

**MCBA Chair’s Report for the AGM 2016**

* It has been quite a good year for Manchester County Bridge. In the context nationally of a fall in the numbers playing bridge the county has made some steps forward. Our overall membership has increased from 1397 to 1463. Entries to our County competitions have also increased from 746 to 786. The University of Manchester again has a thriving bridge society. We also welcomed Stretford Bridge Club back into the County and almost immediately they produced a team for the Gazette Cup.
* Our Manchester League, despite a slight fall in numbers, is the second largest in the Country and probably the largest if you take the ratio of teams to members. We have 4 teams in the Northern Bridge League despite having only half the members of Lancashire and one third of the members of Yorkshire.
* Our members have been at the forefront of Competition both locally and nationally. It has been a particularly outstanding year for John Holland, winning the Gold Cup, the Sunday Telegraph salver again and representing England at Senior level in the World Championships.
* Bridge education in Manchester is thriving. Large numbers of new players are being introduced into the game in our clubs and courses. Improvers seminars are well attended as are the seminars organised by the County for our Northern Bridge League players in the different divisions. We need to work on maintaining the enthusiasm of our new recruits and developing them into regular duplicate players and from there into county competition players and beyond.
* On the financial side we have had to dip into our reserves this year. As a consequence we have increased entry fees by a modest amount for most of our competitions .
* We have had 4 new executive members this year organising different aspects of bridge in Manchester. Haidee Tattersall has taken over as Treasurer, Ann Thornton is the new Tournament Secretary, Karen Sandler has taken over as Membership Secretary and Ken Hassell has for the past year been the Chair of Selectors. They have worked hard and with support from the rest of the MCBA Committee they have settle in well.

**2015-16 Roll of Honour.**

**National Competitions**

**Corwen Trophy** Ken Hassell and Raymond Semp were are best placed pair, finishing fifth in June 2015

**Garden Cities** The Manchester Bridge Club Team of Michael Byrne/Michael Newman, Alan Mould/John Holland, John Hassett/Jeff Morris and Andrew Woodcock/Catherine Draper won the Garden Cities trophy at Solihull on Saturday 13th June.

**Premier League** In the first division Jason and Justin Hackett's team won and the twins were the leading pair on the cross IMPs.  Michael Byrne's team survived in sixth place, but John Holland's team finished seventh and is relegated.  The second division finished with Paul Hackett’s team dropping to third place.

**National On-line knockout competition** was won by Michael Byrne’s team in June.

**Brighton Congress** In August Michael Byrne (playing with Kieran Dyke) finished first equal in the four session Swiss Pairs in a field of 287 pairs (they won the trophy on a tie splitting procedure).   
In the Under 25 pairs on Tuesday Sean Mekie won with Basil Letts.    
Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield were fourth in the Senior Pairs, with John Holland and Erika Slatcher second in the B final.  
Rhona Goldenfield and Michael Byrne were second in the Mixed Pairs.  
Michael Byrne won the midweek knockout teams with (Tom Paske, Steve Raine, Chris Cooper, Tom Townsend and Alastair Kent.)

**Rhodes Overseas Congress** In the EBU holiday congress Swiss teams on 12-13th October Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield.  In the Ladies pairs was won by Pauline Lang (playing with Babs Matthews.)

**EBU Autumn Congress** At Peterborough on 17th-18th October Michael Byrne was second in the Swiss pairs(with Kieran Dyke) and was second in the main teams event (with Kieran Dyke, Dinah Caplan and Marion Robertson.)

**Gold Cup** John Holland won Britain's most prestigious competition at Solihull on 11-13th December.  John, who has won virtually every other national event, has never won the Gold Cup, though his team only lost by 2 IMPs in the 2006 final.  John and partner Ben Green played every board in the final stages beating the holders (Allfrey, Robson, Forrester, Gold, Bakhshi, McIntosh) in the quarter finals on Friday and then Peter Lee's team in the semis by 98 IMPs.  In the final against Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Taf Anthias and Chris Dixon they were virtually level after three sets, but won 34 in the fourth set.  Two more sets of small losses followed by a 31 IMP gain in the seventh set, aided by a somewhat fortunate slam swing of around 30 IMPs when Myers-Brock bid a grand slam going off on a 4-1 break, left John's team 58 IMPs up with eight to play.  Nothing dramatic happened in the last set and John's team ran out worthy winners by 65 IMPs. (John’s other team members were: Simon Cope Peter Crouch and Nicola Smith.)

**European Seniors Trial**

The first stage of the trials for the England Senior Team took place in Solihull from 18th-20th December.  John Holland played with Gunnar Hallberg in a team captained by Paul Hackett.  They overtook the Penfold team in the last twelve board segment. However, the Hackett team lost in a play off in January to the Penfold team. But, John Holland secured his place to play for England Seniors in the European championships in Budapest in June.

**Northern Year End Congress** John Holland and Alan Mould repeated their success of last year when they won the Swiss Pairs at Clayton-le-Moors on 27-28th December. In the Swiss Teams with one match to go Alan Mould, John Holland, Rodney Lighton and John Currie were leading and played Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield, Irving and Joy Blakey who were 7 VPs behind in third place.  The deals were very exciting including two grand slams and a small slam as well as a couple of difficult game hands.  There were swings on every board; the Goldenfields and Blakeys outplayed the opposition to win 17-3 and finish second in the event.  Two other teams won 20-0 in their last matches to overtake the Mould team

**Sunday Telegraph Salver** John Holland won the yearly Masterpoint competition and with it the Sunday Telegraph Salver for the third year running and for the fifth time overall. He also leads in the Gold point competition.

**National Teams Congress** In the point-a-board event at Birmingham on 16-17th January Michael Byrne's team (Kieran Dyke, Andrew Murphy, Ed Jones) were second and John Holland's team (Ben Green, Jeremy Dhondy, Brian Callaghan) finished third.

**Cyprus Congress** In the EBU overseas congress from the 1st-7th February Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield won the teams event playing with Warner Solomon and Sandy Davies.

**Ranked Masters Events** Events for each ranking were held in Birmingham over the weekend of 27-28th February.  Manchester players did well with Kath Nelson second in the Premier Grand Masters playing with Steve Auchterlonie of Kent, Peter Foster won the Premier Life Masters with John Liebeschutz of Cambridge, Tom Slater was second in the National Masters with Rob Dixon of Oxford and Sean Mekie was second in the Regional Masters with Laura Covill also from Oxford.

**Portland Bowl** Manchester University A reached the semi- finals of the Portland Bowl ( a competition for university bridge teams.) by beating Cambridge University A in an online match.  The team, led by England Under 25 squad member Toby Nonnenmacher included Henry Bissell, Ernest Au, Sophie Harper and Max Sampson lost in the semi- final to Cambridge B.

**Regional Pairs** John Holland and Tony Coley finished second in the Northern section of the National Pairs at Bradford on 13th March and qualified for the National Pairs Final in April along with Gary Hyett who played with Dan Crofts in Solihull.

**Portland Pairs** Congratulations to Irene Davies and Roger Hopton who were an excellent fourth out of 360 in the EBU Mixed Pairs event on 20th March.  Playing at Brierfield they had a 59% first session to be in 27th place, then a small improvement in the second session to 61.5% gave them an average of 60.5% about 2% behind the winners.

**Easter Festivals** In the Northern Easter Festival at Ilkley Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield won the Swiss Pairs without losing a match, well ahead of second placed Alan Mould and John Holland.  Also, Bernard and Rhona teamed up with Irving and Joy Blakey to finish second ahead of John Holland, Alan Mould, Gary Hyett (and Willie Crook) in the teams event.

Meanwhile in London Michael Byrne (with Kieran Dyke) finished second in the In the Swiss Pairs and Kath and Alan Nelson teamed up with former MCBA members Steve Egington and Bill Hirst to finish 3rd in the Teams.

**Schapiro Spring Foursomes.** Manchester's Toby Nonnenmacher won the main consolation event at the Schapiro Spring Fours over the bank holiday weekend at the start of May. His teammates were Ben Norton (Leics), Ankush Khandelwal (Notts), Alex Roberts (Mersey/Cheshire). They were knocked out of the main competition at an early stage. They then reached the knockout stages of the Punch Bowl after finishing second in their eight team group, and won three matches in the knockout to take the trophy.

**Garden Cities Regional Finals** The Manchester Bridge Club team of Edward Levy, Robert Myers, David Sarabowski, Andy Green, Jason Hackett, Adrian Kenworthy, John Hassett and Jeff Morris won the Northern regional final of the Garden Cities Trophy at Bradford on 7th May.  They progress to the national final in June.

**County Competitions**

**Riviera Congress:** Nicholas Greer and Sean Mekie won the Teams event (with Mike Bell & Bill Gardener)

**Scarborough Congress:** John Holland & Alan Mould won the team event (with Jeremy Dhondy and Bill Hirst)

**EBU Northern Midweek Congress**  Paul Worswick and Dave Hammonds finished second in the pairs at Clayton-le-Moors on 25-26th August.

**Bolton Congress** In the Ladies pairs Rhona Goldenfield won with Marianne Farr.  Roger Hopton and Lance Bloohn were second in the pairs.  In the teams Rodney Lighton, John Currie, Neil Thomas and Nicholas Greer came first

**Cumbria/Westmorland Green Point Events** The Swiss Teams was won by Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield (with Jeff Smith and Jackie Pye of Lancashire) and in the Swiss Pairs Neil Thomas and Rodney Lighton won.

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| **Great Northern Swiss Pairs** Michael Byrne( with Kieran Dyke from London) followed up their win in Brighton with a comfortable win at Leeds on 3-4th October.  **Chester Bowl** John Fitzgerald and Adam Wiseberg from Altrincham won the consolation event with a fine score of 66% in the charity pairs at Deva on Sunday 18th October.  **Lancashire Swiss Teams** Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield, Irving and Joy Blakey finished a close second in the green point teams at Blackburn on Sunday 25th October.  **Pendle Witch Pairs**  Barbara Eastabrook and Karen Jones played really well and were delighted to win the non-expert prize and trophy.  John Currie and Rodney Lighton won overall for the second year running.  Session prizes were won by Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield and Ken Hassell and Ian Kane  **Llangollen Swiss Teams** Michael Byrne and Gary Hyett (playing with Tommy Garvey and Hugh McGann of Ireland) won the two day event at Llangollen on 14-15th November ahead of Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield who played with Jim Luck and Adrian Thomas of Wales.  **Lytham Rose Bowl** Paul Worswick and Dave Hammonds won the Lytham Rose Bowl in December in a field of 22 pairs.  **Preston Teams.** The clear winners were Kath and Alan Nelson with Jackie Pye and Jeff Smith ahead of Catherine Draper, Andrew Woodcock and Liz and Bill Wattleworth of Lancashire.    **LCBA Butler Pairs** Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield won the event at Lytham in January ahead of Jackie Pye and Jeff Smith.  **Chester Congress** Several Manchester players went to Deva bridge club for their congress on 30-31 January.  Successes were recorded by Pauline Lang and Rod Franks who were second equal in the pairs and in the Swiss Teams by Michael Newman and Ollie Burgess who won by a large margin playing with Andrew Woodcock and Catherine Draper of Lancashire.  **East Wales Swiss**  Bill and Joyce White playing with (Babs and Tim Matthews of Cumbria) came second in a field of 38 teams at Newport on 13-14th Feb’  **Harrogate Congress** John Holland finished third in the Swiss Pairs playing with Clive Owen.  **North Wales Swiss Teams** Kath and Alan Nelson with Rhona and Bernard Goldenfield won at Wrexham on Sunday 3rd April.  **Jersey Festival**  Joy and Irving Blakey finished second in the Swiss Pairs in a field of 58 pairs at the EBU event at the end of April.  In the teams Joy and Irving Blakey, Rhona and Bernard Goldenfield were third and in the senior pairs Joy and Irving were second with Rhona and Bernard third.  Rhona and Bernard won the mid-week pairs and Joy, Irving, Rhona and Bernard won the seniors multiple teams.  **Blackburn Open Swiss Pairs**  Manchester players dominated this event on Sunday 8th May.  John Holland and Brian Senior who were practising for the European Seniors next month unsurprisingly won, losing only one match to David Hammonds and Paul Beckwith who finished a close second.  Bernard and Rhona Goldenfield recovered from an indifferent first session scoring 59 out of 60 in the evening to finish third.  **International Competition**  **World Championships in Chennai** Manchester players involved were John Holland partnering Gunnar Hallberg and Paul Hackett partnering David Mossop in the seniors, also playing were Colin Simpson and David Price.  In the open Jason and Justin Hackett played with Tony Forrester, Andrew Robson, David Gold and David Bakhshi.  Lancashire's Catherine Draper played in the women's team.The women’s team won the Bronze medal and the Seniors and Open teams lost narrowly in the quarter finals.  **Paris Open Youth Competition** Sean Mekie of Manchester (though currently resident in Devon) played with Nick Dean, Chris Derrick and Thomas Brass representing England Under 25s.  **Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer** The Under 26 and Under 21 home internationals took place from 19th-21st February in Edinburgh.  Manchester interest was provided in the U26 event by Sean Mekie, a Manchester member currently living in the South and by Toby Nonnenmacher, a London member currently living in Manchester.  Having trailed to Scotland in the U26 event most of the weekend, England overtook them by winning the final set of 14 boards 66-4. Michael Byrne was the Non-Playing Captain (NPC) of the under 20 team. Michael was also the NPC to the under 20 team in the European Youth Bridge Tournamnent in Norway in July 2015.  **French Trials in Paris** The French Bridge Federation held their Open trials with a novel format (19th-21st April). They invited six pairs from England to play against their top six pairs.  John Holland played with Ben Green and Michael Byrne with Mike Bell. John Holland had the best English Average.  **Well done to you all!**  Irene Davies 9/5/16 |