

A History of Northumberland Table Tennis Association
By Aubrey Drapkin

CHAPTER SIX

The Peak Years - Part Two

1970-1971

During the summer of **1970** many of the clubs affiliated to the association continued playing competitive table tennis in the Tyneside section of the North East Summer League which was now administered by Aubrey Drapkin.

Stan Lawson had a change of heart about resigning after an approach to him had been made by several members of the executive committee and he was duly re-elected as chairman for 1970/71. In addition, he was elected to be National Councillor and he was then appointed to the National Development sub-committee by the E.T.T.A.

There was no change to the existing Officers of the association, but Harry Dignan was now Coaching Officer and Arnie Warents was back on the executive committee, now called the executive council, along with new members Ray Rogers, Robert Lumb and George Newby.

The three new members were also on the County Management Committee along with Pauline Jackson, Arnie Warents, Len Heppell, John Richardson and Alan Morpeth.

There were no changes to the League Management Committee nor were there any new qualified umpires at the start of the season.

During the season M.J.Armstrong, Alan Morpeth and George Newby all qualified as County Umpires and did Brian Burn but he left the district. Sid Holt eventually took over as County Umpires Secretary.

The editorial committee for the 'Sandwich' magazine were the editor Arnie Warents, along with Pauline Jackson, Leo Gowan and Joe McLeod.

Leagues affiliated to the County were the Northumberland League, the Berwick League and the Newcastle league.

The Northumberland League continued to be administered by the County Association and started the season with one hundred and twenty-two teams from sixty-six clubs, an increase of one club but a decrease of three teams. Nine divisions were again in operation.

D.H.S.S., Benton and North Shields YMCA were the largest clubs in the league at the end of the previous season, each having six teams throughout the divisions but at the start of 1970/71 the YMCA only had four.

George Newby took over the organisation of the Northumberland Youth Association League which was again a success with four divisions. The winners of each division

who took part in playoffs were Hartford Youth Centre, Walbottle Campus, Bedlington Westridge and Gosforth. Unfortunately, there is no record of the results of the semi finals or of the eventual winners.

On the coaching front six centres were regularly used including a weekly advanced class at Whitley Bay Grammar School. E.T.T.A. Hard Training sessions were held monthly at the Lightfoot Stadium in Newcastle, the final one being attended by thirty student coaches and five staff coaches. Proficiency tests were taken by youngsters at Whitley Bay and at the Lightfoot with gold awards being achieved by Carolyn Little and Glenn McCardle, the latter being a very promising thirteen year old. Silver and bronze awards were gained by an increasing number of keen young players.

County trials were held which formed the basis of ranking lists which were drawn up.

Janet Priestley, Carolyn Little and Stephen Brewis were all nominated for junior trials to be held nationally in Cheltenham for which it was agreed that the association would pay their expenses, but it was only Janet Priestley that took up the offer.

In connection with the North East Educational Film project the area's National Coach, Peter Simpson, with the help of two Teesside youngsters, Nicky Jarvis and David Alderson had demonstrated table tennis.

A second demonstration was also held at a later date.

Harry Dignan was appointed as chairman of the E.T.T.A. Northern Area coaching panel.

Because of the continued demand for coaching within the area the association decided to set up a coaching committee for the following season.

Two senior teams were once again entered in the County Championships with the first team in the Second Division, North and the second team in the Northern Division. The first team ended up winning three matches and losing three whilst the second team whose regular players included Arthur Chilvers, Ron Kettlewell and Pauline Jackson won three and lost one to win the Northern Division.

A junior team took part in the Junior Division North but could only draw one match and lose their other three to finish in bottom place.

The men's League team made an early exit from the Wilmott Cup at the hands of North Yorkshire to whom they lost 1 - 5.

However the women's side reached the quarter finals of the Rose Bowl but the team of Maureen Robson, Nancy Ferguson and Pauline Long narrowly lost 4 - 5 to Stockport.

Because of the lack of top standard junior players teams were not entered into the Carter Cup (boys) or into the Bromfield Trophy(girls) competitions.

Because he had left the district permission was granted to Brian Burn to register for Warwickshire. It had been hoped to be able to register Fred Short and Miss P.Young

for the county teams and application was made to Durham but as in previous cases it was as usual met with a refusal.

A strong party of players and officials visited Bergen but after five successive victories the association's hold on the North Sea Cup was relinquished with Bergen winning 3 - 2.

The Newcastle University students were once again all set to organise the Tyneside Closed Championships which Sid Holt agreed to referee but unfortunately it was impossible to organise it because of the postal strike.

Because publicity in The Journal had been poor in the previous season it was decided to once again approach the Evening Chronicle to obtain coverage. This resulted in an improved situation and league tables were occasionally published.

No copy was sent to Table Tennis News during the year.

The editor, Arnie Warents, changed jobs during the year and was unable to devote very much time to the 'Sandwich' magazine. This, coupled with the fact that there was a shortage of suitable advertising available, led to the suspension of production and it was suggested that for the following season it should be replaced by a News Sheet.

Alan Ransome was the most successful player from the county on the Open tournament scene reaching the final of the Men's Singles at the Cumberland and the semi finals at both the North of England and the Birmingham.

In Men's Doubles he was a winner at the North of England partnered by Ian Robertson and at the Birmingham when his partner was Brian Burn who was now a Warwickshire player. He reached the final at the Humberside and at the Midland Counties with Yorkshire's Nicky Jarvis and at the Cumberland with Jimmy Walker of Yorkshire. He also got to the semis at the North Middlesex when his partner was Yorkshire and England's Dennis Neale. Playing with Yorkshire's Linda Bashford he reached the final of the Mixed Doubles at the Humberside and won at the Cumberland where they defeated Ian Robertson and his partner J.Green from Cheshire.

Ian Robertson won the Boys Singles at the Kent Open and reached the semi finals of the Men's Doubles at the Teesside with Brian Burn.

Harry Dignan won the Veterans Singles at the Teesside and Arthur Chilvers got to the semi finals of the Mens Singles at the Pontefract.

There was a new tournament nearby with a Restricted Open taking place at Stanley in County Durham and quite a number of players from Northumberland took part.

Peter Hoyles won the Men's Singles and Nancy Ferguson was runner up in the Women's Singles. Hoyles and Ron Kettlewell reached the semi finals of the Doubles event and the pairing of Peter Gorman and John Rowell were runners up in the Junior Doubles. There was also a Team of Two event which was won by Hoyles and Kettlewell who beat Arthur Chilvers and Peter Holt in the final.

The Northumberland Open tournament had to be cancelled because of the postal strike which also caused a lower entry than usual in the Closed Tournament.

The Closed went ahead, once again at the D.H.S.S. canteen in Longbenton and was very successful both with the standard of play and financially. The outstanding players were Peter Hoyles representing D.H.S.S. Benton and Maureen Robson of Hexham Fandango, Peter retaining the Men's Singles and the Handicap Singles and also winning the Mixed Doubles with Maureen.

Maureen regained the Women's Singles title, this being the sixth time that she had won it in eight years, as well as partnering Nancy Ferguson of N.Shields YMCA to success in the Women's Doubles.

The Newcastle YMCA duo of Arthur Chilvers and Dave Armstong won the Men's Doubles whilst Blyth YMCA's Roland Earl was successful in the Veterans Singles for the third year running.

The Youths Singles winner was Chris Shepherd of Newcastle YMCA and D.H.S.S. Benton players swept the board in the Women's Handicap, the Junior Singles and the Junior Girls Singles, the winners being Pauline Jackson, B.Kauffman and Janet Priestley.

The Northumberland League programme was adversely affected by power cuts during the year and the administration was also disrupted by the postal strike. Many postponements took place, mainly in the first division and the submission of correctly completed score cards also again left room for improvement.

D.H.S.S., Benton retained the First Division title and also had two other divisional winners with their 'C' team in Division 3c and their 'F' team in Division 3a. Borough of Wallsend Sports Club were the winners of Division 2a and Revac 'B' team were successful in Division 2b. The other third division winners were Reyrolles 'C' and the three teams to win the fourth divisions were Wills SRC, Procter and Gamble 'A' and Saint Wilfred's Boys Club.

The Knock Out competition did not take place.

For the first time for many years a Dinner Dance and Presentation Night was held. It took place at the Grand Hotel in Tynemouth and turned out to be very successful thanks to the organisation of Joe McLeod, Bill Dixon and John Richardson. Financially a deficit of some £65 was incurred, mainly due to a loss on the Closed Tournament for the first time which was probably caused by the postal strike, and the balance in hand at the end of the year was down to £67.

During the summer a good number of teams once again took part in the Tyneside Section of the North East Summer league.

1971- 1972

The start of the **1971/72 season** saw the same Officers in post although one of the Handbook Secretaries, Tony Nichol, resigned in the October. Terry Wilkinson's position became that of Assistant League Secretary instead of Master Points Secretary, therefore the participation in the Master Points Scheme must have come to an end.

Harry Dignan continued to be Coaching Officer

The Executive Council was unchanged except that Arnie Warents was no longer involved. After the season started Bill McMaster was co - opted onto the Council.

The County Management Committee and League Management Committee were also both unchanged apart from the omission of Arnie Warents from the former and Tony Nichol resigning from the latter as well as Handbook Secretary in the October.

The number of qualified umpires was unfortunately reduced with Adam Coffey and Dave Robson no longer active and Brian Burn moving to Warwickshire.

The Berwick and Newcastle Leagues continued to be affiliated to the association.

There were two less teams in the Northumberland League although the number of clubs actually increased by three to sixty-nine and the number of divisions remained at nine.

One of the new clubs was Ashington YMCA who had previously been in the league in 1938/39, 1947/48 to 1950/51 and from 1952/53 to 1965/66. This time they were to stay until the end of the 1994/95 season.

Rule changes saw the fees for participation in the Northumberland League increased from £2.50 per team to £3 per team and the fee for an autonomous league increased to 20p per team. Individual affiliation became 50p.

All references to pounds, shillings and pence were, of course, changed to pounds and pence following decimalisation.

Each team in the Northumberland League now had to subscribe for four copies of the handbook.

A rule was brought in that teams having resigned during the course of the season were to be treated as having been relegated from a division except, of course, any of the fourth divisions.

Teams in the Ladies Knock Out Cup were now to consist of only two players.

A proposal was made at the Annual General Meeting to reduce the number of players in a team from four to three. The advantages were said to be that matches would be shorter, there would be less waiting time between games, and it would allow for the inclusion of a doubles match. After much discussion a vote was taken which ended having to be decided by the casting vote of the chairman Stan Lawson and he decided that there should be no change.

It was decided that the type of ball to be used for league play was to be one approved by the E.T.T.A. and not the I.T.T.F.

A Northumberland Youth Association League was again organised by George Newby with nineteen teams in four divisions. It was again successful, and the four divisional winners went into a knock out competition with Walbottle 'A' beating Hartford and Whitley Bay overcoming Saint Charles, Gosforth 'A' in the semis. The final was won by Walbottle 'A'.

Contact with schools obviously continued as Colin Richardson was appointed to be Schools Representative.

Regular coaching sessions were again held at the Lightfoot Stadium in Newcastle and at Whitley Bay Grammar School. with up to thirty players turning up at the Lightfoot.

A Stiga Exhibition was held at Whitley Bay Grammar School aimed principally at young players of school age and it was well publicised in schools and Youth Centres. The exhibition was well attended and well put over by Alan Ransome and his Teesside squad and generally considered to be a success.

Seven boys and three girls attended Sheffield YMCA during the Christmas school holidays for an official E.T.T.A. squad practice for top juniors.

There was also a coaching weekend at Lea Green in Derbyshire for which three places for boys and two for girls were available to Northumberland but there is no record of whether or not these were taken up.

Copy was still supplied to the Evening Chronicle for publication and it was recorded that the Northumberland League tables had on occasion been printed.

The publication of a newsletter to replace the 'Sandwich' magazine was left in abeyance with the typing, duplication and sending out the league tables to clubs taking preference.

Joe McLeod only sent in copy to the E.T.T.A. magazine on one occasion although Alan Morpeth did supply copy to them relating to the Northumberland Open Tournament.

In the one article that was printed in Table Tennis News Joe McLeod wrote that relegation from the Premier Division of the County Championships at the end of the 1969/70 season had cost Northumberland dearly both materially and psychologically. He stated that earlier a veneer of talent had travelled the tournament circuit for years to achieve within the county the standard necessary for Premier status but now we were back in the second division.

Stuart Lennie was now in Glasgow and Brian Burn who he said must surely have been the greatest player Northumberland ever produced was now in Warwickshire and Maureen Robson had also left the district with 'Pop' having been transferred by Newcastle United to West Ham United.

He said that their loss deprived the remainder of a target, a standard by which to gauge themselves and this psychological affect dulled a lot of the enthusiasm. He also

said the standard within Northumberland's top ranks had been weakened even further with the loss of Ian Robertson to Essex, Pete and Cynthia back to Yorkshire and Alan Ransome to Yorkshire.

Those remaining of any significance were Peter Hoyles, Arthur Chilvers, Ron Kettlewell and among the women Phil Clark, all of whom were well tried players who had been on the scene for years, but have not risen to the heights of their predecessors nor look likely to do so.

However he did state that there were promising young players on the scene in Glenn McCardle and Andrew Clark in the under 13s as well as Peter and Lucille Clark and Gillian McKenzie in the under sixteens.

A letter signed 'Old Northumbrian' appeared in the magazine the following month referring to Hoyles, Kettlewell and Chilvers as excellent players who would not consider themselves to be so long in the tooth as to be contemporaries of Phil Clark who had actually coached Ron Kettlewell in his early days.

The writer also pointed out that Phil Clark had played for England Juniors before Burn and her niece, Maureen, had started their careers and to suggest that she would not reach the playing achievements of her predecessors seemed to be slightly misinformed to say the least!

The season was, in fact, a disappointing one for the senior first team in the County Championships Senior Second Division North beating Durham in their first match but only managing a draw in one other and losing out on four occasions.

The second team fared better in the Northern Division, winning three matches and losing two.

The Junior team were again in Junior Division North and they won two, drew one and lost three. After beating Stockton 5 - 3 the Northumberland League team went out of the Wilmott Cup with a 0 - 5 defeat at the hands of North Yorkshire.

North Yorkshire also beat the womens' team in the first round of the Rose Bowl although it was closely fought with a 5 - 4 result.

However the association played host to the Bergen contingent of players and officials and the North Sea Cup was regained with a 3 - 2 success. The visitors were also given a dinner and a party with the usual friendly atmosphere prevailing.

There was not very much activity at Open tournaments outside of the county with the only record of any sort of success being Ian Robertson reaching the semi finals of the Mens Doubles at the North of England with Brian Burn, Harry Dignan getting to the semis of the veterans event at the Teesside and young Andrew Clark reaching the semis of the Junior Boys singles at the Teesside.

The Northumberland Open took place at the D.H.S.S. canteen again after having been cancelled in the previous year. There was a good entry although lacking in E.T.T.A. ranked players which was blamed on the fact that the Welsh Open was held on the same day.

Cheshire's Brian Johns was the star of the show, winning the Mens Singles, the Mens Doubles with his brother Ian and the Mixed Doubles with Janice Green, also of Cheshire.

Jean White of Lincolnshire was successful in the Women's Singles while the Women's Doubles was won by Lynne Bainbridge of Durham and Judith Walker from Yorkshire, the latter also winning the Junior Girls event. Yorkshire's Brian Alderson won the Junior Boys and at the other end of the age scale Cheshire's Derek Schofield won the Veterans Singles.

Once again, the Closed tournament was also held at the same venue, but the entry was lower than usual. Peter Hoyles of D.H.S.S. Benton made it three in a row by winning the Men's Singles and Nancy Ferguson of North.Shields YMCA triumphed in the Women's Singles.

For good measure Peter also won the Men's Doubles with his team mate Ron Kettlewell and the Mixed Doubles with Barbara Kearney who played for N.Shields YMCA. Unfortunately, the Women's Doubles had to be cancelled because of lack of entries.

Gillian McKenzie of Briarside won two titles, the Junior Girls and the Women's Handicap. The Individual Handicap winner was another Briarside player in Andrew Clark. The Youths Singles and the Junior Boys Singles were both won by players from B.B.C. House Boys Club, Dave Armstrong and Peter Gorman. Frank Graham of North Shields Boys Club won the Veterans Singles.

Numerous power cuts meant many postponed matches in the Northumberland League and the season had to be extended by three weeks in order that all matches could be played.

The incorrect completion of score cards continued to raise its head and caused problems for the league secretary and the loss of the use of the computer by Terry Wilkinson was also a set- back.

Harry Dignan was very keen that in future all matches in a division should be held at a central venue each week, but this idea was never taken up.

Blyth YMCA, who had been the outstanding team before the war and won the top division in eight of the first nine seasons of its existence, won it again for what turned out to be the last ever time while the two second division winners were Anglo Plas and Harrogate House.

The third divisions were won by Briarside, South Shields Corporation and Bells Close Methodists

The teams to finish at the top of the fourth divisions were North Shields Boys Club 'B', Wallsend Fire Brigade and Prudential.

North Shields YMCA triumphed in both the K.O. Cup and the ladies Knock Out Cup competitions.

A Dinner Dance and Presentation Evening was once again held, this time at the Panorama Restaurant in Shephards of Gateshead and was financially successful despite a disappointing attendance. Once again Bill Dixon, Joe McLeod and John Richardson were the people responsible for organising the event.

This year the running of the tournaments showed a small surplus compared with the large loss of the previous year and there was also a big saving in the costs of running the county teams and financially there was a surplus of £53 for the year which meant funds to carry forward stood at £120.

Because of the change in county boundaries and new county names having come into force it was agreed to support the E.T.T.A. proposals that counties should be based on the new boundaries but that leagues be given the choice of county if on the border. It was also agreed that a new county 'Greater Tyneside', in which most of the Northumberland League teams played would be recommended and the secretary was instructed to write to the E.T.T.A. on those lines.

The Tyneside Section of the North East Summer league continued to attract a good number of teams from Northumberland during what used to be the 'closed' season.

1972-1973

The start of 1972/73 season suddenly saw a drop in the number of entrants to the Northumberland League with seven fewer clubs and eleven less teams entering.

There were also now only the Berwick League affiliated in addition to the Northumberland League, the Newcastle League having been disbanded.

The officers of the association were unchanged and Harry Dignan at first continued to be coaching officer/ secretary but because of his Area commitments he let Ray Neal take over after the season started and Phil Clark was also brought in as Northumberland's representative on the Area Coaching Panel.

Bill McMaster , who had been co - opted during the previous season, was officially elected to the Executive Council along with Ray Neal who replaced Ray Rogers.

The County Management Committee was now made up of Joe McLeod, Bill McMaster, Harry Dignan, Ray Neal, Robert Lumb, George Newby, John Richardson, Pauline Jackson and Alan Morpeth. Terry Wilkinson and Tony Nichol were no longer involved.

There was no change in the number of qualified umpires.

George Newby once again organised the Northumberland Youth Association League which had an entry of twelve teams in two divisions of six but there is no record of any of the results.

Representative teams were once again entered in the County Championships for two senior teams and one junior team as well as League representative teams in the Wilmott Cup and the Rose Bowl.

This year entries were also made in the junior events, the Carter Cup for the boys and the Bromfield Trophy for the girls.

The senior county teams fared badly with the first team only winning one match and drawing one in the Second Division North and the second team's results were extremely disappointing in the Northern Division with only a single win to their name.

The Junior county team, however, did really well to win three, draw one and only lose one match to finish as runners up in the Junior Division North. As the winners of the division, Yorkshire's second team, were not eligible for promotion to the Junior Premier Division the Northumberland Junior team of Andrew and Peter Clark, Glenn McCardle, Barbara Kearney and Lucille Clark, went into the play offs but could only draw one match and lose three and were not promoted.

The men's League team beat Stockton but then lost to North Yorkshire who also narrowly defeated the women in the first round Rose Bowl match.

The boys lost their first round Carter Cup match to Stockton, but the girls did well in the Bromfield Trophy beating North Yorkshire 5 - 4 and Hull by the same score to reach the quarter finals and were then drawn against Liverpool. Unfortunately, they then pulled out of the competition because the date offered by Liverpool coincided with the Junior Premier Division play-offs at Loughborough.

A party of players and officials once again made the trip across the North Sea to visit Bergen but despite having a most enjoyable visit they were unable to win the North Sea Cup, being beaten 3 - 2.

After the start of the season Pauline Jackson (later to be Pauline Long) took over as Publicity Secretary from Joe McLeod. a position she was to hold until the end of the 1987/88 season and then again from 1994/95 to 2010/11.

There is no record of what happened with local publicity, but regular reports were submitted by her to Table Tennis News.

Regular coaching sessions were held during the season at Whitley Bay and other centres and four training sessions for juniors were held at the Lightfoot Stadium later in the season.

Five boys and three girls were nominated for places in the Northern Assessment Camp at Sheffield but only five places were allocated being for two boys and three girls. Those who were finally nominated were Andrew and Peter Clark, Barbara Kearney, Lucille Clark and Gillian McKenzie and the association paid for the costs incurred. Unfortunately the two boys to miss out were A.Walton and B.Howe.

Both of the boys did well, and Barbara and Lucille showed good form, but Gillian did not attend.

Peter Hoyles was nominated, subject to sponsorship being arranged, to take part in the Butterfly Champion of Champions tournament which was held in Plymouth but there is no record of him ever going.

With a bus being organised a good number of juniors were taken to a junior tournament in Eston and a junior, unfortunately not named in the records, went to an event in Berwick.

Berwick also held an invitation event which was won by Northumberland's Alan Jones.

Sid Holt, together with Ray Rodgers and his wife, attended a tournament for disabled persons at the Lightfoot Stadium and helped with the organisation.

The J.R.Waugh award for 1971/72 season was presented during the year to Terry Wilkinson for his excellent service and help with the administration of the league.

There was not a lot of action away from the county, but Barbara Kearney was involved quite a lot. She won the Girls Singles at the Yorkshire Junior Open and was runner up in the Girls Singles at the Meadowbank Open and a semi finalist at the Cumberland Open.

The doubles partnership of Kearney and Lucille Clark won the Girls Doubles event at Meadowbank, lost in the final of the Women's Doubles at the Cumberland and reached the semi finals of the Women's Doubles at the Teesside Open.

Playing in the Women's Team event at the Teesside they got to the semi finals. Barbara also reached the final of the Junior Mixed Doubles at the Teesside Junior Tournament with S.Haskiag of Durham.

Glenn McCardle reached the Grand Finals of the News of the World National Coaching Scheme.

The Closed Championships were organised by Ray Neal and Robert Lumb and once again staged at the Number 1 Canteen of the D.H.S.S. at Longbenton in the November.

It was a very enjoyable tournament despite a low entry but there was a complaint lodged about the handicap that had been given to the winner of the Independent Handicap competition which was not resolved until a later meeting of the Executive Council at the beginning of January.

At the same meeting it was decided that an Honorary Referee would be appointed at future tournaments.

A report was also given to the Executive Council of the prizes being awarded at an event at the Swallow Hotel in Newcastle but no details of this were ever recorded.

Alan Jones of Byker Community Centre won the Men's Singles. Sixteen year old Barbara Kearney of Newcastle YMCA won the Women's Singles, the Women's Handicap Singles, the Junior Girls Singles and for good measure retained the Mixed Doubles title with Peter Hoyles of Blyth YMCA. Once again there was insufficient

entries to hold a Women's Doubles event. As well as the Mixed, Hoyles also won the Men's Doubles with Byker Community Centre's Ron Kettlewell.

The Individual Handicap was won by a Newcastle University student S.Hanson, Andrew Clark did the double of the Youths and Boys Singles and Harry Dignan won the Veterans Singles for the eighth time, the last one being in 1967/68.

The Open Tournament, also again at the D.H.S.S. Canteen, was sponsored for the first time, thanks to Viking Marine and to Stan Swan (Sports) Limited. There was a good entry, but it again did not attract the England ranked players.

The Men's Singles was won by Jimmy Walker of Yorkshire with the Women's Singles title being retained by Lincolnshire's Jean White who also won the Mixed Doubles with Alan Ransome, now of Yorkshire.

The Cheshire pairing of Nigel Eckersley and Brian Johns triumphed in the Men's Doubles with the Yorkshire pairing of Judith Walker and Sylvia Broadbent coming out on top in the Women's Doubles.

Judith Walker also won the Junior Girls Singles and other successful Yorkshire players were Philip Ward who took the Junior Boys title and Len Browning who won the Veterans Singles.

In the season end Annual Report of the Executive Council clubs in the Northumberland League were congratulated for their co - operation throughout the season with the League Secretary although the correct completion of score cards still continued to be a problem Unfortunately several teams resigned from the league during the course of the season.

Byker Community Centre won Division One and their 'B' team finished top of Division 2a with Reyrolles 'B' team the other second division winners.

The third divisions were won by Electrics 'C', Saint Wilfred's and Leam Lane Community Centre whilst Health and Social Services and South Shields YMCA 'C' were the fourth division winners.

The Knock Out Cup was won by Blyth YMCA but the Women's K.O. Cup was not played for.

Joe McLeod and John Richardson organised the Dinner Dance, this time back at the Grand Hotel in Tynemouth when all of the cups were presented by the president of the association, Bart Kinnair. It was a very enjoyable evening, but the low attendance cast doubt as to whether such an event would be held in the future.

The general increase in costs of running the association coupled with an increase in the expenditure of £25 on the County teams and a decrease of £30 in subscriptions meant a loss for the season of £71, leaving only £46 in reserve.

After the normal season ended for league play many teams yet again took part in the Tyneside section of the North East Summer League.

1973-1974

There were a couple of changes to the officers of the association at the beginning of the **1973/74** season with Pauline Jackson officially becoming Publicity Secretary and Robert Lumb taking over as Handbook Secretary.

On the coaching front Harry Dignan was appointed as the Coaching Adviser for North East England so Ray Neal took on the role of Coaching Officer and Phil Clark carried on as the representative on the Area 10 Coaching Panel.

Changes to the Executive Council saw Maurice Bowman replace Robert Lumb and Joe McLeod was elected in place of George Newby who had resigned.

The County Management Committee members were Robert Lumb, John Richardson, Alan Morpeth, Pauline Jackson, Joe McLeod, Bill McMaster, Harry Dignan, Ray Neal and Maurice Bowman. The separate League Management Committee was dispensed with.

Apart from the Northumberland League the Berwick League was still the only league affiliated to the county.

The proposed rule to make teams of three instead of four players that was so narrowly defeated two seasons previously was brought into effect for this season and this composition of teams has remained unchanged to the present day.

The playing format was that each player played each member of the opposition giving nine singles matches. Together with one double's this gave a total of ten matches all together.

A change was made to the Knock Out Cup in that only the third and fourth division sides would play in the first two rounds, the first and second division teams coming into the draw for the third round.

The number of clubs in the league increased slightly to sixty-five and as a result of the change to three a side, the number of teams rose by twenty-five to make a total of one hundred and thirty-four. Whilst this increase in teams meant that there was an extra fourth division the actual increase was not as many as expected with the change to the composition of the teams.

George Newby had resigned as organiser of the Northumberland Youth Association League and nobody else could be found who was willing to take over the organiser's job. The league continued but it was then dealt with through Northumberland County Hall. Unfortunately, no record exists as to whether it was successful or indeed as to whether it carried on for any length of time.

With Harry Dignan more involved in the Northern Region, Ray Neal and Phil Clark took on more of the active roles in Northumberland.

One good success was the organisation of a coaching course and assessment for school children at Newcastle Polytechnic Sports Hall which was followed up by a rally at the same venue later in the season. Both were well attended with about eighty boys and girls attending each event.

Coaching sessions were held at other centres including the Lightfoot Stadium and a centre in Berwick on Tweed.

Harry Dignan organised a course for coaches at Gateshead Technical College.

Andrew Clark had made so much progress that he was sent to a coaching session at Lillieshall, the cost being met by the county.

Selected junior players of county standard attended summer coaching week-ends on Teesside.

Due to her commitments to working with the young players in the county Phil Clark actually resigned as representative on the Area 10 Coaching Panel.

In the County Championships Division Two North the first team won three matches and lost two to finish third. However the top two were ineligible for promotion to the Premier Division as they already had a team in it so Northumberland qualified to play in the Premier Division play-offs at St.Albans in Hertfordshire. The team was Peter Hoyles, Alan Jones, Ron Kettlewell, Andrew Clark and Barbara Kearney but they lost all four of the matches.

Peter Hoyles and Viking (Marine) were thanked for their help in financing the participation in the play-offs.

During the season the match against Durham was staged at the Spittal Club in Berwick upon Tweed along with a corresponding junior match on the same day. Fourteen year old Andrew Clark played in both matches, making a winning debut in the senior one.

However, the county lost the services of his brother Peter who decided to call it a day at the age of sixteen!

The senior second team, playing in the Northern Division, had a disappointing time and only won one match, losing the other three.

The juniors fared even worse in the Junior Division North when they lost all six matches played.

The Northumberland League men's team beat Carlisle in the first round of the Wilmott Cup but then went out to North Yorkshire League in the second round.

In the Rose bowl the women had a walk over against the Aycliffe League but then went out to a North Yorkshire side that included their own county player Barbara Kearney. With regard to the women and girls there was an acute shortage of players.

The junior boys also lost to North Yorkshire in the Carter Cup and an entry was not made into the junior girls Bromfield Trophy competition.

Because of all of the industrial disputes taking place during the season it was decided to leave any arrangements regarding the Bergen visits until the following year.

Local publicity continued to be a problem and while league tables were prepared and sent to the Evening Chronicle on five occasions they were only published once

Nationally however, Pauline Jackson had reports published in every monthly edition of Table Tennis News.

The association was unable to stage either the Open or Closed Tournaments. The venue at the D.H.S.S. was unavailable on the first date arranged for the Closed because it was being redecorated and it was also unavailable on the re-arranged date. The Open was cancelled because of the industrial disputes affecting the country which left doubt as to whether lighting would be available on the date arranged.

As it turned out there would not be another Northumberland Open for a few years, the next one not being held until the 1979/80 season.

On the tournament scene away from Northumberland Barbara Kearney had a good measure of success especially in the doubles playing with North Yorkshire's England ranked Carole Knight. They won the Women's Doubles at the Cumberland Open and the Durham One Star, lost in the final at the Yorkshire and reached the semis at the Essex.

In singles Barbara lost in the final of the Women's at the Cumberland and in Mixed Doubles lost in the final at the same event partnered by Tony Martin of Yorkshire.

At the Teesside Junior young Andrew Clark won the Under 15 Boys Singles and also the Boys Doubles with Brian Baxter of Yorkshire. He reached the semi finals of the Under 15 Boys singles at the Yorkshire Junior Tournament and also the semi finals of the Boys Doubles with his fellow Northumbrian Glenn McCardle.

At the Pontefract open Peter Hoyles won the Men's Singles and Alan Jones, partnered by Len Browning of Yorkshire, got to the semis of the Men's Doubles.

In the Northumberland league the change to three a side was welcomed by the majority of players.

Unfortunately, the league programme was again interrupted, by lighting restrictions imposed during the State of Emergency and consequently the season was extended by five weeks. Incredibly one hundred and thirty matches were played in the last five weeks and clubs were congratulated on their efforts to complete the fixtures.

Once again score cards were poorly completed despite a copy of a correctly completed one once again being printed in the handbook and team captains were implored to insert correct division number, week number, and team number in the next season.

Byker Community Centre entered a team in the Stiga National Club Championships but there is no record of how they got on. Domestically they did the double by winning the First Division and also the Knock Out Cup and their 'D' team won Division 4b.

BBC House Boys Club won Division 2a and Electrics 'A' triumphed in Division 2b. The Third Division winners were Campbell Isherwood, North Shields Boys Club 'B' and Whitley Bay YMCA.

The other fourth division winners were Cramlington Fire Brigade, Prudhoe East Youth Club and Tyne Lead 'B'.

This year a Dinner Dance was organised by Bill McMaster and held at Parrish's 'Highlight Suite' in Shields Road, Newcastle which was very successful and well attended with approximately one hundred being there.

The J.R.Waugh Cup was awarded to John Charlton, the secretary of the Dunston Hill Disabled Club.

The Tyneside Section of the North East Summer league was again in operation with two divisions and the first division was won by North Shields Boys Club with National Carriers winning Division Two.

On the financial side of things there was another small deficit for the year which left the total funds standing at only £23. The treasurer reported that ways and means were being sought to create a sound financial structure for the future.

It was with regret that it was reported that the Chairman, Stan Lawson, had died on 10th April 1974 after a brief illness and deepest sympathy to Mrs Lawson and family was recorded in the Executive Council Annual report.

Stan had first played table tennis in the Northumberland League in 1947/48 and had played in every season since then. He joined the Executive Council in 1955 and became chairman in 1959. He gave yeoman service to the Association, not least in helping to organise the tournaments, and it was recorded that he would be sadly missed.

1974-1975

1974/75 saw the appointment of Harry Dignan as Chairman with Stan Denton taking on the role of Vice Chairman. Harry was also elected as National Councillor.

Mrs Phil Clark, Miss Barbara Kearney, Ron Wilson and W.E.Bolton were elected to the Executive Council. John Richardson had resigned, Joe McLeod had left the district and Stan Denton was now Vice Chairman.

Phil Clark replaced Joe McLeod on the County Management Committee.

The qualified umpires remained the same.

Once again, the Berwick League was the only autonomous league affiliated to the county association.

There were six fewer clubs and eight fewer teams in the Northumberland League, but it still consisted of ten divisions.

As a result of the poor financial position at the end of the previous year the fees for entry into the Northumberland League were increased from £3 per team to £4 per team and the cost of the handbook, of which each team had to purchase three copies, went up from 25p to 50p.

With Harry Dignan again being involved regionally Ray Neal was again instrumental in arranging most of the coaching.

County practice was arranged at the new Killingworth Sports Centre which was attended by all of the junior team players but only by two of those involved in the senior teams. Unfortunately, it was reported that the facilities were below the required standard.

Regular coaching took place at the Lightfoot Stadium in Newcastle and there was also a deal of coaching at Whitley Bay Grammar school whilst courses for coaches were held at Killingworth Sports Centre and at Carnegie College.

Two coaching rallies were held at Newcastle Polytechnic with sixty-three players attending the first one and fifty-six at the second one.

A couple of events solely for juniors were also held at the Lightfoot Stadium. Andrew Clark was nominated by the Regional Area 10 for coaching and assessment at Lillieshall but he was not then invited to the final National Trials at Crystal Palace.

It was suggested that three under thirteen players, M.Johnson, Bernard Clark and Janet Aust take part in an Under 13 competition in the area but there is no record of whether or not this took place.

Nineteen juniors took part in a sponsored walk which raised £81 for the association's funds.

It was also agreed to pay Andrew Clark £15 to enter the English Junior Open tournament but unfortunately the event was cancelled.

Teams entered in the County Championships and the National League Competitions were on the same basis as in the previous year and it was hoped that results would improve with the return to the area of Maureen Robson and Ian 'Benny' Robertson.

However, the expected increase in performance did not materialise and the County Senior first team won two, drew one and lost two matches in Division Two North. Maureen Robson did not play at all.

The Senior second team were the most disappointing, losing all four of their matches in the Northern Division but there was a slight improvement with the Juniors in Junior Division North who won two and lost four.

All of the League representative teams went out of their competitions at the hands of Ormesby. The men's senior side had previously beaten Carlisle 5 -4 and Aycliffe 5 - 0 but went down 0 - 5 to Ormesby. In the Rose Bowl Barbara Kearney was again playing for the opposition and they were far too good for the Northumberland League side and won 6 - 0. Before losing 1 - 6 to Ormesby the Junior Boys had beaten Carlisle 8 - 1 in the Carter Cup.

It was Northumberland's turn to host the players and officials from Bergen but the visitors retained the North Sea Cup. However, there was local success in the Individual Tournament, that was also arranged, with Ian Robertson winning the Men's Singles and Barbara Kearney being successful in the Women's Singles. Players from Bergen won the junior events.

There was a great deal of interest in the affairs of the Berwick League and of the County with the Spittal club being able to get full coverage in the Berwick press and also get the league tables published.

There was not a great deal of coverage by the Newcastle newspapers, but Pauline Jackson continued to have her article published every month in the E.T.T.A. magazine.

Following the boundary changes and formation of new counties the Cleveland Association and the Cumbria Association had been formed and the Northumberland executive council discussed at length whether or not there should be a Tyne and Wear Association.

The question was put in abeyance and advice was sought from the E.T.T.A. Following a reply from them it was felt that a special meeting would be needed to discuss the matter further.

Barbara Kearney had a measure of success at Open tournaments, especially in the Women's Doubles although she was a runner up in the Women's Singles at the West of Scotland tournament. She lost in two Women's Doubles finals the first being at the North of England when Carole Knight was her partner. The other was at the Yorkshire when her partner was Susan Lisle at Cheshire.

She also lost in the semi finals at the East of England partnered by Gloria Stocks of Yorkshire and at the Cumbria with Carole Knight.

Phil Clark and her partner Barbara Kirkman from Lancashire beat Barbara and Carole in the semi finals at the Cumbria but then lost in the final.

Peter Hoyles won the Men's Singles at the West of Scotland and Ian Robertson was a semi finalist at the Perth Open. Ian also featured briefly during the season at number eighteen in the English rankings.

Andrew Clark got to the semi finals of the Boys Singles at the North of England and was a losing finalist in the Boys Doubles with Durham's Keith Paxton at the Lancashire Open.

Whilst he did not gain a place in the English Junior Rankings Andrew's form saw him being included in the Group 'A' list.

After having to be cancelled in the previous season the Closed Tournament returned and were once more staged at the D.H.S.S. canteen and there was a reasonable entry but down on previous years. This year it's players were limited to enter only three events and the Veterans Singles was changed from Over 35 to Over 40.

Ian Robertson (North Shields YMCA) was the star player, winning the Mens Singles, the Mens Doubles with Dave Armstrong and the Mixed Doubles with Pauline Jackson (D.H.S.S.)

Pat Small (D.H.S.S.) was victorious in the Womens Singles but the Womens Doubles was once again cancelled because of insufficient entries.

Fred Short (Tyne Dock) was the winner of the Individual Handicap Singles with Kit Cheung winning the Womens Handicap event.

Andrew Clark (Briarside Fandango) was successful in both the Youths Singles and the Boys Singles with Anne Henderson coming out on top in the Girls Singles. The Veterans Singles was won for the ninth and last time by Harry Dignan (North Shields YMCA)

The running of the Northumberland League was generally satisfactory although the problem of postponed matches was still a problem. Ron Wilson did a good job in duplicating and circulating the league tables on a regular basis.

Spittal were allowed to enter the league in division 3b despite a number of clubs objecting to the distance they would have to travel. Spittal were very accommodating as to the arrangements for their home matches with some being staged in the afternoon on a Saturday or Sunday. In the event they actually won the division.

The first division was won by Reyrolles while Briarside Fandango 'B' and North Shields YMCA were the winners of the second divisions.

As well as Spittal the third division winners were Vickers Michell and Prudhoe East Youth Club and the fourth divisions were won by Postal Clerks 'D', Watson Norie, Saint John Vianney Youth Club 'B' and South Shields YMCA 'C'

South Shields YMCA won the Knock Out Cup.

It was decided to try to arrange a schools' league in the Newcastle area for the following season and Phil Clark wrote to ten schools of which eight showed an interest.

Bill and Lily McMaster organised the end of season dinner dance at J.T.Parrish Ltd which once again which turned out to be extremely successful with over one hundred

and fifty people supporting it. Once again, the President, Bart Kinnair, presented the trophies and prizes.

The financial situation at the end of the year was healthier as a result of the increased fees with a surplus of £36 being achieved giving £59 total funds to carry forward.

Twenty-nine teams entered the Tyneside Summer League which had been formed to take the place of the Tyneside Section of the North East Summer League and it operated with four divisions and also a Handicap Knock Out Cup competition.

The founder members of this league were Aubrey Drapkin, Bill McMaster, Ron Wilson and Pauline Jackson.

North Shields YMCA won the First Division, Delaval Community Centre were successful in the Second Division and also the Handicap Cup.

Postal Clerks took the Third Division and Watson Norie finished top of the Fourth Division.

1975-1976

No changes were made to the officers for the **1975/76** season, but Barbara Kearney resigned from the Executive Council and two new members in Ian Bryson and Aubrey Drapkin were elected.

Dave Robson was made a Vice President, Harry Dignan continued as National Councillor and Regional Coaching Advisor, Ray Neal continued as Coaching Officer and Phil Clark continued in her role as Area 10 Coaching Representative.

Aubrey Drapkin had been involved with the North East Summer League as registrar of the Tyneside section from 1970 to 1974 and thereafter secretary of the Tyneside Summer League.

He became involved with the county and league and still is having had various roles including two spells as Chairman as well as many other positions. Currently he is the President of the Association.

Changes to rules saw the entry fees for teams in the Northumberland League further increased to £4.50 per team and the K.O. Competition entry fee increased from 25p to 50p per team.

There was a change in the structure of the Northumberland League, which was now the only league affiliated to the county, with the formation of a Premier Division, one First Division. two Second Divisions, three Third Divisions, etc.

The number of clubs in membership of the league was one less at fifty-eight but there were still one hundred and twenty six teams which this time round were put into nine divisions of fourteen teams each.

The question as to whether a Tyne and Wear Table Tennis County should be formed gained sufficient interest at the Annual General Meeting for the Executive Council to look further into the matter and it was decided to send a circular to all clubs asking for their opinion. Twenty-five replies were received with eighteen in favour and seven against and it was decided to write to Tyne and Wear Council for advice.

There is no record of any follow up to this and the matter was still being deferred at the final Executive Council meeting of the season in June 1976.

Shortly after the Annual General Meeting a party of junior players attended assessment trials at Eston for a North East Counties training camp to be held at a later date which resulted in Andrew Clark, Glenn McCardle and Valerie Smith being selected.

North Tyneside Council were interested in having a coaching centre in their area and courses for coaches were held at Ralph Gardner School in North Shields and in Whitley Bay. Eventually there were five newly qualified coaches.

Trials were held for both the County Senior and Junior teams.

Phil Clark arranged a four week's course for young players at the Lightfoot Centre in Walker and also two Newcastle Schools Leagues, one for seniors and one for fifteen year olds.

Further junior training camps and a North East assessment meeting were held in Billingham which resulted in Bernard Clark, Eddie Thomas, John Anderson, Roger Bambrough and Julie Hobson all being recommended.

Newcastle Recreation Department informed the association that there was a possibility that the new Eldon Square Leisure Centre could become available for coaching and for staging tournaments.

The Newcastle Schools League organised by Phil Clark turned out to be very successful with teams from ten schools taking part. The competition received a fair amount of publicity and the successful school was Saint Cuthbert's.

The presentation of medals was made to the winners by the football star, Bryan 'Pop' Robson.

Later in the season a similar league for fifteen year olds was successfully arranged but there is no record of how many schools took part or of the winners.

The regular competition with Bergen for the North Sea Cup was discussed by the Executive Council and it was decided that it would only take place this year if a strong team was available and eventually it did not happen.

Some of the members of the Executive Council assisted with a competition for the disabled which was held at the Lightfoot Stadium.

Pauline Jackson continued to submit monthly articles to Table Tennis News which were always published.

Table tennis was included in the Newcastle Spring Indoor Festival of Sport at Newcastle Polytechnic with a tournament staged on four tables. Good standard junior players in the age group of fifteen to eighteen were to take part with sixteen boys and six girls being invited although it went ahead with the full compliment of boys but only three girls.

Alan Morpeth and Phil Clark made all of the arrangements although the conditions were poor, and the winners were Andrew Clark and Valerie Smith. The prizes provided were poor and the Association provided better quality ones for the winners and runners up.

The E.T.T.A. were to host the World Championships in 1977 in Birmingham and it was agreed to support their request for a fee of thirty pence per team place for the next three seasons to help towards the cost.

It was not a good season for the various representative sides with the County Seniors who were rarely able to field their strongest team only winning one match and losing four in Division Two North whilst the second team lost all four of their matches in Division Three North. The Junior County team fared slightly better with two wins and five defeats.

The Northumberland League sides all made early exits from the Wilmott Cup, the Rose Bowl and the Carter Cup. The Senior League team were weakened when Andrew Clark decided to represent the Sunderland League this season.

New venues for staging the County matches were found with Byker Community Centre and Woodland Park Community Centre both turning out to be excellent.

The staging of the match against Durham at the Royal Grammar School was however, apart from the result, the biggest success with over one hundred spectators. Tickets had been sold and a fairly good amount of publicity given which obviously had the desired effect.

For away matches the meal allowance for the players was increased to 75p.

There was not very much participation in tournaments outside of the county although Andrew Clark, partnered by Durham's Keith Paxton, won the team event and the Boys Doubles at the Cleveland Junior 2 Star and Andrew reached the semi finals of the Under 19 Boys event at the Cleveland 3 star.

Ian 'Benny' Robertson lost in the final of the Men's Singles and in the final of the Mixed Doubles with Valerie Smith at the East of Scotland whilst Barbara Kearney, once again partnered by Cleveland's Carole Knight got to the semi finals at the Cleveland 3 Star.

Andrew Clark had the honour of being selected for the English (R.C) Schools representative team.

Disappointingly he had been ranked at number fifteen in the E.T.T.A. Junior Ranking List at the start of the season but slid down to eighteen at the halfway stage before being excluded completely before the season ended.

The County Closed tournament had for many years been held at the Number One Canteen of the D.H.S.S. but that building had now been demolished and Executive Council members were asked to look for an alternative venue.

Various suggestions were made including Ashington Leisure Centre, Gibson Street Baths in Newcastle, Wharrier Street School Tennis Club, Norham Road High School, North Shields and Eldon Square Leisure Centre.

Eventually a sub committee was formed to look into this but by this time it was late in the season and it was decided that the tournament would not be held until early in the following season by which time the various details of availability and costs would be known.

The organisation of the Northumberland League had generally been successful although the number of postponed matches, especially in the Premier Division, had once more been a problem.

The Spittal club had informed the league secretary and the various clubs involved in their fixtures that they would no longer be able to arrange matches on a Saturday afternoon as their players would not be available and that they preferred their home matches to be played on a Monday evening.

Later in the season they also stated that Sunday afternoons were also out of the question. In the event five teams forfeited the points rather than travel to Spittal.

There was also a problem with Hexham Fandango failing to play seven matches and it was decided by the Executive Council to look at bringing in a special rule to apply to clubs outside a radius of twenty-five miles from Newcastle.

League tables continued to be circulated by Ron Wilson on a regular basis.

The winners of the newly formed Premier Division were Briarside with the first division being won by North Shields YMCA 'B' team. Saint Georges Methodists.

Woodlands Park were victorious in the second divisions as were Newbiggin Hall Boys Club, Arden House and Postal Clerks 'C' in the third divisions.

The two fourth divisions were won by Sterling Winthrop 'B' and Thompsons T.T.C.

Byker Community Centre were the winners of the Knock Out Cup.

Robert Lumb who had been on the Council for a few years and had been Handbook Secretary for the last three stated that he was resigning at the end of the season and the County Secretary Alan Morpeth asked for a revision of his duties as he felt that his job had become more onerous and that he should relinquish some of his duties.

Financially the season had been the best for a few years with a surplus of £228 being achieved thanks mainly to an increase in income from the clubs and income from sponsorship and from the dance.

The Summer Season saw an entry of forty-eight teams playing in six divisions in the Tyneside Summer league and a Knock Out Cup Competition being organised which was won by Allen Bradley Electronics.

The association had been asked to organise table tennis at the North Tyneside Summer Festival and this was referred to the Tyneside Summer League. Aubrey Drapkin and Ron Wilson along with some helpers handled it.

The various singles winners were Andrew Clark in the Men's and the Under 18 Boys, Miss B Murtaugh in the Women's, Valerie Smith in the Under 18 Girl's Singles, John Anderson in the Under 15s, Neil Herrington in the Under 12s and S.Hills in the Third and Fourth Division event.

Bob Dodds and Jimmy Scope won the Men's Doubles, Kit Cheung and Valerie Smith the Women's Doubles and Phil Stewart and Valerie Smith the Mixed Doubles.

1976-1977

There was one enforced change in the officers of the association for **1976/77** following the resignation of Robert Lumb and his place as Handbook Secretary was taken on by Aubrey Drapkin.

There is no record that the request by Alan Morpeth for a reduction in his duties was ever followed up.

After only one season Ian Bryson resigned from the Executive Council and Arnie Warents returned as a member along with newcomers Bill Armstrong and Billy Baird.

Harry Dignan continued as National Councillor as well as still doing his work on the National Coaching Scheme and Ray Neal carried on as Coaching Officer.

The only rule change was an increase in the cost of the handbook to 30p per copy.

The proposed change to bring into effect a rule stating that clubs outside of a 25 mile radius of Newcastle must allow their opponents the opportunity to play on a Saturday or Sunday was deferred from the Annual General Meeting to the Special Handbook Meeting in the September when it was put to the vote but not passed.

The Tyneside Summer League became affiliated to the county having previously been directly affiliated to the E.T.T.A.

Whilst the number of clubs in the Northumberland League increased by three to sixty-one the actual number of teams was down by four to one hundred and twenty two.

There was no change in the structure of the league with nine divisions again being formed. A new club that joined was Ouston Community Centre and they have continued their membership until the present time.

The question of as to whether to form a Tyne and Wear Association dragged on and on and was still not decided by the final meeting of the Executive Council for the season when it was reported that changes were imminent in the Durham set up and it might then become an opportune time to open discussions with them.

Senior trials were held at Byker Community Centre for the men with similar trials for the women held at a different time and venue. As a result of these trials the top two men were Andrew Clark and Alan Jones and the top two women were Phil Clark and Pat Small.

Junior trials were held at the Lightfoot Stadium which resulted in the top two boys being Eddie Thomas and Bernard Clark and the top two girls were Julie Hobson and Debbie Glenn.

Ray Neal and Phil Clark were asked to formulate a coaching plan and several courses were organised. Unfortunately, Ray Neal was unable to commit sufficient time to the association and eventually had to resign as Coaching Officer.

Courses for coaches were held in Boldon and in North Shields and during the course of the season Maurice Bowman became a qualified coach.

Phil Clark organised one or two coaching courses as well as a course for beginners at Eldon Leisure Centre which were well attended, and she also organised a course for about twenty youngsters after the Schools League was completed.

A course which was open to the public was held at the Lightfoot Stadium over a few weeks which was under the control of Frank Buck who was ably assisted by Maurice Bowman and Eddie Thomas.

Harry Dignan reported that there was a great deal of interest in the schools in North Tyneside although no courses appear to have been organised.

At the end of the season seven boys and two girls were nominated to attend the Northern Trials.

Phil Clark, with the help of some teachers, organised the Newcastle Schools League and Tournament at Eldon Square Leisure Centre.

The League was divided into four sections with a Senior Division of ten teams, an Intermediate (under 15) Division of ten teams, a Girls Division of four teams and a Junior (under 13) Division of six teams.

The Royal Grammar School won the Seniors, Heaton Grammar won the Intermediate, Gosforth High were top of the Girls and Royal Grammar School also won the Juniors.

There was an entry of approximately one hundred and fifty in the Schools tournament with ten events taking place, five for boys and five for girls.

The Under 19 Singles were won by Roger Bambrough and Valerie Smith, the Under 16 Singles by John Burke and Susan Norris and the Under 13 Singles by Bernard Clark and S. Carr.

There were also doubles events with the Seniors winners being Roger Bambrough and D.Mosley in the boys and Kit Cheung and Julie Hobson in the girls.

The successful pairs in the Juniors were Simon Montague partnered by Jimmy Brumby and the girls combination of S.Carr and J.Hancock.

In the English Schools Table Tennis Association tournaments the Royal Grammar School under eleven team came third in the area competition.

Pauline Jackson continued to get monthly articles published in the E.T.T.A. magazine Table Tennis News but there was still little coverage in the local press.

It was decided that the Northumberland County Senior team should have organised practice once every two weeks under the supervision of Arnie Warents who was appointed as County captain.

The county Senior team had a mixed season in the County Championships Division 2 North winning two matches, drawing one and losing two. The second team were also very average in Division 3 North with two wins and three defeats.

Unfortunately, the very inexperienced Junior side were outclassed in the Junior 2 North division and lost all seven of their matches to end up relegated.

Towards the end of the season it was decided to request the release of Ian Robertson from Essex in order that he would be available for the following season.

The Northumberland League had representative teams in the Wilmott Cup for men, the Rose bowl for women and the Carter Cup for Junior boys but all of them made early exits from their relevant competitions.

The men's team did beat Carlisle in the first round before losing to Ormesby, the women also lost their first match to Ormesby and the junior boys went out at the first time of asking to Millom.

The contact with Bergen was renewed with a party from Northumberland going over in the January. The trip was socially successful, but the organisation of the matches was found to be disappointing as was the result of the North Sea Cup competition which Bergen won 4 - 0.

In the tournament that was arranged Peter Hoyles got to the semi finals of the Men's Singles and Valerie Smith did likewise in the Women's Singles.

There was little interest in open tournaments and no record of any achievements by players from Northumberland.

The sub-committee formed at towards the end of the previous season to look into possible venues at which to stage the Closed Tournament had recommended that it take place at Eldon Square Leisure Centre and this recommendation was followed up and arrangements made.

Despite some difficulties and unforeseen incidents, the arrangements were very good and the tournament turned out to be a most popular and successful one although it did not finish until 10.00p.m.

Sid Holt was appointed as the referee and he received valuable assistance from David Lush of the Woodlands Park club.

The Men's Singles was won by Andrew Clark (Briarside) who also won the Under 18 Youths Singles.

Valerie Smith was the outstanding female player winning the Women's Singles, the Under 18 Girls Singles and the Mixed Doubles with Malcolm McMaster of Byker Community Centre .

Malcolm was also successful in the Men's Doubles when he had fellow Byker C.C. player Chris Shepherd as his partner.

The Womens Doubles was won by Pauline Jackson and Pat Small (both D.H.S.S.),

Peter Hoyles won the Individual Handicap Singles off scratch and Terry Wilkinson of North Shields YMCA was the Veterans champion.

In the Northumberland League Sid Holt reported that there had been an improvement in the receipt of score cards on time but yet again a lot of inaccuracies on them.

The Premier Division was won by Tyne Dock Youth Club who also captured the Knock Out Cup.

Prudhoe East Youth Club were successful in Division One and the two second division winners were Electrics 'B' and Delaval Community Centre.

Woodlands Park 'B', Saint Wilfred's 'B' and SEVCON were the third division winners with Tynegas Welfare and Byker Community Centre 'H' finishing at the top of the two fourth divisions.

During the season Ron Wilson and Aubrey Drapkin qualified as County Umpires.

Bill and Lily McMaster once again organised a successful Dinner Dance and Presentation Night at Parrish's in Newcastle. A feature of it was the attendance of the 1947/48 Rose Bowl winning team of Doreen Ormond (nee Smith), Joyce Hewitt (nee Purves) and Madge Pattinson (nee Waugh).

Financially there were no problems with a small surplus for the year of £19 making just over £300 to be carried forward.

A Junior Tournament was held for the first time in the August and was played at Eldon Square Leisure Centre with John Burke (Byker Community Centre) winning the Junior Boys Singles and Susan Norris the Junior Girls.

Burke also won the Under 15 Boys Singles with Martin Schapira winning the Under 13 Boys Singles.

Susan Yeung was the winner of both the Under 15 and Under 13 Girls Singles

There was also an Under 11 event for both boys and girls which was won by Martin Schapira.

Seventy-one teams took part in the Tyneside Summer league which had nine divisions and also ran a handicap cup competition.

National Carriers finished top of Division 1a with the winners of Division 1b being Eldon Square who then won the challenge match and also won the handicap cup.

The second division winners were National Carriers 'B' and Great Lumley 'B' whilst Maccabi and Byker Community Centre 'E' were top of the third divisions.

There were three fourth divisions and the successful sides in those divisions were Oxhill, Byker Community Centre 'H' and Thompsons 'D'.

The league organised the North Tyneside Silver Jubilee Tournament at Norham Road High School in North Shields which attracted a large entry.

Andrew Clark won the Men's Singles and Under 18 Boys Singles, Julie Hobson the Under 18 Girls Singles, Kit Cheung the Women's Singles, Alan Westwater the Division Three and Four Singles, S.Lawrence the Under 15 Singles and Martin Schapira the Under 11 Singles.

In the doubles events Malcolm McMaster and Chris Shepherd won the Men's, Lily and Janet Aust the Women's and McMaster and Kit Cheung the Mixed.

Bill and Lily McMaster also organised a buffet supper and 50/50 disco as a Tyneside Summer League Presentation Night at Parrish's which was attended by 170 people.

1977-1978

Stan Denton had left the district which meant a change in the officers for the **1977/78** season with Bill McMaster taking over as Vice Chairman.

Sid Holt was appointed as Umpires Secretary and Aubrey Drapkin replaced Harry Dignan as National Councillor.

David Lush was elected onto the Executive Council which was otherwise unchanged but during the course of the season there were resignations by Maurice Bowman, Billy Baird and Eddie Bowman and Bill Brown was co-opted onto the council.

The position of Coaching Officer remained unfilled throughout the season despite efforts and discussions with various persons.

The position of the association's representative on the Area 5 (previously called area 10) Coaching Panel was taken over by Harry Dignan who was no longer involved with the National Coaching Scheme.

There was no change in the leagues affiliated to the County, the Northumberland League and the Tyneside Summer League being the only ones.

Changes to rules saw the entry fees for teams in the Northumberland League again being raised, this time from £4.50 to £5 per team.

A change was made to the order of play for Northumberland League matches so that where A,B and C are the home team and X,Y and Z are the away team the final three matches became CvZ, BvY, and AvX.

Changes were also made to who could play for which teams where a club had more than one team. It now became necessary that four players had to be registered for the first team and a minimum of three for each other team. Teams also had to be selected in order of playing ability and not more than one player registered for a team could play for the next lower only team in any one match. Players were allowed to play for a team higher than the one they were registered for without any restriction on number of times.

Later in the season the Executive Council decided that a review should be made of all of the rules and regulations and a sub committee of Sid Holt, David Lush, Ron Wilson and Aubrey Drapkin was appointed to look into this.

There had been a surge of interest in table tennis after the large amount of coverage of the World Championships in Birmingham on television and the number of clubs increased to sixty-eight and there were one hundred and forty teams which meant the creation of an extra fourth division.

Dunston Community Centre were one of the new clubs and, albeit also under the names of Dunston T.T.C. and Dunston Methodist at different times were to stay in the league for thirty-four years up to and including 2010/11 season.

Another new club was Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service who were to be in the league even longer, being involved for thirty-nine years until the end of the 2015/16 season.

Aubrey Drapkin, Ron Wilson and Sid Holt all qualified as Tournament Referees and Bill Brown and Philip Solomon became County Umpires. Another County Umpire was David Lush who had transferred from Essex.

A.J.P. Guymer and young Andrew Drapkin passed the theory test of the County Umpires examination and were classed as Probationary Umpires.

It was decided to form a County Umpires Committee and the first members were Sid Holt, Ron Wilson and Aubrey Drapkin.

The question as to whether or not a Tyne and Wear Table Tennis County should be formed lingered on as Durham had been approached several times without success. As Durham now had a new set of officials it was decided to form a sub-committee of Arnie Warents, Alan Morpeth and Aubrey Drapkin who were asked to contact other leagues in the new Tyne and Wear area for possible discussions. By the end of the season there was still no progress.

Obtaining local press coverage was still a problem and it was decided to produce a monthly News Bulletin for distribution to all clubs along with copies of the league tables and Aubrey Drapkin took this on board.

Pauline Jackson still continued to get her articles published in Table Tennis News.

The front cover of the November edition of Table Tennis News carried a photograph of the result of an Easter Egg competition held earlier in the year which showed two decorated eggs with bats on either side of a pretend net and a score sheet showing that Mr. Douglas (Desmond) had lost 5 - 3 to a Mr.Dodd.

It turned out that school teacher Gilbert Dodd, who played in the Northumberland League had been encouraging his class of 9 – 10 year olds at Parkside School in Cramlington to watch the world championships on television and when he ran the Easter Egg competition at the end of term it had been created by a ten year old girl!

Phil Clark once again organised a Newcastle Schools League at Eldon Square Leisure Centre which had thirteen teams in the Senior section, fourteen in the Intermediate, nine in the Junior and seven in the Girls section but there is no record of the winners.

However, there is a record of the Schools Tournament which was also organised by Phil Clark and had one hundred and forty-nine youngsters taking part. John Burke won both the Under 19s and the Under 16s Boys events and Susan Norris did likewise in the Girls. Neil McMaster was the Under 13 Boys winner and Christine Burke won the Under 13 Girls. An Under 11 mixed event was won by Martin Schapira.

Various coaching courses were held during the season. One for advanced players was held at Eldon Square Leisure Centre as was an intermediate course for young players. The same venue also hosted a course for the top thirty juniors, both boys and girls and a course for beginners.

Frank Buck took a course for youngsters at the Dr. Barnados home in North Kenton, Maurice Bowman conducted a general coaching course at Wallsend Sports Centre and Terry Straughan looked after a course at the King Edward VI School in Morpeth

Phil Clark organised courses at the Lightfoot Stadium for schools players, including one over three days and one during the half term holidays in October.

Courses for coaches were held at the Lightfoot Stadium and at Whitley Bay where Harry Dignan was highly involved.

County trials for both the senior and junior teams were also held at Eldon Square.

The association with Bergen was resumed when a party of Norwegians visited the area in January 1978 to play for the North Sea Cup and in a tournament organised for them at Eldon Square. The visit was sponsored by several local businesses, the main one being the North East Co-operative Society. The jewellers H.Samuel Limited supplied a cup for the men's singles event at the tournament.

Bergen retained the North Sea Cup, winning 4 - 2 and they also swept the board in the tournament winning all of the events but unfortunately the Boys Singles final was not played as the time allocated by Eldon Square ran out. Socially the visit was another success and a party for the visitors as well as for the local players, officials and friends was held at Tynemouth Cricket Club.

The season was a disaster for the teams in the County Championships with the first team losing all five of their matches in Division Two North and the second team doing likewise in Division Three North. This meant that the first team were due to be relegated and that there would no longer be a place in the third division for the second team in 1978/79. As it turned out the firsts were actually retained in the second division when the divisions were made up and the second team were able to continue in the third.

The Junior side did slightly better, winning one match, drawing one but losing three.

In the National league competitions, the Northumberland League men beat Westmorland in the Wilmott Cup but then were eliminated by Ormesby who also defeated the women in the first round of the Rose Bowl. The junior boys team were beaten in the opening round of the Carter Cup albeit narrowly, going down 4 - 5 to Barrow.

The Eldon Square team that won the previous season's Tyneside Summer League also played in the Wilmott Cup and beat Carlisle before they too went out to Ormesby.

Andrew Clark played in a few tournaments and his best performances were reaching the quarter finals of the Class 2 Singles at the Cleveland 3 Star and also the quarter finals of the Men's Singles at the North Yorkshire 1 Star.

Ron Kettlewell and Malcolm McMaster reached the quarter finals of the Men's Doubles when they travelled north of the border to play in the Perth Open.

Playing in his first ever tournament young Martin Schapira having put out Andrew Drapkin in the quarter finals went on to reach the final of the Under 11 Boys event the Cleveland Junior 2 star. He was beaten in the final by Carl Prean from the Isle of Wight who was to become one of England's stars in later years.

He was beaten again by Prean in the final of the English Schools National Tournament.

A group of juniors played in a Cadet tournament at Ormesby. Neil McMaster did best by winning three matches and only losing one in his round one group but then lost out in round two. Bernard Clark, Martin Schapira and James Brumby all won two and lost two in their groups but did not progress any further. There was a cadet girls round robin event in which Christine Burke won one match.

Despite the lack of success, all four of the young players gave a good showing on the day. Andrew Clark, John Burke and Neil McMaster were all accepted into the Centre of Excellence at Eston in Cleveland.

Pauline Jackson had the honour of being selected to play for the Civil Service team to play against the Universities Athletic Union in London where she won all three of her matches.

The Closed tournament was staged at Eldon Square Leisure Centre, the cost of hire being £200 but sponsorship of £50 was raised thanks to TeesSport Limited and to P.Plunkett (Tiling Contractor) Limited of Prudhoe. Nearly 150 competitors took part in eleven events on sixteen tables and the playing conditions were excellent.

Andrew Clark (Briarside) was the winner of the Men's Singles and his younger brother Bernard, who also played for Briarside, won the Cadet Boys Singles.

The Women's Singles was won by Pauline Jackson (D.H.S.S.) who also won the Women's Doubles with Nancy Kirsop of North Shields YMCA.

Tyne Dock's Fred Short and Billy Dial were successful in the Men's Doubles and the Mixed Doubles winners were Frank Mitchinson of Briarside and Susan Norris. Susan also won the Girls Singles. Revac's Jim Jackson was the Veterans Singles champion and Jimmy Scope won the Handicap Singles.

Christine Burke (Briarside) and Henderson Yeung (Byker Community Centre) won the Cadet Girls Singles and the Boys Singles respectively.

The league programme was completed a little later than scheduled because of the necessary rearrangement of postponed matches once again and the usual problems were faced by the league secretary regarding the scorecards.

Briarside regained the Premier Division title and their team of Andrew Clark, Frank Mitchinson and Steve Robinson were successful in winning the Knock Out Cup.

Procter & Gamble won the first division with Visionhire and Byker Community Centre 'D' the second division winners.

Procter & Gamble were also winners in the Division 3a with their 'C' team, the other third division titles going to Eldon Square and North Shields YMCA 'C'.

Simonside Youth Club, Newton 'C' and Thompsons 'C' won the three fourth divisions. The Women's Knock Out Competition, which was revived after an absence of five years and had eight teams of two competing, was won by the D.H.S.S. team of Pauline Jackson and Pat Small.

In May 1978 Aubrey Drapkin was appointed to the newly formed E.T.T.A. Development Committee.

Despite an increase in income from the club entry fees, increases in the cost of county team matches, the cost of the Bergen visit and an increase in admin costs in general, there was a financial deficit of £77 for the year, leaving £229 to carry forward.

Eighty-four teams entered the Tyneside Summer League which had eleven divisions and also once again ran a Handicap Cup Competition.

The winners of the various divisions were as follows: Washington TTC (1a), Eldon Square (1b), Stanley Central (2a), Wrekenton Community Centre (2b), Washington TTC 'B' (2c), Gladstone Terrace 'C' (3a), Reyrolles 'B' (3b), Gladstone Terrace 'B' (3c), D.H.S.S. 'D' (4a), Delaval Community Centre 'D' (4b), John Boste (4c).

The Handicap Cup was won by Washington TTC 'B'.

The North Tyneside Festival Tournament was once again organised by the Tyneside Summer League and attracted an entry of 150 competitors in eleven events.

The men's and boy's events were won by Andrew Clark (Singles), Frank Mitchinson and Ian Svenson (Doubles), Philip Kolvin (Boys Singles) and Neil McMaster (Cadet Boys Singles).

The winners in the women's and girl's events were Kit Cheung (Women's), Kit Cheung and Julie Hobson (Women's Doubles), Susan Norris (Girls Singles), Christine Burke (Cadet Girls Singles), and Claire Mouzon (Under 11 Girls Singles).

Martin Schapira won the Under 11 event open to boys and girls and the two divisional event winners were Jimmy Scope (divisions one and two) and Nigel Jobling (divisions three and four).

Another successful buffet dinner dance was organised, again by the McMasters at Parrish's Highlight Suite in Shields Road, Newcastle.

1978-1979

There were no changes to the Officers for **1978/79** but the Executive Council had two new members in Dave Armstrong and Bob Dodds as well as Bill Brown who had been co-opted onto the Council during the previous season.

Aubrey Drapkin was still National Councillor and Harry Dignan continued to represent the association on the Area Coaching Panel. The County Umpires Committee was unchanged.

During the course of the year the treasurer, Bill Dixon was forced to indicate that he would have to resign because of health problems and Bill Brown was appointed as assistant treasurer for the remainder of the season.

There was no change to the leagues affiliated to the County.

The sub-committee appointed to review the rules produced a complete redraft of them which was approved by the Annual General Meeting. There were no major changes except for a separate proposal to alter the system of the award of merit points in the Northumberland League which was not approved.

Sixty-seven clubs started the season in the Northumberland League with the number of teams increased to 148 and an additional fourth division was formed making eleven divisions in total.

Two new clubs came on the scene who were to be members for a considerable time. Lemington Community Centre, also later known as Lemington TTC joined and Lemington Riverside over the years and played for one season before missing out in 1979/80 but then coming back in and staying until 2002.

The other newcomers were Whitehouse Lane who remained as members until the end of the 2012/13 season.

By now the largest club in the league was Byker Community Centre with nine teams operating.

Coaching by Phil Clark continued at Eldon Square Leisure Centre on a regular basis but the trials for the Junior County team were moved to Byker Community Centre as the use of Eldon Square was now considered to be too expensive.

The trials would in future take the form of assessments and the invited players were informed that they were expected to attend or to give an adequate reason why they could not.

Phil Clark also held a coaching class at the Lightfoot Stadium which lasted for two and a half hours on Sunday afternoons. Among the attendees were seven boys and four girls who were regulars.

Phil also organised a Day Course for Teachers at the Lightfoot.

There was a suggestion that the association should employ a top coach from Cleveland to coach the juniors, but this idea was strongly rejected on the grounds that the Executive Council were more than happy with Phil Clark.

The Maccabi club requested a coach for their club for Sunday afternoons and Alan Morpeth agreed to ask Frank Buck to take this.

Area ranking trials were held at Eston in Cleveland for the best juniors. Of the five that were nominated to take part, Henderson Yeung did best and progressed to the second round of groups in the Juniors. Neil McMaster was fourth in his Cadet Group and Martin Schapira eighth in his. Susan Norris won one match in the Junior Girls but Christine Burke was unable to attend.

Neil, Martin, and Christine together with Susan Yeung were nominated to take part in the National Cadet Championships

On the publicity front Pauline Jackson continued to submit monthly articles to Table Tennis News which were always printed, and she also submitted copy to the Evening Chronicle which was sometimes published.

Aubrey Drapkin continued to produce a monthly newsletter for the clubs which was now called 'Smash'.

Dunlop (Sports) Ltd. arranged for an exhibition to be held at Eldon Square in the September but no advance notice was given to the association by Dunlops, and it was of little value to Northumberland. Overall the exhibition and the arrangements appeared to be poorly organised.

Once again Phil Clark organised a Schools League at Eldon Square which attracted entries from forty-five teams spread over five divisions.

The Senior Division was won by the Royal Grammar School as was the Intermediate 'A' and the Junior Boys. Slatyford School won the Intermediate division with Heaton winning the Girls.

Ashington Leisure Centre requested permission to stage a tournament, which was granted, and it took place in the December with eight events.

Durham's Dave Svenson was victorious in the Men's Singles as was Judy Davies in the Women's and Malcolm McMaster and Chris Shepherd won the Men's Doubles.

The Junior Boys was won by Henderson Yeung with Susan Norris winning the Junior Girls. A third and fourth division competition was won by Ian Bonner.

Ashington's rising young star Claire Mouzon won both the Under 11 Girls and the Under 11 event that was open to both girls and boys.

A small group of Norwegians visited the area in November although not the official party from Bergen and they were taken to the East of Scotland along with a number of local players.

The competition for the North Sea Cup took place in February when the contingent of players and officials that visited Bergen numbered twenty-eight including four from Durham. Unfortunately, the North Sea Cup was once again retained by Bergen.

The Men's team of Dave Svenson, Frank Mitchinson and Peter Whietman lost 2 - 5, The Men's Doubles side of Whiteman and Arnie Warents, Mitchinson and Svenson and Dave Armstrong and Jimmy Scope went down 4 - 5 as did the Women's team of Pauline Jackson, Julie Smith and Lily Aust. Both the Men's Second team of Armstrong, Scope and Warents and the Junior Boys team of Nigel Jobling, John Burke and Henderson Yeung were also beaten.

With Northumberland having a large party of players other friendly matches were arranged. They involved a Men's team (Michael Watson, Aubrey Drapkin and Alan Morpeth), Women's Second team of Janice Fowles and Olive Drapkin, Junior Girls side of Susan Norris and Janet Aust, Cadet Boys (Nicholas Jeffreys and Andrew Drapkin) and a Junior Boys Second team of Alistair Collin, Nicholas Ringrose and Jimmy Brumby. Unfortunately, Bergen won all of them!

There was a measure of success in the individual tournament with Dave Svenson being runner up in the Men's Singles, Pauline Jackson and Julie Smith being losing semi finalists in the Women's Singles, Nigel Jobling doing likewise in the Junior Boys Singles whilst Jimmy Brumby and Aubrey Drapkin reached the semi finals of the Class 'C' Singles.

It was another poor season for the County teams with the Seniors only winning one match in Division Two North, the second team doing the same in Division Three North and the Juniors also just having one success in the Junior Division Three North.

The Northumberland League sides failed to get very far, the Men losing out to Carlisle in round one of the Wilmott Cup and the Women losing to Ormesby in the first round of the Rose Bowl.

The Junior Boys beat the Tyneside Summer League in round one of the Carter Cup but then lost to Ormesby but only 4 - 5 with John Burke winning all three of his matches.

There was more interest in the tournament scene with bus loads of thirty-four players going to the North of England in Manchester, over forty to Carlisle for the Cumbria Two Star and another to the East of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Nigel Jobling got to the quarter finals of the Boys Singles at the Cumbria while at Edinburgh Andrew Clark and his partner Keith Paxton of Durham reached the semi finals of the Men's Doubles and Susan Norris and Valerie Elsdon were losing semi finalists in the Girls Singles.

Alan Jones reached the quarter finals of the Men's Singles, Kit Cheung the quarter finals of the Women's Singles and Andrew Drapkin the quarter finals of the Cadet Boys Singles.

Barbara Kearney, back from Australia, reached the quarter finals of the Women's Doubles with an Australian player, C. Little, at the Cleveland 3 Star and there was a fair amount of success at the Durham 1 Star where Arnie Warents won the Veteran Men's Singles. Pauline Jackson and Cleveland's Julia Woodcock got to the semi finals of the Women's Doubles and Malcolm and Neil McMaster reached the quarter finals of the Men's Doubles.

In the singles events Peter Whiteman got to the quarter finals of the Men's Singles and Kit Cheung did likewise in the Women's Singles. Other quarter finalists were Susan Norris, Susan Yeung and Caron Buglass, all in the Girls Singles event.

Judith Drapkin reached the quarter finals of the Under 11 Girls Singles at the Cleveland Junior 'Select' tournament.

Pauline Jackson was again picked for the national Civil Service team that played against the Combined Services at Stanmore in London.

Young Martin Schapira played for the England Schools Junior Boys 'B' team at the 'Stiga' Schools International Championships in Bradford who defeated Scotland, Ireland 'A' and 'B' teams but lost to England 'A'.

The Northumberland Closed was held in April, this time at Cramlington Concordia Sports Centre where the staff were thanked for being extremely co-operative. The organisation of the tournament was excellent and the facilities excellent. Aubrey Drapkin was the referee and stewards were appointed to look after getting matches started as soon as possible after being called and it worked extremely well.

Afterward a number of incidents were discussed, and it was felt that a more flexible line may have been taken on occasion without affecting the overall efficiency of the tournament.

The entry was the highest for many years and a record amount of prize money, (£150), was paid out.

The handicap event produced a situation that is not likely to be repeated when both players in the final were called Michael Watson. The winner was from Eldon Square club on plus seven with the runner up on plus ten coming from Ashington.

Frank Mitchinson of Briarside won the Mens Singles, Barbara Kearney won the Womens Singles, Nigel Jobling (Delaval C.C.) won the Junior Boys, Byker Community Centre's Susan Yeung won the Girls Singles, Martin Schapira won the Cadet Boys Singles and Christine Burke (Briarside) was successful in the Cadet Girls. Ken Lawson of West End Boys Club was the winner of the Veterans Singles.

Winning doubles partnerships were Ken Lawson and Charlie Robertson in the Men's, Barbara Kearney and Kit Cheung in the Women's with Frank Mitchinson and Susan Norris retaining the Mixed title.

The league season had once again to be extended to enable the large number of postponed matches to be played. Strikes and bad weather had been a major factor in eighty-four matches being postponed but on top of that another one hundred and fourteen had also been put off.

During the season the news magazine contained a warning to players that it was not permitted to play for or against teams in an unaffiliated league such as the Coast Youth league.

Briarside won both the Premier Division of the Northumberland League and the Knock Out Cup for the second year in succession and D.H.S.S. did likewise in the Women's K.O.Cup.

Byker Community Centre 'B' won the first division and their 'D' team were successful in Division 2b. Eldon Square won the other second division.

The three third divisions were won by Simonside, Delaval Community Centre 'C' and Gladstone Terrace 'B'. Delaval Community Centre had other successful teams with their 'D' side winning Division 4a and their 'F' team finishing top of Division 4c.

6th Newcastle Boys Brigade and Gladstone Terrace 'C' were the winners of the other two fourth divisions.

The season was described as a 'holding one' as far as the umpires committee were concerned with no new qualified umpires but no loss of any either. Aubrey Drapkin was upgraded as he qualified as a National Umpire.

During the season Arnie Warents reminded the Executive Council that no progress had been made regarding the formation of a Tyne and Wear Table Tennis County and Aubrey Drapkin arranged an informal meeting with Durham's Ken Taylor. No report of that meeting was ever recorded.

Application was made to the E.T.T.A. to stage a 2 Star Open Tournament for the 1979/80 season and this was granted.

The now usual dinner dance was arranged by Mr and Mrs McMaster at Parrish's and it was well attended and enjoyed although the feeling was that the buffet meal was not up to the same standard as previously. Mrs Madge Pattinson again presented the prizes.

Bill Dixon was awarded the J.R. Waugh trophy and he was thanked for his work over many years. The Executive Council wished him and his wife improved health in the following year.

Harry Dignan indicated that he would resign at the next Annual General Meeting and he was thanked for his services to the Association over many years.

Away from local affairs Aubrey Drapkin was appointed by the E.T.T.A. to be administrator of the County Championships.

A small deficit was incurred financially leaving £214 to carry forward.

The close season again saw a good entry in the Tyneside Summer league with 89 teams from 52 clubs. There were twelve senior divisions and this time round three cadet divisions which were played on Saturday afternoons. A handicap cup competition was again organised.

New Collingwood won the Premier Division, Washington 'B' were top of Division 1a and Sunderland West top of Division 1b.

Sunderland West 'B' and Reyrolles 'B' were the second division winners with Brandling Hall, 6th Newcastle Boys Brigade and Royal Grammar School finishing on top of the third divisions.

The four fourth division champions were Whitehouse Lane 'A' and 'B' teams, Whitley Bay Boys Club and Schwalbe 'B'. Washington 'E' won the Handicap Cup Competition.

The winners of the cadet divisions were Washington, Byker Community Centre and Blaydon Youth Club.

The Tyneside Summer League once again organised the North Tyneside Festival Tournament, this time at Wallsend Sports centre which was once again successful.

Dave Svenson was the winner of the Men's Singles and Shirley Gelder won the Women's Singles.

The winners of the other events were as follows: Dave and Ian Svenson the Men's Doubles, Shirley Gelder and Kit Cheung the Women's Doubles, John Burke the Junior Boys, Christine Burke the Junior Girls and the Cadet Girls, Martin Schapira the Cadet Boys, Claire Mouzon the Under 11 Mixed, Michael Watson the Premier, First and Second event, and G.Stephenson the Third and Fourth Division event.

A social evening was held at the 'Junction Cafeteria' in Newcastle town centre.

1979-1980

The enforced changes to the Officers of the Association for **1979/80** saw Bill McMaster appointed as Chairman with Ron Wilson becoming Vice Chairman and Bill Brown elected as Treasurer.

Bill McMaster had been on the council since 1971/72 and Vice Chairman since 1977/78 and was to continue as Chairman until the end of 1986/87 season.

Apart from Ron Wilson and Bill Brown becoming Officers no changes were made to the Executive Council at the Annual Meeting, but Eddie Kennedy was appointed at a later date and Jimmy Scope was later co - opted onto the Council.

Part way through the season Phil Clark, Bill Armstrong and Eddie Kennedy resigned from the Council and a letter of thanks was sent to Phil for all of the hard work she had done in the past.

The County Umpires Committee remained the same but there was a change to the representative on the Northern Area Coaching Panel with R.Heppele taking over for a while and then being replaced by Charlie Mouzon.

The only rule change was to increase the entry fees for the Northumberland League from £5 per team to £6 per team.

Aubrey Drapkin produced a document that was considered by the Executive Council and as a result seven sub committees were formed. These were to cover Selection and Ranking, Publicity, Finance and Development, League Management, Umpires and Tournaments, Coaching and County Rules.

As well as the Northumberland and Tyneside Summer Leagues, the North Tyneside Coastal Youth Conference affiliated to the County.

The Northumberland League had an additional five clubs and an extra six teams making a total of seventy-two clubs and one hundred and fifty-four teams which meant that once again there were eleven divisions.

Blaydon Youth Club were one of the new clubs to join and after playing in the 1979/80 and 1980/81 seasons they withdrew but were members from 1984/85 to 2001/02 and then again from 2005/06 to 2012/2013 inclusive.

The handbook was again drastically reduced and no longer contained the rules and regulations which were circulated separately to the clubs.

A certain amount of publicity was given in the Evening Chronicle and Aubrey Drapkin continued to produce the newsletter 'Smash' on a monthly basis.

Pauline Jackson continued with her excellent articles in the E.T.T.A. magazine, Table Tennis News.

The umpires committee stressed the need for more qualified umpires but only Matt Clark became a County Umpire during the season and Jack McAllister became a Probationary County Umpire. Ron joined Aubrey Drapkin in qualifying as a National Umpire.

As well as her schools programme Phil Clark continued to organise coaching at Eldon Square and also held regular Sunday afternoon sessions at the Lightfoot Stadium which were well attended. She also ran a three-day course there.

A course for coaches was held at Whitley Bay Grammar School.

County player assessments were held during the season at Byker Community Centre.

An exhibition and invitation tournament was organised, by Eldon Square Leisure Centre, in connection with the city's nine hundred year anniversary.

Blyth Sports Centre held a 'Sport for all' day at which youngsters John Burke and Neil McMaster put on a table tennis exhibition. Three players were nominated and took part in the National Area Junior Assessment Trials and they all progressed into the England Junior Ranking tournament at Thornaby where Martin Schapira won six of his eight matches in the Cadet Boys but Caron Buglass lost all of her matches in the Junior Girls as did Claire Mouzon in the Cadet Girls.

A highly successful Newcastle Schools League was again held at Eldon Square under the guidance of Phil Clark with the Royal Grammar School teams winning the Senior, Intermediate and Junior Divisions and Heaton winning the Girls Division.

A schools' tournament was again held this year with Neil McMaster winning both the Under 19 and Under 16 Boys Singles events and Christine doing the same in the Girls Singles as well as taking the Girls Doubles with Susan Yeung.

Andrew Drapkin won the Under 13 Boys Singles and also the Under 13 Boys Doubles with Waseem Shakoor while Jimmy Brumby and David Maughan were successful in

the older Boys Doubles. Linda Jackman won the Under 13 Girls Singles and Judith Drapkin took the Under 11 Mixed Singles.

In the National Schools Area Competition the Royal Grammar School Under 19 and Under 13 teams along with Slatyford School Under 16 team qualified for the Regional Competition at Millom School in Leeds. The Royal Grammar School Under 13 team of Martin Schapira, Andrew Drapkin, Waseem Shakoor and Jonathon Miller defeated Fairham School from Nottingham and Wakefield Sandal Endowed to reach the National finals.

These were held at Matlock but they lost out to Stepney Green of Inner London and Shropshire's The Grove from Market Drayton to finish third.

Martin Schapira reached the final of the Under 13 Boys Singles at the Schools National Tournament where he once again lost out to Carl Prean. During the season he was selected and played for England Cadets 'B' team.

The County Senior team had their best season for many years, winning two and drawing one of their six matches in the County Championships Division Two North. They were helped by the return to the area of Ian 'Benny' Robertson who played in their last three matches.

The policy for the second team in Division Three North was to use younger players and this was done as far as possible. One match was won but the other three ended in defeats.

The success story was the Junior side who won three and lost only one match in the Junior Division Three North to finish on top of the table. The team that represented them was John Burke, Neil McMaster, Malcolm Aitchison, Caron Buglass and Christine Burke.

The Northumberland League sides all lost out to Sunderland in the Wilmott Cup, Rose Bowl and Carter Cup. However, the men beat Barrow and Stockton before losing to them in the Wilmott Cup.

A team of girls was entered in the Bromfield Trophy and they did beat Sunderland and then had a walk over against Preston before going out to Sheffield.

Teams representing the Tyneside Summer League lost to Stockton in the Wilmott Cup and to Harrogate in the Carter Cup.

There were a number of good performances in various tournaments over the course of the season starting with the Cumbria 2 Star where Kit Cheung won the Womens Doubles partnered by Cleveland's Carole Knight and Arnie Warents won the Veteran Mens Singles.

Ian Robertson was a runner up in two events, the Mens Singles in which Andrew Clark reached the semi finals and the Mens Doubles with Pat Glynn of Warwickshire. Caron Buglass was a quarter finalist in the Girls Singles.

Peter Whiteman reached the quarter finals of the Mens Singles at the Pontefract 1 Star and young Claire Mouzon was runner up in the Girls Consolation Singles at the North Yorkshire Junior.

Andrew Clark got to the quarter finals of the Class 2 Mixed Singles at the Humberside 3 Star and north of the border in Edinburgh the Boys Singles of the East of Scotland title went to John Burke, Arnie Warents claiming another Mens Veterans Singles crown.

John got to the quarter finals of the Mens Singles at the Hartlepool 1 Star where Kit Cheung did well in two events, reaching the semi finals of the Womens Singles and the semi finals of the Womens Doubles partnered by A. Smith of Durham.

At the same tournament Neil McMaster reached the quarter finals of the Boys Singles.

A number of players did well at the Durham Open where Andrew Clark won the Mens Doubles with Durham's Tony Gelder. Ian Robertson was runner up in the Men's Singles as well as getting to the semi finals of the Men's Doubles with Peter McQueen, then of Surrey.

Kit Cheung also had a good tournament reaching the semi finals of the Womens Singles and only losing in the final of the Women's Doubles partnered by July Speight of Durham.

There was a semi finalist in the Veteran Men's Singles in Bill Newham.

Quite a few players took part in a local event in Consett, the Maureen Kerry Memorial Tournament, winning five events including the Men's Singles by John Burke. Pauline Jackson won the Women's Singles and Jimmy Brumby the Open Junior Singles. In the doubles events Michael Watson and Martin Young were successful in the Men's and Pauline Jackson and her partner Betty Charlton of Durham won the Women's.

Pauline won the Mixed Doubles title at the National Civil Service Championships and was again selected to play for the National Civil Service team against the Combined Services at Aldershot.

Northumberland Fire Brigade league team's Brian Illingworth was a double winner at the National Fire Brigade Championships held in Wiltshire at Devises. He won the Veteran Men's Singles and also the Veteran Men's Doubles with his team colleague Johnson McKenzie.

A new national competition, the National League, had been formed and Briarside entered a team in the Second Division, playing their matches at Sunderland Y.M.C.A. Their squad was Andrew Clark, Frank Mitchinson, Chris Reed, Steve Robinson and Bryan 'Pop' Robson from Northumberland along with Dave and Ian Svenson and Tony Gelder from Durham. They had a decent first season, finishing in mid table.

As usual the Northumberland League season had to be extended in order that the glut of postponed matches could be played otherwise there were no problems with the running of the competition.

Unfortunately, there was disciplinary problem that had to be dealt with following a complaint by North Shields YMCA regarding the behaviour of the young Byker Community Centre 'F' team and Dean Hastie in particular who had used abusive language to Nancy Kirsop.

The players involved were warned as to their future behaviour and Hastie was asked to send a letter of apology to Nancy Kirsop but he did not do so and in March was suspended until the end of April or further if the letter was not sent immediately. There was no further mention of the incident.

New Collingwood were the winners of the Premier Division for the first time and they did the double by winning the Knock Out Cup.

East Cramlington won the second division and their 'B' team won Division 3b.

The winners of the two second divisions were Simonside and Saint Georges with the other two third division titles going to Reyrolles 'D' and Tyne Dock 'B'.

Newton TTC 'D', New Benwell, Cullercoats Methodists and British Ship Research Association were the successful teams in the fourth divisions.

The Women's Knock Out Cup was won by Briarside.

There was another change of venue for the staging of the Northumberland Closed Tournament when it was played at Ashington Leisure Centre. It was well attended, and Ian 'Benny' Roberson of North Shields YMCA was the star player.

He won the Men's Singles, the Men's Doubles with Peter Whiteman of Saint Georges and the Mixed Doubles partnered by his North Shields YMCA colleague Nancy Kirsop.

Briarside players were on form in the Women's events with Kit Cheung taking the Singles title and the pairing of Caron Buglass and Christine Burke being successful in the Doubles.

Arnie Warents (Saint Georges) secured the Veterans title and the Handicap Singles went to Malcolm Aitchison of Simonside playing off plus seven.

A Northumberland Junior Closed Tournament was held for the first time and was played at Blaydon Youth Club on five tables. The tournament was sponsored by Crow's Transport Limited and there was a very good entry with seventy-seven boys contesting the Junior Singles, forty-five playing in the Cadet Boys Singles and twenty girls taking part.

Dave Godbold of Washington won the Junior Boys Singles and the Boys Doubles with Briarside's John Burke. John's sister Christine who also played for Briarside was the Junior Girls champion and partnered another Briarside player, Caron Buglass to success in the Girls Doubles.

Byker Community Centre's Neil McMaster won the Cadet Boys Singles, Claire Mouzon of Ashington Leisure Centre the Cadet Girls Singles and Delaval Community Centre's Judith Drapkin came out on top in the Under 11 Mixed Singles.

For the first time since the 1972/73 season the Northumberland 2 Star Tournament took place being organised by Aubrey Drapkin with help from various committee members.

It was sponsored by the Evening Chronicle and there was a prize fund of £510. It attracted a very good quality entry of just under two hundred players with several highly ranked English players and some from Scotland and Wales taking part. Geoff Scruton of Yorkshire was the referee assisted by Aubrey Drapkin.

The Men's Singles was won by Nigel Eckersley of Cheshire who was the ranked at number nine in England and the English Women's number eleven ranked player Sally Midgley won the Women Singles. The Lancashire pair Phil Bowen and Tony Boasman were successful in the Men Doubles with Northumberland's Barbara Kearney and Cleveland's England ranked Carole Knight taking the Women's Doubles.

Cleveland players came out on top in the junior events with Lindsay Taylor winning the Junior Boys Singles and Helen Robinson the Junior Girls Singles.

Northumberland men who did best in the tournament were Chu Van Que who was a semi finalist in the Men's Singles, Andrew Clark (partnered by Eckersley) who reached the semi finals of the Men's Doubles in which Peter Gorman and Jimmy Scope got to the quarter finals and John Burke, a semi finalist in the Junior Boys.

In the Women's Doubles Caron Buglass and Kit Cheung and the mother and daughter partnership of Olive and Judith Drapkin were semi finalists while Caron Buglass lost in the final of the Junior Girls Singles.

It was intended to hold the usual presentation night at the end of the season but unfortunately it had to be cancelled due to lack of support.

The sub-committee to look into the possible Tyne and Wear County was still in existence though nothing ever happened.

Financially there was a small surplus for the season.

The cost of equipment by now saw tables retaining at anything from £48 to £375 depending on quality and table top thickness. The cost of blades ranged from £6.60 to £35.50 and bat rubbers from £8.50 to £18.50 a pair. Balls were £3.95 to £4.97 per dozen and clothing costs saw shirts at £11 to £13 whilst a pair of shorts cost £7.

The average wage at the time was £110 per week.

The Tyneside Summer League had eighty-eight teams playing in eleven divisions and also thirteen taking part in Cadet Divisions and sixty-six entries in the Handicap Cup but there is no record of the final placings.

There is a record of the first Tyneside Summer League Closed tournament which was held at Blaydon Youth Club over two days with over one hundred entries and a prize fund of £160.

John Burke (New Collingwood) won the Men's Singles and the Junior Boys Singles and Pauline Jackson (D.H.S.S.) won the Women's Singles. There was a Division One Singles which went to Micky Grimes of Reyrolles.

The Junior Girls Singles winner was Judith Hindmarsh of Delaval Community Centre and the two Cadet Singles were won by Neil McMaster (Byker C.C.) and Judith Drapkin (Delaval C.C.).

The Under 11 Singles was won by Dave Watson of Blaydon Youth Club and there was also a singles event for players in the Tyneside Summer League cadet divisions which was won by Neil McMaster.

During the summer Aubrey Drapkin was appointed as treasurer of the governing body, the English Table Tennis Association.