

# TEAMS COMMITTEE REPORT 2014-2015

## WESSEX LEAGUE

The Wessex League season has been successful for OBC CIO in 2014-2015. Last year's report noted "Particular goals for the 2014-2015 Wessex League season include a promotion for Oxford E, and maintaining three teams in division one." In fact, both Oxford E and F finished in line for promotion, a key target at the start of the season, and indeed we maintained three teams in Division 1. This now means that OBC has a team in every division, which will allow for the appropriate level of competition for all pairs competing. All other teams performed well, and will remain in their division for next year. Further details of the matches and results can be found at <http://www.ebu.co.uk/leagues/?id=OXF-000003-01> for division 1, and then for lower divisions one can replace the trailing '1' with the division number.

Notable thanks go to the Wessex League captains: Kathy Talbot (A), Rob Dixon (B), Dave Dobson (C), Richard Sills (D), Claire MacDonagh (E), Vicky Fleming (F), Pat Lewis (G), and Joan Bailes (H). It is considerable work to organise a team, find match dates, arrange substitutions and collate results; one wonders how cardplay can be thought about during the evening. Their efforts are very much appreciated. Their own reports on the teams they captained follows.

*Somewhat disappointing performance from the A team. We never seem to perform well against the B team and I am not sure why we finished behind them yet again. On a personal note, I often think that team members can perform better when playing for other teams. **Kathy Talbot, A Team Captain.***

*After a good start with the narrowest of losses to Menagerie A and wins against the other Oxford teams, the B team unfortunately lost a hold on the next matches with small losses, drifting down the table until a final win against Banbury and other favourable results between other teams allowed us to finish 3rd in the table. Many thanks to all the members of the squad (especially Simon & Hugo who played all 7 matches) as well as Diana Nettleton, John Slater & Helen Lawton-Smith for standing in when needed. **Rob Dixon, B Team Captain.***

*The fixture list was always likely to leave the C team working hard in the final few weeks of the season to keep their status in division 1 and 'hopefully' keep OBC as the only club to have more than 2 teams in the top division. This is exactly how it panned out. Early matches, in successive weeks before Christmas, against Oxford B and A went along similar lines the team quite comfortably up at half time, but poor second halves resulting in defeats realising 8.14 and 3.18 VPs respectively. The 3rd match of the season, early in the New Year, against Aylesbury A proved less successful still with only 2.76 VPs recorded and we were rooted at the foot of the division. However 4 matches in March resulted in wins against Wallingford A, Summertown A and Banbury A by 10.18, 17.86 and 13.18 VPs with a 20-0 reverse against the 'soon to be crowned champions' Menagerie A. This meant a nervous week waiting for the result of the match between Banbury A and Menagerie A on April 29th, where anything 'worse' than a 17.03-2.97 win by Banbury would see us finish in the bottom 2. Unlikely as we felt that was going to be maybe, it was with some relief when this result came through as an 11.05-9.85 (6 IMP) win for Menagerie. In summary, an inconsistent year where on too many occasions one pair (not always the same one!) would make a significant error on a board and allow a game swing or similar through (~5-12 IMPs) which just cannot be maintained to win*

bridge matches, but we live to fight another year in the top flight and help maintain the club's proud record over the past few seasons. **Dave Dobson, C Team Captain.**

The aim of the D team has been to survive in division 2, following promotion in 2013. The team had achieved that aim by the narrowest possible margin in 2013-14; so it counts as progress that we did so much more comfortably in 2014-15. Four victories were recorded - including three against teams who had beaten us the previous year; and a final position of 5th, with an average of 9.18, was highly satisfactory. However, the team has lost a couple of players, so will need some reinforcement for next season. **Richard Sills, D Team Captain.**

Oxford E has had a challenging but ultimately rewarding and enjoyable season ending with us winning promotion to Division 3. Every member of the team contributed to our success as did a number of substitutes who kindly stepped in, sometimes within hours of a match to assist us. I am particularly impressed and pleased with the commitment and attitude of the entire team everyone of whom represented the club with dignity, courtesy and unfailing good humour. **Claire MacDonagh, E Team Captain.**

The F team had a successful season winning five of their six matches. Finishing second in the division should mean that the F team plays in division four next season. A win in the last match was needed to guarantee promotion. The scores, in imps, for each group of six boards, starting with the first set were +57. -1,-21,-33 resulting in victory by just two imps. Scoring the match was a tense affair for the captain! A big thank you to the team for their support and tenacity. **Vicky Fleming, F Team Captain.**

The G team have had a very mixed season this year losing 4 matches and winning two. Apart from one match the score difference averaged 4.5 which was closer than the end results indicated. We had a very faithful core of ten players but this did make availability very tight and we were grateful to the H team for supplying a pair for one match. I wish to thank all those who so generously gave support to the team. **Pat Lewis, G Team Captain.**

This was only the second year that Oxford H team played in the Wessex league. We had 3 wins out of 6 matches which was excellent. On average we were only .33 Victory Points behind the joint third place- Bic B and Oxford G teams. I would like to thank all the Pairs who played for this team during the season. **Joan Bailes, H Team Captain.**

## NICKO

The NICKO was more mixed this year. All five teams lost in the first round of the NICKO, entering the plate. At the time of writing, only Oxford B still remains, playing a fourth round match in the coming week. Again, many thanks for the captains who organised matches for their teams: Kathy Talbot, Nigel Birks, Richard Sills, Chris Dawe, and Diana Thorne. Comments from the captains follow.

The team unfortunately lost two winnable matches in the first two rounds, which should have been won. **Kathy Talbot, A Team Captain.**

After a successful campaign in 2014 when we reached the quarter final of the main NICKO competition hopes were high for another run this year, but sadly this was not to be and we transferred to the Plate following a first round loss in a swingy game versus Worcester B. Chris & Beryl kindly joined the team when James Dow retired for a while to concentrate on the final stages of qualifying as a doctor. We then travelled to Solihull for a comfortable (78IMP) win over a West Midlands team followed by a home win over an Ascot team (35 IMPS) and a home win over Sutton Coldfield A (28 IMPS). We are now looking forward to the draw for Round 4 which is the last 16 teams. **Nigel Birks, B Team Captain.**

*Our team lost 1st round matches in both the main event and the Plate - probably because we were outclassed.* **Richard Sills, C Team Captain.**

*We had two very pleasant games (both away matches). The first against Leighton Buzzard A and the second against Reading C. Both opposing teams were good teams and we lost them both, but our Plate match was closer.* **Chris Dawe, D Team Captain.**

*Our matches went smoothly, easy to arrange but sadly we did not win!* **Diana Thorne, E Team Captain.**

If anybody has any questions regarding this report, feel free to contact me. I look forward to seeing a strong OBC showing in competitions in 2015-2016.

JAMES W. J. ANDERSON