

GCBA PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021/22

I start by thanking the many enthusiastic volunteers across the county, the TDs, the club officials, the teachers and the helpers that make bridge happen in Gloucestershire. Also to all the players for giving the pleasure of their company to each other. I thank too my GCBA committee for their contributions and must give recognition to Mike Wignall who after three years steps down from being our prudent and sage Treasurer.

Like the previous year it has been an "odd one" due to Covid and this has held back some of the progress that we had hoped to make but we are now move things forward on several fronts. In spite of the pandemic I'm pleased to report a number of successes in the county:

- Following on from success in the Midland Counties Online League in 20/21 we again did rather well coming first in the Porter, second in the Markham and fourth in the Dawes.
- An outstanding success was Gloucestershire winning the national inter county Tollemache for the first time since 2007.

Our congratulations to the teams and our thanks to the Representative Events Committee. We have a county to be proud off.

- In the Cleverly League we had 21 teams in three divisions. Division One was tied for first place by Stroud and Tudor; Division Two saw Cheltenham Z at the top and Division Three had the new team of Sharps.
- Individually we saw Patrick Shields, Dan McIntosh and their partners win the Scottish Cup; Patrick and Diana Nettleton be runners up in the EBU Year End Congress and once again our Patrick, this time with Richard Chamberlain, win the Teltscher Trials and go on to represent England in the Senior Camrose home international, coming second.
- F2F - the resumption of face to face play at nearly all of our clubs, including some GCBA sessions which we hope to increase, dependent on take up.
- The restart of school's bridge
- The GCBA Newsletter, Facebook page and website helping to keep us informed during a period when we could not be as "out and about".
- The variety of GCBA organised formats to complement the bridge offered in Gloucestershire.
- The holding of the GCBA instigated TD training within the county (first for many years) which was well attended by 20 prospective Directors.

Players and Player Sessions continue to recover. We are not yet at pre Covid levels but the trend is positive:

	May Club Sessions:	May Individual Players (club+EBU online):
2019	4108	670
2020	1520	264
2021	3202	482
2022	3418	622

What impresses me most is the enthusiasm that I see in so many of our members, even in the face of Covid. Without doubt it is enthusiasm and a willingness to get stuck in to help our fellow players and prospective players that leads to success. By way of examples look at clubs such as Churchdown, Tudor and Cheltenham and no doubt others too, including the bridge stakeholders that we got together recently in the north east of the county, that are finding ways to support each other and give the game a boost.

Do let us know at GCBA of your successes so that we can publicise them to inform and inspire others as well as giving deserved recognition.

I conclude with my thoughts about our overall performance as a county.

The higher level game continues to do well: the county representative teams, the GCBA program and the Cheltenham Congress and long may this continue.

The more Grassroots game, even before Covid, I think has the most potential for growth. The non-duplicate players outnumber us and huge numbers of non players would benefit from learning the game and boost our club numbers. We need to give this serious thought and take appropriate action. GCBA / EBU are there and keen to support in this.

Ian Sidgwick