



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION
1 APRIL 2012- 31 MARCH 2013**

The English Bridge Union is the governing body for duplicate bridge in England representing communities of bridge players at club, county and national level. It is funded by members for members and provides the infrastructure and development of the game in England.

This year has been one of consolidation and transition. We completed the targets we set ourselves in our five year strategic plan launched in 2008 and spent much of our time at Board level developing our strategic plan for the next 5 years. We have addressed each area of our activities and our report Bidding for the Future 2013-18 can be viewed on our website alongside the measurement of our achievements with our previous five year plan.

This annual report provides an insight in to the work that we do to support our clubs, counties and members and will be of interest to those individuals and organisations that, in turn, provide us with support to develop the game.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that make up our national team - the Directors of the Board and all the members of its standing and sub committees. And the dedicated team of staff under our General Manager, Barry Capal, at Aylesbury.

A full list of national volunteers and staff appears at the end of this report.

The statutory annual report and accounts compiled by our auditor will be able to be viewed on our website www.ebu.co.uk shortly after the EBU's Annual General Meeting on 2nd October 2013.

Yours sincerely

Sally Bugden
Chairman
English Bridge Union



The Board

The Board is made up of ten directors, eight elected by the shareholders - who are the representatives of our counties - and two appointed by the Board. The directors receive no remuneration for the work they undertake. They have legal and financial responsibilities as set out in the Company's Act 2006.

Each director takes responsibility for one or more aspects of the EBU's business. This responsibility includes budgetary control, delivering strategic objectives and regular reporting on the work of the department and committee associated with it. For the year 2012-13 the responsibilities were as follows:

Chairman – Sally Bugden

Vice Chairman – Andrew Petrie 1/4/12 – 2/10/12

Vice Chairman - Jeremy Dhondy 3/10/12

Treasurer – Michael Hill 1/4/12 -2/10/12

Treasurer - Andrew Petrie 3/10/12

Tournament Committee Chairman - Ian Payn

Selection Committee Chairman - Heather Dhondy

Laws and Ethics Committee Chairman - Jeremy Dhondy

Board Director responsible for Charity Conversion – Andrew Petrie

Board Director responsible for Education – Sally Bugden

Board Director responsible for facilitating the strategic plan – Jerry Cope

Board Director responsible for updating the financial five year plan- Michael Hill appointed 3/10/12

Board Director responsible for premises and retail – Malcolm Oliver appointed 3/10/12

Board Director responsible for staff development – Jerry Cope

National Club Committee Chairman – Val Gibson 3/10/12 – 15/1/13

National Club Committee Chairman – Sally Bugden 16/1/13

Editorial Board Chairman– Sally Bugden

Tournament Directors Development Group Chairman - Heather Dhondy

Board Director responsible for Bridge Great Britain – Jeremy Dhondy

Board Director responsible for European and World duplicate bridge affairs – Sally Bugden

Board Director responsible for Awards – Graham Jepson 2/10/13

Board Director responsible for Awards – Ron Millet 3/10/13

Like all regulated sports in England, the EBU has players who take part in international events. It is this very activity that doesn't allow us to register the whole of our organisation as a charity. The Board therefore took the decision to discontinue its investigations into complete registration of the EBU and took the route of registering its work in education and development as a charitable body. The majority of the year was taken with this task with registration scheduled for September 2013 with the launch of the charity scheduled for April 2014.



We finalised agreements with:

- The Scottish Bridge Union and Welsh Bridge Union on the British Simultaneous Pairs and we continue to work towards reciprocity of master point awards between our countries.
- The European Bridge League and World Bridge Federation in terms of the categories of members on whom we make our annual per capita payments. This is a necessary payment to ensure that we are represented internationally by players competing for England in international games and as an organisation. It also allows our members to be recognised by other national bridge organisations and play in any open events that they may run.
- Bridge Overseas Limited who had provided a very good service to the EBU for its Overseas Congresses over recent years and this has now been extended to include accommodation for our English congresses.

We finalised our five year strategic plan.

We developed a self certification process for our counties and their constitutions and we provided advice and guidance on corporate governance.

We said goodbye to our Honorary Counsel EBU Vice President David Harris and our Pro Bono Advisor, EBU Vice President Gerard Faulkner – to both of whom we extend our warmest and most grateful thanks for providing such an excellent service over many years as volunteers.

We welcomed David Ewart QC who agreed to be our new Honorary Counsel and Stephen Barnfield who agreed to be our new Pro Bono Advisor. We are grateful to both of them for taking on these national roles in a voluntary capacity.

Finance

In the light of the continuing difficult financial climate, the budget for 2012-13 was again fairly conservative and tight financial controls remained in place.

We are delighted to have turned a budgeted loss of £53,000 into a surplus of £8,000. Much of this was due to the hard work of staff and volunteers to ensure that the finances were managed for the best possible outcomes. The improvement was down to many factors and the annual accounts provide a detailed financial picture for all the EBU's activities and these will be available online shortly after the Annual General Meeting. A turn-round of £61,000 may appear very large but of course this represents only 3.4% of Turnover.

Our balance sheet remains strong with liquid reserves of £350,000 well in excess of the £225,000 currently set by the Board as a working, conservative safe level. It should be noted that in line with generally accepted practice, our building at Aylesbury appears in the Balance Sheet at its original cost (plus improvements) and not at current market value.



Club Services

Our new Club Liaison Officer, Andrew Urbanski was appointed in May 2012. He has made visits to over 40 clubs in various counties around the country including Essex, Nottinghamshire, Devon, Avon, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Merseyside and Cheshire as well as helping eight new clubs to affiliate. He has also finalised and electronically published the EBU Club Manager's Handbook, a service for our affiliated clubs packed full of useful and helpful information on running a duplicate bridge club, from administration and finance, through recruitment to tournament directing and scoring. It is a super addition to the services we provide to our affiliated clubs and can be accessed through the private section of our new website.

The National Club Committee met twice in the year, providing input on various issues including Blue Points, club development, English Bridge, the revised regulations and education.

The subsidised club courses to train teachers and tournament directors have been even more popular this year and we hope to encourage many more clubs to take part in the years to come.

Education and development

Club teacher courses – we have trained 94 club teachers during this financial year representing a growth of 25% on the previous year. We are also looking at increased sales of our Bridge for All Year 1 books at approximately 40% growth on the year demonstrating that our club teachers are recruiting and teaching students to play in their clubs.

We have trained approximately 300 tournament directors in the year. This course is increasingly popular with some clubs still to take advantage of the buy one get one free offer available to them.

Three Partner Teacher courses and one course aimed at assisting individuals to run duplicate bridge teaching on cruise ships were also run during the year – these courses are fully paid for by those taking part and the cruise teaching course is only open to English Bridge Union Teachers Association members.

Three Really Easy congresses also took place; in Derby in the Spring, Brighton in the Summer and Wroxton near Banbury in the Autumn. All of these events take place to try to encourage newcomers to try tournament play.

We also ran a Next Step Congress in Brighton for those players who are interested in tournament bridge but need to build their confidence before they play in a full EBU congress.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Bridge

This group goes from strength to strength under the Chairmanship of Baroness Ruth Henig of Lancaster. Meetings address the development and awareness of the benefits of bridge (particularly for young people and for senior citizens) and the promotion of enjoyment of the game, and bridge events, with the legislatures of other countries.



This year it was agreed to organise two visits from schools that play Minibridge. These outings are great fun and the school pupils and their teachers visit the Lord Speaker in her office, tour the Houses of Parliament and then play bridge in the beautiful River Room and are treated to tea at the end of a long afternoon. The children demonstrate without doubt the benefits of playing Minibridge at school.

We will continue to work on encouraging many more schools to take part in learning Minibridge through the EBU's Youth and Education Trust and we will also continue to work on raising the profile of this game with the government's Minister for Education, Michael Gove MP.

International Success

England's representation in international duplicate bridge competitions is an important part of the EBU's activities as a national bridge organisation. It provides us with an international profile in the bridge world and it also brings extra voting power within the European Bridge League (EBL) and the World Bridge Federation (WBF) – this gives us a stronger voice when participating at EBL and WBF general meetings.

The Selection Committee, made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU under the chairmanship of Board director Heather Dhondy, is responsible for selecting the teams to represent us internationally; these include Open, Women, Seniors and Juniors. It's been a very good year for England at international level:

- ***Open***

The Open team qualified for the Bermuda Bowl for the first time in a number of years, finishing a very creditable 4th in the European Championships

They also won the Camrose

- ***Women***

The Women won Gold at the European Championships and also won Gold at the World Mind sports Olympiad. Through their European win they qualified for the Venice Cup.

- ***Juniors***

The Juniors teams completed the double at the Home Internationals this year, winning both the Junior Camrose and the Peggy Bayer trophies.



Regulation

The Laws and Ethics Committee (L&E), made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU under the chairmanship of Board director Jeremy Dhondy, is responsible for the regulation of the game in England.

The main work over the past year has been a significant overhaul to our regulations, the first major review since 2006. That has led to a new Blue Book – which will replace the Orange and Tangerine Books - and White Book which will be published in our next financial year on August 1st 2013. These publications are both significantly slimmer than their predecessors and written in plainer English. The Blue Book includes the relatively few accepted applications received this year for new methods. Both publications are available electronically, free, from the website and will be updated annually.

The L&E have dealt with a significant number of disciplinary problems in the past year which have started in our clubs. In some cases these would be more easily resolved if the clubs concerned had a proper constitution and had applied it correctly. There is a model constitution provided by the EBU on which affiliated clubs can base their version if they wish. It is particularly important to have correct disciplinary processes even if the hope is not to have to use them very often. A behaviour code such as Best Behaviour at Bridge can be useful at all levels in determining expectations. The committee has produced a table of suggested standard penalties to help ensure consistency of decision. Whilst this is primarily intended for tournaments it can be adopted in whole or part by clubs and counties if they wish. The L&E will offer advice, if requested, to members and clubs on disciplinary matters. Occasionally disputes can be resolved by mediation and the EBU offers such a service.

Appeals from tournaments are reviewed by the L&E so that they can offer advice and ensure the consistency of decisions. An annual booklet of the major decisions is published and is available electronically from the EBU website. Appeals are reviewed and comments published in the minutes of their meetings.

There is a panel of referees appointed by the L&E who hear appeals at tournaments and act as telephone referees in knock out events, on a voluntary basis. They are also called upon from time to time to give rulings from club and county events.

Tournament Committee

The Tournament Committee, made up of seven elected individual members of the EBU under the chairmanship of Board Director Ian Payn, oversees the tournament programme of the EBU and reviews activities so that they meet the needs of those who currently play in and those who may like to play in our national competitions.

2012-13 has seen a great deal of change. Max Bavin retired as Chief Tournament Director, and Gordon Rainsford took over. Max's experience remains only a phone call away, and Gordon has taken to his new post with a will. Working closely with the staff at Aylesbury, the Tournament Directors and Tournament Committee, he has also involved himself in negotiations with Bridge Overseas, leading the EBU's drive to get better value for members by securing improved venue accommodation for our congresses and our tournament players.



We have faced a decline in entries over the past few years. We have researched this issue and are implementing actions which we hope will result in a steady increase over the coming years. A lot of work has gone into adapting this year's Brighton Congress to suit a changing world. This will be followed by a similar approach to other events. Attendances at events are monitored and analysed, and demographic information recorded and acted upon. It can't be stressed often enough that this group of national volunteers is a listening committee, in place not to preserve hidebound tradition, but to provide what's wanted by EBU members.

More sophisticated and targeted feedback forms are being introduced, and, in 2014, EBU Blue-Pointed holidays will be introduced in some very nice-looking venues around the country. This is in a response for a need for services from players who want to step outside the club world but are a little daunted by what they perceive as the "hothouse" world of tournament bridge. It's a further example of opening things up so that there are more services for every level of members.

A new format of presentation of our tournaments income and expenditure can be found in the appendix to our audited accounts which will appear on our website after our Annual General Meeting held on 2nd October 2013.

Tournament Directors Development Group

This subcommittee of the Board deals with the appraisal, promotion, development and management of the EBU's active tournament directors. It is chaired by Board Director, Heather Dhondy. This year has seen the retirement of several tournament directors, whom we thank for their work over the years. The group continues its work of recruiting, training and mentoring new tournament directors to continue the excellent service provided at our national tournaments and competitions.

English Bridge

The Editorial Board for English Bridge is a subcommittee of the Board chaired by EBU Board Chairman Sally Bugden. Jeremy Dhondy is a member of the Editorial Board along with the Editor, General Manager, Advertising Manager and Communications Officer of the EBU. During 2012-13 the rising costs of production and specifically postage has provided challenges to the Editorial Board. We have spent the year working on developments which we hope will enhance the important service that we provide to our members during the coming years.

EBU Headquarters at Aylesbury

We have a full time staff equivalent of just over seventeen, serving over fifty thousand members through the provision of tournaments, education, regulation, international support, club and membership support services including a shop providing bridge books and supplies and communications including Club Focus, Tournament Focus, Events Focus and Appeals Focus. It has been a particularly busy year with the following developments:

- ***Office refurbishment***

The Board determined that the EBU's premises at Aylesbury would be our headquarters for the foreseeable future.



After many years of neglect, money was spent on improving the fabric of the office to improve the staff working environment and to protect our investment in the building we own.

- ***Solar Panels***

We took advantage of the Government's substantial incentives for installing Solar Panels. We now have 96 solar panels on our flat roof which are totally invisible except from the sky! As well as being environmentally friendly, this is estimated to provide a return on investment in excess of 12% - very much better than is available from any savings account and which will be used for membership services and development. We will also have a much decreased electricity bill.

- ***National Grading Scheme***

The National Grading System went live during this year. It has added a layer of "fun" to our games which is liked by many. It also allows our clubs and counties to take a player's current playing ability in to account when seeding or handicapping events.

- ***New Website***

After much hard work, this went live in March and continues to be upgraded. We have had many compliments on the new site and the ease of the changeover.

- ***Success in the Media***

Our women's team's success in both the European and World Mind Sports Games in the summer resulted in some very good national media coverage for the event and our "Lavender Girls" in the Sunday Telegraph, the Sunday Times, the Daily Mail and on Sky News.

Public Honours

Two bridge players have received public honours and we send them our heartiest congratulations:

Andrew Robson was awarded an OBE for services to bridge and charity in the 2013 New Year's Honours list.

Although it falls slightly outside of our remit for reporting in this year, Janet de Botton was made a Dame in the Queen's birthday honours list in 2013 for services to the arts.

General Meetings and Shareholdings

The EBU is a company limited by shares. Our shareholders do not get any financial remuneration, their shareholdings and voting rights are based on the number of members their county has. There are two shareholder meetings a year, one of which is an annual general meeting. This report will be presented to the shareholders for discussion at the Annual General Meeting on 2nd October 2013.

For full details of our constitution and structure please see the EBU's Articles and Bye Laws available on the EBU's website www.ebu.co.uk or by request from Aylesbury on 01296 317200.

Sally Bugden, Chairman. For and on behalf of the Board of the English Bridge Union



Staff Members and National Volunteers 1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

Board

Sally Bugden, Jeremy Dhondy, Andrew Petrie, Jerry Cope, Heather Dhondy, Darren Evetts, Val Gibson, Mike Hill, Graham Jepson, Ron Millet, Malcolm Oliver, Ian Payn

Laws and Ethics Committee

Jeremy Dhondy, Frances Hinden, Mike Amos, David Burn, Tim Rees, Neil Morley, Martin Pool

Selection Committee

Heather Dhondy, Simon Cochemé, Andy Bowles, David Burn, Heather Bakhshi, Peter Baxter, Paul Hackett, Nick Smith, Tom Townsend

Tournament Committee

Ian Payn, Brian Crack, Margaret Curtis, Gillian Fawcett, Paul Hackett, Philip Mason, Addis Page

English Bridge Editorial Board

Sally Bugden, Elena Jeronimidis (Editor), Jeremy Dhondy, Chris Danby (Advertising Manager)

National Club Committee

Val Gibson, Sally Bugden, Colin O'Hara, David Latcham, Chris Harris, Trevor Ward, Barbara Herold

Tournament Directors Development Group

Heather Dhondy, Jeremy Dhondy, Joy Mayall, Martin Pool, Pat Davies, Gordon Rainsford

National Grading Scheme Working Group

Mike Christie, Barrie Partridge, Paul Bond, Paul Habershon, Andy Kittridge, Anthony Moon, Peter Lee

Honorary Counsel

David Ewart QC, David Harris.

Pro Bono Advisor

Stephen Barnfield, Gerard Faulkner

All the members of the disciplinary panel

National Awards Panel

Margaret Curtis, Philip Mason, Jeff Morris

Staff

General Manager	Barry Capal
English Bridge Editor	Elena Jeronimidis
Tournaments Manager/ Chief TD	Max Bavin to 31.10.12
Tournaments Manager/Chief TD	Gordon Rainsford from 1.11.12
Tournaments Administrator	Peter Jordan



Tournaments Administrator	Dawn Mertens
Tournaments Assistant	Gill Pain
Accounts Manager	Gail Nancarrow
Press & Communications Officer	Matt Betts
Club Liaison Officer	Andrew Urbanski
Bridge Shop Manager	Sue Humphris
Trading Assistant	Liz Goodchild
Education Manager,	John Pain
Laws & Ethics Secretary	John Pain
Education Assistant	Lisa Miller
Office Manager / Membership	Karen Durrell
Administration Assistant	Kay Carter
Membership/Accounts Assistant	Clare Burnage
Receptionist/Office Assistant	Julie Murray
Support Officer / Webmaster	Michael Clark
IT Support/ Masterpoints	Ian Mitchell
IT Assistant	Adam Lugmayer