East Wales Bridge Association

Chairman’s Report AGM

29th April 2018

Good afternoon and welcome. Thank you all for coming today; apologies to those of you who have little interest in the intricacies of our AGM, but it’s a legal requirement; I hope we won’t delay the resumption of the bridge, but in the meantime I hope that you are all enjoying this great feast provided by Helen and her crew.

Two significant additions to our committee this year. The first actually happened at last year’s AGM, when Adrian Trickey volunteered his services to the committee. He actually wanted a job, not just to be a committee member. It so happened that our secretary had finished two months previously. I thanked Adrian very quickly and accepted his kind offer before he had a chance to reconsider, and for the last year he has done a tremendous amount of work for us, as any club secretary will be able to confirm. No members should be in any doubt about our planned events. Thank you so much, Adrian.

At last year’s AGM, I reported that this year, it would be the turn of East Wales to submit a nomination for President of the Welsh Bridge Union, to take over from the current President at the AGM in June. I asked for suggestions, but answer came there none. I suppose Simon G and myself would have been candidates, but we are both far too tied up with work and family responsibilities.

Time passed, with us no further forward, until a couple of months ago, I was struck by a bolt similar in scale to Saul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. The lights came on and there she was-Sarah, recently moved to Pontypridd and now an East Wales member. I asked her if she might be interested, and fortunately she was. There was unconfined, unadulterated joy amongst the committee, the usual reaction being ’Why the hell didn’t I think of her?’ Sarah will be crowned at the WBU AGM on 3RD June. Our Treasurer, Simon, has commissioned a Bardic Chair for the occasion, and Gwynn Davies will sing the National Anthem.

Each year at the same venue as the Welsh Bridge Union’s AGM (they have one too, in June!), the Perry Shield and Spickett Bowl are contested between the four areas. East Wales is defending the Perry Shield. Well done, Gwynn, Sue, Simon, Chris, Filip and Tony who won last year. We wish our 2018 teams the best of luck. Also at stake is the President’s Cup, for less experienced players. East Wales have won this for the last two years. We try and get a member club to provide the three pairs required. Last year a squad from Rhiwbina triumphed. This year, we are sending a Mid Glamorgan team to Llandrindod with our best wishes. This club have for a long time remained somewhat in the background when it comes to supporting East Wales events. I’m pleased to say that Glenda and Phil have taken it upon themselves to encourage their members to get more involved in supporting our events. We hope they are successful.

It is my pleasant duty to thank the committee for all the hard work they have put in during the year. I’ve mentioned Adrian already; Simon has had a very trying year as Treasurer with the upcoming email-right to privacy legislation that forbids sending bridge marketing information to anyone who has not specifically asked for it even though they may want it and have been having it for years quite happily. Please all sign up for Mailchimp on the WBU webpage, and get your friends to do so as well.

Our wonderful ATO, Helen, whom I recruited less than two years ago is now organising not just East Wales events but increasingly, National events which are gradually migrating to East Wales because most of the competition players reside here. She is also entry secretary for events both local and National. Her partner in crime, Mieke, does all our posters, entry brochures and organises the printing thereof. Helen and her band of helpers are also responsible for organising the meal today.

In addition to all our other competitions, we run two weekend green-point Congresses every year. There is our two-day Swiss Teams Congress in February. Then in August we have a one-day Swiss Pairs on Saturday followed by a day of Swiss Teams on Sunday. Booking is already open for the Congress on 4th and 5th August. You can see leaflets for it here today. Go to the EWBA website and book your places! As usual, we will be at the Lysaght Institute, Newport which has proved to be an excellent and popular venue. Come and play! Tell your friends to come and play! Great bridge with efficient tournament direction in a light, airy space. Those who haven’t played there before really should come and give it a try. You don’t have to play both days. Try the pairs or the teams, whichever suits you best. But I bet that most newcomers to a Congress would want to play both events the next year. Simon leads our Congress organising committee with great help from Helen, Meike and Steve. And I must mention Irene Thomas who was our entry secretary for many years. She has now passed on that role to Helen. We are very grateful to Irene for providing such an efficient and friendly presence, the link between the Congresses and our players.

Steve Webb organises the East Wales leagues and the Western League, both of which take up a great deal of time and effort. Julie from the Monmouth club is helping to organize more bridge teaching. Thanks to Jason who runs our website. We are all pleased to see him back after a spell in hospital. Do check the site regularly. All our news about bridge in East Wales is posted there.

I should like a show of gratitude please, for ‘this happy band of men (and women), this little world’, as Shakespeare put it, which most of you have no idea exists.

I am very pleased that we are seeing more frequent and more regular representation of clubs at our East Wales committee meetings. But there are one or two clubs who are seldom represented. Please try to join us. It’s only a couple of hours in the afternoon, about six times a year. We send out agendas and minutes so you will always know when there is some matter that particularly affects your members. But you don’t have to wait for that. Come and contribute to our discussions and decisions! All clubs are entitled to send representatives and we are always happy to have more volunteers who just turn up at our meetings and see if there is anything they can do to help. Thank you, Cardiff BC for providing a room for most of our meetings (even if we have felt the cold numbing our fingers and toes during some winter afternoons; it helps us get on with business as fast as we can!). And thanks are due to all the clubs who host our events, often providing the TDs, the equipment and the refreshments. Well done!

Thanks again to everyone who has contributed, and sincere apologies to anyone whom I’ve missed out. Enjoy the rest of the day, and we hope to see you all at our events next season.

Geoff Evans

EWBA Chairman

28th April 2018