

Cippenham Table Tennis Club

Annual Report 1996-7

Introduction

This report summarises the twenty-fourth and by far the most important season in the history of Cippenham Table Tennis Club.

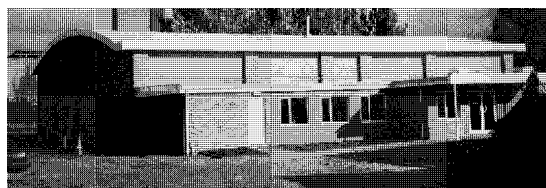
In the last year Cippenham Table Tennis Club has changed immensely. After nearly five years of planning the doors of the new purpose built Cippenham Table Tennis Centre were opened on 1st October 1996, a move that has revolutionised the sport in the Slough area and provides the basis for the development of the Club and the sport in the time leading up to and into the next millennium.

There were so many highlights in the last year that it is difficult to summarise. Here are some of the most important:

- the opening of the new Centre of 1st October;
- the first international matches at the new Centre;
- the use of the Centre for the prestigious National Junior and Cadet Masters;
- the first open tournaments to be organised by the Club at the Centre;
- Gareth Herbert's first senior cap for England, and Martin Rule's call up for the cadet team;
- Gareth's other successes including the retention of his national junior title;
- a win double for Gareth and Jesper Hougaard at the National Junior and Cadet Masters;
- Slough's victory in the Leach Cup with all players coming from Cippenham;
- the creation of a *Top Club* style coaching model at the Club;
- the continued success of our players in team and individual events;
- the expansion of our interest in British leagues with womens' and veteran mens' teams;
- the tremendous energy shown by the Club's management in the day to day operation of the Centre;
- the Club's nomination as the ETTA Club of the Year.

Opening of Cippenham Table Tennis Centre

The opening of Cippenham Table Tennis Centre last autumn was by far the most important event ever in the history of table tennis in the Slough area. Nearly five years after the original concept was created, the doors were finally opened on 1st October. The health and safety plan was signed only at 4 pm that afternoon, providing the way for league matches to commence at 7.30 pm. The first ball was hit at about 6.50 pm by Graham Trimming, Secretary since the founding of the Club in 1973, and mastermind behind the building project.



The Centre is a joint project with The Westgate School and is used by the School during school hours for a variety of sporting activities. Outside of schools hours, in the evenings, weekends and holidays it is used exclusively by the Club for table tennis. The Centre is managed by Cippenham Table Tennis Centre Limited, a company formed by the management of the Club for the sole purpose of managing the new facility. The Board of Directors includes ten Club members who have recently been joined by the acting Headteacher and Chairman of the Board of Governors from the School.

The result of many thousands of hours of hard work by members of the Club's Building Committee is the creation of the finest table tennis centre in Britain. With a playing hall measuring 25m by 22m it is not the largest, but overall the Centre is considered by many people to be the best in the country. Members of the England team who practise at the Centre have indicated that the playing conditions are the best to be found.

The Centre comprises a playing hall with adjacent storage, plus an amenities area which includes a 69 sq.m. lounge bar area with kitchen which has a full width glazed screen providing great views over the playing area. This facet of the design has been very favourably received by visitors. There is a spacious reception area and an office which doubles as

a control point for tournaments. Mens' and ladies' toilets are supplemented by a disabled toilet and shower facility, while a link has been established to the School's existing changing rooms which have had their shower areas completely renovated.



The Club is indebted to the Building Committee: Alec Watson (Chairman); Graham Trimming (Secretary); Steve Joel; Frank Earis and Steve Crow, whose efforts over the past five years have been so richly rewarded. During the building stage a working group was set up meeting on Fridays afternoons at the School. This group was Graham Trimming (CTTC); Wendy Armstrong (The Westgate School); Paul Baker (ETTA) and Derek Hampshire (Archadia Chartered Architects). Thanks are also due to this group of people. Having Paul available as the ETTA Facilities Officer as well as being a Club member

was of enormous benefit to the project, as was the fact that Steve Joel was working for the Sports Council and therefore had specialist knowledge of the Lottery Sports Fund.

There are still a few snagging to overcome on the site and the roadworks and car park areas have recently gone out for a separate tender. This work will be completed in the summer of 1997. When complete the final cost of the project will be about £520,000 and external funding has been secured from:

National Lottery Sports Fund	£277,157
Funding Agency for Schools	£105,000
The Foundation for Sport and the Arts (through ETTA)	£70,000
Sports Council (Southern Region)	£30,000
The Westgate School	£20,000
Slough Borough Council	£8,200
Slough Social Fund	£4,000

The Centre was officially opened on 15th April within a ceremony organised by the English Sports Council to celebrate the first £50m of funding to be granted by the National Lottery Sports Fund to projects in the Southern Region.

Membership

The opening of the new Centre has brought with it a remarkable increase in membership. In 1995-6 membership of the Club stood at 60. Now it has grown to 153 although the introduction of a family membership scheme has included in this figure about 20 non-players. Apart from the attraction of top class practice facilities, membership numbers have been swelled by in the inclusion of all of the advanced and elite coaching squads. Some of the attendees at beginners' coaching have not yet joined the Club so the figure could have been even greater.

Membership fees were reduced last summer to make annual membership financially more accessible. Annual fees are £10 for adults and £5 for students and OAPs with any number of the same family at the same address being granted membership for just £17.50. The principal of the fee structure at the Club remains on the basis of "pay as you play".

Members are only permitted to use the Centre when it is officially open. The only exceptions to this are key holding Privileged Members. These are Management Committee members and young players such as Gareth Herbert, Martin Rule and Jesper Hougard who have been granted special rights to practice facilities as elite performers.

Over the past twelve months a total of 87 players have represented the club in match play, about twenty higher than the previous record. Twenty-six teams were entered into various leagues during the past season, four more than in the previous season, and this number now includes three in British leagues - womens', veteran mens' and junior boys. Eighteen teams operated in the Slough League, twelve in the senior divisions and six in the Woolwich Junior League, while the usual two mens' and one ladies' teams were entered into leagues run by the ETTA Southern Region and a re-entry was wade into the Maidenhead League with two teams.

Wendy Barlow celebrated her 200th appearance for the Club in the past year and four players made it to the first century: Jane Dickens; Sue Markwell; Chris Davies and Mike Snape. The all time leading appearance list now reads:

Graham Trimming	1168	Frank Cowley	363	Dave Pountney	276
Peter Hillier	686	George Appleby	356	Steve Crow	268
Frank Earis	650	Gareth Lovell	348	Jacquie Lovell	246
Ken Phillips	533	Rodney Potts	316	Wendy Barlow	218
Jackie Thomas	385	Alec Watson	301	Anna Watton	204
Neil Bird	374	Mike Rhodes	297	Steve Dorrell	201

Administration

Last May the structure of the Management Committee was changed. There were no places for general committee members, all those elected took an office. The purpose of this was to reorganise the management structure of the Club by using more sub-committees to undertake the day to day work with the departmental heads reporting the work of their sub-committees to the main Management Committee. To a large extent, this experiment has not worked, largely because two of the offices, that of Club Captain and Events Officer have been unfilled during the season. The role of Club Captain was established to co-ordinate all of the Club's teams, and the fact that the odd team has failed to operate as well as would have been liked is principally because no member came forward at the AGM to fill this task.

The Management Committee met fourteen times, many more than in any previous season, and including four times in three weeks around the time of the move into the new Centre. Constitution and personal attendances were as follows:

Name	Position	Meetings	Attendance	
Alec Watson	Chairman	10	June 18th	5
Graham Trimming	General Secretary	14	July 9th	6
Peter Hillier	Treasurer	13	August 7th	6
Ken Phillips	Deputy Chairman & Coaching Officer	14	September 16th	7
Mike Rhodes	Bookings Officer	14	September 23rd	6
Steve Joel	Public Relations Officer	8	September 30th	7
Jacquie Lovell	Social Officer	12	October 9th	7
Neil Bird	Events Officer	0	October 28th	6
Neil Bird resigned from the Committee on 7 th July.			November 18th	5
			December 17th	6
			January 16th	5
			February 27th	6
			March 27 th	6
			May 14 th	7

Due to pressure of work Steve Joel was largely inactive in his role as Public Relations Officer from mid October to March.

A sub-committee took on the following aspects of the Club's administration:

Coaching: Ken Phillips, Steve Joel, Chris Dickens, Richard Davidson, Alan Farral

Thanks are due to all who have contributed to the administration of the club, including all the team captains. Unfortunately the Club Chairman, Alec Watson, is standing down at the Annual General Meeting after ten years in the office.

As always the Management Committee of the Slough League had a significant Cippenham contingent. Graham Trimming completed his sixteenth year as Chairman and twenty-second as Fixtures Secretary, while Mike Rhodes has completed his seventh as Inter-League Secretary. Ken Phillips (Coaching Co-ordinator), Katie Dickens (Junior Representative), Gareth Lovell and Armando Borges also served on the Committee.

Peter Hillier has now completed his tenth year as Treasurer of the English Table Tennis Association, but has decided to retire from this position at the AGM in June. English table tennis owes a debt of gratitude to Peter for the immense amount of work he has done in this capacity over the past decade. For the Buckinghamshire County Association Ken Phillips has continued in his role of Coaching Officer. Graham Trimming was honoured with a Vice-Presidency of the Bucks Association last summer and recently received the ETTA Merit Award for services to the Slough League.

Paul Baker is employed full time by the ETTA as Facilities Officer while Steve Joel now works for the National Lottery Sports Fund at the Sports Council.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the past year was the nomination by the ETTA of Cippenham as the table tennis representative against all other sports in a Club of the Year competition organised by the CCPR. We did not win the £10,000 first prize but nevertheless to be considered as England's leading club over the past year was a great fillip.

Finance

The Club has had a very successful year financially, surpassing our expectations about the financing of the new Centre. The Club remains a members' club running its finances in much the same way as previously with the exception that it now pays rent to Cippenham Table Tennis Centre Ltd rather than to an outside body. Management accounts have been produced each month since September and these consolidate the results of the Club and the Centre - essential for an understanding of the true position. At the 30th April year end, the rent payable by the Club to the Centre has been calculated in such a way as to leave a £1 surplus over the year in the Centre's accounts. This shelters the Centre from

any exposure to Corporation Tax, which the Club does not pay as its income is derived from members' subscriptions.

The surplus shown in the Club's accounts is £2,544 and the balance sheet reveals a net worth of £5,972. However, the accounts have been drawn up using estimated figures which could turn out to be inaccurate. We currently have no indication of expense for local authority rates, gas heating or water services. The total accrued for in the accounts for these unknown costs is £2,905. In addition, although the School has charged electricity expense to the Centre it is on an estimated basis as the specified separate metering facility has not been installed by the builders.

There are loans outstanding to members from the Centre totalling £5,000. These were required to fund the investment in furniture at the Centre and are due for repayment on or before Autumn 1998. It is expected that these loans will be repaid as soon as the second tranche of National Lottery funding is received. Cash balances aggregate to £9,221 while creditors and accruals utilise £8,873, leaving a unallocated cash balance of only £348.

Members this season paid an annual fee of £10 plus Slough League fees of £10 and Maidenhead League fees of £15. Match fees, practice fees and coaching fees were all £3, halved for juniors and OAPs. Practice fees for non-members carry a 50p (25p) surcharge.

A deal has been negotiated with Jarvis Sports who are the official suppliers of kit and equipment to the Club. All purchases this year will produce a 5% sponsorship next year.

Public Relations

Publicity surrounding the Club has been at a much higher level this season following the opening of the Centre. The local press carried articles about the Centre during the building phase and then very extensive publicity surrounded the actual opening. All major events at the Centre have been reported in the press as has the success of our members through their individual achievements. Most of the press reports this season have been written by Graham Trimming.

Spots on local radio and even one on television followed the news of the opening of the Centre and one issue of the ETTA Southern Region newsletter *Spin Into Action* featured the Centre very heavily.

Four Club Newsletters have been produced in folded A3 format. These have been well received by members and visitors and provide the reader with reports of events that have happened and news about events yet to occur. These and the well maintained notice boards at the Centre are an important source of information for everyone. The Newsletters have been produced by Steve Joel and Graham Trimming.

The Club has chosen the Donic World Championship Collection as its official kit and many members have purchased the tracksuit, shirt and shorts. All shirts and many tracksuit tops have also had the Club's professionally designed logo printed on the back.

Last summer the Club once again participated in the Slough Festival. Three tables were taken out into Upton Court Park along with the ball feeding machine. Many new people tried table tennis during the day.

Venue utilisation

The Club continued to use the facilities of the Haymill Centre until 29th September. This included a regular weekly practice session with Summer League matches running concurrently, and the SMACC advanced coaching on Monday evenings throughout the school summer term.

After 1st October we had the use of our own purpose built facility. The days of fighting for space at Haymill and paying exorbitant rents for the privilege suddenly finished. We were now the masters of our own destiny but with the huge responsibility of managing a £520,000 facility funded by public money and the need to develop activities quickly so as to recover all the associated running costs.

Two principals were established: that weekdays should be regular events, and that weekends should be filled on an ad hoc basis with no regular weekly events impeding this. The weekday format agreed upon was as follows:

Monday	5.30 to 7.30 pm	Advanced coaching group
	7.30 to 9.30 pm	Elite coaching group
Tuesday	5.00 to 7.00 pm	Beginners' coaching
	7.15 to 11.00 pm	Local league matches
	7.30 to 11.00 pm	General training
Wednesday	5.00 to 7.00 pm	Champion Coaching
	7.30 to 11.00 pm	Grand Prix tournament

Thursday	5.00 to 7.00 pm	Beginners' coaching
	7.15 to 11.00 pm	Local league matches
	7.30 to 11.00 pm	General training
Friday	7.30 to 11.00 pm	General training

Unfortunately, two events - Wednesday Champion Coaching and Friday general training - were discontinued at Christmas because of lack of interest.

Members of the Club have often been treated to a special exhibition of table tennis skills if they have been lucky enough to be present when some of England's leading players have been training there. England number one Matthew Syed is a regular visitor and he is often to be found playing with his national team colleagues Alex Perry and Terry Young. Gareth Herbert, of course, also uses the Centre as his training base and he is usually in the company of Scottish number one Ewan Walker. Other leading players were spotted at the Centre in the days and weeks leading up to the World Championships in Manchester.

Many weekend dates have been sold to outside events which will be detailed later in this report, and by Club tournaments. There were few dates during the season when the Centre remained empty.

Social Amenities

One of the best features of the design of the Centre is the lounge bar area with its viewing aspect into the playing hall. This area doubles up as a snack area at tournaments during which the (small) kitchen has coped remarkably well with the demands placed upon it. This is due in no small way to the skill and hard work of the Club's Social Officer Jacquie Lovell and her staff, especially Pam Dickens and Alan Farral. John Raemers has also been invaluable to Jacquie in a consultancy role.

The lounge has become a magnet for players at events while they are not actually playing. Many members and visitors prefer to sit inside the lounge area where they can eat, drink and talk rather than stay in the playing arena.

A full on-licence was obtained about a week after the opening of the Centre and the bar has proved to be both popular and financially lucrative. The bar hours are Tuesday to Thursday 9 to 11 pm when the Centre is open and at weekends when required. Prior to Christmas it was also open on Friday evenings. The licensees named are Jacquie Lovell and Ken Phillips.

All the major events at the Centre have had their catering needs satisfied and this includes a reception for the teams and officials and the Deputy Mayor of Slough after the European League match with Germany.

A party was arranged in the bar during the week before Christmas and this was well attended by members and their families.

There are strict laws regarding the sale of food and drink to the public. With this in mind Jacquie Lovell attended courses for the National Licensee's Certificate and Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and passed both examinations. Jacquie then passed on the knowledge gained to prospective staff by conducting two training sessions where she was assisted by a speaker from the Fire Service.

A cold drinks vending machine has been in operation from day one for the benefit of members and visitors and recently a pay telephone has also been installed.

Outside Events

The Club has been very successful in marketing the Centre for outside events. Extensive use has been made by the ETTA Southern Region, Buckinghamshire County Association and the Slough League. In addition, the Club was pleased to be able to promote three prestigious ETTA events for which we granted the ETTA a free venue.

The first of these was a mens' friendly international match against Slovakia on 9th November, not even six weeks after the opening of the Centre. This was the first international match in Slough since the early sixties. To add more excitement to an already overwhelming evening our own Gareth Herbert made his senior debut for England in this match. Slovakia won the match 5-2 but not before the 160 crowd had been treated to the most amazing display of exhibition play by Matthew Syed. What a night! Such was the successful way in which the Club organised its first big occasion, we were soon rewarded by yet another international match, the European League Semi-Final 2nd Leg match between the ladies' teams of England and Germany. The might of Germany carried the day 4-0 before a crowd of about 100. The third prestigious event was the English National Junior and Cadet



Masters tournament featuring the twelve best players in each age group, boys and girls. This was made even more special by the fact that Gareth Herbert and Jesper Hougaard won the two boys events between them. It just can't get better than that!

A full list of outside events is as follows:

ETTA:	International matches (2) National Junior and Cadet Masters National Junior Coach usage
ETTA Southern Region:	Junior Preliminary Trials Junior Training Days (3) Coach Education Courses (2) Coaches Get Togethers (2) Southern Region Ladies' League sessions (2)
Bucks County TTA:	Junior Closed Championships Mens' Inter-League (2) Junior Inter-League Cadet Inter-League County matches (2 dates)
Berks County TTA: Slough League:	Berkshire Closed Championships Slough Closed Championships (2 days) Slough Masters Tournament Woolwich Junior League (6) Inter-league matches
Slough Council:	Champion Coaching sessions (10)

Club Events

Open Tournaments

Three open tournaments were staged by the Club at the new Centre, a quarter of a century after the last such event in Slough. All were Two Star events and all ran very successfully. In December we started with the Cadet Open, followed by a Veterans' Open in February and a Junior Open in April. A further veterans' event is planned for June.



The Cadet Open had an entry of 55 - slightly disappointing but probably caused by late production of the entry form. The veterans yielded an entry of 68, one more than the junior event. The Club also tasted quite a lot of success in the male events at these tournaments. The Boys Singles final at the Cadet Open was an all Cippenham affair with Martin Rule defeating Jesper Hougaard. Mike Rhodes was runner-up in the Mens' Singles at the Veterans' Open while Jesper Hougaard was similarly runner-up in the Boys Singles at the Junior Open.

Ken Phillips was the Organiser of the Cadet and Junior tournaments with Mike Atkinson acting as Entries Secretary. Graham Trimming ran the Veterans Open. All events were refereed by Mick Strode or his deputy.

The Centre lends itself very well to tournaments of this kind - singles only in groups of four with the top two in each group going forward into the championship, while the third and fourth placed go into a consolation event. Maximum numbers that can be accommodated are 96 for juniors and 80 for veterans.

Members' Tournaments

Entry forms for the proposed Handicap Tournament in November were not produced in time and the event was cancelled through lack of entries. The events were added to the Club Championships in March which produced a record 39 participants. A schedule of winners can be found in the appendix.

Invitation Tournament

The tenth annual Cippenham Invitation Tournament was the first weekend event to be played at the Centre. The usual date half way through September was delayed by four weeks to accommodate this. An entry of ten teams was accepted and a good day's play was enjoyed by all. It was fitting that the event should be won by the Cippenham "A" team of Steve Joel, Mike Rhodes and Kimber Choda.

Grand Prix

Wednesday evenings at the Centre are now Grand Prix evenings. The philosophy is to create a different sort of competitive table tennis opportunity which will attract players of all standards and provide opportunities for new members

who may not be able to get into one of the Club's teams. Each series of tournament runs for twelve weeks (Autumn 1996 was only ten weeks due to the late opening of the Centre) and competitors are awarded points for their performances in each of the weekly competitions which are aggregated to decide the overall winner. Martin Rule was the winner of the Autumn 1996 competition while Graham Trimming won in the Spring of 1997.

Team Competitions

National Competitions

The Club increased its membership of British leagues to three teams this season and has plans to double that number for next season. A womens' team and a veteran mens' men were added this season to the junior boys' team that was started in 1995. Next season a mens' team is planned together with a further junior boys' team and a junior girls' team. All three teams this season played in the format of two weekend sessions at central venues.

Pride of place this season goes to the womens' team who won Division 3 at their first attempt. To enable the Club to enter a team in this competition it was necessary to recruit new players and Sue Collier, Isabel Walker and Claire Plumridge were signed up to supplement Jacquie Lovell and Jackie Thomas. All the players performed well especially Sue Collier who was unbeaten and played in every match.

The junior boys' team were elevated from Division 3 the previous season to Division 1 despite finishing only fifth in 1995-6. They performed well at the higher level, finishing fifth. The veteran mens' team played in the new feeder competition, divisions 4 and 5. Placed into two groups of equal standard they played well to finish second in Division 4a in the first weekend. This placed the team in Division 4 for the second weekend where they found the opposition a little too strong. In fact, this division was of a much higher standard than Division 3!

As champions of the Slough League, the Club was once again invited to represent the town in the Ormesby Cup, the national club knock-out championship. However, in our first match we ran into a strong Ashford team and were beaten 5-1.

Southern Region Leagues

These competitions were very disappointing this season especially in respect of the inadequacy of the organisation of the leagues. The Premier Division, in which our "A" team were due to play, did not even commence its fixtures. The "B" team operated in a truncated First Division of only four teams on a home and away basis and finished third. The ladies' team played in three sessions and because they could field a strong team on only two of these occasions did less well than in previous seasons and also finished third.

Slough League

The Club fielded a record twelve teams in the senior divisions of the Slough League this season: six in the top division and two each in the other three. The Club's record equalling thirteenth championship title was won by a group of young teenagers in the form of Gareth Herbert (16), Martin Rule (14) and Jesper Hougaard (13). This Vagabonds team was ably supported by team captain Ken Phillips and Stan Mathurin. It is doubtful whether the Slough League title has ever before been won by a such a young team. Gareth remained unbeaten throughout the campaign and the other boys also produced tremendous results.

With teams also in third, fourth and fifth places the Club dominated the top half of Division One except for the presence of a Burnham team in second place. The Club's other team teams finished ninth and tenth. Our two teams in Division Two came in fifth and sixth while Rascals were successful in securing promotion back to Division Two by becoming runners-up in Division Three. At the other end of the table Bandits were bottom of Division Three and our two teams in Division Four finished sixth and eighth.

In the Division One averages Gareth Herbert was first followed by Steve Joel (2), Kimber Choda (3), Jesper Hougaard (4), Mike Rhodes (6) and Tarn Gascoyne (7). In Division Three Chris Davies was fourth followed by his son Philip in fifth place.

Most of our teams fulfilled their fixtures but Rebels failed to play their two matches with a Wamdsad team and these were declared void. There were a few problems with the Brigands team who failed to turn up altogether for one match and several other times were short of a player. Many complaints were also received about the lateness of time that they arrived for matches.

Slough Woolwich Junior League

Despite a rule change in 1996 which permitted players to compete in both the senior divisions of the Slough League and the Woolwich Junior League, the Club's top players this season opted out of the latter. The Chalfont club put in a very

strong team so the Club's domination of the Woolwich competition was ended. Our six teams finished third in Division One, first and sixth in Division Two and the other three filled the bottom three places in Division Three. This competition was run on six Sundays at Cippenham.

Urchins were our most successful team: Jonathan Branfield and Daniel Savage winning Division Two and these two players also filled the top two places in the averages.

Maidenhead League

After a gap of one year the Club re-entered the Maidenhead League with two teams in the Premier Division. They finished third and fifth. The Trojans team was entered principally to give our junior players more experience at the top local level.

Summer League

Three teams were entered into the Slough Summer League last year with only Alpha, who finished third in Division One, finding any success. Four teams have been entered for the 1997 competition.

St. Ives Inter-Club Competition

Cippenham entered teams for the second time in the junior team competition at St. Ives. It turned out to be a wonderfully successful day for the Club as the Cadet "A" team won their age group without losing a set all day, the Junior "A" team and the Under-12 team both came second and the Cadet "B" team came fourth. Players for these teams were drawn from the Club's advanced coaching group and their success in this competition proves yet again that the Club has one of the strongest coaching set-ups in the country.

Coaching

During the summer of 1996 coaching continued at Haymill Centre on Sundays with SMACC (Slough and Maidenhead Advanced Coaching Centre) operating on Monday evenings. Since the move to the new Centre coaching activities have been increased dramatically. There are now two beginners' sessions each week between 5 and 7 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, where any players can come and be taught the basics of the sport. These have been run by Ken Phillips, Alan Farral, Richard Davidson and Rhys Evans with help from other players as well. Until Christmas the Club was also operating Champion Coaching on behalf of Slough Borough Council. This was on Wednesday evenings from 5 to 7 pm but folded through lack of interest.

SMACC has now been incorporated within the Club's sphere of management and extended to a maximum of twenty players in two groups on Monday evenings. All the players attending the advanced groups are specially invited and come from the Club's core of players and other coaching groups in the area. The structure that is already in place via this advanced group is very similar to that being proposed for *Top Club*, a Youth Sport Trust initiative, for which the Club has been accepted at the excellence level for a pilot scheme. In Ken Phillips, a Level 4 (Senior) coach, the Club is very fortunate in having someone with the skill and dedication necessary to fulfil our young players' ambitions.

One to one coaching also takes place at the Centre with Ken Phillips and Colin Wilson, while the National Junior Coach also uses the venue for coaching some of the England junior squad. During the Easter holidays there were four one day training camps organised for Club members by Ken Phillips.

One of the first events at the new Centre was a Level 2 coach education course lasting twelve hours over two days in October. Coaches from all over the region attended this course which was specially beneficial to some of the Club's student coaches. The Leo Thompson Memorial Trophy for the most improved junior in the Slough League was awarded to Jesper Hougaard.

Tournament Success for Individuals

This has been a remarkable year for the Club's members. A list of their achievements can be found in the appendix. Although many of the Club's senior players have been successful, especially in local tournaments, it is the younger players that carry the Club's reputation on the national scene.

Pride of place obviously goes to Gareth Herbert who retained his national junior singles title and looks set to make it a hat-trick next year. Gareth is so far the best (male) player that Slough has ever produced and is virtually unbeatable on the junior scene in England. Not only did he win the English junior title but also the Under-21 title last Summer and was runner-up in the Under-18 event. Gareth has now been champion at Under-12, Under-14, Under-15, Under-17 and

Under-21 levels. For his outstanding success Gareth was voted Slough Council's Most Promising Sportsperson for 1996.



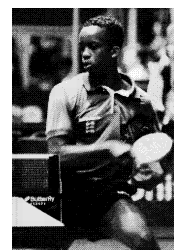
In a wonderful day at Cippenham in April Gareth Herbert and Jesper Hougaard between them won both the boys' titles at the National Junior Masters, Gareth winning in Under-17 title and Jesper surpassing all expectations in securing the Under-14 title after a pulsating final.

Club members dominated the Slough Closed Championship with all the major titles coming to the Club. Samantha Marling won all three championship events open to her, while Steve Joel picked up the coveted Mens' Singles. Martin Rule dominated the junior events, as Jesper Hougaard had done at the Bucks Junior Closed. In the Slough Masters Martin Rule fought his way through to the final but not even he had any chance against the might of Gareth Herbert.

Representative Honours and Rankings

An incredible 46 members of the Club have appeared on England ranking lists this season. Gareth Herbert is the only player to have made it to number one, being at the pinnacle of the junior boys list all season. He has also reached 24 in the mens' list while Neil Charles is only nine places lower. Sue Collier is our top ranked woman at 15 while Samantha Marling's highest position in the year was 29. Others who feature in the top ten of their age groups are: Martin Rule and Jesper Hougaard, both highest fourth in the cadet boys; Robert Wilson (4), Johnny Davidson (6) and Joe Ferguson (8) in the Under-12 boys and Gemma Chapman (7) in the Under-12 girls.

Two players have played for England this season. Gareth Herbert has been an established member of the England junior team for some time. This season he made his senior debut at the never to be forgotten occasion in November when England played Slovakia at Cippenham. In April he also played for the England mens' team in the Commonwealth Championships in Glasgow picking up a gold medal in the process. Gareth was also selected to play in the individual events at the World Championships in Manchester. Martin Rule also finished the season on a high note when playing for the England cadet boys team at the Spanish Junior Open.



Nine players who represent Cippenham in the Slough League have played for Buckinghamshire this season, while 24 have represented Slough. Martin Rule, Jesper Hougaard and Nicholas Wilson comprised the Slough cadet boys' team which won the national Leach Cup for Slough last June and are once again in the final. Martin, Jesper and Gareth Herbert, representing Slough in the junior Carter Cup are also in next month's final.

Congratulations to all the organisers, players and teams that have made the past season such a special one for Cippenham Table Tennis Club.

Graham Trimming
May 1997