

Alf Harding

When Alf Harding stood down from the NZTTA executive in 1982 he had completed 25 years service, with 12 of those years in the top position of Chairman.

At that time he had also completed 48 years in table tennis administration.

Alf was one of those rare breeds who took an interest in administration while still in his teens.

He was involved in starting the Empire Table Tennis Club in Petone in 1934 and at that stage would not have envisaged that Empire would become the biggest in numbers and assets in New Zealand. Alf was involved in most positions in the club throughout his life.



1973

Progressing on to the Hutt Valley Association at an early age he gave 16 years service, nine as chairman. He was involved in running two National Championships in Wellington during that time.

In 1957 Alf Harding was elected to the NZTTA executive and started his 25 years of service to the national body.

Alf's philosophy was "that if you did not do something for others in your lifetime you would not fulfill your destiny". He certainly kept to that.

Throughout his years on the NZ executive Alf served in areas of tours, finance, ranking and seeding in the main, but was also involved in other areas.

He was a New Zealand selector for many years and North Island selector for three.

It was throughout Alf's term and more so when he was Chairman that New Zealand began regularly sending teams to World Championships, Commonwealth Championships and Australian events. This was also the era when we had teams to our shores from Sweden, Japan, China, Czechoslovakia, Hong Kong and Australia. Alf was the instigator of these tours.

Throughout the early seventies Alf was team manager on many tours overseas, also acting as reporter (his day job) and delegate to ITTF meetings. He also toured New Zealand with overseas teams as the liaison person.

He attended Oceania meetings, was on the OTTF Council in 1979 and 1980 and the ITTF Council representing Oceania.

Publicity was an area where table tennis got its fair share of space when Alf was involved. He wrote many articles for both New Zealand and for Hutt Valley. On tours he would spend hours reporting for the Press and Radio.



1984 - Alf and wife Merle cutting the Empire Club 50th Jubilee cake.

Alf Harding continued

Administration was not his only involvement, he was more than a handy player having represented Hutt Valley from 1936 to 1975. In his own words "I was never a top player but as a pen-gripper I was able to give the best players a game - nothing more." Notwithstanding this, he crowned his playing career with a bronze medal in the 1996 World Veterans Championships 80 and Over Men's doubles.

He was awarded Life Membership of TTNZ in 1978.

Alf passed away on 1st January 2000 at the age of 86.



1970 - Alf presenting a prize to Neti Traill at an Invitation Tournament following the opening of an extension to Empire club rooms.



2001
Empire Club



NZ team to Commonwealth & World Championships - 1971

L/R back: **Kathy Fraser, James Morris, Gary Murphy, Richard Lee, Yvonne Fogarty.**
front: **Ken Wilkinson (Official), Alan Tomlinson, Dick Rassie (Official), Neti Traill, Alf Harding (Official)**