

Jayne Torvill

Jayne Torvill was born in Clifton, Nottingham, on the 7th October 1957. Her father, George, worked for Raleigh bicycles, and her mother, Betty, had a job at the Players' cigarette factory. Later, her parents ran a newsagents.

Jayne went to a local grammar school, leaving at 16. Her first job was as a clerk at a Nottingham insurance company. She was introduced to skating at the age of 8 during a school trip to the old Nottingham Ice Stadium. This led to an immediate interest in the sport and she began attending skating lessons with local teachers Thelma Perry and Norma Bowmar, before and after school hours.



As a Pairs Skater, together with her teenage partner Michael Hutchinson, she won gold at the British championship in 1971 and silver in 1970 and 1972. After this flurry of success, the pair split and Jayne continued to skate on her own.

Jayne began skating with Christopher Dean in 1975, having 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 Championships in late 1980, a feat that they would achieve for six successive years.

Jayne did not leave her full-time job until shortly after the Winter Olympics in 1980, when a grant from Nottingham City Council enabled her to skate 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 intact 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 of 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. Jayne lives in Sussex with her husband Phil Christensen whom she married in 1990, and their two children, Kieran and Jessica.