

## MOUNTNESSING BRIDGE CLUB 2010-2011

The English Bridge Union (EBU) is introducing a new way of financing its activities from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 based on the concept of [Universal Membership](#). Mountnessing Bridge Club (MBC) has opted to remain affiliated to the EBU for the year 2010/11, and hence it will come within the scope of the new [Universal Membership](#) scheme, which for individual players involves the replacement of the annual EBU membership fee by a 'pay to play' premium levied on all sessions held at the club.

Two points that are of immediate relevance to renewals of MBC membership are:

- All members of MBC will automatically become full members of the EBU; the EBU has identified a number of [benefits of membership](#). Club members also, of course, benefit from a reduced rate of weekly table money compared with non-members.
- The costs levied on [the club](#) by the EBU will increase by approximately £800 in a full year

Since the charges were last set, costs falling on the club have increased, and attendance at the club has decreased, creating additional pressure on the club's bank balances. Presently the club only remains financially viable courtesy of interest-free loans from my personal bank account in order to manage cash flow fluctuations throughout the year.

Charges will be revised as detailed below.

### FIRSTLY, THE BAD NEWS

Table Money for Standard Club Nights: this charge will be increased by 50 pence per player per week to £2.50 for club members and £4.00 for non-members. The table money for Simultaneous Pairs events for non-members will rise by 50 pence to £7.00.

NICKO Team entry: for the past few years the club has fully subsidised teams from the Club to enter the National Inter Club Knockout Tournament (NICKO). This practice is no longer sustainable. The actual cost per team charged by the EBU operates on a sliding scale depending on the total number of entries through the Club. There will be a flat rate charge of £48 per team; the club will pay the balance of the actual charge, i.e., a subsidy of approximately £5 per team.

### BETTER NEWS

Table Money for Club Championship events will **remain at £2.50** (members) and £4.00 (non-members) – and hence will become the same as for normal club nights. The table money for Simultaneous Pairs events will **remain at £5.00** for club members.

The annual membership fee will **remain at £15.00**

The 'Player of the Month' award will **continue to operate** as now, with the leading player each calendar month (based on the sum of weekly percentage scores) receiving a bottle of wine. This award will continue to be open to both members and non-members.

### OTHER CHANGES

A new policy concerning the award of wine prizes will be adopted. The club has traditionally offered wine to the winning pair from each of two sections, but that practice was established when there were regularly 25 - 30 tables in play. In 2010/11 normally, only one pair will be awarded wine if the number of tables is less than 16; in such circumstances, for Pairs events,

the wine will be awarded to the pair with the highest percentage score whichever section they may be playing in. For Pairs events, we will continue the practice of NOT splitting ties for the purposes of determining the winners of the wine – i.e., both pairs would win wine. The same consideration applies to the 'Player of the Month' award.

There will continue to be two parallel year-long Ladder Awards, but the details will change. For the past few years there have been separate ladder awards for the two sections, Blue and Red. With the club now playing quite regularly as a single section, this distinction is no longer sustainable, and from 2010/11 the awards will revert back, such that the **Faye Wernick Trophy** will be awarded to the leading lady, and the **Lionel Wernick Trophy** to the leading man. As is currently the case, only club members will be eligible to win these awards. There will also be a small change to the 'ladder rules' for 2010/11; the 'loyalty bonus' is intended to reward players attending the club regularly throughout the year, with the first 'bonus' active after the 26<sup>th</sup> attendance in the year. Please keep an eye on the website and the club's Noticeboard for the restatement of the rules for 2010/11.

Following the success of the experimental [Teams of Four](#) events, these will become a regular feature – taking place on the **third Thursday of alternate months**, unless that date happens to clash with a Simultaneous Pairs event (as would be destined to happen in November 2010).

There will be a **brand new page** on the club's website effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 entitled '**Developing Bridge Skills**'. This page will be aimed primarily at 'the average club player' and it will only be available through the "Members' Area", and hence a username and password will be required to access it. All members renewing for 2010/11 will be reminded of their user name & password by e-mail shortly after renewal, providing they give an e-mail address on the membership application form. This new page will comprise an index to on-line articles about a variety of Bridge Topics, such as 'Losing Trick Count', 'Transfer Bidding', etc. The articles will be a mixture of those sourced externally, e.g., courtesy of "Mr Bridge" and others originating from within MBC. The contents list on this page will be displayed on the club's notice board and members who do not have internet access can request copies of specific articles at a flat rate of 50 pence each, to cover the costs of printing – or alternatively, ask a fellow member to print one for you for free!

## **FOR THE FUTURE**

It is anticipated that the changes described above will enable the club to build up some much needed reserves, and if so, the club will look towards investing in more technology to support the running of club nights. Top of the list would be to acquire a set of 'Bridge Mates' or equivalent. These devices effectively replace the traditional 'travelling score sheet' by an electronic data capture pad, which then has two main advantages:

- Any scoring anomalies are resolved instantly, because the Bridge Mate will not accept an illogical score; the scorer enters the orientation, contract, and the number of tricks made and then the device works out the correct score
- Speedy scoring - results would normally be available at the club within five minutes of the last board being played, and on the club's website before midnight

Any comments about this suggestion would be welcome.

A further-off aim would be to acquire a 'duplimate' machine, which would mean that pre-dealt boards with hand sheets could be used at every club meeting. That aim is 'up in the clouds' at the moment due to the costs involved.

Alaric Cundy, Club Director  
February 2010