
Bridge News February 2025

1 message

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20 February 2025 at 10:16

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New Year PROGRESS?



FEBRUARY 2025



www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk

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IMPROVING

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For teachers

Thanks to everyone who gives feedback about the newsletter!

Did you receive this from a friend? If you would like to have it delivered directly to you, you can subscribe at:

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

NEWS

This newsletter launched in August 2020 during the pandemic to provide information and support for duplicate bridge clubs. Back editions on the web site.

CLUB DATA

Bridge club data is collated to provide a picture of life, and trends, in club life. Analysis, updated fortnightly. Taster below. Full analysis on the web site.

TEACHING SCHEME

A teaching scheme is available, entirely free of charge.

DISCUSSION

For almost four years we held monthly Zoom meetings to discuss anything of interest to clubs. Recordings on the web site.

WEB SITE (Hosted by BridgeWebs)

<http://www.bridgeforpleasure.co.uk>.

Please forward the letter to anyone in the bridge world who might be interested. Anyone can subscribe for free, no adverts.

[Click here to subscribe to this newsletter](#)

The wonderful Joan Bennett has sent us this report on the state of Youth Bridge. Take a deep breath....

YOUTH BRIDGE

SUMMARY- ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING IS IMPROVING

WHAT ARE WE DOING/HAVE WE DONE?

Surrey Schools Cup. Feb 25. 150 entrants-previous record 120(2024), 100(2023)

Grand Prix. A series of 6 events in its 4th year. Last year 88 juniors participated.

National Schools Championship to be held in Loughborough on 1 st March. Expected teams, subject to train problems, 32 Tables.. 2024-28 Tables., 2023- 26 Tables., 2023- 23 Tables.

Interschools league held online and now in its 4th year. Results on the Home Page of the EBU website. Run by Stuart Haring of Haberdashers boys. Moving beyond the traditional bridge playing schools and expanding in the state sector.

U16 squad players. Train enthusiastically online every Monday and Friday under Alan Shillitoe (a well deserved silver award in Feb 2025 EBU mag).

Bridge camps. 3 held each year. In 2025 these are in Shropshire (Spring), Northants (Summer) and Surrey (Autumn) from absolute beginners to European medal winners. Parents and grandparents have fun as well. Numbers increasing steadily.

Gather a grandchild and give it a try. Contact joan@ebedcio.org.uk or 07548 782538 to talk it over.

Generation Game. Run monthly on RealBridge. Introduced in December 2023 to enable far flung family members to play together round a card table. Choose minibridge or bridge. Contact joan@ebedcio.or.uk or 07548 782538 to ask for the link. Totally secure platform as link is only sent out on request. Now running at tables per month

Thursdays after school. Drop in/out between 4.15-6.15. Run by Richard Croot CEO. Started November 2024 and now up to 3T at a time. Children enjoy meeting others whom they have met at camps etc. Contact richard.croot@ebedcio.org.uk or 01296 317218.

AND TO CONTINUE MOVING FORWARD?

University expansion. Big Bristol taster on 8th February. Tasting cards, beer and pizza. The way to a teenagers heart? Durham. Proved very popular at this years

freshers fair.

Loughborough, Manchester, Canterbury all have squad youngsters prepared to run bridge clubs and we will help. Traditional university clubs continue.

Gathering info on current year 13s (Upper sixth in old money) to help them organise next year.

Large school/youth tasters. 170 children at a Cheltenham school in January. Proposed large scale events in Shrewsbury in March(county chair happy to run resultant club), Northampton in July. In the past these have been isolated but now there is a calendar of events that the keener ones can join either online or F2F and become part of an increasing youth community.

And then- there are the pockets of bridge clubs of which we were completely unaware that keep popping up and which were previously completely isolated. Since Xmas we have found Hereford 6th form college (5 Tables), Radley College, Downside School(entering Nat Champs) Heathside Academy(teacher moved and started club, came to Surrey SC) , and who knows how many others. Dina Bennett aged 15 has started a school bridge club in London- 12 Tables. Happy chaos- for her silver DoE project.

All this activity is being augmented by keen and helpful adults preparing to take these clubs on so that there is a good chance that we can keep the plates spinning. There is also a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm which is fantastic.

ED: So come on readers, get involved!

5% More EBU Members

The EBU board has taken on a target to increase membership by 5%. This is really good news. At last they have recognised the urgent need to renew our aging and shrinking community of players. Hopefully this goal will be the leading objective of the new County and Membership Development Officer.

It raises the interesting question of what exactly is the level of EBU

membership? In the document "EBU Board Commitments for 2025, it states "Our plan is to help our clubs grow our membership from 40,000 to 45,000 in 2025". It's not clear where these numbers come from.

Once a year, for shareholders at the AGM, the EBU publishes its membership numbers. They give three figures:

- The number of EBU members who have played at least twelve times in the measured year (aka UM2);
- the number of EBU members who have played between once and eleven times in the measured year (aka UM1);
- and the number of EBU members (players registered with affiliated clubs, who have not played in sessions submitted to the EBU in the measured year (UM0);
- The EBU also has the records of players who are not playing, no longer members of an affiliated club, and not directly affiliated to the EBU. ("UM Historic")

Twelve or more times a year (UM2) is the minimum activity for a player to be recognised by the World Bridge Federation as a National Bridge Organisation. Today (6th Feb) the WBF recognises 18,614 members of the EBU. France has over 54,000 and the Netherlands has nearly 65,,000.

When UM was introduced, the vast majority of members stopped paying an individual subscription, and instead, were known to the EBU through the UM subscriptions paid by affiliated clubs.

Clubs often have members listed in the club's EBU account who have not played in the last twelve months. Those players may have died, may be learners not playing in affiliated sessions yet, moved away, or be temporarily not playing. Sometimes players in the UM0 return to bridge and reappear in the UM1 or UM2 lists. Some players reappear from UM Historic.

Sometimes the EBU is informed that a player has died, otherwise the EBU may not know.

	Mar-23	Mar-24		5% increase on 2024
UM2	26220	27471	5%	1374
UM1	7838	7386	-6%	369
UM0	14007	12643	-11%	632

Total 48065 47500 -1% 2375

These figures were given to shareholders at the 2024 November AGM.

Looking at these figures, it is reasonable to suppose that during the year to March 2024 most of the change is players "moved" from UM2 to UM1 and players who moved from UM0 to UM2, in other words they went from not playing at all, or from playing occasionally to playing frequently. Some brand new frequent players may have appeared. The EBU has the means to determine this. They could compare the EBU Numbers in each category and work out the movement.

The EBU does tell us that players are playing more frequently. This is comforting from the point of view of the increase in current UM income. However, it does not seem comforting for the future of the game. A community of fewer, older, players will naturally decline faster.

There was almost certainly an increase in UM0 proportion during and immediately after the pandemic as many clubs did not play at all for one to two years, but kept their member list intact. However clubs that have resumed have brought their membership lists up to date.

The EBU has actually accused me of lying because I pointed out the simple decrease in overall membership. It is very much in line with today's disinformation culture to be accused of lying when you play an organisation's own publications back to them.

These figures are almost a year old already. The EBU will have the numbers to March 2025 soon, even if they do not normally publish them until the November AGM. Will they have got better or worse? Will they claim a victory for 5% increase from before they set the goal?

EBU goals in 2025

1: **MEMBERSHIP** The board has announced its own goal of increasing membership by 5%. This is 2,000 more on an unclear base.

2: **PUBLIC AWARENESS** The public awareness of bridge needs to be raised for bridge to survive.

An effective PR/marketing/communication strategy is needed. It must reach beyond current players and clubs to reach people who have never heard of the game.

Coverage in mainstream media is needed. There have been two items covered by local BBC. The first was headlined "Bridge is not just for Grannys". Unfortunately young people will read that as "Bridge is for Grannys".

The second, coverage of Exeter Bridge club was much better, featuring happy players, but perhaps a little solemn? Although gone from the BBC website, you should be able to see it on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqzeuSdPULM>

These windfalls show what can be done. Bridge needs a planned, high quality campaign.. Social media is getting more bridge content, but most of it will only be going to social bridge users who curate their feeds towards bridge. We need "pushed" items that reflect youth and enthusiasm, like "BridgeBabe". and "BridgePlusMore".

3: **NEW LEARNERS** When the general public's interest in bridge is raised, there needs to be a place to find out more and offer a first step. Steering learners to teachers, identifying and supporting active learners, and supporting teachers and recognising professional development. The EBU Teachers Directory seems to have become slightly harder to find. It does have 325 entries, providing you know to untick the "has vacancies" box. Otherwise you see about 270. This box relies on listed teachers keeping their vacancies status up to date. Given the difficulty of getting teachers to register at all, it seems rather hopeful to expect they will.

4: **CLUB COSTS** The EBU to manage its costs rather than let them grow and simply pass them on to the affiliated clubs.

Engaging with the EBU in 2025 - Strategy/Plans

We have had a reference to these plans in the latest monthly "Updates From Aylesbury". It says we will get update on status soon. The EBU has been concentrating on internal restructuring of Selection and other committees that are important to elite players but of no benefit to most affiliated clubs. This reorganisation is not mentioned in the Plan of Action.

I hear that appointment of the County and Membership Development Officer is close. It seems that the Club Liaison Officer remains in place. The EBU has appealed for volunteers with one of three skill sets:

- A Communications Co-ordinator, who will guide and advise the EBU's communications team, seeking to ensure effective

engagement with player members, clubs and County Associations. This role involves working with our staff and Board members to help create and deliver compelling content, manage our online and social media presence, and ensure consistency across all communication channels.

- An IT Project Change Co-ordinator who will guide and advise the IT team, and facilitate the update and modernisation of our IT systems, including our accounting software. This role involves working with our staff and Board members to ensure our systems align with the evolving needs of the EBU, its members, and all stakeholders. This is an ideal opportunity for someone passionate about IT systems, project management, and change facilitation who wants to make a meaningful impact within the EBU.
- A Marketing Co-ordinator, ideally with extensive knowledge and experience of social media, to help the staff, Board and all volunteers with marketing the game to the public at large, taking into account the need to enhance and project the game's image; and with public relations in general.

Making sure these valuable resources deliver the Plan of Action will require support and co-ordination at board level. I would recommend appointing a steering group responsible for overall progress, reporting and communication and enabling the complex relationships of EBU, EBED, Counties, Clubs, Teachers, External Stakeholders etc.

ASPIRATION
ASPIRATION WITH TARGET
PLAN (IS#)

EBU Board Commitments for 2025

Our Mission

*To welcome, help and support all players on their own personal journey into and through the world of Bridge
To promote the game of Bridge in England as an inclusive Mind Sport, working with and through our Bridge Clubs and County Associations*

Our Values

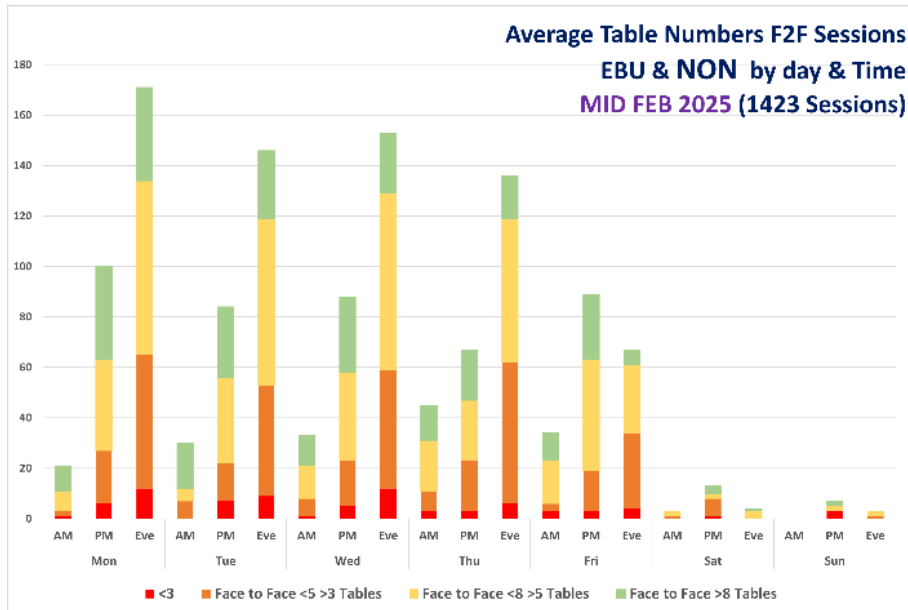
We will build on our foundations and promote diversity and inclusivity of all players across all skill levels, ages and cultures.	We will champion the importance of our Clubs and promote pathways for their success	We will commit to a professional approach as a Board and an openness and honesty when we get things wrong	We will do more to support our employed staff and the many volunteers who give their time for free	We will look for smarter ways of working
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Plan of Action for 2025

<p>Our Members and Clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sustainability of our Clubs and growing our membership is paramount o Our plan is to help our clubs grow our membership by 5% from 40,000 to 42,000 by 2025 o Appoint a new Club/County Liaison Officer by March 2025 to work directly with Counties and Clubs in an advisory and mentorship role o Reach out and support non-affiliated Clubs 	<p>Our Junior Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Aim to improve engagement with Junior members and encourage affiliation to local Clubs o Roll out a Junior Council to include Squad Leaders and Squad representatives o Support the aspirations of International players o Encourage support for a Brand for Team England o Match fund Universities initiative alongside EBED o Assist EBED's work in promoting Bridge within Schools 	<p>Our People - Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Well-being and enjoyment of their role o Look at smarter ways of working o Provide a more stimulating working environment <p>Our People - Volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure we meet our commitments in terms of compliance and recognition of the time they give o Review our Policies and appoint a co-Ordinator o Offer an annual thank you 	<p>Our Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Make a plan to upgrade administrative and book-keeping systems so they are less paper dependent and to reduce input time o We will provide a Draft budget for the year ahead at the AGM o We will make sure the longer-term financial planning is aligned to our strategic goals o When there is a financial surplus this will be invested back into agreed projects 	<p>Our IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Expand the available resource within the IT team o Complete a review of the EBU legacy systems by March 2025 and agree an IT Roadmap o Implement robust and better integrated systems o Improve usability of EBU Score for Clubs and members <p>Our Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Complete EDI Policy o Complete Risk Register o Complete Sustainability policy
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How are clubs doing?

Here's face to face table numbers distributed across the week.

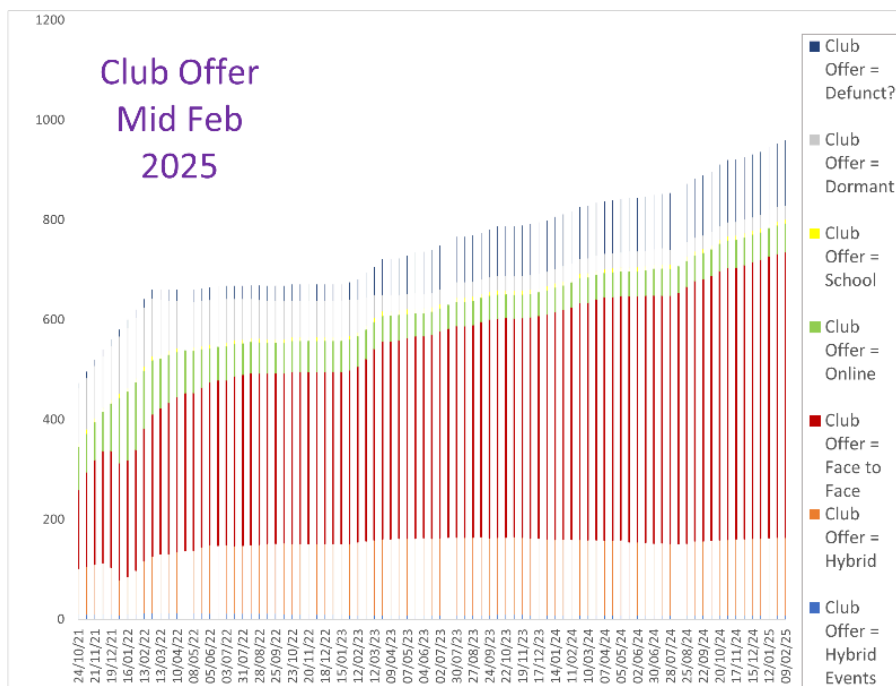


The thin blue band at the bottom counts clubs offering face to face **and** online and combining at least one session into a **hybrid result**.

Above it, the orange section counts clubs that offer both face to face and online sessions.

The majority of active clubs are offering only face to face. That's the steadily growing red section.

The green belt above shows clubs only offering online sessions. The grey bands are dormant (website there but no results or update for sometime) or defunct.



Trends in table numbers.

Details of 1591 sessions have been captured including table numbers. 297 have been revisited over the last eighteen months allowing comparison of two table number snapshots.

There is a decline of 2% in the two data points.

Within this sample there are clubs doing better and clubs doing worse.

There's more information here, typically updated once a fortnight.

BFP Club Statistics Page

For Clubs

Items for Your Newsletter

Bridge Club Newsletters can help to keep members informed, interested and helping to run the club.

There are some brilliant examples about.

It can be tricky to find interesting content on a regular basis.

Here's some ideas you are welcome to copy into your club newsletter.

No charge, no obligation, a credit for "Bridge for Pleasure" would be nice, but not mandatory.

If you edit an item, then no credit please, it's your work now ♥

Here is the latest addition to the library:

Calling for cards from dummy

Terse or silent indication of the cards to play in dummy may be a sensible way to prevent unauthorised information leaking to other tables.

Law 46 describes the required effect of various "terse" instructions by Declarer:

A. Proper Form for Designating Dummy's Card

When calling a card to be played from dummy declarer should clearly state both the suit and the rank of the desired card.

B. Incomplete or Erroneous Call

In case of an incomplete or erroneous call by declarer of the card to be played from dummy, the following restrictions apply (except when declarer's different intention is incontrovertible):

1. (a) If declarer in playing from dummy calls 'high', or words of like meaning, he is deemed to have called the highest card.

(b) If he directs dummy to 'win' the trick he is deemed to have called the lowest card that it is known will win the trick.

(c) If he calls 'low', or words of like meaning, he is deemed to have called the lowest card.

2. If declarer designates a suit but not a rank he is deemed to have called the lowest card of the suit indicated.

3. If declarer designates a rank but not a suit:

(a) In leading, declarer is deemed to have continued the suit in which dummy won the preceding trick provided there is a card of the designated rank in that suit.

(b) In all other cases declarer must play a card from dummy of the designated rank if he can legally do so; but if there are two or more such cards that can be legally played declarer must designate which is intended.

4. If declarer calls a card that is not in dummy the call is void and declarer

may designate any legal card.

5. If declarer indicates a play without designating either a suit or a rank (as by saying 'play anything' or words of like meaning) either defender may designate the play from dummy. **(Did you realise this??)**

So by saying "Win the trick"; or "Low"; or "Heart", declarer can give away very little information about dummy's hand to another table. Dummy needs to stay alert (good practice anyway).

But Dummy must be careful not to seem to indicate any particular card or suit should be played....

Law 45F. Dummy Indicates Card

After dummy's hand is faced, dummy may not touch or indicate any card (except for purpose of arrangement) without instruction from declarer. If he does so the Director should be summoned forthwith and informed of the action. Play continues. At the end of the play the Director shall award an adjusted score if he considers dummy

suggested a play to declarer and the defenders were damaged by the play suggested.

CLUBS - PLEASE GIVE A LINK OR CONTACT FOR POTENTIAL LEARNERS ON YOUR WEBSITE

Over 60% of club website home pages make NO reference to lessons or teaching.

Your club may not teach, or have any intention to teach, but you could put a referral to a local teacher on your home page. If there is no local option you could put a link to your county page, the EBU teacher directory, or to the information on learning on the Bridge For Pleasure website.

There are about 1,000 duplicate club websites, please make sure yours has information on how to learn bridge. If we all did that there would be 600 new sites on the net with information for potential learners. At no cost!

BFP Club Newsletter Item Library

For Teachers

Do you know about BridgeComposer?

This is the very best software for creating, editing, checking, sorting and renumbering themed sets of hands for lessons or practice. it creates deal sets in Portable Bridge Notation (PBN) form.

You can produce hand reports or much fuller commentaries containing recommended auctions, leads and card play. You can produce files for dealing machines for physical cards. You can produce files for loading to online platforms such as RealBridge.

There are now features to allow you to preset an auction, and even the opening lead, to ensure practice of card play without variation in the auction.

There is a single first time fee to use the software and no maintenance charge. The software is maintained and developed regularly. You can have a free thirty day trial. At the time of writing the cost is \$25.

Bridge Composer Features Page

Bridge for Pleasure Teaching Scheme

There is a completely free teaching scheme, hundreds of Plans, Notes, Quizzes, Deals, Commentaries etc at this address:

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/bridgeforpleasure>

Let's provide chances all over the country to observe teachers in action; practice teaching and discuss teaching with experienced, qualified teachers. Please contact me if you can provide the same opportunity.

Heart of England Bridge Club (Rugby):

heartofenglandbridge@gmail.com

New contributors

If you would like to contribute an item, please send it. Please make it no more than 200 words. Please make it positive, and supporting the goal of keeping grass roots bridge alive. That will keep elite bridge going.

[Click here to view previous newsletters](#)

Your Feedback

You can provide likes, dislikes and comments on the content of the Bridge For Pleasure website by registering on it.

[Click on this link to send an email to register:](#)

bridgeforpleasure@gmail.com

To quote the wonderful "Sorry Partner", BE NICE, or we'll call the director.

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