

CIPPENHAM TABLE TENNIS CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT 1993-4

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the twenty-first season of Cippenham Table Tennis Club, and its tenth since moving to the present multi-table headquarters at Haymill Centre in October 1984.

The highlights of the year were the championships of the Slough League and the Southern Region Ladies' League, the continued surge up the rankings of Gareth Herbert, and the progress towards the club's own purpose built facility.

MEMBERSHIP

Over the past twelve months a total of sixty-eight players have represented the club in match play, and sixty-two have held full membership of the club during the winter season. Both these figures are slightly down on the record levels set the previous season. With non-members regularly attending club practice and coaching sessions, there are now over eighty players associated with the club in one way or another. Cippenham Table Tennis Club remains one of the largest and most successful sporting organizations in Slough.

Twenty-three teams were run in various leagues during the past season, equalling the record of the previous season. Seventeen teams operated in the Slough League, eleven in the senior divisions and six in the Youth, while two more played in the Maidenhead League. Four teams were entered into the Southern Region League, a record for any club, and these included a ladies team.

Graham Trimming, founder of the club in 1973, became the first person to register 1000 appearances for the club. It is likely to be many years before another player emulates this feat. Frank Earis made his 600th appearance for the club he joined in 1975, and Dave Richards reached the 100 mark. The all time leading appearance list now reads: Graham Trimming 1020, Peter Hillier 657, Frank Earis 602, Ken Phillips 489, Jackie Thomas 365, Neil Bird 341, Frank Cowley 327, Rodney Potts 322, Alec Watson 294, George Appleby 289, Gareth Lovell 279, Dave Pountney 276, Steve Crow 269 and Steve Dorrell 200. The busiest players over the past year were Graham Trimming, Ken Phillips and George Appleby with 46, 42 and 41 appearances respectively.

ADMINISTRATION

The Management Committee, elected at the Annual General Meeting last May, met eleven times, more than in any other season. Constitution and personal attendances were as follows:

Name	Position	Meetings	Attendance
Alec Watson	Chairman	9	July 13th 8
Graham Trimming	Secretary	11	August 17th 10
Peter Hillier	Treasurer	9	September 7th 8
Ken Phillips	Deputy Chairman	11	October 27th 7
Mike Rhodes	Venue Liaison Administrator	10	November 24th 8
Neil Bird	Press Secretary	9	December 20th 8
Richard Ford	Coaching Administrator	4	January 24th 7
Steve Crow	Commercial Development		February 16th 8
	Coordinator	7	March 21st 5
Frank Earis	Committee member	2	April 6th 6
Ping-Yau Lee	Committee member	2	May 10th 6
Jonathan Phillips	Committee member	7	

Steve Crow was co-opted onto the Management Committee on 17th August.

Sub Committees took on several aspects of the club's administration:

Building:	Alec Watson, Graham Trimming, Steve Crow, Frank Earis
100 Club:	Ken Phillips, Jonathan Phillips, Ping-Yau Lee
Commercial Development:	Steve Crow, Neil Bird, Frank Earis, Jacquie Lovell
Anniversary Tournament:	Neil Bird, Ken Phillips, Mike Rhodes
SRL Selection:	Mike Rhodes, Ken Phillips, Rhys Evans, Wendy Barlow.

The Building Sub-Committee, as might be expected, was by far the busiest, meeting ten times between June and January, and holding many other meetings with third parties. The Commercial Development Sub-Committee, a brain child of Steve Crow, has yet to meet, while the Anniversary Tournament Sub-Committee was set up to run the event of the same name which unfortunately was cancelled through lack of interest.

Thanks are due to all who have contributed to the administration of the club, including all the team captains without whose efforts there would be no club.

As always the Management Committee of the Slough League had a significant Cippenham contingent. Graham Trimming completed his thirteenth year as Chairman and nineteenth as Fixtures Secretary, while Mike Rhodes has completed his fifth season on the committee and his fourth as Inter-League Secretary. Gareth Lovell resigned his official posts last summer but still played a part submitting important press reports, while Mark Dozell joined the committee as Treasurer. New member Filippo Rotunno is Auditor of the Slough League, the same position Graham Trimming fills at Maidenhead.

Peter Hillier has now completed more than seven years as Treasurer of the English Table Tennis Association, a very busy office, as is to be congratulated for the immense amount of work he did in connection with the ETTA's staging of the European Championships. Graham Trimming has for the sixth season been the main organizer of the Southern Region leagues in his position as Match Secretary. For the County, Ken Phillips has continued his roles for the Buckinghamshire Association as Coaching Secretary, Treasurer, and representative on the Southern Region Committee.

For the first time there has been a person employed full-time in table tennis in the Southern Region, and we are very fortunate that the person chosen to be the Regional Development Officer is Cippenham member Steve Joel. Steve has been extremely successful in his first months in the post, and it is to the club's advantage that we have our "own man" in the Sports Council's offices in Reading.

Ken Phillips' activities in the sphere of coaching extend beyond Cippenham, as he plays a major role at the Maidenhead Association's weekly class. Last summer he was again involved in organising the week long Bucks School of Sport, and until a few months ago held the post of Assistant Staff Coach for the ETTA Southern Region.

Frank Earis has represented the club on the Cippenham Neighbourhood Forum.

Much coverage of the club's activities has been enjoyed in the local press, with the Slough Express, Slough Observer, Maidenhead Advertiser and their sister newspapers reporting all major events including matches in the Southern Region leagues. In addition, of course, the club's exploits in the local leagues attracted coverage, as did the success of our players in local tournaments. Five club members, Graham Trimming, Ken Phillips, Wendy Barlow, Gareth Herbert and Steve Joel, have also been interviewed by Slough's new radio station Star FM about table tennis activities.

During the year the club has been registered with the E.T.T.A. Join A Table Tennis Club Campaign and three representatives of the club attended the ETTA's "Growing for Growth" seminar at Marlow in September.

VENUE AND EQUIPMENT

Until such time as the club is required to equip its new building, it is not proposed to make any significant investment in new equipment. Ten new screens were ordered at the start in August 1993 but the seller failed to deliver these. This order would be repeated if an inexpensive supply of screens was identified. Otherwise, the £5500 investment made over the period between the end of 1984 and early 1986 continues to meet our requirements. The club justifiably boasts having the finest playing conditions, an opinion shared by many visitors including those in the Southern Region leagues. For match and tournament play four Butterfly Nippon Rollaway tables are used, each court individually enclosed and lit by four 500W tungsten halogen lamps permanently attached to the ceiling at a height of eighteen feet. For practice and coaching five or six tables are erected.

Due to the demands placed upon storage capacity at Haymill over the past few years, some equipment has deteriorated faster than expected. The court surrounds are now stored on two brackets and this system protects the main frame of the screen, but generally the surrounds are in poor condition. One of the Nippon tables requires replacement wheels but these are proving difficult to source.

The Haymill gymnasium has been used each Thursday throughout the year, and Tuesdays during the winter and summer league seasons. Eight Slough League teams have utilised Tuesday, with the remaining three Slough League teams and the two Maidenhead League sides playing on Thursdays. On all occasions space has been allocated for at least one practice table on Thursday evenings throughout the winter. Sunday afternoons have been reserved for coaching, and occasional use has been made at the weekend for matches in the Southern Region leagues, with the club's two tournaments being played on Saturdays.

The Slough League has made use of Haymill on six Saturday afternoons for its Youth Division, played on six tables. In addition the Mens Division A of the Buckinghamshire Inter-League Championship was staged on a Saturday at the club.

The club still has a few shirts with the name of the club printed on the back. These are available for purchase by members.

BUILDING PROJECT

In January 1992 the club established a Building Sub-Committee whose remit was to assess the feasibility of the club building and operating its own premises. This was in response to the creation of the Foundation for Sport and the Arts with an annual budget of forty million pounds to grant to sport.

The Sub-Committee comprises Alec Watson (Chairman), Graham Trimming (Secretary), Steve Crow and Frank Earis, and has now met a total of thirty times, not including the many other meetings that have been held with third parties, e.g. Slough Borough Council, building contractors and architects, schools personnel, ETTA, Sports Council, suppliers etc. A great deal of work over thousands of hours has been undertaken and the club owes a great debt to the members of this Sub-Committee.

A preliminary application was made to the Foundation for grant aid totalling £545,000 in July 1992, however we heard last summer that this had been rejected. Instead the Foundation gave a grant to the ETTA of £500,000 for the express purpose of grant funding regional table tennis centres. At a meeting in June 1993 the Sports Council pledged £100,000 towards the project as the first regional centre to be funded from its Focus Sport programme. As this amount represents 25% of the total annual capital budget for the Southern Region, which has to be spread over five counties and 100 sports, this was indeed a very flattering and generous offer. Subsequently, in February 1994 the ETTA decided to grant the club £70,000 from the funds made available by the Foundation, and Slough Borough Council have pledged £8,200 benefits in kind, including legal assistance and planning application fees. This together with another contribution from the Regional Development Officer's budget, has increased the funds available to over £180,000, and more is expected for funding of equipment.

The club developed plans over the winter for a two-phase building programme, utilising the funds available for a build of the main hall in the summer or autumn of 1994, completing the project with the addition of all amenities when funding is available from the National Lottery. Calculations showed that a Main Hall measuring 32m by 22m could be built for about £170,000, and would include the provision of a semi-sprung maple floor. However, two things have occurred that have now altered these plans. Firstly, the VAT regulations were changed from April 1st, making the provision of sporting facilities by non-profit making organisations exempt from VAT. This has the effect of eliminating the strategy of registering for VAT and claiming back the input tax on the capital cost. Secondly, the Sports Council now appear to have cold feet about allowing a part finished project to proceed in case the second phase fails to materialise. The Sports Council are now suggesting that the club opts for a one-phase build of the entire facility when National Lottery funds become available in the Spring of 1995. From many points of view this makes good sense but leaves the club with the probability that the building will not be complete for the start of season 1995-6.

Another hastily organised change of direction occurred last December, when faced with the necessity to present a strategy to the ETTA it became obvious that the management of Cippenham Middle School, with whom the club had been negotiating for eighteen months, were not able to respond in the short time available. At the eleventh hour the proposed site was changed to The Westgate School, with whom more was accomplished in a few short weeks than in all that time with Cippenham Middle. Westgate has also recently changed its status to being grant maintained with effect from 1st September 1993. Agreements in principle have been procured from the school, the Department for Education and Slough Borough Planning Department.

If the project proceeds in its entirety then the building will be as follows. The main hall will measure 38.5m by 22m, 847 sq.m., and will accommodate a range of table configurations from six in E.T.T.A. Grade 2 conditions, nine to eleven for tournaments, thirteen for practice and nineteen for coaching. In addition tiered seating for 150 spectators will be accommodated and a full public address system will be incorporated. The plans contain a two storey amenities area, with the ground floor including a reception and waiting area, three changing areas, showers and toilets, facilities for the disabled, plus three storage areas. The first floor, accessible by stairs and lift, will feature a lounge bar, cafeteria, kitchen, meeting room and toilets. A glazed screen will run the length of the amenities area at first floor level overlooking the main hall.

All the paperwork has been prepared for the incorporation of Cippenham Table Tennis Centre Limited. Eight members of the club's Management Committee, Neil Bird, Steve Crow, Frank Earis, Peter Hillier, Ken Phillips, Mike Rhodes, Graham Trimming and Alec Watson have signed as subscribers the Memorandum and Articles of Association and will be the first directors of the Company. Graham Trimming will be Company Secretary. The Articles allow for any member of Cippenham Table Tennis Club to become a member of the Company and their liability will be limited by guarantee in the sum of one pound.

The Company will own the building and the lease to the land, and be responsible for financing and managing the facility, and renting it out to parties including Cippenham Table Tennis Club.

FINANCE

For the first time in memory the club has made a financial loss on the season, and it is of significant proportions. The causes were principally the loss of two teams in the Maidenhead League and the resulting loss of income, Haymill's rent increases of last April, Haymill's requirement on the club to take out public liability insurance, and the number of matches not played by club teams resulting in a loss of match fee income and fines imposed by the Slough League.

Members this season paid an annual fee of £15 plus match fees of £3. Practice fees were £2.50 for non-members and £2 for members. All fees are halved for juniors and OAPs. These were not increased from the previous year despite the increased rental charges from Haymill.

Haymill dropped a bombshell in March with the announcement of further and substantial increased charges from 1st April 1994. The main evening rate is to rise from £11.30 per hour to £12.50 but more significantly weekend daytime rates are to rise from £4.50 (£2.26 for junior events) also to £12.50. This caused the club to cancel Sunday coaching for six weeks while negotiations were conducted. A negotiated agreement has been reached whereby Haymill charge the club a monthly rental of £245. This covers all Thursdays from 7.00 to 11.30 p.m. and Sundays from 2.00 to 5.30 p.m. Other bookings will be charged at the prevailing rate with the exception that Tuesday evenings 7.00 to 11.30 p.m. will be charged at two and a half hours only. The nett effect is an annual increase of about 11%.

To raise funds for the building project a "100 Club" was started this season. Members of the 100 Club contribute a £10 stake, and there are to be five draws at which more than half of the money will be returned in prizes. The club will make £150 profit from this and more may be run in the future.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

Southern Region Leagues

Congratulations are due to the Cippenham ladies team of Wendy Barlow and Denise Rolfe for winning the championship of the Southern Region Ladies' League. This is the third time that the club has achieved this honour, to add to our four titles in seven seasons of the counterpart mens' competition.

After surprisingly winning their league in 1993, the mens' "A" team slipped three places this time. The standard in the division was very even and half of the ten matches were won. For the first time a "C" team was entered but neither they nor the "B" team found much success, filling the last two places in Division Two. Whether the entry of a Cippenham "C" team will persuade other clubs to enter lesser teams, thus furthering progress towards a pyramid system in the Southern Region linking local leagues with the regional and national leagues has yet to be seen.

Wendy Barlow and Denise Rolfe finished second and third respectively in the ladies' averages, while Mike Rhodes was seventh in the Premier Division, counting players qualified by playing in half of their teams' matches.

Slough League

Cippenham Outlaws wrested the Slough and District League championship title back from Burnham after finishing runners-up for the past two seasons. This was the club's tenth title since 1978 and congratulations are due to Frank Earis, Mike Rhodes, Graham Trimming and Alec Watson.

With Pirates finishing in third place the club underlined its position as the strongest in the Slough area, further emphasised by two more teams retaining their status amongst the League's elite. Buccaneers had a fairly successful season in Division Two but, unfortunately, Villains slipped into the relegation zone they narrowly avoided twelve months previously.

Rascals, promoted from Division Four in 1993, swiftly made their mark in Division Three, missing further promotion by just one position. Scoundrels, who struggled to raise a team for much of the season slipped to ninth but Bandits face the prospect of relegation to the basement division where Cippenham already has the two bottom teams.

Cippenham has always prided itself on being a club for all standards of players, and the oft quoted phrase "we have the top team and the bottom team in the league, and many inbetween" was never more true or exact.

One could be excused for thinking that the Slough Youth Division is run for the exclusive benefit of the Cippenham club. This is not quite so but it is true that the three top teams all come from here, and for good measure Waifs were runners-up in Division Two.

Congratulations to Urchins, winners of Division One in the guise of Ashley Cox and David Carol, and to Strays (the brothers Sears, Phil and Rob) who were runners-up in the same division. Waifs were represented by Barnabas Tandy and Steven Willis.

The evergreen super-veteran Frank Earis topped the senior Division One averages, and not for the first time. Mike Rhodes was third in the same division, Frank Buisson seventh, Neil Bird eighth, and Steve Crow, Graham Trimming and Steve Joel occupied places ten to twelve.

In Division Two Dave Richards was fifth, while in Division Three Pammi Sohanpaul was sixth and Chris Davies ninth. In the Youth Divisions Phil Sears, Martin Rule, Ashley Cox, David Carol and Rob Sears finished in second to sixth places in the top section respectively, while in the second division Barnabas Tandy and Steven Willis were third and fifth.

In the Dilger Cup, the team handicap knock-out competition, no team progressed beyond the fourth round, but Waifs were successful in reaching the final of the Tunes Cup, the counterpart competition for teams in the youth divisions.

Maidenhead League

Only two teams were entered in the Maidenhead and District League this season, one in the Premier Division and one in Division Three. Spartans slipped one place to fourth in the top strata, still a very creditable performance by the team selected, while Saxons were bottom of the pile in their section.

Summer Leagues

Five teams were entered in the Slough Summer League and one in Maidenhead. The most successful was the Cippenham Alpha team of Neil Bird and Mark Dozell who secured the runners-up spot in Slough Division One.

TOURNAMENTS

Club Championship and Handicap Tournament

Because of the unavailability of suitable dates in the Autumn the annual Handicap Tournament was merged this season with the Club Championship. On a Saturday in April thirty-two players took to the tables for a feast of table tennis lasting twelve hours.

Steve Joel won the Mens Singles for the first time, beating favourite Gareth Herbert in the semi-final, and then 1992 champion Mike Rhodes in the final. Gareth won all the other events he entered including the Championship Doubles with Steve, presenting the latter with the double. Steve could not make it a triple celebration however as he was beaten by Mike Rhodes in the Tweenie Singles. Mike went on to take the title in his last season in this category.

Jackie Thomas won the Ladies Singles from Wendy Barlow won obtained some consolation in the Girls Singles. Graham Trimming was victorious in the veterans event at the first attempt and also picked up the Top 'n' Tail Doubles with Nick Wilson who impressed all with his potential considering he is yet to make his debut in the league. There were two titles also for Frank Buisson and Robert Wilson in the handicap events and a total of twelve players shared the winners medals.

Invitation Tournament

The seventh Cippenham Invitation Tournament was played in September with six teams playing a round robin event. Invitations were accepted by Chalfont St. Peter Community Centre, Den (High Wycombe), Kingfisher (Reading), Burnham, plus two teams from the host club.

All matches were played with the experimental scoring of thirteen-up and at the end of the day it was Den who won the championship after defeating Cippenham "A" into second place in the very last match. Graham Trimming astonishingly went through the day undefeated to be the pick of the Cippenham players.

COACHING

Now into its tenth year, the Cippenham coaching scheme has continued under the expert guidance of ETTA Level 4 Coach (Senior) Ken Phillips, who has been assisted by several of the club's senior players. The scheme operates on Sunday afternoon with two sessions, one for beginners and another for more advanced, and has retained its status as a Club Advanced Centre.

The Leo Thompson Trophy, awarded by the Slough League to the most improved junior, went this season to Tom Baker.

Ken has plans to inaugurate an Advanced Training Centre at the club from next September. This will be an elite squad and so assist the youngsters with the greatest potential.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

For the second year the club partook in the Slough Borough Fun Day outdoors in Upton Court Park. At least a hundred local people, mostly young children, were able to try table tennis or have a go on the "robot" which always proves extremely popular on these occasions.

The club also supported the "Mega Break" initiative of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. During the school holidays four sessions were organised at Haymill during a fortnight in August. These were moderately successful but, like the Slough Fun Day, are a useful way of increasing the profile of the club within local government at a time when the club is looking for support towards its building project.

TOURNAMENT SUCCESSES FOR INDIVIDUALS

This has been a memorable year for individual successes for the club's players, and the list of awards for our junior players in the appendix is certainly not exhaustive.

Gareth Herbert, of course, continues to be the club's star performer on the tournament circuit. Not a national champion this season, although he did win the England cadets ranking trial, but runner-up in both the singles and doubles events at cadet level at the national championships. Gareth still has one year left at this age group so we wish him even more success next season.

As if not to be totally outdone by players at one end of the age spectrum, Jackie Thomas and Georgia Veneer were both successful in veterans events. Jackie won the Mixed Doubles at the VETTS Northern Masters and Georgia Veneer won the Over-60 Ladies Doubles at the VETTS Midland Masters. Both were also runners-up in other events and in the World Veterans Championships, held in April in Australia, Georgia Veneer won the Over-70 Ladies Doubles Consolation while Graham Trimming was runner-up in the Over-40 Mens Doubles Consolation.

Wendy Barlow was the star of the Buckinghamshire Closed Championships winning all three junior events and coming runner-up in the Womens Doubles, a feat emulated by Ken Phillips in the Veterans Singles.

There were medals galore at the Slough Closed with Gareth Herbert winning three of the four events he entered, while Jackie Thomas and Frank Earis both picked up two winners awards. Mike Rhodes was runner-up in the prestigious Slough Masters, while Frank Earis made it a double of Veterans Singles successes by adding the Maidenhead title to the one from Slough.

Frank also won the Slough Hard Bat Singles, while Steve Crow won the other two events, the Handicap Singles and the Doubles, the latter in a drawn format with Armando Borges.

There were two winners from the same team in the Slough individual handicap events when Edward Donovan won the Lynford Bowl and Wendy Barlow retained the Wharton Vase.

REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS AND RANKINGS

Gareth Herbert reached the first pinnacle of his young international career when chosen to represent England at the European Youth Championships in Slovenia in 1993. Gareth appeared in one match for the cadets in the team competition and also in the individual events. More international selections have followed for the best prospect in English table tennis.

No less than fourteen Cippenham players and members have appeared in England ranking lists this season. Gareth Herbert followed his achievement of being England number one at Under-12 level last season to reach that same exulted position this time in the cadet (under-14) list. Gareth has also reached number 11 in the junior (under-17) rankings and another position of note is Jackie Thomas at number 19 in the Veteran Women. A full list can be found in the appendix.

Gareth Herbert has also played a major role in the Berkshire junior team which won the Junior Premier Division of the County Championships at the first attempt. Gareth remained unbeaten throughout his singles matches against the best junior players in the country.

Six Cippenham players represented Buckinghamshire teams over the past year while twenty-four represented Slough which must be some sort of record. Jacquie Lovell was our only representative in Bucks teams at senior level, while Jackie Thomas and Graham Trimming were selected for the veterans teams, and Wendy Barlow, Edward Donovan and Katie Dickens for the juniors.

Congratulations to all the players who, by their team or individual successes, have made this season a memorable one in the history of Cippenham Table Tennis Club.

Graham Trimming
May 1994