

*London
Metropolitan
Bridge
Association*



MetroNews

*The newsletter of the
London Metropolitan Bridge Association*

Spring 2017



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Words from the Editor



For as long as I can remember, the EBU Board of Directors has been supported in managing the business of the Union by three Standing Committees. These are composed of volunteers, elected by the EBU shareholders, who look after things in their specific areas of responsibility. They are the Tournament Committee, which determines the programme of events and ensures their satisfactory organisation, the Selection Committee which determines and manages the selection procedures and makes the selection of players to represent England in various international events, and the Laws and Ethics Committee, which formulates and disseminates regulations and directives supplementing the Laws of the game and deals with any problems arising out of situations at the table.

Following a review of the committee structure, it was decided at the last EBU AGM in November to abolish the Tournament Committee as it was no longer needed. The programme of competitions run each year is very well established and, in London member Gordon Rainsford, the EBU has a very able Chief Tournament Director who is well able to ensure the day-to-day management of events. Of course the range of events that is run does need review from time to time, and a small sub-committee has been set up to assist and advise on organisation and regulation instead of the cumbersome TC. Overall, things should run more efficiently and cost-effectively.

There was discussion of changing the other Standing Committees at the same time, but it was eventually decided to leave the Selection Committee as it is. The L&E also stays, but the plan is to streamline the way in which disciplinary matters are handled.



I mentioned the EBU AGM above, which is always well-attended by the County shareholders who represent the members in their counties. I wish I could say the same of the LMBA AGM!

I am one of the three London shareholders and I do my best to represent the best interest of London members, but I have to rely almost entirely on my instincts in this respect. Because whilst we hold an AGM every year, to which London members are invited to come and air their views, it is extraordinarily poorly attended. Now I know that there is quite a bit of business of an AGM that is routine and not very interesting, but there is still plenty of opportunity for discussion. Are we running events that you want to play in? Is our organisation what you want? Are we charging too much or too little? Do we communicate with you enough, or too much? I wish I knew!

Below you will see an announcement of the date of the 2017 AGM. Why not make a note of it now in your diaries or planners and come along next time. Discussion

and debate are the best ways of ascertaining the future direction for the Association, but you don't have to wait until the AGM to tell your shareholders about your views. My contact details are widely available, both below and on the LMBA website at metrobridge.co.uk. Elaine Kay is our second shareholder – her email address is elainefkay@icloud.com, also available on our website. Our third shareholder, James Smith, prefers his email address not to be published but if you would like to contact him just send an email to lmbaentries@gmail.com, marking it for his attention, and it will be forwarded to him.

We are all looking forward to hearing from you.

Chris Duckworth

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Annual General Meeting

The 2016 AGM of the LMBA was held on Thursday 8th September at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. The draft minutes of the meeting can be found on the LMBA website at www.metronews.co.uk.

The 2017 AGM will be held on Thursday 14th September at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Further details and an agenda will be published in the next issue of MetroNews.

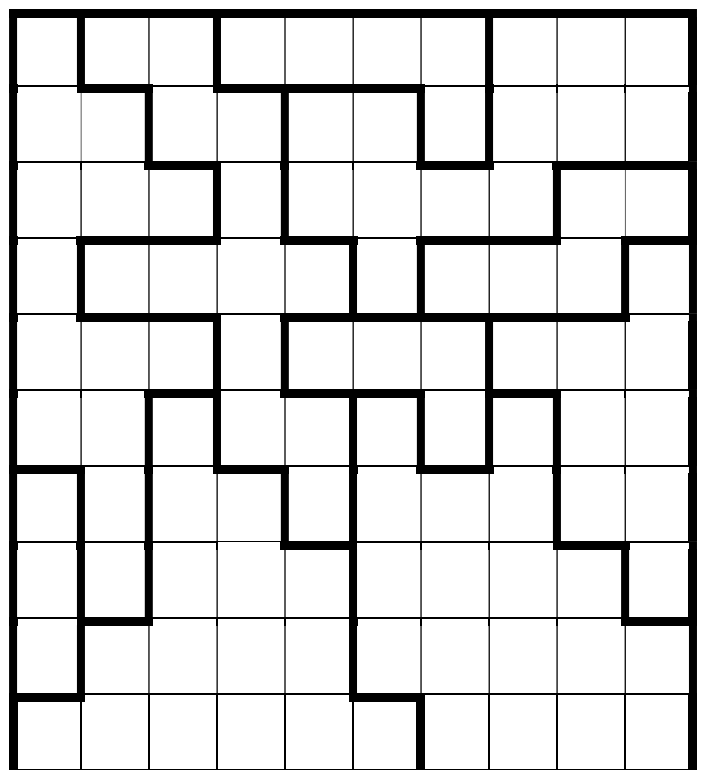
Puzzle Corner

This issue's puzzle requires you to place Aces in the grid so that each row, column and outlined region contains exactly two Aces. No Ace may touch another, even diagonally.



The solution, if you get stuck, is on page 29.

(Hint: Once you have identified the locations of some aces, mark with a dot those squares which cannot contain aces. This will help you place further aces.)



LMBA results this season

Café Bridge Drive - Brook Green

Our September Café Bridge event moved this season from Clapham, where a couple of the venues closed down or pulled out, leaving us with too few to run a viable event.



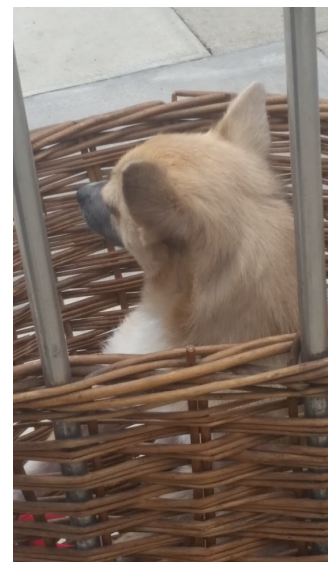
An alternative location was sought and as a result the event was held in and around Brook Green, a leafy and attractive part of Hammersmith tucked away behind Olympia. Our headquarters venue was The Jameson in Blythe Road,



where everyone gathered at the start and end of the event. Their garden proved popular as we were once again blessed with glorious weather on the day, and the new area was deemed a great success. This picture was taken after play whilst the scores were being checked prior to

the prize giving.

The entry on this occasion was limited to 44 pairs (plus one small dog who enjoyed most of the day being transported in a shopping basket – see *right!*). The winners were Susi Behrmann and Malcolm Morris (*pictured left*), Café Bridge regulars who have always do well in these events, though this was their first win. These were the top four finishers:



- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Susi Behrmann & Malcolm Morris | 64.03% |
| 2 | Paul Hainsworth & Terry Welsh | 62.08 |
| 3 | David Taylor & Paul Singer | 59.86 |
| 4 | Lissie Cocking & Lyn Poole | 59.44 |

The event raised £800 for Cancer Research UK, our chosen charity on this occasion.

Mixed Pairs Championship

This season's Mixed Pairs Championship was held on 18th September 2017. 22 pairs competed for the title, and the convincing winners were a full 3% ahead of the rest of the field at the end of play.

The leading scores were:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1 | Gilly Cardiff & Corneliu Rimboiu | 63.00% |
| 2 | Brigid Baddiscombe & Victor Silverstone | 59.44 |
| 3 | Sally Young & Mike Bell | 58.29 |



Men's Pairs & Women's IMP Pairs

This event, relatively new in the LMBA competition calendar, continues to show small but steady growth. This year there were 12 competing male pairs and 15 female pairs, all of whom played enjoyed a hard-fought event played at the Young Chelsea BC last October.

The winners in both events led by a clear margin, as these results show:

Men's Pairs:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Corneliu Rimboiu & Ting To | +101 IMPs |
| 2 | Simon Gass & Alan Scott | +52 |
| 3 | Mark Nelson & Liam Sanderson | + 36 |

Women's Pairs

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Nevena Senior & Brigid Battiscombe | +48.17 IMPs |
| 2 | Heather Bakhshi & Claire Robinson | +26.67 |
| 3 | Lyn Poole & Elisabeth Cocking | +26.00 |



The Men's Pairs winners, Ting To and Corneliu Rimboiu are pictured on the left.

The Women's Pairs winner, Nevena Senior, is on the right. (Nevena's partner, Brigid Battiscombe, had to dash off!)



Palmer Bayer Trophy

The Palmer Bayer is the trophy for the annual “No Fear” Pairs, which was played in January this year. A late change of date, along with poor weather and a selection of train strikes may have somewhat depressed the entry, but there was still a good turnout of players to enjoy this social and friendly competition.



This event is always well-supported by a number of players from Unison, the public services union, none of whom plays regular club bridge. This year the winners once again came from this group – Sam Oestreicher, for whom this was a fifth win in the Palmer Bayer, and his partner Chris Townsend, who was playing in his first ever duplicate!

The picture (*below right*) shows Sam on the left and Chris being presented with the trophy by Brian

Callaghan who came along to be the guest expert at the event, leading the post-play hand discussion.

Another Unison pair took second place, close behind the winners. The leading positions were:

- 1 Chris Townsend & Sam Oestreicher
59.76%
- 2 Pete Challis & Ben Thomas 58.57
- 3 Michel Glen & Lorna Heaton 57.14



London News

Tollemache success

The London team won the Tollemache Trophy in 2016 and is on course to repeat this success in 2017. In the qualifier they won their group with a match to spare, so have earned a place in the finals to be held in February this year, where they will be the team to beat.

The team in the qualifier comprised Tom Townsend, Nick Sandqvist, Brian Callaghan, Heather Dhondy, Paul Lamford, David Ewart, Mike Bell, Sarah O'Connor, Phil King, Kieran Dyke and Ian Payn (NPC). The same team will be competing in the final with Stelio di Bello replacing Brian Callaghan who is unavailable. We wish them luck!

New members

The LMBA is very pleased to welcome the following new members who have either joined the EBU through the London County for the first time, or have transferred their allegiance to London, during the past six months.

Lena Anninos	Kiril Delev	Stuart Mann	Meg Pennycook
Susan Ashby	Linda Dicks	Bertie Maxwell	Antonia Previte
Verona Baker	Claire Doran	John McManus	Guy Reid
Anna Bastrakova	Anna Goldsmith	Vivienne	Peter Rogers
Myra Berg	Wendy Greaves	McNaughton	Kevin Satti
Nick Boulter	James Greenfield	Fiona McWatters	Louise Selway
Andrew Bowers	Christophe Grosset	Henry McWatters	Amit Shah
Paul Brooks	Pascale Hakim	Abigail Montrose	Hiroko Shinjyo
Bernadette Browne	Maureen Harris	Ludovico Mori	Bettina St J Skeen
Alison Brunton	Michael Heath	Rachel Morris	Kaoru Stephens
Donald Carse	Roger Hepher	Simon Morris	Kaoru Urata
Thomas	Rachel Kellett-	Angela O'Hara	Lim Jia Wei
Christopher	Clarke	Anne Parker	Gerald Wombwell
William Coley	Oliver Kent	Jill Parker	Ju Min Wong
Tim Colyer	Carole Kiralyfi	Janelle Parsons	
Anne Connolly	John Langworthy	Jess Parsons	
John Craggs	Hilary Leslie	Kate Payne	

Club News

The Monday Club is moving both its premises and its club night. From mid-February they will play on Monday evenings at the Battersea Labour Club, 81-83 Falcon Road, SW11 2PF. More details on their website at <http://www.bridgewebs.com/monday2/>

Sheila Peers RIP

It is with sadness that we report the death of Sheila Peers at the age of 99. Sheila was an excellent bridge player – she achieved the rank of Premier National Master – who played regularly in London clubs and events until a few years ago. Sheila outlived three husbands, the most recent of whom was Bryan, her partner, also a fine player, but whom she would regularly berate at the bridge table, as is often the way with married couples. Being a little deaf, Sheila's admonishments in stentorian tones often raised a smile in an otherwise hushed bridge room!

After Bryan's death Sheila moved to West Sussex to be nearer her children but she continued to play bridge at the Chichester Bridge Club until very recently, and she retained her London membership to the end. Sheila spent a happy last Christmas with her family before passing away peacefully on 9th January. Our condolences to her family, including children, stepson, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Lederer Memorial Trophy 2016

The next Lederer Memorial Trophy, the prestigious invitational event for national and international teams, will be held at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall over the weekend of **Saturday - Sunday 25th - 26th February 2017**.



This great event provides a terrific opportunity for bridge enthusiasts to come along and watch and learn from the masters in play. As a spectator, you can watch at the tables, rubbing shoulders with the top stars from this country and abroad as they compete for trophy.

The 2016 Lederer in play

If you prefer you can watch from the comfort of the VuGraph room (*right*), where the full hands can be seen, as they are played, and you can follow all the play as it evolves. Play is accompanied by a light-hearted but insightful commentary from a panel of experts.



Either way, you will enjoy the great atmosphere of the event, and be able to meet some of the players, who this year will include:

- **Holders** – Andrew Robson, Alexander Allfrey, Tony Forrester, David Gold, David Bakhshi. This team has won the trophy in the last two years and will be hard to beat this time.
- **Israel** – Migry Zur-Campanile, Michael Barel, Assaf Lengy, Ilan Bareket . We particularly welcome this team visiting the Lederer for the first time, including Migry (*right*), who has represented both Israel and the USA in women’s events.
- **Gillis** – Simon Gillis, Boye Brogelund, Espen Erichsen, Espen Lindqvist. These players are all current Gold Cup holders.



- **Ireland** – John Carroll, Tommy Garvey, Tom Hanlon, Mark Moran, Rory Boland
Most of the Irish international team, at the time of writing leading the field ahead of England in the 2017 Camrose.
- **Zia** – Zia Mahmood, Jan Jansma, Anita Sinclair, Peter Crouch, Simon Cope. The incomparable Zia, with a team including Dutch international Jan Jansma (*right*).
- **De Botton** – Janet de Botton, Thor Erik Hoftaniska, Nick Sandqvist, Tom Townsend
- **Hinden** – Frances Hinden, Jeffrey Allerton, Graham Osborne, Jon Cooke, Michael Byrne, Keiran Dyke
- **Crockfords** – David Mossop, Alex Hydes, Paul Hackett, David Price, Jason Hackett, Justin Hackett – this team won the 2015 Premier League as well as Crockfords Cup in 2016.
- **Chairman's Team** – David Burn, Heather Dhondy, Joe Fawcett, Gillian Fawcett, Ollie Burgess, Alan Mould
- **London** – a team representing the LMBA



Come along and watch!

You can choose to come along on either day of the event, or both. Play starts at 12 noon on Saturday and continues until 7.00 pm. On Sunday the start time is again 12 noon and proceedings will end with a reception and prize-giving at around 6.00 pm for which spectators are welcome to stay.



All are welcome and there will be no charge to spectators. We do ask that you notify us, however, if you intend to come. Please send an email, indicating your name and when you expect to attend, to lederertrophy@gmail.com.

Please note that there is a dress code at the RAC which must be adhered to in order to gain admittance. Men should wear jacket and tie, and no jeans or trainers are allowed for either men or women.

Forthcoming competitions

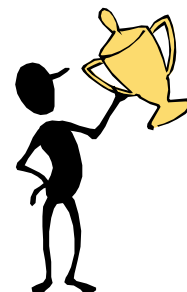
Unless otherwise indicated, all competitions are played with permitted conventions at EBU Level 4. Membership requirements are specified in each competition description. Details of how to enter events are at the end of this section.

London Championship Pairs

Sunday 26th March 2017 starting at **11.30 am**

Holder: *Nick Sandqvist & Shahzaad Natt*

Venue: Young Chelsea Bridge Club. 54 Goldhawk Road, London W12 8HA



This competition is a one-day, two session, match-pointed pairs. Please note the early start time which will be combined with a short break between sessions to allow an early evening finish time.

The top fourteen pairs from the first session will compete in an all-play-all final with carry-forward scores whilst the remainder of the field competes in a consolation final. This major County Pairs Championship is green-pointed and is the qualifying event for the Corwen Trophy, the national inter-county pairs championship.

All players must be LMBA members, but only the leading four pairs with London as their county of allegiance (before playing in the event) will be eligible to represent London playing in the Corwen Trophy on 3rd – 4th June 2017 at the Holiday Inn, Birmingham Airport.

Entry fee: £36.00 per pair.

Advance entry is not essential but is strongly recommended. Entries should be made to Imbaentries@gmail.com, putting "Champ Pairs" in the subject line.

Garden Cities Heat

Thursday 30th March 2017 starting at **7.00 pm**

Holder: *Young Chelsea BC*

Venue: Young Chelsea Bridge Club. 54 Goldhawk Road, London W12 8HA



The Garden Cities is the national teams-of-eight championship for EBU affiliated clubs. The winner of London's single-session qualifying heat will be eligible to play in the South-East Regional Final that takes place in Richmond on Saturday 6th May 2017 and, if successful there, in the National Final that takes place on Saturday 24th June 2017 in Solihull. Clubs may enter as many teams as they wish, subject to space restrictions at the venue. (The LMBA reserves the right, if necessary, to restrict the number of teams per club).

Clubs must be members of the LMBA. Players must be members of the EBU and of the club they represent but do not have to be LMBA members. It is not necessary for the same eight players to represent a team at each stage of the competition but no player may play for more than one club.

Entry fee: £64 per team

Advance entry is required and should be made by 24th March 2017 to **Chris Duckworth** at chris.duckworth@lineone.net or on 020 7385 3534.

London Trophy Pairs

Sunday 2nd April 2017 starting at **2.00 pm**

Holder: *Peter Brook & Roy Westwater*

Venue: Young Chelsea Bridge Club. 54 Goldhawk Road, London W12 8HA

This is a single-session pairs competition open to players who have participated in the London Trophy in the current season. The rules regarding permitted systems and conventions in this event are the same as for the London Trophy.



Please note that the venue for this event has changed this year, and it will now be held at the YCBC instead of the RAC.

Entry fee: Free!

Advance entry is required for this event and should be made no later than 26th March 2017 to **Imbaentries@gmail.com**.

Enquiries may be made to **Kath Stynes** on 07747 197940.

London Trophy Finals

Sunday 11th June 2017 starting at **2.00 pm**

Holder Trophy: *HM Treasury* Plate: *MCC*

Venue: To be confirmed.

You can't now enter the 2016/17 London Trophy, as this knock-out competition for teams of four representing social clubs of all kinds is well under way.

But you can, if you wish, enjoy the drama of the final. Spectators are very welcome, particularly if they are willing to help with recording the bidding and early play of the hands.

Enquiries to **Kath Stynes** on 07747 197940 or to **Imbaentries@gmail.com**.

Café Bridge - Tonsleys

Tuesday 25th April 2017 starting at **10.30 for 11.00 am**

Holder: *Mike Skelly & Margaret Hamilton*



Venue: The Alma Tavern, 499 Old York Road, SW18 1TF (for registration)

Our Spring Café Bridge Drive will once again be held in the Tonsleys area close to Wandsworth Town station, and will again be held in aid of the local charity, Age UK Wandsworth.

For those not familiar with the idea of café bridge, the duplicate bridge tournament will be played during the day in a number of different cafés/bars/restaurants in the area, each round of the tournament being played in a different venue.

All are welcome – EBU membership is not necessary.

Entry Fee: £25.00 per player, which includes lunch at whichever venue you find yourself in at lunchtime!

Advance entry is essential and entries should be sent to **Imbaentries@gmail.com** to arrive no later than 18th April 2017, putting “Café Bridge” in the subject line. Please note that Café Bridge events are very popular and numbers are restricted – entries will be accepted strictly on a first-come first-served basis.

Any queries may be directed to **Chris Duckworth** on 020 7385 3534.

Fox Shammon Trophy

Sunday 23rd April 2017 starting at **2.00pm**

Holder: *Victor Silverstone & Gerald Haase*

Venue: Young Chelsea Bridge Club. 54 Goldhawk Road, London W12 8HA

This is a single extended session match-pointed pairs event for senior players. All participants must have been born in or before 1956 and must be EBU members.



The event is expected to finish at 6.30-7.00pm.

Entry fee: £26.00 per pair

Advance entry is strongly advised and should be sent to arrive no later than 16th April 2017 to **Imbaentries@gmail.com** putting “Fox Shammon” in the subject line.

Enquiries may be made to **Dave Muller** on 07847 618105.

London Congress

incorporating

the twenty-third Green-Pointed One-Day Swiss Weekend

Saturday - Sunday 15th – 16th July 2017

Swiss Pairs Holders: *Alistair Kent & Andrew McIntosh*

Swiss Teams Holders: *Andrew Murphy, Graeme Robertson, Ed Jones, Tom Paske*

Venue: Young Chelsea Bridge Club.
54 Goldhawk Road, London W12 8HA



The previous venue, The Central Hall Westminster, is not available this year due to a clash of dates, so the event will be held at the YCBC (unless an alternative larger venue can be found). **This means that numbers will be limited and pre-entry is essential.**

The London Congress continues the tradition of the LMBA Green-Pointed Swiss Weekends. The Swiss Pairs and the Swiss Teams will be single-flighted, with green points awarded in accordance with EBU regulations and prizes for the leading players in both events.

All players must be EBU members, but LMBA membership is not required.

Programme:

Saturday 16th July: Swiss Pairs starting at 1.00pm.

Two sessions with a one-hour interval, finishing at approx. 9.00pm

Sunday 17th July: Swiss Teams starting at 11.30 am

Two sessions with a one-hour interval, finishing at approx. 7.30 pm

Entry fee: £25 per person per event. A reduced fee of £48 per person is available to anyone playing in both events over the weekend.

Half price for Under-25s in all events.

Pairs wishing to play in the Sunday teams events are invited to request entry, stating clearly which event they wish to play in and giving their EBU master point rankings or NGS grades. Every effort will then be made to pair them up with suitable team-mates.

Advance entry is essential and should be made to **Mike Hill** at michaelrd.hill@btinternet.com or 01732 863283 or in writing to Winterbourne, Swan Lane, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6AL.

Payment of entry fees

Payment on the day is generally acceptable for most competitions, but pre-payment is expected for the Café Bridge and London Congress events, both to avoid excessive registration times and because numbers are limited.

Payments may be by cash, by cheque made payable to LMBA, or by bank transfer. Debit and credit card payments are not possible.

Electronic transfer of funds should be made to the following LMBA account:

Sort Code: 09-06-66 Account No: 41838562

Please use your surname as a reference.

General Competition Information & Regulations

Membership requirements for each competition are specified in the description for each event. Where LMBA membership is required, players who are members of counties other than London can become LMBA dual members to meet this requirement by the payment of our dual membership subscription, which is £5 per annum. Subscriptions may be paid along with competition entry fees, making sure that full contact details for the individual are provided, including email address and existing EBU membership number if appropriate.

Seating policy. Players may be allocated a starting position by the TD on arrival at a venue, or may be required to draw a starting position or cut for North-South. Players who need a stationary position for medical or mobility reasons should if possible notify the organiser or venue in advance.

Competition regulations. The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge (2007) apply to all competitions as do, where appropriate, the regulations and directives of the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee. Full LMBA competition rules for individual events may be found on the LMBA website at www.metrobridge.co.uk.

Monsters

by Mike Graham

Mike latest article helps you to make the most of those wonderful big hands that you seem to get dealt so rarely.

Just occasionally, you pick up a seriously big hand. Most partnerships will have their agreed methods for bidding big hands – opening 2NT to show X-Y high card points in a balanced hand, for example. A common range for 2NT is 20-22, but many high-level partnerships play other ranges. It is up to you.

Higher ranges for balanced hands can be opened with 2♣ or 2♦. Commonly, 2♣ is used to show, as one of the possible options, 23-24 balanced. This is shown by a 2NT rebid. It makes sense to have your responses to 2NT as an opening bid or via 2♣ as the same, whether as an opening bid or rebid; this saves memory strain.

There arises the question of what responder is supposed to do after a 2♣ opening. An early work (The Complete Book of Bridge, by Terence Reese and Albert Dormer) recommended a response of 2♦ as “a hand with fewer than 7 points in high cards”; anything else was a positive response. This work recommended that a positive response should contain at least one quick trick – an ace or the KQ of the suit bid. A response of 2NT showed 7-9, and 3NT 10-12. However, the Reese/Dormer work recommended a 2NT response to 2♣ on ♠ Q107 ♥ 5 ♦ Q9843 ♣ KJ62; 7-9 points, but diamonds not good enough for 3♦. It would be uncommon to see this today.

These days a positive response is usually used to show a good five or six card suit with honours in the suit bid. Using this method 2♦ is used as a “waiting” bid, not necessarily a weak hand. This has the advantage of allowing opener to define his hand. There are a lot of common treatments that allow opener to closely define a balanced hand – the Kokish convention, whereby a 2♥ rebid can be hearts or a particular range of balanced hand, is very popular. In the 1980’s a group of Precision Club players were playing the sequence 1♣-1♦-1♥ in similar fashion, so that 1♥ was either hearts or a variety of strong balanced. Pairs can have all sorts of fun inventing their own methods.

A number of hands have come up in recent matches which have given the 2♣ opening a bit of a work-out. You hold:

♠ Q1092
♥ 4
♦ A9764
♣ J86

Partner opens 2♣, you respond 2♦, and partner rebids 2NT to show 23-24 balanced. There is a lot to be said for having your bidding structures after 1NT and 2NT to be similar; Stayman, Transfers, and the like. Here, you would like to know if there is a spade fit, so you bid 3♣, Stayman (many pairs play Puppet Stayman here, asking for 5-card majors; a 3♦ response shows a four-card major, and a direct major suit bid shows five). Disappointingly, partner bids 3♦, denying a four-card major. How to proceed?

At the table, this hand metaphorically shrugged its shoulders and bid 3NT, which made eleven tricks. However, partner had ♠ A53 ♥ AK ♦ KQ1032 ♣

AK5, and Six Diamonds was virtually laydown. The problem was that the partnership had no clear agreement what a 4♦ bid (over 3♦ by opener) would be – would it be a definite slam try, or simply showing a suit hoping to find a fit, and being able to end the auction in 4NT if no fit was found? A solution was agreed that 4♦ in this kind of sequence invited slam with a fit (opener would cue-bid) and that 4NT was “no fit”. Obviously, responder could proceed over 4NT with extra values.

Let us have a quick look at the play in Six Diamonds:

♠ Q1092
♥ 4
♦ A9764
♣ J86

♠ A53
♥ AK
♦ KQ1032
♣ AK5

The lead was the queen of hearts.

At first sight, we can win the heart lead and draw trumps, and then guess the spades. Probably the best line, taking the spade suit in isolation, is to take two finesses, running the queen (just in case West has the singleton jack) and then running the ten.

However, a closer look reveals an absolute baby endplay which guarantees the contract. Win the heart lead and draw trumps. Now cash the second heart winner and discard a club from dummy, followed by the club ace-king and a club ruff in dummy. The position is now:

♠ Q1092

♥ –

♦ A9

♣ –

♠ A53

♥ –

♦ 1032

♣ –

Now run the queen of spades. If West wins, he must either play a spade, which gives you no further spade loser, or another suit; you ruff in dummy and discard a low spade from hand. If the queen of spades is covered, you simply force out the jack.

♣♦♥♠

In a teams match, with both sides vulnerable, you pick up:

♠ AQ5 ♥ AKQJ986 ♦ A ♣ A5

RHO passes. After you have finished gawping in amazement, you open 2♣. Predictably, partner responds 2♦. What now?

This is an exceptional hand, even for a 2♣ opener. In Acol, there is a way to show it – a jump to 3♥. This jump rebid classically shows a solid suit and is

forcing to game; partner is not allowed to pass. It also indicates that opener has no desire for any other suit to be trumps.

What is partner expected to do over this jump rebid? Early books recommended a 3NT rebid to show a “bust”. However, after the jump to the three-level the partnership is rapidly running out of room for delicate slam investigations, and 3NT can be used for other things.

As the jump rebid is forcing to game, it makes sense for a simple raise to game to be the weakest bid possible – you raise to 4♥ with ♠ 5432 ♥ 2 ♦ 5432 ♣ 5432, for example. As opener is known to have a giant hand, a new suit bid can be used to show some values in that suit. For example, responder, holding ♠ KJ76, could bid 3♠. Now opener, knowing of decent spades opposite, can jump majestically to the seven level. Partnerships playing these methods should agree on the minimum holding in the suit – would K1086 be enough, for example.

If a new suit bid is used to show concentrated values in the suit, a 3NT response can be used to show a smattering of high cards but no concentration. This would have worked well in practice – the responding hand was ♠ J874 ♥ 10 ♦ Q532 ♣ K1095, and Six Hearts was laydown. It does not look good that, at eight tables, Six Hearts was bid only once. Team-mates were most apologetic for missing the slam – they bid 2♣-2♦-3♥-4♥, which opener correctly passed, as 4♥ was the weakest bid available.

However, they gained on the board in somewhat amusing circumstances. The big hand did not get a chance to

open 2♣, as RHO opened 1♥. This was not natural – it showed a hand that was not an opening bid (this was in a league that allows such methods). The big hand doubled, and next hand redoubled. This showed a hand that held a long suit somewhere. Partner bid 1♠ over this, and, presumably taking the entirely reasonable view that this showed something in spades, the next bid was 7♥. The king of clubs provided an entry for the spade finesse, but it was offside. 7♥ was also bid at one other table.

♣♦♥♠

This hand came up in a match broadcast on Bridge Base Online (BBO):

♠ AKQJ
♥ --
♦ AKQJ1085
♣ K7

The player holding this hand opened 2♣ and, after a 2♦ response from partner, jumped to 4♦. What you would really like to see now is 5♣ bid by partner, over which you can jump to 7♦, as the club card can only be the ace. Over a 4♥ bid you can bid 4♠. This is not an offer of a place to play, as the jump rebid (here 4♦) set the suit. Again, over 5♣ you can now bid 7♦. However, over 4♦, partner merely raised to 5♦.

The problem now is that this hand has no idea whether there will be a play for slam or not. Obviously, 7♦ is out, but the queen of clubs opposite makes 6♦ virtually laydown, and there is just no way to find out. Even opposite a complete bust 6♦ may have chances – dummy may have the ♦9, for example, which would provide an entry to try a club towards the king. And if this hand

had ended up as declarer, there would always be the chance of a club lead.

At the table the player bid 6♦. The lead was the ace of hearts. Partner held:

♠ 8632
♥ 975
♦ 742
♣ 983

You can imagine that the holder of these cards did not think initially that he would end up as declarer in a freely-bid slam, but it was not without play, as he held the priceless seven of diamonds. Since diamonds were 2-1, the seven would provide an entry to play a club towards the king, which would have been successful. However, to the sympathy of the commentators, declarer ruffed the heart lead with the five of diamonds.....

This was unlucky in a way, as responder had four spades. With three or fewer, he could have ruffed the fourth round and then led a club.

A possible alternative opening for this hand is 4NT. Classically, this useful convention (in the sense that it might prove useful once every fifty years or so) asks for specific aces. The responses are:

5♣ = no ace
5♦ = ♦A
5♥ = ♥A
5♠ = ♠A
5NT = two aces (Some pairs invert the
6♣ = ♣A 5NT and 6♣ responses)

However, this opening is extremely low-frequency, and many pairs use different meanings for 4NT. One possibility is a five-level opening in a minor.

♣♦♥♠

In a recent NICKO match, South, after a picking up a seemingly endless succession of flat five-counts, took this magnificent hand out of the wallet:

♠ AQ
♥ AKJ76
♦ --
♣ AKQ942

Certainly strong enough to insist on game, with slam definitely in the picture if you can find a fit. At one table the bidding started:

2♣ 2♦ (negative)
3♣ 3♠
?

And now the opener had a problem. What would partner take 4♥ as? Would it be natural, opener simply bidding out his shape, or would it be interpreted as a cue-bid agreeing spades? And, if natural, would partner pass with some heart support but not much in the way of high cards? You would certainly want to be in 6♥ opposite any semblance of genuine support, and even a grand slam would not be out of the question (picture partner with ♠Kxxxx ♥Qxxx, for example).

In the end, this hand did bid 4♥ (and, I am informed, at commendable speed). Partner raised to 5♥ (if I remember correctly) and this hand went on to six.

At the other table this hand opened 1♣, a forcing bid on the NS methods, and got a 1♠ response. This was a natural bid, 6+hcp and 5+spades. The methods prescribed a 3♣ rebid, showing a very strong hand with clubs (a 2♣ rebid would be natural but not forcing), so now the position was effectively identical with what was happening at the other table. Over 3♣, partner bid 3NT.....and the player was now concerned that a natural 4♥ bid

would be passed. So he jumped to 5♥; but there is an inherent flaw with this bid, in that it makes things very difficult for partner, who might very well decide that this is Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood with clubs agreed by inference.

{Exclusion Roman Keycard Blackwood is a way of asking for Keycards but telling partner to ignore any keycards (usually aces) in a particular suit, the inference being that you are void in the suit and do not want partner to include that ace in the keycard response.}

However, the last time this particular partnership used ERKCB they ended in 5♣ on a 3-0 fit, down eight, with 7♠ laydown. North, possibly not wanting a repeat, raised to 6♥. South, having found a fit, decided to give North the option of which grand slam to play by bidding 7♣.

This, of course, was crazy, as it sounds like 5♥ was Exclusion after all, and that South had genuinely solid clubs. Having found a heart fit, South should have just bid 7♥ and not put poor North under pressure (if I seem a bit hard on South, it is because your correspondent was....well, you can probably work that out). However, South got lucky. West, who held ♣J8763, doubled. Now South reconsidered and removed to 7♥.

The North hand was ♠108754 ♥Q953 ♦A42 ♣10. A 3♥ rebid over 3♣ would have dramatically simplified the auction. Armed with the news that clubs were breaking badly, declarer drew trumps (they were 2-2) and when the clubs were 5-1 could claim. Next door declarer ruffed an early heart, thus making only six when East could overruff the dummy.

All in all, a pretty incompetent performance at both tables, but, looking at the two auctions, there are a number of points that pairs would do well to discuss:

(1) After 2♣ – any bid – suit – new suit – new suit, is the second suit opener has bid a genuine suit (so that the 2♣ opener was based on a strong two-suiter) or a cue-bid in support of responder's suit? And is it forcing, or may it be passed? For example, 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♣ – 3♠ – 4♥.

(2) If the 2♣ opener makes a jump bid in a new suit, is that a genuine suit (such that opener is afraid of responder passing) or some kind of Blackwood? For example, 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♣ – 3♠ – 5♥.

(3) Not particularly related to the last hand, but what are the minimum suit requirements for responder to bid a new suit after 2♣ – any bid – jump? For example, 2♣ – 2♦ – 4♣.

2♣ Transfers at the Year End

by Brian Callaghan

Why is Stayman like the 'Multi'? This might look like a joke from a bridge-themed Christmas cracker, but has a serious answer. Stayman is usually thought of as an asking bid, and not as a bid which *shows* anything. But, just like the Multicoloured 2♦ does, Stayman shows one of various distinct hand types, the type perhaps to be revealed later in the auction. A Stayman responder may be about to show a hand that contains either a four-card major, or maybe game-invitational values in no trumps, or maybe a minor suit. Stayman is arguably a multicoloured 2♣ response to a 1NT opening.



Let's call a bid that shows one of just *two* specific suits (or maybe strains) **bicoloured**. (Such a bid is not the same as a two-suited bid.) Some players use *promissory* Stayman, which guarantees either a heart suit or a spade suit. Promissory Stayman is a bicoloured 2♣ response.

I play a bicoloured 2♣ response to 1NT in my favourite partnerships, but the 2♣ bid is not promissory Stayman or any kind of Stayman at all. 2♣ is a *transfer*, asking partner to bid 2♦, and it shows either a *diamond* suit or a spade suit. In my methods, the *only* way to transfer to show diamonds is to start with 2♣, but either a 2♣ or a 2♥ transfer may be used to show spades. (The choice of transfer to show spades depends on the particular hand type.)

My favourite partners tolerate my eccentricities, so it was with differing emotions that Chris Duckworth and I looked forward to our game together in the Mixed Pairs at the London Year End tournament. I know my own methods inside out, and regard the opportunity to use them as the best entertainment my entry fee can buy. Chris, who has to work harder to remember a method she plays with no-one else, is less positive.

Sometimes whole days of bridge can pass without a 2♣ response cropping up, but at the Year End it was like buses – four came along at once. So how did it work in practice?

Session 1 Board 16

EW Vul. Dealer West

♠ AQ5	
♥ A94	
♦ J2	
♣ Q10762	
♠ 9632	♠ J8
♥ 32	♥ QJ87
♦ 103	♦ Q964
♣ AK843	♣ J95
♠ K1074	
♥ K1065	
♦ AK875	
♣ –	

I was South and we had an undisturbed auction starting with North:

1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♦ - 3♥ - 3♠ - 3NT

The method does not specifically provide a way to show a 5440 three-suited hand. It does cope with 4441 shapes, with which I transfer to show the *minor* first. My 2♠ rebid was a second transfer to show *diamonds* (all other bids below 4♦ show *spades*), asking partner to bid 2NT and saying I had at least a four-card diamond suit and game-forcing values. My second rebid of 3♦ said I had a 4441 shape with both diamonds and spades. Chris relayed once more and my 3♠ showed hearts (a major shows a major – easier to remember than stepping). The auction took some time, because it was an uncommon one, but Chris placed the contract in 3NT.

Did the method work? Well, not on this deal. The idea is to reach a minor-suit game when 3NT is poor. (Imagine North's minor suits interchanged.) The method produces occasional big gains, but some small losses. East was warned off a red-suit lead and started with the J♠. (Stayman followed by 3♦ from South was a common auction that did not say quite so much about South's shape.)

Deep Finesse is able to bring the diamonds for one loser, but Chris tried the normal low diamond to the J and only made nine tricks for a below average score.

Session 1 Board 8

Love All. Dealer West

	♠ A87
	♥ 8765
	♦ 973
	♣ J64
♠ Q953	♠ KJ42
♥ K1093	♥ 4
♦ K1085	♦ AJ62
♣ K	♣ A985
	♠ 106
	♥ AQJ2
	♦ Q4
	♣ Q10732

This deal came towards the end of the first session for us. It was arrow-switched and I was East. Again we had an undisturbed auction:

1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♠ - 2NT - 3♦ - 4♠

Our 1NT opening in first and second seat shows 11-14 and a singleton is possible, so it was a normal action for

us. Again I had a 4441 shape, but this time the auction went much more quickly as we had had the earlier deal for practice. Chris, with a spade fit, did not bother to ask for my entire shape but bid 4♠ directly. South led a spade, not a risk-free action, but OK this time. I made ten tricks for another below average when I misguessed the diamonds. This was probably another small loss for the method, because it discouraged a diamond lead.

Session 2 Board 15

NS Vul. Dealer South

♠ AKQ	
♥ KJ1063	
♦ 54	
♣ A63	
♠ J1076	♠ 5432
♥ Q92	♥ A4
♦ 2	♦ AK109
♣ Q9872	♣ KJ5
♠ 98	
♥ 875	
♦ QJ8763	
♣ 104	

After the break, the opposition were more kind to us. I was South when the auction was:

pass - 1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - (double) - pass - 2♥

Our 1NT opening in third and fourth seat shows 14-17 so Chris might well have upgraded to a 1♥ opening. I could have shown a weak 2♦ opening by starting with 2♣ (which is also our strong bid), but that was too rich for me. One of the upsides of the method is that it lets us play in 2♦. That seemed ideal to me, but East doubled.

Deep Finesse says 2♦ would make an overtrick, which would have been a near top, but Chris was understandably worried that I might have only a five-card suit. She asked the opponents if they knew what the double meant, but they did not. She pulled to 2♥ and fortunately for us the defenders lost their way to let us make ten tricks. That was still a 90% score.

Session 2 Board 8

Love All. Dealer West

	♠ J863	
	♥ QJ53	
	♦ K72	
	♣ J5	
♠ A1092		♠ Q754
♥ AK9		♥ 1074
♦ 954		♦ 3
♣ 874		♣ AKQ63
	♠ K	
	♥ 862	
	♦ AQJ1086	
	♣ 1092	

Last-board syndrome struck at the end of the session. I was East on the arrow-switch again, and we were back to another undisturbed auction:

1NT - 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♣ - 3NT

My 3♣ rebid was natural and non-forcing showing at least five clubs and, because I had not bid 2♠, a four-card *spade* suit too. At the end of a long day, Chris missed this and thought I had clubs and diamonds. We told the opponents what I had shown before North made a normal, but unfortunate, low heart lead. On the run of the rounded suits North let go of a spade, which gave us 12 tricks, but it did not matter as 11

would have been enough for a complete top for us.

If we debit bad boards due to forgetfulness we should credit good ones for the same, so this was a good

board for the method. South would have been more inclined to bid 2♦ over Stayman, but with the prospect of my having diamonds too, decided to pass.

We finished the day in an unremarkable 13th place with a score of 55.8%. Congratulation to the winners of the Mixed Pairs, London members playing old-fashioned Stayman, Gitte Hecht-Johansen and Szczepan Smoczyński.

Tournament Bridge in England: 1925-1945

LMBA Life Member and former Chairman, Richard Fleet, has written a book about the early history of bridge in this country. Richard has meticulously researched his topic and the book contains some fascinating information about the events and personalities of this era, along with details of some noteworthy hands.

The book is strongly recommended to all keen players and can be read online by following this link:

<https://view.pagetiger.com/tournament-bridge-in-england/1925-1945>

Meet Heather Dhondy

by Chris Duckworth

Heather Dhondy will be very well known to most readers as one of England's top women players for many years, but she has only relatively recently become a London member. When her husband Jeremy, current Chairman of the EBU, retired from teaching, the couple decided to move out of London and bought a house in Dorset. At the same time Heather, whose work is mainly in London, acquired a flat in Hammersmith where she could stay for part of each week and she transferred her allegiance from Middlesex to London. This was four years ago, so an interview with her is overdue!



I began by asking Heather how she started playing bridge. It was with her parents, with whom she played kitchen bridge as a teenager. They had no real idea of what they were doing until they came across a book called "Learn Bridge with the Lederers" – a fount of bridge knowledge for many students of the game – where they discovered some basic principles, such as the fact that a 1NT opening should have a limited range of points. Heather continued to play bridge at university in York, where she studied music. She played for the university in a team with Harry Anoyrkatis and, later, Sarah Teshome. York won the Portland Bowl - the Inter-University KO teams competition - twice in her time playing for the team.

Whilst at York, Heather met Sally Dunsby, a young friend of Harry's – later to become his wife – who was then still at school. They formed a partnership and entered the Lady Milne trials in 1990 as complete unknowns. They won and went on to win the Lady Milne for England – the first of Heather's 16 Lady Milne outings for England to date (12 of which she has won!)

Heather partnered Sally Anoyrkatis until 1995, when Sally decided to withdraw from international bridge, Heather then paired up with Liz McGowan playing for Great Britain and this was a very successful partnership until the devolution of the British Bridge League in 2000, which meant that England, Scotland and Wales each won the right to send representative teams to European and World events. Liz continued to play for Scotland and Heather paired up with Nicola Smith. This lasted until 2007, since when she has played with Nevena Senior.



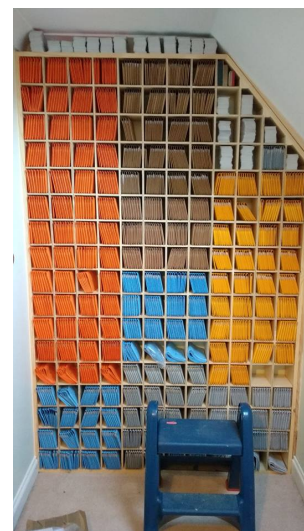
Heather has lost count of how many medals she has won in international events. I asked her if she could take a photo of them all and here it is – pretty impressive!

Pride of place amongst these, though, are her Gold medals in European and World events. She won three European golds in her first three outings representing the England women in 1997, 1999 and 2001, the first two with Liz and the last with Nicola

(in an event in which they played every single board!), then two more in 2012 and most recently in 2016, playing with Nevena. She also won the European Mixed Teams in partnership with Jeremy in 2007. Her world titles came in 1996, when she won the Transnational Mixed Teams with Liz McGowan and a team of Icelanders and in 2008 and 2012 when she won the Women's Teams Olympiads in partnership with Nevena.

If all that sounds like hard work, it is, and for the moment Heather is taking a break from Women's bridge, but she continues to play in open events with Brian Callaghan. They represented England in the 2015 Camrose series and have played together in the Tollemache representing London each year since Heather joined the County. And she plays in (and has won!) plenty of national congresses and competitions.

Bridge is work for Heather in other ways as well. After working as an accountant for some 20 years, Heather left that behind to make a living from playing, teaching and writing about bridge. She writes for English Bridge, Mr Bridge and Choice magazine and does a great deal of teaching, mainly private groups. She is an excellent teacher and is supremely well organised – this is a picture of her prepared teaching boards stored in her office in Dorset - there are more in her flat in London!



Heather also works hard to give back to the game of bridge. She was on the EBU Selection Committee for about 15 years, chairing it for 5 years. About 7 seven years ago she joined the EBU Board of Directors, where she has responsibility for international matters and tournament direction. She chairs the TD Development Group which interviews, assesses and organises training for EBU panel directors. After the cheating allegations of 2015, Heather was asked to join an international panel of experts to review evidence of cheating at world level. She hasn't yet been required to give any opinions, but it is probably just a matter of time.

Apart from bridge, Heather is a very keen tennis player. She only started playing seven years ago but she now plays two or three times a week. She has developed



a mutually beneficial arrangement with Buster Mottram, the former British Number 1 player who is also keen on bridge – Heather coaches him at bridge and he coaches her at tennis. So far she has managed to rise to the heights of playing for her village team in Dorset, but no doubt Wimbledon is in her sights!



To complete our interview, I asked Heather for a memorable hand from her many competitions and she gave me this from her first European championship. They were playing in the final round, in contention for a gold medal:

Heather	♠ K7542	Liz	♠ A3
	♥ AQ		♥ 42
	♦ AJ1094		♦ KQ63
	♣ 6		♣ A7542

Some optimistic bidding saw them reach a pushy 7♦ by Heather (we'll draw a veil over the auction!). A trump was led, and now Heather paused for as long as she can remember ever doing as declarer. It felt as though the event would hinge on this hand, and with options in all four suits, it was a complicated play problem. If spades were 3-3, then one of 2-2 trumps, the heart finesse or 4-3 clubs would get her to 13 tricks. If spades were 4-2, trumps would need to be 2-2 and an extra trick would be needed from hearts or clubs.

It seemed to Heather that if the clubs were to be tested, that needed to happen right away in order to have sufficient entries, so she played a club to the ace and ruffed one. Now a spade to the ace, and another club revealed a five-two break. Time for plan B, and something good needed to happen in two of the remaining three suits. She cashed the king of spades and ruffed one high. They broke 3-3 (but if they hadn't she would still have been alright if trumps were 2-2 and the heart finesse worked). Drawing trumps, she now breathed a sigh of relief when they were 2-2, no longer needing the heart finesse.

Coming out to score, she discovered that the opponents had only reached game, and bidding the small slam would have been enough to win the gold, and saved quite a few fingernails!

Congratulations ...

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



There were numerous successes from London members at the Summer Congress in Eastbourne last August.

The first weekend, the Harold Poster Cup for the main Pairs event was won by **Andrew Robson** (left) in partnership with Alexander Allfrey. This achievement led to Andrew and Alexander becoming joint winners of the "Player of the Year" title. **Christophe Grosset** was third and **Kieran Dyke** fourth.



At the second weekend, several London players made it to the main finals of the teams. In the Four Star A final **Ben Green** was second, the team of **Andrew Black, Gunnar Hallberg, Phil King** and **Willie Whittaker** was fourth, **Andy Bowles** and **Shireen Mohandes** were sixth, **Dessy Malakova** and



Shahzaad Natt seventh and **Toby Nonnenmacher** eighth.

In the B final **Marion Robertson, Mike Bell** and **Kieran Dyke** were third, **Ian Payn** and **Frank To** sixth and the team of **Tim Chanter, Helen Wildsmith, Paul Chapman** and **Graham Pollack** was seventh.

Simon Gillis was third in the Swiss Teams. **Jeff Clargo** (left, playing with **Simon Carter**) won the Saturday Stratified Swiss Pairs.

In the Eastbourne mid-week afternoon events the Monday Open Pairs was won by **Mike Bell** while **Gad Chadha** was third in both the Thursday and Friday Open Pairs. The team of



Andrew Black, Willie Whittaker, Gunnar Hallberg and **Phil King** were third in the Friday PAB Teams. The Midweek KO Teams was won by a team including **Alex Hydes, Tom Townsend, Sarah O'Connor** and **Mike Bell** (pictured above right).



Sam Behrens (left) was second in the Under-26 Pairs.



In the midweek evening events the “Play with the Experts” Pairs was won by **Tom Townsend** and **Alex Hydes**, (left) with **Anne Catchpole** and **Martin Baker** third.

The GCH Fox Pairs was won by **Sarah O'Connor** (below, playing with Ben Norton), while **Ewa Kater** was second.



In the Mixed Pivot Teams **Sarah O'Connor** and **Mike Bell** were second. In the Mixed Pairs **Susanna Gross** and **Alex Hydes** were second.

In the Speedball events, **Szczepan Smoczynski** won both Friday Pairs events, the first with **Daniel Cardnell** and the second with **Chantal Girardin**. **Mike Bell** and **Sarah O'Connor** were second the first Friday and also second in the first Saturday teams speedball along with **Toby Nonnenmacher** while **Debbie Sandford** and **Gad Chadha** were third in the same event. **Ingar Hansen** was second in the second Friday Pairs and **Alex Hydes** won the second Saturday teams.



Simon Gillis, with **Zia Mahmood** in the team, also a sometime London member, won the Gold Cup, which he is holding in the picture, left. **Robert Sheehan** was one of the losing finalists team.

Alex Hydes won the Crockfords Cup for the second year running, though with different team mates, while **David Bakhshi** and **Mike Bell** were runners up.

Crockfords Plate was won by a team including **Brian McGuire** and **Mike Davis** (right).

Tom Townsend and **Graham Orsmund** were members of the TGRs team who won the 2016 NICKO.



Andrew Robson, David Bakhshi, David Gold and Mike Bell won the Premier League, earning themselves a place in the 2017 England Camrose team. **Kieran Dyke** was in the second placed team and **Alex Hydes** was in the third. **Ben Green, Simon Gillis** and **Shahzaad Natt** were in the first, second and third placed teams respectively in Division 2 of the Premier League.

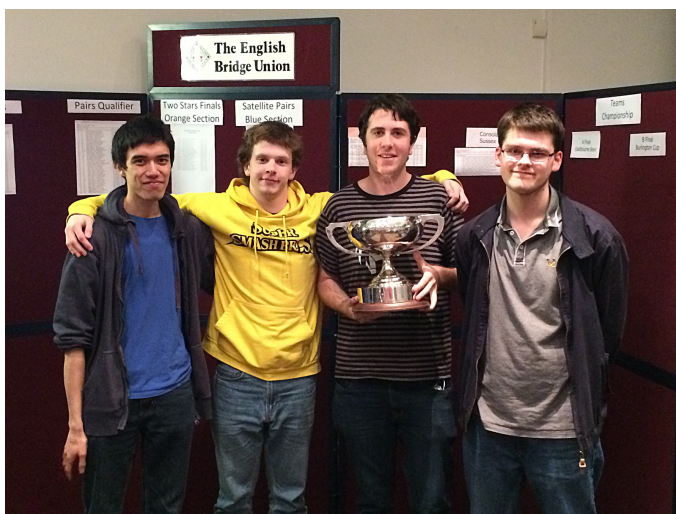


At the Autumn Congress there were some fine results, especially for members of the Bakhshi family. **Heather Bakhshi** and **Claire Robinson** won the Swiss Pairs while **David Bakhshi** came second.

David and Jasmine Bakhshi and **Liam Sanderson** (Heather's son) won the Sussex Cup. **Ben Hackenbroch** was third in the Sussex Cup.



Another team of youngsters, including **Sam Behrens** (pictured below holding the trophy), won the Eastbourne Bowl.



Andrew Black and **Gunnar Hallberg**, (right) won the Burlington Cup, with **Kieran Dyke** and **Marion Robertson** second.



David Wing won the Lake Garda Swiss Teams in October.

Roland Gronau, Tim Chanter and **Helen Wildsmith** were third in the Teams B final at the Scarborough Summer Congress.

In the Guernsey Congress, **Tim Gauld** won both the Swiss Pairs and the Men's Pairs and came second in the Multiple Teams along with his daughter **Elle**. **Elle Gauld** was also third in the Mixed Pairs with **Angus Simpson**. **Dominic Flint** and **Pamela Reiss** were second equal in the Swiss Teams.

At the Great Northern Swiss Pairs **Heather Bakhshi** and **Claire Robinson** were fourth in a big field of 98 pairs.



Hannah Cornfield and **Rowena Clow** (*pictured left*) won the Swiss Teams at the Blackpool Year End Congress

At the London Year End Congress the Swiss Pairs was won by **Gunnar Hallberg** and **Phil King** (*Phil with trophy, below right*).



The Mixed Pairs was won by **Szczepan Smoczynski** and **Gitte Hecht-Johansen** (*Gitte with trophy, below left*). **Marcia Green** was second in the Mixed Pairs.



Simon Gillis and **Paul Lamford** were second in the Swiss Teams.

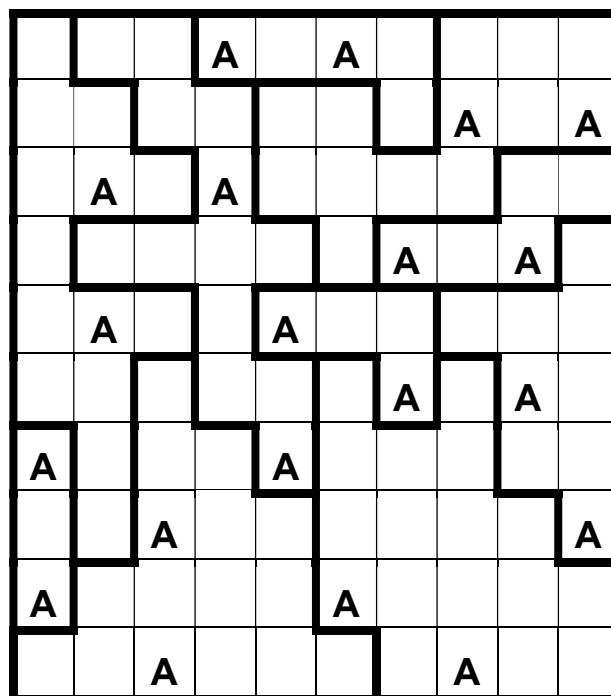


Sam Behrens (*right, with trophy*) won the Swiss Teams at the Manchester Congress in January.



Puzzle Solution

(See page 3)



Grimm's Tales

by Barry Grimm

A Life on the Ocean Wave

There are words and phrases, dear readers, that don't belong in the same sentence. "Walliams" and "comedy"; "Cliff CD" and "Christmas Present" (I found that one out the hard way); "Gourmet" and "Brentford". To this list might I suggest an addition? "Bridge" and "Cruise".

None of what happened below is my fault. None of it. But who takes the flak, shoulders the blame and carries the can? Muggins, that's who. As per bl**dy usual.

I was whiling away a couple of hours watching the lovely Shirley Harlow polishing the BridgeMates before the evening session. I was just beginning to doze off when she spoke. "Barry," she said, "You know we haven't been away for a while?" I grunted agreement.

"Well," she continued, "I've had Nobby Clarke on the phone. He and Vi do these Bridge Cruises but Vi's had a fall and they can't go on their next one so he wondered if we'd like to take over." I sat up, suspiciously (can you sit up suspiciously? Maybe you can, maybe you can't: I'll let the scholars debate that one). "It's not very onerous, you just have to do a lesson in the morning followed by a supervised session, and then in the afternoon run a duplicate or a teams thing. It depends on how many people are interested."

"How much do we get paid?" I sensibly asked.

"Well, nothing as such, but we get a free cruise and all food provided, as long as we don't go in the posh restaurants. Nobby and Vi always upgrade to a nicer cabin and pay the difference, and they've got one on hold."

“So it’s actually going to cost us money?” I protested but I don’t know why I bothered. I knew the battle was lost. It was just a matter of picking over the spoils. Unsurprisingly, she continued “We leave Southampton and go round various places in the Mediterranean. Ten days on board, altogether.”

“And when, if we went, would we be leaving?”

“Well, we’d need to get there at about noon, so to be on the safe side we should leave home at about nine.” She said.

“Yes, yes, that’s all very well, but on what date, exactly, always assuming I agree?”

So, the next morning we left Nobby Clarke in charge of the club (he didn’t seem particularly bothered about leaving Vi “Home Alone” for the best part of a fortnight) and drove down to Southampton. To be fair, getting on the boat was pretty straightforward, even though they seemed to be processing thousands of people. The nice woman at the counter just took my credit card details and gave me a sheet of paper with our “duties” written on it, and a list of the restaurants where we’d have to pay (no fear!), together with the Entertainments Officer’s phone extension. He was our boss. Apparently we were classed as “Entertainments”. Well, I do remember someone saying once after one of my Supervised Practices “you’re having a laugh, aren’t you?” so perhaps it wasn’t too far-fetched.

After unpacking and admiring the view from our balcony (Southampton Docks) we thought we’d take a leisurely stroll around. We were wandering along the deck when my heart froze. Surely it had to be an apparition? Surely it couldn’t be her, swathed in a garish kaftan that would give Timmy Mallet a headache? Oh God, it could...

“Barry, boyo! Good to see you ducks. Shirley my lovely, how are you?” Yes, it was Phyllis-Doris Madoc, dressed up to the eights and ready to party. “Lovely to see you, Phyllis-Doris,” said Shirley Harlow quickly, before I could say the wrong thing. “I didn’t know you went on cruises.”

“Well, I don’t usually, but this is a treat. And we’re in a Princess Suite. Quite the high life!” I didn’t like that “we”. There’d been some gossip down the Cat and Hamster but surely she couldn’t be on the boat with...

“Afternoon, all!” My worst fears had been realised. I was going to be spending ten days marooned at sea not only with Phyllis-Doris, the blancmange on legs, but also in the company of Christopher Plummer. Not, you will recall, dear reader, the famous film star. The bl**dy pork butcher.

As it turned out, it wasn’t that bad. Shirley did most of the bridge sessions (well, she enjoys it) so yours truly was left mainly to my own devices. I’d hang around the cabin, wander along the deck, have a drink or a cup of coffee and then in the afternoons have a nap after the morning’s exertions. Plummer and Phyllis-Doris ate in all the posh restaurants (how did a malodorous pork butcher get to be so loaded?) so we barely saw them other than for a drink. We did some excursions, but mostly without the gruesome twosome. The only place we all went together was Pisa, where I was stuck on the ground with Plummer while the girls staggered

up the tower. There was no chance of my joining them, not with my sciatica and asthma, not to mention the vertigo. Plummer was hardly scintillating company, but at least things cheered up a bit when it started to rain.

The only blot on an otherwise tolerable escutcheon was the day that Shirley Harlow had an attack of the vapours, after a particularly energetic evening on the dance floor with Phyllis-Doris. No-one's fault but her own. The lambada was bad enough, but I knew when they started limbo dancing it would end in tears. I tell you, when Phyllis-Doris went under that pole it looked like an earthquake in the Andes. But I digress.

The morning lesson was easy enough. I didn't give one. "You've all been playing for a few days now, so why don't we just go straight into Supervised Practice where you can consolidate what you've learned?" I reckon I got away with that quite neatly. Just as well, because I didn't know where Shirley Harlow had left her lecture notes. It was the afternoon that was the problem. There were only three players, a nice young couple from Pinner and Christopher Plummer. There was nothing for it, we had to play rubber bridge. The Pinner pair (can't remember their name) were too nervous to play cut-in, so we had to play a partnership game. Three hours sitting opposite Christopher Plummer! That's more than flesh and blood could reasonably be expected to stand. Fortunately, the Pinner Pair didn't want to play for money. That was a relief, I thought, glancing across at Plummer. I only had about three or four hundred quid on me.

Nothing much happened for a very long time. Then, Mr. Pinner dealt, as South. He and Mrs. Pinner were vulnerable, Christopher (W) and I were not.

Christopher held:

♠ A 5 3
♥ K J
♦ K 10 8 3
♣ A 8 3 2

Mr. Pinner opened Four Hearts in front of him. This wasn't a sophisticated game, there were no hidden meanings or alternative ways of bidding. Four Hearts meant Four Hearts. Plummer passed, and so did everyone else. With a triumphant flourish, everyone's favourite butcher led off ...the King of Hearts!

Mrs. Pinner trembled slightly as she put down dummy. "I hope," she said, "that I have enough."

Inevitably, she put down bombs.

♠ K Q 10 9 4 2
♥ Q 6
♦ 4
♣ K 9 5 4.

The Butcher of Brentford looked at dummy, blinked, looked at me, looked at declarer, looked at dummy again and said "What's the contract?"

"Four Hearts!" replied the Pinner and me, almost in harmony.

"Oh." he said. "I thought it was Four Spades."

I couldn't help it. I told him he was an idiot, and that his wretched lead had probably cost us the rubber (yes, in the cold light of day, so what?). But while I was ranting away, I noticed out of the corner of my eye that Mr. Pinner was looking more and more worried. This was the full deal.

♠ KQ10942
 ♥ Q6
 ♦ 4
 ♣ K954
 ♠ A53 ♠ J876
 ♥ KJ ♥ 54
 ♦ K1083 ♦ QJ6
 ♣ A832 ♣ QJ107
 ♠ –
 ♥ A1098732
 ♦ A9752
 ♣ 6

Squirm as Mr. Pinner might, he could no longer make the contract. The King of Hearts was the only lead to beat it! [*The Ace of Clubs works, as well, but West must switch to ♥K at trick two – Ed.*]

I was appalled. The idiot had done the right thing, for once in his miserable life. And by mistake! Damn him! I apologised. I wheedled. I cajoled. And then, in desperation, I took the only action left to me. I ordered a round of drinks.

Normality was soon restored. The Lovely Shirley Harlow returned to her post at the helm of the Good Ship Bridge, but I vowed never to go on a Bridge Cruise again. My blood pressure couldn't take it.

The next few days passed peaceably enough. A meal here, a drink there, a jaunt round the streets of Vigo (half an hour). In no time at all, we were back at Southampton. We said our farewells [*I note the absence of the word "fond" – Ed.*] to Plummer and Phyllis-Doris ("Can't stop, Chrissie has ordered a limo to take us back to Brentford") and I went to settle up. They had my card details anyway, but I thought I'd check the damage. We did go to the posh restaurants once or twice, and I supposed when you keep just signing for drinks it mounts up a bit. So, I asked for my bill, and the young lady handed me an invoice for...TWO AND A HALF GRAND!!!! Yes, two thousand five hundred quid! I caught my breath and looked at it closely. How many Mai-Tais? How many bottles of wine?? How many champagne cocktails??? But worst of all, how many pints? A pint was – get this – nine quid. Yes, nine quid. I'd had no idea. I turned back to the young lady and opened my mouth but she smiled and said "Nothing to worry about, it's already been taken off your card." There was nothing to say. So much for a cheap holiday. First we upgrade (The Lovely Shirely Harlow still hadn't told me how much that had cost), and now I'm stiffed with a two and a half grand bill on top. I turned to Shirley to remonstrate, but she was gone.

Good grief, I'd be glad to get back to Brentford. And that's not something you hear every day of the week.

So, until the next time, dear readers, here's a slightly impoverished two thumbs up, from me, to you.

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