

Dear Members,



November – Despite the gloom and doom of COVID, we must pay tribute to all those in the armed forces and supporting services on Sunday 8th November and Wednesday 11th November. Our red poppy is a symbol of both Remembrance and hope for a peaceful future.

Lockdown again! – It really was no surprise that, once again, we have to 'stay in doors' and try and find yet more tasks to keep us distracted. I have got out the jigsaws that were not opened last time and have made a note of some of the T.V series that might be of interest that I did not watch in the summer months. Do let me know if you are in need of help with regard to shopping or a phone call to chat over things that might be worrying you. My phone number is at the end of this newsletter and I am always happy to chat.

Your Committee – We meet once a month on Zoom to review the COVID situation, discuss ideas that may be of use to keeping you involved and to check how our on-line tournaments are progressing. It is so re-assuring that many members are playing in the league organised by Mike Thacker and there is a growing number now playing on StepBridge in our own on-line club that meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. These weekly events, organised by Arthur Whittaker with support from David Charlton, Su Kensley and Thelma Price, certainly provide the nearest solution to 'face2face' bridge as you are playing with members of HDBC rather than robots or strangers. If you need a partner at any time please contact Arthur Whittaker on art334496@gmail.com and he will circulate the request to all our StepBridge members. If you are not successfully paired up you can still log onto StepBridge and stay in the lobby and kibitz the tables playing. You may actually be called upon to play if, during the course of the evening, a member has problems with their internet or equipment. To kibitz, provided you are in the lobby, you can click on 'view' in the top menu, then click 'tables', then double click on the table you want to go to. To leave the table go to 'tables' double click on 'lobby' or another table. I really look forward to our Wednesday evenings and I am on a mission to encourage yet more members to join us. At our most recent Committee meeting we discussed Christmas and what we might be able to do to celebrate in these very strange circumstances assuming that restrictions are still imposed on us after 2nd December.

A Christmas gathering on Zoom – We felt that we could not let Christmas pass us by without organising something special. So we would like you to join us on Zoom on Wednesday 16th December at 6 p.m. We will be suitably dressed in our Christmas gear with a glass of cheer so we encourage you to do the same. It will

just be a short get-together prior to our usual StepBridge game. Any members who want help to use Zoom or would like the opportunity to have a practice run before the 16th December should contact Su Kensley on su.kensley@btinternet.com. Su will be happy to get you started and give you the opportunity to practice. The invitation to join the gathering on the 16th December will be sent out to all members in our club.

Do you see what I see?



For the last seven months we have seen the cruise ships hugging the horizon often changing shape as others arrive and push some along the coast as far as Weymouth and beyond. They dominate the skyline looking like huge tower blocks. For those of you who have cruised on the big liners you will know that the first challenge is finding your way around the ship.. But one has to have huge admiration about their smooth operation when dealing with upwards of 4 – 5,000 passengers. I know they always exercise to ensure they are able to cope with any emergency but I doubt they were fully prepared for what COVID-19 has dealt the cruise industry. Where ever they are anchored or docked all the vessels have to address fundamental safety procedures and must adhere to sea worthy conditions during these troubled times. I was so curious about these floating sensations that I was driven to produce my usual ditty about their life at sea.

Nowhere to hide

*You look out to sea – how many are there
They glide to and fro – there is more than a pair
Like ducks in a row they stand out so proud
As we view them between the sea and the cloud*

*There are so many liners it is hard to believe
The numbers Identified you really can't conceive
Huge clusters are scattered far and wide
Because for them there is nowhere to hide*

*They have to anchor near to the land
And do, of course, need a port close at hand
To repatriate crew they need to dock
And take on fuel and replenish their stock*

*So many will say “why don’t they go away”
Some will be scrapped and dealt with that way
Others will be put into ‘cold lay-up’ below
Cheaper to do but re-commissioning is slow*

*Hot or warm lay-ups are the other options viewed
Where the ships are only partially crewed
With the skills necessary to deal with the tasks
To maintain the ship’s safety working with masks!*

*And every so often they head for deeper water
To test the engines in an appropriate quarter
Flushing the ballast tanks is one more job to do
Before they return to their spot in our view*

That’s all for now folks – keep safe, stay positive and keep smiling. And if you are finding all of that too much pick up the phone and tell me or someone in your family or a friend. We will crack this together.



Pat Carruthers (01425 616312)

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