
Bridge News September 2025

1 message

Nicky Bainbridge <bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com>
To: Nicky Bainbridge <bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com>
Bcc: nickyrbainbridge@gmail.com

11 September 2025 at 07:21

Gmail refused this in the normal format this month (sigh)

[View this email in your browser](#)

September



2025

To Keep Playing



We Need the Clubs

In this edition...

What do the Bridge Clubs have to say?

Warrington Bridge Club

Bridge Clubs - Amazing Survivors

Market Harborough Bridge Club

What does a typical club look like?

Stamford Bridge Club

Where do Clubs Play? What effect does that have?

Oxsted Bridge Club

EBU Affiliation

Barrow Bridge Club

Tournament Directing - A Highly Skilled Job

Kenilworth Bridge Club

Tournament Directing - Could we make it easier?

Coventry & North Warwickshire Bridge Club

CAKE

St Ives (Cornwall)

Sept Update From EBED

EBU Goals in 2025

How are clubs doing?

For clubs

Risk Management

Newsletter Item - Mitchell and Howell Movements

Put potential players in touch with Teachers

Thanks to everyone who gives feedback about the newsletter!

Did you receive this from a friend? If you would like to have it delivered directly to you, you can subscribe at:

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

NEWS

This newsletter launched in August 2020 during the pandemic to provide information and support for duplicate bridge clubs. Back editions on the web site.

CLUB DATA

Bridge club data is collated to provide a picture of life, and trends, in club life. Analysis.Taster below. Full analysis on the web site.

TEACHING SCHEME

A teaching scheme is available, entirely free of charge.

DISCUSSION

For almost four years we held monthly Zoom meetings to discuss anything of interest to clubs. Recordings on the web site.

WEB SITE (Hosted by BridgeWebs)

<http://www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk>.

Please forward the letter to anyone in the bridge world who might be interested. Anyone can subscribe for free, no adverts.

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

What do the Bridge Clubs have to say?

I asked some clubs to write articles on how they are seeing the world.. Thank you so much to the many who responded. The brief was:

Where the club plays; how many members; how many sessions each week?

Whats great about it and the bridge club scene?

What are you most concerned about for the future?

Anything else you would like to say?

I am interspersing these with reports from my data collecting and opinions on some issues.

ENJOY

Warrington Bridge Club

We are an EBU-affiliated club.

We play in a hired room in large social club in the middle of Warrington, called Alford Hall in Manchester Road, WA1 3NJ. We secured a regular booking there after Covid, as we were not able to return to our previous premises. It works well, as we have a large bridge room, a lockable store cupboard for our equipment, a large car

park, and use of a kitchen so we can provide tea, coffee, etc. The room hire costs are reasonable.

We are not a big club. We currently have 128 members. However, the numbers are growing steadily. We were dying as a club before Covid, and numbers had reduced to under 60 in 2017. But we took on teaching, and an alliance with our local u3a, and have been able to reverse the decline.

We run two F2F playing sessions per week:

Monday evenings :“serious” bridge, usually Duplicate pairs, and Thursday afternoons (mornings during the summer when we’re not teaching): relaxed duplicate pairs, up to 18 boards max, usually 16, which is a very friendly and popular social bridge session.

From September to June we run a teaching course on Thursday mornings. It’s Intermediate level, to take people who’ve generally learnt bridge with u3a over two years, as Beginners and then Improvers. The aim is to take people to the level where they can feel comfortable playing in a serious club duplicate pairs session. We generally have a class of about 20. The format is a short talk (25-30 minutes) followed by play of prepared hands on the topic. I include a suggested auction on the traveller for each board, which they look at once they’ve bid and played the board. I find this aids discussion and learning.

We also run two on-line sessions per week, on RealBridge, on Tuesday and Friday evenings. The Tuesday one is a joint venture with another local but non-EBU affiliated Club, and is quite relaxed. The Friday one is quite competitive and a high standard of bridge.

What's great about it and the bridge club scene?

We’re growing, and attracting more people to the great game of bridge. People are enjoying coming, especially to our relaxed Thursday sessions, and word of mouth is helping us grow. We are also reaching out to other clubs to help them grow too. Our joint on-line session is an example. Also we have a dealing machine, so we are providing random computer deals to another local club, so that they can play genuinely random hands, and see them afterwards on their website. We also have run occasional joint TD training sessions.

But the best thing is when someone says thank you, learning bridge was the best thing I ever did, and has opened up a whole new life: bridge holidays, new friends, cruises with bridge on board, etc.

There is no doubt that a bridge club is a great asset to a community- it encourages social interaction, and gives retired people, particularly those who live on their own, a reason to get out of bed in the morning, and a structure to their week.

What are you most concerned about for the future?

The age demographic. The average age of bridge players in UK is now 75, and rising. Our focus quite rightly is on retired people, or people approaching retirement, as they're the ones who have the spare time to devote to bridge. But the reservoir of people who have grown up playing cards is declining.

I think unless we address nationally attracting young people into bridge, we are going to struggle to prevent more and more clubs closing for good. Playing bridge has to not only be known about, it has to have an attractive image, not all about fusty old people.

Anything else you would like to say?

Keep doing what you're doing, Nicky. It's helpful and encouraging. The EBU needs to change. Three priorities I would suggest

1. Concentrate on raising the profile of bridge nationally. It's got to be seen as a cool thing to do. That means social media, TV

2. Focus on young people (Primary Schools, Universities), to steadily reduce the average age of players

3. Make an offering to make it attractive for non-affiliated clubs to join. That means no pay to play, except where clubs decide they want their events to count for Master points and NGS. It's a radical change to the financial model, but something radical is needed. Taking the comparison with golf, England Golf charge £11.25/year for all club members. That's it – no paying England golf every time you play. I have had a look but the EBU accounts don't seem to make clear how much per year they raise from P2P. Do you know the figures?



Bridge Clubs - Amazing Survivors

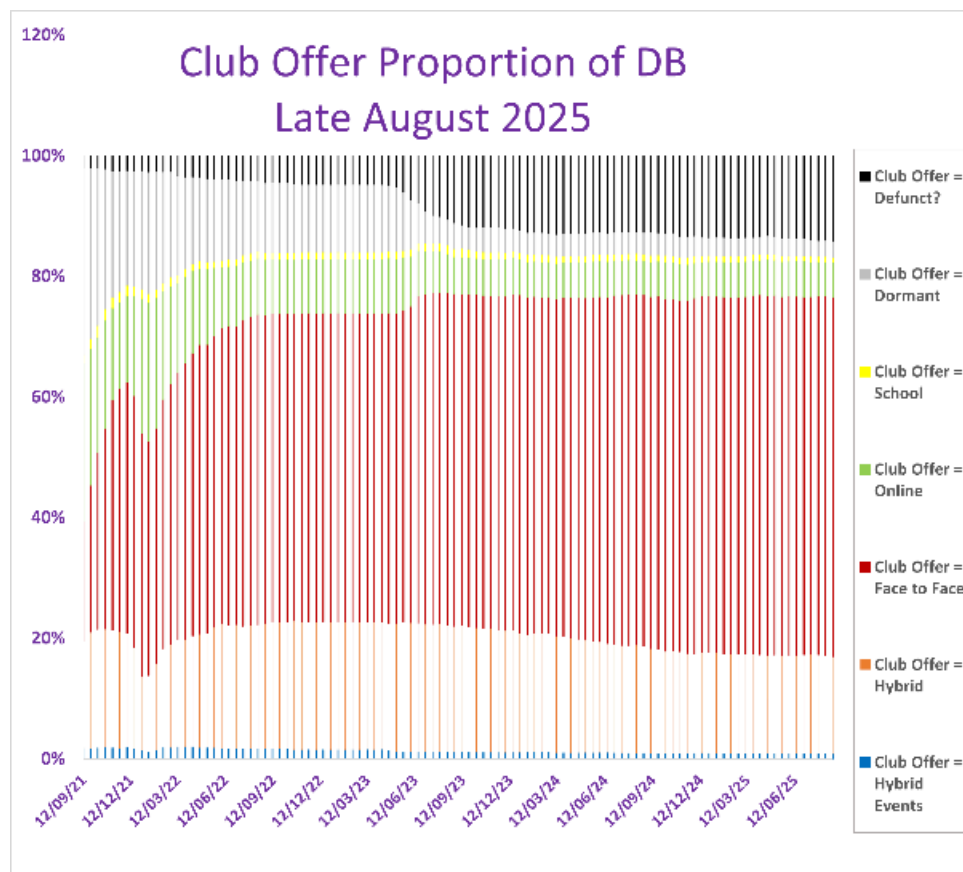
During Covid I met in a pub garden with a couple of other bridge obsessed women. We speculated how many of the closed bridge clubs would come back whenever it became safe and players had the confidence. We had opinions (guesses) ranging from 50% through 40% to as low as 30%.

Five years on, I think the number of active duplicate clubs is about 75% pre-pandemic levels. They are not always the same clubs. A few are online only, quite a lot offer some face to face and some online, but the majority offer just face to face.

The general nature of the players, and therefore the bridge, has changed dramatically. Bridge is more social, often involves food, is played during week days.

There was a **gap** between elite bridge and club bridge before COVID.

IMO there is now a **chasm** between elite bridge and social/recreational/normal club bridge.



Market Harborough Bridge Club.

MHBC is now a very typical and active EBU registered club with around 70 members, playing at a venue in the heart of the town with excellent facilities.

It has transformed itself since covid. Prior to that time, we regularly had 11-12 tables at one weekly session on Monday evenings. Afterwards, as with many clubs, we struggled, often getting as few as 4-5 tables.

Of the small numbers that returned, the age of players was a key factor, the average age meaning we were likely to lose membership rather than gain.

Our future existence was very much in doubt.

To survive, we decided to branch out. We launched teaching sessions for beginners (evenings, to target a younger age group); embarked on a marketing campaign in local media (including posters, radio and social media) and merged with an independent group who were also struggling.

Fast forwards to 2025. Now we have Monday evening as the club's main night (24 boards usually), with a second session on Thursday evenings at a more relaxed pace (21 boards in the same time); an associate group who meet and play social bridge at the same venue on a Wednesday mornings.

And on Wednesday evenings we run lessons for beginners alongside an informal "supervised practice" playing session, again with learners and new players in mind.

This mix of learning, practice, social and formal bridge makes a great environment for bridge players of all ages and abilities. Our membership is increasing, and the average age of members is decreasing. At the moment, things are looking positive; but as ever, all of this is only working because of a small number of enthusiastic volunteers who put in many hundreds of hours to keep MHBC afloat. We need more helpers as I'm sure all other clubs do, and I think that is a threat to our future.

We would like, eventually, to add more playing sessions and one-off events like Swiss Pairs. Our biggest hurdle to this next step is having

people trained and capable with the technology. We depend on technology now, from dealing machines and hand record files, through laptop/PC which is up to date and not likely to suddenly reboot after an update mid-session, to Bridgemates (or similar devices). Getting new volunteers up to speed with the scoring software, uploads, downloads, wi-fi networks, resolving problems... It takes time and commitment. Finding and training those people is perhaps our biggest hurdle.

What does a typical club look like?

This is an update on a March 2024 newsletter item.

(Text in this colour is updated from the March 2024 version.)

From information about duplicate bridge clubs collected over four (two and a half) years. A picture of a typical club.

From data collected, it:

- Meets once a week (Over 50%)
- Meets in a shared community space, typically a village or church hall (Around 80%)
- Offers face to face (Over 75%) (Over 70%)
- Is either an informal association (no published constitution) (40%) (37%) or has an unincorporated constitution (41%) (42%)
- Charges £2., £2.50, £3.00, £3.50, or £4 table money (22%, 15%, 34%, 4%, 10%) (26%, 17%, 31%, -, -)
- May or may not be EBU affiliated (50%/50%)
- Is most likely to play sometime from Monday to Thursday
- Is most likely to play in the evening, though a substantial minority play in the afternoon
- Fills almost seven tables at each session
- Has a BridgeWebs web site (98%)
- Does not teach or refer potential learners to a teaching session on it's website. (67%)

From observation during data collection:

- It is run by two/three people

- It has moved away from collecting cash
- It puts an emphasis on friendly play
- It has a food/charity/social dimension
- It is likely to play in a village or town rather than a city
- The members are mainly older people and mainly female
- May well be using WhatsApp to find partners

These are generalisations. Your club is unique.

Stamford Bridge Club

Located near the centre of our fabulous market town, Stamford Bridge Club (SBC) is fortunate enough to have its own purpose-built clubhouse. With two bridge rooms, one fully equipped for teaching, and a tea and coffee area, members enjoy a comfortable playing environment. SBC has more than 600 hundred members, offers a variety of playing sessions and is run almost exclusively by volunteers.

The club offers regular beginners' courses, the next iteration of which will start in early October 2025. Those wishing to learn our great game may attend morning or evening sessions, each running for 10 weeks. We then have a transition phase to allow learners to play with confidence at one of our many supervised sessions. The club also runs teaching for improvers at a variety of levels, including regular workshops, summer school and mentoring sessions.

Regular bridge sessions run morning, afternoon and most evenings during the week, with the occasional weekend event. Session quality varies considerably, with members choosing to play at times to suit their ambition. The club prides itself on promoting a very friendly environment with any member welcome to play any session, although we do run specific sessions for less experience players with an NGS ≤ 6 . More ambitious players may compete for a variety of trophies, including winter-season teams and pairs events. The club contributes significantly to the Northamptonshire County Bridge Association.

SBC promotes a healthy social environment with supervised sessions, quiz evenings, an annual barbecue (with bridge), Christmas parties and charity events. Members will enjoy an away weekend in January

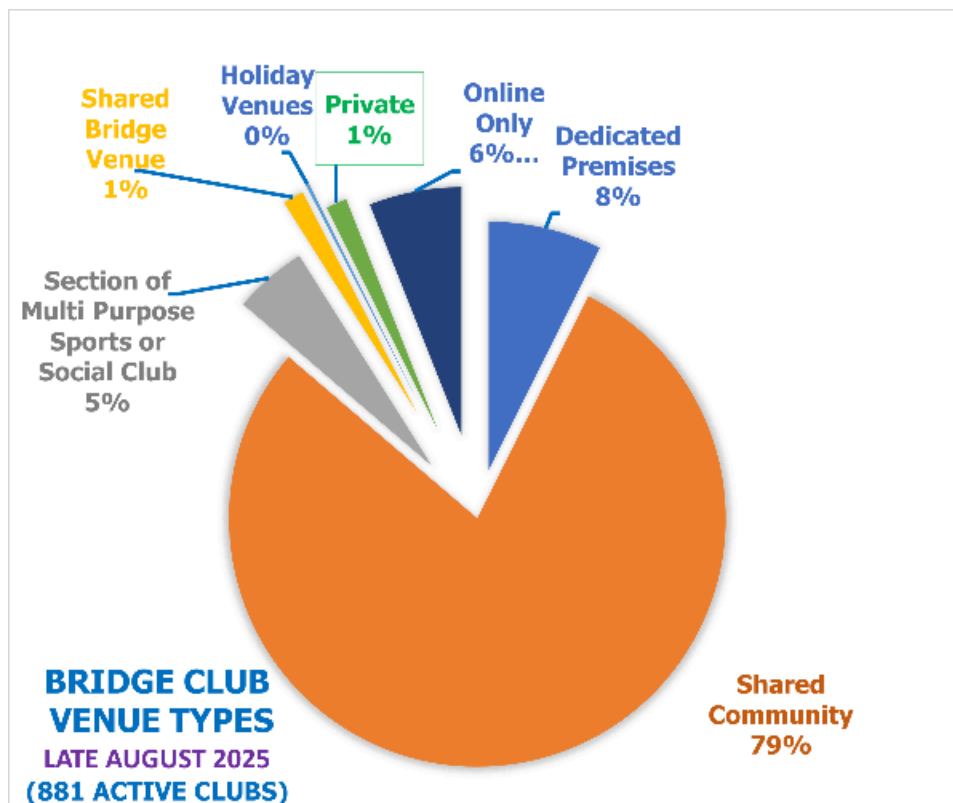
2026 with the chance to play lots of bridge and meet friends outside of one's usual session environment. While all this comes at a cost, we think that the annual membership of £20 and a session fee of £3.00 represents excellent value for money. Full details of club activities, membership application form, beginners' lesson detail and our latest newsletter can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/SfrdBC>

Concerns for the future include:

Balancing the needs of what is effectively a 'village hall' bridge club with such a big membership,
targeting training,
persuading intermediate players to challenge themselves and participate in the highest NGS sessions held at the club,
and the paucity of younger members.

Where Do Clubs Play? What effect does that have?

My research, collecting the details of nearly 900 active duplicate bridge clubs shows the type of venue they use as follows:



The effect of dedicated premises

Only about 8% of clubs play in dedicated premises, it's 9% if you include the shared dedicated bridge premises. Clubs in dedicated premises are busier, more likely to teach and charge higher table money.

There are also the clubs that are "Sections" of multi-activity clubs. Sections in multi activity clubs, typically golf clubs, don't attract quite so many players. There are relatively few of these, hence the jump in July last year when a particularly active club joined the database. Of course these vary greatly and Coventry and North Warwickshire is a big exception.

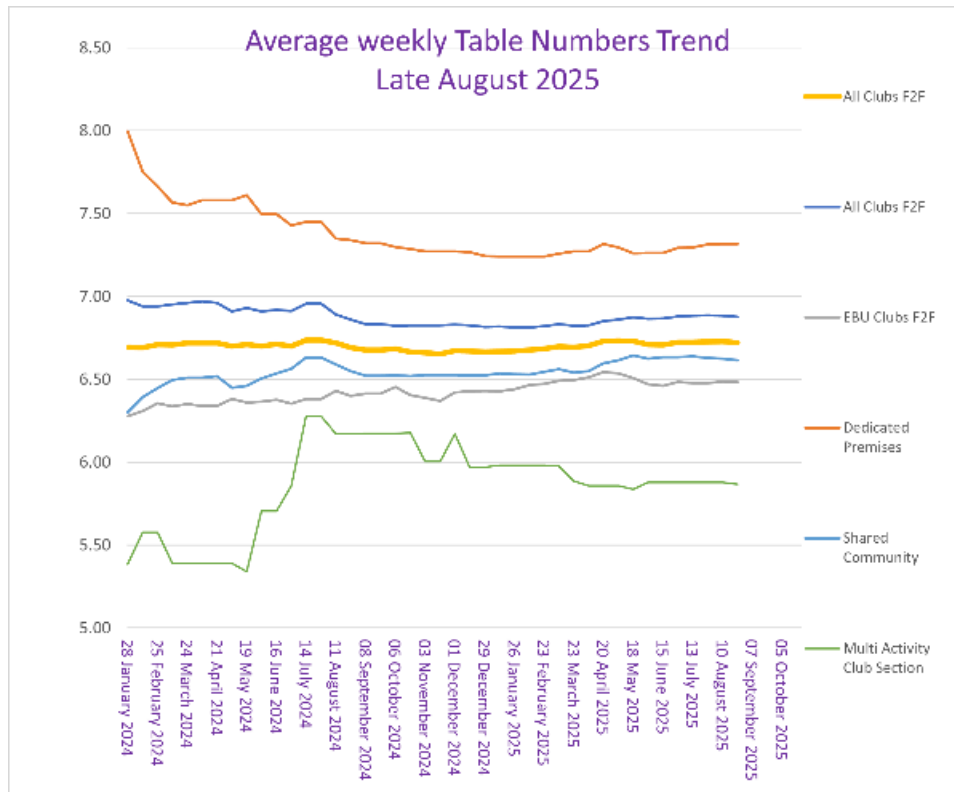
Out of the 50 busiest EBU affiliated clubs listed for the year to 2025, 37 play in dedicated premises. One is online only. There are a handful of unaffiliated clubs whose numbers would be in the top half of this group. Membership appears to be above average in the better used venues.

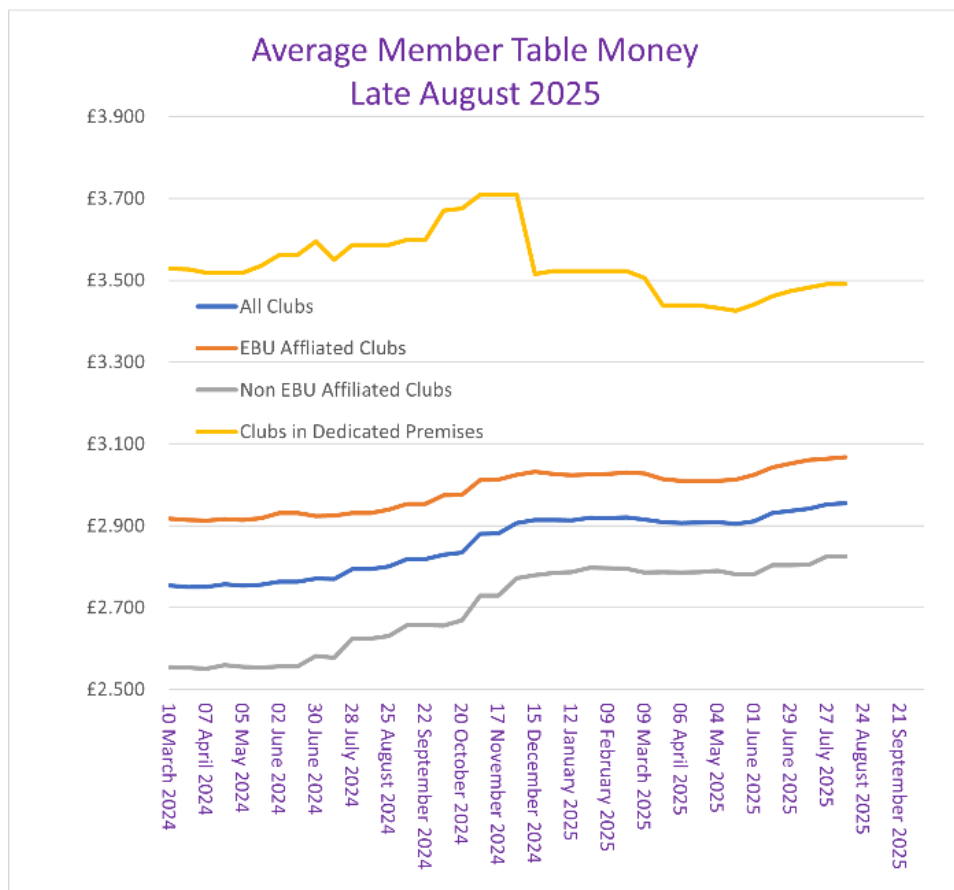
However, some of the 65+ dedicated premises host only two or three sessions a week. There are strains on the upkeep of older buildings. Occasionally smaller clubs complain that the bigger clubs attract players away from them.

The busiest dedicated bridge venues are well occupied. However, most, if

not many, are used less the half the time.

Is there some way these spaces could be made available for more bridge teaching? Perhaps by opening them up to independent teachers?





Oxted Bridge Club

Our club is currently doing well but as with most clubs we are concerned about the aging membership.

We have attracted a few "younger" players lately

We have two sessions per week catering for different profiles.

- Midweek we have a morning session playing gentle duplicate at a leisurely pace.
- We play c14 boards in 21/4 to 21/2 hours in the main .for beginners to intermediates.
- Fridays are aimed at intermediates and we sometimes have a handicap, teams, Sim Pairs or Swiss Pairs.
- Both sessions average c7.5 tables which is sufficient to maintain club funds. We do not aim to make a profit.

The general scene is a worry because there does not seem to be a significant influx of youngsters to sustain the game.

The EBU does not seem to have necessary focus to deliver the step change required to promote the game. Look at what chess has done!! Teaching is a major problem. In our area I always recommend the facilities provided by another local club, but a lot of newbies do not want a structured 13 week course at £x.

At our club we have a Saturday workshop 3/4 times a year where member driven topics are explored via set hands. This is where players seem to learn the most as they often play with their normal partner and put the learnings into practice.

Going forward I would like to see the EBU promote the game more heavily and that non affiliated clubs are given attractive reasons to join.

Masterpoints and NGS mean nothing to most club players but being part of a forward looking organisation where tangible and visible benefits are seen would be hugely beneficial.

EBU Affiliation

Clubs are autonomous organisations. They are often "Informal Associations" operated by volunteers without a written constitution. They may have a written constitution, making them "Unincorporated" . Sometimes they are sections of multi-activity clubs, sometime owned by proprietors, sometimes operating as part of the u3a. Larger clubs may be limited companies, or registered charities.

About 550 bridge clubs are affiliated to the EBU. There are about another 550 bridge clubs, playing regular duplicate that are not affiliated to the EBU.

EBU Affiliation is an agreement between a club and the EBU. The club is required to pay Universal Membership and Affiliation fees, It becomes subject to some EBU regulations. It can provide the features of the Master Points and National Grade systems to its members.

An affiliated club has no defined role in EBU governance. It is required to affiliate to an EBU county, although there are now exceptions and some

clubs are affiliated directly to the EBU.

Each EBU affiliated county is entitled to hold a number of shares in English Bridge Union Ltd. The number is related to the number of player members of the county. Counties choose nominated shareholder, sometimes different ones for each share, sometimes one nominee for all the county's sharers. These shareholder are entitled to attend EBU general meetings and to vote on matters put to them by the EBU board.

To influence any decision each club needs to identify the shareholders in its county and hold whatever discussions it can.

You may have a view on whether the EBU should add 2p rather than 1p to Universal Membership levy paid by an affiliated club on each player in each session in an EBU affiliated club. Seek out your shareholder(s) and tell them now. They will be voting on this matter at the EBU AGM in November.

LinkedIn Post from Franck Riehm 2nd degree
connection2nd Co-Fondateur Flam's | Président
World Bridge Federation 🌐 | Président de la
Fédération Française de Bridge

Barrow Bridge Club

At Barrow Bridge Club we are tucked away from the rest of the Country at the North of Morecambe Bay and to the West of the Lake District in a County now named Westmorland and Furness, previously Cumbria and historically (and to some always) Lancashire. Despite our isolation we have had an active Bridge Club since 1944, with its origins in the late 30s in the shipyard (which Barrow is most noted for). We celebrated our 80th anniversary last year with a very lively party and combined it with our fundraising efforts for EBU's "Bridge is a Big Deal" campaign for Cancer Research UK.

Our membership numbers have shrunk overall in the last 10 years, but those who learn to play love the game either for the challenge or the friendly atmosphere, or both. Today our membership continues steadily at around 70, but we are constantly trying to attract new members for both Face

to Face and online sessions. We hold lessons for those interested in learning how to play this stimulating game and try to tie these in with imaginative publicity in the local area. Our concern has always been how to preserve and maintain what is clearly a much valued activity over the longer term. We were recently delighted to have a new member aged 14 join us after completing the lessons, and hope they will bring along others. They will be able to tell their friends that Bridge is actually a great strategic game, and more challenging and fun than computers.

We play very regularly, four times a week in the Club, Monday and Thursday evenings and Tuesday and Friday afternoons. We also play 3 times a week online on BBO, on Monday and Friday afternoons and Tuesday evening. We can assure anyone who would like to join us either online or Face to Face that we will offer them a warm welcome whether they fancy joining us for a one off game or because they are lucky enough to be visiting our beautiful area.

Tournament Directing - A highly skilled job

Both teaching and tournament directing require a high level of a range of skills. However, duplicate bridge usually needs a TD, where many clubs get along without teachers.

Directors need great communication skills. They need to set the tone, authoritative when competition is important, and relaxed when players are there to enjoy themselves.

They must ensure a level of fair play that the players have confidence in. That may be based on detailed knowledge of the appeals on the latest dispute for an elite competition. It may just mean reminding a new player that they mustn't check with their partner about transfers mid-auction.

(Without being so fierce that they never come back).

They must be able to plan a session and manage its schedule. They often have to deal with an uncertain number of players. Unless they have the luxury of a scorer, they need to be able to operate the scoring system, and often manage the storage and publication of the results.

In most sessions in most clubs (1800 plus a week), the director does this while playing.

Many clubs are struggling to find members to take this on!

Kenilworth Bridge Club

Home of Friendly, High-Quality Bridge

Kenilworth Bridge Club is a welcoming community of 400 members who enjoy bridge in a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. We are the largest club in the Midlands area and are ranked number 9 in England for number of player sessions.

We run six, in-club, duplicate sessions each week plus two online sessions on BBO, so there's always a game to suit you—whether you're a beginner, social player, or experienced competitor. Visitors are always welcome.

Since Covid, our committee has focused on rebuilding the membership base, creating new sessions for mixed abilities, including supervised play and Novice duplicate, so learners can be playing real games within weeks of starting lessons. The future of bridge is reliant on getting new players into the club and the main way we do this is through teaching.

With three fully qualified teachers, we offer lessons for all levels, from absolute beginners to advanced players. We also encourage members to get involved, with a team of volunteers who support teachers, act as hosts, and run supervised play.

Alongside regular sessions, we run ladder competitions throughout the year, as well as handicapped pairs and Swiss pairs events for those who enjoy a challenge.

Our main concern is the age profile of the large majority of people who play bridge in the UK. We need to find ways to attracting a younger audience. We need to make bridge appealing to a wider age group and make younger people aware of the challenge and excitement of competitive duplicate bridge. Once you're bitten by the bug you never give it up. The main way we can do this is through social media such as Facebook, Instagram and You-tube. There are already fantastic bridge players, out there, who have a large number of followers on You-tube, such as International bridge player Pete Hollands and teacher Bernard Magee. However I'm not sure anyone other than the bridge community knows of them.

At Kenilworth we are trying to get to a new audience by advertising on Facebook, Kenilworth Vibes , Warwick Neighbourhood and Kenilworth Nub News.

Our dedicated premises on Warwick Road, Kenilworth, provide a comfortable, well-equipped venue with ample parking and refreshments, making it the perfect place to play, learn, and make friends.

At Kenilworth Bridge Club, it's not just about the cards—it's about the friendships, the laughter, and the shared love of bridge.

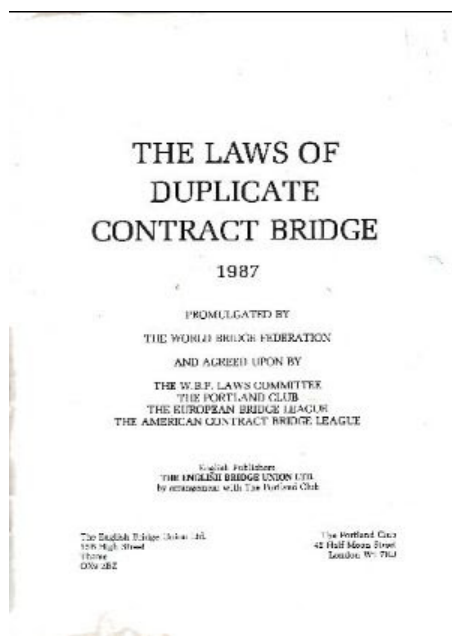
Kenilworth Bridge Club – more than just cards, it's a community.

Tournament Directing - Make it easier

The Laws are international. They are freely available to all and can be downloaded in PDF form without charge. Anyone can use them to organise and play the game.

The Laws are laid out in a peculiar order. You often have to seek text distributed over the document to resolve one issue.

This must be the result of a long



history.

To make life easier, especially for new directors, regroup and reorder them in a logical way, and renumber them so that new laws can be fitted into the sensible place for them.

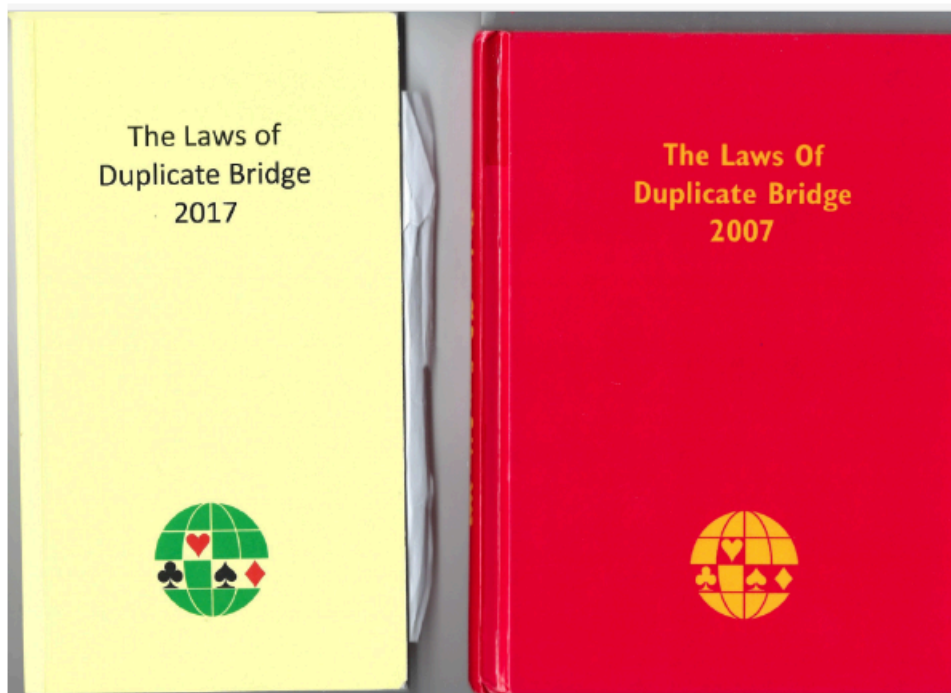
I am told this has been discussed but rejected.
IMHO this forms a barrier to new entrants to directing.

OR Could we have an app? Or an AI Assistant?

Could we have a better book?

The laws are updated every ten years, although there was an interim in 2023. At least in theory, clubs and directors buy new copies that will last ten years. I liked the 2007 hard back. It did last ten years. The EBU 2017 paper back, with late loose addenda has not lasted well. It was a smaller size.

When I queried this, I was told it was a good size to slip into a pocket. Most women do not wear clothing with this kind of pocket.



The Regulations

The laws do not cover all aspects of the game even as it is played in recreational clubs. Use of the stop card, announcing and alerting, and use of the bidding box are covered by regulations set by your NBO, in our case the English Bridge Union.

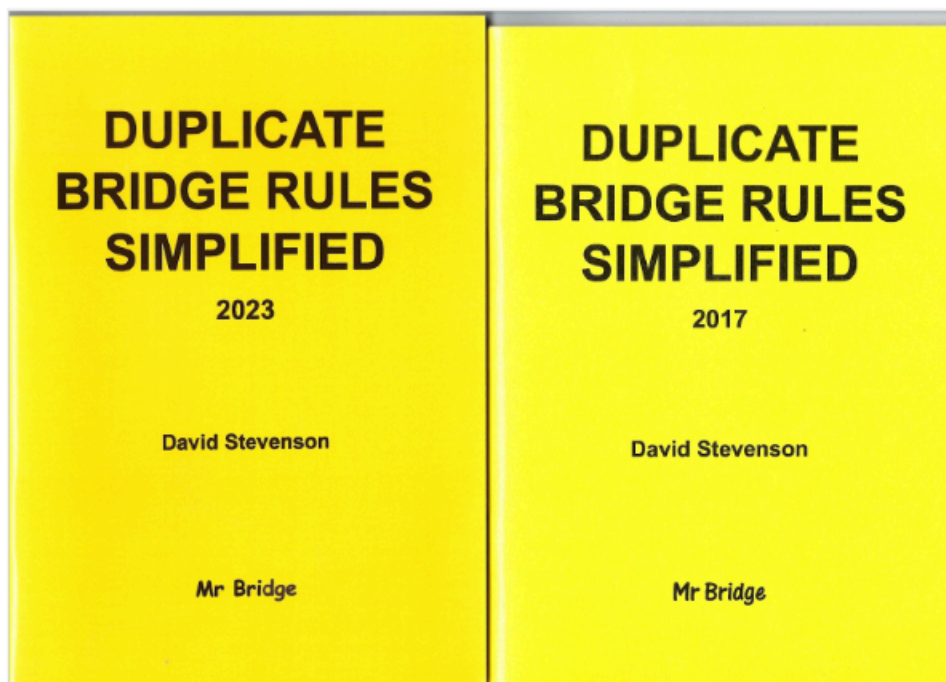
EBU regulations, Blue Book, White Book etc tend to be amended annually. This work is done to be applied to elite tournaments. Now that there is a chasm between recreational bridge and elite bridge, very little attention is paid to these updates. The audience of a couple of thousand elite players probably put the effort in to keep up, but the thirty thousand club players don't any more.

The shorter announcing and alerting summary used to be published and observed in clubs, but I don't see it any more. We need a simpler, shorter official EBU version of that for clubs, that is kept stable and changes are only made when it is really important that all the eighty and ninety year players change their habits.

The Yellow book. Thank you David Stevenson and Mr Bridge.

This book covers the vast majority of what's needed in club directing. Hence it's popularity, hence you can buy it from the EBU Bridge

Warehouse, even though it's not "official".



Coventry & North Warwickshire Bridge Club

is based at C&NW Sports Club on the Binley Road in Coventry.

We have about 145 members, but only 107 of these are active.

We run face to face duplicate sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday; 2 gentle sessions for novices on Tuesday and Wednesday and 1 online session played on RealBridge.

There are also two monthly competitions which run through the season.

We run classes for beginners, intermediates and improvers throughout the year.

Visitors are welcome at all our sessions. All our regular sessions are hosted, with the exception of Tuesday evening and Wednesday RealBridge.

Although we have dedicated premises, as we are part of the wider Sports Club our future depends on the solvency of the club as a whole. This is not in doubt at present but the recovery from Covid lock-downs has been hard going, and debts built up in that period are still being repaid.

CAKE





St Ives (Cornwall) Bridge Club affiliated to the EBU

We play in St Johns-in-the-fields Church Hall St Ives.

We have 40+ members playing once a week on Thursday evenings 6:30 - 10 pm (24 boards).

We are a friendly club and often host holiday makers.

The refreshment break is a good way for visitors or new members to get friendly.

Usually 6 to 8 tables .

Players email us (jimfrances@talktalk.net) and we add the names to the website.

If anyone wants a partner we send out an email with their details and this works most of the time

How can we fit in the ninth table in???

Many of our members have come via Carbis Bay bridge club. This has rubber bridge and guided learning on Monday afternoons. Anyone is welcome on Mondays whether they have ever seen a playing card or nor, we will teach them.

We have three EBU affiliated clubs in West Cornwall:
Camborne, Penzance & St Ives and some people play at all
three (Monday, Wednesday & Thursday evenings).

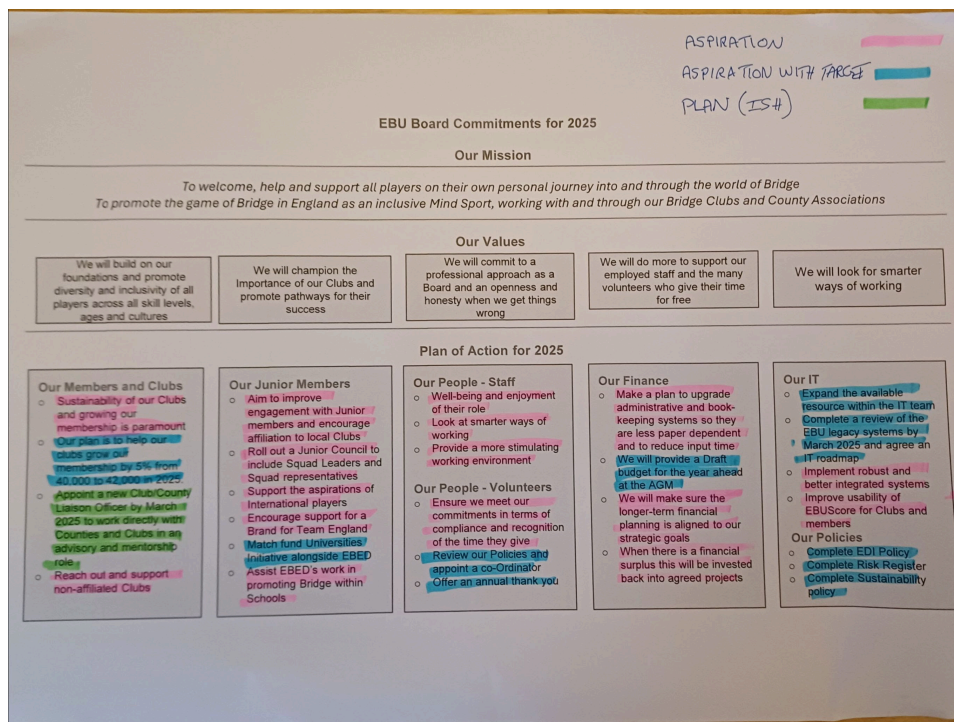
We have at least four members who are Club Directors and do
direct (we used to be allowed to run the EBU course in
Cornwall) There are at least another three qualified Club
Directors who don't normally direct in the area.

We always put Cornwall but despite searching I have not found
a club in Cambridgeshire!

But it does have a famous bridge.

Sept Update from EBED

EBU goals in 2025



EBU goal 1: MEMBERSHIP The board has announced its own goal of increasing membership by 5%. This is 2,000 more on an unclear base.

There's no reported progress on this target. In the July Counties Chairs meeting, newly appointed EBU Board director, David Guild, warned of static membership.

On 1st Sept the EBU launched a campaign urging clubs to get their members to recruit other members.

EBU goal 2: PUBLIC AWARENESS The public awareness of bridge needs to be raised for bridge to survive.

An effective PR/marketing/communication strategy is needed. It must reach beyond current players and clubs to reach people who have never heard of the game.

Bridge needs a planned, high quality campaign.. Social media is getting more bridge content, but most of it will only be going to social bridge users who curate their feeds towards bridge. We need "pushed" items that reflect youth and enthusiasm, like "BridgeBabe". and "BridgePlusMore".

The new Counties and Development Officer has this as an objective for "Year 2".

EBU goal 3: NEW LEARNERS When the general public's interest in bridge is raised, there needs to be a place to find out more and offer a first step. Steering learners to teachers, identifying and supporting active learners, and supporting teachers and recognising professional development. The EBU Teachers Directory seems to have become slightly harder to find. It does have 275 (was 325???) entries, providing you know to untick the "has vacancies" box. Otherwise you see about 274. This box relies on listed teachers keeping their vacancies status up to date. Given the difficulty of getting teachers to register at all, it seems rather hopeful to expect they will.

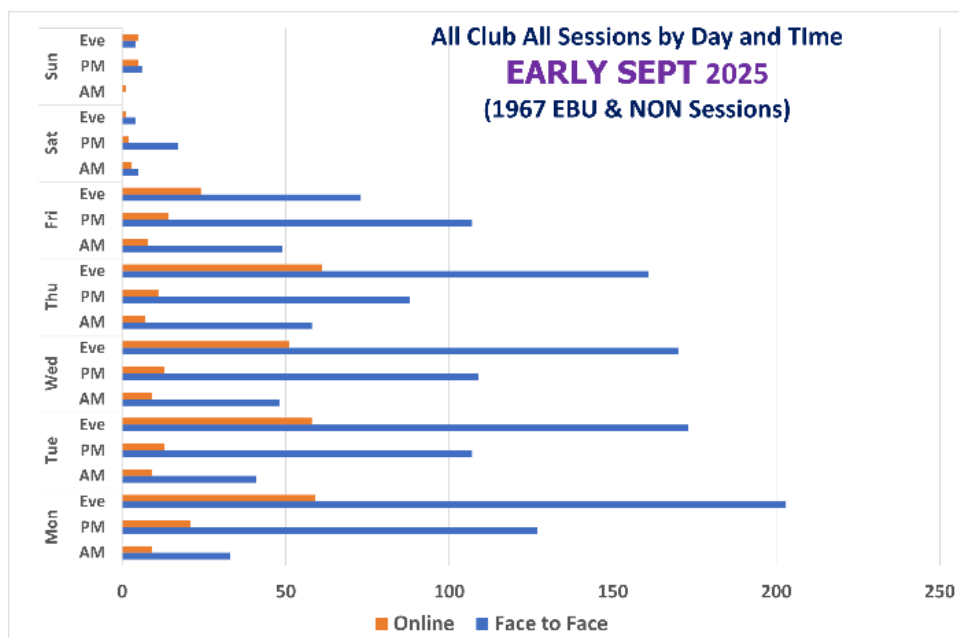
Total entries (if you untick "Has vacancies") seems now to be 336, a rise of about 12 in a couple of months. There's been a fourth round of scam emails.

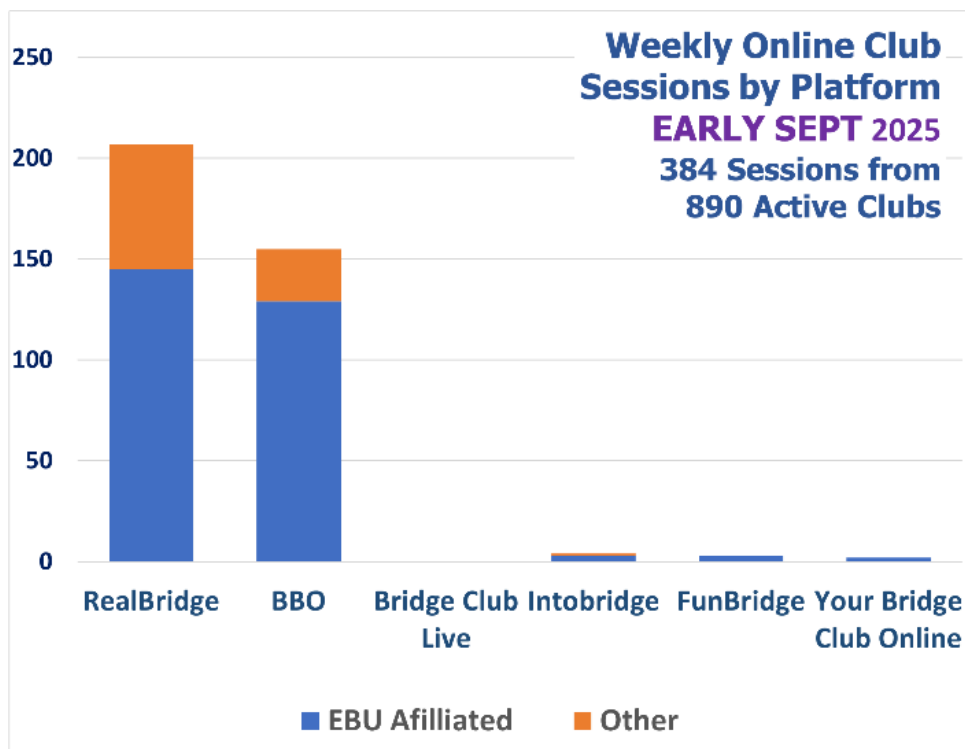
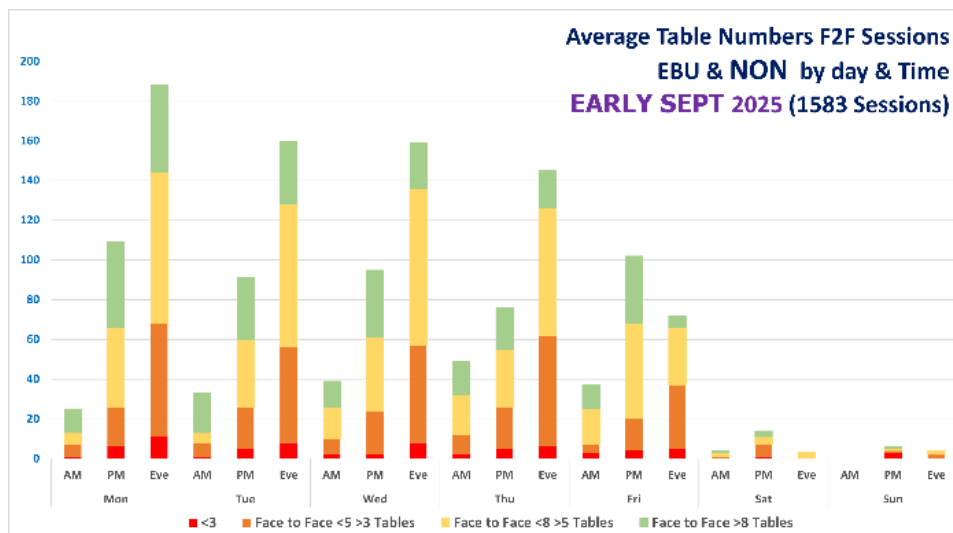
EBU goal 4: CLUB COSTS The EBU to manage its costs rather than let them grow and simply pass them on to the affiliated clubs.

From Draft EBU Board Minutes June 6th 2025

"The 4-year Plan The Treasurer had prepared top level budgets for the next few years based on two distinct sets of assumptions around how the membership grows over the period. In both cases (optimistic and pessimistic) the budgets show a continued deficit which the Board agreed is not sustainable. It was suggested that we might need to consider a 2p increase in UMS (after below inflation increases for two years) and that if the investment in an MDO does not generate the growth intended then that investment will have to be reviewed. A number of workshops were proposed, to take place at the next Aylesbury Board meeting, to review income and expenditure."

How are clubs doing?





There's more information here, typically updated once a fortnight.

BFP Club Statistics Page

For Clubs

Risk Management

From Oxshott's web site:

"A Member at another club tripped while moving between tables resulting in multiple fractures.

A general risk assessment at bridge clubs pointed out possible hazards:

- Avoid placing handbags on the floor next to chairs
- Place walking sticks appropriately (ask others at your table to help if reqd)
- Ensure no-one is behind you when moving back chairs to stand
- Do not crowd slowly moving people on entrancing or exiting the club
- Position tables as far apart as possible
- Ensure any wires or cables are not placed in a position that can trip

Please help avoid another accident by following the above and feel free to speak to another member, or a committee member, or the director if you spot a hazard."

I would echo the point on spacing out tables. A neighbouring club had a trip while carrying beverages. They have taken out a row of tables and made it much easier and safer to move around.

If you put up and take down tables with hinged legs, I would also suggest making sure all legs are completely engaged and pulled a little bit to the outward side of each corner. I have heard of a table collapse and have encountered unstable tables several times.

An offering for a club newsletter.

Mitchell and Howell Movements

The beginning of every duplicate bridge session sets a puzzle for the Tournament Director. He or she has to pick out a "movement" or pattern of play consisting of the correct number of boards, in a suitable number of rounds, that gives the players who have turned up for the session an opportunity to play the highest possible proportion of the boards they can manage in the time, against as many of the other pairs as possible.

To be awarded EBU Masterpoints all players must play at least 70% of the available boards. All this must be calculated in the 5-10 minutes before the start of play. Woe betide the TD who uses a movement that fails to meet the Masterpoints criteria!!

If there is an odd number of pairs (making a half table), there will be a "sit out" round. The TD will try to keep the number of boards per round low so that the sit out time is short. Generally, we assume that one board averages 7 minutes. So, a 3 board "sit out" averages 21 minutes.

The simplest movement is the Mitchell movement featuring stationary North-South pairs and moving East-West pairs, with boards also moving. There will be winners in each direction, and this movement is more common with a larger number of tables. If there is an even number of tables in the room a skip is required in the movement (skip Mitchell). This ensures that N/S pairs do not meet the same boards twice. With an odd number of tables, no skip is necessary.

A Howell movement, however, involves most pairs moving, playing both North-South and East-West hands, and playing against most other pairs. A single overall winner is produced because each pair plays against nearly every other pair, sometimes as North-South and sometimes as East-West. This movement is more common for smaller number of tables and where you want shorter "sit outs".

Example Mitchell Calculation.

Suppose you have 5 tables to play a 2.5 hour session of bridge. Generally, people play about 8 boards an hour and it should be possible to play twenty boards in the time. Dividing the boards into rounds of 4 boards would give 5 rounds altogether. The TD might choose a Mitchell movement

with all North South pairs remaining stationary; East West pairs will move "up" one table; and boards will move "down" one table at the end of each round. After two rounds, the boards previously played by a given East West pair will "pass" that pair as they move for round three. The movement will complete when all five East West pairs have visited all five tables and each set of boards has been played at all five tables. Very neat!

Example Howell Calculation

Suppose you have 4 and a half tables. If you use the above movement, there will be a long sit out round (about half an hour), and some players will play much fewer boards than others. This is a more difficult puzzle. The TD may choose a "Howell" movement.

A Howell movement is based on the principle that the rounds will be shorter, perhaps only two boards, and each pair will play every other pair, making nine rounds of eighteen boards in all. This means that pairs will only sit out for two boards, hopefully about fifteen minutes. All pairs will play sixteen boards.

However, the room will have to move eight times, taking up time each time. The next step up is 27 boards which could never be played in the time. Only one pair will remain stationary at a table, and everyone else will find their new position in each round and it may be either North South or East West.

There will be no discernible pattern in the table numbers. TIP: Work out which pair you are "following" and look around for where they are at the beginning of each round. Then just go to that place at the end of the round. Most pairs will play some boards as North South and others as East West, so the results are well "mixed up". There will be only one ranking list, and this is described as "single winner" movement.

Complex calculations

So, there are easy solutions to some combinations of time to play and number of pairs, but many combinations are tricky. Another factor is the number of boards dealt in the set. With 10 tables you would need a 30-board set if you wanted to play 21 board (7 rounds of 3 boards). This would meet the 70% criteria ($21/30=70\%$) and you would need a skip with a Mitchell because of the even number of tables. An elegant solution to this is a movement called a Web Mitchell.

The TD has a short interval between the time he or she can be sure of the numbers of players for the session and the time the players expect to start

playing to choose the movement, set it up on the computer, distribute the boards and pass out the scorers.

Be kind to the TD and arrive in time

So please try and arrive a little before the start of play to give the TD time to think. A late pair arriving when the movement has a half table may seem a small problem, but from the above, you can see the TD may have made a very different plan for the movement when there is a half table and has to decide if they are committed already or whether they change it for a different movement, quite possibly allowing more boards to be played, or a shorter sit out etc.

BFP Club Newsletter Item Library

CLUBS - PLEASE GIVE A LINK OR CONTACT FOR POTENTIAL LEARNERS ON YOUR WEBSITE

Over 60% of club website home pages make NO reference to lessons or teaching.

Your club may not teach, or have any intention to teach, but you could put a referral to a local teacher on your home page. If there is no local option you could put a link to your county page, the EBU teacher directory, or to the information on learning on the Bridge For Pleasure website.

There are about 1,000 duplicate club websites, please make sure yours has information on how to learn bridge. If we all did that there would be 600 new sites on the net with information for potential learners. At no cost!

For Teachers

Getting Learners Ready to join an existing class

The amazing No Fear Bridge service includes a free area where learners can follow lessons, quizzes and practice to learn minibridge.

Do you get queries from beginners just after the course has started?

Do you prefer learners to know basic card play and hand evaluation and contract selection before they join your course?

Do you wish to check the commitment of students before they join your class?

Point them to this site, offer to help with problems, ask them to self certificate.

<https://www.nofearbridge.co.uk/minibridge/>

Feedback

I really like to hear your views on what's going on, and what's covered here.

From the July 2025 issue focusing on teaching, I had some positive generally supportive comments. The subscribed list grew a little.

There was comment on the variety of systems taught. Some years ago English Bridge published two articles on facing pages. One was in

support of five-card major systems, and one against. It might be time to repeat this, with side orders of two over one.

Personally I play a strong one club system (I wouldn't dream of teaching it). Rare, but not entirely unique. I enjoy the bafflement of younger opponents and the nostalgia of older ones.

New contributors

If you would like to contribute an item, please send it.

Please make it no more than 200 words.

Please make it positive, and supporting the goal of keeping grass roots bridge alive.

That will keep elite bridge going.

[Click here to view previous newsletters](#)

Your Feedback

You can provide likes, dislikes and comments on the content of the Bridge For Pleasure website by registering on it.

Click on this link to send an email to register:

bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com

To quote the wonderful "Sorry Partner", BE NICE, or we'll call

the director.

Subscribe/Unsubscribe

If you don't want to receive this newsletter, click "Unsubscribe" below. I am always keen on feedback, good or bad, so do tell me...

Copyright © 2025 Rugby Village Bridge, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:

Rugby Village Bridge
Dunchurch Sportsfield and Village Hall
Rugby Road
Dunchurch, Rugby CV22 6PN
United Kingdom

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

