



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

1 APRIL 2013- 31 MARCH 2014

The English Bridge Union is the governing body for duplicate bridge in England representing communities of bridge players at club, county and national level. It is funded by members for members and provides the infrastructure and development of the game in England. All monies are re-invested into our national game.

We are in the first full year of our new five year plan which can be viewed on our website. One significant change is the creation of the new Charity (English Bridge Education and Development) from 1 April 2014. The period of this report saw the development and set up of the charity to commence its activities.

This annual report, the third one produced, provides an insight in to the work that we do to support our clubs, counties and members and will be of interest to those individuals and organisations that, in turn, provide us with support to develop the game.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that make up our national team - the Directors of the Board and all the members of its standing and sub committees. And the dedicated team of staff under our General Manager, Barry Capal, at Aylesbury.

A full list of national volunteers and staff appears at the end of this report.

The statutory annual report and accounts will be able to be viewed on our website www.ebu.co.uk shortly after the EBU's Annual General Meeting on 26th November 2014.

Jeremy Dhondy
Chairman
English Bridge Union

The Board

The Board is made up of ten directors, eight elected by the shareholders - who are the representatives of our counties - and two appointed by the Board. The directors receive no remuneration for the work they undertake. They have legal and financial responsibilities as set out in the Company's Act 2006.

Each director takes responsibility for one or more aspects of the EBU's business. This responsibility includes budgetary control, delivering strategic objectives and regular reporting on the work of the department and committee associated with it. For the year 2013-14 the responsibilities were as follows:

Chairman: Jeremy Dhondy from 02/10/2013
Chairman: Sally Bugden until 02/10/2013
Vice Chairman: Jeremy Dhondy until 02/10/2013
Vice-Chairman: Ian Payn from 02/10/2013
Treasurer: Andrew Petrie



Tournament Committee Chairman: Ian Payn
Selection Committee Chairman: Heather Dhondy until 20/01/2014
Laws and Ethics Committee Chairman: Jeremy Dhondy until 29/01/2014
Board Director responsible for Charity Conversion – Andrew Petrie
Board Director responsible for Education – Sally Bugden until 31/12/2013
Board Director responsible for facilitating the strategic plan – Jerry Cope
Board Director responsible for premises and retail – Malcolm Oliver re-appointed 02/10/2013
Board Director responsible for staff development – Jerry Cope
Board Director Responsible for the County Working Group: Darren Evetts
Editorial Board Chairman: Sally Bugden until 02/10/2013
Editorial Board Chairman: Jeremy Dhondy from 02/10/2013
Tournament Directors Development Group Chairman: Heather Dhondy
Board Director responsible for Bridge Great Britain: Jeremy Dhondy
Board Director responsible for European and World duplicate bridge affairs: Sally Bugden until 02/10/2013
Board Director responsible for European and World duplicate bridge affairs: Jeremy Dhondy from 02/10/2013
Board Director responsible for Awards – Ron Millet
Board Director Responsible for the All Party Parliamentary Group: Sally Bugden until 02/10/2013
Board Director Responsible for the All Party Parliamentary Group: Ron Millet from 02/10/2013

We made an appeal to HMRC concerning the payment of VAT on competition entry fees. We lost but our second appeal will be heard in July 2015. We are grateful to David Ewart for his great assistance in representing us on a pro bono basis.

We have continued our programme to update our bye laws and articles. Our five year plan is now being followed and, for example, a number of improvements are being made to tournaments

We have reviewed our awards system under the guidance of board member Ron Millet and intend to make some improvements to existing awards and introduce some new awards in the coming year.

Finance

We have had a very satisfactory year from a financial viewpoint. We have managed to turn a budgeted loss of about £5K into a surplus of around £64K. This may seem a large amount but it is in fact less than 4% of Turnover. Much of this improvement was due to the hard work of staff and volunteers to ensure that the finances were managed for the best possible outcomes. The annual accounts provide a detailed financial picture for all the EBU's activities and these will be available online shortly after the Annual General Meeting. We have also managed in the 13/14 year to make a cash donation of £45K to our sister charity English Bridge Education and Development, which will set them on a firm financial footing to achieve their objective of developing duplicate bridge in England.

Club Services

18 clubs affiliated during the period April 13 –March 2014 and the Club Liaison Officer visited a number of clubs across the country. Club website pages have been redesigned for easier access and a partnership with the Charity Commission to provide an approved Governing document has been made enabling us to assist those who wish to apply for charitable status as around a dozen clubs already have.



Education and development

Club teacher courses –These continue to be successful and in the coming year will be organised and run by our new charity.

We have trained nearly 300 tournament directors in the year. This course is popular and the move of its organisation to EBED may provide opportunities for new people to participate.

Three Really Easy congresses also took place; in Derby in the spring, Brighton in the summer and Wroxton near Banbury in the autumn. All of these events take place to try to encourage newcomers to try tournament play.

We also ran a successful Next Step Congress in Brighton for those players who are interested in tournament bridge but need to build their confidence before they play in a full EBU congress. Really Easy duplicates are being introduced at some of our congresses to run alongside the main events to provide a gentle introduction for those who have not yet played at this level.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge

This group goes from strength to strength under the Chairmanship of Baroness Ruth Henig of Lancaster. Meetings address the development and awareness of the benefits of bridge (particularly for young people and for senior citizens) and the promotion of enjoyment of the game, and bridge events, with the legislatures of other countries. The group hopes to organise a match against the Polish Parliament in the coming year.

This year it was agreed to organise two visits from schools that play Minibridge. These outings are great fun and the school pupils and their teachers visit the Lord Speaker in her office, tour the Houses of Parliament and then play bridge in the River Room and are treated to tea at the end of a long afternoon. The children demonstrate without doubt the benefits of playing Minibridge at school.

We will continue to work on encouraging many more schools to take part in learning Minibridge through EBED we will also continue to work on raising the profile of this game with the Minister for Education.

International Success

England's representation in international duplicate bridge competitions is an important part of the EBU's activities as a national bridge organisation. Successes at international level help to raise public awareness of English bridge and to attract new players to the game. Our participation in international events provides us with an international profile in the bridge world and it also brings more influence within the European Bridge League (EBL) and the World Bridge Federation (WBF).

The Selection Committee, made up of seven elected and two ex officio members and chaired by Andy Bowles, is responsible for selecting the teams to represent us internationally. It has been a good year for England at international level, with one World Championship medal and wins in three of the five Home Internationals:

- **Open**

The Open team qualified for the Bermuda Bowl and reached the quarter finals. They also won the Camrose.



- **Women**

The Women's team continued their run of medal-winning performances with a Silver Medal in the Venice Cup in Bali.

- **Juniors**

The Juniors again won both the Junior Camrose and the Peggy Bayer trophies. The U25 team won the Channel Trophy in Ostend in December

Junior squads

The Selection Committee is also responsible for the junior squads which provide training for young players. Through the hard work of squad leaders Alan Shillitoe and Michael Byrne, supported by a number of top players who provide coaching and mentoring, the junior squad system continues to bring young players into the game and to prepare successive generations of players for national and international competition.

Regulation

The Laws and Ethics Committee (L&E), made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU under the chairmanship of Tim Rees, is responsible for the regulation of the game in England.

Updated regulations were published in August 2013, including a revised White Book and a new Blue Book. These are smaller than their predecessors and written in plainer English. Both publications are available electronically, free, from the website and will be updated annually.

The L&E hears cases of both a technical and disciplinary nature. During the last year, there have been three appeals to the National Authority, which is the final step for appealing a Director's ruling. One of these cases was rejected due to lack of merit, and the deposit retained. The other two cases were heard, with one being successful.

Disciplinary problems over the last year have been down on previous years. By coincidence, two cases the L&E prosecuted this year were both caused by players walking out of EBU events without notice having received a Director's ruling with which they disagreed. There have been several other problems raised by individuals relating to club/county bridge, but the L&E encourages these issues to be dealt with at a local level, which has successfully happened in this year's cases. The L&E provides advice on model disciplinary regulations for clubs, counties and jointly run events.

Appeals from tournaments are reviewed by the L&E so that they can offer advice and ensure the consistency of decisions. An annual booklet of the major decisions is published and is available electronically from the EBU website. Appeals are reviewed and comments published in the minutes of their meetings.

There is a panel of referees appointed by the L&E who hear appeals at tournaments and act as telephone referees in knock out events, on a voluntary basis. They are also called upon from time to time to give rulings from club and county events.



Tournaments and Competitions

The Tournament Committee has seven elected members, under the Chairmanship of EBU Vice-Chairman Ian Payn. The committee's commitment to dynamism and response is crystallised by the close working relationship with Chief TD Gordon Rainsford, who presented a paper on Tournaments to the Board in June. One upshot of that is the splintering of the Tournament Committee to focus less on general meetings attended by all, to smaller focus groups concentrating on individual tournaments. Following the on-going work of the Brighton group, the next steps in the tournament-wide review are the three Premium Pairs events and weekends (Two-Stars, Spring Bank Holiday and Seniors) and the National Pairs. Over the course of next year these events will be analysed, and hopefully improved.

Blue-Pointed Holidays have been run, and are a cautious success. We have been advised that holiday-based enterprises need time to mature. Hopefully this will happen and the less competitive player will find that they too can enjoy a game of bridge away from home, but without the pressure, real or imagined, of playing in a "serious" congress. On an associated matter, Bridge Overseas have continued to be of great help, not only in arranging bookings for members who want to use their services, but also at the rough end, helping us deal with hotels, striking deals for competitions. This has not been an easy task, because hotel chains are run in such a way as to discourage loyalty on behalf of individual hotels, but the Bridge Overseas team have so far proved equal to the challenge, occasionally at very short notice.

Feedback continues to be important. No form is ignored, no e-mail unanswered. Even though a lot of events are out of our control (usually those to do with hotels) the membership will still be dealt with courteously, usually by Gordon Rainsford or Peter Jordan, who form the front line.

Tournament Directors Development Group

This subcommittee of the Board deals with the appraisal, promotion, development and management of the EBU's active tournament directors. It is chaired by Board Director, Heather Dhondy. This year has seen the welcome addition of Clive Owen to the group, and the retirement of a couple of long serving tournament directors (Alan Reid and June Booty-Taplin), whom we thank for their work over the years. The group continues its work of recruiting and training new tournament directors to continue the excellent service provided at our national tournaments.

The County Working Group

The EBU County Working Group was set up by the Board to focus on County development, the key objectives of which include communications and relationships with Counties, Clubs, Members, and potential Members. The National County Working Group will explore development opportunities and make recommendations to the Board on ways forward.

The National County Working Group is made up of representatives from the five Regional County Working Groups (Eastern, Metropolitan, Midlands, Northern and Western). Each Regional County Working Group is made up of Counties, based primarily on the Inter-County League Groups. Guernsey, Isle of Man, and Jersey are, for geographical reasons, outside of the Regional Groups, but have each been contacted by the Group Chairman, and invited to send a representative to the National Meetings, or to communicate directly with him on any matters they would like to raise.



The meetings held so far have been very positive, and the indication is that this structure has excellent potential, due in no small part to the support, commitment and dedication of those members who have agreed to represent their County, and Region, in engaging in this process. I hope that as many members as possible will make their views known to their Club, and County, so that we can all participate in shaping the future of Bridge in England

English Bridge

The Editorial Board for English Bridge is a subcommittee of the Board chaired by EBU Board Chairman Jeremy Dhondy. During 2013-14 we have developed the archive of past magazines on our website going back to 1945. We will add to those in the coming year. Our current magazine is available online to members and an increasing number are taking it online only where there is additional content however a majority still want the printed magazine. The Editorial Board have been planning for a revised size of magazine which will allow the printed version to continue and will make significant savings. This will help us address the rising costs of production and specifically postage which have provided challenges to the Editorial Board. We have spent the year working on developments which we hope will enhance the important service that we provide to our members during the coming years.

EBU Headquarters at Aylesbury

We have a full time staff equivalent of around eighteen, serving over 54000 members through the provision of tournaments, education, regulation, international support, club and membership support services including a shop providing bridge books and supplies and communications including Club Management Focus, Events Focus and Appeals Focus. Our numbers have increased this year as we have invested in a small additional resource in bridge education and development within the new charity, English Bridge Education and Development. It has been, as usual, a busy year with the following notable developments:

- ***National Grading Scheme***

We have been working on additions to the NGS, so as to include many team events in the calculations. NGS continues to be very popular with our members; the NGS pages are among the most heavily used on our website. There is a good deal of interest from overseas bridge federations in NGS.

- ***Success in the Media***

During the past year we found ourselves the subject of substantial media interest due to our VAT appeal, which resulted in rejection by the "1st Tier Tribunal". During this unexpected level of media interest I was involved in a number of radio interviews and our General Manager got interviewed on the BBC Global news programme. In addition there were a reasonable number of articles in the national and local press. We have a date for our 2nd Tier appeal in July 2015 and look forward, not only to success but some significant media interest.

- ***E Shop***

We have developed a new online shop to update the service we offer and make ordering easier than it was before. The shop continues to offer a discount for members, EBUTA members and affiliated clubs.



- **Diary**

The diary has been revised and the content made more appropriate for the majority of our members. The publication date was returned to August following feedback and some economies have been achieved reducing the cost. The printing has been returned to the UK.

General Meetings and Shareholdings

The EBU is a company limited by shares. Our shareholders do not get any financial remuneration, their shareholdings and voting rights are based on the number of members their county has. There are two shareholder meetings a year, one of which is an annual general meeting. This report will be presented to the shareholders for discussion at the Annual General Meeting on 26th November 2014.

For full details of our constitution and structure please see the EBU's Articles and Bye Laws available on the EBU's website www.ebu.co.uk.

Jeremy Dhondy
Chairman
For and on behalf of the Board of the English Bridge Union

Staff Members and National Volunteers 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014

Board

Sally Bugden (until January 2014), Jeremy Dhondy, Andrew Petrie, Jerry Cope, Heather Dhondy, Darren Evetts, Ron Millet, Malcolm Oliver, Ian Payn, Rob Lawy (from March 2014), Anthony Golding (from March 2014)

Laws and Ethics Committee

Jeremy Dhondy (until October 2013), Frances Hinden, Mike Amos, David Burn, Tim Rees, Neil Morley, Martin Pool, Robin Barker (from October 2013)

Selection Committee

Heather Dhondy (until January 2014), Simon Cochemé, Andy Bowles, David Burn, Paul Hackett, Nick Smith, Tom Townsend

Tournament Committee

Ian Payn, Brian Crack (until October 2013), Margaret Curtis (until October 2013), Gillian Fawcett, Paul Hackett, Philip Mason, Addis Page, Terry Hewett (from October 2013), Eddie Williams (from October 2013)

English Bridge Editorial Board

Sally Bugden (until October 2013), Elena Jeronimidis (Editor), Jeremy Dhondy, Chris Danby (Advertising Manager), Barry Capal (General Manager), Peter Stockdale (Minute Taker)

Tournament Directors Development Group

Heather Dhondy, Jeremy Dhondy (until September 2013), Pat Davies, Clive Owen (from September 2013)

National Grading Scheme Working Group

This group has been disbanded but we are grateful for the help that Mike Christie and Barrie Partridge still offer to make the scheme a success



Honorary Counsel

David Ewart QC

Pro Bono Advisor

Stephen Barnfield

Disciplinary Panel (this group hears and decides on cases that are prosecuted by the Laws & Ethics Committee)

Julie Kennedy, Joy Mayall, Kath Nelson, William Nicolle, Alan Oddie, Jackie Pye, Paul Roberts, Ed Scerri, Paddy Seligman, Geoff Smith, Jeff Smith, Keith Stanley, John Williams.

Awards Panel (this group scrutinises applications from counties for the Dimmie Fleming award and makes recommendations to the EBU Board)

Margaret Curtis, Philip Mason, Jeff Morris

Staff

General Manager	Barry Capal
English Bridge Editor	Elena Jeronimidis
Tournaments Manager/Chief TD	Gordon Rainsford
Tournaments Administrator	Peter Jordan
Tournaments Administrator	Dawn Mertens
Tournaments Assistant	Gill Pain
Accounts Manager	Gail Nancarrow
Communications Officer	Matt Betts (until August 2013)
Communications Officer	Peter Stockdale (from September 2013)
Club Liaison Officer	Andrew Urbanski
Bridge Shop Manager	Sue Humphris
Bridge Shop Assistant	Liz Goodchild
Education Manager	John Pain
Laws & Ethics Secretary	John Pain
Education Assistant	Lisa Miller
Office Manager / Membership	Karen Durrell
Administration Assistant	Kay Carter
Membership/Accounts Assistant	Clare Burnage
Receptionist/Office Assistant	Julie Murray
Support Officer / Webmaster	Michael Clark
IT Support/ Masterpoints	Ian Mitchell
IT Assistant	Adam Lugmayer