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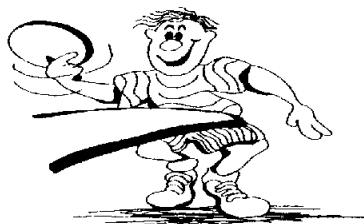


Table Tennis DIGEST

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

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EDITORIAL

Postponements for all the wrong reasons have again marred the past season and we reached week 22 with the usual high number of outstanding matches still to be played. Biggest culprits have again been 1st division teams, some of whom seeming to believe they must only play if both sides are at full strength. Acceptable reasons for a postponement are given in M.R. 9. Postponements because a team cannot be at full strength are not allowed, promotion or relegation issues often being affected if they take place. Next season the M.C. must take a firm line on this issue and any Home team agreeing a postponement outside the Rule must have the match awarded against them. This same action should also apply if an official postponed fixture is not replayed within the agreed time limit of six weeks.

Such a hardline may be considered as unfair, but it will only be those seeking to gain an unfair advantage by protecting their promotional aims or seeking to avoid relegation who are likely to see it in that light. The proper way to look at is that some weeks after the season ended it was still not possible for our F.S. to produce a final league table, matches affecting P & R still requiring to be played. Teams were playing matches in the final weeks going back to October. This has to be unacceptable and must be stamped out. If you cannot field your best team for any reason then you must use a reserve or play short. The only way of ensuring fairness all round is for the M.C. to stop pussyfooting round and fully enforce our Rules. The ETIA have done a 'U' turn on the bigger ball issue and it now seems likely they will be asking its AGM to endorse the full adoption of the bigger ball. This has to be a sensible decision in that we cannot have a situation whereby those who play at tournament, B.L., County level etc play with the new ball one day and the next in their respective league with the existing ball. Whether its adoption will bring about the hoped for improvements remains to be seen.

Another area where a change may take place will be that of service. If the trials being conducted next season are successful the necessary rule changes will be made and they will operate from season 01/02. This will be a much needed change and ensure the receiver and the umpire can see the ball at all times. All that will be needed is full enforcement at all levels. At local league level in particular the current service rule is ignored by most players, some not appearing to know the difference between vertical and horizontal and many totally unable to judge a height of six inches. Any attempt to call a 'fault' generally being greeted with abuse and a row breaking out. Where application of Rule is concerned we are weak and ineffective at most levels, local level being the most ineffective of all. Time for a change, perhaps?

END OF SEASON REPORT

For the 7th season in a row I am able to report that at least one trophy has ended up in the Leagues's possession. Over the past four years the Men's and Ladies team have walked off with their respective divisional crown, in addition we have annexed a Veteran title and three cups. I am delighted to report that our League's success story continues with another Men's Div.1. championship, two Veteran championships and two knockout trophies having been won. I will deal later with the disappointing aspect of the ladies competition.

The Men's squad of Keith Williams, Paul Hutchings, John Rankin and Ken Jackson won every match and finished five points ahead of 2nd placed Mid Cheshire. This being the 5th year in succession that the major divisional title has been won by our League and achieved without call on all of the leading players. Adam Robertson played just once due mainly to his heavy diary of events at home and abroad which has seen him play in two world championships within the space of seven months, a European championship, plus 16 matches for his team in Germany. Keith's seven 1st division winners' medal is, I believe, a record for the L&C League. John collecting his second with Paul and Ken picking up their first. There have been more exciting campaigns, but they did enough to see off the opposition. The only blip being the Bolton match, when Ken stepped in for Keith and won one in a 6-4 victory, and the home match against Mid Cheshire when Adam and John beat Brian Johns in a 7-3 win.

The Veteran's 'A' team started out in 1994 and won the Div.6. title, took the Div.3. title in '98 and this season have won the div.1. title. Alan Chase and Ted Birch have been regulars throughout the seven seasons and thoroughly deserve their success. Dave Evans was also a regular with Ricky Brown and Alex Johns stepping in when required. I have said in previous reports that no team has been more reliable and this again applied under Alan's guidance. They have also been perfect ambassadors for the league. The present regulations prevent the team from pitting themselves against the Premier division big boys as a league is not allowed to have two teams in the top divisions. It is possible that this regulation may be changed by the L&C league AGM. Well done, the team.

Yet another championship title came to the new Vets 'B' team in Div.4. South. The team, ably led by Alex Johns, won all seven matches, dropping just 8 sets in the process, three being walk-overs when they played short. Supporting Alex, who was unbeaten, were Brenda Buoe, Ahmed thabet, Sue Burgess and Mike Power.

Stockport finished as Premier champions for the 12th year in succession and remained unbeaten, ending the season just two points ahead of our team of Keith, Ken Jackson and Peter Lee. It could have been so different if a 5-4 lead had been converted into a 6-4 win when Keith faced Roger Hampson in the decider. It was not to be, the wily old campaigner beating the Liverpool champion to force a draw. We had earlier lost to Blackburn, but victory against the champions would almost certainly have brought home the title.

As the first league to simultaneously hold the Dennis Smith Memorial Trophy and the Norman Cook Memorial Trophy in 1999, it was a tall order to expect both to remain in the League's hands for another year. For the 2nd time in 3 years Keith, Ken and Peter took on the LBH at Cadwa in the 2000 Final. In what was a tremendous advert for veterans table tennis, the match swayed one way then the other. Liverpool took a 2-0 lead via wins by Ken and Keith over Ian McElwee and Mike Mahoney respectively. Their rivals hitting back to level the score, Bob Edwards beating Peter and Mike overcoming Ken. At 4-2 up we looked home and dry only to see Mike and Bob ensure the tie would go to the wire by notching wins over Peter and Ken and level the score at 4-all. Keith, though, was in devastating form, sweeping Ian aside to retain the cup by ensuring us a 5-4 victory.

One week later Keith, John Rankin, Ken Jackson and Brenda made the short trip to St. Helens to face Mid Cheshire in the Norman Cook final. The Cheshire side took the opening two sets but we pulled back to 2-2 with wins by Brenda and Ken. At this point they called their banker, the Men's doubles, and when Brian Johns and Terry Turner led by a game and 20-16 the set looked in the bag. But Ken, playing in place of Paul Hutchings who was unwell, returned the next two serves as winners as he and Keith pulled back to 20-all before winning 30-28 and then winning the decider. That seemed to deflate the opposition and after John and Brenda had cruised to a straight games mixed doubles victory the stage was set for the clash of

the clash of the top two players. Brian Johns won when they met in the league, but on this occasion, even with a 3 point start in each game, the England No.2. was unable to cope with a brilliant demonstration of clever play by Keith. He won in two straight to clinch the match and the cup for a record 7th time for both himself and the league.

The Ladies won their opening match 10-0 but were unable to raise a team for an afternoon match at Oldham. Paula was working and Delyth was at a long standing function in Wales. The home side, having earlier postponed a match when they could not raise a team, were in no mood to offer us a new date within the agreed time scale, hoping, in my opinion, to claim the points. Brenda then contracted a mystery virus in December and again we could not find three players for the next match. At this point, having been advised that Paula was ineligible due to her not having played the requisite number of Liverpool League matches, the decision was taken to withdraw the team. They have been champions ten times since 1987 and it was disturbing to have to resort to this action. Although Delyth will not play in Liverpool next season, hopefully we will be able to re-instate our team next term.

SECRETARY'S DESK MIKE POWER

The League Presentation Night took place at the Police club on Friday 5th May and I am sure all who attended had a good night. It was, however, slightly disappointing to note that several clubs were not represented. This resulted in a poor attendance compared to previous years and not only meant that some trophies could not be presented, but also cast a shadow over future events. Evenings such as this can only be held if they have your support, without which, we are dead in the water. Perhaps this type of event is not your cup of tea and if this is the case, I would appeal to you to let me know what is?

When looking at League tables you will see that Police have had a very good year, winning 3 of the five divisions, Bootle JC and Manweb

taking the other two. Well done, and commiserations to all the nearly-rans' and to those who will be playing in a lower division next season.

In his first year as Cup Secretary, John Langton, has done well and I would like to thank him for the enthusiasm he has put into his new role. He has also been the main instigator, along with Arthur Garnett, which, if you are still unaware of, can be found at www.liverpooltt.freemove.co.uk.

This summer, whilst you are all enjoying your barbecues and supping the odd pint, someone has to organise your table tennis for next season. This comes down to your own club secretary whom you should all appreciate greatly because it can be a thankless job. I think you should all stand up and give them a round of applause.

I know that more than one secretary has had a 'bit of bother' this season that has impinged on their social life and peace of mind. It is up to all of us to make their jobs as easy as possible and one of the ways you can do so is to know the Rules of our League. If you make a mistake and break those rules, no matter how innocent it may appear to you, the Management committee has to act. This can result in a loss of points to your team, fines and suspension of players. No one in our League, including the Management Committee, wants to see this happen. I would ask you all to try and make everyone's job easier by knowing and obeying those rules. If you are ever in doubt about a rule you can always telephone a member of the committee who, I am sure, will be more than pleased to assist you.

A serious incident did occur during the season and the resultant punishment has led to our Appeal Board being called on to adjudicate following an appeal by the club and players involved. Details of the Appeal Board findings can be found elsewhere in this issue.

It would be remiss of me not to add my condolences to the family and friends of the recently departed Bath St. player, John Watson, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

It would also be remiss of me not to wish our President, Arthur Upton, all the best. Hope we see you back at committee meetings before too long, Arthur, after your on going illness.

A reminder to all Club secretaries, return your Club membership form for next season in good time.

An Appeal Board was convened at the request of the Management Committee and sat on 10th May 2000 to hear an appeal by L'pool YMCA and two players, Alvin Tso and Paul O'Donnell.

The Appeal Board members were Eddie Cameron, Appeal Board Chairman, Tom Edge and Brian Leeson. Also present were Peter Lee, Liv YM Secretary, representing Club and players. The two appellants, Alvin Tso and Paul O'Donnell. The Management Committee were represented by Ken Armson.

The Appeal Board had been provided with all relevant correspondence and copy of the Management Committee Disciplinary Hearing of 22nd March.

From the outset the Club's representative accepted as true the allegation that Paul O'Donnell had played for a lower team than that for which he was ranked and had been entered on the scorecard under the assumed name of Robert Aldridge. The two players also confirmed the allegations were true.

The case against the L'pool YM and the two players having been verified and proven left the Appeal Board to comment on the validity of the league's punishment for the offences. As the decisions of the Management Committee were as per Rule the Appeal Board were only able to make recommendations.

Having heard the representations from both sides and taking all aspects of this appeal into consideration and accepting the apparent naivety of Paul O'Donnell the Appeal Board recommendations were:

1. The suspension period for Alvin Tso be reduced to eight league match weeks.
2. The suspension period for Paul O'Donnell be reduced to five league match weeks.

Other aspects and punishments to remain unchanged.

Subsequent similar offences cannot be tolerated and could well attract harsher sentences.

Eddie Cameron
Chairman
League Appeal Board

Well we did it! No, I'm not talking about the Police team, I'm talking about my wife giving birth to our lovely son, Jack. I know you ladies go through a lot during birth, but at least your safely away from the action area. It's us fellas who have to stand at the coal face. It's definitely our last child, I couldn't go through all that pushing, shoving, blood, sweat and swearing again - and that was just the conception.

Anyway putting dirty nappies aside for one minute, I can now concentrate on congratulating the Police team of Paul Hutchings, John Rankin and Chris Ford for lifting the championship and making Police history. I previously predicted that the Cadwa 1st team had a good chance of pinching the title from under the Police nose, and they nearly did. In the clash between the two teams, Cadwa came out 6-4 and 9-1 winners. The Police playing one short on each occasion. In the first match Paul had to withdraw due to a back problem, in the second Chris, for whatever reason, failed to show. He was probably hugging a tree somewhere.

I'm actually doing Chris a dis-service as I'm aware his dedication to the game has reached new heights. On the morning of an important match night, Chris, and folks this is absolutely true, uses his left hand to eat his cereal so as not to strain his right wrist. Utterly commendable, to be fair, I've always been in favour of swopping wrists.

Credit has to go to Cadwa for putting together a late surge that made for an exciting finale. Unfortunately it was not to be, but Keith, Kevin and Mike were more than happy when they later prevented the Police team from doing the double by winning the Readman cup. a tremendous match with Keith voted M.O.T.M and played in front of a capacity crowd. You just can't beat a good night of table tennis. Sad, but true.

Although YM 1st team were a little behind the pace, they, too, will be more than happy with 3rd spot that was achieved through good solid team performances and strong support from their 'A' team. Pat McLoughan continued his superb form and contributed to a fine 6-4 win over WSM winning his three. Jeff Huntington and Peter Lee, who are both No.1's in their own right providing the backbone resulting in comfortable 8-2 wins agst Cadwa 'A' and a 9-1 agst Marconi.

This successful formulae is also in abundance within the WSM 'A' team. Roy Smith, Mike Tierney and Phil Luxon have been threatening to put together a good run for some seasons and must be extra pleased at finishing above their 1st team. The writing was probably on the wall after their derby game ended with the 'A' team coming out 6-4 winner. Roy had a good night taking his three, unlike Phil who ended the night empty handed. His charm even failing to affect the ever improving Alice Howard, although I'm sure Phil would claim she's in denial. Ian Campbell has also featured in their latter games and has been quick to make his mark by going to 3 with Kevin Dolder and Mike Mahoney and then beating Peter Taylor. H also had a good win over Dave Roberts. Ken Armson must make great tea, or have a good supply of yummy biscuits cos they allowed him to play again for the 'A' team agst YM 'A'. to be fair, although he lost all his games, he made the players work. (Ken, you don't have to play to get a mention in my notes, I'll write about you anyway.)

On paper I'm surprised that WSM didn't finish in the top three. Dave Roberts started the season well but of late has had a few uncharacteristic nightmare games. He lost his 3 agst Cadwa, Waterloo and Bath St. The irregular turnout of Wayne Percival probably took its toll resulting in the team losing 6-4 to YM and only drawing with Waterloo.

Another successful no nonsense season for the Bath St. kids of Kenny, Mike and Fred. Kenny continues to lead the way, both in the league, and when representing the City. The team had a good 7-3 win agst Cadwa 'A' but the result was reversed when they faced Harold House. Ken took two by beating Ray and Alex, but lost to Phil Musgrove, who in turn lost to Mike. A good team performance saw them take 4 points from WSM's Adam, Dave and Wayne. Dave losing his three and Ken beating Wayne. Their derby match agst Bath St. 'A' produced a great match and an equally great night for Ian McElwee who was victorious in all his games. 6-4 to the 1st team being the final result.

Ian's performance throughout the season has been instrumental in the team achieving their very respectable final position. It's a shame that Alex and Brenda missed a few games as I'm sure they had the potential to exceed their

1st team. One game they didn't miss was the marathon agst WSM 'A' that finished at 11.45. Seven sets went to three, Alex and Roys' game being voted a classic with Roy pinching it 18 in the 3rd. 8-2 to WSM 'A'.

By the way, if my diplomacy happens to wander, please write in and tell me. I'm making a big effort ever since I embarrassed my wife in front of one of our nosey neighbours, who was complaining, as some women do, about having a small chest. I simply advised her to rub some toilet paper over them. When she asked what good that would do, I said that I didn't really know, but it seemed to work wonders with her backside.

Where was I? Oh yes, ping pong. H. House's perennial late rush up the table was somewhat later than expected and hindered to some extent by some fluctuating results. A fine 7-3 win over Bath St. could only be followed by a draw agst a 2 man WSM 'A' (they'd obviously brought their own tea and biscuits). Reserve team players in the form of John Henshaw and Eddie Clein had to be brought in against Cadwa 'A' and they helped secure a draw. Alex taking his three and Eddie winning two, one of which was a great win over Ken Hartley.

The fight to avoid relegation didn't really feature YM 'A' but I'm sure that they would be happier if they could've moved up a few places. Nevertheless, Dele Oluyombo has continued to establish himself as a good scalp, but I feel that he now needs to up a gear and challenge the likes of Police and Cadwa players. I think that injuries and match fitness have taken their toll on both Ahmed's and Dave Tagg's games, although both played well to take a point each off Bath St and WSM 'A' resulting in 4-6 and a draw.

Cadwa 'A's survival has hinged on a few factors, Ken Hartley's superb season coupled with the ability of Billy Hargreaves and Mike Power to pick up those vital points agst weaker reserve team players, as well as notching up some good individual wins. Billy had a great win over Peter Taylor and although Mike only managed to take a singles set agst Steve Kee, YM, he was voted M.O.T.M. having lost narrowly to Jeff Huntington, 18 in the 3rd, and then to Pat 22 in the 3rd. The card was endorsed 'New! Improved! Biological Power!..... Mike, I'm impressed..... well, I was, until I saw you got battered 2 straight the following week. Oops, there goes my diplomacy again!

The crunch game between Cadwa 'A' and W'loo

ended with the points being shared. Alan Chase played brilliantly to win his three and teamed up with Ted to take the doubles. Ted got the remainder by beating Mike. The absence of a good win over Cadwa meant they needed to beat Police 10-0 in their last game of the season. That result was unfortunately reversed and W'loo were destined to the 2nd div. They take some great results with them, 4 pts from Cadwa, Alan and Ted beating Keith and Mike in the doubles and Peter Taylor losing his 3. Ted was match point agst Keith only to lose 22 in the 3rd. It makes a change to see a lawyer getting robbed.

They got a draw agst WSM, Dave Roberts losing his 3 and then went on to beat YM 'A' 6-4, Mike having a good win over Dave Tagg. Just remember, lads, it's not the winning that matters, it's taking part that counts.

Marconi's priority this season was based on damage limitation, as their relegation was as predictable as the poor turnout for the 'Social.' Nevertheless, they took to the task and managed to rock a few boats. Bob Edwards and Eddie Crowley did well in beating Mike Tierney, Alex Johns also fell victim to Bob. The best result was probably Trevor Owen's win over Jeff Hungington that helped save the whitewash.

Well, its time to close for another season. I'm just on my way out to buy my wife a big bunch of flowers and reminisce to the time, many years ago, when my marriage proposal contained those loving words "YOUR WHAT?"

Have a good closed season.

DIVISION TWO MIKE POWER

Another season finally comes to an end and it's no surprise to me that we all have to congratulate Merseyside Police 'A' for their total dominance throughout the season. They led from start to finish and demolished the opposition with a massive 39 point lead, almost 4 games in hand. They won 20, drew 1 and lost only 1. Paul Gittins strolled through the season with the top average, only 2 defeats, the latest being at the hands of Alan Jones from Maghull 16, -16. 16, this coming in a top of the table clash which ended 7-3 to Police. The quartet of Paul, Steve, Terri-Ann and Gemma 'Larger' Lloyd can look forward to next season in the top flight which I am sure they will all enjoy. Paul and Steve have played there before so it will not come as a shock to them, but for the girls it

may be an eye-opener but nevertheless, valuable experience. Talking about eye-openers, who thinks that Terri-Ann looks better on stage in a mask and shroud than she does on a normal day? (If you don't understand this comment then all I can say is that you should have been at the presentation night!)

Maghull will join Police in the 1st division after beating off the challenge of Fords, only 5 points separating the two teams, (why didn't you come to the presentation night to collect your runners-up medals?) Down at the other end we must say goodbye to Marconi 'A' and Police 'B'. Marconi always seemed certain for the drop but Police 'B' did have at least a fighting chance but failed by just nine points. They did themselves no favours at all by conceding a walkover in Wk. 20 to Bootle J.C. Bath Street 'B' were able to pull clear from the relegation zone thanks in part to the re-ranking of Dave Evans who came in at No.1. and as far as I understand only lost one game, that being to Ray Parkinson, M'web 'A', 21/17, 21/23, 21/17. The match score finished 7-3 to Bath Street with Ray winning all three for the home side.

As I expected, Fords pushed Maghull all the way for the second promotion spot, missing out by just six points. The crunch came in week 19 when the two teams met, the final score being a 5-5 draw. The card indicates a very close, evenly fought game. Steve Woods scraped through 18 in the third against Tim Wearden, but Bob Hughes beat Steve 19, also in the third, James Eaton beating Alan Jones 19. This was the game that Fords needed to win to have any real chance of stopping Maghull returning to the top flight, but on the night it just wasn't to be. In their next game Fords only managed a 6-4 win against Manweb with Alan Evans recording a memorable victory over Tim -8, 22, 20, Trevor Barraclough beat Bob Hughes and Billy Proffitt, Paul Evans also beat Billy. Fords then entertained Marconi 'A' who I had earlier in the season tipped for third place. Marconi haven't really had the best of seasons when compared to their previous high standards, but nevertheless proved they are a force to be reckoned with and beat Fords 6-4. Frank McCann had a tremendous night winning all three of his games, Ian Wensley won two and Peter Wass beat Frank James to make it six. In their final game Marconi 'A' met Waterloo in Huyton and the visitors ran out victorious in a closely fought game 6-4. This time it was Ricky Brown's turn to complete a hat-trick of wins, Frank lost out to him 21/18,

-18, -19. Frank also fell to the unorthodox Ritchie Cragg 19, -19, -21. Although Frank lost, it sounds as though he got his monies worth. Peter was the home sides main success story beating both Peter Holmes and Ritchie and losing narrowly to Ricky.

Bootle J.C. finished the season in fourth place and proved all the way through that they are a hard team to beat. Apart from the teams above them, nobody gave B.J.C. anything like a thrashing. Manweb beat them 7-3 but B.J.C. played a reserve in the shape of Dave Graham (what shape is that). Dave, however, having suffered a loss of match practise due to injury, didn't disgrace himself taking both John Hardy and Alan Evans to three games. Brian Crolley had a good season with victories over Mark Miles, Peter Wass, Alan Jones and Trevor Owens. Mike Moran had good wins against Ian Wensley, Mark Miles, Roy Adams and two wins in a 7-3 defeat against Maghull beating Alan Jones and Fred Pheysey -18, 18 & 19. Roger Neal was as steady as ever and his claim to fame came earlier in the season against Maghull (please see previous Digest).

Both Manweb teams were not only playing for second division survival but were battling against each other and were evenly matched throughout the season. Both teams eventually finished on 96 points apiece. Had it not been for a mid season injury to Andy Lloyd, the 'A' team may have put one over their first team. The first team managed to take three points off Police 'A' over the two games. The first match ending up 9-1 but according to Paul the score didn't reflect the match. John Hardy had tough luck against both Paul and Steve losing 21/17 to Paul and 24/22 to Steve, both in the third. Alan Evans won the sole game for Manweb beating Gemma 11/21 in the third. The return match finished 8-2 with Terri-Ann being the unfortunate one losing to both John and Paul Evans but recorded a good victory over Alan 18/21 in the third. Manweb lost 7-3 to Wavertree St. Mary's 'B' before beating Marconi 'B' by the same score, the impressive Trevor Owens won his three. Then as previously stated they went down 6-4 to Fords and then drew with Waterloo and finally lost to Police 'A'. Manweb 'A' won two of their last six matches. They beat Bootle J.C. 6-4 with,

once again Ray Parkinson collecting the man-of-the-match award winning all three in superb style all two straight. They beat Police 'B' by the same score but this time it was Paula French who got the P.O.T.M. award by completing a hat-trick including the disposal of Andy Lloyd 19/21 in the third. M'web's game away to Waterloo looks to have been a nail biter. It finished 6-4 to Waterloo but seven games went to three sets and three of them finished 22/20 in the third, another 21/18 in the third and another 21/17 in the third. Ricky Brown and Peter Holmes both won two, as did Paul Jennings. M'webs next game ended in a 9-1 defeat at the hands of Police 'A' which included a Gemma Lloyd win over Ray 15 & 28. Maghull then beat them by the same score and their final game was at the hands of Bath Street, losing 7-3.

WSM 'B' ended with a flourish, winning four of their last six matches including an incredible win over promoted Maghull. Would you believe the score ended up 9-1 with Steve Woods saving a whitewash, but only just, beating the much-improved Tim Tement 19 in the third. I have to say in defence of Maghull that Fred Pheysey didn't play, but nevertheless this was an impressive win. Both Mark Miles and Roy Adams won their three and teamed up to win the doubles but the win of the night was reserved for young Tim who beat Alan Jones 14 & 10, well done. They followed this with a 7-3 win over M'web, Mark again winning his three, Tim narrowly losing to John Hardy 19 in the third. They then beat Marconi 'A' 6-4 before losing 8-2 to Bath Street, but played a man short. They then drew with Bootle J.C. and rounded off the season with a resounding 7-3 win over Police 'B'. Next season, everyone beware!

It's obvious to me that there is someone out there, and that you do in fact read these notes. I have received more cards this time around with comments on them than I have received since I started putting pen to paper. Thankyou to all those who have contributed. This makes the job a lot easier and instead of staying up until 3am to write them I have been able to finish at 2am. I hope the future writer of these notes receives the same amount of help. Yes, there is a clue there. Due to my work commitments and the countless other things I have to do as League Secretary, something has to go and unfortunately this is that something. I hope that someone out there will make Ken Armson's job a lot simpler next season and volunteer for this task, I guarantee you will

feel a sense of achievement once you have done it. Honest!

By the way, a well-known 1st division note writer has asked me the question, "Does Ken Arnson take ugly pills?". Well, apparently he used to, but he doesn't need them any more.

DIVISION 3 SYLVIA GRAHAM

The season's not over 'til the fat lady sings'.... or so the saying goes. well, the fat lady is definitely singing now!! For I must congratulate myself on picking the top four teams, although not in the right order. I fully expected one of the two Bath St teams to be promoted and it wasn't until the final few matches that the division was eventually decided. It was the re-appearance of Lionel Arnoud for YM that put the heart back into the team and the self belief that they would be promoted. The replay of the Bath St. 'D' v Cadwa 'D' match clinching the final positions.

I must admit that it is satisfying to write and congratulate BJC 'A' on winning the division under the captaincy of the indomitable Bill Harris and the backroom work of Dave Graham. A special mention must be given to Ken Strahan because he always complains he never gets a mention. As the young(?), tanned (sunbed?), handsome (?) member of BJC, Ken, together with Lionel Arnoud, are the two outstanding players in this division, losing one, and no league sets, respectively. In reality at least six teams would have been worthy of a place in Div 2. Cadwa 'B' will certainly be up for it next season along with the two Bath St. teams and the newly relegated Police team, so I can't see it being any easier.

M'hull 'B' and WSM 'D' could make a quick return but will be required to field more settled side than they did this season.

I'm truly amazed at this batch of cards, the comments are fantastic, and as promised all will be mentioned. Cadwa 'C' were a little disappointed in their 6-4 loss to Bootle YM, especially as they had the opportunity to draw the match with only three players. Don Davies fought valiantly agst Danny Every but lost 19 in the 3rd. The following week Bootle YM notched another 6-4 agst WSM 'C' in a mixed match where the deciding factor was the doubles.

On March 7th, history was made as Rob Peat and

John Langton registered their first ever wins over John Higham. However, in John's defence, he did have a tummy bug that was more appropriate to cricket and unfortunate in such a close match. YM commented that they had lost to Bath St. 'C' four times this season, but even with meeting in the cup, it should only be three. Is this another team that has problems distinguishing Bath St. 'C' from Bath St 'D'?

Whilst Ian Black was in Indonesia, allegedly as a standby for the English Men's team, WSM 'B' had to play short agst Cadwa 'B', who also had to field a weak reserve in Alan Davies, at No.4!!!! Nevertheless, the 3 WSM players each won a singles with the best result being Peter Howdens' victory over Colin Rourke -12, 16, 18.

Unluckily for M'hull 'B', March also saw the return of YM's Lionel Arnoud, often exploited and seen pisted in Scandanavia (or so Stephen Kee said!!). Lionel apparently jet-skied in to help his ailing team-mates, and with the winning post in sight he led the charge forward for two matches and then disappeared yet again. His second appearance was against Boo YM where the opening match was a fast, open, hard hitting set of Danny Every v Billy Cheung, with Billy returning the ball from the back of the court and always managing to land on the corners. Whenever Lionel played he always had another gear to move up to, but apparently his tactics have at last been sussed.... black rubber agaainst black shorts and red rubber in front of red Liverpool shirt, so you never know where his bat is!!!! John Higham gave him a mild flutter when they went to a 3rd game, but a win was not on the cards.

The Cadwa derby resulted in a 9-1 win for the 'B' team which does not reflect the actual match. Several sets went close in the 3rd and only one was won by the 'C' team. In two of those Sue Burgess overcame Alan 'Grasshopper' Davies and Rob 'Woody' Peverall - please enlighten me!

It was also nice to see Stan Clarke having one of his usual lucky wins; this time against Boo YM's Danny Every. In that same match Colin Fyles apparently played brilliantly against John Higham but lost 18 in the 3rd. Colin kept his cool when John turned on his self criticism, out loud, when not having a good game.... not that his opponent could possibly be playing well!! John had his wrist well slapped by his team mates, which was obvious when he played us the following week.

Alan Davies, Cadwa 'C' and Julie Prince, W'loo, had three excellent games in their match. It was a really tight set and it certainly looked curtains for Alan in the second when Julie twice had match point. Alan was blooded (he cut his knee!!), but not bowed, and he won the set 18 in the 3rd. My favourite comments, for obvious reasons, were sent in from Cadwa 'C' when they played BJC 'A' needing 3 points to secure promotion. It was a seesaw start as Cadwa clawed back a two set deficit when Cherith Graham secured the 3rd set to celebrate promotion. Rob Peverall finished the season by beating Bill Harris in a marathon three gamer, both players giving their all. He stated that the game was enriched by the developing talent of Cherith, a star for the future. I never realised Rob was so perceptive!!!

Well, I don't think Uncle Ken will let me write much more, though it is the end of the season so I'll finish with the facesavers and close matches.

Facesavers: Eddie Preston bt Johnny Tsang - 12, 16 & 18. Ritchie Jones bt Derek Sullivan 15 & 13. Steve Graham bt Mark Paterson 12, -18, 9. Bill Salter bt Ro Craddock -22, 12 & 18. George Frost bt Jimmy Clewett 13 & 18. Rob Peverall bt Steve Graham in the Cadwa derby 10, -16, 12. Chris Roberts bt Derek Sullivan 14 & 25. Stan Clarke bt Danny Every -17, 18 & 19. Mabel Neary bt Jim Clewett 19 & 15. John Higham bt Bill Harris -13, 14 & 14.

Close matches: Colin Fyles and Dave Williams bt Bill Stanley and Peter Howden 21 & 20. Sylvia Graham bt Reg Edwards 19, -21, 21. Derek Sullivan and Bill Harris bt John Langton and John McCann 22 & 23. Alan Davies bt Julie Prince -21, 24 & 18. Cherith Graham bt Tom Killip 22 & 21. Rob Peverall bt Tom Downing 15, -21, 20.

DIVISION 4

DOUG BAKER

Heartly congratulations to the double winning Cops, Police 'C', Gareth Jones, Len Dyson, Dave Crispin and Brian Burrows, ably assisted by Dave Oakes, who have romped home (some time ago) to claim the 4th div. title. 22 wins, no defeats, a massive 194 pts from 220, 88%,

surely some kind of record! They took the Forrest Cup by beating their nearest rivals, WSM 'E', 5-2 in the final.

Police have felt slightly embarrassed to be here, questioning the Committee's decision to place such a strong team in this division, as justified by a finish of five consecutive 10-nils. From the beginning the question has not been if they will win, but rather by how much. Across the 22 matches it's been their commitment and single mindedness of purpose that has made it look easier than it actually was, avoiding any pitfalls of complacency. Gareth can testify to the abilities of the No 1's and 2's in the divisions that ensured he doesn't leave us unscathed. Len and Dave have both beaten the 4th div. Individual champion, Harry Reeve. Brian hasn't been able to play as many games as he would have liked, but he's guaranteed to win his singles. Everyone will agree that it's been a pleasure to lock horns with the Newsham Knights and the division has been enriched by their exemplary skills and the sportsmanship they have brought to the game. As opposed to others who attempt to bring gamesmanship to the sport.

Jubilant runners-up, WSM 'E', Bob Owen, John Gratton, Gordon Langshaw and Ken Roberts, also ascend into the upper echelons. Bouncing back from whence they came, with promise of a permanent settlement in the 3rd. Their last match of the season had them on 139 pts playing rivals H.H. 'A' on 126 points who still had a postponed match to play. WSM 'E' knew they needed at least 4 pts to be sure, as if H.H. 'A' won 7-3 they could steal it 143 to 142 if they beat Cadwa 10-0 the following night. Sadly for H.H. 'A' they were without the unbeatable Mr Clein for both matches. WSM 'E' clinched the runner-up spot with a 5-all draw. Bob Owen bt John Henshaw (from a game down) and Paul Morgan. John Henshaw bt John Gratton, who in turn thwarted Mike Poole. Bob has made a habit of comebacks, btg Phil Christie -18, 18 & 23, and Harry Reeve 19 in the 3rd. They've made good use of reserves Ken Armson and Andy Bird, alongside of standout performances from the regulars, such as John Gratton taking Bert Rivers 17 in the 3rd; Gordon Langshaw btg Jack Highton 24 in the 3rd and Ken Roberts overcoming John O'Sullivan after losing the first.

So, Harold House take 3rd place in what was a very good season with an improved squad. Eddie Clein has had another standout and landslide season,

The closest anyone got to Eddie was Ken Armson, 17 in the 3rd. Their 2 v 3 clash with WSM 'E' came just too late and the draw was a good result considering they were without Eddie's services. They came closest to upsetting the Police with a 4-6 result, Eddie btg Gareth and Len and John Henshaw also btg Gareth narrowly 19 in the 3rd. A 10-0 v WSM 'G' saw Paul Morgan recover from 15-20 down in't 3rd against Paul Reed-Clayton to take the next 7 points. Mike Poole also came back from a game down and 9-16 in the 2nd to beat Ken Ray. They've covered Eddie's obligations by having Ritchie Blackburn and the venerable Dave Cohen playing a round.

M'web 'B', who settled down to a mainstay of Cameron, Ashley and Harrison, again finish behind H.H. but two places up on last season, and with visible signs of improvement in the camp. An 8-2 defeat by the Police 'C' in February was quite a close affair, 4 sets going to a decider, but only Gareth v Paul Evans -20. 20 & 20 going to M'Web. Alan Cameron taking the other point beating Gareth in 2. A 10-0 defeat from the Police in the return fixture could be forgiven, however, wins over Boo YM 'A' and W'loo and a draw with M'hull have to be weighed up agst defeats from WSM 'F', WSM 'G' and H.H. 'A'. A solid performance over the season, which recommends them as a team to watch for next season.

M'hull 'C' have come on leaps and bounds from last season's efforts and will be well pleased with 5th spot, seeing it as an opportunity to go that extra yard next season. Their draw away to M'web was mainly due to Phil Christie having the luck/skill to win both his singles in the 3rd, 24 & 19. Steve McGanity also won his two that night btg John and Arthur and has followed this with good wins agst Don Davies, Arthur Garnett and Ken Roberts. Impressive 7-3 wins over Cadwa 'D' and Boo YM 'A' were balanced agst defeats from WSM'S 'E' & 'G' to define their position in the pecking order.

WSM 'F' boast the club's Mandarins, Stan Clarke and Ken Armson, with samurais (early in de morning) Paul Banks and Rez Mirdamadi, and have done well to establish themselves. Mr Armson, san, has had a good run out to the season assassinating Mike Poole, Harry Reeve (17

in the 3rd) and Alan Cameron. The team hit Linacre 9-1 and M'web 6-4. A closely fought derby with the 'G' team saw them win the 4 singles that went to a 3rd game (Stan by the narrowest of margins against Paul and Ian), and losing both doubles from deuce in the 3rd didn't prevent their winning the match 6-4.

On the table Cadwa 'D' have had a "nothing much to talk about really" kind of season. Most of the action has been off court, with the club's ranking up and down, ranking the players. When they got Critchley, Dolder (Snr), Highton and O'Sullivan to turn out they were quite a strong prospect, as witnessed by those four beating Boo YM 7-3. John O'Sullivan has certainly enjoyed his re-acquaintance with the league, especially the night he stole two apples off the Police apple cart, beating Daves Crispin and Oakes. Steve Critchley will be only too glad to see the introduction of bigger balls, that's all he talked about, according to Trevor, who, by the way, had an epic game v Mike Poole, 21, -20, 17. Bath St 'E' always looked like they were too good to go down and although the wheels came off, they're still singing. Losing to both promotion chasers, WSM 'E' and H.H. 'A' but Alan Willis btg Gratton and Roberts, and Chris winning the battle of Blackburn from Richard. Everyone in tune winning one single and then both doubles to beat M'hull 'C'. Karen Gibson has been solid at No.1. regularly beating the opposition 1 & 2s. Due to illnesses Chris has appeared as the No 4, 3 & 2 but was capable of winning both sets at any position.

A reconstituted Boo YM 'A' have had some hard battles, both personally and as a team. Bert Rivers has been toying with his bat, losing more than he would like. Jim Geddes boasts a comeback victory over Frank Lacey. Mike Hughes in 3 over Austin Hayden. Bert and Jim teamed up to enjoy a 19 in the 3rd win over Langshaw and Roberts. They've come together as a team for recent wins over Bath St 'E' 6-4 and W'loo 'C' 7-3, with Arthur Garnett resplendent as usual. They also had the unusual experience of starting a match in one venue and finishing it in another, when Cadwa 'D' were moved out of the main hall to the small hall. this may have explained why they lost all 5 of the sets that went to 3. At the end of the season W'loo will be glad to have done a 'Bradford' and finished just above the relegation zone, managing to stop a free fall of successive season drops. In what was the equivalent of one of those head to head cycle races,

were the two riders do 5 circuits of the velodrome at a snails pace and then one of them bursts for the line, W'loo on 58 points with a game in hand, met WSM 'G' on 60 points in match 18. And so it came to pass that W'loo accelerated past WSM 'G' 9-1 to establish a six point lead, which they held onto, as they gained 21 points from their remaining 5 games, as did WSM 'G' from their last 4. On that defining night, Harry Nelson, Ken Nelson and Austin Hayden took top honours and both doubles, with Ian Douglas responding for the opposition v Bill Spencer. they see-sawed through the remaining games, down 2-8 at M'web, up 9-1 to Cadwa (3 pts w/overs). level at Bath St 'E', down for nought at Police and finishing off even Stevens, again with Bath St 'E'. WSM 'G' proved their mettle last season by beating stablemates WSM 'E' in a tiebreaker to claim the 5th div c'ship. Next season they will be competing for the same trophy. A 10-0 defeat from a strong H.H. 'A' (5 games lost in the 3rd) didn't help themselves or their challenging 'E' team. A good 10-0 against the Police in so much as 4 sets went to three. Andy Bird involved in two of them, the closest being -23, 18, -18 versus Len. A 6-4 win over M'hull 'C' gave hope. Sadly, their penultimate match, a 10-0 over Linacre, their best result of the season, did no more than extend the gap between the two teams. their final game, a 7-3 win over Boo YM 'A', notable for Paul Reed-Clayton as he out foxed Rivers and Geddes, was not quite enough. Even though the team has gone down, expect to see guest appearances for the surviving WSM team from Andy, Paul, Ian and Steve. Linacre will be looking to whitewash the wall whereupon the writing has been written. Last year's eleventh hour up turn could not be repeated, and the 5th will be welcoming one of the finest hosts in the league. A second win of the season came against Bath St 'E', in no small part due to 4 games being w/overs. Their finest hour came in an impressive draw against WSM 'E' in March. Harry losing to Bob, but too good for John. Jack Davidson beating Gordon, and best of all, Bob 18 in the 3rd. Neil Appleby losing his two but having chances at deuce in each. Their last game was a home defeat 4-6 by Boo YM 'A', Jack Davidson losing to Bert 19, -18, 19, but triumphant over

Arthur in 3.

As I surmised at the start of the season, WSM with three teams in the one division had several options open to them, when it came to how they "packed the bases". As prophesised, giving one team the leg up to the next division, can push another down. WSM finish with one team promoted, one mid table, one relegated. As ever with table tennis, joys and tears dispersed in equal measure.

I hope you all enjoyed the season and the Social Presentation Night. I know I did, as I was one of the last to leave and can't remember all the intriguing gossip. See you for more fun and games next season.

DIVISION 5

KEN ARMSON

No surprises, not that any were expected. Manweb winning the title in a canter and dropping only 16 sets in the process. thus, after moving players up to the 4th. They won the cup just as easily, 5-0, with a line up that would not have been out of place in a 3rd div match. They will almost certainly be in the running for further promotion next season and their 'B' team could either finish below them or go up with them, such is the depth of their strength. Their cup opponents, Aigburth, were out-classed and out-gunned, only the first set going to 3, but they never stopped trying and earned their runner up medals. Aigburth have the consolation of clinching the No 2 spot, 13 points clear of nearest rivals Bath St 'F'. Congratulations to Alan Biggs and his team of Peter Carney, Rob Barker and Rob Conley on a well deserved League and Cup double. Peter Carney must be feeling well pleased with the rewards for his return after a lengthy absence. for A'burth it was a much harder season and at times they doubted their ability to gain promotion back to the 4th, but they need not have worried for their nearest rivals, Bath St. 'F' were well adrift. They had their share of problems and the sudden disappearance of Dave Evans at a crucial point in the season did not help. Waiting in the wings, however, was Carl Anderson who surprised himself and his club with a series of good results when he stepped in on several occasions to assist his 1st team. Carl is a by product, so to speak, of the league coaching sessions, in that he is not a junior. He was snapped up by Aigburth who have been more than pleased with his reliability and results. He won his two agst M'web btg Ron Houghton and Ray Finnigan. Playing for the

1st against the 'A' he again won his two beating Derek Traynor and Eric (Twinkle toes) Young. Twinkle toes because he surprised me, probably a few others, with the excellence of his dancing footwork at the Presentation Night, his wife's also. Carl is a player to watch out for next season, who knows, his club may give him a crack at the 4th div.

Bath St 'F' and M'hull 'D' tried hard to stay with A'burth but surprisingly it was not to be for Bath St. who had the strength in depth to compete but could not convert that strength into match points. Obviously they will now see themselves as probable front runners next season.

Most teams won the matches they expected to win and there were few surprises. Liv YM did produce one when Tony Wong beat Delyth Davies in 2 straight to make it an unhappy season for Delyth. Not that she will be too bothered, her education being more important at present than winning matches, but this should not detract from what was possibly Tony's best win of the season. The big question now being will we see Hope back with us next season? Rumour has it that we may not. What has been a serious problem in a division already short of teams and matches is that of walkovers. Far too many have occurred and these have resulted in less matches for the teams affected. Hope were one of the offenders and yet still succeeded in finishing above Police 'D' even after a ten point deduction for playing an ineligible player. As last season, Police remain firmly anchored on the bottom and yet have players in their squad who could have improved their position had they played more often for their own team.

The season was marred by a serious breach of Rule by L'pool YM 'C' that culminated in their being expelled, the Management Committee decision having been upheld by the Board of Appeal. they failed to learn from an earlier offence, showed a total disregard for the league rules, and left little room for any other decision. Fortunately the subsequent adjustment of points made necessary by their expulsion has had no effect on most placings. Perhaps the YM's behaviour is more adequately covered by comments on the scorecard for their match against M'hull 'D' which read "Only one YM player, Alvin Tso, turned up at 8.30pm. This being the second time this season they have failed to turn up for our match. I don't know what's going on at L'pool YM, it's

frustrating for every one."

Clearly there are lessons to be learnt by every team from this incident. The most important being that Clubs should ensure their players are fully familiar with Rules governing ranking and eligibility of players. Hopefully it will all be history next season and everyone can pick up where they left off this season and get back to playing table tennis and at the same time ensuring they operate within the league rules.

The main aim now has to be ensuring that there are twelve teams competing in this division and so ensure a full 22 week match programme for everyone.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER

The word 'ineligible' in Rule 19 has led to some confusion as to its exact interpretation so far as playing order is concerned. Your Management Committee have looked into this and agreed Guidelines on its exact interpretation so far as an offence is concerned. The main definition so far as Clubs are concerned being that the word 'ineligible' will only apply to a player who plays for a team that he or she is not eligible to play for. To simply play out of order does not deem that player is ineligible.

NETS & EDGES

After more years than he cares to remember Brian Leeson has relinquished his final table tennis post, that of County Umpire Secretary, to enable him to give more time to his musical interests. Brian leads a musical group and is very active in the world of music. Many thanks, Brian, and best wishes with your music, may it always be sweet to your ear.

Apologies to Eddie Cameron, his letter re errors in league tables having been mislaid. His point being that totals in columns do not always equal matches/sets played indicating tables have not been properly checked.

DIVISION 1	P	W	D	L	PTS
POLICE	22	20	0	2	183
CADWA	22	21	0	1	177
LIV YM	22	12	2	8	129
W.S.M. 'A'	22	11	4	7	113
W.S.M.	22	9	5	8	111
BATH ST	22	12	0	10	109
BATH ST 'A'	22	10	2	10	102
LIV YM 'A'	22	7	3	12	90
CADWA 'A'	22	3	5	14	84
H.HOUSE	22	8	4	10	83*
WATERLOO	22	2	6	14	75
MARCONI	22	1	1	20	54

DIVISION 2	P	W	D	L	PTS
POLICE 'A'	22	20	1	1	171
MAGHULL	22	15	3	4	132
FORDS	22	13	2	7	127
BOOTLE J.C.	22	10	5	7	115
W'LOO 'A'	22	8	6	8	111
W.S.M. 'B'	22	11	2	9	111
BATH ST 'B'	22	8	3	11	103
MARCONI 'A'	22	6	5	11	102
MANWEB	22	8	3	11	96
MANWEB 'A'	22	8	0	14	96
POLICE 'B'	22	4	6	12	87
MARCONI 'B'	22	0	4	19	63

DIVISION 3	P	W	D	L	PTS
BOO JC 'A'	22	15	4	3	153
LIV YM 'B'	22	16	2	4	147
BATH ST 'D'	22	16	3	3	141
BATH ST 'C'	22	15	2	5	134
CADWA 'B'	22	9	6	7	112
BOOTLE YM	22	11	2	9	111
W'LOO 'B'	22	7	4	11	109
CADWA 'C'	22	6	5	11	99
W.S.M. 'C'	22	6	2	14	94
M'HULL 'A'	22	6	7	9	89
M'HULL 'B'	22	3	1	18	69
W.S.M. 'D'	22	2	2	18	62

DIVISION 4	P	W	D	L	PTS
POLICE 'C'	22	22	0	0	194
W.S.M. 'E'	22	16	3	3	144
H.HOUSE 'A'	22	14	3	5	137
M'WEB 'B'	22	9	4	9	110
M'HULL 'C'	22	11	1	10	107
W.S.M. 'F'	22	10	3	9	104
CADWA 'D'	22	7	4	11	99
BATH ST 'E'	22	6	5	11	97
BOO YM 'A'	22	6	3	14	95
W'LOO 'C'	22	7	3	12	88
W.S.M. 'G'	22	5	3	14	82
LINACRE	22	2	2	18	65

DIVISION 5	P	W	D	L	PTS
M'WEB 'C'	16	16	0	0	144
AIGBURTH	16	12	0	4	112
BATH ST 'F'	16	12	0	4	99
M'HULL 'D'	16	6	2	8	73
BATH ST 'G'	16	5	1	10	66
A'BURTH 'A'	16	6	4	6	64
H.HOUSE 'B'	16	4	2	10	63
HOPE	16	5	2	9	54*
POLICE 'B'	16	0	1	15	34
LIV YM 'C' - RECORD EXPUNGED					

* DENOTES 10 PTS DEDUCTED

CLOSED CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

For the first time we made use of the additional tables available to us using 15 for match play and a further four for practice play. This enabled us to maintain the schedule of play and still have tables available for practice. Several members have asked why we play across the venue and so have some tables directly in front of a white wall, it being felt that the use of orange balls is not sufficient to compensate for a facing white wall at one end of a court. There are two reasons for this, the first being that this enables maximum court layout without using all available space. The second, and by far the most important, being that we have insufficient surrounds for any alternative layout. At the GP in August we were able to move away from the wall and have a passageway round the perimeter of the 24 tables because the sponsor provided the additional surrounds required. We hope to shortly be in a position to purchase additional surrounds and if these become available we will use a layout with all round access. LH courts will still be facing a white wall but this will not as now be the court perimeter and we will continue to use orange balls. As they will then be the new larger size balls they will be even easier to see. I decided to do a complete 'U' turn for the O55s by making it a Group event followed by a k/out. This gave early competitors more matches and appeared to be well received. It did add to the overall running time and as always with veteran events a number of games were prolonged. I had allowed for this, but what you cannot allow for is who will go through to the later stages. It was this factor that caused some delay to the Divisional singles that followed the O55s, but we succeeded in introducing the O40 event on time. Again, the delay factor was related to competitors playing in all three events and several progressing to the later stages. The recovery time I had included in the scheduling assisted in compensating for some of this delay and helped us keep up to schedule. The WS with only seven competitors ran well, but the JS with only three competitors probably created more problems than any other event. This being due to one of the competitors in that event arriving late for the D5 event resulting in the JS not being played as scheduled during the O40 event. With another also competing in the WS I was un-

able to get the JS started until the WS groups had been played. By that time we had commenced the MS and had a further knock on effect due to two of the JS players also being in the MS. We still made good progress and commenced introducing Doubles matches shortly after 5p.m. as planned. This is always the most difficult time due to players still being involved in the later MS stages, some MS matches running slightly behind schedule not helping. It only takes a couple of long matches in either event to bring about problems and we had a number in both events. Had everything run smoothly with players being knocked out to order and so becoming available for their next event, we would have finished at the planned time of 1830 to 1900. Soda Law being what it is play did not finish until 1940. Everything had been cleared and everyone was away home by 19.55hrs. The usual small band of helpers being the last to leave. I was pleased to see more members assisting in the dismantling of courts and removal of equipment than is normally the case. This is a time consuming task made easier if we have the assistance of members, it being for your benefit that we run a tournament. We set up the previous evening with a much smaller band comprised of Committee members and two others. It was necessary during play to have a slightly prolonged General Let to enable presentations to be made to O55 and DS finalists. I know some players found this to be a bind, but it was a necessary bind. Prior to moving to the Tennis Centre, there was a prolonged break in play whilst officials took lunch followed by DS finals and presentation of trophies. I have eliminated the lunch break (we eat as we work) and events including finals are played on a continuous basis. This benefits everyone with the exception of officials - they run the risk of indigestion etc. It follows that there needs to be a break if we are to ensure that finalists are to be properly presented with their award. We also had new perpetual shields to present to D2 & 3 winners, purchase of these having been made possible by an anonymous donation. It was important to ensure that these new trophies were properly presented. If anyone felt aggrieved by this break in play they should reflect on the fact that it could just as easily been themselves on the receiving end of one of these presentations. There is never a right time for such a break and to have allowed play to finish on all tables before making the presentations would have incurred a disruption in play of up to one hour. Not

to mention being besieged by players demanding to know why their match was not being played when tables were obviously available.

Finals Night went well, too well, for we had to adjust the programme of events because one of the WS finalists was delayed, only to find play proceed at such speed that all possible matches had been completed by 2100hrs and we were still without both WS finalists. The spectre of being the first league referee to scratch a finalist zoomed into view, the only way of avoiding doing so being to have a short break. This becoming a 30 minute break, Paula arriving at the time she had said she would of 21.30. We still succeeded in finishing well before 22.00hrs. Because Finals Night tended to run late the programme was reduced to ensure a more acceptable finishing time. However, we may need to review this decision and add at least one additional match or alternatively move the commencing time forward and give us a finishing time of around 22.00hrs.

For the first time anyone could remember our President, Arthur Upton was not able to be with us due to illness. He did send a message wishing us a successful night, but we would much preferred to have had both Arthur and Lil with us. I, for one, certainly missed him. We can only hope that his current health problems will improve and enable him to again play a part in the running of our league.

We have a new MS champion; Adam Robertson comfortably beating Kevin Dolder in a one sided final on his first, and possibly last, appearance in our championships. International calls having previously prevented his entering the competition. He was never extended in any of his matches, but everyone enjoyed watching him on Sunday and again on Finals night. Keith Williams comfortably retained his VS title with Alice Howard reversing last season's WS final by beating Paula French 2 straight. Kevin Dolder and Phil Musgrove took the Doubles in the 3rd having somehow managed to lose the first when winning it comfortably.

As your referee I don't get to see many matches, but I did see what must have been the best match of the championships. A doubles semi-final, Kevin and Phil beating Keith and Wayne 24/22 in the 3rd.

Other winners were -O55 - Ted Birch, r/u

Peter Taylor. JS - Cherith Graham, r/u Paul O'Donnell. D2 - Steve Gittins, r/u Paul Gittins. D3 - Billy Cheung, r/u Mark Paterson. D4 - Harry Reeves, r/u Doug Baker. D5 - Alan Biggs, r/u Johnny Tsang.

Entries this year were down slightly but this was compensated by an increased entry for the 2nd and 3rd divisional singles. A very poor entry for D4 and 5. We had only 15 MS groups compared with 17 last year. This is YOUR tournament, run for your benefit and enjoyment, so why not make your season a more enjoyable one next time by entering. You will have an enjoyable day, playing, watching and chatting to other members.

I would like your views on any aspect of your tournament, criticism or praise. Your views are important and having asked for them without success in the past, I am giving it another try. Have we got the format right? When should we stage the event? Should all event finalists receive a trophy or a prize in kind? What format would you like for Finals night? There are many areas of discussion and your views are important. Let me have them and I will ensure your views receive consideration. I may decide to publish some views in our magazine so that everyone can consider them. Your Management Committee have done their bit by upgrading trophies for the divisional and O55 event

In conclusion my thanks to all competitors for their support, assistance and co-operation and for the many donations received. My special thanks to the small band of helpers who worked throughout the day to help make the tournament the success that I believe it was. I shall be studying the schedule of play with a view to moving the doubles event to an earlier slot. It may still create problems, requiring as it does four players for a match, but anything that makes the day easier for officials and competitors is worth considering. Any change may also eliminate the inevitable scratching that is part of any doubles event.

Ken Armson, MBE
Tournament Referee

NETS AND EDGES

Congratulations to Eddie Clein on his taking of office as Lord Mayor of our City. He is the first member ever to fill this prestigious post. Did you read the article he featured in in the Echo? Some surprising revelations. A dark horse, our Eddie. Well done, Eddie, may you have a successful and enjoyable year of office.

Rumour has it that Paul Gittins was last seen chasing ducklings in Crosby in his new role as a Guardian of the ducklings! Now you know why you never see a policeman when you need one. They are probably too busy chasing their Christmas dinner.

Due to his continued poor health our President, Arthur Upton, has stood down as Chairman and National Councillor for Lancashire after 32 years in office. He has also stood down as Chairman of the ETTA Disciplinary Committee having held this prestigious position for many years.

After two seasons as L&C League Secretary Don Davies has seen the light and handed over the reins of this demanding post to Dave Higginson, Halton League.

The ETTA Executive Committee recommendation that the bigger ball be adopted from 1st July was unanimously adopted by National Councillors at their meeting. This will now be put to the ETTA A.G.M. for adoption.

This will have been discussed at our own AGM so make sure you know what ball we will be using next season.

Cherith Graham has shown much improvement this season as many older and more experienced players have found to their cost. She has qualified for G.P. Finals at Bath having won The Band 3 Women's Event at Kings Lynn, the U21 at Newcastle and been a finalist and semi finalist in other GP events. She has also been invited to the Cadet Masters. Well done, Cherith.

Stan Clarke has succeeded Arthur Upton as National Councillor and Chairman of Lancashire. Congratulations, Stan, Arthur will be a hard act to follow, but you will have no problem doing so.

Bath St. have been successful with their application for a lottery grant to extend their clubroom. Their enlarged premises will be ready for the start of next season.

Chris Ford, partnered by Andrew Eden, reached the semi finals of the National Senior Men's Doubles event and almost made it to the Final, losing in three.

An embarrassing 'First' was achieved by the ETTA at the National Senior finals when the players objected to the knockout events having been reduced to best of three and went on strike. Play had to be suspended for discussions to take place. There were no winners here, only a loser, our sport.

Ray Hebson, currently one of our Auditors, is standing down this year. He was one of the stalwarts of our league having filled a number of posts before stepping down to take office as an auditor. He is also a Life Member. Many thanks, Ray, for your sterling work for our League over many years.

At its annual meeting the B.L. voted to change from fortnightly match play to four weekends of match play. The Premier Division to remain fortnightly. This change will be welcomed by players wanting to play B.L. who have been unable to commit themselves on a fortnightly basis.

Ray Jackson won the British League Secretary of the Year award for his work as Secretary of the Halton B.L. team. This award not being normally presented to a first season secretary. Congratulations, Ray.

Sylvia Graham has won a double promotion for in addition to her team winning promotion to the 2nd div she has also been promoted to 2nd div Digest Correspondent. Congrats to Sylvia, on a well earned double promotion.

Arthur Upton has been elected as President of both the L&C League and Lancashire County. These new honours make him a triple President in that he is also our President. Congratulations, Arthur, and our best wishes for your continued improvement, health wise. The end of one era and the beginning of another, we hope. Take good care of him, Lil.

CUP FINAL REPORTS

READMAN CUP: CADWA 5 v POLICE 3

A night of top class table tennis for the many spectators that demonstrated the strength of the Liverpool League. Cadwa always looking the most likely winners having two players capable of winning their three sets. Having won the toss their first call was Kevin Dolder v Paul Hutchings; Kevin winning 15 in the third in a set he never really looked in danger of losing. Police then called Mike Mahoney (Cadwa) to face Chris Ford and Chris duly made it 1-1 beating Mike 18 & 23. This pattern continued with Cadwa calling on their winners and Police responding by calling on Mike Mahoney to provide their wins. This was to be their undoing for once Mike had played and lost three times, they had no certain winning calls left. With the score at 3-3 Cadwa's call was Keith Williams v Chris Ford, another cert, as Keith demonstrated by winning in a canter 19 & 10. This left John Rankin to play the last two sets for Police and he had a mountain to climb in that his opponents would be Keith and Kevin. They decided to call Keith straight back on, not really a good call as Keith was showing the same tremendous form he had produced the previous evening in the Frank Murphy Veteran Cup Final, but Police obviously considered it a better alternative than putting John against Kevin Dolder. To keep their hopes alive, John needed to beat Keith and then go for the cup win by also beating Kevin. It was not to be for Keith took the first, 14, and was cantering home in the second 19/14 only to see John strike a golden seam and pull back to 19-All and go on to win 21/19. A tremendous recovery that combined winning serves with powerhouse winning shots. Keith was clearly annoyed with his having seen the winning post too soon and got down to the business in the 3rd, running out a comfortable winner and securing the Readman Cup for his Club. MOTM had to be Keith who again almost won the match on his own to make it six out of six in two successive finals.

RUMJAHN CUP: POLICE 'A' 5 v FORDS 2

Fords won the toss, but their captain not being fully au fait with the Cup Rules mistakenly elected to be the home team. This error put Police firmly in control, Paul Gittins beating James Eaton -20, 10 & 17. Tim Wearden quickly levelled the score, beating Gemma Lloyd 12 & 17. Steve Gittins, who along with his brother had returned early from the Police championships to play in this match, emulated Paul in the next set beating Bob Hughes 10 in the 3rd. Gemma Lloyd put Police in a 3/1 lead, recovering from a first game defeat to take the next two against a demoralised James Eaton. The next set, Tim Wearden v Paul Gittins, was to prove the best of the match. Paul losing the first, narrowly winning the second, and coming from behind in the third when all seemed lost to win it 21/19. This gave Police an unassailable lead of 4-1, but Bob Hughes put his club briefly back in the frame by beating Gemma 2 straight. Any hopes they had of a revival soon faded, Steve beating James Eaton 15 & 9 to win the cup for his Club. On this occasion their journey really was necessary, for without them this final would almost certainly have had a different result. A match of quality table tennis and good sportsmanship, the Cup being presented by the family representative, Ted Rumjahn.

HYDE CUP: Bootle JC 5 v Bath St. 'C' 2

I was an honoured guest at this match, Dave Graham giving up his front row seat for me (thanks, Dave). Ken Strahan set his team on the road to victory beating Dave Stoddern 21/12 in the 3rd. Bath St. calling on John Langton to play Sylvia Graham to level the score. John duly obliged but not before Sylvia had put him on the rack, hitting strongly on both wings her backhand a dream. John clawed his way back to 10-All in the first and took it game 18. Early nerves banished, John took the lead in the second only to see Sylvia pull it back and then take the lead with brilliantly placed attacking shots. John again clawed his way back to win the game and level the match scores 1-1. Another case of cup nerves from Rob Peat who struggled to cope with the consistent and cleverly flighted returns of Derek Sullivan. He got back into the game by continuing to go for his shots only to see Derek take it 22/20. Derek made it a two straight victory; his ability to retrieve Rob's best shots and return them with well-disguised spin proving too much for Rob. With the

With the score 2-1 in BJC's favour Bath St decided to play their ace early, calling on John McCann to play Sylvia, only to see Sylvia trump their ace with another spell of controlled hitting. She took the first 16, continuing where she had left off against John, and went on to take the second even easier. This made it 3-1 and was the win that put her club firmly on the road to victory. After a shaky start in his second set John Langton pulled back to 15-all only to see it slip away as he was forced into a series of errors by the unorthodox return shots of his opponent Derek Sullivan. In the 2nd John changed his game playing a more steady and controlled game to win 21/13. In a tremendous 3rd game, the best of the match, John, still showing signs of nerves, punished the loose balls as the lead swayed both ways, John eventually taking a tense game 22/20 to pull one back for his club. A questionable call by BJC as John had beaten Derek a few weeks earlier, but one that almost paid off.

Bath St also got in on the questionable calls act and called on the doubles set, Rob Peat/Dave Stoddern v Derek Sullivan/Ken Strahan, the BJC pair taking the first comfortably 21/15. The Bath St pairing paid the price for forgetting the golden rule in doubles play, keep the ball on the table, a stream of big hits costing them a 23/21 defeat. With a 4-2 lead BJC finally played their ace and the Grand Old Man of the Liverpool League, Bill Harris, came on stage to seal the match for them. He never looked in trouble against Dave Stoddern and took the first 14. He continued in the same vein in the second for what was looking to be an easy win and with a winning lead decided to go for the big finish. This sudden rush of blood to the head was almost his undoing, a series of big no hits getting Dave back to 20/19. Bill was clearly rattled, the unthinkable of going to three staring him in the eye, but this point Lady Luck, Sods Law, call it what you wish, took over and to Dave's disgust and Bill's relief, Dave served off to give Bill the set and his Club the cup.

FORREST CUP: POLICE 'C' 5 v WSM 'E' 2

Police having won this division in a canter and having beaten the WSM team by big margins in their league encounters was a clear indication that this could be an early bath night for teams and spectators.

The first set confirmed this, Len Dyson beating Gordon Langshaw 12 & 11. A surprise call by WSM brought on John Gratton to play Gareth Jones, John fully justifying his call by taking the first game 6. Gareth got back into the game in the second but John kept his nerve and kept going for his shots to take the second game 19 and level the match score 1 apiece. Police called another certain winner, Dave Crispin v Ken Roberts only to have Ken give them a fright when he pulled back in both games with steady sensible play, Dave hanging on to win 17 & 20. At 2-1 down WSM made a second questionable decision and called on the doubles set when their No.1. Bob Owen, who had not yet played a singles, had beaten both Gareth and Len in league play. It was John Gratton/Bob Owen v Gareth Jones/Dave Crispin, the first going to the WSM pair 18. Was this to be as the first had been an astute call? Gareth and Dave had obviously decided otherwise and took the next two 17 & 11 to put their team 3-1 up.

The match was slipping away from WSM for Police had the next call and called another certain winner, Brian Burrows v Ken Roberts. The WSM player did his best to stay with Brian but had no answer to his opponents' steady play and controlled shots. Brian taking the set 15 & 17 to make the match score 4-1 in his team's favour. WSM finally called on Bob Owen to play Len Dyson and as expected Bob took the set easily 13 & 11, but it was a call and win too late, for with a 4-2 lead and their call the Police had this match all sewn up. They called Brian Burrows back to play Gordon Langshaw, a call both sides knew would be a probable winner and so it was. Brian was again in full flow and took the set in a canter 10 & 14 to seal the match for his team and the double.

STAMP CUP: M'WEB 'B' 5 v AIGBURTH 0

This was to be another early bath night for all concerned, Manweb having also won their division and beaten their cup opponents twice. Aigburth won the toss calling on Graham Rollinson to play Rob Cowley who gave his team a fright losing the first 24/22. He was clearly suffering from the affliction that affects many players, cup nerves, but managed to hang on and scrape home by the same score in the second. The hoped for good start by Aigburth was sunk without trace when Rob settled down to take the third game 14. From that point on it was

all one way traffic, Manweb taking the next four sets all comfortable two straight wins. At 4-0 down Aigburth called the doubles in a last ditch attempt to stem the flow, but it was to no avail, Alan Biggs and Rob Cowley easily disposing of Graham Rollinson and Eric Woods 11 & 11 to take the match score to a winning 5-0. This was to be the fastest Cup final; having commenced at 19.40 it was all over by 21.15 for a total match time of an hour and thirty-five minutes. Fast it may have been, but it was played in a good sporting manner and although faced with a mountain to climb the Aigburth players, to their great credit, gave 100% effort and never stopped trying to avoid a whitewash. The real winner here being the friendliness and sportsmanship that is prevalent throughout the Liverpool league.

FRANK MURPHY VETERAN HANDI-CAP CUP: CADWA 5 v BATH ST 2

As last season the presence of two teams composed of 1st division players, one on a minus 5 handicap, indicated that we have not yet got it right so far as giving the minnows of the league a chance to win the Frank Murphy Cup. If the handicaps gave players problems, so did the umpiring, play being littered with too many umpiring errors. Bath St won the toss and called on Fred Bainbridge (plus 7) to play Keith Williams (minus 5) the match getting off to a good start with some umpiring confusion. Having got it sorted the match continued, Keith overcoming his two handicaps - his own and Fred's - to win 29 & 29 in the closest set of the night. Keith was in tremendous form and commented later that he was seeing the ball as big as a football. Ken Jackson (0) then faced Peter Taylor (plus 5) catching up at 24-all to win 31/26. In the 2nd he caught up at 17-all and never looked in any danger, winning 31/23 to make it 1 apiece. This pattern of

play was to continue, Bath St picking on Peter Taylor in their search for wins and Cadwa relying on Keith. Cadwa called on Keith to play Mike Keane (plus 5) for the 3rd match, Keith catching him up at 11-all for a comfortable game 21 win. In the second he again caught up at 11-all winning as easily game 22. The next set, Fred Bainbridge v Peter Taylor, was to be the best set of the match. Peter got level at 10-all, Fred still going for his forehand drive, Peter winning 31/24. At this point I asked the question of myself - were either of these players familiar with the requirements of the service rule? In the second Peter got level at 12-all and went on to take a 20-15 lead only to see Fred surge back to 20-all. Big boomers from Fred and Peter doing his impersonation of Mathew Syed, at one point almost having to climb a ladder on the corner seat to return the ball. Fred taking the game 31/27. He continued in the third to thrill the spectators with his boomers only to miss three vital shots to go 18-22 down. Although visibly tiring he continued to attack and hit himself back into the game 26/27, then 28/28 with more boomers. Went 29/30 down and got back to 30-all with another crashing forehand. At this point the spectators were treated to that rare spectacle of PT making an attacking shot, his first of the match (Mike Power having forecast this seconds before it happened). It was a winner and he got his match winning point with a lucky bounce, but that is how it goes. All credit to both players for an exciting match in which concern about handicaps played no part. With the score at 3-1 Cadwa again called on Keith clearly indicating that their player was under handicapped. Keith continued in brilliant form and once in the lead - which did not take him long - opened up. His opponent being Ken Jackson meant this was a fast and furious match, Ken not knowing the meaning of careful steady play, the ball, in his view, being there to be hit not patted. Although struggling to stay in the match he kept attacking and lost the first 31/21. In the second Keith got level

at 3-all and was soon 22/8 up to take it 31/12 and make it a 4-1 lead. 6th call was Mike Keane (plus 5) v Peter Taylor (plus 5) this was not a handicap match but a normal match extended to 31 points. Pretty pointless no matter how you view it. Mike took the first 31/22 and out defended and out gunned PT to win 22 & 20 to make the score 4-2.

Onto the scene came 'Pale Rider' in the shape of Mike Mahony (plus 5), neither team having felt the need to call him. His opponent, Fred Bainbridge, continued his big forehand attacking shots, Mike being content to lob most of them back. At 26/29 down Fred served off but got back to 30 apiece only to lose it 34/32. In the second MM levelled the scores at 7 all and never looked in danger of losing, but Fred, a most courageous player, never played it safe and even at 21/29 down was still attacking with his forehand boomers. Mike taking it 31/21 to secure the cup for his team. Frank's widow, Margaret, and his sister Myra Lovelady presented the Cup and trophies.

This match proving that the Handicap Committee have got to get their thinking caps on if they really do want to give every team an equal chance of reaching this final and taking the cup. The present system being heavily loaded in favour of the best players who seemingly face no difficulties in overcoming the highest of handicaps. This is the only cup competition open to all clubs and as such everyone must be given an equal chance of winning it.

Cadwa, Liv YM, Marconi and Police provided the venues for Cup finals. For Cadwa Steve Graham looked after the refreshments and match requirements. Peter Lee took charge at the YM assisted by a number of members and made up for his minor faux pas of last season by getting it right this time and providing excellent organisation to cope with the big attendance and excellent refreshments to boot. For Marconi, Stan Harvey looked after the Rumjahn Cup with Trevor attending to the Frank Murphy cup, the refreshments being provided by Margaret and Myra as has been the custom. Refreshments at the Police club being arranged via the Club, Dave Crispin and Len Dyson being responsible for equipment etc.

Chairman Don Davies and Management Committee members Ron Georgeson, Frank Lacey, Graham Rollinson and Alex Gould again giving of their time to officiate at our six Finals and ensure they went off smoothly.

PETER TAYLOR

(CADWA TT CLUB)

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

(N.I.C.E.I.C. APPROVED)

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