

Week Commencing 4th April 2005

Birmingham Table Tennis

By Bob Brown

Helen Turner and Ian Ferguson - the golden duo of Birmingham table tennis - justified their status by winning the singles titles at the Birmingham Closed Championship, staged at the North Solihull Sports Centre. Ferguson was two games down to defending champion Michael Browne (Kingshurst) in the final, before showing the touch and power that has made him the leading player in the city for the past 10 years. The Curdworth attacking star won the final three games to win the title for the fourth time. "After losing out in the Warwickshire Closed I was determined not to be beaten here and although I don't feel I was at my best, I did enough" stated Ferguson. Turner suffered a shock defeat to Sarah Riach (Kingshurst) in the final round robin play-off for the ladies title, but victory over Alex Childs (Hockley Heath) clinched the event on games average. Ferguson and Turner teamed up for a comfortable success in the mixed doubles, but the shock of the day was the defeat of Ferguson and Andy Hare in the men's doubles final by the Kingshurst duo of Browne and Jason Essex. In a fine match the Browne/Essex combination succeeded by an amazing 18-16 scoreline in the fifth game, after saving five match points. Tom Hearne (Baverstock) upset the form book by beating Navinder Matharu (Colebridge) in the U21 singles, then another Colebridge youngster in Scott Danter in the final. 13 year old Alan Caffrey showed his remarkable talent in winning the cadet singles and giving Matharu a stern challenge in the junior singles final. "Alan has the potential to be as good as any player in Birmingham over the past 20 years" enthused his Kingshurst coach Simon Upson. "His attitude is first class and it is probable we will fast track him into the Premier Division for next season". Caffrey, along with fellow Kingshurst players Scott and Daniel Tune and Jamie Morgan clinched the Heart of England Cadet League the previous day for Birmingham, with both Caffrey and Morgan having a 100 per cent record throughout the competition. Kidderminster finished second, with Evesham third. Caffrey then went on to win the individual singles competition. Other winners at the Birmingham Closed included the following: Veteran Singles: Mike Browne (Kingshurst), Veteran O50 singles Roger Ellerington (Kingshurst), U12 singles: Rajinder Dansi (Wheelers Lane), Junior Boys Doubles: Scott Danter/Navinder Matharu (Colebridge), Restricted A Singles: Peter Boniface (Sutton), Restricted B Singles: Dean Hicks (Hockley Heath), Restricted C Singles: Alan Buck (Tile Cross), Junior Restricted Singles: Scott Tune (Kingshurst).

The Maurice Goldstein Cup will be contested by the title winning Curdworth trio of Ferguson, Hare and Phil Burwell against The Rest, who include Kingshurst's Browne, Essex and Scott Prime in their line-up. The match takes place at Baverstock School, on Thursday March 31, 7.30pm start, with free admission to spectators. Graham Elsdon who was the guiding force behind the Hockley Heath club, died in Solihull Hospital after collapsing at the Colebridge club in Shirley, after competing in a Birmingham League fixture. He was a popular member of Ladbroke Park golf club and leading figure in the local community. His funeral service will take place at St Giles Church, Packwood, Solihull, on Thursday March 24, 11.30am, followed by a burial at St Giles.