



## OXFORDSHIRE BRIDGE COMMUNITY NEWS FEBRUARY 2026

### INTRODUCTION

In our first issue we wrote that we invite your help to take this News forward. A big thank you goes to Matthew Covill and Joan Bennett who have set the ball rolling with contributions that you will find below.

**Please do write to the [Editor](#)** with suggestions for future news sheets or submit your own bridge-related article for inclusion. Feel free to tell us what you like and what you don't like and what else you would like to read about.

### CIRCULATION

We are circulating this to all OBA members as well as to the contacts we have for clubs that are not affiliated to the EBU. Please would these clubs forward this to their members. **If individual members would like to be added**

**to our mailing list for future issues** please could they register their interest with our [Editor](#).

## WHERE TO PLAY AND LEARN

The [OBA website](#) shows where bridge is played at its affiliated clubs, together with [contact details](#) for these clubs. We are compiling a schedule of other clubs and contact details and would like with their permission to add this information in due course. We would also like this schedule to give full information about all the places where bridge is taught.

## WATCHING BRIDGE ONLINE

Are you aware that you can watch many bridge events online, particularly but not solely at international level, on the BBO and RealBridge platforms? Both are free. For some events the experience is enhanced by the presence of one or more expert commentators explaining the likely thought processes of the players. You will either need to sign on to [BBO](#) and click on the Vugraph button to see what is archived, live or coming up, or google "[kibitzrealbridge](#)" to find a similar presentation for RealBridge. The next major event you might look out for is the second and final weekend of the Home International Series for the Camrose Trophy to be held from March 6 to 8. This will be on RealBridge. After the first weekend England lie in second place narrowly behind Ireland.

## JUNIORS

Joan Bennett, Oxfordshire's Youth Officer, writes:

It is 5 years in April since I joined Giorgio at English Bridge and Development (EBED) to get youth bridge restarted after Covid. There are three initiatives that I would like you to draw to the attention of any young people who might be interested:

### Weekend Camps

These are open to everyone aged 7 to 87 and enjoyed by everyone. Adult relatives can join in as much or as little as they wish either with the youngsters or amongst themselves. Entry is via the [EBED website](#) but anyone who wants to chat to me as to whether you/your young relative will enjoy, please call me on 07548 782538. Here is the poster for the next one in March this year:

# SPRING BRIDGE CAMP

A weekend of fun bridge for young people and their families. No prior experience is necessary.



**Come and join us.**

Expert Bridge tuition by our top Bridge teachers, coaches and players

Full details on our website.  
Check in from 4:00pm



Call Lisa to book 01296 317217 ( Mon - Wed 7-15am to 3pm )  
E-mail [lisa@ebedcio.org.uk](mailto:lisa@ebedcio.org.uk)

[www.ebedcio.org.uk](http://www.ebedcio.org.uk)

**English Bridge**

Education &  
Development



27th- 29th March 2026  
Pioneer Centre, Cleobury  
Mortimer, Kidderminster.  
DY14 8JG  
£150 full board

## BURSARIES AVAILABLE

£130 bird price  
Book by end of February

Bridge tuition

All levels

Parents welcome

Grand Prix Round

Outdoor fun

Competitions / prizes



Thursday afternoon online game 4.15-6.15.

Richard Croot([richard.croot@ebedcio.org.uk](mailto:richard.croot@ebedcio.org.uk)) runs a drop in drop out session(to fit with stamina, swimming lessons etc)

every week. It is open not only to all youngsters from 8 upwards, but also to accompanying relatives who enjoy playing/meeting their often distant children/grandchildren. It is held on RealBridge and it is absolutely fine if you are on the phone to your youngster (so long as you are muted!). Once you are on Richard's list he will send you the link every week and then it is up to you. There is some (but not too much) instruction since the children prefer to play cards at that time of day than have more teaching.

[Generation Game](#) 2nd Sunday of month.

The new format for this is a 12 board duplicate on RealBridge probably of a standard that would make a gentle duplicate seem difficult. Rather than fixed tables the children will move around and play against other families/children which we hope they will enjoy.

I feel very proud of the way in which EBED has increased the options for youth bridge since Covid when it almost died, along with so many other activities. Everything we do seems to be better than last year although there is a long way to go as yet. We will be glad of any help that any of you can give us and I am very happy to attend any of your clubs to talk about it. Some people think I never stop talking!

## INTERNATIONAL

Abbey Smith and Diana Nettleton were once again in action in January competing in different teams in trials to represent England in the Mixed European Teams Championship in July. Congratulations to Abbey's team, Abbey playing with

Martin Jones and Sally Anoyrkatis partnering John Atthey, who emerged the winners by a very narrow margin.

They were just behind with six hands to go when the RealBridge feed was unfortunately terminated. This turned out to be for an amusing reason which will hopefully have been rectified in time for the next event. The bidding and play at each table was being recorded by overhead cameras. When one hand was passed out the computer programme is still waiting for a lead to appear. As a result nothing further was recorded.

The crucial hand which spectators missed turned out to be board 38 of 42. The computer shows that N/S have 8 tricks available in spades, but Martin Jones was in 3S. To win the trials he needed to make this contract with two top club losers, one top heart loser and diamonds of K72 opposite J964. One of the K72 could be discarded on a heart but with the ace sitting over the king and the queen sitting over the jack there would always be two losers unless the defence opened up the suit. If you want to know how this happened you would have to ask Martin as Abbey says she doesn't watch when her partner is declarer!

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.

## RECENT COUNTY EVENTS

In January Oxfordshire held its annual Mixed Pairs Championship. Congratulations to winners Joey and Bryony McMillan and to runners-up Debbie Roberts and Peter Russell.

If you win an event please do write up the story of an interesting hand that contributed to your victory and send it to the [Editor](#) so that we can publish it.

The county's inter-club online team of eight competition, The Wessex League, is nearing its conclusion with a few vital matches still needed to determine winners of each division and for some the possibility of escaping relegation. Of the 25 teams in four divisions 15 come from three clubs, Abbey Smith, Oxford and Wallingford. With over forty clubs playing bridge in and around Oxfordshire there is clearly scope for more to get involved. Please ask. Your club does not need to be affiliated.

The county also runs a daytime face to face team of four Wessex League with 23 teams.

Up to date positions in all of these leagues can be found by scrolling down to Oxfordshire in the [EBU leagues list](#).

## FUTURE CLUB EVENTS

**If your club has an event open to non-members coming up that you would like publicised** please advise the [Editor](#). We are thinking of the type of event Kings Sutton Bridge Club ran recently which featured 18 teams drawn from both affiliated and unaffiliated clubs.

## COUNTY TEAM

With three wins and a draw against Worcestershire in the February round of matches in the Midlands League Oxfordshire stands in the middle of the first division and in the lead in the second, third and 9-High divisions with just one round to go. The tables can be found by scrolling down to Midland Counties League in the [EBU Leagues list](#).

County Captain, Matthew Covill, reported on the Worcestershire matches [here on the OBA website](#), reflecting particularly on the successes of our 9-High contingent and the strength in depth of Oxfordshire bridge.

He has written this report on a swingy hand from the Worcestershire encounter:

<b>Board 10</b>	♠ 9532		
<b>Dealer E</b>	♥ 5		
<b>All Vul</b>	♦ AKQJ42		
	♣ A4		
♠ AK8		♠ 7	NT
♥ K4		♥ AQJ1062	♠ 5 9 1 10 1
♦ 10753		♦ —	S 5 9 1 10 1
♣ KQ52		♣ J108763	E 6 3 11 3 12
	♠ QJ1064		W 6 3 11 3 12
	♥ 9873		Par -500 6♦X-2 NS
	♦ 986		NS: 14 + 3 = 17 HCP
	♣ 9		EW: 8 + 15 = 23 HCP

### What do I open?

The board was played at sixteen tables. At six tables East opened 1H. At six tables East opened 2H (weak) or its equivalent. At one table East opened 4H and at the

remaining three tables East passed, presumably waiting to see how the auction would develop.

### **What do I do next?**

Whilst 4H seems a very practical opening bid from East, at the table Martin Illingworth and I both chose 1H. Partner responded 2C which was forcing to game. At this point at Martin's table North bid 4D. Now knowing that his partner's honours were not in diamonds, Martin jumped to 6C. At my table North passed so it was I who jumped to 4D showing club support and a singleton or void in diamonds. Partner worked out that I would either have a diamond void, or the ace of clubs so he also jumped to 6C.

The partnerships reaching 6C all opened 1H. The remaining three pairs opening 1H all reached game, although at one table it was the wrong game (3NT by West which went 3 down).

Three of the pairs opening a weak 2H stayed out of game. At another table opening a weak 2H the bid enabled Malcolm Currie to bid the spade game with the North hand. Malcolm managed to bid both his diamonds and his spades before Peter Litchfield raised to 4S. To defeat 4S East would need to lead a low heart so that West can give him a diamond ruff. Since this is not what happened, Malcolm made his contract.

## **Hand evaluation**

Bridge players are very familiar with evaluating the strength of a hand by counting points. However, distribution can also add to the value of the hand, and the East hand above has good length in two suits. It is therefore sensible to open the hand either 1H or 4H.