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| Bath Street Table Tennis Club |   C:\Liv TT\Bath Street TT Club\Website\Recovery\bvttc\BSM\News\cp_000154b0.gif | Dateline:4 September 2014 |
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| **Finals Night** 23 members gathered on Wednesday 3 September for the Finals Night of the Club Tournament, the Ron Georgeson Memorial Trophy. The event was inaugurated in 2013 to the memory of Ron who had died peacefully earlier that year after losing the battle with cancer. The tournament consisted of two events, both played on a handicap basis. The main event, the trophy itself, is a straight knock out cup with each match comprising of 5 games played up to 11 with a handicap added to the points scored of the lower ranked player. The ultimate winner of each match being the player with the most points, including the handicap. A case of points certainly do make prizes! The second event, The Plate, is a second chance for players who lose in the first round of the main event and is played on exactly the same basis. Through the two events all entrants are guaranteed at least 2 matches. With such a good crowd present and some interesting matches in prospect, we were set for a good night. Members Don Gibson, Keith Dudley and Migs Morris study the form before the start, making their last minute predictions on the programme.Barbara Alcock and Liz Adams warm up before their final events.The first match of the evening was the first semi-final of the Plate competition featuring Club Chairman Fred Bainbridge against Barbara Alcock - who was being proudly watched by her husband. Barbara was the only player in the tournament this year to be involved in a draw! In a fabulous quarter final match she matched the higher rated player Darren Taylor coming out even on points. In the event of a draw the lower ranked player has 1pt extra point added to their score - so Barbara reached the semi-final! It is never easy being first match on and especially against a strong higher ranked player, but with a handicap advantage of 32 pts Barbara looked to have a fair chance. After some early nerves Barbara put in a spirited performance in games 3 and 4 so that at the start of the final game Fred was still 5 pts behind. But with just a little bit too much fire power on both backhand and forehand wings Fred gradually overcame the arrears in the final end winning out 55 points to 52. *All smiles as Barbara and Fred prepare to do battle, but there is no doubt the killer instinct was out when it came to the match itself.*Next up, the second semi-final of the Plate competition featuring Liz Adams against the evergreen Albert Parker. Albert appearing in finals night for the second consecutive year. Both times in the Plate competition. Could he go one better than last year when he was a losing semi-finalist? It is never easy to get the handicaps right for an event of this nature and the 8 point advantage that Liz had looked a little light against the very experienced campaigner Albert. Left hander Liz tried to make the most of her attacking forehand but the absence of consistency eventually took its toll so that by the fourth end Albert had already closed the handicap going on to take the match 55 points to 37.Albert and Liz - surely they must have been the best looking pair in the finals event?So the final of the Plate was decided, Fred would play Albert.Potentially the first semi-final of the Trophy looked to be an interesting prospect, with last year's winner of the Plate, Club Secretary Graham Turner, up against the very much in-form Club Treasurer Ian McElwee. With a 14point start for Graham the match looked finely balanced. And that seemed to be the case after two ends, when the points score remained even with both players having won one game. What went wrong after that just isn't clear! Some subtle changes from Ian and effective use of pimples and changes of spin coupled with an uncharacteristic total collapse from Graham took away the spectacle from the remaining games with Ian running out a comfortable winner 51 points to 42. It was however to prove to be the only match of the night where the underdog actually won one end! *Ian McElwee and Graham Turner before the first of the Trophy semi-finals. Graham didn't look too happy before the match, so what was he like afterwards!?*  |

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| Good crowd delighted by spirited play The second semi-final of the Trophy proved to be the match of the night. Former Liverpool Closed Champion Dave Roberts, still one of the top 20 amongst the regular players of the 1st Division of the Liverpool League, up against the unpredictable and hard hitting cabbie and Tournament Director, Dave Noden. With a 26 point handicap advantage to Dave N the former champion was going to have to use all of his guile, power and consistency to make it to the final. And what a cracker this match proved to be. Although Dave N took first blood in points the more experienced Dave R ran away with the first game. Needing around 6 points in each game scoring only 3 in the first looked to bode badly for Dave N. But what was to prove a key game followed, Dave N surprisingly scoring some vital points from two or three good serves together with some heroic adventure in returning and some dynamic clear cut winners. It wasn't enough to win the end but the 9pts secured more than balanced out the first game and perhaps cast a shadow of doubt in the mind of the senior player. Another 7 pts from Big Dave in game 3 kept the pressure on Dave R, but he seemed to have weathered that taking game 4 11:4. By the start of game 5 Dave R was still 5pts behind, so 6 more for Dave N would see him squeeze through. It still looked likely that the senior player would come through and it certainly looked that way at the start of game 5. But some absolute heroics from Big Dave and a couple of unforced errors from Dave R let a clear lead slip and the knowledgeable crowd reacted positively when Dave N somehow secured a 6th point. In the end although Dave R won all 5 games the final points score was Dave N 56 to Dave R 55. What a match, the first and only underdog through to a final.------*Dave Noden and Dave Roberts featured in what was arguably the match of the night with just 1 point separating them after 5 games.*------After a brief break for drinks the Finals began. First up, the Plate, featuring Chairman Fred Bainbridge against Albert Parker, with Albert having a 26 point handicap advantage. In the first game it seemed he didn't need it, matching Fred point for point for an 11:10 score-line in favour of Fred, a great start for the underdog. But Fred came back turning up the heat in games two and three with much greater consistency and some hard hitting on both wings. But still Albert came back for more, snatching 7 points in the fourth end to leave Fred still trailing by 5 heading into the final game. But all o a sudden nerves seemed to get the better of Albert and Fred brought out his most ruthless streak with some powerful and decisive attacking strokes. The final score a victory for Fred 55 pts to 51. *Albert just couldn't match the superior hitting power of his higher ranked opponent Fred.*And so to the final match of the night, for the Ron Georgeson Memorial Trophy itself. Featuring Club Treasurer Ian McElwee and the tournament director Dave Noden. Dave didn't set the handicaps, so no conspiracy can be suggested! With a handicap advantage of 20 points this looked like another match where there could be an upset if Dave could repeat the dare devil spirit shown in the semi-final. And he was certainly fast and furious out of the blocks with some big shots, but strewn with errors. Still, needing an average of 7 points a game, 9 in the first end was a positive start for Dave. However some clever trickery with the short pimples and some great flicks on both forehand and backhand saw Ian pull himself back into the match in games 2 and 3 leaving him just 5 points behind after 3 ends. Dave fought hard in game 4 securing the needed 7 points but now Ian was just 1 point behind with only the final game to go. In the final end Ian showed his full range of skills and experience to complete the win with an 11:5 score. The final score a 55 pts to 50 gave victory for Ian. When asked what the worthy winner thought of the match, "it was very hot" was the stoical reply!Undertaking his first official duties as newly elected Club President the legendary Billy Clayton presented the trophies, first recalling the man in whose honour the tournament is named, Ron Georgeson, and then paying tribute to the founder of the Club Alex Gould. He congratulated all members for keeping the spirit of the Club alive and praised the way the matches had ben played on the night. He also thanked Tournament Director Dave Noden and the team for organising the competition and this finals night before going on to present the trophies. *President Billy Clayton presents the Plate runner-up trophy to Albert Parker**That's certainly a menacing grin from the President, perhaps it was in anticipation of Chairman Fred's acceptance speech on winning the Ron Georgeson Memorial Plate!**Little and Large, Dave Noden receives the Ron Georgeson Memorial Trophy runner-up award from President Clayton.**Ian McElwee receives the shield for the Ron Georgeson Memorial Trophy for 2014 from Club President Billy Clayton.Great win Ian.* |

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