

# THE NOTTINGHAM BRIDGE CLUB

## *Newsletter - July 2021*



# We're open!

## from Monday 19 July



**Starting on 19 July  
our regular drives  
at the Club are:**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>1:30 pm</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>

**Online  
we will still be running:**

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>

At last, after sixteen months, we can again open for regular bridge drives. But will you come and join us? After over a year of being kept apart, for many of us it is going to be strange to be sitting at a table with other people. Many members have told me, over the past year, that the online bridge has given them something to keep them occupied but, most importantly, it has given them contact with other people. I'm hoping that everyone will soon realise that typing wdp in a BBO game pales into insignificance compared with the smile that your partner gives you when you make that difficult contract!

On the next page, you can read how we will be running our face-to-face drives and why we have chosen to do things that way. This should help you decide whether you are ready to return to the table.

The Club Committee appreciates that not everyone will be ready to come back just yet, so for the time being we will continue running our online tournaments on Tuesday and Friday evenings. Was this a brave decision, as they used to say on *Yes, Minister?* The Committee couldn't decide whether we would be flooded with players or struggling for tables!

To encourage you to come out on Tuesday and Friday evenings, there's no need to register - just turn up. In the (hopefully unlikely) event that not many come, you will play for free with the Club paying the contribution to the EBU for Master Points. But, just in case we can't cope with the numbers, we will only accept visitors who are partnering members.

We will be playing 24 boards on Tuesdays and Fridays, and the bar will be open, so there should be time to relax and catch up with friends.

I've been playing on Monday and Thursday evenings and I was surprised how much I enjoyed being back at the table. I'm looking forward to playing a full movement at the table and I hope to see you there.

*David Dunford*

# We're back!

**Y**es, from 19 July we will be playing duplicate bridge again at the club. However, we all know that the coronavirus has not gone away. What has changed is that the government feels that we all, as individuals, are now in a position to weigh up the risks and decide ourselves what we feel is safe for us to do. To help you in this, the Committee wants to take this opportunity to explain the choices it has made and the reasons for them.

The easiest decision has been to say that, if you have a positive test for the coronavirus or have symptoms that suggest you may have caught it, then please do not come to the club. Similarly, if you should be isolating, then do so.

The club has registered with the NHS test and trace scheme and you can check in with the QR code if you wish. However, if you are playing, then there is no need to do so as the scoring system collects who you are and when you played. We even publish it on our web site, and we have contact details available for everyone.

After the long periods of lockdown, people's natural immunity is likely to be lower than normal. So, if you're feeling under the weather please think twice about coming to the club. The slogan "coughs and sneezes spread diseases" was coined in the First World War, but is just as true today, when the message has become "use a tissue and bin it".

At the start of the pandemic there was concern about passing the virus by touching objects. Our reading of the published reports is that, while the virus can live on hard surfaces for a while, there seems little evidence that it has been passed on by touching. It survives for a shorter time on cloth than hard surfaces, which is why we are using cloths on the tables. It is not practical for us to operate without passing boards between tables, so we will be doing that, with no quarantining between sessions. Also, bidding boxes will stay on the tables – not everyone has a steady hand and there is a risk of bidding cards being scattered over the floor. However, if you have your own

bidding box and wish to take it with you, that is fine so long as you close it securely before you move between tables.

Players may wish to use hand sanitiser. However, this will not be provided by the club. Tables already have more than enough on them for playing bridge, and placing sanitisers elsewhere would just result in people queuing in close proximity. If you bring your own sanitiser, then please bring one high in alcohol and make sure your hands are clean before you touch the cards. We already have reports from other clubs of cards being ruined and causing problems with dealing machines because of the gels being used.

The Committee feels that playing bridge for a full session and wearing a mask are just not compatible. If you want to wear one that is absolutely fine, but do not ask others to do so. Draughts have been an issue at the club for a long time; some complaining there is too much and some that there is too little. However, we now know that draughts are a good way of combating the coronavirus. So, the committee will be experimenting with ways of improving the air flow in the playing rooms. If this gives you discomfort, then you may wish to consider bringing a scarf or shawl with you.

For our play on Monday and Thursday evenings we have been using four tables pushed together, but from 19 July we will be back to individual tables. However, we can understand that the proximity may come as something of a shock to some after the need to social distance for so many months! Where the numbers make it possible, for the initial weeks, we will spread people out between the playing rooms, so that some of the tables are not in use.

We would love to see you all back at the club and (where mutually acceptable) see people sharing hugs once again. However, we respect the fact that some people will feel that they are not yet ready to take that step. Take care.

*David Dunford*

## Anyone for daytime bridge?

**S**everal people have said that they would like the Club to offer more daytime bridge. It looks as though Thursdays might be the best time for this, so if you would be interested in playing bridge then, please let us know with an email to [Chairman@NottinghamBridge.Club](mailto:Chairman@NottinghamBridge.Club), so that we can judge whether it would be viable.

We would also be interested in your ideas as to what form it should take. Should we start soon, or leave it until

later in the year? How many boards would you like to play? Do you want the opportunity to bring a sandwich and have a chat over coffee before you start? Or do you want a break half-way for coffee and a chat? Or something stronger from the bar? Perhaps you would like to bake cakes for people to have.

At the moment, plans are a blank sheet of paper, so feel free to give us your ideas.

# Our face-to-face drives are now CASHLESS

For some time now, our treasurer, Phil Gross, has been investigating moving to a cashless system for table fees. It's not a good thing to have lots of cash at the club, and even less so for Phil to be carrying heavy bags of coins to the bank. In addition, moving to a cashless system will improve our record keeping. We'll also be using it for annual subscriptions, which will make it much easier to keep track of who has paid and who hasn't.

We have been trialling a cashless system for our face-to-face drives on Monday and Thursday evenings, and we will continue this now for all our face-to-face drives.

We are asking members to pay by bank transfer. The account details are shown in the box. **Please take care, this is not the same account that you may have used before. If you have the old account details in your online banking, it would be best to delete them.**

If you are not able to make bank transfers, then you can pay by cheque made out to "THE NOTTINGHAM BRIDGE CLUB" with your EBU number on the back. However, this does make extra work, so we would prefer just one cheque a month. You don't have to give it to Phil; a trustee or director will be able to put it in Phil's tray.

Similarly, we are happy for you to make a monthly bank transfer in arrears. But if you feel happier making a bank transfer every time you pays, that's fine: it doesn't make any extra work for us.

We will issue monthly statements showing how much you owe for table fees and how much you have paid.

**Account Name:  
THE NOTTINGHAM  
BRIDGE CLUB**

**Sortcode: 40-35-19  
Account number:  
51248219**

**Add your EBU number  
as your reference  
(and nothing else)**

The club's bank usually issues statements on the 16th of the month, so we will aim to get your statements out shortly afterwards.

You can check how many times you have played by going to the Competitions section on the Club web site and clicking on the Face-to-face entry. So, it should be fairly easy for you to keep track of how much you owe, or how much you are in credit. Regular players may prefer to make a standing order and make the occasional top-up as necessary.

## Tablet scoring



As well as going cashless, we've adopted more modern technology for scoring

Instead of Bridgemates, we're using tablets for entering the scores at the table. We've been using these on Monday and Thursday evenings and they've been warmly received. It's so much easier to see the suits.

You enter the same information that you did on a Bridgemate, but using a touch screen that gives you just the choices that you need. No more hunting through an array of buttons that mean different things at different times.

Another change is that the results at the end of a drive will be displayed on our new TV screen outside the office for all to see. As well as meaning that we no longer need to print off results, the scorer should be able to do their job without people leaning over them to see if the results are available yet!

# Bidder beware!

## Your opponents may say they are playing ACOL, but it may not be ACOL as you know it.

Playing on BBO has shone a light on people's bidding styles. It is not unknown for someone to announce that they play ACOL with a weak no trump and then open one of a suit with a 12 HCP, 4432 hand, and an unexciting holding in the suit they have bid.

People are also making much lighter bids than are set out in the EBU's Standard English Modern ACOL:

- \* For our main club drives, the EBU outlaws agreements to open at the one level in first or second seat with less than 8 HCP. (They also have to obey the Rule of 18 or better.) We've seen lighter opening bids.

- \* Standard English ACOL says that a response in a new suit at the two level, e.g. 1H-(P)-2D, shows 9+ HCP. Many players are not constrained by such considerations.

- \* Similarly, the EBU tells us a weak two opener shows a decent 6-card suit and about 5-9 HCP. However, for some players, 3 HCP and a Jack in the suit seems enough.

- \* For the EBU, an overcall at the one level shows around 8-16 HCP, and a respectable 5 card suit with at least two honours. We've seen overcalls that fall short on all three of these conditions.

It's not beginners forgetting their system. We've seen all of the above from established players with several decades' experience. Making any of these bids is not illegal – an agreement to open with 7 HCP is illegal, but doing so is merely considered a “deviation” – and you have no redress if your opponents make such bids and you feel disadvantaged by them.

However, many players do feel disadvantaged. Especially as your opponent's partner will be familiar with their style and may shade their own bids accordingly. So what can you do?

One approach, when knowing the bidder's style would affect how you bid, is to ask a question of the bidder's partner. But, instead of asking what system they are playing it needs to be along the lines of “From your experience, how few points might your partner have to make that bid.” Although there is nothing stopping light bids, misinforming opponents is against the laws. And, with BBO, it's possible to check their bidding history by looking at how they have bid in the past. You are entitled to know how your opponents bid.

An important principle in duplicate bridge is that your opponents are entitled to know what your partnership understandings are. However, not everyone realises just how much that entails.

It's not just your bidding system, but includes any discards or other signals that you play.

It's also not just what is written down on a system card, or even things that you have discussed and agreed with your partner. If you “understand” what your partner's bid means through experience of playing with them, or even against them, then that is part of your partnership understanding.

Your opponents are even entitled to know how your choice of call differs from possible alternatives. For example, with the sequence

N	E	S	W
1♥	X	P	2♣
X	2♠		

West can be asked when East might bid spades immediately after the 1NT rather than double.

Occasionally, your partner may make a bid that is clearly not natural but you have no idea what it means. What do you do? You alert it. When asked what it means, then you can say that there is no partnership understanding. But make sure that is the case. How often have you been told that there is no agreement – quite different from an understanding – only to hear them say, “oh, I thought that was what you would have” when the dummy went down? (If an opponent says they can't remember, then call the director who can send the forgetful player away from the table while the bidder tells you what their understanding is.)

The EBU, by whose rules we play, has taken it even further. It says that: a natural bid that has a potentially unexpected meaning must be alerted. The EBU is particularly hot on doubles: the opponents need to know if it is your practice to make take-out doubles on very weak hands or with hands that could have length in the opener's suit.

Psyches are allowed by the laws of bridge: a psyche is a gross and deliberate misrepresentation of a hand. A lot of club players don't like psyches, but they are firmly embedded as allowed by the laws. We can't do anything about that, with one exception and that is psychic artificial calls: so the Club Committee has decided to outlaw these so that, for example, you can't open a strong 2♣ on what some people used to call tram tickets.

You're not just entitled to know your opponents' bidding system.

Not everyone has been open on BBO about their discards and signals,

but once we're back at a proper table it's much easier to ask what a defender's discard shows.