

Isle of Wight

Table Tennis League

October 2023

Chairman's Message

Welcome to another Winter Season!

Firstly, I would like to welcome on to the IWCTTA Management Committee, Pat Thorley and Paul Cates, who have generously offered to fill the positions of General Secretary and Trophies Officer respectively. Also, Debbie Yates has kindly agreed to extend her duties, as she was elected as Welfare Officer in addition to the role of Publicity Officer she has had for some years. My thanks go out to the outgoing officers who held these positions until the last AGM: Peter Clarke (Gen Sec), Heather Wykes (Welfare) and Martin Dove (Trophies). Needless to add (but I will anyway), that without such people giving up their time, we would not have an association.

Since the last newsletter a few notable events have taken place which I will briefly mention now. Firstly, the Mountbatten Charity Tournament once again attracted many decent players to compete, both home-grown and mainlanders. Seldom do we get to see the quality of table tennis that enthralled the spectators in the final, as Matt Ware managed to overcome our own George Downing in a thrilling match. My thanks go out to Rob Smith who organised the draw and the day's play, Martin Dove who kept the Centre immaculate during the event, Pat Thorley and Pauline Rorke who looked after the catering, Dave Wiles who refereed the day – and many others who scored, ran the raffle, helped track down the players and generally made everything run smoothly. Sincerest thanks also to the many people and businesses who sponsored the day – it would not have happened without you. We managed to raise £1650 for the Mountbatten Hospice, an awesome result!

Almost straight after the Mountbatten Tournament, our very own Island Games team hopped over to Guernsey to show the other islands what we were made of. Dan Burns as Team Manager and Glenn Morley as coach navigated the team to a very satisfying Bronze Medal in the Team Event – the first time the Isle of Wight won a Team Event medal since 2007. Apart from Dan's administrative duties, he was of course playing too... and also "well done" to George Downing, Scott Lawson, Hugh Idle, Temeesha Hobbs, Pat Thorley, Anna Joyce and Elaine Mills... great work team!

As some of you may already be aware, this season the Isle of Wight has entered its own British League team. For those of you unfamiliar with this competition, it is the next level up from local league play, and players with no other affiliation can play together (ie not constrained by geography or age). Our team, consisting of Hugh Idle, Ryan Cates, Lewis Johnstone and Tim Giles travelled to Essex at the end of last month, and (against very stiff opposition) came away with 1 win and 3 defeats. This is a step up for all except Hugh, who has competed at this level in the past, so it's a great effort for the first weekend! Next matches are at the end of November, so watch this space.

Finally, as we discussed at the AGM, we are currently undertaking remedial works to do on our Centre. The outside of the roof has been in poor condition for some while, and our contractors have so far completed half of the repainting – part of the works we need to do to ensure our Centre remains one of the best venues on the south coast.

So, whether you're enjoying the new experimental doubles league (thanks Neil!), getting busy in the Winter League, or just popping down for a knock every now and then... have an enjoyable season, and don't forget to reach out to me with ideas, offers of help, or anything else I need to know!

Best wishes,

Alex Rorke (Chairman, IWCTTA)

Summer League

The Summer League finished in the middle of August and the final was contested between Grazak (Graham and Zak) and Pimple Players (Alex and Ethan).

Both teams in the final were a blend of youth and experience, with teenagers Ethan and Zak partnered by the experienced Division One players, Alex and Graham, respectively. There was some excellent play and exciting moments in the final, with Alex and Ethan coming out as the winners.



Ethan and Alex



Zak and Graham

News

Non league tournament

A fun non-league tournament took place in August, and a wide range of age groups took part, with the youngest being 8 year old Toby. There were lots of close games, and the final was contested between Robin Clegg and Albie Yeung. Albie won the final and remained unbeaten throughout the tournament. Everyone enjoyed the day and it generated a keen interest in joining the league for some of the players.

Banded tournament

A popular banded tournament was held in September, with twenty-eight entrants, meaning there were six groups of four/five players in each, giving all the players lots of opportunity to play others at the same level as themselves, whom they might not normally get the chance to play regularly.

It was a fun and friendly way to spend a Sunday, especially as torrential rain was thundering down on the roof as we played, so there was no chance of taking part in any outdoor pursuits that day! With hot dogs and cheesy chips on offer for lunch, followed by cakes, scones and other sweet treats (all provided by Pat), it really was an excellent day.

With thanks to Rob for organising and Pat for the food, plus thanks to all the others who helped on the day.

New Daytime Doubles League *Details correct as of 15 October 2023*

A new Doubles League has started and is a welcome addition to our regular tournaments. Seven teams with twenty one players are participating. Many thanks to Neil Hedges who has initiated and organised this tournament.

At time of going to press, All Spar One, comprising Peter Burger, Alan Dennis and Robert Wendes, were top of the table, whilst The Tee Bees – Bryce Wilson and Tim and Beverley Giles lie in second place.



Bev and Alan in action in the new Doubles league



Annual Presentation Evening

The Annual Presentation Evening was held on Saturday 9 September at Ryde Castle Hotel and more than 70 people attended to celebrate the many achievements of our players and teams over the past year.

It was an excellent evening with delicious food in a great venue and a lovely convivial atmosphere.



Eighteen players with thirty two trophies between them

At the front are Jye, Pat and Tim

A presentation of two special awards was made to Lewis Johnstone and Ryan Cates who reached the finals of the English Leagues Tournament earlier in the year.



Presentations to Joseph Renouf and Noah Ford

IWTTA Chairman Alex Rorke says: "We're delighted with the progress of our youngsters at our coaching sessions and we're pleased to welcome Joseph and Noah into the TT League."

Congratulations to Joseph Renouf & Noah Ford

Both boys have been awarded their IoW table tennis shirt and will be playing in the Winter League. Joseph (seen here with his grandparents) and Noah (seen with his father, Paul) have just been presented with their Table Tennis shirts by coach, Elaine Mills. Both boys have made excellent progress in the Junior coaching sessions. Noah will be playing in the Ryde Frogs team. Joseph is in the Ryde Retailers team with Paul & Shane Cates & Joseph Millward.



IoW Table Tennis Association chairman, Alex Rorke, writes:-

"We're delighted with the progress of both Joseph & Noah at our coaching sessions and we're pleased to have them both into the T. T. league".

Isle of Wight Table Tennis Centre opening times and coaching sessions

WELCOME TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT TABLE

TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Smallbrook T.T. Centre, Ashey Road, Ryde, PO33 4BH

Mondays: 9-00am - 12 noon.

6-45pm - 9-00pm.

Wednesdays: 9-00am - 12 noon.

Fridays: 6-45pm - 9-00pm.

Junior Coaching

Mondays: 5-00pm - 7-00pm

Thursday: 5-00pm - 7-00pm

Saturdays: 9.30 am - 12.30 pm



For further information regarding junior coaching, contact Elaine Mills.

E. mail elainekmills@gmail.com

Cost £4-00 per session for adults. £2-00 for Juniors.

Junior coaching - £3-50



A warm welcome to all visitors and new players.

If you don't have a bat or a ball there are some available for you to use.

Tea/coffee/soft drinks are available in the kitchen

Visit our website:- www.tabletennis365.com/IsleOfWight

Table Tennis News

Table Tennis News is a Facebook Page which produces a monthly online magazine and they have been regularly featuring Isle of Wight table tennis news, thanks to Peter. The latest edition can be found by clicking the link below. Also why not join their Facebook page, just search for Table Tennis News and you should find it.

[Table Tennis News Monthly - October 2023](#)

Dates for your Diary

IW Inter-Club Table Tennis Tournament

The IW inter-club table tennis tournament will be held on Monday 4 December at 1.30 pm. It is hoped that a few different teams will enter. Last year Ryde and Wootton took part with Wootton coming out the winners. Peter Clarke is contacting all the clubs to give full details of the tournament, and we hope to have as many teams as possible entering. Should be a fun afternoon!

Winter League *All details correct as of 15 October 2023*

Legitimate serves

Please note the important information below in regards to the correct serving procedure:

For a correct, legitimate serve, the server must have the ball in the (open) palm of his/her hand above the level of the table and throw it up at least six inches before hitting the ball.

If the umpire believes that this rule is not being observed he/she should speak to the player (quietly) to indicate what is wrong. The umpire should also take the opportunity after each game to indicate and to remind the server (if necessary) of the correct procedure.

If the incorrect serve persists, the server should be called for a foul serve.

Team profiles

With the winter league now under way, Peter Clarke has kindly provided us with some profiles of teams taking part, and one from each Division is featured below:

Ryde Rascals



Brian, Peter, John and Steve

Meet the Second Division team, Ryde Rascals, who were fourth three years ago, then third. and runners up this past season, consequently improving all the time. Not bad for a veterans team and arguably the oldest team in the league!

Brian Voller, Peter Clarke, John Featherstone and Steve Gibbons. The first three ... average age ...almost 80!

Many teams are unrecognisable one season to the next, but Brian, John and Peter have been Ryde Rascals for the past five years. Steve joined us last season, replacing Alison Botha. He is the babe of the team! With various commitments of team members, we have added another team player in the last few weeks - Alan Burch.

Quite often we find teams dominated by one individual, who wins most matches and carries the rest of the team. I think that we can say that Ryde Rascals is a team of equals with hardly anything between us in the ratings. John's love of table tennis is exemplified with his school coaching; giving his free time after school to coach children at Cowes High School in the 80s and 90s. Brian and Peter are both past winners of the SuperVets tournament. Steve and Alan, as the "youngsters" of the team, are fast improving players, who will do well for us this season.

The Rascals look forward to having a good season, although they are realistic. There are some good teams in Division Two this season and they will be hard pressed to hang on to the runners up spot again.

Ryde Retailers



**Paul, Joseph,
Joe and Shane**

In the Third Division, brothers Paul and Shane Cates played for the Retailers last season; missing out on third place by just one point. They are joined this season by the two Josephs: eleven year old Joseph Renouf (left), who will be playing in the league for the first time. He was delighted when he was presented with his IW T.T. shirt a few weeks ago. The second Joseph is the more experienced Joe Millward (right). Joe played in the Relatives team last season with his brother, Ethan and grandad Martin. He'll be a big asset to this team.

Both Paul and Shane have been most encouraging and supportive with our Juniors. Ryan Cates, Zak Holbrook (both now Division One) and Jye Lock (now Division Two) were once in the Retailers team.

With just six teams in Division Three this season, the Retailers will be playing the other Division Three teams four times in the season and they'll be hoping to end up in the top half of the table.

Ryde A



**Mark, Pat, Scott
and Rob**

Division One champions by a huge margin of 30 points. Looking for the weak link here...? There simply isn't one. Scott had 100% record last season; and both he and Pat were in the IW team that won the bronze medal in this summer's International Island Games. Both Mark and Rob are experienced players who will not lose many matches. Hence, it will be a really strong team that will overtake Ryde A this coming season.

Division One

Ryde B head the Division after two matches. They had a tough match against Shanklin A, but an easy win last week over Vics B. Ryde Reprobates lie second after two wins over Ryde C and Vics A.

Jim of Shanklin A



Tom of Ryde Reprobates

Ryde A, winners of the League last year, had a close match against Ryde Ravens, and lost against Ryde C, so it looks like this year the championship is going to be a much closer affair.

Division Two

Things look interesting already in Division Two, with Ryde Rascals and Vics C on the same points in first and second place. Last season the Rascals finished as runners up, but this is a newly remodelled Vics C team who look in great form, and with Ryde Rockets close behind in third place, there is going to be an exciting battle for top spot.



Lawrence of Vics C



Brian of Ryde Rascals

Division Three

Vics D head the table at present, perhaps not surprisingly as they were in Division Two last season, whilst Shorwell Saints are in second place and Ryde Retailers lie third. Last season's runners up, Shorwell Spinners, are sure to improve on their current fourth place position.



Chris of Vics D



Joe of Ryde Retailers

(All details above correct at time of going to press)

Memories

Thanks to Peter Clarke for sending in this photo from a presentation evening held in the 70's. Just look at those flares! And there were bow ties too! Barry Joyce has given Peter some names of people he recognises:

Roger Hookey, Keith & Pete Urry, Kevin Attrill, Steve Harris, Joe Daly and his daughter, and Steve White (brother of Paul - known to most of us).

Unfortunately, I don't have the information of who is who in the photo, but perhaps you can match the names to the faces, identify any of the others or maybe you were even there yourself?

Please let us know.



Isle of Wight Table Tennis Clothing

If your old table tennis kit is looking past its best, then have a look at the IW Table Tennis clothing available from Big Wight. There's a great selection at excellent prices. Visit [Big Wight](https://www.bigwight.com/iw-table-tennis/) to have a browse.

ISLE OF WIGHT TABLE TENNIS CLOTHING NOW AVAILABLE

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



Their prices are reasonable. They vary according to size / design.
Google them at:- <https://www.bigwight.com/iw-table-tennis/>
Or call in and see them at Daish Way,
Dodnor Industrial Estate, Newport
Tel. 01983 532333

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



Archive

In our archive section looking back at old Table Tennis News magazines, we reach 1992. Things seem to be looking up for Island Table Tennis during this period with some success in the Leagues.

In the January issue the Island's Carl Preatn graced the cover and was England Number One:



The February issue had lots of Island news and there was mention of Danny Burns who was playing for the Island Cadets all those years ago. There was also a moan about the ferry prices, so nothing changes....:

QUITE A LARGE contingent of us travelled across the water to support England against China in Bournemouth on 30th December, particularly our Isle of Wight player Carl Preatn. We braved wind, water and the high charges of the ferry operators ('the most expensive strip of water in the world') to good effect as England won 4-3 after a stirring 4 hour epic before a full house. All those who worked to make the match such a success deserve every credit.

I was particularly impressed with the Chinese No. 1 Xie Chaojie, a penholder with short pimples, who made one understand the meaning of the words 'greased lightning'. If he (No. 21 in the world) really has 20 peers, they must be very good players! However, our man Carl had

him (-19 in the third) but not quite. At 3 all Carl went on the table with Alan Cooke against Xie and Yu Shentong (winner of the English Open in 1990) and no one gave our players the slightest chance against what seemed an ideal left hander/right hander combination, but they did it after 3 pulsating games and all the excitement we need and more.

Doubles have not been our bright spot for some years. perhaps the start of better days? With the Olympics near, a good time to hit form and winning ways. I endured some amusing leg pulling about my 'unbeaten record'. As I exclusively predicted it was not to last long and looked better than it was because the magazine was rather late in appearing. Once I lost my first, two further defeats quickly followed. However, as Dr Johnson might have remarked, the miracle is to play at all, not to win. You may recall the story of the man playing his dog at chess. On being complimented on having such a clever dog, he replied "Not at all. I also win sometimes."

My own table tennis ambitions draw inspiration from this heartwarming story.

Our Cadets travelled hopefully to the first leg of the Hampshire Inter-Town Junior Championships. I was not able to make the trip but the statistics made good reading with Greg Burns winning 7 out of 9 and Stuart Dover and Danny Burns (11) 4 each. All three doubles were won and second place achieved after 1 win and 2 draws. Portsmouth looked very strong with two 10-0 wins, but we have high hopes of a near-top position.

Our B team travelled for 'experience' rather than in great expectations, but Lorna Dutch's 3 wins, playing against boys, generally three years older, has to be a good performance, encouraging hopes of future successes.

Our Juniors opened with two 10-0 wins, unfortunately in Division 2. Escape/promotion may not be easy for all that, as Bournemouth are well placed with two wins and a games average of 19-1. With only one team going up, there will be much to play for. Our standard should remain high next season when Greg Burns leaves the Cadet age group. Our B side went for experience which included 19 defeats out of 20. However, they now know what it is all about. They will do better.

Our Veterans are holding their own in the 2nd division of the Hampshire veterans league with Alan Hulbert winning three out of 4 with Pete Urry and Joe Daly winning half their matches, as indeed did Heather Wykes.

Pete Urry made further history when he inflicted his first defeat of the season on Steve Barsdell but Wroxall A remain on top of our First Division.

I hear our team in the Southern Regional League is doing better. Last season was one to forget. I shall ferret out the details for you in time for the next issue. Good to see entire cadet team in Bournemouth where they learned a lot and had a fantastic evening. I enjoyed meeting many old friends. At one time it seemed as if I had played half the audience at one time or another as old 'enemies' appeared to remind me of many happy days. It was a great pleasure to see Carl play in a town where I had had so much fun before so many good friends. It seemed to be what table tennis should be - and only sometimes is - about; the spanning of the generations, a sport than can and should be fun.

FIRST DIVISION

AMITY GENERATION 'B'	5	4	1	26	19	9
ISLE OF WIGHT	4	3	1	20	16	7
KCD (STIGA) 'B'	4	2	2	18	18	7
BURNHAM 'B'	5	1	4	20	25	7
CIPPENHAM 'B'	3	1	2	13	14	4
KINGFISHER 'B'	4	0	4	11	25	2

LADIES' LEAGUE

AMITY GENERATION	5	3	2	15	10	9
CIPPENHAM	3	3	0	11	4	7
OLOP	3	3	0	11	4	7
ALDERSHOT 'B'	5	2	3	12	13	7
ASH	3	1	2	7	8	4
ISLE OF WIGHT	4	1	3	5	15	3
ALDERSHOT 'A'	3	0	3	4	11	2

In the March issue every aspect of Island table tennis was covered, from the Southern Regional League to our own Island League:

ISLE OF WIGHT

John Preat

OUR MEN'S TEAM which plays in the Southern Regional League, are enjoying an excellent season, improving greatly on last season's modest form. So far they are showing promotion form with 5 wins from 6 outings.

The Under 17 side has not so far been tested with two 10-0 wins. I pay due tribute to the Hampshire county which calls this 2nd division what it is, ie Division 2. Promotion may not be too easy for our team, as Bournemouth B also look strong with a games average of 19-1. However, so far the lineup of Alex Rorke, Marcus Garman, Ali Hulbert and Claire Waghorn has not tasted individual defeat.

Our Veterans have won one and lost one in Division 2 of the Hampshire Veterans League. Alan Hulbert has won 3 from 4, Pete Urry and the evergreen Joe Daly (not to be confused with his brother Jim) 2 from 4. Heather Wykes has won one and lost one, ladies being accorded fewer singles. It is the first time for some years that we fielded a Veterans team. The last time we had Jim Daly at No. 1 and me at No. 2. We qualified for the newly formed National Premier section, but were, for various reasons, unable to take our place, but it was a season to remember. We did not lose until the last match of the season when Dorset defeated us and took the title. We were not too unhappy with second place.

I have endured entirely justified leg-pulling as a result of my own comeback briefly noted in these columns. However, it proved that I have a few readers outside the Island. I continue to try not to make these notes too parochial in the cause of writing about matters of interest outside our county in addition to recording what happens here. One fellow joker suggested that I was about to become a 'media darling' yet again as a result of my sterling (?) efforts in our Division 2, which despite international examples we refuse to call Division 1 and this despite my presence! I had to disillusion my friend. I only make the local press when I lose or so it seems. However that provides plenty of media opportunities.

Roger Hookey has remained the mainstay of our revival, his last success being a 6-3 win in Frimley vs OLOP where he contributed another hat trick. Chris Angus won 2 and Mike Turner 1. A big 'well done' to these three and also Steve Barsdell who has played more than well in these Southern Region matches.

At the time of writing our Juniors also look well placed in the Hampshire Inter-Town Junior Leagues at both under 17 and under 14 levels. The Under 14 side is in second place with two draws and one victory. Greg Burns was by far their best player with 7 wins from 9 outings. Stuart Dover won 4, a little triumph after two stomach operations and one broken wrist in one year. So that was quite a comeback. Danny Burns also won and is only 11. All three doubles were won. Lorna Dutch was the best of the B team. She has a bright future if she can add speed of foot to her excellent reflexes and what the Germans call 'a good hand'.

The experiment to make our first division an 8 team event, the teams playing each other three times over the season, seems a success. It has certainly made the second division stronger as I am able to discover almost every week. The two leading teams in the premier section, Wroxall and Sandown, parted after a 5-all draw with the issue still undecided and the fate of the Championship will not be known until much later in the season, which is as it should be. Wroxall, with stronger reserves, looks favourite. Alan Hulbert has certainly worked hard to build a strong team and club and few will begrudge them their success if indeed it comes.

Less happy the news that Rookley, one of our larger clubs, have lost their premises, a blow to them and the whole league. One hopes that the problem will lead to solutions which will keep an excellent club alive in the interest of Island table tennis.

In April great news for the future of Island table tennis, with the Cadets taking the Hampshire Under 14 Championship, and the team included 11 year old Danny Burns:

ISLE OF WIGHT

John Prean

OUR CADETS HAVE done it! They won the Hampshire Inter-Town U14 Championship when they defeated Southampton 7-3, a match they had to win, as their opponents were one point ahead.

Harold Albery, the guiding spirit behind all Hampshire Junior Events as well as the hardest worker, what a charming letter to me. I quote extracts: "A tremendous result. The atmosphere was almost like a 'cup final' with almost everyone watching this particular match the IOW can be justifiably proud of their Cadets. They will do well in the future ..."

I add my own best wishes to Greg and Danny Burns and Stuart Dover, who turned the match when our boys were 3-1 down. Greg played magnificently over the three weekends with 18 wins out of 21 and Danny, at 11, must have quite a future.

I missed these great moments as I was at the 'Closed' where our man did not quite retain his title. Once again the platitude that you can't win them all triumphed. Greg Burns also won the Island Junior title, defeated Alex Rorke in the final, a strong performance by a cadet who conceded a couple of years. Alex, an improving player, has been playing particularly well in our second division and on occasional outings in our first.

Sandown took a giant step towards retaining our first division title when they defeated Wroxall 6-4. The teams are now level on points, but Sandown's games average looks better and only injuries can defeat them in the title race. Roger Hookey won all three yet again all in three games and remains the one to beat. Disappointingly few Island members made the long trip to Birmingham for the Open - a far cry from the days we sent parties of 40 or 50 to Brighton.

Carl Prean survived longer than other British players until the fourth round. His win against the reigning world champion was the highlight of his trip.

I can offer my readers an 'exclusive'. Alan Cooke and Carl reached the semi final of the event in the men's doubles. It is something you did not read elsewhere, certainly not in the 8 or so pages of praise and self-praise which this journal devoted to the event. In fact Carl and Cookie lost 20-22 in the third to the eventual winners, Waldner and Appelgren and so, after two match points, missed a sure spot in Grandstand on the box.

In the May/June issue it was reported that the Island Juniors had won the Second Division of the Hampshire Junior League, with our current Chairman Alex Rorke part of the team and getting a 100% average, and Wroxall A won Division One of the Island League, with Alan Hulbert a member of the team:

ISLE OF WIGHT

John Prean

OUR JUNIORS FOLLOWED our cadets, winning the 2nd division of the Hampshire Inter-Town Junior League. Congratulations to Marcus Garman, Alistair Hulbert, Alex Rorke and Claire Waghorn, all of whom produced

100% averages. As often happens in junior events, only the last two will be there next season to reap the full benefits of a place in Division 1, but with Greg Burns and Stuart Dover moving up, the team should still be a very useful one.

The very healthy junior scene owes a great deal to a grant received from the ETTA Development Fund, which enabled us to have structured junior coaching in addition to recording membership gains for two successive seasons after a period of losses. A few hundred pounds went a long way. This experience was not unusual and similar things have happened elsewhere. No piece on our junior game can be complete without the warmest praise for Bill and Joan Rossi without whose marvellous work at the Newport Vics Club little could or would have been achieved. Bill has not been well lately. We wish him a speedy and complete recovery.

I got the wrong information on our league title race in Division 1. It was Wroxall A whose games average was superior and so it remained until the end and Sandown's title hopes came to nothing. Congratulations to Alan Hulbert, Steve Barsdell and Chris Angus, the latter also won the Island 'Closed', defeating Roger Hookey deuce in the third in a stirring final. One wishes that our best players were spread more evenly across the clubs to produce a more closely contested title race, at any rate by more clubs. It has happened in the past, but not very often. It is a story one hears all too often in other leagues.

Greg Burns won both our junior and cadet title, an excellent effort. His father, Gordon, another 'fanatic' to whom the sport owes so much, tells me that Greg will play in quite a few national junior tournaments next season. He will have three seasons to reach the top and he is quite capable of that.

When you read this column you not only find out about what goes on here, but in England's international matches! Last time I pointed out that it went unrecorded, at any rate in this magazine, that one of our pairs had reached the semi final of the doubles in the English Open. England's victory vs Czechoslovakia (in Bratislava on 15th January) was another event the locusts had eaten. It got us to the Final of the playoffs for a place in the Super Division, but I guess the powers that be did not regard it as very important when compared with such momentous pictures as an Irish official drinking chocolate which DID get quarter of a page.

Our Island player contributed two to England's 4-2 win, which I thought was a good effort despite the deafening silence accorded to the occasion in this journal. One must not be surprised if national newspaper space declines if such are our priorities. Certainly most of the table tennis pieces I have seen have been tiny and, if we cannot generate more interest, the future looks bleak despite such efforts as I have described earlier, no doubt duplicated by other progressive leagues and counties elsewhere.

First Division

Isle of Wight	11	8	3	57	42	21
OLOP 'B'	10	8	2	57	33	20
KCD Stiga 'B'	10	5	5	46	44	16
Kingfisher 'B'	10	5	5	49	41	15
Burnham 'B'	11	4	7	44	55	14
Amity Gen. 'B'	11	5	6	42	57	13
Cippenham 'B'	11	2	9	38	61	12

Ladies Division

Amity Gen.	12	9	3	44	16	26
Cippenham	11	8	3	37	18	22
OLOP	10	8	2	30	20	19
Aldershot 'B'	9	3	6	20	25	12
Ash	9	4	5	19	26	11
Isle of Wight	10	2	8	13	37	8
Aldershot 'A'	9	1	8	12	33	7

In the September issue the table tennis squad who were playing in the Olympic Games in Barcelona graced the front cover:



Alan Cooke (left) and Carl Prean

OLYMPIC GAMES - 2

Prean storms into the last sixteen

ISLE OF WIGHT

John Prean

IT WAS GOOD to hear that my former colleague Jim Beckley has been restored to the ETTA Management Committee as Vice Chairman of Publicity and PR which includes responsibility for this magazine. I have confidence in Jim and hope the dark days of censorship are over.

Our men's team in the Southern Regional League did not gain promotion to the Premier Section, a point separating the top three teams with ours unfortunately not on top. Again Roger Hookey did not have enough support.

I have reported on the success of our junior team in the Hampshire Inter-Town leagues. The juniors will find life harder in the higher division but with Alex Rorke and Greg Burns in the side, I have every confidence that they will not lose their place. The cadets may be hard pressed to repeat their championship winning performance with Greg and also Stuart Dover moving up into the junior ranks. However, Danny Burns will still be there, a bright prospect at 12.

We feel excited at the prospect of having a player in the Olympics. At the time of going to press I did not know his results, but Carl Prean's training had gone well and we had high hopes. Carl reached the finals of the US Open where he lost to the former Chinese player, now playing for Canada, Johnny Huang, but an earlier victory vs Zoran Primorac, ranked above Carl in Europe, was an epic. Carl was ranked in the top 10 in Europe for the first time - at No. 9. He tells me he has beaten all players above him this season except the new European champion Rosskopf to whom he lost 19 in the third the last time they meet a few weeks ago and Waldner to whom he lost in 5 in the Swedish Open. He defeated Gatien in the

European Club Cup in February. The Frenchman is now ranked No. 1 in the world. Carl expressed some disappointment at having lost his No. 1 ranking in England, having held this for the best part of 2 years. With Carl's record of 47 wins to 23 defeats against Chen Xinhua's 33 wins to 22 defeats over the season, I can offer no explanation of this mystery. Carl also reckons that he had the harder matches as he played in the No. 1 spot in all of England's team matches.

The Inter-Island Games will take place on the Isle of Wight next summer. These mini-Olympics for smaller islands should give a useful boost to the local sports centre and will include table tennis. With facilities poor and too few one hopes that the 'Games' may bring some improvement. Many other areas have the same problem and those who travel abroad will have noted the difference in facilities there and here. Rising rents of otherwise deteriorating premises have added to the basic problem. On the whole island there is only one club where youngsters and others can play fairly regularly. The rest is of the once or twice a week variety, not enough to build real skills and enthusiasm for the sport.

In the October issue there was the usual report on the Isle of Wight, including some sad news:

ISLE OF WIGHT

John Prean

FOR THE THIRD year running the Isle of Wight League managed to increase membership, though this time only by one extra team. This is very much against the long term national trends. It is the results of LOCAL rather than central efforts. It remains my view that this is the way this problem should be solved. We got £500 from the so-called (though not by me) John Prean £100,000 Development Fund and it was that summer when energetic coaching initiatives led by our Chairman Alan Hulbert began and brought new people into the game. We found no lack of interests in our sport among the young. Only mild encouragement is needed by way of indication that newcomers are welcome. The ONLY obstacle remains the shortage of decent premises where one can play the game as it should be played.

Our first Division has reverted to 12 teams, having tried an 8 team format last season. I am mystified by this apparent voluntary reduction in standards. The main reason advanced was that players were tired of playing the same, old faces too often. It looks as if the title will return to Sandown. Champions Wroxall have lost two key players, Chris Angus joining Newport Vics and Steve Bearsdell crossing the water each week to play in Southampton. It is unlikely therefore that Roger Hookey, Mike Turner and newcomer Ian Urry will be troubled too much when they seek to return the title to Sandown.

Those who expected Carl Prean to return quickly to the No. 1 spot on the English Ranking List were disappointed. He undoubtedly had good results (finalist in the US Open and last 16 in the Olympics). If he had NOT played in the US event, he would now be No. 11. Make of that what you will.

I conclude with the sad news that a significant figure of Island table tennis has died. Brian Pierce, who was for many years one of our best players and had immense influence off the table was lost to us at a tragically early age - not yet 60. He is perhaps best remembered as the moving spirit behind the old Sandown Club of the late 60's and early 70's which was a veritable table tennis academy in which the sport, its tactics and techniques, players, good and less good, were debated until deep into the night! It was not until 2am or so that our weekly indoor football match began! Those were the happiest days of my own table tennis life. I remember particularly our doubles marathons, usually played to best of 13 or even 17, which we called the "World Series". We all improved as doubles players as a result. Above all, Brian had a tremendous sense of

humour and love for the sport, which suddenly seemed more important than it had been before. We all began to take it more seriously and Island table tennis scored numerous successes in our expeditions to the 'mainland' where previously we had been thrashed.

Brian leaves a widow, Kathy, herself one of our best-ever lady players, who shared his table tennis passions and sense of fun and her part in the things I have tried to sketch was immense. As we paid our tribute for the last time, the many who had come to Brian's funeral, were the clearest indication of how much loved Brian had been.

Some good news in the November issue:

ISLE OF WIGHT

John Prean

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALEX Rorke and Lorna Dutch who won their sections of the Hampshire Trials. Both gained places in Hampshire Junior County teams as a result. Lorna is only 12. If she retains here enthusiasm, she could go a long way, certainly near the top of English Junior Ranking Lists. Both players gain greatly from the support of parents who are themselves table tennis fanatics.

Lorna owes her first place winning from 15-20 down in a vital 3rd game. That certainly shows good nerve and, dare one say, fortune. My advice: Next time don't leave it quite so late!

Our teams in the Southern Regional League began their campaign and all three were well beaten by the Cippenham Club's teams. The A side's final stages I missed as the match started rather late. The Premier place the team gained after all, despite not winning the lower section, may take some holding on this form! It was good to see that the Regional League now has three divisions. Considerable thanks are due to Graham Trimming who not only runs the event efficiently and well, but also plays with great and dramatic enthusiasm and no little success. I saw him enjoy a very good win vs Mike Turner.

It was a good idea to enter a second team in the second division so that younger players could also gain experience. That Ali Hulbert and Greg Burns certainly did, though losing all three to Cippenham B. Inexperience, in fact, was the main enemy and they appeared rather nervous. However, they got better as the afternoon progressed and could have won one or two. Both are hard and energetic hitters, but the formality of getting more than half the hits on the table needs more attention and sometimes even Waldner needs to play 'bread and butter' shots. In short, sometimes spin can win points. Not all balls have to be hit at 100 miles per hour. It was left to Veteran Joe Daly to deliver the solitary point. He showed that even at 50 a good technique works wonders.

Carl Prean, still our only player on the ETTA Halex Ranking List continues in the No. 2 spot, a topic most of our members raise with me and that is why I do here. After winning 47 and losing 23 last season, he ended at No. 2 to his rival who had scored 33 wins and 22 defeats. That may not sound too great to those with averages of 90% in their local leagues, but these boys play against the world's best. This season Carl has won 10 and lost 7 whilst Chen Xinhua has won 1 and lost 3. 1-3 is obviously better than 10-7. The rest is history.

"Carl" wrote Mr Woodford elsewhere, "seemed to have the troubles of the word on his shoulders". Indeed.

No Island news in the December issue, but Carl was taking part in an international challenge match especially for BBC Grandstand:

	T.V. INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE ENGLAND v FRANCE Friday 8th January at 7.00 pm	
Players to include: Jean -Philippe Gatien (World No. 2), Wang Xiaoming (European No. 5) Lisa Lomas (European Silver Medallist), Chen Xinhua (English Champion), Carl Prean (European No. 9)		
BLETCHLEY LEISURE CENTRE Tickets: Adults £5.00 - Child/OAP £3.00 from ETTA 0424 722525 Event will be shown on BBC Grandstand on Saturday 9th January		

And finally

The season has started again at last, but which of these do you identify with?



Thank you for reading. The next newsletter will be in January 2024. All contributions are very much appreciated so do please send any suggestions, articles or photos to: debbiey1960@outlook.com