

Tennis Umpires Association Of English Table



Issue 10

August 2008

CHAIRMAN'S 2008 A.G.M. REPORT

Although we lost our founder Ken Armson on the first day of 2008 it has been a very good year for the Association and great strides have been made. Membership has increased and now stands at 80. The Secretary in his report will detail issues discussed at Committee Meetings and you will see that many of these have either been resolved or are well on the way to being resolved, official recognition being the exception. In spite of being accepted by the NURC and appearing on the ETTA website, the AETTU is still not officially recognised by ETTA Ltd.

At a meeting with the NURC Chairman, Tom Purcell, Stan Clarke and myself had good input into the proposals regarding the "Umpire Crisis" to be presented to National Council regarding working conditions, recruitment, insurance and training and the financial implications. The outcome will be reported at this meeting.

A definite selection policy has been promised but not yet received. In the meantime selections are being forwarded to the Secretary when made.

AETTU badges have been produced and are available from the Secretary 80p each). AETTU tossing discs are also available from the Secretary (free). You can get yours at this meeting.

The first Association tournament took place at Grimsby and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part. Play was of a high standard and very competitive. A photograph and the results were posted on the ETTA website. Thanks to Steve for this and for providing the venue, the equipment and for arranging the meals and accommodation-it is intended to repeat the event next year.

It has been decided unanimously by the NURC to propose a change from ETTA to ITTF uniform. However, following the mistake made last time the umpires **WILL** be consulted. The Secretary, in conjunction with the NURC Chairman, will draw up a consultative document to be sent to all umpires. I would urge all members to consider the implications carefully and respond. It is what umpires think that is important so please make your views known.

The Association magazine has appeared regularly, thanks to Geoff for its publication and distribution. You can help by contributing an article or by voicing an opinion. Material for the next issue to be sent to Geoff by 31st August, so that the magazine can be received by members at the beginning of the season.

In conclusion I would like to thank Tom for his energetic work as Secretary. Derek for his help, Steve for keeping the accounts, Geoff for producing the magazines, and Stan, Barry and John for their support. Also my thanks to all members for their support, subscriptions and loyalty to the Association.

GEORGE TYLER

SECRETARYS 2008 A.G.M. REPORT

The past year saw the death of Ken Armson, a founder member of the AETTU and the first Secretary of the Association. Ken was instrumental in the formation of the AETTU and he is sadly missed by his friends, colleagues and the game of table tennis.

During the last year a number of advances have taken place in our aims and objectives as an Association. One of our primary aims was recognition of the AETTU by the ETTA. Previous meetings with the ETTA failed to achieve this objective but times have changed in line with Stuart Sherlock as taking over as Chair of the NURC. The AETTU had a frosty relationship with previous NURC Chairs but during the last year the relationship has improved resulting in a positive meeting between the AETTU and NURC in June. This meeting will be discussed at the AGM.

The ETТА, through National Council, has not yet formally recognised the Association but in every other aspect we have been recognised. As Secretary of the AETTU I have been writing to the ETТА and receiving correspondence from ETТА officers. The NURC, on behalf of the ETТА, have asked members of the AETTU to assist in the recruitment and training of umpires and in our role of officers of the AETTU we have influenced and improved conditions for umpires. The formal recognition from National Council may not yet have been achieved but by working positively, as we have done, I feel sure it will be achieved. The subject will be discussed at the AGM.

During the last year I have been pursuing the question of ETТА insurance cover for our members while working as umpires or referees. Previously the ETТА had stated that umpires were not insured under ETТА insurance, however during the last twelve months it has agreed that umpires and referees are insured when they are working on National ETТА events, travelling to the tournaments, during the tournaments and while travelling home. This also includes travel to and from hotels used during tournaments. Until recently the ETТА was less positive about insurance cover for umpires and referees travelling to overseas events. The ETТА didn't recognise us as representing the ETТА but as a result of detailed correspondence with the ETТА their stance has now changed and umpires and referees are covered under ETТА Travel Insurance subject to age and pre-travel medical conditions.

There were a number of complaints about conditions for umpires at last years National UI 1/12/13/14 tournament at Norwich. I wrote to the ETТА on behalf of the Association highlighting the unsatisfactory conditions and advising that if conditions did not improve there was a great danger that umpires would refuse to attend future tournaments. Mike Holt from the ETТА Competitions Committee promised an improvement in conditions and I am pleased to say that compared to the previous two years conditions did improve, unfortunately organisers of the 2008 National UI 1/U12/13/14 competition appear to have been over cautious resulting in umpires being under utilised and complaints from parents about the lack of competition. I'm sure lessons will be learned for next year's tournament.

Last year the NURC made a decision to change the umpires' uniform from the English uniform to the ITTF uniform. National Council rejected this recommendation mainly because it had not been discussed with the umpires. At a recent meeting the NURC once again recommended that English umpires should change to the ITTF uniform. I haven't seen the NURC minutes but I believe this recommendation was based on the difficulty and cost of obtaining English uniforms compared to the cost and worldwide standardisation of ITTF uniforms. This subject was discussed at the recent AETTU/ NURC meeting and it was agreed that all umpires would be surveyed to obtain their opinion on the NTJRC recommendation. The question of umpires' uniform is not a simple yes/no decision for English or ITTF uniforms. There are a number of variations and these will be discussed at the AGM prior to the survey.

The umpire crisis was recently discussed at National Council and at the meeting between AETTU and NURC. Stuart Sherlock has submitted a report to National Council with a number of recommendations to improve the status of umpires and improve the recruitment of umpires. This will be discussed as a separate item at the AGM.

At the last AGM it was recommended that the Association design lapel badges for the AETTU to be used as Association badges and 'give-away' badges to other umpires. As a result Geoff Taylor designed a badge which was approved by the Committee and is now available to members for a small cost. About 100 of the badges have been sold and have been bought by members as souvenirs and gifts for colleagues at overseas tournaments. Geoff Taylor, on behalf of the AETTU, has also designed and purchased "tossing discs" for members. It has been agreed that each member of the Association will receive a free "tossing disc" and I have started to distribute them. Thanks to Geoff for his work.

For the last two years the Association has been talking about organising a TT tournament for our members. This finally came about at the beginning of July when 20 of our members descended on Grimsby TT Club and thoroughly enjoyed a week-end of table tennis. At the end of the week-end reputations were made, most players returned home with aching bodies and all the players agreed that an umpires' tournament should take place in 2009. Plans are already in place. Many thanks must go to Steve and Margaret Welch who arranged the venue and refreshments for the tournament.

An area that has caused concern to umpires is clarity around the selection process for National and International tournaments. During the last year, after discussions with the NURC, it was agreed that I, on behalf of the AETTU, would be informed about the number of umpires who applied for overseas events and the names of those who had

been successful. I have been receiving this information and circulating it to members. I will circulate a full list in the next magazine. At the recent AETTU/NURC meeting the policy and procedures around selection was also discussed. It was agreed that the procedures needing bringing up to date and the NURC would take this work forward.

As mentioned earlier in this report, at the last National Council meeting Stuart Sherlock reported to the meeting about the umpire crisis. Alan Ransome and George Tyler had submitted reports to the NC about the crisis. Over the last three decades the number of umpires recruited has gone from approximately 400/200/100 respectively. Stuart was tasked with preparing a report for NC identifying the problems and making recommendations to improve the matter. This was discussed at our recent meeting when the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Stan Clarke and I met Stuart and Margot Fraser on behalf of the NURC. A number of items were discussed but we identified the lack of status of the umpire as a major reason why there was difficulty in recruiting new umpires together with the scheduling of tournaments without consideration for umpires and lack of event planning resulting in umpires being spread too thinly across the events and the resulting problems. Stuart has consulted a number of parties in preparing his report which will be presented to the NC at the next meeting. He has made a number of recommendations to improve our status, recruit umpires and carry out training for new and existing umpires. A lot of this will cost money so it will be interesting to see how the report is accepted by the members NC and Mancom.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Association for their support during my first year as Secretary and members of the Committee for their support and contribution.

Tom Purcell Secretary AETTU

OBITUARY - JOHN BIRD

John passed away on Saturday 26th of April 2008 at the age of 68. John was not a member of AETTU as he had stopped umpiring before the Association was formed due to ill health.

John was a twin brother to Jim and both were active in the umpiring world from about 1978 in the County of Cleveland. The only way they could be distinguished was that Jim had a small mole near his right eye.

He started umpiring around 1978 where he was well known at many tournaments and British League matches and he and his brother were always available to help people with advice on umpiring and explaining rules etc. to players.

When the Chinese National Team visited Cleveland they could not believe their likeness and they all wanted to be photographed with them.

Owing to ill health both John and Jim retired from playing table tennis in the Middlesbrough and District T.T. League and also their umpiring duties.

John's other hobby was painting wild birds also shared with Jim. They had appeared on local television displaying their paintings. The way they worked would be for one to start a painting and when he was ready for a break the other one would carry on with the picture and they would continue like this until the painting was finished. They would then both sign the picture.

I will always appreciate John's company and the umpiring guidance I received from him

John Lawton

**MINUTES OF AETTU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
BULKINGTON VILLAGE CENTRE
2pm SUNDAY 27th JULY 2008**

In attendance: George Tyler (Chair), Derek Sherrat (V. Chair), Steve Welch (treasurer), Tom Purcell (Secretary), Stan Clarke (Ctte), Geoff Taylor (Ctte), John Lawton (Ctte), Barry Granger (Ctte). Dave Goulden, Bob Montgomery, Bob Evans, Dot Macfarlane, Dave Cochrane, Brian Watkins, Jim Kenny, Mike Payne, Lillian Payne, John Appleton.

Meeting commenced 14.05hrs

Chairman's Welcome: George Tyler, welcomed everyone to the 2008 AETTU AGM and thanked them for their attendance. He informed the meeting that there were a number of important issues to discuss and that the previous day, at National Council, an important decision had been made to adopt a report from Stuart Sherlock, as Chair of the NURC, dealing with the umpire crisis. This would be discussed later in the meeting.

Apologies: Dave Edwards, Alan Harwood, Neil Curtis, John Hardcastle, Eileen Allison, Steve Barker, Peter Yeung, Lewis Ward, Tim Jenkins, Tim Harris, Nick Osland, Adrian Barnes, Steve Perry, John Mackey and Tom Davies.

Minutes from the 2007 AGM: Proposed by Stan Clarke and seconded by Dave Goulden that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Carried.

Matters arising: Tom P informed the meeting that at the 2007 AGM had been tasked with contacting the Chair of the ETTA to record our members concerns about the umpires' schedule and conditions of work at the National U11/12/13/14 tournament at Norwich. The letter had been sent and as a result Mike Holt of the Competitions Committee had written to all umpires promising that the 2008 tournament would be improved and there would be a proper schedule for umpires. There was a general discussion about the 2008 tournament and while it was agreed that conditions had improved for umpires there was a time when umpires were waiting for games and parents and players about lack of competition and vacant tables. There were also complaints about the location of the venue (Norwich) and the difficulty of reaching the venue. Steve Welch informed the meeting that in 2009 there were to be regional qualification tournaments for the National U11/12/13/14 and the ETTA were contracted to the venue at Norwich for at least another twelve months.

Tom P also informed the meeting that at the 2007 AGM Geoff Taylor had been tasked with obtaining AETTU 'tossing discs' for our members. This had been completed and the Committee had decided to give one free disc to each member. (These are being distributed). The Association had also purchased AETTU lapel badges. These were being sold to members for their own use and as 'give away' gifts when working with foreign umpires. Stan Clarke informed the meeting that he had recently been at a tournament in France and the lapel badges were very well received by the overseas umpires.

Tom P also pointed out that the Umpires' social week-end had taken place at Grimsby TTC at the beginning of July. It was a very successful week-end with 20 umpires taking part in a number of competitions. A report on the week-end was placed on the ETTA website and plans are in place to organise a similar event in 2009. There was a general discussion about the event and all parties involved reported it a very good event. It was agreed to hold the 2009 event on the 27/28th June 2009 at a venue to be arranged (possibly around the Birmingham area).

Chairman's report: The report was circulated and the Chairman reported on the meeting that took place between the Officers of the AETTU and the NURC. He reported that the meeting was positive with the AETTU making a number of recommendations to the NURC to improve the status of the umpire. He also reported that Stuart Sherlock, (Chair) of the NURC, had submitted a report to the National Council with a number of recommendations to improve the status of the umpire. The recommendations from Stuart fell into four main areas:

1. Improve the status of the umpire which includes funding and hours of work.
2. Increase the number of umpires and training courses.
3. Increase the effectiveness of the Junior Umpire Initiative.
4. Provide umpire's information on the ETTA website.

This has been accepted unanimously by NC and it was up to Mancom to take the recommendations forward and find the necessary finance. Other item in the Chairman's would be treated as separate items on the agenda.

Proposed: Stan Clarke. Seconded: Barry Granger. Report accepted and carried. **Action 1: TP to forward copy of SS report to ail members.**

Secretary's Report: The report was circulated and the Chair asked for any questions. Selection Policy. Tom P reported that at the meeting with the NURC the selection policy had been discussed and it had been agreed with NURC that the policy needed bringing up to date to include the different types of selection ie:- blue badge, international and national. It was agreed that the policy also needed clarity to include situations where members of the NURC applied for overseas tournaments and how these applications were considered. NURC agreed to review the selection policy. Other issues in the report would be discussed at agenda items.

Stan Clarke thanked the Secretary for the work he had carried out during the year on behalf of the Association and the quality of his report.

Proposed: Dave Goulden. Seconded: Mike Payne. Report accepted and carried.

Treasurer's Report: The report was circulated and the Chairman asked for any questions. Barry Granger asked how many persons were now paid up members of the Association. The treasurer reported that 56 persons were paid up members of the Association although records show that 82 persons were members. The majority of the remaining umpires were members who would renew their membership during the next 12 months. There was then a discussion about membership and it was agreed that a member would no longer be considered a member if they failed to renew their membership by 12 months after the current membership year. There was a general discussion about the report.

Proposed: Derek Sherratt. Seconded: Geoff Taylor. Report accepted and carried.

Auditor's Report: The auditor John Mackey was unable to attend the meeting and had sent his apologies. He did report through the Chair that he was satisfied with the accounts.

Proposed: Dave Cochrane. Seconded: Bob Montgomery. Accepted and carried.

Election of Officers: There had been no nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and the current post holders were therefore re-elected unopposed.

Election of Committee: There were no nominations for the 4 Committee Posts and the current post holders were therefore re-elected unopposed.

The Chair informed the meeting that Nick Osland, member from Wiltshire, had been co-opted onto the committee to assist with committee issues and as a representative for the South West region. There was then a general discussion about the structure of the Association Committee. It was agreed that the number of Committee members should outnumber the number of elected Officers. It was recommended by Stan Clarke that the number of elected Committee members should be increased from four to five and this was agreed by the members present. It was too late to vote on this issue at the 2008 AGM so it would be discussed at the next AGM.

Changes to Constitution: Previously circulated with agenda. Committee recommended creation of Associate Membership from members of other National Associations. Dot Macfarlane warned about possible increased costs that may be incurred in posting magazines to Associate members overseas. There was a general discussion about the proposed change to the Constitution and it was agreed.

Proposed: Committee. Seconded: Brian Watkins. Carried unanimously.

A.O.B.

(a) Meeting with NURC: George Tyler informed the members that a positive meeting had taken place between the AETTU and the NURC. Stuart Sherlock has listened to our concerns about the status of the umpire and a number of our recommendations were included in Stuart's paper to the National Council. There was a general discussion about the meeting and it was agreed that the minutes would be circulated to members.

Action 2: Secretary to circulate Minutes from the AETTU/NURC meeting to the members.

(b) Insurance. Tom P informed the meeting that he had been in correspondence with the ETTA during the last 12 months. After initially stating that umpires were not covered by the ETTA insurance, the ETTA now agreed that all umpires were covered by ETTA insurance at National ETTA events. The ETTA also agreed that umpires travelling to overseas events were covered by ETTA travel insurance subject to normal insurance restrictions on age and pre-reported health conditions.

Action 3: Secretary to circulate insurance details and restrictions to all members

(c) Uniform. General discussion about NURC's decision recommending changing to ITTF uniform. It was agreed that the Secretary would work with NURC to circulate discussion paper and voting paper to all umpires. Chair advised that it was in everyone's interest to complete and return the voting paper to the NURC.

(d) Tournament Assessment Forms. Derek Sherratt invited the meeting to adopt Tournament Assessment forms to be completed by umpires about working conditions at tournaments. There was a general discussion about the subject and it was agreed that the Secretary would circulate the forms, receive them after completion and circulate assessment.

Proposed: Derek Sherratt. Seconded: Mike Payne. Carried.

(e) Recognition of Association. There was a general discussion about obtaining recognition from the ETTA for the AETTU. Geoff Taylor and John Lawton argued that they believed the Association should still be actively pursuing recognition. Stan Clarke, Derek Sherratt and John Appleton argued that the Association was already recognised by the ETTA because the Committee received correspondence from the officers of the ETTA, had been involved in meetings with ETTA and NURC and had been invited by the NURC to take part in the training of umpires. There was then a debate about whether the AETTU should be accepted in Good Standing by the ETTA. At the conclusion of the debate Stan Clarke recommended that the subject of formal recognition by the ETTA should be put on the 'back burner' until a more favourable time.

Proposed: Stan Clarke. Seconded: Derek Sherratt. For 16 Against 1 Abstain 1 Carried.

(f) Magazine. Tom P reminded the meeting that Geoff Taylor was putting together articles for the next AETTU Magazine which was due to be circulated in early September. Articles should be with Geoff as soon as possible and before 31/8/08.

Date of next AGM - Sunday 26th July 2009 at 14.00hrs.

Meeting concluded at 16.55hrs.

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LETTER SENT TO STUART SHERLOCK FROM MIKE PAYNE

Mike sent me a copy of his letter and thought it would make interesting reading to our members. I was recently at a University Tournament and one match was between German and Serbian Universities. With the number of umpires present it meant that umpires were used as table managers, ensuring the sheet was correct, tossing up and generally keeping an eye on the match with the players doing the umpiring. Each team had a coach who had not interfered with proceedings. In the fifth and last match with the Serbian player as umpire another Serbian coach came courtside - spin is the same in English as in Serbian and he was even sitting next to me!! I remonstrated with him but the gist of his reply was that as the umpire was not bothered there was not a lot I could do about it. I was happy I was not down a dark alley I can assure you and I now realise about the 'Balkan problem'. I went to the referee (an Italian IR) who was unwilling to get involved. The match finished in favour of the Germans. As I filled the match sheet in the coach started again and this time the referee did come between us. As I see the regulations the table manager has no power under these circumstances except to call in the referee. Is this correct. What would you have done in these circumstances? Let us know.

Mike Payne.
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LETTERS.

Letter from John Lawton.

I have been watching the World Championships on the television (Eurosport). In a team match between Germany and Austria there were some strange things happening, the umpire and the assistant umpire were both oriental women, after checking both players bats, numbers etc. etc. the umpire then stuck 2 fingers up to both players, I assume this was not to tell the players to go away (or words to that effect) as they had just come onto court, but to tell them they had a two minute knock up. I don't think this is a good idea as I am sure if it had happened to certain players in this country they would be shaking the umpire by the neck (although we do have a red card for protection!!!!).

In the same team match the German player Dimitri Ovtcharov serves looked a bit dodgy, the camera picked up Dimitri serves from his opponents position and all you could see was the top of Dimitri's fingers indicating the ball must have been below the surface of the table when he served in a continuous movement. In one match Dimitri changed his shirt after the end of a game but did not replace his players number on his new shirt, but there again I suppose we can all make mistakes.

I find the lifting of the two fingers to indicate a 2 minute knock up very interesting as I am unable to find this procedure in the ITTF rule book or handbook for match officials. If anyone can shed some light on this matter please contact our secretary.

John Lawton

Reply to John Lawton's letter via Tom Purcell from Tony Chatwin.

It was interesting to read John Lawton's letter re the two-fingered gesture from an Asian umpire, in the recent World Team Championships, indicating the two-minute warm up period. I was in Yangzhou, China for the Asian Championships in September 2007 where I noticed a number of Chinese umpires were using this signal. When I asked them why, they replied that it was to indicate to the players and to the AU that they had up to two minutes warm up time.

The umpire may of course say to the players "two minutes" warm up but even this is not necessary.

I pointed out that this was not an official signal, which in some parts of the world could be interpreted as an obscene gesture, and that they should stop using it. I also informed them that the AU should not start the watch until the ball left the players hand and not when the umpire gave the ball to the player.

I cannot comment on the second point raised by John only to say that camera angles can distort and I would find it very difficult to make a judgment based on television alone.

Tony Chatwin
ITTF URC Tutor / Trainer

Letter from Lynda Reid

UNIFORM

1. Until 1974, English umpires wore dark blue blazers and grey trousers or skirt.
2. Current ITTF uniform is dark blue jackets and Khaki/tan trousers or skirt with ITTF tie.
3. Some European Associations have dark blue jackets with grey trousers/skirt as national uniform.
2. Some European Associations wear a tie of their National Associations.
3. Some European Associations wear a pocket badge of their National Association.

4. When umpires are at work, seated at the tables, the jacket colour is what is seen.
5. If it is hot and jackets are removed, a blue shirt is acceptable but white is not.
6. At the European Youth Championships this year, not one jacket was any colour other than dark blue.
7. Dark blue jackets and grey trousers are readily available in England in the school section of every clothing retailer from Tesco onwards.

We want to encourage new umpires to join the circuit and, we hope, to progress to higher qualifications and to umpire in the wider world. This is the 21st century and the vast majority of people in table tennis do not have their clothing made by bespoke tailors, they buy 'value' clothing at low cost. I consider it absurd to expect umpires to find specialist suppliers of bright blue jackets, or to have them made out of purchased material at substantial cost and inconvenience.

I am suggesting the way forward is to change, over a period to a navy jacket while retaining the ETTA tie (at least for internal events) and grey trousers. I consider a blue shirt is more generally useful, but most English events take place in cool conditions so this is not critical.

English umpires would then be distinguished primarily by their ties. We would be part of the international body of umpires, but would be distinct. When travelling abroad we could still choose to go in national uniform or ITTF uniform. Whichever we chose, we would clearly be seen as umpires by our dark blue jackets with badges. Those who chose to wear ITTF uniform would find the change easier and requiring less financial outlay.

In my limited experience abroad, when I am in uniform I want to be seen by players, officials, spectators etc. as an umpire, one of 90. When I take my uniform off. I can be primarily an England supporter and wave a flag if I wish.

Lynda Reid

**GROUP PHOTOGRAPH OF MEMBERS WHO
PARTICIPATED IN OUR FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP HELD IN
GRIMSBY ON THE WEEK-END OF 5th and 6th JULY**



ON THE BANKS OF THE HUMBER by LYNDA REID

We are umpires. We are accustomed to suffering (see issue 7). But it is usually at the hands of Referees, who always want their pound of flesh (or blood, sweat and tears). We expect to go home exhausted after a week-end in a bluejacket.

And so the AETTU was formed to promote the welfare of members.

On a wet week-end in Grimsby, we had a new interpretation of 'welfare'. It appears to involve an out-of-season testing of the physical strength of umpires (especially the older ones) to select out the fittest for survival.

We can be certain that this event was not under control of a referee. Our Chairman would never let himself be thought of as a referee - you could be thrown out of the Association for suggesting it. (There were umpires present who had been seen at control tables in the past, but they all had bats in their hands.) So this can only have been a week-end of suffering that we umpires brought on ourselves. Did we really think we could play 10 matches in a day and enjoy it?



DOUBLES



OVER 40 SINGLES

The best bits!! The Buffet Lunch on Sunday (thanks Margaret), winning a game from 6-10 down, playing new people, watching umpires play, talking to people and learning which umpires are all play and no forehand!!

Of course we want to do it again next year, and we hope more members will join in. I am already planning my revenge on a certain S.... W.... and if we play under ITTF Regs we can Ban each other's bats.

2008 ROLL OF HONOUR

Over 40 singles

Wnr. Ray Jackson (Lancs)
R.U. Steve Welch (Lincs)

Over 50 singles

Wnr. John Lawton (Cleveland)
R.U. Ray Jackson Lancs)

Over 60 Singles

Wnr. John Lawton (Cleveland)
R.U. Lynda Reid (Worcs)

Over 70 Singles

Wnr. Stan Clarke (Lancs)
R.U. Geoff Taylor (Warks)

Open Singles

Wnr. John Lawton (Cleveland)
R.U. Ray Jackson (Lancs)

Open Plate

Wnr. Bill Moran (Lincs)
R.U. John Mackey (Lincs)

Doubles

Wnrs. Jackson / Mackey
R.U's Sutcliffe/Edwards

UMPIRES TOURNAMENT WEEK-END FOR 2009

Arrangements are well under way for our second week-end which will be a similar week-end to this years event. It is 99% certain to be held at Wood Green Sports Centre, Wednesbury, Walsall, West Midlands. It is adjacent to Junction 9 on the M6 motorway. Hotels are located on Junction 10 on the M6 motorway. The junctions are about 1 mile apart. Bed and English breakfast will be taken at the Quality Hotel at a cost of £40 per room (2 people sharing) and the Evening meal on Saturday night will be at the Village Hotel at the cost of £10.00 per person. If you want a great week-end then make a note in your diary. More information will be given when all arrangements have been completed

DATE TO PUT IN YOU DIARY — 27th/28th JUNE 2009

FISH, BALLS at GRIMSBY By Russell Sutcliffe

It must be around 25 years ago when I first went to Grimsby - during the late Coal Age - and I was not playing table tennis at all at the time! It was a bustling town with big industry and a thriving fishing fleet.

So my second visit was very different. Grimsby has the air of the English port that has seen better times, but it is trying to move into new world economics. It is a far cry from the bankers in London and other big financial centres who are leeching the money from the rest of the country.

The weather for the day turned out kind, although it was not the same for everyone as thunder storms popped up. I really missed the opportunity to see the Vulcan near Lincoln. So after a long journey I found the table tennis centre. It looked rather tired from the outside, but it was like entering the Tardis. A well lit, well equipped and bustling sporting venue was to be found inside. This was the start of a week-end adventure where time flew.

We started with the doubles. As always the umpires were challenged to work in pairs and found the decision on assisting most difficult. This was an excellent and fun event which provided a wide variety of competition.

The rest of the events were singles which were great opportunities to meet umpires at different sides of the table, debate illegal behaviour, appreciate style and cunning! It was quite entertaining to see banned rubbers and foot stamping being accepted in good heart. However, the most impressive thing was to see a 'no announcement' tournament proceed smoothly.

Such was the activity that it was not until the Saturday evening that there was any chance of an extended conversation. After the required freshening up, most of us met up to enjoy a traditional fish supper. This was followed by a highly esoteric low-scoring quiz won by NURC members! The more robust then investigated the night life of Grimsby whilst everyone else then tried to get to sleep in the sauna level heat of the hotel. The rooms were fine, but it seemed impossible to cool them.

Eventually everyone got up for a leisurely breakfast and return to the venue. Once again play was hectic, but there was more time between games to chat and appreciate the diverse skills on display.

As more of us fell by the wayside and enjoyed a delicious lunch, the favoured few battled out the last few matches.

Finally, all matches were over and several people did 'Alex Murdoch' impersonations as the trophies were presented. There was a satisfaction that we'd had a real sociable time, tinged with the inevitable sadness as we said our farewells. These included the hope and expectation that a similar event would take place next year. Such was the enthusiasm that Derek has been deluged with suggestions of additional activities. I believe he will share these for a £10 donation to AETTU. If you want to find out for real - make sure you meet up next year.

NANCY SCRUTON

It is with great sadness that I let you know that Nancy passed away on Friday 15th August 2008. She was playing in a bowls match when she collapsed and passed away later that afternoon. This will come of a great shock to all who knew Nancy, she was a lovely lady with a keen sense of humour and it was always a pleasure to be in her company,.
R.I.P Nancy

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A PERSONAL PROFILE OF JOHN LAWTON INTERNATIONAL UMPIRE FROM CLEVELAND

Name. John Lawton.

Age 66

Happily married to my wife Judith for 41 years which has produced two daughters and 4 grandchildren. Susanne, our youngest daughter, played table tennis and played for the under 13 England schools team and was nationally ranked in the top 5 of the cadet and junior girls.

Occupation:- Retired chemical process technician.

Food:- Good English food and beer (none of this foreign stuff)

Other sports:- Have school and regimental colours in football and boxing. I was intending to become a boxing referee but table tennis took priority when Susanne started getting quite good. So I took up coaching (have a 1 star badge) and umpiring. I like driving, and have passed The Institute of Advanced Motorists driving test. I have also been on rally and racing car driving courses (the rally driving course was very scary, these drivers must have nerves of steel.

I also like walking on the North Yorkshire Moors, I have done a lot of long distance walks with the Plants Walking Club, i/e The Lyke Wake Walk 42 miles (6 times), The Cleveland Way 110 miles and The White Rose Walk 38 miles, plus numerous shorter walks.

Umpiring:- I have enjoyed my umpiring career (30 years) and meeting fellow umpires and many hundreds of players. I was very pleased to receive my International Umpire Badge and was as proud as punch when I went on my first trip abroad to the Commonwealth games in Kenya. Since then I have felt very privileged to have officiated at many other major tournaments (other than the Olympics Games), these include Europeans in Paris, Worlds in Manchester and the Euro/Asia tournament in Cleveland.

The future:- I am hoping to have a long and happy retirement with my wife Judith as well as playing and officiating at the game of table tennis and to keep my recently won umpires titles (3) for a long time to come!!!! and also hoping the AETTU goes from strength to strength.

John Lawton

