

# BRIDGE

**Number Ninety-two**

**Christmas 2008**



I have a list of people, all of whom are entered in a database.

Every year, as Christmas approaches, I take a good look

And I realise that these names are a part

Not just of a database but of everything I do.

Each name stands for someone who has somehow crossed my path.

Then the memory of an email or a memo,

A friendly face or strongly worded letter is conjured up before me.

Still, when I send this magazine to you,

It is because you are in this database and one of the many

With whom I have had contact and don't wish to forget.

Whether I have known you for many years or just a few months

You have had a part in shaping the things I do.

So, as Christmas approaches, may its spirit, in whatever shape it takes for you,

Leave its richest blessings in your heart.



# Now Ready Q PLUS 9.1

The very best Acol-playing Software available



## FEATURES

- The Usual Friendly Interface (see above)
- Hint and Help Buttons – always at hand
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- Comprehensive Manual
- Rubber, Duplicate and Teams Scoring
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- 2,000 pre-played hands for match-pointed pairs including 1,000 new hands
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- **NEW** Systems include: several versions of Acol, including Bernard Magee's system, Standard American or create your own.
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## SYSTEM

- 8mb RAM
- CD-ROM
- Pentium or equivalent
- Windows XP or Vista

## HANS LEBER



## TRADE-IN

Trade-in any previous version of Q Plus. Just post in the booklet and disk and a cheque for £32.

Mr Bridge



Make your cheque payable to **Mr Bridge** and send to: Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2TH



**01483 489961** [www.mrbridge.co.uk/mrbridge-shop](http://www.mrbridge.co.uk/mrbridge-shop) Fax **01483 797302**



# BRIDGE

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## FEATURES

- 3 **Bidding Quiz**  
by Bernard Magee
- 4 **Mr Bridge**
- 6 **Double Dummy Quiz**  
by Richard Wheen
- 7 **Bidding Quiz Answers**  
by Bernard Magee
- 8 **Cruise to the Riviera**  
by Bernard Magee
- 13 **Defence Quiz**  
by Julian Pottage
- 14 **Declarer Play Quiz**  
by Dave Huggett
- 15 **The Advantages of Transfers**  
by Freddie North
- 16 **A Slam for Santa**  
by Michael Scarrott
- 19 **Double Dummy Answer**  
by Richard Wheen
- 20 David Stevenson  
**Answers Your Questions**
- 26 **Bubble Captions**
- 28 **A Walk at Christmas**  
by Countryman
- 32 Julian Pottage  
**Answers Your Questions**
- 38 **Benjaminised Acoll and the Lion of the North**  
by Ned Paul
- 40 **The Baron Outwits the Grand Duke**  
by Dick Atkinson
- 41 **Declarer Play Answers**  
by David Huggett
- 44 Julian Pottage says  
**Signal Attitude on Partner's Lead**
- 45 Jeremy Dhondy says  
**Don't Run from the Frying Pan into the Fire**
- 46 David Gold says **Don't Underbid Small Hands**
- 47 **Readers' Letters**
- 51 **Readers' Letters on the EBU P2P**
- 53 Freddie North says  
**The Five Level Belongs to the Opponents**
- 55 Liz McGowan says  
**Second Hand Plays Low**
- 56 Dave Huggett says  
**Don't Rush to Take Finesses**
- 57 Andrew Kambites says  
**Look Before You Leap to 4NT**
- 58 **Defence Quiz Answers**  
by Julian Pottage
- 59 Mike Wenble says  
**Count Your Losers as Declarer**

## ADVERTISEMENTS

- 2 **QPlus 9.1**
- 4 **Charity Bridge Events Christmas 2009 Tutorial Software & Mail Order Form**
- 9 **Better Hand Evaluation**
- 10 **Tunisia 2009**
- 13 **Marsham Court Bridge Weekends**
- 14 **Beach Hotel Bridge Weekends**
- 15 **2009 Diaries**
- 21 **The New Yellow Book**
- 21 **Rubber/Chicago Bridge Events**
- 22 **Blunsdon House Hotel Bridge Events**
- 25 **The Olde Barn Hotel Bridge Events**
- 26 **Wychwood Park Bridge Events**
- 29 **Staverton Park Bridge Weekends**
- 30 **2009 Summer Cruises On Board Discovery**
- 39 **Denham Grove Bridge Weekends**
- 42 **Holiday Diary**
- 47 **Stamps**
- 50 **Barony Castle Bridge Weekends**
- 50 **Single-Suited Pens**
- 54 **Global Travel Insurance Club Insurance Form**
- 60 **Voyage to Nice on board Discovery**

## BIDDING QUIZ

by Bernard Magee

You are West in the auctions below, playing 'Standard Acoll' with a weak no-trump (12-14 points) and four-card majors.

(Answers on page 7)

### 1. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

♠ A K 8 7 6 4 3 2  
♥ 4  
♦ 7 6  
♣ 5 3

West North East South  
?

### 2. Dealer East. Game All.

♠ Void  
♥ K 9 8 7  
♦ K 7 6 3 2  
♣ 10 4 3 2

West North East South  
1♠ Pass  
?

### 3. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

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

West North East South  
1♠ Pass 4♣ Pass  
?

### 4. Dealer West. Love All.

♠ K Q 9  
♥ K Q 8 7  
♦ A 8 3 2  
♣ K 2

West North East South  
1♥ 2♣ Pass Pass  
?

### 5. Dealer West. Love All.

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

West North East South  
1NT Pass 2♣ Pass  
2♦ Pass 2♣ Pass  
?

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher or its Managing Editor.

## CHARITY BRIDGE EVENTS

### NOVEMBER 2008

- 14 **DISPLACED PEOPLE IN BOSNIA**  
Parish Centre, St John's Road,  
Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead.  
9.30am-2.30pm. Includes lunch.  
Pat Henry ☎ 01442 391087
- 21 **AIR AMBULANCE.** £13.00.  
Village Hall, Hemmingford Abbots.  
Sheila Poval ☎ 01480 395394
- 28 **WATERAID & CHESTERFIELD  
CHILDREN'S CHARITY**  
St John's Church Hall,  
Chesterfield. 12.30 pm. £12.  
Wine on arrival & luxury tea.  
Mrs P Bown ☎ 01246 200211

### DECEMBER 2008

- 1 **ST. TERESA'S HOSPICE**  
Christmas Bridge Party at  
St. George's Bridge Centre,  
Darlington. 1.15pm £5.  
Generous prizes & afternoon tea.  
Mrs Bainbridge  
☎ 01325 469785

### JANUARY 2009

- 29 **THE HARPENDEN FRIENDS OF  
CANCER RESEARCH & THE LADY  
TAVERNERS**  
Park Hall, Harpenden.  
First session 10am - 1pm.  
Second session 2pm - 5pm.  
£40 per table inc. refreshments.  
Tickets from the Town Hall.

### FEBRUARY 2009

- 5 **THAMES VALLEY ADVENTURE  
PLAYGROUND**  
Eton College Rowing Centre,  
Dorney. 10.30am - 4pm.  
£17 per person to include  
coffee on arrival and lunch.  
Rosemary ☎ 01753 642515  
Jane ☎ 01753 644490
- 17 **RIDING FOR THE DISABLED  
(COURT MEADOW GROUP)**  
Millennium Hall, Scaynes Hill,  
Sussex. 11am - 3pm £50 per  
table inc. good lunch.  
Carolyn Hawkins  
☎ 0845 2414346
- Email:  
manderly\_hk@hotmail.com

### MARCH 2009

- 26 **FRIENDS OF FARLEIGH HOSPICE**  
Luncheon Bridge Drive.  
Julie Renvoize ☎ 01245 258067



## FUND RAISING

Last issue I invited readers to send in postage stamps in support of Little Voice, a charity devoted to supporting an orphanage and school in Ethiopia. I have been heartened by your response and I have sent all I have received to Mr Bamberger of Trimley St Mary, Suffolk who is handling their sale.

When sending me packages please do not enclose any correspondence as some may remain unopened.

Please keep saving stamps, especially over Christmas. I will tell you what further arrangements I will make for their collection.

Little Voice is part of L.U.C.I.A. Charity Number 1112674 registered with the UK Charity Commissioners. If you would like to send a donation, as some of you already have, please make it payable to LUCIA and not to me. It is just about the poorest country in the world, but every little helps.

## CHARITY STRIP

Alongside is the current strip of fund-raising bridge dates. Fund-raisers should send in details as far in advance as possible and always ask for some prizes. I never say no.

## GLOBAL TRAVEL

I am pleased to find space to promote Global Travel insurance. The policy advertised should suit those who are ill but whose symptoms are under control. Global Travel understand and cater for this segment of a growing market.

## CLUB INSURANCE

I am glad to say that Moore Stephens were so pleased with the response to the little mention I gave them in the last issue that they have prepared an annual policy for £65 to cover clubs of up to 100 members. See the cut-out page opposite page 55.

These days, when legal actions are part of everyday life, committee members should insist that the club has public liability cover.

## SECRET SANTA



If you are having a club party, why not have some fun with a Secret Santa. All those due to attend put their names on a piece of paper and drop them into a hat.

These are then drawn and everyone has to buy a gift for the person they have drawn. A modest price limit should be set which should be strictly adhered to and completely spent.

Wrap it and put it into the sack for distribution by Santa at the party and believe me, it should create a lot of fun and laughs.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Until further notice the bubble caption and the prize bidding competitions have been discontinued. I need to find new sponsors, which believe me, are hard enough to find let alone sign up. The bubble caption competition, in particular, attracted an enormous number to take part and I really have enjoyed reading all the entries. Thank you.

## DEAD HORSE



I feel like I'm flogging a dead horse compiling my directory of bridge clubs and teachers.

However, I intend to devote the next four working weeks, with two or three assistants, to get on top of what is turning into hard work. Please make sure that your club downloads and completes the form found at [www.mrbridge.co.uk](http://www.mrbridge.co.uk).

## ANOTHER OLD NAG

You will see that there is no panel in this issue for the details of your friends or indeed registration. If you would like any of your friends to receive copies, send in their full details including postcode and telephone number and if a friend complains that they haven't received their copy recently then they probably haven't reregistered.

## POSTAGE SAVINGS



Clive Goff is a loyal advertiser. He supports this free publication by providing an unusual service.

He supplies readers with a discount of at least 10% off British postage stamps. Ring him on ☎ 0208 422 4906. Do say you heard it from Mr Bridge. ▶

## VENUES 2009

The joy that bubbles out of the "Ode to Oxford" makes my job all worthwhile. While I cannot promise everyone the same level of experience, we do try to make it so.

The venues for 2009, some old and some new, are listed in this issue. Details of hosts and seminar subjects will be announced later.

## DIRECTORS COURSES



Our resident bridge laws expert, David Stevenson, is to host a series of bridge weekends which involve the training of directors for bridge clubs.

Four sessions of training and two evening duplicates. These are designed so that the course student can bring a companion who does not share the same interest, but would enjoy playing bridge in the evening. Full board at only £199 per person. This is an important subsidised initiative. Those interested should register immediately so that I can plan out the venues and the number of courses.

## LAITHWAITES **£50 OFF**

One of the inserted advertisements is for a case of 15 bottles of red wine for only £39.95 if you use the voucher. With delivery at less than £7 per case, it is a really reasonable price for such a selection. Do please mention Mr Bridge if you take up the offer.

## BACK COPIES

As I hate to throw anything away, I can tell you that I do have some back numbers (from 83 onwards) for which readers should send three first class stamps each.

I also have some earlier issues. 10 different for £5. Only a few lots available.

## OTHER

I have other magazines – English Bridge, Bridge Magazine and ACBL. Any three different for £2. First come, first served.

## ERIC HILL

Eric Hill has a specialist catalogue acting as a mail order boutique offering the best European Fashion brands including Grazia, Finnkarelia and Brandtex. He offers £10 Off to readers, FREE p&p, FREE alterations and FREE returns. This means that readers can try his goods out for FREE – at no risk. And what's more, can place their order for FREE. It is a pleasure to enclose his booklet. Do say you heard of his service from Mr Bridge.

## CRIB SHEET

At last, as promised, Bernard Magee's crib sheet. It can be found in my website library. [mrbridge.co.uk/library.php](http://mrbridge.co.uk/library.php).

## NORWAY AGAIN



I'm going up to the Fjords twice this coming summer to see the scenes and breathe the air and rest. If you haven't yet tried a bridge cruise on Discovery, you really should try one of these short breaks. I look forward to meeting you on board.

## JUST DUPLICATE

Following on from the enormous success of Gentle Duplicate Weekends, I am introducing Just Duplicate Weekends at several venues. £150 for the weekend, full board. Six sessions of social duplicate. No prizes, no master points, no seminars, no tuition. Payment in full at the time of booking, either by debit card or by cheque.

## TUNISIA 2009

As the party hosted by Bernard Magee at The Royal Kenz is now fully booked, I have added a further fortnight towards the end of the year.

**15-29 November 2009.**  
£749 per person inclusive.

Holidays outside the euro currency area are proving to be really good value, so I have added another bridge and golf fortnight hosted by Tony and Jan Richards. 1-15 November, £699 pp.

## CHRISTMAS GIFT

Send in your friends' names and addresses, so that they can have their own copy of BRIDGE in 2009. Make sure to include the postcode. ►

## ODE TO OXFORD

by Carolyn Rayner

We've just got back from Oxford,  
from a weekend filled with fun,  
we're not entirely truthful,  
'bout just how well we've done.

We left our homes on Friday,  
all packed in Patrick's car,  
complete with crisps and wine and port,  
we wouldn't need the bar.

We spent a happy weekend  
learning signals and discards,  
when partner plays the eight of spades  
you must be on your guard.

We listened to the seminar,  
then played a few set hands,  
I don't think that we did them,  
quite as Bernard planned.

The afternoon was long and hard,  
opponents came and went,  
did I bid clubs or one no trump,  
it was three of hearts I meant.

The hammer blow came quickly  
there was no going back,  
we saw that we'd been shuffled  
to the bottom of the pack.

We were a bit downhearted  
but with a bit of luck  
when we played again on Sunday  
there was only one way - up!

And so it proved we all won through  
and left for home on top  
weighed down with ties and diaries  
we journeyed back non-stop.

## COMING SOON.

Several new series for 2009. Here is a taster.

# DOUBLE DUMMY PROBLEM

by **Richard When**

(Answer on page 19)



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

**Y**ou are South, declarer, in a heart contract. You have arrived at the position shown above, needing to make five of the last six tricks, with dummy on lead. How do you avoid two spade losers?

## Q PLUS 7.5

Following recent trade-ins, I now have a small stock of second hand QPlus 7.5 on sale at only £32. Please phone before ordering to avoid disappointment.

## RECOVERY FOR DISCOVERY



The good ship Discovery had a number of engine problems earlier this year. All is now repaired and a programme of refurbishment is in hand. These smaller ships really are so much more friendly than the so called giants of the sea.

## BERNARD'S CRUISE



You will no doubt read all about this year's cruise from Harwich to Nice with Bernard Magee. (See page 8.) He repeats the same itinerary for 2009. Fares from £499 sharing.

During the eight-day cruise there are several days at sea, with lots of time to attend seminars and play bridge. There will be tutors on board to teach those wishing to learn to play bridge.

## THE RIGHT PATH

Freddie North first published The Right Path in 1988.

He tells me he still has some copies of this splendid primer and they are available from him at £4.50 plus 50p for postage and packing.

Write to him at: 14 Hammy Way, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 6GG. ☎ 01273 464204

## BUBBLE CAPTIONS

Our wonderful cartoonist Marguerite Lihou has chosen the following six captions as winners in the bubble caption competition.



**Don't bother, you can't outbid her.**

*George Wells, Olney.*

**Waiting for the queen to drop.**

*Joy Furness, Epsom.*

**I can just afford a limit bid.**

*Anne Thomas, Taunton.*

**Picture cards always have value.**

*Alan Hobday, Solihull.*

**Artful Bidding.**

*Mr W Huggan, Bromley.*

**Whatever he's bid, I'll double it.**

*Richard Thorne, Rochdale.*

Congratulations.

Each winner has been sent a boxed set of four Single-suited Ball Point Pens.

## MATERNITY LEAVE



Leanora Addis has started her maternity leave and we are all patiently awaiting word of the new arrival.

## QPLUS QUIZ

Solution and winners will be published in full in the next issue.

## CHRISTMAS



Christmas this year is hosted by Sandy Bell. She is supported by the usual team.

Denham Grove, Uxbridge is a comfortable conference centre set in 40 acres.

All bedrooms are within the main building and half are on the ground floor. There is easy access to all the bridge rooms, leisure pool and other facilities, making this an ideal Christmas venue.

Hosted rubber or Chicago bridge will be provided for all those who would like it.

## TWIXMAS

Chris Barrable and Ann Pearson host 27-29

December. This will follow the established pattern of a two night weekend event.

See the adjacent programme.

## NEW YEAR

Chris and Ann also host 29 December to 1 January, see adjacent advert. As always, Mrs Bridge and I will be present to greet everyone at the Gala Reception on the evening of 31st.

## DAY GUESTS

Do give the office a ring if you would like to attend any of our weekend events, without bed and breakfast. This can also be arranged for any part of the Christmas and New Year programme, subject to availability.

## SEASONS GREETINGS

I wish you all I wish for myself. Love, peace and blessings.

**Mr Bridge**

# CHRISTMAS AT DENHAM GROVE

*Tilehouse Lane, Denham, Uxbridge, Buckinghamshire. UB9 5DU.*

## CHRISTMAS

**24-27 DECEMBER 2008**

**£395 – Duplicate with Sandy Bell Rubber is also an available option**

### Example Programme

#### CHRISTMAS EVE

- 1500 **Mr Bridge** Welcome Desk open.  
Mulled wine and mince pies
- 1745 Welcome Reception (Black Tie optional) followed by DINNER then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

- 1030 **SEMINAR** or other games (Trivial Pursuit, Scrabble etc)
- 1230 **CHRISTMAS LUNCH**
- 1500 **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)** or Queen's speech
- 1830 Festive Buffet **DINNER** followed by **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### BOXING DAY

- 1000 **SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 **LUNCH** then further Supervised Play or ("novelty" bridge, duplicate pairs)
- 1830 **DINNER** then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### 27 DECEMBER

- 1000 Informal Prize-Giving for Duplicate Section  
**SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 Buffet **LUNCH** followed by **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

**27-29 DECEMBER 2008**

**£199 – Duplicate with Chris Barrable**

### Example Programme

#### 27 DECEMBER

- 1500 **Mr Bridge** Welcome Desk open.  
Mulled wine and mince pies
- 1745 Welcome Reception followed by **DINNER** then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### 28 DECEMBER

- 1000 **SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 **LUNCH** then further Supervised Play or duplicate pairs
- 1830 **DINNER** then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### 29 DECEMBER

- 1000 **SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 **LUNCH** then further Supervised Play or duplicate pairs



## NEW YEAR

**29 DEC 2008 -1 JAN 2009**

**£355 – Duplicate with Chris Barrable**

### Example Programme

#### 29 DECEMBER

- 1500 **Mr Bridge** Welcome Desk open.  
Mulled wine and mince pies
- 1745 Welcome Reception followed by **DINNER** then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### 30 DECEMBER

- 1000 **SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 **LUNCH** then further Supervised Play or duplicate pairs
- 1830 **DINNER** then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**

#### NEW YEAR'S EVE

- 1000 **SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 **LUNCH** then further Supervised Play or "novelty" bridge or duplicate pairs
- 1745 **GALA RECEPTION** (Black Tie optional) followed by a **GALA DINNER** then **BRIDGE (duplicate pairs)**
- 2345 See in the New Year

#### NEW YEAR'S DAY

- 1000 **SEMINAR** followed by Supervised Play
- 1230 **LUNCH** then further Supervised Play or duplicate pairs



Eight executive rooms: £50 supplement per event. Half the bedrooms are on the ground floor. Please advise if you require a ground-floor room.

## BOOKING FORM

Mr/Mrs/Miss .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... ☎ .....

Please book me for ..... places,

Single ..... Twin ..... Double .....

Executive (twin or double) .....

24-27 Dec ..... 27-29 Dec .....

29 Dec-1 Jan ..... All .....

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

### SPECIAL REQUESTS

These cannot be guaranteed, but we will do our best to oblige.

### EXTRA NIGHT

Dinner, bed & breakfast  
Single £55pp, Double £35pp,  
payable to the hotel on departure.

23 Dec ..... 1 Jan .....

Please send a non-returnable deposit of £50 per person per event 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.

**Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Knaphill,**

**Surrey GU21 2TH**

**☎ 01483 489961**

**Fax 01483 797302**

**jessica@mrbridge.co.uk**

Mr Bridge ☎ 01483 489961

### PLAY SOFTWARE

QPlus 9.1	£82.00 .....
Trade-in any previous QPlus Book & Disk and just send	ONLY £32.00 .....
QPlus 8.8	£52.00 .....

### TUTORIAL SOFTWARE

Acol Bidding	£62.00 .....
More Acol Bidding	£92.00 .....
Declarer Play	£70.00 .....
Advanced Declarer Play	£75.00 .....

### BOOKS

Duplicate Bridge Rules Simplified	£5.95 .....
Hand Evaluation	£14.00 .....

### 2009 DIARIES

#### Standard

Pillar Box Red ..... Navy Blue ..... Ivory .....	£5.95 .....
Maroon ..... Cambridge Blue .....	

#### Luxury with Kidrell Cover & Ball-Point Pen

Bottle Green .....	£12.95 .....
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### PENS

Boxed Set of Four Ball Point Pens (Heart, Club, Diamond, Spade)	£19.95 .....
---	--------------

### BONE CHINA MUG

Bidding Sequence	£14.35 .....
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### TEA TOWELS

Tea Towels - Any four for	£17.00 .....
We are Survivors	£5.95 .....
Ten Commandments for Bridge Players	£5.95 .....
How to know you are growing older	£5.95 .....
Ode to a Pill	£5.95 .....
Thoughts of an older person	£5.95 .....
Bridge Traffic Signs	£5.95 .....
Life's a game, but bridge is serious	£5.95 .....
Recipe for a happy marriage	£5.95 .....

### TIES





Bridge Players Ties. Red or Navy	£11.95 .....
Bridge Players Novelty Tie (Big Cards)	£11.95 .....

All prices are fully inclusive. I enclose a cheque for £.....

Mr/Mrs/Miss .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

 Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2TH.   
 [www.mrbridge.co.uk](http://www.mrbridge.co.uk) 

# TUTORIAL SOFTWARE

with Bernard Magee

## ACOL BIDDING

- Opening Bids and Responses
- Slams and Strong Openings
- Support for Partner
- Pre-empting
- Overcalls
- No-trump Openings and Responses
- Opener's and Responder's Rebids
- Minors and Misfits
- Doubles
- Competitive Auctions

£62

## MORE ACOL BIDDING

- Basics
- Advanced Basics
- Weak Twos
- Strong hands
- Defence to Weak Twos
- Defence to 1NT
- Doubles
- Two-suited Overcalls
- Defences to Other Systems
- Misfits and Distributional Hands

£92

## DECLARER PLAY

- Suit Establishment in No-trumps
- Suit Establishment in Suits
- Hold-ups
- Ruffing for Extra Tricks
- Entries in No-trumps
- Delaying Drawing Trumps
- Using the Lead
- Trump Control
- Endplays & Avoidance
- Using the Bidding

£70

## ADVANCED DECLARER PLAY

- Making Overtricks in No-trumps
- Making Overtricks in Suit Contracts
- Endplays
- Avoidance
- Wrong Contract
- Simple Squeezes
- Counting the Hand
- Trump Reductions & Coups
- Playing Doubled Contracts
- Safety Plays

£75

System Requirements: Windows XP or Vista, 8mb RAM, CD-ROM

# ANSWERS TO THE BIDDING QUIZ ON PAGE 3 by BERNARD MAGEE

## 1. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
?			

**4♣.** The vulnerability is in your favour – North-South are vulnerable, you are not – and you are first to speak. You should certainly make a pre-emptive bid, but at what level? It is a choice between opening 3♣ and 4♣. When your suit has good quality then the level of your pre-empt should depend on the length of the suit. With seven you should open 3♣, but with eight, as here, you should open 4♣, putting the maximum pressure on the opponents. A 4♣ opener is difficult to deal with because the opponents may be unsure what a double means – is it penalties or take-out?

On this particular hand, you would probably go one off in 4♣, whilst your opponents can make at least eleven tricks, if not twelve, in hearts or clubs. At this vulnerability, one off doubled costs just 100 points, whilst a vulnerable game is worth at least 600. When you are non-vulnerable, pre-empt to the maximum!

## 2. Dealer East. Game All.

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

West	North	East	South
?		1♣	Pass

**1NT.** You have 6 HCP, so you must make a response. How much strength do you need to bid at the two-level? You need ten points including length and at least 9 HCP. You do not have enough, so your choices are coming down! If you have to respond, but cannot bid at the two-level, you have Hobson's choice and must bid 1NT.

Although you do not have a balanced hand, sometimes when you are weak, you have to tell little lies to stop the auction from getting

out of control. Bidding 1NT is a bit like a negative bid – with a weak hand (6 or 7 HCP) and a distribution you cannot show: respond 1NT first and then, if partner shows a second suit, you can play there.

On this hand, if you respond 1NT, your partner will pass – his flat 16 points does not merit any more action. Finishing at the 1-level is just what you hoped for. 2♦ is a better contract, but you cannot bid to it! If you respond 2♦, your partner would rebid 2NT, taking you much too high. Note how much better 1NT is than 1♣ – passing would be cruel to your partner – after all, would you want to play in 1♣ with these two hands?

## 3. Dealer West. N/S Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
?			

**Pass.** A direct raise to 4♣ over a 1♣ opening is generally a pre-emptive bid, cutting out the opponents. Bearing this in mind, you should be wary of going on past game. This hand exhibits the need to differentiate between pre-emptive raises to game and genuine strong raises. For slam to be a good prospect opposite your hand, you would require at least two aces and the king of trumps, but with such a hand, your partner should take his time, by delaying his raise to game.

East's 4♣ response was excellent – had you had a weaker hand – your opponents might have been able to make something and it cut out their suit. Note that 10 tricks are all you can make, so 5♣ is too high.

## 4. Dealer West. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♣	Pass	Pass
?			

**Double.** You have a strong hand and the temptation is to bid your hand out by rebidding 2NT. However, your partner might be very weak, as here, and 2NT will make only 5 or 6 tricks.

In the early rounds of bidding, when just suits have been bid and nobody has limited their hand, doubles are generally most useful as take-out bids, asking partner to show his best suit. This is a prime example illustrating when you can use such a double. Your double expresses to your partner that you are strong and want to bid on, but you must also be short in the opponents' suit and have some support for the unbid suits.

With four cards in diamonds and three in spades you have enough support for whatever he chooses, so this hand is ideal for a take-out double. Your partner responds 2♦ and now you should keep your peace – 2♦ is an excellent contract.

Note that, once one member of the partnership has bid no-trumps, doubles will more often be for penalties.

## 5. Dealer West. Love All.

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

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

**Pass.** What does your partner have for this auction? Usually one would need 11 points or more for Stayman, but, on a couple of hand types, one can use it with weaker hands.

Here is one of those types: 5-4 in the majors and a weak hand. Rather than transferring (or making a weak take-out) the best option is to use Stayman to see whether opener has a fit in responder's four-card major: the plan is to pass if opener shows a four-card major and otherwise to rebid with two of the five-card major, which opener should pass. Here East tried for a heart fit, but failing that, he 'signed off' in 2♣. Although it does not look pretty from your side, once again trusting partner pays dividends because 2♣ is the best contract. ■



# Cruise to the Riviera

## by Bernard Magee

In 2007, the sea was calm and the sun shone throughout. The 2008 cruise was very different indeed! The cruise ship was ailing with engine problems and the winds were getting up.

Having had such a success in 2007 and with an aggressive pricing structure, Mr Bridge decided to expand the bridge group on board: taking over two lounges, we took a party of 160 players and there were also 30-40 non-players in the party.



I was excited about the cruise and was determined to make sure everybody else was too! The ship was late in, but I made sure I persuaded everybody that things would get better when we were on board.

The sun was half out when we left Harwich and the waves were visible but not overly dismaying. However, if you can see the waves when close to port, beware the open seas!

With everybody on board, we had our welcome meeting in the Carousel Lounge, many still clutching their life jackets – not because we thought the ship was going down, but because the boat drill had been fitted into a tight timing schedule.

We have a beginners' section, a relaxed section and the main section, I

explained. The beginners would be looked after by Carol during the cruise and would play on Deck 7 in the card room, whilst the Showstoppers (relaxed) section would play in the Palm Court and the main section would play in the Bridge Club. The Showstoppers may sound a grand name, but it means exactly what it says: it stops for the 2nd sitting show. I introduced the Mr Bridge Team, which included helpers from across the country and also a troupe of actors. My sister was on board: Yvie Magee and with her fellow performers, they were to put on two plays but more of that later.

After dinner, a few players were starting to sense the ship's motion, but most made it to the first evening, which I promised would be a little shorter than usual. 37 tables in play and what is wonderful about bridge is that, once you start playing, you do not notice the motion of the ship at all. The standard of play was a little variable due to tiredness. Up and down was perhaps the best description.



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

The declarer on this hand really felt the effects of the sea. In the bidding, once North knew his partner had five spades (because of his rebid of 3♣), he decided to jump to 4♠.

Declarer won the ♣Q lead in dummy and decided to play on diamonds before trumps. He played the ♦A, ♦K and a third diamond which was ruffed high at the same time as the boat moved upwards: all followed and it looked as though overtricks were there: time to draw trumps ending in dummy. The ♠K and then the boat sunk down into the waves, as West discarded on the second round of trumps and now the diamonds were stranded. A third round of trumps could be won in dummy, but when a winning diamond was played East ruffed. Although declarer could overruff, he had to settle for ten tricks. Declarer's fortunes fluctuated throughout the hand, but he had a certain entry to dummy in the ♣A and that is what he should have conserved. Win the lead in hand with the ♣K, then play on diamonds, ▶

**Dealer South. Love All.**

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

## Cruise to the Riviera

continued

ruffing the third round, as before. Now you can draw four rounds of trumps and then cross to the ♣A to enjoy the two diamond tricks: 12 tricks made for a top score – plain sailing.

The next morning brought a very busy day: seminar, welcome party, afternoon bridge and evening bridge. I emphasized



that all the bridge was optional because, as always on cruise ships, there are plenty of other things going on.

The seminar went well, but in the Carousel, we were at the very front of the ship and the motion caught a few out. However, the advantage of being in the Carousel is that you are videoed for the cabin television, so a number of clients, who were stuck in bed, were able to watch me from the comfort (or discomfort) of their own cabins.

Next followed our welcome drinks for which the turnout was about 50%, which, considering there were free drinks on offer, will tell you that it was getting rough. The singles got together for a meeting to arrange partners for a few different bridge events: this gives everybody the chance to try a few different bridge partners before settling down with one or other.

Surely, by the second day, the sea will have quietened, the engines would be roaring and all would be well – not quite! The wind was roaring and the engines were spluttering – I went out on the starboard side at the stern of the ship and could barely stand. The wind was holding us back and at Force 9 with a big swell, it was tossing us this way and that. Undoubtedly an impressive sea, but less so for those stuck in their beds

and the news that we were set for a third day at sea did not cheer many up.

However, more sea means more bridge and if you wanted to, you could nearly have managed to do bridge, non-stop. The second day brought our first set of set hands and a chance to practise the subject of the morning's seminar: 16 tables tried their hand, whilst 14 tables played a duplicate. Here is a deal from the duplicate that could easily have featured in the set hands on overcalling.

**Dealer North. E/W Game.**

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

West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♥	Dbl
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
End			

West led the ♥Q against 3NT and declarer made an easy eleven tricks. The overcalling seminar focussed on the reasons for overcalling. Why had East overcalled this hand? His answer would probably be because it was only at the one-level. Never forget that there are two players in each partnership and you are speaking to your partner. You are vulnerable against not, so you are not looking for a sacrifice. You are not causing much disruption as 1♥ over ▶

# Better Hand Evaluation

## Bernard Magee

### Introduction

*Better Hand Evaluation* is aimed at helping readers to add greater accuracy to their bidding. It deals with auctions in which you and your partner, against silent opponents, can describe your hands to each other fully and, by evaluating them accurately, find the best final contract. The emphasis of all good, accurate bidding is on hand evaluation.

There are two general types of auction: a) A fit is found and b) No fit is found.

When you do not have a fit, you are aiming to describe the strength of your hand as soon as possible, most often using no-trump bids. This book begins by discussing balanced-hand bidding in Acol, as it is very important that both members of a partnership have an accurate knowledge of how to show hands of different strengths.

When a fit is found, there is much re-evaluation of the hand to be done; point count, though still important, needs to be evaluated along with distribution. The best way of reaching an accurate assessment is to use the Losing Trick Count; this is an important method of hand evaluation and takes up a number of chapters.

Finally, we move on to different forms of evaluation, including game tries and splinter bids. You can never know enough methods of hand evaluation; the more you learn, the better you get at judging your hand.

Although the Losing Trick Count is used more easily in tandem with your partner, a large proportion of the ideas in this book can be used by an individual. For example, evaluating your hand to be worth an extra point is going to help anyone you partner – as long as you get it right!

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# Mr Bridge

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
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## Cruise to the Riviera

continued

1♦ does not consume space. When it turns out you can have only 7 or 8 points (West hears the opponents bid to 3NT and he holds 7 points which does not leave you with much) it means you were unlikely to be focussed on competing the hand. So that leaves just one good reason: you must have been overcalling because you wanted the suit led!

I love to bid; I love to overcall on weak hands, but I only bid on weak hands if my suit is of high quality – I want my partner to think, ‘He overcalled on a weak hand so I must lead his suit.’ If you want your partner to think this, then make sure you only bid with strong suits if you are weak. Had East passed with this hand, West would have led the ♣3 against 3NT and declarer would have been one down, losing four clubs and the ♦A.

All I need to do is change one card and the 1♥ overcall is fine: make the ♠K the ♥K instead, now the heart suit is decent and the chances are that a heart lead is best. With the king bolstering your suit, the ♥Q lead would be perfect and would defeat

3NT. The only time I overcall with a weak suit is when I have a strong all-round hand that needs to compete (12+ points), but it must be at least five cards long.

Learning 160 names was certainly testing me, but for the men, there were so many Johns that if I was in any doubt I could always call them John – easier for me perhaps, but it did cause some problems for the singles. When they said they were playing with John, it was not always easy to partner them up – quite often we were searching from room to room to find the right partners invariably partnering up helpers with some of them – none of the helpers was called John, thankfully!

Day four and the sun was out, the sea was calm and the mood on board lightened. After all, it was fine for us

bridge players, endlessly entertained, but for many other passengers, it had been rather glum! Another seminar and more set hands and then, at 4.15pm, the first play: *Shakers*.

I managed to get the play put on after the bridge had finished, so the players could watch it if they wished. I thought I would fall asleep, having been doing bridge non-stop, but I enjoyed every moment: the four actresses were extremely professional and the John Godber Play was entertaining, if a little risqué for some.

Everybody was emerging from below: one player who had not yet



made the bridge room appeared and was welcomed with open arms and a kiss! The atmosphere on board was of relief and excitement. With excess energy to disperse after the evening’s bridge, it was dance time. The young actresses were up on the floor and I could not resist joining them, and quite a few of the bridge group joined in too – little did they know that they would get a prize for it – San, Hilary, Jean, Gwen and Gaynor to name but a few.

The next morning brought dreams of stepping on dry land, but there was still time for a seminar and plenty of dolphin watching. Great numbers of the mammals were leaping out of the water on both sides of the ship. Groups would stay for a while, swim off and then rejoin us later on – although they may have been different ones; my dolphin

recognition skills are none too good.

We also had time for a software demonstration. We had two computers available for clients to try out the various pieces of software that could be bought from the on-board boutique, tax-free. There was plenty of interest, especially in the Acrol Bidding and the Declarer Play. Jessica, from the office, was on hand to take questions about Mr Bridge’s activities on land and at sea. It was a good chance for her to see how a cruise really works and how bridge sessions run – it was also a good chance for her to have some fun!

Land ahoy! The welcome shape of the

Rock of Gibraltar brought us our first landfall of the cruise. Lisbon was missed out because of foul weather and engine trouble, but the Captain had done well to get us to Gibraltar. Most of the clients swayed gently as they walked off the ship – trying to walk the sea from their legs.

There were plenty of stories to tell when back on board, especially of wonderful bargains in the shops. Clearly a number of players felt the need of retail therapy to recover from the sea’s rocking. The first port of call is always wonderful because it gets people talking about the things

they have done during the day. They compare prices for taxis and talk about their tours and walks. The atmosphere at bridge that evening was heightened – and we would have a full day in port the next day.

Our main stop of the cruise was Almeida and everybody enjoyed it thoroughly: blazing sunshine and searing heat in the middle of the day. Plenty of people went off to the Alhambra Palace; meanwhile I went off with Jo, one of my helpers and we ventured round the streets of Almeida to find a bar and have a beer! ‘With olives,’ we said to the barman and olives and sardines appeared. It was a wonderful scene, leaning back in the chair in the shade of olive trees, eating fresh fish and drinking cold beer. At the table next to us were two Australians, who had as much ►

## Cruise to the Riviera

continued

trouble as us ordering their drinks and snacks. They ordered the same as us, but then another lady came and although they tried to say they had already ordered, she misunderstood! They got the same as us, but then two minutes later a huge platter of seafood arrived. Having just eaten a big lunch around the corner, they had not been prepared for this, but Jo and I were glad to come to the rescue. We joined their table and shared calamari, whitebait, sardines and squid with more beer, of course.



Farewell drinks already, but with the sea calm and the sun going slowly down, the Carousel lounge was filled and the atmosphere was excellent. There were plenty of prizes to distribute, from the best of the bridge players in both sections (Tony & Jo, Dave & Derek) to the best drinkers (Jane & Judi) and the best dancers (the actresses). Plenty of drinks were drunk and with wine at dinner too, there was some innovative bidding and play later on that evening.

Of course, there was still a day at sea to go: seminar, bridge, bridge, parties, plays and dancing! The last seminar was on the Bidding Quiz and included some very difficult decisions, one of which was:

Dealer North.

Love All.

♠ K Q 6 4 3

♥ A 7 5

♦ K Q 6 5

♣ 2

West	North	East	South
	3♥	Dbf	Pass
?			

I will give you a little time to decide what you bid, as West, with this hand.

The play on the last afternoon was another by John Godber, *Teachers*. Unfortunately, it was scheduled at the same time as bridge, but many of the group chose to see the play and they were rewarded by another excellent show. The feedback about the acting was brilliant and congratulations are due to their great efforts. After the first two days, the actors were wondering why they had come, but by the end of the cruise, they were on their best form – having enjoyed a wonderful ride.

Whilst all this bridge was being played by the more experienced players, Carol had four absolute beginners who had had five days at sea to get their teeth into the game and they made great progress. By the end, they were playing a game of Chicago in the bridge room with the rest of us!

Captain's cocktails arrived and everybody was looking splendid, all dressed up with plenty of places to go; including the bridge room, of course. The bridge games finished with no big bangs and the dance floor was waiting. More champagne for me as I shared a bottle with Ethel and Tony as we looked



at some of his ideas on the relationships between high-card points and ability, on the performance in a duplicate. Meanwhile they got up on the dance floor for a jive.



Back to the hand above. Most players bid 4♠, but you have a very strong hand: your partner's double is for take-out and suggests an opening hand at least. Fully evaluating your hand including shortage and length, gives you 17 points (or five losers), which opposite an opening hand is enough to think about slam. Your partner is quite likely to hold a singleton heart for his double, so the hands may well fit together beautifully. If he holds two aces then 6♠ should have a good chance of making, so you should ask your partner how many aces he has: bid 4NT.

This was your partner's hand:

♠ A J 9 5

♥ 2

♦ J 9 3 2

♣ A Q 8 4

It is the very minimum for a take-out double at the three-level and yet when he shows two aces, you can bid 6♠ and expect to make it.

Finally we reached Marseilles, by which time I was very tired. A coach took me through the French countryside to Nice airport in the morning. Along with Liz, Rosemary, Stephanie and Sandra we made our way back to Northern Ireland.

What a cruise: the seas and the engines added to the entertainment, but the bridge group was buzzing and it was a great pleasure to be involved. The good news is that the engines are all back working and the ship is cruising in style again. I cannot wait until next year, when the skies will be blue, the sun bright and the sea calm and we will all be wondering what the fuss was about! ■