

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S BUILDING SITE

Firstly, my apologies for the long gap since the last of these pieces.

I was fortunate enough to be able to work through October and November, so selfishly took the opportunity to keep the roof over my head.

The roof over my head is, unfortunately, somewhat leaky so I am now having to arrange something of a building project to repair the damage (it also helps when the tenants in the flat upstairs place the curtain inside the bath before having a shower- who would have thought?).

As I write this (Sunday morning) we are all digesting yesterday's announcement, and working out how the new restrictions affect our plans for the Christmas period.

It looks as though I am going to have plenty of time for reading. Having finished Samuel Pepys' Diary, I have bought myself a copy of Daniel Defoe's A Journal of the Plague Year. It is considerably shorter, not least because Pepys was covering a much longer period, so will not detain me for anywhere near as long.

That will then allow me to break a previous New Year's resolution. That was not to buy/read another book by Matthew Syed. My excuse (in terms of buying it) is that it was the free book in a 3 for 2 deal; having acquired the book I suppose I should try to read it. I will report back (but am expecting it to be derivative [careful choice of word designed to avoid the interest of any libel lawyers] and full of long words as the author reminds us how clever he is).

The other piece of research I will carry out is to count how many TV adverts make use of table tennis. We appear to be the sport of choice for advertisers at present, for reasons that aren't immediately obvious to me (unless it is just because the table, being relatively small, can physically fit into lots of spaces?).

This has (understatement alert) obviously been a very difficult year.

In terms of league organised events we had to suspend activity back in March. Since then table tennis activity (other than for the few fortunate enough to have their own table) has been restricted to outdoor tables and a brief return to some limited club activity for those clubs/venues able to reopen [junior coaching, but not much else, is possible at present].

Sadly, we have lost a player (Dave Bray) and, just recently, a player/official (Derek Butt). There are details/tributes on Topspin, which gives me the opportunity to thank John for keeping that valuable resource (and also the regular e-mail updates) going through these difficult times.

I hope that we will be able to resume activity in 2021.

On the positive side, we have the experience of safely reopening some clubs/venues- this will be invaluable as we eventually come out of the lockdown measures. And, above all, we are obviously that much nearer being vaccinated.

Finally, some wise words:

- 'it's only a game' (but we like it and look forward to being able to play it again)

- "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.'

Season's Greetings, and please take care (and stay alert)

Peter