

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

JULY 2012

WWW.SCCBA.CO.UK

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## A NOTE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN - *Joy Mayall*

Hello everyone,

I am very happy to be writing my first newsletter introduction to you; it is a real honour to be your new chair. My aim will be to build on Jackie's work and to do my best to make Sussex bridge enjoyable for players at all levels.



Those of you who came to the AGM will know already that Jackie was made a Vice President to mark her service to the county and her extreme bravery in the face of the many difficulties she has encountered over the past 18 months. I know you will wish to join me in congratulating Jackie and to wish her well. She is eager to continue to work for us and will help with the new Mentoring Project we aim to start very soon.

For those who don't know me yet, I have been Chair of the Conduct committee for the past five years and during that time have got to know a little about Sussex players: you like to play bridge in a pleasant atmosphere and will not tolerate rudeness or anything that falls short of best behaviour at bridge – and nor should you! I am pleased to hand over the baton of Chair of that committee to Liz Hoskins who will I know do a good job.

Inside the calendar you will see the names of your new committee and their roles and responsibilities. Please contact me if you would like to help us in any way and we will be pleased to have you on board. Bridge might be a competitive game but it is a collaborative one too! So all are welcome and encouraged to chip in and help where they can on or off committee.

May I direct your attention to the results of the feedback from the survey. Much was encouraging but it was pointed out that we have areas to improve too. As such, we have decided to introduce a 'find a partner scheme' – by creating a 'members only' forum online; and have already set up a group to look at developing a mentoring scheme. You wanted more clarity on the qualifications for semi and final competitions and you will find an article inside on that in more detail. We will be trying to encourage you in the future to visit our website more often where there will be a plethora of up to date information available; we would also like to communicate with you via email to save on postage costs - Eddie Williams who has taken over the role of Membership Secretary is assembling a database of your email addresses and would be pleased to have yours to add to it: [sccbamembers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sccbamembers@hotmail.co.uk)

Finally, we thought we would have one or two 'fun' competitions to add to our tournament list. Golf/Bridge and Bowls/Bridge. Our 1st County golf/bridge competition will be held on 19th Sept (see flier inside this newsletter) and our Bowls/Bridge competition will be advertised in the next newsletter. No masterpoints I am afraid, but lots of fun!

Have a good summer.

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## CLUB NEWS

### **The Bognor Club** - *Sheridan Stevens*

Members of The Bognor Club would not agree with George V's alleged last words, "Bugger Bognor" for they turn out in droves to support one of Sussex's largest, liveliest and friendliest bridge clubs.

We are proud to boast that we are the oldest bridge club in Sussex, having been established in 1871 as a gentlemen's club

before relocating to a fine Georgian building in 1893, coincidentally around the time that John Collinson was formulating his bridge rules.



Another “first” is the Club’s claim to be the only bridge club in the UK that has a minstrels’ gallery. It is testament to the buildings’ history but, today, the gallery is only used to string up Christmas decorations, not minstrels - unless they misbid!

The traditional setting belies the Club’s ethos to use modern technology, such as Duplimate and Bridgemate. We play at least one session every day of the week, except Sunday. There are also lessons and supervised play for improvers and we plan to add further tuition programmes in the future.

As well as members-only competitions, we host several County events. Guests are always given a warm welcome at the Club but we particularly welcome members of other SCCBA clubs to join us for the County Competitions.

Bridge is the Club’s main activity with snooker a close-run second. We also host chess, music and book clubs; a veritable feast of interests for members.

We must be doing something right because we have members of 50 years’ standing. But we are always delighted to see new faces; young, old, in-between and, especially, minstrels!

Find Us At: 2 Sudley Road, Bognor Regis, PO21 1EU, [www.bridgewebs.com/thebognorclub/](http://www.bridgewebs.com/thebognorclub/) Jen Wright 01243-583856

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**LOOKING FOR A BRIDGE PARTNER FOR COUNTY EVENTS?**

Would you like to play in county events but you don’t have a partner? Then why not try to find a partner by using the ‘Members Only’ facility on the SCCBA web-site? To use this facility, you’ll need a Registration Code. To obtain this code, please email the SCCBA webmaster (using the link on the SCCBA web-site home page) giving your name and EBU number. Once you’ve registered, you’ll be able to login and leave a message - for instance, indicating your playing standard and the county events that you’d be interested in playing in.

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## A CHALLENGE FOR YOU

“It is fair to say that bridge is a game that we all love and want to keep thriving in the years to come... would you be prepared to mentor a next generation player?”

In the recent SCCBA survey 53 members responded YES to the challenge presented. A small group has now been set up to create a project within the county to take this enthusiasm forward.

The group would very much like to hear views and ideas from any members on how they see such a project developing. An email has been sent to those members who gave email addresses; unfortunately some of the members responding “yes” did not give an email address - if you are one of those or indeed did not respond and would like to be involved, the group is as follows and would love to hear from you:

Gerry Stanford [gezukstanford@hotmail.com](mailto:gezukstanford@hotmail.com)

Ann Bennell [annbennell@hotmail.com](mailto:annbennell@hotmail.com)

Jackie Clinton [jackie.clinton@btinternet.com](mailto:jackie.clinton@btinternet.com)

Julia Simpson [jbs@backsettown.demon.co.uk](mailto:jbs@backsettown.demon.co.uk)

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## NOMINATION OF CHARITIES FOR SCCBA EVENTS

Attention all members – nominate a local charity to be supported by the SCCBA.

The SCCBA Charity events will be held in January 2013. The charities to be supported will be considered at the next management committee meeting. Please send your nomination, by 15 July, to the SCCBA Charity Coordinator – [jbs@backsettown.demon.co.uk](mailto:jbs@backsettown.demon.co.uk)

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## PICKING QUALIFIERS FOR FINALS - *Martin Pool*

In the past, this subject has been seen by some as controversial. In this article I aim to remove the mystery which has surrounded it in some members' eyes and

make our approach clear to all. The County uses the EBU model for equitably selecting qualifiers from heats to go forward to semi-finals and finals and the initial steps are:

- The event Organiser decides how many pairs are required for the final and makes sure we comply with EBU regulations regarding awarding master points e.g. the Championship Pairs final must be all play all.
- Next the same percentage of qualifiers is taken from each heat to make up the number required for the final.

For the Organiser the more difficult part is filling gaps left by those qualifiers who find they cannot play. Further steps are involved to reach an equitable position:

- Initially the first reserve pair is taken from the heat where someone has dropped out. All first reserves rank in front of any further reserves.
- After that places are filled by taking players from the heats with the lowest percentages already selected. Most heats have at least slightly different numbers of entrants so that percentages selected will be slightly different too.
- If a pair is needed from heats having the same percentage then it is the pair with the smallest percentage gap to the pair above them that will be selected first.
- If this does not split any tie then the pair with the highest percentage is selected.
- If the above fails to split the tie a random ballot is used.

There is also the case where one or more pairs is/are needed on the day and it becomes impractical to wait for the next reserve(s) to reply. In this case the Organiser will do his/her best but he/she has to fill the place and will therefore take a reserve that can play at such short notice even though they are not the next in line.

From this, it can be seen that if a pair cannot play, they should inform the Organiser as soon as possible to give him/her the best possible chance of filling the vacancy, according to the rules.

Don't let any of this put you off entering, as we would rather you played in the heats even though you cannot play in the final, than not play at all.

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## OBITUARIES

### **Margaret North** - *by Julian Mitchell*

I was sixteen years old when I first played at the Avenue in 1980. We had already played at the Claremont, the strong club, two streets away in our suits and shiny faces, where we learned of the Avenue, the friendly club. We went to play on a Thursday evening, and whilst it was clear that the standard of play was not quite as high as at the Claremont, the warmth of the welcome was everything that I had been led to expect – and the main reason for that was Margaret Crabb.

Margaret Crabb owned and ran the Avenue with her mother, Elsie Infield – Elsie very much in charge of the bar from her vantage point sitting South at table five. A warm welcome was guaranteed, not just from Margaret, who made you feel at ease from the moment you walked in and who impressed me with her perfect recall, never failing to remember anyone's name; but also from the menagerie. The dogs, Tam and Tosca, would be all over you given any encouragement – with the cats Jessie and Jennifer sometimes deigning to put in an appearance. Not all the natives were friendly however. Woe betide the unsuspecting patsy who tried to tickle Grendel the cat's tummy – not a mistake that you made twice. Margaret's strong affection for animals, which also extended to horses and horse riding, brought her some local notoriety – ending up in the pages of the Argus when she protected Tam from a vicious bull terrier by the simple expedient of sitting on top of it!

Margaret built up the Avenue into becoming the best supported bridge club in Sussex in the 1980s – regulars can well remember what having a full house would mean: twelve tables upstairs and eighteen tables downstairs with extra tables then placed in the fireplaces in the playing rooms, in the bar, two in the hallway and even on the landing – all of which would lead to journeys of

discovery for the E/W pairs navigating their way around the room. It was just as popular in the afternoons with a thriving 30p/100 rubber bridge game taking place every day upstairs, whilst downstairs there would be 2p/100 partnership games, other low stake rubber games as well as a duplicate every Tuesday afternoon.

Margaret was a convivial hostess. The bar didn't shut until you had all had enough (or too much!), with the post duplicate chat inevitably starting with the words, "You hold ...". Whilst Margaret was not greatly taken with bridge competitions away from the Avenue, she did win the SCCBA Autumn Congress Pairs in 1985 with Joyce Hunter in one of her rare forays into the tournament world.

It was a sad day when Margaret announced her intention to sell the club in 1994 – it was very much an end of an era and we all knew it. Margaret, Elsie and the menagerie went to live in Battle in a well-earned retirement. Well, semi-retirement. Margaret's love of animals was placed on a professional footing as the menagerie decamped to run a cattery in Battle.

Sadly Elsie was not alive to see Margaret marry Freddie North, who of course had a long association with the Avenue – not just through being its most successful rubber bridge player – but also through the Sussex School of Bridge, which Freddie ran on Wednesday evenings at the Avenue. Margaret and Freddie moved to Shoreham and now played their bridge at Worthing Bridge Club, but still would not retire, running bridge cruises with P&O up until 2002. Sadly, when Freddie died in 2009, Margaret was left in failing health herself with Sasha the dog for company - a lifelong cigarette habit contributing to circulatory and breathing problems, which were to restrict her ability to get out and about in her final years.

For many like me, Margaret's name will always be inextricably linked with that of the Avenue Bridge Club. Whilst many helped out – Margaret's Avenue is where I learned to direct (yes, I am still learning) - she was the driving force behind its success in its 1980s heydays, which I hope explains why almost all my memories of the Avenue's success in those times are inevitably also memories of Margaret.



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## **Brian Loasby** - *by Peter Gannon*

Brian Loasby died overnight at his home in Ringmer on Thursday 26th April. He had been a member of Lewes bridge club for over 20 years and played regularly on both the Tuesday evening and Thursday afternoon sessions. Indeed he played the Thursday afternoon before his death. He was a club director for many years. He was also the club's representative on the county committee, before his ill-health forced him to give up these roles, and he was fond of telling colleagues that he had been an EBU national director. When Lewes had its congress event in the 1990s, Brian was responsible for the catering operation and did so successfully. He was master points secretary for a number of years on the county committee, a role he fulfilled diligently.

The main love of his life was his time in the RAF, and he used to relate many stories about this time at the bridge table, being particularly proud of his association with the V bombers of the 1950s. He leaves behind a son and a daughter.

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## **SURVEY RESULTS** - *Editor*

Here is a quick interpretation of the survey that was sent out to SCCBA members in January. For detailed results, please see the website.

So most of you have been playing bridge for 10 to 40 years, unsurprisingly, with those with more than 40 years experience slightly outnumbering those with 10 or less. Consequently perhaps, most describe themselves as either Intermediate or Advanced (84%) whilst there are four times more Experts (12%) than Beginners or Novices (3%). The most popular events are the Sim pairs, followed by the Congresses and the League.

On the question of whether all Sussex events should be open to all EBU members or not, there was a small win in favour, but a clearer win in the case of Congresses.

On the events section, you supported a mid-week two-session one day event and preferred it to be held on a Wednesday. Your wishes have been granted, with a Swiss pairs event organised on the 31st October in Henfield. Mixed heats seem popular but the introduction of stratified events, where the rankings



are separated according to Master Point ranks, only just got the nod. You seem undecided about supporting county championships events (Sussex pairs etc.) if the costs were kept to a minimum, but, not surprisingly, do not seem concerned about what happens to the championship teams plate, and have little intention of entering a team in the League, all of which suggests that these events are run mostly for a small, but keen, group of players.

As for organisation of events, you want shorter meal breaks, an earlier start and no meal included in the entry fee. Fair enough. For those who don't attend our congresses, it seems not having to travel too far only to find a bully at the table would make you reconsider your participation. In other words, if you live in Chichester, and go to an event held in East Grinstead, you'd rather not have to explain that, if you hesitated for a couple of seconds before passing, it was because a card was stuck behind another.

Quite a few seem prepared to help as organisers or directors (12% of respondent) and most of you know about the conduct committee. A staggering 13% of you have stopped playing in a county event as a result of a player's behaviour. So more improvements needed there too. Don't stop. Use the conduct committee.

Regarding our communications, you have internet access, yet overwhelmingly prefer to read a printed version of the newsletter (66%), but are quite happy to receive information via email as an alternative.

Finally, on the idea of mentoring, 46% of you are prepared to mentor a next generation player (see article in this issue) and you are happy for the county to organise sessions (80%) but not so warm to the idea of attending them yourselves (52%). Still, quite strong support for the idea. Hopefully you will put this in practice. It's important.

### **Survey draw winner**

Frank Sansom of Crawley Bridge Club was the lucky prize winner of the Survey draw, enabling him and a partner to enter a county competition free of charge in the coming year.

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RESULTS - A LIST OF WHO'S WON WHAT SINCE THE LAST  
EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER

January 2012

**Elisabeth North Final:** Jean-Pierre Simon & Liz Hardisty, Lynne Spooner & Jack Vidler - **Jackie's Pairs:** Gerry Stanford & Dave Franklin - **SCCBA Charity Simultaneous Pairs:** Andy Ryder & Mike Allen - **SCCBA New Year Swiss Teams:** Jill Armstrong & Liz Hoskins, Nigel Osmer & Vida Bingham (pictured)



February 2012

**Sussex Individual Final:** Reg Underwood - **Senior Simultaneous Pairs:** Tilly Hennings & Jack Woodard - **David Pavey Final:** Paul Londesborough & Sheridan Stevens

March 2012

**SCCBA Mixed Pairs Final:** Neil Watts & Christine Jepson

April 2012

**Teams of Eight:** 1st Horsham, 2nd Avenue, 3rd West Sussex - **Spring Congress**  
- **Swiss Teams:** John Jackson & Leon Northeast, Yves Lebrec & Peter Brown  
- **SCCBA Welcome Pairs:** Susan Napper & Katherine Holdbrook - **Spring Congress** - **Swiss Pairs:** Espen Erichsen & Andrew Cairns - **Spring Congress** - **Mixed Pairs:** Malcolm Wright & Joy Mayall - **Spring Congress** - **Basic Bridge Pairs:** Barry Sowton & John Watling - **Sussex Pairs Final:** Andrew Southwell & Ian Lancaster

May 2012

**Hastings Basic Bridge Pairs:** Garrick Oliver & Marion Boswell

AND FINALLY, AT LAST, SOME BRIDGE TECHNIQUE...

**Mad, Bad or Unlucky?** - *Richard Fedrick*

Take a look at the hand below, which I played in a League match a couple of years ago. The Ace of clubs is onside, there is no diamond ruff, no voids, and trumps break 2-2. Ten tricks are completely cold, and yet I managed to make just nine for an ignominious -100.

	<p>♠ Kxxx ♥ KJxxx ♦ Qx ♣ xx</p>	
	<p>N W E S</p>	
	<p>♠ Axx ♥ AQxxx ♦ Kxx ♣ Kx</p>	

I played in 4H (opponents silent) on the lead of the Queen of spades. How did I go off?

At first sight, it looks like a 50% contract. There are three unavoidable losers in spades and diamonds and clubs, so the game is essentially on the position of the Ace of clubs. Are there any additional chances? Yes, two:

- (1) West might hold the Ace of diamonds, precisely singleton or doubleton. This is an additional chance so tiny I cannot compute it at the table (1.16%, in case you are wondering), so I ignore it.
- (2) More promisingly, I have an additional chance if spades are 3-3, since I can build a club discard. This also requires that I can keep East off lead (so he cannot fire a club through). What are these odds?

I need spades 3-3 (36%), and the diamond Ace on my left (50%), which is 18%, and the additional chance is only relevant if the club Ace is wrong (50%), so that improves my chances to 59% in total. This is on the reasonable assumption that LHO has the spade Jack for his lead, in which case I can always arrange to lose my spade trick to him (win in hand, subsequently lead up towards dummy. If he ducks I play King and another, if he pops Jack I duck).

That's a useful extra 9%, but I was mindful of Bobby Fischer's chess maxim: if you think you've found a good move, look again and try to find a better one. Can I improve my odds? In particular can I make it if the diamond Ace is on my right? Yes, probably: suppose I duck the opening lead in both hands, losing my spade trick early when the defence have less information. Won't West, looking at something like QJ10 xx Jxxx Axxx, just play another spade, thinking he's fished out a good'un for a change? If so, that's another 9%, bringing my odds to a healthy 68%.

This plan is not completely without risk however – it will cost the contract whenever spades are 5-1 (7%) and the club Ace was right all along, so about 3.5% of the time. So it is a good idea if I think West (who shall remain nameless, but we'll call him 'Mike Keeping' for convenience) will plug away, fatally, with a second spade at least 40% of the time (because  $40\% \times 9\% > 3.5\%$ ).

I have good news and bad news to report. The good news is that my cunning ruse succeeded, and West innocently played another spade at trick 2. The bad news, spades were indeed 5-1, East chortled merrily as he took his unexpected ruff, and that was 12 imps away.

*The SCCBA newsletter is published twice a year. Please email any comments (including, news items, results, pictures and articles to Yves Lebrech, Editor ([sccba@lebrech.com](mailto:sccba@lebrech.com))).*