

Oxfordshire Bridge Association
Officers' and other reports presented to the
66th Annual General Meeting – 12 June 2012

Officers' reports

Chairman

During the past year we have:

- Carried out a survey of your views
- Held an open meeting to present and discuss the results of this survey
- Set up small management teams with delegated authority to cover various areas of activity
- Enlisted the support of a significant number of members to ensure that these management teams contain representation from all regions of the county
- Agreed aims and objectives for each of these management teams in the light of the survey findings
- Taken together these form a detailed plan for the development of duplicate bridge in Oxfordshire as was requested at last year's AGM - this has been published on the county website
- Won the Dawes League (the Midlands Inter-County League for county first teams) for the first time in our history
- Been able to report a number of successes by our players outside the county, at Junior, Open and Senior level
- Provided assistance at the Camrose International Weekend held in Oxford
- Sold out entries for this year's annual Oxfordshire Open Congress at Steventon two months in advance and extended it with a new event at Drayton appropriate to players of lesser experience, from beginner to 10,000 local points (at time of writing some places still available here)
- Agreed in principle to a proposed formal agreement with OBC for our use of their premises
- Enjoyed a day of café bridge in Oxford
- Held an "Open Doors" promotion event in Oxford
- Continued the expansion of our very successful youth bridge initiative in schools including holding an Oxon Schools Minibridge event in March
- Made progress towards a number of website enhancements
- Reviewed and revised the competition bylaws
- Reviewed and revised the rules about OBA membership and the county constitution.

The OBA has over 1300 members, mostly being also members of one or more of its 19 affiliated clubs. (We have welcomed the affiliation of Abbey Smith's new club at West Horwood during the year.) Listening to your views when I visited our clubs at the start of the year and looking at the results of the survey, one issue stands

out – the desirability of extending our teaching and bridge-playing opportunities to players amongst you of all levels of experience as near to your home as possible – the county association is not just for the top players nor should its activities be confined to the centre in Oxford. I have worked hard to try to encourage members from the outlying clubs to join our management teams, but more needs to be done – it will be more difficult to extend the opportunities if we don't have sufficient input from members at all levels and in all areas.

I am grateful to many people – officers, members of the management committee, members of our new management teams and many others – for what they have contributed this year and for their support. They work very hard for your benefit. On occasion no doubt their efforts don't achieve the results they or you would like and I am sure they all regret it when things go wrong. They welcome constructive help and suggestions for improvements, but not destructive criticism! Now that we have some clearly stated objectives (see the "Development" section on the county website) I look to everyone throughout the association to work together to achieve them.

In the next year I look forward to:

- A revision of our portfolio of competitions, widening their attractiveness to players with less experience and those located away from Oxford (John Slater's Competitions Team)
- The introduction of a new website platform (Alan Grunwald is working on this) with improved content (Aleksander Lishkov is working on this)
- Our extended annual congress for all levels of player (this Saturday at Drayton and Steventon) and the introduction of further "social" bridge activities (Barbara Jordan's Social Team – more members required)
- Greater use of E-mail to promote events and activities (Peter Litchfield is working on this)
- Fuller and clearer promotion of opportunities to improve one's bridge throughout the county, whether through affiliated clubs, unaffiliated clubs or independent teachers and discussion with clubs in areas where there are clear gaps in the opportunities provided (my Education Team – until someone else volunteers to lead it in my place!)
- Moves to increase the integration of county team into the other activities of the county (Alan Wilson's County Team Management Team)
- Presenting accounts in a new format that matches the split of management responsibilities into the new management teams (Dinah Lintott is working with me on this)
- Generally starting to see some of the things that we have so far only talked about come to fruition (Up to all of us to get involved where we can).

Robert Procter, 17 May 2012

Secretary

Considerable work has been undertaken over the past few months, in collaboration with the Membership Secretary, on the revision of the County Constitution, which appears as an item on the Agenda. I am grateful to Martin Pool of the EBU for his assistance with this. Otherwise, I have nothing to report which is not covered elsewhere.

Sandra Nicholson, June 2012

Treasurer and Auditor (for approval by AGM)

OBA accounts for April 2011-March 2012

Although the balance sheet shows an increased profit, this is largely due to the significant amount of entries for the Summer Congress already collected, whilst the costs for this event have not yet been paid. Since this summer we are running a subsidiary Social event, the final accounts may show an overall drop in profits for the Summer Congress.

Since April 2012 the rent paid for the Tuesday County nights has substantially increased, and we are now liable for P2P; so although the table money has been raised to £4, there will be a drop in takings for the coming year.

The following notes apply.

1. Tuesday nights. In 2011 five capitation payments were made rather than the four this year. However, attendance was up.
2. Membership payments. This year the fee received from the EBU was fixed at 6p rather than the previous year's 3p.
3. The Honours Boards were not updated this year, but are expected to be a significant figure in next year's accounts.
4. Expenditure on trophies was less since in 2011 a major trophy was purchased to replace one that had been lost.
5. No computer grant has been applied for this year.
6. The duplimate machine had to be repaired in 2011 but worked satisfactorily this year.
7. Licences for the Wessex League, Chester Cup and Presidents Cup were not paid in the 2011 accounts as should have been the case, and therefore appear twice in this year.
8. County pairs. The final in 2012 was held on April 1st and the costs do not appear in this year's accounts. Also, there were no director's costs in the two semi-finals since on both occasions players were also directing.
9. Figures for the Summer Congress are misleading, as more entries have already been received for this summer's event, than was the case in 2011.

10. The significant outlay on Junior Bridge is planned to continue.
 11. There was no Robson Seminar in this year's accounts, though it is already booked for later in 2012.

Dinah Lintott, May 2012

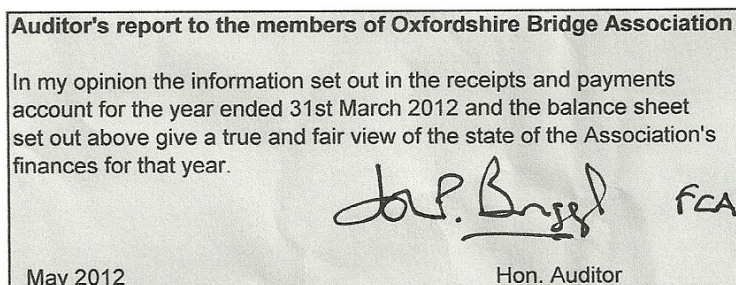
Receipts and Payments for April 2011 to March 2012

	Receipts	Payments	Net		Receipts	Payments	Net
Tuesday Duplicate / Capitation	6201.00	3712.50	2488.50		5887.50	4238.65	1648.85
Membership	2953.68	332.77	2620.91		1436.18	0.00	1436.18
Brochure / Newsletter	0.00	755.60	-755.60		0.00	707.19	-707.19
Committee Expenses, Directors Courses, etc	0.00	390.01	-390.01		0.00	315.32	-315.32
Gifts /Donations	0.00	33.00	-33.00		0.00	50.00	-50.00
Honours Board	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	475.88	-475.88
Trophies and Engraving	0.00	459.90	-459.90		0.00	787.75	-787.75
Computer Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	156.38	-156.38
Duplimate, Cards, Boards	0.00	47.89	-47.89		0.00	486.02	-486.02
Wessex League / Garden Cities	780.00	1010.00	-230.00		800.00	366.20	433.80
President's Cup / Pachabo	231.00	415.00	-184.00		231.00	299.20	-68.20
Chester Cup	168.00	155.00	13.00		168.00	92.80	75.20
Mens Pairs	221.00	196.00	25.00		187.00	226.00	-39.00
Ladies Pairs	204.00	196.00	8.00		221.00	253.00	-32.00
Mixed Pairs	442.50	290.50	152.00		323.50	228.50	95.00
Swiss Pairs	595.00	382.00	213.00		467.50	378.00	89.50
County Pairs / Corwen	117.00	794.50	-677.50		351.00	1275.10	-924.10
Beck Cup	410.00	366.06	43.94		471.00	338.50	132.50
OBA Simultaneous Pairs	361.00	333.14	27.86		516.00	480.50	35.50
Harwell Cup	263.50	231.50	32.00		365.50	319.90	45.60
Oxford Times Cup	52.00	111.50	-59.50		156.00	161.46	-5.46
Pro-Am	182.00	20.00	162.00		136.00	24.60	111.40
Seniors Pairs	2158.00	2163.00	-5.00		2588.00	2108.86	479.14
Golfprint	170.00	105.00	65.00		306.00	191.77	114.23
Newcomers Pairs	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
Dawes	288.00	666.00	-378.00		714.00	1194.00	-480.00
Tollemache	0.00	368.00	-368.00		0.00	349.92	-349.92
Oxford Congress 2011	8197.55	7071.60	1125.95		8446.00	6372.44	2073.56
Oxford Congress 2012	5150.00	326.00	4824.00		672.00	30.00	642.00
Invitation Events	0.00	32.00	-32.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
Interest	347.68	0.00	347.68		435.55	30.00	405.55
Junior Bridge	0.00	1248.37	-1248.37		0.00	125.00	-125.00
Robson Seminar	0.00	0.00	0.00		962.00	746.00	216.00
SURPLUS	29492.91	22212.84	7280.07		25840.73	22808.94	3031.79

Balance Sheet and Auditor's Report

Oxfordshire Bridge Association Balance Sheet 31 March 2012

	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-11
Balance brought forward	28632.11	25600.32
Surplus for the year	7280.07	3031.79
Balance carried forward	35912.18	28632.11
Cash in hand	0.00	0.00
Current bank account	7807.29	3872.90
Building society account	28104.89	24759.21
Total	35912.18	28632.11



EBU Shareholders

At the EBU AGM in October 2011, Nick Smith was voted in as a member of the National Selection Committee which picks the teams to compete in international events.

In April 2012, EBU P2P charges went up from 31p to 33p per session. This was as a result of a debate at the AGM in 2010, when the board had asked for a large increase in a single year and the shareholders voted instead to split it over two years. At the latest shareholders' meeting the Treasurer reported that, as a result both of increases in income and reduction in costs, the outturn for the current year was expected to be over £100K better than budget, resulting in a surplus of some £60K. Although he was still budgeting for a deficit of over £50K in 2012-13, he felt that this might be pessimistic.

During the year the EBU has successfully introduced two new initiatives, taking over the organisation of national Simultaneous Pairs events from BGB and Ecats, and also finally launching the new National Grading Scheme (NGS). Both involved significant IT development, carried out in-house at very reasonable cost, and both have gone very smoothly.

A major change on the horizon is the possibility of the EBU becoming a registered charity. This has the potential for significant benefits, both financially and also in terms of the image of the organisation and its attractiveness to potential members and supporters. Various changes to the organisation's constitution and by-laws will need to be made to meet the requirements of the Charities Commission. In particular, participation in international events will need to be split off under a separate company (to be named Bridge England), since this is not considered to be a charitable activity within the terms of the relevant legislation. Consultation documents on this subject have recently been sent to Counties and will be discussed at the County Chairmen's Conference in July. It is worth noting that neither county associations nor affiliated clubs will automatically become charities if and when the EBU achieves recognition as a charity, since they are considered to be separate organisations.

Sandra Nicholson/Brenda Harris/Alan Wilson, May 2012

Team reports

Communications and Infrastructure

At the Management Committee meeting in March it was suggested that our management team for communication should be merged with our management team for premises and finance. It has yet to meet or indeed to be formally formed, but objectives for it are included in the development plan covering the management of the website, communication, premises, finance and people.

This report therefore covers matters that have been addressed during the year by a variety of differently constituted groups of people.

- Following the meeting to discuss the response to our members' survey in Kidlington last October the Management Committee endorsed the setting up of a number of separate management teams to manage different aspects of the development of bridge in Oxfordshire. Following a number of subsequent changes these teams are as listed in the AGM Agenda.
- Your Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Chief Tournament Director met with their opposite numbers of the Oxford Bridge Club to discuss the terms on which the OBA should continue to use the OBC premises for county nights and other events. Proposals to change from a capitation fee per player playing to a fixed room rental, to set the level of charge at a fair market rent and to incorporate a six-month notice period on either side were put forward and subsequently approved by both the county and club's Management Committees. Other less significant details are still to be agreed and the OBC has undertaken the task of drawing up a full formal agreement for the county's approval.
- Your Chairman and Treasurer have met to discuss the format of the annual accounts. Their proposal for a new format that reflects the division of responsibilities between the new management teams and has been approved by the Management Committee. The accounts at this year's AGM will be presented by the Treasurer in the same format as in previous years and then also in the new format to show you how we propose to present them in future.
- A group led by Peter Litchfield has discussed methods of communication within the Association and has proposed that greater use could be made of E-mail direct to members. He is continuing to work on bringing this about, whilst other aspects of communication, particularly via the website and club representatives will become the responsibility of the Infrastructure Team.
- Several meetings including those of a special sub-committee set up for the purpose of reviewing the county's website have led to a number of developments. The content of the Competitions pages on the website have been transferred to Stephen Brown's responsibility. Alan Grunwald will continue to in the role of Internet Officer with technical responsibility for the maintenance and development of the technical aspects of the website. Aleksander Lishkov has accepted (subject to this meeting's approval) a newly designated role as Website and Communications Officer. His brief will be to ensure that everyone is encouraged to make maximum use of the website and to help them to do so, acting effectively as the Website Editor and liaising with Alan where format changes may be called for. At the same time Alan will be working to develop a new website platform that will allow easier access to officers who have material they wish to display. He aims to have a site that replicates the content of the existing site in time for the new season in September and then to start work on a number of further desirable technical enhancements. The choice of platform for this new website was difficult. Many people have argued strongly for using Bridgewebs, the most used and therefore most familiar platform used by bridge clubs, but ultimately we have decided that the extra flexibility of Joomla would allow us to design a more distinctive Oxfordshire site whilst still enjoying all the functionality available on Bridgewebs.

Robert Procter, 24 May 2012

Publicity Officer's report

- 1) Social Congress Publicity: A4 posters distributed to all clubs with "social" players & to all those with active teaching eg Aylesbury Vale & Aces, Wallingford, OBC/OBL etc.
- 2) At the EBU Shareholders meeting in April, I announced & distributed these posters to neighbouring counties for their teaching/novice sessions.
- 3) Oxford Times Cup: same publicity as 1) above with modest response.
- 4) Flyers advertising AGM have been produced; prize-winners contacted & encouraged to attend.
- 5) Andrew Robson Seminar is booked for 18 April 2013 at Oxford BC. We are grateful to Oxford BC committee for accommodating this session within their busy schedule.
- 6) A photo of the Beck Cup winners (Warwickshire) appears in June issue of English Bridge.

Newsletter Editor's report

Starting out

My predecessor as editor, Malcolm Simpson, bowed out in issue 8 bemoaning the "lack of input from rank and file members". The first issue I edited, number 9, appeared in black-and-white in April 2010. Many hundreds of hard copies were printed, yet few OBA members expected an OBA newsletter to interest them. Fortunately I was helped initially by a number of people, including Sandra Nicholson, Alan Grunwald, Nick Smith and publicity officer Brenda Harris.

What has changed?

I have slashed the print-run to 200-250 copies. Believing that today's readers expect colour pics to brighten their text, since May 2011 I have incorporated colour photos (mostly taken by me at no cost to the OBA). Through news items and photos I have tried to interest our readers in what the OBA is about: bridge players and bridge activities in and around Oxfordshire. I now have members asking me to include items in the newsletter. Of course I'm grateful to the sponsors who have put up prizes for the regular newsletter quiz, in total worth getting on for £1,000. I'm also grateful for the great co-operation I get from OBA membership secretary Vicky Fleming. In each issue I give the online address for the OBA website. Most players will always see their home club's website as their first port of call. I'd like their second port of call to be: www.oxfordshirebridge.co.uk.

What next?

A number of OBA-affiliated clubs, such as Wallingford BC and Summertown BC, now routinely post a link to new issues of the newsletter as it is posted to the OBA website. I hope more will soon follow suit. An OBA member said to me earlier this year, "I play at three OBA clubs but until today I didn't know there was an OBA newsletter." Surely our clubs can help more here? Especially, perhaps, when the quiz prize is a free lunch for two within walking distance of the club?

FAQ 1

Why still print hard copies? - Some OBA members can't access the internet. The newsletter is an attraction on a club notice board. Its arrival in a club may spark a real-time conversation among members. When approaching a potential prize sponsor it is crucial to be able to show a portfolio of past issues. When welcoming new members to the OBA the membership secretary finds it an invaluable help to enclose past newsletters.

FAQ 2

Does the newsletter get paid for all his work? - No. But it was fun to award a sponsored prize at the mini-bridge tournament for primary school children in April. And it has been quite moving to hear so much about Alfredo Campoli as members have related fond memories to me following the quiz in issue 16 (when prizes were won by John Williams, Sandra Claridge, Graham Elliott, Steph Bliss, Holly Kilpatrick, Andrea Smith, Pete Bowen and Rob Dixon plus a last-minute extra prize sponsored by the Spice Lounge in Oxford, a lunch for two, which went to Ian Angus).

FAQ 3

When is the next issue? - Issue 17 for June has just appeared. See: www.oxfordshirebridge.co.uk. Issue 18 is already in preparation (with more great quiz prizes).

David Bygott, June 2012

County Night and Competitions

Introduction

The group is charged with ensuring that county level competitions meet the needs of Oxfordshire's duplicate bridge players throughout Oxfordshire at all levels of experience and ability.

Detailed objectives are:

- To review the competitions already run by the county considering what changes, including regionalisation and stratification, might increase their attraction and considering whether further competitions might be introduced to cater for the less experienced player
- To increase the attraction of the weekly county night (intended as an opportunity for better club players to participate in a higher standard field than is available at their local club)
- To ensure that overall county nights and internal competitions cover their costs
- To develop the Oxfordshire Congress to meet the recognised growing need for expansion.

Inevitably the first period has been one of fact finding. We are grateful to all those who have given us data and especially to the Treasurer, Secretary and Chair who have given us insights into developments and their likely effects on OBA.

Review of competitions

We have looked at each competition and looked at data from the treasurer. There are some that are likely to lose money in the next year and we have identified these and transmitted the results to the officers thus partially meeting the first objective.

The OBA has already decided that only those with primary allegiance to Oxon may take part in the County Pairs. We now propose that this be extended to the President's Cup.

This is marginally counter to the first objective but this is more than offset by the following proposals:

- To introduce a plate in the President's cup, free to those who are defeated in their first match (in either round 1 or round 2) and allow other teams to enter the plate at a reduced fee. The plate would not be subject to the primary allegiance rule.
- To move the county pairs to involve clubs more – each club will be invited to have a heat on a normal pairs night. Pairs can play at any club of which one is a member or where clubs are prepared to accept visitor pairs (entirely up to the club). No separate sections – pairs just say whether they are competing or not. One third (rounded up) of those competing go through to up to two semifinals (of indeterminate size) which produce the 20 pairs for the final. County heat remains for those that miss everything else. County table and tea money at semi and final at the standard rate for Sunday county events. Normal club table monies or more (up to clubs to whom any extra goes). There is a counter view that we should still charge some extra table money in the light of the large cost of the Corwen entry but this would undoubtedly cut numbers entering substantially.
- Wessex League. A number of detailed changes are underway. The major areas under discussion include default, eligibility, and playing down.

Bylaw drafting is underway.

County Night:

An analysis of numbers shows that numbers for the pairs and especially the 4th Tuesday pairs are dropping to the point of worry. Teams and Butlers numbers, however, are comparatively buoyant. We originally thought to propose changing the 5th night to a teams format but have responded to representations that the 5th Tues was valuable in playing with odd partners, keeping in with a second partner (useful for the county) etc.

Note that the County Pairs Heat, National pairs Heat, EBU Simultaneous, and Pro-Am will all be on pairs nights.

Congress

This is very successful and should continue.

Other items

We believe that the County Pairs Secretary should have a full role on the tournament committee.

With the help of Nigel Wilkes and Stephen Brown, we are piloting how to use the EBU rankings essentially as handicaps by having a small prize for the person who outperforms their EBU rank by the most in the 2012 Congress pairs.

John Slater, 01/06/12

Reports for Wessex League, Presidents Cup and Chester Cup competitions 2011 to 2012

Firstly, very well done to all captains for getting their matches played within the time-frames. This is not always easy, especially as the weather can sometimes affect travel arrangements.

A number of rulings have been necessary this time around because one or two pairs do not seem to have properly sorted-out their defences to artificial bids. It is not a major issue but I shall cover this problem more fully in communications to captains at the beginning of next season.

The following teams have done particularly well and are to be congratulated on their results:

Wessex League (thirty nine teams of eight)

	<u>Winners</u>	<u>Runners-up</u>
Division 1	Wallingford A (112)	Menagerie B (90)

Division 2	Banbury	(111)	Oxford B (91)
Division 3	Oxford C	(93)	Wallingford C (82)
Division 4	Oxford D	(126)	Oxford E (105)
Division 5	University B	(91)	Wantage B (82)

President's Cup (eleven teams of four)

Winners: Nick Smith, Alan Wilson, Dan MacIntosh, Stuart McPhee, Chris Cooper

Runners-up: Kathy Talbot, Denis Talbot, Debbie Roberts, Geoff Nicholas

Chester Cup (eight teams of four)

Winners: Mike Webley, Geoff Nicholas, Dinah Lintott, Andrew Lintott

Runners-up: Kathy Talbot, Denis Talbot, Rob Procter, Nick Smith

Geoff Nicholas (League Secretary)

Chief Tournament Director's report

I would like to thank Rob Dixon for all his support with directing/scoring this year and I am very pleased to be sharing the directing role with him over the coming year. I would also like to thank Max Booker, Chris Dawe, Kathy Talbot, Pete McAllister, Lynne Hayes (and anyone else who I have forgotten) who have directed some events this year, Entries have been recorded very accurately by Claire MacDonagh and I am very appreciative of all her hard work.

Stephen Brown, June 2012

County Team Management

This team, consisting of the county captain, Chris Cooper, the match secretary, Ian Angus, the chairman of selectors, Colin Jones, and led by Alan Wilson, aims to improve the performance of all the county teams while ensuring that county-level bridge is fully integrated with other bridge activity in the county.

Arguably, we have already made an impressive start with improving the performance of the county A team, at least, which recently won the Midlands Counties "Dawes" league for the first time for at least 35 years and as far as anyone can remember the first time ever. Many congratulations to all 23 people who played for the team over the course of the season. The other county teams had a more modest performances this year, with the B team finishing slightly below average in 6th place out of 9 counties and the C team slightly above average in 4th place. But these teams have both had recent wins in their respective divisions, and the county has considerable strength in depth which we hope will be reflected in further wins over the coming seasons. The Tollemache team unfortunately performed a bit below par this year, finishing 7th out of 9 teams in the qualifier, and a place in the final remains as elusive as it has been for several years.

As ever, the management team is grateful to those who have helped make it all happen, with special thanks to Esme Alden for providing teas at all our home matches. There was some confusion over the organisation of our last match against Leicestershire, in particular over the provision of pre-duplicated boards, for which we apologise, and we will be looking to ensure this does not happen again. In the meantime we are extremely grateful to Rob Dixon, assisted by Lorna Swadling and Sandra Nicholson, who saved the day by rapidly putting together a new set of boards.

Looking ahead, the management team is keen to widen the range of opportunities to represent the county, and will be looking at opportunities for additional friendly matches against neighbouring counties – particularly since some counties have suggested reorganising the Midlands Counties Leagues to take place over fewer days. Anyone who is interested in joining the potential pool of players should contact one of the selectors or a member of this team. We are also looking at possibilities for using some county competitions to allow the winners to earn the right to play for the county, and at the possibility of providing some training seminars for existing or potential county squad members - we have circulated a questionnaire to the squad to help gauge the feasibility and interest in such activities.

Alan Wilson, June 2012

Education and Improvers

The Education Team consists of Robert Procter (leader until someone else volunteers please), Claire Macdonagh as Education Officer (resigning at AGM to be replaced by Cathy Rowland subject to election), Ian Mitchell (Aylesbury Vale), Melinda Jordan (Oxford Bridge Learning), David Watkins (Bicester), Gaye Kyle (Wantage), Judy Wesselbaum (Oxford) with advice from time to time from Alison Nicolson.

As leader I have met with all the members of this team either singly or in groups to discuss the team's objectives in the light of the members' survey answers. The results of our discussions are encompassed in the aims and objectives statement shown on the Development page of the county website. These were approved by the Management Committee at their March meeting.

A number of points can be made:

- Bridge education covers more than just bridge skills – people have to learn the etiquette of club duplicate play if they are to feel comfortable in that environment – helping clubs to help beginners over this hurdle is an important element in growing our clubs
- Thereafter it is important to continue to offer opportunities for players at improver level – unless they continue to advance their skills and improve their scores there is the danger that they become disenchanted
- Some clubs in the county already provide a wide range of educational opportunities, but there are clearly gaps that may need to be plugged by the county or by clubs with the county's assistance
- There is more teaching available in Oxfordshire at the beginner level than at higher levels where a mentoring scheme and seminars may be appropriate
- At present little use is made of the knowledge of our strongest players
- We need to recognise our responsibility for the quality of teaching and of teaching materials used in the county and work out how to monitor these
- Greater publicity of what is available is necessary to help anyone anywhere in the county to find appropriate teaching somewhere in their area
- The English Bridge Union can help us by providing a teacher training course – but to make use of this we need to have a plan to use those teachers in conjunction with other opportunities for play for improvers.

Finally I am pleased to report that Brenda Harris has managed to secure the services of Andrew Robson for another of his seminars next April.

Robert Procter, May 17 2012

Youth and Duplicate Bridge Promotion

The Promotion Team has been created to encourage and support individuals and groups of all ages to play bridge and minibridge and to help those wishing to progress to duplicate bridge, including assisting any groups who wish to form new affiliated duplicate bridge clubs.

The Team comprises separate sub groups to deal with Youth, Adult Player and Duplicate Bridge Club Development, and Membership.

Youth objectives

- For all schools in the OBA area to be aware of bridge and minibridge.
- To be given details of the schemes available from the EBU and OBA.
- To be given a contact point for advice and help.
- To be invited to competitive events managed and run by the OBA.

There already exists a thriving bridge community in primary schools in the South East, with more sporadic activity in the rest of the OBA area. The Youth Team is identifying which schools are not part of this community, and will at the very least achieve the objectives listed above.

The OBA Survey responses are being processed to obtain a list of helpers and teachers to provide support for individual schools. The specific requirements for help and teaching are being formulated, and the associated training requirements evaluated. It is vital that when contact is made with a school that the OBA is in a position to provide any support promised.

- A Youth website is being prepared to provide a useful forum for school teachers and pupils.
- An Open Day is being planned for February 2013 to attract pupils of all abilities, as well as newcomers.

Work on the budget for the Youth activities is outstanding, but in addition to the annual costs previously identified the OBA will need to consider an additional duplimating machine, (vital for teaching over a number of different locations), and additional training-costs. Support and development of bridge in schools also involves significant travel costs.

Clubs are requested to pass old playing cards, and other surplus equipment to the team for distribution to schools.

Player and Club Development

The objective is for all bridge players in the OBA area to be aware of duplicate bridge, and to be given the opportunity to learn how they could incorporate duplicate bridge into their own bridge groups.

- To provide documentation to support the move to duplicate bridge
- To be given a contact point for advice and help
- The OBA to provide members for on-site support
- The OBA/EBU to provide start-up interest free loans for wallets and cards
- In conjunction with the Social Team the OBA to run events for Novices & Students, and Next Steppers
- Affiliated clubs to be given the responsibility to “foster” groups new to duplicate.

The Promotion Team has not yet done any work on this although there will be a spin-off from the analysis of the Survey responses for adult teaching and support. A major requirement will be to identify existing groups of bridge players, not affiliated, and perhaps not playing duplicate bridge.

Mike Fletcher, May 2012

Promotion Team Contacts

Mike Fletcher, Marryat Stevens, Viccy Fleming, Holly Kilpatrick, and Mike Webley

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Membership Secretary’s Report

On 10th May 2012 there were 1312 full members of OBA in the following categories:-

P2P Full	1226
P2P Junior	10
Direct Full	26
Direct Juniors	20
EBUTA teachers	19
Partner Teachers	11

During the 2010-2011 Season, 37 EBU members with primary allegiance to a county other than Oxfordshire chose to become Dual Members of OBA. This enabled them to play in the OBA events and competitions that require participants to be members of OBA.

It is pleasing to note the increase in Direct Junior Members, most of whom have joined OBA as a result of their involvement in the Youth Bridge initiative.

Fleming, 13.05.12

Viccy

Social

Social Bridge Congress – promoting this is taking most of my time at the moment. Thank you to everyone on the committee for their help and support. Rob Procter has, very kindly, taken me to six Bridge clubs over the last six weeks to introduce me and to talk to club members. We have told people what we are trying to achieve and invited them to become involved. However, encouraging participation in the Social Congress has been the main focus of the visits. Numbers are slow to build up, I think mainly because this is a new concept for the County, however, we will do our best to make the day enjoyable and memorable for those who do come along. I

think we can learn a lot from this experience and, from my own observations so far, I have some suggestions when we meet for the debrief after the event.

Café Bridge - I met with the people organising the Café Bridge in Oxford and a date for this has been set for Wednesday 24th October. I am going to stay involved and will be there on the day to help in any way that I can. I am hoping that other areas of the County might like to run something similar and I would be very happy to work with them to make it happen. Two of the clubs that I have visited have been receptive to the idea initially and realised that it needs local knowledge to make it happen.

Mini Bridge in South of the County – I have had an approach from the people who are working with this. I am arranging to meet with them to see how they think I can be involved. I think they are already involved with the Youth Development Team and possibly the Education Team so there could be the possibility of some joint work.

Developing a Social Bridge Team – this remains a priority for me. As you will all know I sent an information letter out in March. This was sent to all clubs to forward to all their members. I also sent it to all current teachers and to a huge list of people who had expressed an interest in being kept informed. I have also sent it to many other people to take to social clubs and golf clubs etc. I wasn't hopeful of an overwhelming response and I wasn't disappointed! People are understandably reluctant to volunteer when it isn't totally clear yet what they would be volunteering for. However, it has definitely raised awareness and from conversations that I am having with people there is quite a lot of interest being shown – but they aren't volunteering to be involved – yet! I think (busy) people are worried that they are going to be asked to attend meetings and take on onerous responsibilities. I need to make it clear to people that I am not envisaging a Team that is heavy on meetings. I need a “Virtual Team” to make things happen. Nobody knows their own community and their own club like the members do. So I need their expertise and knowledge to enable opportunities for social bridge to happen in their areas. All I really need is one, or possibly two, members of each club to be prepared to liaise with me, by email or phone, to share ideas and examples of good practice.

I will continue to visit all of the clubs in the County over the next six months and hopefully the personal approach will help people to feel happier about being involved. I am looking forward to helping to develop a social bridge programme for Oxfordshire – in partnership with other committee members, with individuals, with teachers and with clubs. I am not envisaging this being an onerous task. The key word here is “social” so promoting enjoyable bridge for all abilities to enjoy will be an enjoyable process. I look forward to working with you all.

Barbara Jordan, May 2012