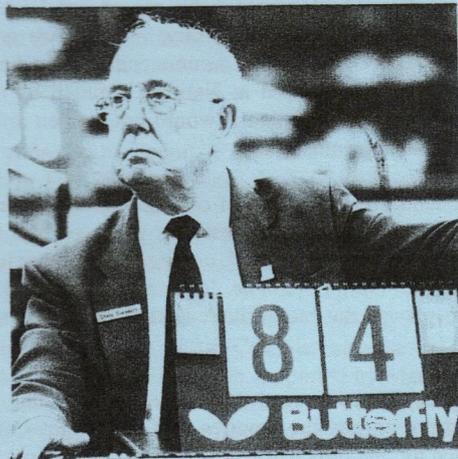


Association Of English Table Tennis Umpires



Issue 11

February 2009

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Although a little late I would like to wish all of our members A Happy New Year. 2009 may well be an interesting and eventful year for all concerned. Membership of the association is steadily increasing, preparations are in hand for the second association tournament, there will be an English Open and I am given to understand that there will be an election for the office of ETTA Chairman

With regard to membership please feel free to hand your annual subscription (for this year or next) to me when you see me on the circuit, its only a fiver! It's mil the I iwi so much as of being part of an active organisation for umpires.

My thanks to all umpires who voiced their opinion in the uniform survey sent out by the secretary. Full details will appear in his report, but I am pleased that so many-umpires wish to retain the English identity, after all we are the Association for ENGLISH Table Tennis Umpires. The recommendation by the NURC to discontinue the ETTA blazer badge was raised at National Council by committee member Stan Clarke and Council was assured that it would not happen unless umpires had been consulted and were in agreement.

I regret that our request for the date of our tournament to be placed on the ETTA Calendar was turned down. The request was made so that tournament organisers would know that a large number of umpires would be involved in their own tournament and would not be available. It was an opportunity for the ETTA to show good faith, but by playing the "not affiliated" card the words "shot" and "foot" spring to mind!

Like many I was concerned to read the editorial in the June issue of Table Tennis News, which did not portray the umpires in a good light - rather the opposite. An apology was called for, but only a justification appeared. Hence my letter to the editor, which may or may not appear in the next issue of Table Tennis News.

You will have heard by now that Alan Ransome has agreed to stand for the position of ETTA Chairman. Alan has of late made positive remarks in favour of umpires and was instrumental in putting the article "The Umpire Crisis" before National Council. This in turn brought about the action plan agreed by both NURC and AETTU, which was presented to and agreed by National Council. He has shown support for the Association and may well support our request for recognition, lime will tell.

I cannot close without reference to selection. Selection for prestigious events has always been a contentious and emotive issue and as a former chairman of the selection panel I can appreciate the problems involved. However selection of the six umpires already selected for the Commonwealth Championships, a mixture of NURC committee members, selection panel members, referees and blue badge umpires may well cause concern.

If you have views on any issue in the magazine send them to the editor and they will be printed in the next issue.

GEORGE TYLER (Chairman)

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

Membership of the AETTU is increasing in the knowledge that the Association will look after the welfare of its members and will take steps to improve umpires' working conditions. During the last year a number of improvements have taken place but there are still issues which cause the AETTU concern.

The debate on umpires' uniforms still continues. The NURC has had a return and debated its limited response as to whether we should change from the ETTA uniform to the ITTF uniform. The result of the NURC survey is not yet known and will probably not be reported to the umpires for another few months. The result of the AETTU survey was overwhelming, 93.75% of members responded to our survey 72% voted to keep the current uniform for domestic events and the ITTF uniform for overseas events, 27% voted to change to a partial ITTF uniform and 1% was in favour of a complete change to the ITTF uniform. This debate is obviously going to run for a few more months and hopefully a result, which will favour the majority of umpires, will be agreed.

As the Chairman mentions in his report, I informed the ETTA of the date for our Umpires' competition in July 2009 and asked the ETTA to put it in the Calendar to ensure that organisers would be aware that a large number of umpires wouldn't be available on that weekend. Even though the ETTA calendar didn't show any competitions on that date I was informed that it clashed with a competition for the disabled and to support the ETTA and the organisers we agreed to change our date. I re-submitted the new date but then the Calendar Working Party (CWP) decided unanimously not to enter our date in the Calendar because the AETTU was not affiliated to the ETTA. This decision was also supported by Management Committee and I was informed that the CWP were powerless to do otherwise. I suggest that common sense and "working together" rather than an "us and them" mentality could have easily dealt with this issue.

The umpires have been selected for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. I believe that about 17 umpires applied for the games and 6 have been selected with a possibility that more may be required depending on the number of overseas umpires. I've received a number of phone calls voicing concern about the selection process for the Commonwealth Games and other overseas events. The ETTA website now contains an umpires' page and the selection policy is displayed on the site. It was agreed at the AETTU/ETTA meeting last year that the policy needed bringing up to date and that the issue of selection of NURC members and other associated panel members should be clearly defined. This hasn't yet taken place.

A couple of years ago a motion was made to the ITTF AGM to do away with the law on Expedite. I don't know what happened at the AGM but the law is still there. At the Olympic Games in Beijing a game involving expedite took place. John Mackey and I umpired at the recent Danish Open. In the tournament Joanna Parker from England beat one of the top players from Belarus and the game went to expedite. I acted as counter and for both of us it was the first time we had been involved with expedite since we qualified as County Umpires. I must admit the Olympics and a Pro-Tour event were the last places I would have expected to see expedite in use.

The 2009 AETTU Umpires' Tournament is going to be held on 18th-19th July at Burton Bridge Table Tennis Centre, Burton on Trent. Put the date in your diary and you will find further details later in the magazine.

I hope to see you all soon. Tom Purcell Secretary AETTU.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF TABLE TENNIS NEWS

The editorial in the June magazine showed an alarming lack of respect for table tennis umpires and was a subject for discussion at a subsequent National Council meeting. This should not be puzzling, since respect for officials is, and should be, paramount to the ETTA's governing body. Umpires are expected to be impartial and to uphold the regulations as written.

When discussed at National Council it was agreed that the editorial had been an error of judgement and that an apology would be made in the November magazine. Having read the editorial I see no sign of an apology, but a justification of the offending article. Umpires do not "Thrive on every rule infringement" nor do they "look forward to clamping down on each player who dares to cross the line". Such phrases encourage lack of respect; they cannot be justified and warrant an apology to all the officials who give their time and expertise to English table tennis.

GEORGE TYLER IU

In November 2008 TT News published an article titled "Who'd be an umpire" The article gave an insight into the pleasures and problems of being an umpire and highlighted Stuart Sherlock's report to the ETTA recommending a number of changes to improve the recruitment, retention and profile of the umpire. The article claimed that things are about to change in 2009 in the world of umpiring. Time will tell.

**LETTER FROM TOM PURCELL TO EDITOR OF TT NEWS
(In response to the above article)**

Richard

I read the article in TT News (Issue 336) about the umpire crisis. I agree with the comments of David Edwards and Stuart Sherlock that umpires take up the role for love of the sport and to put something back after years of playing the sport. A few umpires reach international status with the ambition of umpiring at major ITTF tournaments and other major events however, the vast majority are happy umpiring at ETTA, County and other assorted tournaments. In order to recruit umpires, retain them and improve experience umpires, umpires need to know that they will have reasonable working conditions and will not be used and abused by tournament organisers. They also need to know that the ETTA and NURC are looking after their best interests. This has not always happened. Stuart Sherlock, Chair of the NURC, recently submitted a paper to National Council with a number of recommendations to improve the recruitment, training and status of the umpire. The Association of English Table Tennis Umpires (AETTU) held a meeting with NURC and discussed ways to improve these areas. A number of recommendations were included in the paper. The AETTU fully support the recommendations but it is up to the ETTA to finance the recommendations and not merely pay lip service.

The status of the umpire is important. Umpires need to know they are being fully consulted about their role and with all reasonable choices open to consultation, not merely the limited choices decided by the NURC.

Umpires umpire for the love of the game. All they want are reasonable working conditions and the odd 'thank you'.

Tom Purcell Secretary - Association of English Table Tennis Umpires

LETTER FROM JOHN LAWTON - RE SELECTION

I thought I would drop you a line to see if the following article would be OK to put in our news letter. I believe George will be contacting you on the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships regarding the Umpire selection fiasco as well.

I was disappointed in not being selected for the Commonwealth Championships although I accept the NURC's decision. What I do not accept is the certain personnel that have been selected by the NURC panel it certainly looks like a put up job.

I was officiating at the Veterans British League at Doncaster on the 31 St. Jan /1 St. Feb and this topic was discussed with all the umpires present and virtually all the umpires agreed that the NURC selection leaves 'a lot to be desired'.

At the above tournament I umpired a women's match (the team and player shall remain nameless) in one game the server threw the ball up a couple of inches into the air, I called a let and explained that the ball in service should be thrown up in the air at least 6 inches and she said " **6 inches, I haven't seen 6 inches in years**" play was resumed a short while later when the other lady competitor and myself had stopped laughing,. Could this be the quote of the year?

Regards,

John Lawton.

UMPIRES 2009 TOURNAMENT

If you are intending to attend the tournament, Derek Sherratt would like some input in to which hotel we should use (which you will find later in the magazine). First impressions seem to be for choice (B). Please let Derek know as soon as possible

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**SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE MEETING 23rd
NOVEMBER 2008**

The Committee met in Bulkington, Warwickshire. Members present were George Tyler (Chairman). Derek Sherratt (Vice Chairman) Tom Purcell (Secretary) Steve Welch (Treasurer). Stan Clarke, Geoff Taylor and Barry Granger. Apologies from John Lawton and Nick Osland.

Matters arising from the last Committee meeting were:-

Associate Members of AETTU, this was approved at the AGM 2008 with a membership fee of £5.

Committee members should be raised from 4 to 5 as from 2009, in the meantime Nick Osland was co-opted onto the committee.

The possibility of a AETTU committee member becoming a member of the NURC. NURC Chairman Stuart Sherlock said that if this happened the member would not be representing the AETTU but would be acting in their own right. Discussion followed and some members were sceptical about this happening perhaps he could be put in some compromising positions.

Free tossing discs were still to be given to some members. If you have not yet received one speak to Tom Purcell when you see him.

Chairman's report had a number of items the most important was the training of new umpires. Actions to be taken by the Secretary:- Contact the NURC and recommend circulation of training Powerpoint to County Secretaries and also that County Umpires Secretaries should have prior knowledge of all NURC recruiting/training courses in their Counties.

Secretary's Report. Tom Purcell reported the NURC had circulated a questionnaire on the subject of changing the ETTU Blazer to an ITTF uniform. Tom said that the NURC questionnaire was contrary to an agreement between the AETTU and the NURC. Secretary to take action and circulate questionnaire, with alternative options, to members. There was also general discussion on a NURC minute to National Council which recommended that the English Blazer badge should be discontinued. Action to be taken by Secretary to contact Secretary National Council for clarity on recommendation of discontinued use of the ETTA blazer badge. Selection was also a topic for discussion. Tom Purcell reported that the ETTA website now had an Umpires' link which contained details of persons on the NURC and associated panels and a copy of the current selection policy. At the meeting between the AETTU and the NURC it was agreed that the selection policy was out of date and agreed that the policy would be brought up to date to include how members of the NURC and associated panel are selected for events. Tom Purcell to contact Stuart Sherlock for update on review of selection policy.

Treasurers report. Steve Welch said we had about £1400 in the bank. There was a general discussion about membership and it was agreed that members who had not renewed their membership for 2 years would be removed from the list of members. Subject of a Junior Membership to be recommended to the 2009 AGM.

AOB

Travel to the Commonwealth Games Glasgow. There was a discussion about selection of umpires for the Games and travel costs. It was pointed out that the Games were considered to be an overseas event and as such a daily allowance would be paid and umpires would have to pay their own travel expenses.

Tom Purcell
Secretary Association of English Table Tennis Umpires



ASSOCIATION OF ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS UMPIRES

CONSTITUTION

(As amended and adopted at the Annual General meeting, July 2008)

1. NAME

This association of English table tennis umpires shall be called the Association of English Table Tennis Umpires (AETTU) (hereinafter called "the Association").

2. OBJECTIVES

The Association shall be conducted on the principles:

- a To promote the welfare of its members.
- b To improve the working conditions of its members.
- c To safeguard the interests of members.
- d To make representations to ETTA Ltd on any matter involving the Association or its members.
- e To assist informally in the recruitment and retention of umpires who shall be

- trained and qualified by ETTA Ltd.
- f To establish links with other National Table Tennis Umpiring Associations to enable and exchange of views, information and agreements to attain standardisation for umpires.

3. OFFICERS

The officers of the Association shall be the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer who shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year.

4. MANAGEMENT

The affairs of the Association shall be controlled by a Management Committee (the Committee) consisting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, together with four elected members of the Association to be elected by the Annual General Meeting each year (AGM).

Five members shall form a quorum two of whom must be officers.

The Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional members with or without powers to vote.

The Committee shall have the power to fill any casual vacancies in the official posts, as they occur but any members so appointed shall only hold office until the next AGM.

Every motion at a meeting of the Committee shall be determined by the majority of members present and voting, every member having one vote. In the case of equality of votes the Chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

Subject to the approval of the Management Committee representation will be available to a member with a grievance.

When necessary the Chairman, or in his absence the Vice Chairman, together with the Secretary and Treasurer will be empowered to act on behalf of the Association.

President, Vice President and Life members may be elected at the Annual General Meeting but only on the nomination of the Committee.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Full Members

Only Qualified ETTA umpires shall be eligible for full membership of the Association.

- b) Associate Members

In accordance with the Association's Constitutional objective 2(f) - to establish links with other National Table Tennis Umpiring Associations - qualified umpires from other National Associations may apply to join the AETTU as an Associate Member. Membership will be subject to approval by the AETTU Committee and a £5 Membership fee.

6. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Annual General Meeting shall determine the initial registration fee and the annual membership fee. The annual membership fee shall be payable no later than 1st. October of each year.

7. FINANCE

The Treasurer shall collect all monies due to the Association and shall keep a proper account of receipts and expenditure which must be submitted to the AGM.

The financial account year for the Association shall be from 1st. July to 30th. June the following year.

All monies received by the Association must be banked in the name of the Association

The signature of two of the following officers, namely the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer, shall be necessary before a withdrawal can be made from the Association

An interim statement of accounts shall be placed before the Committee,
The income and property of the Association shall be applied solely to the furtherance
No member of the Association shall receive payment for his/her services to the Association.

The financial accounts of the Association shall be examined annually by an Auditor who shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting each year. An Auditor's report shall form part of the yearly accounts presented to the Annual General Meeting.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

An Annual General Meeting will be held no later than 31 St. August of each year to receive, and if approved adopt the records and accounts, elect officers and transact any other business of which due notice has been given.

Nominations for official positions and any proposed amendments to the Constitution or motions for the AGM agenda must be submitted to the Secretary, in writing no later than 1st May of each year. Unless nominations for official positions are thus received the incumbent officers will, if willing, be re-elected.

The Secretary will send a notice to members convening the AGM accompanied by an agenda and details of any amendments or motions received at least 21 days before the date of the meeting. Amendments to any item on the AGM agenda must be received by the secretary in writing no later than seven days prior to the date of the meeting.

Ten members will form a quorum.

The Treasurer will submit a Statement of accounts, balance sheet and an Auditor's Report for approval by the AGM.

9. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

A Special General Meeting (SGM) of the Association shall be held within 28 days of the receipt, by the Secretary, of a requisition, in writing, stating fully the reason for which the meeting is required and a copy of each resolution to be submitted to the meeting. Such a requisition must be signed by at least one third of the Association members.

The Secretary shall give at least 7 days, written notice of the SGM.

No other business will be discussed at the SGM except with the unanimous consent of the members present.

10. ALTERATIONS TO RULES OR CONSTITUTION

No alteration of, amendments to or recession of the rules of the Association can be made except at AGM or SGM expressly called for that purpose. Decisions made at AGM or SGM shall be decided by a majority vote of members present and eligible to vote.

No proposal to amend the Constitution shall be adopted unless the proposal obtains at least two thirds of the votes cast by members present and eligible to vote.

11. PROCEDURE AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a) The Annual General Meeting shall be managed by the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice Chairman or any other member agreed by those present.

b) With the exception of amendments to the Constitution which shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Debate, the Chairman of the AGM may limit the number of times members may speak on any one proposal but the proposer of the motion shall, at all times, be given the right of reply before the motion is put to the vote.

c) A point of order may be raised at any time and shall take precedence over any other business.

d) The Chairman's decision on a point of order will be final.

e) All proposals shall have a mover and a seconder.

f) Voting on all matters shall be by a show of hands unless agreed otherwise by the meeting

g) In all of equality the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

12. GENERAL MATTERS

No agreement made with any other party shall be adopted until ratified by a member of the Management Committee. Agreements, when adopted, shall be binding on all members. The Chairman and Secretary shall be signatories for the Association to agreements made with any other party.

The Management Committee shall select, from the Committee, representation for meetings with other Bodies. Where ever possible such representation must include the Chairman and Secretary plus one or more Committee members. Total representation at a meeting with any other party shall not be less than that of the other party.

13. DISSOLUTION

If upon the winding - up or dissolution of the Association there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever the same shall not be paid or distributed among the members of the Association but shall be given or transferred to some other institution having objects similar to the objects of the Association

KEEP THIS COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

STRICTLY COME DANCING D.....OWN TO UMPIRE

Stiff fuming at the BBC for not accepting my nomination of an umpire for this modern classic Saturday night show I decided to boycott the TV and do a spot of Googling.

Presently found myself in the hallowed pages of the ETTA. web site. Turning to the umpires I studied the list of umpires and was immediately struck by the fact that quite a few names were significant by their absence from the circuit as I know it. Of course just because I do not see them in their blue blazers does not necessarily mean they have given up umpiring for good.

Nevertheless I felt that the inclusion of their names on the list was at best downright misleading; Particularly to people not from the umpiring fraternity and it certainly does not help our cause in the continuing debate about the decline in umpire numbers.

This brought me to the familiar term 'active' a difficult thing to quantify and I therefore decided to carry out the following experiment.

For every name I gave a score from 0 to 10 based on my observations. For example I gave myself a score of 7. There are 67 names on the list and the total was 244.

Therefore the average $244 \div 67 = 3.64$

Referees on the list were counted only for umpiring duties.

I did not score anyone with 10 but 16 had a 0.

Strictly come dancing. Please indicate the names of one gentleman and one lady you would like to nominate for this competition (no married couples are allowed)

Derek (Goodman) Sherratt

Friends, Umpires and countrymen lend me you ears (well eyes then)

A tragedy in several Acts

"I come not to bury anyone in particular but to praise them. The good is.

"Yes I am paraphrasing our ex Warwickshire member again.

Scene one sees your colleagues holding up their hands in horror exclaiming that once again they cannot be expected to carry out their appointed duties i.e. to name six umpires for the Commonwealth Championships. Yes, I remind you, we have heard this strange and weird story before.

But our colleagues constitute an honourable body!

The scene closes with the not original idea 'let us ask someone else to make the selection, say someone who might pick us' hey presto, book my ticket for Glasgow.

But they are all honourable people!

Scene 2 sees this august body (the someone else) pouring over the difficult selection process. There are, we are informed, 17 names to consider. 17 of the most experienced umpires in the land.

But of course they are honourable people!

We could pick the 'Blue Badges' wait a minute that will not work.
We could exclude umpires who have either been abroad in recent times or are about to go abroad, no that will not do either.
Let's pick names that are mainly umpires and not referees. Failure yet again.

They are still honourable people.

Lets play the 'activity card', select only those umpires who work week in and week out as umpires. That will not do either. There must be a solution. Why not pick the names you first thought of?

But you are forgetting that these people are honourable people

The someone else therefore, based on their knowledge of the current tournament scene, made the published selection. "Wait a minute" you might say "When did any of the triumvirate last see me actually umpire a match? And how do they know who regularly does the bread and butter events? They have a panel to advise them.

And these; are honourable men?

There is a hole in my bucket Eliza

He dies...

Exit; stage left, transparency hand in hand •with credibility.

Plato the elder Postscript:- If you ever had any doubt about the creation of the AETTU?????

A THANKLESS JOB

Selections have always been a problem since I started umpiring in 1980 and probably always will be. Ten years later I became the first IU in Staffordshire, no fast tracking in those days for a Blue Badge. I just umpired most weekends, with fantastic support from Tony Chatwin and Arthur Morgan. They kept me on my toes with good advice and a few rollickings. I was blessed with the time they gave me and very thankful. Arthur went the second over the 60 rule was tried, what a waste.

I lived in an area full of top class table tennis with Des, Sky, Nicky, Carl and Max playing for GKN Steelstock. Happy days.

I can never complain about my selections abroad they have been a joy. It is what being an IU is all about, like being in a different world. With the knowledge of the English umpires that went before me, I was proud to be English, but it was a great responsibility and honour.

You always had a NOT him again look and something like, at least he Umpires. Which I think is the main problem with selection. I think that all English IU's are more than capable of doing a good job and indeed all selected by which ever selector. Referee, Organizer, TT Workers and all the good guys should not. IT IS FOR UMPIRES IN THE FIRING LINE EVERY WEEK.

In my day it was the Blue eyed boys that got the blame, now its the Blue Badge. With NO blue badge assessments in the U.K. from day one it has been a disgrace. You beg to think sometimes

Yours in Sport

Brian Watkins
Retired International Umpire

UMPIRES TOURNAMENT 2009

Last year we held our first Umpires Table Tennis Tournament at Grimsby. 20 members entered the different age groups. All different age groups were played in groups and so there was not a shortage of games for anyone. In fact, on Sunday afternoon when the presentations were made I am sure many were pleased to go home for a rest. This year we are repeating the week-end and we hope to see more of our members entering. Below you will find all the details you will need and our esteemed Vice Chairman Derek Sherratt has done all the arrangements, so if you need anymore information he is the person to contact.

Date 18th/19th July 2009

Tournament commencement time 12.30pm Saturday

Venue.... Robert Sutton School (Burton Uxbridge) T.T. Centre Burton on Trent

Referee Alan Harwood I.U. (to be agreed)

Play will be on 8 tables

Balls (Yes balls will be used)

All matches will be umpired by a qualified umpire?

All matches will be played in accordance with the Rules of Table Tennis (or something very like them)

Hotels (see below)

A) Holiday Inn Express A38 Branston £60 per twin room plus Continental Breakfast. Diner Nearby

B) Premier Hotel, Bretby Road. £48 per twin room. Breakfast Full English £7.35. Continental £5.50. Restaurant Next Door.

C) Travel Lodge. A38 (south) Barton under Needwood. Can be £19 per room if you book now on the internet (but no refunds) or £40 flexi. Little Chef next door. Pubs not far away.

I have been unable to match the previous hotel deal at Wednesbury. Of the three I am inclined to favour (B)

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OPEN LETTER TO NURC.

I was very concerned and disappointed with the recent selection of umpires for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. I understand that 17 umpires applied for the tournament and of the six initially selected four are associated with the NURC and five of the six are or have been Blue Badge umpires. Two of the selected

umpires are mainly match referees and rarely umpire from one month to another. The Commonwealth Game is not a "Blue Badge" event and Blue Badge qualification should not therefore be a pre-requisite for the initial selection.

This is not the first time I have been concerned about selections involving persons associated with the NURC. The selection of umpires for the Island Games in the Shetland Islands also left many experienced umpires questioning the selection process. At previous Island Games, with a view to minimising costs, priority was given to umpires who lived near to the venue. At the Shetland Island Games despite numerous experienced National and International umpires from the North and Midlands two umpires from the South of England, including one from the NURC Selection panel were selected.

I have no problem with members of the NURC for major domestic and overseas events provided the selections are shared out evenly between qualified applicants. What I do have a problem with is the apparent secretive manner in which they are selected. I note from the minutes of the meeting between the AETTU and the NURC last year the weakness of the selection policy was pointed out to the members of the NURC and Stuart Sherlock agreed to bring the selection policy up to date. This hasn't happened. I have read the selection policy on the umpire's page on the ETTA website. Three small paragraphs can hardly be called a policy and procedure document and there is nothing in the document to explain how selection will be carried out when a conflict of interests occurs involving the members of the selection committees.

Umpires are never told which umpires have applied for which events. We should be informed. We are now informed, through the Secretary of the AETTU, which umpires have been selected for events but unless we know who has applied how can we be satisfied that the selections are fair and equitable.

Name supplied to the Editor.

"OH, WHAT A SURPRISE"

Over the past two weekends at both the Veterans and Junior British Leagues matches, I have been asked a number of times of what I thought about the selections for the Commonwealth Championships in Glasgow, as one of a number of unsuccessful applicants.

Usually I am not one who often expresses my views on such issues, but I've decided perhaps this was one occasion that I should forego my normal reluctance. My initial thoughts were one of "surprise" and, in all honesty, for once, words did initially fail me. I then had to ask myself whether I really was surprised and I believe the answer is a sad and firm "no".

Finally, I thought if no one spoke out, then perhaps the selectors would think that we are all happy with the job they've done. We all know the selections. Whatever the sport, can be highly emotive subject, but whatever the reasons for any selections it is imperative that it must be seen to be fair with equal opportunities for all.

This prompted me to go to the umpires' section on the ETTA website and remind myself what the "so called" stated selection policy says. My first thoughts were perhaps the ITTF had taken over the mantle of the Commonwealth Championships and, along with their positive discrimination procedures, they had regarded the Championships as a blue badge event. Having been a 'professional engineer' all my working life, where the application of logical processes were second nature, I would ask the question of whether there is any sensible logic behind this selection procedure and, if so, I must admit I fail to see it. Application of logic is not "rocket science", but does require a real degree of common sense.

Am I disappointed? Well, of course, the answer is yes, but not necessarily for myself, but for a number of the other unsuccessful and regular umpires, within the domestic scene, who have regrettably been overlooked on this occasion. For a number of personal and business reasons, I've not been able to apply for "foreign" events over the past 15 to 18 months, so I didn't expect to be considered before a number of the other applicants, which also includes some of those selected.

Dave Goulden