



Table Tennis Times

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

Issue 29

Editorial

Winter 2022

As I sit to write this, winter is most definitely here. It had been getting colder over the last few days and this afternoon Bexhill has been covered in snow! It may look pretty for a while, and I am sure will be welcomed by many, but I am not a fan.

This edition of our magazine delivers, as promised, the continuing story from Ken and Karenza Mathews, now largely concerning Ken's activities, as Karenza has retired and become a mother for the first time.

We are also fortunate to have articles from our regular contributors, Brian Kean and Graham Frankel. Brian looks at the Volunteer Work Force and Player Development, whilst Graham looks at the decline of Local Leagues and suggests a possible way this could be reversed.

Diane pays tribute to Alan Cooke who is retiring from his position at Table Tennis England at the end of the year but hopes to continue coaching in a private capacity. I am sure Alan will receive many accolades for his service to the sport and he will be much missed.

Diane has also written an article on Joyce Bogoni, nee Roberts, a name not many of the current generation will recognise, but whose story is fascinating.

Amongst our regular features "What Was Happening" goes back to 1927 and discovers that the first officially recognised table tennis magazine in the UK was in fact "Table Tennis" from the Welsh Association.

There are also several tournament reports on how the players of today are faring on the world stage, including at the World Para Championships, an update on Table Tennis England governance and a report on the ITTF Summit and AGM held in Amman, Jordan.

Christmas is just around the corner and we send our best wishes to all our readers.

Best wishes

Diane and Harvey Webb

World Para Championships
6th–12th November 2022: Grenada, Andalucia
Photos courtesy of the ITTF unless otherwise titled

A change in format for these Championships as the team events were dispensed with and doubles brought in instead. Another change was groups disappeared and all events were played on a straight knock-out basis.

The World Para Championships are ones in which, traditionally, the Great Britain team do well and it was hoped that a fistful of medals would be brought home. Two former England senior international players, Matt Kenny and Andrew Rushton are part of the coaching team alongside Shaun Marples, the BPTT Pathway Manager, and working part-time, current international, David McBeath.

Doubles: What a brilliant start to the tournament as Paul Karabardak and Billy Shilton took the gold medal on the second day in Men's Doubles Class 14. This was followed by a silver for Ross Wilson and Joshua Stacey in Men's Doubles Class 18. For those who saw the pure joy for Karabardak by Will Bayley at the Tokyo Olympics will know what a special moment this would have been to top that by becoming a world champion.



Paul Karabardak & Billy Shilton



Joshua Stacey & Ross Wilson

It was a bronze medal for Shilton and Fliss Pickard in the Mixed Doubles Class 14 but disappointment for Jack Hunter-Spivey and Sue Bailey (Gilroy) who went out at the quarter-final stage in the Mixed Doubles Class 10 as did Stacey and Grace Williams in the Mixed Doubles Class 17.



Jack Hunter-Spivey & Sue Bailey



Billy Shilton & Fliss Pickard

A superb triumph and the title in the Women's Doubles Class 14 for Pickard and Williams: Williams entered the tournament on a wild card, looking for experience, and she has ended up as a gold medallist. Delighted for Pickard, too, and this title should go some way to make up for just missing out at the Commonwealth Games where she was in an event of very wide range of classification and despite being at the lower end reached the semi-final and was only just defeated by a much higher category player.



*Fliss Pickard & Grace Williams with Shaun Marples
Photo Courtesy of Francesca Bullock*

Singles: Mixed fortunes in the singles events from gold medals to first round knock-outs.

Sue Bailey (Women’s Class 4), Fliss Pickard (Women’s Class 6), Paul Karabardak (Men’s Class 6) and Billy Shilton (Men’s Class 8) all went out in the round of 16.

Quarter-finalists, and just missing out on a medal, were Tom Matthews (Men’s Class 1) who had the misfortune to meet the world number one, Joo Young Dae from the Korea Republic. He lost the match by the closest of margins going down -10, 4, -9, 10, -11. Jack Hunter-Spivey (Men’s Class 5) also lost at this stage, to the young 16-year-old Brazilian, Lucas Arabian, who had won the Brazilian Open earlier in the year. Grace Williams (Women’s Class 7) went out in the quarter-finals, another GB player who had to face a world number one. Aida Dahlen of Norway was the victor in the clash by 3-0.



Rob Davies



Tom Matthews

Semi-finalists and bronze medal winners were Rob Davies (Men’s Class 1) who met the world number one, Joo, who had previously beaten Tom Matthews. Davies and Joo had previously met at the Rio Olympics in the finals, a match which Davies won 3-1. This time though it was the Korean, who won the Paralympic title in Tokyo, who was the victor, winning 3-0. Martin Perry (Men’s Class 6) was another GB bronze medallist. His opponent in the semi-finals was Italian, Matteo Parenzan, who had beaten Perry recently in the Greek Open and it was Parenzan who again came out on top.

In Men’s Class 8 both Aaron McKibbin and Ross Wilson won a bronze medal going out at the semi-final stage. McKibbin had a very tense quarter-final match against world number three, Maksym Nikolenko of the Ukraine, winning 12-10 in the fifth. He then faced the world number one, another Ukrainian, Viktor Didukh, but this time it was the Ukrainian who took the honours. Wilson, the defending champion, had a nip and tuck match against Frenchman, Thomas Bouvais, winning the first, losing the second, winning the third, losing the fourth and then the fifth in a very tight encounter. Final score 5, -10, 4, -7, -14 to Bouvais.



Aaron McKibbin



Martin Perry

Joshua Stacey won Great Britain’s sole singles silver medal, in Men’s Class 9, battling against the world number one, Laurens Devos of Belgium, who has not lost a match since 2015, so it was always going to be an uphill struggle. Stacey put up a spirited fight in the third end but ultimately lost 6, 1, -12, 6.

On top of the podium was the irrepressible, Will Bayley, in Men’s Class 7, who beat Jean Paul Montanus of the Netherlands in the final. Bayley was on top form and always looked like winning which he did in style, 6, 7, 6, to regain the title he won back in 2014.



Will Bayley

Final tally for the GB squad: 3 gold, 2 silver, 5 bronze.

It is 40 years since the first World Championships for the Disabled were held 29th September-2nd October 1982 in the Ludwig Guttman Sports Centre for the Disabled at Stoke Mandeville. There were 200 players from 15 countries: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, West Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. West Germany won the most medals taking home 35, Austria were second with 17 and Great Britain third with 16.



*1982 - Referee Stuart Dane at the control table
Umpire Fred Groom, Umpires Control Doreen Stannard, Deputy Referee Len Pilditch*

The Ken & Karenza Mathews Story – the latter days

1975

Ken: Although Karenza had now retired from competition I was still very busy with work with the England Table Tennis Squad. Ron Crayden was still Chairman of the Selectors and I was on the phone to him nearly every evening about something connected with one or more of the players and arrangements for forthcoming trips. Brian Burn was now the coach in charge of the squad and, here again, there always seemed to be something to talk to him about. That, together with letters and other paperwork, meant quite a lot of involvement.

Karenza and me at about this time (left).

Two meetings in September, the Sponsorship Committee of the E.T.T.A., on the 21st and, on the 22nd, a meeting of the Middlesex County Committee.



Karenza and Ken

On 2nd October we played an exhibition at the Corn Exchange at Ipswich in Suffolk. This was for the Suffolk County Table Tennis Association. Now that Karenza had retired she was no longer taking part in these fun events and so tonight we had Jill, Carole Knight of Cleveland who was now ranked number two in England, Denis, Nicky, Paul Day and Andy Barden who were the England Junior numbers one and two. These exhibitions were now seen by the ETTA as being important publicity for the game and so an official from the hierarchy was designated to attend each one; this time our old friend Albert Shipley, who was the General Secretary of the ETTA, was at the event.

Two days later Nicky went with Paul Day to do a small exhibition at the Epping Sports Centre. Nicky had taken part in many of these exhibitions and so he was happy to lead this one with Paul.

Another meeting: on 6th of October, a meeting of the National Selection Committee at the Kenilworth Hotel in London. And, on the 21st, another meeting of the Sponsorship Committee in London. And another! On the 29th, the Middlesex County Committee met again.

And another! I attended another National Selection Committee meeting in London on 4th November.

On 20th of November, I went to a seminar in London about the World Championships which were due to be held at The National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, in 1977. Although some way off, plans were already being discussed as it was going to be the biggest event that the Association had ever staged. Hence, the regular meetings of the Sponsorship Committee.

Meeting of Middlesex Committee on the 25th, and of the Sponsorship Committee on the 26th.

I went to a National Selection Committee meeting in London on 14th December. Meetings, bloody meetings!

1976

I attended a meeting of the National Selection Committee in London on Tuesday 6th January.

On 8th, 9th and 10th January, as Manager of the England Squad, I had to be at Brighton for the Norwich Union International Championships. I stayed down in the England Team Hotel and Karenza came down for the team events and the individual events. It made a bit of a change for me to be with the team while Karenza was in the crowd!

The men did very well to win the Men's team event although our Women's first team (Jill, Carole and Linda) lost to Czechoslovakia in the semi. But Jill then went on and played very well to win the Women's Singles. Jill and Linda lost in the semi of the Women's Doubles.

The new European Ranking List was issued in January. Great news for Jill – she had been elevated to number one.

It was some time since we had played an exhibition evening but on 4th February we went to the Stalybridge (near Manchester) Indoor Sports Club where Jill, Linda, Denis, Nicky, Desmond Douglas - who was now the England Senior number one - and Andy Barden (now senior number four) entertained a packed house. Brian Burn was now the England trainer and so he was there to supervise the fitness training part of the programme. George Yates who was Deputy Chairman of the ETTA was there as the official representative.

I attended a meeting of the Middlesex County Committee on 2nd March and visited the England Squad's training camp at Lea Green on the 16th. This latter visit was about the European Championships which were coming up in April.

The study in our house was important for me as I was doing a lot of work in preparation for the European Championships which were to take place at Prague from 26th March to 4th April. I had been appointed Manager of the England Team for the trip and so I was determined to see that everything went well. There were a number of meetings of the National Selection Committee in London, together with meetings with Brian Burn who would be the men's team captain and Bryan Merritt who would captain the women. The team selected for the championships was, Men: Desmond Douglas, Nicky Jarvis, Denis Neale and the two younger players, Andy Barden and Paul Day. The Women's team was, Jill, Carole and Linda.



England's squad march into the arena for the opening ceremony.

European Championships, Prague

We flew to Prague on 26th March. With the team were the two captains, E.T.T.A., Deputy Chairman, George Yates and myself. Johnny Leach was also there to attend a meeting of one of the international committees. This picture appeared in the April edition of the magazine of me and George leading the England Team into the arena for the opening ceremony.

We did brilliantly in the Women's team event taking the silver medal. Jill won nine of her eleven games and Linda five of her eight. The men ended in seventh place.

The two younger players, Andy Barden and Paul Day, incurred the wrath of their Captain, Brian Burn, and me, during the team competition. They seemed to think it was a great joke that they were there and that it was okay to fool around laughing and chatting. Brian spoke to me and we called them both into a meeting. I told them that it was a very simple issue: if Brian or I had the smallest shred of evidence of further behaviour like that, they would be on the next plane home. 'You can't do that', they said. 'Watch me.' I said – and I meant it. There were many young players back in England who would give anything to have the honour of representing England. I wasn't about to let them abuse the privilege and opportunity they had been given. Anyway, after that there were no more problems and they both played very well.



*Jill Hammersley,
European Champion*

The singles event was a great triumph for Jill and for England – when she won the Women’s Singles to become European Champion! The matches on the way to the final were tough. Among others she had to beat the Czech, Grofova, Rudnova of Russia in the quarters, and Hellman of Sweden in the semi. The final was against – guess who! The old enemy, Maria Alexandru of Rumania. Jill beat her amid high drama. At that time, under international rules, expedite was a system that was brought in as a game had lasted for ten minutes and still hadn’t finished; this would normally be a game between two defensive players – Jill and Alexandru were both defensive players. Expedite came in during the first game and continued throughout the match. From then on, each rally could last no longer than twelve strokes or the point went to the player who made twelve returns without a mistake. This meant that, both players were forced to attack. Huge tension! Alexandru tried every trick in the book to put Jill off; at one stage she argued with the umpire about a point, refused to carry on and, illegally, left the arena. We told Jill to stay calm and focused – she did and she won the title over four games.

To complete the celebrations, Jill and Linda won the Women’s Doubles title.

Back to earth! Well back home anyway. More meetings during May: the National Development Committee on the 7th, the National Selection Committee on the 17th, and a Middlesex County meeting on the 18th. I was away nearly as often as Karenza had been!

But I certainly was at the hospital when our first daughter, Julia Emma Karenza was born at 23.40 on 12th July. I was not allowed to be at the birth – in those days husbands were considered to be an unnecessary irrelevance – but I was then allowed to see Karenza and our new baby – what a moment! She was beautiful! They both were!



Jill Hammersley & Linda Howard, European Champions

Back to business! There was another shoal of meetings during July including a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee. This was a follow-up about Andy Barden and Paul Day at the European Championships in April; although they had behaved themselves for the remainder of the championships there had been further incidents at tournaments after they returned home. They were given a severe warning and told that any further misdemeanours would result in suspension. I remember that Paul’s father attended the hearing; he was a very big man, a farmer from Suffolk and he was rightly furious with his son. When they left I reckon that Paul was under no illusions about what his father would do to him if there was any more trouble! Both players went on to have excellent playing careers, both representing England in the Swaythling Cup in the World Championships in 1977 and winning eleven English National Championship titles between them.

The Mosney, Ireland, coaching week ran from 28th August. This was to be the last year that I would be in charge of the course. It carried on in future years but Karenza and I decided that we had done enough. As Karenza couldn’t take Julie over there I went with two other players to do the coaching.

On 16th September I went with the England squad to do an exhibition at the West Notts Technical College at Derby Road, Mansfield, for the Nottinghamshire Table Tennis Association. No Denis this time - which was unusual as he liked the money and liked the fun part of the evening. (Incidentally an interesting thing about Denis was that he could do 100 metres in about fourteen seconds - which was pretty fast!) And no Jill this

evening and so Linda, Carole Knight, Desmond Douglas, Nicky Jarvis, Andy Barden and Jimmy Walker took part. Peter Simpson, now the England Trainer was also there.

We did an exhibition at the William Thompson Sports Centre at Burnley on 22nd October for the Burnley and District Table Tennis League. This was to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the League. Jill, Linda, Desmond Douglas, Denis, Nicky and Jimmy Walker took part - with me doing the yapping as usual! George Yates came along as the ETTA VIP.

While touching on the subject of table tennis, it was sometime this year that George Chester Barnes hung up his table tennis bat for the last time. Chester was one of the best players that England had during the Sixties and Seventies. Barry Meisel, a player who wrote tributes to a number of English players, said: *Chester Barnes was born in London's East End in July 1947. He became England's youngest ever national champion, when he won the championships for the first time in 1963 at age 15.*

There were two sides to Chester, who was an exceptional, charismatic player from an early age, but his "my way or the highway" attitude caused him to be banned by the ETTA on several occasions for many different reasons, which included failing to turn up for international matches. Chester represented England over 250 times and he was a maverick of the swinging 1960s to be likened to Georgie Best the footballer, Alex Higgins of snooker and Terence Stamp the film star.



Chester Barnes

His infectious grin and sense of humour endeared him to his audiences, who flocked to see if the talented but volatile player would lose to a nobody, or beat an international champion.

We knew Chester very well during his playing days. He won the English Men's Singles title five times, the Men's Doubles title five times and the Mixed Doubles title twice, once with Diane Rowe and once with Karenza. He played more than two hundred and fifty times for England – although he might have played more if he hadn't fallen out with the authorities quite so often! Unfortunately, one of them was me as I had a hand in banning him from the England Team when I

was on the National Selection Committee. But that was only when his rebellions went too far. Chester was a great character and did a great deal to make the sport more popular during those years.

And while we are on the subject of great players retiring from table tennis, perhaps here we can mention our old friends Judy Williams and Shelagh Hession. Comprehensive notes were written about both players by Diane Webb, the historian of the English Table Tennis Association. Firstly Judy:

Judy Williams – was an England International who later also played for the Netherlands. Judy was a National Champion, winning the Women's Singles in 1969. The following year she travelled to Moscow to take part in the European Championships, as a private entrant. She reached the round of 16 with Shelagh Hession in the Women's Doubles. Other successes included a Quadrangular Team Gold medal, quarter-finalist in the English Open in 1962 in the Women's Singles and Junior Girls' Doubles champion with Mary Shannon in 1961

And Shelagh:

Shelagh Hession – was an England International who played in the World Championships in 1977, reaching the last 32 in the Mixed Doubles with Douggie Johnson. In 1970 she competed in the European Championships as a private entrant, travelling to Moscow at her own expense and was rewarded with a round of 16 placing in the Women's Doubles. Shelagh's England debut was on December 10, 1973 when she played against the Soviet Union in the European League. A considerable span of English Opens (1956-1972) saw Shelagh as a Junior Mixed Doubles champion in 1958 with D Grant and two runners-up positions in the Junior Girls' Doubles – with

Miss Pickard in 1956 and Jean Harrower in 1958. In the main event Shelagh reached the Women's Singles quarter-finals in 1970, the Women's Doubles quarter-finals in 1960, 1961, and in 1968 with Judy Williams, and in the Mixed Doubles the same position with Ken Beamish in 1960.

Nineteen National Championships were played between the first, in January 1960 and 1978. Three times semi-finalist in the Women's Singles and three runners-up placings in the Women's Doubles – 1967, 1968 and 1973, all with Judy Williams. Added to this was a semi-final place in the Mixed Doubles in 1974 with Alan Hydes.

On 26th October the squad gave an exhibition at Lowestoft; another celebration, this time the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Lowestoft League. This time the team was Jill, Linda, Nicky, Jimmy Walker, Donald Parker and Paul Day. A report subsequently appeared in Table Tennis News (December edition), part of which read:

'A celebration evening was held at Denes Holiday Camp, Kessingland Beach, which featured an exhibition by the England International Squad. Jill Hammersley, Linda Howard, Paul Day, Nicky Jarvis, Jimmy Walker and Donald Parker provided a highly entertaining display which thrilled the spectators. The performance of Ken Mathews, the Squad Manager, was also duly noted, especially by the Camp owner, who is looking for a comic for the next holiday season!'

I'm not sure what all that was about, but one interesting thing did happen that evening. We were told that three men were there who had been playing together as one team for fifty years! I arranged for Jill, as the current European Champion to go over to where the three were sitting together; she shook hands with them and presented them with medals that had been prepared by the League. Not a dry eye in the house!

The November issue of the magazine gave the new World Ranking list. Denis Neale was at 19 with Nicky Jarvis at 22. Jill was elevated to number 6 in the world with Linda included for the first time at 24.

Table Tennis England Governance and Reviews

The election for a fourth Table Tennis England Member Elected Director was a very close contest with Jos Kelly pipping Neil Hurford to the vacant position. Kelly received 168 votes to Hurford's 152 whilst Mike Bishop was third with 13. Kelly took up his post when the result was announced on 2nd November 2022 and will serve for a four-year period term of office. The other three Elected Directors are Don Parker, Ritchie Venner and Susie Venner. Voting was carried out electronically with 69% of Company Members voting. Congratulations to Kelly who we are sure will make an excellent addition to the Board. He attended his first meeting on 9th December 2022.

There are two major reviews ongoing, one on membership and one on competitions. There have been a series of webinars on both. The membership review is looking at restructuring the way membership fees are charged with a possible modular structure so members can opt in or out of various components. The competition review is looking at completely restructuring the events which are run not only by Table Tennis England but also the various open competitions held by clubs and leagues. Proposals include dispensing with some long standing competitions including the English Leagues Cup Competition (formerly the National Team Championships) and some County Championship categories.

The new competition calendar was due to start at the beginning of the 2023/24 season. However, after the webinars and the discussions these occasioned it was felt further consultation and consideration was needed so we will await further deliberations.

Preston Grand Prix: 5th-6th November 2022

Photos courtesy of Table Tennis England

The second Grand Prix of the season moved north to Preston and it was a successful weekend for the two number one seeds in the Men's and Women's Singles as Denise Payet and Russian, Grigory Vlasov, took the honours. The runners-up were Mollie Patterson and Chris Doran with the women's semi-finalists Jasmin Wong and Anna Green and for the men, Jersey's Jordan Wykes and Romanian Mircea Neagu.



*Jasmin Wong, Anna Green, Mollie Patterson,
Denise Payet with Susie Venner*



*Jordan Wykes, Chris Doran, TTE President Jill Parker,
Mircea Neagu, Grigory Vlasov*

The Under 21 singles went to Jasmin Wong and Adam Dennison with the runners-up Yat Poon of Hong Kong and Jie Fu Tham. Doran won the Restricted Singles with Naphat Boonyaprapa the runner-up and the Veterans event was won by Kevin Dolder with Ireland's Rory Scott the runner-up.



Jasmin Wong & Yat Poon, Adam Dennison & Jie Fu Tham



Naphat Boonyaprapa & Chris Doran, Kevin Dolder & Rory Scott

Three more Grand Prix to come this season although there is a considerable gap before the next one which is in London, 27th-29th May 2023 followed by Gloucester, 24th-25th June 2023 and Wolverhampton, 15th-16th July 2023. There are also two Satellite Grand Prix, Cardiff 17th-18th December 2022 and in Jersey over the Easter weekend 7th-9th April 2023.

Cleveland Junior 4* Open 29th-30th October 2022

14 events in the Cleveland Junior 4* Open were played over the weekend of 29th-30th October 2022 at Thornaby Pavilion from the Under 11s to the junior age category of Under 19s.

Junior Events: There was considerable success for players from the North East with Durham's Tom Rayner winning the Junior Boys' Singles defeating number 1 seed, Ben Piggott of Cleveland in the final. The winning sixth seed defeated James Hamblett and Felix Thomis on his way to the final. Piggott and Rayner combined in the Junior Boys' Team event to take that title.

In the Junior Girls' Singles it was another success for a Durham player over a Cleveland one with Rebecca Savage getting the better of Ella Pashley. As with the Junior Boys, it was the two finalists who teamed up to take the Junior Girls' Team title.



*Tom Rayner and Rebecca Savage
Photos by Chris Rayner*

Under 17 Events: A win for the number 1 seed, James Hamblett of Hertfordshire in the Cadet 17 Boys' Singles over Lancashire's Joseph Dennison and in the Under 17 Girls' Singles, it was Pashley who won the title defeating Mabel Shute from Essex in the final.



*James Hamblett and Ella Pashley
Photos by Chris Rayner*

Cadet Events: Another event where the number 1 seed, Yorkshire's Abraham Sellado, took the honours with a win against Max Radiven of Middlesex. Pashley was having a very good weekend as she now claimed the Cadet Girls' Singles title defeating Hannah Saunders of Cambridgeshire.

The two Cadet Team events were won by Adam Alibhai and Rex Wong for the Boys and Eva Eccles and Mia Longman for the Girls.



With Alan Ransome - Abraham Sellado, Adam Alibhai & Rex Wong. Photos by Brenda Stephenson



Mia Longman & Eva Eccles. Photo by Chris Rayner

Under 13 Events: Sellado gained a second title as he defeated Scotland's Joe Mulhern and success for Saunders as she beat Amber Lemmon in the corresponding Girls' event.



*Zihan Lin and Hannah Saunders both Alan Ransome
Photos by Chris Rayner*

Under 11 Events: It was a double for Cambridgeshire players as Zihan Lin and Saunders took the two titles with wins in the final over Lewis Wu, also of Cambridgeshire, and a repeat of the Under 13 Girls' Singles with Lemmon the runner-up.

Star of the weekend was Hannah Saunders who at just nine years old was runner-up in the Cadet Girls' Singles and won both the Under 13 and Under 11 Girls' Singles events.

Dad's Army

By Brian Kean, former Scottish International

VOLUNTEERS

“Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler thinking you can win the war?”

Yes, they are all there, Table Tennis's equivalent to Dad's Army, with our own Captain Mainwaring's ageing volunteer work force beavering away without the bayonets but duly equipped and drugged up with beta blockers, Viagra and cholesterol busting doses of statins.

The Table Tennis England (TTE) website rightly highlights the debt our game owes to these stalwarts who administer our local leagues, tournaments, national leagues and schools' events.

The magnitude of volunteer duties struck a chord with me over the past two weeks in my capacity of schools' individual and team tournament organiser for Greater Manchester. Promoting such events is a near impossible task with over 2,000 schools in the region. I floundered in my first year trying to work out how to publicise the event given that no database was provided from Table Tennis England's (TTE) schools department. After much time-consuming research, I contacted the organiser of the GREATER MANCHESTER SCHOOLS GAMES (*which in effect is a mini-Olympic event involving the ten boroughs*) and obtained a complete list of schools in all ten boroughs. This was forwarded to TTE assuming a communication database would be formulated from which office staff could advise Greater Manchester schools of pending events. Regrettably, 12 months on, nothing has been forthcoming.

Computerisation provides many benefits to table tennis and indeed in most aspects of daily life. However, for the various local and national league organisers it's a mammoth task requiring countless volunteer hours inputting results. The recent North West Cadet League was a trimmed down event compared to previous years, nonetheless, it still required entering near on 200 pieces of information which can be multiplied across all national league's and unfathomable numbers for all league match secretaries.

National schools' competition organiser, Richard J Hudson, has performed a herculean task for many years but has decided to cut back on his duties and I fear it won't be long before we will witness many members of our “volunteer land army” who are stepping back due to the excessive workload being devolved to regional volunteers.

Where am I going with this? Well, I ask the question, what exactly does the paid head office staff actually do? Many are “working” from home so I suggest we take a leaf out of Sir Alan Sugar's book, get them back in the office and provide some practical help to the ageing team of volunteers. I have never contributed to the “more productive” ethos of non-office based staff which fails to recognise the value of supervision, accountability, collective motivation, interpersonal skills and camaraderie.

I note the TTE website has two vacancies relating to digital engagement and creation, hopefully their brief includes systems to alleviate the time volunteers are spending behind their computer screens.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT/COACHING

My table tennis activities are coaching dominated and it's worth focusing on where we stand with our current crop of juniors. As I write, we have no juniors inside the top 100 in Europe and only three inside the top 200.

There's a plethora of reasons which could be identified causing this situation but largely, I suspect a dearth of multi table clubs is one of the main reasons.

Let's dream for a moment and a fairy godmother waves a magic wand and hey presto every major city is suddenly blessed with a minimum of two multi table facilities that welcome all our prospective internationals who can practice for anything up to 20 hours week.

If that were the case, how are we fixed for top quality coaches?

Using football as a comparison the top Premier Clubs in England are largely managed by former top-quality players who played at the highest level and includes Pep Guardiola...Jurgen Klopp...Stevie Gerrard...Frank Lampard...Antonio Conte ... OK, many of them have been sacked at different times but let's be fair, if "Fergie" had been around today he would've been sacked after his early days at Manchester United.

It's fair to say that good players don't always make good coaches. However, it's evident from the previous paragraph and historical research will prove that in many sports the best coaches/managers were indeed top players.

Top player coaches will provide many titbits and words of wisdom textbook coaches will be unable to do, they bring the old adage "been there and done it." These comments are vindicated by the experiences in my erstwhile regional coach's role when along with fellow coaches, Sally Shutt and Katy Parker (both former senior internationals), the coaches CPD courses were bereft of top players.

The ideal scenario would see qualified coaches of varying abilities and playing prowess working and sharing the knowledge to the benefits of table tennis.

IT'S A FACT THAT THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTOR TO DROP OUT IS FAILURE...

I have firm views on the need to provide youngsters with a solid sustainable platform from which they can gradually build up the skills to assist their development. Presently, I run four or five sessions a week at which a new arrival to the sessions was a promising 10-year-old who received 1-to-1 multi ball sessions with another coach. Midway through the session his father appeared saying "I don't want him to push, I would rather he loses by attacking than win by pushing".

I promptly considered the soccer mantra of having a strong core through the middle of the park, i.e. goalkeeper, centre back, defensive midfielder and finally goal scoring centre forward. This building platform is an ethos that is mirrored in other sports. Golfing gurus always say "DRIVE FOR GLORY, PUTT FOR DOUGH", cricketers apply the stonewall tactic. These examples eloquently illustrate the ability to shut up shop and apply the northern thriftiness of "owt for nowt" unlike the profligacy that prevails in table tennis.

There has been an obsession with an avoidance of pushing deeming it too negative, I believe this strays from the soccer principle of a strong core which in relation to relative newcomers means solid consistent containment over the table with the ability to push and block on both back and forehand thus providing the platform to develop the attacking aspect of their game.

I estimate while watching local cadet and juniors, 75-80% of points gained are due to unforced errors, and coaches will learn more watching one match than countless hours of set piece routines. The importance and randomness of matches (*even in practice sessions*) should not be underestimated as it entails aspects of the game such as anticipation, reaction, shot selection, reading spin, pace, preventing unforced errors and identifying opponents' strengths and weaknesses before accurate execution of shots. My sessions usually begin with a simple pushing exercise incorporating serves and return whereby once a mistake is made the pair sit down. Suffice to say that if expedite (*our veteran players will remember those days*) was introduced after two minutes there wouldn't be much action on any of the tables. Normal routines would follow, however 50% of the session will be devoted to matches.

Much of what I observe of those 75% plus giveaways is to a large extent pushing, (*with highly charged speedy bats they can't control*) this, along with over ambitious use of the highly skilled high risk backhand topspin.

An overriding fact why we fail to produce world class players is due to the current league structure from which England's erstwhile stars served their apprenticeships. If Greater Manchester's "JUNIOR FREE ZONE" leagues are mirrored throughout the country, then there lies the embryonic platform that is missing.

Previous generations of players in Greater Manchester could feasibly stand toe to toe weekly with an opponent between six and 12 times, excluding county matches and tournaments, of which there was at least two a month.

A lack of juniors in local leagues impacts on what traditionally has been a great recruiting base for parental volunteers highlighting again the dwindling land-based volunteers.

A recent Hong Kong immigrant at our club cannot understand why very few clubs haven't at least two dedicated coaches and why most of the matches are played in single table venues by "old men"; he states it would not be good if I had to keep my son out playing table tennis until 10.30pm.

There is little doubt these views will not be universally shared, however, come back and tell me I am wrong when we next have six juniors in the top 50 in Europe.

Ps... Just received notification from local league match secretary that two teams have withdrawn with immediate effect and that it is becoming impossible to keep track of the constant match postponements.

England National Championships

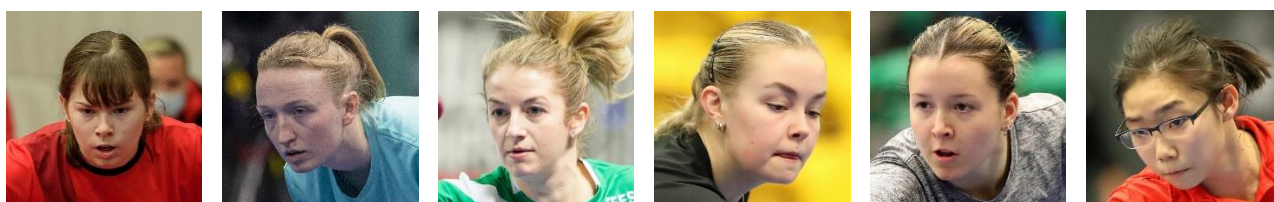
The top 16 players in the Men's and Women's Singles are exempt from playing in the qualification tournament on 7th-8th January 2023. The ranking list for December 2022 is the one which was used and so the following players will be offered a place directly into the main event, listed below in ranking order.

Women: Tin-Tin Ho, Maria Tsaptsinos, Charlotte Bardsley, Denise Payet, Emily Bolton, Mollie Patterson, Jasmin Wong, Mari Baldwin, Lois Peake, Emma Vickers, Evangeline Collier, Lauren Charles, Scarlett Anders, Amy Marriott, Letitia McMullan, Karina Le Fevre.

Men: Liam Pitchford, Paul Drinkhall, Tom Jarvis, Sam Walker, David McBeath, Chris Doran, Sam Mabey, Josh Bennett, Shayan Siraj, Ismaila Akindiya, Gabriel Achampong, Lorestas Trumpauskas, Connor Green, Joe Cope, Mathew Ware, Naphat Boonyaprapa.

There is a good mixture of experience and youth on both lists. It is particularly pleasing to see Karina Le Fevre back in the top echelon after not playing in a National Championships since 2018. We hope most of these players will take up the invitation to play in their National Championships in March.

Some of the Contenders



Charlotte Bardsley, Emily Bolton, Karina Le Fevre, Mollie Patterson, Denise Payet, Jasmin Wong



Gabriel Achampong, Josh Bennett, Naphat Boonyaprapa, Chris Doran, Sam Mabey, Shayan Siraj

WTT Senior Events

WTT Contender: 31st October-6th November 2022, Nova Gorica, Slovenia

All photos courtesy of WTT

Five of England's senior players entered this tournament, four men – Paul Drinkhall, Tom Jarvis, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker with Tin-Tin Ho the sole female participant from England.

Pitchford (WR 22) was seeded and so went through to the main draw. Of the remaining three in the Men's Singles who all had byes in the first qualifying round, it was only England's highest ranked player, Drinkhall (WR 75), who won his match in the second qualifying round, beating Li Hon Ming of Hong Kong, China (WR 208). Jarvis (WR 117) and Walker (WR 104) both went out at the first time of asking to Matteo Mutti of Italy (WR 704) and Steffen Mengel of Germany (WR 133), respectively. Drinkhall then had to meet Jarvis's victor Mutti. It was a 3-1 win for Drinkhall and so he progressed into the fourth qualifying round against Walker's victor, Mengel, to obtain a place in the main draw, round of 32. It was a close match but Drinkhall took the deciding end.

The round of 32 saw mixed fortunes for the two English players remaining. First on the table was Pitchford and he had a comfortable win against defender, Wang Yang of Slovakia (WR 37), 5, 10, 5. It was a different story for Drinkhall who lost 14-12 in the fifth despite having three match points earlier in the game. So, Pitchford moved on to the round of 16 where he met Feng Yi-Hsin (WR 77). After starting well by winning the first game, the next two slipped away putting the man from Chinese Taipei ahead, Pitchford pulled one back to level the score but lost the fifth end. Final score 4, -5, -10, 9, -7.

There wasn't much joy in the Women's Singles as Ho (WR 153) succumbed in her first match to Irina Ciobanu of Romania (WR 202) but it was so close with Ciobanu winning 12-10 in the last end.

The Men's Doubles saw Jarvis with Walker have a first match draw in the qualifying round against Maciej Kubik and Samuel Kulczucki of Poland. It was the two Poles who won in three straight 9, 2, 8, and so the end of the line for the English men. Drinkhall and Pitchford, seeded 3, entered the main draw where their first opponents were Nandor Ecseki and Adam Szudi of Hungary. It wasn't a successful outing for the English pair going down 3-1, -11, 4, -7, -9.



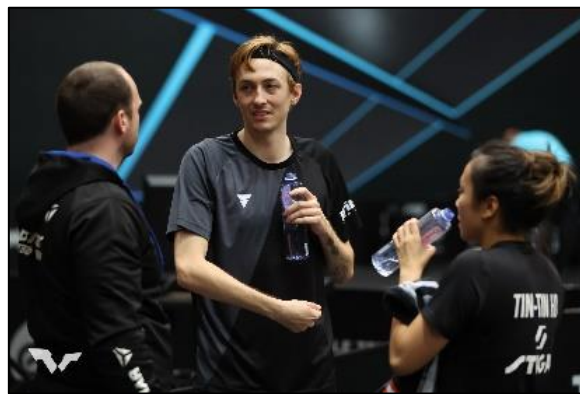
Sam Walker & Tom Jarvis



Liam Pitchford & Paul Drinkhall

The Women's Doubles saw Ho, once again, partner Karoline Mischek of Austria, they entered the event at the main draw level with first opponents Tatiana Kukulikova and Ema Labosova of the Slovak Republic. It was the Slovakian ladies who won the match 10, -7, 7, 9.

There were only 16 pairs in the Mixed Doubles and Pitchford and Ho met number 2 seeds, Ovidiu Ionescu and Bernadette Szocs of Romania in their first match. They put up a good fight with the game swinging one way and then the next but eventually lost -5, 9, -5, 9, -6.



Tin-Tin Ho & Liam Pitchford and being coached by Paul Drinkhall

WTT Feeder: 22nd-25th November 2022, Düsseldorf, Germany

Tin-Tin Ho, Paul Drinkhall and Sam Walker were the English contingent in this tournament.

Ho (WR 155) reached the round of 32 in the Women’s Singles after beating Melanie Diaz of Puerto Rica (WR 116) in the round of 64 by 4-0. She then lost to Miyu Nagasaki of Japan (WR 43) this time it was 4-0 in favour of her opponent. Ho teamed up with Karoline Mischek of Austria once again and although it was very close, they left that event in the round of 16, score 4, 12, -10, -10, -12. The Mixed Doubles with Walker also saw an exit at the round of 16 with Albert Mino and Nathaly Parades of Ecuador the victors by -6, 9, 7, 4.

Walker (WR 107), in the Men’s Singles, had a very close game against Deni Kozul of Slovenia (WR 171) and just lost deuce in the seventh in his round of 64 match, final score 10, -10, -11, 10, 7, -5, -11. Drinkhall won his first match in the round of 32 against Keishi Hagihara of Japan (WR 709) in seven. In the next round after leading Spain’s Alvaro Robles (WR 56) 3-1, he lost the next three and the match. In the Men’s Doubles, Drinkhall partnered Benedikt Duda of Germany but they didn’t live up to their number 1 seeding, losing their first match in the round of 16, score -4, -11, -11.



Tin-Tin Ho



Paul Drinkhall

WTT Feeder: Fort Lauderdale, USA, 11th-14th December 2022

Tin-Tin Ho took part in this event but went out in the round of 32 in the Women’s Singles losing to America’s Amy Wang. In the Women’s Doubles, Ho partnered Sofia-Xuan Zhang of Spain but they lost their first match which was at the quarter-final stage. In the Mixed Doubles, playing with Pak Nam Ng of Hong Kong, the pair won their first match but then withdraw and so were did not continue in this event.

The Decline of Local Leagues

By Graham Frankel

Lovers of table tennis in the UK are worried. Local leagues, the mainstay of the sport for as long as anyone can remember, are shrinking, and some have disappeared completely.

I have heard players blame Covid, Table Tennis England, Brexit. Some come up with the old excuse that youngsters have too many other interests to spend time playing table tennis.

They are all wrong.

The decline of leagues began more than 40 years ago, but it has happened so slowly that most players hardly noticed until more recent times.

Another theory – in my view misguided – is that Maggie Thatcher and her economic policies were to blame. It's true that the old works teams, so common in the middle years of the last century, steadily disappeared. But it is not the root cause.

I spent around ten years researching why table tennis in this country (not just local leagues) has declined. I won't attempt a summary here. My main purpose here is not to bemoan the past, but to let you know about an idea that may contribute to a reversal of the decline.

The Open Singles competition evolved from an idea first given to me by Chris Turner. Chris, as many will know, is an enthusiastic coach based in Nottingham and currently the Youth Participation Lead at TTE.

Several years ago, Chris told me about a successful junior league he was running, and he was very happy for me to copy the idea at BATTs in Harlow, Essex, where I was coaching. Apart from being truly open to any players from the area, there was another key feature of this system. There were no teams. Players entered as individuals. Removing teams meant that players could participate whenever it suited them.



BATTs Open Singles Group 2019

The Junior League at BATTs took off very well. After a couple of years, I decided to try removing the age barrier completely, opening it up to all ages and all levels. Thanks to an excellent rating system designed for us by another Chris (Pickard) we were able to establish a highly competitive league that often came close to filling our hall (which has a maximum capacity of 48 players on eight tables with a decent court size).

Similar competitions have now begun springing up in other clubs. I believe that Open Singles could become an essential part of the revival of table tennis.

The format is highly flexible. All you need is a venue that has a reasonable capacity (ideally 6 or more tables) and availability. It can be run by a couple of enthusiastic volunteers. The competition could generate income for your club, depending of course on what you pay for the venue. But there are no other significant costs.

Want to hear more? Please contact me: Graham Frankel

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Alan Cooke Retires

Alan Cooke is retiring after 40 years with the ETTA/TTE as a player and a coach. He will leave the Association at the end of December 2022. It was back in 1982 that Alan gained his first junior cap and followed with a senior cap the following year, his last England performance was in 2006.



World Veteran Champion 2006

He was number 1 in England for numerous years and held that place in June 2006 when he was over 40. 2006 was a momentous year, as it was the year Alan became a world champion - at the World Veteran Championships in Bremen where he defeated the Swede, Mikael Appelgren in the final to the tumultuous applause and cheering from the English contingent which included Harvey and me.

During his playing years Alan held 18 senior national titles, only Desmond Douglas and Paul Drinkhall have won more, he played in seven World Championships, four Team World Cups, eight European Championships, one Commonwealth Games, six Commonwealth Championships, two

Olympic Games and was a regular member of the England team in the European League from 1983-2004.

Some notable performances included at the World Championships in 1987 when he beat the world number 4, Chen Xinhua, who was playing for China at that time. At the European Championships in 1988 the men's team were runners-up to Sweden losing 5-3 in the final: Alan played alongside Desmond Douglas and Carl Prean against world beaters; Jan-Ove Waldner who he defeated although he lost to Erik Lindh and Jorgen Persson.



National Champions 2005 Alan Cooke and Helen Lower



Alan, right, with the successful England Men's Team 2016: Paul Drinkhall, Liam Pitchford, Sam Walker. Photo by Alan Man

As a coach Alan has been in charge of the women's, men's and latterly, junior teams, with 2016 probably the high point. In this year, England men gained a bronze medal at the World Championships in the team event and also were quarter-finalists at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. As a result, Alan was nominated for the ITTF Star Award Coach of the Year and was runner-up to China's Liu Guoliang. Other accolades include receiving the ETTA Victor Barna Award in 1988 and 1989 and becoming a Vice-President in 2006. At the Commonwealth Championships in 2004 Alan received the Fair Play Award; other awards included the Derbyshire Times Sports Personality of the Year in 1984/85 and the Veteran Sportsperson of the Year at the Derbyshire Sports Awards in 2006.

After a break, Alan intends to continue with private coaching. We wish him well for the future and thank him for the past.

Table Tennis England's Performance Department also will be losing Matt Stanforth, Head of Pathway Development, in December 2022 which follows the departure of the Performance Director, Simon Mills in October.

A Very Special Lady

By Diane Webb

Sometimes, one is privileged to be able to speak to or meet a person who is a bit special and that was the case when I contacted a lady whose name may not be familiar with the players of today, Joyce Bogoni, or Joyce Roberts as she was when she started playing table tennis. Joyce was born in London in 1926, the year the foundation meeting of the ITTF was held. She lived through the blitz, was a WAAF working at Bletchley Park before playing in two World Championships, winning a bronze medal in the Corbillon Cup and then a member of the England squad which had an eight-match tour of East and West Germany in 1951. Joyce later went on to be a Founder Member of the National Autistic Society and later still helped establish two homes for people with learning disabilities on the Isle of Wight.

It was while at Bletchley Park where Joyce saw Sergeant Cadet K Sebestak and Private E Berger of the Czechoslovak Army and England's Cyril Merrett and Maurice Kriss in a war-time final. This enthused her enough to take up a bat seriously and it wasn't long before she was representing the WAAF against the WRENS and other services, along with Betty Blackburn, who later went on to win a World Championship gold medal in the Corbillon Cup. Excellent company indeed.



England line up at the 1951 World Championships

Nearly all the canteens in the WAAF had table tennis tables and it wasn't long before Joyce was beating all the men, which didn't always go down too well. However, it was after the war that her game really blossomed and by the late 1940s she was winning a considerable number of Open tournaments in singles and also in doubles with Peggy Franks – a World Championships multiple gold medallist. Joyce's first international took place in 1949 before she went on to play in two World Championships. The first was in Vienna in 1951 where with Peggy Franks, Diane and Rosalind Rowe, the Corbillon Cup team took home a bronze medal, she reached the quarter-finals in the Women's and Mixed Doubles that year too. Joyce also played in the 1954 Worlds on home territory at Wembley.

Further caps came when Joyce was selected to go on a tour of Germany in September 1951, the first visit after the Second World War. Matches were played in both East and West Germany as well as an international against a combined team, the players were warmly welcomed in most cities. Eight matches were played in total and England won them all. Having lived through the blitz in London it gave Joyce a very special feeling when the National Anthem was played after the win in the international. Ivor Montagu accompanied the team which comprised Kathy Best, Ken Craigie, Aubrey Simons and Michael Thornhill.



Germany, 1951. Kathy Best, Joyce Roberts, Aubrey Simons, Ken Craigie, Michael Thornhill



Germany, September 1951, Joyce in action with Kathy Best at the far end

Joyce played in other internationals and also achieved success at the English Open when she was runner-up in the Women's Doubles with Peggy Franks in 1952; at the time the English Open was regarded as only second in importance on the world stage to the World Championships. The French Open the following year also proved a good hunting ground when Joyce won the Mixed Doubles with Brian Kennedy and a silver medal in the Women's Doubles with Ann Haydon. Joyce reached England number 3 but, in an era, when England's ladies were on top of the world this was no mean achievement with Betty Blackbourn (WR 2), Vera Dace (WR 3),



Joyce in her England shirt

Rosalind Rowe (WR 3), Diane Rowe (WR 5), Dora Beregi (WR 6) and Peggy Franks (WR 7). Joyce was described as sporting, good-natured, one of the most popular players in the game and her attitude was never, never give up. An attitude which served her well in later years.

Following her marriage to Bruce Bogoni which lasted nearly 60 years, Joyce's interest in table tennis waned as he had little interest in the game and when Joyce gave birth to her son, who was autistic, her energy and drive were directed into helping found the National Autistic Society. Later, a daughter was a further addition to the family. Later still, when the family moved to the Isle of Wight, Joyce went on to help establish two homes for people with learning difficulties.

Joyce still meets up with old friends and colleagues at Bletchley Park for a Veterans Reunion and on their Open Day the former WAAF ladies are paraded before those fortunate enough to attend.

At 95, Joyce retains her vibrant personality and looks back with affection on her truly remarkable life. A very special lady.

This article first appeared in the Table Tennis England National Championships programme 2022.

WTT Youth Tournaments

WTT Youth Contender Szombathely, Hungary

3rd-9th November 2022

Under 19 Girls' Singles: Group - Mari Baldwin

Under 17 Girls' Singles: Group - Naomi Coker, Bethany Ellis

Under 15 Girls' Singles: Group - Naomi Coker, Bethany Ellis, Sienna Jetha

Under 13 Girls' Singles: Group - Sienna Jetha

Under 19 Boys' Singles: Group - Toby Ellis, Joshua Bruce, Ben Piggott

Under 17 Boys' Singles: Round of 64 - Ben Piggott, Round of 128 - Isaac Kingham, Toby Ellis, Jakub Piwowar, Group - Ralph Pattison, Larry Trumpauskas

Under 15 Boys' Singles: Round of 32 - Larry Trumpauskas, Isaac Kingham, Round of 64 - Jakub Piwowar, Ralph Pattison, Group - Max Radiven, Prayrit Ahluwalia

Under 13 Boys' Singles: Group - Prayrit Ahluwalia, Max Radiven

WTT Youth Contender, Senec, Slovakia

7th-13th November 2022

Under 19 Girls' Singles: Round of 64 - Jasmin Wong, Group - Mari Baldwin

Under 17 Girls' Singles: Group - Bethany Ellis

Under 15 Girls' Singles: Group - Bethany Ellis

Under 19 Boys' Singles: Round of 32 – Ben Piggott, Round of 64 – Toby Ellis, Group – Adam Dennison, Joshua Bruce, Nahom Asgedom

Under 17 Boys' Singles: Round of 32 – Ralph Pattison, Round of 64 – Toby Ellis, Ben Piggott, Adam Dennison, Larry Trumpauskas

Under 15 Boys' Singles: Round of 32 – Ralph Pattison, Larry Trumpauskas, Round of 64 – Max Radiven, Kacper Piwowar

Under 13 Boys' Singles: Round of 16 – Kacper Piwowar, Round of 32 – Prayrit Ahluwalia, Max Radiven



Kacper Piwowar



Sophie Earley (Ireland) and Connor Green (England)

WTT Youth Star Contender: Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal

23rd-27th November 2022

Under 19 Boys' Singles: 4th in Group – Connor Green

Under 19 Boys' Doubles: Round of 16 – Connor Green & Hwan Bae (Australia)

Under 19 Mixed Doubles: Round of 16 – Connor Green & Sophie Earley (Ireland)

ITTF Summit and AGM

The capital of Jordan, Amman, hosted the ITTF Summit and AGM from 4th-6th December 2022. It had been usual for the AGM to be held at the World Championships but due to the restrictions with China this was not possible in 2022. Sandra Deaton (TTE Chairman) and Adrian Christie (TTE CEO) were England's two delegates; Susie Venner (TTE Deputy Chairman) also attended.

There were several sessions In Amman, entitled: Growing the Table Tennis Industry, Becoming a Leading International Federation, The Sport of Table Tennis in 50 Years, Sustainability - the Only Way Forward, Events for All and Home of Table Tennis.

Obviously, a major focus was on World Table Tennis and how that has evolved which has helped increase revenue to just under 35 million US Dollars. Other areas included building a social legacy, looking at governance, improving the calendar and a change to the bidding process.



ITTF AGM, Amman

The AGM was a hybrid meeting, held on the last day. A few delegates attended remotely whilst there were a good number present in Amman. There were the usual agenda items which as always, included a plethora of reports.

There were seven propositions to be voted on. Three were withdrawn including suspending India and England's bid for preferred bidder status for the 2026 World Championships. The most interesting debate was about proposed changes to the blade and a very reasoned and well-presented argument was put forward by Professor C K Chan of the Hong Kong Association. This had previously been submitted five years ago and although got a majority vote then failed to make the 75% benchmark required by one vote. Steve Dainton, the ITTF CEO, asked for this not to be approved saying the ITTF needed more time and would start looking at blade approvals in the next year or two, one of the reasons being that the ITTF Equipment Manager had only been appointed in 2019. The proposals would not affect the legality of blades currently being used. The President, Petra Sorling, also said more time was needed and a step-by-step approach required. It makes you wonder how much time the ITTF need: over five years since it was first proposed and someone in post for over three years with nothing being moved forward and possibly not in the near future. Professor Chan asked if the ITTF would put a time limit on deliberations. The motion failed with no indication as to when this will be visited.

The other proposal which affected players was by Iran and put forward to dispense with nets (cords) and remove time outs. Unfortunately, it was not a well worded proposition and there was the difficulty of two different concepts in one motion. Perhaps consideration could have been given to help word a proposition better particularly when English is not a first language.

For those who like to look ahead there was a vote on where the World Championships would be held in 2025 with Doha, Qatar winning the vote by 57 votes to 39 with Alicante, Spain the unsuccessful location. It was also announced that the World Veteran Championships in 2024 will be held in Rome.

As well as the ITTF meetings there are always a number of other meetings held during the few days when so many get together. The ETTU held an Extraordinary Congress but the Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation postponed their AGM and it will be now held at the World Veteran Championships in Oman in January 2023.

The Swaythling Club International also held their AGM in Amman on 4th December 2022. It was held in the early evening to avoid many of the other meetings that were taking place over the weekend.



Pedro Moura and some of the other attendees at the SCI AGM

A good attendance was welcomed by Claude Bergeret, President, who had invited Petra Sorling (President of the ITTF, who incidentally is a member of the SCI in her own right) to address the assembly, before the business of the meeting was opened. The meeting was conducted, as expected, in a friendly manner and it was a delight for many old friends to see each other for the first time since Covid-19 had disrupted table tennis and life in general.

ITTF Athletes Commission

Elections were held in November for ten places on the ITTF Athletes Commission for a four-year term of office for eight able bodied and two para players with at least one representative from each continent.

The successful candidates in order of the number of votes were: Elizabeta Samara (Roumania), Sharath Kamal Achanta (India), Daniely Rios (Puerto Rica), Omar Assar (Egypt), Melissa Tapper (Australia), Stefan Fegerl (Austria), Jon Persson (Sweden), Liu Shiwen (China). Ingela Lunback (Sweden) was the wheelchair player elected and Kelly Van Zon the standing player.

There were 283 voters for the able-bodied candidates and 155 for the para candidates.

Once the elections had taken place there was a further election for the two chairs, one male and one female. Those elected to the Athletes Commission had a vote as did Ryu Seung-Min as the International Olympic Committee Member and the ITTF Commission ex-officio member. It was the two Asian players, Achanta and Shiwen who were elected to those positions and so joined the ITTF Executive Committee.

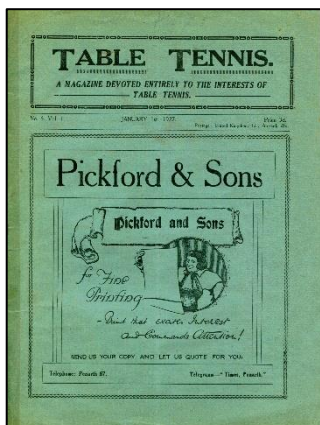


Eight of the Athletes Commission at the ITTF Summit

Daniely Rios, Stefan Fegerl, Jon Persson, Liu Shiwen, Sharath Kamal Achanta, Kelly Van Zon, Elizabeta Samara, Ingela Lunback

What was Happening 95 Years Ago? 1927

With thanks to Colin Clemett for additional information



❖ Volume 5, Number 1 of the Welsh magazine 'Table Tennis' came out on 1st January 1927 costing 3d. It covered international topics as well as English ones but with the emphasis on the game in Wales. It was "the only organ in England recognised and adopted by the International Table Tennis Federation". It referred to the formation of the ITTF the previous month stating that the ITTF headquarters were to be in Cardiff and the Honorary Secretary was Mr C H Hallett who lived in Penarth.

❖ England played Wales for the fifth time on Saturday, 15th January 1927, 7pm at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. Ivor Montagu was the referee with Philip Warden the umpire. For the second time England lost with Frank Lawes, Frank Burls and Charles Allwright the only English players to win their matches – one game up to 50. Maurice Armstrong, Charles Mase, Lionel Farris, Andrew Donaldson, Bernard Bernstein, James Thompson (the captain) and H Bennett all lost.

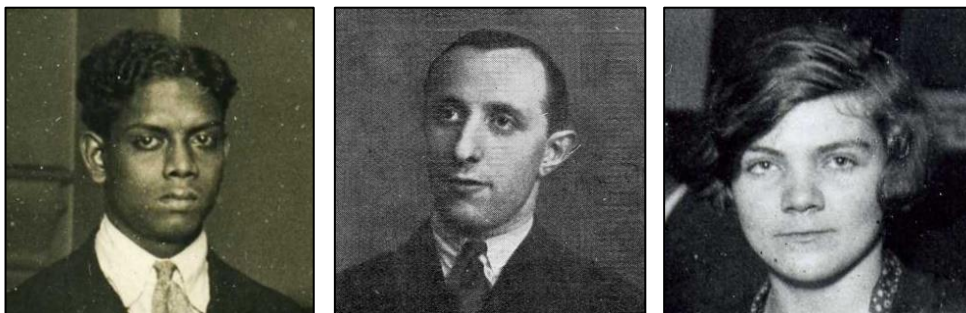
WALES		ENGLAND	
1. J. H. Thomas	50	1. H. Bennett	31
2. R. Thomas	50	2. M. Armstrong	38
3. J. C. Thomas	50	3. C. Mase	35
4. J. C. Thomas	50	4. R. B. Thomas	37
5. J. C. Thomas	50	5. J. H. Bennett	35
6. J. C. Thomas	50	6. A. Donaldson	35
7. J. C. Thomas	50	7. B. Bernstein	31
8. J. C. Thomas	50	8. J. Thompson	34
9. J. C. Thomas	50	9. H. Bennett	32
10. J. C. Thomas	50	10. J. Thompson	32
11. J. C. Thomas	50	11. J. Thompson	32
12. J. C. Thomas	50	12. J. Thompson	32
13. J. C. Thomas	50	13. J. Thompson	32
14. J. C. Thomas	50	14. J. Thompson	32
15. J. C. Thomas	50	15. J. Thompson	32
16. J. C. Thomas	50	16. J. Thompson	32
17. J. C. Thomas	50	17. J. Thompson	32
18. J. C. Thomas	50	18. J. Thompson	32
19. J. C. Thomas	50	19. J. Thompson	32
20. J. C. Thomas	50	20. J. Thompson	32



Charles Allwright, Frank Burls, Frank Lawes

- ❖ An inter-town match was played on 22nd January between the Birmingham and Cardiff Leagues under English rules, the previous fixture being under Welsh rules which advantaged the Welsh players who won nine of the ten matches with a points difference of 498 to 366. All bar one of the Birmingham players used a wooden racket and it was this player who won the one match. The difference – Wales played up to 50 points whilst in England it was either 21 or 31 depending on the area. In Wales only wooden rackets were allowed whilst in England anything could be used whether just wood or with some kind of covering. At the time rubber and sandpaper were common. Another difference was that in Wales teams were eight-a-side for club matches and ten-a-side in representative games with the total number of points deciding who had won. England on the other hand usually had five or seven-a-side with the match decided by the number of games won or lost. Standardisation was one of the reasons for forming an international federation.
- ❖ The English Championships, later known as the English Open, which were also held at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, introduced doubles events for the first time, previously only singles had been played. All three doubles were won by British players: the Men's Doubles by Lionel Farris and Percy Bromfield, the Women's' Doubles by Joan Ingram and Dolly Gubbins of Wales and the Mixed Doubles by Lionel Farris and Joan Ingram. Ingram also was runner-up in the Women's Singles losing to her

doubles partner, Gubbins. The Indian, Raja Suppiah, won the Men's Singles defeating Bernard Bernstein. Another new event was for a Men's Singles for those players not seeded which was won by Frank Burls, with a name that later became very well known, as the runner-up – Fred Perry. The tournament took place on 22nd-23rd April 1927.

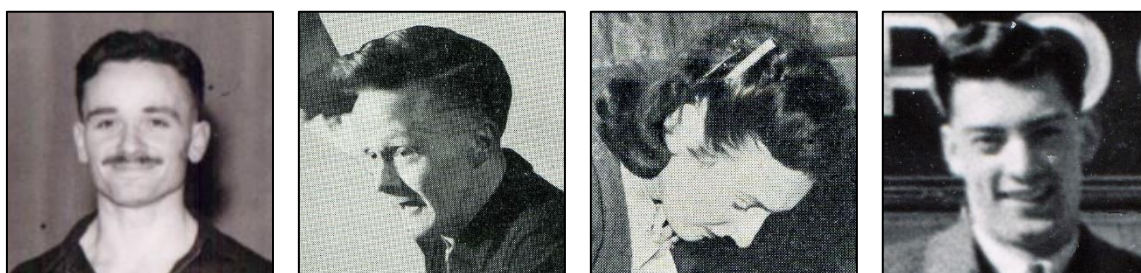


Raja Suppiah, Bernard Bernstein, Joan Ingram



Lionel Farris, Percy Bromfield

- ❖ The Provisional ETTA ratified its position and the Foundation Conference took place at the Indian Students Hostel in Gower Street, London, on Sunday, 24th April 1927. The earlier constitution and regulations drawn up by the Provisional Committee were adopted and Ivor Montagu and Bill Pope were elected Chairman and Secretary/Treasurer respectively. 18 people attended and there were apologies from five leagues and one club. The new title "The English Table Tennis Association" was adopted changing from the Table Tennis Association.
- ❖ The first ETTA handbook was produced which incorporated 'The English Language Handbook of the International Table Tennis Federation', price – one shilling. It recorded 19 affiliated leagues and bodies and 16 directly affiliated clubs. There were area committees for the Northern Counties, Lancashire and the Midlands. Annual subscriptions for the 1927/28 season for each club affiliated to a league was 2/6d and for clubs not members of a league 5/-. For individuals who were not members of an affiliated club the charge was 2/6d.
- ❖ Future internationals born in 1927: Brian Brumwell, Keith Hurlock, Violet Patterson and Ronnie Rumjahn.



ITTF World Youth Championships 4th-11th December 2022: Tunis, Tunisia

Photos courtesy of the ITTF

There were two age categories in the Championships, Under 19s and Under 15s, with team events, singles and doubles in both, making 14 events in total.

There were no English participants, nor indeed any from the other Home Countries. There were, however, several European players who had performed well at the Europe Youth Top 10 in September/October, so it was a real test to see how they fared against their peers on the higher stage.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, China won both the U19 Boys' and U19 Girls' Team events with Poland and France being the respective runners-up. France and Chinese Taipei were the losing semi-finalists in the Boys' event and Japan and Romania in the Girls' event.

It was a similar story in the U15 Team events with China winning both events. Australia were the runners-up in the U15 Boys with France and Japan the losing semi-finalists. Whilst in the U15 Girls, Japan were runners-up and Korea Republic and Romania the losing semi-finalists.

U19 Singles: The U19 Girls' Singles semi-finals saw both matches with China meeting Japan and it was the two girls from Japan who progressed to the finals, Kuai Man and Chen Yi the losing players. The final saw Miyuu Kihara beat fellow Japanese player Miwa Harimoto 4-1.

The U19 Boy's Singles semi-finals saw two Chinese players face the Frenchman, Felix Lebrun, and the Romanian, Darius Movileanu and it was the two Chinese players who reached the final. Lin Shidong versus Chen Yuanyu with Lin becoming the champion in a 4-1 win.



Under 19 Singles Champions - Miyuu Kihara, Japan and Lin Shidong, China

U19 Doubles: The U19 Boys' Doubles saw the two U19 Men's Doubles finalists partner each other and they defeated Adrien Rassenfosse, Belgium and Hayate Suzuki, Japan in the final. The U19 Girls' title went to Japan's Miwa Harimoto and Miyuu Kihara who overcame Charlotte Lutz and Prithika Pavade of France. It was a third title for Lin who with Kuai Man won the U19 Mixed Doubles against Lee Hoyun and Lee Daeun of Korea Republic.

U15 Singles: As with the U19 Girls' Singles it was two China versus Japan clashes in the semi-finals and on this occasion, it was China who prevailed. Yuna Ojio and Rin Mende being the bronze medallists. The final saw Yan Yutong defeat her compatriot Xiang Junin 4-3.

In the U15 Boys Flavien Coton, France, defeated Japan's Takumi Tanimoto in one semi-final, a tremendous battle 8, -7, -12, 8, -9, 9, 9. On the other table it was Japan's Kazuki Yoshiyama who was the victor with Alan Kurmangaliyev of Kazakhstan the losing player. In the final, Coton, who had won the Europe Youth Top 10, was the victor, defeating Kazuki Yoshiyama of Japan 4-2, he was the only non-Asian player to reach a singles final.



Under 15 Singles Champions – Yan Yutong, China and Flavien Coton, France

U15 Doubles: It was Samuel Arpas from Slovakia and Balazs Lei of Hungary who won the U15 Boys' Doubles from Japan's Kazuki Yoshiyama and Takumi Tanimoto. Whilst another title went to China in the U15 Girl's Doubles as Xiang Junlin and Yan Yutong were the winners with Korea Republic's Yoo Yerin and Lee Seungeun the runners-up. The U15 Mixed Doubles saw a win for Kurmangaliyev and Hana Goda, Egypt, their opponents in the final were Tiago Abiodun, Portugal and Maria Berzosa Casas, Spain.

Cippenham Junior 4* Open: 4th-5th December 2022

All photos courtesy of Graham Trimming

This season's Cippenham Junior 4* saw 162 players battle for honours in junior and cadet singles with a high number of the top ranked England players participating making it a very competitive event. Saturday was the day for the Cadet Boys and Girls whilst Sunday saw the older Junior age group. At the group stage the winners and runners-up went through to the main event whilst the remainder of each group played in the consolation events, so plenty of matches for everyone.

Cadets: In the Cadet Boys' Singles there were a large number of entries which resulted in 24 groups. The four semi-finalists were Isaac Kingham (No. 1 seed) versus Kacper Piwowar (No. 4 seed) and Leo Nguyen (No. 3 seed) versus Max Radiven (No. 2 seed). It was Kingham, the defending champion and Nguyen who faced each other in the final with Kingham successfully defending his title.



Cadet Boys' Winner Isaac Kingham and Runner-up Leo Nguyen

The Cadet Girls' Singles semi-finalists were Sienna Jetha (No. 1 seed) versus Eva Eccles (No. 3 seed) and Mia Lakhani (unseeded) versus Darcey Taylor (No. 4 seed). It was Jetha who made it through into the final but a tremendous fight was put up by Eccles who only just lost the semi-final encounter deuce in the fifth. In the other match it was the unseeded Lakhani who prevailed in her semi-final match although she couldn't emulate the win in the final. Jetha became the champion.



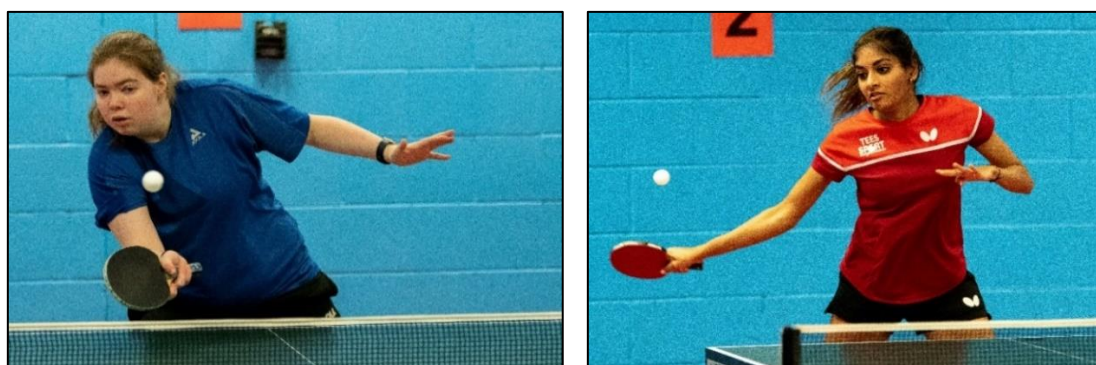
Cadet Girls' Winner Sienna Jetha and Runner-up Mia Lakhani

Juniors: Sunday started with the Junior Boys' event. One semi-final saw Larry Trumpauskas (No. 1 seed) who meet Joseph Hunter (no. 4 seed) and it was Hunter who took the win. The other semi-final saw Kingham (No. 12 seed) triumph over Kacper Piwowar (unseeded) to give him his second final of the weekend. It wasn't to be a double triumph for Kingham although he took Hunter to five in a close tussle. An excellent weekend for the young man.



Junior Boys' Winner Joseph Hunter and Runner-up Isaac Kingham

The Junior Girls' Singles was always going to be a tightly fought contest with all top four England girls competing for the honours as well as many other up and coming players. Mari Baldwin's (No. 1 seed) semi-final opponent was Scarlett Anders (No. 3 seed) and it was Baldwin who won the encounter. Anaya Patel (No. 2 seed) was the player who progressed from the other semi-final defeating Millie Rogove (scratch entry) who had earlier beaten Maliha Baig (No. 4 seed). The final between the top two seeded players reflected how tight it is at the top of the girls' game but it was Baldwin who triumphed -8, -8, 5, 14, 10.



Junior Girls' Winner Mari Baldwin and Runner-up Anaya Patel

European Championships Qualification Tournament Round 4: 8th December 2022, Kovilovo, Serbia

Although this was the fourth round it was actually the first match of the four to be played with two home matches on 26th and 27th January 2023 at Milton Keynes against Serbia and France. The final match away to France is due to be played on 29th January 2023.

On paper it looked as if it should be an easy win for England but it turned out to be the tightest of matches. The England squad was Paul Drinkhall, Tom Jarvis, Liam Pitchford and Sam Walker, coached by Gavin Evans.

First on the table was Drinkhall (WR 77) who faced Dimitrije Levajac (WR 213). After a comfortable first game winning 11-4, Drinkhall lost the next three. Final score 4, -9, -8, -3. Serbia 1 England 0.



Dimitrije Levajac v Paul Drinkhall. Photo courtesy of the ETTU

Next was Pitchford (WR 24) whose opponent was Marko Jevtovic (WR 412). A close first game which Pitchford won 11-9, followed by the Serb winning the second 11-5, third went to Pitchford 11-7 and the fourth was very tight with Pitchford just getting over the line 11-9. Serbia 1 England 1.

Jarvis (WR 120) was England's number 3 playing Zsolt Peto (WR 315). Another game going to four with Jarvis coming out on top, score 14-12, 9-11, 11-5, 11-6. Serbia 1 England 2.

The fourth match saw Pitchford versus Levajac with nearly 200 ranking places between them. Despite this it was the Serb who took the match with all the scores once again being close. The match see-sawed with Pitchford winning the first 11-6, Levajac the second 11-8, Pitchford the third 11-8 and Levajac the fourth and fifth 11-9, 11-8. Serbia 2 England 2.

It wouldn't have been expected that Drinkhall would be playing in a fifth and deciding match but that was how it turned out with Jevtovic on the other side of the table. First blood went to Drinkhall 11-8, the second also went his way 11-9. The Serb fought back to take the third 11-5. With great relief for England but huge disappointment to the good and vocal Serbian crowd, Drinkhall won the fourth end 11-7. Serbia 2 England 3.

The return leg in England could be interesting.

There was good, live, free coverage on the ETTU.TV site and great credit must go to having such an excellent recording of the match.

Future Dates

Domestic Events:

Cardiff Satellite Grand Prix: 17th-18th December 2022

National Championships Qualifiers: 7th-8th January 2023, Nottingham

National Championships: 24th-26th March 2023, Nottingham

Jersey Satellite Grand Prix: 7th-9th April 2023, St Clement, Jersey

ELCC Qualifiers: 16th April 2023 (juniors), 22nd April 2023 (seniors)

Cadet, Under 17, Junior National Championships: 29th-30th April 2023, Nottingham

Cadet National Cup: 13th-14th May 2023, Plymouth

London Grand Prix: 27th-28th May 2023, Redbridge

ELCC Finals: 3rd-4th June 2023, venue to be confirmed

Under 11 and Under 13 National Championships: 10th-11th June 2023, Wolverhampton

Junior National Cup: 17th-18th June 2023, Harlow

Gloucester Grand Prix: 24th-25th June 2023

Senior National Cup: 8th-9th July 2023 - Cancelled

Wolverhampton Grand Prix: 15th-16th July 2023 (change of date)

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

International Events:

European Team Championships Stage 1: Group A3: England Men: Home to Serbia on 26th January 2023 and home to France on 27th January 2023, both at Milton Keynes, away to France on 29th January 2023

Europe Top 16 Cup: 25th-26th February 2023, Montreux, Switzerland

European Under 21 Championships: 5th-9th April 2023, Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

World Championships: 22nd-28th May 2023, Durban, South Africa

European Under 13 Championships: 14th-18th June 2023, venue to be confirmed

European Games: 23rd June-2nd July 2023, Krakow and Malopolska, Poland

European Youth Championships: 14th-23rd July 2023, Gliwice, Poland

European Championships (Team): 10th-17th September 2023, Malmo, Sweden

Europe Youth Top 10: 29th September-1st October 2023, Bucharest, Romania

There are also a number of World Table Tennis events

Veterans Events: For the Over 40s:

World Veteran Championships: 15th-21st January 2023, Muscat, Oman

European Veteran Championships: 26th June-1st July 2023, Sandefjord, Norway

More details can be found on the VETTS website. Booking for Norway is still open but Oman closes on 15th December 2022.

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