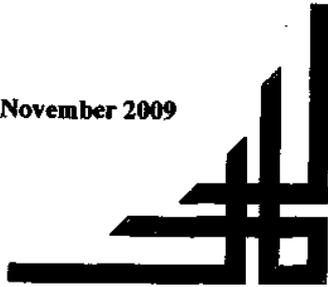




Issue 13

November 2009



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We hear a great deal about climate change in the world; there also appears to be a calendar change in the table tennis world. For the past few years the calendar has been relatively quiet prior to Christmas, with a host of events after Christmas. This year however, it has been much busier before Christmas (12 events in all), with the English Open the star attraction.

It was good to see the re-appearance of an event at Bridlington, the MBL East Yorkshire Cadet Junior Championships, sponsored by Mark Bastes Ltd. The venue, the Spa Royal Hall, having been refurbished was magnificent, and although the entry was not as large as expected, the standard of play was high. The event was well organised by Richard Scruton, and although the hotel left a little to be desired, the atmosphere and hospitality was good and the event finished early on Sunday. There were 17 umpires, 15 of whom were members of the Association. I can also report that 18 of the 22 umpires named for the English Open are members of the Association.

You may have heard that John Lawton was taken to hospital recently with a heart condition. I have been told that John is now out of hospital and has been advised to take things easy for a while. We all wish him well.

It was good to receive the NURC News in September, almost before the start of the season. It contained the latest rule changes by the ITTF and an update of the Time-out procedure. It also mentioned the ETTA Handbook for Umpires which I am now given to understand is 'at the printers' and should be out for 2010.

Umpires sometimes ask about the procedure to be used when the score exceeds the capacity of the score machines. NURC advise umpires that if the score reaches 20-19, the score machines should be reset to 10-9.

My best wishes to everyone. The next committee will be held at Bulkington (near Coventry) on Saturday 21st at 12 noon. If you have anything to bring to the attention of the committee, please let the Secretary or me know.

George Tyler

Mike Payne sent this Article how many others have had similar experiences?

One tournament that brings back fond memories for a select few is the Shree Sorathia Prajapati Millenium Games (SSPC) which was held at Kettering Leisure Village (KLV) on 26/27 August 2000. This was an idea of Judy Rogers as I recall and part of this was to broaden the appeal of Table Tennis to other communities. I agreed to be organiser and referee and went to a couple of meetings beforehand and it all seemed straightforward. The SSPC is a family based organisation with branches in the major cities with large Asian communities. The objective was sport but the week-end was also the opportunity for meeting friends and family. The SSPC literally took over the KLV and provided all the meals starting with breakfast and also all of the equipment. The exception was the bar as the SSPC is a dry community. There were several thousand people there and it was shoulder to shoulder in all areas on both days. Table Tennis was one of 10 sports which included the usual indoor and outdoor games plus Carrom which is a mixture of several board games.

On the Friday evening with some helpers we put up 8 of the 12 tables and left the volunteers to put up the rest. Of course no such thing happened!! We

had breakfast at the hotel but found we could have had it at the KLy. The SSPC took over the top floor for the opening ceremony which was obviously entirely of a religious nature. The other umpires arrived to find us shoeless in semi-darkness whilst trays of lighted candles were passed around with prayers being said from the front of the hall and chanting from the audience. The lucky umpires were George T, David E, Bob M, Frank S, T Davies Lillian P, and Alan H.

The standard was mixed with some up to county level but the biggest problem was the multi sport aspect of the event. There was no proper liaison between TT and the other sports so there were long periods of doing nothing. There was no PA system. As I recall there were never any of the promised coffee or tea either. Lunch was a surprise. We all trooped up to the first floor and joined an endless queue only for several ladies to take charge of us and take us to the head of the queue - we really did stick out like sore thumb in our blue blazers. All the food was prepared on site by the Birmingham chapter of the SSPC. The umpires went home about 5pm and we got down to the final stages soon afterwards. The finals were left over till Sunday in the main hall. There were bleachers all round and Lillian took the ladies to one end of the hall then came 4 Badminton courts and then the men's final table. All the results were on a huge screen down one side of the hall. This was the first time I had umpired where the audience cheered if a player made a mistake and the noise was horrendous. Feeding was the same again on Sunday so this time we turned up for breakfast as well and we went to the head of the *Q* again.

We did not get asked back for 2001!! Looking back on these words and they are not good enough to describe the week-end - it was so different.

Mike Payne.

MINUTES OF AETTU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING BULKINGTON VILLAGE CENTRE 2PM SUNDAY 9th AUGUST 2009

In attendance: George Tyler (Chair), Derek Sherratt (V. Chair), Steve Welch (Treasurer), Tom Purcell (Secretary), Stan Clarke (Ctte), Geoff Taylor (Ctte), John Lawton (Ctte), Dave Goulden, Bob Montgomery, Dot Macfarlane, Brian Watkins, Jim Kenny, Bill Moran, Russell Sutcliffe, Connie Moran, Margaret Welch. **Meeting commenced 14.15 hrs.**

1. Chairman's Welcome. The Chairman, George Tyler, welcomed everyone to the 2009 AETTU A.G.M.

2. Apologies: Dave Edwards, Alan Harwood, Neil Curtis, John Hardcastle, Eileen Allison, Lewis Ward, Tim Harris, John Mackey, Ron Douglas, Bob Williamson, Dave Cochran, Mike Payne, Lillian Payne, Barry Grainger, John Appleton, Terry Boxall, Janie Kirby, Gill Smith, Derek Sideaway, Ken Elliot.

3. Minutes from AGM 2008: Proposed by Stan Clarke and seconded by Dave Goulden that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Carried.

4. Matters arising:

Action 1: Secretary to circulate copy of Stuart Sherlock's report to all members - Completed

Action 2: Secretary to circulate copy of joint AETTU/NURC meeting to all members - Completed.

Action 3: Secretary to circulate details of ETTA insurance and restrictions to all members - Completed. Russell Sutcliffe asked about restrictions linked to the ETTA Insurance. Secretary pointed out that the insurance covered all umpires travelling to and from official ETTA tournaments and during tournaments. It also covered umpires working at overseas events. Bill Moran pointed out that there were age and medical restrictions on the insurance. General discussion on this subject and secretary agreed to obtain more detailed information about the insurance and circulate to members.

Action 1: Secretary to obtain and circulate details of ETTA insurance and restrictions.

5. Chairman's report.

Chair reported on the increase in membership since the last AGM. He also pointed out

that we should try to recruit new members. Chair reported that colleague Ray Lavin has stood down as an umpire after his complaint against Dennis Neale. Ray is a loss to the umpiring community but players now know that they will not get away with abusing umpires. Chair also reported that the "ETTA Handbook for Umpires" was not yet ready for circulation by the NURC but hopefully will be distributed in the next couple of months. Chair also thanked Geoff Taylor for the creation and distribution of the Magazine which appeared to be well received by everyone **Action 2: Secretary to inform NURC of Ray Lavin's decision.** Chairman's report proposed by Bill Moran and seconded by John Lawton - Accepted and carried.

6. Secretary's Report. The report was circulated and the following items were Highlighted:

A) **Umpires' Uniform.** The debate has been running for over 12 months and continues. The AETTU survey showed that there was overwhelming support to continue using the English Uniform. The NURC therefore decided to put the subject on the back burner until a later time. At the last National Council the NURC did recommend that the English umpires' tie should change from blue to red and this would allow the tie to be used at ITTF events.

Secretary also reported that the two uniform suppliers that had been identified by the AETTU had supplied a number of jackets to colleagues.

B) **Selection.** Secretary highlighted the concern from colleagues about the lack of clarity around the selection of umpires for events. This had come to a head at the Glasgow Commonwealth Tournament. The NURC seemed to have listened to the concerns because the Selection policy had been brought up to date and was now published on the umpires' page on the ETTA website.

C)

Tournament. The Secretary reported that the umpires' tournament had been a success and it was planned to hold another tournament in 2010. Date and venue to be arranged.

Secretary highlighted that the AETTU was for the benefit of all umpires and that the Association must be seen to be working in partnership with the ETTA. There was general discussion about the content of the report. Some umpires still had concerns about the selection process.

Secretary also pointed out that although the ETTA wanted to change to a red ETTA tie and use it at ITTF events, the ITTF uniform regulations stipulated that a red tie must be used with an option of the ITTF logo. It did not mention an Association tie.

Action 3. Secretary to highlight tie discrepancy to the NURC. Proposed : Russell Sutcliffe. Seconded Bill Moran. Report accepted and carried.

7. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer submitted his report to the meeting. The Association finances showed a balance of £1421.00 at the end of the financial year. This was an increase of £96.00 compared to the last financial year. Membership has now increased to 89 members. A few members, had dropped out of the Association because they were no longer active, however, overall the numbers had increased. There was a general discussion on the report at the conclusion of which it was accepted. Proposed: Stan Clarke. Seconded: Russell Thornton. Report accepted and carried.

8. Auditor's Report.

The treasurer reported that the accounts had been audited by John Mackey who was due to attend the AGM. Unfortunately he had withdrawn from the meeting at the last minute. He did however forward an e-mail to the meeting confirming he had audited the accounts and that they were in order. Proposed: Dot Macfarlane. Seconded Bob Montgomery. Accepted and carried.

9-12 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 un-opposed.

13. Election of Committee:

There had been no nominations for the 4 committee posts and the current post holders were therefore re-elected un-opposed.

14. Election of Auditor.

Re-elected un-opposed

15. **Changes to Constitution:**

Previously circulated with agenda

a) The Secretary advised the meeting that at the 2008 AGM Stan Clarke had proposed that the number of elected Committee members should be increased from four to five so that the number of elected committee was more than the number of Officers. This was to ensure that the business of the Association could be discussed in a democratic manner and the views of the members could not be overly influenced by the Officers. There was a general discussion on the subject and the proposed change to the Constitution was unanimously accepted.

Proposed: Stan Clarke. Seconded Derek Sherratt Accepted and carried.

b) The Secretary advised the meeting that at the 2008 AGM the subject of Junior membership of the Association had been discussed and it had been suggested that the position of "Junior Member" should be created. This proposed change to the Constitution and had been circulated for discussion at the AGM, however, the AETTU Committee had discussed the subject and had decided to withdraw the proposed amendment On the proposed change the Committee decided that there was no difference between a full member and a Junior member.

There was then a general discussion about membership of the Association. The Constitution described a Full Member as "a person who is a qualified ETTA umpire". John Lawton asked whether Full Membership included Local and Junior Umpires and other umpires who had not attained the County umpire qualification. **Action 4.**

Secretary to contact NURC re definition of "Umpire"

16. **Selection:**

The subject of Selection had been discussed earlier in the meeting. Secretary repeated that an improved policy and guidelines on Selection was published on the Umpires' page on the ETTA website. There was a general discussion on the subject. Members welcomed the update on the selection policy but there was concern about how umpires would be selected for the English Open. Treasurer reported that a panel of Richard Scruton, Stuart Sherlock and himself would be responsible for the selection at the Open. The panel had not yet met but SW ensured members that selection would be fair and equitable.

17. **Uniform.**

Discussed earlier under the Secretary's report Chair reported that at National Council the NURC Minute's were always discussed near the end of the agenda and quite often there was no time to discuss issues raised from the NURC minutes eg. Blazers, ties^ DS reported that the late submission of NURC minutes had been raised more than once. Chair commented that the late submission of NURC minutes did not give NC members sufficient time to prepare and there was often no time to have a full discussion on agenda items. Chair reported that to the Chair of NC, Alex Murdoch had pointed out that the congestion on the agenda at NC was often caused by member^ raising topics which should be discussed with the Vice Chairs of the various committees before the NC and thereby reduce the time discussed at NC. Only if ^eioS could not be resolved should they be brought to NC. ~

After a general discussion it was suggested that the Chair should contact the Vice Chair to highlight the the problem with NURC minutes. Agreed.

Action 5. Chair to contact Vice Chair Competitions re NURC Minutes.

18. **Umpires Tournament**

Discussed earlier under Secretary's report.

19. **A.O.B.**

a) **Players behaviour.**

Treasurer reported that the ETTA were looking at the penalty process for players receiving yellow and red warning cards. It has been discussed that the current process was not being effective and that a stricter penalty process may be required. There was a general discussion on the subject and it was agreed that some players did appear to be repeat offenders. Lynda Reid advised the meeting that if penalties were increased they had to be considered against penalties that were given out by the Disiplinary Committee on other issues. Treasurer asked members to forward any particular opinions on the subject to him for further discussion.

b) **Umpires' page on ETTA website.**

Secretary reported that he was pleased that the selection process had been

updated on the umpires' page on the ETТА website. He asked members what other items should be on the site. There was a general discussion on the subject and the following subjects were suggested.

1. TT Laws and Regulations and updates
2. News items from the NURC
3. Uniform suppliers
4. Details of umpires
5. Training items

Action 6 Secretary to contact John Mackey, site manager, to suggest the above.

c) Membership.

John Lawton asked whether members of the NURC should be members of the AETTU. There was a general discussion on this topic and it was overwhelmingly agreed that membership of AETTU was open to all umpires. Chair stated that was not an "us and them" in this area and membership was open to all umpires. Secretary pointed out that AETTU members on the NURC were acting in their own right and not representing the AETTU. Secretary also agreed that membership of the AETTU was open to all umpires.

d) Entrance fees at ETТА events.

John Lawton asked the meeting whether qualified umpires attending ETТА/ITTF events as spectators should receive reduced entrance fees. There was a general discussion about the subject. Stan Clarke pointed out that Counties received complimentary tickets to all the events which could be used by umpire spectators. It was also highlighted that if umpires received cheap tickets then all the other volunteers/ match officials/ ETТА workers could demand the same.

e) Magazine

Geoff Taylor reported that he had circulated the latest edition of the AETTU magazine. It had cost slightly more than the last edition because of the new AETTU badge on the front of the magazine was in colour. There was a general discussion on the subject and it was unanimously agreed that the magazine was well produced with interesting items. Derek Sherratt highlighted his "News Items" page and hoped that members would submit items for the magazine without producing large articles. Dot Macfarlane advised the meeting that the cost of sending the magazine to associate members overseas could be very expensive. Treasurer advised the meeting that he would monitor the magazine costs with the editor and highlight any problems to the committee.

The date for the next magazine had not been arranged but Geoff Taylor reminded the meeting that the magazine was for members and that articles should be submitted from as many members as possible.

Chair thanked Geoff for preparing and circulating the magazine. Secretary asked whether the magazine could be circulated electronically. After a general discussion members stated they preferred a hard copy of the magazine.

Meeting concluded at 16.15 Hours

FOLLOWING DEREK THE BAGGAGE HANDLERS ARTICLE IN LATEST
MAG. THOUGHT YOU MIGHT APPRECIATE THE ATTACHED!

This came from a September 1951 copy of 'Table Tennis'
(So nothing much is new, is it).

"NEW SERVICE" Kit for UMPIRES

"Just the Job" — *Armchair critics review* This
will solve all New Service Problems

Contents include:

- 1 Tin Plasticine For levelling off hollow palms.
- 1 Spirit Level The hand must be flat in a horizontal plane.
- 1 Straight Edge..... The fingers must be straight.

- 1 Feeler Gauge The fingers must be together.
- 1 Wedge The thumb must be free.
- 1 Plumb-line Ball must rise vertically upwards.
- 1 Cine camera with tele -
photo lens Ball must not spin before contact with the bat.
- 2 Theodolites To observe imaginary continuations of the
sidelines.
- 1 Periscope To keep an eye on the striker - out meanwhile.
- 1 Packet Voice Pastilles For obvious reasons.

Now in Production

Available soon

Sent in by Alan Duke.

A LEARNING CURVE

I recently read David Edwards's piece on the ETTA Website 'How I became an umpire' and this sent me reflecting on my early experience which threw up some contrasting thoughts.

For many years I was a medium fish in a small pool, and as a County Umpire rarely travelled more than 20 miles; height of my season would be the Midland 3 star or a County Championship Event.

Eventually I succumbed to the persuasiveness of local colleague Brian Watkins and started to find pastures new; the rest is history as they say. The 'World is your oyster' is another platitude sometimes quoted.

It would be fair to say that for most of the period between gaining my county badge and the next rung up the ladder, almost 10 years, I was mostly on my own; not quite self taught, but left to my own devices. Even when I started the epic journey, through many Open Tournaments, the learning process consisted of mainly watching other umpires on court and listening to their diatribe whilst eating my dinner.

The problem is, with the pearls of wisdom, you pick up some dodgy stuff as well. It is not that my new colleagues were reluctant to help; there is a problem of time and I found that most umpires were rather reticent in criticising you to your face. They were hardly likely to say 'well you made a dogs breakfast of that, didn't you'?

The result was that it took rather longer to realise that I was probably not following tried and tested 'on court procedures': Something that perhaps went unnoticed in a village hall during a Junior Division 3 County Championship match raised a few eyebrows in more exulted company.

I am of course generalising and some of my new colleagues were very helpful in my development. Of these one man stood out, the late Jack Randell, who, when I quizzed him, would reply "now lets first see what the book says": having done that, he would then continue "however if so and so" In this way the jigsaw gradually came together.

I am afraid that there is no easy way of learning; one has to submit oneself to the grindstone that is the domestic scene to acquire what I call a rounded apprenticeship. A learning curve is what mathematicians call asymptotic; that is, one never actually achieves perfection and an umpire is just as likely to face his or her nemesis in the under 12 Championships as in an Olympic quarter final. The old soccer adage applies 'you are only as good as your last match'

This is where I think the holding of regular seminars would be of benefit. Here speakers can differentiate between good and bad practice in an impersonable way. I would also like to see a mentoring system introduced whereby new umpires could serve a form of apprenticeship under the watchful eye of an experienced colleague. The cost could be funded by the new budget allocation and would go some way to redress the chronic decline in numbers.

At the end of the day the progress or otherwise of an umpire is up to himself. Implicit in the experience covered by David's paper is dedication. The World can indeed be your oyster, but you have to work at it. An umpire may not have the opportunity to officiate at an Olympic Final, but they can at least aspire to it.

Derek Sherratt

Canons **Park** table tennis courts vandalised

Wednesday 29th July 2009

By Jack Royston

These are the remains of table tennis surfaces smashed by "mindless vandals" less than a week after they were unveiled at a Harrow park. •

Police believe a "heavy implement", some residents say a sledge hammer, was used to break two concrete tables on Friday night, leaving them strewn across the new playground in Canons Park.



It must have been done with a sledge hammer because the tables were re-enforced concrete underneath. It could not do that by hand.

The new playground in the park, off Whitchurch Lane, had it officially opening on Sunday 19th July, after being in use for several months.

Friends of Canons Park helped Harrow Council and politicians campaign to get Lottery funding for the revamp for around six years before the project was eventually awarded £85,000, pooled with £50,000 from the council. Sharon Graham, a member of the group's committee, said "The vandals have made a terrible mess of the tables and one was completely smashed up. "I just don't know why someone would want to take away the pleasure that people have been getting from them. When I went to the playground, there was a father and son standing there with table tennis rackets literally just hitting the ball to each other because they could not use the tables".

The table tennis tables will be replaced, but obviously its tax payers who will foot the bill and not the mindless vandals themselves.

Points of view

Is the "Blue Badge" system spoiling the umpire fraternity. If an umpire is unable to travel abroad for various reasons it means it would be a waste of time him taking the Blue Badge examination and so he would be penalised in attending any World, European, Commonwealth and ITTF events that take place in **this country** even though he is more than capable of doing his duties correctly, so he will have to travel around the country doing the run of the mill tournaments and British League events. is **this correct**

John Lawton IU

CHANGE YOUR THINKING

It will take 37 seconds to read this and change your thinking.

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time on his back

The men spoke for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been to on holiday..... Every afternoon, when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his room mate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine this picturesque scene. One warm afternoon, the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man could not hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Days weeks and months

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to look at the real world outside. He strained to slowly turn to look out of the window beside the bed..... It faced a blank wall

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

EPILOGUE:

There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy.

"Today is a gift That is why it is call *"The Present"*

This article was sent to me by John Hardcastle