



## ENGLAND ARE EUROPEAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONS

The England Women's team have won gold in the European Bridge Team Championships currently taking place in Dublin.

The six woman side, which includes a pharmacist and a typesetter, saw off the challenges of 17 other European countries during the ten day event in Dublin. Although they lost their tense last match against Sweden, the England Women's team have become gold medal winners today at the European Bridge Championships.

The Women's team is one of the strongest in the world, with several world titles under the senior members' belts.

The team has recently seen great successes on the world stage, including winning gold in the first World Mind Sports Games in Beijing in 2008.

Today's victory is only the beginning as the team are next playing in the second World Mind Sports Games in Lille in August to defend their 2008 title; and today's win automatically qualifies them to play in the world championships in Bali (the Venice Cup) in October 2013. A truly exciting few months for the Women's team and their supporters.

Sally Bugden, Chairman of the English Bridge Union, said: "Our Women's team have once again thrust English bridge to the forefront of the European game. We are thrilled and proud that our players have done so well in this important event, and wish them well in the upcoming bridge championships. Their success represents another milestone for the game in this country."

The England team is due to return from Dublin next week, and can be interviewed on their return. Please contact Matt Betts, the EBU's communications officer, on 07723307674 or email [Matt@ebu.co.uk](mailto:Matt@ebu.co.uk) for more information and for contact details. Photo of the team can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/c34a7k6>

The gold medal heroes of the Women's team have a wealth of experience in international championships:

**Heather Dhondy** (age 45), based in London, is a retired accountant and now full time bridge teacher. Aged only 24, Heather began playing for the England women's team. The highlight of Heather's international career until today occurred in 2008 at the Mind Sports Games in Beijing where the England women won the Gold medal. Heather also won the Bronze medal in the Olympiad in Istanbul in 2004 and won the World Mixed Teams in Rhodes in 1996 as well as three European Championships, the first two (1997 & 1999) for Great Britain and the last (2001) for England. In addition, she has won a record 13 Lady Milne trophies (the home nations' competition) over the past 18 years.

**Nevena Senior** is originally from Bulgaria and now lives in Nottingham where she is married to a bridge writer and player. Internationally, Nevena has won 10 medals from European and World Championships for three different countries (Bulgaria, Great Britain and England). Her best achievement (until today) was winning the European Ladies Pairs in 1987 in Brighton and winning the Gold in the Mind Sports Games in Beijing 2008.

**Nicola Smith** lives in London. In Dublin, Nicola played in her 20th European Championship, which is more than anyone else and a tremendous achievement. At world level she has won the Venice Cup twice (1981 and 1985) and the World Women's Individual once (1994) as well as winning silver medals in the Venice Cup (1976) and the World Women's Olympiad (1976, 1984, 1988, 1992). At European level, she has won the European Women's Teams 6 times (1975, 1979, 1981, 1997, 1999, and 2001) as well as a host of other European competitions and has a clutch of silver and bronze medals at world Women's level as well. In 1995, Nicola's contribution to the game of bridge was honoured at national level when she was awarded the M.B.E. by the Queen.

**Sally Brock** (age 58) lives in Buckinghamshire, England, where she works as a typesetter for travel guides and as a professional bridge player. Sally played in her first European Championship in 1979, which England won. She played and won the European Championships again in 1981, later winning the Venice Cup in the same year. In 1985, Sally was in the winning team again with Nicola Smith. After a break to bring up her family, Sally returned to the international scene at the end of 2008 to play in the women's team for the World Mind Sports Games in 2008, where her team won the gold medal.

**Susan Stockdale** (age 29) first learned to play bridge under the tutelage of her parents and her bridge quickly progressed. After her junior international debut at the age of 14, Susan went on to represent Great Britain and England at junior level in many home internationals, Junior Channel Trophy teams and European Championships. Susan went on to partner Fiona Brown with whom she has had many successes and international appearances for the England Ladies, including the Venice Cup last year (where the team came fourth). Susan now lives in Loughborough, working as a director of a company that market and distribute products to the veterinary and animal healthcare sectors.

**Fiona Brown** (age 27) is from Australia, but has lived in England for a number of years. Fiona's bridge partnership with Susan Stockdale began in 2008, when they debuted in the Junior Channel Trophy. As a pair they have represented England four times in the Lady Milne, played in the English under 28 team which finished 5th in the World Mind Sports Games, played twice in the European Championships on the England Women's team, and once in the Venice Cup where the team came fourth. Fiona currently works part - time in an independent pharmacy which allows her the flexibility to play bridge.



***What is the European Bridge Team Championships?***

The 51st edition of the European Bridge Team Championships were held in the Citywest Hotel, Dublin, Ireland, from 12 to 23 June 2012. As usual, the Championships comprise three series - for Open, Women and Senior national teams.

***The Team***

Like all great teams, the England women have a team ritual: they don't sit at the bridge table before putting on a few drops of lavender oil to keep the bad spirits away.

***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 300,000 people play bridge regularly in hundreds of clubs in cities, towns and villages up and down the land.

***About the English Bridge Union***

The English Bridge Union was formed on 23 May 1936 and is a non-profit making membership-funded organisation committed to promoting the game of duplicate bridge. It is also a National Bridge Organisation in its own right affiliated to the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation. New players are the lifeblood of the game and the EBU are keen to encourage them. For more information on the English Bridge Union please visit: <http://www.ebu.co.uk/media/pressresources.htm>