



Dear All,
Our January Newsletter was upbeat as we congratulated 'top of the World' Sweden with the 55th European Team

championships to look forward to in June. Alas no. On page three, President Jan Kamras outlines the situation with regard to these championships. Postponed for now in these uncertain times with Covid 19 still raging across Europe

Many of our top women players are delighted, and even more so now, to have our well established EBL Women Practice matches online and thus the opportunity to practice for the 55th European Team Championships whenever they will be. Do join us!

In this issue Rafal Marks writes about the Polish Golden girls, (there are golden polish women too!), telling us how the team was built and the innovative steps that were taken to reach their goal of gold at the 27th European Youth Team Championships in Oslo last year. A team to be reckoned with and a team ready for any challenge. Watch out for them!

Sarah Amos writes of her experience at the 7th EBL TD Course in Belfast in February and you are invited to comment on our heading 'Why do women NOT choose to be TDs?'

Irish delegate Dermot O'Brien reports on the 10th EBL Officers' Seminar in Prague and the EBL Women's Report to the Seminar is here too.

Irish Bridge Journalist, Seamus Dowling comments about Women in Bridge through the years while Liz Mc Gowan, Medalist, Player, Administrator and Mega Friend to Youth Bridge, tells 'On the Line to Wuhan' with her Scottish Women's team.

He's Scottish too but the Irish have adopted him and his name is Gordon Lessells. He has a Test for you. It's a Quiz of course and a challenge!

Do you have news for us? We would love to hear from you.

Stay Well,
Mary Kelly Rogers
Editor

EBL WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER APRIL 2020

WHY DO WOMEN CHOOSE NOT TO BE TDS?

**BELFAST WAS HOST TO THE 7TH EBL TD COURSE IN FEBRUARY
THERE WERE 60 PARTICIPANTS, FROM 20 COUNTRIES
TEN WERE WOMEN**



Left Fearghal O'Boyle, Examiner at the 7th EBL TD Workshop Belfast February 2020
Women attendees Megan Jones (England), Gal Fibert (Israel) Anni Mäkelä (Finland)

Sarah Amos, a TD for almost 20 years, is a National TD working in both England & Wales. Sarah writes of her experience of the EBL TD course in Belfast. See Next Page.

For the record we have been told that: -

- EBL TD workshops usually have about 25% women participants
- There are only THREE women TDs in the 60 qualified TDs on the official EBL TD Register.
- Two of these, plus only ONE other (from USA, but ex-Netherlands) are WBF recognized. 4 in the whole world!!

What a statistic and WHY?

- Is it due to lack of experience in their home countries?
- Have women trouble getting TD jobs in their NBO events?
- Is it possible women who could be TDs prefer to play?
- Do home commitments prevent women from committing to Regular TD jobs?

If you have insights as to why women do not choose to be TDS please let us know by emailing eblwomen@gmail.com

Sarah Amos



attended the EBL TD Course

'I love the variety that directing brings me and the chance to meet a huge

range of different personalities and levels of bridge player'.

Sarah now writes.....

I went to Belfast representing both Wales and England as I am a top-level director for both NBOs. I had never been to an EBL event before and though I had looked at the records of previous ones and completed the online test, nothing prepared me for the scale and intensity of the four-day workshop.

I arrived early on the Thursday and was pleased to spot some familiar, friendly Scottish faces in the hotel foyer. Conscious of the packed timetable I decided to have a rest before things got underway at 4:30. Definitely the right decision!

The delegates assembled and what struck me most as I looked around was not only the wide age range, but the large number of younger TDs participating. After a brief welcome meeting we plunged straight into a dizzying round of table simulations, lectures and another written test.

We were divided into five groups of about 10 for the table simulations with five group leaders circulating around the groups. If you have ever been on a TD training course at any level and frozen at the table desperately thumbing through the Law Book try find the relevant bit to read to the players – you will know the feeling of nervous butterflies that I'm sure we all felt waiting our turn to make our first attempt.

The organisers had devised all sorts of 'interesting' situations for us to test ourselves on. Some of which I had come across before, some were completely novel. We practiced leads out of turn, revokes, bids out of turn and all manner of other things going wrong.

I found the whole experience fantastic. Meeting over 50 other TDs from all over Europe sharing knowledge and learning from some of the best and most experienced in the field is an opportunity that I will never forget. I felt keenly the privilege of being an English speaker and was lost in admiration of those who were working in their second language and yet were able to explain complex rulings. Would I do it again? If you had asked me the day after I would have thought twice but yes, I definitely would and I would recommend it to any TD aspiring to further their careers.

7th EBL TD Course Belfast

How about this situation?

At the end of the auction presumed declarer (South) asks his RHO (East) to lead to the first trick and then puts his cards down as dummy. TD!
East and West both lead face up but there is no agreement on who was first.

It is an opening lead out of turn but South told East to lead, so how do you sort it out? When in doubt take a look at the law book - Law 47E1 is the bit that applies.

LAW 47 - RETRACTION OF CARD PLAYED

E. Change of Play Based on Misinformation

1. A lead out of turn (or play of a card) is retracted without further rectification if the player was mistakenly informed by an opponent that it was his turn to lead or play (see Law 16C). A lead or play may not be accepted by his LHO in these circumstances and Law 63A1 does not apply.

Because East was wrongly informed that it was her lead, she takes her card back (UI for declarer) and declarer picks up her cards and plays the hand (AI for the defenders). The order in which defenders led is irrelevant. I bet this happens in your events all the time but it was a first for me!

Thursday saw two rounds of simulations, one either side of dinner, and a lecture on score adjustments between 10:00 and 11:00 pm. Sleeping was not a problem after all that! Friday's program started with a review of the pre course quiz material and another round of table simulations before lunch. Hesitations and how to interpret their meaning was the topic of a very interesting lecture by Sławek Latała after lunch. I have not come across the idea of classifying the information from hesitations as H+ encouraging bidding on, H- discouraging bidding on or H= not conveying any meaning, and I'm sure that I will find this very useful in the future.



There were two more rounds of table exercises, a lecture on UI and MI and a general discussion session to round off a packed day.

Saturday was another 13-hour day which included a two and a half hour written test, two more rounds of simulations and two more lectures. I was just about still standing by the end of the day. Apologies to Gordon Rainsford that I opted out of his optional talk on Web Mitchells from 10:00 to 11:00pm as I was sure that my brain could not absorb any more information. I am told Gordon's talk was superb. Sunday brought the final plenary session, the handing out of certificates and storm Ciara!



My Scottish friends Christine, Julia and I decided to fill some of our time before our flights home, with a bus tour of Belfast so we could at least say we had seen more than the inside of our hotel while we were there. It was quite an eye opener. Our jolly commentator



cheerfully pointed out landmark places where people had been shot or blown up during the troubles – all in the tone of voice you might use to read a story to a three-year-old! The bus laboured through the storm-tossed parkland up to Belfast Castle with its panoramic views of the city which was great. On the way back Rachel our guide said there wasn't much to see so she would entertain us with a song. She proceeded to massacre "Danny Boy" which reduced

the three of us to helpless giggles. We did round the experience off with a very nice lunch before heading our separate ways. My plane home was delayed by four hours but at least it did take off, so I was better off than lots of the other delegates.

Sarah Amos



EBL Coaches/
Examiners
7th EBL TD course
Belfast

February 2020

Organiser Eitan
Levy



Message from EBL



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE



President of EBL Jan Kamras



EBL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2018-2022

EBL Events 2020 - Covid-19 Update

Jan Kamras
President

April 18, 2020

Due to the continuing disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, at its meeting on April 6 (via video-conference of course), the EBL Executive Committee (EC), in consultation with the Portuguese and Madeira Bridge Federations, decided to postpone the European National Teams Championships (ENTC) to a not yet defined future date.

Subsequently the local authorities have informed us that a postponement until later in the year will not be possible. At a further meeting on April 17 the EC therefore decided that the ENTC will be moved to sometime in June 2021.

We are hopeful that it can still be held in Funchal, Madeira as originally foreseen, but this will have to be negotiated with the local authorities and host federations.

For the time being we are not rescheduling the Champions' Cup planned to be held November 12-14, 2020 in Slovakia, but we are aware that this can still change depending on the development of the virus situation and travel restrictions/recommendations.

Thankfully the internet is providing various opportunities, both for play and education, and many federations are increasing their activities online. Specifically, for our women players the EBL's Women's Committee is arranging many online activities that I hope you will take part in.

I understand the disappointment and problems this situation creates but trust you all appreciate that we are in uncharted waters, trying to make the best of a very complex and fluid situation

Best regards

Jan Kamras

Message from WBF



International Sport Federation (IF)
recognized by the International
Olympic Committee

A meeting of the Management Committee of the World Bridge Federation, held on Tuesday 14th April 2020,

Considered that

- On 11th March the World Health Organization (WHO) moved to declare the COVID-19 outbreak as an official Pandemic and in every Country the Authorities introduced restrictive measures for protecting the public health of its people
- The virus persistently continues to spread its dramatic effects all over the world
- The uncertainty at present to make any possible prediction about the end of these measures and the achievement of safety conditions
- Various concerns, including psychological and emotional aspects, are expressed by several of our stakeholders
- The priority of the WBF is the health and welfare of its National Bridge Organisations, registered members and people attending its event
- It's necessary and urgent to provide certainties and to avoid or minimize any possible negative effect on our members, the WBF and the Organisers

With regret, unanimously stated

1. The cancellation of the World Youth Bridge Teams Championship scheduled to be held in Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, on 31st July – 9th August postponing it to August 2021, still to be hosted in Salsomaggiore Terme, retaining the name of 2020 World Youth Bridge Team Championship and all the same requirements and conditions, including the 2020 age limits. For these circumstances the 2021 World Youth Transnational Bridge Championship is cancelled.
2. The cancellation of the World Bridge Games scheduled to be held in Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, on 21st August – 4th September 2020, postponing it to 2021 (indicatively February/March), still to be hosted in Salsomaggiore Terme, retaining the name of 2020 World Bridge Games. The exact dates and the 2021 WBF Calendar of Events will be defined in due time.

Apologising

for any inconvenience caused, but in taking the decision to cancel the event at this stage, endeavoured to minimise the potential disruption to the participants' plans, remarking once again that this decision has been taken with the utmost consideration for every single person involved to protect his health, wellbeing and safety, being very grateful for the support of the City of Salsomaggiore Terme and the Italian Bridge Federation.

Sharing

its concern and best wishes for players, officials, personnel, families and colleagues, and for everyone who has been affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic.



It seems an age and six weeks is an age for us Bridge players globally, not to have our normal Bridge routines. Help is at hand as the EBL Women Practice matches continue on BBO for top women players. Those that play tell me that they not only find the matches enjoyable and useful as practice for EBL Championships but also an opportunity to network and engage with women players in the EBL.

Women in your NBO may have found it difficult to find the time in their busy schedules to join the group but now could be a time to join EBL WOMEN PRACTICE MATCHES ONLINE.

These matches at present are every week. If you have a team that wishes to join in then all you have to do is provide the email address of a Co Ordinator and we will take it from there.

The matches scheduled at present are for those that **will** play European Team Championships but a schedule of matches for **new and aspiring teams** to international level can be organised if such teams come forward. Please do as we have some countries interested. We are also keen to put an **U26 schedule** in place if there is interest.

Here is a link to the last Newsletter.

<http://www.eurobridge.org/2020/01/15/ebl-womens-newsletter/>

If you have a team for

EBL WOMEN'S PRACTICE MATCHES ONLINE

Please email eblwomen@gmail.com with contact details of your Team Practice Co Ordinator. If you have an item of news from your country for the next Newsletter that would be of interest to EBL Women Please email us.

ONLINE FESTIVAL

WOMEN'S ONLINE FESTIVAL

Just finished.

It was fun with excellent Prizes

<http://www.wbfwomensbridgeclub.org/>

REPORT TO 10th EBL OFFICERS' SEMINAR PRAGUE



Women's Report

At the 9th EBL Officers' Seminar in Belfast 2018 we, on the EBL Women's Committee, asked the delegates as first steps in building the Women's game to

SELECT 'a PERSON' to look after Women's Bridge in their NBO

Outcome: 25 NBOs selected a person. Now called A Women's Bridge Co-Ordinator (WBC) **SET UP A DATABASE** with GDPR compliance for the WBC

Outcome: We don't know if Databases of Women have been setup by NBOs for WBCs. **INFORM - ENCOURAGE**

Outcome: Information Documents have been circulated from Women's Committee to WBCs

and NBOs - the most recent being the EBL WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER Jan 2020.

Meeting in Ostend after the EBL National Women's Pairs in 2018.

NETWORK to DEVELOP

Outcome: Women's Online Practice Matches

Top Section: 14 countries take part. Sweden, Norway, Scotland and France used the tool to practice for the Venice cup. One co Ordinator wrote '... Thanks a lot ...Now we have a lot of boards to play against the best teams in Europe!'

New and Aspiring: Only Cyprus, Ireland, Israel took part with Estonia interested.

U26 Women: U26 Women in Poland played Top of the World Sweden this week as a one off.

Much can be done using this tool - coaching, analysis, networking and it has the potential to encourage smaller countries to participate in the international scene and enhance the game for women.

ENCOURAGE, SUPPORT, PROPOSE and ELECT WOMEN:

Outcome: We have doubled the representation on the EBL Executive

WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE:

Networking:

We could share information such as:

How countries run trials

How countries structure the coaching for women

We could examine why:

Some countries have success and win

How countries have had success in encouraging young women to play Bridge.

We could arrange

Inter- country matches perhaps as a league on BBO.

We could ask about the long-term view in terms of teams

How teams are selected

We could support countries who can only afford to send an Open team

Women could support women

EBL Executive helped by reducing fees in Istanbul for example.

HOW CAN OFFICERS AT THIS SEMINAR HELP?

If you have not done so already – Select a WBC

Support the WBC

Provide the WBC with a Database

Have Women's Bridge on the Agenda of your meetings with

- A Progress Report
 - Plan of Action for Development.
 - Send a Women's team to EBL Championships (Fundraise if necessary)
 - Encourage women to play in National Women's Pairs (This year in Madeira).
 - Encourage Women to play in Open Championships - last time Istanbul
 - Help the WBC to submit teams for ONLINE Practice
- Top Women, New and Aspiring and U26

MUCH CAN BE DONE IF WE WORK TOGETHER TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN BRIDGE

Seamus Dowling



Writer, former teacher and former local government official, Past President of CBAI and IBU, Irish Times bridge correspondent, contributor to The Irish Bridge Journal. Author: Thank You Partner, The History of Bridge in Ireland, published by Liberties Press 2009; Great Players, Great Plays, 80 Years of Irish Bridge Deals, 1932 - 2012, published privately 2013; proceeds from the latter donated to junior bridge development.

Seamus was the initiator of the Irish bridge-teacher training programme and says ' something I am proud of and probably the only thing I have done which required some effort and real work - everything else was just fun'!

WOMEN IN BRIDGE – Food for Thought

Anyone who argued that bridge, nowadays is a male-dominated game would quickly be silenced. 'Of course it is not,' the cries would be loud and widespread. The European Bridge League has never published statistics showing the respective numbers of male and female players in its constituent member states, yet is it a fair guess that a majority of club members across Europe are female. In some countries women players are in a substantial majority. Why, therefore are there only two women members on the EBL's 13-person, executive committee. The image projected is that of a male bastion of power, determined to hold on to power. Yes, women have equal opportunity at the table and the EBL has a women's committee but, in the end we men make the decisions. And just to show we are not biased we will have a woman or two on the committee.

However, women's position in bridge should be seen in the context of their long struggle for equality in the world in general. Bridge, during its early developmental stages was a male pastime. A magazine, *The Irish Golfer* in 1904, when all of Ireland was still part of the UK, reported that women were beginning to play bridge in golf clubs and it stated: *we do not consider that ladies ought to play cards publicly*. This was not simply a bias against women; it was the way of the world at the time. Women had their place in society; it was not at the bridge table. We have advanced a long way since then. This was the era of the suffragettes, the fight for the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Following a long and at times violent struggle, women achieved their aim in the UK and Germany in 1918; in Austria and The Netherlands the following year. It is difficult to believe now that France gave women the vote only in 1944, Greece in 1952 and Switzerland as recent as 1971. It is not surprising that women across Europe have some catching up to do.

Fewer countries enter teams in the women's European team championships than in the open. In recent years there has been a decline in women participating at international level. This, a discouraging and disturbing trend is, of course a matter for the countries concerned but it was alarming to observe so few participants from the host country in some recent women's pairs' championships. There are, of course reasons for this but has any attempt been made to discover what these reasons are? Do our male administrators care? Can or indeed should the EBL do anything to increase women's participation? What can it do? It is easy enough to speculate that the economic recession that began in 2008 affected women's international participation more than men. But why should that be? We have become accustomed to women in senior management positions in all walks of life; female CEOs of major corporations and public bodies are growing in number. European countries have had women presidents and prime ministers. How many national governing bodies for bridge have had women presidents? Ultimately women must further their own cause but do women wish to be involved at the top level of planning and decision making? How long before we see the first female president of the European Bridge League?

Seamus Dowling

Dermot O'Brien



I had the honour in February of accompanying Paul Porteous and Harold Curran as a

delegate of the Irish Bridge Union to the European Bridge League Officers' Seminar in Prague for three days of debate and discussion about the issues facing the European bridge federations.

There were around 60 delegates representing 29 federations, along with the Executive Committee of which Paul is a member. As the weekend coincided with the UK's Brexit date, five of them, including Harold, flew to Prague as citizens of the EU and returned home as "exiles".

EBL President Jan Kamras chaired the meetings, with some difficulty as he was on two crutches as a result of a recent skiing accident.



Once the discussions started, it was reassuring to find the vast majority of federations facing up to the same challenges as we are here in Ireland – an aging, and in many cases, declining membership (although ours is better described as stable rather than declining); the difficulty of recruiting new members, and new teachers; the balance between the resources devoted to the elite few versus the large majority of essentially social players; and of course the dreaded GDPR!

The huge additional resources available to the larger federations quickly became apparent, when a French delegate, in a presentation on an exercise they took to reinvigorate the performance of their open squad, revealed that the annual cost had been €150,000, from a total annual budget of €7 million. One of my co-delegates from Austria confided in me later that the main message he took from his first seminar a few years ago was that he had some very rich neighbours.

10th EBL OFFICERS' SEMINAR PRAGUE

Irish Delegate's Story

In one of the sub-group meetings, a Danish delegate told us that they spend €120,000 a year on a printed newsletter for members, which seemed odd from a technologically advanced nation in this digital age; apparently the Danish bridge players are reluctant to give up their paper copies. Our recent promotion week and our programme for new teachers were well-received by several of our peers, and I have commitments to email the relevant materials to the interested parties.



There was a lively discussion on both women's bridge, a subject close to the heart of our own Mary Kelly-Rogers, a long-standing member of the EBL Women's Committee. On Women's Bridge, one (female) delegate provocatively suggested that there should be no such thing as women's bridge, just bridge. This led to a very passionate debate, at the end of which one (male) delegate opined that if such a step were ever taken, it seemed that 50% of women players would be delighted, and the other 50% outraged. Still on matters of gender, the English delegation reported that they have recently received their first member request to change gender, and were glad that they had the foresight to put in place a formal written policy to deal with this. On junior bridge, we had the good news from Geert Magerman that he is confident that the technical obstacle that has prevented us from entering European university championships (because bridge is not recognised as a sport in Ireland, it is thus not within the ambit of Student Sport Ireland, whose approval is needed for a team to be entered) has been overcome, as a result of representations by ourselves and other federations similarly affected.



There was an excellent presentation on the laws of bridge by Eitan Levy of the Laws Committee. There are no major law changes currently planned, but watch out for a change in the determination of whether or not a card has been played. And, just to demonstrate that no rule book, no matter how exhaustive, can deal with every eventuality, Gordon Rainsford of the EBU relayed a problem that had arisen in one of their recent events. Dummy had made the opening lead (there is a law to cover that, apparently), but his left-hand-opponent promptly followed suit ... as did "Declarer"! That one might tax even the unflappable Fearghal O'Boyle.

On the final day of the seminar, EBL Treasurer Eric Laurant made an excellent presentation on the League's finances, and the successful strides the current Executive has made to reduce costs and bring revenues and expenditures into a more sustainable long-term balance. The Committee has also taken measures to make it easier, and more financially appealing, for national federations to bid to host an EBL event. Indeed, there was a very well-attended EBL Tournament Directors' Seminar in Belfast the weekend after our meetings.



I really enjoyed my first EBL Officers' Seminar; I learned a lot, and met some very interesting and well-informed bridge administrators and organisers from all over Europe. Hopefully, once the current crisis conditions have abated and bridge is back on an even keel, we'll have some new ideas to put in place for our clubs and members.

Rafal Marks



Writes of the exciting road he took that led to the U26 Polish Women team winning gold last year at the European Youth Championships in Norway and thus their place to compete in the

Worlds -whenever that might now be.

Two years ago, I got a call from my friend Piotr, 'I got an offer to become the coach of the Polish national girls' team, however I can't handle this by myself. Would you like to join me?'. I thought to myself: 'I teach mathematics at the university, why not try teaching bridge?'.


Afterwards I invited Zuzanna to join us and together we started the most thrilling journey of my life. Since we both just finished our junior bridge careers, it was an exciting opportunity for us to reenter this world in a new role.

Our first task was to choose the team for the 2018 Youth World Championships in Wujiang, China. Finally, we picked a team, which consisted of three complete newcomers – Joanna Kokot, Dominika Ocylok and Joanna Zalewska, two with some international experience - Hania Ciunczyk and Anna Zareba - and one very experienced and successful player – Sophie Baldysz. The team was young and promising; however, inexperienced, so expectations towards their performance were not very high.

It became quickly evident that we are not afraid of anyone, including the top European teams. We had a secret weapon. Piotr is a football fan and he used his stadium experience to come up with special chants about all the opposing



teams – we would sing them together before every match, which would fill all of our players with positive energy. The songs, alongside issue-free play, led us to the final. In the final we had to give superiority to the brilliant Chinese team, which showed us that we must further develop our skills.

Poland's Golden Girls

Win Gold 27th European Youth Team Championships Oslo 2019



Our team were Sophie BALDYSZ, Joanna KOKOT, Dominika OCYLOK, Monika SUCHODOLSKA, Joanna ZALEWSKA, Anna ZAREBA, Rafal MARKS (npc), Zuzanna MOSZCZYNSKA (coach)



By the time of the European Youth championships we had lost Hania (due to age) and Piotr (he and his wife had a baby ☺). However, the other girls dedicated themselves to significantly improving their bridge skills.



This now 'experienced' team of Sophie Baldysz – Joanna Zalewska, Joanna Kokot-Dominika Ocylok and Anna Zareba – Monika Suchodolska won the 2019 Youth European Championships in Oslo resolving any doubts about their abilities. Despite an unpromising start, we managed to win 12 consecutive matches and ended the tournament with a significant margin over all the opponents. The same team is going to represent Poland in the Youth World Championships and attempt to win gold, just as golden girls do! The 2020 Championships are now postponed due to the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic but will be held in Salsomaggiore. August 2021 with 'all the same requirements and conditions, including the 2020 age limits'. The golden girls will be ready!

Rafal Marks



U 26 Women's Team



Poland's U26 Golden Girls

A deadly mixture!

Sophie Baldysz Sophie Baldysz comes from a family, where bridge was deeply rooted as her parents met at a bridge tournament. Together with her mom she has been playing for the Polish Women's team since 2017, with whom she achieved an enormous success of winning a gold medal in the 2018 European Women Championship in Ostend. Her adventure with junior girls' team started six years ago and continues till today, during which she played with various partners. She manages to continue working on her PhD in biotechnology, as well as attend a jazz singing school, despite the large amounts of time she dedicates to the development of her bridge skills.

Joanna Zalewska actually started playing bridge by accident. In high school, when she was looking for the classroom where the math club meetings were held, she confused the classrooms and ended up at the bridge club instead. This accident sparked her interest in bridge and as a result a year and a half later she joined the junior girls' team. Joanna is still attending school, which makes her the youngest member of our team. In the future, she is planning to study at the Flight Academy, where she would like to become a master in 'sending her opponents home'.

A pair consisting of the youngest and the most experienced player forms a deadly mixture. Their very aggressive bidding style alongside their perfect card play leaves their opponents with little chances to draw breath during the match.

The 'Agents' Kokot-Ocylok

Dominika Ocylok – a student of medicine with the looks of a model and the spirit of an eccentric musician. A workhorse, an expert swimmer, and knows everything about your interior, literally. Her adventure with bridge started in junior high school. Since she dreamed of becoming an actress at the time, she decided to choose a class with a theater-bridge oriented profile.

Joanna Kokot – a very successful computer scientist, currently working on her own bidding-practice app. However, don't be deceived – she works out intensively at the gym, and is a steeplechase veteran, drinks only black coffee and wears leather army boots with skirts. You can always get a smart joke out of her. She started playing bridge, because she was persuaded by a classmate, who fell in love with their bridge teacher, to join the class.

Both Joanna and Dominika considered dropping bridge at the beginning of their studies. Fortunately, they met each other and encouraged each other to continue to improve their skills. They formed a pair with a very inventive playing style, extremely hard to read. You never know where the 'agent' is hidden. They believe that the key to success is to do a gym 'bridge position' before every match in order to improve your bridge skills. Considering their results (including a silver medal in the Polish Women Pairs Championships), the method turned out to be effective.

'Casino girls' Suchodolska-Zareba



Monika Suchodolska – Due to her work in a casino in Sopot, she knows everything about cards. Once she went with her father to watch him play a bridge league match. In the absence of one pair she sat in with her brother to avoid a forfeit of her dad's team and it quickly turned out that they're the best pair on that team.

Anna Zareba – A very successful student of data science, although during work she is constantly thinking about links between data analysis and bridge. Her bridge career had its beginning when back in high school she was playing during recess. In addition to serious international competitions, she enjoys recreational bridge with friends in the atmosphere of smiling and screaming accompanied by the finest wine.

They use a "village-peasant-simple" bidding style, however if you bid a little bit too high against them, be prepared for a double and perfect defense. You'll never get bored watching their play, stakes are high, but as everybody knows, the casino always wins.



Team Quotes:

- 'What does 2NT mean?' 'It is asking for the sense of life'
- 'And what is the sense of life?', '3 spades'
- 'Everyone is a bidding devil compared to us'
- 'What's the score for 1♥x+2?' '560' 'Phew. That's not a lot'
- 'It's a slam madness'

Zuzanna Moszczyńska- Coach



Zuzanna started playing bridge in high school, where Piotr recognized her as the most talented girl player he had ever seen. By winning two consecutive silver medals in European Youth Teams Championships Zuzanna lived up to his expectations. Her role as coach for the U26 girls Polish team brought her the coveted gold medal, well earned, in her outstanding work as coach and mentor to the golden girls. Endplays are her hallmark. She works as a commercial TV campaign manager and cooking is one of the things she does to get away from her work.

Rafal Marks - NPC

As a true game-addict, it is not surprising that both my job, which is at a sports-betting company, and my hobby are game-centered. Bridge is mostly the game of drawing conclusions; however, since I am a mathematician-probabilist, I keep on studying the links between Bridge and probability theories. My journey through the world of Bridge as a player started in high school thanks to Piotr Dybicz. Thanks to him I started my career as a coach of juniors just after I became too old for U25 category. In 2019 I managed to become a 3-time gold medalist of the Polish National Championships and represented Poland in the national mixed team. I believe that the experience I gained as a coach of girls has allowed me to better understand my mixed partner and therefore helped me pursue this path.

Rafal Marks

LIZ MCGOWAN



**Medalist,
Journalist
Mega worker for
Youth Bridge
and ALL Bridge**

Not many players can be top Bridge players and still be administrators but Liz McGowan is one player that has and does tirelessly. She is to be congratulated on many fronts. The list is endless, Editor of the Scottish Bridge News magazine, Chair of SBU Laws and Ethics Committee, Past President of the SBU and past Chairman of BGB and probably all aspects of Scottish Bridge.

Liz was PC of Scotland's Women's team in WBG Wroclaw, reaching the semi-finals. This led to an invitation to the Beijing Hua Yuan Cup World Women Elite Bridge competition. After qualification in EBL in Ostend for Scotland's first appearance in the Venice cup in Wuhan, Liz was instrumental in the fundraising, including giving invitational seminars at clubs throughout the country. She is in the Scottish women's teams for 55th European Team Championships now postponed, see President Jan Kamras' letter on Page 3, and for the Lady Milne, 5 nations championships also postponed.

When Scottish players refer to Lady Milne it is a Women's Championship played between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

LIZ McGowan "I played my first Lady Milne in 1977, and this (2019) will be my 35th appearance, with my 9th partner. I have won 10 times, and would like to reach a dozen, but I'm running out of time ...Prior to 2000, I was a member of the British Women's team, picked up silver medals at the 1988 and '92 Olympiads and gold at the Europeans in '97 and '99. I also won the 1996 World Mixed Teams with Heather Dhondy. I like to think of myself as a Bridge journalist; currently editing the Scottish Bridge News for the SBU. I live in Edinburgh with husband Ian, two daughters, and much-loved grand-daughter."

Women's Team Scotland World Championships Wuhan September 2019 Venice Cup



The Scottish team that went to Wuhan to play in the Venice Cup having qualified from The 55th European Team Championships in Ostend in 2018

SCOTLAND

WOMEN TEAM

Helen KANE (Scotland)	player
Paula LESLIE (Scotland)	player
Elizabeth (Liz) MCGOWAN (Scotland)	player
Fiona McQUAKER (Scotland)	player
Sam PUNCH (Scotland)	player
Anne SYMONS (Scotland)	player
Alex ADAMSON (Scotland)	non-playing captain
Danny KANE (Scotland)	coach

<https://www.scottishbridge.com/city-publications/venice-cup-march-2020/>

On the Line to Wuhan Reports Liz McGowan

Last year the Scottish Women managed to qualify for the Venice Cup, the first time we have done so. Our Seniors won a bronze medal at the 2012 European Championships in Dublin, qualifying for the d'Orsi Cup. They reached the KO stages in Bali and so we had a goal!

It seemed fortuitous that the EBL Women's Committee decided to launch an Online Women's Practice matches this year, and we were quick to sign up. Online is much less stressful than At the Table. As dummy you can judge how long partner might take over a contract: you can decide whether to not bid for a trick even or watch a short film on TV. But it is more difficult to focus on the small cards played, even your own, when you never actually handle them. And of course, you cannot conceal your less-than-perfect calls and plays when team-mates can follow the play card by card next day.

cost £10.50 US\$54 Annual subscription



Women's Team Scotland

Liz above and the rest of the team for Venice Cup



Fiona McQuaker

"I played my first Lady Milne in Cheltenham, with Liz and we have played in

a number of Scottish Ladies teams since then, including Olympiads and Europeans. I have one European bronze medal, won with Liz, Paula and Suzanne. I am a chartered accountant, living and working in Edinburgh. I enjoy travelling, both within Scotland and abroad."



Samantha Punch

"I have played in the Scottish women's team since 2008, winning the Lady Milne six times. I'm Professor of

Sociology at the University of Stirling, where I'm currently working to establish the Sociology of Bridge as a new research field. This includes 52 in-depth interviews with top players and a project (with EBED) on well-being, healthy ageing and bridge. I am currently driving the global Keep Bridge Alive (KBA) campaign which aims to communicate messages about the benefits of bridge beyond the bridge world. The key goals of KBA are to transform the image of bridge, to increase participation and enhance the sustainability of the mind sport. Please do consider making a donation by searching for 'Keep Bridge Alive' on the UK Crowdfunder website <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/u5c0e5e7810869>

What have we learned? Well, part score swings can be decisive. Here is an example from our very first outing:

Board 11: Love All, Dealer South

	♠ J10864 ♥ Q73 ♦ J ♣ AKQ10	
♠ K93 ♥ KJ105 ♦ 105 ♣ 9876		♠ AQ ♥ A642 ♦ Q432 ♣ J65
	♠ 752 ♥ 98 ♦ AK9876 ♣ 42	

Both Souths could open a weak 2♦, and both played there. Our South got a passive club lead. She cashed the top diamonds, discarded a spade on a club, and claimed 8 tricks.

Many top players argue for 'safe' leads, but surely here, where partner's silence suggests a misfit and considerable strength in dummy, it must be right to attack? A Strong ♥10. brought pleasing results. Declarer covered, East won. She cashed 2 spades and returned a heart. ♠K was our 5th trick, with a certain trump to come. Declarer somehow negotiated a second trump loser for -2 and 5 imps. We won this match by 6 imps.

Board 4 Game all Dealer West

	♠ A10 ♥ J1095 ♦ K73 ♣ J1054	
♠ K98643 ♥ A5 ♦ QJ5 ♣ Q7		♠ J72 ♥ KQ ♦ 98642 ♣ A93
	♠ Q5 ♥ 76432 ♦ A10 ♣ K862	

West opened 1♠. Our East's raise to 2♠ ended the auction. Opponents' 3-card limit raise got them a level higher. Leading into the stronger hand is more dangerous, so North settled for a passive ♥J. We play Suit Preference Signals when dummy's holding tells us the suit led has no future, but South was unsure of the strongest attack. She played a neutral ♥4. Declarer won the ♥K in dummy and played ♠J, covered all round. A diamond switch now gives us a ruff for one down, but establishes diamonds for a club discard. A club switch also collects a fifth trick for -1. And when declarer ducked to the King we got the diamond ruff as well for -2.

After the same start our declarer preferred a low spade to the King and Ace. Now the ruff is with a natural winner and the 2♠ contract cannot be beaten. 7 imps feels warm and fuzzy on an unexciting board. Add in a couple of game swings and you have a healthy win. It is worth fighting even for a lowly 1NT contract.



Paula Leslie

"I started playing bridge at school in Dundee together with Suzanne Cohen (now Sheasby) with whom I

have won a number of events over the years. I also have five bronze medals from various European events. In 2018 I won a silver in the women's event at the World Bridge Series. My ambition is one day to win a gold. This will be my seventh Lady Milne (fourth with Sam). I moved to London after university, qualified as a chartered accountant and now



Anne Symons has been a regular member of the Scottish Ladies team for a number of years, playing in Lady Milnes,

Europeans and Olympiads. She has also been part of the only women's pair to play in the Camrose for Scotland. This is her fifth year playing with Helen and they were part of the team who won the Lady Milne in 2016. She still works part time as a pharmacist and enjoys classes at the gym when she has the time.



Helen Kane "I started playing bridge in my early twenties. Aside from Lady Milne wins and Scottish

National Pairs titles, I consider my major bridge achievement to be reaching the semi-final of the 2016 World Games in Poland. My partnership with Anne began 5 years ago and this is now our 5th Lady Milne playing together. I took early retirement from my work as a Cytopathologist 5 years ago, and I now happily combine bridge with my other hobbies of piano playing, violin playing and walking. I live in Glasgow with my husband, Danny, and my dog, Jade."

Board 4 Game all Dealer West

	♠ Q853 ♥ 1032 ♦ AQ7 ♣ A98	
♠ AKJ4 ♥ J94 ♦ K32 ♣ KQ4		♠ 762 ♥ KQ8 ♦ T96 ♣ T752
	♠ 109 ♥ A765 ♦ J854 ♣ J63	

West opened a strong no-trump and played there. Neither North was inspired to find the killing heart lead. (Deep Finesse also recommends ♣9, but that is surely too Deep for a short-sighted single dummy player.) The actual spade lead ran to the Jack and declarer played a heart to dummy and a club back to hand. North won the club and played a heart. Here the defence diverged. Fiona McQuaker ducked the second heart; the opposing South won and played her second spade.

At the other table our declarer was now well in control. She cashed the ♥Q and endplayed North with the fourth spade. The nine of clubs was covered by the ten, Jack and Queen and North put back on lead with the eight to concede the seventh trick to the ♦K. Back at our table declarer had reached this position:

	♠ Q85 ♥ 10 ♦ AQ7 ♣ 98	
♠ AK4 ♥ 9 ♦ K32 ♣ Q4		♠ 76 ♥ Q ♦ T96 ♣ T75
	♠ 10 ♥ A7 ♦ J854 ♣ J6	

She cashed a spade and exited with a heart. South cashed the thirteenth heart. West threw a spade, North and East threw clubs. South led a diamond to the Queen. North, who for once had been keeping track of the played cards, exited with a spade. Declarer had to go one down. Just 5 imps in a match we won big, but every imp counted in Wuhan.

Liz McGowan

Gordon Lessells



Gordon began bridge in 1963, organised the first Nigerian Bridge Congress in 1978 with Professor Norman Smith and have been a fan of the Listener Crossword (now appearing in The Times newspaper) since the early 60's. I lectured in Mathematics in Scotland, Nigeria and Ireland and have been involved with Ireland's participation in the International Mathematical Olympiad since 1988.

There's more to Gordon than this!

He says ' The aim is to find the thirty six in the text. However, not all letters will be together. The letters of some location might spread out over several words. There are lots of extraneous words and letters in order to make the narrative make some sense.

PLEASE SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO GORDON

gordon.lessells@ul.ie

Journey through Europe

QUIZ -- A TEST - TRY IT! - IT's FUN -It's for YOU

In the following narrative you will discover 36 locations throughout Europe. The locations follow each other in a way that each location follows and is followed by a location in a country that has a land border or can be reached by ferry from the other country. A total of 36 locations should be found. You need to find out where the journey starts.

Narrative for Test

Doubling can be a lucky charm in bridge. After a Bergen raise don't blink hoping for the young turk you are with will find a most cogent and powerful lead. Start up your bridge adventure, filling in undertricks. Minus two tricks will give you a kick start even if the Chinese in the auction was in a lower contract. So far I am buoyant. An endplay at the death earns a top. I risk opening Benjie. Thirty % and an average follow. April's hot in Madeira. November is a cold time. Most are wearing pullovers as uniform. Mary is bored. But David Price's Table orations raise a laugh. Versus a three Club limited intervention Byrne opts for doubling Zia. Smiles and large numbers ensue. Next hand overtricks come home. We find home in seven. Most end up in six. I rely on a squeeze. The devil sleeps and we get our top to finish. Solution in next issue.



Thank you to Contributors

President Jan Kamras

Sarah Amos

Seamus Dowling

Gordon Lessells

Rafal Marks

Liz McGowan

Fearghal O'Boyle

Dermot O'Brien

EBL Women's Committee 2018-2022



In Middle Sevinç Atay
Chairperson
Kari-Anne Opsal, Silvia Valentini
Katarzyna Dufurat (Kasia)
Mary Kelly Rogers



ONLINE PRACTICE MATCHES APRIL 21st to MAY 26th

Matches played on a **Tuesday 20.00 CET**
OR
a Time and Date to suit both teams

EBL WOMEN'S PRACTICE MATCHES APRIL 21 st to MAY 26 th						
Country	Apr 21 st	Apr 28 th	May 5 th	May 12 th	May 19 th	May 26 th
Estonia	Norway	Russia 1	Turkey	Italy	Ireland	Sweden
Norway	Estonia	Israel	Switzerland	Germany	Hungary	Denmark
Scotland	Sweden	Russia 2	Ireland	Russia 1	Italy	Turkey
Sweden	Scotland	Germany	Denmark	Hungary	Switzerland	Estonia
Israel	Turkey	Norway	Italy	Russia 2	Russia 1	Ireland
Turkey	Israel	Hungary	Estonia	Switzerland	Denmark	Scotland
Germany	Ireland	Sweden	Russia 1	Norway	Russia 2	Italy
Ireland	Germany	Switzerland	Scotland	Denmark	Estonia	Israel
Hungary	Italy	Turkey	Russia 2	Sweden	Norway	Russia 1
Italy	Hungary	Denmark	Israel	Estonia	Scotland	Germany
Switzerland	Russia 1	Ireland	Norway	Turkey	Sweden	Russia 2
Russia 1	Switzerland	Estonia	Germany	Scotland	Israel	Hungary
Denmark	Russia 2	Italy	Sweden	Ireland	Turkey	Norway
Russia 2	Denmark	Scotland	Hungary	Israel	Germany	Switzerland

This is the schedule at present for top women players.

A similar schedule can happen for new and aspiring players to international level to include U 26 women players.

eblwomen@gmail.com