

A.E.T.T.U.

**ASSOCIATION OF
ENGLISH
TABLE TENNIS
UMPIRES**

Issue 5

August 2006

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

By now you will have heard that the result of our request for recognition at National Council went against us 11-22. A full report of this appears later. It is interesting to note that of the 11 Councillors who voted for recognition, four of them represent Counties which have no members of the Association. Of the 22 Counties who do have members only 7 voted for recognition, the remainder were either absent, voted against or abstained. What did your Councillor do?

Contact your County Committee and ask how your Councillor voted, and why your Association did not have their support. You have a right to know. It is possible that some Councillors did not vote for recognition even if they had been mandated to do so.

An interesting theory is that out of the 48 possible votes at a full Council meeting only 22 votes were against, 6 from ManCom with the Chairman and one other ManCom member abstaining. Only 16 Councillors voted against. There were 11 votes for recognition so that would leave 13 Councillors who either abstained or were absent. Without the ManCom anti vote and with 3 possible 'ayes' from Essex, Herts and Warwicks., Whose Councillors were unavoidably absent, the result would have been 14-16! With a secret ballot we may well have been successful. Obviously this is conjecture but it does show that recognition is achievable.

The Association must remain solid and I ask members to support its aims whenever possible, by speaking to their league and County officials and gaining their support.

Included in this magazine is the case for recognition as presented to the National Council by me. I think it is reasonable, what do you think? Also included is a report of the meeting as I saw it.

I look forward to meeting and talking to you during the coming season.

George Tyler

RECOGNITION OF THE A.E.T.T.U. BY NATIONAL COUNCIL

Introduction

For some time now the A.E.T.T.U. has been seeking recognition by ETTA Ltd. The Association applied 'to be in good standing' but this was rejected on the grounds that it was not 'a playing association'. A subsequent request was made for it to be recognised made for it to be recognised as the association to represent umpires welfare and interests, was also rejected. This was questioned by a National Councillor and it was agreed that information should be provided for the issue to be discussed at National Council meeting in July.

Background

As a result of the groundswell of criticism emanating from the umpiring fraternity relating to the welfare and treatment of umpires, a meeting was arranged at Rolls Royce Derby in October 2004. The attendance of 27 umpires as widespread as Cleveland and Wiltshire indicated the measure of support for this action. In addition a further 17 umpires tendered their apologies

The membership is open to all umpires who meet the requirements laid down in article 9.2.7 of the English Table Tennis Association rules. It now stands at 62, which is thought to be in excess of 90% of active umpires. The subscription for membership is £20 which represents a £15 initial Joining Fee plus £5 annual fee.

The aims and objectives relating to umpires were first established at the inaugural meeting and ratified in the Association Constitution at the Annual General meeting in July 2005. They are To promote the welfare of members. To improve working conditions of members, to safeguard the interests of members.

To make representations to ETTA Ltd. on any matters involving the Association or its members.
To assist informally in the recruitment and retention of umpires who shall be trained by ETTA Ltd. To establish links with other National Table Tennis Umpires Associations.

The management of the Association shall be controlled by a Management Committee consisting of Officers together with four elected members of the Association. The officers of the Association are currently Chairman George Tyler IU, Vice Chairman Derek Sherratt IU, Secretary Ken Armson MBE. HI and Treasurer Steve Welch IU. The four elected members are Stan Clark IU, Barry Grainger IU, John Lawton IU and Geoff Taylor IU.

The management of the Association has met on a number of occasions to discuss recognition by ETTA Ltd. Also discussed were areas of concern highlighted by members such as welfare, duty of care, insurance, recruitment, selection policies and the need for training seminars.

Members receive regular news of Association activity and a magazine is sent to all members containing reports, information and articles of interest written by members.

Why Recognition

The AETTU was formed at the request of umpires who wanted an independent, professional association to represent their welfare and interests. At present there are 62 members almost the entire number of umpires who are active on the tournament circuit. As examples: at the Senior Nationals 2006 there were 18 umpires, 15 of whom were members, at the Junior Nationals 2006 there were 27 umpires, 23 of whom were members and at the U14 Nationals at Chrystal Palace there were 25 umpires of whom 18 were members. The Association membership consists of 34 International Umpires, 6 National Umpires, 9 Tournament Umpires, 12 County Umpires and 1 Local Umpire.

I have been an umpire for 25 years, was member of National Umpires and Referees Committee for 12 years and am currently an Umpires' Assessor. As Chairman of the AETTU I believe that recognition would be of great benefit to the ETTA in particular and the sport of table tennis in general. Communication and interchange between umpires via their Association. The Management Committee and the National Umpires and Referees Committee could establish a sound relationship which would be in the best interest of all concerned.

Umpires are an important and necessary part of the ETTA and with the increasing number of events, the relatively small number of 'active' umpires are under pressure to 'do more'. It has long been a problem for the NURC that recruitment of new umpires is a difficult exercise. There are so many other pursuits that people want to follow in this modern world, and qualifying as an ETTA umpire and then spend week-ends away from the family to umpire at tournaments is not high on 'modern' man or woman's agenda. Added to that, the current umpires are not getting any younger. Of those currently active and umpiring regularly at the many, many tournaments in the calendar (and those abroad), the majority are well over 60. The NURC has recognised this problem and are attempting to recruit umpires but, their success is limited. As an Association, we may well be able to assist in this process and, if prospective umpires see there is an association for umpires caring for their welfare, who knows - they may very well be more inclined to become an umpire!

There appear to be two obstacles to recognition:

(i) it is said there is nothing in the company rules **which allows recognition of organisations like AETTU. Conversely there is nothing in the company rules which does not allow recognition.**

(ii) It is also argued that the ETTA has a committee (the NURC) responsible for umpires and referees, **The National Umpires and Referees Committee (NURC) is a committee appointed by and responsible to the ETTA. Its terms of reference specify qualification training and selection of umpires and referees and advice on rules and regulations. There is no mention of the welfare of umpires.**

Conclusion

A number of people believe that umpires have a right to form a professional association. If you believe that too, then surely they also have the right for that association to be recognised by their parent body. I would respectfully point out that most umpires are dedicated to the sport of table tennis and are heavily involved in their own leagues or counties as players and/or administrators and are affiliated members of the ETTA.

It is the intention of the AETTU to work with the NURC and ETTA in the best interests of table tennis. I believe that official recognition of a body that represents umpires is a first necessary step to cement a positive and fruitful relationship between the ETTA and umpires and I hope you will agree that recognition is a positive way forward.

George Tyler IU Chairman

FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

We had another good attendance for our second A.G.M. and a synopsis was sent out to all members and hopefully this included you. We have a large number of members with an email address and this helps to keep costs down but I would ask those receiving our emails to ensure we are notified if you change or discontinue your email address. Similarly if you go on to email let us know your address for future contact use.

Our efforts to obtain recognition by ETTA have been the main focus of our attention and you will all be aware that to date we have not been successful. We did make some inroads obtaining 11 votes with 22 against with 4 or 5 abstaining. One we definitely thought would have supported us also abstaining. Our Chairman made an excellent presentation that could not be faulted but some had clearly made up their minds and had no intention of supporting our request. It was interesting to note that whereas some were clearly disinterested in umpires and others were probably just as disinterested in the views of their county or its umpires, some from counties having no active umpires supported us.

In his presentation George rightly made reference to welfare and some NC's fastened on this as a way of negating our request claiming NURC could deal with welfare matters. Welfare is a wide ranging field and includes numerous issues often of a personal nature and verbal dialogue will be necessary to resolve many such issues. The view that we were seeking to take over or undermine the NURC was also apparent when nothing could be further from the truth. All umpires are fully aware of the duties and responsibilities of the NURC but what is lacking is input into a number of matters pertaining to our role and welfare of members want an independent Body to put forward their views. Members believe that the elected representatives should be recognised and able to put forward ideas and views of umpires that are in the best interest of all parties. The 22 votes against indicated that most Mancom members and some National Councillors were clearly out of touch with the views of umpires.

There is need to emphasise again why recognition is important as to some this may seem much ado about nothing. In order to enter into correspondence or dialogue, arrange meetings that involve meaningful dialogue, to be able to put forward suggestions and make recommendations on behalf of our members and to represent our members at all levels as fully as is possible the Association has to be recognised. The present situation leaves us without any of those options and correspondence can be ignored or just left on file and like our existence need not even be acknowledged.

Recognition was never expected to be easy and as I stated in my report to the A.G.M. we are not a quick fix organisation and some matters need to be seen as long term aims. We must remain united, focussed and committed. There is no magic wand or quick fit solutions we must be patient and remain positive as there are certain to be some who will try to undermine us and weaken the foundations we have built our Association on. In agreeing we should continue to explore all avenues to obtain improved support the A.G.M. recognised these needs. With 11 votes for this was not a defeat; merely a minor setback and we need to build on this. Mancom will not be happy with the support we received and input from members is important. We did not succeed on this occasion because it was clear from the debate and subsequent vote that most NC's had not had contact with umpires or County. Members must contact both their County and National Councillor to let them know how strongly they feel about this issue and seek to obtain their support. The attempt to side step our request by making reference to all volunteers was discussed at our A.G.M. and raised an interesting issue that has already resulted in a letter to Geoff Taylor. It was agreed we press for recognition as Technical Officials; this will not change us from being volunteers but will recognise our specialist volunteer role. In making her point of view the writer misses the point that numerous

volunteers already have a title and that is what members at our meeting felt we should try to achieve. It is not intended to belittle any other volunteer but to clearly indicate what type of volunteer role we fall into. The Chairman was at pains to emphasise that he is also a volunteer but no one addresses him as volunteer Murdoch, neither is he introduced as such. Reference was made to the Manchester Commonwealth Games and at this event volunteers wore uniforms relevant to the position they were filling. Everyone involved was still a volunteer but wore different style of uniforms, Is this any different than a volunteer having a title instead of lumping everyone under the same heading? As the letter indicates there will be varied views on this and members now have the opportunity to put their individual view in writing as Lynda has done. What better way to get additional for our next news letter than for members to air their views on the issue that Lynda has highlighted and made an important contribution to. Send your views to Geoff for our next newsletter but try to keep them brief and as informative but make sure you get your view across as Lynda has done. Not everyone might agree with any view received but we do need your views, controversial or otherwise. We have heard recently that Spanish umpires also set up their own association and sought recognition by their Governing Body as we are seeking to do. Their request was rejected out of hand as ours has been and it would appear that they have lost heart and folded. We are made of sterner stuff and never expected recognition to be easily achieved. People often fear change and what it might bring and Governing Bodies more so as they will see this as a threat when it is anything but.

I received a number of complaints, one in writing, about the event held at Chrystal Palace, an event that was also the subject of discussion at both the ETTA AGM and the National Council meeting. That the ETTA were let down by the original venue and had to seek a change at very short notice is widely accepted, but was it also necessary to change the accommodation or was this always the intended accommodation? Complaints were made about work conditions and the poor quality of available food. Clearly the ETTA were aware of these problems as they were referred too in the letter sent to umpires, what was not included were the inevitable associated long working hours. Entries at junior level are increasing and this is good for table tennis and restricting or refusing entries to a National Event at junior level would clearly not be good for table tennis. Knowing entry levels were high, working conditions would be difficult and longer playing hours would be necessary should have sent out warning signals to the Organisers and a shift system for all officials organised. I am aware this would require more umpires along with increased costs, but this must surely be preferable to alienating umpires. Having a reasonable break and time for a decent hot meal is surely not too much to ask during a long day in difficult conditions. The fact that these problems were in the letter to umpires is a clear indication that someone knew this was likely to be an event memorable for all the wrong reasons. Just as clearly it indicates no one was concerned enough to take any steps to minimise the problems. I don't know who had the ultimate authority or whose area of responsibility this involved, but whoever it was it was you can bet no heads will roll.

I have followed up my suggestion that was agreed by the A.G.M. that we have our own website and am in active discussion with Dave Cochrane who will get this up and running for us. A forum page is planned to enable members to air their views etc. Members will be advised and provided with the website address when this is up and running. If you have any ideas for our planned website why not let me have these and the committee in association with Dave will examine suggestions and if feasible they will be implemented. Communication is our most important weapon, particularly if we can make contact with umpires abroad and a website is the ideal vehicle.

A reminder that your £5.00 membership fee for 2006-07 is now due and should be sent to Steve Welch or passed to him if you expect to meet up with him at an event in the near future. Only 4 members overlooked this last year and they will have received a reminder and I feel certain they will stay with us. We must remain united and committed if we are to succeed in our aims and full membership is obviously of the utmost importance. Another recommendation endorsed by the A.G.M. to co-opt a member as an assistant secretary will be introduced, Tom Purcell's name was put forward and he has agreed to accept the position. If any member would like a copy of my report to the A.G.M. I will be happy to make one available by email or post, all you need to do is contact me.

Ken Armson (Hon Secretary)

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NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING 29th JULY 2006

Prior to the meeting I was informed by the General Secretary Rob Sinclair that I would be announced as a visitor for the day and could be present for the entire meeting. However, immediately prior to the meeting I was told by the Chairman to wait outside, I would be called in for the AETTU item and would then have to leave when the vote was taken.

After the presentation, the Chairman asked Council if there were any questions. There appeared to be an embarrassed silence. This led me to believe that most of the Councillors had already made up their minds. The Chairman then asked Councillors to speak, alternating between for and against recognition. Some were for, some were against, but I am of the opinion that one or two Councillors who wanted to speak for were ignored for a long period, only managing to speak at the end.

I have given numerical account of the voting earlier, but there one or two things of note. Two National Councillors surprisingly voted for recognition. One Councillor stated that she had consulted the umpires in her county and they were against recognition. Yet at our AGM one of her county's umpires said that he had not been consulted! I hope he will take this up with her.

From the end of my presentation to my exit I had the impression that the proceedings had been 'stage managed' by the Chairman.

There was a positive for the Association. Many Councillors were of the opinion that there was a problem and that something should be done - but what? Hopefully this will be taken up at the next National Council meeting.

George Tyler

Chairman

LET'S HEAR IT FOR VOLUNTEERS

at the recent AGM, there was some discussion about the possible rebranding of umpires as Technical Officials, to distinguish us from volunteers. Before we get too carried away, can I put a word in for volunteers.

Those who were at the Manchester Commonwealth Games will remember What I could achieve with some gaffer tape and a pair of scissors. I may have been a menial but I worked more hours than any umpire and was not put up in a hotel by the organisers.

Wearing another hat, I have worked as a volunteer in Citizens Advice for more than 20 years. We give a skilled, highly trained and professional service.

Let us not confuse being a volunteer with being an amateur, casual or untrained. Perhaps we are Technical Officials but we are also volunteers.

Lynda Reid

BADGES – OR NOT

I would have liked to have something like an AETTU badge at the European Youth, not so much for the IU's who go around the circuit but to give to the local umpires, or other helpful/friendly locals. Perhaps there are people who you would want to give a card to, and one who would appreciate something a little different. As with most things one size does not fit all.

Lynda Reid

An umpire's bag was left at a tournament (possibly Doncaster). There is no identification in it. If you think it is yours give Stan Clarke a telephone call on 0152-928-3771. He would like to re-unite it with its owner.

SYNOPSIS OF AGM HELD SUNDAY 6th AUGUST AT MARCONI SOCIAL CLUB, COVENTRY

There was a good turnout for our 2nd AGM with 20 members who had travelled from as far afield as Middlesbrough and Eastbourne in attendance. A good proportion of members had again taken the time and trouble to send apologies and these were noted.

The annual reports of the Chairman and Secretary along with a copy of the Balance Sheet were made available to members present.

Opening the meeting the Chairman thanked members for another good turnout and this indicated strong member interest in the Association. His written report was brief as the main body of his report would be made under item 9, Report and Debate on Recognition, this having been lost 11 votes for and 22 against. He thanked Geoff Taylor for producing the newsletters and committee members for their input. Members were reminded that Geoff needed material from members for newsletters to ensure members' views are fully aired. Greater input would ensure Geoff was able to produce full newsletters.

The Secretary had submitted an extensive report and this gave rise to a number of questions. Discussion took place on producing a possible badge and it was agreed this be referred to the Committee to finalise subject to reasonable production costs. The recommendation that the Association consider having its own website was discussed and received unanimous approval. The Secretary would approach Dave Cochrane for assistance to get the website up and running. The following discussion on position of Assistant Secretary the meeting approved the recommendation that the Committee co-opt Tom Purcell to fill this position. This would be dealt with by the Committee at their next meeting.

Treasurer, Steve Welch, reported on a healthy balance sheet with only 6 members not having renewed their membership. Main costs were for the production and distribution of the newsletters. Subscriptions were £350 plus £16 in donations. Closing his report the Treasurer thanked Auditor John Mackey, a vote of thanks for John was carried unanimously.

Officers, committee members and Auditor were re-elected having been unopposed.

His written presentation to National Council having been passed around the Chairman reported fully on the events of our request and the lost vote of 11 for with 22 voting against. The debate had to some extent been stage managed and Mancom vote en bloc against the Association. There was a good groundswell of support but not enough to win the day. Our cause not being helped by one National Councillor who had given strong indications of support but whose input did us no favours. The absence of a number of National Councillors had also been detrimental to the Association.

After a lengthy debate the meeting agreed efforts to attain recognition should continue and all possible avenues for support be explored. Several lines of approach were discussed and these would be followed up by the Committee. The Secretary would write to the NURC seeking their assistance in obtaining recognition to enable the Association and the NURC to work closely together in the best interests of our sport without involvement in the work and role of the NURC as a sub committee of the ETTA.

Discussed under Other Business was a suggestion by Brian Watkins that he look further into obtaining a suitable umpire bag and a suggestion by Brian Rimmer that members be asked to report on umpire conditions at tournaments.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members for their attendance and support and wished everyone a safe journey home. The meeting closed at 14:55hrs.

"What's in a name?."

Many of you will be familiar with WW2 films where the sergeant says "I want three volunteers; **you, you and you!**"

The recent debate within the Association regarding the status of umpires could be regarded as amusing if there was not a serious underlying issue.

Those members who have been fortunate to participate in major European or World events will have been described as technical officials. Nearer to home umpires are usually bracketed as volunteers, although sometimes phrases such as *volunteers and officials* may appear in material emanating from Hastings.

Does it really matter?

When local events are in the detailed planning stage the familiar lines are trotted out. "What time can you open the premises? Will you be able to set up? Who will be in charge of refreshments? Can your good lady/husband be there to assist?"

Even the larger National Events depend on some extent on local table tennis people to carry out certain tasks. These people are the dedicated enthusiasts which Our sport depends upon: they are volunteers. Some of these might also be Umpires without their blue jackets.

Should qualified umpires be regarded as somehow different from the persons described above when they appear in their traditional uniform?

Let us start with the terms of reference. For National Events the appointing letter often says *you have been selected to officiate*. That's a good boost for one's ego. But from then on it is downhill. *There will be an umpires briefing at such a time and play begins*. Implicit in the invitation is the fact that you are in attendance for the duration, under starting orders and subject to a disciplinary code particular to umpires.

Nothing wrong in that: umpires know the ground rules and have always entered into this contract with their eyes open and mostly in a spirit of co-operation.

In fact it used to be common for the conditions of appointment to specify how the umpires were to dress for the occasion i.e. Blue blazer, mid grey trousers, black shoes, white shirt and ETTA tie. It is still regarded as mandatory and most umpires follow this dress code to the letter. They take pride in their appearance and are mostly a credit to the organisation.

Do you see any differences emerging from the term volunteer?

For a start the umpire has provided the said uniform out of his/her own pocket. In addition, whilst in certain circumstances an allowance may be granted for an absence the umpire cannot disappear to run his wife to the shops, nip home to cut the lawn or take two hours off to watch the cup final.

Prior to all this an umpire has served a rigorous apprenticeship taking examinations, been subject to assessments and more to the point has a full diary of events and future commitments. If he/she has travelled abroad he/she will have in the majority of cases funded the air travel which for instance could be many hundreds of pounds.

How many non umpire volunteers do you know who would pay for their own foreign travel and dress up like a Christmas tree at the behest of the organiser?

Returning to the theme of local volunteers, if the people who did all these thankless tasks last year say *sorry I'm off to Spain that week-end or my daughters getting married on that day* you can scratch your head and pick up the telephone.

Whilst I'm not suggesting for one minute that does not happen with umpires in principle its not so straight forward. Most umpires are approached by organisers many months in advance to canvas their availability. More importantly, because the number of active qualified umpires is reducing there is often an unseemly scramble as organisers compete each other for their services. Efforts to stem the decline are hopefully addressed by the NURC. The problem is not only the failure to recruit new umpires but the perplexing failure to retain experienced umpires.

However, this is where improved status, more consideration for umpires and a greater degree of care might have an effect of reducing the problem. The number of active qualified umpires is a finite quantity which over the past decade has seen its numbers eroded for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons I suggest is the perceived lack of status. The ETTA can easily take this one small step for MANCOM .

That which we call an umpire by any other name would smell as sweet" (Will Shakespeare)

**LETTER RECEIVED FROM JOHN MACKEY
AETTU MEMBER AND NURC MEMBER**

I have read with interest the Secretary's letter in issue 2 of the AETTU newsletter, particularly the section dealing with Selection. Mention was made in the letter about selection being high on the 'agenda' for the AETTU committee particularly following the announcement of 5 squads for the European Champions League (ECL) matches announced in a recent NURC newsletter. It was stated in his letter that because the NURC Selection Committee had not invited nominations then that body could not have made the final selections. This was cited as a reason for umpires to have cause for concern about the manner of selections and the failure of the NURC Selection Committee to seek nominations.

I feel it is important that members of the AETTU should be aware of the circumstances pertaining to the selection of the squads for the ECL matches. The 1-TTA received a letter from the European Table Tennis Union (ETTU) on 30th July 2005 asking for 5 squads, with two umpires per squad, to officiate at ECL matches during the 2005-06 season. The invitation for nominated squads was received too late for IU's to be circulated and in view of this the 5 squads were selected without seeking nominations. There was a meeting of the NURC held on the 6th of August and the selection committee in conjunction with the rest of the NURC members made the selection at this meeting. The selection by the full NTJRC membership was recorded in the minutes of the 6th August meeting (item 6.4), so there was no question of secrecy, I trust this allays the concerns expressed in the secretary's letter, viz: ' / make no reference as to who has been selected, as our concern has not to be those selected, but the method of selection. In this particular case it comes down to secrecy and selection by unknown parties'.

I appreciate that many concerns by individuals about the selection process could possibly stem from personal disappointment about not being selected and this is a natural human reaction. I can only attempt to reassure fellow umpires that every effort is made to ensure that the selection process is as equitable as possible, but despite this I know that there will be probably always be some occasions when an umpire may feel aggrieved, because no one is infallible, not even NURC members!

John Mackey

NURC member

LETTER RECEIVED FROM ALAN HARWOOD

I have been meaning to write to you regarding the latest edition of the AETTU magazine for a few weeks but never seem to get around to it. However, better late than never. The latest issue in my view appreciably better than the previous which in my view had far too many jokes. This one has more relevant content.

I have a couple of points I would like to make. The first is the colour red for the covers of the magazine. In itself this is not a problem. However George has his 'From the Chairman' article and Tom Purcell has an article on insurance on the back. What I find it is more difficult to read when the background is dark red. I should point out that this is not just my view but I believe a view shared by many. If possible use a lighter colour in future.

The second point concerns John Mackey's letter concerning the formation of 5 squads for the European Champion's League. In the letter he states **'the selection committee in conjunction with the rest of the NURC members made a selection'**. This is incorrect. I was a member of the selection committee and **I had no input into the formation of the 5 squads**. The first I knew was when everyone else was told. The NURC selected the squads itself. The selection panel finds itself criticised no matter what it does and I do not see why they should be criticised for something in which they had no part. **Alan Harwood AETTU Member**

EDITORIAL

As you will have seen this newsletter has more pages than any of the previous issues. There are obvious reasons why this has happened. There were many items to be discussed at the AGM and I am including everything that went on at the meeting. This years AGM was again held in Coventry and considering some members have long distances to travel to turn out was excellent and there were also many apologies sent in. You will see two e-mails from Lynda Reid. Do you agree with them? If you do then let me know. If you do not agree let us know and tell us the reasons why.

Our discussions with ETTA about recognition of our Association are ongoing but as I see it there are people at the top of the ETTA tree who for some reason are against our inclusion. In circumstances like these National Council can be led by Mancom (I know I have been there) unless they have been mandated by their counties to do otherwise. One can speak to top brass at tournaments and they tell us how sympathetic they are with our cause, tell us what a good job we are doing and then go to National Council and they seem to forget all they said while speaking with us. I hasten to add I do not say this about everyone as some top brass are truly sympathetic to our cause and for their support we are truly thankful.

You will see I've had a letter from John Mackey giving his side of the selection of squads for the European Champions League. I have also received a letter from Alan Harwood giving a different version. Is there anyone out there who would like to reply to either John or Alan. I would be please to have something to put in the next issue.

The Association is talking about setting up a website for our members and also anyone else who wish to keep in touch with umpiring and I can tell you that Dave Cochrane has started the procedure and as soon as Ken Armson had any definite news all members will be notified of the website address.

We were told at the AGM that 4 or 5 members who had not paid their subs for the last year but I have been told lately there are now only 2 and I am sure we will not be losing them as they are an important part of our machinery for getting our Association recognised as I am sure will also help us to get more people into umpiring and strengthen our position in the game of table tennis.

Geoff Taylor, Editor.