



# Table Tennis Times

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

**Issue 30**

**Editorial**

**Spring 2023**

The sunshine over the last few days has been most welcome and it is good to feel the warmth of the sun again after a very wet winter.

This edition of TTT reaches a new high of over 40 pages thanks to lots of news and several welcome articles from guest contributors. As promised, we include the final part of the Ken and Karenza Mathews story which has been an extremely popular feature over many issues. Ken and Karenza now own an extremely comfortable country hotel with an excellent kitchen, The Grange at Osborne, and having stayed there ourselves we can thoroughly recommend it. Osborne is near Sherborne in Dorset.

To add to our report on the World Veteran Championships in Oman and the excellent photographs from Mike Rhodes, Diccon Gray gives us his impressions of Oman, both the tournament and his extended stay.

The Spotlight article in this edition is on David Creamer who was a top player in the late 50s and early 60s before he switched to golf where he could make a living.

Steve Leven offers another perspective of "A Late Return" by William Rees and Laurie Landry has contributed a memoir of his days as the Captain of the England Juniors in the 1960s. Laurie is much in our thoughts as he hasn't been very well lately and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Neil Brierley, who many of you will know as one of the driving forces behind BATTs, reflects on the beginnings of the World Ping Pong Championships which were featured on Sky TV. As Chris Doran once said "It's not proper table tennis but it is proper money!" There is also feature on Chris Beckley and 'A Picture of Health' and we acknowledge the work of a young photographer, Leo Socher Grethe, which adds to the growing number of photographers who allow us to use their images for which we are exceedingly grateful.

Diane, as usual has written reports on the ever-growing WTT events, as well as domestic competitions including our National Championships, plus international events. There is a constant stream of tournaments at the moment and so we have used a cut-off date of 31<sup>st</sup> March for this issue with anything starting after 1<sup>st</sup> April in the next one.

The Good News page and What was Happening, this time 50 years ago, appear as usual. We also record the sad passing of Erica Prean which gives some details of her remarkable life.

We hope that you enjoy this bumper edition and get the chance to read it in the spring sunshine.

Best wishes

Diane and Harvey Webb

## National Championships Qualifying Tournament 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> January 2023: Nottingham

It was the biggest entry yet in the recent qualifying tournaments for the National Championships with 136 men and 39 women taking part in groups of seven or eight. 14 from each event went through automatically to the National Championships in March. Additional places were offered in descending order from the qualifying tournament if any of the invited top 16 ranked players did not take up their place.

Each group played on one table, so Saturday was a long day for the men with matches in the groups of eight scheduled to take twelve hours starting at 9am and finishing at 9pm.

From the Men's Singles the top two from each group went through to the positional stage on the Sunday. The top six from three of the women's groups progressed to the second stage and the top seven from the other two groups.

There were few surprises at the end of day one. There was only one seed from those that played in the men's event who did not proceed to the second day and that was Jack Bennett. Unlucky Tom Rayner, seeded nine, was unable to play due to Covid-19 and Rhys Davies, seeded seven, also was not able to take part due to health issues.

As would be expected, the number one seed, Darius Knight, won the event. Knight had to play in the qualifying tournament as he was not on the relevant ranking list from which the top ranked players were automatically selected. He went through the two days relatively untroubled. Second seed, Shaquille Webb-Dixon finished in his allotted second place but it wasn't such an easy journey for him with third placed Felix Thomis taking him so close in the position 1-4 play-off match with Webb-Dixon winning 14-12 in the fifth end.

It was a very successful tournament for Thomis to reach the third spot from an unseeded position. Larry Trumpauskas, seeded fourth finished fourth and another youngster, aged only 14, our number one cadet, Ralph Pattison, also had an excellent weekend finishing fifth, again from an unseeded position. Pattison beat Jack Bennett in his group and in the positional rounds defeated Alim Hirji, Joshua Bruce, and Graeme Barella with his only loss to Trumpauskas. Jakub Piwowar, finished sixth, another youngster showing promise who also beat Jack Bennett in his group but lost to Thomis and Pattison in the positional matches, reversing the result against Pattison from the group.

The remaining places for the finals of the National Championships went to Graeme Barella, Adam Dennison, Joshua Bruce, Naphong Boonyaprapa, Oliver Cornish, Artur Caltabiano, Ben Piggott and Maxim Stevens.



*Darius Knight, Shaquille Webb-Dixon, Felix Thomis, Larry Trumpauskas, Ralph Pattison  
All photos courtesy of Pawel Meryn*

The Women's Singles wasn't quite so straightforward. 38 players turned up on the day so all bar six went through to the positional stage on day two.

Unseeded Ella Pashley, still a cadet, who won her group went through the tournament winning every match she played. In the positional matches she overcame Lauren Loosemore, Saskia Key, Megan Jones, Rebecca Savage and finally Mya Sultan to win the tournament. Sultan too, played above her ranking beating fourth seed, Tiana Dennison, fifth ranked player Sara Williams, second seed Erin Green and unseeded Rachael Iles before losing against Pashley in her final match. It was also a successful tournament for Iles who finished third and success too to fourth placed Rebecca Savage who had earlier defeated the number one seed, Anna Green.

The other players who went through to the National Championships were Anna Green, Erin Green, Anaya Patel, Megan Jones, Mabel Shute, Naomi Coker, Sara Williams, Saskia Key, Mia Lakhani, Lisa Rinnhofer, Ella Barnard and Stefania Popa.



*Ella Pashley, Mya Sultan, Rachael Iles, Rebecca Savage, Anna Green  
Photo of Rachael Iles courtesy of Graham Trimming, other photos courtesy of Pawel Meryn*

## Criteria for the National Championships

**Men and Women's Singles:** Qualifying event: restricted to 64. Championships: 32 players made up of invitations to top 16 ranked players plus two wild cards. The remaining 14 places were taken from the Qualifiers in descending order. If any of the invited players did not take up the offer then the next player/s were taken from the qualification event. Some players who entered the Qualification event were not able to play as it was oversubscribed.

**Under 21 Singles:** The top 14 were taken from the Under 21 ranking list plus two wild cards. 16 in total.

**Doubles:** If a player played in any of the singles events they could enter the doubles with either someone who was also playing in the tournament or their usual partner. Again, as events were oversubscribed it meant some players were not able to take part.

**Para Events:** Selected by British Para TTA, 12 players in total.

## Can You Help?

The Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation website has disappeared along with all the information that was held on it, photographs, reports, results etc. Investigations are being made to try and find what has happened and if the material is recoverable. (No wonder I like paper, it seems to last a lot longer!)

If anyone has anything from any Commonwealth Championships or Commonwealth Games, it would be greatly appreciated if you would get in touch so at least some of the material may be able to be preserved. Contact details on the last page.

Diane

## National Championships 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2023: Nottingham

Once more to Nottingham for the National Championships which ran from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023. As usual for the last few years the Under 21 events were held on the Friday as well as the groups for the Men's and Women's Singles and the Mixed Doubles up to the semi-finals.

In the Under 21 event the entry was restricted to 16 players with the top four starting at the quarter-final stage, the remaining players played in four groups of three. The winner of each group went through to the knockout stage where they joined the four seeds.

In the Under 21 Men's event that resulted in quarter final matches between number one seed Connor Green and Toby Ellis, number two seed Joe Ferguson playing Naphong Boonyaprapa, number three seed Louis Price playing Nahom Asgedom and number four seed Joseph Hunter playing Krish Chotai. Green, Ferguson and Hunter went through to the semi-finals with Asgedom the fourth semi-finalist who had beaten Price. In the semi-finals Green defeated Hunter 4, 5, 3 and Ferguson defeated Asgedom 5 -11, 9, -6, 8. The final saw a comfortable win for Green 10, 3, 2.



*Connor Green receiving the Under 21 Men's Singles Trophy from TTE President, Jill Parker  
Photo by Alan Man*



*Under 21 Women's Singles runner-up Mari Baldwin, Champion Jasmin Wong, semi-finalist Amy Marriott  
Photo by Alan Man*

The Under 21 Women's event followed the same format and it was number one, Mollie Patterson who played Rebecca Savage in the quarter-finals, Jasmin Wong at number two met Ella Pashley, third seed Mari Baldwin faced Scarlett Anders and finally fourth seed Anna Green had Amy Marriott as her opponent. Patterson, Wong and Baldwin all secured a semi-final place but Marriott beat Green to take the fourth spot. It was at this stage that Baldwin beat Patterson 5, 7, 9 and Wong beat Marriott - 9, -10, 5, 8, 9. The final victory went to Wong over Baldwin with the score 6, -8, 9, 7.

The Mixed Doubles saw one of the shocks of the tournament as the title went to Ismaila Akindiya and Mollie Patterson who had a stunning victory in the final to defeat Liam Pitchford and Tin-Tin Ho. Pitchford and Ho had won the title back in 2018 and were the respective number one seeds in the singles. So, on paper it should have been an easy victory for them. For both Akindiya and Patterson it was their first senior national title and one which was well deserved. Patterson was Norfolk's first National Champion in the 63 years of the Championships going one better than Lauren Spink (now Lauren Charles) who was a finalist in the Women's Doubles in 2012 when she played with Emily Bates.

The score in the final was 8, 6, -7, 12 to the new champions. The winning pair had come past Jakub Piwowar and Megan Jones, Ben Piggott and Jasmin Wong and then in the semi-final Connor Green and Erin Green. Pitchford and Ho had beaten Felix Thomis and Mari Baldwin, Louis Price and Amy Marriott and in the semis Tommy Gritton and Denise Payet.



*Mixed Doubles Champions Mollie Patterson and Ismaila Akindiya  
Photo by Alan Man*

No surprise winners in the Women's Doubles as the number one seeds, Emily Bolton and Tin-Tin Ho, won the title. Ho's partner for many years, Maria Tsaptsinos, was not participating in this year's championships due to her work commitments and so Ho partnered Bolton and it proved to be a fruitful partnership. They won 1, 5, 8, 8 beating Anna Green and Erin Green in a rather one-sided contest in the final. Mari Baldwin and Mollie Patterson had teamed up to reach the semi-finals and Megan Jones and Amy Marriott were the other semi-finalists having beaten the second seeds Denise Payet and Jasmin Wong in the quarters.



*Women's Doubles Champions Emily Bolton & Tin-Tin Ho. runners-up Erin Green & Anna Green  
Photos by Mike Rhodes*

The Men's Doubles saw some changes in partnerships as last year's champions, Tom Jarvis and Sam Walker, split up. Walker played with Darius Knight and Jarvis partnered David McBeath. It was the latter pair who benefitted most reaching the final where they met Paul Drinkhall and Pitchford in an excellent and entertaining contest. The final score 7, 10, -6, -8, 7 to Drinkhall and Pitchford which gave them their seventh time title and Drinkhall his 13<sup>th</sup> Men's Doubles victory just two short of Desmond Douglas's record 15.

There were two unexpected pairs who reached the semi-finals as Olly Cornish and Adam Dennison had beaten third seeds Darius Knight and Sam Walker in the first round and then defeated Louis Price and Larry

Trumpauskas. Toby Ellis and Nahom Asgedom had also defeated a seeded pair, number four, Chris Doran and Joe Ferguson, last year's finalists in their first-round match followed by a win over Josh Bruce and Lorestas Trumpauskas. Excellent results for the two young partnerships. What a great pity though that medals were not awarded for the semi-finalists in the doubles, for some it will be the biggest achievement of their playing career and no medal to show for it.



*Men's Doubles Champions Liam Pitchford & Paul Drinkhall and runners-up David McBeath & Tom Jarvis  
Photos by Alan Man and Mike Rhodes*



*Men's Doubles semi-finalists Adam Dennison & Olly Cornish and Nahom Asgedom & Toby Ellis.  
Photos by Alan Man*

The Women's Singles resulted in a fifth title for Ho as she beat Bolton 8, 3, 9, 10. Ho didn't lose a game in the whole event having beaten Mia Lakhani, Mari Baldwin and Mollie Patterson 4, 10, 3, 8 before facing Bolton in the final. Bolton at number three had gone past Ella Pashley, Scarlett Anders and finally the number two seed Denise Payet 5, -7, 7, 8, 6, the only time she dropped a game.



*Women's Singles Champion Tin-Tin Ho, presentation by Emma Vickers, and runner-up Emily Bolton  
Photos by Alan Man and Mike Rhodes*

Payet had two monumental matches to reach the semi-finals beating Megan Jones 7, 4, 5, -8, 7 before overcoming the new Under 21 Champion, Wong, -12, 4, 8, -5, 5, 7. Patterson did not have an easy first round match but got the better of Anaya Patel -9, -7, 9, 5, 1, 11 before a more comfortable victory against Anna Green 3, 2, 3, 8 to reach her semi-final spot.

There were more surprises in the Men's Singles as the two top seeds both lost at the semi-final stage, Pitchford to Walker and Drinkhall to Jarvis. Neither Drinkhall nor Pitchford played in last year's event. Drinkhall was injured and Pitchford elected to play in a WTT event instead. You have to go back to 2006 for the last time that neither one or the other of these two, and often both, were in the final which shows their dominance of the men's game for nearly twenty years and gives a scale of the achievement of Walker and Jarvis in their wins.

And so, the final, as last year, was Jarvis versus Walker and for the second time it was Jarvis who won the contest to give him his second Men's Singles National Championships title 10, 8, -4, 6, 8.



*Men's Singles Champion Tom Jarvis and runner-up Sam Walker*

*Photos by Mike Rhodes*

It hadn't been an easy ride for the two finalists earlier in the tournament. Walker had a close match against David McBeath in the quarter-finals, a match he eventually won 9, -8, 8, 4, -7, 9. Whilst Jarvis had beaten the ever improving Connor Green -15, 12, 2, 2, -8, 7 also in the quarter-finals. Chris Doran was another quarter-finalist and it was one more match between Darius Knight and Drinkhall in the fourth quarter-final match. Seeing these two meet each other took us back many years to when they first played, partnered and represented England in their very early days.

There were a number of invitation showcase para matches which were won by Jack Hunter-Spivey (Singles Class 2-5), Ashley Facey-Thompson (Singles 6-10), Jack Hunter-Spivey and Megan Shackleton (Para Doubles 2-5) and Billy Shilton & Ross Wilson (Para Doubles 6-10). With the Para National Championships coming up shortly we will report in more detail on their Championships in our next issue.

The prize money this year was enhanced with thanks to the main sponsor, Mark Bates Ltd., for adding to the pot for the players.

Overall, a good Championships, although many would like to see an increase in the number of participants in all events, especially in the Under 21s and Doubles, which are restricted to 16 players or pairs, also for the Qualifying Event to accept entries from all who wish to play in it.

A quirky fact: Paul Drinkhall was 10 years old when he played in his first National Championships which meant 21 of the entrants in the Men's Singles weren't even born when he first played. Apologies Paul if that makes you feel old! He won his first title in 2006 in the Men's Doubles with Alan Cooke. He has gone on to win 24 titles – so far. Only Desmond Douglas has more at 30.

However, as always, the best part for us was meeting up with so many old friends - and making new ones. There seemed more people we knew this year and it was a special moment to meet up with Margaret and Dennis Calver who we hadn't seen for several years. They attended the Championships as they had been nominated by Shaun Parsley for the Pride of Table Tennis Lifetime Achievement Award and won the category. It would be hard to find a more dedicated and delightful couple. Margaret and I had worked together as Umpires Managers on several occasions including English Opens, the Para Olympic Test event and National Championships. Dennis was always present as an umpire and earned the moniker 'Last Man Standing' as he was the last umpire to leave any venue. Congratulations to them both on a well-deserved award.



*Margaret and Dennis Calver.  
Photo by Diane Webb*

### Some More Shots



*Gavin Evans presenting the Mike Watts Achievement Awards to Ella Pashley and Ralph Pattison  
Photo by Mike Rhodes*



*An emotional moment for Tom Jarvis with his Grandad  
Photo by Alan Man*



*The Drinkhall family with the Men's Doubles Trophy  
Photo by Alan Man*



*Two of our most famous players Jill Parker MBE and Desmond Douglas MBE  
Photo by Mike Rhodes*

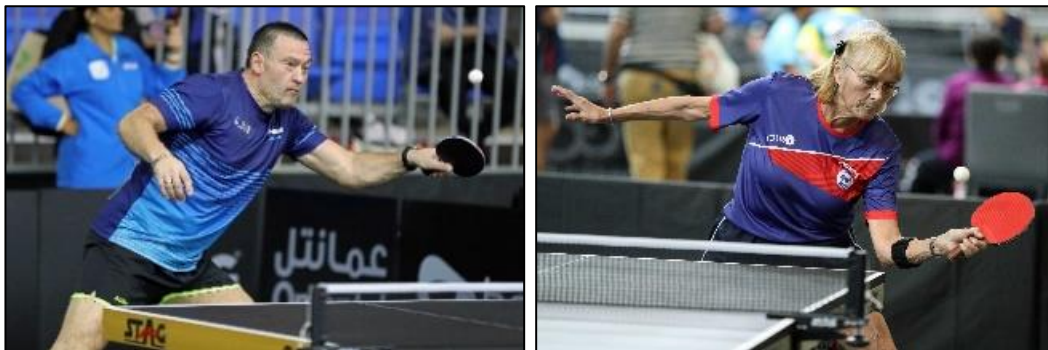


**World Veteran Championships (WVC)  
Muscat, Oman: 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> January 2023  
All photos by Mike Rhodes**

It was nice to have this event back in the calendar as it hadn't been run since 2018 when it was held in Las Vegas. The tournament in Bordeaux in 2021 was first postponed and then cancelled due to Covid-19. Oman was the first time that the WVC had run in the Middle East and also the first time that the ITTF had run it. The authority had been handed over to them from the Swaythling Club International who had run it since its inception in 1982.

Entries were much lower than usual with a total of 1,181 and only 22 from England, three from Wales and one from Scotland. However, what they lost in quantity they made up for in quality with a good haul of medals. There were only nine home nation players – all men!

There were many excellent performances including Lorestas Trumpauskas who was probably the star of the England players when he narrowly missed out on the gold medal in the O50 Men's Singles to Dane, Henrik Vendelbo. Sandra Rider, too, came away with a silver medal in the O70 Women's Singles losing to Japan's Kazuko Horino. She got a second medal, a silver, in the O70 Women's Doubles playing with Hildegard Georgi of Germany.



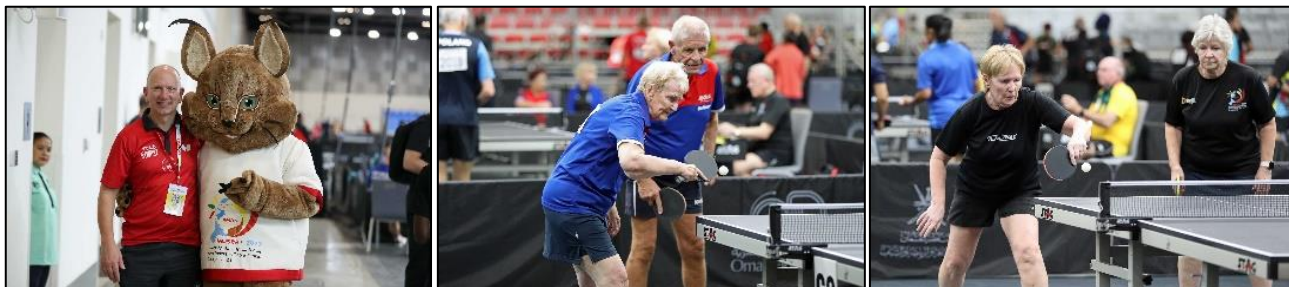
*Lorestas Trumpauskas and Sandra Rider*

Seasoned veteran player, Betty Bird, reached the semi-finals in the O85 Women's Singles losing to her doubles partner, Mariann Blasberg and won gold in the O85 Women's Doubles, to add to her considerable medal haul over the years. Roy Norton with Wales's Dennis Bromage achieved a similar semi-final place in the O80 Men's Doubles. A special mention must be made of Michael Marsden, who now plays under Wales colours, who won a gold in the O40 Men's Doubles with Gregor Foerster of Germany.



*Betty Bird and Michael Marsden & Gregor Foerster*

In the consolation events Kevin Nicholls came away with a silver medal in the O50 Men's Doubles partnering Paulo Martinez of Brazil. Whilst Elana McClements and Norma Milward received their gold medals in the O70 Women's Doubles courtesy of a walk over in the final. Carol Judson and her partner, Ilse Pohl of Germany, came away with a silver medal in the O75 Women's Doubles and it was this pair who conceded the final. Judson received a second medal as the runner-up in the O80s Women's Singles Consolation whilst Roy Norton won the O80s Men's Singles Consolation event.



*Kevin Nicholls with mascot, Carol Judson & Roy Norton, Elana McClements & Norma Milward*

For the first time Mixed Doubles were part of the tournament and there were further successes for England players in these events. Roy Norton and Carol Judson won silver in the O80s, and Betty Bird with Croatian Josip Martinovic were gold medallists in the O80s consolation. Michael Marsden with Juyeon Oh, Korea were bronze medallist in the O40s consolation.

All in all, a good tournament for many players. Perhaps spare a thought for Diccon Gray who had the misfortune to meet in the quarter-finals of the O60 Men's Singles the former Romanian and German international Zsolt-Georg Bohm who was the eventual winner. Bohm was possibly the best player in the tournament and when younger had won two gold medals in the European Youth Championships in doubles and multiple national titles in Romania and Germany with perhaps his best win when he beat Gabor Gergely of Hungary at the World Championships in 1979. Hungary had won team gold that year. An impressive record and a tough opponent for Diccon.



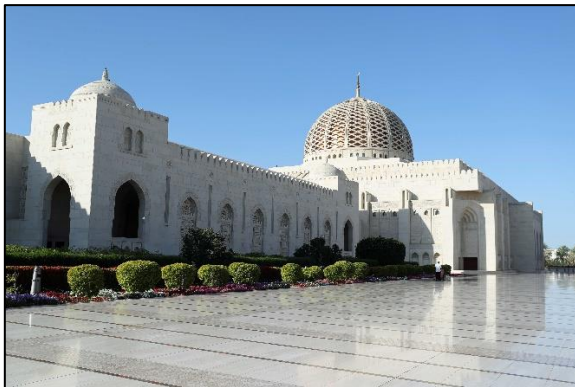
*Diccon Gray & Michael Rhodes (right), some young supporters*

The next big veterans event is the European Veteran Championships in Sandefjord, Norway from 26<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023. Late entries will be accepted until 30<sup>th</sup> April. There are the usual age categories plus men's and women's doubles. Additionally, there are four para events for men and women class 1-5 (wheelchair) and class 6-10 (standing). The venue, hotels and restaurants are all in one holiday village with a beach nearby. 150 tables are to be used in the playing halls and the entry capacity is 4,000. There is already a good entry of just under 100 from English players at the last count.

The next World Championships for veterans are to be held in Rome from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024 with a name change from World Veteran Championships to World Masters Championships.

### More Photos

It was certainly a different experience in Oman and we thank Mike Rhodes for sharing some of his photos with us, not only at the event but also when he had a little time to see some of the sights. Mike very much enjoyed the opening ceremony, one of the best. We hope you enjoy the pictures as much as we did.



## Impressions of Oman: By Diccon Gray

What a fabulous experience – competing in the world veterans table tennis championships and exploring the very interesting, vast country of Oman (January 2023). The event was held in the exhibition and convention centre located on the outskirts of the capital city Muscat - a truly magnificent building with several large exhibition halls and a luxurious conference hall.

On arrival at the airport in the early hours, the warmth of welcome extended by the Omani people was immediately evident - be it taxi drivers, competition organisers, hotel staff, restaurants etc. Despite it being their winter, it was a very pleasant 23-25 degrees most days - warm without being oppressively hot as it is in summer where temperatures apparently soar to 46+.

I had planned a few days either side of the event to explore the country and get to experience the Arabian culture. Trips to the renowned grand mosque, opera house, Sultan's palace and souq (indoor markets) in Muscat plus a foray into the mountains to visit forts and underground caves were fitted in between practice and accreditation.

The table tennis started in earnest on Monday 14th and my roommate - soon to be world champion no less - Mike Marsden arrived in the early hours of Sunday 13th in time for practice (joined by Mike Rhodes and newly acquainted, Paulo, from Brazil).

**Accreditation and the opening ceremony** - often long and needlessly drawn-out affairs (too many long speeches?). However, this was above average and Mike M particularly enjoyed the drumming band and cheering the Welsh flag. We had five nights in the modest City Park Hotel apartments - a good move to upgrade as this gave us much more space plus washing machine that came in handy!

After a dubious start of 'no show' for a day, the shuttle buses swung into action on Sunday and routinely took us the 20-minute journey to the playing hall each day.

Only about 30 British players but good success on day one of qualifying groups including fairly comfortable first places for me and Mike M in O60 and O40 categories respectively. Tuesday was doubles qualification groups and again success for most of the British. Surprisingly, it seems the low British contingent was down to a misapprehension that discriminatory practice was common in Oman - I saw none of this and spoke to several Omanis of both genders who all had positive reports of the laws and expectations emanating from the Sultanate of Oman (political leader). It is understood that the VETTS wrote an official letter to the ITTF/Organisers explaining why they felt few British players had chosen to travel – some are unconvinced this action was either necessary or proportionate.

Wednesday was rest day - well at least from the TT - however I had teamed up with a couple of Mongolian ladies and their German nonplaying German lady game to share a taxi and adventures and we headed off to see forts, caves, traditional markets and the unique water irrigation system (where I had a refreshing swim!). Meanwhile Mike chilled out back at base and enjoyed the rooftop pool with the delightful Gelders (and also a couple of pricy lagers - £10 a bottle of Heineken!). Of course, Islam does not encourage partaking in alcohol as much of the western world does - rather there is a proliferation of 'coffee houses' and juice bars on every street corner and shopping mall where people meet to relax and chew the cud. No doubt the crafty Welshman was also conserving energy as he was dreaming of becoming a world champ....on second thoughts, perhaps he was enjoying the lagers with Tony and a few other Brits who had booked into the more upmarket Radisson Blu hotel!

The gala dinner - a swanky affair - was also held on rest day, in the gardens of the intercontinental hotel and really was an enjoyable mix of speeches, entertainment and then at last....good quality food, including a good selection of vegetarian fare!

Back to the hall Thursday where the singles knock outs began. Unfortunately for Mike he came up against a very strong Indian (ranked 3 in India) and after a bad start, went down 3-1. The draw was a lot kinder to me and I was able to progress to the last eight beating an Indian, German, Chilean in the group, a further German, Greek and Iranian on the way. But alas my run ended there and I was soundly beaten by Zsolt-Georg Bohm a former Romanian and German national champion and eventual winner of both O60s singles and doubles - still my expectations were exceeded and I gained more understanding of the level I need to be at going forwards. (10 years ago I set myself a target of getting a medal in O65s at either world or European level - well you've got to dream haven't you?).

Friday was doubles day where Mike Rhodes and I bowed out to a modest Indian pair in last 32 and Shirley Gelder and I lost in the last 16 to the eventual winners from India 3-1 - no disgrace but we felt we could have done better (life seems to be full of could haves, should haves and might have beens!).

Meanwhile Mike Marsden having partnered up with O40 number seed Gregor Foerster played really well reaching the semi- final.

Saturday was finals day with Mike being crowned world O40s Men's Doubles champion – a superb achievement and well deserved on the day. A number of other medals were won by British players and documented elsewhere.

With the tournament completed and most players departing, armed with my Oman guide book, I planned a bus adventure to the desert and on to see turtles on the coast at Sur. Suffice it to say, travelling solo was exciting even though I was unsure if 'Bright Deserts' host Ali would actually turn up to meet me off the bus at Bidiyah (five hour trip – one bus a day) and take me into Winibah Sands to stay overnight with his Benouin family with camel riding, off road sand dunes experience... but he did and it was such an enriching experience! Other highlights included a wooden boat building yard, Bangladeshi fish, livestock and vegetable market, delicious south Indian vegetarian restaurants.



My last day was spent off the beaten track at Al Seeb (northern part of Muscat) just taking in 'normal Omani life' away from the tourist trail. Following a ten-hour layover in Abu Dhabi where I took a whistle stop tourist bus tour - I arrived back home safe and sound with some great memories.

## Ken and Karenza Mathews Story: The Final Episode

### 1977

The year started with some bad news from Sweden. Hans Alser, the Swedish table tennis player, had been killed in an air crash. He had been not only a great player - he had been European Champion - but also a very friendly man; he had been a good friend to many English players in the past including Brian and Mary Wright.

January saw the English Open Championships at Thornaby Pavilion on Teesside. I needed to be there for meetings and went up on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Although it was a poor tournament in terms of foreign entries, it was good to see Carole Knight win the Women's Singles; she beat Jill in the final – a shock result – over five games. Denis Neale won the Men's Singles.

On 14<sup>th</sup> March, I attended a meeting at the Bonnington Hotel in London with Ron Moseley. Ron worked for the Press Association and had agreed to be the Press Liaison Officer for the English Table Tennis Association at the World Championships. We discussed the way in which we would work particularly at press conferences. Ron was a very nice guy and very experienced in handling press matters - I was very pleased to have the benefit of his advice and relieved to know that he would be there if there were problems.

A training camp had started at the beginning of March. This was at Lea Green and was for the team that had been selected for the Worlds, and, incidentally, for the Commonwealth Championships that were to take place in Guernsey just prior to the Worlds. I had been appointed Manager of the England Team for the World Championships. The responsibilities included such glamorous things as taking delivery of crates of new clothes, shirts, shorts, skirts, socks, tracksuits etc for the team. Karenza and I drove up to Lea Green on 6<sup>th</sup> March. I talked to the teams to give them some pointers about what they would have to face as the home team at Birmingham. The team for the Championships was about 18 strong, ten men and eight women.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Championships were held in Guernsey from 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March. As our top players were in training for the Worlds a second team was selected. Players from Hong Kong did very well in the tournament winning both singles titles; our only title was won by Melody Ludi and Karen Witt who captured the Women's Doubles. Hong Kong also won both team competitions with England coming second in each event.

Just prior to the Worlds I went back to the training camp at Lea Green and went with the players to visit the venue for the championships; this was to give them an early view of the playing hall. The Championships were to run from 26<sup>th</sup> March to 5<sup>th</sup> April. The vast Hall Number 5 (25,000 square metres) at the National Exhibition Centre (the NEC) had been transformed into a sports exhibition (Sportacus '77) featuring different sports and sports' goods manufacturers. (There was a glass-back squash court, which I was able to play on.) Then there were two arenas, one with 16 tables, the other, featuring the four show courts.

I drove up to Birmingham on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup>. Karenza and Julie were with me, our friends Terry and Marie from Ireland. They had booked into a hotel for two or three nights to see the opening ceremony and the beginning of the team events. They dropped me at the NEC where I met the players and the two team captains, Peter Simpson (Men) and Bryan Merrett (Women). After practise sessions during the day, we all went back to Birmingham University where we were to stay during the championships. Transport was by coach; they ran a constant ferrying service for all the teams during the championships.

The set-up at the NEC was very well managed. The organising committee had worked hard to make sure the whole event ran as smoothly as possible – the only problem worth mentioning was the canteen arrangements which could perhaps have been better. All players had tickets and it had been decreed that players would be served on a first come, first served basis. That was okay – unless a player had just finished one match, say, a singles match and had to go back to the table for a doubles match soon after. On one occasion I had to intervene as Denis Neale was faced with exactly that problem. See below!

The whole of the tournament was to receive a huge amount of TV coverage. As well as live broadcasting of the major events, a one or two hour 'Match of the Day' programme was being shown by the BBC each evening. Just before the start of play on the first day, Mike Lawless, the Association's Development Officer, came rushing up to me and asked if I would sit in with the BBC commentators to provide the expert commentary. Well of course he could not have thought of anyone better qualified! But I was there as team manager and I knew that I would have enough to do and so I declined; I suggested that Mike should ask Johnny Leach to do it.

The Opening Ceremony was televised. I had the honour of leading the England Team into the arena. We duly lined up, hoping that we would be able to do well in the tournament - but it was not to be and in fact European players generally did badly. Mitsuru Khono of Japan won the Men's Singles while Pak Yung Sun of North Korea won the Women's. The Men's and Women's Doubles also went to Asians; the only bright spot as far as Europe was concerned was in the form of Jacques Secretin and Claude Bergeret of France who won the Mixed Doubles. China won both the Men's and Women's team events.

**WORLD TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONS**

# DON'T JUMP THE QUEUE!

By DAVID MOORE

**ENGLAND'S men completed their most convincing victory in the World Table Tennis Championships yesterday — but still found themselves in trouble.** They walked off court at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre after thrashing Australia 5-0 to be met by a warning about their table manners!

## England heroes get a telling-off

feeling of indigestion as well as indignation." Denis Neale, the 32-year-old Middlesbrough veteran, explained what happened: "We arrived at the restaurant well before we were due to face Australia to be confronted by an hour-long queue. There was no way we were going to eat in time. "I was told that the Americans had already been given preferential treatment. So I approached the restaurant manager and he was happy to accommodate us straight away. "It is a joke. Instead of congratulating us for winning, we are told 'Don't jump the queue again.' I can't believe it."

England made a meal of the Aussies, who were without top man Steve Knapp because of a tendon injury. Day and

our No. 1, Birmingham's Desmond Douglas, were both two-time winners. "It looks as though we are going to finish in the group playing off for positions 9 to 12 in the Swaythling Cup," said Mathews.

England's girls suffered their second defeat in the Corbillon Cup when they slumped 3-0 against Hungary.

### Pat-ball

European champion Jill Hammersley lost 15-21, 21-18, 13-21 to Beatrix Kishazi in a patacake encounter. Carole Knight, the Middlesbrough 19-year-old, also fell in three to Judith Magoa.

And Jill and Linda Howard (Guldford) went the same way in the doubles after winning the first game 21-10.

### A MOVE BACK TO AMATEUR

THE International Table Tennis Federation wants to turn back the clock, writes David Moore. They announced plans last night to recreate amateur status—in a sport that abolished all distinctions way back in 1931—so that table tennis can enter the Olympic Games. Federation president Roy Evans, of Wales, said: "The growth of the game means that more than 90 per cent. of people playing it could be called amateurs these days."

### Priority

"We have been told it must not happen again. But as far as I am concerned, teams who have match schedules must be given some sort of priority. "It left me with a

I think this non-story was pounced on by some bored sports writer who couldn't think of anything better to write about.

What of our players? We had some good wins here and there but our overall standard was not good enough to make any impression on the Asian players. Our best hope was of course Jill but she had been suffering from a right shoulder injury. On the days before the singles began, we arranged for her to have physiotherapy and acupuncture treatment and anything else we could think of to try to get her fit. Although it certainly wasn't my idea, the treatment included a session with a faith healer – but not even that or injections of pain killers was to have any effect. In floods of tears, she had to pull out of the singles after only a few points in her second-round match.

That episode led to a falling out between me and Johnny Leach! After Jill had been unable to continue, I liaised with Ron Moseley and called a press-conference for the following morning; at that time I would tell the press about her condition and what steps we had taken to try to help her. But that evening, Johnny, who was doing the BBC TV commentary (Mike Lawless had asked him to do it and he had agreed) came running up to me and asked me to give him the details so that he could talk about it live on TV; what would I be saying at the press conference? I really didn't know what to do and Ron Moseley wasn't around to consult. But it seemed to me to be wrong to call a press conference – and then spill the beans 12 hours before it was due to take place; surely that wasn't fair on the other members of the press. So I told him I couldn't answer his questions, he would have to wait until the following morning. Well, he wasn't very pleased about that! But it was tough – I did what I thought was right.

The following morning, I held the press conference and told the press what had happened; the story was duly printed that day. But Johnny wasn't the sort to bear grudges and within a few hours everything was okay again between us.

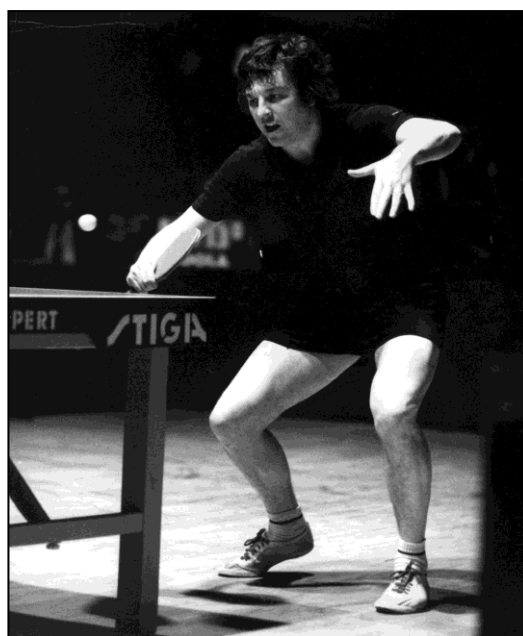
Apart from that bit of excitement everything else that I was responsible for seemed to go well and, although we didn't do well on the playing side, from all other points of view, England's World Championships were considered a great success. A new World Ranking list was issued shortly after the tournament. Desmond Douglas was put at 25 with Denis at 32. In the Women's list Jill was at 10 with Carole Knight at 28.

It was at about this time that our friend Diane Pearce retired from table tennis. Well, that's not exactly true as she would go on to have many very successful years playing as a veteran. Di had played for England and had played in several English Open Championships during the Sixties and the Seventies. Back in 1965 she had won the Junior Girls' Doubles title partnering Karenza. She also reached the last 16 in the Women's Singles at the English Open in 1970. She was an excellent doubles player reaching the quarter-finals with Elsie Carrington in 1967 and with Lesley Radford in 1970, 1972 and 1974.

In the National Championships she reached the semi-finals of the Women's Singles in 1969 and 1973 and was runner-up in the Women's Doubles four times partnering Leslie.

A great career for our very good friend Diane!

And another player who retired after the World Championships was Denis Neale. Denis had a great career and was certainly one of the main players who kept England high in the European nations from 1964 to 1976; during that period in the European Team Championships, England was never ranked lower than eighth and in 1968 was ranked number five. It was a similar story in the World Championships when between 1965 and 1977 England was never ranked below number 12 and in 1969 was fifth. To achieve these results England relied heavily on Denis who was a great fighter for his country. In 1973 and 1975 Denis won the Men's Singles title in the Commonwealth Championships and won the Mixed Doubles title in 1973 partnering Karenza. At the English Open Championships Denis reached the semi-final three times and won the Mixed Doubles in 1970 partnering Mary; he was also runner-up twice, once with Mary and once with Karenza. Denis was Men's Champion of England six times between 1966 and 1977 and runner-up twice. He won the Men's Doubles seven times and the Mixed Doubles four times between 1968 and 1974, all with Karenza. A brilliant career.



*Denis Neale*

In June a table tennis conference took place at a hotel in London. This was at my instigation as I was putting forward various proposals about the future of the England Team. Our showing at the World Championships had not been very impressive and the idea was to try to improve the organisation of the squad. Before he had resigned, Brian Burn had tried to get the players together for much longer periods to enable him to take them through more intensive training programmes. Mainly because of financial constraints, this hadn't been possible. The whole subject was now discussed for two days during which little progress was made. After behind the scenes talks, I was offered the job of England Team Manager as opposed to England Squad Manager but without a great deal more commitment from the Association – but it didn't appear that this would make much difference to the future of the players. I declined that offer and so effectively my role as manager of the team was ended. I would continue to help the players and run the exhibitions – but my days of heavy involvement with the English Table Tennis Association were coming to an end.



Which perhaps was not a bad thing? Both Karenza and I had been up to our necks in table tennis for many years and maybe we needed to find new interests. As you read this you might well agree! If you have followed Karenza's playing career and my involvement with the players, you may be really fed up with reading about tournaments and the long lists of results. And so, with the exception of a few more meetings and some more exhibitions, our table tennis days were over.

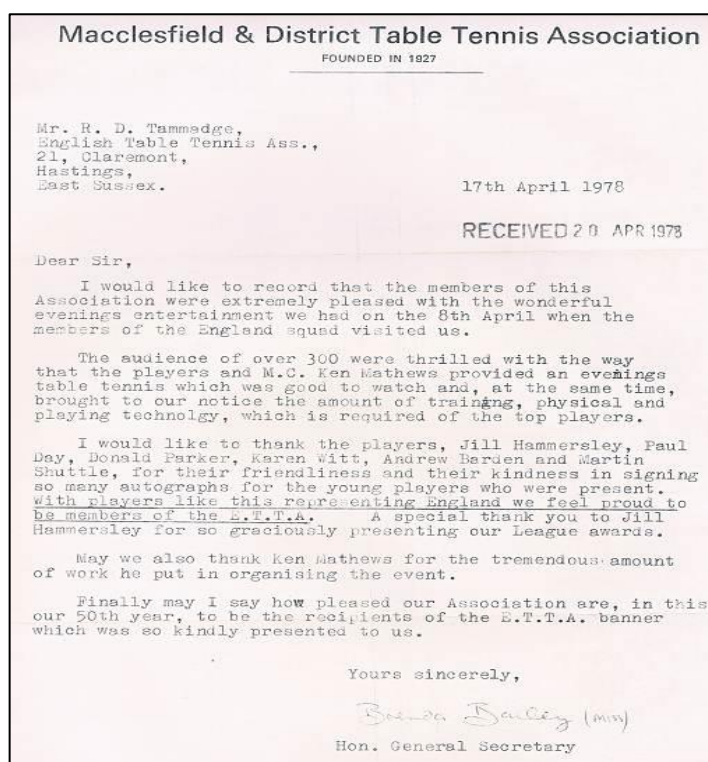
In October the squad did two exhibitions. The first one was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and it was for the Plymouth Branch of the Civil Service Sports Association. Only four players for this one: Linda, Karen Witt of Buckinghamshire - now England senior number five - Donald Parker and Andy Barden.

The second exhibition was at the Maidenhead Leisure Centre on 2<sup>nd</sup> October and was put on by the Windsor and Maidenhead Sports Association for the Disabled. Four players for this one, Jill - now the European Champion - Angela Mitchell, who was the England number 11 (it was tough for her playing Jill - but I think Jill made it a little easier for her!), Paul Day, England number three, and Andy Barden, England number four. It was a good evening and made better by the presence of a number of paraplegic players.

We went to an interesting meeting in London on 20<sup>th</sup> October. This was with Micky Takahashi. Micky was the owner of a large sports goods manufacturing company in Japan. Karenza had met him at a tournament somewhere when, in the middle of a match, she had got a nosebleed! When she stepped out of the arena to try to stem the flow, Micky, who as always, was dressed in an immaculate and very expensive suit, stepped forward and offered her his handkerchief. She gratefully accepted but as the handkerchief was made of priceless lace, she quickly reduced it to a bloody rag. She apologised but he gave her his card and said that he would contact us next time he was in London. Now here he was and when he telephoned us, we met up with him for a drink.

## 1978

During February and March, I attended a few more meetings of the Development Committee of the Association. A new, full-time Development Officer had now been appointed and I think that my function was only to discuss things that had happened in the past, discussions that might lead to different ways of improving the Association for the future.



On 8<sup>th</sup> April the England Squad did the last exhibition that I was to comper. In fact, as I had now retired from the ranks of the ETTA officials, I think this was probably the last of these kinds of events - mainly because there was no-one to organise them. A great pity as the exhibitions had provided some welcome funds for the players – and had taken England's top players to many venues around the country. This one was at Macclesfield in Cheshire and was to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Macclesfield and District Table Tennis Association. Jill played with Karen Witt, Donald Parker, Paul Day, Andy Barden and Martin Shuttle who was the England junior number one. As this was the last of an era the letter, left, which is similar to many that were received, is a testimony to the many players who had taken part over the years and who had brought a great deal of pleasure to so many people:

Our second daughter, Jennifer Katherine was born at Reigate Hospital (the same hospital as Julie) on 19<sup>th</sup> August. Lots of celebrations for the birth of our second, beautiful little girl!

Two young sisters!

Karenza and I continued to coach table tennis at various schools and clubs in the London and South East for many years. When I took retirement (after 30 years!) from my work in London in 1978, we bought a hotel in Brighton. We ran that until 2003 when we sold and bought the hotel we have now, The Grange at Osborne. The hotel is an old country house hotel and is in the pretty village of Osborne which is just outside Sherborne in Dorset.

Our first daughter Julie is married and lives with her husband Brian and their two children at Fermoy in Ireland. Jenny is also married; she and her husband Jon have two children. Jenny and Jon are the joint General Managers of the hotel.



*Julie and Jenny*



*Jenny, Karenza and Julie*

Since coming to Osborne, Karenza and I have staged charity table tennis events at the village annual summer fete. We have roped in Mary and Brian Wright, Di Pearce, Connie Warren, Barry Hill and various other players to help! Alas, Connie is now no longer with us.

Karenza with Jenny on the left and Julie, in the village hall. Our two beautiful daughters are a little older now!

We have recently bought a top-class table tennis table! We have it hidden away in the hotel and will pull it out from time to time to practise. Well, you never know when we might be needed again!

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## Table Tennis England Governance

- \* In December 2022 TTE set up an Athletes Panel for those on the England Talent and Performance Pathway. Senior internationals Tin-Tin Ho and Sam Walker were appointed along with juniors Mari Baldwin, Anna Green and Megan Jones for a term of two years.
- \* There is to be a change in the staff structure from February 2023 with Area Managers being re-introduced, there will be seven posts spread throughout the country.
- \* A new Chairman is to be appointed to Table Tennis England as Sandra Deaton completed nine years in February and her term of office has been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 making nine and a half years in all. It is the Board, not the membership, who make the appointment and the closing date for applications was 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The criteria required were extensive but it only refers to having a “deep understanding of table tennis” as a desirable criteria not an essential one.

Interviews are to take place at the end of April.

## Europe Top 16 Cup 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> February: Montreux, Switzerland Photos courtesy of the ETTU

The city of Montreux, Switzerland again hosted the Europe Top 16 Cup on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023. As in recent years the tournament is now a straight knockout, no longer any groups or all play all. Most of the top players in Europe were competing and so it was no easy task to become champion. The two winners went home with a nice cheque for 10,000 euros and even those losing in the first round received 2,000 euros each.

Liam Pitchford, seeded sixth, was the only English participant and in his first match he was drawn against Tomislav Pucar of Croatia, seeded 12th. Pitchford started well winning the first two 11-7 but lost the third by the same score, a tight fourth 13-11 went Pitchford's way and then Pucar took the fifth 12-10. Pitchford then got the win 11-3 in the sixth.

Pitchford's next opponent was Sweden's Truls Moregardh, world ranked five and top seed. He had beaten Slovakian, Wang Yang, in a game of excellent quality which drew applause from the spectators for the many superb rallies. It showed table tennis at its best as attacker faced a supreme defender. Pitchford versus Moregardh was also a match to remember as the Swede got off to a good start winning the first 11-8, Pitchford then evened the score 11-4. Moregardh then had two very comfortable wins 11-3, 11-3 giving him an 3-1 lead. It looked all over for Pitchford but then in a complete turnaround Pitchford won the last three games 11-7, 11-4, 11-9 for the match.

Pitchford was through to the semi-finals and faced Qiu Dang of Germany, the European Champion. It was another thrilling seven game match. This time Pitchford won the first 11-6, then Qiu went ahead when he won the next two 11-4, 11-5 before Pitchford levelled winning the fourth game 11-5. It was the same score but for Qiu in the fifth before Pitchford again drew level 12-10. The final game went Qiu's way 11-8 to put him through to the final where he faced the reigning champion Darko Jorgic from Slovakia and it was a second win for Jorgic 8, 9, 11, -7, 5, 7. Dimitrij Ovtcharov was the other semi-finalist.

Pitchford was the first English player to stand on the podium since 1987. In that year Desmond Douglas won what was then the European Top 12 when it was all play all – 11 matches.



*The medallists*

*Qiu Dang, Darko Jorgic, Dimitrij Ovtcharov, Liam Pitchford    Sofia Polcanova, Han Ying, Nina Mittelham, Jieni Shao*

The Women's final was between defending champion, German, Han Ying and Sofia Polcanova of Austria, it was the German player who won 5, -10, 3, 9, 5 to retain her title and make her the oldest player at 39 years and ten months to win either the men's or the women's event. Germany's Nina Mittelham and Portugal's Jieni Shao were the two semi-finalists.

## Spotlight on Former England International David Creamer

Last year I made contact with former England international, David Creamer, who now lives in Switzerland and had a very interesting and informative chat about his table tennis career and especially about his tours of Nigeria and North America.

David was a top junior international towards the end of the 1950s and he went on to have a successful career at senior level in the early 1960s before he changed his sport to concentrate on golf, eventually becoming a golf pro.

David came to table tennis prominence when he was the Most Promising Boy in the Butlins/News of the World Coaching Scheme in 1958 and a year later won the Boy of the Year Award. Johnny Leach described him as “a dedicated player possessing considerable ability”.



*News of the World Boy and Girl of the Year:  
David Creamer and Hilde Brautigam*

David progressed quickly and by 1960 was playing in junior internationals. He played against Austria, Federal Germany and Belgium in January 1960 while on tour and won every one of his 12 singles matches. Later in the year he played against Wales and won two more matches giving him a 100% record in junior internationals.

For several years David played in the English Open, a tournament regarded as only second to the World Championships and in 1960 he reached the semi-finals in all three junior events playing with Wilf Barker in the Junior Boys' Doubles and Jean Harrower in the Junior Mixed Doubles.

His first senior cap came on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1962 in Norwich against Sweden, the first leg of the Swedish Tour. Although the team lost 5-2, David had an outstanding debut beating Stellan Bengtsson, later to become World Champion, 13, -13, 15 but losing, just, to Hans Alser -18, -18. Certainly no disgrace as Alser was the European Champion at the time. David played in two further fixtures against the Swedes at Wealdstone and Tottenham and again beat Bengtsson on both occasions. David couldn't get the better of Alser in any of the matches and also lost to Carl Bernhardt at Tottenham, Nonetheless, a very impressive debut.



*Victor Barna and David Creamer in Nigeria*

Shortly after these matches, 19-year-old David toured Nigeria with the legendary Victor Barna for three weeks from 15<sup>th</sup> October 1962. It was a whirlwind tour. Arriving in Lagos they started with a practice against the Nigerian National team followed by two exhibitions at the King's and Queen's Colleges. On they went for a very bumpy 90-mile car ride to Ibadan stopping off to play at a school in Umaha. Four days were spent at Green Springs Rest House but there was no rest for the players. They took part in another exhibition before 750 spectators on the stage of the local cinema before two more exhibitions at the university and a school.

A 400-mile flight to Enugu for a television appearance and two more exhibitions, then a 200-mile car journey to Port Harcourt for another exhibition after which they flew back to Lagos for more exhibitions and to be feted at a cocktail party at the Governor-General's residence. Another plane journey of 600 miles to Kaduna then onto Kano by plane which is where David left Victor to return to London. An awful lot to be crammed in to such a short space of time but an amazing experience for the young man.

David had some excellent results at numerous Open tournaments at junior and senior level including winning the Men's Singles in the Welsh Open in 1962/63. His results had given him a ranking of number two at both junior and senior level. The successes meant David was selected to play for England at the World Championships in Prague, Czechoslovakia in April 1963 and with Chester Barnes, Ian Harrison and Bryan Merrett they finished 9<sup>th</sup> in the Swaythling Cup.

David also played several senior international matches against China, Federal Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and the USA all in 1962 and 1963.

In 1964 David became a National Champion when, with Johnny Leach, the pair won the Men's Doubles. Their opponents in the final, David's elder brother Michael and Terry Densham. David had been a semi-finalist in the Men's Singles the previous year. Michael had been a big influence on David's development and play, acting as his coach particularly in his earlier years.

In December 1964 it was another tour, this time a six-month exhibition tour of North America with Ralph Gunnion, organised by American Erwin Klein. Going on tour may sound glamorous but not when you spend the best part of your time sleeping in a Volkswagen Beetle. The pair travelled thousands of miles from the Mexico border into Canada and as Ralph couldn't drive, David did the lot, with the table tennis table on the roof of the car!

Unfortunately, the agreement they signed up to wasn't met but the gallant pair continued for the full six months even carrying out one exhibition in a prison. Perhaps the highlight of the tour was a very successful event when Ralph won £100 in Vancouver. A very large sum in those days equivalent to £2,395 today. But, Ralph got itchy fingers when they went to a casino and whilst David went to the Gents, Ralph very quickly lost the lot!

It was the height of Beatles fame in the 1960s and at one school, Erwin Klein introduced Ralph as coming from Liverpool where he was a friend of the Beatles and as you can probably imagine even having that, supposed, tenuous link, was enough for him to be mobbed. I reckon the haircut would have helped.

To add to the woes of losing all that money the Canadian Police stopped them and put them in jail as vagrants – well, sleeping in a car with table on the top doesn't exactly give that good an impression. They wanted the pairs fingerprints and Ralph willingly gave his saying "I don't intend coming back" but David refused. When they returned to the US border, David was not allowed in. Eventually, Erwin Klein sorted it out.

When they returned home the two friends met in the Kent Open and Ralph won the Men's Singles beating David in the final. Ralph was certain that all that driving had worn David out and so he wasn't playing his best. It was a good victory for Ralph.

David returned to Butlins as a coach in 1964, 1965 and 1966 and it was while he was here, he developed his love for golf. He received golf lessons from the pro at the camps and later from a local pro. He had realised he couldn't earn a living from table tennis (at the time the biggest prize it was possible to win in England was £5 for a Men's Singles and Junior Singles). Consequently, David changed direction and eventually became a golf pro himself in 1966, joining the European Seniors Golf Tour in 1993.

It was a great loss to table tennis but David certainly packed an awful lot into the five years he was at the top of the game and took part in two very memorable and unique tours.



*David and Ralph with their beetle, their home for six months, the table is on the roof*

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## Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation

The last Commonwealth Championships, as opposed to the multi sport Commonwealth Games was last held in 2018 in India. At that time India, Vikek Kohli, was elected as Chairman taking over from Alan Ransome who had held the post for many years.

Usually, Commonwealth Championships are held every four years but there seems to have been no movement yet for the Championships to be held this year.

The Commonwealth Championships are an important part of the international calendar for England and other countries in the Commonwealth as affords an opportunity, of which there are very few nowadays, when players can represent their country.

We hope that there will be some positive movement in the near future.

## European Championships Qualifiers

Serbia: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

France: 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Serbia photos and Sam Walker by David Johnson

France photos and Paul Drinkhall, Tom Jarvis and David McBeath by Michael Loveder

The first leg of England's group had been played in Serbia on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022, it was a close fought match which England won 3-2 with Drinkhall, Pitchford and Jarvis all winning one match and Drinkhall and Pitchford both losing one. The return leg was held at the K2 in Crawley on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023. It was unfortunate that the top three Serbian players and the three who had played in the first leg were unable to take part this time due to health issues. So, it fell to two of their youngsters and a somewhat older team captain/player to try and rescue the situation for Serbia, the proposition looked somewhat different for this match.

A good crowd supported the England players and Paul Drinkhall first on the table against unseeded Bence Bognar, aged 22, was a short-lived match which Drinkhall won 4, 9, 10. The next match saw two 23-year-olds battle it out as Tom Jarvis met Alexa Gacev. Jarvis had a world ranking of 111 and Gacev one of 409 and the result mirrored the difference with Jarvis winning 3, 1, -9, 6. The third match giving England the win was between Sam Walker with a world ranking of 105 and the unranked team captain/player Milos Djukic. It was an unfortunate end to the evening as Djukic had to retire after six points due to an aggravated arm injury. All done and dusted in under an hour for the England team.



*Umpire David Edwards, Serbia Team, England Team*

Serbia have often in recent years proved much tougher competition and so it was a difficult fixture for them this time round. As the match had finished so early an exhibition was put on between Drinkhall and Jarvis to give the spectators a little bit more for their money, they were joined by two youngsters from the audience to give them an opportunity of a lifetime.



*Paul Drinkhall, Tom Jarvis, David McBeath, Sam Walker*

The following night England met France for the first time in the qualification and this, on paper, looked a very different proposition. The higher crowd numbers also indicated a more popular fixture.

Drinkhall was again the first on the table and faced Can Akkuzu, world ranked 68 compared to Drinkhall's 79. It was a highly entertaining and closely fought match but the 25-year-old Frenchman eventually put France in the lead winning 12, -11, 9, -5, 8.

Tom Jarvis was next on the table against Felix Lebrun, the 16-year-old pen holder, who is hitting the headlines. Lebrun already world ranked at 69 had the ranking edge over Jarvis but there was little to tell between the two of them as both played some superb table tennis. Jarvis came out of the starting blocks on fire and won the first game 11-5 but then Lebrun stepped up a gear and won the next three ends 7, 8, 7 to put France 2-0 up.

The third match saw David McBeath, world ranked 404, which in no way reflects his ability, pitted against another French youngster, 22-year-old Jules Roland, world ranked 128. Again, the England player came out roaring and was 6-2 in the first game only to let it slip away as he lost that 11-7. The next two games both went to deuce but it was the younger player who was the victor winning 7, 11, 13.

A 3-0 loss for England and the end of the evening. Although the score was disappointing the crowd would have gone home after a good evening watching some excellent international table tennis on home soil for the first time in a long while.



*Can Akkuzu, Felix Lebrun, Jules Roland*

The same England trio, Drinkhall, Jarvis and McBeath, travelled to Montpellier for the return match against France, two days later on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The French this time had their number two player, Simon Gauzy, world ranked 31, playing for them and Jarvis was his opponent in the first match of the evening. Gauzy's experience showed and it was a 6, 5, 7, win for the Frenchman. Drinkhall was next against young Felix Lebrun, hoping to get revenge for Jarvis's loss against him on Friday night. Although Drinkhall started well, he began to fade and eventually lost 6, -12, -8, -5. The third and final match of the evening was McBeath against Can Akkuzu and Akkuzu got another victory over an England player 9, 4, 5.

Final score 3-0 to France which put France at the top of the group with England in second place and Serbia third. As the top two teams in the group qualified for the European Championships to be held from 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in Malmo, Sweden it meant England men were through along with France.

The Women's team have one more hurdle to get over to qualify for the finals. They are one of 14 teams for ten places and will need to play in a further matches to get to Malmo. The other teams are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Turkiye and Wales. Good luck ladies.

We await details of the format and fixtures for the remaining qualifiers and wish our players the best of luck in qualifying and hope to see them in Malmo.



## **Fairy Tale at the Palace**

### **By Neil Brierley**

"Can I speak to Fred please."

"Who shall I say is calling?" said Jane Dove.

"Tell him it's Barry Hearn"

Its 2011 when landlines were still common and a shaking Fred Dove picked up the phone "Hi Barry, its Fred speaking."

Maybe it shouldn't have been a surprise as for around 12 months, Fred had been firing off emails to Barry at his Matchroom Corporation (unperturbed by the absence of a reply) telling him what a wonderful addition table tennis could be to his stable of TV sports. Fishing, snooker, darts and pool all backed up the big ticket boxing shows. "Why not table tennis" reasoned Fred.

For a bit of background, Fred had been a local league player in Clacton from his youth who transformed his game when frictionless rubber became available. It made his backhand hit virtually unplayable and, combined with a fast forehand rubber, he memorably won the Ashford Open beating the erstwhile Abdul Wuraola in the final.

Then, without warning, the ITTF banned Fred's frictionless rubber. Infuriated at this decision, he switched to a hardbat and it was this version he dreamed of selling to Barry Hearn.

"Fred, I've been picking up your emails for some time", the call continued "and I'd like to meet you to see if we can make this work."

"I'm thrilled and grateful you've phoned." Fred could barely get the words out. "I'm happy to meet anytime."

The rest, as they say, is history. The World Ping Pong Championships (WPCC) enjoyed ten years of unbroken coverage on Sky TV. No highlights package this, but live coverage from the first serve to the final kill.

To put this into perspective, Olympic and Commonwealth Games aside, and with odd exceptions, you have to go back to David Coleman in the 70s and the finals of the English Open and English Closed for a chance of live action.

When Matchroom take on an event, they have a reputation for making it work. So the sandpaper bat format was adopted to make it distinguishable from the conventional game and to gain support from a wealthy backer. Still, it was hard to believe what was to follow.

In January 2013, the iconic Alexandra Palace opened its doors to a new tournament and the table tennis fraternity, in their numbers, blinked at what they saw. A battery of Sky cameras and a car park with supporting trucks and trailers. One hundred thousand dollars prize money was up for grabs - unparalleled for a weekend table tennis competition.

Of course, loads of work had gone on before to get to this day. First Barry had come along to Batts to meet Fred. I happened to be standing outside the club on a bright, sunny Sunday morning when a gleaming Bentley



*Barry Hearn, Joe Kennedy, Fred Dove, Chris Bartram, Neil Brierley*

pulled up and this larger than life and unmistakable sports promoter stepped out. "Right, let's meet this Fred Dove" said Barry, with a huge smile on his face. The photo taken on this memorable day shows, left to right, Barry, a largely concealed Joe Kennedy, Fred Dove, Chris Bartram and me.

That first WCPP had a big UK bias with good support from our Dutch friends and players from Germany. In subsequent years, Fred worked tirelessly to make it a truly global event with qualifying events in numerous countries including China and the USA. Fred just happened to be a software developer and for many years developed and operated the programme that ran the tournament.

The thrill of that opening weekend is something I'll never forget. Most of the players were known to me and the cacophony of cameras whirring, crowds swirling, and a roving Sky presenter conducting courtside interviews was heaven for a table tennis nut like me. Alan Ransome came up and asked if I could introduce him to Barry Hearn. Gosh, I felt important!

As if that wasn't enough excitement, Fred approached me to say that Trisha, the Sky producer, wanted someone who knew what they were talking about to sit next to her in the production unit in the car park. (As the joke goes, they couldn't find anyone so they asked me). I was led out to this extraordinary long vehicle, brightly lit, with masses of TV screens as far as the eye could see. Okay, I was away from the main arena, but to supply Trisha with player information that was subsequently used by the commentators on live TV was a surreal feeling.

Colin Wilson was in charge of commentary and, unsurprisingly, did it in an assured and professional way. Trisha asked me to recommend guests to join him during the day. I didn't endear myself in this high-pressure environment when a Dutch player I suggested struggled to understand the questions! Subsequently I proposed Tony West (once he had been knocked out of the tournament) and his natural style and easy manner ensured he became a permanent fixture as co-commentator for the next 10 years.

Part of Fred's recruitment strategy was to recruit the greats of the English game and Andrew Baggaley achieved extraordinary success in this format winning the world title four times. Chris Doran featured strongly too and the legend that is Denis Neale qualified for the inaugural championships, eventually losing to Andrew Rushton.

The Russian, Maxim Shmyrev, was a giant of the sport at the outset, winning the first three titles. Then came Baggaley's successes broken up by two Chinese winners. The ultimate victor was deservedly the popular and charismatic Alexander "The Flash" Flemming who enjoyed vociferous support from the raucous German fans. He had come heartbreakingly close to winning on three previous occasions.

I'll always remember 2014 when the USA champion and film star Adoni Maropis, who had featured in the popular 24 series, qualified to play. He told stories about playing basketball with George Clooney but admitted that George thought his name was Tony!

Sadly, the sun set on Ping Pong when, after ten glorious years, Eddie Hearn took the reins from his father Barry and concentrated on the boxing. So ended Fred's interest in table tennis and he moved on to other pursuits. There is a good argument to say that he gave a version of our sport a profile it hadn't enjoyed since the heady days of Chester Barnes.

For a magical period, "Ally Pally" became a meeting ground for many of us who had been in the sport all our lives. Lovers of the game who had been waiting so long for events in our capital city to compare with those national and international competitions of yesteryear. More than anything, it gave us a chance to get together and renew friendships and we loved it. Fred, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

## World Championships: 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Durban, South Africa

It is the turn of the individual events at the World Championships in Durban in May.

England would have been able to send four men and three women provided they met the ranking eligibility criteria. This meant that Paul Drinkhall, Tom Jarvis, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker could all play and they were duly on the entry list. All were in the singles event with Drinkhall and Pitchford plus Jarvis and Walker playing in the Men's Doubles. Tin-Tin Ho was the only English female whose ranking enabled her to play. Ho will be playing in the Women's Singles, the Women's Doubles with her oft time partner, Karoline Mischek of Austria and with Pitchford in the Mixed Doubles.

We wish them all a successful tournament.

### ITTF News

The ITTF announced on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 that from the end of May players with a Russian or Belarusian passport will be able to take part in ITTF and WTT organised competitions under strict conditions of neutrality. As the date has passed for qualification to the World Championships it will be too late for any entries into this event.

However, sanctions will still apply to Russian and Belarusian government or state officials for events organised by the ITTF or WTT and no national symbols, colours, flags or anthems will be allowed to be displayed at such events.

The change has come, in part, because of the International Olympic Committee Executive Board's Recommended Conditions of Participation.

The ITTF have also announced that they will be setting up their first 'Home of Table Tennis' in Singapore. It was originally intended to have just one 'Home' but several new hubs have been identified. 28 cities were interested in having the new headquarters in their city.

Currently, ITTF staff are based in Lausanne and Singapore.



### Table Tennis News

An old name but a new concept as there is an excellent digital magazine which has been running for a month or two with the same title as the ETTA magazine which we all loved to read. This new version comes from the Birmingham area and is published by Rod Lewis, produced by Sheila Grandfield and edited by Bob Brown.

It contains lots of news, interesting career articles, photographs and information and is exceedingly well presented.

It's highly recommended and a must for all table tennis aficionados. Contact details if you wish to receive it directly are given on the poster.

## World Table Tennis Senior Events

### Photos courtesy of WTT

#### WTT Contender, Durban, South Africa: 10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> January 2023

2023 kicked off with this tournament in the city which is to host the World Championships later this year. Paul Drinkhall and Tom Jarvis were the England entries playing in the Men's Singles and as a pair in the Men's Doubles.

Both players entered the Men's Singles competition in the main draw at round of 32. Jarvis (WR 121) played exceptionally well to defeat the much higher ranked player, Xue Fei of China (WR 68), with a very comfortable scoreline 5, 8, 7. He then had to face another Chinese player, Lin Shidong (WR 46). Jarvis gave his opponent a good game but the final score was -9, 7, 10, 4 to Lin.

Drinkhall (WR 78) had the toughest of draws for his first match as he faced number one seed, Hugo Calderano from Brazil (WR 7), a match which didn't last long with a 4, 8, 4 result in favour of the Brazilian.

Seeded four in the Men's Doubles, Drinkhall and Jarvis went straight through to the quarter-finals where they met South Africans, Luke Abrahams and Kurt Lingeveltd. It was an easy victory for the Englishmen winning 5, 5, 8. Their next opponents were a different kettle of fish, the number one seeds, Chinese pair, Xu Xingbin and Xu Haidong. The Englishmen played well together, not a usual combination, especially in the second game where they saved and had game points but it was Xu and Xu who won 8, 13, 7.



*Tom Jarvis & Paul Drinkhall*

#### WTT Contender: Doha, Qatar: 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> January 2023

Sam Walker (WR 102) was the sole Englishman in the Men's Singles and he had a good win in his first match, qualifying round two, when he beat Mohammed Abdulwahhab from Qatar (WR 210) with a 9, 7, 8 win. He then had to face the much higher ranked Portuguese, Joao Geraldo (WR 52), and this time it was Walker who lost 3-0 with a 8, 2, 9 scoreline.

On the distaff side it was Tin-Tin Ho (WR 155) who was England's solitary representative and she lost at the first time of asking to Chantal Mantz of Germany (WR 120) 7, 9, 9.

Ho played with her regular doubles partner, Karoline Mischek, Austria but they weren't successful this time round and lost to Korea Republic's Shin Yubin and Jeon Jihee 4, 2, 9 in the round of 16.



*Tin-Tin Ho & Sam Walker*

The Mixed Doubles had the two English players team up and they won their first qualifying match against Samuel Kulczycki and Katarzyna Wegrzyn of Poland to put them through into the main draw. Here, they had a real battle against the number two seeds, Sathiyam Gnanasekaran and Manika Batra, both players who are ranked much higher than them in singles events and as a pair in mixed doubles. Walker and Ho have always played well together and this match was no exception. They could consider themselves a trifle unlucky not to get the win. They put up a good fight before going down -6, 8, -8, 7, 8.

### WTT Feeder, Amman, Jordan: 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> February 2023

It was ladies only playing in Amman as Tin-Tin Ho and Charlotte Carey of Wales were the two entered from the UK.



*Charlotte Carey & Tin-Tin Ho*

Ho (WR 158) started well with a 3-0 win against her Jordanian opponent Batool Khader in the round of 64 but lost at the next stage against Hong Kong's Lee Ho Ching.

Ho played with Carey in the Women's Doubles, the pair seemed to gel as they defeated the number three seeds Ema Labosova and Tatiana Kukulikova of Slovakia. They then beat the French players Leila Mostafavi and Audrey Zarif in the quarter-finals before succumbing to the Chinese Qin Yuxuan and Han Feier.

### WTT Contender, Amman, Jordan: 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Tin-Tin Ho (WR 156) also played in the WTT Contender in Amman where she won her first-round match in the qualifying event against Sarah Hanffou of Cameroon (WR 148). Next on the agenda was Chinese, Zhu Chengzhu (WR 92) and this time it was a 3-1 defeat for Ho. Charlotte Carey (WR 211), played well to win her first two matches but lost to the young French teenager, Camille Lutz (WR 128) in the final qualifying round.

Ho and Carey teamed up again in the Women's Doubles but lost their first qualifying round match to Hungarians Helga Dari and Leonie Hartbrich -5, 6, -9, -7.

Ho with Pitchford played together in the Mixed Doubles with their first match, round of 16, against Nandor Ecseki and Dora Madarasz of Hungary. It was the Hungarian pair who won 9, 6, 5.

Pitchford (WR 24) was the sole English male due to Tom Jarvis having to withdraw with a hip injury. As a seeded player Pitchford entered at the main draw stage and his first opponent was Chinese, Yan Sheng (WR 208). It was a victory for Pitchford but a close call as he had to save a match point before he went on to win. His second encounter in the round of 16 was against another Chinese player, Lin Shidong (WR 37) but this time it was the Chinese who was successful 10, 10, 5.



*Liam Pitchford*

### WTT Feeder: Dusseldorf, Germany: 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Sam Walker (WR 110) was the only player from England in this tournament. He met qualifier Lilian Bardet (WR 166) in the Men's Singles round of 64 where he lost 9, 6, 11.

Walker teamed up with Charlotte Carey in the Mixed Doubles but the pair lost their first match in the qualifying round to Alberto Mino and Nathaly Paredes of Ecuador 9, 9, 8. Carey had earlier lost in the Women's Singles in the third qualifying round and in the Women's Doubles in the first qualifying round with Gaia Monfardini of Italy.

### WTT Feeder: Dusseldorf, Germany: 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Paul Drinkhall, seeded sixth (WR 80), started in the round of 32 where he beat Slovenian Deni Kozul (WR 150) -9, -9, 3, 6, 8. His next match saw a win against Jules Rolland, France (WR 130) -9, 9, -8, 7, 9 and then Drinkhall beat Youssef Abdel-Aziz, Egypt (WR 616) 7, -8, 7, 6. His semi-final opponent was Martin Allegro, Belgium (WR

105) and although he started well he wasn't able to sustain the momentum and it was Allegro who went on to win 6, 10, -9, -11, -6.

Tin-Tin Ho (WR 153) won her first singles match in the second qualifying round, having a bye in the first, with a win against Bernadette Balint of Hungary (WR 204) 9, -7, 5, 11. Next up was Poland's Anna Wegrzyn (WR 196) but Ho was unable to get over the line in a close match and Wegrzyn won -8, 8, 5, -6, 8.

Ho was the only English player in the Mixed Doubles where she played with Edward Ly, Canada but the pair went out in their first match to Luxembourg duo, Luka Mladenovic and Xia Lian Ni 7, 8, 9.

### **WTT Star Contender: Goa, India: 27<sup>th</sup> February -5<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Tom Jarvis (WR 121) went out in the first qualifying round to Harmeet Desai, India (WR 141) but it was a close match. Sam Walker (WR 117) went one better beating Cristian Pletea, Romania (WR 154) but then went out in the next round to Bence Majoros (WR 110) 6, 3, 9. Liam Pitchford (WR 25) was seeded 15<sup>th</sup> but he too went out in his first match to Frenchman, Simon Gauzy (WR 32) in the round of 32 by 12, -6, -10, -9. There were shocks in the event as the new European Top 16 winner, Darko Jorgic (WR 9) lost to Swede, Jon Persson (WR 45) in the round of 32 and the biggest shock result for a long time was when top seed and world number one, Fan Zhendong, China lost his first match to Cho Daeseong, Korea Republic, world number 190 also in the round of 32.

Tin-Tin Ho (WR 152) had a good tournament. A bye in the first qualifying round and then two further wins in the qualifying part of the tournament against two higher ranked players, Diya Parag Chitale, India (WR 122) - 11, 6, -11, 8, 9 and Zhu Chengzu, Hong Kong (WR 85) -5, 8, 9, 9 put her through into the main draw where she met Manika Batra, India (WR 34) and made a quick exit 4, 8, 5. It was Batra who had got the better of her in the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Walker and Jarvis paired up for the Men's Doubles and entered in the main draw round of 16 but lost that match to Park Ganghyeon and Kang Dongsoo of the Korea Republic 6, 8, 12.

Walker and Ho united for the Mixed Doubles and won their first match in the qualifying event beating Sanil Shetty and Reeth Tennison of India but then lost to Germans, Patrick Franziska and Xiaona Shan.

### **WTT Singapore Smash: 7<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

A major WTT tournament with all the world's top ten and most of the top 100 participating. It was going to be a tough tournament for all who entered. England had five who took part – Liam Pitchford (WR 23), Paul Drinkhall (WR 71), Sam Walker (WR 117), Tom Jarvis (WR 121) and Tin-Tin Ho (WR 152). Drinkhall and Pitchford were also playing in the Men's Doubles and were seeded eighth as there were only 24 pairs in the Men's and Women's Doubles, 20 taken from the ITTF ranking list plus four wild card home nation pairs, they were fortunate to be taking part. It left no room for any other players to enter and so was quite protective of those top pairs as it meant they could all earn ranking points whilst others were prohibited from doing so thus enhancing the advantage those top pairs had.

Ranking points and prize money were on offer to everyone who entered which was fortunate for those who didn't get past the first qualifying round as it was a long and expensive way to go for only one match for many players. The singles winner won 100,000 US dollars and 2,000 ranking points whilst those who departed in the first qualifying round received 1,300 US dollars and five ranking points. The doubles champions received 2,000 ranking points and 12,000 US dollars which went down to 2,000 US dollars and 175 ranking points for those who lost in the round of 16 in all doubles events and 1,000 US dollars and 10 ranking points for those who lost in the round of 24 in the Men's and Women's Doubles.

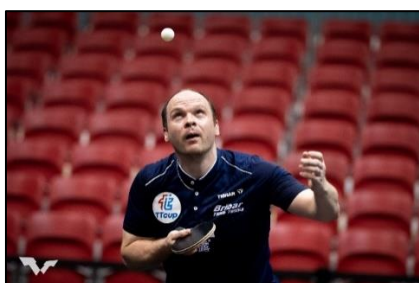
All except Pitchford had to play in the qualifying events and Tom Jarvis set the scene as he had an easy victory over Jeremy Dey of New Caledonia (WR 110) 2, 6, 5. A surprising score when it is considered Dey was ranked higher than Jarvis. Sam Walker was next up but he often seems to get unfortunate draws and so it was this time. His opponent was Lubomir Jancarik of the Czech Republic (WR 115) just slightly higher than Walker and it was the Czech who won in three very close games 10, 9, 11. Paul Drinkhall had us all on the edge of our seats when he played Maciej Kubik of Poland (WR 102). Drinkhall won but it took him nine match points to get over the line. The finals score -10, 6, 8, -12, 9.



*Sam Walker and Tin-Tin Ho*

Ho met much higher ranked Korea Republic's Lee Zion and she went out -8, -4, 8, 5 in her one and only match.

The second qualifying round saw the exit of both Drinkhall and Jarvis. Drinkhall lost to Belgian, Martin Allegro who had also beaten him in Dusseldorf in February Jarvis had the toughest opponent in the qualifying part of the event meeting the highest ranked player in the qualifiers, An Jaehyun, Korea Republic (WR 59) and it was the Korean, not unexpectedly, who progressed 8, 5, 9.



*Paul Drinkhall and Tom Jarvis*

Liam Pitchford's (WR 23) first match in the main draw, round of 64, saw a very straightforward loss as German, Dang Qiu (WR 11) won 5, 3, 8. The two had only met the previous week in the Europe Top 16 when Qiu got the win but in a much tighter match. Nevertheless, it meant Pitchford took home 5,000 US dollars and earned 20 ranking points.

The Men's Doubles was now the only event left. As Drinkhall and Pitchford were seeded they had a bye in the first round and so went straight to the round of 16 where Jakub Dyjas, Poland, and Cedric Nuytinck, Belgium, were their opponents. The English pair started well winning the first two ends but Dyjas and Nuytinck pulled back to make it 2-2. At the change of ends in the fifth it was 5-5 but Drinkhall and Pitchford only secured one more point. The final score was 3, 9, -7, -6, -6.

The end of the tournament for the English players.

### **WTT Feeder Antalya, Turkey: 27<sup>th</sup> March-1<sup>st</sup> April 2023**

Following straight on from the National Championships Tin-Tin Ho (WR 142) flew to Turkey for the WTT Feeder tournament in Antalya where she won her first round match, round of 64 against Belgium's Nathalie Marchetti (WR 327) 16, 4, 8 but went out in the next round to Li Yu-Jhun (WR 91) of Chinese Taipei -9, -5, -11.

## Chris Beckley and A Picture of Health

Harvey and I had the great pleasure to meet up with an old friend and former regular on the Grand Prix circuit at the ETTA Centenary dinner last year where he was awarded the Volunteer of the Year. Now Chris is advocating the benefits of table tennis in helping to keep fit and healthy as well as the social benefits and in typical Chris style also the joy, fun, laughter and friendship that you get along the way. There is a lovely article about Chris in “A Picture of Health – Collecting Perspectives” produced by the Imperial College London.



Chris is now a full-time coach and has been for four years after working for the Fire Service for many years. He is presently the Club Captain at the Clissold Table Tennis Club in Stoke Newington but has coached for many years in other parts of London.

On being interviewed in January 2022, when asked what he hopes people take from his classes, he replied “Everything positive and life enhancing, enriching, energising, encouraging, engaging ... and much more”.

How I wished I lived closer.

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## Leo Socher Grethe: Sports Photographer

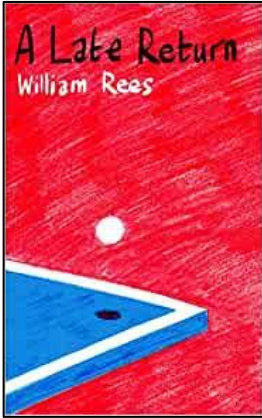
We are always most appreciative of the photographers who let us use their images to enhance our magazine.

It was, therefore, a real pleasure to meet another young photographer at the VETTS Southern Masters at Crawley in February. Leo Socher Grethe is currently studying A-Level photography and has been offered a place at university to continue his studies - with a special interest in sports photography. Certainly, a name to look out for in the future with an impressive portfolio under his belt already. We wish Leo well in his future career and look forward to seeing more of his photographs, a sample of which is below.

If you would like to see more of Leo’s work, then go to his website <http://www.leosgvisuals.com> and/or Instagram @leosg\_visuals. They are well worth a visit.







## **A Late Return - Table Tennis à la carte**

By William Rees, Parthian Books 2021, 71pp, £7.99

Review by Steve Leven

Club and tournament players will enjoy this vignette on competitive table tennis, recognising the scenario in which the action is set as well, possibly, as a description of themselves or others in the pen portraits of the players. The author is a seller of English-language books based in the south of France, but the premise of the book - a late return to the game for him after picking up a bat for the first time in forty years - is merely a backdrop to his description of a one-star Vets tournament.

He and his clubmates travel to the venue by high-speed car, driven by Alain, who is also the tournament favourite and revered by the author as a role model, on the table at least. The other passenger, David, warms up for the match in his customary way - with a nap in the car whilst the others are practicing in the hall. The author describes his mental ups and downs in navigating the group stage, winning from behind and losing from ahead. He is always wondering what his - absent - coach would be thinking or telling him.

At just 70 pages of spaced-out text, this is definitely a book you will be able to finish in the breaks between games at your own tournament. On a pence-per-page basis, it's a rather expensive volume, although well produced. There are some line drawings presumably depicting the author himself, but it would have been good if there had been some photographs of the players described to emphasise their character and show us how unlike, and yet how similar, they are to ourselves. The book was published in 2021 but in the absence of any reference to COVID-19, and surely there would have been some mention of face masks, for example, one can assume that the tournament was played before the pandemic.

Sadly, in these days when the spotlight is on women and girls' participation in ours and other sports, there is only one female given a mention - the rather schroomistressy tournament organiser - but even she gets only a passing mention and no name check. Hopefully the game in France is taking the same if not greater measures as in England to ensure that such tournaments in the future are played on a more level gender playing field.

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### **European Games:**

**23<sup>rd</sup> June-2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023: Hutnika Arena, Krakow-Malopolska, Poland**

The third European Games are to take place in June and July this year. As in previous year's it is a Great Britain team and not an England team that participates. The GB men's team will be playing but the GB women, despite the enhancement to England players by Welsh and Irish players, will not be part of the tournament.

As well as team events there are five individual events as part of the programme with the opportunity for the winners of the Mixed Doubles to automatically qualify for the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024.

We await further selection details.

## Non-Playing Captain of England Juniors from 1962-1969

By Laurie Landry

I began playing table tennis at the age of 12 on a friend's dining room table. After a few friendly matches against local teams in the Willesden League, I began playing for Tennyson Table Tennis Club following up an advert in the local paper for 'players wanted'. Eric Prowen, the Secretary of the Club, very kindly gave me a lift to the matches as I didn't have my own transport.

During the 1950's and into the 1960's, I was very active in table tennis and took part in Open Tournaments all over the United Kingdom, I represented England as a junior (under 17) and later as a Senior.

I did feel that I could contribute something to the game, apart from playing. At the age of 16, I was asked if I would be prepared to be a member of the Committee running the Willesden League. Later I agreed to work on the Middlesex County Committee. Soon after I was asked to be a member of the ETTA National Junior Selection Committee.

It was in May 1961 that I was ranked at No. 6 in the England Men's list. I was at the top of my form when in that same month tragedy struck. I was involved in a serious road traffic accident which left me unconscious for ten days and fighting for my life. Thanks to the staff at Hillingdon Hospital in West London and a period at Farnham Park Rehabilitation Centre, I was back on my feet some eight months later. In early 1962, at the age of 23, I was asked by the ETTA to take over the captaincy of the English Junior Team from Brian Brumwell.

During my seven years as the Junior Captain, I was also to help the progress of a number of young players. I urged the ETTA Committee, which had discontinued sending our players to the European Junior Championships to resume sending our teams to this event. In fact, back in 1955, I had been in the Junior team that had taken part in Stuttgart, Germany, in the first European Junior Championships.

I was fortunate enough to assist in the progress of such players as Denis Neale, Chester Barnes, Mike Johns, Alan Hydes, Tony Clayton, Stuart Gibbs and Trevor Taylor all of whom became so successful at Senior level. Jill Parker and Karenza Mathews, such well known Senior players in the Women's game, played as Juniors under my Captaincy.



*July 1963. England's Junior team setting off to the West German Junior Invitation Tournament  
Back: David Stanley, Margaret Fry (npc), Tony Robinson, Laurie Landry (npc), Christine Holes, Jackie Canham  
Front: Chester Barnes, Lesley Bell  
Bell won the Girls Singles and England won the Girls Team event, the Boys reached the semi-final*

There were many exciting times during my period as Captain when our team flew to Stockholm to join the Swedish team for a training camp and then on to Helsinki for a get-together with the Finnish team. The three teams (English, Swedish and Finnish) all travelled together by coach to the European Junior Championships in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) in Russia.

On another occasion, again for the European Junior Championships, we travelled to Vejle (Denmark) when all the Captains were invited to make up a football team to play against the local amateur team. The match ended in a 1-1 draw and in the friendly penalty shoot-out I scored the winning goal much to my delight. However, I remained loyal to my TT career.

Another time Stuart Gibbs became lost on the train to Czechoslovakia. When I found him, he was being questioned by the railway officials as he couldn't produce a travel ticket. As Captain, I had the group ticket for the team. Stuart was much relieved when I eventually found him explaining "Here, I'm with this lot". So all ended happily.

When we were going to Bucharest by train, we had pre-booked sleepers, I still had to convince the guard as we found a group of tourists had taken our compartments, shouldn't have been there at all!

This was a very eventful seven years, the most enjoyable in my table tennis career. Aside from being non-playing Captain of the Junior team, I was still playing in TT tournaments, the highlight of which was playing in the Men's Doubles with Tony Clayton, when we reached the final of the National Championships at Crystal Palace in 1971.



*Laurie Landry, npc, leading the England team out at the Commonwealth Championships, Guernsey 1977  
Players: Andy Barden, John Hilton, John Kitchener, Donald Parker, Jimmy Walker, Suzanne Hunt, Melody Ludi, Angela Mitchell, Karen Rogers, Anita Stevenson. Alan Hydes was the npc for the Men's Team  
England won one gold, four silver and three bronze medals*

It has been very rewarding to see that many of the Juniors I coached have gone on to be so successful as adult players.

## WTT Youth Events

### WTT Youth Contender, Linz, Austria: 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> January 2023

2023 started with several English youngsters playing in Austria, a tournament with 12 events, with mixed fortunes. Connor Green who with Sophie Earley of Northern Ireland reached the quarter-finals in the Under 19 Mixed Doubles although as they were the number one seeds they did not meet expectations. Green also reached the quarter-final of the Under 17 Boys' Singles, Kacper Piwowar got through to this stage, too, in the Under 13 Boys' Singles. Several other players had a good tournament and are getting experience on the international stage.

U19 Boys' Singles: Group - James Hamblett, Larry Trumpauskas, Jakub Piwowar, Round of 64 – Joshua Bruce, Round of 32 – Connor Green

U19 Girls' Singles: Group – Amy Marriott, Anna Green, Tianer Yu, Round of 32 – Mari Baldwin

U19 Mixed Doubles: Round of 32 – Aaron Sahr (Luxembourg)/Tianer Yu, Neil Incorvaja (Malta)/Anna Green, Noah Lambinet (Luxembourg)/Amy Marriott, Round of 16 – Larry Trumpauskas/Mari Baldwin, Quarter-finals – Connor Green/Sophie Earley (Northern Ireland)

U17 Boys' Singles: Group – Isaac Kingham, Prayit Ahluwalia, Jakub Piwowar, Round of 64 - James Hamblett, Larry Trumpauskas, Round of 32 – Ralph Pattison, Quarter-final - Connor Green

U17 Girls Singles: Group – Anna Green, Naomi Coker, Ella Pashley, Jonabel Taguibao, Round of 32 – Sienna Jetha, Round of 16 - Tianer Yu

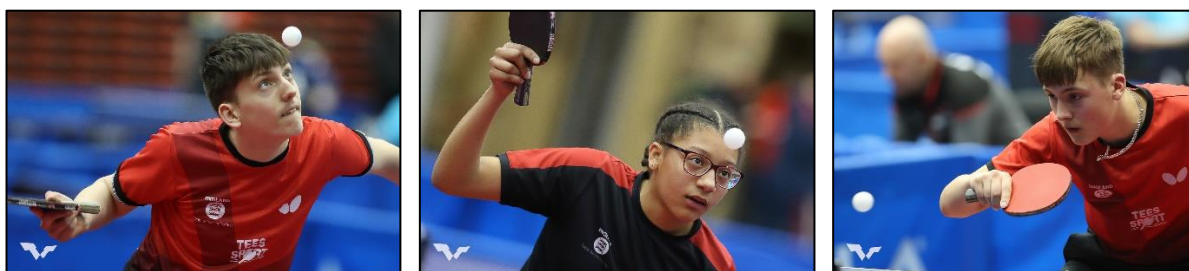
U15 Boys Singles: Group - Prayit Ahluwalia, Teagan Kazhal, Round of 64 – Abraham Sellado, Isaac Kingham, Round of 32 – Kacper Piwowar, Round of 16 – Ralph Pattison

U15 Girls' Singles: Group - Naomi Coker, Round of 32 – Jonabel Taguibao, Sienna Jetha, Ella Pashley,

U15 Mixed Doubles: Round of 32 - Abraham Sellado/Jonabel Taguibao, Ralph Pattison/Sienna Jetha, Kacper Piwowar/Naomi Coker, Isaac Kingham/Ella Pashley

U13 Boys' Singles: Group - Dimitar Dimitrov, Teagan Kazhal, Round of 32 – Abraham Sellado, Quarter-final – Kacper Piwowar

U11 Boys' Singles: Group - Dimitar Dimitrov



*Ralph Pattison, Naomi Coker, Larry Trumpauskas. Photos courtesy of WTT*

### WTT Youth Star Contender: Tunis

Connor Green and Ralph Pattison were England's two representatives in this tournament.

Green, playing in the U19 Boys' Singles and lost all three matches in his group to Junior World ranked 15, 26 and 93, Green is now ranked at 65.

In the U19 Boys' Doubles he partnered Stepan Brhel of the Czech Republic and they went out at the first time of asking in the round of 16.

Pattison also did not progress from his U15 Boy's Singles group losing to the number two seed and world ranked 121 and 245 but beating an unranked Tunisian. In the U15 Boys' Doubles he joined German, Tom Wienke and they won their first match in the round of 16 but lost their quarter-final match in the next round.

## Swaythling Club International: English Branch Meeting



*Back Row: Alan Ransome OBE, Don Parker, Harvey Webb, Richard Scruton  
Front Row: Jose Ransome, Jill Parker MBE, Beverley Godfrey, Karen Tonge OBE  
Photo by Diane Webb*

The English branch of the SCI met on the morning of finals day at the National Championships. Once again, we are grateful to Table Tennis England for hosting the meeting.

As usual the meeting was an opportunity for our members to hear about the latest SCI developments and to exchange news. It was noted the SCI AGM is to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 during the World Championships in Durban.

Members also took the opportunity to sign a birthday card for Diane Scholer who will reach her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 14<sup>th</sup> April and we send our best wishes.

The meeting was unanimous in expressing a wish to have a formal dinner at next year's National Championships and it was agreed to explore the possibilities once the venue was confirmed.

This year's SCI Fair Play Award was won by Ross Wilson who unfortunately was not present on the Sunday. It was, therefore, agreed that Karen Tonge would arrange for a presentation to be made to Ross at the Para National Championships in April.



*Ross Wilson  
Photo by Mike Rhodes*

## Birthday Greetings

We don't usually acknowledge birthdays but reaching the landmark of 90 is a little bit special. So, congratulations to Derek Burridge, Rosemary Ponting and Doreen Stannard who all reached that impressive number in February.

1933 was obviously a good year.

## What was Happening 50 Years ago? 1973

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973 saw the United Kingdom join the European Economic Community (EEC). A momentous occasion and to mark it Britain held a cultural festival entitled a “Fanfare for Europe” with over 300 events taking place. Table tennis did its part by holding a tournament in Bolton on 12<sup>th</sup> January. The twelve players were flown in by British European Airways who also provided the Commemorative Trophy which was won by Denis Neale who also received a cheque for £100. Jacques Secretin of France was the losing finalist and Trevor Taylor and Nicky Jarvis the losing semi-finalists.



*Some of Europe's best: Stefano Bosi, (Italy), Alan Griffiths (Wales), Bert van der Helm (Holland), Nicky Jarvis, Jean Krier (Luxembourg), Jimmy Langan (Ireland), Denis Neale, Claus Pederson ((Denmark), Jacques Secretin (France), Trevor Taylor, Norbert Van Der Walle (Belgium). Also played: Hans Micheiloff (Federal Germany)*

- ❖ At the beginning of the year the two junior number ones were Desmond Douglas and Linda Howard. Douglas entered the Men's list for the first time at number 10 whilst Linda Howard was at number five in the Women's ranking list.
- ❖ Crystal Palace was the venue for the English Closed in January and Trevor Taylor retained his Men's Singles title defeating Denis Neale in the final -10, 17, 10, -20, 13. Alan Hydes and Tony Clayton were the losing semi-finalists. The Women's Singles saw the rising star, Jill Hammersley (later Parker), win the first of her seven singles titles with victory over Karenza Mathews. Diane Court (Simpson/Pearce) and Judy Williams were the defeated semi-finalists. It was the two Men's Singles finalists who took the Men's Doubles title with a win over Tony Clayton and Laurie Landry whilst Karenza Mathews with Linda Howard were the Women's Doubles champions beating Shelagh Hession and Judy Williams. The Mixed Doubles was a family affair as the two Howard sisters were opposite sides of the table and it was Linda with Alan Hydes who got the victory over Susan partnered by Tony Clayton.
- ❖ The 1<sup>st</sup> World University Championships took place in Hanover with a Great Britain team of Tony Clayton, Alan Fletcher, Brian Mitchell, Sheila Hamilton, Susan Lisle and Elaine Smith. The Women's Team finished sixth and the Men's Team were ninth. The standard of teams was very variable with some countries, including the USSR, entering with their full national team. It was a tough challenge for the GB players but Tony Clayton did win the Men's Consolation Singles and Scotland's Elaine Smith was runner-up in the Consolation Women's Singles.

- ❖ The Halex Golden Rackets presented to the players with the most points from the five 3 Star tournaments went to Denis Neale and Karenza Mathews. The trophies were presented by Johnny Leach.

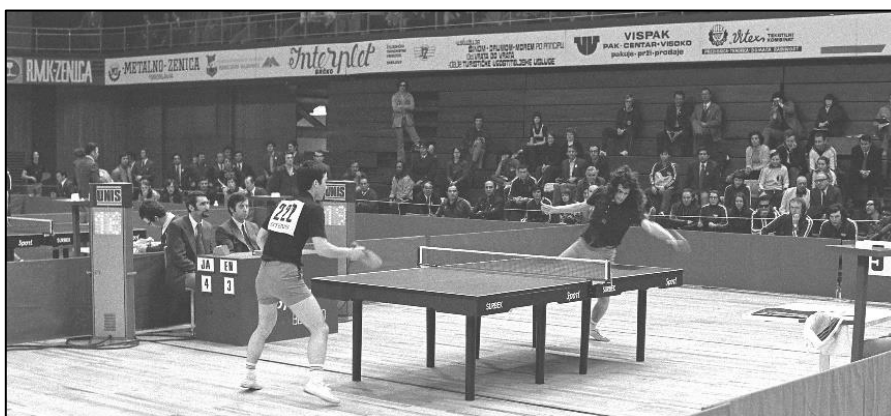


*Denis Neale, Johnny Leach, Karenza Mathews*

- ❖ The English Open in Brighton saw Sweden win both the team events. The England's women team of Jill Hammersley, Linda Howard and Karenza Mathews were runners-up. Sweden's Stellan Bengtsson, World Champion and World Number one won the Men's Singles beating compatriot Kjell Johansson in the final. It was another triumph for Sweden as Birgitta Radberg won the women's title over Maria Alexandru of Rumania. Linda Howard and Karenza Mathews reached the semi-finals of the Women's Doubles and Mathews with Denis Neale were the runners-up in the Mixed Doubles. Desmond Douglas showed signs of the future when he beat Kjell Johansson in the team event.

- ❖ The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth Championships which were held in Cardiff resulted in a full house of titles for England winning both team events as well as the five individual ones – Trevor Taylor (Men's Singles – retaining his title), Jill Hammersley (Women's Singles), Denis Neale and Trevor Taylor (Men's Doubles), Jill Hammersley and Susan Howard (Women's Doubles) and Denis Neale and Karenza Mathews (Mixed Doubles).

- ❖ The World Championships were held in Sarajevo in April. Denis Neale played spectacularly to defeat Nobuhiko Hasegawa, seeded two, in the first round of the Men's Singles. Trevor Taylor, too, had impressive victories in the team event when he beat all three Japanese players – Hasegawa, Tokio Tasaka and Yunjiro Imano but less successful results against other teams left England men in 10<sup>th</sup> position, the same as the women. The Men's team medallists were Sweden, China and Japan and for the women South Korea, China and Japan.



*Tokio Tasaka v Trevor Taylor.  
Photo courtesy of Malcolm Anderson*

- ❖ There was a three-venue tour of England in April by Japan with matches played in Torquay (4-4 draw), Bletchley (Japan won 5-3) and Crystal Palace (Japan won 4-3).
- ❖ The Junior English Open in Worthing in May saw players from Belgium, Guernsey, Holland, Sweden and Wales enter along with a high number of England players. As with the senior event, Sweden dominated and both team titles and both singles went to the Scandinavians, although Don Parker

nearly put an end to their clean sweep when he lost in the final to Ulf Thorsell -21, -21. Yorkshire's Judith Walker nearly captured the Junior Girls' Singles title just missing out 17, -19, 19. There was success in the doubles as Desmond Douglas and Simon Heaps and Linda Howard and Anita Stevenson won gold. Further medals came England's way with Douglas and Howard coming away with silver medals in the Junior Mixed Doubles and bronze went to Anita Stevenson (JGS), John Kitchener and David Tan and David Bangeter and G Walsh (JBD), Elaine Tarten and Gillian Taylor and Karen Rogers and Judith Walker (JGD), Paul Day and Elaine Tarten and Don Parker and Judith Walker (JXD).

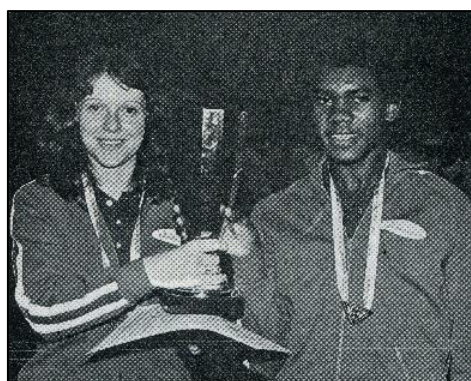
❖ The first international umpires exam was held.

❖ A two-week tour of China by England youngsters, average age, 16 years and seven months took place in June. Karenza Mathews at the grand old age of 22 was the senior player, Anita Stevenson (16), Nicky Jarvis (19), Donald Parker replacing injured David Alderson (15), Desmond Douglas (17), Paul Day (14) and Andy Barden (14) made up the squad with Scotland's 20-year-old, David Fraser also joined the party.



*Donald Parker, Desmond Douglas, Andy Barden, Paul Day, George Yates (Deputy Leader), Anita Stevenson, David Fraser (Scotland), Karenza Mathews, Nicky Jarvis, Peter Simpson (Coach)*

Travel was via Zurich, Athens, Bahrain and Colombo. Matches were played in Singapore, Hong Kong, Peking (known as Beijing today) and Hangchow. There was plenty of sightseeing, lots of travelling and nine matches played in the fortnight.



*Linda Howard and Desmond Douglas*

❖ At the European Youth Championships in Piraeus, Greece, England Junior Mixed Doubles pair of Desmond Douglas and Linda Howard took the gold medal, the first time since the first championships in 1955 that any English player had stood on the top of the podium. Douglas had another podium place as the losing finalist in the Junior Boys' Singles to Ulf Thorsell 18, -16, -19. The Junior Boys' team finished seventh and the girls sixth.

❖ In the European League, England finished sixth in the Premier Division.

❖ The fifth Under 13 National Championships resulted in wins for Angela Mitchell and Martin Shuttle, Mitchell beating all her seven opponents and Shuttle winning six of his seven matches losing to David Newman who finished third on count back with Christopher Rogers in second place. Runner-up in the girls' event was Suzanne Hunt and Angela Tierney was third, both winning five and losing two.

❖ At the ETTA AGM Ian Crickmer was awarded the Ivor Montagu Award, Jill Hammersley the Victor Barna Trophy and Paul Marks of Halex was made a Vice-President, Halex had agreed to provide £3,000 sponsorship over two years. Bill Vint, OBE stood down as President and was replaced by Maurice Goldstein. Doug Moss had been presented with the Leslie Forrest Memorial Trophy.





*Charles Wyles at Buckingham Palace with his son and daughter-in-law, Mr and Mrs Kenneth Wyles*

❖ Charles Wyles, ETTA Chairman, was made an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours. He attended the investiture with his son, Kenneth, and daughter-in-law.

❖ Three juniors went on tour to Sweden and played two junior international matches and one regional match before playing in a tournament in which Anita Stevenson won the Girls’ Singles and David Alderson the Boys’ Singles. Alderson went on to win the Boys’ Doubles with Paul Day.

❖ There were three notable deaths during the year.

**Marjorie Carrington**, an England international playing against Wales in 1939 and the ETTA Assistant Secretary from 1937-47, she kept everything going during the war years and Bill Pope said “without her, the Association could not have been kept in existence in the circumstances in which we were placed”. When the ETTA offices were destroyed by bombs in the Second World War she sat down and cried and never did forgive Mr Hitler.

One of England’s greatest and most prolific players and also England’s Men’s Captain when they won the Swaythling Cup, **Adrian Haydon**, died in September. Adrian played in 17 World Championships, the first in 1928 aged 16 years when the team were bronze medallists and the same position in 1929, and 1933. He was part of the runners-up team in 1931 and 1952. Adrian reached the Men’s Singles semi-final twice, and quarter-finals once, in the Men’s Doubles he was runner-up twice, semi-finalist three times and quarter-finalist twice, whilst in the Mixed Doubles he reached one semi-final and two quarter-finals. Father of Ann Haydon (later Jones), husband of international Doris Haydon (nee Jordan) and brother of international Marjorie Haydon (Mrs Maisey).

One of the ETTA’s great administrators, **Malcolm Scott**, died in October. Malcolm had served on National Council, the National Executive Committee and a considerable number of other ETTA committees for a number of years, he had been Chairman of Staffordshire and Worcestershire County Associations and President and Chairman of the Wolverhampton League. The Malcolm Scott Memorial Trophy was presented the next season in honour of Malcolm.



*Marjorie Carrington, Adrian Haydon, Malcolm Scott*

## The Good News Page

- \* In January Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford reached their best ever world doubles position at number seven.
- \* Congratulations to Andrew Rushton and Shaun Marples who have been promoted to Head Coach and Programme Manager/Pathway Manager respectively for British Para Table Tennis. They have both done excellent work and been a significant part of para success over the last few years.



\* Gorazd Vecko was in the news as he was awarded a Friend of Para Sport for his contribution to table tennis by the Slovenian Government and the National Paralympic Committee. A great honour indeed. Gorazd had been the Tournament Director at the Slovenian Para Open for 20 years, a tournament which is regarded as the most prestigious as well as the largest Open Para event in the world. Gorazd was the Slovenian Head Coach for 19 years before becoming the incredibly effective Performance Director of British Para Table Tennis from 2009, he has built strong links between his home country and Great Britain. The President and eight government ministers were present at the dinner where Gorazd was presented with his award by the Japanese ambassador to Slovenia.

- \* Congratulations too, to Gavin Evans, who has been appointed as TTE's Head of Performance Development on a permanent basis. Gavin has been acting in an interim capacity since October 2022. More good news when we heard of the appointment of Emma Vickers to the post of TTE's Head of Pathway Development. Although the downside is Emma will have to come off the TTE Board.

- \* ..... and the not such good news – Colin Clemett has stood down from the TTE Rules Committee, a committee he first joined in 1958. Although his service on that committee wasn't continuous he had the undoubted record of serving on the National Umpires and Referees Committee, later known as Technical Committee, for 58 years continuously. Richard Scruton visited Colin to present him with a photographic memento and also a food hamper.



*Richard Scruton with Colin Clemett*

As TTE have changed their criteria for serving on committees, Colin's record is unlikely to be emulated. In future the maximum period for serving on a committee will be eight years.

We can only thank Colin for his many wonderful years of enormous service to table tennis at all levels from the ITTF downwards, table tennis will be the poorer without his enormous wealth of knowledge and sound judgement. Fortunately, Colin is still a very active and valued member of the TTE Archives, Museum and Records Committee.

## In Memoriam



### Erica Prean

Erica Prean passed away on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2002, aged 92 years, at her home in Ryde, Isle of Wight. She was the wife of former Chairman, John Prean, and mother of England international Carl Prean.

Erica had been involved with table tennis at Local League, County and National level for many years. She was both National Councillor and Deputy National Councillor for the Isle of Wight at various times between 1980-2013. She acted as treasurer and general secretary for the Isle of Wight County TTA and also was secretary for the Isle of Wight League for several periods between 1979-2012.

Erica was very supportive of all John's table tennis activities, especially when he was Chairman of the ETTA, and also of Carl's extensive table tennis playing career. Whenever anyone from the table tennis world visited she was a charming and attentive hostess.

Born in Aachen, Germany, Erica witnessed Kristallnacht when she was eight years old in November 1938. She came to England as a child refugee the following August with her mother two weeks before war broke out. They were each allowed to bring with them a very small suitcase and the equivalent of ten shillings. Erica had been brought up in Germany by her mother's parents and they were two of 96 family members who were exterminated in a concentration camp or on the way to one.

Erica met Wolfgang, later known as John, Lustig-Prean through a friend at the refugee home where she lived in Tunbridge Wells, they were married in 1952. John came from an aristocratic Austrian family and when she first met them in Vienna it was rather overwhelming. However, Erica's love of music helped smooth the way when it was found out her future father-in-law was the director of the Vienna Conservatoire and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

Erica had a very strong social conscience and supported refugee causes, homeless charities and the Royal Institute of the Blind when John's eyesight was failing. More recently she donated to help Ukrainian refugees. She was also Chairwoman of the Isle of Wight NSPCC and served on the local committee of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts. Erica felt passionately that the Holocaust should not be forgotten and gave many talks whilst the family archives are in the Winer Holocaust Library.

Quite an extraordinary and very gracious lady.

Our condolences go to her two sons, Carl and Duncan.

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## Future Dates

### Domestic Events:

**Jersey Satellite Grand Prix:** 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April 2023, St Clement, Jersey  
**ELCC Qualifiers:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (juniors), 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023 (seniors)  
**Cadet, Under 17, Junior National Championships:** 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Nottingham  
**Cadet National Cup:** 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Plymouth  
**London Grand Prix:** 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Redbridge  
**ELCC Finals:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> June 2023, venue to be confirmed  
**Under 11 and Under 13 National Championships:** 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Wolverhampton  
**Junior National Cup:** 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Harlow  
**Gloucester Grand Prix:** 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June 2023  
**Senior National Cup:** 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July 2023 - Cancelled  
**Wolverhampton Grand Prix:** 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> July 2023 (change of date)

Due to the ongoing competition review all dates for the 2023/24 season are only provisional.

### International Events:

**European Under 21 Championships:** 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina  
**World Championships (Individual):** 22<sup>nd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Durban, South Africa  
**European Under 13 Championships:** 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Zagreb, Croatia – the first U13 Championships  
**European Games:** 23<sup>rd</sup> June-2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023, Krakow-Malopolska, Poland  
**European Youth Championships:** 14<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023, Gliwice, Poland  
**European Para Championships:** 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Sheffield  
**European Championships (Team):** 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Malmo, Sweden  
**Europe Youth Top 10:** 29<sup>th</sup> September-1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, Bucharest, Romania  
**World Youth Championships:** 26<sup>th</sup> November-3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023, Novo Gorica, Slovenia  
**European Championships:** October 2024, Linz, Austria

There are also a number of World Table Tennis events

### Veterans Events - For the Over 40s:

**European Veteran Championships:** 26<sup>th</sup> June-1<sup>st</sup> July 2023, Sandefjord, Norway  
More details can be found on [www.EVC2023.com](http://www.EVC2023.com) website. Late entries are accepted up to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

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