

# table tennis news

Official Table Tennis Magazine of the **English Table Tennis Association**

ISSUE 314 £2.95  
**FEBRUARY 06**

## Target Your Training

fitness to improve your game

## Helen Lower

she's not your average player

## Ken Hyde

master of yesteryear

## Time Lords Meet

Cooke v Drinkhall  
who will win?

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FRONT COVER PICTURE BY CLARA MOLDEN  
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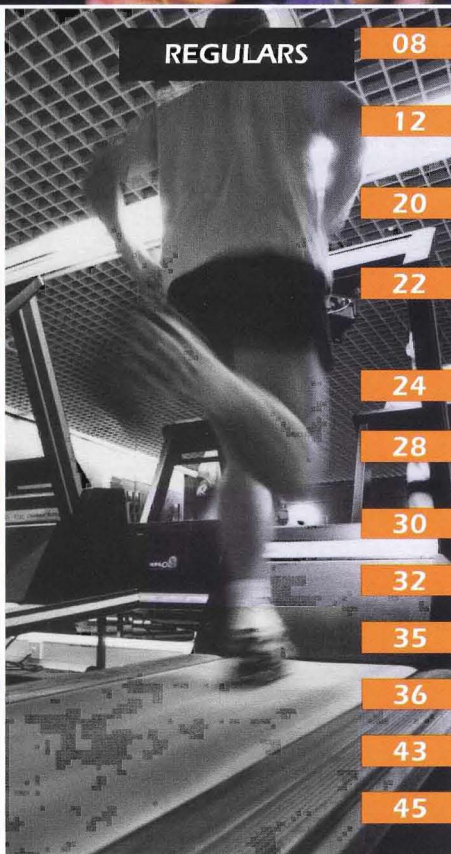
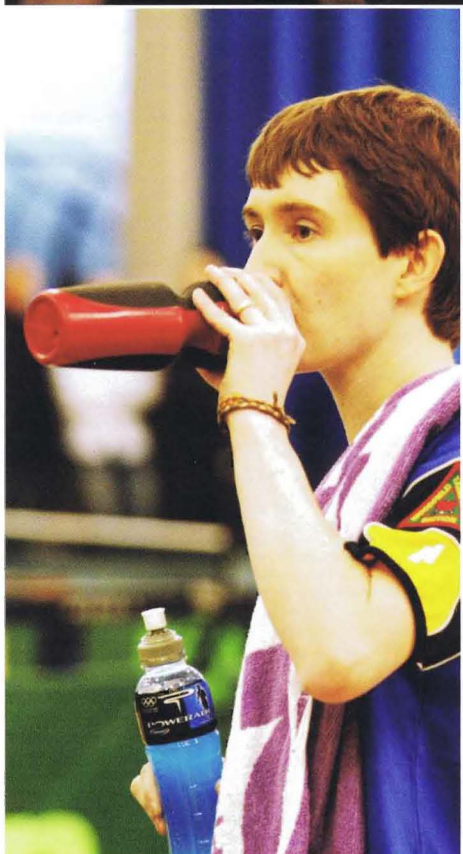
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**English National Table Tennis Championships**

*Intense*  
**Explosive**

**3-5 February 2006 Ponds Forge International Sports Centre Sheffield**  
Tickets available at Reception on the day of play only - Friday from 1pm: free  
Saturday all day: adult £4 Concession £2, Sunday All day: adult £6 Concession £3

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ENGLISH NATIONAL  
TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sheffield  
3rd-5th February 06

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## RICHARD PETTIT, EDITOR



### RICHARD EATON

Richard has written about racket sports for 30 years, working for newspapers, magazines, radio and websites all over the world. He has also co-authored books with Desmond Douglas, Jill Hammersley Parker and John Hilton.



### PAUL RAINFORD

Paul worked as a journalist in London for several years but now runs Exmoor House, a small hotel in Exmoor. As a cadet he reached number two in England but sadly it's been downhill ever since



### MATTHEW SYED

Matthew is former English number one. He has a defensive style with the bat yet quite the opposite with the pen. Currently a Times columnist, TV sports commentator and media pundit.



### BRIAN HALLIDAY

Brian is a long serving table tennis reporter. He is fanatical about our sport and is currently National Councillor for Berkshire and ETTA Vice-President.

It is a strange thing, writing this column for the first time.

The brief seems simple enough. Tell you about the good stuff in a couple of hundred words or so and try to be entertaining along the way. However, sitting at my desk tapping away, takes me back to my very first visit to the ETTA headquarters for the 'dreaded' interview' being grilled by the three wise men (Richard Yule, Jim Beckley and Alex Murdoch). Only this time it's not within the confines of four walls, it's out there for all to see.

I remember being asked the question... 'How would you improve on our present position'? I thought for a moment. I had run through this question thousands of times in my mind and even had a portfolio with answers, illustrations and examples, yet my heart started to race.

This wasn't the feeling of fear or anguish, well, perhaps a little nervous tension, but more an overriding sensation of sheer relief that the question had been asked and I had an answer.

So being an open minded editor I have served up my first issue and putting the ball straight in your court. No chop, topspin or even a hint of side, just some questions from me to you.

How would you like to see the magazine evolve? What issues are on your mind and what makes you, the reader, pick up and read?

"OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS THEY COULD BE APPEARING ON THE SAME AND OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE TOURNAMENTS WHICH COULD WELL BE CAREER-CHANGING" **RICHARD EATON** PAGE 4 "WE SHALL BE WORKING CLOSELY WITH UK SPORT, LONDON 2012, ITTF AND THE ETTU ON EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE OLYMPICS" **ALEX MURDOCH** PAGE 9 "SHE ALSO HAS THE MISFORTUNE TO SUPPORT WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS" **PAUL RAINFORD** PAGE 11 "CHESTER AND TREVOR ARE MY BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENTS" **KEN MUHR** PAGE 13 "IT IS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DEVISE AN APPROPRIATE, INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE STRUCTURE FOR TABLE TENNIS" **JOHN ARNOLD** PAGE 21 "SOME HIDE THEIR MORE FIENDISH SERVES. OTHERS WOULD REDUCE THE SPEED ON THEIR TOPSPIN" **MATTHEW SYED** PAGE 22 "INTRODUCE COMPETITIVE ASPECTS INTO YOUR TRAINING AS DOING SO FOCUSES THE MIND" **CHRISTOPHER PETTIT** PAGE 27



BY RICHARD PETTIT

Imagine if the 1982 Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*, with its grainy flashback of Harold Abrahams winning a gold medal at the Paris Olympics, were somehow replayed alongside a brightly coloured documentary of Seb Coe's cunningly crafted defeat of Paris' latest Olympic bid.

Or if Margaret Thatcher's bolted-neck image appeared alongside Tony Blair's pinned-on grin at the cabinet table. Or Trevor Brooking were time-warped in to link with David Beckham in midfield. Stars of 24 years ago alongside today's seem as incongruous as a telex working alongside an iPod, or Pink Floyd playing with Black-Eyed Peas.

Unless they are Alan Cooke and Paul Drinkhall. Cooke, aged 39, is already the oldest man to win the English title, and Drinkhall, only 15, could easily become the youngest. Together they seem like time lords scrambling the decades.

They are scrambling the business of winning and

## THE TIME LORDS OF TABLE TENNIS

STARS of 24 years ago alongside today's seem as incongruous as a telex working alongside an iPod, or Pink Floyd playing with Black-Eyed Peas. Unless they are Alan Cooke and Paul Drinkhall.

BY RICHARD EATON

losing too. Over the next two months they could be appearing on the same and the opposite sides of the net in tournaments which could well be career-changing.

At Sheffield this month (February 2006) they will be rivals - maybe principal rivals - at the National Championships, and in Melbourne the month afterwards (March 2006) they will be partners, in the men's doubles at the Commonwealth Games. That will be Cooke's last appearance in an England shirt. And maybe Drinkhall's first in which he becomes the main man. Inevitably all the satire-inducing categories will be dragged out.

It will become the handing over of the baton, or the passing on of the torch, or the master endorsing his successor. Ian Botham and Freddie Flintoff played up to it quite readily. But it was inflicted upon Tim Henman and Andy Murray before they were quite ready, one suspects.

In Drinkhall's case it may be more appropriate, because Cooke is not only a role model but part of the England coaching staff. Making the future is his job as well as his wish.

"When I play in the team he tries to make sure I am OK; he is thinking for me," said Drinkhall. "I think he's the best player for me to be playing with.

"He doesn't make many mistakes. He's good in the rallies, his services have got better and his return is OK," he added, with diplomatically canny references to Cooke's strengths and weaknesses. The lad was more than a lad. That became apparent again as he qualified his praise.

"I think I can beat anyone at the nationals," he said. "But I can't just go there and just expect to win. I have to make sure I go there and focus, and try to play hard every point."

This was a self-warning reference to his own shortcomings. And revealed an awareness that role models can become road blocks.

There were no such inhibitions about praise-giving with Cooke.

For him the nationals are not the priority they are for a young man who would like to maintain a remarkable record of having won every national singles title sequentially.

"Paul has a great all-round game," Cooke says.

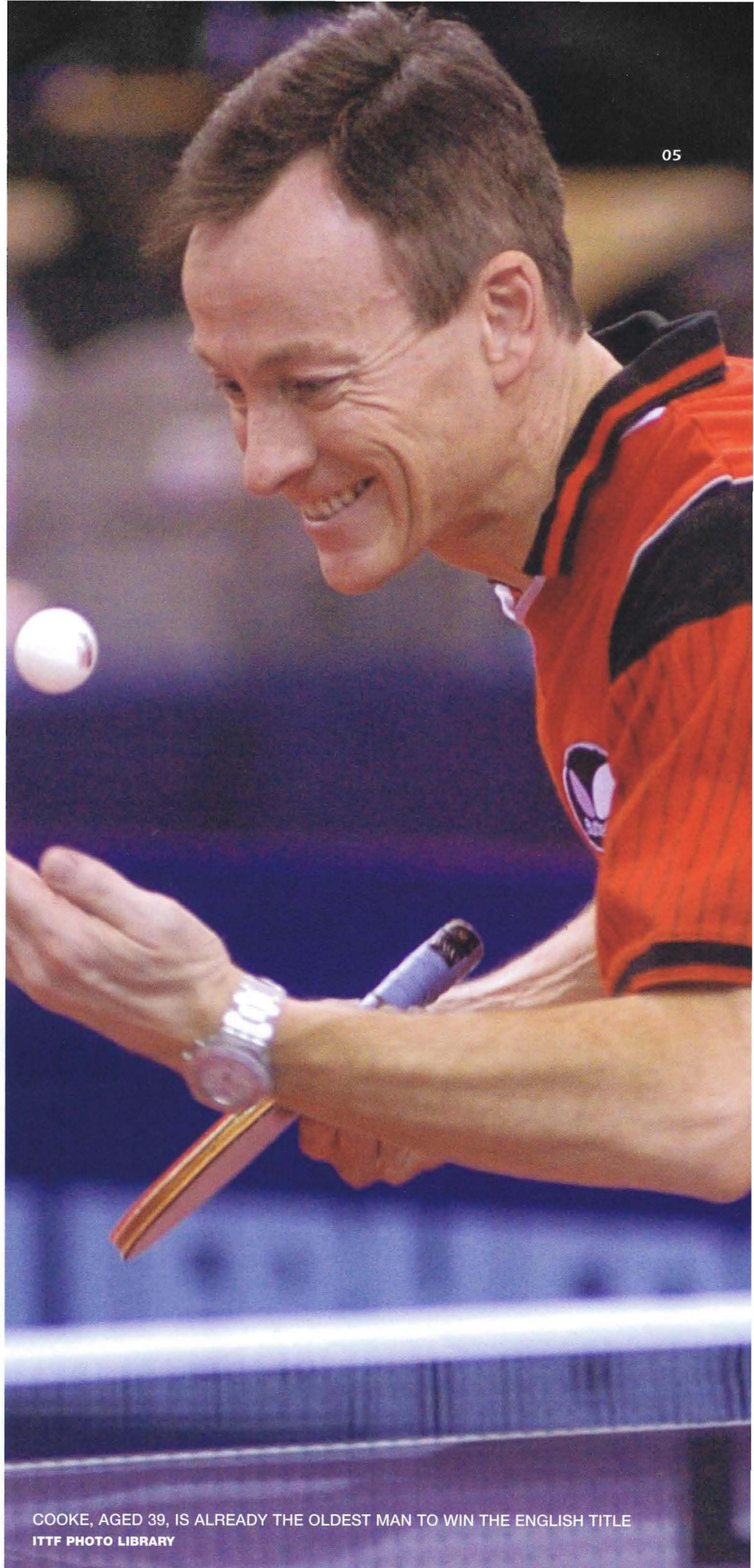
"He's amazingly quick around the table.

Deceptively quick. He gets his forehand in fantastically well. And off the table he is still dangerous. You can't think you have won the point.

"I need some young legs to do some running," he said, only semi-seriously. "It's nice for me to be playing with someone who's young and energetic and desperate to win and that will help me to win."

It will also offer a vehicle for his knowledge. "A couple of years ago I felt worried because he was not showing enough emotion on the table,"

Cooke revealed. "No negative emotion, that's good, but no positive emotion, that's not just being cool; you need your emotions to help you.



COOKE, AGED 39, IS ALREADY THE OLDEST MAN TO WIN THE ENGLISH TITLE  
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*COOKE, aged 39, is already the oldest man to win the English title, and Drinkhall, only 15, could easily become the youngest. Together they seem like time lords scrambling the decades. They are scrambling the business of winning and losing too.*

But I think he has sorted that now.

"I learnt a lot being around Des Douglas and Carl Prean (team mates when Cooke first made the England squad). But Paul's different, having been brought up with younger players around him.

That's why it's good I can help him a little bit with some of these things."

How did Drinkhall become so good? With ability, hard work and commitment, of course. But also with happy accidents of timing which made all the difference.

Like a grand-dad who introduced him as a child to table tennis at a local chapel. Like parents who invested what money they had in him and his brother's. Like a famous club, Ormesby, within range of home, and lottery funding which started in table tennis not long after he did.

"I knew right away that he had something special," said Carole Moore, the Ormesby coach who set him on the right roads. Via these he progressed to the ETTA's tough-minded Liu Jia - Yi.

"He's done very well for Paul. He's concentrated on him and Darius (Knight) to the exclusion of others," said Alan Ransome, who brought the Chinese coach to England when he was ETTA Chairman.

"It gets up people's noses as you might imagine," Ransome added drily. The implication was clear. Here was someone for whom the annoyance might be worth it.

And how has Cooke hung on so long? Through the mentality which started him in the sport. There were no millions of pounds of funding in those days. Cooke was funded by desire.

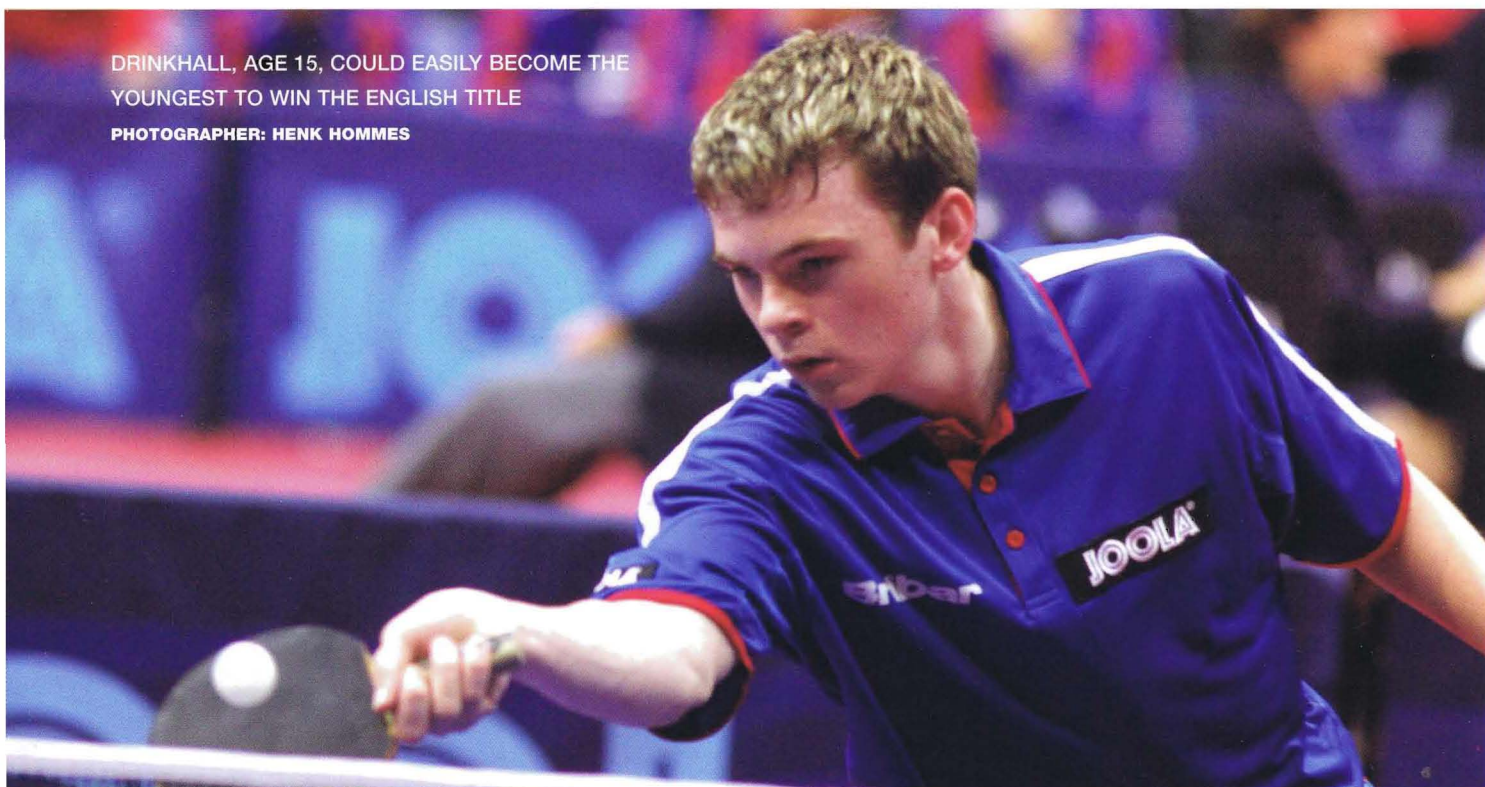
It was this which brought him back to top level competition when, eight years ago, exhausted, he had tried to retire. Instead he became hooked on fitness, training harder than ever before, and even running a ten-kilometre race and playing a league match the same day. But the England set-up had players whom he "strongly felt didn't have commitment and professionalism." He added:

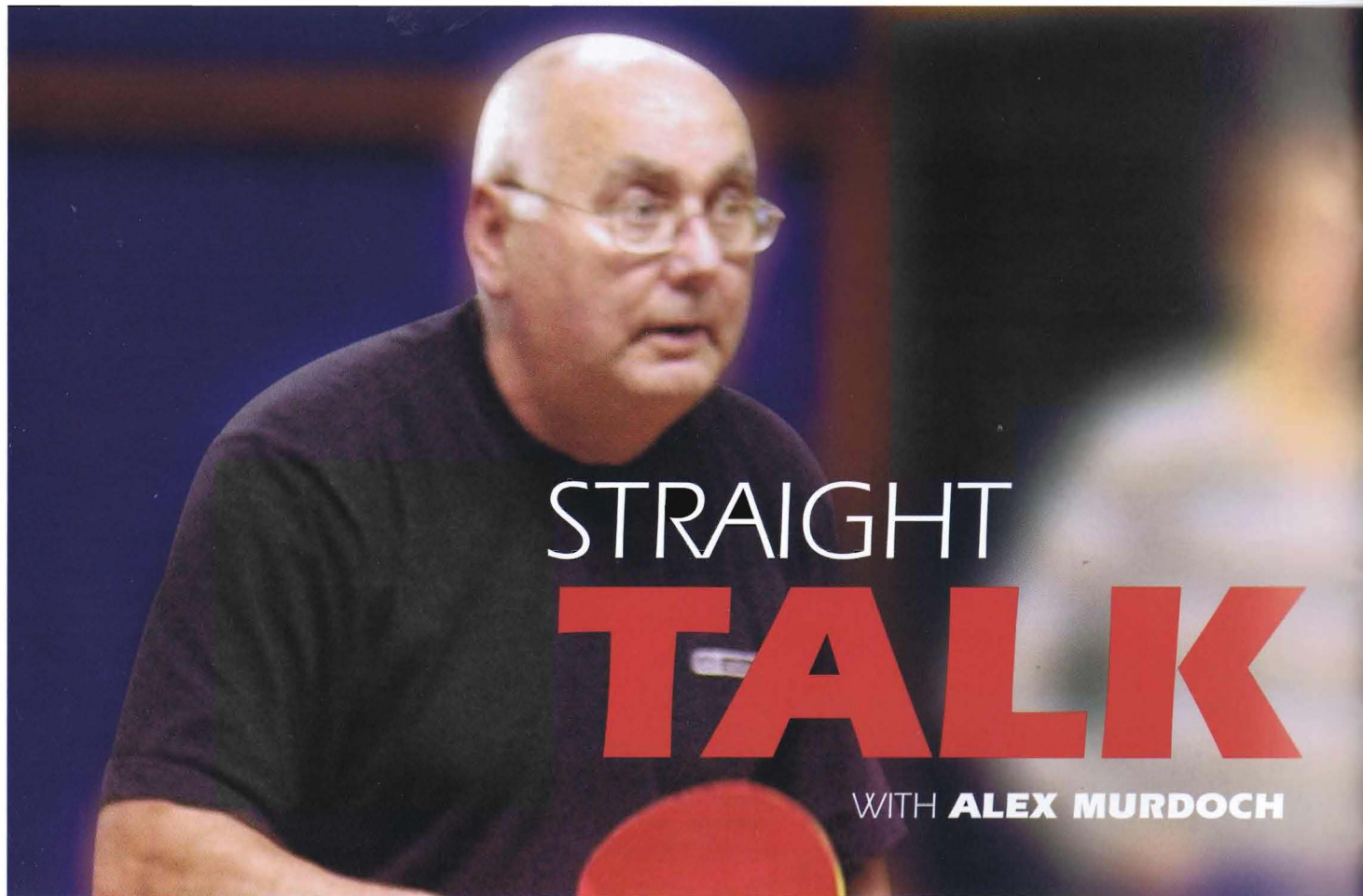
"And it's hard when players are not giving you what it takes."

That has changed. Which means Cooke's career is about to as well. Drinkhall's is entering the main stadium. And if there is a baton to be passed, now is when it is likely to happen.

**DRINKHALL, AGE 15, COULD EASILY BECOME THE YOUNGEST TO WIN THE ENGLISH TITLE**

**PHOTOGRAPHER: HENK HOMMES**





# STRAIGHT TALK

WITH **ALEX MURDOCH**

Welcome to 2006 and the first issue of Table Tennis News under its new editor Richard Pettit. I wish him and his team every success in upgrading and improving this publication which is the voice of our sport to the outside world.

Last year was an interesting and exciting year for table tennis with the successes of our cadet boys in the international arena, with London becoming the host city for the 2012 Olympics and the first year of the Sport England 4 year Whole Sport Plan giving us additional funding and support.

It is always difficult to quantify if these and actions taken within the ETTA programmes and strategies have made a significant difference to table tennis in England.

They will of course not initially be of benefit to you all, you can though be assured that changes and actions will be ongoing to move our great sport forward. This will happen with better communications, increase participation, steady improvements in our international team, increasing and improving support to the grass

roots, and a continued willingness by the Management to work in partnership with the membership.

## INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATIONS

It is essential that the data from Leagues and Premier Clubs continue to come in so at the end of the season we have a much more accurate database of our membership. If you need any help please get in touch, I am always willing to meet players, coaches, organisers and officials to discuss this and any ETTA programmes.

## FUNDING

We have received excellent support from Sport England and shall work with them in a positive way to encourage further funding growth. Such funding will be managed in a way to help the grass roots increase participation and give them support in every way possible.

At the same time it is critical that our group of

talented young players and those on the way up need training, and it is our role to endeavour to get additional funding from UK Sport to meet the medal hopes of these players at London 2012.

UK Sport is working closely in conjunction with the British Olympic Association and the national governing bodies on the future funding and planning programmes for 2012, details of which have been presented to the Government. It is anticipated that the results of negotiations will be available in the next 90 days, and let's hope for a significant outcome for table tennis in support and preparations for the Olympics.

We have not forgotten the need for us as an organisation to increase our own income streams, and this will be an important element in our plans for the future.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SQUAD AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

Investment and support will be increased in these areas as a pathway and opportunities must exist for our up and coming young players. Participation and improvements at international level is a key element towards growth in general for any sport.

A better understanding of these programmes and the criteria surrounding them will be communicated to the membership during the coming months.

## COACHING

During the next 18 months the advent of the UK Coaching Certificate will change the face of coaching in England. We are part of this process and will work closely with existing and new potential coaches whose role in our sport is critical for our future.

## RULES AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

This is major area in need of modernisation. It is essential that a forward looking and effective national governing body has a process of rules and regulations which are manageable, user friendly and easy to understand and implement.

## WEBSITE AND LOGO

The new upgraded and easier to use website is imminent. This will be updated more often and cover more information useful for our members on a day-to-day basis. A new logo and brand identity for the ETTA has been agreed which will in the coming months be used throughout our communications, and provide us with a more upbeat and sporty appearance to the world.

## EVENTS

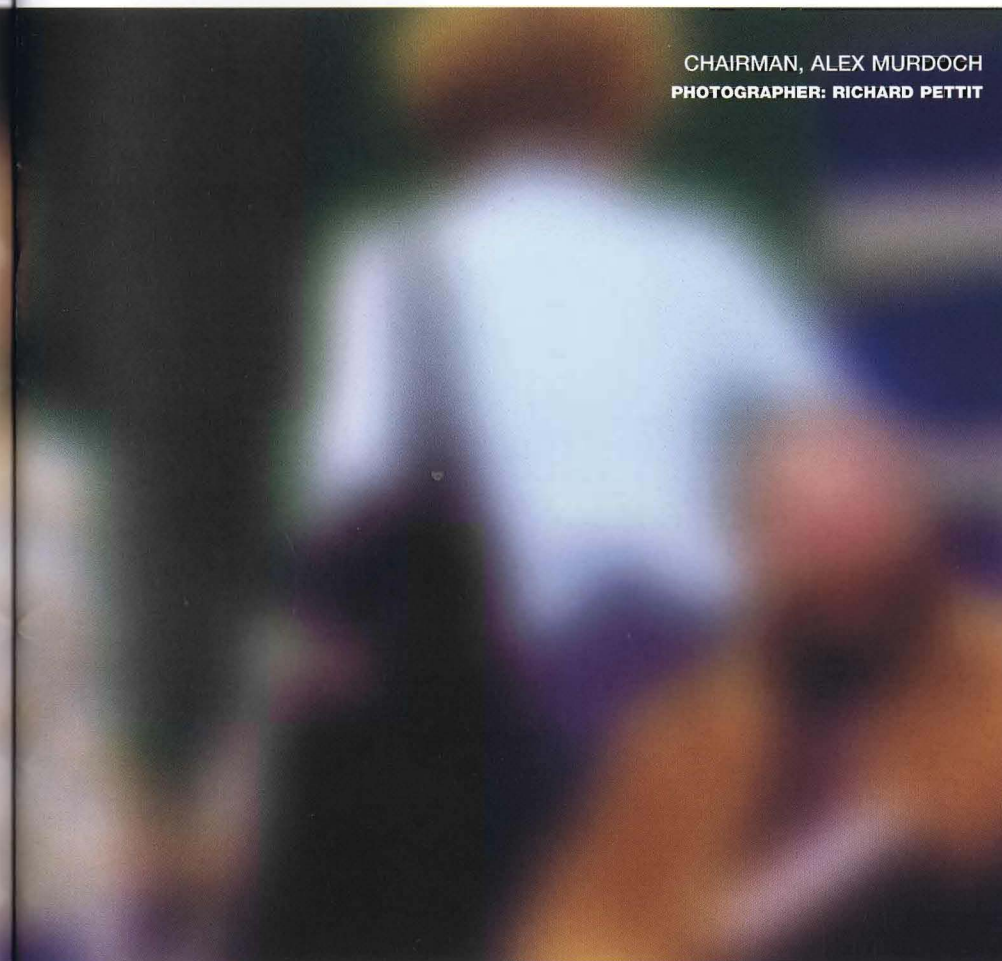
We shall be working closely with UK Sport, London 2012, ITTF and the ETTU on events leading up to the Olympics.

Part of this must include television and increased media coverage, which is another element in the process of increasing participation.

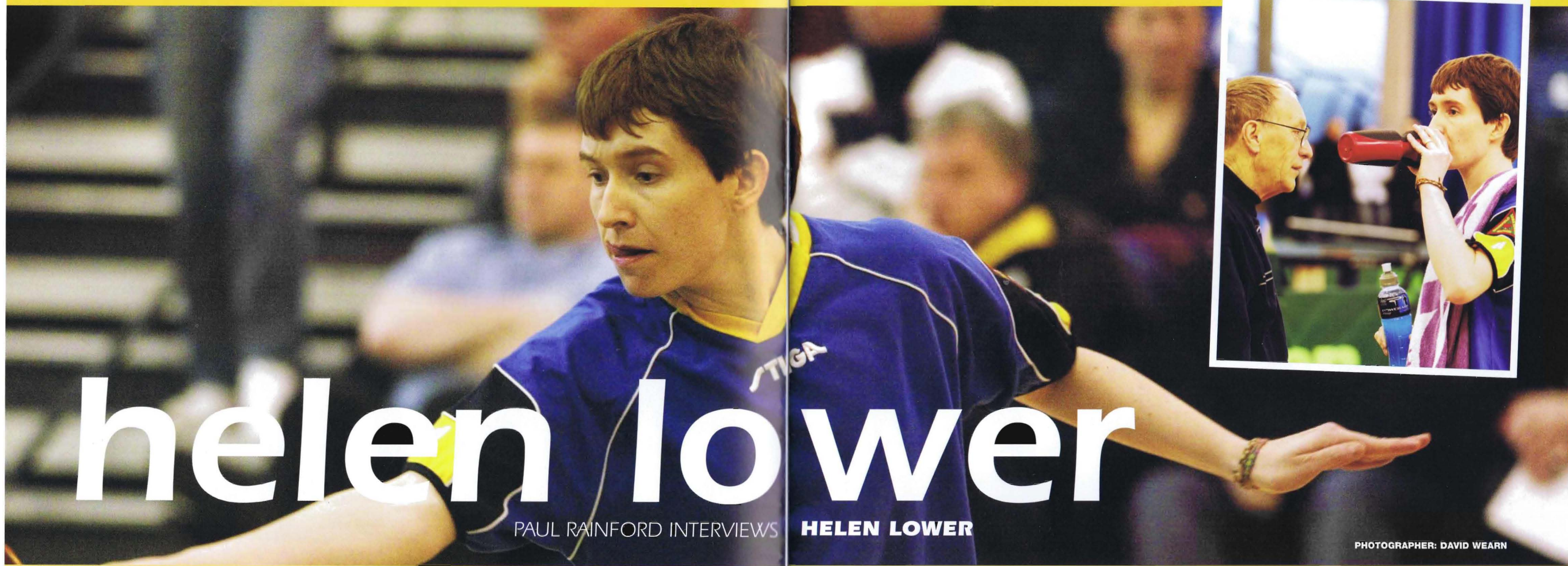
Moving our sport forward must be a partnership of cooperation between us all, and one of my roles is to assist and support this process in every way possible. The links and communications between staff, volunteers and the membership are the key part of this partnership, and I am sure we all want the sport we love to grow and give pleasure to us and the many other potential players in the community at large.

I, on behalf of the ETTA, wish you all a great, competitive and enjoyable 2006 and hope that during my travels, I meet with you and discuss any issues about table tennis. As always I am happy to visit your Club, League, County and Region, just get in touch and let me know.

CHAIRMAN, ALEX MURDOCH  
PHOTOGRAPHER: RICHARD PETTIT







# helen lower

PAUL RAINFORD INTERVIEWS **HELEN LOWER**

PHOTOGRAPHER: DAVID WEARN

You could forgive someone who had lost in the final of the national championships six times for thinking it was never going to happen. Lesser players might have decided to put their bats away for the last time and go and spend more time with their family. Helen Lower, however, is not your average player. Her victory at Ponds Forge last year, at the seventh time of asking and at the age of 34, was a testament to her sheer determination and will to win. These are the qualities that, according to her long-time coach Derrick Marples, make her a special player "Helen has such a strong attitude and is not easily intimidated. She has worked so hard," he says. It comes as little surprise to learn that Helen draws inspiration from Paula Radcliffe's recent autobiography. Her triumph last season is all the more remarkable considering the injuries she has had to overcome during her career. Several years ago she sustained a serious leg injury at a training camp which stopped her playing for several months – a major setback at Helen's level. She has also suffered shoulder problems. "There was always something interfering with Helen's progress," says Derrick. So what made the difference in 2005? What was the secret ingredient

in Helen's game that was missing on the six previous attempts? Helen herself is self-effacing: "Everything just clicked on the day. I actually had a bit of a shaky start, losing the first set in the first round and I had a real struggle against Joanna Roberts." But once all cylinders started firing, she proved too good for Andrea Holt - who she had lost to the previous year - in the final. Helen's bagging of the national title is of course the culmination of many years of endeavour. She started playing when she was eight, inspired by one Mr Docherty, a teacher who thankfully took it upon himself to start a table tennis club at Helen's local primary school. About a year later she started playing in the Wolverhampton & District League, soon rubbing shoulders with the likes of Adrian Dixon and Fiona Elliot. In fact, it was with Fiona, Jill Harris, Janet Dunning and Sandra Roden, in the collective shape of the Woodfield Ladies team, that Helen first tasted major success, when they won the national title. (By Helen's reckoning, they went on to win it 16 times!) On the coaching side, Helen was initially taken under the wing of Jenny Heaton before teaming up with Derrick Marples as she advanced in standard. Since winning the title Helen has had the kind of busy year you would expect of a champion.

She commutes to France to represent CAM Bordeaux in the national league there twice a month, which she finds tiring but rewarding. "The French league is very strong - much stronger than England," says Helen. "And we get some decent crowds at our home games." When she is not away at training camps she meets up with Derrick Marples at least once a week, who puts her through her paces on the table in Sheffield and at Lea Green, Derrick's top 30-ranked grandson Shaun being the practice partner of choice. At one time Helen was putting in four hours a day on the table, but with her own coaching commitments (Helen has attained Level 3 coaching award) she now has to do what she can. She looks after the fitness side herself, putting in a lot of endurance work. Away from the table Helen likes to listen to music – Oasis and Bon Jovi both figure on her playlist but Usher is her favourite. She also has the misfortune to support Wolverhampton Wanderers when she gets a chance, being a fan of manager Glen Hoddle but admitting that a decent striker is desperately needed. She may not be very confident about Wolves' chances of promotion this year, but what of her own chances of retaining her title? "There's

not much to choose between the top girls - it's whoever plays well on the day," says Helen. For coach Derrick, however, a second title for Helen is definitely on the cards: "She's playing the best table tennis of her life," he believes. Whatever happens, it won't be a lack of determination or dedication that stands in her way.

## helen's factfile

- Birthday: 9th May 1970
- Born: Wolverhampton
- Hobbies: Reading and following Wolves FC
- Style of Play: Right Handed Topspin. Loop
- International Club: CAM Bordeaux, France
- National Club: Woodfield Table Tennis Club, Wolverhampton
- Sporting Achievements: 13 National Titles
  - European - Team Bronze
  - Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships, Team Silver, Mixed Doubles - Silver, Mixed Doubles - Bronze

# POINTS TO NOTE

FEBRUARY NEWS REVIEW

## IMMENSE CONTRIBUTION

Doreen Nightingale has been with the Association since 1991, and what an eventful time she has had. As well as being an excellent worker Doreen is a dedicated umpire and referee and this is how it all started..... Following an early retirement from the teaching profession Doreen's restless nature together with the persuasive powers of Mike Watts (then Vice-Chairman (Administration)) led to full time employment at the ETTA. Whilst the teaching profession, was mourning its loss table tennis revelled in the skills of the new 'Rankings Master' Since 1991 Doreen has helped the Association progress in many ways, perhaps the most visible the adoption of the Canadian Ranking system, and, whilst working with Diccon Gray (Development Manager) the inauguration of the Junior Leagues which sealed a six year sponsorship deal with the Woolwich. Soon the ranking scheme became a full time job on its own and Doreen, at the request of Robert Sinclair (General Secretary), moved with the ranking scheme into the Administration

Department. Here she was able to stretch her wings and managed to accumulate lots more responsibilities and so supporting and easing the pressure on Rob.

Unfortunately the time has come for Doreen to retire; however, being a true team player she will continue to work on a part time basis offering her expertise to Jennifer Sherwin who is taking over the Ranking System.

"Having nearly reached my 'three score years and ten' I feel that it is time I gave myself the opportunity to slow down a bit and take a look around. I am not brave enough to make the break completely and so I will be working for the Association on a part time basis. I shall continue to work with the Local Leagues, National Council and other Committees as well as my volunteer work with umpiring, refereeing and at Grand Prix's. The result of this is that I do not have to say 'good-bye' and am looking forward to maintaining the friendships that I have enjoyed over the years"

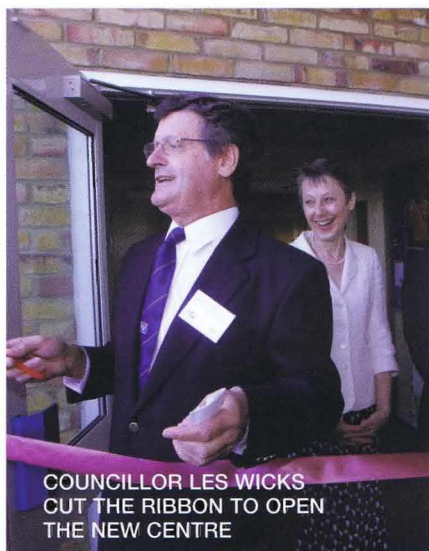
Richard Yule, Chief Executive said "Doreen's contribution to the work of the Association has been immense! A true multi tasker, her energy,

enthusiasm and expertise has touched and improved every important administrative function in the office. While Doreen is not leaving us completely I welcome this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation of her outstanding work to date. Thank you Doreen and enjoy your semi-retirement."

Doreen, Thank you from all at the ETTA.



DOREEN AT ETTA HEADQUARTERS



COUNCILLOR LES WICKS  
CUT THE RIBBON TO OPEN  
THE NEW CENTRE

## HOWARD SCHOOL TABLE TENNIS CENTRE

New dedicated facilities are helping raise the Profile, Performance and Participation of table tennis. The Howard School Table Tennis Centre is just one of many new facilities that are popping up around the country.

The Big Lottery funded Howard School Table Tennis Centre is a dedicated facility with the flexibility of 6 tables for competitive matches and 10 for coaching and practice. During school hours the centre is utilised for curriculum and term time table tennis, leaving the rest of the time available to the budding table tennis players of Kent and further afield. With the District League, Chatham, Medway and the recently formed Howard School Table Tennis Club all using the facilities, it truly is a crucial hub for the development of the sport in the south east. Claire Moore, Medway Sports Development Officer, is delighted: 'The new Table Tennis Centre has given the sport a huge boost in the Medway area. Thanks must go to the support of the clubs and volunteer coaches, through their development work in schools and at the centre, the sport is really beginning to grow'

## THE GEORGE BEST OF TABLE TENNIS

The sad death at 59 last November, through complications related to alcoholism, of Manchester United and Northern Ireland footballing genius George Best, possibly the most talented player ever, reminds me that, like many other top footballers, he once played table tennis. An ETTA promotional booklet published in 1968, quoted George, alongside a photograph, saying:

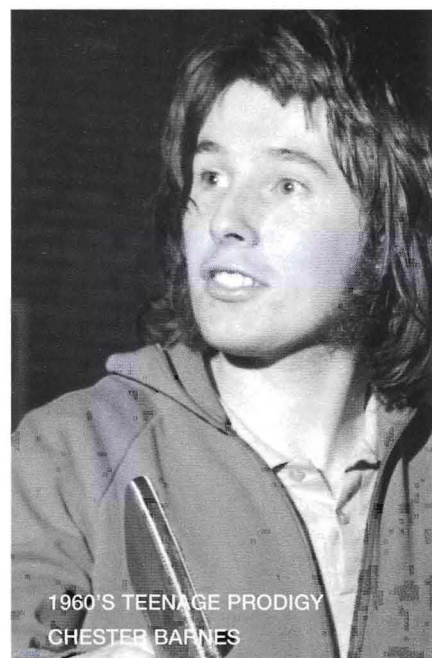
"Table tennis? It's a great game. Ask any of the Manchester United boys. The majority play it, some better than others, and modest me, I'm not considered too bad in Old Trafford ratings. I played it first at school, then at my local youth club in Belfast and now at the Manchester Y.M.C.A., though not as often as I'd like. But it's a fine game for footballers. It keeps your eye in, maintains your fitness, yet can still be played – if a little less energetically, when you get past some of the other pleasures."

I forget who, but somebody from table tennis did confirm that they had seen Georgie playing TT at the YMCA. Never really a big football fan myself, even I was impressed by his incredible close ball control and sheer sleight of foot, as he dribbled past numerous defenders. Like musician Van Morrison and boxer Barry McGuigan, he was a celebrity that bridged the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland. Owing to his cavalier attitude to his own health and indulgence in the good life, he effectively retired from the top level of the sport aged only 27, causing team-mate Denis Law to opine, "I don't think we saw the best of him...he could have got even better."

1960's teenage prodigy Chester Barnes, 5 times English national champion, was the George Best of table tennis. Stylish and charismatic, the supremely gifted Barnes had the game and flair that could have adapted very well to the speed glue era. This, combined with youthful good looks, an infectious personality and quick wit, made Chester England's last table tennis media

star. Maybe they didn't all meet up at the same time, but I have memories of Chester on 'A Question of Sport' with George Best and Henry Cooper.

At least in his brief career Best got near to fulfilment of potential. Although not brought low by alcohol abuse (and fortunately still with us as a racehorse trainer), Chester's extra-curricular activities and run-ins with authority meant that at too early an age he stopped seriously training and contending in table tennis. He had the talent



1960'S TEENAGE PRODIGY  
CHESTER BARNES

and beat several of the top players in the world, but was never rated among the very best. Des Douglas, and even Denis Neale, did better on the international stage. Of English might-have-beens I have witnessed in my 43 years in the sport, Chester and Trevor Taylor are my biggest disappointments.

However, echoing Georgie Best's sentiments, Chester said that the next best thing to being world champion, was being able to live like one. What can you say to that?

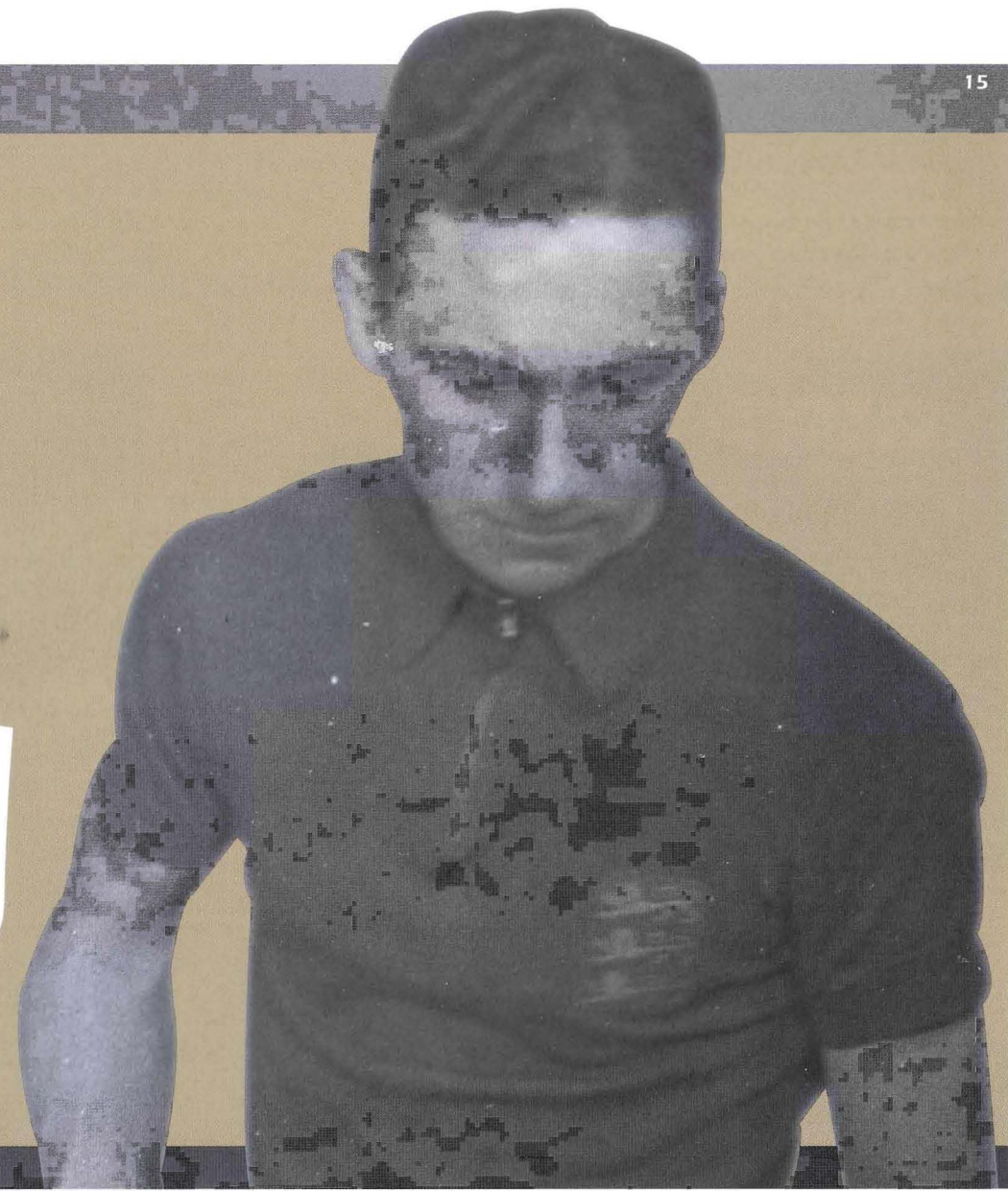
By Ken Muhr



HOWARD SCHOOL TABLE TENNIS CENTRE, HOLDING 250 SPECTATORS

# PLAYING FOR ONE'S COUNTRY MEANT everything

BRIAN HALLIDAY INTERVIEWS **KEN HYDE**



The telephone rang. The caller started out by announcing "You won't know me, my name is Ken Hyde."

...I trawled swiftly through my memory. Yes I did recall the name, probably from ploughing through the sports old archives some years ago. The conversation we had was so fascinating that I asked Ken whether he would consent to be interviewed. I still believe that history and traditions are important and the story that he had to tell throws more light on yesterdays players and the conditions they played under.

*BH: Can you tell me a little about yourself and how you first became interested in the game?*

KH: I was born in St. Helens, Lancashire in 1916. I went to the Quarry Bank High School in Liverpool and then to the University of Liverpool where I graduated B.Sc in Chemistry. I was fortunate to be born into a sporting family, in fact my father was captain of the team that won the first Ping Pong League in the world. That was the St. Helens League in 1912. My father was an all round sportsman and I think that this rubbed off on my two elder brothers and myself.

*BH: So when did you start to play seriously?*

KH: We moved to Liverpool in 1931 and I joined the Grove House Club and was able to play in the Liverpool League.

*BH: When did you first taste success?*

KH: In 1932 I played in the English Open at Buxton and was drawn against the great Victor Barna in the 1st Round. I managed to win the first game- this caused a sensation -then Victor won the next three! This match did me a massive favour as I was selected for England against Wales and Ireland that year.

*BH: When did you take part in your first World Championships?*

KH: I was still at school when I was selected for the Swaythling Cup team in Paris in 1933. I don't think I was the youngest to achieve this honour as Adrian Hayden (father of Ann Jones who achieved dual fame at both tennis and table tennis) and Andy Miller were some months younger. The experience I gained was simply enormous. We all thought we were good until we were pitched into the real international scene and we all realised very quickly that we had much to learn. I really feel that, provided you have the necessary talent and ability, the sooner you experience the game at this level the better.

*BH: What happened in the ensuing years?*

KH: I was a regular member of the Swaythling Cup team from 1933 to the outbreak of the 2nd World War. I remember touring Germany and Holland in 1934 with Maurice Bergl and we won all our matches including three

internationals. These years were golden for me. I won many Open tournaments including the Merseyside twice. Perhaps the best was the Welsh Open in 1937 when I beat Liebster of Austria and the Hymie Lurie in the final.

*BH: Can you recall any personal triumphs and disasters at that time?*

KH: I remember in a match against Hungary in Bristol I beat the former World Champion and a real legend in the sport, Michael Szabados. Probably my best win was against Victor Barna in the Manchester Evening Chronicle International Tournament - the first time he had lost to an English player. Defeats? I well remember a final of the Merseyside Open and losing to Richard Bergmann. He was certainly the most difficult opponent I ever played. I beat three former World Champions, but never Richard. In 1939 I had an epic match at the Royal Albert Hall in London against Vana. I lost 3-1 but it was mighty close and I think I might have won.

*BH: What do you remember of the trip to The Worlds in 1939?*

KH: How could I forget it? It was held in Cairo and it took us 5 days to get there. On the journey out we played France in Paris, and won. My confidence was sky high as I beat Haganauer in that match. In fact the team were very confident going into the Worlds. We played the Czech side and although I beat Vana and, for some reason with which I have

never been able to fathom, we all lost to the Number 3. I reached the last 8 in the singles - only to lose to my pet aversion, Bergmann. I was playing so well and so confidently at that time that I think, with a kinder draw, I might have gone all the way. Apart from the competitive side we played some exhibition matches before the King and Queen of Egypt. It was 1939 and little did I think that three years later I would return with the RAF

*BH: Where did you spend the war years?*

KH: I volunteered for the RAF in 1940 and spent six years, three of them in Africa. I rose to the rank of Squadron Leader.

*BH: After the war what did you do?*

KH: I began a career in Industry, played little table tennis until I was persuaded to play in a Charity Exhibition in 1948. Unfortunately I broke an Achilles Tendon and my playing days were over. My interest in the game never wavered and I was honoured to be elected President of the Liverpool League in 1961, an office I held until 1990.

*BH: Going back to the 1930s, you have mentioned the difficulties of travel.*

KH: Well we all travelled the cheapest way possible. When you are going to places like Prague, Budapest, and Baden, sitting on wooden seats in Third Class compartments is not very funny. On the Cairo trip we travelled

train by to Newhaven, boat to Dieppe, train to Paris, train to Marseilles, and from there three days to Alexandria. Not the best of preparations. We were of course amateurs - no payments at all, not even out of pocket expenses. I suppose it seems old fashioned now, but to play for one's country meant everything. It was the honour that was important.

BH: Have you any general remarks on the game in those days and how it compares to the game now?

KH: Perhaps one sees the past through rose tinted glasses, but table tennis was a spectacle in those days. The Hungarians were sensational and their visits drew massive crowds. 10,000 spectators to their shows were not uncommon. As a small boy they inspired me tremendously and my ambition was to play just like them. Even in domestic tournaments thousands turned up to watch. I remember the Merseyside Open held at the Picton Hall had 6000 spectators.. In 1939 the Albert Hall was filled as was the Wembley Arena for the English Open.

BH: Any personal views?

KH: You know Brian table tennis was a true ball game, with no assistance from fancy bats or fancy spin services. It is worth remembering that Fred Perry won major titles at table tennis and tennis, Frank Wilde played Davis Cup, Eric Filby was also a double international. Excellent England players who also played cricket included Charlie Bull, Les Todd, Stan Proffitt, Cliff Cooke. (BH: also Sir Jack Hobbs I seem to recall). I was certainly born a ball game player and at University gained colours for Soccer, Cricket, Tennis, and Squash in addition to Table Tennis. I am not saying this from any conceited aspect, it is just that the more young players that can

participate in as many ball games as possible, then the better their chance and opportunity of having success.

BH: I understand that you have some pretty forthright views on today's equipment.

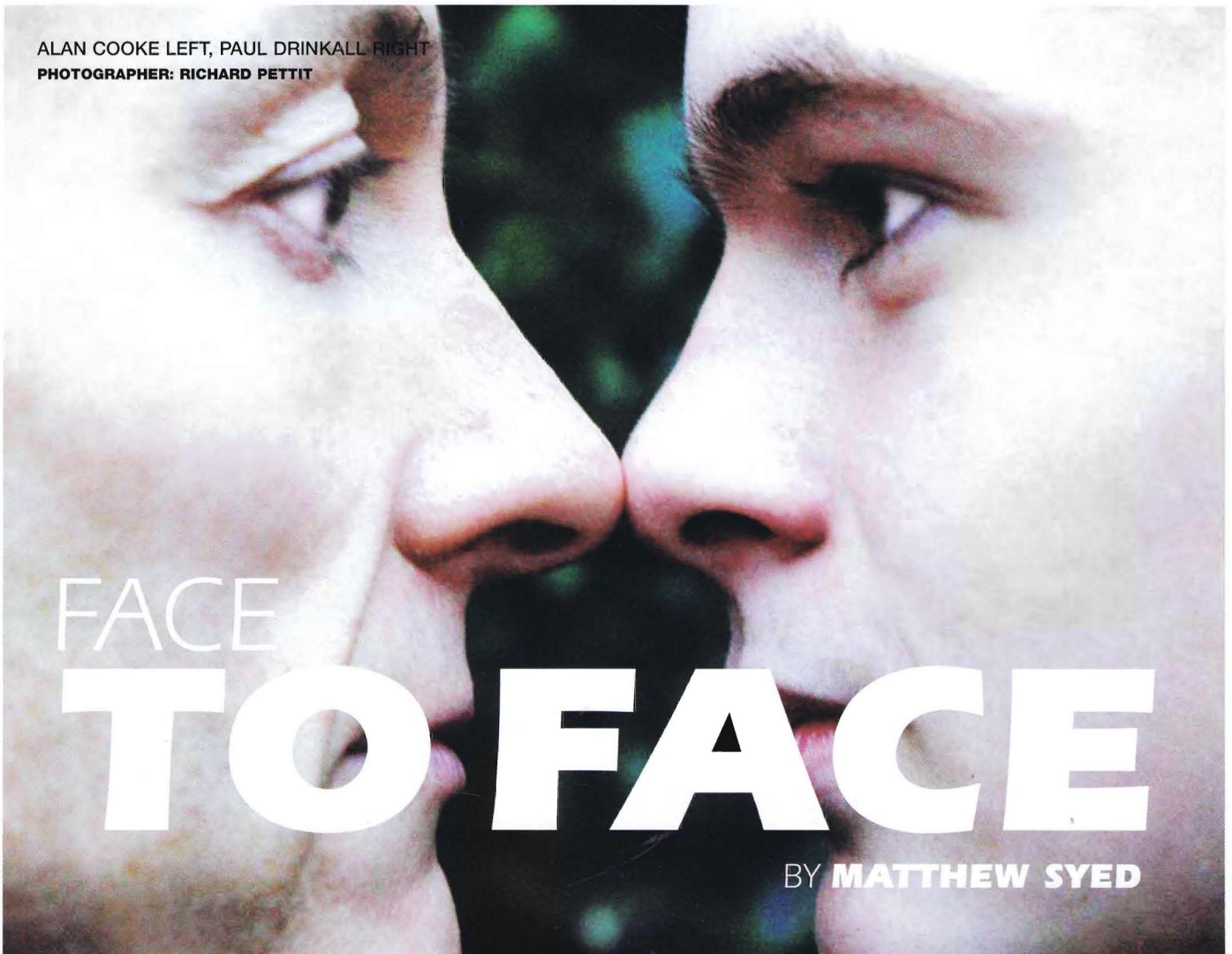
KH: My view is that the sponge bat has ruined table tennis. I know of no other game where the equipment has gone through so many changes. With all the host of different surfaces and the various types of glue, the game has become farcical. It is no longer a true ball game to a ball game player. The game used to be graceful, now it is ugly. No player these days has the grace of Barna. Evidence? In 1939 Wembley had 10,000 spectators - trains and coaches were laid on from all over the country. You know at that time a vicious spin service with the fingers was introduced and the administrators imposed an immediate ban. Would that happen now? Also why is there so little publicity? If the game is to be a spectator sport there has to be massive changes. We are told there are thousands of players, why is publicity so poor.

BH: The points you have made are well taken and I am sure will invoke a response from our readers. Thank you very much for talking to me and providing an interesting insight to the game both past and present. Finally Ken, I and others have written many words on that infamous two hours and ten minute point all those years ago in Prague. Any comments?

KH: I was actually there when it all took place. I will tell you about it another time.



4TH FROM LEFT – BARNA, SZABADOS, LIBSTER,  
BELLAK, KEN HYDE, ERIC HYDE



ALAN COOKE LEFT, PAUL DRINKALL RIGHT  
 PHOTOGRAPHER: RICHARD PETTIT

# FACE TO FACE

BY MATTHEW SYED

I always found the National Championships a mildly surreal occasion, the one day in the year when England team-mates would become enemies. Facing a close friend across the net is always somewhat unnerving but this is amplified when that person is someone you have trained with, supported and even roomed with for the previous 12 months.

The atmosphere in the training hall (particularly when we were all stationed together at the National Watersports Centre in Nottingham) would become progressively more muted as the big day approached. Some would hide their more fiendish serves. Others would reduce the speed on their topspin in an (often comical) attempt to lull opponents into a false sense of security.

Then the big day would finally arrive when the

IT will be fascinating to watch Darius Knight and, in particular, the prodigious Gavin Evans spring to mind. One thing is for sure, the Nationals will provide some of the most compelling table tennis of the year in addition to an opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues

questions would be answered and a new pecking order established. Walking into the hall one would spot Alex Perry, perhaps, or Terry Young, people with whom one would normally share a laugh and a joke. Not at the Nationals, where a nodded acknowledgement and a gentle knock-up (with spin serves concealed, of course) would suffice. Only the easy-going Gareth Herbert was gloriously unaffected by the one-day-per-year rivalry.

The surrealism is heightened by the fact that the Nationals brings one face to face with English table tennis in all its diversity. From John Hilton (still exuding all the ambition of an adolescent – good for him) to Mick Strode (one of the most genial and judicious arbiters in the sport). From John Woodford (complete with notepad and pen) to Harvey Webb (the doyen of tournament

DARIUS KNIGHT  
 PHOTOGRAPHER: HENK HOMMES



organisers with more experience than Treebeard of the Ents).

The intrigue of this year's Nationals is intensified by the fact that two of the leading contenders are due to clash in an archetypal battle of the generations. Paul Drinkall, 15, from Middlesbrough is formidably talented, and is almost certain to win a string of titles in the future, but does he possess the maturity to claim success already?

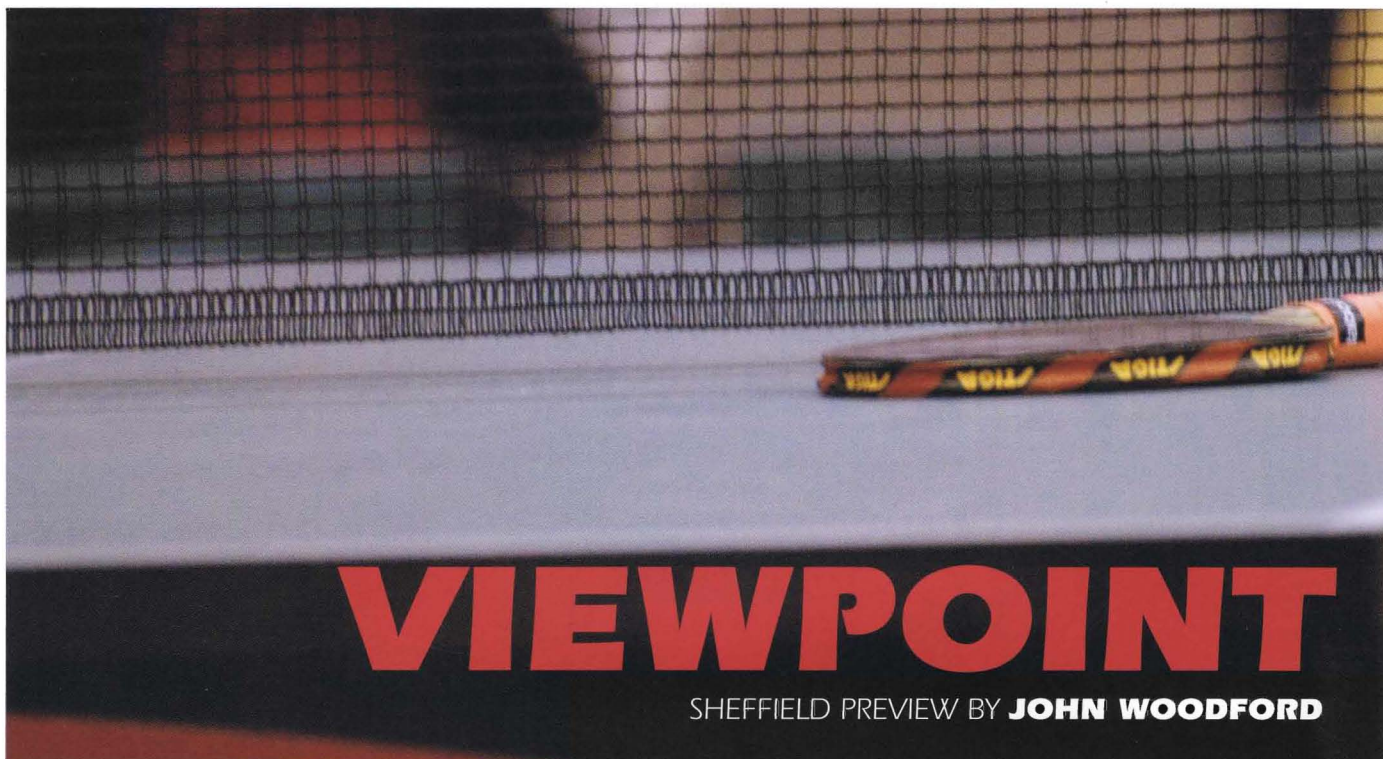
Alan Cooke, nearly 25 years his senior, stands in his way. A wily campaigner who retired after the World Championships in Manchester in 1997, Cooke has rediscovered the raw ambition that made him a fixture in the England team for a decade. Cooke's is fiercely competitive, something that translates into all aspects of life whether on a football pitch or across a

Monopoly board.

Then there is Andrew Baggaley. I am regularly reminded that the youngster from Milton Keynes has failed to progress at the speed I predicted when first witnessing his soft hands and intuitive stroke-making. It is remarkable that a player with such a keen instinct has yet to break into the world's top 50 players. He still has time. Alex Perry is another who might challenge. Immensely bright and possessing one of the sharpest wits (he regularly has the rest of the England team in hysterics), Perry is thought to be focussing on other challenges. That might render him even more dangerous. It will be fascinating to watch others, too. Darius Knight and, in particular, the prodigious Gavin Evans spring to mind.

One thing is for sure, the Nationals will provide

some of the most compelling table tennis of the year in addition to an opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues. I am already getting excited having spent a fair time over Christmas and the New Year chatting with Andrew, my older brother, about the various contenders. I look forward to seeing you all in Sheffield.



ALAN COOKE, now 39 will attempt to win his seventh England crown at Ponds Forge this weekend. A former winner of the Commonwealth title his venomous top-spin has changed little over the years since he first won the England title in 1988.

#### Alan Cooke

His workload is enormous at this time. Apart from bidding here in Sheffield for that seventh crown, he is currently at the heart of the training camps for the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and has sprung a surprise by entering the world veteran's championships in May on his debut as a veteran.

#### Alex Perry

Seeded to meet Cooke in the final will almost certainly be the pride of Devon and Nottingham. Perry won the England crown here in Sheffield in 1999, and with a whiplash backhand and the most deadly counter hits is back in form. He won the Bath Grand Prix in great style in the final to beat Ryan Jenkins.

#### Paul Drinkhall

Seeded 3, 4 and 5 respectively we have the Cleveland junior sensation Paul Drinkhall the European Junior champion, Andrew Baggaley who won the title in 2002 and Lancashire's Andrew Rushton whose recent upsurge in form

has landed him a place for England at the Melbourne Games.

#### Helen Lower

Wolverhampton's Helen Lower will be favourite to retain her women's singles after a sterling performance last year to beat Manchester's Andrea Holt 3-1 in the final.

Miss Lower, 35 is a great worker on the table with her non-stop attack and trains as hard as anyone in the England squad. She would have won this title more often but for the presence of Nicola Deaton who clinched the crown five times before retiring to take up coaching.

#### Joanne Parker, Georgina Walker and Kelly Sibley

There are a possible three other candidates who could upset the Staffordshire holder – Joanna Parker (Surrey) whose club is in Berlin, Georgina Walker (Nottingham) and the youngest contender Kelly Sibley from Warwickshire.

#### And finally

A fourth player who has won a string of tournaments in England is Natalie Bawden who is disappointed at not being chosen for Melbourne.

There is a surprises in the men's doubles pairings - Cooke playing with Paul Drinkhall and Matthew Syed playing only in the doubles with the Brighton champion Paul Andrews - lifelong

pals since their England junior days.

Top eight seeds as the Draw in Blackpool

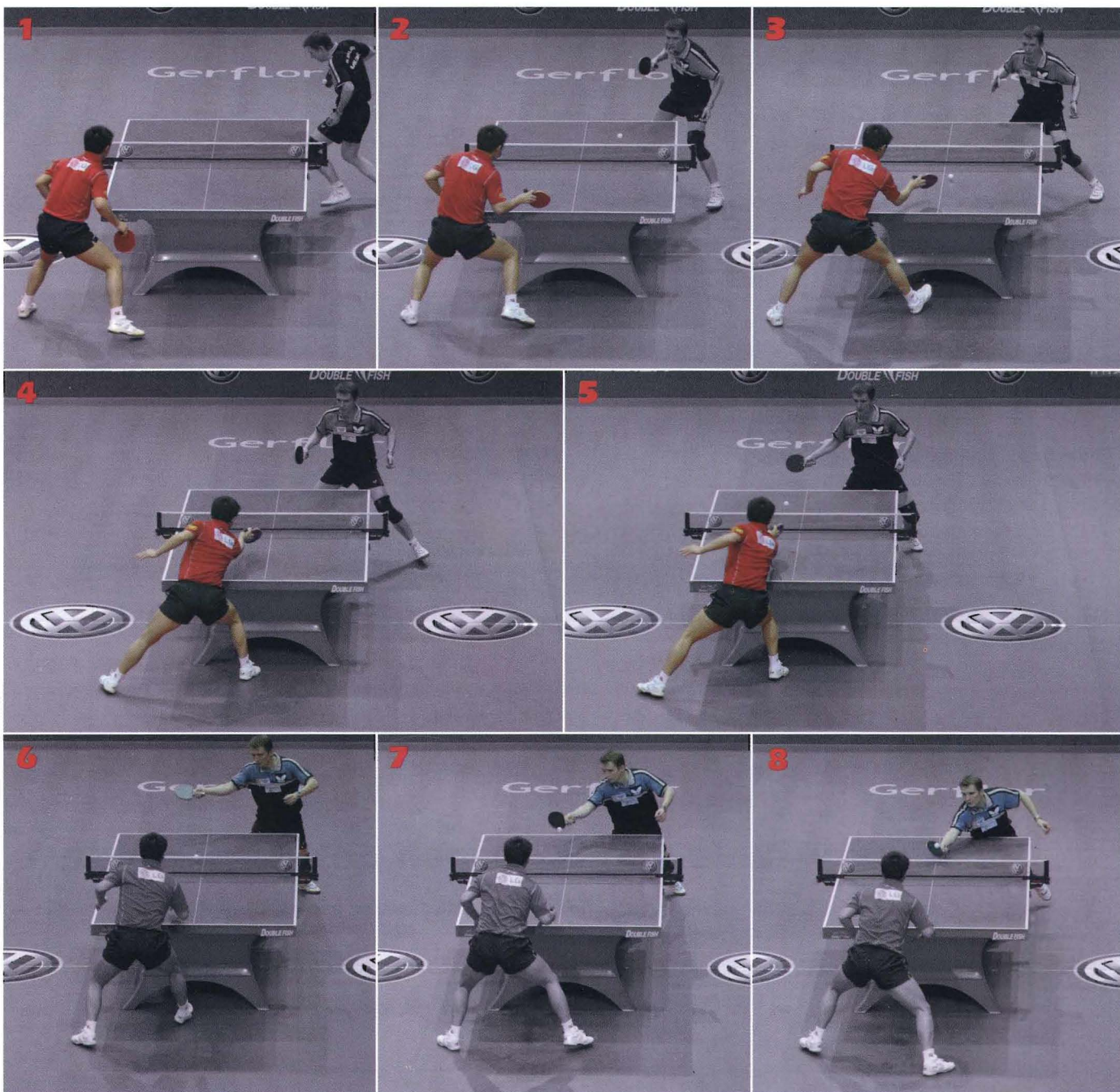
#### Senior Men

- 1: Alan Cooke (DY.)
- 2: Alex Perry (DV.)
- 3: Andrew Baggaley (Bu.)
- 4: Andrew Rushton (LA.)
- 5: Paul Drinkhall (CV.)
- 6: Terry Young (BK.)
- 7: Darius Knight (SY.)
- 8: Adam Bleakley (LA.)

#### Senior Woman

- 1: Helen Lower (ST.)
- 2: Joanna Parker (SY.)
- 3: Linda March (HE.)
- 4: Geogina Walker (DY.)
- 5: Kelly Sibley (WA.)
- 6: Natalie Bawden (E.)
- 7: Lindsey Reynolds (LA.)
- 8: Joanna Roberts (Y.)





#### Flexible Wrist

An advantage of the penhold grip is when playing close to the net, the wrist is very flexible.

#### Gain Wide Angle

Wang Hao makes contact with the ball before the top of the bounce (Pic 4); this enables him to play with control and if necessary gain a wide angle.

## PENHOLD GRIP

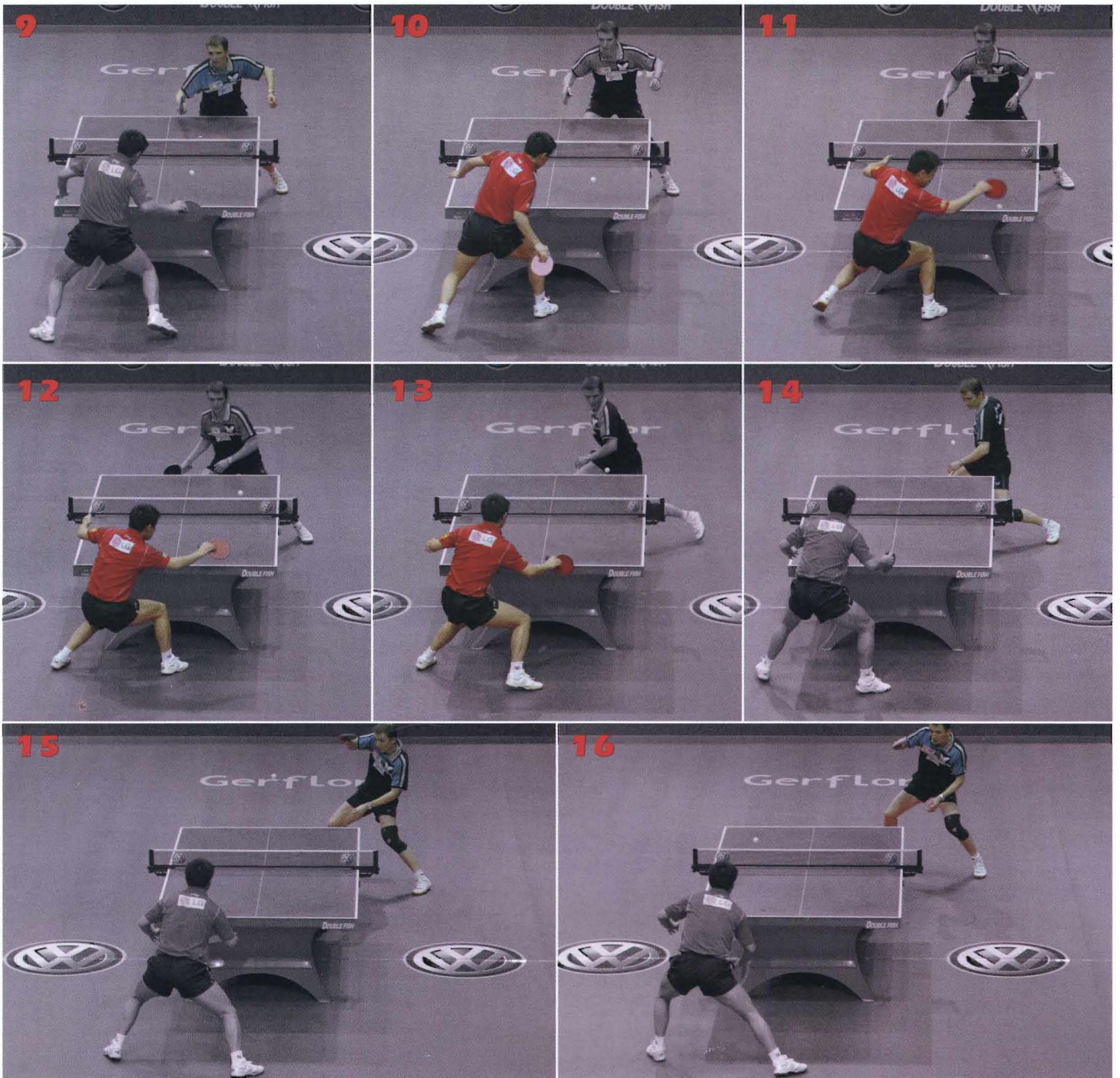
### COACHING TIPS WITH IAN MARSHALL

#### Low Body Position.

Wang Hao moves the right foot forward and adopts a low body position when returning the service (Pic 3).

#### Strong Attack.

He recovers quickly after the return of service into a position where he can attack strongly from either backhand or forehand; note the good use of his legs.



### The Return.

Schlager's return is played with control but it is very slightly long (Pic 11).

### Spin Not Speed

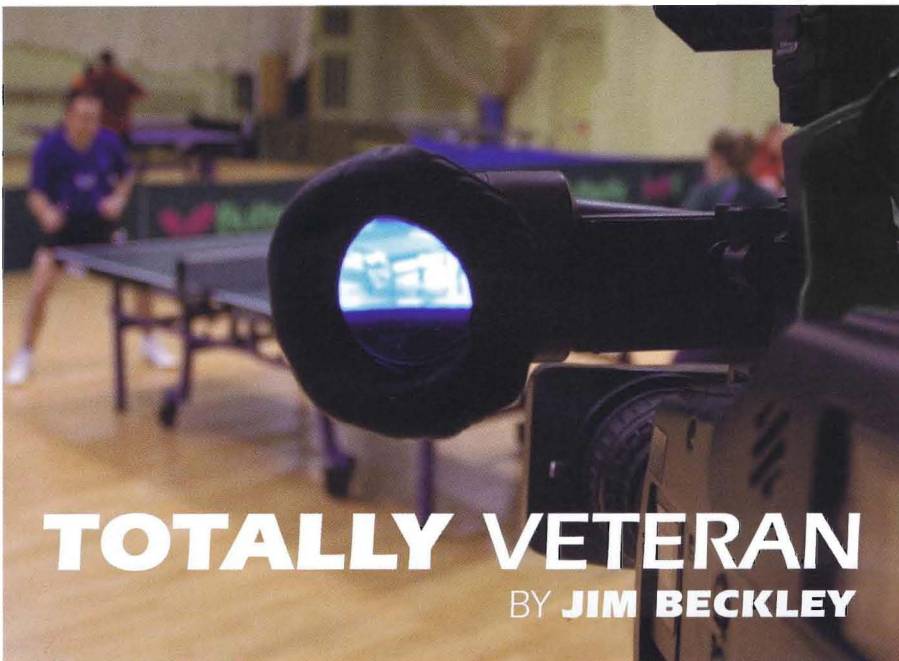
Wang Hao plays a forehand topspin; it's the spin and direction that causes problems; often, it is more difficult to return a ball that has spin as opposed to speed (Pic 12).

### Execute a Topspin

Wang Hao's arm is virtually straight. Note the use of the wrist; this combined with a fast bend of the elbow enables him to execute a topspin stroke that prevents Schlager playing a powerful stroke (Pic 10, 11 & 12).

### Point Won

Schlager's topspin flies off the side of the table, point to Wang Hao.



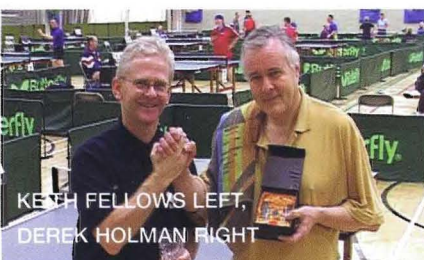
## FELLOWS ON TV

TV fame doesn't faze our local hero Keith Fellows. In the last Diary we mentioned Keith was to be the subject of a documentary by Teachers TV. Well, a camera followed Keith around the entire two days of the Eastern Masters in Norwich recording every moment he was in action.

Besides coping with the camera Keith had to try and keep his mind on what he was there for, to win a title. Well he wasn't successful in the singles but he was in the doubles.

As the Diary recorded in a previous issue, Keith has managed to strike up a successful partnership with the quiet man himself Derek Holman, between them have won at least four titles.

Well, despite the close attention of TV, they both managed to win the doubles title at the Norwich venue beating Steve Howlett and Dave Henderson in the final of the over 50s.



KEITH FELLOWS LEFT,  
DEREK HOLMAN RIGHT

## MARCH 06 MEETING

The vets committee failed to meet at Hereford and instead the meeting of VIPs will go-ahead in breezy Blackpool during the Northern Masters in March. I'm told the meeting was called off because too many key people would have been missing - pity, because as I understand it, there are quite a few issues to be resolved. Anyway, Blackpool is always a popular event and will I'm sure get a full house of members this time.

## WORLD CHAMPS ENTRY DEADLINE

Have you sent in your entry for the World Veterans Championships in May yet? If not do it quickly because the organisers have informed the Diary they have already received 3200 entries and will be closing their books when the figure reaches 3500.

The UK always sends a good number of players and whilst most entries will have already been sent, there are always a few who leave it to the last minute. But our German colleagues mean business so there's a great danger that if you do miss the deadline of March 15 you could be left out.

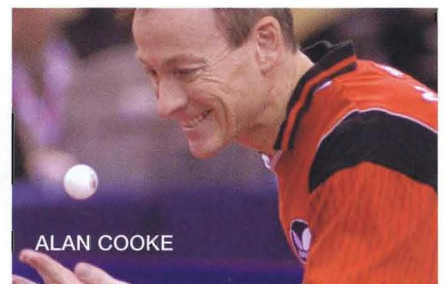
## NEW FACE ON BOARD

One of my most reliable informers tells me that when our vets take off for the World Championships in Bremen in May there will be a new face on board. Nothing exceptional about that I hear you say because we get many new players moving into a certain age bracket every year. But this vet has a real chance of bringing home a medal - or maybe even two..

Alan Cooke has finally reached the age when at one time it was more fashionable to put your bat away for good. Not any more of course. The vets scene is probably the most successful section of the ETTA with membership growing every year. And Alan's acceptance as a Vett will be warmly welcomed. But believe me he will not have it all his own way. Most of our top players went out in either the 1st or 2nd rounds at Bratislava, the exception being Abdul Wuraola who reached the quarter finals.

The opposition Cookie will have to contend with in Bremen will probably include the brilliant Europeans Anton Kutis, Miroslav Ceceva and the current holder of the singles title Michael Applegren, and doubtless a few 'new' names besides.

But the mere fact that Alan had recognised the vet's scene for what it is, a lively and successful organisation. is a real bonus and I'm sure he and his wife Susan will enjoy every minute of it.



ALAN COOKE

## WEB SUBSCRIBERS ON THE RISE!

The vets website now has its own address which is [www.vetts.com](http://www.vetts.com).

Since my brief mention of the sterling work John Fairweather has put into getting the site up and running, the number of visitors to the site has risen from approx 10,000 to almost 19,000. Only wish subscribers to TTN could rise by so many. Still, there are plans in the pipeline.



# VISION TO CHALLENGE

ARTICLE FROM **JOHN ARNOLD, ESTTA**

Early last year representatives of National Governing Bodies/School Sport Associations from 31 different sports were invited by Sport England, the Youth Sport Trust and the National Council for School Sport to discuss their vision for the future competitive structure of their sport.



Table Tennis, together with Badminton, Gymnastics, Netball, Rugby Union, Squash, Swimming and Tennis have successfully bid to be part of Phase 1 of a project which, over the next few years, will eventually embrace all sports.

Each National Governing Body/School Sport Association is jointly developing a high quality School Sport National Competition Framework which will be implemented locally with opportunities for all across each Educational Key Stage. The 8 sports are piloting their competitions in 20 School Sport Partnerships - (some 180 secondary schools and 1000 primary schools). In each of the 20 partnerships a full time Competition Manager has been appointed to oversee the rollout of the competition frameworks. Schools in Cornwall, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Sussex and West Yorkshire are included in the pilot programme which started from September 2005 - this will rapidly grow to include all schools in all 440 School Sport Partnerships throughout the country.

Is this programme just about embracing all schools in team and individual table tennis competition locally through to nationally? No! It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to devise an appropriate, integrated and inclusive structure for table tennis, starting with grass roots

schools' competition with exit roots to local leagues, county events and through to national and international matches, at the right level for each athlete in line with the educational values of sport for young people and the principles of Long Term Athlete Development.

The initial challenge is for the English Table Tennis Association and the English Schools' Table Tennis Association to devise competitions which will excite young people to want to play table tennis .... but .... remember, initially seven other sports are doing the same thing.

The second challenge is to encourage and motivate table tennis promoters in Cornwall, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Sussex and West Yorkshire to become involved in the project.

This will involve ESTTA looking at its competitions - are these played in the right format at the right time? It will involve ETTA looking at its events for young people - is there duplication? Is there overplay for young athletes? Are there clear pathways with appropriate challenges at the right times? Is there the right balance of coaching and competition? Are there clear exit roots with School Club links at the heart of the process? ETTA and ESTTA must work together to create an integrated system.

## **IS TABLE TENNIS READY TO ACCEPT THIS CHALLENGE?**

It will be hard work - painful decisions will have to be taken. Threats and weaknesses will become opportunities and strengths.

**CHALLENGE TODAY**  
8 SPORTS - 5 COUNTIES -  
20 SCHOOL SPORT PARTNERSHIPS

.... leading to ....

**CHALLENGE - YEAR 2010**  
UP TO 31 SPORTS - ALL COUNTIES -  
ALL PARTNERSHIPS

.... leading to ....

**CHALLENGE - YEAR 2012**  
THE OLYMPICS!!

**EXCITING TIMES .....  
ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!**



SPECIFICITY IS

# THE KEY

IMPROVE YOUR GAME WITH **CHRISTOPHER PETTIT**

CHRISTOPHER PETTIT EXERCISE AND SPORTS SCIENTIST (BSc HONS) AND A.C.S.M QUALIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER

Lack of energy (fatigue) has the single greatest impact on performance whatever level you play table tennis. Therefore being physically fitter than your opponent can provide you with a major advantage. The nature of Table Tennis is intermittent, with short bursts of activity. This means that an effective training programme needs to concentrate on improving the body's ability to sustain short intense bursts of activity and to achieve quick recovery, so you are ready to win the next point.

#### Specificity is the key.

To develop a specific training programme for a sport, you need to acquire a basic knowledge of the energy systems used to fuel movement.

#### A brief biology lesson

The body has several different energy systems. These can be divided into two simple subheadings anaerobic and aerobic. A twenty-metre sprint for the bus predominantly uses the anaerobic (without oxygen) system. A long jog or bike ride at a steady pace uses the aerobic system. Using these examples it is easy to see that table tennis for the most part, uses the anaerobic system.

#### Going deeper

To develop any system within the body you must overload it to stimulate a training effect. The human body is very resilient if you overload a system regularly it will gradually adjust to enable you to sustain the new intensity more efficiently. This adjustment/development means that the same intensity or production output of work is

less demanding on the body and therefore has less negative effects on performance. Your imagination is the limit to your training programme, as long as you adhere to the principles of specificity and overloading regularly. It is always good to introduce a competitive aspect to your training as doing so focuses the mind ensuring maximum effort.

#### 11 is the magic number

Improving fitness at the same time as developing skills is a great combination. Here are 11 ideas for developing the anaerobic system during a training session:-

- Short (20m) sprint
- Sprinting three or more times around the table
- Piggy back opponent a short distance as fast as you can
- Wheel barrow opponent a short distance as fast as you can
- Sprinting on the spot (30-50 seconds)
- Press ups (30-50 seconds)
- Step ups (30-50 seconds)
- Squat thrusts (30-50 seconds)
- Star jumps (30-50 seconds)
- Sit ups (30-50 seconds)
- Skipping on the spot (30-50 seconds)

#### Session success

Any or all of these short bursts of anaerobic exercise could be built in to a training match. For example, if you want to make it really tough try a 20m sprint at the end of every other point. It is always good to introduce a competitive aspect to your training to focus the mind on achieving maximum effort so that overload is achieved. The

competition could be that the loser of the point has to perform the activity, or you could take a positive slant, the first one back from the 20m sprints wins an extra point and so on! Overloading this energy system more than usual in a game will not only make it more efficient, it is also advantageous because it conditions your ability to maintain mental focus and technical ability in a fatigued state.

#### Away from the table

The best way to develop the anaerobic system outside a table tennis session is to use interval training - short intervals of all out effort, followed by a short period of rest. This can be performed on any of the standard pieces of exercise equipment, examples include a bike (in or outdoor), treadmill, cross trainer or rowing machine.

The length of intervals/rests and the number of exercises performed is adjusted according to the level of fitness. Intervals should initially start very short (30 sec) and gradually increase (2-3 mins) during a training session. Remember that you are looking to simulate game situations; as a result the intervals/rests should not become too long. This type of training is tough and starting with cautious rest periods of 1-2 mins and taking more intervals is better than being over optimistic and only being able to complete 2-3 intervals. Some form of anaerobic training must be incorporated at least once a week into a regular regime for a training effect to be achieved.

N.B All exercise should only be performed with consent of your doctor especially that of an intense nature.



After the second weekend of British League matches there are only three non-Premier division teams left with 100% records. Rotherham Scorpions I led by top-class Juniors Ben Barlow and Luke Carrington top the Division Two North table whilst the all-conquering Chesterfield side which features another top ranked Junior - England no. 16 Allan Fullwood, are racing away with Division Three North. Ormesby III are upholding the tradition of the British League's most famous club and they lead Division Four North. Their side included Anthony Wright, Nicky Skipp, Matthew Stanforth, Tim Surrey and Jon Durham.

For those of you who like the bizarre then look no further than the performance of Sutton Sharks in Division Three South. Eight draws from eight matches. When will they actually win a match. On the other hand when are they finally going to lose?

#### Division One South

DML Woolwell continue to impress defeating London Progress II 6-2, second place Fusion I 5-3 and Brighton 6-2; faltering only on Sunday afternoon with a surprise draw to second bottom side OLOP Impact.

Oxford Fire Place Centre I have acquired the services of two superb Chinese players and neither Yue Jiao Wu or Jing Wei Zhao lost a match as the Oxford side scored four wins to climb to third place in the table. You had to be quick to catch Ms Yue's games such was the trail of destruction she left in her wake, although Cippenham's Rob Hansell's clever all-round game did cause her a few problems before he capsized in the fifth end. She is a former world-ranked player and it should be very interesting to follow her results during her stay at the Bristol Academy.

#### Division Two North

Things are looking very good for Rotherham Scorpions after they carried on where they had left off in September with four more victories. The highlight took place in round five when they hammered second-placed ELGRE Nottingham II 8-0. With additional victories against Halton Croda (6-2), Uxbridge Burton (7-1) and Blackpool (7-1) it is pretty fair to say that their settled side of Ben Barlow, Luke Carrington, Steve Crosby and Matt Squires weren't pushed that hard all weekend.

Their performance against Rotherham Scorpions aside, ELGRE had an excellent

weekend and won their other three matches. The 6-2 victory over third-placed Halton Croda means they are a clear second and this came about via unbeaten performances from Stewart Mudie and Stuart McIntyre.

#### Division Three North

Few people will have been prepared to bet against Chesterfield winning this division but the margin of their victory (8-0) over second-placed Sheffield was still a major surprise. You just don't expect a side containing Simon Pugh and Bill Grant to be white washed at this level.

#### Division Four North

As one of only three teams left in the League with a 100 % record, Ormesby III enjoyed a great weekend winning all four of their matches. However it isn't all over just yet, and although they beat second-placed ELGRE IV 5-3 in round seven to take charge of the division they still only lead their Nottingham rivals by two points.



**DIVISION 1 NORTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Derwent I	8	6	-	2	41	23	12
Sycamore	8	6	-	2	37	27	12
Norwich	8	4	1	3	37	27	9
Darlington II	8	3	3	2	35	29	9
Ormesby II	8	4	-	4	32	32	8
Bedford Mod I	8	2	3	3	30	34	7
Grantham	8	2	2	4	26	38	6
Seasiders I	8	-	1	7	18	46	1

**DIVISION 2 SOUTH & MIDLANDS**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Lon.ProgressIII	8	5	2	1	44	20	12
CippenhamII	8	5	1	2	40	24	11
Oxford F.P.C.II	8	5	1	2	37	27	11
EBS-Orange NII	8	3	3	2	38	26	9
Harvey BarnetsII	8	3	3	2	32	32	9
Bedford Mod.II	8	2	2	4	26	38	6
Ashford I	8	1	1	6	23	41	3
Kings.Briar	8	1	1	6	16	48	3

**DIVISION 4 SOUTH & WEST**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
DML Wool.II	8	5	3	-	43	21	13
CippenhamIII	8	4	4	-	40	24	12
Plym.Wander's	8	4	4	-	38	26	12
Cofton Hackett	8	3	3	2	37	27	9
South'ton West	8	2	2	4	31	33	6
Lon.ProgressV	8	2	1	5	32	32	5
Guinn.Polskall	8	2	1	5	17	47	5
BrightonIII	8	1	-	7	18	46	2

**DIVISION 1 SOUTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
DML Wool.I	8	7	1	-	47	17	15
Fusion I	8	6	-	2	44	20	12
Oxford F.P.C.I	8	5	-	3	35	29	10
Lon. ProgressII	8	4	-	4	35	29	8
Cippenham I	8	4	-	4	32	32	8
Brighton I	8	2	1	5	25	39	5
OLOP Impact I	8	1	2	5	23	41	4
De Vere Netts	8	1	-	7	15	49	2

**DIVISION 3 SOUTH & WEST**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Guinn.Polskal	8	7	1	-	56	8	15
Club Cornwall	8	5	2	1	42	22	12
Waterside	8	3	4	1	37	27	10
Guernsey	8	4	1	3	31	33	9
Kingf.Reading	8	3	2	3	31	33	8
NWF	8	2	1	5	25	39	5
Oxford F.P.C.III	8	1	2	5	21	43	4
Ashford III	8	-	1	7	13	51	1

**DIVISION 4 NORTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Elgre Nott.IV	4	4	-	-	28	4	8
Ormesby III	4	4	-	-	27	5	8
Woodfield	4	3	-	1	25	7	6
Darlington III	4	3	-	1	24	8	6
Roth.Scorp. II	4	2	-	2	17	15	4
Isle of Man	4	-	-	4	4	28	-
HP Peterb'gh	4	-	-	4	2	30	-
Angels	4	-	-	4	1	31	-

Latest results not yet received

**DIVISION 2 NORTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Roth. Scorp.I	8	8	-	-	53	11	16
Elgre Nott.II	8	6	1	1	41	23	13
Halton Croda I	8	6	-	2	41	23	12
McClym. Nat.	8	4	-	4	39	25	8
Blackpool	8	2	1	5	24	40	5
Northfield	8	2	1	5	23	41	5
D & B.D. Fast.I	8	2	1	5	20	44	5
Ux. Burton	8	-	-	8	14	50	-

**DIVISION 3 NORTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Chesterfield	8	8	-	-	57	7	16
Sheffield	8	6	1	1	43	21	13
Halton Croda II	8	6	-	2	41	23	12
D&B.D. Fastb.II	8	3	1	4	25	39	7
Seasiders II	8	1	3	4	27	37	5
Barrow	8	1	3	4	24	40	5
Derwent II	8	-	3	5	21	43	3
Grimsby	8	1	1	6	18	46	3

**DIVISION 4 SOUTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Eastbourne S	7	5	2	-	41	15	12
Brighton II	6	5	1	-	42	6	11
Byng Hall II	7	4	-	3	27	29	8
York Gardens II	7	3	1	3	29	27	7
Fusion III	7	2	1	4	18	38	5
Brit. Ipswich	7	1	1	5	19	37	3
Harv.Barnets III	7	1	-	6	16	40	2

**DIVISION 2 SOUTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
York Grdns I	8	7	-	1	45	19	14
EBS-OrangeNI	8	7	-	1	41	23	14
Byng Hall I	8	6	-	2	41	23	12
Fusion II	8	5	-	3	34	30	10
OLOP ImpactII	8	1	3	4	25	39	5
Generation 2	8	1	2	5	26	38	4
Batts T PenielII	8	1	1	6	22	42	3
HorshamII	8	-	2	6	22	42	2

**DIVISION 3 SOUTH**

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Mossford	8	5	3	-	41	23	13
Lon.ProgressIV	8	3	4	1	37	27	10
Horsham III	8	3	4	1	35	29	10
Sutton Sharks	8	-	8	-	32	32	8
Ashford II	8	3	2	3	31	33	8
EllenboroughII	8	2	2	4	30	34	6
Hastings	8	1	3	4	27	37	5
Elgre Nott.III	8	-	4	4	23	41	4

**THE BRITISH LEAGUE  
OFFICIAL BALL**

3-Star - ITTF Approved

**STIGA®**

# COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

With most of the divisions reaching the halfway point it provides a great opportunity to examine the elite and scrutinise the strugglers. With twenty eight teams on maximum points something will have to give in 2006. However, for the forty two teams still yet to get off the mark, just a couple of points could make all the difference. Let's hope a few new bats were under the Christmas tree.

## CADETS DIVISION 1B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Middlesex	4	4	0	0	35	5	8
Sussex 2	4	2	1	1	21	19	5
Wiltshire	4	2	1	1	19	21	5
Glamorgan	4	2	1	1	18	22	5
Gloucester	4	1	1	2	19	21	3
Surrex 2	4	1	1	2	17	23	3
Berkshire	4	0	2	2	18	22	2
Worcester	4	0	1	3	13	27	1

## CADETS DIVISION 1A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Warwick	3	3	0	0	25	5	6
Notts	3	2	0	1	22	8	4
Cheshire	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Lancashire	2	1	0	1	12	8	2
Leicester	3	1	0	2	8	22	2
Shropshire	3	0	0	3	5	25	0
S Yorkshire	2	0	0	2	4	16	0

## JUNIOR PREMIER DIVISION

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Bucks	3	3	0	0	24	6	6
Essex	3	3	0	0	23	7	6
Devon	3	1	1	1	15	15	3
Lincoln	3	1	1	1	13	17	3
Derbyshire	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Cheshire	3	1	0	2	12	18	2
Yorkshire	3	1	0	2	11	19	2
Kent	3	0	0	3	9	21	0

## JUNIOR DIVISION 1A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Hertford	4	4	0	0	35	5	8
Essex 2nd	4	4	0	0	30	10	8
S Yorkshire	4	4	0	0	26	13	8
Lancashire	4	1	1	2	19	21	3
Notts	4	1	1	2	14	25	3
Durham	4	0	2	3	14	24	1
Northants	4	0	1	3	7	33	1
Worcester	4	0	0	4	13	27	0

## JUNIOR DIVISION 1B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Hampshire	4	4	0	0	32	8	8
Sussex	4	3	1	0	25	15	7
Surrey	4	2	1	1	25	15	5
Somerset	4	2	1	1	23	17	5
Glamorgan	4	1	2	1	18	22	4
Middlesex 1	4	1	1	2	20	20	3
Middlesex 2	4	0	0	4	10	30	0
Bucks 2nd	4	0	0	4	7	33	0

## JUNIOR DIVISION 2A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Cheshire 2	4	4	0	0	33	7	8
Lincoln 2	5	3	0	2	27	23	6
Cleveland	3	3	0	0	26	4	6
Yorkshire 2	3	2	1	0	18	12	5
Lancs 2	4	2	0	2	21	19	4
Staffs	4	1	1	2	20	20	3
Durham 2	5	1	0	4	20	29	2
Northants 2	4	1	0	3	11	29	2
North'land	4	0	0	4	3	36	0

## JUNIOR DIVISION 2B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Glam 2	6	4	2	0	41	19	10
Cornwall 1	5	4	1	0	40	10	9
Devon 2	6	4	0	2	40	20	8
Avon	5	3	2	0	32	18	8
Cornwall 2	5	2	0	3	23	27	4
Dorset	5	1	2	2	21	29	4
Avon 2	5	1	1	3	19	31	3
Devon 3	6	1	0	5	22	38	2
Devon 4	5	0	0	5	2	48	0

## JUNIOR DIVISION 2D

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Surrey 2	3	3	0	0	23	7	6
Sussex 2	2	2	0	0	17	3	4
berkshire	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Kent 3	3	1	1	1	15	15	3
Sussex 3	3	1	1	1	12	18	3
Gloucester	2	1	0	1	11	9	2
Bucks 3	3	0	0	3	9	21	0
Kent 2	3	0	0	3	7	23	0
Oxford	1	0	0	1	2	8	0

## SENIORS PREMIER DIVISION

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Yorkshire	3	2	1	0	20	10	5
Essex	3	2	1	0	17	13	5
Devon	3	2	0	1	18	12	4
Middlesex	3	2	0	1	16	14	4
Sussex	3	2	0	1	16	14	4
Durham	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Lancashire	3	0	0	3	11	19	0
Gloucester	3	0	0	3	9	21	0

## SENIORS DIVISION 1A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Leicester	3	2	1	0	21	9	5
Derbyshire	3	2	1	0	20	10	5
Notts	3	2	1	0	20	10	5
Cleveland	3	2	1	0	19	11	5
Lincolnshire	3	1	1	1	15	15	3
S Yorkshire	3	0	1	2	9	21	1
Cheshire	3	0	0	3	11	19	0
Cambridge	3	0	0	3	5	25	0

## SENIORS DIVISION 1B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Glamorgan	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Surrey	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Middlesex 2	2	2	0	0	13	7	4
Wilts	2	1	0	1	12	8	2
Berkshire	2	1	0	1	10	10	2
Bucks	2	0	0	2	6	14	0
Somerset	2	0	0	2	6	14	0
Kent	2	0	0	2	5	15	0

## SENIORS 2A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
North'land	5	5	0	0	38	12	10
Durham 2	5	3	1	1	25	24	7
Derbyshire 2	5	2	1	2	26	23	5
Leicester 2	5	0	3	2	21	29	3
Cumbria	5	1	1	3	21	29	3
Warwick 2	5	1	0	4	18	32	2

## SENIORS DIVISION 2B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Devon 2	2	2	0	0	15	5	4
Cornwall 1	1	1	0	0	8	2	2
Avon	2	1	0	1	8	12	2
Cornwall 2	1	1	0	0	7	3	2
Worcester	1	0	0	1	3	7	0
Somerset 2	3	0	0	3	9	21	0

## SENIORS DIVISION 2C

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Norfolk	5	5	0	0	37	13	10
Warwick	5	4	0	1	29	21	8
Bedford	5	3	0	2	28	22	6
Northants	5	1	1	3	24	26	3
Suffolk	5	1	1	3	22	28	3
Cambridge	5	0	0	5	10	40	0

# BUTTERFLY

## OFFICIAL BALL SUPPLIER



### SENIORS DIVISION 2D

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Sussex 2	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Essex 2	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Hertford	2	1	1	0	11	9	3
Berks 2	2	0	1	1	7	13	1
Kent 2	2	0	0	2	7	13	0
Surrey 2	2	0	0	2	7	13	0
Dorset	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### OVER 60S 1B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Middlesex	3	3	0	0	24	6	6
Kent	4	2	2	0	26	14	6
Essex	4	2	1	1	19	21	5
Sussex	4	2	0	2	22	18	4
Berks 1	3	1	1	1	16	14	3
Hertford	3	0	0	3	9	21	0
Surrey	3	0	0	3	4	26	0

### VETERANS PREMIER DIVISION

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Devon	3	3	0	0	21	9	6
Yorkshire	3	3	0	0	19	11	6
Essex	3	2	0	1	20	10	4
Kent	3	1	0	2	15	15	2
Cheshire	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Lancashire	3	1	0	2	11	19	2
Northumberland	3	1	0	2	11	19	2
Dorset	3	0	0	3	10	20	0

### VETERANS DIVISION 1A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Leicester	4	4	0	0	30	10	8
Worcester	4	3	0	1	24	16	6
Middlesex	4	2	1	1	24	16	5
Norfolk	4	2	1	1	23	17	5
Herts	4	1	1	2	17	23	3
Oxfordshire	4	1	1	2	15	25	3
Cheshire 2	4	0	2	2	13	27	2
Yorks 2	4	0	0	4	14	26	0

### VETERANS 1B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Surrey	5	5	0	0	45	5	10
Sussex	4	4	0	0	32	8	8
Berkshire	4	3	0	1	29	11	6
Kent 2	4	1	1	2	16	24	3
Surrey 2	5	0	2	3	15	35	2
Wiltshire	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Avon	3	0	1	2	6	24	1
Dorset 2	4	0	0	4	4	36	0

### VETERANS 2A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Essex 2	4	4	0	0	29	11	8
Essex 3	4	3	0	1	27	13	6
Yorks 3	4	2	1	1	25	15	5
S Yorkshire	4	2	1	1	20	20	5
Notts	4	1	1	2	18	22	3
Lincs	4	0	2	2	17	23	2
Cambs	4	0	2	2	13	27	2
Herts 2	4	0	1	3	11	29	1

### VETERANS 2B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Hereford	2	2	0	0	16	4	4
Essex 4	2	2	0	0	15	5	4
Sussex 2	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Berks 2	3	1	1	1	15	15	3
Bucks	2	1	0	1	9	11	2
Kent 3	3	0	1	2	9	21	1
Somerset	2	0	0	2	7	13	0
Hampshire	2	0	0	2	5	15	0

### VETERANS DIVISION 3C

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Middlesex 3	3	2	1	0	20	10	5
Sussex 3	2	2	0	0	14	6	4
Oxford 2	2	2	0	0	13	7	4
Wilts 2	2	1	1	0	12	8	3
Kent 4	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Kent 5	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Berks 4	3	0	0	3	8	22	0
Hants 2	2	0	0	2	7	13	0

### VETERANS DIVISION 3D

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Worcester 2	3	2	1	0	22	8	5
Gloucester	3	2	0	1	19	11	4
Shropshire 1	2	1	1	0	12	8	3
Devon 2	3	1	1	1	15	15	3
Middlesex 4	3	1	1	1	14	16	3
Somerset 2	3	1	1	1	14	16	3
Hants 3	2	0	1	1	9	11	1
Dorset 3	3	0	0	3	5	25	0

### VETERANS 4A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Herts 4	3	3	0	0	19	11	6
Northants 2	3	2	0	1	19	11	4
Lincoln 2	3	1	0	2	16	14	2
Staffordshire	2	1	0	1	10	10	2
Yorks 5	2	1	0	1	9	11	2
Norfolk 3	3	0	1	2	10	20	1
Notts 2	2	0	1	1	7	13	1

### VETERANS 4B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Herts 5	2	2	0	0	16	4	4
Wo 3	2	2	0	0	15	5	4
Cambs 2	3	2	0	1	19	11	4
Essex 5	2	1	0	1	12	8	2
Northants 3	3	1	0	2	17	13	2
Oxford 3	3	1	0	2	8	22	2
Hereford 3	3	0	0	3	3	27	0

### VETERANS 4C

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Surrey 4	4	4	0	0	35	5	8
Hereford 2	4	2	1	1	21	19	5
Somerset 4	4	1	2	1	17	23	4
Berks 2	3	1	1	1	15	15	3
Wilts 4	3	1	1	1	18	12	3
Devon 4	3	1	0	2	13	17	2
Berks 6	4	1	0	3	9	31	2
Herts 6	2	0	0	2	7	13	0

### VETERANS 4D

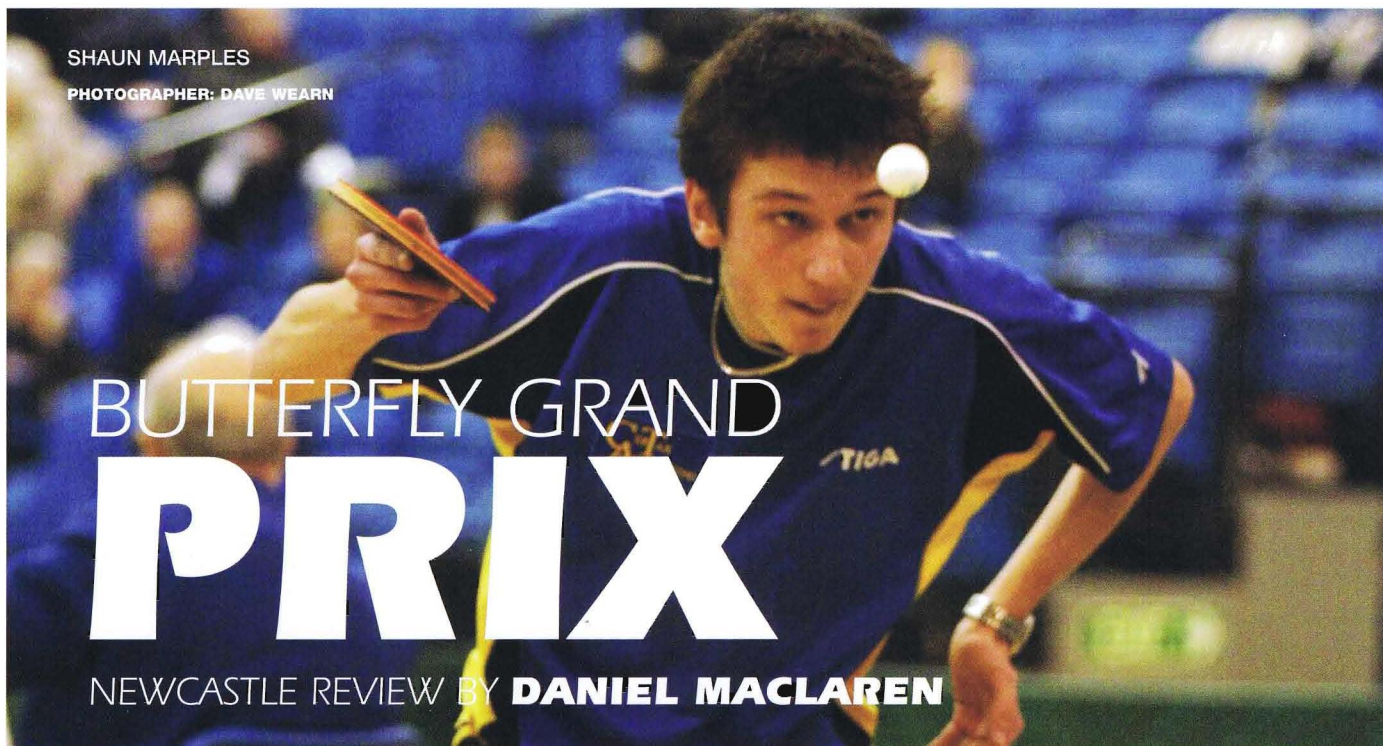
COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Glamorgan	3	3	0	0	26	4	6
Wilts 3	3	3	0	0	20	10	6
Devon 3	2	1	0	1	11	9	2
Devon 5	2	1	0	1	10	10	2
Berks 5	2	0	0	2	6	14	0
Cornwall	2	0	0	2	4	16	0
Somerset 3	2	0	0	2	3	17	0

### VETERANS 3B

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Northants	4	4	0	0	31	9	8
Bedford	5	3	1	1	35	15	7
Middlesex 2	4	2	1	1	21	19	5
Hertford 3	4	2	0	2	21	19	4
Surrey 3	4	2	0	2	19	21	4
Bucks 2	4	1	1	2	18	22	3
Bedford 2	5	1	1	3	18	32	3
Berks 3	4	0	0	4	7	33	0

### VETERANS 3A

COUNTY	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Durham	3	2	1	0	20	10	5
Leicester 2	4	2	1	1	24	16	5
Norfolk 2	3	2	1	0	17	13	5
Cheshire 3	4	2	0	2	22	18	4
Warwick	3	1	1	1	14	16	3
Yorks 4	3	1	0	2	15	15	2
Shropshire 2	4	0	0	4	8	32	0
Clwyd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



SHAUN MARPLES

PHOTOGRAPHER: DAVE WEARN

# BUTTERFLY GRAND PRIX

NEWCASTLE REVIEW BY **DANIEL MACLAREN**

Players from the length and breadth of U.K plus Italy, Belgium and Libya took part in the North East's top table tennis event at Eldon Leisure Centre, Newcastle.

Unfortunately the top seeds in both the Men's and Women's events had to withdraw late on, Bryn Drinkhall through illness and Helen Lower had a late call from Team England. But this event will be remembered by those who were there for one remarkable moment of play on the Sunday.

It was without doubt the shot of the day, the weekend, the week and maybe even the year! It happened during the match of the day, the under 21 Men's semi-final in which Shaun Marples (Derbyshire) beat Ben Barlow (South Yorks) 20-18 in the fifth game. The shot was played at the end of a scintillating rally with Ben forcing Shaun out wide further and further to the right with each shot. In one last gasp effort whilst crashing into the barrier, Shaun played what was described by one as 'the best shot I have ever seen in table tennis', smashing the ball at full stretch between umpire and net to win the point. The audience was on its feet applauding and cheering.

By the time the final came around it was a step too far for an exhausted Shaun as David Meads took the U21 title in 3 games.

The Men's Singles title went overseas, won by

the Italian Fabio Mantegazza who defeated young Danny Reed of Cleveland in a very entertaining final. Men's Band 1 winner Eddie Smith was the most successful local player, reaching the quarter finals before going out to David Meads of Durham.

Lindsey Thornton-Reynolds won the Women's event with a victory over Claire Wilson but Claire came back to win the U21 title against 'Butterfly Player of Tournament' Sarah Perks.

In the Veteran's event Dave Godbold beat Stephen Crosby.

The Saturday saw the graded events played in which Northumberland's Eddie Smith was victorious in the Band 1 Men's Singles, lifting the title at the expense of Steven Bailey.

The match of the day on Saturday, however, was the first round clash between the top seed Fabio Mantegazza of Italy and the Belgian Bart Vermoesen. Mantegazza won the first two ends but Vermoesen fought back to win the next 3 games and take the tie 8-11 8-11 11-6 11-9 11-8. He went on to reach the semi finals but lost out to Bailey.

The band two title went to Martin Rogers of Nottingham, band three to Matt Dodds of South Yorkshire and band four to Warren Slaney of Derbyshire. Bedfordshire's Paul Savins won both band five and band six.

In the women's banded events there was

success for Sarah Perks (Nottingham) in band 1, Rachel Greener (Cleveland) in band 2 and Corrina Whitaker (Scotland) in band 3.

## results

### Men's Singles – Semi finals:

Mantegazza (Italy) beat Nutch (Yorks) 11-5 11-2 9-11 11-5  
Read (Cleveland) beat Meads (Durham) 5-11 11-9 11-6 11-8  
Final: Mantegazza beat Read 11-6 9-11 11-8 11-9

### Women's Singles – Semi finals:

Wilson (Durham) beat Greener (Cleveland) 11-8 11-3 11-7  
Thornton-Reynolds (Lancs) beat Galloway (Scotland)  
11-8 10-12 11-7 11-6

Final: Thornton-Reynolds beat Wilson 11-8 11-6 12-10

### Under 21 Men's Final:

Meads beat Marples (Derbys) 11-8 11-5 11-7

### Under 21 Women's Final:

Wilson (Durham) beat Perks (Notts) 9-11 11-9 11-6 11-4

### Veteran Men's Final:

Godbold (Northumb.) beat Crosby (S. Yorks) 11-8 11-4 11-4

### Band 1 Men's Final:

Smith (Northumb.) beat Bailey (Cleveland) 11-2 8-11 11-4 11-9

### Band 2 Men's Final:

Rogers (Nottingham) beat Moss (Yorks) 11-7 11-7 11-8

### Band 3 Men's Final:

Dodds (S. Yorks) beat West (Essex) 11-5 11-9 11-9

### Band 4 Men's Final:

Slaney (Derbys) beat Arliss (Yorks) 9-11 11-9 3-11 11-7 11-6

### Band 5 Men's Final:

Savins (Beds) beat Vaughan (Cheshire) 3-11 11-4 11-4 11-9

### Band 6 Men's Final:

Savins beat Fowler (Scotland) 11-2 11-9 14-12

### Band 1 Women's Final:

Perks (Notts) beat O'Sullivan (Derbys) 6-11 11-5 11-9 11-5

### Band 2 Women's Final:

Greener (Cleveland) beat Le Fevre (Cleveland) 11-4 14-12 11-9

### Band 3 Women's Final:

Whitaker (Scotland) beat Le Fevre (Cleveland)  
11-3 11-6 7-11 9-11 11-7

## AVON

By Dave Banks

I know there hasn't been an article from Avon for quite a while, but we are still very much alive and kicking!! In Avon table tennis continues to thrive, with high standards of play taking place, week in, week out. The Bristol League is one of the largest in the country and includes a four division strong junior league and with Filton table tennis academy flourishing under the coaching direction of Kevin Satchell, Avon really is a county on the way up.

Filton College is also the ETTA's South West high performance coaching centre and twice a week Ryan Jenkins (Welsh number 1) takes sessions which many of our county's top players attend.

**The Avon County has a senior team, a veterans team and two junior teams:**

Senior Squad - Paul Hooper, David Reeves, Len Vowles, Ricky Jemmott, Carey Barrett. Jess Orlik, Sally Jones, Michelle Leonard.

Veteran Squad - Gary Baldwin, Paul Hooper, Clive Ellison, Neil Wigglesworth. Bob Murray and Linda Porter.

Junior 1st Squad - Andy Banks, Alex Kearney, Alex Banks, Rachel Webb, Hayley Ruderham.

Junior 2nd Squad - Joe Ratajczak, Tom West, Lloyd Gregory, Russell Driver, Chris Edwards, Hannah Stock, Rebecca Gregory and Jessica Coggins.

## BERKSHIRE

By Colin Dyke

Reading are the new Inter-Town champions. They regained the Barbara Peisley Cup at Crippenham TTC by just 4 points from Bracknell, last years winners with Newbury trailing in third. Some great table tennis enjoyed by all who took part with 12 tables flat out all day. However a question mark hangs over this great event which needs an organiser for next season.

Our juniors returned from the Southern Regional Trials with heads held high. Kuldeep Gehlot, Tom Maynard. Rory McGowan and Ayonija Sundararajan all qualified for the National Trials with Richard Andrews and Abhay Gehlot in reserve positions.

The Veterans 1st team got off to a flying start with 3 wins in their first four matches. The wins saw Dave Barr and Dave Reeves unbeaten in the singles whilst Sharon Mitchell lost only to Brenda Baldwin of Wiltshire.

The Veterans 2nd team opened with three tight matches losing 4-6 to Sussex 2nds and drawing with both Hampshire and Kent 3rds. There was never more than one set in it against Sussex who clinched the win with a 3 straight mixed doubles success by John Clarke and Carol Eckersley over Denise Rolfe and Bob

# ROUND UP SUMMARY

Welcome to this month's notes from around the country. Thanks must go to all our county reporters: their dedication and commitment continues to bring us the news from your area.

Davis. Earlier Rolfe had upset the form book by beating Eckersley at 9 in the fifth.

The Veterans 3rd team are not yet off the mark losing to both Northants and Herts 3rds by 9-1. Cliff Putterford won the only set against Herts beating Jim Craggs at 4 in the fifth and only just lost out to Chris Ogle at 9 in the fifth.

The Veterans 4th team are also struggling losing to Kent 5ths 3-7, Wilts 2nds 3-7 and Middlesex 3rds 2-8. The Veterans 5th team were outclassed by Glamorgan in the men's matches but Carol Byers gained some respect for the home side with wins in the ladies singles (v Marcia Bennett) and two mixed leaving the score 3-7

The Veterans 6th team lost 9-1 to Wiltshire 4ths with Clive Dawson getting the only win v Brian Rayment at 9 in the fifth. He also pushed Alan Duke all the way losing at 7 in the fifth. To complete a miserable period for Berkshire's lower ranked veteran teams the 6ths lost to Herefordshire 2nds 8-2 with Peter Bennett gaining the only singles success over Dave Hamer.

The Over 60's team completed the first half of their fixtures with a win, a loss and a draw. The loss was against a strong Essex side by 4-6 in which Gill Knightley excelled winning a singles and two mixed. John Morris added an excellent three straight win over Peter Ballard. Tony Brown and Knightley were unbeaten in the 7-3 win over Hertfordshire with Peter Bradley adding an important win in five over Geof Bax. Finally a fighting draw was squeezed from a strong Kent team. Again Knightley was unbeaten (a 100% weekend) and aided by a Colin Dyke win over Alan Rutherford and a Tony Brown win over Dave Kellard.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

By Steve Rate

Success in Cambridgeshire is happening, the Wilmott Cup started for Cambridge in December with a trip to Ellenborough with opponents Watford, North Herts. and North Middlesex in the 1st round. This proved to be very close but Cambridge triumphed as winners of the group. The wins were 5-0 over North Herts., 5-3

over Watford and 5-3 over North Middlesex. Congratulations must go to David Atkinson, Martin Gray and Kevin Gray on some very good performances to put Cambridge into the next round. Cambridgeshire's only British League team are the veterans, Netmanage St.Neots, who triumphed spectacularly winning all five games 6-0, winning 90 ends to only 6 against, fantastic. Well done to Chris Rogers, Stuart Palmer, Keith Richardson and Mick Harper.

Congratulations must go to our number 1 junior Nick Rate who won the Junior Boys Banded and Junior Boys events at Grantham and has just performed brilliantly to win under 16's at Chesham beating the number 1 seed R. Muhith, and also won the under 18 grade 1 and grade 2 events at Chesham again beating a number one seed J. Chacholiades after being two sets down. This junior is really playing well and deserved recognition from the England set up must come soon for the exciting 15 year old from Peterborough. The Cambridgeshire county teams had mixed success with our senior 1 team battling it out in a very strong league, ending up playing 3 and losing 3. Our senior 2 team again played very strong opposition and lost all five, however, this young team is showing promise for the future. Veterans 1 team had a good weekend playing 4, drew 2 lost 2 but the star was Roger Fensom, a captain who wasn't expecting to play, but when push came to shove, picked up a paddle and won a game, well done Roger. Veterans 2 team have been our best county team having only played 2 and winning both, even if one match was in a farm outbuilding!

## CLEVELAND

By Alan Ransome

Juniors Promoted - The Cleveland Junior County team have won Division Junior 2A of the County Championships following a very successful day in Grantham winning a total of five matches. Cleveland beat Northumberland 10 - 0, Yorkshire 2nd 9 - 1 Cheshire 2nds 8 - 2, Durham 2nds 9 - 1 and Northants 2nds 10 - 0 to clinch the title.

Andrew Wilson was the most successful of the Cleveland players winning all ten of his singles matches, whilst Anthony Wright and Jonathan Durham both made strong contributions with 9 out of 10. The Cleveland girls, Karina Lefevre and Jennifer Lowther both won 4 of their five matches, both losing to Rachel Baker of Cheshire. The team was captained by Matthew Stanforth.

British League Tie - Ormesby 3rd team surrendered their lead at the top of the 4th Division of the British League at the Halton Table Tennis Centre on 8th January when they lost to the Woodfield Club of

Wolverhampton by 5 sets to 3 despite two wins from Matthew Stanforth, and as a result now share the lead at the top of the Division with Woodfield and the Elgre Club from Nottingham. Ormesby kept their interest in the Championship race alive with a 7 - 1 win against the Isle of Man, with two wins from Matthew Stanforth, Jonathan Durham and Tim Surrey, and one from Anthony Wright.

Ormesby 2nd team playing in the 1st Division North at the Blackpool Table Tennis Centre had a disappointing day losing both of their matches to Derwent and Darlington by 5 sets to 3. Martyn Clarke, Andrew Wilson and Mark Simon all won one each against Derwent, whilst Damien Nicholls was Ormesby's best player against Darlington.

## CHESHIRE

from Alan Blears

The opportunities available for youngsters today are almost limitless. Caroline Hallows will shortly be following in the footsteps of Karen Shepherd and Fiona Dennett to China; Charlotte Baker trots around Europe to junior United Nations conferences (and missed the regional trials as a result); while for Matthew Weatherby the sky's the limit – more of that later.

Caroline has been invited to represent the ESTTA as a member of the Nationally Selected girls' team to play in the International School Sport Federation championships in Shanghai in April, with Northwich's Gail McCulloch as the girls' N.P.C.

Caroline's selection has come on the back of two excellent major tournament results. In the Bath Super Grand Prix she was runner-up in the junior girls and not by much to Kelly Sibley, and in the Stockton Junior Four Star she got the better of old rival Rachel Jameson to win a five-game junior girls' final.

Cadet' Junior County Championships

In the junior Premier Division, the team was severely hindered by Sophie Byron having to retire through illness, but given full fitness in round 2 the team should be able to survive. This is the prime objective this season, with Mark Roscaleer and Matthew Weatherby finding their feet at this level.

The second team, in Div. 2A, are clear leaders after round 1, the strength in depth of the county's girls reflected by the fact that although first-choice players Jordyn Layfield and Fiona Dennett were unavailable, their replacements, Lynsey Pich and Rachel Baker, were unbeaten.

The cadets in Div. 1A have barely started, playing only two matches, both of which they won. At very short notice, Matthew McCormick still in the U11, age group replaced the injured Bryan Turner, to become one of the youngest players to represent the county.

Competition in the Cheshire cadets next season will be

intense, with several Stockport youngsters snapping at the heels of the present team. Chris Pattison and Bryan Turner have already lost to Dan Brown and Jordan Potts, while eleven year old Natalie Dodd makes a habit of beating Annie Hudson. Watch out also for Sarah Weatherby, Stephen Jackson and Louis Anthony.

Mid Cheshire Senior Open (Knutsford)

This competition was graced by the presence of national champions Alan Cooke and Helen Lower, who did not disappoint, winning their respective singles. Cooky had an easy straight games win over Sweden's Erik Ekstrom, but Helen needed four game to beat Lyndsey Reynolds, the former Miss Thornton.

Flying High – On Cloud Nine

Can any other player match for thrills Matthew Weatherby's recent activity in Spain? He and his mum and dad went SKY-DIVING!! Only younger sister Sarah remained on terra firma, as opposed to terror faller, and is no doubt grateful that she is not an orphan. I salute your courage, folks. It's not for me – no way!

## CORNWALL

By Tim Bowler

County Championships - Cornwall Junior teams got off to good starts in the first weekend of matches in large part due to the excellent performances by the Cornwall girls who were unbeaten all day in both the Cornish first and second teams.

Cornwall 1st team beat Avon 2nd 7-2 and followed this up with a win against Devon 4th 10-0. In the tightest match of the day an unbeaten performance by Alex Kearney for Avon 1st, inflicting the only defeat of the day on Cornwall's Matthew Trevorror, ensured honours were shared with Cornwall 1st 5-5.

The Cornwall 2nd team started out with a 6-4 win against Devon 3rd followed by a 10-0 win over Devon 4th before going down 6-4 in their final match to Avon 2nd.

In the Veterans Cornwall travelled to Glamorgan, who were too strong for a new look Cornwall side who were defeated 9-1 with Austin Chapman preventing the whitewash.

League Round-up - Having dominated the West Cornwall League for the last few years, Bridge Table Tennis Club (previously Harris Mill) consisting of Graham and Neville Reed, recently strengthened by the inclusion of Darren, will, this season, have to face up to a strong challenge from Falmouth Docks. Jeremy Williams and Esme Densiow have recruited Adrian Noott to create another sledgehammer. The Championship will be decided, not by the outcome of the matches between the two teams, but by the

number of sets dropped along the way. The League's strict no-postponements policy does mean that reserves must be brought in if necessary – and they could drop valuable points.

Elsewhere, the league's very popular end of season tournament for Division 3 players and novices (for the Alan Knight Trophy) will be brought forward and played over the Christmas/New Year period at Cornwall College Camborne.

In the Mid Cornwall League, last year's winners St Austell A again look to be favourites. Blisland A, last year's runners-up, will need to get their best team out regularly if they are to mount a serious challenge. Any points dropped could enable any of 3 other St Austell teams to challenge for the second if not top spot. A new look St Austell D team with the League's youngest player, 13 year old Ryan Bowler will be hoping to build on their good start.

Christmas Hard Bat Competition - The Mid Cornwall League annual Christmas hard bat competition took place at Tregorrick Park in St Austell just before Christmas.

The competition saw 18 players take part in 3 groups. Despite the heaviest handicap Kate Alken, the defending champion, won all her group games to win her group from James Broad in second place. The other two group winners, father and son Tim and 13 year old Ryan Bowler, were also unbeaten with Keith Clements and newcomer to the league Dan Bassett finishing runners up. The two best 3rd place players, Colin Wilson and another newcomer Ivan Rosevear, also went through to the last eight. In the quarter finals Ryan easily overcame Colin Wilson with a strong attacking game by 30 points to 21. Defending champion Kate Alken was too strong for Dan Bassett and Keith Clements overcame the 2003 champion, junior James Broad on the last point 30-29. In the other quarter final Tim Bowler proved too consistent for Ivan Rosevear winning 30-26.

In the semi-final Kate's defensive game was too consistent for Tim Bowler as she came through 30-17. In the other semi Ryan Bowler was too strong in the attack for Keith Clements and ran out an easy 30-19 winner. The final proved to be an excellent match with young Ryan attacking and Kate playing a defensive game away from the table. In the end Kate's experience and consistency saw her retain the title but at 13 Ryan will surely be challenging for the title in future years.

## DEVONSHIRE

By John Vincent

The Beacon Electrical Plymouth and District Table Tennis League is now in its 103rd year. It has 69 teams in 6 divisions with DML/WOOLWELL being the biggest

club with 15 teams.

DML/WOOLWELL Table Tennis Club have recently painted the main hall walls and installed supplementary lighting to improve playing conditions at the Woolwell Centre. Major contributions from members and a grant from Sport South Hams have now enabled them to purchase five high quality new tables to assist with upgrading and development of the club. Special thanks must also go to Pillar Land Securities, Reliant Window Cleaning Services and Thornton's Sport and Leisure for their extremely generous donations and equipment support.

Following the disappointment of Yelton Primary School having to pull out of the Devon schools team event due to lack of players, it was decided to put on a demonstration to the 250 pupils, with the aim of encouraging new players. Richard Light (Headmaster) John Vicent (Coach) and Daniel Nile (aged 9) conducted the demonstration which was a true success and amazingly spurred 20 pupils into action with many more waiting in the wings.

Club championships 2005 results - Boys' Singles Winner - Daniel Nile, 2nd - Adam McEvoy, 3rd - Steve Damerell. Girls' Singles Winner - Georgie Talbot, 2nd - Jemma Talmaye, 3rd - Alison Spratt. Plate Competitions - Boys' Winner - Ricky Dixon 2nd - Ellis Williams Girl's Winner - Savanna Fisser, 2nd - Fiona Grenney Club Shield (Handicap – top boy v top girl + 4 points each game) Daniel Nile Bt. Georgie Talbot 2-1 Yealmpstone TTC Open Championship Gold Medal - Daniel Nile, Silver Medal - Scott Lawson (Ridgeway), Bronze Medal – Steve Damerell and Billy Harvey ETTA Skills Awards - Eleven new members have obtained the "ROOKIE" award qualifications and will receive their certificates and badges soon.

## ESSEX

By Alan Shepperd

County junior first team excel - The County junior first team played their first set of matches at the Cippenham Club in Slough in November and with a fast improving team it was clear that Essex had the potential to do well. However, to win all three matches and to finish the weekend only a single game behind Bucks I was a performance of the highest order. The team's first opponents on the Saturday afternoon were Devonshire I and the team ran out clear-cut 7-3 winners. Essex No.3 boy Yasir Mauthoor (Ilford) scored two hard-fought 3-2 victories over Chris Warn and Chris Smith whilst Sarra Wang (Braintree), the England No.3 ranked girl stamped her authority on proceedings by winning both of her singles.

Sunday morning's opponents Cheshire I were also beaten 7-3 as Ashley Stokes excelled with two fine wins as he saw off the higher ranked Jonathan Taylor

3-1, and he repeated this feat in his second singles with a 3-1 victory over Matthew Weatherby.

These two wins moved Essex into second place in the table and an emphatic 9-1 victory over Derbyshire in their third match meant they closed the gap on the leaders Bucks to a single game. Yasir Mauthoor made his mark with a hard-fought 3-2 victory over Liam Pitchford, the England No.2 Under 13 boy. Kelly Skeggs was the only Essex player to taste defeat in this match, and try as hard as she did she was unable to contain the England No.5 girl Emma Vickers. Looking at the players' individual records, Sarra Wang with five wins out of five fared best whilst Ashley Stokes and Yasir Mauthoor both excelled by winning five times out of six, terrific performances by both of them.

Junior regional trials - This season's event took place in Orpington in December under a new format. The Under 18 and Under 15 categories were supplemented by fresh groups of Under 13 and Under 11 boys and girls. Six from each category would qualify for the National Finals, to be played at Bristol on 25/26 March 2006 and the event would no longer be a stepping stone for the leading players to reach the prestigious "Masters" event, which will be by invitation only.

Essex had an impressive 37 nominees taking part. Ashley Stokes won his groups and qualified in second place overall and in the Under 18 girls, both Holly Stubbings (Colchester) and Laura Pym (Chelmsford) qualified, by respectively finishing first and second in their groups.

Of our Under 15 boys, Emran Hussain (Langham School), and Nial Akata (Becontree) both qualified. In the Under 15 girls I am delighted to report that both did very well - Chelmsford's Golden Girl - Stevie Pell qualified in the top six while Kalyan Nair (Ilford) has been named as a reserve.

In the Under 13 Boys both Reece Tan and Stephen Heard from Brentwood made it through as Qualifiers whilst in the Under 13 Girls section, Hannah Pitt, another Chelmsford product, qualified while Maddison Andrews, who is a Mossford girl from the Ilford & DTTL made it onto the Official Reserves list. And finally to the Under 11 category it is great to report that Scott Dowsett (Chelmsford), the son of our former County players Terry Dowsett and Kim Hayden, has made it through as a reserve for Bristol. Overall, I think that I can say that the Essex players performed creditably throughout this weekend and our final figure of eight qualifiers was an excellent achievement "

## HERTFORDSHIRE

By Ann Fereday

More Herts teams have been in action with some good results. In December Herts 3 paid another visit to Ashford for two more matches. Their captain is Dennis Robinson; this time he had a really good supporting team consisting of Chris Ogle, Jim Craggs and Jeanette Maybanks. In the morning they had a convincing win over Berkshire 3 by 9 sets to 1. In the afternoon they took on Surrey 3 beating them 7 - 3. Both Chris & Jeanette had won all their singles. Well done !

Team 4 were away to Northants. 2. Geof Bax is their captain. With him this year are Stuart Myirea and Larry Gregory. Their lady is June Nelson. Their winning ways continued. This time they won by 6 sets to 4. Everybody won one singles, then both mixed, so an extra well done to June.

At home in the Barnet Centre team 5 took on Cambridgeshire 2 which has now got some Hunts players in it. They won 7 – 3. The Herts players were Barry Phillips (captain), Andrew Nash & Brian Gale. Their lady is Mary Nicholls. Andrew won both his singles, so he is still 100%. Mary had to play her singles against her sister. They had agreed to hit but it did not work out that way. Mary lost the first 2 games but won the next 2. In the 5th the rallies got longer & longer until Mary finally won the decider 14 - 12. Team 6 played two matches in Berkshire. Though many games were close they lost 7 – 3 to Somerset 4 and 6 - 4 to Hereford 2. Captain David Wilson won as did Jackie Channel but there was no support. The team is being reshaped for the next match.

## NORFOLK

By Ray Hogg

An excellent start to the season on all fronts such as Women's British League when Mary Sawyer led Lindsey Dare, Wendy Durrant – all Norwich players and Pauline Steel to help out – winning two of their 5 matches. Not to be outdone our senior team went to Leamington Spa and came home unbeaten. Phillip Logsdon led by example winning all his 10 games and Jon Cockburn, Steve Sadd, Lindsey Dare and Julie Horstead all doing their bit. Now the veterans 1st team, namely Russell King, Chris Brewer, Mats Olsson and once again Lindsey Dare won enough matches to avoid relegation. Vets 3rd team with 3 wins and a draw stand a good chance of promotion which Steve Howlett, Mick Broughton, David Henderson and Wendy Durrant are aiming for. A point from the veterans matches is that mixed doubles pairs seem to have clicked. Finally at the Eastern Region VETTS in Norwich Steve Howlett and David Henderson, last

year's winners of the over 50's doubles this year could only reach runners up spot. Instead Russell King and Mats Olsson won the over 40's. I counted over 20 players from Norfolk.

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

By Dennis Millman

Northants latest acquisition, a newly formed veterans team, has made an excellent start to the County Championship season.

Four matches played and four victories achieved by Steve Silk's team have produced a substantial lead in Division 3B, with the latest successes coming against Berks and Beds.

The previous unbeaten Bedfordshire side provided a searching test but failed to halt Northants progress, especially as Dave Welsman was in tremendous form with his 5, 4, 5 win against defender Steve Dobbin described by Silk as "Brilliant – the best game I have seen for years"

Welsman was unbeaten in singles and doubles, Silk won twice, Chris Ross once, while Margaret Welsman had the misfortune to meet the talented Sandra Harper in peak form. Nevertheless, the final 7-3 verdict was well deserved. Welsman, Ross and Silk took six singles between them against Berkshire with Margaret Welsman winning her personal encounter against Denise Weller. Additionally, the Welsman/Ross and Welsman family doubles pairings retained their unbeaten records for the season and Berkshire was beaten 9-1

The prestigious EBS UK Ltd. Northants Super League has been beset by early teething troubles and after two sessions only Wellingborough's Westfield has played twice and taken maximum points. Greg Yarnall and John Fuller remain unbeaten while Ian Yarnall has provided excellent support.

Things could have been different if Towcester's Farthingstone had been able to field Dave Murphy and Gary Webb when they opened the competition against Westfield.

At full strength against Towcester's other representatives Cold Higham, Murphy, Webb and Jason Tustain went through the card, with only Tustain's clash with Gerald Henson going close. Sarah Hollis made her final appearance in Northants Junior Top 8 for Girls a winning one, when she took the title without dropping an end.

All the games were played in the best sporting spirit but only one game went against the Thornton's Sport County Ranking List with Charlotte Binley, rated ten places lower than Jordan Wood, winning a hard fought tussle. However Katy Armstrong's win over Katie Hancox could have gone either way. Final placings: 1 Sarah Hollis, 2. Katy Armstrong, 3. Katie Hancox, 4.

Charlotte Binley, 5. Jordan Wood.

Dave Welsman has taken over at the top of the County Ranking List with wife Margaret the leading woman.

Top 20: 1. Dave Welsman, 2. Greg Yarnall, 3. Tim Yarnall, 4. Richard Elliott, 5. Andy Trott, 6. Chris Ross, 7. Ian Bird, 8. John Fuller, 9. David Gatiss, 10. Andy LeButt, 11. Chris Gibbons, 12. Ken Philipson, 13. Steve Silk, 14. Ryan Keates, 15. David Murphy, 16. Dave Grundy, 17. Gordon Saw, 18. Paul Gatiss, 19. Mark Nannery, 20. John Alsop.

Burton Baptist A, comprising Steve Silk, Chris Ross and Dave Welsman, head the Kettering Premier Division with Harborough Athletic, Kettering Town A, Higham Band and SAS Thrapston all in close contention.

In the CT Autoparts Wellingborough Premier Division, Higham Band lead the way four points in front of Westfield A.

## NORTHUMBERLAND

By Pauline Long

The County veterans' team of Dave Goldbold, Geoff Salter, Chris Thorp (on debut, replacing the unavailable "Benny" Robertson), Caron Guthrie and Christine Burke experienced mixed fortunes in their first series of Premier Division matches at Halifax.

They had a good 6-4 win over Lancashire, with Dave taking two (including a win over Chris Ford), and Geoff and Chris one each. Caron repeated last season's win over Brenda Buoey, and also partnered Dave to a mixed doubles win. Unfortunately they lost 2-8 to Devon, with Dave/Geoff beating Paul Giles/Paul Whiting, and Geoff/Christine defeating Whiting/Penny Perry; and 3-7 to Cheshire, with Geoff and Chris each taking a singles and Dave/Geoff getting another good win over Brian Johns/Wayne Percival.

Unfortunately, none of the top boys were available for the first series of the Junior Division 2B matches against Lincolnshire, Lancashire II and Staffordshire in Grantham on the same Saturday, and Jamie Dent (Oxhill YC), Ben Dawson and Alan Sibley (both Cramlington) were brought in for their debuts. The team was further handicapped by the lack of available girls, and only Jamie managed to win a set.

The Northumbria League representative side advanced to the next round of the Wilmott Cup by beating Hull 5-2 and Sunderland 5-3 at the Sand Hill View Centre in Sunderland. The Northumbria League representative beat Hull 5-1 away to advance to the next round of the Alec Brook Men's Veterans National Team Competition.

The Butterfly Newcastle Grand Prix Tournament presumably will have been published elsewhere in the magazine, but it is worth recording details of local performances. Eddie Smith was the most successful

local player, winning the Band 1 singles and reaching the quarter-finals of the main men's singles. In the veterans' event Dave Godbold came through to comfortably win the men's veterans singles.

The Northumbria League was approaching the Christmas and New Year break at the time of writing, and leading teams were as follows: Premier Division - Washington "A", Division 1 - North Shields YMCA "A", Division 2 - Alnwick "A", Division 3 - Cramlington Casuals, Division 4 - Cramlington Lions

## OXFORDSHIRE

By Avril Haynes

County Teams - Veterans 1st - After a competitive weekend at Milton Keynes, the first team has secured 3 points from a possible 8. Karl Bushell achieved 7 wins from 8 singles and was well supported by Nat Richardson, Eddie Herrity, Andy Missledine and Janet Brown.

Veterans 2nd - The second team got their 2005/2006 campaign in Division 3C off to a good start with two wins in their first set of matches at Ashford Table Tennis Centre. They defeated Hants II 6-4 followed with a 7-3 victory over Kent. Performances of note were by Bob Sym who won all four singles and both men's doubles (with Jeff Rigby), and by Jan Curtis who won both her ladies singles.

Table Tennis in Oxfordshire in particular in Didcot, suffered a devastating loss with the death of John Wheeler following recent cancer. John was an active player in the top divisions of Didcot and Newbury and was also a good organiser. John was instrumental in keeping the British Rail Club in Didcot open and could often be seen painting, cleaning and preparing the rooms for play. He was also active in supporting the juniors in both Didcot and the County and giving valuable support to his grandson Gary. He will be sorely missed by all friends and players.

League Scene - Didcot - Oxford Fireplace "A" lead the way with an unbeaten record. Their squad which includes Karl Bushell, Ian Packford, Ray Powell and Nat Richardson will take some stopping but Crown "A" are in hot pursuit.

Oxford Rutherford's are the surprised leaders to date with Vikings "A" and Morris Motors in close contention. Last year's champions Kidlington "A" suffered an early blow in conceding their first match but are quickly picking up points and remain favourites to retain their crown.

## SHROPSHIRE

By Terry Ridgway

Despite losing in the Shropshire Closed final to teammate Pete Fowell, Telford's Tony Akeroyd retains



the No 1 spot for the fifth successive season. The 42 year old topspin attacker has proved to be the county's most consistent and popular player for many years, its also great to note that the young Bridgnorth duo of Billy Pegg and Joe Hurdley force themselves into the top ten. The first ever Telford hard bat tournament proved quite a popular pre season opener with 32 of the area's keenest players participating in what could become a regular event, with 18 year old former Shropshire junior star Billy Pegg mastering the tricky art of the no sponge or rubber with ease, beating Wayne Richards in an excellent final.

Industrial Bearings are the surprise leaders of Telford's top division at the half-way stage. Their squad of Dave Allen, Matt Croft, Rob Holding and former county champion John Holding have always been a hard side to beat but this season could prove to be the team that finally wrestle the title away from three time champions Albrighton A, who are currently playing catch up with outstanding fixtures. The Albrighton side contains Shropshires recently crowned county champion Pete Fowell, current Shropshire No1 Tony Akeroyd and veterans first team captain Dave Elkin so can never be written off as title favourites. Second placed Bridgnorth A are looking to improve on their two consecutive runners up trophies and with Billy Pegg, Mike Dudley, Mark Jones and Terry Ridgway in their side could mount a serious challenge as the season goes by. Telford's second division looks to be a tight battle as relegated Shifnal and Mathesons B lead but Abbey B and Mathesons C also appear to be pushing hard for promotion; my inside information is that Lilleshall B are the dark horses of the division with Colin Richardson, Kevin Crump, the 18 year old highly rated prospect Mark Simpson and recent signing former Cheshire junior star Tracey Latham they will be in the mix for the trophies as the season continues!

Shrewsbury Premier Division - Pontesbury A have to be cast-iron certainties to take the premier title (and possibly the only side ever in the county's history to include three brothers), their team of Alistair and Paul Corfield are captained by the ever popular and highly respected Darrell Corfield. Last season's champs Cricket Club A are also unbeaten and after adding Rob Mansfield to their squad they will be putting up a determined fight to retain their crown.

Shrewsbury Division One - Unison C are runaway leaders in the title race and also the only unbeaten side in this division, John Cartwright and Bob Stockton in fine form for the town hall side.

Midland league - Shrewsbury's A side are finding the going a little tough in the top division with two defeats so far but the B team are on a high with three successive wins (7-3v Kidderminster, 7-3 v Oxford and 6-4 v Stafford) and are in a battle for honours with Kettering for the Division two title.

## SOMERSET

By John Wood

It was a family affair for the second year running at the Somerset Closed Table Tennis Championships held at the Castle School Sports Centre, Taunton, when the Hall family from Wells scooped all the winners trophies. One of the most spectacular finals ever seen in Somerset saw 15 year old Shaun Hall powerhouse his way through to take the coveted men's singles trophy, with explosive forehand and backhand attacking against his Dad Steve, who is one of the best exponents of the combination bat techniques in Britain, beating him 11-9, 11-8, 11-9.

Shaun who has moved up a gear or two this season, looks a outstanding prospect for the future of Somerset table tennis. He always had the ability, but now he has added power and speed to his game. In the semi-finals Shaun beat last year's finalist Jon Hughes from Wellington and Steve out-foxed rising star 14 year old Jamie Hutchinson from Weston-Super-Mare.

Hutchinson had a very good tournament beating en-route to the semis talented John Troke and the formidable Bill Bruton.

Father and son Steve and Shaun teamed-up to beat Bridgwater's Ed Martin and Taunton's Mark Morley 11-4, 4-11, 11-6, 11-4, in the men's doubles final.

The women's singles final was also a corker, with 18 year old Laura Hall and her younger sister Sarah putting on a fantastic display of non-stop topspin attack, which saw 16 year old Sarah grab the glory at the wire, winning 11-6, 5-11, 6-11, 11-5, 13-11. Immediately after the final Sarah said, "I went a bit wild in the middle, but it was kind of an even match, where both of us played equally well but I managed to take the vital last two points" In the semis Sarah beat super defender Shirley Dark from Yeovil, whilst Laura defeated Christine Cowell also from Yeovil.

The two sisters Sarah and Laura paired-up to take the women's doubles trophy beating the Yeovil pair of Shirley Dark and Christine Cowell 11-7, 11-5, 11-2.

The junior boy's final was won by Shaun Hall when he beat Weston-super-Mare's James Downes 11-4, 11-8, 11-4, whilst the junior girls event was run on a round-robin basis, with Sarah Hall emerging in first place and Bridgwaters Carrie Gill in second position.

The tournament just ran out of time to play the mixed doubles final, which again was an all Hall affair with Steve and daughter Sarah against brother and sister Shaun and Laura. This final is to be played at a later date. A report of this match will appear in the March edition of Table Tennis News.

This being my first Christmas in Somerset, I wish everyone involved in table tennis greetings of the season and a happy new year.

## SURREY

By Chris Andrews

Joanna Parker has been picked to play for England at the Commonwealth Games in 2006 by Steen Kyst Hansen.

In the National Cadet League, Graham Spicer's 1st team beat Darenth 6-0, Kemnal A 5-1, South Croydon 6-0, drew with Meopham 3-3 and beat Geoffrey Chaucer A 5-1. These results put Graham Spicer A top of the league with Matthew Seager on 90%. The 2nd team did even better in Division 2. They beat Kemnal C 9-0, Kemnal B 7-2, South Croydon 9-0 and Geoffrey Chaucer 9-0. Kim Beard and Anna Driscoll remained on 100%.

Derek Holman is joint top of the averages in the Veterans' British League Division 2. While Merrow are still struggling, at the moment they are in the Veterans' British League Division 4.

The Croydon Table Tennis League held their annual closed championships. There was an unusual pairing in the doubles which saw Patrick Matthews (16) partner Lon Moir (81). Unfortunately they came up against the eventual semi-finalists in the first round. In the Singles Tony Bostic beat Dele Ayoola. The Handicap Singles saw Ian O'Conner beat Lee Nicholls. Tony Bostic and Lee Nicholls beat Robert Harrowwen and Steve Sparshott. The score is very close at the top of Croydon's Division 1 with Forrester's A and Wickham Park level on 22 points and Eldon A only one point behind. We should congratulate the Croydon League on having two new teams in their 3rd Division who are Limpsfield and Croydon College.

In the Thames Valley League both Chris Bush and Kwang Ho Shin have beaten star performer Ian Girdler. Having had Adam Laws, Christopher Lewis and Robert Lemon break into the top 100 players in the country in 2005 and with Evan Sharp, Dorian Robinson, Wing Yung Chan and Chris Bush set to do the same in 2006, the future looks bright for Surrey.

## SUSSEX

By John Woodford

RITCHIE VENNEN, eight or nine times the Sussex senior champion, has moved into new pastures as the new England No.1 veteran, winning on his major debut the Eastern Masters at Norwich.

He brought down all six opponents three-straight, although he may have been fortunate to escape playing the Swiss legend Herbert Neubuer. Herbert, 60, possibly the fittest 60-year old in European table tennis was beaten in the quarters by Chris Pickard – the biggest shock of the day.

Venner disposed of the other new veteran Abdul Wuraola 3-0 although the first game was 13-11 to the

Hastings ace. Ritchie is now heavily engaged in boosting Sussex in the county championships – Premier Division Senior and Division 1 veteran. Nicky Mason, six times England men's doubles champion with Skylet Andrew, has made an exhibition appearance at the official opening of the Halsham Community Sports Hall, which took place on January 7th. For getting table tennis into the Halsham hall is worth a lifetime achievement award for super-veteran coach Jim West who is still coaching twice weekly at the age of 85. Are there any veteran coaches who can beat the age of 85.

## WARWICKSHIRE

By Caroline Williams

At the Regional Trials held at Wednesbury in December, Leamington league players Holly Thompson and Matthew Outhwaite both ended up qualifying for the Under 11 National Trials and Navinder Matharu for the Under 18 Trials.

From Birmingham, Jack Williamson and Sanika Karandikar, plus Nuneaton's Jessica Birbeck, all qualified at Under 13, Charlotte Caffery (Birmingham) at Under 15 level and Rachel Pilgrim (Coventry) at Under 18 to pick up places for the National trials, as they all finished in the top three places.

Holly Thompson had played well to come second in the Under 11 girls contest, winning 4 out of her 5 matches and only losing to the Worcestershire winner, Ella Parry-Reece. In particular, Holly had an especially difficult match to win against the third placed girl which went to 17/15 in the fifth! Matthew Outhwaite remained undefeated in the Under 11 Boys. In the Junior Boys, the final 8 places came down to consistency and player focus as 14 of their matches went to 5 games. However it was Navinder Matharu who finished in second place, having lost only to the top player Luke Moffat (Worcestershire).

Coventry's Rachel Pilgrim just beat Emily Pinnell, Staffordshire, -9,5,7,-9,10 to finish first in the Junior Girls. A small entry in the Under 15 Girls still gave first place to Charlotte Caffery.

The Under 13 Girls was fiercely contested with Natalie Slater, Staffordshire, emerging undefeated ahead of Sanika Karandikar and Jessica Birbeck, Sanika finishing second with a close 5 game win 10,-7,7,-10,5 over Jessica.

James Ward, Staffordshire, emerged from the Under 13 Boys event undefeated, although he had some very close matches. Jack Williamson of Birmingham tied for second spot but gets the runner-up spot due to his earlier win. Jack had earlier just lost out to James Ward, who came back from 2 games down to win, -9,-10, 8, 7, 7. Leamington League have been interested to discover that not only are they the biggest league in

Warwickshire now, but they are the biggest in the West Midlands and actually the 14th by size in England.

## WORCESTERSHIRE

By Ken Waiton

Milton Keynes was the venue for the start of the Veteran 1st Division 1A campaign. Already without England No.1 Jill Harris, the team changed again when yours truly picked up an ankle infection just before the event, meaning that Pat McCabe stepped into the breach to supply ample replacement. Norfolk were first up and a 7-3 victory followed, before the afternoon encounter with Yorkshire 1sts where the team responded magnificently to upset the odds winning 6-4. Lynda Reid, who contributed much over the weekend, beat Helen Shields in this match. Sunday morning and a tough encounter against Leicestershire for whom Dave Gannon was in sparkling form inflicting the only defeat of the weekend on No.1 Lewis Siket. Steve Horton battled back from 2 games and 10-2 down to Dave, but lost in 4, leaving the team on the wrong side of a 7-3 result. Finally, despite Paul Collins beating Pat 2,1 and 1, Cheshire 2nds were downed 7-3 to end a fantastic time for all concerned. The second weekend in this month will see the team taking on Hertfordshire 1sts, Oxfordshire and Middlesex to conclude what has so far been an interesting and successful journey for all involved. With Pat McCabe moving up to the 1st team, Eric Hardman turned to Chris Maiden for the 2nds 375 miles round trip to Hampshire where they secured a creditable 5-5 result, after being 5-1 down early in the proceedings. Nick Mytton won 2, Eric 1 and combined with some excellent doubles performances where everyone contributed, Vets 3rds won 9-1 at Oxfordshire 2nds with only a loss for Mike Meredith preventing a whitewash on the day. Good wins again for ace defender Mervyn Wood and nice to see father and daughter Mike and Sue (Horton) combining well in the mixed

At the younger end of the age scale, Worcestershire cadets and juniors took part in the West Midlands Regional Trials held at the Wood Green school in Wednesbury. Mixed results followed for our youngsters, with Ella Parry-Reece and Amber Perry taking the major honours for finishing 1st and 3rd respectively in the cadet girls under 11 competition. Bethany Roberts found it hard going in a fiercely competitive under 13 girls event eventually finishing 5th, whilst in the junior girls section, Rachael Sellick and Leanne Sully flew the flag for the county, and finished 3rd and 4th respectively.

Chris Pearce beat third placed overall Jonathan Sneddon of Staffs 11-6 in the 4th game, but finished 4th himself at the final count in the cadet boys event.

In the under 13 boys, Adam Nutland defeated 2nd placed Jack Williamson of Warwickshire 11-9, 11-9, 11-8, and went on to finish a creditable 4th overall in what was once again a very competitive field. Michael Siket used all of his 8 years old experience to finish 2nd in the under 11 boys play off finals, and reports suggest that he has his dad's competitive streak, so watch out all of us in the years ahead. Well done to you all, and continued enjoyment and success.

## YORKSHIRE

By Barry Snowden

St Mary's College in Hull is now in its second season playing league matches in the Hull and District Table Tennis Association and the club as well as the city owes a great deal to the hard work and foresight of Shane Bradley.

Shane, known around the junior circuit for his work with Yorkshire Junior No.1 Luke Carrington, was a coach at Walton Street Leisure in West Hull, a centre run by Brian Addy which had four tables with 12 junior players, and such was the success of the centre that it was beginning to outgrow the premises. At about the same time Bradley was doing a six week coaching course for St Mary's College and enquired into the possibility of relocating from Walton Street and to his delight the college agreed. The college also provided 12 tables and the new St Mary's Club were initially housed in the old sports hall at the college which could accommodate 10 match sized courts and the club still runs its Wednesday night coaching in the sports hall. The table tennis club has now moved into the sixth form academy extension to the school and use this facility on Tuesday evening for matches, coaching and practice.

The college has welcomed the table tennis club and apart from the provision of tables they have also provided full lighting in the extension which can hold up to 12 tables.

In the two years since its launch St Marys have grown from 12 junior players to 40 juniors and 40 senior players. The centre has also benefited by the provision of 80 barriers donated by the BP development fund. St Mary's College in Hull is a success story and like all others is down to plenty of hard work as when I visited the college it was pleasing to see the whole extension being used not just by juniors but seniors as well involved in matches and practice. Bradley was quick to point out though that it is not a one man band and wished to point out that the club would not be where it was now had it not been for the hard work of others, and in particular Alan Dunn and Alan Coles.

# RANKINGS

Not many movers and shakers this month. Alex Perry, regains his second spot thanks to a victorious trip to Bath and Lindsey Reynolds. Continues to progress up the board, pipping her DML Woolwell team mate Lauren Spink to eighth spot. For further details please ring Jennifer Sherwin on 01424 722525.

## SENIOR MEN



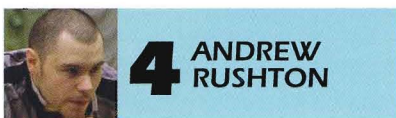
**1** ALAN COOKE



**2** ALEX PERRY ↑



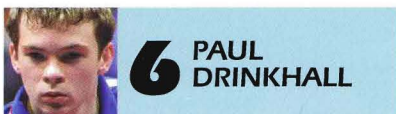
**3** ANDREW BAGGAILEY ↓



**4** ANDREW RUSHTON



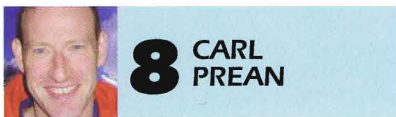
**5** GARETH HERBERT



**6** PAUL DRINKHALL



**7** TERRY YOUNG



**8** CARL PREAN



**9** DARIUS KNIGHT



**10** ADAM BLEAKLEY

- 11 Craig Bryant
- 12 John Holland
- 13 Tim Yarnell
- 14 Bryn Drinkhall
- 15 Dale Barham
- 16 Daniel Reed
- 17 David Meads
- 18 Mark Richard Smith
- 19 John Hilton
- 20 Abdul Wuraola

### JUNIOR BOYS

- 1 Paul Drinkhall
- 2 Darius Knight
- 3 Gavin Evans
- 4 Tim Yarnall
- 5 David Meads

### CADET BOYS

- 1 Gavin Evans
- 2 Wing-Yung Chan
- 3 Myles Evans
- 4 Matthew Ware
- 5 Christopher Doran

### UNDER 13 BOYS

- 1 Gavin Evans
- 2 Liam Pitchford
- 3 Daniel Lowe
- 4 Sean Cullen
- 5 Michael Bates

### VETERAN MEN

- 1 Ritchie Venner
- 2 Abdul Wuraola
- 3 Nigel Eckersley
- 4 John Hilton
- 5 Paul Giles

## SENIOR WOMEN



**1** HELEN LOWER



**2** JOANNA PARKER



**3** LINDA MARCH



**4** GEORGINA WALKER



**5** KELLY SIBLEY



**6** NATALIE BAWDEN



**7** ABIGAIL EMBLING



**8** LINDSEY REYNOLDS ↑



**9** LAUREN SPINK ↓



**10** JOANNA ROBERTS

- 11 Marina Zarzycka
- 12 Lindsey Reynolds
- 13 Lauren Spink
- 14 Kaori Saijo
- 15 Joanna Roberts
- 16 Karen Shepherd
- 17 Naomi Wilson
- 18 Lesley Keast
- 19 Shu Huang
- 20 Nicola White

### JUNIOR GIRLS

- 1 Kelly Sibley
- 2 Lauren Spink
- 3 Sarra Wang
- 4 Melanie Farquhar
- 5 Emma Vickers

### CADET GIRLS

- 1 Emma Vickers
- 2 Rachel Jamieson
- 3 Melissa Wright
- 4 Mary Fuller
- 5 Reena Ardeshana

### UNDER 13 GIRLS

- 1 Ayonija Sundararajan
- 2 Martha Travis
- 3 Karina Lefevre
- 4 Lucy Davidson
- 5 Emily Bates

### VETERAN WOMEN

- 1 Shu Huang
- 2 Jill Harris
- 3 Karen Smith
- 4 Sandra Harper
- 5 Jan Johns

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# MAIN EVENTS FEBRUARY 2006

WEDNESDAY <b>1</b>	THURSDAY <b>2</b>	FRIDAY <b>3</b> <i>English National Table Tennis Championships</i>	SATURDAY <b>4</b> <i>English National Table Tennis Championships</i>	SUNDAY <b>5</b> <i>English National Table Tennis Championships</i>	MONDAY <b>6</b>
TUESDAY <b>7</b>	WEDNESDAY <b>8</b>	THURSDAY <b>9</b>	FRIDAY <b>10</b>	SATURDAY <b>11</b> <i>Mid Sussex Open</i> <i>Butterfly Grand Prix tournament</i>	SUNDAY <b>12</b> <i>Mid Sussex Open</i> <i>Butterfly Grand Prix tournament</i>
MONDAY <b>13</b>	TUESDAY <b>14</b>	WEDNESDAY <b>15</b>	THURSDAY <b>16</b>	FRIDAY <b>17</b>	SATURDAY <b>18</b> <i>ESTTA Team Regional Finals</i>
SUNDAY <b>19</b> <i>ESTTA Team Regional Finals</i>	MONDAY <b>20</b>	TUESDAY <b>21</b>	WEDNESDAY <b>22</b>	THURSDAY <b>23</b>	FRIDAY <b>24</b>
SATURDAY <b>25</b> <i>ITTF Pro Tour - Middle East Veterans Premier</i> <i>W18 (2), Ashford TTC</i>	SUNDAY <b>26</b> <i>ITTF Pro Tour - Middle East Veterans Premier</i> <i>W18 (2), Ashford TTC</i>	MONDAY <b>27</b>	TUESDAY <b>28</b>		

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