

Oxfordshire Bridge Association
72nd Annual General Meeting 2018
7.00 p.m. Friday 1st June 2018 at Wallingford Bridge Club

Chair's report

EBU Shareholders' report

Treasurer's Report

Website Report

Congress Teams' report

Competitions report

Membership report

County Teams' report

Juniors report

Chair's Report for AGM - (written April 21 2018)

Successes:

- In the year to 31 March 2018 there was a 7.5% increase in the total number of plays at our clubs (whilst I believe our number of members has grown by about 2%);
- Buckingham Bridge Club re-affiliated to the EBU through Oxfordshire on 1 April 2018 and earlier in the year Freeland BC was formed as a teaching club by Chris Onslow, a former Summertown member. I am sure you will join me in giving them both a warm welcome;
- At least half of our clubs now either run or are connected to teaching programmes and the county was pleased to support Bicester and Oxford financially in their new programmes;
- Our Annual Congress continues to be one of the most successful in the country;
- The county qualified for the Tollemache Final for the second successive year and achieved sixth place in a very strong field;
- At the time of writing both our B and C teams are in contention to win their divisions of the Midlands Inter-County League;
- We have close to 150 junior members, more than any two other counties put together. They collectively hold approximately 25% of the awards that have been handed out under EBED's Junior Awards Scheme;
- Four Oxfordshire juniors were in the England junior teams that qualified via the European Junior Championships for the World Junior Championships in China this August
- Our festival was universally acclaimed by those who took part, whether they were locals or visitors to the county.

Some comments on our direction:

- Before the advent of Universal Membership the county's main focus was on the county team, county competitions and county nights. Although promoting bridge was specified as an objective, the county could be regarded as serving only the better players;
- Since then we have widened our focus to aim to serve all bridge players and we have introduced cafe bridge and other social events, a festival and club promotion grants;
- Future ideas include having more county competitions in either handicap or stratified form and providing more opportunities for experienced players to help newcomers to the game.

Administrative matters in the year:

- We set up a Governance Working Party to consider recommendations for best practice made by the EBU's County Working Groups. This has resulted in the changes to our county constitution proposed at this AGM, which I welcome and invite you to vote for. In particular I support the proposal to reduce the number of non-officer positions on the committee in line both with other counties and the best practice guidelines. This will make the logistics of managing the committee easier. (All members will still be welcome to attend Management Committee meetings in an observing capacity);
- The Management Committee approved a Safeguarding Policy and a small group is working on allocating responsibilities and putting procedures in place to ensure that we now adhere to that policy at county events. If we are to welcome our many juniors to events

at our affiliated clubs, the clubs too will need to address these issues and I would encourage them to do so;

- A small group is working to ensure that we comply with the General Data Protection Regulations which come into force on 25 May. Clubs need to address this issue too;
- Another small group is working on transferring the county website on to a single Bridgewebs platform.

Some thoughts for the future:

- The county administration performs a valuable role between clubs operating at a local level and the national body, the EBU. It needs more volunteers to help with that administration and it would be beneficial if those volunteers came from as wide a spectrum of player as possible - experience and expertise as a bridge player is certainly not required. In particular expanding the appeal of the game requires links to bridge players who play elsewhere than our affiliated clubs;
- Successes in attracting juniors to start the game and in attracting others to bridge lessons at our clubs will come to nothing if we cannot help them over the threshold into club competitive duplicate bridge. More daytime sessions for the elderly, more holiday sessions for the juniors, more evening teaching for the working population, more social sessions for the less competitive - all need to be considered and the county can help clubs to meet the financial hurdles of getting new things started;
- The work of The Social Team is primarily about providing social bridge events which appeal as much to bridge players who don't belong to our affiliated clubs as to those who do. I therefore recommend that The Social Team be amalgamated with The Education and Bridge Promotion Team;
- Amongst a number of issues that the Midlands Counties Working Group is working on is the question of who should pay how much for what. There is a suggestion that a "one size fits all" approach inhibits unaffiliated clubs from joining the national body and that a change in our pricing structure may be what is needed. I hope to be able to continue working with my Midland County colleagues on considering this issue.

And finally:

- I would like to thank everyone who has helped me over the past seven years. There are too many of you to mention you all by name, but you know who you are. Without your support I would have given up the post long ago;
- I wish my successor every success in the future and will give him or her my full support. It can be a lot of fun and despite setbacks from time to time it is very rewarding when things move forward.

EBU Shareholders' report for OBA AGM 2018

Last year there was some concern about the long-term financial outlook for the EBU, but various measures have been taken to reduce costs and the Treasurer now reports that the forecast for the next four year period indicates a return to stability. The Universal Membership charge – formerly known as P2P – increased by 1p from 37p to 38p per play from April 2018, and further increases in line with inflation are expected in the future.

The Board has prepared a short summary of its strategic aims for the next 5 years, which can be viewed at <http://www.ebu.co.uk/documents/official-documents/strategic-aims-2018-2023.pdf> and will also be published in the next issue of *English Bridge*. The top priority is now to “Promote the teaching and playing of duplicate bridge in order to attract potential players of all ages and at all levels of ability, thereby increasing the size of the EBU membership”. It is recognised that the average age of bridge players is rising and although approximately 3,800 new members join the EBU every year, sadly almost the same number are lost. The EBU and the Yorkshire CBA have been jointly running a pilot Membership Campaign since the beginning of 2017, with encouraging results, particularly in helping to “rescue” smaller clubs that were in danger of disappearing completely. This will shortly be extended to a small number of other counties interested in becoming involved.

In support of this aim, a “Welcome Pack” is now available for new members, containing a diary, the latest issue of *English Bridge*, a leaflet about EBED (the education and development arm of the EBU), and a new booklet entitled “Welcome to the EBU”. You may be interested to know that the photograph used on the front cover of the booklet (picturing a Congress in full swing) prominently features two of our own members, thinking hard about their bidding!

The County Working Group structure has been reviewed and arrangements have been put in place to improve liaison and communication between the CWGs, the Board, and the Aylesbury staff. It is hoped that the South West, London and South East will soon be in a position to follow the successful examples set by the North and Midlands regions. .

Much work has been done over the course of the year, mainly by the General Manager, to prepare the EBU for the advent of the new General Data Protection Regulations. This includes the publication of detailed advice for counties and clubs, who are all considered to be separate organisations for this purpose.

A campaign is currently running to attract support for the English Junior teams, as we will have four teams competing in the World Youth Bridge Championships in China later this year. To date over half the target amount of £60,000 has been raised, including contributions from our own County (via a specially organised fundraising event) and several local clubs.

Finally, as most members will be aware, the EBU’s attempt to win the right to exemption from VAT, which went as far as the European Court in Luxembourg, was eventually rejected and will not be pursued further.

Sandra Claridge, Sandra Nicholson and Alan Wilson

May 2018

Treasurer's Report 2017-18

On 31/3/2018 the OBA had a balance of £14,894 in its current accounts (Main OBA & Congress) and £29,807 in a Barclays deposit account. This compares with £9,488 and £29,807 on 31/03/2017. During the year a new Lloyds account with on-line banking was opened. The new sort code is 30-92-92 account number 36652960. I expect to close the old account shortly. Please ensure that all payments go to the new account.

The Congress made a profit of £3,115 (last year: £2,524). The Festival made a loss of £1,333 but was deemed a great success by all that attended. OBA competitions made a profit of £891 (last year: £933) and the OBA subsidized the county teams to the tune of £760 (last year: £860)

P2P brought in a total of £2974 (last year £3,308). At a recent Management Committee meeting it was resolved to reduce the P2P levy from 6p to 1p in a move to reduce our large positive cash balance. Other things being equal this would give an approximately break-even yearly budget.

Management committee expenses were £317 (last year: £109) mostly in travel expenses. The duplication service made a profit of £238, despite a large one-off expenditure on new cards.

A grant of £800 was made to Bicester Bridge club and £694. £1000 was raised at a seminar held at Abingdon DBC for the fund to send England Juniors to the Junior World Championships

More details can be found in the annual accounts.

Peter Litchfield

May 2018

OBA Website Report 2017/2018

I am pleased to report that the OBA website has been continued to be used to efficiently to

- Allow people to enter competitions and fund raising activities
- See more events being advertised using the “Photo Slider” at the top of the homepage.
- Congratulate people winning competitions
- Display the monthly newsletter produced by Laurence Hayes
- Regularly email OBA members to encourage entries etc
- and continue all functions as last year.

At the March OBA meeting it was decided to move all the information to the BridgeWebs site. I am awaiting the Website subcommittee chaired by John Rowe to meet and advise me on the format required on the BridgeWebs site then information will be transferred. John wishes to look at the information needed for new viewer's, existing viewers and interested viewers. He would like to look carefully at my “Joomla to Bridgewebs” document in detail (published in March) and match it with our two sites before any transfer is made.

As always I encourage team leaders to update their areas on the BridgeWebs site once all data is transferred.

Stephen Brown

OBA Website May 2018.

Congress Organiser's Report

1. Last year's congress was a bridge and financial success with a surplus of £3,115.
2. The 2018 Congress will feel very much like last year's taking place in the same venue, Marlborough School in Woodstock and enjoying the same expert team of Directors.
3. Entries are looking a bit different compared with last year. As at 16th May with over 3 weeks still to go we already have more teams entries (47) than last year. Pairs entries stand at 80 and so may not reach last years' total of 128.
4. We are running a new Friendly Pairs event on the Sunday for NGS9 and below players. Entries for this have been slow and we are relying on clubs promoting a “half-price entry” offer to secure a reasonable turnout for this new initiative.
5. In response to feedback last year we have changed caterer and are hoping that by offering a better standard of food we will get more positive comments in this area this year.
6. All things taken together we are hopeful that we can again make a contribution of around £3,000 to the OBA's finances.

The Congress Team

May 2018

Competitions Report 2017/18

1. There were no major problems with competitions in 2017/18
2. Congratulations to all the prize winners detailed elsewhere in the AGM agenda.
3. The gendered pairs were hosted by Central Yarnnton with enough pairs for a two section event. An excellent evening was had with David Bygott again acting as host with prizes etc. making it a more social and fun occasion.
5. The President's cup only had 6 entries
6. The County Pairs competition had 28 entries with a 14 table semi-final followed by a 7 table final.
7. The Harwell cup had 9 teams this year. It had been decided to scrap the Beck Cup.
8. The numbers for the Wessex League were the same as in 2016/17. The Competitions Team are investigating whether the structure of the League should be changed for 2018/19 and all clubs were asked for their views.
2017/8 we may need to look at the number of divisions.
9. Several optional competitions will also need a hard look if numbers fall further.
10. The trophies and hons boards continued to be handled by Sandra Nicholson who extracted some of them from OBC before the exodos, finding one in the process. They are all accounted for.
11. I would also like to thank Nigel Wilkes as Tournament secretary and Wessex league Sec, Sandra Claridge for looking after the Presidents' and Chester cups, to Claire MacDonagh for her wonderful teas and refreshments and Chris Whitehouse for making sure the cards were in the right place.

John Rowe

May 2018

Membership Report

OBA Membership Statistics					
		01-May-16	01-May-17	01-May-18	Growth
P2P *	Adult	1,384	1,555	1,489	(4%)
	Junior	20	22	63	186%
Direct *	Adult	30	20	7	(65%)
	Junior	107	118	153	30%
Teachers		24	24	32	33%
Bridge4All		47	71	76	7%
		1,612	1,810	1,820	1%
* excluding Teachers					
"P2P" means EBU member through "Pay to Play" with OBA as County of Primary Allegiance ("CPA")					
"Dual" means county other than Oxfordshire as CPA, but has joined OBA, probably for events					
"Direct" means joined EBU directly (not via P2P) and paid £4 to join OBA					
"Junior" means U25 on 1st January in year					
"Year" means 1 April to 31st March					

County Teams report 2017/8

Oxfordshire continues to be represented in the three divisions of the Midland Counties League. The A team did not have a particularly successful season, finishing below average, but the B and C teams both won their respective divisions, with the result that they will represent the county later this month in the national finals for winners of the various regional inter-county leagues around the county – congratulations to everyone who played for these teams. The A team did better in the EBU's inter-county competition, the Tollemache, though, repeating last year's tough feat of qualifying for the 8-team final. The final itself saw an improvement on last year's result, too, with the team finishing 6th out of the 8 teams in the final, but only slightly below average in terms of victory points – no mean feat when a number of counties can call on pools of internationals to represent them.

Please contact me or any of the selectors if you might be interested in joining the squad of players considered by the selection committee for these events.

Alan Wilson
County Captain

JUNIOR REPORT FOR AGM 1st June 2018

DETAILS ON BRIDGEWEBS, OXFORDSHIRE, BRIDGE4SCHOOLS

1. **Player numbers and quality.** We have had 330 youngsters this year playing under our banner, of whom over one third are playing bridge (the traditional average for conversion from MB to bridge being 10%). Over 10 of these are now in various national squads which is fantastic, in addition to the established members of the U26 womens team- Laura, Ewa and Siyu
2. **Junior events.** OJBC November 2017(22 children), Roke February 2018(28 children) are reported on the Bridge4schools website. OJBC runs weekly in term time. The junior award scheme is becoming established and many Oxfordshire youngsters have now received awards from minibridge to gold.
3. **National Schools day.** Was held in Loughborough Reading School were our local stars this year, with 3 primarily mixed young OJBC teams performing very respectably.
4. **Wessex Youth Bridge weekend.** Was held on 7th 8th April at Cheltenham in what is becoming an annual event. It was attended by 60 children+15 accompanying adults. The trophy was won by Oxford's Thomas and Jacob Potter.
5. **Summary.** The future of bridge as a game depends on us continuing to widen the base, particularly amongst keen children of non-bridge playing parents. Many of the current crop of competent young players in our county fall into this category, which is fantastic. Some are enthusing their parents, and if they continue, will benefit OBA, or somewhere else, tremendously in the future. The appointment of David Emerson, himself youthful, by EBED and currently a member of Wallingford BC, is a step forward.

Joan Bennett May 29th 2018