

## **GCBA President's Report 2022/23**

At last the impact of Covid significantly reduced, though it leaves a lasting impression on our game with widespread online playing and a little more bridge being played by a little fewer players. It is much more the face-to-face though that gives us the sense of community which we still have and should nurture. We must follow customer demand though and recognise that there is a place for the online game but where face-to-face is possible then I say let's plump for it whenever we can, in order to keep the undoubted social benefits that bridge offers to people of all ages.

The percentage post Covid bridge playing in our county is higher than some and there were roughly 600 of our members that played in April 2022 and 700 last month, so it is going in a good direction.

### **Other highlights include the following:**

Representative Events - our Dawes team had a spectacular win in the Midland Counties League by 23 VPs; Porter came second and Markham third. All out of the 8 counties taking part. For the Garden Cities Stroud beat stiff opposition from Cheltenham who have generally represented us in this one in the past. The EBU Senior's KO was won by Garry Watson's team of Gloucestershire players.

Schools - the restart and expansion.

Teaching - TD training course completed adding to our numbers.

Teaching - a bridge teacher's training course was organised to be held in July, now fully subscribed.

More Teaching - two courses organised by GCBA in the North Cotswolds, one for complete beginners, one for novices, attendance totalling 29.

While we had to pull some face-to-face weekend events for lack of support, the 9-High Online Swiss Pairs reaches is 21st series.

Charity fund raising donations through GCBA totalling over £2100.

Disappointment over the venue booking for our joint Cheltenham Congress, now amicably resolved and to be held 26/27th August. We will have the usual Green Pointed Swiss pairs and teams but also an NGS 9 high Swiss pairs, so the event is tailored to a wide range of players. After all that we have been through with Covid disruptions to our bridge and the frustrations for our congress team, having to deal with the rescheduling and related matters, then it's a great opportunity for us to get together in something of a celebration of the game we love. We also of course have the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Congress at Ross 22/23 July. I hope to see many of you at these.

This report is my opportunity to thank all the volunteers for their contributions to bridge in Gloucestershire. Your enthusiasm adds a lot to the lives of others. After 6 years on the GCBA committee, including terms as president and also secretary I give my special thanks to Patrick Shields who according to our constitution is obliged to step down from GCBA after the 6 years. I'm pleased to say that he remains as Chief TD.

I ended my report last year by recognising our strength at the higher level of the game and observing that the more grassroots game has the most potential. I'm still of this opinion. We have made some progress with the TDs, Teachers, Schools, beginner/novice teaching but much remains.

Currently we are using the concept of Cooperative Clusters. This is when we get together the bridge stakeholders within an area of the county to see how they can help each other, how GCBA can support them and together give the game a boost. We started in the North Cotswolds, an outcome being the two teaching courses. This month we met with Stroud area clubs and teachers and have produced an action plan. Through these and other ways we strive to meet the Vision Statement that is on our website:

VISION STATEMENT : anyone who is or might be interested in the game of bridge in Gloucestershire has access to a plentiful supply of learning and playing opportunities.

Gloucestershire is a great county for bridge, we strive to both maintain our standards and expand playing generally.

Ian Sidgwick

President GCBA

May 2023