

table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

Hat-trick for Sibley

The National Championships



Table Tennis - the new rock and roll; Rowe twins celebrate 75 years; Olympics - the qualification battle; Plus the latest news and results

Baggaley bags his second National title

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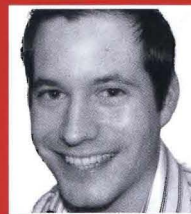
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Guide to May's TT events



first word



March is always a fascinating month in the table tennis calendar. With the National Championships as the main focus, everyone's attention is drawn to who will be crowned champion. However, looking at this year's entry I found myself being distinctly disappointed. No longer was it the old guard versus the new and no longer was there uncertainty about the finals. For me the buzz was missing, as the usual anticipation of a weekend filled with shocks and classic head to head battles looked, to say the least, unlikely. However, my reservations were swiftly forgotten as I entered the Ponds Forge arena. Despite the nagging thought of predictability looming there seemed to be a fresh outlook to the tournament and one which should be celebrated. No other sport's national championships could surely boast such a wealth of young talent; I'm not just talking about the Sibleys and Drinkhalls of this world either. Since last

year, there have been some exceptional breakthroughs with Mathew Ware and Liam Pitchford being two glowing examples. The fresh faced new environment has also brought with it other benefits, encouraging, or perhaps forcing, a new wave of apparel. At times over the last few years, stepping into a table tennis tournament has been like stepping back into the 80s. This thankfully has come to a shuddering halt, as the young players appear to be grabbing our sport by the scruff of its neck and remoulding it into the 21st century sport they want it to be. Will this season be remembered as the season table tennis finally reconnected with youth and embraced the 21st century? I will leave that one for you to decide.

In line with these thoughts this month Paul Rainford has taken a look at how table tennis is now in vogue with many stylish design studios, chic brands and

trendy bars up and down the land (page 18). Jeremy Wilson provides an insight into one of the shining lights of women's table tennis, Kelly Sibley, who continues to improve as each day passes (page 16). Plus we celebrate the 75th anniversary of possibly the most influential twins in the business, the Rowe twins (page 10). The twins' celebration is not the only anniversary in this issue. As the RAF table tennis club achieves a 60 year history, Wing Commander Andy Pipe brings us up-to-date and lets us know about the RAF's table tennis academy and its 25 year inter-service dominance (page 26). Finally, I would like to congratulate this year's National Champions (page 22) and especially the women's squad for their inspired performance at the recent World Championships (page 15). I hope you enjoy the magazine, and as ever I look forward to receiving your thoughts, comments and letters.

Richard.pettit@etta.co.uk
Richard Pettit, Editor

The highlights from our main contributors...

"The impact this spectacle has made is not just with the table tennis fraternity but many others outside of our sport" Alex Murdoch Page 5 "Diane was capable of brilliance and despair in the same game" Steve Leven Page 10 "Table tennis is alive and kicking in the RAF" Andy Pipe Page 12 "Just trying to arrange an interview with Sibley gives an indication of the demanding schedule" Jeremy Wilson Page 17 "They even have a rotating line-up of DJs serving up music to play ping pong to" Paul Rainford Page 18

Straight talk

I am sure you want to congratulate the England women's team of Kelly Sibley, Jo Parker, Emma Vickers and coach, Alan Cooke, for their outstanding achievements in the World Team Championships in China. The women's team remained undefeated winning all 8 matches and have won promotion to the top division.

The England men's team won a number of matches and improved their ranking position. The whole event ran with typical Chinese efficiency as one might expect from this nation these days. China as expected won both the men's and women's titles.

During the event your delegates attended the following meetings on your behalf:- ITTF AGM, ITTF Board of Directors, ETTU Congress, CTF AGM, ETTU Executive Board, CTF Management, ITTF Nominations, Equipment and Women's Committees, ETTU Women's Working Party. They met with representatives of the European Veterans Championships 2009, ITTF Company Secretary, China Olympic Committee members and had a number of informal discussions with delegates and board members from across the world.

The most significant propositions approved by the ITTF were:- **Proposition 4.** Change in the constitution of the Executive Board from 6 to 8 vice presidents. **Proposition 7.** Wording change about racket coverings. **Proposition 12.** Eligibility clause for world title events.

Propositions in regard to changing the format of the World Veterans and expedite were withdrawn. Details of all the propositions were posted on the ETTA website before the event.

Club and Coach Award

Confirmation has been received by Sport England in regard to our completed application and delivery plans. Adverts for the various new posts including the regional coaches are on the ETTA and other websites and the initial funding was in place during March. An additional application to support the UKCC and coaching framework for £31K has been submitted and signed off by Sport England which will include a coaching conference.

Table Tennis and Sainsbury's PLC

The recent announcement of the BTTF and Sainsbury's partnership agreement is fantastic for Table Tennis and will be of significant assistance for our sport during the next few years. Sainsbury's have a very high profile and their Active Kids programme for sport is recognised by all as key to getting young people involved in sport. The ETTA has taken a lead role in the negotiations as part of the Service Level Agreement between all the home countries. The development of the partnership agreement with the support from Sainsbury's will ensure that our sports profile and structures meet the needs from grass roots to the elite players and bring to Table Tennis expertise which money cannot buy. The whole agreement is over a period to 2013 and the process of how this develops is ongoing.

My thanks on behalf of Table Tennis go to the staff of Sainsbury's for their support and enthusiasm, and to the BOA for bringing us together via the FT100 Initiative.

2009 to 2013 Planning Process

Sport England were asked by the DCMS to review via a consultation process proposals and delivery plans for sport for the 2008 to 2011 period. This has been completed by them and approval has been given by the DCMS. Details are available on the Sport England website.

During the coming weeks a number of meetings and seminars will take place between the NGBs and Sport England. Once these are concluded the ETTA will be able to continue the planning and consultation process prior to our application for the 2009 to 2013 awards for Table Tennis.

It is anticipated that these plans will be on the basis of a "Whole Sport Plan" for our sport which will include consultation at national, regional and county levels to



Alex Murdoch, ETTA Chairman

The recent announcement of the BTTF and Sainsbury's partnership agreement is fantastic for Table Tennis and will be of significant assistance for our sport during the next few years.

ensure that our sports activities and progress covers all areas from grass roots through talent/coaching/development/competitions right through to international level.

Dunlop Masters, Royal Albert Hall

I am sure those who attended the event or watched it on Sky Sports will agree it was fantastic for our sport. The many people I have spoken to during and after the event found the whole evening excellent and a credit to the organisers, Greenhouse, who must be congratulated on staging this prestigious event in one of the best venues in the world. Recognition must also go to the efforts of Matt Syed, supported by the ETTA Events team, and the many volunteers who worked tirelessly on behalf of Table Tennis.

A number of the press have been in touch who did articles before the event and intend to follow up on our sport in the future. The impact the spectacle has made is not just with the Table Tennis fraternity but many others outside of our sport.

ETTA Review

The review has started with the consultants and will be ongoing over the next couple of months with discussions

taking place with both ETTA staff and the volunteers. It will cover many areas of our structures, management, HR and governance.

ITTF Executive Board Meeting

It has been agreed that this meeting will be held in London from 16th to 18th May including discussions with LOCOG, BTTF and a visit to the 2012 venue for Table Tennis. Funding has been approved by UK Sport and many thanks to them for their continued support and assistance.

E-ZINE

The circulation continues to increase and comments of its recognition and quality have been received not just from England but across the world including an email from the ITTF President.

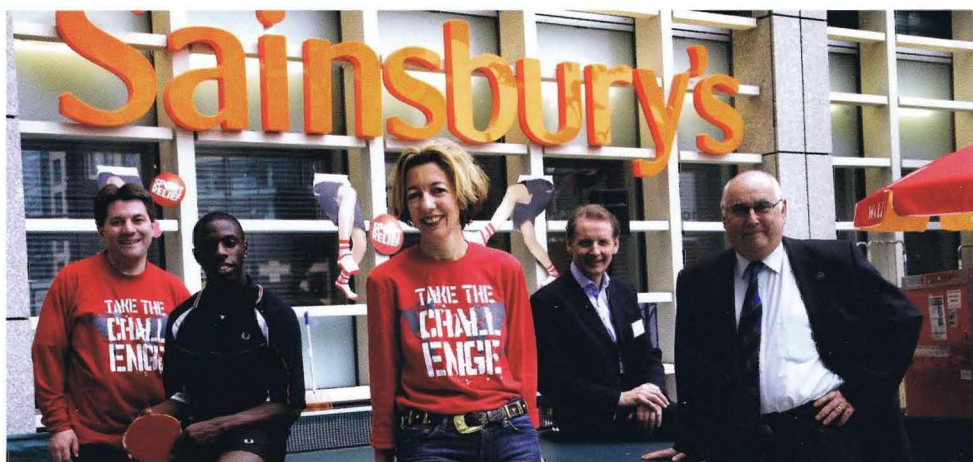
I hope the rest of your season goes well and I am very happy to make visits to your club, league, county or region; please get in touch.

Headlines

The latest stories from the Table Tennis World

SYED WINS AGAIN

Matthew Syed won the award for Sports Feature Writer of the Year at the "Oscars of Sports Journalism", otherwise known as the SJA awards ceremony in London, for articles including his remarkable interview with Zhuang Zedong, the Chinese table tennis hero who was exiled after finding himself at the forefront of the Cultural Revolution, and his examination of the sanitising revisionism surrounding Muhammad Ali. Syed, who also holds three Commonwealth gold medals for men's singles table tennis, was praised for producing articles that did not conform to the mainstream. "His highly original, investigative journalism throws much new light on world sport, the major players and the ever increasing involvement of high politics and commerce," one judge said.



SAINSBURY'S & THE BTTF

With its exciting blend of performance and participation, our household game has managed to entice a household name into what could be one of the most influential partnerships ever for British table tennis. The household name in question is Sainsbury's.

Alex Murdoch, Chairman of BTTF, said: "I am delighted that the BTTF is partnering one of Britain's leading and progressive companies - Sainsbury's - in this ground breaking initiative. The expertise they will bring to the table is something money can't buy and will be invaluable and allow us to make sure that we are a first class organisation delivering all the services our athletes need as they prepare for 2012."

The partnership was formed as part of the British Olympic Association (BOA) FTSE100 initiative initiated by Lord Moynihan, Chairman of the BOA. The initiative is designed to support the BOA's aspirational goal of fourth place for Team GB

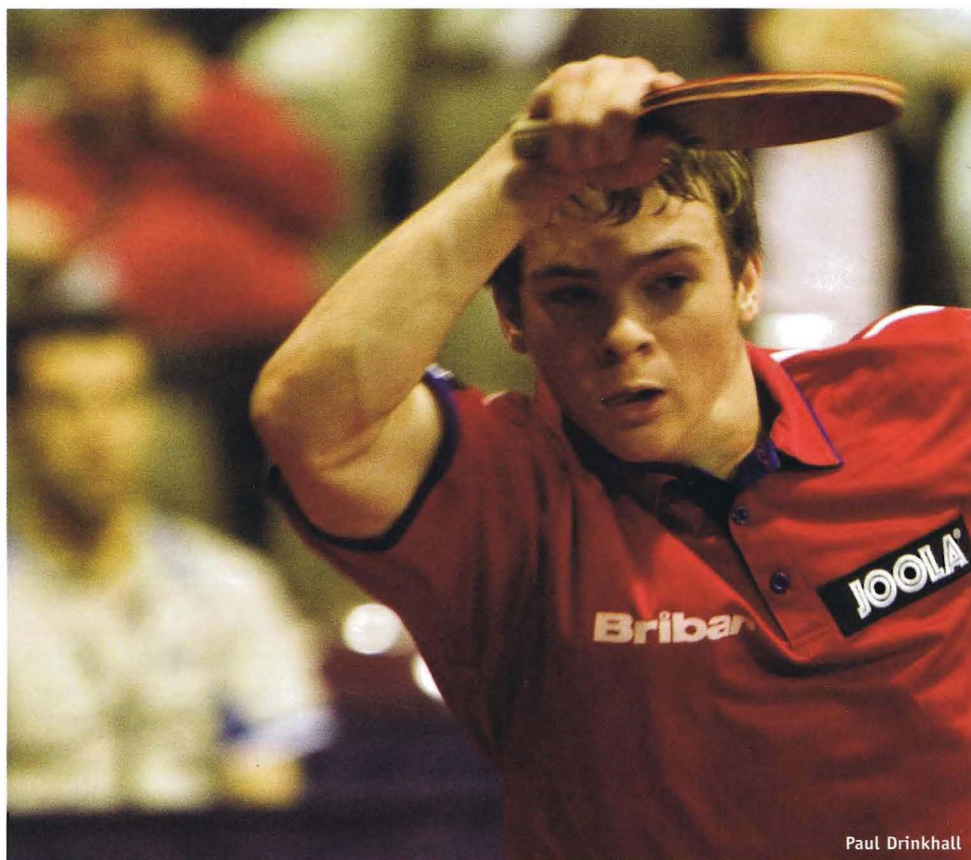
in the London 2012 Olympics medal table. The scheme will help the BTTF and the other 32 Olympic national governing bodies (NGBs) to develop into world class, autonomous organisations in the run-up to London 2012.

Speaking about the initiative Lord Moynihan commented: "Elite performance is business driven; the NGBs and the athletes, just like successful businessmen and women, have to deliver results, be it support services, a top contract or an Olympic medal. These partnerships will provide an exchange of values and best practices which, I am sure, will be beneficial for both worlds." Rob Crumbie, Head of Sponsorship at Sainsbury's, who will be leading the Sainsbury's/BTTF partnership said: "Table tennis is a brilliant and accessible sport that we have been supporting through our Active Kids programme for several years. With the wealth of major world competitive events in the coming years, we're delighted to

be able to provide broader guidance to the BTTF that we hope will help British table tennis go from strength to strength."

The partnership was announced at Canary Wharf where Sainsbury's top operators were treated to a dazzling display of table tennis from two rising England stars, Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight. This was then followed by an internal promotion in the grand atrium at Sainsbury's head office where the sound of table tennis balls flying around attracted many of the 3500 staff to take part in a 30-second challenge against a robot. Top hitter for Sainsbury's was Enrique from Finance who managed an impressive 42. This partnership is another excellent step in the revitalisation of table tennis across Britain and although it does not provide direct sponsorship, it focuses some of the UK's best business strategists directly on table tennis ensuring that the governance can keep pace with the meteoric rise of its young superstars.

FOUR OF OUR HIGHEST CLIMBERS



Paul Drinkhall

After an impressive display at the World Team Table Tennis Championships in China, where both our male and female players disposed of many significantly higher ranked opponents, four English players have really climbed the world rankings.

Paul Drinkhall

U18. In his last year in this category Paul has now reached 4th (previously 6th). U21. He has moved from 31st to 21st. Men. Paul has reached a

significant landmark breaking into the top 200, climbing from 240th to 194th.

Darius Knight

U18. Darius is now on the cusp of breaking into the top ten moving from 12th to 11th.

U21. Now ranked 54th (was 59th).

Men. A climb of 33 places puts him in 343rd.

Kelly Sibley

U21. She is now ranked in the top 50 moving from 53rd to 46th.

Women. After winning 12 from 13 matches at the WTTC Kelly's climb in the women's rankings was always going to be more impressive than in the other age groups, she has moved up from 232nd to 186th.

Joanna Parker

U21. She is getting closer to a top 50 ranking moving to 55th from 71st.

Women. Joanna has climbed into the 233rd spot vacated by Kelly Sibley, climbing from 276th.

ON A JOURNEY TO LONDON 2012

P&O have put together a sponsorship deal worth £75,000 to help some of the top young athletes from Kent achieve their dreams of competing in the London Olympics, one of those athletes was none other than table tennis player Lewis Gray. This sponsorship money will help towards the costs of training and going to events.

MORE SUPPORT FOR EMILY

Following an impressive run of form, including her first international win in Sweden, Emily Bates (member of the Grantham Tornadoes) has been awarded a £500 grant by the Rotary Club of Grantham, in association with Sports Aid East Midlands. This should go some way to help support her through the season.



NEW BOOK FOR THE MASSES

Chris Andrews, a table tennis enthusiast, has compiled and published his very own TT book, Table Tennis an Overview. It includes words from some of the greats and is dedicated to the late Ron Crayden, a brilliant talent

who in his time was Surrey President, captained England and reached a quarter-final in the Doubles at the World Championships. The book includes top websites, info on celebrities, advice for those beginning up to more

advanced techniques, guidance for TT clubs on various topics, player profiles, international results, an autograph hunt and much, much more. To purchase this book just log on to www.tabletennisoverview.co.uk



Sue Gilroy

BEIJING 2008 PARALYMPIC GAMES

ParalympicsGB has officially named the first British athletes selected to compete in the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games by naming table tennis players Arnie Chan, James Rawson, Neil Robinson, Sue Gilroy, Cathy Mitton, Scott Robertson, Clare Robertson, David Wetherill, Paul Karabardak and Dzaier Neil as part of the team.

Among those selected is Cornwall teenager David Wetherill who will be making his Paralympic Games' debut in China this summer. The 18-year-old sixth form student from Torpoint, Cornwall, who is currently ranked no.11 in the world in the class 6 classification, is the youngest selected member of the squad and one of three athletes, along with 32-year-old Clare Robertson from Deeside, North Wales, and

22-year-old Paul Karabardak from Swansea, making their Games' debuts.

Wetherill said: "I am relieved and excited to have qualified, however the easy part is over; the hard work starts now. There is only really one goal for me at the Games and that is to win the tournament, and so everything between now and Beijing will be focused towards giving me the best possible chance to achieve this goal."

As well as these newcomers a number of the squad are likely to be among the most experienced British team members in Beijing this summer, with 50-year-old Chan (Mansfield, Notts), 42-year-old Rawson (Nottingham) and 49-year-old Robinson (Bridgend, Glamorgan). Selected for their sixth successive Paralympic Games. These selections also

signify a comeback for 50-year-old Londoner Dzaier Neil, who last competed at the Paralympics in 1984.

Qualification for the table tennis competitions at the Beijing Paralympics was based on positions in the world ranking list after it closed on December 31st 2007. British performances at events throughout 2006 and 2007 saw the GB players rise through the world rankings to qualify and subsequently be selected for the Games.

At the 2006 IPC Table Tennis World Championships, 51-year-old Mitton (York, North Yorkshire), Robinson and 35-year-old Gilroy (Barnsley, South Yorkshire) all won individual bronze medals in their respective classes, following a gold and bronze respectively for Gilroy and Mitton at the 2006

Commonwealth Games. These performances set the team up nicely for a number of key victories at world cups throughout 2007, including an individual class 3 gold for Chan at the Irish Open, an individual class 3 gold for Rawson, team golds for Wetherill in the class 6 competition and Rawson and Chan in class 3, all at the Slovenian Open. The squad hit gold again at the Polish Open with Robinson winning class 3 singles and Wetherill and Bayley taking the class 6 team title. Team Manager Steve Ward said: "To be the first team selected by ParalympicsGB is a great honour for table tennis and the athletes who have achieved the tough qualification standards.

We will have a larger squad than in Athens in 2004 with a number having never competed at the Paralympics before but who have great chances to compete for medals and gain valuable experience for future Games in London in 2012 and beyond. We have some of the youngest and most improved athletes in the world - David Wetherill is an example of what a young athlete can

achieve with talent and dedication. He is a great chance of a British medal in Beijing and London.

We are planning to defend the two medals won in Athens - men's class 3 team silver and women's class 2 singles bronze - as well as take others. Beijing will, however, be much tougher than Athens and all players will need to perform at the highest level to challenge the Chinese in their backyard. The sport over there is like football here and we are being told the tickets are selling out already. The venue is outstanding and the biggest stage in world for table tennis, we need to pull out our biggest performances to maximise medal chances."

Sue Gilroy said: "The Beijing Games is going to be such a fabulous experience because table tennis is one of their major sports whereas it's always been a minority sport at the Games before."

While James Rawson added: "Selection is the culmination of four years of hard training and a lot of travelling, in particular in the last year. This year will be even more hectic as we will be training even harder to combat the threat of the strong Chinese team. China is the home of table tennis and the atmosphere at the Games will be unbelievable." The Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games opens on September 6 and closes on September 17. The table tennis events at the Games take place from September 7 to 16 at the Peking University Gymnasium.

At the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games Britain finished second in the medal table with a total of 35 golds, 30 silver and 29 bronze medals. With competitive standards continually rising and the dominant Chinese team taking the home advantage, ParalympicsGB recognises that the 2008 Paralympics will be one of its biggest challenges yet.

The teenage World Champions

On 14 April 2008 two of England's select band of world champions celebrated their 75th birthday. The twins Diane and Rosalind Rowe surprised the world of table tennis with their doubles success in Vienna in 1951, and then delighted their home crowd with a repeat victory in 1954 at the Royal Albert Hall. The all-English final, against Ann Haydon and Kathleen Best, took place on their 21st birthday.

Diane and Ros began playing the game as many children do even today, hitting the ball across the kitchen table, with the endless encouragement of their father. Soon they joined a local youth club in Greenford, Middlesex, where they had their first experience of proper conditions. It wasn't long before, in their mid-teens, they both joined the nearby West Ealing club, where they soon played for the local league team.

They were both very agile and interested in playing any form of sport. Their affinity to table tennis came naturally and they played during every free moment. Sisterly rivalry, especially as twins, was never far from the surface, and the girls helped each other to improve as a result of this. They also found that they made a natural doubles partnership, with an innate understanding of the other, as Diane calls it "like a machine, in automatic harmony." Coached at West Ealing by England international Ken Craigie, Ros, who is right-handed and the elder, and Diane, who is left-handed, made great progress. In 1949, 16 year-old Ros was selected to play for England in a match in Czechoslovakia. Whilst she was away, Diane won a Daily Mirror competition for which the prize was coaching from the great Victor Barna, who became the twins' coach and mentor for several years.

After both girls had played in several internationals for England, in 1951 they were selected to represent England in the world championships in Vienna. Whilst considering it a tremendous achievement to be selected, the urge to win once they arrived also

burned strongly. It may have surprised the rest of the table tennis world that they won the title, but the twins themselves were more determined than overawed.

The 18 year-olds fought through four knockout rounds to reach the final, where they played the highly-rated Romanians Angelica Rozeanu and Sari Szasz. Roared on by British servicemen stationed in the Austrian capital, their victory was by three games to one, their most memorable moment in the sport.

In the 1950s, the world championships were held each year. In both 1952 in Bombay, and 1953 in Bucharest, the twins were twice runners-up as they attempted to win the ladies' doubles for a second time. Meanwhile, both reached the semi-finals of the singles in Bucharest and Ros also reached the Bombay semi-finals. Ros' results individually were slightly better overall than those of her sister. She was the steadier player, whilst Diane was capable of brilliance and despair in the same game.

So the scene was set for the 1954 championships in London. Diane reflects on her disappointment that their opponents in the final were also English, but throughout the event the twins had demonstrated that no one was going to stop them this time and in the final they duly beat Haydon and Best deuce in the fourth game.

The victory sparked a whirlwind of



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celebrations, first of all back at home for a 21st birthday cake, and then to the England team hotel in London to party on until the early hours, all the time surrounded by flowers, telegrams and assorted well-wishers.

Ros played the following year (the twins were again world runners-up), but then she married and played no more top class tournaments. Instead, Ros reached a very high standard at golf. She now lives in Kent.

Diane, however, carried on, appearing regularly in all of the major international tournaments until she was into her forties. She was again world doubles runner-up in 1957 playing with Ann Haydon and, with Mary Shannon, twice European doubles champion. In 1966, Diane not only married her mixed doubles partner, Eberhard Schöler, but she also took up German nationality and they settled in Düsseldorf. Diane played in, and for, West Germany for the next six years, achieving success at all levels, including a mixed doubles bronze medal at the 1971 world championships in Japan.

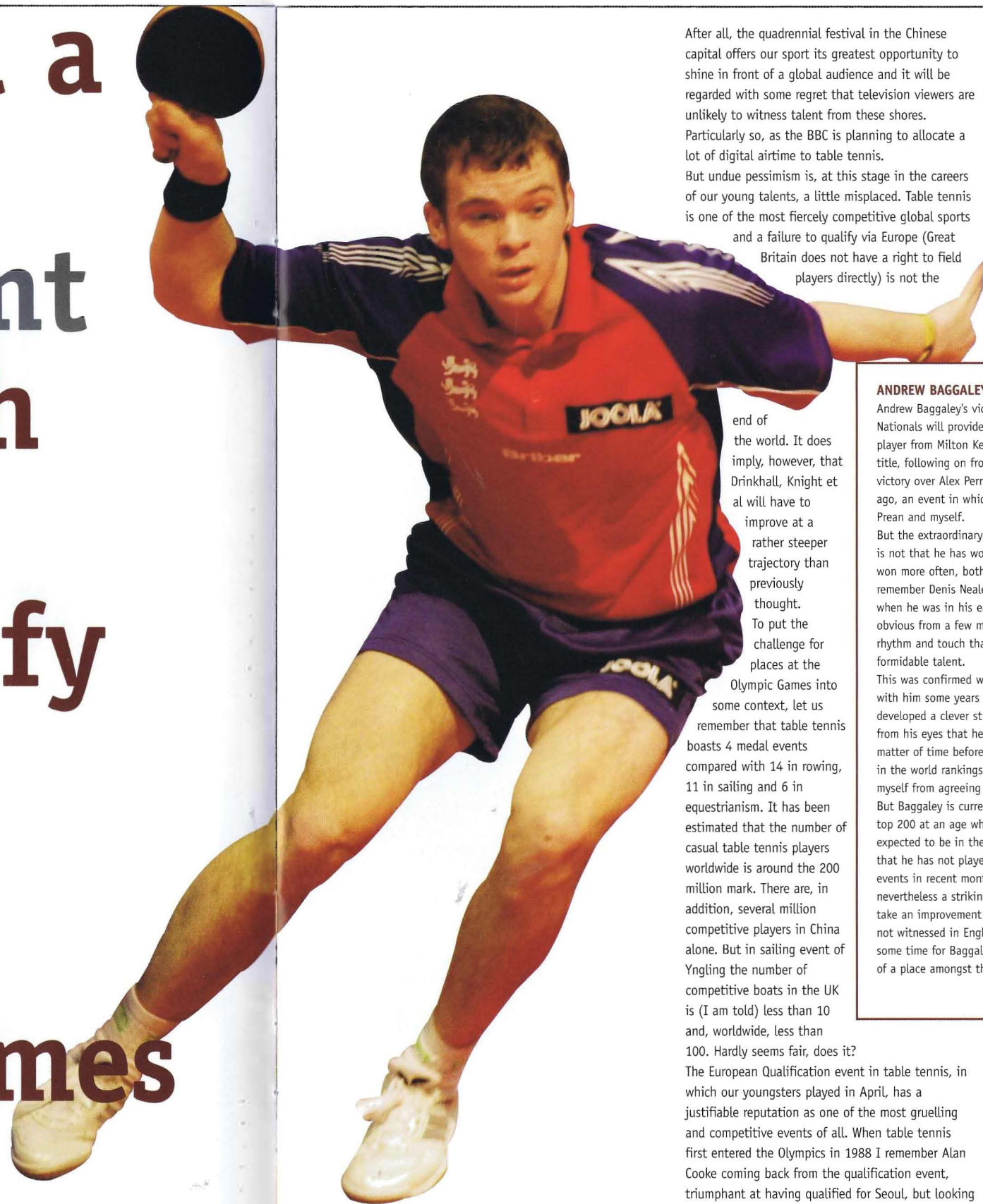
Diane has never quite lost the table tennis bug. For many years she was a coach and national team trainer in Germany. She has served the Swaythling Club International (representing ex-international players), latterly as President of the Executive Committee since 2000. In 1993, she was awarded the ITTF Merit Award for services to the game.

Diane says that she has enjoyed her lifetime's involvement with table tennis. "Playing can be very exhilarating but also heart-breaking; coaching can be very inspiring, particularly of young players; organising, well, it's sometimes a thankless hobby." Who were her best players of the past? Two she played against: Gizi Farkas, oozing with natural talent, and Angelica Rozeanu, who was a dedicated and tenacious player; two she played with: Victor Barna, with his elegance and ball control, and Richard Bergmann for his fighting ability and tenacity; and two whom she has watched more recently: Jan-Ove Waldner and Jean-Michel Saive. Thinking of the future, Diane would like to see an end to the blanket domination of the Chinese players, especially in the women's game. "It is essential," she says, "to have a high standard of competition throughout the world and not to be dominated by one nation - this makes it more interesting for all."

As their 75th birthday approached, Diane looked back on her achievements with pride and is grateful for what she has achieved: "I would like to think that I have given sufficient back to my sport as a thank you for what I gained from table tennis over the years."

Some will feel a tinge of disappointment that no British player looks likely to qualify for...

the Beijing Games this summer.



After all, the quadrennial festival in the Chinese capital offers our sport its greatest opportunity to shine in front of a global audience and it will be regarded with some regret that television viewers are unlikely to witness talent from these shores. Particularly so, as the BBC is planning to allocate a lot of digital airtime to table tennis. But undue pessimism is, at this stage in the careers of our young talents, a little misplaced. Table tennis is one of the most fiercely competitive global sports and a failure to qualify via Europe (Great Britain does not have a right to field players directly) is not the

as if he had been involved in a war. I knew what he meant 4 years later when I played in the same event in Italy. This was a time when there was no fall back of a world qualification event and each day's play comprised 4 best of 5 matches. That may not sound hard, but it was gruelling beyond belief. I felt a sense more of relief than elation when I won 8 straight matches to secure qualification by the end of the 2nd day. A particularly vivid memory of that event was being coached by the great Desmond Douglas. Des was a wonderful companion on that trip (we roomed together) and a tremendous practise partner throughout the competition, always willing and eager. But I shall never forget going to the bench after losing the first game in my first match against

end of the world. It does imply, however, that Drinkhall, Knight et al will have to improve at a rather steeper trajectory than previously thought. To put the challenge for places at the Olympic Games into some context, let us remember that table tennis boasts 4 medal events compared with 14 in rowing, 11 in sailing and 6 in equestrianism. It has been estimated that the number of casual table tennis players worldwide is around the 200 million mark. There are, in addition, several million competitive players in China alone. But in sailing event of Yngling the number of competitive boats in the UK is (I am told) less than 10 and, worldwide, less than 100. Hardly seems fair, does it?

ANDREW BAGGALEY

Andrew Baggaley's victory at the English Nationals will provide a huge boost to the player from Milton Keynes. It is his second title, following on from his impressive final victory over Alex Perry two or three years ago, an event in which he also defeated Carl Prean and myself. But the extraordinary thing about Baggaley is not that he has won, but that he has not won more often, both at home and abroad. I remember Denis Neale pointing out Baggaley when he was in his early teens and it was obvious from a few minutes of watching his rhythm and touch that he possessed a formidable talent. This was confirmed when I started practising with him some years later. He quickly developed a clever strategy and I could see from his eyes that he believed it only a matter of time before he would overtake me in the world rankings. I could not prevent myself from agreeing with him. But Baggaley is currently ranked outside the top 200 at an age when he might have expected to be in the top 20. I understand that he has not played in many ranking events in recent months, but it is nevertheless a striking discrepancy. It will take an improvement of the kind we have not witnessed in English table tennis for some time for Baggaley to fulfil his ambition of a place amongst the world's elite.

Thierry Miller of Switzerland and Des saying: "have you thought of staying closer to the table and trying a few blocks?" Perhaps my greatest disappointment in table tennis was failing to qualify for Atlanta in 1996. The irony of the qualification event (which took place in Manchester) is that I played the best match of my career to defeat Jorgen Persson, but subsequently lost to Zoltan Batorfi in the make or break, sudden death playoff match. Batorfi was a player I had never lost to before and was never to lose to again. It was not a case of nerves or anxiety, indeed, strange to say, I played one of the best matches of my life. Rather it was one of those highly intense and surreal occasions when one's opponent finds energy as if from above and plays a blinder. I was not playing against Batorfi, it seemed, but some higher, elemental force.

That summer, as the world's players descended with excitement on the Olympic Village in Atlanta, I spent my time playing cricket with my brother in the back garden of my parent's place. We invented all sorts of weird and wonderful rules to compensate for a lack of fielders and space. But, do you know what? It really helped to take the edge of my disappointment.

The European Qualification event in table tennis, in which our youngsters played in April, has a justifiable reputation as one of the most gruelling and competitive events of all. When table tennis first entered the Olympics in 1988 I remember Alan Cooke coming back from the qualification event, triumphant at having qualified for Seoul, but looking

The European Qualification event in table tennis, in which our youngsters played in April, has a justifiable reputation as one of the most gruelling and competitive events of all.

reports and results from

the 2008 world team table tennis championships

Six English hopefuls travelled out to Guangzhou, China, for the World Team Table Tennis Championships. Selection favoured youth over experience as our current crop of top young talent set out to take on the best the world could offer. Fighting hard on foreign soil, both teams improved on their positions from Bremen 2006. On this occasion, however, it was the

women's team that stole the limelight with some exceptional displays of talent.

Men - There were some excellent performances throughout the tournament to dispose of some high calibre and much higher ranked opposition to improve from 32nd to 30th position. Top player Paul Drinkhall won 12 of his 14 games, Darius Knight took 5 from 10 and,

although Danny Reed only managed 1 win from 8 games, he pushed every opponent to their limits, reinforcing the selectors' decision and underlining his undoubted potential.

Women - Finishing the tournament as champions of division two, the women's squad of Kelly Sibley, Joanna Parker and Emma Vickers, under the guidance of coach Alan Cooke, provided a glittering display of talent, determination and passion.

The Journey to the Finals

The Group Stages - Both teams performed really well and qualified as top seeds. The women maintained a 100% record and the men's sole defeat came at the hands of Canada (3-2).

Day 1 - Men
England bt. Australia 3-0

Day 1 - Women
England bt. Estonia 3-1
England bt. India 3-1



Day 2 - Men

England bt. Nigeria 3-1
Canada bt. England 3-2

Day 2 - Women

England bt. Australia 3-2

Day 3 - Men

England bt. Israel 3-1

Day 3 - Women

England bt. Denmark 3-2

Day 4 - Men

England bt. Bulgaria 3-2

Day 4 - Women

England bt. Indonesia 3-1



Emma Vickers, Val McDermid, Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley

Coach Alan Cooke



Main Draw

Having both made it through as top qualifiers, the teams got a bye and jumped straight into the fight for positions 25-32.

Men - The men's team could not match the success of the women, going out in their first match against the Ukraine, with an identical score to their previous encounter at the World Championships in Bremen, 3-1.

The women marched on undefeated, whilst the men went into the play-offs for positions 29-32, successfully beating Turkey 3-1, but then in the battle for 29th and 30th they lost out to Brazil 3-0.

Ukraine bt. England 3-1

Positions 29-32

England bt. Turkey 3-1

Positions 29-30

Brazil bt. England 3-0

Women - This match was always going to be a hard one, the Luxembourg team is headed by World no. 39 Ni Xia Lian, with our top ranked player Kelly Sibley at 232. With both number two players (Joanna Parker and Simone Haan) defeated 3-1, it was time for the clash of the team leaders, nobody told Kelly she couldn't do it! The Luxembourg Chinese is a penhold blocker/hitter who twiddles between longer and short pimples up close to the table, in short a nightmare to play against. Ni Xi Lian won the first easily, but from then on Kelly ruled the day, demonstrating superb control and aggression. Ni Xi Lian just could not dominate as she likes to, giving Kelly the win of her career.

Final game, Joanna Parker against

Simone Haan, Haan fought all the way but Joanna was chopping and hitting superbly, a three straight set victory sealed the match for England 3-2.

England bt. Luxembourg 3-2

Positions 25-28 (Division 2 semi-final) England v Canada

It was close between the Canadian and English women. Entering the third game at 2-1, with Joanna Parker 7-2 down in the third after losing the first two sets, things weren't looking promising, until she dug deep and turned it around, taking the set 11-7 before winning the next two and the game.

Kelly then returned for the last game to continue her dominance and help the women progress into the final.

England bt. Canada 3-2

Positions 25-26 (Division 2 final) England v Slovak Republic

Kelly Sibley started proceedings against Barbora Balazova and in a well fought game won 3-1.

Joanna Parker, however, found the youthful talents of the top Slovak junior, Jana Medrikova, just too powerful.

The Slovak Republic played their strongest player Lenka Kmotorkova, at no 3 against Emma Vickers. Emma as usual came close in the first game, but lost it on deuce and after that the Slovak player dominated. In the fourth, Kelly was not at her sharpest after such a long and gruelling competition, but she summoned the strength and power to take the first two sets against Jana Medrikova. The third set was controlled by the Slovak teenager and the fourth was a real dogfight in which Kelly came out on top at deuce.

Joanna's turn again to win the final game for a team win, at 2-2 it went to a tremendous fifth set, Joanna led early but was pegged back, she then produced some of her best attacking and defensive play of the whole week to take the final game 11-7 and with it the Division 2 Championship.

International News

The Netherlands Will Host The World Championships 2011

During the World Team Table Tennis Championships in Guangzhou, the ITTF held its AGM, where the Dutch city of Rotterdam was announced as the host for the World Championships in 2011 after Qatar withdrew its bid and supported the Netherlands.

Singles and Doubles in 2011

All of the events will take place in the Ahoy Sport and Events Centre. ITTF President Mr. Adham Sharara underlined that the bid provided "excellent conditions for the participants".

Former ETTA National Coach Promotes Development In Saudi Arabia

Courtesy Ian Marshall, ITTF

The effects of the ITTF Development Programme are increasing; national associations and organisations are increasingly organising courses under their own initiative based on the highly successful programmes designed by the International Table Tennis Federation. Courses of this nature are growing, not only are they having a positive effect on those who attend, it is also proving a source of motivation for former high level players to become involved in delivering these courses and passing on their expertise.

Successful

Such a person in question is England's Brian Burn, a former international and a national coach; under his leadership in the 1970s England prospered and now his expertise is being channelled into the area of development. A qualified teacher, he has the expertise to transmit the information. Regrettably too often the situation is that past players have the knowledge, they just do not know how to transmit that knowledge; that is not the situation with Brian Burn.

Different

Certainly the number of independent courses based on the ITTF Level One Coaches Programme has grown but the course which Brian Burn led was different. It was an Advanced Coaching Course in Riyadh organised by the Saudi British Sports Co-operation Programme in conjunction with the Saudi Arabian Table Tennis Federation and the English Table Tennis Association.

Twelve Coaches

"Twelve coaches had previously attended an introductory course and they have now completed eighty hours of tuition", explained Brian Burn. "Several coaches who are ranked in the top ten senior players in the country attended the highly successful course." The course was a success thanks to the efforts of Brian Burn who was a fine player, a fine national coach and whose knowledge is most welcome in the area of development.

more world news



In the life of any elite sports person, it is those wonderful and relatively rare high points that we most often read or hear about. The great paradox, of course, is that it is the ability to deal with the more mundane everyday aspects of training and preparation which often separate the very best from the rest.

Take England number one Kelly Sibley. Most table tennis aficionados would be familiar with her success in winning a hat-trick of titles at the recent National Championships. They might also have heard of her wonderful performance in the World Team Championships this year when she won 12 out of 13 matches, including a victory against the world number 39, to help England back into the top division of the global game.

Yet it is the sacrifices: the training, the travel, the early mornings and the late nights which underpin those moments of triumph.

Just trying to arrange an interview with Sibley gives an indication of the demanding weekly schedule.

It is just a few days after her success at the national championships and she has flown to France to play in a series of qualifying matches for the Olympic Games. She returns on the Sunday, but must practice throughout the day on Monday before a 9.30am flight the following morning to play a club match in the French national league. She will then return to England again the following morning before more practice ahead of weekend competition.

"Sometimes it is hard," she says. "Occasionally, there are tears but then you have something like the world team championships and it is all worth it. Sometimes you think 'this is really, really good' and other times you think 'I could be doing something else'. You can't have much of a social life, you can't do a lot of things that your friends are doing and there are sacrifices.

SIBLEY FACTS

D.O.B: 21/05/1988
Residence: Leamington Spa
Style of play: Right hand topspin attack
Sponsor: Tees Sport Butterfly

EQUIPMENT:

Forehand: Butterfly Sriver EL REV
Backhand: Butterfly Sriver L REV
Blade: Butterfly Micheal Maze OFF
Shoes: Butterfly Radial TB

EQUIPMENT:

Average training time per week: 14 - 26
Personality on the court: Emotional with a competitive edge
England Debut Junior: Isle of man 1999 in an ESTA tournament
England Debut Senior: Europeans in Italy
Current Club: Alchie in Spain Premier
Table tennis ambitions: "My aim is to compete in London 2012"
Proudest Moment: "Winning triple crown at the National Junior Championships 2005"
Biggest Disappointment: "In my last year as a cadet losing in the last 16 of the European Youth Championships after being 3-2 up and lost 4-3"

was spotted while playing in the local Leamington Spa League and she made the decision to base herself at the national academy in Nottingham at the age of just 13. By the time Sibley was 15, she had played for the senior team in the European Championships and she is now based full-time at the national centre in Sheffield. A typical week involves training with the likes of Joanna Parker, Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight for six hours every day. On top of three-hour morning and afternoon sessions, there is also the physical programme, which includes gym sessions, as well as weight training and running.

Overseeing her progress is the six-times national singles champion Alan Cooke. "He has been there and done it, so is a great person to have around," says Sibley. "He can relate to your experiences because he has been through them himself and is someone you can feel comfortable talking to about how you are feeling."

Cooke believes that Sibley's performances in the World Team Championships in China were evidence that she has moved up to a new level this year. "I actually had an injury earlier in the season and we went out there and practiced for about a week and I just felt very fresh and confident," she says. "Practicing in China made a huge difference. The Chinese are just so quick and when I then played against one of the European players I just felt like I had so much time. It was amazing in China. We were only playing against people at universities in Shanghai and Beijing, but the standard was just unbelievable.

"My results did give me more confidence. I still have a lot to work on in my game. My strength is my forehand and, even though I have improved my backhand, it can still get better. I am also working on my short game. "The National Championships was also a highlight this season. I played Jo (Parker) in the final of the Under 21s on the Friday and I knew it would be harder in the

the life of Sibley

..."It made you think what it would be like in London in 2012."

"But when I feel like that, I only really have to think about one thing and that is the Olympics in London in 2012. To have the chance to play in the biggest sporting event ever in this country is an amazing thought. "I think about the Olympics a lot if I am feeling tired or down about how I am playing. I was at the Commonwealth Games in Australia and that was a great feeling. But what I remember is seeing the Australian athletes come out, and the noise was just unbelievable. It made you think what it would be like in London in 2012."

Sibley, who is now 19, followed her county-playing mum Lynn into table tennis. Her potential as an 11-year-old

BEHIND THE BAT

Favourite colour: Sky Blue
Favourite film: Mary Poppins
Favourite music genre: Chart/Pop
Favourite artists: Robbie Williams
Favourite book: Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets
Favourite sports person: Paula Radcliffe

women's singles. Neither of us had ever won it. We practice so often with each other and we both say we could play each other in our sleep." Big objectives remain over the next few seasons. There is still the chance to qualify for the Olympics in Beijing this year and then looming European, Commonwealth and World Championships. However, it is the year 2012 which understandably remains at the forefront of Sibley's mind. "All the training and everything we do is about building up to London - it is a fantastic opportunity," she says.

The New Rock and Roll

Say it loud, say it proud: table tennis is fashionable again. No, honestly. The signs are all there, if you know where to look.

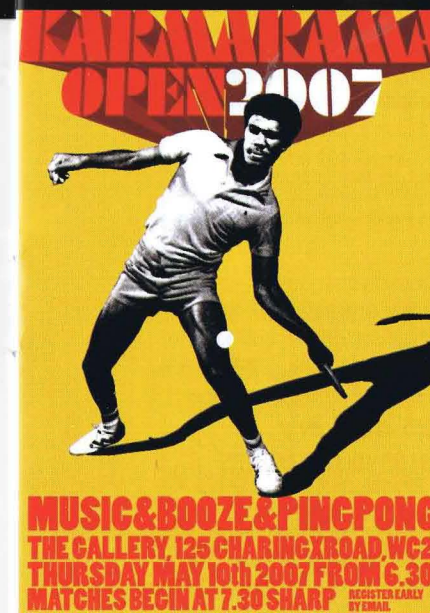
First we have cool-as-you-like ex-Blur front man Damon Albarn proclaiming his love for our sport on Radio 4's prestigious Today programme at the end of 2007, and sounding like he meant it. After a quick hit with Messrs Drinkhall, Knight and Reed at an England training camp, the man who brought us 'Park Life' and Gorillaz but never made it onto Liam Gallagher's Christmas card list delivered a rousing rallying cry for the future of table tennis: "We need a champion". Good work, Damon. Keeps the old profile up. And now we have the Young Offenders Institute, a club for hip young London things, many of whom probably own at least one of Damon's albums, having regular table tennis centred party nights in a venue in the East End called The Fleapit. It works like this: hip young things check on Facebook or similar to see when the next YOI table tennis session is; they turn up after work; buy a beer; then they play a game of 'round the table', the old youth club favourite whereby all present take it in turns to hit the ball then move around the table until the last two are standing and they battle it out to be the winner. They even have a rotating line-up of DJs serving up 'music to

play ping pong to'. (Apparently Stevie Wonder is useful in this department.)

Liz Jones, one of the organisers of these nights, explains how the YOI nights came into being: "We decided to run the night because we have fond memories of playing round-the-table at birthday parties and New Year's holidays. A lot of people turn up do so because they too remember playing round-the-table as kids but occasionally we find ourselves chatting to people who enjoy it because they have tables installed in their offices."

It's clearly a fun night, but it seems that even here there is a competitive edge. "We do get a few people who take it a wee bit too seriously," says Jones. "We had one chap at the last night we ran who complained that he couldn't play at his best because one of his competitors was wearing a white top! Once we get down to the final two in a game, things generally take a more serious turn."

The people behind the YOI evenings put out a team in the Central London League, where one of their regular opponents is the team from Karmarama, a top advertising agency whose



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clients include Coca Cola, the Conservative Party, Ikea and - this is the one they really like shout about - the ETTA. Top London advertising agency? It doesn't get much more fashionable than that, surely. David Buonaguidi, creative partner at Karmarama, is clearly a table tennis nut. When he was kitting out the company offices he was given the choice of a fax machine or printer for one of the meeting rooms but declined them in favour of, you've guessed it, a table tennis table. Eight years on, that table is still there, providing a focal point for staff relaxation at lunchtimes and after work. "The table has become almost talismanic for us as an agency," explains Buonaguidi. "We have a work motto: 'Be nice to people, play ping pong.'" Indeed, among the slick examples of creative advertising work it has done for its high-profile clients, the Karmarama website has an entire section devoted to table tennis, with an entertaining short film by Steven Qua detailing the less than successful debut season of one of their teams in the league. ("We lost to old people, we lost to 20-stone men," laments the film's narrator.) Early on in their career, Karmarama's first team were able to call on the services of a 'proper' table tennis player, namely Richard Hyacinth, as Richard's brother Robert was a flatmate of one of the Karmarama crew. Now that's what you call a ringer. But the Karmarama example of fondness for the noble game is just one of many to be found in London's medialand. According to Richard Martin, brand manager at Fred Perry, fans of the game are found in all sorts of unexpected places. "I come across loads of agencies, TV production companies and so on that have a secret passion for table tennis. I can't think of another sport where so many people have played it at some stage in their lives - there seems to be a very strong positive emotion towards the sport, perhaps because many associate it with good times such as holidays."

Martin can understand why the table tennis table is finding a home in cutting-edge workplaces such as advertising agencies. "Creative environments are very focussed, and table tennis offers the staff a chance to let off steam. It's also more flexible than, say, table football, which tends to be male-dominated."

Of course, Fred Perry has been doing its bit to update the image of table tennis with its setting up of the Urban Cup, which ran for the first time in September 2007 and, spearheaded by Darius Knight, received good coverage in the press. Focussing on cities and using state-of-the-art graphic design in its marketing, it purposefully positioned table tennis as a contemporary sport that is perhaps perceived as more accessible than some, with a markedly lower entry cost than most.

Some may argue that playing round-the-table in what amounts to a crowded bar has nothing to do with proper table tennis. But surely the point is that if people get accustomed to the idea that table tennis is fun and helps keep you fit, the likelihood of a grass roots revival of the sport increases. And if the grass-roots revival really does kick in, it can only be a matter of time before we do indeed start getting the champions that Damon Albarn, and the rest of us, would so dearly love to see.

National Championships

Andrew Baggaley, a name that has slipped off the radar for many English table tennis fanatics, stamped his name in the history books for the second time by regaining the national title he won some five years ago. However, Baggaley's performance was perhaps overshadowed by the superb Kelly Sibley, who managed to emboss her name on not one, but three national titles.

U21 Mens

Andrew Baggaley v Paul Drinkhall

It was a Cleveland v Buckinghamshire final as Andrew Baggaley squared up to last year's champion and the number one seed Paul Drinkhall. It promised to be a cracker and it did not disappoint. Baggaley, who plays his game in Spain, lost the first point; from then on, it looked pretty even with Drinkhall edging the first end 11-7. 12-10 went the second end as Baggaley levelled the score, and although Drinkhall came across as more composed, it was his consistency, which had been such a strong point of his game throughout the tournament, that let him down. The third end saw both players prove that they weren't just heavy hitters, although the play was predominantly getting further

and further from the table, it was interspersed with some dynamic, close, precise and delicate shots that left the crowd hungry for more. Baggaley took the third 12-10 repeating the score of the second. The beginning of the fourth saw the ball hitting the white line more than any other part of the table. However, Baggaley's strength and relentless pressure secured him his third consecutive end. Onto the fifth, and after going 10-3 down it looked as though Drinkhall's day was done, Andrew Baggaley's momentum was unstoppable; Drinkhall tried a late comeback bringing it to 10-6 before hitting long to hand the national title to Baggaley.

This was a superb match and a credit to the raising standards of the English game. Baggaley was a worthy champion who looked strong throughout the tournament. However, you just can't help but think that fatigue had a part to play, and if Drinkhall had concentrated his efforts squarely on the men's singles, as Baggaley did, instead of trying to win everything, this match would

Results Singles

Men's Singles

Final - (5) Andrew Baggaley bt. (1) Paul Drinkhall 7-11, 12-10, 12-10, 11-4, 11-6
Semi-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall bt. (3) Darius Knight 11-4, 16-14, 10-12, 11-4, 14-12
 (4) Andrew Baggaley bt. (19) Ben Barlow 11-7, 11-4, 7-11, 11-6, 11-8
Quarter-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall bt. (5) Gavin Evans 11-2, 9-11, 11-5, 13-11, 11-3 (3) Darius Knight bt. Liam Pitchford 11-9, 9-11, 11-8, 10-12, 11-6, 11-5
 (4) Andrew Baggaley bt. (6) Daniel Reed 3-11, 11-6, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5 (19) Ben Barlow bt. (24) Mathew Ware 11-5, 9-11, 12-10, 9-11, 11-5, 11-8

Women's Singles

Final - (1) Kelly Sibley bt. Joanna Parker (2) 11-9, 8-11, 11-4, 11-2
Quarter-Finals - (201) Kelly Sibley bt. (227) Mary Fuller 11-5, 11-7, 11-2, 11-4 (216) Sarah Perks bt. (205) Joanna Roberts 11-4, 6-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-5 (207) Sarra Wang bt. (203) Lindsey Reynolds 12-10, 6-11, 8-11, 13-11, 11-4, 11-3 (202) Joanna Parker bt. (206) Karen Shepherd 11-5, 11-2, 11-7, 11-2
Semi-Finals - (201) Kelly Sibley bt. (216) Sarah Perks 11-8, 11-5, 11-8, 11-8 (202) Joanna Parker bt. (207) Sarra Wang 11-6, 11-4, 11-7, 11-7

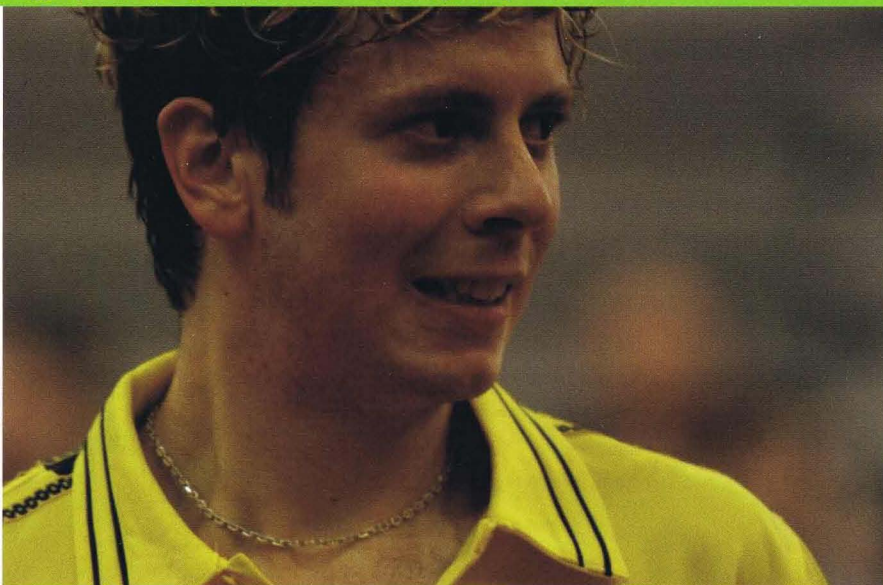
U21 Men's

Final - (3) Darius Knight bt. (1) Paul Drinkhall 7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 11-8
Semi-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall bt. (5) Gavin Evans 11-8, 12-10, 11-7 (3) Darius Knight bt. (6) Daniel Reed 11-9, 8-11, 5-11, 11-5, 11-6
Quarter-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall bt. (15) Damien Nicholls 12-10, 11-3, 11-8 (5) Gavin Evans bt. (24) Mathew Ware 11-8, 11-13, 11-9, 12-14, 11-8 (6) Daniel Reed bt. (40) Liam Pitchford 11-9, 11-9, 12-10
 (3) Darius Knight bt. (7) Tim Yarnall 11-8, 11-6, 11-8

U21 Women's

Final - (201) Kelly Sibley bt. (202) Joanna Parker 11-2, 3-11, 11-6, 11-2
Semi-Finals - (201) Kelly Sibley bt. (211) Melanie Farquhar 11-3, 13-11, 12-10 (202) Joanna Parker bt. (211) Sarra Wang 11-6, 11-8, 11-7
Quarter-Finals - (201) Kelly Sibley bt. (215) Emily Bates 11-3, 11-8, 11-5 (211) Melanie Farquhar bt. (204) Abigail Embling 12-10, 6-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-5
 (211) Sarra Wang bt. (218) Reena Ardesiana 5-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-1 (202) Joanna Parker bt. (213) Hannah Hicks 11-4, 11-2, 11-4

Baggaley was a worthy champion who looked strong throughout the tournament



There were a few forced errors for Sibley and Parker, but the third and fourth ranked players rarely managed to capitalise.

have been even closer. (5) Andrew Baggaley bt. (1) Paul Drinkhall 7-11, 12-10, 12-10, 11-4, 11-6

Women's Final

Kelly Sibley v Joanna Parker

Kelly Sibley, last year's runner-up, looked assured as she dominated the early stages with a confident and positive performance. However, Parker's elegant playing style brought her back in contention as she varied defence with an impressive forehand attack, something that has been lacking in recent years.

The crowd really appreciated this classic table tennis encounter as both players revelled in the atmosphere pushing each other to the very limits of their ability. With barely two points to separate them throughout the second game, Parker edged it 11-8, following a mistake by Sibley who smashed a high return into the bottom of the net. Back level pegging the third end seemed to favour the number one seed as she dismantled Parker's defence 11-4. Sibley perhaps the mentally tougher of the two, was aided in the fourth by a fortunate clip of the net that killed the ball dead, and with this went Parker's focus as Sibley moved into a 3-1 lead. In the fifth, Sibley appeared to relax and bide her time waiting for the moment to attack. In a desperate attempt to halt her opponent's progress, Parker called a timeout

at 5-9. This just delayed the inevitable as Sibley went on to gain her first senior singles national title and her third title of the weekend.

(1) Kelly Sibley bt. Joanna Parker (2) 11-9, 8-11, 11-4, 11-2

U21 Mens

Paul Drinkhall V Darius Knight

The game commenced with Drinkhall's consistency being the overwhelming feature.

However, you could sense Knight was keen to stamp his mark on proceedings with a mid-game resurgence that had moments of sheer brilliance. Drinkhall was reluctant to loosen his grip on a title that evaded him for two years. However, Knight slipped out of his grasp, as on the two previous years, taking the final end 11-8.

(3) Darius Knight bt. (1) Paul Drinkhall 7-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 11-8

Results Doubles

Men's Doubles

Final - (3) Darius Knight/(1) Paul Drinkhall bt. (7) Tim Yarnall/(2) Andrew Rushton 11-7, 11-7, 14-12
Semi-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall/(3) Darius Knight bt. (19) Ben Barlow/(26) Chris Lewis 11-8, 11-6, 11-7
 (2) Andrew Rushton/(7) Tim Yarnall bt. (43) David MacBeath/(74) Kim Daybell 11-3, 11-3, 11-8
Quarter-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall/(3) Darius Knight bt. (9) Lorestas Trumpauskas/(34) Clive Carthy 9-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-6 (19) Ben Barlow/(26) Chris Lewis bt. (28) Simon Nutch/(39) Sam Perry 13-11, 10-12, 7-11, 13-11, 11-5 (43) David MacBeath/(74) Kim Daybell bt. (40) Liam Pitchford/(76) Daniel Lowe 11-5, 11-13, 11-8, 3-11, 11-6 (2) Andrew Rushton/(7) Tim Yarnall bt. (41) Richard Marshall/(35) Alim Hirji 11-9, 11-9, 8-11, 7-11, 11-9

Women's Doubles

Final - (201) Kelly Sibley/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (203) Lindsey Reynolds/(204) Abigail Embling 11-6, 11-8, 11-8
Semi-Finals - (201) Kelly Sibley/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (208) Caroline Hallows/(213) Hannah Hicks 11-7, 11-1,

11-7 (203) Lindsey Reynolds/(204) Abigail Embling bt. (222) Natalie Slater/(229) Martha Travis 11-7, 11-6, 11-2
Quarter-Finals - (201) Kelly Sibley/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (228) Jessica Dawson/(231) Chloe Whyte 11-2, 11-1, 11-3 (208) Caroline Hallows/(213) Hannah Hicks bt. (219) Eileen Shaler/(224) Val Murdoch 11-5, 11-5, 11-8
 (222) Natalie Slater/(229) Martha Travis bt. (207) Sarra Wang/(211) Melanie Farquhar 7-11, 11-13, 11-6, 11-7, 11-7 (203) Lindsey Reynolds/(204) Abigail Embling bt. (215) Emily Bates/(227) Mary Fuller 11-5, 11-5, 11-6

Mixed Doubles

Final - (1) Paul Drinkhall/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (3) Darius Knight/(201) Kelly Sibley 11-9, 9-11, 11-6, 12-10
Semi-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (6) Daniel Reed/(208) Caroline Hallows 11-5, 11-8, 8-11, 11-7 (3) Darius Knight/(201) Kelly Sibley bt. (5) Gavin Evans/(203) Lindsey Reynolds 11-9, 11-5, 12-10
Quarter-Finals - (1) Paul Drinkhall/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (28) Simon Nutch/(205) Joanna Roberts 11-9, 11-3, 11-3 (6) Daniel Reed/(208) Caroline Hallows bt. (10) Martha Marsden/(204) Abigail Embling 11-9, 11-7, 11-6 (5) Gavin Evans/(203) Lindsey Reynolds bt. (8) David Meads/(211) Melanie Farquhar 16-14, 15-13, 11-6 (3) Darius Knight/(201) Kelly Sibley bt. (11) Bradley Evans/(207) Sarra Wang 11-8, 11-6, 11-8

U21 Womens

Kelly Sibley v Joanna Parker

In a classic game of defence versus attack it was Sibley's attacking style that won out in the end after a fight back in game 2 by Parker.

(201) Kelly Sibley bt. (202) Joanna Parker 11-2, 3-11, 11-6, 11-2.

Perhaps the best performance, however, was made by Melanie Farquhar seeded 11, who reached the semi-final by knocking out the no. 4 seed Abigail Embling 12-10,6-11,9-11,11-6,11-5

Veteran Men's

Abdul Wuraola v Eddie Smith

A new champion was crowned in the Veteran men's singles this year. The final saw a battle of the top two seeds, with Wuraola winning it in the end after dropping the first set.

(18) Abdul Wuraola bt. (17) Eddie Smith 6-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-8

Veteran Men's Doubles

In a repeat of last year's final, it was the 2007 runners-up that stepped up to take the title.

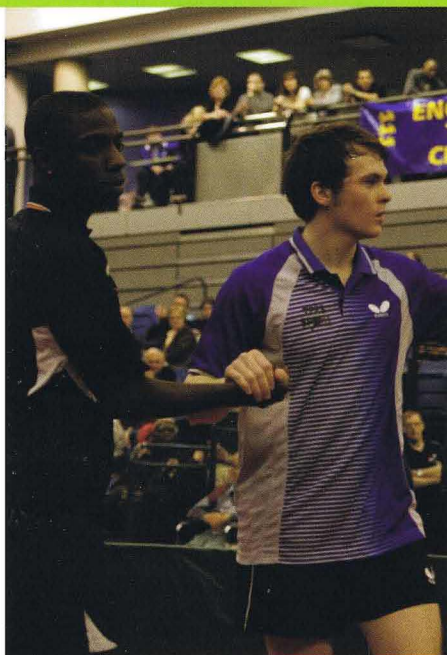
(17) Eddie Smith/(51) Dave Godbold bt. (32) Joe Kennedy/(34) Clive Carthy 10-12, 11-7, 11-6, 11-9

Mixed Doubles

Joanna Parker and Paul Drinkhall v Kelly Sibley and Darius Knight

As is often the case when opponents that know each other's games inside out play against each other, points are lost rather than won, this game was no exception. It was a close affair seeing both sides trading

Drinkhall and Knight had their work cut out



points, even as the pace increased neither really took charge. In a role reversal from last year, it was Parker and Drinkhall who eventually took the title. (1) Paul Drinkhall/(202) Joanna Parker bt. (3) Darius Knight/(201) Kelly Sibley 11-9, 9-11, 11-6, 12-10

Women's Doubles Final

Kelly Sibley and Joanna Parker v Lindsey Reynolds and Abigail Embling

The women's doubles final saw the top four seeds of the tournament team up.

After a shock defeat in the first round of the singles by Sarah Perks (ranked 16th), Embling was really pulling out the stops to try to redeem herself. There were a few forced errors for Sibley and Parker, but the third and fourth ranked players rarely managed to capitalise. The speed and movement of the top seeds shone through and showed just why they have been performing so well on the international scene recently, winning the game in three straight sets.

(201) Kelly Sibley/(202) Joanna Parker bt.

(203) Lindsey Reynolds/(204) Abigail Embling 11-6, 11-8, 11-8

Results Other

Veteran Men's

Final - (18) Abdul Wuraola bt. (17) Eddie Smith 6-11, 11-5, 12-10, 11-8

Semi-Finals - (18) Abdul Wuraola bt. (30) Jimmy Walsh 11-4, 6-11, 11-4, 11-9 (17) Eddie Smith bt. (32) Joe Kennedy 11-8, 11-5, 11-8

Quarter-Finals - (18) Abdul Wuraola bt. (51) Dave Godbold 11-8, 11-9, 11-6 (30) Jimmy Walsh bt. (22) Nigel Eckersley 11-7, 11-13, 4-11, 11-9, 11-8 (17) Eddie Smith bt. (47) Jerome Jonah 11-7, 11-7, 7-11, 11-3 (32) Joe Kennedy bt. (29) Dave Harvey 6-11, 12-10, 11-4, 10-12, 11-7

Veteran Men's Doubles

Final - (17) Eddie Smith/(51) Dave Godbold bt. (32) Joe Kennedy/(34) Clive Carthy 10-12, 11-7, 11-6, 11-9

Semi-Finals - (17) Eddie Smith/(51) Dave Godbold bt. (75) Andrew Frain/(78) David Fraser 11-13, 11-7, 11-3, 11-6 (32) Joe Kennedy/(34) Clive Carthy bt. (50) Trevor Kerry/(59) Diccon Gray 11-9, 10-12, 11-3, 11-6

Quarter-Finals - (75) Andrew Frain/(78) David Fraser bt. (18) Abdul Wuraola/(30) Jimmy Walsh 8-11, 11-9, 11-5, 11-6 (17) Eddie Smith/(51) Dave Godbold bt. (77) Julien Gittens/(111) David Ayinde 11-9, 11-7, 11-6 (50) Trevor Kerry/(59) Diccon Gray bt. (79) Steve Crosby/(80) Steve Lyons 11-8, 11-4, 11-4 (32) Joe Kennedy/(34) Clive Carthy bt. (62) John Dennison/(65) Martin Smith 11-6, 11-7, 11-6

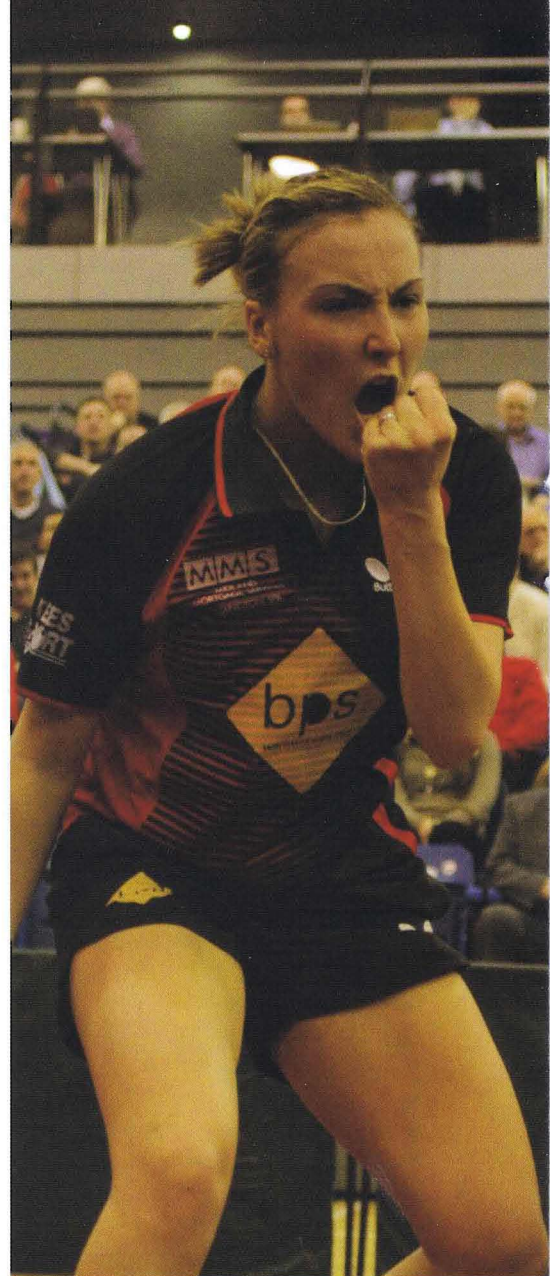
Disabled Singles/Men's Standing

Final - (74) Kim Daybell bt. (99) Farrell Anthony 11-6, 11-7, 16-14

Semi-Final - (99) Farrell Anthony bt. (116) Chris Cattell 7-11, 11-7, 11-8, 9-11, 11-4 (74) Kim Daybell bt. (117) Joe Stotesbury 11-7, 7-11, 11-6, 11-8

Disabled Singles/Women's Wheelchair Singles Final

(240) Leanne Stephens bt. (241) Hannah Coulthurst 11-7, 11-8, 6-11, 5-11, 12-10



...it was Sibley's attacking style that won out in the end

Men's Doubles Final

Paul Drinkhall / Darius Knight v Tim Yarnall / Andrew Rushton

With both Rushton and Yarnall keen to avenge their early exits from the men's singles the men's doubles final looked to be a tight affair. Drinkhall and Knight had their work cut out from the beginning to retain their title. The game started in frantic fashion as the number one seeds shot into a 3-0 lead, this continued onto an 11-7 first end. The next end was a carbon copy of the first as the current holders began to assert their authority over the opposition.

Following their timeout in the third, Rushton and Yarnall commenced a fight back. However, this was short lived and they eventually succumbed to a powerful display from their opponents.

(3) Darius Knight /(1) Paul Drinkhall bt.

(7) Tim Yarnall/(2) Andrew Rushton 11-7, 11-7, 14-12

Royal

Air Force Table Tennis Academy

The RAF Table Tennis Association (RAFTTA) was formed 60 years ago. It has generally been a popular sport competing effectively against tennis, badminton and squash for racket players, and while there have been ups and downs with numbers actively playing the sport over the years, there is currently a significant revival.

The sport has been consistently successful for the RAF over the last 24 years, with the men's team undefeated in the Inter-Services Championships for nearly a quarter of a century. Why is this important? Well the RAF Table Tennis Association (RAFTTA) wants to make it 25 years undefeated this year and to keep the winning formula going. To do that, it is important to keep developing both new and existing players.

In late 2006, a chance conversation on a golf course between the Director of the RAF Sports Board, Air Marshal Chris Davidson, and a successful London based businessman, Mr David Spencer-Percival, provided an unexpected opportunity for RAF table tennis. When asked what sports he was interested in, David replied "Don't laugh but my only sporting passion is table tennis". The reply from the Air Marshal was "I think you are just the man we need". So began the makings of an RAF table tennis academy. In November 2007, the RAFTTA secured £10K for a two year academy with an option of a third year should the RAF team keep winning the Inter-Services.

This is the first time that any sport across the three services has formed an academy overseen by civilian qualified coaches to ensure the development of its players to representative standard. The RAFTTA Coaching Member (Flight Sergeant Marcus Burton - RAF Odiham, Hampshire) and Warrant Officer Roy Claxton (Prestwick, Ayrshire) were asked to help establish the academy. Working within a compressed time frame due to the Christmas and New Year break, it was decided that the academy would be based at RAF Odiham three times a year, each a two day session of eight hours. For interest beyond table tennis, the station is the home to all the RAF's Ch 47 Chinook helicopters.

Twelve players of all differing standards, but those deemed committed and with short, medium or long-term potential to represent the RAF, were selected at the RAF

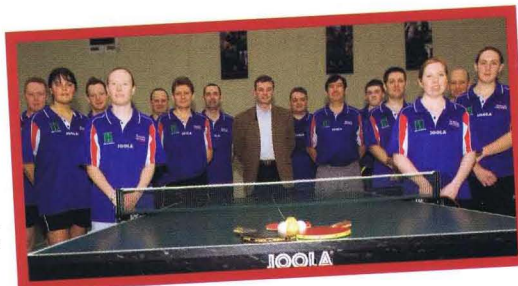
Festival of Table Tennis held at RAF Halton, Bucks, in late 2007. Work began to organise the venue, equipment, clothing, accommodation and coaches. Extra tables were acquired/purchased, a total of seven in use at any one time, and + 400 practice balls, nets, sponsored shirts and a practice robot were purchased.

By kind permission of the Station Commander, Group Captain Andy Turner, the first session was formally held in the RAF Odiham sports hall on Saturday 19 January 2008. Taking the opportunity to pit his skill and wits against our robot, the Stn Cdr proved to be a confident, progressive attacking player with a good forehand drive. His footwork and backhand technique needed a little honing but then again, this was a common theme for all the RAF players! A two-day event, The DSP Academy (named after our sponsor, Mr David Spencer - Percival) involved 12 players from across the RAF along with English Table Tennis Association coaches, Mr Charlie Childs and Miss Heather Knight, assisted by Marcus Burton, also a qualified ETTA coach.

The first sessions concentrated on all the key elements of table tennis: the four basic strokes, service and service return, basic matchplay tactics, footwork (often a table tennis player's Achilles heel...no pun intended) and lots of practice drills, including time on the robot and multi-ball. In addition to the Hungarian/Chinese multi-ball training technique improving the skill set of the players it also provided a completely new way to find out how unfit in table tennis terms the players were!

By the end of the day, all players admitted to being very tired both physically and mentally, due to the high levels of mobility and concentration demanded by the practice drills.

Day two began with the all important warm up, which seemed a lot harder than before due to the previous day's tough pace and some aching legs! These sessions





The players selected for the Academy came from a variety of standards from absolute novice (picked up a bat for the first time in November 2007) to the RAF no 2. Players were as follows:

RAF Coach - Flight Sergeant Marcus Burton

Academy Members
Flight Sergeant Martin Jones - RAF Shawbury
Corporal Darren Flack - RAF Boscombe Down
Senior Aircraftman Ashley Rowe - RAF Lyneham
Corporal Bex Lawes - RAF Headley Court
Sergeant Tracey Palmer - RAF Halton
Senior Aircraftman Mick Metcalfe - RAF Portreath
Senior Aircraftman Kris Sumner - RAF Leeming
Sergeant Scott Doehren - RAF Cosford
Aircraftman Vivers - RAF Cosford
Wing Commander Andy Pipe - RAF High Wycombe
Flight Lieutenant Tracey Rowlands - RAF Benson
Warrant Officer Tony Stead - MOD London

This is the **first time** that any sport across the three services has **formed an academy** overseen by **civilian qualified coaches...**

continued with the emphasis being on consolidating previous skills within a matchplay scenario. Players were encouraged to introduce a change in tactics during games and follow them religiously, even if that meant losing some points. In addition, new serves were employed and games were played with conditions attached. This 'conditional play' along with the change technique required a tricky mental adjustment for some of the more experienced players (proving that old dogs can learn new tricks), or those with unique or less conventional playing styles.

Another dimension introduced was video analysis. All the players were filmed during competitive matchplay. They were then subjected to a review of their techniques with the coaches providing a critique using a portable projection screen and this proved an extremely valuable tool, once the players had got over their 'do I really do that/play like that?' surprise. All agreed that the camera really doesn't lie and gleaned a great insight into their strengths and areas for improvement. While the goal was to formally assess the players against the ETTA's Butterfly skills award programme, it was decided that it did not entirely fit the RAF's needs, and therefore, assessment would need to be made against another formal system.

The Dunlop skills award would have met the needs, its withdrawal from use means that the RAF will develop its own scheme drawing on the skills frameworks of other schemes - this is an ambitious task for the purely RAF volunteer players, but will be worthwhile.

Post academy, the players received DVDs containing their matchplay videos, along with structured player profiles listing the areas they were expected to develop and practice before the next academy weekend scheduled for 31 May/1 June 2008. Needless to say, the two days were mentally and physically taxing and a real eye opener for some, but immensely enjoyable for all concerned - the coaches worked all the players extremely hard.

In the past 12 months, the RAF has identified 16 new recruits who have played/play table tennis, and the best of the bunch Aircraftman Matt Faulkner is expected to represent the RAF at the first time of asking and will hopefully be part of the winning team of 25 years undefeated in the Inter-Services. Table tennis is alive and kicking in the RAF and should any players out there be interested in joining the Service you know you'll be able to continue playing the sport.

Review of the latest Tournaments

If you have a Tournament you would like us to feature please email James.Comford@etta.co.uk.



Wuraola was ranked about 900 points and many places above second seed Fred Dove and the difference in class showed.

Wuraola justifies his seeding Cippenham Veterans' 2-Star Open Championships By Graham Trimming

The Cippenham Veterans' 2-Star Open Championships on 2nd March attracted a good entry of 64 players and a highly ranked champion in Abdul Wuraola, number one ranked veteran in England. Wuraola was ranked about 900 points and many places above second seed Fred Dove and the difference in class showed. Wuraola did not drop a game all day in claiming the title and this included a final 11-9, 11-5, 11-6 demolition job on Dove, a player to whom he had lost in a recent tournament.

There were a lot of close and exciting encounters during the day's play and two in particular featured Wayne Matthews. After proceeding out of Group 1 where he had to play second fiddle to Wuraola, Matthews went on a run that saw him beat David Fraser in five games in the first knock-out round, then John Fannin in a rather more comfortably three-straight sets, followed by another five game epic with Lee Middleton. That, however, was his limit, because after winning the first game of his semi-final against Dove, Matthews slipped away 3-1. Two of his previous victims also had their own moments of glory in the preliminary round groups. Fraser had beaten eighth seed David Crowley, whilst Middleton had scored an impressive win against third seed Steve Davis, both seeds thereby being relegated to second place in their groups.

It mattered not to Davis who found a different path to his allotted semi-final berth. En route he beat his Graham Spicer team-mate, fourth seed Derek Holman, and then Cippenham's most impressive player of the day, Paul Elliott, in the quarter-final.

Elliott was another who scored a good result in the groups, beating fifth seed Andy Misseldine, he then went on to beat Crowley and Tony Dias, the latter 13-11 in the fifth, before extending Davis after having been 2-1 up at one stage.

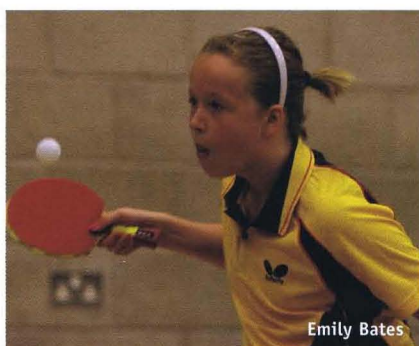
Roger Hookey from the Isle of Wight, but a Cippenham player in the Veterans' British League, justified his sixth seed billing by reaching the quarter-final, falling to Dove, while other local players to make it into the competition proper included Elroy Hull, Neil Bird and Phil Prady. Prady's success included a win over seventh seed Andy Frain in the groups.

Two newcomers battled out the final of the Women's Singles. Neither Julie Thorn, the winner, nor Janice Lee, runner-up, had competed in a veterans' event at Cippenham before. Thorn needed to come back

from a 2-1 deficit in the final to take the winner's trophy back to the Isle of Wight.

The tournament, which ran to time, was organized by Graham Trimming and refereed by Mick Strobe.





Bates Takes Derby By Storm

By Geoff Ware

At the tender age of just 12 years young, England cadet international Emily Bates surely made history by taking the City of Derby 4 Star Open Junior Girls' title.

Following a weekend full of surprises in the FA Cup, Emily was magnificent throughout the tournament, to shock all at the Moorways Leisure Centre on Sunday 9th March. Full of confidence from her recent unbelievable win at the Safirs (Stockholm) International under 13 tournament, Emily continued to play some incredible table tennis to defeat the likes of Mary Fuller, then top seed and England number 1, Emma Vickers, at the semi-final stage. The staged final went to a close five setter, but Emily was not to be denied, as she once again capped a memorable day, taking the Junior Girls' title by defeating England number 3, Rachel Jamieson.

Matt Ware confirmed his top seed placing by taking the Junior Boys' title from Richard Marshall in the final. Marshall had earlier found a rich vein of form to reach the final, with great wins over Craig Howison, then Chris Doran at the semi-final stage. Ware on the other hand had to pull out all the stops to halt a spirited challenge from Richard Andrews in the quarters, surviving match points down in the fifth end. Ware outpointed Wing Yung Chan in the other semi to set up a final confrontation with fellow England junior international, Marshall.

Hong Ming Zhang Zaps Jiang Chang Hong

By Keith Lesser

In perhaps the best Super League final I have witnessed, the speed of Hong Ming Zhang whizzing loops past Jiang Chang Hong faster than a laser beam, was exceptional and a very impressed crowd enjoyed what has to be the best mid-week table tennis anywhere in the UK. Surely, you would think the presence of Hong and Jiang would encourage England's

better players to come down and challenge the Progress starlets. Xu Shuying/Wang Zheng came joint third, with Wang also an impressive talent but perhaps not quite up to the standard of Hong and Jiang. Hong incidentally, can be viewed on the ETTA's youtube website.

Fighting Like Dogs

This leaves essentially fifth place becoming the old "first" as the best of the rest are left fighting for the remaining positions. Zac Zilesnick, from Barnet TTC, had been on the BBC, on Blue Peter the previous Tuesday (4th March), and it was a shame the improving Zac was not present to take on some of Super League's best. Reece Tan and Costas Papantoniou were left to fly the flag for Barnet, with both impressing, Reece with an excellent win against Zoltan Hosszu to finish 19th and Costas, well what can I say? Everyone watching the final, marvelling the talents of Hong Ming Zhang, the speed, the agility, the reactions, unbelievable. Mr Papantoniou was then able still to distract the whole audience (Costas v John Holland was the only other match going on at that time for fifth place). A huge outburst worthy of the title "strop of the year" came when Costas missed a smash when the game was sitting at 2-1 to Holland in sets and 12-12 in the fourth. Holland then took the game 3-1 avenging a recent victory for Costas whose improved results are noted. Perhaps it is the practice with Costas' two sons at Barnet who are certainly both improving and will be competing in Super League no doubt very soon. Congratulations to Mr Papantoniou for his performance, his shorts and his humour in entertaining the crowd. Screaming at one point no less than "Fight like a dog, come on" - literally unshaven for days, one would not be surprised were Costas to get down on all fours and start biting barriers.

Becker Than Beckham

Paul Beck had a blinder. Unlike his namesake David who has failed to impress by moving to the USA for his footballing exploits, Beck played more like an inspired Boris Becker, taking his first Wimbledon title at the age of 17. Beck had wins against Matt Spero 3-0, Neil Charles 3-2 and Liu Meihan 3-0. All particularly

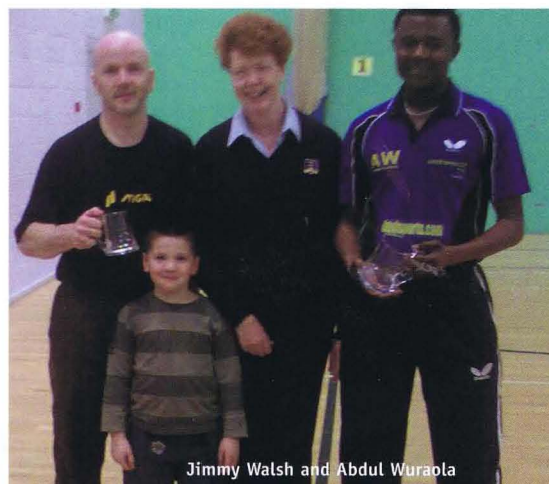
impressive with Paul's ranking shooting through the roof.

North Herts 2 Star

By Steve Leven

An entry of 95 competitors made the North Herts Banded Two Star Satellite Table Tennis Grand Prix Open held at the Hitchin Boys' School Sports Centre on 8th and 9th March 2008 the success it was.

The biggest shock of the weekend came with the exit of the number one seed Abdul Wuraola of Surrey in the semi-finals of the Men's Singles, ousted by young Mark Simpson of Durham in a thrilling five-setter, 11-9, 9-11, 9-11, 11-5, 11-7. In the final, Simpson succumbed to Scotland's Niall Cameron in another hard-fought match. However, Simpson saw further success when he won the U21 Men's Singles, beating Shropshire's Billy Pegg in the final. In the Veteran Singles, Wuraola justified his number one seeding by overcoming local lad Jimmy Walsh from Stevenage in the final.



Jimmy Walsh and Abdul Wuraola

On the Saturday, Kai Lu of Nottinghamshire won both the Men's Band 5 and 6, while Malgorzata Muda from Middlesex won the Women's Bands 1 and 2. Heather Knight from Hampshire won the Women's Band 3, beating local girl Haylee Potts from Hoddesdon in the final. Heather was also runner-up in Women's Band 2.

The North Herts Table Tennis Association would like to thank the staff of the Hitchin Boys' School Sports Centre for all their valued help over the weekend and all those volunteers who helped to make this event run so smoothly.

British League

COMFORTABLE WINNERS

BATTS Team Peniel II carried on where they had left off, scoping a maximum eight points in the last round of matches to give themselves a magnificent return of 27 points for the season and to finish as very comfortable winners of Division Two South. They had the advantage of playing on their home tables and they stormed away with the Division. Their closest match came in round 11 against Fusion II, where they eventually won 5-3, having been 3-2 down. Sean Gibson looked dead and buried against Martin Smith and having lost the first two ends he trailed the inform Surrey counter-hitter 5-1 in the third end. Somehow Sean roused himself to a new level and he came through to win 8-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-9. It was just as well as Thomas Hughes and Martin Smith both beat Martin Kubrt, whilst the underrated Lawrence Orekoya was an excellent five game winner against Billy Deville. With the match tied at 3-3 Abigail Embling scored a vital 4-11, 7-11, 11-4, 11-9, 11-7 win against Thomas Hughes, and Billy Deville earned BATTS both points as he beat Jogenes Senorin 11-8, 11-6, 3-11, 12-10. It was Abigail who took the Player of the Match award, having also scored an excellent 12-10, 11-7, 13-11 victory against "Jojo". BATTS were expecting a strong challenge from DHS London Progress IV, but this never really materialised and BATTS Team Peniel ran out comfortable 7-1 winners. Koji Hirota, easily Progress's leading player in this team, was the Southall Club's only winner when he beat Billy

Deville 11-8, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7. Hirota also had a real tussle with Sean Gibson but it was the former England international Gibson who came through to win in five sets 8-11, 11-9, 11-4, 9-11, 11-7. These were the two outstanding players in this division, with Gibson winning all 18 of his singles, and Hirota only tasting defeat twice, both times against Gibson. Billy Deville, one of the most improved players in the south of England, wrapped up the BATTS victory with a dominant display against Tony Alvarez where he came though 11-5, 11-4, 11-7. How long will it be before Billy is pushing for a place in the BATTS Premier Division side? It was Fusion II who eventually finished second, a feat they secured in their last match by beating DHS London Progress IV 5-3. Fusion took a 3-1 lead but found themselves tied at 3-3 after Rafael Marom had beaten Martin Smith 3-2 and the ever reliable Koji Hirota had seen off Thomas Hughes 3-1. Fusion kept their nerve really well in the circumstances, and Farhat Rasul beat Tony Alvarez 3-1 to give them a 4-3 lead. Jogenes Senorin completed what has been an excellent season for the Dulwich side by defeating Andrew Hagger 3-2 to seal second place for his team.

BATTS showed their strength in depth on the Sunday. They were able to leave Sean Gibson out of their side and still beat Mossford 6-2. An inform Matt Spero caused them the most problems beating both Martin Kubrt and Oscar Selfridge, but Billy Deville and Meihan Lui were both undefeated to ensure that an upset was

Tables

DIVISION 1 NORTH	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ELGRE NOTTINGHAM I	10	4	0	76	36	24
DERWENT I	10	1	3	76	36	21
DRUMCHAPEL GLASGOW II	8	3	3	64	48	19
GRANTHAM	7	3	4	63	49	17
ROTHERHAM SCORPIONS I	2	5	7	44	68	9
ORMESBY II	1	6	7	36	76	8
HALTON I	2	3	9	46	66	7
CHESTERFIELD I	2	3	9	43	69	7

DIVISION 2 NORTH	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BARROW	8	4	2	70	42	20
FASTBATS	9	2	3	70	42	20
SHEFFIELD	7	3	4	69	43	17
ELGRE NOTTINGHAM II	5	7	2	60	52	17
DERWENT II	5	2	7	48	64	12
NORTHFIELD	4	3	7	47	65	11
MARKET RASEN	3	4	7	52	60	10
ORMESBY III	1	3	10	32	80	5

DIVISION 1 SOUTH	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FUSION I	8	2	4	69	43	18
BRIGHTON I	8	1	5	56	56	17
DML WOOLWELL I	7	2	5	58	54	16
DHS LONDON PROGRESS II	5	5	4	62	50	15
CIPPENHAM I	4	5	5	55	57	13
GENERATION 2 I	3	6	5	53	59	12
YORK GARDENS I	4	4	6	51	61	12
BYNG HALL I	2	5	7	44	68	9

DIVISION 2 SOUTH	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BATTS TEAM PENIEL II	13	1	0	86	26	27
FUSION II	10	1	3	72	40	21
DHS LONDON PROGRESS IV	9	1	4	67	45	19
MOSSFORD	9	0	5	64	48	18
BRIGHTON II	4	1	9	43	68	9
HORSHAM II	2	4	8	42	70	8
CLUB CORNWALL	3	1	10	41	70	7
ASHFORD II	1	1	12	32	80	3

DIVISION 1 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
OLOP IMPACT I	10	2	0	72	24	22
WESTFIELD I	8	2	2	66	30	18
DHS LONDON PROGRESS III	7	1	4	63	33	15
CARRARA POLSKA I	6	1	5	52	44	13
URBAN PROGRESS II	4	0	8	35	61	8
BEDFORD MODERN I	2	1	9	27	69	5
CIPPENHAM II	1	1	10	21	75	3
OXFORD FIREPLACE CENTRE II (Expelled)						

DIVISION 2 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
KINGFISHER	13	1	0	83	29	27
HORSHAM I	6	4	4	66	46	16
ASHFORD I	7	1	6	65	47	15
GUERNSEY	5	5	4	61	51	15
EASTBOURNE	5	3	6	53	59	13
KINGSHURST BRIBAR	6	1	7	47	65	13
DE VERE NETTS	3	2	9	41	71	8
BEDFORD MODERN II	2	1	11	32	80	5



Abigail Embling

never on the cards. Meihan showed what a tough competitor she can be by beating Shelley Uzal 11-7, 11-3, 11-2, whilst Martin Kubrt hit back well in his second singles and beat Euan Little 11-4, 11-4, 15-13. Club Cornwall were forced to play with three players all weekend after Matthew Nicholls broke his foot on the Friday evening. They battled away bravely, and

relegation was averted in the last round of matches when they beat Ashford II 5-3, which left Ashford (three points) in bottom place. Adrian Noott and Matthew Trevorrow were both undefeated and Martin Rule added the all important fifth win by getting the better of Robin Pretty 11-8, 19-17, 4-11, 8-11, 11-9. Cornwall live to fight another day!

DIVISION 3 NORTH

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HALTON II	10	2	2	67	45	22
MURRAYFIELD	9	2	3	66	46	20
UXBRIDGE I	8	3	3	65	47	19
WOODFIELD I	6	1	7	53	59	13
HARTLEPOOL	5	2	7	56	56	12
DRUMCHAPEL GLASGOW III	4	4	6	54	58	12
ELGRE NOTTINGHAM III	3	2	9	46	66	8
FORMBY	1	4	9	41	71	6

DIVISION 3 SOUTH

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
YORK GARDENS II	12	1	1	80	32	25
TTK GREENHOUSE II	12	0	2	79	33	24
SEH BRITANNIA IPSWICH I	8	1	5	63	49	17
OLOP IMPACT II	4	4	6	56	56	12
HASTINGS	5	2	7	46	66	12
HORSHAM III	3	3	8	39	73	9
CIPPENHAM III	3	2	9	48	64	8
ELLENBOROUGH II	2	1	11	37	75	5

DIVISION 3 SOUTH AND WEST

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DML WOOLWELL II	10	2	0	66	30	22
B @ S GROUP	6	3	3	58	38	15
WESTFIELD II	7	1	4	51	45	15
NWF	4	3	5	46	50	11
GENERATION 2 II	3	4	5	47	49	10
FUSION III	3	2	7	40	56	8
BRIGHTON III	1	1	10	28	68	3
Oxford Fireplace Centre III	Expelled					

DIVISION 4 NORTH

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SUNDERLAND	12	0	2	87	25	24
PUDSEY	11	2	1	76	36	24
ST MARY'S HULL	10	0	4	75	37	20
BARNT GREEN	8	2	4	71	41	18
ROTH' SCORPIONS II	5	1	8	48	64	11
CHESTERFIELD II	4	2	8	50	62	10
ISLE OF MAN	1	1	12	22	90	3
DRUMCHAPEL GLA. IV	1	0	13	19	93	2

DIVISION 4 SOUTH

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRIGHTON CITY	14	0	0	95	17	28
CARRARA POLSKA II	10	1	3	82	30	21
SOUTHAMPTON WEST	8	2	4	72	40	18
DHS LONDON PROGRESS V	7	2	5	55	57	16
DML WOOLWELL III	5	2	7	50	62	12
BATTS TEAM PENIEL III	3	1	10	41	71	7
BYNG HALL II	3	0	11	26	86	6
SEH BRITANNIA IPSWICH II	2	0	12	27	85	4

DIVISION 4 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CRUSADERS	12	0	2	78	34	24
FELLOWS CRANLEIGH	11	1	2	74	38	23
DHS LONDON PROGRESS VI	7	3	4	61	51	17
ASHFORD III	6	4	4	63	49	16
TTK GREENHOUSE III	6	2	6	62	50	14
YORK GARDENS III	4	3	7	49	63	11
UXBRIDGE II	1	2	11	30	82	4
WOODFIELD II	1	1	12	31	81	3



County Championships

Middlesex Cadets Ease To Cadets' Title

It is a great time to be a youngster in Middlesex as following on from the junior second team winning promotion to next season's Premier Division, the cadet team swept all before them to win the Premier Division which was held over one weekend at Draycott and Long Eaton TTC. In the cadets event it was Ping and Tin-Tin Ho who were the stars for Middlesex although their weekend did not get off to the best possible start as coach Nick McKoy was taken ill during Friday night in a Derby hotel and was unable to assist the team over the weekend, although I'm sure his recovery was helped by the on table performances of his charges. Middlesex were the dominant team over the weekend and showed their intention right from the start when in the first match they overwhelmed last season's runners-up Yorkshire, 9-1. Their six player squad of Ping Ho, Connor Neenan, Eden Fung, Damilola Thomas, Sushmita Limbu and Tin-Tin Ho won seven straight matches and took the title by three points from runners-up Warwickshire. From early on during the second day Middlesex had sewn up the title and the real interest and excitement was who would finish runners-up. Going into the final round of matches any one of three counties could have finished second, with Warwickshire, South Yorkshire and Sussex all in with a realistic chance, and it was in the very last set of the weekend that Matthew Outhwaite of Warwickshire scored a thrilling five game victory over South Yorkshire's Scott Hollowood, thus giving the Midlands a vital point and the crucial runners-up spot. Ping Ho was the star performer for Middlesex, with an

unbeaten record of 12 wins, and only a slightly better average than his sister Tin-Tin, who dropped only one win from her 12 starts.

Sadly we say goodbye to Lincolnshire and Cleveland who finished in the bottom two positions, and will next season start in the lower tier in an attempt to regain their premier status.

Devon Win Senior Premier Division

Devon became the 2008 County Championships Senior Premier Division Champions, but they may well have wished for a smoother ride in their final match. Middlesex had been well beaten 9-1 by Derbyshire and 8-2 by Sussex but they produced a far better performance here, leading 2-0 and 4-2. Devon had Craig Bryant to thank for keeping them in the game and there was more than the odd anxious moment before Craig secured his second victory by getting the better of Tom Cutler 6-11, 11-9, 6-11, 11-3, 11-8. Sally Smith also had to come from behind to beat Lindsay Armstrong and she had to retrieve two game points in the second end before she came through to win 7-11, 12-10, 11-8, 11-2. A draw had been achieved and thus Devon took the title by one point from Derbyshire. Congratulations are extended to their full squad of Craig Bryant, Chris Brown, James Whiteman, Jon May, Marketa Myskova, Sally Smith and Lisa Radford. Derbyshire finished as runners-up for the second year running after beating last year's champions Sussex 6-4. Emma Vickers and Shaun Marples were both undefeated with Shaun sealing the draw by getting the better of Nigel

Eckersley 3-0, and Emma clinching the victory by beating Rosemary Rainton 11-7, 11-8, 3-11, 14-12, after a very well contested fourth game. Sussex's newcomer Andrej Lasota again made his mark and this time he scored an excellent 12-10, 7-11, 11-3, 11-9 win over Sam Perry.

A gallant Leicestershire side scored their first point of the season by drawing 5-5 with Berkshire. Chris Rogers "signed off" from the Premier Division by beating both David Barr and Martin Adams 3-0 with one of the most dominant displays of the weekend.

Essex, one of the teams who began the weekend with hopes of winning the title, also finished well and they beat Gloucestershire 7-3. Clive Carthy and Sarra Wang both won twice with Clive's 11-8 in the fifth set victory against Dave Harvey the closest of the match. Fellow veteran Darren Griffin beat both of Essex's "young pretenders" - Vytas Rybakas and Ashley Stokes in five ends. Sarra Wang produced her best performance of the weekend, beating Choi Sze Toi 11-8, 11-8, 11-6.

Hampshire Become Junior Champions

As anticipated Hampshire became the Junior Premier Division Champions by beating second-placed Lincolnshire 7-3 to retain their 100% record. Congratulations are extended to their team of David McBeath, Garth Kinlocke, Ruihao Zhang, Hannah Hicks and Annabelle Morle. Hampshire raced into a 4-0 and 7-1 lead which illustrated their overall superiority with McBeath and Kinlocke both staying undefeated. However, Lincolnshire battled well and three of Hampshire's wins were by scores closer than 11-8 in the

final game. Emily Bates beat both Annabelle Morle and Hannah Hicks, and Paul Johnson made the scoreline more respectable by getting the better of Ruihao Zhang 3-0 in the final set.

A battling Sussex side fought hard to draw with Devonshire, and they won the three five-setters that took place. Both Stephen Denman and Stephen Eckford beat Freddie Cutler in five sets, and Yolanda King just saw off Vicky Smith 12-10, 6-11, 11-8, 16-14. Stephen Denman had the task of winning the match for Sussex, and he fought hard. However, it was Chris Smith who pulled away in the third end to eventually win comfortably 11-8, 12-10, 11-3.

The match between Yorkshire and Derbyshire also finished level. Lucy Davidson and Mark Naylor were both unbeaten for Derbyshire with Edward Fambely faring best of the Yorkshire players. Lucy Davidson's clash with Mary Fuller turned out to be the closest of the weekend with Lucy eventually nicking it 11-6, 11-4, 3-11, 9-11, 16-14.

It was a battle for pride when the relegated Essex and Hertfordshire teams faced each other, and Essex will have been pleased to have shaded the match 6-4. Emran Hussain and Luca Mariano both won both of their singles for Essex, and Emran just saw off Guy Ben-Aroya 6-11, 1-11, 11-9, 11-9, 12-10. An excellent fight back after a poor start. With Haylee Potts getting the better of Holly Stubbings 11-4, 11-2, 7-11, 8-11, 14-12 it all rested on the last game, and Mark Mulley completed his junior career in the best possible way, beating Pritesh Kalad 11-7, 11-5, 13-11 to secure Essex's first win of the season.

Visit www.etta.co.uk for the latest County Championships results and tables



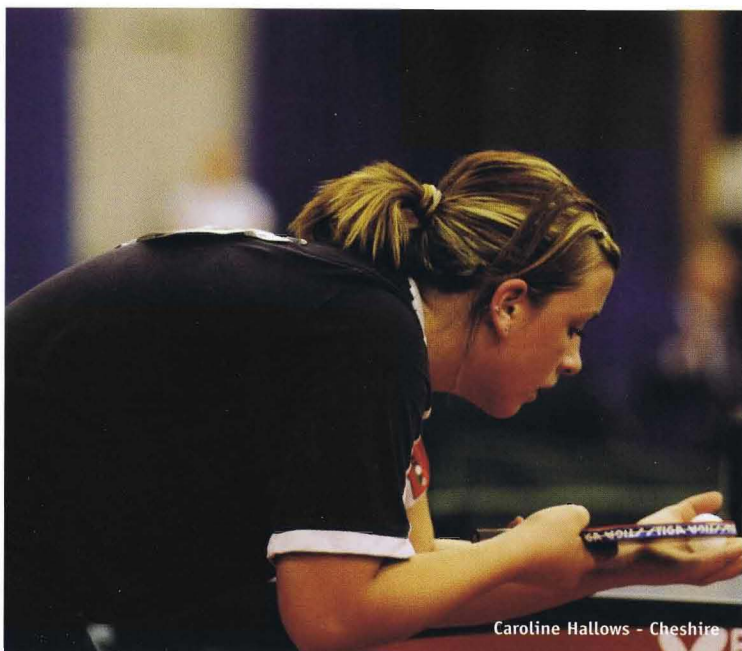
County Notes

Berkshire by Colin Dyke

Our veteran first team completed their programme with two victories to keep themselves out of the relegation zone. The day started with an 8-2 victory over a strong Surrey 2. Hari Gehlot had three straight wins over both Derek Holman and John Fannin, whilst Dave Barr comfortably beat Steve Davis, but had to hang on grimly to his 100% record when beating Holman 8 in the fifth. Bela Hegedus beat John Fannin, but succumbed 1-3 in a close match with Davis. Sharon Mitchell contributed a singles win over Jane Barella and a

mixed doubles success.

Dave Barr and Sharon Mitchell were unbeaten in the win over Essex 4 by 8-2, Barr thus remaining unbeaten in this division. Mitchell had a close call when scraping home 9 in the fifth against Elaine Sayer. The men's doubles was also a close affair when Barr and Hari Gehlot beat Ray Lam and Peter Ballard 7 in the fifth. The veteran second team have had a poor season with only three points from their six matches to date, although three of their four losses have been by the narrowest 4-6 margin. The loss to Herts 3 was



Caroline Hallows - Cheshire

Three Stockport youngsters enjoyed success in the Greater Manchester event. Nicole Dodd at U11 and sister Natalie at U13 had little trouble in repeating last year's Dodd double. In fact it was a "Doddle".

particularly close, as Berkshire had only two men. Dave Streak had a great match, with two deuce in the fifth wins over Dennis Robinson and Jim Green respectively, and then teamed up with Denise Rolfe for a final mixed doubles win. A point just escaped them when Geoff Civil lost 9 in the fifth to Dave Langham. Another 4-6 defeat by Bucks 1 saw Streak beat Michael Wilkins but succumb to an excellent Alan Cherry. With Bob Davis and Denise Rolfe losing to Nick Hansell and Sue Hayes respectively both at 9 in the fifth, another point went begging. Ramesh Gehlot beat Hansell, but also found Cherry too strong. Finally a point was secured in a draw with Sussex 4, although at 5-2 up it was looking better than that. The men each won one whilst Rolfe won the closest of women's singles at deuce in the fifth and paired with Gehlot to win a mixed doubles.

Cheshire by Alan Blears

Congratulations to the U13 girls of Bramhall High School, Stockport, on reaching the national finals, and on finishing valiant runners-up to the Peniel Academy. Commiserations to the U11 girls of Nevill Road Junior, Stockport, and to the U19 boys of Park Lane High, Macclesfield, who lost out in the regional finals by the narrowest of margins.

Individuals - Three Stockport youngsters enjoyed success in the Greater Manchester event. Nicole Dodd at U11 and sister Natalie at U13 had little trouble in repeating last year's Dodd double. In fact it was

a "Doddle". More surprising was the superb win by Jordan Potts in a large and strong U16 boys field, Jordan beating Tameside's national squad player, Josh Boulton, 3-1 in the final. There was a great effort too from another Stockport player, Adam Topper, who reached the U16 semi-final. There were no such surprises in the Cheshire Individuals. The winners were:

Boys U19 - Jacob Shaw
Girls U19 - Caroline Hallows (unopposed)
Boys U16 - Chris Pattison
Girls U16 - Sarah Bardsley
Boys U13 - Matthew McCormick
Girls U13 - Janay Gibson
Boys U11 - Daniel Weardon
Girls U11 - No entries (they are all in Stockport or the Wirral!)

National Junior League (N.W.) - In a thrilling final day, Wirral 'A' overtook rival Preston 'A' to win the Premier Division title, and as N.W. champions take the Hillcourt Trophy - when it can be found! Someone must have it. Congratulations to Chris Hatton, Stephen Nicholls, Chris Weir and Steven Broad.

In Div. 1 South, the most significant event of Day 3 was 16-year-old Nabil Hudda taking over as match day organiser from the unavailable Dave Cochrane. The day passed without a hitch, Nabil managing to play six sets as well!

On Day 4, Hillcourt 'A' continued their relentless march, dropping just three sets all season - two of them to the 'B' team's Tom Roberts and Matthew Pearsall! The other was to Macclesfield's David Bruce. Jordan Potts finished with 100%, Dan Brown, Marcus McNulty and Nabil Hudda each losing one.

A close battle for runners-up spot saw Tameside 'A' scrape home from the two Macclesfield teams.

National Cadet League (N.W.) results after Day 3:

Div 1: - New Ferry/Gaultby Road. 'A' lead, with Stephen Nicholls winning 31 from 33.

Div 2: - Warrington 'A' lead Halton 'B', with John Ryan-Warnick 27 from 28.

Div3: - Blackpool lead Halton 'D', with Halton's wheelchair athlete Jack Hunter-Spivey taking 25 from 32. Well done, sir!

Cleveland by Alan Ransome

Cleveland Closed - Ormesby's Michael Marsden won the Open Singles in the Cleveland Closed Table Tennis Championships which took place at Ormesby on Sunday 23rd March, beating his team mate Andrew Wilson in straight games in the final. Marsden was only troubled in the semi-final where he lost the first game to Welsh international Mark Simon, before winning the next 3 games at 11-8, 11-8 and 11-6. Andrew Wilson upset the seeding in the semi-final by defeating Hartlepool's Darren McVitie by 3 games to 1 after Wilson had been taken to 5

games in the quarter-final by Karina Lefevre. The other close game in the quarter-final was Mark Simon's victory over Edward Fambely by 3 games to 1.

The Junior Singles was won by Fambely who defeated Adam Smith by 3-0 in the semi-final and Karina Lefevre by 3-1 in the final. The Cadet Singles was won by Adam Smith who upset the seeding by beating Karina Lefevre in straight games in the final.

The Handicap Singles that received the biggest entry was won by Teesside University's Joe Childs, who defeated Ormesby's Martin Rutter 2 games to 1 in the final. Childs had beaten Michael Marsden in straight games in the semi-final where Rutter defeated Adam Smith, also in straight games.

The Banded event was won by Ormesby's Gary Whyman who beat Paul Smith by 3 games to 1 in the final.

Whyman beat Jim Scott 3-1 in the semi-final whilst Smith beat Anthony Barbier by the same score.

Results - Open Singles

Michael Marsden (Ormesby) bt. Andrew Wilson (Ormesby) 11-4, 11-9, 11-6

Junior Singles Edward Fambely (Ormesby) bt. Karina Lefevre (Ormesby) 11-6, 11-8, 5-11, 11-5

Cadet Singles Adam Smith (Ormesby) bt. Karina Lefevre (Ormesby) 11-9, 11-3, 12-10

Banded Singles Gary Whyman (Ormesby) bt. Paul Smith (Ormesby) 11-9, 8-11, 13-11, 12-10

Handicap Singles Joe Childs (Teesside University) bt. Martin Rutter (Ormesby) 21-17, 22-20, 21-10

Mini Cadet Singles Paul Smith (Ormesby) bt. Ashley Scott (Ormesby) 11-8, 11-9, 11-8

Veterans' Singles Darren McVitie (Hartlepool) bt. Mark Simon (Ormesby) 11-9, 5-11, 11-6, 11-4

Disability Day - With tutoring from Judy Rogers, Ormesby hosted a Disability Awareness Seminar for the Northern region on Saturday 15th March.

With an attendance of 24 from all parts of the region, the day was successful. In particular, groups from Alnwick in Northumberland and Sunderland participated.

The Disability programme at the Ormesby Club, led by Chris Rayner, is proving popular with two sessions every week on a Wednesday morning and evening.

Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

This month's notes come to you from sunny South Australia! Australia does have some Derbyshire news. As it happens there is another Derbyshire connection as S.A./Australian no. 1, William Henzel, has been at Littleover Club at various times recently. He is hot favourite to win the Olympic Qualifying Tournament which is being held in Adelaide, at the Houghton TTC, although it has actually been here for fifty years or so before my visit! Yes, moving on he is still well ahead and William had a pleasant extra on the penultimate day of the tournament, as the whole hall sang Happy Birthday, and as he shared his cake he chatted about his visits to

the Derby area and Derby players including Emily O'Sullivan and Emma Vickers. Last thing he said on the final day was to give his regards to Frank, Marilyn and Emily and everybody else he met and visited in Derby.

Talking of which, back in England, Emma and the other Derbyshire seniors (Shaun Marples, Adam Frost, Sam Perry with Jane Vickers and Allan Fulwood) did a good job in action for the final Premier weekend (featuring both juniors and seniors). The seniors had an excellent finish with a draw against Essex, then a 9-1 v Middlesex and Leicestershire and finally 6-4 against Sussex. This brought them the runner-up spot for the second year running, although that glow of success was tinged with a twinge of `so near`, as they were only one point off winning! Owing to previously mentioned England call-ups, Lucy Davidson and Mark Naylor were the only remaining juniors from the original nominated team. The big question adding to a gripping weekend was could we get the points needed to stay up with just four from the first weekend? It is easily possible to go down on five, but as we fought for points, surprising events unfolded such that after the Sunday morning (and Yorkshire helping by beating our main rivals) the extremely rare circumstance occurred that meant we would stay up on four, as the two bottom teams only scored three between them. So in particular contrast to last year's match with keen neighbours/rivals Yorkshire (when both teams needed the points for a good finish) a very friendly match went to a good draw. Finishing the weekend with a fifth point thanks to an excellent maximum from Mark and good wins from Lucy over Mary Fuller, as well as on form Rebecca George. Earlier Lucy excelled with an excellent double against Hampshire as it included being (according to a keen statistician) the first player to beat Hannah Hicks in

two seasons of county! All this was keenly supported by three players on their debut - Abbie Millwain with a number of very good sets and wins and very good work from no.2 and 3 boys, Ben Goodwin (who also scored a win against champions Hampshire) and Tom Booth.

Devon by John Smith

Many congratulations to the seniors on winning the County Championship for the third time in five years. Craig Bryant and Marketa Myskova led the way - both unbeaten throughout the two weekends, with assistance from Chris Brown, James Whiteman, Jon May, Lisa Radford and Sally Smith. The juniors, consisting of five players who all started out at Woolwell TTC and live within a one mile radius of each other, also comfortably retained their Premier Division status. Richard Marshall defeated the top two from champions Hampshire, on his way to an unbeaten weekend, and Chris Smith lost just three matches over the two weekends.

A bumper entry of 47 players competed in the county closed championships at Okehampton. Chris Smith stormed through to the men's final, defeating third seed Jon May, then top seed Chris Brown in straight games in the semi-final. However, his coach, Paul Whiting, had too much experience in a four game final. Whiting did the double by taking the veterans' title from Mike Short.

Brown gained some consolation by picking up two titles - the men's doubles with Kevin Buddell against Short/May, and the mixed with 12 year-old Vicky Smith. Vicky's sister Sally and Harry Cutler were their final victims, but this was Sally's only defeat of the day. She took the ladies' singles without dropping a game, defeating Liz May in the final, and teamed up with Elaine Short to beat May and Zuza Zimny in the ladies doubles.

Devonport High School for Girls in Plymouth pulled off an impressive

treble in the Devon Schools Individual Championships, with Amy Whiting, Laura McLeod and Vicky Smith taking the under 19, 16 and 13 titles respectively. Jodie Kirk from Yealmpstone Farm in Plymouth won the girls U11 event.

Chris Smith (St Boniface's College, Plymouth) took the boys U19 title with Mike Griffiths (Ivybridge), Ben Snow (St Wilfrid's, Exeter) and Ollie Buddell (King's, Plymouth) taking under 16, 13 and 11 respectively.

Essex by Steve Kerns

Brian Rowlen Honoured

Congratulations are extended to Clacton & DTTL Chairman and International Umpire Brian Rowlen who was the proud recipient of a Special Award from the Tendring District Council for his "outstanding Contribution to Sport in Tendring". Rowlen has been a member of the Clacton Committee since 1956, as well as the League Chairman since 1984. With his guidance and hard work the League continues to flourish and currently has 160 players on its books.

M&G Investments Chelmsford Closed British League Premier Division star Neil Charles won his first M&G Investments Chelmsford Men's Singles' title, played in front of a packed audience at the Old Chelmsfordians Club, beating Peter Hayden in the semi-final 11-7, 16-14, 6-11, 11-9 and Rik James 11-8, 11-7, 12-10 in the final. James had to work hard in his semi-final, and he eventually overcame Kevin Read 11-7, 15-13, 9-11, 11-5. The still improving Read had provided the shock of the tournament beating top seed Dave Cole 11-7, 11-5, 9-11, 5-11, 11-8 in the quarter-final.

Nikki Kennard, in her first season in the Chelmsford League, was a very impressive Ladies Singles' winner, beating 15 times champion Julie Vansertima 11-7, 11-5, 11-4.

Other results included: Men's Doubles: Neil Charles/Paul Davison bt. Rik James/Dave Cole 3-0.

Hicks, meanwhile, was the winner of the women's band one event at the Blackpool GP, while Ware reached the final of the men's competition. Ware also enjoyed an excellent performance in the recent national championships which included a thrilling win against Andrew Rushton to reach the last eight of the men's singles.

Veterans' Singles: Rik James bt. Dave Cole 3-0. U21 Singles: Bradley Hudgell bt. Greg Green 3-0. Mixed Doubles: Nikki Kennard/Paul Davison bt. Melanie Bonnett/Steve Kerns 3-1.

Ladies' Doubles: Julie Vansertima/Alison Gurner bt. Nikki Kennard/Linda Murray 3-0. Over 60s' Singles: Peter Ballard bt. Ian Whiteside 3-2. Junior Boys' Singles: Bradley Hudgell bt. Greg Green 3-2. Under 16 Singles: Brandon Crouchman bt. Matt Davis 3-0. Under 14 Singles: Brandon Crouchman bt. Scott Dowsett 3-0. Junior Doubles: Greg Green/Sam Pitt bt. Bradley Hudgell/William O'Donnell 3-1.

Gloucestershire by Lesley Dewick

Premier Division - In the last round of the County Table Tennis Championships, Gloucestershire earned the right to stay in the Premiership.

In their first year in the Premiership the players knew they were going to have to work very hard in order to maintain their status. Gloucestershire knew that they had to beat both Leicestershire and Berkshire to avoid relegation and raised their games to achieve this goal. A squad of Gloucestershire players travelled to Hall Green in Birmingham to compete. The squad consisting of Dave Harvey, Darren Griffin, Brian McRandle, Suzy Robinson, Choi Sze Toi and Natasha Hurd competed over two days against Berkshire, Devonshire, Leicestershire and Essex with mixed results. Natasha Hurd was the player of the weekend winning all her games in the two matches that she played in.

Gloucestershire 2 v Devonshire 8

In this match the team knew they were going to have their work cut out as Devonshire were one of the teams competing for the Premiership title. Darren Griffin must have thought he was in with a very good chance of beating highly ranked Craig Bryant when he was leading in the fifth and final set. Unfortunately this was not meant to be when Bryant went into overdrive and stole the game away, winning 11-8.

Griffin did manage a win in this county encounter beating Jon May over four sets. Choi Sze Toi also won a game for Gloucestershire beating Sally Smith in five sets.

Essex 7 v Gloucestershire 3 Essex, also one of the teams who began the weekend with hopes of winning the title finished well, beating Gloucestershire 7-3.

Clive Carthy and Sarra Wang both won twice with Clive's 11-8 in the fifth set victory against Dave Harvey the closest of the match. Fellow veteran Darren Griffin beat both of Essex's "young pretenders" - Vytas Rybakas and Ashley Stokes in five ends. Sarra Wang produced her best performance of the weekend beating Choi Sze Toi 11-8, 11-8, 11-6.

Leicestershire 3 v Gloucestershire 7 - Dave Harvey won both of his encounters with fair ease. He beat Keith Fellows over four sets and then took down Chris Rogers over three sets to earn his county points. Darren Griffin and Brian McRandle also won points for the county by both beating Amrish Rana. Griffin crushed Rana in three sets whilst McRandle battled it out over five to eventually emerge triumphant. Natasha Hurd won her two games with ease with three straight sets against Joanne Kennedy and Karen Smith. Choi Sze Toi also took down Joanne Kennedy in three sets.

Berkshire 4 v Gloucestershire 6

Choi Sze Toi was first to taste victory with a great win in four sets over Melanie Farquhar (ranked top 20 senior ladies in England). She also went on to beat Susan Johnson over five sets. Natasha Hurd also beat with ease Farquhar over four sets and Johnson over three sets. Darren Griffin won maximum points for Gloucestershire with a win in three sets over Martin Adams and in four sets over Richard Andrews.

Gloucestershire finish in sixth place in the Premiership table (full tables can be found at www.etta.co.uk).

Hampshire by Jeremy Wilson

Hampshire's wonderful general secretary, Harold Albery, is to bow out on a high this year after seeing the county's junior team win the national Premier Division title for a second straight year.

Generations of table tennis players in Hampshire have Albery to thank for organising their tournaments and events for more than three decades but, with his 89th birthday fast approaching, he has been forced to step down due to ill-health.

Albery has carried out the role of Hampshire secretary for the past 35 years ever since 1973.

"It's been thoroughly enjoyable but it's time for me to step down," he said. "The highlight for me in all of that time has been the success of the current junior team. We are not the biggest county but over the last few years they have achieved something I previously never thought Hampshire could obtain.

"To win the Premier Division for the first time ever last year was magnificent, but then to follow up this year to take the title for the second time was out of this world." Albery will, of course, be impossible to replace. During

his time as general secretary, he has performed countless additional tasks and responsibilities and, for the time being, it has been decided to share out his duties among members of the management council.

The junior team's success was sealed even without the availability of number one player Mathew Ware. However, the team of David McBeath, Garth Kinlocke, Ruihao Zhang, Hannah Hicks and Annabelle Morle produced an outstanding team performance to beat Sussex 8-2, Yorkshire 10-0 and then Hertfordshire 7-3.

The majority of the team still have two years remaining as juniors, meaning they have the chance to win a hat-trick of titles.

Before last year, Hampshire had never previously played in the Premier Division and their success is a tribute to a number of coaches in the county, including Charlie Childs, Ken Macleod, Dave Wiles, as well as Gary and Anne Longland.

Hicks, meanwhile, was the winner of the women's band one event at the Blackpool Grand Prix, while Ware reached the final of the men's competition. Ware also enjoyed an excellent performance in the recent national championships which included a thrilling win against Andrew Rushton to reach the last eight of the men's singles.

Bournemouth have topped the junior inter-town league, beating Winchester and Gosport & Fareham, while the Bournemouth B team defeated runner-up Andover to win Division Two.

Top averages were Matt Bishop, Matthew Haynes, Tressa Armitage in Division One and Nathan Bingham, Chris Dakin, Michael Robertson, Saul Harris, Shannon Ross and Loyi Leung in Division Two.

Hertfordshire by Ann Fereday

The County Closed Tournament has been held with an increase in the entries from both men and ladies. The results were as follows:

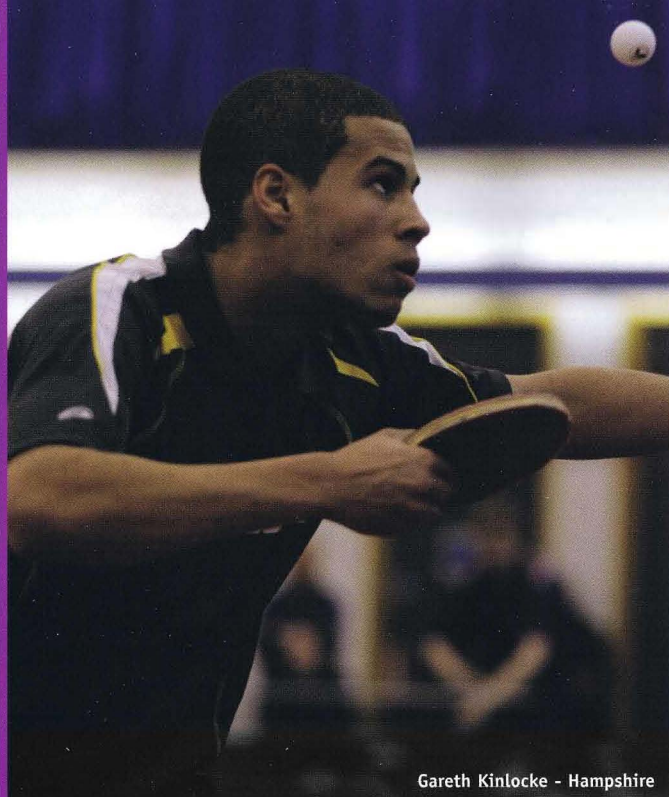
...However, the team of David McBeath, Garth Kinlocke, Ruihao Zhang, Hannah Hicks and Annabelle Morle produced an outstanding team performance to beat Sussex 8-2, Yorkshire 10-0 and then Hertfordshire 7-3.

Men's Singles: Richard Murrell bt. Ray Powell 11-8, 8-11, 11-7, 11-4
Ladies' Singles: Janice Laing bt. Sue Felstead 11-7, 11-7, 11-4
Men's Veteran Singles: Ken Stonebridge bt. Mark McCarthy 9-11, 11-2, 11-9, 11-7
Ladies Veteran Singles: Janice Laing bt. Sue Felstead 11-4, 11-7, 4-11, 8-11, 11-2
Senior Veteran Singles: Dennis Robinson bt. Ken Stonebridge 11-4, 9-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-6
Men's Doubles: Dennis Robinson/Mark McCarthy bt. Ray Powell/C Armstrong 11-6, 11-3, 10-12, 8-11, 11-9
Ladies' Doubles: Sue Felstead/Janice Laing bt. Sally Bax/Jackie Channel 12-10, 11-4, 11-6
Mixed Doubles: Sue Felstead/Dennis Robinson bt. Sally Bax/Geoff Bax 11-8, 11-4, 5-11, 11-5
Veteran Doubles: Dennis Robinson/Mark McCarthy bt. T Brown/B Shi 11-8, 11-7, 15-13
The tournament was run by John Barnes assisted by David Edwards. The Over 60s team has had its second and final weekend outing. On the Saturday they drew 5-5 with Middlesex. On the Sunday they beat Kent 2 by 10-0 then drew 5-5 with Sussex. Overall this team has done much better than in previous years due to some better men turning over 60.
On the Saturday the team was Stuart Seaholme, Dennis Robinson, Larry Gregory and Jackie Channel. On Sunday it was Stuart, Dennis, Larry plus Geoff and Sally Bax. Taking both weekends together, the male star would be Stuart Seaholme who won 12 of his 16 singles. Another Hertfordshire League has had its closed competition. Here are

the results of the Cheshunt Championships:
Men's Singles: John Barnes bt. Terry Wilson
Veteran Singles: John Barnes bt. Terry Wilson
Division 2/3 Singles: Semi Idowo bt. Brad Tuttle
Open Doubles: Ron Bird/Malcolm Norris bt. Terry Wilson/Stan Smith
There were some ladies in the last event.

Northamptonshire by Dennis Millman

The EBS Mobile Phones Ltd Super League ended on a high note with some tremendous encounters determining the final outcome. Unity's 8-1 success against Farthingstone was closer than the score suggests, even though the Towcester team was not at full strength. Andy Trott's hat-trick kept his 100% record intact, but Steve Silk, taken the distance by Matt Carter, was a shade unfortunate as his three wins gave him the highest individual tally with 19 out of 21. Dave Welsman won twice in close contests before finally succumbing 11-8 in the fifth to Gary Webb, by this time the title had been secured and Unity had gone one step better than last year's second place. Higham Band and Kettering Town met in a battle to settle the minor placings with the latter requiring a 6-3 victory to finish as runners-up ahead of their opponents. Richard Elliott gave Higham an initial lead when he beat Ken Philipson, but John Fuller soon levelled matters against Mark Nannery. Chris Doran made no mistake against John Alsop and with Philipson beating Nannery in four



Gareth Kinlocke - Hampshire

ends, and Doran getting the better of Elliott after coming from behind, Town led 4-1.

Alsop and Fuller fought out a protracted encounter, with Alsop coming from two games to one down to take the decider 11-9. Doran then returned to complete his hat-trick, after surviving a 15-13 second end against Nannery. Town needed one more win to deprive Higham of second place and it didn't appear to be coming in the eighth rubber when Philipson, who had lost to Bedford's Alsop in a recent County Championship match, trailed by two games and by five points in the third. The Town player gradually reduced the deficit and after taking the third end 13-11 made light of the following two games, to give Town the three points they needed.

At the lower end of the table, hat-tricks from Gerald Henson and Paul Wood gave Park Avenue an 8-2 verdict over Cold Higham, while Westfield, winners in 2006, kept the Wellingborough flag flying as they proved too good for Headlands.

Dan Sabhi Appanna, from Mauritius, was the top player on view while juniors Dan Smalley and Jack Coleman both won twice, despite failing to get the better of Mariusz Ryłow.

Northumberland by Pauline Long

Jamie Dent beat Ben Dawson in the final of the junior singles to become County Junior Champion in the tournament at Cramlington Sporting Club.

Brothers Ryan and Dean Richardson were cadet and under 11 singles winners respectively, whilst Ellis Cooper took the under 13 title.

Andrew Wilkinson in retaining his open singles title at the senior closed tournament, also at Cramlington, became the first holder of the Alan Morpeth Memorial Cup, which was presented to him by two of Alan's daughters, Sheila and Alison. His final opponent was Dave Godbold, who had earlier put out Eddie Smith in both this event and the Veterans' Singles.

Lynne Herrington regained her women's singles title, while this season the doubles was played with every pair consisting of a highly-ranked player partnered by a lower-ranked player. This was eventually won by Barry Richardson (father of Ryan and Dean) and Ken Brown. It was pleasing to see so many junior boys taking part in the senior events and making their presence felt by finishing as either winners or runners-up in the graded and handicap events.

Many thanks to Aubrey Drapkin and his band of helpers for the considerable efforts made in organising both tournaments.

Eddie Smith was runner-up in two over 40 events at the Northern Masters tournament in Blackpool, losing in a five game final to Keith Williams (Lancs) in the singles, and in partnership with Steve Hall (Somerset) was also defeated at the same stage of the doubles by Brian Johns (Cheshire) and Trevor Kerry (Notts).

South Yorkshire by Rob Loxley

At the recently held National Championships at Ponds Forge, Rotherham's Ben Barlow had the "best tournament of his career" as he ploughed through the quality field only to be halted in the semi-final by Andrew Baggaley, the eventual champion. Following Ben Barlow's exploits, the Disabled Men's Standing Singles attracted further local interest as Kim Daybell (Crookes) overcame Farrell Anthony (Stocksbridge) 11-6, 11-7 16-14. On the Saturday of the Nationals' weekend at the Vulcan Table Tennis Club in Attercliffe, Don Valley, a "Sheffield Select" team of Shaun Bibby, Bill Grant and Stephen Horsfield beat the "Past Masters" (Kev Beadsley, Steve Mills and Trev Williams) by 5 sets to 4, in a friendly but competitive "fun match" designed by double Sheffield champion Trevor Williams. As old rivalries were renewed and banter flowed, veterans' champ Bill Grant opened the proceedings at noon with a 3-1 win over Trevor. Shaun Bibby increased "Select's" lead with a stunning win over Steve Mills that went the distance. "Cometh the hour cometh the man" - the third set was arguably the surprise of the day as Queensbury's Kev Beadsley unwound his serves and devilish left handed loop, to carve out a 3-2 victory over reigning Sheffield champ - Stephen Horsfield. Kev went on to beat both Bill and Shaun 3-1 for his hat-trick. However, Stephen bounced back to take out Trev and "Milisy" (both 3-1) and Shaun and Bill both accounted for the former Wadsley Bridge star who was clearly out of match practice, but had "enjoyed the return to Sheffield and meeting old adversaries"! The match completed, it was off to Ponds Forge to watch the second day of the Nationals and renew further acquaintances. Well done Trevor, it was an inspirational idea and FUN, which we don't seem to get enough of these days! Results: Bill Grant bt. Trev Williams 11-8, 6-11, 11-6, 11-6.



Ben Barlow v Andrew Baggaley

Shaun Bibby bt. Steve Mills 11-8, 11-4, 11-13, 7-11, 11-3. Stephen Horsfield lost to Kev Beadsley 7-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-9, 4-11. Bibby lost to Williams 3-11, 11-8, 7-11, 11-5, 9-11. Grant lost to Beadsley 9-11, 3-11, 11-4, 11-13. Horsfield bt. Mills 11-7, 7-11, 11-9, 11-2. Bibby lost to Beadsley 11-6, 9-11, 4-11, 9-11. Horsfield bt. Williams 11-5, 11-4, 7-11, 11-5. Grant bt. Mills 11-6, 11-7, 17-15. At the British Universities championships, Lisa Radford (21) and Julia Ludwig (20) representing Sheffield University found Tong Fei Ming and Pan Li Chun (London Metropolitan University) too strong as they went down 3-0 in the final of the women's team championships held at the English Institute for Sport. Their hard-hitting opponents from Chinese Taipei outgunned Lisa from Devon and German born Julia, both students at the University. The Sheffield pair, who play regularly for Wadsley Bridge Table Tennis Club in the Sheffield League, qualified for the final by knocking out nine other teams including Loughborough at the semi-final stage.

Surrey by Chris Andrews

Fusion 1 with Surrey's Simon Philipz were champions of the British League Division 1 South and OLOP 1 with Surrey's Chris Bush were champions of Division 1 South &

Midlands. York Gardens II of Chris Martin, Marcia Ma, Wayne Matthews, Antony Bostic and Trevor Campbell won the British League Division 3 South title by one point. Crusaders of the British League Division 4 South & Midlands also won their title by one point with Ben Larcombe being one of their star players. The Guildford League table tennis tournament attracted over 70 competitors and proved to be both a celebration of the old and the new. The main event, the Open Singles, was won by the veteran Ramesh Bhalla. Eleven of the top twelve players in the league were competing, but it was the unseeded Bhalla who rolled back the years in fighting his way to the final. Bhalla had a tough draw beating the first, fourth and fifth seeds (Marc Burman, Richard Tanner and Graham Watts) on his way to the final. In the final he was matched against the second seed, Matt Pernet. Having gone two sets to one down, Bhalla dug deep to take the last two sets to win the final in the deciding set. A new face burst onto the scene in the shape of Godalming's Feifei Pei, who achieved a quadruple crown of the Ladies' Singles, Ladies Doubles' (with partner Lucy Lou), Junior Girls and Junior Doubles (with partner Conor Grant). The most impressive of these was the

Ladies' Singles where in the final Feifei held her nerve to overcome the many time champion Maria Taylor Woodward. Woodward gained some revenge with her partner John Robinson, by defeating Feifei and Matt Pernet in the final of the Mixed Doubles.

The Open Doubles was fought by four of the leagues best players, the Burymead pairing of Matt Pernet and Richard Tanner versus the Challoner pair of Adam Brewer and Nic Ravalec. Like so many matches over the weekend this produced an enthralling five setter with Brewer and Ravalec just losing out.

A keenly contested veterans event was won by Richard Tanner who defeated Merrow's John Callcut in the final. Most bizarrely, Ramesh Bhalla, the Open Singles champion, was defeated in the last 16 of this event by the battling Richard Seymour.

Barrie Gilbert was successful in the Premier Singles, Masters Singles and Premier Doubles (with his partner Gary Bonner).

Congratulations go to Ron Stracey, Carsten Horne, Jason Minoo and Gary Adkins for winning the first, second, third and fourth division titles respectively. The junior boys' event was won by the premier league player Ross Saxby with Scott Gotham impressing with victories in both the under 15 and under 13 categories.

A complete list of all the winners and runners-up can be seen on the Guildford TT League website at www.gttl.co.uk. The Guildford section of this column was condensed from the report in the Surrey Advertiser.



ANDREW BAGGALEY

Birth date: 26/02/1983

Place of birth: Northampton

Residence: Milton Keynes

When and how did you start to play table tennis?

"I started at five with my mum in the back garden, my brother has coached me ever since, my first club was Greenleys Table Tennis Club"

Average training time per week: 20 hours

Personality on the court: Aggressive and focused

England senior debut: French Open in 1997 (age 14)

Current club: Spanish club Borchegé

Most wants to beat: "No one I really want to beat, I just want to reach my full potential"

Table tennis ambitions: "Win as many titles as possible"

Results:

- 2008 English Senior National Champion
- 2006 Commonwealth Games Men's Doubles Silver
- 2003 Reached England senior number 1
- 2002 Commonwealth Games Men's Doubles Gold
- 2002 Commonwealth Games Men's Team Gold
- 2002 English Senior National Champion

Player Rankings 2007/2008

TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	PERRY, Alex (DV.)
4.	RUSHTON, Andrew (LA.)
5.	HERBERT, Gareth (BK.)
6.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
7.	REED, Daniel (CV.)
8.	YARNALL, Tim (NP.)
9.	JIANG, Chang Hong (ML.)
10.	MEADS, David (DU.)
11.	YOUNG, Terry (BK.)
12.	BRYANT, Craig (DV.)
13.	TRUMPAUSKAS, Lawrence (E.)
14.	MARSDEN, Michael (DU.)
15.	HOLLAND, John J (Dy)
16.	BARHAM, Dale (CA.)
17.	DOLDER, Kevin (LA.)
18.	NOAH, Hubert (E.)
19.	SMITH, Mark Richard (Y.)
20.	KENNY, Mathew (Y.)
21.	MA, Justin (YS.)
22.	NICHOLLS, Damien (SP.)
23.	ESSOMBA, Marco (SY.)
24.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
25.	MARPLES, Shaun (DY.)

TOP 5 JUNIOR BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
4.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
5.	WARE, Mathew (DO.)

TOP 5 CADET BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
2.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
3.	LOWE, Daniel (DY.)
4.	CULLEN, Sean (DY.)
5.	BARELLA, Graeme (DU.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	ZILESnick, Zac (MI.)
2.	WALKER, Sam (NG.)
3.	ADEBANJO, Azarel (E.)
4.	PATEL, Jared (E.)
5.	NEENAN, Connor (MI.)

TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	WURAOLA, Abdul (SY.)
2.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
3.	WILLIAMS, Keith (LA.)
4.	KENNEDY, Joe (K) (E.)
5.	ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SX.)

TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SIBLEY, Kelly (WA.)
2.	PARKER, Joanna (SY.)
3.	LOWER, Helen (ST.)
4.	BAWDEN, Natalie (E.)
5.	REYNOLDS, Lindsey (LA.)
6.	EMBLING, Abigail (E.)
7.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
8.	ROBERTS, Joanna (Y.)
9.	SHEPHERD, Karen (CH.)
10.	RAINTON, Rosemary (SX.)
11.	WANG, Sarra (E.)
12.	KEAST, Lesley (LI.)
13.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
14.	JAMIESON, Rachel (E.)
15.	LEFEVRE, Karina (CV.)
16.	VICKERS, Jane (DY.)
17.	HALLOWS, Caroline (CH.)
18.	CLEMENTS, Sanya (DO.)
19.	UZAL, Shelley (E.)
20.	WILSON, Naomi (SO.)
21.	BALDI, Andrea (Ys) (Y.)
22.	RADFORD, Lisa (DV.)
23.	DONNELLY, Stephanie (CV.)
24.	HICKS, Hannah (HA.)
25.	FARQUHAR, Melanie (BK.)

TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
2.	SPRINGTHORPE, Lauren (LI.)
3.	JAMIESON, Rachel (E.)
4.	HALLOWS, Caroline (CH.)
5.	BATES, Emily (LI.)

TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
2.	LEFEVRE, Karina (CV.)
3.	SLATER, Natalie (ST.)
4.	DAVIDSON, Lucy (DY.)
5.	SUNDARARAJAN, Ayonija (BK.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
2.	HO, Tin-Tin (MI.)
3.	DAWSON, Jessica (CV.)
4.	SMITH, Victoria (DV.)
5.	MARCH, Bethany (E.)

TOP 5 VETERAN WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
2.	HUANG, Shu (K.)
3.	HARPER, Sandra (BD.)
4.	COLLIER, Sue (CH.)
5.	MUDGE, Kim (K) (SY.)



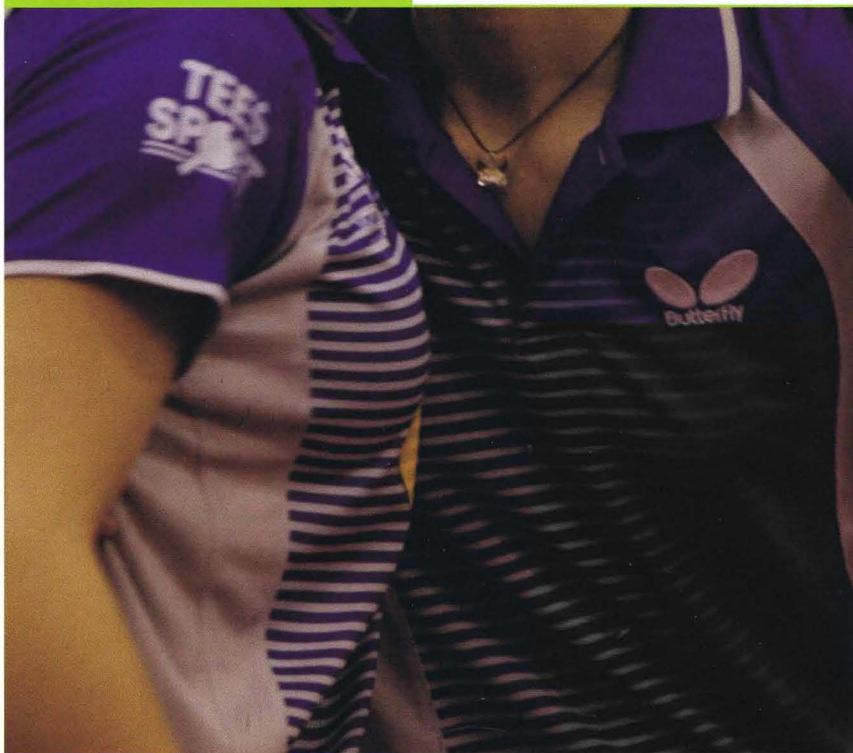
For the full list of player rankings go to our website

www.etta.co.uk



Dates for your diary

Table Tennis events for May 2008



2007/2008 COPY DATES

May Issue

Copy Deadline: 07 Apr
Advertising Deadline: 31 Mar

June Issue

Copy Deadline: 05 May
Advertising Deadline: 28 Apr

Sunday 11th

Senior: Wolverhampton Open BGP
Veteran: VETTS National Championships
Other: BTTAD Nationals, Sheffield Spanish Youth Open

Saturday 17th

Cadet: Masters, Wellingborough
Cadet/Junior: Cornwall 1 Star
Senior: BL Premier Play-Offs

Sunday 18th

Cadet: Masters, Wellingborough
Senior: BL Premier Play-Offs

Saturday 24th

Cadet: Chandlers Farm Equip 1 Star
Junior: Chandlers Farm Equip 1 Star
Hollington 1 Star; Masters, Cippenham

Saturday 31st

U11/12/13/14 National Championships, Norwich

Other:

Monday 26th-31st

Veteran: World Veterans,
Rio de Janeiro

Thursday 29th-1st

Polish Youth Open

Saturday 3rd - 4th

Cadet/Junior: National Championships

Saturday 10th

Cadet/Junior: Northfield 2 Star
Senior: Wolverhampton Open BGP
Veteran: VETTS National Championships
Other: BTTAD Nationals, Sheffield Spanish Youth Open

The Association would like to thank all of the following for their support during the season 2007/08



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