

## **All Our Yesterdays – 50 Years Ago, Number 5 – John Bowness**

From the point of view of National Team competitions it was a case of so near yet so far with the Men and the Junior Girls already having lost 5-4, when it came to the turn of the Junior Boys who faced Manchester in the semi finals of that event, with a very good chance of success.

The opponent's Tony Boasman was one of the top juniors in the country at the time so a plan was hatched for Paul Randell and Andy Holdsworth to concentrate on their expected two apiece. Leaving Alan Philpott needing to beat their number three. It nearly worked as Alan did his bit valiantly while Paul won two.

However, on the day Andy, who was apt to do this on occasion, lacked urgency and lost 23-21 in the third to Philip Bowen, trying two "impossible" shots at 21-21. So, for the third time this season, a Leicester team went down 5-4.

A large contingent entered the Midland "Closed" at Derby with a great deal of success, and this included Charlie Jacques rounding off one of his finest seasons by taking the Men's Singles title for the first time after striving for a number of years.

As I reported at the time "his immaculate defence completely broke Richard Cooper from Birmingham in the final after Jacques lost the first, but then got better and better". The final score was 15-21, 21-11, 21-9.

Paul Randell also had a good tournament, beating Birmingham's Philip Giles in the Boy's Singles final and then combined with that same player to take the Boy's Doubles title.

Sally Elsdon came so close to making it four titles for Leicester players when she took the first game in the Girls Singles against Barbara Eardley 21-17, and then narrowly lost the second before her opponent got on top in the third.

A semi finalist in the Girls event was Karen Rogers who went out to Eardley.

While on the subject of Karen who incidentally features in five of the eight "My Three Players" currently in Top Spin (as Karen Smith). With Sally Elsdon and Jane Evans, this trio became the first junior girls side ever to win a divisional title in the Leicester League when they topped Division 7B.

With the premature and unexpected retirement of Rita Stevenson before this season, who had held sway at the top of the local women's gradings from many years, it was a close run thing this time around as to who would take her place.

In the end it was Post Office's Barbara Webster who just pipped Jose Rogers and Glenys Odams, both Knighton Park on, respectively, 227, 223 and 221. Pat Kilsby (Eng Electric) was fourth on 207 while Audrey Watson (Gee Advertising) at 178 was fifth.

As the season approached it's close no less than 50 teams had entered the increasingly popular Elbow Tankard, the summer competition still in existence including two previous winners in Taverners and Northstars.