

Derek Miller RIP

1935-2020

Barrow Chess Player

The news of Derek's demise was a shock even though he had been suffering from cancer and had undergone treatment for a few years. One thing that Derek will be remembered for was his unfailingly sunny disposition. Whether it be cancer or losing a game of chess, his unflappable and cheerful nature was infectious.

Derek to the best of my knowledge had been in the club for the best part of 30 years, joining in the early 1990's. Derek became a very proficient player and although his grade didn't reach great heights, it didn't dim his enthusiasm for the game. He would turn out in all weathers and play for the Barrow teams in the Cumbria league whenever requested. He was a player that you took for granted at your peril and had some notable scalps. Derek was also a winner of the Barrow Summer League (Minor), the Doubles competition twice and winner of the John Game Trophy.

I first met Derek in 1979 when he worked in the shipyard Machine and Pipe shops, when neither of us had an inkling of playing chess in a club, but would then listen in the chess club to his tales of work and playing table tennis in the Barrow leagues for which he was fearlessly competitive and by all accounts one of Barrow's top players. His spirit surely rubbed off on his grandkids where he would regale us with stories of their training and in matches of them playing football and rugby.

One of the features of a chess club night would be listening to Derek and Alan Llewellyn discussing the merits of the England and Welsh Rugby Union teams performance on the Monday night after the weekend match; come the Wednesday evening chess club, the conversation would still be going on!

Derek was a great character and laughed at most things, but had a serious side when his stern voice came to the fore and you knew he meant it. It was obvious Derek loved playing chess and talking about it along with musing on life in general.

Derek after a defeat would shrug his shoulders and say 'It's alright, it doesn't matter' – he was right of course; just move on to the next game - but of course it did matter in his own mind, as he would go home, set up the position and go through the game. A true gentleman who will be fondly remembered and sorely missed in Barrow Chess Club.

Dave Cole

Chairman Barrow Chess Club