

Halcyon days of the Birmingham League

**BIRMINGHAM,
SOLIHULL & DISTRICT
ASSOCIATION
CENTENARY**

THE Birmingham, Solihull & District Association celebrates its centenary this year and although it is difficult to know where to start with so many incredible players and officials being involved in the competition, two names stand out, Maurice Goldstein OBE and Desmond Douglas MBE.

Maurice was an England trialist in the 1930's and became secretary of the Association in 1931, going on to be ETTA President and also masterminded the World Championship staged at the NEC in 1977.

To itemise all the achievements of Maurice in an official capacity would fill all 12 pages of Table Tennis News this month, so we publish a tribute to Maurice by the No 1 table tennis journalist John Woodford, in 1963.

"Maurice has strode quietly across a Himalayan range of achievement and while lesser men have come and gone, Maurice has sacrificed himself to table tennis.

"He has no time for verbal histrionics, controversy, or the spiky nature of a rule for rules sake and knows the possible best of the game, forever fighting doggedly for its survival."

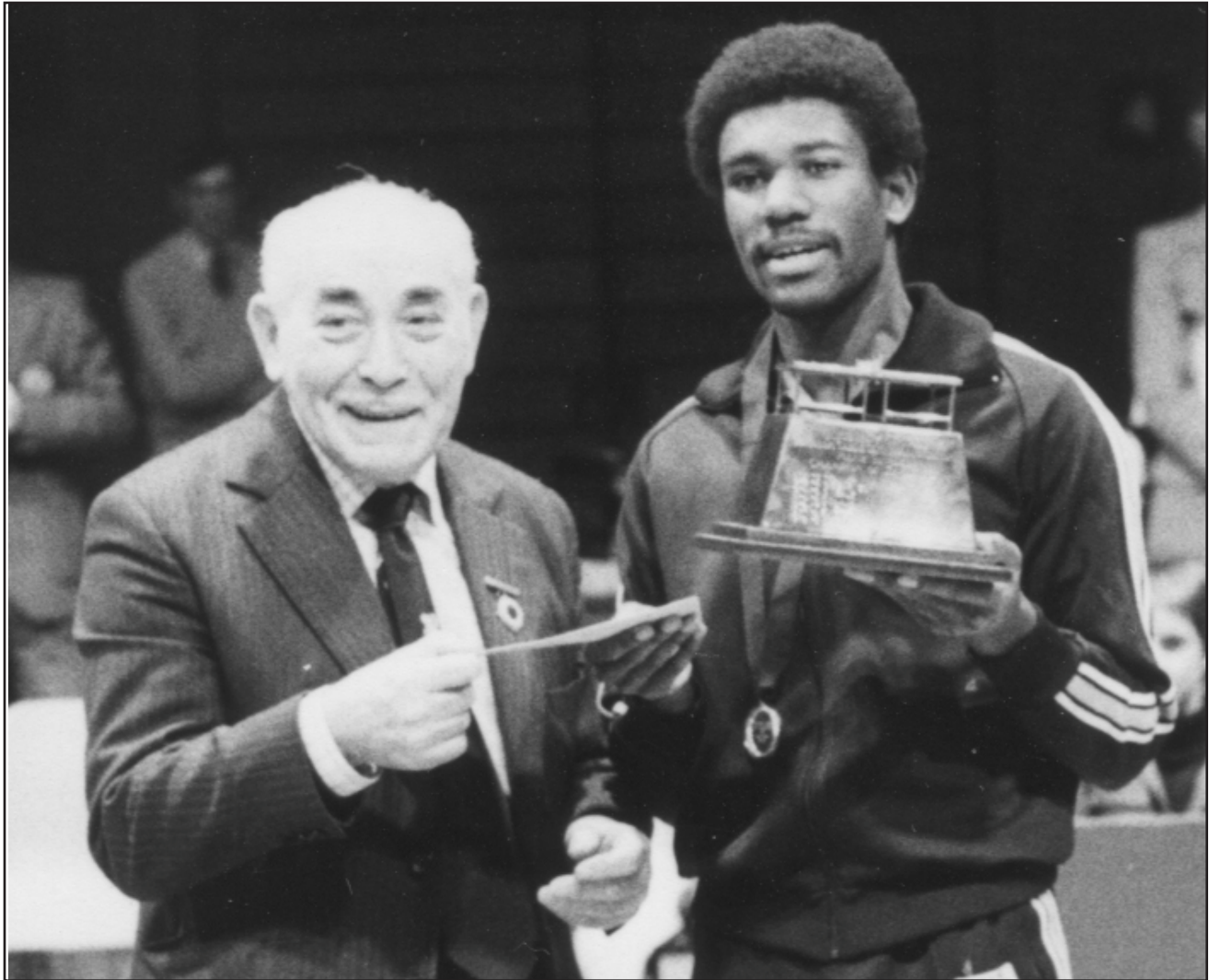
Desmond Douglas reached a high of seven in the world ranking list, won the European Top 12 event, was 12 times English National champion and again to list all of the success he had on the table tennis circuit would again fill TTN this month.

His first ever tournament was the Burford Junior Open in 1971 and four years later he became the first player from Birmingham since Adrian Haydon to be England senior No 1, some 40 years previous.

He is the current Association President and is arguably still the most well known name on the England scene.

Maurice and Desmond in different ways made an incredible mark nationally and can't be split in achievement in our opinion.

It is difficult to judge the standard of play throughout the last 100 years in each era, but the feats of Adrian Haydon and his daughter Ann are right up there with the best.



Maurice Goldstein and Desmond Douglas

Adrian was ranked sixth in the world in 1928 and reached the semi-final of the men's singles at the World Championship in both 1929 and 1933 and won a total of 14 medals in the world event including a men's team gold.

He considered his most exciting ever set was in losing 21-18 in the fifth to Victor Barna in the final of the English Championship in 1933.

He was also a talented cricketer, being good enough to represent the Warwickshire second team.

Ann's finest performance was in reaching the final of the women's singles, women's doubles and mixed dou-

bles at the World Championship in Stockholm in 1957.

As a tennis player she won the singles at Wimbledon in 1969, beating Billie Jean King in the final and was also French Open champion in 1963, 1968 and 1969, during an incredible career, which also saw her gaining five Grand Slam doubles titles.

Her mother Doris Haydon, Margaret Osborne, Pam Mortimer and Jean Mackay were also England international table tennis players from the Birmingham League.

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Adrian Haydon



Ann Haydon-Jones

BIRMINGHAM, SOLIHULL & DISTRICT ASSOCIATION CENTENARY

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Betty Steventon, who represented the Birmingham City club, was a member of the England team that won the Corbillon Cup, the women's team event at the World Championship of 1948.

Ralph Gunnion was an England international who was capable of beating the best and is associated with the legendary Central YMCA and Handsworth Victoria clubs, during his long and distinguished career.

Dougie Johnson still represented his club South Yardley in the Birmingham League, as well as playing for England all over the globe, after the combination bat specialist burst onto the international scene.

Amongst many high profile victories for the former England No 2 in his career, there were successes over Andrez Grubba (Poland), former world champion Jacques Secretin (France), Michael Applegren (Sweden), Gabor Gergely (Hungary) and Milan Orlovski (Czechoslovakia).

It is impossible to mention all the players that have made a significant mark in the city, so feel free to use the TTN Facebook site to post your memories.

Derek Munt, Paul Judd and Pat Glynn were all leading players on the England junior scene in the late 60's who went on to senior success while the trio of Karen Groves, Sandra Peakman and Di St Ledger all made their mark in the 1970s and beyond.

Leigh Jeffries and the late Bob Broadmore were both junior England internationals.

Ian Ferguson, with an incredible 11 successive Birmingham



OURS TO HOLD! ENGLAND WINS CORBILLON CUP.

The England team with the Marcel Corbillon Cup, after winning the World Table Tennis Championships for women.

Left to right are: Miss E. Steventon, Miss D. Beregi, Mrs. (Vera Dace) Thomas and Mrs. M. Knott (N.P.C.).

England team with the Corbillon Cup

League individual titles, to go with his seven Warwickshire Closed and five Birmingham Closed successes brings the story up to date, with the current crop of youngsters at Ian's club Colebridge, looking set to dominate the sport in the city in the near future.

Martin Clayton is the current Association chairman, who along with vice chairman Adrian Jones and the rest of the committee has steadied the Birmingham ship following difficult times during lockdown and has most exciting plans for the future.



WASHWOOD Heath U13 boys who won the English Schools title in 1972, under the guidance of elite coach Phil Burwell, who himself was a Premier Division player in the Birmingham League and later became Birmingham President.

Dougie Johnson became a senior England international and being ranked as high as No 2 in the national ranking list, while Karen Groves became a future Warwickshire No 1 at senior level.

Left: Washwood Heath School: Back Row: Richard Mountford, Gary Groves, Robert Dee, Dougie Johnson, Phil Burwell (coach).

Middle Row: Lynne Melon, Sue Gibbons, Maggie Allen, Sandra Fitzpatrick, Karen Groves.

Front Row: Unknown,

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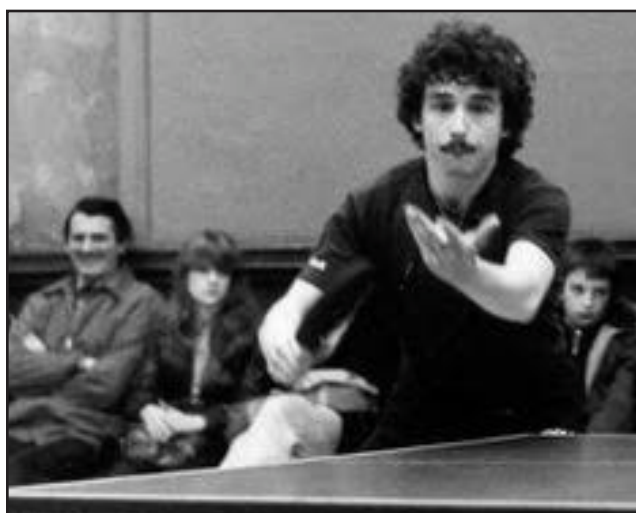
**BIRMINGHAM CITY TABLE TENNIS CLUB.
Winners of the All-England Team Championship,
1922-23.**



Left to right, front row—

H. L. Morgan, S. H. Hossell, Jnr., F. S. B. Lawes,
(Capt.)

Back row— W. A. Leadbetter, H. Bowker.



Left: Dougie Johnson

Right: Winners of the All-England Team Championship

Pics courtesy of Diane Webb