



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 24th June 2015 starting at 19.30 at Val Mollison's house – Tekoa Lodge, Mayes Lane, Sandon, Chelmsford, CM2 7RW

Present: Paul Mollison, Linda Fleet, Margaret Curtis, Keith Thompson, Theo Todman, Bernie Hunt, Audrey Hartley, Val Mollison.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** Paul Mollison welcomed those present. He accepted apologies from Nigel Bardsley, Dennis Valtisiaris and Chris Taylor. .
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday, 29th January, 2015:** These had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed to be a correct record.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes not already included in the agenda.**
 - a. **Item 3. a. The LMBA's change of date for their Congress:** The proposed change of the LMBA's Congress to one week before the Herts/Essex weekend in July had been agreed by the EBU's Tournament Committee. This matter was raised by Margaret and Audrey at the shareholder's meeting on 13th May 2015. A final decision was made at the Tournament Committee Meeting the following week that they would not change their decision.
 - b. **Item 3.c. Printing and distribution of ECBA Score cards to clubs:** Audrey added the new ECBA mobile number to the cards and ordered 36,000 cards as agreed. These were then delivered to Barleylands. Val has the distribution of the cards in progress. Most affiliated clubs have received theirs with about 6 or 7 clubs still to organise. A list of unaffiliated clubs and their contacts needs compiling before cards can be distributed. This is likely to take some time. Keith pointed out that he is also trying to compile a list of clubs. Val and Keith agreed to combine their efforts and share their respective lists.
 - c. **Item 4. c. iv) Bidding boxes with cards that need replacing:** This action is still outstanding, partly due to lack of time/other priorities, and partly because Val needs to coordinate with Nicole who has been unavailable due to family bereavement.
 - d. **item 4.d. para 1. Survey of league teams regarding possibility of smaller divisions.** to be covered later in the meeting.
 - e. **item 4.d. para 2. Master Points for 2013-14 season Leagues.** Bernie has contacted Ian Mitchell at the EBU who says that they are no longer willing to accept masterpoints in spreadsheet format. The suggestion was that a dummy event be created to submit the masterpoints but Bernie does not know how this is meant to work when the teams vary from match to match. Given the small number of masterpoints involved it was decided that it was not a good use of time to pursue this. Future seasons will be done via the new system. The points for the season just completed will be allocated once the leagues are finalised which will be done once a decision is made about promotions/demotions for next season.
 - f. **item 4.f.ii) Possible adoption of the friendly league.** Joan McGuffin had expressed reservations about having the ECBA adopt because of implications on collecting P2P to reimburse the ECBA. It was decided that the ECBA will not adopt the league as it would cause difficulties if rules were

introduced about who can play, but we will support them in trying to keep it going. Bernie asked Graham Foster if he wanted to continue the organisation of the league, but Graham says he no longer has the time. Audrey said she didn't think Alaric wants to organise it. Val agreed to talk to Joan McGuffin about it.

Since the meeting there have been various emails exchanged on this topic. Graham Foster says he has never given any indication that he wanted to hand the organisation of the friendly league over to anyone else and wishes to continue with it.

g. item 4. f. v) Promotion of Theo's mini-websites for clubs without their own. The committee has no objection to Theo offering his website as a service to clubs who do not already have a website as long it is stated on the website (which it is) that this is not run by the ECBA.

h. item 5 Essex representative at next Eastern Counties group meeting. We are not proposing to send anyone else to the Eastern Counties group meeting if Dennis is not back in time to go.

4. Reports from Hon. Officers:

a. Hon. General Secretary: Val reported the following

i) Hand over from Audrey. Audrey has given Val all files, archives etc. Val has gone through and made a list of what is in each file. *(Margaret indicated she may have some further bits and pieces to hand over)*

ii) AGM Minutes and County Newsletter. These have been written and circulated to committee members. Once the last lot of typos have been corrected these can go on the website. They will be posted to those without internet and club secretaries once the Sep-May programme has been finalised.

iii) Competition Programme Sep 2015 - May 2016. Val presented a list of proposed dates alongside the list of EBU and other county events that we need to avoid clashing with. The date for the *Play with an Expert* was discussed because previously this has been played on the same date as the EBU's *National Pairs Regionals*, but that is no longer sensible as the Regionals is now the first round of the competition so more experts will be playing in it. It had been proposed to hold it on the same day as the EBU's *Masters Pairs* as previously we have very few players enter it, but Bernie pointed out that there is a proposal to hold a heat of that event at Barleylands (*subsequently confirmed by the EBU*), and so may attract more players. The number of other Sundays was very limited so it was decided to try this on a Saturday as it is an afternoon only event and would not interfere too much with players plans for the evening. February 13th was chosen as there is no event on Sunday which is Valentine's day (another day to avoid)

(Subsequent to the meeting Margaret asked if it was possible to revert to holding the Gwen Herga in March due to less chance of adverse weather conditions. Val then also realised that we had not noticed that the new date for the Play with an Expert was the day after the Gwen Herga, so it was decided by email discussion to move the Gwen Hergas to March 11th)

Keith raised the point that players all seem to be unsure from the program about when the event is expected to finish and what refreshments are provided. The number of boards and details about refreshments are in the program. Val agreed to try to make the information more obvious.

iv) Distribution of ECBA Score Cards This is underway as mentioned earlier, but I will need cards back from Nicole for distribution to non-affiliated clubs as there are insufficient left at Barleylands to send out.

b. Hon. Treasurer's Report: Linda Fleet circulated her report which is attached in full (Appendix A)

Main Points discussed

1. Val is to be added as a signatory. Ted is willing to stay on as a signatory until that is all sorted.
2. Theo queried why cheques can't be made out to ECBA. Linda said that banks are getting stricter about payee names matching the name of the account.
3. There has been a drop in income from P2P due to falling numbers. The amount of the Essex portion will need to be discussed at the next meeting in October.
4. Mentoring expenses have been paid out of the Development Fund up to now. Linda, after discussion with Tony Philpott, has suggested that any further mentoring expenses be paid out of income and expenditure and leave the development fund for any expenses Keith might incur in promotion of teaching etc. There was no objection from the committee.

c. Hon. Tournament Secretary: We were sad to note that this would have been Sue Taylor's first report. The work Sue would have been doing has been covered mainly by Theo, Linda, Paul and Val and each reported on their particular parts.

i) There have been several events in June. The Warboys had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. The decision not to extend invites to specified pairs seems to have had an adverse effect. Paul tried sending an email to A and B squad players on the lines of "you are invited to play in this event with a partner of your choice" but that did not result in many entries. Other factors might include the clash with Fathers day and also the fact that this year every Sunday had a bridge event. There isn't always a County match in June, and the play with an expert was originally in July. It was decided that we should recommend that the selection committee revert to making it an invitation event and also to try to spread events a little better in next summer's programme.

ii) The George Curtis attracted one team from out of the county who were put together by the new matching service that Theo has put onto the website.

iii) There are more "ams" who need matching with "pros" than there appears to be from the website. We have more pros than we need. Bernie is to deal with the matching up. There should be enough pairs to make the event viable but still not large numbers. We need to start promoting this at places such as clubs and supervised play sessions bridge a bit sooner.

iv) The numbers entered for the Summer Seniors seems to be down, but hopefully there will be more entries as generally players are entering later and later. Players don't seem to realise that late entries can cause problems deciding whether or not an event need cancelling or how many to ask the caterers to cater for.

v) Paul and Theo have begun talking about ways of improving and maintaining the e-mailing lists. This is in early stages.

d. Hon. League Secretary: Bernie reported that the number of teams for next season is likely to be down as a few teams have dropped out but there is one new team likely to join. The likely number of teams for next season is 17 teams. It was decided that assuming that is the number then we will have 3 divisions of 6, 6 and 5 teams respectively. This means that only 1 team will be promoted

from division 2 and 1 from division 3. Also with smaller divisions there will be only one promotion and one demotion from each division at the end of next season. The possibility of having smaller divisions playing home and away was discussed. We may have to do that if more teams drop out, but otherwise we will stick with 3 divisions with 1 up 1 down each season.

- e. **Hon. Education Officer:** Keith Thompson circulated his report before the meeting and is attached in full (Appendix B)

Main Points:

1) Not many changes to Education/Teaching web pages yet. What is there is out of date/not working. Information on EBU pages no longer exists. Many of Teachers on the old list no longer teaching or email address is wrong. Keith says he needs to get together up-to-date information before updating website. He has started this but has only had a response from a few teachers and one club so far

2) What teachers want to do is to be able to publicise when new courses are starting, when they are running special events (seminars, bridge weekend etc). The impression is that the ECBA aren't willing to do this because it is considered to be commercial. It has been agreed that Keith can start publicising this sort of information, either through the website or by emailing clubs, with the only proviso being that a disclaimer is used to make it clear that the ECBA is not offering any recommendations or guarantees.

3) It was agreed that we need to improve the relationship with teachers and make the web page contain clearer and up-to-date information.

- f. **Hon. Webmaster:** Theo circulated his report before the meeting which is attached in full (Appendix C)

Points discussed:

i) He has introduced a partners and team mates request form on the entries spreadsheet following on from Marcia's suggestion at the AGM. It has resulted in a couple of teams being put together. It is too early to say whether it will really take off.

ii) He has done a lot of work on the spreadsheets and Eve Goblet points calculations. He suggested it would be useful if the League teams were entered via the on-line entry form as for other competitions so that he gets the details of the League Team members which is useful for Eve Goblet updates. Bernie agreed to ask the teams to do this (payment is going to be done via same method as other competitions, so this will help with reconciliation too)

iii) The cause of the problem with the George Curtis results this year was down to wrong scale being set up as club preference at the start. Bernie says that the director/scorer needs to be reminded before the start of play to check that the correct scale is in use.

5. **Replacement Tournament Secretary:** Val reported that Nicole Cook had offered to take on the role of Tournament Secretary either on a temporary or permanent basis. The committee were pleased to accept the offer. Paul mentioned that as Theo had done a lot of work on the competition entries and reconciliation with Linda and this appears to work well and fit in with the webmaster role, now is probably a good time to review what the Tournament Secretary/Director role should be. It was suggested that Nicole's primary responsibilities should be that of Tournament Director: arranging directors, getting equipment together and generally running the events on the day. Paul could continue with the mailing of publicity and reminders for events. The split of duties will be agreed between Paul

and Nicole and other committee members who may be affected. Theo will take over the reporting of entry statistics as he has control of the spreadsheets.

6. **Share Holder's report:** Margaret and Audrey went to the shareholders meeting on 13th May. There was no vote on the proposal to change the way that members of the standing committees are selected (Tournament Committee, Laws and Ethics Committee, Selection Committee for teams representing England). Currently these are elected by the shareholders. The proposal is that in future they are appointed by the board. Several current members of the Tournament committee were in favour of the changes with respect to the Tournament Committee so is likely to go through. Audrey and Margaret were in favour of the splitting the Laws and Ethics committee so that disciplinary matters were dealt with by a separate committee. This will be discussed again at the Chairmen's meeting. Paul said he intended to go to the Chairmen's meeting where these proposals will be presented.

Paul reported that these proposals were presented to the Chairmen's meeting and there was no opposition to the changes.

Audrey and Margaret also raised the issue of the LMBC's change of date of their Green Point event but the date change has gone through.

There is still a delay on the Bridge as a sport issue. Another representation to Sport England is due in July.

7. **Review of Metropolitan Cup Entry/Team selection:** The issue is whether or not we have enough players to field an A team for this event. Part of the problem is that it clashes with the Overseas Congress which a reasonable number of Essex players are attending. Audrey raised the point that one of the reasons we entered a team in the TGR league and reinstated the Warboys competition was to give the county squad more exposure to better competition and the Metropolitan Cup is one such opportunity. Bernie agreed to look at what the team make up would be if we put in A,B and C, and if we put in only B and C.

Subsequent to the meeting Bernie circulated an email stating that there were so few players available that it does not look viable to enter an A team and proposes that we enter B and C teams only and no A team players will be selected for the B team.

9. **Herts/Essex joint venture.** Linda Fleet stated that it was disappointing that the decision to allow the LMBC to hold their green point event the weekend before ours had not been changed so we will just have to be more proactive in promoting our own.

There is another problem with the September event in 2016 as the EBU has, for one year only, moved the Crockfords finals to the same weekend as the Green point events. The EBU has given us the choice of changing our green point weekend to the beginning of the month when the Crockfords used to be held. There has been discussion about whether to see what Surrey does as we are more likely to lose players to that than the Crockfords as there are likely to be no, or at most one, teams from Essex/Herts getting through to the finals. Surrey have decided not to change. Herts are about to discuss the issue at their committee meeting, A deposit has already been paid on the venue, although it should be possible to change the date. Other things that might affect the decision are: the new date is still within the holiday season; the new date is only 6 weeks after the July Green Point weekend; also if some of our regulars go to Surrey next year because we have changed, we might not get them back the following year. The committee decided it would be better to stick with the traditional date subject to Herts coming to the same decision.

Entries are going well for the next Green Point weekend in July, with entries compared with same time last year slightly up.

The September event this year will be at a new venue as the Ware venue was not available even though Mike Minting tried to book it last year. The new venue is slightly closer than Ware. A good venue but they won't be able to supply meals.

- 10. Friends of Essex** Val wanted clarification about how Friends of Essex are chosen. Recommendations should primarily come from the clubs. The committee can recommend people. Val will put out a request for recommendations in time for next year's AGM.

11. A.O.B.

The committee agreed that they were happy for Ted to continue as a signatory on the ECBA at least until Val is added as a new signatory.

- 12. Date of next meeting:** The date of the next meeting was set as Wednesday, 21st October 2015 at the Mollisons' home.

Paul closed the meeting shortly after 10.30 pm and the Committee thanked Val and Paul for their hospitality.

Appendix A: Treasurer's report

Treasurers Report 24.06.2015

Bank Balance at year end

£8,921 - Barclays

£15,365 - Skipton

Competitions

It was disappointing that the Warboys had to be cancelled and hopefully later in the meeting the probable reasons will be discussed and decisions made. The attendance at the other spring/summer competitions was about average with the Mixed Teams nearly back to its average. I am still waiting for some expenses to come in e.g. P2P but with the savings in refreshments and room hire most made a surplus

P2P

Total for the first three months is £819 (£919- 2014) which is an 11% drop. As this is comparing like for like for the Essex portion the drop is due to falling attendances and the loss of St Edith's as an affiliated club (Burnham on Crouch affiliated but then withdrew

The amount of the Essex portion will be put on the agenda for discussion at October meeting this year

Mentoring Expenses

The mentoring expenses will be settled after the final session of the year on the 7th July. (Bernie said that the sessions had already finished and he will send in his final expenses)

As mentioned in the minutes to the last meeting the costs of the mentoring have been met through the Development Fund and the balance of this stands at £597 which is approximately the cost of the mentoring for the year 2105/2016. I would like to propose that we put the future of the mentoring sessions on the agenda for our meeting in October when we can decide in view of our financial position at that time how much we need to transfer to the Development Fund to continue with the scheme or whether we should change the format. After a discussion regarding Tony P's suggestion that the expenses are now taken from the I & E account it was decided to leave the Development Funds available for Keith if he needed any funding and to agree to take expenses from I&E

The mentoring has produced some new steady county C players and so has achieved its objective The signature mandate has been forwarded to Val and Ted has said he is willing to stay as signatory

I have forwarded the signature mandate change to Val

Essex & Herts GP

It has already been mentioned that the EBU's Tournament Committee have rejected the appeal against allowing a GP event the weekend before Essex & Herts July 2016 Congress and Mike Minting has suggested putting an advert in English Bridge in the April Edition and just to be as proactive as possible. Richard Banbury is the new president of HBA and through Mike Minting he has thanked Bernard Eddlestone and Paul Mollison for their efforts on the counties behalf

There is another problem which has arisen for GP events on 24/25 September 2016. The EBU have decided to change the date of the Crockfords final as it clashes with the World Bridge Games in Poland. They have suggested to the Counties that have GP events that weekend a one year only change to 3/4 September 2016. Surrey have decided to stay at 24/25th September and Mike is consulting with the Herts committee and has asked for our opinion as to whether we should

change. We have already paid a £350 deposit to Wodeson so we are waiting to hear about availability.

After a discussion it was agreed that LF would advise Herts that they think that we should stay with original dates

Entries are rolling in for this July's event we have 54 pairs and 30 teams(this time last year we had 48 pairs and 28 teams so we are hoping to equal last year's final total of 120 Pairs and 51 Teams)

We have had to move the September 2015 event to Haileybury School as Wodeson was not available this year –Committee were shown a provisional Entry form

Appendix B: Education Officer's Report

ECBA EDUCATION OFFICERS REPORT (FOR 24th JUNE ECBA COMMITTEE)

Initial actions I have taken:

- replaced Alaric's name and contact details with mine on the website;
- removed from the website information about school Bridge. It was out-of-date, referring to Graham Foster;
- with Paul's help, "introduced" me to Club contacts as the new Education Officer and requested information (not much response). This included an invitation for entries to the Pro-Am;
- with Paul's and Theo's help, publicised a seminar on slam bidding at Thorpe Bay;
- responded to an enquiry re school bridge (via EBED and Paul) hopefully to some effect at least
- obtained information from Alaric re teachers, non-EBU clubs, contacts for "newcomer" competitions;
- acted as a potential newcomer to Bridge, using internet searches to find things. Not impressed with what I got from EBU or ECBA. Concluded that I need to review things, rather than just start tinkering;
- also concluded that I need to look at what the role and purpose of the Education Officer should be.

Role and purpose (the things in *italics* I'm less sure about, especially where *publicising* is involved):

- facilitate contact between potential students and teachers. So "*to help teachers get customers*";
- encourage entries in appropriate events and competitions with a view to bringing newcomers into more competitive ECBA events. The hard bit is *doing it effectively!*;
- provide information to newer players on where and how to develop their Bridge, *including non-EBU clubs because they are more likely to be newcomer-friendly*;
- liaise with EBU (EBED) if/as necessary, re teaching, etc;
- *provide help and advice, if/as appropriate, to teachers and people setting up (beginner friendly) clubs*;
- *publicise seminars, courses, learning opportunities, etc. Also, publicise teacher's availability to put on such events*;
- *publicise Bridge holidays (with learning content?) that our teachers are running. Also, publicise their availability to organise and run such holidays on request.*

The review so far:

- Alaric has put a lot of work in over a long time. I doubt I'll be able to do as much or do it as well. But (inevitably) things have got out of date over time and what we have doesn't really meet the purpose I've set out above;
- finding teaching via EBU is poor. It's not much better via ECBA, where the information is out-of-date and incomplete and where contacts don't seem to work;
- I have e-mailed teachers on Alaric's list seeking updates, ideas and views (this included an invitation for entries to the Pro-Am). I've had some responses and I've spoken to some teachers. Also I know what some teachers do anyway (eg Bernie). But one is deceased and others haven't responded or their e-mails have bounced;
- I've reviewed (as far as I can) Alaric's list of people to contact re the Pro-Am and Play-with-an-Expert competitions. From a list of some 150 names there are 4 who have ever played in the PWAE and two who have ever played in the P-A. The list may have been useful at one time but I

don't think it's up-to-date or useful now. Maintaining such a list effectively may be an impossible task;

- I've yet to review Alaric's list of non-EBU (so newcomer friendly?) clubs. Also, I know there are a lot of clubs (often U3A) where Bridge (but sometimes "not as we know it") is taught and played. I'd like better information on all this;
- the PWAE and P-A are nice competitions, subject to getting enough participation. But, firstly, they rely on the effort of a few people to drum up entries (especially the P-A) and, secondly, they aren't really meeting their objective of bringing new players into more competitive Bridge (I can find little evidence of that anyway). The PWAE looks more effective than the P-A, probably because it's more likely that newcomers will enter;
- I've had a look at what other Counties do. The Herts approach is straightforward and easy to follow. The Yorks approach is more complex (with a separate website) but as easy to follow for potential students. Yorks aim to enable teachers to update their own information, which is attractive. Both show that we could do things better.

Initial views based on my own thoughts and experience, plus looking at the information available, plus responses from Club contacts and (most importantly) from what teachers have told me:

- I've yet to hear from a teacher who's got any customers via EBU or ECBA. Their pupils come from word of mouth and local initiatives. The EBU teaching material is quite well-thought-of, generally, though;
- I don't find much interest from teachers in the PWAE and P-A competitions. They see it as "too early" and "too competitive" for their people. This doesn't make the concept wrong. It's maybe more to do with how we market and target these competitions. And maybe we should be looking more at "really easy" competitions too?
- I've no idea how to target "newcomers" for the PWAE and P-A. For sure the current list isn't effective. Maybe it's best done via Clubs, teachers, and "Pro"s?
- I've had little response from Clubs (whether EBU or non-EBU). Mostly they just get on with doing what they do;
- what teachers seem to want from us is:
 - i) new pupils/customers. The search stuff for teaching in Essex has to work much better than it does now;
 - ii) publicity. Maybe I should be the contact who can just point customers in the right direction;
 - iii) publicity. Maybe the website should give teacher details. But it must work better than it does now;
 - iv) publicity. New courses starting, one-off seminars, whatever. Anything that gets them customers;
 - v) publicity/promotion. Services, eg Bridge holidays, or the ability to run them, seminars, etc;
 - vi) current/accurate information. Reviewing and updating needs to be improved;
 - vii) maybe, contacts between teachers. Meeting up, exchanging information, whatever.
- all the teachers do it because they like and enjoy it. But they do it for income too. I think ECBA has, perhaps, frowned on this in the past (that's the perception I get from some teachers anyway). I think it's important we recognise they are businesses which we want to help and support;
- we don't have enough effective ways of helping new players into Bridge. Maybe we need to handle and promote non-EBU clubs better (if we can)?

What next?

Don't worry. I don't plan to give you a lengthy report like this every time! But I'm struggling to sort out just what I should be doing. By the next Committee meeting I'll, hopefully, be clear about the way ahead for the ECBA Education Officer role. I think It boils down to:

- obtaining up-to-date information and working out how best to maintain it subsequently;
- improving presentation of, and access to, this information (especially online);
- effective publicity and promotion of a wider range of regular and one-off learning and development opportunities;
- promoting competitions that are attractive to newer players and bring them into more competitive Bridge;
- overall, providing services that teachers, newcomers and clubs find more valuable than they do currently.

Keith Thompson

Appendix C: Webmaster's Report

- **General:**
 - **Club lists:** the list of 28 affiliated clubs is now correct. Hamlet Court and Ann Owen had allegedly not agreed to be listed, but Richard Perryman agreed on behalf of Hamlet Court. I never heard back from Ann Owen BC (Keith Williams), but they had the chance to object and I had a positive unofficial response from John Court.
 - I created a consolidated Competitions, Cups, Prizes, etc, page, and replaced specific information on entry fees + prizes within the individual competition pages by links to this page. However, for the convenience of competition entrants, I added entry fees to the pick-list on the entry form.
 - **Otherwise:** the site has been stable and updated promptly.
- **Partners / Team-Mates Required:** I created a form for this in response to a suggestion by Marcia at the AGM. The Burtts made use of it and found team mates for the Teams of 4 and George Curtis.
- **Education pages:**
 - I've left these to Keith at his request (but no change other than change of name, as far as I can see)
 - I put an advert for Marc Chawner's Slam Bidding course on the home page, with a link to the "Special Ads" page for further information (pending the development of Keith's pages)
 - I've insisted that no-one but me has rights over the home page, though obviously anyone can (and does) send me information to put on the home page.
 - but I'm happy (-ish) to subcontract specialist pages to others.
 - however (to be honest) I'd prefer to have control of the whole site to provide a uniform "look and feel", unless there's a particular reason for this to be overridden. I'm unlikely to hold things up.
- **Tournament Spreadsheet:**
 - I took this over from Sue, who'd taken it over from Ted.
 - I've put a lot of work into providing a better audit trail and reconciliation procedure which is complete, working and (more or less) documented.
 - I've also added sections for those seeking partners / team-mates.
 - I'll bring copies of the summary stats page along to the meeting (unless I forget ...)
- **Leagues & KOs (names & entries):**
 - I managed to get most of the names from various sources and updated the relevant pages. The tournament spreadsheet is now useful in this regard.
 - While people enter the knock-outs via the Tournament entry form, they don't in general do so for the Leagues. Currently, the Tournament spreadsheet only has two teams for the leagues: one from SE and one from W, though presumably there are more entrants known only to Bernie.
 - I'd prefer it if the same procedure was followed for all competitions.
- **Butlers:**
 - There seems to be some confusion in the minutes and in discussion between the ECL Butlers, currently produced manually, but which might be produced using Bridgemates and / or the scoring program, and those for the ECBA and other competitions that I produce.
 - Anyway, however produced, they are loaded on the website.

- Since the last meeting I've created Butlers for Collier Row Open Teams, Essex Mixed Teams and the George Curtis.
- **George Curtis Results:**
 - There was some alleged problem with results of the GC Teams which delayed publication for a couple of days, and was deemed to require Nicole's intervention. However, when Bernie loaded the results to Bridgewebs, there wasn't a problem at all.
 - I'd agreed to look into the problem, should there have been one, as Nicole had returned to NZ.
 - This raises a general question – I'd be happy to get involved in any technology issue, but have never actually been involved with the configuration of Bridgemates, or the use of the Scorebridge or Jeff Smith scoring software. I could do with some exposure to all of this – maybe I could look over Bernie's shoulder sometime at Barleylands, and then educate myself by reading the technical documentation?
- **Eve Goblets:** this was finalised fine for 2014/15 and is up and running for 2015/16.
- **Mini Websites:** All quiet. I added an advert / announcement feature which was used briefly for Bernie's special events. It takes me about 3 hours a month in total to keep the 14 sites up and running.
- **Bulk Email:** Paul mentioned that he and I should discuss how to get his email lists in order once things have quietened down a bit for the summer. We've not done anything on this yet, but my initial thoughts are:-
 - It's a fairly straightforward job to get all the contact details into a database, categorise them into various email groups, and write routines to populate a bulk mailer's address list(s).
 - I'd probably need access to the Essex EBU account to grab and maintain the lists using their data, and compare the EBU version with that obtained from other sources.
 - We should decide what bulk mailer to use. Paul uses GroupMail; the EBU uses YMLP; there's MailChimp and lots of others. If there are restrictions using the free versions, the Committee might agree to a small monthly cost?
 - It would be worth investigating the Bridgewebs bulk email facility (though it subcontracts the actual email sending to a third party).
 - It's possible to make the emails very snazzy (like the EBU Event Focus emails, and then some), though maybe not worth the bother.