

CLUB FOCUS

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ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of Club Focus, the new electronic EBU club newsletter!

The aim is to provide an interesting, informative and entertaining read for all players in our affiliated bridge clubs. The newsletter is very much **your** newsletter, and we would like to invite you to write in and tell us what you would like to see! We welcome all your letters, suggestions and contributions. Submissions can be anything from a short piece about your favourite Bridge Club, to an amusing anecdote, an interesting hand or a request for suggestions on how to deal with a particular issue affecting your club.

The selection of articles in this issue is not fixed, and we aim to remain flexible in the content. Initially, the newsletter will be bi-monthly, alternating with English Bridge magazine. We would like to ask each club to kindly forward the newsletter by email to those of its members with email addresses and to print out a few copies for those without email.

We hope you enjoy this first issue and we look forward to your views. Our contact details are on page four. Thank you to everyone who has helped so far.

Matt Betts
Communications Officer

Krys Kazmierczak
Club Liaison Officer

Down our club

Selsdon Bridge Club near Croydon has recently celebrated 75 years of playing! It was founded in October 1932 when a number of enthusiasts gathered together for the first time to play bridge in tea rooms above a baker's shop and it has played continuously since then, except during the war years. On 18th October 2007 the club celebrated its 75th Anniversary. It still has the minutes of the founding meeting!

56 members and guests turned out for the anniversary celebrations. The birthday cake was cut by Beryl Absalom, the club's longest standing member. She joined the club over 50 years ago and has enjoyed playing there each year.

The club has only moved four times during its long history and has recently taken up residence at the Methodist Church in Limsfield Road, Sanderstead, where it meets for a friendly game of duplicate bridge every Thursday evening. The club continues to do well in Surrey County events, winning the Affiliated Clubs teams-of-eight Championship for the second year.

One particularly interesting tournament, which may be unique among England's bridge clubs, is their annual Teams of Three Competition. Each player spends about a third of the evening playing with each team mate. The remaining third is spent playing in an individual section, where the partners 'borrow' each other to complete a team of four.



Do you want to write about your bridge club? Do you want to tell us why you play at your club? Write to us at our address on page 4.

Did you know?

... that the earliest known playing cards were in use in the 9th Century in China in a kind of game of dominoes. It is thought that the modern symbols on Mah Jong tiles evolved from the designs on those early playing cards.



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Best Limerick Competition



Every issue we will be giving away a prize for the best limerick. The prize for our first competition is a copy of the excellent book *Really Easy Mistakes*. The limerick should have a bridge theme. To make it more interesting, each competition has to include a town or city from one of the 39 English Bridge counties. For our first competition, the place included needs to be from Avon, e.g. Bath or Bristol etc.

So that we can start the ball rolling, here is a limerick we made up:

*There was a bridge
play'r from Kilkenny*

*Who didn't know his
Dodds from
McKenney*

*The wrong signal
was made*

*When he wanted a
spade*

*So the contract then
made one too many*

For those not familiar with them, Dodds and McKenney are both bridge signalling systems.

Write to us at the address on page 4 of the newsletter, if you would like to share a limerick or two.

Did you know?

... that limericks get their name from the Irish town and county of Limerick, but no one really knows why.

"After getting confused about North, South, West and... June the dummy, Terry failed to learn bridge in 2 hours".

Learning bridge better than Terry and June...

As the new communications officer at the EBU, I have to admit that I knew very little about bridge. I immediately realised that this was going to be an interesting learning curve and one that would last a life-time. Challenges are extremely alluring, and I wanted to know more. Here is my story of how I started to learn bridge..

It all started very obscurely. After getting home one night in my first week at the EBU, I noticed that an episode of the 80's comedy *Terry and June* was on pause. A small note was stuck to the television from my housemate advising that I must watch it. The episode sees Terry trying to learn bridge, because he had offered to partner his boss – which he hoped would aid him in a promotion. Of course, Terry could not play, but was adamant he could learn bridge in two hours. After getting confused about North,

South, West and...June the dummy, Terry failed. Quite right, I thought – this game looks impossible! I was starting to despair.

How hard was this game, and would I ever understand even the basics? Luckily, help was at hand, as I had received an email in my first week, with the simple words: "I see you want to learn about bridge...have you thought about learning it in just a weekend?" I was intrigued at this and I signed up.

Learning bridge in 2 hours is not really possible, as evidenced by Terry Scott; but learning bridge in a weekend – was that possible? I was fascinated by the concept, as were thirteen other students in September 2007. The group was a good mix of people, and we were all keen to learn and play in the future. Our teacher, Ned Paul was an interesting figure in the

"classroom" - he had an air of knowledge about him; a bit of eccentricity and humour; whilst also being very charming and engaging.

The weekend was a physically and mentally stimulating experience, but I feel challenged and ready to keep learning about bridge. Obviously Ned Paul's course is not unique and anyone can find a course near them.

I agreed with Ned when he told me, "*Bridge is about playing the game, not learning it. Learning is never finished, and no-one has learnt it all.*" That's the beauty of bridge – the constant challenge. Perhaps Terry and June should have tried to learn bridge properly!

Matt Betts

How did you learn to play bridge? What were your experiences like? Let us know, by writing to us at our address on page 4.



Terry and June - all confused about bridge.



Maintain membership by teaching

Is the average age profile of your club increasing year on year?

Many clubs that were enjoying high attendances in the 1980's and 90's are now worried that there are not enough new people coming in to the organised game to refresh club membership.

There are plenty of bridge teachers and many new people coming into the game, but it is estimated that fewer than 5% of graduating bridge students go on to play club bridge. This break in the 'supply chain', from classroom to clubroom is largely responsible for falling memberships in our clubs.

The EBU have recently started to address this issue with their new Partner Teacher scheme.

The Partner Teacher courses are especially designed to help new teachers recruit, retain and evolve their students into club players. The main beneficiaries of this scheme are the students themselves since they can continue to enjoy their bridge as they progress from classroom to club room.

One of the best ways of ensuring that your bridge club maintains its membership numbers is to have bridge teaching associated with the club. Teaching is fun and very rewarding. If there are any members of your club who are interested in taking

up bridge teaching, why not send them on one of the EBU's Partner Teacher courses.

There are two parts to becoming a Qualified Bridge Teacher. Part One is attendance at the Partner Teacher Course, after which teachers can call themselves Accredited Bridge Teachers. Part Two is the Assessment Unit. Following successful completion of that, teachers become Qualified Bridge Teachers.

To find out more about the Partner Teacher scheme contact Lisa at the EBU on 01296 317217 or email lisa@ebu.co.uk.



Bidding Tools: 4th suit forcing

When we first start playing, an uncontested bidding sequence in which a partnership bids all four suits, such as 1♣ – 1♥ – 1♠ – 2♦, is considered completely natural. The opener has shown clubs and spades, and the responder has shown hearts and diamonds.

After a little while, we learn that in this situation it is actually unlikely that there is a suit fit, so the responder, instead of showing his diamonds, may just as well bid either 2NT (invitational to game with 10-12 points) or go straight to 3NT (with 13-15 points).

This leaves the bid of the fourth suit (in this case 2♦) free to be used conventionally as a forcing bid, saying nothing about the fourth suit, but simply asking opener to describe his hand further. This very useful convention is known as 4th-Suit Forcing (4SF).

Responder should have opening values. For example with a hand such as:

♠75 ♥QJ1083 ♦A43 ♣AK9 in the above sequence, any of 3NT, 4♥ or 5♣ might be the best final contract. To decide which, responder needs to find out more about opener's hand, so he bids 2♦ as 4SF.

In reply, opener should choose the bid which best describes his hand. First priority is to show partner if you have three cards in his major suit; second priority is to bid NT with a stop in the 4th suit. What should opener bid with the following?

A: ♠KQJ8 ♥K72 ♦9 ♣QJ854

B: ♠AK98 ♥7 ♦K97 ♣QJ873

C: ♠AK98 ♥K7 ♦97 ♣QJ873

With A bid 2♥ to show three hearts and minimum strength. Responder can now happily go on to 4♥ knowing there is an 8-card fit.

With B bid 2NT to show a stop in diamonds but a minimum point count. Responder will go on to 3NT.

With C bid 3♣ to show five or six clubs but no diamond stop. 5♣ is the safest contract.

You need to agree with your regular partner whether to play the convention as forcing to game or forcing for one round only. 4SF can also be used with stronger hands to find out more about partner's hand with a view to finding the best denomination for a slam.

Finally, beware of the exception: the sequence 1♣ – 1♦ – 1♥ – 1♠ is not normally played as 4SF. The 1♠ bid is natural showing spades, but you need to agree with partner whether to play it as forcing for one round. The 4SF bid in this sequence is 2♠.

"You need to agree with your regular partner whether to play the convention as forcing to game or forcing for one round only."

Duplimate Seminar - Stratford upon Avon

The EBU invites you to a seminar for those who already use a Duplimate machine, or are intending to acquire one, and wish to learn more about the ins and outs of duplimate deals. The seminar will consist of three parts:

i. Software related issues

Import/Export of deal files to/from various bridge software.

How your club can show [tournament] deals in vugraph style.

How to tailor make deals, e.g. for classes.

Publishing of deals (and results) in various ways, styles and formats.

ii. Hardware related issues

How to prevent fouled boards and how to get maximum output from a dealing machine.

iii. Workshop

Workshop for those who have (or are in the pipeline for) a dealing machine.

Free service and support for those who bring their Duplimate. Any expensive spare parts, and/or repairs that cannot be carried out on the spot are not included in this offer.



Further details:

The seminar will be conducted by Per Jannersten, the authority on Duplimates and proprietor of the company which supplies them, together with David Stead of Duplimate UK and takes place on 15 March 2008.

It is free of charge for EBU affiliated clubs and county associations and includes afternoon tea/coffee and biscuits.

Please register by email to krys@ebu.co.uk or by post to Club Liaison Officer, as below.

Places are limited, so first come, first served! Closing date for registration is *10th March 2008*.

Bridge Tales

A Director is called to the bridge table.

Director: 'How can I help?'

Defender: 'Declarer has made an incorrect claim'.

Declarer: 'There is nothing wrong with my claim. I claim the rest on a cross-ruff'.

Defender: 'But the contract is 3NT!'

(Courtesy of Andrew Kambites)



Bridge Shop

The EBU Bridge Shop is available to provide good quality equipment at a sensible price.

Both individual and club members of the EBU receive a 10% discount on published prices, 20% on a wide range of books including Master Bridge, Batsford, Chess & Bridge and the Really Easy Series.

For further information call **01296 397851/317200** or visit www.ebu.co.uk/bridgeshop/



Write to us

We hope you have enjoyed reading the first edition of Club Focus. Are you interested in writing for the next newsletter? Have you started learning bridge? Have you got any funny stories about bridge? Does your club have any interesting ideas or solutions to common problems which other clubs might benefit from? Would you like to publicise any special events open to non-members and members? Please let us know!

If you would like to contact us or send us your articles, feedback or comments please email: clubfocus@ebu.co.uk or post to: **Club Focus, English Bridge Union, Broadfields, Aylesbury, HP19 8AZ.**

We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your thoughts.

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