

LYTHAM BRIDGE CLUB NEWSLETTER

October 2020

Foreword by the Chairman - Jack Henderson

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter 2020.

I am sending to you an especially long newsletter this time. I hope you enjoy news about what is happening with our Club in these strangest of times.

Not for us; depression from today's doom laden journalism and pessimistic media; oh no, we have reason to be of good cheer.

Why? Because our committee and members, continuously and willingly contribute so much to the Club. Attending to endless tasks and duties to maintain the Club's wellbeing. For a start, the premises are regularly checked by us. Also our Club Secretary, Jeremy Stanforth, has trained with the EBU to be qualified in order to run the on line bridge session on Wednesday evenings. Our training classes have also moved on line- more details below. Yes, it can be said that we have all adapted well to our changed circumstances.

We are committed to resuming our welcoming and friendly Bridge sessions at our Club house when the situation allows. We are all missing the social contact and friendship which contact at the bridge table brings.

We can also be grateful that we own our premises and have a healthy Bank account. Two very significant assets in these difficult times.

A special thank you, to all members who renewed membership this year and a very warm welcome to new members. Keep safe.

Jack

An Update from our President - Pauline Cope

This has been a very difficult and unusual year for us all and I know you will have missed your bridge as I have. As the restrictions continue, I'm sure, like me, you are beginning to find it difficult to fill your days. There are only so many cupboards that need tidying, so many jigsaws that need doing and so many books that need reading !! I won't even mention the repeats on the TV.....

I resisted playing bridge on line for quite sometime as I'm sure, like you, I enjoy the social interaction as much as the cards, but I have succumbed and it is quite enjoyable. It's not the same as meeting up at the bridge table, of course I believe a lot of members have renewed their subscriptions, so we are all thinking positively, we will get back to the club. I know the committee will reopen as soon as they are able and it is safe to do so. Until that happens, I wish you all well, take care and stay safe.

Comments from Chief Tournament Director - John Dearing

Lytham Club Online Sessions

We have an online session available to **all** members every week on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. You can join in by logging onto Bridge Base online (commonly referred to as BBO) and letting Jeremy know that you want to play. He will ensure that your log on id is included in the list of permitted names that can join in.

We have been running sessions since August and we have excellent numbers of players participating but we would always welcome more. There is a great variety in experience of participating members so

please don't think you are not good enough. If you are still uncertain about playing online there is lots of information available about how to do it. Jeremy has some information on the club website and there are lots of videos on You Tube (everything is on You Tube!).

There are differences from playing pairs online from Face to Face bridge (as we seem to call it now). You get about 7 minutes a board to play which should be ample. If you don't finish a board you will usually be given an automatic adjusted score. Also, partner does not alert your bid, you have to alert your own. Typing in text can be tricky if you use a tablet or ipad to play, rather than a laptop, but it becomes easier with practice. Again, lots of information about how to play online is out there, you just have to look for it.

The reason we have online sessions is that Kate May & Jack Henderson were keen to get the sessions going. Jeremy Stanforth has taken the appropriate EBU courses to learn how to run an online session and has done all the work to get the sessions going. If you are computer savvy and are keen to help then let Jeremy know.

Kate May, Team Captain, enlarges on the joys of playing on line

Who would have thought, when Lytham Bridge Club closed in February, that this wouldn't be for just a few weeks, but for a year or more? We now realise that opening in Spring next year is probably the best we can hope for. I miss very much seeing most of the other members on a weekly basis: I often wonder how people are and what is happening to them. But I am not missing the game of bridge per se, because I can play as often as I like on line and it's better than I thought it would be.

As winter approaches it even has advantages. Instead of driving out on a cold, wet night, wondering if the road will be flooded, I can settle down in a comfy chair, with a hot drink for company (or a big glass of wine, but don't tell my partners) and play for a couple of hours.

Many of our members do play on line. There are several sites on which you can get a game; some of you, I know, play social bridge with 3 friends, or more competitive games, in pairs format just like Lytham Bridge Club. The EBU run several every day. Also, of course, there are the tuition and practice sessions run by our hard working teaching team which quite a few more experienced players do take part in.

Best of all, for the majority of us, Lytham Bridge Club has its own competitive session each Wednesday evening. It's open to both members and visitors with some connection to Lytham, not total strangers, and we now have over 60 people signed up. But I do believe more members would find real enjoyment in playing in these on line sessions if they just gave it a try. Honestly it's not as complicated as you might think, and although it will never be the same as meeting round a bridge table, having a chat and handling a real pack of cards, it is good fun and a wonderful way to keep in touch.

Perhaps we can start a second session, maybe Friday afternoons, and try to replicate the lovely games we used to have on Tuesdays and Fridays. We would allow a little more time to play each board so that no one would feel rushed to do things right when they first start, and in some ways bridge is a bit easier on line. You don't worry about leading out of turn or revoking- the computer won't let you! You can talk to each other by way of little typed messages and with a bit of effort make it as much like a face to face game as possible.

The Lytham sessions are played on a site called Bridge Base Online (BBO) and cost about £2,50 each time. Some of this comes back to Lytham Bridge Club. You pay in dollars, which you buy in advance using a credit card or PayPal. BBO has been around for many years and is perfectly safe. I use it with absolute confidence.

You will have gathered the aim of me writing this piece is to encourage more members to keep in touch with each other (even more important now we are virtually locked up again) by means of the online games. We can only think of a second weekly session if we know members would like it. If any members would be interested in playing in an afternoon, more relaxed, session please let us know. You

can ring me on 01772 686780, text me on 07505730283 or contact me at katemay17@icloud.com. either to just say you are interested or for help in getting started. I can talk you through how to sign up to BBO and register for Lytham games.

Let's keep in touch through our much loved game and keep Lytham B.C alive until we can get together again.

Peter White Zooms in

Our bridge club has been closed for over six months and we have been unable to meet up and play. As disappointing as this is, we have to adapt to difficult circumstances and, in March, I came to realise that, to continue our teaching programme, we needed to use digital technology and the internet. With help from the English Bridge Teachers' Association and support from Anne Burgess, Bill Bowden and Jeremy Stanforth, I set up the Tuesday afternoon teaching sessions utilising Zoom, a videoconferencing facility, and Bridge Base Online (BBO). These sessions have proved very popular and, after our initial experimental period and with support from the committee, we invited members from Clifton and Poulton Bridge Clubs to join us.

The sessions consist of a PowerPoint presentation via Zoom on a topic of the day. This lasts for about half an hour and afterwards, on BBO, we play 10 boards which are related to the chosen topic. These weekly sessions continued throughout the summer until mid-September at which time the teaching team had a well-earned break.

In early October we started a new series of sessions and these will continue until December. We have 23 players in the group, mostly from Lytham Bridge Club. We will be looking at several aspects relating to One NT, Managing Major Suits, Strategies in Declarer and Defence Play, Hand evaluation and Signals and Discards. Our plans for the New Year are being formulated.

I am sure we are all looking forward to our return to the bridge club but Government and local restrictions will delay that for some time to come. Meanwhile stay healthy

Game Changer from Ollie

When I learnt bridge, the advice given by my mum when declarer was, "what is your first instinct? Look at the percentage play, then go back to your first instinct." A life lesson in itself.

Monday 7th September found me at Preston Train station waiting to board the 12.15pm train to London Euston. What found me on this train?

Bridge has always been a huge part of my life - when I graduated from university in 2006, I was not brave enough to consider doing it full time. My thoughts at the time were that I should follow a traditional career path and do bridge on the side enjoying job security whilst still being able to play and teach my favourite game. At the start of lockdown and with no opportunity to play bridge, I saw an advert for online duplicates at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club in London. I contacted Paula Leslie, the treasurer of the club - someone I knew well enough to say hello to at tournaments but nothing more. Paula - a top ladies international player- was short of a partner that particular Friday night so invited me to play and there began my love affair with the club.

Friday evening quickly became the highlight of the week (after the foodshop) and I would reconnect with a whole host of my southern friends and partner them on a Friday evening. What made the experience more enjoyable was the obligatory Zoom chat afterwards where 4 or 5 of us would go through the hands, catch up and drink wine until the early hours of the morning.

Working from home in my current legal job was becoming increasingly unbearable and at the end of July, I saw an advert for the YC Manager. Paula pointed me in that direction and I quickly dismissed the prospect. Three other people also saw the advert and repeated Paula's message. Well, why not send a speculative application as this was all a bit of a pipe dream that would never materialise.

I was emailed back promptly and called for a Zoom interview with the YC Management Board. A few days later having armed myself with club knowledge, my 40 minute interview commenced. Like most the population, I felt the interview did not go well. My mum comforted me and said it did not matter if I did not get the job to which I instantaneously replied, that I had set my heart on it and I would be gutted- talk about a u-turn.

To my amazement, I received a second interview which was to be on the following Sunday whilst I would be staying with my best pal in South Manchester. Interview had but this time it felt better and I was cautiously optimistic. My friend, Chris, shared the optimism (him and his dog had been listening in!) and he said "let's go get some booze from the supermarket as we will be celebrating tonight." Email within an hour offering me the job and so began a huge life change (with a slight hangover the next morning).

Back to the 7th September - I am quite a sensitive person but I managed to hide my tears until my mum had left the station. Go me! I had always been intimidated by London but after a month, it feels like home - I've only gone the wrong way on the tube three times! The bridge club is unable to open but there is a hub of online activity including a star studded Monday and Friday night games together with our new more relaxed afternoon sessions. There is also online teaching which is expanding week by week.

Whilst one friend said you are mad to quit your steady job to move to London during a pandemic for a club that cannot open, I would like to think that I have followed my heart and dreams to do a job where I wake up excited everyday rather than in total dread.

I am feeling really good this week - I've been approached by a big London sponsor wanting to hire me for tournaments and I have received such awesome feedback from the lessons I have been doing online.

Not if BUT when we reopen, come look me up and join all the YC has to offer. But don't ask me to come meet you from the station as who knows what tube line we may end up on.

Ollie Burgess



Finally, Keep safe and join us on line for the time being.

Mary Irving, Editor