

*London  
Metropolitan  
Bridge  
Association*



# *MetroNews*

*The newsletter of the  
London Metropolitan Bridge Association*

Spring 2007

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## Words from the Editor

What do you think of the EBU's "Best Behaviour at Bridge" project? Hopefully you have heard about it, since it is now a full year since the EBU took the decision to apply this code of conduct at all EBU tournaments. But bridge players can be slow to take on board new ideas and for the past year we've been struggling to adapt to the new alerting and announcing rules, so I suspect some people may not be too well informed about BBB.



It is surely a worthwhile initiative, so for those of you who don't know much about it, the code requires players to be courteous to both partner and opponents at the table. The following are the guidelines to be followed:

- Greet others in a friendly manner prior to start of play on each round.
- Be a good 'host' or 'guest' at the table.
- Make your convention card readily available to your opponents and fill it out completely.
- Make bridge enjoyable for yourself, partner and opponents.
- Give credit when opponents make a good bid or play.
- Take care of your personal grooming.
- Ensure that your mobile phone is turned off.
- Enjoy the company as well as the game.

Not really a list that it should be difficult to comply with, is it? But I bet we all know people who don't. The idea is that if a player at the table behaves in an unacceptable manner the director should be called immediately. Annoying behaviour, embarrassing remarks, or any other conduct which might interfere with the enjoyment of the game is specifically prohibited by the Laws of bridge, which also give the director the authority to apply disciplinary penalties. And that is what EBU Directors are now doing when offenders are brought to their notice.

Whilst I think there is a danger of players being overly sensitive and trying to report behaviour that was not meant as offensive – perhaps a mis-judged witticism, or similar, for example – there is no doubt that poor table behaviour has historically been a major deterrent for new players coming into organized bridge. So it needs to be tackled, and we all have our part to play in this.

London as a County has not yet formally adopted BBB as a policy for its tournaments, but perhaps we should. I'd really like to hear your views on this – why not let me know what you think?

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# Annual General Meeting

The 2007 Annual General Meeting will be held at the **Young Chelsea Bridge Club**, 32 Barkston Gardens, SW5 (nearest tube station: Earls Court) on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July**, starting at **7.00 pm**. The Agenda for the meeting is shown below.

The AGM is your opportunity to have your say on all matters to do with how the Association is run. This includes our subscription rates and our competition programme, and also the issues that our county representatives raise and the stance they take at EBU meetings. And if you would be interested in joining the committee and helping to run things within the County, we'd be particularly pleased to see you.

Do come along in July - there is also a free glass of wine and nibbles on offer for all attendees!

## Agenda

- 1 Registration of proxies
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the AGM of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006  
(**Note.** These can be found at [www.metrobridge.co.uk](http://www.metrobridge.co.uk) – the LMBA website – follow the link at the bottom of the page)
- 4 Matters arising from these minutes.
- 5 Chairman's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report
- 7 Adoption of accounts for 2006
- 8 Subscriptions for 2008-2009
- 9 Elections to the Executive Committee
- 10 Appointment of honorary auditor
- 11 EBU delegates' Report
- 12 Any other business



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## Coming Soon!

### Mixed Pairs

The first event of the 2007/8 season will, as ever, be the **Mixed Pairs Championship**, always a sociable and enjoyable event. It will be held on **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September** at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Holder Anne Catchpole will be looking for her record fifth win in this competition – maybe you can stop her! You don't need to pre-enter, but it is helpful if you do – just call the Young Chelsea on 020 7373 1665 to say you will be coming along, or contact the event organiser, Nigel Freake, at [nigel.freake@paper.co.uk](mailto:nigel.freake@paper.co.uk).

## London Trophy

It's not too soon to be thinking about getting together a team of social players to play in the **London Trophy**. This knock-out competition provides inter-club bridge for non-bridge clubs, so if you can gather together a foursome from your golf club, tennis club, place of work or any other formal or ad-hoc "club" this is the perfect way to introduce them to some not-too-serious organised bridge.

Entries are due by **1<sup>st</sup> September**, though if you are a little later than that, don't worry - it will probably be possible to fit you in. All enquiries and entries should be made to Cecil Leighton on 020 8500 0700.

## Junior Inter-County Teams

Last year we changed the date of this popular junior event to the autumn, and this seems to be a much better time of year to hold this competition. This year it is scheduled for **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October**, just one week before the EBU's Junior Trials. So the event will provide the perfect practice ground for aspiring young pairs, as well as great competition in its own right. The venue is



the Young Chelsea Bridge Club and, subject to numbers, there will be separate Under-25 and Under-19 winners.



Though notionally an inter-county event, the regulations governing who plays for which county or not too rigorous, with the aim of providing an opportunity for as many young players as possible to take part, regardless of where they are based. Individuals and pairs who would like to play should contact the

organiser, Dave Muller, who will probably be able to help them form teams. Dave can be contacted on 020 8204 3975 or at [dmuller@dircon.co.uk](mailto:dmuller@dircon.co.uk).

It may seem very soon to be reminding people about this event, but as all students tend to disappear in lots of different directions during the summer holidays, now is a very good time to get organised!

## Lederer Memorial Trophy

It's not too soon, either, to get the date of this year's **Lederer Memorial Trophy** in your diaries. It will be held at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club on **Saturday and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October**. (If you use your EBU diary to remind you about the dates of events, you may worry that this isn't what it says there, and that the date clashes with the EBU's Autumn Congress, but there's no need for concern. The EBU has changed quite a few of its autumn dates, which is why the Lederer is now in mid-October and the congress will be held two weeks later, over the first weekend in November).

The usual galaxy of star names have been invited to participate this year, including the holders (Zia Mahmood's team), the Gold Cup and Spring Foursomes winners and of course the ever popular Irish national team. More details will be

published in the Competition Brochure to be sent out later in the summer, but make sure you note the dates in your diaries and come along for a feast of spectator bridge.

## Teltscher Cups



In addition, on the Saturday afternoon of the Lederer, clubs in and around London will be able to play with the stars, playing the same hands as in the main event and scoring up with two of the top pairs. The winning pairs from these heats will be awarded the **Teltscher Cups** and be invited along to the competition to receive them on the Sunday. The picture shows last year's EW winners Maurice Bechor, Marion Tamblyn &

Danny Gesua along with their NS team-mates John Mohan and Zia Mahmood and LMBA President Bernard Teltscher. Clubs interested in participating in this should contact organiser Simon Cochemé at [simonx@simonx.plus.com](mailto:simonx@simonx.plus.com) or on 020 7603 3032.

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## London News

### Committee Match v Surrey

The annual match between the committees of the London and Surrey bridge Associations was played in mid-March this year. London lost the Trophy to Surrey last year and was keen to regain it this time, but things did not go entirely according to plan!

At half time, Surrey had a small lead, but the troops rallied in the second half. When we came to score up, it seemed that London had won by a similarly small margin. But there had been a problem on one hand about the meaning of a bid and a neutral director was called in to adjudicate, not knowing which side had bid which hands. His ruling turned around the result and Surrey duly won by an even smaller margin! As Chris Stableford, who took the photo, said "It is not clear which of Mike Hill or Frances Trebble looks the more surprised!"



# Stars fell on Alabama that night

by Ian Payn

I'm not normally given to wandering around the home counties in search of uninteresting bridge competitions, but earlier this year I had a free weekend (the missus was away) and not much to do, so I suggested to the long-suffering Rob Cliffe that we found a modest event to play in, with the proviso that it was only for one day. We scoured English Bridge, and found just the thing. A county competition with a pairs event on Saturday, teams on Sunday. We decided that the pairs was our best shot, as it saved us the bother of finding team-mates. Judicious use of Virgin Rail and a minicab (not simultaneously) found us at a leisure centre with the usual faint aroma of armpit-based squalor about it.



I quickly clocked that there was a bar adjacent to the playing area and made straight for it. I offered Rob a drink, but he refused. He was taking a few days off alcohol, so contented himself with a Styrofoam beaker of what we will call, for the sake of argument, coffee. I could drink freely, of course, because no matter what state I rolled home in, there was no rolling-pin waiting for me behind the door. For once.



We settled down in what turned out to be a smaller section, so we'd be playing three board rounds. The afternoon session was a qualifier for a final in the evening, with a consolation event for those who didn't make the cut. Looking around the reasonably-sized field we saw no-one we knew and virtually no-one we recognised. That was, we thought, a good sign.

Things chugged along normally. A bit up, a bit down, the odd gift and the odd disaster. The gifts were outweighing the disasters (just) so we were qualifying comfortably. What might have been annoying was the general demeanour of our opponents. Not that anyone (well, almost anyone) was

unpleasant, but they all talked such rot all the time. Still, whatever gets you through the day, I suppose.

Rob was a bit more fractious than usual. He's never usually fractious at all, in fact, but possibly the combination of no alcohol and bad coffee was getting to him. The sandwiches we'd invested in had been no bargain either. Anyway, he'd pointed out to me that I'd misdefended something in what he regarded as a crass manner, which he never usually does until afterwards, so I could tell he was on the edge.

About halfway through we came up against a pair of keenies. Young (well, younger than us. I'm forty-seven and people still call me "young man" – it's a bridge thing), fully-filled out convention cards, and card-snapping all round. They were, they told us solemnly, playing Precision. We told them what we were playing (not much, as it happens) and they asked us what our defence to a Strong Club was. Rob replied that we hadn't got one. They looked at us as though we were mad. I smiled. Benignly. My left hand opponent was female, and chewed gum. Trust me on this girls – it never looks good. My right hand opponent was male, and badly dressed, even by

the standards of the badly dressed. He kept sniffing. I don't know why.

**Board One**

**Game All. Dealer West**

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

After two passes, Rob (East) opened One Club, South overcalled One Heart. I bid Two No Trumps (natural), North passed, Rob raised to three No Trumps and that was passed out. North, not unnaturally, led a small Heart. South won with the Ace and played one back to the Jack and Queen. That was bad news. That was the contract down the diddies. Still, winning the Heart continuation I ran the Clubs and South duly fell from grace by keeping his Diamonds and throwing a couple of Hearts.

"I was squeezed" he said afterwards. Nobody said anything. There's no point in keeping the Diamonds, of course, because if I've got A Q that's where I'm going for my ninth trick. Plus Six Hundred was a reasonable score for us. Hurrah.

Things got a bit more exciting on the second board (see top of next column).

North opened One Diamond (Precision!) and South responded Three Diamonds. I don't know what this was supposed to show, and wasn't

**Board Two**

**NS Vul. Dealer North**

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

going to demean myself by asking, but I bet it wasn't supposed to show Ace, Queen to eight trumps and an Ace on the side. I dutifully overcalled Three Hearts, and North bid Three No Trumps on her impressive collection

The defence was on the brisk side: A Heart to the King followed by a Spade switch more or less doomed things. Declarer didn't, it must be said, make the best of a bad job, and ended up with only five tricks, but she was hardly going to get many matchpoints for going three off, so that didn't matter much. She apologised to her partner, and he had the good grace to accept. That Three Diamonds might have been a slightly odd effort didn't occur to either of them for the briefest of moments. Ah well, one more board and then on to the next round. A third good score would propel us into the final, surely?

Do you detect, dear reader, a certain smugness? The metropolitan experts preening as the hicks threw board after board at them? Is nemesis just around the corner?

You bet...

**Board Three**  
**EW Vul. Dealer East**

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

Rob dealt and passed, South opened One Diamond (Precision!). A rather different hand on that which his partner opened One Diamond on the previous board, but that's Precision for you (Ah! The delicacies of irony). I passed, and North went into a brown study. After much gum-chewing she slid the Two Diamond bidding card onto the table. This was passed out (looking at the other three hands, unsurprisingly). I led something and dummy came down.

I peered at it, and looked across the table at Rob. He peered at it for a bit. We both turned to look at declarer. I'm not quite sure who Larry was, but declarer was as happy as him. "Thank you, partner!" he bellowed, and proceeded to wrap up precisely eight tricks (yes, he lost a trick somewhere). This, of course, was the only plus score for North/South. Nothing at all for us.

"I knew", said North "That we couldn't make anything. I've only got the three bare Aces and the Queen of Diamonds." "Quite right", said her partner. "Everyone else must have bid like crazy. That's the beauty of Precision. You can tell which zone you're in from the word go."

I opened my mouth to congratulate them, but no words came out. Rob coughed gently.



"Yes?" I said.

"Get me a pint, would you?"

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## Palmer Bayer 07

*by Chris Duckworth*

The Palmer Bayer Trophy has always been a "No Fear" pairs event, designed to provide a friendly and not too serious competition suitable for less experienced players. This year we relaxed the rules slightly, allowing participants to play 5-card majors, weak twos and transfers opposite 1NT and 2NT openings. The aim of this relaxation was to allow those who had only played such systems, such as someone who had only learned Standard American, to take part. This relaxation certainly suited this year's winners, whose basic system was a combination of Standard American and Standard French!

As last year, the computer decided to stir things up by throwing in quite a few very distributional hands, so some players missed having available weak jump overcalls and any two-suited overcalls, Michaels Cue Bids and the UNT still being on the banned list. But it was fun trying to find ways of bidding these freaky hands naturally.



I played with the director, Martin Lee, in order to avoid having a half-table and a sit out. We had a very enjoyable time until this hand came along:

**Love All. Dealer West**

♠ KQ9632	
♥ QJ102	
♦ —	
♣ Q53	
♠ A87	♠ 1054
♠ 86	♥ K7
♦ K987654	♦ J1032
♣ 6	♣ K1087
	♠ J
	♥ A9543
	♦ AQ
	♣ AJ942

Cheryl Fraser-Sampson, West, opened 3♦ and I was North. I hate to be preempted out of contracts, so I tried 3♠ and Jon Bradshaw, East, did really well to bounce things up by bidding 5♦. This gave Martin a real problem and eventually he punted 6NT. Cheryl led a diamond to Martin's queen and declarer had a very small glimmer of hope. He led ♠J, planning to overtake with one of dummy's top spades. If this trick held, he could take the heart finesse and later the finesse in clubs. With both kings lying well and the right view in clubs, he might come close to making the slam. But Cheryl unerringly went up with ♠A and continued diamonds, and now Martin was forced

to try for a singleton ♥K. When this didn't materialise, we went an ignominious five off!

♣♦♥♠

There were quite a few slam hands around and we did better on this one:

**EW Vul. Dealer North**

	♠ Q2	
	♥ A109	
	♦ AK87	
	♣ A863	
♠ 84		♠ 10753
♥ K762		♥ 5
♦ Q1042		♦ J9653
♣ Q97		♣ 1054
	♠ AKJ96	
	♥ QJ843	
	♦ —	
	♣ KJ2	

I opened 1♣ (preferring to open my weaker minor when I expect to end up in no trumps), and partner responded 1♠. Over my 1NT rebid he bid 3♥ and I bid a rather feeble 3NT. But partner was still hoping for better things and he continued with 4♣, bidding out his shape. This was enough for me to bid 6NT.

East thought a heart lead through dummy's second suit, one that was clearly not breaking well, would be a good idea, but when West played his ♥K I could claim all the tricks.

Everyone enjoyed a discussion of the hands with Rob Cliffe at the end of play, following which the results were announced and the trophy was presented to the winners, Cliff Feldman and Weird Minzinga. The leading pairs were as shown below:

1	Cliff Feldman & Weird Minzinga	63.64 %
2	Justin Wickens & Sue Estermann	60.00 %
3	Guy Fraser-Sampson & Eva Ferguson	55.15 %

# Newcomers Day

Bank Holiday Sunday wasn't the best choice of date for this year's Newcomers' Day, but there were still three tables of eager players who enjoyed a fun afternoon's bridge. The least experienced had started to learn bridge only the same morning! But they managed incredibly well to cope with 15 boards of play, producing some remarkably good results.

This was a hand where the contracts reached were probably most varied:

## Game All. Dealer South

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

One table reached 3NT by North, making an overtrick, and one table stopped in 2♥ by North making just one overtrick – just as well they didn't bid game! The third table reached 7♦ by South, which was doubled. The contract actually went two down, but you can see that it is not such a bad place to play and the contract can actually make if it is played by North. (Played by South, a club lead removes an entry to the North hand prematurely, so the hearts cannot be set up and reached to yield four tricks to go with five diamonds, one club, two spades and a spade ruff).



At the end of the afternoon, the winner was Jo Living (playing with Chris Duckworth who made up the numbers). Jo is seen on the left here, engrossed in playing a hand against the eventual runners up, Linda Simpson and Sharon McDonald. Linda (one of those who

started only that morning) and Sharon were only one point behind the winners and you can see how happy they were with the result from this pic (Linda on the left).

Caroline Stewart and Siân Richards were third, and each of the leading players won a prize of a Victor Mollo book from his "Menagerie" series.



# LMBA results this year

## London Championship Teams of Four

The first event of 2007 was the London Championship Teams of Four qualifying event. The team of Ian Payn, David Burn, Brian Callaghan, Rob Cliffe has won this competition for the last five years, but this year David Burn was not available to play and the team had to make do with Chris Duckworth in his stead, which inevitably meant that they failed to make the cut this time.

The hard-fought event ended with two teams in equal first place at the top of the lists. They were Paul Martin, Benjamin McCarron, Justin Corfield, Mary Stanley and Ryan Stephenson, Liz Clery, Mike Scanlon, Paul Huggins. These two teams qualified to a head-to-head play-off which resulted in Paul Martin's team being this year's champions. This team goes on to represent London in the Pachabo Cup in June and we wish them luck in this.



The LMBA Committee has decided to rename this event next year in memory of Ian Gardiner OBE, a well-known and long-standing London member who died in 2003 after a year-long battle with cancer. Ian represented the county on numerous occasions over the years, and he won this trophy no less than six times between 1984 and 2001. The silver cup which is held by the winning team will become known as the Ian Gardiner Trophy.



## London Championship Pairs

The Pairs Championship was held in early February this year and attracted a good turnout. The competition consists of a qualifying session in the afternoon from which 14 pairs go on to an all-play-all final and at the end of the first session last year's winners, Ryan Stephenson & Liz Clery, were in the lead once more. But they weren't able to hold on to the lead in the final, and the top positions were taken as follows:

- 1 Carl Nelson & Abigail Nichols
- 2 Nick Boss & Richard Johnson
- 3 Heather Dhondy & Moza Panahpour
- 4 Ian Pagan & Geoff Lederman
- 5 Ryan Stephenson & Liz Clery

The winners' names will not be familiar to readers as London members. They were in fact visiting Americans who decided to join the LMBA especially to be able to play in this competition. They were so delighted to win that they plan to return to this country to represent London in the Corwen Trophy in June along with the other London qualifying pairs!

The leading pairs in the consolation event were:

- 1 David Parry & Rosie White
- 2 Nigel Clayton & Sati McKenzie

### **Garden Cities heat**

Four teams from three different clubs competed this year for the right to represent London in the national Garden Cities competition. The winners were the Woodberry Club, fairly closely followed by one of the Young Chelsea teams.

1 **Woodberry** Nigel Freake, Anne Catchpole, Colin Hepworth, Ken Rolph, Gill Hutchinson, Doug Dunn, Paul Lamford, Stefanie Rohan

2 **Young Chelsea 1** Chris Duckworth, Brian McGuire, John Pemberton, Andrew Dalton, Rob Cliffe, Ian Payn, Tim Gauld, Simon Cochemé

### **Fox Shammon Seniors Pairs**

This competition took place at Queen's Club on a gorgeous sunny April afternoon. Players were able to lunch on the terrace beforehand with a great view of the tennis being played, and a record number of pairs turned up to enjoy the ambience and the bridge.

The event was won by two of the LMBA Committee members, who are seen here with the very pretty Fox-Shammon Trophy:

- 1 Simon Cochemé & James Smith
- 2 Vivian & Tony Priday
- 3 Charles Moore & Sati McKenzie



### **Home Counties League**

Well done to the London Red team who won this year's Home Counties League for teams of 8. London Red fielded a squad of 12 players who, to quote team captain Simon Cochemé "massacRED London Blue, slaughteRED Middlesex and outscORED Surrey" (in the second half of that match only!) to finish top of the table with 29 VPs to Surrey's 24.

The full team was Simon Cochemé, Tim Gauld, David Muller, Fergal Boland, John Pemberton, Steve Popham, Helen Erichsen, Mark Lehto, Alice Kay, Brian McGuire, Paul Martin and Andrew Dalton.

You may like to spare a thought for Surrey, who have won all their matches in this competition for the last four years, without ever winning the League in that time!

### **Palmer Bayer Trophy & Newcomers' Day**

Reports from these events, with full results, are on pages 8 – 10.

# Meet Janet de Botton

by Chris Duckworth



When thinking about who the readers of MetroNews would be interested in learning more about, I wanted to find someone who wasn't just a top player, but rather someone who had a different and interesting perspective on the bridge scene. And who better than Janet de Botton, who is undoubtedly best known as a sponsor of top level bridge?

In fact, because Janet is a sponsor, it is easy to overlook

the fact that she has a terrific record of achievement in her own right in the short time that she has been playing bridge. Her most recent victory was in the last Year-End Congress, where she won the A flight Swiss Teams, but Janet has two of most prestigious titles in the British calendar under her belt. She won the Spring Foursomes in 2004 and the Gold Cup in 2005, a double that many other top players would be only too happy to have matched. (*Stop Press: Since writing this, Janet has just added the Crockfords Cup to her collection – she and her team won this year's event in mid-May*).

Prior to 1999, Janet's main interest in life and her great love was the arts. She was on the board of the Tate Gallery for 10 years and was an avid art collector. But then she decided to learn bridge and went along for lessons with David Parry, who she describes as a great teacher. And very quickly, bridge became the main passion in her life. After about nine

months, a friend took her along to St John's Wood Bridge Club, where she played in the 20p rubber bridge game. Soon after, when the then club manager Unal Durmus transferred to TGRs Bridge Club, Janet went along too and started in the £1 game. Although she now plays all types of bridge, Janet firmly believes that rubber bridge is the best training ground possible, particularly for teams players. She reckons that very often pairs with complex systems use their gadgets in place of judgement. Rubber players don't have gadgets, so judgement in bidding is crucial. Far more than brilliant card play, it is knowing when to bid on, when to save, when to double that makes all the difference, she believes.

Janet has put together a team of six players with whom she plays, and when asked who her "dream team" would be, she quickly said that her current squad was just that. This is not said lightly, for in her time Janet has partnered such international superstars as Boye Brogeland and Geir Helgemo. She now plays with David Burn, teaming up with the Hackett twins and Nick Sandqvist and Artur Malinowski, although the partnerships do swap around from time to time for different events. Though he is the newest member of this squad, Janet is very

happy playing with David, who she feels has made her more confident as a card player.

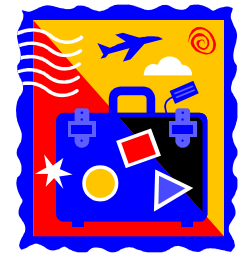
Janet counts herself very fortunate that she has been able to sponsor her team and develop her game with a number of very good players. Her view is that although we have plenty of good “pairs” players in this country, we don’t have enough good “teams” players. And definitely too many good individual players but not enough partnerships. This is why our achievements internationally have not been as good as we would like.

Perhaps not surprisingly, she sees sponsorship as the way forward for the game in this country, believing that teams should be developed that stay together for more than just one season. The sponsor’s role should be to identify the good team players and try to help them develop new partnerships within a team structure. She would particularly like to see this happen with some of the promising young players who are around but who often can’t afford to devote their time to bridge in the way that is necessary to achieve international success.

The view of “officialdom” in this country of late has been that the presence of a sponsor fatally weakens a team. This is why international trials have been restricted to teams of four rather than six. When I asked Janet her view on this, she simply named two of the most individually successful players in the world currently – Nick Nickell and Rose Meltzer – both sponsors! And you have only to look at the success of the Italians to see how well sponsorship can work. As she pointed out, the value of team building and cohesion

usually easily outweigh the limitations of any one individual.

Janet would also like to see English players competing more frequently overseas as a way of helping to improve their game. There are many overseas events which offer the opportunity to meet, play against and understand different and unfamiliar systems, and which could provide a challenge for all sorts of players. People are prepared to travel around the country for various national competitions, and now, with the ready availability of cheap flights, they could and should go further afield for their bridge. The EBU has a role to play here in providing more information about what is available to their membership, Janet feels.



Does she aspire to success in the women’s game, I wondered? She replied that she has no female partner, but in any case she feels that although there is much talent around, the women’s game as a whole is too random and unaggressive, so really doesn’t appeal to her. And of course she would much prefer to be a presence in the open game. At this point there were a few dark murmurings about the lack of women selected to represent London in its Tollemache team, and the County’s misogynistic selection policy, but she wasn’t being entirely serious.... or was she?

Finally, I asked Janet for a memorable hand. She directed me to David Burn, and he gave me this one from their most recent Gold Cup match which

nicely demonstrates Janet's table presence:

♠ A K J 10 x x x  
♥ A  
♦ K 9 7 x  
♣ A  
  
♠ –  
♥ K x x x  
♦ A J 10 x x  
♣ Q J x x

The bidding was pretty swift – Janet, as South, opened 1♦, David bid 4NT and heard 5♦, indicating one key card. He asked about the trump queen by

bidding 5♥ and Janet bid 6♦. She thought this denied the queen, but David thought otherwise and went on to 7♦ anyway. West, on lead, asked a lot of questions about this simple auction before leading a heart. So Janet won, ruffed a spade, played a club to the ace and ruffed a second spade. With this suit successfully established all that was necessary now was to find the queen of diamonds, and Janet had no hesitation in successfully running ♦J – why else had West been asking all those questions!

---

## Eight Ball minds the basset

*by Broadway*

One evening along about 7 o'clock I am in Omar O'Cohen's little Pizza parlour on Brompton putting on the Vesuvius, which is a dish I am very fond of, when in come three parties wearing caps as follows: Criss Cross Jane, Geordie Lagarde and Progressive Pete.



Right away they come over to my table and sit down, and Geordie Lagarde spears a slice of my pizza using his fingers, but I overlook this as I have the only knife at the table. I try to think of something jolly to say, while Geordie Lagarde goes purple and nabs my water and guzzles it, although I never before see Geordie Lagarde guzzle other than beer.

"Where is Eight Ball?" Criss Cross Jane asks.

"Eight Ball?" I say, as if I never before hear the name in my life.

"Yes, where is he?" Criss Cross Jane says, very impatient. "We have a proposition for him, and wish you to take us to him at once, or we will have to put the squeeze on somebody."

Well, as the only one around for them to put the squeeze on seems to be me, naturally I am transferring the threat and lead them over to Fulham, where

Eight Ball gets a few bobs minding a pooch for Dame Vera, the Actress. In fact, Eight Ball is always undertaking small tasks for a few dibs, as he is such a guy as will do anything for a little extra scratch, except go to work.

And right away Criss Cross Jane states a most surprising proposition indeed to Eight Ball.

It seems that there is a match this very evening against The Brain, and Lefty Ling, and other characters who have many many green points and who even use the aeroplane to play in spots

as far off as Venice and Bermuda. Furthermore Criss Cross Jane, Geordie Lagarde and Progressive Pete wish Eight Ball to team with them as they have given The Colourblind Kid the wind, as he loses 1400 in mistaking red for green once too often.

Now this Eight Ball is an African guy who is nearly as wide as he is tall, but he is not considered a high shot, even by his ever-loving wife, or even by his sweetheart, although he may lose less than The Colourblind Kid, at that.

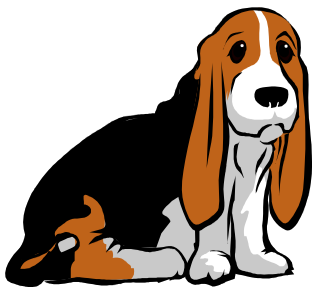
Eight Ball thinks it over, but finally says as follows:

"No, I must let it go, because I must mind the dog. Dame Vera is very particular about this, and if she comes home and finds I am not minding the dog she will put the blast on me plenty."

Well, Criss Cross Jane, Geordie Lagarde and Progressive Pete are very much disappointed, and stand around talking among themselves, when all of a sudden Progressive Pete is pleased up by a bright idea he gets.

"Listen, Eight Ball", he says, "Fido is needing a walk, we can take him with us, and you can mind him and play too".

"Why" agrees Eight Ball, "This is quite an idea indeed" and by and by I am sitting with Rex behind Eight Ball as the match begins and this hand is dealt:



♠ J4  
♥ K9  
♦ AK1073  
♣ A1074

♠ AQ62	♠ 1097
♥ QJ54	♥ 1083
♦ 82	♦ QJ95
♣ Q82	♣ 963

♠ K853  
♥ A762  
♦ 64  
♣ KJ5

The Brain and Lefty Ling reach 3NT as follows:

Brain	Lefty
1♦	1♥
2♣	2NT
3NT	pass

and Eight Ball naturally starts 2 of spades, which goes Jack, 10, 3. Now it is clear that Lefty is taking the club finesse the wrong way to protect spades and Eight Ball is in again with the Queen. This time he gets out with a diamond, which Lefty takes to play club winners. Between beers Geordie Lagarde, out of the East seat, throws a spade on the last club and so does Lefty and there occurs a most irregular diversion.

♠ 4  
♥ K9  
♦ K1073  
♣ (10)

♠ AQ6	♠ 9(7)
♥ QJ54	♥ 1083
♦ 2	♦ QJ5
♣ -	♣ -

♠ K8(5)  
♥ A762  
♦ 6  
♣ -



Eight Ball has in his hand a small heart when suddenly Prince growls ger-rowf ger-rowf, and in fact does not stop growling until Eight Ball happens to touch the Jack of hearts. Eight Ball now plays same. Lefty continues by cashing the red Kings then gets out the 9 of hearts from dummy which goes 10, Ace and again Eight Ball is trying to play a small heart but when there is a small ger-full he decides instead to unblock the Queen and the defence are taking the remainder for one off.

Now The Brain is such a guy who is always shaking his head from side to side, which some say is a touch of palsy but which most citizens believe comes when he is displeased up, which is to say all of the time, and right now he is shaking his head as if to better his own world best.

For a while it is all quiet on the canine front, but now this hand is turning up

♠ QJ1082	♠ 74
♥ Q85	♥ A73
♦ A98	♦ K7432
♣ 86	♣ A43
	♠ 9
	♥ 64
	♦ QJ1065
	♣ K10752
	♠ AK653
	♥ KJ1092
	♦ –
	♣ QJ9

and Eight Ball and Geordie Lagarde are bidding to game as follows

Eight Ball	Geordie
1♠	2♦
2♥	2NT
3♥	4♥

The Brain starts 8 of clubs and it seems easy as Eight Ball is losing a heart, a spade and a club at most, and he plays small on the first trick. Now Lefty takes the King and gets out the 9 of spades, which is going Ace, 8 and 4.

I find out later that Eight Ball is to play a small trump as he wishes to lead the next spade from dummy but Bonzo is too quick and commences barking which ends only as Eight Ball stumbles on a small spade. Of course Eight Ball plays same, The Brain wins and gets out another, as Lefty is showing out.

Now Eight Ball is wondering which trump to play when there is a medium sized ger-ruff from Shep and so he is choosing the 7. Afterwards, over a beer, Geordie Lagarde is telling me that this is correct, as it may force the Queen when there are no more problems and if it is losing to the 8 it is not fatal, but it so happens that Lefty cannot beat the 7 and so discards again.

The 3 of hearts is next, 4, Eight Ball is carefully playing the King, and 5. Now there is a loud ger-ruff from Spot and Eight Ball is trumping his last small spade with the Ace and yet another ger-ruff means he is trumping a diamond back to hand rather than risking a club ruff. Now the Jack of trumps is forcing out the Queen from The Brain and when Lefty is following with the 6 the rest is easy.

It goes very quiet, so quiet that I can hear myself thinking that this Toto is a very fine player, indeed, and The Brain's noggin is shaking so much it seems a sure thing that it is going to fall off.

Now it comes on the first break, and Criss Cross Jane, Geordie Lagarde and Progressive Pete are ahead, and The Brain is very politely asking Eight Ball whether Pickles is eating recently, and when he hears he is not is kindly providing a bowl of food, which is noisily consumed.



But what happens next is nothing but that Dougal is very sick, and whimpering, and making most repellent sounds from both ends and does not watch anymore.

Well, the upshot of it all is that Criss Cross Jane, Geordie Lagarde and Progressive Pete are losing and that I am walking Eight Ball and Lassie back to Dame Vera's, although I cannot tell you to this day why I do so.

Now it is obvious to one and all that Patch is very sick and we spot that Dame Vera is home, but on the outside chance that her reaction is favourable we take Pongo in, and her reaction is to order me and Eight Ball out with instructions never to darken her door again. We are trying to explain what happens but Dame Vera carries on regardless, using many words that are most unladylike, and it is not until a sudden lull we even realize she listens.

"The Brain?" she says. "You are letting The Brain give Scooby a snack? And what is it that The Brain is feeding him that makes him so sick?"

We confess we do not know and so she is telling us.

"Whale meat. Again." says Dame Vera.

## Puzzle Corner

It's a Sudoku this time. But one of a type that I have only rarely come across, so may be new to you. It's called a Hyper Sudoku and I hope you find it interesting.

As well as each of the lines, columns and three-by-three boxes containing each of the digits from 1 to 9, in this puzzle, the four shaded three-by-three squares also must contain each of the digits.

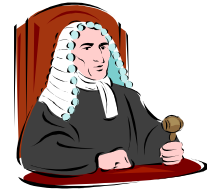
Have fun trying it – if you get stuck the answer is on page 29.

		1	9	5		8		
2								
	7							
		6	1				4	8
	4		2	9		3		1
							1	
		5	7				9	
		3						



# How well do you know the laws?

## Part C - Defence



*The third in our series of articles on the Laws looks at the rights of the defenders - are you sure you know what you are, or are not, allowed to do? As usual, the answers are overleaf.*

### **As a defender:**

1. Declarer (on your right) plays from his own hand when the lead was in dummy. While you are thinking your partner points out the error.
  - (a) You are allowed to carry on thinking and condone the lead if you wish.
  - (b) Because partner pointed out the error before you played a card, the lead reverts to dummy.
2. Declarer (on your left) plays from his own hand when the lead was in dummy. Partner follows with a spot card.
  - (a) You can point out the error and the lead reverts to dummy.
  - (b) Because partner has played a card the error has been condoned and play continues.
3. Partner shows out of a suit.
  - (a) You may ask "Having none?"
  - (b) You may not ask "Having none?"
4. Partner has one of his tricks pointing the wrong way and may think you are beating the contract.
  - (a) You may point out his error.
  - (b) You may not point out his error.
5. You realise you have revoked. Your partner won a trick after the revoke, but you haven't gained from the revoke. Declarer claims the last four tricks, so nobody else sees the offending card.
  - (a) You are obliged to own up to your revoke.
  - (b) You are not obliged to own up to your revoke, but it would be the ethical thing to do.
  - (c) You are not obliged to own up to your revoke; it is up to the opponents to notice it.
6. Partner leads a suit at trick 1. You have a singleton.
  - (a) You should play it in tempo, without thinking about the whole hand.
  - (b) You should place it face down on the table while you think about the hand, then play it.
  - (c) You should take time to think about the hand and then play it.

# How well do you know the laws?

## Answers

1. Answer (b) is correct. Law 55A says that if declarer has led out of turn from his or dummy's hand, either defender may accept the lead or require its retraction. It is generally accepted that whoever speaks first commits the partnership.

2. Answer (b) is correct. It is Law 55A again, only this time partner's act of following accepts the lead.

3. Answer (b) is correct. Law 61B applies and it all depends who you are at the table. Declarer may ask a defender who has failed to follow suit whether he has a card of the suit led. Dummy may ask declarer. Defenders may ask declarer but not one another.

4. Answer (b) is correct. You may not point out the error. Nowhere in the laws does it say you can – so you can't.

5. Answer (c) is correct. Players may find this surprising, but Law 72B3 says there is no obligation to draw attention to an inadvertent infraction of law committed by one's own side. Law 72B4, however, says a player may not attempt to conceal an inadvertent infraction, such as by committing a second revoke, concealing a card involved in a revoke or mixing the cards prematurely. So you don't have to own up but neither must you try to conceal it.

6. Either (b) or (c) will do here – (b) if declarer plays in normal tempo, (c) if declarer plays quickly.

There is guidance in the White Book\* about pauses by third hand at trick one. If declarer plays quickly from dummy at trick one, a pause by third hand should not be considered to transmit any unauthorised information to partner, nor to convey potentially misleading information to declarer. In such circumstances, no disclaimer is necessary.

The freedom for third hand to think about the deal generally at trick one if declarer has not paused before playing from dummy applies irrespective of his holding. Thus, for example, it is perfectly legitimate to think about the deal generally at trick one even if third hand holds a singleton in the suit led. As a consequence TDs should not entertain claims that declarer has been misled by a pause from third hand at trick one if declarer did not himself pause before playing from dummy.

\* *The White Book is a guide for Tournament Directors published by the EBU – it can be downloaded from the Laws & Ethics page of the EBU website at [www.ebu.co.uk](http://www.ebu.co.uk)*

# Visiting the Dentist

by Paul Lamford

If you have to go to the dentist twice in one week, it is usually a worrying sign, but this happened to me recently, and despite both visits involving extractions, the experience was quite pleasant.



The first was in an early round of Crockfords:

## Love all. Dealer South

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

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

West	North	East	South
Danny Roth	Stefanie Rohan	Noboku Matsumara	Paul Lamford

			1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

I would have bid an old-fashioned 3NT on the second-round of the auction on Stef's hand, but then there would have been no story to tell, as declarer would surely have made five spades, three clubs and a diamond.

West led the two of hearts and East won with the ace and returned a trump (a heart return and a diamond switch would have beaten the contract). I won and drew trumps in four rounds, West discarding a low diamond and a heart, and continued with the king of clubs.

West won and switched to the nine of diamonds. Danny Roth tends to play only true cards, so I rose with the ace, played a club to the queen and another club on which West followed. I decided after a while to play dummy's jack and was pleased to see the fall of the ten. Now I cashed the thirteenth club, throwing my second diamond, and West was caught in the rare dentist's squeeze. If he pitches a diamond, then I ruff a diamond and play a heart towards dummy. If he pitches a heart, as he did, then I duck a heart to his king and make the remainder.

Why did I not finesse the nine of clubs, especially as West had turned up with only two spades to his partner's four? Well, if West did have ♣A10xx, he should have ducked the first club and won the second before returning the diamond; now I would have been forced to rely on clubs 3-3. It seemed better therefore to play for the genuine chance.

♣♦♥♠

The idyllic Pacific islands of Hawai'i are not the place to visit the dentist. Far better to go snorkelling on the coral reef at Hanauma Bay. Fortunately the next extraction was not too painful. It was played in the first qualifying round of the North American Swiss Teams.

**Game All. Dealer East.**

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

<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
<i>Wealthy Stefanie</i>		<i>Wealthy Paul</i>	
<i>American Rohan</i>		<i>American Lamford</i>	
		Pass	1♦
1♠	2♣	Pass	3♣
3♥	3♠	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West sensibly started with an overcall – he does not want preference to hearts when partner is 2-2 in the majors, a likely result if he makes a Michaels Cue Bid. I thought 2♠ would show a better hand on the second

round, so contented myself with a simple 3♣, but was happy to bid 3NT when partner bid 3♠, showing a spade stop and asking for a heart stop.

West led the king of spades and I ducked the first two rounds, discarding diamonds, and won the third spade. Now I played a club to the ace, all following. In a rare moment of perspicacity I cashed the ace of diamonds, a dentist coup – extracting West’s singleton diamond, before running the clubs.

Now West was caught in a strip squeeze, and the ending was easy to read as he was known to have started with six spades. He came down to two spades and ♥Kx, but was thrown in with a spade to concede the last two tricks to the ♥AQ. Note that if I had not cashed the ace of diamonds early on, he would be able to keep enough winners to beat me. I would also have succeeded if West had ♦Kx and only four hearts, as the last club would then triple squeeze him.

---

## Grand Larceny

*by Peter Burrows*

What odds do you need to bid a Grand Slam in a Swiss Teams match? And do you think the answer is different in the case of a longer match? The learned treatises tell you that in either case it may depend on your assessment of what is likely to happen at the other table. For if you go to seven and opponents fail to bid the small slam, you risk losing a lot to gain very little. On the other hand, if they rest in the small slam, then it is generally accepted [assuming that it is not a five-or-seven deal], that odds of around 70% in your favour are good enough. If you want a more precise calculation, go consult the nearest mathematician.

I was brooding on these matters as partner pushed the bidding skywards in the Swiss Teams in the Overseas Congress in Turkey last year. Eventually I was cajoled into bidding

the grand in hearts, and this proved to be solid provided that declarer could bring in a trump suit of AQJ87 facing K9x for no loser. Double-dummy this would present no difficulty; all one

needs to do is to finesse the nine on the first round of the suit! Not surprisingly, declarer failed to find this line, and so we lost a bushel of IMPs [against the eventual winners!] when opponents stopped in the prosaic 6NT at the other table. Since I make our contract about 98% to succeed [assuming, as was the case, that there was no first-round ruff], I was not in a very good mood for the rest of the event.

Irrespective of the result, I dislike having to make seven-level decisions. One is painfully aware that the result of the match may well depend on the outcome, and the fewer the boards, the more this is true. The most dramatic example I have encountered came up many years ago in a match that featured no less than seven seven-level decisions in 40 boards! (It was scheduled for 48, but opponents conceded after 40, so you can deduce that our team got more of them right than they did)! Nevertheless, this was a miss by both pairs:

♠ –	♠ KJxxxx
♥ AKxx	♥ x
♦ KQ9	♦ AJ
♣ AKJxxx	♣ Q10xx

Our pair's sequence was:

1♣ (a)	1♠
2♣	2♦ (b)
2♥	3♣
3♥	3♠ (c)
4♦ (d)	4♥
6♣ (e)	End

a) Precision

b) Artificial, showing 12+HCP, which looks like a good upgrade in light of the club fit.

c) In the Italian style, i.e. showing first and second round controls indiscriminately.

d) But even so, this looks wrong, since it denied East the opportunity to show the AD.

e) And this was surely precipitate.

However, opponents did no better:

1♥ (a)	(1♠)	Double(b)
3♣ (c)		3♠
6♣ (d)		End

a) Canapé

b) Not the best riposte!

c) 3-4 losers, longer clubs than hearts.

d) Even more precipitate than the same bid at the other table.

To be fair, I think that this is quite a difficult grand to bid with confidence. East is likely to be worried by a lack of solidity in his primary suit, while West will never be sure of the precise value of his void therein. As it happens, given West's void, the quality of East's suit is completely immaterial.

---

Our team did better on the next deal:

♠ K10xx	♠ AQJxxx
♥ A	♥ Jxx
♦ xx	♦ Ax
♣ KQxxxx	♣ Ax

West	North	East	South
		1♣ (a)	1♦ (b)
2♣	Pass	2♠	3♦
3♥	4♥	4♠	Pass
5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
5♥	Pass	5NT(c)	Pass
6♦(d)	Pass	7♠	All Pass

a) Precision

b) Red suits (he actually had 5/6)

c) Trump ask

d) One of the top three

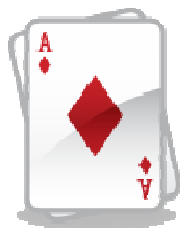
I was West, and thought at the time that our auction was fairly automatic [indeed, East, David Burn, said as much in his write-up of the match]. Nevertheless, in retrospect, I feel that 4♥ rather than 3♥ might have made East's life easier. Splinters on a stiff Ace are not normally a good idea. However, if one has agreed that they are permissible in appropriate cases, this hand must surely qualify. After 4♥, East could try 4NT [simple 5-Ace Blackwood in those days] and have an easy 7♠ bid over the 5♥ reply, since West would hardly have splintered on the stiff Ace if his clubs were not such as to be solidified by East's Ax.

At the other table South made a more practical overcall of the 1♣ opening, and the East-West pair found life more difficult as a result:

West	North	East	South
		1♣ (a)	3♦
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♠ (b)	All Pass		

a) Precision

b) It is easy to be wise after the event, but this strikes me as fatuous. West knows that either black suit will provide an acceptable trump holding, if he leaves the final decision on strain to East. Given that, it can cost nothing to bid 6♥ on the way to 6♠ in case the knowledge of the second-round control allows East to bid the grand. On his actual cards, East would no doubt have done just that.



The other grand slam on which we gained points was this:

♠ AQJxxxx	♠ K10xx
♥ xx	♥ AJ
♦ x	♦ AQJ109xx
♣ QJx	♣ –

When opponents held these cards the auction was:

West	North	East	South
		1♣ (a)	3♥
3♠	Pass	5♠ (b)	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

a) Precision

b) Another precipitate effort. After this they had no realistic chance of reaching seven. I think that 4♥ must be preferable to 5♠, if only because it saves a full round of bidding. But perhaps a 5♣ splinter followed by 6♣ over partner's presumed 5♠ would have saved the day. And if West had thought his hand worth 5♦ over 5♣, then East's way forward would have been very easy.

The auction started the same way at the other table, but our pair's efforts were more successful:

West	North	East	South
		1♣ (a)	3♥
3♠	4♥	5NT(b)	Pass
6♥ (c)	Pass	7♠	All Pass

a) Precision

b) GSF

c) 2 top honours

East's use of the GSF was obviously not risk-free, but it was clearly far more practical than the 5♠ effort in the other room. Note that in this case the extra barrage put up by the enemy North had no effect at all on our pair's auction. There may be a lesson in that.



When you think that the enemy have found their fit in a trump suit which outranks your own, perhaps it is only worth continuing the pre-empt if you can afford to rob them of a full round of bidding. In this case, if North could have risked 5♥, it would admittedly have had no influence on the meaning of our East's 5NT. But the enemy East's 5♠ would have been ambiguous over a 5♥ bid. Against that, perhaps he would then have reconsidered his options and chosen 5NT instead. All of which suggests that there are no easy answers in these complex situations. We will never know what would have happened had West held a doubleton diamond. In real life, South chose to lead the stiff ♦K, so declarer had 15 top tricks.

---

My next example occurred even more recently, when I was actually in the middle of writing this article. It comes from the match between Hertfordshire and Cambs & Hunts in the Eastern Counties League. By an ironic twist of fate, these cards were held by the pair who had 10xxxx of trumps on the wrong side on the deal mentioned at the start of this article.

♠ 6	♠ AQJ974
♥ AKJ8542	♥ 93
♦ A653	♦ –
♣ 9	♣ AK1063

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣ (a)	Pass
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT(b)	Pass
5♣ (c)	Pass	5♦ (d)	Pass
5♠ (e)	Pass	7♥	All Pass

- a) Precision
- b) RKCB
- c) 0 or 3
- d) "Do you hold the ♥Q?"
- e) "Yes, [or the equivalent] plus a further spade control."

Fortunately for us, I held Qxx of trumps as North, and so we belatedly achieved a sweet revenge for the failure of our 98% effort.

The late Edgar Kaplan always refused to employ RKCB, arguing that the advantage that it enjoyed over simpler methods was too small to counter the risk of accidents in the more esoteric cases. Certainly this deal seems to support that view. Our opponents were a top-name pair, and I incline to the view that, if it can happen to them, then it can happen to anyone. West argued, reasonably enough, that her 3♥ had only promised six cards, so that with seven she was entitled to say that she had a Queen-substitute. East countered that he had never promised more than two-card support, and that with only a nine-card fit they did not want to be in the grand when missing the Queen of trumps. That is the nub of the matter of course, for if East had held three trumps, then West's extra length would have been enough to make the grand slam a fair bet.

I do not profess to expertise in the field of follow-ups after RKCB, but it seems to me that when the presumed trump suit has not been agreed explicitly [so that the length in the short trump hand is uncertain], it ought to be possible for partner of the 4NT bidder to state explicitly that (s)he is showing extra length rather than the Queen specifically. In the specific case here, West had six bids at her disposal before committing her side to the

grand slam. She would obviously bid 5♥ if holding neither the Queen nor extra length. Suppose we say that in this position 5NT or higher should show the Queen plus a further spade control [plus, in the case of 6 of minor, or, indeed, 6♥, whatever extra you think is most useful]. In that case, 5♠ could have a double duty, showing either extra length, or the Queen without a further spade control. If it were essential for the 4NT bidder to know which, then (s)he could continue with a relay of 5NT. That precise scheme would work only in the case when hearts were trump and the response to 4NT was 5♣. However, I think it would be possible to construct a similar schedule for at least some of the other situations. Since I don't usually use RKCB, I am far too lazy to work it all out for myself. Interested parties can have fun constructing their own mousetrap.

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I am not sure whether there are any simple conclusions to be drawn from this somewhat random collection of deals. The lesson from my last deal however is absolutely clear-cut. Never make a play that can not possibly gain if there is any chance of an alternative line that can! Imagine that, after a sequence that we dare not show in a respectable newsletter, you find yourself in 7♦ with the East cards. Upon being doubled by LHO, you

retreat to your partner's heart suit, only to be doubled again on your left. This leaves poor West with the task of making 13 tricks on this layout:

♠ AKJ2	♠ 6
♥ Q942	♥ A853
♦ –	♦ KQJ9832
♣ AKQ32	♣ 7

North led a spade to the Queen and King. ♣A was followed by a club ruff in dummy, whereupon West ran the King of diamonds [ditching a small club] and held the trick. A second top diamond was covered by South and ruffed with the two. Declarer returned to dummy with a spade ruff. When he led another top diamond, South ruffed, and, instead of stopping to think, declarer over-ruffed. Later on, South, who had started with KJ10x of trumps, took two tricks in the suit.

At the point when South ruffed the diamond, West's only chance of making the contract was to assume that he had revoked, as was in fact the case. So, if declarer had discarded instead of over-ruffing, the defence would have won the trick on which the revoke took place, plus one further trick with South's ♥K. Both of these would have been transferred to declarer, who would thus have achieved the relatively rare feat of making a grand slam with a winner on loser play!

### Overheard at the bridge table

- ♣ South "Alert!" East "Yes?"  
South "I'm required to further misdescribe my hand"
- ♦ I'd like a review of the bidding, please, with all the original inflections.
- ♠ We play forcing hesitations.

# Notes from the coal face

by A Minor



I played in a cricket match last summer and even though Shane Warne was bowling for the opposition, I scored a hundred.

Before I tell you how, does anything strike you as odd about that statement? A hint – as with bridge, I am totally inept at the game. Still don't see it? Well, unlike bridge, I can't see anyway that I could ever get onto the same playing field as Mr Warne.

All this coalesced in my mind as I watched the final of the London Trophy, played in the comfortable surroundings of the Queen's Tennis Club in Fulham. Before play started, the usual litany of all the conventions that are banned in this competition was read out and it struck me how anti-progressive and counter-productive to bridge this was. In the early rounds, OK. But everybody in the final was a grown-up and I don't think it is complicated systems that inhibit some people from exploring their full potential in the game. What is required is the knowledge that one isn't going to be abused or insulted at the table, and this has never happened to me when an expert has been present. Nor do the experts care about whatever fool system my partner and I have adopted because they are going to beat us anyway. They'll beat us because they are better. They bid better, play the cards better and make better deductions, and do all this while remaining polite.

I am not forced into rooms where the experts play, but two thoughts occur to me on this point:

- I can't think of any other game, sport or human activity where a novice and a world expert can come face to face;
- I'd rather get a series of 'bottoms' against them and relish the challenge, than get 'tops' because there was some artificial restraint upon the experts.

Bridge is haemorrhaging members at an alarming rate and yet fails to exploit this unique selling point. Let novice and expert continue to meet and let them play whatever they want, but let all lovers of the game help to stamp out arrogance, rudeness and boorish behaviour. I believe it is this aspect that drives most people away from club bridge, to settle for the security of rubber in their homes. There is shame in being made to feel stupid by loutish opponents but none in being thwarted by experts. In fact, I'd be more comfortable playing against Zia, whatever his methods, than with him.... whatever his methods.

Oh, the hundred I scored? Warne wasn't allowed to spin the ball.



# Congratulations ....

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



International successes first of all – Espen Erichsen won the Australian National Open Teams in Canberra in January as part of an international team. He is pictured, second from the left, with the winning team and their trophy.

Jan Petter Svendsen won both the Open Pairs and the Open Teams at the Icelandair Bridge Festival in Reykjavik in February. Jan is on the left in this picture of the victorious team with their trophy, wearing both his medals!



At the Year End Congress the all-London team of Janet de Botton, David Burn, Nick Sandqvist and Artur Malinowski won the A flight Swiss Teams, with David Bakhshi and David Gold members of the third placed team. Mark Davies and Edward Leatham won the B flight Swiss Teams, while in the Swiss Pairs David Gold and David Bakhshi were second and Moza Panahpour was fourth. Richard Hillman was second in the Mixed Pairs, Aline Sandberg and Juliet Scott were second in the Women's Pairs and Gitte Hecht Johansen was fourth in the Pre-Congress Pairs.



At the Ranked Masters event in March, Rob Cliffe won the first ever Premier Grand Masters Pairs in partnership with Heather Dhondy, while Gordon Rainsford and Dom Goodwin won the Premier Life Masters.



Also in March, Nicholas Davidson and Peter Collins won the Championship Pairs at the Cumbria Congress, Gitte Hecht Johansen won the Leicester One-Day Swiss Pairs, Geoffrey Lederman was second in the Bedford One-Day Swiss Teams, and Ian Abel was fourth in the Under-25 Pairs.

Simon Cochemé and Tim Gauld were members of the winning England team in the Corn Cairdis, the annual friendly match against Ireland,

Five London members played in this year's Camrose Trophy representing England – they were Nick Sandqvist, Artur Malinowski, Tom Townsend, David Gold and David Bakhshi. The trophy was retained by the holders, the Irish national team, but England finished a very creditable second.



At the Easter Festival, Ross Harper won the Championship Pairs playing with Paul Hackett and Nick Sandqvist won the Mixed Pairs playing with Nevena Senior. Nick also came equal first along with partner Tom Townsend in the Swiss Pairs A Flight, but they lost the title on a split tie.



Other good results from the Easter Festival came from Richard Harris, second in the Open Pairs; David Bakhshi, third in the Mixed Pairs and equal fourth in the Swiss Pairs; Nick Boss, third in the Championship Pairs; Liz Clery & Ryan Stephenson, fifth in the Championship Pairs; and Neil Treeby, Dave Strawbridge, Nick Surface and Roy Cooper, third in the B flight Swiss Teams.

Luke Porter was second in the final of the National Pairs, playing with Michael Clark. Chris Duckworth and Agnes Wesseling were third in the National Women's Pairs.

At the Jersey Congress, Alan and Olivia Woo won the Swiss Teams along with Brian Callaghan, with Mike Fletcher a member of the second placed team. Alan and Olivia were also third in the Pre-Congress Pairs.

## Puzzle Solution

(see page 13)

9	8	7	4	2	3	1	6	5
6	3	1	9	5	7	8	2	4
2	5	4	6	8	1	9	3	7
1	7	2	8	3	4	6	5	9
3	9	6	1	7	5	2	4	8
5	4	8	2	9	6	3	7	1
7	6	9	3	4	8	5	1	2
8	1	5	7	6	2	4	9	3
4	2	3	5	1	9	7	8	6

Cecil Leighton won the May One-Day Swiss Teams in Bedfordshire and Geoffrey Lederman was third in the same event.



At the Schapiro Spring Foursomes, Gunnar Hallberg (seen on the left of the picture) was a member of the winning team who took the Schapiro Trophy. The Hamilton Cup was won by Tom Townsend and David Gold, while Helen Schapiro was a member of the third-placed team.

In the Portland Bowl, the Inter-University Knock-Out competition, Alice Kaye was a member of the winning Oxford A team, Nicola Macdougall was a member of the second-placed Durham A team and Ian Abel was a member of the third-placed Cambridge B team.



Crockfords Cup was won by Janet de Botton, David Burn, Artur Malinowski and Nick Sandqvist (along with the Hackett twins), with David Bakhshi a member of the runners-up team and Espen Erichsen in the third-placed team.

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## Veronica Thicke explains it all for you

*Celebrating the return of Mr. Thicke from Vienna, Veronica will be holding open house at her villa in Monte Carlo. All her readers are invited, but Veronica requests that they regard the invitation as sufficient, and don't actually turn up.*



I have to start with an apology. My tour of London Clubs other than the Young Chelsea, which, you will recall, started with a trip to Robson's in Fulham, has ground somewhat to a halt. TGR, the rubber bridge club, is to move premises soon, so a visit now would be pointless. The other club on my agenda, Woodberry, is in Islington, and try as I might I haven't managed to make the trip up there. I get as far as Knightsbridge and then some magical force takes over, and I go to Harvey Nicks instead. Don't despair, though! I'll get there one day!

So, having also abandoned the gimcrack suggestion of the editor of this journal ("Bouquets and Brickbats", you'll recall. Give me strength) it's back to my ever-bulging postbag.

*A.W. of Sunbury on Thames (the posh end, he assures me) writes: I often hear people talking about playing in leagues. Three friends and I would like to join one, preferably based in Central London, where we all work. Any suggestions? We're all a bit bored with endless pairs games at our local suburban club.*

Well, A.W., you've written just in the nick of time. The London League for 2006-7 is in its final stages as I type. Entries for next year would be very welcome. Each season typically involves six or seven matches of twenty-four boards, victory points allocated using a scale that runs all the way to minus five if a particularly savage loss has been recorded (a maximum win being restricted to plus twenty). A schedule is sent out at the beginning of the season giving actual play-on dates, and details of who is home and who is away. I bumped into stalwart of the Young Chelsea team Brian Callaghan at the ballet (watching, not performing) and asked him whether the play-on dates were adhered to. "It has been known," he replied, after some thought "I think it last happened to us in 2003, but that's not to say that it'll never happen again."

Entry level is normally the lowest available division, but, A.W., if your team is of the highest calibre (which, alas, I doubt) then you might be accelerated to the upper reaches, otherwise only attainable via a fierce promotion struggle. Contact Sati McKenzie (S.McKenzie@gre.ac.uk) to enrol. Do it tomorrow – better yet, do it today!

*Who, B.F. of Sands End wants to know, is Terry Collier, and what is he banging on about?*

Ah, B.F. (am I alone in thinking these unfortunate initials?), I know of whom you speak. Former general manager of the EBU Terry Collier, despite having demonstrated no interest in playing bridge before or during his tenure, has, since his departure from that body, re-invented himself as the saviour of

English Bridge. Nothing wrong with that, of course, as long as you don't expect any recognition or thanks. Or, indeed, anyone to take you seriously. Quite apart from all that, however, he is trying to get a commercial concern going, based, currently, around a new dealing machine. Nothing wrong with that, either. Everyone has to eat. The machine, I'm told, is very good, its main advantage being some sort of optical recognition which relieves one of the burden of buying bar-coded cards (I hope this works better than the fingerprint recognition on Mr. Thicke's laptop, which is even more temperamental than he is). This may well be a sound investment for clubs who haven't already bought a Duplimate – that is for treasurers across the land to decide, and I feel that in not getting hold of the rights themselves the EBU made a rare error. As far as Mr. Collier's other activities are concerned, however, I feel that if he had a point to begin with he hasn't now, as the tiller of the EBU canoe is once again under the firm and capable hands of Mr. Stocken and the new general manager Mr. Capal, who seems committed.

*CU of Wembley writes: "Dear Mrs. Thicke. Bridge columns are always full of deals where so-called experts do the right thing. Can you put us less exalted mortals out of our misery and tell us of an occasion when a so-called expert got everything wrong for all the wrong reasons?"*

What a strange postbag I seem to get these days. Bitterness is such an unattractive character trait, I find. Ah well, here goes.

**North**  
(So-called expert 2)

♠ K 7 4  
♥ 8 6 2  
♦ K Q 9  
♣ K 10 7 6

**West**

(Honest toiler)

♠ J 9  
♥ J 9 5  
♦ A 8 6 4 2  
♣ 8 5 4

**East**

(Complete lunatic)

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

**South**  
(So-called expert 1)

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

At Matchpoint scoring, South dealt at love all and opened One Spade. West passed, North bid Two Clubs (note: oposite a passed hand you should probably bid One No Trump). East, clearly a madman, bid Two No Trumps. Now, a sophisticated partnership might play that a take-out double and an unusual no-trump would have different meanings from East here. The former might have more high cards, the latter better shape. This was not a sophisticated partnership. This was just someone who thought he might stand a chance of making Three No Trumps, but minimised his chances of playing there by bidding Two No Trumps. What can you do?

South supported his partner, and bid Three Clubs. At this stage of proceedings one might well have expected Honest Toiler to have bid some number of Diamonds, but he elected (wisely, as it turned out) not to. North, not surprisingly, bid Four Spades. There matters rested.

The casual observer will have spotted that ten tricks are easily available, owing to the favourable Spade split. Unfortunately for our expert South, the Two No trump bid cast a seed of doubt in his mind and he was convinced the spade length was on his left, so he played not to go more than one off. After a Heart lead and a Heart ruff, he knocked out the Ace of Diamonds and ruffed another Heart. Now declarer ducked a trump to the 9 and 10 and East led a fourth Heart. West ruffed and North over-ruffed and now declarer played for the remaining spades to break. One off. At all the other tables 420 went in the plus column, the play of the hand having taken five seconds flat. At this table it took ages, and a lonely 50 points were recorded in the out column. It takes an expert to play this well, and score this badly.

Happy, CU?

*Keep those letters and postcards coming! More next time! Watch out Woodberry, I'm on my way!*

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