

# A National Table Tennis Day to remember!

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**Posted On:** July 18, 2014



Keith Vaz MP takes on England ace Darius Knight at Parliament

Clubs and communities across Britain combined to celebrate a memorable National Table Tennis Day.

From the Houses of Parliament to shopping centres, parks, railway stations and even on the beach, and involving every level from novices to England stars, the table tennis family came together to promote our sport.

The day co-incided with the launch of the annual Ping! initiative, which places free-play tables in public areas of cities across England.

Radio and TV crews were out in force, with ITV covering the T3 Ping Pong event in Faringdon, London, and BBC and commercial radio stations attending events at Ping! cities around the country.

Social media was buzzing all day as groups tweeted pictures of their events on the [@TableTennisDay](#) feed, while the day had shout-outs on Twitter from the likes of the ITTF and from the European Youth Championships.

The headline event was at the Houses of Parliament, where a series of Lords and MPs took up bats to show their prowess. They included the chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz, and Mark Lancaster, the Milton Keynes MP, who helped to arrange the event on Speaker's Green in the shadow of Big Ben.

Mr Vaz played a challenge match against England ace Darius Knight, while national junior champion Maria Tsaptsinos and youngsters from London Academy and Greenhouse also showed off their skills.

Mr Vaz said of his game: "I thought it was absolutely marvellous. It's a good, clean, safe sport which can involve a lot of people of all ages, and it's certainly less stressful than the ping-pong we get at Prime Minister's Questions every Wednesday!

"I'll certainly be ensuring I and my children play regularly."



MPs Mark Lancaster (left) and Stuart Andrew in action

Pudsey MP Stuart Andrew, who teamed up with Mr Lancaster to take on fellow MPs Andrew Stevenson and Andrew Percy, said: "It brought back some memories of youth club!

"I think National Table Tennis Day is a great idea. Bringing things like this to Parliament is really good because it makes us all aware of the initiatives that are going on around the country.

"We can see by the atmosphere here today that it's having an impact, and I hope it goes from strength to strength."



Karina Le Fevre takes on former national champion Denis Neale in Middlesbrough

England Commonwealth Games team members Karina Le Fevre and Daniel Reed helped to launch the summer of Ping! in their home town of Middlesbrough, where Karina – who was celebrating her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday – played an exhibition match against former English champion Denis Neale.



Andrew Baggaley attracts an interested spectator in Milton Keynes

Fellow Glasgow 2014 team member [Andrew Baggaley helped to launch the initiative in Milton Keynes](#), taking on

passers-by outside MK Central railway station.

How did you celebrate National Table Tennis Day? Send us your photos and reports – email [paul.stimpson@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:paul.stimpson@tabletennisengland.co.uk)

**By Paul Stimpson (July 18th, 2014)**

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