

CLUB FOCUS

Volume I, Christmas Issue

December 2008



ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

Welcome

Dear Club Focus Readers,

At this time of year families and friends come together to celebrate the season of peace, joy and goodwill. It is also the season that demonstrates the need for friendship and a community spirit to be extended to everybody. In the club bridge world we are in a wonderful position to bring people together to enjoy the company of others and take part in our wonderful game.

This is also a time for reflection. Eighteen months ago, as part of our policy to put clubs at the centre of the English Bridge Union, we appointed our first Club Liaison Officer, known to you all as Krys K. During Krys' first year he spent much of his time talking with clubs about the proposals for universal membership, an extremely important task. But he has also done a great deal more than that – he has made himself available to consult with clubs about their needs and to see how the EBU can help each club survive and thrive. Krys does sterling work, but we recognised that we needed more people on the ground to help clubs develop. To meet these requirements we have appointed a Club Committee, a group of eight volunteers, who are working extremely hard to contact all clubs in their regions to determine what services you want from the EBU, how we can help you enhance your club and the playing experience for all your members. Please, please respond to any requests for ideas and information that our Club Committee members make to you. They are committed to helping you.

So, what can we help you with? We can provide assistance and advice on many issues including club management and administration, tournament direction and regulation, teaching and promotion. But we also want to develop services that meet the needs of your club and your members. We are working hard to construct a package of benefits for our EBU clubs to launch alongside universal membership in April 2010. Let us know what you want – talk to your Club Committee representative now!

Help with promotion is provided by Matt Betts, our Communications Officer. Matt was appointed a few

months after Krys and they work in tandem to produce Club Focus – your newsletter. Matt can also help your club with local publicity and promotion. You can contact him direct at Aylesbury or via email matt@ebu.co.uk

2008 also saw the majority approval of universal membership. But what does this mean for you? We believe it means a thriving community of clubs playing duplicate bridge. We believe it means more people coming in to our clubs to learn to play. We believe it means creating environments for new players to join with existing players to enjoy this great game of ours. Every player in every EBU affiliated club will be playing a part in this expansion; you will be contributing to the development of teaching, training and learning for all ages. But more than that, it will provide you with the individual benefits of EBU membership, which includes the opportunity to have a say in that which we do.

So, to ensure that you have your say, please keep us up-to-date and let Karen Durrell know the correct contact information for your club. You can reach Karen at Aylesbury or via her email karend@ebu.co.uk

I would like to thank all our Club Committee volunteers and Krys, Matt and Karen for the extraordinary amount of work they have undertaken for us all this year and extend my thanks to all remaining staff at EBU HQ and all the thousands of volunteers in the bridge community.

And finally and most importantly, I would also like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you the compliments of the season and a happy, healthy and successful 2009.

Very best wishes

Sally Bugden, Chairman

Focal Point

The final club contract, along with a list of the full range of services and benefits to be provided by the EBU, will be sent out to clubs by the latest in July, but hopefully in June, after the June Shareholders meeting. We recommend that your club considers its future relationship with the EBU at that time when you will be in receipt of this information and can take part in an informed discussion.



This Issue

Welcome	1
Meet the Beijing Medalists	2
Christmas Limerick	2
New Midlands Club Rep	2
A Strange Hand	3
Bridge Tails	3
Alerting Doubles	4
Bridge Tales	4
Contact Us	4

Meet The Beijing Medalists

It has been quite a few years since England last won a World Championship in Bridge, but at the Mind Sports Games in Beijing our teams combined to give us the best ever performance by teams from England or Great Britain in any World Championship. A Gold for our Women, Silvers for the Open team and Under 21s, and 5th place for the Seniors and the Under 28s was a truly inspiring effort, bettering even the mighty Italians, Poles, Norwegians and Americans!

Long ago, in the days of Culbertson and Buller, World Bridge was a spectacle that enthused all players, and even the public at large. The internet is now reaching big audiences in a different way, with a "gate" of almost half a million following the play on-line during the Beijing fortnight.

Now that we are again leading the world, let us take the opportunity to all share in our national success. To consolidate on our teams' performances, the EBU is keen to generate interest here at home. We know that we can't organise an open-top bus tour round the bridge clubs of England, but there are ways that you can find so that your club members could share in the celebration.

- It will provide the opportunity to generate some publicity for your club.
- You could arrange a Play with an Expert evening and auction off a duplicate session with a Star pair or player to raise money for your favourite charity.
- You could invite one of them to come and give a short talk about their triumph in Beijing and host a bridge clinic.
- You could invite one of them to come and present the prizes at an annual club event.

No doubt, you can think of other innovative events as well. And any of these would be a photo opportunity for your members to be snapped with a Beijing medallist!

If your club is interested in participating, then let us know your proposal, and we will liaise with the players and try to arrange it. Please email: clubfocus@ebu.co.uk or write to: Club Focus, English Bridge Union, Broadfields, Aylesbury, HP19 8AZ.

Steve Eginton, EBU Selection Committee member

Xmas Limerick

There is no competition this issue but here is a seasonal stanza:

There was a young reindeer from Lapland

Who picked up a wonderful bridge hand

With his nose glowing proudly

And bells jingling loudly

He bid all the way to a grand

Sandra Nicholson

The winner of the limerick competition from issue VI will be announced in the next issue of Club Focus, due out in January.



New Midlands Club Committee Representative

Unfortunately, Maggie Jones has had to step down from this position due to other commitments. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the work she does for bridge in the Midlands area.

The Club Committee is very fortunate in having now secured the volunteer services of Tim Johnson of Market Harborough in Leicestershire, who has agreed to take on the role of Regional Representative/Club Committee Member for the "Midlands" (Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire). Tim is a Regional Master who has been playing bridge intermittently for 30 years or so but has taken it up more seriously

since 2002. In recent years he has played at thirteen different clubs in the Midlands and been a member of six of them.

Our Club Committee members are there to help you and represent your views to the EBU. Once Tim has brought himself up-to-date with the work of the committee, he will be contacting clubs in his area. In the meantime you can contact him and the other Regional Representatives through your county secretary, by email to cc@ebu.co.uk or by writing to Club Committee, Broadfields, Bicester Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8AZ. Direct contact details for individual Regional Representatives can be found at

www.ebu.co.uk/club/regions.htm

Please bear in mind that the present regional allocations are interim in nature, based around the geographical location and workload of the current volunteer Committee Members. The final permanent regional structure is likely to be rather different.

Focal Point

Does your club have a website? Why not put a link in to Club Focus? Our permanent web-address is: www.ebu.co.uk/cf



A Strange Hand

It was the afternoon of Pembury Bridge Club's party, and afterwards everyone could only talk of board thirteen. The hands were as follows:-

NORTH		EAST	
♠	A 6 2	♠	K Q J 10 9 8 7 5 4 3
♥	-	♥	-
♦	A K 10 9 7 6 2	♦	3
♣	K 3 2	♣	6 5
WEST		SOUTH	
♠	-	♠	-
♥	A K Q J 10 9 8 5 4 3 2	♥	7 6
♦	Q 8	♦	J 5 4
♣	-	♣	A Q J 10 9 8 7 4

Two passes later found West bidding 7♥. Normally North would have doubled again, but with clearly extraordinary distribution she reluctantly passed, finding herself on lead. The top two diamonds saw the contract down two tricks, and on the Ace of spades West opened his hand and it was all over.

The traveller was fascinating. Only one E/W pair was allowed to play in 5♥, which made. At every other table the contract went down, and at five tables it was a grand slam which failed, at five more it was a small slam which failed. Thirteen was the unlucky board that day!

Notice in passing that if North has the temerity to bid 7NT over 7♥ it makes, since there is no chance of a heart lead. It would be a brave North to take the gamble, and none of us did. The diamonds would need careful handling for North not to block them, and it would take nerves of steel.

"Surely you put that hand in because it was a party" the director was accused, but no, it was a randomly dealt hand. However it was certainly a good hand for a party!

Elsbeth Fox



North was dealer, all were vulnerable, and surely at every table the opening was 1♦. At our table East overcalled 4♠, over which South enthusiastically bid 5♣. West overcalled 6♥, leaving North in a dilemma. No, she couldn't really support the clubs at the seven level. East bid 6♠, followed by two passes and a double by North.

Bridge Tails - Christmas Caption Competition



We hope you have enjoyed our bridge tails over the last few issues. For our special Christmas issue, we would like to ask you to have a go and create a caption for this moody cat!

The winner of our competition will receive the great prize of a Pelissier Table (worth £85!).

Please send your entries by **12 January 2009** to Clubfocus@ebu.co.uk



Proposed Changes to the Regulations for Alerting Doubles

There has perhaps always been some confusion, particularly at club level, as to which doubles are alertable and which aren't. The regulations on alerting of doubles were last simplified in August 2006, at the time of the introduction of announcements, but it is still the case that they are frequently not properly understood. The Laws and Ethics Committee is therefore considering simplifying the alerting rules further to say that

"Doubles only require an alert if they have a highly unusual meaning."

This regulation would apply equally below and above the 3NT level.

Thus, for example, most players use a double of a natural 1-level opening suit bid as a take-out double. Such a double would not need to be alerted. However, if such a double is intended for penalties, it is highly unusual and would need to be alerted.

Similarly, a double of a natural opening bid of 1NT is normally intended as a penalty double and this would not need to be alerted. However, if this double is used for another pur-

pose such as a take-out or specifying a minor two-suiter, it is highly unusual and would have to be alerted.

The vast majority of doubles used by club players, whether for take-out or penalties, or asking for a lead of the suit doubled would not need to be alerted.

Examples of some of the doubles which would need to be alerted include:

- A double that shows a specific suit in an auction where this is highly unusual, e.g. 1C 1D x showing clubs; 1NT 2H x showing diamonds.
- A double that has an unusual conventional lead-directing meaning, e.g. 1S x P 2S x asking for a non-spade lead.
- "Anti-penalty" doubles in high-level forcing pass auctions (where double suggests bidding on and pass suggests defending).

Once again it should be stressed that club players playing normal bridge would not have to alert any doubles under the proposed changes.

Note that the proposed regulation is similar to that used in the USA, Canada and Mexico. In some other countries no doubles at all are alerted; in others virtually all doubles are alerted.

The Club Committee and Laws and Ethics Committee would like to hear the views of ordinary clubs and club members on this proposal. Are you in favour? Would you like the current system to remain in place? Would you prefer no alerts of doubles at all? Or perhaps you are in favour in principle, but feel it is too soon for another change in the regulations? Please make your views known by writing to your Club Committee Regional Representative or to lecsec@ebu.co.uk or Laws & Ethics, EBU, Broadfields, Bicester Road, Aylesbury HP19 8AZ.



Contact us

We hope you have enjoyed reading our special Christmas issue of Club Focus. Are you interested in writing for the next newsletter - number seven? 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? Do you have a special pet who likes to play cards? 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.** Deadline for submissions is 10 January 2009.

Bridge Tales

The director was called to a table where Hubby was most indignant.

He pointed to his wife and said:

'She called me a blithering idiot. You cannot allow that'.

'Hold on', said Wife. 'He started it by calling me an incompetent fool.

That is forcing for one round. Look! It says so on our convention card'.

And it did!

Andrew Kambites



If this newsletter is printed, please don't forget to recycle it afterwards.

Information contained in this edition is correct at time of going to press. Production schedules mean that entries listed or reviewed may change between going to press and publication.

Published by the English Bridge Union 2008

