

# Christopher Dean

Christopher Colin Dean was born in July 1958 in Calverton, Nottinghamshire, about ten miles from the city of Nottingham. His father, Colin, was a coal miner all his life.

Chris first stepped on to the ice at the age of 10 after receiving a pair of skates for Christmas. He was instantly hooked; mesmerised by the grace and athleticism of the figure skaters that he watched. He took lessons outside school hours, working with Ken Babbington, Len Saywood and Pat Beat at the old Nottingham Ice Stadium. At 14 he began competing with ice partner Sandra Elson and despite enjoying significant success for a couple of years (British Junior Dance champions in 1974), Chris and Sandra went their separate ways.



Shortly afterwards, he began skating with another local girl, Jayne Torvill. Meanwhile, Chris was training to be a policeman, joining the Nottingham Police Force straight from school in 1974.

Chris and Jayne had been paired up by coach Janet Sawbridge at the Nottingham Ice Stadium. They enjoyed success in several national and international competitions, winning in Oberstdorf and coming third in the British Championships in 1977.

In 1979, they switched coaches to Betty Callaway. The progress they had made as a dancing pair was confirmed by a fifth place finish in the Winter Olympics of 1980 at Lake Placid, USA. They were placed fourth in the World Championships and won their first British Champions in late 1980, a feat that they achieved for six successive years. Chris resigned from the police force in 1980, enabling him to concentrate on skating full time.

Their greatest moment came at the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo. Performing their now legendary Bolero routine on Valentines Day of that year, the pair stunned a British audience of over 24 million with a magnificent combination of artistic movement and athletic prowess, earning full marks from all nine judges and a gold medal.

No dancing pair had ever received full marks in a skating competition before, and it is a record that remains in tact to the present day. They had redefined ice dancing.

Turning professional in 1984, they were able to take advantage of the artistic possibilities of their new status. They worked creating routines for themselves and produced their own ice shows, which toured Australia, the U.S., and Europe. Their projects included a filmed fairy tale "Fire and Ice." They also choreographed, as a team, for other ice dancers and skaters, particularly the French Canadian brother-sister team Isabelle and Paul Duchesnay, who competed at the 1992 Winter Olympics and won the silver medal and French couple Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat who won Olympic Gold at Lake Placid in 2002. Torvill and Dean competed in their third Winter Olympics at Lillehammer in Norway in 1994, winning a bronze medal. They were champions of Europe however, winning gold at the European Championships the same year. 1998 was the year of their official retirement. They were awarded OBE's in 2000 for their outstanding contributions to skating and to British sport.

In 2006, they were asked to star in Dancing on Ice, the ITV series which will begin its seventh series in January 2012. Each year, they have taken the show on a national tour following the series.