

## **On-line Bridge Booms in Lockdown in Warminster!**

An established club, Warminster Bridge Club faced potential collapse in March 2020 in the face of the pandemic. Chairman, Ian Bell, faced a dilemma: Should Warminster Bridge Club close its doors as several other local clubs had done or re-invent itself and embrace the challenge that the COVID pandemic presented.

A year ago, on-line Bridge offered some alternatives to the Face-to-Face game and Ian decided to put his faith in technology and develop the club around it. This was not a light decision. With most players aged between 60 and 90 years old and not familiar with technology, Warminster Bridge Club faced quite a challenge.

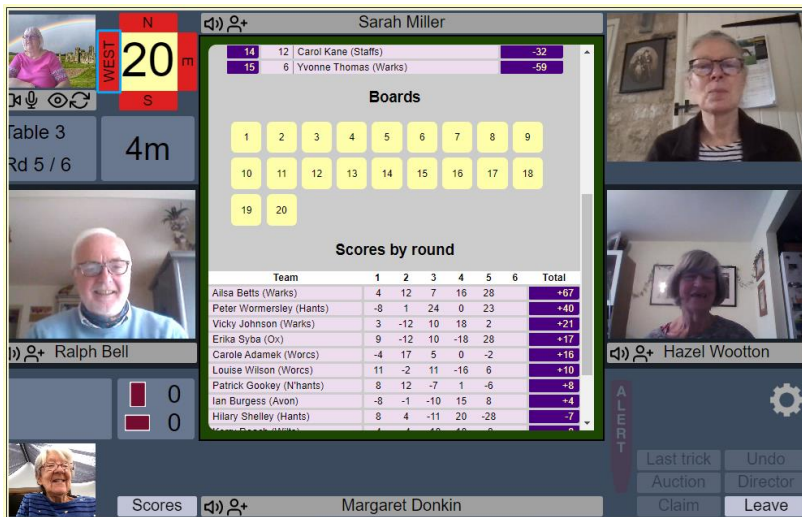
*Shirley, who has passed her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, says she was reluctant to play on-line to start with, "but soon I got used to the ease of playing bridge online and indeed I started to really look forward to playing. My confidence in particular grew, our game got better, and we get so much fun from the play."*

*Pat and Tony added "After the club had the foresight to introduce online bridge, it has proved a lifeline for us; an opportunity to stay close to our friends, and make new ones, by playing online bridge both socially and competitively."*

*Online bridge has no geographical boundaries and Gayle and Colin have particularly enjoyed being able to play with bridge playing friends from other parts of the UK – and have even been able to join friends in Australia for a game online.*

*Some of the less experienced players from the Club recently took part in the Midland Counties "6 High" (beginners) Teams event. Sarah Miller playing with Margaret Donkin, Ralph Bell and Hazel Wootton are seen here having a fun time on the Realbridge online platform! Sarah, said "these team events are great fun. You could describe it as speed dating meets online Bridge (not that she had tried the*

*former she hastened to add!) It's terrific to see there are so many people around the country enjoying the game as much as me!*



The spin off has not only been the chance to play a great game with friends in Lockdown but also has given many elderly folks confidence to use technology for zoom calls, shopping, and other necessary activities.

The take up of on-line Bridge has been incredibly popular and it was not long before Warminster Bridge Club moved from two to three sessions a week including a supervised play session for beginners every Monday morning.

Gillian said: "I like the scope for playing whenever free to do so. On-line bridge has been a saviour in lockdown."

Marianne from Frome added: "I don't drive at night now and prior to Lockdown I had to rely on friends to take me to the Warminster Bridge Club. I am now able to play online without leaving my own home. I am certainly glad to have the opportunity to play independently as contact with other people is so important"

Although many players are looking forward to getting back to Face-to-Face, nearly everyone expects to continue to play on-line as well.

A friendly club, Warminster Bridge Club now caters for every type of player with members ranging from complete beginners to good club players. Everyone is welcome. If you are thinking of taking up Bridge you'd be welcome at Warminster.

To learn more or to learn Bridge visit:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/warminster/>