

It is with great sadness that the Dorset & Wilts Rugby Football Union must inform you of the passing of Arthur Bowden in Salisbury Hospital on the 1st January 2021.

Arthur's rugby career started 74 years ago when he joined Salisbury RFC in 1946. He was selected at full back for Dorset & Wilts in 1948 and played in the County Championship. He also wore the famous Harlequins shirt and played for his University College, Peterhouse.

He first became a rugby administrator with the Salisbury Club in 1956 and later became Club Chairman for 9 years.

Arthur was an Honorary Life Vice-President of the Dorset & Wilts Rugby Football Union which he first joined in 1966, representing Wiltshire Clubs, which means that he has been a member for a record number of years, 54 to be precise.

He served as Assistant Honorary General Secretary from 1968 to 1975 and then has an outstanding Honorary General Secretary from 1975-1979 and 1985-2007, a record total of 27 years.

Finally, Arthur served with distinction as President of Dorset & Wilts RFU twice. Firstly from 1981-1983 and secondly from 2005-2007.

One of Arthur's great strengths was that he always had the willingness to accept change and move forward. Child welfare and discipline, on and off the rugby field, are challenging issues in this modern world that require a range of expert skills and he was at the helm of the Union's Governance Committee since the beginning of the new Millennium. During this time, he expertly guided the D&WRFU across changing times.

When he finally retired from committee life in 2018, he continued to be available to offer advice and guidance to those who asked when needed.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Arthur's wife Joyce. Who without her support and encouragement, he would never have been able to find the necessary time, energy, commitment and provide the leadership that has been needed to develop and promote the game throughout the twin counties for over 50 years.

Arthur was also an active volunteer in many other organisations within Salisbury area, like the Rotary Club of Wilton, Salisbury Cathedral, and the Musical Theatre Salisbury (Formerly Salisbury Amateur Operatic Society).

Arthur will be deeply missed by all within Dorset and Wiltshire.