

Andrew Edward Thomson

Life Membership

At a party to celebrate winning his third World Indoor title, Andy Thomson was awarded Life Membership of Blackheath and Greenwich Bowls Club. The World Championships in January 2012, were held at Potters Leisure Resort, Norfolk.

Andy joined the Blackheath and Greenwich Bowling Club in 1980 when he moved from Scotland to Eltham in South East London. Whilst playing at Lewisham Indoor Bowling Club he met Ken Cave and Ron Stone and they introduced him to both B&G and to Cyphers IBC



Andy Thomson receiving his life membership from Ken Cave (Immediate Past President)

In 1977 he had won the Scottish Under 25 title and then went on to represent Scotland in 1979. And it was not long before he was winning in England too. In 1981 he won the Kent singles title defeating Gary Smith from Old Colfeian BC and went on to win the English National Singles title at Worthing in the same year beating Alan Windsor of Woking Park (Surrey). He won the Kent singles title again in 1983 defeating D Hughdie (Cheriton BC) but could not do the "double double" with another victory in the National Championships.

Andy was soon selected for the Kent's County Championship Middleton cup side and had his first win with them in 1987 beating Essex in the final.

The England (EBA) selectors included Andy in the side for the 1982 International series in his native Scotland and played at Ayr. Unfortunately England came last! But this was just the start, as England won eleven times between 1983 and 1994 with only Wales breaking the sequence with win in 1992. He was a regular in the International team for 25 years up to his retirement from the squad in 2006.

His first appearance in the England Indoor team (EIBA) came in 1981 and he is still a regular member of the team, and with 96 caps. He was made captain in 2004 and still holds that position in 2012.

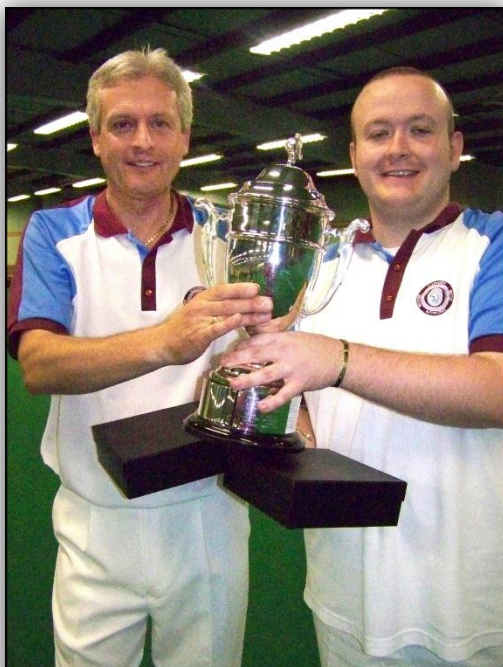
In 1986 he made his first appearance in the Commonwealth Games in his home Country, when David Bryant was regarded as ineligible because he had 'turned professional', Andy was selected to carry England's singles hopes in Edinburgh, finishing in sixth place. He was included again for the games in Auckland where he skipped the pairs with his friend Gary Smith. This time he finished in fifth place. The pair were again selected for the 1994 games held at Victoria in Canada. This time they secured a bronze medal behind Australia (gold) and Wales (silver)

Andy won three medals at the World Outdoor Championships in 1996 and two more in 2004. Two of the three have come when playing in Scotland. He has represented England five times in the World Outdoor Championships. Although the first time was in Ayr in Scotland he did not manage to win a medal in his country of birth. The first medal came in his second appearance in Adelaide in 1996, winning Gold in the fours when playing third behind John Bell. Brett Morley led and David Cutler was at two. Two bronze medals were won in 2004, in Ayr, when Andy skipped in both the triples (Mervyn King and John Rednall) and the fours (John Rednall, Mervyn King, Robert Newman). He has also represented England in the 2000 Championships.

Along with his Outdoor National singles success, Andy has won the National pairs in 1992 and was the runner up in 1993, both with Gary Smith. He reached the semi-finals of the National triples. in 1997 with Paul Haylor and Gary Smith, and in 2003 with Paul Field and Terry Heppell. In 1992, Andy and Gary also won the British Isles pairs title at Worthing.

Kent selected Andy five times in the English Bowling Association (EBA) National County Top Four Competition, finishing as losing finalist in 1999 (P Barnicott, G Smith, G Charlton) and 2001 (P Barnicott, G Charlton and G Smith) and semi-finalist in 2000 (P Barnicott, G Charlton and G Smith). In 2002, Andy was in the winning top four team with P Barnicott, D Hanmore and G Charlton and repeated that success in 2003, with R Kendrick, D Hanmore and P Barnicott.

In 1985 Andy was a member of the Blackheath and Greenwich team that won London and Southern Counties Bowling Association (Outdoor) Challenge Shield.



EIBA National Pairs Winners 2008/9
Andy Thomson and Paul Field

His indoor record is even more impressive. He has won 16 Indoor National titles from his Cyphers (Beckenham) club, four singles, three pairs titles, two in the triples and an astonishing seven titles in the fours. This includes a run of four in six years and three of them on the trot with Martyn Sekjer, Terry Heppell and Gary Smith between 1987 and 1989. Two pairs titles with Gary Smith came in 1985 and 1990 and one in 2008 with Paul Field. His latest fours title was in 2010 when teaming up with his old friend Martyn Sekjer, along with Paul Field and Tom Doig.

Andy first represented England at indoor bowls in 1980/1. The 2012 series, that took place in Swansea, Wales, was his 32nd consecutive appearance – and he has been the team Captain since 2004. With 96 caps he is now the all-time record holder for England after the March 2012 series.

With the formation of the World Bowls Tours new events came into the indoor game. And Andy soon made his mark here. He won the UK Open in 1991 beating Tony

Allcock in the final. In 1994, the competition became the International Open and Andy lost in the final to Mark McMahon. Andy won the re-named event, the BUPA Care Homes Open, in 2003.

In the Scottish Masters, (now the Scottish International Open) he reached the final in 1995 losing to Wales's John Price but came back to win it in 2007 beating Mark Royal 2-1. He has not had any success in the Welsh Masters, losing in two finals in 2000 and 2004. He has one victory in the World Match Play with 2-1 defeat of Scotland's Alex Marshal.

In the British Isles Indoor Bowls Championship, which is held between the four Home Countries and latterly including the Channel Isles, he has amassed eight titles. Two in the singles (1991 and 1992), two in the pairs in 1987 and 1989, again both with Gary Smith. And four titles in the fours in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1995.

Some of his greatest achievements have come in the World Indoor Championships. At first, Andy did not enjoy great success in the WIBC world indoor singles, but he hit the jackpot in 1994 and 1995, winning back-to-back titles after beating Richard Corsie in both finals. But, after a 17 year gap, "Thommo" won it again in 2012 with a two nil win against Welshman Jason Greenslade.

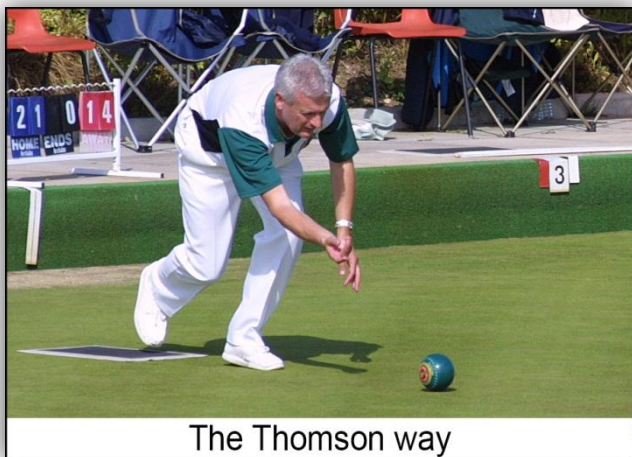
In the World Indoor pairs, Andy and Gary Smith appeared in the final six times between 1987 and 2000, winning the title just once in 1993. They finished runners up in 1987, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000. Andy then won it again in 2008, this time with Devon's Ian Bond. They won it again in 2010 to make a hat-trick of wins.

At the World Bowls Tour 2010 Awards Dinner Andy was given the 'Lifetime Achievement' Award in recognition of all that he has done for the Sport of Bowls and was given a standing ovation from his playing colleagues.

In a career that spans 44 years, starting at the age of 13 with his father in Scotland, the "The Silver Fox" still continues to delight on the bowling greens of Great Britain and amassed a host of titles. There seems almost nothing more for him to achieve, but no one watching Andy play would be in any doubt that he still has a great appetite for the game, and for winning. His silky smooth delivery is a joy to watch. And his amiable personality and sportsmanship mark him out as a Gentleman.



Andy Thomson World Indoor Champion 2012 with the Fred Olsen Trophy



Andy continues to play at county, national and at international level. This story is not yet over and I look forward to adding to it in the years to come.

David Turner

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