

Chairman's Report  
KCBA Committee Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Firstly can I welcome Charles Scott to the Committee. Charles has kindly agreed to take on the post of Membership Secretary.

The biggest issue by far for us at the moment is the postponement of the final lifting of the Government Covid restrictions. This will have an obvious impact on the re-opening of clubs, counties and the EBU back into F2F bridge. We will therefore have to hold both our AGM and the Phillimore Cup online again this year. The Committee continue to work very hard on providing the best bridge experience as possible for our members with competitions and regular Saturday games online. Although numbers held up fairly well in the spring, especially the 9 high Saturday afternoon sessions, we have seen a considerable drop in numbers in recent weeks, which is probably a reflection of the easing of Covid restrictions and the warmer weather. We had a disappointing number of entries for our Swiss Teams on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, such that we had to combine with East Anglia to produce a decent field. However we are not alone in this, all counties are struggling for numbers for their events. The exact reasons for this are not clear.

My congratulations to the following Kent players who have had successes in the last 3 months.

At the Lambourne Jersey Congress in April (played online) Jill Skinner and Jeremy Willans won the Open Pairs, the Multiple Teams, playing with Ian Draper and Gwyneth Davies, and Swiss Pairs. Norman Selway, playing with Gilly Cardiff, won the Mixed Pairs.

David Stern and Sue Parkins won the Swiss Pairs at the Cambridge and Hunts BP event in April.

At the Easter 9 high event David Clyde and Peter Davis were the winners of the afternoon session.

Ron Davis won the Telegraph Salver for the most master points accumulated over the year.

In Kent Competitions me and my partner Christine Kempton won the George Griffiths Cup (seniors) pairs.

Stephen Brown, Michael Collins, Stefan Sypliwczak, and Phil Jones won the Arnold Cup. The Arnold Plate was won by John Hemington, John Amor, Jon Chapman, and Bill Charlwood.

The Larsky Cup was won by Jenny Kendall and Richard Sissons.

Congratulations to all.

The EBU held the annual County Chairs meeting online in May. The minutes are available on the EBU website. The main points are as follows. Financially the EBU have done better than they expected, due to a combination of redundancies, Government grants, individual and County donations (including Kent), deferment of WBF and EBF fees, and a better than expected income in the fourth quarter. However there will be significant challenges in the financial year to come and they anticipate a heavy loss.

Approximately 50% of affiliated clubs are playing online. Only 57% of EBU members have been playing online, but those members have been playing more sessions than pre-Covid. The figures from an online survey of County Chairs show that as many as 20% of pre-Covid clubs may not reopen. One benefit of the pandemic is that it has underlined the value of the EBU and a number of clubs countrywide have newly affiliated in order to receive the help in organising online sessions, as well as receiving general advice.

EBED reported that not many teachers have been teaching online. Everyone agreed that the overwhelming priority for the future was the recruitment of new players, and we received a presentation regarding this from Kay Preddy. There was also a report from the Yorkshire CBA regarding their online teaching programme, which was of great interest to me and may be a way forward in the future.

The EBU are planning to hold the Eastbourne Summer Meeting as F2F, and the Tollemache Final F2F as well. The Year End Congress will be a hybrid, a combination of online and F2F bridge.

As far as the future for Kent bridge is concerned, I have formed a sub group of the Committee to try to construct a plan for the future, both in the medium and long terms. As part of this we will be surveying the membership to ascertain their plans and wishes for the future. It is likely that we will continue with a mixture of F2F and online bridge, with some competitions being held entirely online. The pandemic has been a real challenge for all bridge players, but it is also an opportunity to examine everything that we do and ask ourselves if there is a better way to do them.

Norman Inniss

Chair KCBA 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021.