

## **GOOD LEARNING CURVE FOR LEWIS GRAY IN PORTUGUESE YOUTH OPEN**

Playing abroad for England for the first time as a junior (under 18) last long weekend, Benenden's Lewis Gray did well as a young player in a higher age group at the Portuguese Youth Open in Tavira.

Although in the team matches against Spain, Portugal, Poland, and Russia, the 15 year old Angley School, Cranbrook pupil and Weald TT Club member won only 1 out of 5 singles (beating a Spanish boy), he always got close to his opponents and was never outclassed. For example, against Russia he lost his first match close in the 5<sup>th</sup> game, and was 9-1 up in the 4<sup>th</sup> game, but 2 games to 1 down, before his opponent fought back to snatch a win.

In the singles group he had an excellent 3-0 result over an Austrian, and then, in his best performance led the European no.3 junior Benjamin Brossier (France) 5-1 in the first game before losing 8-11, took the second game and was 9-6 and 11-10 up in the 4<sup>th</sup>, ultimately succumbing to a 1-3 defeat.

Former England international and non-playing captain Andrew Rushton was happy with Lewis's play. "We were trying out younger players in an older category to see how they would do. It was a good experience and learning curve. Lewis did well to get close and have some good wins. His forehand attack was strong, but he needs to make his return of serve tighter and more consistent, and to learn to relax and go with the flow when he is blocking."