



2010 was the first year in which most EBU and county subscriptions were paid via Pay-to-Play. The Association envisaged a significant fall in county subscription income as a result, given that only about half of London's clubs remained affiliated from April 2010, and took steps to reduce costs, particularly of printing and postage. These were successful, with the result that the accounts for the year show a small surplus.

Other successful innovations were the Association's first Café Bridge event and the expansion of the London Trophy to allow bridge clubs to participate, albeit whilst maintaining the limits on ranked players. It is to be hoped that both will continue to develop.

For the third year running, our performance in the Tollemache Cup and Metropolitan Cup gave us nothing to celebrate. However, our team in the Pachabo Cup restored a little of our confidence by finishing a very creditable third.

People

Christine Duckworth has continued to shoulder the bulk of work for the Association as county secretary, editor of the newsletter and youth officer. And as if that were not enough, she is taking over the organisation and administration of the London Trophy for the forthcoming season.

Sati McKenzie has, however, run her a close second. Whilst continuing to run the leagues, the Champions Cup and the London Championship Teams of Four for the Ian Gardiner trophy and act as the committee's minutes secretary, she also took on the role of treasurer. As a result, we now have accounts for 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Roger Morton managed the county aspects of the transition to Universal Membership. He collected all the relevant membership data and ensured that all players registered with London allegiance were identified and, where necessary, reminded of the need to pay a direct subscription. He also continued to maintain the Association's website.

Sadly, we lost two hard-working and long-serving committee members. Simon Cocheme and Cecil Leighton both stood down from the committee at the AGM. Our thanks go to both of them for their work over a number of years.

Finance

The underlying financial position remains stable. The difficulties with successive treasurers over the last five years have been overcome and, as reported above, we now have accounts for the last three years, showing that we have continued to generate a small

surplus in each. The committee has therefore agreed that it is neither practical nor necessary to attempt to create accounts for the two years still missing (2006 and 2007).

As already mentioned, a number of actions were taken to reduce costs in order to maintain financial stability in the era of Universal Membership. Our 2010 subscription income was, as expected, barely half of our 2009 subscription income but the cost savings balanced this shortfall.

Sponsorship remains a critical part of the Association's finances. The Lederer could not take place without generous sponsorship from our President, Bernard Teltscher, and the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Similarly, the Fox Shammon Trophy, the finals of the London Trophy and the Della-Porta Plate and the London Trophy Pairs continue to benefit from venues being provided by Queen's Club and the Royal Automobile Club. Our thanks are due to them all.

The Future

We are still in the "settling down" period following the implementation of Universal Membership, some developments in bridge education and the closer direct relationship between the EBU and its affiliated clubs. Meanwhile the EBU continues to pursue the possibility of adopting charitable status and to analyse the potential costs and benefits. All of this means a period of continuing uncertainty. In the interests of its members, the Association remains committed to helping the EBU through this period and in the process of developing the game but will need the continuing support of its members to do so. It is well placed to make this contribution as it now has two members on the Board of the EBU, Ian Payn having been co-opted to fill a vacancy earlier this year.

Following the success of the first ever Café Bridge event in England (and a follow-up one this year), we have scope for expanding that type of event. The involvement of local charities is a very positive aspect – bridge raises funds for them and they bring new participants into our events. In such ways, the Association intends to continue to attempt to develop the game and broaden participation in tandem with its support for the EBU's development activities.

M. R. D. Hill

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