

BOWLING NEWSSouth Eastern Bowling Association
of the B.T.B.A.Views expressed herein are not necessarily those
of the Executive Officers of the S.E.B.A.**20th SEBA
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

SEBA members from Bexleyheath, Dagenham, Basildon, Whitstable and Cliftonville met on the lanes at Whitstable to decide the 20th SEBA Championships. Whitstable was the scene of the 14th Championships back in 1976, and was hailed as the wonder of Whitstable. This year's Championships lacked the one magic ingredient required for complete satisfaction 'High Scores'. To say that the lanes were difficult would be an understatement. Still nonetheless for that the Championships were well attended. Not a record entry, but enough to give tournament manager and Area Secretary one or two problems, and the tournament only ran into serious time difficulties on the 23rd. My congratulations to Kerry Purcell and his excellent staff for 5 days of superb service from the snack bar personel, bar staff, and the seldom seen machine men down at the back end — how you stand the noise and heat I shall never know.

There are two men I must single out for their constant devotion to their duties: Brian Morrison, and Bill Ainger. What would we do without these two men? John Cudmore had the same difficulties as his predecessor Brian Langford — how to fit every one in — but true to tradition no one was refused, or had to drop out because their needs could not be satisfied, and that must be a mark of excellence. Perhaps because of the distance from Walton and Southend we received no entries from either of these centres. We were advised that Southend members did not enter because we would not recognise their averages if they only played in a Southend League! What absolute rubbish.

On to our 1982 Champions: Regular Scratch All Events Champion is **George Patel** from Dagenham, he scored 1699, an average of 188. **David Yoxall** from Dagenham was 2nd, only three pins behind George with 1696. **Nick Peek** from Dagenham won the All Events Handicap title with 1945. **David Yoxall** collected his second 2nd place 30 pins behind Nick with 1915. **David Yoxall** moved up a place in

the Regular Scratch Singles to 1st place with 597. **Keith Hodge** was 2nd scoring 595 only two pins behind David.

The Handicap Singles Champion is **Alan Ainstice** from Cliftonville, 699 secured the championship from Whitstable's **Paul Valente**.

Ken Barnard & Roy Filler from Whitstable doubled up on their championship honours by winning the Regular Scratch and Handicap Doubles from **David Yoxall & Trevor Taylor** in both events. All we need to find now is that Dave Yoxall was playing for the team that came second in the team event.

Aquila are the Regular Team Scratch Champions. Congratulations to **Steve Carnall, Pete Butcher, Terry Saunders, Billy Preston and George Patel**, they scored 2693, and were 34 pins ahead of the Dagenham Diamonds.

Regular Team Handicap Champions are **Kingcraft (Saints)** from Dagenham — congratulations to **Joe Killian, Terry Swords, Roger Brentnall, John Ward and Joe Artnier**. The Dagenham Diamonds were 2nd by only one pin — that was close — hard luck **Tony Neagle**,



Frank Long, Alphonso Ferrol, George Brown and Mickey Frankland. Where's David?

Now the Ladies. All events Scratch **Christine Lodge 1550**. All Events Handicap, **Christine Lodge 1856**. Second to Christine in both events, local lovely and SEBA Ladies Masters Champion **Lyn Purcell**. Christine partnered her sister **Elaine** to the Ladies Scratch and Handicap Doubles, emulating **Sheila White's** and **Jan Hodge's** achievements last year. **Kaye Cudmore and Margaret Shrimpton** were 2nd in the Handicap Doubles, and **Sheila White and Jan Hodge** were 2nd in the Scratch Doubles. **Lyn Purcell** was the 1982 ladies Scratch Singles Champion. **Lyn** scored 549, and was 12 pins in front of **Sue Trott** from Whitstable.

Connie Vaughan from Basildon secured the Ladies Handicap Singles title by 17 pins from **Lyn Purcell**. The Trendsetters from Cliftonville won both the Ladies Scratch and Handicap team Championship — congratulations to **Joan Cole, Joyce Grimes, Jill Baldwin, Joyce Chapman and Marion Constable**. Only two teams entered the Ladies Scratch team event, and second to the Trendsetters were the legendary **Maids of Kent**. 2nd in the Ladies Team Handicap Championships the **Hi-Lows** from Cliftonville. Well, there we are until next year, when our Area Championships will reach the grand old age of 21, and we'll all meet again to renew the SEBA Championships at Southend.

SEBA Championship Results

REGULAR DIVISION

TEAM HANDICAP

1. Kingcraft (Saints)	DAG	3046
2. Dagenham Diamonds	DAG	3045
3. Black Magic Youth	DAG	3025
4. The Sandbaggers	WHIT	2995
5. Alpha Omega I	BEX	2968
6. Cavaliers	DAG	2946

TEAM SCRATCH

1. Aquila	DAG	2693
2. Kingcraft (Saints)	DAG	2659
3. Cavaliers	DAG	2648

DOUBLES HANDICAP

1. Ken Barnard/Roy Fillier	WHIT	1305
2. Dave Yoxall/Trevor Taylor	DAG	1302
3. Barry Emberson/Nick Peek	DAG	1287
4. Gerry Barker/Dave Franks	WHIT	1284
5. Pete Woodward/Ricky Post	CLIF	1280
6. Steve and Brian Bentley	WHIT	1272
7. James Hogbin/David O'Keeffe	WHIT	1260
8. Ern Moore/Dave Druce	CLIF	1240
9. Linsey and Ian Clark	BEX	1238
John Heel/Ken Jobson	BEX	1238
11. Laurie Walmsley/Don Turner	CLIF	1233

DOUBLES SCRATCH

1. Ken Barnard/Roy Fillier	WHIT	1171
2. Dave Yoxall/Trevor Taylor	DAG	1143
3. Barry Emberson/Nick Peek	DAG	1130
4. Pete Woodward/Ricky Post	CLIF	1103
5. Joe Kilian/Joe Artner	DAG	1099

SINGLES HANDICAP

1. Alan Anstice	CLIF	699
2. Paul Valente	WHIT	681
3. Wilfred Bushell	WHIT	675
4. David Yoxall	DAG	670
5. Richard Lynch	BAS	662
6. Peter Gorton	BAS	660
7. Mike Harrison	BEX	659
8. Peter Valente	WHIT	645
9. John Woolsey	BEX	634
10. Mike Hand	BEX	633
11. Laurie Walmsley	CLIF	632
12. Keith Hodge	DAG	630
13. Ray Meager	BEX	629
14. Joe Kilian	DAG	626
Nick Peek	DAG	626
16. Colin Layton	BAS	624
Andy Sargent	WHIT	624
18. Pete Butcher	DAG	623

SINGLES SCRATCH

1. David Yoxall	DAG	597
2. Keith Hodge	DAG	595
3. Alan Kirk	BEX	590
4. Pete Butcher	DAG	584
5. Joe Killan	DAG	574
6. Alan Anstice	CLIF	573
7. Mike Harrison	BEX	571
George Patel	DAG	571

ALL EVENTS HANDICAP

1. Nick Peek	DAG	1945
2. David Yoxall	DAG	1915
3. Roy Hudson	BEX	1904
4. Alwyn Sykes	BEX	1869
5. Roy Fillier	WHIT	1868
Ken Barnard	WHIT	1868
7. Geoff Zimmer	DAG	1867
8. Alan Anstice	CLIF	1857
9. Pete Woodward	CLIF	1852
10. Joe Kilian	DAG	1849
11. Steve Bentley	WHIT	1847
Sean Purcell	WHIT	1847
13. Gerry Barker	WHIT	1837

ALL EVENTS SCRATCH

1. George Patel	DAG	1699
2. David Yoxall	DAG	1696
3. Joe Kilian	DAG	1693
4. Roy Hudson	BEX	1691
5. Nick Peek	DAG	1681
6. Roy Fillier	WHIT	1679
7. Steve Carnall	DAG	1673

FEMALE DIVISION

TEAM HANDICAP

1. Trendsetters	CLIF	2848
2. Hi-Lows	CLIF	2828

TEAM SCRATCH

1. Trendsetters	CLIF	2285
-----------------	------	------

DOUBLES HANDICAP

1. Elaine and Christine Lodge	BEX	1238
2. Kaye Cudmore/Mags Shrimpton	BEX	1209
3. Susan Wright/Ruth Molineaux	BAS	1190
4. Joyce Chapman/Carol Wynn	CLIF	1188

DOUBLES SCRATCH

1. Elaine and Christine Lodge	BEX	1002
2. Jan Hodge/Sheila White	BEX	995

SINGLES HANDICAP

1. Connie Vaughan	BAS	650
2. Lyn Purcell	WHIT	633
3. Sue Trott	WHIT	631
4. Christine Lodge	BEX	625
5. Fran Honess	BEX	624
6. Dawn Stanley	WHIT	613

SINGLES SCRATCH

1. Lyn Purcell	WHIT	549
2. Sue Trott	WHIT	537
3. Christine Lodge	BEX	523

ALL EVENTS HANDICAP

1. Christine Lodge	BEX	1856
2. Lyn Purcell	WHIT	1800
3. Jackie Noakes	BEX	1748
4. Rose Wheatley	BAS	1732
5. Joan Cole	CLIF	1726

ALL EVENTS SCRATCH

1. Christine Lodge	BEX	1550
2. Lyn Purcell	WHIT	1548
3. Jan Hodge	BEX	1477

The Bill Taylor 'Shotmaker' Classic Singles Dagenham 1982

With a total prize fund of well over £3,500, of which £2,000 was generously added by Bill Taylor, it was not surprising to observe practically every well known name in the sport at the Princess Bowl, Dagenham over the May Bank Holiday weekend. 12 game qualifiers operated on Saturday, Sunday and early Monday with the two unique finals taking place on the Monday evening.

Right from the start it was obvious that it was not going to be easy to qualify with **Brian Michael** firing on all cylinders for sets of 602 — 626 — 674 — 595 for a 2497 opener followed by **Roger Hunter** with 2423. Brian's 674 included the first 10 in a row in game 2 for a 289. On Sunday **Jez Darvill** made sure of a finals placing with his 12 game total of 2501 including sets of 660 and 682 and this was only a few pins ahead of **Steve Offord** on 2490 including a 660 and a 677. **Derry McCarthy** included a 641 and a 650 in an excellent total of 2458 and **Steve Carnall**, after a slow beginning, more than made amends with a 698 that was just an 8 pin tap away from his first 700, and followed this with 613 to total 1247. **Chris Buck** was consistency itself on 1200 dead but, as things turned out, had to sweat a bit before being sure of making the final. The Monday was reserved for out of town and continental bowlers and it was nice to see support from the likes of **Ian Davidson** and **Bill Van de Looverbosch** from the Netherlands and **Phillip Thompson** of the Paris Sharks team. **Gregg Turvey** was high man off the 10 a.m. squad with a creditable 2398 but the fireworks were to come on the Noon shift in the guise of **Loke Coleman**! Following a 632 opener the likeable Mancunian proceeded to string games of 232 — 244 — 248 — 242 — 210 — 267 for back-to-back sets of 724 and 719 and he then rounded out with a 651 for an incredible total of 2726 and an average of over 227! Team mate **Pete Gray** qualified on 2422 as did **Rick Couldwell** with 2399 leaving **Ron Oldfield** as first reserve in the scratch section sitting on 2390 — just over a 199 average!

All entrants were playing for a place either in the scratch or handicap 6 game finals. A number, naturally, figured on both lists and they had to make a choice whether to go for the £1,500 first prize in the scratch division or the £500 in the handicap list. All except **Brent Sharp** on 2413 elected to go scratch which produced qualifying lists as follows:—

Scratch	Handicap
Loke Coleman	Brent Sharp
Jez Darvill	David Grainger
Brian Michael	Paul Creighton
Steve Offord	John Orton
Derry McCarthy	Ken Blackmore
Steve Carnall	Mike Rogacs
Pete Gray	Keith Hodge
Roger Hunter	Dave Simons
Chris Buck	Phil Hurworth
Rick Couldwell	Colin Salmon
Gregg Turvey	Rick Wainwright
Ron Oldfield	Mick Ross

The now notorious slow bowling of some of our country's top performers delayed the first final by over 1½ hours but undeterred the 12 lined up for the handicap final being operated on the novel BT Bonus system where every finalist bowls every game against every other finalist with 5 points being awarded for every game he wins. With **Dave Grainger** and **Rob Whittingham** of Norten Leisure operating their computer, scores were coming out after every game in a matter of minutes and the fluctuations could be clearly seen by all. **Keith Hodge** set off at a blistering pace on games of 203 — 246 — 217 — 227 to accumulate 200 points by game 4 but then hit disaster with a 160 which, as it happened, coincided with the game where everyone else went big! A zero score here set him back to third where he remained after the final game but still came out with a cheque for £100 and a 6 game scratch total of 1231. Local bowler **Colin Salmon** bought a place in the tournament at the last minute and his £25 investment earned him £225 for second place! It was Crawley's **Ken Blackmore**, however, who was to prove the surprise package of this section as despite an entering average of only 169 he proceeded to string games of 214 — 198

— 199 — 226 — 242 to storm through for the £500 first place cheque and a final average of nearly 208. **Paul Creighton** was fourth and **Brent Sharp** fifth.

The scratch final for the largest prize money ever seen for a singles event anywhere in Europe now climaxed a fine 3 days bowling. The audience of around 200 were to witness yet more fine bowling with 7 of the first 12 games being over 200; pole position at this stage going to **Jez Darvill** on 229. After game 2 **Steve Carnall** and **Derry McCarthy** took over on respective games of 211 and 248 but game 3 saw **Chris Buck** nose in front and, despite determined challenges from **Steve Offord** finishing with 214 — 245 — 247 and **Ron Oldfield** with a run of 221 — 223 — 215 he managed to hold on to the lead and with games of 203 — 202 — 226 — 217 — 226 — 205 for a 1279 total surely deserved his massive cheque of £1,500. A 171 opening game for only 10 points had always put **Steve Offord** under pressure but, in the end, he came through for the runners-up cheque with an excellent 6 game total of 1305 with **Ron Oldfield** making 3rd spot, **Roger Hunter** 4th and **Steve Carnall** and **Jez Darvill** joint 5th.

Despite the time being well after 11 p.m. all the bowlers and all the appreciative crowd stayed for the presentations and to listen to the words of wisdom imparted by **Bill Taylor** without whose sponsorship the event could not have taken place.

During the tournament exactly 101 series of over 600 were bowled with 4 over the 700 mark; the 2 already mentioned authored by **Loke Coleman** plus a 203 — 287 — 234 set totalling 724 from **Mick Ross** and a 706 by **Steve Offord**. All these scores were made despite moving lanes each game and a final word here to Dagenham's hard working **Ted Woodham** for all his efforts with the lane dressing would not be amiss. Conditioned to 35 feet, then bare wood for the remainder of the lane with the lanes being cross buffed is his old fashioned method. No 'extra' oil anywhere and, from these scores, who really needs it?

Brian Morrison

The Bill Taylor 'Shotmaker' Classic Doubles Bexleyheath 1982

Following the successful Bill Taylor Shotmaker Singles at Dagenham, it was Bexleyheath's turn to host a Bill Taylor Tournament. 70 teams entered to compete for a £600 first prize. Each team faced a 4 game qualifier to find the top four teams and it was possible to re-enter in the qualifying rounds.

A high place in this the first Bill Taylor Shotmaker Doubles was important, the 14 finalists would carry forward their qualifying score into the final. The qualifying competition started on Saturday 8th May and the first 600 series after three games was by Phil Phillips of Strike Force Red, along with his partner Gordon they scored 1733 and must have thought they stood a chance of qualifying but alas they failed by 9 pins. However, two teams were to qualify from the Saturday squad. Lyn and Kerry Purcell posing as the Linkers they finished 3rd and Parawings, Chris Mills and Pete Blake they scored 1761.

Sunday the 9th, Dave Leeds and Alex Hoskins in Highwaymen I made their way into the final fifteen by scoring 1797: Squad 3, and the heavy mob arrived, Sting, Aquila and the All Stars just to name a few, although to be fair we had seen a few good lads come and go but the tournament winners should come from the next two squads. Simon Brown and Neil Leaver for All Stars 'A' scored 1680. Dave Maberley and Bobby Mansfield All Stars B, scored 1658 and two re-entries were on their way. George Patel and Pat Duggan bowling as Aquila Red scored 1749, and re-entered. Phil Puttick and Alan Hutchins for Sting II rolled 1755, took their chance on qualifying with another three squads to go and qualified in 11th place. Brian Morrison and Billy Preston in Aquila Blue (and very nice they looked too) also played the odds and won, they scored 1762 and qualified in 8th place: Squad 4, time for K.B. International to try their arm, Tubby Woo and Chris Buck scored 1734, Tubby hit a four game series that read 192-230-202-219 for 843, they re-entered. Bernie Caterer and Brian Michael scored 1702, and they re-entered. Eddie Bullock and Mike Rogacs from Mildenhall scored 1602, re-entered in to the

next squad, and qualified in 7th place with 1789. Rob Stanley and Gerry Cooper scored 1749 and made it into the final as Robs Rods, try saying that after you've been in the Bar!

Robs Rods Ladies, Dawn Stanley and Kim Orbell took last place after 4 games a piece with 1741: Squad 5, K. B. International and All Stars tried again but without success. Pat Duggan and George Patel in Aquila Red tried to better their previous score, and the unbelievable happened they equalled it. 1749 — 1749 and to compound matters they qualified twice!! Once for the tournament and once for a now famous club. The final squad produced five finalists, Classical Gas Blue with Toni Leonida and they scored 1757 and qualified in 10th place. Classical Gas White, Derek Brooker and Riff Abraham in 5th place 1800. K. Blackmore and Paul Crighton in Camero 'B', they scored 1803 and qualified 4th. M. & S. Jennings in Razzamataz who re-entered were successful in their second attempt and qualified in 2nd place.

Finally — Steve Conquer and Eric White, The Musketeers, 240-203-176-193 by Steve ably supported by Eric to finish in pole position with 1853 and we were worried if Eric would last for four games and he had another four games to play. For the purpose of my commentary I shall add the four game handicap and continue as scratch. Adding the Handicap has somewhat

upset the positions. Razzamataz were 1st, Rob Rods 2nd, Classical Gas White 3rd, Parawings 4th — The Musketeers had dropped to 7th place.

Game 1 and Sting II hit 419, and the Musketeers 403. Alan Hutchins and Eric White both scoring 235 for their respective teams. Razzamataz held on to their lead but the Musketeers moved up from 7th to 2nd place. Game 2 and 220 from Buzz Morrison helped Aquila Blue to a 431 and a leg up from 13th to 7th place. Razzamataz were still 1st, The Musketeers 2nd, Robs Rods 3rd, Classical Gas White 4th. Game 3 and 403 from the Linkers, Lyn Purcell scored 206, while the Musketeers were not far behind with 399 and another 200 plus from Eric White. Mildenhall and Sting II scored 393. One game to go and the Musketeers had taken the lead from Razzamataz, the Linkers had moved up to 3rd place, Robs Rods were 4th. Eddie Bullock and Mike Rogacs hit 404 from Mildenhall and moved up from 5th to finish in 2nd place. Robs Rods, Gerry Cooper and Rob Stanley took third place with a handicap total of 3539. Lyn and Kerry Purcell the Linkers were 4th. The Musketeers Steve Conquer and Eric White scored 343 for a handicap total of 3633 and £600 in the first Bill Taylor Handicap Doubles.

Congratulations to Steve and Eric.

BTBA Tournament Calendar

Date	Event	Venue
25 July	Mixed Doubles	Hull
25 July	Junior Scratch	Streatham
1 August	Trios, Handicap and Scratch	Streatham
22 August	Inter County Qualifying Round	Streatham
22 August	Humberside Handicap Doubles	Hull
22 August	Jardines National League Div. 2	Aylesbury
5 September	Watneys Doubles Handicap and Scratch	Streatham
12 September	Jardines National League Div. 1	Aylesbury
25/26 September	5th Annual Pioneer Tournament	Leeds
2 October	Junior Scratch Tournament	Streatham
16/17 October	Inter County Finals	
17 October	Handicap Trios	Worthing
17/24 Oct/7 Nov	Five Man Scratch	Wokingham
24 October	Ebonite Trios Handicap and Scratch	Streatham
14 November	Marlboro Doubles Handicap and Scratch	Streatham
14 November	Scratch Sixes	Worthing
21 November	Handicap Doubles	Worthing
28 November	Winter Handicap Trios	Hull
11/12/19 December	Mecca Handicap Sixes	Streatham

COOL CORNER

First, I'd like to express my sympathy to all those Lewisham bowlers for the closure of their lanes. Especially the dozens of them who told me all those years ago when my league switched to Bexleyheath that we'd regret the move because Bexleyheath would be closed within six months. Never mind every cloud has a silver lining, and this ones silver lining is in the form of being able to bowl in the liveliest Area and receive the smartest Area mag.

Welcome, and come on in.

* * *

Well, my olds, ain't it pleasant at Whistable? What a bunch of nice people. We got a real comradely cheer when we arrived with one minute and twenty five seconds to spare for our squad time on the first Sunday of the Area Championships.

I've never been to Whistable in my life. I'd always imagined it as the sort of place where middle class Victorians spent genteel holidays. Standing on the shore looking inland at the buildings I could visualize the stove pipe hats and sailor suits of the premanding family groups. Turning thru' 180 degrees and ZOWEE! Power boats, sail boards, water skis, funny little things like Lambrettas without wheels. My apologies, Whistable, for prejudging you. You're a lovely little town. One question, tho', shouldn't you rename that short stretch of road leading to the shore? "Beach Walk" is all very well, but a more apt title surely would be "Pebble Dash"?

I'd always had this vague idea that Whistable was the place that Dracula came ashore from the storm bound boat, but Phil Davis assures me that I'm thinking of Whitby. No, you don't know Phil Davis, that's to say most of you don't know Phil Davis, but he's a pleasant enough feller despite his lack of fame (O.K. Phil? That's just cost you two pints). About the same number of you don't know Eve Lewis, but she's the one who got presented with the 500 club tournament trophy, and she's a pleasant enough person also (and that's just cost you the key to your liquor cabinet, Eve).

However, back to the tournament. Don't it strike you just how much fun the Area championships are? In comparison, ain't the Nationals a gloomy affair? The only Nats. I can recall as enjoyable was at Poole six (?) years ago. But

there's not been an Area championships I've not enjoyed. And that's not sour grapes, I've won money in the Nats, but not in the Areas.

There's an atmosphere of enjoyment at the Areas that's lacking at the Nats. Don't you feel that the Area Championships are laid on for your benefit? I'll admit I can't give a concrete reason for it, but I shall continue to whack in my entry for the Areas year after year without hesitation, while continuing to regard the theoretical premier tournament with some scepticism. Come on B.T.B.A. start looking at the areas for the key to success, instead of the F.I.Q. (Ten points to anyone who can tell me what F.I.Q. means without looking it up).

Anyway, just a few more observations on Whitstable. You know how hot it was in the bowl? Couldn't possibly have been hotter. Oh no? I put my face in round the business end of things during the evening, and the air around the machines was shimmering. My hat comes off to the lane staff for working so efficiently in a temperature of (I guess) at least 85 degrees Farenheit.

My one criticism? That festering wall next to lane ten. It's murder on southpaws, and I've got a manicured right hand to prove it.

And finally, to the gentleman with the bruised buttock and the lady with the pained expression on her face; I'm sorry. It was a pitchy black night. It was very late. There was no moon. I was making a lot of noise, talking and singing and mumbling to myself. And how was I to know there was anybody the other side of the breakwater? I'd jumped over the previous two and encountered nothing but sand and shingle. I trust that wasn't an example of your everyday vocabulary. By the time of you read this the bruise should have gone and you'll be able to see the funny side.

* * *

Did it ever occur to you that you missed that strike purely because *You* failed to knock over all the pins?

* * *

My wife, now there's a subject I could get quite blasphemous about. She reckons I'm indecisive. What a bunch of rubbish. I take after my dad, bless his memory. He made a decision during the war that saved his life. He decided not to go.

Uncle Jim was in the war too. He was in the green and blue paint fleet. They'd go out to sea and empty hundred of drums of green and blue paint onto the water. When a German submarine puts its periscope up the paint stuck to the glass, thus convincing everyone in the submarine they were still under water. So they'd keep rising. When they were fifty feet up in the air my uncle's mob shot 'em down with anti-aircraft guns.



I'm not a cranky medaevelist, but I've got my doubts about this new gear at Southend. You know, their high speed, super duper, go faster double decker, Magicscore system that tots all the bits and pieces up automatically. I just get this horrible premonition of the future where some manky bit of machinery tells us off for swearing at the lanes and smacks our little bottoms for being rude.

* * *

I sat out in the garden the other evening after work. Warm; peaceful; wallflowers smelling like an advert for Yardleys, bees humming, sparrows grubbing about in the grass for food; blue tits in and out the nest box; frogs basking in the evening sunshine round the pond.

It was wonderful. Idyllic even. It was as if all the problems of the world were a million miles away. Then this beautiful butterfly flittered into the garden. Checked out the pansies and cornflowers. Sniffed round a nettle. Progressed on its leisurely course. Even stopped for a few seconds on the arm of my garden chair, just long enough for me to admire at close quarters the improbable perfection of the sheen on its wing. Irredescent purple, shimmering blue, glowing orange. Took off to bring a bit of delight to someone else. Then, a flash of brown, an audible 'snap', and no more butterfly. Just a smug well fed sparrow. There's gotta be a moral in there somewhere, but I'm thing eyed if I can see it. Ain't life a bitch sometimes.

Joe Cool