

TABLE TENNIS GROUP - Report by Peter Singer



Hamilton: An American Musical, Lin Manuel Miranda's epic story of the founding of the United States, is brilliant – see it if you can! It invokes a range of emotions, but is ultimately an uplifting experience, set to great music (even including the occasional forays into hip-hop) and incredible dance. One of the key songs and something of a motif, is “My Shot”, with the recurring refrain “I am not throwing away my shot”. This may broadly be interpreted as not wasting one's chances of making a success of one's life. Later in the story, it relates also specifically to duelling (apparently not an uncommon event at that time amongst the upper echelons of American society) and the notion of deliberately aiming to miss one's opponent, in the expectation that they will do the same and the matter will be settled, with honour served and no-one injured. Not surprisingly (spoiler alert), this doesn't work out well either for Alexander Hamilton or his son Philip, who both reputedly adopted the tactic in their duels respectively with Aaron Burr and George Eacker. It is, however, a good learning point for those of us constantly fighting a duel with a small, round, white, plastic opponent – the ping pong ball. It is especially important in relation to the serve, the only “shot” that is entirely within one's control. Some useful pointers, for example, might be:

- * take a breath and focus;
- * ensure a well-balanced stance;
- * decide where you want your shot to land;
- * choose the spin you may or may not want to put on the ball;
- * vary your serve – a hard and fast serve may work well, but an occasional shorter, slower ball may surprise and prevents a fast return.

The first three points probably apply equally to duelling, but this is not recommended by U3A nor covered by the insurance policy. Whatever you do, don't rush it, make sure the ball lands somewhere in play and, above all, **don't throw away your shot!**

If you would like to join our group to learn the game, improve your skills or just enjoy playing and socialising, please contact Peter Singer (pandjsinger@btinternet.com 07508 663998). All are welcome, whether you play regularly, have not played for some time or have never played before.