

# Isle of Wight

## Table Tennis League

**April 2024**

### **Chairman's Message**

Firstly, as another season ends, I would like to congratulate the divisional winners: Ryde C, Vics C and Vics D – all of whom had comfortable leads over their nearest rivals. Ryde C's season got even better, as they also managed to win the Knowles Cup, beating Shanklin in the final. It's pretty impressive these days for any team to so consistently turn out just three players (Ryde C only used one reserve in the whole season), so a fine testament to the dedication of Paul, Ryan and Graham.

Finals Night will once again show-piece our tournaments' climaxes, with a handful of semi-finals thrown in to, so please come along to support the players on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> May.

As you have probably already heard, we are once again hosting a charity tournament in the summer, in aid of the Mountbatten Hospice. I have sent out details in separate communications, but if anyone needs further information, please email me. We are always looking for volunteers on the day, so please come on down and support the event. I can promise some top-class table tennis, if last year's event is anything to go by!

We also have the Summer League to look forward to, which starts the week after Finals Night. Don't forget to get your entries in to Rob – but if you can't commit to every week, let him know you're interested in reserving.

Also, further out in the year (although we know it will come round quickly) is the Presentation Evening – put the 13<sup>th</sup> September in your diaries. Tim Giles will be dropping out some details nearer the time, but we will be back at the Ryde Castle for trophies, food and a catch-up.

Have a great summer,

Alex Rorke

(Chairman, IWCTTA)

# Charity Open Table Tennis Tournament in aid of the Mountbatten Hospice

Organised by the IoW Table Tennis Association

Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> June , 2024

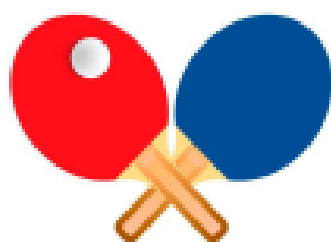
9-30 Start at the Island T.T. Centre, Smallbrook



This event is open to all players with a valid "Compete" Table Tennis England Membership; there are no separate categories for age or gender. The tournament is approved by TTE but not included in the Computer Ranking Scheme.

**Thanks to the generosity of local sponsors, the Island TTA is delighted to announce that PRIZE MONEY is available for this competition, as follows:**

**Winner: £500 Losing finalist: £250 Losing semi-finalists: £125 each**



This is a charity tournament; entry is £18 per competitor (this includes the TTE Tournament levy of £2-00).

**All proceeds will be donated to the  
Island Mountbatten Hospice.**

For further contact Alex Rorke  
E.mail [alexrorke@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alexrorke@hotmail.co.uk)

**Mountbatten Hospice are dedicated to providing a range of care and support for people with life-limiting conditions, ensuring that they get the care they need, when they need it, within their local community.**



## Mountbatten

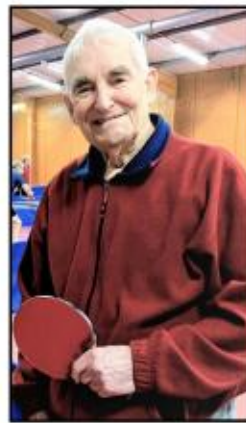
Please visit their website to see the incredible work they do locally:

<https://www.mountbatten.org.uk>

### Super Vets Handicapped Singles

This was a great event, with twenty-one entrants and a fun and competitive atmosphere throughout the evening. IWTTA President 92 year old Bert Paice reached the final by beating Chris Gordine, whilst Tim Giles made it by overcoming Spike Hughes on the final point in the fifth set of their match. The final was closely contested, with Tim Giles ultimately taking the title.

## ISLE OF WIGHT TABLE TENNIS SUPERVETS (OVER 60S) TOURNAMENT



### Handicapped Doubles

There was a really good turnout at the Handicapped Doubles event, held in February, with forty-six players entering.

In one semi final there was definitely family rivalry with brothers Paul and Shane Cates playing against Paul's son, Ryan, partnered by Joe Chapman. The two teenagers Ryan and Joe were the winners. They will meet Derek Pittard and Tom Flood in the final to be played on Finals Night.



Joe and Ryan



Tom and Derek

### Over 70's Singles

This event was held in February, with thirteen entrants, and the finalists are Dave Hilliam, who overcame Tim Giles in five sets, and Keith Baker who beat Rob Smith.

Dave in action



### Over 40's singles

There were twenty-one entrants to the Over 40's Singles Championship and the standard of play was high, with many of the top Island League players taking part. The finalists are Paul Rainford and Steve Mills, who overcame Alex Rorke and Tim Giles in their respective semi-finals.

Steve and Paul will meet in the final



### Division Two Singles

There were fourteen players in the Division Two Singles Championship, and the semi finals were between Steve Gibbons and Tim Wakeley, and Charlie Stapeley and Dave Batten. Steve and Charlie are the finalists who will meet on Finals night.

Dave and Charlie



Steve and Tim



### Division Three Singles

Despite there only being nine entrants to the Division Three Singles Championship, it was hotly contested and produced some surprise results, none greater than young Noah Ford beating top seed Chris Gordine in five sets. The semi finals were contested between Robert Wendes, Shane Cates, Chris Gordine and Peter Burger. The finalists are Shane and Chris who will meet on Finals night.



Robert, Shane, Chris and Peter

### Doubles Championships

There was lots of interest in the Doubles Championships held on 14 April, with Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles all being played, and the finalists are shown below.



Lewis Johnstone and Hugh Idle will meet  
Paul Rainford and Ryan Cates in the men's final



Elaine Mills and Pat Thorley will meet  
Nicola Turner and Nicky Dando in the women's final





Pat Thorley and Tim Giles will meet Anna Joyce and Don Hobbs in the mixed doubles final

### Junior and Cadet Championships

Wednesday 17 April saw the Junior and Cadet competitions taking place and there was a good entry to both events.

In the Junior event there was some top quality table tennis. The highlight was the semi-final match between Ryan Cates and Lewis Johnstone. Ryan won the first end but Lewis fought back to take a 2-1 lead and had 2 points to win it 3-1, but Ryan won the 4th end 12-10 to take it to a decider. It was close in the fifth end but Lewis just managed to hold on and take it 11-8.

The Junior Final will be between Lewis and Joe Chapman, and Jye Lock and Thane Taylor will contest the Cadet Final on Final's Night on 1 May.

Juniors and Cadets who took part

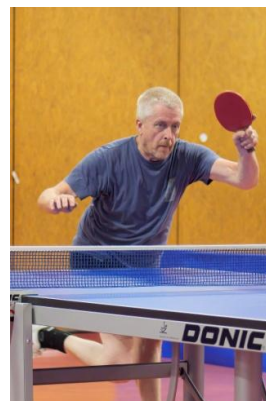


### Over 60's Championship

The finalists in the Over 60's tournament held in April are Don Hobbs and Mike Turner.



Don and Mike in action



## Men's and Women's Championships

These were held on Sunday 28 April and the finalists in the Women's competition are Pat Thorley and Nicky Dando.

The Men's competition was played to the semi-final stage and the players competing on Final's night are Hugh Idle v Mark Turner, and Ryan Cates v Steve Mills.



Pat and Nicky will meet in the Women's final



Mark will be playing Hugh in the first Men's semi-final

**Come along and enjoy all the finals on Final's Night on Wednesday 1 May starting at 7pm.**

## Hardbat Tournament

The Hardbat Tournament held on 21 April was a huge success and there was a full day's table tennis to enjoy.

The finalists in the singles were Alex Rorke and Ryan Cates, with Alex winning the title.

In the doubles, Ryan played with Peter Clarke and they overcame Glenn Morley and Nicky Dando to take the title.



Singles winner  
Alex and runner up  
Ryan

Doubles runners up Glenn and Nicky, and  
winners Ryan and Peter



### Pat Thorley success

Our much loved Pat Thorley achieved success in the Veteran British League Competition, playing with two of her friends. After two weekends of competition held in Derby, Pat and her team mates Janet and Sue won a gold medal. After last year's Island Games bronze medal, Pat just needs a silver to complete her collection, so who knows what 2025 might bring?



Pat and her team mates with their gold medals

### Quiz Night

A very successful quiz night was held in March to raise money for our British Senior League teams. Nearly £500 was raised via the quiz and raffle and it was a great, fun evening with a large turnout. We would like to thank the Lifeboat Inn for hosting the event, and to Paul Cates and Glenn Morley for organising it so efficiently.



Alex giving information about the British Senior League

Glenn and Paul reading the questions



The winning team





## Daytime League



Winners of the popular Daytime League were the Harriers, comprising Bev and Tim Giles, who finished just two points ahead of the Ospreys, comprising Graham Evans and Glen Morley.

The Harriers, Bev and Tim

## Primary Schools Tournament

On Friday 22 March the IWTTA Primary Schools Tournament was held. During January and February one hundred and twenty children from twelve schools took part in table tennis sessions at the centre. The top schools then competed in the final tournament and the medals for the top three teams were presented to them by Elaine and Ryan.



The medallists – Greenmount, Newchurch and Summerfields

## Isle of Wight Table Tennis Association

### KNOWLES CUP

2023-24



This is the IoW Table Tennis Association's premier tournament after the Winter League.

Congratulations to the winners –

**RYDE C**

(Graham Evans, Ryan Cates, Paul Rainford),

They have achieved the "Double" this season –  
Div. One winners & Knowles Cup winners

Well done to Runners up –

**SHANKLIN A**

(Mike Turner, Don Hobbs,  
Mike Bulpitt, Jim Hall).

They also attained 5<sup>th</sup> place  
in League Div. One this  
season.



## Winter League

Ryde teams dominated Division One this year, whilst Newport Vics, Havenstreet and Shorwell were the clubs to beat in Divisions Two and Three.

### **Division One**

Ryde C are the League Champions this year, taking the honours from Ryde A who finished second, with Ryde Reprobates a close third.

Scott of Ryde A headed the players' averages once again, with over 97% win average, whilst the Reprobates Hugh was second with over 93% and Ryde C's Paul had just under 92%. Juniors Ryan and Lewis both performed very well with 75% and 62% respectively.



**Graham, Ryan and Paul of Champions Ryde C**



**Mark, Pat, Scott and Rob of Runners of runners up Ryde A**



**Lewis in action for Ryde Reprobates**

**Hugh of Ryde Reprobates was second in the players averages**





Scott of Ryde A headed the averages table, losing only one match

## Division Two

Newport Vics C are Division Two Champions, 23 points ahead of Havenstreet Hooters in second place, who were 19 points ahead of Ryde Rascals.

Lawrence of Vics C was unbeaten at the top of the averages table, with the Rocket's Trevor second on 94% and Vics C's Charlie on 87%. The Reveller's Gourav finished with over 81% and Havenstreet's Mike also had 81%. Junior Jye from Ryde Allsorts performed particularly well to finish with 46% win average.



Charlie, Paul H and Paul L of Division Two Champions Vics C, and teammate Lawrence who headed the players' averages table with 100%



Karen and Alan of Havenstreet, who along with team mates, Paul, Carl, Dave and Mike, finished as runners up



Jye had a fine season in Division Two playing for Ryde Allsorts

### Division Three

Vics D finished as Division Three Champions with a 35 point lead over second placed Shorwell Spinners, whilst Ryde Retailers were third.

Robert from the Spinners topped the averages table on nearly 87% win average, with Vic's Chris just 0.5% behind in second place, and Debbie from Vics was in third on 84%. Junior Joe from the Retailers had 77% and another junior player Dee from Shorwell Saints had a good season finishing on over 45%. Cadet Noah Ford had an excellent second half to his season, with a few notable wins over players from the top three teams.



Sam, Debbie and Chris of Division Three Champions Vics D (fellow player Richard is missing from the photo)



Peter and Robert of runners up Shorwell Spinners (fellow players were Sam and Ian)



Joe from the Ryde Retailers was one of the higher ranked players

## Archive

We have reached 1994 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 John Prean continued to write his interesting and informative column on our local scene:

# ISLE OF WIGHT

## John Prean

OUR Juniors continue to do well. The team of Lorna Dutch, Greg and Danny Burns and Nic Hutchings won all their three matches in the Hampshire Inter-Town Junior League First Division. Scores of 9-1 (v Southampton) 8-2 (v Portsmouth and Gosport) indicate the quality of play of these young players. Lorna and Nic were unbeaten.

Lorna made her mark in national junior tournaments: Final of the South of England 2 Star, semi-final of the Cleveland Select, quarter finals of both cadet and junior in the English National Championships. Her reward in ranking terms? To drop from No. 7 to No. 8. What an incredible system this is and what a way to discourage the young! As one player put it to me: "Our ritual monthly humiliation."

Whilst our Juniors seem to be heading for the title, our Cadets will not. Without Lorna (who was at the Cleveland), they went to a 6-4 defeat against Southampton in the Hampshire

Inter-Town Cadet League and, though winning their other two matches, top place may now be beyond us. Danny Burns won all his matches. He also won through to the final stages of the National Cadet Trials, the results of which we shall know by the time these notes are published.

We are soldering on with the project of getting our own Table Tennis Centre built. Numerous problems are still before us which must be common to all who have such ambitions.

Perhaps that is what the ETTA had in mind when they advertised the post of a National Facilities Officer. If the right man is appointed - it seems to be taking a long time - that could be a great asset for all those trying to create space in which table tennis can be played. Our quest for a room in the

otherwise impressive Westridge Centre, which has been empty for some years, seems to be stuck in the quagmire of excessive rates which we cannot afford. Thus the centre will remain empty, the Ryde Club may soon be homeless with nowhere to play - a credit to British Sport to put along side such tales as the Olympic Archer, who had his dole withdrawn whilst winning two medals in Barcelona.

We certainly agree with the governing body which has identified the provision of playing space as a No. 1 priority without which the sport can only decline further. It is a problem we know well. However, one wishes more help were on offer in relaxing such ambitions and needs. I wonder how many dreams will eventually be strangled by red tape and how many good schemes will never see the light of day.

Finally, congratulations to the Island's Carl Prean on his recent victory against the World No. 1 Jan Ove Waldner in the "Swedish Open."

In the March/April issue there was lots more news of our teams and some current players:

# ISLE OF WIGHT

## John Prean

OUR junior scene continues to look good despite some disappointments recently. Our 'Top 12' included a record number of young players. Danny Burns was the youngest ever to join this select band at 13, though it has to be said that the event did not take place in the Carl Prean junior era. Greg Burns and Nic Hutchings, current Hampshire juniors, had made it and so had Alex Rorke, a junior last year. Lorna Dutch had also qualified for this select gathering, no doubt the first 14 year old girl to do so. Unfortunately she was not there, having been called into an England U14 camp at short notice, of which more later.

It proved a sensational event and for the first time was won by a woman, Regina Stevens. She is, of course, a formidable competitor, who would, in my view, be in the top ten women in England, if she competed regularly at national level. Nevertheless her victory was a major surprise. She defeated

Chris Angus in the final and quite conclusively at that. Chris had looked very good till then, defeating Roger Hookey in the semi final and Roger is seen by most players as the Island's best. Mike Turner, despite a defeat by Greg Burns in the groups, made the semi final where he was seen off by Regina. Her hardest match was against ace-defender Pete Urry who gave her not only a hard match, but one with a hard bat. At times she produced unorthodox methods - balloon defence against push. In the end it worked.

The county season of our juniors in the Hampshire team ended with a cliff hanger to avoid relegation from division

one vs Essex 11 in their section of the County Championships. Just as our own 'Top 12' was deprived of the services of Lorna Dutch, so were Hampshire juniors in this vital match of their number one girl by the late call-up to an England cadet camp. It was important that Hampshire should not be relegated. That was not only a matter of pride, but making sure that most players would get division one matches next season. You may be relieved to hear that I do not make strong criticism of the 'establishment', particularly as notes have been taken, so that similar clashes of loyalties do not re-appear in the future. I think that loyalty to one's team mates and supporters is as important as eventually playing well. The decision to let the county down distressed me. On the playing side, Lorna has again played well to win the National Cadet Girls Trials, an outstanding feat and the highlight of her season so far.

Back to that county match: Hampshire did avoid the dreadful drop (unless something quite astounding happens). I did not envy Nic Hutchings task when he went on at 5-4, his team's fate in his hands. Fortunately he had his opponent on the hook with some fine serving and won the first with something to spare. The second was less fun and went to deuce and spectators looked pale with excitement, in the end Nic clinched it. His double victory was a suitable way to bow out of the junior county game. He, alone in this team, will be too old next season. He has a fine future, unless university life in another year intervenes, as it had done so often in the past.

Our first division continues to be dominated by Sandown. With Ian Urry supporting the Hookey/Turner duo, most opponents wonder where the next point will come from. Perhaps Angus, supported by a couple of Newport Vics' excellent juniors, will challenge next time round.

A few of us saw Carl Prean on duty vs Japan in Andover and he duly won his two. It was good to see an international in the area and we hope for many more. Nothing like it to stir the imagination and raise the image of the game, still the number one target before the sport.



1994 National Championship contender Carl Prean

In the May issue plans for our table tennis centre at Smallbrook were under way, but the going was not easy:

## ISLE OF WIGHT

### John Prean

THE dream of our own table tennis centre is still very much alive, but it is

hard going. Last summer I negotiated the supply of free land on the site of Smallbrook Stadium, the home of Ryde Sports, the local football club. Beautifully placed, with limitless parking space, a gym and an attractive bar on the site, it seemed plain sailing. I did not know what a Pandora's Box of red tape I had opened.

We had good support from the ETTA. Diccon Gray came down immediately and liked what he saw. We were allocated a share of money allocated to the ETTA by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts and we have good indications from the Sports Council, Southern Region.

One pays tribute to Chairman Alan Ransome who negotiated grants of £500,000 towards table tennis centres and when these spring up all over the country, they will bring a revival in the fortunes of the areas involved. Now the battle against red tape has to be won.

I shall not bore you with the paper mountains which multiply almost weekly. However, the treatment of VAT casts a particular shadow. It may be reclaimed one day, but before that it has to be paid. To make non-profit-making sporting bodies exempt in the first place has not occurred to our rulers. Much unnecessary paper will be generated in the process of paying and then reclaiming the same sums. Since weeks and months will elapse between payment and return, we shall have to borrow to sustain the red tape involved. Neither is the process a simple one. It is one which may even fail, in which case the consequences do not bear thinking about, but VAT is only one complication. One wonders how or whether we shall ever see the building go up and how many such buildings will eventually be built. We shall, of course, battle to the end, whatever that may be.

Sandown have won our First Division with time and points to spare. The trio of Hookey, Turner and Ian Urry were untroubled throughout. It is not good for Island table tennis that our major team crown should be so thinly contested. One hopes for a real challenge next season.

That brings me to our Juniors. They travelled hopefully to the Hampshire Junior Closed and for a time it looked as if our strong hand would produce a few titles. Four in the last eight, two in the semi finals looked good, but none in the Final less so! In the end we only won the U12 Girls (Lucy Pointer) in which only two competed and the Cadet Boys (Danny Burns, Luke Canavan). Greg Burns faltered in the Boys semi finals, as did Nic Hutchings, whilst Danny Burns lost in the Cadet Final. Our other title came from Lorna Dutch (of course) in the Junior Girls. She did not contest the Cadet Girls (why?). We did better in the Inter-Town Junior Championships, repeating in the second weekend what had been achieved in the first, which was to win all our matches. Nic Hutchings went through both weekends unbeaten, which repeated a feat that Danny Burns had achieved in the Cadet weekends. The Junior team of these two plus Greg Burns was a very strong one and in Lorna they also had the best girl. All, apart from Nic, will be young enough to compete next time.

Congratulations to Lorna Dutch who achieved the No.4 spot on the

National Ranking List. I see the letter 'R' which presumably indicates some extra-curricular input following her great win in the National Trials. A previous excellent spell served only to relegate her from No.7 to No.8! Thus the mysteries of our ranking system continue. There is, however, no mystery as to why so many of our tournaments have gone out of business. Certainly the advance chalked up by Lorna and the computer is remarkable: A little matter of 400 points in one month. To put this into perspective, the 1993 National Champion got precisely 20 points for that feat and the Ladies Champion, Andrea Holt got 25 points in that year for winning her national title.

Whether these eccentricities are due to entrusting too much to computers, which are made of wire, metal and plastic and therefore have no intelligence or sense of fair play, I have no means of knowing. It may be that the scheme owes too much to dogma and prejudice which is basically hostile to excellent. That would explain why it is deemed better to turn up and lose a few times than to win a national title. When I explain all that to friends in other sports, they think we have gone mad. I find it hard to argue that they are wrong.

In the June issue there was another interesting article from John Prean about our local Champions and County players:

## ISLE OF WIGHT

### John Prean

ROGER Hookey became Island Champion for the sixth time and so joined the elite of multi-champions, the likes of Eric Green and the legendary Jim Daly. He got better as the event progressed. Lorna Dutch is the new ladies champion, at 14 the youngest ever. She beat Regina Stevens in a very good final. Regina who, not long ago, was in the country's top 20 women, had won the Island's top 12 in December and beaten some of our best men. She looked short of practice this time and that was no way to prepare for the England number three cadet girl. A gripping final for all that with Lorna fighting back after being 17-11 down in the second to win in straight games to create an undoubted sensation.

Greg Burns, who reached the semis here, was the Island Junior Champion. Chris Angus, Hookey's main rival, left his best form to the end of the season when, on our finals night, he achieved a tour de force which will take some beating. He played eight games in four hours, all semi finals and finals of events played on other days to that stage, and won the lot. First he won the Veterans, then the 'Handicap Doubles' with 14 year old Danny Burns for whom we see a bright future (but only if he works

hard on his game), then switched bats for the conclusion of the 'Hard Bat' events. Naturally he won both doubles and singles, the first with John Pointer, the second after a fine final with Peter Urry who plays with a hard bat all the time. Luke Canavan won the title for players from divisions four and five which was one event Angus could not win! Jackie Urry was the unlucky finalist. She lost 19 in the third, missing a high ball at 19 all, a moment she will remember for a long time. For all that, Luke was a worthy winner, playing a modern if not yet consistent game, but he knows how to hit the ball.

An interesting, if not pleasing curiosity was the fact that more players participated in our 'hard bat' events, albeit with borrowed bats, than did in our County Championships where less than 30 entered. With at least half a dozen contenders who had a fair chance and more potential outsiders, the old cry that it was a waste coming could not be heard. There were no Dalys or Preans about who might be seen as certainties. There is, of course, no really suitable venue on the island, where there is (a) enough room and (b) social facilities where those who have been knocked out can refresh themselves for the next event or drown their sorrows whilst they remember happier days.

Our new centre, which would correct all that, is still on the rails and moving hopefully towards the conclusion of formalities and the start of building. It is proving no easy matter, though it is good to endorse ETTA policies in such matters which sees the creation of such centres as a major priority.

Our juniors duly won the Hampshire Inter-Town Junior League, winning all their matches. Nic Hutchings went through both weekends unbeaten, a good way to sign off from the junior game. Lorna Dutch was similarly successful among the girls and she has three more years as a junior. She can go a long way which may include the 'European Youth Championships' one day, but only when she realises what is involved in practise and planning before the big events and I speak in terms of years rather than hours.

Our 'fixed team' won the Hampshire Mixed Inter-Town Championships, a noble feat and one we had never managed before. We were helped by having to play only two matches. It was good to have Lorna in the team and in the second match, won 7-5 vs Aldershot, decisive!



We performed poorly in the second division of the Hampshire Inter-Town Men's League and deserved to stay down! However, it was an almost solitary blemish on a good season. I nearly forgot our cadets' second place (joint) in the Hampshire Cadet League. It was achieved without Lorna who would have been one of our trump cards. The other was Danny Burns who won all his matches.

Carl Prean returned from Birmingham with a bronze medal in the team event of the European Championships - par for the course, since England had won two silver and two bronze in the last four campaigns. In the singles he lost to Waldner in the last 16, not an unusual state of affairs. It is not clear why he draws the same opponent so often in major events. The schedule was, to put it mildly, unfortunate from

his point of view and it remains unclear why one who had to play almost 'last thing at night' should have to go on so early the next morning. When one allows for the time it takes to eat and then digest before going to bed, the sums did not make sense and Waldner is not an opponent one wants to meet on unequal terms. All that in our own country!

I can only echo the astonishment in these parts when Carl's number four English ranking was noted here. However, such nonsense is not his problem, but that of those who compile such nonsense with apparent full official approval. A sad business.

In the September issue it was announced that a £60,000 grant was being made towards the new table tennis centre:

## Success for the Isle of Wight

### ISLE OF WIGHT CENTRE GETTING £60,000 GRANT

With regard to the facilities programme, I am pleased to be able to report that the Isle of Wight Table Tennis Centre is progressing well. The Foundation for Sport and the Arts have notified John Prean that they will approve a grant of £60,000 from the £500,000 allocated to Table Tennis for the Isle of Wight Centre. The Sports Council, Southern Region, and the Isle of Wight County Council are both strongly committed to the project and in total funds in the region of £150 - £160,000 will be forthcoming.

Mike Lewis, Vice Chairman of development and Paul Baker, the new Facilities Officer, have been particularly active with John Prean in bringing this important project to fruition. It is likely that the new centre will be open next year. Congratulations!

In the November issue there was lots of news of our teams, current players and the new centre:

## ISLE OF WIGHT

JOHN PREAN

### PLEASANT SURPRISE

Our Cadets gave us a pleasant surprise when they won their first 2 matches 9-1 and 10-0 in the first Hampshire Inter-Town weekend. Mark Prysocki, James Ovnik and Ruorarie Farralley won all their matches and Lucy Pointer, who is only 10 and was therefore playing boys two and three years older than herself, won two singles.

Even better, she reached the Semi-Finals of the Peniel 2 Star Select Junior U-12, a fine effort by one generally younger than her rivals. I heard from a number of parents that this was the best junior tournament they had ever attended.

There was disappointment for Lucy from then on, as we learned she would not be included in the national U-12 ranking lists. It seems to take an age to get on the list at all, which is hardly an encouragement to the younger players. I would have thought reaching the Semi-Final stages of a major tournament should be sufficient, not least because the U-12 ranking list is ridiculously small in numbers and therefore needs additional names to lend it credibility and authority. But no. Elsewhere one learns of 'big' points being awarded for no greater achievement than turning up and losing in the first round. A strange world where turning up and losing a few times is worth than a national title. Stranger still, that at a time the ETTA Chairman seeks actively to foster junior excellence (which I fully support) another ETTA department encourages junior mediocrity. One sees thousands of names on these ranking lists (not a bad idea), but a young girl of 10 (to whom being on the list would really mean something) is given a hard time and long wait despite having made a semi-final.

Greg Burns kept his No.1 Junior spot in Hampshire, but he won the County trials only on a count-back of points. The rules in such matters i.e. a count-back only among the players involved in this triple tie, were not universally liked, but they were correctly applied. Some though I had made them up to favour an Island

player and so controversy followed me about again on what I thought would be a quiet Sunday. Danny Burns became a victim of the count-back system earlier, but made the second team in the end. With two years left in the juniors, he now has every chance to make his mark.

Lorna Dutch won both junior and senior trials, the latter also on a count-back! Despite her first place in the trials, the final senior Hampshire list saw her at No.3. Time is on her side. She has three years as a junior to land the titles we think she is capable of, but it is time that needs to be well used. We have now created an environment in which it is possible for ambitious players to play 5 or 6 times per week, including one excellence session. Our centre at the Westridge Leisure Complex is now open, potentially 7 days per week and for 24 hours each day. I shall be disappointed if we do not produce a string of players with national possibilities over the years.

Our big new table tennis centre remains on course. This will hold nine or ten table for practice and six for excellent match conditions. By the time you read this, the tenders will have been opened and perhaps building will have begun. Our very warm thanks again to the ETTA. Critical as I have often been in the past, our governing body deserves great praise for such initiatives which will push the sport into quite a different class in many areas and enable us to compete with other sports. I hope to write more fully about this project and thank all those involved as we near completion of the dream.

Our team in Southern Region League began with a 5-4 win vs Burnchal after leading 4-1. I did see most of it. Mike Turner was our hero with his first ever hat-trick in this company. The contest was a credit to the game and its infinite variety as various bats, funny and unfunny, were on view and all our opponents were mainly defenders, an unusual situation these days, but it made for an enthralling contest. The Westridge Centre venue looked great, well lit and spacious.

Our first division again seems a two horse race (Sandown and Newport Vics). The former have signed Lorna Dutch to replace Ian Urry who has left the Island. With Roger Hookey, our best player and Mike Turner, Sandown will again be very strong. Vics will need improvement from the Burns brothers. They are quite capable of this, but it will not come by itself. Chris Angus can beat anybody. If he down this on the right days, we may yet see a contest. I think Ryde and Rookley will follow the two bigger guns home. The latter have captured Dave Hilliam who had an excellent season last time, a veritable Indian summer for a former Island Junior Champion and "Evergreen" Joe Daly. They are joined by Martin Mitchell, who has started playing with a hard bat again - and very well too. His father Fred has never deserted his and still wins quite a few in our

Division 2 at 73, in relative terms, perhaps the best performance of all.

Some international news: Our player in the German Bundesliga (Carl Prean) celebrated another win vs the English No.1 (Chen Xinhua) in that league, his 10th in 12 contest against the former Chinese champion. Another "exclusive" for this column!

In the last issue of the year, it looked like Sandown would win the league easily, and Carl Prean had slipped to Number 3 in England:

## ISLE OF WIGHT

JOHN PREAN

### ONE HORSE RACE

The First Division which I described as a two horse race in my last notes, has turned into a one horse race, as Sandown defeated Newport Vics 9-1. "Closer than the score suggests" is the only consolation one can offer the losers as the championship loses its main interest. I expect a stern battle for places 2 to 4.

Our Team in the Southern Regional League, after an initial 5-4 success, has lost the next two matches 5-4 and then 8-1, the latter against Kingfisher, Reading proving a depressing experience to watch and, no doubt to play in. Greg Burns, otherwise plagued by injuries this season, was a solitary winner. That the Regional League itself has lost one whole division, after excellent progress for so long, adds to our sadness.

Danny Burns (14), with 5 wins out of 6 for Hampshire Juniors II, seems to be the player who has improved most. Also effective in our last division.

Our men's team began with two 8-2 wins in the Hampshire Inter-Town 2nd division and hopes are high that they will escape into the higher section next time round. Work will soon commence on our table tennis centre at a cost of £160,000 or so.

We can't wait. Much credit is due to the ETTA, often criticised, especially by me, Sports Council, Southern Region and FSA without whose help this would not have happened. It took well over a year to assemble, but what an opportunity for our members when it is finally up and running! Some of our juniors, who have the stamina and talent to reach the top, will have an easier passage than earlier generations. It adds up to a very bright future for Island Table Tennis, but the main factor remains what we ourselves put into the sport.

## CARL PREAN

ENGLAND NO.3

Carl is one of the most difficult players in the world to play against, mixing the spins nearly every shot. In my opinion the best player in the world against defensive players. I think if Carl had more self-belief in his game he is capable of winning any tournament.

### And finally

If you interested in the history of table tennis, then Table Tennis England have an archive album where you can see some of the historic artefacts from their collection, dating back to the 1900's. Click the picture to follow the link.



Thank you for reading. The next newsletter will be in July 2024. 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](mailto:debbiey1960@outlook.com)