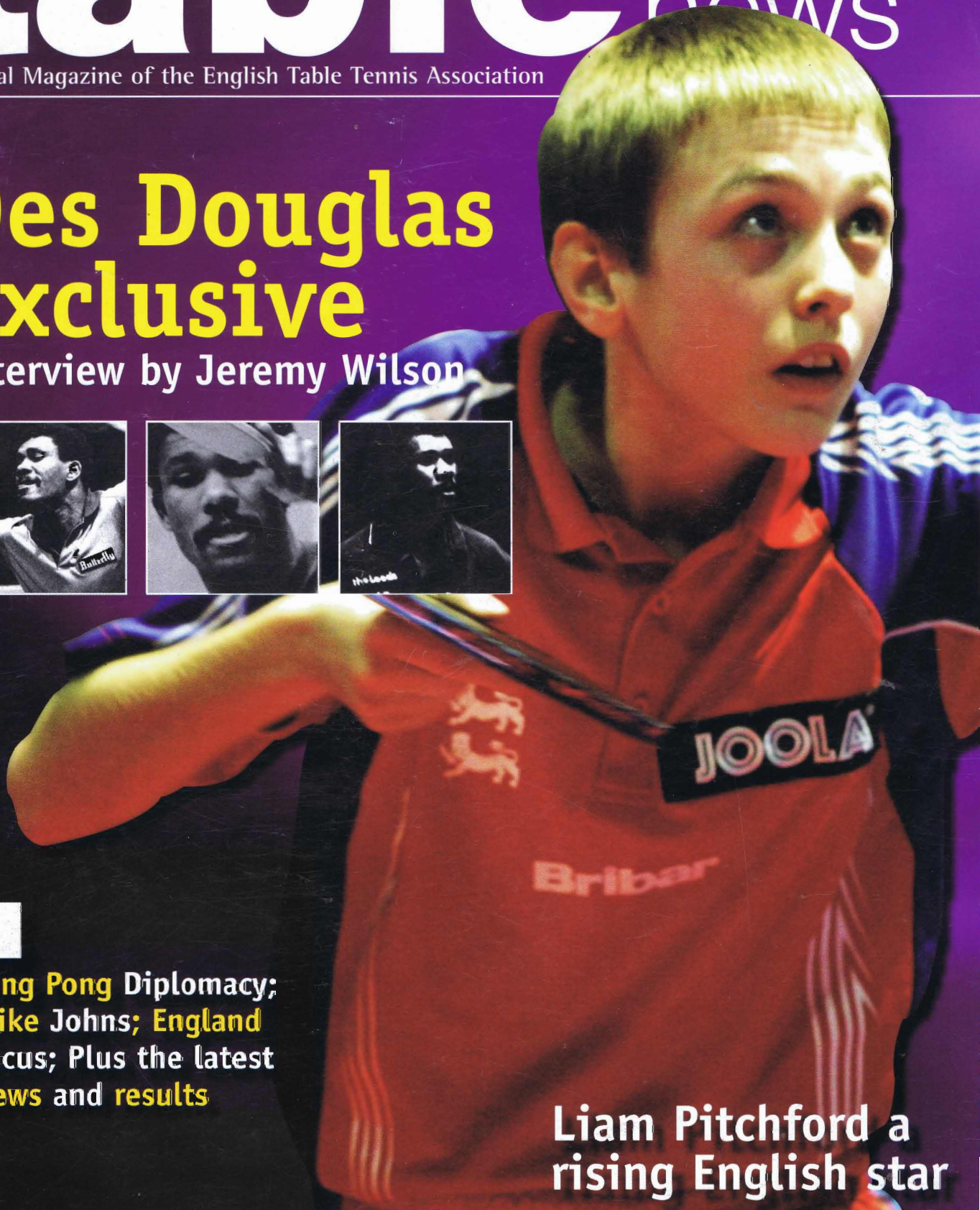
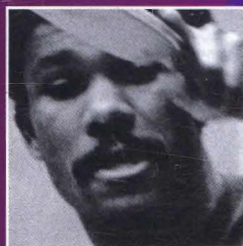
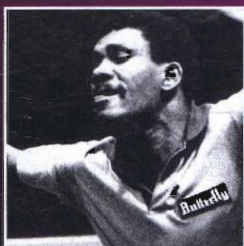


table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

Des Douglas Exclusive

Interview by Jeremy Wilson



Ping Pong Diplomacy; Mike Johns; England focus; Plus the latest news and results

Liam Pitchford a rising English star

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JOB VACANCIES

East Region Table Tennis Development Officer

The English Table Tennis Association is recruiting a suitable individual to help drive forward the development of Table Tennis.

- Can you - work with a wide range of table tennis volunteers as well as other sports professionals (schools and community) to develop Table Tennis?
- Do you - relish a challenge, have patience in abundance AND have good communication skills?
- Are you - a dynamic, versatile and conscientious 'self starter' with an interest in Table Tennis?

If you think you fit the bill, and you have the ambition and commitment to help Table Tennis progress, we look forward to hearing from you!

Job purpose:

To initiate and co-ordinate Table Tennis development in the region in accordance with the ETTA whole sport plan. Key work areas include: club and league development, school club links, volunteer support, facility development and communication.

Job details:

Fixed term contract up to March 2009 with a contract extension anticipated.

Salary £18,500 p.a.

Office base to be confirmed (within the region).

Travel expenses will be paid for business mileage and the post is subject to a car allowance.

For an informal discussion about the post contact:

Diccon Gray (National Development Manager, ETTA)


Tel: 07970 575285.

Find out more: www.etta.co.uk

Application process:

Job pack (background, person specification, job description and application form) available from www.etta.co.uk or hard copies can be requested from:

Sheila King (Development Secretary)
Tel: 01424 722525,
Fax: 01424 422103,
E-mail: sheila.king@etta.co.uk



The English Table Tennis Association Ltd is actively working towards being an equal opportunities employer committed to building a diverse workforce, and as such welcomes applications from any suitably qualified individual.



Matthew Syed

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



Jeremy Wilson

Jeremy is a sports journalist who writes regularly for both The Guardian and The Sunday Times. He has also played senior and junior county table tennis for Hampshire.



Paul Rainford

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

first word



The first meeting with anyone is usually an interesting experience. You can guarantee without fail that, popped into the mix of the initial series of questions, whether you utter or receive them, will be the inevitable where do you live? And what's your occupation? My responses to these enquiries are usually met with one of two reactions. Either an inquisitive 'really', or a dismissive 'what ping pong?' However, no matter which reaction I receive I always continue with enthusiasm, sure in the knowledge that at some point in their life my new acquaintance will have come in contact with our sport. Whether it be at a holiday camp or youth club, on TV or played over their mate's dining room table, everyone knows, has watched or has played table tennis at some point. Following my unexpected reply, those in the 'ping pong' category generally go down

the "what do you do for table tennis" route etc. etc. we continue... I won't bore you with the rest here. However, the other response, the inquisitive 'really?', always makes me smile; you can see their minds running through a lifetime's interaction with the sport and I can sense they share the same fascination with the sport as I do. For many this fascination is symbolised by one man, the table tennis idol, Des Douglas.

Des is a true icon of British sport and in this issue we have an exclusive interview by Jeremy Wilson that gains the great man's views on everything from the National Championships to playing in Germany (page 12). Ping Pong Diplomacy is another issue that has been brought to the fore following the Prime Minister's refusal to play the Premier Wen Jiabao in his recent visit to China. Paul Rainford delves

deeper into the history and politics surrounding this infamous incident (page 22). We also have some points of reflection from Matthew Syed (page 16) plus the usual news, reports and round-up of results.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we have had to say a premature goodbye to an influential figure within the table tennis world, Mike Johns. One of only a few English players to represent England at every level (junior - veterans), Mike's unquestionable love for the sport shone through, and he was an instrumental figure both on and off the court here and down under. He will be greatly missed. Anyway that enough from me. Remember to keep your letters, questions, results and reports flooding in and don't forget to sign up to our free e-zine at www.etta.co.uk I hope you enjoy this issue.

As ever, e-mail your views, comments or questions to me at Richard.pettit@etta.co.uk

Richard Pettit, Editor

The highlights from our main contributors...

"It is essential that any new affiliation proposals are user friendly" Alex Murdoch Page 5 "In his prime during the 1970s and 1980s Douglas was an idol" Jeremy Wilson Page 12 "The great man is now in his late 70's but that did not prevent us from having some marvellous hard bat sessions". Matthew Syed page 17 "The British PM declined a knock with his opposite number" Paul Rainford page 23

Straight talk

The second half of the season is in full swing and I hope that you are having a competitive and successful season. The Table Tennis Masters 2008 will take place at the Royal Albert Hall on 17th March, have you booked your tickets to watch some of the best players in the world?

I am sure like me you will wish success to the players for the coming European Olympic Qualification in Nantes from 2nd to 6th April. A very tough event and I hope our players perform well.

Negotiations and planning with partners are continuing and ongoing in regard to the ETTA running major events up to 2012, it is essential that we receive financial support to run these events. The major funding agency for these events is UK Sport and responses from them have been very positive.

The World Team Championships will have taken place in Guangzhou, China, prior to this issue, reports will be on the website and I shall report back to you in regard to any decisions taken during the various meetings which may impact our sport.

It is anticipated that the funding and criteria for the Club and Coach Programme will be in place during March. This will enable us to increase coaching support across England with the appointment of eight full-time regional coaches for a minimum of three years. This, with the recent appointment of a Coaching Manager and the 20 full and part-time coaches working on the PESSCL project, will enable our sport to increase participation levels of young players and increase the number of qualified coaches available.

An announcement will be made in the middle of March by the British Olympic Association at a press conference in regard to the Table Tennis partner as part of the their FT100 initiative.

A testing document has been produced in regard to "gluing" for circulation to the membership and published on the website. For clarification, the changes from 1st January 2008 applied only to cadet/junior events and not the participation in any senior competitions. It will apply to all from September 1st 2008. The ETTA will only

be able to test at certain events on the calendar, but not at grass roots competitions.

Proposals in regard to the use of "pimpled" rubbers will be discussed at the April National Council meeting, following inputs received during the World Team Championships with other member countries and the ITTF Equipment Committee on which England has a nominated and elected member.

The ETTA has received backing from Sport England to appoint an independent consultant to look at many areas of the ETTA, including structures, HR, governance and working practices. This will be our first one since the Genesis Report of 2000. The Management felt that with all the changes over the last few years in the way we have to operate, that this process was needed.

A massive increase in players wishing to participate in the ETTA events programme has been occurring, which has resulted in many events being oversubscribed. Albeit this shows that players wish to play in the ETTA competition programme it does concern me that we have to turn away players. A number of initiatives are being looked at, not least a competition review under the Competitions Department which is being funded as part of the UK School Games award. The recent affiliation of TTK enables them now to run ETTA approved competitions in London, which will help to alleviate the oversubscribed situation which has impacted the junior circuit.

The lack of technical officials has also made an impact upon the events programme, the new Chairman of the NURC will be looking at a number of proposals to improve this situation. It has been a problem for some years and a resolution is critical for our sport. Every effort is being made to support and assist the existing technical officials, the sport just needs more people who are



Alex Murdoch, ETTA Chairman

The ETTA has received backing from Sport England to appoint an independent consultant to look at many areas of the ETTA, including structures, HR, governance and working practices.

willing to qualify as umpires and referees.

The reported interim figures for affiliated league teams shows a decline, it gives me no pleasure that this decline has been occurring for many years. As I have stated many times, our real affiliated membership cannot be quantified, most of the leagues who have reported via IR forms show a significant difference between the 4 players per team returns and the actual players registered in that league.

Venues and their cost concern the table tennis fraternity at grass roots. The ETTA and the DCMS Community Club Development Programme via Sport England have made massive investments into our sport and they will be putting in another £1.2M during the next phase to support a number of Table Tennis facilities in England.

The reality is that our sport is still very low cost in comparison to many others and we cannot expect the free or low cost venues which were available in the past at sports and social clubs, village halls, etc.

We have to expect to pay the going rate to compete with other sports and activities who want to use the venues available. Using larger venues for league matches by consolidating teams and clubs within the one venue

has worked in one of the leagues I play in, where we use a school facility for three separate clubs and 10 teams. Another club I play for has booked a leisure centre for 12 months and uses it one night a week for league matches and practice, both of these are very price competitive.

It is quite clear, following a recent governmental report involving sport, that participation of Table Tennis at schools is increasing which is backed by the increase in sales of TT equipment to schools. We need to ensure that these young people are given the opportunity to progress via clubs, leagues and competitions to continue playing our great sport.

Comments have been raised about the process of Individual Affiliation being kept simple and that consultation with the membership takes place. You can be assured that this is happening and the membership have been given details about the proposals and further information will be circulated following inputs received. It is essential that any new affiliation proposals are "user friendly" for the local volunteers who administer it.

If you have any questions or require a meeting please contact me via the office or on alex@harwoodltd.co.uk.

Headlines

The latest stories from the Table Tennis World

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Seven sporting stars from Chesterfield have had their talents recognised, with a cash boost of £300 each. Four of the recipients are the table tennis competitors; Liam Pitchford, Lucy Davidson, Sean Cullen and Daniel Lowe have all been presented with bursaries from the Derbyshire Talented Athlete Fund.

The Fund has been set up thanks to contributions from a number of partners, including Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire County Cricket Club. Cllr Keith Morgan, Chesterfield Borough Council Lead Member Healthy Communities and Leisure, co-presented the cheque, along with Sports Development Officer Scott Webster, Clive Moesby, Chair of Derbyshire Sport, and Derbyshire County Cricket Club player Stephen Stubbings.



Chesterfield's 'Magnificent Seven'



Brian Rowlen, Chairman of the Clacton and District Table Tennis League

"BRIAN ROWLEN HONOURED"

Brian Rowlen, Chairman of the Clacton and District Table Tennis League, has been honoured for his services to local sport. At the recent Sports Personality Awards presentation evening organised by Tendring District Council, Brian was presented with a special award for his "Outstanding Contribution to Sport in the Tendring District". Brian began playing Clacton League table tennis as a schoolboy aged 12 years in the early 1950s and continued to play until 2002. He joined the Management Committee in 1956 and, apart

from three years when he worked away, he has been a member ever since. From 1974 to 1984 Brian was the League's Press and Records Secretary. Since 1984, he has been League Chairman. Brian arranges the League programme, and schedules and referees all the League's tournaments. Since 1991, he has been Secretary of the Brotherhood Club, the League's largest club. Brian, a past Chairman of the Essex County Table Tennis Association, is also a qualified International Umpire who has umpired at World

Championships and other international events. Without Brian's efforts and dedication, there would not be a flourishing table tennis league in Clacton which currently boasts 160 players. Brian has rightly earned the title "Clacton's Mr Table Tennis". Brian was originally nominated for the category "Volunteer of the Year". However, the awarding committee felt it appropriate to create a special award to recognise Brian's commitment and long service.



MENCAP SPORT

The England Table Tennis squad for people with a learning disability has been slowly climbing the World rankings over the past few years, thanks to excellent support from Mencap Sport.

Working in partnership with the ETTA, Mencap Sport supports gifted and talented players from across the country - ensuring they are training regularly and can access quality coaching, providing regularly squad training opportunities, and supporting them to enter INAS (the international federation for learning disability sport) competitions worldwide.

Because of funding rules, athletes with a learning disability do not currently qualify for support through the World Class Programmes, though it is hoped that this will change soon. The squad meet approximately 6 times per year under the direction of Head Coach Mick Veasey.

In addition, there are a number of events for players with a learning disability across the country each year.

To compete in the classification players must demonstrate a minimum level of learning disability, and players are regularly invited to attend trials. For more information, contact Mencap Sport at www.mencap.org.uk/sport, email sport@mencap.org.uk or phone 01924 234 912.

SYCAMORE TT ARE THE BEST

After receiving written evidence from ten sports clubs from around the Nottinghamshire area, the judges for the Nottinghamshire Sports Review of the Year awarded the Sycamore TT Club the Sports Club of the Year award.

Secretary Owen Rumbold who himself reached the top 5 (out of 21) in the Volunteer of the Year category, said: "The area gets a lot of negative publicity, but through our sport we want to address that and create a balance. This is a very proud moment for us." These awards aren't just about the competitors, they also seek to reward those behind the scenes, such as coaches and administrators that make competitive sport possible.

BBC SPORT

Did you know that table tennis has its own section on the BBC Sport website (www.bbc.co.uk/sport)?

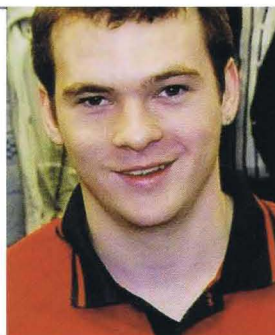
Simply go to the "Olympics & Olympic Sport" section and then choose table tennis from the list of sports.

Within the TT section is news, interviews and videos, along with updates from the Olympic Dreams programme in which the BBC follows the progress of a select few 2012 Olympic hopefuls.

In Short

Paul's Plate

In the February issue we printed a piece entitled "Mayor's Award For Paul Drinkhall", we would just like to thank the Middlesbrough & District Table Tennis League for donating the commemorative plate in recognition of Paul's achievements and to the Middlesbrough Gazette for allowing us to print their photograph



Top E-zine

Take a look and subscribe to our new monthly e-zine. The President of the ITTF, Adam Sharara, has and this is what he had to say. "Excellent E-zine, the best I have seen so far. Great design and very informative. Good work." Log on to www.etta.co.uk to subscribe - it's free.

Youth Table Tennis

Record numbers of young athletes will compete at the UK School Games, when it is staged in Bristol and Bath this summer.

2008 UK School Games: Details of the event, which will be the first in the London Olympiad following the end of the Beijing Olympics, were announced at a recent press conference in Bath, where Olympic gold medallist Jason Gardener was joined by young fencer Sophie Williams, also from the South West, who has won double gold at both previous UK School Games.

Jason Gardener said: "I'm looking forward to what will be a hugely successful event. It represents a fantastic opportunity for the best young competitors to gain invaluable experience of future multi-sport competitions, and I hope all those welcomed to Bristol and Bath in August will seize the opportunity to compete to the very best of their ability in fair and good-spirited competition. Sophie Williams went on to say: "It is a fantastic event and I'm hoping that this year will be just as good, if not better,

than the previous events in

Glasgow and Coventry".

1500 children will compete in the 2008 UK School Games which will be held at four venues around the city from 28th to 31st August, and will replicate a major adult multi-sport competition with an opening and closing ceremony plus an athletes' village.

Alongside table tennis and the new sport of hockey, competition will take place in badminton, judo, volleyball, athletics, fencing, gymnastics and swimming, with disability events in table tennis, athletics and swimming also included.

Selection by governing bodies will take place over the next few months, with the very best of youth sport competing at the first class venues across the region. The event promises to be even bigger and better than the previous two years hosted in Glasgow and Coventry in 2006 and 2007. New developments this year from the event organisers, the Youth Sport Trust, include the development of a school supporters programme to get local schools involved in the Games, the work with Mencap and the governing bodies of particular sports to develop clear pathways into the competition for athletes with learning disabilities, and additional use of young officials during the event.

This year the UK School Games will be complemented by an exciting community sport and cultural programme. Hundreds of school aged children across the region will take part in festivals of sport, and in Bristol's harbourside there will be a dazzling showcase of urban sport from 30-31st August combining demonstrations and



UK School Games:
Mathew Ware, Jason Gardener, Hannah Hicks

workshops from renowned skateboarders, aerial performers, trial bikers and climbers. £6 million from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has been awarded to the Youth Sport Trust through Legacy Trust UK to develop the UK School Games in Bristol and Bath in 2008 and each year until 2011. Steve Granger, Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust, summed up by saying: "The Youth Sport Trust was delighted with the success of the UK School Games in Coventry last year, and we are looking forward to raising the bar even higher in Bristol and Bath this summer.

"The UK School Games is an inspirational and motivational event which is already helping to transform the competitive opportunities for school age children. Once again we are moving the event forward and will give even more young competitors and volunteers the chance to experience this fantastic four-day celebration of the UK's young sporting talent."



'More Schools' Launch

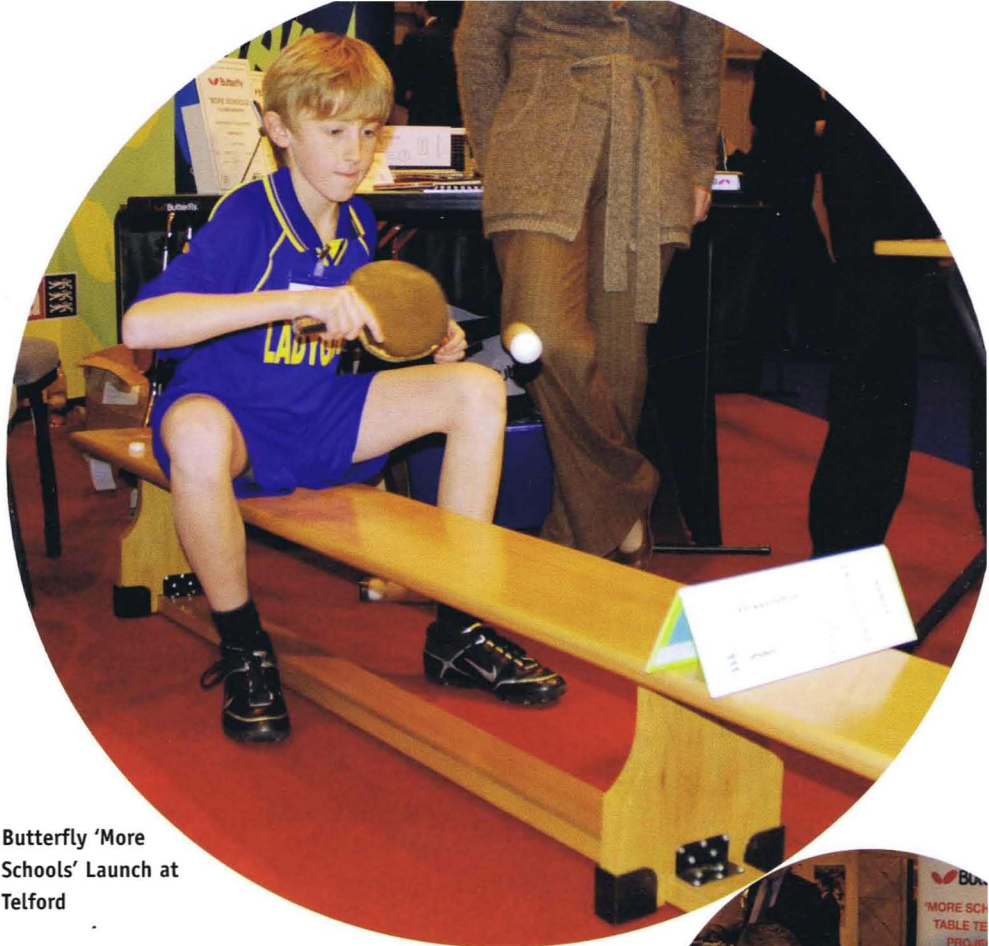
Tamworth's teeming with players. Juniors from Tamworth have just proved that table tennis can certainly not be called a dying sport.

Recently around 50 youngsters between the ages of 9 and 17 turned up to the Tamworth and District Table Association's annual junior championships. This was an unprecedented turnout of young players, ranging in ability from complete beginners to players of a county standard.

One of the coaches who helps these young players improve every Saturday at Tamworth Youth Club, Andy Jackson, said: "I am overwhelmed by the turnout of youngsters that we had. This is so encouraging, not only for the club, but also for the sport." 44 junior players played competitively in over 150 matches throughout the evening, in an open singles, handicap singles and academy singles tournament. This figure is particularly surprising considering the size of the league. It consists of just 3 divisions, with 27 teams in total, ranging from these juniors all the way up to a very high standard of adult players.

Moreover, one of the more talented youngsters, James Liddiard, who reached the final of two of the competitions, has a coach who has been doing the table tennis circuits for over 20 years. He said that it is the best turnout of juniors at an event like this he has ever seen. Visit www.tamworthtabletennis.co.uk to find out more.

Butterfly 'More Schools' Project: The English Schools' Table Tennis Association is pleased to announce the launch by Gerry Sutcliffe, MP, Minister for Sport, of the Butterfly 'More Schools' Project at the Youth Sport Trust Sports Colleges Conference held at the Telford International Conference Centre on 31st January/1st February 2008. The Butterfly 'More Schools' Toolkit consists of a range of materials for starting and developing table tennis in both primary and secondary schools. It moves through 'Enjoyment and



Butterfly 'More Schools' Launch at Telford

Participation to Performance' in both basic practice and all levels of intra and inter school team and individual competitions. There is the added incentive for competition organisers of the provision of Certificates of Participation and Achievement, together with engraved trophies. ESTTA believes that this Toolkit will be the catalyst to promote the participation of more schools in competitive table tennis leading to greater involvement in their Team and Individual Championships.

The Toolkit, currently being trialled around the country, has promoted positive responses:

- This is just what my staff have been asking for - fantastic! (Senior Competition Manager)
- Great pack - loads of useful resources for primaries and secondaries. (School Sport Co-ordinator)

- Very positive - I like the ideas for 'alternative' table tennis tables, i.e. PE benches and ordinary tables. (Partnership Development Manager)
- Excellent ideas on maximising space and equipment. (Head of PE)
- Very clear with great ideas for schools with and without table tennis tables. (PDM)
- Excellent resource cards with skills and drills for pupils to explore - easy to use - very structured. (PDM)
- A good starting point for Year 4/5 pupils. Good templates for competition which together with the Butterfly Skills Programme provides testing but achievable goals. (PDM)
- FREE TO SCHOOLS /PARTNERSHIPS /COMPETITION MANAGERS!

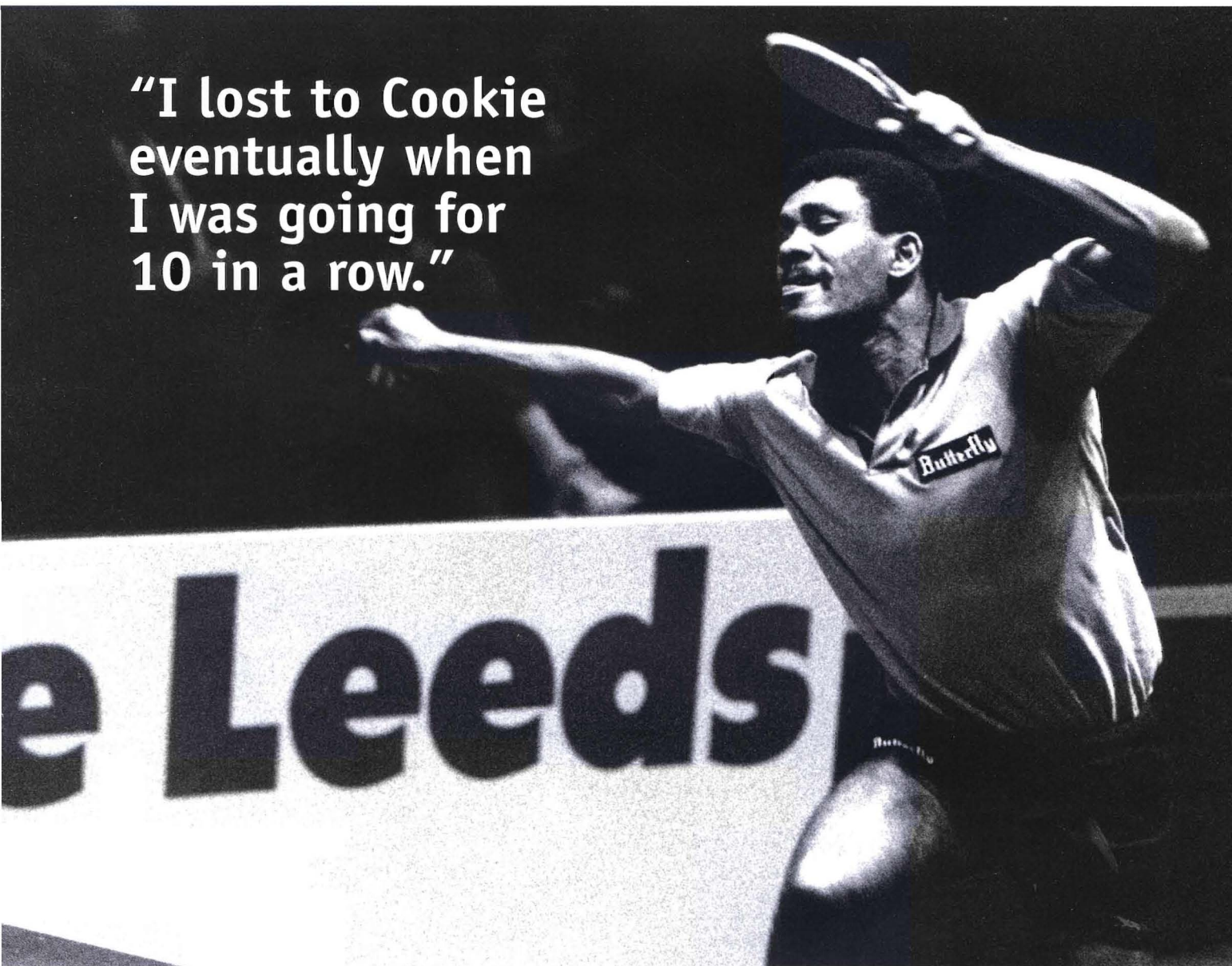


UK School Games launch at Bath Spa



The Association is committed to raising the profile of table tennis and is currently modernising its communication links with all schools promoting table tennis in both curricular and extracurricular activities. It is the partnership between Butterfly and the Association with support from Sportsmatch that makes this possible.

"I lost to Cookie eventually when I was going for 10 in a row."



desmond douglas

It is rare to come off the telephone feeling rather privileged to have spent an hour in conversation with somebody. But, then again, there is nobody in the history of British table tennis quite like Desmond Douglas.

In his prime, during the 1970s and 1980s, Douglas was an idol. Today, he remains an icon. Sports fans who know nothing about table tennis have the name 'Desmond Douglas' stored somewhere in their memory and, even now, he is the one English player to get recognised on the street by total strangers.

Douglas turns 53 this year, but that slight physique and steely expression remain familiar, if not the quiet voice. "I didn't speak too much," he says. "I was happier doing my talking on the table."

In the celebrity age it is rather refreshing to remember that Douglas's status derived from performances rather than any trace of self-promotion.

He has become the most famous English table tennis player of modern times because, quite simply, he was the best. Matthew Syed would also rank among the elite in any list of post-war champions, yet his assessment of Douglas is compelling and delivered with feeling. "Of all the number ones, whether you are talking about Cooke, Prean, myself, Chester Barnes and now Paul Drinkhall, Desmond Douglas is light-years ahead," he said. "At his best, I think he was unbeaten against any English player for more than a decade. He was also wonderful to be around - he never made those of us who held him in such awe feel uncomfortable."

Typically, Douglas is more circumspect. "Dennis Neale would know," he says, "and he reckons that, in terms of pure ability, Chester Barnes was better than me." The facts suggest otherwise.

Barnes, the great showman, might have been the Alex Higgins of British table tennis during the 1960s and 1970s, but Douglas was Steve Davis and Stephen Hendry rolled into one.

At domestic level, he was a winning machine. His first

English singles title came at the age of 20 in 1976, yet he was still good enough to reach the final as recently as 1998 when he lost narrowly to Syed. "I was in my absolute prime, he was well in his 40s, and we were still 15-all in the fifth," said Syed, "if we had played when we were both at our best, Des would have massacred me 3-0."

To put the Douglas dominance in context, it is perhaps enough to say that even the combined haul of great players like Carl Prean, Chen Xinhua and Chester Barnes would be one short of his final tally of 11 English singles titles.

In recent times, the closest - and that is a relative term - are Dennis Neale and Alan Cooke with six titles and Syed with four.

"I lost to Cookie eventually when I was going for 10 in a row," says Douglas. "He worked his socks off. It did become hard. Looking back, to win that many in a row is ridiculous and, as the years went on, it would weigh more heavily on you. Sometimes you would almost want to let go.

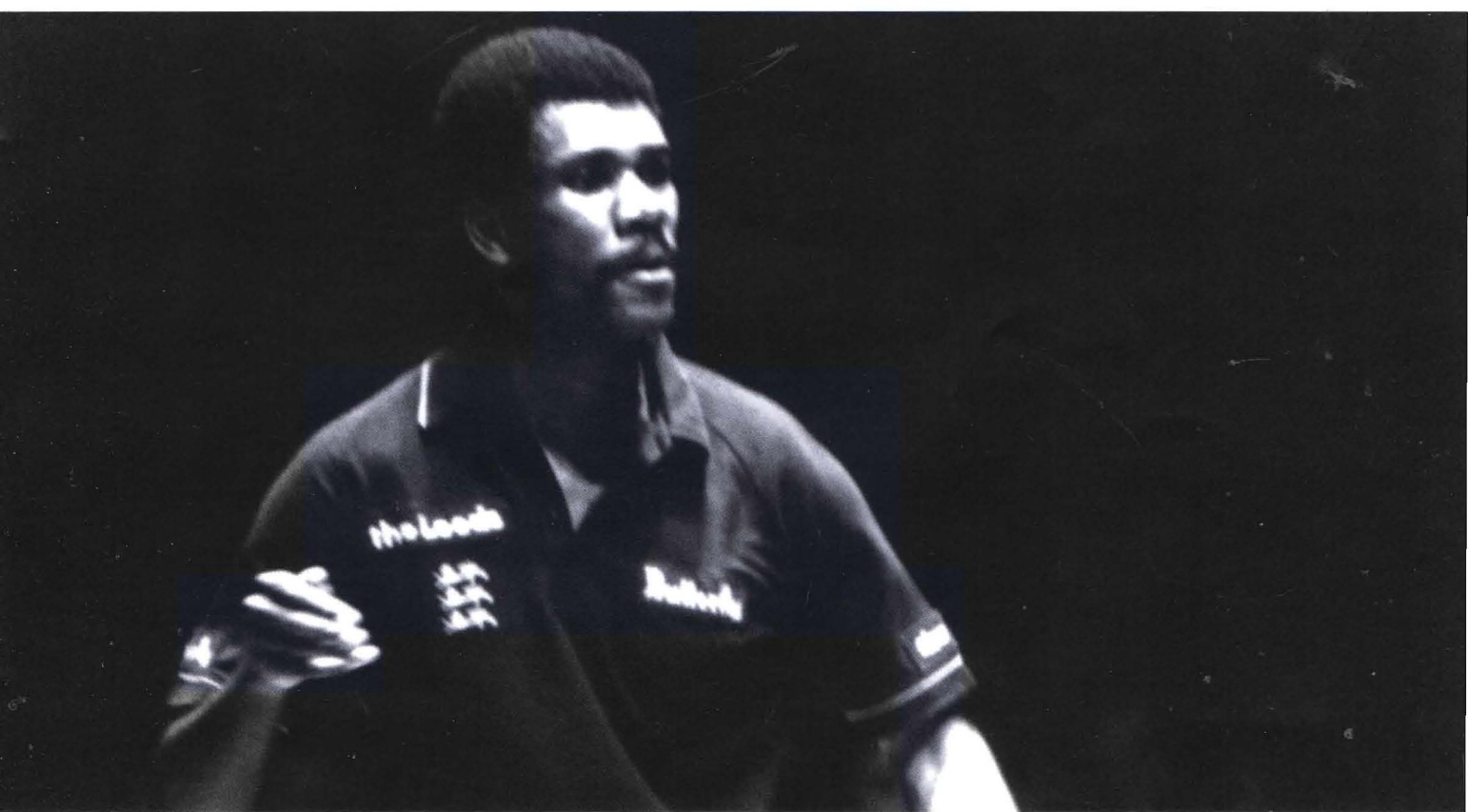
"I didn't think about losing and, at one stage, I suppose I did have an aura that probably put me two or three points ahead. I had to keep setting myself new goals. It is easier to be chasing someone."

For that reason, Douglas has advised Paul Drinkhall to base himself abroad. "You have to push yourself," he says, "I had eight years in Germany, playing at least four hours every day and it kept me at that level. It was the time of all the strikes in England and they thought I would be lazy. I had to work even harder to prove myself.

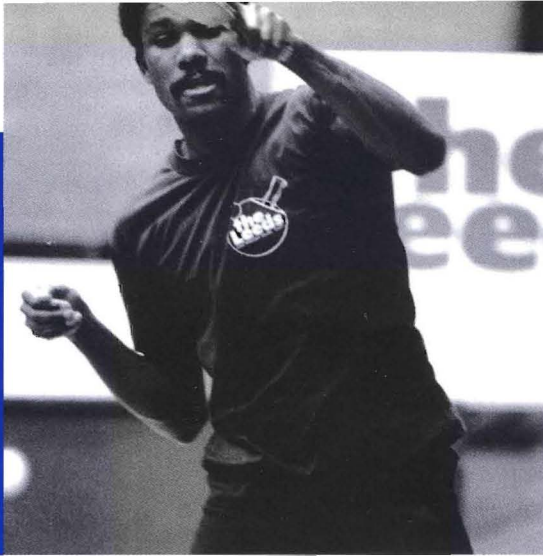
"Paul spoke to me about it and I advised him to play abroad. I've seen Paul play and he has definitely got the talent. It would be fantastic if he could break my record. The dream, though, has to be the Olympics in 2012."

Behind the softly spoken voice, Douglas also has strong

"Paul spoke to me about it and I advised him to play abroad. I've seen Paul play and he has definitely got the talent. It would be fantastic if he could break my record. The dream, though, has to be the Olympics in 2012."



"By about 1988, I had to eventually fight fire with fire and use the glue because they would be standing a few yards away from the table, hardly touching the ball and it would still be coming over like a bullet."



views on the wider development of young players in this country. "I think the ETTA must be careful not to focus too much attention on Paul and Darius [Knight]," he says. "You want 12 players all pushing each other and it is a massive gamble to rely on Paul and Darius. As well as Sheffield, you really need a centre in the Midlands and in the South." From his own experience, Douglas knows that players develop at different stages and at different rates. He first picked up a table tennis bat while at the Gower Boys Secondary School in the Lozells district of Birmingham at the age of 14. Within four years, he was the best junior in England. "We had a table in a small classroom and there was a blackboard up against your back - that was how I developed my style," he says. The Douglas style was, of course, both unique and devastating. He played almost on top of the table, never took a backwards step and relied on incredible reflexes and relatively short strokes to counter-punch his way to the top table of the global game. At his peak, he was rated number three in Europe and number seven in the world, although many experts would argue that, for several periods during the 1970s and 1980s, he was the continent's most feared player. "The faster they came at me, the better - I wanted to play at 100 miles an hour," he says. At the European Championships in Duisberg in 1978, he won

event in Duisberg were probably my best achievements, although losing in the European semi-final was probably the biggest disappointment," he says. "The Top 12 in 1987 was great. All the top players were there - Waldner, Persson, Grubba, Appelgren, Lindh - and, when everyone plays everyone, you have to be the best to win.

"Without glue, I was playing with a pea-shooter compared to their rifles. I had to out-manoeuvre them so it was satisfying. I didn't agree with glue - I thought it was cheating. I was a purist and I think everyone should have the same equipment and table tennis should be a test of skill. By about 1988, I had to eventually fight fire with fire and use the glue because they would be standing a few yards away from the table, hardly touching the ball and it would still be coming over like a bullet."

Douglas became particularly famous in Germany during the 1980s for his exploits in the Bundesliga with Borussia Düsseldorf, who he led to two European club championship finals. Indeed, it is interesting to note that his Wikipedia biography in German is five times the length of his entry in English. As well as table tennis players, he also became a role model to the black community and was recently named alongside the likes of Daley Thompson, Naomi Campbell, Sir Trevor MacDonald and Lennox Lewis in a list of 100 Great Black Britons.

Having never wanted to be famous, he has easily adjusted to life away from competitive table tennis. "I am a bit of an introvert," he says, "I preferred to just be in the background. I look at David Beckham and I couldn't take all that attention. I travelled the world, I don't have any regrets and I achieved more than I would have imagined."

And does he still play? "I played last night against Damien Nicholls," he says. Nicholls is currently rated number seven in the England juniors and, after much prompting, Douglas reveals the first trace of the quiet self-confidence that must surely have underpinned his success.

"Okay," he says, "I won. I'm still in pretty good shape. When I go to the tournaments, I don't see anything that I haven't seen before or anything that I think would have hurt me. I coach locally in Birmingham. I wouldn't poke my nose in, but I would always have time for Paul, Darius or any of the

"I'd rather avoid too much attention, it should be about the youngsters..."

21 straight singles matches in the team event before eventually running out of steam in the semi-final of the singles to the Hungarian great Istvan Jonyer. "I had nothing left in the tank," he says, "I had given so much for the team and that did cost me sometimes in singles." Douglas' record in the European Top 12 event was more reflective of his standing. Indeed, for a time during the 1980s, the European Top 12 was dominated by Douglas and Sweden's Jan-Ove Waldner. Douglas won the event in 1987, finished second three times and was placed third once. His victory in 1987 was made all the more remarkable by the fact that he was the only leading player not to have switched to speed glue. "The European Top 12 and the team

other players if they want a chat."

Last year, Douglas was spotted at the national championships and was persuaded to be introduced to the audience. The spontaneous standing ovation said it all. "I'd rather avoid too much attention, it should be about the youngsters - maybe I'll wear a hat and dark glasses next time!"

And so will he return to Sheffield this year, perhaps to see Drinkhall win a second title? "I might pop in," he says. "I'll see how things go". You sense he will but, when the introductions are made, look out for the disguise.

a tribute...

After a mercifully short illness, Dolly Harmer died of cancer on 20 January 2008, aged 88. She was a lifelong devotee of table tennis, and taught the game to so many children that many people in Leighton Buzzard refer to her as "Mrs Table Tennis".

Dolly began playing table tennis in 1922 with an oval shaped varnished wooden bat, over a billiards table dining top. During the 1930s she played at Cricklewood Church Youth Club and at the Imperial Tobacco Company Sports Club where she first met Peter, her future husband, who presented her with one of the first rubber covered bats. Coverings then had progressed from wood to cork to sandpaper.

In 1936, on her 17th birthday, Dolly was given a full size Jaques table tennis table on which she played regularly. In 1951 she was playing table tennis in the family barn and so were the rest of her village. Six years later she joined the Christchurch Youth Club in Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard having told Dolly that she and Peter were too old to play in their League! Two years later Dolly, Peter and their 8-year-old son Paul were admitted into Leighton Buzzard League as a family team. She continued to play in Dunstable also until 1995.

Qualifying as a County Umpire and Coach in 1960, she introduced a conservatively estimated 1000 children to the sport at six local schools and other venues. She helped set the guidelines for the Dunlop Skills Awards and during the 1970s was involved in forming the Bedfordshire Schools Association. Dolly helped found the English Schools Table Tennis Association, continued on their committee until 1978, then maintained her interest as a Vice-President and for a period was Assistant Tournament Secretary. In 1978 she went to the World School Games in Turkey as coach/chaperone for the girls' table tennis team. That year she retired as a teacher, but did supply teaching until she was 75. From 1962 Dolly ran coaching sessions for all local people interested in table tennis in the garage at her home, 84 Brooklands Drive, Leighton Buzzard. This became known as the "84 Club" and was a member of the Bedfordshire Youth Association.

It was in 1969 that Dolly had realised that there was nothing written for children interested in table tennis, so she wrote and had published a paperback entitled "Play Table Tennis Right From the Start". The book had photographs on every page and was written for under 9s. Owing to its simplicity, overseas teachers purchased many copies. In all 2000 copies were sold. Another book followed, titled "Sam and Sharon Learn to Play Table Tennis". This book, similar to her first, was well illustrated and was written as a story that any child would enjoy reading. Writing and publishing booklets posed no problems for Dolly; she produced others including some of



her poetry, "Memories and Anecdotes" in 2005 and "Heroes (Sung and Unsung)" just a few weeks before her death. Until 1992 Dolly coached table tennis at both Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard leisure centres during the school holidays. She also gave help at coaching sessions at a local lower school and practised with players at Dunstable Table Tennis Centre whenever possible.

She was a founder member of the Veterans English Table Tennis Society (VETTS). Together with husband Peter up to 1994, Dolly played in nine World Veterans Championships from 1984 to 2000: Finland, Italy, Yugoslavia, USA, Eire, Australia, Norway, Manchester and Vancouver. She also played in Veterans' Championships in Wales, France and the Isle of Man.

In 1994, when Dolly was 75 and still coaching, umpiring, organising and playing locally, she was successfully nominated for a Service to Sport Award. She was a Vice-President of the Bedfordshire County Association, Dunstable League and the Leighton League of which she was also a Life Member. She continued playing in the League until 2004 and was an active County Umpire until the end of 2005.

Throughout her life she gave her time generously in the promotion of the character-building sport of table tennis. She pursued her aims with determination, always encouraging good sportsmanship and teaching young people to win with modesty and lose with grace.

It was typical of Dolly to plan for her funeral, seeking a "joyful celebration" of her life at which her friends should wear no black, but something bright, especially red, her favourite colour. Her lively personality will be missed by all who knew her especially her three sons, twelve grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

In 1980 she won the Leighton Buzzard Ladies' Singles title, and in 1986 she received the English Table Tennis Association's Merit Award for devoted service to table tennis.

Reflections

I was at my parents over Christmas and my father, who has been serving on the Reading and District Table Tennis Association Committee, starting talking about how impressed he has been with many of the people who give up their time to make table tennis function in this country.

VOLUNTEERS

Two individuals in particular had caught his eye, the same two people that my brother Andrew, who does sterling work as a coach in the area, singled out for praise. Their names are John Cunningham and Nigel Maltby. I got to know Cunningham, a member of the local Labour Party, during my run for Parliament in 2001. His work as a coach at the Our Lady of Peace Club is the stuff of legend. Humane, magnanimous and imbued with a tremendous sense of community service, Cunningham has made a real difference to the lives of hundreds of young people in the area. Maltby is another decent and remarkably hard working person who serves as Chairman of the Reading committee. I met him at a local league match a couple of seasons ago (I try to play one or two matches for my brother's team each season) and was immediately struck by his warmth and passion for the sport. He carries much of the burden of administrating the league on his considerable shoulders.

We have always been lucky in table tennis to have some of the finest volunteers in sport. Cunningham and Maltby symbolise the very best in English table tennis.

DRINKHALL AND KNIGHT

The disappointing results of Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight in recent weeks provide further evidence (if we needed it) of how difficult it is to successfully make the transition from junior to senior level. There is little doubt that both youngsters possess marvellous talent (they also happen to possess terrific personalities). But they are now discovering that success in youth table tennis is a very different matter from making a noise in the big, bad world of the senior ranks. With dozens of brilliant young China

players coming through, the task on their hands to challenge for gold in 2012 is made even harder. There have been hundreds of youngsters down the years who have evoked premonitions of future glory only to fizzle from view. Drinkhall and Knight must buckle down if they are not to join their number.

DESMOND DOUGLAS

Jeremy Wilson, the excellent young journalist from the Daily Telegraph whose work often appears on these pages, phoned me the other day to talk about Desmond Douglas (his feature on Des page 12). The conversation got me thinking about the former England number one. My first senior training camp was on the south coast in the autumn of 1984, when Douglas was in his prime. His playing standard was far ahead of the rest of the team, but his essential humility was never threatened. He had that lovely knack of making others feel at ease and would always play a little longer at the end of a training session if someone (anyone) asked. That training camp marked the beginning of a long friendship with Des. But it also marked the beginning of a long running political debate that continues whenever I see him at competitions or functions. A strong supporter of Margaret Thatcher, Douglas is one of the staunchest

Conservatives I have ever met. In almost 25 years I have not managed to alter his view on a single political issue.

MARTY REISMAN

When I was in New York last September I spent a lot of time with the former English Open Champion Marty Reisman. The great man is now in his late 70s, but that did not prevent us having some marvellous hard bat sessions in the basement of Harry Evans and Tina Brown's apartment block on East 57th Street. Despite his years, Reisman packs an incredible punch and plays with a ferocious intelligence. After our sessions we would repair to the Mee Noodle Bar on 2nd Avenue for some sesame noodles, cold beer and hours of conversation about ping pong, philosophy and hard bat table tennis. Those of a certain age will be pleased to hear that I found the hard bat game utterly enthralling. As Howard Jacobson has said many times, it is a game that encompasses wit, charm and the dialogue that is too often missing in modern table tennis. We regularly spent over two hours in the basement, with the echoing sound of ball on bat, locked in mortal combat. I look forward to going back for some more action in the next couple of months.



Marty Reisman

But they are now discovering that success in youth table tennis is a very different matter from making a noise in the big, bad world of the senior ranks



a tribute...

As a person, how would we describe Mike?

Judging by the comments of those I have spoken to and received e-mails from, he was seen as a good person, a nice person who if he did not have anything to say that is good about a person, he would rather not say it. This is a characteristic he got from our mother who was very proud of her eldest.. He was a great table tennis player who represented England all over the world. I believe he is the only person to represent England at table tennis at Junior, Senior and Veteran level. We had a good laugh together when I was ribbing him a few weeks back that he got 90 years of life out of his 60, how he had lived life to the full. I had to stop when he was sore with laughing.

Mike won his first title The Hull Open Under 15 title within 12 months of starting playing and made the Cheshire junior team winning 4 of his first 6 games and beating junior international David Stanley.

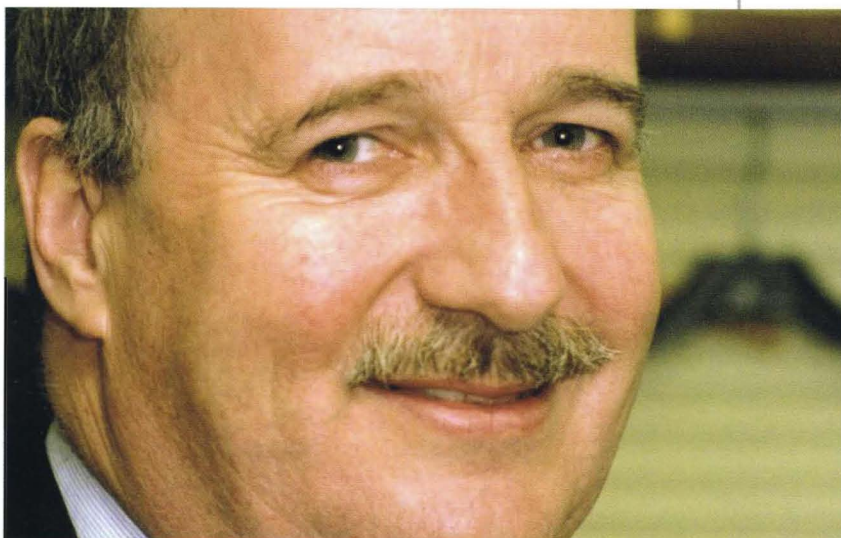
At an early age Mike had to choose between TT and cricket, having been selected for the final Cheshire cricket trial, having taken 6 wickets for 15 runs in a county trial. This clashed with junior international table tennis and there was only one winner. He has special memories and was very proud to represent Cheshire at all levels. Derek Schofield was a big early influence on Mike and he was very grateful for the guidance given by Schoey in his formative years. He had a great table tennis doubles partnership with Roger Hampson and they won many titles together beating many top players. He enjoyed being part of the Cheshire crowd and had great memories of the likes of the Schofields, Roger Hampson, Brian Kean, John Hilton, Bo, Nigel Eck and many others.

He had special memories of Australia where he spent 13 years of his life after becoming their national table tennis coach. The tributes from Australia have been coming in thick and fast and Mike Andrews, a very good friend, recently managed to come out and spend time with Mike which he enjoyed immensely. Mike Andrews wanted me to say the following to you:

"It was fantastic what Mike did in Australia for TT and no doubt also in England. He was a great character, a great leader and we really missed Mike when he left Australia, and he will be missed forever more."

Mike has great memories of playing the tournament circuit in the 60s and 70s, with many stories that cannot be told here today. We remember him winning the Merseyside Open beating OB Les Haslam and England number 1 Dennis Neale on the way to the title. He latterly enjoyed the veterans circuit and won many titles at Over 40 and Over 50 level. He could have done some damage at Over 60s level had his health held up. He later became Events Manager of the ETTA and rose to become Deputy Chairman of the Association.

As a family team we also won the National Veterans team title



on 5 occasions. Mike was also proud that the 4 of us played together in the World Vets Championship in 1997 losing in the semi-finals of the Over 40s team event.

He, as most of you will know, died of an asbestos related disease that he is believed to have picked up as a 15 year old. The tumour was found in the plural lining of the lung. He fought it as best he could and put up a tremendous fight showing great strength, but it was a battle he was never going to win. He wanted to thank all the staff who cared for him both in Turkey and the UK but especially St Luke's Hospice who gave Mike and Gail respite when they needed it most. It was Mike's wish to die at home in Davenham and that wish was granted.

So how will we remember Mike?

He was a man who loved all his children and was very close to his son Dominic who was a tower of strength and great support to Mike in dealing with his illness. He was very proud of his daughter Heidi for making him a grandad and all his other children - Simon, Sam, Samantha, Sasha and Poppy - for the love they shared with him.

He was close to all his brothers, we never had a cross word or fell out, and we were all extremely proud of Mike in all he had achieved. He was very happy in his last 7 years with Gail. He found a soul mate who loved TT like he did. He was taken prematurely from Gail but she was brilliant with him, supporting him all the way, often in difficult circumstances, and I know he was grateful for her making his final days as comfortable as possible. Mike will be remembered as one who made friends and enjoyed life. We were privileged to know him and will cherish those memories.

This tribute is only a small part of the superb eulogy given at the funeral by Mike's brother Ian Johns.

"It was fantastic what Mike did in Australia for TT and no doubt also in England. He was a great character, a great leader and we really missed Mike when he left Australia, and he will be missed forever more."

Mike Andrews

Letters

Thanks for everyone's letters...we appreciate all contributions and encourage an open debate

The Editor



SUCCESS

I've been on your website and the Butterfly programme looks excellent and a great coup to get James Purnell to launch and promote - congratulations.

Jason Squire

LETTERS PAGE

I cannot really grasp why it is headed "Ask the Editor". My letter to the magazine was not asking a question directly to you, the editor, it was to try and generate some more comment into the magazine and was written and aimed at table tennis players out there suggesting they should support the current administration. Can we not have a more meaningful heading; I would be more than happy with "Letters". It says exactly what it means.

On a different note congratulations on the December e-zine, it was a good first effort and more of the same please.

John Andrews

Editor: please note the title change. If you wish to subscribe to the free e-zine log on to www.etta.co.uk

IDEAS TO CHANGE

1. All-weather vandal-proof tables (blocks of concrete of a suitable size with adequate space around them) sited on recreation areas, and odd bits of grass or tarmac away from traffic.
2. As above, but with the "tables" being concrete troughs set in, or on, the ground which are shaped after the fashion of cricket

catching-cradles.

3. Find an entrepreneur with access to plenty of money that he/she wishes to keep from being wasted by the government. Persuade them to acquire properties all over the country with suitable space for several tables, upgrade them into drop-in table tennis emporiums (complete with profitable side-sales, and catering facilities) with whatever grants and tax-breaks they can arrange. Staff them suitably, knowing that in the future the custom generated will bring profit opportunities, and that any losses in the interim can be set against tax. In the future the entrepreneur will have a portfolio of developed prime sites, suitable for a variety of commercial uses, which will represent a very healthy return on their initial investment.

Regis

QUESTIONING THE MANUFACTURERS

Your unnamed correspondent in the December/January edition made some excellent points about standardisation of equipment, but his comments received a bizarre dismissal from you. Your statement that "equipment manufacturers keep the economy of table tennis ticking" is preposterous. Equipment manufacturers have only one aim in mind - to

maximise their profits. In my view, the ticking of the table tennis economy is more like a time bomb. The advertorial "Butterfly's solution to the Glue Ban" (published in the same edition) demonstrates very clearly how one manufacturer is desperately attempting to maintain its revenue from a sport which is being strangled by technological innovation. There is only one way the sport could be revived, and that is to return to the standard non-sponge pimpled rubbers of the early years. This would remove the artificial and unfair advantages offered by certain types of rubber. One of the consequences of this would be something fundamental for the sport: it would enable table tennis to become, once again, a sport that could be appreciated by spectators. TV coverage would follow.

Graham Frankel

Editor: Your view of the trade is a touch cynical, many of them have the development of the sport uppermost in their minds. Every sport has different equipment and to standardise, in my opinion, would simply be impossible.

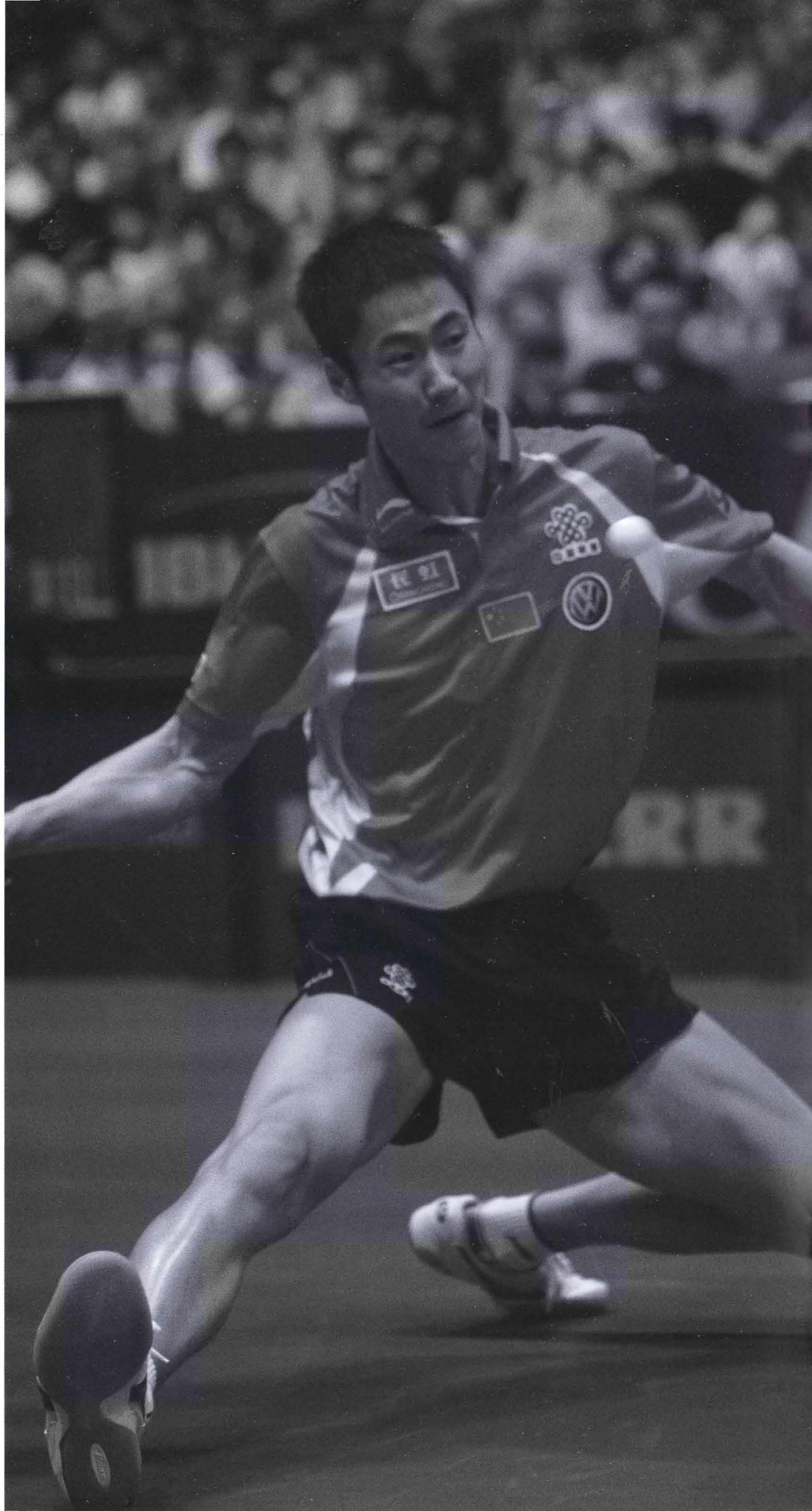
HIGHEST SCORE

We had a doubles game in our league that went to 27-25 last week. Is this the highest score since the change to 11-up?

Malcolm Allsop

These days, **China** & **Britain**, if not exactly best pals, **have learned** to get on with **each other.**

...it was during this tournament that an apparently chance encounter between an American and a Chinese player was to change the face of international relations....



The hand of friendship extended by Chinese Premier, Chou En-Lai to ETTA Chairman, Charles Wyles (1971).

When Prime Minister Gordon Brown was photographed looking on, rather glassy-eyed it seemed, as a group of top young Chinese and British table tennis players were being put through their paces during his state visit to China earlier this year, it was inevitable that the phrase 'ping pong diplomacy' would make an appearance in the press coverage of the event. Apparently, the British PM declined a knock with his opposite number, Wen Jiabao - perhaps Brown thought that the fact that he is blind in one eye would put him at a disadvantage. Or perhaps he had forgotten to pack his plimsolls. Whatever the reason, Brown's decision not to strut his on-table stuff did not, apparently, cause a major diplomatic incident. It was smiles all round and he and Mrs Brown still got their invitation to the forthcoming Beijing Olympics. These days, China and Britain, if not exactly best pals, have learned to get on with each other. Bearing in mind China's burgeoning economic might, Britain probably has little choice but to play nicely with Wen Jiabao and friends. Back in 1971, things were a little different. The Cold War was still raging, in its low key way, with the US and its western allies grimly staring across at the Communist blocs of China and Russia. Friendly diplomatic exchanges were not on the cards. Or so it seemed.

The 1971 World Championships were held in Nagoya, Japan, and it was during this tournament that an apparently chance encounter between an American and a Chinese player was to change the face of international relations - and put table tennis (or at least 'ping pong') on the front page of newspapers worldwide.

The story goes that Glenn Cowan, a flamboyant, shaggy-haired member of the US team, was practising with the Chinese player Liang Geliang when a Japanese official came along and told them they had to pack up for the afternoon

because the training area was being closed for the day. Cowan rushed out to get on his team bus, only to find that it had left without him. An unknown Chinese player apparently then waved Cowan onto the Chinese team's bus to give him a lift back to his team base. After a bit of awkward chat through an interpreter between Cowan and some of the players near the front of the bus, Zhuang Zedong, one of the Chinese greats, took it upon himself to come up from the back of the bus and present Cowan with a silk-screen portrait of the Huangshan Mountains in a friendship gesture that became the catalyst for a thawing of relations between the West and the People's Republic. (All Cowan had on him at the time as a reciprocal gift was a comb, but later he found a T-shirt bearing the legend 'Let it Be', which he presented in return.)

By the time they all got off the bus, a fair section of the world's press had somehow got wind of what was going on and had assembled to record this momentous and unlikely meeting of minds. The following day many Japanese newspapers carried photographs of Cowan and his new best friend.

Cynics may wonder at what was going on behind the scenes, but legend has it that China's then leader, Mao Zedong, read about the two players' meeting and decided as a result that he would invite the US team to come straight from the World Championships to play some friendly games behind the 'bamboo curtain'. Rather one-sided matches were played, the Great Wall was visited and a good time was had by all. This paved the way for a secret visit to China by Henry Kissinger a few months later, to be followed by President Nixon's visit in February of the following year. But it wasn't just the Americans who were invited. The English team in Nagoya, comprising Trevor Taylor, Alan Hyde, Tony Clayton, Alan Ransome, Jill



Zhuang Zedong, one of the Chinese greats, took it upon himself to come up from the back of the bus and present Cowan with a silk-screen portrait...

Hammersley and Pauline Piddock (Chester Barnes and Denis Neale had fallen out with the ETTA and didn't go), also got the telephone call from the powers-that-be which meant that instead of getting on the plane back to Heathrow they would be heading for Beijing. Jill Hammersley (now Jill Parker) recalls her experiences of visiting the mecca of table tennis: "We were playing in 25,000-seater venues where everyone was wearing the same clothes. Outside, as Westerners, we were the objects of great interest and followed everywhere. I remember on one day we went on a shopping trip and later, after we had got back to the hotel, an official turned up with a button in his hand. It had fallen off Alan Hyde's jacket and they had realised it must be one of ours!"

Jill was obviously aware that the trip carried wider political significance but such concerns were very much in the background. "As a player you just concentrated on your game," she says. The only sour note for Jill on the trip was the Chinese habit of obviously throwing games in the name of international friendship. Two years later Jill's now husband Don Parker joined Des Douglas, Paul Day, Nicky Jarvis, Andy Barden, Anita Stevenson, Karenza Matthews and Scotland's David Fraser on a return visit to China. Like Jill before him, Don found it strange being in a country where the top table tennis players were treated almost like David Beckham, though this being Communist China in the 1970s, without the lucrative sponsorship deals and the misspelt tattoos.

On the table Don was trying, without much success, to get to grips with his first taste of a long-pimpled 'twiddler' in the form of Huang Liang. Off the table, he was experiencing the slightly sinister chaperoning that became a hallmark of these trips. Says Don: "I remember on one of our rest days a few of us decided to go for a swim. We were taken to the local public pool, which was full of Chinese families enjoying themselves. Suddenly an official blew a whistle

A VOTE FOR TABLE TENNIS

If Gordon Brown got a taste for table tennis following his trip to China, he could always enrol at the MPs' table tennis club. This group of around 20 TT enthusiasts meet when schedules allow on a Monday evening in a room on the lower floor of 7 Millbank in London. Michael Foster, Labour MP for Hastings and Rye, is club secretary and clearly a huge fan of our sport. "We organised the club partly to recognise the fact that table tennis makes such a huge contribution to the nation's fitness levels - it's such an affordable and accessible sport," he says.

The club was formed four years ago with the help of Brian Spicer, the ETTA's London development officer, and uses a table supplied by the ETTA. Matthew Syed, who in 2001 stood as the Labour candidate against the Tories' John Redwood for the Wokingham parliamentary seat, has been down on three or four occasions to do a spot of coaching.

One of the club's most memorable nights saw the House of Commons taking on the House of Lords, with Michael Foster seeing off former Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont in the final.

Sadly, at the time of writing the club had not met for several months. The reason? "The problem is that we haven't got a room where we can leave the table up," says Foster.

The image of Norman Lamont and friends having to take the table down after playing is surely one to savour...

and ordered all the Chinese people out so that we could have the pool to ourselves. We felt so guilty after that we only stayed in the pool for about five minutes."

In 1995 Don went back to China and noticed "massive changes" everywhere. "There was so much more colour than when we were there before," he says. However, when he tried to talk to a Chinese girl about the notorious killings in Tiananmen Square six years earlier it was clear that the tight Communist control of the media was still very much in evidence. "It was almost like she had never heard of what had gone on there," says Don.

In 2006 eight members of the American team that had helped kick-start the era of 'ping pong diplomacy' returned to China to mark the 35th anniversary of those momentous events. At the Zhongguancun primary school in Beijing they again took on their Chinese counterparts, probably with little more success than they had first time around. But Glenn Cowan, the man who arguably had started it all, was not there. In a sad

human postscript to this tale of massive international forces at work, Cowan died of a heart attack during bypass surgery in 2004, following psychiatric treatment.

Zhuang Zedong, who had cut through the red tape of Communist officialdom and presented Cowan with the silk-screen pennant on the Chinese team bus in 1971, called from Beijing to express his sympathy.



County Championships

Juniors Division 2C

Yorkshire Veterans regained the County Championship Premier Division at Ashford as this season's competition came to a conclusion.

The White Rose county began the weekend at the top of the table, level on six points with reigning champions Leicestershire and Kent, but with a superior sets advantage, with all three counties two points ahead of a dangerous looking Sussex.

Kent were rocked before the weekend with the withdrawal of top man Joe Kennedy through injury and fell to Sussex 6-4 in their opening encounter, and it was this round of fixtures that saw Yorkshire move to the top of the pile on their own, as a hard fought 6-4 victory brought them another two points which could not be repeated by Leicestershire, who were comfortably beaten by Surrey 7-3, who were strengthened by the inclusion of Marcia Ma.

The highlight of the "war of the roses" clash was a crucial victory by Yorkshire's Mick Stead, who came from 5-1 down in the deciding game to beat Keith Williams who is currently ranked no 5 in the country, and although this victory occurred in the second set of the match it proved crucial to the outcome of the match and the whole division.

Yorkshire, Sussex and Leicestershire all scored victories on Saturday afternoon with Yorkshire once again recording a hard fought 6-4 victory against Kent, with Stead once more performing with distinction with two victories.

The Yorkshire against Sussex match first thing Sunday morning was always going to be a vital match and so it

proved, starting in spectacular fashion with Stead beating current English ranked no 2 Ritchie Venner in five thrilling sets.

Once again the Yorkshire squad of Keith Rodger, Stead, Richard Lightowler, Tim Dyson and Helen Shields all picked up sets as another hard fought 6-4 victory was achieved.

With Sussex now out of the picture, a 7-3 victory by Leicestershire over Kent saw Yorkshire requiring just three sets against Leicestershire in the final match to be sure of the title.

The first set of the final match saw Rodger score a four game victory over Dave Gannon, followed by a very nervy four game win by Lightowler over Keith Fellows to put Yorkshire tantalisingly one set from the title and they did not have very long to wait. In the third set Stead completed a splendid weekend with a three game victory over English ranked no 8 Chris Rogers as the celebrations began for Yorkshire.

Reigning champions Leicestershire were not going to roll over despite being deposed of their crown, and perhaps wanted to set down a marker for next season as they won the remainder of the sets with the exception of a win from player of the weekend, Stead, over Fellows as they ran out 6-4 victors to surrender their title on sets advantage.

Sadly Lancashire and Devonshire are lost to the Premier League next season and whilst Lancashire was in the mix along with Middlesex and Surrey, the north west county finished their campaign on four points, one point short of Middlesex and Surrey. Unfortunately Devonshire was unable

to field a team for the second weekend and their relegation was already assured.

Veterans Division 2A

The second weekend was played at the marvellous Halifax TTC and saw the Norfolk 1 team of Lindsey Dare, Phil Logsdon, Mats Olsson and Stephen Howlett just pip Yorkshire 3 for the Veterans Division 2A title. After the previous weekend, held at St Neots, they were lying in first place on equal points and just two games difference from Yorkshire's strength in depth squad with Sandra Rider, Janet Adams, Mark Rycroft, Darren Page, Richard Priestley, Neil Harris and Julien Gittens to choose from.

Saturday morning commenced with Norfolk against the strong Durham side of Shirley Gelder, Dave Robson, Tony Gelder and Keith Weatherby looking to avoid relegation after turning out a weaker side on the first weekend. It was Robson who took first blood, taking out Olsson 11-9, 11-9, 9-11, 8-11, 7-11, but it was not to be for Durham and they eventually lost 7-3 with England no. 16 Logsdon not dropping a single set.

Meanwhile Yorkshire were playing Notts and this match probably sealed Yorkshire's fate, as they only drew 5-5 as England no. 26 Trevor Kerry gained a maximum, supported by Stoddart and Glossop with one each.

The mighty Norfolk met the goliath Yorkshire in the afternoon for glory or shame. It was Logsdon who opened up the match beating Richard Priestley 6-11, 7-11, 11-7, 4-11. However, Yorkshire then raced into a 3-1 lead with wins by Rycroft and then Page, with Rider and Rycroft in the mixed

doubles. Norfolk's Stephen Howlett pulled one back against Priestley and then Rider made it 4-2 with a straight sets win over Dare. Norfolk's determination to win promotion showed through as they battled back to eventually settle for a hard fought 5-5 draw.

On Sunday, Norfolk could only lose promotion as they took on Notts in their last match and they looked to have secured the title as they raced into a 5-1 lead. However, Notts pulled it back to 5-3 before the clash of unbeaten Kerry against Logsdon, with only a single loss in the first weekend to Northants' Steve Silk (deuce in the fifth). It looked like it was Kerry's match as he won the first two sets 10, 10, however Logsdon was not going to allow Norfolk to be denied promotion and he pulled back the next three sets 7, 8 and 6. The last mixed doubles went to Norfolk as they sealed a 7-3 match victory and the title with Yorkshire beating Durham 6-4.

Veterans Division 3A

Lincolnshire overwhelmed all other counties and scored a memorable seven win performance to take the division by three clear points from runners-up Leicestershire.

South Yorkshire had the most disappointing weekend, as lying in second place after the first weekend, trailing Lincolnshire by only one point, they only managed two draws from three matches, including a 7-3 defeat in their last match against Lincolnshire, which allowed Leicestershire seconds to overhaul South Yorkshire and emulate their own first team by finishing runners-up.

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



Chris Rogers (C) Photos by Paul Stansfeild

Trevor Kerry

Mike Stead

ITTF World junior circuit.

The English squad visit Hungary and Sweden for rounds of the World Team Championships



HUNGARY - BOYS' TEAM

The team finished top in their group by beating Serbia 1 3-2, Austria 2 3-1 and losing to Ukraine 2-3. In round 1 they met Romania 1, unfortunately going out 1-3. It was Liam Pitchford who managed to pull out their sole win (3-2) when he faced fellow Europe Youth Top 10 competitor Hunor Szocs (ROU).

Final - France 2 were the eventual winners beating Poland 3-1.

Girls' Team Final - There was an all Korean final with Korea 2 beating Korea 1 3-0.

Boys' Singles - There were mixed fortunes in the singles events, Christopher Doran unfortunately didn't make it out of the group stages whilst Damien Nicholls lost out in the first round to Patryk Jendrzewski (Pol).

Gavin Evans, England's top cadet, managed to go one round further, but it was Liam Pitchford, the player with the least amount of international experience, who really shone for England, causing the shock of the tournament when he beat the winner of the Joola German Junior Open, Kristian Karlsson (SWE) en route to round 3.

Rd 1 - Liam Pitchford bt. Paulo Rocha (BRA), 11-7, 11-6, 11-7, 11-8. Gavin Evans bt. Ivan Zeljko (HRV) 3-11, 11-8, 12-10, 11-9, 11-3. Patryk Jendrzewski (POL) bt. Damien Nicholls 11-5, 9-11, 11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 11-2.

Rd 2 - Liam Pitchford bt. Kristian Karlsson (SWE) 11-3, 11-9, 2-11, 12-10, 13-11. Jun Seung Lee (KOR) bt. Gavin Evans 11-9, 5-11, 5-11, 8-11.

Rd 3 - Romain Lorentz (FRA) bt. Liam Pitchford 11-8, 11-8, 11-5, 6-11, 9-11, 11-9.

Final - Mattias Karlsson (SWE) beat Thomas Le Breton (FRA) 11-5, 11-3, 11-2, 11-5.

Girls' Singles - The girls' event culminated in a thrilling seven match game with the win eventually going to Korea's Ha Eun Yang.

Final - Ha Eun Yang (KOR) bt. Barbora Balazova (SVK) 11-6, 9-11, 11-7, 10-12, 8-11, 11-5, 13-15.

Boys' Doubles - In the doubles two pairings made it through as far as round 3, with Christopher Doran and Damien Nicholls taking it to the wire.

Rd 1 - Seung Jun Lee/In Cheol Shin (KOR) bt. Gavin Evans/Cedric Nuytinck (BEL) 6-11, 5-11, 11-9, 2-11. Christopher Doran/Damien Nicholls bt. Daniel Gabor Kiss/Tamas Lakatos Tamas (HUN) 7-11, 11-9, 11-6, 6-11, 11-6. Liam Pitchford teamed/Ludovic Bierny (BEL) BYE.

Rd 2 - Christopher Doran/Damien Nicholls bt. Thomas Le Breton (FRA) and Victorien Le Guen (FRA) 11-8, 11-8, 6-11, 14-12. Liam Pitchford/Ludovic Bierny (BEL) bt. Filip Cipin and Fucec (HRV) 5-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8, 5-11.

Rd 3 - Viktor Brood/Anthony Tran (SWE) bt. Christopher Doran/Damien Nicholls 14-12, 11-4, 16-14. Patryk Jendrzewski/Daniel Puchalski (POL) bt. Liam Pitchford/Ludovic Bierny (BEL) 11-9, 11-7, 11-6.

Final - Daniel Kosiba and Peter Sebestyen (HUN) beat Seung Jun Lee and In Cheol Shin (KOR) 7-11, 9-11, 11-6, 5-11.

SWEDEN

Less than a week after the Hungarian Open the young English players are back in action.

Boys' Singles - Mathew Ware was the only English player to make it out of the group stages, winning round 1 4-1

against Juan Restrepo, but being knocked out in round 2 when he met one of the large group of dominant young Swedish players, Simon Arvidsson.

Rd 1 - Mathew Ware bt. Juan Restrepo (COL) 11-8, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8.

Rd 2 - Simon Arvidsson (SWE) bt. Mathew Ware 13-11, 6-11, 11-6, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9.

Final - Alexander Shibaev (RUS) bt. Jin Ueda (JPN) 7-11, 11-1, 11-9, 11-6, 8-11, 12-10.

Girls' Singles Final - Wenting Ma (NOR) bt. Misaki Morizono (JPN) 11-7, 11-6, 11-5, 12-10.

Boys' Doubles - There were three teams with English representation, but only one all English team, which was Sean Cullen and Mathew Ware. Round 1 saw Gavin Evans teamed up with Cedric Nuytinck of Belgium go out after a close 5 set match, whilst Liam Pitchford went through in straight sets and the all English pair Sean and Mathew managed to reach round 2, but that was as far as the English boys would progress.

Rd 1 - David Karas/Tibor Sekera (SVK) bt. Gavin Evans/ Cedric Nuytinck (BEL) 14-12, 11-8, 4-11, 7-11, 11-5.

Ludovic Bierny (BEL)/Liam Pitchford bt. Pavel Sirucek/Karel Volny (CZE) 11-6, 12-10, 11-9. Sean Cullen/Mathew Ware got a bye.

Rd 2 - So Ri Ham/Dong Hyun Kim (KOR) bt. Ludovic Bierny (BEL)/Liam Pitchford 11-8, 9-11, 11-3, 11-8.

Josue Donado (ESA)/Juan Restrepo (COL) bt. Sean Cullen/Mathew Ware 11-8, 12-10, 11-4.

Final - Kristian Karlsson/Mattias Oversjo (SWE) bt. Tayo Nomura/Jin Ueda (JPN) 11-9, 11-3, 8-11, 11-7.

Girls' Doubles Final - Yu Jin Jo/Ha Eun Yang (KOR) bt. Yuko Fuji (JPN)/Megumi Okazaki (JPN) 11-8, 13-11, 4-11, 6-11.

With many of our players out in China it was down to Gavin Evans, Liam Pitchford, Christopher Doran, Damien Nicholls, Mathew Ware and Sean Cullen to represent the ETTA.



There were mixed fortunes in the singles events, Christopher Doran unfortunately didn't make it out of the group stages whilst Damien Nicholls lost out in the first round to Patryk Jendrzewski (Pol).

British League

FUSION JUMP FROM FOURTH TO FIRST

Rarely, if ever, has there been such a turnaround in the final week of the season, as in this year's Division One South. Fusion I went into the last weekend with a modest 10 points in a secure fourth place, and surely could never have expected, even in their wildest dreams, that they would be driving home on Sunday night crowned Champions. Not only did they win their four games with four excellent performances, but their nearest challengers all lost vital matches. The leaders Brighton suffered most, despite beating second placed DML Woolwell 6-2 in round 11, again, a crucial result from a Fusion perspective. Unfortunately, after that Brighton never reached the same heights again. Brighton lost 5-3 to York Gardens I, 5-3 against Generation 2 I and rather dejectedly, 7-1 in their last match, to Cippenham I.

More of the Champions Fusion, represented by Tommy Cutler, Remi Petrosius, Simon Phillipz and John Dennison in all four games. Their weekend started in perfect fashion when they romped home 8-0 against Byng Hall I. They won the first seven games by three-nil margins (almost unheard of in this division) before Robert Worrall stopped the rot and pushed John Dennison all the way, finally succumbing 8-11, 11-6, 5-11, 15-13, 11-13.

Fusion's Saturday afternoon clash against second placed DML Woolwell saw them edge home 5-3. Remi Petrosius and Simon Phillipz were both undefeated and both

players turned in vital performances. Petrosius edged out DML's top player Darren Reed 11-5, 11-8, 9-11, 13-15, 11-9, whilst Phillipz's 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9 victory over England no. 5 lady Marketa Myskova levelled the scores at 3-3. Good going as Marketa had beaten no less a player than Tommy Cutler (ranked no. 32 in England) in her first singles. By this stage Fusion had the bit between their teeth and Remi Petrosius gave his side a 4-3 lead by getting the better of Mike Short 12-10, 11-5, 11-9. John Dennison wrapped up what really was a "four-point" victory by getting the better of Kevin Buddell 11-8, 11-7, 11-13, 11-9.

Fusion added another two points to their tally on the Sunday morning by getting the better of York Gardens 6-2. Remi Petrosius was no match for the hard-hitting Dorian Robinson succumbing 7-11, 5-11, 5-11, but after Tommy Cutler had beaten Wing-Yung Chan 11-9, 9-11, 8-11, 11-8, 11-9 Fusion took charge and they never looked like losing. Cutler showed how adept he is at dealing with the "big-hitters" by getting the better of Dorian Robinson 13-11, 11-8, 11-7.

It was all resting on the last game and Fusion must have sensed that they were in the driving seat. They didn't produce their best display of the season, but a 5-3 victory over Generation 2 I was just what was needed, and they "sealed" it at 5-2. Remi Petrosius and Simon Phillipz were both undefeated, whilst Wesley Bush-Harris scored the most notable win for the losers, a fluctuating five-end victory over Tommy Cutler. Generation 2 no.

Tables

DIVISION 1 NORTH	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Elgre Nottingham I	10	4	-	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

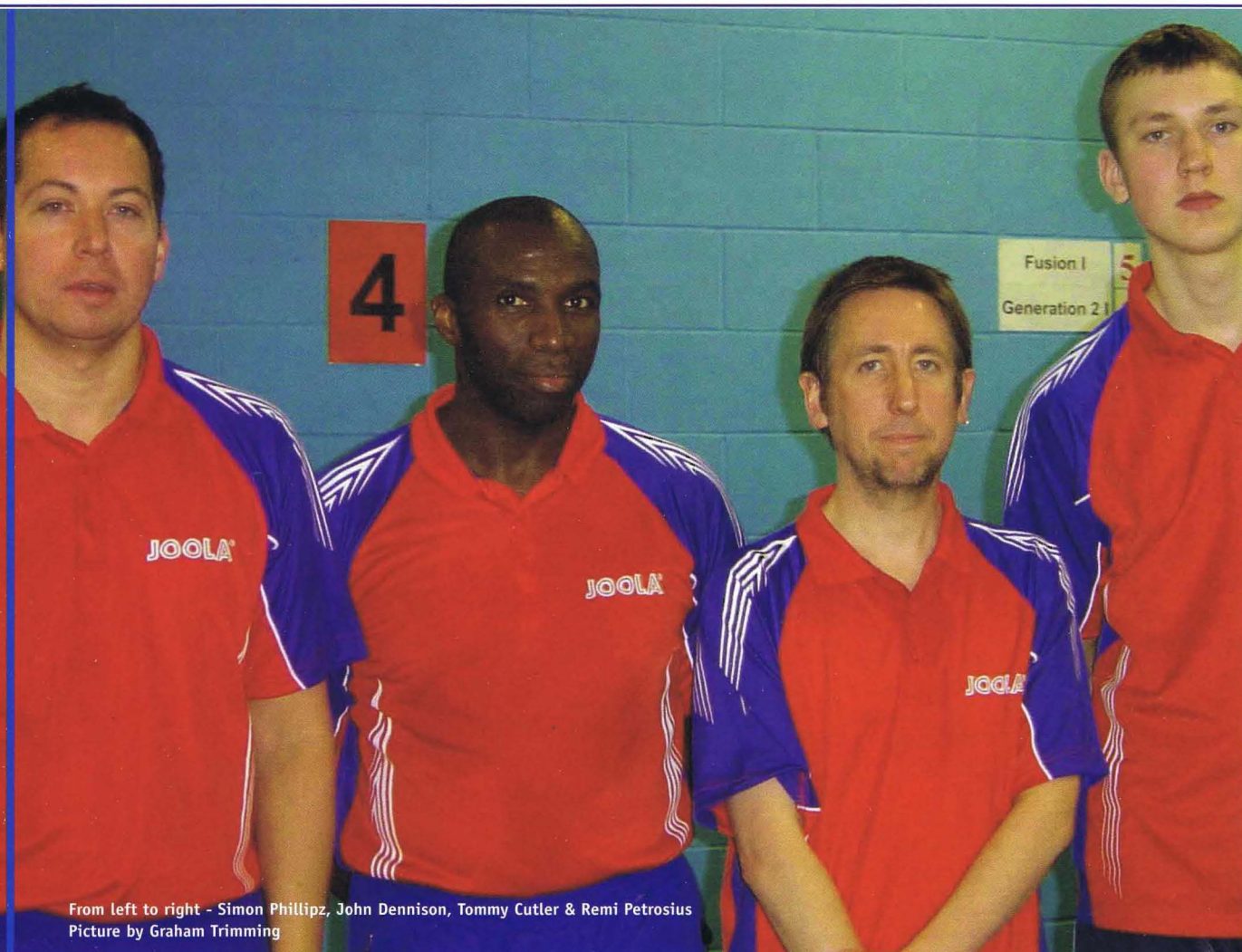
DIVISION 2 NORTH	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barrow	8	4	2	70	42	20
Fastbats	9	2	3	70	42	20
Sheffield	7	3	4	69	43	17
Elgre Nottingham II	5	7	2	60	52	17
Derwent II	5	2	7	48	64	12
Northfield	4	3	7	47	65	11
Market Rasen	3	4	7	52	60	10
Ormesby III	1	3	10	32	80	5

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	-	86	26	27
Fusion II	10	1	3	72	40	21
DHS London Progress IV	9	1	4	67	45	19
Mossford	9	-	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	-	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	-	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	-	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
Kinghurst 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



From left to right - Simon Phillipz, John Dennison, Tommy Cutler & Remi Petrosius
Picture by Graham Trimming

three Ashley Willetts, recently featured in Table Tennis News magazine, having visited Hunan in China and played mixed doubles with Guo Yue and men's doubles with Timo Boll, contributed a hard-fought win for the

losing side. He edged out Dennison 15-13, 11-8, 14-16, 11-8. One suspects that any form of Table Tennis must seem a little slow to him having witnessed the lightning reflexes of Miss Yue at such close hand!

DIVISION 3 NORTH							DIVISION 3 SOUTH							DIVISION 3 SOUTH AND WEST						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Halton II	10	2	2	67	45	22	York Gardens II	12	1	1	80	32	25	DML Woolwell II	10	2	-	66	30	22
Murrayfield	9	2	3	66	46	20	TTK Greenhouse II	12	-	2	79	33	24	B&S Group	6	3	3	58	38	15
Uxbridge I	8	3	3	65	47	19	SEH-Britannia Ipswich I	8	1	5	63	49	17	Westfield II	7	1	4	51	45	15
Woodfield I	6	1	7	53	59	13	OLOP Impact II	4	4	6	56	56	12	NWF	4	3	5	46	50	11
Hartlepool	5	2	7	56	56	12	Hastings	5	2	7	46	66	12	Generation 2 II	3	4	5	47	49	10
Drumchapel Glasgow III	4	4	6	54	58	12	Horsham III	3	3	8	39	73	9	Fusion III	3	2	7	40	56	8
Elgre Nottingham III	3	2	9	46	66	8	Cippenham II	3	2	9	48	64	8	Brighton III	1	1	10	28	68	3
Formby	1	4	9	41	71	6	Ellenborough II	2	1	11	37	75	5	Oxford Fireplace Centre III	Expeded					
DIVISION 4 NORTH							DIVISION 4 SOUTH							DIVISION 4 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts		W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunderland	12	-	2	87	25	24	Brighton City	14	-	-	95	17	28	Crusaders	12	-	2	78	34	24
Pudsey	11	2	1	76	36	24	Carrara Polska II	10	1	3	82	30	21	Fellows Cranleigh	11	1	2	74	38	23
St. Mary's Hull	10	-	4	75	37	20	Southampton West	8	2	4	72	40	18	DHS London Progress VI	7	3	4	61	51	17
Barnet Green	8	2	4	71	41	18	DHS London Progress V	7	2	5	55	57	16	Ashford III	6	4	4	63	49	16
Rotherham Scorpions II	5	1	8	48	64	11	DML Woolwell III	5	2	7	50	62	12	TTK Greenhouse III	6	2	6	62	50	14
Chesterfield II	4	2	8	50	62	10	Batts Team Peniel III	3	1	10	41	71	7	York Gardens III	4	3	7	49	63	11
Isle of Man	1	1	12	22	90	3	Byng Hall II	3	-	11	26	86	6	Uxbridge II	1	2	11	30	82	4
Drumchapel Glasgow IV	1	-	13	19	93	2	SEH Britannia Ipswich II	2	-	12	27	85	4	Woodfield II	1	1	12	31	81	3



Butterfly Grand Prix Doncaster Open

The popularity of these open events continues to flourish, attracting a full house of entries, with players flying in from Ireland and as far afield as Norway!

Whilst just across the Bawtree Road the thunder of hooves and loud cheers could be heard coming from the famous Doncaster racecourse, a virtually unknown young man from Norway was the "dark horse" of the event: Lui Wanzhe brushed aside the likes of Matt Ware, Shaun Marples, Craig Howieson, and finally Garth Kinlocke to take the men's band 1 crown.

The women's band 1 final was an all Irish affair between Claire Nelson and Amanda Mogeey, it was a great see-saw match with Claire Nelson running out the winner.

As is often the case in racing when the odds-on favourites were being turned over, certainly this pattern was emerging with one after another title going to the youngsters, as outsiders! Yet another junior, Emran Hussein, was hacking up in men's band 2, whilst 14 year old Natalie Slater was finding the going easy in women's band two. Mary Fuller, fresh from her successful trip to Sweden, was taken right to the wire by the rapidly improving Kirsty Wilson in the women's band 3 final, with Mary asserting in the final strides.

Momentarily, 40 year old Chris Clinton seeded at two, broke the pattern by taking men's band 3, before the bookies were once again rubbing their hands and filling their satchels with losing bets as more long shots were coming into the winners enclosure. Sunderland's Graham Barella got over the final hurdle to take men's band 4, whilst John McBeath was quickly out of the stalls to outstay all his opponents in men's class 5. Fifteen year old Irish international Sam Hanley cruised his way to take the men's band six title from the Keyworth club's Kai Lu, with some strong offensive play, winning in the fourth end.

Scotland's Gavin Rungay was not going down without a fight, with all the youngsters queuing up to take his men's title. Gavin was made to fight all the way to reach the final where he faced Ben Barlow.

Right from the start of the match Rungay returned everything that Barlow could throw at

him, with some awesome long range counter topspin rallies that had the packed audience on the edge of their seats. Barlow simply ran out of steam, having earlier produced probably one of his finest recent tournament winning runs, which left Rungay to take the men's open title, and put him one step nearer to collecting the Butterfly Grand Prix points winner's cheque for £1,650 at the end of the series.

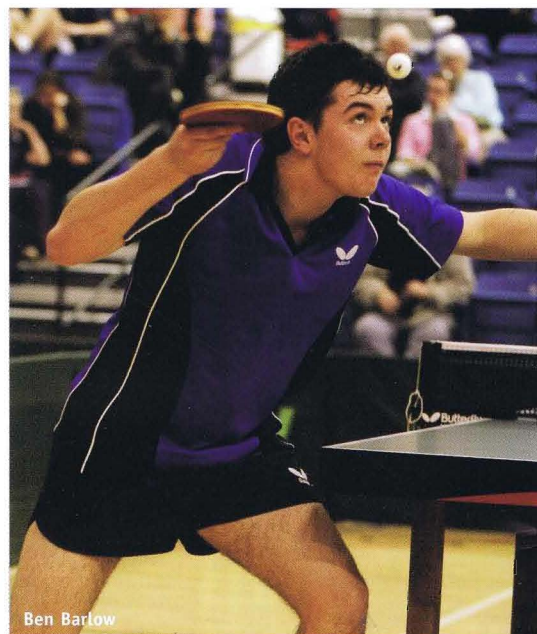
The all Chinese women's open easily matched the drama and tension of the men's event. Liu Na and Shu Ying Xu treated the packed centre court area with some oriental wizardry. Words cannot describe the magic these two charming ladies brought to the Doncaster Dome, with table tennis that was simply out of this world. Nail-biting long hard hitting rallies featured in every single point, coming from all areas of the table, with drama and tension throughout the five sets final. It was Liu Na who managed to cross the winning line, 16-14 in the fifth leg, after an unforgettable match that was given a standing ovation from the appreciative audience.

Thirteen year old Laura Robinson from Yorkshire in her first Grand Prix was creating news by defeating another young star Chloe Whyte in the group stage of the women's under 21 event, eventually going out to Naomi Owen in the first round.

Naomi faced Claire Owens in a Wales v Ireland final, top seed Naomi proved too strong for Claire with her wealth of international experience coming into play, taking the title in four sets.

Could anyone stop the Chinese star, Lui Wanzhe, in the under 21 men's, after his brilliant displays earlier in the band 1, and men's open last 16 placing?

Wanzhe, the 17-year-old resident Norway penholder, was made to work on his route to the final Will Maybanks found the extra resolve, to set up a final against Wanzhe. Wanzhe continued in his devastating form to outplay Maybanks, and pick up the winner's cheque.



Ben Barlow

RESULTS AND PLACINGS

Men's Singles Gavin Rungay (Sco) bt. Ben Barlow (Ys) 11-5, 11-7, 12-10

Women's Singles Lui Na (Ni) bt. Shu Ying Xu (Chn) 6-11, 11-8, 5-11, 11-9, 16-14 **U21 Men's** Lui Wanzhe (Nor) bt. Will Maybanks (He) 11-7, 12-10, 11-6

U21 Women's Naomi Owen (Wa) bt. Claire Nelson (Ni) 11-8, 11-3, 8-11, 11-9

Veteran Men Abdul Wuraola (Sy) bt. Julien Gittens (Y) 11-9, 11-9, 11-6

Restricted Men Stephen Denny (Y) bt. Matt Pernet (Cv) 11-9, 12-10, 11-7

Men's Band 1 Lui Wanzhe (Nor) bt. Garth Kinlocke (Ha) 11-5, 11-3, 11-8

Men's Band 2 Emran Hussein (E) bt. Matt Pernet (Sy) 11-8, 11-4, 7-11, 11-9

Men's Band 3 Chris Clinton (Y) bt. Scott Crawford (Cu) 8-11, 11-8, 7-11, 11-3, 11-8 **Men's Band 4** Graham Barella (Du) bt. Joe Higgs (Wo) 8-11, 11-9, 11-7, 12-10

Men's Band 5 John McBeath (Ha) bt. Michael Hahn (Du) 11-6, 11-8, 11-6

Men's Band 6 Sam Hanley (Ni) bt. Kai LU (Sy) 6-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-8 **Women's Band 1** Claire Nelson (Irl) bt. Amanda Mogeey (Irl) 8-11, 4-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-5

Women's Band 2 Natalie Slater (St) bt. Malgorzata Muda (Mi) 11-6, 11-8, 11-8

Women's Band 3 Mary Fuller (Y) bt. Kirsty Wilson (K) 11-5, 4-11, 11-9, 13-11

a tribute...

FRANCES JARVIS

Mrs Frances Jarvis, the Devonshire County Table Tennis Association (DCTTA) President for over 30 years, died on 1st November 2007 at the age of 89.

Keith Ponting, General Secretary (DCTTA) and (ETTA) Vice-Chairman of Competitions said:

"Although not being active in recent years, Frances played a major role in the development of the County Association in its early years and continued to be heavily involved for many years in a variety of capacities, always willing to help if called upon to do so. There is no doubt that the sport of table tennis owes her a great debt of gratitude." In her early years, Frances used to love to play tennis and table tennis. Her husband, Roy, was a top class table tennis player in Plymouth with the YMCA Club. Sadly he died at the age of 50. Frances was a county umpire who enjoyed doing national league, county and local championships at the Plymouth and District League Headquarters.

"Frances was a lovely lady who will be badly missed by all those who were privileged to know and work with her."

By John Vincent

DEREK LANGLEY

Devonshire County Table Tennis Association

Derek started playing table tennis as a teenager in south London. After his National Service in the RAF, he worked in the City and played in the London Banks League for Kleinwort Benson, until he moved to Newbury in 1974. He started a coaching club at Kleinworts with Wally Smith (father of England international Mandy Smith), who was very influential on Derek as a coach.

Derek's qualities were soon recognised at regional and national level after he successfully organised coach education course after coach education course, attracting coaches and potential coaches from the whole of the South West of England.

Refusing to neglect excellence, Derek was instrumental in setting up a satellite Centre of Excellence and a parallel grass roots programme at Shaw House School, Newbury. This created many local star internationals including Dave Barr, Mandy Smith, Dave Reeves and Julie Norman. It also enabled starry-eyed beginners to train alongside their heroes.

In my opinion, Derek's greatest hour was back in 1984 when the Newbury League celebrated its 50th anniversary. Led by Derek, a strong Newbury organising team of Keith Jones, Bruce McKenzie and many others put together a memorable bonanza weekend of table tennis activities - coaching, come 'n try it, play-the-robot - culminating in a Newbury v England match watched by 400 spectators. The



England team included National Champions Alison Broe (nee Gordon) and Carl Prean.

This was Derek's baby: he sat back and didn't step forward to receive a standing ovation he thoroughly deserved - he left that to others. This was typical of the man.

Derek you were a true gentleman and a dear, dear friend. The whole of table tennis and beyond mourns your untimely passing.

Dave Fairholm,
Former Director of Coaching England & Scotland

"Frances was a lovely lady who will be badly missed by all those who were privileged to know and work with her."

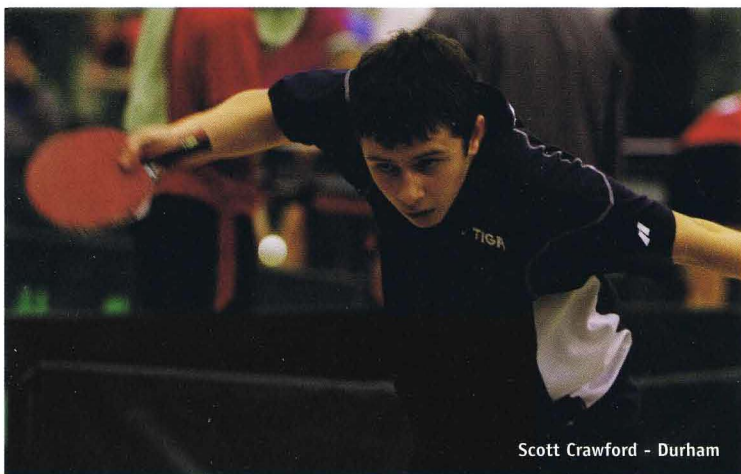
"Derek you were a true gentleman and a dear, dear friend."

County Notes

Berkshire by Colin Dyke

The Senior second team got their season under way with a series of matches at Harlow. Regrettably they found the competition a bit too strong and lost all three matches to Sussex II (3-7), Sussex III (2-8) and Essex II (2-8). However, one success story emerged in the form of 14 year old Ayonija Sundararajan, making her senior county debut. She won 5 of her 6 matches including wins over Yolanda King, Sally Hughes, Nikki Kennard, Lisa Standen and Sara Coggon. Her only setback was a 3-1 defeat by Essex's Shelley Uzal. Rachel Farquhar also had a good win over Standen, whilst the only men's success came from Steve Murgatroyd with a great win over Essex's Martin Kubrt in five. The Veterans first team has only two

points to show from five matches. However, they can count themselves unlucky as they have lost three by 6-4 margins and drawn the other two. Dave Barr picked up good wins over John Robinson and Tony Clayton in the 6-4 defeat by Dorset. Hari Gehlot and Sharon Mitchell added to Berkshire's score. Dave Barr again scored two comfortable victories in the 6-4 defeat by Essex, which was added to by a mixed doubles and Hari Gehlot's victory over Fred Dove. Finally Barr maintained his 100% record with a further two wins in a draw with Kent II when he beat Chris Knight and Phil Saxby. Dave Hilbeck won a thrilling five setter against Ian Gordon, who was also beaten three straight by Hari Gehlot. Success in the men's doubles clinched the draw.



Scott Crawford - Durham

It was good to see a Butterfly Satellite Grand Prix tournament returning to Cheshire. Despite being only just before Christmas there was a very good entry, with Darius Knight and Helen Lower among those attracted to the Halton venue.

Other results:

Veterans 3 lost Kent 5ths 1-9
Veterans 4 beat Beds 2nds 7-3, beat Hertfordshire 6ths 9-1, lost Norfolk 4ths 3-7, beat Northants 3rds 6-4, beat Oxford 3rds 6-4.
Veterans 6 lost Somerset 2nds 4-6, and Herefordshire 2nds 3-7.

MAIDENHEAD CLOSED CHAMPIONSHIPS

Maidenhead was the first town this season to stage its Closed Championships. Ramesh Gehlot from the Kingfisher Club took all three major titles with the help of his doubles partners, Phil Prady and Sharon Mitchell. Gemma Chapman just missed out on this record on the ladies side winning the singles and doubles but just losing out in the mixed. In the men's singles final Ramesh beat his son Abhay, who will no doubt get his own back in years to come.

Results:

Men's Singles: Ramesh Gehlot bt. Abhay Gehlot 12-10, 11-6, 3-11, 12-10
Ladies Singles: Gemma Chapman bt. Sharon Mitchell 11-8, 12-10, 11-2
Men's Doubles: Ramesh Gehlot/Phil Prady bt. John Barclay/Nick Hansell 14-12, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8
Mixed Doubles: Ramesh Gehlot/Sharon Mitchell bt. Trevor Griffiths/Gemma Chapman 11-6, 7-11, 9-11, 11-9, 12-10
Ladies Doubles: Gemma Chapman/Jan Chapman bt. Vivienne Davies/Moto Mitcham 11-5, 11-8, 11-4
Men's Veteran Singles: John Barclay bt. Colin Dyke 11-6, 11-8, 11-8
Ladies Veteran Singles: Sharon Mitchell bt. Kathy Dudley 11-9, 11-6, 7-11, 11-2
Tweenies Singles: Abhay Gehlot bt. Tim Goodship 4-11, 11-7,

8-11, 11-6, 12-10

Premier Division: Tim Goodship bt. John Barclay 11-3, 3-11, 9-11, 11-6 Division 1: Eddie Mitchell bt. Ken Phillips 11-4, 11-4, 15-13 Division 2: Pat Maher bt. Stephen Davies 11-5, 11-8, 5-11, 11-5 Division 3 Bob Waters bt. Cheryl Gardner 11-8, 11-7, 11-5

Cheshire by Alan Blears

Ken Armson - Many tributes have been paid, and will be paid, to KEN ARMSON, M.B.E. The huge attendance at his funeral is a reflection of the high esteem in which he was held, and in table tennis circles nowhere will he be more missed than here in Lancashire and Cheshire.

I cannot improve on the so-appropriate wording of the sympathy card I sent to his family. I quote:- "In tribute and respect - Some people leave their mark on the world by the way they live and the difference they make to those whose lives they touch. Your loved one was just such a person - Remembering someone who was a real inspiration, and joining the many who pay their respects". Goodbye Ken, and thanks.

Cheshire Two Star Open - It was good to see a Butterfly Satellite Grand Prix tournament returning to Cheshire. Despite being only just before Christmas there was a very good entry, with Darius Knight and Helen Lower among those attracted to the Halton venue. Particularly encouraging was the number of young girls who entered, and who comprised most of the players in the women's banded events. The full results will no doubt be reported elsewhere, so I will highlight just a few here. Darius Knight and Helen Lower duly won their respective men's and women's singles, though neither had it all their own way against runners-up Kevin Dolder and Stephanie Donnelly. This was a particularly good tournament for Stephanie, whose career was threatened a few years ago by illness. Apart from taking Helen Lower to deuce in the first two games of the final, she won the Women's Band 1 against local girl Fiona Dennett.

Other local successes were Ken Connor in the veteran men's, Stephanie Howard and Helena Dennett winner and runner-up in the veteran women's, Jonathan Taylor runner-up in the U21 men's, and Rachel Baker winner of the U21 women's.

National Junior League, Round 2 - Premier:- Wirral 'A' second, two points behind Preston 'A'. Chris Hatton 92%. Div.1S:- Hillcourt 'A' lead, with 59 sets from 60. Jordan Potts, Dan Brown, Nabil Hudda 100%. Div.1N:- Halton 'A' three points clear of Tonge 'A'. Matthew McCormick 95%. Div.2S:- Wirral 'B' eleven points clear. John Simcox, Tom Hill, Chris Lewis 100%. Div.2N:-No Cheshire teams.

Addendum - Hardly had the region begun to come to terms with the loss of Ken Armson when news came through that Mike Johns had lost his own fight for life at

the age of just sixty. I only got to know Mike after his return to Cheshire from Hastings, but am very appreciative of the subsequent encouragement he gave to myself and my young players.

On behalf of the whole Cheshire table tennis community I would like to express our gratitude for everything Mike has done for the sport and to offer our condolences to Gail and his family.

Cumbria by Gordon Brown

A national honour came the way of a Furness youngster, when the 12-year-old from Ulverston Victoria High School, Connor Brockbank, won table tennis gold at the Norwich Union National Junior Disability Games at Stoke Mandeville.

Connor, who also had success at other sports at the Games, said: "Table tennis is my top sport, so I was delighted to get gold." He plays at Barrow Table Tennis Centre and Hoops Centre in the town.

Two years ago, a trophy competition was launched at Barrow Table Tennis Centre in memory of popular local coach Dave Southam. In those two years of slogging it out by the area's top primary schools, only one name has appeared on the trophy, known as the Dave Southam Memorial Trophy, that name is St Columba's Boys, who were again invited by top local coach Duncan Crawford to contest the trophy with Askam, Our Lady's, Dane Ghyll and Holy Family.

Askam started with an 8-0 win over Our Lady's, then Dane Ghyll beat Holy Family 6-2, St Columba's Boys beat their own girls 8-0, Askam beat Holy Family 7-1, Dane Ghyll beat St Columba's Girls 5-3, St Columba's Boys beat Our Lady's 8-0, Our Lady's and St Columba's Girls drew 4-4, Askam beat Dane Ghyll 8-0, St Columba's Boys beat Holy Family 7-1, Holy Family beat Our Lady's 6-2, St Columba's beat Dane Ghyll 8-0, Askam beat St Columba's Girls 8-0, Holy Family beat St Columba's Girls 6-2 and Dane Ghyll beat Our Lady's 5-3. The highlight was the clash in the last round of games between the two unbeaten sides, St Columba's Boys and Askam, with the former winning 5-3. Hats off individually to St Columba's Boys' players Stefan Weatherburn and Oliver Shipley, who remained unbeaten throughout the contest. Weatherburn has also been among the stars so far in Barrow's opening round of matches in the National Junior Premier League, with colleagues Ben and Jake Perry and Ryan Smith equally shining as the side have won four of their five opening matches. Luke Walker, 10, who was in the Askam team in the Dave Southam competition, is also hitting the high spots and was one of the favourites for the Cumbria U11 Championships, which he has won previously.

Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

Recently coached at NSTTA regional finals (Grantham), county junior Danny Lowe with his Springwell School

(Staveley) team-mates, Sean Cullen, Josh Packwood and Steven Stockley, put on a wicked performance to get through to National Finals. In the schools team competition you don't see many top players getting through, this is because they don't always go to the same school and while a couple of decent players can carry a team through the county and area events, they need a good third and fourth player to reach the Regional and especially National Finals.

Representing Derbyshire was also a Girls U16s team, with sisters Laura and Emma Shand from Uxbridge Burton playing for De Ferrer's School, Burton-on-Trent. There were a lot of teams from the North East and upper North West, but the above were the only Derbyshire connections. The Burton area is mainly Staffordshire schools, but as for the moment I think is still connected with Derbyshire, so I can also give league players who affiliated to Derbyshire a mention.

A Derbyshire junior school had a good time in the limelight recently, Matlock All Saints Junior School appeared on the regional news! Keen teacher Mrs Abbott and the help of local coach Brian Finney, their teams have been winning Derbyshire Schools' team events. The Chesterfield area has won the title for many years, so it is nice to see a school from somewhere else in the county doing well.

It is always good to see the sport starting early enough in primary education - I always say to schools that they (and the country as a whole) would work wonders in other sports as well as table tennis if they saw beyond the "youth club" image and used it as a key sport.

Unfortunately this unawareness still persists amongst those teachers who (although highly educated in general) are unlucky to have missed the appropriate table tennis education. They don't realise how valuable it can be as a pastime, socially in school and out, plus a real character building sport that encourages independence

and good sports-personship. Talking of improvement in our sport, Speedwell T.T.C. Staveley had another visit from Alan Cooke a month or so back, doing another successful course with many club members of all ages and visiting players having a keen couple of days. The key with these events is, as well as enjoying it, to remember what was done and said and practice it a lot!

Devon by John Smith

Two heavyweight teams battled it out in Division 2B of the senior County Championships for one promotion spot, and the Devon second team disappointingly missed out to Dorset. In their critical match, Chris Smith, playing at one, beat Mark Butler and James Whitehorn, both ranked above him, but Mike Hugh and Harry Cutler could not add to the men's score. Sally Smith and Sonja Wicks (substituting for the injured Liz May) both beat Joy Whitehorn, but Sally could not convert three match points against the highest ranked player in the division, English number 17, Sanya Clements, which would have achieved a vital draw.

With one day to go in this season's Plymouth heat of the National Junior League, the much improved Newton Abbot team of Ed Hyland, Scott Jessop and Sam Hurst will take some catching in Division One, although the teams from the West Exe and Torrington clubs are close behind. Woolwell Table Tennis Club started their ninth year of club championship events with 65 players entering the teams' competition, a record number at any session in the club's ten-year history.

Among those playing was David Wetherill whose thoroughly deserved selection for the Beijing Paralympics was recently announced. It was also appropriate that four people who have contributed so much to the club's rise should lead their teams to honours. Former ETTA Coach of the Year Paul Whiting and his wife, Debbie, teamed up with precocious 10 year old Erik

Wilson to take the Division One title, whilst Club Chairman Ian McLeod and Yetty Smith took the Division Two title with another extremely promising youngster, 12 year old Naomi Jackson from Okehampton. The Division Three event was won by three of this season's newcomers, all from St Boniface's College, Aidan Wiseman, Daniel Ridholls and James Keen.

The ever expanding club is in early talks regarding a move to a purpose built centre in Plymouth and should have a community coach in place soon to help increase its membership further.

While the experienced first team took a creditable third place in Division One, the club's strength in depth has been highlighted by the performance of their second team in this season's British League. Three of their longest serving younger members, Chris Smith, Harry Cutler and Sally Smith, were joined by Simon James, and they eventually stormed to the Division Three South and West title, winning by a massive seven points.

Durham by Kevin Wilson

There has been only one senior Grand Prix since my last county notes and this took place at the fantastic Dome at Doncaster. As always with the northern tournaments several Durham players took part, unfortunately this was one of our quieter Grand Prixes, but the county still managed one winner and one runner-up in the banded events.

Graeme Barella, who is quickly gaining a reputation in the lower bands as someone players want to avoid in the draw, took the men's band 4 title with a 3-1 victory over Joe Higgs (Wo). Michael Hahn, no stranger to banded titles himself this season, reached the final of band 5 but had to settle for the runner-up spot succumbing 3-0 to John McBeath (Ha).

The Durham County senior first team of David Meads, Michael Marsden, Mark Simpson, Andrew Leighton,

For the county's junior players the top competition over the last month was the second and final weekend of this season's Junior British League. All of Durham's interest lay in Boys Division 1 with the county's top junior, Mark Simpson, and the county's only team, Sunderland, both in this division.

Claire Wilson and Joanne Meads had high hopes of promotion back to the Premier Division of the county championships as they went into this season's matches. In particular with England number 10 David Meads at 1 and England number 14 Michael Marsden at 2, the men looked extremely strong in a team with no weak link. Their division, 1A, took place over two weekends and the team excelled in both, topping the table to regain their Premier Division status for next season.

It was a close run thing however, as Durham ended the season tied with Cleveland in second place on 11 points and the division had to be settled on sets difference, with Durham victorious by just two sets. In the match between the two teams they couldn't be separated as they played out a 5-5 draw. Durham drew two further matches, against local rivals Northumberland and Yorkshire firsts, and won their remaining four games. Lincolnshire put up the sternest resistance out of the defeated sides, going down narrowly 4-6, but against the other three teams Durham were dominant winning 7-3 against both Lancashire and South Yorkshire, and defeating Nottinghamshire by the overwhelming scoreline of 9-1.

For the county's junior players the top competition over the last month was the second and final weekend of this season's Junior British League. All of Durham's interest lay in Boys Division 1 with the county's top junior, Mark Simpson, and the county's only team, Sunderland, both in this division.

Mark Simpson was representing Waterside and they finished second in the division, narrowly losing out to champions DHS London Progress B on sets difference. They can count themselves as unfortunate not to have won the division though, as they won all five of their matches over the weekend, including a victory over the London side. Mark Simpson was the team's top performer winning all 10 of his matches including a double against champions London Progress, beating Emran Hussain 3-2 and defeating Ryan Collins 3-0.

Sunderland ended the season comfortably mid-table with 10 points from their 10 matches, with a record of 4 wins, 2 draws and 4 defeats. The most pleasing of their second weekend victories was a 6-0 demolition of the top north

east club Ormesby. The Sunderland players dominated this match from the start with Graeme Barella getting the better of Marc Besford in the opening game, Anthony Barella following this up by defeating Edward Fambely, 3-1 and John Bousfield feeling the full force of Scott Crawford's game going down 3-0. Graeme Barella secured the win with a 3-1 victory over Edward Fambely, before Scott Crawford was stretched by Marc Besford, eventually coming through 3-2. Anthony Barella completed the whitewash by defeating John Bousfield 3-0.

Over the season Scott Crawford was the top player for the team, with 11 wins out of 17, Anthony Barella won 10 out of 19 and Graeme Barella took 9 out of 20.

Essex by Steve Kerns

Peniel Academy dominate - Over 100 players took part in this year's Essex Closed Table Tennis Championships held at the BATTs Team Peniel Table Tennis Club in Harlow, with the BATTs Team Peniel Table Tennis Club/Peniel Academy set-up capturing 10 out of the 15 titles that were contested.

The Men's Singles was decimated by the non-appearance of four of the eleven seeded players and with other seeded players exiting earlier than expected, the event was more "open" than in previous years. None of this seemed to affect BATTs Team Peniel's John Holland, who duly took the title without too much bother. After winning his group, Holland beat Luca Mariano (Eastlea School), Ryan Savill (Chelmsford) and his team-mate Billy Deville, all without the loss of a game, before getting the better of Umair Mauthoor (Ilford) 3-1 in the final. There were shocks galore, none more so than in the group stages where the seeded Matt Spero (Ilford) lost to both Steve White (Ilford) and Stephen Cooper (Peniel Academy) and failed to qualify.

Last year's champion Martin Kubrt was a 3-0 loser to Billy Deville at the quarter-final stage, whilst the all-action Umair Mauthoor, playing in his first tournament after a long lay-off, dominated the bottom half of the draw. Mauthoor appeared to grow in stature as the day progressed. He scored an excellent 3-1 win over Peter Radford (Romford), followed by a 3-1 victory against Neil Brierley (Harlow) and a 3-2 success against Steve Kerns (Chelmsford). Assisted by the withdrawal through injury of second seed Niall Cameron (Ilford), Mauthoor's semi-final victim was Stephen Cooper who fought bravely before succumbing 8-11, 10-12, 10-12. Umair Mauthoor produced some spectacular table tennis in the final but Holland is a player of considerable experience and the England no.19 ranked senior player was able to "move through the gears" to clinch victory 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 11-2.

Perhaps the biggest shock of the weekend took place in the Women's Singles. Rebekah March (Peniel Academy), ranked no. 15 in England at Under 15 Girls, level scored a stunning 6-11, 11-9, 11-7, 4-11, 12-10 victory over team-

mate and top seed Rachel Jamieson (ranked no. 13 in England ladies) in the semi-final, and went on to win the final by beating another Peniel Academy player Rachel Anslow after another hard-fought battle 12-10, 5-11, 12-10, 11-7. The odds on Rachel Jamieson leaving the tournament empty-handed would have been incredibly high and sure enough Rachel made up for her disappointment by winning the Under 21 Ladies Singles title. She beat Rachel Anslow 11-6, 11-4, 11-7 in the semi-final and she avenged her defeat by beating Rebekah March 11-9, 11-7, 11-4 in the final.

Results were as follows - Men's Singles - John Holland bt Umair Mauthoor 3-1. **Men's Over 40 Singles** - Peter Radford bt Steve Kerns 3-1. **Men's U21 Singles** - Billy Deville bt Emran Hussein 3-2. **Men's Restricted Singles** - David Wright bt Paul Martindill 3-0. **Women's Singles** - Rebekah March bt Rachel Anslow 3-1. **Women's U21 Singles** - Rachel Jamieson bt Rebekah March 3-0. **Open Doubles** John Holland/Oscar Selfridge bt Fred Dove/Martin Kubrt 3-0. **Open Over 40 Doubles** - Fred Dove/Steve White bt Reuben Okai /John Monk 3-2. **U13 Boy's Singles** - Jared Patel bt Azarel Adebajo 3-0. **U15 Boys' Singles** - Reece Tan bt Luca Mariano 3-2. **U18 Boys' Singles** - Billy Deville bt Reece Tan 3-0. **U18 Boys' Restricted Singles** - Brandon Crouchman bt Robin Onyelekere 3-0. **U13 U15 Girls' Singles** - Esther Hoskin bt Georgina Barnes 3-2. **U15 Girls' Singles** - Rebekah March bt Hannah Hoskin 3-0. **U18 U15 Girls' Singles** - Evie Collier bt Rebekah March 3-1.

Northamptonshire by Dennis Millman

The Wellingborough Closed Tournament normally held at the Rushden and Diamonds Sports Hall switched venue to the Weavers Table Tennis Centre, and to all intents and purpose the change proved successful. Two players, John Fuller and Jack

Coleman, dominated the proceedings but neither featured in the men's singles final in which Matthew Carter beat fellow junior Daniel Smalley in four ends. Carter's victims on his way to the final included Coleman and Kevin Bird, while Smalley not only dispatched the powerful David Waples but also got the better of no.1 seed Fuller at the penultimate stage. Fuller's successes came in the Over 40s singles against Bird, and the Men's Doubles, partnered by Alex Aston, with the beaten finalists Bird and Coleman. Geoff Atkinson helped Fuller to victory in both the over 40 and the Over 50 doubles but lost to Fuller in the Over 50 singles final. Atkinson also won the consolation singles against Ian Donaldson, and the Over 60 singles with Maurice Jones his beaten opponent. Although Jack Coleman lost to Dan Smalley in the final of the Rod Marchant Memorial Trophy for Under 18s, he won everything else at his level - the corresponding doubles and the Under 15s in tandem with Grant Stevens, whom he then beat in the Under 15 singles final. Coleman also made no mistake in the Premier Division Handicap but his most significant win came in the Hard Bat Singles, yet another indication that it isn't the equipment but the player using it that wins matches. Six sessions completed with just one to play and four teams remain in contention for the EBS Mobile Phones Ltd Super League title, together with three handsome cash awards. To add to an intriguing situation, the sides will be in direct opposition. Leaders Unity will be opposed by third placed Farthingstone, while the current runners-up Higham Band will face Kettering Town.

January's double session was dominated by Unity and Higham Band, with both sides gaining the maximum points possible. Unity's Andy Trott, Dave Welsman and Steve Silk were all unbeaten with not a single rubber requiring a deciding fifth end.

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Headlands and Cold Higham were left trying to avoid the wooden spoon. Higham Band coped well against marginally stronger opposition, with the first set of the day going all the way before Mark Nannery scraped through against Park Avenue's Andy Wood. Richard Elliott and John Alsop were always in control as Higham completed the whitewash.

Westfield provided Higham's next opposition, but with Daniel Smalley and Jack Coleman at Cheltenham helping Wollaston School to win the Under 19 Schools Regional Final, Charlotte Binley became the first junior girl to feature in the Super League. She took opening ends against Elliott and Nannery, and led Alsop in the early stages, but all to no avail.

David Przybysz provided the greatest threat and might have registered his second hat-trick of the day, for after accounting for Nannery in four ends, he led Alsop by two games, and stood level at two all with Elliott, only to falter at the final hurdle.

Earlier Przybysz had produced the best individual performance of the day when he hit a tremendous treble against Farthingstone, with every encounter going to deciders as Alan Cherry, Matt Carter and Dave Murphy all had to admit defeat.

Kettering Town, without Wollaston School no.1 Chris Doran, had started the day well enough when hat-tricks from John Fuller and Ken Philipson,



Rebekah March - Essex

and a straight game success from Mike Hawes, had made certain of the maximum four points against Cold Higham. A close encounter was anticipated when Town met Farthingstone and so it proved. Town led four times, but the Towcester side levelled on each occasion, with a top form Matt Carter beating both Philipson and Hawes. Master tactician Fuller beat Carter in four ends to complete his second hat-trick of the day, but Town still required another win. This wasn't forthcoming as fourth end wins for Murphy and Cherry against Philipson and Hawes respectively gave Farthingstone three points to Town's one. At the wrong end of the table Headlands Marius Rylow produced an impressive unbeaten display against Park Avenue, but it wasn't enough as two wins each from Gerald Henson and Andy Wood gave their side a narrow victory.

Leading positions:

	W	L	Pts
Unity	6	0	22
Higham Band	5	1	20
Farthingstone	5	1	18
Kettering Town	4	2	18

Northumberland by Pauline Long

The senior county team experienced mixed fortunes in their first series of Division 1A matches scheduled during the weekend prior to Christmas at Wellow School near Newark. They beat Lancashire 6-4 and drew 5-5 with Cleveland, but lost 3-7 to Notts, 2-8 to South Yorkshire and 4-6 to Yorkshire.

Eddie Smith led the way from the no. 1 position with seven wins out of ten sets, with Andrew Wilkinson and Dave Godbold taking five sets each. Caron Guthrie won three of her women's singles sets.

Eddie also reached the final of the over 40s singles at the Western Masters tournament in Hereford, losing out to Surrey's Abdul Wuraola.

At the other end of the age scale, Cramlington's Ryan

Richardson finished second in the cadets' event at the junior regional trials in Billingham, while his brother, Dean, was third in the under 11s competition. Both players qualified for the next stage of the national finals in Derby. Jack Highmoor from Westgate also took part and gained valuable experience for the future. Debbie Dawson was unable to attend due to illness.

The Cramlington club has recently received £250 through the Royal Bank of Scotland Community Cashback Awards. The Bank helps community groups, schools and charities where staff are involved voluntarily, and the award was for the help given to the club by playing member Iain Wood. Results from Cramlington Junior and Veterans' tournament were as follows:

- Junior Singles - Jamie Dent bt. Ben Dawson 11-8, 11-6
- U15s - Ryan Richardson bt. Debbie Dawson 11-6, 14-12
- U13s - Ellis Cooper bt. Dean Richardson 11-9, 11-4
- U11s - Niall Morris bt. D. Richardson 11-6, 2-11, 11-8
- Over 40s - Barry Richardson bt. Nigel Coe 11-5, 1-5
- Over 50s - Mike Dunn bt. Coe 13-11, 11-6
- Over 60s - Dunn bt. Aubrey Drapkin 11-9, 11-9
- Vets Handicap - Steve Ralph (+12) bt. B. Richardson 21-18, 21-18.

Players and friends were sorry to learn from the VETTS members' publication that former league player, John Ainley - who has now returned to Leeds - was recently diagnosed with a brain tumour. Fortunately it has turned out to be benign and he was due to have an operation during late January/early February. Get well soon John from all your friends in Northumberland and we hope to see you back on the veterans' tournament circuit soon.

South Yorkshire by Robert Loxley

In Issue 323 March/April 2007 of this publication I wrote about the coaching achievements of Sheffield's Alan Lowe and to close the article I warned of the impending breakthrough about to be realised by "a 10 year old, right handed looper from Rotherham". Scott Hollowood is now 11 years old and has been asked to join Igor Morais (MI) and Tin-Tin Ho (MI) in the England under 12s' team on March 1st to compete in Barcelona. Lowe, Scott's personal coach, is delighted that his prediction of national recognition for the South Yorkshire lad has now borne fruit.

A further South Yorkshire success story recently unfolded with the emergence of 18 year old Ben Barlow at the Doncaster Grand Prix earlier this month. Ben produced the form of his life to reach the Open final and leave Ireland's Paul McCreedy, Shaun Marples (Dy), Tim Yarnall and Wang Zheng in his wake. However, in the final Ben simply ran out of steam against the titleholder and Scotland's number one - Gavin Rungay, who countered Ben's attack with huge long-range topspins of his own.

South Yorkshire finally finished in third place in Division 1A in the County Championships and with a full strength

side may have won the title. The team of Matt Kenny, Stephen Horsfield, Matt Dodds, Melissa Wright and Laura Robinson represented our county over the first weekend, however, for the second weekend we went to the event with only three players, as both Melissa and Laura were unavailable due to a clash with Junior British League. Even with our two women playing it would have been very tough against Lancashire and Cleveland who both have strong women players. Versus Lancashire - lost 8-2 Matt Kenny 0, Stephen Horsfield 1, Matt Dodds 1. Versus Cleveland - drew 5-5 MK 2, SH 1, MD 2.

Sussex by Graham Carter

Ritchie Venner remained unbeaten with two wins at Harlow to help his side, Batts Team Peniel, into joint second place in the British League Premier Division.

The Hastings star beat Vidal Graham (London) 3-1 and then defeated another London-based player, Sullivan Morias 3-1 when the team were losing 4-3, this clinched a valuable 4-4 draw against TTK Greenhouse.

Crawley's Craig Bryant played in the same team as Venner and recorded one win in the match against Graham 3-0, but lost to Andrew Rushton.

Bryant also won twice in a match Venner was not selected to play in on Saturday, beating Kevin Dolder and his Devon county team-mate Chris Brown 11-5, 9-11, 11-8, 11-6 in a devastating 8-0 victory against Nottingham club Sycamore.

The competition was thrown into chaos when one of the teams, Oxford Fireplace Centre, failed to arrive at the venue with no warning to the organisers. Then a power cut experienced throughout the town led to play being called off on Saturday afternoon, only for the electricity supply to return just 10 minutes after teams left the venue.

Organisers contacted team captains and they recalled their players and

all the abandoned matches were rearranged and played either later the same day or on Sunday.

Uckfield veteran Nigel Eckersley enjoyed a successful weekend playing for the north east team, Ormesby. He won three out of six, and gained revenge for a defeat in their first half of the season against Costas Papantoniou 11-6, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8, as they beat Urban Progress 7-1, overcame Ellenborough 6-2, but fell 6-1 to defending champions and clear leaders DHS London Progress.

Sussex II lead Division 2D of the County Championships by two points, after gaining a win and a defeat at Harlow.

Brighton's Harry McCarney starred with four wins out of four, including a superb victory against Martin Kubrt (Essex) as Sussex beat Berkshire II 7-3, but lost to Essex II 8-2. McCarney combined with Haywards Heath's Marc Burman (2 wins) and Worthing's Mike Robinson (2 wins) to overturn Berkshire.

Gary Wilson (Lancing), Stephen Eckford (Brighton) and Lewis Mayhew (Eastbourne) all won two each for Sussex III in their 8-2 success against Berkshire II. The thirds, like the seconds, were unable to upset Essex II, going down 8-2 during which 14-year-old Yolanda King gained a win during her senior debut.

Sussex veterans narrowly missed out on lifting the County Championships Premier Division title after losing 6-4 to eventual champions Yorkshire.

Returning in the top flight for the first time, having gained promotion as Division One champions, they gained three victories over the weekend at Ashford, Middlesex. They beat Kent 6-4, Middlesex 7-3 and hammered Surrey 9-1 to finish third, behind Yorkshire and runners-up Leicestershire.

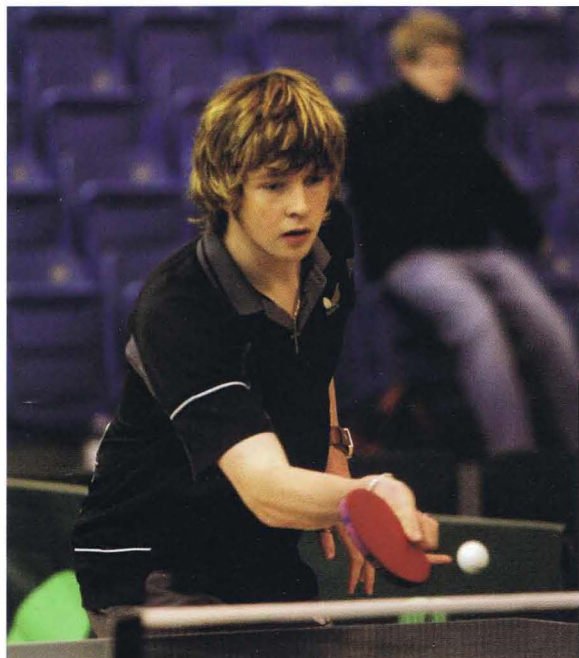
Ritchie Venner (Hastings) was top scorer with six wins out of eight, including a fine double against Kent's Mark Brown and Phil Cox, and another unbeaten performance to

dispatch Surrey's Ian Girdler and Steve Davis. Nigel Eckersley (Uckfield) and Adrian Moore (West Malling) also stood out for Sussex, both winning four out of six. Captain Peter Bartram, who won two out of four, said: "We did well, especially in the key doubles matches where we won all three points against Kent, Middlesex and Surrey. However, we lost all three against Yorkshire and this cost us any hopes of winning the title."

Garry Bonner (Crawley) was unbeaten with four wins for Sussex II to help them stay joint top of Division 2 with Gloucestershire following two 5-5 draws against Avon and Hereford. Barrie Gilbert (Horley) and Paul Barry (Hastings) added two apiece. They need to beat Hampshire first and second teams in their final session in April and hope that Gloucestershire slip up if they are to take the title.

Results: Veterans County Championships Premier Division (Ashford): Sussex bt. Kent 4-6, Sussex bt. Middlesex 7-3, Yorkshire bt. Sussex 6-4, Sussex bt. Surrey 9-1. Division 2: Sussex II v Avon 5-5, Sussex II v Hereford 5-5, Avon bt. Sussex III 6-4, Hereford bt. Sussex III 7-3.

Division 3: (Milton Keynes) Sussex IV v Hereford II 5-5, Sussex IV v Berkshire III 5-5.



DAMIEN NICHOLLS

Birth date: 25.09.90

Place of birth: Wolverhampton

Residence: Shropshire

When and how did you start to play table tennis?

Started playing socially at age 6 as my two older brothers were playing. Then began playing seriously at around 9 years old.

Who has been the greatest influence on your career?

Parents have been biggest influence with their support, then Des Douglas, as he trains with me at my local club.

Have you had any major injuries? Had meningitis when I was 5 weeks old and was told that if I lived I would have serious problems, deafness, lack of co-ordination and possibly unable to walk, thankfully they were incorrect. Been in serious car accident with brother who had bad head injuries, I walked free with superficial cuts and bruises.

Current ranking UK: Juniors 6, Senior 23

Style of play: Attacking shake hands

Sponsor: Tees Sport Butterfly

Current club: Woodfield TTC Wolverhampton/
Ormesby TTC

Most wants to beat: Tomas Tregler (Cze)

Proudest moment: Winning gold in the team event at the World Cadet Challenge

Player Rankings 2007/2008

TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

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

TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

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

TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

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

TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
2.	SPRINGHORPE, Lauren (LI.)
3.	JAMIESON, Rachel (E.)
4.	HALLOWS, Caroline (CH.)
5.	LEFEVRE, Karina (CV.)

TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

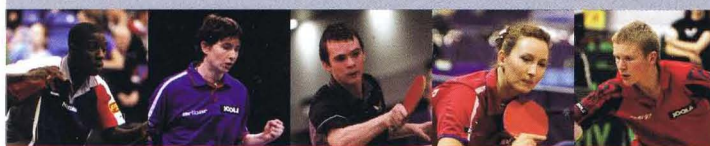
Ranking	Player
1.	LEFEVRE, Karina (CV.)
2.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
3.	SUNDARARAJAN, Ayonija (BK.)
4.	SLATER, Natalie (ST.)
5.	TRAVIS, Martha (CO.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 GIRLS

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

TOP 5 VETERAN WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
2.	HUANG, Shu (K.)
3.	HARPER, Sandra (BD.)
4.	MUDGE, Kim (K) (SY.)
5.	SHORT, Elaine (DV.)



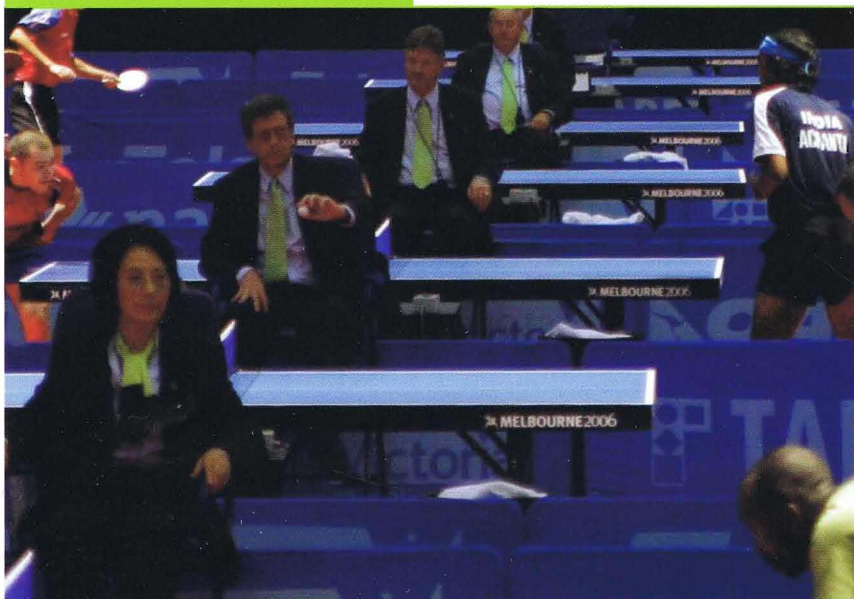
For the full list of player rankings go to our website

www.etta.co.uk



Dates for your diary

Table Tennis events for April 2008



2007/2008 COPY DATES

April Issue

Copy Deadline: 03 Mar
Advertising Deadline: 25 Feb

May Issue

Copy Deadline: 07 Apr
Advertising Deadline: 31 Mar

June Issue

Copy Deadline: 05 May
Advertising Deadline: 28 Apr

Sunday 13th

Cadet: National Trials Final - Derby, Crippenham 2 Star
Senior: British League Premier (4)
Veteran: VETTS Southern Masters-Crawley

Saturday 19th

Junior: Essex 4 Star
Senior: John Jermyn Memorial Cornwall 2 Star Open

Sunday 20th

Cadet: Essex 4 Star
Senior: John Jermyn Memorial Cornwall 2 Star Open

Saturday 5th

Cadet: Cheltenham (Cotswold) 4/3 Star
Senior: Blackpool Grand Prix
Veteran: County Championships

Sunday 6th

Junior: Cheltenham (Cotswold) 4/3 Star
Senior: Blackpool Grand Prix
Veteran: County Championships

Saturday 12th

Cadet: National Trials Final - Derby
Cadet/Junior: Chandlers Farm Equip 1 Star
Senior: British League Premier (4)
Veteran: VETTS Southern Masters-Crawley

Saturday 26th

Senior: London Grand Prix - Redbridge

Sunday 27th

Cadet: National Regional Squad Championships
Senior: London Grand Prix - Redbridge

Other:

Wednesday 2nd - Sunday 6th

Euro Olympic Qualification, Nantes

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



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