



Background to the English Bridge Union

Over 75 years Dedicated to Duplicate Bridge in England

The English Bridge Union – the membership body for the game of bridge in England – will reach a milestone on 23 May 2011 when it celebrates 75 years of existence.

The EBU was formed on the 23 May 1936 after a decision by three regional bridge associations for the North-East, the North-West and Yorkshire to create an English 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. By the second meeting on 12 June 1936, the EBU had created eight constituent area associations so that it could properly manage the game.

The English Bridge Union is a membership-funded organisation committed to promoting the game of duplicate bridge. It is a non-profit making organisation which uses its funds for providing services to its members as well as the promotion and development of bridge.

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.

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 50,000 members and 600 affiliated clubs, allowing the organisation to further the development of bridge. The organisation has eighteen 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 volunteer directors.

In 2009, the EBU set up the All Party Parliamentary Group for the development of bridge under the chairmanship of Baroness Ruth Henig. The group has concentrated on two major areas of development: introducing bridge into primary schools across the country so that children can experience the benefits bridge provides; and secondly research into how bridge can protect against dementia through regular testing of mental agility, but also through social interaction.

Recent research has proven that undertaking regular mental activity such as playing bridge can significantly lower the risk of developing forms of dementia in our older population¹. Additionally, research shows that social interaction amongst the elderly can stave off cognitive decline. Playing bridge has also been proven to benefit

school pupils, not only in their education but in later years when they have more time available for a leisure pursuit. Bridge helps children to improve their skills in numeracy, problem solving, probability, speaking, listening, rule following, team building, mental capacity and much more. The game provides both high level mental stimulation and social engagement for all ages.

In addition, after seventy-five years, bridge can be played absolutely anywhere. It has been played at the North Pole and at the South Pole; it can be played on the Internet and on your iPhone; and it can be played in over 600 affiliated EBU clubs across England. The EBU also organises many tournaments each year for its members. At the EBU's biggest event in Brighton during August, over 7500 packs of cards will be used in producing 600 hands of bridge at 100 tables. In total 70,000 hands of bridge will be played during the 10 days. Finally, the EBU runs and organises a whole network of bridge teachers and events for the novice player.

Press:

For further information, please visit our special 75th Anniversary area on the EBU website: www.ebu.co.uk/75 which will be live on Monday 23 May 2011. The area will include photos, interviews and information on special events. Alternatively please contact **Matt Betts**, the EBU's press and communications officer, on **01296 317 200** or by email Matt@ebu.co.uk. In addition, if you would like a copy of our special 75th Anniversary magazine, please let Matt know and this will be sent immediately.

What is Bridge?

Bridge is a trick-taking card game of skill and chance. It is played by four players who form two partnerships (sides); the partners sit opposite each other at a table. The game consists of the auction (often called bidding) and play, after which the hand is scored. Further information on the EBU and bridge can be found on the Media section of our website, please view [here](#).

Who Plays Bridge?

Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, tennis legend Martina Navratilova, actor Omar Sharif and the world's top investor, Warren Buffett...to name just four. In this country an estimated 150,000 people play bridge regularly in hundreds of clubs in cities, towns and villages up