

**Congress Secretary’s report for the 2016 AGM**

The 2016 Manchester Bridge Congress was held on Saturday and Sunday the 2nd and 3rd January at the V & A hotel. . On the Saturday there were 65 pairs in the Championship event and 19 pairs in the Player Progress Cup. On the Sunday there were 29 teams in the Championship Teams and 14 pairs in the Kevin Comrie Cup. See chart for comparisons with previous years.

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| MANCHESTER CONGRESS (statistics from Jeff Smith) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  | Pairs | Teams | Novice 1 | Novice 2 | Novice 3 | Novice 4 | Profit | Loss |   |
| 2000 | 72 | 35 | 18 | 6 | 16 | 10 |  | £992.00 |  |
| 2001 | 68 | 36 | 18 | 7 | 16 | 12 |  | £370.00 |  |
| 2002 | 71 | 35 | 11 | 8 | 12 | 14 |   | £533.00 |  |
| 2003 | 80 | 43 | 18 | 6 | 18 | 17 | £665.00 |   |  |
| 2004 | 66 | 37 | 20 | 6 | 15 | 11 |   | £472.00 |  |
| 2005 | 58 | 29 | 13 | 6 | 18 | 16 |   | £750.00 |  |
| 2006 | 58 | 32 | 13 | 5 | 12 | 12 |  |   |  |
| 2007 | 74 | 35 | 21 | 8 | 14 | 13 |  |  |  |
| 2008 | 66 | 33 | 15 | 0 | 18 | 9 |  |  |  |
| 2009 | 81 | 37 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2010 | 64 | 35 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 5 |  |  |  |
| 2011 | 72 | 36 | 8 |  | 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 2012 | 79 | 36 | 30 |  | 19 |  |  |  |  |
| 2013 | 74 | 36 | 13 |  | 12 |  |  |  |  |
| 2014 | 74 | 36 | 14 |  | 12 |  |  | £367.00 |  |
| 2015 | 68 | 29 | 14 |  | 20 |  |  | £685.00 |  |
| 2016 | 65 | 29 | 19 |  | 14 |  |  | £850.75 |  |
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 We had been concerned that the early date for the Congress might have affected the level of entries but this proved not to be the case. Once again the Congress attracted players from all over the country. About 1/3 of the players came from outside Manchester. There were fewer juniors this year than in previous years, but still a pleasing number. In the non-expert events the numbers of the Saturday were good but not so good on the Sunday. The feedback from participants in all competitions was that the Congress was well run and very enjoyable. Mike and Sarah Amos were excellent directors and ensured that the event ran smoothly. For the first time we had a bridge bookstall run by Gordon Bickley which was a useful addition. Congress is only successful because of the unpaid hard work put in by a large team of people. Thanks to everyone involved in the organisation of the event.

Jeff Smith and Marianne Farr from Lancashire won the Pairs Trophy on the Saturday, with Richard Winter and Tom Cohen of Yorkshire second winning the Men’s Pairs trophy also. Top Manchester pair were Sam Herman and Peter Jones.  They were followed by the winners of the Mixed Trophy Barry Myers and Sally Brock. Janet Tolan and Victor Ridding finished in a very creditable in sixth place and Eddie Thornton-Chan and Tony Hodgson who were seventh. The Ladies pairs trophy was won by Irene Davies and Karen Reissmann and the Intermediate Trophy was won by Ann Thornton and Michael Greaney. In the teams Alec Smalley, Michael Newman, Joy and Irving Blakey managed a score of +81 IMPs which would normally be a winning score, but Sally Brock, Barry Myers, John Currie and Rodney Lighton had a huge score of +115 IMPs to win by a large margin.
In the teams B final Jason Hackett's team also posted a score of over 100 IMPs for an emphatic win.
In the teams C final the Whitefield team of Avril Mattinson, Rosemary Rosenthal, Wendy Brentwood and Pam Ladbrooke were delighted to win in their first Congress. Laura Covil from Oxford won the Junior prize. In the Players Progress Cup Sue Jones and Carol Straffon were the winners . In the Kevin Comrie Cup Liz Downie and Margaret Kelly were the winners. Two quizzes were set by Michael Byrne and Raymond Semp and a caption competiton also kept players entertained.

The loss on the event has gone up from £685 last year to £850 this year. This was largely due to an increase of £400 on the cost of the venue and slightly higher costs for the Tournament Directors. (We also had a loss in respect of the tea and coffee which we have an honesty box for payment. We were £110 short of our £336 bill.) Entrance fees had been increased this year to £22.50 a day/ £40 for the weekend (from £20 and £35), but this did not compensate sufficiently for the loss. The loss we make on the Congress should be seen in the context of the amount of money the MCBA pays out each year for our elite players to play in national competitions. The Tollemache alone in 2015 cost the Association £1382 and the figure will be higher for 2016. This is money well spent but the money spent for Congress benefits a much wider section of our membership and should be considered in that light. We have decided to increase entry cost next year to £25 per day or £45 for the weekend. The entry fees for the Players Progress Cup and the Kevin Comrie Cup to increase by £1 to £8 for each event. The hotel’s charge for the room has been held at the same price.

**Other issues from Congress.**

* The 2017 event will again clash with the West Midlands Congress which has been brought forward a week. This presents problems for Mike & Sarah Amos who also TD that Congress. This issue is yet to be resolved.
* Car Parking was a big problem for lots of players. Despite advertising that there was a parking problem on our website many players came expecting to park in the old NCP car park next to the Hotel and were disappointed at having to park far away or pay £20 to use the Spinningfields car park. We will address this with better information for next year.
* There needs to be greater clarity on the Intermediate prizes criteria. Unfortunately, the criteria we used for determining the prize at the event was not the same as was on the leaflet. We will make sure that the leaflet has the right criteria next year.
* The dinner break on the Saturday was too long. The first session finished early and the restart time was not altered. We will be more flexible with the restart time next year. Hopefully, this will mean an earlier finish on Saturday night and still give plenty of time for a nice meal.
* The PA System broke down and we had to use the Hotel’s which we got at the knock down price of £60 for the weekend. It was supposed to be £300.Kevin Comrie has tried to get it fixed but to no avail. We need to consider whether to buy or hire a new system or do without.
* Mike Amos felt that the barometer scoring was very time consuming and for little purpose. He does not want to do it next year.

**Next year’s Congress will take place on the 7th & 8th January at the V & A.**

**Irene Davies Congress Secretary 24/4/2016**