

## Reflections on my bridge 'journey'

Sometime towards the end of 2021, I was sitting in a local coffee shop whilst waiting to go to an appointment. I had worked for years in a busy and challenging role and was semi-retired, and I had been wondering what I could do to fill some of the time previously filled by work. As I have always been very competitive, I knew that I needed to continue to challenge myself in some way. Little did I know that a solution was in the local magazine that I flipped through whilst enjoying my coffee!

The magazine contained an advert for bridge lessons for beginners at the Cardiff Bridge Club. I knew next to nothing about bridge, but I remember being instantly enthusiastic, and immediately decided to attend the taster session that was being run in February 2022. I have now attended both the 10-week Beginner and 10-week Continuing Bridge Courses, as well as most of the assisted-play sessions provided by the club for those learning to play. The courses are intensive and challenging and there were many times when I felt as if I was sinking rather than swimming, and I even found myself doing weekly homework!! However, the experience was also always very enjoyable, and I haven't regretted the time, money and effort for one second. The classes are run in a very friendly and supportive fashion, with plenty of time for discussion and questions. They also provide an environment to create new friendships, and the potential of partnering one of these new friends whilst moving on to play 'proper' bridge in a competitive setting.

I was delighted when it was suggested to me whilst doing the second of the courses (September 2022) that I might like to play in the Monday afternoon (social bridge) session at the club. I attended with some trepidation, but again soon relaxed and realised that I had enough knowledge to be able to compete. At that stage I started to feel like a 'proper' bridge player. I have continued to play on Monday afternoons and was very pleased when this week my partner and I came second in the ranking table!

I know that I have a lot more to learn – but that is an exciting prospect. The 'journey' to date has been challenging, but I was looking for a challenge and I very much look forward to further learning.

Bronwen Evans, October 2023