

Wayne Adamson was a well-known table tennis player in the 1970's and 1980's - representing Canterbury from 1973 to 1980 and Counties from 1981 till the early 90's.

A sad lapse in his life resulted in being made a guest of the Prison Service. He is an avid reader of *Table Tennis Info* and after some hesitation decided to write the following delightful letter of "in there"! It's great to hear from him, and to learn that he has taken advantage of opportunities that have arisen to enhance his skills and be positive until his return to normal life. What's more, *he's the reigning TT Champion!*

Letter from Wayne

A big "HI" to fellow Table Tennis peoples out there. Great to see the game progressing. I've been fortunate, thanks to Robin, to keep up with the TT happenings/results via the "Table Tennis Info". I have only praise for the way Robin, and all concerned, have given their time and effort for this enjoyable, informative mag.

Life for me has undoubtedly had its share of highs and lows but this present void I live in remains the lowest by far. As time moves on I've made the most of the limited opportunities and gained skills in the IT field. Four years ago, thanks to brother Grant and his upgrades, I was given his old Pentium 1 computer while on remand at Mt Eden and my journey into the IT field began. The next break came at "Maxi" when I was recruited into the Computer Industries, working my way via hardware/software into the amazing and more skilled field of Video Editing on an Avid Express. In the last 18 months I've produced over 100 programmes for TV1's Shell MotorSport and Suzuki SportZone plus corporate videos, commercials and promo tapes. I love it and feel very privileged to have been given the opportunity. Nowadays I'm a peer tutor recruiting and introducing others to the industry. The real opportunity though is when I'm released I've been offered work with a guy who produces Shortland St and Mercy Peak, so here's hoping.

PARE CHAMPION!

Under pressure from certain quarters I recently played in the local Paremoremo Table Tennis Championships. I rarely play TT these days and no one knew my history in the sport. This rather bizarre experience added another Table Tennis chapter to my life. Adjusting to prison rules is a mission in itself - weird rules like having to serve diagonally in singles, no lets, 3 nets lose a point and so on kept me on edge. Believe me, if you were returning to the table or weren't looking you can expect a quick nasty serve behind your back. After scraping in against the unit junkie (wasted as), in the 1/4's I played one of the intimidating muscular Islanders - a lifer who thought he was the man. I pulled out my old trusty hard bat (swapped for an expensive Stiga) and warily played, praying I didn't make a fool of him. (As you can appreciate the consequences of such an act can be life-threatening!) It was two straight but made close and the immediate danger ceased.

In the Semis I came up against a 'Black Power' member and experienced for the first time ever "**finger Spin**". What made it worse, I had reverted back to a sponge bat just to make sure! I received the first 5 serves and missed the table completely until I adjusted and coasted to a 2 game victory. He had none of the intimidating factors of my previous opponent except a full-face moko - something one becomes accustomed to in here.

In the final I was up against the Sergeant at Arms of the 'Hell's Angels' (fortunately a friend of mine). Until now he's been my only loss in prison but I hasten to add this was after hip surgery 4 years ago at the Mount. Now this guy can play. I rate him and Simon Poelman the best I've played in prison.

It was fun counter hitting with posy lob defence, flashes of days gone by? Eventually I won in 4 thrilling sets and revenge was mine. I say this cause he'd been avoiding playing me for nearly 2 years.

EXHIBITION

Admittedly the final wasn't anywhere near the spectacle that **Aaron Winborn, Hagen Bower, Wayne Gear** and **Chris Herlihy** displayed in one of their exhibitions in the Medium (Prison). These were great matches and gave opportunity for the crims to watch and then play against NZ Reps, a big buzz for these guys - they talked about it for months. Some now want to join clubs on their release. (Lock your cupboards!)

I've kept in touch with these guys and quite a few other TT players - some have been out to visit which I'm very grateful for. I'm looking forward to playing again in the 2003 season.

It's really great to see team-mates and players from the early 70's still playing or back at it - guys like **Colin Tipper, Alan Alabaster, John Armstrong, Mike Warren, the Fogarty's** - the list goes on and of course my special friend **Lesley Gardner** who's been playing so well. Table Tennis has certainly created many friendships and cherished moments that I'll never forget. I can't wait to be back playing.

Prison is a hard lonely depressing experience and I am grateful to my family and the many Table Tennis players who have visited and/or made contact - unquestionably a place where you find out who your true friends are. Thank you.

Take Care Out There

Wayne Adamson

PS, See you in 2003!

Highlights of Wayne's table tennis career include:

- No 1 in South Island 1973 – 1980
- Led Canterbury team to NZ title in early 1970's, beating all NZ's top ten players in the process
- Canterbury champion at least six times
- South Island Champion and North Island Runner-up in the same year
- Top ten ranking for ten years
- Played on television several times, including a match where Wayne and opponent Richard Lee were flown to Mount Maunganui for a special one-off exhibition
- Played some of the best players in the world at Oceania Games in Auckland in 1981.

CHECK YOUR MEDAL !!

If you won a medal at the **NZ Championships** in Auckland last month, have a look to make sure it has "New Zealand Championships" on the front. We've been advised that some were mistakenly engraved with "New Zealand Veterans Championships".

If yours is one of these, please wrap it in tissue paper, slip it in an envelope and mail it promptly to Table Tennis New Zealand, PO Box 867, Wellington. It will be replaced with a correctly engraved medal.

