

New Normal News June/July 2023

1 message

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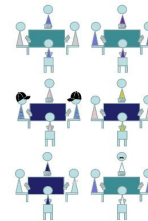
22 July 2023 at 14:29

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New
Normal
News



JUNE/JULY
2023



www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk

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Thanks to everyone who contributes to the meetings and gives feedback about the newsletter, or lets me know they watch the conference recordings. As long as I know this is useful, I will keep going!

The audience for this newsletter is growing. If you would like to receive it, you can subscribe at:

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

[Click here to view previous newsletters](#)

Monthly Discussions - Summer Slowdown

Our informal meetings are open to all interested in organising duplicate bridge. They do not have any formal role. Small and large clubs, face to face and/or online clubs, affiliated or not, in England, or outside. Please join us.

We usually hold a discussion about running bridge once a month. The June meeting was sparsely attended. So we're going to skip the summer and have the next meeting in September.

It used to take place at 09.00 on a Wednesday morning. This is a difficult time for me as I am teaching on Wednesday mornings for the foreseeable future. So I have switched to 10.00 on a Friday morning.

If there is a reasonable level of interest on 15th September, monthly discussions will resume.

Discussion Theme - June

To make meetings more useful, in addition to discussing current topics, we have a theme for each. In the June meeting theme was **Applying Laws and Regulations**.

Although the meeting wasn't well attended, there was a relatively high level of reaction and response to the topic. (See follow up below).

Discussion Theme - September

The proposed theme for the September meeting is **Affiliated Clubs and the EBU**.

Any thoughts or experiences you have would be most welcome. Please reply to this newsletter by end August for the newsletter planned for the start of September.

I would be interested if you receive the "News from Aylesbury" emails and find them interesting? Do you use the EBU forums?

Do you worry about competition for your players from the EBU daily online events, or its Congresses etc?

Have you found the recent webinars (Teaching, Web sites, Charitable Status) useful?

Any comments on EBU admin of membership or fees?

Possible Future Themes

Clubs and Teaching Bridge
Marketing (social media etc)

Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Please reply

to this newsletter.

The Zoom link for the next discussion, and the Youtube link for the recording of the last one are below.

Fairness, Friendliness and Cheating - Follow Up

This topic caused quite a few reactions in emails and discussions. Experience in my own club has made me think further about it, especially convention cards.

Advice for Congress Players

Paul Gipson has provided a short document with key advice for players. It includes hesitation. It could be printed and put on tables at key events, or distributed to members by email or on web sites.

Thank you Paul.

https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoq/bw.cgi?club=bridgeforpleasure&pid=docs_2023%2007%20Advice%20for%20Congress%20players.pdf

Full Disclosure

Our club numbers are growing. Some unwelcome old habits are reappearing. I overheard a player interrogated another play about a **correctly announced** Stayman call.

Q1 Is that Stayman? "Yes"

Q2 Could it be non-promissory Stayman? "Not Sure"

Q3 How many points does it show? "Shrug"

In my view none of these questions were necessary. It's unusual for there to be any questions in our highly social club. Afterwards I went to the interrogated, offered reassurance, and suggested next time the director should be called.

In my club newsletter I published the following:

Full Disclosure

Law 40 of Duplicate Bridge, Partnership Understandings: "Each partnership has a duty to make its partnership understandings available to its opponents.

The Regulating Authority (in our case the EBU) specifies the manner in which this is done." This principle is fundamental to the game. It cannot be played without it.

Frankly, in my opinion, our "Regulating Authority" has created a mess consisting of rules about Announcing, rules about Alerting, and a peculiar mixture of unnatural bids or calls that "everyone knows" and those that must be disclosed. It is far more suitable for elite tournaments with big prizes or kudos at stake. The more it's tweaked, the less fit for purpose it is for club bridge.

Firstly, everyone playing at our club has a first duty to make the game enjoyable for their partner, their opponents, the director, and everyone else at the club.

Secondly, everyone playing at the club is entitled to be given information about partnership understandings in the most helpful way possible. Equally, information about partnership understandings must be provided in a simple, clear and helpful way. Any possibility that this process has become overbearing must be avoided.

Thirdly, ALWAYS call the director if any discussion of partnership understandings goes beyond ONE question and ONE answer.

This should not be necessary and the director may need to explain a better approach to one or more of the players at the table.

The EBU say that it's up to the club what rules and regulations they choose to apply.

Clubs with players who want to compete at a higher level may choose to enforce the whole panoply so that the players can practice for higher level competition. BUT very few players in most clubs compete at higher levels.

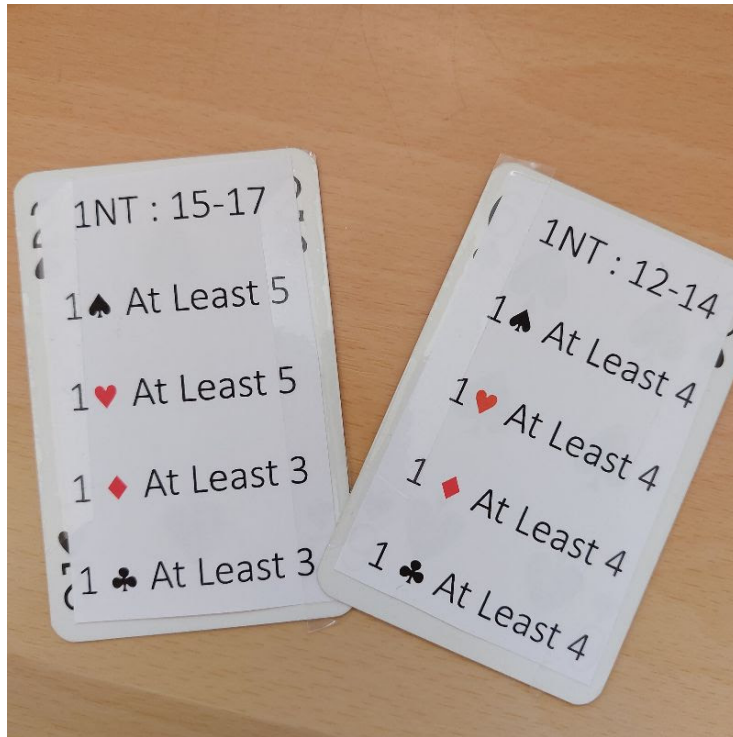
Do many club players use convention cards?

Most county events gave up insisting on convention cards years ago for the same reason my club has. We played in a highly enjoyable online EBU competition recently. About half the pairs we played had fully completed cards. Most of the rest copied a short description into the chat line and some gave us no idea what they were playing.

I would feel sorry for any TD called to deal with issues around disclosure or following partnership understandings.

Players don't use convention cards in my club. It isn't necessary and attempting to make them would drive people away. In my view there are very few aspects of any system that are not announced or alerted and should be know to the opposition.

So I have come up with a form that could be displayed on a playing card. I will ask my players to trial it, but here is the basic idea:



How is the bridge world organised? Where does the player sit?

Fred Davis of Northamptonshire CBA produced the following for his club members. It proved to be of considerable interest. He has offered it for any of us to use to inform ourselves and our members.

Where am I in the World of Bridge?

Whether you have played this game for many years or are a newcomer, it is sometimes difficult to perceive how wide the family of bridge players is in the world.

Let me put everything into perspective. Our club has about one hundred members, which is a small percentage amongst the 18,000 members who play at English Bridge Union EBU affiliated clubs in England. The UK then has the EBU, the Scottish Bridge Union SBU, the Welsh Bridge Union WBU, and the Irish Bridge Union IBU. They all are constituent members of the European Bridge League EBL. The EBL itself is part of eight areas of the world who together form the World Bridge Federation WBF. Wherever you go in the world you will find players who understand bridge, (with numerous variations and conventions to suit regional and expertise differences), and all follow the same basic rules set by the WBF. These rules apply both for face-to-face and online games.

I will take you along that path – click the links to view in more detail:

We follow the EBU rules: [Rules and Regulations \(EBU\)](#)

and we play at Bourne bridge club: [Bourne Bridge Club](#)

This is part of the Northamptonshire County Bridge Association: [Northamptonshire CBA](#)

which itself is affiliated to the English Bridge Union: [Welcome! English Bridge Union](#)

The member countries of the European Bridge League are: [Europe |](#)

[WBF](#)

and the eight zones of the world are: [ZONES | World Bridge Federation](#)

The players referred to here are only the members who belong through registered clubs - there are many others who play just for fun in each other's houses, U3A groups, village halls and at charity events. I trust that you can see that there are many players of different abilities who happily play near you, wherever you may be on this planet.

Bridge is an exciting and challenging game to thoroughly enjoy, and by your involvement you help share this pleasure with millions around the world.

Fred Davis
Committee member and your rep on Northants CBA

What is a club? How does the EBU define it?

The database I use to publish statistics now has over 750 clubs listed. Any organisation is included in the database if they post results of duplicate sessions on a regular basis.

That might seem very obvious, but I regularly encounter puzzles.

What about sites that present themselves as primarily teachers and coaches and publish supervised or gentle session results? (I include them, but categorise them as Schools.)

What about sites that advertise regular sessions but do not load results, or choose to keep them behind a password protected area? (I include them in the main database, but cannot capture table number data, so they do not appear in the session information).

Clubs are included whether they are affiliated or not. There are even a small number of WBU affiliated clubs.

What about the EBU and clubs?

The EBU offers affiliation to clubs provided they hold at least 26 duplicates a year. However, for twice the usual affiliation fee you can affiliate as a club even if you hold fewer duplicates in a year. In the terms of affiliation, clubs are limited to operating duplicates at one physical venue, or at closely geographically linked venues. So we can't organise ourselves as one super club paying only one annual subscription.

Affiliated clubs pay EBU Universal Membership fees, for each player, whenever they hold duplicates. These fees usually consist of EBU fees plus the fee going to the EBU Country to which the club is affiliated. (These fees surely appear in any affiliated clubs accounts as an expense? The EBU describes them as collected by the club from the player and somehow not a cost.)

Most clubs affiliate to an EBU County. However, if your club operates

purely online, you can affiliate "directly" to the EBU and avoid EBU County subscription fees.

Clubs have no place in the governance of the EBU (as indeed members do not). Clubs can take an active role in organising their EBU County. The EBU County will have a shareholder who can vote at EBU AGMs and EGMs. EBU Counties vary hugely in their level of resources and activities.

There are only two EBU competitions where affiliated clubs compete. One is the eight a side Garden Cities team competition, where entry is managed by the EBU Counties. The other is the Club Knock Out Competition. (NIKKO). Clubs can put as many teams in as they wish. However, following some successful years when an online format allowed clubs from all over England to be drawn against each other, it has now reverted to face to face drawn initially locally, and entries have fallen back.

The EBU offers some products and services, particularly training, usually at a fee. EBU staff are always splendid at offering directly requested advice and help. Other programmes, for example, webinars, might be more effective at reaching five or six hundred clubs.

The terms of club affiliation can be read here:

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/documents/membership/Club-terms-of-affiliation.pdf>

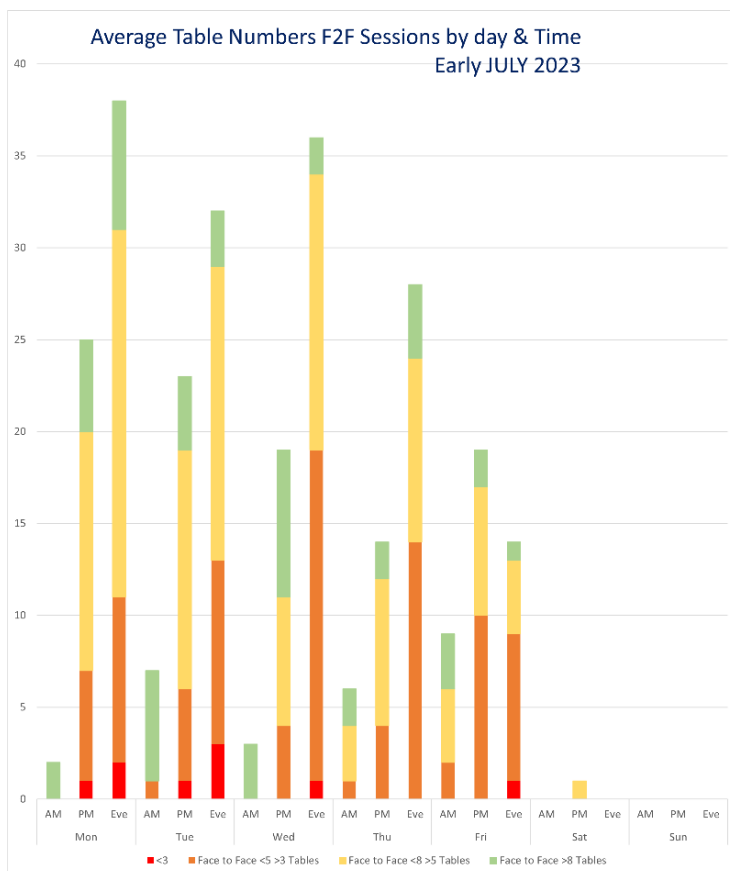
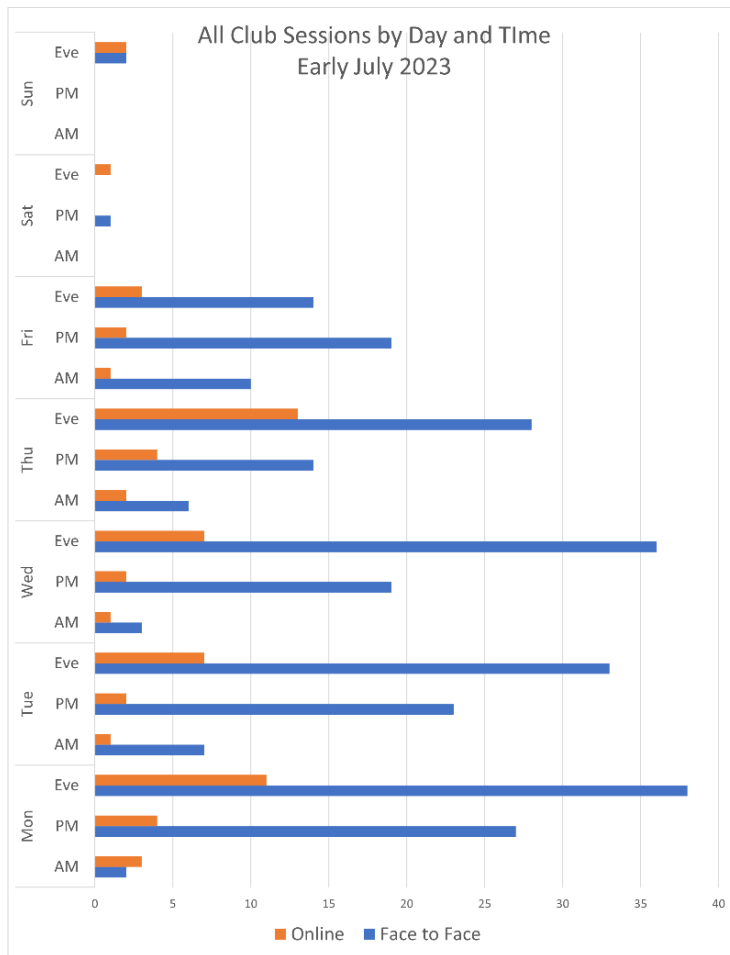
How are clubs doing?

Data gathering is going well. Most weeks two or three clubs are added to the database. Amongst the **755 clubs in the database** there are about **1700 weekly duplicate sessions**.

The "Session" database now contains details of **373 weekly sessions**, and so is a reasonably sized sample. The session records the tables numbers (average of latest three weeks at review data) by day of week and time of day.

The average face to face **field size amongst the weekly sessions is 6.94** (affiliated and non affiliated).

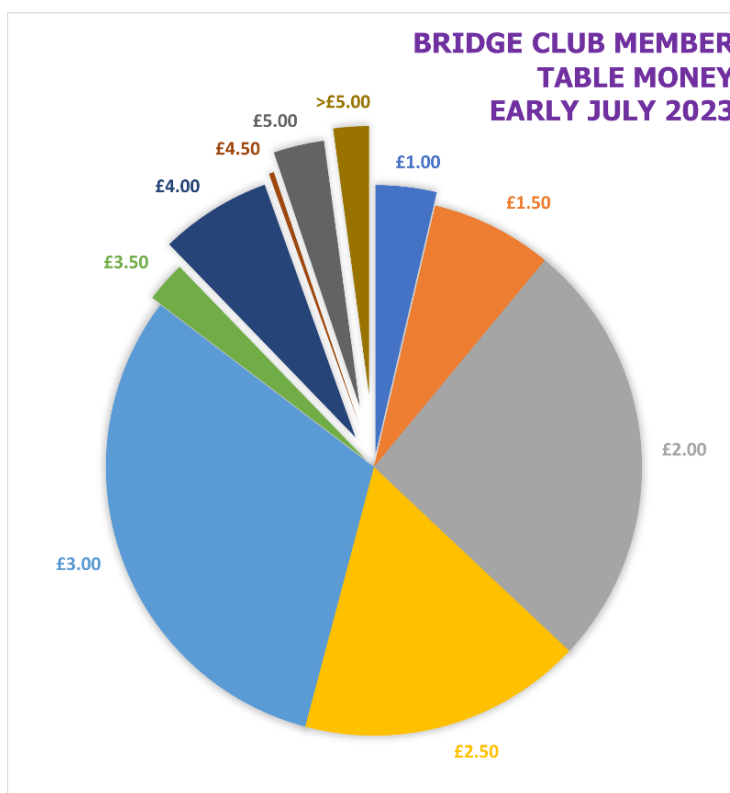
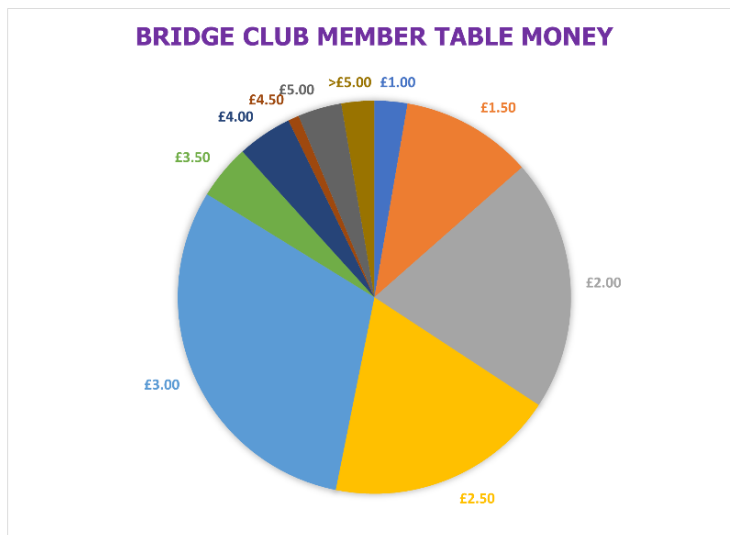
Here are a couple of key graphics.



Comparing the first table money data collected six months with the latest. Sample size has grown due to data being added to clubs already in the database and data collected from new additions.

No club has been resurveyed yet (roughly annually), so any trend is from changes in the "new" data.

January 2023:



There's more information here, typically updated once a fortnight.

BFP Club Statistics Page

Is anything really new?

I have been clearing out some of the mass of bridge related publications and paperwork I have been hoarding. This made me smile.

Teaching Online

It finally happened!

The first online bridge lesson took place on June 25th. I was very pleased with the response – over 100 students indicated an interest in taking part. They received the lesson on transfers plus the answers to the quiz. I also received offers of help from nearly 20 teachers. On the night itself 48 students and 12 teachers logged on to take part. There were a few teething problems, mainly to do with not being able to log-on, but by and large the evening went very well. Each table in the supervised play room had four student players and a teacher watching over them. Most tables managed to get through the 12 practice hands in just about two hours. After the lesson the students received a copy of the hands they had played. Everything was done by email which made it very easy for me.

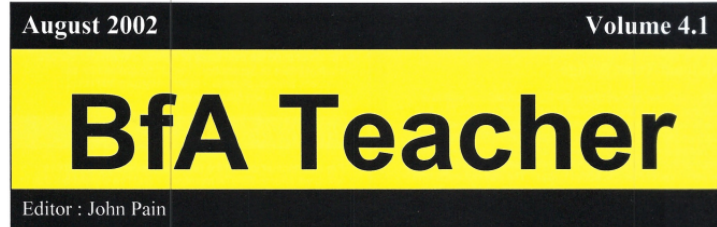
The feedback from the students was largely positive – they enjoyed what was offered and they want another one (or two). That's probably because it was free!

My thanks go to the teachers who took part. The problems for the future are principally logistical and financial. Logistically, it will be quite difficult to have enough teachers on hand for future events of this kind and it is not reasonable to expect them to do it for nothing. So we come to the question of how much to charge the students and how much to pay the teachers for doing it. A reasonable rate of pay would be £40 for a two-hour lesson but I also need to build in EBU costs. Assuming that one

teacher covers only one table (I left my table for a couple of minutes and when I returned chaos had set in!), then a rate of about £12.50 per student will be needed. If we allowed, say, five or six people per table (taking turn and turn about), then we could reduce to about £8 per student.

Food for thought. Perhaps you have alternative ideas on how to proceed – please let me know what you think.

For those of you who have yet to enjoy the delights of online bridge, log-on to www.bridgeclublive.com and enjoy three free months or 48 boards (whichever is soonest).



Bridgemates Wanted

Is there any club (or former club) out there that has a set of now unused Bridgemates. They should be Bridgemate IIs and I would need the server as well. If there is please get in touch and we could discuss terms. It could be outright purchase or a donation to charity or even a loan arrangement with them being returned on request. I am in the London area but would be prepared to drive a reasonable distance to collect. Thanks in advance. Ned Paul, 07792 715517 ned_paul@outlook.com

Next Zoom discussion

Nicky Bainbridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Bridge Clubs in the New Normal
Time: Sep 15, 2023 10:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85088826517?pwd=a0djc256MmhOd3l1OGJwaVFiclhmZz09>

Meeting ID: 850 8882 6517
Passcode: 644957

Previous New Normal Zoom Discussions

The meetings are informal gatherings. They are intended to bring together a wide range of perspectives. They should allow constructive debate.

The proceedings are informal and are recorded and published on YouTube.

Previous Zoom conferences:

2020	16th September 18th November	21st October 16th December
2021	20th January 17th March 19th May	17th February 21st April 16th June
	21st July 18th August 22nd September	https://youtu.be/PbTyAz9vuHA https://youtu.be/pPEzFxs8VBA https://youtu.be/QJlu3PIn02s
	20th October 17th November	https://youtu.be/VRP7eaeqaH8 https://youtu.be/DAv-7POhNHU
2022	19th January 16th February 16th March 20th April 18th May 22nd June 20th July 17th August 21st September 19th October 23rd November	https://youtu.be/3w9hI3UWG70 https://youtu.be/Z5jOfwcpueU https://youtu.be/nlW1BIMG6-0 https://youtu.be/ekPnjt-KIzs https://youtu.be/hond7ZCvKzM https://youtu.be/cz1sBGPMisE https://youtu.be/1McE5pexdjg https://youtu.be/5pegkP_R_Ro https://youtu.be/uxmPqzTQNqo https://youtu.be/uxmPqzTQNqo https://youtu.be/H-xaZ-moSGg
2023	18th January 22nd February 22nd March 6th June	https://youtu.be/aRoMH6I68g0 https://youtu.be/Og5VRoX9IXY http://youtu.be/ZdhdvzIVeZw https://youtu.be/WY2PUDMHBQA

Zoom link for the next New Normal Bridge Zoom Conference

New Normal Newsletter

This is issued roughly once a month. It is written and distributed on an entirely non profit basis, takes no advertising or commission.

Previous New Normal newsletters and a subscription form are available on the Bridge for Pleasure web site.

There is also information on playing Covid-secure bridge.

A freely available bridge teaching scheme with lesson plans, notes, deals, homework quizzes and answers is there for all.

Bridge for Pleasure - Information Web Site

Please forward the letter to anyone in the bridge world who might be interested. Anyone can subscribe using the link below,

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