

SEKs Appeal by Paul Lamford



When David Kendrick and I were invited to make up a team with Michael Byrne and Mike Bell for the Chairman's Cup in Örebro, we jumped at the chance. Sweden was a country I had not spent

any time in, apart from flying there and crossing the magnificent Øresund bridge from Malmö to Copenhagen once. It has a reputation for good food and good hospitality and that proved to be the case. 166 teams from 13 countries entered the event, which had over 300,000 SEKs in prize money. and the defending champions, Fem på nya äventyr, had the most interesting name. Swedish speakers familiar with Enid Blyton, will recognise the book *Five Go Adventuring Again*. There are plenty of other Famous Five books to use if they keep the same team! They probably had 500 Swedish caps and a dozen Bermuda Bowl appearances in total. Johnny Östberg, Anders Morath, Sven Åke Berregård, Christer Bjäring and Tommy Gullberg were justly the favourites for the event. We started steadily in the 13-round Swiss Teams Qualifier, then this hand occurred:

Six of the Best

Game all Dealer West

	♠ QJ2	
	♥ 8	
	♦ A42	
	♣ AKQ972	
♠ 6543		♠ K98
♥ T93		♥ A54
♦ T3		♦ Q765
♣ J853		♣ T64
	♠ AT7	
	♥ KQJ762	
	♦ KJ98	
	♣ None	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Lyngmo</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Karlsson</i>
Pass	1♣*	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	6NT
All Pass			

Our opponents had an undistinguished auction after a strong club start, and South had little option but to bid 6NT at the end. Even though Kendrick ducked two hearts, declarer had to play a third round and that was 12 tricks and a 13 IMP loss. Despite that result and our first loss, by 17-13, we steadily moved up the field. Kendrick jacked up a 1S overcall to four on ♠J9653 ♥J2 ♦J83 ♣763 and that caused opponents to misjudge to bid 5♥, which drifted one off, leading to a good win in the next round. Then this hand:

Find the Lady

E-W Game Dealer West.

	♠ AK75	
	♥ Q9	
	♦ J98	
	♣ KJ54	
♠ T94		♠ 62
♥ KJ63		♥ A852
♦ AK72		♦ Q4
♣ A6		♣ QT872
	♠ QJ83	
	♥ T74	
	♦ T653	
	♣ 93	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Norberg</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Ström</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

A strong NT auction led to the playable vulnerable game and North cashed two spades and played a third, South showing an even number. Lamford ruffed low in dummy, cashed the ace of hearts which went four, three, nine, and played a heart to the king, jokingly telling North to hold his cards up when the queen appeared. This is an interesting problem, and the game-theory strategy for the defenders is quite complex. North should play the nine half the time from 9x on the first round, and South should play the ten from T7x two thirds of the time in total on either of the first two rounds of hearts. That would make the finesse right, but in the real world one pays off to these false cards, even against experts. With Futile Willie as North and South, the drop is surprisingly around 2-1 on because 109 doubleton is half as likely as Q9 doubleton (adjusting for restricted choice). Anyway that was 11 IMPS and a further move up the field. Day one finished disappointingly when Dan Bylund and Helena Stromberg did well to bid 6♦ against us on the following hands:

North ♠6 ♥A3 ♦A7642 ♣JT853; South ♠ AKQ932 ♥T2 ♦KJ5 ♣A4. Spades were 4-2 but Qxx of trumps were onside and Helena played it well. That was 12 IMPs away,.

Our next match was a draw; it would have been worse except team-mates caught the opponents in 4♥x and took the maximum 500 with good defence. That made up for a poor 3NT reached by us on one board in the other room which had no play.

We played friends of ours in the next round, JONATHAN (Harris, Capal, Root, Sobell) and they were quite generous to their compatriots. Despite bidding a good slam, they bid two less good slams and went for 1100 on one board. That big win moved us back into the top ten again. And the following round was solid with the only gain when declarer went off in a game that could have made, so 9 IMPs to teammates on the Butler and another win. We moved further up with a win against Zang. Expecting at least one Chinese player, we met four more Swedes all with a diaeresis in their names. Then our opponents decided to bid another thin slam at our table:

Guessing Game

Game all Dealer East

	♠ K3	
	♥ Q6	
	♦ A32	
	♣ KQT852	
♠ JT98		♠ 762
♥ KJ2		♥ 987543
♦ T865		♦ Q4
♣ A6		♣ J7
	♠ AQ54	
	♥ AT	
	♦ KJ97	
	♣ 963	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Hen'berg</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Hen'berg</i>
		Pass	1NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

South opened a 14-16 NT and 3C was a natural slam-try. I would have signed off over this, but South bid 3♦ and soon they were in the poor Six Clubs. East's speculative lead of the queen of diamonds did not cause any problems, and declarer soon recorded +1370. Declarer may still make on the lead of the eight of hearts, by rising, playing three spades pitching a heart, and then playing a club. He can then ruff the fourth spade high and fell the jack of clubs, but there are plenty of dead ends in this labyrinth. Declarer might have found one if East had led the three of hearts which would be a good shot.

Our next opponents included John Solodar, a former Bermuda Bowl winner, and there was only one swing of more than 1 IMP in the match when we reached slam quickly on the following hand, where Lamford tried an aggressive preempt second in hand:

Light Headed

Game all Dealer South

	♠ K8732	
	♥ AJ94	
	♦ 84	
	♣ J2	
♠ J		♠ A54
♥ T53		♥ KQ82
♦ QJT9763		♦ AK
♣ 85		♣ AKQ3
	♠ QT96	
	♥ 76	
	♦ 52	
	♣ T9764	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Larsson</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Törnqvist</i>
			Pass
3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♦	All Pass

That came in easily for 11 IMPs, as it was missed in the other room, where I liked the lead from Mike Bell as North against 5♦. Knowing that there was a “bad” 25-count on his left, if there is such an animal, he tried the jack of hearts which was a great shot but made no difference on the actual layout. The final match of the qualifier was also a win, and team-mates did very well to play in a major-suit Moysian of Q963 opposite K52 when 3NT had no play.

So, we qualified fourth in the Swiss, which was pretty comfortable, as 32 teams made it through to the knockout stage starting with two 32-board matches on the Monday. In the Chairman’s Cup, the first 16 qualifiers choose their opponents from the teams that come 17-32 and we were therefore fourth to pick, so the final ranking made a difference, as that system then continues until the end

The two Michaels had some Swedish spies who had played junior bridge with them and gave us some information on the strength of teams, so we left the picking of opponents to our skipper throughout. We picked Västergötland, an area of Sweden about which I learned more when I visited the very interesting Örebro castle at the end of the event. It has two of Sweden’s national parks, and Sweden’s largest lake, and I am told is incredibly beautiful. The match was quite close, and the following board was interesting:

Scylla and Charybdis

E-W Game Dealer West

	♠ K84	
	♥ AT42	
	♦ 72	
	♣ Q983	
♠ AQJ7		♠ T6532
♥ Q98		♥ K753
♦ AKQT		♦ 64
♣ J2		♣ A6
	♠ 9	
	♥ J6	
	♦ J9853	
	♣ KT754	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Lantz</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Carlsson</i>
1♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

A simple strong-and-four auction led to the normal game here. In the open room, on a much different auction, Mike Bell led the seven of diamonds and declarer had no problem. Lamford faced the more testing lead of the eight of clubs (third and fifth) and he rose with the ace, cashed the ace of spades, and played three top diamonds. North ruffed perforce with the eight of spades, but Lamford over-ruffed, and exited with a club. Both opponents were Morton-forked simultaneously. If South won and played a diamond, dummy would ruff and play a trump and North would be endplayed, declarer playing for split minor honours in hearts. Similarly if North won the club, he would have to open up the hearts immediately. Some strong players, commenting on BBO later, thought that playing three rounds of diamonds immediately was slightly better, but a simulation showed that this fails to some layouts with Kx of trumps with a low doubleton diamond, and even a singleton trump with a low doubleton diamond. Close, and certainly the line chosen at the table was solid enough and had the virtue of bringing home the bacon. It would be nice to have had more play or auctions from the other room, and perhaps our team-mates will write those up sometime.

Cutting Edge

N-S Game Dealer East

	♠ K	
	♥ J983	
	♦ T984	
	♣ Q985	
♠ T762		♠ A983
♥ T2		♥ AKQ74
♦ KQ7		♦ A53
♣ JT74		♣ 3
	♠ QJ54	
	♥ 65	
	♦ J62	
	♣ AK62	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Lantz</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Carlsson</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West signed off quickly opposite the splinter of 4♣ and North picked a safe ten of diamonds lead. West, Lamford, won with the king, and wrongly played on trumps immediately. He did, however, trust North's king and reverted to hearts playing the ace, king and queen. North, falsely but foolishly, showed an odd number of hearts, so South naturally ruffed the third heart after which declarer was home, over-ruffing, crossing to a diamond and ruffing the hearts good. The winning defence for South was to discard a diamond on the third heart, and later he can get a diamond ruff by under-leading his ace and king of clubs. West had an antidote to this strategy of a Scissors Coup of leading a club at trick two, but that was not obvious to him. Even less obvious was North's antidote to the Scissors Coup of leading the stiff king of spades on the go, and declarer cannot prevail. If he wins and ducks a club, South can clear the trumps.

We won that match 51-30, and were again fourth to choose in the round of 16, and our scouts thought that we should pick Sundsvallsgänget. I knew that this translated as Sundsvall Chipmunks, and also that Sundsvall did not have a team in the first division of the Swedish Allsvenskan, but I did not know until later that the city had been burnt down four times, most recently in the Great Northern War.

The match started quietly and we were 19-15 up at half-time partly through this board:

Twelve Top

Game all Dealer South

	♠ J53	
	♥ K43	
	♦ T432	
	♣ T63	
♠ 9		♠ A8762
♥ AJT5		♥ Q96
♦ KQ986		♦ AJ5
♣ AKJ		♣ 97
	♠ KQT4	
	♥ 872	
	♦ 7	
	♣ Q8542	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Ek</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Nordén</i>
			Pass
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♦	Pass
6♦	All Pass		

As East-West was a relatively new partnership, Lamford adopted a pragmatic approach to the auction: he reversed and then bid what he thought he could make. Even with the heart finesse wrong, 12 tricks were easy and EW were a bit surprised to gain on the board at this stage of the competition. The match was still close when the following board occurred:

Careless Talk

Game all Dealer West

	♠ A432	
	♥ A7	
	♦ A9754	
	♣ A7	
♠ Q87		♠ 96
♥ 54		♥ T632
♦ KJ32		♦ 8
♣ KQ32		♣ T98654
	♠ KJT5	
	♥ KQJ98	
	♦ QT6	
	♣ J	

West	North	East	South
<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Ek</i>	<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Nordén</i>
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦*
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
Dble	6♠	All Pass	

In the other room, West opened the bidding with a Precision Diamond, so when our teammates reached Six Spades, Mike Bell, North, had no problem in playing West for the queen of spades. Lamford, West, chose to Pass, and North, with 18 Binkies, opened a strong club and showed 17-19 balanced, and North-South were soon in slam when South showed a keycard. Kendrick led the ten of clubs, and Ek finessed trumps against him, fatally, because he could pick up ♠Qxxx with East and make if diamonds were favourable. A slightly random 17 IMPs to England, who then ran away with the match. So, through to the quarters, where we were left with the shark from the group 7-32 because teams 1-3 chose before us, and we played the team that remained. Unsurprisingly they were the defending champions, Fem på nya äventyr, and the match length went up to 64 boards for the last three rounds.

Some discussion took place among our team as to whether it was better to finish 4th or 5th in the Swiss, without us reaching any firm conclusions. We spent some time discussing the contentious issue of dumping, which was of academic interest only as we were now in a straight knockout against the team that nobody wanted to play, which would present our toughest challenge.



The first quarter was incredibly swingy and the Swedish juniors were impressed that we had managed to exchange 112 IMPs in only 16 boards, while we were quite pleased to enter the second segment only 10 adrift. Kendrick earned 11 IMPs from a solo effort on board 2, or we would have been further behind:

The Swedish Team and Defending Champions

Psychic Ability

N-S Game Dealer East

♠ JT64	♠ A87	♠ 932
♥ JT6	♥ AQ73	♥ K942
♦ K53	♦ AQ7	♦ 9
♣ 743	♣ J98	♣ AKT62
	♠ KQ5	
	♥ 85	
	♦ JT8642	
	♣ Q5	

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Östberg</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Bjåring</i>
1♥	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	Dble	Rdble
All Pass		3♣	3♦

South intended his 3♦ to be forcing, but Lamford decided that there seemed to be around 50 points in the pack, and the vulnerable opponents were less likely to be acting than Kendrick. 3NT in the other room was easy, and that was 11 in. That was about our only good board of the set, however, and Lamford gave back those IMPs by being conservative on ♠832 ♥A6 ♦AT2 ♣T8532, just inviting opposite a strong NT. Partner had ♠J96 ♥KQ4 ♦854 ♣AKQ4 and the good game was missed, although only bid twice in the eight hands of the four matches in play. A 1000-deal simulation with Bridge Dealer opposite a 15-count had game making 29% of the time, and inviting seems the correct strategy, assuming partner will pass with 15 and bid game with 16. Opposite a 16-count, the above hand makes 3NT 47% of the time, which is easily enough to bid game, and, for completeness, opposite a 17-count, the percentage goes up to 67%. Mike Bell has a theory that one should pass or bid game on this type of hand, but I remain unconvinced. Teammates definitely kept us in the game in this set, as we let through 4♠ which could be beaten, and we played in the wrong vulnerable game.

The next set was also swingy, and Lamford went for 1100 when he overcalled 4♥ on ♠Q52 ♥KQT9876 ♦Q2 ♣3 at favourable vulnerability over an auction of 1C-Pass-2S which was natural and game-forcing. In theory, the opponents could make 6C but nobody was getting there. He was consoled that the auction and result by Solodarnilsson was identical, but that was in the other match, so it was 7 IMPs out. When the smoke had cleared the lead was down to 4 IMPs. 103-107 after only 32 boards!

Grand Larceny

Game all Dealer East

	♠ 2	
	♥ 962	
	♦ K962	
	♣ QT643	
♠ A7653		♠ K8
♥ KJ8		♥ AQ7543
♦ AQJ		♦ T3
♣ 92		♣ AK8
	♠ QJT94	
	♥ T	
	♦ 8654	
	♣ J75	

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Östberg</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Bjåring</i>
		1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♦	Pass	7♥	All Pass

England galloped into the excellent grand here, entirely naturally. 4NT was RKCB and East showed 2 plus the queen of trumps. 5NT said please cue kings, and 6♦ was a general grand-slam try. East thought the king of spades was important and bid the grand. South led the ♠Q and Lamford drew two rounds of trumps and led a spade to the ace, but North ruffed. This was an excellent grand, especially on a non-diamond lead. Finding out that the Swedes missed small slam here was quite a shock, but it is one of the downsides of bidding grands. The odds are poor if they are not in slam in the other room.

We got those 13 IMPs back on the last board of the set, bidding another grand, 7♥, that was even better. ♠none ♥AQJ8652 ♦KQ87♣AT opposite ♠A875432 ♥K ♦A4 ♣KQ8. If that one had also failed it would indeed have been carelessness, but all was well and we still trailed by 4 at the end of the third segment after an exciting draw in set 3.

The final set was surprisingly comfortable, and far less swingy. Byrne and Bell bid an excellent and cold slam which was missed in the other room with a combined 26-count with ♠KQT3 ♥A8 ♦K ♣QT8653 opposite ♠AJ986 ♥KT76♦AT54 ♣none. We only took the lead in the match on board 62 but by the end of a gripping encounter, England had won by 15, 175-160, and would play Westerlund in the semi-final.

That match again started in a lively fashion, and England pulled ahead with a good slam on minimum values, again bid naturally:

Reversal of Fortune

E-W Game Dealer East

	♠ Q632	
	♥ JT865	
	♦ AQ2	
	♣ J	
♠ AJ985		♠ KT
♥ 2		♥ AQ73
♦ 85		♦ K4
♣ K8743		♣ AQ652
	♠ 74	
	♥ K94	
	♦ JT9763	
	♣ T9	

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Sundell</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Westerlund</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	6♣	All Pass

Sometimes having few gadgets is no bad thing, and the above auction was entirely natural, to the excellent 6♣ by East. If the diamond is right it is virtually cold, and might otherwise depend on the ruffing spade finesse or a spade guess. When South led a diamond, Lamford claimed as soon as he discovered trumps were 2-1.

So, on to the semi-final, and the other team Zmrzlina, who were the only team in the event with five consecutive consonants, chose Solodar in the semi-final. As an aside, I suppose you all know the only London Underground station with six consecutive consonants. We were therefore due to play Westerlund in the semi-final. That we were not picked first flattered us, as John Solodar won the Bermuda Bowl in 1981 and is still a strong player at the age of 74.

The first set was very wild, and a slam swing went to England when Karlsson and Svensson had ♠AK2 ♥AK853 ♦7 ♣AJ82 opposite ♠J8 ♥QJT93 ♦AT83 ♣53 and did not bid the slam reached at the three other tables including the other semi-final. Given that it only needs trumps 2-1, and was still cold as the cards lay when they were 3-0, that was a “fumble” as they say in American Football. Mike Bell received a more testing lead against a Four Spades contract, and his reasonable line was unsuccessful. Byrne made a thin 3NT on another board, which Kendrick and Lamford tried to let through in the other room, and an over-aggressive non-vulnerable overall of 2♦ by Westerlund on ♠Q7 ♥K95 ♦KT863 ♣J92 led to an 800 penalty. So, at the end of the segment, England led by 32, 65-33.

The second set was equally swingy. Westerlund and Sundell bid a vulnerable slam on minimum values with ♠T ♥AJ5 ♦AQ754 ♣KQJ9 opposite ♠A752 ♥KQ8 ♦2 ♣76432. With diamonds 4-3 and clubs 2-2 that could not be touched, and the solid 800 teammates extracted from 3♠x in the other room was not enough compensation. Teammates found an excellent sacrifice in 5♣ at Love All on one board, and that paid rich dividends when Karlsson and Svensson misjudged to go on to 5H for a 10 IMP pick up. Lamford and Kendrick reached a very good Five Diamonds on a combined 21-count with ♠AKT95 ♥965 ♦AT764 ♣none opposite ♠J2 ♥82 ♦KQ82 ♣A8754 and that was another 10 IMPs. One final board of the set clawed back the early losses and was definitely the one that got away.

Deep Finesse

Love all Dealer East

	♠ A9	
	♥ 98	
	♦ KQ732	
	♣ K532	
♠ KJ62		♠ T53
♥ 6		♥ AKQT543
♦ J6		♦ T9
♣ QJT987		♣ 4
	♠ Q874	
	♥ J72	
	♦ A854	
	♣ A6	

East's opening bid of 4♥ closed proceedings, so the danger of another -1100 had been averted. South led the seven of spades, third and fifth. Declarer played low, and would have unblocked the six if he had had it and the five had been in dummy! North put all his eggs in one basket by winning with the ace and returning a spade, correct if his partner has the ace of hearts, but wrong on most other layouts, and South covered the ten with the queen. That was the last chance for the defence, as Lamford could now finesse the six of spades for his contract after drawing trumps. "I can't make it on a fourth-best lead", joked Lamford to his screen-mate, Sundell, who, like Queen Victoria is often misquoted as saying, was not amused.

The third set was much quieter, with only two double-figure swings. This was flat: but might not have been:

Safety First

E-W Game Dealer North

		♠ KQ3	
		♥ J6	
		♦ QJ6532	
		♣ 53	
♠ A62			♠ JT4
♥ K832			♥ AQ9
♦ A987			♦ K4
♣ K6			♣ AJ972
		♠ 9875	
		♥ T754	
		♦ T	
		♣ QT84	
West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Sundell</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Westerlund</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Kendrick does not like too much auction, so picked 3NT on the first round, and South led a deceptive ♠9, in theory showing shortage. Lamford, East, ducked, won the small diamond switch with the king, noting the fall of the 10, and ran the jack of clubs. South ducked smoothly, but Lamford ran it, as he was 100% even if it lost, as North would be endplayed in four suits. If South had covered, declarer would give up a club to him and rise with the ace of spades on the next round of clubs and knock out the remaining club

guard while the spades were blocked. The only way he could be beaten was if South had 98x of spades, so South was hoisted on his own petard by the false-card lead of the nine! Note the good play of not covering by South which might beat the contract if declarer, not knowing who has the long clubs, rises with the king on the first round and finesses on the way back, which he might do if his heart pips were weaker.

On another board, Kendrick overcalled 3C with 4C on ♠T75433 ♥J98543 ♦AQ. ♣None. His partner expected a better hand and drove to slam, which had some play but went off when the diamond finesse was wrong. They made up for this bad result by collecting 800 from 3♦x when North, Sundell, balanced, not unreasonably, at Game All on ♠Q♥QT742 ♦A8752 ♣J9 after the auction Pass-(1♣)-Pass-(1♠)-Pass-(2♠)-Pass-(Pass).-Dble. To rub salt into the wound, they guessed to play in the worse 5-3 fit and that was 800 from nowhere. A few small pick-ups by Westerlund trimmed the lead to 22, but a solid last set, with no double digit swings led to England running out comfortable winners by 156-114., and only conceding a few overtricks and a total of 4 IMPs.

So, we move to the final, where we faced the redoubtable John Solodar and his team of top Swedes. The match started well, with Larsson and Tornqvist reaching a slam that needed the club finesse. That failed and 11 IMPs to England was the punishment. There was a misclaim by Lamford, who specified the correct remaining tricks in 3NT, but the total was 8 not 9, and only the director (who was watching but could say nothing) noticed. That was discovered at the break, and corrected. Potential misinformation led to Michael Byrne making the wrong lead against a game, which he would have beaten with his normal lead, and the score was, at one time, 34-1 to England for the set, but later, as England pulled away, the Solodar team were given those IMPs back as they persuaded the director that Byrne had received the correct information but Nielsen had misbid.. We gave in on three potential rulings in the final in the interests of good relations, and because our lead grew at times to close to 100.

How you would you feel if you decided to overcall 1♥ over 1♦ at game all, as Sundell did, on the following hand: ♠J5 ♥AK94 ♦T87643. ♣6? It now goes 1♠ on your left, 6♥ from partner, all pass. Dummy hits with ♠A ♥QT86532 ♦none ♣KQ987. You score up +1430 only to lose 6 IMPs against the -1660 in the other room in 6♥x on a far longer and far more competitive auction. Par is only 500 for East-West in 6♠x!

The biggest board of the second set was the following:

Grand Aspirations

N-S Game Dealer West

		♠ J52	
		♥ KJT984	
		♦ 9	
		♣ 965	
♠ KQ63			♠ A954
♥ none			♥ AQ2
♦ AKQJT			♦ 7543
♣ KJ43			♣ QT
		♠ T7	
		♥ 7653	
		♦ 862	
		♣ A873	
West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Sundell</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Westerlund</i>
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♠	Pass
5NT	Pass	6♦	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

The only good thing I can say about the Kendrick-Lamford auction is that it was better than the one in the other room which got to 7D, for a 14 IMP pick-up to England. I do not have that auction, but in any case it would not be allowed in a family magazine. In this room, 5♠ was intended by Lamford to be a general slam-try, or asking for a club control, but interpreted as asking for good trumps by Kendrick. I am not sure what West thought 5NT was, but East thought it was “pick-a-slam”, a sensible attempt to avoid a potential spade loser when spades were 4-1, but that did not seem to tally with the correction to Six Spades from a much safer slam.. *All's Well that Ends Well*, as the bard said, and I think that South's lead of a low club was excellent, despite the commentators criticising it on BBO. Had I held the jack of spades instead of the queen of clubs, I might well have gone down.

This was an interesting board

Lady Luck

N-S Game Dealer West

		♠ Q5	
		♥ AJ83	
		♦ 5	
		♣ QJ8742	
♠ 962			♠ K874
♥ Q762			♥ 9
♦ KQ32			♦ J9764
♣ 63			♣ KT5
		♠ AJT3	
		♥ KT54	
		♦ AT8	
		♣ A9	

North-South bid, after three passes, uncontested, 1NT-2♣-2♥-4♥, which seems a bit pessimistic, although slam is only so-so. They were nearly in Four Spades, when North bid 3NT over 2♥, and then told East, his screen-mate, that he had made the wrong bid, just as East was about to pass. East asked North if it was a mechanical error, and North

stated it was, so East allowed North to correct it. Of course, the director should have been called then, not by East when he saw dummy and realised that it might have been some inexplicable error, but was not likely to have been mechanical. The TD ruled that the auction had ended, so the change of call stood. Lamford, East, had noticed by the end of the hand that 4♠ was cold, so did not complain. In the other room North was in 6♥, and mis-guessed the play. Michael Byrne's line of playing for hearts to be 3-2 looked right at the time. I will leave readers to decide how they would have played it, as it easy to make looking at all the hands.

Byrne and Bell, with ♠852 ♥Q7 ♦K4 ♣AQ8752 opposite ♠AQ43 ♥AJ2 ♦AQT ♣K64 bid to an excellent Six Clubs, missed in the other room, and on this occasion one of the major finesses was right, so they gained 10 IMPs against the +490 by South in the other room. By the end of the set, England had stretched their lead to 69-31. And we still had at least one potential ruling, on the misinformation in segment one, if things got sticky, but we hoped that it would not come to that.

The third set began wildly and it was clear that the Solodar team was going to overbid in order to try to get the IMPs back. And this approach led to an opportunity on the second board of the set after a dull first one. Instead of 17 in, it could easily have been 14 out, and I think this may have been the point where the match was effectively decided:

Correction Facility

N-S Game Dealer East

♠ AQ6542 ♥ Q6 ♦ AJ6 ♣ A3			
♠ T83		♠ J	
♥ KJ742		♥ T98	
♦ none		♦ Q98543	
♣ T8765		♣ QJ4	
♠ K97 ♥ A53 ♦ KT72 ♣ K92			
West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Nilsson</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Solodar</i>
		Pass	1♦
2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	7♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

The double of 7S was duly alerted by Lamford on his side of the screen, so maybe North should have corrected to 7NT, which, as observant readers will notice, is cold on the double squeeze. I might have led a diamond anyway (as partner did not double 5♥) but I think doubling by West is reasonable. And North viewed that Kendrick was quite capable of making a psychic lightner double when leading by over 50 in a match, if he judges that 7NT is going off, but 7♠ is making. East dutifully led a diamond and that was 17 IMPs to England. Another 13IMP came when declarer did not view to drop the queen of hearts doubleton offside in a slam with ♥AJ5 opposite ♥K9432. I think he might have guessed this at the state of the match. He needs a swing, and opponents might also be there, so playing the standard line might just get a flat board. One might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, as they say in Wales. The opponents went a

little on tilt after that board, and pulled back 10 IMPs when Nilsson raise a strong NT to three with ♠63 ♥T98 ♦AQJT9 ♣T53. On this occasion, there was ♦Kxx in the hole, and partner has ♠AKJ72 so 12 tricks rolled in for Solodar. Par was 6♠=, but 2♠+4 normal!

Perhaps the final nail in the coffin was the following board where teammates were given a chance to make 4♥x, and we misdefended in our room but it was still 14 IMPs in.

De piscibus e sartagine in prunas desilentibus

Game all Dealer South

	♠ 65	
	♥ JT72	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ KQJ74	
♠ T9742		♠ AJ8
♥ 4		♥ AQ63
♦ JT43		♦ A9652
♣ 965		♣ 3
	♠ KQ3	
	♥ K985	
	♦ 87	
	♣ AT82	

West	North	East	South
<i>Kendrick</i>	<i>Nilsson</i>	<i>Lamford</i>	<i>Solodar</i>
			1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	Dble	Pass
Pass	5♣	Dble	All Pass

Aficionados of Abstemius will recognise the heading as his 20th fable.

East, Lamford, thought NS might be punting again, and decided to have some of 4♥ – after all it is not making overtricks, and the forcing defence of ace and another diamond polishes it off comfortably. East waits to duck the first two rounds of hearts and wins the third round (actually he can surprisingly play the queen on this trick and declarer still cannot get home!) and plays a fourth round of trumps and declarer cannot make it. I understand that Michael Byrne could have made 4♥x as the play went but said that he lost concentration at a crucial moment. North lost more than concentration in our room when he ran to 5♣, and West led his singleton heart. East returned the three and West ruffed with the three of clubs, returning the three of diamonds to East who returned the queen of hearts and West ruffed and returned the ten of spades. East guessed to give his partner another heart ruff, because even if South did not have the king of spades (and that would given him at most a ten-count), there would be nowhere for the spade loser to go. West should ruff the first heart with the six, return the jack of diamonds, to tell his partner that South does not have it for a spade discard from dummy, ruff the second heart with the three, and then play the nine of spades, as East will then know for certain that West does not have the king of spades then. So, +1100 anyway, and the Solodar team seemed to give up mentally after this blow.

The score had climbed to 46-125 when Solodar decided to throw in the towel with a set to play, which is the first time, according to one of the organisers, that the final has not gone the distance. We played in luck, and the chances for gains for them that did come along went begging. The prize-giving was splendid, with a Grand Prix style podium, flowers, and a rendering of God Save the Queen (not officially England's national

anthem; “not a lot of people know that”, as Michael Caine is often misquoted as saying; apparently Peter Sellers impersonated him.).

The trophy winged its way to Manchester Bridge Club, to join the Premiership trophy for at least a year, while our 50,000 SEKs found their way to Foreign Exchange.com, to whom I am happy to give a free plug, in Liverpool St Arcade. The flowers had to remain in Sweden, owing to Ryanair’s stringent “no plants” regulation, but we had no difficulty in finding suitable recipients among the female kibitzers in the final. This was certainly an event I would play in again, and I will try to form a team next year assuming I do not get selected.