

Mr Bridge AT LATIMER HOUSE 2008



1-3 Feb (£209)
Endplay & Avoidance
Bernard Magee

22-24 Feb (£199)
Leads & Defence

7-9 Mar (£199)
Doubles
Ned Paul

14-16 Mar (£199)
Responding to 1NT

4-6 Apr (£199)
Improvers*
Declarer Play
Sandy Bell

25-27 Apr (£209)
Further into
the Auction
Bernard Magee

19-21 Sep (£199)
Sacrificing
Alex Davoud

21-23 Nov (£209)
Suit Establishment
New Topic
Bernard Magee

**No Single
Supplement**

Manor house rooms:
£50 supplement per room.

*Improvers' Weekends are aimed at the novice player and/or those picking up the game after a long break.

PROGRAMME

This is the format for all duplicate weekends and rarely varies.

FRIDAY

1500 **Mr Bridge**
Welcome Desk open
Afternoon Tea

1745 to 1830
Welcome drinks
reception

1830 to 2000
DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE
SESSION 1**
DUPLICATE PAIRS

SATURDAY

0800 to 0930
BREAKFAST

1000 to 1230
SEMINAR &
SUPERVISED PLAY
of SET HANDS 1
(tea & coffee at 1100)

1230 to 1330
COLD BUFFET
LUNCH

1400 to 1645
**BRIDGE
SESSION 2**
TEAMS of FOUR

1815 to 2000
DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE
SESSION 3**
DUPLICATE PAIRS

SUNDAY

0800 to 0930
BREAKFAST

1000 to 1230
SEMINAR &
SUPERVISED PLAY
of SET HANDS 2
(tea & coffee at 1100)

1230 to 1400
CARVERY LUNCH

1400 to 1645
**BRIDGE
SESSION 4**
DUPLICATE PAIRS

Mr Bridge

AT LATIMER HOUSE

Latimer Road, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1UG

- ◆ Full-board Friday to Sunday
- ◆ All rooms with en-suite facilities
- ◆ No single supplements
- ◆ Venue non-smoking
- ◆ Use of indoor swimming pool
- ◆ Bidding quiz and two seminars
- ◆ Please note: there is no lift

BOOKING FORM

Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode

☎

Please book me for places,

Single Double Twin Manor

at the Latimer House weekend of

Special requirements (these cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige)

.....

Please give the name(s) of all those covered by this booking

.....

Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per place by cheque, payable to Mr Bridge. An invoice will be sent with your booking confirmation. On receipt of your final payment, 28 days before the event, a programme and full details will be sent together with a map. Cancellations are not refundable. Should you require insurance, you should contact your own insurance broker.

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Expiry: CVV Issue No.

(CVV is the last 3 numbers on the signature strip)

Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Bisley, Surrey GU21 2TH

☎ 01483 489961 Fax 01483 797302

e-mail: leanora@mrbridge.co.uk

website: www.holidaybridge.com

Mr Bridge

AT STAVERTON PARK

Staverton, Daventry, Northants, NN11 6JT

- ◆ Full-board Friday to Sunday
- ◆ All rooms with en-suite facilities
- ◆ No single supplements
- ◆ Venue non-smoking
- ◆ Use of swimming pool and fitness suite
- ◆ Bidding quiz and two seminars

BOOKING FORM

Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode

.....

Please book me for places,

Single Double Twin

at the Staverton Park weekend of

Special requirements (these cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige)

.....

Please give the name(s) of all those covered by this booking

.....

Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per place by cheque, payable to Mr Bridge. An invoice will be sent with your booking confirmation. On receipt of your final payment, 28 days before the event, a programme and full details will be sent together with a map. Cancellations are not refundable. Should you require insurance, you should contact your own insurance broker.

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Mr Bridge WEEKENDS AT STAVERTON PARK

Staverton, Daventry, Northants, NN11 6JT

2008

- 8-10 February (£199)**
Signals & Discards
Ned Paul
- 23-26 May (£249)**
Bank Holiday (3 nights)
Chris Barrable
- 22-24 February (£199)**
Slams & Cue Bidding
Alan Lamb
- 22-25 August (£249)**
Bank Holiday (3 nights)
Develop at Duplicate Pairs
3 Seminars - Chris Barrable
- 29 Feb-2 Mar (£199)**
Stayman & Transfers
Improvers' Weekend
Mike Coggles
- 29-31 August (£199)**
Losing Trick Count
Ned Paul



- 20-24 March (£299)**
EASTER (4 nights)
4 seminars
6 bridge sessions
Acol Revision
Chris Barrable
- 12-14 Sept (£199)**
Doubles
Crombie McNeil
- 18-20 April (£199)**
Leads and Defence
John Wootton
- 25-27 April (£199)**
Doubles
Sandy Bell
Improvers' Weekend
- 26-28 Sept (£209)***
Game Tries
(New Topic)
Bernard Magee
- 10-12 October (£199)**
Leads and Defence
Sandy Bell
Improvers' Weekend
- 2-5 May (£299)***
Bank Holiday (3 nights)
Develop at Duplicate Pairs
3 Seminars
Bernard Magee
- 31 Oct - 2 Nov (£199)**
Hand Evaluation
Ned Paul
- 14-16 Nov (£209)***
Endplay and Avoidance
Bernard Magee

All weekends are duplicate bridge. * denotes a large weekend with a relaxed section which plays at a slightly slower pace. **Improvers' Weekends** are aimed at the novice player and/or those picking up the game after a long break.

DETAILS & BOOKINGS

☎ 01483 489961

A Walk in Winter

This little piece of England, where the birds are singing, the sun is shining and the air seriously intoxicating – it’s all too easy to fall under its magic spell and dream on, contentedly...

Early February

It’s early February and winter has us firmly in her grip. Hard frosts have made the ground rock-solid and there is now a fair covering of snow, which has enveloped everything in its path. The scene is certainly picturesque, assisted in no small degree by a misty sun that seems to be involved in a private battle to penetrate the haze.

Cindy and the Snow

Cindy, my Golden Retriever, seems impervious to climatic conditions. While I wrap up well, she’s impatiently waiting to get started on her walkies, no doubt thinking that all this extra clothes performance is a complete waste of time. I can’t remember when Cindy last experienced snow, or if she has seen it before, but I might have guessed – she revelled in it! The way she bounded about, frolicking like a young lamb, was in considerable contrast to my slipping and sliding in an attempt to maintain a dignified and upright position.

Just before we left, the telephone rang and a friend from the bridge club wanted to discuss a deal that had occurred in the previous evening’s duplicate. I’ll tell you about it later on.

Since the snow provided clear footprints of animal movement, although somewhat few and far

between, it was interesting to try to link animal and footprint together. The first one was not difficult because I saw that bloodthirsty little creature – a weasel – darting along the hedge-rows no doubt in pursuit of its lunch. I don’t know whether Cindy noticed it or not; she may have considered it beneath her sniff! Other prints may have been rabbits and nearby, I think, perhaps a fox. It was at this point that Cindy seemed suitably impressed and bounded around with great enthusiasm, her nose close to the ground.

The Birds in Winter

Up above, in a cluster of high trees, the rooks were very vociferous, I suspect they were mainly concerned with nest repairs – a sort of make and mend exercise in preparation for rearing their young in the next month or two.

I can hear some lapwings not far away. Their peewit-peewit song is very distinctive and I know they start nesting next month. One of their favourite spots is the nearby marshy ground besides the river. I remember once being concerned by a plover, apparently with a damaged wing, but discovered later that this was a well-known ploy – the distraction display – to lead me away from its nest. It wasn’t injured at all but its theatricals had the desired effect – very clever and most impressive.

Freak Distribution at the Bridge Club

Now, about that bridge deal that was the subject of my telephone call this morning.

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

♠ A K 9 7 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ A 9 8 ♣ A 8 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 ♥ Q ♦ K J 10 7 3 ♣ K Q 10 9 7 5 ♠ Q J 10 8 4 2 ♥ Void ♦ 6 5 4 2 ♣ 6 4 3 ♠ 5 3 ♥ A K J 10 8 7 6 4 3 ♦ Q ♣ J
	N										
W		E									
	S										

Every time we get a freak distribution at the club, two things happen. The computer comes in for some stick and the traveller makes interesting reading!

A Problem for South

This was the bidding at the table where my telephone caller sat South.

West	North	East	South
			4♥
Dbl	Pass	4♠	5♥
Dbl	End		

West’s first double showed high cards and a preparedness to play in spades. The second double was for penalties.

West led the ace of spades and, on seeing dummy, switched meanly to a trump so that declarer could make no more than his original nine tricks. Minus 500 was not a success, but equally it was not a complete bottom as it had happened before.

South claimed that his pre-empt was exceptional and therefore he was ▶

entitled to bid again. The fact that North couldn't produce a single trick for him was – well, unlucky.

Exceptional Pre-empt

One has to have a little sympathy for South because he did have a somewhat unusual pre-empt. However, the guiding principle that, once you pre-empt, you must leave all future decisions to partner, is a good one. The point is that your partner has a fair idea of your hand while that is not the case vice-versa. South was also surprised to see that East-West, with their four inescapable losers (two diamonds and two clubs), had on more than one occasion managed to make 4♠ – did I know what had happened?

Four Losers?

“Four inescapable losers” is not quite accurate as good play makes one of those losers disappear. South leads the ace of hearts, ruffed by declarer. After two rounds of trumps declarer ducks a diamond and ruffs the heart return. At this point, declarer knows that South started with nine hearts and two spades so he cashes the minor-suit aces to complete the count. Now dummy leads the nine of hearts and, instead of ruffing it, declarer discards a club. South has only hearts to play so dummy ruffs the next trick while declarer ditches his last club (the disappearing trick).

The Disappearing Trick

There are still two diamonds to lose but declarer is home with the loss of one heart (on the third round) and those two diamonds. The eight and two of clubs are, or course, ruffed in the East hand.

Pre-empt only Once

When we get home and while warming ourselves in front of a welcoming fire, I say to Cindy, ‘So you see, once you embark on a pre-empt you must leave further decisions to partner’. She cocks her head on one side and looks at me with those lovely brown eyes which seem to be saying, “I know that!” ■



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120 Hands in 10 Chapters

**Special Introductory Extra Chapter on
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- Suit Establishment in No-trumps
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- Hold-ups
- Ruffing for Extra Tricks
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- Delaying Drawing Trumps
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- Trump Control
- Endplays & Avoidance
- Using the Bidding

Each Chapter Includes

**2 play-through hands and
10 play hands with
following explanations**

£69⁹⁵

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Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2TH

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Lead Partner's Suit

When you need to make the opening lead, you very often want to start with the question, 'Did partner bid?' If the answer is yes, you follow up with 'Can I see a very good reason not to lead the suit?' Normally there is none.

These are some of the advantages of leading partner's suit:

- 1 You are likely to be leading towards strength and away from weakness.
- 2 To have bid, partner is likely to have strength, which means that there will be an entry to any winners you set up.
- 3 On some deals, partner will have bid mainly to direct the lead – this applies to overcalls in particular.
- 4 The state of mind implied in such a selfless lead keeps partner happy.
- 5 On the rare occasions when you lead something else, partner can draw a strong inference about your holding.

♠ 10 6 4
♥ Q 10 8 5 2
♦ K 10 5
♣ 9 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♣	2NT
Pass	3NT	End	

Lead the nine of clubs. Partner has a better suit than you do and more entries. Even Mollo's Hideous Hog would lead a club here. Do not allow the opposing no-trump bids to deter you from leading a club.

What card do you lead in partner's suit? Someone once said 'the top card'. This is not the right answer. Normal for most partnerships is to lead the same as you would in an unbid suit. Lead top of a sequence, second from a long bad suit, fourth best from other long suits and the higher card from a doubleton.

♠ Q 6 4
♥ Q 10 8 5 2
♦ 10 6 5
♣ 9 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	1♠	2♣
End		Pass	3♣

Lead the four of spades. In an unbid suit, the lead from three to an honour is quite rare – it is far from safe and risks causing confusion. In partner's suit, it is quite a common occurrence – lead the lowest card, not the top one. If, for example, declarer has K-J-x or A-J-x of spades, this allows you to save the queen to capture the jack later.

♠ 6 4
♥ Q 10
♦ K J 9 6 5
♣ A Q 9 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	3♥	2♥
Pass	3♥	1♠	End

Lead the six of spades. While you, no doubt, have a better hand than partner does and you may well have a better suit as well, this is no reason to lead a diamond. By leading a spade to start with and waiting for a diamond to come back, both of you are leading up to strength – normally a good idea.

What would cause you to reject a lead of partner's suit? If the opponents are in a suit contract and you hold the ace of partner's suit, you might try your luck elsewhere rather than risk setting up the king in declarer's hand. There is no hard and fast rule on this.

If you lead some other suit, it tends to be because you have a very attractive lead of your own. An ace-king holding or a strong three-card sequence (e.g. K-Q-J) may well be enough. If you lead a suit bid by an opponent rather than partner, you are almost certain (against a suit contract) to be leading a singleton. Being void in partner's suit also excuses you from leading it!

The time when you treat partner's bid as merely a suggestion occurs if you forced the situation – for instance if you made a take-out double or a two-suited overcall. Then partner's bid implies length but not necessarily strength.

I said earlier that an opposing bid in no-trumps should not deter you from leading partner's suit. In one situation, it provides half an excuse – if partner bid the suit only once and it was not an overcall and you have a singleton in the suit, you may look at your hand and see if you have a decent lead of your own.

♠ A 6 4
♥ J 8 5 3
♦ J 10 9 5 2
♣ 5

West	North	East	South
End		1♣	1NT

Lead the jack of diamonds. For all you know, the opponents have a 4-4 fit in clubs. South might even have a five-card club suit. What is more, you have a fair five-card suit of your own and a sure entry.

Remember, however, that I have included this last example by way of exception. If you want to defeat as many opposing contracts as you can and – just as importantly – maintain partnership harmony – *lead partner's suit*. ■



Eight Ever Nine Never

This rule is mainly about what to do if you are missing the queen and want to know whether to finesse.



Do you play off the ace-king, hoping the queen falls in two rounds, or do you cash the ace in case of a bare queen and finesse on the second round? The key situations are when West holds Q-x-x or when East has Q-x. 'Eight Ever Nine Never' helps you decide. With eight cards between the two hands, you should finesse the jack. When there are five cards missing and the suit breaks 3-2, obviously the queen will be in the three-card holding three times for every twice that it is in the doubleton. You would need a very good reason to go against the rule. What could that be? If there are sixteen points missing, East opened the bidding and West has turned up with an ace, you would put East with the queen and try to drop it.



How do you play the trumps in 4♥?

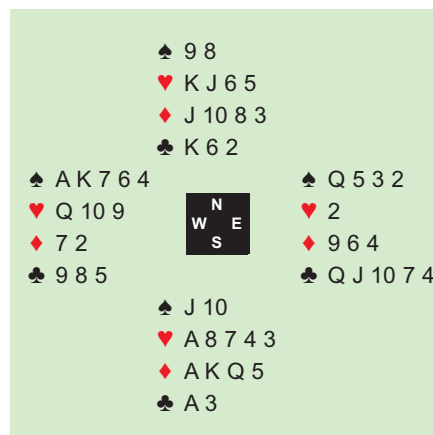
'Nine Never' says not to finesse with nine cards but the odds are closer.

In general, Q-x offside is slightly more likely than Q-x-x onside, which is why the rule says to go for the drop. So do you play off the ace-king?

I must tell you the bidding before you answer. Suppose first that you opened 1♥ in fourth seat and that, with no opposing bidding, you reached 4♥. In this case, you follow the rule and play for the drop. In fact the bidding was:

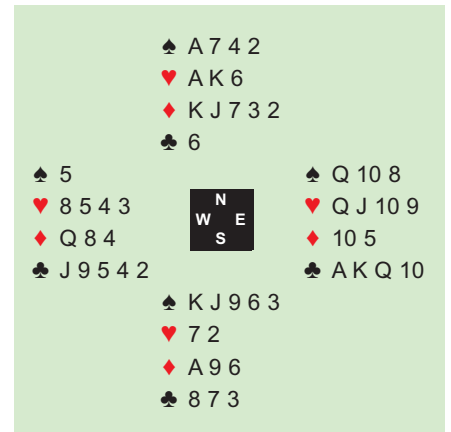
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥
1♠	2♥	3♣	4♥
End			

The opponents have bid a lot with 14 points between them, especially if they are vulnerable. They must have some distributional values. In this case, you would cash only the heart ace, planning to finesse on the second round. This works when the full deal is:



If the finesse or drop decision is in a side suit, you might try some detective work in the other suits first. You might be able to establish that one opponent is long in the key suit or that he needs the vital queen to justify his bidding. In such cases, you can finesse him for it.

When you have to tackle the key suit head on, the bidding often provides the best clue. If one of the opponents made a two-suited overcall, he will be short in the other suits and the queens there are likely to be in the other hand. Has there been an informative double? Informative is exactly what it can be!



West	North	East	South
	1♦	Double	1♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠
End			

West leads a club. East wins with the queen and switches to the heart queen. Having won this, you need to play the trump suit. If you follow the maxim, 'Nine Never', you will play the spades from the top. Of course, you should not expect spades to break 2-2 because of East's take-out double. With this in mind, you cash the ace (in case of a bare queen) and are happy to see West follow. You finesse the jack next time as East's double said he had tolerance for all the unbid suits. The double also implies that East is short in diamonds. So, after drawing the last trump, you finesse West for the diamond queen.

You have used the auction to find both queens, one to reject the maxim and one to follow it. ■

Mr Bridge
MARSHAM
COURT
HOTEL



Duplicate
Mid-week

Hosted by
Chris Barrable
and
Ann Pearson

2008

24-26 February
(Sunday-Tuesday)
Stayman
& Transfers

£199
per person
full board

No Single
Supplement

Guaranteed
sea-facing views
£30 extra per room

Day Guests
£115 per person

PROGRAMME

This is the format for all duplicate events and rarely varies.

DAY 1

1500 **Mr Bridge**
 Welcome Desk open
 Afternoon Tea

1745 **to 1830**
 Welcome drinks
 reception

1830 **to 2000**
 DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE**
SESSION 1
 DUPLICATE PAIRS

DAY 2

0800 **to 0930**
 BREAKFAST

1000 **to 1230**
 SEMINAR &
 SUPERVISED PLAY
 of SET HANDS 1
 (tea & coffee at 1100)

1230 **to 1330**
 COLD BUFFET
 LUNCH

1400 **to 1645**
BRIDGE
SESSION 2
 TEAMS of FOUR

1815 **to 2000**
 DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE**
SESSION 3
 DUPLICATE PAIRS

DAY 3

0800 **to 0930**
 BREAKFAST

1000 **to 1230**
 SEMINAR &
 SUPERVISED PLAY
 of SET HANDS 2
 (tea & coffee at 1100)

1230 **to 1400**
 COLD BUFFET
 LUNCH

1400 **to 1645**
BRIDGE
SESSION 4
 DUPLICATE PAIRS

Mr Bridge

AT MARSHAM COURT

East Cliff, Bournemouth, BH1 3AB

- ♦ Full-board
- ♦ All rooms with en-suite facilities
- ♦ No single supplement
- ♦ Venue non-smoking
- ♦ Tuition with supervised play, bidding quiz and two seminars

BOOKING FORM

Please book me for places,

Single Double Twin Sea View

for the Marsham Court date(s) of

.....

Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address.....

.....

Postcode ☎

Special requirements (these cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige)

.....

Please give the name(s) of all those covered by this booking

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Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per place by cheque, payable to Mr Bridge. An invoice will be sent with your booking confirmation. On receipt of your final payment, 28 days before the event, a programme and full details will be sent together with a map. Cancellations are not refundable. Should you require insurance, you should contact your own insurance broker.

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e-mail: leanora@mrbridge.co.uk

website: www.holidaybridge.com

Mr Bridge

AT THE BEACH HOTEL

Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 3QJ

- ◆ Full-board Friday to Sunday
- ◆ All rooms with en-suite facilities
- ◆ No single supplement
- ◆ Venue non-smoking
- ◆ Tuition with supervised play, bidding quiz and two seminars (on duplicate weekends only)

BOOKING FORM

Please book me for places,

Single Double Twin Sea View

at the Beach Hotel weekend(s) of

.....

Mr/Mrs/Miss

Address.....

.....

Postcode

☎

Special requirements (these cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige)

.....

Please give the name(s) of all those covered by this booking

.....

Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per place by cheque, payable to Mr Bridge. An invoice will be sent with your booking confirmation. On receipt of your final payment, 28 days before the event, a programme and full details will be sent together with a map. Cancellations are not refundable. Should you require insurance, you should contact your own insurance broker.

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PROGRAMME

This is the format for all duplicate weekends and rarely varies.

FRIDAY

- 1500 **Mr Bridge**
Welcome Desk open
Afternoon Tea
- 1745 to 1830
Welcome drinks reception
- 1830 to 2000
DINNER
- 2015 **BRIDGE SESSION 1**
DUPLICATE PAIRS

SATURDAY

- 0800 to 0930
BREAKFAST
- 1000 to 1230
SEMINAR & SUPERVISED PLAY of SET HANDS 1 (tea & coffee at 1100)
- 1230 to 1330
COLD BUFFET LUNCH
- 1400 to 1645
BRIDGE SESSION 2
TEAMS of FOUR

1815 to 2000
DINNER

2015 **BRIDGE SESSION 3**
DUPLICATE PAIRS

SUNDAY

- 0800 to 0930
BREAKFAST
- 1000 to 1230
SEMINAR & SUPERVISED PLAY of SET HANDS 2 (tea & coffee at 1100)
- 1230 to 1400
CARVERY LUNCH
- 1400 to 1645
BRIDGE SESSION 4
DUPLICATE PAIRS

Mr Bridge AT THE BEACH HOTEL



Duplicate Weekends

Hosted by **Bernard Magee**

2008

25-27 January
Signals & Discards

8-10 February
Further into the Auction

6-8 June
Doubles

17-19 October
Better Defence

5-7 December
Game Tries (New topic)

£209
per person full board

No Single Supplement

Guaranteed sea-facing views
£30 extra per room

Under the Spotlight

Both North and South had to make critical decisions on the hand below, which is now under the spotlight. It is pairs, with North-South vulnerable. East passes as dealer, South opens 1♣ and West passes. First, North had to decide what to respond holding:

♠	Q
♥	J 7 2
♦	Q J 10 9
♣	K 9 6 4 2

We can narrow the choice down to 1♦ or 3♣. The advantage of bidding 3♣ is that it limits the hand and obstructs the opponents from entering the auction with a major suit at a convenient level. As against that, North's chunky diamond suit may get lost in the wash. Let's continue the sequence after 1♣-3♣. With East-West silent throughout, South rebid 3♥ and that left North in a further quandary. At some tables, he raised to 4♥ on the grounds that he had denied a four-card heart suit with his initial response so was entitled to raise the major suit with three-card support. At other tables, North tried 3♠ over 3♥ (your guess as to what this means is as good as mine but at least it kept the ball rolling!) and was promptly raised to 4♠. At this point North quickly retired to 5♣, which became the final contract, although 4NT (natural) might have been a reasonable alternative.

When North decided to respond 1♦ initially, South

continued with 1♥ and then over 3♣ bid 3NT, which ended the auction. It's time to look at the North-South cards.

Dealer East. N/S Vul.					
♠	Q				
♥	J 7 2				
♦	Q J 10 9				
♣	K 9 6 4 2				
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>		N	E	W	S
N	E				
W	S				
♠	A K 7 4				
♥	A K 8 6				
♦	5				
♣	Q 8 5 3				

One of the routes to 5♣ is as follows.

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	End	

West led the diamond eight and East tried to cash both top honours (whatever happened to MUD?). Declarer ruffed the second diamond and quietly cursed that the partnership had missed 3NT, which looked a rather more secure contract. Anyway, the problem now was to avoid losing two club tricks. If that little obstacle could be overcome, perhaps all would not be lost. Of course, if the clubs were two-two there would be no problem but South had to hope that this was not the case so that those declarers in 3NT ran into as bumpy a ride as possible.

With East passing as dealer it was not too big a problem placing West with the ace of

clubs, and if this card happened to be singleton then the right approach was to lead small towards the king in dummy. However, declarer reasoned that it was about twice as likely that East held a singleton club – the jack and the ten being the crucial cards – in which case it would be a good idea to lead a low club from dummy initially. So the queen of spades won trick three and, on the two of clubs, East played the jack, South the queen and West the ace. Regaining the lead at trick five, the moment of truth had arrived – how best to draw trumps without further loss. Let's look at the full deal.

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

Declarer decided that, as he wanted the outstanding clubs to be three-one, he would assume them to be so. In any case, the Principle of Restricted Choice strongly suggested that it was now right to finesse West for the ten. So, a small club to dummy's nine resolved all further problems. Plus 600 was not the best score possible, but perhaps in the circumstances it was the best possible score! ■

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Defending Against a Better Minor

Q Playing social bridge, two of our regular opponents play five-card majors with better minor. They have confounded me on several occasions by opening my strongest suit (a minor) then bidding one of the majors. We would have done better playing in my minor than letting them make a score in their major.

How do you defend against a 'better minor' when opponents, playing five-card majors, open the longer of their minor suits (i.e. holding ♣ x-x, ♦ x-x-x and no five-card major, they would open 1♦)? If opponents open 1♦ and I have 12 to 14 HCP with A-K-x-x-x in diamonds and poor length in the other suits, what should I do?

Should we change 1NT to show 12+ HCP and length in their minor? Or is there a better strategy?

Mr A D Williams, Anglesey.

A I agree it can be a problem when you hold five cards or more in the opponent's prepared minor. However, I have never found this a hurdle. Often it keeps me out of an auction of which I want to be out. It usually works best just to wait for the next round. If the prepared minor opener has rebid no-trumps, then it will most likely work well to pass when you have a decent five-card suit to lead. If opener raises responder's suit then you can either bid your minor or make a take-out double, whichever seems more appropriate. Partner should realise that the most likely reason for you to pass on the first round and bid later is that you have length in the suit opened and act accordingly.

There are very sound reasons for

keeping a 1NT overall up to strength, typically 15-17 or 15-18 points. For one thing, once an opponent has opened the chance of game your way goes down – especially when you have a balanced hand – so you have less to gain by entering the auction. For another, the partner of the opening bidder will have a good idea of his side's combined strength and so will be in a position to double you if their side has the balance of power.



Q This hand recently appeared at our weekly club meeting in Mildenhall. Slams were bid at four of the five tables – going down. The remaining table bid 5♦ – making. My partner and I (playing Acol, Weak NT, Gerber, RKCB) bid as follows:

Dealer South (Hand rotated for convenience).

♠	A K Q J 8 6 5 4 2									
♥	Void									
♦	Void									
♣	K 9 6 2									
<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	Void									
♥	A J 10 9 8 6									
♦	A K Q J 8 7 3									
♣	Void									

South	North
1♥	1♠
3♦	4♣ (Gerber)
4NT	7NT

West led the ace of clubs and the contract went three light. Two questions please.

1. Should I, as North, have bid 5♠ or 5♣ instead of 7NT?

2. How would you have bid this misfit? Vic Rainbow, Lakenheath, Suffolk.

A What a freak! I am quite sure I would have got too high too! I would like to abstain on your first question as I would never have been in this position. To start with South should open with his longest suit. If I had a natural Acol 2♦ available I would open that; otherwise I would choose 1♦, even though the hand has too much playing strength for a normal one-level opening. With a freak like this, it is important to start by bidding one of your suits (if you started, for example, with an Acol 2♣, vigorous opposing bidding in spades would make life very difficult).

After a 2♦ opening, North should bid 3♠ to show a solid suit, and South would rebid 4♥. After a 1♦ opening, North should force with 2♠ and South would rebid 3♥. Then no doubt North rebids 3♠ and South 4♥. Now it's a question of just how conservative North might be.

I just popped into the next room and asked my husband what he would bid after either of those auctions. He said he would settle for 4♠. I'm sure I would have done more but he has better judgement than I do and he would have been right. I suppose 4♠ might go down but it is unlikely. To start with the defenders would have to lead a trump and then clubs would have to lie unluckily for 4♠ to fail, though I do agree that 5♦ is the better game. ▶

Sally Brock answers your questions continued

Q My partner, sitting North, held the following hand in our duplicate at Ringwood (Tapton Park, Chesterfield) Bridge Club.

♠	A J 8 4 3
♥	3
♦	9 6 5
♣	K 8 7 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	Dble
1♥	?		

I shall be most obliged if you will say what you consider the correct bid here.
Maurice Harrison, Chesterfield.

A Many people would consider the choice to be between 2♠ and 3♠ or 2♣ and 1♠. I would bid 4♠, though this is a slightly aggressive action. My hand just seems too good for anything less. If partner has a 4-4-1-4 shape, he needs so little for game to be good, particularly if he doesn't have too much in hearts. Suppose he just has: ♠K-x-x-x ♥A-x-x-x ♦x ♣Q-J-x-x. That is only a 10-count and 4♠ is an excellent contract.



Q Help! What should the bidding have been on the hands below?

♠	7 2									
♥	A 9 6									
♦	Q 10 9 5 4									
♣	A Q 6									
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠	A K Q J 8 3									
♥	10 4									
♦	A K 2									
♣	9 8									

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	1♥	1♠
End		Pass	3♠

Obviously we went wrong somewhere in the bidding. Presumably, North should have taken some further action. The bid by East of 1♥ was misleading as he had six hearts but only 6 or 7 points!
Liz Luffingham, Chichester.

A It is generally a much better idea to trust your partner than an opponent. At least if that trust is misplaced, you will know for another time.

Here South was very good for a simple overcall (I would have preferred to double and then bid spades to show a hand too strong to overcall in the first place). Also perhaps he did not quite do his hand justice with the 3♠ rebid over North's 2♦. But why did North not go on to 4♠? Partner must have good opening values and a strong six-card suit. What more does North need?

I think bidding a slam, however, would be difficult after South has underbid his hand the first time. The following would perhaps be a good auction to slam:

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♦	1♥	Dble
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
End			

The 3♦ response to the take-out double is a little bit of an underbid, but game in a minor needs a lot of extras. South's 3♠ must show at least five spades and be forcing – with a weaker hand, he would have overcalled 1♠ on the first round. The next three bids are cue-bids and enable South to use Blackwood. It is very hard to bid the grand slam, though, because how does South know about the queen of diamonds?



Q Playing West, I bid 1NT (12-14 balanced). North doubled. My partner having 7 points passed. South with only 4 points passed (She informed me later that taking her partner to have 16 points

to add to her four she gave her partner the benefit of the doubt in being able to get the contract down. With less than four, she would have taken the doubled contract out.) I went down two tricks vulnerable -500.

North had six spades including the king and queen, ace of hearts and ace and king of clubs. My partner had a singleton spade, three hearts to the queen, four diamonds to the king, and five clubs to the queen. As I had only one stopper in spades – the ace, I lost five spade tricks, a heart trick and two club tricks.

My questions are:

1. What is your view of North's double when many in that position would bid 2♠?
2. Should my partner have bid with a singleton spade and five-four in the minors?
3. Should South have bid after her partner's double?

Ron Gibbons, Heathfield, East Sussex.

A First, I think it is normal to double 1NT with a decent hand even when holding a six-card suit, especially if the suit is semi-solid, i.e. you are likely to set it up with just one lead. Why play in two of a major when you could be defeating 1NT doubled? So it sounds to me as if North's double was OK.

Second, I would generally remove 1NT doubled with a five-card suit unless I was pretty sure that our side had more points than our opponents. So I would have bid 2♣ with your partner's hand (Stayman does not apply after the opponents have doubled 1NT). Even if she had had a much stronger hand, if she does not have a stopper in every suit, there is always the risk that the doubler has a long suit. I remember a famous hand in a women's trial where a player redoubled 1NT with 15 points but a void somewhere. She found that her opponent cashed the first eight cards in a suit while her side was cold for a grand slam! In fact, the more high cards you have, the more likely it is that the double is based on tricks rather than points.

You haven't told me anything about South's distribution. In general, I would pass the double with a balanced hand and hope that partner can defeat 1NT more or less on his own. After all, if I run I might get doubled and lose a sizeable minus anyway. ▶

Q We played this hand at our local golf club. I have re-orientated the deal to make South declarer.

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

South	North
1NT	2♣
2♠	4♣
4♥	End

South opened a 12-14 no-trump; West passed; North bid 2♣, asking for 4-card majors – reply 2♠. Our agreement was that as clubs had not been bid, naturally 4♣ asked for aces. When South showed only one ace, North assumed this was in spades and passed 4♥.

We missed a slam. Could you explain how one could get into a slam? Nobody in the room bid a slam but several pairs made twelve tricks.

We discussed ways after our evening session with other members. One of our more experienced players suggested going straight to 5♥ leaving the call of 6♥ to come from South. Doreen Savage, Doncaster.

A I think the problem stems from North's initial response. There is no reason to use Stayman when you have a void in one major and six cards in the other. North should have started by showing his hearts, preferably with a 2♦ transfer, but otherwise with a natural, forcing 3♥.

The continuation is easier if you play transfers, as new suits are forcing after opener has completed the transfer. So after 2♦, South bids 2♥ and North now bids a natural, game-forcing 3♦.

With a maximum (more or less) hand,

with excellent hearts and four-card diamond support, South should now bid 4♣, a cue-bid showing the ace of clubs while agreeing diamonds. North can continue with a 4♠ cue-bid, which should be enough to get South to leap to 6♦, or maybe 6♥ at match-pointed pairs.



Q My partner opened 1NT (weak). I had eight points, five spades and a void so bid 3♠.

♠ K 10 9 6 4
♥ Void
♦ K 6 5 4
♣ Q 9 7 3

Partner with 12 points rebid 3NT. We went down, but a weak take-out would lead to 2♠ making. I felt a weak take-out was inappropriate. Do you agree? Mrs Margaret Page, by e-mail.

A Hands with voids are very difficult because until you know that you have a fit for partner you do not know that the void is going to be useful at all. A certain amount of guesswork is called for.

While you are right in thinking that it was quite possible that game was on with your hand facing a weak no-trump, it was just as likely that partner held only a doubleton spade and lots of points in your void suit. My experience is that the latter is more often the case. Sometimes when your partner does turn out to have a good fit with you, the opponents will enter the auction and give you a second chance.

I haven't run your hand through any test program but I would guess that the odds would favour conservatism. Over a weak take-out your partner can bid on when he has four-card support and a maximum. This would lead to your sometimes being able to bid the game when it was a good contract. ■

Sally Brock is a multiple women's world bridge champion and the editor of the magazine Bridge Plus.

RAYMOND BROCK 1936-2008



Following a brave battle with cancer, the world of British bridge has lost one of its greatest players and ambassadors, Raymond Brock. He grew up in Manchester and for many years played with Roy Higson, enjoying many successes. Probably his most famous partnership was with Tony Forrester. Playing together for the British team, they reached the final of the 1987 Bermuda Bowl. For many years the leading masterpoint holder in England, Raymond won the Gold Cup no fewer than 7 times. He also played in more than 30 Camrose matches for England.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Raymond developed a squad of junior players in Britain. This bore fruit with victories for Great Britain in the 1989 and 1995 Junior world championships – he was non-playing captain both times.

Raymond served two spells as Chairman of the British Bridge League, from 1986-1988 and from 1990-1992. In addition, Raymond was a member of Portland Club Card Committee, the body responsible for the laws of rubber bridge.

In the early 1990s, he married Sally. Out went a diet of champagne, smoked salmon, penguin biscuits and nicotine. Along came a rejuvenated man, with a family life, a son Toby and a daughter Briony. He briefly worked as General Manager of the EBU. This brought with it a move to High Wycombe where the family still live.

Raymond stayed cheerful until the end and it was typical that he asked for guests at his funeral to wear bright coloured clothes. J.P.