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Ian Agol* (agol@math.uic.edu), MSCS UIC, 322 SEO, m/c 249, 851 S. Morgan St., Chicago, IL 60622. *Automorphisms of the genus 2 Heegaard splitting of S^3 .*

The automorphism group of a Heegaard splitting H of a closed 3-manifold M is the quotient of the group of diffeomorphisms of M which preserve H by the connected component of the identity of this group. Recently, Erol Akbas has given a presentation of this group for the genus 2 Heegaard splitting of S^3 , which in particular shows that the group is virtually free. We give an alternative proof based on some of Akbas' ideas, making use of the ping pong lemma. (Received August 06, 2006)