

DEVON BRIDGE ASSOCIATION (EASTERN SECTION)



Chairman's Report 2023 – East Devon Section

1. Overview

The last three years have been a tumultuous time for all clubs as lockdown hastened the popularity of online bridge coupled with massive improvements in more accessible software through BBO, Realbridge and BCL amongst others. While the section EBU membership for individuals has held up, some East Devon clubs left the EBU or merged leaving four EBU clubs in the section: the Acolites (merged with Tipton St John). Exeter, Exmouth and Honiton. When lockdown started in March 2020, Honiton were first to embrace online bridge followed by Exeter and Exmouth. Once players were able to return to face-to-face (F2F) bridge only Exeter continues a virtual platform due to the profitability of their online games. The table below shows club membership between April 2020 and June 2023.

Club	01/04/2020	01/06/2023	
Acolites	42	44	*About 50% list another club as their primary base, whilst a further 5% list Exeter but are not based in Devon.
Exmouth Bridge Club	196	193	
Honiton Bridge Club	59	62	
Exeter Bridge Club*	145	339*	

Source: EBU

Thanks to Nigel Richardson, the section set up an internet site via bridge webs and introduced a separate account with RealBridge. All information and results can be viewed: www.bridgewebs.com/easterndba

2. Competitions

Prior to lockdown Exeter BC and the Eastern section hosted 24 Devon wide teams competing monthly in three leagues from October to April. From autumn 2020 Nigel continued this event as a virtual contest and then introduced a Swiss pairs competition. During the 2022/23 season there were 14 teams competing in two leagues. The Swiss pairs remains popular during spring and summer with 16 pairs playing on a regular basis. All results are available on the website. Finally every January, the section traditionally ran the John Woolcott competition which consisted of a Saturday Swiss pairs event plus a Sunday blue pointed teams at Exeter BC. Again this is now an online competition. Although numbers are lower, it is hoped that the increasing popularity of virtual bridge will see entries rise for 2024.

3. Training

Over the last year, the section financed two courses open to all Devon's EBU and non-affiliated clubs. First recognising that with clubs reopening for F2F bridge, many had lost their pre-pandemic rota of directors and scorers or their directors wanted to revise how to run a club duplicate. Noting that the EBU were offering to run such courses but the price and location were not suitable for Devon based clubs the section commissioned Jeremy Childs the county director to run a one-day update course on directing. Later he ran an introduction to directing for players who were prepared to take on this role for their local club. Both courses were well received.

4. People

Many thanks to Tim Barnes who returned to the committee as treasurer having previously been chair 2018/19. Tim took over from Tony Hart who we appreciate stepped in on a temporary basis as both Jane and Tim Barnes had to resign their positions due to work and family commitments.

Finally, on behalf of myself and the section I would like to pay tribute to Malcolm Boyack who was instrumental in advancing the cause of virtual bridge in East Devon. From those early days in 2020 when very few of us had played online he not only ensured that we had the technical capacity for running virtual bridge but also provided equipment and training to players wanting to participate.

Jean Harrison, Chair, East Devon section. June 2023