

OXFORDSHIRE BRIDGE ASSOCIATION REPORTS TO THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Shareholders Report

At the EBU's AGM the inaugural Tony Priday award was presented by Vivienne Priday to Bernard Teltscher. Elena Jeronimides was thanked for her service as Editor of *English Bridge*, and Lou Hobhouse was congratulated on her appointment as the new Editor.

The EBU had achieved a surplus of £43K for the year, largely due to tighter controls on spending, the worth of the company had risen to over £1m, and a great deal of media exposure had significantly raised the profile of the game. The finances of the EBU remain essentially sound with overall membership currently fairly stable at approximately 55,000. The P2P charge was not increased this year, but it seems likely that it will rise again next year. A new IT system will be implemented shortly at Aylesbury and the Board continues to pursue the vexed question of whether bridge can legally be considered a "sport" (with a further hearing due later this year), as well as whether it should be exempt from VAT. Expenditure on these activities has led to a larger than expected deficit for the current year but as exceptional items, they will be funded by drawing from reserves, which still remain healthy at over £0.5M.

At the 2015 AGM the Board put forward a proposal to discontinue the existing mechanism whereby shareholders (i.e. county representatives) are responsible for electing members to the EBU's three main "Standing Committees" i.e. the Laws and Ethics, Selection, and Tournament committees. Instead they would become sub-committees of the Board. This caused considerable disquiet, and although it was eventually carried by a small majority, this was not sufficient for the change to be implemented. Revised proposals will be put to the 2016 AGM in November, following a period of consultation over the summer.

The current cheating scandals have led the World Bridge Federation to recommend that national organisations should change their bye laws so as to ensure that where dishonesty is alleged, the standard of proof is not (as at present) "beyond reasonable doubt", but a slightly less rigorous test based on "clear and convincing evidence". The shareholders have now approved this change to our own bye laws, although, happily, no similar cases are currently known of within the English bridge environment.

At the EBU AGM, Oxfordshire recipients of a prize draw of Simultaneous Pairs heat winners were Lisa Furnival & Peter Finbow of the Summertown club (£200), and in the club category, Wantage Bridge Club (£1000).

Sandra Claridge, Sandra Nicholson, Alan Wilson

County Teams report

1. In the Midlands county leagues, the county finished 6th in the Dawes league of the Dawes (1st team), 4th in the Porter (2nd team) and 1st in the Markham (3rd team). This is down on last year except for the C team who won very comfortably and will now represent the region in the inter regional final. The B team while finishing 4th in a tight field were in contention until the final match.
2. The Tollemache was yet another "near miss" with the county coming third narrowly in its group thus just failing to qualify for the final.
3. One of the county's entries for the Beck Cup won the event (D Lintott, A Lintott, K Talbot, D Talbot) for the first time for some years.
4. Following a questionnaire in the previous year, the selection committee moved to more evidence based selection procedures. One aspect of this was that data was routinely and largely successfully collected from first division matches of the Wessex league. As part of good practice procedures it is intended to publish the criteria used, on the county website. The move to do all business by email was completely successful.
5. However on several occasions the problems were not those of selection but rather those of availability. The dates for the coming year are already known and early work will collect and keep up to date availability.

Nick Smith/Alan Wilson/John Slater

Competitions Committee Report

1. This has been a year of consolidation.
2. After an entry crisis, the Chester cup was moved to being a summer competition. This has led to a small increase in entries.
3. The Wessex league has been very efficiently run and enjoyable. It completed with no serious problems. Congratulations to the winners of all five divisions.
4. The President's cup completed in 3 rounds with an excellent final and winners Wilson, Smith, Procter and Robinson.
5. The county pairs moved to a new format with an open semi-final and a smaller final. The general feeling is that this was a success and avoided some of the problems of randomness resulting from very small heats. Thus although overall numbers were reduced by a factor of 3, all taking part were keen and serious.
6. County night had moved to 2 nights each month. Numbers continue to drop. Team night is currently averaging about 7 tables per month and pairs about 4 tables a month. The latter is likely to prove unsustainable unless there is significant "new blood" before the Oxford venue become unavailable for some time.
7. Numbers have also dropped at other competitions.
 - a. The Swiss teams (Harwell Cup) was abandoned as there were only 2 entries. It seems unlikely that a swiss teams format event will continue.
 - b. Numbers were down for the Swiss pairs and, at the time of writing, the mixed pairs.
 - c. Gendered pairs entries dropped marginally. some time.
8. Competitions committee is scheduled to meet on Jun 9th to discuss possible ways forward including further revisions to the timetable. This timing allows us to interact more easily with ebu events.
9. We would like to invite the AGM on our behalf to thank Rob Dixon for his sterling work as the county's chief tournament Director. It has not been an easy time and he has been very efficient while being friendly and helpful. We wish him well.

John Slater

Website Co-ordinator Report

The website has taken on a better look in the past six months with regular pictures, links to more competitions, the EBU main website and EBED teachers / TD website. We have a good congratulations section giving details of winners of events and highlighting those playing for the County in Dawes League and Pachabo. All OBA results are displayed using BridgeWebs giving many more features of analysis and display of results and automatic uploading from EBUscore. Robert Procter has updated the education section making it easier for players new to the game to find information. The site is being backed-up monthly. As always I welcome comments or suggestions for improvement from clubs or members of the OBA and will try to act on them to give a better service to our members.

Stephen Brown

Website Coordinator

President & Chester Cups Secretary

The Presidents's Cup attracted 8 entries, and was won by Mike Robinson's team. The team of Mike Robinson, Robert Procter, Alan Wilson and Nick Smith will represent the County in the Pachabo Cup on 11th/12th June. The Chester Cup has shown a modest increase, with 7 teams. It's anticipated that all the matches will be completed by the 30th September.

Sandra Claridge

Membership Secretary – Report for AGM on 14/06/2016

Membership of the County is largely defined by the EBU.

The exceptions are members who pay a county Subscription direct, usually people whose primary allegiance is to another county and who wish to play in Oxford County competitions.

The table below shows how numbers have increased over the two years since I became membership secretary.

	1st July 2014	1st May 2015	1st May 2016
Pay for Play	1330	1331	1397
of whom are			
juniors	16	14	20
Direct	97	101	137
of whom are			
juniors	73	78	107
Teachers	28	24	24
Bridge For All	39	84	47
Anonymous	7	7	7
Total	<u>1501</u>	<u>1547</u>	<u>1612</u>

Peter Briggs

7th May 2016

OXFORDSHIRE JUNIORS REPORT 2015-16

OXFORD JUNIOR BRIDGE CLUB BY KOLLY KILPATRICK



The Oxford Junior Bridge Club has enjoyed a successful year. Six new children started with us in September and most of the 'old guard' returned. During the winter months, we sometimes had three tables and it's a sight to behold, seeing children of different ages chattering and interacting over the bridge table.

In November we held a competition at the Oxford Bridge Club and were delighted to have 32 entrants, from all over the county, for three sections: mini-bridge, novice bidders and experienced bidders. We hope very much that this will be a regular feature of the junior bridge calendar and are very grateful to Richard Sills and the Trustees of OBC for the use of their premises.

We were bowled over with surprise when we learned that 11 year old Henry Rose had been selected to play for the England under 15 team and we wish him luck in the Youth World Championships in Italy this summer. I'm greatly indebted to Alecks Lichkov, who has taken Henry under his wing by mentoring and playing bridge online with him. Indeed Alecks will spend next weekend at Stratford playing with Henry in the Pairs and in the teams with two other Under 15 England Juniors.

We entered two teams for the E.B.U. Youth Challenge in Loughborough on 5th March and were delighted when one of the teams came 4th out of 22 in the Schools Cup. With an average age of 10 years 5 months, they beat strapping lads from the sixth forms of top public schools. Our second team, with an even younger average age, also did well, just tying with Oxford Girls High School.

I'm immensely grateful to all the volunteers, who turn out on a rota basis on Sundays and also to Peter Litchfield, who helped greatly, by dealing boards on the Oxford Bridge Club machine.

Last September Peter Sherry and Joan Bailles started a club at Headington Prep School, supported by Sue Burge and Ameena Ahmad and their numbers remain steady at 2.5 tables of girls. Bridge clubs continue to thrive at the Dragon School, Oxford Girls High School, Magdalen College School, Rye St Antony, Summerfields and D'Overbroecks.

We are working hard on getting the children through the EBU Junior Award Schemes and most of the attendees at the Oxford Junior Club have qualified for their Bronze Award.

Eight children have entered for the Oxfordshire Bridge Congress in June and some will be playing on both days, sporting their new "Oxford Junior Bridge Club" t shirts! Look out for them and, in certain cases beware of them!

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

Our pattern has continued to develop differently from that in Oxford itself, almost certainly due to the different geography. Our schools flourish (13 primary and 3 secondary with approximately 300 children), but our Sunday afternoon club has not prospered. We had 4 entries at Wallingford BP in September 2015, and 6 entries at Abingdon in January 2016 (+2 from Oxford). George Anstis is now in Michael Byrnes U20 squad, and should transfer to OBC when he starts at University College in the Autumn, and I am sure that someone will nurture him. EBED cancelled the JTI for 2016, so both Oxfordshire and Sussex have put events on at short notice for the children (page 45 of the June EBU magazine). Ours is being held in Cheltenham thanks to Ro Kaye, who is both a housemistress at CLC and vice chair of Cheltenham BC, who has cut us an unbelievably good deal. We have run 2 Learn Bridge in a Weekend courses (Jan and April), and these seem to work with mixed age groups. Discussion and thoughts welcome for the future.

Joan Bennett

May 2016