

MANCHESTER COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 27TH MAY 2004 AT MANCHESTER BRIDGE CLUB

Present:

Jeff Smith (Chairman), Gordon Rice (Sec.), Bernard Kaye (Treasurer & Membership Sec.), Pat Buxton (Tournament Sec.), Kath Nelson (Congress Sec.), Howard Kay (Match Sec. & Chairman of Selectors), Bob Cooke (League Sec), Boris Ewart (Newsletter Editor), David Adelman (Schools & Teachers Liaison Officer), Michelle Brunner, Tracy Capal, Celia Comrie, Rhona Goldenfield, Eve Lighthill, Jenny Morris, Elena Rosenbaum, Joyce White, Fred Bell, Lance Bloohn, Michael Byrne, Kevin Comrie, David Debbage, Craig Fisher, Dick Fleishman, Bernard Goldenfield, John Holland, Gary Hyett, Rodney Lighton, Steve Mattinson, Alan Nelson, Ian Pendlebury, Marcello Rosenbaum, John Rudolf, Ron Scovell, Sid Travers

1. Apologies for Absence

Caryl Bloch, Barbara Lewis, Joel Bloch, Jeff Morris, Raymond Semp, Alex Smalley, Jeff Storry.

2 Minutes of Last AGM (1st May 2003) and Matters Arising

The Minutes were proposed as correct by Eve Lighthill and seconded by Bob Cooke.

3. Reports from the Officers

3.1. Chairman (Jeff Smith)

The Chairman thanked everyone for his or her help during his first year as Chairman. From the moment of accepting the position he had been directly involved in the Camrose and Corn Cardis which Manchester had been asked at a very late stage to host. The event was held at Cheadle House Conference Centre and with the help of many County members it was staged very successfully.

The County has been awarded the hosting of the Lady Milne Trophy in April 2005, which will be staged at Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre, Manchester. This was offered to the County in the light of the successful staging of the Camrose and Corn Cardis events.

The Chairman reported the sad news of the death of Mary Higson and Henry Huggill in April 2004 and February 2004. They had both been stalwarts in the Bridge scene within the County for many years. Mary had held many official positions and had almost single-handedly kept the County Association going during the 1960's. Henry was Chairman of the County Association for many years and had stepped down as President at the previous Annual General Meeting. They will both be missed.

3.2 Secretary (Gordon Rice)

The Secretary thanked everyone who had helped him during his first year in office. He had attended the County Secretaries Meeting in June 2003. Amongst the topics discussed at that meeting the following were salient:

- a) Modernisation of the EBU to become a Limited Company. This will avoid any personal liability of a Member acting on behalf of the EBU.
- b) Communications. The EBU are seeking to update their information base on Clubs. The County will be advised of any communication sent direct to a club within their respective Association.
- c) The EBU are actively seeking to increase membership and stressed that any poor attitude or rudeness in clubs will drive potential members away. Clubs should provide a warm welcoming environment to beginners and guests.

During the year the EBU had introduced CASS (Computer Assisted Scoring System) an on-line data facility. A C.D. had been sent to clubs. This will help clubs with their scoring administration and also allow direct crediting of Master Points. Various upgrades to the system will be published during the coming months.

3.3 Membership Secretary (Bernard Kaye)

The number of members had decreased during the year by 7.6%, from 841 members (31st March 2003) to 780 (31st March 2004); nationally the decrease in EBU numbers was 10%. Approximately 30% of the County's members pay their subscription by Direct Debit, which is the preferred method of payment by the EBU and the County. Members should be encouraged to pay their subscription by this method. Club fees had increased to £25 from £24 and Individual Members fees increased to £20 from £19. The Individual fee included the EBU subscription of £15.

In the Under 17 year old category we have 14 members, last year 34. In the Under 25 year old category there are 14 members, last year 20. The fees for the Under 17's had increased from £1 to £2 – this is paid by the County Association. The fees for the Under 25's had increased from £4 to £5 – this was reimbursed to those members in full time education.

One club has ceased affiliation to the EBU and it is thought some of their members may have cancelled their membership to the EBU.

In future years the Membership Secretary will endeavour to provide the total number of new members joining the County as well as those ceasing to be members.

3.4 Treasurer (Bernard Kaye)

The Treasurer thanked Bernard Goldenfield, for auditing the Accounts.

The treasurer reported a Loss of £2637 during the year ended 31st March 2004. Most of this was attributable to the decrease in entries to the Manchester Congress and the One Day Green Pointed Joint Ventures where Net Profit fell from £2142 (2002/03) to

£187 (2003/04). There was an exceptional attendance at the Manchester Congress in 2003 but the figures for 2004 were in line with years prior to 2003.

Travelling expenses by EBU Delegates had fallen during the year. However, where the County has a Delegate who is also a Board Member then the County has to pay the full expenses.

The entry fee for the Corwen Trophy appeared high but this was due to the timing of paying the entry fee. The fee for 2003 and 2004 fell within the current period. The cost of the Huggill Trophy also appeared high but this is borne only when the County hosts the event – once every 3 years.

There was an animated debate as to how costs could be reduced, and the Executive will be taking these forward. The Treasurer put forward suggestions to reduce costs:

- a. Consider election of EBU delegates who are not Board Members. Consider whether all delegates need to attend each meeting, but we will have to ensure continuity by our delegates.
- b. The Newsletter is expensive to produce – £1253 for the past year. We should consider whether it should be produced regularly in the same format or perhaps produced in print annually with the remaining editions published on the County web site.
- c. Manchester Congress. It is important that we break-even for the 2005 Congress. The prize structure should be implemented only after all costs are known.

The accounts were accepted as a true record and were proposed by Kevin Comrie and seconded by Bernard Goldenfield.

3.5 Congress Secretary (Kath Nelson)

The role of the Congress Secretary has changed over the years and now includes responsibility for the “One Day Green Pointed Events” organised in conjunction with Lancashire C.B.A. and Merseyside & Cheshire C.B.A. These events have been renamed as “North West Green Pointed” as it was felt that some players were only supporting their own county’s events, when in fact all resources are pooled. 50% of the profit for each event is sent to the E.B.U. and the remaining 50% is shared equally between the 3 Associations. It now costs members approximately £20 to enter these events. It will now be possible to store Bridge Tables at the Risley venue, free of charge, which will be a cost saving to each county.

Attendances for the events for the past 3 joint events were:

July 2003	Pairs 72	Teams 39
March 2004	Pairs 94	Teams 27
May 2004	Pairs 88	Teams 38

The Manchester Congress was again held over the first weekend of the New Year at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel. Attendance figures were similar to the first three

years of the Congress; last years attendance was exceptional due to a larger number of visiting players. The loss as stated in the Treasurer's report was largely due an increase charged by the hotel and the need for emergency Duplimated Boards for the Sunday Teams event. The 2005 Congress will be held in a new venue within the nearby C.I.S. complex, as the Hotel is unable to accommodate us due to their calendar.

The Secretary thanked Bernard Kaye and John Rudolf for their help in transporting the tables to the venue thus reducing costs. She also said that after many years as Congress Secretary she had decided to step down but will contribute help to the Manchester Association. The Chairman thanked her on behalf of M.C.B.A for all the work she has put into her role and a presentation was made to Kath.

3.6 Tournament Secretary (Pat Buxton)

The first event in the calendar was the Manchester Congress. The report was contained in the Congress Secretary's remarks.

The Gazette Cup for teams of 8 was held in February with 7 teams participating, 2 more than on the previous occasion. The winners were Manchester "A" team who will represent the County in the Garden Cities Trophy.

The following week the Ben Franks Trophy was played for, John Holland and Allan Purdy winning the event. They and the next 3 pairs will play in the Corwen Trophy later in the year. The Ben Franks had been postponed from the original date in December 2003 because the County had been asked at a very late date to stage the Corn Cairdis and Camrose Match v Republic of Ireland. 25 pairs competed in this years Ben Franks as opposed to 42 the previous year.

The Cantor Cup for novices and improvers was held at Altrincham Bridge Club. 26 pairs participated and once again it was a very successful event.

The Roy Higson Cup and Plate competitions were completed successfully during the year. The "Curry Eaters" won the Cup and "Acolytes" won the Plate.

A new event is being held on 10 June 2004. It is an individual Bridge/Golf competition being held at Whitefield Golf Club – this was suggested by and organised by Tracy Capal.

The Secretary thanked Irena Grugulis, Barbara Lewis, Bob Cooke, Steve Mattinson and Jeff Smith for their help with the above events, also Tony Woollen, Peter Dawson and Jeff Smith who acted as Directors.

3.7 Match Secretary (Howard Kay)

Matches against Derbyshire and Yorkshire have been arranged for August and July respectively. An invitation to play in "The President's Cup" has just been received prior to the A.G.M. and it is expected that a team will be entered.

The “Huggill Trophy”, played between Manchester C.B.A., Lancashire C.B.A. and Merseyside & Cheshire C.B.A. will also be staged in Chester in July.

After 6 years as Match Secretary, Howard has decided to step down from office. The Chairman thanked Howard for his work throughout those years and a presentation was made to him.

3.8 League Secretary (Bob Cooke)

The Secretary gave figures for teams participating in the past year:

League	101	(107 previous year)
Roy Higson Cup	67	(73 previous year)
Newcomers League	7	(9 previous year)

Apart from using the “Card System” for receiving league and cup results the Secretary now receives results via the Internet – this is his preferred system.

The top three league divisions are to be restructured into a columnar form for the coming season. Each division will have 11 teams with 3 teams being promoted and relegated at the end of the season, but 4 teams being relegated from the new “3rd Division” to what is currently Divisions 2A & 2B.

The complete draw for the Roy Higson Cup will be made at the start of the new season so that winning teams will know whom their next opponents will be. Dates for playing each round of the Cup will be strictly adhered to. The draw for the Plate event will continue as at present.

The Secretary thanked Elena Rosenbaum for her work in distributing and collecting the various cups and trophies for the league: David Pennington for forwarding the league results left at Cheadle Hulme Bridge Club: Jeff Morris for finding new teams: Rodney Lighton for Publishing results on the web site.

It was suggested that the “Roy Higson Cup” and “Plate” should be re-named the “Roy and Mary Higson Cup” and “Plate”. The possibility of having the trophies altered will be looked at.

There was considerable debate on league issues and a suggestion made that a sub-committee be set up to support the League Secretary. He felt there was no need.

3.9 Newsletter Editor (Boris Ewart)

This is produced 4 times a year. Each edition has 1000 copies printed with 900 copies being distributed through the E.B.U. and 100 copies posted to others outside of M.C.B.A. area.

The editor said this cost the Association £1253 and he queried its value. He proposes to publish the letter on the M.C.B.A. Web site with the possibility of printing one edition to announce the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

This proposal will be taken forward at the next Executive Meeting.

3.10 Chairman of Selectors (Howard Kay)

The chairman said that the team to represent the County Association in the “Tollemache Trophy” was chosen from the best players available on that date. The Selection Committee picked players to represent the County in all other events.

3.11/12 Schools and Youth Officers/Teachers Liaison Officer

A new event “The Easter Mini Bridge Challenge” was held with 36 players competing. A forthcoming event will be held in Harrogate on the first Sunday in July at Harrogate. Teams entering will be competing in the “Under 12 year old” and “Under 16 year old “ categories.

David Adelman said he hoped many of the Mini Bridge players will go on to become Bridge players and wanted the County to do all it can to help.

3.13 Press & Publicity (Jeff Morris)

Jeff Morris had given apologies for his absence. As reported in the Chairman’s remarks the County had staged with great success the Camrose Match (v Republic of Ireland) and Corn Cardis Match. These events received great publicity including “A.A. Road Signs”.

3.14 E.B.U. Delegates

1. “Bridge for All”. The delegates reported that some Counties continued successfully teaching “Bridge for All” whilst other Counties had not taken up this scheme.
2. Master Points/ Ranking Scheme. The E.B.U. were setting up a committee to review the whole concept and will report back to the Counties at a later date.
3. A National Bridge Centre was being located at Kettering Leisure Centre
4. To ensure that the best teams can represent each County a request had been made that the dates of events such as the “Tollemache” should not clash with major international events.
5. The E.B.U. had indicated that “Bridge Tours” by Andrew Robson, Ron Klinger were being arranged for 14-18 September 2004 and 1 – 20 October 2004 and that the Hackett family will be giving tours in April 2005. It was hoped that some of these may be held in the County but as yet no details are available.

4-7. Election of Officials.

The following people were elected to hold the under-mentioned positions for the coming year:

President:	Eve Lighthill
Chairman:	Jeff Smith
Vice Chairman:	Kevin Comrie
Secretary:	Gordon Rice
Membership Secretary:	Bernard Kaye
Treasurer:	Bernard Kaye
Congress Secretary:	Steve Mattinson
Tournament Secretary:	Pat Buxton
Match Secretary:	Maurice Super
League Secretary:	Bob Cooke
Newsletter Secretary:	Boris Ewart
Schools/Youth Officers:	David Adelman & Jeff Morris
Teachers Liaison:	David Adelman
Press & Publicity:	Jeff Morris
E.B.U. Delegates:	Bernard Kaye, John Rudolf, Jeff Smith
E.B.U. Alternates:	Maurice Super, Gordon Rice.
Auditor:	Bernard Goldenfield
Selectors:	Rhona Goldenfield, Michael Byrne, Kevin Comrie, David Debbage and John Holland.

8. Any Other Business

1. The name of the web site was questioned and whether this should be changed to reflect the County Association's name. However, the cost of doing this did not represent the best use of the County's funds. The web site can be found on:
www.lighton.btinternet.co.uk
2. Inter-County League. The formation of an Inter-County League has been resurrected. Merseyside & Cheshire C.B.A. and Yorkshire C.B.A. have been very positive in their approaches. Lancashire C.B.A. are becoming more positive. Discussions are still continuing.
3. As there are a number of professional bridge players competing in the league and cup a proposal was put forward to award a trophy to the "Best Amateur" team. This motion was defeated.

The meeting closed at 10.55 pm. Manchester Bridge Club were thanked for providing hospitality.

