Morpeth members help Canary Wharf event hit heights

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Luke Savill and Tin-Tin Ho show their skills on behalf of Joola Morpeth TTC at Canary Wharf

Members of Joola Morpeth TTC were a 'towering' presence as they managed a 10-day Ping! event at Canary Wharf.

It was the second year in a row the club had been asked to support the event, hosted and supported by the Canary Wharf Group, which saw table tennis tables located within the famous London shopping and financial centre.

These tables were manned throughout by club members with coaching, advice and help on offer at all times. With space at a premium, playing slots were limited to 2,000 – which were filled with ease. Some came from their offices in suits and shoes, while others came prepared with sports kit – and quite a few had definitely played before, judging by their skills.

Exhibitions by club members were held daily and were very well received. Among those giving their time were Commonwealth Games stars Tin-Tin Ho – who had barely got down the escalator before she was asked for the first of many photos – and Gavin Rumgay.

'Little' Sophie Chiang stole the show in terms of spectators and cameras, the others (Luke Savill, Ashley Willetts, Soeren Wegner, Michael O'Driscoll and Helshan Weerasinghe) who gave up time to come along were also on the receiving end of plenty of applause and praise.

The likes of The Economist, Hertz, JP Morgan, Citibank and Morgan Stanley all competed in the team challenge, which was eventually won by a very good side from Barclays Bank.

The final was quite a vociferous affair, with spectators making more noise than the customers in the nearby bar and restaurant. Canary Wharf Group provided excellent glass trophies and the bar next door donated a bottle of bubbly for the winning team.

The feedback forms seemed universal in asking for this event to run more often. There were people keen to play that we just could not fit in. Those that did get a chance wanted more.

One participant said that he had first picked up a bat at this event last year, since when he had played twice a week and had lost over four stone in weight.

Another saw one of the exhibitions then played on one of the tables, where he was helped with the basics. After being given details of his local club website, he went back to the office, arranged a visit and attended that very evening.

For the members who were there giving up their time the event was long and physically tiring. However, the participants were keen, enthusiastic and grateful, thus making the effort worthwhile.

By John Payne
Chairman, Joola Morpeth TTC

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