

## **KCBA History**

A short history of KCBA. Further details of many of the people mentioned below can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive on the website. There are also extra details of some of the KCBA competitions in the trophies history section of the archive.

The first recorded mention of duplicate bridge is in the 1850s but contract bridge as known today has dates from 1925 when the first set of rules were drawn up. The first national competition played in England was the Gold Cup which started in 1931/2 season which was run by the British Bridge League. This was closely followed by the Tollemache & Lady Milne Cups which were both teams of four knock out competitions, the latter for teams of women. These competitions were run by Hubert Phillips. The English Bridge Union was formed on 23 May 1936, which in due course took over running most of the national competitions.

Duplicate bridge was being played in Kent from the early 1930s, in December 1933 there were three Kent teams who managed to win their first round Gold Cup matches, the captains were George Buck (Birchington), George Scott Page (Tunbridge Wells) & Colonel Jameson (Folkestone). Subsequently in the 1934/5 & 1935/6 season George Buck was the captain of a team who reached the quarter final of the Gold Cup.

Kent teams were also entering both the Tollemache & Lady Milne Cups, in 1934 both George Buck & Colonel Jameson won their first round matches in the Tollemache. In 1936 Mrs E B Harvey entered a team in the Lady Milne which also included Mrs Turner, Mrs Oswald Smith & Mrs Starling.

The British Bridge League also ran a National Pairs Championship & heats were held in Kent. One example being a heat that was held on 16 March 1934 at the Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells which included entries from eighteen local pairs. Heats were held at other venues including Birchington.

By 1936 there were various bridge clubs being formed in Kent. One of the first was the West Kent club which was based at 81 London Road in Tunbridge Wells. It was advertising in the local Kent & Sussex Courier that it was open for mixed, residential & social bridge. All bedrooms had running water & there was central heating. The adverts also mentioned no entrance fee & private tables could be booked. In 1937 they were advertising a vacancy for a steward. In January 1939 it was taken over by a registered private company West Kent Club Ltd with Mrs Kathleen Nutting as managing director, she was also one of the directors along with John Pearson (founder of KCBA) & Geoffrey S Hall (solicitor of Cripps, Harries Hall & Co based in Tunbridge Wells). It is thought the club moved to Boyne Park in Tunbridge Wells by 1939 where it stayed for over 30 years.

There were also county matches being played, on 31 January 1937 Kent played Sussex at the Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells with both teams fielding 28 pairs. Another match was played at The Spa on Sunday 25 April 1937.

KCBA was formed in 1937, the founder & first chairman was John Pearson & his daughter Maud Harvey (subsequently Corbett) was the first secretary. It was run by

Maud from the ground floor study at 12 Boyne Park in Tunbridge Wells. At the launch there were only three clubs in Kent, Birchington, New Kent (Folkestone) & West Kent (Tunbridge Wells).

The first two competitions organised were the Arnold Cup, as now a knock out teams of four competition & an all Kent league, there were two divisions in the first year although this subsequently increased to three in the next season. In the leagues there were seven teams in each division for the 1937/8 season, league one for the Jameson Cup comprised New Kent I (based in Folkestone), West Kent, Chislehurst, Birchington I, Birchington II, Deal & Ramsgate I. League two for the Pearson Cup included Birchington III, Birchington IV, Star Hill (based in Rochester), Ramsgate II, Ramsgate III, Mrs Turner (from Hildenborough) & Captain Ennals. Both competitions were scored by aggregate.

The first Kent congress was held on 20 to 22 May 1938 at the Queen's Highcliffe Hotel in Margate. It started on Friday evening with a qualifying competition for the Buck Cup, presented by George Buck for a Kent pairs competition. On Saturday afternoon there was a match between the Men of Kent & the Kentish men with twenty pairs aside which was considered to be the chief event of the congress. On Saturday evening 15 teams played in a competition with the top nine qualifying for the final on Sunday evening. On Sunday morning a golf competition was held at Thanet Golf Club. The final of the Buck Cup was played on Sunday afternoon with congress pairs for those who had not qualified. Also during the congress the final of the Arnold Cup was played. The first annual meeting of KCBA was held on Saturday morning under the chairmanship of John Pearson & the following were elected:-

President	John Pearson	
Treasurer	Joyce Buck	
Secretary	Maud Harvey	
District secretary	Marjorie Steer Watkins	Birchington
	Denys Cleaver	Folkestone
Committee	Helen Bower	Rochester
	Captain Charles Ennals	Sutton Valence
	Sybil Crowdy	Chislehurst
	Lt Col Archibald D Jameson	Folkestone
	George Buck	Birchington
	Eric Harvey	Tunbridge Wells
	Mrs Turner	Hildenborough
	Edward Hussian	Ramsgate
	Marguerite Urry	Deal

The winners of the Arnold Cup final played during the congress were George & Joyce Buck playing with Marjorie Steer Watkins & Mrs Jupp who beat another Westgate team of Mrs Armstrong, Mrs Owens, Philip & Ethel Brook in a close final, which was scored by aggregate.

Later in the year the all Kent league competition was increased to three divisions, the first division for the Jameson Cup, the second for Pearson Cup & the third for the Gill cup. There were seven teams in each league. The first division comprised of West Kent 1, Chislehurst, New Kent 1 (based in Folkestone), New Kent II, Birchington 1, Birchington II & Hildenborough. The second division teams were West Kent II,

Birchington III, Birchington IV, Star Hill (based in Rochester), Sutton Valance I, Ramsgate I and Westgate. Finally, the third division teams were Ramsgate II, West Kent III, West Kent IV, Old Colfeians (based in Lewisham), Sidcup, Sutton Valance II & Maidstone.

1939 saw Dimmie Fleming play for Great Britain for the first time with Dorothy Pearson, further details of both can be found in the KCBA people archive.

In May 1939 a congress was again held at The Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells & the second AGM of KCBA was held during the congress. A few months later all competitive bridge ceased on the outbreak of WW2. One of the leading players in Kent George Buck died serving in the RAF & further details of him can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive.

After the end of WW2 bridge resumed with no change to the pre-war format. National success was achieved in 1946 when the Pachabo Cup was won by a Kent team of Dimmie Fleming, Captain Edward Parker, Mrs J Stewart & Baroness Olga Knoop. They were all members of West Kent. Also, in 1946/7 season the all Kent league was replaced by an East & a West league. The Gill Cup was awarded to the runners up but by 1950/1951 season at the latest a North West league was in place with the winners receiving the Gill Cup.

It is thought the first post war congress was held at the Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells on 9 to 11 May 1947 with the format similar to the 1938 one, the main difference was that the Arnold Cup final was not played that weekend. A match was also staged during the congress between London & the Home Counties with fourteen pairs a side, it was easily won by London who had Terence Reese as one of their players.

A new pairs competition the Phillimore Cup was also thought to have been first contested in 1947. It is named after Major Philip George Phillimore of Folkestone. Further details of Major Phillimore can be found in the trophies history document.

In February 1949 a list of clubs affiliated to the EBU appeared in Contract Bridge Journal magazine & there were five clubs listed in Kent which were:-

Abbotsford BC, Abbotsford Lodge, Sea Point Road, Broadstairs  
Queensway BC, 16 Frankswood Avenue, Orpington  
Ramsgate BC, The Regency, Ramsgate  
Tunbridge Wells & Counties Club, Tunbridge Wells  
West Kent Club, Tunbridge Wells

In 1949 a Kent team of Dimmie Fleming, Edward Parker, Leslie Fleming & Eric Harvey lost out very narrowly to Middlesex in the Pachabo Cup. A report from that era mentioned that Kent were very unfortunate not to win, if it had been scored on either IMPs or VPs they would have clearly won.

The years 1949 & 1950 also saw some very impressive national wins for Dimmie Fleming as she won Crockfords in both 1949 & 1950 as well as the Gold Cup in 1950. She was a regular member of the Great Britain ladies team at that time.

On 29 October 1950 over one hundred players competed during an afternoon session at The Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells for the Buck Cup. Twelve pairs qualified for the final held later that day which was won by Colonel George Stopford & Dr Le May, from Tunbridge Wells, with Leslie Fleming & Eric Harvey as runners up. The other ten pairs to qualify for the final were Philip Brook & M Barr, Violet Erskine & Peggy Palmer, Mr & Mrs Blaxland, Commander Richards & Bertram Birkle, Mrs Cocking & Mrs Vaughan, G Shute & Mrs Parker, Mr & Mrs A B Clark, Mr & Mrs Gordon Hammond, Dick & Lucy Podmore and Mr & Mrs Bulman.

According to EBU records the number of KCBA members on 28 February 1951 was 222 out of a total of 4603 in England. The membership was the eighth largest in the country, Yorkshire was the largest with 828. The EBU delegates at that time were John Pearson & Edward Parker. John sat on the Finance & Executive Committee with Edward serving on Selection Committee and Rules & Ethics Committee.

The annual Spring meeting in 1951 was held at Beresford Hotel in Birchington on just one day, April 29 & it included a match between the Men of Kent & the Kentish Men with twenty five pairs a side, the latter being victorious. Also, in that year 43 pairs entered the Buck Cup with the final being played at Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells. A play off to represent Kent in the Daily Telegraph Cup was won narrowly by a team of Harry Ingram (now playing in many Kent competitions), Dorothy Pearson and Mr & Mrs Gordon Hammond.

A new KCBA competition was introduced in 1952 the Birkle Bowl which was presented by Bertram Birkle of Sidcup. It was first contested on 20 July 1952 at the Spa Hotel in Tunbridge Wells & seventeen teams entered. The first winners were a team from Sidcup of D.Seddon, W Hare, J.Winkworth & E.Howard. Further details of Bertram Birkle can be found in the trophies history document.

Also, in 1952 the final of Phillimore Cup was played on Sunday 14 September at Bromley. There were 24 pairs, play started promptly at 14.00 with a break for tea at 17.00 & play finished on the dot of 20.00 in time for supper & a few drinks. According to the report 48 boards were played (logically 46 seems more likely as that would have been two boards against each pair). The winning pair was Dimmie Fleming & Edward Parker.

In 1953 the annual Spring meeting was again held in Birchington with popular Kentish Men versus Men of Kent being contested. At the AGM John Pearson was re-elected as Chairman, Frere Allnut as vice chairman, Maud Corbett as secretary & treasurer & A Farmery as auditor. The EBU delegates were Edward Parker & H W Haycocks.

Also, in 1953 Kent qualified to play in the final of the Metropolitan summer competition which at the time was contested by Surrey, Sussex & Kent by beating Sussex & drawing with Surrey. The team that played against Surrey was Dimmie Fleming & Edward Parker, Leslie Fleming & Eric Parker, Frere Allnut & Jack Griffiths, Harry Ingram & Dorothy Pearson, Mr & Mrs Gordon Hammond, Mr & Mrs H W Haycocks. This was an indication of the leading players in Kent at that time.

Later in 1953 in an A team match against Sussex the team was Audrey Oswald-Smith & Maud Corbett, Mr & Mrs Watson, Tony & Geraldine Hunter, Philip & Ethel Brook, A J Farmery & K Holloway, J Battery & C. Murray.

The year 1953 also saw a new young pair appearing on the scene, Bill Bowen & John Sarjeant. Playing together they won the Buck Cup.

Other KCBA competitions were also appearing and by 1954 at the latest there was an individual competition for the Clark Bowl. In 1954 there were 107 players who entered in seven qualifying heats. The winner of the final was A. Farmery. The Buck Cup was still the main pairs event, 55 pairs competed in the heats & a final of 13 pairs was won by Frere Allnutt & C Pentecost.

As well as all Kent competitions further regional leagues were being played although the exact start dates of some are not precisely known. Further leagues which commenced in 1950s & 1960s included the following:-

Aveling Trophy	Mid Kent	started no later than 1953
Charles Dickens Cup	Thameside	started no later than 1960
Fletcher Cup	Mid Kent	started no later than 1959
Thanet Cup	North East Kent	started no later than 1969
Dover Cup	East Kent	started in 1970

The year 1954 also saw the first congress held by the West Kent club in the Autumn. It incorporated both pairs & teams competitions, there were twelve pairs in the final of the former while 21 teams played in the latter. It was a successful event & continued for a number of years.

Master points were introduced by the EBU in 1956 in a structure which has remained more or less unchanged in the intervening period. The first person to reach the master rank in Kent was Dimmie Fleming. By early 1958 Kent had three masters (Dimmie Fleming, Norman Smart & Harry Ingram), two county masters (Tony & Geraldine Hunter), 19 local masters & 89 club masters.

In 1958 England played Northern Ireland in a Camrose match at Tunbridge Wells, the England team included Boris Schapiro & Terence Reese.

In the mid to late 1950s further cups were introduced by KCBA due to demand including the Dyer Smith, Fleming Femina & Ingram trophies.

Rex & Maud Corbett offered an inter club cup in 1958 & after discussion at a committee meeting in April 1958 it was agreed that the Corbett Cup would be a knock out teams of eight competition played over 32 boards with an entry fee of one pound. The final was to be played at West Kent club. The first running of the Corbett Cup occurred in 1958 & the winners were Sidcup bridge club, who then retained it in the following season.

There were changes made to the selection of Kent teams following discussions in committee meetings in April & August 1958. Prior to the changes the teams were balloted rather than selected by a captain (the exact details of the ballot are unknown). It was agreed that a sub-committee would be formed which would select the

Tollemache team from a pre-determined panel. Subsequently at another committee meeting in April 1959 it was agreed that the sub-committee would select the Kent first & second teams.

In the 1958/9 season the Arnold Cup was won by John Sarjeant, Bill Bowen, Mike Buckley, Mike Williams & Mrs Daphne Brett. In the final they played Dimmie Fleming, Norman Smart, Lesley Fleming & Dorothy Pearson. The final at the time was played over 64 boards & after 32 boards John Sarjeant's team was leading by 32 IMPs. However, after 64 boards the match was tied so a further eight boards had to be played. On the very last board John Sarjeant & his partner Bill Bowen correctly sacrificed in four spades over four hearts at favourable vulnerability ensuring a narrow win.

John Sarjeant's team then become the premier Kent team in the next decade, winning the Arnold Cup eight times in the following ten years. After the end of the 1960s they all won the Arnold Cup again but never all together in the same team. John Sarjeant won the Arnold for the last time in 1986 before moving abroad. As well as Kent competitions they also played in national competitions with some success. As an example, in October 1963 John Sarjeant, Bill Bowen, Mike Williams & his wife Daphne (formerly Daphne Brett) won the teams of four championship at the EBU Eastbourne congress. They subsequently won the Eastbourne Cup again in 1966.

John Pearson the founder & first president of KCBA died on 17 April 1959. He was succeeded as chairman by Frere Allnutt. At the time the EBU delegates were Frere Allnutt, Maud Corbett & H W Haycocks. Further details of John Pearson can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive.

In July 1959 The British Bridge World (a magazine backed by the EBU) published a list of clubs affiliated to the EBU who had replied to a questionnaire (so there might be some who had not replied, e.g. Tunbridge Wells & Counties Club). There were fourteen clubs listed in Kent but in some the amount of duplicate bridge was minimal compared to the present time. A list of the clubs, the venue & the amount of duplicate played below. Maidstone was the only club which mentioned duplicate teams being played.

Beckenham, Verneys Restaurant, High St	Duplicate twice a week
Broadstairs, Abbotsford BC, 8 Seapoint Road	Duplicate once a month
Bromley, Hackwood Hotel, Widmore Road	Only partnership
Canterbury Golf Club	Duplicate once a fortnight
Farnborough & District, Village Hall	Duplicate 6/7 times a month
Folkestone, East Kent BC, 209 Sandgate Road	Duplicate 3/4 times per annum
Gravesend, 198 Parrock Street	Duplicate every Tuesday evening
Isle of Sheppey, Queensboro' Road	Duplicate 2/3 times per month
Maidstone, 14 Beech Drive	Duplicate teams once a month
	Duplicate pairs fortnightly
Rochester, Eagle Court, 124 High Street	Duplicate twice a fortnight
Sidcup, Golf Club, Hurst Road	Duplicate twice a week
Sittingbourne, King George Playing Fields	Duplicate three times per month
Westgate, Town Hall	Duplicate five times a week
West Kent, 12 Boyne Park, Tunbridge Wells	Duplicate twice a month

Also, in 1959 the first post war Kent Congress was held at the Grand Hotel in Folkestone from June 19 to June 21 with Maud Corbett as congress secretary. It ran from Friday afternoon to Sunday evening. The format stayed unchanged for many years although by the 1970s it was held in the Marine Pavilion in Folkestone.

The upward rise of Kent bridge was confirmed in early 1961 when a Kent quintet narrowly lost winning the Daily Telegraph Cup for the first time. They led until the very last board when they were overtaken by a Middlesex team of six internationals. The Kent team was Dimmie Fleming, Norman Smart, Mike Buckley, Bill Bowen & John Sarjeant.

In 1961 the EBU made some changes to the master points systems introducing star masters. By the end of the year the leading Kent players in the system were as listed below.

Life Master	Dimmie Fleming
Two Star Master	Harry Ingram, Mike Williams
One Star Master	Daphne Brett, Geraldine Hunter, Tony Hunter John Sarjeant, Bill Bowen

In November 1962 Bill Bowen & Mike Buckley played in the Camrose trials finishing equal second. In November 1963 they played in the trials in Harrogate & qualified for a place in the remaining home internationals. They subsequently played in the Camrose match against Northern Ireland at Bournemouth in January 1964, they won the first two matches 5-1 & 6-0. In 1968 they were selected to play in the final Camrose trial without having to play in the pre-trials and finished equal first. They were then selected to play in the Camrose match against Northern Ireland in Belfast. England won the first match 6-0, the second 4-2 & drew the third 3-3. They also played in matches in Belfast in 1969 & St Athans in 1970. In the Camrose trials in Autumn 1970 they finished third & played versus Scotland in Manchester in January 1971. England won 4-2, lost 2-4 & then won 4-2 & were then overall Camrose winners.

In 1963 Kent won the Metropolitan Cup "B" team final for teams of twelve. The team as recorded in the British Bridge World was Brand, Phyllis Allnutt, Tony & Geraldine Hunter, Mrs Goodall, Geoff Russell, Morriss, Buckland, Caro, Tony Walkden, Peter Crofts & Eric Parsons.

National success was achieved in 1966 when the Pachabo Cup was won by John Sarjeant, Bill Bowen, Mike Buckley and Mike Williams. The Pachabo Cup is only open to the winners of the main county teams event, in Kent this is the Arnold Cup. In the 1960s this team with the addition of Daphne Williams had a good record in the Pachabo as they finished fourth in 1962, third in 1967 & second equal in 1969.

Also, in July 1966 the Kent congress was held on board QSS Arkadia.

The number of KCBA members continued to increase slowly & the total in 1964 was 364, then 380 in 1965, 439 in 1966, reducing to 427 in 1967 before increasing to 457 in 1968 then to 469 in 1969.

There was not much change in the 1960s but in 1969 the Larsky Cup became the prize for the winners of the main Kent pairs championship & for the next few years the Buck Cup was awarded to the runners up. Also, in the 1960s Sidcup & Beckenham bridge clubs flourished & become strong playing centres, between then they won the Corbett Cup most years between 1960 & 1980.

In December 1969 Kent qualified for the Tollemache final for the first time, the final was played in January 1970. The Kent team selected for the final was Dimmie Fleming & Paul Spurway, Mike & Daphne Williams, Mike Buckley & John Sarjeant with Howard Oken & Tony Walkden. Kent finished with 18 Victory Points compared to an average of 24 but finished fifth & bottom as the scores were very close, Lincolnshire were third with 20 Victory Points.

In the early 1970s Kent bridge suffered a great loss when Mike Buckley stopped playing to follow his career as a leading civil servant. In the few years he played he had represented England & won numerous Kent & national competitions.

In the mid to late 1970s some new players emerged with John Cullingworth, Dick Payne, Peter Law & Denis O'Donovan all winning the Arnold Cup for the first time in that period with Pat Collins following in 1980. They all become leading players in Kent for many decades.

Another young pair who arrived on the scene in the early 1970s were Steve Burton & Tony Clark. They won the Camrose trials in October 1972 & subsequently played in the Camrose for England against Wales in February 1973.

In 1978 Peter Law & Dick Payne won the Harold Poster cup for swiss pairs at the Brighton Summer congress followed in 1980 by Jeremy Willans & Mike Kingsland.

At the start of the 1980s there was a fall in entries in some KCBA competitions with the arrival of many other green pointed swiss teams & other competitions. As a result of this some competitions were no longer contested while the format & entry conditions changed for others. Two cups which were discontinued were the Clark Cup & Blaxland Bowl, as individual competitions fell out of favour. In 1987 the Buck Cup became a mixed pivot team knock out competition until it sadly was discontinued after 2008 because of the small number of entries. The entry for the 1980 congress at Folkestone increased to 249 from 206 the previous year.

By 1981 the total number of KCBA members had increased to 682. The cost of membership was £4.50 per annum of which £3 was payable to the EBU.

The last KCBA congress to be held in Folkestone was in 1985. No congress was held in 1986 and then it was held at St Lawrence cricket ground in Canterbury in 1987 where it stayed until 1992.

In the late 1980s & early 1990s the number of teams entering the local leagues reduced and as a result three leagues ceased running which were Jameson, Fletcher & Charles Dickens. However, as a result of much work by the North West local area secretary Harry Millward the Gill Cup was extended to include league division two & three. This remains the position to the present except that the Thanet Cup ceased after 2003 & the Gill Cup now has only two leagues.

In 1989 Kent provided three of the Great Britain players in the world under 25 world championship, Derek Patterson, Gerald & Stuart Tredinnick.

After many years of trying Kent managed to win the Tollemache Cup in 1990 when the team consisted of Gerald & Stuart Tredinnick, Peter Law, Pat Collins, Neil Rosen, Peter Taylor, Derek Patterson, Trevor Ward, Jeremy Willans & Phil Bailey with Denis O'Donovan as non-playing captain. Kent subsequently won the cup again a few years later in 1997 with mostly the same team.

Dimmie Fleming awards were received in 1991 by three long serving members for their work in Kent namely Robbie Robinson and Bill & Gay Bright. Further details of these individuals can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive. These awards have been made by the EBU since 1985 named after Dimmie for her services to the EBU.

In the period since 1990 Kent has also had considerable success in many national competitions, for example the Pachabo was won no less than five times between 1991 & 2010. The successes in the two main knockout cups are listed below.

In the Crockfords Cup in the period from 1991 to 2002 all Kent teams won it no less than four times & with one runner up in addition. The winning teams were:-

1991 Peter Law, Pat Collins, Malcolm Lewis, Gerald Tredinnick, Stuart Tredinnick  
1993 Colin Thame, Trevor Ward, Phil Bailey, Denis O'Donovan, Derek Patterson  
1996 Derek Patterson, Denis O'Donovan, Willie Whittaker, Peter Law, Pat Collins  
2002 Pat Collins, Peter Law, Denis O'Donovan, Derek Patterson

In the Gold Cup in the period from 1994 to 2009 all Kent teams won twice in 1994 & 1995 but in addition there were four runners up the teams were:-

1994 Derek Patterson, Gerald Tredinnick, Stuart Tredinnick, Neil Rosen,  
Phil King, Pat Collins  
1995 As 1994  
1998 Gerald Soper, Terry Goldsmith, John Short, Rod Oakford  
2005 Pat Collins, Derek Patterson, Gerald Tredinnick, Stuart Tredinnick,  
Neil Rosen, Peter Crouch  
2008 Pat Collins, Derek Patterson, Gerald Tredinnick, Stuart Tredinnick  
2009 Pat Collins, Derek Patterson, Gerald Tredinnick, Stuart Tredinnick

As might be expected with success in national competitions there were many players selected to play in internationals for either Great Britain or England. The players selected included Gerald Tredinnick, Stuart Tredinnick, Neil Rosen, Derek Patterson, Norman Selway, Espen Erichsen, Kay Preddy, Peter Crouch, Jeremy Willans & Catherine Draper. In addition, there were appearances in the senior internationals for Pat Collins & Malcolm Lewis.

In the late 1990s there were still falling entries for many competitions & in 1999 after almost 50 years of being the main one-day teams competition the Birkle Bowl was changed to a pivot teams format. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient interest for

this to continue so in 2006 it became the prize for the leading non-expert team in the Congress.

An all Kent league for teams of four was introduced in 1991 for which the winners were awarded the Brook Cup. In 1992 to 1994 the top division became the Premier league. The competition ceased after 1994 due to lack of entries.

In 1993 the KCBA congress was held for the first time at the Imperial Hotel in Hythe which was also the venue for the 1994 congress. Unfortunately, both congresses were run at a loss so it was moved in 1995 to the current venue of Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club. Also, in 1993 Peter Leonard took over as chairman when Brian Crack had to stand down for business reasons.

The number of KCBA members continued to increase in the 1990s and in the subscription year 1994/5 was 1,159 which increased to 1,194 in 1995/6. These numbers included 141 & 105 new members respectively. The subscription by 1996/7 had increased to £15 per annum of which £12 was the EBU subscription.

Dimmie Fleming the president of KCBA died in September 1996 & at the following AGM on 29 June 1997 during the interval of the George Griffiths Cup Ray White was duly elected to the vacant position. Further details of Dimmie can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive.

Bridge continued its increase in popularity as the total number of KCBA members in the 1999/2000 season was 1362 which included 30 dual members & in addition there were 54 clubs registered.

In 2001 Farnborough become the first Kent club to win the Garden Cities Trophy, which is contested by the winners of all county teams of eight competition. The winning team was Ian & Catherine Draper, Neil & Anne Rosen, Gerald & Stuart Tredinnick, Phil Bailey & Tony Clark. They then retained the trophy in 2002.

KCBA progressed with the times & set up its own website by 2001 which now holds details of all results, competitions and so on.

Ray White received the Dimmie Fleming award in 2003 for his services over many years, he was KCBA chairman for twelve years & involved in bridge in Tunbridge Wells for many years. Further details of Ray can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive.

In May 2004 the last original KCBA club West Kent merged with Tunbridge Wells & Counties Club & Wellington bridge club to form Tunbridge Wells bridge club. They had all played at the same venue for a number of years. It is the only club in Kent to own its own premises, a Victorian building based at 40 London Road. It is the venue for many KCBA events.

Ray White the president of KCBA died in June 2004 & he was succeeded as president by Bob King. More details of Ray can be found in the KCBA people archive.

Dimmie Fleming awards were made in 2004 & 2005 to Bob King & Mike de Winter respectively. They were both long serving members of the KCBA committee. More details of Bob can be found in the KCBA people archive.

Kent were confirmed as one of the leading counties by winning the Tollemache Cup in 2008 & then retaining it in 2009. The team for both years consisted of Gerald & Stuart Tredinnick, Pat Collins, Derek Patterson, Peter Law, Denis O'Donovan, Jeremy Willans & Ian Draper. They also reached the final every year from 2011 to 2017 and finished second three times.

The structure of the teams of eight competitions for clubs (Corbett Cup, Corbett Plate & Mitchell Salver) was changed in 2009. They were changed from being knock out to being played over two days (one day for Mitchell Salver), with three divisions the top one playing for the Corbett Cup & the second for the Corbett Plate. Since this change Chislehurst has emerged as the leading club team whereas over the previous 20 years most finals had been won by Farnborough or one of the Tunbridge Wells teams. In fact, Chislehurst won the Corbett Cup for nine consecutive years from 2008 to 2016 inclusive before Tunbridge Wells won it in 2017 & 2018.

The EBU seniors knock out for the Gerard Faulkner Salver was won in 2010 by a team of six which included four Kent players Peter Law, Pat Collins, Denis O'Donovan & John Short. Denis & John were subsequently selected to play for England in a senior Camrose match but sadly Denis died before the match. Further details of Denis can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive.

The number of members continued to increase, in 2011 there were just over 2300 & this gradually increased over the next few years (with occasional small drops) to just over 2600 in 2015.

Chislehurst become the second Kent club to win the Garden Cities Trophy in 2012. The winning team was Michael Hampton, Pat Collins, Bill Charlwood, Jon Chapman, Michael Prior, Leigh Chapman, Ian Draper & Jeremy Willans.

In June 2013 Martin Wortel & Doug Andrews become the first Kent pair to win the Corwen trophy. Also, in the same year the winning team of five in the Hubert Phillips Bowl contained four Kent players, Kay Preddy, Norman Selway, Pat Collins & Derek Patterson. The Four Stars winning team at the EBU Brighton 2013 summer congress included two Kent players in Nick Irens & Espen Erichsen.

In 2014 Brian Crack became the first person in Kent to be awarded the Silver Award by the EBU for his services. He was initially elected to the KCBA committee in 1983, became secretary in 1986 & then served as chairman from 1989 to 1993 before having to step down for business reasons. He then returned to the committee in 2002 & served as secretary until 2009. Also, from 2002 he served on the EBU tournament committee for seven years, six years as vice chairman.

Geoff Smith was awarded the Dimmie Fleming award in November 2015 after completing twenty five years service on the KCBA committee. He was first elected in 1990 & was appointed treasurer in 1991 a position he held for over twenty years. In 2010 he become deputy chairman & then one year later took over as chairman. In his

time as chairman he has been keen to get more tournament directors & teachers in Kent bridge clubs. He was also instrumental in appointing an archivist.

In the summer of 2016 David Anning was nominated for the Dimmie Fleming award & this was approved by the EBU. Sadly, David died in September 2016 but the award was made at the EBU AGM in November 2016. Further details of David can be found in the KCBA people section of the archive.

In September 2016 Geoff Smith stood down as chairman in anticipation of his move to Cornwall. Keith Ashcroft was appointed as acting chairman until the AGM in 2017. At the 2017 AGM Malcolm Lewis was appointed as chairman with Keith Ashcroft returning to the role as vice chairman.

Espen Erichsen was part of the winning Gold Cup team when the finals were played in October 2016.

The following year 2017 was another very successful year for Kent bridge with a team of Pat Collins, Peter Law, Mike Hampton & Phil Bailey winning the Pachabo Cup. Norman Inniss playing with Richard Creamer (from London) won the Life Master Pairs. Tunbridge Wells reached the national final of the Garden Cities where they finished fourth, only four Victory Points behind the second team. There was also the first Kent success in the NICKO as the winners were a Tunbridge Wells BC team of Andrew Cairns, Espen Erichsen, Helen Erichsen, Norman Selway & Jeremy Willans. In the Gold Cup final Derek Paterson was captain of the winning team & Norman Selway and Kay Preddy were members of the losing team. In addition, Pat Collins, Peter Law & Bill Hirst were in one of the losing semi-final teams.

Also, in 2017 Anton & Jessica Mauve became the first Kent recipients of the Tom Bradley award from the EBU. This was in recognition of starting and fostering school bridge in the West Kent area.

Sadly, Ian Ottley one of the honorary vice presidents died in March 2017. In October 2017 Ted Nesom & Dot Servante were both appointed as honorary vice presidents.

In February 2018 Kent won the Tollemache final after being runners up for the previous two years. Then in the following month Helen Erichsen & Jon Thorsen won the Portland Pairs, the winning margin being over 4%. Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club then became the third Kent club to win the Garden Cities final in June 2018. Later in the year in November the Tunbridge Wells BC team retained the NICKO they had won in 2017.

Monica Aitken was presented with the Dimmie Fleming award in November 2018 in recognition of her services to KCBA which included being Congress Secretary since 2007 & helping out with successful initiatives to bring bridge to the young, as well as teaching in two schools.