



Table Tennis Times

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

Issue 21

Editorial

Winter 2020

The most welcome news in recent days has been, of course, the announcement that a vaccine has been approved. We hope that by the time our Spring issue is published that the light at the end of the tunnel will be shining a little brighter and that eventually it will be safe to return to our sport and a more normal life.

Over the last couple of months there has been only a minimal amount of table tennis to report on but that has given us the opportunity to include some articles that we hope will entertain.

We also have another installment of the highly popular Ken & Karenza Mathews' story, this time taking us back to 1972. This series continues to delight many of our readers.

On pages 10 and 11 we reproduce an article Michael Parkinson wrote in 1974 for the Sunday Times Magazine which we hope you will enjoy.

Another staple of our magazine is "Old Photographs" and as Diane has recently received some 2,500 negatives of photographs taken by the late Tony Ross, she has included some wonderful memories of the Sunday Times Super League also from 1974.

As this year is the 40th Anniversary of John Hilton's remarkable win at the European Championships we asked his great friend, Brian Kean, to reflect not only on the famous achievement but also to look beyond that and see what we can learn about John. Our research looked at what else was "Happening 40 Years ago" and as usual some interesting facts have been unearthed.

We are also indebted to Tom Purcell who has written an article about Harry Reeve and the Linacre Table Tennis Club in Liverpool. This is a wonderful story of how they have kept complete records of every match they played from 1948 – 72 years – a remarkable feat.

If you still need to buy a late Christmas present then have a look at the five books we have highlighted, a varied range of table tennis related reading matter.

Christmas and New Year will obviously be a little muted this year for most of us but we do hope you are able to enjoy it on some level. Above all, stay safe.

Best wishes

Diane and Harvey Webb

ITTF Events Round Up

ITTF Women's and Men's World Cups

The ITTF launched its "Project Restart" which incorporated three events in the Far East featuring many of the same players in each event, and we have reports on all three. Some interesting points came out of the project as the ITTF put everyone in the so called "Bubble" for the entire period of 66 days and did not have a single case of Covid. Having taken advice from the World Health Organisation they put many measures in place and they obviously did a good job; transporting players and officials around on a dedicated aeroplane and taking over complete floors in the hotels involved, ensuring there was no mixing with anyone outside the "Bubble", regular testing, mandatory mask wearing apart from in the playing area all played their part.

Weihai, China was the venue for the first event, the Women's and the Men's World Cups. Twenty one ladies took part in the women's competition, held from 8th -10th November 2020. All but two of the Quarter-final places going to Far Eastern players, the exceptions being Lily Zhang of America and Ying Han of Germany. A maximum of two players per Association were allowed and the final saw the two



Sun Yingsha, Runner-up, Chen Meng, Winner, Mima Ito, 3rd place. Photo courtesy of the ITTF

Chinese players meet with World Number 1, Chen Meng, taking the title, her first, and World Number 3, Sun Yingsha, the Runners-up spot - the score -11, 6, 9, 6, 8. The two Semi-finalists were Ying Han and Mima Ito of Japan with Ito beating Han 2, 7, 9, 4 in the Play-off for 3rd and 4th places.



Liam Pitchford.
Photo courtesy of the ITTF

21 players including England's Liam Pitchford, participated in the Men's event which ran from 13th-15th November 2020. Pitchford last took part in the Men's World Cup in Liverpool in 2012 alongside Paul Drinkhall where they both finished fourth in their respective groups. Pitchford started well winning both his group matches against Chuang Chih-Yuan (World 30) from Chinese Taipei, -9, 6, 8, 11, 11 and USAs, Kanak Jha (World 27), -7, 4, -13, 5, 5, -10, 4. He then met Dmitrij Ovtcharov (World 11), in the last 16 but in a close match fell to the German -10, 9, 4, -5, -11, -7.

The latter stages of the competition were dominated too by Asian players with all but two of the Quarter-finalists, Ovtcharov and Mattias Falck of Sweden, coming from the Far East. The final was a closely contested match between the two Chinese players Fan Zhendong and Ma Long and in a thrilling match the World Number 1, Zhendong, clinched the title with a -3, 8, 3, 6, -7, -7, 9, victory. Tomokazu Harimoto, Japan, took the bronze medal in the third/fourth play-off match with a 4-3 win over Jang Woojin of South Korea.



Fan Zhendong.
Photo courtesy of the ITTF

ITTF Finals

Liam Pitchford was the only English player in either the Men's or Women's events held between 19th-22nd November 2020 in Zhengzhou, China. Pitchford in his first match in the Round of 16 faced Brazilian, Hugo Calderano (World 6), Pitchford only lasted 33 minutes before succumbing -4, -4, -11, -10. Calderano was in blistering form and took revenge on Pitchford for his three defeats on the occasions when they had met previously.



Liam Pitchford, far end, v Hugo Calderano of Brazil. Photo courtesy of the ITTF.

Some of the other results in the same round showed the Chinese dominance as Fan Zhendong won 6, 2, 5, 7, Ma Long by 10, 1, 6, 4 and Xu Xin 10, 8, 6, 5. The best match perhaps was between Simon Gauzy of France and Sweden's, Mattias Falck, with the score in Falck's favour 4, 9, -5, -7, -10, 6, 7.

Eventual winners were Ma Long, who beat Fan Zhendong in the final 4-1, and Chen Meng who also won 4-1 against Wang Manyu in the all Chinese Women's final. German, Petrissa Solja, was the sole non Asian in the Quarter-finals in the Women's event. Mattias Falck and Hugo Calderano were the two non Asian players in the Men's Quarter-finals, the two events once again being dominated by players from the Far East.



Chen Meng, far side, v Wang Manyu. Photo courtesy of the ITTF

The Karenza and Ken Mathews Story continued

1972

Ken: Karenza had a bad cold at the start of the New Year. But bravely she rallied (!) in time for the English Closed Championships which were held at the Crystal Palace from the 6th to 8th January. She played very well, beating Lesley Radford to win the Women's Singles, thus retaining the title of England Champion which she won a year ago. She also went on to win the Women's Doubles with Jill Hammersley and the Mixed with Denis Neale - a clean sweep - Hooray!



The report of the tournament was written for Table Tennis News by John Woodford, a sports journalist who wrote for several national newspapers. This is what he wrote about the Women's Singles:

'Karenza fought herself almost to a standstill for her wonderful victory. She overcame very stiff challenges at nearly every hurdle. Her dedication and control are truly world-class. Never flinching in her game of continuous flowing attack, just going on and on taking the game to her opponent, piling on the speed and the topspin until she reached the required number of points. In the final Lesley established a 2-1 lead and it was only another great effort by Karenza that gained her the last two games and the crown for the second time. Karenza's most wanted prize was in the new rankings, the No.1 spot – hard earned indeed from Jill Hammersley.'



The new England ranking list was published a few days later with Karenza back at Number One.

Another accolade for Karenza was that her picture appeared in the Butterfly magazine, a publication circulated world-wide by Butterfly, the Japanese Table Tennis Company.

From 1st January Les Greswell had become the full-time England Coach and Team Captain.

Exactly when this happened we are not sure but we think it was on a trip to a tournament up North; Karenza and I were travelling in our new car, a Morris Marina. We were driving back to the hotel where

we were staying and on the way we gave Johnny Leach a lift. As we were going along in our brand new car I went to change gear - and the gear lever came off in my hand! We thought Johnny was going to have a heart attack he was laughing so much. We called out the AA; the mechanic managed to fix it temporarily for us and so we were able to limp home. The next week the Marina went in to the garage where they repaired it properly. Apparently it was a common fault on the new Marinas.

Karenza: On 21st January we flew to Bucharest in Rumania. We stayed there overnight. (We saw the film Grand Prix in the evening - it had Rumanian sub-titles.) Next day we flew on to Cluj for the Rumanian Open. On this trip our number one ranked girl, Linda Howard and I were the England Women's team. In the team event we convincingly lost 3-0 to the Rumanian second team. I was seeded third in the Singles but didn't live up to my status as I lost in the second round to another Rumanian called Leszay, an awkward rubber bat chopper! Linda did rather better, reaching the quarters before losing to Henrietta Lotaller of Hungary. This is a picture of Linda taken at about this time.



Together we lost in the 3rd round of the Doubles to the number two seeds, Maria Alexandru and Carmen Crisan of Rumania and, partnering Nicky Jarvis, he and I lost in the third round to two Hungarians.

Next day we had an interesting twelve hour train journey to Bratislava, which left Cluj at 5 a.m. Great! In the Czech Open Linda and I lost to Yugoslavia, then, in the Singles I lost to Claude Bergeret of France and Linda lost to a Czech girl called Reidlova. In the Doubles we did quite well but lost to the third seeds Eleonora Mihalca and Crisan. Nicky and I lost in the second round of the Mixed.

On the way home we had to take a taxi from Bratislava to Vienna and then we flew home from there. A lot of travelling! Not a great trip - except that I got on really well with Linda who was a lot of fun.

On 23rd February Ken and I drove up to Teesside for the 3 Star Tournament there. Perhaps I should have explained that all the members of the International Squad had to play in the 3 Star tournaments in England. I beat Jill Hammersley in the final of the Singles. Jill and I won the Doubles and I won the Mixed with Nicky. Good trip - except that at all the weekend home tournaments the finals would take place on the Sunday evening. That meant starting out for home at about ten o'clock, sometimes later, and reaching home sometime in the early hours next day. Not much fun particularly if, like Ken, you had to get up and go off to work a few hours later.

The following Tuesday the team flew to Paris and then on to Troyes where we lost a European League match to France 6-1. Jill lost to Claude Bergeret and Chester Barnes and I lost the Doubles 17 in the third. Having played in that match Jill had to return home. The rest of us went on via Dusseldorf to Hagen for the West German Open. Linda and I beat Holland 3-0, then lost to West Germany 3-1, Linda and I winning the Doubles. In the Singles I beat someone called Kreke and then, for the first time, beat Birgitta Radberg of Sweden (19 in the fifth!). In the third round I lost to Alicia Grofova 3-1. Linda and I reached the third round of the Women's Doubles and Chester and I got knocked out in the second round of the Mixed.

The picture is an advertising photo of Jill taken for the Daily Mail at about this time.

Ken: The English Open was held at The Dome and Corn Exchange at Brighton; it had now been staged there on and off for some years. The Corn Exchange was a long hall where the tables were set up in a row; the conditions were good and some great games were seen there. The Dome was a theatre attached to the Corn Exchange; it was a round building and had originally been the stables built next to the Royal Pavilion, the oriental-style palace built by King George



III. Transformed into a theatre it usually had two tables set up, virtually surrounded by the audience; the layout and conditions always seemed to create a great atmosphere for the big matches.

We have tried to find the results of the English players for the tournament but our efforts have been in vain. Neither we nor Mary and Brian Wright have the table tennis magazine that covers the tournament and the English Table Tennis Association does not have a copy in their archives*. We do know that the Swedish player, Stellan Bengtsson, won the Men's Singles and that Maria Alexandru won the Women's Singles. *Now have the results.

Just recently, Karenza had put a small ad in one of the national papers which said that she was available to do private coaching. She'd had a call from a woman called Susan Young and so on 5th February we visited her at her home, a very expensive flat in Mayfair. She and some friends were there and after talking we played for a while. We cannot recall now if Karenza ever went there again - but we don't think so. Later, Karenza did do some interesting coaching in Central London - but more of that in due course.

On 6th March, England played Czechoslovakia at Bracknell, Berkshire. Karenza lost two straight to Ilona Vostova and England lost the match 8-1, the only win coming from Linda who beat Grofova. The next day the team went up to Leicester where the Czechs won again - 6-3. This time Karenza beat Grofova but lost 19 in the third to Vostova - and Linda lost to Grofova! On the 9th, a third match took place, this time a European League match at Norwich. Once again England lost, the score 5-2. Jill lost to Vostova but Karenza and Denis won the Mixed and the men won the Doubles.

Karenza: On 17th March the team travelled via Copenhagen and Malmo to Solvesborg in Sweden, for a Four Nations women's invitation tournament which included us, Denmark, Sweden and West Germany. In the team event we lost to West Germany 5-4. I beat Kirsten Kruger and Monica Kneip but lost to Weibke Hendrikson 19 in the third. (Jill beat the same two that I beat but Linda lost her three.) Against Sweden we won 5-3; Jill won three and I won two. Against Denmark we won 5-0, Jill and I won two each and Linda made it five. In the tournament none of us did well in the singles but Linda and I won the Women's Doubles beating Jill and Kruger in the semi and Kneip and Hendrikson in the final.

Ken: The following weekend we went to the Newbury Open where Karenza lost to the un-ranked Sheila Hamilton of Middlesex. She also lost obscurely in the Women's and Mixed Doubles. Maybe she would have been better off at home with her feet up!

On Easter Monday, 3rd April, she went off to a training camp at Lea Green; this lasted until the 9th. Then a week of practice and training before the team left for Rotterdam and the European Championships which ran from the 15th to 22nd April. Karenza lost in the 3rd round to Svetlana Federova of the USSR. In the Women's Doubles Karenza playing with Linda Howard lost in the 3rd round to Alexandru and Crisan of Rumania; this was over four close games. In the Mixed she and Denis Neale lost in the second round to Alexandru and Anton Stipancic of Rumania, 21-18 in fifth. Very close! Jill partnered Beatrix Kishazi of Hungary in the Women's Doubles - they did very well but lost in the final. In the team events England's women had good results with wins against Luxembourg, Switzerland, Yugoslavia and West Germany; they ended 7th in Europe. Karenza won 4 and lost 4.

On 24th April we went to Southend for a European League match against Hungary. England won the match 4-3 although Karenza and Denis lost their Mixed Doubles match.

The following day we played another match against Hungary, this time at Maidstone. This was a friendly which England lost 7-1 (Not so friendly!) England's only win was when Karenza and Denis beat Borzsei and Kishazi 21-17, 21-15 in the Mixed Doubles

On the following Saturday we went to a dinner and dance held by the Middlesex Table Tennis Association. It made a nice change to be able to relax and chat to our friends away from the game!

On Sunday 7th May, Karenza played in the final of the Rose Bowl, a women's team competition. We are not sure how many times Karenza and her team won the National Rose Bowl Competition but it may have been three or four times. The team that Karenza played in represented the Central London Table Tennis League. This photo shows Karenza with Judy Williams and Di, Diane Simpson (as she was then) being presented with the trophy by an official from Coca Cola who were sponsoring the competition.



On 25th May, Karenza went with the team over to Guernsey to take part in an invitation event to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Guernsey Table Tennis Association. Apart from England, teams had also been invited from West Germany, the Netherlands and the other home countries. There were only three in the England Team: Karenza and Denis as the two England number ones, together with Nicky Jarvis. England won the Mixed team event, Karenza winning all of her matches. She also won the Women's Singles beating her old foe Hendrickson two straight. She won the Mixed with Denis but was unable to win the Women's Doubles as there wasn't a Women's Doubles event!

We were sad to hear that, on 5th July, Geoffrey Harrower had died. He had been reporting on table tennis for the Daily Telegraph for many years; both Karenza and I had known Geoffrey very well.

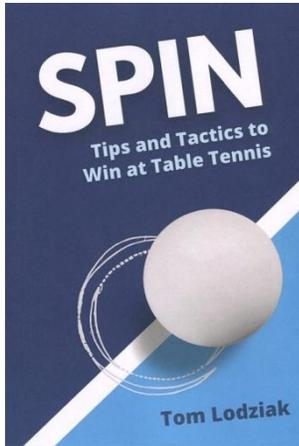
On 15th August we played an exhibition with Linda Howard and Mike Johns on the concourse of Victoria Station. We cannot remember how that came about but I expect the commuters were surprised to see us there.

More from the pens of Ken and Karenza next issue.

Book Reviews

It is well known that if you have been waiting for a bus for ages, then two will come along at the same time. It appears that the same is true for coaches!

It is probably something to do with the pandemic but this month we have three books written by eminent coaches to review.



SPIN – Tips and Tactics to Win at Table Tennis by Tom Lodziak

The opening chapter gives an entertaining description of a league match that the author played during 2019. It is so familiar in that it not only describes Tom’s match but also many I have played in, and I am sure will ring true for everyone else that plays our sport.

Chapter 2 describes the author’s table tennis history which gives an insight of his journey with the inevitable highs and lows, the moment he realised he was becoming addicted and finally to the point where he decided that he wanted to share his experience to help everyone to achieve their goals.

Aimed at the local league player it provides tips and tactics to help you improve your game through sharing his experiences and providing various options for you to try.

Tom is also keen to remind everyone that they should always remember that table tennis “should be fun – that is why we all started in the first place”.

An excellent book that does not try and teach technique but concentrates on how to get the best out of your existing skills.

Available from Amazon at £9.99

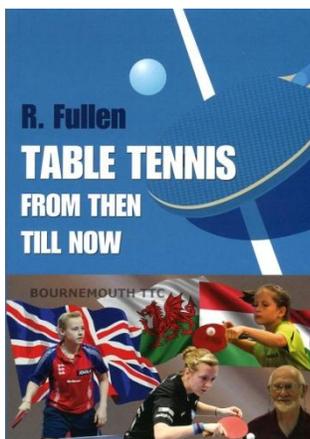


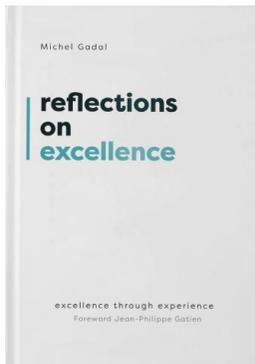
Table Tennis – From Then to Now by Rowden Fullen

This is a fine collection of articles, lectures and seminars that Rowden has delivered over his many years involved as a well respected coach at all levels and in many parts of the world.

As you would expect from a creative thinker, as the author undoubtedly is, this is not a cosy fireside read, but requires complete concentration to get the best out of it.

The book charts the changes in the game over the decades and also incorporates the ideas and philosophy of some of the greatest coaches that Rowden has met.

Available for Amazon at £8.99



reflections on excellence by Michel Gadat

The author has been National Coach for France, Canada, the National Technical Director for France, and as some of you will remember, the Director of Performance for England, and has accumulated a lifetime of coaching experience. He was the coach of Jean-Philippe Gatien whom he coached from a junior to World Champion in 1993.

This book focuses, as the title suggests, on aspects of excellence. It is aimed primarily at coaches to help them pass on the latest thinking, but can also be read by players who want a better understanding of a path to excellence.

It is only available as a digital book. Priced at 14.90 Euro it can be downloaded from e-campus.trans.fr//presentation-of-the-book-michel-gadal

If you are looking to buy a late Christmas present there are two more books you may wish to consider:-



Chop, Slice, Smash and Serve by Felix Thomis - the first ever Table Tennis Cookery Book. It has been produced by 15 year old England Junior Squad member, Felix (with some help from Mum and Dad).

Felix managed to get an impressive array of International table tennis stars to contribute recipes, Quadri Aruna, Dina Meshref, Vladimir Samsonov, Marcos Freitas, Sarah Nutte and Joo Se-Hyuk. Closer to home he obtained contributions from Gavin Evans, Sam Walker, Tin-Tin Ho, Maria Tsaptsinos and Will Bayley as well as other luminaries. Mark Bates has also contributed a recipe and most remarkably, Felix obtained a recipe for a Chocolate Oak Cake from No 10 Downing Street.

This is an outstanding effort from Felix and will benefit not only those that buy it and try some of the recipes, but also Ackworth School Table Tennis Academy, and charities for the elderly and homeless in West Yorkshire.

The book costs £10 + £2.95 postage and packing and can be ordered from Yasmin Thomis via andythomis@gmail.com and she will pass on details of how you can pay by Bank Transfer.



Felix in action

Note: we have ordered a copy and will report next time on our culinary exploits!!



Finally, a reminder of Graham Frankel's entertaining book, **Ping! – A Personal Perspective on Table Tennis** which we featured in our last issue. At £9.99 from Amazon, Kindle version also available, it charts Graham's own table tennis journey as well as giving insights into some of the many changes in table tennis at international and domestic level with Graham's views on why these were made and the impact on table tennis.

An enjoyable and thought provoking read.

This isn't the game my bird played . .

. . . . Michael Parkinson's expert view of table tennis



Led out like the regimental goat to open the Table Tennis Super League sponsored by this newspaper, I was interested to observe how much the game had changed since I was a lad. At Alexandra Palace, with Britain's best players on view, I was able to reflect that an abandonment at an early age of my ambition to be a table tennis champion only goes to prove that I am not as daft as I look. Mind you, the reason I gave up was not because I had an inspired vision of the future; rather it was a matter of sex - but I will tell you about that later.

What struck me most forcibly about the modern game was its silence. The bats, thickly padded with sponge, make no noise as they strike the ball, and even the most entertaining rally loses at least 50 per cent of its appeal because the eye operates without the benefit of sound. It is exactly like watching a silent film wherein the action, no matter how much a tribute to the athlete's skill, takes on a dreamy, unreal quality.

The bat of my youth had sandpaper one side, and a slice of cork on the other, and when it connected with the ball it made a sound like a rifle shot. What is more, the modern player is given too much room to work in. I learned my table tennis in a lean-to at the back of the Y.M.C.A. which was so small it wouldn't have offered a work-out to a brace of pygmies. By the time we had fitted the table in, we had about six inches to spare all the way round, which accounted for the fact that we had a series of exceedingly thin champions. The best of these was Waggy, a po-faced youth with the physique of one raised on a diet of bread and water, but blessed with the most remarkable eye and wrists. He simply stood centre-table flicking the ball hither and thither, never shifting his stance while his opponents careered about colliding with the walls of that claustrophobic room.

Visiting teams came to dread playing on our premises, particularly if they had learned their game on a table with adequate space around it. Those who favoured a defensive game from a deep position simply ended up with a backside full of splinters. And those who energetically flew round the table attacking with fierce forehand smashes were confined and helpless, like rats in a barrel.

One youth from a visiting team, making a diving attacking shot before he had time to take his bearings, went through the window and fell on the pitch-and-toss school which met outside our shed. But the most spectacular disaster occurred when Waggy so incensed an opponent that he punched the rear wall in frustration, only to bring the entire structure crashing down.

From then on, we played at the youth club, and I met a girl with grey eyes and for the first time fell in love. We were paired in the mixed doubles and, because of her, we won it. She was a marvellous player, much better than me, and she knew it, treating me with utter disdain.

I remember that when we won the mixed doubles she received a tin of toffees, and never asked me if I wanted one, whereas my prize was a pair of black socks which I treasured for years because they reminded me of her.

To say my love was unrequited is putting it mildly, but she did wonders for my game. Every time we played, I wanted to prove that I was at least her equal, and for a while we were an unbeatable pair.

Then, one year, just about the time I started shaving, we lost in the semi-finals to a newcomer and his bird. The stranger was a plumber from another village who smelled of violets, and his partner was called, believe it or not, Freda Bucket. Needless to say, I ended up with Miss Bucket, and could only watch as my partner and the violet-smelling plumber went on from success to success and eventually got married.

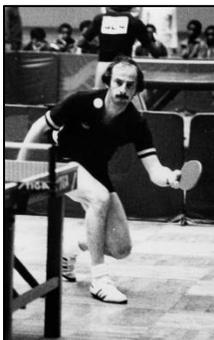
Last time I heard, he had left her for a bus conductress, and she was like a house-end through too many children and too much port and lemon. Serves her right. She ruined my appetite for table tennis. I never played again.

I thought of her when I went to Alexandra Palace. In common with the other spectators, I sat in rapt attention as the athletes flickered to and fro. But I was in another time and another place, when table tennis rallies sounded like bursts of small arms fire and I was gaga about a girl with grey eyes. Bathed in those memories of athletic ambition and sexual stirrings, I declared the competition well and truly open, but could not begin to account for the smile on my lips or the twinkle in my eyes as I said it.

This article first appeared and is reproduced courtesy of the Sunday Times magazine.

Grateful thanks too, to Sir Michael Parkinson for granting his permission to include the article, thanks also to Alan Hydes for contacting Sir Michael on our behalf – one famous Barnsley lad to another.

Jacques Secretin



We were saddened to hear of the death of Jacques Secretin on 25th November 2020 at the age of 71 years. The French legend was not only a superb table tennis player winning the Mixed Doubles with Claude Bergeret at the World Championships in Birmingham in 1977 but was perhaps the ultimate entertainer. His exhibitions and demonstrations with Vincent Pukart, sometimes assisted by Bergeret or Brigitte Thieret, were never forgotten by those who saw them. They travelled around the world delighting everyone who came to watch.

Secretin won 61 French National titles, 17 of them in the Men's Singles event. He also won the Men's Singles at the European Championships in 1976 plus four other medals at the Europeans. His one World Championships gold medal was added to by four other medals at the Worlds. He represented France on 495 occasions and was awarded the French Legion of Honour and the National Order of Merit.

Secretin was still playing actively at the time of his death and was due to have played at the World Veteran Championships in Bordeaux this year.

Our condolences go to all family and friends.

Old Photographs

In our last issue we mentioned the Sunday Times Super League and then coincidentally there were some photographs from one of the matches amongst the many images (around 2,500 negatives) recently received from Tony Ross's sister via the good offices of Richard Hudson. Below is a selection from the last set of matches held at Thornaby Pavilion on 16th February 1974.



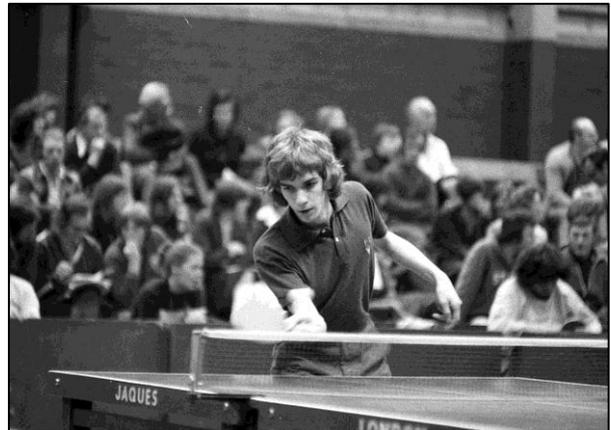
Playing hall



Paul Day and Desmond Douglas



John Kitchener



Peter Taylor



Keeping the Score



Andy Barden v Alan Hydes



Andy Barden



Harry Robinson, Pat Simpson, Bob Wiley Snr., Peter Simpson



The Players



Ian Horsham, Robert Wiley, Eric Caetano (Canada), David Alderson, Nicky Jarvis



Alan Hydes and Tony Clayton with ETTA Chairman, Charles Wyles



The Winning Team, Andy Barden, Desmond Douglas, Ian Horsham

Desmond Douglas's team finished in pole position with 26 points, Denis Neale's team were a close second with 25 points, Tony Clayton's team third with 23 points followed closely by Alan Hydes team with 22 points, fifth place went to Nicky Jarvis's team with 20 points and finally, Brian Burn's team finished with 19 points.

World Table Tennis

A new concept, a new structure and new rules saw the first World Table Tennis event take place in Macao from 24th-29th November 2020 following on the heels of the World Cups and the ITTF Finals. Due to Covid 19, this first event was an invitation exhibition event and so ITTF World Ranking points were not applied.

There were so many innovations in the tournament that it is difficult to identify which were potentially positive changes and which confusing. The presentation of the players on court and the court itself were spectacular, the table was black with orange lines, the floor was black, the whole colour scheme was black and orange and when an orange ball was used the effect was improved further. (Maybe because I am a Wolverhampton Wanderers fan (Diane writing) that colour combination was pleasing with orange the nearest thing to 'Old Gold'). The umpires too were colour co-ordinated with black shirts and trousers with orange trim. With all the black, including the flooring, the court did seem rather sombre and maybe not enough contrast with the table, exacerbated when a player wore black kit. Overall, the colour scheme made a very impressive impact.



Jeon Jihee, Korea, v Adriana Diaz, Puerto Rico. Photo courtesy of the ITTF

Some of the top 32 players in the world were invited to take part with mega prize money at stake. The Men's Singles saw six Chinese players, one from Hong Kong, China, one from Chinese Taipei, two from the Korean Republic, two from Brazil, and one each from Austria, Sweden, Egypt and England's Liam Pitchford. The split for the Women's event saw seven from China, one from Hong Kong, China, one from Chinese Taipei, one from Singapore, two from Korea Republic and one each from Puerto Rico, Germany, Romania and the USA.

The privileged of being invited was certainly profitable for the players who took part as they all received \$15,000 as an appearance fee with additional various amounts ranging from \$2,500 up to \$25,000 for the eventual winner.

The playing format was complicated to say the least. The first day's play had the players who were ranked from 9-16 playing in a straight knock-out. Day 2 and those ranked 5-8 then faced those who survived the first day's play. On top of this the top four seeds played two matches over the first two days to determine the order of seeds for the Quarter-finals. The winner of this group of matches was then

able to decide his or her opponent in the Quarter-finals; the second seed had second choice and so on. The third day was Quarter-final day with the Semis on day 4 and the Finals on the 5th day.

Now on to the rules and I did feel sorry for the umpires who had to keep on top of all the different formats. What was called Battle Round 1 ie those matches played between 9-16 players and the Quarter-finals had the same rules apply – best of five games but first up to 11, so it was sudden death if the score was 10-10, at least for the first four games but two clear points were needed if the match went to five games. The Top 4 seed Battle was also the best of five games but up to 5 points only in all of the games including the fifth. The Semi-final was the best of 7 games with the first to 11 in the first four and two clear points for the 7th and deciding game. The final was the best of 9 games with the first up to 11 points in the first 8 but two clear points in the ninth game.

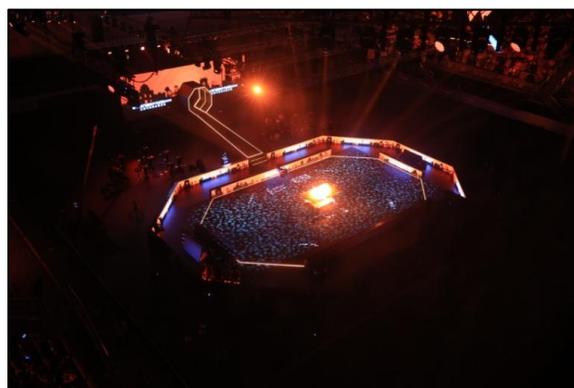
For the English interest, Liam Pitchford met Jang Woojin of Korea in his first round match and won that 9-11, 11-4, 11-10, 11-7. Onto day 2 where he met his second Korean opponent, Jeoung Youngsik but after a close match was defeated 11-6, 8-11, 8-11, 11-9, 5-11.



Liam Pitchford v Jang Woojin, Korea. Maybe a little too much black?
Photo courtesy of the ITTF

The Quarter-final stage saw three of the five Chinese Quarter-finalists move into the Semi-finals, along with Mattias Falck but that was as far as he went and once again the finals, as in so many events, saw China battle it out against China with that old war horse Ma Long the victor over Wang Chuqin by 5 games to 1.

The Women's event was even more dominated by the Chinese players with six of them reaching the Quarter-finals, the other two places going to Singapore and Chinese Taipei. The Semi-finals were a full house for the Chinese and the final saw Sun Yingsha win 5-1 against Chen Xingtong.



An overview of the arena. Photo courtesy of the ITTF

John Hilton.. A Life in Sport

By Brian Kean



John Hilton, European Champion, 1980,
with Jacques Secretin

During a conversation with Diane regarding the next issue of her and Harvey's excellent Newsletter the subject of John Hilton's remarkable European singles success in 1980 arose.

Articles in other publications alluded to the fact 2020 was the 40th anniversary of Hilton's success and much of the writings related to his journey through the actual event and discussions largely attributing his success to the combination bat.

Without wishing to prolong the debate and merits of the bat we need to remember the combination bat had been in use for a number of years prior to 1980 and the overwhelming difference was Hilton's unique skill in twiddling and combining it with his ability to do so while changing from attack to defence mid rally.

Diane advised that the general theme of TTT's next issue is to be 40 YEARS AGO and suggested that I would be well placed to provide a John Hilton story type article.

I will make no apology for the fact much of this article will make references to myself which is unavoidable given our friendship has spanned 57 years in which we have lived together (he moved into my spare room) participated and shared interests together in running YM Marathons..Gymnastics...Football...Golf....Squash...Night Clubbing....Holidays...Spring board diving... and of course our TT practice time plus coaching/exhibitions throughout which the binding ingredient was our outrageous sense of humour.

While, yes, there has been much laughter we did however shed a tear or two during John's brush with cancer which brought to the fore his true fighting and indomitable spirit which pulled him through in a manner I have not witnessed anywhere.

We first met at the GREENGATE AND IRWELL RUBBER COMPANY at a coaching session being conducted by former international Ron Allcock and gradually over the course of the next six weeks we started to forge that relationship which stands firm today.

John testifies to the fact his upbringing in Hyde with brothers Mike and Phil didn't quite fit with typical family norms. Their parents run the ODDFELLOWS which was very much your back street Rovers Return public house, albeit devoid of Betty Turpin's hotpot, however, mother MADGE could always rustle up unlimited supplies of Pork Scratchings and each and every variety of SMITHS salted crisps.

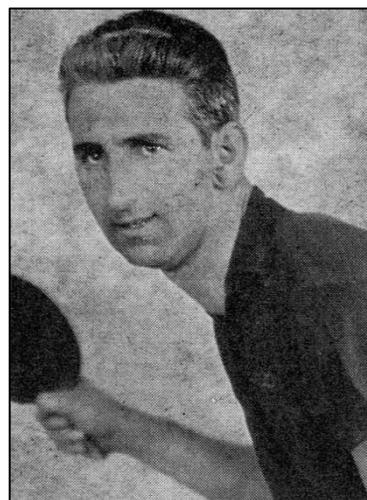
This environment meant the lads became very independent and arguably this was instrumental in building the determined independent type character that served John so well when he embarked on his sporting activities.

In work/career terms John was somewhat nomadic spending variable amounts of time in carpentry, bread van delivery, blue coat entertainment at Pontins and eventually finding his feet as an insurance agent.

His early teenage years saw him join HYDE LADS CLUB which provided members with a plethora of sporting activities and despite John being a fearless talented gymnast there was a natural gravitation towards Table Tennis and it wasn't too long before his ability and competitive nature forced himself into the club teams playing in the Local Leagues of Hyde and Ashton.

His rate of improvement was such it prompted his experienced team-mates, Bill Stanway and Brian Baldwin, to suggest he needed to spread his wings and seek stiffer practice opportunities in an endeavour to assist his elevation to the next level. The overwhelming choice was simple; Manchester YMCA was the place to be. For many years the YM's record of producing players of premier county and international standard was unequalled. Out of respect it's wholly appropriate to name a few of the yesteryear top county and international stars who had an influence on all the youngsters who honed their skills at the YM.

Stan Proffitt... Benny Casofsky... Jeff Ingber... Derek Schofield... George Goodman... Lou Laza... Ron Allcock... Vince Hankey... Mike Symonds... Geoff Pullar... Kevin Forshaw. Last but not least the man who was mentor to us all, JACK CLAYTON, who is possibly the best player ever to never play for England. Jack was ever present at the YM conveying his wealth of knowledge on tactics gamesmanship and 'when to' and 'when not' to play particular shots at varying stages of the game. Without question Jack's influence and characteristics are evident in the manner John goes about his business



Jack Clayton

One of the YM's greatest assets was being open six days a week from 9am to 10pm and was renowned for being a mercilessly tough school with an operational system not to every ones liking. It housed five tables and there was a natural ability/grading system relative to which players were in attendance.

The system was simple, WINNER STAY ON, for that reason you chose carefully as to which table suited your ability. Ideas above your station ie: choosing the wrong table invariably meant ONE GAME.. ONE LOSS. Then a reversion to the role of spectator while you once again took your place at the end of the queue.

It was a system which made John value every minute on the table as to lose meant a wait of up to 40 minutes (*or longer depending on how close the games were*) for your next game and by definition it was a formula that bred WINNERS. John was one of the new successful generation of nationally known YM starlets such as Mike Johns, Roger Hampson, Tony Boasman, Nigel Eckersley, John Clark, Phil Bowen, Dave Constance and on occasions Denis Neale would grace the YM with his presence

Being an insurance agent afforded John the opportunity to juggle his working hours enabling him to cram in a couple of daytime hours most afternoons throughout the week.

Saturdays were the highlight of the week. Arrival 9-9.30am... departure 9-9.30pm. The morning would typically involve three hours table time occasionally if quiet players used the spare tables for stroke production work. After lunch it was back on the tables as the room filled with many of the best players in Lancashire and Cheshire, this is when competition and rivalry was at its peak as players sweated their

guts out to avoid a long wait between games. As the clock approached tea time the room thinned out as players vacated the room, not for John, however, after a quick bite in the YM CAFF it was back to the TT room with the dedicated few for another couple of hours.



Manchester YMCA - TT on the 3rd floor

Concluding the day's activities usually meant an hour in the gym with its unique indoor, steeply banked 22 lap per mile running track which was incorporated in the official PTI structured training sessions at which John excelled. Make no mistake, John was fit both physically and mentally and was up there with some of the fittest guys in Manchester, *(it was not only his bat that Euro's top players struggled with but both his Mental (thanks Jack Clayton) and Physical strength.)* The day would invariably finish with a swim and dare devil Hilton executing double Back Somersault dives with a twist from the dizzy heights of the balcony around the pool. This was followed by a quick shower donning ones best 'trapping off gear' then off to the OASIS, Twisted WHEEL, PLAZA or any of the Manchester night time hotspots. Hence, optimising the phrase 'work hard and play hard'.

An indication of YM TT lads' fitness is best illustrated by quoting LEN HEPPELL *(who is Len Heppell you might ask?)* Len Heppell was the father of table tennis international, Maureen Heppell, who was the wife of footballer Bryan (Pop) Robson, he of the Uniteds' of Newcastle and West Ham. Newcastle employed LEN as a fitness and dance instructor in the club's endeavour to improve players' footwork and balance.

On occasions when Newcastle were playing UNITED OR CITY IN MANCHESTER Len would visit the YM for a knock and watch the YM training sessions of which he said, and I quote... "You YM lads are far fitter and more committed than many of the professional footballers I work with".

Part of John's fitness programme included regularly running between five and ten miles. The motivation for this was easy for a number of reasons. On many occasions John and I would be at home when the door bell would ring and stood in the drive would be Phil Bowen *(who lived on the same street)* in his running gear. Within five minutes we were off arriving home 45-60 minutes later with six or seven miles under our belts and as a threesome we pushed and pulled each other along. With a couple of hundred yards left it was a race for the finish and rarely did John bring up the rear.

The standard of play in the Greater Manchester Leagues was exceptional and due to the close proximity of the leagues it was not uncommon to register with three or four clubs/teams. This afforded players the opportunity to play two matches a night. It required a bit of juggling and jiggery poky to ensure players arrived before the 9pm deadline in the second match. This was in the days when teams of five played two matches each. It did of course become more difficult with the move to three player teams.

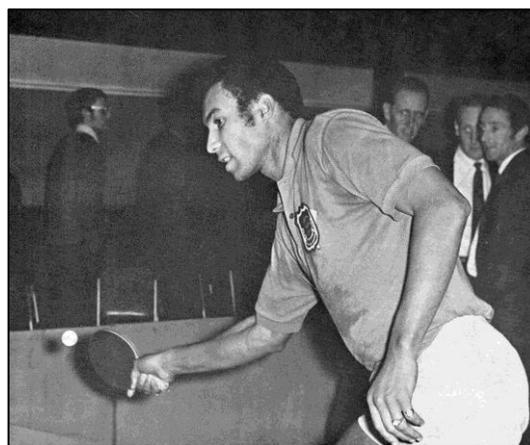
John's early year performances were often unpredictable and frustrating for his team-mates. More often than not he would play with a carefree smile on his face, attempting ridiculous shots, resulting in losing both his matches. Conversely, he would dash out of the room to play a second match for Hyde Lads against Manchester YM and comfortably beat players like Lancs No. 1 Kevin Forshaw and England junior No. 2 Tony Boasman. It was akin to the proverbial box of chocolates in that you never knew what you were going to get.

Early year tournaments were treated very much as serving an apprenticeship as you were faced with unknown players with differing styles to that which you were accustomed to in the local leagues.

Tournament attendances were dictated by geography and cost and the need to rely on public transport due to limited opportunities of lifts. On one occasion we decided the EAST OF ENGLAND OPEN at Skegness had a certain attractiveness on account of it being held at BUTLINS holiday camp which offered entertainment opportunities (*following a bad day the office*) should the need arise in helping to drown one's sorrows. PIG & WHISTLE was the venue of choice affording the possibility of sampling the artistic delights of the famous red coated dancers who purported to be BILLY'S equivalent of Pans People.

However, transporting ourselves there required some thinking outside the box. As a newspaper man I was able to call in a few favours. Manchester printed titles were transported by rail and thanks to a wink and a nod from press dispatch manager, John and I pitched up at Piccadilly station, climbed aboard the 1am newspaper train to Lincoln where we duly arrived (*after a number of stops*) in Lincoln at 4.30am having had little or no sleep.

The onward journey to Skeggy was courtesy of WH Smith wholesale retail delivery van which cruised through the camp gates and dumped us along with bundles of Mirror, Sun, Mail and Expresses on the doorstep of the camp retail shop around 6.30am. Clearly this was not the ideal preparation for a weekend of intense competition; suffice to say the memory of our performances is somewhat sketchy other than to say our singles interest did not stretch beyond the 1st round (no groups in those days) courtesy of Messrs LES HASLAM and TREVOR TAYLOR. Despite losing to Les the seeds and fruits of what was to come from John shone through prompting a heavily perspiring Haslam to comment "Bloody Hell I didn't expect to go through that in a 1st round match".



Les Haslam

All the aforementioned was the general scene that prevailed for a number of years until out of the blue in 1970 John said to me "Keanus, I need a change", (*a comment which prompted me in the normal humorous manner to say*) "why has your waste disposal system lost its sense of control and timing". "Nah I'm being serious, life around here is the same old boring routine and I need to get away."

In true Hilton style Australia beckoned and within a month John embarked on a 23 hour love affair with Freddie Laker who kindly delivered him to Perth where his old pal from hometown HYDE, Mick Faye was there to greet and generously accommodate him until he found his feet.

John's search for Table Tennis took him to Western Australia University where his welcome was somewhat inhospitable as he was curtly snubbed and refused a knock by a couple of Malaysian players who happened to be ranked 1 and 2 in Western Australia. A little while later a third person, Brian Lawrie, arrived who with a degree of reluctance agreed to have a knock. This proved to be a major turning point and this unwelcoming threesome's aloofness dissipated rapidly realising to their detriment that this guy could play. In John's own words he said "Yeah we played loads back home but in truth I never really took it that serious and tended to mess about quite a bit"Witnessing how seriously

these guys took their Table Tennis John soon fell into their structured and committed attitude to practice and training gradually reaping the rewarding fruits of his labour.

Along with his now WESTERN AUSSIE COMPATRIATES the foursome booked and subsequently boarded an internal flight heading East for Melbourne and a crack at making an impression in the National Championships.

John took the five hour flight in his stride; after all it was more comfortable than the sleepless journey to Skegness which from start to finish exceeded the Perth to Melbourne flight time. His performance in these championships proved to be pivotal with John revelling in the occasion and soaking up the buzz and atmosphere as he progressed through the tournament resigning a couple of seeded players to an early bath. A semi final spot and ultimately a national ranking of 6 established John as Western Australia's leading player, this in turn led to numerous national representative appearances. All of this pandered ideally to John's outgoing larger than life personality and saw him revel in the limelight which quickly became a dietary need.

"Alas, all good things and all that" two years in, and despite a high profile TT life, endless blue skies and the sun drenched beaches of Western OZ the heart yearned for the snow clad hills and wider vagaries of English weather, and, his native hometown of Hyde. Whilst he will be eternally grateful to Mr Laker for introducing him to the wonders of the southern hemisphere he was even more grateful to Qantas for taking him back to where he belonged.

Moving into 1972/3, and that which two years earlier was the same old boring routine suddenly took on a whole new meaning and was exactly the routine John embarked on with a new verve and enthusiasm. His two years in Australia were instrumental in providing him with an increasing sense of self belief and personal discipline which in turn provided the motivation to knuckle down in an endeavour to continue the improvement which gathered momentum throughout his time in Australia.

RIVALRY

There is little doubt a powerful tool in creating desire and motivation is provided when peer group rivalry comes to the fore. That's exactly what transpired when John discovered his fellow YM member Nigel Eckersley had similar desires and dreams to be the best in the land.

It is/was a prolonged rivalry that existed well into their VETTS years and without question was a major factor in both their considerable achievements and was largely attributable to the countless hours practising together and battling it out toe to toe in Manchester YM.

To say it was always friendly would be far from the truth. My belief is the ECK had a knack of tweaking the buttons (*maybe not intentionally ?*) that seriously irritated John, Eck's general table demeanour, more volatile, eye balling, fist pumping antics was felt by John and many others to be somewhat excessive, particularly so in the spirit of the VETTS circuit and not quite being "Cricket old chap".

While having a recent conversation with John I posed a number of questions

BK "WHO WAS THE PLAYER YOU ADMIRER MOST".....**JH** "Liang Geliang"
...his admiration for this Chinese all rounder knows no bounds and John



Liang Geliang

explained Liang had it all, the ability to attack and defend while covering the court with outstanding footwork that would have graced the floors of numerous sports and Strictly ballrooms. This admiration took on greater relevance when the pair opposed each other in the final of the World Vets in Baltimore. **JH** "It was one of these matches that whatever I did he simply did it better."

BK "HAVE YOU ANY TT REGRETS".... John went on at length to say "KEANUS I know you were a big fan of Peter Simpson and you worked and learned a lot from him and felt he was underrated as a coach". He explained his biggest regret was not taking Peter's advice in the weeks and months following his Euro success. He was playing and living in Germany but still persevered with countless commitments in England and after a couple of years admitted to suffering from burn out as was predicted by Peter.

My spin on that is John never strayed from his roots and quite simply did not change one iota after winning the Euros. No aloofness, no off the table arrogance, he was still the relatively unknown amiable 'jack the lad' from Hyde who just happened to be the former Pontins Blue Coat who became Europe's No. 1 TT Player and yes, if he was called to play a handicap cup match for Hyde Lads against a 3rd division team in the Ashton League he would endeavour to avail himself

Interesting snippet from an Indian meal out in Manchester where he happened to notice snooker icon Alex (Hurricane) Higgins sitting nearby politely signing autographs for fellow diners. After a while Higgins vacated his table and walked in the direction of the toilets when he suddenly recognised John, changing direction he boldly strode over to greet and congratulate John for his Euro success in a manner totally befitting of his reputation as the wild exuberant Irishman of snooker. Suddenly, all eyes were on John after which you could feel the hushed tones of other diners as they bafflingly tried to identify the guy who moments earlier had Alex Higgins standing in awe and brimming with admiration of this fellow sportsman.

As you will appreciate, there is so much more to John Hilton than table tennis, a fact that I can bear witness to. However, in my conversations with Diane Webb (editor) I regaled some of the more hilarious and colourful events which occurred over the years, interesting as they were, Diane felt they were, and I quote "stories to be told rather than documented," reluctantly, I had to agree. However, I am convinced if our game and personalities were sporting household names many RED TOP editors would be affording table tennis personalities countless space in their newspaper columns!!!



John in exuberant mood

It is fairly obvious some people's personalities attract and prompt varying reactions from others which can range between a level of love but conversely can spill over into the realms of rancour. Make no mistake, John ain't no angel and can be a right pain in the butt, however, his engaging personality is such you cannot, not like him warts n'all. I have never heard him bad mouth anyone, of course, he might comment (*none confrontationally*) that he thinks X or Y is a bit of a pratt but said without anger or venom.

Testimony to some of the points made above is best illustrated during his battle with the dreaded big "C". Following surgery his wife Belinda realised the level of pain he was suffering suggested serious problems. She had no hesitation in ringing John's first **wife** Christine (specialist nurse in her field) for advice; they amicably sat together deciding on a course of action. It turned out

that Christine's intervention was crucial and followed a hasty trip back to theatre without which John could have been on the wrong side of DEUCE IN THE 5TH.

Soccer fans throughout the country are angered and feel it's an indictment on the game lamenting the fact that despite copious and morally vulgar amounts of cash swirls around in football 54 years have elapsed since England's Bobby Moore held aloft the coveted **Jules Rimet Trophy** at Wembley celebrating England's only world cup victory. Sporting wealth similarly exudes within an exclusive elite group of other high profile sports whose successes have been largely enjoyed while gloriously basking in the excesses of media and financial sunshine. This should prompt us to question our social values whereby minority sports (which are thinning out on the ground) are devoid of such riches and media attention. Society should fear the long term implications for youngsters who are deprived of the benefits derived from erstwhile places like HYDE LADS CLUB, CHURCH YOUTH CLUBS, BOYS AND GIRLS BRIGADES and of course the social and sports clubs provided by industry which were essential in the Northern industrial heartlands and provided my introduction to John.

Yes, 2020 is the 40th anniversary of John Hilton's remarkable Euro success, however, we cannot undervalue the social structure that prevailed previously and played no small part in John's formative years and is sadly diminishing as you read. Tony Blair's famous quote on entering Downing Street was EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION. If we are to rejoice again in the glory of producing a MEN'S SINGLES EUROPEAN CHAMPION then our watchword must be FACILITIES, FACILITIES, FACILITIES.



The inestimable Mr Kean as Captain Cornflake

Table Tennis Scotland You Tube Interviews

Head over to Table Tennis Scotland if you would like to hear more from Brian Kean where he was interviewed by David Fairholm on 27th July 2020. Several other well known names from British table tennis have also taken their turn in the hot seat with Desmond Douglas's delightful interview the latest on 3rd December. Other interviewees have included Jill and Donald Parker, Nicky Jarvis, Alison Broe, Colin and Sam Wilson, Ryan Jenkins, Jonny Cowan and Gavin Rungay, plus many more.

Put your feet up for an hour or so as they are well worth listening to.

What was Happening 40 Years Ago? 1980



John Hilton

- One of the most remarkable victories in table tennis when John Hilton won the European Championships Men's Singles title in 1980 in Berne. There were further impressive results at the tournament when England's Men finished 3rd, Desmond Douglas (15-2), John Hilton (11-5), Paul Day (7-8). The Women's Team finished 4th with Jill Hammersley winning all her 11 matches, other team members were Carole Knight, Linda Jarvis and Anita Stevenson. The Mixed Doubles saw a silver medal for Desmond Douglas and Linda Jarvis and a Semi-final spot for Jill Hammersley and Linda Jarvis in the Women's Doubles.

- The year started with Jill Hammersley as European Number 1 and Des Douglas as Number 5. By the end of the year John Hilton was European 1 and World 5.
- Europe Top 12 saw Jill Hammersley win the Women's event for the second time and Desmond Douglas finished 4th.
- England rankings saw Jill and Des as the number 1s at the beginning of the year and Linda Jarvis topped the list by December following Jill's retirement. At Junior level Graham Sandley and Alison Gordon took pole position.



Jill Hammersley

- A telephone answering service was introduced in the ETTA office in Hastings. As phone calls were cheaper in the evenings and weekends it was intended to help reduce cost of members' phone bills.
- At the English Open in January, Desmond Douglas beat Paul Day in the final of the Men's Singles, Jill Hammersley won the Women's event. England Men's team of Paul Day, Desmond Douglas and Don Parker also took the gold medal. A good tournament for English players.
- Maurice Goldstein was the ETTA President, Tom Blunn the Chairman and George Yates the Deputy Chairman. Mike Greatrex started the year as Treasurer but later stood down to make way for Aubrey Drapkin.



Maurice Goldstein



Tom Blunn



George Yates



Michael Greatrex



Aubrey Drapkin

- The first ITTF World Cup took place in Hong Kong in August and England's sole representative John Hilton finished 5th.

- The International Club of England Hard Bat tournament saw several former internationals taking titles with Stuart Gibbs defeating Jeff Ingber in the Men's Singles final, Semi-finalists were Laurie Landry and Len Adams. Betty Bird beat Marjorie Dawson in the Women's Singles.
- The National League, pre-cursor to the British League, was won by Sealink MK with the team of Skylet Andrew, Nigel Eckersley, John Hilton and Duggie Johnson. Two second divisions were formed for the 1980/81 season with nine new clubs forming North and South divisions.
- There was a repeat of the English Open result at the National Championships when Des once again beat Paul Day for his third win. Jill Hammersley failed to take her seventh title when a



Desmond Douglas

determined Carole Knight was victorious for the second time in the Women's Singles. Carole took a second title in the Women's Doubles partnered by Anita Stevenson whilst the Men's Doubles went to Paul Day and Nicky Jarvis. John Hilton partnered by Jill Hammersley triumphed in the Mixed Doubles for his only senior National title.



Carole Knight

- In the European League England finished 6th from 8 in the Super Division.
- The County Championships Premier Division was won by Essex with their players being Bob Potton with a 100% record, Dave Newman, Ian Horsham and Mrs E Foulds.
- Table Tennis News cost 30p in January and increased to 35p in October, George Yates was the Editor.
- Four notables passed away during the year: ETTA Vice-President and stalwart of Lancashire and Blackpool, Bill Worsley; Ivor Eyles, former ETTA Chairman and Honorary Life Member of Bristol and Gloucestershire; Leslie 'Les' Cohen former England international and President and Chairman of the Manchester League; Eric Hyde, former international and author of 'Table Tennis' published in 1938.



Bill Worsley



Ivor Eyles



Les Cohen

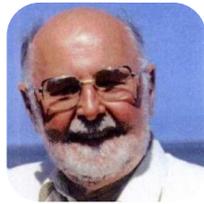


Eric Hyde

- Alan Ransome married Jose Tompkins on 15th July – we send congratulations on their 40 years.
- At the ETTA AGM honours and awards were made: Vice-Presidents – Harry Edwards, Tom Honey, David Plowes, Keith Ponting, Dr David Ryde; the Victor Barna Award was presented to John Hilton; Peter Charters received the Ivor Montagu Award and George White the Malcolm Scott Award.



Harry Edwards



Tom Honey



David Plowes



Keith Ponting



Dr David Ryde



John Hilton



Peter Charters



George White

- There were 10 staff members additionally four secretarial staff, Albert Shipley – General Secretary, Mike Watts – Deputy General Secretary, Roy Stevens – Administrative Secretary, Rob Oldfield – Development Officer, Peter Simpson – National Trainer/Coach, Jack Carrington – Senior Coaching Officer and four National Coaches – David Fairholm, Peter Hirst, Bryan Merrett and Don Parker.
- The ETTA Management Committee comprised the Officers plus five Vice-Chairmen, Colin Clemett – Competitions, Ron Crayden – Selection & Coaching, Alan Ransome – Development, Norman Reeve – Public Relations, George White – Administration.
- Prize money limits were increased to £75.00 for juniors and £30.00 for cadets.
- There were 322 Affiliated Leagues and Associations with 8,392 clubs and 21,250 teams plus 45 Organisations in Good Standing.
- 49 new County Umpires were qualified and three National Umpires, additionally eight Tournament Referees.
- The National Team Championships saw Dagenham win the Wilmott Cup (Desmond Charlery, Ian Horsham, David Newman), Leicester were successful in the J M Rose Bowl (Suzanne Hunt, Karen Rogers, Anita Stevenson), North Middlesex triumphed in the Carter Cup (Philip Bradbury, Mark Oakley, John Souter) and Dunstable claimed the Bromfield Trophy (Jackie Bellinger, Lisa Bellinger, Julie Dimmock).

Harry Reeve and Linacre Table Tennis Club, Liverpool

By Tom Purcell, Organising Secretary, Liverpool & District Table Tennis League

At the start of the 2020-21 season Linacre Table Tennis Club, Liverpool decided that it would not enter a team into the Liverpool League for that season. The club had one team and most of the players were in their late 70s and 80s. Some of the players were in poor health and the appearance of the Covid-19 pandemic forced their hand into withdrawing the team from the Liverpool League.

When we get back to “normal” after the pandemic a number of players in the Local Leagues may decide to retire and a few clubs, for various reasons, may not be able to continue but Linacre TTC has a very long history of playing league table tennis and has played continuously in the Liverpool League, without a break, since 1948.

The Liverpool League has been in existence since 1926 and in 1948, after playing together in the Liverpool Boys' Association, and after forming Linacre Boys' Club, five enthusiasts banded together to form Linacre TTC, to play in the Liverpool League. The club/team played its first league match on 27th October 1948 and from that date until the end of the 2019/20 season the team has played 1,850 league and cup matches in the Liverpool League.

I can be accurate about the number of matches that Linacre played in the Liverpool League because when I was talking to the Club Secretary, Harry Reeve, he informed me that over the years the club secretaries had kept a copy of every single league and cup match that the club had played since the first match in 1948. The records for 72 years had been kept in eight hardback books.

The records have been meticulously kept for each season and at the end of each season a record was made of each player's record.

League match v Silcocks
Wednesday 27th Oct. '48. Away.

1. W. Sellick	1. J. Larkin	20	18	21	-	2	-	1	
1.	2. J. Davidson	12	22	21	1	2	-	1	
2. J. Young	1. J. Larkin	16	21	20	3	-	-	1	
2.	2. J. Davidson	13	21	21	-	2	-	1	
3. J. Seed	3. J. Lacey	16	21	25	-	2	-	1	
3.	4. A. Davidson	21	21	17	2	-	1	-	
4. J. Bottrell	3. J. Lacey	12	21	21	-	2	-	1	
4.	5. D. M. Gonigal	21	17	12	2	-	1	-	
5. M. Solkin	4. A. Davidson	16	21	11	21	1	2	-	
5.	5. D. M. Gonigal	21	21	15	21	2	1	-	
Match won by Linacre							8	15	3

Harry was 18 years when he played his first league match for Linacre in 1957. He won his first two matches. A copy of the scorecard is shown below:

League match v University
Tuesday 10th Dec. '57. Away.

1. L. Jones	1. J. Larkin	21	19	19	2	-	1	-	
1.	2. J. Lacey	21	21	18	2	-	1	-	
2. P. Ascroft	1. J. Larkin	16	21	21	-	2	-	1	
2.	2. D. M. Gonigal	12	21	18	21	1	2	-	
3. A. Rosenbloom	1. J. Lacey	21	16	18	2	-	1	-	
3.	2. A. Davidson	21	23	21	-	2	-	1	
4. J. Towers	2. D. M. Gonigal	20	22	13	21	-	2	-	
4.	3. H. Reeve	19	21	19	21	1	2	-	
5. M. Eason	4. A. Davidson	21	18	12	21	1	2	-	
5.	5. H. Reeve	13	21	19	21	1	2	-	
Match won by Linacre							10	14	3

As Harry grew older he began working as a ship's engineer and over the years he missed many league matches because he was working at sea. He finally retired in 1999 as a senior engineer for a major shipping line.

One record that Harry does claim is that Linacre has never bought a table. Jack Davidson, the first secretary, pictured below, made their first table from old wooden bulkheads from merchant ships. In 1971, the players decided they needed a new table, so Jack made another one and sold the original for £20.00. Linacre are still in possession of the second table although they have been given a third table from another club.

Harry was concerned that the club's records would be lost. He was not used to computers, so I agreed to transfer the records onto computer and started the work at the beginning of September 2020. By 26th October I had scanned all the records up to 2016 when I received a phone call to inform me that Harry had died from the Covid-19 virus. I completed the transfer of records and these are now held within the records of the Liverpool League.



Linacre TTC: Winners of the Frank Murphy Handicap Cup 2008.
Dave Ferguson, Harry Nelson, Jack Davidson, Harry Reeve

Below is a record of the number of matches, sets and games played by Linacre TTC between 1948 and 2020.

LINACRE MATCH RECORDS 1948-2020									
					SETS		GAMES		% WINS
	P	W	L	D	F	A	F	A	
LEAGUE MATCHES	1645	667	717	261	8056	8347	20749	21473	40.54
CUP MATCHES	205	83	96	30	834	1046	2169	2430	40.48
TOTAL	1850	750	813	291	8890	9393	22918	23903	40.54

Harry and Linacre TTC will be a great loss to the Liverpool League. The players were gentlemen and respected throughout the league.

What is Happening Today

Local League play in England has once again been suspended but there are a smattering of reports on some of our top, professional players, all of whom are playing abroad. Emily Bolton has joined Saint Quentin, France, whilst Sam Walker is playing for French club, Hennebont and Paul Drinkhall makes it a hat trick for French clubs following his signing for Jura Morez, Liam Pitchford is playing for Russian club, UMMC.

Future Events (As at the time of writing)

The latest information is that the National Championships in Nottingham which were due to run from 29th-31st January 2021 have been cancelled as have nearly all other events in the TTE calendar. It is hoped the Junior & Cadet National Championships may still happen, to be held 8th-9th May 2021 in Nottingham and also the U10-U13 National Championships 12th-13th June 2021 in Wolverhampton.

Regrettably, the World Veteran Championships which were put back to April 2021 have now been cancelled. The next Championships will be held in Oman in January 2023 with the European Veteran Championships due in Cardiff in 2022.

The ITTF have announced the World Team Championships are still planned to go ahead in Busan from 28th February-7th March 2021 but it will be a reduced format with a maximum of 32 Men's and Women's Teams.

All planned events are subject to change and we will provide updates on these and any other tournaments in our next issue.

ITTF Updates

We reported previously that different coloured rubbers were being trialled and the ITTF Board of Directors have now approved four new colours of racket coverings: green, blue, violet/purple and pink (with specific ranges) with red still being an option. One side of the racket has to be black and the other side any of the above from the approved list.

The world competition ages are to be adjusted to under 19s and under 15s.

Governance

TTE have announced an EGM will be called as requested by a Board Member and following the receipt of the required number of supporting voting rights from the membership, according to Company Law.

Our Contact Details

Diane and Harvey Webb
Pine Edge
12 Salvington Crescent
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3NP

Email: DianeK1414@hotmail.co.uk
HarveyWebb17@gmail.com

Telephone: 01424 216342