

Stars in the Centres

Amongst the many thousands of people who have been involved in sports centres some prominent sportsmen have held management positions, including Olympic athletes **David Hemery** (Sobell), **Brendan Foster** (Gateshead), **Brian Kilby** (Leicester) and **Jim Douglas** (Carlisle). Over the years, a very large number of sportspeople have been employed in centres or been closely involved in event management. This has been in different positions, ranging from manager to recreation assistant. Sometimes this has been as a student for holiday or other short-term employment or more substantially as a follow-up to a sports career or qualification.

The 'shop floor' and event staff have been as important as management in providing a service to millions of users over the years. The following are good examples.



Pamela Hutchinson - beam

National Champion and GB's top Munich Olympic gymnast, **Pamela Hutchinson**, worked at Crowtree for many years.



Beth Tweddle, Britain's most successful Olympic gymnast, now has a company that provides gymnastics training in British schools and leisure centres.

Currently Littlehampton Swimming & Sports Centre has a recreation assistant, **Lee Farrell**, for whom 'sporting achievement' is his benchmark. Lee is hearing impaired and uses British sign language. He started playing football as a youngster for the Lamb pub in Rustington and then was successively transferred to East Preston, Lewes, and then Horsham for their record fee of £2,500. A prolific goalscorer, he scored both Horsham's goal in 2007 in losing 6-2 to Swansea City in the FA Cup. In 2005 he was selected for the Great Britain team in the Deaflympics in Australia – and scored the winning 'gold medal' goal in the final against Iran.



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Doug James founded the Cumbria Open Karate Championships held annually since 2007 at Penrith Leisure Centre. He served on the board of the karate governing body for four years, and in 2007 retired from his role as one of the World Karate Federation's top kumite referees after an international refereeing career spanning 21 years.



Courtesy of Cumberland & Westmorland Herald

See also [Roy Maplebeck](#), Billingham Forum (Chapter 2).