

Chairman's report to the SCBA AGM
May 27th 2018

Firstly and perhaps unusually I wish to start with an emphatic appreciation of my committee members who have worked really hard this year to support the objectives, which we set for this year.

These were:

- To develop better liaison and involvement of and with our clubs whether or not they are EBU affiliated.
- Consult with players at all levels to see how we can better support them.
- Produce a strategy for the development of Fast Track Bridge
- Produce a strategy to recruit more social players into Club Bridge
- Ensure succession planning by involving others in our work
- Put Best Behaviour at Bridge to the forefront.

We set out these policies at an open meeting for clubs at Cossington in November, which was very well attended and received and much enthusiasm flowed from that event. The next day by chance we received the news that our lottery application had been successful and we were soon in receipt of the funds which allowed us to proceed at full bore with our Fast Track programme.

We have tried very hard this year to improve our dialogue with players and clubs by way of club visits and regular communications including our monthly newsletter for which I thank Joan Pooley who has taken on the role of editor and who is doing a magnificent job. From the start I have understood that the role of the SCBA is the development of duplicate bridge in Somerset, not just in EBU affiliated clubs, and I believe it is very important that everything that we have to offer is available to these non EBU clubs in the hope that this attitude will help to increase participation of these clubs and players in our events. To emphasise this point I have visited as many clubs as possible this season and have seen at first hand those clubs that are thriving and those doing less well.

Like all other counties we have a problem increasing the numbers of those playing in EBU clubs. We are generally losing more players than we are gaining. One of the answers is teaching but research has shown that only about 30% of students move from classroom to ordinary club play something we are addressing in our fast track programme. I believe that our role as a county is to assist those clubs needing support to recruit more members from the vast number of social bridge players that exist in the county and this will be a major objective for us in the next few years.

Our first fast track event has been organised by the Yeovil/Castle Cary/Sherborne cluster and took place on the weekend 18th-30th May. Alternating lessons and assisted play on Thursday evenings will follow the weekend. At the time of writing there were 13 signed up students. Further courses are scheduled for Street on September 15th-16th and for Pawlett and Weston in September.

There are of course other ways of teaching bridge but we believe that fast immersion followed by assisted play and club integration is an attractive option for the younger people we are hoping to attract and the purpose of this pilot is to assess the success of this programme.

Ceri Pierce is leading this project and she has done a really efficient job for which I am very grateful. I must highlight also the work done by Caroline Macpherson in putting together a pack for the weekend fast track course, which has been distributed to the other tutors. We also have a series of lessons with associated on line support so that delivery across the groups will be consistent.

An idea that came out of the November meeting was that there are clusters of clubs in the county and that much could be achieved by these clubs cooperating at local level in the organisation of local events and competitions. We haven't got far with this but I must highlight the efforts of Graham Daniel, chairman of Kingston Seymour in stimulating just such a cluster. I have high hopes for what he calls the Northern Power House and already cross club seminars are taking place. I would really encourage other clubs to get involved in supporting efforts to develop the game.

Speaking of seminars leads me to our continued promotion of four or five events per season. This year we were lucky enough to have another Andrew Robson event, which was as usual a sell out. In addition we had a return visit from Paul Bowyer who was much enjoyed. Both Andrew and Paul are booked for next season. As usual we also delivered two free seminars and again our thanks are due to Caroline for leading these events. Overall thanks of course go to Jean Howard who has skilfully organised four seminars, a course for directors (thanks to Frank Coltman and Colin Simcox) and the Bruton weekend in conjunction with Caroline and Daphne Greatorex. This is a heavy workload and I congratulate and thank Jean on her enthusiasm and commitment.

Overall we have had a successful tournament programme with numbers up in most competitions. Our tournament organiser Frank Coltman has some interesting proposals for next season and beyond and the schedule is available on the website. Some of these proposals are the result of the player survey that we commissioned earlier in the year showing that as a committee we are receptive to player feedback. This is one of the more arduous committee jobs and I am grateful to Frank for the enthusiastic way in which he has carried out the role.

Western League

Pride of place goes to the B team who were unbeaten in their league and who will go on to represent us in the inter regional league event later in the summer. The A team had a mixed season in a division from which Devon emerged as comfortable victors and failed to repeat last year's success in the Tollemache. The C team suffered a poor run of results and ended up bottom of the table. Colin Juneman says that " we could be criticised for giving a game to as many pairs as possible but this is the first time that policy has produced such a poor series of results and, as Chairman of selectors, I would prefer to continue with this policy unless there are major objections".

Thanks to Colin and his co-selectors for their efforts this season.

Later on we will congratulate those who have been successful in our own events but at this point I would like to mention those who have done good things outside the county.

Ceri Pierce won the Lady Milne Trial and represented Wales again in the Lady Milne Trophy

Roger Sweet and Colin Juneman won the Swiss Teams events at the EBU Seniors Congress and at the Cheltenham Congress in 2017

Eric and Ceri won the Championship Pairs at our own congress and together with Alan & Jette Bailey won the Berks and Bucks GP Swiss teams 2017 (Too many second and third places to mention) but may I give pride of place to Gillian Toogood and Wendy Miller who won the Swiss Pairs at this year's Cheltenham Festival (at the table and not over the fences) and in partnership with Anne Skinner and Barbara Biggin won the Friday night event the Evesham Cup.

In 2017 congress moved back to its spiritual home at the refurbished Winter Gardens. This really is now a first class facility, which was enjoyed by 85 tables of players and gave a worthwhile profit. It is hope to increase the limit to 90 tables this year and already entries have been coming in for congress2018. This is a real county effort and I am very grateful to all those who offer their unstinting support over this weekend to make our congress as popular as it is.

Financially we have had another good year as the accounts indicate. We continue to generate the funds which will enable us to support developments in the county, to offer free seminars and to offer financial support to those clubs supporting our cluster group proposals and seeking our help to increase numbers. I must thank Richard for producing the accounts and keeping on top of a financially challenged congress organiser. Thanks also to Ken Bawdon for auditing the books.

I finish as I started by thanking the whole committee for their enthusiasm and support and to these I would add special thanks to Andy Ridgers and Eric Cummings who have both been invaluable in various ways and to Bob Warrender for his continued expertise in running the county league, probably our most successful event, to Gina Howard for administering the Michael Coda Cup and to Sheila Coda for collating suggestions as to who might be the first winner of the Terry Girdlestone Trophy and also making sure that our trophies are in the right place at the right time.

In conclusion may I say that I look forward with your permission to continuing what we have started this year.

Thank you

SOMERSET CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2018

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Fixed Assets: | | |
| Trophies | 1,384 | 1,384 |
| Tables | 542 | 768 |
| Bidding Boxes, Boards and Cards | 516 | 774 |
| Bridgemates | 200 | 430 |
| | 2,642 | 3,356 |
| Current Assets: | | |
| Lloyds Bank - Treasurers' Account | 6,137 | 3,518 |
| Lloyds Bank - Business Instant Access Account | 21,463 | 9,457 |
| Scottish Widows 60 Day Treasury Account | 6,872 | 16,868 |
| Skipton BS Bond | 10,138 | 0 |
| Sundry Debtors and Prepayments | 1,036 | 3,904 |
| | 45,646 | 33,746 |
| | 48,287 | 37,102 |
| Current Liabilities: | | |
| Prize Fund | 389 | 900 |
| Sundry Creditors | 7,152 | 7,817 |
| | 7,541 | 8,717 |
| NET ASSETS | 40,746 | 28,385 |
| Represented By: | | |
| Accumulated Funds | | |
| General Fund as at 1st April 2017 | 28,385 | 26,513 |
| Sponsorship fund | 9,369 | 0 |
| Suplus/(Deficit) for the year | 2,992 | 1,872 |
| TOTAL FUNDS | 40,746 | 28,385 |

NOTES: These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention on an accruals basis. Income and expenditure is generally accounted for in the period to which it relates irrespective of whether actually received or paid within that period except that entry fees for the County League and Pairs League are accounted for in the year the competition starts.

Fixed Assets are depreciated by annual instalments over their estimated useful lives.

Examined and in accordance with the accounting records