

A Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you had a great time over Christmas either relaxing or celebrating as your inclinations took you, and you're looking forward to 2026. As predicted in last month's Trumpit, I have already managed to buy hot cross buns, although it does seem that any underlying significance has disappeared.

The Christmas party was well attended. After a free bridge competition, there were quizzes and music (Thank you Molly), before a catered meal and some imbibing (Thank you Avra for organising the meal). Everyone seemed to be having a good time, and we even had some dancing to round off the evening. There were enough helpers to put the tables and chairs back in place for the next bridge session on the following Monday.

The Open Teams Congress was held on Sunday 7th of December. The attendance was down a bit on last year, with only 22 teams in the field. This may have been because several bridge clubs in the area were having their Christmas parties on the same day. It turned out to be a really good event, with very positive messages from the visitors about the environment, the food and the way it was run. The volunteers who contributed are all to be congratulated on their efforts. This sort of message will certainly encourage people to enter our congresses. The best result for the club was from the team of Jane Whelan, Judith Corney, Shirley Burgess and Nigel Cleminson. We were graded at 17th, so well down in B grade, but we managed to finish in 5th place overall.

We had club representatives go to the Inter-Club Teams event, which was held at BBC this year. Within the three grades, our best result was in the restricted section where Robina Cooper, Margot Fabian, Michael Clibbon and Derek Morris came first.

The next event on our calendar is the New Year Graded Pairs. Just like last year we're holding this significant red-point event on Tuesdays. This will mean you'll have to have a partner and have your names on the nomination sheet to play on these two days – the 6th and 13th of January. Please remember that if you put your name down to enter a special event like this, then you're making

a commitment to appear on the day. There won't be any other type of session on those two days, so I encourage you to give it a go. There will probably be only two sections because the number of entries isn't enough for three. At the time of writing, we have 26 pairs entered. Our Tuesday sessions have been getting progressively bigger but some of the other days are still struggling with numbers. We hope table numbers will pick up again after people return from their holiday travels and family commitments.

Supervised play is going to restart on the 8th of January, and the next set of lessons will take place around March. Some of the beginners from previous lessons have started playing. The normal day for beginners to enter the fray has been Tuesday. This was originally set aside for those with very few master points. There has been a gradual change as players accumulated points, and there is now little difference with other sessions in terms of those playing. We still accept people without a partner. Some of the learners have been finding the supervised play a bit of a struggle, and they are able to attend the lessons again, since it's easier to pick up on the second go.

The calendar of club events has been settled, and if anyone wants a copy there are printed versions at the front desk.

Nigel Cleminson – Club President