

CHAIRS REPORT FOR AGM JUNE 10th 2023

Welcome everyone to this, the second of our hybrid meetings. One of the reasons for doing it like this is so that not only do we hope more members will participate but also it means we are more likely to be quorate!

Before I get into my report, I have to announce that I will be stepping down as chair of the YCBA but remaining on the board, apparently as vice chair with the idea of supporting the new chair. As no one has come forward to be the chair, this means that for the first time in 60 odd years the YCBA will be without one. The board will continue to operate though and I am delighted to announce a new member, Ruth Kerr.

During my time we have probably seen the greatest shift in the nature of bridge, due to the pandemic, since the introduction of universal membership. The sea change that this has caused with the proliferation of on-line bridge has meant that all organisations have had to adapt quickly to the change. That process is still in development and changes in the way, that we as a county run events, will have to be looked at. The plethora of cups and competitions we used to have face to face has dwindled and indeed may lead to the scrapping of them unless alternatives can be found. This is inevitable as we try to accommodate both camps.

As you know, the board is a voluntary organisation, just as your clubs are run by volunteers but replacements are needed. Our treasurer plans to step down, so we will be on the look out to replace her as well. There is a proposal which the board have to discuss of looking at how long officers and board members should remain in post, that is to have a fixed term of office. This is of course dependent upon volunteers coming forward at the end of peoples' terms. Whether it would encourage more to stand, knowing that they are only there for a fixed term is of course open to debate. Board meetings and committee meetings are now all held online so the necessity of travel to Garforth for the meetings of old is negated.

Those that work on the board or have been co-opted onto committees have worked hard over the past couple of years and whilst it is traditional to give my thanks at the end, I shall do so now.

First is Jim Edwards, not only for posting things on the website when we send them to him but also for his TD exploits and assistance with teaching via his bridgeplay platform.

Phil Godfrey, who has stepped down from his role of vice chair but whose input I valued tremendously over the years, both as a colleague and a friend, and of course for his TD exploits.

Stuart Davies, who may well have relinquished some of his role but continues to be our main recipient for competitions and congresses and is a great source of information as well as his TD exploits.

Mike Jackson for the amount of work he has put into the running of both the face to face and online leagues and with a new responsibility of running the Waddington shield and Yorkshire Trophy.

As for the board itself, the work they do from everything to looking at the constitution and competition rules: taking minutes: running, organising and taking entries for competitions: balancing the books: teaching initiatives: grants: the list goes on and whilst sometimes we do not get everything right or in a timely fashion, that is because we are human and have to live our lives!

My sincerest thanks go to all who are on or who have served on the board during my tenure as chair.

Now to my report:

NATIONAL UPDATE

Whilst there have been changes to the board at the EBU Ian Payn remains as chairman but Cathryn Fox is no longer the vice chair as I reported last year! Most changes come about in EBED, the educational trust, where Mark Humphris has taken over from Giorgio Provenza as CEO. They are producing new material for teaching all the time and I know that our very own David Guild has been keeping a close eye on this. Also, they are looking for teacher trainers to run courses for people wishing to start bridge teaching. There is going to be a target on junior bridge and recently they have been left a very large legacy which will support EBED for the next 10 years or so. The recent county chairs meeting looked at the structure of EBU competitions going forward, the role of the shareholder, a bridge v chess analogy and EBU/EBED working closer together. The thorny issue of balancing online/face to face always comes up and whilst there is no ideal solution many ideas abound (eg. alternating online/face to face competitions yearly).

For those interested, the yearly report from the EBU can be found on the website.

COUNTY REPORT

Thankfully my task on reporting county matters has been made a lot easier due to the fact that we now have teaching and the Yorkshire league (face to face and on-line) as separate items on the agenda. I will let David Guild and Mike Jackson update you on those very soon.

I would like to mention the fact that we are again offering grants to clubs. Hopefully all the clubs will have been notified to this effect and details of how to apply are on the website. This was a very successful scheme in the past and we hope that clubs will avail themselves of the grants this year.

The county is still in a healthy position financially, hence the ability to re-introduce the grants scheme but I will let the treasurer update you in greater detail.

One thing I would like to mention here is about the cost of running events face to face, especially in hotels. Oliver Cowan organised an excellent spring congress at Harrogate and we had a better than expected turnout for the Northern Easter festival as well. Together with the GNSP we organise these on behalf of the EBU. Not only have hotel costs risen but the price of food, as you know, has risen even more dramatically. These of course all add to the costs, together with the black/green point charges, TD costs, room hire etc. You may think that some of the events that are run within the county (not necessarily at hotels) seem expensive but in reality the cost of them has not gone up that much (indeed some have remained the same or cheaper since before the pandemic) and of course whilst they offer the social aspect of bridge face to face by their nature they will always be more expensive than online competitions. All these things we have to think about when running competitions and of course if the response is poor, we have to shut them down.

That is why I am encouraging to look at the calendar of events we have coming up over the summer.

The Affiliated teams: 22nd June at Doncaster bridge club (explain)

Castle Swiss pairs: 25th June, Huddersfield bridge club (traditional event reopened)

Waddington Cup: 9th July, York bridge club (explain)

Bridge Teacher Fundamentals: 3rd July, Halifax BC (run by Mark Humphris of EBED, details on website)

TD course: 9th, 16th, 23rd September at York BC, run by Barrie Partridge (details on website)

Notable results by county players in national events:

If I have forgotten any team/pair then that is entirely my fault and I apologise unreservedly.

Gerald Faulkner Salver (seniors comp) Robinson/Sowter/Gisborne/Davies in final (played yet?)

One day green pointed Swiss teams: Robinson/Sowter with others!

Garden Cities (county teams of 8 comp): Leeds A won regional heat, final next weekend

NBL: Yorkshire second in Divisions 1 and 2 but won the third division and the team will play in final next Sunday.

Northern Easter festival: Woolven/Jarvis/Edge/Copeland teams winners

HSC: Tom Cohen and Fiona Brown part of the team that won the teams.

Waxman/Brereton/Dixon/Pike/Robinson/Sowter competing in the Pachabo (county teams winners) as we speak

My last thanks go out to all the club officials and committees, who help keep bridge at the forefront in their community and to thank you for your support over the last year.