

# **REPORT ON NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS SATURDAY 26 APRIL 2008 FROM KEN MUHR**

13 year old Yolanda King, a member of the Angley School, Cranbrook based Weald Table Tennis Club, comfortably won the under 13 girls' singles event of the National Schools Individual Championships at The Dome, Doncaster on Saturday. Two years ago she won the national under 11s singles title.

Yolanda, from Hastings and a pupil of Claremont School, St Leonards, beat the 5 opponents in her group, and then all those she met in the knockout rounds en route to the final, all in straight games. Then to lift the title she defeated Evangeline Collier (Essex) 11-9, 11-3, 8-11, 11-7.

Another member of the Weald TTC, who like Yolanda also trains at the Angley School based South East High Performance Centre, Helshan Weerasinghe from Dartford, won the national schools under 11 boys' singles, with an easy 11-4, 11-4, 11-5 victory over Sam Mabey (Northamptonshire) in the final. However, he was within two points of losing in straight games to Alex Holland (Essex) in the semi-finals, before battling through 6-11, 9-11, 12-10, 11-4, 11-9.

Benenden's Lewis Gray, a local member of the Weald TTC and an Angley School pupil, won his under 16s group, although he was tested over 5 games by the relatively unknown Patrick Hui (Middlesex). He then lost 10-12, 6-11, 5-11 in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the knockout to the highly England junior (under 18) ranked David McBeath (Hampshire). His sister Daniella, also a pupil at Angley, came second in her under 13s girls' group, losing only to Yolanda King, before going out to Kelly Reed (Cornwell) in the first round.

Kirsty and Ross Wilson, of the Howard Club, Gillingham, and who are also members of the SE High Performance Centre at Angley School, had a great day. Playing in a very tough under 16s girls' singles group, Kirsty edged through 8-11, 11-7, 16-14, 13-15, 11-8 over the England no.4 cadet (under 15), Lucy Davidson (Derbyshire) in an epic encounter. She had another tight 7-11, 9-11, 13-11, 11-4, 11-6 win over Sally Hoang (Middlesex) before coming through her group unbeaten. After a comfortable first round success, she fought back from behind to beat Rebekah Griffith (Lancashire) 8-1, 9-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-9 in the quarter-finals, before finally going out in close games 8-11, 11-13, 10-12 to the England no.3 cadet, Natalie Slater (Staffordshire), in the semis, Slater going on to lift the title.

Ross Wilson topped his under 13 boys' singles group and then had a 7-1, 11-8, 11-9, 3-11, 11-7 1<sup>st</sup> round win against Michael Lunn (Lancashire). However, he then suffered the narrowest quarter-final loss, 11-8, 7-11, 5-11, 11-7, 10-12 to Jack Cleminson (Essex).

Former Kent County men's champion John Burleton, who as a coach at the Weald Club and the High Performance Centre trains all the above from the South East, said, "It is really pleasing to be associated with these players who have worked hard for their success. I also coach at Hayesbrook School in Tonbridge, and encourage all my pupils to aim to get to the High Performance Centre at Cranbrook."