



Dear Women Players,

The promised Press Release with the announcement that the European Team Championships would not

take place in Madeira in June was no surprise considering the current pandemic surge in parts of Europe. It brought the news that there will likely be a virtual qualification for the Worlds *'should the WBF decide to go ahead with the World Championships later this year.'*

EBL Women will be prepared. Our Online April series is an opportunity for teams that have qualified for Madeira to check that 'all systems go' with 'no surprises'. See Page 3.

Bridge players had choices when the pandemic hit. Wait for it to be over or embrace the new situation and happily for most it was an embracing that brought bridge fulfilment through online Bridge.

There is no doubt that BBO was quick to rise to the challenge and we are indebted to those that worked around the clock to satisfy the thousands and thousands that came online. Crashes are of the past, practices are in place to tackle the cheating temptations of the few and video and sound is now available to satisfy the need to see one another. Well done BBO.

Mark Horton highlights an article Marie Montuir will write on how federations have risen to the challenges of the pandemic.

RealBridge, a new platform, emerged in the past six months and already is being used for online championships and in clubs worldwide, allowing us to simply play and see! Co-founder Shireen Mohandes tells the story here.

Have you heard of Bamsa? Samantha Punch tells its story and here you will find the information for Bamsa's forthcoming conference starting in late June.

Is it Live Bridge or Not? - Women Bridge Coordinators tell the story in their country.

Finally, a thank you to contributors and a well done to the many women in top rankings.

Mary Kelly Rogers

Editor

EBL Women's Committee

EBL WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER APRIL 2021

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS NOT LIVE BUT LIKELY TO GO VIRTUAL JUNE 2021

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Liz McGowan – Scotland

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Samantha Punch – Bamsa Conference

Women's Rankings

EBL PRESIDENT JAN KAMRAS



**EBL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
2018-2022**



**EBL Women's Committee
2018-2022**

**In Middle Sevinç Atay
Chairperson**

Kari-Anne Opsal, Silvia Valentini

Katarzyna Dufurat (Kasia)

Mary Kelly Rogers

**EBL Women's Committee
2018-2022**

EBL PRESS RELEASE APRIL 2ND, 2021



EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

PRESS RELEASE

ENTC Madeira 2021 Update

The EBL is disappointed to announce that, due to the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic and the situation disimproving in so many countries, the National Team Championships planned for June 2021 in Madeira have been cancelled.

With the co-operation of our very flexible and accommodating hosts, the Portuguese Bridge Federation, we hope to finally go to Madeira in June 2022, for the twice postponed National Team Championships.

In the meantime, should the WBF decide to go ahead with the World Teams Championships later this year, the EBL will organise an alternative method to determine the Zone 1 qualifiers. If such qualification will be held online, it is likely to be within the original Championship time period - 12 – 22 June.

The WBF has not yet made its final decision and may not do so before sometime in May.

In preparation, the EBL is finalising a detailed protocol for an online event which would include, amongst many other security features, players playing in a designated domestic location, set up according to very specific criteria, supervised by independent international observers.

2nd April 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Jan Kamras'.

Jan Kamras
President of EBL

EBL WOMEN'S TEAMS ONLINE SERIES APRIL 24-25

THE TEAM

Tournament Director
Vigfús Pálsson

EBL Consultant TD
Fearghal O'Boyle

RealBridge Consultant
Shireen Mohandes

EBL Women's Organiser
Mary Kelly Rogers

Commitment Forms
Catherine Vitry

Convention Cards
Anna Gudge

EBL Website
Fotis Skoularikis

Meet Event TD Vigfús Pálsson



Vigfús started to play Bridge at 15 but it was the work of TD that took most of his interest. He took time out from Bridge when he got

married. He came back to the fold 15 years ago and to his surprise was asked to be a TD in the largest bridge club in Iceland and in the UK. When Covid 19 stopped face to face Bridge his main work has been BBO TD and then in last 6 months TD for RealBridge.



EBL Women's Teams Online Series

RealBridge April 24 – 25, 2021

Purpose: To prepare women's teams for an Online EBL qualification for the Worlds which are likely to take place virtually 'should the WBF decide to go ahead with the World Teams Championships later this year.'

This event is an opportunity for women to have 'real' practice should the online qualification take place on RealBridge.

General Information and Conditions of Contest can be found here on the EBL website. <http://www.eurobridge.org/>

Please check all details.

Entry Form: tinyurl.com/EBL24-25April

Commitment form: should be sent to:-

Catherine VITRY

EBL Secretariat

Email : secretariat@europeanbridge.org

Tel : +33 6 45 57 93 60

Convention cards: should be sent to: -

Anna Gudge

(E: Anna@ecats.co.uk)

Entry Fee: 50 euros to: -

Credit Suisse AG

Rue de Lion d'Or 5-7

CH-1002 Lausanne-Switzerland

Account: EUROPEAN BRIDGE LEAGUE

IBAN: CH88 0483 5135 2558 8200 0

SWIFT/BIC: CRESCHZZ80A

EBL Women's Online series JANUARY A CATEGORY



1st Germany

The online platform was BBO

17 teams played

4 teams played in Final A

EBL Women's Online Series JANUARY B CATEGORY

This category was for **emerging teams**. Those that trial to play for their country and one day soon envisage that will.

NBOs and WBCs are invited to put forward teams for this group.

NBO Practice matches can be arranged for this group.

Norway's U26 team
Profiled in September 2020
edition of EBL Women's
Newsletter

[http://www.eurobridge.org
/?s=newsletter](http://www.eurobridge.org/?s=newsletter)

8 teams played
Top 4 Final B

JANUARY 2021 EBL Women's Online Series RESULTS

FINAL A



First: Germany

Anne Gladiator, Andrea Reim, Ingrid Gromann, Karin Wenning, Elke Weber, Susanne Kriftner

Second: Denmark

Lone Bilde, Helle Rasmussen, Anita Buus Thomsen, Dorthe Cilleborg Bilde, Tina Ege, Stense Farholt

Third Russia

Tatiana Ponomareva, Elena KHONICHEVA, Maria YAKOVLEVA, Olga PAVLUSHKO, Olga VOROBAYCHIKOVA, Maria LEBEDEVA, CHUBAROVA Svetlana, NIKITINA Alexandra

FINAL B

First: Norway

Sofie Sjødal, Agnethe Hansen Kjensli, Thea Indrebø, Ida Marie Øberg, Kaja Brekke, Erleta Plana

Second: Scotland

Laura Middleton, Ying Piper, Cathy Fergusson, Joyce Benson

Third: Russia

Yury Khyuppenen, Anastasia Makarova, Irina Yun, Alena Kostina, Evgenia Antipova, Antonina Manina



Norway's U26 Women's team

EBL Women's Online Series JANUARY CONSOLATION



1st Israel

16 teams played

**EBL WOMEN'S
PRACTICE MATCH
SCHEDULE
MARCH – JUNE 2021**

**22 COUNTRIES
TAKE PART**

FINAL CONSOLATION

First: Israel:

Varda Abramov, Nurit Graizer, Michal Nosatzki, Natali Saada,

Second: Ireland:

Joan Kenny, Jeannie Fitzgerald, Diane Greenwood, Teresa Rigney, Gilda Pender and Rebecca O'Keeffe

Third: Norway

Tonje Brogeland, Åse Langeland, Stine Holmøy, Maja Rom Anjer, Ann Karin Fuglestad

Category A

<https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=TT:75139;:b=5,r=10,v=2;:-1610186594>

Category B

<https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=TT:91602;:b=7,r=7,v=2;:-1610186600>

A Final

<https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=TT:98928;:b=10,r=3,v=2;:-1610298256>

B Final

<https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=TT:7508;:b=10,r=3,v=2;:-1610298574>

Consolation

<https://webutil.bridgebase.com/v2/tview.php?t=TT:91687;:b=5,r=5,v=2;:-1610298664>

Country	March 9	March 23	April 6	April 20	May 4	May 18	June 1	June 15
Austria	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Hungary	Malta	Norway	Portugal	Russia 2
Denmark	Austria	Turkey	England	Scotland	Russia 1	Poland	Neth'Inds	Italy
England	Swit'Ind	Wales	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Hungary	Malta	Norway
Estonia	Germany	Ireland	Hungary	Malta	Norway	Portugal	Russia 2	Spain
Germany	Estonia	Austria	Turkey	England	Scotland	Russia 1	Poland	Neth'Inds
Greece	Ireland	Hungary	Malta	Norway	Portugal	Russia 2	Spain	Swit'Ind
Hungary	Israel	Greece	Estonia	Austria	Turkey	England	Scotland	Russia 1
Ireland	Greece	Estonia	Austria	Turkey	England	Scotland	Russia 1	Poland
Israel	Hungary	Malta	Norway	Portugal	Russia 2	Spain	Swit'Ind	Wales
Italy	Malta	Norway	Portugal	Russia 2	Spain	Swit'Ind	Wales	Denmark
Malta	Italy	Israel	Greece	Estonia	Austria	Turkey	England	Scotland
Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Russia 2	Spain	Swit'Ind	Wales	Denmark	Germany
Norway	Neth'Inds	Italy	Israel	Greece	Estonia	Austria	Turkey	England
Poland	Portugal	Russia 2	Spain	Swi'Ind	Wales	Denmark	Germany	Ireland
Portugal	Poland	Neth'Inds	Italy	Israel	Greece	Estonia	Austria	Turkey
Russia 1	Russia 2	Spain	Swit'Ind	Wales	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Hungary
Russia 2	Russia 1	Poland	Neth'Inds	Italy	Israel	Greece	Estonia	Austria
Scotland	Spain	Swit'Ind	Wales	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Hungary	Malta
Spain	Scotland	Russia 1	Poland	Neth'Inds	Italy	Israel	Greece	Estonia
Switzerland	England	Scotland	Russia 1	Poland	Neth'Inds	Italy	Israel	Greece
Turkey	Wales	Denmark	Germany	Turkey	Hungary	Malta	Norway	Portugal
Wales	Turkey	England	Scotland	Russia 1	Portugal	Neth'Inds	Italy	Israel

EBL Women's Online Series FEBRUARY



1st Denmark

First Denmark

Lone Bilde PC
Helle Rasmussen
Anita Buus Thomsen
Dorte Cilleorg Bilde
Tina Ege
Stense Farholt

Runners Up Ireland

Joan Kenny PC
Jeannie Fitzgerald
Gilda Pender
Rebecca Brown
Siobhan Part
Hilary McDonagh

3rd Estonia

Maaja Oras PC
Aire Taube
Mirjam Iher
Ines Piibeht
Pihel Kuusk
Tuul Sepp

Tournament organiser:

Mary Kelly Rogers Ireland

Tournament director:

Vigfús Pálsson Iceland Iceland

EBL WOMEN'S FIRST REAL BRIDGE Results, Butler and Overall Ranking and Links

Pos	No	Team
1	1	Denmark
2	2	Ireland
3	5	Estonia
4	6	Switzerland
5	4	Italy
6	8	Germany
7	9	Norway
8	7	Wales
9	10	Northern Ireland
10	3	NIBU

Pos	No	Pair
1	2	Siobhán Part & Rebecca Brown
2	2	Hilary McDonagh & Gilda Pender
3	1	Stense Farholt & Tina Ege
4	6	Irene suisse & Christine Vincent
5	5	Aire Taube & Maarja Oras
6	1	Helle Rasmussen & Lone Bilde
7	9	Katarina Ekren & Ida Marie Øberg
8	5	Pihel Kuusk & Tuul Sepp
9	8	Ingrid Gromann & Karin Wenning
10	4	Simonetta Paoluzi & margherita chavarria
11	9	Lisbeth Glærum & Tonje Brogeland
12	1	Anita Buus Thomsen & Dorte C. Bilde
13	6	Darina Langer & Ruth Nikitine
14	6	Laurence Duc & Elianna Meyerson
15	8	Annaïg Della Monta & Gisela Smykalla
16	4	monica aghemo & Monica Buratti
17	2	Joan Kenny & Jeannie Fitzgerald
18	5	Mirjam Iher & Maarja Oras
19	4	Claudia Pomares & Cristina Golin
20	9	Ann-Mari Mirkovic Juvik & Lisbeth Glærum
21	7	Gilly Clench & Aida Aris
22	9	åse langeland & Tonje Brogeland
23	5	Aire Taube & Ines Piibeht
24	8	Susanne Kriftner & Mieke Plath
25	9	Kaja Brække & Ida Marie Øberg
26	8	Anne Gladiator & Andrea Reim
27	9	Katarina Ekren & Kaja Brække
28	7	margaret lane & LEE COLLIER
29	10	Anne Fitzpatrick & Mary KellyRogers
30	3	Heather Hill & Clare Watson
31	6	Kamelia Balabanova & Sandra Vegh
32	3	Kathleen Cassidy & Norma Irwin
33	10	Diane Greenwood & Helen Hall

REAL BRIDGE EVENT RESULTS DAY 1 AND DAY 2

<https://play.realbridge.online/cq.html?p=210226125129&q=LxmdCq5VU7Hx>

Day 2

<https://play.realbridge.online/cq.html?p=210228125390&q=XeJRngBn9NGD>

EBL Practice match players say.....



Sevinç Atay
Turkey

September 2020

The bridge scene In **Turkey** is pretty much similar to the rest of Europe. All bridge clubs are closed and struggling to make ends meet.

The Turkish Bridge Federation started paid tournaments on BBO, giving out Masterpoints. The proceeds from online tournaments are partly shared with the clubs to cover a fraction of their costs.

Some number of clubs came together to run paid tournaments too. This helps the relatively smaller clubs with their routine costs. All clubs face the risk of closing down for good if the covid19 threat goes on for another year.



Carina
Wademark
Sweden

September 2020

For **Sweden** some clubs have small pairs competitions with special safety rules, but it's rare. More and more clubs are opening up with the screens as on page 1 but most clubs remain closed.

We do have a lot of leagues on BBO, but really looking forward to the real tables again.

We unfortunately can't see it happening until 2021 😞

Live Bridge or Not?

EBL Women Practice Match Coordinators commented on Bridge in their country in September 2020 and now in April 2021.

First – a message from Sevinç Atay, Chair of Women's Committee

As we all observe the pandemic problem is continuing through the whole world with all its strength. We shall not reach a stable situation until the vaccination process is complete. In all countries.

However, bridge activity continues online with new developments to include video. April 24-25 is an opportunity for practise with video but of course we hope in the near future it will be face to face in different countries for various occasions.

I convey my best wishes to all of you.

Sevinç Atay

NOW - April 2021: Turkey, similar to all countries, is running online bridge during the pandemic period. The Türkish Bridge Federation is organizing Mixed, Open and Women's Bridge Teams Championships this month. We are hopeful that we will be back to face to face bridge in the near future.

That is our hope but next week all cafes and restaurants in Turkey will be closed with weekend ban on crowds on streets. Hospitals and Intensive care units are full.

Sevinç Atay, Turkey

NOW - -April 2021

For Sweden it's the same for live bridge, a few clubs are playing live with plexiscreens.

More and more clubs are playing leagues and pairs competitions online on BBO and on RealBridge.

2021 we are playing the Swedish championship for teams, semi-finals with 60 teams and final with 6 teams, on RealBridge.

We hope to arrange our big Bridge festival with our pair championships, a large international teams competition - Chairman's Cup and many other competitions in Örebro July 30-August 8th live. If that's not possible we will play all our pair championships online, most likely on RealBridge.

Carina Wademark, Sweden



**Liz McGowan
Scotland**

September 2020

Scottish Bridge Clubs cannot re-open for the foreseeable future: laws currently forbid more than 6 adults from no more than 2 households getting together indoors.

About half our members have registered for online tournaments; some others are managing the occasional rubber game in each other's homes.

We are concerned that some of the smaller clubs will never recover. The larger ones keep going with online tournaments on BBO.

NOW - April 2021

Scotland has had no face-to-face bridge since mid-March 2020. But the Scottish Bridge Union has made great efforts to encourage online bridge and found a number of keen volunteers to act as Tournament Directors. Many of our members have really taken to online - on the whole we get better turnouts for club district and national tournaments than we did when people had to travel. Bridge has been a godsend to players with no other form of social communication.

Lots of people are running online lessons, so we attract new members that way.

It seems likely that if / when things return to 'normal' we shall have to continue to run online events for the benefit of those who cannot for some reason attend their local clubs - some may prefer online to venturing out on a cold winter's evening.

We have an Online League of 8 Divisions - 84 teams in all. The Camrose series (between England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) has been played on RealBridge, with video communication which makes it more sociable.

We have also formed a link with South Africa, and run regular matches against their teams.

Our Women very much enjoy the EBL matches, thanks to the organisers.

"It's an ill wind that blows nae guid".

Liz McGowan, Scotland

Denmark Sept 2020



Denmark was among the first countries in Europe to enforce a complete lock-down on its population from

the beginning of March to June, forcing us all to stop playing live-bridge and join the virtual tables on BBO. After having swallowed the pain and sorrow of the cancellation of all international live bridge championships in 2020, actually, I came to play more during the three months of lock down than I ever did before.

Today, the Danish bridge clubs are open again and most members have returned to their beloved hobby and sport, which is only truly authentic with cards in the hands and with real people at the table. Although new restrictions are introduced almost every day due to increasing infection rates, all sit-down activity is still allowed in Denmark. Of course, life is not exactly the same as before at the table. Now, we play with our own bidding box, have our own deck of cards at the table, only one player can touch the Bridge-mate, and we use an awful amount of hand sanitizer. Further to this, in my club, there is thermometer at the door entry, and we play behind plexi-glass screens. The latter can be an advantage though, as it is difficult to hear your partner's post hoc analysis of the board you just played.

Denmark April 2021

NOW - April 2021

The corona-virus has not had the same impact on morbidity and mortality in Denmark as in other European countries. The "hammer" with complete lock-down and severe restrictions has been used extensively by our Government. However, the apathy among Danes from this strategy is clear to see, and as more people get vaccinated, it is time to impose "the dance" with Covid now and open the society again. The other day, I was walking in sunny Copenhagen and saw the squares bursting with people who were outside to celebrate the coming of spring like cows on new grass. And that gave me a hope - as green as Madeira.

For bridge players, the move from live to online bridge has benefits in terms of relative ease of play at any time without the need for transportation, but also severe costs in terms of lack of true social interaction and the constant fear and suspicion of cheating. Therefore, for the sake of bridge as a sport, we really need to get back to the green table.

Our 2020 women team was reselected for the European Championship in 2021, so the team is the same, but the waiting time between tournaments has indeed been different. Our team has practiced much more as a team than any other national team I played with. I am sure part of the reason for this is Covid and the home-bound situation, it has put us in. I counted more than 60 practice matches by team Denmark on BBO since the beginning of 2020. To this comes individual bidding practice and loads of boards with other partners. Our team also played three international online women tournaments, two of which were organized by the EBL and we did well in all three. Of course, yet another cancellation of Madeira was tough to swallow. I sincerely hope that we can keep up our team spirit while waiting for a live bridge event where we can try it out.

Lone Bilde, Denmark

Lone wrote when hopeful of the Championships taking place in Madeira this June '...So, the hypothesis is easy to make that the covid crisis is the burning platform that will make a great team spirit. However, we hope that we will be able to test this hypothesis at the live-EC in Madeira in June. While we wait for the decision from EBL, we must visualize the fresh smell of the blue Atlantic Sea, the dark lava, the sun, the green hills, the "levadas", the fruits, the flowers, the seafood, the Portuguese language and most importantly, playing live bridge at the European Championship.'

Let's keep this visualisation, we will go to Madeira! The EBL Press release states '...With the co-operation of our very flexible and accommodating hosts, the Portuguese Bridge Federation, we hope to finally go to Madeira in June 2022, for the twice postponed National Team Championships.'

Estonia sept 2020



Maarja is Coordinator and Player for EBL Women's Practice matches Estonia

September 2020: As to live bridge, in Estonia we've started getting back to more or less normal: both clubs and bigger tournaments are happening, with only the 50% requirement for rooms and of course disinfectants available to the players. (There is no mask requirement, as our Health Board doesn't strongly recommend wearing masks.) The first live tournament in the summer even had more participants than usual, probably because people had missed live bridge so much. Right now, we're preparing for the Estonian Teams' Championship which was cancelled in the spring and will hopefully happen in two weeks. I'm saying 'hopefully', because right now, COVID numbers have started rising again in Estonia, so it can't be excluded that the tournament will have to be cancelled. I'll let you know if that happens, so that the newsletter article will be up to date. It will be interesting to see how different countries have coped with bridge in these conditions!

Estonia sept 2020 - April 2021

September 2020 con'd

Since I promised you an update, I wanted to let you know that our national championship is still taking place this weekend. There has now been a decision on some additional rules: use of a thermometer, hand disinfectants available in each section, tables are spaced as wide apart as possible, bids must be explained in writing only (i.e. no whispering close to the opp's face), each player gets an individual bidding box for the whole tournament, and there is the possibility of an additional replacement player in the team. Use of masks is still voluntary, but masks are provided by the organiser for those who need them. Sadly, my own team has some additional complications, since one of our 3 pairs is Latvian, and Latvia has a 14-day-quarantine rule for countries with the infection rate over 16 (which includes Estonia). So unfortunately, it is likely that we will have to play with 2 pairs (our Latvian friends unfortunately cannot afford the quarantine, work-wise), unless a different decision is made by the Latvian government by Friday.

In the end my Latvian friends played and helped us win the silver medal.

NOW - April 2021

Since the time of the last newsletter, unfortunately the COVID-19 situation in Estonia has worsened considerably – we are now among the countries with highest infection rates in Europe.

This has resulted in tightening restrictions, which among other activities have made bridge impossible both on national and local club level.

There have been no live tournaments since November, and first ones (national team championships) are planned (optimistically) in May.

The women's practice matches, as well as weekend tournaments on BBO and Real Bridge, have for this reason been a welcome chance to play – especially Real Bridge, which offered an experience somewhat comparable to actually sitting at a table, being able to see and chat to our opponents (albeit having to 'invite' all the opponents to our homes).

On the national level, we have short (6x3 boards) tournaments twice per week as well, but the number of participants is not high (usually ~20 pairs, which is fewer than in bigger local clubs). I really hope to be able to play some actual, face-to-face bridge in the summer at least!

Maarja Oras, Estonia

Michal Nosatzki



Michal Nosatzki is a member of the Israeli bridge women's team, together with Nathalie Saada.

Saada is active since 2012. Active in various IBF (Israeli Bridge Federation) activities. Head of Online Appeals Committee.

Michal was an enthusiastic coordinator for EBL Women's Practice matches in the first years and in more recent times has handed over to Michael Barel.

Israel 2021

How is Bridge coming back in a vaccinated country?

On February 2020 Covid-19 arrived to Israel. Almost immediately, all bridge activities stopped. No more clubs, no more frontal competitions...

But soon all bridge activities moved to BBO. National competitions, as well as regular club activities, started to take place in the BBO. Of course, this has caused various well known problems (like cheating, use of robots, and the hardest maybe is the financial situation of the bridge clubs). But this is what we had, and with that we won!

In December 2020 the vaccination process began in Israel. Each individual has got two phase vaccine 3 weeks apart. A week after the second vaccination one is considered vaccinated. Today about 50% percent of the Israeli population is vaccinated, when about 80% of the population with age above 29 is vaccinated!

So, now frontal bridge is returning. Many bridge clubs are opened. Allowed to play:

- 1) Only IBF (Israeli Bridge Federation) members
- 2) Either vaccinated or recovered players

Masks are required during all staying in the club, except where screens are used. Various clubs acquired transparent screens in order to prevent the need for masks. Also, the space between tables is 2 meters.

Beside regular club activities, national events are in the process of returning to normal Zoom less events. The next simultaneous competition will be partially frontal and partially online. After Pesach, activities that almost completely stopped will return, including women and youngsters' bridge.

So – vaccination is indeed allowing us to maintain our routine life. I just want to add that not everyone in Israel is happy with vaccinations, there are many people that oppose them for various reasons. These people are having a hard life, as various places and activities require vaccination (or recovery): Work places, sport centers, culture events like theaters, etc.

In any case, we do hope that the world will return to normal life, including the bridge world. And we hope we soon meet in Madeira for the European Championship 😊😊

Michal Nosatzki, Israel

Mark Horton



Mark Horton, editor of BeBridge Magazine, is a regular contributor to this Newsletter.

Here, Mark draws attention to Marie Montuir's project for the next issue of BeBridge. It will be of interest to all of us as it explores the challenges for the Bridge world in this pandemic time.

Current edition of BeBridge can be downloaded at present if you are a BBO Prime member.

First issue:

<https://www.funbridge.com/blog/bebridge-the-new-magazine-that-revolutionizes-the-bridge-press/>



Next Issue 5 page preview

<https://kiosque.lebridgeur.com/bebridge-07-us-preview.php>

Marie Montuir's Project

That's Entertainment!

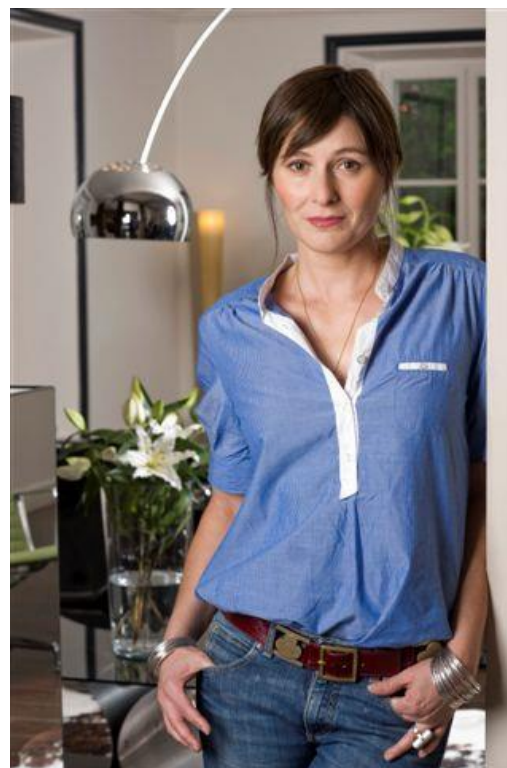
The French based company Entertainment 52 is a significant figure in the world of bridge. It owns the two biggest online platforms in the world, Funbridge and BBO and also publishes, under the mantle of Le Bridgeur, *Be BRIDGE*, a glossy bi-monthly life-style magazine that combines traditional articles about the game with biographies, cultural and travel information and an array of features for everyone, even those with only a passing interest in bridge.

The team behind BeBRIDGE is headed by CEO Karine Meyer-Naudan, the daughter of Jean- Paul Meyer and she has assembled a formidable team to bring about what she describes as a '*real revolution in the world of bridge*'.

Muriel Clement, Isabelle Fontaine & Sonia Valoura have recently been joined by leading journalists Florine Constant and Marie Montuir. Florine is busy preparing an article featuring bridge

teachers while Marie is currently working on a major story about the way in which the world's bridge federations have risen to the numerous challenges imposed by the pandemic. Both are set to appear in the May issue.

BeBRIDGE is a bimonthly 96-page online magazine available by subscription. It aims to reach and grow the current readership of over 50,000 per issue to encompass the 400,000 users of the companies in the 52 Entertainment Group – who between them play some four million deals every day!



Marie Montuir

Mark Horton

Making It Real



Co-founder Shireen Mohandes tells us how RealBridge went from lockdown project to platform used all around the world by national event organisers, clubs, and teachers.

Lockdown project

Almost a year ago today, Graham Hazel, an English bridge-player and I.T. professional, found himself, like most of us, at home with some time on his hands. Also, like others, he was playing more online bridge, and finding that it was OK, but not quite like the real thing. What do you do when the software doesn't do what you want? If you're Graham, you write your own.

Two months later, he had the core of what you see at the table today – an interface for playing bridge, with built-in audio and video. He showed it to me, and I went “Wow!”



RealBridge

A long hot summer

There was still a huge amount to do. We spent the summer designing and building the rest of the system, testing exhaustively on different types of hardware, and spreading the word about the new platform.

We wanted a platform that was good for everybody, so we consulted everybody: players, tournament directors, teachers, club owners, and major-event organisers. Everybody had ideas: mostly good; some quite challenging; some rather impractical.

Many hands make light work, especially when you're testing a multi-person game. A group of about 30 people from around the world rallied round and joined in the testing sessions. We are eternally grateful to them for all their help.

Clubs in England, Norway, Germany, Australia and India started running their games on the beta version. National bridge organisations got interested, starting with the English Bridge Union and the USBF. Both of these organisations were very supportive, and started running events on RealBridge in the early autumn.

Launch

In November 2020 we launched the platform commercially. By now we had a solid core of clubs and teachers using the platform. It had already been used successfully for two national events and one international one (that was a nervous moment!).

A few months on, and RealBridge has been adopted by more than 1000 clubs and teachers, and nearly 20 NBOs. We have a growing team of staff – currently four of us, with more joining soon.

What's next?

Online bridge will never replace face-to-face bridge, but it doesn't have to be a poor relation. We're determined that RealBridge will be a big part of the future of bridge.

We are continuously working on new features. This week's release added broadcast video features for directors and teachers. In the next few weeks, we expect to provide significant improvements to the vugraph experience. We have more things planned for later in the year.

Who has helped to shape RealBridge?

We have had huge amounts of advice and support from players, directors and organisers at every level.

Amongst NBOs and major event-organisers, our greatest helpers have been Jan Martel at the USBF, the EBU led by Gordon Rainsford, Marianne Harding from Norway, Pierre Schmidt from France, Sukrit Vijayakar's Bridge from Home team in India, Antonio Riccardi from Italy, Sus Vang and Jan Nielsen from Denmark, Linnea Edlund from Sweden, and many others.

It's never too late - Finally, a story from the TV news in the UK: Bessie Hyder, from the North of England, had her 106th birthday recently. She celebrated by eating some cake, then joining a game on RealBridge.

Shireen Mohandes



Bridge: A MindSport For All
Connects People, Challenges Minds

BAMSA Conference 2021: Bridging Academia, Policy and Practice

Monday 8 June to
Thursday 1 July
2021 (online)

In June 2021, BAMSA is hosting **Bridging Academia, Policy and Practice**, an online international bridge conference that brings together 55 presenters and panelists from 20 countries. We are grateful to the University of Stirling, the Scottish Bridge Union and the Leisure Studies Association for their support.

The conference is designed for academics, practitioners and policymakers. The event is open to anyone that cares about bridge and the sustainability of the game. Academics, bridge players, teachers and organisers are all welcome.

The overall aim of the conference is to push the boundaries of current academic thinking and shape a future research agenda. The conference will highlight the latest findings from BAMSA's research network.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Bridging Academia, Policy and Practice

[BAMSA Conference 2021 - Bridge A MindSport for all - BAMSA \(bridgemindsport.org\)](https://bridgemindsport.org)

[1A] Mindsports in Academia & Society

Monday 28 June 2021 13:00-15:00 (BST UK) / 14:00-17:00 (CEST) / 08:00-10:00 (EDT)

Opening Address Gianarrigo Rona, President of the World Bridge Federation

- *Bridge as a MindSport in Research, in the Bridge World, in Society* (BAMSA)
- *Mind, Body, Confidence: Emotion and Physicality* Dr David Scott (Abertay University, UK)
- *Characteristics of Players in Israel* Dr Liat Hen-Herbst (Occupational Therapy, Ariel University)

[1B] Wellbeing & Bridge

Monday 28 June 2021 16:30-18:30 (BST UK) / 17:30-19:30 (CEST) / 11:30-13:30 (EDT)

Keynote Address Professor Martin Seligman (Psychology, University of Pennsylvania, USA)

Book Launch *Bridge at the Top: Behind the Screens* by Samantha Punch (Master Point Press)

[2A] Impact of a Global Pandemic on Bridge

Tuesday 29 June 2021 11:30-13:30 (BST UK) / 12:30-14:30 (CEST) / 06:30-08:30 (EDT)

- *Reconnecting with Clubs: Social Capital and Play* Kevin Judge (University of Stirling, UK)
- *The New Normal: Bridge Club Perspective* Nicky Bainbridge (Bridge for Pleasure)
- *Ongoing and Future Impacts of Covid* Patrick Shields (English Bridge Union)
- *The Digital and Face-to-Face Hybrid* Dr Miriam Snellgrove (BAMSA)

[2B] Digital Bridge & Cheating

Tuesday 29 June 2021 19:30-21:30 (BST UK) / 20:30-22:30 (CEST) / 14:30-16:30 (EDT)

- *Dishonest Behaviour in Online Bridge during COVID-19* Dr Tihana Brkljačić (Croatia)
- *Cheating at Digital Bridge: Revisiting Moral Panics* Jordan Maclean (BAMSA)
- **Panelists:** Jan Kamras (EBL), Boye Brogeland and Steve Weinstein (World Champions)

[3A] Ageing, Intergenerationality & Bridge

Wednesday 30 June 2021 10:00-12:00 (BST UK) / 11:00-13:00 (CEST) / 05:00-07:00 (EDT)

- *Bridge Research with Older People and in Schools* Dr Marek Malysa (Bridge to the People)
- *Between Loneliness and Connection: Older Adults' Leisure during a Pandemic* Dr Miriam Snellgrove and Professor Samantha Punch (BAMSA)
- *Social Identity, Ageing and Third-Places* Polly Fong (University of Queensland, Australia)
- *Inclusivity and Bridge* José Júlio Curado (Open University of Portugal, Madeira)
- *Intergenerationality and Bridge* Chris Panagiotaros (Western Sydney University, Australia)

[3B] Gender, Sexism & Bridge

Wednesday 30 June 2021 15:00-17:00 (BST UK) / 16:00-18:00 (CEST) / 10:00-12:00 (EDT)

Panel 1 Women's Bridge: Segregation Pros & Cons **Panel 2 Sexism within the Game: Solutions?**

[4A] New Approaches to Teaching & Recruitment

Thursday 1 July 2021 13:00-15:00 (BST) / 14:00-17:00 (CEST) / 08:00-10:00 (EDT)

Panel 1 Learning & Teaching Bridge **Panel 2 School & Youth Bridge: Retaining Learners**
Case studies: Czech Republic, Denmark, England, India, Japan, Norway, Northern Ireland, USA

[4B] Marketing Bridge

Thursday 1 July 2021 16:30-18:00 (BST UK) / 17:30-19:00 (CEST) / 11:30-13:00 (EDT)

- *Bridging Insights: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Marketing Bridge to New Players* Esme Nicholson and Christina Ballinger (Bridge 2 Bridge) and Jordan Maclean (BAMSA)
This interactive session will include live opinion polling and small group discussion

[4C] Conference Close: Future Research and Implications for Bridge

Thursday 1 July 2021 18:00-18:30 (BST UK) / 19:00-19:30 (CEST) / 13:00-13:30 (EDT)

It will showcase the ways in which academic research can inform policy and influence the grass-roots development of bridge as a mindsport. There will also be a Conference Pairs tournament and a Bridge Taster session.

Broadly speaking, the sessions on the first and third day are theoretical in focus, and those on the second and fourth day are practical. Having said that, there will be academics and non-academics at every session, and presentations will be tailored to a mixed audience. In addition to the live sessions, speakers and panelists have prepared recorded presentations in advance. The recordings are available to view on the BAMSA website from May 2021 and there is more information on the [BAMSA website](#).

We very much hope you will join us for the BAMSA 2021 Conference. The success of the event will depend on the engagement of a wide range of people from the world of academia and the world of bridge.

Professor Samantha Punch & the BAMSA team

PLAY BRIDGE

Tuesday 29 June 2021 **Conference Pairs Tournament (16 boards) & Prize-Giving**

15:00-17:30 (BST UK)

16:00-18:30 (CEST)

10:00-12:30 (EDT)

Wednesday 30 June 2021 **Bridge Taster for First-timers**

18:30-20:30 (BST UK)

19:30-21:30 (CEST)

13:30-15:30 (EDT)



Samantha says "I have played in the Scottish women's team since 2008, winning the Lady Milne six times, and in the open team for the Camrose since 2012. 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 English Bridge Education and Development) on wellbeing, healthy ageing and bridge.

Samantha Punch

In 2019 I launched the global Keep Bridge Alive (KBA) campaign which aims to communicate messages about the benefits of bridge beyond the bridge world."

KBA has been renamed *Bridge: A MindSport for All* (BAMSA). The key goals of BAMSA 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>

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION



RANKINGS – HISTORIC RECORD

(EMPs awarded from 1980 until today; deceased players included)

**WELL DONE
TO ALL WOMEN IN TOP RANKINGS**

Contributors

Thank you

Sevinç Atay
Lone Bilde
Mark Horton
Liz McGowan
Shireen Mohandes
Michal Nosatzki
Maarja Oras
Samantha Punch
Carina Wademark



WOMEN

	Name	Country	EMPs	Title
1	Sylvie WILLARD	France	5394	EGM / W, M
2	Sabine AUKEN	Germany	5221	EGM / O, W, M
3	Nicola SMITH	England	5173	EGM / W
4	Catherine D'OVIDIO	France	4657	EGM / W, M
5	Benedicte CRONIER	France	4587	EGM / W, M
6	Sally BROCK	England	4178	EGM / W
7	Bep VRIEND	Netherlands	3877	EGM / W, M
8	Veronique BESSIS	France	3710	EGM / W, M
9	Daniela VON ARNIM	Germany	3678	EGM / W
10	Heather DHONDY	England	3346	EGM / W, M
11	Daniele GAVIARD	France	3197	EGM / W
12	Anneke SIMONS	Netherlands	3186	EGM / W
13	Jet PASMEN	Netherlands	3146	EGM / W
14	Pony Beate NEHMERT	Germany	2951	EGM
15	Carla ARNOLDS	Netherlands	2889	EGM / W

OPEN

	Name	Country	EMPs	Title
1	Lorenzo LAURIA	Italy	6747	EGM / O
2	Alfredo VERSACE	Italy	6544	EGM / O, J, M
3	Giorgio DUBOIN	Italy	6487	EGM / O, M
4	Norberto BOCCHI	Italy	5918	EGM / O
5	Tor HELNESS	Norway	5888	EGM / O, J, M
6	Geir HELGEMO	Norway	5741	EGM / O, J
7	Sylvie WILLARD	France	5394	EGM / W, M
8	Sabine AUKEN	Germany	5221	EGM / O, W, M
9	Nicola SMITH	England	5173	EGM / W
10	Catherine D'OVIDIO	France	4657	EGM / W, M
11	Benedicte CRONIER	France	4587	EGM / W, M
12	Franck MULTON	Monaco	4463	EGM / O, J, M
13	Cezary BALICKI	Poland	4225	EGM / O
14	Sally BROCK	England	4178	EGM / W
15	Adam ZMUDZINSKI	Poland	4106	EGM / O