

County Matters – Peter Watts

In the Tollemache Trophy (County Championships), we won 3 matches against Dorset, Wiltshire and Devon but lost to the very strong sides of London, Surrey, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Warwickshire. After a relatively poor Saturday, the team came back well on the Sunday but unfortunately some large deficits could not be recovered, although half match victories were achieved against London, Surrey and Yorkshire. In the Western League the county lost all three matches against East Wales (mainly the Welsh squad) but bounced back with two wins and a draw against Wiltshire – see website for placings. With Devon calling off the games in early January, the next Western League fixtures will be against Avon in February. **Congratulations** to Ben & Tom Paske who have continued to gain selection at England level and both were selected for the December Channel Trophy matches against France, Netherlands and Belgium. Ben, with Ed Jones, won the London Year-End Swiss Pairs & Tom came 4th in the Swiss Teams (the winners had Tony Forrester (Hereford) in the side). Hereford flying the flag, again! Well done.

Calendar

Friday 16 th January	7pm	Nat Pairs Qualifying Heat	Bartestree
Friday 23 rd January	7pm	Club Teams of 4 -2 nd Round	Ledbury
Friday 30 th January	7pm	No Fear Teams	Bartestree
Sunday 1 st February	10.30am	Swiss Pairs	Tarrington
Friday 20 th February	7pm	Mixed Pairs	Bartestree
Sat 28 th February	1pm	Club Teams of 8	Tarrington

News by e mail(Word)/ letters to the editor, 62 Huntsmans Drive, Kings Acre, Hereford HR4 0PN. 01432 354012 by 28/02/09 for the MARCH 09 Issue

email: stephen_booth@hotmail.com

Please make use of the County Website and make constructive criticisms.

[County website: www.herefordshirebridge.co.uk]

HEREFORDSHIRE BRIDGE

Newsletter 92

Herefordshire Bridge Association

Editor: Stephen Booth (01432 354012)

JANUARY 2009

Chairman's Chat from Tony Shadforth

2009 sees the start of the changes instituted by the EBU in support of their plans for universal membership. Although the pay-to-pay system will not be launched until April 2010, the pay-to-play fee will be determined this year, in time for the approval of Shareholders in October.

Likewise, Counties will be asked to resolve how they will raise their income against the background of these new arrangements. For a County such as ours a small add-on to the EBU pay-to-pay fee would be the simplest method; it would be easy for the EBU to collect the combined fee under the terms of their contract with individual Clubs and then return the County element to us.

More importantly, each individual Club will be invited to enter into a contract with the EBU in July. By then they will know what the deal is; what the services are provided by the EBU, what the Club has to do to collect and pay the fees, and what the cost is to individual members every time they play in a bridge session at their own or any other affiliated Club. In subsequent years the pay-to-pay fee will be set every October for the following year commencing in April, and Clubs will always be free to withdraw at the end of a financial year if they give 3 months notice.

Turning to matters more domestic, January marks the month when our own County programme of competitive events really takes off. Please take a look at your own HBA Programme or at the announcements on your Club notice board. There is a really rich variety of events coming up, aimed to appeal to the widest range of experience and interest. I do hope you will find something to attract you.

My best wishes for 2009 to all bridge players throughout our fair County.

Malvern Hills Bridge Club - new venue

Our web site is located at <http://www.bridgewebs.com/malvernhills> and there you will find our details, the salient ones being that we play Duplicate Bridge on Thursday evenings at 7pm (host available), at the Hanley Swan Memorial (Village) Hall, Welland Road, Hanley Swan, Worcs WR8 0EQ. David Silber (Sec)

NEW YEAR BRIDGE AT BROMSGROVE – Judy Mabe

This is something you might do if you feel like a change and it's an event where you will meet interesting, very serious and pleasant people. But it's not a 'holiday'. You'll play lots and lots and lots of Bridge.

Arriving at midday Jo Kelly and I lunched and then played bridge all afternoon. I don't know how many boards there were but the session lasted a long time. Then we had a break for tea and people discussed their good, bad or indifferent hands, their successes and their partners' mistakes. We continued playing again and later had a break for dinner. After dinner we played again.

Jo and I were very pleased to see a few other HBA players had come along too. We learned from them that we'd need stamina.

There was a bridge seminar the following morning, and in the afternoon and evening we played hundreds of boards again – although because it was Hogmanay, there was also a special dinner and free wine. Jo, being a Glaswegian (and feeling that a festive atmosphere was lacking) decided to make a wee speech and she addressed all the lasses and laddies; this went down very well and the mood lifted. (At last.) Jo then had a little more wine and made another wee speech, which also went down well. After all the corks had popped and we had sung Robbie's song, Jo and I joined / gatecrashed the hotel disco. Some other bridge players who were no longer very serious came and danced too.

On New Year's Day, our third day, a few participants attended the second morning seminar and we all played in teams in the afternoon and evening; this was fun.

We learned there was to be a "Welcome Newcomers Meeting" at 6 pm before dinner for people who had never attended a Hilton Bridge event before and that was a bit puzzling because it was nearly time to go home. I was glad when one of the other 'newcomers' asked why we hadn't been 'welcomed' and given information on our first day instead of on our last and was amazed at the organiser's response: "This isn't an easy thing to do." I made a few suggestions. . . .

Although by the end of our stay we were a little 'bridged out', we've now recovered and are, of course, looking forward to our next game.

Has our play improved? Mmmm, probably not. Why didn't we attend both bridge seminars? That's another story.

Take-out Doubles – Peter Watts

How often do your take-out doubles get confused? Many regular partnerships do not have a structured convention for take-out doubles and there is quite a range of them. How strong is yours? What do you say when opponents enquire the meaning of the Double? Many good scores can be had when you really understand each other and many disasters averted.

While it is too large a subject to detail here, an example hand came up recently in a County Knock-out match involving the John Griffiths' team and John Thacker's team.

East holds: - KQJxx, ---, AKJx, Axxx
West holds: - Axx, Jxxxx, x, Jxxx

Dealer North opens 1Heart, East doubles which, in the system played, has one of two meanings. Either 1.) a hand with a 4-card spade suit and about opening values OR 2.) a strong hand with a long suit and 17+pts. What it has NOT got is a balanced hand with a heart stop. After South passes, West bids 1NT, North passes and East bids 2S to show at least 5-card spades and a strong hand. With 1.) the 1NT would have been passed as partner is showing a heart stop. With this knowledge and no further bidding by opponents, West should jump to a game of 4Spades - with a very useful Ace Sp and the knowledge that partner is almost certainly short of hearts and a high chance of diamond ruffs in the West hand. In the play, East trumps the inevitable heart lead, cashes Ace Di, then ruffs a diamond, returns to hand with Ace Cl, ruffs a second diamond with AS and then plays a low spade. East now clears trumps and makes 10 tricks – losing 3 Club tricks. NB - Take out trumps early and the contract goes down.