

table tennis news

Official Magazine of the English Table Tennis Association

Butterfly **Grand Prix** top two; PM Launch's **new TT initiative**; How to improve your **backhand drive**; Plus the latest **news and results**

Women's table tennis explored

Table Tennis Masters 09

returns to the Royal Albert Hall

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first word



We start the New Year with a bang! Great announcements are coming left, right and centre as the most comprehensive tournament package for years is unveiled. First up is the return of the European Nations League - 24th February - involving England's Men against Turkey and the Women facing Belarus. Next the National Championships 8th - 10th March as Andrew Baggaley aims to gain the senior national title for the third time; however he will have to be on top of his game as he will undoubtedly face stiff competition from the former champion and current England number one Paul Drinkhall. Table tennis will also be making a return to the prestigious Royal Albert Hall. Last year's play was as spectacular as the venue itself so if you missed out

on ticket make sure you're first in the queue for this year's event (7th May) as it promises to be even better. Find out more on page 19. England also plays host to India's national squad in a three match test series the week prior to the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships in Glasgow. With the venues set in London 10th, Stoke 12th and Preston 16th May there's no excuse to miss out as England's elite pitch their wits against one of the fastest growing table tennis nations in the world. Topping the lot is the confirmation of funding to host the crown jewel of table tennis tournaments, the English Open. Last staged in 2001, this tournament will boast a glittering field with most of the top table tennis talents on the planet aiming to win a share of the \$172,000 prize money on

offer. With well over 30 nations represented it is a truly global event. It is one of only four ITTF Major Pro Tour events the others being Japan, Germany and China. To be hosted at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield from 28th October - 1st November, this event is one not to be missed.

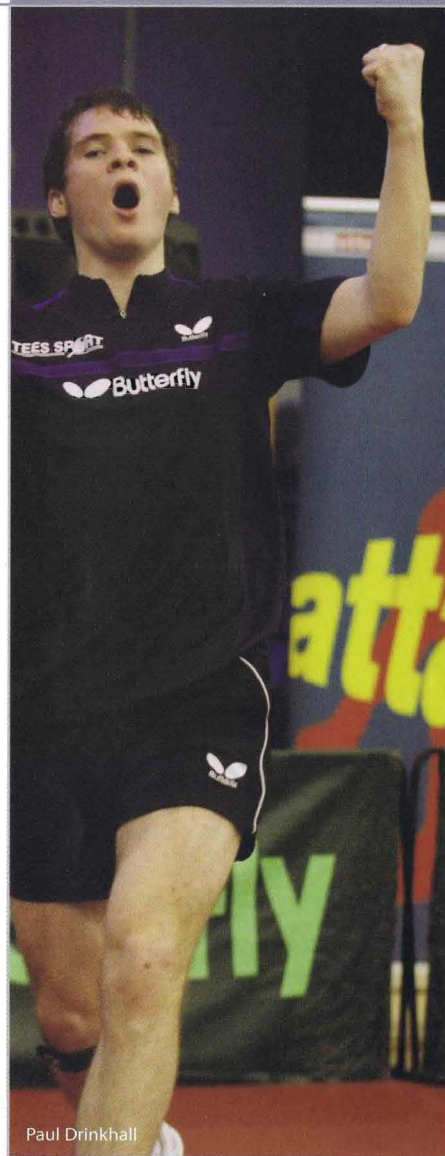
Tickets for most of these events are already available on our website www.etta.co.uk and if you're not online just give our office a call on 01424 456 210. I hope you enjoy this magazine and I look forward to seeing you at one of these fantastic events. As ever I would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to send in letters and reports, we really appreciate them.

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

The highlights from our main contributors...

"There are a few similarities between Britain's predicament in the global economic crisis and that of the women in English table tennis" **Richard Eaton** Page 22 "The Masters will be contested by the world's top players including crowd favourites Jean Michel Saive and Chen Weixing" **Matthew Syed** Page 18 "Hicks had already demonstrated an aptitude for sport and outstanding handeye coordination as a county level cricketer. Table tennis, though, would prove to be her sport of choice and her progress was rapid" **Jeremy Wilson** Page 28 "Our sport is receiving increased interest within both the community and at schools, which is resulting in more people playing" **Alex Murdoch** Page 5

StraightTalk



Paul Drinkhall

...congratulations are in order for the **bronze and silver medals** won by the **England team** at the recent **World Junior Championships...**

SPORT ENGLAND FUNDING

The new Sport England strategy of giving more responsibility to the national governing body (ETTA) will mean closer scrutiny, monitoring and greater responsibility for the ETTA in achieving the outcomes both we and our sport want and need.

Some modifications and additions to the departmental responsibilities, staff work programmes, structures and governance will take place, and additional programmes will be put in place to cover the various interventional plans and project management with our partners such as Sainsbury's and Fred Perry.

Our awards to date for the next four years are as follows:

Core Funding/Facilities/PE and Sports Strategy for Young People (PESSYP)	£9,301,404
Club and Coach	£844,000
Playground to Podium (P2P)	£569,900
Premier Football Initiative	£132,000
Total	£10,847,304

As has been the case in the past, some funding is ring-fenced and all of this funding cannot be used to cover overheads and salaries, but will be used to support and pay for other resources such as venue hire, part-time PESSYP coaches and within the P2P/Club and Coach and Premier Club Initiative awards criteria.

It is though interesting to note for comparison purposes that the grants funding in 2003/4 were £1.0M against the 2009/10 financial year forecast of £2.2M. This excludes any facilities awards which are directly allocated to the clubs project.

In terms of the "Core Funding" namely not ring-fenced funding 2003/4 was £480K and in 2009/10 £1.6M. This shows the increasing commitment by Sport England to support our sport, based upon the progress we have made over the last few years.

The funding award will be geared and monitored for our sports needs and that of Sport England's strategy across 10 interventions included in the ETTA planning application to Sport England.

Some further background on the future:

Sport England's new strategy was launched on 10th June 2008 and commits us to delivering demanding targets over the next four years, this involves increased participation of the over 16s based upon returns from the Annual Peoples Survey. For your information in the 2007/8 report Table Tennis increased its regular participants by 32,700 to 195,700 and was classified as one of the sports which "Statistically showed significant change". We do though have some way to go to compete with the other racquet sports, and the results we get over the next four years are critical from a funding perspective in the future.

Other targets for us include a 25% reduction in the number of 16 to 18-year-olds who drop out of our sport, improved talent development systems, a measurable increase in people's satisfaction with their experience of our sport, and to contribute to the delivery of the five hour sports PESSYP offer for children and young people.

All of these are primarily community and grass roots initiatives and they involve increasing participation, club accreditation, coaches and improving coaching standards, recruiting and training more volunteers and technical officials, talent pool and all aspects of communications including social media. To be honest, the ball is in our court to deliver, having been given this support and opportunity by Sport England; I thank Richard Yule our CE for all his efforts during the planning process and behind closed doors.

BTF GB FUNDING FROM UK SPORT

You have, I am sure, seen the significant publicity surrounding a number of sports including Table Tennis having to wait until the next UK Sport board meeting at the end of January before the 'GB teams' funding is confirmed.

Most people were aware of the "risk" for Table Tennis, irrespective of the results our GB players have obtained over the last three years, albeit any risk could have been averted if the commitment made by the

then Chancellor to provide the extra £100M promised through the private sector had been actioned sooner rather than later. I do consider that UK Sport, as the funding distributor for the London 2012 build up programmes for the elite players, has a responsibility to ensure that all the 26 Olympic sports are given adequate funding based upon the £550M, so all sports could provide competitive GB teams on home turf. They are now responsible for raising this extra £50M.

You can be assured that the BTTF on behalf of the home countries has taken our sport's concerns to the highest levels, including the BOA, LOCOG, ITTF, Minister of Sport and Secretary of State, as well as the UK Sport staff.

Our negotiations continue as I write this and a further meeting is planned with UK Sport on 15th January with their decision makers and GB Table Tennis is given sufficient funding to meet its goal of having trained and developed a competitive team representing our great sport in London 2012.

WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Details will be included in this issue but I am sure you will agree that many congratulations are in order for the bronze and silver medals won by the England team at the recent World Junior Championships, and recognize in particular Paul Drinkhall's outstanding performances throughout these Championships.

These achievements make the total tally of medals for England since 2004 a total of 34, in Olympic, European and World Cadet and Junior Championships, never before achieved by England at this level and the gold promotion medal for the women's team in China at the 2008 World Team Championships.

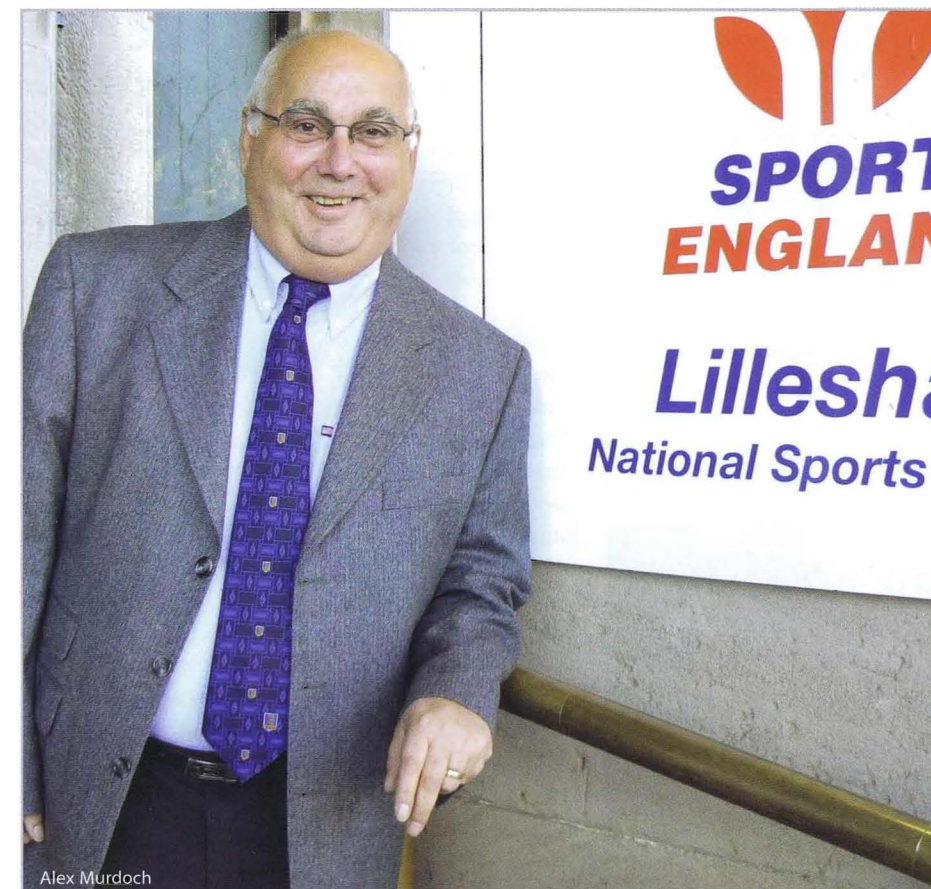
ENGLISH OPEN AND OTHER EVENTS

Planning continues towards the prestigious English Open as part of the ITTF Pro Tour, which will take place at the English Institute

of Sport (EIS) in Sheffield from 28th October to 1st November this year following positive applications to UK Sport and Yorkshire Forward for funding support. The ITTF has decided to give this event special status in 2009 as one of the four prime Pro Tour events, along with China, Japan and Germany. Further regular details and updates will be included on the website. The first round of the European Nations League matches will take place on 24th February at the EIS in Sheffield. The men will play Turkey and the women play Belarus. Details and ticketing information will be on the website and let us make sure we have a full house and give support to our players so please put this date in your diary. Negotiations continue with the England versus India Test Series to take place in May, further details of dates and locations will be published on the website and circulated. During the last three months, apart from

meetings with government agencies and other potential funders, I have visited a number of clubs, leagues and events and had the opportunity to discuss many aspects of our sport.

Our sport is receiving increased interest within both the community and at schools, which is resulting in more people playing. Our dedicated and hard working volunteers have contributed significantly in helping to promote our sport; this increased interest is of course putting more demands on them. It is important that the ETTA supports these volunteers, providing the tools to assist them and putting in programmes to retain and increase our volunteer base. Please keep in touch and I look forward to meeting you on my travels and will keep you all updated. As always I am happy to meet with you to discuss any aspects of Table Tennis.



Alex Murdoch

SPORT ENGLAND
Lillesha
National Sports

Headlines

The latest stories from the Table Tennis World

BBC LONDON RISING STAR AWARDS

On 7th December two of SportsAid's London athletes were announced as the winners of the 2008 BBC London Sport Rising Stars Awards. Table Tennis player Tin-Tin Ho, age 10 from the City of Westminster, and Tae Kwon Do fighter George Lee, age 13 from Lewisham.

Tin-Tin has been playing table tennis since she was five years old. Her enormous talent has seen her dominate her own age group since she took up the sport and she regularly competes with those who are in age groups above with success. Despite her young age she recently managed to win the British title for Under 13, Under 12 and Under 11 girls. She will get international experience in the summer when she competes in the Six Nations tournament, Mini Cadet tournament in Holland and European Mini Championships in France. In the long term she hopes to represent Team GB at the Olympic Games.



Tin-Tin Ho



Igor Morais

GREENHOUSE RECEIVE OVER £200,000

Hundreds more teenagers will now benefit from schemes run by Greenhouse, the charity supported by the Standard's Christmas auction. Michael de Giorgio, Greenhouse's founder and CEO, spoke of his delight at the auction. "We're thrilled about the fantastic amount of money raised through the auction, particularly given the current climate. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who chose to support us with their wonderful generosity."

Veronica Wadley, editor of the Standard, said: "This is a sensational amount of money to have raised in these difficult times. A big thank you goes to the people who donated the auction lots and to the generosity of our readers who bid for them."

The money will be used to support existing Greenhouse projects, but will also allow the charity to roll out new schemes across London. The charity helps more than 7,000 children each week through performing arts and sports programmes held in schools and community

clubs. It has a proven record of helping the most deprived teenagers steer clear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Mr de Giorgio added: "The funds raised will allow us to considerably expand our reach in London through new programmes. It costs £40,000 to fund an entire programme".

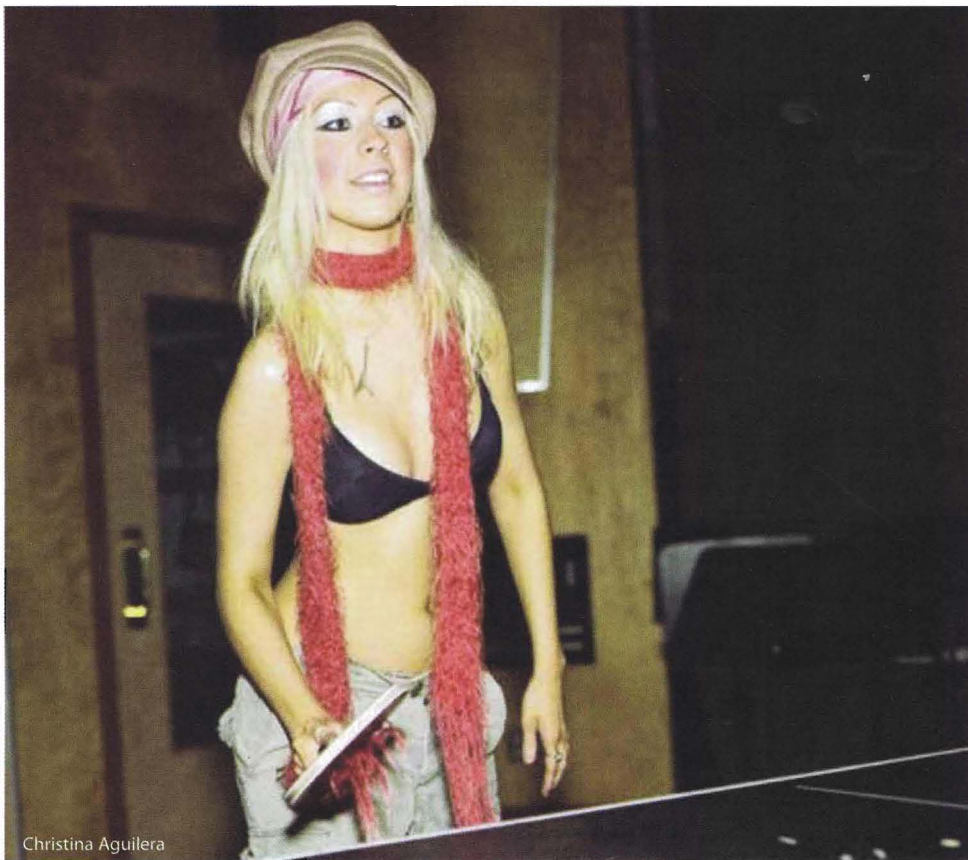
The sum raised easily eclipses the total of just over £180,000 in last year's auction.

The highest bid this year was for a triangular table tennis tournament with Michael Sherwood, joint CEO of Goldman Sachs, and the Standard's business editor Chris Blackhurst. It fetched a staggering £14,600 in the last moments of the eBay auction.

The final bid - for the table tennis match followed by dinner - narrowly beat the £14,200 raised for a shopping trip to New York with supermodel Kate Moss and retail tycoon Sir Philip Green, to coincide with the opening of Topshop's first store in America.

Article courtesy Evening Standard.

CELEBRITY PINGPONG



Christina Aguilera

The celebrity interview magazine is a time-honoured if often shallow institution. The time is right to spice it up a bit. That's what James Cooper, a creative at Another Anomaly (the spin-off of regular Anomaly), hopes to do with Celebrity PingPong www.cppmag.com. The magazine, created by Cooper and a class he taught at Miami Ad School, features interviews with artists, actors and writers while they show off their paddle skills. The

idea came to Cooper, a self-described "Ping Pong nerd," as a way of getting interviewees to relax and open up. The magazine promises to be "a bit like Freud's couch, but with less mothers and more top spin." The first issue, a 60-pager featuring interviews with graphic designer Kate Moross, author Jerome Charyn and rapper Kenan Bell, is out now. Initially, CPP has spec ads created by Miami Ad School students. Cooper hopes to tap

into Anomaly's stable of brands to make the magazine a regular business. He's lined up other notables for chats, including author Salman Rushdie. I could see this working. Ping Pong has that retro-cool feel about it nowadays. Cooper says his bosses are totally behind the effort. "We're Anomaly, we're supposed to do silly things," he says. Anomaly is hosting a launch party, featuring a Ping Pong tournament.



THE ENGLISH OPEN 2009

The English Open is due to take place from October 28th until November 1st at the English Institute of Sport Athletics Arena which will be transformed with a professionally raised tournament floor over the athletics track. One of the four Pro Tour

majors including Germany, Japan and China, the English Open will have an increased prize fund which will help to attract some of the best players in the world. The tournament will be using 12 tables working their way down as the proceedings progress.

Picture shows the Youth Development Squad training in the athletics area with a team of top coaches including the legendary Des Douglas.

CHILDREN'S COACH OF THE YEAR

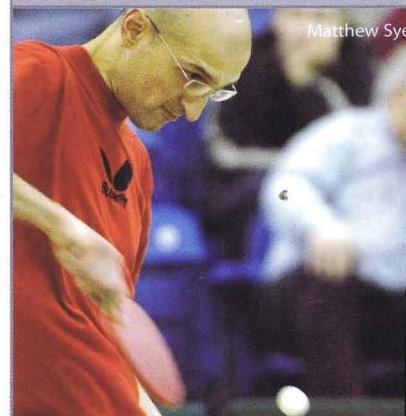
At the recent UK Coaching Awards, table tennis coach Gordon Fearn was awarded the title Children's Coach of the Year.

KAREN TONGE MBE

As a result of her services to Table Tennis, in particular the voluntary aspect, Karen Tonge has received an MBE in the New Year Honours list. This will be the third time that Karen has visited Buckingham Palace having received the President's Certificate of the National Playing Fields Association and for her involvement with the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR).

MATTHEW SYED'S NEW COLUMN

Ex-England international and journalist Matthew Syed now writes a major sports column every Wednesday in The Times which will incorporate a large range of sports, ideas and beliefs not just about his chosen sport of table tennis, although we are sure that it will pop up from time to time.



Matthew Syed



Luca Modric

Gordon Brown with Harry Redknapp & Andy Burnham

PM PLAYS TT TO LAUNCH EXCITING NEW INITIATIVE

On January 16th the Prime Minister played table tennis with football boss Harry Redknapp to celebrate the announcement of a Government sporting initiative. All Premier League football clubs are set to help attract thousands of youngsters to try table tennis, judo, badminton and volleyball.

The 20 top flight clubs will join forces with community sports groups in a bid to get more children involved in Olympic sports before 2012. The 3.8 million initiative - Premier League 4 Sport - aims to get 25,000 youngsters aged 11-16 involved in the four Olympic sports over three years. The Prime Minister was joined by Culture Secretary Andy Burnham to launch the scheme at Tottenham's

training ground in Chigwell, Essex. Mr Brown and Mr Burnham competed in table tennis doubles with Spurs' manager Redknapp and Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore. Walking away, Mr Brown told a sports coach: "I need some training." Mr Brown met children from Rush Croft School, Waltham Forest, and Vale School, Haringey, as they took part in the four sports with players from the club. The Prime Minister said: "In the run-up to 2012, we want to see more young people from all walks of life getting involved in sport. These new clubs are an excellent example of how the Olympic legacy will benefit people right across the country for years to come and how the Games can be used to inspire

more people to get active."

The project was also welcomed by the English Table Tennis Association Chief Executive Richard Yule, who stated: "The launch of the Premier League 4 Sport initiative is a fantastic opportunity for table tennis. This partnership with one of the world's most prominent sports brands - the Premier League - will help strengthen our clubs and inspire an even greater number of young people to engage with our sport."

The initiative will help the Government's ambition to offer children five hours of sport a week as part of its 2012 legacy plans. Ministers also hope the plan will keep young people doing sport when they leave school.

Each Premier League club will

be linked to four community sports clubs in their local area. Mr Burnham said the Premier League clubs would boost participation rates in table tennis, volleyball, judo and badminton.

Mr Scudamore said Premier League clubs were at the "heart of their communities". He said: "Premier League 4 Sport will build on this existing work, encouraging young people who love football to think about taking up another sport. With the pedigree that our clubs have in delivering projects, I am confident it will be a huge success."

The initiative will be launched in April this year.

Karen Tonge

Even in Runcorn, there can't be many telephone answering machine messages that begin with the words: "Hello, this is the Runcorn ping-pong emporium..." It is a sure sign of how important a part table tennis plays in Karen Tonge's life that hers does.

An unsung heroine of the table tennis community in Cheshire and Merseyside and beyond for many years, Karen's unstinting efforts for the sport received the ultimate seal of approval in the New Year's Honours list when she was awarded the MBE for voluntary services to table tennis, as her official citation put it. On March 12th she will be donning her finery and heading down to the Palace to receive her richly deserved bling from the Queen.

Though Karen received the letter back in November telling her that she had been recommended for an honour, Karen only knew for certain she had bagged the gong when the local press starting telephoning her on December 30th. Until the media frenzy started, she had managed to keep her potential good news to herself – "I didn't tell a soul," she maintains.

Karen's first taste of table tennis came courtesy of the crew of her local fire station in Bollington, Cheshire, when they invited her and her father back to HQ for an introductory knock. Clearly hooked, she was soon organising her first table tennis competition at her school, Macclesfield High, and working on her game at the local youth club.

It was about this time when she encountered a problem with her local table tennis scene: "I didn't play local league because where I was there were no opportunities, and no real coaching available," says Karen.

So it was partly for this reason, and also because of an innate desire to do something for the local community, that Karen signed up for a coaching course with Peter Simpson in 1974. By now living in Runcorn, she used her new qualification to teach table tennis at the youth centre there. "When I came to Runcorn a lot of the young people had been re-housed there from Liverpool, Glasgow and the armed forces," says Karen. Formerly a professional teacher of RE and geography, a change in career to full-time youth worker helped to build a community using her coaching skills in what was then an embryonic New Town. (And it wasn't just table tennis – she qualified as an archery coach too.)

But Karen wasn't satisfied that she was as good a coach as she could be, so in 1977 she decided to become an umpire. "To improve as a coach," admits Karen, "I felt I needed to see some of the senior players. I was taking the juniors to a lot of events but I never saw the top players." Needless to say, the blue blazer was soon around her shoulders. This was just the start: in 2005 Karen was to become a Blue Badge umpire and international referee in 1997 appearing at arenas all over the world. As she proudly points out, she is the only English woman to have made this particular grade of IR. Tournaments in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Shanghai and New Delhi have benefited from Karen's experience, while the last two years have seen her officiating at the US Open in Las Vegas.

She has rubbed shoulders with some of the greats of modern table tennis, such as Jan Ove Waldner, Vladimir Samsonov and, of course, Des Douglas. "It's been a privilege to have watched them all and be with them all. You get a relationship with them built on respect," she says. She fondly remembers her first umpiring job abroad, at the French Open in Nantes, with an England team comprising two experienced campaigners in Des Douglas and Alison Gordon in combination with what were then two new kids on the international block, Matthew Syed and Andrea Holt.

During her time as a top umpire Karen has seen the sport undergo many changes. The glue saga is just one of them. For Karen, the glue ban is definitely a good thing: "I was always concerned as a youth worker because of glue sniffing and health hazard. I always had concerns about the use of it. I've been involved with the testing and been trained as a racket tester. The testing machines are getting more sophisticated now. And now there's going to be post-match testing which can lead to disqualification."

The change from 21-up to 11-up has also had a huge impact, believes Karen: "It has speeded things up – you've got to focus and you can't be

a slow starter. It's a different type of game. On TV you never used to see the whole of the match – there was a dead part of the game, whereas now it's all action."

But back at grass roots level, well away from the cameras, it really is the taking part that counts for Karen. "With the really young ones it's all about fun – getting to know the fundamentals of the sport and learning bat and ball skills. It's about increasing participation in community sport and giving them a pathway on life's journey. And then it's up to them – we've got the facilities and the coaches around us. It's down to their motivation and determination and the amount of effort that they put into it. It develops them as people."

Karen was appointed Chairman of Halton TT League and Club in 1997 which is now a limited company. Lottery funding of £2.3 million was obtained in partnership with Halton Borough Council and the ETTA to build Halton Regional TT Centre under the West Stand of Halton Stadium. This is a unique facility in the country which was opened in 1999.

Since then Karen obtained funding to appoint a Community Coach under PESSCL/PESSYP which has taken table tennis into every one of the 48 primary schools in her borough – Halton – and at least two of the secondary schools have got ten table tennis tables. With enthusiasm like that driving it forward, it is little wonder that table tennis is, in Karen's words, "growing like Topsy" in the North West. But, as Karen sees it, the problem in other parts of the country can lie in the lack of good clubs to retain that budding interest in the sport. "What we haven't got is enough PremierClubs and Clubmark clubs around the country because that's what the teachers and competition managers that are now employed are wanting. There needs to be enough places in the community for new players to go. Unless they become PremierClubs or Clubmark ones local authorities won't touch them."



Though shaping young lives through sport is clearly important to Karen, it's not all about the kids. As part of her hectic schedule, she runs three sessions a week for the over 50s, with the oldest participant a spritely 84, as part of the Halton Healthy Living Project and BIG Lottery Target Well-Being. Since news of Karen's MBE reached the press, interest in these sessions has apparently rocketed. "We've been bursting at the seams," she says.

She and the Halton TT Club are also heavily involved in table tennis for the disabled, and proudly cites the success of two of her charges, Jack Hunter-Spivey and Jade Carr. Jack, a wheelchair user, won a silver medal at the UK School Games, while Jade became world champion at the Transplant Games.

"Any sport has an ability to change people's lives," concludes Karen.

"Even if it's not them that make it to the top level of the sport, it may be their children or their grandchildren.

"For me, it was about putting something back into the community. That's just how I was brought up."

"I felt I needed to see some of the senior players. I was taking

the juniors to a lot of events but I never saw the top players."

backhand drive/topspin

The backhand drive and backhand topspin is a very important shot for players to develop, especially at an early stage of their development.

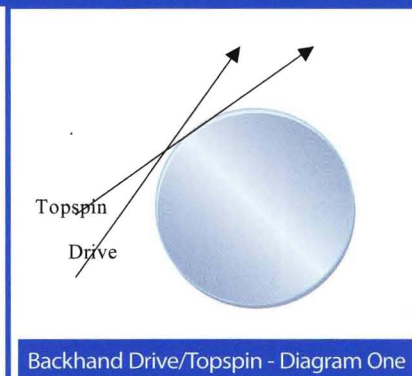
It is vitally important that the correct technique is learnt for the backhand drive before trying to develop the backhand topspin. Although the majority of players do prefer attacking on their forehand, those that have the ability to attack on their backhand as well will have a greater chance of becoming a more all round player.

As with the forehand attack if you look at the above diagram you can see that there are two different contact points for the backhand depending upon whether you want to drive the ball or topspin the ball. The contact point for the drive is a lot more at the back of the ball whereas the contact point for the topspin is more at the top of the ball to help develop more spin.

BACKHAND DRIVE

Ready Position/Preparation: (Pic One)

1. Feet shoulder width apart and square to the table.
2. Knees bent and body weight slightly forward.
3. Bat in front of the body.



Backhand Drive/Topspin - Diagram One

Backswing: (Pic Two)

4. Bat moves back towards the waist.
5. Wrist is angled backwards.
6. Rotate backwards at waist and hips.

Contact Point: (Pic Three)

7. Bat moves straight forward.
8. Elbow moves slightly forward.
9. Contact is in front and slightly to the left hand side of the body.

Follow Through: (Pic Four)

10. Bat moves in the direction of the ball and upwards.
11. Player brings bat and body back to ready position.



BACKHAND TOPSPIN

Ready Position/Preparation: (Pic Five)

12. Feet are shoulder width apart and square to the table.
13. Knees are bent and leaning slightly forward.

Backswing: (Pic Six)

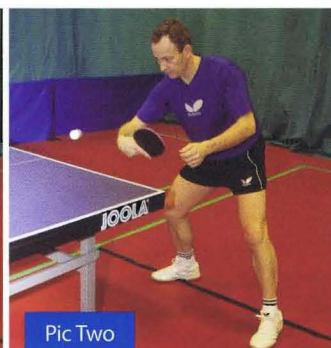
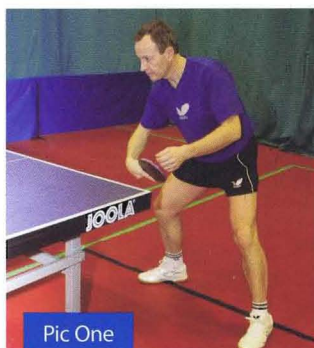
14. Bat moves back towards the waist.
15. The wrist is angled backwards and slightly downwards.
16. Hips, waist and shoulders rotate backwards and slightly to the left.

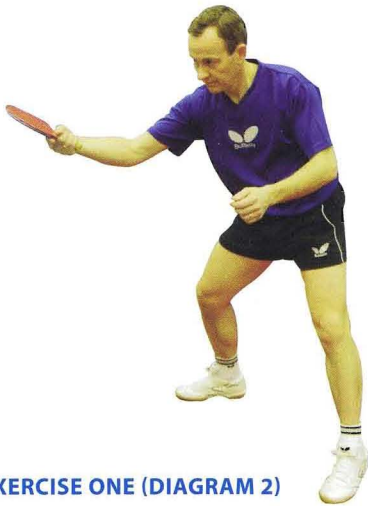
Contact Point: (Pic Seven)

17. Bat moves upwards and forwards from the elbow.
18. Forearm and wrist accelerates, and the bat brushes the ball just after peak of the bounce.

Follow Through: (Pic Eight)

19. Bat moves in direction of ball and upwards and then returns to a neutral position.





EXERCISE ONE (DIAGRAM 2)

Using the above coaching points you can use the following exercises to help improve both of these shots.

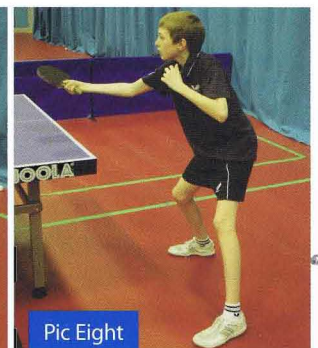
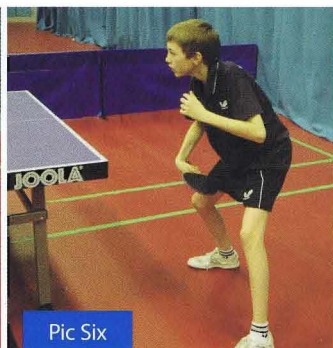
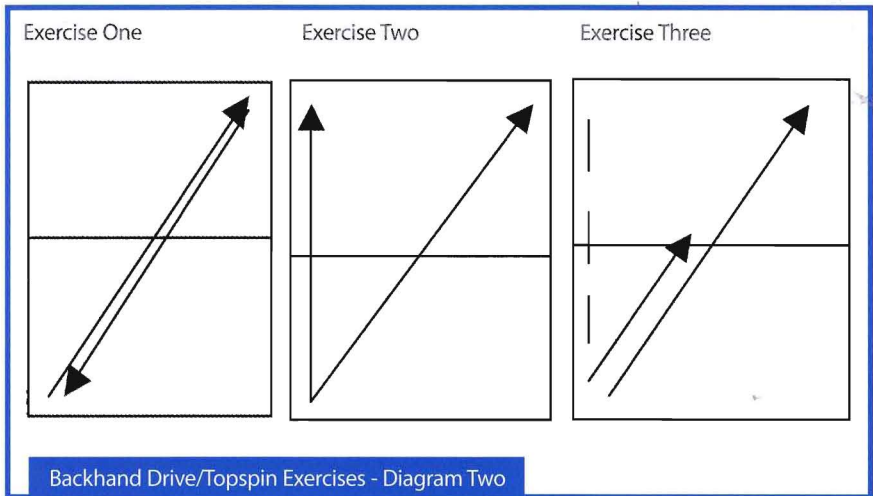
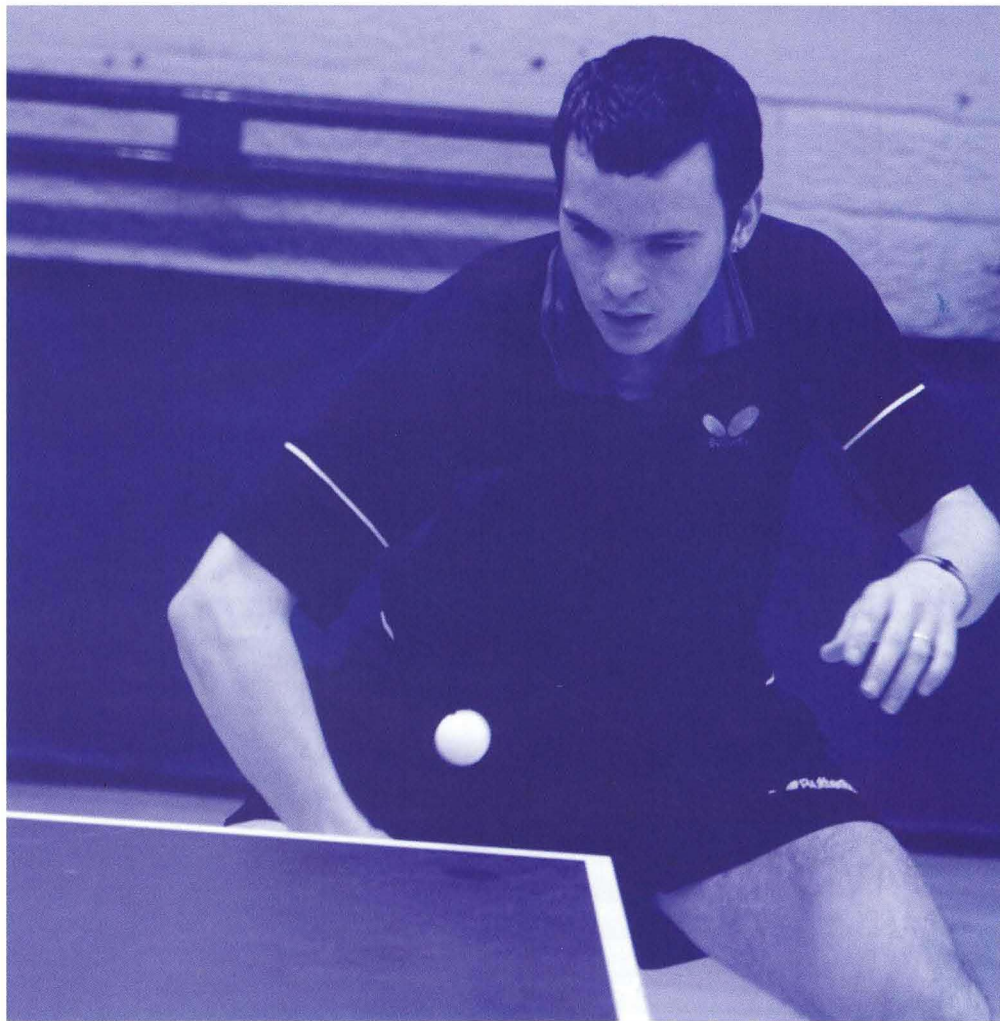
20. Both players can develop their backhand drive by playing along the backhand diagonal.
21. You can set targets for how many shots you want to complete.
22. Make sure players are accurate when doing this, you could cover up the forehand side of the table with a towel so if they hit it there the rally stops.

EXERCISE TWO (DIAGRAM 2)

1. One player can practice playing backhands across court and then down the line.
2. It is important to make sure that the player has the right feet position especially when playing down the line.
3. This exercise can be done with both the drive and topspin shot.

EXERCISE THREE (DIAGRAM 2)

4. Short serve, push return to the backhand corner.
5. Player plays a backhand topspin across court, opponent blocks back to backhand.
6. Attacker plays a backhand drive down the line or across court and then point goes free.



Letters

The Editor

How to send in your views. Write to: Richard Pettit, English Table Tennis Association, Queensbury House (Third Floor), Havelock Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1HF Email: richard.pettit@etta.co.uk



TABLE TENNIS PROVES POPULAR IN LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

I am involved at a local primary school in York. I work with groups of twelve with one or two parent-volunteers. Rowntree Park in York has recently been given the first all-weather community outdoor table which is great because it helps to sustain interest and provide ease of access to everybody. Terraced houses and TT don't go well together. My experience is that TT is extremely popular with the children. In our little school, the school council (reps from all classes) voted for TT out of choice of fairly attractive alternatives. I am limiting myself to one year-group (y4)

and still get a heavy oversubscription. Invariably, these sessions sometimes deteriorate into crowd control - but try the same with football and you will get the same challenge. But out of my twelve regulars I could easily select two or three for further training. I think it is surprising how many children, boys and girls, are not interested in football because it is too intimidating, but cannot afford tennis because it is too expensive. The problem is that there is no obvious link between what I am doing, what other schools are doing and what a club nearby offers. Ideally I would be able to say that the school sessions really are tasters, but

that there is a follow-up session, paid and all, is available for those who are serious. I am currently working on the teachers with the goal to set up a fund raiser tournament within the school. To summarise: I think getting an 'agent' in a school is moderately easy: the National Curriculum certainly helps on this one and I find the PTAs are quite good first ports of call. But then what? The link between school and club is what matters. But there is a more general problem: I am an immigrant from a traditional TT country (Timo Boll anybody?) who managed to live four years in York before realising that I live practically next door to the local coaching sessions. How on earth can somebody who is not quite as obsessed with TT as me find out what's going on? Nigel Williams

SPREAD THE WORD

Not sure if you're able to use this Richard but our league has finally gone live with a website and we'd welcome the publicity as, as with all leagues, we have suffered badly over the last 10 to 15 years with a decline in the number of clubs and teams. We are a stand alone league affiliated directly to the ETTA but changed from a closed

league to an open league a few years ago and are now one of only two leagues left in central London with the Central League being the other one. We have three divisions to their one and when you consider a few years ago there were eight or more leagues in Central London each with anything from two to fifteen divisions you'll appreciate how TT in London has really almost disappeared. We would really like to see TT grow again in central London, especially in the run up to the Olympics, and so our membership and registration rules were changed. We have also developed a website. (<http://www.lbcsttl.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>) There's a lot more to be added to it but it's already worth directing people to and hopefully if we can continue to spread the word we will be able to reverse the decline. One of the best bits of news is that after many years of losing venues we hope to have a new one this coming year ready for next season [near Paddington station] and will have a three table room for Table Tennis which we hope to make full use of. Cheers, Neil Le Milliere Chairman LB&CSTTL

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW ETTA WEBSITE

World

Junior Table Tennis Championships

The England squad of Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, Gavin Evans and Liam Pitchford all headed out to Spain back in December for the World Junior Table Tennis Championships.

This was the last time that Paul and Darius would be able to compete before being confined to the senior ranks and with England being particularly strong at this level, even against the Far East, anything could happen. Below is how the tournament unfolded from an English perspective:

BOYS' TEAM EVENT

The England boys' team put on an impressive performance and once again improved over previous years' performances, moving up from fifth place in the 2007 tournament in Palo Alto America, to the bronze medal position in Madrid. This produced a repeat of the 2007 Korea v China team finals, with China taking the gold. England's route to the bronze began by qualifying top of their group, winning all three of their matches with some great performances: "If Paul plays at his best he can beat anyone; Gavin is also playing exceptionally well," said Steen Hansen, Performance Manager. Sweden took second place in the group thanks to their two wins. In round 2 the start of the fight for positions 1-8 went well, with the team of Paul, Darius and Gavin beating the Polish 3-1: "Jia (National Coach) has moved the team around following the European Youth Championships which is benefiting Darius, who has won three of his four matches" and "for the first time in three years at the World Junior Championships we have had the luck of the draw," said Steen. That meant that the weight of Europe's table tennis rested on the shoulders of our team, as they battled it out with the might of the far east South Korea (Korea Republic), Japan and China.

Current reigning silver medallists Korea proved too strong taking the win 3-0 to go on and repeat their 2007 success after being defeated by China 3-0. England would go on

to share the spoils of the bronze medal with Japan.

Gold: China

Silver: Korea

Bronze: England and Japan

BOYS' SINGLES

Group Stages - To start the singles off 3-0 seemed to be the score of choice, with Paul, Darius and Gavin all taking wins, but unfortunately Liam lost his first match by the same amount.

Both Paul and Darius finished top of their respective groups on a maximum two wins out of two; for the other two English players things were a little closer. Liam gave himself a lifeline by beating Cheung Yat Fung Johnny (HKG), which gave him the opportunity to tie his group should he be able to beat Noshad Alamiyan (IRI) who already had two wins. For Gavin it looked likely that Kristian Karlsson would top their group, but with two critical

matches left, nothing was finalised; if Karlsson lost, then the winner of Sonbol (EGY) v Evans would tie the group with him.

Gavin successfully disposed of Shady Sonbol of Egypt to claim second place in group 16, behind the Swede Kristian Karlsson, but Liam, despite fighting valiantly, winning both the second and fourth games, was eventually knocked out by the Iranian Noshad Alamiyan. **Last 64** - Paul and Darius got byes into the last 32, whilst Gavin put on a strong fight to come back from 3-1 down to take the win 4-3 over Victorien Le Guen of France.

Last 32 - Our top two players were both the victors in their international confrontations by the same scoreline of 4-2, Darius dispatched

Final - The number one ranked junior in Europe was in a fight to be crowned World Champion and only Chen Chei-An (TPE) stood in his way, unfortunately for Paul Chen came out on top taking the win 4-1 and the gold. Upon claiming the silver Paul did, however, become the most successful English player at the Junior World Championships since their inception.

Gold: Chen Chien-An (TPE)

Silver: Paul Drinkhall (ENG)

Bronze: Yan An (CHN) and Lee Sang Su (KOR)

BOYS' DOUBLES

Last 32 - Both pairs got a bye into the second round, but only one made it through to the

Bronze: Jung Young Sik/Kim Min Seok (KOR) and Kenta Matsudaira/Koki Niwa (JPN)

MIXED DOUBLES

Main Draw Rd 1 - All four English competitors in the mixed doubles avoided the qualification round, going directly into the main draw and the first round of 64 competitors. To demonstrate just how strong a nation England is at international junior level, three of the four boys successfully made it out of round one with convincing wins, Gavin Evans 3-1, Darius Knight 3-0 and Paul Drinkhall 3-0. Liam Pitchford, who was teamed up with the Romanian Camelia Postoaca, couldn't match the success of his

To demonstrate just how strong a nation England is at international junior level, three of the four boys successfully made it out of round one with convincing wins...

Endika Diez (ESP) who was playing on home soil, whilst Paul battled it out with one Cheng Jinqqi of China. Despite winning the first game, Gavin's quest for a medal would come to an end when he faced the Korean Lee Sang Su, being knocked out 4-1.

Last 16 - Although Darius was defeated 4-1, the scoreline does not reflect just how close the battle was, with Kim Min Seok (KOR) only taking one game by a convincing margin. Paul's fight was equally as hard, trading wins early on, but eventually coming out superior 4-3, he will now face Jung Young Sik of Korea.

Semi-final - Reaching the semi-finals Paul went up against the Korean Lee San Su, despite a slow start going 2-0 down, he pulled it back to win 4-2.

last 16 and that was the younger pairing of Gavin Evans and Liam Pitchford, who had a 3-1 victory over their Russian counterparts, with Paul and Darius getting knocked out in a close 3-2 battle having been 2-0 up at the start.

Last 16 - In the last 16 Gavin and Liam came up against the Koreans Lee Sang Su and Seo Hyun Deok, this was always going to be an uphill battle, with the Koreans ranked 6th and 11th respectively in the Under 18s world rankings, against Gavin's 47th and Liam's 116th. This didn't stop the boys putting on a good show, winning the first and fourth games before going out 3-2.

Gold: Song Hongyuan/Yan An (CHN)

Silver: Lee Sang Su/Seo Hyun Deok (KOR)

team-mates and went out in straight sets.

Last 32 - Only one to soldier on. We had three players fighting it out in the last 32, Paul, Darius and Gavin, both Paul and Gavin had very close matches, but it was only Darius that was able to secure a win, doing so in convincing style 3-0.

Last 16 - Darius Knight (teamed with Amelie Solja (GER)) was our sole remaining representative, but the might of the Korean opposition proved too strong as they went out 3-0 to Kim Min Seok/Kim Min Hee.

Gold: Song Hongyuan/Cao Lisi (CHN)

Silver: Seo Hyun Deok/Song Ma Eum (KOR)

Bronze: Kenta Matsudaira/Kasumi Ishikawa (JPN) and Cheng Jinqqi/Wang Dagin (CHN)

Current reigning silver medallists Korea proved too strong taking the win 3-0 to go on and repeat their 2007 success after being defeated by China 3-0. England would go on to share the spoils of the bronze medal with Japan.



Table Tennis Returns to Royal Albert Hall

Table tennis will return to the iconic Royal Albert Hall on May 7th for the Table Tennis Masters 2009.

The Masters will be contested by the cream of the world's top players including crowd favourites Jean Michel Saive and Chen Weixing, plus other star names depending on form over the coming weeks. Darius Knight and Paul Drinkhall, the two rising stars of English table tennis, will also be there.

The Table Tennis Masters is expected to be even bigger and better than last year's spectacular inaugural event, and its return to the majestic surroundings of the Royal Albert Hall will create excitement across 'Planet Table Tennis'. The prestigious London venue, opposite Hyde Park's Albert Memorial and just a stone's throw from Harrods, is generally regarded as the world's most atmospheric indoor arena, and has tremendous historic significance for table tennis as the venue that played host to major events in the heyday of Richard Bergmann and Johnny Leach. The auditorium is quite unlike any other in the world, as those who attended last year's Table Tennis Masters will testify. The seats are "on the round", completely encircling the playing arena and creating a gladiatorial atmosphere with a tremendous sense of intimacy. The Masters will be broadcast on Sky Sports in the UK and will be beamed to dozens of nations around the world.

The Masters is a six-man competition for huge prize money, encompassing two quarter-finals, two semi-finals and a final. The event will begin at 7pm and will conclude around 10.30pm. Don't just expect to see world-class table tennis: the organisers are planning features and special guests that will take the breath



away. Specially installed big screens, featuring action replays and interviews with the players as they happen on court, will add to the sense of occasion.

As with last year, it will be fascinating to see how leading players cope with the unique atmosphere of the Royal Albert Hall and the pressure of a live audience expected to exceed 5,000 spectators. Many of the world's leading players have expressed a desire to play in the event, following the success of last year, and organisers are now testing form over the coming weeks to secure the participation of the best and most exciting players.

It will also be intriguing to see how Drinkhall, a youngster expected to challenge for gold in 2012, fares against the world's best. The Royal Albert Hall is in the heart of central London and offers excellent transport links by road, rail, underground and bus.

All profits from the Table Tennis Masters will be donated to TTK, the table tennis initiative of the Greenhouse Schools Project charity.



Interview with Glen Hoddle

FABULOUS CAUSE

All profits from the Table Tennis Masters will be donated to TTK, the table tennis initiative of Greenhouse Schools Project, which provides coaching, mentoring and holiday programmes to young people from some of the nation's most socially deprived areas.

TTK operates table tennis programmes in 12 inner city schools in London and three in the Rhondda Valley, Wales. The goal of the project

is not only to encourage mass participation but also to enable the very committed young people to train as much as 10-15 hours per week. TTK currently works with thousands of young people per week.

Each school has a full-time coach who works both in term time and in the holidays. They have been selected to have sufficient patience to deal with beginners, while at the same time the technical expertise to progress the better players.

The coaches include many ex-British internationals with the resulting progress being made by the players as quite extraordinary. The programmes have a positive impact on attendance and behaviour, and also provide the opportunity to guide/mentor the young people taking part.

Event Information

Ticket prices for the Masters are as follows:

	Adult	Child/OAP
Stalls and Stage	£25.00	£12.50
Second Tier and Choir	£10.00	£5.00

Session starts at 7pm

Box Office: To purchase tickets please go to www.royalalberthall.com or call the box office on 0207 589 8212.

For more information on the Table Tennis Masters please go to: www.tabletennismasters.org

For further information in person please contact Gemma Barnes on 0207 603 5111 or info@tabletennismasters.org

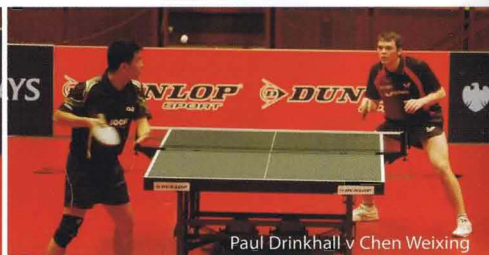
For more information on TTK please go to: www.greenhouseschools.org



Darius Knight v Kalinikos Kreanga



Jean Michel Saive v Jan-Otto Waldner



Paul Drinkhall v Chen Weixing

CAMBRIDGESHIRE TAKE SENIORS 2C

Cambridgeshire were the winners of County Championships Senior Division 2C when the 7 county divisions played out over one weekend at the excellent Westfield TTC in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, and although they actually lost to eventual runners-up Suffolk 1, they still managed to clinch the title by a point from Suffolk.

Playing three matches each day, Cambridgeshire began with an overwhelming 9-1 victory over the Suffolk second team, but it was a different story when they met Suffolk firsts in the second match as Suffolk raced off to a 3-0 lead and soon found themselves in a winning 6-1 lead before Cambridgeshire completed the match stronger, and it was Suffolk who took the honours with a 7-3 victory.

Cambridgeshire ended the first day with a hard fought 6-4 victory against Norfolk who made Cams work really hard before reaching the elusive sixth set, and it was Suffolk who ended the first day at the top of the table with five points as they drew with rivals Norfolk earlier in the day, with Cams lying one point adrift.

Sunday proved a stronger day for Cambridgeshire as they began with an 8-2 victory over Leicestershire 2, before just easing past Bedfordshire 6-4 and ending the day with a 9-1 thumping of Northants. It was Bedfordshire who had a major influence on this day as despite Suffolk 1 recording victories over Suffolk seconds and Northants, it was their shock 7-3 defeat against Bedfordshire which handed the title to Cambridgeshire.

Martin Grey and Maria Boulton led the way for champions Cambridgeshire, both recording nine wins from 12, and were well supported by Kevin

Grey who pick up seven wins. Further support in cameo roles came from Caroline Wright and Simon Pyke who each contributed five wins from six.

VETERANS DIV 1A

The first round of matches in Division 1A were held at Halifax TTC and it was the home county's second team who ended the weekend at the top of the pile, with four straight wins on eight points.

Hertfordshire were the first opposition for Yorkshire with a high noon start on Saturday, and it was Herts who got off to the better start as Stuart Seaholme and Gary Morgan beat home players Tim Dyson and Sean Madden respectively to put Herts 2-0 up.

Mark Land reduced his county's arrears with a four game win over Glen Wilkes and when Dyson partnered Linda Simpson to a mixed doubles win over Seaholme and Janice Laing the counties were locked at two sets all.

The next two sets were shared as Madden beat Seaholme and Laing beat Simpson, and it was Herts who retook the lead in the next set as Wilkes and Morgan beat Madden and Land in the men's doubles so Herts now led 4-3.

Land took his second singles victory of the match with a five game victory over Morgan to bring the sides level, and in the penultimate set of the match Dyson comfortably beat Wilkes 11-5, 11-8, 11-2, to

give Yorkshire a 5-4 lead which was turned into victory when Madden and Simpson beat Wilkes and Laing 11-6, 8-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-8, in a final set mixed doubles victory.

Saturday afternoon saw a comprehensive victory by Yorkshire over Essex 2 as they scored an emphatic 9-1 victory with a solitary ladies singles win by Gill Locke over Linda Simpson. The difference between 9-1 and a whitewash.

Essex third team fared slightly better against Yorkshire on Sunday morning as they went one set better than their own second team. Once again they took the ladies singles as Elaine Sayer beat Simpson and they added that to a men's singles victory by Raymond Lam against Madden, as Yorkshire took their third victory by 8-2.

The same quartet of Dyson, Madden, Land and Simpson had played in all three matches and now faced their own third team that featured a wealth of experience and a new exciting prospect of Hull player Chris Clinton. Although the second team were never headed they were never more than two sets ahead, and were mighty relieved when Madden and Simpson took the last mixed doubles over Corporate Games World Champions Phil Cawser and Sandra Rider 11-6, 5-11, 11-9, 11-8, to ease to a narrow 6-4 victory and maximum points for the weekend.

SENIORS DIVISION 2C							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cambridgeshire	6	5	0	1	41	19	10
Suffolk 1	6	4	1	1	38	22	9
Bedfordshire	6	3	2	1	36	24	8
Northamptonshire	6	2	1	3	27	33	5
Suffolk 2	6	2	0	4	22	38	4
Norfolk	6	1	1	4	25	35	3
Leicestershire 2	6	1	1	4	21	39	3

VETERANS DIVISION 1A							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yorkshire 2	4	4	0	0	29	11	8
Lancashire 1	4	3	1	0	30	10	7
Cheshire 2	4	3	1	0	28	12	7
Yorkshire 3	4	2	1	1	25	15	5
Norfolk 1	3	0	1	2	11	19	1
Hertfordshire 1	3	0	0	3	9	21	0
Essex 2	3	0	0	3	5	25	0
Essex 3	3	0	0	3	3	27	0

VETERANS DIVISION 3A							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yorkshire 4	4	3	0	1	27	13	6
South Yorkshire	4	2	2	0	26	14	6
Cleveland	4	2	2	0	24	16	6
Durham	4	2	1	1	24	16	5
Lancashire 2	4	2	0	2	23	17	4
Warwickshire	4	1	2	1	19	21	4
Northants 2	4	0	1	3	12	28	1
Worcestershire 3	4	0	0	4	5	35	0

Refer to www.etta.co.uk for full results and tables

Jill Hammersley

table manners. when working with Women

There are a few similarities between Britain's predicament in the global economic crisis and that of women in English table tennis. We think we have an analysis of the problems, we think we have identified possible solutions, and we think we have started to act on them. It's just that improvement takes time, and in the meantime we all could do with a bit of cheering up.

It might be helpful therefore to recall an old joke from the Great Depression. "The credit crunch has helped me to get back on my feet," said the lady, and added: "My car's been repossessed." There can indeed be unexpected consolations during hard times. Having to take more exercise can perhaps be one of them, and certainly playing table tennis, which is still pretty cheap compared with most entertainment, can be another. It might also be helpful, though more risqué, to recall an old joke about the sexes, which parodies an absurd prejudice about women and boomerangs it back at a man who proffers it. "Why did you make women so attractive?" the man asked God. "So that you should be able to love them," God replied. "And why did you make them so dumb?" the man then asked. "So that they should be able to love you," came the reply. Of course neither men nor women are intrinsically dumb, but it may be that some men have allowed themselves to become dumb at working out what women need to be successful, or even happy, in table tennis. That is one of the things which the ETTA, its development officers, and hopefully some clubs, have been trying to address. Women have different needs socially, psychologically, in their coaching and in their environmental preferences.

Someone who knows the importance of all this better than most is Andrea Holt, an unusually talented England number one who gave up competition prematurely, and who is now the development officer for the North West.

"The women's game is different from the men's, the techniques and the tactics," Holt said. "And women have different issues away from the table, personal issues. So not only do we need more girls to play, we need to get more women to coach." More of this later. First, a perspective. Let us be in no doubt about the scale of the problem, or the depth of the crisis. It has never been greater.

There is not one girl under the age of ten competing enough to gain a national ranking. There are 30 or 40 boys. France started with 500 under tens from which they created a squad of 15. Halfway through this season in England, there were just 77 girls in the under 13 list, but 388 boys. And the tendency is for girls to drop out more during their teens. At the moment there are 1,274 boys on the under 18 list and only 250 girls. It's a ratio of slightly more than five to one, and it doesn't take much to get on the list; just one county match will do it.

This is a simmering earthquake. Unless reasonable progress is made during the opportunities of the next three or four years, it may be too late, in a rapidly changing world, to reverse the trend.

The problem is, what we do have, we don't find easy to keep. A whole sequence of international standard women have left the sport prematurely; as well as Holt there was Nicola Deaton, Katy Parker, Georgina Walker, and Natalie Green (Bawden), good players all of them, and England has had no world class woman player since Jill Hammersley-Parker more than a quarter of a century ago.

Let us pause for a much-needed moment of optimism. Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley have done well in the past year, having risen more than a 100 places in the world rankings; it indicates that Alan Cooke becoming full-time England women's coach was a good decision, and that the addition of an assistant from Croatia, Nikola Vukelija, should make many more things possible. Unfortunately it's a thin layer of icing on an ill-cooked cake in

which the fruit is sinking.

Many of us are aware of the inability of the British League to attract sponsorship or television, and of the shortcomings of many clubs, where women can find facilities off-putting, attitudes uncomprehending, and coaching inadequate. This sometimes means, according to Steen Hansen, England's head coach, that: "a lot of girls are put in a training group with boys and perhaps that's too tough an environment to start off with. They may need a hand on a shoulder a little bit more at the start of their journey into table tennis."

Hansen is forthright. "I am worried about the situation," he says. "There are not many young girls coming through, and those girls coming through have not managed to convince me that they really want it." He talks about moving the focus to the next, a younger group. Some see it differently. Peter Charters, a successful coach for very many years as well as ETTA Vice-Chairman of Selection, believes girls sometimes find it helpful to train with boys. He is also concerned about discarding girls because many have little chance of success at the Olympics when they might prove useful at a lower level, perhaps even as England players.

What is certain is that ETTA Chairman Alex Murdoch espouses a policy of positive discrimination towards girls and women, and has an ongoing dialogue with ETTA Chief Executive Richard Yule about a raft of development measures to support women. Critics, of whom one is former chairman Alan Ransome – now standing for the top job again – claims that it is only lip service, and asks why so few girls or women have been sent to tournaments since last summer.

Yule will tell you that the ETTA is encouraging clubs to obtain their own facilities, rather than rent halls designed for other purposes, and wants to lend assistance to a property-owning infrastructure. He cites Cippenham, which had two award winners at the 2008 National Volunteer & Club Awards, who were both women. Ormesby is another rising success. Yule will also cite ETTA attempts to change the public image of table tennis to something nearer its dynamic, skilful reality – a TV quiz programme recently described it as a sport you could play without running! He will point out the help which the three-year deal with Fred Perry clothing products has been in doing this. Yule will point out that leagues have been encouraged to use a

Halfway through this season in England, there were just **77 girls** in the **under 13** list, but **388 boys**



Daniella Gray & Tin Tin Ho

"If you put a lot of spin on the serve you can create an opening in the women's game,"



Sally Shutt, Steen Hansen, Jill Parker & Dr Kay Brennan

format of matches which takes less time to play, enabling young girls to get home earlier in the evening, and that there is talk of trying to emulate the housewives league in Japan.

Holt however, who has been successful in increasing female participation in the North West region, feels that it is just that – talk and not enough action.

She also agrees that to get more women into the game, it is important to be sensitive to the different needs which women have. Many of them are technical and tactical as well as personal and emotional.

"If you put a lot of spin on the serve you can create an opening in the women's game," she says. "In the men's game you keep the serve short and tight and stop the opponent getting in. In the women's game you can serve long and you are not out of the rally."

Her views are corroborated by Eva Jeler, the well-known German coach, who reportedly claims that some women are less good at reading spin and many have a game based more on speed than spin.

Holt was a spinny player and believes that other women could be too, particularly if they had access to Chinese women coaches. She points out how Paul Drinkhall has benefited from his coaching with Liu Jia-Yi, and claims she learned more during her six months' coaching from Chen Xin-hua, the former England number one who won the World Cup as a Chinese player, than at any other time in her career. Most of all, Holt says, the future lies with building links with schools. "The Youth Sport Trust could help, because they are linked with schools, and they have sporting champions who go into schools and try to get youngsters to take up sport. They have contact with role models."

Holt also believes that girls could be inspired to take up table tennis by getting top women and ex-players to perform roadshows, perhaps with celebrities, and that above all, more initiative is required.

Let us hear more from Charters, who was very successful with the development of three England players in the eighties, Alison Gordon, Karen Witt, and Mandy Sainsbury, and who is eloquent about why it is harder to do the same now.

"Whether that's because of (the nature of) primary education over the last 20 years – I think it is," Charters says. "I think education had a period where competition has been a dirty

word, and where everyone had to win and not to lose."

He agrees that society has changed in other ways. Whereas once women would play table tennis just for fun, or excitement, or, if they were good enough, for glory, few girls now contemplate a long-term future in something at which they cannot earn enough money. This has led to a situation in which we have only two international players, Jo Parker and Kelly Sibley, who will benefit considerably from London 2012 funding, while those below them risk being overlooked. We have to do our best with the current group of cadet girls, Charters believes, then concentrate harder on getting schools to be more responsive, and work to build a wider base of players.

In the meantime it would help – not only financially but with women's self-esteem – if there were equal prize money, as in many other sports there is. Currently the English national championships give the women's singles winner only £300. The men's winner gets £800. The entry fees are the same. Can this be right?

While the ETTA seems aware of the imperative to equalise things, it may be inhibited by the fact that so many fewer women entries means much less income from entry fees. What is the best way past this problem? One answer is given by Jose Ransome, the longest-lasting and most passionate advocate for equal prize money for women, who advocates an intermediate stage in which the two singles' events have equal prize money while the others achieve it over time as economic circumstances improve.

It is not only an issue of fairness, she points out, it's an investment. "In this day and age what woman is going to get involved in something where there is not equality?" she asks tellingly. "If this is going to continue, no women are going to take up table tennis."

So what will be done? ETTA Chairman Alex Murdoch writes that "prize money is only a part of a whole initiative being looked at to support women, and is included in our 2009-13 planning process. Richard Yule and I have recently discussed this with Sport England, Sainsbury's and the ITTF President," but, as we all know, it is action which is urgently needed, and we may not get it until the aftermath of the UK Sport funding crisis. In defence of the ETTA and Yule in particular, so much time has been taken up in recent months trying to protect table tennis from this, perhaps one of the cruellest body blows any sport ever had. Because of UK Sport's promised Olympic funding having a £90 million shortfall, table tennis finds itself losing its vision of a promised land, and finding itself being badly hurt through no fault of its own. Quite understandably Hansen seems near the end of his tether. "One minute your hopes are sky high and the next you're sent back 300 miles under the earth," came his agonised words, though his thoughts were not merely for his jerked-about emotions, but for the predicament of others too. "It's so difficult for women in table tennis to have a healthy financial situation by playing table tennis," he concluded, but if you too are beginning to despair whether the economic downturn will end in time to save table tennis this side of what we all thought was going to be a landmark Olympics, stop worrying and try a little more humour.

This time, believe it or not, it's from an economist. "The only function of economic forecasting," John Kenneth Galbraith once said, "is to make astrology look respectable."

ALL TO PLAY FOR

Division Three South and Division Four South and Midlands appear to be two very evenly matched affairs.

Ashford II head Division Three South after picking up four good wins, one point ahead of Fusion III who proved more vulnerable during the second weekend. Fusion were held to a draw by an inspired SEH-Britannia Ipswich side, a result that they had to work hard to achieve having trailed 4-2. David Fraser made the score 3-4 by getting the better of Andy Holmes 3-1 and Chris Turpin levelled the score in the last game as he beat Aimee Sparkes 3-1. Britannia's Gary Young had been caught up in two furious five-enders. Gary saw off David Fraser 4-11, 13-11, 11-5, 7-11, 12-10 but in his second singles he missed out 7-11, 8-11, 11-3, 11-8, 7-11 to Akos Baranyi. Ashford II were not really stretched in any of their four games. Hastings gave them their closest battle, but the 6-2 score line reflects their overall superiority and the fact that they were always ahead. Nick Standen excelled for Hastings by getting the better of Adam Brewer 3-1, whilst Matt Porter scored a fine 3-1 victory over Anthony Johnson, but undefeated performances from Nic Ravalec and Trung Tran meant Ashford ran out as comfortable winners. Ashford's 8-0 win over SEH-Britannia Ipswich will be looked upon as an outstanding result after Fusion had struggled against the Suffolk side. Adam Brewer, Nic Ravalec, Anthony Johnson and Trung Tran took all eight singles, with Ravalec coming under the most pressure. Nic required five games to see off Gary Young 11-9, 11-3, 10-12, 12-14, 11-7 and it was even closer against the unorthodox Andy Holmes: Nic scraped home 7-11, 10-12, 11-7, 11-9, 11-9. Ashford had few problems against the bottom placed Cippenham III and they ran out as 7-1 winners. Gemma Chapman's fine opening game 3-1 victory over Nic Ravalec indicated that this might prove a tricky contest, but Ashford had other ideas and they picked up the remaining seven games. Hastings (six points) did well to beat their old rivals Horsham III (seven points) 5-3. Paul Barry was unbeaten for Hastings and this included a hard-fought 11-7, 7-11, 11-8, 11-8 victory over Rory Scott.

Ricki Weston picked up his two singles for Horsham and this included a really hard-fought contest against England no. three cadet girl, Yolanda King. Ricki won this one 11-6, 9-11, 8-11, 12-10, 17-15 to level the scores at 2-2. Rosemary Rainton had played her part by giving Hastings a 4-2 lead by getting the better of Stephen Eckford 11-5, 11-3, 8-11, 8-11, 12-10.

Third-placed Crusaders hit the jackpot against Cippenham III and they ran out as 8-0 winners. From the first game when Darren Pumford beat Gemma Chapman over five ends it was all Crusaders and Ben Larcombe, Ping Ho and Mike Ho all played well. Crusaders met with more resistance against Hastings and neither Darren Pumford or Ben Larcombe were able to take a game off Paul Barry. Ping Ho levelled the scores by beating Rosemary Rainton 3-0 and Darren Pumford gave Crusaders a 4-3 lead as he beat Yolanda King 11-7, 11-9, 13-11. In a grand finale Michael Ho faced the unorthodox Roger Pingram and it was the experienced Pingram who prevailed, just, 11-9, 12-14, 11-9, 5-11, 11-9, one of those rare games where the losing player won the most points! There appears to be three very strong teams in contention in Division Four South and Midlands, and, although Keyworth lead the way with 14 points they lost 5-3 to fourth placed Woodfield, and therefore cannot afford to take things for granted. Keyworth's Kai Lu was easily the outstanding player in this match and he produced some storming play to beat Steve Bertie (11-6, 11-7, 11-7) and Lester Bertie (11-4, 11-2, 11-5). Billy Pegg played his part for Woodfield and he scored two contrasting victories. He scarcely put a foot wrong as he downed Trevor Kerry (11-2, 11-7, 13-11), and he came through a really hard fought tussle to get the better of Hung Kei Li 14-12, 5-11, 11-5, 10-12, 12-10. Shaun Slater secured the Woodfield victory in the last game by getting the better of Steve Fox 11-6, 8-11, 11-9, 11-6. Keyworth scored an easier than anticipated 6-2 victory over Howard. Mark Buckley was an

outstanding five game winner over Keyworth no. one Trevor Kerry, but, Kai Lu and Hung Kei Li both stayed undefeated as Keyworth dominated. Peter Furneaux completed an excellent team performance by getting the better of Phil Thomas 9-11, 18-16, 11-7, 11-9.

Keyworth also ran out 6-2 winners against Bribar Redlands Rookies in a match where England no. five cadet Sam Walker was easily the outstanding Bribar player. Walker scored a fine 11-7, 11-13, 11-6, 16-14 victory over Trevor Kerry and he also scored his team's second victory as well, a cleverly executed 11-5, 11-4, 11-7 win over Steve Fox.

The match between second placed Howard and third placed Yaxley Royal British Legion was as you would expect a close fought affair, although it certainly looked at one stage as if Howard would pick up both points. Howard moved into a 4-1 lead after Ian Gordon beat Kevin Gray 12-14, 9-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-3 and surely the odds were now heavily stacked in Howard's favour? Not in this case! Wayne Mason hit back by beating Harry Lumb 3-1, Shaun Murray made the score 3-4 by getting the better of Ross Wilson 3-1 and Daniel Fielding levelled the scores by beating Kirsty Wilson 11-3, 11-9, 15-13.

Yaxley Royal British Legion's clash with Woodfield II also finished all square. Kevin Gray opened proceedings with a 12-10, 11-6, 11-9 victory against Billy Pegg and the scores moved onto 2-2 whereupon Steve Bertie gave Woodfield the advantage by getting the better of Kevin Gray over five well contested ends. Bertie won 9-11, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 11-6. Pegg made the score 4-2 to Woodfield by beating Shuan Murray 11-9, 11-8, 11-8 but it wasn't enough to secure them both points. Wayne Mason hit back by getting the better of Lester Bertie 11-7, 11-6, 9-11, 11-5 and Daniel Fielding earned Yaxley Royal British Legion a share of the points by beating Shaun Slater 11-8, 11-8, 9-11, 13-11.

PREMIERSHIP TABLE

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Drumchapel Glasgow I	10	0	0	71	9	20
Ellenborough I	6	1	3	40	40	13
Batts Team Peniel I	5	2	3	45	35	12
Westfield I	4	4	2	43	37	12
Dhs G'house Prog. I	4	2	4	37	43	10
Ormesby I	2	4	4	33	47	8
Fusion I	0	3	7	30	50	3
Greenhouse TTK	1	0	9	21	59	2

DIVISION 1 NORTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Derwent I	10	0	0	63	17	20
Ormesby II	8	1	1	54	26	17
Drumchapel Glasgow II	6	1	3	50	30	13
Barrow	4	2	4	35	45	10
Rotherham Scorpions I	2	3	5	35	45	7
Grantham	2	3	5	34	46	7
Halton	2	1	7	32	48	5
Fastbats	0	1	9	17	63	1

DIVISION 2 NORTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Northfield I	10	0	0	69	11	20
Murrayfield	7	2	1	55	25	16
Sheffield	6	1	3	50	30	13
Market Rasen	4	3	3	40	40	11
Chesterfield	4	1	5	36	44	9
Smiths Wood Bribar	1	2	7	27	53	4
Derwent II	2	0	8	23	57	4
Elgre Nottingham II	1	1	8	20	60	3

DIVISION 3 NORTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Drumchapel Glasgow III	10	0	0	66	14	20
Pudsey I	6	3	1	49	31	15
Uxbridge I	6	2	2	53	27	14
Hull C.N.T.S.	5	2	2	42	30	12
Formby	3	1	5	30	42	7
Ormesby III	2	1	7	27	53	5
St. Mary's Hull	1	1	8	27	53	3
Sunderland	0	0	8	10	54	0

DIVISION 4 NORTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Northfield II	9	0	1	60	20	18
Rotherham Scorpions II	5	4	1	47	33	14
Ormesby IV	4	4	2	43	37	12
Drumchapel Glasgow IV	4	3	3	39	41	11
Pudsey II	3	1	6	34	46	7
Isle Of Man	3	1	6	28	52	7
Hydroflo Team Matlock	2	2	6	34	46	6
Uxbridge II	2	1	7	35	45	5

DIVISION 1 SOUTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Urban Progress I	9	1	0	66	14	19
Brighton I	7	1	2	51	29	15
Woolwell I	6	3	1	51	29	15
VRS Generation I	4	3	3	39	41	11
DHS G'house Prog. II	3	2	5	35	45	8
Batts Team Peniel II	2	2	6	31	49	6
York Gardens I	1	1	8	24	56	3
Cippenham I	0	3	7	23	57	3

DIVISION 2 SOUTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sportingbet Guernsey	9	1	0	61	19	19
Mossford I	7	3	0	54	26	17
Byng Hall I	6	2	2	55	25	14
Brighton II	4	3	3	40	40	11
Horsham II	3	2	5	35	45	8
Bedford Modern I	3	1	6	32	48	7
Dhs Greenhouse Progress III	1	0	9	25	55	2
De Vere Netts	1	0	9	18	62	2

DIVISION 3 SOUTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ashford II	8	1	1	56	24	17
Fusion III	5	2	3	45	35	12
Crusaders	3	4	3	44	36	10
DHS G'house Prog. IV	4	2	4	39	41	10
Cippenham III	5	0	5	34	46	10
Horsham III	4	1	5	38	42	9
Hastings	2	2	6	33	47	6
SEH Britannia Ipswich	2	2	6	31	49	6

DIVISION 4 SOUTH						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inspire Bognor Regis	9	0	1	59	21	18
Woolwell III	6	0	4	48	32	12
Barnet	5	2	3	47	33	12
Metropolitan Police	5	1	4	44	36	11
Pavilion	3	3	4	38	42	9
Ellenborough II	3	3	4	37	43	9
Batts Team Peniel III	3	1	6	33	47	7
Byng Hall II	0	2	8	14	66	2

DIVISION 1 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sycamore	10	0	0	64	16	20
Olop Impact I	7	1	2	51	29	15
Elgre Nottingham I	5	2	3	42	38	12
Kingfisher	3	2	5	37	43	8
Cippenham II	3	2	5	34	46	8
Fusion II	3	1	6	33	47	7
Carrara Polska I	2	2	6	30	50	6
Urban Progress II	1	2	7	29	51	4

DIVISION 2 SOUTH AND WEST						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brighton City	8	1	1	56	24	17
Ashford I	5	2	3	42	38	12
Horsham I	4	2	4	40	40	10
Woolwell II	4	2	4	38	42	10
York Gardens II	3	3	4	42	38	9
B @ S Group Okehampton	4	1	5	36	44	9
Club Cornwall	3	1	6	34	46	7
NWF	3	0	7	32	48	6

DIVISION 3 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Westfield II	6	2	0	46	18	14
Carrara Polska II	5	1	2	37	27	11
Woodfield I	3	4	1	41	23	10
Fellows Cranleigh	4	2	2	39	25	10
Vrs Generation II	3	1	4	32	32	7
Olop Impact II	2	3	3	30	34	7
Mossford II	2	1	5	23	41	5
Southampton West	0	0	8	8	56	0

DIVISION 4 SOUTH AND MIDLANDS						
	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Keyworth	9	0	1	58	22	18
Howard	6	3	1	49	31	15
Yaxley Ryl British Legion	5	3	2	47	33	13
Woodfield II	4	3	3	42	38	11
Bribar Redlands Rookies	2	5	3	39	41	9
Bedford Modern II	2	2	6	33	47	6
York Gardens III	2	2	6	32	48	6
DHS G'house Progress V	1	0	9	20	60	2

Butterfly

Grand Prix Leaders

From complete table tennis novice just over three years ago to leading the rankings in Butterfly's national women's Grand Prix series, the rise and rise of Hampshire's Hannah Hicks has been nothing short of meteoric.

At the age of just 17, she is already in the top 10 of both the women's and junior national rankings, and at her current rate of progress, heading at some speed towards a possible place in the team for the 2012 London Olympics.

However, with the quality of opposition and practice in England limited, it is increasingly to Europe that Hicks may turn. Last summer she spent almost a month in Sweden and, like many of Britain's best young players, Hicks is increasingly playing her competitive table tennis abroad.

At home, her development has owed much to Bournemouth Sports Table Tennis Club, where Mathew Ware has also emerged at some speed towards the top end of both the national junior and senior rankings. Ware is also the current men's points leader in the Grand Prix series and closing in on a first prize of £1,650.

Both turn 18 this year but, whereas Ware began playing table tennis when he was eight, Hicks first started at 14.

When she first walked into the table tennis club in Bournemouth, in October 2005, Hicks had already demonstrated an aptitude for sport and outstanding hand-eye coordination as a county level cricketer. Table tennis, though, would prove to be her sport of choice and her progress was rapid. Coach Rowden Fullen described her as "pretty much a raw beginner at table tennis; even then however a beginner with a number of interesting qualities".

He added: "One could see from the initial examination that she was athletic and would develop to be both strong and fast. She was always a worker and a fighter and seemed to have little or no idea of her own limitations, or in fact that there were any limitations at all.

"So much so that in her very first major tournament at Bath she beat players who had been in the top three in England the previous season and was named 'Player of the Tournament'.

"From this auspicious start her progress was nothing short of phenomenal and before the end of her first season of playing she was ranked No. 3 in England in the cadets. "This in spite of the fact that she was competing against many girls who had been playing for as long as 7-8 years. In the seniors there can't have been many women over the years who came from nowhere in the rankings to number five in the country in only three years."

Hicks also joined the local table tennis league in Andover, and, less than a year after she started playing, finished fourth in the national cadet masters and had played representative table tennis for England abroad.

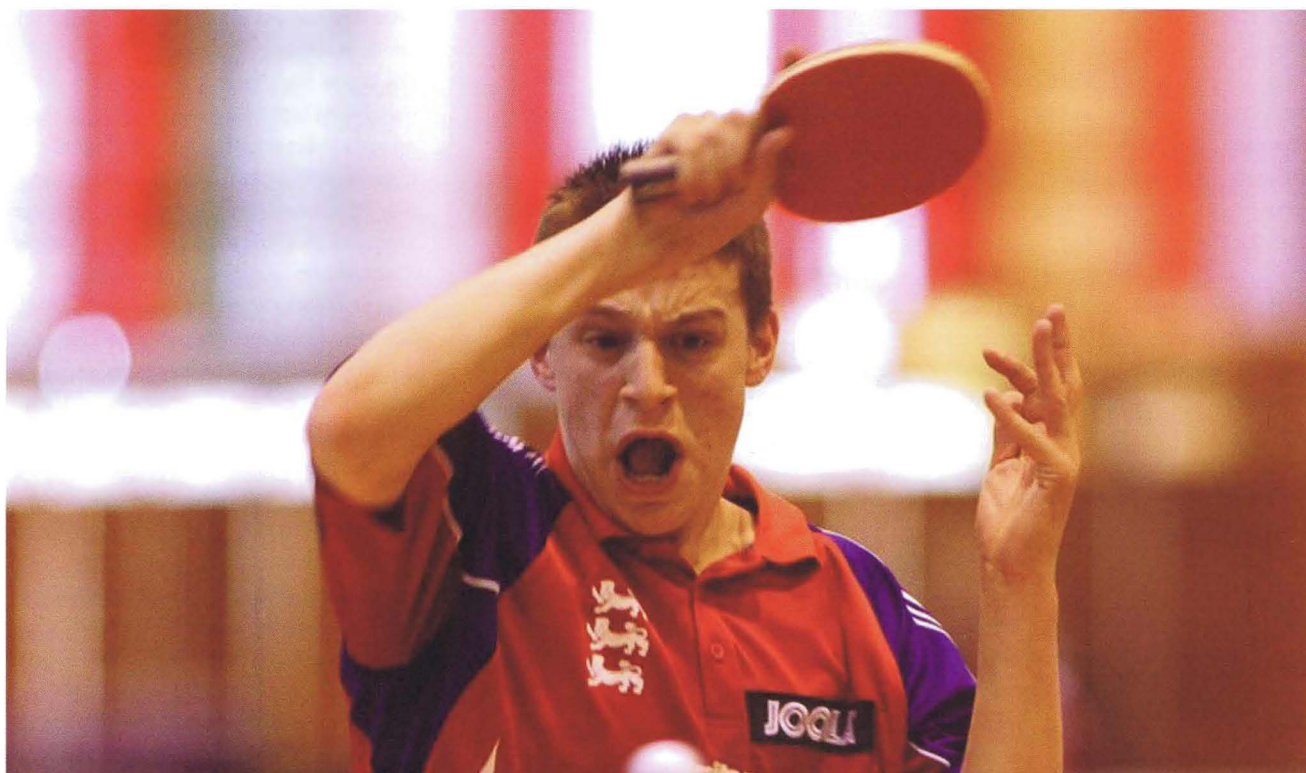
The following season, she moved straight into the Women's British League Premier Division and won 75 per cent of her matches. Her success has meant playing more and more abroad and she also spent parts of the summer in 2006 and 2007 in Germany and Sweden, while representing England at a number of tournaments across Europe.

Among the more eye-catching results have been winning the English Schools Championships, leading her team in the Swedish National League into the Elite Division and helping Hampshire to successive national team titles.

Even more remarkable is the fact she has had to fundamentally adapt her style, during the three years that she has been playing table tennis to accommodate the ban in frictionless long pimples that came

Hannah Hicks





Mathew Ware

into effect in July 2008.

It meant completely restructuring here game. "Instead of blocking close to the table and retaining a simple style which was both difficult to develop and also allowed limited opportunity for her to progress tactically, Hannah decided she wanted to defend more and to 'mix' it both with defence away from the table and counter-hitting/blocking in the closer areas," explained Fullen.

Hicks and Fullen have since examined in detail the styles of the world's top women defenders, such as the Chinese player Fan Ying, and she intends to further develop her game as an 'attacking defender'. With funding and the quality of practice so limited in England, Hicks also knows that she may soon have to base herself in Europe to compete with the quality of opposition from some of the old Eastern bloc countries and many of the exceptional Asian players.

A similar dilemma stands before Ware, whose progress has been rather more conventional, but almost as rapid over the past three years.

His table tennis journey began on a Butlins family holiday camp in 1998 with his dad Geoff, a local league player, and brother David.

"I said to my wife Julie, 'I'm taking the boys to the amusement hall' where they had snooker and table tennis tables," recalled

Geoff. "I was at one end 'feeding' the ball to both the boys, and it seemed almost straight away that Matt had great hand eye co-ordination and was nifty around the table, and we all had a great time, although Matt could hardly see over the table at the time as he was quite small then.

"He wanted to play every day through the rest of the holiday, and so the seed was sown."

Upon returning from their holiday, Ware began playing at the Bournemouth Sports Club and learnt the basis of his technique from coach Trevor Parry before joining the local Bournemouth league.

Within a season, he moved from Division Five to Division One, learning all the time from some of the ex-internationals at the Bournemouth club, such as Tony Clayton and Brian Burn.

Fullen was also hugely involved with Ware's development, who began winning local titles and was simultaneously the Bournemouth Under 13, Under 15 and Under 18 champion. He also reached the final of the national Under 13 championships and began to play in international matches abroad.

Other highlights since then have involved winning the European Tournoi tournament in Nantes, the national county team championships with Hicks, Garth Kinlocke, David McBeath and Becky House, and a clean sweep of individual titles at the

Hampshire junior and senior championships in 2006. Last year, he won the national junior mixed doubles titles with Karina Le Fevre.

His best wins have included a victory over Darius Knight in the Junior British Premier League and, last year, Andrew Rushton in the senior national championships on his way to the quarter-finals. Like Hicks, he has spent considerable time in Sweden and is combining a BTEC sports diploma with up to 16 hours a week of practice. The perennial problem, however, is finding quality practice partners within a manageable travelling distance.

In the short term, the goal for both Hicks and Ware will be defending their positions in the Butterfly Grand Prix series but, in the longer term, both will inevitably have an eye on the London Olympics in 2012.

LONDON OPEN BGP

Hong Ming Zhang hardly broke sweat on his way to winning the Men's Open title on day two of the Tees Sport sponsored London Open, a Butterfly Grand Prix event, collecting his winner's cheque for £300. The "happy chappy" from China exuded class throughout the event and simply outplayed Lennart Wehking from Germany in the final, three sets to love.

The entire Men's Open event lived up to all the prior expectations with the players and spectators alike being treated on the day to

some "Oriental Magic" from Hong Ming Zhang.

What a delight it was to savour the professionalism and power of England number one Jo Parker in coming through unscathed to win the Women's Open in a straight sets final over the many times Grand Prix winner Shuying Xu. Jo treated the packed final audience to her superb retrieval skills coupled with devastating attacking play on both wings to run out a true champion. Because of her busy schedule it is a rare opportunity to witness her defensive skills in a Grand Prix event, and she made Shuying Xu look almost ordinary in a one-sided last match spectacle. Jo was never under any threat throughout the tournament and won all her matches in straight sets.

The Under 21 Men's was soon under way, with the expert in this event, Damien Nicholls, stealthily progressing through to the latter stages.

Chris Doran was also playing his part in the proceedings enjoying gutsy wins over Olly Langlois and Matt Ware at the last eight stage to set up a confrontation with Nicholls.

The Under 21 Men's final proved once again

Mathew Ware



Results London

Men's Open Hong Ming Zhang (CHN) bt. Lennart Wehking (GER) 11-7, 11-8, 11-4.
Women's Open Jo Parker (Sy) bt. Shuying Xu (E) 11-7, 11-4, 11-6.
Under 21 Men Damien Nicholls (Sp) bt. Wang Zheng (E) 11-8, 7-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-5.
Under 21 Women Meihan Lui (E) bt. Sarra Wang (E) 5-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-4, 11-8.
Mixed Restricted Singles Remi Petrosius (K) bt. Zoltan Hosszu (Sy) 11-6, 11-4, 11-4.
Mixed Veteran Singles Abdul Wuraola (Sy) bt. David Williams (Mi) 11-3, 11-7, 5-11, 9-11, 11-8.
Men's Band 1 Abdul Wuraola (Sy) bt. Mark Smith (Y) 15-17, 11-1, 11-8, 9-11, 11-0
Women's Band 1 Hannah Hicks (Ha) bt. Emily Bates (Li) 12-10, 11-5, 11-9.
Men's Band 2 Vyatas Rybakas (E) bt. Umair Mauthoor (E) 14-12, 11-8, 11-5.
Women's Band 2 Klaudia Szadkowska (Mi) bt. Catherine Chen (CHN) 11-4, 11-6, 11-7.
Men's Band 3 Dave Reeves (Av) bt. Will Bayley (Av) 11-9, 11-2, 12-10.
Women's Band 3 Klaudia Szadkowska (Mi) bt. Jas Ould (K) 3-11, 13-11, 11-5, 11-8.
Men's Band 4 Eskil Lindholm (NOR) bt. Jide Owolabi (K) 12-10, 11-8, 11-6.
Men's Band 5 Michal Kiszka (E) bt. Ben Gardiner (Bd) 11-6, 11-4, 7-11, 16-14.
Men's Band 6 Koji Hirota (Mi) bt. Joe Hurdley (Sp) 11-7, 11-5, 11-9.

the sheer class and utmost determination Damien Nicholls possesses in taking the title after some intense topspin rallies throughout the five long sets, with Wang Zheng. It was a top class match fought out with a true sportsmanship display from both players giving it their all.

Meanwhile the Women's under 21 competition was reaching the closing stages.

Top seeded Meihan Lui was easing her way through to the final overcoming the challenge of Bekky Griffith and Feifei Pei in the knockout rounds to book her place in the final. In the bottom half of the draw Sarra Wang was looking strong to meet Meihan in the last match.

The final went the full distance, with Meihan Liu finishing off the job using her expert chopping skills to outstay a determined Sarra Wang to take the winner's cheque for £50.

Klaudia Szadkowska was the shining star on day one twenty six year old Polish sensation that plays British League for Carrera Polska was a revelation in winning both the Women's Band Two and Three titles.

Cruising her way through to the Women's Band Two title, Klaudia steamrollered all

before her, and was in a superior class to all her opponents.

The last of the Women's events, Band One, had drama and excitement right from the off with cadet international Emily Bates getting off to a great start by beating top seeded Hannah Hicks in straight sets at the group stage. Emily then went on to outstay Kirsty Wilson, and then enjoy a great win against Melissa Wright at the penultimate hurdle to reach the final. After her defeat at the hands of Bates, Hannah Hicks progressed through as group runner-up to the bottom half of the draw to progress to the final. This set up a repeat of their earlier match in the groups. The eagerly awaited final with Hicks and Bates did not live up to expectations and it was Hannah that came through the stronger to take the Women's Band One title in straight sets.

The main event on the men's card was Band One, and it was the master magician Abdul Wuraola conjuring up his wizardry skills to put a spell over all before him, taking the title in a twilight 11pm finish against Mark Smith from Yorkshire.

At 14 years young, Jas Ould from the Byng Hall Club once again hit the high notes in winning the Player of the Tournament for a second successive Grand Prix and this sets a record, so I am told. Very well done Jas, who collected her £50 voucher from the sponsors, Tees Sport. **By Geoff Ware**

MEDWAY OPEN BGP

The Men's and Women's Open winner's Bo Huang Chen and Shuying Xu both confirmed previous year's results that Medway is the place for a Chinese takeaway.

It was as last year, an all Chinese Men's final, with Zheng taking on Chen, both these young men wooed the gathered crowd with the wonderful standard of play that we have become accustomed to by these Oriental stars. The match was jam packed with awesome rallies, and supreme touch play. Bo Huang Chen soon got the upper hand and ran out a 3-0 winner, and duly collected his title cheque for £300. Shuying Xu made it a Chinese double by proving that once again she is a worthy Women's Open Champion and terminated all her opponents to pick up the winner's cheque for £175. Karina Le Fevre from the Ormesby Club managed to take a set off Shuying in the final, but that was as good as it got.

The Under 21 Women's event was soon under way and it was top seed Karina Le



Hannah Hicks

Fevre who was cruising her way to the final with a straight sets win over club mate Chloe Whyte in the last four to await her opponent in the final. Hannah Hicks worked her way through the field to meet Karina in the final, Karina won the first set 12-10, and from there on was always in command and ran out a straight sets winner to collect the winner's trophy. On adjacent tables the Men's Under 21 event was in full flow. Top seed Matt Ware was easing his way through to the final to meet once again this weekend, his "best mate" Chris Doran in the semi-final. Ware was soon out of the blocks and held the upper hand from a battling Doran, coming through in three closely fought sets, to await his final opponent.

Second seed Wang Zheng who had earlier in the day fought a losing battle in the Men's Open final, was making inroads towards the latter stages to set up his final with Ware. Meanwhile during these afternoon matches the entire playing hall came to a fifteen-minute standstill through a temporary power cut. With the lighting restored Ware came out of the darkness to bring new light and zest into his final contest, and simply outplayed the Chinese star Zheng, to win in straight sets and collect the champion prize.

Tom Maynard proved just what a great competitor he is following three months out of top flight table tennis through a

back injury, to fight all the way to the Men's Band 2 title, on day one of the Medway Open Butterfly Grand Prix.

In the main Men's Band 1 event Kinlocke was simply "on fire", blazing a glory trail to the final. Having spent several months putting in the training and competition hours in Sweden, this investment is now paying huge. In the top half of the draw Matt Ware was having to work hard to reach a last confrontation with his Hampshire colleague Garth Kinlocke. It was Kinlocke who took first blood with an amazing display of controlled play to take the first two sets fairly comfortably. Ware fought back in the third, but Kinlocke kept his cool to run out a true Champion, 3-1.

The Women's Band 1 included all the usual suspects, with the final fought out by the two top seeded players, Hannah Hicks and Sanja Clements. In previous encounters Hannah had the edge in matches won against her Bournemouth adversary, but it was Sanja who was in devastating form to run out a straight sets winner over Hicks, taking the title and the victory cheque for £50.

The Tees Sport "Player of the Tournament Award", which includes a framed certificate and £50 in Tees Sport vouchers, was presented to Garth Kinlocke for his outstanding performances throughout the entire weekend. **By Geoff Ware**

Results Medway

Men's Open Bo Huang Chen (TPE) bt. Wang Zheng (E)
11-9, 11-8, 11-9

Women's Open Shuying Xu (E) bt. Karina Le Fevre (Cv)
11-4, 11-13, 11-4, 11-4

Under 21 Men Matt Ware (Ha) bt. Wang Zheng (E)
11-5, 11-5, 11-9

Under 21 Women Karina Le Fevre (Cv) bt.
Hannah Hicks (Ha) 12-10, 11-5, 12-10

Mixed Veteran Chris Bartram (K) bt. Adrian Moore (Sx)
12-10, 9-11, 8-11, 11-7, 15-13

Mixed Restricted
Remi Petrosious (K) bt. Zoltan Hosszu (Sy) 11-1, 9-11, 11-9,
12-10

Men's Band 1 Garth Kinlocke (Ha) bt. Matt Ware (Ha)
11-9, 11-0, 2-11, 11-8

Women's Band 1 Sanja Clements (Do) bt. Hannah Hicks
(Ha) 11-7, 11-3, 13-11

Men's Band 2 Tom Maynard (Bk) bt. Richard Andrews (Bk)
8-11, 11-8, 7-11, 14-12, 11-8

Women's Band 2
Chloe Whyte (Cv) bt. Gosia Muda (Mi) 11-3, 11-9, 11-9

Men's Band 3 Daniel Basterfield (Mi) bt. Ping Ho (Mi)
11-9, 11-8, 11-6

Women's Band 3 Ikue Humphrey (Sy) bt. Haylee Potts (He)
11-5, 11-5, 6-11, 8-11, 11-5

Men's Band 4 Billy Pegg (Sp) bt. Ben Larcombe (Sy)
11-9, 11-5, 11-8

Men's Band 5 Tony Wilkinson (Mi) bt. Nathan Bingham (Do)
11-8, 11-9, 11-7

Men's Band 6 Koji Hirota (Mi) bt. Igor Morais (Mi)
11-8, 11-3, 13-11

County Notes

Berkshire by Colin Dyke

The Senior 2nd team were depleted by injuries for their first group matches at Cippenham, losing all three matches in the process. There were some encouraging signs from the stand-in ladies though, Denise Rolfe beat Sue Hayes over four games in the defeat by Bucks 2, whilst 12 year old Megan Knowles exceeded all expectations by leading the same lady 2-0 before losing a close match in the fifth.

Stuart Williams won the only other set beating Tim Chung in three. Steve Murgatroyd saved the whitewash against both Surrey 2 and Kent 1 by beating Ben Larcombe and Mark Buckley respectively.

The Veterans 1st team started with a comfortable win over Essex 4 by 8-2 with Dave Barr unbeaten, albeit coming back from two games down to beat Brian Adams. However, in the afternoon, a cracking match with Dorset resulted in a 6-4 defeat.

The Veterans 2nd team are unbeaten to date. Well that's a way of looking at two good draws.

The Over 60s 1st team had mixed success at Ashford and finished the first half mid table. The team was strengthened by new "old" boys Derek Wood and Dave Streak, but points were still hard to come by. Berks 2 were comfortably seen off 8-2, but then points were dropped in draws against both Kent 2 and Surrey, and a 4-6 defeat by a ladyless Sussex did the damage. There was a notable double for Wood against Surrey, including the defeat of Derek Holman at deuce in the fifth in a marvellous contest. Berks 2 finished pointless, although bright points were Pam Spooner's four out of five singles including victories over Gill Knightley and Lorna Slifkin, and a good win for Allan Bruton over Sussex's John Millward.

Finally an astonishing match ensued when the Veterans 5th team lost 1-9 to Gloucestershire 2. Every one of the first seven sets went to five games and of the maximum 50 games possible, 47 were played to settle the result. Is this some sort of record?

Cornwall By Jeremy Williams

The season started in Cornwall on a sad note with the news that Cornwall's first County Champion Geoff Cornelius passed away in October. Geoff played for many of the St Austell clubs over the years and won the Men's Singles way back in 1950. He was 83.

Cornwall's largest league, West Cornwall, which last season boasted five divisions, celebrates its 50th anniversary this season

HIGHLIGHTED NEWS FROM CORNWALL

Cornwall's largest league, West Cornwall, which last season boasted five divisions, celebrates its 50th anniversary this season having been formed in October 1958 following an amalgamation of all the principal leagues in the area. A number of events are planned for later in the season to commemorate this special occasion.

Fifty years on and only two clubs survive - St Ives and Falmouth Docks continue to flourish. John Bassett was playing for St Ives then and he is still playing now in the twilight of his long and distinguished table tennis career - and at nearly 69 years of age is one of the last remaining hard bat exponents.

having been formed in October 1958 following an amalgamation of all the principal leagues in the area. A number of events are planned for later in the season to commemorate this special occasion. Fifty years on and only two clubs survive - St Ives and Falmouth Docks continue to flourish. John Bassett was playing for St Ives then and he is still playing now in the twilight of his long and distinguished table tennis career - and at nearly 69 years of age is one of the last remaining hard bat exponents.

Darren Reed (Bridge TTC) starts the season where he usually is at no 1 in the Cornwall rankings. He is also currently ranked 41 in the England men's list following some excellent successes in the British League. He will lead the county seniors again this season to try and build on the second place position attained last season in Senior Division 1A. On the female front St Ives' Rachel Trevorrow continues to make excellent progress and has emerged as a top senior player over the past season, and we welcome back Martha Travis to the fold after a spell up north which strengthens our ladies' squad.

Our arch rivals and good friends Devon won the eighteenth Tamar Cup held at St Austell in November and were just too strong on the day. Fielding the same senior team as competed in last season's County Championships, Cornwall never really fired on all cylinders with only Darren Reed on top form winning both his singles in the 8-2 defeat. The Tamar Cup which competes at Senior, Veteran, Junior and Cadet level now returns over the River Tamar as it did way back in January 1991 before 120 fans at Mevagissey.

Derbyshire by Neil Houghton

After the Senior Premier weekend Derbyshire tops the table in both the Senior and Junior Premier Divisions!

Derbyshire Seniors I, comprising Shaun Marples, Sam Perry, Adam Frost, along with Emma and Jane Vickers, had some good wins with 7-3 over Buckinghamshire, 9-1 v Gloucestershire and 8-2 v Essex.

More recently I went to Draycott to see the newly promoted Derbyshire Seniors II team in Division One action, however they found their new division very strong and short lived, with one 7-3 win and some close losses, unfortunately taking the drop - hopefully ready to come back up in 2010. Personally I feel the whole division played in one weekend seems squashed, as well as not exactly traditional county play, but presumably some like

Steve Murgatroyd saved the whitewash against both Surrey 2 and Kent 1 by beating Ben Larcombe and Mark Buckley respectively.



it with a busy calendar. Talking of second teams, Derbyshire Juniors II should be making their debut around the time this appears in TTN in Division 2A, so it will be interesting to see how they go as the team will contain some making their county debut.

Melissa Slaney has indeed accepted the post of Derbyshire Women's Officer and as I suggested earlier, Melissa is just right for the job as a balanced personality no doubt eager to champion women and girls in sport, but also keen on every aspect of T.T. At least we have a good bunch of young and older ladies in Derbyshire, but we could have a big discussion on women and girls in sport with no doubt some lively debate on the best ways to get them into it. Those females who are already active tend to be lively and keen; however two things are easily agreed on - getting many girls and women to play ANY sport is difficult and getting more into T.T. maybe even more difficult - and of course these days fewer boys as well are "into" sport, a number of young people being more likely to have computer or TV/couch potato syndrome.

At the recent coaching awards in Lilleshall, Speedwell and Waingroves picked up their PremierClub awards and Mel Buxton was given Coach of Year. Also Liam Pitchford received the Johnny Leach Trophy for Junior Player of the Year.

Lucy Davidson is certainly worthy of a big mention for her double at Stockton. Well done Lucy for your performance in winning the team event with Yolanda King (Sx), and in an all team-mate final beating Yolanda to win the event. Well wicked performance! Also at Stockton were Danny Lowe and Sean Cullen - as I heard it Sean beat Danny to go through to finish junior runner-up, whilst Danny in the England team with Hertfordshire's William Maybanks came runner-up in the team final. Very well done lads!

Stop Press - I've just heard that at the East Midlands Ranking Trials a pleasing number of 16 Derbyshire players went to Grantham and I also heard that Jayden Budworth won the Under 11s.

Devon by John Smith

A new look Devon senior side, missing its three leading players, Craig Bryant, Marketa Myskova and Chris Brown, and with two junior debutants in Richard Marshall and Chris Smith, were always going to struggle to retain the county title. However, they acquitted themselves very well with a 7-3 win over Gloucestershire and a draw with Durham, their only defeat of the first weekend coming against Buckinghamshire.

Devon were made very welcome by the Cornish at St Austell for the annual Tamar Cup match between the two counties, but made a clean sweep of the Veterans, Senior, Junior and Cadet events to reclaim the cup.

County Notes

Woolwell Table Tennis Club's £1,000 Super Series, sponsored by Thornton's Sport & Leisure and Viridor Waste Management, ended with a bumper entry of 49 for the final day's play and some of the best table tennis ever seen at the Woolwell Centre. 17 year old Garth Kinlocke, ranked no 31 in England, took the £50 first prize, but certainly did not have it all his own way. In the final group stage, his first severe test of the day saw him defeated in four games by the vastly experienced Paul Whiting. However, he took second place to qualify for a semi-final against the other group winner, Chris Smith.

Smith briefly matched Kinlocke's powerful play but was convincingly beaten, as was an out of form Richard Marshall by Whiting, setting up a best of seven re-match. Kinlocke, now in top form and more familiar with the playing venue, took his revenge 4-1. Despite his disappointing day, Marshall bagged the £200 series first prize after his two earlier season victories. The two series leaders, Vicky Smith and Sam Hurst, met prematurely in the quarter-final after Hurst also slipped up in his group, against an in form Ben Cunningham. Smith won a hard fought battle in five to destroy Hurst's chance of taking the £100 overall prize.

Bowler and Wilson played out a titanic semi-final, particularly in the final game, when two of the most determined players on display produced some enthralling rallies, but Wilson finally edged it to keep his hopes of the overall prize alive if Smith failed to reach the final.

Smith's match followed immediately afterwards, against her conqueror in the band 1 event, Exeter's Mark Perfect. Once again youth triumphed over experience as she overpowered her opponent 3-1 to guarantee herself the series prize. Not finished yet, she still had enough energy to take another five game final and retain her remarkable perfect band 2 record of three wins in three events.

Sarah Jackson from Okehampton made an inauspicious start to band 3, losing two group matches and scraping through on countback, but she emerged victorious after defeating George Haskell in the semi-final and Tom Pearce in the final. 11 year old Beth Wilson justified her favourite status to take band 4, but Tanoa Ansah did well to reach the final.

The Woolwell club is becoming as renowned for its cuisine as its table tennis thanks to members Yetty Smith, Debbie Whiting and Janet Marshall, and once again they provided a superb evening buffet for over 70 people, which was followed by an entertaining music quiz.

Essex by Steve Kerns

Hopes of a quick return to the County Championships Premier Division for the junior sides were given a real boost when both the first team and the second teams made superb starts to the

HIGHLIGHTED NEWS FROM DEVON

17 year old Garth Kinlocke, ranked no 31 in England, took the £50 first prize, but certainly did not have it all his own way. In the final group stage, his first severe test of the day saw him defeated in four games by the vastly experienced Paul Whiting. However, he took second place to qualify for a semi-final against the other group winner, Chris Smith. Smith briefly matched Kinlocke's powerful play but was convincingly beaten, as was an out of form Richard Marshall by Whiting, setting up a best of seven re-match. Kinlocke, now in top form and more familiar with the playing venue, took his revenge 4-1.

season. The first team won all three games played at Grantham in October with Emran Hussain, Azarel Adebajo, Reece Tan, excellent newcomer Nicole Sydorenko and Evie Collier carrying all before them. Essex II also impressed and their side of Luca Mariano, Jared Patel, Matthew Mulley, Bethany March and Georgina Barnes beat Bedfordshire I 7-3 and Durham I 9-1 - two very good results. Expect the likes of Emran Hussain and Nicole Sydorenko to be pushing for places in the county's senior teams as the season progresses.

Mossford I's hopes of gaining promotion to Division One South of the Senior British League look to have vanished after they failed to keep pace with the up-and-coming Guernsey team in the second round of matches. Mossford had to fight back from 2-4 down to draw with Byng Hall I with Didier Ngoma beating Mark Romano 12-10, 11-7, 11-8 in the seventh game and Keith Lesser doing well to get the better of Will Power 11-6, 11-2, 11-8 in the last game. In addition, Mossford had also scraped home in two other games. Ngoma had to pull out all the stops to get the better of Mark Brown 11-8, 12-10, 7-11, 4-11, 14-12 and Euan Liddle also just managed to beat Mark Brown 7-11, 11-9, 2-11, 11-5, 11-9. Mossford also struggled against a strong Brighton team bolstered by the inclusion of the stylish Mayur Majithia at no. 1.

Even in their game against bottom side De Vere NETTS, Mossford failed to match the performance of their Channel Island rivals who had beaten the Braintree side 8-0.

De Vere NETTS look unlikely to avoid relegation but they came very close to taking a point off Brighton II. Paul Davison gave NETTS a great start by getting the better of Paul Carter 9-11, 9-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-7 and Alistair Hill excelled (again) by beating Kevin Green 6-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-8. An inform Paul Davison looked as if he just might beat Mayur Majithia as he took the first two ends. Unfortunately, Paul just missed out in the third end and his challenge never hit the same heights again. Mayur edged this one 9-11, 11-13, 16-14, 11-7, 11-6. NETTS' new signing Kevin Read did well to beat Matthew Brown 14-12, 11-8, 11-9 and debutante Nikki Kennard just failed to earn her side a point in the last game. A relieved Kevin Green beat Nikki 11-7, 9-11, 12-10, 6-11, 11-7 to seal a 5-3 victory for the Sussex team.

Hertfordshire by Ann Fereday

The Over 60 team had its best set of results to date at Ashford, they finished the weekend tying with Essex for second place only 1 point behind Kent 1.

Their first opponents on the Saturday morning were Surrey who they beat 7-3. In the afternoon they drew 5-5 with Middlesex. The evening match against Essex, was won 7-3. On Sunday morning Kent 2 went down by 8-2 to us but we lost 2-8 to Kent 1.

Derbyshire Seniors I, comprising **Shaun Marples**, Sam Perry, Adam Frost, along with Emma and Jane Vickers, had some good wins with 7-3 over Buckinghamshire, 9-1 v Gloucestershire and 8-2 v Essex.



Much of our success was due to John Taylor who won all his singles on Saturday and Sally Bax who played both days and beat all opponents. Others who played were Stuart Seaholme, Geof Bax, Larry Gregory, Alan Lamprell and Keith Hartridge. Part two of the competition is in March.

The Over 40 veteran teams have not fared so well. The first team is sixth of eight in Div.1A, having lost 4-6 to Yorkshire 2, 9-1 to Lancashire and 4-6 to Yorks 3, although their lady, Janice Laing, won all her singles.

Herts 2 and 4 are in the same division so they had to play each other. It was a close match with long games ending in a 5-5 draw.

With only one original member left, team 3 had to find reserves who lost 1-8 to Kent 5 and 3-7 to Surrey 4. Team 4 fell 0-10 to Surrey 3.

Herts 5 and 6 are also in the same division. When they played each other both sides turned out their best teams in a real needle match. Eventually team 6 beat 5 by 6-4 to the delight of the team 6 captain, Dave Wilson.

Lancashire by Dave Buckley

The results of the county trials held at Preston back in September were as follows:

Under 18 boys:

1 Joshua Bleakley; 2 Ben Edwards; 3 Alex Buchanan
4 Michael Padden; 5 Alex Tyson; 6 Adam Choi

Under 15 boys:

1 Michael Lunn; 2 Craig Scarisbrick
3 Alex Leslie ; 4 Liam McCreav; 5 Jony Cummins; 6 Nick Valentine

Under 13 boys:

1 Jamie Lunn; 2 Alex Storey; 3 Matthew Fields;
4 Callum Stott ; 5 Krishna Chauhan; 6 Ted Mossop

Under 11 boys:

1 David Eden; 2 Ryan Lunn; 3 Callum Allman; 4
Daniel Gillan; 5 James Chappell; 6 Tom Miller

Under 15 girls:

1 Weronika Szleszynska; 2 Danielle Eden
3 Rebecca McGrath; 4 Rebecca Hodgson; 5 Gabriella Kaye
6 Emily Ross

The top five in each category could be nominated for the Regional Trials at Halton at the end of November.

The Lancs veterans second team have started their campaign with mixed degrees of success. They beat Northants 2 7-3 and Worcs 3 9-1 before losing to Yorkshire 4 7-3 and Cleveland by 6-4. Brian Clements and Barry Elliot were both responsible for valuable contributions.

The first rounds of matches in the Lancs & Cheshire League were played at Blackpool in November. The premier division after four rounds looks extremely tight with just a single point separating Bolton, Warrington, Bury and Oldham. A maximum haul from any of these sides could clinch the title. Newly formed East Lancs are on course for a premier slot next season. Mike Moir and Josh Bleakley are responsible for a maximum points haul after the

County Notes

first rounds in division one. Division two leaders Oldham A are also on course for promotion, mainly due to the talented youth of Reena Ardeshana, Rebekah Griffith and Adam Rowbotham. The Manchester ladies Junqui Houghton, Diane Ashford and Diane Twist, currently top their respective division after a maximum haul from their first three matches. The county ranked junior trio of Ben Edwards, Adam Choi and Alex Buchanan are instrumental in the junior premier title assault for Southport who boast a 100% record after three matches. Josh Boulton, Rebekah Griffith and Nathan Buckley spearhead a similar charge for Oldham in juniors div 1. Oldham A juniors currently top div 2 represented by Sarah Weatherby, Natalie Dodd and Abigail Griffith. The vets premier division is looking to be retained by Manchester who boast a sizeable 12 point lead after a mere three matches, Brian Clements, Mark Ramsbottom, Barry Elliot and John Hope being responsible for the fine start. Oldham lead vets division 1 by five points after three matches aided by the transfer of Dave Griffith from Bolton.

The standard of Oldham League table tennis has improved dramatically in recent seasons. The England ranked Paul Cicchelli represented Saddleworth CC together with the Huddersfield no 1 Darren Lindley. They overcame champions Glodwick which consisted of Mark Ramsbottom and Phil Biggs.

Northants by Dennis Millman

Eight years ago the Burton Latimer Baptist Church had a single team in the Kettering & District League. Then one of the church leaders, and table tennis enthusiast, Derek Muggleton, took a hand.

After obtaining the necessary coaching qualifications he gradually built up the table tennis section which now has six teams and a big enough membership to support several more. In 2003 former county champion Graeme McKim, who has close links with the church, was persuaded to make a comeback and the following season he led the Baptist A team to the Premier Division title. Injury then brought about his second retirement but the side continues to feature at or near the top of the table. This season it trails the title-holders Town A by three points at the halfway stage, and as last season the current quartet of Alex Aston, Steve Silk, Chris Ross and Dawid Przybysz is the only side to get the better of Town A.

The Burton Baptist club doesn't confine its activities to seeking league honours. For the last four years Derek Muggleton has organised a table tennis marathon in aid of Kettering's Cransley Hospice, raising a total in excess of £4,000. Additionally the club has put its excellent facilities at the disposal of both Northants and the Kettering League for the staging of tournament finals and local cup competitions.

A thriving Burton Latimer Baptist Church has again taken on the

HIGHLIGHTED NEWS FROM NORTHANTS

The eleven times county men's singles champion Andy Trott has finally reached the veteran stage, currently standing at no.24 in the rankings. This achievement has been surpassed by Tim Yarnall, no.5 on the Senior men's list, and Chris Doran who occupies 23rd place in the same category, whilst ranked no. 3 at junior level.

A recent clash between Yarnall and Doran saw the latter emerge victorious, but while Yarnall took the county men's title twice in his early teens, Doran's national commitments have prevented him from challenging Trott, the present holder.

role of Kettering League sponsor, and in so many ways ensured that the Kettering League has bucked the national trend with a 50% increase in its number of teams since the year 2000.

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A recent clash between Yarnall and Doran saw the latter emerge victorious, but while Yarnall took the county men's title twice in his early teens, Doran's national commitments have prevented him from challenging Trott, the present holder.

On the league front Westfield A seem certain to retain the Wellingborough Premier crown with a nucleus of young players, including Jordan Dainty, Jack Coleman and more recently Daniel Smalley.

In the Kettering Premier, Dainty for his home club Rothborough A, and Coleman, for Westfield, have excelled, but their respective teams have yet to make a serious impact.

Town A, Baptist A and Higham Band A should battle for honours with player availability the deciding factor.

11 year old Sam Mabey has made the most progress in Division One and is now a match for anyone in the section. The ever cheerful John Hanvey, who also plays in Division One, hit the headlines recently when he simultaneously played two matches for Corby B and one for Corby A on adjacent tables. It would be nice to say that it proved a rewarding experience, but regrettably quantity exceeded quality on the night.

Northumberland by Pauline Long

The county senior team won one (Derbyshire 6-4) and drew one (Warwickshire 5-5) of its seven matches at the Division 1A play-offs at Draycott, and as a result will stay up. Andrew Wilkinson led the way from the no. 1 position with nine wins from 14, Bart Vermoesen got five and Gary Sangster one. For the women, Caron Guthrie chipped in with five sets and Karen Henry three. The Northumbria League representative side of Dale Aitkenhead and Jim Stamas went out in the first round group for the Wilmott Cup men's team competition at Ormesby. They lost 0-3 to Stockton and 2-3 to Middlesbrough, Dale winning both sets. A very successful inaugural Cramlington 2 Star junior tournament was recently held at the Sporting Club, attracting players from Durham, Cleveland and Scotland as well as our own county. Top junior Ryan Richardson had the most success in the main events, finishing runner-up to Cleveland's John Bousfield in the cadet boys' singles. James McCabe and Rahul Vadhera were winner and runner-up respectively in the cadet consolation event.

Expect the likes of Emrain Hussain and Nicole Sydorenko to be pushing for places in the county's senior teams as the season progresses.



The junior side of Ryan, Alex Guttridge and Debbie Dawson also took part in the first session of the northern section of the Junior National League at Billingham. They made an excellent start, winning all four of their matches against Scarborough (2), Northfield (Billingham) and Hartlepool. They are undoubtedly gaining valuable experience of match play, despite not being able to play at junior county level because of a lack of available girls.

South Yorkshire by Robert Loxley

The Stocksbridge Table Tennis Club based in the north of the city have won a total of 10 division one titles, placing them second in the all time list of champions of Sheffield. The club's outstanding achievements have been based largely on the efforts of Andrew and Stephen Horsfield, defensive ace Trevor Williams and Barnsley's Richard Shirt.

The most number of championships won by one team is the 11 by Albion Corinthians who every year from 1962 until 1973 lifted the title with the exception of 1972.

The current season forms a backdrop for the closest race for many years for the coveted "Morning Telegraph trophy", which is presented to the champions of the second largest league in ETTA membership.

The three horse race is narrowly led by Stocksbridge 'A' who sit atop of the division with 11 wins and a draw from 13 matches. Crookes 'A' are in second place with 11 wins from 13 matches. Third placed Abbeydale 'A' are a mere one set behind Crookes, with 11 wins from 13 to their credit.

Following weeks of toil and disappointment, Sheffield Wheelchairs 'B' managed their first point of the season in a drawn division four match against fellow strugglers Cable 'C'. Kevin Ploughman's brace and wins from club captain Roger Hales and Mick Prendergast cancelled out Roger Morley's hat-trick and efforts from Calvin Clarke and Steven Wild, as the honours were shared at the Northern General Hospital.

Dronfield C's squad of young teenagers will begin the New Year as the league's "strongest" team as they occupy the bottom position in the lowest division - six! Phil Nunn, Billy White and Dan Mines ended 2008 with a brace each as they achieved a 6-4 result against Shiregreen 'D', for whom Frank Brailsford took a hat-trick. Brailsford (27/33), the division's fifth highest scorer, proved too experienced for the youngsters on this occasion, winning the doubles in tandem with Phil Hoyes.

Surrey by Chris Andrews

England won a bronze medal in the team event of the World Junior Championships in Madrid, Spain. Darius Knight was part of the team that beat Sweden, Canada, Australia and Poland. In the singles he made it to the last 16. He then teamed up with

County Notes

Germany's Amelie Solja in the mixed doubles to reach the last 16. As well as this Darius reach the last 32 with Paul Drinkhall in the boys doubles.

At the Austrian Open, in Salzburg, Joanna Parker reached the last 32 losing to Reiko Hiura from Japan who has a World ranking of 54. At the same tournament Darius Knight beat Thomas Keinath and Peter Sereda of Slovakia in the doubles in the team event with Daniel Reed, although England lost this first round match 3-2.

Joanna Parker qualified from the group stages at the German Open. However, she lost in the first round to World ranked no. 49 Wenjing Tan Monfaron of Italy.

The Cippenham series 2 saw Abdul Wuraola win both the Men's Singles and the Veteran Men's Singles, whilst Catherin Chen was runner-up in the Women's Singles. Abdul Wuraola came second in the Cippenham Team Two Star Open Championship with his team Abdul Sports & Table Tennis Limited. At the fourth Horsham Super Sixteen tournament Abdul also ran away with the title.

Abdul Wuraola also won the Men's Band 1 event at the London Grand Prix and the Mixed Veterans' event, while Joanna Parker won the Women's Singles event. FeiFei reached the semi-finals of the Women Under 21s' event losing to the eventual winner Chinese Meihan Lui. This is no mean feat considering she has only recently had her 15th birthday. This achievement is another milestone in her table tennis career after winning the Guildford TTA senior women's singles title at 14 years old.

Bristol's Open Grand Prix saw Chris Lewis as runner-up in the Men's Band 2 and Ben Larcombe as runner-up in the Men's Band 4. Abdul Wuraola won the Mixed Veterans' Singles.

In the Guildford League Premier Division Heishan Weerasinghe has been a revelation beating so many players which is unheard of for an 11 year old. One of his victories included former Olympian Alain Choo-Choy.

York Gardens wiped the board during the first half of season in the Wandsworth and District Table Tennis League, having the top three teams in the top flight although South Mitcham's Steve Holloway is top of the averages.

Sussex by Graham Carter

Brighton defender Johnny Clarke caused a major shock when he became Eastern Masters over 60s champion.

Ranked no.22 in England, he overcame the current no.1 Brian Hill (Lincolnshire) in the final in Norwich to lift the trophy. It was a marathon battle, as he recovered from losing the first game and was again behind at 2-1 before eventually prevailing 8-11, 11-5, 10-12, 11-8, 14-12.

England no.2 Ritchie Venner's (Hastings) hopes of winning the over 40s title for a fourth time came to a surprise end at the

HIGHLIGHTED NEWS FROM SUSSEX

England no.2 Ritchie Venner's (Hastings) hopes of winning the over-40s title for a fourth time came to a surprise end at the hands of Sussex county team-mate Nigel Eckersley (Uckfield) ranked 4, who knocked him out in the semi-final. Eckersley beat the three-times champion 11-8, 11-6, 11-6 before bowing out in the final to Essex's England no.8 Clive Carthy 8-11, 11-9, 11-9, 12-14, 11-9..

hands of Sussex county team-mate Nigel Eckersley (Uckfield) ranked 4, who knocked him out in the semi-final. Eckersley beat the three-times champion 11-8, 11-6, 11-6 before bowing out in the final to Essex's England no.8 Clive Carthy 8-11, 11-9, 11-9, 12-14, 11-9. Venner surprisingly lost out in the doubles too.

Eckersley also reached the final of the over 50s men's doubles event where he was top seed with Cheshire's Brian Johns, but lost to Northants/Leicestershire combination Dave Welsman and Keith Fellows. Sheila King (Hastings) enjoyed a successful tournament, reaching the over 40s women's final and narrowly losing out 12-14 in the fifth to Yorkshire's Sandra Rider, having saved three match points.

Sussex senior first team made a fine start to their County Championship Premier Division campaign with two wins and a narrow defeat after three matches played at Cippenham TTC, Slough.

They lie second in the table, two points behind leaders Derbyshire with four matches remaining to play in Birmingham in March.

Selector Terry Dean said: "It was a very satisfactory team performance. All the players made significant contributions and confirmed their selection. They were a good example to the youngsters in the county who could learn a lot off them. Some of the shots were tremendous and the play was of a very good standard."

Chinese junior star DASH made a superb debut for Sussex senior second team winning a perfect six out of six contests.

In a youthful side, 14-year-old Yolanda King (Hastings) also stood with a maximum return of six wins, Sara Wright (nee Coggon, Royston) claimed five wins and Brighton's Harry McCarney, playing at no.1, won four times as Sussex cruised to victories against the first teams from Buckinghamshire (6-4), Kent (8-2) and also Sussex thirds (10-0).

Sussex third team were weakened by late withdrawals of Marc Burman (Haywards Heath) due to illness and Koray Ozcan (Farnborough), who had a car crash the night before which forced late call-ups to the squads.

Sussex II's Gary Wilson (Lancing) recovered from 2-0 down to beat the thirds' Rory Scott (Horsham) 3-2, despite having broken his bat and playing with a borrowed one.

Sussex has the chance to win the division if they can continue their form at the next session to be held at Cippenham on January 10th.

Hastings star Yolanda King won the cadet team event representing England at the Stockton 4 Star international tournament.

Warwickshire by Caroline Williams

The 2008/09 Warwickshire Championships were held on Sunday

County Notes

November 16th at the St. Nicholas Sports Centre in Warwick. From a large entry, Steve Bertie from Birmingham was the new name for the Men's Singles champion, though he had been runner-up for the two previous years. John Collymore and Michael Browne were the losing semi-finalists. Steve Bertie also picked up the Men's Doubles title partnering Michael Browne. Last minute serious injury prevented last year's winner Helen Turner from retaining her Ladies Singles' title which went to newcomer Dawn Sagoo, who overcame Sarah Riach, but neither of those could take the Ladies Doubles, which fell to last year's runners-up Charlotte Spencer and Samantha Meredith. In the Junior Boys Jack Williamson beat Alan Caffrey in the final for the second year running. In the first Over 70 competition Neil Wheatley took the trophy from an entry of three, as well as picking up the second place in the Over 60 event.

Men's Singles: Steve Bertie beat Muhammed Khalid; Ladies Singles: Dawn Sagoo beat Sarah Riach; Men's Doubles: Steve Bertie/Michael Browne beat Ian Ferguson/Alan Hewitt; Ladies Doubles: Charlotte Spencer/Samantha Meredith beat Sarah Riach/Jessica Birbeck; Mixed Doubles: Holly Thompson/Ian Ferguson beat Dawn Sagoo/Michael Browne
Veteran Singles: John Collymore beat Steven Robinson; Over 50 Singles: Graham Hoskin beat Andrew Hare; Over 60 Singles: Bill Fletcher beat Neil Wheatley; Over 70 Singles: Neil Wheatley beat John Earles; Veteran Doubles: Adrian Pilgrim/Ian Randle beat Simon Griew/Nilton Green; Junior Boys' Singles: Jack Williamson beat Alan Caffrey; Junior Girls' Singles: Charlotte Spencer beat Holly Savage; Cadet Boys' Singles: Matthew Outhwaite beat Mitchell Nash

Cadet Girls' Singles: Jessica Birbeck beat Holly Thompson; Under 13 Boys' Singles: Jesse Kendrick-Hill beat Luke Spencer; Junior Boys' Doubles: Jack Randle/Matthew Outhwaite beat Luke Baker/Ian Anson; Junior Girls' Doubles: Charlotte Spencer/Holly Savage beat Jessica Birbeck/Holly Thompson; Men's Restricted: Muhammed Khalid beat Tristan Gretton; Ladies Restricted: Charlotte Spencer beat Dawn Sagoo; Junior Boys' Restricted: Ian Anson beat Lee Holtham; Junior Girls' Restricted: Holly Savage beat Holly Thompson

Yorkshire by Barry Snowden

With two Yorkshire teams contesting Veterans Division 1A in the county championships, both were hoping to make a good start to their respective campaigns at Halifax TTC. It was the Yorkshire second team who ended the weekend with a maximum eight points from four matches and the third team were handily placed on five.

Hertfordshire were the first opposition for Yorkshire seconds with a high noon showdown on Saturday, and it was Herts who got off to a fine start as Stuart Seaholme beat Tim Dyson,

HIGHLIGHTED NEWS FROM YORKSHIRE

The same quartet of Dyson, Madden, Land and Simpson had played in all matches and now faced their own third team who featured a wealth of experience and the new exciting prospect of Hull's Chris Clinton. Although the second team were never behind they were never more than two sets ahead and were mighty relieved when Madden and Simpson took a last set mixed doubles victory over Corporate Games world champions Phil Cawser and Sandra Rider to ease to a 6-4 victory and complete the weekend with four wins.

followed by a five game victory by Herts as Gary Morgan beat Sean Madden, which put Herts 2-0 up.

Mark Land reduced the arrears for Yorkshire with a four game win over Glen Wilkes, and when Dyson partnered Linda Simpson to a comfortable three game mixed victory over Seaholme and Janice Laing the sides were locked at 2 sets all. The next two sets were shared as Madden beat Seaholme and Laing beat Simpson, followed by Wilkes and Morgan beating Madden and Land in the men's doubles. Land took his second singles victory of the match over Morgan to bring the sides level in this most exciting of matches, and the home county took the lead in the penultimate set of the match as Dyson overwhelmed Wilkes. In the final set it was Madden and Simpson who snatched victory for Yorkshire, with a last set 11-8 mixed doubles victory over Wilkes and Laing to record a 6-4 victory.

Saturday afternoon saw a comprehensive victory by Yorkshire seconds over Essex 2 9-1, with only a solitary ladies singles win from Gill Locke over Linda Simpson the difference between 9-1 and a whitewash. Essex thirds fared slightly better against Yorkshire 2 on Sunday morning as they went one set better than their second team, once again they took the ladies singles as Elaine Sayer beat Simpson and added to that with a men's singles victory by Raymond Lam against Madden, as Yorkshire took a comfortable 8-2 victory.

The same quartet of Dyson, Madden, Land and Simpson had played in all matches and now faced their own third team who featured a wealth of experience and the new exciting prospect of Hull's Chris Clinton. Although the second team were never behind they were never more than two sets ahead and were mighty relieved when Madden and Simpson took a last set mixed doubles victory over Corporate Games world champions Phil Cawser and Sandra Rider to ease to a 6-4 victory and complete the weekend with four wins.

The Yorkshire third team of Nigel Pennock, Clinton, Cawser and Rider began with a hard fought draw against Norfolk with Cawser leading the way with two singles wins and a mixed success with Rider in their five sets.

Saturday afternoon saw an emphatic 10-0 win against Essex thirds as Richard Priestley replaced Pennock in the Yorkshire ranks, and on Sunday morning the home county third also were made to fight hard by Hertfordshire just as their second team had done. Just like their county colleagues they managed to secure a hard fought 6-4 victory, but their defeat to their second team has the thirds lying mid-table as both sides travel to BATTs for the conclusion of the division in the new year.

World Rankings

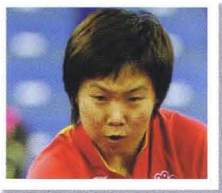
MEN

1. WANG Hao (CHN)
2. MA Lin (CHN)
3. MA Long (CHN)
4. BOLL Timo (GER)
5. SAMSONOV Vladimir (BLR)



WOMEN

1. ZHANG Yining (CHN)
2. GUO Yue (CHN)
3. LI Xiaoxia (CHN)
4. GUO Yan (CHN)
5. WANG Nan (CHN)



U21 MEN

1. MA Long (CHN)
2. OVTCHAROV Dimitrij (GER)
3. JIANG Tianyi (HKG)
4. MIZUTANI Jun (JPN)
5. ZHANG Jike (CHN)



U21 WOMEN

1. GUO Yue (CHN)
2. LI Xiaoxia (CHN)
3. FUKUHARA Ai (JPN)
4. LIU Shiwen (CHN)
5. YAO Yan (CHN)



U18 BOYS

1. MATSUDAIRA Kenta (JPN)
2. MA Liang (SIN)
3. CHEN Chien-An (TPE)
4. YAN An (CHN)
5. SEO Hyun Deok (KOR)



U18 GIRLS

1. LIU Shiwen (CHN)
2. WU Yang (CHN)
3. CAO Lisi (CHN)
4. CHENG I-Ching (TPE)
5. ISHIKAWA Kasumi (JPN)



U15 BOYS

1. CHENG Jingqi (CHN)
2. ZHANG Shengwunan (CHN)
3. NIWA Koki (JPN)
4. GAUZY Simon (FRA)
5. CHIU Chung Hei (HKG)



U15 GIRLS

1. CHEN Meng (CHN)
2. YANG Ha Eun (KOR)
3. SOLJA Petrissa (GER)
4. TANIOKA Ayuka (JPN)
5. SZOCS Bernadette (ROU)



Player Rankings 2008/2009

TOP 25 SENIOR MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	DRINKHALL, Paul (CV.)
2.	KNIGHT, Darius (SY.)
3.	RUSHTON, Andrew (LA.)
4.	REED, Daniel (CV.)
5.	YARNALL, Tim (NP.)
6.	HERBERT, Gareth (BK.)
7.	MEADS, David (DU.)
8.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
9.	NICHOLLS, Damien (SP.)
10.	YOUNG, Terry (BK.)
11.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
12.	WARE, Mathew (DO.)
13.	TRUMPAUSKAS, Lawrence (E.)
14.	BRYANT, Craig (DV.)
15.	DORAN, Christopher (NP.)
16.	DRINKHALL, Bryn (CV.)
17.	HOLLAND, John J (Dy) (E.)
18.	SMITH, Mark Richard (Y.)
19.	DOLDER, Kevin (LA.)
20.	URBAN, Gergely (HE.)
21.	KENNY, Mathew (Y.)
22.	EVANS, Bradley (BU.)
23.	HIRJI, Alim (MI.)
24.	WURAOLA, Abdul (SY.)
25.	MARPLES, Shaun (DY.)

TOP 25 SENIOR WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	PARKER, Joanna (SY.)
2.	SIBLEY, Kelly (WA.)
3.	LE FEVRE, Karina (CV.)
4.	REYNOLDS, Lindsey (LA.)
5.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
6.	HICKS, Hannah (HA.)
7.	EMBLING, Abigail (E.)
8.	CLEMENTS, Sanya (DO.)
9.	WANG, Sarra (E.)
10.	ROBERTS, Joanna (Y.)
11.	SHEPHERD, Karen (CH.)
12.	RAINTON, Rosemary (SX.)
13.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
14.	JAMIESON, Rachel (E.)
15.	VICKERS, Jane (DY.)
16.	KEAST, Lesley (LI.)
17.	FARQUHAR, Melanie (BK.)
18.	PERKS, Sarah (NG.)
19.	SMITH, Sally (DV.)
20.	ROSE, Emma (HE.)
21.	CHAPMAN, Gemma (BK.)
22.	WEIL, Emma (E.)
23.	DONNELLY, Stephanie (CV.)
24.	HARPER, Sandra (BD.)
25.	WANG, Lucy (E.)

TOP 5 JUNIOR BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	EVANS, Gavin (BU.)
2.	PITCHFORD, Liam (DY.)
3.	DORAN, Christopher (NP.)
4.	WARE, Mathew (DO.)
5.	MAYBANKS, William (HE.)

TOP 5 CADET BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	ZILESNICK, Zak (MI.)
2.	GRAY, Lewis (K.)
3.	TAN, Reece (E.)
4.	HO, Ping (MI.)
5.	WALKER, Sam (NG.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 BOYS

Ranking	Player
1.	MORAIS, Igor (MI.)
2.	PATEL, Jared (E.)
3.	HOLLOWOOD, Scott (Y.)
4.	SIKET, Michael (WO.)
5.	SMITH, Paul (CV.)

TOP 5 VETERAN MEN

Ranking	Player
1.	WURAOLA, Abdul (SY.)
2.	VENNER, Ritchie (SX.)
3.	KENNEDY, Joe (K) (E.)
4.	ECKERSLEY, Nigel (SX.)
5.	SMITH, Eddie (ND.)

TOP 5 JUNIOR GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	VICKERS, Emma (DY.)
2.	LE FEVRE, Karina (CV.)
3.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
4.	WRIGHT, Melissa (YS.)
5.	HICKS, Hannah (HA.)

TOP 5 CADET GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	BATES, Emily (LI.)
2.	DAVIDSON, Lucy (DY.)
3.	KING, Yolanda (SX.)
4.	HO, Tin-Tin (MI.)
5.	WHYTE, Chloe (CV.)

TOP 5 UNDER 13 GIRLS

Ranking	Player
1.	HO, Tin-Tin (MI.)
2.	TORKINGTON, Emma (SX.)
3.	GIBSON, Annabelle (E.)
4.	HOSKIN, Esther (E.)
5.	GRAZIANO, Gabriella (E.)

TOP 5 VETERAN WOMEN

Ranking	Player
1.	SMITH, Karen (LE.)
2.	COLLIER, Sue (CH.)
3.	KEAST, Lesley (LI.)
4.	HARPER, Sandra (BD.)
5.	JOHNS, Jan (CH.)



For the full list of player rankings go to our website

www.etta.co.uk



Dates for your diary

Table Tennis events for February 2009



2008/2009 COPY DATES

March Issue: Copy by 2nd Feb
April Issue: Copy by 2nd Mar
June Issue: Copy by 4th May
July Issue: Copy by 1st June

February 1st

Cadet: NCL
Junior: Stiga 2 Star GP (Halifax)
 Cippenham 1 Star YPNYF
Veteran: British League (Doncaster)
 National League (Swindon)

February 7th

Cadet: Ernest Bevin TTK 1 Star (Tooting)
Junior: British League (Wolverhampton)
 Exeter 2 Star
 Ernest Bevin TTK 1 Star
Senior: Cippenham 2 Star
Veteran: County Championships
Other: European Top 12 (Dusseldorf)

February 8th

Junior: British League (Wolverhampton)
Veteran: Cippenham 2 Star
Other: European Top 12 (Dusseldorf)

February 14th

Junior: Cheshire HS 2 Star
Senior: Salisbury Open BGP
Other: BUCS Individual Champs.

February 15th

Junior: Cirencester U15/18 1 Star
 Stiga Blackpool 1 Star
Senior: Salisbury Open BGP
Other: BUCS Individual Champs.

February 21st

Cadet: County Premier (Draycott)
 County Championships
Cadet/Junior: Chandlers F.E. 1 Star
Senior: British League

February 22nd

Cadet: County Premier (Draycott)
Senior: British League

February 24th

Other: European Nations League

February 28th

Senior: County Championships
Veteran: County Championships
 County Premier (Halifax)

The Association would like to thank all of the following for their support during the season 2008/09

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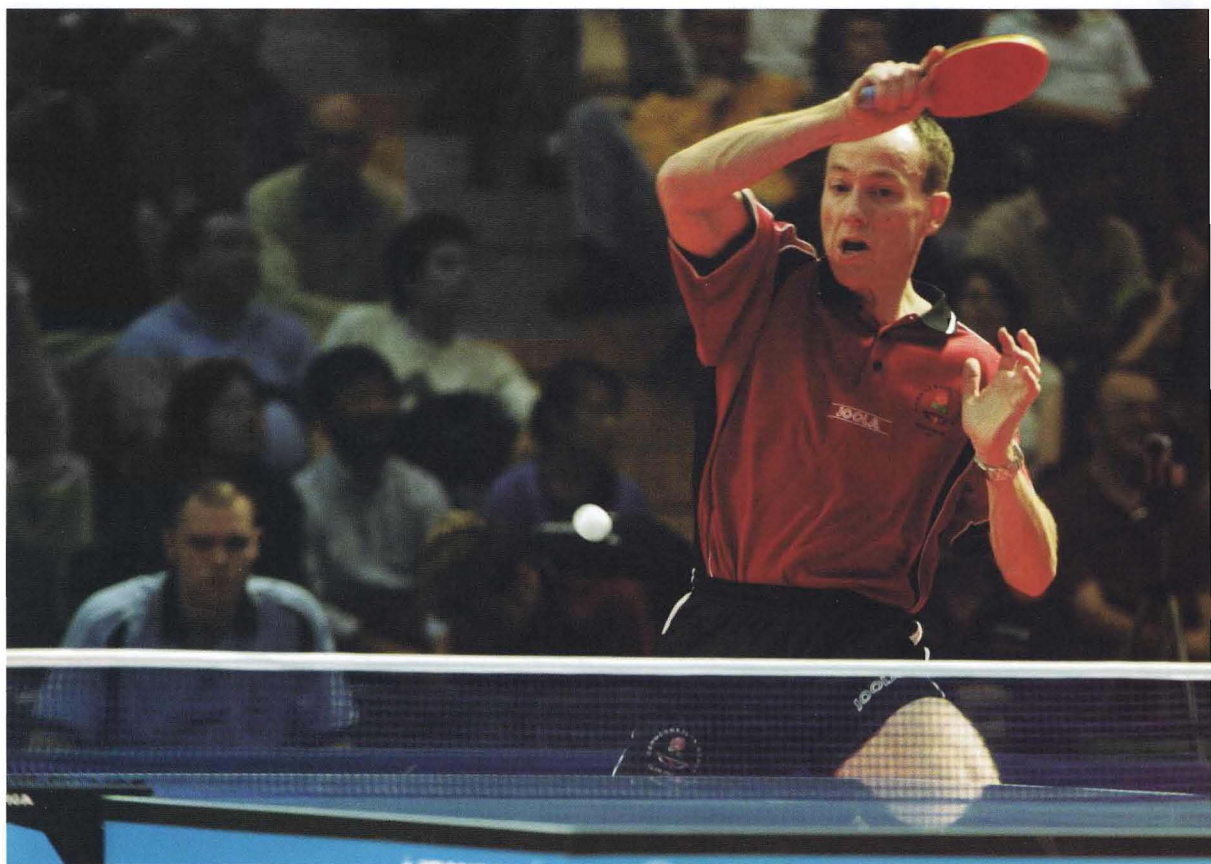
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COOKE

ALAN



“Being the best at table tennis means a lot of hard work, there are no shortcuts.” Alan Cooke

Birth date: 23 March 1966

Place of birth: Chesterfield

Residence: Lower Pilsley, Near Chesterfield

Style of play: Right handed attacking

HERE'S WHAT HE HAD TO SAY:

What is your current role at the ETTA and what does it entail?

BTTF women's head coach. Coaching and overseeing the women's programme leading up to the Olympics in 2012.

Do you feel that your international playing career has benefitted you as a coach?

Absolutely, having gained years of practical experience as a player, so I can understand what the current squad will experience, so I can pass on the knowledge I gained first hand.

How far do you think our current crop of players can go?

Difficult one, I hope that they will achieve their own full potential whatever that may be, but always remember that everything is possible if you want it badly enough. Being the best at table tennis means a lot of hard work, there are no shortcuts.

What is more rewarding, achieving a good result as a player, or seeing your players achieve as a result of your coaching skills?

Both are extremely rewarding, both give great gratification, but I always felt winning as a team gives a greater sense of camaraderie, be it as a player or a coach.

You have competed at several Olympic and Commonwealth

Games along with having a world title, but what would your key highlights of your playing career be?

As an individual becoming Commonwealth Champion, as a team, looking back, losing narrowly in the final of the 1988 European Team Championships to Sweden, arguably one of the most successful men's team ever (beating J O Waldner), was one of our finest achievements.

What was your highest World ranking?

27.

If you could change anything about the sport what would it be?

It's a sport that deserves a much higher profile in media terms due to the skill levels required to reach top international standards.