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# Chivers and Loveridge bridge generation gap

by Rob Batiste

**THIRTY-TWO years ago, a fresh-faced 14-year-old arrived on the table tennis scene and swept to the first of many women's singles titles.**

On Saturday night at the Guernsey Table Tennis Centre, Kay Chivers added another singles crown to her vast collection and, most significantly, partnered the next Kay Herquin — her name back then — to the women's doubles trophy.

Chivers, now 46, and Alice Loveridge, 10, may be two generations apart, but they formed a fine partnership and swept past the top seeds, Dawn Morgan and Helen Fooks, with minimum fuss.

The number-two seeds, who had never played a tournament together previously, romped to a straight-sets win, which was good news during an evening when both faced hectic schedules.

Chivers has little doubt that her partner will surpass her own achievement in winning the singles title at such a tender age. 'She's coming on really well. Perhaps, she just needs to stand up to the table a little more,' said the experienced hand in the partnership with a vaguely critical eye.

'She did what she had to do. She was really good,' added Chivers, who outlined their game plan.

'It was me serving a chop service, Alice going in with her loop and me going for the kill.'

It worked. The bemused top seeds only got close to taking a set in the third.

It was no harder for Chivers in the singles final where, in the absence of the defending champion, Morgan, Becky O'Keefe stepped up to book a place in the final.

O'Keefe took her opponent close in the second but in the other three sets was well beaten.

The men's singles was a minor classic with Mark Pipet coming from the brink of going three sets down to defeat Phil Ogier, a former champion himself, in the seventh and final set.

Some of the action was breathtaking, with fantastic retrieving from Ogier, notably against full-blooded smashes from Pipet, the top seed.

Ogier had to keep the action close to the table to succeed and in the opening stages did that, but long before the end he was being forced to dart here, there and everywhere to get the ball back into play.

Pipet raced into a 5-0 lead in the first, but Ogier held steady and hit back to take the set 11-7.

He claimed the second 11-9 and at 7-3 and 8-5 in the third, he had Pipet in big trouble.

But Pipet, a deep thinker as well as a wonderful technician, squeezed through the set 11-9 to give himself hope.

Ogier was back in the driving seat when he took the fourth for the loss of seven points and Pipet now faced a precipice of needing to win three sets on the bounce to reclaim the title.

At 9-9 in the fifth, Ogier was just a couple of points away from the trophy, but he could not find the killer touch.

Pipet won that one 13-11.

At 10-10 in the sixth, Ogier again had the trophy close at hand, but the 47-year-old held his nerve to take it 12-10.

When Pipet moved 1-0 ahead in the decider, he had finally got his nose in front for the first time since the opening points of the match and he was still ahead 5-3 at the change of ends.

The first of three match points to Pipet came at 10-6.

Ogier saved it and two more to serve at 8-10 down.

Remarkably, and fatally for him, he served straight into the net and the title was gone for another year.

Pipet had escaped and he said as much later.

'He threw me a lifeline at 3-1 down and he should have closed me out, but he didn't.'

Pipet put his recovery down to slowing his pace on the ball.

'I just cut back a little. Instead of going at 95% speed, I was hitting them at 85%.

'There were some mind games out there, don't worry.'

Ogier was sporting in defeat, an example many in team games should follow.

'Fair play to "Pip". He ground it out, stayed in there and never threw in the towel.

'I stopped playing the game that had put me ahead.'

Consolation for Ogier came in landing the men's doubles with Pete Bretel, while Pipet also claimed the veteran singles and mixed doubles.

Young Loveridge added three more titles in the under-13 open singles, under-15 and under-18 girls' singles, but the one that got away came in the under-11 open in which Liam Robilliard, the number two seed, defeated her 11-9 in the deciding seventh.