



SOMERSET CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION



February Newsletter

Thoughts from Abroad

Imagine the scenario: someone out of the blue contacts your club wanting to know how to learn bridge with a view to joining the club. What would the response be?

- a) Sorry, you will have to go away and take some lessons and come back later (0/10)
- b) Sorry we do not offer lessons but we can refer you to someone who may be able to help (2/10)
- c) Sorry we do not offer lessons but we work with a local teacher who will be able to introduce you to the club when you are ready (6/10)
- d) Yes, we will be delighted to help. Please come along on Tuesday to discuss the options. We have courses starting two or three times a year (10/10)

Unfortunately (a) is all too common and (d) very rare, yet the first contact is overwhelmingly important – there may never be another opportunity.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all clubs were teaching clubs at which learners and improvers were fully supported? The good news is that Somerset CBA has all the resources for you to set up such a programme and that these are available FREE to all our clubs.

So, what is the model?

1. Train the teacher.
2. Find the students.
3. Teach – if we don't teach them then who will?
4. Assist.
5. Integrate. The club is the heart of the bridge community.
6. Teach some more. Improving ability makes the game more pleasurable for all.

TAIT – That's all it takes!

Teacher training courses are free to EBU clubs and we have one starting in Nailsea in June. Lots of other courses are also available.

We can help with marketing your courses having run five in 2019 all of which have been fully subscribed.

We have a complete course of 31 lessons and associated resources available free of charge. These include teacher notes, student notes, a set of hands with curtain cards for student dealing as well as .pbn files for dealing machines, and quizzes.

Year two lessons will be available soon. During and after the course the students will play in assisted play groups and be gradually integrated into the main club. If the club is to benefit from this work in terms of increased and sustained membership then the link between the lessons and the club is imperative. Again, we can help.

We also have available the **FAST FORWARD TO BRIDGE** course for those who want to go that way. [Contact Ceri for details.](#)

I understand that there are difficulties with facility hire in our clubs none of whom own their own property but where there's a will Let's discuss and solve any problems before we give up.

We have learnt much from our work during the past two years and as a result now have a programme to offer which I hope will be of interest to your club. If you are already teaching then please feel free to add this resource to your programme but if not and you would like to know more then please get in touch with [Ceri Pierce](#) who is leading this project.

I will be back from foreign climes at the beginning of March – please get in touch if you have any queries about how we can help ensure the success of your club initiatives.

Tony Russ SCBA Chair

Upcoming events for Improvers:

February 9th (Sunday) “DOUBLE!” **Claverham Village Hall** – a seminar with Caroline Macpherson on the various uses of the double card including penalty, take-out, negative and responsive doubles among others. This event is free of charge but please register on the **SCBA website** to ensure that we have a handle on numbers.

March 2nd **Normandy Bridge Club** Evening Seminar – **Defending** – defeating contracts with careful defence. A short presentation followed by prepared hands. 7.15pm start with a planned 10.00pm finish. Cost £5 to include refreshments and course notes.

March 20th - 22nd **Bruton Weekend**. Held at Kings School, Bruton This weekend of seminars, quizzes and competitions takes place from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon. Complete course programme and a breakdown of costs is available on the **SCBA website**.

Competitions:

Please refer to the SCBA website for Woolavington details.

February 3rd on – the **Michael Coda Cup** in aid of **BIBIC**. A simultaneous pairs competition to be held at various locations across Somerset. Please check in with your local club(s) to find locations. Note: the event takes place on different days so you will only be able to play at one club.

February 21st (Friday) – County league 7 – Woolavington 7.15pm

February 23rd (Sunday) – **Championship Pairs**. The premier event of the season at Woolavington. 1pm start.

March 1st (Sunday) – **Masters Pairs** (**Green** pointed event) – Gypsy Hill Hotel, Exeter. The Ann Staveley trophy competed for over several centres in a two session MP event commencing at 11.00 pm. Further details and entry forms on the **Exeter Bridge Club** website.

March 13th (Friday) – County league 8 – Woolavington 7.15pm

March 14th (Saturday) – **Teams of 8** – Woolavington 1pm. Full details and entry here: https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwx/bw.cgi?pid=display_page57&sessid=528338758112352&wd=1&club=somerset

March 15th (Sunday) – **National Pairs** (**Green** pointed event) – Gypsy Hill Hotel, Exeter. A pairs event – two sessions of 24 boards commencing at 1pm. The top fifty pairs nationally will compete in a final event. Regional trophies and prizes as well. Further details and entry forms on the **Exeter Bridge Club** website.

Entries are now open for **Pairs League 2020**. For those who haven't played in this event before, pairs are allocated to divisions of a league and so are pitted only against pairs of similar ability and will never be out-gunned. The event takes place over 5 evenings (April 1st, 7th, 24th, 30th and May 4th) and pairs must commit to all 5 evenings or to arrange a reserve pair to stand in for them. Two matches of 12 boards are played on each evening and the event costs £25 per pair for the whole event.

It's a 'Play against the Experts' event in that scores are compared against those achieved by expert players in high level competition rather than those actually achieved in the room so players can see how their bidding and play compares with the best. An excellent way to learn and improve through play for all levels of player.

REPORTS

Tony Russ recently had the pleasure of playing in the second edition of the **Cannington Open Pairs**. This event was organised by Mike Cotterill and Steve Barham, was well attended and was enjoyed by a wide variety of Somerset players with a couple of guests from Wiltshire, Sue Hands and Brian Johnson the eventual winners. The SCBA was delighted to support this event and is very keen to back future initiatives of this sort which provide a stepping stone between club and county events. If you think you or your club would like to

organise an event then please contact Tony at scbachair@icloud.com He can assure you of a positive response.

Forum for the Future (this is an abridged report the full text is available on the Somerset website)

On Monday 20th January the Somerset County Bridge Association put on an event hosted by Street bridge club for Somerset clubs (irrespective of EBU affiliation) to discuss the future. I was glad to attend as EBU Membership Development Officer, and to lead part of the discussion. Also in attendance were Jonathan Lilycrop (Club Liaison Officer) and Giles Ip (Youth Officer, English Bridge and Development). Around a dozen bridge clubs were represented. Tony Russ chaired and introduced the meeting.

Tony highlighted Frome and Street as being among the most successful clubs in the county (Street is not affiliated) because they welcome and teach novices. Frome has made a teaching effort and increased attendance by 62%. These are the exception, though. When he wrote to all the clubs about membership issue, only 12 of 36 replied. Very few clubs offer lessons, he said, and only 2 clubs offer assisted play. Many clubs will turn away absolute beginners.

Somerset has a two-year plan, he said, based on encouraging clubs to be able to offer lessons and reaching the point where an enquirer could call any club and it would be able to offer teaching and welcome. Clubs who do not have teachers, or want to train more, can send members on a teacher training course which is coming up in Nailsea in June. It is important that clubs run courses themselves, rather than simply referring enquirers to an external teacher, meaning that person will probably never come back to the club. New players need to be integrated into a club as quickly as possible.

In the discussion which followed there were several themes. A key issue is transition: how do you get novices from playing in gentle bridge sessions to the main club session or sessions? The EBU has thought a lot about this issue and has tips to share on its Membership Development site. It is important to avoid forming “clubs within clubs” that do nothing to sustain the main session. Mixed ability sessions are the answer for most clubs, including tolerance for mistakes or minor infractions made by novices. Jonathan at the EBU can advise on how to run movements where some players play fewer boards, or where beginners play in a parallel session. It is good to have beginners playing in the same room as the main session in order to integrate them with the club.

There was also discussion of the value of mentoring in all its guises. One club pairs up experienced players with beginners as a way of teaching. Having a host system is very helpful as way of increasing numbers since members know they will always get a game.

There was quite a bit of discussion about EBU affiliation with the main concern being the idea that EBU clubs are less friendly. I said that the EBU is changing and that a warm welcome to players of every standard is now a pillar of our approach and that we aim for all our clubs to offer this. Members from Castle Cary said that affiliation had not diminished the club's friendliness in any way.

Some clubs have struggled with EBU guidance for Facebook advertising. Help is available by contacting Tim or Jonathan at the EBU. We also talked about Nextdoor, which is a social media platform for near neighbours such as a housing estate or village. Clubs have found this very effective for marketing bridge course. Posting messages on Nextdoor is free and it is easier to use than Facebook.

Clubs are also anxious to support youth bridge even though this is unlikely to bring new members to most clubs in the short term. Giles spoke about what clubs can do to support bridge in schools and universities.

The bottom line: all bridge clubs need to gear up to teach and welcome novices, if they have not done so already. It works, it is hugely worthwhile, and remember – That's All It Takes!

Links:

Book a place for club teacher training:

<https://www.ebedcio.org.uk/club-teacher-training>

Contact Tim at the EBU: tim@ebu.co.uk

Contact Jonathan at the EBU: jonathan@ebu.co.uk

Contact Giles at EBED: giles@ebedcio.org.uk

EBU Membership Development resources: <https://ebumemberdevelop.org.uk/>

Tim Anderson (EBU Membership Development)

January 2020

Correction – in the last newsletter we reported that Somerset played with a Non-playing Captain at the Tollemache for the first time. Peter Brunsch has reminded me that he captained the team after SCBA was formed from Avon CBA with team members David and Gina Howard, Robin and Judy Belcher, Terry Girdlestone and Graham Heal.

Little bits of history can be easily lost – any interesting anecdotes or reminiscences will be gratefully received by the editor

RESULTS

Swiss Pairs 5th January – players had obviously been missing bridge over the Christmas period and there was a great turnout of 27 tables. When the dust settled Roger Sweet and Colin Juneman headed the field with 108 VP's Chris King and Steve Tomlinson were in second place on 102 VP's. Full results can be found here: https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?pid=display_rank&event=20200105_1&club=somerset

County league results:

Division 1 can be found here: https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?pid=display_rank&event=20200117_1&club=somerset

Division 2 can be found here: https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?pid=display_rank&event=20200117_2&club=somerset

Interclub Teams (Open) 19th January. The team of Rob Lawy, Roger Sweet, Colin Flood and Sheila Coda playing for Taunton took the honours on the day with Wells second and Langport third with Langport winning the overall competition with Nailsea in second place.

Full results can be found here:

https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?pid=display_rank&event=20200119_1&club=somerset

Interclub Teams (Non-affiliated section) – a tussle between Weston-super-Mare and Chew Valley with the latter coming out on top and taking the overall competition to boot. The team of Jackie and Stephen Banks and Mary and Alan Rodgman were the winners on the day.

Results can be found here: https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?pid=display_rank&event=20200119_2&club=somerset

Ask Jack - 'Should East have switched?'

An interesting deal turned up in the 18th Champions cup in Bucharest. While England beat Monaco 51:30 in one semi-final, BC't Onstein 1 beat Canottieri Olona 70:45 despite losing 11 imps here.

S AK54	
H Q	
D A974	
C J874	
S QJT872	S 3
H 543	H AJT876
D Q	D T65
C AQ6	C 953
S 96	
H K92	
D KJ832	
C KT2	

Table 1			
W	N	E	S
		2 H	Pass
3 H	Dbl	Pass	3 NT

Table 2			
W	N	E	S
		2 H	Pass
2 S	Dbl	Pass	3 H
Pass	3 NT		

At table 1, 3 NT was made after West led the 5 of hearts to the Ace, followed by the Jack. South simply held up the King until the 3rd round and East had no entries. At table 2 East led the 3 of spades to defeat the contract. Whatever North does, West has sufficient entries to enjoy their spades.

The 3 of spades lead at table 2 was easy to find since partner had bid spades but East at table 1 had a chance to switch after taking their Ace of hearts. It is clear that South must hold the King of hearts and, unless partner started with 4 hearts, East has no prospect of further heart tricks. West must hold length in spades since South bid 3NT with a poor heart stop rather than supporting North's spades suit implied by their double. Also, if anyone has entries it is West since East has none. Who can tell whether on average it is better to switch or continue hearts though?

Jack, the multiple world champion computer bridge program can. According to Jack, it is worth switching to the 3 of spades at this point, even though partner has not bid spades. After dealing and analysing 1000 hands, all consistent with the above bidding, Jack thinks that switching to the 3 of spades is the best chance you have of defeating the contract. In this particular deal, the switch is too late to defeat the contract if your declarer play is as good as Jack's. By running 5 diamond tricks and never touching clubs he must make his contract. Any attempt to play on the club suit before taking all 5 diamonds results in the

contract failing, however, and I am sure many of us might make this mistake holding King, Jack and ten and only needing one trick.

The moral of this story, always consider how to find ways of establishing tricks for partner when you have poor prospects for yourself.

Another great article by Geoff Davies in conjunction with Jack. Looking forward to a few more!

A final thought – coughs and sneezes spread diseases and so can playing cards. Have you thought of using hand sanitizer at the table during the cold and flu season?