**Jayne Torville and Christopher Dean - Life on Ice**

Jayne Torvill and Christoper Dean were both born in Nottingham in 1957 and 1958 respectively. Both ‘only’ children, they began skating before their tenth birthdays and met in their late teens in 1975. At the time, Torvill worked as an insurance clerk and Dean was a trainee policeman. Working together, they became legends of British sporting history.

**Early Career**

Although Torvill and Dean started as figure skaters, when Ice Dance was introduced into the Olympics in 1976, they quickly switched training techniques to focus on this new discipline. However, unlike many of the world’s athletes, they couldn’t afford to train full time and needed to fit in their practice sessions around their working hours. Their determination paid off and in 1977 they qualified for the European and World Championships the following year, in which they were placed 9th and 11th. On their return to training, they acquired a new coach, Betty Calloway, who encouraged them to have ballet lessons to develop further their dance skills. The lessons paid off and later than year they won the British Championships – a feat they were to repeat for the next six years.

**First Olympic Games**

In 1980 the pair had a major breakthrough: having come 4th in the European Championships in Gothenburg, they qualified to compete in that year’s Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, USA. In an outstanding field they succeeded in achieving 5th place. They were pleased but they realised that if they were to achieve their true potential, they would have to give up their jobs and focus solely on their skating. With no income they worried about how they were going to survive, but luckily Nottingham Council offered them a grant which allowed them to work exclusively on their sport.

**A Fresh Start**

The following year, 1981, they entered the European Championships; the Russians were expected to take first place but Torvill and Dean swooped in and plucked the prize from them. They followed this success six weeks later by winning the World Championships.

Torvill and Dean were now firm British favourites and that year they won BBC Team of the Year and were awarded with MBEs by the Queen at Buckingham Palace

**Invention**

The skating couple - who in spite of a lot of speculation were not romantically involved – were keen to re-invent the sport of ice dancing. Whilst at a performance of the musical ‘Barnum’, which starred Michael Crawford, the pair was inspired to base their next routine on the circus-based musical. This was the first time that an ice dance told a story. This approach and their technical ability impressed the judges and for the first time in ice dance history, Torvill and Dean achieved some perfect scores of 6.0 at the World Championships.

**Ultimate Goal**

In 1984 the Winter Olympics were held in Sarajevo in Yugoslavia (now Bosnia and Herzegovina). Torvill and Dean were the favourites to win the Gold medal but no-one could have anticipated the style in which they were to win. Dancing to music called Bolero, by Ravel, they achieved perfect 6.0 scores from all nine judges. This had never been achieved before and hasn’t since.