



## OXFORDSHIRE BRIDGE COMMUNITY NEWS APRIL 2026

### EDITORIAL OBJECTIVE

Google “Why is bridge so popular?” and AI will tell you that it is a highly stimulating, social, and low-cost "mind sport" that combines logic, psychology, and teamwork.

Whether you compete for master points hoping to improve your national grade, play duplicate bridge at a social bridge club with nothing more than honour at stake or at home with your friends, AI’s answer would seem to apply to all.

For the good of the game the Oxfordshire Bridge Association aims to support bridge in whatever form it is played. In this context a meeting in early May will be looking at what financial, teaching and marketing help might be given to smaller clubs to help them sustain and grow themselves.

If this bridge community news has appeared to concentrate on the competitive side that is a consequence of news about competitive bridge being more readily available than news

of social bridge. The [Editor](#) invites readers to write to him to fill the gap.

## OXFORD JUNIOR BRIDGE CLUB

12 years ago Holly Kilpatrick founded a club for Oxford's juniors, initially playing in Summertown and then after a break for covid moving to Oxford Bridge Club. It plays on a Sunday afternoon at 2.30 for two hours and regularly attracts 3 or 4 tables of youngsters with varying levels of experience. Over the years several of Holly's "graduates" have gone on to play for England's junior teams.

Holly is ably supported by Kelvin Ward, Peter Sherry and Zahir Soonawalla. She is planning to step down herself this summer and is hoping to recruit one or more new people to take her place. Many thanks are due to Holly for everything she has achieved.

You can read about the last 12 years and the job description on the [OBA website](#).

If you know of other youngsters who would like to learn to play bridge for £5 per Sunday afternoon please do introduce them too.

## APOLOGY

It may be customary to hide apologies for inaccuracies in the small print on the back page but we like to be upfront. In the February news we incorrectly reported that: "In February, Graham Orsmond, Abbey Smith and Diana Nettleton travelled to Prague for events in the European Winter TransNationals. Unfortunately they have no great successes to report but we hope they enjoyed Prague."

They did so travel and did have a success to report. Graham Orsmond's team finished second in the Board a Match event and beat a team of Italian internationals a couple of times on the way. Very well done!

The editor apologises for missing this. When asked for a hand from the event Graham instead chose to relate a different hand in a different event:

Playing for Oxford Bridge Club in the third round of the National Inter-Club Knockout Graham Orsmond and Jackie Fairclough teaming up with Denis and Kathy Talbot beat the very strong Young Chelsea team of Ben Norton, Stefano Tommasini, Matt Brown and Tim Leslie.

Here is the hand that Denis held when Kathy opened a strong 1 Club:

♠ AKQJ3

♥ K

♦ JT82

♣ K65

Denis bid 1♦ showing any hand with 8+ points and 2+ controls counting an ace as 2 and a king as 1. Kathy's rebid of 2♣ said I am unbalanced with at least 4 hearts, but may have a longer suit. 2♦ from Denis was the first of a series of relay bids where Kathy was telling Denis about her hand. 2♥ from Kathy showed a club suit, 2♠ was a relay, 4♦ from Kathy showed precisely 2605 shape.

At this stage Denis probably knew enough, as the opening 1C bid should have 16 points or equivalent values and he knows that Kathy has none in spades or diamonds. Would she open the strong club with less than xx, AQJxxx, void, AQJxx? It seems unlikely. He did check for aces before choosing the club grand slam to win the match when the opposition only found their way to the heart small slam. Kathy's hand was

♠ 96

♥ AQJ643

♦ VOID

♣ AQJ72

Excellent work! Maybe this should come with a warning "Don't try this at home" but if you are interested in learning a relay system you know whom to ask.

## WESSEX LEAGUE

The inter-club teams of eight championship has recently finished. The top division was won by Oxford A with a convincing win against The Menagerie in their last match and they will go on to represent Oxfordshire in the Garden Cities Cup. We wish them well there. The other divisions were won by Blewbury, Aylesbury Aces and Wallingford D. Well done to all concerned.

The league has four divisions comprising 25 teams coming from 11 clubs. There are 10 affiliated and 19 unaffiliated clubs not entering the competition, all of whom would be very welcome to join. Matches are normally played online

so costs are low and you get to play on RealBridge against people from other clubs. What's stopping you?

## WHERE TO PLAY AND LEARN

The [OBA website](#) shows where bridge is played at its affiliated clubs, together with [contact details](#) for these clubs.

Several other clubs have come back to us with details of their sessions:

Burford plays 12 boards on a Tuesday afternoon at 4 o'clock - if you would like to play there contact Amir Hashimi: 07831 301886. Once a month they have Supervised Tutorial Sessions and Play With Experts.

Haddenham Friday club plays at 6.30 on Fridays in the Haddenham Library. They would welcome new members. If you would like to play there contact Hilary Skipsey at [hilaryskipsey@gmail.com](mailto:hilaryskipsey@gmail.com).

The North Oxford Association hosts bridge in Summertown from 1.00 to 3.30 on Friday afternoons - email [info@northoxfordassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@northoxfordassociation.org.uk) if you would like more information

Woodstock bridge club plays weekly. Sheila Cowley writes: "We are a small club, currently with 30 members, and would welcome new players.

Since Covid, we play exclusively on-line using RealBridge on Wednesdays at 7pm and play a maximum of 24 hands. Website Link - [www.bridgewebs.com/woodstock/](http://www.bridgewebs.com/woodstock/) Contact

name for anyone wishing more information is Sheila Cowley - Tel: 01993 705859. We organise 3 or 4 parties a year in order to meet face to face. These are held at a venue in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, and usually take the form of a meal, followed by some informal bridge.”

Please advise the [Editor](#) if your club would like information about your activities publicised here.

## OXFORDSHIRE EVENT WINNERS

Congratulations go to:

Tiz Evans and Arthur Harold for winning the 9-High County Pairs

Christopher Whitehouse and Mary-Ann Sheehy for winning the County Pairs and qualifying with three other pairs to represent Oxfordshire in the Crown

Nick Smith, Alan Wilson, Abbey Smith and Robert Procter for winning the President's Cup and qualifying to represent Oxfordshire in the Pachabo

Chris Wilson and Matthew Covill for winning the Oxford BC Swiss pairs

## NATIONAL EVENT RESULTS TO CONGRATULATE

In the Easter Congress in London Diana Nettleton played with New Zealander Matt Brown and finished second in the Swiss Pairs.

The Swiss Teams in the same Congress was won convincingly by the team that recently won the right to represent England in the European Mixed Championships. They beat all their seven opponents including at least four extremely strong teams so they must be in good form! Abbey Smith (Oxfordshire) played with Martin Jones with teammates John Atthey and Sally Anoyrkatis.

In the National Pairs Finn Clark and Stuart Forsyth achieved an enormous 66.59% in the regional final which was good enough for second when someone else had over 69%. Then in the final they scored 55.52% and again had to be content with second by 3%. More about these two fantastic results below.

Oxford University has won the inter-university Portland Bowl. The team for the final included in various combinations: Nicholas Lee, Lucy Norman, Yining Yang, Henry Huang and Thomas Gardner with in earlier rounds also Henry Rose.

## NATIONAL PAIRS RESULTS OF FINN AND STUART

Report by the Editor

When I saw their regional final result I asked Finn to send me some hands. Here are two of the ones he sent me:

Bd 26, Dlr E

3♦ X-4 E

W

♠ 1086  
♥ KJ962  
♦ 95  
♣ J62

♠ Q42  
♥ Q53  
♦ —  
♣ K1098743

N

E

♠ J73  
♥ A10  
♦ AQ8743  
♣ A5

♠ AK95  
♥ 874  
♦ KJ1062  
♣ Q

S

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♥	3♣	3♦	X
P	P	P	

Bd 32, Dlr W 3♣X-4 W	♠ AK76 ♥ AQ8 ♦ 54 ♣ KJ53	N  E																				
♠ 53 ♥ K4 ♦ 10876 ♣ AQ862		♠ J104 ♥ J1053 ♦ KJ9 ♣ 1074																				
S	♠ Q982 ♥ 9762 ♦ AQ32 ♣ 9	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X*</td> <td>XX</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♣</td> <td>X</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	1NT	P	2♣	X*	XX	P	P	3♣	X	P	P	P			
W	N	E	S																			
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X*	XX	P	P																			
3♣	X	P	P																			
P																						

Two 1100 penalties coming your way are clearly not going to do your score any harm. In the second one Stuart as South bids Stayman and Finn shows good clubs by suggesting 2CXX as a place to play which Stuart accepts. Indeed 2C would have made, probably with an overtrick and West had nowhere to go.

Doing well at Pairs requires this sort of aggression but you may have to choose your opponents well. I watched quite a

bit of the final and saw a lot of their aggressive style. On one hand Stuart held:

♠ T5

♥ QJ96

♦ AKT

♣ Q985

When his right hand opponent opened 1H he had to pass and 1NT on his left which was passed round to him. I am sure many of us would take their chances of defeating 1NT - if you double partner is surely going to say 2♠ and where will you go from there? Well Stuart did double, Finn did bid 2♠ and that is where they played. When Finn played a spade off dummy towards his 9872 it is hardly surprising that neither opponent realised how good their spades were and he managed to get out for two off and -100, beating all the part scores the other way for 96% of the matchpoints.

On another hand Finn held:

♠ 875

♥ J8762

♦ 6

♣ AKQ4

His right hand opponent opened a weak no trump and vulnerable against not he bid 2♣ (clubs and playable in two other suits). Left hand opponent bid 2♦ which was passed round to him and he said 2♥. The result of sticking his neck out this time was that it got cut off, 3♣X-3 for -800

and 0% of the matchpoints this time when 2♦ would likely have ended one off.

But the message their overall results show is that their continuous aggression works.

## WATCHING BRIDGE ONLINE

We wrote last time about how you might watch bridge online either by signing on to [BBO](#) or “[kibitzrealbridge](#)”

You might have watched England’s ultimately failing struggle to overtake Ireland in the second and final weekend of the Home International series (Camrose Trophy) or you could have enjoyed the performance of the England women carrying all before them in their Home International event (The Lady Milne Trophy).

Coming up you can look out for:

The European Online Mixed Championships - May 14-17

The Junior Bridge Festival with Under 16, 21, 26 and 31 categories - May 10, May 31 and June 10

The European National Team Championships - June 27 to July 7

The European Youth Team Championships - July 9-15

