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September 2026

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Fill the Classrooms

www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk

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Thanks to everyone who gives feedback about the newsletter!

Did you receive this from a friend? If you would like to have it delivered directly to you, please just reply to this email saying so,

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NEWS
From August 2020, during the pandemic with information and support for duplicate bridge clubs. Back editions on the web site.

CLUB DATA
Bridge club data is collated to provide a picture of life, and trends, in club life. Analysis.Taster below. Full analysis on the web site.

TEACHING SCHEME
A teaching scheme is available, entirely free of charge.

DISCUSSION
For almost four years we held monthly Zoom meetings to discuss anything of interest to clubs. Recordings on the web site.

WEB SITE (Hosted by BridgeWebs)
http://www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk.

Please foward the letter to anyone in the bridge world who might be interested. Anyone can subscribe for free, no adverts.

Autumn Beginners

Many beginners join classes that start in the autumn. This time of year is crucial for reaching them and signing them up,

It's important for the future of the game. It's especially important for face to face bridge clubs. The numbers of clubs, and even the number of sessions they offer is holding up pretty well, though the direction, if any, is downwards.

Beginners are often recruited by current members. Local advertising can work, but takes money and effort.

The EBU and EBED are spending money on campaigns, mostly Restless and Facebook to attract new players to the game. Your club, or you as a teacher can benefit from this. Sing up now.

How does it work?

1. You load details of your class, gentle duplicate, or taster session to https://www.enjoybridge.co.uk/
2. EBU places advertisements in Restless newsletters and on Facebook
3. Potential learners see the ads and click to be directed to https://www.enjoybridge.co.uk/ (There have been TWO million such clicks already)
4. A map and a searchable directory lists the courses. Potential players can click to enguire.
5. The enquiry is forwarded to the teacher/club.
6. The teacher/club contacts the learner and signs them up for the course.

Does it work?

- Thousands of queries have been forwarded so far. Half the places on the course I am starting this week have come through this channel, so yes, it works.

EBED Renaissance

https://www.ebedcio.org.uk/

English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

The charity has two public benefit objectives:

- the furtherance of duplicate bridge as an activity which enriches the life of all
- a specific aim to foster duplicate bridge among those in full-time education.

EBED was created to focus effort on raising money through charitable donations and to enjoy any tax benefits of charitable status. Although close to EBU, EBED has separate objectives and its subject to different laws and regulations.

It's registered address is at Aylesbury. It is steered by a board of volunteer trustees.Three are listed here, but three new ones, including yours truly, have recently been added.

https://www.ebedcio.org.uk/trustees

EBED has a handful of staff,some based at Aylesbury.

I became a trustee of EBED in Autumn 2025.

EBED has had historical problems finding its place. However, this is old news, water under the bridge and things are much better now and improving all the time.

This is not of course because I became a trustee. It is because my fellow trustees are the most talented, skilled and dedicated bridge management group I have come across anywhere. We are all reasonably new to EBED. There are legal, financial, project management and teaching skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience. In the last year or so the group has completed, or nearly completed:

- Updating the EBED Constitution
- Agreeing a ten-year financial strategy
- Reviewed investment policy
- Reviewed insurance arrangements
- Reviewed the VAT position
- Review staff contracts
- Tackling agreement for office services with the EBU
- Managing the lingering questions about the Faulkner bequest
- Supported the recruitment of new staff
- Supported EBU development projects

This tells you that much of this work needed to put EBED on a sound foundation. It’s the kind of thing that is easily neglected, doesn’t seem to really matter, until the day it matters a lot.

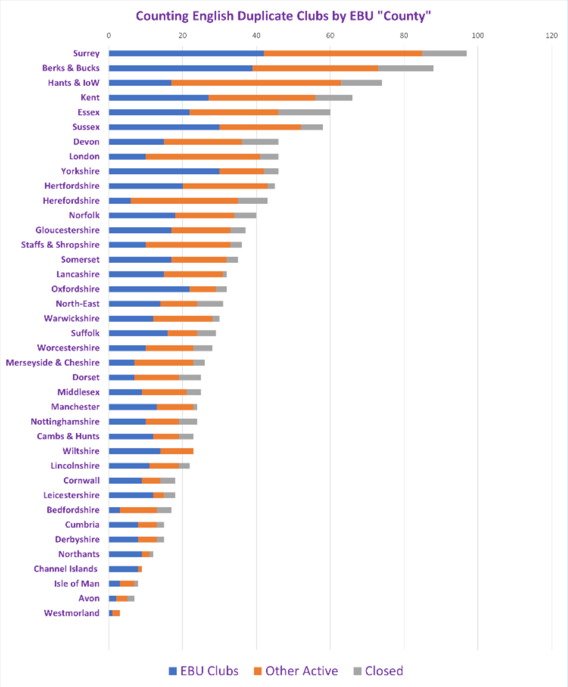
Of course our staff have been working as well. There are new teaching resources, a new teacher training course and a new club director course, among other good stuff.

EBED is positioned to help EBU and you and your club and your teaching to keep bridge alive. If you would like to keep in touch with the EBED story I have been asked to create a newsletter with all the hews about the charity's strategy, activity and impact so you know where it fits, and can ask questions, make proposals about the future, and maybe even get involved.

You are reading this as an item in my, Nicky Bainbridge's, newsletter. This new newsletter will be an EBED publication and separate. However, it's me getting it off the ground, so there may be some linkage, especially to start with.

To sign up for our probably quarterly EBED news please reply to this newsletter.

Westmorland CBA RIP



The above list shows the huge disparity in size of the EBU Affiliated Counties.
The counties have a role in EBU Governance. As shareholders they have actual power to change EBU Board policy or actions.

Counties need officers to exist; chair, treasurer, secretaries etc.

Most counties participate in regional leagues.and for the smallest, it is often those who participate in county leagues who act as officers.

Bigger counties with more resources may run County Green and/or Blue Pointed events, may support teacher and director training; may support clubs and teachers with grants, may have youth officers. Smaller counties may not..

Westmorland was the smallest county listed by clubs. It has decided to wind up its affairs. Its clubs have switched to Cumbria. Best wishes and well done to all players who helped run Westmorland CBA.

The EBU is not addressing the county structure, but Westmorland has shown that counties may choose to wind up with dignity. Possibly others will follow?

Calendar Blues

At this time of year many players, teachers and directors are filling out their diaries. The diary may be electronic, an EBU or a Bernard Magee, physical diaries.

The EBU reserves five weekends for County Green Point events, but keeps the rest for elite events. Sharing 5 weekends among 38 counties doesn't' help the counties.to offer local events and benefit from the income. It would be reasonable to consider adding a sixth weekend.

Courses for club directors are run by EBED throughout the year. ONCE a year there are two courses leading to County Director qualification, required for county EBU licenced event. The dates for these have often been announced at very short notice. I am pleased that 2027 have been announced, great! You do have to do a bit of web site searching, or phone Aylesbury to find them.

These courses are of peak interest to county players, county directors or senior club directors. These players are likely to be occupied on county green point event weekends. In 2027, for the fourth time in five years the second course is taking place on a county green point weekend. This is not ideal.

Making clubs feel wanted

I subscribe to a lot of podcasts, news letters, substacks etc. Recently I reviewed them. I unsubscribed from one well known national media company.

Their response was to ask what they could do to change my mind. Then they continued to send the content, for free, so far for nearly one hundred days. Each time, they say "look how good this is" and offer a re-subscription at a discount. My opinion of them has improved as a result of this experience.

My bridge club, that I have run for over fifteen years, is no longer running substantial duplicates. However, we are offering lessons, and running small gentle duplicates. It's no longer sensible to bear the costs of EBU Affiliation. In March I advised the EBU that we would no longer be affiliated. I was then asked whether the club was closing or it was "resigning" from the EBU. I replied neither. The club was terminating it's affiliation agreement with the EBU. They responded that meant it was "resigning".

I really objected to this term, and to this response. Frankly EBU did not need to correct me about the action this could only be to maintain some sense of their "superiority". Secondly, it is not the correct term. The club affiliation agreement requires payment from the Club to the EBU. Clubs get a limited range of services from the EBU. It's an agreement between parties subject to possible termination by either.

The EBU then removed me from the "Updates from Aylesbury" distribution list, despite me being an EBU shareholder. So, in contrast to my other example, I would no longer be reminded of their existence or activities.

The EBU often seems to believe it's the top of a hierarchy.

Subservient to them are the affiliated counties, and subservient to them are the affiliated clubs. The EBU's financial existence depends on the work of thousands of volunteers who keep the clubs going.The UM from clubs pays for the Aylesbury building and twenty or so staff. EBU governance relies heavily on hundreds of volunteers leading the counties and providing board directors and committee members. In fact it's a network.

No EBU officer, employee or volunteer sets out to be unfriendly to clubs, but there is, IMHO, a subconscious culture that the EBU is there to dominate rather than to serve. I suggest that their survival will partially depend on cultivating approval and therefor support among their stakeholders, particularly affiliated clubs.

Here's a volunteer network celebrating its achievements, the participants and the people who make it happen.

parkrun Vitality partners

parkrun ID:

Welcome
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One million down – here's to the next million! 🧡

Hi Nicky,

We're absolutely buzzing after delivering our one millionth event. Across the world, 464,977 people came together to celebrate this incredible moment.

Over the last 22 years, that's meant:

- Millions of friendships
- Millions of personal achievements
- Millions of reasons to get out the door on a Saturday and Sunday morning

The impact of parkrun is extraordinary. And, its future depends on support from people who believe it matters. You can help **power the next million** 🌟

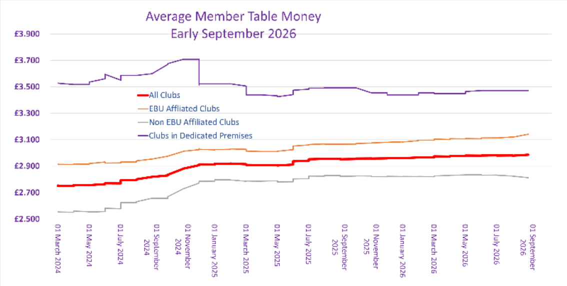
Power The Next Million

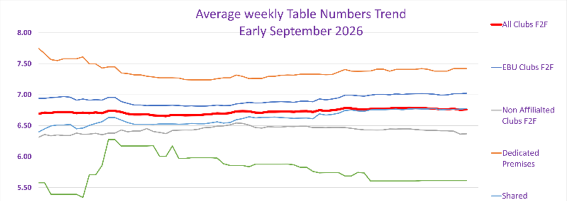
EBU Money too tight to mention

EBU reserves have shrunk to around £200K,
Deficits of £20K-£50K are predicted for current and some future years.
This can only lead to severe problems.

The EBU is resorting to raising the fee paid by clubs to try and plug the losses.

How are clubs doing?





There's more information here, typically updated once a fortnight.

BFP Club Statistics Page

For Clubs

A drop in for a club newsletter.

Keep Up With the Field!

Every bridge session can only proceed at the pace of the slowest player. All must finish the current round before the move to the next round can start. Some boards are more difficult to play and may slow everyone who plays them down. As a non-playing director, you can often watch such boards go around the room.

However, there are also players who are always last to finish. They seem to resent being asked to speed up. They don't understand it is not acceptable to hold up the whole room.

If you often play your last boards against rising noise, with the TD standing over you, you are one of these players. The noise is caused by players who have already finished, chatting while they wait for you. You are not popular with the director or other players. You won't get a lot of sympathy about the noise level.

Occasionally the director will remove a board from your table to get you caught up with the rest of the room. We don't like doing this, but sometimes its unavoidable. You should be penalised by a score adjusted downwards. Your opponents should be compensated for losing a board through no fault of their own with a score adjusted upwards. We are probably a bit lenient here as we like to keep things relaxed, but if you persist in holding up play, we'll get a bit tougher.

There are some simple habits to help you keep up, that don't lose "playing" time:

- Don't chatter at the start of the round. We are amazed how often slow players ignore the next opponents standing by the table, waiting to sit, and yet talk to each other about the last hand (not good practice at any time) and take time greeting the opponents. Just say "Sorry to keep you" and get on.

- If you are scoring, select the number of each board as the cards are being drawn from it. It avoids mistakes and saves time at the end of the auction.

- When the auction is over, if you are on lead, make your lead before entering the contract and lead. If you are dummy, wait for the lead to be turned over and then put the dummy hand on the table before entering the contract and the lead.

- Always enter the lead before the card play starts. It wastes time to find out what was led after the hand is played. If you are scoring, return your cards to the board, shuffled, before entering and agreeing the result. Don't make the director wait or ask for cards to be returned to the board to move the board.

- Advise your opponents, if moving, where they are going and encourage your opponents to move promptly. Make a note yourself if you are moving and move promptly yourself Listen for the call to move, and don't miss it because you are too busy chatting and make the director ask your table to move again.

None of this will cut into your "playing" time and will help the whole session move smoothly for everyone else.

BFP Club Newsletter Item Library

CLUBS - PLEASE GIVE A LINK OR CONTACT FOR POTENTIAL LEARNERS ON YOUR WEBSITE

Over 60% of club website home pages make NO reference to lessons or teaching.

Your club may not teach, or have any intention to teach, but you could put a referral to a local teacher on your home page. If there is no local option you could put a link to your county page, the EBU teacher directory, or to the information on learning on the Bridge For Pleasure website.

There are about 1,000 duplicate club websites, please make sure yours has information on how to learn bridge. If we all did that there would be 600 new sites on the net with information for potential learners. At no cost!

For Teachers

Getting Learners Ready to join an existing class

The amazing No Fear Bridge service includes a free area where learners can follow lessons, quizzes and practice to learn minibridge.

Do you get queries from beginners just after the course has started?

Do you prefer learners to know basic card play and hand evaluation and contract selection before they join your course?

Do you wish to check the commitment of students before they join your class?

Point them to this site, offer to help with problems, ask them to self certificate.

https://www.nofearbridge.co.uk/minibridge/

Feedback

I really like to hear your views on what's going on, and what's covered here.

From the July 2025 issue focusing on teaching, I had some positive generally supportive comments. The subscribed list grew a little.

There was comment on the variety of systems taught. Some years ago English Bridge published two articles on facing pages. One was in support of five-card major systems, and one against. It might be time to repeat this, with side orders of two over one.

Personally I play a strong one club system (I wouldn't dream of teaching it). Rare, but not entirely unique. I enjoy the bafflement of younger opponents and the nostalgia of older ones.

New contributors

If you would like to contribute an item, please send it.
Please make it no more than 200 words.
Please make it positive, and supporting the goal of keeping grass roots bridge alive.
That will keep elite bridge going.

Click here to view previous newsletters

Your Feedback

You can provide likes, dislikes and comments on the content of the Bridge For Pleasure website by registering on it.

Click on this link to send an email to register:
bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com

To quote the wonderful "Sorry Partner", BE NICE, or we'll call the director.

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