



# Scottish Bridge Union

## President's Report – September 2015

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Firstly, best wishes to everyone for a successful and enjoyable new season.

Since our AGM in May, I have participated in a Master Point Workshop, the Scottish Cup (a couple of wins but soundly defeated by a strong Piper team), the National Summer Congress, a Tournament Director Training Course, Central District Congress and the Clarendon Bowl. I would like to extend my thanks to the organisers of all these events for their efforts.

The first of these was very well attended by club representatives and spawned a MEMPAD User Group under the independent chairmanship of Mike Baron – please feel free to contact him if you would like to become involved in this excellent initiative.

Between now and our next Council meeting, I am hoping to attend the Watson Trophy in Edinburgh, the Edwin Berry teams, the Diamond Trophy, the Autumn National Congress and the first weekend of the National League – please take the opportunity to say hello if our paths cross.

At last week's Council meeting, there was much to discuss:

- The evening was dominated by discussions on SBU's financial position which, although still healthy, has been gradually deteriorating over recent years. Although this decline is projected to be arrested by the gradual increase in subscription levels over the next four years agreed at this year's AGM, Finance Committee feel that we cannot rely on this alone and made a number of recommendations to increase income and restrict expenditure. These include the capping of honoraria and a reduction in mileage claim rates.
- Most of our larger clubs are now submitting their master point awards to MEMPAD electronically and work continues to improve the efficiency of this process - in particular we are looking to deliver enhanced acknowledgement of award files processed electronically. Since the relaxation of minimum purchase levels, the automated approach is now proving more attractive to many smaller clubs. In parallel, the vast majority of our active players have now completed their database registration and can view their personal award records online – the associated discontinuation of paper statements is now beginning to deliver improved processing efficiency and cost savings.
- Ownership of Bridge Scorer will be transferred from Jeff Smith to the English Bridge Union with effect from the end of September. As this may result in the introduction of maintenance charges, club scorers and tournament directors are recommended to upgrade to the latest release before this change takes place.
- Council confirmed Tournament Committee's recommendation that high-level master point rankings be standardised as follows:
  - Gold: Life Master and above
  - Silver: Scottish and National Masters
  - Bronze 3: Senior Master and Masters, including star variations
  - Bronze 2: District Masters
  - Bronze 1: Local and Club Masters and Novices

Districts are encouraged to introduce events specifically for Bronze players and to apply the above sub-divisions as appropriate.

- SBU Diaries for 2015/16 were issued to District Delegates at last week's Council meeting for onward transmission to clubs and subsequent distribution to all of our members.
- Please note that SBU Membership Subscriptions of £6 per member are now due. If you haven't already paid for the 2015/16 season, please do so through your chosen "home" club as soon as you can. Club Treasurers are asked to forward these payments, together with the club fee of £17, to George Plant, our new Treasurer.
- Improvements continue to be made to the SBU Website to enhance the delivery of useful information to our members.
- The scope of Scottish Bridge News is being expanded to appeal to less experienced players. In particular, a new bidding challenge is being introduced from next month especially for District Masters and below – please encourage as many of your improvers as possible to submit an entry!
- Thanks to the efforts of our Education Committee, bridge classes have been introduced to a number of primary and secondary schools across Scotland – many thanks to those who have volunteered to assist with these excellent initiatives. Given the growth in demand for youth education, further volunteers are urgently needed - please contact your District Education Officer if anyone else feels that they are able to assist (minimal experience is required and teachers will be provided with support materials).
- Council confirmed Tournament Committee's Chief TD appointments:
  - Christine Walker for national events
  - Horst Kopleck for national congresses
- Congress Committee reported on the success of our Summer Congress and the major improvement programme being undertaken by Peebles Hydro – we are looking forward to seeing the additional progress made when we visit once again in July. Please contact Joan Lees with entries for the Autumn and/or Winter Congresses and, indeed, for next year's Overseas Congress in Croatia.
- International Committee reported on the revised arrangements for the Junior Camrose and the Peggy Bayer. As Scotland are the hosts in 2016, we may be able to enter two teams for each of these events – the financial implications of this are currently being investigated.
- Law & Ethics Committee are currently revising disciplinary procedures and upgrading the appeals procedure.
- Our representative reported on Bridge Great Britain (BGB) and European Bridge League (EBL) developments, Scotland now being represented on the latter's Communications Group. An EBL seminar is to be held in Rome in January and it was agreed that SBU will be represented.

I am acutely aware of the magnificent efforts made by every one of our Council Delegates to undertake the work of Council and the administration of bridge in Scotland – many thanks to you all for your support and unstinting service.

Russell Frame

President

3 September 2015