

LETTER TO SUMMERTOWN B.C.

Dear All,

In April, I wrote optimistically, that I hoped it would not be long before I saw you all again but that was 4 months ago! It's wonderful that Summertown is now on BBO on Mondays and, if you haven't yet tried this I do recommend you give it a go.

I have loved reading all the very different reports from members and Steph's recent account of learning bridge reminded me of my first Bridge course at an adult education class where I was then living, in a Nottinghamshire village.

This doesn't end in my finding a husband as I already had one of those but it was the beginning of years of fun and anguish at the bridge table.

Our teachers were a mature married couple called Frances and Charles. Frances got all her was's and were's muddled up, was the queen of double negatives and hadn't heard of the letter "h". She also bullied Charles mercilessly:

"You didn't ought to ave given em suit ands; they're aving enough trouble with notrumps!"

"Olly, you was in 3 Notrumps wasn't you! Dick ere was in 4 arts going 2 orff."

Unfortunately, my allocated partner was called Hilary so we were Ilary and Olly and we was always in some sort of muddle.

The teaching was hilarious but confusing, and afterwards, we all fell into the nearby pub hootin with laughter, much to the interest of the locals, who wanted to share the joke. However, we were very loyal and told them all that the Bridge classes were wonderful and huge fun and they all decided that they would sign up the following year.

Term 3 proved too much for me: jump shifts, forcing and non forcing bids, highly invitational, sign offs and I had to keep running outside to get fresh air. By half term I learned that I was expecting my first baby and no longer felt like a pint of post bridge bitter shandy in the pub.

When the locals found out why I was missing they all said:

“Ooh, don’t go to those bridge classes, look what’s happened to Olly!”

Last time I wrote about delivering Bridge hands to my local pupils and since then, Joan Bennett, Kathy Talbot and I have been organising online junior bridge competitions on the third Sunday of the month.

Some of them are old hands at using BBO, but for others the May event was their first experience of an online competition and armed with some highly original Usernames and grim determination, they duly logged on, as instructed, by 1.45pm in time for a 2.00pm start – well about half of them did, meanwhile my mobile phone and inbox were awash with anxious messages:-

“BBO won’t accept my Username”, I can’t remember my password” “Is it too late to enter?” “My partner’s pulled out!” “are passwords case sensitive? Do you know if I’m an EBU member? “I can’t find my ipad....”

The TDs managed, miraculously to solve most of these crises (bar the lost Reading ipad) and play duly started on time and proceeded, without further dramas.

On 16th August, the 4th such competition will take place with juniors competing from London, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, the Isle of Wight and now their holiday venues, as far away as the U.SA!

Very best wishes to you all and repeated hopes that we will soon meet again in person.

Holly