



OXFORDSHIRE BRIDGE COMMUNITY NEWS JUNE 2026

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INTRODUCTION - ONE COMMUNITY

Oxfordshire has about forty bridge clubs. The OBA aims to support bridge in all clubs whatever their status in a single community of all bridge players. Recently the Oxfordshire

chair, Malcolm Currie, accompanied by the editor, met with representatives of four of the unaffiliated clubs. We talked of Oxfordshire's willingness to offer all clubs support. This could include finding teachers, promoting the clubs' activities and providing finance for equipment. All clubs are welcome to enter Oxfordshire's leagues.

All players will be welcomed at other clubs without needing EBU membership (although it is polite to make contact beforehand rather than just turning up).

INTRODUCTION - FEEDBACK

Pat Barbour sent some feedback including the suggestion that there should be pictures.

So here she is

And to help me to action her other constructive suggestions I will be inviting a few people to form an "Editorial Board" in time for the next issue. Volunteers will be welcomed.

In case you haven't met, and she has already played at a lot of our clubs, I will tell you something about Pat. She took up bridge enthusiastically a few years ago on retirement from being a GP and just before moving to the Burford area. She was responsible for organising a very successful cafe bridge event in Burford last year and the Burford Festival (not bridge) this year. We need more people like Pat with energy and ideas helping to promote bridge in Oxfordshire. And we need more feedback from all of our readers.



OXFORDSHIRE TEAMS BRIDGE LEAGUES

by Sandra Nicholson

Take Your Bridge Beyond the Club Night

Playing bridge as part of a team offers a refreshingly different experience from a standard duplicate session. In many ways, it feels closer to rubber bridge: the scoring system places much greater emphasis on bidding and making games—or, when defending, stopping your opponents from doing so—than on squeezing out every possible overtrick.

While teams bridge can certainly be enjoyed on a club night, joining a league opens up a whole new dimension. You'll face a wider range of opponents, test your skills in different situations, and enjoy the flexibility of arranging matches at times that suit you.

Whether you're already a teams enthusiast or have never tried this style of bridge before, the Oxfordshire Bridge Association (OBA) offers three different leagues, each providing a welcoming and competitive environment.

The Wessex League

The Wessex League is our longest-running teams competition, with a history stretching back more than 60 years. It is played by teams of eight and remains one of the county's most popular competitions.

Matches are now played online via RealBridge, making participation easier than ever. Teams are entered by clubs, and players must be registered members of the club they represent.

The league currently consists of four divisions, with promotion and relegation ensuring that teams compete against others of a similar standard. Each team typically plays five or six matches during the season. The lowest division is also open to non-affiliated clubs.

Matches are usually played in the evenings, and the season runs from early October through to the end of April.

The Daytime Wessex League

Launched in 2019, the Daytime Wessex League brings the same competitive format to players who prefer daytime bridge. This competition is for teams of four, with matches played online via RealBridge during the day.

The league has grown steadily in recent years and is expected to expand from three divisions to four next season. As with the evening league, teams are entered by clubs, and promotion and relegation ensure competitive balance between divisions. New teams begin in the lowest division, which is also open to non-affiliated clubs.

If you're new to teams bridge, the Daytime League can be an excellent place to start. After all, assembling a team of four is often much easier than finding eight players!

How to Enter

Entries for both sections of the Wessex League open in early July each year and close in mid-August.

All affiliated clubs automatically receive an invitation to enter. Non-affiliated clubs are also very welcome and should contact the Wessex League Secretary, Sandra Nicholson (sjnich@gmail.com), to request an entry form.

If your club doesn't currently take part and you'd like to get involved, why not speak to your club committee about entering a team?

The Mercian League

The Mercian League is OBA's newest teams competition and offers something different: a face-to-face league for teams of four, entered by individual captains and open to all bridge players in Oxfordshire.

The inaugural season took place this year, attracting seven teams who all played one another. We hope to attract enough entries next season to create at least two divisions, allowing teams to compete against others of a similar standard.

Entries will be invited towards the end of the year, with matches played between November and May.

For more information about the Mercian League, please contact the organiser, Malcolm Currie (mjc@astroprog.org).

Why Not Give Teams Bridge a Try?

Teams bridge combines strategy, partnership understanding and friendly competition in a way that's quite different from duplicate pairs. Whether you prefer evening or daytime play, online or face-to-face competition, there's a league to suit you.

Why not take the next step and join a team next season?

END OF YEAR NATIONAL FINALS

May and June feature a number of national play-offs between winners of counties' own events. This year:

Oxford A won the Wessex League for club teams of eight and so went forward to play in the regional finals of the Garden Cities

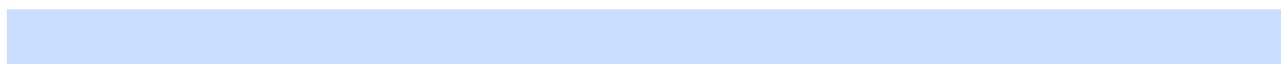
Nick Smith, Alan Wilson, Abbey Smith and Robert Procter won the President's Cup for teams of four and so went forward to play in the Pachabo

Christopher Whitehouse and Mary-Ann Sheehy, Paul Morris and Graham Arnold, Sandra Nicholson and Krys Kazmierczak, Kathy Talbot and Denis Talbot went forward from the County Pairs to play in the Corwen

And Tiz Evers and Arthur Harold, Richard Crawford and Diane Mitchell, Ursula Bowler and Marion Sheppard, Richard Sills and Diana Cannon went forward to play in the 9-high Corwen

Congratulations to all for getting to represent the county. Results in the national arena were less satisfactory and the editor has received no reports from the players concerned so he will draw a veil over those

There was a hand of interest in the Pachabo where one player in a field of 26 tables managed to bid and make game on this hand:



Opt NS -620:	♠765 ♥JT ♦KQJ72 ♣QJ4	
♠T84 ♥K ♦A9865 ♣AK53		♠AKJ32 ♥83 ♦43 ♣T862
10 14 HCP 8 8	♠Q9 ♥AQ976542 ♦T ♣97	N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ N - - 2 - - S - - 2 - - E - 4 - 1 4 W - 4 - 1 4

When your editor sat East the bidding proceeded 4 hearts from South doubled by West and he bid 4 spades ending the auction. Winning the diamond lead in dummy he took the spade finesse and conceded a trick in each suit for one down. Nothing very remarkable with no obvious reason to play to drop the spade queen.

However Damian Hassan of the North-East showed how it could be done. On the same bidding and lead he started by

ducking the opening lead. North overtook and returned a diamond giving his partner a ruff. South cashed the heart ace and continued with a second heart which Damian ruffed in dummy. He now played four rounds of spades from the top throwing two clubs from dummy. North was squeezed. If he threw a club Damian could cash the top two clubs and return to hand with a diamond ruff to enjoy the two remaining clubs, not even needing the diamond ace. But if North threw a diamond Damian could cross to the ace of clubs, cash the ace of diamonds discarding a club, ruff a diamond setting up dummy's final diamond as a winner and cross to it using the club king.

Very pretty. You can follow the play trick by trick [here](#).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Oxford Congress is split this year into two weekends, the first being open events face to face at Abingdon School and the second being limited to 9-High and online:

Aug 15 [Open Swiss Pairs](#)

Aug 16 [Open Swiss Teams](#)

Aug 30 on RealBridge [Friendly Pairs](#)

The links are to the entry forms so get your names down before space runs out.

Enjoy a daytime bridge outing at the Seniors Pairs on the second Monday of each month at Wallingford Bridge Club at

Roke. About 30 boards starting at 11 o'clock and with a break for your own packed lunch. It is open to all, but only those over 55 qualify to win the annual ladder prize. Entry for this should be made through the [OBA website](#).

View the [OBA calendar](#) for later events such as the Harwell Cup on Sep 13 and Henley cafe bridge on Sep 15.

HOW AND WHERE TO LEARN BRIDGE IN OXFORDSHIRE

Someone tells you they are interested in learning to play bridge - what can you tell them?

There are lots of options - they could learn from a teacher face to face or on-line or by reading from so much written about the game.

The first step could be attending a "taster" session to find out what it is all about and whether it is a game for them.

They might google local bridge club websites and find, for example, that Wallingford Bridge Club is holding one on Aug 1 - [details](#). Sue Waddington, selling this event and her club, writes as follows:

"Wallingford Bridge Club have multiple sessions on every day of the week (f2f and online). It's a bridge enthusiast's heaven, and a friendly club to boot! With over 400 members, Wallingford Bridge Club is growing.

Key to this success is the teaching programme for beginners and improvers. With structured termly courses, David Emerson,

Barbara Antrobus and Anna Wright guide learners through the building blocks of bridge in an engaging, informative manner.

What's more Wallingford's teaching programmes are supported by supervised sessions, gentle bridge and ProAm competitions. Students are able to put their lessons into practice very early on, in fun and friendly sessions. It's a learning journey within a warm community – which often leads to a life-long love of bridge.

If you know someone who would like to know more about the wonderful game of bridge please pass these details on..."

Oxford Bridge Club will be running four free taster sessions this autumn:

Mon evening 24th Aug 7-9 [Click here](#)

Mon evening 31st Aug 7-9 [Click here](#)

Tues afternoon 25th Aug 2-4 [Click here](#)

Tues afternoon 1st Sept 2-4 [Click here](#)

Looking to see what other clubs and teachers have to offer you could draw their attention to the list of clubs and teachers on the [EBU website](#) where they can put in their postcode to find clubs and teachers near them.

A message to clubs is: Please let us know what you are doing so that we can publicise it on the OBA website.

A message to teachers is: Please ensure your details are on the EBU list so that people will find you there.

Whichever way a person chooses to learn a good way of measuring progress is to look at the criteria for the junior award scheme set out on the [EBED website](#).

And you can tell them how good bridge will be for them too! You might be interested to read this [interesting article](#) by Sam Punch, selling bridge as a counterbalance to the effects on our brains of too much reliance on AI rather than thinking for ourselves.

And finally if you want to become a bridge teacher yourself you should maybe sign up for a teacher training course being held in Oxford in two stages on October 4 and 11 - more details in the next issue.

2026 SUMMER AND AUTUMN YOUTH CAMPS

Joan Bennett writes:

GATHER YOUR GRANDCHILD

YOU HAVE ALL HAD A LOT OF FUN FROM BRIDGE OVER THE YEARS AND YOU CAN NOW HAVE MORE FUN PLAYING WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN. BRING THEM TO A BRIDGE CAMP.

Talk to your friends and fellow bridge club members. They and their grandchildren will enjoy themselves as much as you will. It is like a bridge holiday only noisier. The next one is at Kings Park Northampton- Google it- all twin en-suite rooms. You can see pictures of the recent autumn camp on [bridge4schools](#) and a write up in December English Bridge magazine.

Summer 2026. Kings Park, Northants Aug 28-30

Autumn 2026. Juniper Hall, Dorking, Surrey near Box Hill Oct 30 - Nov 1



Absolute beginners welcomed enthusiastically although you will be able to play some decent bridge as well- junior and senior internationals are among our regulars.

You can play with your grandchildren online on the generation game on RealBridge after the camps- if they will let you- as they often prefer to play with 'camp friends' online. Online Thursdays available for all youngsters which are more fun for them with friends- which applies to us all.

Your ticket to ride is at least 1 grandchild. Feel free to bring more, come with friends, come by the day since Northampton is accessible for us. You can join in the lessons and competitions, play pick up bridge or sample the delights of the area but you will have fun. Please call me, Joan, on 07548 782538 for a chat if you have any queries.

INTERNATIONAL

The European Teams Championships will be held in Latvia from June 27th to July 7th inclusive. There will be Open, Women's, Mixed and Senior Teams representing England followed by Youth events from July 9th to 15th inclusive. You can follow results at [the Eurobridge website](#) and will be able to watch many of the matches on [BBO](#) Oxfordshire's Abbey Smith will be playing in the England Mixed Team partnering Martin Jones. They qualified for this by winning the Trials in January teamed up with John Atthey and Sally Anoyrkatis. Their team is completed by Maggie Knottenbelt and Ben Handley-Pritchard.

John, Sally, Abbey and Martin have shown their paces in practice events by coming first and second in the

LlanBrighton Pairs on June 6th and combining for third in the Teams on June 7th. Abbey and Martin also came second in the 2-Star Pairs at the EBU Spring Congress whilst Abbey, John and Sally came fifth in the Teams.

We wish all the English teams well in Latvia.

COUNTY TEAM

Our B and C teams played in the national inter county league finals on June 7:

Division 2 Well done coming 3rd / 6 Christopher Whitehouse & Mary-Ann Sheehy, Finn Clark & Stuart forsyth, Tony Guilfoyle & Tony Guilfoyle, Lawrence Wang & Yining Yang See **FULL RESULTS**

Division 3 Well done coming 3rd / 6 Amr El-Kashef & Martin Illingworth, Gillian Lonsdale & Nigel Wilkes, Krys Kazmierczak & Sandra Nicholson, Malcolm Currie & Peter Litchfield See **FULL RESULTS**

Whilst the inter-county competition takes its summer break that shouldn't stop anyone from preparing for next season.

If you would like to be considered for the county team fill in this [form](#). We are particularly looking for players in the 9-High category.

A BIG SWING HAND

Peter Litchfield has written up the hand below:

“The Abingdon team of Nigel Wilkes and Gillian Lonsdale plus Malcolm Currie and I recently played a third round NICKO Plate match. Board 4 produced some fireworks

Bd 4, Dlr W
 7♦ = W

W Gillian Lonsdale
 ♠ 7
 ♥ 1065
 ♦ 104
 ♣ QJ86542

N Nigel Wilkes E
 ♠ A85
 ♥ AKQ32
 ♦ AQJ98
 ♣ —

S
 ♠ KJ1064
 ♥ J974
 ♦ 72
 ♣ 109

Tricks taken: 13
 Save adjustment

W	N	E	S
1♦*	P	4NT*	P
5♥*	P	7♦	P
P	P		

When Nigel and Gillian were EW the auction was short and sweet. They play a strong club system so Gillian opened 1♦, alerted as 4+ ♦ 11-15 points. Nigel, with a monster hand and five ♦ bid 4NT, Roman Keycard Blackwood. Gillian showed 2 keycards without the Q♦ and Nigel bid the

grand slam. 7♦ was cold with declarer's losing spades going on dummy's clubs and the heart losers being ruffed in dummy. 2,140 points to Abingdon

The opposition's auction was rather different. W passed a hand which most would open. Although he had only 20 points E's hand is so powerful that he justifiably opened 2♣. W responded 2♦, alerted as a relay and E bid his ♥ suit. Now W bid 2♠ and E, having a minimum 2♣ hand, thought spades looked the most likely game and jumped to 4♠. W felt he had so far shown nothing, so went on with 4NT, no doubt intending it as Blackwood. Whether or not E recognised this he chose to bid 6♠. When asked what this meant he said '6♠ is what I think I can make'. Not having shown anything like his 12 points, W raised to 7♠.

Malcolm, with five ♠ to the KJ10 could have doubled but correctly did not, lest they be able to escape to a making 7NT.

Probably shocked by his view of the dummy, W did not play the hand very well and went four down. Double dummy says you can make 11 tricks in ♠. 400 points to Abingdon, a swing of 2,540 in total, 21 IMPs. We won the match by 19 IMPs."

