

Pre Association Memories

1905-6 My first memory of the game of ping pong occurred about 50 odd years ago in a very important township of Hokitika, the capital of the wonderful West Coast.

It went something like this:-

"Why didn't you stop the ball from getting into the fire, you slow coach or you shump, accompanied by perhaps a ~~clap~~ <sup>clap</sup> on the <sup>ear</sup> ~~cheek~~" These remarks came from one or other of my elder brothers.

Needless to say I did not enjoy such treatment:-

- (1) Because I was not the official ball boy
- (2) Because I had my back to the

table - being more interested in getting warm than in watching that game

(3) Because I couldn't retaliate in any way - I being 5 or 6 and they being about 14 and 15

(4) I was no hero when it came to picking ping pong balls out of a blazing fire anyway.

However you can easily see that I was brought up the hard way in regard to the game of ping pong.

Now after having <sup>done</sup> a lot of <sup>swet</sup> ~~work~~ to gain their matriculation, my brothers were looking for something a bit easier, so they joined the civil service

and were posted to from the  
capital of the West Coast to the  
capital of New Zealand. ~~and~~

When our family were again united  
after World War I, my father again  
bought a house in Melbourne and  
of course a ping pong table was  
necessary to keep the 7 of us out of  
mischiefs.

My chief memory of those games was  
how to return my brother Henry's  
services. I used to get absolutely  
annoyed wondering whether it had  
bounced on his side of the table first  
before it came over now to my side.  
I wasn't used to the new finger serve  
those of you who used to play  
in those days will remember

that the original method of  
serving was to meet the ball  
lower than the height of the table  
and hit it straight over the net.

My brother's service was new to me  
and as he could place it easily  
either straight down the line or across  
the table I did not enjoy it;  
fortunately as he served it from the  
backhand corner. My brother  
Charlie's service was a lot easier  
because he served from the  
forehand corner

---

My next memory concerns a  
quadrangular tournament played  
at the Y M C A between the Fort Life  
bears and Statisticians Y M C A and  
the Audit Office. This was early in  
the 1920's

There was a very well known  
personality playing for the Y.M.C.A.  
team by the name of Jack Larsson.

You all know Jack &

"It was a beautiful day at the  
Park and Society thoroughly deserved  
their win over - Boston Peterson

Well Jack had a real racketball  
service. As I said before you were  
supposed to meet the ball lower  
than the height of the table;  
but Jack's idea of this rule was  
somewhat <sup>elastic</sup> ~~different~~. He certainly  
started with his hand holding  
the ball below the table; but when  
he met the ball, it was almost  
high enough for a good forehand  
drive, and drive it he did.

There were no uniforms with badges  
in those days.

We move on now to 1931.

In the winter of this year, there was  
a chap running a public ping pong  
parlour just around the corner  
in Lower Cuba St where Miss O'Connor  
now has her dancing studio. ~~There~~  
At the end of his season, he ran  
a <sup>championship</sup> tournament which was skillfully won  
by a chap named Harry Kennedy.

Harry's method was simply to say  
to his club mate Dick Dry - you beat  
Keith Longmore, and I'll beat you, and  
I'll win - which he did.

---

In November of that year, I commenced  
professional coaching <sup>at 43</sup> ~~at 43~~ Lower  
Cuba Street, and

In the following winter season in 1932  
I bought 4 tables - the cost 37/6  
each for the table and 2/6 each for the trestles

1933

1933

At the commencement of the <sup>next</sup> winter season in 1933, I thought it would be a good idea to form an association, as although there were a number of clubs in existence, <sup>and just formed</sup> there was <sup>no</sup> <sup>controlling</sup> <sup>body</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>area</sup>.

I <sup>mentioned</sup> ~~discussed~~ this idea <sup>to</sup> my brother Charles, who was one of Wellington's best players. <sup>He</sup> <sup>commented</sup> - "what do you want an Association for?"

However I persevered with the idea, and rang up all the clubs where I knew the game was played, or where some of the people I contacted told me it was played, and I invited them to a meeting in my rooms at 43 Lower Cuba Street.

One telephone call went like this: -  
 "Could you please put me on to the secretary of your punj pong club."

Oh - we have no secretary.  
 Well says I could you put me on to someone who is interested in the game.

Right, and he gets someone, and I put across my father.

Well the meeting was duly held on May 1<sup>st</sup>. I took the chair - I wasn't voted to it, and there were about 30 present.

1933 (cont)

The first thing that happened was that the chairman didn't take the chair. Why - well because he had none to take - he had given it to another delegate, <sup>and</sup> there were more delegates than chairs - so I stood to conduct the meeting. Thank goodness it was only a short meeting - one.

There were only two motions

I moved that the Wellington Table Tennis team be formed. This was seconded ~~by~~ and was carried after very little discussion.

I then moved that a sub-committee of 3 of Messrs HD Kennedy, AEB Wood and W Jackson be appointed to draw up a draft constitution.

This was carried and the meeting then concluded.

Mr Wood promised to obtain a copy of the Auckland Assn's rules; but after waiting for them for I think a couple of weeks, we gave them up, and proceeded to draw up our own based on the English constitution.

straightaway  
We called for entries for our inter-college competition and guess how many we got - 62  
yes 62 in our first year

The most notable feature of the first season was the visit to Wellington of Fred Perry and Frank Wilde of England who were on a lawn tennis tour of this country. Now Fred was an ex World's champion at table tennis, and Frank was also an English International Table Tennis Ref.

1933.

So of course we decided that we must see them at table tennis as <sup>well thought</sup> we might never see another world's champion again (Little did we foresee that we might see two world's champions together 24 years later)

Well the next point was when could we get them to play. They were playing tennis on Saturday afternoon, and they had an official tennis dinner on Saturday night, and they were leaving for Wanganui on the Monday.

That left Sunday - if we could arrange for them to play.

Well the Executive had a meeting after work - <sup>each</sup> no ~~good~~ - we couldn't think of a place for them to play - so we went to <sup>near</sup> <sup>friends</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>place</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Regent</sup> <sup>down</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>street</sup> - then we resumed

our meeting. We finally gave up on the understanding that I would interview Jimmy Harris, Slazenger's representative who was sponsoring the tour.

Well I saw Jimmy, and I had better not tell you what we discussed. Perhaps it will be alright - but not for publication please.

Jimmy said "look if you offer him £20 he'll play", but no I couldn't offer him <sup>£20 or that</sup> any sum as I did not know how the venture would turn out. <sup>and that was an excellent suggestion.</sup> I think we had about £10 - £15 in the kitty, and the hire of the Town Hall (which was the only place we could get) was £20.

Jimmy however promised to see what he could do. And the final arrangement was -



1933

Now there was one other feature about that matter that had future repercussions.

As ~~we~~ the Executive had so little money, we had a meeting in the Town Hall underneath that clock there, and decided that if there was a loss on those matters, we would each put in a £ to make up the deficiency.

Well, we did not have too as the gate takings were £26 odd, but I thought afterwards

well it is a pretty poor show if the people who did all the work had to ante up as well, if the show was not a success.

So I vowed and declared that any future show was going to pay its way, and I am very pleased to say thirty five years

after <sup>that</sup> they all did - even if the profits were not on the Springfield's scale.

Now there were one or two other interesting features about that first season.

(1) We sent a team to Auckland - there was an excursion train going of so our team Kennedy, <sup>(Christopher)</sup> West Langrove and Haynie went too - and guess how they played Auckland - best of 2 sets!!!  
Wght lost 18-14

(2) Do you know what it cost to play in our bluffs that year - 1/- per cent <sup>add!</sup> but only 2/6 if you entered for the 3 events

And we finished that year with <sup>a profit of</sup> assets (what?) £2-11-0. In other words that's £65.450 more than the



city transport made last  
quarter - so it wasn't bad  
for a first year.

Now one other item before I close my  
memories of our first year.

In order to publicize our game I approached  
the Evening Post, and had an interview  
with one of their sub-editors, Mr Hardcastle.  
Now before Mr Hardcastle would promise  
me any space, he asked me one very  
significant question, that has stuck in my memory.

"Did I think the game would last?"

I assumed him that I thought it always  
<sup>as much as the player says was such a good game.</sup>  
Well, unless appearances are very  
deceiving it is still very much alive.

I should have told him to our next  
~~year's~~ week's ~~at~~ about that point.

1934 1934

The Wgts Assn issued an invitation to other Associations to a meeting in Wellington to form the NZ Assn. on 5/4/34 - ~~meeting~~

Mr Lowndes of Wanganui was elected Chairman and George Lukin (just now posted to the United Kingdom) Hon Secretary. ~~on 5/4/34~~ it was a subsequent meeting on 20/5/34. He nominated Messrs M. Baker, Mr. Clark, Mr. King, Mr. Longman & Mr. Millman. AEB Head

We preceded the NZ blimps by playing a ref. game against Auckland and won 12-9

There was one unusual feature of these blimpings and that was that the finals were played on a tarpaulin covered floor, as the caretaker of the board blimps of the Town Hall refused permission for it to be taken up. So the players had to straighten it up after each rally.

In the year also Mr Longman and I attended a meeting in Kennerly Garage, High St, Lower Hill to assist in the formation of the Hill Valley Club Assn. The meeting was held up in the loft. Do you remember climbing up there? Scattered

They had 38 members in their club Assn

3/9/34 All matches in 1934 blimps take 21 points up - according to advice received from the NZ Association

By the way I imported some pumpled rubber faced bats from England, and I asked 5/6 for them - Ouch! What a terrible price when the usual wooden bats cost 2/- and the sand paper covered ones 2/3. However I sold them out quite easily

1935 1935.

We were asked to provide hospitality for the Japanese Navy officers when their fleet called in to the harbour. Being under the impression that they were very good, I select the best Ref. I got my first shock when they arrived and found they preferred they said wooden ones. I fancy we had to outfit them with sand shoes too. Being under the impression that they were not proficients

Well it was not long before I discovered that they were not proficients enough for our ref. team - so I allowed the ref. team to depart homewards, and we spent the rest of the evening playing mahjong against my Wellington club members.

It was in this year that I ran into Arthur Law, and <sup>in the course of conversation he asked me</sup> ~~was asking me to~~ <sup>asked me</sup> pulled out his roll, and we then had the Law bug for the Men's C. <sup>hand</sup> Angles.

Arthur was a real enthusiast - he didn't believe in any of these 2 <sup>hand</sup> <sup>inf</sup> games, - it was 21 games up with Arthur. or he played until he beat you. Arthur would have done well in some of our country tournaments that finish about 2 o'clock in the morning.

1935 (cont)

The N2 blimps were again  
Gerald Bell and Rex Pyle  
Don Dennis (N2B) and

By the way we made a profit  
now totalled £21/8/9.

I think it was about this time too  
3 games to best of 5 games for the  
Keith Longmore Dave Hayward  
have a try out over the longer  
decided to pull down a wall in  
and to work we went - first the  
paper we found - and then some  
was the best player of the four but he  
I think I did it's best work with

held in Wellington and  
won the Mero Doubles and  
Laura Hughes (now Mrs Horn) the Mero Doubles

that year of £14/10/1 and our assets

that we decided to change from best of  
by blimping. So one Saturday afternoon  
Eric Boufais and I decided that we would  
distance. On the same afternoon we also  
my children. Keith brought down a crowbar  
wall which was full of sawdust and old  
had little tennis. What an afternoon! Keith  
didn't win over that distance that afternoon.  
the crowbar - so of course I won the little tennis.

1936

Now this was the year when we  
and we made £23. The first

It was also the year when we held  
International Rules, and there  
who thought that the light <sup>lights to</sup>  
down the centre of the table <sup>was</sup> wall

However Stewart Fernandez, you know  
Sub Assn <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>and</sup> he voted on  
<sub>AN</sub>

The ball was possibly about 11 to the

Oh yes, I happened to run into  
long to feel some more notes off  
for the Ladies Angles Championship.

I also met another very interesting  
with Mr Bessley a public accountant. Would  
Mr H W Smith who was staying at the

held our first ATO Union - a 3<sup>rd</sup> one.  
prize was £5 of alluvial gold.

a special meeting to introduce the  
was plenty of opposition from those  
ball and the placing of a white line  
down of the games

his start 7 ft left, held the Hutt Valley  
way, so that finished the battle

of, but is now 13 to the of.

Arthur Law again, and it didn't take him  
his roll, and we had the Law Rose Bowl

person that year. I received a phone call from  
I call an English gentleman by the name of  
Midland Hotel. Well you might wonder

what he had to do with table tennis  
who, as Selwyn Zoogood might say, has  
he used to sponsor English champions

Well I arranged some games of  
foot Insurance office. Eric Bonfrue  
Harry Kennedy also had some matches.  
and some good work with the washing

and for the paper. This same Mr  
the expense of a day for the boat

Now for the sequel. This same Mr  
of NZ a year later by advancing

Not only that but he also <sup>later</sup> gave the  
expenses of a team to Australia.  
here and sent down to Dr Billings <sup>FEA</sup> for  
hospitality at Timaru  
five eighth.

Well Mr Smith was one of these gentlemen  
plenty of hay or muck or what have you, and  
to travel up to his home town of Hull.

table tennis for him that night at the  
was there, Pat Zuelan, Bill Barker, and  
Harry provided the supper, and also put  
it.

and for the paper. This same Mr  
the expense of a day for the boat

Mr Smith sponsored the Ladies Club but  
the necessary cash to pay for their passages to NZ.

NZ Assn £100 towards the travelling  
He also asked me to have a table made  
the one time All Black to repay him for his

1937

Now this was a particularly important  
and probably in the history of letters

First of all we were joined on the  
the late Arthur Mearns, whose son we  
will mention now the N2 Assn's Hon Sec.

I would like to mention at this stage that  
because of his marrying Helen's that and  
got someone of the N2 Assn's Body delegates  
of the N2 Assn which was then vacant.  
but fortunately he got in. However  
that is sufficient tribute to Helen's work  
N2 Assn, and some might say

He had Charles Tomwood became our Palms  
members.

We had another Art Union that year  
which put in another ball and made it

that year in the history of the N2 Assn  
was in this country.

committed by two of N2's greatest workers of  
have in our company tonight, and Helen

when the time came for Helen to leave the N2 Assn <sup>1950</sup>  
going to Iowa that to live, we had quite a  
that he was the right man for the Secretaryship  
whatly this was an election for the position,  
I haven't heard of any elections since, and  
He was also elected a Vice President of the  
N2 Assn <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ even a greater tribute.

and Harry Kennedy and Dave Hayward's life

and related to 19-19-0. It's a wonder somebody  
the even to 20.

1937 (cont)

Now we come to the main matter.

The N2 Assn asked us to guarantee Ryabakov and Edward Belas the two

We were staggered by the huge demand and Wilde had played here. Accor-  
a counter offer of so much for net  
likewise turned down their

The outcome was that the N2 Assn  
the Court.

The final outcome was that the Wgt  
in the process - but the Court was  
definitely overruled by  
Bement's goodwill effect, so  
Bellak were also anxious to come

Now I'll tell you how we came  
at a step in our financial

£100 gross for a market against Muhl's  
Hungerford, who said had held world titles.

remembering that he had taken £250 when Perry  
huff we turned down this offer; but made  
for the market. All the other Associations  
guaranteed.

asked the Wgt Assn if it would run

Assn did run the Court, and lost £1-19-9  
not only a great success, but <sup>it had</sup> ~~was~~

much so that their counterparts Barrow and  
the two countries.

to line the 19/9 because you might think  
accident. We originally intended to run



costs to a minimum by sending these  
my national manager, and we  
guarantee will all the local association  
had afterthoughts, and thought it  
foreigner, we had better send some  
having made a contract for a set  
not think it proper to break that  
— so the Wgts Assn bore the full  
around with them at different stages  
of making a nice profit; but I am  
made the tour much more successful,  
for these players to pass on the word

Now for two little memories of that tour:

- (1) A conversation with Helen on our  
do not know what fear is", and  
of Hungary. A population of 30  
afterwards — (2) It was  
his words prophetic — Look what  
rolled over by Hitler's hordes.

players around from town to town without  
budgeted accordingly, and arranged our  
on this basis. Later on however we  
more desirable that as these players were  
we around with them. We, however  
guarantee with all the assumptions, did  
of contract by asking for an increased sum.  
out of the four or five managers that we sent  
and that is why we lost our £1-19-19 unless  
certain in my own mind that that action  
and I said earlier it did not take long  
about a tour to New Zealand.

way back to Auckland — "you in this country  
he narrated what happened to his own country  
millions before World War 1 — and 7 to millions  
surrounded by our powerful nations, and were it  
happened in World War 2, his country was just  
how you wonder why none of those Hungarian

champions ever returned to their own  
in Australia, Bellah in America

My other memory was the way my  
deck of that steamer as to depart  
with people - not to see them off  
yes that was my recollection caused

Now to get back to local politics -  
the North Valley and association  
association to the National body. -  
that comes as though the New  
New name later)

On the 13/7/37 we received advice from  
full membership

Now you might also be interested  
along these lines -  
The North Assn wish to give

country. Lyabados and Helen settled  
and Brown in England

given by Lyabados and Helen on the top  
from Auckland. The wharf was packed  
not to see our All Black teams off to Australia  
a string of necks to see where the war cry came from

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1937 it was decided to endorse  
applications for direct applications as no independent  
as soon as their liability to us had been paid.  
not have been our Treasurer then (but he was it,

the NZ Assn that the North Valley had been granted

in a letter which we sent to the NZ Assn  
notice of their intention to move the following

motion:-

That the Management Committee of the NZ  
Assoc be instructed to enquire into the  
probable cost of a visit from Australia  
next, and to place the information  
before all affiliated Associations.

1958 - 21 years later - still no visit.

Before I ~~leave~~ forget, I should have  
mentioned that Sybilos gave me quite  
a good lesson in finance. He asked me  
what we were charging, and I said 3/6 for the  
best seats. He said over in Sydney they were  
charging 2/1/- . He said the people who really  
want to see a match will pay any price. So  
we went and better seats under 1/-. Sybilos  
was on a percentage of the gate money, but he was  
only for wanted high priced tickets.

Incidentally when I took Sybilos along to the  
Zoo Hall to show him where he would be playing,  
what should be on, but the competition, and what  
should be on at that moment was a competition song  
a Hungarian dance. you should have seen Sybilos eyes  
light up.