

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming today.

Well I guess that not many of you would have thought that there would be 3 different people at this table compared to last year I know I certainly didn't.

As most of you know Jerry's personal situation meant that it became almost impossible for him to carry on as our chairman and therefore I happily agreed earlier in the year to take over the role. I would like to put on record my thanks to Jerry for his hard work and I am sure like me you would like to wish him well going forward. Hopefully he will at some time read these comments so Jerry thank you and you will always be welcome back for a game if ever you are over here.

My aim is to continue his legacy and to continue to have this club recognised as a friendly place to come and play bridge and also to be very welcoming to new members, indeed I know that this is true as the feedback we get is very positive, and that is down to yourselves ladies and gentlemen so thank you.

Let me now run through some of the highlights of this past year.

We started with the roll out of the Pianola system which has been very successful and I'm sure that Marilyn and Yvonne will be singing its praises later, all in all I think a very good decision to bring it on board.

During November and December we had a couple of sim pairs events which over the 4 days we played generated 65 tables supporting both children in need and a local charity, Christopher's hospice for children in Guildford via the Dorin salver, thus proving that not only is it a friendly place to play but that we can be very generous in our support of local and national charities.

Just before Christmas we had our very enjoyable party where despite a number of awful cracker jokes, we once again provided generous raffle prizes and a good amount was collected for the Princess Alice Hospice.

Village week came along in June and again the club supported it well, especially the very enjoyable quiz night where the questions were so hard that even the chasers would have struggled. So congratulations to both of our teams for not coming last. It was also the time we played the Chairman's cup which had a very popular pair winning. In fact as you will hear later we have different winners this year in all our competitions.

Organising and running the club doesn't happen by magic, it's initially down to the committee who get here early to set up the equipment needed for our sessions and also arrange for directors, scorers, lists for Harrison room events and spare partners along with the various membership forms that need to be completed to be available.

Therefore I would like to thank the committee for their hard work and their support this last year, thank you all.

They aren't the only people who go out of their way to contribute to the club, and if I leave anyone out then my sincere apologies so thanks also to:

Miranda for the up keep of our website

Neil Higgins for overseeing pianola and for the training of the new scorers

Richard Skeet for the auditing and also for the training of new scorers

In this respect I am delighted to be able to tell you that we have 4 members training as scorers they are in no particular order Lynn, Tracey, Sue and Yvonne thank you ladies.

Steve Leach for heading up our duplimating team and indeed to all our duplimators.

Lesley, Sandy and their team who always have a smile on their faces when serving the afternoon teas and also for being available today and at the Christmas party where they make everything run smoothly at lunchtime.

All these people have made a huge contribution over the year so please show your thanks.

Now on to the committee, we are sadly losing two members, Richard and David but I am pleased to hopefully welcome onto the committee if you all agree and I hope you will, Diana Greenman, Fredrik Adilz and David Watt who I believe will add their own skills and honestly they haven't been coerced or bribed.

When I think of BABC it occurs to me that although the common interest is bridge, this place is so much more, in fact it seems to me like a community and as in all good communities, and from a personal perspective, you all look out for each other, offering support where needed and you are genuinely pleased if someone has good news. I can tell from the laughter and light hearted ribbing that goes on that you are happy to be in each other's company.

Last year Jerry talked about the power of the welcome and when I took over from him I was genuinely surprised at the strength of support that you showed me and I have to say it's been an absolute pleasure. It isn't just me that you've made to feel most welcome it is also the friendliness and courtesy that you show to prospective and new members, so much so that they bring their friends here as well.

This is why I am happy if you'll have me to be your chairman as we go on to make this wonderful club of ours even better, in fact the best there is.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.