**Reports from Officers for March 2021 MCBA Council Meeting**

**Chair (Irene Davies)**

Since November the Exec has met twice to deal with day to day matters for the County. We have also discussed matters such as the return to F2F bridge.

The Exec has co-opted Susan Triggs, Alec Smalley and Rodney Lighton to attend these meetings.

All clubs except Prestbury now have some online presence either on BBO or RealBridge. And numbers attending on-line sessions are good. The County continues to run three sessions a week (one being for non-experts, with a Charity Pairs once a month).

The Membership sub-committee has ceased to function, but an emphasis on teaching Beginners Bridge has been maintained. We now have 14 teachers teaching on-line in the area. We held a meeting for these teachers February and are planning to hold a training session on a new bridge teaching platform in the next month.

**Secretary (Alan Mould)**

As might be expected an extremely quiet period. My main duties have been minuting the executive meetings which have taken place more or less monthly, the minutes of which are available on the website. There has been a minimal amount of correspondence from the EBU.

**Treasurer (Joy Blakey)**

MCBA continues in its quest to support its members by bringing bridge competition opportunities to the whole community in these continuing unprecedented times.

There is much to do in the ‘Treasury’; checking entries for all the leagues and competitions, calculating correct payments to Directors, the EBU for UMS and RealBridge charges; collecting money for our Charity Wednesday and ensuring it arrives at the right place and checking the EBU’s contribution to the County for all the BBO games, paying County entry fees, UMS to the EBU for everything that happens on line, etc. etc. etc.

Happily everything is under control. So far, since April last year, we have raised over £10,000 for charity. Additionally, we have donated £1,000 to the EBU.

Traditionally, our main source of income came from league entries and UMS recovered from the EBU; Last November the Executive took the decision to stop the County’s portion of UMS paid to the EBU by our affiliated clubs and indeed repaid all the County’s share to those clubs for the period between May and October 2020.

Online entry fees are obviously much reduced commensurate with our expenses and the situation at both the Bank and Building Society remains stable.

**League Secretary (Adam Wiseberg)**

We are now into season 6 and the format still appears very popular with the participants.

I expect that we will continue with this until such time that F2F is deemed safe to resume.

Each time teams have dropped out I have managed to find replacements.

In Season 6 there are 7 teams in Division 7 so the season has to run for an additional two weeks. There will be two promotions from Div 7 to Div 6 and a corresponding two relegations.

Hopefully we may be able to resume Face to Face bridge by September and set a new league commencing on the usual date.

**Higson Cup Secretary (Adam Wiseberg)**

All teams have until 31st March to play their remaining matches online.

Some matches have taken place and some teams have conceded in both the Cup & Plate.

The Cup final will be contested between 6 teams over 50 boards – 5 matches of 10 boards. All teams will be handicapped according to their combined NGS. The plate final will be contested between 8 teams, probably playing a total of 48 boards.

Once the final has taken place, I will assess whether it is feasible to run another online Higson Cup competition between April and September.

Hopefully we may be able to resume Face to Face bridge by then.

**Goldstone Trophy Secretary (Roger Hopton)**

Competition completed, Jeff Morris's team won the final and will represent Manchester in the Pachabo 2021.

Next competition will start in September, hopefully F2F.

**Membership Secretary (Alan Mould)**

As I said in my previous report, I am unconvinced that the membership data is terribly meaningful at the moment given the continued lockdown so that people are unable to play in clubs and have to play online. MCBA membership has also been artificially slightly increased due to Adam’s laudable insistence that anyone who plays in our lockdown league or plays in our online pairs events in any consistent manner has to join MCBA.

I give below the data from the EBU as of 4th August 2020, as of 15th November 2020, and as of 23rd February 2021

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Member** | **Total****04/08/2020** | **Total****15/11/2020** | **Total 23/02/2021** |
| P2P | **1400** | **1405** | **1396** |
| Direct members |  **42** | **44** | **45** |
| Students (People on the EBED register as learning bridge) |  **21** | **21** | **20** |
| Total from spreadsheet |  **1463** | **1470** | **1461** |

So, as can be seen, there is almost no difference in numbers over the last 7 months.

Dealing only with the data of 23rd November, of the 1461 members, 1415 have primary allegiance to Manchester, and 46 have secondary allegiance. Of the 43 secondary all bar 3 are Pay to Play members, the remaining 3 being direct members who live way outside the county boundaries.

Under the EBED category the following are listed:

* 283 people listed as EBTA (ie teachers), all of which are Pay to Play bar 1. This is down from 28 in November
* 20 people listed as “BFA Year 1” who are the same 20 listed in the student category. This is not surprising as this means they are on year 1 of a 2 year teaching programme. All have Trafford Bridge Club listed as club of primary allegiance. Trafford BC is unique of Manchester clubs in enrolling their learners as EBED students
* All others are listed as “none” under EBED.

**Club Numbers**

I have given the MCBA primary clubs and numbers below. Clubs will obviously have their own records, but I thought people might be interested to see what the EBU records show. There are actually 51 bridge clubs listed as primary in the spreadsheet scattered all over the country. This will be the result of Adam enrolling people as members of MCBA when they play in our online events. I have thus ignored everything except the MCBA affiliated clubs and simply listed the numbers in them. This does mean of course that the total is NOT 1461 since all of the “other” clubs are missing. Again, I give the number as of 4th August, as of 15th November and as of 23rd November.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Primary Club** | **Number****04/08/2020** | **Number****15/11/2020** | **Number 23/02/2021** |
| Altrincham Bridge Club |  **210** | **218** | **218** |
| Ashton and District Bridge Club |  **105** | **107** | **105** |
| Besses O’Th’barn Bridge Club |  **43** | **43** | **43** |
| Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme Bridge Centre\* | **-** | **119** | **124** |
| Bramhall Green Bridge Club |  **60** | **48** | **47** |
| Bramhall Village Bridge Club\* |  **52** | **-** | **-** |
| Cheadle Hulme Bridge Club\* |  **95** | **-** | **-** |
| Manchester Bridge Club | **201** | **203** | **206** |
| Marple Duplicate Bridge Club |  **61** | **66** | **67** |
| Prestbury Duplicate Bridge Club | **67** | **71** | **69** |
| Stretford Bridge Club | **74** | **75** | **74** |
| Trafford Bridge Club | **261** | **275** | **274** |
| Total |  **1229** | **1225** | **1227** |

\* Bramhall Village Bridge Club and Cheadle Hulme Bridge Club have merged to become Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme Bridge Centre. Hence the odd numbers. It is also possible some numbers have yet to be transferred on the EBU system.

In addition, we have 30 primary members listed as no club and 3 secondary members listed as no club. All bar one are direct members as you would expect. The other 12 direct members (45-33) are scattered amongst MCBA affiliated and other clubs.

Of the members who list a primary club, 312 also list a secondary club, sometimes several. Usually these are MCBA affiliated clubs, but not always, with clubs such as Bury Athenaeum or Preston featuring.

I reported in November that there were 17 members whose primary club is listed as Manchester University Bridge Club, though none of them are listed as students and all have D.O.B.s of 1994 or before. I contacted the EBU about this who have removed MUBC from them all, but have left the club open in case it reappears anytime.

**Tournament Secretary (David Tilley)**

No report to date.

**Congress Secretary (Irene Davies)**

The Manchester Congress was held on-line this year on the 2nd and 3rd January. 44 pairs competed in the Championship Pairs on the Saturday. Michael Byrne and Kay Preddy winning. In second place were John Currie and Rodney Lighton, who won the Mens’ Pairs title. In third place were John Holland and Alan Mould. Rhona Goldenfield and Marianne Farr won the Ladies Pairs, Norman and Louise Selway won the Mixed Pairs.

Also, on the Saturday was the Intermediates Players’ Progress Cup which was won by Angela Adams and Leonie Pulford from Oxfordshire. 23 pairs competed.

The Championship teams event on the Sunday attracted 26 teams. The main final was won by Sally Brock, Barry Myers, Jovanka Smederevac and Rodney Lighton. The B final was won by Stuart Shalom, Phillip Taylor, Paul Murray and Mike Wakefield. The C Final was won by Felicity Kay, John Wilmot, Bill Richardson and Gaynor Williams.

The Kevin Comrie Cup for Intermediates on the Sunday attracted a field of 26 pairs and was won by Michael Benton and Fred Bechman from Hertfordshire.

Many thanks to Adam Wiseberg and the on-line sub-committee for all their hard work in organising the event. Thanks also to the directors, Ken Johnston, Alec Smalley and Josh Clarke.

Congress 2022. Should we look at booking the Marriot V & A now for 8th and 9th January 2022?

**Match Secretary (Michael Byrne)**

No report to date.

**Green Point Secretary (Rhona Goldenfield)**

I contacted the EBU to check we had a licence for March 6 2021 and informed them we are holding it on line. I will send out details to my contacts when I am given them by the online committee who will be organising it.

Are we hopeful about July teams F2F? if on-line then we will run it as teams.

**Chair of Selectors (Report by Secretary – John Roberts)**

The functioning of the selection Committee continues to be affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Face to face selection meetings continue to be replaced by regular Zoom conference meetings and the use of frequent emails to deal with business. The committee (Adam Wiseberg, Roger Hopton, John Roberts, Michael Byrne and Rhona Goldenfield) met several times between August and November 2020 and also once in January 2021.

**Inter-County matches**

The annual match against Derbyshire did not take place in 2020 and neither did the Northern league competition. In their place on-line matches were arranged with other (often more remote) counties. In Sept and Oct 2020 the first two of these matches (with London and Devon) were held on-line on the Realbridge Platform. Although Manchester lost both matches, they were competitive and both events were considered to be successful and well received by players.

Since then, further matches have taken place against the following counties :

Gloucestershire 21st Nov 2020

Sussex 12th Dec 2020

Suffolk 16th Jan 2021

Norfolk 6th Feb 2021

Selections were made for the match against Gloucestershire at the selection meeting in October 2020 (these were reported in the last report to Council). The match was played on the same weekend as the Tollemache Qualifier (Saturday 21st Nov 2020). As Gloucestershire are also playing in the Tollemache it was agreed to have three teams in which the players were all below the strength of the Tollemache teams.

Selection for the other three matches was made at meetings of Nov 17th 2020 and Jan 12th 2021

**Sussex (12th Dec 2020)**

A

Irving and Joy Blakey, Kath and Alan Nelson, Rodney Lighton and Royce Alexander, John Roberts and Peter Foster

B

Alec Smalley and Barbara Lewis, Nathan Marks and Geoffrey Fink, Phil Taylor and Wei Che Tham, Adam Wiseberg and Stuart Shalom

C

Paul Murray and Mike Wakefield, Richard Acaster and Gil Flecher, Judith Dunkerley and Sally Bray, Barbara Eastabrook and Karen Jones

Manchester A +3 imps, B +77 imps and C -13 imps. Overall Manchester won by 37.8-22.2 VPs

**Suffolk (16th Jan 2021)**

A

Raymond Semp and Royce Alexander, Kath Nelson and Rhone Goldenfield, Rodney Lighton and Neil Thomas, Joy and Irving Blakey

B

Alan Tranter and Andy Burnett, Alec Smalley and Barbara Lewis, Roger Hopton and Dave Fussell, Irene Davies and Bob Cooke

C

Avril Mattison and Rosemary Rosenthal, Ann Thornton and Peter Green, Gordon Bickley and Ann Farquhar, Simon Townsend and Tricia Blum

Manchester A +110 imps, B -27 imps and C -45 imps. Overall Suffolk won by 33.08-26.92 VPs

**Norfolk (6th Feb 2021)**

A Team

Joy and Irving Blakey, Kath Nelson and Rhona Goldenfield, Pete Foster and John Roberts, Neil Thomas and Rodney Lighton

B Team

Stephen Ward and Chris Hine, Espen Gisvold and Janet Tolan, Irene Davies and Bob Cooke , Joyce White and Steve Mattinson

C Team

Adele Hodari and Suzanne Beckett, Jonathan Engler and Adam Wiseberg, George Leigh and Yvonne Barnes, John Browning and Sylvia Massey, Ray and Angela Ashleigh, Anne Whitehead and Nicky Decent

Manchester A +49 imps, B -11 imps and C -57 imps. Overall Norfolk won by 33.27-26.73 VPs

**Tollemache**

The Qualifier for the Tollyeache was played on the Realbridge platform on the weekend of 21st/22nd Nov 2020. At its October 2020 meeting the committee selected the following five pairs :

Catherine Draper and Andrew Woodcock, John Holland and John Hassett, Alan Mould and Rodney Lighton, Michael Byrne and Gary Hyatt, Alec Smalley and Tom Slater

Playing Captain : Michel Byrne

27 teams contested the Qualifier. Manchester won very comfortably, averaging 13.6 VPs per match. All 5 pairs were positive on the cross imps.

At its meeting Jan 12th 2021 the committee selected the same five pairs and captain for the final on the weekend of 20/21 Feb 2021. At the time of writing this report, the final of the event was completed and Manchester finished 4th with 80 VPs (out of 140).

**Future Events**

At its January 12th meeting, it was agreed to explore the possibility of arranging matches against Ireland (preferably for 13th March) and Worcestershire (preferably in April). The response has not been very good and whilst there has been some interest shown, a final date has not been agreed. Discussions are still continuing. The committee is also looking at the possibility of a match with Somerset. Assuming that F2F bridge is not likely to take place before the summer the committee is looking at possible on-line matches in April- June

The future plans for the Northern league for 2021 is currently under discussion, and the committee will meet to make selections for this event if and when it takes place.

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**Publicity Officer (Susan Triggs)**

Nothing to report.

**EBU Shareholders (Jeff Morris, Alan Mould, Alec Smalley)**

A verbal report on the main items at the EBU AGM was given at the last Council meeting. There has been no further communication to shareholders since that time.

**Schools, Youth and Liaison Officer (Jeff Morris)**

Nothing to report.

**Webmaster (Rodney Lighton)**

Nothing to report.

**On-line Committee Report (Adam Wiseberg)**

We ran a hugely successful Congress on the usual weekend in January and all the players seemed to enjoy it.

We are continuing to run three duplicates per week – Monday at 1:45pm Wednesday Non Experts at 10:30am and Friday IMPS at 11am.

Numbers are sufficient to ensure that we are close to break-even from week to week. Sometimes there is a small profit and sometimes a small loss.

We run a charity event on the last Wednesday of each month and hope to have raised close to £10,000 in a calendar year by the end of March.

We ran the Gazette Cup in February which was another successful event.

Our next events will be the Cantor Cup on 27th Feb and the Green Pointed Pairs the following weekend.

I would like to thank all the members of the online committee for their ongoing commitment to ensure that players who are registered with the county are able to Play duplicate events online.