

Table Tennis Times

A quarterly, independent, magazine from the world of English Table Tennis

Issue 20

Editorial

Autumn 2020

Our Autumn edition arrives without the hoped-for return to table tennis as we know it. Just as we were beginning to see a return to a more normal life the Covid-19 pandemic reared up again and dashed hopes for a return to table tennis for most of us.

On a positive note our friends at BATTs in Harlow have found a safe way to start up some tournaments – read the article on pages 3 & 4 – and we commend them highly for this initiative.

This edition has only one page of Tournament Reports, but Diane, who was really looking forward to going to Bordeaux for the World Veteran Championships has added a retrospective report on the WVC in Hohhot in 2010 with some wonderful photographs.

We also have Ken & Karenza's latest installment of their life in table tennis, together with some of our usual features, "Spotlight" this time on the Olympic Games, "What was Happening" going back to 2010 10 years ago.

We are also happy to share some lovely photographs from former Junior International, Ray Dorking, who held a reunion for his table tennis friends prior to the turn of the century. A wonderful turnout, it shows how many of us make lifelong friends through table tennis. Many marriages have resulted too - including us - and if you send your wedding photos we will include a selection next time to help brighten the winter days.

Our last issue's 'Debate' by Brian Kean certainly caused much discussion with sympathy and agreement with many of Brian's viewpoints.

Good news from the Swaythling Club International is that they now have their own website (swaythlingclub.com) which includes the SCI Magazine that was previously only available to members – lots of good reading. Back issues of Table Tennis Times can be found there too.

In the meantime, above all, stay safe,

Our best wishes

Harvey and Diane Webb

Competitions

A rather spartan report on competitions as all Table Tennis England events have been cancelled to date and several forthcoming events have also been cancelled due to Covid-19. There have, however, been some recent competitions with English or UK interest.

Hereford League has run some Open Senior and Veterans Tournaments with more planned, all complying with the appropriate protocols. **BATTS at Harlow** have been running their Open Singles League as well, see their article on pages 3 and 4.

The **Annual Veteran Tournament in Antalya, Turkey** went ahead from 27th September to 2nd October 2020 and several GB players entered this competition. Phil Bowen was the most successful winning the Men's Over 65s while Benny Robertson and Vladimir Mugurd of Russia were Semi-finalists in the Men's Over 65 Doubles.



Phil Bowen. Photo by Mike Rhodes (not taken at the event)

The **European Youth Top 10** Tournament has also taken place from 9th-11th October 2020 in Berlin. There were no English participants but two from the Home Countries took part in the Cadet Girls' event – Sophie Earley of Ireland (European Cadet 2) and Anna Hursey of Wales (European Cadet 7). Anna had a podium finish with a bronze whilst Sophie finished in sixth place. On the European lists which were last produced in April 2020 the highest English Cadet Girl was Amy Marriott at 106, Cadet Boy Naphong Boonyaprapa at 29 who was also the highest ranked English Junior Boy at 103, Charlotte Bardsley was ranked at 15 on the Junior Girls lists and so just missed out on a place in the event.



Sophie Earley of Northern Ireland and Anna Hursey of Wales at the European Youth Top 10. Photos courtesy of the ETTU

The four champions were Junior Boys: Kay Stumper (Germany), Junior Girls: Prithika Pavade (France), Cadet Boys: Felix Lebrun (France), Cadet Girls: Annett Kaufmann (Germany). All names to watch out for in the future.

BATTS Harlow: Surviving the Virus

By Graham Frankel

The unwelcome arrival of COVID-19 at BATTs resulted in a closure of all our activities, and like everyone else in the sporting world we were faced with a springtime of wondering when it would all end. Until that time, we'd seen ever-increasing interest in table tennis, and especially from young players discovering the sport for the first time.



BATTs Harlow

As spring turned into summer, and the case numbers began to steadily drop from the alarming peak, we started making plans for how we could resume playing. We were confident that a resumption could be made without delay, because we are in the fortunate position of being in total control of how we use our building. Our only commitment to the council that owns the building is that we continue to make it available to other users who want to hire the hall or parts of it.

By the time the end of lockdown was announced we were ready with our plan and started playing again with strict limitations and the necessary hygiene and safety measures in place. The main differences were that our normal maximum of 12 tables was reduced to 6, and that every playing session was divided into 30 minute slots with two players per table. We looked at various options on offer for booking these slots and decided that the simplest (and totally free) method was to use a Google sheet with a page for each day. This was made available for all members to view, but bookings had to be made by specific administrators.

Before starting up again we recruited a volunteer team of Hall Supervisors, who had the important task of ensuring that all the safety guidelines were being followed, as well as dealing with hall security.

We were very keen to ensure that juniors could continue to play, either by being coached or to play against other junior members. Sensible advice from Table Tennis England was to allow only members to book tables, so during the first few weeks of resuming play we saw an unprecedented influx of new

members, and most of them were senior players who were refugees from other clubs that had not been able to make such a prompt re-start.

Despite the reduction in the number of tables, the booking system has worked well, and it meant that we could schedule sessions on every weekday, with longer sessions (4pm – 10pm) on three days.

While the resumption of play was successful, we very soon realised that what players really wanted was to get back to some kind of organised competitive play. The relaxing of the restrictions on competition happened rather sooner than we expected, but it didn't take long to start making plans to resume our popular Open Singles League competition. Another quick and helpful consultation with Table Tennis England confirmed the guidelines that we would need to adopt for this, and we were especially pleased that we were authorised to continue including non-members, provided they were required to follow the same health and safety guidelines as members.

About 75% of the players who'd registered in the latest Open Singles series confirmed they'd be interested to continue, and so we resumed on 22nd September giving the choice of Tuesday evening or Sunday afternoon for each of the remaining five rounds. The constraints on table layout and the popularity of the competition meant that we had to disappoint a few players, but those who missed registering for a round were given a guaranteed place in the following round. That seemed to placate those who were not quite quick enough to grab the 18 places on offer at each session.



Open Singles returns on 22nd September 2020

At the time of writing, it seems that most of the traditional competitions and local leagues are still in disarray and being cancelled. We are confident that even if we have to put up with another lockdown, we will be ready to resume the Open Singles as soon as the restrictions are lifted again.

We have plans to extend the competition from January with a new series enabling players to choose from three options rather than two, and that will enable us to add another thirty players to the list: we have absolutely no doubt that they will be queuing up to join! We are happy to share our Open Singles set up with other clubs. Contact Graham Frankel for more information on Grahamf49@gmail.com.

Apart from table tennis, some of the other regular activities at our centre have resumed, and badminton seems to be enjoying a boom, giving us some welcome revenue.

“Ping! – A Personal Perspective on Table Tennis” by Graham Frankel

Review by Harvey Webb



This book by Graham Frankel was a long time in gestation, and helped by the months in “lockdown” caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, has finally come into being, and it was well worth the wait. It is an excellent read for all fellow enthusiasts which cleverly charts his own journey inside the sport against a timeline of the major changes that have occurred over the last 50 years.

Graham’s personal story begins, as it did for legions of us, with a gift of a table tennis set, with no idea that there was to be a lifetime chasing the little white ball. He takes us from his schooldays, through University and his working career, all the time searching for places to play, how to improve, and a meaningful role, which he finds by coaching youngsters at BATTs in Harlow.

The second thread of the book is well-researched and includes descriptions of the key changes in the sport at both an International level and domestically, and he offers his reasoning and theories as to why England is no longer a major force, together with some solutions. Some of these maybe a little controversial and not everyone will immediately agree with them, but they are definitely worth debate.

In conclusion the book is a first-class read for all table tennis people. It is available from Amazon and costs £9.99 for paperback and a Kindle version is also available.

More Table Tennis Books

It seems lockdown and the current situation has resulted in more table tennis people flexing their literary skills.

That excellent coach, who specialises in the coaching of girls and women, Rowden Fullen, has published “Table Tennis from Then Till Now” which takes you on Rowden’s journey charting the way the game has changed over nearly eight decades. It is a quite technical read but full of detailed information. Rowden has produced many England internationals and National Champions as well as helping to develop world top 20 players from the three continents and 23 countries he has worked in.



Rowden with Hannah Hicks. Photo courtesy of John Upham

Tom Lodziak has produced a book over the summer titled “Spin - Tips and Tactics to win at table tennis”. Many of you may have seen Tom’s excellent YouTube coaching tips on the website so we are sure it will give excellent advice. Tom is based in Cambridge

Former English Performance Director, Michel Gadal’s new book “Reflections on Excellence” looks as if it could be interesting. It can only be purchased to download. Michel has also been Canada’s National Coach and the National Technical Director of the French Association, amongst other appointments.

We will report more on these in our next issue.

A Table Tennis Life

Ken and Karenza Mathew's Table Tennis Journey Continues

1971 continued:

Karenza: During May or perhaps June, our team from Gainsford won the J M Rose Bowl, an English competition for women's teams. Our team was Judy Williams, Di Simpson and me. This year the competition had been sponsored by Coca Cola. We would go on to win this trophy for the next two years.

In July, Jill and I did another exhibition for the E.T.T.A. General Secretary, Derek Tremayne, down at King Alfred's College at Winchester.

During the last few months I was noticing that I was having problems with my hearing. On 20th August I went for an appointment at Charing Cross Hospital. They told me that I had Otosclerosis which is something like a hardening of a little bone in the middle ear. The specialist said that I could have an operation but that it would not be a good idea while I was still playing as it could upset my balance. I decided it would have to wait until I hung up my bat for the last time!

On 28th August we left for Ireland to do the annual coaching week. This time Johnny Leach had stepped aside and left the organisation to Ken.

I think it was on that trip that John Pulman, one of snooker's all-time greats (he had been world champion four times), was at Mosney playing exhibition matches. We got to know him and, hearing it was to be my birthday on 7th September, he insisted on throwing a party for us in his chalet. Lots of booze - he could drink the whole lot of us under the table, no problem!

Back home and more practice sessions at St. Brides. On 21st September I did my first coaching session at Merton Technical College. This was during the day and it was to become a regular fixture for me. It was certainly a bit intimidating at first as the boys were a pretty rough crew, turning up in jeans and bover boots! I soon got used to it – and anyway they were really nice guys.

On 9th and 10th October I played in the North Middlesex Open. I was beaten in about round one by Susan Lisle, a talented player from Lancashire. I won the Women's Doubles with Jill but, partnering Tony Clayton, lost in the final of the Mixed to Di (Simpson) who was partnered by Mike Johns.

The Sussex Open at Hastings was successful for me as I won the Singles beating Jill in the final. Jill and I lost to Shelagh (Hession) and Judy Williams in the final of the Women's Doubles but I won the Mixed with Chester (Barnes). Apart from the fact that we lost to them in the Women's Doubles, we were all very pleased to see Shelagh back in action again after that nasty road accident that she had earlier in the year.

The next day the team flew out to Troisdorf in Germany to play West Germany in a European League Match. We managed to lose 4-3, Denis and I losing to the Scholers in the Mixed Doubles. We flew back on the 28th.

Back home? No, off to Hull on the 29th for the Humberside Open Championships. Maybe I should have stayed at home as I lost in the second round to the fast improving England number one junior, Linda Howard of Surrey. I then completed a not good weekend by losing in the finals of the Women's and Mixed Doubles. After the long drive back on Sunday night after the tournament, Ken and I didn't go training on the Monday - we felt we needed a rest!

Not for long though as the following Sunday, 7th November we flew to Paris for the French Open. In the team event Jill and I beat West Germany 3-0 but then lost 3-0 to Sweden. I lost to Anderson of Sweden in that team event and I think I lost to her again in the Singles. Jill and I did better in the Women's Doubles when we reached the semi-final. Partnering Nicky Jarvis in the Mixed Doubles, we also lost in the semi-final.

Sorry, I'm off again, this time with the team to play a European League match against Sweden at Kalmar and then to play in the Scandinavian Open at Gothenburg (25th - 28th November). Sometimes while I was away, Ken would do my coaching, at other times Mary (Wright) would do it, as long as she could make arrangements for someone to baby-sit Jackie and Sandra, her two little girls. Anyway, in Sweden we lost the match 4-3 (I lost to their number one, Radberg) and in the tournament I lost to her again in the first round; at least she went on to win the title. Jill and I reached the quarters of the Doubles and then lost to two Chinese women.

After returning home, on Thursday 2nd of December, I did my first coaching session at Thomas Moore School at Purley, not far from where we lived.

Ken: At about this time I made a trip to Yorkshire. I had telephoned Tom Blunn who was the Treasurer of the English Table Tennis Association and asked him for a meeting. The reason I chose Tom was that as treasurer he held the purse strings of the Association and wielded most of the power in the game at national level. We met and he surprised me by bringing along the President of the Yorkshire Association; I think he wanted someone along as an independent witness! I had prepared a paper in which I explained that the national team was totally inadequately handled in comparison to all the other major national teams of Europe. Players like Mary and Brian had to work for a living and others like Denis Neale and Chester Barnes scratched about doing some coaching and trying to earn whatever they could. In addition all the other countries had professional coaches who would work with the players on training camps and at international matches.

Tom read through the paper with me. I told him that Les Greswell was already doing some work with the top players but that he should be taken on as a full time coach for the England Team. Previously I had talked to Les and he had said that if he were offered the job he would accept it. He had played junior table tennis for England and was a fully qualified physical training instructor. I said that a squad should be set up consisting of the top players and that they should be paid (I suggested £10.00 per day which doesn't sound a lot now but it wasn't bad then) while they were on international duty and while they were at training camps. I offered to become the unpaid Manager of the England Squad. My job would be to be a link between the full-time trainer, the National Selection Committee, the office which arranged the domestic and foreign trips, and the players.

We talked about the proposal for several hours. After the meeting finished I caught the train home hoping that I had persuaded Tom that the scheme should be accepted. Within about two weeks Les had been offered and had accepted the job and I had been appointed as National Squad Manager. The

players would be paid as recommended. Les would start his new job on 1st August 1972. A short article appeared in the national magazine confirming the new set-up.

I'd like to note here that, at this time, Karenza was ranked number 27 in the world!

Following the visit of the England Team to China earlier in the year, a team from China was due to tour Britain in December. I had been asked by the Association to help with the tour. Two cars had been loaned for the tour by the Ford Motor Company and one of my jobs was to get at least one of the cars, together with various items of equipment, to wherever they were needed.

Another, and perhaps slightly more important job for me, was to organise the presentation of the matches at each of the venues. Until recently, the staging of international matches in England had been left in the hands of local people. Sometimes this had worked well but frequently matches had been chaotic with various officials shuffling about not having a clue what they were supposed to be doing - not very impressive on the international front. Back in 1963 I had prepared a booklet which gave guidance about organising international matches and the kind of things that needed to be considered.



The tour was sponsored partly by Mothercare and partly by Gestetner a company that made office machines. This is a shot of some of the Chinese Team with Karenza about to get on one of the team coaches.

The tour started with a match at Manchester where Jill lost one and won one and Karenza beat Huan Hshi-ping; thus we won 2-1. The boys lost their match 3-2. After the match we went to the best Chinese restaurant in town and had a banquet. It was really something to see the local Chinese population turn out to welcome the Chinese team; after the

isolation of China during the Cultural Revolution it was obviously very moving for them to see their national team visiting the West - the first time such a thing had happened for many years.

We then travelled to Cardiff where a combined Men's and Women's team lost to China 6-2. Karenza lost 16 in the third to Cheng Huai-ying and Jill lost her Singles. While we were at Cardiff we paid an official visit to the national rugby stadium at Cardiff Arms Park. We went out onto the pitch where several of us tried to explain the game of Rugby. The Chinese were totally unfamiliar with any sport that involved bodily contact; apparently it was alien to their culture. Trying to make them understand the principle of a game that involved an egg-shaped ball fought over by thirty men was made that much more difficult when we had to do it through an interpreter! After that we went to a Dinner given by the Chairman of the Glamorgan County Council at the County Hall, Glamorgan and, on the 9th we attended a reception given by the Lord Mayor at Cardiff Castle. And the next day a buffet lunch given by the Welsh Tourist Board at Glamorgan Airport!



On to Edinburgh. There, England didn't play; this time it was left to the Scots who lost 5-3. But after the match there was another reception, this time with traditional Scottish music - including the Gay Gordons in which I had the pleasure of dancing with one of the Chinese players - I think it was Li Li who, although ranked number three in the world at table tennis, was worse than I was at the Gay Gordons. Someone said that our picture was on the front page of the Daily Telegraph but I never saw it.

Back down south to Birmingham. Here we lost 4-3. Karenza lost to Li Li, while Jill won her match. The picture shows Karenza in action against Li Li at Birmingham. Once again there was a feast after the match. The teams then went to Ireland for a match that China won 4-3.

This photograph shows me explaining something in fluent Mandarin to one of the Chinese officials. Women's Team Captain Bryan Merritt looks on. Also in the picture is the Chinese player Hsi En-Ting who would go on to become World Champion in Sarajevo in 1973.



And finally to the Crystal Palace where two matches were played on consecutive evenings. In the first, England lost 4-3, Karenza beating Li Mei-chun and Jill losing her match with Cheng Huai-ying. On the second night, England won 4-3, Karenza beating Li Li and Jill winning her encounter with Huang Hshi-ping. These results for Karenza and Jill were extraordinary given the fact that the Chinese women were the world champions.



The two teams went to the London Zoo where they all admired the pandas

The Chinese tour was taken very seriously by the Government; Trumpeters from the Household Cavalry were in attendance at the Crystal Palace. The other picture (below) which was taken at the match at Birmingham shows Karenza being introduced to Denis Howell who was the MP for Birmingham Small Heath at that time. He had been the Minister for Sport under the Callaghan government until 1970.

The whole tour was fascinating, particularly as we were able to talk quite a lot to the Chinese players; this frequently happened as we travelled around in the coaches that were provided





The Invitation

Two events happened at the end of the tour. One was that the Prime Minister, Edward Heath, invited the Chinese and England teams to meet him at 10, Downing Street.

As you can see in the group picture, (below), Karenza was next to the P.M. Karenza recalls that Edward Heath asked if the dress she was wearing was part of a uniform! Others in the photo were bottom left, Nicky Jarvis, then Denis Neale and in front of Edward Heath, Chester Barnes with the long hair that he had at that time. Standing on the back left is Tony Clayton, then team captain Bryan Merrett. Jill is standing two to the PM's left.

After that reception I joined the party again for a trip to see The Black and White Minstrel Show in London. I thought then, as I do now, that it was an extraordinary choice of entertainment. I cannot imagine what the Chinese can possibly have thought about it - but of course they were very polite and said that they had enjoyed it.

The second thing was that a Grand Reception was held at the Chinese Embassy in London. There were numerous round tables with one English person at each, surrounded by Chinese. The drink was Mao-tai, a Chinese liquor which is apparently made in Mao-tai in China. The toast was Gan Bei which means Dry Glass and the custom is to empty your glass at one go. At my table we toasted everything under the sun which nearly resulted in me being under the table - but, stiff upper lip and all that, the English contingent managed to behave themselves reasonably well. Karenza was at another table and we helped each other back into the cars at the end of the evening. Quite an experience!



At Number 10

Karenza: The Chinese party left on Friday the 17th and, to make sure that I hadn't forgotten how to play the game, I played in the Middlesex Open on 18th and 19th. I lost two straight to Shelagh Hession in the Singles and didn't even reach the semis of either Doubles.

Next instalment in the next issue.

Spotlight on the Olympic Games

2020! No Olympic Games this year. Let us hope that they will be able to be held in some form in 2021 where they are now planned to run from 23rd July to 8th August.

Consequently, we thought we would turn the Spotlight on past Olympics. As you may know table tennis did not make an appearance until 1988 in Seoul although it had been included in the Paralympics since Rome in 1966. 1988, that first year England or more correctly, Great Britain, had four players taking part: Desmond Douglas, Alan Cooke and Carl Prean in the Men's Singles and Skylet Andrew in the Doubles. Des reached the last 16 whilst Alan and Carl finished in the Round of 64. The Men's Doubles saw Skylet and Des reach the last 32, the same round as Alan and Carl. Colin Clemett was on the Jury and Trevor Openshaw umpired.

Four years later in Barcelona, Carl Prean reached the last 16 in the Men's Singles and Matthew Syed played for the first time and got to the Round of 64. The first English female players participated with Alison Gordon and Lisa Lomas who also got knocked out in the Round of 64 but together reached the Round of 32 in the Women's Doubles. Alan Cooke and Carl Prean also reached this round in the Men's Doubles. Colin Clemett was a Technical Delegate and Jack Melnick an umpire.



Andrea Holt



Lisa Lomas

Moving on to Atlanta in 1996, Lisa Lomas was the sole English representative in the Women's Singles and again it was the Round of 64 which saw her last match, teaming up with Andrea Holt, the pair reached the Round of 32 in the Women's Doubles. Chen Xinhua and Carl Prean didn't get past the Round of 64 in the Men's Singles. Liz Wilson was an umpire, the only English female to date to officiate, Colin Clemett was again a Technical Delegate.

The turn of the century and 2000 saw Matthew Syed as England's sole player and the Round of 64 was again the stumbling block in the Men's Singles. David Edwards took his place in the umpire's chair and Colin Clemett once again acted as a Technical Delegate.



David Edwards in Sydney



Matthew Syed on court

The birthplace of the Olympics, Athens, in 2004 had no English participants but made up for it with the top job of Referee going to Richard Scruton whilst Andy Seward was an umpire. It was a similar story in Beijing in 2008 with no English players but the prestigious role of Deputy Referee being awarded to Steve Welch.

As the home nation in 2012, Great Britain were allocated a place in both team events as well as one place in each of the singles. The Men's Team of Andrew Baggaley, Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford were knocked out by Portugal in the Round of 16 and likewise the Women's Team of Joanna Parker, Kelly Sibley and Northern Ireland's Liu Na were also knocked out in this round by Korea DPR. Britain's two players in the singles, Paul Drinkhall and Joanna Parker reached the last 32 and last 64 respectively. Appointments went to English officials with Richard Scruton leading the pack as Competition Manager, Stuart Sherlock as Deputy Referee and three umpires – John Mackey, Tom Purcell and Mick Strode.

2016 in Rio de Janeiro saw Great Britain's most impressive performance when the trio of Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker beat the French in the Round of 16 only to lose to China in the Quarter-finals, some stunning play from all three in their matches and for anyone who watched it I am sure the pure elation on the players faces when they beat the French team will be something that stays with them. Paul Drinkhall stepped up to reach the Round of 16 in the Men's Singles and Liam Pitchford the Round of 32. There were no female players but once again the top job of Referee went to an Englishman, Stuart Sherlock.



Olympic Games, Rio, 2016. Three delighted players with coach, Alan Cooke.
Photo courtesy of the ITTF

As for the delayed Tokyo Olympics which were due to be held from 24th July to 9th August 2020 there will still be a qualification process for the individual events. However, it is only in the Men's Singles that there is the possibility of Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford being able to take part as GB did not qualify for either team event or for the Women's Singles event.

Let us all hope Paul and Liam will both be successful in qualifying and so be able to perform at their third consecutive Olympic Games.

The Paralympics have also been put back and are now due to take place from 24th August to 5th September 2021. We wish all players the best of luck and good fortune.

Photos from Ray Dorking

Just over 20 years ago Ray Dorking, junior international, held a reunion for his many friends from the table tennis world. A wonderful gathering of some of the top players of the 1950s and 1960s with over 30 senior international amongst the many illustrious guests including Diane and Ebby Scholer who flew in especially from Germany. It must have been a very special day and we thank Ray for sharing these photographs with us.

Ray was at the top of the tree as an England Junior and not only played abroad on the junior tour of Sweden in January 1953 with Geoff Pullar and David House, non playing captain was Leo Thompson. Leo commented on the three lads "Our boys made a grand team. Full of fun and high spirits, but always well disciplined, considerate and well behaved. They gave a jolly good show and everything I asked for." A true compliment.

Ray had considerable success at home and especially at the English Open winning the Junior Mixed Doubles with Ann Haydon in November 1953 and the Junior Boys' Doubles twice, in 1952/53 with Alan Danton and again in November 1953 with Michael Maclaren. Unfortunately, a serious illness put an end to what was likely to have been a stellar career at senior level.

Ray has kept in touch with many of his table tennis friends and one of them, David House, former senior international, has asked to be remembered to all who knew him.



The Gathering



Micki Jones/McMeekin, Jean Head/Winn,
Sheila & Brian Brumwell, Marge & Ray Dorking, Ivor Jones



Ebby Scholer, Peter & Linda Radford,
Diane Scholer/Rowe, Betty Gray, Shirley House/Jones



Marie Know, Peggy Piper, Derek & Angela Burridge



Eddie & Joyce Hodson, Tony Cornell



Bobby Raybould, Peggy Piper, Ray Dorking



Stan Jacobson, Ray Dorking, Les Sawyer



Connie Warren, Diane Simpson, Yvonne & Ralph Gunnion



Micky Thornhill, Peggy Hook/Franks, Gloria Burns/Low



Back: Ivor Jones, Bobby Stevens, Percy Curtis & wife, Harry Venner,
Front: Gloria Burns/Low, Shirley House/Jones, Betty Gray,
Elsie Carrington, Marie Know, Micki Jones/McMeekin, Sylvia Stevens



Ebby Scholer, Mary Wright/Shannon, Jackie Butcher



Norman Sugarhood, Sylvia & Bobby Stevens, Micky Thornhill



Terry & Chris Densham, Ken Craigie & wife



Jackie Head, Freddie Goodwyn, Jean Head/Winn,
Gordon & Rosemary Chapman, Joyce Goodwyn, Ray Dorking



Back: Chris Bartram, Jimmy Stokes, Wayne Perry,
Steve Dorking, Front: x, Ruth & Sean Gibson,
Jean Stokes/Parker

What was Happening 10 Years Ago? 2010



Jo Parker.
Photo by Steve Parkin

- Equal prize money was introduced at the National Championships. Andrew Baggaley won the Men's title for the third time beating Liam Pitchford in the final. Joanna Parker had her second consecutive win in the Women's Singles overcoming friend and rival, Kelly Sibley, in the final. Paul Drinkhall and Emma Vickers won the U21 events. The ebullient Matt Ware had an outstanding match to beat Darius Knight in the Quarter-finals of the Men's Singles.

- The multi sport Commonwealth Games were held in New Delhi, India from 3rd-14th October 2010 and England came away with three medals. Silver went to the Men's Team comprising Andrew Baggaley, Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, Liam Pitchford and Danny Reed and bronze medals went to the Mixed Doubles partnership of Paul Drinkhall with Joanna Parker and in the Men's Doubles for Andrew Baggaley with Liam Pitchford. The Women's Team of Hannah Hicks, Karina Le Fevre, Joanna Parker and Kelly Sibley just missed out on a medal losing 3-2 to Malaysia in the 3rd/4th Play-off match.

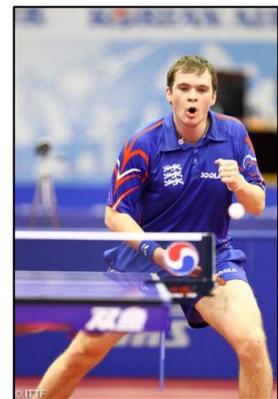


Karina Le Fevre, Kelly Sibley, Hannah Hicks



Liam Pitchford and Andrew Baggaley

- The European Championships were held in Ostrava, Czech Republic in September. Hannah Hicks and Karina Le Fevre had the best result in the individual events reaching the last 16 in the Women's Doubles. The Men's Team finished in 10th place and the Women in 20th, the composition of both teams was the same as for the Commonwealth Games with the exception of Andrew Baggaley who did not participate.
- Paul Drinkhall and Joanna Parker were England number 1s. Paul reached number 6 in the World U21 ranking list, the only European in the top 15. Paul also reached the top 100 in the World Senior rankings, the first time that an England player has been in the top 100 since Matthew Syed. Gavin Evans and Karina Le Fevre topped the junior list at the start of the year and Liam Pitchford and Emily Bates took over the pole position later on. Paul had an excellent year winning the Polish U21 Men's Singles in November and qualifying for the ITTF Pro Tour Finals, the only European to do so.



Paul Drinkhall at the ITTF Pro Tour Finals. Photo courtesy of the ITTF

- St Neots Table Tennis Club's £390,000 refurbishment was completed.
- The first UKCC Level 3 course was run with 10 people qualifying. There were also 142 new Level 1 qualifications and 51 at Level 2. In total there were 780 coaching registrations nationally.
- The Ping! Project was launched in London at St Pancras Station on 22nd July 2010 with, amongst others, Matthew Syed, Jean-Philippe Gatien and Jonathan Edwards in attendance. Sport England agreed to provide over £500,000 for a three year period for the Ping! Project.



Danny Reed v Darius Knight, Margot Fraser umpiring



Matthew Syed and Jean-Philippe Gatien

Photos by Steve Parkin

- Individual Membership which was agreed in principle at the ETTA AGM in 2009 had the fees set at this year's AGM - £5.64 for seniors and £2.82 for junior and cadets for Player Members whilst Associate Members fees were agreed at £2.50. Civil Liability Insurance was included in both categories. At the meeting Stan Clarke was made a Vice-President, Steve Welch received the Ivor Montagu Award, John Dignum, the Malcolm Scott Award, Malcolm Macfarlane the Leslie Forrest Memorial Trophy, Liam Pitchford the Victor Barna Award whilst Hannah Hicks and Chris Doran were presented jointly with the Johnny Leach Most Improved Player Award. Johnny Leach remained as President with Alex Murdoch as Chairman, Peter Bradley as Deputy Chairman and Martin Clark as Treasurer.



Top: Stan Clarke, Steve Welch, John Dignum, Malcolm Macfarlane. Bottom: Liam Pitchford, Hannah Hicks, Chris Dora

- Iris Moss, stalwart of Middlesex for 54 years and Peter Rumjahn, former England international, of Liverpool passed away.



Peter Rumjahn



Iris Moss

- The end of season Grand Prix titles went to Gavin Runggay and Egle Adomelyte for the Men's and Women's Singles and Damien Nicholls and Emma Vickers for the U21 events.
- The Wilmott Cup was won by Wembley & Harrow, the J M Rose Bowl by North Herts, the Carter Cup by Birmingham and the Bromfield Trophy by Derby.
- Sunderland League celebrated their 100 year anniversary.
- Junior Masters were won by Liam Pitchford and Karina le Fevre whilst Sam Walker and Emily Bates won the Cadet titles.
- After nine years Steen Kyst Hansen, Performance Director, left the ETTA. He had done much to help the young England players develop and excel.
- July 2010 saw the demise of 'Table Tennis News' after 350 issues. A sad day. The first issue was in October 1966 and prior to that 'Table Tennis' magazine had been in existence since November 1935 and published continually excluding the war years.

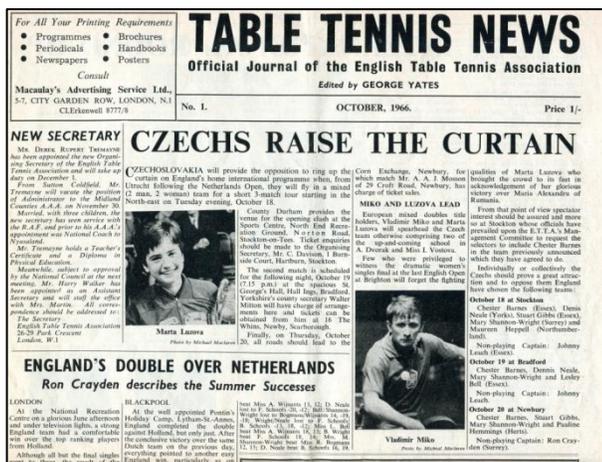


Table Tennis News Issue 1, October 1966 and Table Tennis News Issue 350, July 2010 - the first and last

World Veteran Championships, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia - 2010

As we mentioned previously we should have been in Bordeaux at the World Veteran Championships earlier this year but circumstances prevented the trip. So, we thought we would include some photos from an earlier trip to a World Veteran Championships in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia in 2010. Photos courtesy of John Fairweather with a couple from Brian Hill. We thank them for sharing these.

It was an amazing trip for those who went, from the colourful opening ceremony, the play – of course, followed by visits to the Grasslands near Hohhot and on to Beijing to the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and the Terracotta Army.





In Memoriam



Harold Evans playing for the Sunday Times against a team from the Chinese Embassy, circa 1973

Sir Harold Evans

Newspaper editor, historian, author and in his own words “a ping pong nut.” Sir Harold was perhaps best known during the time he was editor of the Sunday Times where his journalistic investigations helped mothers who had been affected by the thalidomide tragedy receive compensation, as well as exposing Kim Philby as a Soviet spy.

Sir Harold later moved to New York and remained in America, marrying the iconic Tina Brown, editor of Vanity Fair.

Not bad for a youngster born in Salford who first dipped his toe in journalistic waters as a 16 year old in Ashton-under-Lyne.

As well as journalism there was one constant throughout Sir Harold’s life and that was his love of table tennis. He started playing during the war on top of his Aunt’s Morrison shelter in one of her rooms with his younger brother, Fred. He later played at Manchester YMCA, where amongst others; he played with and against England international, Ron Allcock. When the English Open was held in Manchester in 1947, the two paired up in the Men’s Doubles where they lost in the Round of 32, unsurprisingly, as they came up against Johnny Leach and Jack Carrington. In the Men’s Singles, Harold had a similarly tough draw when he met the French champion and World Championships silver and bronze medallist, Maurice Bordrez – Harold didn’t win. Harold and Ron, who died earlier this year, remained lifelong friends.

Harold’s two passions were combined when he was the table tennis columnist for the Manchester Evening News, he also edited Ken Stanley’s book “Table Tennis: A New Approach”, published in 1959.

The table tennis thread continued and the ETTA benefitted when Sir Harold’s influence resulted in sponsorship to run the Sunday Times Super League. This was a very high profile tournament which ran for two seasons between 1973 and 1975. It was a show-case for the top players in England. There were six teams of three players – the captain, one senior player and one junior player. All teams played each other in a series of five matches played at venues of four 3 Star tournaments plus the English Championships. The prize money for the winning team was £300 (just over £3,000 at today’s rate). In addition £2 was paid to the winner of every set played. The six captains in that first year were Brian Burn, Tony Clayton, Desmond Douglas, Alan Hydes, Nicky Jarvis and Denis Neale, all top internationals. All remaining team members were or went on to be senior internationals too. It was an innovative series and with 18 of England’s top players a real feast for the spectators. To give the tournaments a bit more kudos, Michael Parkinson was the guest presenter at one of the matches.

As Doreen Stannard, ETTA Past President, said, “Harold was very good for table tennis”. Doreen was very much involved in the Super League series as Treasurer and in charge of umpires and stewards. Doreen tells of nearly causing a major incident in The Times offices where a match was being played. One of the light bulbs went out over the table and it was suggested someone hopped up onto the table to change it. You could almost feel the building shake at this, what seemed like an innocent suggestion, as it would have brought the wrath of the unions down and probably caused a major walkout.

Later while in America, Sir Harold became good friends with US table tennis entertainer legend, Marty Reisman. Marty persuaded Harold to start playing again using bats pre-sponge to help preserve the purity of the game. All this time literary articles regularly came from the pen, or more likely from the keyboard of Harold. One of his last was for the very quirky book “Everything You Know is Pong” by Roger Bennett and Eli Horowitz in 2010 in which he describes how he wasn’t in favour of sponge and preferred the elegance and style of the hard bat era.

Harvey had contact with Sir Harold in 2009 when he wanted information for yet another table tennis article and at that time he was still playing with Marty Reisman, both using pimped rubber bats in his good-sized basement. Another contact was with Ken Muhr, when he was ETTA Information Officer, who had lengthy correspondence with Sir Harold for some time in the 2000s and found him very natural, chatty and unpretentious – “most unlike a major figure in international journalism”. His love of, and interest in, table tennis remained to the end.

A great man and definitely a table tennis nut.



Gerald Gurney

Table tennis historian and collector Gerald Gurney died on 8th July 2020 at his home in Great Bromley, Essex.

Born on 10th March 1931 in the village where he always lived Gerald had the distinction of playing for both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Table tennis was not originally recognised for a ‘Blue’ at either university but Gerald, with the help of Ivor Montagu, persuaded the Blues Committee at Oxford to award a Half-Blue for table tennis. Shortly afterwards Cambridge followed suit.

Gerald became involved in the administration of table tennis, firstly, with Essex Schools Association as Secretary in 1966 and then with ESTTA as the founder General Secretary in 1968 and later Chairman, President and first Life Member.

A collector of memorabilia of several racket sports Gerald’s table tennis collection was regarded as one of the most extensive private collections in the world and he exhibited in several countries.

In 1987 Gerald’s definitive book ‘Table Tennis – The Early Years’ was published which explored the beginnings of the game and its development at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. As a result of his work in the history of table tennis, Gerald was made of Vice-President of the ETTA in 1992. He served on the Archive & Museums Committee from 2001-13.

Gerald also helped Ron Crayden with his 1995 book ‘The Story of Table Tennis – the first 100 years’. Another invaluable table tennis book for historians. Wanting to share his knowledge of the history of table tennis, Gerald became the first editor of the ITTF magazine ‘The Table Tennis Collector’ in 1993 and continued until 2001 when Graham Trimming took over. However, Gerald continued to write occasional articles for this magazine as well as the ETTA’s own publication ‘Table Tennis News’.

Future Events and the English National Championships

As reported in our last issue the change in date for the World Championships in Busan, South Korea to 28th February-7th March 2021 meant a clash with the National Championships in all European countries.

As a result, the English Nationals have been brought forward to 29th-31st January 2021 with the venue remaining at Nottingham University. The Qualifying Tournament will take place three weeks prior to this on 9th-10th January, again at Nottingham.

To date, all tournaments run by Table Tennis England have been cancelled. This includes County Championships, British League and Grand Prix. The great majority of tournaments run by affiliated leagues have also been cancelled with Hereford seeming to be the only one running approved Open events, in six person 'bubbles'. With much of the country now having increased restrictions several leagues which had restarted, in limited formats, have now been put on hold so the amount of competitive play is very minimal.

On the continent play has restarted in several countries. Charlotte Bardsley has already played for her club in the German Bundesliga and Tom Jarvis too is playing in Germany. Maria Tsapsinos is playing in the Greek League this season and two of our top professional players, Paul Drinkhall and Sam Walker, will be playing for their French clubs. Liam Pitchford will be returning to the table in China in November to take part in the ITTF Men's World Cup and ITTF Finals.



Charlotte Bardsley. Photo by Mike Rhodes

Commonwealth Games 2022



However, one of the biggest future events in the calendar is the Commonwealth Games which is to be held in Birmingham in 2022 with the opening ceremony on 28th July 2022.

Table tennis will feature every day, from Friday, 29th July to Monday 8th August and will be held at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) which was of course the home for the 1977 World Championships. England will be looking for some more medals after a handful in the Gold Coast in 2016. Para events are due to be run as well as the more usual individual and team events.

The countdown for the Games has already begun and we are sure that everyone will be given a very warm Brummie welcome. Tickets will be on sale in 2021 but jobs are already being advertised both voluntary and paid.

Table Tennis England's Members Advisory Group (MAG)

There are several positives coming out of the TTE Members Advisory Group in recent weeks. Details of their Committee meetings are now on the MAG section of the TTE website, as are quarterly reports, and the first of their advisory reports to the Board on Coaching is available to view. A second report on Volunteering has been forwarded to the Board and that will be available to read shortly.

MAG has undertaken several Zoom meetings with Local Leagues and Counties as well as a recent one with several of the top people involved in various committees all of which have proved productive. There has also been input into the Ranking consultation earlier this year.

There have been some issues where MAG have challenged the Board particularly about the way the Board/TTE communicated the no coaching policy for the U12 National Cup this season, a policy which is intended to be extended to other events in the future. There has been major concern with this change and much dissatisfaction expressed about this change in policy without consultation.

Several projects are in the pipeline including looking at IT systems and reducing the decline in players especially in the 17-24 age range.

So, after a slow start, it looks as if MAG is beginning to find its feet. We look forward to some positive results and improved communication with the membership which will meet the objectives recommended by the Independent Review two years ago.

And Finally



The legend - Vladimir Samsonov

Vladimir Samsonov continues with his dream to play in his seventh Olympic Games and compete for a medal – at the tender age of 44! However, that is not his only wish. Recently elected a Vice-President of the European Table Tennis Union he will be looking to pass on his love, passion and experience of table tennis having spent seven years as the ITTF athletes' representative as well as from his legendary playing career. While focussing on improvement for the younger generation Vladi also aims to look at how players can still be involved with table tennis at the end of their playing days. We wish him well in all areas.

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