

## SBC bulletin (no. 23) – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

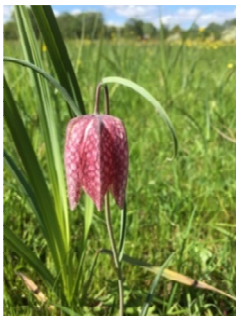
I can hardly believe it's more than five months since we last played face-to-face bridge.

Christopher & I have been pottering along peacefully in lockdown. Christopher, apart from gardening, has been reorganising holidays which we had booked for this year and planning others for next year. Meanwhile his hair and beard grew more and more unkempt.



Finally, in early July we asked Paul Stevenson to come and tackle the undergrowth! Here are the before and after photos.

I, who usually lead quite a busy social life, meeting friends for coffees, lunch etc., felt – like most of you, I suspect - that the rug had been pulled away from under me. So I took advantage of the fact that one could go for daily walks and went out onto Iffley Meadow, behind our house. In April the snakeshead fritillaries (see below) were flowering. I've observed a number of interesting birds and flowers there over the months, and watched baby swallows being fed in



their nests under a nearby road bridge, and young grey wagtails being fed nearby.

I've watched the goslings grow from balls of fluff until they are almost indistinguishable from their parents. Now that things are opening up again, I've been able to go out on Otmoor for lovely early morning walks. A few weeks ago I saw a sweet little tufted duckling riding on its mother's back.

Following on from the recent bulletins, I thought I'd tell you how we came to play bridge. Christopher went to a Quaker school, where gambling and all forms of card playing (even patience) were banned. However, rather strangely the headmaster gave bridge lessons to older pupils. Presumably the logic was that bridge was a cerebral game. Thus Christopher came to learn bridge, and in due course enthused his mother and sister sufficiently that they also learned. Indeed his sister (a member of Wallingford BC) now plays in the SBC online games!

After leaving school Christopher played rubber bridge occasionally with three friends. He & I met (51 years ago) through dinghy sailing, but after we got married I showed some interest in the card games he played with his friends and used to watch them. One evening one of the other three failed to turn up. Despite never having had a lesson or read a bridge book, I was

roped in and instructed what to do with my cards, and then became one of the four – the original fourth never did appear again! It was not an easy start to card playing, being continually told by three chaps what I should do and what I'd done wrong. However, we continued in this way for nearly twenty years until 1992 when Christopher spotted an advertisement in the local paper by the newly formed Summertown Bridge Club! We subsequently took informal lessons from Olivia Woo's sister, Sheila Zinkin, who used to be a member of Oxford BC.

Back to 2020: it took me a while to start playing **online bridge**, but now I've become quite enthusiastic – on the basis that it's not as good as face-to-face but it's the best option in the current 'climate'.

These are my tips to help you when playing online.

1. I made many misbids to start with. Then I found that I could set my BBO account up so that I had to confirm each bid. (Log in, click on account, settings, confirm bids). Since then I haven't (so far!) made any unintentional bids.
2. If, when playing or defending a hand, you want to review the bidding, click on the box which says, e.g., 3NT by S, and the bidding sequence will appear. Click in the same place to make the sequence disappear.
3. If you or the opposition have self-alerted and explained a bid, that box sometimes stays on the screen obscuring the cards. If you click at the top of the explanation box it will disappear.

Here is a photo of the SBC trophies, newly engraved (thank you to Sara for arranging this), which would have been handed out at the AGM. If Diane, Linda E, Peter F, Alison, Sandra or Krys would like to claim their trophies, do let me know!

