

Management Report by David Guild, Joint Chair of YCBA

Firstly, I would like to give heartfelt thanks to all the Board, Committee Members and other volunteers who make the YCBA such a vibrant organisation; we could not do it without your generous free assistance. So, thanks to you all.

Lesley Millet, our Treasurer, has been a long-term contributor to bridge, serving first as Club Chair and then over 15 years on our YCBA Board. This year the EBU has recognised Lesley's substantial support by presenting her with a Dimmie Fleming Award. So, congratulations Lesley on receiving this accolade.

This is perhaps a good time to mention that Lesley is not alone in being an overloaded, long served officer. We now critically need more assistance to continue to deliver key activities and we need your help in support roles. This includes both general admin support and key skills assistance in financial, marketing and IT. Please help us to spread the word

We have certainly had a less turbulent year than the EBU and EBED and we continue to make good development progress.

Looking first at our membership numbers; we are at 3,500 members, an increase of 6% over last year. This may sound a good figure but we are now at only 90% of our pre-covid level and need to increase recruitment.

Our number of player sessions is also up slightly - some two and a half per cent higher than last year -but we are still 15% lower than 2019. The EBU has fared better and is now only 5% lower than 2019. One of the reasons for this is that Yorkshire has not yet embraced online social bridge to the extent of the EBU and many other counties.

This past year, we increased the number of Board positions to eleven in post. This has been done to show our commitment to take diversity seriously. We have added two roles, one to focus on ethnic development and another specifically to champion the inclusion of women. Both roles are currently vacant and we welcome applicants.

Also, all of our Board and key committee members have attended a diversity course during this past year. If any Club Board wishes similar training, please contact me. Later in this meeting, Ron is going to make a brief statement on why diversity is important for us all.

Our clubs and members need to have a clear communications path to the Board and have a personal contact. To this aim, each member of our Board has recently met with Club Chairs, either by club visit or telephone conversations. We now have a far better understanding of our Clubs' needs and will move forward accordingly.

Part of our enquiry to Chairs has been to understand club recruitment and teaching requirements.

Of consequence, we have introduced more clubs to our free Bridgeplay.uk course and teaching platform and offered advice on using Scorebridge for more complex movements. We have also run two free Club TD courses and intend a further course in South Yorkshire this October.

One purpose of our club contacts was to gauge their appetite for shared bridge lessons, known as PiggyBack Teaching, with remote free live lectures and then clubs running their

own themed practice sessions. Club visits proved interest and our free teaching service launches this September. We will support this teaching with additional grants. More information will follow shortly after our AGM.

TOURNAMENT UPDATE by Nick Woolven , YCBA Joint Chair

Before I start on the results and successes Yorkshire pairs and teams have add, I would like to say a big thankyou on behalf of the board to our small band of TDs, namely Stuart Davies, James Carpenter and Jim Edwards who help run all our competitions whether they be national ones or local ones. Secondly, I would like to thank the venues that hold our local competitions and for the volunteers that help these competitions run smoothly.

Calendar permitting the tournament committee will look at ways of trying to implement regional 9 high events, face to face. This group represents a large percentage of our players and aside from congresses and national events there are few face to face events in this category. As a heads up for early 2025, the EBU are also thinking of inaugurating a 9 high Corwen event. The Corwen is traditionally for winners (and qualifiers) of a county's major pairs event and we hope to run a nine high event alongside the Yorkshire pairs in January. In the past we have had a five high event online, so will look at the possibility of holding either a face to face or online one again.

The YCBA also funds the entries for our county teams into National events including the Pachabo (County teams of 4 winners), Presidents Cup, Garden Cities and Tollemache and in the pairs, the Corwen. Players' costs are also subsidised if staying overnight. Setting of costs for events is always a tricky balance and we try to hold the costs of our local events each year. Obviously black/green/blue points prices change, UMS changes and also TD costs change. Catering costs have risen and if we go to a hotel, room hire prices and delegate rates have risen considerably. However, we really try to do our best with these rising costs and will continue to subsidise events where we can. Indeed, even the free event at the New Year failed to attract as many as we thought it might so perhaps cost is not everything!

Also, I am trying to compile a list of winners of Yorkshire trophies, going back as far as I can. Any help beyond 2015 (when Pianola results stop) would be greatly appreciated. Obviously, the trophies that we are keeping have the names on, but ones like the Yorkshire Cup, Waddington Cup etc do not. On that note, I would like to make a plug for the Waddington Shield (County teams of 4 KO) and the Yorkshire Trophy, which we have rebranded to a Jack High teams of 4 KO. Details of how to enter will appear soon.

Now onto the successes:

NORTHERN EASTER FESTIVAL:

Teams: Nichola Cockerill-Smith, Richard Pike, Gill Copeland, Steve Blackburn

9 High/Really Easy: Barry Copley, John Dalton

MASTERS PAIRS

Adrian Dubel, Richard Porteus

GRAND MASTER PAIRS

Frank Dixon & Paul Brereton

HARROGATE SPRING CONGRESS

9 High/Really Easy: Rachel and Stephen Smith

GREAT NORTHERN SWISS PAIRS

9 High/Really Easy: Magaret Cowe, Meg Jenkins

GARDEN CITIES

Sheffield reached the final and finished fourth

PRESIDENTS CUP (Teams of Eight)

Yorkshire were the winners

NORTHERN BRIDGE LEAGUE

A Division : Yorkshire winners

B Division: Yorkshire Winners

C Division: Yorkshire tied first but lost on split tie!

NATIONAL INTER-COUNTY LEAGUE FINALS

Yorkshire were the winners of the A Division Final and in second place in the B Division Final.

Yorkshire League Committee Chair's Report by Mike Jackson

I would like to start my report by recounting a match that I played in the Yorkshire League this season. Wetherby A V Malton A. Wetherby as the home team greeted us upon our arrival and directed us towards the tea making facility. From the start of the match the atmosphere was friendly, and the banter was jovial. This remained throughout the match which ended in a closely fought 12-8 to Wetherby. Despite losing I found that I had enjoyed the day out and it had all the values of what I think should happen in a Sunday League match: - competitiveness, friendliness and a desire of those present to enjoy themselves. It was the only match we lost all season and the only match Wetherby won, yet for an onlooker they could easily have predicted that it would have been the other way round as I felt that we were outplayed on the day. This shows the closeness of the leagues and what makes the Yorkshire League such a good event to play in. I hope all those involved in this match would agree with me that it was a match to remember. I thank Wetherby for their hospitality and think that their good, spirited attitude towards matches is not uncommon. I think that there is a general desire for the Sunday League to succeed and all who are involved in these matches help make our Sunday afternoons so pleasurable.

I would like to thank my fellow members of the YLC for all their hard work and I am grateful for all the support we receive from the match secretaries, the online match day support, the TDs, the finance team, the scorers of the butlers and all the help used to sort specific

problems from a number of players and of course the players themselves who have been keen to play.

I am pleased to see that the numbers for the Yorkshire League have been growing since the pandemic and hope that this trend continues. The numbers for the online League have understandably declined markedly since the pandemic as more players return to playing face to face, yet it still provides pleasure for over 100 players, and we will continue to run it as long as there is a demand.

This season the YLC took over the running of the Waddington Shield and tried to get the Yorkshire Trophy up and running again. Both events went smoothly without a hitch, and we will be running them again this season. The numbers for the Waddington Shield were up slightly, but numbers for the Yorkshire Trophy which is an event restricted to J high or below, were a little disappointing as only four teams entered. As a member of one of them I would like to recount my experience with the hope of drawing more teams in.

My team, representing York, managed to wobble through the first round V Halifax by 47-46. For those who are afraid of entering this event I can safely say that you shouldn't be. The match was full of errors with both teams trying to help the other side win which ended in dramatic style when on the final hand I misread my hand, opened the wrong thing and manage to escape unpunished. We then found ourselves in the final against another York team and decided to play this match face to face just before Christmas. Both teams went out of their way with the catering and the half time tea was to die for with the Highlight being Daniel Ungar's daughter's chocolate Brownies. A lot of banter was had in the lead up to the match and this continued during the match. Everybody was in festive spirit and the match was enjoyed by all. Stuart Kay's team won in style, yet I still found the whole experience as with the Wetherby match most enjoyable as the atmosphere was right and everybody involved went there with a desire to enjoy themselves.

Over the years I have played in this event a number of times before and can recommend it to all who like to play team's bridge. And for those who wish to play the best then you can do no better than trying your hand at the Waddington Shield as the best in Yorkshire represent some of the best In the country.

Going forwards, this year we will be running the face-to-face league, 2 online leagues, the Waddington Shield and the Yorkshire Trophy. Together with my fellow YLC members we will always listen to members' views and do what we think is best for running the leagues. Any question or query however big or small will always be considered.