

# **TOUGH GOING FOR WEALD STARS IN SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Weald TT Club stars Lewis Gray, 16, and Yolanda King, 15, and Helshan Weerasinghe, 13, who trains with them at Angley School, Cranbrook, found it tough going while representing England at the Safir International Tournament in Orebro, Sweden from 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February, though all had some success.

However, travel problems caused them the worst of preparations. Yolanda King explained: “Our plane had to land 120miles away from the airport where we were supposed to, because of fog. Our hotel was about another 1hr 30mins away from where we were originally landing. We landed at about 7pm and had to wait 30mins for our baggage and another 2hrs for the coach to get from the other airport. We then had a 3hr drive and got to the hotel at about 12.45am. I got to bed at 1.00am and had to get up at 6.30am to start at 9.00.”

Benenden’s Lewis Gray lost to a Korean, Min Hyuck Chen, 6-11, 11-6, 6-11, 8-11 in his opening match in the men’s under 21 singles, but he had a chance of going to a deciding game, having led 8-6 in the 4<sup>th</sup> before dropping 5 consecutive points. Then in the under 16 boys’ singles, in which he was seeded, he had a good run. After a bye, he beat Charles Dang (USA) 10-12, 10-12, 11-3, 11-7, 11-5 and could have won 3 straight, having had game points in both the first two games. He then came through a tight encounter with Moises Alvarez (Spain), 5-11, 11-9, 11-8, 7-11, 11-9, before being outplayed, 5-11, 5-11, 8-11, in the last 16 by another Korean, Jae Jun Cho, who went on to win the event.

The Angley pupil’s last outing was in the under 18 boy’s, where he put up a good showing against the seeded Omar Bedair (Egypt), who had lost the under 16 boy’s singles final. Gray fought back from 3-9, to 8-9 down in the 5<sup>th</sup> game, before finally succumbing 12-10, 2-11, 7-11, 11-7, 8-11.

Tired and nervous, St Bede’s, Hailsham pupil Yolanda King was disappointed to lose her opening under 21 singles match 10-12, 5-11, 13-11, 13-11, 8-11 to Aaseb Martegrutle (Norway), after leading 8-5 in the deciding game. After beating Erica Bredbury (Sweden) 9-11, 11-7, 11-8, 7-11, 11-3 in the under 16 girls’ singles, she fell 9-11, 9-11, 5-11 to Alice Berendregt (Holland). She beat Kristine Zetterstrom (Sweden), 3 straight in the first round of the junior (under 18) singles, and then put up her best performance against the seeded Celine Pang (France), ranked 116 in the world. She dominated the first two games and led 4-0 in the 4<sup>th</sup> before tensing up to go down 11-8, 11-8, 6-11, 5-11, 8-11.

Helshan Weerasinghe, of the Judd School, Tonbridge, gave a fine performance in the under 14 boys’ singles. After a first round walkover he beat Anton Kallberg (Sweden) and then the seeded Jim Cloos (Luxembourg), 13-11, 11-4, 7-11, 6-11, 11-8. However, in the quarter-finals he was no match for Padasak Tanviravechakul (Thailand), falling 3-11, 5-11, 4-11.