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Editorial

For starters, congratulations to the teams who have won their divisional championships, Liverpool YMCA won the top division by a massive 30 points, and that is without any of our top national ranking players, Division 2 was won by the young team of Bootle J.C. 'A' by 3 points, they were in this spot at the half way stage of the season. Division 3 was won by Police 'B', 9 points ahead of Manweb 'B'. Division 4 was won by L/pool YM. 'C', 1 point ahead of Maghull 'A', Div. 5 won by Wavertree 'F', who pulled away right from the start, but a special mention for the Greenbank team which came 2nd. and will be moving up to the 4th. Hopefully they will still have the strong squad they have used, for next season.



Score Lane, Childwall, Liverpool YMCA had a bit of a reprieve, then after the season had ended were told that they had to leave immediately, so at time of writing this, are rumoured to have found premises in the Long Lane Aintree area???. Another end of season shock was Waterloo being told to leave their premises, and are down to 1 team playing from Linacre's premises, and Bath Street are still in negotiations about their impending move. I wrote a bit in the last Digest about the unexpected problem of not only having to find new premises, but the financial cost that goes with it, gone are the days of big business subsidising the rooms to play in, the real world requires a high payment, and players need to accept that if they want to play, they must pay the going rate. I'm afraid some have still not grasped that fact, the day of the free lunch is over!

A very pleasant thing happened to me a short while ago, I was asked to meet someone for a coffee, with the added attraction I thought, of "something for the Digest". as you know I'm always looking for articles of interest to make life easier for myself. So we met locally, had a good chat, (I'm waiting for an indication of the article), time was getting on, when he said, "this is to cover the cost of the Digest next season"; quite a substantial amount, for which I and the L&DITTL are very grateful, I would love to name this person for the credit he deserves, but he has requested no publicity, please!, so be it, and thank you!

I also had a donation early this year from ex player, Brian Leeson, 'towards the cost of the Digest', I don't think we'll be seeing the Digest in W.H Smiths yet, but everything helps.

The AGM discussed the problem of player ranking abuse, the Management Committee having put forward proposed changes to Rule 13, which all Club Secretaries had had in advance of the meeting. The discussion, to me, seemed to center on the complexity of the proposed changes, with a comment from the floor that "it would give too much power to the Management Committee", the proposed changes failed, not having obtained the two thirds majority when the vote was taken. So the problem was discussed, your Rules Committee has suggested changes, the clubs voted for the status-quo, hopefully Clubs take note and rank in the spirit of the game for every ones enjoyment.

Clubs and Venues, quite a few changes here from the last Digest, Marconi have lost their premises, and have provisionally found new premises at

Tom Purcell, ex. Police player who now lives in London, sent me an E-mail (see Letters on page 18) after having read my comments in the last Digest, he plays for a club in the Wandsworth League, and his Club fees are £120 pa. (per. player) to cover hire of Hall and other fees. I suppose London is an extreme case, but it makes you think! Tom, as National Umpire is a regular visitor to our local Tournaments, and is hoping to return to Liverpool for good in the near future.

The £100,000 Masters, renamed the Ocean International Cup, was battled out at the Fairfield Concert Hall, Croydon, on July 23rd. The winner was European Champion Vladimir Samsonov, of Belarus who picked up the £70,000 first prize after beating German champion Timo Boll, 9-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-8, 11-9. This extravaganza was part of the \$1,000,000 World Super Circuit. with this particular event being sponsored by Mr. Paul Andrews, MD. of a global television production company, an ex. TT. Player himself, he also sponsored last years Masters, and the successful Sussex Open. Sadly our two English players, Matthew Syed and Gareth Herbert were both eliminated in the prelim. rounds, but that was indicative of the strength and quality of the other players.

The coverage by the BBC and shown the following day in Grandstand for an hour was good for table tennis, but I'm not sure how the crowd in the rear balcony felt about it, it seemed a long way to the table to me, expecting that little ball to be flashing about pretty fast!

EDITOR

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As you may remember, I have been encouraging all in the last Digest to watch this tournament when it was broadcast, right up to the last Wednesday practice night, when I reminded my club mates. So come the Saturday, knowing I would be out when it was on, I thought, no problem! I can record it, so set everything up with Video Plus, and went out confident that I could watch it on Saturday night. Gets back later, and! Yep, you guessed it, it didn't record, tape had jammed, a fairly new tape as well, (why aren't these machines capable of saying "this tape is faulty") even the best laid plans using modern technology don't always work, I'm hoping someone else has taken my advice and recorded it properly, so I can see it.

Samsonov now heads off for the Olympic Games in Athens (mid August).

The Bribrar "Top 12" took place at the Greenbank Academy the other week, the title was a bit misleading, but nevertheless had some good table tennis on view, more reports later in this Digest

Another reminder of the Golf Tournament that Peter Carney and Paul Morgan have put together for the Golf players of the Liverpool & District T.T. League. To be played at the Lee Park Golf Club, Gateacre on Saturday 4th. September 2004, tee off 1-30 pm. Cost for the day, including Green Fees, meal and prizes would be £25. It would help the organising if Club Secretaries would contact any known golfing members of their own T.T. clubs, to make contact with Peter Carney ASAP at 0151 426 3625.

The old photo I have been running in the previous Digests has nearly got a full list of names, Jan Davies (Rumjahn) (see letters page 18) named the 3 players on the right, so we now have from L. to R. - unknown, Wally Allinson, Alan Timewell, Arthur Taylor, Peter Rumjahn, Clin Casselman.

The seasons' Cup Finals were all played in an excellent friendly and competitive atmosphere, still a shortage of spectators though, even though the Finals are played at venues with the purpose of providing more space for spectators, a last minute move took the Frank Murphy Final to Liverpool YM. My thanks to the Club secretaries who offered the use of their clubs for the finals and for the enjoyable after match refreshments, CADWA's Doug Baker, who did 2, Beotle YM's Jim Goddes, Ford's Peter Cunningham, Police's Steve Riley, and Liverpool YM's George Smith, the refreshments for the Frank Murphy were again supplied by Marjory Murphy and Myra Lovelady. Ron Georgeson had offered the use of the Bath St. for the Frank Murphy Final as my last available venue, but George's late change saved what would have been a very crowded final, my thanks to Ron though for the original offer. It has been suggested to me

that secretaries may be reluctant to offer the use of their club for a Final because of the hassle of providing refreshments,

If that was the case, I would be prepared to organise the "butties" myself. A thank you to the match officials who controlled each Final, Ken Armson MBE, Graham Rollinson, Ray Lavin, Ron Georgeson, Arthur Garnett, and yours truly, all members of your M.C.

The 5th. Division has finished another disappointing season, only 8 teams finishing the course, which meant quite a lot of missed weeks in a 12 team division league, throw in a few walkover games, we can understand why players got a bit upset at not playing, but this is an impossible situation to know in advance, the bottom division is always susceptible to shortage of teams, there seems to be plenty of players for a few more teams, but then the problems of Venues and match nights come in to the equation. Trevor, our Match Secretary has been working on a way to ensure that teams have a regular game, even to the extent of playing teams 3 times, this in itself creates its own set of problems in the form of match night clashes. but as all this prep work has to be completed for the start of season handbook meeting, if a club drops a team out at the last minute, it's back to the drawing board. Believe me, the effort to alleviate this problem goes in at the top (Trevor), but it also needs the commitment from the players.

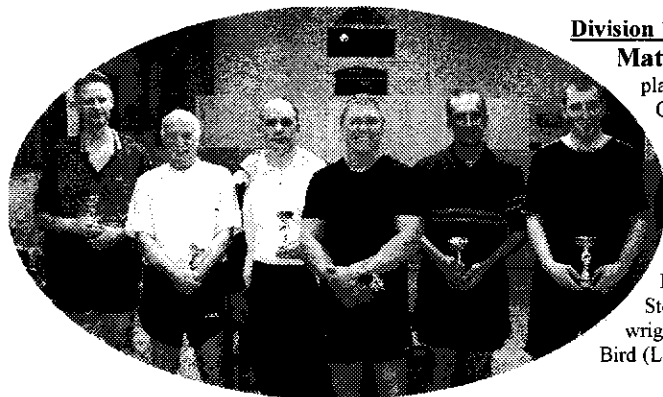
Tom Purcell also mentions the way his league in London got round the falling team numbers, this is from his E-mail, 'quote, "My League also plays a different format in the League structure because of falling team numbers" see his letter page 18

The Paralympics takes place in Athens, 17th to 28th. September, two weeks after the main Olympics. The idea of a "Paralympics" was first developed in 1948, when Sir Ludwig Guttmann organised a competition in Stoke Manderville for World War 2 veterans with spinal injuries, in 1952, in a Paralympics style competition, only 2 countries and 130 competitors took part. At the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney, 123 countries and 3483 competitors took part. This Paralympics in Athens, The British Paralympic Association is sending an 8 strong Table Tennis team, 2 of whom are from our local Greenbank club, Scott Robertson, (his second Paralympics) and Lynne Riding, it goes without saying that we all wish Lynne and Scott best wishes for a successful games.

Well this is the last Digest of the 2003-04 season, hopefully it is an encouraging opener for the 2004-05 season which we are about to start, so best wishes to all, and most of all,
enjoy your game

The Editor

CUP FINALS



Division 1. The Readman Cup

Match official. Ken Armson MBE.

played at CADWA between League Champions Liverpool YMCA and Harold House. The match was won by YM.5-0, who just had the edge, but wasn't as one sided as the score suggests, so a League and Cup double for Liverpool YMCA.

Players in the photo L. To R. -:

Ken Connor (HH), Alec Bryce (HH), Steve Whalley (HH), Lawrence Kenwright (LYM), Omid Khaiyat (LYM), Keith Bird (LYM).

Division 2. The Rumjahn Cup

Match official. Graham Rollinson.

Played at CADWA between Divisional Champions Bootle J.C.'A' and mid table Merseyside Police 'A', The Police built up a 3-1 lead, but J.C. Pulled back to make it 3-2, and never looked back, winning the next 3 games to clinch the match 5-3 to Bootle J.C. and the double.

Players in the photo L. To R. -:

Cherith Graham (BJC), Dave Evans (BJC), Tom Bray (BJC), Jon Dyson (MP), Terri-Anne Nolan (MP), Gemma Lloyd (MP)



Division 3. The Hyde Cup

Match official. Ray Lavin

Played at FORDS between Divisional champions Merseyside Police 'B' and 4th placed Bootle YMCA. Bootle made first call, John v Gavin, John had won in 5 at their last meeting in the league, but Gavin played well to win 3-2, it was all downhill after that for Bootle YM. Police having a comfortable 5-0 win, and another double into the bargain.

Players in photo L. To R. -:

John Higham (BYM), Danny Every (BYM), Richie Winckle (BYM), Roly Wright (BYM), Gareth Jones (MP), Len Dyson (MP), Ray Lavin, (match official) Tony Harris (MP), Gavin Lloyd (MP)



CUP FINALS

Division 4. The Forrest Cup match official. Roly Wright

Played at Bootle YMCA. between Divisional champions Liverpool YMCA 'C' and 3rd placed Harold House 'A'. H. H. won the first set, but YM. the next 3, was a double on the cards, Rod won 5th set, then HH won the 6th (doubles), Paul won the 7th, and Martin the 8th. to give H.H. the victory.

Players in the photo are L. To R. Alvin Tso (LYM), Billy Cheung (LYM), Eddie Clein (HH), Rod McPherson (HH), Stephen Kee (LYM), Paul Shaw (HH), Francois Boll (LYM), Martin Roberts (HH)



Division 5. The Stamp Cup

Match official. Arthur Garnett

Played at the Police Club, "Fairfield". between mid table Aigburth 'A' and runaway champions Wavertree Labour 'F'

Aigburth settled down better and took a 4-2 lead, Wav. captain John pulling back one to 4-3, but young Ian Laird had the honour of clinching the match with a 3-1 win over Ian Woods, well done to Aigburth, against the odds!

Players in the photo's are L. to R. :-

Top photo. Wavertree 'F'

Eric Spencer, Ian Woods, Faith Moore (presented trophies), Kevin O'Hanlon, John Rowan.

Bottom photo Aigburth 'A'.

Paul Grugel, Ian Laird, Faith, Derek Traynor, Eric Spencer



The Frank Murphy Memorial Handicap Cup

Match official. Ron Georgeson

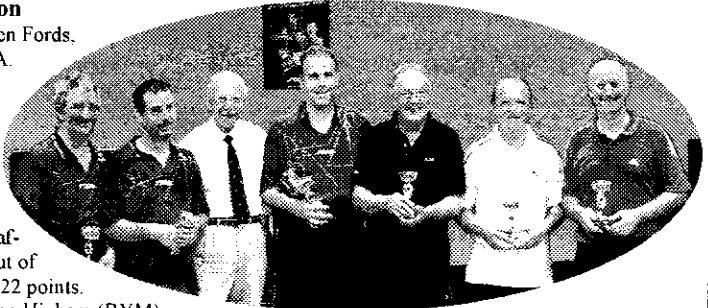
Played at Liverpool YMCA between Fords. (mid. 2nd.Div.) and Bootle YMCA.

(4th. in the 3rd.Div.)

Bootle Ym. started as the away team, with a 39 point advantage. John gaining 17 points in the first set, making Fords having to chase points from now on, with all the Bootle team playing more relaxed after that start, winning a total of 8 out of the 18 games to take the trophy by 22 points.

Players in the photo L. To R. :- John Higham (BYM),

Danny Every (BYM), Ron Georgeson, (match official) Richie Winckle (BYM), Alf Perry (Fords), Robbie Goldson (Fords), Frank James (Fords)



My thanks to all the Club secretary's who offered the use of their club for the various Finals, and the refreshments provided, and also to the match officials who controlled each event.

Roly Wright Cup Secretary

Match Secretary Don Davies

Open Premier Division -

Matches played at neutral venue

A draw in our last match against Bolton would have secured the title for the ninth year in a row, since Bolton had drawn with Tameside. We were without John Rankin and Chris Ford, but although Kevin Dolder beat Adam Bleakley and Keith Williams overcame Mike Moir, we need one from Ahmed Thabet to force a draw, John Hilton winning his two.

<u>1st Team</u>	<u>Runners Up</u>
Tameside	W 6-0
Ellesmere Port	W 6-0
Bury	W 5-1
Manchester	W 6-0
Halton	W 5-1
Mid Cheshire	W 4-2
Bolton	L 2-4

Ladies

Premier Division Runners-Up

Wirral retained the title by a single point although our girls led 4-1 and 5-3 when they met their great rivals, when victory would have given us the crown. Alice and Clara Howard together with Cherith Graham were on duty that night but Clare Peers was the difference between the sides, winning her three singles sets while combining with Terri-Anne Nolan to take the doubles set.

Mid Cheshire	A	W	7-3
Macclesfield	H	W	10-0 w/o
Oldham	A	D	5-5
Wirral	H	D	5-5
Manchester	A	W	6-4
Halton	H	W	7-3

Division One -

Matches played at neutral venue

The first four matches were lost when two of the selected players dropped out a couple of days before the weekend matches, and although on paper I had two replacements, at 11pm on the eve of the matches, I lost all three for one reason or another. My brother Rob and myself had to play to avoid walk overs and a £60 fine.

When the second round of matches came along, I was able to turn out Omid Khaiyat, Keith Bird and yet another late replacement, Fred Bainbridge. This trio gained some credibility, beating Preston and coming within a point of beating Manchester A

A Team

Trafford	L	0-6
Warrington	L	0-6
Preston A	L	0-6
Blackpool	L	0-6
Preston	W	4-2
Oldham	L	2-4
Manchester A	D	3-3

Open Veteran Premier Division

Tameside failed to fulfil the fixture, crying off on the day of the match. Their reason was that they would have to travel in three cars to Bath Street, instead of one to Cadwa, where the match was originally due to be played. The points were awarded to us, the final league tables showing us as champions. Tameside then lodged an appeal, the Board of Appeal confirming the League's Executive Committee's decision, that the match must be played. Incredibly, they said that if the match is not played, on a neutral table by September, the points will be awarded to Tameside. The League's own Match Regulations states that an away team cannot postpone a match. The season ended in

March and one would have expected this to have been resolved by now. Our League's General Secretary (Mike Power) has written to the L & C League Secretary insisting that they comply with their own regulations

1st Team Probable champions

Oldham	H	W	10-0
Macclesfield	A	W	10-0 w/o
Manchester	H	W	7-3
Blackpool	A	W	8-2
Liverpool B.H.	H	W	9-1
Preston	A	W	8-2
Tameside	H	W	10-0 w/o

Veteran A Team

For the second time in three years, the A team has gained promotion, the only League ever to have enjoyed two teams in the top division. Ken Jackson, Ahmed Tabet and Fred Bainbridge and Graeme Black all played while Peter Ross, who expected to watch a match at Bath St. finished up playing - thank you Peter. The two walk over matches were as a result of postponements by our opponents who failed to re-arrange the matches, which I didn't claim

Division 1 Runners Up

Trafford	A	W	7-3
Preston A	H	W	8-2
Halton	A	L	1-9
East Lancs	A	W	10-0 w/o
Rochdale	H	W	10-0 w/o
Wirral	H	W	8-2
Trafford A	H	D	5-5

After finishing as runner-up a year ago in the Wilmott Cup, the men again had to settle for the silver medal position after losing 5-4 in the deciding match.

After a 5-2 victory over Crawley/Horsham and a 5-1 success over Hull, Kevin, Keith W. and Keith Bird, led 3-2 and looked to be on track to take the trophy for the first time. The turning point though came when Kevin lost to Ritchie Venner 11-6, 11-4, 9-11, 12-14, 8-11 when victory would have given us a 3-1 lead. Keith W. took the next set in straight games but at four sets all, Keith Bird led by 2 games to 1 in the decider but in a tense finale, lost the next two 11-8, 11-8.

Brenda Buocy, Sue Burgess and Sylvia Graham, took the silver medal in the Pat Archdale cup losing their only match to North Herts. Four teams were due to contest the finals but Hastings dropped out a month earlier, followed by Wolverhampton three days prior to the matches, this being included in the finals' programme although no one thought to advise me, which meant our girls waiting from 9am until 2pm, not good preparation for such an important match

The League took the Norman Cook Memorial Trophy, beating Halton in the final at Sutton Cricket club. With Keith W. John Rankin and Chris Ford unavailable, Kevin was joined by the YMCA's Lawrence Kenwright and Keith Bird, who was making his debut in the competition. The Mount Pleasant pair both beat Ken Connor, the latter for the second time in 24 hours, having faced him in the Readman cup final.



Kenwright also beat Mal McEvoy, who although the former Liverpool champion, suffered a rare defeat, losing to Ray Jackson, who made use of his seven points handicap start, Liverpool running out victors 5-1 for a record tenth time since 1989.

Lawrence Kenwright, Kevin Dolder and Keith Bird with their trophies

The first ever Mabel Neary cup was staged and after ousting Halton in the semi's, we were easily beaten by Wirral in the final.

In conclusion, it was a fair season but losing John Rankin, Chris Ford, Ken Jackson, Omid Khaiyat and Les Molyneux for important matches plus a few others, was disappointing. However, for those who pulled out all the stops for the League and their respective teams', those who drove the teams', the club secretaries who provided club rooms' and all who had to listen to me going on about the season ahead and how we wanted to remain as the best League in Lancashire and Cheshire and when in national competition, one of the best in the country, I thank you sincerely.

Don Davies
Match Secretary

Being a Club Secretary is tough enough, but organising City teams in leagues and competitions which entail lots of travelling, with constantly changing venues and last minute team changes must be a constant headache for a city match sec. So give Don a pat on the back, he deserves it.

And that goes for all the League members who give of their free time.
Editor

The Ladies reached the final of the J.M. Rose Bowl in Derby, but despite beating sixteen times winners Wolverhampton 5-3, finished as runners up, having lost 5-4 to North Herts who in turn lost 5-0 to



The team that played at CADWA in the previous round, Cherith Graham, Brenda Buocy, Alice and Clara Howard
Photo supplied by Steve Graham of CADWA

Wolverhampton. Alice, ranked at 40 in England, was in tremendous form, accounting for Jill Harris (22), Jan Dunning (24) and Jose Bongers (32). Cherith was also in fine form, beating Dunning and Bongers. Had our girls won 5-2 against Wolverhampton, we would have retained the cup but the midlanders took the trophy via a superior sets aggregate.

Thump !!!!! Blimey, you'll never guess what's just landed in my back garden?.....Beckham's bloody penalty . Perhaps Tim Henman could teach Becks how to hit the ball in the net and at the same time Tim could get some tips on how to get the ball over the net. Never mind, lets now concentrate on a proper sport.

Congratulations to our divisional champions **Liverpool Y.M.** The disappointment of being pipped at the post last season and finishing runners up is now a faded memory and the team of Lawrence Kenwright, Omid Khaiyat and Peter Lee can now enjoy being crowned worthy champions, finishing some thirty points ahead of second place Waterloo. The YM team seldom walked away from a match with maximum points but the difference being was that they were able to field a consistent team throughout the season who were strong enough to reap majority points. Their strength also lay in being able to call upon strong reserve players such as Tony Whelan, Ahmed Thabet and Keith Bird, who in their own right are capable of holding their own against any team.

YM did however come close to achieving maximum points when playing the struggling **Marconi** team but the resolute Trevor Owen spoilt the party with a great five setter win over Peter Lee. Peter was unfortunately once again YM's fall guy in their 9-1 defeat of **Harold House** losing in three deuce games to Ken Connor. Omid Khaiyat comfortably won all his three and , just to emphasize my earlier point , Tony Whelan came in as reserve and left undefeated having secured a 11/9 final set winner against Ken. YM's derby game against YM'A' saw the first team dropping three sets with Dave Tagg being the unfortunate culprit. Dave was however very unlucky not to pinch a game from Keith Bird having lost close in the fifth set.



YM continued their winning ways against **Bath St. 'A'** but I have a feeling that the 8-2 win was not a fair reflection of the match. The talented Claire Peers had a tremendous fifth setter win over Lawrence Kenwright whilst the tenacious Eddie Crowley nearly did the double but just lost out to Lol 8/11 in the final set. Eddie did however make amends by defeating, again in the fifth, John Lau who in turn went on to dampen Claire's celebrations with a fine win which again went the full distance. Amongst the melco of five setter games, Omid won all his three in comfort without even dropping a game.

YM's only defeat of the season came against runners up **Waterloo**. Enshrined within the 6-4 win I'm told was table tennis of the highest calibre and in particular , according to Ted Birch , the best doubles match he's ever seen (and trust me , a guy as old as Ted has seen lot of matches). Keith Williams and Lol Kenwright set the tone with a great five setter match with Keith pinching it 11/8. Lol eased his earlier defeat with another five setter win this time over Alan Chase. Omid, not to miss out on the fun, then joined the party with some fantastic defensive play to secure a great win over Keith 10/12 in the fifth. Alan Chase then got his second wind (that's six pints in Alan's world) and managed to do what Keith couldn't and break down Omid's

formidable defence, winning in four. Ahmed Thabet lost in four to Keith and in five to Alan but managed a comfortable four setter win over young Ted. Keith and Alan then teamed up in the doubles to face YM's Lol Kenwright and Omid Khaiyat. The **Waterloo** boys were two sets up but lost the next two 11 and 5 to even the game and take it to a decider. A tremendous fifth setter saw the YM crew take the game 12/14.

Waterloo will be over the moon with the runners up slot having finished mid table last season. Keith's contribution to the team is clearly obvious and has been well documented in previous digests but for the team to attain second place has required the other team members to lift their game. Ted Birch certainly played his part in their 6-4 win over **Bath St 'A'**. Ted had a great four set win against on- form Claire Peers. Eddie Crowley managed to push Ted to the final game but once again Ted was able to dig deep and pinch the fifth 11/5. Ted's luck did however run out against Ian McElwee, losing 11/9 in the fifth but once again the tide changed when Ian faced Alan Chase and duly lost comfortably in three. Alan's pleasure was soon dampened when losing in five to Claire and a straight game defeat at the hands of Eddie. Keith had to work to earn his usual three which all went to the final game. Keith continued the trend against **Bath St 1st** team and ended the night as **Waterloo's** sole winner although Alan will be disappointed losing 11/9 in the fifth to Kenny Jackson.

Alan's disappointment was soon forgotten. Having donned the teams number one spot he went on to have great wins over **Wavertree's** Alice Howard and Gary Watson. **Wav's** Mick Tierney did reek some revenge by beating Alan and Ted, both in the final sets but Mick was unable to overcome **Waterloo's** prodigal son Mick Allen who must have been chuffed with his four set win over his

name sake. Alice completed the night with good competitive wins over Ted and Mike which just managed to topple the 6-4 win in **Wav's** favour. This score line was reversed when **Waterloo** faced **Harold House** and although both Alan Chase and Nigel Stopher will be pleased with their respective wins over Eddie Cloin, neither managed to overcome Ken Connor or Alex Bryce. Keith won his three and teamed up with Neil to take the doubles. The spoils were shared when the Crosby tennis club faced the Cronton lads from **Fords**. I don't think that Keith will be too concerned that he was unable to reciprocate his 'Closed Championship' performance against Kevin Dolder although on this occasion the games were closer than their last league clash with two of the four going to deuce. Both Keith and Alan then strolled to comfortable victories over Tim Weardon and Tom Murray whilst Nigel Stopher preferred to do it the hard way by beating Tim and losing to Tom in the final sets.

Although **YM'A'** finished the season on identical points as fourth placed **Fords** and fifth placed **Cadwa**, the Mount Pleasant team earned the third spot by attaining more wins and less losers. The league table will show that there is actually only ten points separating the third and ninth placements which emphasizes the consequence of receiving or conceding a walk over. **YM'A'** have once again shown what can be done with a good solid squad. Keith Bird, Ahmed Thabet, Miguel Bellec and John Lau are all, for most of us, difficult players to beat. They took no prisoners against **Maghull**, **Police** and **Marconi** winning 9-1 in each game. Fred Pheysey beat Ahmed. Steve Gittins and Trevor Owen both beat a vastly improved Steve Kcc to save the whitewash in their respective matches. The team did however stumble against the **Wavertree** team of Roy Smith, Alice Howard and Gary Watson with Keith Bird being the sole **YM** winner when beating Alec and Gary. Miguel must how-

ever take some solace in losing 8/11 in the fifth to both Alice and Roy.

Relinquished league champions **Cadwa** have obviously felt the absence of star player Kevin Dolder but regardless of this I do think that, all things considered, that they will be happy with their final position. The infrequent use of Chris Ford has probably made the difference between the third or fourth spot but having said that, I'd rather have Chris playing for six matches than none at all. Chris proved his worth by assisting in their 8-2 win over **Bath St 'A'**. Ricky Brown saved the visitors blushes by having a great win over Ken Hartley which in turn motivated Ian McElwee and Eddie Crowley to take an exciting five setter doubles match against Ken and Peter. Ken was soon back to his winning ways the following week against **Wavertree** beating Roy Smith in three and Alice Howard in the fifth. Peter Taylor was unfortunately unable to make a mark on the 8-2 defeat. **Cadwa** fared somewhat better against their old rivals **YM**. The difference being that Chris was available and immediately made his mark with a fine five setter win over Lawrence Kenwright and Tony Whelan. Chris then went on to have a comfortable straight set win over Omid Khaiyat who also later faced the same disposal at the hands of Ken Hartley. Tony Whelan put in a solid performance beating Peter Taylor and Ken with relative ease.

Cadwa had mixed fortunes against **Bath St.** and **Marconi** with both matches finishing 6-4, the latter being in **Cadwa's** favour. Both Ken and Peter got the better of **Bath St's** Brenda Buocy and Fred Bainbridge but could not dispose of King Kenny. Mike Power lost his three but made a game of it against Fred, losing close in the fifth. Ken Hartley didn't drop a game in the **Marconi** match but Peter Taylor wasn't as lucky losing in five to the resilient Trevor Owen. Peter's luck did however change in their 7-3 defeat at **Harold House** when on this occasion Peter, as well as Ken, got the better of Alec Bryce although **HH's** Ken Connor remained defiant winning

all of his three. **Cadwa's** clash against **Fords** saw Chris Ford pitted against Kevin Dolder. Kevin was, unfortunately for Chris, not in the mood to lose his 100% and subsequently despatched Chris in four sets. Chris made expected amends against Tim Weardon and Tom Murray and Ken Hartley secured their three points with a straight win over Tim.

This time last season **Fords**, having achieved promotion from the second division, were probably praying to the heavens for inspiration on how to maintain their first division status for the forthcoming season. For me personally, being a dyslexic agnostic and therefore not believing in Dog my prayers would've been wasted but obviously someone in the **Fords** team knew how to bend the ear of our Heavenly creator and their prayers were answered in the shape of Kevin Dolder. Now before all you churchgoers thumb through your catechism and put pen to paper complaining of my blasphemous tone. Can I please categorically state that in no way am I attempting to portray Kevin Dolder as the new Messiah. I mean let's face it. The All Mighty may very well come back as a bus driver but surely not on the Skelmersdale route. A 'Cumfy' bus through Formby village would be my preferred route.

Unfortunately **Bath St's** Fred Bainbridge's prayers hit a brick wall when he played Kevin losing in straight sets 11/4, 11/1 and 11/1. Strangely enough, Fred was actually playing quite well and went on to have goods wins, as did Kenny Jackson, over James Eaton and Bob Hughes. Bob's hat-trick of defeats were completed when he lost to Brenda Buocy resulting in both teams sharing the points. **Fords** did however manage to go one better against **Harold House** with a 6-4 win thanks once again to Kevin who was assisted on the night by Tim Weardon and Bob Hughes who both had good wins over Ray Jackson but equally failed to make their mark against Ken Connor and Alec Bryce. **YM'A's** John Lau and Keith Bird will be pleased with

their nights work against the Cronton lads having both despatched James Eaton and Tim Weardon. Kevin remained flawless in his games whilst the only other **Fords** singles point came from Tim's defeat of Miguel Bellec. Miguel did go on to have a good win over James Eaton. to even the match.

You would have to go back to 1998 to see the last time that **Bath St 'A'** finished above their first team and spooky as it may seem but also on that occasion, as the case is now, only one point separated them. I don't think that Ian McElwee, Claire Peers and Eddie Crowley will go as far as an open-top bus celebration but they've certainly earned themselves a wry smile. Hang on a minute, the open-top bus may not be as daft as it seems. Eddie could probably sort out a bit of discount and a quiet word in the car of the Cronton prophet and.....bingoa driver for the day. Don't worry. My medication will kick in soon. Celebrations were somewhat limited when they faced an on-form **Maghull** team inspired on the night by Alan Jones' great win over Claire Peers which was then followed by Matt Wilson's credible wins over Ian Mc and Eddie. Both Ian and Eddie did however make amends by beating Alan Jones to take the match 6-4. Ian had mixed fortunes in their draw against **Wavertree**. Having achieved a reasonably comfortable win over Roy Smith, Ian went on to lose in the fifth to Alice Howard and Mike Tierney. Roy made up for the earlier defeat with a solid performance against Claire and Eddie. Another draw was on the cards with the visit of the **Police** team. Both Steve Gittins and Tom Page beat Ian in three and Tom again showed his worth with good wins over Claire and Eddie.

Ian McElwee was able to revenge his earlier defeat to Steve when he turned out as reserve for **Bath St.** first team in their 6-4 win against the **Police**. Ian went on to have a great five setter match over young Tom Page but once again the

youngster pinched it. Kenny Jackson was yet again impressive with solid wins over Steve, Tom and Jon Dyson. Fred Bainbridge was unlucky to go home empty handed having gone all the way in his matches, but I'm sure that Fred, as sporting as he is, would not deny Jon Dyson's recognition in achieving a good win over Fred. Kenny's winning ways continued when his team faced the **Champions YM**. Kenny disposed of Omid in straight sets and then went on to have a brilliant win over Lawrence Kenwright with a five set thriller. Kenny unfortunately lost out on his hat-trick by losing to the established Tony Whelan who, incidentally, did manage his own hat-trick beating Fred and Brenda comfortably. Fred was once again extremely unlucky losing in the fifth to Lawrence but his luck did eventually change when he faced **Harold Houses** in form Ken Connor and cruised to a four setter win. Alec Bryce, having lost to Kenny, secured wins over Fred and Brenda Buoeuy whilst Ken Connor got his consolation win over Brenda to end the match 6-4 in **Bath St's** favour.

Not wishing to go off on too much of a tangent but I'd like to comment on the last digest which was the March publication. I actually thought that it was brilliant and contained some excellent pieces. Roly's 'Editorial' coupled with an excellent 'Closed report' by Ken Armson was great reading and we all had the benefit of some interesting if not controversial letters. I really do think that Roly has taken the digest to another level. Well done Roly.

Wavertree's final position at eighth place in the league may on first viewing be looked upon as disappointing and would certainly belie their season's performance. However, when one considers that only five points separated them from the third spot, then a more accurate perspective is achieved. Let's face it. You will not get an easy game when facing Roy Smith, Alice Howard and Gary Watson. **Harold House** certainly worked hard for their six points and neither Ken Connor, Alec Bryce or Steve Whalley left the match unscathed. Ken, having con-

quered Alice and Gary found Roy, as did Alec Bryce, invincible in defence. Steve Whalley on the other hand beat Roy and Alice in four but failed to cope with Gary's unorthodox style losing 9/11 in the fifth. Alex cruised to a comfortable win over Alice. Gary Watson was the hat-trick man in their 8-2 win against **Maghull's** Fred Phesey, Alan Jones and Mark Ambrose. Fred had a great win over Roy Smith but probably more impressive was Alan's five set win over young Alice who unfortunately also went on to be the scape goat, losing to James Eaton, in **Wav's** 9-1 win over **Fords**. In the same match Mick Tierney made another guest appearance and didn't disappoint, producing three good wins and in particular a 12/10 four setter defeat of Tom Murray. Gary Watson, having just been pipped by **Police's** John Rankin, then went on to save the whitewash by beating Steve Gittins.

Harold House, although never seriously threatened by the prospect of relegation, will probably be thankful of the seasons end. Their 6-4 win over **Police** contributed to them finishing some ten points above the Fairfield crew although on the night in question, Steve Gittins would have been happy with his three wins over Ken Connor, Alec Bryce and Paul Shaw. Jon Dyson collected the remaining point by beating Paul Shaw who was then picked off by Trevor Owen in their 9-1 win over **Marconi**.

Police's season went the same way as the wife's backside..... pear-shaped. The affects of John Rankin's unavailability coupled with my injury certainly took it's toll on the team which consequently led to pressure being placed upon the likes of Steve Gittins and Tom Page to get the results. They both rose to the challenge and were ably assisted by the reliable Gemma Lloyd. Jon Dyson and Terri Ann Nolan. This was clearly evident in their crucial 7-3 win over relegation rivals **Maghull**. Both Steve and John Dyson beat Fred Phesey and Mark Ambrose but lost to Matt Wilson in four sets. Gemma Lloyd played a blinder winning all three matches.

Tom Page was once again man of the match having won all three against **Cadwa's Ken Hartley**, Peter Taylor and Mike Power. Steve couldn't just quite equal Tom's achievement, losing narrowly to Ken Hartley.

We're hoping that next season will be somewhat brighter. John Rankin is now off shift work and should therefore be more accessible next season. I've just completed several sessions of physiotherapy on my arm which I might add is as much fun as sitting in-between Ron Atkinson and Kilroy-Silk in a Bradford delhi. So hopefully, fingers crossed, next season we'll all be fighting fit.

Maghull's flight within the first division is over for the time being but there's no doubt that they will return the following season. Matt Wilson, Fred Pheysey and Alan Jones have had some memorable wins throughout the season which I'm sure has wetted their appetite for further first division scalps. Matt Wilson's sole winner against **Waterloo's** Alan

Chase in straight sets is equalled to his fine wins over **Fords** Tim Weardon and James Eaton. Fred and Alan also played their part in this match with similar wins against James to earn four important points. Their wooden spoon match against **Marconi** ended 8-2 in their favour with Nick Miller and Matt winning all three. Fred had a miserable night losing out to Trevor Owen and Frank McCann.

Marconi may also bounce back from the second next season but it will probably take some club reorganisation to achieve this. Poor Trevor must feel that he's been left holding the baby at times which is a shame because he's had a tremendous season. It's been so often through the season that Trevor has pinched a point to save the white-wash. My brother Steve can vouch for that having lost the solitary game against Trevor in straight sets. So I wish best of luck to **Maghull** and **Marconi** for the forthcoming season.

Just looking back at last season got me thinking as to what would be voted the best moment of the year. Being somewhat sparse of votes, I hope you don't mind but I've taken the liberty of selecting something which I'm sure would meet with your approval. The moment being the joy expressed by Keith Williams when he beat Kevin Dolder to win last seasons brilliant Men's Closed Final. An exceptional moment for an exceptional player. Speaking personally, my own proudest moment this year has nothing to do with Table Tennis but is still worthy of mention. Standing with my nine year old son Sam on 'Sword Beach' and watching my eighty one year old father paying his respects at the memorial dedicated to his fallen comrades of the 41st Royal Marine Commando and then to watch him receive the spontaneous heartfelt thanks of passers-by from the local village was absolutely priceless.

Have a good closed season.

Another good end of season report from Paul to start the new season off, but Paul mentions that he will be studying for promotion during the next 12 months, so it's not going to leave him with much free time and has asked for a 'gap year' from his Divisional notes, so in order to keep the 1st. Div. In the limelight, can I please have a volunteer writer to keep the notes going, contact me as soon as possible.

Editor

Another two stalwarts of our league have just come through medical "repairs" which could have gone either way, thankfully both came through on the good side, Manweb secretary Allan Biggs has had both his knees operated on, the first around Christmas, and the second approximately 6-8 weeks after that, quite a long recuperation for someone active on their feet. Anyway, speaking to Allan recently, he says he is back playing at the table and waiting to start the new season.

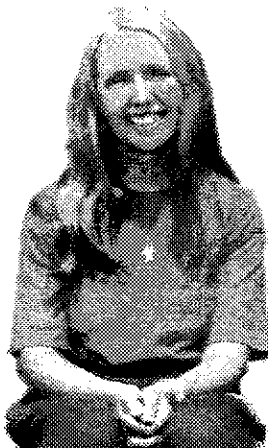
The other player, Les Higham, Bootle YM's match secretary, has just come through his 4th Hip replacement, the 3rd one done last year was an eventful one bringing on a heart problem, which for a short while was touch and go, anyone who has played Les in the past will know he's a battler, eventually pulling through this one, but the after effects left the 4th hip op in doubt, it took a long time to for the Medics to decide his heart could stand more major surgery, so, given the choice, Les went for it. And another happy outcome, Les is out and about and will be at the club soon, I don't know how long before he's on the table, but knowing Les, not long!
Well done to both players

Here are some interesting statistics on The Double Happiness Company

- DHS makes 100 million TT balls annually, accounting for 60% of world total.
- DHS makes 3 million blades annually.
- Sales volume: 380 million RMB. (£25m)
- Profit: 30 million RMB. (£2m)
- 80% of competition TT balls used in the world made by DHS.
- Stiga, Nittaku, Joola and Donic order balls from DHS.
- After gluing, TT balls take 1 month in a 50C chamber to dry. In the '60's, it took 112 days to make TT balls.
- DHS factory is in a suburb of Shanghai.

The season's finished and our new division and cup champions are Bootle JC 'A' and I must say how proud I am as you don't often see a team of a veteran and two youngsters winning a division of this calibre. It's sad that their achievement has to be undermined by Tony Harris of Merseyside Police with his nasty insinuations but I have replied to those in a letter to the editor which I hope will have been printed in its entirety. I must say that winning the division was not all plain sailing because with six weeks to go there were still six teams in contention and no single team was guaranteed promotion. At that time I think Bootle JC 'A' were probably third if not fourth favourite behind Manweb 'A', Cadwa 'A' and Police 'A' and slightly ahead of Manweb and Liverpool YMCA 'B'. Then with four weeks to go the field had narrowed to just three teams. Police, for whatever reason, seemed to lose confidence in themselves and after being the high flyers for the first half of the season they suddenly seemed to lose the edge. I think that work commitments didn't help but as a young team they should be confident in their ability to perform next season. I do think that Jon Dyson had his best season ever in the league!! and played tremendously in the cup. Manweb first team also seemed to lose the will to win. Whether they envisaged a quick return to the first division (er!! As did I) and then were a little disappointed in their results I don't know but it led to them not playing to their true potential and they waned away from the promotion stakes leaving just three teams to fight it out. The teams were now Cadwa 'A', Manweb 'A' and Bootle JC 'A'.

In truth I'd started to believe that these would actually be the final placings especially as Cadwa were now fielding both Alan Timewell (ze master ov ze combination bat!!!) and the indomitable Graeme Black on a regular basis and Manweb spear-headed by Les Molyneux were the



team in form after having had a slow start to the season but since Christmas had been playing like a team possessed. However, as the season came to a close the Bootle JC 'A' youngsters started to belie the faith of their stalwart captain and never lost another match including the match against their rivals Cadwa whom Mike Power said would thrash them. The last match of the season was the decider for the final positions. Bootle JC 'A' needed just four points to gain promotion and six points to win the division as Manweb 'A' and Cadwa 'A' had both managed 8:2 wins over Manweb and Police respectively. A good team performance against Marconi with Dave Evans playing a captain's game and taking his three and Cherith Graham and Tom Bray two each and the doubles guaranteed the division and promotion.

The regular correspondents have kept me interested in their cards. Brian Crolley says that it was nice to see Jeff Huntington again and John Lau was the star man when Bootle JC played YMCA 'B'. Graeme Reid says that the league's worst doubles pair (I think it's him and Alf Perry!) ended the season with a win and that quote 'age hasn't just caught up with Alf...it's started to lap him!!!'. If anyone wants to reply to Graeme's comments and/or

comment on Graeme himself I will guarantee it will be printed so don't be scared of putting pen to paper. Trevor Owens wants to thank Jim Geddes and Bootle YMCA for providing Marconi with premises for their last match of the season. The last comment of the year must go to your friend and mine..Mr Mike Power. Cadwa's last match was against Police and Mike says that Tori-Ann had one of those nights when her big forehead just couldn't miss and she had two good wins in particular against Mr Timewell who belies his years. He also thinks that it was a pity Gemma couldn't get away from work and he says that John Dyson and Paul Evans from Manweb 'A' are the most improved players he's seen. He thinks that Tom Bray can expect big things in the future but at the moment Graeme Black and Les Molyneux are top of the shop.

Oh, yes! I haven't forgotten the divisional awards for this season. Y'know the important ones ...here they are

DIVISION 2 AWARDS FOR 2003-2004 SEASON

OUTSTANDING CAPTAIN

Dave Evans (anyone playing with two Youngsters deserves it

MOST SPORTING TEAM

Liverpool YMCA 'B'yet again!!!!

MOST DEDICATED PLAYER

Bill Stanley dedication against Impossible odds

BEST CORRESPONDENT

Graeme Reid

BEST SERVICE (legal or illegal)

Julian Quirk

Congratulations to Division 3 Champions, Police 'B' and to runners up, Manweb 'B', and commiserations to Waterloo 'B' and Marconi 'B' who will be playing in Div 4 next season. As predicted last time the promotion and relegation places were decided in the very last match and my predictions at the start of the season proved correct and would have been 100% correct if CADWA 'C' had not had the 10 point penalty.



7-3 defeat at Manweb 'B' where Roly Wright was in top form with wins over Alan Evans and Sharon Norman. A good 7-3 away win at Bath St 'D' was followed by a disappointing 7-3 home loss to Wav Lab 'B' which put paid to any chance of promotion. Bootle YM have had a good season but maybe they were 'cup watching' in the run in, as two cup finals in a matter of days saw them lose the Hyde Cup to Police 'B' but win the Vets Cup against a strong Fords team. Well done!

I did stick my neck out in tipping my own team, Police 'B' for the title but with a squad of six strong players, Gavin Lloyd, myself, Paula French, Len Dyson. Gareth Jones and Brian Burrows we proved too strong for the rest and finished worthy champions. It remained tight at the top especially after CADWA 'C' beat Police 'B' for the second time this season in week 20, 6-4. Police 'B' bounced back in the next match however with an impressive 7-3 home win over Bath St 'C', who called yours truly on in the first game to face Ricky Brown, yours truly winning in three straight (sorry, Rick, just had to give myself one positive mention this season). Last match of the season at Waterloo 'B' saw police 'B' take 10 points thus ensuring top spot regardless of CADWA 'C' s 10 point penalty.

second place for Manweb 'B', edging CADWA 'C' by just 2 points.

CADWA 'C' must be kicking them selves after finishing in third place and missing out on promotion. The situation leading to their 10 point deduction have been well documented but further 'self destruct' situation occurred in week 16 in their home match against Wav Lab 'B'. Colin Rourke, at number 1 arrived at 10 pm when the match had finished thus gifting the Wav lab team 3 points but more importantly, losing 3 points for CADWA 'C', the match score being 6-4 to CADWA. The CADWA outfit pulled out all the stops in the run in with six straight wins, 7-3 v CADWA 'B', 9-1 v Marconi 'B', 8-2 v Manweb 'C', 6-4 v Police 'B', and 9-1 v Bath St 'D' but it just wasn't enough.

Bath St 'C' finished in fifth place and I stick to my previous comments that if their regular foursome had been together from the very start of the season they would have been genuine title contenders. A battling draw at Manweb 'B' where Ricky Brown won two five gamers against Alan Evans and Sharon Norman was followed by a 7-3 home win over Bootle YM, Dave Stoddern starring with wins over Roly Wright and Ritchie Winckle. Another draw, away at Wav Lab 'B', and then a strong 10-0 v CADWA 'B' and 9-1 v Marconi 'B', piled on the points and kept them in the race. The 7-3 defeat at Police 'B' put a halt to their promotion chances and this, along with an unsettled team in the first few weeks of the season cost Bath St 'C' a possible promotion place.

Manweb 'B' secured runners up spot courtesy of a strong run in which coincided with Paul Jennings availability after a time working away. An excellent 7-3 victory over promotion rivals Bootle YM, where Paul Jennings starred, defeating John Higham, 11-4 in the fifth and also beating Danny Every 3-1, was followed by a god 7-3 home win over CADWA 'B'. This result was all the more impressive as Sharon Norman, usually playing at number 3, played at number 1 and won both sets v Rob Peverall and Rob Davies. An 8-2 win against Manweb 'C' followed by a 9-1 victory over Marconi 'B' proved good enough to secure

I commented in the first Digest of the season that Bootle YM were capable of gaining promotion from this division but added, 'only if they really want to'. I stand by that comment and results tend to show that maybe they didn't really want to play in Div. 2 next season. Not that the Bootle lads don't fight for every point but sub consciously, who knows? In the 7-3 home defeat to CADWA 'C' Ritchie Winckle starred with wins over Steve Graham, in the fifth and a 3-1 win over George Higham. John Higham was leading unbeaten Colin Rourke 2-0 before losing the next three but he bounced back with an excellent win over George Lennon. A 7-3 defeat at Bath St 'C' was followed by a 10-0 win at Waterloo 'b' but then another

Wav Lab 'B' come next in 6th place. Clara Howard picked up 2 points for them in the home draw with Bath St 'C' taking the scalps of Ricky Brown (11-6 in the fifth) and Rob Peat. Two 6-4 wins followed, away at Waterloo 'B' and home to Manweb 'B' where Peter Houden and Dave Foulis starred picking up 2 points a piece. Peter with straight games wins over Alan Evans and Neil Jennings, and Dave also beating Neil and then Allan Biggs. An excellent 7-3 win over Bootle YM put paid to YM's promotion push. Mike Ashton coming in at number 4 and promptly defeating Ritchie Winckle and Danny Every and as Roly mentioned on the match card, 'losing both doubles

made all the difference'. I always feel that this Wav Lab quartet are capable of much more in this division but they need the consistency that seems to have been lacking this time around.

Bath St 'D' in 7th spot won 9 and lost 9 and that reflects their mid table position, not strong enough to challenge for promotion but never in any danger either. Nevertheless, they are an experienced team and have had some excellent results. In the 7-3 away win at Manweb 'C' Billy Clayton had a good double over Rob Barker (11-6 in the fifth) and Arthur Harrison. Steve Nield failed to appear in the 9-1 home defeat to Manweb 'B', Peter Ross saving the whitewash with a good win over Paul Jennings. They came from 4-1 down to earn the second draw of the season against Police 'B', taking both doubles and then securing the draw with a fine win for Les Gee over Gareth Jones, Les coming from 2-0 down, and then Peter Ross beating Brian Burrows in straight games. In the 6-4 away win at Wav Lab 'C' Neil Pritchett came in at number 1 and had two epic encounters with Tony Connor and Mike Ashton winning both in the fifth.

CADWA 'B' in 8th spot are another team who were always going to be in mid table security. The clubs problems have been well documented but the upshot is that CADWA 'B' just haven't had a regular foursome from week 1 and this is always a problem. In the 6-4 away defeat at Wav Lab 'C' Rob Peverall had a good win over Mike Ashton and Peter Roberts battled from 2-0 down to earn a good win against Ted McGiveran, 11-5 in the fifth. The CADWA derby match finished 7-3 to the 'C' team, reserve Andy McNab coming in for the 'B' team and inflicting defeats on John O'Sullivan and George Higham. CADWA 'B' then suffered a whitewash against Bath St 'C' but the following week thrashed Waterloo 'B' 9-1. In the 7-3 away defeat at Manweb 'B' Steve Graham starred with wins over Rob Barker and Trevor Barraclough. Captain Rob Peverall will no doubt be looking forward to a settled foursome for next season's campaign.

Wav Lab 'C' secured their third division status by a margin of 13 points and can in the main thank captain Tony Connor for that. In the 6-4 home win over CADWA 'B', Tony secured 2 points with wins over Rob Peverall and Ian Burrows, and he also won his two in the 7-3 away win at Marconi 'B' defeating Tony Mulally and Bobby Bell. He chipped in with two more points in the 6-4 home defeat to Manweb 'C' beating Neil Jennings and Rob Barker. Bill Stanley appeared for Wav Lab 'C' ('A' team to 'C' team in just a few weeks!) in their 7-3 away defeat at the hands of Police 'B'. Bill played at number one and lost both but it pushed the others down the order. Nevertheless, Tony Connor stilled played well to beat Gareth Jones in straight games and Steve Dean beat Brian Burrows in the fifth. It was Colin Fyles who starred in the 6-4 home defeat to Bath St 'D' beating Steve Nield and Billy Clayton and then with partner Dave Williams beating Billy and Peter Ross 11-9 in the fifth.

Manweb 'C' finished third from bottom on the same number of points as Marconi 'B' but they stay up courtesy of the week 15, 7-3 win over Marconi 'B'. This wasn't straightforward either as Bobby Bell was unwell on the night and had to concede his three sets. Captain Neil Jennings is anything but a battler and he picked up two valuable points in the 7-3 home defeat to Bath St 'D' with straight games wins over Steve Nield and Les Gee. Neil picked up another crucial point in the 8-2 defeat at Police 'B' beating Tony Harris 11-9 in the fifth. This was followed by an important 6-4 away win at a full strength Wav Lab 'C', Manweb 'C' taking both doubles and each player taking one singles point each. In the 8-2 home defeat to CADWA 'C' it was Neil again who took two points beating Steve Graham 11-6 in the fifth and with Peter Carney winning a doubles set. In the Manweb derby match the spoils went to the 'B' team 8-2 but the two points earned by the 'C' team proved crucial in the relegation battle and helped keep them up.

Marconi 'B' battled for every point and were very unlucky to be relegated with 78 points. They earned

two good points away at Police 'B' courtesy of an Andrew Owens win over Tony Harris and a Russell Thornton comeback against Brian Burrows eventually taking the fifth game 11-6. Russell took another crucial point in the 7-3 home defeat to Wav Lab 'C' beating Dave Williams in straight games, as did Tommy Lynch. It was Russell again who saved the whitewash at CADWA 'C' with a fine win over George Higham, and he did the same again in the 9-1 home defeat to Bath St 'C' with a battling win over Dave Stodder, 11-3 in the fifth. A good 8-2 win at Waterloo 'B', where Bobby Bell had an excellent double over Ken Nelson and Graham Oates wasn't enough to save Marconi 'B' and it was in the last re-arranged match of the season, which they lost 9-1 to Manweb 'B' which put the final nail in their coffin.

Waterloo 'B' have known all along that they will be playing in Division 4 next season so the pressure was off them in the run in. In the 7-3 away defeat at Bath St 'D' Ted Cramsie beat Steve Nield and Austin Hayden, making a rare appearance (Hi Austin!) showed he is still a good player with wins over Peter Ross and Billy Clayton. Ted Cramsie earned the points in the 8-2 home loss to Manweb 'B' with two excellent wins over Alan Evans and Paul Jennings, both close in the fifth. In the battling 6-4 home defeat to Wav Lab 'B' Harry Nelson had a good win 11-9 in the fifth over Paul Banks and K. Wright beat Dave Foulis by the same margin. Heavy defeats followed, 9-1 at CADWA 'B', Ted Cramsie saving the whitewash with a win over Rob Peverall, and 8-2 home to Marconi 'B' where Ted won his two v Andrew Owens and John McCann. Last match of the season saw bottom team, Waterloo 'B', face top team, Police 'B', and the 10-0 whitewash proved that it's tough at the bottom, as everything went Police 'B's way on the night.

So, it's been a tough season and I've really enjoyed it. Hope you did too and that you will be raring to go in September.

Cheers!

"And another one bites the dust!"

Yet another season seemingly flies by before we know it and division 4, or should that be divisions 4A and 4B come to their conclusion. Season 2003/4 has seen this division split, with the "big three" fighting it out amongst themselves, and the rest looking for their very own Roman Abramovich to come along to provide something to help them compete.

The destination of the divisional title was in doubt right to the very end of the season, with Liverpool YMCA 'C' finally pipping Maghull 'A' by a solitary point, with Harold House 'A' a further three points behind in third place. Harold House will, in one way, be relieved to know that the 2 points that they were penalised for playing out of order against Cadwa didn't prove decisive in the final reckoning.

Division 4 "B" was headed by Wavertree Labour 'D', an unbelievable 49 points adrift of Harold House! Only 12 points separated the next four teams, with Bootle YMCA 'A' claiming fifth place with 108 points from Wavertree Labour 'E' with 103, and Maghull 'B' and Bath Street 'E' with 97 and 96 respectively.

Aigburth, Linacre and Cadwa 'D' were never in any real danger of relegation when it became likely that only one team would go down, they all finished well clear of Bath Street 'F' who were, unfortunately, only able to amass 42 points from their 22 games and will be "plying their trade" in the fifth division next season. We played them towards the end of the season when they were resigned to their fate, and I am sure that if they can keep the team together they will do well next season, and I wish them well in doing so.

The mid-season clash between Harold House and Liverpool YM saw Harold House making full use of home advantage, edging out the YM 6-4. With, surprisingly, only one set going to five games. Eddie Clein remained unbeaten on the night,



beating George Smith in three, before doing the same to Billy Chung, including an 11-1 scoreline in the third after edging the first 14-12!

Wavertree Labour 'E', after losing the first clash of the season with their 'D' team rivals 9-1, claimed their revenge with a 7-3 victory in the return match, Gordon Langshaw and Steve Perry both remaining unbeaten on the night. Ken Armson, having claimed that the season would bring two 10-0 victories for the 'D' team, "ducked" this clash, claiming prior league business and was somewhat disappointed to turn up on the night to find his team trailing before proceeding to offer them some "words of encouragement" which didn't quite do the trick. He has already promised four 10-0 wins for next season as the 'F' team have gained promotion after winning division five. Oh well, we will see.....

Cadwa have found themselves playing short on more than one occasion this season which has seriously affected their final position, so much so that if two teams were to be relegated, they would be joining Bath Street 'F' in division five next season.

One of the closest matches of the season for Liverpool YM was away to Wavertree Labour 'D'. Wavertree were forced to field two reserves but still pushed YM all the way before narrowly losing 6-4, Stan Clarke producing probably his best result of the season defeating Steve Kee 11-7, 12-

10, 11-7. Reserve John Rowan featured in a real "see-saw" game against Francois Boll, eventually edging him 17-19, 11-6, 12-10, 12-10.

I would now like to list some close games and "face-savers" :-

"Face-savers," - Brian Gregory (Maghull 'B') 11-3 in the fifth against George Frost (Maghull 'A') in a 9-1 defeat, Alan Willis (Bath Street 'F') in three over Mike Poole (Harold House), 11-6, 11-5, 11-5, Anthony Mitchell (Wav Labour 'E') in three, 11-9, 11-8, 11-8 over George Frost, Graham Rollinson (Aigburth) in four, 7-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-9 against Alvin Tso (Liverpool YM), Don Davies (Cadwa) in four, 10-12, 11-2, 11-6, 11-3 over Gordon Langshaw (Wav Labour 'E').

"Close shaves," - Paul Morgan (Harold House), 7-11, 11-5, 11-6, 3-11, 11-5, over Don Davies (Cadwa), this after Don had led 7-0 in the fourth! Steve Perry Wav Labour 'E', 10-12, 11-3, 11-8, 8-11, 14-12 over Steve McGanity (Maghull 'B') and 5-11, 4-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-7 over Stephanie Howard, Wav Labour 'D', both revenge victories, Wilf Gibson (Maghull 'B'), 10-12, 11-6, 8-11, 11-8, 11-8 against Alan Willis (Bath Street 'F'), Ken Ainsworth (Linacre), 11-7, 11-13, 5-11, 11-5, 13-11 over Dave Batty (Bath Street 'F'), Francois Boll (Liverpool YM), 11-6, 12-14, 11-7, 13-15, 11-9 and 6-11, 11-8, 9-11, 11-9, 11-9 over Steve Perry and Tom Creevy (Wav Labour 'E'), Ray Jones (Aigburth) against Stan Clarke (Wav Labour 'D'), 11-13, 5-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-7, Harry Reeve (Linacre), 6-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5, 11-6 over Chris Roberts (Maghull 'A'), which also saved a whitewash.

So there you have it, another season finished, another year older. Always like to finish on a cheerful note! All that is left is for me to wish you all a good summer and to look forward to renewing friendships and rivalries in season 2004/5.

See you all next season.

DIVISION 5

It's me again, the Editor, putting these last notes of the season together for Div. 5. It still surprises me that we can't find someone to put a few notes together, we don't expect a Will Shakespeare.

In the last Digest I stuck my neck out to pencil in **Wavertree Labour 'F'** for the double, and get there with a 100% record, mainly because of the consistently strong team they were putting out, they did win the title, with a 24 point gap, but their 100% went down to a strong **Greenbank** team in match 18, 4-4 in the individual games, but as in many matches, the doubles making the difference, **Greenbank** winning both. The K.O. Cup Final, again on paper was a banker for the top of the table **Wavertree** team to beat mid table **Aigburth 'A'**, their last meeting finished with a 9-1 win for **Wavertree**, but **Aigburth** pulled out the stops to win 5-3.

So **Wavertree 'F'** are deservedly going up as champions, with dark horses **Greenbank**, with the help of some of their "International" players, promoted in second spot. **Wavertree 'F'**'s regular team of John Rowan, 22 wins out of 24, Ian Woods, Kevin O'Hanlon and Eric Spencer had the division sewn up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the season and played young Tom Creevy for the last few games, winning his last two against the Ladies of **Bath St 'H'**, other than **Greenbank**, only **Maghull 'D'** came close, drawing 4-4, but **Wavertree** winning the last 2, to clinch the win.

Greenbank had a good run in from week 16, picking up 41 points from a possible 50 in the last 5 games, among them being that good 6-4 win over **Wavertree 'F'**. With the strong squad of Internationally blooded players, they should prove formidable opponents on moving up the league, players like Dave Finn, 23 wins out of 26, Scott Robertson 12 out of 12, Tony Edge 21 out of 24, Lynne Riding and Clare Harris, and with the many regular players have now decided to enter another team, well done **Greenbank**.

Third placed **Maghull 'C'**, another team with a strong squad led by Harry McGanity, closing the season with two comprehensive wins against **Police 'C'** 8-2 and a 9-1 derby win against their **'D'**, but unfortunate to meet a very strong **Greenbank** team in match 20, going down 8-2, so it's back to the 4th. For Harry.

Harold House 'B', another team using a lot of players (8), No. 1 early on was Rod McPherson, who was soon moved up to make a 6 man squad in the **'A'** team, maybe if Rod had stayed, the **'B'** may have challenged **Maghull** for the promotion spot, only managing 14 points from their last 4 matches. Another club with a large register of players, a narrow line between having enough teams to give everyone a regular game, and the interest that goes with playing regular, or having too many teams and players not willing to play regularly.

Aigburth 'A' was another team using 8 players trying to give everyone a game doesn't help consistency, 8 played in the 5th Div. and 9 in the 4th (inc. 5th Div. players), so Eric's doing his best to give everyone games. 22 of the last possible 50 points, 5-3 down to **Maghull 'C'**, then winning the first doubles to 4-5 down, then young Ian Laird winning a 5 gamer against Denise Chorley for the draw.

Maghull 'D', 19 from the last 40 points started with an 2-8 loss against **Greenbank**, Keith Whitaker the saviour in this one winning his single against Clare Harris in 4, then joining with Andy McCourt to win a tight 5 gamer against Tony Edge and Clare, 12-10 in the last. The Derby with the **'C'** team must have been a good night, the score was 9-1 for the **'C'**, but what does the score matter, Jeff Banks saved the whitewash with a win against Denise in 4, only 2 sets in the match finishing in 3 games, 4 sets in 4 games and 4 sets going all the way, the **'C'** team winning all of them, the **'D'** team must have felt it was just one of those nights.

Police 'C' must be a team typical of frustration, the second half of the

season, 11 match weeks, they only played 5 matches, conceding two of the last 3 as walkovers, unable to raise a team from a seven man squad, I suppose the side effect of a large squad, players not really knowing when they may be playing, rather than in a small squad who know they will be playing every week, a nightmare for the club secretary's when shift patterns come into it. They had a good win against **Aigburth 'A'**, Bob Rawlinson and Dave Oakes winning both their singles, Bob having a tough 5 gamer against Ian Laird, 11-8 in the 5th. Bob and Dave winning the first doubles, and Neil Thomas chipping in with his single against Eric Young. Alan Woods saved the whitewash against **Greenbank** with a win against Lynne Riding in 4, another good 7-3 win against **Maghull 'D'** and ending the season with a 2-8 loss to **Maghull 'C'**.

Bath St. 'H''s best result was in the second half of the season, going down 4-6 to **Harold House 'B'**, 4-4 after all the singles, with Albie Parker winning both his, Barbara Alcock and Myra Lovelady chipping in with one each, but both doubles going to **H.H.**, but much credit to this team from **Bath Street** who continue to play for the "social" side of the game.

Anyway, to finish on a nice note, there were only 2 comments on the match cards, (yep! only 2), Eric young of **Aigburth** saying he's too old for this game, (didn't realize you'd had the telegram off the Queen Eric!), and Ian Woods of **Wavertree** says "**Bath Street 'H'** are the nicest team we have played all season, and **Wav. Lab. 'F'** are the ugliest", I'm sure the other teams in the division will agree with the first comment.

I have a list of 55 players who took part in the 5th div. this season, how about one who can put a few notes together about the players you play with, notice my notes are a bit impersonal.

The Editor

The following is the latest letter from ETТА chairman, Alex Murdoch posted on the ETТА web site, in his quest to keep everyone informed of what's going on.

I have added it for those who don't have access to a web site, and also for those who do but don't bother to look!!

CHAIRMAN'S FORUM JULY 2004

Another month has passed where lots of things have happened within our sport despite the league season being at an end.

I hope the following update is of interest to you.

1. Funding

The Interim Funding package from Sport England has been confirmed and the money will be used in a number of ways to support table tennis in England. Appointments will be made as soon as possible for two more Regional Development Officers, Assistant Events Manager, Communications Officer and Teaching and Training Officer. The balance of this funding will be used towards support of a modernisation programme within the ETТА.

2. PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL)

We have been granted £170K over a two year period to cover this project which will involve the appointment of a number of Community Table Tennis Coaches across England and a National Club and Schools Manager. This project is to increase participation of young people at schools and to link this with our club structure hence keeping these young people involved with our sport.

3. Individual Registrations

The process is continuing and discussions will take place at National Council over the coming months and further information will be circulated in the near future covering membership benefits and further background information.

4. England Performances

Two Major Events have taken place, namely, the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships and the European Youth Championships. In the Commonwealth Event we won two Silver Medals, one in the Men's Team Event and one in the Mixed Doubles with Alan Cooke and Helen Lower. Alan also won the Fair Play Award.

A very successful European Youth Event gave us a Silver Medal in the Cadet Boys Team Event, our first medal for many years, with Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight and Bradley and Gavin Evans. There were many other excellent performances including our Junior Girls Team of Joanna Parker, Kelly Sibley and Abigail Embling who beat some highly ranked European players to take 10th place in the Team Event.

Something for the Veterans amongst us The World Veterans Championships held in Japan recently, we have lots of players who follow the Vets. Tournaments around the country, and also a few who travel the Globe to take part in them, I know some of our players did go to Japan, for those that didn't, some of the names will be recognised.

At the World Veterans Championships held in Yokohama last week the local players from Japan, China and Chinese Taipei dominated the Womens events but European players did well in the Mens events.

In the Mens Over 60 singles, a very well known to English VETTS, Herbert Neubauer(SUI) added a World Over 60's crown to the over 50's he won several years ago beating Vladimir Miko(CZE) in the Final

In the Mens Over 65 Singles it was Valentin Langerhegermann(LUX) who came out on top against Konrad Steinkemper, in the Mens Over 70 Singles saw Chen Ying-Lieh(TPE) triumph over Tsui Cheung Ling(HKG). Both Mervin Wood and

Fred Lockwood lost in the quarters of this event.

The Mens Over 75 Singles brought England a Silver Medal when Gordon Chapman was beaten in a very close match by Lu Kuang(TPE) and in the Mens Over 80 Singles Les D'Arcy collected another silver losing in the final to old adversary Hubert Levinge(IRL). In the Mens Over 85 Singles once again Dick Satchell was only able to claim a Silver losing in the quarter to Chen Chia-Cho(TPE)

Notable results in the Mens Doubles, in the Over 70 event both Fred Lockwood playing with Richard Lubert(GER) and Derek Schofield with Mervyn Wood claimed Bronze Medals, in the over 75's Bronze Medals

went to Gordon Chapman and Terry Donlon

The Mens Doubles Over 80 event brought the only England Gold of the event where Les D'Arcy teamed up with Hubert Levinge(IRL) to beat Andre Jiong and Roger Lenert(FRA) in the final.

Some consolation success saw Pam Butcher losing in the Over 70 Doubles consolation quarter final. In the over 60 Singles consolation Sally Bax had to concede the final to her Japanese opponent. For the Men Tony Morse lost a Over 60 Doubles quarter. Rod Bradburn lost in the Over 60 Singles quarters

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

In the last issue of the digest there was a letter to yourself that I feel obliged to reply to and I am not going to apologise for whatever I say in this letter because I feel the author of that letter does not deserve that consideration. The letter I'm relating to was from Tony Harris who for whatever reason has made allegations against the Bootle JC club. The allegations are a slight on Bootle JC's integrity for which I feel an apology is due, however, I feel more embarrassed for Tony who has made a complete fool of himself in front of his fellow table tennis players. Before putting pen to paper Tony should have checked his facts and the match results. If he had then he would have found that Bootle JC 'A' had fielded the same three players in 90% of games and only played a substitute when one of the three players was unavailable because of work or other table tennis commitments. If he had further checked his facts he would have found that only once did any of these three players play for Bootle

JC and that player won one set out of three and on another occasion Bootle JC actually played short...hardly the actions of a team determined to stay up whatever!!!! Furthermore at the start of the season, as you, the editor pointed out, no one would have tipped the Bootle JC 'A' team for promotion. Finally I'd like to welcome Tony's team into the second division next season. Oh, no!!! that means two teams from the Police club in the same division with the prospect of one challenging for promotion and the other fighting a relegation battle? Watch out, as Tony obviously knows his own tricks best.

Regards
Sylvia Graham
Bootle JC Table Tennis Club

The following E-mail from Jan Davies I received 25th April 2004:- Brian Crolley will be interested in this. It has been suggested that Alan Timewell is one of the other three, can Alan throw some light on this?

Dear Roly,

I am always interested to see what is happening in the League and one of the queries has been the second photo where a Rafter's team feature. (the 3 on the right) They are ARTHUR TAYLOR, Peter RUMJAHN & CLIN CASSELMAN in the days when Rafter's split their team strength in the First Division so there were no whitewashes!

Wishing everyone continued success. I will be at Cadwa for the Rumjahn Cup Final.
Regards, Jan Davies (nee Rumjahn)

This is the E-mail from Tom Purcell I mentioned in the editorial

Hi Roly,

I've just read the latest e-digest and as a ex-Liverpool League player can I congratulate you and the League for the impressive e-digest. It's good to keep up with the news and recognise many of the names and players. I do still see many players when I'm umpiring at the tournaments however, now that I'm working in London I'm only able to umpire one or two tournaments in the year. I was reading the article about the reduction in venues for T/T and the higher prices players have to pay.

I was obviously very lucky with my home venue, the Police Club, but in my current league, The Wandsworth League London, the cost of hiring a venue is ridiculous and in my current club we each pay £120 per annum. towards the hire of the hall etc.

My League also plays a different format in the League structure. Because of falling team numbers the league decided, a number of years ago, to have 6 team leagues. Each team plays home and away before Christmas. The top two are promoted and the bottom two relegated. The same happens after Christmas. It does take some getting used to but it ensures a good turn over of teams and the wide difference you often get between the top and bottom teams in a 12 team league rarely occur.

I'm hoping to return to Liverpool in the next year or two and join a team. For those who remember, the flashing back-hand is still there and a forehand is still missing.

Hope to see you soon,
Tom Purcell

OBITUARY



It is with great sadness that I have to announce the passing of Ian Mitchell who was a member of the Police Table Tennis club. Ian was registered disabled and was an employee of the Police Support staff at H.Q. Ian's disability belied his intellectual prowess which was exemplified by his masters degree in pure mathematics and it was obvious that Ian's intelligence (particularly after a few pints) was matched only by his sharp wit. Ian joined our section four years ago and played in Steve Riley's team in the fifth division. Ian was well aware of his limitations but this did not dampen his enthusiasm and love of the sport. Ian was a

regular on our practice nights and actively supported the League Table Tennis social events. He was a reliable participant in our Force Championships and I can recall when he partnered John Rankin in the doubles and Ian threw the ball up to serve and on five consecutive occasions totally missed the ball. Ian turned to a bewildered Rankin and said, " I must be having an off day cos I usually hit one out of five."

Ian will be sadly missed by his family and his many, many friends.



Paul Gittins. Police T.T. Club.

Have you been watching the Olympics in Athens, fantastic Stadiums, could we produce venues like them, if we get the 2012 Olympics, I can see the doubters putting so many restrictions on cost that any flare in designs will be snuffed out, still, every year seems to get more lavish, I could be wrong.

I have spent a lot of time looking at the Table Tennis schedules on the BBC interactive channels, watching some TT on the TV. (how about one of those Olympic tables!) also trawling through the ETTA web site for anything relating to English players without success, I've been checking on the Olympic results pages, without success, then I found a little article in the TTNews, saying that no Great Britain player had qualified for the Olympics, what a sad state of affairs.

But the article went on to say that we do have a qualifying table tennis team in the disabled Paralympics which take place in Athens 18th. to 28th. September at the same venues as the main Olympics, we have an 8 strong squad which includes Scott Robertson and Lynne Riding from our local Greenbank Club.

The 8 strong GB team includes James Rawson, Neil Robinson and Stefan Trofan, Silver medalists in the class 3 team event in the Sydney 2000 Paralympics, the trio were runners-up with France in Sydney, and will get the opportunity to go one better in Athens. This will be Scott Robertson's second Paralympics, his team mate Arnie Chan will be trying to add to the team Bronze he won in Seoul in 1988 and a Bronze in Barcelona in 1992.

The squad will be supported by the GB Team coach Manager Steve Ward with coaches Andrew Horsfield and Andrew Eden. Steve Ward performance Director for the GB disabled table tennis team, said " The competition in Athens will be tough, but all the players who have qualified have been selected by the BPA and have real medal chances".

So hopefully there will be some TV. Coverage of the Paralympics table tennis where we can see some TT Medals coming home, so again, good luck to the team, but enjoy the experience.

Editor

It is 15 years since the Top 12 Tournament was played, and for Liverpool to be given the chance to stage the first after so long was a bit of a bonus for local players to see something of the outside world of table tennis, sadly not all that many could be bothered, a pity because the Greenbank Academy was set up in a very professional way, with tiered seating set up to give spectators an excellent view of all the 6 tables at once.

It was staged over 3 days, 12 men and 12 women, playing their own gender, in a league format, so every player playing 11 matches, so you could go on any day and see all the players in action during your visit.

It couldn't be said that it was strictly the "Top 12" due to some of the top players dropping out due to injuries or 'other commitments', but at least the top man was there, Matthew Syed, the No. 1 veteran John Hilton, and as a taster of the future of English TT, the top 3 Cadet boys, Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight and Bradley Evans, names you will no doubt see a lot of in the future. The ladies were led by England No. 3 Helen Lower with Cadet No.1 Lauren Springthorpe, a number of top juniors, and local player Clare Peers, from Bath St., ranked 22 in England.

With the Commonwealth championships due in June, England head coach Steen Hanson was at the Top 12 possibly to see how the juniors played against the seniors.

Mat Syed eventually won the men's top prize of £750, being a class above everyone else, but being the gentleman he is, never played to dominate, but always in control, his toughest match though was probably against young Paul Drinkhall, who took him to 5 games, Paul leading 7-2 in the 5th, before Mat moved up a gear to win, Paul finally finishing the tournament in 2nd. Spot.

Local player Clare Peers didn't reach her normal standard, and I think she was probably a shade disap-

pointed with her weekend play, Helen Lower finally winning the top Women's prize of £600.

Hopefully Liverpool will be asked to Host the Top 12 again and that more Liverpool players will take the opportunity to watch a very well organised tournament. I enjoyed it, what more can I say!!

Editor.

The players who took part were:-

Senior Men :-M. Syed (1); A. Rushton (10);J. Holland (18);J. Hilton (23);A. Wuraola (29); M. James (33); A. Wilkinson (37);

Junior Boys :-C.Bryant (3);A.Bleakly (6);

Cadets:-P.Drinkhall (1);D.Knight (2); B.Evans (3)

Senior Women :-H.Lower (3); G. Walker (5); N. Bawden (11); C. Peers (22)

Junior Girls :-J.Parker (1); K.Sibley (4); A.Embling (5);

L. Spink (8); K.Shepherd (9); G.Chapman (10);

Cadet Girls :- L. Springthorpe (1);

National rankings in brackets ()



The Greenbank Academy, 6 tables and plenty of tiered seating for spectators

SCHOOLS

Cherith Graham of Bootle J.C. 'A' played for England Schools U18's in the Home Internationals in Limerick Ireland at the end of June, playing in two player teams, Cherith and partner Claire Wilson, got third place in the U18 girls team event from the six country tournament

Liverpool School, Our Lady High School, won an under 18's National Div.4S Championship, in their first season, coached by Dave Graham.

The following is part of the final day report from Malcolm McParland of the ETTA on the European Youth Championships in Budapest, I've included it to highlight the future of our International Table Tennis

The European Youth Championships for 2004 are now finished, final English interest was limited to Craig Bryant in his quest for the Junior Boys Consolation

Title, unfortunately it was not to be as Craig went down against Niagol Stoyanov of Italy in the Semi Final

To look back at the Event as a whole. A Silver medal in the Cadet Boys Team Event has been a long time coming, about 20 years, but with the England team leading France 2-0 in the Final, the win seemed on the cards, only for France to win the next 3 to take Gold. I expect the whole England team will be a little disappointed to have got so close to Individual Medals without claiming any.

That being said there are great signs of improvement in the Cadet Boys and Junior Girls. The Junior Girls team is likely to be relatively unchanged for a further year and a 10th place was an improvement on last year's 13th. The Cadet Boys also have another year as both Paul Drinkhall and Darius Knight have very lucky birthdays under the 1st January age groups, and they must be hoping to go one better next year

For some years the league have worked closely with the Council Sport & Recreation Development Section and table tennis is included in their sports development programme. As part of that involvement we receive support for events and also keep pushing for a dedicated table tennis centre and although ours is a minority sport we keep trying. So as our representative it was with some surprise I learnt of a meeting apparently organised by two City Councillors and attended by two members of the league who play no part in the running of our league plus our Chairman and a couple of others who are not part of our league and presumably not supporters of table tennis. The league knew nothing of this meeting and I doubt the two Councillors, one of whom apparently chaired this unofficial meeting know much, if anything, about table tennis. No minutes appear to have been produced, this was not a Council led initiative or the result of our request for our own centre, neither were the Sport & Recreation Service involved or represented. So why should two Councillors with no interest in table tennis and without any discussion or notification to our league suddenly decide we should have a dedicated table tennis centre. Has it anything to do, I wonder, with the fact that they are involved with the Vernon Sangster Sports Centre, an independent centre run by a Trust that is under threat of closure and if rumour is correct short of funds and who see us as a vehicle to obtain funds for their new centre. You may not agree with me but to me there is a strong smell of something not quite right and until these people come out into the open and get involved in open discussion with all interested parties and have the blessing and support of the City Council we should have nothing to do with this scheme and must not allow ourselves to become someone else's bullet. Yes, we want a Centre. Yes, we believe one is needed but we want it on our terms not the terms of those whose motives may not stand up to closer scrutiny.



Proposed changes to the service law were not carried at the ITTF meeting but more surprisingly the proposal to put in place a timetable to eliminate the use of fast glue was. So the glue users of whom there are many have been given due notice but the don't throw the ball up, the throw it back and shield the ball brigade will no doubt feel they have been given the all clear to continue flouting the service law. These the worst offenders are

those who blatantly serve straight off the hand and in doing so cheat.

We now have a new RDO but not the ETTA's first choice who was unsuccessful in her attempt to obtain a work permit and the post was offered to Andrea Holt who is now in situ and hopes to build on the work of her predecessor, Martin Ireland.

My piece on Eddie Crowley has reached wider readership having been included in the recent issue of the Vets magazine so making Eddie Crowley a well-known name. But for Eddie the wheel turned a full circle as when umpiring in the Blackpool 3 Star he also inadvertently put the wrong player down as winner but on this occasion the error was spotted and the correct winner went through.

Also included in that same issue was a piece from the 1st Division notes Paul's joke about PW getting star billing. There is, however, no truth in the rumour that the Editor of the Vets magazine has signed Paul up as a Columnist to write similar comments about their members.

Tom Creevy, (Wavertree Labour) newly appointed as a Local umpire has now moved on having passed with flying colours the ETTA County Umpire and is now a qualified county Umpire and to the best of my knowledge the youngest ETTA County umpire. He will receive his badge at our AGM and hopes to become a National Umpire in two years time. **Well done, Tom.**



Tom, receiving his badge from County Chairman Stan Clarke at the AGM

Incidentally our league probably has more qualified umpires than any other local league as we currently have 7 active umpires, 8 if we include Tom Purcell who is still working in London and 9 if we include Brian Leeson who although retired from TT is nevertheless a qualified umpire.

Since the election of a new Chairman of the ETTA I have pondered on whether or not this has been a good thing or a bad and until the publication of the last issue of Table Tennis News I was still unable to make my mind up. That has now changed and I am satisfied we did make the right decision but have to add that recent events in which I was involved have also indicated that our new Chairman may have feet of clay and gives the kitchen a bypass when it gets too hot.

Did you get sucked in and pay £7 to watch the event played at Greenbank and advertised as the Top 12? The title bore little resemblance to the Top 12 the player list being more in keeping with the Top 24, but it did include the Top 12 women, well, almost, and so I suppose could possibly justify its title but only if you had not paid the £7 entrance fee. The attendance was poor, most of those present being either with the players or on freebies and anyone not present on Sunday missed the best match of the weekend when England's best cadet, Paul Drinkhall, narrowly failed to bring Matthew Syed to his knees after leading 2-0 and being 7-2 up in the 5th only to see Matthew drag himself back from the brink of defeat and take the 5th game. In the end it was all about experience but the measure of Paul's ability at such a young age can be gauged by the fact that only two other players were successful in taking a game off Matthew and Paul beat both of them 3-0. We may well have been watching a future English Senior champion whilst still a junior or even a possible future European champion.

I attended the ETTA AGM and it was quite an eye opener not to mention a complete waste of time and gave me even more reason to believe we made the right decision when we elected a new Chairman and Management team. The ousted team wasting 2 hours raising spurious questions on the Management Report. It was like watching a human puppet show with the ex chairman acting as puppet mas-

ter and his ex team taking it in turn to respond to his string pulling.

A resolution seeking to have the option to play 11 or 21 up put back in the ETTA Laws of table tennis was resoundingly defeated at the ETTA AGM 8,714 for 26,609 against. The best of 3 21 up has now been consigned to the history books and we can now get on with full adjustment to a change most of us never wanted and one that some may never get to like. It will take time but it is now here to stay.

No one is irreplaceable but the proof that some are more irreplaceable than others was proven at the ETTA AGM the sudden death of Tony Wickens, the pivotal member of the Rules and Standing Orders Committee, requiring others to take over his role and not making a very good job of it. A member holding a proxy for a league who had submitted a resolution was allowed to withdraw it on their behalf and then allowed by the Chairman to launch into a lengthy discourse on the withdrawn item with no intervention from the SOC member to prevent this blatant procedural breach. There were a number of other gaffs that Tony Wickens would never have allowed and I suspect he would also have blocked the attempt by the ex chairman and his colleagues to hijack the meeting with a multitude of spurious questions on the Management committee report accompanied by much waffling on their part.

Last season our 5th division started off with 9 teams finishing with only 7 and as a league we need to look at our divisional set up as it is past its sell by date. The Management Committee again spent a great deal of time on this and although our rules allow them to change the number of teams per division they were naturally reluctant to change to smaller divisions as this would involve teams going down. Faced again with a reduced division 5 they have opted for this division to play each other 3 times using an additional fixture list for these matches but with a reducing number of teams the time has come for us to review how we set up

our divisions. Many other leagues operate with smaller divisions and balance this with a later or earlier start or a mixture of both. Smaller divisions will also lead to more competitive divisions. Think about it and ask your club to put forward changes to cope with any reduction in teams.

The new season finds us with some new venues brought about by the heaviest venue loss in any season, Marconi closing down sooner than expected and Waterloo and Liverpool YMCA also going to the wall. Waterloo were unceremoniously kicked out by their parent tennis club with YM, who thought they had been given a 12 month reprieve, getting their marching orders forthwith. Team and player losses have followed only one Waterloo team remaining. Marconi have new premises but with only 2 match nights and one of those allocated to LBH matches they will need to double up on matches using the same room if they have multiple teams. Never an easy option, as I found out when we lost our premises. This brings us face to face with the ever increasing need to have our own headquarters capable of holding at least ten courts, run by the league and available to us 24 hours a day. Still a pipe dream and none have heeded my repeated warnings.

I refereed the NW NJL championships organised by Bryan Wearden in St Helens and viewed with envy the squad of willing volunteers helping him. They set the venue up the previous day, helped out with table managing and did their share of umpiring when we ran short of player umpires. When it was time to start dismantling they were again eager and willing and soon cleared the area. Tables were put away and court surrounds rolled up and secured in bundles in no time. They provide the same support at coaching sessions and I certainly envied Bryan. Would you believe that Kevin Dolder was also one of Bryan's willing volunteers? Contrast this with our league where we often struggle to get

enough volunteers to set up for our tournaments, have very little assistance running them and when it comes time to dismantle the courts we are generally left with the same few workers and most of them are committee members. We receive even less assistance with coaching as no one appears interested in ensuring the future of table tennis and our league and in Liverpool.

Democracy does not get much of a look in in many sections of the ETTA, the Chairman of its sub committees being appointed by the Vice Chairman of the relevant department. They in turn select their own committee members with some committees at times behaving as if they, not the ETTA, are the governing body. Some appearing to have little interest or concern about what we the members want as they believe they know better than we do. A prime example of this being the decision of the Marketing Committee to remove the U21 event from Grand Prix tournaments and replace this with a junior event. The Grand Prix committee were strongly against this change but the Marketing Committee steamrollered over their objections the Vice Chair of Marketing seeking and obtaining the support of the Management Committee to enforce this change. Fortunately democracy of a sort does exist within the National Council and the Management Committee and the Chair of Marketing got a bloody nose this change being overwhelmingly rejected. To make the point, last year we had an entry of 60 for our GP U21 event its JS replacement has only attracted an entry of 37 so clearly someone either did not do their homework or other interests were at work.

There has been much in the press of late about cronyism in politics, just as well the press don't show much interest in TT as cronyism is also prevalent within the ETTA.

Thanks to the input and efforts of Roly Wright we now have a loose-leaf rulebook and an ample sup-

ply of spare paper for future page changes and this will avoid having to do a full reprint every time we amend our rules. It will now be up to clubs and team captains to ensure they keep their copy updated and in good condition and have it available for reference at matches.

The 1st division gained themselves an unenviable record for Week 14 of last season two of the six matches being conceded as walkovers by Marconi and Harold House a 3rd having apparently been postponed only for the Police to make it a hat trick of walkovers by conceding the re-arranged match.

We are fortunate in that our League is well run, well organised and we try to do things correctly. I experienced at first hand just what can happen in a league when these important aspects are not present when I attended what was supposed to be a Special General Meeting of the Lancashire & Cheshire League. At best it was poorly attended, badly run and poorly organised and at worst it resembled a Mickey Mouse puppet show. Rules and their application may not always please us but they are there for the well-being of all members of any organisation but that was not the view being expressed by some in attendance who saw them as being tiresome and to be changed whenever it took their fancy.

Last season a league failed to turn up for a match against a Liverpool team. This was apparently awarded to Liverpool, the away team concerned appealing against this decision of the L&C committee. We were not represented or invited to attend the Appeal Board whose decision went against the L&C rules, which state an away team cannot postpone a match, and decreed this match must be replayed. This decision was never implemented and now out of the blue a letter has been received from the L&C league committee informing us that they have now decided this match must be replayed and at a neutral venue. This, bear in mind, is a match played last season, the

season for the L&C league commencing on 1st July of each year and the meeting at which this decision was made having taken place in August. The words Mickey Mouse again spring to mind.

Just a reminder of the **Golf Tournament** Peter Carney and Paul Morgan have arranged for the Golf playing members of the L&DTTLeague.

To be played at Lee Park Golf Club on Saturday 4th. September 2004. Tee off times are from 1-30 pm. Full details were printed in the last Digest in March. Peter and Paul need to know numbers for finalising arrangements, so would anyone who wishes to take part and has not already contacted Peter, please do so ASAP.

Peter can be contacted on :-
0151 426 3625.

It would be appreciated if CLUB Secretaries would contact any known 'golfers' in your club, as to this reminder,

Thanks!



By the time most players read this Digest the tournament will have already taken place, Peter informs me that he intends to make it an annual event with the date depending on the feed back he gets, so if you have missed this one due to holidays or other commitments, contact Peter or Paul with next years tournament in mind
Editor

Do any players wonder why there isn't very much in the Digest on local club news, easy, clubs send in very little news to the Digest!!

FINAL LEAGUE TABLES SEASON 2003 - 2004

<i>Division 1</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Pts</i>
Liverpool YMCA	22	21	0	1	168
Waterloo	22	15	3	4	138
Liverpool YMCA 'A'	22	12	1	9	118
Fords	22	10	4	8	118
Cadwa	22	10	2	10	118
Bath St 'A'	22	10	2	10	116
Bath St	22	12	1	9	115
Wavertree Labour	22	10	1	11	114
Harold House	22	11	1	10	108
Merseyside Police	22	8	2	12	98
Maghull	22	3	0	19	62
Marconi	22	1	1	20	47

<i>Division 2</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Pts</i>
Bootle JC 'A'	20	16	1	3	136
Manweb 'A'	20	16	1	3	133
Cadwa 'A'	20	14	2	4	131
Manweb	20	12	1	7	120
Liverpool YMCA 'B'	20	13	2	5	118
Merseyside Police 'A'	20	10	6	4	113
Fords 'A'	20	2	2	16	81
Bootle JC	20	6	1	13	80
Marconi 'A'	20	3	4	13	74
Bath St 'B'	20	5	2	13	72
Waterloo 'A'	20	2	0	18	42
Wavertree Labour 'A'	<i>records expunged</i>				

<i>Division 3</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Pts</i>
Merseyside Police 'B'	22	16	2	4	152
Manweb 'B'	22	15	2	5	143
Cadwa 'C'	22	18	0	4	141
Bootle YMCA	22	16	0	6	136
Bath St 'C'	22	11	4	7	134
Wavertree Labour 'B'	22	11	4	7	107
Bath St 'D'	22	9	4	9	104
Cadwa 'B'	22	6	3	13	96
Wavertree Labour 'C'	22	7	3	12	91
Manweb 'C'	22	3	2	17	78
Marconi 'B'	22	4	3	15	78
Waterloo 'B'	22	2	1	19	50

<i>Division 4</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Pts</i>
Liverpool YMCA 'C'	22	20	0	2	175
Maghull 'A'	22	19	0	3	174
Harold House 'A'	22	19	2	1	171
Wavertree Labour 'D'	22	10	5	7	122
Bootle YMCA 'A'	22	6	9	7	108
Wavertree Labour 'E'	22	8	3	11	103
Maghull 'B'	22	9	3	10	97
Bath St 'E'	22	7	3	12	96
Aigburth	22	6	4	12	87
Linacre	22	3	5	14	74
Cadwa 'D'	22	4	6	12	71
Bath St 'F'	22	0	2	20	42

CADWA 'C' Deducted 10 Pts. Ineligible Player

<i>Division 5</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Pts</i>
Wavertree Labour 'F'	14	13	0	1	117
Greenbank	14	10	1	3	93
Maghull 'C'	14	9	1	4	86
Harold House 'B'	14	7	1	6	69
Aigburth 'A'	14	4	3	7	64
Maghull 'D'	14	3	2	9	51
Merseyside Police 'C'	14	4	1	9	44
Bath St 'H'	14	1	1	12	36
Bath St 'G'	<i>Records Expunged</i>				

My understanding of the promotion and relegation issues are that the bottom two teams are relegated, and the top two teams are promoted, but after clarification of this rule last season, in the case of a division where a team has dropped out during the season, only one team will be relegated, with the top two teams from the next division promoted to make the correct div. strength. So Div. 3 will require 3 teams to be promoted from the 4th div. to make the numbers up, (only one team came down from the 2nd.). The same situation arises in the 4th div. Two teams down and three promoted from the 5th div. Which highlights the problem of the 5th. Div. even more, having lost a team through the season. A complete reappraisal can't be done until the possibility of new team entries is known at the handbook meeting.