

## Chairman's Report to the Management Committee - November 21 2016

Having only recently written a blog and posted it on the website (click on "Chairman's blog" on the OBA website) I have little new to report and will cover just three items here:

1. I have had a couple of meetings with Ken Langdon, our new county secretary. We went through the "welcome pack" which describes the operations of the OBA and its committees and brought it up to date. Whilst this is intended for new members of the committee, if any existing member of the committee would like a copy I am sure Ken would be happy to supply it to you.

Ken has questioned the need for a contact list of club representatives, suggesting that as clubs are free to change their representatives on the county committee at any time the county's line of communication should be via club secretaries rather than directly to the currently nominated representatives.

2. I have been investigating possible venues for an "Oxford Festival of Bridge" and may have found one that would be satisfactory. I am hoping to arrange a meeting with Annabel Wade and Barbara Jordan so that we can bring a formal proposal to the MC meeting.

3. I have attended a further meeting of the Midlands Counties Working Group at which a number of subjects were discussed including:

- timing and scoring of Midlands League matches - for next season a possible change of start time to 2.00 with use of Bridgemates and common pre-dealt boards.
- venue for next year's Midlands Region Improvers Event - I suggested that Oxford might be a possibility but have subsequently had to report back that it isn't as the rebuilding work at OBC is expected to be in progress at the required time - another idea might be somewhere like Towcester, but would our improvers be prepared to travel even that far?
- the collection of data regarding the use of the EBU's membership recording system as this has been upgraded and may offer the potential for recording and reporting more information - Peter Briggs has communicated his thoughts to the EBU on our behalf - but clearly this will need to be a joint view of all the counties as the EBU can only run one standard system.
- I have been commissioned by the group to work with Mike Willoughby of Worcestershire on preparing a discussion paper, the main aim of which is to identify any changes that the EBU could or should make in the way it handles its affairs that would serve to encourage the volunteers who support the game within the counties. I have already discussed the circumstances that gave rise to this commission with the county's shareholders and will summarise our collective thoughts at the MC meeting.

## Competitions Committee Report - November 2016

We met in June which was a useful thing to do as it laid out the pattern well.

The last month of county nights was September. Thanks to Richard Sills and OBC for allowing us to finish a bit earlier than the agreement would have implied. The last teams attracted 6 teams and the last pairs (a celebration) attracted 10 tables (more than it has done for a while).

The Chester Cup finished, uncharacteristically with all teams completing all fixtures. Congratulations to the winning Procter team. A summer timescale seems good.

The president's cup has 7 entries this year. The proposed Plate may be somewhat restricted.

The group looking at any replacement for county night is still gathering evidence.

The county team nights at Roke on 5th Fridays seem to be just about tenable. Currently they attract largely folk from the South of the county. Thanks to Sandra Claridge for bringing a team from foreign parts. The next one will be on March 31st.

The Gendered pairs became orphaned as a result of the end of county night but a new date and venue – 27th Oct at Yarnton Village Hall has been brokered. CYBC will host the events and, through David Bygot, has put up some more prize money to see whether it attracts more numbers. CYBC will run the event and take the table money. At the time of writing (18th Oct) there are 7 entries for the Men's pairs and 3 for the Ladies' pairs so cash does not (yet) seem to be a driver.

The Swiss pairs will be held on Nov 27th at OBC and has attracted 3 entries so far. This is more or less normal at this stage.

We have taken to sending a regular monthly email to all county members. This reaches those whose emails are up to date on the ebu site. Stephen Brown has been very helpful with this and other website matters. This followed anecdotal and actual evidence that few now routinely look at the county website. There are currently no other channels to county members. We therefore are planning on numbers being routinely down in all county competitions except the congress which advertises through many other channels. We are looking to see whether we can get more focussed advertising as used by GN for the Seniors.

If the entry for the county pairs is sufficiently low we shall be able to avoid a semi-final. This will cut costs substantially and avoid a clash with the point a board ebu event.

The "clubs" section of the website has been removed from the competitions tab and made into a main heading. MC should perhaps appoint someone to look after it.

John Slater

## County Juniors Report – November 21st 2016

The second Oxford Junior Bridge Club Competition was held at the Oxford Bridge Club on the afternoon of Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November when twenty-five children, aged 9 – 15 years, descended upon the balloon decorated premises, generating laughter and good will. The juniors came from a variety of schools around the city and county and from as far afield as Sonning Common, Reading and the Midlands!

Congratulations to our scorer, Diane Coe and TDs, Mike Fletcher and Peter Sherry, who managed to keep boards and children moving, in spite of the speed differentials and the cross table chatting! This year we merged the experienced bidders with the novices and awarded prizes in both sections. The four pairs of mini-bridge players might have been low in numbers but were high in enthusiasm and played eight boards from a recent simultaneous pairs competition. Two young entrants have only been learning for four weeks!

At 4.15 p.m. we called a halt and everyone descended upon the tea table, groaning with goodies, mostly donated by parents, many of whom joined us for tea, while Diane feverishly attempted to get a result.

When presenting the prizes, organiser, Holly Kilpatrick warmly thanked the Chairman and Trustees of the Oxford Bridge Club, who had kindly given their premises free of charge. In the mini-bridge section, first prize went to Carl Shelley, whom, although playing with an adult, had played all the hands and chosen the contracts. In the novice bidders section our winners were Jennifer Ellis and Jacob Hathaway from Sonning Common and in the “experienced” bidders section first prize went to Richmond Yeung and Inigo Sanchez-Asiain from the Dragon School. Some of the results were extremely close and congratulations to all the children who took part. Full results are listed below:

### EXPERIENCED BIDDERS

1<sup>st</sup> Richmond Yeung and Inigo Sanchez Asiain      2<sup>nd</sup> Megan Jones and Henry Rose

### NOVICE BIDDERS

1<sup>st</sup> Jennifer Ellis and Jacob Hathaway      2<sup>nd</sup> Jacob Potter and Freddie Beneat

### MINI-BRIDGE

1<sup>ST</sup> Carl Shelley      2<sup>nd</sup> Freya Cook and Louisa Alvey  
3<sup>rd</sup> Harry Litchfield and Zach Matthews      4<sup>th</sup> Merlin Kavanna and Hanmer Hanbury

Holly Kilpatrick, November 20th 2016 (updated from original submission)

## County Website Report – November 21st 2016

The Website now has different pictures on the home page to represent other events besides playing in a club (e.g. juniors, congress) and an advert for the next County Event. Other photos are welcome.

All the on-line entry forms are set up for all the competitions up to May 2017 and the congress on-line entries will be set up once the costs are confirmed.

Following useful comments from members, the Play Duplicate Bridge section is now split into Competitions and Clubs. The results are now located at the top left on both the home page and the Competitions page so all competition results for OBA events are in one place (this links to our BridgeWebs site). We continue to congratulate OBA players on doing well in EBU or county events.

Stephen Brown. 2/11/2016

## Education & Development Team

The Education and development team met on 30<sup>th</sup> September to discuss how to distribute the £3,000 budget set by the management committee to assist clubs to develop the amount of bridge played. Ian Mitchell from the EBU joined us. After discussion we agreed a list of possible initiatives clubs could take and how they should approach us for support. As a result, we sent out this note to all affiliated clubs.

### **WE'RE OFFERING MONEY TO CLUBS TO GET MORE PEOPLE TO PLAY BRIDGE**

We've set up an annual budget to help Oxfordshire clubs to attract new members and grow the amount of bridge members play. We've asked the Education and Promotion Team to spend this budget to the greatest effect.

We would like to invite you to apply for funding for club initiatives designed to achieve this growth. Please tell us how your proposal will lead to an increased player-session count at your club.

We will need a bit of time to think about how to invest, so if you want to spend money before 31 March 2017 please apply before the end of 2016. There's no fixed percentage of expenditure that the county will be prepared to meet; we'll consider every application. We'll aim to achieve a balance between the greater need for financial support of smaller more rural clubs against the greater effectiveness of expenditure in a more densely-populated urban area.

We'll ask you to give us some feedback on the outcome of your initiative so that clubs can learn from each other.

The committee has asked me to act as the initial recipient of proposals; so if you want to have a chat about it first please call me on 0750 616069. We hope you'll find something in this for your club.

Best wishes

Ken Langdon Secretary OBA

### **SOME EXAMPLES OF THE INITIATIVES THAT WE WOULD SUPPORT (BUT YOU MAY HAVE BETTER IDEAS)**

- Ones that will encourage new people to take up lessons - e.g. taster sessions, targeted marketing, incentives to members to introduce others (compared to newspaper adverts we've found that word of mouth is better than newspapers).
- Ones that enable clubs to set up teaching sessions - e.g. provision of teaching material and equipment, teacher training.
- Ones that will help teachers to assist their protégés over the threshold into duplicate bridge - e.g. mentoring schemes
- Ones that enable clubs to run more sessions (adding daytime sessions seems to be working for several clubs already) - e.g. provision of Tournament Director training or additional equipment if necessary
- Ones that will attract people who already play at unaffiliated clubs in your area or at home - e.g. events run in conjunction with local unaffiliated clubs, setting up a "home bridge league" open to non-members as much as members.
- Ones that encourage your members to introduce others including beginners to play in your duplicates - e.g. offering discounted table money to anyone playing with someone who has not played in your club duplicate before.
- Ones that help develop a friendly atmosphere in your club where everyone, whatever standard and experience, is made to feel equally welcome (we believe that with appropriate help it should be possible for a beginner or newcomer to play comfortably at an open club session - if stronger players wish to play in a stronger game, it's best to run these sessions separately)