

# CROWBOROUGH TABLE TENNIS CLUB

([www.crowboroughttc.org.uk](http://www.crowboroughttc.org.uk))

## NEWSLETTER No. 8 – FEBRUARY 2009

### EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This is the eighth edition of the Newsletter, since it was re-introduced in August 2007, and it is sent to members, friends and supporters of the Club. We have a circulation list of 55, 43 sent by post and 11 via email. To save postage costs it would be helpful if you could let me know whether you would prefer to receive the Newsletter by email ([john@sidey.net](mailto:john@sidey.net)) or, indeed, if you no longer wish to receive it – but I hope not!

The usual features appear in this issue with a player profile of Mike Stringer (thanks Mike) and a longer article on the fortunes of our three teams in the Wealden League, now that the mid-season break is upon us. There's also a report on the recent Wealden League Tournament.

The Committee join with me in wishing everyone a rather belated "Happy New Year".

### WEALDEN LEAGUE REPORT

At the Christmas break, the "A" side heads the Division with 196 points from nine games, although Broad Oak "A" are only 27 adrift with two matches in hand. The "B" team has had a good half with 167 points from eight played and is currently fourth. Our "C" team is at the bottom of the Division, but has suffered from cancelled matches and only played six matches with a total of 77 points.

The "A" team has suffered from both Mick Derbyshire's absence through sickness and John Neal being in America for some time. Fortunately Mick was able to start playing again at the end of November, but prior to that it has been left to Michael Gaughan to be the mainstay of the team with support from players from both the "B" and "C" sides.

Nevertheless seven wins out of nine is a very good achievement and with a regular team in the second half of the season, they should be challenging for the title again. Good wins have included a 27-7 trouncing of Herstmonceux "A", 29-12 over Ridgewood "A" and 24-12 against Herstmonceux "B". They have also had close matches with both our "B" and "C" sides, winning by 23-18 and 20-15 respectively. Michael has won 21 out of 24 played. Mick, since his return, has a 100% record from four matches so has lost none of his form and John Neal 10 wins from 12.

Under the captaincy of Bob Fordham, the "B" side has had consistent performances throughout the first half. Excellent wins over Ridgewood "A" by 24-17 and over Herstmonceux "A" by 27-10 have been recorded. With a largely regular team, Mike Stringer has 70.8%, Chris Buck 66.7% and Bob 55.5%. With a match in hand, the "B"s could move higher.

As mentioned the "C" team has suffered from cancelled matches and only played six matches so far. It is hoped that they can progress up the table with their games in hand to come. Nick Dawson has had a good first-half averaging 66%, the highlight being a very good win over Michael Gaughan in the match versus the "A" team.

The mid-table position in the League is very close with just 21 points separating the teams in 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> places, so an exciting second half is in prospect, with the possibility of our teams improving their positions. The second half of the season begins in early February.

Don't forget you can check the latest League Table and results on [www.wealdentabletennisleague.leaguerepublic.com/](http://www.wealdentabletennisleague.leaguerepublic.com/)

## CLUB NIGHTS

It is pleasing to report that the Friday sessions continue to be very well supported with several new faces. These take place at the Scout & Guide HQ in Jarvis Brook between 8pm and 10pm each week.

## FROM THE PAST .....

Scorecard TW League 27/1/87:

Bill Abbott beat our Club President, Mick Chewter, in a close encounter 21-17, 17-21, 21-13.

1976/77 Season:

The Editor, playing for Grieveson Grant then, won the Division Five Average Award in the TW League with 90.74% - if only now!

2001 Club Tournament:

Mike Gorman (now living in Devon) beat Mick Derbyshire in the Veteran's Final by 21-18, 21-19.

1977/78 Season:

Mick Chewter achieved a 40.47% average in Division Two of the TW League.

## "50" CLUB

The winning number in the December draw for £25 was lucky number 7. Congratulations! Many thanks to all those who took part in 2008 and provided valuable extra income for the Club.

It will run again this year and application forms are enclosed with this Newsletter.

## WEALDEN LEAGUE TOURNAMENT

This took place over three Wednesday evenings at Broad Oak Village Hall during January. There was a good entry of well over 30, but rather disappointingly only four entries from Crowborough players, albeit with notable success. The events were the Open

Singles, Handicap Singles, Doubles, a combined Junior/Female and Veterans (over 45).

Unfortunately Nick Dawson could only make the first week and John Sidey, although he reached the Q/Fs of the Handicap, went out of the other events in the early matches. However, both Mick Derbyshire and Michael Gaughan did extremely well.

Mick reached three S/Fs and got to the Final in both the Open and Handicap Singles. In an epic Open S/F Mick came from two sets down to beat Michael Williams (Ridgewood), winning 11-9 in the crucial deciding set. An easier passage in the Handicap S/F saw him ease past James Smith (9) 31-24 off a 2 handicap.

Michael G also got to the Open Final with a 3-0 S/F win over Pam Winter (Herstmonceux).

This was somewhat easier than a Q/F 3-2 win, at 15-13 in the fifth over Mike Gadd (Broad Oak). Michael had another long match in the Veterans 2<sup>nd</sup> Round where he was edged out by Keith Harper, also by 3-2.

In the Open Final, Michael with his loop going well, got the better of Mick and won the title by 11-5, 11-9, 9-11, 11-8. The Handicap Final brought the second Crowborough success with Mick (2), in the end, comfortably beating Pam Winter (6) by 31-23. Well done both!

The Doubles Final was an all Ridgewood affair with Jon Gothard/Michael White winning a hard fought match over Colin Campbell/Mike Richardson at 11-6 in the fifth, despite losing a 2-0 lead. Michael Gaughan did well partnering Eileen Morris (Broad Oak) and they were beaten in the S/F by the losing finalists. Michael Williams took the Vets Event by 3-1 over Keith Harper. In the S/F Michael W got revenge over our Mick with a hard fought win by 9-11, 14-12, 11-9, 11-9. (ED. I think I'll change my name to Mick or Michael - they seem to do pretty well!)

Overall the Tournament was a great success, with a lot of close and competitive games, and was well organised over the three weeks by Mike Gadd of Broad Oak.

## PLAYER PROFILE

### MIKE STRINGER

#### How and when did you start playing?

In 1958, I started playing table tennis at the Brunswick Boys' Club in Fulham. John Hunt, an excellent player and club leader, entered us in the local league in which we finished second behind an all girls' team! Freddie Goodwin coached the team. After Freddie left, I went to Park Walk in Chelsea to be coached by the world ranking Hungarian exile, Joe Somogyi. Sadly, Joe was killed in a motor accident. New players joined the Brunswick and the next year John entered us in the Wandsworth and District League. We started in division five and worked up to division one, winning every division as we did so. Our team consisted of Eddie Lovell (the national champion of Guyana), John Sheen (the first person to coach Darius Knight, the present England number 2) and myself - guess who was the weakest link?

#### What other leagues have you played in and what else have you achieved in your TT career?

Then I met Les Haslam, the England number seven who was to become my best friend. He introduced me to Alan Lindsay's club at Hurlingham Girls' School. Alan was the most accurate player I ever encountered and his was the best club in the country. Every evening, at least five of the ten top ranked players in England were present. I practised there and spent weekends playing tournaments. Alan was invited to provide twelve players to make an advertisement for Whitbread Trophy Bitter. I was amazed when Alan selected me! At filming Ron Penfold, the England number eight, and I were "left over" - all the other players had paired up in advance, none wanting to be with Ron, because he could never do other than play flat out! Not too good under the powerful lights needed for filming. I nearly died!

I qualified as a coach, was promoted and was lucky enough to work with a few good county standard players. However, I realised that earning a living playing table tennis was not viable and in 1970 went to university for four years. My last tournament was the Middlesex Open where I lost the deciding game at deuce to Graham Sandley, the England number one junior.

In 1977, a friend persuaded me to play in the first division of the Acton and District league. He did so

by humiliating me in a "friendly" match. After two years I managed to get my own back by beating him in another "friendly" match. However, the demands of work convinced me to give up league play at the end of the 1978/79 season. I didn't play again until Nick Dawson was working at my house in 2005. Nick persuaded me to try Crowborough Table Tennis Club and the rest is history as they say.

#### What has been your best individual win or best moment in TT?

It is immodest to say what was my best win. However, I do have many significant losses to my credit! My two best "results" were getting to the quarter-finals of the Welsh Open and the other was during England vs Yugoslavia at Newbury in December 1968. Brian Wright lost the first set to the European champion, Dragutin Surbek. At the change of ends Brian, a player I knew well, was standing next to my chair and, as the England coach said nothing, I suggested a different tactic. Using his great skill and the modest suggestions I had made, Brian changed his game and won his match. Afterwards, Brian rushed over to shake my hand and embrace me, even before he telephoned Mary, his wife. My best moment in table tennis!

#### Your worst moment in TT?

My worst moment was in the final match of the preliminary rounds in the English Open. A Kent county player (2 sets to 1 down and 17/12 down on my serve) cheated and went on to win. Len Pilditch, the Middlesex non-playing captain, told me I would have played for the Middlesex Seconds had I won. Happily, the Kent player lost easily to Chester Barnes.

#### Interests outside TT?

Other than table tennis, my main interests are my family, Fulham Football Club, reading and an interest in quizzes. Ritchie Venner, the Sussex number one, is responsible for this interest and most Tuesdays we play table tennis (he plays and I try) and then go to a quiz. Ritchie is exceptional at quizzes and his general knowledge puts mine to shame. Incidentally, his dad, Harry, coached my first coach Freddie Goodwin. A coincidence that dates me somewhat!

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