

REMINISCING

BEVANS HOLDINGS TTC 1977/78 TO 1981/82 AND 1987 TO 1988

BEVANS HOLDINGS TTC was a small specialised precision engineering company situated on Gloucester Crescent South Wigston. The firm folded in the mid noughties and the premises are currently occupied by Woods Coaches. During the mid seventies employee Newmann Meider organised the delivery of a very old and very heavy TT table plus about 90 multi-coloured ping pong balls from a blower type bingo machine that belonged to the Gypsy Lane WMC for whom he used to play for in what I believed to be the Leicester Working Men's Club League. The table, which had a full 1 inch thick plywood top and ornate lathe-carved legs, had been extensively repaired over its many years of use. Despite this and provided you avoided the bad bits played remarkably well. Newmann had also covered some old Barna type racquets with sponge foam rubber. We really enjoyed our lunchtime 45 minute practice sessions – we were in fact pioneers I believe in playing 11 up games so that as many people as possible could get to play a few games with the time available. Inspired by our own enthusiasm and the TV coverage of the TT World Championships held in Birmingham in 1977, we decided to apply to join the L&DTTL for the 1977/78 season. We all bought new sandwich rubber bats(mine was a Slazenger Red Devil !) and a new table through the trading magazine Exchange and Mart. It had a half inch thick chipboard top but played really well. We were placed into division 20 under the auspices of a certain John Bowness. His last L&DTTL post before retiring to take up bowls, happily returned to the fold now. We thought we were good. Ken Amos, Stu Jones and Terry Bown – our main 3 players for the next four years – got our season off to a good start with an 8-2 win against Camber International 2. We thought we were really good. Wrong !! We ended the season with just 4 wins and finished well down the pecking order of the division. The next season we were delighted and surprised to be promoted up 3 divisions to division 17 where we managed to win 12 matches and a top half finish. Promotion again saw us go up to division 13 under the guidance of Kelvin Wells of Fosse Riders fame. A better season followed with 11 wins and just 2 defeats to a County Hall 2 team which included Steve Pratt and Richard Just who are still playing. We also lost to Leicester Gas 2. We always attended the presentation evenings held in those days at the Glen Hall on Hillsborough Road. Although we thought we had done quite well over the last 3 seasons, we had won nothing. We were envious of those teams who had won something and couldn't understand why some teams never bothered to turn up to receive their prizes. We would have crawled up to the stage had we been fortunate to have won something. Things were about to change. We were promoted up two more divisions to 11. After a titanic struggle with Leicestershire Police we emerged as runners-up, our first ever award. We were ecstatic. Promotion again to division 8 but this time earned by our runners-up spot the season before. That made it four promotions in four seasons, up 12 divisions. However we were dealt a blow a couple of weeks before the next season started when our number one player, Ken Amos, decided to retire not only from table tennis but also from his job at Bevans. We struggled on the next season with various guest players but it just was not the same. After a mid-table finish we decided not to apply for the 82/83 season. Both Stu Jones and myself went our separate ways, table tennis wise that is. Stuart went on to play for the Alliance & Leicester Building Society whilst I turned out for The Leicester Gas. After 5 years the revival of club's appearance in the League was sparked by new employee Mark Smith, a remarkable natural talent. The League very generously placed us into division 7 and with Mark's enormous help (Second in the individual averages to New Braunstone Goon's Klaus Huermann by 1 game) together with the experience of Stu and Terry managed to win the division by 3 sets over New Braunstone Goons. My one real regret in all those past seasons in the League was that we never received the division 7 trophy to keep for the customary 12 months due to an administration cock-up (engraving).

Terry Bown.