



Scottish Bridge Union

President's Report - April 2015

Report from Council - April 2015

Since my last report, I have attended a number of events:

- Mixed Swiss Pairs & Teams: Well done to Cathy for generating such an encouraging level of entries and to Horst and Maureen for running things so effectively.
- Senior Trials: This was my first experience of playing in a pairs trial and I enjoyed it immensely. It was most encouraging to see that 18 highly experienced pairs had entered. Angus and Anne ran the event like clockwork and I was most impressed at the friendliness of all our opponents, despite the fact that selection for the Teltscher Trophy team was at stake. Congratulations to Danny Kane, Irving Gordon, Charles & Vi Outred, Harry Smith & Roy Bennett for their selection and best wishes to them for a successful result in Dublin next month.
- Men's Pairs: Despite encountering a number of technical problems, Ian Hunter did manage to complete a somewhat complex movement (34 pairs over two floors) without any other TD assistance and only discovering that he would be left to run the event at the last minute. Feedback from participants has resulted in the introduction of advanced TD training courses over the next few months (see below).
- South District Congress: Many thanks to Cathie Forbes for extending me an invitation to participate in the Congress Pairs and to Ian Ellison for agreeing to partner me.
- West District Congress: Convener "rookies" Peter Edmond and John Glen did an excellent job of organising the Congress which had moved from Peebles to the New St Andrew and Buchanan Clubs in Glasgow. Horst and Maureen did a great job of running the main Congress events smoothly and Angus did the same for the Bronze section.

I also attended the Southern heat of the School's MiniBridge Championship in Stirling - what an uplifting experience due to the enthusiasm of the children taking part! Jenny, Ann, Liz, Tim and all the teachers are to be congratulated for all their work which culminated in 13 teams in the Southern heat and 20 in the Northern heat which was held the following week in Elgin. This was a record entry for the event with over double the number of teams that had ever participated in previous years. Well done to the Kings and Queens team from Balloch Primary School who were declared the overall winners.

Between now and the AGM at the end of next month, I am looking forward to participating in the New Melville Congress, the Harrison Individual, the Scottish Swiss Pairs and my first ever SBU Overseas Congress which, this year, will be in Corfu. I look forward to seeing many members at these events. Best wishes to Sam Punch, Paula Leslie, Anne Symons, Helen Kane, Liz McGowan & Michele Gladstone who will shortly be doing battle with the other home nations in the Lady Milne Trophy in Birmingham. On a similar theme, all the very best to Jun Nakamaru-Pinder, Stewart Pinkerton, Olivia Bailey, Soozy Nesom, Liam O'Brien & Ronan Valentine who will make up Scotland's under-20 team at the Junior European Championships in Tromsø in July - they will be accompanied by an under-16 team from Hutchesons' Grammar School who will be our representatives in the first ever "Kids Event" which runs alongside the main Championships and to whom we also extend our best wishes.

As ever, your delegates faced a lengthy agenda at our latest Council meeting:

- Council have agreed to recommend to next month's AGM the appointment of Ian Hunter as our first ever President Elect. This role was agreed at last year's AGM and will provide greater continuity as we would expect Ian succeed me as President in 2016.
- Sincere thanks are due to Sandy Duncan who published the final version of his MEMPAD Report. This will shortly be posted on the website and Council have undertaken to take his conclusions on board as further development is undertaken. In particular, the priorities and needs of clubs will be factored in and members who have expressed an interest will be invited to a workshop to specify requirements for the next phase of development.
- Revised minimum purchase levels for master points (based on usage) already available to clubs submitting awards electronically will be extended to those few clubs still printing off paper points.
- After a number of years of exceptionally hard work as our Master Point Secretary, including overseeing the launch of MEMPAD, Janet Rixon has decided to vacate this position to allow her to focus on other activities. Interim arrangements are currently being put in place by Bill Whyte, Convener of Member Services and we would ask for members' continued patience while these are being bedded in.
- In-depth discussions were held on the revised budget and financial projections for the 17-month period to 31 August 2015 and the budget for 2015/16, all of which had been presented by Fiona Greenwood, Convener of Finance Committee. Due partly to the extension of the current financial period from 12 to 17 months but also to increasing costs and decreasing income, we are currently looking at significant deficits for both these periods. Although our overall capital position remains healthy, such deficits are unsustainable in the long term and remedial action plans will be put in place. In particular, proposals for modest increases in the level of subscriptions for 2016/17 and 2017/18 will be submitted to next month's AGM.
- After many years of dedicated service as SBU Treasurer, Tim Wickens will be stepping down from this role at the end of August. Interviews have been held to identify a successor and I have great pleasure in advising that George Plant will take over with effect from September.
- Teaching of MiniBridge in primary schools continues to make great progress but, so much so, that we are now in danger of becoming victims of our own success! Additional volunteers are needed to build on existing activity - if you feel that you can assist in any way, please contact Ann Wickens, our Education Convener or your District Education Coordinator.
- In the run-up to December's retirement of Ian Ross as Chief Tournament Director, Horst Kopleck has agreed to take over the role of manager of our Peebles Congresses and will be working with Ian during the rest of this calendar year. The Tournament Committee continue to investigate alternatives for Ian's other responsibilities.
- During this summer, two advanced training courses will be held in Glasgow and Dundee for our more experienced tournament directors. They will focus on use of technology in an effort to eliminate some of the problems encountered in recent years and improve the level of

service delivered to tournament players. Participation will initially be by invitation but additional places may become available if number constraints permit.

- Liaison officers have been appointed within each District and in some of the larger clubs to help encourage tournament entries. In particular, clubs will be encouraged to hold heats of the Celtic Simultaneous Pairs which help generate additional funds for the SBU.
- A trophy has been sourced for the 2nd Division of the National League and will be presented to this season's winners.

Apologies for the length of this report but I hope it gives you a flavour of the vast array of topics that Council need to look after on your behalf. Hopefully, as many members as possible will attend next month's AGM - we would particularly like to see the winners of all national events being presented with their trophies.

Russell Frame
SBU President