

TABLE TENNIS NEWS

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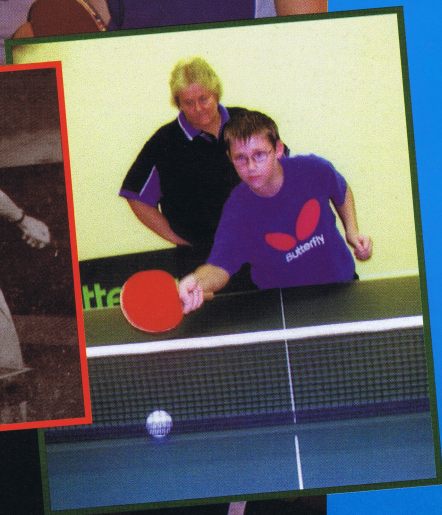
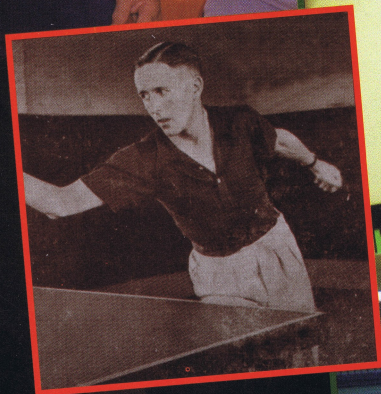
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NOVEMBER 2002



HOW ENGLISH COACHES HAVE SHAPED OUR GAME

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turn supporting table tennis.

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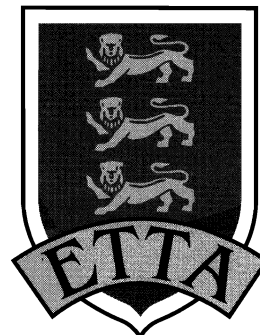


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FRONT COVER MAIN PHOTOGRAPH
Cippenham Coach Ken Phillips coaching Gemma
Chapman and Robert Lemon - picture by John Wood

The ETTA would like to thank the following organisations for their support

GIDEON'S DREAM

GIDEON ASHISON had a table tennis dream come true, when his coaching club moved from a one table large garden shed in Wandsworth, to a 10 table centre at Southfields College in Wandsworth, London.

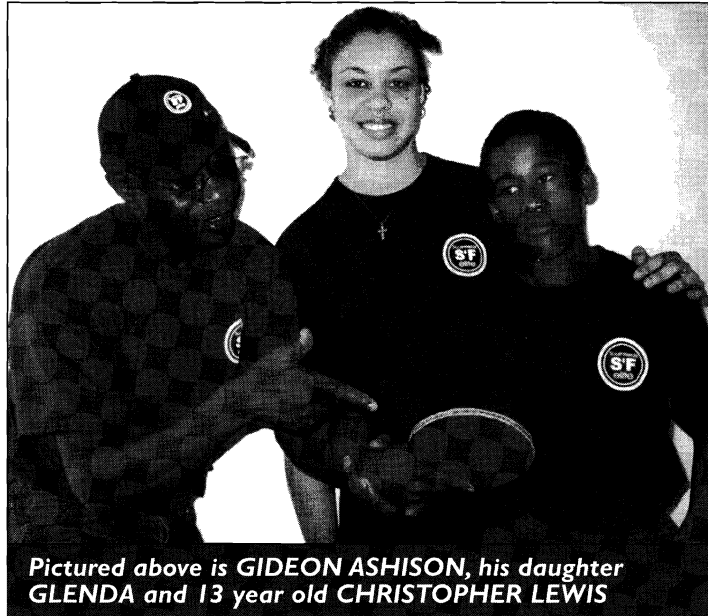
Gideon's dream became a reality when the new Southfields Elite Table Tennis Club was formed.

The new premises at the Southfields College was funded by the Lottery, and supported by the ETTA Chairman Alan Ransome, and Matthew Syed. (See Matthew's feature on page 12 and 13, on how a sporting miracle was cultivated in a garden shed.)

The club's talisman is young Darius Knight, who now trains at Nottingham with the National squad.

When Darius came on the scene in 2000 he said, "Can I play in the next tournament." Gideon replied, "You will have to learn how to play first."

Dreams can come true, if like Gideon you reach for the stars.



Pictured above is GIDEON ASHISON, his daughter GLENDA and 13 year old CHRISTOPHER LEWIS

WILTSHIRE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

WILTSHIRE Table Tennis Association is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year with a reception evening at Devizes Town Football Club, Devizes, on Saturday, 16th November.

Alan Ransome OBE, Chairman of

the English Table Tennis Association will be attending as a guest, as will be former England international of the late 40's and 50's, Aubrey Simons, who alongside Johnny Leach and Richard Bergmann won the Swaythling Men's Team Cup of the World Championships for England in 1953, and who is still active as a veteran player in Bristol. Hoping to attend, health permitting, will be the first Wiltshire player to represent England (in 1931), Joe Silto, who is now 91.

Presentations will be made to officials and life members, to players who have made over 100 appearances for the county, and also of county badges to all those who qualify. In addition, photographs and other memorabilia depicting table tennis in Wiltshire and records of the Association will be on display.

Noel Sewell, Press Officer of Wiltshire TTA said, "This special occasion will provide an opportunity for past and present players and officials of the Association to renew old acquaintances and friendships. I have a case of old table tennis memorabilia of another former Wiltshire player, which I am sorting through, and Joe Silto has been able to identify many of the players in the photographs. Swindon actually ran two women's divisions in the 1930's, but, judging by the dress and equipment of lady players in one of the photographs, I think it may be from the 1920's! I am desperately trying to prepare this memorabilia ready for display on 16th November".

For further information about the Wiltshire TTA Anniversary Reception, contact Noel Sewell (Tel. 01225 865359) or John Ford, Chairman of Organising Committee (Tel. 01373 822546).

WOODY'S World

WELCOME to this coaching special edition of Table Tennis News, starting on page 10 with 'English Coaches Past and Present' by Brian Halliday.

Followed by a fantastic story of Gideon Ashison's dream on this page, and Matthew Syed's feature on pages 12 and 13.

The success story of our England Juniors continues with their achievements in Sweden, page 27.

Don't forget to vote in our email poll on 'Who's the greatest English Coach', see page 17.

John Wood

PRESS OFFICER OF THE YEAR

JUDY SMITH, Press Officer for the Weston-Super-Mare and District Table Tennis League, Somerset, since 1988, has received the prestigious ETTA Press Officer of the Year Award, supported by the Random House Publishing Group.

OBITUARY

BETTY SHIPLEY 1928-2002

I REGRET to have to inform you that Betty died peacefully early on the morning of Saturday, 27th July 2002 at the Conquest Hospital in Hastings.

From late March of this year she began to suffer with breathlessness and general tiredness and at first was treated for a dilated bile duct and poor kidney function. Tubes were inserted internally to bypass the bile duct and after having both kidneys drained she began to recover from the jaundice but the weakness prevailed.

Further tests showed that cancer had spread to the liver and kidneys and there was no treatment that could halt the decline. She did not suffer any pain and the end came as peaceful as possible.

Her cremation took place at 2.30 p.m. on Thursday, 8th August at Hastings Crematorium, The Ridge, Hastings, and afterwards at Hawkhurst Golf Club.

May she rest in peace.

Albert Shipley.

FAREWELL SUSIE



SUSIE FOLEY left the ETTA Headquarters in Hastings on 1st November 2002, after five and a half years service.

She started as a Clerical Assistant and was promoted to Secretary to Chief Executive Richard Yule (above left), and General Secretary Rob Sinclair (right).

THANKYOU

Tony and Pat Chatwin and family wish to express their appreciation to colleagues and friends for the numerous messages of support received, following the death of their daughter Claire.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED



**Alan Ransome OBE,
Chairman of the ETTA**

AS I TRAVEL around the country and talk to county, league and club officials, the biggest single problem that is raised with me is the lack of people willing to take on the various tasks involved with organising the sport.

Table tennis isn't the only sport with this difficulty, in fact many other national officials in other sports that I speak to seem to have a far more acute problem than we do. However, if we were able to recruit, train and manage a far greater number of people to organise the sport at local level, those under pressure at present would be able to find some relief and the sport itself would have the people and the energy to expand at a far greater rate.

The British Government and Sport England have recognised the problem created by less people volunteering and have introduced a number of initiatives to help address the concern. The Government also recognises that sport is the ideal vehicle to attack two of their main priorities, improving the fitness and health of the nation and implementing their inclusion programmes which are designed to encourage people who are not at the centre of society to become more involved in sport and community activities. Sport England have selected table tennis as one of the eight sports to be part of a major initiative to encourage more volunteers into sport and from the Association's perspective, we are pleased to participate and will do our utmost to ensure that the sport receives the maximum benefit from this opportunity.

Initially we have organised nine conferences, one per region throughout the country, to present the volunteer initiative and to consult and to invite comments from county, league and club officials on how they would like to see the programme



SYLVIA TYLER is pictured receiving the 'Volunteer of the Year' award from ETTA Chairman ALAN RANSOME, at the ETTA Volunteer Awards Presentation Dinner, held at Lilleshal National Sports Centre, in September. Sylvia is the Secretary of the Ellenborough Table Tennis Club, Enfield, North London.

develop. We have also established a committee within the Teaching & Training Department who are working with a Sport England consultant to produce a programme which will encourage more volunteers to come into table tennis. This programme will receive significant funding from Sport England once it is approved.

From my perspective the recruitment process falls into three phases – the recruitment itself, the training and then the supervision to ensure that volunteers, once trained, are provided with suitable involvement within the table tennis community to enable them make a valuable contribution. I am aware that in the past many coaches have qualified, received their award and then have not had any classes to teach and may have been lost

to coaching as a result. A key element in the volunteering programme will be the establishment of a suitable person in each Premier club, local league and county association to take on the role of volunteer manager, finding the people to recruit, arrange the training and then supervise their initial activities.

From my experience in the early days of the Ormesby Club, I recognised that it was impossible to build a successful club without a large team of volunteers undertaking the various roles and encouraged in the main the parents of the youngsters who were coming to our coaching sessions to become involved in the club. Those who had table tennis skills to qualify as coaches or umpires and others who were interested in the sport to become organisers or to help in other ways. Eventually we were

running four separate coaching squads and helping with local tournaments with our qualified umpires and running approximately 20 teams in the local league mainly of youngsters with parents supervising the travel and organisation.

One could say that finding a suitable person to take on the role of volunteer manager would be difficult as most volunteers have already a full workload. My response would be to say that by recruiting help the volunteer could have less commitment and could take on more of a managerial role.

One of the initiatives to come out of the round of conferences is that the Teaching & Training Department are organising a Regional Training Day in each of the nine regions approximately twelve weeks after the conference where a series of courses will be held at the same venue. A course for coaches, umpires, for local tournament organisers, for local development officers, with all clubs and leagues encouraged to find people within their organisation to attend the courses and gain qualifications. The London and South East training day has been arranged at South Bank University on 4 & 5 January 2003 and the North West training day has been arranged for 2 February at Lancaster & Morecambe College. For information regarding these courses, please contact the Teaching & Training Director, Peter Hirst, via the Hastings Office.

The Teaching & Training Department committee who are putting together the Association strategy would welcome comments and input from county, local league and club officials and, therefore, any thoughts that readers have on this project are most welcome.

Part of this process is the

POSTBAG

UNDER 12 ENGLAND TRAINING CAMPS

AT the National Academy meeting, I spoke out about the recently cancelled U12 England Training Camp (amongst other things). At present there isn't any funding for the Under 12s so I appreciate the problems. A number of parents of those children selected had indicated that they would have been prepared to pay and I suggested that the ETTA might like to approach the parents about this. Others did not agree and told me that some people might not be able to afford it. Surely the same is true of the many school trips that are organised. Isn't there somewhere on the form that explains no child should be excluded due to financial difficulties? They don't just not organise the trips in case a couple of people can't afford it. They organise them and then find ways of helping those that need it. My feelings are that most parents, relatives and schools are extremely proud of their children and honoured when they are selected for an England training camp and I believe would consider this an option. Surely the costs of this U12 camp would be less than one of the commercially run camps that are presumably profit making. It may also be the only way that some children can benefit from top quality coaches, since hiring one on an individual basis would be out of the question. Hence could we not say that this is discriminating against those that cannot afford as much as those that can? Those that can afford it will make their own arrangements anyway, as many people do already.

I think it is very important that the camps go ahead, those at the National Academy need to have others snapping at their heels in order that they don't become complacent. It is also important for the many, many other English youngsters (and their dedicated parents/coaches) to have something to aim for and know that if they are good enough, they will get their chance.

Not knowing enough about lottery funding, world class programmes and politics, I will not pretend to be an expert, however it seems to me, that all three Performance Directors (Michel, Soren and Steen) say all the right things, know what we need to do, then promptly have to spend most of their time, not in the training hall, but in meetings discussing finance, what a waste! It also seems that they are then restricted in what they want to do in the way of training, due to the emphasis placed on schooling. I would have thought that the emphasis should be on their individual

training programmes, not at the expense of education, but simply allowing the pupils to take their exams over a longer period of time. Nobody has ever asked me how old I was when I passed all my GCSEs and A Levels.

*Linda Evans,
Newark, Nottinghamshire*

COLOUR PUZZLE?

I WAS once told by a fellow player that the only reason he lost to me was because he couldn't see the ball we were playing with because it clashed with my hair. However this is not the most ridiculous thing someone has said to me.

Umpires have some very strange ideas. At the university championships held in Warwick in February I was forced to change my University of Sheffield playing top because on it were the words "no nonsense". This was said to be promoting John Smiths and alcohol consumption. Many players looked on in amazement. The next day I pointed out to the umpire that I was in fact more of a lager drinker and wore a t-shirt with a small Heineken logo on it. This time the umpire said nothing.

At the recent Merseyside Open, a lady I have never seen in my life thought it was her duty to point out to the head umpire that I wasn't wearing my number. It was screwed up in my bag and I can't believe anyone could actually care less whether or not I wore it. Coincidentally I changed my shirt as I put my new number on. The colour of the shirt was yellow. Mick Strode later informed me that the colours orange and yellow were forbidden. The umpire said nothing about this to me. I actually wanted Roy Norton's number, but he wouldn't give it to me.

It's funny how a simple set of rules can be interpreted so differently by so many different people. Hundreds watched Ryan Jenkins and Barbara Kiss play their respective finals in orange and yellow shirts. I'm a bit puzzled by all this nonsense and I certainly won't be packing a cap in my bag for the next tournament. What's next no more white balls because they clash with skin colour?

Personally I think all the recent rule changes have made no difference with regards to television ratings. The product is the same old rubbish. The time out rule is useless. 5 minute beer breaks between sets would be far better. The umpires could even join in and may suddenly see everything crystal clear. That is if they open their eyes. I also quite like the idea of the womens final being switched to a mud wrestling contest. Then you would get SKY on the phone!

Keith Lesser, Mossford and Vulcan TTC.

continued on page 8

COURTSIDE

by John Woodford

- **THE WORLD** team championships due to be held in 2004 in Doha, Qatar have been moved backwards from the end of April to March 1st.
- **POLITICAL** turbulence in the Gulf and throughout the Middle East is apparently on-going. On both the trips I have made to Qatar, I have felt the tension, but the situation has deteriorated in recent months to a point where any forthcoming sporting event, could be in jeopardy.
- **THE BALKANS** is another area where political and military strife is always likely to threaten sport. Some three years ago, our world championships were scheduled for Belgrade but another tyrannical regime was in power, so we ended up in Eindhoven.
- **MAYBE** on this occasion, time is on our side; there is time for the Middle East to become more stable. If that does not happen then our table tennis friends in Qatar might have to inform the ITTF that it would be unwise to proceed in March 2004, a mere eighteen months from now.
- **MEANWHILE**, the financial axe has fallen on our senior players who might have been playing in the German and Dutch Opens in the second half of October.
- **MATTHEW SYED** after moving up on the September world list, has now moved down three places to 75, further signalling that our top man is no longer a force amongst world class players, but remains the world's best entertainer with his long-distance defence.
- **GARETH HERBERT** and Katy Parker are now the two players starting to pull up trees - we desperately need them to make progress to European class - Gareth seems to have had no problems with the new service rules, so far.
- **WE** all know that support for the National Lottery has declined - people are not buying as many tickets now as they were a year ago, so all sports will get less money via the offices of Sport England.
- **A LOT** of money was spent on our preparation programme for the Commonwealth Games, so this means that at least until December, when amounts of money will become known, cuts have been made - the World Professional Circuit will it seems, not see any English players in the foreseeable future.
- **MANY** people outside the ETTA Management Committee and the National Council are not made aware of the financial situation. Paid-up members have a right to know.
- **SOME** national councillors do not let their leagues know all manner of things. Fortunately, Sussex county delegates are kept informed, both in writing and verbally at meetings. Not so, in some other counties.
- **MANCHESTER's** Midland Hotel is "venerable." The prices of most rooms start at £165 a night, rising in the better suites to £600 a night. David Beckham and Posh Spice have stayed there, also Tom Jones, Pavarotti and the Earl and Countess of Essex.
- **THE** Countess was I am informed (by an impeccable source) not impressed with the service there. But this is where a number of the top brass officials of the Commonwealth Games stayed. I wonder who footed the bill for the top officials at the table tennis who included the President of the ITTF Adham Sharara and his wife the former Marianne Domonkos and Mr and Mrs Alan Ransome?
- **MY** hotel room, a stone's throw from the Midland - Juries Hotel - cost the best part of £1,500 for twelve nights residence. I would be interested to know who paid for the table tennis VIP's at the Midland.

The above views expressed by John Woodford, are not necessarily the views of Table Tennis News or the English Table Tennis Association.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR continued

continued from page 7

THE BIG ROW

I WISH to respond to John Woodford's inaccurate and unfair report on the Commonwealth Games competition (TTN 287).

From the nonsensical medal count in the 1st paragraph to his comment on doubles seedings, Woodford shows a surprising lack of basic knowledge for someone who has been reporting table tennis for so long. In fact, England won 3 gold medals - men's team, men's doubles and women's wheelchair singles - and the doubles seedings were derived in accordance with the normal ITTF procedure for international competitions and not by any whim of the organisers or the referee.

The playing schedule was devised and fine-tuned over many months during 2000 and 2001 by Alan Ransome, Karen Tonge and myself. Team matches were scheduled for 1000 (the earliest possible starting time), 1300, 1600 and 1900 so it was inevitable that some team matches would finish about 2100 in the evening. On day 8 singles quarter-finals were scheduled for 1900 and 2000 for the benefit of the live audience and television, but taking into account the requirements to give players adequate rest and time to eat between matches. On day 9 the show court arena was reduced to 1 table for the afternoon doubles finals, followed by the 4 singles semi-finals consecutively from 1800. The 2n~ men's semi-final was scheduled for 2100, a starting time we had tried to avoid. A rolling programme, with each

match starting as soon as the previous one ended, might have avoided the late starts of some of the evening matches, but we were committed to defined starting times by our agreements with television. At no time did we hear of our spectators being fearful of 'clashing with 38,000 fans' leaving the adjacent main stadium during the rugby sevens.

It is Woodford's factually incorrect statements, on the Johnny Huang incident, 'The Big Row', which cause greatest concern.

Huang (Canada) failed to return a service from Adam Robertson (Wales) during a doubles quarter-final and the umpire, Bill Moran, correctly awarded the point to Robertson and his partner Ryan Jenkins. Huang claimed that the ball had touched his left half court. Woodford states 'what is clear is that Adam's service must have been very, very close to the service line' and he fails to grasp that, even if the ball had bounced on the centre line, it was legitimate. Woodford compounds his error by stating that the umpire's best plan would have been to play a let. The umpire has no power to declare a let in these circumstances and must make a decision based on the facts as seen, i.e. the service was good (point to server) or not good (point to receiver).

Woodford fails to mention that Bill Moran saw nothing wrong with the service, Huang failed to return the ball and therefore the point was correctly awarded to Robertson and Jenkins. Following the interval between games and an immediate timeout, Huang withdrew from the match. Woodford is out of order by stating that 'here was a

British umpire giving a very dodgy decision in favour of a British player' - a most disreputable and unworthy comment.

There was no question of consulting 'the Games top organisation' as Woodford states and it was a matter for the referee to deal with. Therefore I requested statements from the umpire and the duty deputy referee. In view of the seriousness of Huang's postmatch comments about the umpire and his opponents, alleging cheating and bias, I discussed the matter urgently with the ITTF Technical Delegate, Colin Clemett, and the Commonwealth TT Federation chairman, Alan Ransome. In keeping with the spirit of 'The Friendly Games' it was decided not to take disciplinary action against Huang, but afterwards a full report of the incident was sent to the Canadian TT Association.

Woodford refers to the incident as the biggest and most widely reported he can recall, forgetting the major row involving the services of Chinese players, particularly singles finalist Guo Yue Hua, at the 1977 Birmingham World Championships and Jiang Jialing's refusal to continue to play during the 1989 Swaythling Cup final in Dortmund. He refers to the story appearing in the Sydney Daily Telegraph, described by one of my Australian colleagues at the Games as a 'not very serious tabloid', a far cry from the august and respected London newspaper.

When a player of Huang's ability and experience accuses opponents of cheating and match officials of bias without any factual basis, I expect a reporter of Woodford's experience to report the matter factually and competently. Instead he questions the ability of a very reputable umpire, implicitly accuses the Welsh players of lying and makes a false accusation regarding a correct decision. I would have wished to see Woodford question Huang's motives, criticise Huang's disgraceful comments and lack of consideration for his doubles partner, consider the Canadian team's reaction to a default during play and the loss of a potential medal, and the reaction from Team Canada at the Games Village.

English table tennis deserves better than John's version of the incident.
Richard Scruton
Referee, Commonwealth Games 2002, Table Tennis

TV AT THE GAMES

DID TABLE TENNIS at the Commonwealth Games enjoy good television coverage?

'... the sport (Table Tennis) enjoying the biggest publicity boost for more than twenty-five years'. 'An important part of the boost was the television coverage by the BBC who had a full camera crew present throughout the ten days of play and broadcast many hours of coverage on the new BBC Digital service... The amount of coverage on the main BBC channel was good although

not as extensive as we might have hoped.' Quotes by Alan Ransome.

'The support of the table tennis was also very good, in the media coverage'. Ken Muhr

'... the BBC who covered quite a fair amount of table tennis although their timing of some of the matches was not ideal' John Woodford & Brain Halliday.

'... although I felt the television coverage was not as good as was given to other fringe sports...' Les Maple letter.

'I am writing to express my disappointment at the meagre coverage of table tennis on terrestrial TV, at the Commonwealth Games' Les Bridges letter.

The two extremes of how good the television coverage of Table Tennis was at the Commonwealth Games. Presumably all of the ETTA officials are basing their comments on what they were told, since they were at the Games watching the matches live. So how, if they have, have they got it so wrong, or are they airing how they hoped the coverage was.

Coverage on Digital television would probably only be seen by members of the public who are interested in the game already; to generate interest in non-players it must be available to them, which means a lot more terrestrial coverage.

Unfortunately, I cannot comment either way on the television coverage, since I was at the Games for all of the 10 days of Table Tennis, and not as a volunteer. If just one piece of the atmosphere in the main courts could have been captured by a camera and relayed to the rest of the UK, the number of both new players and players returning to the game would increase beyond our wildest dreams.
Mike Scott,
Development Officer,
Nottingham & District Table Tennis Association.

TT IN PRISON

I WAS very interested to read the item by Tony Jervis on table tennis in prison.

The statistics he quoted were absolutely correct and I am sure the experiences of conforming to rules was a great help to most of the participants.

Gartree still has a team in our league, but the Prison Officer who ran the show has now been transferred and this will probably lead to complications.

If anyone ever needs information on this subject of prison teams in local leagues, I must be some kind of authority on the pitfalls and advantages.

Dennis Millman
Northants



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ENGLISH COACHES PAST & PRESENT

MATT SYED sowed the seed. His suggestion "How about an edition of Table Tennis News devoted to coaching? Oh yes and you are just the guy to write about coaches you have known and worked with".

Not an easy assignment this, but how can I refuse the persuasive Syed, especially when flattery is the name of the game!

Just as my thoughts were becoming pretty negative and maybe this was becoming an article too far, I was invited to Lilleshall as a sort of guest and an interested observer at the Teaching and Training conference. Perhaps the highlight of an informative and stimulating weekend was the announcement of some very special news that had come out of China.

Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight had won the Under 12 doubles in the China Junior Open. Add to this the fact that Paul (U12) had beaten the Chinese No1 (U15) in the team event, this was special news indeed. Coincidence now played a role as that day I read Syed's emotional piece in The Times, all about Darius and his mentor and coach Gideon Ashison. (Reproduced on page 12)

Ashison is obviously an

Brian Halliday looks at how English Coaches have shaped our game



Former England International JACK CARRINGTON

extraordinary motivator and coach and is one of those special people who find real joy in inspiring players to the limit of their potential. He is the latest in a long line of dedicated volunteers who, in the main, have achieved very real success on a one to one system basis.

OK I stand corrected. Its not only

one to one. That method cannot commence before all those indispensable coaches, helpers, and teachers introduce youngsters to the game. Some coaches can even combine both attributes, and nowhere is this better demonstrated than at the Cippenham club where Ken Phillips has set such a brilliant

example both in a group environment and on an individual basis.

I possess no coaching qualifications, therefore no woolly jumpers with posh badges. My loss I suppose, however I certainly dabbled with it all 20 or so years ago. Believe it or not I am back in it all again now, but more of that later.

No secret in that your truly exceptional coach must be possessed of so many attributes. We all know that the teaching of technical skills are paramount, the ability to inspire, motivate, demonstrate, all done with discipline laced with humour, are essential. Patience and toleration also. The end product has to be the fact that a player will be motivated and so inspired that he would run through a brick wall for his coach.

Perhaps that is really where one to one really comes to the fore. It is a sad, and I suppose slightly controversial fact, that grandiose blanket coaching schemes rarely produce super stars. The brilliance of Des Douglas was self honed by his ability to learn from, and listen to, many people and every opponent he played. John Prean ensured that his son enjoyed maximum exposure to the best coaches in and out of the established system. Carl developed a special and extremely successful game based on innovation and dedicated parental involvement. Maybe Carl is the real exception as parents do not usually make great coaches. Parental and family involvement can cause all sorts of friction and, although there are exceptions, the chances of cracking it at the highest level are slim.

So who are the best coaches produced since World War 2, and what criteria as to judgement should we use? The argument must be subjective but perhaps the strongest accolades of coaching success must be either, in the number of international stars produced, or the highest championship honour achieved.

My very first thoughts concerned



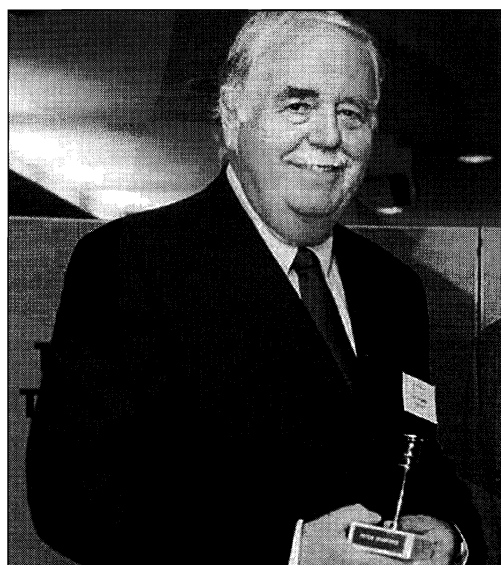
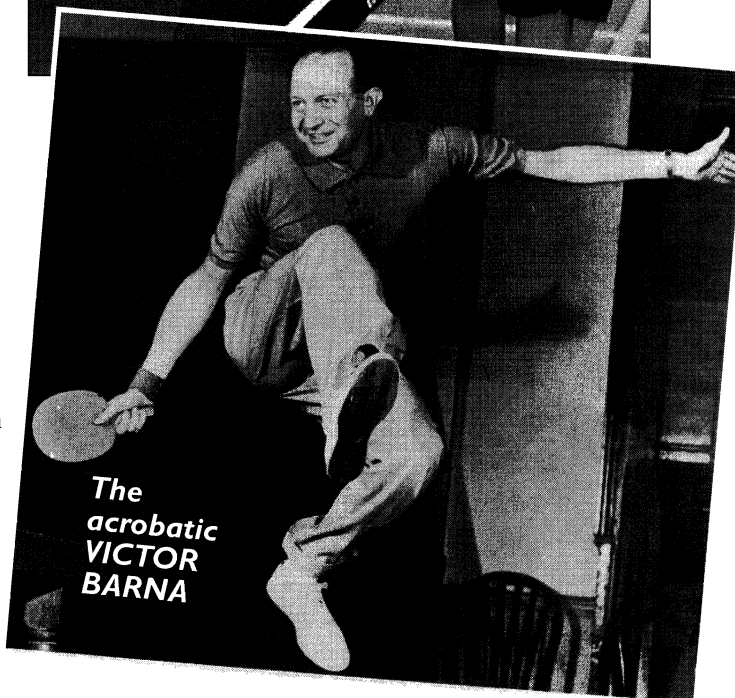
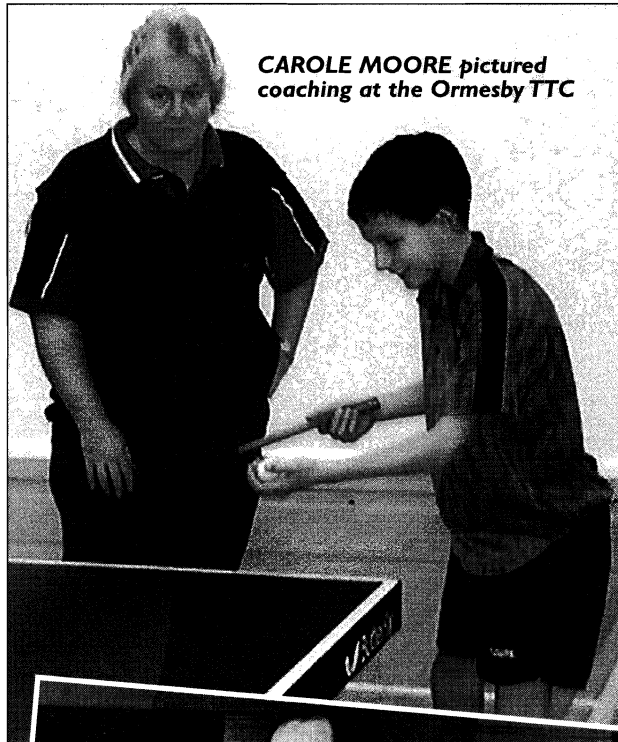
Cippenham TTC Coach KEN PHILLIPS is pictured with a couple of his successful players, who are both 16 years old, ROBERT LEMON and GEMMA CHAPMAN

the late Jack Carrington, and I was somewhat miffed when our own No1 player revealed that Carrington's name was not one with which he was familiar. Really Matt, how remiss of you! Jack and his charming wife Elsie were great players in their own right in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. The Bethnal Green club, which I had the pleasure and honour of visiting, was synonymous with coached table tennis of the highest order. Top standards of discipline and behaviour were the order of the day, and a visit there was to produce memories that would last a lifetime.

Jack's complete love affair with the game lasted all of his life. Our own President, Johnny Leach, is unstinting in his praise when referring to Jack "Especially in the early days when I was unknown, he was a major influence. His technical expertise was colossal. He was a great coach. We spent the war in Ireland, Jack, Ron Crayden, and I, and later toured Italy, Greece, and Austria coaching and giving demonstrations. I well remember reaching the World Doubles final with Jack in Paris in 1947, and of course he had a major influence on my World Singles successes in 1949 and 1951."

Victor Barna, so many times a World Champion, had much to do with the success of Diane and Ros Rowe who won the World Ladies Doubles twice. Victor is best remembered as a player but he did make a major contribution to English success in the 1950s.

Chester Barnes owed his many triumphs to Harry Venner and English Champion Bobby Stevens. It was Stevens who had much to do with other top line stars such as Stuart Gibbs. In the years that followed Alan Ransome was to set new standards at the Ormesby club. The shed in his back garden saw



PETER CHARTERS pictured left with the 'Torch Trophy', which was presented to him by Sir Bobby Charlton at the recent Commonwealth Games in Manchester, has started coaching again.

Denis Neale, Jimmy Walker, and Nicky Jarvis flower into proven international players, all due to Alan's drive and devotion to the table tennis cause. Ormesby continues to flourish with the Drinkhall lads and others, overseen by that excellent ex international, Carole Moore.

My employers transferred me to the Reading area in 1971. Derek Heaps was the top man in the coaching field in Berkshire and two of his four children became international players. Simon won the European Cadet title, while Judy played alongside a very young Jill Shirley (Parker) for England. Derek's other two children never quite made it at the highest level but became excellent County players in their own

right.

At that time another guy was beginning to make a special mark locally. Venue - a one table hut where the roof leaked, the floor had holes in, seats had three legs (if you were lucky) - in short an abyss. Yet here was born an experiment in collective will that was to dominate English table tennis for years to come.

With the indefatigable Reg Hart as his side-kick, Peter Charters produced a whole stream of talent. Long hours of tuition and practice produced a conveyor belt of star performers. That so many became internationals was extraordinary and is extremely unlikely to be repeated. Karen Witt, Alison Gordon, Mandy Sainsbury, Dave Barr, Andy Syed, and Matt Syed. Dave Reeves won the English Junior title. Andy Wellman was British Universities Champion.

Perhaps it was his teaching skills that he brought so successfully to the table, but the more pertinent reason was the ability to learn from and study at close quarters the skills of players from all over Europe.

Reading was fortunate that when Charters took a well earned rest, a new coach with a whole new concept to reveal burst onto the scene. Jim Stokes Senior is no great technician. His supreme skill lies in the work ethic and the ability to motivate. He formed a small squad of players who had demonstrated commitment and talent. Jim was able to inspire them all with a boundless enthusiasm. Gemma Schwartz (now retired), and current internationals Gareth Herbert and Terry Young mostly owe their careers to Big Jim Stokes. His own son Jimmy Stokes would have the benefit of both his father and Charters expertise, and he became yet another full senior international star. When Terry won his Gold medal in India, I phoned Jim with the news. My friend Jim can be emotional and I know that there were tears of joy in the Stokes house that night. That special night was repeated when Terry, Gareth, and Matt all won Gold in Manchester recently.

With Peter Charters back in the England set-up, he judged the time ripe for resurrecting the 'one to one'. Would I join him? You bet I would. One last hurrah. Big Jim joins us (he had 'got fed up with his boat'). Even Matt is enthusiastic. Can the magic be repeated? It won't be for the want of trying, but as age increases more patience is required. Therefore you four young players that bring us your talent to hone every week, bear with us. Maybe we can repeat it again. Maybe.

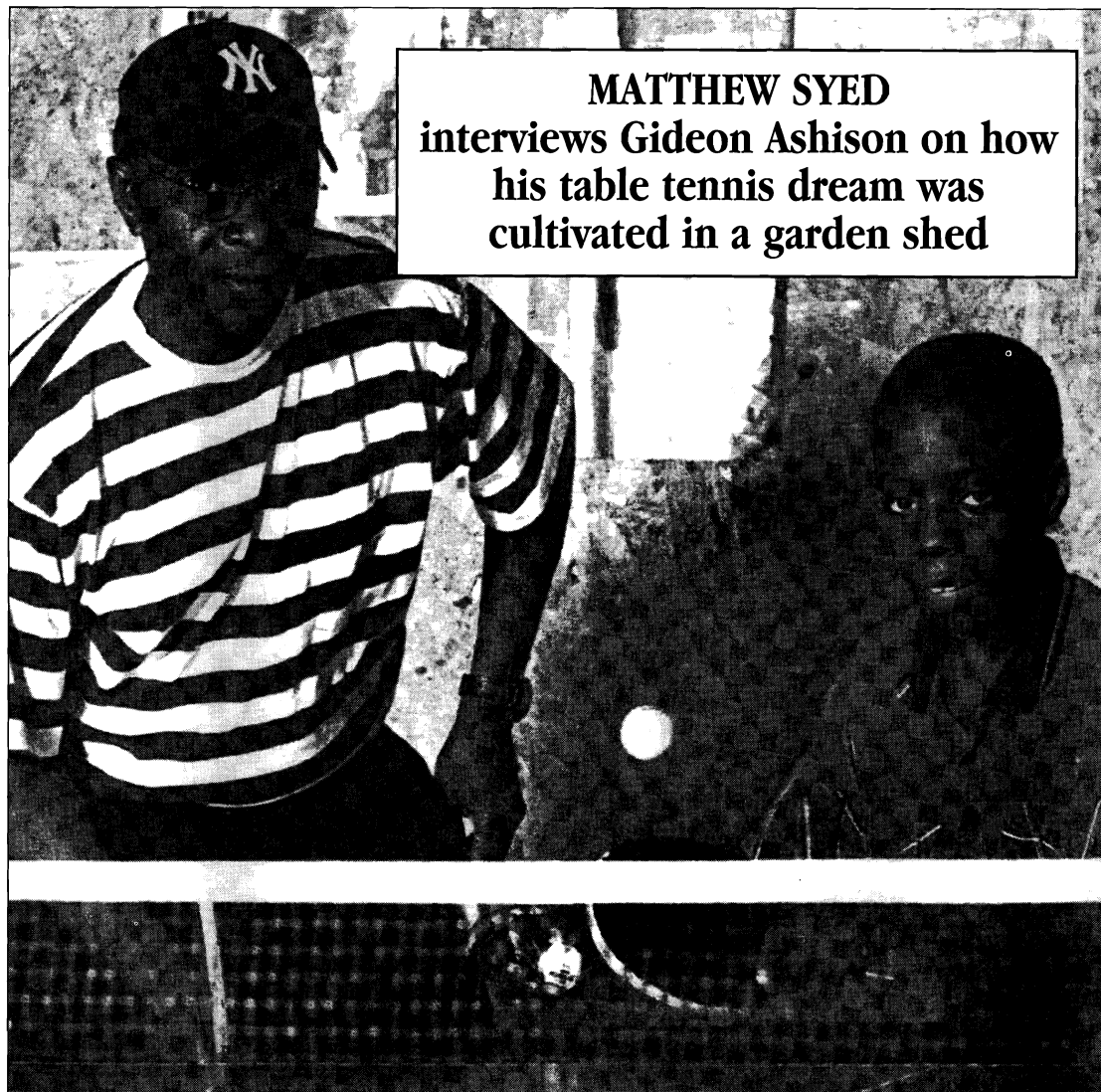
PIED PIPER LEADING YOUNG TALENT ON GLORY TRAIL

SHOULD Darius Knight progress to Olympic glory - and all who have witnessed the twelve-year-old's majestic stroke-making affirm that he was born to win gold medals - the story would have all the ingredients of a Hollywood blockbuster, writes Matthew Syed.

The street-smart kid from Battersea is already being hailed as one of the most talented players of his generation. In June he took Europe by storm, winning the under twelve event at the Luxembourg Open. Comparisons with former England Champion Desmond Douglas, particularly pertinent given the youngster's playing style and ethnicity, are, for once, justified. But in any future biopic the starring role will be played, not by Knight, but by the man who fashioned his raw talent into the form that, last summer, induced an invitation to the National Training Centre in Nottingham.

Gideon Ashison has been dubbed the "Pied Piper of ping-pong" due to the string of youngsters, headed by Knight, who have gate-crashed top-flight junior table tennis under his tutelage over the past eighteen months. But he is as unlikely a coach as he is a potential movie-hero.

Having emigrated from his native Ghana in 1973, Ashison now works as a library assistant for Hammersmith and Fulham Council and lives with his children in a flat in a council estate near London Bridge. His ability as a table tennis player is, by his own admission, mediocre. But with sheer initiative coupled with a near fanatical desire to improve the lives of kids living on the rough edges of the nation's capital, he has created a table tennis club utterly unique in the annals of the sport. Intrigued by his description of the club, we drove to across to Wandsworth and parked in front of an average looking house in an inconspicuous street. Ashison led me beside the house to a large garden shed. I hesitated before entering and peered through the gap in the door. I was met by an astonishing sight - two small boys, watched by six others in a state of intense concentration,



MATTHEW SYED
interviews Gideon Ashison on how his table tennis dream was cultivated in a garden shed

were doing magical things with a small white ball across a solitary table tennis table.

Unadorned on the outside, the shed is an Aladdin's Cave of talent. Heated by a stove fuelled by wood from the workshop of a friend of Ashison's, and bedecked with posters of top players, the facility is ludicrously lacking in space. But to the youngsters, it is heaven.

Almost all of Ashison's charges, including Knight, come from single parent families living in Battersea council estates. Such environments are not exactly conducive to the rigorous demands of elite sporting performance and indeed Ashison

has, on occasion, seen his players strut the heartbreaking path into crime and drugs. But the rest have discovered in table tennis a passion beyond the allure of easy answers and artificial substances.

"I adore playing the game," said the effervescent Knight. "It is taking me all over Europe and I really believe that, if I have the right attitude, I can become the best."

The left-handed attacker is very much the club's talisman, and the transformation in his life chances since he picked up a bat has not been lost on his friends. "All the other kids from the estates want to come to the club now because of

GIDEON ASHISON is pictured above with DARIUS KNIGHT

Darius," Ashison said with understandable pride. "The word on the street is that table tennis is the sport to play."

Ashison discovered the youngsters at his coaching sessions at York Gardens in Battersea. Knight was at first reluctant to leave the camaraderie of the adjacent adventure playground for his famously disciplined regime, but, when he did, the implications for English table tennis were straightforward.

"You could see immediately that

this was a once-in-a-lifetime find", said Ashison. "Darius has incredible talent and he quickly developed the commitment and passion without which you cannot reach the very top. Now he is receiving first class support at the National Training Centre - psychology, physiology, top coaching. All the others want to emulate what he has achieved."

When Ashison first started out in coaching he ran his special sessions at the small tenant's hall in the London Bridge estate where he lives, on a battered second hand table. That is where Darius first learned his trade; getting fit by running up and down the six flights of stairs of the high rise building.

Ashison used to walk the short distance from his flat to coach his charges every weekday evening, whilst at weekends he had the group sleep over on his lounge floor, snuggled into sleeping bags. They would spend the evenings watching videos of their table tennis hero's whilst Ashison's own children, Glenda and Gerald (both now at university), helped them with their reading and writing.

Needless to say Ashison never once charged for his time or the considerable expenses he incurred. When he lost the use of the tenant's hall, Ashison was stuck. It was then that he persuaded Tom Draper, his close friend and table tennis enthusiast, to convert his garden shed so that he could have a facility, albeit inadequate, in which to continue his prodigious efforts.

"The trip from London Bridge to Wandsworth can sometimes take up to an hour," commented Ashison. "But I really don't mind - I am married to the sport. The thrill when you witness its capacity to transform the lives of kids who could otherwise so easily become messed up is truly awesome".

But doesn't it cause havoc with

"The unadorned shed is an Aladdin's cave of talent. To the youngsters, it is heaven"

your private life? "I'm having problems with my fiancée (Ashison was separated from his first wife two years ago) since she can't come to terms with the extent of my commitment."

When I finally entered the shed, the group, unaware that I was coming, gazed across with expressions that slowly changed from bewilderment to excitement. I sparred with them one by one, but even after half an hour I still couldn't absorb the contrast between the beauty of their play and the meagreness of the surroundings - particularly when compared to the facilities available to their less talented, if more privileged, peers. The youths, needless to say, are oblivious to the irony.

"It's great to train here", said ten-year-old Zane. "I jumped at the chance when Gideon invited me to his club. I take the 157 bus after finishing my homework and then walk twenty minutes so that I can practise every day".

But isn't it a little frustrating that, with only one table available, you spend most of your time sitting and watching from the side? "No", he said. "We work as a team. We watch and encourage each other and that way we all improve together".

What makes the success of Ashison even more exciting for English table tennis is that it coincides with triumphs, albeit of a more conventional nature, at other clubs. Paul Drinkhall, 12, from Middlesbrough and Gavin Evans, 9, from Slough are now based at Nottingham and, like Knight, are amongst the best for their age in Europe. They are complemented by the dazzling Hung Kei Li, 11, from Hong Kong, who is in the midst of an ongoing legal battle for British citizenship.

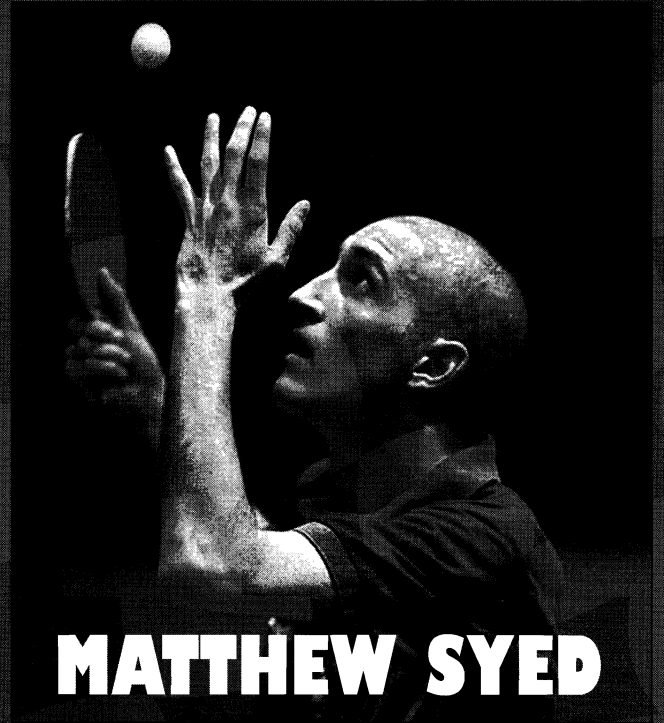
Drinkhall and Knight recently clashed in a "super kids" challenge match as part of the Commonwealth Masters event on BBC1, with Knight victorious. Drinkhall exacted revenge in the national under twelve finals. Fiercely competitive on the table, they are best friends off it and share a small bedroom at the national centre.

The rivalry between the various proteges bodes well for their progress and heralds the possibility that England might become a world leader in table tennis as they approach maturity.

In the meantime Ashison's accomplishments illustrate that sport, in spite of the corruption and cynicism that prevail all too often, still has the capacity to transform lives for the better. And they stand too as a glittering monument to the proposition that sporting excellence and social inclusion go hand in hand.

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PLAYER PROFILE



MATTHEW SYED

Favourite:

Book: The Lord of the Rings

Film: The Matrix

Vice: Stuffing myself with highly calorific, highly scrumptious food

Food: Chinese - can't get enough of it!

Holiday destination: Helsinki in summer

Alternative career: Novelist - if only I had the talent

Celebrity to have a date with: Tricky one - Liz Hurley for her looks but perhaps not her personality!

Way to waste time: Watching videos whilst eating candy

Song/Piece of Music: Handel's Zadok the Priest

Childhood memory: Early on Christmas mornings, when me and my brother would be beside ourselves with excitement!

Table tennis hero: Jan-Ove Waldner, the greatest - who else?

CCPR SPORTS CLUB OF THE YEAR AWARD

ELLENBOROUGH WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

THE ELLENBOROUGH Table Tennis Club, Enfield, North London, have lifted two prestigious national awards.

The most significant was winning the CCPR Sports Club of the Year Award, supported by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts. Nominated by the English Table Tennis Association, and being chosen from 83 clubs representing 50 different sports, Ellenborough benefited financially to the tune of £10,000 prize money!

The presentations were made at Manchester United Football Club, Old Trafford, by Grattan Endicott OBE, Secretary to the FSA Trustees, and Geoff Thompson MBE, former karate world heavyweight champion (1982) and World Games heavyweight gold medallist.

The CCPR and FSA recognised the outstanding contribution of Ellenborough to the local community, encompassing people from many cultural backgrounds. In particular, the judges were impressed by the well-developed links with local schools and disabled groups.

Earlier, at the ETTA's Presentation Dinner held during the annual Coaches Conference at Lilleshall National Sports Centre, Shropshire, on Saturday 7th September, Ellenborough TTC had been awarded Premier Club of the Year (Excellence Level) by Alan Ransome OBE,



CCPR SPORTS CLUB OF THE YEAR: (left to right) Geoff Thompson MBE, Sylvia Tyler, Dave Hope, and Grattan Endicott OBE.

Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association. The citation said, "This well-known North London club is booming again thanks to a conscious change of emphasis to devising and successfully implementing a development policy aimed at reaching out into their local community.

A strong advocate of the (ETTA's) Premier Club programme from the word go, the club has embodied the principles of a hub club and cluster

approach which has brought about an unprecedented upsurge in membership. As part of an outstanding player programme, a thriving junior section, ladies evening, over 50's and disabled group are all testament to good planning, active links with schools and the local authority and most of all, from a very committed, action orientated and hard working team of volunteers."

At the same Presentation Dinner,

one of the key driving forces behind the club and for table tennis generally, Sylvia Tyler (the club secretary), picked up the ETTA Volunteer of the Year Award.

Commenting on the recognition for Ellenborough's achievements, the club chairman, Dave Hope, acknowledged the support of the London Borough of Enfield's Sports Development Team in helping organise courses for beginners and improvers for juniors, men and women who are aged 50 plus and for people with disabilities. "As well as promoting table tennis and Ellenborough Club in Enfield, the Sports Development Team has given assistance to the club in successfully bidding to the National Lottery 'Awards for All' scheme to upgrade the club facilities and improve access for people with disabilities."

A presentation ceremony was planned for the club with the Mayor at the Enfield Borough Council Offices on Wednesday, 16th October.



PREMIER CLUB EXCELLENCE: (l.to.r) Dave Hope, Sylvia Tyler, Bernie Kelly (Ellenborough TTC), Alan Ransome OBE, Nick McKay (E TTC), David Woolf (E TTC).

XIAO DE LIN I.M.P.A.C.T



Pictured above, left to right, BILL AYRES, STEPHEN AYRES, XIAO DE LIN, STEPHEN PURCHASE, MIKE REYNOLDS, DAVE CALCUTT, ALAN DINES and PETER BRADLEY.

XIAO DE LIN I.M.P.A.C.T TABLE TENNIS COACHING IN CHINA Report from Alan Dines

PROFESSOR XIAO DE LIN, a Chinese Provincial Champion and leading Chinese coach has been actively involved in the O.L.O.P. I.M.P.A.C.T. Table Tennis Coaching Programme during the last year.

In recognition of this, a Coaches Get Together was held at O.L.O.P for a discussion on coaching methods in China. This was extremely informative and intensive discussion went on way beyond the original two hours scheduled. A brief summary follows.

The scale of table tennis in China is considerably higher than in England so that most of the criteria that produce results there are not repeatable here. There are probably 100 million competitive players with 100,000 top class players.

The Government give a lot of money for table tennis development. All Universities have Physical Education Departments with table tennis specialisation. Table tennis is a major sport and there is intensive development in schools. The help of parents and local players is important. Coaching sessions with 20 tables are normal. At the top there are 2,000 schools which specialise in table tennis. These are a mixture of professional and amateur with just over half being fully professional. These schools usually have the normal curriculum in the morning and have table tennis in the afternoons and evenings.

Parental pressure is an important factor in the development of junior

players. In China many parents want their children to succeed in business, and see that success at table tennis can help them to secure a good business job or access to University. This motivation pushes the less enthusiastic pupils to do well enough to secure and retain a place in one of the special 2,000 schools - this being better than being sent back to a normal school.

Table tennis development starts at an early age in schools. An important factor is the use of tables that are adjustable in height. This is a common feature for table tennis tables in China. The objective is to have children playing normal strokes relative to the height of tables.

There seems to be a general lack of basic skills in England compared to China. Coaching in China is more extensive and intensive and has the advantage with large numbers that very large groups of juniors of the same age can be coached together. However there are signs that as in England sport has to compete with other interests.

There are differences in training. Much more importance is given to footwork techniques and particularly getting this right in the first few months. Emphasis is mostly on attack which progresses to concentrating on the forehand which is more flexible and powerful. Different styles, bats and rubbers are allowed.

There are five basic skills which are the foundation of coaching:

- Quickness • Accuracy • Power
- Changes • Spin

In early stages importance is given to shadow play without ball contact.

Typically beginners will have 30 minutes of shadow play with 200 repetitions for a stroke.

Multi-ball feeding when used would not last for more than 30 minutes in a 2 to 3 hour session.

Physical development is important and where necessary players use a heavier bat and/or have weights added to arms and legs.

Xiao DeLin said that he 'retired' at the age of 14 because he wanted to concentrate on a University career in preference to becoming an international or professional player. This did not prevent him from becoming a Provincial Champion which is a high achievement in world table tennis. At the age of 45 he is able to amaze us with some of his serves and power play. A pity we have not been able to persuade him to practice and play for O.L.O.P in the British League. He did however for fun recently wander along to the British Universities Championships where he finished third. Xiao DeLin is now back in China but we await his return in the near future. In the meantime he is organising a training trip to China for some of the O.L.O.P I.M.P.A.C.T stars.



ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ETTA is seeking to recruit three dynamic individuals to drive forward the development of the sport in the regions and to share and implement the Premier Club vision.

Post details:

- Fixed term contract until March 2003 (ETTA are negotiating funding for the posts to continue for a further four years).
- Office based with outreach work (offices likely to be Braintree or Norwich – Eastern, York – Northern/Yorkshire + Bath – South West).
- Salary - £16,000 p.a. (plus travel expenses and £1,200 car allowance).
- 48 hours (average) per week.

Ideal candidates will:

- have an involvement in and knowledge of table tennis club development
- have a BTEC higher level or NVQ equivalent in a subject area relevant to requirements of a sports related position
- have practical experience of sports development issues
- have effective communication skills
- be willing to work long and some unsociable hours
- hold a current full British driving licence and have full use of a suitable vehicle
- live in the region or within a maximum 50 mile radius of the office base
- have the ambition to help table tennis progress.

Application details:

For job background, person specification, job description and an application form (no CVs) contact:

Sheila King (Development Secretary)
ETTA, Queensbury House, Havelock Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1HF. Tel: 01424 722525
Fax: 01424 422103 E-mail: sheilaking.etta@talk21.com
 Closing date: December 2nd 2002

VICTORY IN CIPPENHAM

FOR TEN days in August Cippenham Table Tennis Club played host to the first ever foreign team for persons with disabilities to take part in an international exchange visit in table tennis, writes Graham Trimming.

The Saudi Arabian team for deaf players trained at Cippenham twice a day during their stay and were joined by members of the English deaf team and by members of the Cippenham club.

The visit culminated on Sunday 25th August with international matches between England and Saudi Arabia with guest of honour the First Minister from the Saudi Arabian Embassy in attendance.

England were far and away stronger than their Saudi counterparts and ran away 9-1 winners in the "A" team match and 6-4 in the "B" team match. Three of the Saudi "B" wins, in fact, came from an Englishman, Trevor Holland, guesting for the Saudi team that had brought only seven players.

The England "A" team romped into a 9-0 lead with two wins each from Bela Hegedus, George Buck and Hitesh Kanji, one from Elaine Butterworth plus two doubles victories before the Saudis got their solitary score when Zakaria Ibrahim Al-Hassan beat Butterworth in the



ENGLAND: (l.to.r) ELAINE BUTTERWORTH, HITESH KANJI, BELA HEGEDUS and GEORGE BUCK.

last set. England number one Bela Hegedus, who plays for Kingfisher in the Reading League, was totally untroubled in his two singles sets, never being extended beyond five points, while Buck and Kanji dropped only one game each. The closest match was one of the doubles in which Buck and Butterworth came

back from two games down to defeat Abdullah Al-Gonnaiter and Mohammed Asir 11-8 in the fifth.

For England "B", Alan Cunningham (who is Table Tennis Director for the Greater London Deaf Sports Council and the British Deaf Sports Council) and Martin Strutt won all their singles, while Bell won once but

Andrew Drury failed to score.

England's victory was secured by a doubles win from Drury and Bell.

The match was supported by BAE Systems, the Saudi British Sports Co-operative Programme and the British Deaf Sports Council. Judy Rogers made all the arrangements for the programme on behalf of the ETTA and thanks are due to the local staff including coach Jason Sugrue and organizer Ken Phillips. The match itself was refereed by John Jermy and assisted by umpires Graeme Sopp, Alan Harwood, David Edwards and Mick Reynolds. Master of Ceremonies was Brian Spicer and Graham Trimming was the Cippenham gofer!

Following the match there was an official reception for the players and officials who were treated to a wonderful buffet spread prepared by Pam Dickens and her team. Gifts were exchanged by the parties and these included presentations by the Saudis to Cippenham members Sebastian Bielec, Andrew Dickens and Bassam Mocharraffie for their assistance during the training programme. Bassam had been an invaluable asset due to his fluency in the Arabic language.



Pictured above are the England and Saudi Arabian Squads, plus officials

TABLE TENNIS NEWS EXTRA

Issue no. 288 November 2002

Editorial

I start with apologies about the last issue and this one. **Firstly to Yorkshire.** From time to time I get complaints that particular county notes do not appear, but usually when I check, no report has been received. However, Barry Snowden undoubtedly e-mailed in his notes for the last issue in plenty of time: in partial recompense, I publish the two lots of Yorkshire notes in this issue.

It irritates me when, to save space, my colleague sometimes takes out 'superfluous' punctuation – e.g. apostrophes and dashes – from my contributions to the glossy. However, it was an error during printing that deleted all apostrophes from the Sept/Oct TTN Extra. Sorry about that.

With space so short for this issue, I regret I cannot fit in several reports from clubs around the country such as Halton in Cheshire, Natland & Oxenholme in Kendal, Cumbria, Chatham in Kent, and the South West Sussex League (and probably several more held by Carole Beames), on their very successful activities for **'Take Up Table Tennis Week'** following the Commonwealth Games. I will **hold over for the December issue** a lengthy report by Alan Shepherd, with supporting photographs by Arthur C Clark, on the **Essex 4* Junior Select Jarvis Sport GP**, a **review of the Blue Bishops'** (whose lead singer and harmonica player is veteran TT player **Geoff Grange!**) second CD, an article by **Linda Evans on her family move**, and an interesting **article by Bridgewater's Les Bridges.**

It is a time of **anniversaries in English table tennis** with the ETTA having recently celebrated its 75th year (80 years as TTA). Among others, I know that Worcestershire (50 years), Wiltshire (50 years), Aylesbury League (75), Gloucester (75 next year), Liverpool (75 last year – I will review a history by Tony Harris in the next issue) and, the oldest of them all, Plymouth (100 next year – I will write an article for the next issue) have all been or will be celebrating significant birthdays.

It is early days, but indications on the domestic scene are that players have not greatly changed their **service actions in response to the rule alterations** to prevent shielding. Umpires appear to be interpreting services fairly leniently. I have been surprised that more players have not

been using backhand sidespin ('crab'), forehand tennis/tomahawk and 'flipper' serves, or employing more wrist flourishes to disguise spin, to regain effectiveness, and there has been little yet in the way of innovation. There is the suspicion that some players are throwing the ball back more. I personally was in favour of the changes, but there is a heavy onus on umpires (or those umpiring) enforcing the rule to prevent cheating or pushing interpretation beyond the limit.

I report elsewhere on the Annual Coaches Conference and Volunteer Award Presentation Dinner. **Coaches and other volunteers are absolutely vital for the health of table tennis** and it is **important that they are recognised.** It worries me that too often the burden for keeping things going falls on to few key people. Take the dwindling band of jobbing tournament referees for instance: how would we get by without the likes of **Mick Strode** (who adds major computing and website roles!)?

Alan Ransome in his 'From the Chair' column mentions the wonderful achievement of **Ellenborough TTC in winning the CCPR Sports Club of the Year Award** (supported by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts) and £10,000! (Also see report.) Alan also records the tremendous results of youngsters Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, Katy Parker and others in the Helsingborg Youth Championships in Sweden (following the earlier success of Paul and Darius in China), and how, after a slow start, a very youthful England women's side composed of Katy Parker (17), Georgina Walker (17) and Joanna Parker (15), won 2 out of 3 matches in their European League First Division group played at Vilnius, Lithuania. The longer-term future does look good for our top players. (Our men incidentally, beat Turkey 3-2, but lost 3-1 to Norway in their European League matches.)

Talking about international play, I was saddened to learn that Swede **Jan-Ove Waldner**, possibly the greatest player ever, will be out of table tennis for 6 months owing to **breaking his foot.** Now 37, will he ever make a comeback to the top level?

I was struck by the good sense in **John Knock's** letter (Sept/Oct TTN), even if he offers no answers as to **how to attract young players into local leagues.** I also think that **John Prean** offers good suggestions with regard to

this: matches with games up to 11, fewer sets, and earlier starts (or at least starting on time). I would add, two players in a team or playing on two tables when possible, and 'Woolwich type' junior leagues get over the problem identified by John Knock of young players being put off by the weird styles of crafty old veterans by providing competition play until they are ready to play in the senior league. I have sympathy for John Prean's assertion that 'there have to be clear signposts and roads on which today's beginner will travel' and that beginners 'can't just practise week after week without any objective'. However, in trying to grapple with this issue, I am coming to the conclusion that often the **problem comes earlier**, before kids are ready to commit themselves to regular, structured competitive play.

All over the country there is **evidence that more youngsters are playing table tennis**, but they seem to drift off, or in and out, before being hooked on the sport. **So how do we hold them?** The staple answers of making it fun, in a friendly, caring, safe and good social environment are helpful but not enough. As I am getting into late middle age, I suspect that it also helps if at least one of the key coaches, leaders or role models is nearer to the youngsters' ages, but it is no good saying this if a club has no such people.

So I wonder whether, rather than doggedly sticking rigidly to tried and tested formulae, the **coach or leader** of beginner kids is going to have to **be far more flexible:** prepared, for example, to **organise impromptu** team, group, knockout, handicap, ladder, doubles and fun/novelty **competitions** etc. at the drop of a hat, constantly changing the content and format of coaching sessions, using different techniques and devices (e.g. robot, multi-ball, targets) to retain interest, excitement and attention. I also know that some children like the security of doing the same things over and over again, so these ideas won't suit everyone! Nothing of course is really new, and retaining young players will always depend ultimately on the dedication, personality, enthusiasm, and good judgement of whoever is leading them.

Farewell with thanks and good wishes to **Susie Foley**, who from the beginning has been responsible for typing and presentation of TTN Extra.

Ken Muhr

Connexionscard.com

Through its PremierClub programme, the ETTA is providing rewards for Connexions Card, a new incentive for 16-19 year-olds to keep learning.

The Connexions Card is a secure smartcard which allows you to collect reward points for learning, work-based training and voluntary activities. These can be exchanged for discounted and free goods and services and other rewards, including some exclusive 'money can't buy' experiences. The Card can also be used for on-the-spot discounts and special offers from outlets and businesses displaying the Connexions Card window sticker. It is available free to all 16-19 year-olds in England.

How does the Connexions Card work?

The Connexions Card is like a smartcard with a chip that stores basic information such as your date of birth. It has a colour photograph and can be used for proof of age if needed. The Card is secure so cannot be used fraudulently and as it's not a credit card or bank card you won't be tempted to run up a huge overdraft with it! All companies and organisations offering rewards to cardholders will be carefully screened. The Card can also be used to electronically record attendance, so you may be asked by your school, college or work-based training provider to carry the Card with you.

How do I earn points?

You can earn points for:

- Public and private full-time and part-time courses
- Work-based training
- Personal development
- Voluntary activities with clear targets, e.g. Millennium Volunteers

Rewards provided by the ETTA:

A free session, redeemed for 50 points, any evening of the week at one of the ETTA's Premier Clubs. Once you exchange your points for a session of table tennis you will be sent a voucher which you must take along to your chosen club to claim your free session.

For further information contact:
Freephone 0808 172 3333 (Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-5pm) or visit www.connexionscard.com

England Youngsters in China

Just before their amazing success in the World Junior Circuit tournament in Taiyuan, in which Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight won the boys' under 12 doubles, Paul beat the Chinese no.1 under 15 and Adam Bleakley reached the under 15s quarter-finals, England juniors had been training in Beijing.



From l-r: Bryn & Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, Adam Bleakley astride a copy of the Swaythling Cup



Darius & Paul with Cai Zhea Hua, Chief Coach in China

£30,000 to Local Groups to launch Boston Table Tennis Cluster by Andy Gilbert (Sorry report late. KM)

Alex Green and Brian Hill played an exhilarating five set exhibition match at Wyberton Primary School to launch the Boston Mayflower PremierClub Cluster. Teachers and pupils from six schools witnessed the match. Representatives from the ETTA and 'Awards for All' were also in attendance.

Following the exhibition match, Charlotte and Angela from Awards for All East Midlands presented Awards certificates to Boston Mayflower TTC and St Thomas Primary, Wyberton Primary, Giles School, Kirton Middlecote School, Thomas Cowley School, Donnington School and William Lovell School. "It's fantastic to see the whole cluster of schools together in one venue", were Charlotte's comments.

This launch sees the official start of a huge development programme for Boston; this development of table tennis is part of the ETTA's vision for the future. Andy Gilbert, the cluster's head coach said, "The ETTA's PremierClub Programme gives us a structured approach to coaching and

development, and the future of our sport locally is now much stronger and assured."

With the ETTA's Premier Club Programme and Awards for All Lottery grants combining so well, just over £30,000 has been brought into the local area. This has purchased 34 new table tennis tables, and over 800 young people have now been able to experience the dynamic indoor sport of table tennis. This will allow future players to be found without them falling through the net!!

Six more schools now also eagerly wait to join in. Next for table tennis in the Boston area is to establish a large team league.

Thanks are expressed to the East Midlands Region, the ETTA, Bill Moran (International Umpire), Brabar Table Tennis and 'Awards for All' for making all this possible.

An Invitation to Killerspin Event, Chicago, USA, 27th-29th December

We would like to invite you to become a part of a historic table tennis event in the United States!

Killerspin will be hosting the "Killerspin Open" and "The Extreme Table Tennis Championship" this December 27th-29th in Chicago. The best table tennis players in the world will compete in the Extreme Championship. The list includes the World Champion Chinese National Team, Vladimir Samsonov, Zoran Primorac, Jean-Michael Saive, Kim Taek Soo, Chuan Chi Yuan, Chiang Peng Lung, Alexander Karakasevic, Werner Schlager, Kalinikos Kreanga and Lucjan Blaszczyk.

Come watch the best players play in an exciting format. At the same time, you can participate in the Killerspin tournament no matter what your level is!

The Killerspin Open is for athletes of all ages and levels. The best players across the US have confirmed their entries. We hope your association will be represented at the Killerspin Open. The two tournaments will not conflict with each other.

These events are also a part of the 30th Anniversary of "Ping Pong Diplomacy", China's first trip to the US in which they sent their national table tennis team on a tour of the United States. This event is so significant to the sport that the head of China's Olympic Committee and Vice-Chairman of Sports (Mr. Li Furong) will be bringing a high-level delegation to Chicago. The mayors of Chicago's sister cities, Shanghai and Shenyang, will also bring delegations. The city of

Chicago is a co-sponsor of this unprecedented event and many U.S. politicians and businesses will also be represented.

The Extreme Championship will be aired on Chinese television and in other major markets around the world. We expect the worldwide audience to exceed 300 million. According to the ITTF, the last world championships drew an audience in excess of 250 million.

We hope to see you and your elite athletes at the inaugural Killerspin Open and the Extreme Table Tennis Championship in December!

Visit www.killerspin.com for more information, or e-mail Ashu Jain at ajain@killerspin.com (tel. 321-236-0903 x 222) or Robert Blackwell on rblackwell@eki-consulting.com

International Youth Table Tennis Tournament in Nantes, France, June 2003

Every year during June we organise an international tournament in Nantes (France) with two squads (cadet and the category under cadet) of three players (two boys and one girl); food and bedrooms are offered by the organiser. It's during three days with a squad tournament and an Individual tournament. For further information contact the organisers on ghyslaine.bobillier@wanadoo.fr

English Schools' Table Tennis Association

Important dates for 2002/3

Nov 13 – Last date for nomination of events and payments of Team Championship entry fees; Dec 10 – Last date for nomination of schools or colleges for Team Championships; Jan 19 – Zone finals of the Team Championships; Feb 9 – Regional Finals of the Team Championships; Mar 1 – Last date for nomination of events and payment of entry fees for Individual Championships; Mar 15 – National Team Finals – Hinckley, Leics; Mar 21 – Last date for nomination of players for Individual Championships; Mar 31 – Last date for notification of Rule alteration proposals for inclusion on the AGM Agenda; Apr 4-6 – British Primary Championships – England to host in Blackburn; Apr 26 – Individual Championships – Fenton Manor, Stoke-on-Trent; May 11 – AGM – Wednesbury; Jun 28/29 – Senior International in Largs, Scotland

For further information contact ESTTA General Secretary, 22 Albert Street, Ramsbottom, Bury BLO 9EL. Tel:

01706 828832, e-mail: jfwramsbottom@aol.com. Website: www.estta.org.uk

Partnership/Twinning/Exchange requested for Brandenburg Table Tennis Club

We are the youth department of the umbrella sports organisation of Brandenburg/Germany. One of our table tennis clubs in Bad Liebenwerda (approx. 100km north of Dresden) is looking for a partner(s) abroad in order to co-operate and/or to organise exchanges for young people.

It would be nice if you could provide us with a list of addresses of table tennis clubs that might be interested in such a co-operation, or we would be grateful if you could forward this information to possible partners. Thank you very much for your co-operation and we are looking forward to your reply.

Guido Cools - Manager International Projects and Project Development
BSJ (Brandenburgische sportjugend – sports youth Brandenburg), Schopenhauer Strasse 34, 14467 Potsdam, Germany. Tel: +49 331 971 9820, Fax: +49 331 971 98341 e-mail: g.cools.bsj@lsb-brandenburg.de; Website: www.sportjugend-bb.de

Grand Opening of Woodfield Social & Sports Club Ltd, Wolverhampton (Report compiled from notes from Denise Craig and Jan Dunning. Ed.)

Ann (Haydon) Jones, the former Wimbledon tennis ladies singles (1969) and doubles champion and 5 times world table tennis championships finalist, attended the opening ceremony of the new Woodfield Social & Sports Club development, Penn Road, Wolverhampton, on Sunday 8th September.

The brand new, £1.45million development (with £1.01million Lottery-funded through Sport England) includes:

- Multi-table table tennis Hall (the only specialist table tennis facility in Wolverhampton)
- 4 all-weather, floodlit, artificial grass Tennis Courts
- 2 first class Crown Green Bowling Greens
- 5 Snooker Tables

The launch went brilliantly and Ann Jones was a fantastic special guest, who admitted that she didn't go to these kinds of events very often. She liked the way she was approached, said the club was very organised and that she had enjoyed the day very much.

She was impressed with how much had been found out about her table tennis career (thank you Ron Crayden) – coming from a TT family herself (her father, Adrian, had been a world semi-finalist and national no.1), she became the youngest player to represent England in a world championships, when aged 15 in 1954 (actually reaching the women's doubles final with Kathy Best!). 1957 was her golden year, when, after taking 3 titles at the French Open without dropping a set, she reached 3 world championship finals, losing the women's doubles, mixed doubles and the women's singles all in 5 sets, the singles at 19 in the 5th to Eguchi of Japan. Her other world final was in the 1956 mixed doubles, with Andreadis (Czechoslovakia). Between 1954 and 1959 Ann made 63 international appearances for England, before concentrating on tennis from 1960 onwards.

Woodfield Social & Sports Club (tel. 01902 341335 www.woodfieldssc.co.uk) is the only multi-sport facility of its kind in the area. It is already an established club with a reputation for excellence in several of the sports offered. It is an open and friendly club, offering a wide and varied range of sports for all ages in and around the locality of Penn.

The club has a proud table tennis tradition: Woodfield has been the leading club in the Wolverhampton area for the last 60 years, with many past and present members ranked at county and national level. England representative honours were bestowed on Rex Edwards, Fiona Elliot, Jill Harris, Andy Bellingham, Jill Powis and Helen Lower who is currently ranked no. 2 in England Ladies. The Welsh squad benefited from the services of Stephanie Jones, Welsh no. 1 for 5 years and Shirley Cain. Jan Dunning, ranked no 2 in the England veterans ranking list, has been playing at the club since the early seventies.

During these times, Woodfield was a regular venue for England squad training, West Midlands County Centre of Excellence weekends and training days, and has also hosted British League team matches. The British League team boasted the best players in the country, including Desmond Douglas, Jill Hammersley and Alan Cooke. Currently the club is the home of the best ladies side in England, winning the national team knockout title (Rose Bowl) for a record 16th year. The club is also proud of the very strong special Olympic team based at the club.



John Roberts, Sport England, with Ann Jones (photo - Birmingham Evening Mail)

**ETTA COACHES CONFERENCE,
LILLESBALL NATIONAL
SPORTS CENTRE, 6-8th
SEPTEMBER by Ken Muhr**

With, apart from the Awards Presentation Dinner, participants limited to coaches only, this was a smaller conference this year, but again in the lovely setting of Lilleshall, Shropshire.

From the start Peter Hirst, the ETTA Director of Teaching & Training responsible for organising the weekend, was burdened with additional pressure: Sue Campbell, Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust, who was to make the Friday evening keynote address 'The Vision for Sports Coaching', pulled out at the last moment owing to urgent Government business. So after ETTA Vice Chairman for Teaching & Training, Karen Tonge welcomed everyone, it was Peter who addressed the gathering on the Government's agenda for sport and coaching! Fortunately coaches in the bar afterwards seemed happy enough with his performance!

Saturday morning was taken up with (mostly) practical sessions led by Paul Birch of Bedford Modern School and Peter Hirst, on newly devised skills awards, followed by Peter Austen of Ryelands Middle School, Northampton, on Batskills games and accessories.

Paul, who had been given a secondment to work on skills ideas devised by Peter, said that the aim of the new Skills Awards was that youngsters could gain skills with enthusiasm. There was a link with what kids are doing in schools through worksheets. Pupils had charts to work through and there were tutor sheets listing the Skills awards (in 12 levels: Levels 1-5, Advanced Level 1-7) with accompanying tutor notes. Peter said that he would like these awards to form

the basis of a new Teacher Coaching Award.

Delegates were put in small groups to try out the Skills Awards and were overall very complimentary. Diagrams, teaching cards, greater clarity and cross-referencing (between the charts and tutor notes), and possibly a video (if funds could be found) were suggested. Peter Hirst said that he would take these comments on board and subject to 'tweaking'; the Awards were ready to be published – provided a sponsor could be found to pick up the costs!

Peter Austen enthusiastically explained the background to the Batskills target and rally games (also see article in Sept/Oct TTN) and then took the coaches through a practical circuit trying out all of them. Again I found them fun and they held my attention and competitiveness - but I did not think I was as good at them as when I first tried them out at Ryelands Middle School! Beginners luck! They mostly were very well received by the coaches, who debated which of the games, if they did not buy the whole set, they would choose. Actually Peter did sell at least one set there and then!

Peter Austen pointed out that he would be very pleased to provide free sessions to other groups of clubs and coaches to try out Batskills. Contact: Batskills Ltd, tel. 01604 464878, e-mail. info@batskills.com

(peter.austen@batskills.com), website: www.batskills.com

On the Saturday afternoon, ETTA Sport Psychologist Mark Bawden and Peter Hirst gave a double act, linking theory into practice, on player development and methods of learning (which carried on into the Sunday morning with ideas for the better than average player). Peter outlined a matrix of coaching styles according to stages of player development. Mark then posed the question, 'can we keep players operating at a subconscious level throughout learning?' based on the propositions that skill learned holistically (in its entirety) is more resilient/less likely to breakdown under pressure, and that skill learned in bits will breakdown under pressure. Learning is about exploration (finding out for yourself), people solve problems and solve them in different ways, and the environment, and their physiology, psychology etc dictate the behaviours people produce. Coaches should keep it simple.

Some principles behind subconscious strategies for learning were suggested: set problems to be solved, allow errors (in solving them/adapting), put players under pressure (including restricting/controlling/manipulating the

environment e.g. by feeding backspin, designating target or limiting playing area etc), work on decision making and concentrate on one ball at a time (playing without knowledge of the score).

Peter then asked the coaches to design a practice that required no instruction, the player having to find the/an answer. The coaches then worked in groups of 3 on several practices: in turn, one coach 'coaching'/observing, one playing (being coached), one feeding. At some stages in proceedings, Peter got one of the right-handed coaches to demonstrate how to play a left-handed 'loop' by spinning up a ball rolled off the end of the table at the position ('George'), where he had moved the index finger of his free hand on the table in line with the oncoming ball – it is much easier to show this than write about it! All the coaches had a go at this, all fairly successfully. A good ploy for teaching improvers' backhand loop with their playing arm!

Another good ploy is facilitating the reading of spin serve and adaptation (as well as giving servers, serving and third ball attack practice), by tasking receivers to return spin serves (the same spin serve until the target is hit) to a squashed ball placed at the server's discretion. Once the target has been hit, the server can change the serve and the receiver's target.

Peter pointed out key concepts in learning through setting targets/problems: control of the angle of the bat and touch, striking the ball at 'George' (a constant position in relation to the body, i.e. where the freehand can be placed for orientation/reference point), and that fast learners are good at adaptation (learning from error). If a player learns a skill for himself, it will be more adaptable, individual specific and less likely to breakdown under pressure. The principles were applied for more advanced players on the Sunday – note that I write separately about the Presentation Dinner on the Saturday evening. The practical sessions over, I collected in the balls and found that 36 had gone missing – surely they had not all been damaged!

For a large part of the Sunday, Steen Kyst Hansen, Acting ETTA Performance Director, spoke about the higher level, first on the Commonwealth Games and then on how to help the best get better. As these were sit-down presentations (as opposed to the practical component in the other sessions) I took copious notes, from which I have selected a few key points here.

Steen remarked on the 'fantastic' volunteers at the Games in Manchester. He gave a detailed outline of the England preparation for the Games, which he thought was good (Katy Parker improved dramatically in aerobic fitness), and of some of the problems before and during the Games. England did well but could have done even better. Some players are good sparring partners but not winners – used to losing, scared of winning.

Regarding helping players get better, Steen said he would like to see the following happen: educating parents, so for example, they don't transmit fear to their children; the players taking responsibility for their table tennis; the National Centre working closer with the regions.

Among other things, players with talent have to work hard (not say 'I am tired!'), compete (if you can't win at home, you will never win abroad), and have a winning temperament (be never satisfied). Steen divided (high level) players into 3 categories: winners, who play at their best when it is most important; training champions – players who are world class in practice but who can't win under pressure; and losers, who are just happy to take part. He outlined many qualities and success criteria if we are to develop a 'winning project' in England.

Steen felt there were the following weaknesses in England: players had good serves but poor return of serves; relatively poor footwork in and out; tactics are 'a complete disaster'! Spin and placement could be used more instead of speed and power; home tournaments are possibly not strong enough; at the mental level players lack confidence (often as the result of bad planning); players need to improve at the physical level. Steen believed in KISS – keep it simple, stupid! For example, always attack a long serve, touch or flick a short serve.

A few selected (by me) pointers of advice Steen gave for coaching players at different levels were:

Introduction: neutral, relaxed grip; teach service and forehand topspin early; a lot of forehand practice (especially with girls); a lot of footwork, including 'around the corner' (i.e. forehand from backhand corner).

Participation: 50% of exercises starting with (prescribed as opposed to open) serve; service and receive practice; a lot of footwork, regular and irregular; development of both forehand and backhand topspin; use of multi-ball; start gluing; start physical training; develop different playing styles.

Advanced: different practice drills such as Gatien special (e.g. control 1, 2 or 3 times to backhand and to forehand,

player runs round backhand when can to play forehand drive), Saive (e.g. short play with backspin, then attack whenever the ball is slightly long), Karlsson/Grubba (backhand topspin from close to the table); switching down line and following up; develop physically; develop tactical analysis; individual plan for each player; hit ball in front of body; topspin top of ball so it can go in any direction; make strokes shorter (use of elbow, wrist and hips); stroke not up and down but behind and through; stay crouched; for wide forehand take both feet nearer to ball.

Steen felt it was very important that he and Peter Hirst were 'married' i.e. that the National Centre worked closely with the Coaching Scheme (and I confirm, as I was in close proximity to Peter, that he seemed in broad agreement with Steen's presentation).

Karen Tonge wound up the conference, first with some news: for example, Peter Charters (the winner of a Torch Trophy Trust Award) had been appointed chairman of a High Performance Committee, and Dave Berryman was to chair a PremierClub Coaching Working Party. She then thanked all who had contributed to the success of the weekend, and particularly Peter Hirst for organising it, before wishing everyone a safe journey home.

VOLUNTEER AWARD PRESENTATION DINNER, SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER by Ken Muhr

Held during the annual Coaches Conference in the impressive Lilleshall Hall itself, this was again a great occasion. It started with a pre-dinner drinks reception, giving the opportunity for old friends to meet up again and socialise. A concern was that a few of the award winners had not turned up, and I must confess now that in my anxiety to identify the Press Officer of the Year, Judy Smith, I approached an elegant lady thinking she might be she, only to be introduced by Mick Vesey to his lovely wife! Sorry Mrs Vesey, if I moved on too abruptly!

We then moved into the dining area to eat, and an excellent meal it was, helped down, on my table at least, by superb New Zealand (the organiser, Peter Hirst's choice) and Australian wine. At the end of the meal, Karen Tonge, ETTA Vice-Chairman for Teaching & Training read out the names (and citations for all but the coaches – unfortunately with the change in the Teaching & Training, Administrator coming at just the wrong time, these were items that Peter ran out of time to prepare) of the award

winners, who were then presented by Alan Ransome, ETTA Chairman. Therefore, in listing the award winners below, I give the citation, or add a few words (from the nomination papers) in the absence of one.

PremierClub of the Year (Introduction Level): Compton Sports College TT Club, Northolt, Middlesex.

"Compton is a government designated specialist sports college, where table tennis has become the most important sport in the school, boasting a stock of 23 tables. This provided the lever to be able to appoint a full time coach teaching table tennis during PE lessons, as well as setting up lunch-time after-school clubs. A healthy upsurge in interest has generated school teams in both the national junior and cadet leagues, as well as a number of other local competitions. Strong links with London Progress TTC and 6 feeder schools exist and the school has been particularly active in hosting volunteer training courses."

PremierClub of the Year (Participation Level) Joint Winners: Stowmarket TT Club, Suffolk, & Waterside TT Club, Southampton, Hampshire.

"Forward planning – using the PremierClub action plan template – and good organisation have been the bedrock of Stowmarket TTC; in recent years the club has acquired dedicated facilities on a school site and developed very strong school links using a professional coach. A key feature of the club's success has been the communication with members, including regular newsletters and a club website. New innovations include a 10 parent rota to help the junior club, training for young leaders, adjustable height tables and permanent concrete outdoor tables."

"A solid playing programme and sound action plan has led Waterside to a healthy membership increase and some success in school competitions. Strong school links exist where coaching, skills awards, competition ladder and a Junior League provide a varied and balanced programme. Volunteer training is important and this year new coaches and development officers have attended ETTA courses and subsequently qualified. Development is ongoing and the hunt for new, dedicated facilities is being pushed forward.



Colin French, Waterside TTC

PremierClub of the Year (Advanced Level): Northfield (School) TT Club, Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland.

“Northfield has seen an expansion of table tennis activity and membership since converting an old boiler house into a table tennis centre and appointing a full-time coach. This school-based club is a government designated specialist sports college and has developed out of all recognition from the humble beginnings of a successful Woolwich Junior League and casual school club.

With morning, noon and night activity, coaching takes place within the school curriculum and at nine feeder primary schools; the popularity of the sport needs to be seen to be believed at break and lunch times when the playing hall is full to overflowing with a buzz of informal play. A long established local club – Kiora Table Tennis Club – has transferred to the school and uses the facility in the evenings and weekends where a full programme of coaching and competition (including local league) takes place.”

PremierClub of the Year (Excellence Level): Ellenborough TT Club, Enfield, Middlesex.

This well-known north London club is booming once again thanks to a conscious change of emphasis to devising and successfully implementing a development policy aimed at reaching out into their local community.

A strong advocate of the PremierClub programme from the word go, the club has embodied the principles of a hub club and cluster approach which has brought about an unprecedented upsurge in membership. As part of an outstanding player programme, a thriving junior section, ladies evening, over 50s and a disabled group are all testament to good planning, active links with schools and the local authority and most of all, from a very committed, action-orientated and hard-working team of volunteers”.

Press Officer of the Year (supported by the Random House Publishing Group): Judy Smith, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset. Judy Smith, Press Officer for the Weston-Super-Mare and District Table Tennis League since 1988, provides thorough (senior and junior, club and school players mentioned) weekly table tennis reports published in the Weston & Somerset Mercury newspaper. In the absence of Judy, Brian Halliday, ETTA Vice Chairman for Public Relations, said a few words about her work and the valuable support (in the form of books) of the Random House Publishing Group.

Coach Awards sponsored by Paul Day of Turners of Soham Ltd (in the form of Edinburgh crystal glass decanters):-

Young Coach of the Year: Matthew Shorter, Brighton, East Sussex. Matthew, aged 18, recently qualified as a Level 2 coach. He is a team captain for a local league team and started TT sessions at the local sixth form college, which he attends, deciding to become a sports teacher owing to his involvement with TT. Whilst studying and taking exams, Matthew has worked with the local council’s children’s university programme, providing TT for children in primary schools in disaffected areas, and also as a TOP Sport coach in an after-school club.

Female Coach of the Year: Jane Kelly, Surbiton, Surrey. Jane is a very experienced Level 4 coach operating at a high level as senior coach at the Graham Spicer TTC, senior coach in charge of the London Region squad girls and senior coach for the Surrey county first team.

Male Coach of the Year: Mick Vesey, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. A ‘doer’, Mike is a full-time coach operating in several counties with both able bodied and disabled players, and from beginners level to nationally rank. Always enthusiastic, he is also very active in schools table tennis and promoting the sport.



Mick Vesey

Tutor Coach of the Year: Keith Wilson, Newton Aycliffe, Darlington, Co Durham. During the year, Keith has run 9 Level 1 and 2 Level 2 Coach courses, as well as a 3 day course for children in 15 schools, 16 table tennis festivals in primary schools (the biggest taking in 123 girls and 123 boys) and coaching for children with special needs and for 14 year olds excluded from school.

Special Award: Sally Shutt, Bradford, Yorkshire. Sally, a former high level player, is a hard working coach specialising in disability coaching. A coach at Bradford Battlers TTC (of which she is a founder member), she also coaches at Thorn Park School for the deaf, and is involved in organising and running The British Disabilities annual TT tournament.



Sally Shutt

Contribution to Coaching: John Vincent, Plymouth, Devon. John, Devon County and Plymouth Coaching Officer, a Level 4 coach, has been coaching for more than 25 years, several of his players, including his son Adrian, achieving England schools and junior international honours. He is active across the spread of coaching activities: beginners/grass roots level to excellence, schools, disability coaching, fund-raising, coaching administration and coach education.

Karen also mentioned that Reading coach **Peter Charters**, was presented with a **Torch Trophy Trust Special Award** by Sir Bobby Charlton at Old Trafford during the Manchester Commonwealth Games (see September/October TTN).

Volunteer of the Year: Sylvia Tyler, Ellenborough TTC, Enfield, Middlesex. Among other work, Sylvia is a key administrator of top club Ellenborough, a London Junior Ranking Scheme zone co-ordinator, administrator of Ellenborough Eagles (PremierClub Ability), a national umpire, a coach, and a North

Middlesex and Middlesex County administrator.

Table Tennis Development Officer of the Year: Colin French, Southampton, Hampshire.

Colin is a primary school teacher by profession and has been Chairman and Development Officer for Waterside Table Tennis Club since 1997. He has also been involved in the Southampton League as a committee member since 1985.

Colin has been recognised mainly for his achievements in leading the Waterside club from a four-team club operating from a one-table venue to a club that now boasts 12 tables, 11 league teams, a summer league, junior league, 3 Junior British League teams, an extensive junior coaching programme, links with five schools and an all-year-round club night”.

Many diners carried on drinking and chatting in the dining area after proceedings ended, and a few rushed off to the bar to catch last orders! A thoroughly enjoyable occasion, and Peter Hirst is again to be commended for dreaming up this concept, which is so important in engendering team work and networking in table tennis

**CITY OF LIVERPOOL OPEN
Butterfly Grand Prix 24/25 Aug 02**

Results:

Men's Singles (from semi-finals): Ryan Jenkins (WAL) bt Kevin Dolder (La), 8, 7, 10. Bradley Billington (Dy) bt Ryan Jenkins (WAL) 6, 9, -9, 8; Women's Singles (from Semi-finals): Barbara Kiss (He) bt Naomi Owen (WAL) 2, 4, 12. Louise Durrant (Ng), bt Dorka Nagy (HUN) 9, 8, 6; Final: Barbara Kiss (He) bt Louise Durrant (Ng) -7, 9, 7, 9; Under 21 Men's Singles: Craig Bryant (Dv) bt Craig Gascoyne (Ng) -8, 5, 5, 5; Under 21 women's singles: Naomi Owen (WAL) bt Karen Shepherd (Ch) 4, 8, -6, 7; Veteran Men's Singles: Keith Williams (La) bt Chris Ford (La) 8, 7, -6, 9; Veteran Women's Singles: Jane Durham (Cv) bt Brenda Buoey (La) 8, 6, 6; Men's Band 1 Singles: Kevin Dolder (La) bt Conor Nolan (IRL) 6, 6, 11; Men's Band 2 Singles: John Bowe (IRL) bt Stephen Gartson (WAL) 9, -3, 10, 3; Men's Band 3 Singles: Shaun Bibby (Ys) bt David Atkins (SCO) 4, -10, 9, 10; Men's Band 4 Singles: Ashley Nicholls (Sp) bt Tom Page (Ch) -10, 10, -4, 8, 10; Men's Band 5 Singles: Arthur Rybakas (LTU) bt Vytas Rybakas (LTU) 6, -10, -14, 2, 7; Men's Band 6 Singles: Arthur Rybakas (LTU) bt Jon Bayliss (Dy) -8, 5, 5, 10;

Women's Band 1 Singles: Michelle McCreary (Ch) bt Judy Morley (Gs) 7, 11, 4; Women's Band 2 Singles: Cherith Graham (La) bt Elizabeth Dennett (Ch) 4, 8, 5; Women's Band 3 Singles: Helen Parton (Dv) bt Carol Homewood (K) 10, 6, 7.

Famous People Who Played Table Tennis

Following Prime Minister Tony Blair and the then Education Minister Estelle Morris being broadcast on BBC TV News playing table tennis at a school during the Blackpool Labour Party Conference, several national newspapers (e.g. Times, Guardian and Daily Mail) and TV channels showed Tory leader Ian Duncan Smith in action during a mid-October visit to Ducie High School (an ETTA PremierClub!) in Manchester. Wielding a Donic bat, there were indications that he knew a bit about spin. Harold Evans has informed me that Lord Roy Jenkins, the political biographer and former Labour Home Secretary and member of the Social Democrats Gang of Four, “is an energetic, unorthodox, aggressive player – I have played with him”. Previously mentioned in these columns are other ‘Ping Pong’ playing politicians such as President Vladimir Putin of Russia, President Fidel Castro of Cuba, former USA President Bill Clinton, Chairman Mao Tse-Tung of China, Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing, former Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath, and other former government ministers such as Baroness Jay (Labour), Lord Norman Lamont (Conservative) and Lord Bill Rodgers (now Liberal Democrat).

Richard Scruton spotted a Times article (5.10.02) on St Helens' New Zealand called up rugby international, Tevita Vaikona, who was Tonga's flag bearer in the Manchester Commonwealth Games closing ceremony. Among options when he retires from playing, ‘he could resume his other sporting passion as Tonga's (unofficial) table tennis champion’. A Daily Telegraph article on Craig Perks, who won the Players Golf Championship in Florida, says that he was a former New Zealand table tennis champion. Still on golf, Matthew Syed pointed out in a Times article that using table tennis for team building did not seem to have done the American Ryder Cup squad any good!

Father and Son in England Top 100

In response to Chris Brewer's piece in June/July edition about he and son Adam simultaneously being in the top 100 of the men's ranking list, Harry

Spraggs suggests that Maurice and Bradley Billington (and possibly Jackie in the ladies), and women Lesley and Linda Radford (and possibly Peter in the men's) could also have been in the top 100 seniors at the same time. Sounds plausible, but I (KM) have not had time to go through old ranking lists to check!

Coach Courses running to the end of Financial Year 2002

North West

Organiser - Martin Ireland (m. 07973 411559), Levels 1 & 2 – 9/16/23/30 November

11/12 Nov – Hilton TTC

Top-up – 5 December

Level 1 SL – 23 January 2003

London

Organiser: John Standing (tel. 01689 829882), Levels 1 & 2 - 17 & 24 November, Barnet TTC, Middlesex

Level 2 – 4/5 January 2003 – South Bank University, Southwark

Levels 1 & 2 – 12/19 January 2003, Central Foundation School, Central London

South

Organiser: Keith Childs (tel. 01329 282648), Level 2 - TBC December/January, Crippenham

South East

Organiser: Wesley Bush-Harris (m. 07980 586450), Level 3 – 24/24 Nov, 7/8 December

Yorkshire

Organiser: Alan Lowe (tel. 0114 2888798), Level 2 – February – Barnsley

Level 2 - April/May – Sheffield

MUHR'S MEMO: Information Officer Messages from Ken Muhr

Again no room to say all I wanted to! So take it as read that only **John Woodford** in the **Daily Telegraph** is giving anything like an ongoing service at the national daily level, and it seems that even his published word count is being slightly reduced.

The big, nearly full page, table tennis features, with photographs, have been in The Times group newspapers: **Jill Douglas on Sue Gilroy**, the Commonwealth Games Women's Wheelchair Singles Gold Medallist, in the **Sunday Times** (22.9.02); and **two superbly crafted Times pieces by Matthew Syed** (4.9.02 and 19.10.02), hitting all the right social inclusion buttons, on **‘the Pied Piper of ping pong’**, **London coach Gideon Ashison**, which resulted in readers donating generously to a ‘Table Tennis for Kids Project’ charity being set up. I

know that on the ground there are issues to be cleared up, but the messages given out in the media could not be better!

Several TTN readers have mentioned the appearance of our **Commonwealth Games gold medal winning team appearing on BBC 1 TV's 'They think its all over'** programme with Jonathan Ross and Gary Lineker'. Some time go, several people also spotted London Progress player **Taiwo Adedayo participating in ITV's Blind Date!**

Most of the national newspapers, Time Out and local London papers, gave much attention to sculptor **Richard Wentworth's** gentle programme of urban redevelopment, '**An Area of Outstanding Unnatural Beauty**', facilitated by innovative producers Artangle at one of the last warehouses in **Kings Cross**, which includes 6 table tennis tables covered in fragments of London A-Z maps and regular '**Ping**' tournaments run by Jon Kaufman and London volunteers.

I mention elsewhere in 'Famous People Who Played Table Tennis', the huge media attention given to **Conservative leader Ian Duncan Smith** playing at a Manchester High School (Ducie). Other pleasing appearances for our sport were the two pages with coloured photographs of **female players in the Brownie Annual**, and the note in the www.CaribCommx.com website saying that their sports pages had been visited more than their other pages and that, 'Cricket, Athletics, Netball and Table Tennis have drawn the most interest and favourable response'.

Congratulations to **Judy Smith**, Press Officer for Weston-super-Mare, for winning the **ETTA Press Officer of the Year Award** and £500 plus worth of books through the support of the **Random House Publishing Group** – **Caroline Williams** of Leamington DTTA was a close challenger. The panel will be considering how to raise the number of nominations next year (entries were a little down this time). Strong advice we would give to all future contenders is to try to **make your reports come alive** (describe the table tennis action and the issues) so that they **appeal to a non-table tennis readership** or audience. The impression given should be that something exciting is happening. Regarding the ETTA Annual Volunteer Awards, a really excellent **feature on Contribution to Coaching recipient, John Vincent, was published in the Plymouth Evening Herald.**

I do not get to hear about most of the table tennis exposure in the regional media, but **Alan Blears** tells me he was

interviewed at length on **local radio** about Hillcourt Club members promoting the sport in Stockport shopping precinct as part as the Stockport Sport's Trust Open Day.

Finally, **England men may have lost their European League First Division match 3-1 to Norway at Portsmouth** on 8th October, with Gareth Herbert their only winner, but it was a fantastic clash. A cameraman and news reporter from **Meridian TV** filming the practise during the day, enjoyed it so much that they came back for the well attended fixture in the evening, recording much of it, and conducting spectator interviews after play was over!

COUNTY NOTES

A look around the country

BERKSHIRE by John Cunningham

Our Lady of Peace (OLOP) TTC and Impact Coaching joined together on Sunday in a round robin table tennis tournament organised to raise funds for Sports Relief.

Several newcomers joined the more established players in a hard fought but enjoyable morning of table tennis and raised over £70 to help less fortunate youngsters around the world.

On the top table Greg Beckett and Ben Davis of the Kingfisher TTC crossed bats with Jenny Deal, Tim Berger and Dane White from OLOP TTC.

The competition proved to be outstanding as Berger beat White 3-11, 11-9, 11-7 and Beckett 11-4, 14-12 to take gold.

The silver medal, however, was much more difficult to decide – Deal beat Beckett 12-10, 9-11, 12-10, Beckett in turn defeated White by a 8-11, 11-9, 8-11 scoreline and Davis beat Deal 5-11, 11-8, 11-5.

In the end all three won two sets, and shared equal games. International referee Mick Reynolds decided that in true spirit of the competition, all three would share silver, leaving White the bronze medal winner.

Group 2 went to Ian Doyle playing his first ever competitive match.

Four newcomers contested Group 3 where Max Barrow took gold.

The tournament's youngest player Liam Curran also won a medal for best effort on the day.

All are welcome to attend the regular coaching sessions runs by IMPACT and Our Lady of Peace every Sunday between 10am and 12 noon or adult

practice sessions held on Sunday 12-3pm and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings 7.30-10pm.

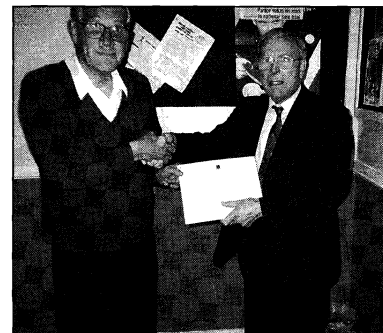


Photo Brian Latham (left) and John Freeman (right)

Berkshire and Reading tournament supreme Brian Latham has received table tennis' top award from the ETTA.

Brian, a member of the Berkshire committee for many years, received the award for outstanding service to the sport of table tennis over a period of close on 50 years.

(Above) Brian received the Maurice Goldstein Award from the Berkshire and Reading President, John Freeman, at the Berkshire AGM, which was held at the Our Lady of Peace Community Centre.

Disney has last laugh at Arborfield

Twenty apprentice tradesmen, inspired by the performance of the England men's team, who won the gold in the Commonwealth Games, turned out for the Junior Company Table Tennis Tournament at the Army Technical Foundation College, Arborfield.

The tournament was played in the new 11up format with four groups each of five players.

Group one was won by AT Gareth Tate, who beat the silver medal winner Pete Glover 11-4 while Glover in turn defeated the bronze medal winner Mark Gibson 11-9.

The gold for the top lady in the group went to AT Laura Broderick-Taylor.

Lee Stoddart was unbeaten in group two, proving to be a class above the rest.

Table four caused the tournament referee major countback problems, the outcome being a joint gold for AT McKay and AT Murray from C Company.

Meanwhile, back on table three, Graham Hall took gold.

The second competition of the day was a handicap within each group, with

a Sports Relief Medal for each group winner.

A great sporting morning ended with most of those who took part earning a medal of some colour.

Referee and tournament co-ordinator John Cunningham would like to thank all those who took part for their efforts and sportsmanship.

Table umpires AT Hopgood, AT Banker, AT McCarthy, AT Tait and AT Emma Murray co-ordinated the medal presentation.



Photo – medal winners AT Emma Murray presents the medals at the Junior Company Table Tennis Tournament

CHESHIRE by Alan Blears

July and August may be quiet months for many, but not for Northwich duo Mike Johns and Gail McCulloch, who organised a popular training camp, a junior competition and a senior competition within three weeks, all at the Egerton Centre in Knutsford.

Holiday time or not, both two star tournaments were well supported, though local entries were rather sparse.

The junior and cadet girls had players from Devon, Somerset and even one from Trinidad, but surprisingly only one from Cheshire! This was 11-year-old Emma Kelly from Stockport, who won the girls' Best Performance award, though Victoria Smith (aged 6!) from Devon, must have run her close.

For the boys Mark Davies was junior runner-up, with younger brother Andrew taking the boys' Best Performance award.

In the senior 2 Star Katie Ingham took the women's title from Judy Morley of Gloucestershire, by beating her in a five-game thriller. Finishing third in her first tournament was Lorna Harper, an immigrant from the distant shores of Co. Durham, and a very welcome addition to the Hillcourt Club in Stockport.

In the men's event, Katie's brother Kevin was runner-up in Band 3.

Cheshire youngsters fared well in the City of Liverpool Grand Prix, which attracted a record entry.

In her first Grand Prix for two years, Stockport's Karen Shepherd celebrated her 16th birthday by finishing runner-up to Naomi Owen of Wales in the Women's U21 section. It was not an easy passage, as Karen had to beat Lauren Springthorpe, Nicola White, Elizabeth Dennett and Kelly Sibley along the way.

Liz Dennett herself played very well all weekend, being runner-up to Lancashire's Cherith Graham in the Women's Band 2, reaching the quarter-finals of the U21 (where she lost to Karen), and the last 16 of the Women's singles. Liz has worked hard at her game and thoroughly deserves this success.

New kid on the block Lorna Harper – nil points – caused quite a stir by beating, among others, Sue Hayes of Bucks, with 2,436 points!

For the boys, Tom Page was runner-up in the Men's Band 4 and quarter-finalist in the U21s.

The Stockport League has a new table tennis centre – but more of this in the next issue, together with news of later events.

CUMBRIA by Gordon Brown

The beauty of the Barrow's team that won the Lancashire and Cheshire Junior Premier Divisions is that all the players are eligible for the new campaign.

The division's upper age limit is 17 and the oldest player that took the title was 15-year-old Faye Gasson of Parkview School, which also provided the reserve, Scott Linklater, also 15.

Also in the team were Dowdales School pair Jonathan Crawford (14) and Peter Deness (13). Crawford is highly promising, having taken titles in Cumbria and Barrow tournaments.

Jonathan's father, Duncan, coached the side, which was the first from Barrow to take the title since season 1993-4 and the days of England junior international Kevin Hodgson, now retired.

Not all the former promising juniors in Barrow have hung up their bats, as Michael Gomersall is taking a coaching course and will be helping Duncan.

In the Jarvis Sport English Schools' National Team Championship Finals, Faye Gasson helped Parkview (Barrow) under 16s to third place, while Askam Village School a few miles outside the town was third in the Under 11 Girls.

A genuine effort is being made to reform Whitehaven & District Table

Tennis League, which folded around 10 years ago.

A special meeting of all interested was held at the Whitehaven Young Men's Christian Association, Irish Street, on Tuesday 10th September. It was due to be convened by the Chairman of the YMCA, John Cotterill, who wants to welcome teams to make the YMCA their home base, and addressed by Martin Ireland, the English Table Tennis Association North West Regional Development Officer. He would talk about grants available and the ETTA Premier Club scheme.

Any further information may be obtained from Gordon Brown, the Cumbria County TTA Press & Publicity Secretary, 5 Monkway Cottages, Kells, Whitehaven. Tel: 01946 67121 and 07773 336698.

Bob Gale has stood down after 25 years as Cumbria County Association Chairman but his successor had not been decided at the time of going to press.

Said Bob: "I have enjoyed my years working and playing for the County and made many long lasting friendships, which I will continue to enjoy".

All the other county officials were re-elected:- Vice Chairman – Miss Clarice Rose, Secretary – Peter Rushton, Treasurer – Richard Johnstone, Match Secretary – Steve Dixon, Press Secretary – Gordon Brown, Coaching Secretary – Mike Yardley, Umpires Secretary – Peter Rushton, Auditor – Ron Rigg.

DERBYSHIRE by Colin Deaton

Bradley Billington again demonstrated that he is still amongst the best table tennis players in Britain by winning the Liverpool Grand Prix Men's Singles title. The Bolsover, Chesterfield based player coach is to take up an appointment at the Grantham College as a coach/lecturer. Already some top young players are to attend the college on a full-time basis and this includes Chesterfield's young, highly rated player, William Cooney. Cooney has now progressed to number 36 in the National Junior Ranking List and, under the watchful eye of Billington, young Cooney looks to have a good future in the game.

The membership throughout Derbyshire appears to be more than holding its own and one of the real thriving areas must be in Derby. Their summer league has come to an end, with Combustion 2nd at the top with 40 points, closely followed by the Lions on 39 and Combustion 1st on 37 points.

Chief organiser for this popular league is Marilyn O'Sullivan, who says that "starting up the league was the hardest part after an absence of 10 years". She added, "Once it was up and running it went smoothly". Marilyn expects it to run next season.

Derby Association's Tony Young has taken the lead role in running the Derby 4 Star Junior Open but he is requiring some help from members. To avoid the usual response of not having enough time, Tony is splitting the tasks down to areas such as entry forms, programme liaison with printing organising, hotel accommodation and working over the weekend, etc.

Derby has now got some real young top prospects who appear to have backing that could see them figure prominently in national events in the future. We will watch their progress with real interest.

Chesterfield too is acquiring some strength in depth with its young players. They have 11 juniors with the rapidly improving Alan Fullwood, who is now ranked at number 69 as a Cadet. However, one disappointing fact is that they do not have any junior or cadet girls featured on the list.

Congratulations are due to Chesterfield's Staveley Club, which for the second successive year has been voted Club of the Year in the East Midlands. This Club has a mammoth 18 teams competing in the Chesterfield and District League and the Club meets on two evenings per week, plus match nights. Secretary of the Club is Sandra Deaton and the periodic visits from Alan Cooke and Nicola Deaton to feature advance sessions have proved most beneficial and popular.

Sandra, incidentally, has been elected Vice-Chairman (Marketing) on the Management Committee of the ETTA. We wish her well in her appointment.

Under the Chairmanship of Tony Gregory, the Matlock League maintains its membership numbers. Their real strength is the strong membership within the veteran's game. I attended their finals and presentation evening at the end of last season and it was one of the best finals evenings I have witnessed. The entire evening was organised by Pat Thorley with Nicola Deaton giving a thrilling exhibition against the League's top players.

Finally, the advanced coaching sessions at Matlock's Lea Green have been featured throughout the summer months with good attendances. Coach in charge, Derrick Marples, who is also the County Chairman, plans to extend them throughout the year. The sessions run on Thursday evenings.

DEVONSHIRE by John Vincent

I was delighted to receive the fabulous 'Contribution to Coaching' award this year which would not have been possible without the help of my friends, team of coaches and top class training partners in Plymouth.

Marie and I celebrated our pearl wedding anniversary in August so I know I have been coaching table tennis for 30 years. Our son, Adrian, was national number 1 Cadet & Junior and his partner Darren Blake won two national doubles titles. I have had the privilege of helping some very talented youngsters over the years such as Craig Bryant, Stuart Gibbs, Robert Svensson, Joanna Barraclough and more recently Darren Reed and Chris Brown.

Another plus for Plymouth is that Yealmpstone Premier Table Tennis Club (Introduction) won the top award in the South West Region at that level and also received a National "Highly Commended" award.

Tamar Cup

This match between Cornwall & Devon was played in Okehampton resulting in a win for Devon 4-0.

Our seniors won 7-3, Veterans 8-1, Juniors 9-1 and Cadets 7-3.

South West Region Preliminary Junior Trials

These were played in St. Austell and the following players qualified for the final trials to be played in Cirencester:-

Cadet Boys

1. Darren Reed
2. Simon Poyner

Cadet Girls

1. Sally Smith

Junior Boys

1. Chris Brown,
2. Shaun Gibbs
3. Daniel Mayhew
4. Jacob Kodicek
5. Darren Reed

Junior Girls

1. Lisa Radford
2. Helen Parton
3. Michelle Barrett
4. Sally Smith

Junior British League

Two teams have been entered as follows:-

Devon Aces

Chris Brown, Shaun Gibbs, Jacob Kodicek, Darren Reed

Woolwell TTC

Michelle Barrett, Lisa Radford, Michelle Turner, Sally Smith

The first weekend will be in Norwich.

National Junior League - Plymouth

Last year a league of 8 teams was successfully run in Plymouth. This season we will run again with teams from Ilfracombe, Redruth, Ivybridge, Woolwell and Plymouth.

Veterans International Table Tennis

Elaine and Mike Short were in action for England in the Home International series in Scotland.

Elaine helped England ladies win the Over 40 team event. She followed that by winning the women's doubles title with her partner, Marilyn Bawden, from Essex. In the Ladies Individual Championship Elaine was runner-up to Elaine Forbes from Scotland, just missing out 8-11 in the fifth set.

Not to be outdone, husband Mike helped his England team-mates win the men's over 50-team event. Mike was in devastating form, winning the men's individual trophy without dropping a set. In the final he beat team-mate Mike Johns from Cheshire.

ESSEX by Steve Kerns

I'M A JUNIOR - GET ME OUT OF HERE!

The Essex Junior Trials (held at the NETTS Club in Gosfield) produced the biggest entry for ten years, testimony to the excellent work being carried out around the county in the coaching field. Unfortunately an event which was dominated by outstanding 13 year-old Lithuanian newcomer, Vytas Rybaka, was marred by the non-appearance of the top three county ranked boys - Keiran Lally, Matt Staines and Tony Halling. Tony and Keiran both eloquently put into writing their view that proven players ranked in the top 50 nationally should be exempt from the Trials. Honest they may have been; but this view is likely to cause real consternation amongst the County Committee who have previously considered that attendance at the County Trials is compulsory. Expect some heated debate at the next county meeting.

ROMFORD & DISTRICT LEAGUE

The news from the Romford League is excellent. The battle for honours in the first division looks to be the keenest for years with as many as five teams vying for honours.

Last year's champions, Cranston Park I (this year represented by Peter Radford, Steve Rand and Daniel and Malcolm Stander) will face tough opposition from last year's runners-up, Fellows Cranleigh (Roland Zaubmayr, John Tandler, Feisal and Zayd Mauthoor, Gavin West and promising, junior Billy Childs) and last year's third placers, Romford Catholic (Stuart Kimm, Garry Lewsey, Steve Bond and Steve Kerns). Other line-ups of note include Dagbury - Dave Randall, Terry Guymer, John Monk, Neil Brierley, Joe Andrews, Alan Candy, Brian Parish, Brian Mailey (and rumour has it that Les Eddie has been seen practising as well!), Trinity - Matthew Spero, John King, Glenn Montgomery and Peter Ridley, and Grove (Ray Murray, Peter Norcott, Paul Sayer, Mick Smalldon, Elaine Sayer, Paul Morris and Gary Ward). Even teams not expected to challenge such as Herberts (Chris Herbert, Clifff Carder, Lee Noakes and Ronnie Turner) are capable of great things on their day. Notwithstanding the fact that having a large squad doesn't guarantee that a team's best players will play regularly you have to admit that this is a pretty impressive array of players for a local league.

Coaching at the League's Coaching School - Coopers Coborn School in Upminster - continues to go from strength to strength. Daniel Stander has progressed from rookie to a member of Cranston Park I within two years of taking up the game, whilst an unprecedented number of Junior players from metropolitan Essex were seen taking part at the Essex Trials. The coaching programme is overseen by the main league officials themselves - Chairman Paul Morris, Vice-Chairman John Mansfield, General Secretary Clive Fosh and Development Officer Colin Sherrin, and regular sessions are held on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The Saturday sessions are by invitation only and are run by Grant Solder and Ian Attridge. The industry generated at this Club hasn't gone unnoticed and for a second year running the Club has been awarded a Jack Petchey Award of £2,400. The Jack Petchey Foundation (run by the former West Ham United director) enables a payment to be made on a monthly basis by the club to an outstanding achiever. A presentation

evening is being held on Friday 4th October where the Foundation's Financial Director, Andrew Billington, will be on hand to present awards. Ian Attridge and Grant Solder will play an exhibition match and there will be a chance for other players to challenge them. The link with Coopers Coborn School continues to thrive with the excellent news that the School has just been awarded Sports College status.

HAMPSHIRE by Jeremy Wilson

The full county ranking list has now been issued by the Hampshire Table Tennis Association for the season 2002-3.

Topping both the senior and veteran's list is Basingstoke's Clive Payne. He is followed in the senior rankings by Hampshire team captain, Mark Butler, and Lee Dredge.

The women's list is headed by Maria Taylor-Woodward, Barbara Savage and Gill Larking, followed by Southampton's Anne Longland.

In the veteran's list Payne heads Ramesh Bhalla and Southampton's Chris Wilshere.

Barbara Savage tops the women's veterans list followed by Sandra Simpson.

Senior men. 1. Clive Payne 2. Mark Butler 3. Lee Dredge 4. Jeremy Wilson 5. Ramesh Bhalla.

Senior women. 1. Maria Taylor-Woodward 2. Barbara Savage 3. Gill Larking 4. Anne Longland 5. Sandra Simpson.

Veteran men. 1. Clive Payne 2. Ramesh Bhalla 3. Chris Wilshere. 4. Keith Childs 5. Graham Outrim.

Veteran women. 1. Barbara Savage 2. Sandra Simpson 3. Anne Longland 4. Gill Larking 5. Susan Hibberd.

The cadet county table tennis team championships are nicely poised for a local showdown between Southampton and Portsmouth.

Both under-14 sides finished the first round of inter-town matches unbeaten with the Pompey squad of Connor Shipp, William George and Michael Gibbs looking particularly dominant with 10-0 wins against Bournemouth, Basingstoke and Portsmouth B. But Southampton also made a good start: their team of Alistair Jones and the young McBeath brothers, John and David, registered comfortable victories against Portsmouth B and Southampton B.

The Portsmouth v Southampton showdown will not take place until the second round of matches in February. Gosport and Fareham have established a two-point lead at the top of the second division of the county league after victories against Southampton C, Winchester and Andover. The squad of Nick Faithful, Ashley Willetts and Sajjad Jaffer look set for a return to the top division after the next matches in February.

The great success of Waterside Table Tennis Club was recognised at the ETTA awards presentation dinner at Lilleshall. The club, which runs 11 teams in the Southampton League, was joint winner of the prestigious Premier Club of the year award (Participation Level).

The efforts of John Fox and Colin French were particularly noted, with French being awarded the award for Table Tennis Development Officer of the Year in recognition for his efforts promoting and introducing young people into table tennis.

ISLE OF WIGHT by John Prean

Although our numbers are again forecast to decline, at any rate in the teams who will compete in the local league, there are quiet signs of revival in interest. Our attendances at club nights at the Carl Prean Centre are substantially higher than a year ago and new policies seem to be working. This includes having at least one coach in attendance at every session and welcoming new arrivals rather than ignoring them. Very often two or three coaches have been at work. These have included Carl Prean who has established an excellent rapport with the younger visitors, also the admirable John Rawlings on Mondays and myself on Mondays and Fridays. 11 tables have been used most nights.

There is no sign as yet of new potential internationals or even players who will make a mark in junior tournaments and most players play other sports, football very prominent. We have attracted a large number of what I would call regular "irregulars" who appear once a week or less and so will not get much from the game in terms of excellence or getting better fast, but may remain hobby players. Only one or two older newcomers will play in the league which will not be enough to replace those who have left the island to go to university, as the equivalent of one or two teams do every year, a sort of inbuilt natural wastage, which we live with. Some depart the island's high unemployment to seek work on the mainland. These

are things we can do little about, but we have at least begun the task of creating a new generation, one we had neglected for some years and one in which, to be frank, we get little help or encouragement from the central body. We have seen no signs, let alone benefits, of various ETTA schemes and for us Hastings may as well be another planet. These, at any rate, are the sentiments one hears from time to time.

As one talks to the newcomers, particularly their parents, one notes the continued concern about the late nights that accompany our league matches and the obvious reluctance to expose children to such obvious hazards in their health and education. One notes a certain helpless indifference within our own committee. I fear it is our inability to act that will continue to bring further decline. The problem may be a national one, but that only makes it worse. There is no doubt that young people find the sport attractive, but less than other sports which have a bigger following, not least because they play at socially acceptable hours, but also because week after week they get TV exposure which, rightly or wrongly, our fellow citizens think is important.

My view remains that more acceptable local league formats in tandem with active coaching and enrolment policies, that make the sport attractive and new people feel wanted, would overcome the biggest problem we have, which is the decline in membership. I can only repeat the criticism one hears so often that the ETTA is little more than an unwelcome tax collector, not an ally in the battle against decline and even oblivion.

When these notes were written, our playing season had not yet begun. We decided very firmly against entering a team in the British League, feeling that in its current shape of four weekends in other places, it offered no benefits to our Association or indeed table tennis on the island. Those of our players who are interested have no difficulty in finding a mainland club.

We soldier on with our county team, although this will clearly be a difficult decision in which even the avoidance of the wooden spoon may be difficult. With Lucy Pointer retired at 17, Danny Burns still in Spain and Carl Prean facing a fuller season in Germany (Bundesliga and European Cup) the task of winning five or six matches out of ten looks daunting. However, credit is due to the staunch spirits that decided to take on the challenge. Victories, if and when they come, will be appreciated all the more.

LEICESTERSHIRE by Derek Butt

First of all on behalf of the Leicestershire Table Tennis Association we congratulate our Mike Smith for his election as Vice-Chairman of Administration for the ETTA. Well done Mike, you deserve it, you have done a lot of hard work to get this award, and all your work for Leicestershire table tennis is much appreciated.

The Leicester League held its annual competition, the Elbow Tankard, and although the entry was lower this season, it was a good tournament and players still enjoy playing up to 21. After the initial group matches, eight teams into the quarter-final stages and the results of these saw Birstall, Electric Shoes (Leicester Electricity), Casualties (Syston Casuals) and Ironmen (Sibley Social) progress to the semi-finals. In the first Birstall met Electric Shoes and it was a one-sided affair with the Birstall team consisting of Dave Quemby, Alan Clarke and Allan Clarke in very good form and took the match 14-6. Man of the match was Alan with five wins from his six. In the second match the holders Ironmen beat Casualties 13-7 thanks mainly to a very good six from six maximum from Gordon Pell. So could the holders retain the trophy again? Well, the answer was no as the Birstall side again proved to be too strong and came out 11-6 winners Mike Scott 2/5, Richard Anderson 3/4 and Allan Clarke 3/4 and they won three of the four doubles). So a new name goes on the trophy, well done to them, and too all the other teams who entered this very good and enjoyable tournament.

On to the new season, and we are down to six divisions, but the good news is that the number of actual teams and players has changed very little. Last season, Division 7 consisted of just six teams and they have now been put into other divisions. In the early stages of the new season Division One looks interesting, with four of the early leaders on level points. County Hall are the leaders of the pack, with teams from Knighton Park, Great Glen and Electricity (team formally Rushey Mead, the current champions of division 1). At the opposite end G.E. Sports and Northwood are the strugglers, the latter seem to relish in doing this each season, but have always kept clear of relegation. Electricity seconds are the early leaders in Division Two, with Leicester Taxes and County Hall hard on their heels. Blaby and Whetstone are the early strugglers, but they only had two players in the one match played so far. I feel sure they will be able to move out

of this spot before the end of the season.

All the cup draws have been made and sent out, again the entries are not good but roughly the same as the past season, so I suppose that is something.

At the time of writing I have received no news from either Hinckley or Loughborough.

NORFOLK by Ray Hogg

Correction – only one senior team in the County Championships – plenty of men but, as with many counties a severe lack of women prepared to travel, particularly as all our matches are weekends and some distance away.

Talking of that reminds me of the County Closed last season when only three women entered the senior event and only one the veterans – it was much the same in the Norwich Closed. I have just seen this season's Norwich handbook and the usual events have been added to with 0.50 veterans of which we have plenty and three banded events. Should this attract the entry it deserves it could be a late finish. Sunday 23rd March is the day.

Norfolk was honoured when the Queen invited Ray Drew, our Chairman, to Sandringham for a garden party – he did not actually get to meet her but got close. We instituted a special award trophy for juniors at last season's junior champs. Derek Barwick donated the funds from his club when it had to close down and the criteria are general interest, sportsmanship and behaviour, both on the table and off. Several players were in contention and it was left to me to decide the winners. After seeing how a match was lost and the reaction of the player he was eliminated and another young man lost his chance after I overheard what he said to his opponent after losing to him. Boys' winner – James Olsson, son of Norwich champion Matt; girls' winner – Amy Ajeto – aged 11 (first year in table tennis).

NORTHANTS by Dennis Millman

Ryan Keates became the first winner of the Unison Masters Invitation Trophy when he produced a sparkling performance to overturn the rankings and beat all five of his opponents at Wellingborough's Glamis Hall.

This event, sponsored by 'Unison' Northampton Healthcare NHS Trust branch and admirably controlled by Ken Marchant, got off to a fine start when Keates opened his account with a fifth end win over current no. 1 Richard

Elliott in what turned out to be the longest game of the day.

Elliott, inactive during the close season, led 8-6 in the opening end, but Keates recovered and from that time onwards was never behind. Elliott saved a single match point to take the match to a decider but Keates stepped up the pressure to settle the issue.

From this point onwards their courses were to run in opposite directions with the eventual champion unbeaten with Elliott destined to draw a blank.

Keates' next opponent was Dave Welsman, the Surrey player, nationally ranked at no. 4 in the Over 50s, but Keates was equal to the task, winning in easy straight games.

Dickson Pang, the youngest participant, was Keates' next opponent and the second to go the full distance. Indeed Pang could have won for he led 10-5 in the second end before Keates fought back to ease through 14-12. Pang went on to level the match when he took the next two ends 13-11, 12-10, but it was not quite enough and Keates moved up a gear to race to victory in the final end.

Dannel Pang was then eclipsed in straight games, as he had been earlier by David Gatiss, who rapidly emerged as the main challenger when Dickson Pang was vanquished without reward. Welsman provided Gatiss with sterner opposition with games won alternately in a scintillating contest before Gatiss squeezed through 14-12 in the fifth. Gatiss then dispatched Elliott in straight games to set up a final showdown with Keates.

A confident Keates gained the early ascendancy, and though he faltered in the third, he soon regained his composure to complete an outstanding afternoon's work.

The clash between the Pang brothers was one of five to go the distance and, with Dickson shrugging aside an early loss before using his extra reach to such good effect, it was the younger brother who came out on top.

Final positions:

1. Ryan Keates 2. David Gatiss 3. Dave Welsman 4. Dickson Pang 5. Dannel Pang 6. Richard Elliott

Kettering was the first county league to start the new campaign, beginning its longest ever season with its biggest entry for more than 20 years. Consequently it is an ideal time for a new sponsor to be involved and on this occasion Burton Latimer Baptist Church will fill that important role.

Burton Baptists first entered the league in 1978 with Derek Muggleton at the helm, with that same player recently responsible for an upsurge in

interest which has resulted in the Meeting Lane outfit fielding three teams for the first time in the year the club celebrates its diamond jubilee.

Just four years ago the Kettering League comprised 30 teams in total, but since then a 60% increase has produced a tally of 48, giving four divisions.

With no gaps in the fixture list and bigger entries in the three cup competitions, a longer season was called for, beginning in mid-September and ending in time for the annual presentation dinner/dance due to take place on Friday 2nd May.

Surprisingly, the league has continued to grow despite the partial decline in the Corby club, together with the demise of the Remnant and Danesholme. Thrapston are now the biggest club with eight teams as before, while in addition to Burton Baptists – Kettering Town, Desborough Cricket Club, Harborough Academy, Oundle Town, Rifle Band and Rothborough have all expanded.

Talented newcomers to the Kettering scene include ex –RAF star Ken Philipson, former Norfolk county player John Fuller, Steve Wilmott and Chris Ross. With their expertise respective teams SAS Thrapston, Kettering Town A, and Corby A could well end the reign of the present titleholders Higham Band.

NORTHUMBERLAND by Pauline Long

North Shields YMCA 'A' team of Andrew Wilkinson, Malcolm Lusk, Keith Patterson and Michael Marsden were runaway winners of the Northumbria Summer League Division 1 title by a huge margin of 15 points from runners-up Washington 'B', who themselves finished 14 points clear of their own 'A' team. They therefore achieved the winter and summer 'double', and will no doubt be hoping to complete a treble during the coming winter season. Much, as usual, will depend on how often their top players are likely to be available.

Other winners and runners-up were: Division 2: DWP 'A' (formerly DSS 'A') and Byker CC; Division 3: North Shields YMCA 'C' and ABB; Division 4: Whitehouse Lane 'B' and North Shields YMCA 'D'.

The Winter League commenced on Monday 16th September with 61 teams contesting five divisions, an increase of three on the previous season, thus allaying fears of a mass exodus because of the 11up rule being adopted for our League. Cramlington Table Tennis Club has added two new teams –

Corinthians and Lions – to take their total of competing teams to ten, eight of whom will be playing at the new Sports Centre at Cramlington Community High School, with the other two at Shanklea School. North Shields YMCA will have seven teams, and Newton has increased its total to six. John Spence Community High School, who played in the Summer League, for the first time, has also entered a team in Division 4, and they are joined by newcomers Alnwick, who are based at the Duchess High School.

The county senior, veteran and junior teams have again been entered in their appropriate divisions. The veterans look forward to competing in the Premier Division for the first time in their history, while the seniors – relegated from Division 1A – will be hoping to be promoted from Division 2A at the earliest opportunity, assuming all their players will still be available for selection.

The juniors will play more in hope than expectation, but the keenness and enthusiasm is undoubtedly there, and there is no substitute for experience. Their time will come. Teams have also been entered in all Cup competitions, apart from the Rose Bowl and Bromfield Trophy.

The County Board of Directors was re-elected unchanged, apart from Ray Lydall, who resigned for personal reasons, and his place has been taken by Nigel Coe. Keith Wilson has been engaged as a Development Officer to cover all areas and will report to the Board on a monthly basis.

Our veteran players had an early season taste of competitive play in the inaugural North-East Masters Tournament, which took place on 16 tables at Seaburn Centre over the weekend of 7th/8th September, and proved to be a great success for those who took part. Despite the incentive of a 50% reduction in entry fees due to considerable sponsorship by Sunderland City Council, the total entry was slightly disappointing, with some players from the south and west choosing not to make the long trek to the northeast. However, there were enough players of the calibre of Joe Kennedy, John Hilton, the Johns brothers and the Schofields to name some who did travel, and we were regaled with some great exhibitions of play from the stars of yesteryear, who are still extremely useful players at veteran level. There was some local success for Doug Lawrence (Washington) who reached the quarterfinals of the 070 men's singles, and for Pauline Long (DWP), who was runner-up in the women's 050 consolation singles final.

Best wishes go to all county and league players for a successful season.

SHROPSHIRE by Terry Ridgway

Superb start to the two county veterans sides, both unfortunately in the same division this season, wins for Malcolm Langford, Rob Mansfield, Mike Dudley and Jane Bevan gave the A team an 8-1 victory over Hereford 3rds and an equally impressive start to the B side's campaign as they made the trip to Ilfracombe to beat Devon 4ths 7-2 - good wins for new boys Dave Elkin and Chris Tarr, and an unbeaten start for Wendy Baggott. Next month's division 4C matches are both home games against Devon 5ths and Hereford 3rds at Bridgnorth.

Mixed opinions with regards to the 11up scoring system led to endless debates at both Telford's and Shrewsbury's AGMs, the majority of Telford's players voted to remain at 21 for the coming season but Shrewsbury have opted for the 11up method. Neighbours Oswestry have chosen the middle ground by playing league matches to 21 but playing the tournaments to 11!

With league action only weeks away the only close season activity was the well established Idsall two-a-side league that was won this season by Chris Tarr's Telford team with an unbeaten record, the side of Chris Sani Clair and Jason James forced last season's winners, Super Vets, into second place followed by Walsall and the ever-improving Idsall junior side.

SUFFOLK by Andrew Doshier

I will start the season off by reviewing events in the Bury St. Edmunds League from last season as they were seldom mentioned last year.

With Martin and Kevin Gray from Cambridge both competing, this attracted a number of quality players from other areas and this in turn meant a much stronger league than usual.

The League held its own top invitation event in February based on the 11up system, which included two round robin groups followed by a final. The top two seeds, Martin Gray and Andrew Doshier, fought out another five-end thriller with Gray the winner six in the decider, flu victim Doshier had done really well to even reach the final as he and Gray had earlier lost to the improving Lee Balaam, while Doshier had also lost to Kevin Gray in his first group sessions.

In the Bury championships, the same two players met in the men's final, this

time Gray won considerably more easily for his first singles' title. Brian Richardson won the veterans title over Ian Brown in two sets. Elsewhere, Joanne Pettitt won the women's, Aaron Self (Rougham) won the juniors, Chris Brook (Stow) won the Division 2 title and Nathan Blunden (Bury Romans) the Division 3 title.

With regard to the 11up scoring system, Bury St. Edmunds has voted to change while Ipswich is staying put.

Suffolk County Matters

Without a regular to the county meetings, I am unsure of the Lowestoft or Beccles League situations on the scoring issue, though I was interested to hear that the Beccles League had written to Suffolk CTTA asking what benefits their League gained from being affiliated to them.

Sadly, a look at the Suffolk ratings shows no players from Beccles and just one from Lowestoft! Before subsequent county closed championships in the past two years I have phoned both leagues trying to promote enthusiasm, even offering a lift from Ipswich station to Stowmarket for their players and have always had the same answer: "our players aren't interested in travelling 50 miles to play" or "some of the juniors might be interested but no one is prepared to take them". Perhaps understandable when one considers the geography of Suffolk, but certainly disheartening from an administrator's view.

Both places are near to neighbouring Norfolk, and have I understand a number of teams in Leagues there. One suggestion is to occasionally play the county championships in Lowestoft, though I understand the time factor in getting tables there would be considerable.

Qualification to play for your County

I recently received the new ranking list and was interested to read the qualification rules which were different to what I understood both with County selection Chairman Peter Avenell and Rob Sinclair (ETTA).

It appears that though you will have to play in a league or be registered for a league affiliated to your county and then as long as one of the other criteria are met, i.e. played six matches, born/living in county - going to a school in the county, you are OK!

British National League

Britannia Handbury are again playing in Division Three South. Ian Brown,

along with Andrew Holmes, Richard Hutchinson and the girl combo of Claire Emmerson and Aimee Sparkes, will make up the squad, but they could well be strengthened by Britannia new boy Kenny Lewis. Andrew Doshier moves from Orange Northampton to Netts in Essex.

Suffolk County TTA Official Rankings

Women

1. Rebecca Sparkes
2. Vicky Gray
3. Aimee Sparkes
4. Claire Emmerson
5. Claire Lowe
6. Sandra Balaam
7. Janet Scoulding
8. Carol Clarke
9. Sonja Talbot
10. Susan Suckling

Men's

1. Paul Cicchelli
2. Andrew Doshier
3. Richard Hutchinson
4. Charles Fulcher
5. Lee Balaam
6. Andrew Warner
7. Ian Brown
8. Andrew Holmes
9. Mick Palmer
10. John Tallent
11. Gary Bloomfield
12. Nigel Hodder
13. Tim Avis
14. Gavin Bloomfield
15. Rex Manning
16. Chris Brook

SUSSEX by John Woodford

Sussex juniors, promoted to the premier division after their nail-biting 5-5 draw with Kent last April, have benefited from the junior age limit concession - 6-footer Gary Wilson (Worthing) and Samantha Stepney (Wittering) are still juniors and will form a vital part of the county's bid to stay in the top flight.

Wilson will be the no. 1 on the Sussex list following by Luke Bridge (Hastings) and Michael Simpson from Arundel. Gina Rogers (Hastings) is the no. 1 girl for Sussex, closely followed by Sam Stepney and the 13-year-old Stacey Furnival who has a spot on the England list at no. 13.

Junior organiser Peter Baldwin has commented on the fast-rising Samantha - "She has only been playing the game for less than two years and is now no. 2 in the county".

Sussex will be hosting the cadets county championship matches on 8th

December at the Six Villages Centre at Fontwell.

Meanwhile, in the British League, the top Horsham team are running joint top with Reading after the first Division 1 (South) weekend at Cippenham. The Worthing pair of Peter Bartram and Andy Walker were the star performers. But Horsham's bid will only succeed if they can bring into the side the Sussex champion, Mayur Majithia, who has two problems – a wrist injury and family commitments.

In the senior county championships, Sussex have finished runners-up by the odd point in the last two campaigns, They will bid again led by Ritchie Venner and Adrian Moore and hopefully Nigel Eckersley who is recovering from tennis elbow. Tendonitis has claimed another victim – Terry Haley – who has returned to the Horsham Club from Guildford.

WARWICKSHIRE by Caroline Williams

Shire youngsters show their ability

Warwickshire held their county selection trials for juniors and cadets in September in Leamington Spa. Good performances were produced to show the county team selectors and many of the top players would also be selected to represent Warwickshire at the Regional Trials.

Matthew Cooper from Leamington had an excellent day and won all but one of his matches to finish as the top junior boy. Matthew's closest match was against Paul Nicholls from Coventry, when Matthew came from 2-1 down to take the next 2 sets to win 3-2. Paul Nicholls finished second overall and he and Matthew are both likely to be selected to play for Warwickshire.

The Warwickshire positions as a result of the trials are as follows. Local leagues are shown by B (Birmingham), C (Coventry), L (Leamington), N (Nuneaton) and S (Stratford).

Junior Boys:- 1. Matthew Cooper (L); 2. Paul Nicholls (C); 3. David Bissell (B); 4. Peter Kirkham (B); 5. Samreet Sandhu (B); 6. Navinder Matharu (B); 7. John Harrison (B); 8. Chris Burgess (B); 9. Brett Medforth (C); 10. Richard Grover (L); 11. Scott Danter (B); 12. Phuc Huynh (B); 13. Omar Banares (B); 14. Danny Orr (R); 15. Liam Walsh (N); 16. Mohammed Yaquob (B); 17. Sunil Basra (N); 18. Edward Freeman (L).

Cadet Boys:- 1. Navinder Matharu (B); 2. Danny Orr (R); 3. Scott Danter (B); 4. Chris Burgess (B); 5. Daniel Rowan (L); 6. Michael Rowan (L); 7. Samreet Sandhu (B); 8. Sunil Basra (N); 9. Jack

Powell (N); 10. Thomas Prichard (R); 11. Steven Allen (R); 12. Lee Bennett (N); 13. Adam Carvell (N).

The change in date by 6 months for eligibility meant that our top Warwickshire girls all gained an extra year as cadets and thus the same three girls took the top three places in both trials, sisters Nikki and Rachel Pilgrim (Nuneaton) just edging in front of Leamington's Stephanie Hawkins.

Junior Girls:- 1. Nikki Pilgrim (N); 2. Rachel Pilgrim (N); 3. Stephanie Hawkins (L); 4. Kelly-Jayne Walden (N); 5. Ros Freeman (L); 6. Sophie Cooper (L); 7. Jennifer Allen (R);

Cadet Girls:- 1. Nikki Pilgrim (N); 2. Rachel Pilgrim (N); 3. Stephanie Hawkins (L); 4. Sophie Cooper (L); 5. Jennifer Allen (R).

In addition Leamington's Kelly Sibley, with a May birthday also gained from the date change and now is ranked 1 in England. Her national duties means however that she is unlikely to be available for county play.

WORCESTERSHIRE by Martin Clark

Rankings

Senior Men

1. Julian Wooton; 2. Steve Horton; 3. Lewis Sicket; 4. Lee Horton; 5. David Rogers; 6. Zia Khan; 7. Mark Brookes; 8. Ray Dixon; 9. Ken Walton; 10. Roy Norton; 11. Eric Hardman; 12. Nick Mytton; 13. Mark Fiddian; 14. Martin Madkins; 15. Mike Meredith; 16. Chris Maiden; 17. Mervyn Wood; 18. Martin Clark; 19. Bryan Belcher; 20. Ray Williams; 21. John Stafford; 22. Will Aherne; 23. Steve Dorrell; 24. Lee Hipkiss; 25. Ian Wood; 26. Matthew Hartwell; 27. Clive Cook; 28. Tony Bartram; 29. Sid Hodgetts

Veteran Men

1. Ray Dixon 2. Ken Walton 3. Roy Norton 4. Eric Hardman 5. Nick Mytton 6. Mike Meredith 7. Chris Maiden 8. Mervyn Wood 9. Martin Clark 10. Bryan Belcher 11. Ray Williams 12. John Stafford 13. Will Aherne 14. Steve Dorrell 15. Clive Cook 16. Tony Bartram 17. Sid Hodgetts

Over 60s Men

1. Ray Dixon 2. Roy Norton 3. Mike Meredith 4. Mervyn Wood 5. Bryan Belcher 6. Sid Hodgetts

Junior Boys

1. William Pritchard 2. Tom McDermott 3. Joe Higgs 4. Matthew Hutton 5. Andrew Thomas 6. Robert Hatherly

7. Daniel Page 8. Andrew Taylor 9. David Smith 10. Craig Norledge

Senior Women

1. Jill Harris 2. Sandra Roden 3. Margaret Dignum 4. Kate Hughes 5. Sarah Thatcher 6. Joanne Hill 7. Carrie Bewley 8. Alison Westwood 9. Stephanie Price 10. Margaret Dignum 11. Helen Pogmore 12. Lynda Reid 13. Janet Hunt 14. Alison Rathbone 15. Dot Macfarlane 16. Beryl Shammon 17. Kendall Smith

Veteran Women

1. Janet Dunning 2. Margaret Dignum 3. Helen Pogmore 4. Lynda Reid 5. Janet Hunt 6. Dot Macfarlane 7. Beryl Shammon

Over 60s Women

1. Margaret Dignum 2. Janet Hunt 3. Beryl Shammon

Junior Girls

1. Kendall Smith 2. Emma Williams 3. Gemma Russell 4. Leanne Sulley 5. Lynsey Garbutt 6. Hannah Garbutt

COUNTY LEAGUES

Yet another reduction in the overall strength in numbers this season, with 141 teams in all against 147 last time. Half the county will again stick with 21 up and the other three continue with the ITTF ruling of 11 up, surely a continuing split of this nature is not good for the long-term future.

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

VETERANS DIVISION 3A

The short trip up the M6 to Stafford proved to be quite fruitful as our Veterans II came away with a well-deserved 6-3 victory in the very warm conditions. Lynda Reid and Martin Clark were undefeated and with Mike Meredith taking a game together with success in both doubles, both points were assured for a good start to the campaign.

EVESHAM PREMIER CLUB

The club continues to grow in popularity. The idea of a 2-a-side competition at an eight table venue (soon to be twelve tables) appeals to large numbers of beginners or those who do not like the long nights of traditional league play.

VETERANS HOME COUNTRIES INTERNATIONAL

The county was well represented in September's event in Largs. Apart from being part of the successful England over 60's teams, there was

individual success as well. Roy Norton won the over 60's singles then teamed up with Ray Dixon to win the Men's over 60's doubles. In the over 60's women's individual events Margaret Dignum was runner up in the singles to Doreen Schofield before teaming up with her to win the women's doubles.

COUNTY LEAGUE

It has been decided to play this season's competition at Evesham High School on December 1st and January 5th.

BROMSGROVE LEAGUE

The Bromsgrove League celebrated its Golden Jubilee in June. Some 120 people joined in the celebrations at Studley Road Social Club. John Bromhead produced a detailed book on the league's history to commemorate the event, spending many hours on research.

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS CLOSED

Junior championships will be held on Saturday 16th November at Christopher Whitehead School and the senior championships on 16th February at Evesham High School.

YORKSHIRE by Barrys Snowden

Doncaster proved themselves as one of the success stories in the inter-cities competition of the Yorkshire League last term when they took three divisional titles.

Their success that encompassed mens, veterans and junior divisions, confirmed their strength across the spectrum of age groups.

In the men's division Doncaster was indebted to their top two players Tim Simpson and Gary Hinds, who enjoyed 12 and 10 wins records respectively from 14 played and, although they never had a regular third player, the four stand-ins each contributed sufficiently to their cause to finish one point clear of York.

Doncaster Veterans no. 2 also finished one point clear in their division as the South Yorkshire team just managed to keep ahead of Halifax no. 1 in the second division.

They earned the top position in this division by virtue of beating Halifax when the two sides met, and although Doncaster dropped one point in a thriller with York no. 2 they justified their title with Mike Thornley achieving an impressive perfect record from 15 starts.

On the junior front Doncaster juniors took the division one title when they edged out a strong Hull side whilst things are looking rosy on the cadets side also as their under 14 side, just missed out on the title as well when they were forced into runners up spot in a three-way tie with winners Scarborough and third place Hull.

Yorkshire is justifiably proud in having a World Table Tennis Champion in Wakefield's Les Darcy, who brought home the over 80s Gold Medal from the recent World Veterans Championships in Lucerne, Switzerland.

The Yorkshire Table Tennis Association would like to thank Rea Balmforth who has decided not to stand for re-election as Press Officer. Rea was a regular contributor to these County Notes and his efforts for many years were greatly appreciated along with the splendid service he has given to the county.

Rea will continue to serve the county on the management committee, where his vast experience will be invaluable.

YORK SUMMER FESTIVAL

The annual veterans summer tournament superbly organised by Brenda Powell is a popular event held in the beautiful historic city.

The event allows players to blow off the cobwebs of summer and have plenty of sets as all events are played initially in large groups.

Unfortunately the over 40's reigning champion Kevin Beadsley was unable to defend his title due to recovery from an operation but Kevin was a popular visitor on the Sunday as he chatted away with many old friends.

Beadsley won the over 40's singles last season at his first attempt, a feat which was repeated by Durham's Dave Robson this time as the likeable Durham player also picked up the mixed doubles title as he was one of two players who scooped two titles.

The Blue Riband event had a number of leading players with John Hilton being top seed ahead of Keith Williams, Tony Gelder and Dave Harding, and although all four reached the quarter-finals, Gelder could only finish runner up in his group to new boy Robson.

Hilton did not have things all his own way in the first quarter final against fellow Cheshire player Phil Biggs winning 3-1 and although Gelder as expected beat Tony Taylor, Wayne Percival's conqueror, all the fun took place in the bottom half of the draw as Robson beat Harding in the third quarter final and was joined in the semi

final by Benny Robertson who surprisingly ousted second seed Williams in three straight games.

The first semi-final saw Gelder overpower a tiring Hilton who just pinched the fourth game but could not come to grips with the explosive Gelder who ran away with the fifth to claim a place in the final where he was joined by Robson who comfortably beat "Benny" in the second semi as Robertson appeared a shadow of the player who had beaten Williams the previous round.

The final saw Gelder take the opening game which was more than he managed in the group stages against Robson but from then on it was his opponent who took control and take three games on the trot to take the title.

Gelder had more success in the doubles when, partnered by Harding, they took the title with a final victory against Dave Newton and Phil Biggs although Gelder almost missed out once more to the ubiquitous Robson in a thrilling quarter final.

Robson partnered by Yorkshire's Barry Snowden ran the top seeds close and had two match points in a sometimes explosive contest before the Surrey/Durham pairing just ran out 10-12 11-8 11-7 9-11 15-13 victors.

A scratch partnership with Sharon Mitchell saw Robson take his second title in the mixed doubles with a final victory over John Hilton and Eileen Shaler.

It was Eileen who prevented the semi-finals of the over 40's ladies event being an all White Rose affair as the Leicestershire player was joined in the semi-finals by Yorkshire players Louvain Smith, Sandra Rider and Linda Simpson.

The final was an all Yorkshire affair as second seed Rider just overcame county colleague Simpson in an exciting final, and it was Rider again who triumphed in the ladies doubles when, partnered by Shirley Gelder, they beat off a spirited effort from regular pairing of Louvain Smith and Janet Brown.

Rest of Results - Finals

Mens over 40's Band 2:

Geoff Brooke beat Barry Snowden

Mens over 40's Band 3

Tony Bartram beat Bill Wilson

Womens over 40's band 2

Dot Macfarlane beat Jenny Holmes

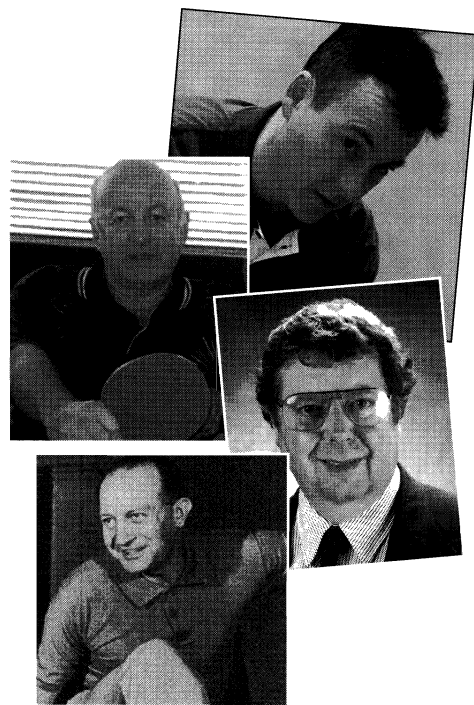
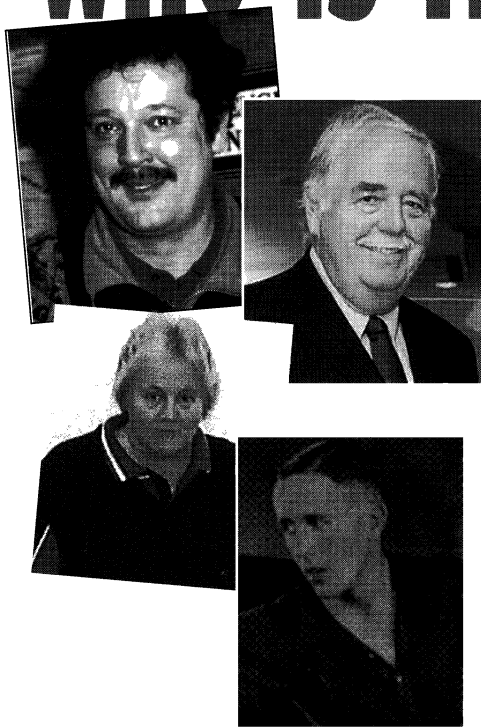
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WHO IS THE GREATEST COACH?



Brian Halliday reviews how English coaches have shaped table tennis in this country, on pages 10 and 11. This raises the question who is, or was, the greatest English coach, who has succeeded most during the last 50 years?

You may think it is your own personal coach, or someone from the past, or possibly people coaching today like Alan Cooke, Nicky Jarvis, Carole Moore, Ken Phillips or Gideon Ashison.

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GROVE FIRM FAVOURITES

MERES Leisure Centre in Grantham was the chosen venue for the opening of the 15th. season of Women's British League and they will also play host to the concluding and final weekend in January.

Late team changes prior to the event played a huge part in establishing Grove, 7 times previous winners, as firm favourites to take the premier division title and the accompanying league tables tell the story. The decision to omit Bosede Kaffo from their squad made it unlikely that London Progress would retain their title and the addition to an already strong squad of Shuang Zhao, newly arrived from Beijing established Grove's credentials. The 16 year old Chinese won all ten of her sets comfortably, only taken to a



TEAM OF THE WEEKEND: BRITANNIA HANBURY (FP): SARAH STEADMAN, AIMEE SPARKES, VICKI GRAY & CLAIRE EMMERSON, with non-playing captain PAUL HUTCHINSON (far left) and Vice Chairman, Development, MIKE LEWIS.

(Draycott/Long Eaton) and Darlington's Claire Wilson and Cherith Graham were each beaten only once. Sarah Nouch and Kate Vickers complete Darlington's squad. Another relegated team looking for an early return are Norton Ladies strengthened by Greek player Alkistis Olympiou who lost only twice. Alison Taylor with 4 wins, Amanda Pennell

Words by
BRIAN LAMERTON
Pictures by
PATRICA MOSNEY

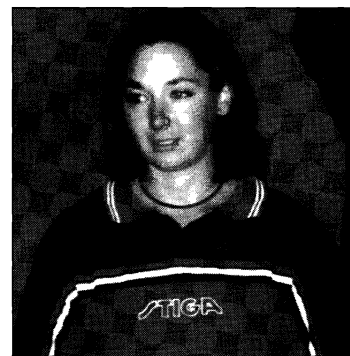
fourth game on one occasion and that on her very first visit to the table by Kelly Sibley of the Grove second team. Shuang's string of victims included Marketa Myskova of Eagle Printers (Plymouth) who in her turn defeated Groves Georgina Walker, the highest English ranked player on view. Grove's No. 3 player who returned a 100% average was Louise Durrant. Grove have yet to play second placed Horsham Ladies who are strengthened this season by the inclusion of those two ever presents in the competition Karen Smith and Jill Harris.

Hollington, who found last seasons premier division hard going have made an early bid to return but will need to improve on draws with Wirral Ladies and Spicer Ladies if they again wish to mix it with the elite. Of players ever present Carmen Vajdi (Spicer), Sarah Coggin and Rosemary Rainton (Hollington), Karen Lockwood (Wirral) and Tamar Seymour (Hull) were all victorious 8 times out of 10.

Second division leaders Darlington have yet to play either Byng Hall or Leeds Ladies and a very close finish can be forecast for this one; the Byng Hall v Leeds clash ended 4-2 in favour of the latter with two wins apiece for Byng's Angie Bristow, who remained unbeaten throughout, and Leeds Clara Howard. Howard together with Jane Vickers

WOMENS BRITISH LEAGUE

PREMIER DIVISION	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grove I	5	5	0	0	29	1	10
Horsham Ladies	5	4	1	0	21	9	9
Cippenham TTC	5	2	2	1	15	15	6
Eagle Printers	5	0	4	1	13	17	4
Grove II	5	1	2	2	13	17	4
London Progress	5	0	3	2	12	18	3
Leeds Ladies I	5	1	1	3	11	19	3
Irish Ladies I	5	0	1	4	6	24	1
FIRST DIVISION							
Hollington	5	3	2	0	22	8	8
Spicer Ladies	5	2	2	1	17	13	6
Hull Sandhill	5	2	2	1	17	13	6
Wirral Ladies	5	2	2	1	16	14	6
Brittania Hanbury(FP)	5	3	0	2	16	14	6
Halton Croda I	5	1	1	3	14	16	3
Batts Peniel Team	5	1	1	3	11	19	3
Irish Ladies II	5	1	0	4	7	23	2
SECOND DIVISION							
Darlington I	5	5	0	0	23	7	10
Byng Hall I	5	4	0	1	20	10	8
Leeds Ladies II	5	4	0	1	19	11	8
Ashford	5	2	1	2	16	14	5
Elgre	5	1	1	3	15	15	3
Draycott & Long Eaton	5	1	1	3	13	17	3
East Midland Ladies	5	1	1	3	10	20	3
Norwich Gels	5	0	0	5	4	26	0
THIRD DIVISION							
Norton Ladies	5	4	1	0	23	7	9
Darlington II	5	3	1	1	18	12	7
Sutton at Hone	5	3	1	1	19	11	7
Grove III	5	2	1	2	17	13	5
Halton Croda II	5	0	1	4	7	23	1
Byng Hall II	5	0	1	4	6	24	1



MARKETA MYSKOVA

and Helen Butcher were also wearing Norton's colours; their one dropped point being against Sutton-at-Hone for whom Kim Mudge defeated both Olympiou and Taylor. Norton defeated Darlington "B" 5-1 and Darlington beat Sutton 4-2 so anything can still happen here. Grove "C"s Sarah Parks and Kim Mudge share second spot on the averages with 7 wins each from 8 played.

Brittania Hanbury (F.P.) were nominated "Team of the Weekend", Marketa Myskova (Eagle Printers) "Woman of the weekend", and long serving umpire Frank Stevens, a "For Being Special" presentation.

VIDEO REVIEW

SELF-STYLED hustler, champion of the hard bat game and a lifelong gadfly to the US authorities Marty Reisman is the subject of a British-made video due out this month (November).

Reisman, now 72, is still a competitive player at national level in the US hardbat rankings. But it is his colourful career up to now which is the focus of 'The Marty Reisman Story,' an hour-long video produced by Liverpool company Northern River Productions.

The production team spent a week with Reisman in his native Manhattan, filming a string of anecdotes and memories as 'the Needle' recalled his early days at Lawrence's famous table tennis centre on Broadway, learning how to hustle a living at the former haunt of one of New York's infamous gangsters Legs Diamond.

The video recounts Reisman's phenomenal success as a young table tennis star, his post-war visits to English including his epic win over Viktor Barna in the British Open at Wembley – and the money matches that went on behind the scenes along with Reisman's penchant for smuggling and blackmail!

Later our hero graduated from smuggling nylons into Britain to carrying gold ingots for Far East cartels in a specially-made vest while touring as a celebrated American table tennis star.

Contributors to the video include table tennis historian Tim Boggan, leading hardbat player Scott Gordon and a former showgirl turned pool coach Ruby Alabama who recalls the exciting days when she hung out with the in-crowd at Reisman's table tennis centre in New York's Upper West Side.

Jackie Mason, the comedian, who grew up with Reisman, also talks exclusively to the production team. When not ripping his old school pal to pieces he admits: "Very few have achieved so much from so little. That's what stars are made of."

Reisman shows no sign of slowing down. "I've had a fantastic life so far – and I still can't wait to see what my next challenge will be," he says. "Through table tennis I have been round the world several times, met the Pope, princes and potentates, I've never had what you might call a proper job, and I've loved every minute. I'm still active as a player and coach and I can't wait to see how good I am when I'm 80!"

As a world championship contender Reisman's potential was dealt a savage blow by the appearance of the sponge bat in the 1950s. Refusing to abandon his wooden paddle he took a conscious decision to let the sponge-dominated game make its own way – while he continued to champion the hardbat game in his own unique style.

'The Marty Reisman Story,' narrated by BBC Radio 5 Live commentator Charlie Lambert, is available from Northern River Productions, 30 Gladstone Road, Liverpool L19 1RR, price £19.95 inclusive of vat, p & p. More details at www.northernriver.co.uk or phone 0151 427 5050.

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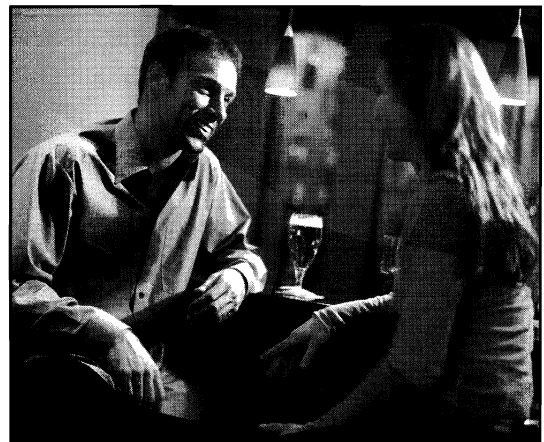
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LORESTAS LEADS JAGS TO 10-4 VICTORY

IT IS HARD to decide which match produced the bigger upset in a week where JAGS and Barnet both excelled. Perhaps it is JAGS who ultimately deserve the head-line as they won by the greater margin. There can be little doubt that their 10-4 win over BATT'S Team Peniel I was a superb all-round team effort. It was JAG'S first win of the season and they can rarely have played better, writes Steve Kerns.

For the old-fashioned amongst us who like our Table Tennis best when it includes long rallies away from the table this match was an absolute delight with some truly outstanding play by all eight players. A lean-looking Lorestas Trumpauskas took the Player-of-the-Match Award with three hard fought singles wins; the highlight being his 13-11 in the fifth end victory over John Holland. Likewise the battle royal between old rivals Joe Kennedy and Clive Carthy was quite outstanding with Clive nicking this one at 12-10 in the fifth. Perhaps the talking-point here (or should that be laughing point?) was a futile attempt by Clive to rescue a lost cause with three chopped returns. Who says he doesn't move? It wasn't John Holland's day as he also missed out 12-10 in the decider against an inspired Abdul Wuraola in the opening game. Ever the professional John hit back in determined fashion with a 3-1 win over Carthy. Neil Charles was unable to match Trumpauskas but he scored twice with a decisive 3-1 win over a dispirited Wuraola and he rescued a 0-2 deficit to get the better of the inform Jerome Jonah.

Barnet's 9-5 win over Darlington again owed everything to team-work as none of their players emerged unbeaten. Gergely Urban missed out against Ritchie Venner 11-8 in the fifth end but hit back by beating Andrew Wilkinson (3-1) and Ian McLean (3-2) whilst Nicky McKoy (ranked no. 63 nationally) won't have been too pleased at losing to the lower ranked Michael Marsden. Nicky redeemed himself with a fine 3-1 win over Ian McLean (ranked no. 54) but this was only a prelude before his third singles where he sensationally got the better of Ritchie Venner (England no. 24) 3-0. Linda March couldn't contain Ritchie Venner going down 3-1 but she played her part with a vital 3-1 win over Andrew Wilkinson and a 12-10 in the fifth end victory over Marsden. McKoy paired with Linda also rescued a desperate situation in the second doubles. Trailing Marsden and Wilkinson by two games to nil and by 8-4 their cause looked hopeless. Amazingly they went on to win and it was this



success that ultimately set up their side's victory. If any further confirmation was needed this win ensured that McKoy took the Player of the Match Award.

Seasider's bright start to the season was brought rudely down to earth. They met a Progress side without Marco Essomba and still lost 11-3. Cris Sladden took his three singles without being extended to a fifth game although Jason Sugrue had to pull out all the stops to get the better of Kevin Dolder at 12-10 in the deciding end. Taju Agunbiade was beaten by an inspired Paul Hutchings but the stylish almost casual way that he plays meant that he was still awarded the Player-of-the-Match Award. Comments were also made on Taju's outstanding sportsmanship. Dedicated Eli Baraty, a home-grown product of the Progress Club has fully earned his place in their first team squad. It seems hard to believe that he was playing in division 2 (South) two seasons ago. Here he twice got the better of players ranked above him with wins over John Rankin and Paul Hutchings.

Things are looking bleak for DML Plymouth and they won't be too pleased with their 10-4 defeat against Wellow House School I. Paul Whiting was their best player with wins over Chris Rogers and Dave Gannon but an unbeaten performance from Lee Neil and two wins for Rogers, Gannon and Mark Green left Wellow House well on top. Neil, the only undefeated player was the deserved Player-of-the-Match and his opening win over Whiting clearly

established the direction in which this match was heading.

UNREGISTERED PLAYERS - NOT THIS YEAR !!

Another Rule-change to contend with and a remarkable improvement in team's administration. These were the two main talking points to come out of a weekend which saw the new ITTF Service Rules introduced on the Sunday. It seemed quite comical on occasions as players struggled valiantly to come to terms with the new rules. Was it the split second that players spent "concentrating" on their service that was the difference from being where they would normally have been instinctively to follow those services up? And after last year's problems where far too many teams failed to register players or to purchase ETTA Licences on time it is very pleasing to hear that there were no misdemeanours whatsoever this weekend. Well done to all concerned.

Another positive feature of the League has been the number of exceptionally strong performers playing in the third divisions. The best known names that have appeared so far include Henry Buist, Mike Johns and Andrew Eden (yes - that one!) Other third division teams have shown a marked improvement in depth and Ashford and Birmingham University are able to boast players of the calibre of Derek Wood and Paul Lucas playing at no. 4.

Division One (South):

OLOP Impact have made their bid for an early return to the Premier division clear and lead the table from Horsham I on games difference. Fittingly when the two teams met a first-class match ended all-square. Looking at the match neither side will be too disappointed with the result. Horsham because they won their four games at 11-9 in the fifth or closer and OLOP because they trailed 4-2 before hitting back. At 2-4 Hari Gehlot scored a superb win over Andy Walker and Ali Subhan an equally fine victory over Ramesh Bhalla. Horsham's Peter Bartram played brilliantly to beat Robert Pountney and David Barr whilst Terry Haley came up trumps against Ali Subhan and then sensationally against Pountney. Not surprisingly they couldn't decide on a Player-of-the-Match on this occasion. Horsham just had enough in hand as they beat Byng Hall Farningham Print I 5-3 with Andy Walker taking the Player-of-the-Match Award as he beat both Mark Brown and John Huckle. Ramesh Bhalla secured the victory for his team by beating Chris Knight 3-1.

Cippenham I are also off to a good start but they met their match against London Progress II where they lost 3-5. Progress had Tajudeen Agunbiade playing on the Saturday before he took his place in their Premier division side on the Sunday and he was the difference between the two sides. He beat both Martin Adams and Richard Tilford 3-1. Cippenham raced into a 4-0 lead against Ellenborough before Ellenborough hit back and it was a relieved Clive Payne who beat Matthew Spero 3-0 to earn his team their 5-3 victory. Payne was the only player to take both his singles on this occasion and he must surely be the strongest regular no. 4 in this division!

EBS-Orange Northampton I and De Vere NETTS are both yet to get off the mark. It was more surprising to see Northampton struggle as they did so well last year although not having their no. 1 Keiron Dabbs certainly didn't help their cause. Luck doesn't seem to have been in abundant supply either. Although Dave Gatiss played superbly against Ellenborough as he beat both Gary Tendler and Simon Philipz, narrow losses by Steve Munson against Jimmy Walsh (13-11 in the decider) and by Simon Pryke against Matthew Spero (11-8 in the fifth end) left them as 2-6 losers. Kevin Copperwheat proved to be their biggest success-story. After losing twice against Cippenham II on the Saturday he faced their first team on the Sunday and got the better of both Clive Payne and Martin Adams. Two outstanding wins!

NETTS somewhat surprisingly gave their best account of themselves against OLOP and although they lost 6-2 they had their chances !. With Kimber Chodha getting the better of Hari Gehlot 3-1 and Keiran Lally seeing off Ali Subhan 3-0; had Dave Cole not succumbed to Robert Pountney at 13-11 in the decider they would have been right there in the thick of things !

Division One (North):

This division has yet to sort itself out and the top six teams are only separated by two points at this early stage. In fact the top three sides all have an identical games ratio of 21-11. It's that close ! Leaders Derwent I slipped up badly (6-2) in round three against sixth-placed Darlington II for whom Michael Marsden and Daniel Tomica were undefeated. Derwent had previously seen off Coventry Phoenix 5-3 and recorded convincing 7-1 victories over bottom and second-to-bottom sides Halton Croda I and Dewsbury. Andrew Horsfield took five of his six singles in these matches, his only defeat coming against Halton no. 1 Chris Ford. David Godbold played on the Saturday and looked impressive in taking his four singles. Second placed Grantham opened their campaign with two wins and two draws. By far their most impressive performance came against Norwich Todd Foxwood where they won 7-1. Dave Harvey dominated proceedings from the no. 1 position and Adam Brewer and Alex Green also stayed unbeaten. Norwich's Kevin Gray marked a very impressive debut weekend at this level by scoring Norwich's sole victory over Michael George. Grantham had Harvey to the fore again in their 4-4 draw against Coventry Phoenix. He took his two singles which earned him the Player-of-the-Match Award and rising star Alex Green followed suit. An unbeaten Neil Wright was Coventry's best player and Adrian Pilgrim earned his side a share of the points in the last match by getting the better of Mark Donaghue 11-8 in the decider.

Halton Croda I struggled and failed to get off the mark. Things looked promising for them as they led Norwich

2-0 in round 3 but from that point it went downhill particularly after Kevin Gray beat James McGrath 3-2 in game no. four. A rampant Norwich side raced through the last four matches. Paul Cicchelli scored a fine 3-1 win over Chris Ford and Martin Gray, Jon Cockburn and Kevin Gray all took their singles three straight. Ormesby were another team who were "out of the blocks" like Colin Jackson only to see it all go wrong. They surged into a 3-0 lead against Coventry Phoenix as Tony Wilson's 11-6 in the fifth set victory over Neil Wright appeared to have given them a match-winning lead. Jas Dhillon hit back by beating Danny Welsh 3-0 and with Tim Yarnall beating Keith Rodger 3-1 it was clear Ormesby had a fight on their hands. Some very close matches followed but on each occasion it was the Coventry players (Ryan Stockham, Jas Dhillon and Neil Wright) who emerged as 3-1 winners.

Division Two (North):

Grove, one of the most famous names in English Table Tennis are going to take some stopping in this division. With a 25-7 games-for ratio, victories against Derwent II (6-2), Oakbank (6-2), Elgre (7-1) and Uxbridge (6-2) tell their own story. The 7-1 demolition of third-placed Elgre was the highlight as Kou Lei, Nupur Santra and Zhou Shuang were all unbeaten. John Taylor not only took his side's singles by getting the better of Bradley Evans but he became the only player to take an end off Kou Lei the whole weekend. Neither Uxbridge Burton's Roy Norton or Andy Henry could make any significant impact. The scorecard comment said simply "the scores say it all". Zhao Shuang also stayed undefeated and her play against a series of good attackers also caught the eye. Again she only dropped one end (against Peter Furneaux) and her play over the season against other leading English female players should be well worth watching.

Division Two (South):

Last year's runaway Champions London Progress III may well be the team to beat again. Even more impressively they

showed a remarkable strength in depth by fielding a completely different line-up to last season. However they won't get too excited just yet as their three wins and draw were against the bottom four placed sides ! Powerful newcomer Eric Hammond not only won all six of his singles but he also stepped up to division One (South) and claimed the scalps of Byng Hall's Mark Romano and John Huckle. Not bad for a player playing no. three or four in this team ! Progress's opening 8-0 whitewash of Hastings flattered them slightly; Branko Putnik, Mike Levene, Jogenes Senorin and Hammond carried all before them although four matches went the distance.

Division Three (Midlands & South):

Generation II look the team to beat in this division having grabbed three of last year's KCD Stiga first team. They clearly have every intention of fighting their way back into division two (South). As impressive as their results were the only question mark that remains over their credentials was the fact that their opponents turned out to be the four bottom placed teams. A strong Birmingham University II team offered them most opposition and actually led 2-1 after Steve Buck had beaten Miki Sinanin and Paul Lucas had seen off Roger Hookey. But their challenge finished there as Generation II rattled off the next five games with Graham Toole and Victor Imisev both completing doubles to leave them as 6-2 winners. In a remarkable display of all-round strength their only other player to lose a game over the weekend was Keith "Charlie" Childs who missed out at 11-9 in the fifth end against BATTIS Team Peniel's Aaron Fennell.

All the teams got off the mark and Peniel owed a lot to the success of their girls when they faced Grove II. Their no. 1 Daniel Rees led the way by taking his two singles whilst team-mates Grace and Sarah Brown both won once. Grove's point came about via an all-round team effort with Gavin Evans, Paul Rowan., Simon Nolan and Sam Clarke all winning solitary singles.

Division Three (South):

Referee Mick Storde's efficiency will be impossible to beat as he was able to update the ETTA Web-Site (which he administers) on the Sunday after the matches. Again a team dominated the division by staying undefeated but not to the same extent that Generation II dominated Division 3 (Midlands & South). Nevertheless, Ashford playing all matches at their home venue are going to be the team to beat. With such good all-round strength the 8 games they lost were often the ones that stood out more than the 24 games that they actually won. Their no. 1 Stefan Edlund (not Stefan Edberg (!!)) which appeared on one scorecard) won't lose many at this level and he showed his class as he saw off Farhat Rasul and Adrian Davis in their 5-3 victory over second-placed JAGS. Dave Crowley took the Player of the Match award for his "steadying-the-ship" win over Adrian Davis in the fourth game. In their other games they weren't really extended and the 7-1 win over bottom-placed Britannia Hanbury was more noticeable for a "gem of win" for the

loser's Ian Brown over Edlund (at 12-10 in the fifth end) than anything else. Little known Ken Lewis in his first foray into the British League gave an excellent account of himself against Derek Wood before missing out over five ends.

Second-placers JAGS II scored a fine 6-2 win over last year's third-placers Horsham III. Farhat Rasul as befits an occasional Premier division performer led his team by example and stayed undefeated and Dele Ayoola contributed a double at the expense of Terry Dean and Graham Faulkner. Simon Pink's opening-game win over Adrian Davis represented the most outstanding effort from the Horsham players.

Division Three (North):

Halton Croda II are off to a flying start in this division but their very impressive 28-4 games ratio disguises the fact that they haven't played second-placed Blackpool or third placers Club Mid-Cheshire yet. Halton's hardest test was against fourth-placed Dewsbury II and their 5-3 narrow win indicates that it is still too early to label them as favourites. On this occasion Dewsbury's no. 1 Darren Page was undefeated whilst Croda dominated the lower-half of the card with Ray Jackson and Rob Hughes both remaining unbeaten. Croda appear to have found few difficulties in beating Isle of Man (8-0), Barrow (7-1) and Seasiders II (8-0).

Second placed Blackpool produced a superb performance to get the better of third-placed Club Mid-Cheshire 5-3. Steve Dixon was on great form getting the better of both Mike and Dominic Johns and Martin Ireland added vital wins over James Eaton and Johns Jr.. Blackpool lost their chance of going top when they drew against Darlington III. Outstanding Cadet prospect David Meads showed just how much the ambitious Juniors like to play against the Seniors by pushing Steve Dixon to five ends whilst another outstanding Junior Andrew Leighton got the better of Martin Ireland. Claire Wilson completed a fine effort from the Darlington side as she beat Philip Crankshaw in the vital eighth game.

Blackpool weren't unduly tested against Seasiders II or Barrow winning 8-0 and 7-1 respectively, the only game that escaped them being a 3-0 success for Johnathan Crawford over Philip Crankshaw.

Division Three (Midlands):

The idea of former Colombian superstar Tino Asprilla playing for Darlington must have been many football fan's idea of the bizarre. But Wirral Premier's inclusion of Andrew Eden on a regular basis in division 3 (Midland) takes some beating in National Table Tennis terms. It certainly puts Des Douglas's participation in division two (North) a couple of years back in the shade. Eden, a former England international not surprisingly stayed undefeated and only dropped a single game in eight matches. Robert Morris (Grove III) pinched the first end but got little change out of the next 33 points. Second placed Kingshurst Bribar were soundly despatched 6-2 with Tom Page also remaining undefeated.

Second placed Woodfield didn't taste defeat but they were held to draws by both Rotherham Scorpions and Bedford Modern.

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WELSH WIZARDS TOO STRONG FOR ENGLAND

ENGLAND are not the poorest table tennis nation in membership of the ITTF. Many nations have to ask their players for sums of money (sometimes sponsors help) in order to travel abroad in search of success and experience, writes John Woodford, in Newtownabbey.

Seven English players from the top of the senior list were not available for this tournament as they were earning cash playing abroad in Japan, Germany, France, Belgium and Sweden.

There is no money available for senior players at this time. The ETTA will know how much will come from the Lottery coffers via Sport England in November.

A lot of money was spent preparing for the Manchester Commonwealth Games. Now we have to wait and see the amount of money ahead with the hopes that there will be a three-year financial run-up to the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in 2006.

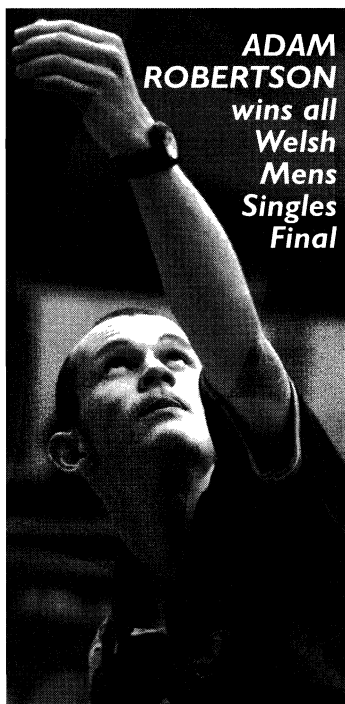
Meanwhile, in the most hospitable atmosphere of Belfast, England were forced to field six juniors in the eight-strong squad to tackle the other five nations. The two seniors were Andrew Rushton and Louise Durrant.

The Welsh national squad were there, of course - led by Adam Robertson, Ryan Jenkins and Bethan Dauntton. It was predictable (as Daily Telegraph readers saw) that the Welsh squad were clear favourites.

Adam Robertson from Wrexham but now living at his club at Wurzburg in Germany, slipped up on one Irish banana skin when he lost 10, 6, 6 to Andrew Rushton - one of the best wins ever for the man from Lancashire. That was in the team event. After that, seeded No.2 Adam coasted through the mens singles draw via Matthew Kenny in the quarters, Brian Fitzgerald 8, 9, 7 in the semis and Ryan Jenkins -8, 8 -4, 8, 7 in a real thriller of a final.

Jenkins power seemed slightly better than his opponent but it was Adam's control and, superior backhand counter-hitting power that saw him through.

England juniors filled three places in the womens singles semi-finals.



ADAM ROBERTSON wins all Welsh Mens Singles Final

Joanna Parker's defence has one flaw rather like Matthew Syed at the moment - her returns are too high, but I still rate her performance last season beating Hungarian Barbara Kiss as outstanding. In Belfast she lost to the power and experience of Bethan Dauntton 6, 15, 6.

The second semi-final saw Katy Parker take out Louise Durrant 9, 4, 10. Overall in Belfast, I was impressed with Katy, although the womens final saw Bethan, with the aid of the Chinese national coach, win the title 9, 6, 8.

Dale Barham is making progress. His attitude on and off-court is showing signs of considerable improvement. But there was one lapse in Cardiff - he just failed to reach the quarters, defeated by the Irish No.2 Brian Fitzgerald who plays in France. Fitzgerald is a player to be reckoned with, fast topspin on both wings. After losing to the Irishman Dale threw his bat into the next court - but at ground level!

Stuart Crawford has lost three stone in weight and has recorded better results than three years ago at the Olympic trials in Sheffield when he lost twice to Barham - this time Fitzgerald beat Crawford 9, 5 -6, 8 in

the quarters.

TEAM EVENT

The six nations all played five matches, with the "minnows" Isle of Man and Guernsey losing most of their matches, except when they clashed when the Channel Islanders beat the Manxmen and Manxwomen 9-1. Guernsey's Kay Chivers provided a shock when she beat Joanna Parker in the team event, but Joanna took revenge 5, -10, 6, 2 in the singles groups.

England and Wales were the strongest teams - they clashed in the penultimate round Wales won 6-4... in the men's matches Wales dominated except for Rushton's splendid win over Adam Robertson, whilst Ryan Jenkins also proved too strong for our young team.

Scotland provided plenty of opposition, led by Gavin Rumgay and coached by Kevin Satchell and Euan Walker who has a long term knee injury - they lost 6-4 to Ireland who had Jason Sugrue as their No.1, but the Scots crashed 9-1 to both Wales and England. Had Walker been fit the end result might have been a different story.

KATY PROVIDES BIG SHOCK

England's brightest session was against Wales who were beaten 3-2 to win the women's cup. The key win that landed the cup was by Katy Parker who beat Bethan Dauntton 10, -3, -4, 2, 7 - that was probably the biggest shock of the tournament for Wales, but it was further proof of encouraging progress by Katy.

Natalie Bawden battled bravely throughout the three-day event. She seemed to be the only female with long hair not tied back, but she managed to win the consolation singles final 2, 8, 6 over Kay Chivers from Guernsey.

Matthew Kenny and Bryn Drinkhall spent a lot of time sitting on the benches in Belfast but when they were in action they looked extremely promising - Kenny reached the mens singles quarters before losing 5, 7, 6 to Robertson.

In the team match against Wales the two lads were given the task of winning the doubles. They did not win but just look at the scoreline -

Jenkins and Robertson only just scraped home 7, -7, -8, 7, 9.

FOOTNOTE:

• Playing conditions at the Valley Leisure Centre were excellent, the food in the hotels was very good - we were entertained by the deputy mayor of Newtownabbey on the Saturday night to a sit-down dinner when the cups were presented to the teams. Ulster have a superb team of officials headed by chairman Gilbert Graham with Alan Strong a tower of strength. Mick Strobe, England's most active referee was in charge, assisted by Malcolm Guy.

RESULTS:

Men's singles: s/f: Ryan Jenkins (Wales) bt Gavin Rumgay (Scotland) 11-3, 11-3, 11-7. Adam Robertson (Wales) bt Brian Fitzgerald (Ireland) 11-8, 11-9, 11-7.

Final: Adam Robertson (Wales) bt Ryan Jenkins (Wales) 8-11, 11-8, 4-11, 11-8, 11-7.

Women's singles: s/f: Bethan Dauntton (Wales) bt Joanna Parker (England) 11-6, 17-15, 11-6. Katy Parker (England) bt Louise Durrant (England) 11-9; 11-4, 12-10.

Final: Bethan Dauntton (Wales) bt Katy Parker (England) 11-9, 11-6, 11-8.

Team result:

Wales bt England 6-4 (Welsh players first)

Ryan Jenkins bt Dale Barham 11-4, 11-8, 11-7

Adam Robertson lost to Andrew Rushton 10-12, 6-11, 6-11

Ryan Jenkins/Adam Robertson bt Dale Barham/Andrew Rushton 7-11, 11-7, 11-8, 7-11, 11-9

Adam Robertson bt Dale Barham 11-8, 11-3, 11-5

Ryan Jenkins bt Andrew Rushton 10-12, 11-6, 11-9, 8-11, 11-6

Natasha Owen lost to Katy Parker 2-11, 11-9, 8-11, 15-13, 3-11

Bethan Dauntton bt Louise Durrant 8-11, 11-3, 11-8, 11-3

Natasha Owen/Bethan Dauntton lost to Katy Parker/Natalie Bawden 7-11, 11-8, 11-13, 8-11

Bethan Dauntton lost to Katy Parker 10-12, 11-3, 11-4, 2-11, 7-11

Natasha Owen bt Louise Durrant 11-7, 11-9, 11-8.

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Sundown Osteo Bi-Flex High Strength retails at £14.99 for 30 tablets and is available nationwide. For stockist details please call 0870-7594003.



designed to rehydrate the body. Isotonic means that they are in balance with the body's own fluid and are therefore absorbed quickly and effectively. The addition of electrolytes in isotonic drinks reduces urine output and increases the amount of fluid retained.

Water is hypotonic - lower osmotic concentration than isotonic drinks - and as a result is not as effective in preventing dehydration. Water also causes a rapid drop in plasma osmolality, reducing the drive to drink even before sufficient fluid has been taken in to replace lost fluids.

The effects of excessive fluid loss are not readily obvious, allowing the individual to continue unknowingly and exacerbating the problem. Thirst is not a good indicator of hydration; if you're thirsty you're already dehydrated. Look for symptoms such as clammy hands, headache, nausea, fatigue, and dizziness.

Top tips on how to stay hydrated:

- Drink two glasses of water in the morning to cleanse the kidneys and detoxify the system
- Avoid caffeinated or fizzy drinks as these are diuretic and take fluids from the body unnecessarily
- If you think you're hungry you may be thirsty - have a drink before you eat
- Avoid alcohol; it will only help dehydrate you. If you do drink, match glass for glass with water afterwards
- Drink before, during and after exercising. Isotonic sports drinks such as Isostar replenish fluids faster than water, and have the added bonus of boosting your energy levels

THE DANGERS OF DEHYDRATION HOW TO KEEP HYDRATED AND BOOST YOUR PERFORMANCE

WITHOUT food you can last a month, but without fluid you would be lucky to last a week. Keeping your body hydrated is imperative, especially while exercising.

It is advised that drinking eight glasses of water each day provides optimum hydration. While this is sound advice for day to day life, if you're conducting prolonged exercise or already dehydrated, you will need an isotonic sports drink to ensure hydration.

Our bodies are made up of about 75% water but even a slight shortage

can have a serious effect on energy levels. If water levels drop, so does blood volume and less oxygen will be able to get to your muscles.

While exercising, up to two litres of water can be lost every hour through perspiration and increased breathing. 2% fluid loss reduces performance by 20% (1.5 litres in an average man). One litre of fluid loss causes the heart rate to increase by 8 beats a minute, cardiac output to decline by about 1 litre of blood per minute and core temperature to rise by 0.3 degrees.

Isotonic drinks are specifically

designed to rehydrate the body. Isotonic means that they are in balance with the body's own fluid and are therefore absorbed quickly and effectively. The addition of electrolytes in isotonic drinks reduces urine output and increases the amount of fluid retained.

- Potassium and magnesium can also be found in these types of sports drinks
- these will help prevent muscle cramps that accompany dehydration

An isotonic drink is an essential ingredient of any fitness regime regardless of whether you're a beginner, amateur enthusiast or professional.

READER OFFER



ETTA NATIONAL RANKING LIST

TOP OF THE TABLE

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Further details please ring Doreen Nightingale 01424 722525

Pos	Name	Rtg	Flg
(1)	1 SYED, Matthew (BK) (SY)	4851*	
(2)	2 BAGGLEY, Andrew (BU)	4728*	
(3)	3 HERBERT, Gareth (BK)	4721*	
(4)	4 PERRY, Alex (DV)	4718*	
(5)	5 COOKE, Alan (DY)	4639***	
(7)	6 YOUNG, Terry (BK)	4509*	
(9)	7 BILLINGTON, Bradley (DY)	4456	
(8)	8 RUSHTON, Andrew (LA)	4432***	
(13)	9 EDEN, Andrew (LA)	4324	
(11)	10 BARNHAM, Dale (CA)	4245	
(17)	11 KENNY, Matthew (Y)	3999	
(14)	12 BRYANT, Craig (DV)	3994	
(18)	13 HOLLAND, John(Dy) (E)	3948	
(20)	14 SLADDEN, Cris (E)	3936	
(23)	15 DRINKHALL, Bryn (CV)	3936	
(22)	16 HAMMOND, Eric (MI)	3850	
(25)	17 MOORE, Adrian (KA)	3775***	
(25)	18 TAYLOR, Jonathan (LA)	3771	
(26)	19 VENNER, Ritchie (SK)	3702**	
(27)	20 PTE, Leeroy (NK)	3683***	
(28)	21 GOODALL, Justin (K)	3653	
(30)	22 ROGERS, Chris (LE)	3647	
(29)	23 JAMES, Michael (Y)	3640	
(49)	24 DOLDER, Kevin (LA)	3637	
(31)	25 WURADLA, Abdul (SY)	3592	
(34)	26 MARSHALL, Peter (Y)	3588****	
(35)	27 CHAN, Michael (SY)	3573***	
(32)	28 CHARLES, Neil (MI)	3557	
(38)	29 BAKER, Gregory (ST)	3553	
(37)	30 SMITH, Eddie (ND)	3517	
(43)	31 WHITING, Paul (DV)	3514	
(36)	32 BARR, David (BK)	3509	
(39)	33 ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SK)	3500**	
(47)	34 NEIL, Lee (NG)	3492	
(53)	35 HILTON, John (CH)	3490	
(50)	36 WILKINSON, Andrew (ND)	3484	
(40)	37 KENNEDY, Joe (E)	3482	
(46)	38 JOHNS, Brian (CH)	3477	
(41)	39 BROWN, Mark (K)	3466	
(53)	40 PAPANTONIOU, Costas (MI)	3454	
(44)	41 POUNTNEY, Robert (SY)	3437	
(72)	42 WILLIAMS, Keith (LA)	3428	
(45)	43 CARTHY, Clive (E)	3413	
(52)	44 BEERLING, Stephen (K)	3406***	
(51)	45 GANNON, David (LE)	3386	
(74)	46 MCLEAN, Ian (NK)	3361	
(56)	47 CUNNINGHAM, Andy (K)	3358***	
(55)	48 HALL, Dominic (K)	3351	
(63)	49 CLEMINSON, Peter (E)	3340	
(50)	50 TILFORD, Richard (HA)	3339N	
(60)	51 HUTCHINGS, Paul (LA)	3336	
(57)	52 GRIFFIN, Darren (GS)	3314	
(69)	53 JAMIESON, Christopher (E)	3309	
(59)	54 YARNALL, Tim (NP)	3308	
(61)	55 RANKIN, John (LA)	3297	
(62)	56 MCKOY, Nick (MI)	3297	
(64)	57 SHORT, Mark (YS)	3296***	
(67)	58 HARVEY, Dave (GS)	3286	
(66)	59 BLEAKLEY, Adam (LA)	3276	
(65)	60 HORNER, Daniel (CH)	3275	
(68)	61 CORBIN, Anthony (HE)	3269	
(70)	62 ROSENTHAL, Louis (LA)	3267***	
(105)	63 DRINKHALL, Paul (CV)	3263	
(86)	64 BARTRAM, Peter (SK)	3254	
(75)	65 BARATY, Eli (MI)	3254	
(71)	66 GREEN, Mark (NG)	3254	
(79)	67 WALSH, Jimmy (HE)	3254	
(73)	68 TENDLER, Gary (E)	3239	
(76)	69 CLAYTON, Tony (DO)	3235**	
(82)	70 WIGNALL, Andy (LI)	3234	
(93)	71 JONAH, Jerome (K)	3219	
(78)	72 BRIDGETT, Gregory (DV)	3210***	
(85)	73 GASCOINE, Craig (NG)	3206	
(80)	74 DABBS, Kieron (NP)	3198***	
(87)	75 GODBOLD, David (DU)	3194	
(81)	76 LOGSDON, Philip (NK)	3187	
(77)	77 GIRDLER, Ian (SY)	3181	
(84)	78 JOHNS, Mike (CH)	3173	
(88)	79 COX, Philip (K)	3163	
(89)	80 HORSFIELD, Andrew (YS) (Y)	3156	
(94)	81 CAMPBELL, Selwyn (SY)	3149	
(98)	82 BAILEY, Steven (CV)	3146	
(90)	83 GELDER, Tony (DU)	3141	
(92)	84 ADAMS, Martin (BK)	3134	
(95)	85 BUTLER, Mark (DO)	3127	
(101)	86 FORD, Christopher (LA)	3125	
(102)	87 MARSDEN, Michael (DU)	3121	

(107)	88 WALKER, Andy (SK)	3116
(89)	89 PAYNE, Phil (SO)	3116
(91)	90 WHITEHMAN, James (DV)	3107
(97)	91 DENNISON, John (E)	3106
(100)	92 WELSMAN, Dave (NP)	3105**
(103)	93 MAJITHA, Mayur (SK)	3096**
(132)	94 KNIGHT, Darius (SY)	3086
(96)	95 SMITH, Richard A (Y)	3077
(99)	96 ROOFE, Eddie (WI)	3073
(110)	97 SHORT, Mike (DV)	3064
(106)	98 HARDING, David (SY)	3052
(109)	99 PHILIPPS, Simon (SY) (K)	3049
(113)	100 FESEHATSON, Daniel (MI)	3042

Pos	Name	Rtg	Flg
(1)	1 DEATON, Nicola (DY)	4014*	
(4)	2 PARKER, Katy (LA)	3925	
(3)	3 LOWER, Helen (ST)	3923*	
(2)	4 STEWARD, Kate (SO)	3861	
(5)	5 PARKER, Joanna (SY)	3799	
(6)	6 HOLT, Andrea (LA)	3744***	
(7)	7 MARCH, Linda (HE)	3715	
(10)	8 WALKER, Georgina (NG)	3666	
(9)	9 BAWDEN, Natalie (E)	3657	
(11)	10 OWOLABI, Kubrat (MI)	3653***	
(11)	11 EMBLING, Abigail (E)	3536	
(14)	12 DURRANT, Louise (NG)	3491	
(13)	13 THORNTON, Lindsey (LA)	3363**	
(15)	14 SMITH, Karen (LE)	3337	
(32)	15 SIBLEY, Kelly (WA)	3284	
(19)	16 WESTON, Sally (SK)	3236	
(18)	17 ROBERTS, Joanna (Y)	3236	
(21)	18 DUNNING, Jan (WO)	3220**	
(20)	19 HARRIS, Jill (ST)	3212	
(22)	20 KEAST, Lesley (LI)	3204	
(29)	21 NEWNS, Clare (CH)	3194	
(22)	22 SPARKES, Rebecca (SK)	3189	
(24)	23 RUOCCO, Shelley (E)	3187****	
(25)	24 HARPER, Sandra (BD)	3185**	
(27)	25 WHITE, Nicola (Y)	3177	
(30)	26 SHORT, Elaine (DV)	3155	
(28)	27 LOCKWOOD, Karen (CH)	3145	
(31)	28 YARDY, Hannah (E)	3140	
(33)	29 COHEN, Michele (AV)	3139	
(26)	30 CHAPMAN, Gemma (BK)	3129	
(31)	31 NARENDRAAN, Aparna (MI)	3125	
(32)	32 RAINTON, Rosemary (SK)	3110	
(37)	33 BONGERS, Jose (ST)	3109	
(34)	34 SPRINGTHORPE, Lauren (LI)	3098	
(35)	35 BLOOR, Trudie (SP)	3097	
(36)	36 HOWARD, Alice (CH)	3097	
(36)	37 SPINK, Lauren (NK)	3096	
(41)	38 HURLING, Emma (HE)	3060***	
(42)	39 BUOYEY, Brenda (LA)	3062	
(43)	40 SMITH, Angela (MI)	3055***	
(38)	41 DURHAM, Jane (CV)	3046	
(45)	42 SMITH, Sarah (NG)	3039****	
(57)	43 SHEPHERD, Karen (CH)	3016	
(47)	44 HURRELL, Rebecca (MI)	3016	
(49)	45 LLOYD, Gemma (CH)	3005	
(63)	46 MURPHY, Judy (GS)	2998	
(40)	47 WILSON, Naomi (SO)	2997	
(48)	48 MALBY, Margaret (NP)	2975**	
(50)	49 ROBINSON, Suzanne (GS)	2965**	
(51)	50 BALDI, Andrea (YS) (Y)	2959***	
(52)	51 WANG, Lucy (E)	2958****	
(61)	52 RIDER, Sandra (Y)	2957	
(53)	53 BAWDEN, Marilyn (E)	2940	
(54)	54 SHIELDS, Helen (Y)	2938	
(56)	55 KING, Sheila (SX)	2937	
(56)	56 SILBURN, Nicola (Y)	2932	
(57)	57 PERRY, Lucy (DV)	2907	
(78)	58 COGGON, Sara (HE)	2898	
(59)	59 PEARE, Diane (K)	2893**	
(55)	60 MARLING, Samantha (MI)	2885	
(76)	61 INGHAM, Katy (CH)	2863	
(155)	62 DENNETT, Elizabeth (CH)	2860	
(64)	63 BENNETT, Teresa (SX)	2847**	
(65)	64 SIMPSON, Linda (Y)	2841**	
(66)	65 PERRY, Penny (DV)	2840	
(73)	66 SEYMOUR, Tamar (CH)	2835	
(68)	67 BURGESS, Suzanne (DU)	2834**	
(81)	68 DEARING, Emily (Y)	2825	
(69)	69 SCHOFIELD, Doreen (CH)	2817*	
(62)	70 HARRISON, Jennifer (E)	2815	
(71)	71 KNIGHTLEY, Gillian (BK)	2808**	
(85)	72 VAJDI, Carmen (SY)	2806	
(74)	73 HORSNELL, Sarah (MI)	2804	

(72)	74 SORRENTINO, Annabelle (CH)	2795
(80)	75 BRISTOW, Angie (K)	2788
(67)	76 TODD, Nicole (E)	2781
(75)	77 SAYER, Elaine (E)	2773****
(78)	78 GARLICK, Helen (K)	2765**
(83)	79 VICKERS, Jane (DY)	2755
(79)	80 DAWSON, Marjorie (E)	2745**
(77)	81 GELDER, Shirley (DU)	2744
(82)	82 BROWN, Janet (OK)	2735**
(106)	83 STEPMAN, Sarah (SK)	2726
(84)	84 SEAHOLME, Sarah (HE)	2722***
(107)	85 SPARKES, Aimee (SK)	2718
(86)	86 ECKERSLEY, Carol (SK)	2713**
(87)	87 MERSH, Jackie (K)	2710****
(90)	88 HALES, Linda (DO)	2688**
(91)	89 GRAHAM, Sylvia (LA)	2685***
(93)	90 MAY, Elizabeth (DV)	2681
(92)	91 FLOWERDAY, Anne (E)	2680**
(94)	92 STEWART, Tina (K)	2675***
(95)	93 SHALER, Eileen (LE)	2673
(89)	94 HUDGE, Kim (E)	2672
(96)	95 BENTLEY, Ruth (NG)	2666**
(97)	96 JUSTON, Carol (Y)	2665**
(115)	97 LANGFORD, Clare (CH)	2657
(98)	98 YARNLEY, Gemma (K)	2656*
(100)	99 KENNARD, Nikki (E)	2650****
(101)	100 HICKMAN, Susan (E)	2644**

Pos	Name	Rtg	Flg
(1)	1 BARNHAM, Dale (CA)	4245	
(2)	2 KOU, Lei (CHN)	4208	
(3)	3 BRYANT, Craig (DV)	3994	
(4)	4 DRINKHALL, Bryn (CV)	3936	
(5)	5 BAKER, Gregory (ST)	3553	
(6)	6 CLEMINSON, Peter (E)	3340	
(7)	7 YARNALL, Tim (NP)	3308	
(7)	8 BLEAKLEY, Adam (LA)	3276	
(8)	9 HORNER, Daniel (CH)	3275	
(9)	10 DRINKHALL, Paul (CV)	3263	
(11)	11 KNIGHT, Darius (SY)	3086	
(10)	12 NOUTCH, Simon (Y)	2979	
(12)	13 GREEN, Alex (LI)	2882	
(13)	14 DENNY, Stephen (Y)	2786	
(17)	15 MARPLES, Shaun (DV)	2727	
(15)	16 GREGORY, Christopher (SP)	2655	
(16)	17 MOSS, Richard (Y)	2569	
(18)	18 CARTWRIGHT, Neil (DO)	2444	
(19)	19 EVANS, Bradley (BU) (NG)	2421	
(22)	20 LALLI, Keiran (E)	2404	
(20)	21 HARTLEY, John (K)	2396**	
(23)	22 LEIGHTON, Andrew (DU)	2303	
(23)	23 BROWN, Christopher (DV)	2278	
(25)	24 PEEBLES, Robin (NG)	2243	
(24)	25 LEMON, Robert (SY)	2159	
(27)	26 REES, Daniel (E)	2134	
(35)	27 STAINES, Matthew (E)	2107	
(38)	28 HAYES, David (BU)	2067**	
(21)	29 SHAHLAEI, Harry (GS)	2063*	
(28)	30 NICHOLLS, Ashley (SP)	2037	
(31)	31 POWELL, Neil (CH)	2019	
(29)	32 BROOKS, Warren (BU)	1977****	
(32)	33 MEADS, David (DU)	1971	
(36)	34 COONEY, William (DY)	1959	
(44)	35 PAGE, Tom (LI)	1949	
(33)	36 CANNON, Samuel (MI)	1934*	
(34)	37 GIBBS, Shaun (DV)	1921*	
(36)	38 WOODHEAD, Andrew (Y)	1881	
(30)	39 MILTON, James (BU)	1877	
(37)	40 ROGERSON, Shaun (LI)	1864*	
(41)	41 BRADFORD, Leigh (WA)	1809	
(39)	42 ARMSTRONG, Marc (MI)	1784*	
(40)	43 KODICEK, Jacob (CO)	1748**	
(42)	44 HALLING, Tony (E)	1735*	
(43)	45 WESLEY, Richard (NG)	1679*	
(48)	46 PANG, Dannel (NP)	1674	
(45)	47 YEUNG, Hamish (BD)	1674	
(52)	48 FROST, Adam (DY)	1633	
(54)	49 ROBERTSON, Shaun (SY)	1571	
(79)	50 REED, Daniel (CV)	1531	

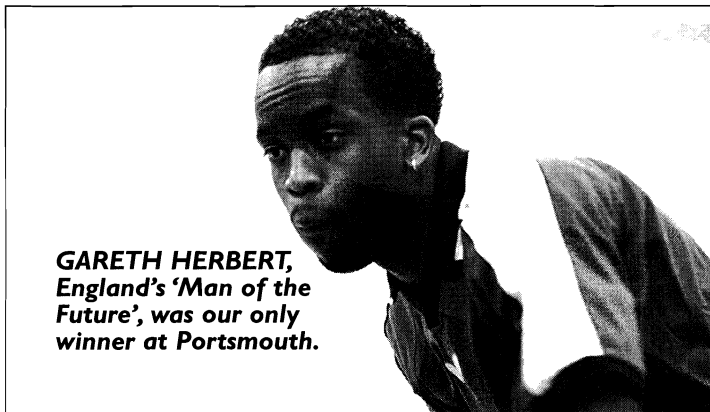
Pos	Name	Rtg	Flg
(1)	1 YARNALL, Tim (NP)	3308	
(2)	2 DRINKHALL, Paul (CV)	3263	
(3)	3 KNIGHT, Darius (SY)	3086	
(4)	4 EVANS, Bradley (BU) (NG)	2421	
(6)	5 REES, Daniel (E)	2134	
(10)	6 HAYES, David (BU)	2067	
(5)	7 SHAHLAEI, Harry (GS)	2063*	
(8)	8 HEADS, David (DU)	1971	
(9)	9 CANNON, Samuel (MI)	1934*	
(7)	10 MILTON, James (BU)	1877	
(14)	11 REED, Daniel (CV)	1531	
(12)	12 EVANS, Gavin (NG)	1514	
(12)	13 BARLOW, Ben (YS)	1256	
(13)	14 CRAWFORD, Jonathan (CU)	1160	
(15)	15 REED, Darren (CO)	997**	
(16)	16 NICHOLLS, Damien (SP)	974	
(28)	17 WILSON, Andrew (CV)	914	
(17)	18 BRAY, Thomas (LA)	896	
(16)	19 LEOW, Adam (SY)	882**	
(30)	20 HURDLEY, Joseph (SP)	858	
(22)	21 NICHOLLS, Russell (SP)	847	
(19)	22 THOMAS, Matthew (MI)	821*	
(20)	23 TAYLOR, Jonathan J (CH)	811*	
(31)	24 SIMPSON, Mark (DU)	808	
(23)	25 POYNER, Simon (DV)	749**	

Pos	Name	Rtg	Flg
(1)	1 STEWARD, Kate (SO)	3861	
(2)	2 PARKER, Joanna (SY)	3799	
(3)	3 WALKER, Georgina (NG)	3666	
(4)	4 EMBLING, Abigail (E)	3536	
(5)	5 SIBLEY, Kelly (WA)	3284	
(6)	6 WHITE, Nicola (Y)	3177	

(5)	7 CHAPMAN, Gemma (BK)	3129
(8)	8 SPRINGTHORPE, Lauren (LI)	3098
(9)	9 SPINK, Lauren (NK)	3090
(11)	10 SHEPHERD, Karen (CH)	3016
(12)	11 WILSON, Naomi (SO)	2997
(12)	12 DENNETT, Elizabeth (CH)	2860
(14)	13 LANGFORD, Clare (CH)	2657
(13)	14 YARNLEY, Gemma (K)	2656*
(16)	15 GRAHAM, Cherith (LA)	2603
(15)	16 BROWN, Sarah (E)	2572
(19)	17 WILSON, Claire (DU)	2492
(18)	18 WEIL, Emma (E)	2338
(21)	19 HUBBARD, Joanne (K)	2238
(20)	20 CRAVEN-GRIFFITHS, Kelly (LE)	2221**
(23)	21 HOWARD, Clara (CH)	2201
(22)	22 BELL, Amanda (Y)	2157
(29)	23 WALLER, Tanya (Y)	2133
(24)	24 TUCKER, Emily (BU)	1997**
(28)	25 SHUTT, Heather (Y)	1979
(26)	26 WEIL, Lucy (E)	1893**
(32)	27 PARTON, Helen (DV)	1874
(27)	28 HOLLETT, Gemma (SY)	1856****
(30)	29 SENEVIRATNE, Anusha (K)	1770**
(31)	30 BARRETT, Michelle (DV)	1754**
(33)	31 BALDI, Rachel (YS) (Y)	1728****
(34)	32 WANG, Sarra (E)	1683*
(35)	33 MEADS, Joanne (DU)	1649
(34)	34 HEARD, Gemma (E)	1565***
(37)	35 DAVIS, Stella (GS)	1523
(38)	36 RADFORD, Lisa (DV)	1483**
(49)	37 PERKS, Sarah (NG)	1462
(39)	38 CLEMINSON, Jessica (E)	

NEW EUROPEAN MENS LEAGUE-DIV. I

SYED BEATEN AS ENGLAND FALL



GARETH HERBERT, England's 'Man of the Future', was our only winner at Portsmouth.

MATTHEW SYED is now in the autumn of his career as a European-World class player. That became obvious to the 500 fans who watched him lose to the skillful Norwegian Istvan Moldovan at the Mountbatten Centre, Portsmouth on October 8 where Norway triumphed 3-1 against an England team that only three weeks earlier had defeated Turkey 3-2 in Istanbul, writes John Woodford.

The Turkish triumph was achieved with Dale Barham at No.3 -this time we had Matthew at No.3 - so we could not lose thought many of the fans. But they were wrong.

Unhappily for English table tennis, Matthew is nothing like the force he was with the smaller ball. He is still the world's finest long-distance defender - the Japanese are paying him very large sums of money to continue on their professional circuit because he thrills the crowds like no other player on this planet.

His defence will continue to land some catches but now most players with a strong top-spin attack, as did Moldovan at Portsmouth, will beat him. It was a great match with Matthew losing the first two games, - 3, -9 and then winning the next two 4, 8, in a heart-warming bounce back. He was always in the match to the end. At 10-10 it looked as though he might pull off a near-miracle and put England two-one up, but Moldovan triumphed to the score of 10, so probably ending the Syed career in the sense that we regarded him as 'The Man to win for England'.

This statement may be seem strange - Syed was put in at No.3 to

play one game because it was considered that there was no way he was going to beat Wang Jianfeng, so it was left to Gareth Herbert and Alex Perry to perform when Syed was forecast to fail, as he did to the surprise of many who thought he was the man to play 2 games, not 1.

Matthew's comments after the Norwegian victory - "I find it very difficult to create the amount of spin with the big ball. I have to get motivated. I think I can still beat players in the top 40 or 50 in the world when the motivation is there."

Matthew will, of course, continue to play what I would call exhibitions. I am sure will get offers to display his unique defence until he is 40, but by then he could be a Member of Parliament, because whatever he does he will succeed, that is the quality of the man.

The only thing at stake in the European League at this time is the seeding of the teams - at the European championships next April in Italy, so results are not really crucial.

And, there is a move by nations who might stage the European Championships in future years to cut out the team events - to save money, whilst preserving the European League - England will vote against that happening.

Back to the match - late start 7.40 pm - that cost us space in all the early and middle editions of the Telegraph.

Perry opened for England. He battled like the true fighter he is but Wang is an excellent performer - a penolder with an excellent blend of top-spin on both sides to win 11,7,9.

WORLD TOP TEN

1st OCTOBER 2002

MEN			WOMEN				
1	(1)	2234 WANG Liqin	CHN	1	(1)	2322 WANG Nan	CHN
2	(2)	2165 MA Lin	CHN	2	(2)	2142 ZHANG Yining	CHN
3	(5)	2121 BOLL Timo	GER	3	(3)	2080 BOROS Tamara	CRO
4	(8)	2115 SCHLAGER Werner	AUT	4	(5)	1994 LI Nan	CHN
5	(3)	2112 SAMSONOV Vladimir	BLR	5	(6)	1985 NIU Jianfeng	CHN
6	(6)	2038 KONG Linghui	CHN	6	(4)	1978 LIN Ling	HKG
7	(12)	2023 KREANGA Kalinikos	GRE	7	(7)	1962 RYU Ji Hae	KOR
8	(8)	2015 SAIYE Jean-Michel	BEL	8	(8)	1922 LI Ju	CHN
9	(7)	1994 WALDNER Jan Ove	SWE	9	(10)	1918 STEFF Mihaela	ROM
10	(16)	CHUAN Chih-Yuan	TPE	10	(9)	1906 LI Jia Wei	SIN
75	(72)	1435 SYED Matthew	ENG	196	(184)	1047 DEATON Nicola	ENG
145	(132)	1178 HERBERT Gareth	ENG	197	(185)	1045 LOWER Helen	ENG
154	(141)	1155 PERRY Alex	ENG	340	(327)	758 PARKER Katy	ENG
195	(179)	1061 BAGGALEY Andrew	ENG	387	(375)	620 BAWDEN Natalie	ENG
252	(235)	973 YOUNG Terry	ENG	420	(417)	536 STEWARD Kate	ENG

Then came, perhaps, The Man of the future - Gareth Herbert (Berkshire) with his deadly services despite the new rules.

Gareth, tall and athletic, took the first 11, lost the second -9, but he bounced back with some rapier like drives to win 8, 10.

After the Syed defeat, England's tails were down. Perry put up a staunch battle only losing 8 in the fifth after a similar fight-back to Syed, losing the first two and then steaming back.

Towards the end his concentration was disturbed by a squeak from some young idiot just as he was serving and then it was all over! Summary: Alan Cooke did a great job as the coach on court - with Steen Hansen and Don Parker sitting just behind.

ETTA chair Alan Ransome made a special journey by air from Middlesborough to Southampton airport. Officials : Mick Stode was the referee - umpires, who had no problems, were Derek Bastley and Mick Reynolds. The local Leisure Services came up trumps and Brian Hall chair of the Portsmouth TTA was a tower of strength as we welcomed back into the firstclass venue list, the Mountbatten Centre.

Footnote: The Master (or{Mistress) of Ceremonies was Matthew Syed's girl-friend Lorna Watson, who is a TV presenter and a stand-up comedienne. With a limited knowledge of the sport she put a professional zip into the announcing job that seemed to lift the 500 fans - proof that we welcome Portsmouth back into the table tennis scene.

Results:

England 1, Norway 3
Alex Perry lost to Wang Jianfeng 11-13, 7-11, 9-11
Gareth Herbert bt Geir Erlandsen 13-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5
Matthew Syed lost to Istvan Moldovan 3-11, 9-11, 11-4, 11-8, 10-12
Alex Perry lost to Geir Erlandsen

10-12, 9-11, 11-7, 12-10, 8-11.

Helsingborg Youth Championships

GREAT RESULTS IN SWEDEN

A YOUNG English team produced many promising results at the Helsingborg Youth Championships in Sweden during early October.

Twelve year old Paul Drinkhall (Loftus, Cleveland), picked up two titles. He won the cadet (under 15) boys' singles, beating the high European ranked Kristoffer Hermansson (Sweden), 11-4, 3-11, 11-7, 11-6 in the final. Hermansson had put out Battersea's Darius Knight (Surrey) 3-2 in the semi-finals. In the under 12 boys' singles, Drinkhall beat his colleague and rival, Knight, 8-11, 6-11, 12-10, 11-9, 12-10 in an excellent final. Darius Knight, 12, did very well to reach the junior (under 18) boys' singles quarter-finals.

Seventeen year old Katy Parker (Preston, Lancashire) won the women's class 1 singles with a 11-6, 7-11, 11-4, 8-11, 11-6 success over the European ranked junior Mie Skov (Denmark). She had a good win over the Swedish senior international Mari Olsson, 11-8, 5-11, 11-6, 11-7, in the quarter-finals of the women's under 20 singles, before going down 4-11, 5-11, 10-12 to the Chinese Kang Li. In the elite (top) women's singles, Parker beat another Swedish senior international, Susanne Jonsson, 7-11, 11-6, 11-5, 11-7, but then was knocked out 7-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-8 in the quarter-finals by Mari Olsson.

With Lauren Springthorpe (Lincolnshire), Kelly Sibley (Warwickshire) and Kate Steward (Somerset) also reaching semi-finals in, respectively, the under 12, cadet and junior girls' singles, English players overall did well.

“PERHAPS A THOUSAND SHADOW STROKES”

I WAS lucky! I asked Li Chunli on Day 1 of the Commonwealth Games Championships in Manchester how she was playing? "I am playing OK". "Do you think you will win?" I said. She grinned "Well maybe. Yes I think this time - maybe".

The first time I watched this truly amazing 40 year old play was in New Delhi in the early rounds of the tournament. Such was her charisma and personality that I arranged an interview. It was quite an interview because all the time she was giggling and laughing. Li came across as a person who absolutely adores what she does and lives life to the full. She narrowly missed out on "Gold" in India, but of course blew all the opposition away in Manchester, beating World Number 9 Li Jia Wei of Singapore in the final.

Here are parts of the interview I was able to get last year in India:

BRIAN HALLIDAY: *I watched you play just now. I noticed that your opponent was weak but you did not let up. Do you always play as ruthlessly as that?*

LI CHUNLI: *I always try to play like that.*

BH: *I understand that you are a full time player.*

Li: *Yes I play in Japan all the year. I have two weeks holiday and then I come to New Zealand. I play in the Japanese league where I only play against men. This for me is exciting.*

BH: *Are there any other Chinese women in your league?*

Li: *Not at the moment.*

BH: *What sort of crowds do you get to watch your matches?*

Li: *It varies. Sometimes one hundred, sometimes several hundred.*

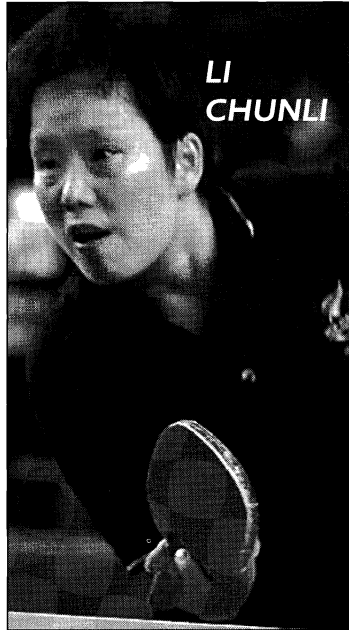
BH: *How about TV and the media generally?*

Li: *Sometimes on TV. There is good coverage in magazines and a few newspapers.*

BH: *Tell me a little about how you started.*

Li: *I started at school in China and I was then taken to a Table Tennis Academy.*

BH: *How many were based there?*



Li: *Oh it was such a long time ago! There were groups for under 10s, under 13s, under 17s etc. **BH:** *English players would be interested to learn how you were coached. What was the daily**

routine in those days?

Li: *We got up at 5.30am, went running. Sometimes weight training. A lot of stretching. Much shadow play, perhaps a thousand shadow strokes. Then breakfast. Then sessions in morning and afternoon.*

BH: *Did the better Chinese players come along?*

Li: *Yes we had help all the time from the older players.*

BH: *Who were the players that inspired you at that time?*

Li: *I watched many movies of great players, especially Chuang Tse Tung. I learnt much from watching and copying him.*

BH: *Heavens! We have much in common. How about today's players?*

Li: *Waldner of course, and Wang Liquin.*

BH: *I think Wang Liquin will win in Osaka (Proved right for once! Wang did in fact win. Wish I had placed a bet now!). What women players do you like?*

Li: *Wang Nan but really I prefer watching the men. (laughs).*

BH: *You play the with the penholder*

grip however it is your backhand stroke that is so powerful.

Li: *I have practised this all the time. Originally I model it on Chuang Tse Tung. Nobody taught me, I just picked it up from watching the movie over and over again.*

BH: *What do you do for relaxation?*

Li: *I have plenty of massage and go to Hot Pool. I used to like loud music but now prefer quieter music. I like reading table tennis books.*

BH: *Have you any comments on English players, and maybe how we can improve?*

Li: *I have not been in Europe very often. The English players are young and are not too bad. I am told that they do not practice as much as Chinese players. I train very hard every day of my life. I just love the game so much that it is always a joy to play. Perhaps that is the way to continue to improve.*

BH: *Thanks for your time. I hope we meet again.*

MEMORIES OF MANCHESTER - THE VOLUNTEERS



CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

9th-10th	Butterfly Grand Prix	Christ's Hospital School, Horsham
	Ocean International Sussex Open	
9th-10th	South of England Cadet/Junior 3 Star	
10th	Knutsford Veteran 2 Star	
10th	Stiga (Hyndburn) GP Cadet/Junior 3 Star	
12th	European Mens League vs Israel	Liverpool
14th-17th	ITTF Pro Tour	Poland
16th	Chesham High Sch Junior 2 Star Graded	
16th-17th	Stockton-on-Tees Cadet/Junior 4 Star	
16th-17th	County Championships Senior Premier (1)	
16th-17th	Veterans British League Weekend (1)	
17th	Whitchurch Senior 2 Star - Super 8	
21st-24th	ITTF Pro Tour	Denmark
23rd	Rose Bowl & Wilmott Cup R1	
23rd-24th	Cadet & Junior Regional Trials	
23rd-24th	VETTS Eastern Masters	Grimsby
24th	British League Premier Division (6)	
30th	National Junior League (1)	
30th-1st Dec	City of Liverpool Cadet/Junior 4 Star	
30th-1st Dec	Butterfly Grand Prix Western Open	Bath

DECEMBER

1st	Cirencester 1 Star U10/12	
7th	County Championships (4)	
	Senior, Cadet, Junior & Veteran	
8th	British League Premier Division (7)	
8th	Leach & Hammersley Cups R1	
8th	Stiga (Hyndburn) GP Cadet/Junior 3 Star	
8th	Cippenham Senior Banded 2 Star	
12th-15th	ITTF Pro Tour Finals	Stockholm, Sweden
14th	National Junior League (2)	
14th-15th	British League Weekend (2)	
15th	National cadet League (2)	
21st	Mid Cheshire Veteran 2 Star	
21st	Chesham High Sch. Junior 2 Star Graded.	
21st	Wilmott Cup & Rose Bowl R2	
22nd	Mid Cheshire Senior 2 Star	
22nd	Whitchurch Junior 2 Star	
28th	Mid Cheshire 2 Star U12/U14	
28th	Chesham 2 Star U12/U14/U15	
28th	Carter, Ormesby & Gainsford Cups R1	
	Bromfield Trophy R1	
29th	Mid Cheshire Junior 2 Star	
30th	Chesham 2 Star Graded Junior Boys	

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