



THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
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The History of the EBU

The English Bridge Union is a membership-funded, non-profit organisation committed to promoting the game of duplicate bridge and acting as the membership body for the game of bridge in England. The EBU uses its funds for providing services to its members from the promotion and development of bridge to the organisation of a whole network of bridge teachers and events for the novice player and any curious non-bridge playing member of the public. The bridge playing community consists of people of all ages, from all backgrounds and all walks of life in villages, towns and cities throughout England.

The EBU was formed on the 23 May 1936 in Liverpool after a decision by three regional bridge associations for the North-East, the North-West and Yorkshire to create an English representative national body for bridge. In particular, the EBU was formed so that England could meet with the two other national teams on equal terms: Scotland and Ireland. The newly formed EBU Council met less than three weeks later with Phillips as Chairman and Richard Lederer, perhaps the leading tournament player at the time, appointed to the position of Honorary Secretary where the draft constitution was approved. The constitution stated that the council's first duty was to endorse the provisional representation of the Duplicate Bridge Control Board. By the second meeting on 12 June 1936, the EBU had created eight constituent area associations so that it could properly manage the game.

Into the early stages of 1939 the council received notification that talks were underway for the merging of the EBU and BBL. Following the resignation of Manning-Foster from the position of BBL president in 1938, his successor Noel Mobbs, was more conciliatory in his attitude, being quoted in Bridge Magazine as undertaking to work towards amalgamation. The likelihood of this drive was financial; due to an item of the December 1938 meeting involving a question of future finance of the EBU.

By July the same year the articles of association and the new EBU memorandum was approved along with a draft constitution for the establishment of a democratic BBL. By September the former Council held its last meeting. Some six months later, the first meeting of the new EBU Council was held and Kathleen Salmons, the BBL Secretary, was appointed to the same position for the EBU. The Council was now composed of delegates from counties in recognizably the same form as endured for almost sixty-five years. In some cases, however, the appearance of democracy was more theoretical than real since the county associations that the delegates purported to represent had not been set up. The Bye-laws were not yet approved and would not be for over five years since the EBU now went into abeyance.

In June 1945 the EBU Council finally met again following the end of World War II. In the meantime Terence Reese had taken the opportunity to set up the Tournament Bridge Association as a result of the EBU being inactive. A programme of events were run by the Tournament Bridge Association in the later half of 1944, including now well known EBU events such as Crockfords Cup and the Two Stars Pairs. The TBA was finally taken over by the EBU by 1950. September 1946 saw the launch of Contract Bridge Journal which was a mouthpiece of the EBU. Its first editor was Maurice Harrison-Gray. In 1956 the EBU introduced its master point scheme as a way of ranking players.. This has been revised over the years and in 2011 the National Grading Scheme was introduced to run alongside it and provided a measure of current performance.

In the 1970's the EBU had its first headquarters in Thame in the house of the secretary Dr Stuart Staveley. It then moved to offices also in Thame but outgrew them and moved in the 1990's to its current home in a purpose built building in Aylesbury.

In 2000 the British Bridge League ceased to exist (a smaller organisation called Bridge Great Britain replaced it) and the home countries were now represented individually at international level. England became an NBO and since that time has competed under its own name and flag.

On 1 April 2010, the EBU ushered in the biggest ever shake-up in its structure by introducing Universal Membership. The EBU now has over 54,000 members and 620 affiliated clubs, allowing the organisation to further the development of bridge.

On 23 May 2011 the EBU celebrated its 75th anniversary. Celebrations of the event included a number of special events, and the milestone was acknowledged by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. More information can be seen at www.ebu.co.uk/75

In April 2014 English Bridge Education and Development began activities, and is responsible for promoting, driving and developing the teaching and education programme which was previously under the EBU's Education Department. EBED is distinct from the EBU but is based at the EBU's office in Aylesbury. More information can be seen at www.ebedcio.org.uk

The organisation has twenty staff members (eight of whom are part-time) based in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. It also relies on a huge team of volunteers and a board of eight elected volunteer directors.

An archive, including award winners, holders of significant positions, tournament results, and English involvement in international competitions, can be seen at <http://www.ebu.co.uk/archive>

An article on the first sixty years of the EBU, written in 1996, is available [here](#)

If you require any further information on the EBU, please contact the Communications Officer on 01296 317215 or at press@ebu.co.uk

