



GRAHAM OSBORNE's national successes include winning the Gold Cup and the Premier League. Playing for the England Open Team he has won the Camrose twice. International successes include two bronze medals in the European Mixed Teams and most recently 2nd place in the prestigious NEC tournament in Japan. Graham is also on the coaching team for the Junior squads.

When did you start playing bridge?

Both my parents played at home and I first learnt from them. I didn't start playing a lot until I went to university at Cambridge. There I was led astray by, amongst others, Robin Barker, who will be familiar to many readers now as a senior EBU tournament director.

How often / where do you play?

I don't play much club bridge, but during the week I play in the London Super League, which has a spring and autumn season, and in Surrey County events over the winter months. At weekends, I play in EBU events around the country, maybe twice a month, and most years travel abroad to play at least a couple of times.

Do you always play with the same partners / team-mates?

In the major teams events I usually partner Frances Hinden and our team-mates are Jeffrey Allerton and some combination of Andy Bowles, Jon Cooke, John Howard, Chris Jagger and Peter Lee. In pairs events I like to play with a variety of people.

I expect them to be well prepared, to give their best and to be courteous to our opponents.

What do you do for a living?

I worked in the city initially as an analyst, moving on to Fund Management and then finally as a trader specialising throughout my career in junk bonds and distressed debt. I gave up the rat race about eight years ago and retired. Now I just do a limited amount of professional bridge work.

What are your favourite bridge books?

When I was starting out in bridge, books were an important part of my learning process, since I didn't have any formal lessons. Terence Reese wrote some excellent books; *The Expert Game* is a favourite of mine but I think the less well-known *Play These Hands with Me* is very good as well.

For defence I think Hugh Kelsey's *Killing Defence*

and *More Killing Defence* help you move on to a different level. Marty Bergen's *Better Bidding with Bergen* opened me up to a host of new ideas.

I have also enjoyed David Bird's Abbot series that seamlessly marries high-level bridge content with humour.

What are your hobbies?

I have a passion for fine wine. I am lucky enough to have a cellar at home which stores a couple of thousand bottles to make sure I don't go thirsty! The rest are scattered around the country in various warehouses. I am a member of a small wine appreciation group that allegedly meets to taste a few times a year. I am also a keen cook and enjoy going to good restaurants.

I also do a lot of travelling, spending a month in Japan last year (less than a week was playing bridge!) and in the autumn nearly a month covering Chile from top to bottom.

What do you like and what would you change in bridge?

By far the biggest challenge in bridge, as I see it, is increasing participation at all levels of the game. Despite the nominal increase in EBU membership due to Universal Membership, the number of people playing in EBU competitions continues to decline year on year and many clubs in the South East run with half the number of tables that they did a few years ago. Allied to this is the relatively small number of young people who are taking up the game. We haven't yet reached the situation in the US where the average age of an ACBL member is over seventy but we are heading that way, and it reminds us that it is a global problem. It's a difficult issue and the solution is far from clear.

I like that bridge is constantly developing and evolving as a game. During every session there are always subtly different situations arising and points to talk over. The social element is important too, I have spent many a long night in hotel bars talking about . . . well, something! □