

OXFORD BRIDGE

Newsletter of the Oxfordshire Bridge Association

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Oxfordshire Congress

27/28 June 2009 at Steventon Village Hall

Cost: £23 per player at each event (incl. plated teas)

1.00 pm Saturday 27 June: Green Pointed Swiss Pairs

11.00 am Sunday 28 June: Green Pointed Swiss Teams

Mixed Pairs

2.00 pm Sunday 14 June at Oxford Bridge Club

Cost: £8.50 per player incl. tea

Players must be members of both the EBU and the OBA

Entries for all events to Alan Grunwald,
1 Elm Tree Cottage, Grove Rd, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7BS
e-mail: AlanG@nurdglaw.demon.co.uk

FREE REFRESHMENTS + BRIDGE at the OBA AGM

7.30 pm Monday 15 June, Oxford Bridge Club

FOCUS ON PLAY - TAKE YOUR TIME

Love All. Dealer South.

NORTH

♠ 42

♥ 974

♦ AQJ732

♣ 98

WEST

♠ QJ1065

♥ Q103

♦ K

♣ K1072

EAST

♠ 973

♥ K865

♦ 10984

♣ Q4

SOUTH

♠ AK8

♥ AJ2

♦ 65

♣ AJ653

North-South land in three no-trumps and get a spade lead. You, South, take this with the ace and play a small diamond. If you call prematurely for the queen and the king appears unexpectedly from West, then you are still obliged to play the queen. I always feel this is a bit harsh, but then 'rules is rules' as they say.

Being a kind soul I will let you play the ace instead - do you feel better now? I hope not, because you are still down in your cold contract. East takes the fourth diamond with the ten, costing you two diamond tricks.

You would have done better to have thought for a while and played the TWO. Now you are home and dry!

AROUND THE CLUBS – 5

A Short History of Oxford Bridge Club

In the Beginning In the 1940s, keen Oxford bridge players would meet weekly sometimes in the Roebuck pub and at other times in a room above the Agripola restaurant in Queen Street. Then, thanks to the drive and energy of Rene Beck, the wife of a local dentist, the Bridge Club acquired a more permanent base, a room in premises in Bevington Road, which her husband had leased from the University for his dental practice.

Some years later, Mr Beck moved his surgery to Beaumont Street and 11 Bevington Road was leased directly by Oxford Bridge Club. At this stage, duplicate bridge was played regularly once a week on the ground floor of the house and the Bridge Club bar was situated in the basement. Later the Oxford Bridge Club was formally established. According to an article in the *Oxford Times* (12 October 1967) the Club was founded in 1951, and therefore various events were arranged during 2001 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Club.

Move to Banbury Road In the mid-sixties the Oxford Bridge Club was forced to vacate 11 Bevington Road when the University decided to re-acquire the house on the expiry of the lease. Through the good offices of Norman Chester, then Warden of Nuffield College, contact was made with University College who agreed to lease to the Club our current premises at 147 Banbury Road.

The new premises required substantial alteration and refurbishment before the Club could move in. Many members gave freely of their time; others gave loans of £50 each to the Club, money that was repaid within two years because of the Club's success. These loans enabled the Club to complete essential work in time for the President's opening party on Wednesday 11 October 1967.

The Management Committee at this time included Micky Beck, President, Freddie and Lilly Beckett (Freddie Beckett was then Chairman), Eva Chester (Chairman of the House Committee) and Sandy Constable, whose skills as a surveyor had been invaluable in planning the building alterations. Sandy Constable is now the President of Oxford Bridge Club.

Improvement and Modernisation Since then the Management Committee has continued to improve the premises and the facilities offered, the latest major development being the substantial extension to the rear, which was built in 1994. This was financed mainly from the Club's contingency fund but also with a grant of £10,000 from the County Association, which uses the premises as its headquarters from where it holds its meetings, duplicate events and county competitions. Later, in 1996, the kitchen was modernised and the previously decrepit back yard transformed. Thanks to Eileen Martensen, there is now a flourishing back garden and patio, an inviting spot on a summer's evening.

In 2004 the lease was due for renewal. University College, the owners of the property, indicated their willingness to sell the freehold of the whole building, including the two flats on the first and second floors. The Club decided to purchase the freehold and then sell the flats. Thanks to the generosity of many members who made donations or loans, it was possible to secure a mortgage, purchase the freehold and sell off the two flats. Peter Stevenson, the then Chairman, skilfully guided the Club through the lengthy process of securing finance and completing the transactions.

Eminent Players Many prominent bridge players have been members of the Club or have been closely associated with it. Stuart and Anne Staveley who were members of the Club in Bevington Road were instrumental in setting up the EBU, which they ran initially from a room in their house in Thame. Moreover players such as Keith Bennett, Jonathan Cansino, Paul and Alex Fearnhead, Lynne Hayes, Sandra Landy, Rob Sheehan, Alan Truscott, and Abbey Walker, all of whom have played at the Club, and at some time in their careers have been chosen to represent their country in international events at senior or junior levels.

Services to Bridge Four members of the Club, Eric Bowtell, Morrie Marsh, Winnie Ling and Sandy Constable have been honoured with the Dimmie Fleming award in recognition of their services to Bridge. Within Oxford Bridge Club itself, Honorary Life Membership has been conferred on nine members.

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