



MetroNews EXTRA!

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Welcome to this special extra edition of MetroNews, the newsletter of the LMBA, published especially to welcome our new members who have joined under the new EBU "Pay to Play" membership arrangements introduced this month



Chris Duckworth, Editor

Who are we?

The **London Metropolitan Bridge Association** (or **LMBA**) exists to promote the game of bridge in and around London. We are part of the bigger national body, the **English Bridge Union (EBU)**, which governs the game of bridge in this country, looking after bridge players and providing a variety of bridge competitions and other services to bridge players across the land. The EBU is in fact a union of county bridge associations, of which we are one, each county in turn having as its members a number of affiliated bridge clubs and all the players in them. As you are a member of an affiliated club, you have now automatically become a member of the LMBA, and also the EBU.

The LMBA, also known as MetroBridge, is a non-profit organisation run by a committee of volunteers who give up their time to support the organisation and its activities. The LMBA runs its own programme of events for local players to complement those run nationally by the EBU. You can find lots more details about us – who is on our committee, what competitions we run and so on – by visiting our website at www.metrobridge.co.uk. It is also worth taking a look at the EBU's website on www.ebu.co.uk.



What does it mean to me be a member of the LMBA?

All of our members are able to take part in our **competitions**, which cater for all types of players. Whilst in London we are lucky to have several top flight players - including currently three world champions! - we also help and encourage many more less-experienced players, from complete beginners up. We really do have something for everyone. As a special gift to our new members, you will find enclosed with your welcome pack a voucher which is worth £5 towards your entry fee in any of our events, so do try us out.

As well as competitions open to all, we run a prestigious annual competition known as the **Lederer Memorial Trophy**, in which eight invited teams of world class players compete in a friendly exhibition match which is open to spectators. This is held every autumn at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club in Earls Court and provides a marvelous opportunity to watch some bridge superstars in action at the tables.

In addition you will receive our bi-annual newsletter, **MetroNews**, packed with interesting articles about bridge people and happenings in the London area. And, provided that you play bridge in an affiliated club enough times to earn them, as an EBU member you will also receive other EBU benefits including **English Bridge** magazine, published bi-monthly by the EBU and a free EBU 18-month diary. You need to play on average once a month, which most of you probably do – if you want to know exactly how the system works, you can see all the details at www.ebu.co.uk/pay2play/magazine%20points.pdf.

Give me more idea of the competitions I can play in

The LMBA competitions are mostly organised within a playing season that starts in September and runs through to about April. So at the moment, the last few competitions of the season are being held and you are probably too late to enter them. But now is a very good time to think about the start of the next season, when you might consider taking part in: -

◆ **The London Trophy** – a knock-out teams-of-four competition in which both the systems which can be played and the number of top-level players participating are restricted, creating a particularly friendly and sociable competition. Originally for teams from non-bridge clubs, next season this competition is being opened up to groups of players from any type of club, including bridge clubs, so this would be particularly suitable for our new members.



◆ **The London League** - a teams-of-four league organised in three main Divisions plus a Newcomers League. You play a series of head-to-head matches against other teams to determine promotion and/or relegation at the end of each season. Any group of four to six people can form a team, and matches can be played either in your home or at your local bridge club, as you prefer. New teams usually enter the Newcomers or Division 3 and can work their way up the levels.



◆ **The Mixed Pairs Championship** – another sociable event, this time for mixed pairs (one man, one woman). This is a single afternoon event, always held on a Sunday in mid-September.

Full details of these and other competitions and events will be published in the next MetroNews, which you will receive in the summer, in good time before the start of the season.

Please tell me about Masterpoints, which I earn in my club

Masterpoints are normally awarded to players coming in the top third of the field in a duplicate session in an EBU-affiliated club, but the scale varies according to how well you do and also the size of the field and the status of the session or competition. Masterpoints are registered with the EBU and as you as an individual accumulate them, you can climb through a series of ranks in recognition of your achievement. You start as a lowly Local Master with your first 100 points, and can climb to the dizzy heights of Premier Grand Master when you have 150,000 (some of which have to be earned in national events. OK, so it may take a while!) Masterpoints are now automatically registered electronically each time you play in your club, but if you have some paper masterpoints that have been issued within the last three years, you can send them off to the EBU to have them registered as well. More details of the scheme and how to register points can be found at www.ebu.co.uk/masterpoints.

Whilst masterpoints give a measure of your lifetime achievement, a new **National Grading Scheme** is to be introduced shortly which will be an indicator of your current playing abilities, based on your performance over your last 50 playing sessions. This will complement rather than replace the Masterpoint scheme.

What else does the EBU do?

The EBU is responsible for encouraging new players into bridge, through the training and development of bridge teachers, through encouraging bridge amongst young people in schools and universities and raising awareness of the benefits of the game for young and old. It organises benefits for its members, including discounts on household, travel and healthcare insurance, car hire and other services. It regulates the game of bridge in this country, training both club and national tournament directors and providing the framework for a fair and enjoyable game for all. It develops and supports our country's top players who compete with some success in home, European and World events. Now you are an EBU and LMBA member, you too can contribute to, and be part of, all of this!