

Chairman's Report

This has been a very challenging year for everyone, never mind for bridge players. Hopefully we are now coming to terms with the restrictions demanded of us.

Bridge at the Carlton has been maintained thanks to the efforts of the members of the Online Bridge Committee. I am very grateful for all the work that they have put in. We are greatly indebted to them.

It is gratifying to report that our membership, although down by about ten, remains at almost 300. The hope is that most will return to face to face bridge in the near future. I fully appreciate that this may take time, but it is encouraging to see members signing up for the four sessions that are running. Full details are on the Club web site.

It is important from a financial point of view that members do begin to return to the Carlton. If you take a look at the accounts and compare the surplus for the year with the grants received from the Scottish Government, you will see the need to have a greater income. A number of members will continue playing online, but this only brings in a fraction of the income compared to that of face to face bridge.

Members of the Board have continued to meet monthly throughout the last year. We have attempted to maintain contact with the membership by posting minutes on the web site, by newsletters, by two surveys and by brief feedback on the surveys. I hope you consider this as adequate communication. Please let us know if you have further ideas about what we could do.

As always I am indebted to the hard work that Board members have provided over the year. Eldrydd Robinson retires as Education Convenor after four years. She has done a power of work in attempting to bring in new members through bridge classes. Jane Stephenson, also on the Education Committee, resigned earlier in the year.

At the risk of offending other members of the Board, I would like to make special mention of the contribution of our Treasurer, Maurice Brady. His tireless efforts under difficult conditions are exemplary.

Sadly, a number of members are no longer with us. Eric Jeffrey, Peter Clark, Alastair Robertson, Anne Young, Gordon Stuart, David Kaye, Alan Armit and Frank Robertson will no longer grace the bridge table. They will all be sorely missed.

EDUCATION This year has been as much about consolidation and encouragement as the development of new areas of teaching. One main concern at the beginning of the year

was to facilitate existing members to play bridge online. This was something new for many of our members and a number of existing online players spent a considerable amount of time playing online with newcomers in order to give them confidence to play on either BBO or Real Bridge. This proved to be a very satisfactory development for those unused to playing online and many have said that they will continue with some online games in the future.

There was also an effort put in place to do some teaching online for either beginners or improvers. This proved to be a challenge as some students found it difficult to cope with lessons, BBO and Zoom. What has happened is that all the enquiries were captured and forwarded to the next year for future classes. At the beginning of the new session starting in October, we are in a position to offer a range of face to face classes and a themed Easy Play session each week. Details are on the web site.

An initiative was created by the Scottish Bridge Union to set up classes for schools wishing to encourage pupils to take up bridge. The Carlton Club has participated in these developments and approaches have been made to a number of Edinburgh schools to take forward this programme. This is still work in progress and will be carried over into the next session.

ONLINE BRIDGE Online Tournament and Club Tournaments have been running since the last Annual General Meeting. The weekly schedule has been Monday morning, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday morning and Sunday evening.

We have 200 members and guests signed up to play in the Carlton Online Tournaments and we have seen good attendance, averaging 10 tables per tournament. We have a number of players from other clubs playing regularly in the weekly tournaments, all contributing to Club income.

We also ran a regular Monday evening tournament and a Tuesday afternoon tournament for those learning to play online or wishing a more gentler game. These stopped in April as the numbers were low.

Real Bridge was introduced to members through a series of practice sessions, then offered free for Social Bridge on a Wednesday evening. The numbers are low so we plan to stop running both events from the beginning of October.

Club events were held to maintain interest.

Carlton Club Congress Swiss Pairs. Winners Graham Fisher and Malcolm McCardle.
Runners up Tim McKay and Sara Duncan.

Club Cup. Winners Michael Young and Duncan MacDonald.
The **Harry Stein Cup** is for the best score in the Club Cup after handicap.
Winners John Pottinger and Pat Lawson.

Min Thomas Mixed Pairs. Winners Heather and Peter Braid.

Easter Swiss Teams. Winners Jane Stephenson, Muriel Blake, Rosemary Steers and Rosemary McKinnel.

The **Carlton Christmas Party** was held on 20 December. There were 8 tables and it proved to be a fun evening, catching up with friends in these strange times.

SBU Events The Carlton has also occasionally had the opportunity to run SBU events where we receive a percentage of the revenue raised.

1. The SBU Bronze Brunch is played every Saturday morning and can attract as many as 80 pairs from across Scotland.
2. The SBU Tea-Time Individual tournament is held every Sunday afternoon.

Hazel Brown has been the club TD for both these events, once a month. They will continue for the foreseeable future.

October Onwards With the start of face to face bridge in October the times of the Carlton Online Tournaments have been changed to Sunday evenings, Tuesday mornings and Friday mornings in order to complement the F2F Bridge schedule.

The Online Tournaments have been managed by a committee comprising Mike Baron, Hazel Brown, Jane Stephenson, Fiona Davies, John Pottinger, Eldyrdd Robinson and Marilyn McDonagh. As from October, responsibility for online tournaments will return to the Board. The Carlton Online Committee would like to extend their thanks to all members who have supported the tournaments.

HOUSE During the Club's closure the garden has been refurbished with a large scale overhaul being done in December. It had become badly overgrown and was beyond the stage where members could deal with it. It should now be much easier to maintain.

During the closure, the club's facilities water/ dishwasher, air handling, emergency lights, fire alarm and intruder alarms have been regularly maintained and serviced.

In preparation of reopening, we have undertaken an assessment of the air handling system, had the Club deep cleaned and performed a robust risk assessment of the Club and grounds. When you return to the Carlton you will find a number of other features introduced to minimise the risk of Covid transmission. These include a debit card system for payment, hand sanitiser stations and a greater distance between tables. Notices outlining the latest regulations from the Scottish Government will be posted. They will be kept under regular review by the Club.

Let me finish by wishing you health, happiness and many successful fitnesses.

Duncan Cursiter
Chairman