

Isle of Wight

Table Tennis League

October 2024

Chairman's Message

As another winter season kicks off, I just wanted to share a couple of things with you all. Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to those who made the Presentation Evening possible. Pat Thorley, Paul Cates and Tim Giles all put a huge amount of effort in to make the event run smoothly on the day, and Peter Clarke helped out with the administration too, so it was an awesome team effort. Personally, I enjoyed the evening very much – and hope you all did too. It's great to get together to celebrate our successes and have a natter.

We are only at the beginning of the Winter League, but the Doubles League has been running a little longer – long enough for a couple of outliers to be positioning themselves at the top of the table. "Above Par" and "Double Trouble" are looking like the teams to beat. My thanks to Neil Hedges for putting this together for us once again.

That's all for now, have a great season!

Alex Rorke
(Chairman, IWCTTA)

News

Coaching *by Rob Smith (Coaching Officer)*

I was appointed Coaching Officer for the IOWTTA at the AGM in August and I look forward to working with the team of coaches and helpers on the island.

I want to thank Glenn Morley for all the work he has done over the last few years and wish him well for the future. Together with Elaine Mills, Mike Prior, Martin Johnstone, Ricky Lock and their helpers they have laid a solid foundation for me to begin with.

Saturday coaching for Juniors began again on Saturday 7th September starting at 10am until noon. Additional sessions on Monday and Thursday evenings may follow later in the year.

New for 2024



Steve Mills Table Tennis Coaching

Steve is a former international table tennis player and coach. He spent 10 years in the top 10 England men's rankings, reaching as high as No.6.

He was a full-time player and coach. Winner of over 25 open men's singles tournaments and 20 men's doubles, including a bronze medal in the men's singles at the English National Championships. During his ten years as a professional player, he had wins over several world-class players, including world No.3, No.5 and No.15.

Steve also played in the German Bundesliga and did many exhibitions on the Isle of Wight. Steve now lives in Merstone, on the Isle of Wight, and is available for group and individual coaching.

Hourly coaching

Table Tennis coaching for both juniors and adults can be booked with Steve on an hourly basis at a time that suits you, Steve, and the Table Tennis Centre is free.

The cost of the coaching per hour is:

One person = £30

Two people = £40

Three or more people = £45

Junior Half Term Coaching

During the October half-term, Steve will be holding a junior training camp. The camp will run as follows:

Time	9am through to 4pm.
Dates	Monday to Friday
Cost	£50 per day
Ages	10 to 16

To book your place, simply call Steve on 07977 074 497 or email steve@steve-mills.com

Presentation Evening

The Annual Presentation Evening was held on Friday 13 September at Ryde Castle and it was an excellent evening with nearly 80 members, family and friends in attendance.

ANNUAL PRESENTATION EVENING 2024

"THANK YOU" FROM ALEX RORKE

Chairman, IoW Table Tennis Association



"Many thanks to everyone (almost eighty people) who attended our annual Presentation Evening on Friday. This is our only table tennis event, away from table, bat and balls; a social gathering to celebrate and to share in our table tennis achievements over the past year.

I take this opportunity of thanking those who worked hard to arrange this event, especially Pat Thorley who co-ordinated the proceedings, Tim Giles, who presented the trophies, and especially Paul Cates, who had the mammoth task collecting, inscribing and arranging all the trophies for the right recipients.

I congratulate all those who received awards. I mention, in particular, Ryan Cates, who received nine trophies, - the highest number for twelve years. This was followed by Pat Thorley, Tim Giles and Paul Rainford, who all won four. It was also good to see some of our young players (cadets and juniors), Joe, Lewis, Jye and Thane who also won awards. We look forward to seeing them continue to improve and develop their game.

Finally, as always, a big "thank you" to all those who assist and support IoW table tennis in any way throughout the year. It is much appreciated"

Ryan - Star of the Show!



The happy trophy winners

Steve and Pat – Men's and Women's Champions



**Jye and Thane – Cadet
Winner and Runner up**



**Ryan and Peter - Hard Bat
Doubles Champions**

**Ryan, Paul and Graham -
Ryde C - League Champions**



**Ryan and Joe won Division One Extra
and the Handicapped Doubles**



Guidance for the Winter League

Isle of Wight Table Tennis Association

Guidance for Winter League

This leaflet seeks to assist players and team captains to ensure the smooth running and efficiency of the Winter League.

Teams comprise at least three players, who elect a captain. This should be a person who is happy both for their contact details to be made available to other captains, and to lead the co-ordination of any rescheduled matches.

Fixtures for the season are published on www.tabletennis365.com/IsleOfWight at the end of September, with league matches commencing in early October. Most matches are played at Smallbrook Table Tennis Centre. Venues and other details can be found on the website.

Please ensure that matches are started by 7:30pm. If both captains agree, and the match venue is available, matches may be started earlier.

A list with team captains' contact information will be made available before the start of the season. Captains can then liaise before a match to confirm arrangements and, where necessary, venue access, parking and any other relevant information.

Postponements. These are sometimes unavoidable due to adverse weather conditions or the venue being unavailable. When a team does not have three players the match can be played with two players or can be rearranged to another suitable date.

Rearranged Matches. When captains rearrange a match, Tom (League Secretary) should be informed within two weeks of the original match date, and the availability of the Centre at Smallbrook (if used) should be checked with Martin.

Equipment. It is the home team's responsibility to ensure that the table is set up for league matches, together with a coin for tossing, pen and scorecard. The home team provides the approved table tennis ball (allocated to team captains before the season starts).

Teams take it in turns to umpire a game, with the home team umpiring first. The result of each game is entered on the scorecard, with the captains responsible for ensuring that the correct result/score is written.

Captains. Captains are responsible for the conduct of their team. They should ensure their team members are ready to play their games without unnecessary delays, and that warm up time once the evening's matches have begun is limited to approximately 2 minutes. Clothing or towels should not be hung over the side barriers as this can distract the team next to you.

Player Conduct. All matches should be played in a sporting manner. If your ball enters the playing area next to you during match play, you should not enter to retrieve it, but wait for them to return it to you. If you get a net or edge during play, we encourage players to lift a hand or apologise to your opponent. Players should shake hands or fist bump each other and the umpire at the end of the match.

Break/Refreshments. Captains should decide prior to a match if there is to be an official break for refreshments, or if players are simply getting their own refreshments when they are not playing.

Result/Scorecard. Scorecards can be downloaded from the website for use during the match and it is the home team's responsibility to provide the scorecard.

At the end of the match, the captains check the scorecard and sign it. A photo should be taken of the final scorecard and emailed to the League Secretary, or it can be placed in the score box on the wall at Smallbrook.

The Table Tennis Association wants all teams/players to have a successful season and to enjoy their table tennis. If you require any further help/advice, you can ask any committee member.

Contact Details:

Tom (League Secretary) leaguesec.iwta@gmail.com

Martin (T.T. Centre manager) martin.dove@blueyonder.co.uk



Daytime Doubles League (details correct at time of going to press)

The Daytime Doubles league has been under way for five weeks now, with Above Par leading the table, Double Trouble second and the TeeBees in third place.



Peter, Robert and Alan of Above Par



Bryce, Bev and Tim of the Tee Bees

Winter League *(details correct at time of going to press)*

With the Winter League still in the very early stages, there have been some interesting developments already.

Division One

Early indications are that Ryde teams will dominate Division One again, but who will come out on top this year?

Ryde C may be favourites to win the Championship again, with Joe now joining Ryan and Paul, but Graham has moved to Ryde Rankers to team up with Hugh and Lewis, and they will also be strong contenders to take the title. Ryde A and B could also both be in with a chance, so it looks an exciting Division One this season.



Paul, Ryan and Joe - Ryde C



Graham, Lewis and Hugh – Ryde Rankers

Division Two

Ryde Revellers have had an excellent start to the season and lead the table over Ryde Detonators. The Revellers have now been joined by Spike, and they look hard to beat.

However, there are a few other teams who could make a bid for the top spot, including Havenstreet B and Vics C, who have both had good starts.



The Reveller's Guarav and Spike look to be top performing Division Two players this season



Division Three

We are delighted to have a new club join the league in Division Three, the Wroxall Warriors, and we wish them well in their first season. Early indications are that they will be a hard team to beat, having lost only 6-4 in their first match, to St Lawrence Lizards who are top of the table.

At present St Lawrence and Ryde Retailers look particularly strong, whilst Ryde Frogs have some new players and are a much improved team.



Robin and Steve have joined Ryde Frogs and strengthened the team

Around the Island

St. Lawrence Table Tennis club *by Andy Francis*

The club is based at the historic Village Hall with views of the sea, we have two tables and we meet every Tuesday and Friday [2.00-4.00pm] at St Lawrence Village Hall at the junction of Undercliff Drive and Seven Sisters Road. On Road Parking is available on Undercliff Drive.

We have a varied selection of ages and abilities amongst our members and welcome newcomers or returning players on either a pay as you play or membership basis. We play mostly doubles, with some singles play and practise, but nobody takes anything too seriously and we all have a lot of fun. Some of our members also play competitively in the IWTTA Summer and Winter Leagues for various teams, but St Lawrence is all about recreational play and enjoyment.

The Village Hall has recently refurbished their kitchen and we have Tea and Biscuits and occasionally cake!!

If you are looking for a new activity or are a seasoned player we look forward to welcoming you.

Wroxall Table Tennis Club

We are very pleased to welcome a team from Wroxall Table Tennis Club for the first time in many years. Wroxall were once one of the biggest clubs on the Island and were very successful. Good luck to Andrew, Mark, David, Kevin and Jon of the Warriors who are playing in the Third Division this season.

Wroxall have also started a new **Parkinson's Table Tennis and Social Group** which is held on the third Wednesday of every month between 2pm and 4pm at Stenbury Hall, Station Road, Wroxall PO38 3DP. This sounds a wonderful initiative! Find out more by emailing info@stenburyhall.org.uk

Shanklin Table Tennis Club

A Table Tennis Group is held at Shanklin Voluntary Youth and Community Centre in Victoria Avenue, Shanklin and they are looking for members for their Tuesday morning sessions which run between 10.30 am and 12.30pm and Tuesday evening sessions which run between 7.30pm and 9.30pm. Cost is £3 per session including refreshments. Call 07792 174941 for more information.

Memories

Barry from Vics found an old newspaper cutting showing the last time someone won nine trophies in a season before Ryan, and it was Anna when she was fifteen, in 2014! This piece in the County Press lists all the trophy winners that year, plus has some great photos too.

August 22, 2014 County Press

Cup haul for Anna

Trophies

Table tennis

ANNA Joyce took home a clutch of awards after another successful table tennis season. The Newport teenager, 15, took home individual prizes and trophies with her team, Newport Vics A, at the IW Table Tennis Association's annual awards night at Southpook Stadium.

With Danny Burns and Chris Angell she won the Division 1 title, and also won the Division 1 pairs contest with Dana Hilliam. In the IW Championships, she won the ladies' singles and doubles alongside Temeesha Hobbs, and was runner-up in the consolation singles and mixed doubles with Andrew Ely.

She and brother, Michael, took home the County Press Tournament title, and was runner-up in the handicap doubles with Chris Angell.

Temeesha was another big winner on the night, taking home the junior girls' singles and mixed open singles titles, and the IW Championships mixed doubles with her dad, Don.

Don, the IW Championships men's singles' winner, also took home the Division 1 Franch Cup, and the veterans' title.

Cups, shields and cash prizes were handed out for all the season's events, and was followed by dinner and a quiz.

Left, Anna Joyce, 2014-2015
Below, Don and Temeesha Hobbs, 2014-2015

Division 1, winners: Newport Vics A (Angell, Burns, Chris Angell, Anna Joyce), Runners-up: STTC (Andrew Ely, Lee Orton, Matt Corbridge)

Division 1 pairs, winners: Dana Hilliam and Anna Joyce, Runners-up: Peaches (Dale Hobbs and Chris Stanton)

Division 2, winners: Newport Vics C (Dana Hilliam, David Brown, Sam and Ray Jones), Runners-up: (Robert Davis, Carl Pate, Paul White and John Horley)

Division 2 pairs, winners: (Shirleywaite, Karen King and Ted Purvis), (John Corbridge), Runners-up: (John Moore) and (Liam Daniel (W. Farrow and Tim Wainwright))

Division 3, winners: STTC, Anna Paul, Michelle, James, Lisa, Helen, Harry, Alex and Paul, (George), Runners-up: (Paula E. (Don Pate), Temeesha Hobbs, Julia Baker and Pauline Rowley)

Knockout Cup, winners: Vics B (Dana Hilliam, Paddy Lupton and Peter Perceval), Runners-up: Vics C (Chris Newlands, Ray Harris, Danny Burns and Barry Joyce)

Summer League, winners: (Paul Ball, (Helen Hulteen), and (Karen King), Runners-up: (Rylee (Al Wagner), (Harriet and Martin Dowd))

Island Championships, men's singles, winner: Don Hobbs, Runners-up: Andrew Ely

Ladies' singles, winner: Anna Joyce, Runners-up: Temeesha Hobbs

Consolation, winner: Jim Hall, Runners-up: Anna Joyce

Men's doubles, winners: Andrew Ely and Lee Orton, Runners-up: Chris Angell and Don Hobbs

Ladies' doubles, winners: Temeesha Hobbs and Anna Joyce

Mixed doubles, winners: Don and Temeesha Hobbs, Runners-up: Andrew Ely and Anna Joyce

Franch Cup, winner: Don Hobbs, Runners-up: Andrew Ely

Junior open singles, winner: (Dale Stanton), Runners-up: Temeesha Hobbs

Junior girls' singles, winner: Temeesha Hobbs, Runners-up: Anna Joyce

Castle open singles, winner: Temeesha Hobbs, Runners-up: (Mushy) Joyce

Castle girls' singles, winner: (George Jones), Runners-up: Temeesha Hobbs

Division 2, winner: (Dany) Rowburn, Runners-up: (John) Corbridge

Division 3, winner: (Michael) Joyce, Runners-up: (Temeesha) Hobbs

Handicap doubles, winners: (Harry Metz and John Hulton), Runners-up: (Chris Angell and Anna Joyce)

Open Women's Pairs, winners: (Lee) Orton and (Heather) Blake, Runners-up: (Don Hobbs and Julia) Stanton

County Press Tournament, winners: Anna and Michael Joyce, Runners-up: (Andrew Ely and Matt) Corbridge, (Semi-Finalists: (Ryan) Hulteen and (Karen King), Alex and Pauline Rowley)

Veterans, winner: Don Hobbs, Runners-up: Chris Angell

Supercup, winner: (Dana) Hilliam, Runners-up: (Martin) Dowd

Handicap, winner: (Peter) Moore, Runners-up: (Jim Hall)

Handicap doubles, winners: (Jim Hall and Don Hobbs), Runners-up: (Peter Moore and John Wainwright)

Below, Alan Hulbert and Karen King, 2014-2015
Below, Paul McCathie with Harry Metz and Ian-Luc Belon, 2014-2015

Lee Orton and Andrew Ely, 2014-2015

Isle of Wight Table Tennis Clothing

Visit Big Wight at [Clubs - IW Table Tennis - BigWight](#) to see the full selection of IW table tennis clothing. They are excellent quality at good prices and look great too!

**ISLE OF WIGHT TABLE TENNIS
CLOTHING NOW AVAILABLE**

Table Tennis Shirts / hoodies are proving to be popular with members.
These are supplied by at the *BigWight* T-shirt company
(based in Newport)



Their prices are reasonable. They vary according to size / design.

Google them at:- <https://www.bigwight.com/iw-table-tennis/>
Or call in and see them at Daish Way,
Dodnor Industrial Estate, Newport
Tel. 01983 532333

Please decide which colour you want.
The IoW badge is on the front and you select your logo
for the back. Indicate your size - XS S M



Archive

We have reached 1996 in our look back at Isle of Wight news in the ETTA Table Tennis News magazines, and this year contained much of interest for Islanders.

In the February issue, we were told that the Island was doing well in the Hampshire Cadet League, but John Prean did not have his usual column printed in the magazine so there was no more information given, but in the March issue the usual column was back.



HAT-TRICK

Our team in the Southern Region League has won again, making it 6 wins in 6 outings. The 7-2 win against KCD Stiga (Gosport) may play a big part, as the 7-2 margin produced also the valuable third point. Our opponents were rather unlucky as they suffered from an injury to a key player and went close on more than one occasion. Roger Hookey again contributed a hat-trick and Mike Turner and Danny Burns produced two each. Now for Cippenham and the probable moment of decision!

Hard to keep Hookey out of the news, as he also won out "masters" which our previous "Top 10" and "Top 12" has become. This time we lined up 15 players (it should have been 16) into four groups with two from each group

going to the Quarter Finals and sudden death. Danny Burns survived a group defeat against Matt Hobley to reach the final against Roger who won in two straight, but in the second the doors had opened for the younger man at deuce. He needed to play a couple of good points then to level the match, but played a couple of indifferent ones.

James Ovník made an excellent impression, beating a couple of good first division players (Chris Everson and Kevin Gatrell). James has been setting our second division alight with his serves and loops. Lorna Dutch won her group, then survived a cliff hanger against Roger Nevell and then fell to Hookey in the semis. Roger has now won this event 6 times in the 8 seasons it has been staged. This season's event was by far the best, the new Carl Prean centre being an excellent venue and backcloth.

In the Cotswold Junior Select, Lorna Dutch reached the semi-finals and Danny Burns the Quarters, indicating the progress of our younger players. Lucy Pointer came second in a group of 5 in the Under 12s and so did not make the semi-finals. Danny's national ranking has been mysteriously low for some time. Recently it was discovered, I am told, that some of his points had gone to another 'Burns'. I would guess that he is somewhere in the top 20 of English boys, but the rankings show him in the top 50. He also hardly loses in the first division of the Junior County Championships, but that event seems to attract very poor points because of the feeble 'weighting' attached. I am amazed that National Councillors, representing the counties should tolerate this state of affairs, but they do. No news at all on the Carl Prean front, although England have lost 6 of the 7 matches played without him. The win was by a 4-3 margin against what was virtually a Hungarian 'B' team. In the meantime seven (sic) selectors have been appointed. That will really frighten those foreigners. If not, it certainly frightens me. The last thing we need is an expansion of the red tape industry.

In the April issue it was reported that the Isle of Wight had won the Hampshire Junior Division One title, with the squad including Danny Burns:

The Isle of Wight have won the inter town Junior Div. 1 title with their squad of Danny Burns, James Ovník, Lorna Dutch (playing as a boy) and Lucy Pointer whilst Southampton "B" represented by Richard Williams, Simon Geddes, Chris Taylor, Craig Longland and Anna Maskell have won Div. 2. Portsmouth "B" will also be promoted whilst their "A" team will be relegated.

In the June issue there was much to report and John Prean was annoyed a couple of his columns had not been printed!

Isle of Wight

BY JOHN PREAN

APOLOGIES

My apologies that these notes have been missing more than once this season. They were punctually and regularly delivered. What happened after that, your guess is as good as mine. My thanks to those who had noticed and particularly those who have written to me about this.

I had hoped to write by now that our team in the Southern Region League had won the title of the Premier League for the first time. Two wins of 6-3 against their rivals Cippenham and a 100% record in other matches seemed to point to a happy ending. However a 7-2 crash against Burnchal looks likely to have reversed the earlier scenario and with Cippenham collecting maximum points (three for a win of 7-2 or over) they are now favourites! Danny Burns won our two on an otherwise depressing day.

As Roger Hookey lost all three that day and Danny had beaten him in the league, the 16 year old Hampshire Junior Champion also seemed to be the favourite of most experts in our "Closed" Championships. Roger, however, had other ideas to win his 8th title, a record. Danny led most of the way in the first game,

lost that and was never in the hunt in the second. Roger's hardest match was against Matt Hobley in the semi-final, which he won 18 and 20, Matt having led 20-17 in the second. I thought there were five players on view with realistic chances, which means that it was never really a walkover for Roger, who now overtakes previous multiple champions, notably Eric Green and Jim Daly.

There was consolation for Danny, as he won both doubles - the Mixed with Lucy Pointer and the men's with Chris Angus. The latter ended a long reign by Hookey and Mike Turner, who lost in the final. Alex Rorke and his mother Pauline went close in the final of the Mixed.

Lucy at 11 (!) became triple champion as she won the ladies' singles and ladies' doubles (the latter with Jackie Urry, who was favourite in the singles, but struggled against the combination bat of her opponents and so did not make the final where Lucy met Barbara Farelly).

The entry in the Ladies was, to put it charitably, disappointing. One hopes that next time Lucy will defend against a larger field. Her next target must be the National Under 11.

Our Cadet team ended in second place in the Hampshire Inter-Town Cadet Championships. With Lucy under 11, Nathan Godolphin under 12 and Dean Whittington under 13, that was a fine performance for a young team. Lucy playing generally against boys won 18 out of 21 and Nathan was not far behind. Two for the future.

Carl Prean, our representative in the English National Championships was beaten in the final by Alan Cooke. He will, no doubt, reflect on the leads that slipped away. He had led 19-16 in the first and 18-17 in the third game and was serving in both and then lost all 9 points on his own service! Sadly, the event was rather devalued by the absence of Matthew Syed and Chen Xinhua. The event may well follow all those Three Stars into the pages of history if "supported" in this way. I have just read an interesting paper by Brian Halliday, the new Vice-Chairman of PR which extols the virtues of contests between defenders and attackers, which I agree are the best to watch and therefore likely to please the spectators. However, if the defenders stay away...such entertainment cannot take place.

The September issue reported that the Carl Prean Centre had opened in August and was proving a success already:

Isle of Wight

John Prean

PLEASURE

A good time to sum up last season. It was one which locally we remember with some pleasure.

Our new centre opened in August and in its first year managed to break even, which offers encouragement for the future. More important, it afforded regular practice under excellent conditions to our best players as well as others who have improved their game. It afforded an excellent venue for our tournaments and representative matches. We now have firm roots.

The Ryde Club which uses the venue on two nights per week is enjoying a rise in membership. Local taxes remain shattering and a cause for concern.

Our team won the Southern Region League. Despite two victories of 6-3 against main rivals Copenham, in the end it was KCD Fareham who brought home our bacon by defeating Cippenham. The curious, if not uninteresting points system nearly caused our downfall. You get two points for winning 5-4 and 6-3, but three by winning 7-2 and over. The latter important 'formality' our team too often overlooked even when 5-0 up. Only one game was lost, but that was by 7-2 against Burnchal, which reversed a 6-3 win at home. Serious thought is now being given to entering the main British League, perhaps in 1997. All our players performed with distinction, notably the ever reliable Roger Hookey, 16 year

old Danny Burns and Mike Turner who kept producing wins at vital moments, which is what one hopes for and seldom gets from a No. 3. Our Juniors again won the Hampshire Inter-Town League. With Danny and Lorna Dutch (playing in a boy's spot) and James Ovnik and Lucy Pointer this was a very strong team. We have won the event 3 times out of 4, but next season will be tough with Lorna seemingly 'losing interest' and Lucy away for the first match. It will be a hard act to follow.

Our Cadets came second in their section. With Lucy (playing against boys and almost unbeatable for all that), Nathan Godolphin and Dean Whittington this was a very strong team (average age 11) which indicates a major achievement in coming second in such good, older company.

Lucy reached the semi-finals in the National U-12 Championships, but did less well in the Under 11. I could not make it to the event, but was pleased to see that it has remained on the Calendar. It was something I started when I was Chairman of the Association. Lucy has been working on her game all summer, as, no doubt, have her main rivals. Time will tell how effective our coaching has been. I see a great future for her, if she keeps her enthusiasm for the game, which is not always easy to do.

I also have high hopes for Danny Burns, so much better than the ranking points indicate.

I get quite a few letters on the subject of Carl Prean, such an asset when he is here (not often enough), after whom our centre is named.

As all local league players know, sometimes there are players with whom we do not want to play in the same team, let alone for a season or more. Carl, rightly or wrongly, came to that point with Chen Xinhua after 5 years of patience, when Chen had let us down, as Carl saw it, rather too often. Carl did not enjoy our descent into second class status as a table tennis nation.

It was perhaps inevitable that Chen would let us down yet again when we most needed him, which was in the two relegation matches against Poland, who should, without Grubba, have been a doddle for us. There was no sign of Chen. He had returned to China in our hour of need. We may have no fewer than seven selectors, but I presume it did not occur to any of them to recall Carl for the match against the Poles. Pride came before the fall and so we went down, a ridiculous and unnecessary state of affairs.

We repeated that dose in the main European Championships and the next team event will see us perform in Category 2.

We had high hopes for Carl in the Olympics, particularly after he had won the "Brazilian Open", a Grand Prix event. However, the sort of black day it is difficult to explain saw our hopes explode. The Atlanta jinx also struck our table tennis hopes.

For all that, his friends on the Island hope that Carl's return to the England Team and the main international tournament scene will not be delayed for too long. One presumes that Chen at 36 (at least) has really retired and that the way is now open for a recovery from a bad time for English table tennis. I was never one to feel that the importation of Chinese veterans was the best way to encourage or produce good English players, but often seemed a voice in the wilderness, obvious though the conclusions were. The scars will not heal overnight and good sense may remain an absentee for some time yet. With the World Championships in Manchester only a few months away, time is not on our side and it never was.

In the August issue, John Prean focused on our top Junior players, including Danny Burns:

Isle of Wight

John Prean

GOOD RESULTS

Our youngsters travelled hopefully to the Clare Pengelly Memorial Tournament in Torquay, chalking up some good results.

Lucy Pointer won the Under 12 girls event, the good news being that it was her first win in a National 3 Star event, the bad being that only 6 girls entered. We certainly hoped that she would win the Under 14 as well, but she lost in the Final by two deuces. She picked up £35 in prize money, which did not cover half her costs. These were kept low and to avoid hotel bills our contingent left on the 5 am boat. Perhaps these logistics explain why entries were low. To which one has to add the 'benefits' of our incredible ranking scheme (more of that later).

Danny Burns won four matches on his way to a meeting with Gareth Herbert in the quarter finals.

Danny Burns won four matches on his way to a meeting with Gareth Herbert in the quarter finals. Herbert, whose play and talent have impressed me in the past, is probably the best junior in England and Danny lost 18 and 17. You get no prizes in table tennis for gallant defeats, but it did show how close Danny is to the very best in English Junior Table Tennis. I have written, when

he was in the top 50 of our ranking list, that he was really top 20 material and now, some time and much improvement later, see him in the top 10.

This brings me back to that incredible ETTA ranking scheme. Lucy, with a win and a runner up spot, has returned with only a handful of ranking points and the same fate has befallen Danny after his four wins and that one defeat against the English junior champion. Getting up at four in the morning, travelling 150 miles and some pretty good play left both more or less where they were

in terms of recognition and certainly in terms of statistics. I do not attribute the generally downward trend in tournament entries to the recession or the other factors so often paraded before us, but our ranking scheme. It would be hard to cobble together one that is so discouraging and heartless as the one we have. Changes are often promised, but harder to detect and the lack of common sense and reality is the main feature, as one contemplates the final lists. Among the many things which seem to have gone wrong in English table tennis, this at least is something capable of immediate cure.

No news, at the time of writing, about any resolution of the problems which have kept the Isle of Wight player Carl Prean out of the England Team for a season and which did much to propel our men's team into the depths of the second category of the team event of the main European Championships and the second division of the annual European League. In the former our last four outings had brought two semi-final and two final places which put us right near the top of European nations. Yet a year later we attained (and deserved) second class status, which was self-imposed by national politics and therefore completely unnecessary. Some changes in management, notable the return of Donald Parker to decision-making roles may bring new attitudes. One certainly hopes so.

The November issue included more news on our young Island players:



WARMEST THANKS

This is the first piece of any sort I have written for over a month following surgery and hospitalisation. First, my warmest thanks to all those who had written to me or sent "get well cards". I don't know how the news got around, but it was touching to see how many friends I had. I shall write to all of them as soon as I can.

Our new centre, "the Carl Prean table tennis centre" staged the first Hampshire Junior Inter-Town day. I did stumble along for an hour or two. Though somewhat below full fitness, it was good to see all those young faces who came to represent their towns in this excellent tournament, always so well run by Harold Albery and his helpers. With Lucy Pointer on holiday and without Lorna Dutch, we were always going to be pushed to equal the wins of former seasons, but

this was nevertheless what we managed to do with our boys, Danny Burns, James Ovník and Ruorarie Farrelly winning their singles in the two matches. We were grateful to Amy Jukes for turning out at short notice, particularly when we say that one of our opponents did not have a girl at all, which gave us immediate points, though perhaps not quite in the way we could wish. With maximum points and with Lucy back, we can look forward to the second session with some confidence.

Lucy was also in the news in our "Cadet Trials". Our best player last season in the Hampshire Inter-Town Cadet competition despite being a girl and three years below maximum age, the trial produced an unpleasant surprise for her, as she ended in fourth place. This produced inter alia some heartsearching for her father, John, who runs the team and he acted, as one would expect, in an entirely honourable way and dropped his daughter! I was, of course, lying in a hospital bed at the time and so was spared possible adjudication as Chairman of the County. My own inclination would have been to play Lucy on the basis of last season's record. Trials should be a

guide, not the be-all-and-end-all. No doubt, the decision would have been criticised, but this is not unusual in table tennis life, where those who try to do things get lots of stick and those who do nothing are regarded as 'nice guys' worthy of the highest honours. It is not surprising that our sport has managerial problems and not enough people to do things.

Even without Lucy, our cadets managed to win their first two matches. The first against Southampton (10-0) was not a problem, but the second against Bournemouth (6-4) certainly was and the title was all but lost. We were saved by Dean Whittington's hat-trick and Nathan Godelphin's two, two youngsters who have been putting in their practice stints all summer and so deserved success. As usual, we shall stage a second trial, since youngsters tend to improve fast on their earlier form.

Lucy fought back with two wins for Hampshire Juniors in Division 1, which is certainly a noble effort for an U-12. She reached the semi-finals of the Peniel U-12, but, having reached the finals last year, it was not quite up to our best hopes.

The general feeling remains that the "Peniel" is the best of our junior tournaments, better than the Junior Closed. The team event offers interesting team play and a second chance to go home with some successes. Danny Burns added to his ranking points.

Despite having our own centre, which provides regular table tennis in good conditions, our numbers, as expressed by league places, were down and it would have been worse than the two teams we lost, if we had not undertaken frantic last minute efforts to cobble together teams from odd players who had lost team mates and so did not have a team. My letter file indicates that this is continuing to happen all over the country. The Ryde Club, which plays at the centre, has increased their numbers and their teams, but there is a decline further away. There are plenty of theories for the drop, which we take very seriously, but one recalls Mr Samaranch's dictum that sports who get little or no television are "doomed to struggle" against sports which are the TV darlings. One recalls the last real upsurge in

our numbers around 1977 when, thanks to the Birmingham World Championships, we enjoyed more than thirty hours table tennis on BBC TV in ten days. The hours have fallen steadily until they reached their present level of near-zero, at any rate on the main channels. I can see no single more urgent problem for the sport. Recent poor results from our national teams cannot have helped our cause. We seemed, after all, more intent on playing politics than saving our men's team from double relegation and, prior to the Worlds, will have little to offer to our public, only a diet of second rate matches in lower divisions of Europe.

I continue to get letters as to when our player, Carl Prean, will play for England again. There is no problem on his side after the departure of Chen Xinhua back to China and changes in team management which were overdue. If the absence of Chen had not been kept from him, Carl would have accepted invitations to play both in the

European Championships and the relegation matches against Poland. Alas, politics prevailed and so we went down in two major events. To lose a winning player is sad enough, to volunteer for the resulting disaster seems particularly inept. However, I expect a happier ending eventually.

And finally...

I bet you didn't know this but an Islander is credited with changing the game of table tennis forever!

James Gibb from St Lawrence introduced the celluloid ball into the game in 1901 after visiting the USA where he came across the balls and realised their potential. Before this table tennis balls were made of solid rubber or cork, often covered in material, and the game was known as Wiff-Waff. After the introduction of the new ball the pace of the game changed and the name Ping Pong was registered.

James Gibb from St Lawrence who introduced these balls to the game which led to the sport we know and love today!



St Lawrence Village Hall – home to the local table tennis club



Thank you for reading. The next newsletter will be in January 2025. My special thanks go to Peter Clarke who provides a wealth of information, photos and posters for the newsletter. All contributions are very much appreciated so do please send any suggestions, articles or photos to: debbiey1960@outlook.com