

February 2015

*Official
Magazine*

Vol 69

No. 2



Web Site. <http://www.ldttl.co.uk>

Editorial

At time of printing the season we have another 8 matches to play, it looks as if the top teams have made their mark for top spot, but there looks like there will be quite a battle for the second spot, and with it, certain promotion

Don D. mentions our contact from Liverpool F.C., it was in fact the Editor of the official Liverpool F.C. web site, a lot of toing and froing for Don and Jonathan Taylor to hopefully get LFC interested in the L&DTTL,(read Don's Nets & Edges), I was promised some photo's of the players in action round a table in their 'relaxing' lounge, but as yet none, maybe soon. I was really impressed with the Official web site though, the difference between amateurs and professionals.

While I'm on about LFC, I received an e-mail advertising the LFC Players Awards, to be held at the Echo Arena, I'd have thought it would be to show appreciation to the Season ticket holders, (still have to wait till a family member passes away to get a season ticket for Anfield), but no, more money required, tickets priced £31-50 / £41-50 / £77-50, and if you have a few bob extra you can get the 'VIP packages which includes a champagne reception with canapés at Jury's Inn Hotel, a Legend experience and tickets to the Players' Awards 2015. HmMMMMM! My family think I'm old fashioned talking about 'loyalty'.

Cup rounds now down to the Finals in every Divisional competition, and as this Digest is a little later than normal, all the venues are Known, Finals week is a free week, so why not get down to see a Final, maybe your own division, or a higher division. For the average player who plays each week for -: the social side, exercise, getting out of the house, wants to stay 'competitive' etc. etc. try and watch a Final from the higher Divs. particularly the Premier Readman Final, a different league in more ways than one! And you may get a cup of tea and sandwich

Match Cards – how to fill in correctly, read Trevor's comments on the match cards loaded onto my web site at , it should be straight forward after all these years to fill in the match card each week, - match week No.! which Division! Date of match! Fixture key No. of each team! If it's not done by the home team, Trevor has to do it when he receives the card, so please help to make life a bit easier for our fixture Sec!! Thanks.

Cup rounds now down to the Finals in every Divisional competition, and as this Digest is a little later than normal, all the venues are Known, Finals week is a free week, so why not get down to see a Final, maybe your own division, or a higher division. For the average player who plays each week for -: the social side, exercise, getting out of the house, wants to stay 'competitive' etc. etc. try and watch a Final from the higher Divs. particularly the Premier Readman Final, a different league in more ways than one! And you may get a cup of tea and sandwich.

Many thanks to the players who send me a photo of match teams, Gordon Langshaw and Mal Kent take them with cameras, Geoff Metcalf takes them using his mobile phone, most mob. phones can take good quality photo's, and most people carry mob phones with them, most of the photo's are lower divisions, so a request to players in the upper divisions to take some team photo's and e-mail to me at roly@ttdigest.co.uk, thanks! (in anticipation).

The Season's grace re. Plastic Balls is coming to the end soon and all matches have to use the new plastic balls, the following extract has been taken from a Q & A from the T.T. England site

“ Plastic balls will be used at all Table Tennis England events from July 1, 2015 in order to ensure a level playing field for all competitors, on both national and international stages.

We strongly advise that all local leagues use the plastic balls from next season for the following reasons:

- Above all, introducing plastic balls across the board will benefit all players as it ensures consistency throughout all levels of the sport. Not introducing plastic balls in one competition would see players disadvantaged when they play in other competitions.
- It is anticipated that supplies of celluloid balls will dwindle rapidly as plastic balls become the norm. Therefore, making the switch at the earliest opportunity and across the board is advisable for the greater good of the sport as a whole.”

The full article on page 18.

History will be made on 6 April 2015, as the International Table Tennis Federation is hosting the first ever - annual World Table Tennis Day.

The World Table Tennis Day is a celebration of the joy to play Table Tennis for fun, bringing people together where the focus is less on the competition and more on participation and fun.

For more information on World Table Tennis Day, and more information about the events going on around the globe, please visit TT4ALL.com.

An interesting stat was sent in by Len Dyson from the match between QVC and M. Police 'D', one of the Doubles matches was Father and Son John and Dean Appleton and Mother Paula Adamson (French) and Son Alan French, the match ended in a draw!, Len wants to know if anyone can remember last time this occurred.

Thanks again to our Reporters for their Divisional reports, only those who have had 'a go' will appreciate how much effort goes into writing for the inexperienced, so my thanks to all our contributors.

When Ford arrived at Crosby High in December they were probably surprised to see Wales international Ryan Jenkins - the winner of 51 Grand Prix men's singles titles - lining up alongside Cherith Graham and Gemma Grant. Unable to turn out their strongest trio for a number of reasons, the champions turned out Terry Turner, Paul Kinsey and newcomer Shaun Hall - all three though, were soundly beaten by the man from Llwynypia, near Pontypridd who conceded a total of just 37 points in his nine ends. Crosby added the doubles, Ford though, taking the other six matches. By the first week in March, Ryan hadn't made a further appearance but, I suspect he will add to that sole outing by the end of the first week in May.

The Readman cup threw up a number of unusual and controversial results. The most surprising of these was the defeat of hot favourites Wavertree Labour in the semi-finals when the Ford trio of Shaun Hall, Andy Taylor and Terry Turner took on Thomas Hadley, Joel Webb and reserve Phil Luxon who stepped in for the unavailable Ryan Maynard. Shaun opened the tie beating Phil and after four sets it was level pegging - Terry having accounted for Phil. Labour, now needing to be bold, called on Thomas against Shaun but, after he took the opening game, the Ford man hit back to complete his hat-trick leaving Andy to secure his team's passage into the final with a 3-0 success over Phil.

The other tie wasn't without controversy and came close to being awarded as a walk over to CTK due to a failed email communication advising of the match date en-route from Labour secretary Stan Clarke to Keith Bird. The details of this may be found in the division one notes. The issue in my previous paragraph has generated adverse comments not just amongst division one players but, throughout the league. In round one Crosby High 1st team conceded a home tie against the club's B team who then registered a comfortable 5-1 success in round two at bottom side Marconi. The semi-final draw produced another inter-club clash - the B taking on the A. The B advised them of the date but, again they were given a walk over, this time into the final which is due to be played on Monday 23rd March against the reigning division one champions, the Ford trio remains to be seen. Crosby will choose from newly crowned closed veteran champion Steve Green, Gary Watson, Olivier Barthelemy and Mark Bleakley. The East Wavertree (tennis) club, I'm sure will be proud to stage this prestigious match which reminds me of the time when a 1970's Readman final ended all square and the MC chose Knotty Ash tennis club as the venue for the English Electric v Wavertree



Labour replay which had been played in a highly boisterous atmosphere. On arriving at the match at 7-15, the room was heaving, with spectators' standing shoulder to shoulder against the wall. A player from Bath Street and myself, were told we couldn't be admitted since there was simply, no room but, when a couple opened the door saying they couldn't stand all night, we were allowed entry. Matches between the two clubs were always very competitive but, it was surprising that such a small venue was chosen

but, I suspect it was because the bar would remain closed.

Roly received a call last month from Liverpool FC, enquiring as to the name of the current Liverpool men's Champion? Roly passed on their email to me and after speaking to the club's web site manager, I ascertained they wanted him to umpire a 'tournament' at Melwood which would involve Jose Enrique, Alberto Moreno, Javier Manquillo and Mario Balatelli. I spoke to an excited Jonathan who instantly agreed to do it and I advised the club he would umpire but, would like to 'knock' with the players, which he did. Coincidentally, his pic, (credited to Roly Wright) was published that week holding the men's singles trophy. I asked if I could attend but, with four players, a camera man, plus the organiser and Jonathan, the room wasn't big enough to allow me also! I was advised that the event was embargoed and not to include it on the League's web site for a week or two! However, Jonathan, when asked by Enrique what standard he'd reached as a youngster said, he was ranked at 9 in England in the under 15 list. The Spaniard, I presume, misunderstood the explanation and announced on Twitter that he'd just played the England number 9. This was picked up by the Daily Mail and Mirror whom, I gather checked the TTE web site and reported that Jose had played current England senior number 9 Gavin Evans. Shortly after, Jonathan then was on the receiving end of a couple of unsavoury messages from a well known England player plus an envious local player, querying his ranking and asking why, was he invited? I can't think of any player more suited to represent the league than the then current Liverpool champion although, Keith Williams would have also filled the bill with distinction. Enough said!! Jose also caused the table to collapse amidst great hilarity which was shown on YOU Tube - so much, for 'Embargo'. The organiser, however, has invited JT to come again but, I hope it doesn't turn into a similar episode. By the way, Jonathan is the proud owner of a signed Liverpool FC shirt. Two days before the Liverpool Closed finals, Jonathan beat Steve Green in the Wirral Closed men's final - his ninth success. Well done.

Steve, by the way phoned to say how proud he was having won the Liverpool veteran title having already picked up the Wirral vets' title.

The ITTF has declared April 6th as the Inaugural 'World Table Tennis Day' which will be celebrated on all continents. I circulated this to a number of addresses but, on Easter Monday, I wonder, just who will turn out and put on a coaching session, tournament or just a casual knock-a-bout. I suspect the league will however, do something.

Roly Wright again printed an attractive Finals' Night Programme, the glossy coloured front page showing the nine players on duty, surprisingly, though, only Jonathan Taylor, Joel Webb and Harry Watson were making a return visit from the eleven playing in the 2014 finals'.

Only eleven first division players entered the Closed men's singles which is very disappointing while even more so, was the Ladies event which again, was staged as a 'Round Robin'. Just five entered, one of whom dropped out a couple of days before the tournament which left holder Clare Peers facing Janette and Amy Hutchings together with Janette's sister and Table Tennis England's Deputy Chairman Sue Hughes. This gave Clare a record seventh success in the event.

The main tournament at Merchant Taylors' attracted an entry of 59 and those who turned up on the day, appeared to enjoy, not only the event but, pleasingly, the playing conditions also. The equipment was collected from Park Road at 11am

on Saturday 21st thanks to the usual band of 'helpers'



Open Doubles winners Aaron Beech and Shaun Hall receiving the Arthur E. Upton Cup from Bill Fawley, League President



Junior Champ Mattie Laird holds the John McKim Cup presented by Bill Fawley



Men's Singles Champion Shaun Hall with the Montague Burton Cup

plus a few new members. I was advised by the school that we could commence setting up the courts at 2-30 and accordingly, I notified the regulars' while Roly, John Langton and Trevor did so via a mass email. As often happens with 'firm' arrangements, the previous gymnastic session was cancelled at short notice which meant we could set up much earlier than planned which we accomplished

in record time but, before those who had planned on a 2-30 start. The league is indebted to all who helped in any way over the three days for, without their involvement, the tournament wouldn't get off the ground.

The following day, Referee Dave Goulden addressed the waiting competitors' before announcing the opening matches and to their credit, players' subsequently turned up on time for their events.

Veteran Champion Steve Green with Linacre Cup

This meant we didn't experience any major problems and play continued

to tick over nicely due to the professional manner in which Dave conducted the events, ably assisted by Graham Rollinson who notwithstanding leaving his sick wife at home, remained at the desk until mid afternoon so, well done and thank you Graham together with Mike Power on the checking in desk who was also a great help to myself in my pre-tournament preparation. A few players failed to arrive which potentially can affect the draw but, Dave managed the issue without too many noticing the

A disappointing aspect I encountered when receiving entries, was in having to advise a number of players that they'd not complied with tournament conditions in relation to the number of matches in which they'd played. In most cases they had mitigating reasons as to why they should be allowed to enter but, tournament conditions

don't allow individual circumstances to circumvent those

long standing rules as harsh as that seems. In winding up the post tournament review, it has to be said that the it was mainly players from the top two divisions who failed to meet the criteria with only a few from the lower reaches of the league, left disappointed. In those cases it was mainly due to not being selected by their respective clubs'. This is probably, something the management committee should look at for future tournaments. If there is a downside to the Closed it lies in the date chosen to stage the event. A number of issues need to be taken into account when selecting a 'suitable' date and inevitably, with the TTE calendar crammed with events almost every week, it's inevitable at least one will clash. Having booked a provisional date in February, Mike was contacted by Dave Graham who pointed out a clash with another local event which we were able to overcome and resulted in a change of date for our event.

With Merchant Taylors' available on February 22nd we booked the venue, transportation and the personnel available on that day to help set up the equipment on Saturday and dismantle it on Sunday and Monday. It was then up to players' to decide in which competition they chose to play. The only leading player qualified to enter who didn't enter, chose to play for the county, was Thomas Hadley while Shaun Hall and Aaron Beech overcame the dilemma by managing to fit in a couple of Lancashire and Cheshire League matches in Bolton on Sunday morning for the Ellesmere Port and Chester League before dashing to Crosby where they qualified for the open doubles final while Shaun reached the last four of the men's singles. The pair, nine days later, made it worthwhile – annexing the doubles title and Shaun taking the men's crown on his debut in the Closed. In doing so he emulated the achievement of Tomasz Rzeszotko in 2010, Mikael Rogala in 2007 and Adam Robertson 2000 by taking the title on their first appearance in the competition.

The Bill Fawley Construction Liverpool Closed championships, continues to represent one of the most prestigious events in the North West. The financial support the league enjoys from the involvement of our President Bill Fawley is most appreciated as is his regular attendance at the event and at regular management committee meetings.

Following the success of last years Finals Night Videos taken by Pete Walsh (Jnr) he has done it again , setting up in the 'birds eye room' producing six videos with the best view of the night, all can be found on you-tube at http://www.ttdigest.co.uk/1415_closed_videos.htm, so thanks and our appreciation to Pete for his work..

Fawley Construction Liverpool Closed Championships

Ladies (Round Robin) C. Peers, A. Hutchings, J. Hutchings, S. Hughes.
Champion C. Peers, R/U S. Hughes

Men Semi Finals -: Jonathan Taylor beat Joel Webb 9, 10, -6, 6. and Shaun Hall beat Ryan Maynard -3, 5, 5, 7.

Doubles Final:- A.aron Beech/ Shaun Hall beat Steve Green/Jonathan Taylor 3, 7, 4.

Veteran Final -: S. Green beat Alan Davies 6, 4, 5.

Junior Final -: Mattie Laird beat Harry Watson 4, 10, -8, 12.

Men's Singles Final:- Hall beat Taylor 5, 7, -9, -9, 3.

The 2015 Liverpool Closed RESULTS

	Winner	Runner Up
Division 2	M. Laird (Crosby High)	A. Hutchings (Maghull)
Division 3	B. Chen (East Wavertree)	S. Pierce (Bath St. M.)
Division 4	H. Nuree (St. Annes)	F. Daco (ST. Annes)
Division 5	J. Sumners (Bootle YMCA)	G. Ghellew (Waterloo)
Ladies (R.R.)	C. Peers (Bath St. M.)	
O./55's (R.R.)	D. Tagg (Christ the King)	S. Hughes (Maghull)
O./40's	S. Green (Crosby High)	A. Davies (Sefton Pk.)
Open Doubles	A. Beech (W av. Labour.) / S. Hall (Fords)	J. Taylor (M. Police) / S. Green (Crosby H.)
Junior Singles	M. Laird (Crosby High)	H. Watson (M. Police)
Men's Singles	S. Hall (Fords)	J. Taylor (M. Police)

Which club wants to take the title from Ford? When the season kicked off, most observers would have fancied Crosby High, Labour or Police. At the turn of the year, Labour looked the most likely to end Ford's amazing domination, enjoying a healthy lead over Crosby High B at the half way stage. Their trio have all been in fine form and at the turn of the year, Thomas Hadley with 31 trips to the table, had still to taste a league defeat. Their summer signings, Ryan Maynard, only one defeat in 26 encounters and the ever improving Joel Webb, with four reversals from 29 outings, gave them a solid, reliable team which, barring injury should ensure the title lands at All Saints church hall.



The Crosby High B line-up certainly has the capability of bringing the title to the club for the first time but, despite the keen interest shown by the B group of players, they've been lying in the wake of Labour and unable to exert pressure on them, however, with a late charge which has seen the Labour lead reduced and led by the ever optimistic, Steve Green, only time will tell.

Since the last edition, matters at the top are fairly similar with Wavertree Labour looking likely to annex the title, providing they hold off, not only the season long challenge from Crosby High B but, also, any unexpected loss of form or personnel, which should enable them to finish off the job by the beginning of May. Their previous success in 2006 was also the start of the Ford domination which has lasted eight years, although their title defence has fallen away in the absence of Kevin and Keith. Prior to that 2006 success, playing in the guise of Wavertree Saint Mary's, they took the crown in 1999. This led to being chided by Roy Smith who has a photographic memory which he regularly tops up by ensconcing himself in back issues of the Digest and Liverpool Echo cuttings, after I'd failed to mention their triumph eight years ago. To make matters worse, the Echo editor used the headline 'Fifteen Years since Labour's Last Success' so, sorry, to all in that title winning squad, and Roy also.

Their summer signings seem to have done the trick- Joel Webb and Ryan Maynard together with Thomas Hadley, have won all but one of their league fixtures up to the end of February giving them a manageable lead at the top. Crosby High B, the strongest group in the club, will have to put in some big performances which will have to include a couple of 10-0 victories if they are to bring the title to the club for the first time. The worrying fixture they have to face is a trip to Ford, when the champions, depending on who is available, could scupper Crosby's

hopes. As I pointed out in the last issue, Steve Green is one of the keenest division one players and in Paul Cicchelli and Gary Watson he has two fully committed colleagues helping him achieve their goal. The old saying of 'going the extra mile' doesn't do justice to the pair – Paul, having left Hertfordshire at 15-30 to play against Labour, drove into Crosby at 7-30 and following a disappointing result, arrived home well after midnight, having clocked 223 miles!! Gary also took to the road which involved driving from a job in central Scotland for the match. The pair, joined by Olivier Barthelemy, picked up just two points – Paul beating Ryan Maynard and Joel Webb. Being crushed by

your main rivals was hard to take and they must wait until week 22 before facing them again when, it may be too late to have a serious impact.

The quarter finals of the G.H. Readman Cup produced few surprises with the top three teams reaching the penultimate stage. Wavertree Labour enjoyed home advantage against Christ the King but, more about that tie later, two of the four matches were decided in five sets, one extending to six, the other being Crosby High's 5-3 defeat of Police B, Ford polished off Bath Street 5-0 which brings me to Labour versus CTK. With home clubs' having to provide seven clear days notice of a cup match date, until the advent of computers', club secretaries either telephoned or advised opponents by post Wavertree Labour secretary Stan Clarke notified the club's four opponents of the respective dates on which they were due to play at Sheil Road. Unfortunately, Christ the King didn't receive their email message and when they didn't arrive on the due date, Stan submitted a score card claiming the match. CTK responded by counter claiming the tie pointing out that they'd not been advised of the date. Stalemate having been reached, Mike Power and Trevor Owens combined with Stan and Keith Bird which resulted in a new date being agreed and the match played. Whilst Labour took the tie 5-0, it was also a victory for the sport – so, well done to all concerned.

Fortunately, I'd started collating this column before the end of the year and had put down almost half of my usual target which was a good start for I didn't bargain on taking in the role of deputy secretary for the Liverpool Closed tournament, which meant I neglected to add to the total plus lots of other things outside of TT with which I've had to deal. I will, however, provide full coverage of the season in the next issue.

Division 2

Ray Jackson

At this stage in the season things start to develop with regards to winners and runners up, but in this division the winners were probably sorted from the first week. This situation hasn't changed, and we're only looking at a race for the runners up.

Week 9 Maghull defeated Wavertree Labour B with trebles from Paul and Amy Hutchings, Lee Farley managing to save the whitewash with a win over Paul Banks. Harold House had a Steve Whalley hat trick in their win at Bootle YMCA, but Ym's cause wasn't helped by Ted Birch retiring injured during his second game, Alan Chase managed wins over Alec Bryce and Peter Findlater.

Bob Edwards, John McCann and Neil Colville managed a brace apiece in their win over Bath St C, and Phil Luxon remained unbeaten in Wavertree Labour A's draw at Cadwa A. Ian McElwee took the unbeaten honours in Bath St B's close win over Sefton Park, Alan Davies getting a couple of wins for Sefton, and Matty Laird remained unbeaten in Crosby High C's win at a depleted Harold House A Week 10

This week saw another 9-1 win for Maghull, this time Bootle YMCA were the victims with just Alan Chase getting the better of Amy Hutchings, Paul's Hutchings and Banks remaining unbeaten. Bob Edwards showed his liking to Crosby High C's new venue by winning his three games, Matty Laird winning two for Crosby.

Despite only two players Wavertree A managed to win at Bath St C, Phil Luxon winning three and two for Dave Harse plus the doubles. Josef Koudelik and Mark Slater scored hat tricks in Cadwa A's win at Wavertree Labour B, and Graeme Black was again unbeaten in Cadwa's defeat of Harold House A, Mike Denmade scoring two for them. Alec Bryce was the star in Harold House's draw with Bath St B, Barry Davis scoring a couple for Bath St.

Week 11 In this week no team scored more than seven points which other than Maghull shows the closeness of the rest. Graeme Black did the business for Cadwa at Marconi A, with Cadwa's Paul Evans and Marconi's Bob Edwards scoring two each. Paul Hutchings kept up his unbeaten record in Maghull's win at Bath St B, Ricky Brown picking up a couple.

Peter Taylor was the main man in Cadwa A's win over Bath St C, remaining unbeaten, with Joseph Koudelik scoring two. Alan Davies and Ian Laird scored two each in Sefton Park's win at Harold House A, with Rod McPherson scoring two for Harold House, and Alan Chase Ted Birch and John Higham each scored two in Bootle YMCA's defeat of Wavertree Lab B. Phil Luxon kept up Wavertree Lab A's aspirations with a treble



against Crosby High C, Matty Laird scoring two for Crosby.

Week 12 Alan Chase and Ted Birch scored hat tricks in Bootle YMCA's defeat of Cadwa A, Mark Slater saving the whitewash with a win over John Higham. Ricky Brown and Barry Davis remained unbeaten in Bath St B's win at Wavertree Lab B, Lee Farley getting the better of Ian McElwee for their sole point. Steve Whalley, Alec Bryce and Peter Findlater were too strong for their A team, all remaining unbeaten.

Bob Edwards proved unstoppable in Marconi A's win at Sefton Park, Tony Mullally for them and Alan Davies for Sefton scoring doubles. Rob Peat took the honours in Bath St C's draw at Crosby High C, Matty Laird and Roger Neal scoring doubles for Crosby. Graeme Black and Paul Evans remained unbeaten in Cadwa's defeat of Wavertree Lab A, Phil Luxon coming close to beating Graeme, losing 9 in the fifth.

Week 13 Graeme Black was again unbeaten in Cadwa's win at Bath St C, with Rob Peat scoring a couple for the home team. Rob Peat was a busy man this week as he remained unbeaten with Ian McElwee in Bath St B's defeat of Bootle YMCA, Alan Chase getting the one point for Bootle against Barry Davis.

Matty Laird and Sylvia Graham picked up good trebles in Crosby High C's win at Cadwa A, and Paul Hutchings and Paul Banks did likewise in Maghull's win at Harold House A.

Bob Edwards was another treble winner in Marconi A's close win over Harold House, Neil Colville also picking up a couple as did Harold House's Steve Whalley. Dave Harse scored his treble in Wavertree Lab A's defeat of Sefton Park, Ian Laird scoring twice for them.

Week 14 The two Pauls again remained unbeaten in Maghull's win at Marconi A, and Ricky Brown also in Bath St B's win at Cadwa A, Josef Koudelik scoring a brace for Cadwa. Phil Luxon took the unbeaten plaudits in Wavertree A's draw with Harold House, Alec Bryce getting a couple for Harold House.

Sefton Park's Alan Davies was too strong for Bath St C but was unable to save his team from defeat, Rob Peat, Dave Stoddern and Colin Mitchell winning two apiece. Lee Farley was unbeaten in Wavertree Lab B's draw at Harold House A, with Johnny Chen scoring a couple, with Harold House's Michael Sui.

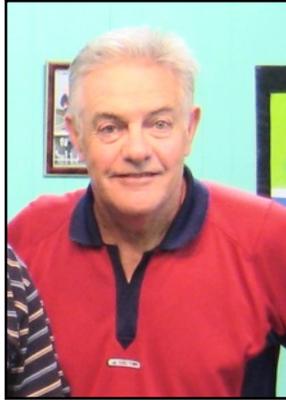
Graeme Black and Paul Evans again scored trebles in Cadwa's win at Crosby High C, and Ricky Brown with three, and two each for Ian McElwee and Barry Davies proved more than a handful for Cadwa A.

Continued on page 15

Division 3

Ian McElwee

When I last wrote these notes it looked like East Wavertree would be continuing their charge through the divisions. They are still well clear at the top with an impressive 130 points, having won 16 and drawn 1 of their 17 matches. However, they have not completely shaken off a determined chase by Marconi B, who have 2 games in hand, and have won 13, drawn 1 and lost 1 in accumulating 103 points. Two good wins in their games in hand just might put some pressure on the East Wavertree team. Bath St Marine E are also having a fine season after a relatively slow start and are level on points with Marconi having played 16 matches.



During the current reporting period East Wavertree have won all of their 7 matches and gained 54 points. At week 9 Merseyside Police C gave them a real fright before going down 6/4, Brenda Buoy and Jack Gittins both beat Joey Williams and Lee Madin, they could so easily have become the first team to beat the East Wavertree side with Brenda losing out 15/13 to Ben Chen in the 5th and John Moore going down 13/11 in the deciding set to Lee. It was another close 6/4 win when they faced BSM E with Heiko Klueger and Ben Chen vying for man of the match each winning their 3 singles. In their 7/3 win over BSM D Heiko had a rare loss to Andy Cheung, Brian Crolley beat Lee and Mal Kent got the better of Joey holding on for a 14/12 5th set victory.

Marconi B have won all of their 8 matches during the period under review taking 59 points. They also beat BSM E 6/4 with their points coming via 2 wins each for Ian Wensley and Peter Wass who combined to take the doubles and Frank McCann clinching the match by beating Ted Cramsie. Frank was the star of the night when he won his 3 against Arriva, Ian beat John Rowan and Brian Hornby and Peter won 11/9 in the 5th against Derek Scotland to secure victory by 6/4.

BSM E have won 5 and only had the above mentioned close losses to the 2 top teams in gaining 50 points. Their tightest win was when they got the better of Marconi C 6/4. In this match Ted Cramsie and Sam Pierce beat Dave McMahan and Bobby Bell and then teamed up to take the doubles, and Graham Turner made sure of the win in beating Bobby, Matt Evans was in top form for Marconi winning his 3 singles. BSM E best result of the season came when they beat their D team 10/0, the nearest the D team came to getting a point was when Andy Cheung was 2 sets and 10/6 up in the 3rd to

Graham, only for Graham to come back and win the set 13/11, Andy was again 10/6 up in the 4th set only for Graham to make another come back and take the set 13/11, by this time Andy must have been a broken man and Graham went on to win the 5th 11/7.

Observation of the league table shows a pattern emerging of 3 or 4 teams being very closely matched on points, some distance behind those teams above them but reasonably clear of the chasing group. For example 4th placed

Arriva NW are on 89 points, 5th placed Merseyside police C on 88, with Maghull B 1 point further adrift. When Arriva get their strongest team of John Rowan, Brian Hornby and Derek Scotland out they are more than a match for most. These 3 players were together in a great 9/1 win over CADWA B with the point being dropped by Brian who was on the verge of victory before being pipped 11/9 in the deciding set by Steve Graham. They also combined to beat Bootle YMCA A 7/3, each winning 2 singles and John and Derek teaming up to win the doubles. Their match with Maghull B was a close affair throughout the evening with 7 matches going to 5 sets and the others going to 4 sets. Arriva ended up winning 6/4. The best win on the night must have been Sue Hughes taking the scalp of John 13/11 in the 5th. The match itself must have been one of the best of the season.

Merseyside Police C are, in the main, made up of youngsters gaining experience and knowledge of playing the game competitively, in her own words Captain Brenda Buoy is there "to act as a mother hen" whilst still retaining the ability to hit opponents off the table. Brenda was accompanied by Jack Gittins and Mike Russell when they recorded a 7/3 win over Wavertree Labour C, they each won 2 singles and Jack and Mike took the doubles. However, Andy Bird was just too sharp on the night and took the 3 points for the Wavertree team. Funnily enough the team's best result came without the presence of Brenda when they beat Bootle YMCA 9/1, Stefan Schober-Thomson and Mike each won 3 singles with the only set back being a Bert Rivers victory over Alan French.

In their derby match with their A team Maghull B had a great night running out 7/3 winners, John McLoughlin was the man in form as he remained unbeaten on the night, Phil Christie got the better of Alan Chan and

8 Naresh Tagore, with Sue losing out 11/9 in the 5th to

John Langton, beating Naresh and combining with Phil to win the doubles. The team's best wins have been 9/1 victories over Wavertree Labour C and Bootle YMCA A.

The next little group consists of Marconi C, 76 points, followed by BSM D and Maghull A who are both on 73, Matt Evans is having an excellent season for Marconi C and was in top form in winning on his 4 visits to the table when they lost 6/4 to their B team. He again won his 3 singles and Dave McMahon won 2 when they drew with CADWA B.

When the BSM D and Maghull A teams met, as you might expect, it was a close encounter resulting in the Maghull side taking the honours in a 6/4 victory. The score line itself does not tell the full story with 5 of the matches going to 5 sets, Maghull claimed victory in 3 of these matches. In these particular matches Phil Christie certainly got his money's worth beating Brian Crolley 11/8 and losing out 11/9 to both Mal Kent and Ted Cramsie, Sue Hughes then beat Mal 11/8 and Ted 11/9. BSM D had one of their best nights when beating Linacre 9/1 with Harry Reeve saving the whitewash by beating Mal Kent. Maghull A played out a good draw when they faced high flying Arriva NW, John Langton and Matt Cranny both beat Brian Hornby and Graham Rollinson, and Alan Chan had a good win over Brian. Man of the match John Rowan once again won his 3 singles and partnered Brian to take the doubles, their other point came via Graham getting the better of Alan.

Bootle YMCA are situated in 10th place on 61 points, when they met Maghull A they had an excellent 6/4 victory, Shakil Malik ran out man of the match winning his 3 singles and combining with Mike Hughes to take the doubles. Eddy Preston gained their other 2 points with wins over John Langton and Sue Hughes. They etched out a draw with bottom of the table Wavertree Labour C by way of a Shakil hat trick, Mike Hughes beating Arash Khozoe and a doubles win.

Although CADWA B are 3rd from bottom on 55 points they are unlikely to be dragged into a relegation battle as they are 14 points ahead of both Linacre and Wavertree Labour C. Their only win to date was over Wavertree Labour C by 7/3, George Higham played well to win his 3, Steve Graham beat Michael Dugdale and Lydia Li, Ian Lunt beat Lydia and they won the doubles, Arash played well in beating Steve and Ian. A credible draw was played out when facing Linacre, in the bottom of the table clash Linacre were without the injured Harry Reeve, who I believe is struggling with his fitness and they went down 7/3, each of the Wavertree Labour lads Andy Bird, Arash and Michael won 2 and they also won the doubles.

It looks like Wavertree need a few more nights like this and Linacre need to also start winning if they are both to gain sufficient points to put the pressure on CADWA B and get out of the relegation spots.

Division 4

Hope everyone had a good Christmas and New Year break. Well here is the first report of 2015, and at the time of writing, it is very close at the top of the 4th Division, Bath Street Marine are just leading East Wavertree by 1 point, with St. Annes in 3rd place just 3 points behind Bath Street Marine, but with a game in hand, it really is important that the top teams play their strongest and most regular players in order to stay in the hunt for the title, and now we are well into the second part of the season it could not be closer.

Still in 2014, week 9 saw Bootle YMCA beat Arriva A 7-3, a good win for Josef beating Tom in 5 sets. A close game between Sefton Park A and Police D, Sefton Park just pipping it 6-4, Paul M. picking up both of his beating both Tom and Len, half the games going to 5 sets, including two hard fought doubles. Another strong 9-1 win for East Wavertree over Maghull D, with a doubles win saving the whitewash for Maghull. Wavertree Labour D beating QVC by the same 9-1 score, Shaun saving the whitewash here with a win over Alvin. The current league leaders Bath Street Marine F pro-

Ken Roberts



duced another good performance to beat Maghull C 8-2, Steve M. beating Josh and a doubles victory giving them their points. My team Marconi D visited St Annes and lost 7-3, star man tonight was John G. winning both of his, John then teamed up with me to win the doubles, this was a very good result as St. Annes had not lost a doubles game to date, Dave has really put a strong team together there.

Week 10 kicked off with an unfortunate incident at Wavertree Labour D who played all their players out of ranked order and ended up with what should have been a 7-3 win with an 8-2 defeat to Arriva A. A good clash between Bath Street F and St. Annes saw Bath Street emerge victors 6-4, Darren winning both of his against Israel and Hassib respectively, and Mickey doing the same against Hassib and Dave. Another close game between Marconi D and Sefton Park A, Sefton Park winning 6-4, John winning both against Robbie and Ian. A set back for East Wavertree when playing short against Maghull C, but still managing 5-5, Jimmy producing an excellent performance to beat both

Tony D and Ged. Cadwa C held off QVC 6-4, Grahame and Paul winning both of their games. Bootle YMCA B produced a strong performance to whitewash Maghull D.

Week 11 kicks off with a storming match between Sefton Park and Bath Street Marine, saw Bath Street take it 6-4, 6 games went to 5 sets, Darren beat Paul game 9 in the 5th, Mickey beat Robbie also game 9 in the 5th, Ian came out the victor after a marathon with a 19-17 win also in the 5th against my old mucker Dave N. St. Annes beat Maghull C 8-2, Steve McGanity beating Francis and a good doubles win gave Maghull their points. All square between Maghull D and Wavertree Labour D, a very uniformed card with everyone winning 1 and sharing the doubles. Cadwa C beat Arriva A 7-3, Grahame coming through an epic 5 setter against Vacek, 12-10 in the 5th. All square between QVC and Police, QVC calling up Dean and John Appleton, who do strengthen the team. Thanks for the poser from Len on the game who noted that John and Dean (Father and Son) played against Paula and Alan (Mother and Son) in the doubles, wondering when that last happened. East Wavertree produced a strong performance to whitewash Bootle YMCA.

Week 12, the first of the New Year, saw Police beating Arriva A 7-3, unfortunately Arriva played short, however a good performance from Eddie Williams winning both of his against John and Alan. East Wavertree just pipping St. Annes 6-4 in a very close fought match between two title contenders, both teams were missing one of their key players, Tony picking up a brace against Francis and Mohamed. Sefton Park were in fine form to beat Maghull C 8-2, some close games here, George beat Paul and Steve M beat Ian for their points. A good 8-2 win for my own team Marconi D against QVC, John and myself winning both of our games. A very good 6-4 win for Maghull D against Cadwa C, Neil the only player to win both against Mike and Luke respectively. All square between Wavertree Labour D and Bootle YM B. Tom picking up a brace against Terry and Gordon, as did Liam against Arthur and Eric, Wavertree winning both doubles to secure the draw.

Now, onto week 13, all square between Bootle YM B and Cadwa, Tom and Liam picking up a brace each and Cadwa also winning both doubles. Another strong performance from East Wavertree beating Wavertree Labour D 9-1, my old doubles partner and good friend Gordon Langshaw saving the whitewash beating Jimmy Williams in 5 sets, some close games here despite the final score. Bath Street Marine were too strong for QVC storming to a full house victory. Arriva A beat Marconi D 7-3, John G winning both his against Vacek and Josef, and I just piping Gary in 5 sets, Charles was unlucky just losing out to Eddie in 5 sets. Police D beat Maghull D 7-3, star performance from Mike Stewart beating both Tom P and John Moore. Sefton Park A gave St. Anne's a good game just losing 4-6, Paul M picking up both of his against Israel and Francis, Dave and Hassib winning their singles.

Week 14 and Cadwa C were in fine form beating Wavertree Labour 9-1, the evergreen Allan Biggs the only point winner beating Shantanu. East Wavertree again produced a strong performance to beat Sefton Park A 9-1, Derek beating Ged to save the whitewash. A lot closer was the game between QVC and Maghull C, QVC coming out on top 6-4, star lady was Jeanette for Maghull winning both of hers against Ron and Ian respectively. Bath Street Marine beat Arriva A 7-3, Vacek beating Josh and Gary beating Dave N, plus a doubles for their points, Darren had a close call against Josef winning in 5 sets. Marconi D played well to beat Maghull D 8-2, Luke and Joe picking up their 2 points against James and Ritchie. Bootle YMCA were in fine form to beat Police D 7-3, Len D winning his two games against Saul and John.

Into February now and week 15 saw Police D beat Wavertree Labour D 6-4, some very close games here, always good to pick up both doubles which Wavertree did, Rob and Terry picking up the other 2 points, Tom and Len winning their games, a good match between two teams consisting of some senior players! Maghull C beat Arriva A 8-2, Vacek and Gary picking up Arriva's points, George F had one of his marathon games against Vacek only to lose in 5 sets. East Wavertree on fire again, beating Cadwa C 8-2, Grahame winning his 2 games against Lee and Tom, Bath Street Marine F whitewashed Maghull D. St Anne's beat QVC 9-1, John Appleton picking up the single point for QVC winning a very close 5 setter against Hassib, Shaun went very close against Dave, as did Tommy against Francis. Ian D still suffering from a shoulder injury. Marconi D beat Bootle YMCA 7-3, some close games here, Liam Tom and Roly winning 1 each for their points.

The Maghull derby kicks off the last week of this report. Week 16 saw an 8-2 victory for C over D, Harry picking up their sole single win plus a doubles for their result. St Anne's again on song with a 9-1 win over Arriva A, Vacek beating Israel for their sole win. A close match between Cadwa C and Police, Police just pipping Cadwa 6-4. Sefton Park A beat QVC 8-2, both teams here were a little under strength, Ian and Shaun picking up QVC's points against Ian F and Eric (woodsie's dad).

A shorter report for week 16 due to two matches postponed to a later date because of cup clashes, best of luck to East Wavertree and St. Annes in the Divisional Cup Final.

Division 5

Jimmy Williams

As we arrive into March we are witnessing a clear indication of how the table may look at the end of the season. Waterloo remain at the top of the pile and are a pretty solid bet to take the title, with three other sides vying for the other much sought after promotional spot. Nevertheless, nothing is certain and given the closeness of the sides it may be decided by the availability of the top players from their respective clubs and/or the results when the sides face each other. Mid-table is equally as competitive with only four points separating the fifth side to the eight. With 100 points left to play for, it looks like being an exciting finale, Best of luck to all.



Week 9 produced an impressive 4 – 6 win for Cadwa D at fellow promotion challengers Sefton Park B. Ian Burrows winning his three for the visitors including a close five setter against the previously unbeaten Derek Traynor. Dave Cunningham and Ray Jones picking up a singles victory each, (and combining successfully in the doubles) to pick up valuable points for the depleted home side. Steady 7-3 victory for league leaders Waterloo against QVC A to maintain their place at the top – Bob Finnegan beating Jeff Hornby in an exciting five setter for the visitors and Ron Houghton beating Phil O’Mullane in three sets in the battle of the left handers before combining together to pick up a further point in their doubles encounter.

How the mighty have fallen! after two consecutive wins Dad’s Army (Maghull E) were beaten 1-9 (despite quite a few five setters) against a strong Waterloo A, Brian and Ged Hanley combining to win their sole point at the midway point of the match. Graceful notes from Alan who commended the visitors on their victory. Another great match played in good spirit between Bath Street Marine G and Bootle YMCA C which produced a reverse of the cup result with the visitors triumphing 3 – 7. The Bootle side picked up seven of the eight singles including notable wins for Jason Sumner over Bill Clayton (10/12 in the fifth) and an excellent double for Kieron (replacing Roly in the fixture – sorry editor!) over Albert Parker and Julia Cornish. Bath Street rescuing two of their points in the form of a pair of excellent doubles performances.

Week 10 saw a strong Bootle YMCA C involved in a close 5 – 5 draw with Waterloo. Player of the night was Steve Daniels (‘by a whisker’) who won both of his singles including a great match against Gavin Minett. Despite his fast movement and consistent forehand top spin, the Waterloo man lost both hitting games (in-

cluding 13/11 in the fifth set of a pulsating match against Colin Hughes). The away team picking up both doubles to avoid defeat (great notes supplied by Roly). Very good win for Arriva North West B over Marconi E, number one Eddie Williams comfortably winning both of his singles in three sets, Cameron Murphy picking up an excellent double for the visitors in two close encounters. Waterloo A number one, Paul Mainey (with the added distraction of having his mobile phone at

his side as he awaited news of an impending new arrival to the family – his wife was overdue and he was on call throughout the match!) led the side to a fine 7-3 win over a very experienced Wavertree Labour’s E side, Paul (along with Graham Chellew) winning his three on the night, great dedication, however, this was an extremely close match with four of the games being decided by a two point margin in the fifth set. The trio of Stan Clarke, Eric Spencer and Francis Lay picking up a point each in their singles games for the Wavertree side.

The pre- Christmas fixtures of **Week 11** showed a change in fortune for Wavertree Labour E who comfortably overcame an incomplete Sefton Park C 8-2 with only a single match going beyond three sets, Roy Cunningham (star man for the visitors) picked up two points - a three set singles victory and a hard fought doubles win alongside Alan Staniland. An excellent 5-5 draw in the match between Maghull E and Arriva North West B, the youth policy triumphing once again with ‘cadets’ (Ged Hanley and Joe Rock) picking up two points apiece, alongside ‘old timer’ Brian Gregory’s four set win over Ray Guy, Harry Hughes winning his three on the night for the Arriva side. Another close match this week between Merseyside Police E and QVC A with the home side edging a 6-4 victory, player of the night was Mike Winder who won his three, including a five set win (after losing the opening two sets 3/11 and 1/11) over Bob Finnegan. Admirable comeback when Brian Burrow’s chipped in with two singles victories to seal the win, added to Sam Hughes’ point in his win over Shaji Matthew.

Week 12 saw a strong performance from Merseyside Police at promotional hopefuls Bootle YMCA C, the home side losing 3 -7 in an excellent match. Stand out games include an epic battle between Steve Daniels and Brian Burrows that reflects the very high standard of players currently in this division – long games of hitting and defending by both players with Brian

defending from the back wall at times, Steve edging the fifth set (not literally!) 11-8, great match. Sam Hughes also winning a five set classic (this time for the visitors) in his game with Jason Sumner, Jason's high and low spin being countered by Sam's hitting, sometimes a fine detail, such as temperament, can be the difference in a close match. The away side also picked up both doubles points in five set victories, clearly an engrossing match. Excellent notes from Ray Guy on the hard fought 5-5 draw between Arriva North West B and Wavertree Labour E, a closely contested match played in a great spirit. Stan Clarke the star man on the night, winning his three games including a close four setter against left hander Harry Hughes. A win for Alan Jones, in the final match of the night, beating Femi in a hard fought five setter, to avoid defeat for the home side, well done to all. A fine 4-6 win for Sefton Park B at Bath Street Marine G in a closely fought match played in true Corinthian spirit, Sefton Parks' Derek Traynor leading from the front and picking up 3 points for his side. Good four set win for Keith Dudley over Eric Wood and the evergreen Bill Clayton also triumphing in an epic five setter against Dave Cunningham, Lots of five setters in a close match.

Week 13 produced strong wins for a number of clubs at the top of the table. Waterloo emerging 3-7 winners in their potentially crucial match against Sefton Park B. The stand out win being Gavin Minett's three straight victory over Derek Traynor, the consistent Geoff Metcalf also winning his three for the Waterloo team. Cadwa D also kept themselves in the hunt with a big win in their match at Wavertree Labour E, picking up eight of the ten available points, Eric Spencer picking up a point in both his singles and doubles for the home side. An experienced Bootle YMCA C picked up nine points on their travels to Marconi E with Charles Sweeney defeating Alan Cameron in three sets to pick up a point to avoid the whitewash. A result that suggests the promotional battle is warming up nicely. Excellent win for Dad's Army (Maghull E) over QVC A, star man on the night was Captain Mainwaring (Andy McCourt) returning to the side to win his three, despite Corporal Jones (Alan) questioning whether he would get back in the team! Young Joe Rock (Pike) filling in admirably for the injured Keith. Tommy Lewis also registering a notable win to overcome a 2-1 deficit to beat Alan Smethurst. Alan doing similar in his clash over the capable Bob Finnegan, also winning 11-9 in the fifth! a result that definitely edges Dad's Army closer to safety! fantastic match commentary from Andy, as per usual.

Week 14 produced an exciting 5-5 draw between Sefton Park C and Arriva North West B, excellent double for Roy Cunningham over Arriva's Gary Mavris and Alan Jones, the consistent Harry Hughes

picking up his three points for the visitors. Big win for Bath Street Marine G at Marconi E (2-8) with both Bill Clayton and Julia Cornish emerging unbeaten after their three trips to the table, Cameron Murphy, Marconi E, unlucky to lose both singles in the fifth set (10/12 and 9/11), Martin Latham picking up a point in his singles over Keith Dudley and combining with Cameron to win their doubles.

Week 15 saw a good double for Martin Latham over Jeff Hornby and Phil O'Mullane in Marconi's 7-3 defeat against a Waterloo side without their regular number one. Bob Jude and Charles Sweeney picking up the other point in their doubles match against Phil O'Mullane and Graham Chellew. Excellent nights table tennis at Bath Street Marine G with the hosts coming out on top 7-3 against a very good Maghull E side, the ever reliable Bill Clayton comfortably winning his three and Keith Dudley and Mary Delamere combining well in their doubles to come back from two sets down to take the point, well done Brian Gregory having a very good night for the visitors, winning both his singles. Good 6-4 win for Sefton Park B over Merseyside Police, stand out performers include Ray Jones and Roy Cunningham who won both of their singles. Bootle YMCA C looking ominously strong with an 8-2 win over Wavertree Labour E, Steve Daniels, Colin Hughes and Roly Wright all winning their three matches on the night, very good wins for Femi and Eric Spencer over Alan Cameron to put some points on the board for the away side.

Waterloo significantly extended their lead at the top to sixteen points during **Week 16** with a comprehensive 10-0 win away to Maghull E. Keith Whittaker gaining the only game throughout the whole match for the hosts, well done Keith, Andy's notes referring to Brians' tumble in his match with Phil, as the quickest move the team managed all night, apparently shaken but not stirred! Impressive 2-8 win for Sefton Park away to Marconi E, the Sefton lads staying in the hunt for promotion and having a fine season. Hard fought wins for Faye Taylor over Eric Wood (the only five setter in the fixture) and Colm Cox (in three sets) over Dave Cunningham to register points for the home side. Impressive 6-4 victory for Arriva North West B (without number one Harry Hughes) over Cadwa D, in a well spirited and sporting match, Ian Burrows winning his three for the visiting Cadwa side (including edging out a determined Gary Mavris 11-7 in the fifth set), with Paul Morrey also having a good night and winning his three for the Arriva side.

On a 'final' note, congratulations to Bootle's Jason Sumner on winning the recent Division 5 closed competition. No mean feat and a great first tournament success. Well done.

Unpaid heroes perform priceless service

Brian Halliday will be familiar to a handful of readers. He was a quiet but determined man, but he rarely featured in newspapers, not even in his home town of Reading. But Halliday, and others like him, are, to my mind, the most important people in British sport, indeed in British society. Halliday was a volunteer.



Lots of words are aspirational in sport, Champion, victor, icon, legend, hero, to name a few. But volunteer, although a word with less effusive connotations, should command similar prestige. Halliday was the chairman of the Kingfisher table tennis club for more than 20 years.

He worked for the English Table Tennis Association for a decade. He wrote the newsletter for the seniors (over-40s, 50s and 60s) for so long that he became an institution.

Marx was wrong about many things, but on one issue he wrote with haunting clarity. He recognised that, while money has lots of uses, it can undermine many important things. Love is corrupted by money. Friendship is, too. These things are precious precisely because they are not about money. The moment you pay someone to be a friend is the moment that the friendship ends.

Halliday was never paid for his tireless work. I remember seeing him at our local club (I have been a member of Kingfisher for most of my life), sitting at a table in a corner patiently going through sheaves of paperwork. We caught each other's eye and he smiled, before carrying on. He wasn't working for money; indeed, to have been paid would have compromised the very act he was undertaking. He did it, like so many volunteers in sport and beyond, out of love.

He loved table tennis. He loved the fellow members of his club, just as we loved him. He loved to be a part of an institution that helped people to grow, to share, to be together. These relationships were anchored not by money, but something with a deeper power. It is the power that David Cameron sought to harness in his idea of a Big Society. But Cameron didn't realise that the beauty and the mystique of

this power is precisely why it is not amenable to political manipulation.

Halliday gave up weekend after weekend to build the club that we shared together. All of us did. In the cold winter of 1986, when the idea of a new table tennis club in a small plot of land in suburban Reading was first proposed, about 30 of us undertook the spade-work. We didn't have the money to pay a professional builder, so we built it ourselves.

First we dismantled a prefab in north Reading. Then we transported it over to a place called Woodley, where we had been granted the land. Then, under the auspices of Jim Hodder, a builder and table tennis player for whom the construction of the club became a personal act of devotion, we started to reassemble it.

The weekends were long. They were cold. Gloves were vital. But the collective endeavour, the sense of camaraderie and mutual support, will never leave me. Over the past 30 years, pride in the club has never wavered.

Halliday became one of the longest-serving volunteers, but he was not alone. Colin Dyke, a bearded defensive player with an impressive forehand slice, has acted as an officer for more than two decades; Hodder is still an honorary vice-president. Today (the club has moved a hundred yards to a new location because the initial plot was required by a local school) a new generation of volunteers are assisting in the work..

Dozens of local young people are members. They do not see the behind-the-scenes work that makes it all tick, but they do see the welcoming faces, the willing coaches, the sense of inclusion.

This is what great volunteers create. It is not about the majesty of the venue (Kingfisher is functional and rather small); rather, it is about the sense of purpose, fun and adventure. This is the real meaning of sport.

I sat down while writing this column and wrote the names of all the people who had shaped my life for the better. To my surprise, almost all were unpaid. My parents, my siblings, my friends, my wife: they go without saying. But I also noted a group who gave up their time out of what I can only describe

as a sense of duty and humanity. I suspect that Peter Charters, my coach, spent more than 5,000 hours nurturing me and other aspiring players at the Kingfisher club and its precursor. He is still the coaching officer today.

The notion of volunteering often sounds twee. The Unsung Hero award at the BBC Sports Personality



Matthew Syed – Sports Columnist and Feature Writer of the year
Article first in The Times of Wednesday February 4th 2015

of the Year can (entirely unintentionally) feel a bit worthy, and more than a little lachrymose. But volunteerism has a moral force that endures. And it evokes a vital imperative: for if those of us who have benefited from the actions of others do not offer that kindness to the next generation, these beautiful ecosystems of mutual support and friendship will wither and die.

Kingfisher is just one club that anchors this urgent truth. Ormesby in Cleveland, Cippenham in Slough, and a hundred more clubs up and down the country — in cricket, swimming, dance and everything in between also capture the magic that emerges when people come together in a shared cause. Table tennis may be the proximate reason for the association at Kingfisher, but it is, at bottom, about the human instinct for sharing and mutual support.

According to a think-tank, 971 million people volunteer in a typical year across the globe either through organisations or directly to persons outside their household. The estimated monetary value of their time is estimated at \$1.5 trillion (about £1

trillion). But this is the least important dimension of volunteering. What these people contribute to a nation is not measured in money, but in soul. It is in these acts of solidarity and love, both making and receiving them, that life finds meaning.

Halliday, who was 79, passed away last month. His funeral will take place tomorrow morning. I noted on Twitter that Maria Tsapsinos, who he nurtured to the top of the junior rankings (I had almost forgotten that Halliday found time, even after the onset of cancer, to coach one of the nation's most promising youngsters) wrote: "Rest in Peace Mr Brian Halliday #number 1 coach."

But I leave the final word to Tom Maynard, another top player, who not only captured Halliday, but hundreds of thousands like him: the men and women who, quietly but emphatically, make this country great.

"Very sad to hear of the passing away of Brian Halliday, such a kind and gentle man, He will be remembered fondly by so many. RIP."



Crosby High's Steve Green recently gained his County Umpires badge and was soon into the action at the Cadet County Weekend at Wellingborough 24/25th Jan. 2015.

Obituary Alan Wood



It is with great sadness that I have to report the sudden death of Alan Wood, 80 yrs, Vice President of the LDTTL and member of the Merseyside Police Table Tennis Club.

Alan was a member of the Police Table Tennis Club from the 1960's and was Secretary of the MPTTS for many years. For his services to the LDTTL Alan was made a Vice President of the League which he considered a great honour.

Alan was well known for his sense of humour and was always laughing and telling terrible jokes. He was Mr. Table Tennis as far as the Police Club was concerned and for many years he organised a table tennis social at the Police Club, Fairfield at the end of the season.

Alan was taken ill towards the end of 2014 but died suddenly in his sleep on Tuesday 20th January 2015.

Alan's funeral took place on Wednesday 28th January at Springwood Crematorium.

Over 160 family and friends attended the funeral.

Rest in Peace.

Tom Purcell
Secretary MPTTS



Division 2 Report contd. From page 7

Week 15 The two Pauls did the business again as Maghull remain unbeaten against Wavertree Lab A. Marconi's John McCann, Neil Colville and Tony Mullaally whitewashed Wavertree Lab B, and Graeme Black and Paul Evans remained unbeaten again in Cadwa's win over their A team.

Matty Laird again proved his class as he won his treble in Crosby High C's win at Sefton Park, Sylvia Graham and James Sullivan scoring two each. Ted Birch rolled back the years as he remained unbeaten in Bootle YMCA's defeat of Harold House A, Alan Chase and John Higham each scoring a pair.

Steve Whalley and Alex Bryce were unbeaten and Peter Findlater scored two as Harold House beat Bath St C, Rob Peat saving the whitewash.

Week 16 This week saw a rare defeat for Graeme Black with Sefton Park's Alan Davies the conqueror, and he

remained unbeaten in their draw with Cadwa. The two Pauls and Amy Hutchings were again unbeaten in Maghull's win at Bath St C, Peter Findlater remained unbeaten, and Steve Whalley picked up two in Harold House's close win at Crosby High C.

Phil Luxon proved the catalyst for Wavertree Lab A's win over their B team, remaining unbeaten, Dave Harse also picked up a couple, Lee Farley getting a couple for the B team. Alan Chase rolled back the years this week as Bootle YMCA won at Marconi A. Barry Davis with three and two each for Ian McElwee and Ricky Brown proved too much for Harold House A.

Well not only is the double still on, but so is the treble, and it will take a brave man to bet against it happening this season. So with the winners almost there who will take the runners up spot? Well at the moment Bath St B are looking likely favourites with Harold House and Marconi having a bit to do to catch them.

An article by Colin Wilson who was ranked as England's No 1 at Under-13, Cadet and Junior levels; won two silver medals at the Commonwealth Championships in Edinburgh in 1979 and is currently on the Board of Table Tennis England.

The weekend of Jan 24/25/ 2015 saw the televised finals of the World Championships of Ping Pong (WCPP), where 64 of the world's best sand-paper bat players took part in a two-day tournament at Alexandra Palace, with a substantial prize fund on offer.

Lots of things are the same between Ping Pong as played in the WCPP and Table Tennis as we know it under the ITTF rules. But there are three crucial differences that make all the difference! The things that are the same include the table, the net, the ball, the flooring, the lighting and the court size (in terms of international table tennis competition standards). So non-players often ask why it is so different? Here are my top three reasons:

1. The bats: The bats for the World Championships of Ping Pong have no modern rubber or sponge on them. They are made of wood, like modern bats, but are then covered only with very fine blue sandpaper, as the leading bats were, when made in the days before modern rubber technology. So the crucial difference is a simple but amazing thing about friction between bat and ball on contact during the stroke. In modern table tennis, the rubber on many of the bats has incredibly high friction, enabling a ball to enter the bat at up to an 80-degree angle, and yet bounce back in the direction it came from! These rubbers offer even more mechanical grip than a Formula 1 slick car tyre, with prices (per square centimetre) to match. This makes table tennis a fantastic, fast, dynamic sport as the players learn to control and express amazing amounts of spin. Against a lesser player, a good modern-day high-friction bat specialist will create more spin than the opponent can handle, forcing errors of technique in the opponent; also they will create a lot of deception in each stroke, so that the opponent is led to believe there is one spin, when in fact there is another spin actually on the ball's rotation, forcing an error of perception, rather than an error of technique (rather like a magician's illusion forces an error of judgement in the eye of the audience). This is amazing to study when watching modern day table tennis, and makes the players into incredible physical and mental athletes.

The high friction rubber also has another effect, to enable the generation of huge amounts of topspin (video analysis shows ball rotation of over 60 times per second as it leaves the bat – and maybe more these days). This enables a player to hit the ball extremely hard (90+ mph on contact), aiming it slightly upwards to get the ball over the net, and yet the topspin will generate an aerodynamic effect like an upside-down aeroplane wing (again, like a rear wing on a F1 car) that in effect increases the gravity on the ball and pulls it downwards so it doesn't travel off the end of the table before landing and shooting onwards towards (or past) the opponent.

So why Ping Pong as played in the WCPP? Well the games are very different both for the players and for the spectators, and I believe in both formats of the game for

very different reasons. The impact of the modern rubbers has been a) to speed up the rallies, b) to shorten the rallies in many (but not all) cases, and c) to make it harder for the spectator to see what the players are actually doing in all their skill. It becomes partly a covert operation – as WCPP promoter Barry Hearn says, "A battle between scientist and scientist", as well as a battle of skill.

With sand-paper bats, however, the friction between bat and ball is very low. I think Fred (our star hard-bat competition organiser and one of our 'low-friction founding fathers', Fred Dove), quotes the video analysis from sand-paper spin being about only two per cent of high-friction Table Tennis spin. This virtually zero-spin environment of WCPP means the players have a very different challenge. They cannot easily deceive the opponent with their spin (though they will certainly try to do so with direction and change of pace!), and they will have to work much more carefully to prevent their hard shots going off the end of the table. So self-control, ball control, table control and opponent control all have to be deployed in very different ways in order to plan and execute a winning strategy in the sand-paper game.

So for the spectators, WCPP is an amazing and different treat. The rallies will on average be much longer than in table tennis, with more cat-and-mouse strategy to notice and enjoy. Perceptually, it is easier for spectators to see the skill applied by the players, and there are more defensive players, rallies and shots from away from the table, which is great to watch as the ball is controlled from afar and floated carefully and low to a tricky corner of the table. The reduction in spin (and hence speed) also means that mentally, the spectators can 'get inside the heads' of the players more easily, understand what they are doing, what they are planning, and can judge the players' judgement and execution more readily during rallies. It all makes for a great event and so much fun to play and to watch!

2. The scoring system is slightly different to table tennis. WCPP games are played to 15 points instead of 11, and importantly, a unique aspect of this Championship is the use of the now-famous 'double-point ball'. Once against each opponent, a player, when due to serve, can ask the umpire to switch to the white ball (from the normal orange one) for one rally. If she wins the next rally she gets two points instead of the usual one point. This may not sound much, but in a close match this can be seen to be the difference between winning and losing, such are the slim margins that create champions with sand-paper. And the psychological effect of winning or losing the double-point ball rally can be really significant and fascinating for the

spectators to see in the players' subsequent shots. The crowd, and often the players, make a big deal of the double-point opportunity. You can't use the double-point ball to win the game directly though, so you can't use it if you have more than 12 points on the board.

3. FUN! Sand-paper bat 'Ping Pong' was born out of player creativity – out of a desire of some to remove the complication and increasing complexity that has been produced by technology, to lengthen the rallies, to enable an excellent spectator experience and above all, to enable players to have a 'ball' of a time playing in a new and refreshing format. Most of the players are not hard-bat specialists (some are) but play both formats of the sport they love. But the real winners are the spectators who like to see the grace and power of tremendous athletes, tactical minds and great personalities. Most of all it is an expression of love for the game and epitomises the friendship that sport can bring across nations and generations.

How easy is it for a top Table Tennis player to succeed at sand-paper Ping Pong?

I've been asked this question a lot, and experience has taught me not to be too sure of myself here in this new sport, as the world level of this discipline evolves! I think there is a balance between sheer athletic and sporting class on the one hand – which shows that a great table tennis player is not just a function of their bat but their eye and skill is likely to make them fantastic at sand-paper Ping Pong too. It certainly surprised some traditional aficionados how good some of the younger kids were able to adapt to this format of the game so quickly. So I think it's true to say that 'the cream rises to the top' whether it's Table Tennis or sand-paper Ping Pong – but these days that's only true if you familiarise yourself with the bats and the change in style properly. Gone are the days when good TT players could simply pick up a sandpaper bat from scratch and think they could win a big hard-bat or sand-paper bat tournament!

But I think it's also true to say, as in any sport, that particular conditions suit different players differently. Just like some golfers are links specialists, or footballers are strikers or defenders or good in a particular formation, a particular change in the rules or style will suit some more than others. I think sand-paper bat Ping Pong is well suited to world-class defenders, like many of the Phillipino sand-paper specialists (Richard Gonzales is a joy to watch around the back of the court, for example), and at the very highest level I think physical conditioning, especially speed endurance (as opposed to the explosive power of table tennis), plays a significant role in shifting the odds between table tennis and Ping Pong. That's one reason I think Max has been so strong. I also think it's hard for the players who excel in table tennis by using more subtle variations of spin to dominate in WCPP – this 'spin-subtlety' has less effect with sandpaper bats, while the risks of this complicated type of shot execution (making a tiny error that takes the ball just off the edge of the table)

are just as great. So sand-paper shifts the risk-reward ratios of the game in a number of subtle ways.

What have been your impressions of the first two years of the WCPP?

I've absolutely loved it. I still uncover and coach some talented juniors in 'modern' table tennis mode, and it's a great sport. But then Fred (Dove) got me into a 'hard bat' competition (similar to sand-paper) where I met up with lots of my old TT tournament circuit friends and adversaries, and we had a great time – competitive but not debilitatingly serious! And it is not so hard on the body in terms of explosive twisting, so I can protect my old injuries from too much exposure!

I've played in several English competitions since that are similar to this WCPP event, but I'm struggling to keep up with the keen, fit and (increasingly) younger up-and-coming sand-paper or hard-bat enthusiasts, so I'd struggle to qualify for this event. I'm more a local quarter-final kind of guy these days! I'm just very, very impressed by the sheer class of the qualifiers who are vying for the medals and the prize money, by the way they approach it professionally, and the way they still, by and large, keep a little tongue-in-cheek about the entertainment aspect of the whole event, despite the intensity of competition and the prize-fighting.

But what is clear is that the standard is rising quickly at the moment, more players are training specifically for this event, the game is evolving quickly, and so I think we're due for some surprises and a lot of fireworks this year!

Can anybody stop Magic Max?

I mentioned the two-time and unbeaten Champion earlier. Max is an amazing athlete, so intense, quick and consistent, and if you look back over 2013 and 2014, he was so good at maintaining his form in the latter stages when some players were beginning to fade or the inspiration occasionally eluded them. Max is tall but he's not large or carrying weight (not according to his latest Facebook picture anyway!), and his physique is fantastic for a guy his age, relative to many of his peers and in fact, even relative to lots of the younger players. My prediction is that he will not dominate in the same way this year, as he's a year older, and some younger players have been gunning for him in training. And no-one wins forever.

But while the standard will be higher, and the matches closer, I still reckon he'll come out on top again, as his experience, approach and attitude are just supreme. But from hard experience from my own playing days, I have learned that my predictions in these types of international events always need to be qualified by the thought that there is always one country that can bring out a new, sometimes internationally unknown player who is just amazing. And this year, Magic Max has to face the qualifiers from, yes...the mighty People's Republic of China.

Table Tennis England Chair's Newsletter March 2015. -:

We have received a number of requests for clarification on the use of plastic balls in competition from next season and have produced a guide to answer some points raised. We hope this will help. We know that this is not universally popular, but this is a change which will be implemented throughout the world-wide table tennis community and it is our responsibility as a sport national governing body to ensure our players are able to compete on a level playing field at home and abroad.

– here is a Q&A guide.

Q1: Why the change?

The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) announced a move to plastic balls in 2013. They have been used in all ITTF-sanctioned and World Title events since July 1, 2014. The European Table Tennis Union (ETTU) confirmed the mandatory use of the plastic ball in all ETTU competition from September 1, 2014.

Q2: What is Table Tennis England's position?

Table Tennis England conforms with the ITTF decision as a matter of principle. However, we recognised that the 2014-15 season would inevitably be one of transition as stocks of celluloid balls were used up and supplies of plastic balls improved. It was therefore decided to introduce plastic balls at National Championship and Grand Prix events, while leaving local leagues and tournaments free to choose between celluloid and plastic for the 2014-15 season.

Q3: What will happen next season (2015/16)?

Plastic balls will be used at all Table Tennis England events from July 1, 2015 in order to ensure a level playing field for all competitors, on both national and international stages.

We strongly advise that all local leagues use the plastic balls from next season for the following reasons:

- Above all, introducing plastic balls across the board will benefit all players as it ensures consistency throughout all levels of the sport. Not introducing plastic balls in one competition would see players disadvantaged when they play in other competitions.
- It is anticipated that supplies of celluloid balls will dwindle rapidly as plastic balls become the norm. Therefore, making the switch at the earliest opportunity and across the board is advisable for the greater good of the sport as a whole.

Q4: What if my league doesn't want to change?

We strongly advised leagues to introduce plastic balls from 2015/16 as not doing so will only serve to disrupt players. However, we recognize that whilst celluloid balls remain on the ITTF approved

list, individual leagues may choose not to introduce plastic balls, despite our strong recommendation that a uniform approach and a common start date would be the most beneficial option for all players.

Q5: What if my club has a big supply of celluloid balls?

The 12 months' notice given to clubs at the start of this season was intended to avoid this situation. However, celluloid balls can continue to be used in practice and club closed tournaments.

Q6: What is the availability?

We have contacted several UK distributors, who believe there may be temporary supply shortages during summer 2015 due to anticipated heavy demand. We therefore encourage all clubs, leagues, and tournament organisers to ensure orders are placed in plenty of time for next season. The ITTF has kept celluloid balls on its list of Approved Balls valid until December 31, 2015. It is not intending to withdraw celluloid balls from the list as long as manufacturers continue to produce them. However, the ITTF anticipates celluloid balls will disappear from the market as production, storage and distribution become unprofitable.

Q7: Are they robust or easily breakable?

Evidence suggests that while early batches fell below the necessary standards for durability, later batches have improved. For more information, see the ITTF's Q&A at:-

http://itff.com/stories/pictures/plastic_ball_12_08_14.pdf

Q8: When can we get Orange balls?

The ITTF anticipates that orange balls will be introduced by manufacturers in the near future as the production process for the white balls becomes normalised.

February 18, 2015

- See more at the ITTF site:

http://itff.com/stories/pictures/plastic_ball_12_08_14.pdf

Divisional Cups Semi Final Results

Readman Cup

Crosby High 'B' W/O	5	v	0	Crosby High 'A'
Wavertree Labour	2	v	5	Fords

Rumjahn Cup

Cadwa	2	v	5	Maghull
Bath St. Marine 'C'	4	v	5	Sefton Park

Hyde Cup

Marconi 'B' W/O	5	v	0	Arriva N.W.
Maghull 'A'	2	v	5	East Wavertree

Forrest Cup

East Wavertree 'A'	5	v	2	Bath St. Marine 'F'
M/Side Police 'D'	3	v	5	St. Annes

Stamp Cup

Waterloo	5	v	3	Bath St. Marine 'G'
Wavertree Lab. 'E'	5	v	4	M/Side Police 'E'

Frank Murphy Vets. H/cap Cup

Round 2

Marconi 3	386	v	370	Bootle YMCA 2
Bath St. Marine 1	364	v	335	Bath St. Marine 3
Bath St. Marine 2	370	v	315	Maghull 1
Waterloo	436	v	392	Marconi 1
Cadwa 3	439	v	475	Arriva N.W. 2
Wavertree Lab. 2	417	v	408	Cadwa 1
Sefton Park 3	467	v	459	Sefton Park 2
Maghull 2	377	v	379	Marconi 2

Frank Murphy Vets. H/cap Cup

Round 3

Wav. Labour 2	396	v	401	Bath St Marine 1
Marconi 2	433	v	479	Waterloo
Bath St Marine 2	384	v	359	Sefton Park 3
Marconi 3	476	v	475	Arriva 2

The venues for the 2014-15 Divisional Cup Finals are confirmed as :-

CUP	Match Night	Teams	Venue
Readman	Mon. 23rd Mar.	Fords v Crosby High 'B'	East Wavertree
Rumjahn	Tues. 24th Mar.	Maghull v Sefton Park	Bootle YMCA
Hyde	Wed. 25th Mar.	Marconi 'B' v East Wavertree	Harold House
Forrest	Thurs 26th Mar.	East Wavertree 'A' v St. Annes	Cadwa
Stamp	Fri. 27th Mar.	Waterloo v Wavertree Lab. 'E'	Bath St. Marine

Which manufacturers already have ITTF Approved plastic balls?

What type of ball (with or without seam)?"

5 manufacturers"

BALL MANUFACTURER	COUNTRY **	TYPE	DATE OF APPROVAL
Double Happiness/DHS	China	with seam	24.01.14
Double Fish	China	With Seam	24.01.14
Xushaofa	China	Seamless	24.01.14
Nittaku	Japan	Eith Seam	25.03.14
Weener	Germany	With Seam	Test passed 29.05.14/ Final approval pending

** Company's Headquarter!

Table above taken from Q & A on the ITTF web page

http://itf.com/stories/pictures/plastic_ball_12_08_14.pdf

League Tables as at 14/3/2015

Division One		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Wavertree Lab	17	16	0	1	144	26	144
2	Crosby High B	17	15	0	2	134	36	134
3	Fords	17	16	0	1	125	45	125
4	M/Side Police	16	11	1	4	109	51	109
5	Bath St Marine A	17	5	5	7	77	93	77
6	Christ The King	17	5	3	9	73	97	73
7	Crosby High A	16	5	2	9	72	88	72
8	Bath St Marine	16	4	3	9	68	92	68
9	M/Side Police A	17	4	2	11	59	111	59
10	Crosby High	14	5	1	8	58	82	58
11	M/Side Police B	17	5	3	9	58	112	58
12	Christ The King A	18	3	2	13	56	124	56
13	Marconi	17	2	1	14	45	125	45
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Division Two		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Maghull	18	18	0	0	154	26	154
2	Bath St Marine B	16	11	2	3	109	51	109
3	Harold House	18	10	4	4	109	71	109
4	Cadwa	18	9	5	4	103	77	103
5	Marconi A	17	11	2	4	100	70	100
6	Bootle YMCA	16	7	3	6	80	80	80
7	Sefton Park	18	4	5	9	79	101	79
8	Wavertree Lab A	17	6	3	8	77	93	77
9	Cadwa A	17	6	2	9	74	96	74
10	Wavertree Lab B	17	4	3	10	65	105	65
11	Crosby High C	16	5	2	9	62	98	62
12	Bath St Marine C	17	2	2	13	51	119	51
13	Harold House A	17	1	1	15	47	123	47
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Division Three		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	East Wavertree	19	17	2	0	143	47	143
2	Bath St Marine E	18	11	1	6	113	67	113
3	Marconi B	17	14	1	2	111	59	111
4	M/Side Police C	19	11	2	6	105	85	105
5	Arriva Nth West	18	9	3	6	102	78	102
6	Maghull B	18	8	3	7	97	83	97
7	Marconi C	19	5	4	10	88	102	88
8	Bath St Marine D	16	6	2	8	80	80	80
9	Maghull A	17	6	2	9	78	92	78
10	Bootle YMCA A	17	5	3	9	72	98	72
11	Cadwa B	18	1	5	12	63	117	63
12	Wavertree Lab C	18	4	2	12	59	121	59
13	Linacre	18	3	2	13	49	131	49
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Division Four		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	St Annes	16	14	0	2	125	35	125
2	East Wavertree A	17	14	2	1	124	46	124
3	Bath St Marine F	16	14	1	1	122	38	122
4	Sefton Park A	17	13	0	4	118	52	118
5	M/Side Police D	17	8	4	5	91	79	91
6	Cadwa C	19	7	3	9	87	103	87
7	Maghull C	18	6	3	9	83	97	83
8	Marconi D	17	7	2	8	81	89	81
9	Bootle YMCA B	18	4	4	10	69	111	69
10	QVC	17	4	2	11	60	110	60
11	Arriva Nth West A	17	2	3	12	56	114	56
12	Maghull D	17	2	2	13	47	123	47
13	Wavertree Lab D	16	2	2	12	47	113	47
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Division Five		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Waterloo	18	16	1	1	143	37	143
2	Bootle YMCA C	17	12	3	2	114	56	114
3	Sefton Park B	17	10	4	3	111	59	111
4	Cadwa D	15	13	0	2	101	49	101
5	Waterloo A	17	9	1	7	91	79	91
6	Arriva Nth West B	16	7	6	3	89	71	89
7	Bath St Marine G	17	8	2	7	88	82	88
8	M/Side Police E	17	8	2	7	86	84	86
9	Wavertree Lab E	18	4	2	12	76	104	76
10	QVCA	17	5	1	11	69	101	69
11	Maghull E	17	3	2	12	55	115	55
12	Sefton Park C	18	1	3	14	45	135	45
13	Marconi E	16	0	1	15	32	128	32
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



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