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**Subject:** Time For Change  
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**To:**  
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To All Who Care Deeply About Bridge

**It's time for change.**

### **Have a Go Heroes: Ordinary People Making a Difference**

In the 1980s, bridge was booming. In 1985, Palmer Bayer became a founding member of Better Bridge in Britain. He was the prime mover behind BBB's introduction to the UK of No Fear bridge.

He was also a keen advocate of bridge for young players. The Under-21 Home International Trophy, the Peggy Bayer Trophy, was donated by Palmer to honour his wife's name. Many of today's leading players cut their international teeth in this tournament.

As a retired businessman himself, Palmer was also an advocate for those who ran small bridge-related businesses like organising bridge holidays and selling bridge stationery.

He brought his business knowledge and experience to the EBU, serving on the Board for five years from 1987 to 1992. To anyone who would listen he explained that in business the customer is king and that customers have choices. He campaigned tirelessly for the necessity to prioritise the needs and wishes of grassroots players. They, he firmly and rightly maintained, underpin everything else. But in the 1980s the EBU was thriving, the Board saw no need to focus their attention on the ordinary members, and they didn't.



Palmer Bayer

### **The Bridge Estate – Bridge Clubs**

In England, we know of at least 62 bridge clubs which have their own premises, eight which share premises, and seven more which are privately owned.

With an aging, declining membership, many clubs are struggling to keep their doors open. Some have closed, selling up and renting rooms instead. For the current players this makes sense. There are no building issues to deal with like repairing a leaking roof; no worries about meeting the overheads of heating, cleaning, business rates and insurance etc. Instead, the equity from the sale allows them to rent comfortable rooms

for many years without any of the worries associated with managing their own building.

However, for anyone trying to teach a small group of juniors (or any group of beginners), it becomes much more difficult to find affordable premises. And when these beginners want to try some supervised practice or gentle duplicates, where do they play? Without classes, practice sessions and No Fear style evenings, the path to the regular club sessions is broken.

We want to stress that we are not criticising the clubs which find themselves forced to sell. Usually they will have been run by the same group of tireless volunteers for years or decades. Now in their 70s, and in some cases 80s, they have more than earned the right to put their feet up. But if bridge is to have a future then we must save our bridge clubs. Here, we believe the national body, the EBU, has a vital role to play.

We would start by working with the English Chess Federation. Chess clubs need premises, just as we do. They don't occupy their premises 24/7, just as we don't. Working together could lead to substantial savings and would enable failing clubs to rejuvenate and have a sound future.

But it isn't just a case of sharing premises with chess players. Many reading this email will have played chess at school and later switched to bridge when shown how to play. The chess-playing population is much younger than the bridge-playing demographic. This offers a unique opportunity to begin to recruit younger bridge players. At the same time, some will rekindle their interest in chess. Chess is just the beginning. Backgammon clubs, Scrabble clubs, book clubs, and many more, provide a rich source of potential new bridge players. The opportunities are clear to see.

### **Reform of education system is vital for growth**

Rachel Sylvester, *The Times* 10 June 2024

Sunak and Starmer are avoiding the subject but the next PM must move swiftly and boldly to give our children a chance

Rishi Sunak calls it a "silver bullet", Keir Starmer sees it as the best way to smash through the "class ceiling" but education has been strangely absent from this election campaign as the leaders exchange insults over tax rises, spending cuts, immigration and health.

The only way to generate the economic growth that the country desperately needs to boost prosperity and fund public services is to transform schools and give children the skills and knowledge that businesses require.

There is no time to waste. The biggest regret of most former prime ministers is that they did not move quickly enough at the start of their time in power. On education reform, the danger now lies not in being too bold but in being too timid.

### **Reform of education system is vital for growth**

David Parry and Nicky Bainbridge June 2024

Adrian Darnell and the EBU Board are avoiding the subject but the Board must move swiftly and boldly to give our children and young adults a chance

EBU Chair Adrian Darnell said the Board is: "Preparing for a new focus on youth

bridge”, that it believes “this is critical to the future of the game”, that it is “working with our associated charity, EBED (English Bridge Education and Development), to implement an effective joint strategy.”

But he said that at last year’s AGM. There has been no actual progress in the ensuing seven months as instead the leaders of the EBU and EBED have argued over costs, spending cuts, staffing and more.

The only way to generate the long-term membership growth that England desperately needs is to boost our support for youth education in schools and universities and give our youngsters the skills and knowledge that starting bridge requires. (\*)

There is no time to waste. The biggest regret of many EBU shareholders is that the Board they elected is not moving quickly enough. On education reform, the danger lies not in being too bold but in being too timid.

(\*) Of course this must be combined with support for bridge teaching across all age groups.

Please do pass on the message to others like you who care about bridge. Invite them to get in touch with us and join the increasing number of players who want to see change . It’s time for change and together we will achieve it.

Finally, if you haven’t already done so, do sign up to Nicky’s newsletter for more news and views. It’s free - subscribe at: <http://eepurl.com/cZhrh1>

Regards

David and Nicky