

Worcestershire Bridge News

December 2019

There is a lot to say as Christmas approaches and so apologies for running to more than a page in this edition! Of course, as our thoughts turn towards Christmas, bridge takes a bit of a back seat for many of us but the New Year will soon be upon us and, no doubt, we'll all be making some resolutions. We are now getting new players coming into the game and some others returning to it. The main thing they're looking for is a welcoming environment and so one of our New Year Resolutions is to re-adopt the recommendations made by Andrew Robson in an article he wrote three or four years back. These recommendations are even truer now than they were then – in order for the game to continue to thrive we must go beyond simply behaving courteously at the bridge table. We must go out of our way to ensure that the other three players at the table enjoy their game. And if another of your resolutions is to expand your horizons and play more, there are a few opportunities to do so highlighted below.....

A Very Happy Christmas and Enjoyable New Bridge Year to all our readers!

Malvern Bridge Congress

Once again the Congress attracted players from across the UK. It's in a nice location and is friendly and relaxed, so no wonder! Having said that it's relaxed, the standard was quite high with at least one former European Champion amongst the competitors. What was particularly encouraging was the takeup of the No-Fear Pairs and Newcomers Teams on the Saturday of the Congress. Seeing those players coming into the competitive game at an early stage of their bridge careers demonstrates that the Congress is a sociable and accessible event to be enjoyed by all, not just the ultra-competitive few. Make a note in your diaries for next year – 31st October and 1st November.



Players at the Congress

Clubs Celebrating

It's always pleasing to hear of clubs celebrating success and this year three of our clubs have done so. Bredon Bridge Club reached its twenty-first anniversary this year and marked the occasion by awarding Life Presidency to Jenny Steel in recognition of her role in both establishing and developing the club over the years. In a similar vein, Pershore Bridge Club awarded Life Membership to Alan Boyes in recognition of his contribution in founding the club, driving it forward over almost twenty years and in organising Pershore's teaching programme, details of which are signposted



Alan Boyes



Jenny Steel

below We look forward to Pershore's forthcoming twenty-first anniversary! Last, but by no means least, we had Worcester Bridge Club celebrating its thirtieth anniversary. This is perhaps particularly noteworthy because the club added an afternoon session to its existing programme and this has now grown to an average of some nine tables, which demonstrates the considerable enthusiasm for the game and demand to play it at varying times and in differing formats.



Worcester BC's Cake!

Events

In addition to the Malvern Congress in October, the first heat of the Inter-Club Teams was held in November. Once again this competition is proving popular with one club moving up from the Simple Systems Division to the Open Division. The second heat will be held in mid-January and we look forward to seeing how the teams are progressing. Players will also have an opportunity to represent their clubs in the Club Representatives Pairs which will be held in Ombersley on 2nd February. In the following month, March, the County Championship Pairs will also be held in Ombersley. For this event, players do not have to be selected by their clubs and all County members are welcome to enter. Both events have a social as well as competitive aspect and include an excellent lunch!

Outside the County, the 70th Midland Counties Congress will be held in Solihull from 3rd to 5th January. In addition to the main Pairs and Teams events on the Saturday and Sunday, there is a variety of single session events on the Friday afternoon and evening. So if you don't want to commit to a whole day (or two whole days!) why not take part in one of the Friday sessions. Details can be found at <https://www.bridgewebs.com/midlandcc/>

Bridge Courses

In our previous edition we made reference to forthcoming bridge courses being run across the County early in the New Year for both beginners and improvers. Details of these, which includes those being run in the Stourbridge, Bewdley and Bromsgrove areas as well as the one to be run by Pershore Bridge Club to which reference is made above, can be found on the "Learning Bridge" page of the WCBA website (<https://tinyurl.com/woy3cjr>). The continuing entry of new players is essential in helping our clubs to thrive and so, if you know of anyone wanting to learn to play the game, we would be grateful if you would direct them to this page.

In addition to those learning the game, there is a growing group of players who play together in supervised sessions at different clubs across the County. Details can be obtained from the County's Education Officer, Mike Vetch (mike1958v@mail.com).

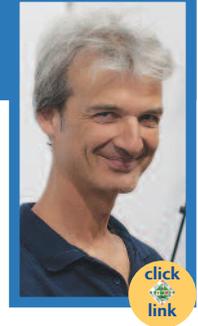
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Do Your Bit for Bridge



Andrew Robson reminds us of the need for good behaviour at the bridge table

We thank Andrew Robson and *The Times* for kind permission to reprint these articles. Andrew's *Times* articles are available online at www.thetimes.co.uk

WHY are fewer and fewer playing in many duplicate bridge clubs – whilst the game is growing in popularity at a social level?

Online bridge is undoubtedly taking people away, but the fact that friendly, welcoming duplicate clubs are all thriving points to a different reason. I fear that a few regular duplicate players put newer players off by their rude, officious, critical, even intimidating behaviour. The chasm of difference from the encouraging classroom is too much for many. They quickly back off and play with their friends. Lost to duplicate bridge. Forever.

I'm far from alone in thinking this. Fellow bridge teacher Harold Schogger has asked me to tackle this subject and so over three days I will devote my *Times* column to education and reform.

Experienced duplicate players should be welcoming new players to the club, not frightening them away. At my club I operate a zero tolerance rule: no bad behaviour of any sort is allowed. Ever. You

The EBU Guide to Good Behaviour at Bridge

- Greet others in a friendly manner prior to start of play on each round.
- Be a good 'host' or 'guest' at the table.
- Make your convention card readily available to your opponents and fill it out completely.
- Make bridge enjoyable for yourself, partner and opponents.
- Give credit when opponents make a good bid or play.
- Take care of your personal grooming.
- Ensure that your mobile phone is turned off.
- Enjoy the company as well as the game.

Please call the director if you think you may have been affected by bad behaviour. You will be helping others as well as yourselves.

should greet your opponents with a cheery hello, smile a lot and thank them when you finish the round. I know I'm largely preaching to the converted. But it

only takes one bad experience to put a new player off for life.

Ethics Quiz

Now here's a quiz. Which of these is allowed and which is not allowed:

- A. To open 1NT (ostensibly 12-14) when holding 11 points?
- B. To bid after your partner has hesitated?
- C. To hesitate when you have a singleton?

A. Perfectly allowed. If you decide that your 11 looks like 12, open 1NT. If your opponents tell you that you're cheating, they're completely wrong and totally missing the point. High-card points are only a guide to bidding, no more.

B. Allowed, but only if you were going to bid anyway. If the opponents believe you have bid based on partner's pause rather than your hand, they are entitled to call the director. However (a) they should give new players lots of leeway here and (b) if they do feel the director should be called, they should do so politely and gently.

Don't shout 'DIRECTOR!' Say to the opponents: 'Would you mind awfully if I asked the director to come over?' before

putting up your hand and saying calmly 'Director, please.' He will then decide whether the bid was acceptable.

C. Not allowed. Cheating. You can never pause with the deliberate intention of misleading; only pause when you genuinely have something to think about. If you find that you've paused inadvertently (easily done in a distracted moment), say 'Sorry, I had nothing to think about.'

Behave as Though You're Hosting a Tea Party

'DIRECTOR!' If you've played at a 'scary' duplicate club, you'll know that cry. There's no 'please'. There's no consultation with the other players before the shout. No wonder new players look to play elsewhere; no wonder the club is losing membership.

Harold Schogger thinks that it is the new player who should be calling the director, not the die-hard: to complain about his high-handed, rude and intimidating behaviour. Harold's right.

Harold reports incidents of the die-hard trying to claim back two

tricks on a revoke at trick twelve (you can't revoke after trick eleven). Or claiming you've cheated if you've downgraded a 15-point hand and opened a 12-14 1NT. You haven't.

I'm pretty hopeless at the Laws. Penalties for leading out of turn, revoking etc. can all get quite technical. So get the director over – in a nice way. That's what he's there for (as well as moving the boards.).

I will say one thing though: if a player inadvertently drops two cards on the table (or similar unintended minor infraction), think twice before you shout 'EXPOSED CARD – DIRECTOR!' You're perfectly within your rights to say: 'Oh dear, I'm so sorry, perhaps we should get the director over.' But I know what I (and a few other top players such as Zia Mahmood) do in such a situation. 'Oh, pick it up.'

I go back to my primary message. Behave to your partner and opponents as though you're hosting a tea party. Then duplicate bridge will start to thrive again – it's such a fabulous game. □

YOUNG CHAMPIONS

THE Under-19 Pairs Championship was held at the Easter Festival in London, and was won by Isaac Channon, aged 15, and Jasmine Bakhshi, aged 10 (pictured). Jasmine and Isaac (both London) finished on 56.12%, with Harry Madden (Derbys) and Daniel Winter (Yorks), and Jamie Muller (Surrey) and Andy Cope (Warks), tied for second on 54.08%.



Great Value EBU BLUE POINT BRIDGE HOLIDAYS for Club Players

Holidays for 2015:

1. Hellidon Lakes, Northants, 3-7 August, £299 per person (£14.99 ss)
2. Chilworth Manor, Hants, 16-20 October, £299 per person (£9.99 ss)

Blue points



A selection of mid-week holidays in various parts of England, organised by Bridge Overseas and aimed at social players looking to combine a holiday with some gently competitive bridge. Blue Points are awarded for all sessions.

Each hotel has excellent facilities, including spas, swimming pools and saunas in all hotels – plus golf, tennis and fishing in some. All venues also offer free parking.

Bookings should be made directly to Bridge Overseas via the Accommodation Booking Service on 0800 0346 246.