

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024**

### **Activities**

**Saturday club:** We found out in the summer term of last year that we would no longer be able to use the space at the Acol Bridge Club on Saturday afternoons so we needed a venue for our sessions that bring the children from different schools together at weekends. For the first term of the current academic year (2023-2024) we used a room in Highgate Library but that was pretty unsatisfactory in many ways. Since November, we have been given the use of space at Acland Burghley School, where several of our young students are now pupils, having moved up to senior school there (from Brookfield) in September 2023. This has been a great success and we now regularly have around 15 to 20 players each Saturday during term time. These are mostly children aged 9 to 12 but we have a few of the parent learners coming along each week too. I typically pay two or three helpers to help supervise these sessions and, where necessary, to run them in my absence. These costs are reflected in teaching costs in the accounts (Gabi Johnson, Rufus Barnett, Nikhil Dewan and Rafi). The larger number of attendees at these sessions has increased our costs to between £80 and £160 per week.

**Schools:** As mentioned in last year's report, the lack of volunteers in schools has led to a situation whereby we cannot realistically afford to go on teaching in most of the schools where we previously did. For the summer term of this academic year, I have been running after school teaching for the Coldfall students in my own home because it allows us to keep the group to eight well-motivated children (previously the school could add new children to the group each half term, some of whom didn't really want to be there, so that was quite disruptive). It also gives the flexibility to cancel the sessions when I am not available so there is no need to pay a teacher now for this group. Most of this group will graduate to senior school in September and be very scattered, so this arrangement also allows us to keep coaching them as a group together after school.

The Acland Burghley after school group still takes place in the school, and will continue to do so from September. The group has been expanded by the addition of two new members joining the original five that moved from Brookfield.

We have been teaching a group at North Bridge House school this year, using a paid teacher (Ingar Hansen) . This activity is cash neutral, as the school pays New Tricks the amount that we pay Ingar.

We have also continued to teach the group at Immanuel College, paying Suzanne Anisfeld to run that group. This cost cannot be sustained so we will not continue in the new school year.

Once again, we took a large group of our young players to participate in the Youth Bridge Challenge at Loughborough, achieving great successes in both the more experienced and less experienced categories. I continue to run free online coaching sessions for the U16 squad members twice per week and these children are making excellent progress.

### **Income sources**

Our income from donations has fallen this year, and I fear that it will continue to do so in coming years as one-off larger donations become harder and harder to come by. The pool of philanthropic bridge players is ever-dwindling. The parents of our Saturday children continue to provide a steady source of funds but it is not sufficient to cover our outgoings. As my focus has been on the schools project I have not had time to make new video content for our adult audience and Patreon subscriber numbers continue to fall.

### **Challenges for the future**

The principal challenge for New Tricks is how to reach a much wider audience of young players and potential young players. To this end, our main focus in 2024-2025 will be on the development of a new website, designed to enable any enthusiast to get a group of learners together and have everything they need to progress from beginners to good players. We will be working in cooperation with English Bridge Education and Development on this very important project and we hope that it will have a significant impact in the new academic year.