

CIPPENHAM TABLE TENNIS CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT 1984-5

INTRODUCTION

The season just finished will be remembered as one of the most important in the club's history. Success on the table has become almost a habit as our teams and players have swept all before them in the last two years, yet this season was also a difficult and, at times, traumatic one for the club.

The highlights were a second successive double of Slough and Maidenhead league titles, the move to a multi-table venue, the commencement of a junior coaching scheme, the trauma of sponsorship dealings and the recent decision to withdraw from the National League.

MEMBERSHIP

The number of full members of the club rose from 23 to 33 while another eight represented the club in matches, making a total of 41 players who appeared for the club over the last twelve months. The club operated seven teams in the Slough League, an increase of one, and two in the senior section in Maidenhead, also an increase of one. In addition the club entered a team in the Maidenhead Youth Division for the first time. Thus a total of eleven teams were run, including one in the National League. We still have some way to go before we once again run eleven teams in the Slough League as we did some years ago.

During the season Frank Earis made his 300th appearance for the club while Dave Pountney celebrated his 200th. Graham Trimming and Peter Hillier have the most with 568 and 383 respectively.

ADMINISTRATION

In the club's busiest season administratively the Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting last May met seven times. Official positions of Coaching Administrator and Venue Liaison Officer were created at a Special General Meeting, held in September for the purpose of reconstituting the club for the move to a new venue and potential sponsorship, and filled by the Management Committee. The full committee, with number of meetings attended was:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Meetings attended</u>	<u>Attendance at meeting</u>	
Frank Earis	Chairman	5		
Graham Trimming	Secretary	7		
Peter Hillier	Treasurer	7	26th July	9
Jackie Thomas	Venue Liaison Officer	7	14th September	7
Rodney Potts	Coaching Administrator	5	31st October	6
Ken Phillips	Committee member	5	14th January	5
Gareth Lovell	do.	3	13th February	6
John Lewis	do.	2	20th March	5
Dave Pountney	do.		24th April	4

In a season when a great deal of work was met by an enthusiastic selection of officials and ordinary members, it is disappointing that some committee members failed to honour their commitments.

Thanks are due to the team captains who, in the main, organised their teams in an efficient and responsible manner. The club's notice board was resurrected upon relocation at Haynill and provided a source of information and advertisement.

Once again the club attracted extensive publicity for all its activities in the local newspapers, gaining a total of 1630 column inches with reports submitted by the club. In addition, as champions, the club naturally featured prominently in articles from the two local leagues. The National League team alone amassed 1330 column inches from three papers, which compares favourably with a best ever 1465 from four papers in 1981-2. Coverage actually improved on the previous three seasons when, on each occasion, it was described by the English Table Tennis Association as the best in the country.

The Slough League Management Committee was well blessed with Cippenham members. Graham Trimming acted as Chairman/Fixtures Secretary, Jacquie Farwell as General Secretary, Peter Hillier Treasurer, Rodney Potts Inter-League Secretary and Gareth Lovell as a committee member in charge of the Slough Closed Championship. In addition Mike Davis was Handicap Secretary/Tournament Secretary on the Maidenhead Association committee and Graham Trimming became a Buckinghamshire selector. At the Slough League's Annual General Meeting in May 1984 Peter Hillier was awarded the Joe Coral Trophy, an annual presentation for services to the League and local table tennis.

VENUE AND EQUIPMENT

The much awaited move to Haynill Centre took place on 18th October, providing the club with facilities for four fully screened match courts and five tables in open plan for coaching and practice. This represented a fulfilment the club had long sought after growing out of the single table venue used at St. Andrews Church since the formation of the club in 1973. The physical move was made prior to matches on the opening night through extraordinary effort by many members, and after three weeks of hard work for Jackie Thomas in rearranging matches at St. Andrews. Frank Eavis has represented the club on the Haynill User Group, formed to provide users an involvement in the management of the centre, and which has representatives on the Haynill Management Committee.

St. Andrews has continued to be used for table tennis; the venue being let out to the Buzby and Farnham Royals teams and for Slough League representative matches in the Bucks Inter-League competition. Increases in the charges from £1.00 per hour, to £1.50 on 1st January and £2.00 on 1st April have been incurred in the last year.

The club's objectives in moving to Haynill were described as:

1. to establish a base for the development of Cippenham TTC
2. to provide top class match facilities
3. to provide good quality practice facilities
4. to encourage newcomers of all ages to the sport
5. to establish coaching schemes
6. to quadruple club membership
7. to develop players' abilities through the club, league, county and national competitive system
8. to utilise the expertise of the club's players, coaches and administrators for the benefit of table tennis.

The first estimate of expenditure required to develop the venue fully was presented to the Sports Council as £3361. Current opinions are that this is more realistically stated as £5500. This involves the provision of five Nippon Rollaway tables, one of which was purchased in September, the court surrounds delivered in November, installation of eighteen 200W tungsten halogen lamps and curtaining of 200 square yards of window area. The increase is largely the result of regulations issued by Berkshire County Council that an approved contractor must be appointed for all electrical work, and the necessity for

the curtains to be fire-proofed. Our immediate priority remains the curtaining of the windows. Four of the club's five existing tables were moved to Haynill on opening night, the original Jaques Tournament table, which is now twelve years old being retained at St. Andrews.

The club obtained a license to use a temporary lighting installation for three months and is very grateful to Mike Davis who designed and built a very efficient pulley system to suspend one lamp above each of four courts. A permanent lighting solution has been costed at £1800.

From its opening until mid April the club has utilised the gymnasium at Haynill on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at a cost of £20 per session. Thursdays were allocated for matches in the Slough League and Maidenhead Youth Division while Tuesdays became coaching and practice evening with matches in the senior section of the Maidenhead League. From mid April Tuesday was dropped while Thursday was curtailed to 6.30 to 10.00 p.m. for coaching and practice. From mid June Summer League matches are scheduled from 8 p.m. on Thursday evenings. A return to evenings per week is anticipated for the next winter season.

In November the club played host to the Slough League's annual Hard Bat Tournament as a test to see how the venue coped with a small competition of this nature.

GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP

A grant of £2000 has been made to the club from the Sports Council against £3361 estimated capital investment in setting up at Haynill. To date £670 has been received in support of a claim for £1125 expenditure. This unusually large grant was made after a visit to Haynill by a Sports Council representative where he met club officials, and a detailed written presentation which was made to him by the club.

Slough Borough Council's Lottery Fund has twice rejected applications for assistance, although on the latter occasion it referred the matter to Berkshire County Council. However in financial year 1983-4 the Lottery Fund did make the club a grant of £500 towards last season's National League team expenses. A re-application will be presented on the basis of our withdrawal from the National League. Several more possible sources are known to the club and applications for grant aid are in hand.

A small amount of money was raised following approaches to Slough trading companies in August of last year.

Also in August the club signed a second three year contract with Butterfly (UK) Ltd. for the provision of kit and equipment to the National League team at a significant discount.

During the first half of the season attempts were made by the club to secure commercial sponsorship. An agent was appointed, working for commission fee only, and a prospectus issued to likely candidates. The fee was a large amount of money enough to equip Haynill and subsidise the season. In what turned out to be a most exasperating experience we were led to believe that five companies had shown great interest and the club signed an agreement with one of these. For reasons unknown to the club the prospective sponsor did not respond and much time and energy was expended with a most disappointing conclusion.

FINANCE

The combination of investment in equipment, the high cost of hiring Haynill and the failure to increase fees at the Special General Meeting served to deplete the club's cash resources this season. As at 15th May funds stood at £692 with room hire liability of £58 for the first half of May, making a working balance of £634 compared with about £900 brought forward last year.

Subsidisation of the club's activities cannot continue and increases in fees will be necessary for next season. The Management Committee has been discussing various fee structures and these will be debated at the Annual General Meeting.

During the season the club made an unsuccessful attempt to register for Value Added Tax in order to reclaim input tax paid on equipment purchased for Haynill.

Remembering the fears of some members regarding the possible financial strain on the club through competing in the National League, it is worth noting that the opposite has been the case. After four years the club has £190 left in its National League account which has bought a great deal of equipment at discounted prices, and produced bank interest on the sponsorship funds deposited.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Cippenham's fourth, and most successful, season in the Halex National League was also its last, as the club announced at the end of April that it would not participate next season. The paramount reason was a lack of local players able to compete successfully in a very strong division, and the financial and other problems, such as lessening enthusiasm of the club's officials, that a team composed entirely of players from outside the district would produce.

The team finished a creditable fourth in the Third Division South of eight clubs, eight points clear of teams below, and for the first three months of the season held the distinction of heading the division. Richard Beckham, from London, and Maidenhead champion Steve Everard were signed last summer and took their places in a six man squad along with Ray Tilling, Alec Watson, Clive Young and Frank Earis. In addition Dave Pountney and Graham Trimming were registered as reserves, and the latter made his debut in the very last match. Richard added a solidity to the team at number two, previously our problem position, and finished with the best record. Alec, Ray and Clive also performed well, each winning more than half of his matches, but Steve was unable to reproduce the form he is sometimes capable of. In all, seven of the fourteen matches were won, three drawn and four lost.

Three venues were used for home matches. The first three fixtures were all played in the Lillimar Hall at Slough Centre, used in the previous three seasons, then a move was made to Haynill. The first match there was played in a cold, dank gymnasium before alternative and more appealing, except for a slippery floor, accommodation was found in the main assembly hall with raised seating for spectators on the stage.

Match presentation was completed with Peter Hillier and Brian Jerome as officials, Graham Trimming as announcer and a buffet meal was provided after each match.

A fuller report appears separately.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

National Club Championship

As champions, Clappenham was honoured to represent Slough for the fifth consecutive season in the Conesby Cup, the national mens' club championship. An invitation was also received to represent Maidenhead but this was declined. After the successful run of 1984 we were disappointed at being eliminated in the first round in Bridgewater, to a team defeated 5-1 in the third round the previous year.

Slough League

Champions for the second successive season, and the fifth time overall, the club also emulated it's 1978 performance in providing the top two teams in Division One. Congratulations to champions Buccaneers represented by Dave Pountney, Frank Earis and John Lewis and aided by Steve Everard and Colin Dyke. The equally consistent Outlaws team, who finished one point behind in second place and eleven points clear of the third placed team, were Peter Swinn, Martin King and Graham Trimming.

Our other successful side was the Villains who were entered with only Mike Davis and Frank Cowler as named players. Thankfully newcomers to the area Steve Dorrell and Kay Kennedy joined their ranks and proved highly successful in winning Division Three. Of the other teams Rogues finished eighth in Division One, Vagabonds fourth in Division Two and Rascals also fourth in Division Three. Rebels ended the season propping up every other team in Division Four and did not claim a point until strengthened late in the season. However this represented a bold effort by a very inexperienced team that maintained it's presence after being badly let down prior to the start of the season by the players the team was originally arranged for.

Dave Pountney topped the Division One averages, followed by Frank Earis in second place, Peter Swinn fifth and Martin King sixth. In Division Two Ken Phillips was fourth while Steve Dorrell headed Division Three with Pan Spooner second, Kay Kennedy eighth and Mike Davis ninth.

In the Dalgry Cup team handicap competition three teams, Vagabonds, Villains and Rascals all enjoyed a successful run until beaten in quarter-final matches.

Maidenhead League

For the first time the club entered two teams in the Premier Division of the Maidenhead League. In an extraordinarily successful season the Spartans team did the 'double' of league and knock-out handicap cup playing quite superbly throughout. In the league they finished seventeen points clear of their nearest rivals to retain the championship and have now performed the unique double of Slough and Maidenhead league titles on three occasions. The winning combination was Alec Watson, Frank Earis, John Lewis and Dave Pountney.

The knock-out cup was won despite being the most heavily handicapped side in the competition and their pedigree was never more needed than in overcoming a 350 point start in the semi-final.

Trojans finished eighth in the Premier Division and another first, the Athenians team in the Youth Division, ended the campaign ninth in their section. This was the first taste of competition for our two young ladies, Emma Thomas and Julie Bell.

Alec Watson fulfilled his ambition of winning the Wilkinson Sword, a magnificent trophy awarded to the player with the best average in the Premier Division. Not far behind was Frank Earis in fifth position.

Buckinghamshire competitions

A rare disappointment in a season of triumph came when the club's first team had to concede their first round match in the Buckinghamshire Premier Division Challenge Cup, the county championship. Thus the club lost it's grip on a title it had won previously in the inaugural season of the competition.

The second team also went out in the first round as did the fourth team in the Intermediate Knock-Out Cup, a competition for second and third division sides. However that round presented no problems to our third team although they were then beaten by the Milton Keynes Division One leaders.

Sumner Leagues

Another double, this time the Sumner League titles of both Slough and Maidenhead. The successful duo were Graham Trimming and Rodney Potts, retaining their Slough League title which the club has now won six times in the last eight years.

If not content Cippenham Beta were runners-up in Slough where the averages in Division One were headed by Graham Trimming. He was followed by Bob Keeley second, Rodney Potts third and Gareth Lovell fifth.

In the Maidenhead averages Graham Trimming came second and Rodney Potts third.

INDIVIDUAL SUCCESSES

This season was probably the club's most successful ever in terms of silverware won by individual members. The Slough mens singles events were dominated by Cippenham players as Dave Pountney won the Slough Closed event and Frank Earis both the Slough Masters Tournament, in which five of the eight qualifiers were Cippenham players, and the Hard Bat Championship.

Back to the Slough Closed where Dave Pountney and Frank Earis won the Mens Doubles, with Lincoln Hicks and Roy Mitchell the runners-up, Frank also retained his Veterans Singles title and Steve Donnell won the Division Three Singles event.

At the Maidenhead Closed John Lewis and Dave Pountney played superbly to clinch the Mens Doubles and Alec Watson was untroubled in the Veterans Singles. Mens Singles winner here, and in the Berkshire Closed, was Steve Everard playing at his peak although representing another club while doing so. Also at the Berkshire Closed Dave Pountney, partnered by Peter Swinn representing his Reading club, reached the final of the Mens Doubles, while Jacquie Farwell went one better in winning the Ladies Doubles.

The Veterans Singles final at the Buckinghamshire Closed Championships was an all Cippenham affair with Alec Watson beating Frank Earis, and Graham Trimming reached the final of the Restricted Singles. At the same tournament Jacquie Farwell, representing her Slough League club, was runner-up in the Ladies Singles.

The club produced all four semi-finalists for the Lynford Bowl, the Slough League's individual handicap competition, and this was won as part of a unique double with the Wharton Vase ladies handicap by Pam Spooner.)

Some very respectable results were also produced by our few representatives at the English Closed Championships, none more so than by Frank Earis in reaching the quarter-final of the Mens Veterans Singles. Then Frank followed this up by a similar performance at the VETTS National Championships recently.

Our National League players also won several titles - Richard Beckham the London and National Civil Service championships and the Central London League title, Ray Tilling the Dulwich League event and Clive Young the mens singles title at the Hampshire Closed. In addition Ray also reached the semi-final of the mens singles at the Bath Open.

REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS AND RANKINGS

Alec Watson and Frank Earis were ever present in the Buckinghamshire veterans team that won all its matches to clinch Division 2a of the County Championships and promotion for the second successive season. With five 5-4 wins in their seven outings the team owed their Premier Division status to the magnificent record of Alec who remained unbeaten throughout.

Alec, ranked number one in Bucks veterans, was then added to the mens list at number five after Christmas, and made one appearance for the senior team after an absence of many years. Also called up by Bucks were Julie Bell and Emma Thomas for the two friendly matches arranged for the junior side. Unfortunately Emma was unable to play. Frank Earis was ranked number two in the veterans and then also added to the senior list at number ten in January, while Jacquie Farwell and Jackie Thomas were ranked three and six respectively in the ladies. Jacquie Farwell appeared for the team late in the season.

Over in Berkshire Steve Everard and Dave Pountney appeared on the mens ranking list and were named as reserves for the county team, and Colin Dyke was a regular in the veterans team. Ray Tilling and Richard Beckham both appeared for Kent II while Clive Young was ranked fifth for Hampshire.

After Ray Tilling had become the first Cippenham player to gain an England mens ranking in the previous season he was then joined by Richard Beckham and Alec Watson. Ray's highest position was an excellent 84 while Richard reached 85. Alec made a brief appearance at 198 solely through his results playing in Cippenham matches.

Alec Watson (27), Frank Earis (34) and Colin Dyke (51) all made the England veterans list, and the placings of the first two named should improve considerably after results at the national championships have been included.

Cippenham had ten representatives in the Slough inter-league teams including provision of the captains for all three mens teams, Martin King, Graham Trimming and Rodney Potts. Peter Hillier captained the veterans 'B' team and, in addition, Frank Earis, Peter Swinn, Steve Dorrell, Kay Kennedy, Jackie Thomas and Ken Phillips all appeared for the town.

During the season Buckinghamshire inaugurated a computer ratings scheme, points being won by players through wins in local league, inter-league, closed championships and other competitions. In the only list published, in December, thirteen Cippenham players appeared headed by Alec Watson (7) and Frank Earis (17).

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

This season the club championship was held on a March Sunday afternoon on five tables in the gymnasium at Haynall. Members of the club's coaching scheme were invited to compete in two junior events, one handicapped, while senior league players had five events including, for the first time, separate mens and ladies singles.

Organised by Jackie Thomas, the tournament was a great success although an unfortunate clash of dates with the Berkshire Closed meant the loss of six top players. The total entry was twenty-six, split equally between seniors and juniors. The children especially enjoyed their first competitive experience and organised a fund-raising refreshment stall. For the first time in many years the club championship did not make a financial loss.

Frank Earis won the mens singles, while Jackie Thomas collected the ladies singles and Morgan Stevens made it a day to remember by winning both the junior events. Kay Kennedy was a popular winner of the handicap singles and partnered Frank to victory in the handicap doubles while Graham Trinning and Rodney Potts captured the championship doubles.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Coaching

On November 20th the club commenced a weekly junior coaching scheme on Tuesday evenings 6.30 to 8 p.m. A successful start was made with all the participants being beginners and has continued since though changing to Thursday evenings after Easter.

Initially attendances averaged ten but an improvement has been evident since the change of day and a recent session attracted a best ever eighteen. The sessions have been organised by Rodney Potts and he has received great support from Ken Phillips, Graham Trinning and Jackie Thomas with Frank Earis, Mike Davis and Terry Stevens all assisting fairly regularly. On most occasions there has been one adult "feeder" on each of five tables. After the initial enthusiasm the support of other members has not been encouraging and it has so far proved impossible to produce the intended rota.

Practice sessions

Initially pre-season practice sessions were organised at St. Andrews for the purpose of enrolling newcomers to the club, then after the move to Haynill in October regular Tuesday sessions on four tables were held from 8 to 10 p.m. The response has generally been disappointing, with the majority of participants being non-members of the club, and the expected attraction for newcomers to take up the sport has so far not materialised. A change to Thursday evenings after Easter was made with a view to the possibility of improved attendances through a reduced incidence of clashes with matches.

Social events

The club took a table at the Slough Sportsman's Ball held at the Fulcrum Leisure Centre in February and was also represented at the Mayor of Slough's reception for a "handing over ceremony" of the sponsorship for the National League team from the Borough's Lottery Fund.

A table was also taken at the Maidenhead Association's presentation dinner dance in May.

Slough Health Habit

The club, along with many other local sporting organisations, has lent it's support to the Slough Health Habit, a pioneer venture in Slough, aiming to reduce heart and arterial disease, set up by the local health authority.

The scheme commenced in May with a Health Fair and Fun Run in which the club had four participants.

Graham Trinning
May 1985