



THE NEW AGENDA

Alan Ransome



Campaign
for Chairman
of the
ETTA



After a break of six years from the Chairmanship of the English Table Tennis Association, I have accepted a request from several major figures in the sport to stand for office again. The reason that I am standing is because I believe that I am the best person to lead the Association. I will build a new, stronger Management team that will take full advantage of the opportunities open to our sport as part of the build up to the 2012 Olympic Games, and make major improvements in many sectors of our sport.

My "New Agenda", some of which is detailed on the following pages, will create enthusiasm, bring new life into table tennis, and provide our members with the opportunities and services that they desire and require.

I am told by many influential coaches and players that during the last six years the sport has stagnated and declined in some areas. We have had no major international events and also our various National Championships have left much to be desired. There have been very few home international matches and, in fact, it is very rare to see any of our top players competing on home soil. None of this can be helpful to the sport in general.

As your new Chairman, with a dedicated Management Team, I will put this right and do much more. I will devote my time to the job of leading and directing the sport, using all the management skills and table tennis knowledge that I have to motivate the volunteers and staff to produce greater activity and momentum. At the same time I will look for new, younger, talented people and give them the opportunity to grow into the organisation and administration of the sport as officials and coaches to ensure that we are building a great future for table tennis in England.

My Management Team will be drawn from the best talents in the Association. Some may be from the current team, some from my former team, some new to the ETTA Management level. I just wish to have the best people who can work together for the good of the sport to deliver the most favourable results for the benefit of all.

I fully appreciate that the wish of the electorate in 2003 was for change; I have learned from that experience and that will be taken into account in the future. Working with Mike Smith especially, we will establish improved routes of communication from members to the officers and departmental heads so that concerns can be shared, understood, acted on appropriately and outcomes brought back to members

This is your Association and with your help and support, we can move table tennis forward. We all need to take responsibility for our sport and make sure that we are all working together towards a successful future!

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'Alan Ransome'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Alan Ransome, O.B.E.

1 MORE PLACES TO PLAY

For table tennis to expand its popularity, every area needs good, modern playing facilities, open on a daily basis. Unfortunately, these are not available in most areas. In one period just over a decade ago, we were opening a new centre almost every month. More recently, whilst new centres are being created, the rate has slowed down and the Development Department seem to have lost their focus on this priority. The National Facility Officer post, which is so vital and crucial in this programme, has not been replaced after the resignation of Paul Baker and has been left vacant for the last year.

ACTION

It will be my intention to prioritise "More Places to Play" and give every local league and club every assistance to find new or improve existing playing facilities.

We will immediately reinstate the National Facility Officer position and refocus the Regional Development Officers to prioritise help to our members.

Club facilities like those in Cippenham, Scarborough, Halton, Dewsbury, Draycott, Ellenborough and my own club at Ormesby, are clearly the way forward for the sport and my goal is to really make this happen everywhere that the local members are ready to play their part.

2 GRANT AID SERVICE FOR LEAGUES AND CLUBS

In the 1990's one of the services provided through the Development Department and the Regional Development Officers was a Grant Aid Service for leagues and clubs. In one season alone, more than £300,000 mainly in small grants was awarded to our member organisations.

I requested the current Management Committee through National Council to provide an up to date guide book for leagues and clubs needing small grants to be produced and distributed but, unfortunately, this was refused. Substantial grant aid is still available. My club, Ormesby, for example, enjoy between £5,000 and £10,000 each year from sources outside table tennis for projects that we promote.

ACTION

One of my first tasks after being elected would be to reintroduce a full Grant Aid assistance programme for our member leagues and clubs, researching all methods of funding and producing a leaflet explaining how these grants can be obtained. This would also be available on the website and heavily promoted so that our members are fully aware of the opportunities available to them. Assistance will be given by the Regional Development Officers where needed.

3 PROGRESS IN SCHOOLS

I am delighted with the progress that has been made by John Arnold, the President of the English Schools' Table Tennis Association, and our Chief Executive, Richard Yule, with the Youth Sports Trust and the programmes for expanding table tennis in schools.

Table tennis is one of the first eight sports to be involved in this programme, which includes the appointment of Competition Managers in schools throughout most of England.

ACTION

This is a programme that we need to build on. However, to take full advantage of it the schools programme needs to be linked into our clubs and leagues that have the capacity to take new members. Special priority together with the English Schools TTA will be given by the Development Department to make this happen and help given to our member clubs to assist them to welcome the influx of keen youngsters.

4 COACHING REVIEW

I am concerned that the ETTA Coaching Scheme is not delivering the service that our coaches and players need. I was pleased to see that Sport England included table tennis in its club/coach programme which has placed a well funded coach in most of our Regions. Currently these coaches are concentrating on real grass roots programmes linked to a small number of Premier Clubs and, therefore, only servicing a very small percentage of our clubs and doing very little for the leagues.

Some other governing bodies supported by Sport England for this programme have been able to give their Regional Coaches a much wider remit allowing them to be more effective for a much larger proportion of their association members.

I am also concerned by the way that table tennis is tackling the change over from ETTA Coaching qualifications to the new UKCC. Although some courses have subsidised the cost of table tennis level 1 and 2 courses, the cost of the switch from ETTA to UKCC seems very high. We are also having much of our training of coaches undertaken by rugby coaches!

ACTION

I am confident that there is a much better way forward and after I have been elected I will undertake a full review of the Coaching Scheme with the objective of finding a much more productive way forward for our sport.

5 INTERNATIONAL EVENTS IN ENGLAND

It is disappointing to record that the last major table tennis event in England was in the Commonwealth Games in 2002. All we have had, have been Matthew Syed's one day invitation events and the Junior/Cadet Europe Top 10 in Sheffield last year which was the wrong event at the worst time and cost ETTA funds an amazing £33,000. Other than the Junior/Cadet Europe Top 10, the ETTA have tried to bring three other international events to England over the last couple of years and have had to cancel all of them. We have had virtually no international matches and certainly no international tours to date. In my first six years in office 1991-1997 we held three full English Opens, the European Championships in Birmingham in 1994, the Olympic Qualification 1996 in Manchester and the full World Individual and Team Championships in Manchester in 1997 with the World Veterans the following year.

I was personally responsible for raising the funds for all of these events as well as being Chairman of the Organising Committees. Much of the £27million of new money that I brought to the sport in my last period in office was used to pay for these events. Some of it was obtained on the back of the Manchester Olympic Bid and the Commonwealth Games. With the budgets available to support the 2012 Olympic Games, funding should be obtainable for an events programme right now if we make the right approaches.

ACTION

Establish an International Event programme including World, European, Commonwealth and English Open events for the next 5 years and bring top quality international table tennis back to England on a regular basis.

6 ETTA WEBSITE

As modern technology has improved, so have websites of all kinds. The ETTA website provides a reasonable service but, in my view, it could be much, much better, be far more informative and provide a comprehensive information service for our members. Some international events in which our players are representing England are missed altogether and others are only reported on when the event is underway without previews.

More of our home events should be covered on the site – some are – but many more should be with an up to date result service from the venues.

ACTION

All of this is achievable – it just takes investment in equipment and people. I know how much a really good website would be appreciated by our members and would quickly take the steps needed to achieve this.

7 NATIONAL TEAM CONCERNS

It has been good to follow the successes of our boys last year winning medals in World and European junior events. Congratulations to all concerned!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE? At this moment we have not benefited from the vast increase in funding provided to Olympic sports and may face a cut in the amount provided. Most of our current crop of top players, Paul Drinkhall, Darius Knight, Gavin Evans, Kelly Sibley, Joanna Parker, benefited greatly from the Nottingham Academy 1998 – 2003. For three years there was no academy, but for the last couple of years this group have benefited from the opening of the +16 Academy in Sheffield – but what about the next generation of players ?

The only player to win a medal in a major junior event, other than those listed above, is Liam Pitchford whose home in Chesterfield is very near to the Sheffield Academy and he obviously benefits from living close to high quality practice and coaching.

For players who cannot play at Sheffield on a regular basis it is very difficult to see with the current arrangements how they can have the support to emulate the achievements of Paul Drinkhall. The European Junior/Cadet Top 10 tournament takes place in the Netherlands in February and we have only one player amongst the 40 competitors – Gavin Evans – no cadets, no girls.

ACTION

Take a fresh look with our top coaches to reassess what is needed to give our top youngsters a real chance again on the World stage and see how this can be provided.

We know that our most talented young players need to have 12/16 hours per week of quality practice, coaching and support services in addition to their competition programme if they are going to make the grade at international level. This happened in Nottingham and now for the local youngsters in Sheffield, but it needs to be available to more of our top young players if we are to succeed.

We also need to provide the support for our young senior squad to progress to 2012 and beyond.

With our current UK Sport funding status both of these may be difficult, but we must find a way. Our players deserve it.

8 BETTER VALUE FOR THE LICENSED PLAYERS

With approximately £300,000 going into ETTA funds from the licensed players in the way of entry and license fees, and from the clubs that enter the British Leagues, I believe that there is scope for a better service being provided by the Association. The ETTA website, although improving, leaves much to be desired in terms of information and reports. Some competitions where the fees include the cost of providing qualified umpires end up with the players umpiring matches. The organisation of our last five Junior/Cadet and the National Under 14 Championships have been seriously "unsatisfactory". I wrote a paper for National Council which Marketing Committee have accepted that the strong criticism was valid.

The calendar also could be much better. For the Juniors, for example, 5 or 6 of the top events are all sandwiched into the last few weeks of the season when many youngsters are in their exam period and whilst, on the other hand, there is a 2 or 3 month gap in the middle of the season with no key events at all. Last season the Women's British league did not start until March and finished at the end of June due to calendar difficulties.

ACTION

I will put all this right and give a much better service and value for the licensed players and British League clubs. I will concentrate on producing a much better and informative website. Work hard with the National Umpires & Referees Committee to increase the number of umpires for ETTA events. Be more selective with venues and put common sense back into the arrangements for our Junior/Cadet/Under 14 Championships and the calendar of events.



Alan Ransome proudly displaying his ETTA Life Member award presented in 1988 and his OBE presented in 1997 for services to Table Tennis

9 UMPIRES & REFEREES

I am deeply concerned about the decline in numbers and availability of umpires for our events. It makes such a difference at British League and County matches, for example, to have qualified umpires available to conduct the matches rather than having players from either team to officiate. As the average age of our umpires is rising, this problem becomes more acute. I wrote a detailed set of proposals to address this problem for National Council several months ago. It was very well received by National Council and, in conjunction with the National Umpires and Referees Committee, Council agreed a way forward for the training and support for our officials.

Unfortunately the resources in manpower and finance have not been allocated to this plan to date so that little or no progress has been made.

ACTION

Implement the NURC/Ransome plan immediately as there is no time to be lost on this project.

10 INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Although we have a member elected to the 50 strong ITTF Board of Directors and a number of people sit on various ITTF and ETTU committees, England have no member on the Executive Committee of either body and no committee chairmen, which is the weakest position we have had in the 80 year history of the sport. The only true decision making position that we hold is Chairman of the Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation, a role that I have held since 1993.

ACTION

Select English members who have real experience in their specialist fields in international table tennis and work with the decision makers in the ITTF and ETTU to have them elected to key influential positions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

When I was elected Chairman in 1991, my first task initiated in the period between the election results had been declared and my taking office three months later, was to establish a Trade Committee. With my company being in the supply of table tennis equipment I felt it was essential that systems and procedures were put in place to remove any scope for personal advantage.

The Trade Committee has been in place since 1991 and is satisfactorily fulfilling its function. The committee includes within its procedures Government, Sport England and UK Sport guidelines and its work is reviewed by Sport England as a routine part of their audit procedure. We will continue with the Trade Committee in its current format and ensure that any possibility for conflict of interest is removed. Follow to the letter the current ETTA Rules regarding Business Interest and Declaration of Interest as was the case in my last period in office.

ALAN RANSOME - THE MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

My first real contact with Alan Ransome took place when he visited Reading. He was the coach to the Ormesby Club who, at that time were dominating the English scene. I remember he stayed at my house and we talked into the early hours of the morning regarding his vision of the future and how the sport which we both loved could prosper and expand.

It was obvious from the outset that we shared a passion and a total agreement on a way forward, and I was delighted when he asked me to serve on the Management Committee in 1995.

Over the years I have got to know Alan well. He has never lost that dynamic attitude, both in and out of office. It was a privilege to be part of a team that was able to introduce the professional Regional Development Officers in each region of the country and facilitate the opening of more than 50 new table tennis centres. In the first six years of his Chairmanship there were three English Opens, European Championships in 1994 in Birmingham, a World Championship in Manchester in 1997, as well as the Olympic Qualifying event in that city. Alan not only raised the funding to stage these events but also led their organisation.

Alan's 50 year involvement with the sport started when he founded the Ormesby Club. He was part of the playing team that won the English Club Championship 10 years in a row, as well as being the only British club ever to win the European Club Championship in 1972. I don't think it is generally realised what a very good player Alan was. He represented England and also reached the semi-final stage of our own English Championships.

I know he is particularly proud of the contribution he has made to the Ormesby Club. In his time out of office he has raised more the £1 million to develop a 15 table full time centre with excellent playing conditions and all the state of the art facilities one could wish for. The Ormesby Club have been awarded the ETTA Club of the Year 2008 at Excellence level. The main reasons for this are the involvement with local schools, the development of players with a high skill level, and a very successful programme tailor made for disabled players. I know Alan is very proud of the current crop of girl players he has coached with no less than 6 in the England squads or with good national rankings.



The Ormesby Representatives Alan and Jose Ransome, Coaches Matthew Stanforth and Steven Brunskill receiving the ETTA Club of the Year Award 2008 from Alex Murdoch.

In the past I have seen Alan in action in his role as Chairman of the Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation. It was Alan who negotiated the way for table tennis to be included in the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002, as well as helping to keep table tennis in the Games in Melbourne in 2006, Delhi in 2010, and Glasgow in 2014. He was also responsible for bringing in the next Commonwealth Championships in Glasgow in May, and for the introduction of table tennis in the Commonwealth Youth Games in Pune, India, last October for the first time.

He has continued to play a major role within National Council with any number of innovative suggestions. Therein lies the key to this man's personality. He is able to provide the energetic leadership that the sport desperately needs, especially in the run up to the Olympic Games.

If you care for the sport and want it to flourish, right from grass roots levels through to the international stage, I know from close personal experience that there is only one man capable of leading table tennis to a much brighter future. That man is Alan Ransome, OBE.

Brian Halliday - ETTA Vice President, Berkshire

Tony Chatwin - Hon Life Member, Derbyshire

I was agreeably pleased to hear that this year there would be elections held for Officers of the Association.

I know that Alan Ransome OBE has decided to stand for the Chairman's position, a decision I welcome and firmly endorse. I have known Alan for many years and of course served on his Management Committee before becoming Deputy Chairman. He is, in my opinion, the perfect candidate for Chairman to lead us through the difficult times ahead.

He has an encyclopedic knowledge of table tennis from grass roots to International and all facets of the game. Alan is respected in England, within the Commonwealth, Europe, Asia and in the ITTF and ETTU.

He is a skilled negotiator from local to National and International levels.

In short, I believe that he is the right man, possibly the only man, at the right time to consolidate and take our sport into the future.

**William Thornton
Proprietor of Thorntons Sport and Leisure
Bury, Lancashire**

Having known Alan Ransome for over 30 years, I consider him to be totally committed to the development of table tennis in this country. As a testament to this, his Ormesby Club is the club that has produced many international players, both in the past and in the current teams. During Alan's previous term in office, England hosted World and European Championships together with English Senior and Junior open International Championships. Alan's drive, vision and negotiating skills were responsible for the foundation of the World Class performance money for table tennis development. Although a competitive business owner, I still firmly believe Alan's knowledge, experience and deep understanding of the world stage, together with his passion for the game, can only enrich table tennis in the lead up to the London Olympics and beyond should he regain the position as Chairman of the ETTA.

Sandra Deaton - Former member of both the Ransome and Murdoch Management Committees, Derbyshire

I was delighted to receive the news that Alan Ransome OBE had decided to stand for Chairman of the ETTA for the period of 2009 to 2011. I worked closely with Alan in his previous Chairmanship and can unreservedly state his wealth of knowledge within the game of table tennis is second to none. He has an innate ability to motivate, lead and support those who work with him.

During his previous period of office there was continual evidence to support that Alan has a natural instinct for new initiatives to drive the sport forward. We are coming to an era within the game that we have never

continued...

experienced before with the onset of London 2012. We have to capitalise on this and undoubtedly Alan Ransome and his management team will have the experience, ability and knowledge to do this better than anyone else. Alan Ransome knows the sport from A to Z —grass roots to International level and NOW is the time to make that count. I am delighted to endorse Alan Ransome's nomination.

Dot Macfarlane - Warwickshire

I would like to unreservedly support Alan Ransome's campaign to become Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association Limited (ETTA) as I believe it is imperative that Table Tennis in England moves forward efficiently, professionally and with enthusiasm at local, national, and international level, especially towards England's part in Team GB's representation at the Olympic Games in London in 2012 and beyond, for which he has all the necessary qualities.

Alan has an immense knowledge of table tennis having served on endless national and international committees/organisations (including of course leading the ETTA as Chairman from 1991 to 2003). During this period the ETTA ran several English Opens at various venues, Olympic qualification, World Championships, Veteran World Championships and Commonwealth Games and due to Alan's own extensive knowledge and respect worldwide, I am sure he is capable of rekindling respect and recognition of English Table Tennis as an Olympic sport worthy of support and sponsorship and will most certainly be able to meet the challenges that Chairmanship of the ETTA would bring at this critical time. I wish him every success in his campaign.

**Richard Scruton
Honorary Life Member and former Management
Committee member**

English table tennis has many challenges ahead both before and after London 2012. Changes in governance, administration, competition and grassroots activity are essential if the sport is to survive as we know it.

In recent years I have worked at home and abroad with Alan behind the scenes, pre-event and during competition, on major Commonwealth events such as Commonwealth Games, Youth Games and Championships.

I know that his knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm are second to none and that the Association needs his experience.

Our sport needs both leadership and use of all the best talents available and for these reasons I support Alan Ransome.

**Gareth Herbert - Gold Medalist - Commonwealth Games
2002, Head Coach TTK Greenhouse**

"I believe that more young players of a high standard need to come through the system. I am convinced that Alan Ransome has all the attributes to achieve these aims"

Rhys Evans - Father of Gavin Evans, Britain's Top Junior Player.

I was particularly pleased to hear that Alan Ransome intends to stand for Chairman of the ETTA in the forthcoming elections. As you know I am a keen table tennis enthusiast and will generally support anyone who is seen to be working hard for the improvement of English Table Tennis from grass roots level through to our elite players.

Since Alex and his team came to power some 5 1/2 years ago, it is regrettable but, I can see no improvement and, in fact, the contrary is the case.

To expand during recent years I have seen:

The further decline in my local league and league membership, the closure of the National Academy at Nottingham, the failure of the High Performance Squads with the exception of the East Midlands Region, the current National Academy at Sheffield under threat of closure, the lack of any International competition held in England, cancelled English Cadet/Junior Opens, many of our top players leaving to play in other countries, the drop in standards of our 4 star tournaments, the lack of support given to our older senior players effectively forcing them to fall away from table tennis, the lack of media attention to our sport resulting in no sponsorship funding.

The above is just a small example of how I see things have not improved. (I'm sure if I think hard I may be able to find some positives?)

I believe that given the vast experience Alan has working in table tennis, at both domestic and International level, he is the right person to stop this trend of decline and positively address some of the issues which I have mentioned above. Since getting to know him over the last few years he has always demonstrated to me a vast knowledge of Table Tennis which he has gained from the many years of working in table tennis at all levels. His work at Ormesby TTC is clear to see with many excellent players continually being produced and a club which is the envy of many.

Having been Chairman of our Association before, I know Alan is fully aware of what's involved and the work that needs to be done to get us back on track. His business expertise along with the table tennis knowledge to my mind, makes Alan the best person qualified to run our Association.

Therefore, I would like to give Alan Ransome my full support in the forthcoming elections.

Good luck and best wishes.

David Carrick - Cumbria

Speaking as a table tennis fanatic, I was delighted to hear that Alan Ransome is standing for Chairman of the English Table Tennis Association. I have seen his energy, drive, infectious enthusiasm and passion for the game at first hand. This along with his vast experience within all areas of the game, including a hugely successful previous spell as Chairman, makes him the perfect candidate and I wish him the best of luck with his campaign.

Local leagues are dying all over the country (living in Cumbria, I have suffered from this, in that there are now no longer Carlisle or Penrith leagues, and I have had to travel a considerable distance to join the Kendal League). There appears to be very few international matches for fans to attend, which is a shame as they can be an inspiration to us all and, above all, I feel there needs to be a campaign to get table tennis played more in our schools.

I sincerely hope that Alan's campaign is successful and that he can address the problems within our great sport.

Mike Lewis Life Member English Table Tennis Association, Avon

A VOTE FOR ALAN RANSOME O.B.E. IS A VOTE FOR THE FUTURE!

Alan Ransome's leadership skills are of the highest and are respected throughout the world of table tennis. He has served our sport in many capacities at National, European and World levels and promoted English table tennis amongst the highest echelons.

The future of our sport (to and beyond 2012) will require a strong hand and one with such experiences: Skillful at sporting politics and dedicated to ensuring our sport's future in difficult times. Financial help, although essential, is not enough to move our sport forward. There must be vision and a vibrant new approach to development.

If ever there was a time for change, it is now! The financial future is uncertain which may well affect our sport in many ways and those sports who are prepared will stand the better chance of weathering the storm.

To this end I recommend that a vote for Alan Ransome as English Table Tennis Association Chairman is a vote for ensuring the future of our sport.