



DEFENCE QUIZ

by **Julian Pottage**

(Answers on page 58)

You are West in the defensive positions below. It is your turn to play.

1. ♠ A Q J 9 4
 ♥ Q 9
 ♦ A 8 4
 ♣ K J 3

♠ 10 5 2
♥ A 10 6 4 2
♦ J 7 2
♣ 10 8

	N	E
W		S

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

You lead the ♥4, which goes to the ♥9, ♥K and ♥5. Partner returns the ♥8, to which South follows with the ♥7. How do you defend?

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

♠ Q 10 5 2
♥ 10
♦ A 7 5
♣ Q 10 8 5 2

	N	E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	4♥	End	

You lead the ♣5. Partner wins with the ♣A and South drops the ♣K. Back comes the ♦9, covered by the ♦K. How do you defend?

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

♠ K 8 7 4
♥ 10 8 7 5 2
♦ A 7 5
♣ 10

	N	E
W		S

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	3NT	End	

You lead the ♥5. Partner wins with the ♥K and returns the ♥6, as South follows with the ♥3 and ♥J. After the ♥A wins, declarer calls for the ♦K from dummy, on which partner plays the ♦6. What do you play on this trick? What do you expect will determine your play to the next trick?

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

♠ 10 8 3
♥ 10 4
♦ A 7 5
♣ K 10 8 5 2

	N	E
W		S

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

You lead the ♣5. Partner wins the ♣9 with the ♣A and returns the ♣7, as South follows low once more. Your defence?

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DECLARER PLAY QUIZ



by David Huggett

(Answers on page 41)

You are South as declarer playing teams or rubber bridge. In each case, what is your play strategy?

1.

♠ K 5 3
♥ 7 6 2
♦ J 5
♣ A Q J 6 2



♠ A J 7
♥ A K 5
♦ A 10 8 3 2
♣ 5 3

3.

♠ K 9 8 4
♥ A 2
♦ A K 7 6 3
♣ J 5



♠ Q J 10 7 5 3
♥ 3
♦ 9 5 4
♣ K 8 3

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠6. East plays the ♠9. How do you plan the play?

You are declarer in 4♠ and West, who bid hearts, leads the ♥K. How do you plan the play?

2.

♠ Q J 9 8
♥ A 6 2
♦ A K 7 5 2
♣ 9



♠ A K 10 7 3
♥ 8 4 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q J 10

4.

♠ J 4
♥ 7
♦ A 8 7 5 4 3 2
♣ 8 4 3



♠ A Q 6 2
♥ A K Q J 10 8
♦ Void
♣ A 6 2

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

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

The Advantages of Transfers

The advent of transfers has unquestionably helped the bidding machinery of ambitious players, especially where close contracts are concerned. In pre-transfer days, how would we have coped with these two hands?

You might like to put yourselves in South's shoes with this hand:

Dealer North.
E/W Vul.
Pairs.
 ♠ A J 7 4 3
 ♥ 10 4 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ A 10 8

N
W S E

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

After two passes, South would, no doubt, open 1NT, giving North a small problem. Perhaps North would settle for 2♠ (usually no need to push for thin games at pairs), or maybe he would bid 2♣ (Stayman) and then, over 2♥, bid 2♠ (showing a hand a bit better than a direct sign-off in 2♠). There the bidding might end, although, if South was having a good day, he might raise to 3♠ and give North a further decision. If North was also having a good day, perhaps they would reach game, but it

all sounds very iffy.

Now let us see how transfers might help as we look at the bidding from one table in the weekly club duplicate.

Dealer North.
E/W Vul.
Pairs.
 ♠ A J 7 4 3
 ♥ 10 4 2
 ♦ 3 2
 ♣ A 10 8

N
W S E

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

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

¹Showing five spades and asking partner to transfer, usually to 2♣.

²I have a heart suit. If you have a fit, maybe we can compete.

³I have a maximum no-trump with four spades.

⁴Then let us try for game.

Probably because of lack of teaching, South's jump to 3♠ (maximum with four trumps) is not part of many players' equipment. On this particular evening, only one pair reached the spade game, which seems to confirm this observation.

Of course, one could argue that South's enthusiasm

might endanger the plus score and there is a smidgeon of sense in this suggestion – but only a smidgeon! A much more potent argument is that the 3♠ bid feeds partner with enough information to try for game on minimal values whenever that is appropriate. Furthermore, if partner is as poor as the proverbial church mouse, then the opposition will surely have a part-score contract of their own, if not a game.

Although understandable, East's double was unfortunate as it further ensured that the hand would play well when West led the three of hearts, an obvious singleton. Declarer won the nine with the queen and laid down the king of spades, dropping the singleton queen (with heart shortage in the West hand, West was favourite to hold length in trumps). Trumps were drawn and then a small diamond to the ten fetched the ace. Not liking the look of the club suit, West returned a diamond and there was an easy parking place for dummy's losing heart on the queen of diamonds. Had West not played a second diamond, declarer could have reached dummy and done so himself, thus ensuring the handsome score of +450 for making eleven tricks. ■

Freddie North is one of Britain's most popular bridge writers.

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A Slam for Santa

by Michael Scarrott

‘I bet Ted Branch would come as the Marquis de Sade,’ chuckled David. ‘Stop right now,’ interrupted David’s wife Velda. ‘Keep a reign on that active imagination of yours. I like the idea and fancy dress would certainly be a change from our usual Christmas Bridge Party. Let’s also make a stipulation that members and guests have to remain in their costume persona for the duration of the evening.’

Yarborough and Blackwood

Readers of BRIDGE may be familiar with David and Velda’s Park Drive Bridge Club through the exploits of their famous ghostly dog, Yarborough, last year. Readers will further be pleased to learn that his successor at the club, Blackwood, is also proving a very popular and intuitive dog!

‘We can’t leave Blackwood out,’ said David while giving the little dog a friendly scratch behind the ears. ‘Maybe something like a little green waistcoat would look appropriate?’ Yarborough looked across at Blackwood and gave a transparent wink. ‘Maybe I could come as the ‘Hound of the Baskervilles,’ he thought. Blackwood thumped his little tail with delight as he sensed this idea.

Fancy Dress

Delighted to have his wife’s approval for the concept, David continued in an innocent tone, ‘perhaps someone will come as Moll Flanders? I believe she was an enthusiastic card player.’ Velda gave an indulgent smile and asked what costume he might favour? ‘Well, I was thinking we should come as the King and Queen of Hearts. You could make a

batch of heart-shaped tarts and hand them round when guests arrive.’ ‘I’ll think about it,’ answered Velda, dismissing this suggestion instantly from her mind.

Approval for Fancy Dress

‘We should have a full house for this evening’s duplicate, so let’s put the idea up for approval.’ Members gave the suggestion a wholehearted thumbs-up and it became a conversation theme throughout the evening. ‘You two might as well dress up as Bonnie and Clyde,’ said a disgruntled Delia Pain to Jack and Janet Brown. ‘You robbed us on that last contract when you led your ace of clubs. You are not supposed to lead out an unsupported ace. Everyone knows that.’ ‘I can only apologise for my error,’ replied Janet with just a hint of pleasure. ‘It’s such a pity it took your singleton king!’

Maggie Thatcher

‘I have just overheard a threat to come as Margaret Thatcher by Maggie Warner,’ said a bemused David. ‘Now that should create quite a stir. Poor old John had better be on his metal or he’ll be out of the Cabinet and onto the back benches in next to no time!’

The Joker

Colin Sims joined in the fun. ‘Don and Pru seem to win most weeks, so, perhaps, they should come as the Dynamic Duo – Batman and Robin?’ ‘If that’s the case, then you should come as The Joker,’ said Colin’s long-suffering wife, Sue. ‘The way you played that last contract was nothing but a joke!’

This was the deal in question:

<i>Sue</i>			<i>Pru</i>	
♠	A J 4		♠	K 9 3
♥	K 10 9		♥	7 4 3
♦	6 5 2		♦	Q J 10 8
♣	A Q J 6		♣	9 4 2
<i>Don</i>		N E S W		
♠	10 8 5 2			
♥	5 2			
♦	A 9 3			
♣	10 8 5 3			
<i>Colin</i> (Dealer)				
♠	Q 7 6			
♥	A Q J 8 6			
♦	K 7 4			
♣	K 7			

Colin opened 1♥ and, when Sue responded 2♣, he decided to give a good impression of his all round strength with a rebid of 2NT. Sue next bid 3♥, which offered Colin the choice of game in 3NT or 4♥, depending on whether he held four hearts or five. Colin closed the auction with a bid of 4♥ and Don led the two of spades.

Careless Play

Without stopping to think or to take heed of Blackwood’s warning cry, Colin called for the four of spades from dummy with every expectation of winning the first trick with the queen. When Pru played the king, he did his best to mask his disappointment. Seeing no future in leading back into the spade strength, Pru returned the diamond queen to the weakness on the table. This proved the fatal blow. Colin’s king fell to Don’s ace and two more diamond ►

A Slam for Santa **continued**

losers put the contract one down.

‘Bad luck old chap,’ said a delighted Don anticipating a good board for them. ‘Yes,’ agreed Sue in her best sarcastic tone. ‘You need to be particularly careful if you’ve only 30 points split evenly between the two hands, a solid five-card trump suit, four club winners and the spade ace.’ Even little Blackwood had a despondent look on his face at this unexpected outcome. Yarborough floated over to have a look at the devastation. Go up with the spade ace at trick one and draw trumps in three rounds. Take the club winners and discard two diamond losers from hand. Played that way, you lose only to the spade king and the diamond ace. ‘It’s a good job it’s not raining,’ thought Yarborough, ‘Colin could well be in for a long walk home if I’m not mistaken!’

Party Plans

The party would take place on the Saturday before Christmas. Members offered to bring a selection of homemade goodies to go along with David’s mulled wine and to make Velda’s sumptuous seasonal buffet complete with legendary mince pies.

The Identity Club

‘I suppose fancy dress is a bit like a role-playing game,’ reflected David. ‘You become someone else for a short period of time and can act completely out of character without causing offence.’ Velda raised her eyebrows at this, but David continued, ‘if you really do your research, you can say things and blame it all on the person you’re masquerading as. In fact, I read recently about a group of people in New York who have taken this to the extreme. They call themselves ‘The Identity Club’ with members adopting the dress and mannerisms of long dead poets, writers, musicians and artists. It really is quite bizarre as most were chosen for their extreme and ritualistic behaviour.’

‘That sort of thing might well suit some of our members,’ answered Velda. ‘Have you noticed how Tom Wise always wears the same tie, week after week?’ ‘I should say so,’ chuckled David. ‘Bright blue with big red dots –

what a distraction – it’s the last thing you want to look at when playing a tricky hand. As a matter of fact, I’m seriously thinking of banning it from the club and having it put down humanely!’

Velda chose to ignore David’s riposte and continued, ‘Did you know that the playing cards themselves are rife with superstition? Some people refer to them as the “devil’s picture book” due to their connection with fortune telling. I’d be willing to bet all manner of lucky charms are worn or carried by members.’

The King & Queen of Hearts

The big day arrived and following the usual last minute panic, everything was ready for the members and guests. David looked splendid as the King of Hearts and Velda appeared very regal as The Queen. Blackwood came dressed in a specially made waistcoat, while an unseen Yarborough took in the proceedings with his usual pleasure and wagged his phantom tail for all it was worth.

Santa and Rusty

Now it may come as quite a surprise for some, but at this very time, Santa Claus was passing over the Park Drive Bridge Club along with Rusty, his trusted elf. He was on one of his many reconnaissance missions, checking out the rooftops for any potential problems well before his big day. He parked his sleigh on a nearby roof and took a clear look at what was going on inside the club. ‘That looks like fun,’ he said in a deep ho, ho, ho type of voice. ‘Everyone is dressed up in different costumes and I can see a long table filled with my favourite mouth-watering goodies.’ Rusty took a small spyglass out of his tunic and looked more closely. ‘I think they might be about to start playing cards. We had such a good game last week when we beat the polar bears. Maybe we could just go down, knock on the door and join in.’ ‘Sounds like a great idea,’ replied Santa. They won’t have a clue who we really are and no one will take much notice of your pointed ears and nose after a glass or

two of that strong-looking brew, bubbling away on the stove.’

‘Answer the door, David,’ shouted Velda, ‘I just knew someone would make a late appearance.’ ‘It’s only Santa Claus and a pixie friend,’ called David from the front door. ‘Come on in and get yourselves a glass of mulled wine; play’s just about to start.’ David winked at Santa and said in a not so sober tone: ‘parked your transport on the roof, I suppose?’ ‘Yes we did, but we managed to slide down without mishap. The reindeers are happily munching the grass in the next door garden.’ ‘Oh, that’s a good one,’ replied David, walking away to join Velda. ‘Everyone’s really getting into the spirit of things.’

Santa and Rusty Play Doctor Who and Cyberwoman

Fully fortified with a glass or two of David’s potent wine, Santa and Rusty found themselves facing Doctor Who and a sinister looking Cyberman. ‘That’s a really splendid costume,’ said a cultured voice from across the table. You could easily get some part time work in one of the local department stores. I understand they are always on the lookout for someone to play Santa at this time of the year. You could even take your little friend along with you. He has the most marvellous rubber ears I have every seen. You might even get the prize for the best costume.’

Best Costume?

Santa looked up and gave a big smile before speaking. ‘That’s very kind of you. We really like to look the part when we go out.’ Rusty looked across at the Cyberman and wagged his pointed ears. ‘How amazing,’ said a female voice from behind the Cyberman’s tin-foil helmet. ‘Now don’t you worry about my partner,’ interrupted Doctor Who, ‘I made a few adjustments with my sonic screwdriver and now she’s no trouble at all. In fact, she is the first ever Cyberwoman!’

Final Board of the Round

Play progressed smoothly with both sides making a couple of part-score contracts. The final board of the round involved some competitive bidding.

This was the deal in question: ►

A Slam for Santa *continued*

<i>Santa</i>	
♠ J 7	
♥ Q 5	
♦ Q 9 8 4 2	
♣ A 10 5 2	
<i>Doctor Who</i> <i>(Dealer)</i>	<i>Cyberwoman</i>
♠ K 9 8 6 5 2	♠ A 3
♥ Void	♥ A 8 6
♦ A K 3	♦ J 10 7 6 5
♣ 8 6 4 3	♣ Q J 9
<i>Rusty</i>	
♠ Q 10 4	
♥ K J 10 9 7 4 3 2	
♦ Void	
♣ K 7	

N
W S E

Doctor Who opened 1♠, Santa Claus passed and Cyberwoman responded 2♦. With his eight-card suit and diamond void, Rusty bid stop 4♥. Doctor Who looked dismissively at the stop card, as time after all was his to control, and passed. The auction finished with an ominous double from the Cyberwoman.

Doctor Who led the diamond ace; Rusty trumped in hand and took time to assess his chances. At first glance, there appeared to be only three losers – two spades and the trump ace. With his long, pointed, green fingers ready to chase out the heart ace, a movement next to his chair distracted him briefly. Blackwood, intrigued by the big jolly man in the red costume and his rather strange looking companion, had wandered over to see what was going on.

Cutting Communications

Rusty took in the mournful expression on the little dog's face and decided to give a little more thought to his line of play. Cyberwoman was marked with the ace of hearts. If she holds up until the second round and then plays on spades, she may well score a fourth trick for the defence with a spade ruff. Rusty decided the safest way to overcome this threat was to lead spades, with the intention of cutting communications while still retaining the queen of trumps in dummy to protect against an over-ruff.

With the danger now gone, the contract came home to generous praise from both opponents. 'Where on earth does an Elf learn to play such a clever game?' said an inquisitive Doctor Who, looking closely at Rusty's finely woven tunic. 'He's my regular partner,' announced Santa from across the table. We play most weeks at a club up near the Arctic Circle. Current club champions are a couple of long-toothed narwhals.'

'I like that,' joined in an amused Cyberwoman. 'Before I teamed up with Doctor Who, I played at a rather select club run by a couple of Daleks. Behaviour at the club was nothing but exemplary at all times. Yes, it's quite amazing how the word "exterminate" can focus the mind!'

Successful Evening

'What a successful evening!' exclaimed a delighted David. 'Is that Keith West over there in the very impressive Henry VIII costume?' asked Velda. 'It most definitely is,' replied David, 'he's usually such a quietly-spoken chap, so it's quite a surprise to everyone when he shouts "off with her head" every time he takes an opponent's queen. 'It's such a shame Yarborough can't be here to join in the fun,' continued David with a hint of sadness. Yarborough's wraithlike outline floated across the room and he laid his big shaggy head on David's lap. 'I wish I could find some way of letting him know I'm still here,' thought Yarborough. He raised his head and looked about the room. His phantom hairs stood on end when he spied Santa Claus and Rusty. 'Maybe there is a way,' he thought.

Velda's Mouth-Watering Banquet

'Come on,' said Velda in an effort to cheer David up, 'it's time we all stopped for something to eat. If we break off now, we can have one final round to end the evening.' The sound of merry chatter was soon heard as members and guests tucked into Velda's mouth-watering banquet. Their good friends, Nick and Joan, soon joined them. 'The name's Bond, James Bond,

said a well-dressed Nick trying his best not to laugh. 'This is my able assistant, Miss Money Penny.' Joan giggled and added for good measure, 'we've parked the Aston Martin outside the front door!'

'You'll like this,' said Nick. 'We've just played against young Tim Wilson. You know whom I mean. He has only been playing for a short time. Well, apparently he was up against Alice Sykes sometime last month and she gave him quite a ticking off for slow play, poor concentration and a heap more. When Tim enquired politely how long she had been playing bridge, she seemed to take exception and told him in no uncertain words that she had been playing for 52 years. Tim pondered this for a while and replied, in a hardly audible tone, that he, in fact, had been playing for only 52 weeks!' Amazingly, they seem to be getting on quite well now. They are even considering playing together at some time in the future. 'Probably the distant future,' added a sceptical David.

Final Round

'Looks like we're up against Santa Claus on the final round,' interrupted Velda, 'so that should be a really cheerful end to the evening.' Friendly chatter and laughter echoed round the room as players waited for the last boards to arrive. Velda looked across at Rusty and congratulated him on his marvellous outfit. Rusty gave a shy smile and thanked Velda for such a lovely meal.

As Santa gazed across the room, the movement of a shadowy outline across the floor startled him for a moment. His extra sensory perception soon made out the shape as that of a disembodied dog. 'Looks very much like the dog in the photograph on the wall,' he thought, 'It must be Yarborough. His spirit never really left the place.' He gave a sympathetic sigh and wished there was something he could do.

Yarborough Appears

Yarborough stared up into Santa's large friendly face and quivered his whole body with celestial pleasure. Santa looked across at an unaware David and gave a warm smile before speaking in an uncharacteristically soft tone, 'he's always close by and knows just how much you miss him.' David looked ►

A Slam for Santa *continued*

up in alarm. ‘Yarborough,’ continued Santa. ‘He wants you to know he is still having a great time and keeps a special watch over little Blackwood.’ David gazed around the room as he took in the implication of this rather unexpected revelation. He glanced across at Santa, who was nodding his head and peering intently at a spot on the carpet just alongside his chair. He looked down and imagined the old dog keeping a watchful eye on the evening’s play. ‘Well, I never!’ was all he could mutter. Yarborough looked up at David and gave a wolfish grin.

The Last Board

With honours just about even, the last board saw a competitive auction:

<i>Rusty</i>			
♠ A K 7 5			
♥ K Q 6 2			
♦ 7 4			
♣ K J 4			
<i>David</i>		<i>Velda</i> (Dealer)	
♠ Void		♠ 9 4	
♥ A 10 9 7 4	N	♥ 5 3	E
♦ K 10 8 5 3	W	♦ J 6	S
♣ Q 8 6	S	♣ A 10 9 7 5 3 2	
		<i>Santa</i>	
		♠ Q J 10 8 6 3 2	
		♥ J 8	
		♦ A Q 9 2	
		♣ Void	

Velda opened a pre-emptive non-vulnerable 3♣. Santa overcalled 3♠ and David went straight to 5♣. With four-card support and a strong hand, Rusty raised Santa to 6♠. David led the six of clubs and Santa took time to assess his chances.

Santa Avoids Too Many Losers

Santa knew that the lead marked Velda with the ace of clubs, which meant that both the ace of hearts and the king of diamonds were most likely with David. He scratched his luxurious white whiskers as he tried to fathom a way of avoiding one loser too many. His mind

made up, he played the jack from dummy and trumped Velda’s ace in hand. His next move was to draw trumps ending in hand and lead the eight of hearts. When David played the ace, this set up his own jack as well as the king-queen in dummy. The two heart winners in dummy, together with the king of clubs, were sufficient to take care of the losing diamonds.

Hold-up?

David gave Velda a crestfallen look. ‘Perhaps I should have held onto the heart ace?’ Santa came to David’s rescue. ‘If you hold up the ace, I simply discard my remaining heart on the club king. I would concede a diamond trick, as the finesse fails, before claiming the contract.’ ‘Maybe I should not have played the club ace on the first round,’ said Velda, ‘I read somewhere about doing the unexpected in an effort to confuse declarer. You wouldn’t have known what to discard, would you?’ ‘Quite right,’ continued David with newfound confidence in his voice, ‘Expert players occasionally come a cropper against complete beginners because they just play out their aces and kings at the first opportunity! This often ruins their careful subterfuge when trying to slip a crafty trick through their opponents’ defences.’

Memorable & Magical Party

Santa winked at Rusty and said, in a jovial tone, ‘I know just what you mean. It was only last week that we had a couple of juvenile snowmen pop in for a game. They confused our best players and eventually had to be escorted from the premises when they were threatened with melt down by a couple of angry polar bears!’ David gave a friendly chuckle before speaking. ‘A Slam for Santa – this was such an appropriate end to such a memorable and magical party!’ ■

**Michael Scarrot lives in Cromer,
Norfolk and teaches bridge
in nearby West Runton.**

DOUBLE DUMMY SOLUTION

by Richard Wheen

(Problem on page 6)

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

I was kibitzing one of my pupils playing this hand in the South-East Surrey Senior Novice qualifiers and saw that declarer could easily make four tricks – two aces and two trumps. He also had two spade losers, and I whispered to him that, to save time, he accept one off (we are quite relaxed about protocol in these events). Declarer gave me a look of thunder and led a club promptly to the ace and then a spade to the ace (the cashing of aces, without first considering where the other tricks were to come from, is one of the hallmarks of South-East Surrey Senior Novices). Now he led a diamond from dummy and I grimaced: I had surely taught him that ruffing cards in the long trump hand does not create extra tricks? However, declarer did not ruff: instead, he threw a spade. West, who won the trick, performed, led a club. Dummy ruffed this, while declarer discarded his last spade. South’s two trumps won the remaining tricks. Declarer had made his contract with the aid of a loser-on-loser endplay and forced ruff-and-discard, a play even I had not envisaged. Not only had he not lost two spade tricks, he had not lost even one! As I congratulated him on his card play, I gained the distinct impression that he would shortly be looking for a new bridge teacher.



2♣ over 1NT by Partner or Opponent

Q I opened 1NT and my partner took it out into 2♣. In all good faith, I explained, ‘weak take-out’, and passed. The opposition re-opened with 3♦ and my partner competed to 3♠, making four. She had five spades (king high) in a ten-point hand with a singleton – too weak for a jump to 3♠, and unsuited to play in 1NT – so 2♣ seems an intelligent bid.

Did we do wrong?
Simon Loveday by e-mail.

A The term ‘weak take-out’ means the response of 2♣ shows a hand that is too weak to expect to make game. This is what your partner had, so there could be no complaint if the opponents had misunderstood.



Q What is your opinion on the bidding below?

(a) E/W are playing non-promissory Stayman and transfers over 1NT.

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

¹12-14

²Stayman

³Actually, it is a weak take out in

clubs. Some say this is legal. Others say it is not.

(b) N/S are playing Landy over a 1NT opening.

West	North	East	South
1NT*	2♣ ²	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♣ ³	End	

¹12-14

²Alerted by South as Landy (both majors)

³Wrong major partner – he had six clubs and four spades

(i) With ‘Landy’ on the convention card, was this legal? (I was South and thought partner had forgotten we were playing Landy).

(ii) If the convention card had ‘Landy or natural’, would that make it legal?

Some say the sequence, with Landy on the convention card, is illegal and that South must not pass 3♣. One director says that ‘any defence to 1NT is acceptable’ and the sequence was acceptable.

David Hughes,
Worthing, West Sussex.

A You can play any responses to 1NT, so you can use a Stayman 2♣ response with a weak take-out in clubs. What is more, when Jack Marx invented the convention, now called Stayman, just before

the World War II, it included this sequence. So playing Stayman to include a weak take-out in clubs has been legal and in use in England for the last seventy years!

Your second sequence, with the 2♣ overcall, is different. For many years, there were restrictions on defence to 1NT.

There still are restrictions at Level 2, which is generally holiday and novice bridge. At Level 3 and above, i.e. club and event bridge, there are no restrictions so you can play whatever defence you like.

In club play, it is thus legal to play 2♣ as the majors or clubs, or perhaps the majors, or one major and clubs.

If you do play it that way, you must still keep the opponents fully informed, so you must not call this Landy. It is not Landy, where 2♣ shows the majors. ‘Landy or natural’ will not do; it is not Landy. You should say ‘the majors or clubs’.

It is not illegal to pass 3♣, since it is legal to play it this way. However, if you have described it as Landy, either in answer to a question or on your convention card, it is misinformation. The opponents will get an adjusted score if they can show that they have suffered damage.

Q Playing duplicate, we had finished a round, scored up our boards and heard the call to move.

Our opponents had been discussing one board and suggested that one of us had revoked. After a short, friendly, discussion, we agreed that my partner had indeed done so. We drew the matter to the attention of the director, who deducted two tricks from our result. Is this right?

Jane Hickey,
Horsell, Surrey.

A Especially with a new Law book, it is important that directors read rulings from the Law book – it sounds like yours did not! If he had, he might have read Law 64B5, which says that there are no penalty tricks deducted after the end of the round.

Of course, if the revoke has gained you tricks then the director should make sure these go back to your opponents. ▶

E-mail your questions on bridge laws to: davidstevenson@mrbridge.co.uk.

Q Playing with a competent partner for the first time, we had only a brief system discussion. On the fifth board, North (my partner) dealt and opened 1NT. I announced 12-14. East passed. I bid 2♥, which North announced as a transfer to spades. West hesitated and then passed. North bid 2♠. East passed and I bid 2NT, which made. West called the director claiming that I had received ‘unauthorised information’. The director looked at the hands. I had 9 points including ♠K-x-x and ♥Q-x-x-x-x. He decided that we should be one down (in 2♠). I explained that we were a new partnership and had not agreed to play transfers. I bid 2NT trying to correct the misunderstanding over my bid of 2♥.

A Newsome,
Bury St Edmunds.

A When your partner announced your 2♥ bid as a transfer, you knew that you and he were not on the same wavelength. His announcement thus gave you unauthorised information. Without it, you might have thought he was showing five spades and a doubleton heart. With it, you knew that your partner had misunderstood your bid.

Whenever you have unauthorised information from partner, you must do your best to take no advantage; I am afraid that bidding 2NT does not do this. You said yourself that your 2NT was ‘an effort to correct the misunderstanding’, but you only knew of the misunderstanding because of the announcement, so you should not have bid 2NT. The director’s adjustment seems fair to me.



Q My partner, East, opened 2♦, Multi, when I, West, was dealer. North noticed the error.

South did not want to accept the bid and called the director. The director said that the 2♦ should remain on the table and that I should pass throughout. This left my partner playing in the wrong contract and we got a poor result.

Name address supplied.

A When the next player does not accept a call out of turn, it is cancelled.

As the director ruled correctly, you must pass throughout if your partner’s bid out of turn was at your turn to call, but he should have let your partner call whatever he liked. ▶

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David Stevenson on Bridge Laws continued

Q I read somewhere that you do not need to alert if partner replies 2NT to 1NT as a transfer to diamonds. Is this correct? I thought all artificial bids up to 3NT require alerting.
 Margaret Harris,
 Rochester.

A I am not sure what it is that you have read. A 2NT response to 1NT as a transfer to diamonds is alertable, as is a 2♠ response as a transfer to clubs.



Q On the first two boards of a round, our opponents (two men we used to get on well with) went eight down doubled and then five down doubled. On the third, my partner played in 3NT. With about five cards left to play, my RHO (the unsuccessful declarer on the two previous boards) announced 'this is so slow, so boring; it is always so slow and boring,' I said, 'perhaps we had better not come again', to which he replied, 'good – that should speed things up a bit.'

I felt so upset that I wanted to go home. Our next opponents (our Chairman and his wife) persuaded us to stay. During the evening, my partner asked the offender for an apology. Apparently, he was rude again and would not apologise. The next day, I telephoned the Chairman, saying I still wanted an apology, and asked what action the club would take.

The following week (the offender was not present), the Chairman read out a

notice. It ran: 'If anyone feels aggrieved at the action or inaction of their opponents, they should call the director. As a committee, we will not tolerate outbursts, rude behaviour or a lack of normal courtesy towards opponents.' My partner wants to continue attending the club but I feel very reluctant to do so in the continuing absence of an apology.

Margot Chapman,
 Letchworth, Herts.

A It would have been better to call for the director immediately. The English Bridge Union is trying to provide a nicer environment, especially by stopping rudeness; they advise always calling the director. He can apply disciplinary penalties. Players have no right to be rude to each other.

Having not done so, your next stage is a written complaint to the club committee. Do not try to settle this by talking to the Chairman.

Not having heard the other side, I cannot say for sure that the committee would decide in your favour, though it seems that they should. I would abandon the club only if they fail to deal at all with a written complaint: that is unforgivable. ▶

David Stevenson answers all queries based on the facts supplied by the letter writer. Neither Mr Bridge nor David Stevenson has any way of knowing whether those facts are correct or complete.

Q At my local club, I encountered a very aggressive opponent. Firstly, she asked me what my partner's 4NT meant, to which I replied Keycard Blackwood asking for aces and king of trumps. She informed me that this was Roman Keycard and I should sort it out. Secondly, my partner opened 1♦ and she overcalled 1♥, after which I went 2♥ as I had 11 points and three hearts. She told me that this was an unacceptable bid. I came away feeling upset as I felt sure that I had bid correctly. I try to follow the books that Bernard has written (also Andrew Robson) so could not understand where I had gone so wrong. What do you think?

Heather Vale,
Street, Somerset.

A Let me first consider the behaviour issue. Bad manners and aggression that upsets others is illegal at this game. Whether you were in the right or in the wrong does not justify the opponent's rudeness in any way. If this happens again, do not worry whether you are right or wrong; just call the director and say 'This opponent is being aggressive and has thoroughly upset me and spoilt my game for me.' The director will issue disciplinary penalties to your opponent.

As to your actual bids, I suspect your opponent expected you to be playing Roman Keycard Blackwood, a very popular convention amongst top club and tournament players. Many players will not have come across the simpler and older version of the convention,

Keycard Blackwood, hence the confusion. Bernard Magee advocates the use of Keycard Blackwood because it is simple and yet still a step beyond normal Blackwood. Both conventions are legal, as is any other 4NT slam convention.

As to your 2♥ bid – that seems normal enough: even if it was not, you can legally play 2♥ any way you like.

So please try to put this in the past: it is not your opponent's place to criticise you and if done aggressively, it is illegal.



Q North opened one of a suit. East, having 23 points, doubled. West took out the double and the final contract was 3NT+4. What came to light after the play was that North had opened with three points. East was disgruntled because he believed that his side had missed a slam (6NT was the top contract) because of North's opening. Could you please give a ruling?

Mr L Borrett,
Middlecombe, Somerset.

A Psyches are legal. I presume the player who opened on three points did so deliberately and that is a psyche. While players psyche quite rarely nowadays, it is still part of the game, adding some interest because it is a gamble. It gives a lot of pleasure to opponents who get a good score because of or despite the psyche, and pleasure to the psycher when his bid succeeds in deflecting opponents. There is no reason to be any more upset when a psyche

succeeds than when an opponent's pre-empt succeeds.



Q In a 'friendly' Acol game, at love all, partner opened 1NT; RHO passed; I had one point and ♥9-x-x-x-x. Knowing the opposition had at least 25 HCP and not wishing to tell them anything, I passed only for my LHO to do the same! Partner went five down and all turned on me saying that I should have bid 2♥. I argued that I had saved at least 200 points since they should have got to game in a variety of ways if I had bid. They both had flat hands with 13 and 14 HCP and said they could not bid. Sour grapes . . . does anyone agree with me?

Ken Russam,
Bracknell, Berks.

A Hardly a friendly atmosphere, I think! Of course, 2♥ is the book bid on your hand, but you made a different call, were lucky, and got a good result. For the opponents to complain is very rude and against the laws of bridge.



Q East played in 3NT and made 10 tricks. At trick six, he called for the ten of diamonds from dummy and discarded a spade from hand. The ten of diamonds won the trick. Declarer then came to hand and won the next two tricks with two top diamonds. At the end of play, the director ruled that only one trick should transfer to our side now that law 64A2 had changed. Under the old laws, two tricks would have

transferred. The offender scored a joint top. What is your view on the decision and the change in ruling?

David Jones,
Ellesmere Port by e-mail.

A Unless declarer finished with more tricks than he would have made without the revoke (in which case the director restores equity), the ruling seems to be correct. Certainly, it has changed from the last law book – revokes are now less likely to hand out tops but they will make life harder for directors, especially if there are more revokes!



Q I claimed (by cross-ruffing) the rest of the tricks playing in hearts holding ♥K-Q and two winning clubs in dummy – opponent on my right held ♥10-8-x and a spade – I, declarer, held two hearts and two good diamonds. I miscounted trumps and my RHO claimed two tricks, which were impossible to make. Was he correct?

Pat Watson,
Ottershaw, Surrey.

A Was this rubber bridge? At duplicate, your opponent has no right to claim anything: if he disputes your claim, he calls the director, who sorts it out: similarly the club host in a rubber bridge club.

In practice, it is not entirely clear from your description. If you just try to crossruff and keep on crossruffing, perhaps he will get both the ten and eight of trumps. All I can say is that, if it is impossible for him to get two tricks, he does not get two tricks; but if the way you have said you will play might give him two tricks, he will get two tricks. ▶

Q One of our members is registered blind but still able to play. As a help, the relevant player at the previous table sorts the hand for her before passing on the board. Will the new rule, for players to shuffle their cards at the end of play, preclude this? John Josephs, Northampton.

A An organisation can make special rules for players disabled in any way and that includes sorting cards for blind players.



Q I have just found out that alerting Stayman with the silent bidding boxes has been abolished in favour of speaking – another new rule! Is the EBU breaking the law?

A I understand that the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 prohibits discrimination against deaf people.

Mrs Anne Coupe, Felpham, Bognor Regis.

A After discussions with various deaf organisations and a number of deaf players, the EBU decided that announcements were an improvement. Most of the feedback they have received supports this view. Therefore, the introduction of announcements is not discriminatory.

It is unclear how an alert of Stayman is any better for a deaf player than an announcement. If the player needs to know what the 2♣ means, they have to make some arrangement, whether lip-reading, reading a

convention card, turning their head (if deaf on one side) or writing on a pad. All this is unchanged. Announcements apply only in specific common auctions and so players expect them; most deaf players accept that announcements are no worse than alerts and are often better.

I agree it can be hard for deaf players to discover their opponents' methods, but announcements do not seem to have added to these difficulties. My deaf friends agree.



Q David Stevenson's assertion in BRIDGE 88, that the riffle shuffle is far preferable to the overhand shuffle, is only true when done badly. Expertly done, the opposite is the case.

A You can easily demonstrate this by sorting a pack into suit and rank order, dividing it exactly in half and then reassembling the pack by taking one card from each half in turn. It makes no difference whether you shuffle four, five, six seven or eight times. In each case, the result is a flat 4333 distribution. One or three riffles produce two-suited 7,600 distributions and two riffles produce four straight single-suit hands. Even worse, eight perfect riffle shuffles restore the pack to its original form – like no shuffle at all.

In the days before plastic-coated cards, and when social rubber bridge was the norm, players frowned upon riffle shuffles. This was mainly because they shortened the

life of the cards but also because players knew that they often gave rise to flat, dull hands.

Jonathan Goodall, Lyncombe Vale, Bath.

A It all sounds very persuasive. However, every authority without exception, apart from you, agrees that riffle shuffles are far fairer than overhand shuffles. A few riffle shuffles produce quite a random pack: seven or so produce as near to complete randomness as possible. Certainly, you may get strange effects with perfect riffles but, since you do not get perfect riffles, why worry?

In contrast, the overhand shuffle does very little shuffling and you need to shuffle for ten to fifteen minutes for decent randomness. The two or three shuffles common in clubs do nothing for randomness, but lead to foreseeable and flat distributions. Experience shows the exact opposite of what you say: hands with riffle shuffles get more interesting because they follow expected statistical distributions reasonably: overhand shuffles lead to flat hands.



Q A lady friend of mine bid 2♦; her LHO, who was also the TD, asked her partner its meaning. Partner replied that she was unsure. The director then turned to the bidder and asked the strength of the bid. Bidder replied that she thought he could not ask her, only her partner. The director replied that he was entitled to ask her. Bidder stuck to her guns. The lady later asked me, and I said he

could only ask the bidder's partner or consult the convention card. When the director learnt of this, he said that she should read the law book as he was correct.

John Dawe, by e-mail.

A Sometimes one can ask a player the meaning of a call she has made if the partner is unsure. The director should send the partner away from the table so that she does not hear the answer. Furthermore, the director should warn the player that she should reply only as to their agreements: if they have no agreement, she should just say 'no partnership agreement'.

Your director's attitude worries me. I would never insist on this for my benefit if I were a playing director; also, if a director wishes to show that what he has said is correct, he should read it from the law book, not tell someone to do so.



Q Could you please clarify the counting of honours? In the Ron Klinger flippers, it says 'either side can score honours'. What does 'either side' mean?

Mrs H Dirckze, London, SW15.

A If a player has, for example, four trump honours in his hand, he scores a bonus of a 100 for honours. Some assume this only applies to declarer and dummy, but this is not so. While it is rare for a defender to hold four trump honours, it is possible and he can get honours. In this instance, 'either side' means either declarer and dummy, or the defenders. ▶

Q North opened 2♥, weak. My partner considered his hand (allegedly) for some 10 seconds before passing. South passed too. I was West and had a nice 12 points. I bid 2NT, which my partner raised to 3NT. Although he thought I had a bit more than I did, as he had 14 points, I made the contract. Our score of 3NT was a top. Several pairs had defeated 2♥ by two or three tricks. The director ruled that my partner's hesitation had influenced my bid and adjusted the score to 150 (2♥ down three).

L Chandler, Surbiton.

A If all is as you describe, you had a raw deal, but it does sound a little strange. 2♥ is a stop bid, so the stop card must be on display, for 10 seconds not just for a moment. Since your partner may not call before the stop card goes away, a pause for 10 seconds by him is not a hesitation.

Of course, many people put the stop card back in the box too fast; in fact, some do so immediately. No matter when the stop card goes back, partner should wait for 10 seconds after the bid. As long as he always follows this rule, you cannot tell whether he was thinking or just waiting the required time. Thus, you have no unauthorised information and can call whatever you like.

I wonder why the director ruled as he did. Did he forget 2♥ was a stop bid – or did he consider that your partner hesitated for 10 seconds beyond the required 10 seconds? In the latter case, you have unauthorised

information and it would be normal to disallow your bid. Bidding 2NT with 12 points is not normal; most people have a strong no-trump when they bid 2NT over a weak two: if you had unauthorised information that partner had values, you may not bid 2NT with only 12 points.



Q Sometimes a table does not play all the boards in a round. How do you score a board not played? Which of the scoring programs best handle this?

Mr Geoff Bishop, Fairford, Glos.

A When pairs do not play all their scheduled boards, the laws say to award averages to them. If both pairs are at fault, you could give average minus (and should do if these pairs are slow repeatedly) but it is normal to give average, saying both pairs are partly at fault. Of course, if they are late because of someone else's interference, they should get average plus because neither is at fault. If you judge only one pair is at fault, they get average minus, their opponents average plus.

All good software allows averages to be entered, average, average plus and average minus. If it does not, get some different software. Personally, I advise Jeff Smith's software: it is good. If there is a problem, Jeff deals with it, even re-writing the program if need be, and it is completely free. It works with Bridgemates and Anna Gudge's Simultaneous Pairs. ■

Mr Bridge

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BRIDGE COVER CAP

Trumped again! Diana Parish, Crieff. Is she bidding Roman Key Card? Vivien Greenow, Worcester. Any more bids? Miss J M Blankhard, Cheadle Holme. Competitive auction ends with a Slam. Valerie Harrison, Bumham-on-Crouch. Is that a bid, Mrs Yarborough? Peter Ayres, Bedford. Do I alert or announce this bid? Peter Harrington, Stockport. Surely you can bid over one spade? Mr R J Groom, Kiddeminster. Do you always overbid? Kenneth Paver, Northallerton. Uncontested auction. Mr M Hall, Llandudno. I hope she passes one this one! Jill Smith, Brentwood. Auctions are all about limit bids. Mr W Roberts, Thornton-Cleveleys. Insufficient bid. Mr R F Kitchener, Biggleswade. She is making a takeout bid! Mr P Skinner, Ipswich. Bid high and bid often. Dr & Mrs Whelan, Woodstock. Is it my turn to bid. John Davies, Eastbourne. The final bid. Mr A W Moore, Alva, Clackmannanshire. Singleton spade opens the bidding. Dr V Navaratnam, Cambridge. Alert, shall we bid for the queen? Jenifer Nixon, Ponteland. Sold to the highest bidder. Gayda Young, Beaumaris. Never hang on to your queen. Mrs J Guinness-Sharp, Bury St. Edmunds. Think carefully before you bid. Mrs E S Fuller, Kiddeminster. Don't over bid your hand darling! Joseph Humber, Thornton-Cleveleys. Partner bidding? Derek Notman, Moffat. Too many jokers. Denis Meadows, Dawlish Warren. Bid double at auction. Patti Parker, Great Shelford. No, No! I said where's the action! Joan Dudley, Hertford. Going! Going! Gone! Mr & Mrs R F Pierrepoint, Ludlow. Pre-empting the bidding Madame. Mrs M E Muntus, Swaffham. Spades outbids clubs. Mike Leonard, Northampton. Beware Overbidding. Mr & Mrs I Nunn, Romsey. You won the frame, a great deal. Mrs L M Rule, Weymouth. Not bidding but waving. Chris Peeler, Wendover. Opening bid. Miss Y Dingwall, Upton-by-Chester. Any chance of a trial bid? Mr & Mrs R Salmon, Wilmslow. I say, she's bidding for her double! Ann Eastham, Bury St. Edmunds. It's not that kind of auction! Mr K G Berry, Crawley Down. Finishing the queen. Mrs P A Wood, Beaminster. Either red queen for a small slam. Mrs E Kasket, Hitchin. Double trouble. Frieda Simmons, Stanmore. It's north. Another bid. Lydia Stanford, Hove. I won't be outbid! Lydia Stanford, Hove. She's been framed. Mr J J Wood, Torquay. Bidding over. Spades are trumps. Peter Stonehouse, Burnley. Is that a double? Jean Fagan, Hertford. Any more bids. Peter Brackfield, Haslemere. Opening bid. Martyn Lewis, Masham. You should have bid higher. Mrs P S Inkey, Loughborough. It has to be an interference bid. Monica Davies, Sutton. Are you bidding or passing? Roly Burn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Who taught her to pre-empt? Mr d H Child, Guemsey. Interference bid! Mike Brady, Sheffield. Auction over spades come up trumps. Zena Learner, Ware. A transfer bid? Brian Isherwood, Chalfont St Peter. Going, going, gone! Bought by Mrs Spades. Ms V A Peck, London N19. I shall open the bidding. Dr S E Heath. What do you mean, my bid? Mr P Collins, Selsey. Opens Rebid. Dorothy Dickinson, Cuddington. You always did overbid. Jennifer Broster, Deer Park, Henfield. One down doubles at 200. Clive Hutchinson, Crewe. Rescue bid. V L Prowse, St Albans. Artful Bidding. Mr W Huggan, Bromley. Picture cards always have value. Alan Hobday, Solihull. Over bidding my dear will cost double. Frank Conlan, Mersyside. Wovee, a bid in spades! Graham Warren, Quorn. Whatever he's bid, I'll double it. Richard Thome, Rochdale. I overcall. Mrs B Curtis, Kirkcaldy. Are you bidding or overbidding? Mrs H R Dirckze, London SW15. What's the value of the Jack? Mr & Mrs G E Burdett, South Anston. Four Spades has won the auction. Mrs M V Coop, Emsworth. A Dutch auction, no hearts! Mr R M Stokes, Chester. Poised for Slam. Alan Chalmers, Kirkintilloch. A major suit always has precedence. Mr P A Birch, Leamingotn Spa. Talk about sixes and sevens. Mr Ganks, Maidstone. I'll bid but I know it's duplicate! Irene Diebelius, Romford. Bridge auction. Going to the highest bidder. Mrs M Balen, Newton Meams. Grossly Overbid! Ron Holton, Stoke on Trent. Six spades, all done? Slam. Mrs M a Jackson, Stamford. Winning bid. Mrs R A Spottiswoode, Letchworth. Does she think it's a family relation? Ruby Green, Flax Bourton. The queen has it, seven spades, gone! Della Nicholson, Brentwood. Bidding one spade! David Boobier, Plymouth. Any old queen will do. Mrs B Carlyle, Shrewsbury. There's that queen. Stephen Dixon, South Harrow. Going, going, gone to the highest bidder. Mrs M Hunter, Overstrand. Best auction bridge bid. Ronald Carlisle, West Ferry. High card signal provokes diamond response. Dave Bryan, Chester. Her bidding deserves to be hammered. Alan Chapman, Marlborough. She always overbids. Mr F Price, Swindon. Your play was a picture. Mr J Carew, Northampton. The art of bidding. Sheryl Prince, Batheaston. That's her double. Mrs K R Street, Woking. Bid out of turn. Mr J M Burrell, Silchester. Learn from the mistakes of others. Ian Dent, Desford. Silent bid. Dr A Paterson, East Lothian. No more bids? Contract to you! Mrs H Connors, Shanklin. Too many faces, not enough aces. John Williams, Angus. I can just afford a limit bid. Anne Thomas, Taunton. Going, going, gone, 3 spades the contract. Dr I Gwyn Evans, Llandeilo. Excellent but insufficient bid Madame! John Wood, Largs. Did she just pre-empt us? Irene Pilbrough, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Home I bid out of turn? Mr J A Rutherford, Lenzie. Damn spades; they always win the auction. Judy Benson, Sandwich. Hope they don't drop the bare queen. Ian Taylor, Stratford-upon-Avon. What am I bid. Mr P B Pichall, Storrington. I'm not bidding on that. Mr L Simpson, Macclesfield. Over bidding again! We'll pay for it. Daphne Lally, Amersham. Yes dear, it's a ruff painting. Penny Bele, Stoke Bishop. Good card player. Poor bidder. Jean Bowles, Brighton. Ban doubles. Doreen Godfrey, Sunderland. Anyone for auction bridge? Andrew

ARTOON BUBBLE CAPTION COMPETITION

Fairclough, Mulberton. **No, stay man! I prefer black wood!** Richard Turlington, Hook. **Did I hear 'double'?** Elaine Vinten, Bury St. Edmunds. **I am the director!** Michael Bickers, Letton. **Sold to the highest bidder.** Linda Coombes, Chilworth. **Looks like the queens off-side again.** Mr M Brennan, Rotherham. **Not a real queen. It's a dummy.** Mrs B M Smith, Bishop's Stortford. **Stop, I have another bid.** Margaret Peck, Holywood. **Oh dear, she's overbidding again.** Alan Perry, Flackwell Heath. **Well bid partner.** Mr & Mrs Methven, Deal. **Forcing bid.** Barry Henderson, Darwen. **The spade bid was not challenged.** Mr M J Bell, Didcot. **Trust her, overbidding again.** Mary Hopper, Chathill. **The play's the thing.** David Stirling, Westbury-on-Trym. **Intervening bid.** Mr P Cook, Leatherhead. **Do I hear seven spades?** Mrs G Goldwater, Chathill. **Is that jack a master?** Brian Sinfeld, St Albans. **This lot will drop the queen.** Colin Thomas, Newport. **Surprisingly she's not underbidding today.** Morag Smith, Edinburgh. **Overbidding again, another 1100 given away.** Mr I Hill, St Ives. **Over bid again.** Robert Russell, Burgess Hill. **Spades bid and two passes. Your call?** Geoffrey Fairhall, Folkstone. **We are always outbid at these auctions.** Anon. **Sorry, the jacks are not for sale.** Mrs M E van Rees, Grange-over-Sands. **Insufficient bid.** Mr J Rogers, Frodsham. **Bridge Post-mortem.** Mrs D Azariah, Stockport. **Competitive Bidding.** Mr D J Fishley, Chalfont St Giles. **Another successful bid!** Mrs P Tillet, Ashford. **Madame, that is a reverse bid!** Mr D O Parker, Havant. **Is that a spade bid?** Mr J Hall, Bolton. **Careful before bidding! Could be a transfer!** Mr A J France, Birstall. **Honours worth bidding for.** Steven Hirst, Huddersfield. **She has just bid three diamonds!** R R Davis, Upton-on-Severn. **Don't compete dear, she always overbids.** Alex Wiseman, Whitefield. **Just one**

she's over bid again. Michael Horton, Newton Longville. **The double prompts a spade bid.** Eva Tucker, Portishead. **Was your bid really double Madame?** Phillip Aelberry, King's Lynn. **She's always overbidding.** Rosemary Wheeler, Shipston-on-Stour. **I have a bid of five diamonds.** Roy Horsnell, Maldon. **Would you bid for me.** Sandra Dennison, Horsham. **Auction...bid...contract.** Bert Howard, High Peak. **Did I hear four spades Madam?** Miss K H McIntosh, Canterbury. **Takeover bid in spades.** Mr S J Connor, Stevenage. **Who is that upstart outbidding me?** David Barrows, Lymington. **Sorry, you were outbid.** Michael Percik, Bolton. **Auction lot sold to highest bidder.** Mrs R L Legg, Caterham Valley. **Don't bother, you can't outbid her.** George Wells, Olney. **An overbid in spades wins the contract!** Margery Miles, Minehead. **Did you double Madame?** Effie Robertson, Chorley. **Someone's got an ace up their sleeve!** Colin Taylor, Bollington. **Do I hear 7 Diamonds?** Dr D O Wilkes, Oxted. **Sold to the highest bidder.** Mr G Drayton, Liphook. **Dummy queen for auction.** D J Coltart, Castle Douglas. **No hearts!** Mrs J Croud, Sidmouth. **Insufficient bid Ma'am!** Else Baker, Borehamwood. **This will surely be a grand slam.** John Over, Oxshott. **Making an overcall.** Marina Palethorpe, Verwood. **Grand slam for my queen of hearts.** Mr H Marsh, Brighton. **Defiantly no bid!** Mrs B Barraclough, Bourneham. **No Bid.** Sylvia Lowther, Poynton. **Highest bid.** Mrs M D White, Godstone. **No Bid.** Mrs B Braithwaite, Ruislip. **Over bid in hearts.** Anne Smith, Bristol. **Am I bid two spades?** Miss S V Rothman, Sevenoaks. **Any advance on one no trump?** Miss J Crossfield, Camforth. **Grand slam contract bid and made!** June Chaplin, Eastbourne. **I intend to win this auction.** Mr R M Palmer, Sevenoaks. **So you want a competitive auction?** Doreen Elliott, Malvern. **No bid for this one.** Hanna Goldsmith, Edgware. **Forcing bid over a weak two.** Mr G F Day, Bideford. **It's a genuine Yarborough!** Tony Mitchell, Shipston-on-Stour. **Double the last bid for takeout.** Brian Holland, Camberley. **Raise her bid and I'll double him.** Mrs V A Golding, Faversham. **Contract completed!** Mrs A Steele, Ascot. **Your bid is psyche.** Mrs M Taylor, Stockport. **Her bidding was always outrageous.** Jay Sutherland, London NW7. **That's right! The higher of a doubleton.** Joyce Mitton, Chichester. **Alert!** Diana Sendall, Farnham. **That's another good auction of royalty.** Mr P Sheldon, Barnet. **Bidding again more money than sense.** Janet Dineen, Eastbourne. **I'll bid one heart.** Mr I C Wells, Market Harborough. **After bidding, she'll get the picture.** Ray Comish, Haddenham. **Going, going, 6 spades!** Lynda Mitchell, Sheffield. **Are you bidding this time?** Mr B P Heal, Gillingham, Dorset. **I have a very strong opening bid.** Pamela Gold, Bushey. **Your bid.** Mr O G Teller, London N21. **Insufficient bid.** Christine Jack, Bridge of Weir. **Auction cue bid.** Marion Smith, Beaconsfield. **Double!** Dr M Wood, Stapleford. **Please use the bidding box.** George Conn, London NW3. **That's not the Mona Lisa.** Mr R F Campion, St Neots. **What is your bid?** Mrs P M Jackman, Neubury. **It's a duplicate, not worth a bid.** Mr J R Smith, South Petherton. **Jack makes his point.** Margaret Morgan, Chichester. **Going, going, gone.** Spades have it. Patricia Ollerton, Knutsford. **Is that your final bid?** Ann Best, Northallerton. **That's an insufficient bid.** Peter Gooch, Bath. **Bidding is fun, try a jump bid.** Mr A G North, Glenfield. **How much are you bidding!** Derek Wood, New Malden. **Bidding a transfer to spades.** Michael Tudor-Craig, Petersfield. **Have you forgotten your bidding box?** Anthony Wann, Nuneaton. **Any advance on 7NT?** Mrs Beagle, London SW2. **Let's tell her to try contract bridge.** Mrs S Rowan, London W14. **Spade overcall wins auction.** Mr S Lawer, Ipswich. **Queen of spades wins competitive auction.** Dawn Wheeler, St Albans. **Is this what they call auction bridge?** Mrs A Roberts, Worcester. **Is that you final bid?** Mrs M Kaye, Watford. **Outbid by spades.** Richard Tempest, Othery. **The royals usually control the bidding.** Mr J Hempshall, Leeds. **Going for a slam.** Andrew Heaver, Brixworth. **Single queens are difficult to bid on.** Mrs J W Coalbran. **She's Bid too high again.** Joy Rowe, Wroughton. **That's never worth two clubs.** Grahame Mabel, Oakmoor. **Transfer to the Antiques Roadshow.** Ruth Evans, London. **Apprentice. Stop! I have a bid.** Susan Pople, Enfield. **Last bid for the heartless queen.** Maggie Beecher, Cardiff. **I knew all along where the queen was.** Jean Cobral, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. **Under bid: Failed to make reserve.** Ted Mattingley, Littlehampton. **I bid seven spades.** Mr R Hill, Basildon. **I knew she would double your bid.** Mrs Sims, Littlehampton. **Bidding with an isolated queen.** Sue McFarlane, Tonbridge. **Singleton queen is valueless in an auction.** David Maloney, Vale of Glamorgan. **One of 52 from the Waddington collection.** Mary Butt, Reigate. **It's your bid, Madame.** You've been doubled! Mrs V M Rhind, Southbourne. **That is an insufficient bid.** Mr A K Saluaga, Canterbury. **Everyone loves a last minute bidder.** Mrs M Dent, Uckfield. **I think mine is the winning bid.** Mrs R Thome, Uckfield. **Auction or contract?** Pamela Wright, Mowbray. **Stop Bidding.** Mrs S Bloomsfield, Chelmondston. **Spades over bidding again.** Joyce Bailey, Cheddleton. **Not a lot for a jump bid.** Joan Postive, Churchdown. **We've gone back to action bridge.** John Kelly, Walsall. **Pulling rank.** Luce Green, Reading. **Call the Director.** Derek Pratt, Upminster. **Suits you, Sir!** Richard Welch, Denbigh. **I have another bid in this auction.** Sue Hall, Southport. **That must be a take-out bid.** Mrs T A Crossling, Poole. **I'll bid having noticed that picture.** Mr R G Robinson, Harpenden. **That was some overcall.** Mr H Small, Shoreham-by-Sea. **No bid, it's a fake.** Mrs D Martin, Portsmouth. **Another pre-emptive bid from spades, I see!** Rev J Torr, Tewkesbury. **But you should have shown Alert.** Ilkley. **Double the last bid.** Epsom.



face card between them. Mrs S Thomas, Littlebury. **Splinter bid.** Patrick Dunham, Coleorton. **Auction won by the spade raised bid.** Mrs Y G Hornitt, Preston. **That bidder certainly has it in spades!** Mr D H Linton, London SE9. **Sold to spades.** Dr J H Naysmith, Cynod. **Four spades has it then.** J Twyford, Brentwood. **Are you bidding or just waving?** Christopher Sales, Totteridge. **She never stops bidding.** William Holden, Sale. **Insufficient bid.** Paul Doe, Exeter. **Is that a conventional bid?** Eva Adamson, Dumfries. **Not quite Acol but very effective.** Brian Rayment, Ealing. **Is that your final bid?** Dr R Ehsanullah, Chalfont St Giles. **A bid too far?** Sybil Cooper, Sutton. **I'm told she has it in spades.** Pauline Bell, Alderley Edge. **Is that your final bid?** Mr D Siddall, Brighton. **Is it Duplicate or Auction bridge?** Marie Bowers, Haslemere. **My Goodness, she has doubled their bid.** Joyce Knight, Hatfield. **Higher than a queen.** Christine Leader, Mountsonel. **I think she has stolen my bid.** Mr M Jennings, Reigate. **A Spade bid.** Peggy Thompson, Bracknell. **The bids with you Madame.** Richard Baratt, Quom. **There! Told you so, overbidding again!** Mrs P Schumann, Highgate. **Should I declare my bidding system?** Maurice Phillips, Henfield. **Waiting for the queen to drop.** Joy Furness, Epsom. **Single queen.** Betty Thome, Vale of Glamorgan. **Any questions partner?** Eileen Bushell, Sudbury. **Queen high, bidding over, contract agreed.** Valerie Wallbank, Sunderland. **Do I hear four no trumps?** Joan England, Radlett. **Well! I declare!** Mrs J Stockbridge, Abingdon. **Looks like**



A Walk at Christmas

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

It would be a lie if I claimed that the sun was shining today. It is up there somewhere, no doubt looking down on us lovingly as, after all, it is Christmas; for the moment, it is conspicuous by its absence. No matter, Christmas is special, regardless of the weather because there always seems to be a kindly, friendly air of goodwill to everyone. It may not last but, for the time being, let us be happy with that mystical glow of benevolence. Even Cindy, my gorgeous golden retriever, seems to know that there is something rather special about this time of year and is very happy to join in the celebrations. She is impervious to the weather. Walkies is her thing and the national obsession with climatic conditions is really beneath her sniff.

Gloria and Mitzi Join us

Today, Gloria, a keen member of the local bridge club, and her black spaniel, Mitzi, have joined us. Cindy and Mitzi get on well together, but very much in their own way. As we walk across the fields, they hare around enthusiastically, each enjoying the countryside to the full. There has been quite a dry spell recently so perhaps the scent is good. The outlook this year is very different from all those white, snowy scenes on so many of my Christmas cards; the dogs are certainly making the most of it.

Gung-ho Bridge

Gloria, referred to irreverently in the club as ‘Jolly Hockey-sticks’, perhaps because of her somewhat gung-ho approach to bridge, is a delightful character who always has a bridge deal that she wants to talk about. Today, Christmas notwithstanding, is no exception. This is it:

Dealer North. Game All.

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

Let us draw a veil over the bidding because Gloria was alone amongst the South players in arriving in 6♣. West led the jack of diamonds, which won the first trick. Subsequently Gloria lost an ‘inevitable’ trump trick for one down.

Impossible Slam?

‘It was impossible to make the slam’, complained Gloria, but she was

somewhat nettled when another player told her that one declarer in 4♠ had made twelve tricks after the same lead. What did I think? We will come back to this hand later.

Christmas Wildlife

Even though there is little colour around at this time of year, Gloria is most impressed with the bright scarlet of the rose hips in the hedgerows. They reach their peak in December and, although they are favourite delicacies for some species of wildlife, who have already been dining out on them, there is plenty of colour remaining. Birds, especially those of the thrush family, and wood mice, who curiously do not hibernate during the winter, are the main enthusiastic consumers.

I notice a plentiful supply of mistletoe this year, another favourite with bird life when those luscious white berries develop gradually. However, we should not begrudge the birds their tasty snack as they are themselves responsible for spreading the seeds around as they scrape sticky leftovers off their beaks and onto branches of other trees.

Twelve Tricks Made

Time to get back to Gloria’s hand and see how one declarer made twelve tricks. After winning with the jack of diamonds, West continued with a second diamond, ruffed by declarer who continued like this: the king of clubs, ace of clubs and a club ruff. Now a second diamond ruff, followed by ►