



## ***WARREN SPRING TABLE TENNIS CLUB NEWSLETTER***

### **Annual Club Subscriptions**

There are still some members who have not paid their membership fees. Make it a New Year resolution to pay in early January. If you are not sure whether you have paid then give me a call and I will tell you.

### **Cup Round-Up**

In the Willmott Cup quarter Finals for premier teams our A team of Arron Beckett, Simon Proffitt and Angela Smith completed a whitewash against Royston A the match finishing when a winning score of 0-6 had been reached.

Two days before the A team match, our B team were battling in the same competition against Bedwell B. The result a 5-2 win which was a good result against a team containing Shahid Jamil and Thermal Udamulla two players who can be very dangerous on the night. Isaac remained undefeated whilst Marek and John McCance lost to Udamulla and Jamil respectively.

In spite of two wins by captain Paul Waterman, our F team were unable to proceed through to the McClaughlin Cup semi-final for division one sides losing 3-6 to Royston C. Paul accounted for both Derek Fuller and Hayden Gowan but lost out to Mike Malone. Unfortunately, whilst Matt Hellon played controlled table tennis throughout the evening he was unable to get onto the score sheet leaving Roy Jager to bag our only other success beating Hayden.

Having lost to Royston E 8-2 (the divisional leaders by a mile) just one week earlier the J team's confidence of winning this McClaughlin Inter Cup game was not very high.

Luckily for us one of their strongest players was not available so our optimism was on the rise before the 1st game began.

Dante had a slightly shaky start driving straight to the venue from Bristol and dropping the first game against Sean Loffman before closing out the match 3-1.

Gary got off to a flyer against Val Parkes (winning first game 11-2) before Val sadly turned the tables and won the next 3 (albeit 2 of them were quite close).

I then struggled to beat an in-form Fred Bendall in 5 (Dante had a similarly tight match with him but was also victorious).

The crunch/grudge match of the night was between myself and Val Parkes (who beat me at Royston the previous week in a close 5-setter with her getting masses of nets and edges)

Although Val won the first leg, I managed to out-manoeuvre her in the next 2 and finally defeated her 12-10 in the 4th.

This brought us a 5-2 victory and by far the best team performance of the season.

We decided to play the last 2 remaining games and won both giving a final score of 7-2. Not a bad turn around on the week before.

Special credit should go to Gary for a very mature and patient performance and to Dante who secured the all important 4<sup>th</sup> win

*Thanks to captain David Kells for this write-up*

In the Henderson Cup for division three teams our L team are through to the semi finals beating Royston F by 8-1, whilst our N team received a walkover when Christchurch could not field a side.

### **League Round-Up**

**Warren A – 8** Tom Carr, Simon Proffitt, Angela Smith

**Hawks – 2** Nick Hart, Steve Kolodzinski, Keith McConnell

This was a very good win for our A squad against a team that had lost only one match previously this season and kept us in joint 1<sup>st</sup> place in the premier division.. It says something for the way our team were playing when Hawks player Nick Hart on 86% ended the evening losing all three games. The Hawks two wins came from their Bedfordshire county player Keith McConnell who defeated both Tom and Angela..

**Warren G – 7** Rob Worrell, James Abrams, Pooja Sharma

**Settlement Ravens – 3** Cliff Pearce, Alan Foard, Roy Lunnon

This win took our G team to the top of division one, although only three points separate the first four places. Captain Rob Worrell lead by example in gaining a maximum three wins being ably supported by James (2) and Pooja (1). Rob and James also took the doubles. After the match Rob praised his team of juniors. "I cannot win a match by myself" he commented, "the youngsters in my team are really playing well and coming good at the right time".

**Warren M – 8** Nigel Gibson-Birch, David Cunningham, Alan Harding

**Cornerstone – 2** Simon Odell, Andrew Yates, Andrew Hills

This fixture epitomises all that is fine and noble in amateur sport. We may not aspire to the giddy heights of technical excellence seen in the divisions above but when our fixture was so needlessly disrupted by what was supposed to be the election of a Police Commissioner, commandeering the Village Hall our nearest rivals in Division 3 could have taken all ten points for want of a venue. But no, without hesitation Cornerstone upheld the spirit of fair play and offered to reschedule so that the match could be played. Upon rescheduling, we set about the game with enthusiasm unbounded and nailed them running out winners by 8-2. The sentiments set out above are all very well BUT ITS

WINNING THAT COUNTS. Mostly it was pretty plain sailing but Alan Harding likes to put us through the ringer. Most of his opening games go to five and this was no exception. On this occasion he did not manage his Houdini-like escape but did go on to take one match of three. The Cunningham – Gibson-Birch doubles team continued their fine run of form to round off a very successful evening. The real winner however is good sportsmanship and all credit to Cornerstone for that.

*Thanks to M team captain Nigel for this report.*

### **English National Junior Championships**

These Championships featuring the very best juniors in the country took place at the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield over the weekend of 24/25 November. The club had two representatives, Isaac Beevor and Pooja Sharma both of whom had to qualify in order to get to this final stage. The boy's group matches were first and Isaac found himself drawn against Daryl Gee (Yorks) England No 12, Gabriel Achampong (Middx) England No 18 and Adam Curran (Northumberland) England No 58. The opening match-up saw Isaac take on Daryl and what a thrilling match this turned out to be. Our young man is playing really well this season and this was borne out when he managed to level the score at two games all. Unfortunately, Daryl's fire power was just too much in the final game but this was a really creditable performance against a much higher ranked player for which Isaac should be proud. A typical battling performance saw him overcome Curran but a victory against Gabriel (which would have taken Isaac into the first round proper) was not to be as the hard forehand hitter came through in four games.

In the girl's event, Pooja was placed in group 12 alongside Lucy Zhu (Sussex) England No 11, Nicole Bird (Northants) England No 21 and Danielle Eden (Cheshire) England No 35. Unfortunately for Pooja she had had no chance to knock and warm up and so suffered in her first game against Nicole who came out of the traps like a greyhound. In her second match against Danielle (a difficult opponent who used pimples on her backhand) Pooja struggled to come to terms with the rubber and soon found herself 0-2 behind. However after receiving advice from coaches John and Roger she stormed through the next three legs 11-8, 11-2, 11-4 to seal a victory. In her final match against Lucy, Pooja produced some fine table tennis in a match full of good rallies but was not quite sharp enough against an extremely quick and hard hitting opponent. So, both our youngsters knocked out in the group phase but that in itself is an indication of just how competitive these championships were.

### **Club Tournament 2013**

Our annual club tournament will take place over the weekend of 23<sup>rd</sup> / 24<sup>th</sup> March.

The format will be a little different this time. On the Saturday afternoon (23<sup>rd</sup>) we will have the division three singles competition and on the Sunday morning (24<sup>th</sup>) the Division One/Two singles. The afternoon will be given over to a competition featuring our Premier Division players and those who have played up for a team in the premier. The day will finish with a handicap competition open to players of all standards and the other event finals. The handicap will be best of three sets up to 21 points with five services each. All other competitions will be played according to normal rules.

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU PUT THESE DATES INTO YOUR DIARIES NOW.**

**Entry forms will be sent out to everybody early in the New Year.**

## Sunday Junior Coaching

In the last few months, the club's junior coaching scheme held at the Hitchin Boy's School has gone from strength to strength. There are now some 40 youngsters signed up and most Sunday's see a regular attendance figure of around 25 all of whom wishing to become good players. An intermediate session is run twice a month by John Giles whilst a mixture of coaches and volunteers turn up each week. Praise should go to David Kells who not only looks after things on the table but also handles the vast amount of administration that is needed in order to ensure things run smoothly. Since the scheme began some 7-8 years' ago, several juniors have gone on to succeed in higher competition and to become England ranked players including Isaac Beevor, Tom Baines, Charlie Baines, Glen Verdon and Pooja Sharma. Currently we have eleven juniors playing in the North Herts league and so the future looks very secure indeed. Apart from John and David I would like to take this opportunity to thank club members Erol Hasan, Matt Hellon, Dante Lacorte and Kevin Yao for their support aided by Clint Armstrong (Broadway) and Gordon Barnes (Royston). There is still a need for further volunteers, so if you are likely to have a spare Sunday afternoon free at any time in the future and would like to help then please give either David or myself a ring.



Intermediate junior group pictured with Coach John Giles.

Three of our most promising under/11's are pictured left to right

Miles Bamforth, Bruce Yao and Eve Whittaker



## **A Warm Welcome**

To Mike Guest who joined us a few days ago just before the deadline date for registrations. A vacancy has occurred in our N team playing in division three and so Mike will play for that team for the remainder of the season.

## **Annual Club Dinner**

Please note that the provisional date for our end of season dinner is **Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>**. More information will be forthcoming from our Chairman nearer the time.

## **Club A.G.M.**

A provisional date of **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May** has been set for next year's AGM. Further information will follow in due course.

## **Hobbies & Interests**

A thought occurred to me that in a club of our size there must be many of you with interests that you would not mind sharing with the rest of us. Usually we only meet within the confines of our sport and so very little is actually known about us (maybe a good thing in my case). In the next edition, Robert Chapman will tell us a little about his love of photography especially wildlife photography where he has won many awards. Please do look out for his article.

## **Call for Help**

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January, neither David Kells nor I will be able to attend the club's regular junior coaching session. Chairman Bill has agreed to run the session in our absence but is looking for a couple of volunteers to help. If you think you can spare an afternoon then please let me know and I will pass your name onto him.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

