Bernard Magee’s Acol Bidding Quiz

You are West in the auctions below, playing ‘Standard Acol’ with a weak no-trump (12-14 points) and 4-card majors.

1. Dealer West. Love All.
   ♠ 4 2
   ♥ 6 5 4
   ♦ A K 8 7 6
   ♣ K Q 7
   West North East South
   ?

2. Dealer East. Love All.
   ♠ K 8 6 5
   ♥ Q 6 5 2
   ♦ 10 8 6 3
   ♣ 2
   West North East South
   1♣ Pass
   ?

3. Dealer East. N/S Game.
   ♠ K 8 7 6
   ♥ 2
   ♦ J 8 6 3
   ♣ 5 4 3
   West North East South
   1♠ Pass
   ?

   ♠ A 7 3
   ♥ K Q 8 7
   ♦ Q J 4 3
   ♣ 7 6
   West North East South
   2♥ Pass
   2♥ Pass
   3♠ Pass
   ?

5. Dealer East. Love All.
   ♠ A 2
   ♥ K Q J
   ♦ Q J 8 4
   ♣ Q J 10 5
   West North East South
   ?

   ♠ K Q 4 2
   ♥ 4 2
   ♦ 7 2
   ♣ A K 8 7 6
   West North East South
   1♥ 1♥ Dbl* Pass
   ?

7. Dealer West. Game All.
   ♠ J 2
   ♥ 7
   ♦ 9 8 3
   ♣ A K 10 9 8 7 3
   West North East South
   3♣ 3♥ Dbl* Pass
   ?

8. Dealer West. Love All.
   ♠ 4 3
   ♥ A K 8 7 6
   ♦ 6
   ♣ A Q J 5 4
   West North East South
   1♥ 1♥ 2♥ 3♠
   ?

   ♠ K Q 5 4
   ♥ K 2
   ♦ K 7
   ♣ A J 10 8 4
   West North East South
   ?

    ♠ A 8 7 6 5
    ♥ 3 2
    ♦ 7 6
    ♣ A Q 4 2
    West North East South
    3♥ Dbl Pass
    ?

    ♠ K 2
    ♥ A J 10 9
    ♦ 9 8 7
    ♣ K 8 3 2
    West North East South
    1♠ 2♥ 3♥
    ?

12. Dealer South. Love All.
    ♠ 4 2
    ♥ A 2
    ♦ A 9 8 3
    ♣ J 8 6 5 3
    West North East South
    Pass 2♥ Pass Pass
    ?

Answers on page 6
Answers on page 9
Answers on page 11
Answers on page 13
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PORT</th>
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<tr>
<td>JUL 30</td>
<td>Fly to ISTANBUL Turkey Transfer to Aegean Odyssey</td>
<td>10.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUL 31</td>
<td>Cruising the Dardanelles and past Mount Athos</td>
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<td>AUG 1</td>
<td>THESSALONIKI Greece</td>
<td>6.00am</td>
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<tr>
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<td>VOLOS (Metora) Greece</td>
<td>7.00am</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG 3</td>
<td>PATMOS Greek Islands</td>
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<td>7.00pm</td>
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<td>AUG 4</td>
<td>PIRAEUS (Athens) Greece</td>
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<td>7.00pm</td>
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<td>GYTHION (Sparta &amp; Mystra) Greece</td>
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<td>1.30pm</td>
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<td>AUG 6</td>
<td>PREVEZA (Arta) Greece</td>
<td>8.30am</td>
<td>6.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG 7</td>
<td>CORFU Greek Islands</td>
<td>midnight</td>
<td>2.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG 8</td>
<td>DUBROVNIK Croatia Cruise the islands of Hvar and Korcula</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>2.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG 9</td>
<td>RAVENNA Italy</td>
<td>1.00pm</td>
<td>midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG 10</td>
<td>VENICE Italy</td>
<td>8.00am</td>
<td>overnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUG 11</td>
<td>VENICE Italy Disembark Aegean Odyssey and transfer to Venice Airport for flight home</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAT J</td>
<td>Standard Outside</td>
<td>£2,450pp</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAT D</td>
<td>Deluxe Balcony</td>
<td>£3,450pp</td>
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BRIDGE April 2014

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Please make sure that all letters and e-mails carry full
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   Eynsham Village Hall.
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8 BURGHEAD ROTARY CHARITIES
   Stamford Bridge Club.
   1.45 for 2.00pm. £8.00.
   Alan Kinch
   01780 444276

15 HUDDERSFIELD PENNINE
   ROTARY CLUB
   Outlane Golf Club.
   12 for 12.30. £48.00 per table.
   Rtn Sam Smith
   01924 492540
   samuelsmith396@btinternet.com

JUNE

13 ST MARY’S CHURCH
   Eaton Socon, St Neots.
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   Malcolm Howarth
   01480 212910

JULY

3 HUDDERSFIELD PENNINE
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   Outlane Golf Club.
   12 for 12.30. £48.00 per table.
   Rtn Sam Smith
   01924 492540
   samuelsmith396@btinternet.com

11 GREAT BARFORD CHURCH
   Village Hall, Great Barford.
   10.00 for 10.30am. £13.50.
   Derek Fordham
   01234 870324

AUGUST

15 ST IVES DAY CARE CENTRE
   Hemingford Abbots Village Hall.
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7-21 May 2014

BERNARD MAGEE
and his supporting team

HOTEL EDEN
ROVINJ

From £1399 sharing

Bernard Magee is going to this lovely country, 7-21 May, £1399 half board, £10 per night single supplement. See the adjacent advertisement.

Yes, I know it is short notice and there will be a smaller group than usual but to some that is a bonus.

TRY ONE AND SEE

I have not managed, thus far, to properly describe Bernard’s Better Bridge interactive CD. Bernard has used some of his very best hands for these worked illustrations. He and Johannes Leber have spent hundreds of hours making it as good as it is.

So let me try to explain just once more, the content of this helpful CD. It covers six separate subjects.

- Identifying and Bidding Slams
- Ruffing for Extra Tricks
- Making the Most of High Cards
- Competitive Auctions
- Doubled Contracts
- Play and Defence in 1NT

These six headings were Bernard’s first filmed series of Better Bridge with Bernard Magee DVDs. The very ones that are being cleared out at a greatly reduced price due to water damage to their over-wrappings. £30 for the set of six.

It is Bernard at his absolute best and the hands used for illustration are some of the most suitable from his considerable portfolio.

This CD has twenty hands for each of the six subjects. These provide supervised play for those who have watched and studied the lecture on their television or computer screen.

It also works as a stand-alone product, especially for those who have enjoyed his tutorial CDs and want more of his hands to play and explanations to listen to.

I am offering this unique product at £35, reduced from £69 as a spring special.

GOFFIES STAMPS

If you want to save on postage, especially as postal rates go up again this month, try Clive Goff’s discounted stamp service. Value supplied in two stamps, combined to make up the 53p 2nd class rate, 2nd class to you at 44p. 1st class 62p, still only 50p to you. Available in lots of 100. 0208 422 4906.

JUST DUPLICATE

I am still committed to the promotion of my Just Duplicate Bridge Events. The Clifton Park Hotel, Lytham St Annes, is a newly added venue. They are all full board and include a traditional Sunday Roast. See page 22.
Q PLUS HANDS
This month’s numbers are listed below. I am preparing a full list which I will try to incorporate into next month’s issue.
1711-04  4691-09  5795-12

DENHAM EVENTS
The fifth in the series of these six-part filmed events, starring Bernard Magee, is scheduled for Denham Grove next January. Three night’s full board, six lectures, six sessions of supervised play. £399 per person, see the advert on page 7. An experience that you will never forget and something you should be part of once in a lifetime.

Bernard Magee, will host both the Twixmas and New Year’s Eve Events at Denham Grove this year. Be sure to book early.

PICK ‘N’ MIX
All three series of six DVDs are listed on page 10 with thumbnail descriptions of their content. Playing time is an average of 90 minutes. The wonderful thing about a tutorial DVD is that viewers have a permanent record which they can re-visit over and over again. Individual DVDs, £25 each. Boxed sets of six, £100. Pick and mix. Six for only £105 including postage.

BLUE BRIDGE
See Readers Letters on pages 24 and 25.

CLUB INSURANCE
Members need to be sure their club is covered by insurance for small losses of cash and their club equipment as well as public liability. Just over £63 for a twelve month period for a club of up to 100 members. There are over five hundred clubs in my scheme enjoying peace of mind. There is a new contact at managing brokers, Moore Stephens. Ring Tom Harvey ☎ 0207 515 5270. It is the unexpected that you need to have covered.

EXTRA CRUISE
Bernard Magee will be travelling on Aegean Odyssey, flying to Istanbul on the 30 July. The ship then sails across the Aegean around Athens and into the Adriatic, visiting Dubrovnik on its way to Venice. Do join the party.

VOYAGER
Good news. We have a new bridge room onboard m.v. Voyager, picture below. I am able to recommend readers to book with real confidence. Have a look at the advert on the back page. If a cruise takes your fancy, give my office a ring and we will send you the 2014/2015 brochure. ☎ 01483 489961.

There are now no bridge supplements for those booking any of our cruises or overseas holidays, so no excuses for not booking with Mr Bridge as we can match all prices.

All good wishes,
Mr Bridge

BRIDGE
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- Sally Brock Tip
- Travel Tip
- Readers Letters

Special Introductory Subscription: £20 for twelve monthly issues.

See mail order form on page 7.
1. Dealer West. Love All.

West North East South
♠ 4 7 6 5 ♥ 6 5 4 ♦ A K 8 7 6 ♣ K Q 7

West North East South
♠ 7 6 5 ♥ A Q 9 2 ♦ 4 2 ♣ J 8 3 2

1NT.

If you are playing a weak no-trump, then you should open hands that fit in to the shape and range with 1NT. Do not worry about the weak suits, part of the power of the weak no-trump is its pre-emptive nature. Looking at your hand, there is a good chance that your opponents might be able to make a contract in one of the majors, and so it turns out.

However, your 1NT opener will make it difficult for them to find their contract. You may well go off in 1NT, but -50 or -100 scores better than -110 for 2♠ making.

2. Dealer East. Love All.

West North East South
♠ K 8 6 5 ♥ Q 6 5 2 ♦ 10 8 6 3 ♣ 2

West North East South
♥ Q 2 ♥ 10 8 ♦ A J 4 2 ♣ A K 6 5 4

1♣.

With 5 HCP, you do not have to respond, but with just a singleton in your partner’s suit, the chances of improving the final contract by responding are quite high. As long as your partner does not rebid clubs, you will probably end up better off. However, if you are going to respond you need to leave all options open, which means responding in your lowest four-card suit: 1♦. This allows your partner to rebid a four-card major if he has one, but more importantly it allows him to support diamonds if he can. Here, he will bid 2♦ which will finish the auction. If you choose a 1♥ or 1♠ response, then your partner has little choice but to rebid 2♣, which leaves you in a poor contract.

3. Dealer East. N/S Game.

West North East South
♠ K 9 8 7 6 ♥ A 9 5 4 3 ♦ J 8 5 ♣ J 8 6 3

West North East South
♥ 2 ♦ 2 ♣ 5 4 3

4♠.

When you have support for your partner’s major and a weak hand, then you must raise his suit. I have a simple rule when responding to one of a major: if I have fewer than 11 points, five-card support and a singleton, then I raise to game: to make or to save. The idea is that if you cannot make game then your opponents may well be able to. It is the weight of trumps that tips in your favour. So often when you have a big fit, your opponents will too. By jumping to 4♠ directly, you keep the opponents out. The losing trick count would suggest just 3♠, but bidding boldly when non-vulnerable in these situations tends to work best.

On this hand, both sides might be able to make game, but North-South will have little chance to try.
PLAY SOFTWARE
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- Losing Trick Count
- Making a Plan as Defender
- Responding to 1NT
- Signals & Discards
- Endplays
- All 6 DVDs as a boxed set £100.00 .......

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- Hand Evaluation
- Pre-Empting
- Splinter & Cue-Bids
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I enclose a cheque for £ .........

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♦ Four bridge sessions**
West North East South
1NT Pass
2♣ Pass 2♥ Pass

3♥. There is a phrase that suggests that two opening hands should make a game together, but there is one exception. Two weak no-trump hands do not necessarily add up to game: if they are minimum and flat, the potential can be less than the total point count. In terms of the losing trick count, the weak no-trump holds all of the weak hands, usually with 7-8 losers, but, as shown here they can be even weaker. With a 7-loser hand, you should invite game by bidding 3♥. Your partner would pass this invitation. With 13 HCP and a 4333 shape, there is little chance of game making.

West North East South
1♠ 1♠ Dbl* Pass

*Negative double: for take-out

2♣. The negative double in this auction shows a hand that would have responded 1♥ (promising at least four cards in the unbid major). You should respond to it in precisely the same way in which you would respond to 1♥. This means that a 1NT rebid still shows a strong hand (15-17 points). Your spades are not good enough to pass for penalties, so your only choice left is to rebid 2♠, which finishes the auction.

£14 including UK postage

See Mail Order Form on page 7.
### Series 1

1. **Ruffing for Extra Tricks**  
   This seminar deals with declarer’s use of ruffing to make extra tricks and then looks at how the defenders might counteract this. (74 mins.)

2. **Competitive Auctions**  
   This seminar focuses on competitive auctions from the perspective of the overcalling side and then from the perspective of the opening side in the second part. (86 mins.)

3. **Making the Most of High Cards**  
   This seminar helps declarer to use his high cards more carefully and then looks at how defenders should care for their high cards. (83 mins.)

4. **Identifying & Bidding Slams**  
   The first half of this seminar is about identifying when a slam might be on – one of the hardest topics to teach. The second half covers some slam-bidding techniques. (96 mins.)

5. **Play & Defence of 1NT Contracts**  
   This seminar looks at the most common and yet most feared of contracts: 1NT. The first half looks at declaring the contract and the second part puts us in the defenders’ seats. (88 mins.)

6. **Doubling & Defence against Doubled Contracts**  
   The first half of this seminar explores penalty doubles and the second half discusses the defence against doubled contracts. (88 mins.)

**Individual DVDs. £25 each. Boxed Set of 6. £100.**

### Series 2

7. **Leads**  
   Bernard takes you through all the basic leads and the importance of your choice of lead. If you start to think not just about your hand, but about your partner’s too, then you will get much better results. (95 mins.)

8. **Losing Trick Count**  
   A way of hand evaluation for when you find a fit. Bernard deals with the basics of the losing trick count then looks at advanced methods to hone your bidding. (92 mins.)

9. **Making a Plan as Declarer**  
   Bernard explains how to make a plan then expands on how to make the most of your long suits. The first half deals with no-trumps, the second with suit contracts. (87 mins.)

10. **Responding to 1NT**  
    This seminar deals with Transfers and Stayman in detail. The 1NT opening comes up frequently, so having a good, accurate system of responses is paramount. (93 mins.)

11. **Signals & Discards**  
    This seminar deals with Count, Attitude and Suit-preference signals: aiming to get you working as a partnership in defence. (92 mins.)

12. **Endplay**  
    Bernard takes you through the basics of the technique before showing some magical hands where you take extra tricks from defenders. In the second half, Bernard looks at how to avoid being endplayed. (80 mins.)

**Individual DVDs. £25 each. Boxed Set of 6. £100.**

### Series 3

13. **Hand Evaluation**  
    Going beyond just the point-count is important if you want to improve. Reaching & making 3NT on 24 HCP; and avoiding 3NT on 26 HCP when there are only 7 or 8 tricks. (110 mins.)

14. **Pre-Emptive Bidding**  
    The art of pre-empting is so important in the modern game. Understanding the right types of hand to bid up on and realising the importance of position and vulnerability. (96 mins.)

15. **Splinter & Cue-Bids**  
    Take your slam bidding to another level. Splinter bids are a vital tool to add to your armoury & try your hand at Italian style cue-bidding. (116 mins.)

16. **Avoidance Play**  
    As declarer, an important tactic is to be in control of the defenders: avoiding a particular defender getting the lead. As a defender, you can try to make sure the right player gets the lead at the right time. (88 mins.)

17. **Play & Defence at Pairs**  
    Duplicate Pairs is the game most of us play and getting used to the tactics will make a lot of difference to your performance. Making more overtricks and making sure you do not give away tricks as a defender. (90 mins.)

18. **Thinking Defence**  
    By far the hardest aspect of bridge, but if you can improve your defence your results will quickly improve. Learn how to think through the defence and get your mind in gear for the decisions that await you. (87 mins.)

**Individual DVDs. £25 each. Boxed Set of 6. £100.**

**PICK AND MIX. A BOX OF ANY 6. £105**

Mr Bridge 01483 489961 email: mrbridge@mrbridge.co.uk
7. Dealer West. Game All.  
♠ J 2  ♠ A 9 4  
♥ 7  ♥ A Q J 3  
♦ 9 8 3  ♦ Q J 5 4 2  
♣ A K 10 9 8 7 3  ♣ 2  

West North East South  
3♠  3♥  Dbl* Pass  
?  *Penalty  

Pass. You opened with a pre-empt, showing a weak hand with a seven card club suit: a beautiful description of your hand. Whenever one hand is perfectly described, the partner takes control of the auction: doubles are for penalties. It is very rare that the pre-emptor should make another bid.

Here, East can tell that 3♥ doubled is the best contract, so he doubles and will be pleased to find the ♣ A-K in your hand. 3♥ will be two or three off: 500 or 800 when there is no game on.

8. Dealer West. Love All.  
♠ J 4 3  ♠ 7 5  
♥ A K 8 7 6  ♥ Q J 5 3  
♦ 6  ♦ 8 3 2  
♣ A Q J 5 4  ♣ K 9 6 3  

West North East South  
1♥  1♠  Pass Pass  
?  

4♠. Bidding 4♥ would be correct, if that was going to be the last bid of the auction, but be realistic, do you expect 4♥ to be passed out?

Predicting the auction is important: you need to decide whether to bid to 5♥ or not and it is much better to make a decision as a partnership rather than an individual. One of the main reasons for bidding to the five-level is when you have a double fit, so if you have the chance to show a second suit, then take it. After you bid 4♠, you can leave the final decision up to your partner. If he has a fit with both of your suits, then he will bid on to 5♥, which is the case here. 5♥ will go one off, but with your opponents having a double fit too, they will probably make 4♣, so 5♥ is an excellent sacrifice.

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

West North East South  
1♥  1♠  Pass Pass  
?  

Pass. Your partner has not mustered a response and you have length in your opponents’ suit. Generally, if your partner is short in their suit, he would have been able to make some kind of response if he had the strength too, so he is likely to be relatively weak. Your two bidding options are 1NT and 2♣, but are they particularly desirable? With few entries to your partner’s hand, it will not be easy to play. Also, bear in mind that your spades are not well placed. Note the vulnerability: one off will be 100 and might be too much. 1♠ might scrape home, but -80 will not be too bad a score.

It is important to compete aggressively when you think your opponents have a fit, but when you suspect that they do not, then leaving them where they are can be the best policy.
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- Supporting Partner
- Responding to 1NT
- Stayman
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- Overcalls
- Doubles
- Pre-empting
- Defence against No Trump Contracts
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- Making Overtricks in Suit Contracts
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- Wrong Contract
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- Counting the Hand
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System Requirements: Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8, 8mb RAM, CD-ROM
♠ A 8 7 6 5 ♠ K Q 3 2
♥ 3 2 ♥ 7
♦ 7 6 ♦ A 9 8 2
♣ A Q 4 2 ♣ K J 7 5
West North East South
3♥ Dbl Pass

4♠. North opens with a pre-emptive 3♥ showing 5-9 points and a seven-card heart suit. Your partner doubles: this is a take-out double asking you to bid your best suit.

3♠ looks like the obvious bid, but remember that you are forced to respond, so a 3♠ bid can show zero points. You have 10 HCP and a five-card spade suit. Your partner should have a good opening hand with at least three spades, or if he is borderline he should have four spades. With such a good fit, you should go for game.

If you bid 3♠, your partner will pass: he has a minimum hand and has suggested his spade holding already. Remember, when responding to a take-out double, that a response at the lowest level can show no strength at all.

♠ K 2 ♠ A 9 8 7 6
♥ A J 10 9 ♥ 7
♦ 9 8 7 ♦ A K 3
♣ K 8 3 2 ♣ A 6 5 4
West North East South
3♥ 2♥ Dbl Pass

Pass. It looks like an obvious 2NT bid: 11 HCP and a good heart stopper, then your partner raises to 3NT and you make 400 points. However, bear in mind the number of times your opponents’ overcalls have upset your bidding: here, there is an opportunity to punish them for their interference.

The vulnerability is in your favour: against North-South. If you can double South in 2♥, you are sure of a very healthy score. However, it is not as easy as just doubling straightaway: most players play this double for take-out. Your partner would probably rebid 3♣ and, once again, you will finish in 3NT.

The only way to reach the best contract is to pass. To make game, your partner has to have a better than minimum hand, along with this he will be short in hearts, so, when the auction comes around to him, he will surely make a take-out double. All that remains is for you to pass and wait for your top score to roll in. 2♥ doubled might well go three off, for +800, but two off is enough to beat the score for game.

12. Dealer South. Love All.
♠ 4 2 ♠ A K 6
♥ A 2 ♥ K Q 8 7
♦ A 9 8 3 ♦ 10 6 5 4
♣ J 8 6 5 3 ♣ 4 2
West North East South 1♠
Pass 2♣ Pass Pass

2NT. Playing duplicate pairs (your usual game) it is so important to compete for every hand. When your opponents have shown a fit and passed at the 2-level, it is almost always correct to try to compete for the hand by bidding over them. The reason this is true is because, if you make your contract, clearly you will have done well, but perhaps more crucially, if you go off, you still get a better score. -50 or -100 will be better than allowing 2♠ to make -110.

Sometimes it is very difficult to compete because of the way the points are divided. The problem you have is that although you are short in spades, you are also short in hearts: if you double for take-out, your partner is sure to respond 3♥, which will be no good at all.

Many of you will not have come across the idea of overcalling 2NT for take-out. However, with neither of your partnership having bid and you having passed on the first round, surely it cannot be a natural bid?

With 20 points you would have bid first time round, so the bid can be used as a take-out bid, but suggesting the minors rather than including hearts. This allows your side to find 3♣, which you should be able to make for +110 rather than -110.

This is not quite the Unusual 2NT, which would be a direct 2NT overcall showing 5-5 in the minors.

Second best to 2NT would be 3♠, but on this occasion that would not work so well. However, it is so important to compete for this hand and your job is to find the best way to do it.

Answers to Bernard Magee’s Bidding Quizzes 10-12 on the Cover

Elstead Hotel
Bournemouth BH1 3QP
21-23 November £245
Doubles
Bernard Magee

The Sheriff of Nottingham was entertaining Lord and Lady Biscotte to dinner in the castle. As a social gathering, it was a tiresome affair. The sole purpose was the high-stake rubber game that would follow. Henri Biscotte had more money than he could possibly spend. It made good sense to divert some of it to better use.

‘Some more of this excellent Spanish wine?’ said the Sheriff, refilling Lord Biscotte’s glass.

Sir Guy of Gisburne, who was captain of the guard and the Sheriff’s bridge partner, moved his own empty glass forward. The Sheriff glared at him. Gisburne played an up-and-down game at the best of times. This red wine was the most intoxicating blend produced by the Treviana monks. If Gisburne thought he’d get a single drop more before the big game, he was mistaken.

Not long afterwards, the four players took their seats in a small chamber illuminated by wall-mounted braziers. The Sheriff noted with approval that Lord Biscotte seemed half asleep already.

A heavy win in this game would be a fair recompense for enduring the Biscottes’ boring conversation. So what if Lady Biscotte’s niece, Donatienne, had recently given birth to twins? Who could possibly be interested in tittle-tattle of that sort?

The first rubber opened with this deal:

West North East South

Guy of Gisburne Lady Biscotte The Sheriff Lord Biscotte

PASS

2♣ 3♠ 4♣ 4♠

Declarer South, Love All.

♠ A 6 5
♥ A 8 4
♦ 7 5 2
♣ 10 8 3

♠ Q 10 ♥ Q 7 ♦ K 9 8 6 3 ♣ 10 8 3

♠ J 4 ♥ J 10 9 6 3 2 ♦ J ♣ Q 9 4

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

West North East South

Guy of Gisburne Lady Biscotte The Sheriff Lord Biscotte

PASS

2♣ 3♠ 4♣ 4♠

With a flourish, Lord Biscotte tossed a low club onto the table. The Sheriff grimaced at the 2-2 break.

‘Just what we needed, Alphonsine,’ said Lord Biscotte.

The elderly declarer played the king and ace of hearts and ruffed dummy’s last heart. He then cashed the ♠ A to leave this position:

West North East South

Guy of Gisburne Lady Biscotte The Sheriff Lord Biscotte

PASS

PASS

♠ 8 6 ♥ — ♦ 10 8 ♣ 10 6

♠ — ♥ — ♦ — ♣ Q 9 8 6

♠ Q 9 J 10 9 ♥ — ♦ 10 4 ♣ 6 5

Gisburne led the ♦ K and the richly-garbed Lady Biscotte laid out her cards. ‘I nearly gave you 4♠, Henri,’ she said. ‘With Sir Guy bidding so strongly, I count 5 points for each ace. They are more likely to stand over the king.’

The Sheriff winced at this absurd utterance. They might well have bid too high. If Gisburne had chosen this moment to give declarer a life-line with his ill-timed opening lead, he would hear about it later.

Lord Biscotte won with the ♣ A, noting the fall of East’s ♦ K. He drew trumps in two rounds, the Sheriff grimacing at the 2-2 break.

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The Sheriff’s mouth fell open. ‘Cold game?’ he said. ‘Without my partner’s foolish opening lead there were four certain losers.’

‘But, my Lord, what would you have me lead?’ protested Gisburne.

‘Bleating like a sheep makes you look even more ridiculous,’ admonished the Sheriff. ‘Next time, think before you make your lead.’

During the next hour, the Sheriff was able to display his mastery against the modest opponents. He had restocked his coffers to the extent of some 150 guineas when this deal arose:

Lord Biscotte opened with a Feeble 2♥, a method that was becoming quite popular. The Sheriff’s eyes blazed when he was raised to 6♠. Did his foolish partner not realise that 4♠ was already an overbid? It was bid in the hope of profiting from some foolish defence. Lord Biscotte led the ♦Q and down went the dummy. The Sheriff was forced to admit that Gisburne had his bid, for once. Now, what was the best way to play the slam?

A 3-3 club break would allow five club tricks to be established. Adding five trumps and the ♠A would bring the total to eleven. It would not be possible to add a heart ruff to the pile. He could not then draw trumps ending in the dummy, to enjoy the good clubs.

The Sheriff spotted a chance. He leaned forward and played a low diamond on the first trick. When Lord Biscotte continued with another diamond, he won with the ace and played a trump to his queen. He continued with the ace and king of clubs, throwing a diamond. The ♣J fell from West and the Sheriff ruffed a diamond in his hand, the suit breaking 3-3. Excellent. When he returned to dummy with the ♣10, all the players held six cards. Since no hearts had been played, West’s Feeble Two meant that all his cards were hearts. The Sheriff took a confident ruffing finesse with the ♠10-9, returning to dummy with a trump to score the long clubs and the thirteenth diamond.

‘A very successful evening, my Lord,’ said Gisburne, when the visitors had left the room. ‘I make it 137 guineas each.’

The Sheriff raised an eyebrow. ‘You want half, after my masterful play and your half-witted efforts throughout the session?’

‘Er… well, if not half, what do you suggest, my Lord?’

‘You must owe me at least 50 guineas, after your second-rate contribution,’ thundered the Sheriff. ‘You can count yourself lucky if I overlook the matter!’

Both sides had scored a game when this big deal arose:

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Both sides had scored a game when this big deal arose:
Rubber bridge (or Chicago) is best played with two packs of cards, traditionally with different coloured backs and, while a player is dealing, his partner shuffles the other pack. The cards are dealt one at a time, clockwise, into four piles, beginning with the player on dealer’s left and ending with dealer. Partner shuffles the pack and puts it on his right. When the hand is over, the next dealer finds the pack on his left and passes it to his right to be cut: his opponent takes the top half off towards the dealer and dealer puts the other half on top and deals. That is what should happen, though players are quite casual about it, especially the rules for cutting. For the deals to be fair, a riffle shuffle should be employed and at least five shuffles done: in practice no-one ever does this and players often use the overhand shuffle, which is practically useless. As a result, the hands tend to be quite flat at rubber bridge.

At duplicate, the boards are dealt at the start. Some players think you should deal each board when you come to it and some players think it matters who deals which board, but they are wrong. All boards are dealt at the start of a session by whoever picks the board up. There are no rules about who shuffles and cuts, though a member of each side should be present when the dealing occurs. The same problems about shuffling occur as at rubber bridge: players do not shuffle enough and do not use proper shuffling procedures. Remember, there should be at least five riffle shuffles.

An interesting question is how the dealing should be done. Of course, many players deal as in rubber, but that is not necessary. As long as the cards finish in four piles and consecutive cards do not go into the same pile, then the deal is legal. It is usually easiest to put the four piles in a line in front of you, especially when more than one board is being dealt at a time. Some players deal into the four piles (call them A B C D) from left to right then right to left so the cards go into piles thus: A B C D C B A A B C D D C B etc. That is not permitted because consecutive cards go into the end piles.

Some players deal into five piles (call them A B C D E) but from left to right only (or in a circle) so the cards go into piles thus: A B C D E A B C D E A B C … When they run out of cards they pick up the fifth pile, and deal that into the four piles starting next to where they finished. That is perfectly legal. Another way is to go left to right then back into five piles, but only putting one in the end pile, thus: A B C D E D C B A B C D E D C … Then they put the two end piles together and that (surprisingly) means there are four piles of 13 cards each. Personally, I favour this approach which seems quickest, easiest and is perfectly legal.

Once the four piles are obtained, they are put in the board by the player dealing them. It does not matter into which pocket or which board they go. While there will always be traditionalists who deal them as at rubber bridge these new ways tend to be easier and quicker and should be encouraged.

Many clubs and nearly all events now use computer-dealt cards. These have three big advantages over dealing by hand. First, there is less hassle and players can get down to playing without having to deal. Second, the hands are fairer. Third, there are copies of the hands at the end – and, in many clubs, copies of the hands appear on the internet as well.

The first and third advantages are obvious enough and I doubt that many people disagree, but there are some people who do not think they are fairer. In what way are they fairer? If you play with computer-dealt hands, then these probabilities will definitely occur in the long run, but with hands dealt at the table the hands are flatter and 3-3 breaks are more likely than the odds suggest.

Bridge is a game of many disciplines, but they include technique and judgement, which are based on assessing odds and risks and those are based on expected probabilities. With computer dealt hands, the probabilities are correct, but not with hand dealt ones. Why not? It comes down to the shuffling. Computers pick cards at random, or very, very nearly, which is equivalent to perfect or near-perfect shuffling. But players do not shuffle perfectly, as explained above. If everyone did at least five riffle shuffles, then hands dealt at the table would have near-perfect probabilities, but it will never happen.
Please could you explain the difference in requirements between an Acol two and a 2♣ opening?

Doreen Parrington, Lytham St Annes.

In broad terms, a 2♣ opening shows a hand worth game on its own, whereas a strong two opening shows a near game hand where you will need some help from partner to make game.

Hand 1
♠ A K Q J 8 6 4
♥ K 7 3
♦ A 2
♣ 3

Hand 2
♠ A K J 9 6 3
♥ K Q J 3
♦ A K
♣ 4

With the first hand, you intend to play in game whatever partner holds. You should open a strong, artificial 2♣.

South passed as dealer and East overcalled in diamonds.

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

Can you see a way North can find out whether South has the thirteenth trick or not?

Michael Franklin, Harrogate.

I feel inclined to agree with you. The odds are 2 in 3 that one of the opponents has the ♣K, so it is sensible just to bid 6♥. In addition, South's inability to open the bidding fractionally increases the chance that the ♠K lies in an opposing hand.

Playing teams, with South dealer and East-West vulnerable, we had the following hands:

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

I opened 5♦ and played there making 12 tricks. The bidding at the other table was:

West North East South
1♥ Dbl 2♥ 6♦ All Pass
1♥ Dbl 2♥ 4♦

Where did we go wrong?

Huw Jones, Swansea.

South's actions at the two tables seem similar. With half the values outside the diamond suit, I, personally, would not open 5♠. However, 5♦ certainly will put pressure on the opponents. In a tournament, you would not be alone in opening 5♠.

North was really the one who took a different view. With four sure winners, all in aces and kings, North should have raised the 5♦ opening to 6♣. The 5♠ opener should have 8 or maybe 9 tricks depending upon vulnerability. Adding 4 to 8 gives 12. If the opponents have two fast heart winners, that is unlucky – and the slam may well make on a non-heart lead even if partner has no heart control.

What sort of hand would be suitable for bidding 2♥ over an opponent's opening 1NT? How might it differ from a 2♥ overcall over 1♠?

Mike Fairclough, Caldy, Wirral (similar from Geoffrey Down, Padbury, Bucks).
Recently, my partner and I held the following hands:

**Hand 1**
- ♠ K J 8 5 3 2
- ♥ Q 9 5
- ♦ A 4 3

**Hand 2**
- ♠ 3
- ♥ K J 8 5
- ♦ Q 9 5 2
- ♠ A 4 3

**Hand 3**
- ♠ Q 2
- ♥ K J 8 5 3
- ♦ Q 9 5
- ♠ A 4 3

Hand 1, which has a six-card suit, is certainly worth a 2♥ overcall. Hand 2, which has only a five-card suit but more values and a better quality suit, is also fine for an immediate 2♥ overcall. Hand 3, which has poor shape and only a moderate 5-card suit, is not worth an overcall.

To overcall 1NT with a 5-card suit, you need a good suit and some shape (not 5332). You should have fewer than 15 points (or you would double). The lower limit depends upon vulnerability and scoring method. In broad terms, when you have only a 5-card suit, you are looking for an opening hand, so 11-14 points. However, suit quality is important too, especially when you are vulnerable.

Unable to make my planned 1NT rebid, I called 2♥ instead. My partner passed this and it became the final contract, although both 4♥ and 3NT made.

How should you deal with an opponent's overcall that takes away opener's natural rebid in no-trumps?

John Bunch, Huddersfield.

In tournament play (and using 4-card majors and a weak no-trump), the usual way to handle a sandwich seat overcall that prevents you from rebidding 1NT is to double. The double shows a strong no-trump hand unless proven otherwise. This sort of hand crops up more often than a penalty double type of hand. Even if you do have a penalty double hand, you can pass (smoothly) and hope partner reopens with a double, which would be for take-out under the bid.

In a social game, players often would not have a method to handle the overcall. Some would overbid with 2NT or do as you did and settle for a simple raise. Overcalls make life difficult for the opening side, which is one reason why opponents make them. Incidentally, with 10 HCP, five hearts and a singleton, West should never have passed over 2♥.

North was dealer and our bidding started 1♣-1♠. Can you suggest a sequence whereby we end up in 6♠ and not 4/5♠?

We do not use splinter bids.

Paul Jesper by email.

You have half answered your own question. If you took up playing splinter bids, the hands would be easier to bid.

Not playing splinters, I guess North raises 1♠ to 3♠. South then cue bids 4♣ (the king in partner’s suit is always worth a cue bid) and North cue bids 4♠. South might guess to bid 6♦ over that. Even though clubs is not the agreed suit, a jump to a slam in partner’s suit should be a suggestion to play there. North knows that matchpoint pairs scoring rewards playing in a major but also knows that South is aware of this and so must have a good reason to suggest clubs as the trump suit.

On Bernard Magee’s quiz, this hand opened 1♥ even though the spades are better.

Hand opened 1♥, so what would you suggest?

June Heard, Broadstairs, Kent.
On hands with 4-4 in the majors, suit quality is immaterial. If you open 1♥, you leave partner room to respond 1♠, thus allowing you to find a 4-4 fit in either major easily. If you open 1♠, you may have no satisfactory rebid. Any suit rebid will indicate a 5-card spade suit, while you are not quite good enough to rebid 2NT over 2♥.

As I had 16 points.

3NT. We missed a slam (quantitative). She bid 17 should bid 4NT (15-16). Surely, 1NT (15-16). Surely, to rebid 2NT over 2♥.

If you open 1♥, pass, not 1NT. I opt for 2♥ or pass, not 1NT.

Keith Boothby, Buxton.

With the right point count and four good hearts, 1NT seems the best choice despite the singleton. The opponents are likely to lead hearts rather than diamonds. In any case, your singleton is an honour.

If the spades were good (swap the black suits for example), you could consider a 1♠ overcall. Just occasionally, you should overcall at the one level on a four-card suit. You should never overcall at the two level on a four-card suit.

If only the opponents are vulnerable, you could consider passing in the hope that the opponents get themselves into trouble.

After the auction started as follows, my partner bid 2NT.

West North East South

1♥ Pass 2♥ ?

Is this unusual or a balanced strong hand? Simon Gottschalk, Pendoylan, Glamorgan.

In tournament or serious club play, the usual way to play 2NT is to show the minors. With a strong balanced hand, you double or pass.

With a 4441 hand, which suit should you open and how many points do you need?

Norman Mitchell, Orpington, Kent.

As far as suit goes, a sensible approach is as follows:

(a) singleton spade, open 1♠ (preparing to rebid 2♥)
(b) singleton heart, open 1♠ (preparing to rebid 1♠)
(c) singleton diamond, open 1♠ (preparing to rebid 1♥)
(d) singleton club, open 1♥ (preparing to rebid 2♠).

If you have the right values (15+ if you play a weak no-trump opening) and a singleton in a black suit, you can rebid in no-trumps instead of another suit.

If you play 2♥ as showing spades and a minor or as some other conventional two-suited hand, you do not want to do that. Instead, you should double.

Could you suggest the best bidding sequence for these hands?

North South

1♠ 10 7 4

4♠ 3

All Pass

4♠ was a splinter. South, with too much in clubs, signed off. Should North show a good diamond suit in preference to a splinter? Name and address supplied.

With two singletons, North might have looked for an alternative bid, though this type of hand is hard to describe. A game-forcing raise will not convey the extreme shape. Responding 2♥ and later raising spades will not convey the strength of the spade support.

I have to disagree with the suggestion that South should sign off over the 4♠ splinter. A-x-x-x would be an excellent holding, with no losers and three potential ruffs facing.
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**EUROPE 1 (RESTRICTED EUROPE):** Means the continent of Europe west of the Urals Mountains including the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man, Channel Islands and all countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, as well as Madeira and The Azores, but excluding Spain, The Canaries, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, Egypt, Israel, Libya, Algeria, Jordan, Syria and Switzerland. For residents of the Isle of Man and Channel Islands travelling to the United Kingdom, United Kingdom shall be considered Europe 1.

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a shortage. While A-Q-J-x may be no better, it is hardly worse. South also holds very good trumps. South should probably cue bid 5♣. This shows the ♠A and denies the red-suit controls, by inference showing good trumps. North, with controls in both red suits then bids 6♣.

♣♥♥♥

Q North-South played a slam in a part-score with these hands. What do you think of the bidding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ A 9 4 3 2</td>
<td>♥ Void</td>
<td>♠ A Q 7 6 3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ J 9 5</td>
<td>♦ J 9 5</td>
<td>♦ J 9 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>♣ 4</td>
<td>♣ 4</td>
<td>♣ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ A K 10 7 6 3</td>
<td>♥ A Q 7 6 3 2</td>
<td>♥ A Q 7 6 3 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ A Q 9 4 3 2</td>
<td>♦ A Q 9 4 3 2</td>
<td>♦ A Q 9 4 3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ Void</td>
<td>♠ Void</td>
<td>♠ Void</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

West North East South
1♣ 2♣ Pass 2♥
Pass 3♥ Pass 4♣
All Pass

Ken Wheeler, Whitstable, Kent.

A Although you have not said what jump overcalls you are playing, I assume they must be intermediate. The North hand is too good for a weak jump overcall and too weak for the strong variety. I do not recommend using intermediate jump overcalls. If you play in a tournament or watch a match on BBO, you will find that everyone plays weak jump overcalls. With an intermediate strength hand, you make a simple overcall and then repeat the suit later.

The other thing I must say is that North cannot pass 4♣. The usual rule is that a new suit at the three level is forcing; by corollary, a new suit at the four level, when it is not game, must be forcing too. In any case, North has good support for diamonds. While reaching 7♠ with confidence is not easy, you should reach 6♣. The sequence below is one possibility.

West North East South
1♣ 1♥ Pass 2♥
Pass 2♣ Pass 3♥
Pass 5♠ Pass 6♣
All Pass

♣♥♥♥

Q Playing a weak no-trump and transfers, what would 1NT–2♥ mean? Trudie Daly by email.

A How you play the sequence is a matter of partnership agreement. Round here, the common agreement is to play that 2♥ is a balanced hand and either a game try or a slam try; opener then rebids 2NT with a minimum and something else (3♣ for some pairs, 4-card suits upwards for some) with a maximum. Another possibility is to play that 2♥ shows a club suit (four-suit transfers). A further possibility is to play that 2♥ shows a weak take-out to either minor: opener has to rebid 2NT and then responder bids the minor, 3♣ or 3♥, which opener passes. I am sure there are others.

There is no right answer really – just play the same as your partner.

♣♥♥♥

Q If you open 1♥ with 12-14 points and 4-4 in the majors and partner responds 2♠ or 2♥, what would you rebid? A reverse of 2♣ would show five hearts as well as a better hand. Roma Spencer, Sutton, Surrey.

A You are quite right that you do not want to reverse with such a hand. You avoid the problem with the correct choice of opening, which generally is not 1♥. The hands on which you open 1♥ with 4-4 in the majors usually have at least 15 points.

If you are playing a weak 1NT opening and have a 4432 type, you open 1NT, not one of a suit. If you are playing a strong 1NT and have a 4432 type, you open a prepared bid in one of the minors, not one of a major. If you are 4414 (singleton diamond), you open 1♣ not 1♥.

The awkward shape in the 12-14 range is 4441 (singleton club). Playing a weak 1NT opening, you cannot open 1♥ and rebid 2NT over a 2♥ response, because that would show at least 15. The traditional Acol solution is to open 1♥ and rebid 2♣, though partner will tend to place you with at least five hearts if you do that.

E-mail your questions for Julian to: julianpottage@mrbridge.co.uk
## Declarer Play Tips

26. When your contract depends on a finesse, think 'endplay'.
27. Consider what a defender might be thinking about.
28. Always take your time at trick one.
29. Establish extra tricks before cashing your winners.
30. Use your opponents' bidding to your advantage.
31. Avoid the 'baddie' gaining the lead.
32. Use the Rule of Seven when holding up in no-trumps.

## General Tips

62. Do not put important cards at either end of your hand.
63. Avoid being declarer when you are dummy.
64. Before you lead, ask for a review of the auction.
65. Enjoy the Game!

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### Bidding Tips

1. Always consider bidding spades if you can.
2. Bid more aggressively when non-vulnerable.
3. Always double when the opponents steal your deal.
4. A takeout double shows shortage in the suit doubled.
5. ‘Borrow’ a king to keep the auction open.
6. After a penalty double, don’t let the opponents escape.
7. Halve the value of a singleton honour when opening.
8. Only add length-points for a suit that might be useful.
9. Isolated honours are bad except in partner’s suit.
10. Use the jump shift sparingly.
11. Consider passing and letting partner decide.
12. You need two top honours for a second-seat pre-empt.
13. Put the brakes on if you have a misfit.
14. Strong and long minors work well in no-trumps.
15. One stop in the opponents’ suit can be enough for no-trumps.
16. Keep your two-level responses up to strength.
17. Use your normal methods in response to a 1NT overcall.
18. Don’t overcall just because you have opening points.
19. Overcalls can be quite weak, so be prudent when responding.
20. Weak overcalls must be based on strong suits.
21. 6NT requires 33 points not 4 aces and 4 kings.
22. Raise immediately, if weak with four-card support.
23. In a competitive auction, show support immediately.
24. Bid to the level of your fit quickly with weak hands.
25. With strength and support, use the opponents’ bid suit.

---

### Defence Tips

34. A low lead usually promises length and an honour.
35. When declaring 1NT, try to be patient.
36. Duck an early round when you are short of entries.
37. Lead up to your two-honour holding.
38. Do not always assume a suit will break well.
39. Drop a high card to put off the defence.
40. Play your highest card to tempt a defender to cover.
41. Don’t overcall just because you have a good reason not to.
42. Do not waste your trump winners.
43. Consider leaving a lone defensive trump winner out.

---

### Bernard Magee’s Tips for Better Bridge

65 invaluable tips in 160 pages

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### Full Board – No Single Supplement

Booking Form on page 8.

Please note there are no seminars, set hands or prizes at these events.
Episode 24: Different Paths. Part 2: The Rough and the Smooth

Wendy and Spouse are taking a short holiday in Pembrokeshire where they have met walkers Dave and Sally.

We could not resist the walking group's invitation to join its members on a ramble around a National Trust conservation area near Fishguard. As we waited to embark on the minibus, we were plied amiably enough with less than witty remarks from fellow bridge players such as, 'It is bound to rain today,' and 'You'll get soaked.' We took their comments in our stride. The minibus dropped us at the bottom of the Iron Age hill-top settlement of Garn Faur and we trudged in a straggly line to the summit with wonderful views of St David's Head, the sea and the inland countryside. Descending to the coastal path, we turned northward to Strumble Head where the lighthouse, even in the bright sunlight, flashed its warning of danger to unseen shipping. As the path headed eastward, the views over Cardigan Bay were breathtaking and the bird watchers in our group were pleased to spot choughs and red kites on the wing. Paths and green lanes heading south eventually led us up and down the hill, Garn Fechan, to complete our walk.

As usual on our return to the hotel for tea, Spouse and I were subjected to friendly taunts regarding our absence from afternoon bridge. Similarly, Dave and Sally cheerfully brushed aside remarks from the walking group's leader echoing his sheer disbelief that anyone could possibly miss the excitement of a seminar that evening on the legal ramifications of rambling and play bridge instead.

The event was teams and, inevitably, we had arranged to play with Dave and Sally. In my view, Spouse seriously overbid his hand on this board (at top of next column).

I wondered if Spouse's rekindled love of real ale had affected his judgement. Well of course it had, but in reality it was probably his macho optimism as well.

West led the ♥7, which I thought was likely to be top of nothing or second in a poor suit. In addition to the ♥A, there were several other possible losers. Would the club finesse work or would the queen drop in two rounds anyway? Was it wise to take a diamond finesse which might set up the suit if the king fell in two rounds? The latter scenario seemed particularly unlikely.

In the end, I took a simple route. On the initial lead, I played low from dummy and the ace appeared on my right. I expected the queen to be returned by East to pin the jack in dummy, but a small heart was returned. I was still sure that East held the queen so I let it run to the jack in dummy. Hoping for a friendly 3-3 or 4-2 break in spades, I played the jack with the intention of running all five cards of the suit. It wasn't to be. Plan A was abandoned and a plan B required. Relying on clubs 3-2 with the queen with West, I led the ♣J. West covered with the queen and I won with the king. Even with a 4-1 break, I now had an entry back to hand to take the master heart and the working diamond finesse.

The lucky slam came home for a score of 1,430 with four tricks in each of the black suits and two in each of the reds. I am sure there were better ways of playing the hand, but I was more than happy just to make it.

Sally and Dave defended four spades at the other table. This hand proved crucial and our team was victorious by a narrow margin. Our team mates were understandably excited by the success as it was their first ever tournament victory. As the walking group emerged glumly from the seminar, its members now seemed less than enthusiastic about the delights of rambling rights in the context of the legal system pertaining to England and Wales, but their leader was pleased to learn of our team triumph in the bridge room. In his view, the achievement had raised the profile of his band of ramblers. I think his acceptance of our association with the group was in no small measure due to his surprise at our stamina on the walks. This belief was based on the fact that we hailed from Norfolk, a county of which his total knowledge seemed to be its flatness. This latter assumption seemed to spring from one line of a play by a certain Noel Coward. Dave and Spouse happily continued their investigation into the merits of real ale. Meanwhile, after a glass of wine each, Sally and I chatted way into the night, sustained by the delights of a copious supply of herbal tea.

Spouse and I thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Pembrokeshire. We had made new friends in Sally and Dave and arranged to meet them again in the near future. It seemed to me that in one aspect at least, walking and bridge are strikingly similar. In both, like in so many situations in life, one has to take the rough with the smooth.

Dealer North. Game All.

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<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
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<td>♠A Q J 8 7</td>
<td>♠A 9 4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>♣J 10 3 2</td>
<td>♣A K Q 7 5</td>
<td>♣K 10 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pass 6NT
Pass 4NT
Pass 5NT
Pass 3NT
Pass 2NT
Pass 1NT
All Pass

West: Spouse
North: Wendy
East: Pass
South: Pass
1Blackwood
2One ace

The Diaries of Wendy Wensum
READERS’ LETTERS

HOW COULD HE?
Mary is mortified at being included in the ‘dumbed down’ columns listed by Mr Geoffrey Fairhall, see Readers’ Letters, BRIDGE 134. In fact she’s positively sulking. Liz Jones by email.

POUND FOR LIFE
Once again the £1 coin in my Mr Bridge key fob has got me out of trouble. Mary Stebbing by email.

THANK YOU
Just a note to thank the many people who replied to my enquiry regarding cards for my friend who has macular degeneration. She is still playing and welcomed all the encouragement. Mrs Hilary Chaplin, Chelford, Macclesfield.

BLUE BRIDGE
Further to your editorial comment, page 4 in BRIDGE 135, I can tell you that the name of the locality (Blue Bridge) was already set by the time suggestions for street names were being canvassed. From what I could find, I don’t believe the officer in charge of naming the streets in Blue Bridge was a bridge player or had much knowledge of the game.

In 1984, Val Sharp of Milton Keynes Council was looking for names connected with the game of bridge. This would have been during the time of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) which has since closed. From the memos I have found of her enquiries, she was recommended by a colleague, Julie Howard, who played the game, to contact Bill Taylor who was regarded by her as a ‘living expert’. I believe Bill Taylor at the time may have been the Principal Marketing Director for MKDC.

A search for Bill Taylor reveals that there is a Bill Taylor from Hampshire & Isle of Wight who has a connection with three players from Northants. It is conceivable he could have lived in the area previously. Blue Bridge is listed and its details and location can be found on the web at http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-487607-blue-bridge-wolverton-and-greenleys-Stewart Pye by email.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS
Bernard seems to be doing well with his bridge career. Some of our members go on cruises hosted by him. We send our good wishes but I bet he doesn’t remember us.

Do remind him of that evening at Ryden Grange, when his friend Brian was playing with a lady from the England ladies team. They had a disagreement over a double. I was playing the hand and had to ask her to be quiet. She lost her temper and at the end of the evening drove her car at speed across your lawn. I can still see the tyre marks. Mrs Brenda Sloman, Swanage, Dorset.

ETIQUETTE GUIDE
As North, when you have entered the result on the traveller at the end of the hand, do you have to show it to one of your opponents to check that you have entered the result correctly or is this optional?

We have discussed this at our local bridge club and the general feeling from the director is, ‘you can always ask.’ As I tend to sit East, whenever possible, one does get the odd look.

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Mrs D Thomas, Suffolk.
Mrs J Waters, Milltimber.
Mr & Mrs Norman, Woking.
Mrs K Cooper, Barrow B.C.
Please keep saving stamps to support Little Voice in Africa.

SPEEDY

Yesterday, nearer 5pm than 4pm, we phoned to request some of Bernard’s videos as we so enjoyed those we ordered for Christmas.

Imagine our surprise when, mirabile dictu, the videos arrived at 10am this morning. Rarely have I encountered such splendid efficiency. I am most impressed.

Mr Ralph Bazen,
Pulborough, West Sussex.

MANY THANKS

The weekend at The Olde Barn Hotel cost £179 – that was just within my budget.

Name and address supplied.

NEW PLUG

We are looking for new members. We play duplicate on Tuesdays, starting at 7pm, at Hartbridge Club.

www.hartbridgeclubfleet.co.uk
Email: fvab@hotmail.com
A Baker, Charvil, Reading.
I have done as you request but you really should provide a telephone number as the response rate is always, I repeat, always so much better.

OVERLOAD

I have had almost two years of intensive seminars, coupled with local lessons and am now at the stage where I have more information than I can handle. I am going to retrench for a year and then plan how to progress further. There is no hope once you have been bitten by the bridge bug, is there?

Thank you for all the information I have acquired and the kind, helpful and knowledgeable ‘helpers’ I have met. To single out any of your team would be invidious but I must mention the wonderful Eddie from Bournemouth who pointed me in the right direction at the outset and without whose advice I would have been wallowing in ignorance for considerably longer.

Mr Bridge has been an amazing experience.

Liz Goodchild,
Walton-on-Thames,
Surrey.

Mr Bridge has been an amazing experience.

Liz Goodchild,
Walton-on-Thames,
Surrey.

Please keep saving stamps to support Little Voice in Africa.

Mr Ron Hill,
Orpington, Kent.

Years ago, I used to tell my club members that North has charge of the board and enters the score on the traveller, East checks the entry, South passes the board to its new table when the movement is called and West sits still and looks pretty. However, I will ask David Stevenson to clarify the subject as it is becoming something of an FAQ.

IN PRAISE OF BRIDGE

I don’t know quite how many bards have celebrated playing cards.

But I would start with bridge and aim, to celebrate a famous game of chance, of skill, of fun and fete – Rubber, Chicago, duplicate – symbolic entertainment which is more than most in meaning rich.

With cards you’re dealt life, too, is played.

The better score with skill is made.

Hugh Gaston Hall,
Kenilworth, Warwicks.

LITTLE VOICE

Would you please convey my thanks and appreciation to all concerned with the saving of stamps, which get sent to me. I’ve just received a super package which will be very useful and will certainly help to raise some more funds.

Some guidance please. Also, would it be at possible to print your answer in your much read BRIDGE magazine? It is read from cover to cover and is often used in debates amongst my bridge friends.

Mr Ron Hill,
Orpington, Kent.

Years ago, I used to tell my club members that North has charge of the board and enters the score on the traveller, East checks the entry, South passes the board to its new table when the movement is called and West sits still and looks pretty. However, I will ask David Stevenson to clarify the subject as it is becoming something of an FAQ.
A good thing to do from time to time (at least for me) is to write down what it is the EBU should be doing. Some things don’t change and are very much the same whatever the game or sport is. We have a responsibility, for example, to regulate our game. We select teams to compete at the highest level. We organise a teaching programme. We need to try to develop the game and we have a five year plan to assist us in our development.

There are other things however that are not as obvious as the above list. One that is dear to my heart and has been neglected is the recording and preserving of the history of our game. Some years ago, my team won an event called the Pachabo Cup which is for the winners of each county teams of four. It’s always nice to win but when the cup was presented it was truly a treasure trove, partly because it was old enough to be made of real silver, but mostly, because apart from when World War II got in the way, it had been competed for and engraved every year since 1933 (three years before the EBU was even formally founded) although in its pre-war days it was for another competition. Pachabo, an odd name, was the nom de plume of AE Whitelaw, who gave not only this trophy but others to the game. If there is a trophy it may have much engraved on it but trophies do become lost, old magazines and books get thrown away or rot in attics and lofts, other paraphernalia doesn’t always survive a move. A few years ago Peter Hasenson researched and wrote a book called British Bridge Almanack which contained all sorts of information about our past events and players.

Contract Bridge players have a bit of love. Books are not going to be the repository of future records, the internet is. Work has already started on digitising our paper records. It’s easy to start with, but going back to the less than copper plate handwriting of the record of the first meetings will be more of a challenge.

I want the history of our game preserved and available. We have a small library of books and magazines at HQ in Aylesbury. Past players such as Terence Reese, GCH Fox and Rixi Markus have left books to this collection. The collection wasn’t in good condition and I’m grateful for the work of sorting it out and cataloguing it undertaken by a volunteer, Gordon Bickley. A catalogue will appear soon on the website. The EBU website now has an archive section where you can see results going back to the start of events and find out who the past officials of the EBU were. The oldest competition anywhere is the Gold Cup, the British Teams of Four Championship which was first competed for in 1931/32. Two of the winners of that first trophy were Edward Mayer who became the Bridge correspondent of the Times and Colonel Beasley who invented a bridge system which was popular in England until Acol swept it away. It isn’t just trophies though, there are minutes which document the founding of the EBU and its key moments. The police arriving at the Harrogate Congress many years ago because the participants were engaged, it was alleged, in something that contravened the gaming act of the time. As there were up-wards of 600 players at the event, arrests could potentially have filled a lot of Yorkshire police cells.

When Contract Bridge was first invented, nearly 90 years ago, it swept its predecessor, Auction Bridge, away very quickly. It was more exciting as a game and well promoted by people such as Ely Culbertson. Have you ever wondered though why there are four suits and no trumps? We take it for granted, but there was a concerted effort to introduce a fifth suit which would have been the same as no-trumps, except the ace would have been low. If that had caught on it would have made hand evaluation rather more interesting and changeable. Others really tried to have a fifth suit and there are packs of cards still in existence that were produced. One such was the De La Rue’s Five Suit Contract Bridge Playing Cards. The fifth suit was called ‘Royals’.

Bridge players have a bit of a reputation for being rather conservative and not liking change. It was new so perhaps that’s why five-suit bridge didn’t catch on. In the late 1940s there was an article in Contract Bridge Journal, a predecessor of English Bridge, lamenting the fact that some players had a secret and reprehensible code whereby they could exchange messages during the bidding. Were they talking about a cheating system? No. They were ruing the day someone was allowed to ask for aces using an agreement invented by Easley Blackwood. Similar frothing at the mouth was exhibited at all levels of the game when bidding boxes first made an appearance about 35 years ago. New ideas take time to bed in. Our past magazines dating back to 1946 have started to appear on the website. Take a look.

Not all records are national or held by the EBU. Some counties and clubs have also started to produce their own archives. If your club hasn’t then there is a danger of its history quietly disappearing. If you are feeling particularly keen, you might volunteer to assist.

If you have constructive comment or feedback on these or other topics, I will be pleased to hear from you at jeremy@ebu.co.uk.
The origins of bridge, and its name, are lost in the mists of time, but some say the game originated in Russia or Turkey under the name Biritch (or similar). My researches suggest otherwise. You will recall reading about the football match played between the British and German forces on the first Christmas Day of WWI. Well, the idea for that encounter came from the match played between the British and French troops during the battle of Agincourt (1415) except that the Agincourt match was a game of cards (we do not know its name at the time). This was played on the main bridge over the River Dordogne, the river being the dividing line between the opposing forces at the time. Following this, the game became known in England as 'the bridge game', later 'bridge'.

♣♦♥♠

The name Bridget is, perhaps not surprisingly, related to the game of bridge and also comes from the French. In France a man who plays bridge is called 'Le bridgeur' (which is also the title of the leading French bridge magazine) and his partner (if female) is 'La bridgette'. A century ago a very well known French lady bridge player called Jeanne Unoudeux was so good at the game (it was auction bridge and at that time not many women played it) that everybody called her La Bridgette. She emigrated to Scotland at the start of the First World War and kept her nickname, hence Bridget. She was often to be seen on the Scottish Counties’ ladies’ bridge circuit and played (initially auction, later contract bridge) for Scotland.

♣♦♥♠

While on the subject of the French, do you know why the French use different terminology from ours for their playing cards? Whereas we have aces, kings, queens and jacks (abbreviated to A, K, Q and J), they have aces (As), kings (Rois), ladies (Dames) and valets (Valets) (abbreviated to A, R, D and V). The point is that, in French, kings (Rois) and queens (Reines) both start with the same letter, which would have been too confusing, even to the French. Hence changing Reines to Dames. That did not, however, deal with the problem that hearts (Coeurs) and diamonds (Carreaux) also start with the same letter. One would have thought that the French would have changed the heart or diamond shape to, say, a star (étoile) to avoid this problem, but no. What they did and still do, was simply pretend that carreaux (diamonds) begins with a K. So KR in French means the king of diamonds, whereas CD means the queen of hearts. Comprenez?

♣♦♥♠

While on the subject of suit designations, do you know how in this country the four suits in a pack of cards came to be clubs, diamonds, hearts and spades? It all followed from the Act of Union, 1706. Once the United Kingdom was formed, it was decided to adopt a new format for playing cards to reflect the four parts of the Kingdom:

- Clubs (originally green, but now black) represent the Irish trefoil
- Diamonds represent Scotland, the jewel in the crown
- Hearts represent the hub of the Kingdom, namely England
- Spades represent mining (both silver and coal) in Wales

It was also at that time that it was decided to have 13 cards in each suit, 13 being then the number of provinces in the new United Kingdom.
Burning one’s bridges is in fact a corruption of burning one’s breeches. The story goes that a Welsh hill-farmer named Taffy got tired of his job, sold his farm, gave half the proceeds to his son and with the other half went to enjoy life in Aberystwyth.

Having lost most of his remaining fortune playing high stakes bridge, Taffy was befriended by a kind Welsh vicar, who recounted to him the parable of the prodigal son and suggested that he head home. Taffy shook his head and said, ‘But I can’t do that. When I left home I wanted to make sure that I could never go back so I burned my breeches,’ (without which, in those days, nobody could get a job in Wales by law).

♣♦♥♠

Mini-Quiz

1 You, O reader, are a bridge player, so you have presumably spent many hours, nay probably days, weeks or months in total, looking at hands of cards. This quiz should therefore be a doddle. It relates to a traditional English pack of cards.

a What is each of the kings holding?
b What is each of the queens holding?
c Which way are the spade court cards looking? Is it to their left (your right) or vice versa?
d Ditto the hearts?
e Ditto the diamonds?
f Ditto the clubs?
g What characteristic distinguishes ♠J, ♥J and ♦K from all the other court cards?

♣♦♥♠

2 So there we were, enjoying our vintage port after an excellent meal with the Colonel, while he demonstrated, with the aid of salt, pepper and mustard, a particular military tactic. ‘If we attack the salt with A Squadron,’ he said, ‘the enemy will have to defend it with their Presidential Guard. If we then attack the pepper with B Company, the enemy will need to defend that with the rest of their forces. So, when we attack the mustard, there is nobody left to defend that. It is rather like the bridge hand I played the other evening,’ he went on. ‘I was South, declarer, in 7NT and, after winning the first six tricks, the remaining cards were as below, with dummy to lead.’ He scribbled this diagram on the rather nice white linen table cloth.

You are declarer in 4♣ and West leads the ♣Q. How do you plan the play?

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♣7. How do you plan the play?

Answers on page 30.
DEFENCE QUIZ
by Julian Pottage
(Answers on page 35)

You are West, playing teams or rubber bridge. It is your turn to play. Both sides are using Acol with a 12-14 1NT.

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

West North East South
1 2♥ Pass 2♥ Pass 4♥
All Pass

Value raise
You lead the ♦ 4. Partner wins with the ♦ A and returns the ♥ 9. You ruff South’s ♥ K. How do you continue?

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

West North East South
1♥ 2♥ Pass 4♥
All Pass

You lead the ♦ 4. Partner wins with the ♥ A and returns the ♠ 9. You ruff South’s ♦ K. How do you continue?

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

West North East South
1♥ Dbl
Pass 2♥ Pass 2♥ Pass 3♥ Pass 4♥
All Pass

You lead the ♦ 4. Partner wins with the ♥ A and returns the ♠ 9. You ruff South’s ♦ K. How do you continue?

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

West North East South
INT 2♥ Pass 4♥ All Pass

You lead the ♦ 4. Partner wins with the ♥ K and returns the ♠ 2. You ruff as South follows low. How do you continue?

Bridge and Travel Tips

1 Suppose you hold:

♠ J 9 8
♥ A K 6
♦ A 6 4
♣ K 7 6 2

You open 1NT (15-17) and partner bids 3♥, showing a 6-card suit and some slam interest. You have a reasonable hand for him: although you are minimum, you have good controls and 3-card support; on the other hand, the 3-3-3-4 distribution and lack of fillers is not so good. You are worth a little show of encouragement, but you don’t want to bid above game unless partner does. So, what do you bid? The trouble with bidding your lowest first-round control is that partner may have no heart control and feel he has to sign off even with a good hand; alternatively, he will bid four hearts which you know will be a singleton or void and you have no idea how useful an asset this may be. This is not an easy hand, but surely it is better to bid 4♣.

You can then pass and they will miss their slam interest. You have a thin game.

2 Suppose you hold:

♠ 7 5
♥ Q 10 8 6 4
♦ K 7 5
♣ Q 10 3

Both sides are vulnerable. Your LHO opens 1♥ and your partner overcalls 2♥. Your RHO bids 3♠ and it is your turn. What do you bid? Well, I’ll tell you what not to bid. Wouldn’t it have been better to pass 3♥? With any luck, your LHO, not knowing of your great heart fit, will pass and they will miss their thin game.

Travel tip from Emma Thomson:

Travel can be stressful. Everything from packing and remembering tickets and passports, to fear of flying and the unfamiliarity of a new destination can churn a knot in the sturdiest of stomachs. The root of most of this anxiety comes from over-thinking the possible pitfalls you could encounter, but in the words of Wayne Bennett: ‘Worry is like a rocking-chair. It gives you something to do, but it gets you nowhere.’ It steals your energy and reduces your ability to make good decisions, so take a deep breath and take comfort in the fact that a study by the National Science Foundation concluded that 40% of the things we worry about never actually occur.
Solution to Mini-Quiz on page 28

Question 1

a A weapon.

b A flower.

c Their left (your right).

d Their right (your left).

e Their right (your left).

f ♠K and ♠Q are looking to their right (your left), ♠ is looking the other way.

g Only one eye is showing.

Question 2

The Colonel continued, ‘Naturally, I cashed ♠A in case the suit broke, when it would be easy to make the remaining tricks, but West threw the ♠10. I realised we had all the makings of the military tactic we were discussing. With East guarding the diamonds and West the clubs, neither would be able to defend the hearts.

The next step was to play ♠A and advance ♠A-K (my spare troops). As expected West had to defend the clubs (the salt), and East the diamonds (the pepper), so neither could guard the mustard – I mean the hearts. When, eventually, I played the hearts from the top, dummy’s lowly ♥3 won the last trick.’

At which point, the ladies rejoined us and we reverted to our discussion of French opera in the 15th century, though I thought I noticed the Colonel’s wife looking rather anxiously at her favourite table cloth from time to time.

Mary’s Fourth Lesson

by Liz Dale

It was quite amazing. By making an opening bid of 1NT, opener was giving partner seven pieces of information. 12-14 HCP, a balanced hand, ie maybe 5332, 4432 or 4333. No void, no singleton, maybe one doubleton but certainly not two doubletons. Opener could have five clubs or five diamonds, but was unlikely to have five hearts or five spades unless the suit was very weak (maybe J-9-8-7-6) and, best of all, opener was handing over the responsibility of the final contract to partner.

Oh and opener didn’t promise a rebid. All this from one bid. Amazing!

Mary liked the bidding boxes. It was easy to see and remember what everyone had bid. It didn’t require too much thinking. Alastair (teacher) said that by bidding 1NT as opener you got into the auction quickly. If your opponents were waiting for their turn to bid and had wanted to open the bidding at a lower level, ie 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠, you had stopped them in their tracks.

Alastair introduced the group to three of the various partner responses to a 1NT opening bid. The bid was ‘pass’ if 1NT opener’s partner had 0-10 HCP and no five-card suit. That sounded easy enough. However, if you had a five card suit with 0-10 HCP, you bid that suit at the two level. This was called a weak take-out. Opener’s partner could have no points at all but was still required to make a weak take-out. Opener’s partner could have no points at all but was still required to make a weak take-out. Opener’s partner could have no points at all but was still required to make a weak take-out. Opener’s partner could have no points at all but was still required to make a weak take-out. Opener’s partner could have no points at all but was still required to make a weak take-out.

Alastair had prepared opening 1NT hands with differing weak take-out responses. After completing at least eight weak take-out bids with the support of a ‘mentor’ at each table, Alastair said the class was ready to move on to the Stayman bid of 2♣ by the partner of the 1NT opener.

This was Mary’s first introduction to what, in bridge speak, is known as a ‘conventional bid’. In other words, an artificial bid, ie it doesn’t mean what it says and therefore has to be ‘announced’. The artificial bid of 2♣ has nothing to do with clubs – in fact, the 2♣ bidder may have no clubs at all. A few eyebrows were raised here. Why make it so difficult for yourself? If you have the majors, ie hearts and spades, why not just bid them. The rumblings persisted. Alastair said responder, that is partner of opener, must have at least 11 HCP to bid Stayman and at least one four-card major (hearts or spades), but they could also have four cards in each major.

There was quite a bit of discussion with some of the group being quite vocal, but still with good humour and then it was time for everyone to bid the prepared Stayman hands with the varying responses at the table.

That was the thing about this group. Everyone was prepared to laugh at themselves. They made it fun. No-one was made to feel silly.

Mary warmed to this lovely group that she was coming to know so well. It had been a really good decision to start learning bridge. Mary hadn’t expected to be accepted into the group so quickly. She and Peter had been a couple for more than forty years and hadn’t really needed other friends, apart from the couples they had known from their time together. This was a chance to make new friends and to get to know people in the area. Mary was glad that she’d insisted that Liam and Anne make other arrangements for taking David to school on Tuesday mornings.

Open the bidding with 1NT with a balanced 12-14 HCP.

In reply, with 0-10 HCP and no 5-card suit, pass.

With 0-10 HCP and a 5-card suit, make a weak take-out by bidding your suit.
Q I was declarer in a contract of 4♥. LHO selected an opening lead from his hand and held it face down. He then had second thoughts, returned the card to his hand and substituted another card, again holding it face down. At this point, I said that I didn’t think he could change an opening lead, once selected, without the consent of the director. The director was called and he sought confirmation that neither card had been faced and no questions asked. He allowed the second selection to stand.

The auction had been straightforward and uncontested. All bids had been natural. No questions had been asked at any stage and there had been no irregularities. In the event, the substituted opening lead seemed to work to my advantage (of course only LHO knew what the original selection had been) as I made an overtrick for a top score. However, as a matter of principle and should the same situation arise in the future, I should be pleased if you would let me know if the director’s ruling was correct.

Pat Tooze by email.

A Once the card has been led, even though it is face-down, it may not be changed unless the director says so, and he will agree to a change only if there is misinformation that has been corrected.

♣♦♥♠

Q As a result of Acol teaching courses, a bridge club was created whose stated objective was sociable bridge with no rules. Originally, only those who had been on the Acol courses attended. With time, it has attracted other couples who were not involved in the Acol courses and who play their own systems. For example one couple has their own ‘invented’ system which includes: 1 of a suit bids = 13-15, 1NT = 16-19 any distribution, 2NT = 20-22 any distribution. (Any distribution includes voids, 7 card suits, 6-6 etc.)

This is the most extreme as other couples play something closer to kitchen bridge which is also not Acol.

This is causing ill-feeling on both sides as some of the Acol players think that an unfair advantage is somehow being taken and the ‘non-conformists’ resent being told that they are not playing ‘correctly’.

How do you think the club should act to restore the happy atmosphere? Clearly, the lack of rules at the outset was a mistake.

Crombie McNeil, Faversham, Kent.

A One of the strangest commonly held opinions in bridge is that fewer rules leads to a social atmosphere: it doesn’t, it leads to insoluble arguments. The most social clubs have easy rules and accept directors’ rulings without complaint.

Whatever runs the club will just have to set rules now, and there will doubtless be a period of unpleasantness – whatever they decide. Most bridge clubs use EBU Level 2 for novice clubs, the old Level 3 for low level clubs, and Level 4 for others. What this pair is playing is legal at Level 3 but not Level 2.

If they allow the methods played by this pair, then they will have to tell other people that no unfair advantage is being taken: everyone can play any legal method if they wish. There will always be some people who will carry on complaining. It might help to show this pair’s record: it is not likely to be very good, thus not supporting the idea that they have an unfair advantage.

♣♦♥♠

Q My partner and I open 2NT with 20-22 points and guarantee a 5-card major. Without a 5-card major, we get there via a 2♣-2♦-2NT sequence. So what do we announce and/or do we alert?

Colin Woods by email.

A I would announce it as 20 to 22, including a five card major. I can see the argument for alerting it, but this announcement seems helpful enough to the opposition.
Q I read with interest your response to an opening 2♣ bid with more than one meaning as I had a similar experience. Our opponents announced at the start of the move that they were playing precision. My RHO opened 2♣ which was announced as intermediate. I ended up in a 3♥ contract and, as the opening lead was made, requested further clarification as to what they meant by intermediate. I was told that this meant six clubs or a hand with five clubs and an unknown 4-card major. Having done the director’s course, I recall that we were informed that any partnership understanding must be advised to your opponents.

At the end of the hand, I called the director, who is an experienced congress director, for clarification. He told our opponents that the bid should be alerted as it had two meanings and not just announced. Our opponents then advised that the EBU Blue Book specifically mentions that in this instance the bid just has to be announced as intermediate. This was looked up and confirmed to be correct. Surely this cannot be correct. Am I missing something? Later on, looking at our opponents’ system card 2♣ merely stated it was 5+ clubs.

John Pelley by email.

A An opening 2♣ in Precision is to be announced, not alerted. It does not have two meanings: it is a natural bid showing at least five clubs and opening points.

It is true that any Precision player will have his own agreements with partner as to when to use which opening bid and the description you give is the most common one. But it is no different from an Acol player who will open 1♠ with four diamonds and four clubs and 1♥ with four hearts and four clubs. You would not consider a 1♣ opening having two meanings if it showed either just clubs or four diamonds and four clubs, nor would you consider it alertable.

Q The defender on the opening lead spread all of her cards. Should the director declare all of the cards as penalty cards (Law 51) or award an adjusted score of 60% to the declarer and 40% to the defenders?

James Tate, Westcott, Surrey.

A 13 penalty cards is correct. When the Law refers to multiple penalty cards there is no mention of a maximum number. Ave+ / Ave- would be very unfair to the non-offending side, who will usually be doing better than that.

♣♥♣♣♣

Q Please confirm that the stop card must be played on an opening bid of 2♣ above. Somebody argued an opening bid was not a ‘jump’ bid, asking what did it jump? Ben Lee, Telford.

A Of course an opening bid of more than 1NT requires a stop card: it is a jump bid. The stop card approach was originally designed for opening pre-empt, and that is still its most important use. There are always some people who re-define well known names like ‘jump bid’. They are unhelpful and should follow the general usage of words.

♣♥♣♣♣

Q East bid a strong Acol 2♣ and South passed. West removed a pass card from the box and it was halfway to the table, before he realised he was wrong. North called the director, who ruled that the pass card, which had been seen by the other players, was played. West had wanted to change his pass for 2♣. My query is, had any information been passed to East that he would not otherwise have got from the 2♣ bid? And if not, is there any other reason why the change should not have been permitted?

John Williams, Montrose.

A What information is passed has no relevance whatever. Calls may be changed under Law 25A only if the requirements of that Law are fulfilled: if they are, the call may be changed. Also, whether the other players saw it is irrelevant: once it is out of the box, the call is made.

To change a call, it must be unintended: it must be changed or an attempt to change it without pause for thought: partner must not have called subsequently. In the scenario you gave, it is clear partner had not called subsequently and that an attempt to change it was made without pause for thought. But was it unintended? At the time West reached for the bidding box, what call did he intend? If, at that moment, he intended to pass, possibly having a brain storm, then the call may not be changed: if he intended to bid 2♣ but pulled a pass card instead it may be changed.

I cannot be certain, without being present and talking to the player, but it seems unlikely he intended to bid 2♣ but actually passed: it seems more likely he looked at his weak hand, forgot he had to bid and intended to pass: if that is so, the pass may not be changed.
Q All players have played to a trick, won by North, declarer, and cards correctly placed. No card has been played or faced to the next trick. Before North plays, he asks what cards were played to the last trick. What should, or must, happen next? If East and/or West comply, can dummy take any action? I have noticed that many players are careless when looking legitimately at their own card played to the last trick and it is often seen by an alert opponent. Is any action appropriate in that instance? John Hamilton by email.

A Once a player puts his card face down to a trick he has no right to see the last trick though he may see his own last card. If he does ask and the opponents comply that is one of those things, and, in fact, is very common. Of course dummy has no rights: dummies are far too prone to getting involved. When a player looks at his own last card, if it can be seen by an opponent that is his fault and no action is required.

♣ ♥ ♦ ♠

Q I would be grateful if you would give your opinion on the following situation which arose recently at our club: our opponents were playing in 6♣ and the hand was down to the last four cards. In dummy were A-K-Q of clubs and the 9 of spades. My partner held the ♦7 and no clubs. The lead was in dummy, and declarer just looked and appeared not to know which card she should call for. Eventually, her partner, presumably to remind her where the lead was, tapped the table with his index finger which appeared to point to the ♦9. Declarer then woke up and called for the spade. This, of course, drew my partner’s last trump. Had a club been played, my partner would have ruffed with the ♦7 for one off. As it was, they made their contract.

We did protest at the way they had behaved and they went to the next table muttering that they had never been accused of cheating before.

We are a friendly club and I don’t think that it was a deliberate attempt at cheating, but I do think that, if it is necessary to ensure that the lead comes from the correct hand, one should say ‘table’ or ‘hand’ and not touch the table at all. What do you think? Dennis Law, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire.

A First, it is true that dummy should not point to a card. In fact, he should do nothing: he has no right to indicate which hand to play from unless he believes declarer is about to play from the wrong hand. But lots of people do not follow the rules in minor ways and dummies always try to be more involved than they should be.

On the other hand, there is every chance that he just vaguely indicated the dummy and you decided he had pointed at a card when he did not really do so. It is also quite possible that once declarer woke up she would have realised she should play the trump.

What worries me is that you say that you protested. What you do not say is to whom you protested. If you protested to the opponents you are completely out of line: you have no right to do so. Only the director has the right to enforce the Laws. If opponents do something you do not like, you have only two options: either call the director and tell him, or ignore the happening completely and carry on without comment. Even in so-called friendly clubs, more bad feeling is created by not calling the director than ever is when the director sorts it out.

If you did protest to the director that is fine, so long as you merely told him the facts without accusation and let him deal with it. If they are upset, so be it, but people often get upset when they do something wrong and it is pointed out. That is acceptable so long as the director does the pointing out.

♣ ♥ ♦ ♠

Q In an event in my local village hall, I was West when the bidding started:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1NT</td>
<td>Dbl</td>
<td>2♣</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2♥</td>
<td>2NT</td>
<td>End</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Announced as 12-14
Announced as Stayman

Before East led, North asked me to leave the table so that he could ask my partner some questions. I said everything was in my system card and offered it to North for him to check. He did not look at my system card but insisted I leave. I did not see why I should leave the table, but as North was also the director and his partner was the club chairman, I had no one to appeal to, so I got up and left the table. After a short interval, they called me back; I was then the only one who did not know what East had said. Was this right?

Trish Avery, Venn Ottery, Devon.

A Playing directors are always a problem: there is no real solution. The Laws assume that the director is not playing. Suppose there had been a non-playing director. Then North would have called the director. He would have explained that there was a problem and some doubt about your agreements. The director would have sent you away from the table and asked East if the agreement was as stated, while warning East that it was only agreements to which she would speak. She would have explained.

Your director certainly was within his rights to ask you to leave the table and you should not have argued with him – you should not argue with the director whether he is right or wrong. Of course, we do not know whether he warned East it is only agreements about which she should speak.

Incidentally, are you sure that it is on your system card? While some people have responses after a double on their system card, it is not common and many people
– probably a majority – change their responses once there is a double. Thus, it is only on your system card if it says that Stayman still applies after a double.

Your opponents have a right to play bridge while knowing your agreements fully. If an opponent has some doubt, you should do everything possible to make sure he gets a full and correct explanation: if that means leaving the table, so be it. In games I play in, it is quite common for players to offer to leave the table.

It is quite common for players to offer to leave the table.

A discomfort to offer to leave the table.

B If your clubs are getting the director. If the revoke trick and the director.

C The bidding started, West dealer: 1NT- Pass-2♥ (weak take-out). South passed after studying her hand and making the comment, ‘I don’t know what to do with this hand, partner.’ West and North both passed. When West told me what had happened, I said that she should have called the director. Please could you let me know the ruling on this comment. In this case, West was not harmed as 2♥ made for an 80% score, however 3NT was on for N/S. Ron Turner by email.

A The law is perfectly clear: the board remains in the centre of the table throughout. So it is fairly difficult to argue with players who want it left there. Actually, my experience is that, except with the very smallest tables, it does not get in the way there.

C Certainly the opponents should call the director immediately. He would have warned the partner to do his best to take no advantage and suggested the opponents call him back at the end if they have any doubts as to whether he has managed to avoid taking advantage. In some situations, he might give them an adjusted score.

Q My partner was in 4♣. As dummy, I had good support in spades ♦K-J-10-9-6. After drawing trumps and knocking out the ♦A, the diamonds left were: ♦K-J-10-6 in dummy and ♦Q-7 in hand. My partner played the king from dummy and, forgetfully, trumped his own trick. He then played back to dummy and played a low diamond from dummy, then realised he had made an error. He acknowledged the revoke and we called the director. The ruling was two tricks to the opponents even though we did not gain; in fact, we had already lost a trick because declarer had trumped his own winner.

Peter Gartshore, Hedge End, Southampton.

A Your partner won the revoke trick and another trick that is two tricks to the opponents.

It makes no difference that you did not gain: the revoke tricks are penalties to stop people revoking as well as, sometimes, restoring equity. If you do not want to pay revoke penalties, make sure you follow suit!

E-mail your questions on bridge laws to: davidstevenson@mrbridge.co.uk
Answers to Julian Pottage’s Defence Quiz on page 29

1. West 1NT 2 Pass
   North Pass
   East Pass
   South 2
   Pass
   All Pass

You lead the ♥4. Partner wins with the ♥A and returns the ♥2. You ruff South’s ♥K.

How do you continue?

Since declarer is presumably out of spades, you should not be thinking about a second ruff for yourself. You might wonder whether partner could be void in diamonds or hold the ♥A. The clue here is that the ♥9 cannot be either the highest or the lowest spade that partner had remaining. Assuming that partner is on the same wavelength, playing one of the minors will achieve little. Instead, you should cut out possible club ruffs in dummy by playing ace and another trump.

2. West ♥Q 10 7 2
   North ♥Q 10 9
   East ♥K J 6 3
   South ♥K 7
   ♥4
   ♥A 9 8 5 3
   ♥J 4 2
   ♥10 8 7 4
   ♥A 8 6 5 3
   ♥K J 6
   ♥A 9 6
   ♥2
   ♥A 9 6
   ♥K J 6
   ♥Q 10 2
   ♥4
   ♥A Q 9 5
   ♥J 8 5 4 3
   ♥Q 10 2

You lead the ♥4. Partner wins with the ♥A and returns the ♥2. You ruff South’s ♥K.

How do you continue?

The situation is similar to the previous deal. You have scored one ruff and can score another if you can put partner on lead in one of the minors. Indeed, if partner holds the ♥A, you will not actually need a second ruff.

This time, your partner has returned the lowly ♥2 when giving you a ruff. This very small card must be a signal for the lower-ranking minor, namely clubs. (You ignore the trump suit for suit-preference signals.) Since you hold the ♥A yourself, you should read partner for the ♥K. So go on, be brave. Underlead your ♥A.

Partner puts up the ♥K and, when it holds, knows exactly what you have done. A second spade ruff duly defeats the contract.

3. West ♥10 7 5 3 2
   North ♥10 9
   East ♥A K 9 5 3
   South ♥7
   ♥4
   ♥A Q 9 8
   ♥A 4 2
   ♥10 8 7 4
   ♥Q 9 5
   ♥J 8 5 4 3
   ♥Q 10 2
   ♥K 6
   ♥K Q J 8 6 3
   ♥2
   ♥A K 9 6
   ♥Q 10 2
   ♥7
   ♥A 9 8 5 3
   ♥8
   ♥7 4 2
   ♥10 8 4
   ♥A 10 8 5 4 3
   ♥K J 6
   ♥K 9 8 6 5 3
   ♥A
   ♥Q 9 6

You lead the ♥4. Partner wins with the ♥A and returns the ♥9. You ruff South’s ♥K.

How do you continue?

Since declarer is presumably out of spades, you should not be thinking about a second ruff for yourself. You might wonder whether partner could be void in diamonds or hold the ♥A. The clue here is that the ♥9 cannot be either the highest or the lowest spade that partner had remaining. Assuming that partner is on the same wavelength, playing one of the minors will achieve little. Instead, you should cut out possible club ruffs in dummy by playing ace and another trump.

4. West ♥J 9 7 3
   North ♥K Q 6
   East ♥K 10 7 2
   South ♥A 7
   ♥4
   ♥A K 10 8 2
   ♥7 4 2
   ♥J 8 6 4
   ♥Q 9 5
   ♥10 8 5 4 3
   ♥Q 6 5
   ♥A J 10 8 5 3
   ♥A 3
   ♥Q 9

You lead the ♥4. Partner wins with the ♥A and returns the ♥2. You ruff as South follows low. How do you continue?

You read the ♥2 as a low spade, asking for a club switch. You have hopefully developed the habit of trusting your partner by now. Although you can see the ♥A but not the ♥A in dummy, you should do as partner has asked. Switch to a club.

Partner has done all the hard work, keeping the boss spade and then signalling for clubs.

If you failed to switch to a club, declarer could set up a spade for a club discard.

BRIDGE April 2014
If opener bids two suits and responder returns to opener’s first suit (called giving simple preference), that does not suggest extra values or any great enthusiasm for opener’s first suit.

West could have passed 2♠ if he was weak and felt that 2♥ would be a better contract than 2♦. As it is, 2♥ shows just 6-9 points and the feeling that 2♥ will be better than 2♦.

Note that simple preference is NOT the same as support. Unless West is very strong, East just wants to find a sensible contract at as low a level as possible. As explained in “About Opener Bidding No-Trumps”, East assumes West has five hearts and four diamonds.

If you give preference to your partner’s suit, that does not necessarily mean that your individual holding is better: more that you believe the combined holdings in the first suit will make a better trump suit.

The point in Layout B is that generally a 5-2 trump fit plays better than a 4-3 fit. Suppose you succeed in drawing trumps in three rounds. If you started with a 5-2 fit, you would still have two trumps left, but if you started with a 4-3 fit, you would have only one trump left.

Look back to Layouts A and B.

When West rebid 2♦, East had very few options. He had little more than a minimum response and needed to end the auction as quickly as possible. With 6-9 points, he had only three options: pass 2♦, which is clearly inferior as explained above; give preference to 2♥; or rebid 2♠, a very risky option on a poor 5-card suit.

Whatever you think of the preference to 2♥, when you think of the alternatives it is clearly the least of evils.

Now take the same Layout as A and make the East hand stronger.

West is not strong enough for a game-forcing jump shift to 3♥, showing 19 points. West will usually get another bid and intends to show his extra strength on the next round of bidding.

East knows West has at least five hearts but maybe only four diamonds. He prefers the 5-2 fit. This is called False Preference.

West knows that East has just 6-9 points, but West is still interested in game. Notice that he doesn’t assume that East has great enthusiasm for hearts. West has a club stopper (the unbid suit) and thoughtfully suggests an alternative denomination. 2NT shows 17-18 points. Note that with a weaker hand, West would pass over 2♦.

With only a doubleton heart, East is happy with the alternative choice. Being maximum in the range 6-9 points, he accepts the game try.

Jump preference should show genuine support.

West East
1♥ 1♠
2♦ 2♥
2NT 3NT

West East
1♥ 1♠
2♦ 2NT

West East
♠ 3 ♥ A Q 7 6 5 ♦ A K 7 6 ♣ Q 4 2
♥ 9 7 6 2 ♦ A K 6 2 ♣ K 9 3
♣ J 4 ♦ J 4 ♥ J 4
♦ Q 3 2 ♠ Q 10 9 3
♣ Q 10 9 3 ♠ Q 10 9 3
♣ Q 10 9 3 ♠ Q 10 9 3
♣ Q 10 9 3 ♠ Q 10 9 3
♣ Q 10 9 3 ♠ Q 10 9 3
♣ K 9 3 ♠ K 9 3
If responder changes suit at the one level and opener rebids a third suit, responder will rarely pass.

If responder has ten or more points, he will clearly want to bid on for positive reasons, so I will consider some weaker hands East might have in this auction.

Hand E
♣ A 765
♥ A 765
♦ 7
♥ Q 87
♦ K 7632
Hand F
♣ A 765
♥ A 765
♦ 7
♥ Q 87
♦ K 7632

With Hand E, East will pass 2♦ gratefully.

With Hand F, East really has no sensible alternative but to pass 2♦, but what if West has 18 points and they play in 2♦ with 27 points?

Hand C
♣ A 765
♥ A Q 8 6 5
♦ A K 12
♥ K 7632
Hand D
♣ K 8
♥ A Q 8 6 5
♦ A K 12
♥ K 7632

The hands are a misfit. OK, this is an extreme case: you have 27 points and no weakness, but equally you have no obvious source of tricks. There will be a lot of gaining and losing the lead in 3NT and it is very difficult to estimate the chances of success, but, in my opinion, 3NT will make approximately half of the time. This is why it is fairly safe for opener to rebid a new suit without a jump on as many as 18 points: responder will rarely pass and if he does pass with eight or nine points, the hands are likely to fit badly, meaning that you will need more than the normal 25 points to make game.

To summarise: unbalanced hands with 16-18 points are best dealt with by making a simple rebid, intending to show your extra strength on the third round.

A jump shift (ie a jump in a third suit) by opener (eg 1♥ - 2♦ - 3♠) should be played as game forcing with 19 points, or, just occasionally, a well-fitting 18.
## SINGLE TRIP SUMMARY OF COVER

The following represent the Significant and Key Features of the policy including Exclusions and Limitations that apply per person. A full copy of the policy document is available on request.

### CANCELLATION OR CURTAILMENT up to £1,500

If you have to cancel or cut short your trip due to illness, injury, redundancy, jury service, the police requiring you to remain at or return to your home due to serious damage to your home, you are covered against loss of travel and accommodation costs.

- **Policy Excess**: £75.

### PERSONAL ACCIDENT up to £15,000

A cash sum for accidental injury resulting in death, loss of sight, loss of limb or permanent total disablement. No Policy Excess.

### MEDICAL AND OTHER EXPENSES up to £10,000,000

Including a 24 HOUR WORLDWIDE MEDICAL EMERGENCY SERVICE

The cost of hospital and other emergency medical expenses incurred abroad, including additional accommodation and repatriation expenses.

- **Policy Excess**: £75 Areas 1, 2 & 3, £150 Area 4 or on a Cruise.
- For persons aged 61 to 70 years the excess is increased to £100.
- For persons aged 60 years or less the excess is increased to £500 Areas 1 & 2, £750 Area 3, £1,000 Area 4 or on a Cruise.
- For persons aged 71 to 90 years the excess is increased to £300 Areas 1, 2 & 3, £1,000 Area 4 or on a Cruise.

See section headed **Increased Excess for Pre Existing Medical Conditions** for increased excesses applicable to claims arising from pre-existing medical conditions.

### HOSPITAL BENEFIT up to £300

An additional benefit of £15 per day for each day you spend in hospital abroad as an in-patient. No Policy Excess.

### PERSONAL LUGGAGE, MONEY & VALUABLES up to £2,000

Covers accidental loss, theft or damage to your personal luggage subject to a limit of £200 for any one article, pair or set and an overall limit of £200 for valuables such as cameras, Jewellery, furs, etc. Luggage and valuables limited to £1500. Delayed luggage, up to £75. Policy Excess £50. Money, travel tickets and travellers cheques are covered up to £500 against accidental loss or theft (cash limit £250). Policy Excess £50. No cover is provided for loss or theft of unattended property, valuables or money or for loss or theft not reported to the Police within 24 hours of discovery.

### PASSPORT EXPENSES up to £200

If you lose your passport or it is stolen whilst abroad, you are covered for additional travel and accommodation costs incurred in obtaining a replacement. No Policy Excess.

### DELAYED DEPARTURE up to £1,500

Additional travel and accommodation expenses incurred to enable you to reach your overseas destination if you arrive too late at your final UK outward departure point due to failure of the vehicle in which you are travelling to deliver you to the departure point caused by adverse weather, strike, industrial action, mechanical breakdown or accident to the vehicle. No Policy Excess.

### MISSED DEPARTURE up to £500

Covers your legal liability for injury or damage to other people or their property, including legal expenses (subject to the laws of England and Wales). Policy Excess £250.

### LEGAL EXPENSES up to £25,000

To enable you to pursue your rights against a third party following injury. No Policy Excess.

### MAIN EXCLUSIONS AND CONDITIONS

The following represents only the main exclusions. The policy document sets out all of the conditions and exclusions. A copy of the full policy wording is available on request in writing prior to application.

### MAIN HEALTH EXCLUSIONS

Insurers will not pay for claims arising:

1. Where You (or any person upon whose health the Trip depends) have or have had symptoms which are awaiting or receiving investigation, tests, treatment, referral or the results of any of the foregoing, unless We have agreed in writing to cover You.
2. From any terminal illness suffered by You (or any person upon whose health the Trip depends).
3. From any medical condition for which You (or any person upon whose health the Trip depends) have within 12 months prior to the date of issue of this insurance been diagnosed with a medical condition which are awaiting or receiving investigation, tests, treatment, referral or the results of any of the foregoing, unless We have agreed in writing to cover You.
4. Medical conditions existing prior to the payment of the insurance premium or any consequence of the same.

### OTHER GENERAL EXCLUSIONS

Claims arising from:

1. Winter sports, any hazardous pursuits, any work of a non sedentary nature.
2. Self inflicted injury or illness, suicide, alcoholism or drug abuse, sexual disease.
3. War, invasion, acts of foreign enemies, hostilities or warlike operations, civil war, rebellion, Terrorism, revolution, insurrection, civil commotion, military or usurped power but this exclusion shall not apply to losses under Section 3 – Medical Expenses unless such losses are caused by nuclear, chemical or biological attack, or the disturbances were already taking place at the beginning of any Trip.
4. Failure or fear of failure or inability of any equipment or any computer program.
5. Bankruptcy/liquidation of any tour operator, travel agent, airline, transportation company or accommodation supplier.
6. Travelling to countries or regions where the FCO or WHO has advised against travel.
7. Your failure to contact the Medical Screening Line where required.

### PRE EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

You only need to undergo medical screening if You are travelling to Area 4, on a Cruise, for a period in excess of 31 days. For all other Trips there is no need to advise us of your pre-existing medical conditions.

If you have a history of any medical condition and are travelling within Area 4 or on a Cruise, you must first contact Towergate Medical Screening Line to establish whether we can provide cover for your trip.

The number to call is: 0844 892 1698

If you are accepted, the level of excess stated below will apply. You will receive written confirmation that you are covered for the trip. In the event that you are not accepted for cover having been screened, we may be able to offer you cover under our Single Trip “PLUS” product. Please ask us for further details or go to our website.

### INCREASED EXCESS FOR PRE EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Acceptance of pre existing medical conditions is made by the application of increased excesses in the event of claims arising from the pre existing condition.

If You already suffer from or have a history of any medical condition, the following excess will apply (other than in respect of claims that are specifically excluded):

- **Under the Cancellation or Curtailment section** – double the normal excess.
- **Under the Medical & Other Expenses section** –
  - For persons aged 60 years or less the excess is increased to £500 Areas 1&2, £750 Area 3, £1,000 Area 4 or on a Cruise.
  - For persons aged 61 to 90 years the excess is increased to £1,000 Areas 1&2, £1,500 Area 3, £2,000 Area 4 or on a Cruise.

Please note that we consider a Cruise to be a Trip by sea in a liner calling at a number of ports.
This insurance is arranged by Global Travel Insurance Services Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and our status can be checked on the FCA Register by visiting www.fca.org.uk or by contacting the FCA on 0845 606 0666. This Insurance is underwritten by ETI – International Travel Protection, the United Kingdom branch of Europäische Reiseversicherung (ERV) A.G.. ERV is authorised by the Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht (Bafin – www.bafin.de) and the Prudential Regulation Authority and subject to limited regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority.

**SINGLE TRIP INSURANCE PRODUCT SUITABILITY**

As this description contains the Key Features of the cover provided it constitutes provision of a statement of demands and needs.

This insurance is suitable for a single round trip starting and finishing in the UK and Channel Islands, is of no more than 94 days duration, for persons whose age is 90 years or less.

This insurance is only available to persons who are permanently resident and domiciled in the UK and Channel Islands.

**SINGLE TRIP PREMIUM RATING SCHEDULE**

**GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS**

1. United Kingdom – England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, including all islands comprising the British Isles (except the Channel Islands and the Republic of Ireland). Any British Isles or UK Cruises are rated as Area 2.

2. Europe – Continental Europe west of the Ural mountain range, all countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea (except, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya & Syria), the Channel Islands and the Republic of Ireland, Iceland, Madeira, The Canaries and The Azores. (Persons residing in the Channel Islands need to pay Area 2 rates for UK trips).

3. Worldwide – All countries outside of the above (except those within Area 4).


**SCHEDULE OF PREMIUMS**

The following Premiums are valid for policies issued up to 31/3/2014 and for travel completed by 31/12/2014. Maximum age is 90 years. For periods in excess of 31 days please call for a quotation.

Maximum period of insurance is 94 days. All premiums include the Government Insurance Premium Tax (IPT).

**PREMIUM ADJUSTMENTS**

All age adjustments apply to the age on the date of return to the UK. Infants up to 2 years inclusive are FREE subject to being included with an adult paying a full premium. Children 3 to 16 years inclusive are HALF PRICE subject to being included with an adult paying a full premium. Unaccompanied children pay the adult rate.

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**Single Trip Travel Insurance**

Suitable for a single round trip starting and finishing in the UK and Channel Islands, is of no more than 94 days duration, for persons whose age is 90 years or less.

**GLOBAL TRAVEL INSURANCE**

The Turret, 25 Farncombe Road, Worthing, BN11 2AY. 01903 235042 Fax 01903 229389

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**SINGLE TRIP APPLICATION FORM**

Please FULLY complete the following in BLOCK CAPITALS. Once complete, return the application panel direct to Global Travel Insurance at the address above, with a cheque or with card details entered. Insurance is not effective until a Policy has been issued.

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss) Initials
Surname
Telephone No.
House Number/Name
Street Name
Town Name
Postcode
Date of leaving Home
Date of arrival Home
Screening Ref
Introducer

Geographical Area – See Premium Panel (1,2,3 or 4)

Names of all persons to be insured Age Premium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Credit/Debit Card Details TOTAL PREMIUM
Card No
Start Date
End Date
Issue No
Security Code

---

**DECLARATION**

On behalf of all persons listed in this application, I agree that this application shall be the basis of the Contract of Insurance. I agree that Insurers may exchange information with other Insurers or their agents. I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the insurance, with which all persons above are in agreement and for whom I am authorised to sign.

Signed........................................ Date

The form MUST be signed by one of the persons to be insured on behalf of all persons to be insured.

Mr Bridge is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Global Travel Insurance Services Ltd, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

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429ST113
1. ♠ K 6 4
   ♥ K 6
   ♦ 8 7 4 2
   ♣ 6 4 3 2
   ♠ 2 ♥ J 9 7 4 ♦ Q J 10 3 ♣ Q J 10 8 5
   ♥ 9 5 3 ♥ A Q 10 3 ♦ K 9 5 ♣ A Q J 10 8 7 ♦ 8 5 2 ♥ A 6 ♣ A K

You are declarer in 4♣ and West leads the ♥ Q. How do you plan the play?

The contract looks to be easy, but there is a slight worry. If you draw trumps and they prove to be 3-1, then you are in danger of losing three heart tricks, if the ace is badly placed, as well as a diamond. However, you can always engineer a heart ruff in dummy, so win the first trick in hand and play a heart to the king immediately. Even if it loses, you are a step ahead and will be able to ruff a heart eventually. Note, however, that even one round of trumps could be fatal as the defenders might be in a position to play two more rounds upon winning their heart tricks.

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

You are declarer in 6♥ and West leads the ♥ 2. How do you plan the play?

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♥ 7. How do you plan the play?

This hand looks so simple it might cause an unthinking declarer to go astray, although the reality is that there are more than enough tricks available. However, you must resist the temptation of playing one of the two diamond honours from dummy at trick 1, but win the ace in hand instead. If you lazily think you have a free finesse available, then you will be disappointed later when you find that you have no entry back to dummy to enjoy those fabulous clubs, assuming of course that the defence are astute enough not to win the ace at the first time the suit is played. So win the diamond in hand with the ace and then play clubs until the ace is taken. Now you will be able to get back to dummy with a diamond sooner or later.

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

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♥ 7. How do you plan the play?

You do not have enough tricks without setting up some clubs and there might seem to be a problem when the defenders win the ace of clubs as they will have enough spade winners to defeat you. But can that really be true? If West started with a holding headed by the K-Q-J, he would surely have led the king so East must hold a top honour and, if it is doubleton, you can block the suit by playing the ace from dummy at trick one. If East unblocks his honour, then your ten and nine will give you another stopper. And, of course, if spades were originally 4-3, then the defence can take only three tricks in the suit anyway.

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

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♥ Q. How do you plan the play?

The contract is a good one, but there seems to be little hope of that twelfth trick outside the club suit. But that is fair enough because all you need is to find at least one of the king or queen situated in the East hand. To take two finesses, however, you need two entries to dummy, so you must use that wonderful trump support in dummy in the most effective way. Win the spade lead, play a trump to the ace and play a low club to the jack immediately. It will most likely lose but you win the return and now play a trump to the ten, in order to take another club finesse. You would be unlucky to find both club honours offside and if they are not, you draw the last trump and claim.

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Answers to David Huggett’s Play Quiz on page 28

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You are declarer in 4♠ and West leads the ♠ Q. How do you plan the play?

The contract is a good one, but there seems to be little hope of that twelfth trick outside the club suit. But that is fair enough because all you need is to find at least one of the king or queen situated in the East hand. To take two finesses, however, you need two entries to dummy, so you must use that wonderful trump support in dummy in the most effective way. Win the spade lead, play a trump to the ace and play a low club to the jack immediately. It will most likely lose but you win the return and now play a trump to the ten, in order to take another club finesse. You would be unlucky to find both club honours offside and if they are not, you draw the last trump and claim.

---

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♦ 7. How do you plan the play?

You do not have enough tricks without setting up some clubs and there might seem to be a problem when the defenders win the ace of clubs as they will have enough spade winners to defeat you. But can that really be true? If West started with a holding headed by the K-Q-J, he would surely have led the king so East must hold a top honour and, if it is doubleton, you can block the suit by playing the ace from dummy at trick one. If East unblocks his honour, then your ten and nine will give you another stopper. And, of course, if spades were originally 4-3, then the defence can take only three tricks in the suit anyway.
1 You are East. What is your next bid with Hands A to F?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West</th>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1♥</td>
<td>1♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2♠</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand A</th>
<th>Hand B</th>
<th>Hand C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ KJ76</td>
<td>♠ KJ76</td>
<td>♠ KJ76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ J62</td>
<td>♥ J62</td>
<td>♥ 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Q65</td>
<td>♦ A108</td>
<td>♦ Q876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 832</td>
<td>♣ Q32</td>
<td>♣ 97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner has shown at least five hearts and at least four clubs. He might have just 12 points, or he might be a lot stronger. Remember, 2♣ would have been game forcing, showing 19 points (or perhaps a very strong 18).

Hand A: 2♥. Simple preference, showing 6-9 points and preferring the combined heart values to the combined club values.

Hand B: 3♥. Jump preference, showing 10-12 points and 3-card heart support.

Hand C: 2♥. Simple preference again. This hand and Hand D demonstrate that preference is not the same as support. You have a weak hand and need to allow the auction to end quickly unless partner is strong. You would rather play in 2♥ (the 5-2 fit) than 2♠ (the likely 4-2 fit).

Hand D: 2♥. This time false preference. You don’t prefer your doubleton heart to your tripleton club, but you do prefer the 5-2 heart fit to the likely 4-3 club fit. 2♥ may not be the best contract, but you have a weak hand and need to make arrangements for the bidding to end quickly unless partner is strong. You simply don’t have the space to investigate further.

Hand E: 2NT. You have the same shape as Hand D but this time you have 11 points. The extra strength gives you more options. 2NT shows 10-12 points and at least one stopper in the unbid suit, diamonds.

If you contrast Hands D and E, you will understand that while it is often necessary to give false simple preference with a weak hand, you have more options with stronger hands. If you jump to 3♥ over 2♣ (as in Hand B), partner will expect you to have three hearts.

Hand F: Are you puzzled? You don’t seem to have a good bid! All will be revealed in a future article when I deal with fourth suit forcing. For the moment, I am going to leave you in suspense but I suspect you can guess that the correct bid is 2♠.

2 You are West. What is your next bid with Hands G to M?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1♥</td>
<td>1♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2♠</td>
<td>?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand G</th>
<th>Hand H</th>
<th>Hand J</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ 876</td>
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<td>♥ AJ76</td>
<td>♥ AJ76</td>
<td>♥ AJ76</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ 6</td>
<td>♦ 6</td>
<td>♦ AQ4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ AK72</td>
<td>♣ AK72</td>
<td>♣ AQ109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner has shown at least five hearts and at least four clubs. He might have just 12 points, or he might be a lot stronger. Remember, 2♠ would have been game forcing, showing 19 points (or perhaps a very strong 18).

Hand G: Pass. No chance of game. Some players would have preferred to raise 1♠ to 2♠ with your hand rather than rebid 2♣. They will be proved right if partner has 5 spades and just 2 hearts.

Hand H: 2♠, showing 16-18 points and (usually) 3-card spade support.

Hand J: 2NT, showing 17-18 points and at least one diamond guard. Don’t worry about the singleton spade, partner bid them. Note that I talk about 17-18 points here but 16-18 for hands H and L where extra shape compensates.


Hand L: 3♠, showing 16-18 points and a fifth club.

Hand M: 3♥. This shows a sixth heart and enough to try for game. The correct denomination is hearts, even if partner has given preference on a small doubleton. Do note that in the hands which you bid on over 2♥ (H, J, L and M), partner ends up with an accurate description of your assets so he should be in a good position to decide on the final contract.

3 You are East. What is your next bid with Hands N to R?

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2♥</td>
<td>2♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2NT</td>
<td>?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand N</th>
<th>Hand P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>♠ 832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ J103</td>
<td>♥ 983</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ 864</td>
<td>♦ Q643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ A532</td>
<td>♣ KJ3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand Q</th>
<th>Hand R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>♠ 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ 972</td>
<td>♥ 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Q987</td>
<td>♦ QJ76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ A1032</td>
<td>♣ K8432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We need to start by working out what partner has shown so far.

Your 1NT response showed 6-9 points. You could have passed 2♥. If partner was strong enough to insist on game, he could have jumped to 3♥ over 1NT.

On the other hand, if he was not interested in game opposite a hand with at most nine points, he would have passed 2♠. So he seems to have enough to invite game, maybe 16-18 points.

How about shape? He opened 1♠ and rebid 2♠, showing at least five spades and four hearts. You gave preference to 2♥ and he continued with 2♠, so his shape is presumably 5-4-2-2. So the question is this: ‘What contract do you want to play in opposite a 5-4-2-2 hand with 17 points?

Hand N: You have eight points and good ones. Honour cards in partner’s long suits are always welcome. You also have a 5-3 spade fit so jump to 3♠.

Hand P: You have 3-card spade support but you have only six points, none of them in partner’s suits. Not only are you minimum for 1NT, but the points you have look pretty useless. Sign off in 3♠.

Hand Q: Your preference to 2♠ was false, just preferring the 5-2 spade fit to the 4-3 heart fit. If partner has only five spades, you don’t want to play in a spade contract at a high level. However, with nine points, you are maximum for 1NT and should play in game. Raise 2NT to 3NT.

Hand R: Pass, quickly!

An Open Letter to Bernard

Dear Bernard,

I was at the de Vere Denham Grove Conference Centre as one of the participants in your January filming weekend. I was so impressed that I thought I would like to write to you to express my appreciation – and also make some further comments.

You are an excellent teacher and your material is really impressive. Your scripts and hand-outs are so clear as well as being informative, sequential and unambiguous. They give enough information, but avoid unnecessary ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’. You are able to answer questions and make jokes without losing the thread and these, of course, allow a little learning ‘space’ for assimilation. The balance of the worked examples to the teaching was just right for me and for the several other people I spoke to. These did their job in clarifying and reinforcing the information taught. As far as I can see, your teaching sessions meet the psychological criteria for effective teaching and therefore, learning. A rare thing.

During the session on Developing Your Bridge Memory, I remembered reading some recent research to do with kinaesthetic learning, which may interest you. If someone imagines doing a physical action, the brain is activated in exactly the same way as would happen were the action actually done. For example, carefully imagining, in detail, training at a gym results in increased fitness, and weight loss – if done often enough and for long enough. So this would imply that if you want to remember a card, act as follows: as you look at it, imagine tracing round the outline of a for example 4 and then of a heart and concentrate on how that would feel – in your fingertip and arm and shoulder – that will activate your brain as if you were actually doing it and learning will take place. I knew this, but had not seen its application to bridge, so thank you.

The idea of playing the set hands to reinforce what has been taught/learnt is first class and, with a relatively small subject like Weak Twos, works very well. However, with a subject of immense breadth like defence, it was not as easy to know what to try to apply from the many important things we had learnt. You presented that particular topic in three phases. I feel it would have been helpful if the set hands had been organised into three corresponding sets so that we revisited one phase at a time, making decisions from fewer possibilities and being more likely to make correct choices. In the event of needing to ask for help, it would have been easier to relate the explanations to more limited information.

Several of your helpers seemed overwhelmed by the number of boards and seemed a bit bogged down in all the explanations. Did they have time for familiarisation with the material?

Talking to other participants, this was a general feeling about the set hands – the activity was extremely useful for ‘smaller’ subjects. Subjects with greater breadth would benefit, we felt, from being subdivided so that the boards could be organised to relate to a lesser amount of information.

This suggestion is genuinely meant to be constructive. I think your product is so good that any small ‘wrinkles’ deserve to be ironed out. I look forward to reading your articles and using your other material with enthusiasm.

One last comment – before last weekend, although I had some defensive strategies, I lacked an overarching understanding of that aspect of bridge. Following your session on defence, I now have increased knowledge and a framework for future learning – and I feel that eventually I really will know what I am doing.

Barbara Rogers, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.
This case concerns a dispute between Mr Eustace Codd and the Erehwon Duplicate Bridge Club. About a year ago, Mr Codd came to the Club for the first time, with a view to playing in the duplicate bridge session that evening. He had got his information about the Club from what I am told is called the internet, where the Club’s website (I hope I have got the term right) extols the virtues of the Club (its welcoming director, comfortable environment, host system, well stocked bar, etc) and encourages new players to come and play on Monday or Thursday evenings and indeed, in due course, to become members of the Club. (For those interested in learning the game, the website also offers bridge lessons in the Church Hall on Tuesday and Friday evenings at 7pm).

So Mr Codd was expecting and indeed received a warm welcome. During the coffee break on his first evening at the Club, he was quizzed on his bridge career (which included playing for his county) and, on being asked to show an interesting hand which he had played in the past, he produced the hand below (Exhibit A), showing the position after seven tricks in a no-trump contract.

He, South, as declarer, needed to make the rest of the tricks, with North to lead. At the end of this judgment, I will tell you how Mr Codd played the hand (which he did of course without seeing his opponents’ cards). He must be a very good player to have made the contract. (I speak as a bridge player myself, albeit a very mediocre one).

To begin with all was well between Mr Codd and the Club, although some of the more, shall we say, conservative members raised their greying eyebrows somewhat when Mr Codd, by now a member of the Club, came a week later dressed in a bright blue T-shirt, bright pink trousers and green shoes. The next time he came, the colours were different, though equally garish and on the following occasion he wore a short-sleeved, polka-dot T-shirt, black shorts (apparently his grandmother had died a few days earlier) and white shoes (his niece had got married that afternoon).

Soon thereafter, an Erehwon Bridge Club Committee meeting was convened, at which it was decided to introduce a dress code, namely smart casual, ie no T-shirts, no shorts or jeans and no trainers (Exhibit B). This was announced the following week when, as it happened, Mr Codd was away. When he next played at the Club, he wore a scarlet woollen jacket, a kilt and sandals. When challenged by the Chairman, he maintained that he was complying with the dress code – as indeed he was. But by the next Club evening, the Committee had tightened up the dress code (Exhibit C) so as to require (for men) shirts with collars, long trousers and leather shoes (but not sandals). This was too much for Mr Codd, who informed the Chairman that he would not be complying with the new dress code, as it was unfair to people such as himself who could not afford the expensive clothing which seemed to be required. Indeed, on one of his last visits to the Club (in the height of summer), he simply wore swimming trunks and flippers.

Thereafter, the Committee sought a way to suspend or expel the embarrassing Mr Codd from the Club. The Club Secretary, a retired lawyer, looked through the Club constitution (Exhibit D) and found that there was nothing in it about sanctioning or expelling members, other than in Rule 10, which read as follows:

(a) Each member shall, in playing bridge at the Club, conform to the highest standards of fair play, courtesy and personal hygiene.

(b) The Committee may, after giving the member the opportunity to be heard, (a) issue a written reprimand or warning to any member, (b) suspend the member from playing at the Club for a period not exceeding six months or (c) expel the member from the Club.

There was considerable discussion in this Court about whether or not the use of Rule 10(b) was limited to cases where the individual had...
breached Rule 10(a). In other words, was it open to the Committee to issue a reprimand or warning, or suspend or expel a member, for breach of some other regulation, even though his play was of the fairest, his courtesy impeccable and his personal hygiene fragrant in the extreme?

The Committee decided that it was and, having heard what Mr Codd had to say, issued him with a written warning (Exhibit E) when he next appeared at the Club. This was ignored by Mr Codd, so the Committee decided to expel him (Exhibit F). Mr Codd again ignored this decision and continued to appear at the Club dressed in his customary manner. A week or two later, the Club hired a bouncer to keep him out, but Mr Codd merely went round to the back of the Clubhouse, shinned up a tree and climbed into the building through an unlocked window. Thereafter, the police obtained an ASBO (Exhibit G) and kept him away from the Club (the local Police Chief being the Chairman’s brother-in-law) and Mr Codd gave up trying to play there – though soon afterwards he issued his claim against the Club.

I now have to decide whether Mr Codd was validly expelled from the Club or whether, as claimed by him, his expulsion did not comply with its constitution. If the latter, then it follows that he is still a member of the Club, and that the ASBO should be discharged.

In my judgment, Mr Codd’s expulsion was invalid for three reasons. First, Rule 10(b) of the constitution comes immediately after (and, of course, in the same clause as) Rule 10(a), so it must have been intended that Rule 10(b) be used only in relation to a breach of Rule 10(a) and, of course, Rule 10(a) does not mention compliance with dress rules. Second, there is nothing in the constitution which gives the Committee power to make dress rules, so the rules the Committee made were invalid ab initio. And thirdly, life would be so boring if everyone dressed the same way, and a bit (or in this case a lot) of colour is a good thing (except in Court). Judgment for Mr Codd, with no doubt enormous costs.

And now I will tell you how Mr Codd made the last six tricks on the hand shown above. As declarer, he first led ♠Q from dummy, covered by East’s ♥K, and won by South with ♥A, West following with ♥10. Mr Codd then cashed his ♥A and continued with ♢3 to dummy’s ♥K – all following in each case.

He now led ♥2 from dummy, on which East and South threw clubs. West took his time over his discard and it soon became clear why. Any discard by him would allow North/South to make the last two tricks. If West threw ♦J, dummy’s ♦9 would make trick 12. His actual diamond discard worked no better, for Mr Codd now played ♥2 to ♥A and won the last trick with the lowly ♠4. Quod erat demonstrandum.

Reporter: Richard Wheen, after A.P. Herbert

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**Catching Up by Sally Brock**

January was a quiet month bridge-wise. We’ve been feeling we’d been playing too much and did not fancy the events we usually play in, eg, the Manchester Congress or the TGR’s auction pairs and we even missed the EBU’s new Board-a-Match teams.

The national knock-out events moved ever onward. We were supposed to have our Hubert Philips quarter-final against Sandra Claridge’s Oxfordshire team, but they had to cancel at the last minute due to illness and we were awarded a walk-over. We had a new-season Gold Cup match that we won comfortably and a first-round Crockfords that we won by just 1 IMP.

There was also the odd team-of-eight match that we won heavily and I had several online sessions, some with Richard and Gerry and some with an Irish women’s pair I have started coaching.

The only major bridge event there has been in this period was the Lady Milne Trials, which I play in with Susanna. This year, we did not shine and finished fifth, with the top three making the team. We had all manner of disasters (including one where we let 3NT doubled through in a way which would be a contender for the worst defended hand ever).

I did well in the bidding on this deal – well enough that we gained nearly 3 IMPs for going down in a cold game. What would you bid as South after East opens with a weak 2♦?

I think many players passed. Jane Moore, for the winners, chose 2NT and that got her partner to 4♣ quickly after the 4-4 fit was located. I preferred a simple overcall in my chunky four-card major and that got me into game even quicker. Note that 4♥ is unbeatable for E/W.

West started with the ♥A-K and switched to the ♥Q. I won the ♥A, crossed to a club and, worried that East started with a singleton club and ♥K-x-x, played the ♥10 from dummy. When East played the singleton ♥K, there was no recovery. What I should have done, as Gillian Fawcett, the North who made the same error at the aforementioned table, pointed out, was to duck the ♥Q. I win the continuation, cross to a club and play a low spade to the ♥J. Now I ruff a diamond and take another spade finesse.

On a more personal level, I have put the house back on the market and there has been quite a flurry of interest but no offers as yet. And it’s holiday time …
Saturday

The alarm goes early to get us up for our 8.45am departure to Gatwick and then on to Malta. Apart from missing our first train, which was deliberately a bit earlier than we needed, the journey passes peacefully enough. However, Malta fails to deliver its promise when we arrive in the pouring rain. We are met by Mario who directs us to our hire car (a small, slightly battered specimen, but a steal at €90 for six days) and I follow him to his flat in Sliema. I’ve been looking forward to showing off the sea view to Barry, but you can barely see it through the gloom.

After settling in and (eventually) sorting out the WiFi password, Mario goes to fetch Margaret and bring her back to the flat for supper.

I should perhaps explain my connection to Malta. In 1999, the European Championships were held there. Although entitled to send a team to any European Championship, Malta had, until then, not done so, but that year, with some government funding, they decided they would like to take part in the event. They hired me to organise the selection and training of the team. So I went for two long weekends, plus a ten-day period when they had their actual trials. They were expecting to come last in the event but didn’t want to make fools of themselves. My coaching was more to give them the experience of playing with screens, against unfamiliar bidding systems and to teach them the etiquette of international bridge.

I then captained them in the event itself. I would say the whole thing was a success: they did indeed finish at the bottom of the table, but they scored some good wins and I think they all enjoyed themselves. Needless to say, I made a lot of friends and have been back to see them most years since.

Sunday

We have a good lie-in and then need to go to the car-hire shop to fill in the paperwork and pay for our hire car. It’s a symptom of the laid back atmosphere here that we were allowed to take the car without any of this. The weather is much better this morning, so we sit outside having a cappuccino overlooking the pretty harbour at St Julians. I even worry slightly that I don’t have sun cream. Then it’s off to Margaret’s for her birthday lunch, pausing first to have a quick drink with her next door neighbour Claire, whom I try to catch up with on most of my visits. At Margaret’s we meet Bjarni and Svetlana, Icelandic and Russian respectively, who met playing bridge in Malta and married a couple of years ago. We are given a delicious curry and afterwards set off for the Malta Bridge Club for the Sunday duplicate. I play with Margaret and Barry plays with Mario.

How would you play this hand in 3NT? West leads the ♣Q. You win the king and cash the ♣A, but East shows out on the second round. How do you proceed?

Against us, declarer next takes a heart finesse. I win the queen and switch to the ♠Q, won by declarer with the ace. He plays a third club which I win. Now is the moment of truth. I know that partner has a diamond honour but am not sure whether it is the ace or the king. I can guarantee beating the contract by switching to a diamond now, but I get greedy. I play a spade instead. Declarer has to finesse and now partner can beat the contract by two tricks by switching to a diamond. But it isn’t so obvious from her side of the table and when she continues spades declarer succeeds by crossing to the ♥K and knocking out the last club stopper.

Do you see where declarer went wrong? That heart finesse is a mistake. He should simply cross to the ♥K and knock out a top club. Then, he wins the return (a heart is probably best for the defence), crosses to hand with the ♦A and knocks out the final club honour. He thus guarantees his contract on any layout unless West started with Q-x-x-x of hearts – pretty unlikely.

Seven Days

by Sally Brock

BRIDGE April 2014
Although there are some problems with the scoring, I am told that Margaret and I finished third, just a smidgeon ahead of Barry and Mario (which, of course, is all that matters). We then go out for a light dinner: grilled seabass and chips, before heading back to Mario’s flat. While there, I look at my laptop and see that I have been emailed the results. I look at my scores which bear no resemblance whatsoever to those I actually achieved. Actually, they look a lot like Mario and Barry’s. Maybe they’ve beaten us by a smidgeon instead.

**Monday**

After a lazy early morning, we wander up the road and catch the ferry across the water to Valletta. We start off by walking around outside the city walls. After all the rain on Saturday there is a lot of groundwater. We leap across several large puddles before arriving at a flooded bit which goes on for several yards. With no desire to spend all day with wet feet, we admit defeat and retrace our steps until we find a portal into the city. We continue our circumnavigation for a while, inside and outside with a great view of the Grand Harbour. In the afternoon, we visit the cathedral, which is certainly the most lavish I have ever seen. Then, we walk back down the hill to catch the ferry back but are told that due to choppiness in the harbour the ferry isn’t running. So we have to trek back up the hill and find the bus station, but that passes off peacefully enough and we get back to Mario’s, via a short supermarket shop, by five. Later, we walk up to the Malta Union Club where Mario and Margaret are playing bridge. After saying hello to some old friends, it’s out to dinner, and then to bed.

**Tuesday**

Today, we start with the Hypogeum. In order to visit this World Heritage Site you need to book and I have never remembered before, so I am looking forward to this outing. The Hypogeum is in parts 5,000 years old, and is a burial ground. It is fascinating to see all the chambers they have excavated since its discovery in 1902. We then walk to see the Tarxien temples which are above ground and also interesting.

Then, it’s off to Marsaxlokk, a pretty fishing village, for lunch on the quayside, looking out at all the brightly coloured fishing boats. I have sea bream caught by the chef’s husband that morning, or so we are told. Then, we drive up to Dingli cliffs for some spectacular views of the Mediterranean and spend a lot of time looking for ‘Clapham Junction’. This is supposed to be the site of some prehistoric cart ruts but we can’t see them – mind you, we don’t really know what we are looking for. Then, it is back to Mario’s – it takes quite a while as I get hopelessly lost (not for the first time). There is a Simultaneous Pairs tonight but we decide not to play. However, we wander up to the hotel where the bridge is being played anyway to meet friends and have a quick drink before the session. Then we have an excellent dinner at Ta’ Kris, a Maltese restaurant, which we thoroughly enjoy.

**Wednesday**

In the morning, we are up and out early for our boat tour. The harbour around Valetta is truly amazing. I remember reading about it and wondering how a fleet could possibly hide in it – but it is so huge that, when you’ve seen it, it is entirely believable. We have been quite lucky with the weather after the disastrous start. Even on the water it is mostly sunny and not too cold. Later, we meet Mario and Margaret and a couple of other friends for lunch before proceeding to the bridge. For some reason, the bridge does not go well for us. The first two matches are OK but then we start on a downhill spiral. We lose the third match and then there is a break but it seems too early to eat so we don’t and maybe that is the problem. Perhaps I let my blood-sugar get too low. Whatever, the bridge is miserable. Not only do we (particularly me) play badly, but we are also out of luck and we don’t enjoy ourselves one little bit.

You would have thought I’d learnt my lesson on that hand from the Lady Milne trials, but obviously not …
partner plays the three at trick one and I play the queen. I play the king from dummy, gratefully discarding a diamond from my hand and continue with, yes, the ♦Q. This is covered by the king and ace. Like an idiot, I play another trump to dummy and then my top clubs. West ruffs the second and continues with another heart which I ruff. As I no longer have a high trump in dummy all I can do is play another club, allowing West to make her nine of trumps.

Again, I could have succeeded easily. After the first round of trumps, I should start on clubs immediately. If they break, I can continue with the trump-drawing process, but West ruffs the second round. What can she do? If she plays a trump, I can draw trumps ending in hand, ruff a club and claim; if she plays a low diamond to the king and another diamond (probably best), I ruff low, ruff a club, draw trumps and claim.

Even more miserably, by the time the bridge is finished most cafés and restaurants are closed, so we have to resort to McDonalds and we aren’t very nice to each other afterwards either.

Thursday

Thank goodness it’s another day. In the morning we go to Mdina, a really old walled city in the middle of the island (well, the word ‘city’ is perhaps an exaggeration). I manage to find it without getting completely lost. We wander around enjoying the sights for an hour or two, stop for a coffee on the ramparts and then drive back to the flat, again without getting lost. Mario and Margaret come around with some smoked salmon and salad for lunch before the game.

Today’s session is much more cheerful. We play better, smile a lot more and end up in the top ten. Afterwards, we go out to dinner, to an interesting all-Asian place. We start with sashimi, move on to crispy duck with pancakes and then have some Thai curry. All delicious. Then back to the flat where I have an online coaching session with my Irish women.

Friday

We need to leave the flat all packed up by about 9.30am. This we manage and drive first to the hire car office, where we pick up a driver, before heading off for the airport (so he can drive the car back). The easyJet flight home is straightforward enough. We get back to Barry’s at about five. A quick cup of tea while he unpacks and sorts himself out and then it’s a rush-hour drive to High Wycombe (as is often the case on a Friday it’s a bit of a nightmare – takes about two hours instead of the usual 40 minutes). Briony has dinner waiting for us: a delicious casserole with mashed potatoes. Then, Barry disappears into our TV den where he can snooze and/or watch whatever TV he likes without any complaint from anyone, while Briony and I sit and gossip about what we’ve both been doing.

Tomorrow, we’re heading off to West Bromwich to defend our title in the Tollemache.
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