

## REMINISCING

Alec mentioned Harold Clark- what a grand bloke he was.- he is much missed. His memory lives on through the Harold Clark Memorial Trophy for Under 400 at the Closed Championships

I played for Leicester University from 1964 to 1968 and was Secretary of the TT club. I met my wife Susan playing table tennis there - she gained full colours while I only got half colours.... I then joined British Rail because my Uni player friend Chuck Kershaw had somehow linked with them; Harold was the driving force in the Club -a really keen and sporting player as well.

I then played with BR until its demise in 1988/89. I played with Harold most of the time and he became a great friend. I remember Alec (Downes) of course -though he was never in the same team -and Don Berrill who he mentioned . There were many others – Pat and Dennis Kilsby were wonderful team mates as was Derek Noon, who later on, I played when he was at Abbots Road. In other teams -we had 5 -were Mick Harvey, - who I have played in recent years when playing Nomads – and his wife Mary played as well. Others in the Club were Stan Dilkes, Norman Todd, Robin Spencer, Tony Wilmin , Richard Collins, Tony Attewell – I recalled most of these names but reference to Andy Wright's Archive helped!

I also played with Audrey and Peter Watson for a couple of years- and still reciprocate at Christmas – as we do with Peter Woodhead – who was a University colleague and player with BR. And finally but definitely most memorable, the incomparable pair of Marjorie Goodman and Dorothy Tudor – mature ladies who could definitely play and caused many to wonder how they did it; they later played at Knighton Park and indeed played in the same team as my daughter Laura when she first started at 10.

It was a great club – but had to close down because of premises and problems with the parent BR Social Club. Who remembers playing at the Railway Station and having to stop because the Transport Police brought their dogs through!

Harold was the cause of my becoming involved in TT administration-so blame him! As he could not get to a League AGM ,he sent me along in his place. I asked questions as did Ted Collins – later also Chairman -and both of us ended up being asked to be on the Committee . Initially I was a Divisional Secretary but then became Assistant General Secretary to Ian McKelvey – who remains a close friend- and then Secretary, Vice – Chairman and Chairman . That was 1980 – so that was 40 years ago and once again I am Assistant General Secretary!..

Without that happenstance in 1980, I would not have had all the privilege and pleasure of being involved at club, league , county, schools county, region, national and international levels since then and again still going at all! That involvement has led to the benefit of meeting so many people and seeing so much.. Who would have thought in 1980 that I would go to China for TT but I did and watched Will Bayley MBE win the World Para Class 7 Singles title with multi millions seeing it on Chinese TV - more than saw him on Strictly ?

I then moved to Belgrave Liberals for a couple of years before moving to Knighton Park- another great club where Alec also ended up. This is my 61<sup>st</sup> season of League play -initially in Hastings but since 1964 here in Leicester- and I am looking forward to a 62<sup>nd</sup> with my current team of Bill, Phil and Tony – with whom I really enjoy my TT very much still.

I could get all in the photo except the one on the right – and its bugging me that I did not recognise Charlie Jacques as I was there at the final John described.

Mike Smith