

Derek Bell (Life member of EBCS)
Born, 31st December 1928 - 23rd September 2020



Derek was born at Heseldon in Co. Durham the son of a miner. He attended the local schools. After passing the 11 plus he went to Henry Smith's Grammar School in Hartlepool and soon his talents for sports started to show through. He was a keen cricketer and later in life became a cricket coach. He was also a keen Sunderland supporter.

Having completed his National Service in the RAF he eventually found himself in Sheffield to complete a Teacher Training Course. He later continued to study part time and gained an Advanced Diploma of Education at Durham University. Derek continued on the teaching promotion ladder and gained a Headship at Throston Primary School where he remained until his retirement in 1987.

He also met a young lady named Shirley Waite, and in 1960 they married, eventually having two children Steven and Adrian.

His sporting activities also included Hockey and often he came home battered and bruised and it was during one of these occasions that a friend introduced him to bowls and the rest you can say is history.

Derek took to the sport with enthusiasm and upon joining Seaton Carew B.C. he won his first trophy in his first year in bowls. He also won the County Pairs and County Singles. He had many successes, eventually playing for Durham County. In 1972 the Hartlepool and District Indoor Bowls Club was formed and Derek was a founder member, becoming a Director of the club. It was through the Indoor bowling that Derek gained some of his finest achievements. 1980 English Singles Champion, 1980/83 Representing England and in the early years a Four Countries competition was set up and a club team from each Country played each other. Derek was part of this inaugural set up playing for Hartlepool IBC, 1981 World Championship Bronze Medal winner, 1981 winner of the Teesside Masters Singles (where he beat the great David Bryant). 1983 Winner of the Liberty Trophy with Durham, 1987 English Bowls Players Association Singles Champion. 1978, 84, 85 The Hartlepool IBC were National "Denny Cup" team champions and Derek contributed greatly to these successes.

In the late seventies the English Bowls Coaching Scheme (now Society) was formed by the English Bowling Association (now Bowls England) which was quickly joined by other National Bowling Organisations. Derek soon became involved qualifying as a coach. When Joe Burrows became Regional Coach,

Derek took over as the Durham County Coach, then after Joe's retirement he took on the role of Regional Coach in 1985 for the Northern Region.

It was probably at this point that Derek's travels began, travelling the length and breadth of the country, coaching, giving lectures and promoting Bowls Coaching. He attended the National Finals at Worthing, Leamington Spa and Skegness and at each place, carrying out coaching duties ably assisted by Shirley especially, when camera work was required. He worked continuously with the National Committee and in 2000 he became National Coach. One of the big highlights of Derek's career, along with Gwyn John, was when they were both invited to Coach the Israeli National Ladies Team, which was thoroughly successful. A bonus to this, was their wives, Shirley and Mayville had assisted, by coaching others who were not actually in the Israeli Team. When the Durham Coaches wanted to form an award scheme it was to Derek that they reached out for guidance resulting in the Durham County Youth Bowls Awards. He also wrote a book "Take up Bowls" as part of a Take up a Sport series. (still available £3.99).

Derek, a gentleman, kind and generous, always there willing to give a hand, someone to look up to and admire, a Coach in the true sense of the word a man whose true ethics will be difficult to follow.

Thank you Derek, on behalf everyone whom you have helped throughout the years.