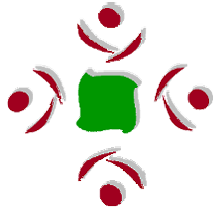


Association
Bridge
Metropolitan
London



MetroNews

*The newsletter of the
London Metropolitan Bridge Association*

Winter 2005

Association
Bridge
Metropolitan
London



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Words from the Editor

Organised bridge in London has been going on for a very long time. Unfortunately most of the early records have been lost, but the London Association has trophies going back to the 1930s. Of course all activity stopped during the second world war, but bridge players were ready to compete again soon after the end of the war.



So it was in 1946 that the London County Contract Bridge Association was reborn in a new form from the ashes of the pre-war county organisation. The



name was changed to the London Metropolitan Bridge Association a few years ago, to reflect the broad scope of our activities across the capital and the greater London area, but the body is the same and so in 2006 we will be reaching our Diamond Jubilee (rather appropriate for a bridge organisation, don't you think!)

For some reason, the LMBA's 50th anniversary was not celebrated, so it seems only right that we should make a bit of a fuss about having been around for 60 years. As it happens, it will also be the 60th Lederer Memorial Trophy next year – the competition actually started in 1945 but missed a year – so this prestigious event will be the focus of our celebrations. But we hope to organise other events and activities in which all our membership can take part.

One of our ideas is to organise a Simultaneous Pairs which can be played in clubs across the region, based on hands of interest from past Lederers. This will probably be held in September and there will be more details published in the next issue of MetroBridge. But we would welcome other ideas from members, perhaps suggestions for events you would like to see or other thoughts about how we should celebrate our Jubilee. I'd love to hear from you – my contact details are below so there's no excuse not to get in touch. Why not surprise me by actually doing so!



Meanwhile, I hope this will reach you before the holidays are over, and I wish the very best of season's greetings to one and all.

Chris Duckworth

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Annual General Meeting

The 2005 Annual General Meeting was due to be held on 7th July at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Many of you will recognise this date as the day when those awful bombs went off in the London transport system. It was necessary to cancel the meeting at very short notice and instead an EGM – an Extraordinary General Meeting – was held in early October.

At that meeting there were some changes to your Executive Committee – Dom Goodwin and David Graham stood down after making valuable contributions, and Stefanie Rohan and Chris Gidden joined the committee. Neither has a specific brief as yet, but both are keen to work for the LMBA and we are very pleased to have some new blood on the executive. Both play much of their bridge at the Woodberry Bridge Club, so you may know them from there.

For more details of the meeting, you can see the minutes on the home page of the LMBA at our website – www.metrobridge.co.uk.

Club details - corrections

I'm afraid there were some errors in the club details published in the LMBA Competition Brochure. Please note the following corrections.

Highgate Bridge Club: The correct address for the playing venue is:
Scout Headquarters, Sheldon Avenue, London N6 4ND

Livesey Bridge Club: The correct contact details for the secretary are:
Jo Garcia, 30 Loxton Road, Forest Hill, SE23 2ET. 020 8699 4686
Jogarcia30@hotmail.com.

Please also note that the club is now entirely non-smoking during play.

Dolphin Square Bridge Circle: The correct contact details are:
Peter Humphries, 3 Howard House, Dolphin Square, SW1V 3PE.
peterjhumphries@hotmail.com

The LMBA, in association with the EBU, presents London's 14th
ONE DAY GREEN POINTED SWISS WEEKEND

at

The Young Chelsea Bridge Club, Earls Court, SW5

on

Saturday & Sunday 11-12th March 2006

Swiss Pairs Saturday at 1.00pm, Swiss Teams Sunday at 11.30am

Entry fee: £21 per player in each event



Contact Sati at s.mckenzie@gre.ac.uk or 020 7627 0977 for an entry form

The 2005 Lederer

by Simon Cochemé

The 59th contest for the Lederer Memorial Trophy, held in honour of Richard and Tony Lederer, was played at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club in October. Ireland had won in 2004 by 2 VPs, the smallest margin ever, and they were back to defend the biggest trophy in British bridge (44 cms high, if you're interested). Their main challengers were expected to be two of England's Bermuda Bowl pairs (David Gold - Tom Townsend, David Price - Colin Simpson) and the All Stars (Zia Mahmood - John Mohan, Sabine Auken - Daniela von Arnim), also Estoril-bound. The eight invited teams play twelve-board matches against each other, with 60 Victory Points at stake per match, a combination of IMPs and point-a-board.

The President's team (led by Bernard Teltscher, LMBA President and sponsor of the Lederer) met the All Stars in Round 2. A little extra tension was created by the fact that Victor Silverstone and Zia had each won the Lederer six times and a victory in 2005 would give one of them an outright lead.

Mohan protected in the West seat after the opponents' bidding had died in Two Spades. Zia's bid of Three Clubs might not be the majority choice, but it created a bit of excitement. Silverstone didn't double Three Clubs on his minimum hand, so we never found out how Zia would have fared in a 3-3 club fit, or if he or Mohan would have escaped to Three Diamonds if Three Clubs had been doubled.

NS Vul. Dealer N

	♠ 9754		
	♥ AQ107		
	♦ K5		
	♣ 1082		
♠ 3		♠ Q1062	
♥ KJ94		♥ 32	
♦ A10862		♦ Q943	
♣ 974		♣ AK3	
	♠ AKJ8		
	♥ 865		
	♦ J7		
	♣ QJ65		

Mohan obediently led a club against Three Spades. Left to his own devices Silverstone would undoubtedly have made the contract, playing East for the queen of spades and West for the ace of diamonds and the king-jack of hearts. Indeed, both Vladi Isporski for the Spring Foursomes Winners and David Horton for Australia made nine tricks in spades. However Zia won with the king and switched to the two of hearts. From Silverstone's point of view this was almost certainly a singleton, so he rejected the spade finesse and cashed the ace-king of spades, getting the bad news. He exited with a club to the ace and Zia played the three of hearts, a real singleton this time! Silverstone won in dummy and led a spade. Zia went up

West	North	East	South
<i>John Mohan</i>	<i>Chris Dixon</i>	<i>Zia Mahmood</i>	<i>Victor Silverstone</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Double	Rdbl	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

with the queen of spades, played a diamond to his partner's ace and Mohan had no difficulty giving Zia his heart ruff. Three Spades down one and 5 IMPs to the All Stars, on their way to a 39-21 win.

This piece of Zia magic won him and John Mohan the prize for the best defended hand.



♣♦♥♠

The Australian team, stopping off in London on their way to the World Championships in Estoril, had jet-lag to contend with, as well as some formidable opposition at the bridge table. They lost their first three matches, including an Ashes rematch against England, before coming up against the Young Chelsea Champions.

EW Game. Dealer E

		♠ AKQ3	
		♥ AJ64	
		♦ K10	
		♣ K74	
♠ 92			♠ 108764
♥ 1092			♥ KQ85
♦ 7432			♦ 96
♣ J1065			♣ 98
	♠ J5		
	♥ 73		
	♦ AQJ85		
	♣ AQ32		
West	North	East	South
<i>Nick Sandqvist</i>	<i>Tony Nunn</i>	<i>Artur Malinowski</i>	<i>Sartaj Hans</i>
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Double	2♠*	Pass	3♠*
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♦
Pass	7♦	All Pass	

Seven of the eight North-South pairs played in a small slam, one in diamonds and the others in no-trumps. At nearly all the tables the first four bids were as above, with North sooner or later jumping to 6NT. In the Australian auction Sartaj Hans bid Three Spades at his third turn, showing extra values but no further distribution. The 5NT bid was 'pick a slam' and when South bid Six Diamonds, showing a good suit, Tony Nunn went on to Seven. The play presented no problem and thirteen tricks rolled in. Hans and Nunn were awarded the prize for the best bid hand. Australia recovered from their poor start and finished in fifth place.

♣♦♥♠

Ireland played the All Stars on VuGraph in Round 4, the last match on Saturday. Ireland were lying third at the time behind England and the All Stars, so this was a crucial encounter.

Game All. Dealer W

		♠ 8	
		♥ AJ872	
		♦ 8763	
		♣ 1097	
♠ AK932			♠ 1075
♥ KQ105			♥ 964
♦ 9			♦ Q1052
♣ 854			♣ 632
	♠ QJ64		
	♥ 3		
	♦ AKJ4		
	♣ AKQJ		
West	North	East	South
<i>Hugh McGann</i>	<i>John Mohan</i>	<i>Tom Hanlon</i>	<i>Zia Mahmood</i>
1♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

The auction in the match where Zia was South was fairly typical, with the main decision being whether to bid 2NT or 3NT on the second round. Seven of the North-South pairs were in Two or Three No-trumps, played by South. Only Zia was held to eight tricks.

Hugh McGann got his side off to a good start when he led the queen of hearts rather than the three of spades, the choice at all the other tables. The lead of the queen asked for attitude or, if that was clearly inappropriate, count. Zia won in dummy with the ace of hearts and Hanlon played the four, showing three hearts. With the diamond queen likely to be offside, and with the point-a-board element to the scoring, Zia chose to play diamonds from the top. After cashing his six minor-suit winners, he exited with the queen of spades. West had discarded two spades and East one spade.

Confounding the predictions of the on-line VuGraph commentators, McGann found the only card to give a chance of beating the contract – the ten of hearts. Zia won the trick with dummy's jack and a bridge had been built to Hanlon's nine of hearts. Now, whatever Zia did, the defence had the communications to take the nine of hearts, the queen of diamonds, the ace of spades and the king of hearts and beat the contract by one trick. When John Carroll made 3NT at the other table the Irish picked up 12 IMPs. They went on to win the match 50-10 and move to share of the lead. Hugh McGann and Tom Hanlon were awarded second prize for their defence.



This curiosity was from the first match on Sunday.

Love All. Dealer N

♠ 52	
♥ AKQ	
♦ A1072	
♣ KJ95	
♠ 976	♠ K1084
♥ 765	♥ J1092
♦ KJ94	♦ 85
♣ 1064	♣ A83
	♠ AQJ3
	♥ 843
	♦ Q63
	♣ Q72

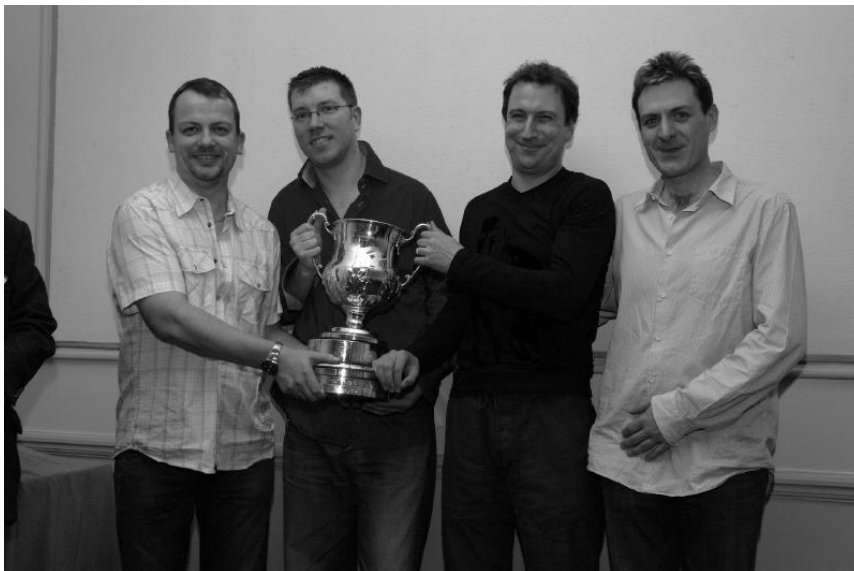
Deep Finesse (the commentator's friend) said that North-South could make game (exactly) in all four suits! I will leave you to work out how to make Five Diamonds.

Seven of the North-Souths were unadventurous, ignoring the Moysian fits in Clubs and Diamonds and playing in mundane 3NT contracts. The exception was the pair that did make ten tricks in hearts ... defending One Heart Doubled! Sabine Auken opened a strong club as North and East doubled to show the majors. Daniela von Arnim redoubled and Auken then doubled East's One Heart bid. As was almost invariably the case over the week-end, the German ladies' defence was merciless and they took +800 and 8 IMPs from the board.

♣♦♥♠

The All Stars had a big win against England in the last match, but the Irish beat Janet de Botton's Young Chelsea Champions to retain the trophy. The final leader board was as follows:

1 st	Ireland (Tommy Garvey, John Carroll, Hugh McGann, Tom Hanlon)	273
2 nd	All Stars (Zia Mahmood, John Mohan, Sabine Auken, Daniela von Arnim)	266
3 rd	Schapiro Spring Foursomes winners (Geoffrey Wolfarth, Brian Senior, Vladi Isporski, Valio Kovachev)	236
4 th	England (Tom Townsend, David Gold, Colin Simpson, David Price)	229



The victorious Irish team.

From left, Tom Hanlon, Tommy Garvey, John Carroll and Hugh McGann

At the same time as the Lederer, a 'Play with the Stars' satellite event was held at the Hurlingham, Roehampton, Acol and Wimbledon Bridge Clubs. The pairs played the first 24 Lederer boards and IMPed up with the All Star pairs. The winners of the Teltscher Cups were:

North-South (scoring with Sabine Auken - Daniela von Arnim): Neill Harcus & Sophie Levi (Acol BC)

East-West - equal first (scoring with Zia Mahmood - John Mohan): Danny Gesua & Marion Tamblyn (Roehampton BC) & Maurice & Bertha Bechor (Hurlingham Bridge Club)

On the left are three of the successful East-West winners of the Teltscher Cups,



pictured with John Mohan, Bernard Teltscher and Zia, whilst on the right are Neill Harcus and Sophie Levi, the North-South winners.



Agatha Christie - Cards on the Table

LMBA members Christine Tomkin and Simon Cochemé were involved in the filming of Agatha Christie's *Cards on the Table*, one of the latest batch of Hercule Poirot stories to be filmed by Granada. Many of Christie's books have some bridge in them, but *Cards on the Table* has the most. The four suspects are playing bridge in an enclosed room when their host, who is sitting by the fire, is murdered.



Christine was asked to work with some of the actors before filming; teaching them the mechanics of the game – how to shuffle, deal, sort the cards, play to tricks, and so on. She also had to construct some hands to fit in with Christie's descriptions of what went on. Don't blame her if you see one of the characters use Blackwood with a void, that's how Christie wrote it!

Simon stood in for Christine when she went on holiday and spent four days at Shepperton Studios while the bridge scenes were being shot. He guided the actors through rehearsals and then had to restrain himself from calling out "Cut!" or "Director!" when things went wrong during shooting.

Cards on the Table, starring David Suchet, Zoë Wanamaker and Alex Jennings, will be shown on ITV in the New Year.

Puzzle Corner

Here's another bridge deal for you to work out. It uses the usual 4-3-2-1 point count and tens are not counted as honours. The solution is given on page 30.



On this deal there are 4 voids but no singletons. West has the lowest point count, at 6. West's and East's points together total the same as South's, which is an odd number.

East, whose only honours are red, has the same number of spades as hearts, an even number, while South, who has no spades that aren't honours, has the same number of clubs as diamonds, an odd number. Each player has been dealt a king and a queen; one has the king and queen of diamonds but in the case of the other three suits the king and queen are in different hands.

The player with the jack of hearts does not have the ace of spades and the one with the queen of hearts does not have the ace of clubs. A player with one club honour has the ace of diamonds. West has exactly one honour in each suit he holds. North has over three times as many spades as South, and West has over twice as many red cards as black ones.

Coming Soon!

The two major London championship competitions, both of which can earn you Green Points, take place early in the New Year, along with the Palmer Bayer Trophy, our annual simple system pairs event. More details are given below.



London Championship Teams of Four

We are trying a new format for the championship this year. The competition will consist of a single day, two-session multiple teams event,



from which the top two teams with London allegiance will qualify to a head-to-head final match to determine the overall champions and the team to represent London in the Pachabo Cup, the national Inter-County Teams of Four championship.

An interesting new feature is that the multiple teams will be scored using the same method as the Pachabo Cup itself.



This is a combination of IMPs and point-a-board – a method which rewards both accurate bidding and careful play.

The multiple teams will take place on **Sunday 8th January at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club**. Note the **start time of 11.30am** – another new feature. This will



enable the event to be completed by early Sunday evening in plenty of time for players to go out for an evening meal or to return home in good time.

The play-off will be arranged at a later date that is mutually convenient for the two teams involved.

The entry fee for this competition is £56 per team. Entries and enquiries should be directed to Sati McKenzie at s.mckenzie@gre.ac.uk or on 020 7627 0977, or may be made direct to the Young Chelsea BC on 020 7373 1665.

London Championship Pairs

The London Pairs Championship will be held on **Sunday 5th February** at the Young Chelsea Bridge Club, this time **starting at 1.00pm**.

This competition is a one-day, two session match-pointed pairs. 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 compete in a consolation final in the second session.

The leading four pairs with London allegiance will be eligible to represent London in the Corwen Trophy, the national Inter-County Pairs Championship.

The entry fee for this event is £28 per pair. Enquiries and entries should be made to Nigel Freake at nigel.freake@paper.co.uk or on 020 8801 2884, or to the YCBC.

Palmer Bayer Trophy

This popular competition is a “No Fear” event for those who take their bridge a little less seriously! The primary aim of the day is to enjoy yourself and to play bridge in a social atmosphere. It will be held at the Young Chelsea BC on **Sunday 22nd January 2006 starting at 1.00pm**

The features that make this a “No Fear” competition are:

- Simple systems only are allowed
- The pace of play is a little more leisurely than usual

- A free glass of wine for all participants at the end of play
- Hand discussion with an expert at the end of play
- Play and hand discussion should all be finished by around 6.00pm.

Because of these features, this is an ideal event for those who are new to competitive bridge, or simply for those wanting a relaxed afternoon’s play.



The entry fee is £16 per pair. Entries and enquiries to the YCBC or to Chris Duckworth on 020 7385 3534 or chris.duckworth@lineone.net.

Newcomers bridge

Newcomers are often reluctant to move from the relative safety of lessons or supervised play sessions to the uncharted waters of duplicate bridge. So special events for newcomers are an excellent idea to provide an opportunity to try out something a bit more serious whilst still being “amongst friends”.

The Young Chelsea Bridge Club is holding such an event in January. The Novice Duplicate will be held at the club on Thursday 19th January 2006, starting at 7.30pm. Features of the evening will be:

- ◆ play at a pace to suit the less experienced
- ◆ no need for a partner – players will be paired up as necessary
- ◆ a mid-session break for refreshments *and* a chance to chat to others
- ◆ prizes for the best performances
- ◆ a guaranteed friendly atmosphere and a good time for all!



The cost of the evening will be £6 per player. Pre-entry is not essential but is helpful. For more details or an Entry Form, contact the club on 020 7373 1665 or info@ycbc.co.uk, or the event organiser, Chris Duckworth, at chris.duckworth@lineone.net or on 020 7385 3534.

Woodberry Bridge Club - 25th Anniversary



This January the Woodberry Bridge Club celebrates its silver jubilee. The club was founded in 1981 by 16 members of an evening class held at Woodberry Down near Finsbury Park in North London, under the encouragement of their bridge teacher, the well known London member and director John Probst.

The club began by playing rubber bridge and Chicago but very soon became duplicate only. It now meets for a duplicate session every Tuesday evening at 7.30. The club started at a swimming pool hall near Clissold Park but has moved several times. It is now at its sixth venue, the Claremont Centre on White Lion Street near the Angel Islington.

The club will be marking this anniversary with a special bridge and social event for its past and present members on Saturday the 14th January 2006.

For further details of the club or its events contact the secretary Richard Allen on secretary@woodberry.info or 020 7503 1126.



A good hand?

by Brian Silverstone

I was delighted to receive this article from a new contributor. He described it as having been composed one day later than the events related, after a sleepless night. I'm pretty sure the last line is a joke, by the way!

To whoever might be remotely interested. This is an indication of why I have represented my country less often than the quality of my bridge has warranted.

Imagine the scene. I am partnering the original Old Vic (reader, by name, not by nature). We are having by our standard a pretty good evening (around the 48-50% mark I guess).

Arriving at our welcoming table is a young duo attempting to make their way in the world of competitive bridge, John Vos and Nil Risen

(I think that's his name, but don't hold me to a possible minor inaccuracy in the moniker department).

(I think he may mean the rather well-known bridge club proprietor and English international - Ed.)

We settle into Hand 8, which is this:

Love All. Dealer West

♠ –	
♥ 86	
♦ Q1086532	
♣ 7652	
♠ AKQJ43	♠ 108752
♥ K9	♥ 752
♦ K974	♦ –
♣ Q	♣ KJ1094
♠ 96	
♥ AQJ1043	
♦ AJ	
♣ A83	

I am disappointed to see my LHO chancing a 1♠ opening. Old Vic passes (which generally means he has a down-valued Yarborough). The kid on my right intimidates with a 4♠ bid. There's not a lot to say as the guy facing me has remained totally shtum (perhaps he'll venture a double – some hope!)

Lo and behold, the adventurous Mr V falls into the trap carefully laid by my hasty disinterested



pass. Blackwood proves a disappointment to him (surprise, surprise) and the unmakeable(?) contract of 5♠ is reached. Nonchalantly and in the manner of any vastly experienced semi-professional (which unfortunately I'm not and never will be) I double. Equally nonchalantly the youngster

on my right, showing the bravado and inexperience of youth, smilingly redoubles. (Old Vic has that rather thunderous look about him that I have seen appear on many occasions, in every session when one of my bids is less than appealing).

I jokingly redouble the redouble and Vic leads a low diamond. As I have only two diamonds this is a fine lead and will enable me to see the table and presumably cash my 3 aces (hopefully the heart will stand up). I did see the table and the horror of the situation at last dawned.

Declarer ruffs, removes trumps ending on table, leads a low club (expletive deleted). I duck, out comes the queen, diamond ruff, ♣K, end of horrendous episode in my life.

Holding three aces, my opponents scramble home making 13 tricks. 5♠+2 doubled, redoubled and redoubled again giving a total of 7093 points. Probably a bottom for us.

The evening deteriorated after this and Old Vic refused to give me a lift home. There was a noisy nasty storm keeping me company as I walked the three miles back and my wife greeted

a sodden ex-bridge player with the customary "Did you have a good evening, dear?"



The cat is in the microwave.

Bridge Rules

♣♦♥♠

Rule of Eleven — the inevitable trick total whenever you bid a slam.

Eight Ever, Nine Never — the upshot whenever you raise 2 NT to 3 NT.

LMBA results from the last six months

The LMBA One-Day Green-Pointed Swiss Teams

A lower than usual entry, perhaps because of the summer date, meant that the one-day event in July was moved to the Young Chelsea Bridge Club at the last minute. The 29 teams who played nicely filled the club and the results were as follows:

1 Carrie Eden, Sue Millard, Mike Eden, Richard Millard

2 Jack Mizel, Tony Forrester, Gerald Haase, Tony Waterlow

3 Noorul Malik, Andre Gubbay, Ian Pagan, Geoffrey Lederman

4 Nick Boss, Brian Callaghan, Olivia Woo, Alan Woo



The winning team

London Leagues and Knockouts

The **London League** reduced to two divisions last season but was as hard-fought as ever. In **Division 1** the TGR Club team captained by Marilyn Nathan ran out winners ahead of Lawrence Young's team from the London Duplicate Club. It was quite a change to see two central London clubs heading the lists above the Young Chelsea BC for once! In **Division 2**, the New Direction Finance team captained by Ian Swanson were victorious, with Chris Goodchild's Young Chelsea 4 team in second place.

In the **Home Counties League**, the Kent Blue team won over Surrey, the runners-up.

In the **Piccadilly Cup**, two of the teams already mentioned fought out the final. The cup was won by the London Duplicate team of Lawrence Young, David Graham, Steve Burton and Tony Clarke, who beat Young Chelsea 4 - Chris Goodchild, M Smyth, Andrew Dalton, John Pemberton and Adrian Scheps

Lederer Memorial Trophy

This year's special event for invited expert teams was one of the best ever and in an exciting finish the Irish team retained the trophy. Full details of the event are given in the report on pages 5-8.



Champions Cup



There was a good turnout of 10 teams for the Champions Cup this year, the event for the winners of the various Leagues in and around London. The leading teams were:

1st Hammersmith League: Frank Wharton, Paul Walker, Barry Stoker and Barbara Stoker

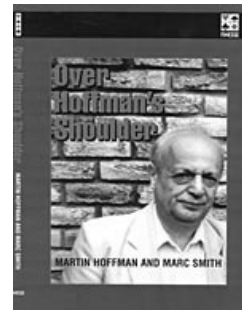
2nd Civil Service League, as represented by the Treasury team: Graham Horscroft, Peter Brook, Jonathan Jacobs and Roy Westwater

3rd London League, represented by TGR's BC: Seb Kristenson, Marilyn Nathan, Milos Sudjic and Shireen Sephabodi

Mixed Pairs Championship

The traditional season opener attracted the usual good entry of high-class Mixed Pairs. In the tough field the leading places were taken as follows:

- 1 Ursula Harper & Martin Hoffman
- 2 David Gold & Susanna Gross
- 3 Brady Richter & Jennifer Richter



Winner Martin Hoffman, as pictured on the cover of one of his many bridge books

Daily Telegraph Cup

There were seven invited teams in this year's event. London was once again represented by the winners of the London Teams of Four Championship, and they retained the trophy for the County once again. Leading positions were:

- 1 London (Brian Callaghan, David Burn, Rob Cliffe, Ian Payn)
- 2 Herts (Arni Anidjar-Romain, Robert Teesdale, John Phalp, Ron Howey)
- 3 Sussex (Chris Bainham, Magnus Berger, Eddie Lucioni, John Murrell)

For a full report on the event, see pages 21-23.

Under-19 Pairs Championship

This year's heat was boosted by a group of enthusiastic young players who came down from the Perse School in Cambridge. They romped home in the first two positions as well:

- 1 Alice Slight & Yi Wang
- 2 Yuming Mei & Weiye Yang
- 3 Alice Kaye & Paul Simister

Tollemache Cup Qualifier

Congratulations to the London team of eight who won their group in the Tollemache qualifying weekend to go forward to the finals. Maybe London can win for the fourth year running! The successful team were Brian Callaghan, David Burn, David Gold, Tom Townsend, David Price, Colin Simpson, Nick Sandqvist and Gunnar Hallberg.

London Trophy Finals - 2005

by Michael Hill

The London Trophy, the LMBA competition for sports and social clubs, now in its 27th year, reached its climax at Queens Club on Sunday, 22nd May. As usual, the climax 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: Queens Club vs Walton Heath Golf Club

3rd place play-off: RAC 1 vs Lewes Golf Club

Plate final: Coolhurst LT & S Club 1 vs Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club

Proceedings were delayed somewhat because one team encountered serious traffic problems (as, to a lesser extent did your scribe) and arrived about an hour late. The good news, given that Queens Club have provided the venue for this event for a number of years, was that one of the participating teams was from Queens Club itself.

The first four boards of the match were all part scores (although bidding to an unmakeable game on two of them was not unreasonable). However, there is (almost) no such thing as a flat board in the London Trophy and, sure enough, there was a swing on all four boards in every match – except on the fourth one in the Plate final where both declarers brought home the unmakeable game! However, board 1 was perhaps the most bizarre.

Love All. Dealer North

♠ K963	
♥ 74	
♦ K9643	
♣ AK	
♠ 82	♠ QJ743
♥ QJ5	♥ A832
♦ AJ1085	♦ 7
♣ 963	♣ Q842
♠ A105	
♥ K1096	
♦ Q2	
♣ J1075	

With East-West silent, the North-South auction began 1♦ -1♥ at every table but then things began to diverge. One North rebid 2♦ (!) and played there, managing somehow to go one off on the lead of the ♣2. The other Norths all rebid 1♠, after which three Souths bid 1NT, one bid 2♠ and one bid 2NT. Two Souths ended up playing in 1NT, one making seven tricks, the other nine. The other three all reached 3NT, making seven tricks (on the lead of the ♥2), eight (on the lead of the ♠8) and nine (on the lead of the ♦J). The smallest swing was 190, the largest 450 (note that this event uses aggregate scoring). And this was only the first board!

Board 6 provided opportunities to gain from good play or good defence (see top of next page). At four of the six tables, the contract was 3NT. Usually, South opened 2NT and North raised to 3NT, recognising that, with 4333 distribution, the 4-4 major fit, if any, probably wasn't relevant.

EW Vul. Dealer East

♠ 872	
♥ Q974	
♦ K82	
♣ Q52	
♠ J54	♠ Q1063
♥ KJ6	♥ 52
♦ 10976	♦ J54
♣ AJ9	♣ 8763
♠ AK9	
♥ A1083	
♦ AQ3	
♣ K104	

But at one table South opened 1♥, and rebid 2NT over North's raise to 2♥ – so they reached 3NT knowing even better both that they had a heart fit and that the flat hand made it irrelevant. On a diamond lead, three declarers won in hand to play ace and another heart. It didn't matter whether or not West won this trick; declarer had time to force out the ♣A to establish the ninth trick. However, one declarer lost his way by winning the diamond lead in dummy and running the ♥Q. After this, there were two heart losers and no way back and the contract duly went one-off.

There was greater interest at the two tables where North bid an enquiring 3♣ over the 2NT opener and duly raised 3♥ to 4♥.

West still led the ♦10 and South won in hand. David Coe, for the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club immediately led a small heart. Can West be blamed for not seeing the need to rise with the King? When he ducked, Coe won the ♥Q, returned a



heart to the ace (presumably breathing more easily when they broke), then cashed his remaining winners in diamonds and spades before exiting with a third round of spades. East correctly overtook the ♠J with the ♠Q to switch to a club, but declarer had not come this far to go wrong. He played low from hand and won West's 9 with the Q. Now a heart endplayed West; he could set up declarer's ♣K or concede a ruff and discard.

At the other table where the final contract was 4♥, declarer won the diamond lead and played ace and another heart. Now it was easier for West to rise with the K and exit with the third heart. Play then continued as before with diamonds and spades cashed and a spade exit overtaken by East to lead a club. At this point, the contract can still be made double-dummy – South puts up the ♣K and West has to lead into the split tenace in clubs (or concede a ruff and discard) – but this is far from clear and South can hardly be blamed for hopefully finessing the ♣10 and duly going one-off.

Since the match in which 3NT went off was the one in which 4♥ also went off, the total swing on this board across three matches was just 20 points (4♥ making 420 vs 3NT making 400 in the Plate final).

This was unusual. There was only one other flat board in one of the three matches in the whole of the first half! So it is rather surprising that, at half time, whilst Queens Club were almost 3000 points ahead in the Trophy final, the margins in the other two matches were just 70 and 100.

The fluctuations continued in the second half. There were only two flat boards in the Trophy final (the last two!) and three in the other two matches. Board 15 generated a slam swing in all three matches!

NS Vul. Dealer S

	♠ AKJ52	
	♥ AK96	
	♦ A6	
	♣ AJ	
♠ 94		♠ Q1087
♥ 73		♥ J10854
♦ 1084		♦ Q72
♣ 987642		♣ 10
	♠ 63	
	♥ Q2	
	♦ KJ953	
	♣ KQ53	

One can only speculate about North's thoughts at the two tables where South opened the bidding (1♦ at one, 1NT at the other). How often have you been preparing to open 2♣ and heard your partner open ahead of you?! At these two tables and two others the final contract was 7NT, at the other two 6NT and 6♣. It is perhaps best to gloss over the bidding at all tables – suffice it to say that no two auctions were the same!



Wasim Naqui showed why Queens Club were almost 3000 points up at half-time. In 7NT he won the heart lead with

the ace, unblocked dummy's top clubs, then cashed the ♠AK to see if anything interesting happened. When it didn't he knew he needed four diamond tricks, so he cashed the ♦A and finessed the knave. When it held

and the suit broke 3-3, he was home. In fact, he had missed a small extra chance – winning the heart lead with the queen would have enabled him to maintain communications with dummy in that suit and so benefit from some squeeze opportunities if the ♦10 had not come down. His Walton Heath opposite number played the same contract from the North hand on the deceptive lead of the ♥10. She, too, won with the ace and unblocked the clubs but then crossed to the ♥Q to cash the remaining clubs.

Unfortunately, she then tried the losing spade finesse, so generating a swing of no less than 2270 points to Queens Club.

In the third place play-off, RAC played 7NT from the South hand on the ♣9 lead and, after unblocking the clubs, played ace and another diamond. East for some reason played the queen on this and declarer soon found he had five diamond tricks and no more worries. Meanwhile, in the other room, the Lewes North-South had found their way to 6♣ after South had bid clubs before diamonds in his positive response to the 2♣ opening. This wasn't a thing of beauty, even without the 6-1 break. Declarer won the ♥J lead with the queen, crossed to the ♦A and, without unblocking the clubs, took the diamond finesse. He could still have got out for one-off at that stage but lost his way slightly and went two-off for a swing of 2420 to RAC.

When Coolhurst held the North South cards in the Plate final, they played NT from the North hand on the ♥J lead. Strangely



enough, as had happened before when the contract was played from the North hand, declarer elected to take the spade finesse and entered –100 on his scorecard. Royal Ashdown stopped in 6NT, also played by North

on the ♥J lead but, this time, declarer took the diamond finesse and duly chalked up an overtrick. Alas, the swing of 1570 points was not quite enough for Royal Ashdown who eventually lost by just 230 points.

Results

Trophy: Queens Club beat Walton Heath Golf Club by 8320 points

Third place play-off: RAC 1 beat Lewes Golf Club by 6840 points

Plate: Coolhurst LT & S Club 1 beat Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club by 230 points



The picture shows the winning team of David Sellman, Wasim Naqui, David Eckhardt and Bijan Dolatabad, along with LMBA Chairman Mike Hill and London Trophy organiser Cecil Leighton (and a team supporter).

The light double

by David Burn



You are West one evening at the Young Chelsea. Your partner is a strong player. Your left-hand opponent is a keen sort who has not been playing for very long, but has regrettably absorbed many of the latest theories of competitive bidding. Your right-hand opponent has represented England in the distant past.

Your hand contains an ace, which is a pity, for otherwise it would be a strong candidate for one of the worst ever dealt:

♠732 ♥7432 ♦72 ♣A432

Only your side is vulnerable, and the auction develops thus:

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Double	2♦
2♥	Double ¹	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Double	6♦
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

¹Ostensibly “takeout”, although into what is far from clear

What is your opening lead?

♣♦♥♠

You are South one evening at the Young Chelsea. Your left-hand opponent has absorbed even more of the latest theories of competitive bidding than your partner. Your right-hand opponent is a strong player. You have represented England in the distant past, and this is your hand as dealer:

♠86 ♥Q86 ♦AKQ98653 ♣None

I decided to open 1♦ rather than some pre-empt, or 3NT. When it went pass - 1♠ - double, I thought I would bid only 2♦ to see what developed. Moreover, I wasn't sure whether North would think 3♦ was strong or pre-emptive, since I have no idea how trendy people play such sequences nowadays.

I nearly passed out 2♥ doubled, since it can't logically be for takeout. But in these days double has ceased to be a logical action. It is a mystic invocation, calling on the powers of



Light to guide partner in the almost impossible task of working out what you have and what to do next, so I thought better of passing it,

especially in view of my own heart length. Of course, I didn't have much of a club stop, but no one had bid clubs.

That was soon to be remedied, because my partner now did bid them. I had not the vaguest notion what this meant, but it did not seem to me that my partner could have very many hearts. Since I seemed to have about six more playing tricks than I might have done for this sequence, I bid six diamonds, which was doubled on my right. This was the full deal:

♠ QJ95
♥ 10
♦ J10
♣ QJ10765

♠ 732	♠ AK104
♥ 7432	♥ AKJ95
♦ 72	♦ 4
♣ A432	♣ K98

♠ 86
♥ Q86
♦ AKQ98653
♣ None

My partner did indeed not have very many hearts, but did not seem to have very much of anything else either. Still, the opening lead was the ace of clubs, so I scored one of the more unlikely 1540s in the history of bridge. East, who had doubled 6♦ with ace-king ace-king king, and seen his partner lead an ace, did rather well in the circumstances. "Sorry, partner", he said. "These light doubles don't always pay, even at matchpoints".

Conventions ♣♦♥♠

As you know, the Blackwood convention was invented by Easley Blackwood. It has been said that if he had a nickel for every time his convention was properly used, he would have been a rich man. But if he had a nickel for every time his convention was misused, he would have become a millionaire.

♣♦♥♠ The road to hell is paved with good conventions.

The Daily Telegraph Cup

December 2005

by Ian Payn



The Daily Telegraph Cup used to be a prestigious event. A multiple teams event made up of teams that had qualified at heats throughout the South East to represent their counties. Held over two days at a London hotel, the final was renowned for its hospitality, and to win was regarded as a real achievement.

In the nineteen-nineties, the Daily Telegraph withdrew its sponsorship, and the event went into a decline. London Metropolitan brought it back to life about a decade ago as an invitational event. Home counties were invited to send a team. London Metropolitan itself tends to send the winners of the county teams of four – whether other counties do this I don't know. The winners of the London teams of four this year were David Burn, Brian Callaghan, Rob Cliffe and myself.

What would you think if you'd just played a hand in the wrong strain, at the wrong level and had only narrowly avoided going off?

E/W Vul. Dealer East

♠ –	♠ 983
♥ J9	♥ 6
♦ AQ109854	♦ KJ6
♣ A532	♣ KJ9864
	♠ QJ7652
	♥ AKQ853
	♦ –
	♣ 10

A Kentish East opened Three Clubs. David Burn, sitting South, bid Four Clubs, showing the majors. West bid Five Clubs, and Callaghan, sitting North, bid Five Hearts. He explained later why he bid this instead of Five Spades. It was in case David had Hearts. Or Spades. Or not. You tend

to lose track of this sort of thing. Callaghan's explanation of the "non-doubt showing non-redouble" on a previous occasion had left twelve people lost for words. Anyway, this went round to West, who doubled. That ended the auction. A happy ending for East West? Alas, no. The defence didn't go Spade ruff, underlead of ♣A, second Spade ruff. The defence only took one trick, which meant 750 to N/S. Instead of +980 for Six Spades. Hmm. Still not a disastrous loss. Six imps out? No. Twenty in.

This was the auction at the other table.

West <i>(Cliffe)</i>	North	East <i>(Me)</i>	South
		3♣ *	4♣ **
4♦ ***	4♠	Pass	5♦ ****
6♣ *****	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

*Normal. **Normal. ***Normal.

**** Not dead yet. *****Me neither

What Rob would have done if the opponents had bid Six Spades, I don't know. Seven Clubs looks right to me, but perhaps a bit more difficult in the heat of the moment. Anyway, he'd done the right thing earlier in the auction by appearing to bid earnestly rather than pre-emptively. South led a Heart. I hadn't been paying much attention, and had forgotten that I had a singleton Heart. When I saw dummy, I thought, therefore, that I was going one down. At trick two, looking for a second Heart to play, I realised that I wasn't. Plus 1540. Not a score you see every day.

♣♦♥♠

Scores that you don't see every day are called "Bailey"s after Phil Bailey, who used to keep records of everything, and was determined to achieve every score available. Another Bailey came up on this hand, as well as an unusual winner and an undeserved good score.

N/S Vul. Dealer East

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| ♠ Q1054 | |
| ♥ J843 | |
| ♦ K8 | |
| ♣ K86 | |
| ♠ A9 | ♠ K62 |
| ♥ AK975 | ♥ 6 |
| ♦ 52 | ♦ AQJ109764 |
| ♣ Q974 | ♣ 2 |
| ♠ J873 | |
| ♥ Q102 | |
| ♦ 3 | |
| ♣ AJ1053 | |

As East, I opened Three Diamonds. Yes, I may have been a bit top heavy. And yes, I regretted it bitterly when it went "All Pass" and dummy

went down. A Spade had been led, and I won in dummy with the Ace. I successfully finessed in Diamonds. When my Ace dropped North's King, and South showed out, North gave me a very funny look. Hadn't he ever seen anyone open Three Diamonds with an eight card suit before?

Anyway, I played off six more rounds of Diamonds discarding all of dummy's Clubs and two of dummy's Hearts. North South had been bailing out Clubs like drunken sailors, so, when I played the Two of Clubs after all the Diamonds it was the only one left.



So, I scored +190 (a "Bailey") and partner bought me a drink (as if I needed any more) for winning the first round of a suit with the deuce. The good score? Well, at the other table East West duly reached Six Diamonds, and Burn led the Ace of Clubs. Declarer reasoned that Burn must have the King of Diamonds to do this. So he banged down the Ace. One off. And me off the hook for playing a slam in a part score.

♣♦♥♠

Finally, something a bit more edifying.

Rob and I seemed to have switched positions for this one. He was East, and opened One Heart. I responded One Spade, and he rebid Two No Trumps. I raised to Three No Trumps for no good reason that I recall.

Love All. Dealer East

	♠ KJ75		♠ KJ7
	♥ A10973		♥ 1097
	♦ A		♦ -
	♣ QJ6		♣ J6
♠ A10642	♠ Q83	♠ A1064	♠ Q8
♥ Q2	♥ KJ64	♥ -	♥ J6
♦ 854	♦ KQJ6	♦ 85	♦ QJ6
♣ 953	♣ AK	♣ 95	♣ K
			♠ -
			♥ -
			♦ 10973
			♣ 10874
	♠ 9		
	♥ 85		
	♦ 109732		
	♣ 108742		

South led the Nine of Spades (must be a Daily Mail reader). Rob played small from dummy, and North won with the King. A Queen of Clubs switch was won by Rob in hand, and he played a Heart to the Queen and Ace.

Now, as we can see from looking at all four hands, a Jack of Clubs continuation from North would have been best for the defence, but North for some reason decided to exit with a small Heart. Rob won this in hand, and was now in control. He played the King of Diamonds. North won, and played the Ten of Hearts, but he was doomed. Cliffe had read the position:

We scored up, and we'd won. Hertfordshire were second, Sussex third. The event had been run excellently by Gordon Rainsford (it started when it was supposed to start and finished when it was supposed to finish, which is unique in my experience). And Chris Duckworth had made sure that the hospitality standards from the old-time Telegraph event were upheld. I had suggested that since the Telegraph no longer has any interest in the event London Metropolitan should rename the Cup. It was pointed out that the cup had Daily Telegraph engraved upon it in enormous letters, much more trouble than it's worth to remove. So, the Telegraph continues to get free publicity, but who knows? If the event grows in stature (and there's no reason why it shouldn't) perhaps they might be interested in renewing their sponsorship.

Winning The Ten of Hearts in hand, he cashed two Diamond winners, the King of Clubs and the Queen of Spades. South had no choice but to come down to:

♠ J 7
♥ 9
♦ -
♣ -

Thrown on lead with his Heart (had he discarded it, Cliffe's ♥6 would have been the ninth trick), North had to concede the last two tricks to dummy's Ace and Ten of Spades. Neatly played, taking advantage of a defensive slip to remove all the safe exit cards from a defender's hand, and then throw him in.

Estoril excitement

by Chris Duckworth

The English women were disappointed with their performance in the European Championships in the summer of 2004. They had hoped for a medal but, failing that, they really wanted to finish in the top five, earning themselves the right to play in the Venice Cup, the main world championship event for women's teams. They ended up in seventh place, two outside their goal, but all was not lost. A sixth European team was allocated a place in the Venice Cup in order to even up the numbers, and later the Israeli women were obliged to drop out, so England was invited to join the party. We didn't need asking twice!

The World Championships were held this autumn in Estoril in Portugal. The selected England women's team included some well-known London-based players, although none of the team was actually a member of the LMBA. Nicola Smith, playing with Heather Dhondy, has been a London member in the past, as has Sally Brock, playing with LMBA President's wife Kitty Teltscher. And all four are Young Chelsea regulars, so there was plenty of local interest. The team was completed by Michelle Brunner and Rhona Goldenfield and non-playing captain Alan Mould, all from Manchester. Oh and me - a genuine London representative - along as coach.

My role, by the way, is a bit of a misnomer. I don't do a lot of the technical stuff advising about systems etc, that David Burn does as coach to the English open team. My responsibilities are more about making sure everyone knows how to get from their hotel to the playing venue, has a good supply of tissues, aspirins, bananas or whatever else they may need for their comfort, and that they have all remembered to leave their mobile phones outside the playing rooms.

I am also there to score throughout, recording all the bidding and play of every hand. Which means that I am privileged to watch an awful lot of really excellent bridge. And I am able to offer congratulations and/or sympathy to our team when things go well or badly. Mostly this is in line with how well or badly the players are playing, but you can also be lucky or unlucky. This can be dependent on your system, or that of your opponents, or just sometimes be because of a good or bad guess. The effect of this is most obvious on the big hands, as these two examples show.

The first came when I was watching Heather Dhondy, who held this monster:

♠ AKQJxxxx
♥ A
♦ Qx
♣ Ax



She was all set to open 2♣ when her right hand opponent beat her to it by opening 2♦ - a multi showing a weak two in one of the majors. Too strong to overcall in spades, Heather doubled for the time being. Left-hand opponent redoubled, asking partner to bid her major, and Nicola, in fourth

seat bid 3♦. This free bid showed some values and a good diamond suit and was followed by a pass from RHO. What now? Heather instantly found the perfect solution – she bid 4NT – Roman Key Card Blackwood for diamonds. When partner bid 5♥ showing two key cards without the trump queen, Heather could count 13 tricks and bid a confident 7NT. Very few other pairs bid the grand slam on this hand, and certainly none as quickly – but Heather and Nicola were helped by their opponent’s system this time.



On the next rather similar hand held by Michelle Brunner the English were less lucky. This time the opponents were silent and Michelle opened 2♣ holding:

♠ AKJ1098632
 ♥ –
 ♦ Q75
 ♣ A

Overall the English women did well in Estoril. Of course they would have liked to finish with a medal, but after all, we had only just squeaked into the championships in the first place. We finished a solid sixth in the round robin stage, guaranteeing a place in the knockout final stages. We drew Germany in the quarter finals, a team we thought could be beaten, but in the event the match went against us. The German women were undoubtedly playing in luck in this match, but they were also playing very well and it was no shame to lose to this team. The Germans went on to reach the final, where they lost to France and had to be content with a silver medal. The French women also played extremely well throughout the event and were worthy winners of the title.

Rhona Goldenfield bid a positive 3♦ and Michelle tried 5NT – a grand slam force in diamonds. She was delighted to hear 7♣ from partner, promising two top diamond honours and offering a choice of grand slams. Which should she choose?

I think Michelle had a tough choice to make between 7♦ and 7♠ – either suit could be breaking well round the table – and I had every sympathy with her choice of 7♠. But this was the full deal:

Game All. Dealer East

♠ –	♠ Q754
♥ A643	♥ Q852
♦ AK9832	♦ 64
♣ QJ2	♣ K108
♠ –	♠ AKJ1098632
♥ KJ1097	♥ –
♦ J10	♦ Q75
♣ 976543	♣ A

As you can see, the spade grand slam was fated to go down, but 7♦ is unbreakable. East may find a spade lead and be delighted to see partner ruff, but her pleasure will be short-lived when North over-ruffs!

Plum Bum *

by Mike Graham

** You may not have heard this expression before. I first came across it spoken by the late great Terence Reese, but I haven't heard the term used much recently. It describes one's score on a less than perfect board. Not a good score. Yes, you guessed it, a complete bottom in fact.*

Needing some practice before a county match, you toddle off to your partner's local club for a pairs event. County matches are teams events, so playing pairs is perhaps not ideal preparation, but never mind. You are travelling by train, so you forget the full system file – it needs a crane to carry it – and take your convention card instead. This is cunningly disguised as a plastic beer mat, and you hope that it will carry you through.

Together with your partner, you pop into a place where refreshment is available. You get to use your convention card as a beer mat, as the place hasn't got any of its own. You talk through what you think you have forgotten since the last time you played together over a couple of pints, and off you go. You pay your money, draw a table, and sit down for the first round.

Vulnerable against not, you hold as dealer: ♠7 ♥AJ9765 ♦1032 ♣QJ8. You are playing a system whereby an opening Two Hearts shows a weakish hand with both majors, so you pass. LHO takes forever to open Two Clubs (alerted). Partner passes, and RHO jumps to Three Diamonds. You try

Three Hearts, more for the lead than for anything else. LHO appears to have heard enough and jumps to Four No Trump (alerted) and partner bids Five Clubs. RHO bids Five Diamonds (alerted). What is going on?

Partner could have doubled Two Clubs to show clubs, or bid Three Clubs himself. He did neither of these things. Therefore he must have heart support – you are quite likely to have a Weak Two in hearts for your actions so far. Also, he should have the club ace.

Which is quite funny. Partner has the ace of clubs. You have the ace of hearts. LHO bid Blackwood after getting a positive response to Two Clubs. RHO appears to have some number of aces, assuming that they know what they are doing over interference to Blackwood. What on earth can LHO have?

At this vulnerability it seemed to me that bidding Five Hearts was too much – two down doubled would be more than an opposition game. LHO was still there, though, and bid Five Spades. Partner passed, and LHO bid Six Diamonds! Well, you have two aces against this, so I passed. LHO bid Six Spades, which was passed out. Partner led the ace of clubs and at least we stopped the overtrick. This was the complete deal.



NS Vul. Dealer North.

♠ 7	
♥ AJ9765	
♦ 1032	
♣ QJ8	
♠ 542	♠ AKQJ10986
♥ –	♥ Q4
♦ KQJ9875	♦ A
♣ K62	♣ 53
♠ 3	
♥ K10832	
♦ 64	
♣ A10974	

Two Clubs was a game force, Three Diamonds was a positive, and listening to the post-mortem (conducted by the opponents; partner and I don't bother, as I can't stand them unless there is something important to discuss *at that point*, which most of the time there isn't) it was clear that the rest was a complete fog. They had no agreements over interference to Blackwood, so East had no idea what Five Diamonds meant, although it must have meant *something*, hence the alert.... As to Six Diamonds, it was either a very good bid, showing fine appreciation of what East's bidding showed, correctly evaluating the heart void and club king as gold dust, or it simply meant that West didn't understand Five Spades, and from West's comments it was clear that the latter was the case. I have some sympathy here – what is wrong with a simple Three Spades over Three Hearts with that East hand? At least partner now knows where you live.

Anyway, minus 980 to start off the evening. I checked the traveller later.

No match points. Saving in Seven Hearts would have been no good either.

About three rounds later, the East-West hands were:

West	East
♠ A973	♠ KQJ1084
♥ 10864	♥ Q
♦ K9	♦ AQ6
♣ AK7	♣ Q62

The bidding proceeded:

West	East
	1♠
2♣	stop 3♠
stop 4♣(alerted)	4♥(alerted) (Dbl)
stop 6♠	

I kid you not. I suppose you can play Four Clubs in this sequence as Gerber, but...! West was clearly a man who knew when his partner would hold a useful singleton at the right time. Bidding and making Six Spades produced a clear top. Never heard of Non-Stop Gerber, boys? Shame on you. Call the TD? Forget it.

A few rounds later, a play problem.

West	East
♠ QJ1053	♠ A9864
♥ K9	♥ 1062
♦ AJ63	♦ K84
♣ Q6	♣ AK

The bidding was straightforward:

West	East
	1♠
2♦	2♠
4♠	

Partner led the jack of clubs, won by the ace. Declarer's next move was to play the ace of spades.



This is quite a good line at teams, as, if the king does not fall, you can cash the king of clubs and exit with a trump. If the king is on your right, RHO will have to make a disadvantageous lead. If the king is on your left, you haven't lost anything. This is not so good at pairs, as it is drastically against the room – a likely line is to lead a heart towards the king and see what happens; you can always take a later diamond finesse. Playing this way, you will always be a trick behind the room if the king of spades is on your right. Unless you are desperate, this is not the way to play pairs.

Well, the good news is that a heart towards the king will hold – the ace is on your left. And the diamonds are three-three with the queen onside. So you will lose a heart and the spade king, as the king of spades is offside. A dead average at 650. Except for our declarer, who scored 680, for the king of spades was singleton you see.

Finally, we got some good hands. I held: ♠A975 ♥KJ10 ♦AQ10975 ♣–. I opened 1♦, partner bid 1♥, I rebid 1♠, and partner produced 2♣, fourth-suit forcing.

Well, this would make a good bidding problem, I thought. Lots of possible bids – Three Hearts, Three Diamonds, Three Clubs; all feasible. However, you can't take forever at the table in a pairs, and I chose to jump to Three Diamonds. I am convinced in retrospect that the best bid at this point with this hand is Four Clubs, but I didn't think of that in time. Anyway, Three Diamonds seemed reasonable, and served to galvanise

partner; he bid Four No Trump. Five Spades from me (two aces and the queen of diamonds, as diamonds were clearly the agreed suit). We do have a useful-void showing mechanism, but I couldn't remember it. Five No Trump from partner (side kings?), Six Hearts (heart king), Seven Diamonds. We had to explain our bids along the way, and I was quite pleased to do so, up to a point.

I was less pleased with the dummy. The jack of clubs was led.

- ♠ Q
- ♥ Q8743
- ♦ K432
- ♣ AQ7

- ♠ A975
- ♥ KJ10
- ♦ AQ10975
- ♣ –

Interesting. Partner explained Five Spades correctly.

Even more interesting, LHO knows I have the king of hearts, as I showed it in the bidding. Partner responded One Heart. Therefore, if LHO has the ace of hearts, she knows it would be standing up and she would have led it. She didn't lead it, therefore she hasn't got it. Which means that RHO has it.



One small chance. I have to play for a swindle. I have to finesse the club queen, and, if it wins, cash the club ace, throwing two high hearts from hand, and hope to sneak a heart through RHO. If the club finesse loses I can simply concede

one down. I played the queen of clubs; it held. I discarded the heart jack. Then the ace of clubs, discarding the heart king. Then a small heart from dummy.

This shouldn't work, really.

Remember the bidding: 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣-3♦. I have no clubs (proven). I opened 1♦ and rebid 1♠; five diamonds, four spades. Allow six diamonds for the Three Diamond bid. I can't have five spades, as I would rebid Two Spades over the Two Club bid. If I have seven diamonds, in other words a 4270 shape, then it is too late by now, and it won't matter if the ace of hearts is ruffed. So RHO

should really play the ace of hearts, hoping my shape is 4360.

But she didn't. She played small. I played the ten, expecting two things: (1) a make (2) a lively post-mortem. Neither of these things happened. LHO won the ace of hearts over my ten. "I knew I'd make it eventually", she said. Well, she wasn't wrong.

Inevitably, bidding and making Six Diamonds would have been a joint top. Guess how many matchpoints going one off in Seven Diamonds scored.

Correct.



Congratulations ...

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



Internationally, pride of place must go to Espen and Helen Erichsen who formed one third of the gold medal-winning team at the European Mixed Teams Championships in Tenerife last June. Tom Townsend and David Gold also gained bronze medals in the Open Pairs Championship in Tenerife, a fine achievement in this world class field.



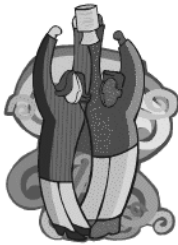
Tom Townsend, David Gold, David Price and Colin Simpson represented England with great credit in the Bermuda Bowl in Estoril in the autumn, not forgetting David Burn and Chris Duckworth, coaches to the English Open and Women's teams respectively.

The same foursome of Tom, Colin and the two Davids won Stage III of the 2005/6 England trials. They have been selected to represent England in the 2006 Camrose, as have Nick Sandqvist and Artur Malinowski who finished third in the trials.

At the Brighton Summer Congress, Brian Callaghan won the Four Stars Teams A final, the major teams trophy, and came second in the Swiss Pairs Championship. Other notable achievements in Brighton came from Alan Woo, Olivia Woo and Paul Martin who were runners-up in the Four Stars A final; Simon Gillis and Espen Erichsen who were third in the same event; Peter



Crouch who was equal fourth in the Swiss Pairs and Anne Catchpole and Edward Sunley, who both did well in different partnerships in the “Play with the Experts” Pairs.



Tony and Vivian Friday won the Swiss Pairs at the Summer Seniors Congress.

Al and Olivia Woo won both the Swiss Pairs and the Swiss Teams at the new Riviera Congress in Torquay.

Janet de Botton’s team, including herself, Nick Sandqvist, Artur Malinowski and Gunnar Hallberg, were runners up in the Crockfords Cup final.

Ned Paul and Bill Harvey won the BGB Summer Sim Pairs in July.

Marc Smith and Peter Czerniewski won the Essex one-day Swiss Pairs and came second in the Surrey one-day Swiss Pairs, while Shireen Mohandes and Andy Bowles were third in the Surrey Swiss Teams.



Jan Petter Svendsen and Mike Fletcher came first and second respectively in the Guernsey Congress Swiss teams.

At the Autumn Congress, in the pairs events, Phil Andrews and Michael Graham came fourth in the Two Stars final, Marc Smith and Peter Czerniewski won the Satellite Final with Rob Cliffe and Nora Smith second, and Dom Goodwin was second in the Swiss Pairs. In the teams, Al and Olivia Woo were third in the Eastbourne Bowl, Rosie White, Brian Ransley, Paul Martin and Brian Mcguire were fourth in the Burlington Cup and Rob Cliffe and Nora Smith won the Sussex Cup.



At the Middlesex Congress Liz Clery won the Swiss Pairs with Ryan Stephenson, while Ashwin Patel and Carmel Wood came second in the Swiss Teams.

Solution

This is the deal referred to in the puzzle on page 9. Did you manage to solve it?



♠	AKxxxxx
♥	—
♦	—
♣	QJxxxx
♠	—
♥	Qxxx
♦	Jxxxx
♣	Kxxx
♠	xxxx
♥	Axxx
♦	KQxxx
♣	—
♠	QJ
♥	KJxxx
♦	Axx
♣	Axx

Through the Minefield

with Veronica Thicke

In which Bridge Expert and bonne viveuse Veronica Thicke answers queries from readers. Veronica Thicke once beat the panel on "What's My Line?". Gilbert Harding thought she was a fishmonger



At the Lederer Memorial Trophy recently, one of the commentators kept banging on about something called "Deep Finesse". What on earth was he on about? (LBV, Moreton-on-the-Marsh)

Deep Finesse is a computer program, and a jolly useful one it is, too. Enter a hand and it will provide you with instant double-dummy analysis. Whilst all this is very clever, this sort of thing is best confined to home use rather than the commentary box. It's all very well tossing out all sorts of information along the lines of "North/South can make One Spade", but if the players subject to a commentary are in something else entirely it hardly matters, does it?

My experience as a commentator (no-one who was there will ever forget the Rhyl Invitational in 1987!) is that what the crowd wants is blood, not dry and irrelevant statistics. They want to know what's going on both at the table and in the minds of the players. The latter isn't always easy,



of course, as anyone who has tried to commentate when Brian Callaghan is playing will tell you, but it's a damned site more interesting than attempting to explain the difference between a thirty per cent line and a thirty one per cent one. I once shared the podium with Terence (who, frankly, had

things on his mind other than bridge, but I managed to resist his charms). He well and truly put me in my place when I spent five minutes explaining what a declarer was thinking about, and what conclusion he would come to before his play in the trump suit after analysing all the various percentages. When I had finished there was a pause. Terence said "That'll be 'Eight Ever, Nine Never', then?" Collapse of crowd, collapse of me!

I recently had an embarrassing experience at the club. Everything was progressing quite happily when my partner, in a competitive auction, thought for a while before passing. When it came round to me, I bid something, and my opponents, older and far more experienced than we are, started waving their arms again and calling for the director. We were quite nonplussed. What should we have done? (EG, North London – Initials and location changed)

I've had to ask your club secretary (who also happened to be directing on the night in question) for clarification. He informs me that he was indeed called to your table, and that your opponent were both clattering on at him about how you had no right to bid after your partner's hesitation, and that they should get an adjusted score. He quietened

them down, and remonstrated with them. Firstly, he points out, the act of calling the director should never cause offence, and it shouldn't be used to intimidate opponents. Secondly, he doesn't take too kindly to people, in this case your opponents, telling him what to rule.

In an ideal world, what should have happened is this. After your call, one or other of your opponents should have told you (politely) that he was going to ask the director to come over. The director would then have been summoned. The first thing he would ask was what the problem was. An opponent would explain. In this case, it would be his concern that your bid might (note that "might"!)

have been influenced (consciously or otherwise) by your partner's hesitation. He would then ask if your side agreed that there had been a hesitation. A lot of people find it hard to answer this question honestly. I don't know why this is – perhaps they think they're being accused of some heinous crime, but they aren't. They're being asked if they broke the tempo a bit during a game of cards. Hardly worth fibbing about, you'd have thought. Anyway, once the hesitation is established, the director will go away and think about what has happened. If possible, he'll consult someone, but this isn't always convenient in club games. He'll then return to your table and tell everyone

his ruling, advising those who did not achieve a ruling in their favour of their right to appeal (again, this might not happen in a smaller club, where the ruling of the director might well be final).



That's it! No need for shouting, demanding redress and browbeating. Your director, in fact, had hoped to see you after

the game to explain things more fully on the night in question, but you'd disappeared. As far as he was concerned, regardless of any ruling, your opponents had behaved very poorly, and he has given them an informal warning about this.

It's too much to hope that bridge might still be a game for ladies and gentlemen, but there's no reason why it shouldn't be played in a pleasant atmosphere. There is no room at the table for the shouting bully – good results should be gained by superior play, not by leaving opponents such quivering wrecks that they don't know a Spade from a Diamond!

Do you have a query for Veronica? E-Mail the editor! Veronica would like to take this opportunity to wish her readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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