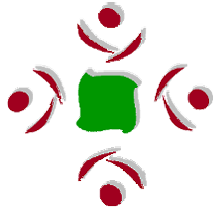


Association
Bridge
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MetroNews

*The newsletter of the
London Metropolitan Bridge Association*

Winter 2004

Association
Bridge
Metropolitan
London



Words from the Editor



Hello all London members, and welcome to this new look *MetroNews*. I have just taken over as Editor from Su King, who has done the job for the last 10 years and I should like to start by recording the heartfelt thanks of the LMBA for all her hard work. She will no doubt be a tough act to follow.

In Su's hands the newsletter retained its tradition of including first rate articles by many top London bridge players and journalists. Whilst I hope to maintain that quality, I want to produce a newsletter which reaches out to **all** the county's membership, with more actual news and information about the county's activities, personalities and so on. It is difficult to be very up to date when the magazine is only produced twice a year, but I shall still try to be a bit more topical and universal in appeal.

I hope that you, the reader, whoever you are, will help me with my aim of producing a magazine with something for everyone. Please let me know what you like and what you don't, so that I can make the magazine what **you** want. And please let me know about your triumphs or disasters at the bridge table or tell me about any amusing incidents that happen to you, particularly in LMBA events – I would really like to include contributions from a bigger cross-section of the membership. Send me your bridge questions or write about any bridge issues that concern you - I would love to introduce a letters page, but I know from experience with other journals that it is difficult to generate sufficient correspondence. So go on, be a devil, read this issue then write or email me with your comments, ideas, news or views. I shall look forward to hearing from you – my contact details are below.

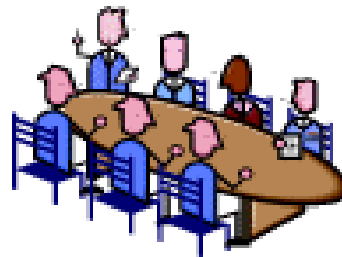
Meanwhile, this should reach you shortly before Christmas, so I will take the opportunity to send you every good greeting for the holiday season.



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LMBA - who are we?



Well I know who I am, but I wonder how many of you know who your London committee members are?

Just a faceless bunch of pen-pushers who stand on committees to make themselves feel important, I expect you think. Actually, we are all volunteers who want to do our bit for bridge players in London. I hope to introduce them all to you, along with other London personalities, in future issues of the newsletter, but for now a very quick run through with thumb-nail sketches:

Mike Hill – chairman and long-term committee member, former newsletter editor, former chairman who has just taken the reins again after the stand down of....

David Martin – who was chairman and also an EBU Board member until recently, when pressure of work as an independent consultant forced him to step down from both roles.

Chris Duckworth – that's me – secretary since 1992 and also now newsletter editor, for which I have found time by leaving my more-than-full-time job at the EBU after 10 years.

Cecil Leighton – membership secretary and very long-term committee member. Cecil still does an amazingly efficient job using pen and paper instead of computer!

Steve Eginton – Treasurer and well known tournament player who lives in the gourmet paradise of Bray in Berkshire.

Dave Muller – who looks after the interests of all junior players in the capital .

Roger Morton – hardworking Webmaster and bridge teacher, based in Surrey.

Nigel Freake – well known player and prominent Woodberry Club member.

Dom Goodwin – youngest committee member (by quite a distance!), now fully employed at the Young Chelsea BC.

Sati McKenzie – minutes secretary, an academic who represents the “ordinary player”.

Kit Jackson and **James Smith** – our publicity officers who are both actors – you'll have seen them both at the theatre or on TV, in programmes such as *The Bill*.



Simon Cochemé – Lederer organiser and bridge writer who recently retired from a career with IBM.

David Graham – our most recent committee member, also a recent retiree.

And we must not forget our President, **Bernard Teltscher**, who provides great support for the county's activities, in particular the Lederer Memorial Trophy.

What do the LMBA and the EBU do for you?

Do you feel that the LMBA does nothing for you, the ordinary player? Or that the EBU has little or no relevance to you? If so, you should be interested in two different initiatives that are currently planned.

One of these is a move by the EBU to work more closely with County Associations across the country to help them to better serve their membership. Towards this end, EBU General Manager Terry Collier has conducted a series of meetings with county officers in various counties to try and understand each one's particular needs and problems, and to find how best the national and local bodies could work together.

Continuing with these meetings, Terry Collier will be visiting London early in 2005. The LMBA has decided this should be an open meeting, to which all interested members are invited. The meeting will be held at the **Young Chelsea Bridge Club** on **Thursday 3rd**

March, starting at **6.30 pm**. Those that wish to do so may attend the first hour of the meeting only, then leave to take part in the regular duplicate at the club at 7.30 pm. But you are all welcome to stay throughout the discussions.

If you have questions you would like to raise relating to the EBU, how it operates and what it does for you, please send them to me, in my role as County Secretary, well before the meeting date, so that Terry Collier can be briefed about the particular concerns of county members. Or if you have ideas and suggestions regarding what you would like to see the EBU doing, why not just come along and voice them on 3rd March? Make a note of the date in your diary now (and don't tell me you don't yet have a 2005 diary, 'cos I know the EBU gave you one back in August!)

The other initiative that is going on within the county is an overhaul of the competition programme. The article below describes this and suggests how you can contribute.



You hold... a series of events!! What would you do?

by David Graham

We want to know what you think about our LMBA competitions. What is good or bad about our overall programme of events? Or, to put it another way, how could we change our events to increase the enjoyment level for those who might want to play in them?

The LMBA Committee has decided to initiate a twin-track review of our competition programme. As well as making tactical improvements to individual events, we are also looking to reassess the overall programme to ensure it meets the needs of our members' and prospective members.

As a preliminary step the Committee will want to confirm the general principles and constraints that should guide the Association in thinking about the programme. Many of these points are obvious but others may not be. I would place the following examples in the obvious category:

- to co-operate with English Bridge Union in the organisation of events at national level – LMBA runs county level events that complement and sometimes “feed” into the national programme
- not to be in competition with other counties or clubs in the Metropolitan area – to recognise the mutual advantage in avoiding fragmentation of effort
- to be non-profit making across all the events in the programme, recognising justifiable cross-subsidisation, but not to take undue financial risks
- to aim for a programme of events that is well-run in all aspects from entry handling to event direction to results, prizes and publicity.



I suggest that the following examples are in the less obvious category:-

- to invest in events aimed at attracting newcomers to duplicate bridge, especially those under 25



- to run a programme with sufficient balance and variety – per the point above, it feels right to run some competitions aimed at newcomers. Also, we should run leagues as well as one-day pairs and teams competitions. But maybe, as an innovation we should try a semi-fast pairs event or a board-a-match teams competition?

The Committee is minded to give particular attention to the events that look most in need of fine tuning, or an overhaul, or even maybe the axe! To help with this we plan to take a preliminary view to decide (on a scale from Green (healthy) through Amber (watch) to Red (action needed)) which events or competitions seem to be thriving and which are not. While entry numbers are an important indicator in all this, there may be other factors too.

But what do you think? I would be interested in hearing from you on any aspect of this where you have a point of view that ought to be taken into account. Please e-mail me with your thoughts by writing to david@dmgraham.com.

The 2004 Lederer

by *Simon Cochemé*

The 58th Lederer Memorial Trophy was held at the Young Chelsea on 16-17th October. Eight teams competed for the trophy in front of the largest ever audience, watching on VuGraph or at the tables. The VuGraph match was shown live on Bridge Base to a world-wide audience of over 700. In addition four clubs were holding heats of the 'Play with Stars' event; playing the first 24 Lederer boards and then IMPing up one of the top Lederer pairs.

The first round on Sunday included this hand:

N/S Vul. Dealer West.

♠ J542	
♥ AKJ106	
♦ A74	
♣ K	
♠ K863	♠ Q1097
♥ Q9	♥ 7
♦ Q1085	♦ J96
♣ Q109	♣ 76432
♠ A	
♥ 85432	
♦ K32	
♣ AJ85	

Where Ireland were North-South against the Schapiro Spring Foursomes winners the bidding went:

South	North
<i>Tommy Garvey</i>	<i>John Carroll</i>
1♥	2NT*
3♣*	3♦*
3NT*	4NT*
5♥*	5NT*
6♦	7♥

2NT was game-forcing with hearts. 3♣ showed a minimum. 3♦ asked for more information; 3NT showed a singleton spade. 5♥ showed two of

the five key cards and 6♦ showed the ♦K.

When England faced Canada the bidding went:

South	North
<i>Tom Townsend</i>	<i>David Gold</i>
1♥	2NT*
3♠*	4NT*
5♥*	5NT*
6♦	7♥

2NT was game-forcing with hearts. 3♠ showed a singleton spade. 5♥ showed two of the five key cards and 6♦ showed the ♦K.

These two sequences earned their bidders a share of the prize for the best bid hand. What made the judges choose this hand? Of the other six pairs, only one bid a small slam while five languished in game.



♣♦♥♠

The next hand was from the last round on Saturday. Two pairs reached 6♦ on the North-South cards and conceded one off as soon as they saw dummy.

E/W Vul. Dealer East.

♠ J10	
♥ AK4	
♦ Q653	
♣ AKQ6	
♠ Q98	♠ AK75
♥ 7	♥ 10986532
♦ 10942	♦ 8
♣ 98532	♣ 7
♠ 6432	
♥ QJ	
♦ AKJ7	
♣ J104	



his partner's suit and declarer made eleven tricks. A flat board, but their play earned Andrew Robson and David Bakhshi the prize for the best defended hand.

♣♦♥♠

At the end of Saturday, after four rounds, Ireland were leading with 160 VPs, ahead of the President's Team (128), the Holders (127) and Canada and Schapiro Spring Foursomes winners (both on 112). Would Irish eyes still be smiling at the end of Sunday?

When the Holders faced Canada the bidding on VuGraph went:

West	North	East	South
David Bakhshi	John Carruthers	Andrew Robson	Joe Silver
		Pass	1♦
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	All Pass	

Robson had not mentioned his heart suit for fear of encouraging a heart lead. He was rewarded when Bakhshi led the ♠8, an attitude lead, apparently denying interest in spades. Robson won with ♠K and considered his options. With a significant point-a-board element in the scoring, overtricks and undertricks can be very important. Eventually he decided to play his partner for precisely ♠Q98 and returned a small spade. The defence took the first four tricks to beat 4NT by one.

In the other room André Laliberté opened 1♥ on the East cards and the Holders bid to 6NT. Jon Robinson led

The Irish won their first two matches on Sunday but the Holders and England both had two big wins and with one round to go there were three teams still in contention. Ireland were leading with 230 VPs from the Holders (222) and England (208). Ireland were playing the President's Team and the Holders faced England on VuGraph. This hand was critical in both matches, when England and the Holders both bid to ♦7.

N/S Vul. Dealer East.

♠ AK5	
♥ A9874	
♦ K64	
♣ K8	
♠ QJ107643	♠ 982
♥ J3	♥ K652
♦ 2	♦ J953
♣ J92	♣ Q4
♠ -	
♥ Q10	
♦ AQ1087	
♣ A107653	

West	North	East	South
Colin Simpson	Andrew McIntosh	David Price	Phil King
		Pass	1♦*
3♠	Dble*	4♠	6♣
Pass	7♦	All Pass	

West	North	East	South
Andrew Robson	David Gold	David Bakhshi	Tom T'send
		Pass	1♣
3♠	3NT	4♠	5♦
Pass	6♠	Pass	7♦
All Pass			

Both Wests led ♠Q and both declarers played to set up the clubs. When West showed up with a third club they had to ruff with dummy's ♦K. Now the critical point had been reached: how to play the trumps. King for the Holders and Townsend for England both played a diamond to the Ace and went back to dummy's ♥A to finesse the ♦10. This line would have succeeded if ♦J had been singleton in the West hand or trebleton in the East hand, but failed on the actual lie of the cards. So the board was flat in 7♦ minus one.

In the Ireland versus President's match Tom Hanlon and Hugh McGann bid and made 6NT. The auction at the other table was:

West	North	East	South
John Carroll	Willie Coyle	Tommy Garvey	Zia Mahmood
		Pass	1♦
3♠	Dble	4♠	6♣
Pass	7♦	All Pass	

The play started in the same way, but, after ruffing the third club with ♦K, Zia

played a diamond to the 8! When that held he was able to cross back to dummy with ♥A and take another trump finesse. There was much discussion on VuGraph, Bridge Base and in the bar afterwards about the relative odds of the two lines of play. I am reliably informed that Zia's line of finessing the ♦8 immediately is 21 to 17 (full calculations available on request). Zia was the only person to make thirteen tricks and was a worthy winner of the award for the best played hand.

Ireland lost 12 IMPs on the board and lost the match 27-33 (the only match they lost all weekend). The VuGraph match was a few boards behind the rest and the VuGraph room at the Young Chelsea was packed for a thrilling finish. The Holders needed one good result to overhaul the Irish. On the very last board David Gold was in 3♠ doubled for England. If he went one off, Ireland would win; if he went two off then the Holders would have just enough points for victory. He went one off and that meant the Holders had only managed a 33-27 win. Ireland emerged as the winners of the 2004 Lederer by 2 VPs, the smallest ever margin of victory.



Mike Hill presents the trophy to Tommy Garvey, captain of the Ireland team

Full Lederer Results:

- 1 **Ireland** (Tommy Garvey, John Carroll, Hugh McGann, Tom Hanlon) 257
- 2 **HOLDERS** (Phil King, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Robson, David Bakhshi) 255
- 3 **England** (Tom Townsend, David Gold, Colin Simpson, David Price) 235
- 4 **Gold Cup Winners** (Peter Lee, Bob Rowlands, Jeffrey Allerton, Frances Hinden, Sean O'Neill, John Frosztega) 213
- 5 **President's Team** (Bernard Teltscher, Tony Priday, Zia Mahmood, Willie Coyle, David Edwin, Geoffrey Breskal) 210
- 6 **Canada** (John Carruthers, Joe Silver, Jon Robinson, André Laliberté) 190
- 7 **Schapiro Spring Foursomes Winners** (Janet de Botton, Gunnar Hallberg, Nick Sandqvist, Artur Malinowski, Jason Hackett, Justin Hackett) 167
- 8 **Young Chelsea Champions** (Adam Dunn, Dafydd Jones, Gary Jones, Brian Callaghan, David Burn, Ian Payn, Rob Cliffe) 153



The first winners of the Teltscher Cups in the new 'Play with the Stars' event held alongside the Lederer, whereby players in several bridge clubs played the same hands at the same time on Saturday afternoon and scored up with the experts, were:

North South scoring with
Andrew Robson and David Bakhshi:
Jim Bochsler & Byron Crittenden
(Wimbledon Bridge Club)

East West scoring with
Zia Mahmood and Willie Coyle:
Ivor Miller & John Sadler
(Acol Bridge Club)



If your club would like to hold a heat in next year's Play with the Stars, please contact me at simonx@simonx.plus.com or on 020 7603 3032.

There are more pictures from the Lederer Memorial Trophy along with lots of information about London events and news of London players at the LMBA website – pay it a visit at www.metrobridge.co.uk

London Trophy Finals - 2004

by Michael Hill



Queens Club in the late spring; an idyll in west London – but, on this occasion, for bridge, not tennis. The London Trophy, the LMBA competition for sports and social clubs, reached its climax there on Sunday, 23rd May. As usual, the event consisted of the final of the Trophy itself, the play-off for third place between the losing semi-finalists and the final of the plate competition.

The three matches were:

Trophy final:	RAC 2 vs Royal Wimbledon Golf Club 2
Third place play-off:	Old Actonians vs Farnham Golf Club
Plate final:	Coombe Hill Golf Club vs Shortlands Golf Club

This showed an interesting predominance of golf clubs this year, including Farnham who were the trophy winners two years ago.

So often, the main interest is slam hands but, curiously enough, the most interesting hand of the day this time was a humble 1NT contract. This was not so much because of what did happen as because of what might have happened.

Love all. Dealer East.

♠ 10753	
♥ 752	
♦ AQ103	
♣ J9	
♠ A62	♠ QJ94
♥ J1043	♥ A98
♦ K86	♦ J2
♣ K104	♣ Q852
♠ K8	
♥ KQ6	
♦ 9754	
♣ A763	

At every table, South opened 1NT (interesting that none of them were playing a strong no trump) and at five of the tables this silenced everyone else. The exception was in the plate final where the Coombe Hill East found a double in the pass-

out seat – and again, this silenced everyone. Every West led a heart but, at five tables it was the three whilst, at the sixth, to maintain the individuality of the plate final, the Shortlands West chose the knave. Every East won and returned a heart, which declarer won to play a diamond. But this was where things began to diverge; the RAC South finessed the ♦10, the Shortlands South (who was doubled) ran the ♦9 and the rest finessed the ♦Q. Running the ♦9 appears to be the best play for four tricks in the suit – it gains when East has the singleton 6 or 8 – but, when there are only three diamond tricks, as here, the best overall play is less clear. Declarer may well benefit more from an early opportunity to lead a black suit from dummy – in which case, the best line in the diamond suit is to finesse the queen.

The Shortlands South won East's heart continuation, took another diamond finesse, returned to the ♣A and then cashed the remaining

diamonds. He exited with the ♣J, which East won to play the ♠Q. There were no more tricks available to declarer on this line and he duly conceded one-off, doubled for -100.

South for the RAC also received a heart continuation and took another diamond finesse but he then ran the ♣9 to West's 10. After cashing the fourth heart, West was reluctant to lead the suit declarer had played, so exited with a spade, thus presenting declarer with his seventh trick.

Of those declarers who finessed the ♦Q, two tried an immediate spade to the king but were soon writing -50 on their cards. Wimbledon's South delayed the evil moment; when the ♦Q held, she cashed the ace, gave up a trick to the king, won the heart continuation and cashed the fourth diamond. Only then did she play a spade to the king - but it made no difference; still -50.

The Old Actonians' South did better, seeing prospects in the club suit. He led the ♣J, covered by the queen and ace, so setting up scope for brilliancies by both declarer and defence. Alas, they were stillborn. He continued with a finesse of the ♦10, giving East the opportunity to switch to the ♠Q, leaving him no legitimate chance - but East prolonged the agony by clearing the hearts instead. However, declarer simply cashed his diamonds and played a spade to the king for -50.

So what were the missed brilliancy opportunities? If declarer had won the second round of diamonds (to keep East off lead), then cashed his remaining heart winner



before exiting with the third round of diamonds, West would have been end-played. She could have cashed the long heart and the K10 of clubs but would then have had to lead away from the ♠A in the three-card ending. Except that, had she unblocked one of the big clubs under the ace at trick 4 then, in the above end-position, she could have cashed her remaining top club, killing dummy's nine and crossed to her partner's ♣8 for a spade lead though declarer. I wonder if Zia would have found that one!

♣♦♥♠

Variety is said to be the spice of life, and a later board provided a reminder of that.

Game all. Dealer West.

♠ 8	
♥ Q53	
♦ 932	
♣ QJ9764	
♠ 9765	♠ K104
♥ AK97	♥ J8642
♦ Q87	♦ 10654
♣ 32	♣ A
	♠ AQJ32
	♥ 10
	♦ AKJ
	♣ K1085

5♣ is an excellent contract for North-South (the best line of play being to ruff out the ♠K which fails only when East has 5+ spades including the king and West has the ♦Q). The problem is bidding it. In practice, this board produced 5 different contracts and six different results. South opened 1♠ at every table of course but after that it was mayhem.

At both tables in the Plate, the Norths passed leaving their partners to play in 1♠ on the lead of the ♥A. After that, it looks as if South should make 9 tricks but one declarer emerged with ten, whilst the other contrived to hold himself to seven. At the other four tables, North responded 1NT. One South rebid 2♠ and played there. She, too, received the ♥A lead but she ended up with 8 tricks. The fourth South tried an adventurous 3NT rebid, which became the final contract – but East led the obvious small heart and the

defence had 5 tricks before declarer's clubs could be established. The remaining two Souths rebid 3♣ (probably the text book action) but one North managed to pass that!

The eventual winners of the Trophy were the only ones to bid to 5♣, which they did via 1♠-1NT-3♣-4♣-4♦-5♣. They were not troubled in the play. After leading the ♥A, West tried to cash the ♥K, so declarer could in due course pitch the ♦J on the ♥Q and cross-ruff the hand.

Results

Trophy: RAC 2 bt Royal Wimbledon Golf Club 2 by 1140 aggregate points

Third place play-off: Old Actonians bt Farnham Golf Club by 620 points

Plate: Shortlands Golf Club bt Coombe Hill Golf Club by 330 points.



Trophy winners A Bowman, T Scouller, B Heilbern and C Freeman (with tournament organiser Cecil Leighton, second left and LMBA Chairman, second right).

At the AGM of the LMBA held on 1st July 2004, the constitution of the Association was changed in respect of the necessary quorum at an AGM. This was reduced from 25 to 15 in recognition of the typical attendance at such meetings. The full minutes of the meeting, including the Chairman's Annual Report, may be seen at the end of the home page on the LMBA website at www.metrobridge.co.uk. To have your say at the next AGM, come to the Young Chelsea BC at 7.00pm on Thursday 7th July 2005.

Coming Soon!

Two popular events in the London calendar are coming up early in 2005, offering something for everyone. Both events will be held at the Young Chelsea, starting at 1.00pm.

Simple System Pairs

The **Palmer Bayer Trophy** on **Sunday 23rd January** is for all those who enjoy a relaxed game of bridge, with no complicated conventions to deal with. It is the ideal competition for someone who is inexperienced at duplicate bridge – the pace is a little slower than usual and the emphasis is on being friendly and sociable. There is even a glass of wine for participants at the end of the session (at around 6.00 pm) which you can enjoy whilst discussing the hands with an expert as the results are calculated. Perfect for bringing along a rubber-bridge playing friend who fancies a taste of duplicate, or just for whiling away a pleasant Sunday afternoon in winter.



Championship Pairs

The **London Championship Pairs** on **Sunday 6th February** is a rather more serious competition. It is the main county pairs championship and, as such, green points are awarded to the leading pairs. It consists of two sessions, the first session serving as a qualifier from which fourteen pairs go forward to an all-play-all final whilst the remainder of the field complete the consolation event.

In addition to the regular prize for the competition, the leading four pairs (with London as their county of allegiance) earn the right to represent London in the Corwen Trophy – the national Inter-County Pairs Championship which is held in June 2005.

For more information about either event, please contact Dom Goodwin at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club – call 020 7373 1665 or email to info@ycbc.co.uk.

Bridge on TV

Have you seen the recent programmes on Sky Sports channels, featuring the 12th Bridge Olympiad held in Istanbul this autumn? If not, you may not be too late. The last programme in the series is due to be shown on Sky Sports 3 at 10.00 pm on Christmas Eve and on Sky Sports Xtra at 6.00 am and 1.00 pm on Christmas day.



Catch it and make your Christmas complete!

Notes from the coal face

by A Minor



Recently I clambered from the dark coal face of my weekly club duplicate up to the sunny pit head to watch the Lederer tournament at the Young Chelsea. Watching the assembled throng of international experts I began to muse on the state of our game.

Some years ago Rugby Union cleaned up its act. It stopped most of the violence, answering back and swearing at the referee. Consequently the game is now attracting more sponsorship and audiences worldwide. And has generally a healthy image. It is, though, still a poor relation to football where the money swilling around the game is literally uncountable. Yet rich top footballers act like thugs, do physical violence to each other, curse and swear at all and everyone and cheat by diving or getting sent off. And still the money doesn't dry up, nor does the FA take a firm hand. Audiences love it.

It struck me, as I watched those careful quiet bridge players, how different was the state of our game, that it is in fact inversely proportionate to football, and yet we cannot attract a single viable sponsor. Down at the coal face, where most of us try to play, we resemble the average premiership footballer with displays of petulance, bad temper, rudeness, discourtesy, unsportsmanlike disrespect to opponents and partner and at best only the merest knowledge of the rules. All these negative attributes actively discourage new players from getting involved at more than a social level with the game. Yet if we down below were to look up the shaft, the light available shines brightly. Apart from their skill and talent – obviously – the biggest discernable difference is how beautifully behaved the players are. Their manners, sportsmanship and courtesy to their partners, not to mention the opponents, always to the fore, with never a desire to flaunt their prowess or vaunt their superiority. Among the best, sharing a love for the game is the uniting factor. Wouldn't a sane sponsor want a piece of this? Alas, no. It won't secure a television slot or sell newspapers.

But as I took the slow ride back down to the coal face of club bridge, I was heartened to have watched the game I love played at the highest level in the best of spirits, and if I cannot rise to the levels of ability I have witnessed, I can at least start to emulate the bearing and demeanour of my superiors and be grateful that the game we are both playing will never have room in its already overcrowded terminology for that loathsome oxymoron – “professional foul”.

*This is the first of what I hope will be a regular series of articles “from the coal face”. What do you think about the state of our game? Why not write and let me know **your** views. And on the subject of TV coverage of bridge, see the [previous page](#).*

Letter from America

by David Burn



At least in the Olympiad, they come one at a time – you have to play Norway, then Italy, then the United States – but in the Reisinger, they come not single spies but in battalions. At the point-a-board, or as the Americans call it board-a-match (but they call a thing gas when it is a liquid, so their terminology may safely be ignored) event that is the culmination of the Fall Nationals, Helness & Helgemo will depart your table, whereupon Fantoni & Nunes will sit down; when they leave, Berkowitz & Cohen will take their place. It's your own fault for having qualified for the final of the tournament in the first place, and if you're going to get mangled I suppose you might as well get mangled by the best...

This is the kind of thing you are up against.

N/S Vul. Dealer East.

	♠ 983	
	♥ QJ98	
	♦ A42	
	♣ J65	
♠ A1075		♠ 6
♥ 43		♥ AK1065
♦ K1093		♦ Q875
♣ AQ2		♣ 1093
	♠ KQJ42	
	♥ 72	
	♦ 6	
	♣ K874	

diamond to the ten, and later played the ten of clubs to the queen, making ten tricks for what seemed to me a decent enough plus 170. Certainly, Zia opined that we could not lose the board...

West	North	East	South
Zmud- zinski	Mossop	Balicki	Rees
		Pass	Pass
1♣ (1)	1♥ (2)	Pass	1♠
Pass	Pass	Dble (3)	Pass
Pass	Pass		

West	North	East	South
Simpson	Zia	Burn	Rosenberg
		Pass	Pass
1♠ (1)	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

(1) Polish, lots of meanings (2) Get in the bidding! (3) I would have doubled 1♥ for penalty.

(1) Four-card majors, strong no trump

Michael Rosenberg led his fourth highest spade. I suppose I could have stuck in the ten, but I didn't have any particular reason to do that at the time. I made better use of the rest of my tens, though – I won the ace of spades, played a heart to the ten, a

Now, maybe that 1♥ overcall was not the soundest thing you've ever seen. But the fact remains that the Poles judged to defend an eight-card fit at the one level when both sides had roughly half the deck; they beat it one, they scored plus 200, and they won the board. That, as Eric Rodwell (who was on the winning team in this year's Reisinger) would say, is bridge, mister.

This wasn't – but it did not occur to me until afterwards how lucky we had been.

E/W Vul. Dealer North.

♠ AQ2
 ♥ J
 ♦ 8432
 ♣ A8765
 ♠ 54
 ♥ 97652
 ♦ Q76
 ♣ 432
 ♠ K873
 ♥ A
 ♦ KJ109
 ♣ KJ109
 ♠ J1096
 ♥ KQ10843
 ♦ A5
 ♣ Q

West	North	East	South
	<i>Simpson</i>		<i>Burn</i>
	1♣	1NT	Dble
2♦	Pass	2♥	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Colin Simpson's opening bid was the usual filth these days – at least he was showing clubs. When East alerted 2♦ as a transfer, I was prepared to bet all money that it wasn't one – my double of 2♥ was a perfunctory gesture prior to getting on with the real auction. But everything was as it seemed, and the final contract went four down for 1100 to us. Meanwhile:

West	North	East	South
<i>Rees</i>		<i>Mossop</i>	
	1♣	1NT	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North at the other table was also willing to pretend that he had an opening bid, even though in his methods he was not showing clubs. David Mossop also viewed the East cards as a 1NT overcall. South's non-forcing 2♥ was a wonderful piece of judgement, for his side could not make a game. When it came round to

East, he doubled for takeout, but Tim Rees had nowhere to go. 2♥ doubled made an overtrick, but 570 was a loss on the board. But if the vulnerability had been switched, Simpson and I would have scored only 800, while our team-mates would have lost 870.

Colin and I have never played together before, and our bidding methods were not sophisticated. The crash-bang-wallop system scored the occasional triumph, though:

♠ 9865
 ♥ AJ8742
 ♦ 102
 ♣ J
 ♠ AKJ4
 ♥ K93
 ♦ K4
 ♣ A942
 ♠ Q107
 ♥ Q
 ♦ A87653
 ♣ KQ5
 ♠ 32
 ♥ 1065
 ♦ QJ9
 ♣ 108763

West	North	East	South
<i>Burn</i>		<i>Simpson</i>	
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

3NT was 18-19 balanced (2NT would not have been forcing). 5♠ was an all-round invitation, and 6♠ was the right contract. North led ♥A and another, so I could ruff a heart in dummy and draw trumps; then the king of hearts squeezed South in the minors and we recorded plus 980. The play would have been more challenging on a diamond lead – I would have needed to make the counter-intuitive play of the ace from dummy, in order to keep communications intact.

The Reisinger is the toughest, but the most enjoyable, bridge tournament I have ever played. If you're thinking of visiting an American National, I strongly recommend the Fall tournament. The ACBL won't stage it in Florida every year, so you won't necessarily have the bonus of temperatures in the 70s during November, but it's still well worth going

Tollemache success

The London team in this year's Tollemache Cup qualifier was somewhat weaker than usual because of the absence of various "superstars" who were playing in the American Nationals in Florida at the time (see David Burn's article above!). They were particularly pleased, therefore, to manage to qualify for the final by being one of the top two teams (out of nine) in their section.

They ran it extremely close, however! After leading throughout most of the event, the team was overtaken by Leicestershire towards the end, who consolidated their position by gaining ground over London in the last match. When all the scores had been totted up and checked, London had ended up tying in second place with Sussex. The tie was to be split by the score in the match between London and Sussex, but this turned out to be a 10 all VP draw. So it was necessary to look at the actual IMPs in this match, and London had the better of Sussex by 2 IMPs. Bad luck to Sussex, but well done to the London team of Brian Callaghan, Chris Duckworth, Ian Payn, Rob Cliffe, Paul Martin, Gordon Rainsford, Marc Smith and Peter Czerniewski.

Calling all clubs

If you are an organiser of a London bridge club, you may have found that your club has not been included in the EBU diary, nor the subsequent addendum issued in October. If so, this may well have been because the EBU does not have your correct contact details. If your secretary changes, you need to tell the EBU and also the LMBA. (It should be enough to tell one or the other body, but we are fallible, so it is a good idea to send the information directly to both!). For the LMBA, details should be sent to our Membership Secretary, Cecil Leighton, 6 The Bowls, Chigwell, IG7 6NB Tel: 020 8500 0700.

Don't forget also to let the LMBA know if your club playing details change, so they can be correctly published in the Competition Brochure. Corrections that we have been notified since the 2004-05 brochure went to press are as follows:

Cumberland LTC – Bridge Section. The contact is now the Chairman, A Corby, 39 Belsize Avenue, NW3 4BN Tel: 020 7794 4779.

Lansdowne Club. The secretary is now Mrs H Kingston.

Ernst & Young BC. The correct details for Michael Kaltz are: 1 More London Place, SE1 2AF Tel: 020 7951 2700.

Nippon BC. Contact is now Mrs E Michalski.



Pot-Pourri

by Peter Burrows



I normally try in these articles to discuss deals that have some sort of common theme. That usually enables me to ride one of my hobby-horses to death, which may not be an advantage, but it does give some thread of coherence to the article as a whole, which probably is. Whether the analysis itself has the same degree of coherence is another question altogether! This time around, inspiration deserted me, so here are three completely unconnected deals that grabbed my attention recently. The first came up at my local club a couple of months ago and it has a number of points of interest, some of which appear more often in the text-books than at the table.

Game all. Dealer East.

	♠ KQ53		
	♥ 5		
	♦ A875		
	♣ A1082		
♠ AJ107642		♠ 98	
♥ J92		♥ AQ107643	
♦ --		♦ 64	
♣ 973		♣ K6	
	♠ --		
	♥ K8		
	♦ KQJ10932		
	♣ QJ54		
West	North	East	South
		3♥	4♦
4♥	6♦	Pass	Pass
6♥	Double	All Pass	

South was not entirely happy about introducing 4♦ when holding neither any Aces nor any spades, but naturally felt that she had to take action. In the post-mortem, she said that she was worried that I (as North) would bid 4♠, and that she would then be in two minds as to whether she should repeat the diamonds or introduce the clubs. Terence Reese used to say that after an enemy pre-empt you should normally put your faith in your long suit, partly because

of the probability of bad breaks. That advice may well be sound in general, but it was easy for South here to envisage the possibility that twelve tricks might be available in clubs, but not in diamonds. Give North something like this, for example:

♠ Qxxxxx
♥ xx
♦ --
♣ AKxxx

Admittedly, on this layout, one would have a difficult decision in principle, if playing 6♣, whether to take the ruffing diamond finesse or to try to bring down the ♦A in two rounds. However, if a heart were led, then presumably the location of the Ace of that suit would be known, and thus the decision in diamonds would become somewhat easier.

There is another point to be considered. Even if twelve tricks are available in clubs, is there a realistic probability that you can bid the slam with any confidence? South had almost made up her mind that the answer was in the negative when the actions of West and North relieved her of the necessity to take a stand, an outcome at which she later expressed



herself to have been mightily relieved. Note that North's double of 6♥ was mandatory. To pass in this position would

show first-round control of hearts, inviting South at least to consider the possibility of bidding the grand.

Presumably West had originally been hoping to play the deal in spades. Seven-card majors are not normally destined to feature in dummy, but this hand was an obvious exception, and West duly raised his partner to game. Now it was my turn to sit and stew. 7♦ might have been rigid. For example, give South:

- ♠ Axx
- ♥ --
- ♦ KQxxxx
- ♣ KQxx

On the other hand, perhaps even 5♦ might be in jeopardy opposite

- ♠ x
- ♥ KQ
- ♦ KJ109xxx
- ♣ QJx

Admittedly, on the first example South might have doubled, while the second would leave her a little light for her bid, but not so light as to silence her, or so I judged (it is very difficult to silence this particular South!).



Eventually I decided that to play her for the first of those hands would be too aggressive, and that to assume the second would be over-pessimistic. So I took what I thought was a middle course in raising to 6♦. As you can see, that was not actually a terrible contract, relying as it did on the club finesse. It looked as though

our side was about to prove unlucky on the deal, but fortunately for us West was still there.

I have every sympathy with West's decision to bid on over 6♦. These high-level decisions are never easy, and in truth he really had no idea whether 6♦ was making or not. The natural tendency in such situations is to pray that the pre-empt has done its job, pass quickly, and hope that you can defeat the enemy contract. Given his partner's line of play, that certainly would have proved to be West's best course of action on this deal. However different considerations come into play if you have reason to hope that your sacrifice might cost less than the value of the enemy game. The slam will presumably not be bid at some tables, and, even if it is going down, you may not score too badly if you take the sacrifice.

As you can see, such was the case on this deal. South can not lead hearts without losing his trump trick and so, provided that East plays for two diamond ruffs in dummy, the actual lay-out enables him to get out for two off. Assume that South leads a top diamond, ruffed in dummy. The trap to avoid is the temptation to take an early trump finesse, for, if it loses, South will presumably return another trump, and the second diamond ruff will be still-born. Instead, declarer should try the effect of a club to the King. If this loses to South, then East is still assured of the second ruff. Alternatively, if North rises with the Ace and plays a trump through, it is obviously correct to win the Ace and take the second ruff (virtually 100% to succeed) rather than risking the trump finesse (50% at best).

Fortunately for us, this analysis was too abstruse for East. At trick two he finessed in hearts! South won the King and played another round of trumps, killing the second ruff. So East eventually lost a trick in each suit, and we made a somewhat fortunate +800.



The second deal came up in a teams event at the same venue a couple of weeks later. It features one of my bêtes noires, and was mis-handled at practically every table.



Game all. Dealer West.

♠ A975	♠ 32
♥ 732	♥ K1096
♦ QJ942	♦ A8
♣ 8	♣ J10754
♠ KQJ1086	♠ 4
♥ A5	♥ QJ84
♦ K753	♦ 106
♣ 6	♣ AKQ932

The auction normally went like this:

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	2♣
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

North led a club, and when South shunted another big one through at trick two, declarer suddenly had two trump losers, provided that North did not play the ♠A on this trick. If North does win with the ♠A (assuming that West puts in a big spade) and then plays another trump to cut down on dummy's ruffs, that disposes of South's singleton trump, and declarer

makes five spade tricks, one diamond ruff, and two top tricks in each red suit. However, most Norths knew enough to duck when West inserted a big spade, whereupon declarer's attempt to ruff a diamond in dummy was thwarted by South's possession of the mighty four and the contract had to go off. (If declarer plays on trumps first, then North can safely win and play a second trump to kill the diamond ruff, leaving West with two diamonds and two black Aces to lose.)

If North wins ♠A at trick two but does not play a trump at trick three, then declarer may mistakenly try to ruff a diamond immediately. Now South can over-ruff and play a third club, promoting North's ♠9. Note though that West can succeed simply enough on that line of defence by pulling South's trump before aiming for the diamond ruff. So, North's declining to play ♠A at trick two was both theoretically and practically correct. Score one for the text-books.



That analysis is not particularly abstruse, but the play was marginally interesting all round. However, it is the auction that really concerns me. What on earth was West thinking of when removing 3NT to 4♠? The previous bidding had described the hand to perfection, so how could West presume to know more than East did about what was the best game contract? If South had not inserted the club bid I would have been less critical of West, for in that case (s)he might reasonably have supposed that there might be a weakness in the club suit. As it was, East's clubs could hardly have been worse, and the 4♠ bid was

back-seat driving at its very worst. Note that nine tricks in NT are completely trivial on any defence, and that is precisely what West should have expected.

That is an interesting example of the way in which the opposition's bidding may help your side. Very few Souths, I think, would have failed to bid 2♣, and that should have made the East-West task much easier (but please don't conclude from this that I am critical of South's call). More pertinent, perhaps, is the thought process that should guide West's actions. When partner expresses a strong view about the final contract, you should ask yourself, "Is there any feature of my hand entitling me to over-ride his decision?" Clearly, the better the picture you have already painted of your hand, the less you should be inclined to do so. In this case, the West hand was precisely what East would be expecting. (S)he had a good spade suit, with at least one (and probably two) outside entries thereto. Given that, and the implications of East's rebidding NT in the face of the club bid, it was simply inconceivable that ten tricks in spades should be easier than nine in NT. Words almost fail me, but enough of my spleen!

♣♦♥♠

Finally, I have one very good piece of advice to offer. Whatever you do, don't be tempted to write a book. Or at least, not a book on bridge! If you do, one thing you can be certain of is that well-meaning friends (and enemies if you have any) will regale you with details of deals they think you should have included but didn't, and complaints about some of those that

you did when they think you shouldn't. However, every cloud has a silver lining, and for me it was the following gem, reported to me by Barrie Partridge, who was the TD when it was played.

Love all. Dealer West.

♠ A865		♠ J10
♥ AKJ94		♥ 108
♦ A73		♦ K6
♣ 5		♣ KJ107432
♠ K9754		♠ Q2
♥ Q62		♥ 753
♦ 852		♦ QJ1094
♣ 86		♣ AQ9

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	1NT!	2♦
2♠	3♣!	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Double	All Pass		

Playing safely for his contract, North had no difficulty in making an overtrick, although it looks as if he could make twelve tricks on a non-spade lead (unfortunately I do not have details of the play).

Why then, you may ask, am I boring you with this trivial deal? Well, the layout may be trivial, but the auction is unique in my experience in that it features a psych by both sides! Neither had any significant impact, other than persuading West to double the final contract. Barrie ruled both of them green while suppressing a silent chuckle.



Youth Bridge Page



Congratulations.....

to **Michael Graham**, who has been selected to play for England in the Under 20s team in the Channel Trophy at Christmas, and in the Peggy Bayer, the home international event for Under-20s, in January.

to **Dave Rogers**, who was selected to play in an English Under-20s team-of-eight in a friendly match against Scotland, played in Darlington at the end of November. The English team comfortably defeated their opponents from across the border.

Junior events in London

Unfortunately, it was unavoidably necessary to cancel the two junior events that were planned for November this year - the Under-19 Pairs and the Under-25 Swiss Teams Championships.

The good news is that the **Under-19 Pairs has been re-scheduled for Sunday 16th January 2005**, again at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Note that the originally scheduled start time was 12.00 noon, and this will again be the time on this date. Where possible, young players will be contacted about this event, but if you know someone who might be interested in playing, please tell them about this new date.

It may not be possible to find a suitable date on which to reschedule the Swiss Teams, but don't worry, there's still an excellent teams event coming up. That is the **Junior Inter-County Teams on Sunday 6th February**. We are not too strict about which county any player wants to play for, and a county can enter as many teams as it wishes. So round up your friends at school, university or wherever and bring them along to Earls Court for this competition, which again starts at 12.00 noon. The event is actually being held at the **Barkston Gardens Hotel**, which is next door to the Young Chelsea in Barkston Gardens, but if you arrive at the YC, there will be someone there to direct you to the right place!

In case you are unsure, to play in a junior event this season, you need to be born on or after 1st January 1980. To play in the Under 19s you need to be born on or after 1st January 1986.

Important organisational note

Responsibility for junior bridge has, for the time being, passed from David Muller to Chris Duckworth. So if you have any questions, need any help, would like to enter an event, or whatever, please contact Chris – contact details are on page 2. Schools that would like to take part in the Schools League and have not yet been contacted about this should please get in touch, preferably by email.

Members' News

Metrobridge is for and about London bridge players and I hope to include a regular page of general news about members' activities. Let me know if you have a piece of news that you would like to share with the readers. To kick-start this column, here's some happy news:

Richard and Sandra's wedding

In late September a large crowd of London members went to Zagreb for the wedding of Richard (Dickie) Probst and his beautiful Croatian bride, Sandra. Richard, who has recently graduated from being a junior to a full member of London, is one of the well known Probst clan, headed by TD father John. The pair met a couple of years ago when playing in the Junior European Championships in Torquay and continued their romance at long distance and also while travelling all over Europe and Africa. They married in Sandra's home town where the many visitors from England enjoyed a great weekend, planned to the last impeccable detail by Sandra. The picture shows the happy couple outside the church immediately after the marriage service.



Happy Coach trip!



At the recent World Olympiad in Istanbul, the England women's team came home with the bronze medal. They lost to the eventual winners, Russia, in the semifinals, but beat the pre-event favourites, China, in the play-off for third and fourth place.

Although the team included four regular London players, including Kitty Teltscher, wife of the LMBA President, who was delighted to win her first international medal, only one of those present was actually a London member – the happy coach (*yours truly, Ed!*).

The second England coach in Istanbul was also a LMBA member – David Burn, who coached the open team. He was also very happy for the first half of the event, when the England team, including Londoners Tom Townsend and David Gold, won their section of the round robin without losing a single match – a great achievement. Unfortunately they then lost to Pakistan in the first of the knock-out stages of the competition.

Puzzle corner

Here is quite a tough little puzzle for you to while away some time over Christmas. If you get stuck, the solution is on page 29.



Can you work out who holds which high cards and the distribution of each hand in this deal of bridge? North/South and East/West each hold a combined 20 points. No-one has a void or more than 5 cards in any suit. All East's honours are red and all North's are black. South is the only player to have an even number of hearts and North the only one to have an odd number of spades. The player with two diamonds has three heart honours but no diamond ones. South holds two more points than North and one fewer than East. East has fewer than half as many red cards as South. North, whose honours are all different, has the same number of spades as diamonds and West has the same number of spades as clubs. The ♥KQ are together in one hand, the ♣KQ are together in another, and the two black jacks in a third. West's honours are in two suits only.

Results from the season 2003/04

The LMBA organises several competitions that run throughout the competition season, usually from October to June. Many members may be unaware of what is available, so brief descriptions of the competitions are provided along with last year's results.

The **London Trophy** is our biggest competition and is a knock-out for teams representing non-bridge clubs. These may be sports clubs – golf, tennis and bowls clubs all frequently contain bridge players – or businesses or any society or association whose primary reason for existence is not bridge. The final is held each year at Queen's Club, the famous tennis club in West Kensington. This year's winners were from the RAC and their triumph is reported, along with the full results, on pages 10 – 12.



The **Home Counties League** is for teams of eight from London and the neighbouring counties. The winners last season were Surrey, closely followed by London Red – one of the two teams fielded by London itself.



The **Piccadilly Cup** is the knock-out competition for teams playing in the London League, though other teams representing bridge clubs are also able to enter. The winners last season were Surrey Marauders, captained by Cameron Small, who beat the Young Chelsea 3 team captained by Tim Pike in the final.

The **London League** is divided into three divisions, so providing great bridge for all levels of players. In fact, we hope to have a Newcomers' League in future years, to provide a starting point for the least experienced of our members, but this has yet to take off. Any group of four (or more) players can play in the League, though many teams represent bridge clubs in the capital.

The 2003/04 leaders in each division were:

- Div I 1st Young Chelsea 1 (Capt: Brian Callaghan)
 2nd Young Chelsea 3 (Capt: Tim Pike)
- Div II 1st Young Chelsea 2 (Capt: Simon Cearns)
 2nd Surrey Marauders (Capt: Cameron Small)
- Div III 1st Monday Club B (Capt: James Smith)
 2nd Young Chelsea 4 (Capt: Chris Goodchild)

The **London Teams of Four Championship** is the premier knock-out event, the winners of which are entitled to represent London in the national inter-county teams of four competition. Last season's winners, who achieved a hat trick by winning this for the third year running, were Ian Payn, Rob Cliffe, David Burn and Brian Callaghan. The unlucky runners-up were Mike Hill, David Ould, Roger Morton and Mike Clack.



The **London Schools League** is for teams from schools in and around the London area. The league culminates in a semi-final in March and a head-to-head final thereafter. In 2004 the winners were Dulwich College who beat Haberdashers' Aske's School into second place. The winning players were Tom Grundy, David Rogers, Steven Rogers and Sam Block.

Two other competitions were run fairly late in the last season, too late for inclusion in the May issue of this newsletter. They were:

The **Bridge for All Day** designed to give students of bridge their first taste of the competitive duplicate game. In the event held last May the leading players were:

- 1st Nicola Gollan
- 2nd Jen Thompson
- 3rd Monique Wakefield & Leslie O'Hara

Please note that this event has been renamed as the Newcomers' Day in 2005.

The **Fox Shammon Trophy** is for senior pairs – players who are aged 54 or over and whose combined age is at least 110. This event is another held in Spring at the prestigious Queen's Club, the playing room overlooking the best tennis courts. Twenty eight pairs competed earlier this year, the leaders at the end of the event being:

- 1st Victor Silverstone & David Sellman
- 2nd Sati Mckenzie & Graham Hudson
- 3rd Michael Fialko & Dudley Leigh



Results to date from the season 2004/05

London Mixed Pairs Championship



This event is held each year in September as a popular season opener. 58 pairs competed this year, the winners being Nigel Freake and Anne Catchpole, with Eva Caplan & Cameron Small second and Victor Silverstone & Caroline Gregson third. This was the third victory in this event for Anne, who won the first time back in 1989 and then again in 2001.

Our records for this event go back to 1981 and show that Anne is the only person to have achieved a hat trick of wins. Others who have won twice include Nigel Freake (both times with Anne), Matthew Bingham (also once with Anne), Richard Fleet with Jenny Lodge and Steve Barnfield with Heather Dunstan (now Dhondy).

The Champions Cup

The Champions Cup is played for by the winners of the various league competitions played in and around London each year. Eight teams took part this time on 24th October, the winners, for the second year running, being the London League champions. The team was captained by Ian Payn with Rob Cliffe, Mark Lehto and Nick Boss. Runners-up were the Suffolk League winners - William Tweddell, Rick Hanley, Eric Newman and Mike Sherer



The actual trophy for this competition is a handsome solid silver cup which is hallmarked as having been made in London in 1804. It started life as the Inter-Association Cup which was competed for by teams of eight, but changed to its current role in 1977 after the original competition had ceased for a few years.

The Daily Telegraph Cup

This is another teams of four event, this time for teams representing counties in the South East of England, for which there is another fine silver trophy, originally presented by the Daily Telegraph. Each County around London is invited to send a strong team and the capital itself usually fields the winners of the London Championship Teams of Four.

Nine teams competed on 5th December, and in a close finish the winners were London – Rob Cliffe, Ian Payn, Michael Hill and David Ould – who narrowly beat last year's winners, Surrey, who fielded Angela Forsyth, Rolf Alexander, Bill Hodgkiss & Robin Clarke.

Matters of Judgement

by Mike Graham

Everybody likes to read about big swings and distributional freaks, and it is always interesting to pick up a freak hand at the table – you never know what course the bidding and play will take. However, there are also many hands where the swings and actions are marginal, with only small numbers at stake; these hands, far more common, can also be important in determining the outcome of a match.

As an example, in the recent Tollemache Cup qualifier (a teams-of-eight event with cross-imps scoring) the following hand occurred:

Love All. Dealer West.

♠ Q8	
♥ 872	
♦ K102	
♣ KQJ93	
♠ J7	♠ AK10643
♥ K1053	♥ 94
♦ AJ6	♦ Q93
♣ 6542	♣ 87
♠ 952	
♥ AQJ6	
♦ 8754	
♣ A10	

Just an everyday part-score, but the bidding was fiercely contested:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	1♠	Dbl
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	3♠	All Pass

South's double was negative. The final contract of 3♠ went one down, for N/S +50, and personally I strongly disapprove of the 3♠ bid. I had passed over the double; a redouble would have shown three trumps, and I had failed to do this. Therefore I was marked with some values but only

two spades, and to go on to 3♠ was a violation of the Law*. The contract went one down after the defence led and continued clubs. Against 3♣, three rounds of spades will produce a one-trick set, and East-West will go +50, instead of the -50 they incurred in 3♠. Only four imps away; no big deal, you might say, but these small swings add up.

(*For those unfamiliar with it, the Law of Total Tricks, in its simplest form, says that in competition you should bid to the level of your fit. So in this instance, with a known 8-card fit, you should bid only to the 8-trick or two-level. Ed)

The next deal, also from the Tollemache, produced a large swing:

Game All. Dealer South.

♠ 8	
♥ AK10852	
♦ Q2	
♣ K643	
♠ AQ63	♠ K54
♥ 6	♥ J
♦ J86543	♦ A97
♣ J5	♣ A109872
♠ J10972	
♥ Q9743	
♦ K10	
♣ Q	

Proceedings at three of the four tables were mundane in the extreme – after two passes, North opened 1♥, East bid 2♣, South raised to 4♥, and there the matter rested, for an easy 620 to North-South. At the fourth table, however, West opened with 2♦, and this was passed out for ten tricks and 130 to East-West.

To explain North’s silence, this was not a weak two in diamonds. It showed diamonds and an unspecified major, 4-10 HCP, at least 4/4 in the two suits. I first came across this device in a London League match about a year ago, and found it deuced difficult to defend against. Since taking it up, with a number of partners, several good (and interesting) results have occurred. Obviously, opposite the wrong hand it can go for a packet, but even at Tollemache level it proved its worth (and we have the +800 and +730 to prove it). Here, for example, North was aware that the bidder probably had spades and diamonds, but there was always the possibility that it was diamonds and hearts, and his partner had already passed.

I used this device partnering David Burn in the Young Chelsea Marathon, with several good results, but we were outwitted by Rob Cliffe, partnering Brian McGuire, on this deal:



David – not asleep but thinking hard!

N/S Game. Dealer West.

♠ Q10963	
♥ 54	
♦ J1054	
♣ A4	
♠ KJ752	♠ 84
♥ 10	♥ 63
♦ KQ96	♦ A832
♣ 753	♣ Q10862
	♠ A
	♥ AKQJ9872
	♦ 7
	♣ KJ9

This was the bidding:

West	North	East	South
<i>Mike</i>	<i>Brian</i>	<i>David</i>	<i>Rob</i>
2♦	Pass	2NT	DbI
3♠	DbI	4♦	6♥
All Pass			

The 2♦ opening was The Device, and David had a shrewd idea that the opponents had a game on. 2NT was, systemically, a relay that was forcing either to 3NT, game in a major, or 4♦, and, as such, showed a strong hand. As Rob said, he had a good idea that something was “going on”, and double seemed a good way to start – he was on lead, after all. 3♠ showed a five-card suit, double expressed an opinion, and 4♦ was natural. Now Rob knew that his partner had some values, so he closed his eyes and bid what he hoped was a contract that would have play. I led the king of diamonds, and, as the king of spades could hardly run away if Rob held Ax, switched to a club, so Rob was able to claim his slam and score 36 matchpoints on a 42 top.

Back to the Tollemache, and a deal on which the actions of our opponents were quite extraordinary.

Game All. Dealer East.

♠ 4	♠ AKQ6	♠ 108
♥ 52	♥ Q8	♥ AJ10976
♦ KJ10952	♦ 76	♦ Q843
♣ Q1053	♣ AK864	♣ 2
	♠ J97532	
	♥ K43	
	♦ A	
	♣ J97	

My partner and I sat East-West against a bright young pair, and this was the auction:

West	North	East	South
		2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

Which, if you look at all four hands, is cold. 5♦ showed one key card. Just look at it. Not only does South have the required heart control (and there is absolutely nothing in the auction to suggest that he does) but he has exactly the right club holding as well, with the double finesse for the Q10 working.

So there you are – a County-level player thinks it is right to hurricane the bidding into a slam with two fast losers in a suit bid and likely to be led by the opposition, two small cards in a side suit, and a club suit that is hardly solid. What was even more extraordinary about this deal is that the other North-South from the same county also reached 6♠, again against a 2♥ opening and with North taking control. Well, teams are entitled to be lucky, but I am going to reserve judgement on whether they are entitled to be this lucky. We drew our own conclusions, and I'm not going to say what they were.



Solution

to puzzle on page 24

This is the deal referred to in the puzzle.



Did you manage to re-create it? Do you enjoy puzzles like this? If so, let me know, and they may become a regular feature.

♠ Axx		
♥ xxxxx		
♦ xxx		
♣ KQ		
♠ Qxxx		♠ xxxx
♥ KQJ		♥ A
♦ xx		♦ AKJ
♣ xxxx		♣ xxxxx
	♠ KJ	
	♥ xxxx	
	♦ Qxxxx	
	♣ AJ	

Congratulations

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



David Gold, Tom Townsend, David Price and Colin Simpson, who came fifth in the European Championships in Malmo in the summer and have been selected to represent England in the Bermuda Bowl in 2005, along with David Burn as coach.

Janet De Botton, Gunnar Hallberg, Nick Sandqvist and Artur Malinowski who won the Schapiro Spring Foursomes. Also David Price, Colin Simpson, Tom Townsend and David Gold who were runners up and Marc Smith and Peter Czerniewski who were losing semi-finalists.



Danny Davies who won the Crockfords Cup.

Rob Cliffe and Nora Smith who won the Grand Masters Pairs.

Steve Lodge and Robert Sheehan who won the Hubert Phillips Bowl.

In the Easter Festival, Gordon Rainsford & Paul Martin who won the Championship Pairs, Janet De Botton, Gunnar Hallberg and Nick Sandqvist who won the A flight Swiss Teams, Charles Leong, Jeftor Yeo and Liz Clery who won the B flight Swiss Teams, Brian Callaghan who won the A flight Swiss Pairs from Matt Quinn & John Ramos who were equal second, and Rob Cliffe who won the Mixed Pairs relegating Janet De Botton and Gunnar Hallberg into second place.

At the Brighton Summer Festival, Glyn Liggins, Joe Fawcett and David Burn, who won the main final on the Teams weekend and Marc Smith and Peter Czerniewski who won the secondary final.



Barney Nisbet who won the Harrogate Congress Mixed Pairs.

At the Jersey Lambourne Festival, Mike Fletcher who won the Swiss Teams, Alan and Olivia Woo who won the Multiple Teams B final and were second in the Swiss Teams along with Paul Martin. The Woos also won the Bournemouth Spring Bank Holiday Congress Swiss Teams along with Milos Sudjic, where Artur Malinowski took second place and Chris Andrews and Fifi Nasrallah third. Artur and Marilyn Nathan were also second in the Swiss Pairs at Bournemouth, with Anne Catchpole and Nigel Freake third.

Nigel Bird who won the London One-Day Swiss Pairs, Anne Catchpole, Nigel Freake, Paul Lamford and Nobuko Matsumura, equal second in the London One-Day Swiss Teams and Richard Harris, who was second in both the Beds One-Day Swiss Pairs and the Avon One-Day Swiss Teams.

At the Guernsey Congress, Willie Coyle who won the pivot Teams, the Seniors Pairs and the Multiple Teams and was second in the Seniors Multiple teams, Jan Peter Svendsen who was second in the Swiss Pairs and third in the Mixed Pairs, Mike Fletcher, third in the Swiss Pairs, Eva De Mercur, third in the Multiple Teams and Artur Malinowski, Marilyn Nathan, Shirin Sephabodi and Milos Sudjic who were third in the Swiss Teams. .



Through the Minefield

with Veronica Thicke

Veronica Thicke is a recipient of the Legion d'Honneur, and owns a timeshare in Wiltshire.

Ploughing through the backlog of letters to my regular column (and that's quite some backlog, I can tell you) I found a theme recurring. Many of you are new to the brash world of tournament bridge, and would like a few tips on how to behave at your first tournament. Never fear! Take my hand, and I will lead you through the minefield...



What should I wear?

More or less what you like, within reason, but "smart casual" is a good rule of thumb. Even the young would do well to follow this advice: There's nothing as likely to cause offence to those who have made an effort than to turn up in torn jeans, a filthy T-shirt and trainers that have seen better days: Respect yourself, and others will respect you. Take note of your surroundings, and make an effort to blend in with them. If playing at a posh hotel, respect the sensibilities of those resident there, regardless of what you may feel about your bridge playing colleagues.

What do I need to bring with me?

Always carry a pen, two fully completed convention cards (downloadable from the web) and some cash for incidentals. If you have no convention card, arrive early, and fill it out in company with your partner, so at least the two of you are agreed about what you're supposed to be playing. In my experience, simple is best if you're dipping your toes in the water for the first time.

East/West or North/South?

Doesn't matter a jot. Neither gets more high cards! True! If you have mobility problems ask a director to sort out a North/South position throughout. If you're hopeless at scoring, sit East/West, with the caveat that you're never going to get any better at it without practice.

How do I greet opponents?

Politely, but don't go mad about it. A reasonably polite level of banter can be sustained until play begins, but thereafter it's best to keep one's comments to oneself. Always, always, always say "Good evening" (or whatever) at the start of a round, and always, always, always say "Thank you".

How do I go about calling the director, if necessary?

Well, hopefully it won't be necessary overly often, but I find it always best to get the director in whenever there's an irregularity. Saves argument. One doesn't have to yell out "Director!" in stentorian terms, just a quiet "Do you mind if we call the director over?" followed by an almost diffident "Director, please" (just loud enough to attract his attention), does the trick. And when the director comes, do as he asks, and don't talk across other people. *Big Note from Veronica:* If your opponents do not live up to these standards, it's probably not their fault. They have been badly brought up, and are no more to blame than the unruly child. Do not snub them, but do not seek out their company in the bar afterwards, either.

What do I do when the event is over?

The first thing to do, as you leave the last table after thanking your opponents, is to thank your partner, regardless of how it's gone. They're human, too, and presumably you wouldn't be playing with them unless you were fairly friendly with them. Then, get the hand records (if available) and await the results. Go through the hands, looking for your own errors (not partner's!). If there's something you don't understand, seek out one of the better players you've played against, and ask them to explain what went wrong. This is where your policy of going around the room being nice to everyone pays dividends: If you've been slouching around like an ill-mannered lout, no-one's likely to want to talk to you after the event, are they? When the results are published, make a note of the frequencies (if it's Match-Pointed Pairs) and see if they tally with your estimates of how you've done.

Despite all the preceding, there's really only one thing to remember: Do as you would be done by! Everyone is there not only to do as well as they can, but also to enjoy themselves. Why should you be any different?

Normal mailbag service will be resumed upon Veronica's return from St. Moritz.

