



In this Edition

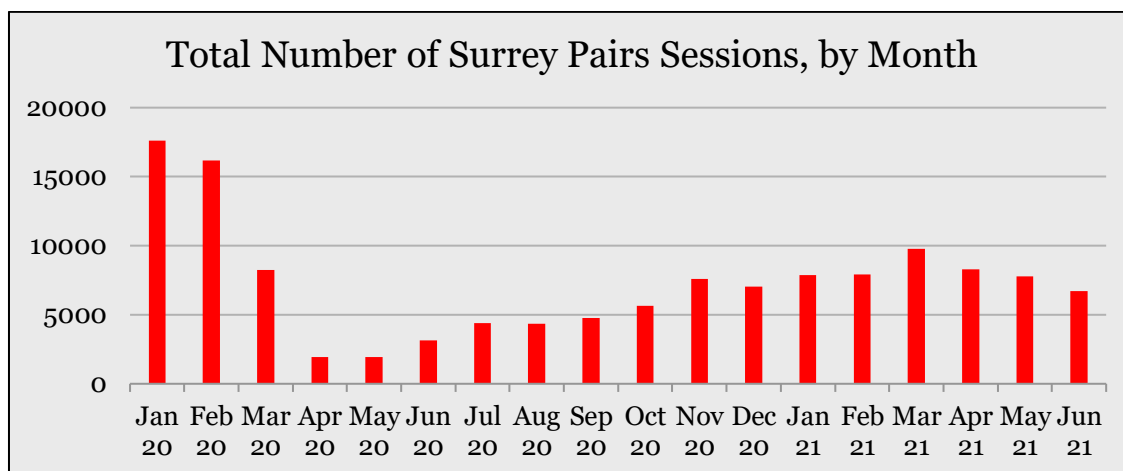
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Introduction

[Tim Warren](#)

Welcome to our latest newsletter, with a mix of serious and humorous articles, news and our latest double dummy puzzle. We’re always keen to hear from you with content ideas – if you’d like to write up a hand, maybe share an amusing/painful disaster, as some members have already done (see below), please do let us know.

At our AGM earlier this month (held via Zoom, of course), we showed this picture, which gives the number of EBU pairs sessions played at Surrey clubs over the last 18 months:



Prior to the pandemic, the run-rate was around 17,000 each month; by April 2021 it was back up to about 10,000 (the real April number will have been rather higher, as some clubs’ sessions haven’t been counted by the EBU). Numbers fell as restrictions started to be lifted and (sort of) better weather arrived, but until then it was clear that new players were continuing to join us in online bridge.

After the formal AGM, we had a lively discussion about the implications of the resumption of face-to-face bridge. We’re planning to work with the EBU to attract new players, but in the meantime some face-to-face bridge clubs may struggle to get sufficient tables to break even. If we can help in any way, please get in touch.

For county events, online bridge is not only cheaper, it means much less financial risk since it doesn’t involve large fixed expenditure in hiring a large hall, tables, caterers, etc. Online is likely to be our norm for the future, but we’re aiming to test the waters with a hybrid event, where some are playing online and some face-to-face.

You can see a brief statement of our [overall future direction on our website](#). If you have any comments, we’d love to hear from you.

Results



- Richmond BC who won **Mary Edwards**
- Mayfield BC for winning the **Wanborough Cup**

Forthcoming Surrey Events

Surrey League and Lady Rose – entries by 20 August due to early start

Last year's experiment of offering **free entry** to our Surrey Teams League and Lady Rose Team knock out competitions has been a great success. Coupled with the popularity of playing matches online, we were delighted to experience a near doubling of the number of entries in divisions 2 to 4 of the Teams League over the previous year.

To help continue this growth, we will be offering free entry once again and anticipate many matches to continue to be played online. To cope with this growth in numbers, an extra division will be added to the Teams League to create a more uniform standard within each division and a more consistently competitive and enjoyable experience for the entrants.

Depending on the numbers, we may expand the size of each division and ask for up to eight matches to be played at a rate of one per month starting in September, before a final for each division at the end of the season in May or June to determine the overall winners.

The structure for the Teams Leagues divisions will be as outlined below: *(NGS ranges are indicative only and are to help players identify the appropriate division)*

- **Surrey League:** Master points awarded for each match won
- **Division 5:** Intended for players with NGS rankings up to 6 and social players. Typically four or five matches are played between September and April. EBU membership is not required.
- **Division 4:** Intended for players with NGS rankings of 7 or 8
- **Division 3:** Intended for players with NGS rankings of 9 or 10
- **Division 2:** Intended for players with NGS rankings of J or Q
- **Division 1:** Intended for the top eight teams in Surrey, comprised of players with the highest NGS rankings. Blue points are awarded for each match won. Entry is usually via promotion from Division 2.
- **Novice League:** For players having lessons or just starting out. Typically three or four matches played from November to April. EBU membership is not required.
- **Lady Rose Cup and Plate:** These are knockout competitions. Green points awarded for each match won in the Cup. Teams knocked out in the first two rounds will be eligible to play in the Plate. We encourage and welcome teams of any ability to enter.

Note these events will start in September this year and the deadline for entries is 20 August.

More details can be obtained from our [website](#) or by contacting: leagueorganiser.scba@bridgewebs.com or ladyroseorganiser.scba@bridgewebs.com

We do not charge for these competitions and we encourage players of all abilities, so there is no reason why you should not give them a try. But remember, we are starting earlier this year.

Goodbye and Hello

We would like to thank Roger Routledge for managing the Surrey League for the last several years and welcome David Burch who will be taking over that role. David's first job was to conduct a poll of teams that have recently played in the League for suggested improvements. Many of the suggestions he received have been incorporated in the plans described above.

Online Play

We have been asked to provide more guidance on online play and have developed some rules and guidance that can be found [here](#).

Green point Swiss Pairs and Swiss Teams

Bookings are now open for:

- the **Green Pointed Swiss Pairs** on 25 September
- the **Green Pointed Swiss Teams** on 26 September

Both events will be held on RealBridge, as there is too much uncertainty surrounding lockdown easing.

This year, bookings can be made using credit or debit cards, which makes entry even easier.

For those who don't know what 'Swiss' events are, please read the article below, which explains why such events are appropriate for a wide range of abilities. So, there is no reason why you shouldn't participate!

What on Earth are 'Swiss Pairs'?

Shirley Pritchard

Most bridge players rapidly learn that we love our jargon, acronyms, abbreviations and bizarre language. That is a shame as, for those new to bridge, some fantastic concepts may be masked by seemingly obscure jargon.



Swiss Pairs are one such fantastic concept – they allow world class players and beginners to play in the same competition without frustrating or scaring each other.

So, how do they do that? In simple terms, after the first round, the first and second ranking pair play against each other. At the same time, the bottom and near-bottom pair play against each other. Similar opponent matching happens for the people in between. This pattern of recalibration continues after each round. The good news is that brainiacs and novices usually don't meet more than once.

Surrey holds various Swiss Pairs events during the year. Beginners should not be deterred from entering these competitions for fear of playing against opponents with fancy conventions.

Bridge in the Bush (Thanks to the Pandemic)

Anton Mauve

Editor's note: We asked Anton to share his story as it is a unique experience of bridge from a nickel mine in Zambia. The narration demonstrates the comfort and salvation that bridge has given so many of us, especially during lockdown.

I arrived at the Zambian mine in late October 2019, expecting to spend a month or two setting up a strong management team and correcting a few technical issues. As I write, some 20 months later, I am *still* at the site with a seemingly permanent 'home' in the mine camp.

By around January 2020 I resigned myself to the fact that my weekly bridge 'fix' would have to be placed on the back burner, as there was no chance of joining a suitable bridge club near Lusaka. Announcements in early March further reinforced the fact that it would be many months until I would see baize again. To my surprise, a little while later, due to rapidly intensifying restrictions in the UK, face-to-face bridge came to a halt and the world of 'virtual baize' took off. I found myself at the virtual table with my partner every evening, playing in much bigger fields than my club sessions ever allowed. As the BBO and RealBridge opportunities increased, so did the online county and national events. An absolute feast of e-based bridge and the perfect antidote to the

daily challenges of the mine operations. I suspect my bridge-addiction has amplified, but remain hugely thankful for the chance to keep playing while remotely confined.

Playing from a remote location has offered challenges I never thought I would experience. Often I need to be outside to get internet reception, and have had many late nights (Zambia is 1-2 hours behind UK time). I have sat under a tree surrounded by the shriek of owls and the cries of bush-babies, with a blanket over my shoulders, contemplating a (non-political) coup. One Saturday afternoon, during a fairly common power outage, I had to run 5km in a tropical downpour to the next nearest location that could offer internet. (Despite this, my partner was not as impressed with my commitment as I thought he should be!) I have been able to play bridge overlooking Kariba Dam or the Zambezi River (on my odd weekend off); while virtually travelling throughout the UK's congress circuit. Online play has definitely made the world of bridge a smaller place, as well as offering access to competitions many of us would have found too challenging to join in the past.

In the time I have been enjoying evening and weekend online events I have noticed much improvement. All the platforms have become easier to use and more reliable, and the offerings cater for virtually any circumstance (ie partner or no partner, 30 mins or two hours). One of my favourites is 'Lockdown League' - super fun, very quick and, for an online experience, unbelievably friendly.

I suspect that bridge as we know it has changed and I am absolutely for the online scene. However, as soon as I am back, at the first opportunity, I will back at the real table!

Are you a member of SCBA living outside Surrey? If so, please do get in touch with your own experience.

Prize Double Dummy Puzzle #11

[John Manches](#)

March's challenge was a Double Dummy puzzle at the easier end of the spectrum. It saw a record number of entries, so thank you to all who responded (it's nice to hear from you whether you get it right or not).

This month's puzzle sees a change from Double Dummy. It was first published by Krysztos Martens in the Polish Bridge magazine Prseglad Brydzowyn nearly 30 years ago, and whilst the solution is surprisingly simple it has perplexed many. I rate it fiendish – a challenge to Surrey's finest.

♠ A K Q J	♠ 10	West to make 7NT against any distribution and defence. Lead = ♠3
♥ A 8	♥ K J 10 9	
♦ A 8 7	♦ K Q 10 9	
♣ A 8 7 6	♣ K Q 10 9	

Please send your answers to me at Johnmanches74@gmail.com. The deadline is 14 August. Names of all those with a clear, full, correct-first-time solution will be put into Tim's Morris hat and the winner selected randomly. The prize, which is open to all Surrey members, will be free entry to one of our county competitions for the winner and partner of choice.

Confessions Corner

Robert Michelmor

Editor's note: here's a confession with a happy ending for the author ☺

A lucky disaster

On the first hand of an EBU pairs event on BBO I picked up this rock-crusher:

Partner	Me
♠ A K J 10 8 5	6
♥ J	A K Q 10 7 5 4 3
♦ Q 5	9 4
♣ J 10 4 2	A K

1 ♠	(3 ♦)	3 ♥	(4 ♦)
4 ♠	(P)	5NT	(P)
7 ♠	all pass		

To my surprise, partner opened 1♠. Our pesky opponents got in the way, but I rolled out Blackwood, intending to bid a heart slam if we had enough aces and kings. Imagine my horror when I mis-clicked 5NT instead of 4NT. To partner, this was a grand-slam force and, holding both top spades, he dutifully bid it.

Luckily, the defence also assumed I had diamonds sewn up and decided not to lead them, choosing a heart instead. Partner ran this round to his Jack, cashed the ♠ AK, and was delighted to see the ♠ Qx drop, so he could draw trumps and claim. Why didn't he win the lead in dummy and take the (losing) finesse in trumps? I've no idea, and nor does he – he claims he was rattled.

Not surprisingly, no other pair was foolish enough to bid the grand slam, so my mis-click led us to an outright top. We did of course apologise to our poor opponents for our outrageous luck.

Teachers' Top Tips

Douglas Wright

The SCBA website has a '[Learning & Improving](#)' section, where learners and improvers will find information about clubs that teach bridge, as well as gentle sessions and supervised play for less experienced players. There is also information about local teachers, a notice board and some useful 'Teachers' Top Tips' with advice from teachers.

The Learning Programme will develop your future club players so please encourage your friends, relatives and neighbours to try this wonderful game by attending an online or a face-to-face taster session, such as the one offered for free by [3 Counties Bridge](#):

Please give your friends, relatives and neighbours a

PRESENT

of a

BRIDGE TASTER SESSION

which can be taken anytime in the YEAR 2021/2022

Either Register them or ask them to Register

[Beginner Taster](#)

[Improver Taster](#)

You / they will receive an email confirming their present.

Douglas invites all Clubs to put a link to the Taster Sessions on their websites, so that we can work together to develop your new members. Douglas will assist you in having suitable Supervised Play Sessions and Gentle Duplicate Sessions so that the new players can easily join your Duplicate sessions.

For more information contact Douglas on douglaswright@3countiesbridge.com or visit www.3countiesbridge.com

Bridge is a Very Unfair Game

Tony Richards

The title of this piece is the last sentence of S J Simon's 'Design For Bidding'. An acceptance of how true it is, means that you don't crow over the lucky triumphs that come your way, but are able to keep your composure when unlucky disasters befall.

I was North on the following hand from an EBU Lockdown League match:

	♠ 9852 ♥ Q73 ♦ AQ4 ♣ T98		Dealer West, E/W game The bidding, with N/S silent was: Pass 2C (ACOL) 5C 6C end
♠ - ♥ 42 ♦ KJT95 ♣ J76432		♠ AK7643 ♥ A95 ♦ 3 ♣ AKQ	
	♠ QJT ♥ KJT86 ♦ 8762 ♣ 5		

Partner led a spade. Declarer discarded the losing heart from dummy; gave up a diamond trick; set up the diamonds via a ruffing finesse, drew trumps and made the rest, scoring 1,370. All we could do was say “well done opps” and pass on to the next board, rather mystified at the bidding.

Our teammates didn’t have the flair to match this result, and their auction was:

Pass 2C
 2D 2S

end; contract just making for 110.

After the match ended our captain forwarded an email from East explaining very apologetically that his partner had thought 2C was an *overcall* and that 5C was a pre-emptive raise. This certainly de-mystified the bidding.

Given the misunderstanding, it is quite a rational sequence and not without amusing aspects, despite the 15 IMPs loss. The only silver lining was that East congratulated us on our attitude to being “royally screwed” and said he had learned a lesson in behaviour at the bridge table.

Yes, bridge *can* be a very unfair game!

Youth Bridge Update

[June Middleton](#)

Schools’ bridge

Most schools have been unable to play during the lockdowns of the past months, but I am hopeful that school clubs will be able to get up and running again in September. We are going to struggle to make up lost ground, having lost 18 months of junior bridge. If you would like to help me overcome the challenge of getting this going again, please get in touch by clicking [here](#).

Joan Bennett, who has been very active in Junior bridge in Oxfordshire, has joined English Bridge Education & Development (EBED) as the Youth Coordinator working one day a week on a voluntary basis. Joan is trying to get a couple of online leagues going for schools from September; one aimed at the more experienced player and the other at those just starting - no experience needed! If you have a school team interested in taking part please contact Joan on joan@ebedcio.org.uk

The South East Counties Junior Bridge Camp

Although normally held in early July, this year the camp will be held over the weekend of 23-24 October at Bowles Rocks Centre, Tunbridge Wells. Please click [here](#) for full information on the event and how to sign up.

Junior duplicate

Young Chelsea are running a weekly duplicate exclusively for junior players — more than 150 are signed up. Under-26s from across the country and beyond are able to play via RealBridge on Friday evenings at 7.30pm free of charge. Each session is scored using cross-IMPs, with EBU Masterpoints awarded to the leading pairs.

These duplicates are being organised by **William Clennell**, President of Cambridge University Bridge Club and member of SCBA. For further information, contact William at wjc41@cam.ac.uk.

With an end to seemingly endless lockdowns finally within touching distance, players and clubs alike are starting to think about how the return to face-to-face bridge will work for them, and the future of online bridge.

The arguments in favour of online bridge continue to build. For players, it's undoubtedly more convenient. For volunteers and directors, it's even more so, with no tables to move, no movements to work out and no revokes and leads out of turn, and it has made us all appreciate how much went unnoticed behind the scenes. In these turbulent times, online bridge is safer and more accessible, and new, previously impossible, events have flourished.

Despite all of this, it's my firm belief that face-to-face bridge has a critical role to play in the future, not least for players now but also for the sustainability of the game. On BBO, one gets used to seeing four usernames on a screen, with little interaction beyond a short hello at the start and a good luck message at the end. Even on RealBridge, it's just impossible to get that feeling of being together as you do in a physical space. You can't smile and wave at those on a neighbouring table, begin a conversation in the kitchen or crowd around the scores as they come in. The greatest memories from bridge come from that sense of community that many of us want to revive.

There are also fundamental differences between face-to-face and online bridge. Of course, the mechanics are the same – an auction and play, 13 tricks and a contract made or lost. But, bridge is not purely mechanical, far from it. Some of you may be familiar with Victor Mollo's series on the Hideous Hog (the first book in a wonderfully comedic series is available for free [here](#)). In it, he describes the 'fourth dimension', a concept to describe the human side to our game. Online, an opponent's hesitation is often nothing more than a technical issue, but in-person it's a signal that you can legally use to determine your play. Playing in tempo is a part of our game, as is avoiding a nervous tell or dropping the wrong card onto the cloth. In Swiss events, there is a psychology to being at the front of the room on top table, or perhaps making the journey from the 'lower' to the 'upper' room. Equally, as in other sports, the venue can make all the difference, whether it be a cosy club environment, idyllic Oxshott or the more serious feel of the Spectrum.

Whether you share my enthusiasm for face-to-face or would rather embrace our new virtual world, or even a mixture of both, SBCA looks forward to playing with you in future.

Club news

Caterham Bridge Club

Bridge, walk and picnic

All are welcome to join members of Caterham Bridge Club for a fun day.

Date: Friday 6 August (subject to government advice)

Venue: The Brickmakers, Tandridge Lane

Cost: £17.00 including full English breakfast or £12.00 without breakfast

Details:

- **9.00am:** Breakfast at the Brickmakers
- **10.00am:** Pairs session
- **1.00pm (approx):** Lunch in the pub garden – you can bring your own picnic lunch, but please purchase drinks from the Brickmakers. If you prefer, you can also buy lunch from the pub. Click [here](#) for a sample menu.
- **2.00 pm:** Walk for all those interested. This will be a gentle walk of about 3.5 miles, which we expect to take around two hours. We will organise car sharing where possible.

Future dates being planned at different locations are: **13 August, 3 September and 17 September.**

For more details and to sign up for the bridge, picnic and walk event, please click [here](#).

Hand of the day videos

Tony Cherrett has been busy, producing a series of short and informative 'hand of the day' videos, based on interesting hands played at Caterham Bridge Club.

Headings include: dummy reversal, restricted choice, punishing the opposition, practical bidding, a well bid slam, as well as many more. These can all be watched on YouTube by clicking [here](#).

National Inter-Club Knock Out (NICKO)

This year Surrey teams have done well in the NICKO, with three in the last 16 of the competition. Farnham A (James Bond, Graham Davidson, Tim Green and Gabriel Hearst) have now reached the quarter-finals, Selsdon A lost their match and Mayfield A have yet to play. Please click [here](#) for the current position. (In the 2019-20 competition there was no Surrey team in the last 32).

Next Newsletter (and our Library)

Please [email](#) us news, views, interesting hands, and what is happening at your club. Similarly, please let us have any comments on any of this newsletter or, for any other bridge matter, please contact the Committee via the links on the website.

Previous editions of our Newsletter are available on our website – please click [here](#). These are available to all, not just members of SCBA.

Wishing you all a happy and sunny summer from SCBA.