Barbara’s Blog for January 2021

Greetings Everyone and my very best wishes for a better 2021. With umpteen different vaccines now being rolled out we can only hope it is a matter of time for enough of us wrinklies to be vaccinated to make it safe for us to be able to participate in F2F bridge again. And of the course the slightly lesser number of “non-wrinklies” as well. Already some of our members have already had their first vaccination. I am anticipating getting mine end of January, beginning of February.

I hope you all had as good a Christmas as could be expected – it was strange for me not having all the various things to do for the Club, and still strange in that I should now be compiling the Trophies’ Winners. Those of you who won Trophies last year get to keep them for another 12 months so all you winners don’t rush to polish them up.

Just a reminder, if you normally pay your subs by Bank Transfer or Standing Order, don’t forget to cancel it as subs are not required for the year of 2021 as mentioned last month.

A number of you are playing online in the 1066 Virtual Bridge Club which is now running sessions three times a week.

The main complaint I hear from those of you who don’t really like online bridge is the lack of sociability. Over the past month I have been investigating a new bridge platform that the EBU used for its End of Year Congress and that is RealBridge. **YOU WILL LIKE THIS.** It is actually much more user-friendly than BBO (BridgeBaseOnline) in that like F2F bridge and unlike BBO, **RESPONDER ALERTS** partner’s conventional bid and because RealBridge has built in video and sound your opponents can talk to you and ask you what the bid means and you may talk back. You are also able to see your two opponents and partner at the table so it’s like playing in a club except you only see one table at a time, a bit like playing in the coffee room!!.

RealBridge run taster sessions for you to learn how to use the software. Just key in RealBridge in your browser (google, chrome, firefox. edge or safari and safari only if you are using an iPad) and head for the website.

There are already a large number of English clubs running sessions and also County Congresses using RealBridge and I suspect that even when we get back to F2F bridge a number of the more competitive players will use this new medium to attend Congresses etc they would not normally play in because of the distance. Counties will probably use it as a Hybrid method having both F2F bridge at their home venue, and also using RealBridge online which gives them greater numbers and profitability.

If you’re interested in experiencing it and would like more information, please phone or email me.

Apart from that December has been pretty quiet for me. I received a very unexpected phone call from an old schoolfriend who used to live next door to me when I was about 14. She managed to track me down via the internet. The most vivid memory I have is of her being sent home from school because she was wearing brown shoes, her regulation black shoes were at the menders. My school was absolutely, totally rigid on uniform. I can remember being hauled out in front of a Latin class and being made to strip off at least 3 of the 5 net petticoats I was wearing. Do you reckon the teachers would get away with that today?? Didn’t stop us trying it on though …………………….Was I distraught? Did I need counselling? Are that’s where they went wrong……………………

As promised I have a few of my favourite Christmas Cracker jokes, some supplied by Paul Janes, the rest I had to forage for myself

**My absolute favourite**

**Why can't Boris Johnson make his Christmas cake until the last minute?**

**He doesn't know how many tiers it should have.**

More, in no particular order

* Slowdown at Santa’s workshops due to Elf-isolation
* Why wasn't Rudolph allowed to take part in vaccine trials? Because they only wanted guinea pigs.
* How do you play Dominic Cummings Monopoly? Ignore the rules, move anywhere on the board you like, and never Go To Jail.
* Why do Santa’s reindeer not need to social distance?...........they have herd immunity
* Why did Mary and Joseph have to travel to Bethlehem? Because they couldn't book a home delivery.

Garden wise it’s been a wee bit too cold for me to venture out much other than to have a quick check on what everything is doing. I’m hoping to be able to harvest some kalettes and purple sprouting broccoli shortly. Up until last year I’ve always had one daffodil in bloom on Christmas Day.  Last year it was late and didn’t bloom until 30th December, this year, I’ve got at least another 10 days to wait to see its cheery face.  BUT to compensate I have a beautiful red carnation plant that decided to grace me with one flower about a week ago.  What??

There is lovely history to this plant.  Many, many years ago Valentine’s Day fell on a Monday and Ken decided to give all the ladies playing in the club a red carnation.  They were very well received I can tell you.  Anyway,  2 years ago Vi Boniface rang me and said did I remember that, of course I said I did.  Well it turns out she had taken cuttings from hers and had several plants and would I like one.  See above for how it has repaid me.

I need Feedback from you all this month. If you’ve got a spare hour (and who hasn’t) please check out RealBridge and let me have your thoughts, either by phone or email.