



## Friday Photos No 58: A tribute to Bernard Crouch

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**Posted On:** November 13, 2015

I had the enormous pleasure this week of being contacted by Rob Crouch, the Great-Nephew of former England International player, Bernard Crouch, who was tragically killed in the Barnes railway accident in 1955. Bernard was just 30 years old at the time. Rob has kindly forwarded me copies of some photographs and pictures of trophies and medals along with several press cuttings.

Bernard was a Senior International of some prominence being the holder of a bronze medal in the Swaythling Cup in 1950 when he played for the England team in Budapest. Indeed, Bernard gained his first international cap at these championships against Brazil. The other team members were: Richard Bergmann, Johnny Leach, Aubrey Simons and Harry Venner – certainly an elite list of names. Bernard also played in the World Championships in 1948 and 1954, in the latter year he reached the last 16 in the Men's Doubles with Peter Cruwys and the last 32 in the Men's Singles. Considerable achievements in what many regard as the heyday of English table tennis.

The English Open saw further success with a Quarter Final place in the Men's Singles in 1949 and two Quarter Final slots in the Men's Doubles in December 1950 with Peter Skerratt and 1952 with Ivor Jones. December 1950 also saw Bernard holding a Runners-up trophy in the Mixed Doubles with Vera Thomas (Dace), herself a World Champion, and, a trophy as the winner of the Consolation Singles.

On the domestic front Bernard was a member of the winning Wilmott Cup team for the Staines League in 1954/55. He was also on the Middlesex County Championships winning side in 1947-48 and 1949-50 to 1955.

Like many other top class table tennis players of the era, Bernard was an excellent tennis player. He was a regular member of the Surrey County side and played at Wimbledon on several occasions. However, racquet sports were not his only forte, Bernard played football as an amateur for Staines Town and cricket for the Laleham Cricket Club.

A rare sporting talent whose life was cut short. Those who knew Bernard paid some wonderful tributes to him, not only for his achievements but for his demeanour and sportsmanship.

*"He will always remain in my memory not only as a great friend, but as a person who played the game as it should be played. Players of any sport, and I say this particularly for the younger generation, could do no better than to emulate his fine example". Michael Thornhill. Friend and team companion.*

*"He (Bernard) was for many years a welcome visitor to tournaments and matches in Surrey and we shall miss this popular and sporting player". Colin Clemett. Surrey TTA.*

*"... He was a gentleman sportsman of our game". Leslie Woollard.*

It has been a privilege to be able to pay tribute to one of English Table Tennis's former stars.

Many thanks to Rob Crouch for providing so much additional information on his Great-Uncle and also to Darius Knight for putting Rob in touch with me.

If you can help with the identification of any of players or the occasion, in the photographs below, it would be much appreciated. Please contact me on [DianeK1414@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:DianeK1414@hotmail.co.uk)



Photo 1 Bernard is second right, back row.





Photo 2 Bernard far left



Photo 3 Bernard second right



Photo 4 Bernard front row, centre.





Photo 5 Harry Venner, Ron Crayden, Jackie Head, Bernard Crouch, Michael Thornhill and (I think) Jimmy Lowe. All England Internationals.

#### Photos from last week

Photo 1



**GUINNESS SCHOOL OF SPORT  
London & South East 1983**

I have several names for last weeks photos so thank you to everyone who has sent in information. However, although I have names they haven't always been matched to the faces, some are definite and those are listed below.

Back row: Peter Hirst, x, Graham Sandley, Mark Oakley, x, x, x, x, Ian Fullerton, x, x, Mike Kercher.

Front row: x, Nicky Mason, x, Juliet Houghton, Sarah Sandley, Jane Barella, Lesley Popkievicz, Sue Collier, x.

However, some names need to be matched to the faces: Andrew Dodd, Chris Bartram, Dave Dewsbury, David Barr, David Dodd, John Souter, Richard Darnell, Andy Cunningham, Geoff Chapman. Can anyone help match the players to the above names?

Thank you to Cliff Carder who came up with 12 names, the highest number.

Photo 2



This was taken at a Regional weekend at Lilleshall in the early 1980s. The only information I have is that Jim Hayward is on the far back right, Helen Lower is in the front row and Derek Sherratt's daughter is the smallest girl on the back row.

As always thank you to everyone who has been in contact and a reminder that all previous week's photos can be looked at under 'About', 'From the Archives' and then 'Friday's Photos'.

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