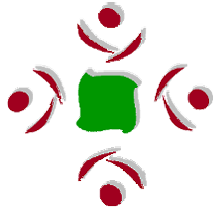


Association  
Bridge  
Metropolitan  
London



# MetroNews

*The newsletter of the  
London Metropolitan Bridge Association*

Spring 2005



Association  
Bridge  
Metropolitan  
London



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## Words from the Editor



In all my time working at the English Bridge Union I had a responsibility for 'Youth Bridge'. For much of the time, this responsibility had to take a lower priority than other jobs associated with the education function I looked after, but in the last few years I was there I was able to devote a bit more time to youth, and I increasingly saw it as the most important work I could be doing. I know there are many people who believe that bridge is an activity more suited to older people, and that the young should be doing other things. Some believe

that they should be engaged in sports or other physical activities; others remember how bridge took up rather too much of their own time when they were students and want to prevent other youngsters getting addicted to bridge.

I have some sympathies with these thoughts, but not that many. Surely there is room in young people's lives for both physical and cerebral activity – after all, sometimes it rains and you don't want to be running around outside. And also, the brain is essential to pretty much all adult work requirements and it too needs its share of development. Bridge has been shown to be beneficial in developing young minds in all sorts of ways (there is a report available on the EBU website at [www.ebu.co.uk](http://www.ebu.co.uk) if you want more details), not only logical and strategic disciplines but also important interpersonal skills such as partnership communication – skills which, incidentally, are not developed by chess, which many recognise as educationally valuable.

And as for that business about getting addicted to bridge – well, all I can say is that if a child has an addictive personality, there are many worse things around now that can tempt them instead of bridge. I'm not talking only about dangerous physical substances, but also the wide variety of computer and interactive games that are so widely accessible - compulsive, but usually pretty mind-numbing.

But one of the biggest reasons why I think we should be trying to bring bridge to the young is that, if we don't, there is a real danger of bridge dying out completely. It is no good saying that there will always be people wanting to take up the game in later life – there won't. The vast majority of those who learn bridge do so because they have come across the game at some time in their lives and have made a mental note to themselves that they will get round to learning one day. They may have tried the game briefly when young, or often they have grown up playing card games and have happy memories of this type of activity. But this doesn't happen nowadays – TV and computers have taken over completely.

Unless we take steps to introduce youngsters to bridge, there will be no reason for them to contemplate taking up bridge later in life. They don't have to become regular or good bridge players when young, nor do they have to continue playing for any length of time – the important thing is to give a taste of the game to as many people as possible. MiniBridge is a great way of doing this for the very young, even if it doesn't lead on to proper bridge for all those who try it.

I have recently taken on responsibility as County Youth Officer for London and am trying to do what I can to promote bridge in schools and amongst young players generally. You will find a couple of items in this issue about some of the competitions for young people which take place in and around London and I do hope that anyone who knows a bridge-playing youngster will encourage them to take part in future years. If anyone would be willing to help with the youth initiative, perhaps teach in a local school, I would be delighted to hear from you. And if you know a child or children who you think would enjoy learning bridge (and in my experience they all do!), you will also find herein a couple of advertisements for teaching events or courses providing this opportunity.

Bridge is currently dying out in England – I'm afraid literally. There are isolated places where it is thriving, happily, but the overall membership of the EBU has decreased significantly in the last couple of years, and steps are needed now to revitalise the game. I do hope you will all join me in trying to bring the joys of the game to the young.



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## Annual General Meeting

The 2005 Annual General Meeting of the LMBA will take place on Thursday 7th July at 7.00pm at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club, 32 Barkston Gardens, Earls Court, SW5. Formal notification of this meeting appeared in the 2004-05 Competition brochure, and you will now find the Agenda for this year's meeting opposite.

The AGM is often poorly attended, but it is your opportunity to have your say on all matters to do with how the Association is run. This includes our subscription rates, our competition programme – what events we run, how much we charge for entry, the prizes we give and so on – and also the issues that our county representatives raise and the stance they take at EBU meetings.

Why not come along in July and make your views known. We also offer a free glass of wine and nibbles, so how can you resist?



# Annual General Meeting 2005

Young Chelsea BC

Thursday 7th July 2005 at 7.00pm

## Agenda

- 1 Registration of proxies
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the AGM of 1st July 2004  
(**Note.** These can be found on the LMBA website at [www.metrobridge.co.uk](http://www.metrobridge.co.uk)  
– follow the link at the bottom of the home page)
- 4 Matters arising from these minutes.
- 5 Chairman's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report
- 7 Adoption of accounts for 2004
- 8 Subscriptions for 2006-2007
- 9 Elections to the Executive Committee
- 10 Appointment of honorary auditor
- 11 EBU delegates' Report
- 12 Any other business



The LMBA, in association with the EBU, is pleased to present London's 13th

## **ONE DAY GREEN POINTED SWISS TEAMS**

at

**The Civil Service Recreation Centre  
Chadwick Street, Westminster, SW1**

on

**Sunday 17th July 2005 starting at 11.30 am**

Single flighted, 7 x 7 Board Matches, Licence level 4



**Yes, we are trying a new early start time! This will allow an early finish on Sunday evening, allowing you to travel home in comfort, or have dinner after the event. We hope you approve!**

Contact [chris.duckworth@lineone.net](mailto:chris.duckworth@lineone.net) or 020 7385 3534 for an entry form

## Coming Soon!

Apart from our one-day Swiss Teams (see previous page) the LMBA tournament organisers get a bit of a break in the summer months. But the season starts again with a couple of very sociable events in the late summer/early autumn.

### London Trophy – bridge for non-bridge clubs!

The first date in our calendar for 2005/6 is the closing date for entries to the London Trophy, which is advertised as 19th August. But actually, you have a while after that to put together a team if you need it – we always try to accommodate late comers in this most social of events.

Teams of four matches, mostly played in people's homes or their (non-bridge) clubs, really do provide the most enjoyable form of bridge. And this competition is perfect for developing players, typically those who enjoy a game of social bridge with friends but would like a taste of something just slightly more ambitious.

If you belong to a non-bridge club – golf, tennis, bowls, or a company social club, it doesn't matter what – why not gather together three others who may be less experienced bridge players than you are, and enter a team. The competition is knock-out throughout, is zoned in the early rounds so that you don't have to travel too far, and only natural systems are played.

The entry fee is just £16 per team, so get your entry in soon. Send it to Cecil Leighton at 6 The Bowls, Chigwell, IG7 6NB, or phone 020 8500 0700 for more information.

### Mixed Pairs

The London **Mixed Pairs Championship** will be held on **Sunday 11th**

**September** at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Because all partnerships in this event must be mixed, there is always a fairly light-hearted and sociable atmosphere in this event.

Starting at 1.00pm, you play what we call a single extended session – usually around 30-36 boards – which allows you to have a satisfying afternoon's bridge but still finish in time for a free evening to relax in whatever way you wish.

The entry fee is £18 per pair and all EBU members are welcome, not just London members. Pre-entry is not necessary, but a phone call to the Young Chelsea on 020 7373 1665 will guarantee your entry. Or if you have any questions, contact the organiser, Nigel Freake, on 020 8801 2884 or [nigel.freake@paper.co.uk](mailto:nigel.freake@paper.co.uk)



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Our **competition review**, described in the last issue, has been completed. The main changes made this season have been the scrapping of the Piccadilly Cup, which was very poorly supported, and the restructuring of the London Championship Teams of Four (see page 15). The new season's Competition Brochure will give full details.

# Turkish Delight

by Peter Burrows



*Peter has written me a splendid article with many deals from Istanbul, but it is too long to include in its entirety in this issue. So I have edited it to concentrate on the Ladies series, and I hope to bring you the other deals from the Open series next time – Ed*

Last Autumn I was in İstanbul during the Olympiad and kibitzed much of the play. I had previously had two narrow misses. In 1991 the Bermuda Bowl was in Yokohama (and I was in Tokyo on business). In 1994 the Olympiad was in Rhodes (on holiday in Turkey, an hour away by boat, but with pre-arranged meetings not fitting the timing of the ferries). In neither case could I see any play. So it was third time lucky, and I saw some intriguing deals.

İstanbul may well have seen the start of a sea change in the power-structure of international bridge. Both the Russians (winners of the Ladies' championship and bronze medallists in the Open) and the Chinese (semi-finalists in both events) achieved significantly better results than anyone could reasonably have forecast.

I was particularly impressed by Russia's Victoria Gromova, whom I would describe as a blonde bombshell, were it not for two things: (1) it would not be PC, and (2) she in fact has red hair. She and her partner, Tatiana Ponomareva, topped the Butler rankings for the round-robin in the Ladies' event, and during the boards I watched in the final she scarcely put a foot wrong. Possibly she felt she had to put one (or should that be two?) over her husband who was one of the bronze medallists in the Open.

On the way to victory the Russians had to deal with the Netherlands, Germany and the USA, (all winners of major international events during the last five years and now fielding either an identical team or one

substantially unchanged), so they scarcely had an easy passage. One third of the way through the final, they trailed by 101-58, but in the first nine boards of the next set they scored 66 unanswered IMPs! Then they held on tenaciously and won eventually by 12 IMPs.

Here is one of the deals that contributed to that nine-board rampage. The swing could easily have gone the other way, but it is a good example of the way the Russians created pressure for their opponents when circumstances allowed.

## ***E/W Vul. Dealer North***

♠ A75432	
♥ Q	
♦ Q1064	
♣ 97	
♠ ---	♠ K9
♥ AK1053	♥ J92
♦ AK752	♦ 983
♣ AJ8	♣ K5432
♠ QJ1086	
♥ 8764	
♦ J	
♣ Q106	

West	North	East	South
<i>Meyers</i>	<i>Lebedeva</i>	<i>Montin</i>	<i>Galaktionova</i>
	2♠	Pass	4♠
4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

That was simple, with 4NT as a 2-suited takeout. The play was straightforward after the lead of ♠A. At the other table there was a more aggressive opening and a Russian coup.

West	North	East	South
<i>Ponomareva</i>	<i>Molson</i>	<i>Gromova</i>	<i>Sokolow</i>
	3♠	Pass	4NT
5♠	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♦	Pass	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Double	All Pass

South's 4NT was presumably designed to prevent West from making that bid over a simple raise to 4♠. As we can see from events at the other table, this was quite a likely development. West deduced, however, that South must have a weak hand with long spades. Even so, I rate her 5♠ as one of the bravest bids of the event. When she corrected East's 6♣ to 6♦, North was happy to let her play there, but South could not know that her partner was looking at two trump tricks, and her decision to take out insurance does not look unreasonable. (So perhaps North should have doubled to warn

partner against taking a phantom sacrifice.) Whatever the logic, the outcome was -800 and 5 IMPs to Russia.



In USA-Poland in the Ladies' event, both Wests faced an unusual lead problem from a holding of ♠Q1093 ♥QJ64 ♦6 ♣K875 in that all three of their 4-card suits had been bid naturally by the opponents, their side not having bid.

Ewa Miszewska for Poland had to lead after this auction (LHO first) 1♣-1♠-2♥-2NT-3NT. She chose ♠3. Tobi Sokolow for USA faced (again LHO first) 1♣-1♠-2♥-2NT-3♦-3NT. She chose a low heart. (In case you think it relevant, I should add that I am unsure of the meaning of 3♦. I assume that it asked for decent diamonds before undertaking 3NT.) Anyway, which lead do you prefer?

**Game All. Dealer West.**

♠ A8	
♥ AK32	
♦ K5	
♣ AQ1043	
♠ Q1093	♠ K75
♥ QJ64	♥ 975
♦ 6	♦ Q10872
♣ K875	♣ J9
♠ J642	
♥ 108	
♦ AJ943	
♣ 62	

The spade proved best in practice. East won with the King to play a second spade to the Ace. Declarer led a diamond to the Ace, and a club to the ten and Jack. A diamond to the King left her with no entry to hand, so she played Ace and another club to West's eight. A long club gave her seven tricks, but that was 200 to Poland.



Declarer could have got home with a lucky series of views in the minors. After the ♠A, she takes three diamonds with the aid of the finesse (presumably discarding a heart from dummy, while West can safely discard two hearts – though I don't say she would necessarily have done so). Now a finesse of the ♣Q followed by Ace and another leaves West on play, declarer having six tricks with two top hearts still to come. It is now trivial to take the ninth trick in clubs.

The Polish declarer had an easier time after running the heart lead to the ten. She finessed ♣10, won the heart return in dummy and played Ace and another club. She won the third heart, and established dummy's long club. West cashed the heart winner, but declarer had four tricks already and five more via ♠A, the long club and three diamonds after the finesse. It is an intriguing deal, but I am not sure if it is really fair to draw conclusions about the relative merit of the spade and heart leads.

Now for some light relief. The next deal comes from the round-robin.

**Love All. Dealer West.**

♠ KJ	
♥ 1074	
♦ 10852	
♣ Q432	
♠ A10743	♠ Q85
♥ K5	♥ 98632
♦ AK743	♦ 6
♣ A	♣ J765
♠ 962	
♥ AQJ	
♦ QJ9	
♣ K1098	

It looks natural to declare some number of spades. Mostly this resulted in a game for East-West, though some pairs stopped short. Jill Casey, playing for the Welsh Ladies, contrived to go down in a spade part-score, which scarcely looks credible until I tell you that she was North!

Over West's strong 1♣, she bid 1♠, systemically showing two suits of the same rank. After two passes (East showing 0-4 points), West decided that 1♠ was a good spot to play. She was probably right on the assumption that the opponents were allowed to buy the deal, since the contract went four off. However, the Welsh East-West duly bid 4♠ to gain a 6 IMP swing to Wales.

Finally, for dramatic effect, nothing, I think, could surpass the final deal of the match between England and France in the Quarter-final of the Ladies' event. After a see-saw match, England led by just 6 IMPs. The Vugraph table finished early, Heather Dhondy and Nicola Smith having scored 680 in 4♠ on these cards after an auction bristling with science.

**E/WVul. Dealer West.**

♠ 62	
♥ J10	
♦ K6532	
♣ A653	
♠ K1095	♠ AQJ3
♥ K98	♥ A752
♦ AQ4	♦ 10
♣ K104	♣ QJ97
♠ 874	
♥ Q643	
♦ J987	
♣ 82	

Over to the French ladies, with the match and a place in the semi-final in the balance:

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Willard</i>	<i>Golden-field</i>	<i>Cronier</i>	<i>Brunner</i>
1NT	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♦(2)	Pass
4♠(3)	Pass	Pass	Pass

- 1) Stayman.
- 2) Splinter.
- 3) After considerable thought!!

Time stood still for me, for all the other English supporters, and no doubt for the French as well, as Sylvie Willard considered her action over her partner's splinter. Her ♦Q was downgraded somewhat, she was minimum for her 1NT, and she had an unexciting shape. "Surely she must sign off?" I thought. Eventually she did, but it seemed to me that she took an eternity to do so. East, of

course, respected her partner's decision, although I think that without the hesitation she could well have considered a further try.

Unfortunately, the English ladies then lost to the eventual winners in the next round before defeating China for the bronze medal. You may deduce from my remarks about the Russian female team that I do not consider losing to them to have been a disgrace, even though it was no doubt a disappointment.



*The English Ladies team collecting their bronze medals in Istanbul.*

### **Experience the drama of the 2004 Bridge Olympiad!**

A double DVD set (4½ hours) is available - packed with critical boards from the main matches, interviews, analysis, predictions and panel discussions.

Presented by Zia Mahmood and Sabine Auken, with commentary on the play by David Burn.

Recommended Retail Price £17.99, but available at a 20% discount to EBU members from the EBU Shop on 01296 397851.

### **Bridge for the young**

Would you like your children/grandchildren to learn or improve their bridge? Let them join over 100 other young bridge enthusiasts at the EBU **Junior Teach-In** weekend at **Loughborough University** over the weekend **2nd – 4th September 2005**.



Huge fun – caters for all experience levels – costs only £80 for two nights accommodation, full board and all teaching and play. For more details visit the EBU website at [www.ebu.co.uk](http://www.ebu.co.uk) and follow the Youth Bridge links, or call John Pain on 01296 317218.

## Members' News

You may have read write-ups of a new political comedy which has recently started airing on BBC Four – the freeview digital BBC channel – which is said to be a worthy successor to *Yes Minister*. Quite possibly you are enjoying watching the series.



Do you also remember reading in the last issue of MetroNews that a couple of the LMBA committee members are actors? If so, you will be interested to know that the character of Glenn Cullen is played by none other than the LMBA's own James Smith!



Congratulations to John Egglestone and Caroline Gunn on their recent marriage. No pictures available, I'm afraid! And apologies to Richard and Sandra Probst, whose wedding photo mysteriously failed to print in the last issue of this magazine – a shame as it really was a lovely picture.



Well done to long-standing London members Peter Cogliatti, John Clarke, David Hull and Jimmy Strauss, who won the Devonshire Cup on behalf of the Stock Exchange for the second successive year. The Devonshire Cup is given for a teams of four competition between London social clubs; past winners include Hurlingham, Roehampton, the Irish Club and the RAC. The standard is high and competitors often include players who do well on the national scene – for example the Hurlingham Club team frequently features the Pridays!



We are sad to report the deaths of several well-known London players – not all LMBA members but familiar presences in London clubs. They include Enid Carter and Peter Gottlieb, both regulars at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club and, at a tragically young age, Richard White, who was a former Chairman of the Middlesex CBA. Our commiserations to their families and friends. Another sad loss to the bridge world is John Collings, who was a familiar sight in London's bridge clubs a few years back. An appreciation is on pages 24 – 25.

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## Calling all clubs

We are shortly going to press with the Competition Brochure for the 2005/6 season. If you think we do not have your up-to-date club details for inclusion in this, please contact us as soon as possible. Either telephone our Membership Secretary, Cecil Leighton, on 020 8500 0700 or email Secretary Chris Duckworth at [chris.duckworth@lineone.net](mailto:chris.duckworth@lineone.net).

## Diverse Views and Opinions – by David M Graham

A recent Crockfords Cup match included several hands where views differed on bidding. Before you look at the full hands, why not decide what you would have done at the table?

### The problems

1. You are North, dealer with EW vulnerable, holding ♠J5 ♥A82 ♦A632 ♣7632. You pass. East opens 1NT (12-14). Partner overcalls 2♥, initially a single-suited transfer overcall showing spades. By the way, you are not playing Astro or similar in this position. West passes and you bid 2♠, your hand not being worth a 2NT try. East passes and partner bids 3♥. What do you do?

2. You are North, third in hand at love all, holding ♠KJ109842 ♥72 ♦43 ♣75. Partner opens 1♥. West passes so you respond 1♠. East bids 2♣ and partner bids 2♦. West now bids 2♠. What do you do?

3. You are South, fourth in hand at game all, with ♠AK76 ♥K6 ♦AKJ9 ♣AK6. Mercifully, it is a clear run to you and you open an Acol style 2♣. With the opposition silent, your partner bids 2♦ as a first negative. You choose to bid 2♠, rather than jumping to 3NT. Partner raises to 3♠, by-passing 3♣ that would have been a second negative. You now bid 3NT. Partner bids 4♥. Your bid?

4. You are East, third in hand with N-S vulnerable, holding ♠10876 ♥K74 ♦98 ♣KJ84. Partner opens 4♠ and you are playing Texas bids to show stronger hands. North doubles.

(a) Do you raise spades or take some other action?

(b) Suppose you pass. South bids 5♠. West passes and North bids 6♣. You pass hopefully but South bids 6♦ which comes back to you. What do you do?

### The post-mortem

#### Hand 1 E-W Vul. Dealer North.

♠ J5	
♥ A82	
♦ A632	
♣ 7632	
♠ Q64	♠ K3
♥ Q97	♥ 654
♦ QJ1098	♦ 75
♣ 95	♣ AKQJ108
♠ A109872	
♥ KJ103	
♦ K4	
♣ 4	

Ignoring the merits, or not, of East's opening no trump, the question seems to be whether partner, South, has 5-5 majors or whether 6-4 is possible. Is there any way to hedge one's bets? The problem would seem to be much the same had the overcall been 2♠, natural.

Given that North has game values, 4♦ has been suggested as a way to get South to clarify, presumably by bidding 4♥ on a 5-5 (or 6-5 etc) and 4♠ on a 6-4 (or maybe even a 5-4, depending on whether Astro, or

similar is being played, though it was not part of the system at this table). After all, given that North had not made a forcing bid over 2♠, neither 4♣ or 4♦ could be looking for slam. At the table, North raised to 4♥, hoping for the 5-5 variety. 4♥ is clearly inferior but it got home, after a diamond lead and the favourable lie of the cards.

**Hand 2 Love all. Dealer South.**

♠ KJ109842	♠ 5
♥ 72	♥ Q103
♦ 43	♦ Q72
♣ 75	♣ AKJ942
♠ A63	♠ Q7
♥ KJ4	♥ A9865
♦ J865	♦ AK109
♣ Q106	♣ 83

Assuming that 2♠ shows a club fit and is forward looking, perhaps with no trumps in mind, the question seems to be whether the North hand should pass or bid 3♠, as one would expect more high cards to justify a double. What are the advantages of crowding their space as against the possible downside risks? And, could 4♠ ever be on? It seems unlikely that 5♣ could be there with South having bid both red suits.

At the table, North passed, East bid 2NT and West raised this to 3NT, a game that is somewhat fortunate to make, depending on the 7-2 spade break. Would a 3♠ bid have dissuaded East-West, though of course it makes the game a better

bet than it was with the actual auction?

**Hand 3 Game all. Dealer West.**

♠ 9852	♠ 103
♥ AQ7	♥ J8542
♦ 8632	♦ 107
♣ 74	♣ Q1083
♠ QJ4	♠ AK76
♥ 1093	♥ K6
♦ Q54	♦ AKJ9
♣ J952	♣ AK6

Playing a style requiring an Ace and a King, or equivalent good values, for a positive response to 2♣, it seems likely to South that, after the 4♥ bid, North will have four spades, the Ace of hearts and some other worthwhile value, consistent with the initial negative. North cannot have 3 queens and the Ace of hearts as the first response would have been 2NT, assuming no shape constraints.

Many South's would just have rebid 3NT so this problem would never have arisen. North would have passed and they would have made their game and moved on to next board without giving spade slam possibilities any thought. Other players use a Kokish approach allowing for an artificial 2♥-2♠ relay to precede a 2NT rebid now showing 25-26. This enables Stayman and transfers to be used to pick the right game or slam, so they might have got to this same stage. How good or bad can a spade slam be after the 4♥ bid? There is quite a

range from excellent (say ♠Qxxx ♥Axxx ♦Qxx ♣xx when the grand slam is reasonable) to the actual hand held that is probably about the most unsuitable, with the slam depending on the diamond finesse, assuming spades break. Maybe only the strong club systems can find out enough before running out of room?

6♠ was down one. At the other table there was a misunderstanding over South's hand strength and they subsided in 3NT without exploring higher level possibilities.

**Hand 4 N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

♠ A  
♥ Q105  
♦ AJ1065  
♣ A963

♠ KQJ9542	♠ 10876
♥ J8	♥ K74
♦ –	♦ 98
♣ Q1072	♣ KJ84

♠ 3  
♥ A9632  
♦ KQ7432  
♣ 5

(a) There is a good case for bidding at least 5♠ as it must be North-South's hand and this is a cheap way to make it more difficult for

them. 5 level bids in clubs or hearts, to indicate values could help West find a good lead but are just as likely to give away valuable information. 5♦ diamonds looks too creative.

(b) Once the opponents have got to 6♦ the save is worth considering but maybe the kings are well-placed, given North's earlier double of the 4♠ opening bid.

Another factor could be the state of the match as this is in the last set and you judge your side is ahead by 20 imps or so. North-South may be pushing for a swing. But should this tip you towards a pass or a save? At the table, East passed and 6♦ made easily. In the other room, the save cost 300.

**The result**

If you found the winning actions on all four hands you would have won the match.

**Finally**, well done to Warwick Pitch and the Young Chelsea Club for providing a pre-dealt set of 32 boards, with hand records available after the match.




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## LMBA results from the current season

### London Teams of Four Championship

This competition is starting to get monotonous! The event has been won this season by last year's holders, the team of Ian Payn, Rob Cliffe, David Burn and Brian Callaghan. That makes it four years running for this team, and many congratulations for this amazing consistency. The runners-up were once again Mike Hill, David Ould, Roger Morton and Mike Clack

Since entries for the competition have been falling over the last few years, however, the LMBA Committee has come up with a devious plan to stop the winning team in their tracks! The format is being changed to a one-day, two session multiple teams event, to be held early in January 2006. The top two teams from this event with London allegiance will qualify to a head-to-head knock out for the title and the right to represent London in the Pachabo, the national inter-county teams championship. More details will be in the LMBA Competition Brochure which will be sent to all members later this summer.



## **London Pairs Championship**

This major London Championship attracted a strong field of 34 pairs in January. Congratulations to Rob Cliffe and Nora Smith who won this year and who have the best record of any pair in this competition. It was their third win, the only pair to have achieved this – and Rob has actually won a fourth time in partnership with Brian Callaghan.

Amazingly, the top six pairs were all mixed this time, and the leading four will represent London in the Corwen Trophy in June (it may have taken place by the time you receive this, so you may know how they did). They were:

- 1st Nora Smith & Rob Cliffe
- 2nd Janet de Botton & Nick Sandqvist
- 3rd Chris Duckworth & Brian Callaghan
- 4th Chantal Girardin & Ken Barnett



## **The Palmer Bayer Trophy**

This event is named after a former LMBA member and EBU Director who championed the idea of “No Fear” bridge, as a way of bringing the joys of competitive bridge to a wider audience. It is a simple system event with a social slant. A particular feature is a free glass of wine at the end of the event for all participants, to be enjoyed whilst discussing the hands with an expert offering advice as to how things should go. Simon Cochemé was this year’s expert and he entertained and informed the players in equal measure until the results were available. These revealed that the winners for the last two years, Sam and Jason, had just failed to make it a hat trick:

- 1st Andrew Clery & Adrian Rogers
- 2nd Jason Crampton & Sam Oestreicher
- 3rd John Sheppard & Panny Ward

## **The LMBA One-Day Green-Pointed Swiss Teams**

A new venue was found for this year’s One-Day Green-Pointed Swiss Teams, run as a joint venture with the EBU. It was held at the Civil Service Recreation Centre, which is just south of Victoria Street and a much more central site than usual. The Centre features a very good value bar and café, and parking in the

area is no problem on a Sunday, so on the whole it was popular with players, though they still had to contend with central London traffic, even on a Sunday!

A total of 48 teams took part, the leading three at the end of the day being:



1st Gareth Birdsall, Sonia Zakrzewski, Dafydd Jones & Tessa Greenslade

2nd Malcolm Lewis, Dave McVey, Mark Benson & Steve Auchterlonie

3rd Simon Cochemé, Tim Gauld, Paul Martin & Lorne Anderson

Many congratulations to the two young couples in the winning team, pictured here with the hard working Chief TD for the day, Roland Bolton.

## London Schools League

The London Schools League, for teams from schools in and around the London area, was a little late in getting going this year, due to administrative difficulties. Nevertheless quite a few matches were played and 8 teams qualified for the semi-finals held at the Young Chelsea on 1st May. Unfortunately, in the event only four of these were able to attend on the day, so it was decided that the event should become the finals rather than semi-finals. The four teams enjoyed an afternoon's bridge played in great good humour and finished in positions that reflected pretty accurately the relative experience of the players.



### **1st Haberdashers' Aske's School**

Hugo Steckelmacher, Philip Maton, Nick Kanfer, Meekesh Shah

### **2nd St Paul's School**

Paul Simister, Jack Wellby, Tom Eccles, Madoc Troup

### **3rd Latymer Upper School**

Nick Mock, Will Abel, Alex Chambers, Adam Drage

### **4th John Lyon School**

Pavan Paw, Faisal Islam, Roshan Bhalla, Neil Ewington

## Under-19 Pairs Championship

It was a small but select heat this year. Congratulations to the new Under-19 champions, Dave Rogers and Thomas Grundy, and runners-up Minesh Shah and Thomas Andrews. These pairs qualified for the national finals at Easter where they finished very creditably in 4th and 9th place respectively.

## Newcomers' Day

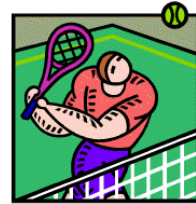
This was a great success this season – see pages 26-27 for full details.



## Fox Shammon Trophy

This is a competition for senior pairs, which is a thoroughly civilised event played in the delightful surroundings of Queen's Club in Barons Court. This year's event, played on 8th May, produced the following results.

- 1st Lawrence Young & David Graham
- 2nd Andrew & Anne Stimson
- 3rd Colin Raw & Dave Quinton



## The London Trophy

Our biggest competition, a knock-out for teams representing non-bridge clubs, reduces to six teams for the last weekend, hosted by the Queen's Club. This sees the final of the main event and the Plate, plus a play-off for third and fourth place in the main competition. The finals were held this year on 22nd May, so we have just managed to get the results in before going to press, though an article about the competition will have to wait until next time. The results were:

### **London Trophy**

Queens Club beat Walton Heath Golf Club by 8330 points. Queens Club were represented by David Sellman (Capt), Wasim Naqvi, Bijan Dolatabadi and David Eckhardt. In the third-place play-off, RAC 1 bt Lewes Golf Club by 6840 points.

### **Della-Porta Plate**

Coolhurst Lawn Tennis & Squash Club 1 beat Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club by 230 pts. The Plate winners were Ken Kentea (Capt), P Krauschar, S Moulder and J Lewis.

## Puzzle Corner

Another puzzle for you to work on – can you discover who holds which high cards and the distribution of each hand in this deal of bridge?



Using the usual 4-3-2-1 scale, one player has 7 points and the highest point count is 15. Among the four hands there are two voids and two singletons, both of which are queens. No-one holds a doubleton and no-one has a longer than 6-card suit.

One hand has a black Ace and ♥J; another has a black Ace with ♦J. South and West have the same number of spades as each other and North and East hold the same number of diamonds as each other. East has two more clubs than spades. Two of the hands have at least one honour in every suit. One hand has both black kings, another has both black queens, and a third holds the ♦KQ together. West doesn't have any queens and South hasn't any kings. Three players have the same number of hearts as each other, and three have the same number of clubs as each other. Both red Aces are in the same hand.

# Westminster workout

*by Chris Duckworth*

The House of Lords plays the House of Commons every year in an annual teams of eight match for the Jack Perry Trophy. The bridge is organised by the EBU, and having frequently acted as a monitor at these matches during my time with the EBU, I was delighted to be asked back again this year. This was not least because it is always held somewhere very comfortable, with a glass or two of champagne and a very nice lunch laid on.

This year was actually the 31st match and the score was level at 15 wins to each side. So there was all to play for and we settled into our seats at Crockfords Club in anticipation of a tight match. I was seated behind Lord Stamp playing with Lord Baker, the



Lord Baker

former Home Secretary, who quickly showed that he knew how to play the cards. This was Board 2 of the match:

## ***N/S Vul. Dealer East***

♠ 962  
♥ 873  
♦ AK5  
♣ 10842

♠ QJ73  
♥ QJ1054  
♦ QJ6  
♣ 6

♠ 1054  
♥ 96  
♦ 9832  
♣ AQ73

♠ AK8  
♥ AK2  
♦ 1074  
♣ KJ95

The bidding was brisk and efficient.

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Dble	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Evan Harris, the energetic Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West was sitting West and led ♥Q. Baker won this, played a diamond to dummy and, after careful thought, played the ♣8, which he ran when East, Tony McWalter, played small. If you look carefully at the position, you will see that this is the only card to ensure that three club tricks and the contract can be made.

At the lunch break the score was extremely close, only some 190 aggregate points separating the two teams. Both captains pleaded with their teams to partake frugally of the lunchtime wine, urgings which largely fell on deaf ears – the players were there to enjoy themselves!



Sir Tim Sainsbury

When play resumed, the East West seats at our table were filled by Tim Sainsbury, the former Conservative Minister and member of the supermarket family, partnering John Marek, a Labour

MP who actually once played for Wales in the Camrose in his youth. The bridge continued to be pretty solid and it felt as if things must still be pretty close when it came to the last board.

## Love All. Dealer West

♠ 82	
♥ K105	
♦ 1053	
♣ J10975	
♠ K4	♠ AQJ107
♥ QJ93	♥ A864
♦ KQ8	♦ J42
♣ AQ43	♣ K
♠ 9653	
♥ 72	
♦ A976	
♣ 862	

The trap on this hand is to avoid playing in your rather poor 4-4 heart fit, no trumps being very much the superior strain, 6NT in fact depending only on the heart finesse. There was no trouble at our table – John Marek opened 1♣ and rebid 2NT after the 1♠ response. Tim Sainsbury needed no more encouragement – he went straight to 6NT and happily watched his partner cash 12 tricks when the finesse was right.

This table was the last to finish and, when the dust had cleared, it was seen that the Commons had won the match by a narrow margin – this slam had certainly been needed to ensure their success.

The trophy was presented to Michael Mates as the Commons captain (as shown in the photo). His pleasure in receiving it was only marginally abated by the fact that the cup needed a new layer on its base before the victory could be recorded for posterity and the Commons would now have to fork out for this!



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## Taking expert advice

by Ian Payn



A while ago, I read an article by a Learned Expert (so called to distinguish him from the more common “Expert” and the even more common “Pig Ignorant Expert”). The Learned Expert wrote that if there was a choice of games, and 3NT was one of those choices, then 3NT was where you should play.

One can usually take or leave these pieces of expert advice: After all, lots of things work for the exalted which don’t work for the likes of you and me. The Principle of Restricted Choice; the Law of Total Tricks; third hand high, second hand low – all that complicated stuff turns to dust in the hands of the average club player. Every once in a while, however, some gem from the past resurfaces in the mind, often just in time. Take these two hands from the same round of a normal club duplicate, for instance.

Partner is keen, but would be the first to admit that he was no Garozzo. Opponents are hardly Meckstroth and Rodwell, either. This being a bridge article, you are South.

1. You pick up:

♠ 10 8  
♥ Q 5  
♦ Q J 7 4 3  
♣ A K 3 2

Right hand opponent deals and opens 3♥ (everybody is vulnerable). For want of anything better to do, you pass. LHO passes and partner doubles, which comes back to you. 3NT may well be the best place to play, but there's only one way to get there, and that's to bid it yourself. So you do. This is passed out. A heart is led, and dummy comes down.

♠ A 9 5 2  
♥ K  
♦ A K 10 8 6 5  
♣ Q 9

That's a bit of luck. A heart stop, and enough tricks, combined with your two, to make eleven. Opening the traveller, you find that your +660 is worth all the matchpoints against a row of 600s from 5♦ contracts.

2. You pick up:

♠ Q 9 8 7  
♥ J 10 6 5  
♦ A 5  
♣ K Q 9

Vulnerable against not, partner deals and opens 1♥. RHO overcalls 1♠ and it's your go. I put it to you, members of the jury, that any old fool can bid 4♥, but it takes a wise man to realise that yet again 3NT is likely to be the best spot. So, you bid it, and everybody passes. Your LHO leads a Spade, and this is the full hand

<p>♠ 6 4 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ 10 9 7 6 2 ♣ A 7 2</p>	<p>♠ A 2 ♥ K Q 9 4 2 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ J 10 8</p> <p>♠ K J 10 5 3 ♥ A ♦ K 8 3 ♣ 6 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ Q 9 8 7 ♥ J 10 6 5 ♦ A 5 ♣ K Q 9</p>
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Two spades, two diamonds, four hearts and two clubs makes ten tricks, for that all important +630. Everyone else, of course, was in the obvious 4♥, making just 620.

♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠

Everyone at the table congratulates you, word goes around the room about your brilliance, and in the bar afterwards, you're money's no good. When you get home, the phone rings. It's Zia...

...Except it isn't. It's the alarm clock. Waking up, you remember with misery how far "trying to be clever" got you last night.



On the first hand, partner had the ♠K, not the ♥K. 6♦ had been an easy make, 3NT lost the first seven tricks. On the second hand, East, rather than West held the ♣A. So, 4♥ was still trivial, but it was "Goodnight Vienna" for 3NT. Another 48% set. That's the last time I pay any attention to any Learned Expert. What do they know?

# Notes from the coal face

by A Minor



I've been pursuing my reverie on Bridge and other sports and I keep coming back to a remark made by Steve Davis at the point when his great powers were just beginning to decline.

Snooker, of course, is arguably the most self-centred sport – or is it? After all, although the truism about “if you are at the table the other fellow can't be” is true, nevertheless the other fellow can leave the balls in a pretty unhelpful position, so he does have some influence. Not so in golf, where the player will only ever have himself to blame or praise. I think this is why golf is often so unattractive to watch, as you are only watching a player playing himself – except of course when it comes to the Ryder Cup when the whole event blossoms and all of sports inconsistencies come majestically to the fore.

Bridge has something of both sports in common, at least down where I play. If you are faced with a three no trump contract with only seven or eight top tricks, you know that any expert will find a way to make the ninth, but you're not playing against him – can you? And if, when you open the traveller, you find that you are the only declarer to garner nine tricks, there is an overwhelming sense of pride and satisfaction, a whole justification of why you struggle on with the game at this level.

But what if you discover that somebody has made ten tricks? Curiosity compels you to seek enlightenment. A different lead or crass defence can leave your sense of satisfaction intact – but a revoke? Your opposite number, your arch competitor, has been awarded an outright 'top' not for excellence or insight or ability, but through another player's incompetence. Your skill has been relegated to second place, which is why at this point you must shrug your shoulders and take comfort for extricating nine tricks from that exacting layout, and share your love of your game with Mr Davis's love of his. And his remark? He maintained that, when all was said and done about snooker, it remained a game in which he didn't know how it was possible to cheat.

## ***New!*** ***Open Teams Challenge***

### **The Young Chelsea Bridge Club**

presents an exciting new weekend competition for teams of four to be held on 1st-2nd October 2005, featuring:

- ◆ *a two-session multiple teams on Saturday*
- ◆ *the leading four teams qualifying to final stages on Sunday*
- ◆ *a two-session Swiss Teams on Sunday for the remainder of the field*
- ◆ *£1000 first prize*
- ◆ *entry fee £120 per team – great value for 4 full sessions of quality bridge*

For more details or to enter call the YCBC on 020 7373 1665.



# Youth Bridge

In an effort to get more youngsters playing bridge, the Young Chelsea Bridge Club ran some courses for school children during the Easter holidays. A total of 12 children aged between 7 and 15 attended the classes, not bad considering the courses were advertised for only a short while beforehand.



The children all learned a lot – starting from a base of no previous experience they learnt the mechanics of the game, the basics of card play, how to open the bidding at the one-level and how to respond to these openings – enough to be able to go away and practice with family and friends so as to consolidate their new knowledge. Above all, the kids had a really good time, as you can probably see from these photos.



The club is running more classes in the summer. These will include both more introductory courses and one or more follow-on courses for those who already know the basics or who have previously attended the first course.

Each course consists of four two-and-a-half hour sessions, run over either two or four consecutive days. Scheduled dates at the moment are:

## ***Introduction to Bridge***

Monday 4th July – Tuesday 5th July	10.00 am – 4.00pm each day
Thursday 21st – Friday 22nd July	10.00 am – 4.00 pm each day
Monday 25th – Thursday 28th July	10.00 am – 12.30 pm each morning

## ***Continuing Bridge***

Monday 1st - Tuesday 2nd August	10.00 am – 4.00 pm each day break
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The cost of each course is £70 per student, including teaching and light refreshments but not lunches.

If you would like more details, the contact is Ricci Hammond, who can be called on 020 7381 4291.

# Teams of Eight triumphs!

## Tollemache Cup

Many congratulations to our Tolle team that succeeded in lifting the cup earlier this year. That made it a hat-trick – the third year running London has won the Tollemache Cup. This has only been done twice before, on both occasions early in the history of this event. Yorkshire was the first to win three in a row, in 1948, 1949 and 1950. London then followed straight on, with wins in 1951, 1952 and 1953.

This year's victory means that London has now won the Tollemache 18 times, far more than any other county. Middlesex are next with a total of 12 wins, and Yorkshire has the distinction of 6 wins, though their last was some while ago in 1968.\*\*

The victorious team this year comprised Brian Callaghan (Captain, pictured), David Burn, Colin Simpson, David Price, Tom Townsend, David Gold, Nick Sandqvist and Artur Malinowski.



## G.W Arnott-Davidson

London's second teams-of-eight win was in the G.W.Arnott Davidson Cup at Easter. This competition, sometimes known as the "Junior Tolle", is an inter-regional teams-of-eight for under-19s. The competition is organised to minimise travel – always a problem for young players. There are two heats, one in the north and one in the south, each competed by up to four regional teams, followed by a North v South play-off during the Easter Festival.



This year London won the southern heat and went on to defeat the North Midlands team representing the north of the country in the finals. Well done to the team, pictured from left to right, Hugo Steckelmacher, Chris Owen, Paul Simister, David Rogers, Shivam Shah, Tom Andrews, Minesh Shah, and Stephen Rogers.

*\*\* If you are wondering where I got hold of these statistics, the answer is from a marvellous book called the British Bridge Almanack. This was compiled as a labour of love by Peter Hasenson and published late last year. It contains zillions of fascinating facts about British bridge competitions and personalities, together with loads of great photos, and I cannot recommend it highly enough. You can buy a copy from the EBU – at £32 it is not cheap, but I think it is worth every penny (and postage is free!).*



# John Collings: a personal recollection

*by Joe Fawcett*



There have been dozens if not hundreds of articles, and more recently obituaries and tributes, about one of England's greatest and most eccentric players. If you want the times, dates and other minutiae then this is not the piece for you, this is just my memories of the master.

I had not been playing at the Wolverhampton Bridge Club for very long when one of the club's leading lights suggested we go along and watch the European Championships one afternoon. This was 1981 and they were being held that year in Birmingham. I was told that the best kibitzing would be had by watching someone I'd never heard of named "Collings". Needless to say there was no possibility to get anywhere near the table, the best I could manage was six rows back. I was amazed, this reminded me more of celebrities and big name golfers rather than the impression I had received about the bridge world so far – my main aim at that stage was to secure a regular place in the Staffordshire county team and certainly no-one came to watch any of our matches.

A few years later I had moved to London and was working as a host at Green Street Bridge Club. Needless to say the bug had bitten badly and on my time off I visited the other clubs. It was at St. John's Wood where I met JDRC for the second time, where he commanded a great deal of attention and respect. I had walked in at about midnight and, as was the custom in those days, there were plenty of games going on. I was awestruck to be properly introduced and then immediately regretted it, for Collings was in full flow, berating his partner for misreading the ending in a slam hand. The correct play was "so obvious" to even a beginner that he picked on the nearest one to prove his point. Fortunately, more by luck than judgement, I managed to make the hand. I even stated how I would have played the first few tricks differently which impressed the old master and left me on a mental high for hours.

I spent many more hours watching Collings over the next few months and was always impressed with his lightning analysis of the hands, a skill he carried across to the duplicate game. I am convinced that this was born of playing much rubber bridge - it didn't help his bidding, but as rubber bridge is played at least twice as quickly as duplicate interesting situations arise much more frequently.

I went on to play many times against John. He had a terrible temper, he hated seeing anything spoil the perfection that he thought existed in Bridge and his bidding froze some years back, but you could rarely fault his defence and hardly ever his declarer play.

There have been many hands over the years but two stick in my head. The first was at an international match. The hand was a text book double squeeze with



the pivot suit being AK52 in the dummy. With a characteristic impishness Collings had discarded the 5 whilst running the trumps and eventually crossed to dummy's ace at trick eleven. After playing the king he conceded one down. His partner, who had been following keenly looked up in surprise, as did the two defenders.

After some muttering in their native tongues the director was called and, as it was impossible for Collings to lose the last trick, the slam was awarded. I saw Collings trying not to laugh as he put the cards back in the wallet. The opponents never caught on and were heard hours later telling their team mates how some clueless Englishman had pulled off a double squeeze by accident.

My favourite hand that I saw at the table, though, was the following that occurred at St. John's Wood Club.

♠ K87  
♥ A76  
♦ Q765  
♣ KQ3

♠ AQ5  
♥ KQ84  
♦ KJ2  
♣ AJ4

The auction was brief, Collings opened 2NT and his partner closed matters with 6NT. Lefty kicked off with the ♠J and Collings won in dummy to lead a diamond to the king and ace. The defence persevered with a spade and Collings won, took three rounds of clubs and then played the king and ace of hearts. On these West played the nine and then the knave. Collings then took the diamond knave and played a diamond to the king, East discarding the thirteenth spade, West having started with ♠J109. At this stage John was in dummy, which had left ♥7 and ♦7, opposite ♥ Q 8 in hand.

He played ♥7 and East followed small. He knew West had the last diamond, but did he also have ♥10 or was his other card the thirteenth club? I was thinking about this and

deciding whether or not I would play with the principle of restricted choice, which clearly indicates finessing, had I been at the helm. John didn't even seem to think; he played for the drop and started adding up the rubber - West indeed following with the ♥10.

He wasn't saying anything at the time, unusual for him, but I collared him later and asked him to explain all. I had the full hand in front of me

♠ K87  
♥ A76  
♦ Q765  
♣ KQ3

♠ J109  
♥ J109  
♦ A1094  
♣ 862

♠ 6432  
♥ 532  
♦ 83  
♣ 10975

♠ AQ5  
♥ KQ84  
♦ KJ2  
♣ AJ4

He wasn't interested in restricted choice; the only thing that mattered to him was the speed of West's lead which had come after a noticeable think. "How quickly would you take to find a lead of the ♠J?" asked John, "If you had knave - ten - nine in that suit and knave - nine doubleton in the other?" As usual he had backed his table presence to be a better judge than the odds.

# Newcomers Bridge

The LMBA believes it is important to try to provide bridge for all sections of our membership, and the Newcomers Day is held each year for those just coming out of classes or who have played only for a short time. On 8th May we were very pleased to welcome 36 players who came into this category, a record entry for an event of this type. Our thanks go to all the bridge teachers who



encouraged their students to come along, with especial thanks to Ned Paul who not only brought along quite a few people but also helped out greatly on the day.

The best thing about the afternoon's bridge was the terrific spirit in which it was played. Everyone was charming to partners and opponents alike, not a cross word was heard, and all seemed keen to come along to another similar event very soon. Advice was available to those who needed it, though most players were happy to bid and play under their own steam, knowing that everyone else was equally uncertain about the optimum bid or play.



The pace of play was comfortable for those present, of course slower than a standard duplicate. In all 14 boards were managed, including a break for tea and cakes. There were several interesting hands to play, but Board 1 had instructive elements in both the bidding and the play of the cards.

## ***Love All. Dealer North.***

	♠ A	
	♥ QJ2	
	♦ J4	
	♣ AK98642	
♠ J1043		♠ 98652
♥ 10986		♥ K7
♦ A1095		♦ K832
♣ 5		♣ QJ
	♠ KQ7	
	♥ A543	
	♦ Q76	
	♣ 1073	

North opened 1♣ and South responded 1♥. North now had the first test – what to rebid? Although holding only 15 points, the fine 7-card club suit and good heart cards make this hand

comfortably worth a 3♣ rebid. South should now be happy to say 3NT, remembering that a game in no trumps is always easier than a minor suit game.

This was the auction at the table I watched, but when I looked at the traveller at the end I found there had been people playing in 1NT, 2NT and 3NT, as well as one in the club game and two in 4♥! Maybe those in hearts got some intervention in spades from East West, though I wouldn't recommend an overcall on either of their hands.

Four hearts proved too difficult, both Souths going two off. But both 3NT and 5♣ should make, losing just the two top diamonds, the former contract

therefore scoring better playing pairs. But there are a couple of traps on this hand, which has to be played carefully.

At the table I watched, West led a low diamond and South made her first mistake by playing the jack from dummy. East won the king and returned a diamond, allowing the defence to take the first four diamond tricks. A holding such as North South have here in diamonds crops up quite often and will always provide a stop in no trumps *provided* the opponents open up the suit and declarer plays second-hand-low on the first round of the suit.

Can you see how this helps? Here, play low from dummy and if East plays the king you follow low from South, and play another low diamond on the second round. West has to play the ace to beat the jack in dummy, and now your queen is a winner.

All was not lost at the table I was watching – the diamonds had split 4-4 so declarer could still take the remaining tricks to make her contract. After cashing their diamonds, though, the defence played a spade and this was performed won by the ace in dummy. Now declarer cashed the top two clubs, pleased to see that the suit broke. But, oh dear, the last club in her hand was now the ten! The third round of clubs therefore had to be won in hand and there was no way back to dummy to cash all those lovely clubs without losing a heart trick.

As declarer, you have to be vigilant to watch out for a situation like this. It would have been very easy to throw the ♣10 under the ♣K, once you have

spotted the potential blockage, but it is easy to see the problem too late!

In fact, no-one managed to bid this hand to 3NT and make the 11 tricks that were there for the taking, so the pair who bid 5♣ got a top on the board. They didn't get a diamond lead, so the losing diamonds went away on the ♠K and ♠Q and all 13 tricks were made with the aid of a heart finesse and a slight misdefence by West, who threw away a couple of hearts at some point on the run of the clubs.

The results were produced quickly at the end of play and were quite spectacular. In the East West direction, the winners had a magnificent 70.83%, well clear of second place, whilst the North South line produce three pairs in equal first place with 54.17%!

The leaders in each direction went away with book prizes, designed to help them improve their bridge further. The top few were as follows:



### **East West**

- 1st Kay Nashton & Renata Cox  
70.83%
- 2nd Jen Thompson & Stephen  
Wickremasinghe 64.29%
- 3rd Sue Estermann & Stephen  
Smith 59.52%

### **North South**

- 1st equal on 54.17%:  
Rosemary Watson & Julia Pippet  
Sheila Tuvyahu & Denise Brahm  
Szabolcs Mikulas & Natasa Perovic

# Difference of Opinion

by Mike Graham

When playing in a Charity or Simultaneous Pair event the bridge seems somehow less intense than a normal pairs. The players seem more socially-minded and the general atmosphere seems more geared to having a fun evening than usual. One good thing is the booklet that you get afterwards, containing the hands and a commentary on what is likely to have happened.



Or not. In a recent Simultaneous, the commentary, which was concise, reasonable and accurate, matched what happened at my table on precisely three occasions.

Take, for example, board 12:

## ***N/S Vul. Dealer West.***

♠ KQ10962	
♥ Q3	
♦ Q92	
♣ 105	
♠ 83	♠ J754
♥ J964	♥ AK10
♦ J10763	♦ K4
♣ 93	♣ QJ42
♠ A	
♥ 8752	
♦ A85	
♣ AK876	

The commentary states: "Playing weak twos North opens 2♠ and plays there...". Well, against my partner and myself, West, a well-known Essex Loony, opened 3♦. Perhaps he was smarting after an obviously foul first board (two down in a silly slam), but look what happened. East declined to get involved, although to bid 3N looks tempting, but why declare 3N when you can defend it? I tried 3N as South (the queen of clubs and out gives you seven tricks, and

surely you can expect a little more than that).

I got a heart lead. East won the king and switched to the king of diamonds, won by the ace, and now I had a chance. Ace of spades, diamond to the ten and queen, and the top spades; alas, the jack failed to come down, and I ended with seven tricks for minus 200 and, probably, zero matchpoints. And this was just the first round.

Board 19:

## ***E/W Vul. Dealer South.***

	♠ K1062	
	♥ ---	
	♦ AJ109874	
	♣ A4	
♠ QJ974		♠ A3
♥ J63		♥ AQ1042
♦ 2		♦ K65
♣ 10862		♣ Q93
	♠ 85	
	♥ K9875	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ KJ75	

After two passes my partner opened 1♦, and as the commentary states, "1♥ from East is followed by two passes, and North can bid either 1♠ or 2♦". What can happen after that is a bit unclear as there are too many options, but at our table East jumped

to 2♥, described as intermediate. After two passes my partner made the bid I had been hoping for – double – and that became the final contract. I led the Q♦, and, once dummy had descended, gazed at it in disbelief. Why do they always get three trumps and a useful singleton when they bid like this?

Getting a count on the hand proved awkward (I did not credit my partner with *seven* diamonds) but the trump pips proved enough to limit declarer to seven tricks and the magic plus 200. Well done partner – you can always correct Three Clubs to Three Diamonds on the North cards, but if you do double you know deep down that that will be the final contract, so doubling takes some courage, and I'm not sure that I would have done it myself.

We had some fun on this board:

**N/S Vul. Dealer North**

♠ J	♠ Q1082
♥ J10542	♥ AKQ9
♦ 10	♦ AKQ
♣ Q106542	♣ K3
♠ 654	♠ AK973
♥ 763	♥ 8
♦ 96532	♦ J874
♣ J8	♣ A97

Not the most difficult grand slam ever, but it defeated 30% of the field, and, of those in seven, most were in spades. We got to 7N after the following ridiculous auction:

North	South
2♣ (1)	3♥ (2)
3♠ (3)	4♦ (4)
4N (5)	5♦ (6)
7N (7)	

- (1) Acol-style.
- (2) A positive in spades.
- (3) How good are your spades?
- (4) King-queen high. Yes, I know. And I'm not going to claim that I pulled the wrong card from my bidding box.
- (5) Interesting, there are two queens of spades in this pack. Pushkin would be proud. Obviously the idiot I'm playing with has misbid. I wonder if he'll forget Blackwood as well?
- (6) Three key cards for spades.
- (7) I'll trust him on this one.

So all was well. I wondered afterwards why partner didn't just bid 4N over 3♥, as the minimum hand I could have had would have been K♠ plus A♣. Incidentally, it is a moot point as to whether the response to a key-card ask such as 4NT should include cards already shown in response to an asking bid or cue-bid.

We now have the agreement that they don't, but I remember years ago there was a Bridge Magazine bidding problem which addressed this point. East, having cue-bid an ace, had to respond to Blackwood holding two aces. I still remember Terence Reese's answer: "Five Hearts. Quite correct to see if the panellists can count up to two."



# Congratulations ...

to the following LMBA members who have done well in national and international events over the last few months.



At the Year End Congress, Phil King won both the Swiss Teams and the Men's Pairs. Sarah Waddington and Glyn Liggins, on a rare outing together, came a fine second in the Swiss Pairs, Colin Simpson and David Price were second in the Swiss Teams and Anne Catchpole was third in the Ladies Pairs. Jack Stocken won the Swiss Pairs up in Blackpool in the parallel northern congress.



Michael Graham was a member of the winning junior England team in the Peggy Bayer Trophy.

At the National Swiss Teams in Leeds, Carl King came second and Peter Czerniewski and Marc Smith were fourth. Marc also did well in the Overseas Congress in Tunisia, winning the Men's Pairs and coming third in the Swiss Pairs.



David Burn and Rob Cliffe won the National Men's Pairs in January.

Kathryn Cearns, Rosie White, Julie Herterich, Gillian Salt and Chris Duckworth won the secondary event at the National Women's Teams.

In the Easter Festival, Nick Sandqvist and Gunnar Hallberg were second in the Swiss Pairs, Dom Goodwin won the Open Pairs and Colin Simpson was third in the Mixed Pairs.



Rob Cliffe came second in the Grand Masters Pairs (not quite managing to retain the title he won in 2004).

Alan and Olivia Woo won the Jersey Congress Swiss Teams.

Brady Richter won the Punchbowl at the Schapiro Spring Fours.

Simon Cochemé, Tim Gauld and Paul Martin were third in the London One-Day Swiss Teams in March. Richard Harris won the Hants & IoW A-Flight One-Day Swiss Teams in May.

## Solution

This is the deal referred to in the puzzle on page 17. Did you manage to solve it?



♠	—	♠	Q
♥	Jxxx	♥	AKxx
♦	KQxxx	♦	Axxxx
♣	Axxx	♣	Qxx
♠	KJxxxx	♠	Axxxxx
♥	xxxx	♥	Q
♦	—	♦	Jxx
♣	Kxx	♣	Jxx

# Through the Minefield

with Veronica Thicke

*In which Bridge Expert and bonne viveuse Veronica Thicke returns to her mailbag. Veronica is currently going through the proofs of her biography of Wilfrid Brambell, due to be published to wide acclaim in the New Year.*



*Q My partner thinks I bid too much. I just don't like letting go in an auction. What is your opinion, please, Veronica? (TC, South Kensington)*

The hand that TC presented for our interest is:

♠ A Q 3 2  
♥ A Q 9 3 2  
♦ 8 3  
♣ J 2

He opened at pairs, as dealer (with everybody vulnerable) with One Heart. No-one could argue with that, TC! His left hand opponent overcalled with Two Clubs and TC's partner (CC, as it happens) bid Two Hearts. Right hand opponent bid Three Clubs, and now we began our descent into Hell. TC bid Three Hearts.

Ye Gods, TC! Does "One, Two, that'll do" mean nothing to you? You have opened a hand with which, had your shape been slightly different, you would have opened a weak no trump. Haven't you? Come, on, answer! Of course you have.

So, your partner has shown six to nine points, you've got a weak no trump and you want to compete at the three level? I don't think so. You have nothing in the bank, nothing. If anyone is going to bid more, it's your partner. He might have a singleton

somewhere, or a five card suit on the side, and decide that it's worth one more bid, but that would be up to him.

TC's tale of woe continues. After his lame Three Heart effort, his LHO bid Four Clubs. This was passed back to TC. Now, any sane person would, at this point, ask partner to lead, but not TC. Four Hearts he tried. Four Hearts they doubled. Four Hearts went off.

The defence didn't slip up. They took Two Diamonds, a Spade and Two Clubs. Two off. 500 to E/W, rather than the paltry plus score they'd have made in Clubs. The full hand follows. You might claim that TC was unlucky that CC put down such a wretched dummy, but this is not the case. TC had no right to expect any more than he got, and might have prepared for less.

## **Game All. Dealer South.**

♠ 8 7 4	
♥ K J 10 8	
♦ Q J 10 7	
♣ 7 6	
♠ K 10 9	♠ J 6 5
♥ 7	♥ 6 5 4
♦ K 9 4 2	♦ A 6 5
♣ A K Q 9 5	♣ 10 8 4 3
♠ A Q 3 2	
♥ A Q 9 3 2	
♦ 8 3	
♣ J 2	

So, TC, if you're wondering whether you overbid, don't ask me. Look at the results!

*Q It seems to me that there's a shortage of really top-class teams events in the London area. Swiss teams, though popular, are a bit of a mixed bag. I know the Young Chelsea Knock-Out is a strong field, but I was thinking about something*



*that would, perhaps, be over in a day or two. (NS, Bayswater)*

It just so happens, NS, that your luck is in! The Young Chelsea, which you mention, is planning a spiffing event, with worthwhile prizes, which should be just the ticket. There has been a lot of interest from the better players already, but the format is such that there's something for everyone. There is, I believe, an advertisement for this event elsewhere in this magazine.

*Q Who's the funny-looking bloke with the ginger wig I saw you playing with in the Budapest Mixed Pairs? (AS, Finsbury Park)*

How unnecessary! For reasons I am unable to go into in these pages, Mr. Thicke is currently to be seen

sporting an expensive, high-class ginger hairpiece. I can say no more – the security of the nation is at stake. We came third, by the way. You?

*Q Which, Veronica, in your opinion, is the best bridge column in a daily paper? (RB, Baron's Court)*



The Times does us a favour by printing Mister Robson's column daily. A slightly repetitive style detracts only a tiny amount from the good value to be found therein. Mister Forrester in The Telegraph? Well, I'm never quite sure where he's coming from, and I was so fond of Mister Friday's column that I still can't quite bear to read his successor. Zia is in The Guardian but once a week – a crying shame, but there you are. When he does appear he's always entertaining, although one wonders how he gets his hands on some obscure results so quickly. David Bird in The Standard is reliable, although he could do with just a few more column inches (couldn't we all?).

*Keep those letters and e-mails coming! The new editor of this august journal has promised lots more articles for all, and greater diversity. This would mean less space for your favourite column. We can't have that, can we?*

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