



Cambs & Hunts Bridge



Newsletter Number 26

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The next newsletter is scheduled to appear on **30th December**. Please try to get copy to us no later than **15th December**. All contributions welcome!



The County once more has its own website! The URL is given above. Thanks to David Allen for taking this on. Any data to be included on the site should be sent to him on david@gismo99.freemove.co.uk



In this issue Giles Woodruff presents two interesting hands, the first below. Peter Burrows describes three slam hands and invites you to spot the link between them. In a letter he also discusses selection practices for the Tollemache from long ago. Philip Wraight introduces competitions for the next season, while Susan Hollingworth and Peter Beavan report on the Millenium Trophy. Chris Jagger discusses when removing 2NT is forcing and there is the usual round-up of News and Events.



Faites vos jeux!

When you're dummy, does the play of a hand sometimes seem like a game of Roulette? So often partner takes his or her eye off the ball, which subsequently spins merrily and randomly around the table before coming to rest in -800, +530 or whatever. So, fancy a flutter on the hand to the right? Giles Woodruff invites you to place your bets as to who won the second round of trumps, with which card, and on which trick. The play is eminently plausible. When you've decided, turn to page 4.

<p>3♠ by West</p> <p>♠ Q1087</p> <p>♥ J</p> <p>♦ 86</p> <p>♣ AKQ1082</p>	<p>♠ 642</p> <p>♥ AK10976</p> <p>♦ K7</p> <p>♣ J9</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 10px auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> W N S E </div> <p>♠ AJ3</p> <p>♥ Q542</p> <p>♦ 1093</p> <p>♣ 753</p>	<p>♥K led</p> <p>♠ K95</p> <p>♥ 83</p> <p>♦ AQJ542</p> <p>♣ 64</p>
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Detective Story *by Peter Burrows*

One of the advantages of having an absolutely terrible memory is the necessity to commit everything that you want to remember onto some sort of permanent record; so that it never gets lost, or anyway, not permanently. One of the disadvantages is that the said permanent record (most of mine having been made long before the days of PCs, and never converted to the new technology) tends to fall out and hit you on the head, usually when you are desperately hunting for your passport, or in similarly fraught circumstances. But when the editors told me that they were looking for new contributors to this august journal, the “filing system” for once came to my assistance. I said that I was far too lazy to write anything new, but that I would look for my passport, and see whether I could revamp any of the material which would no doubt surface in the process.

So, here is the story of three slams. It happened to me a very long time ago in a random club event not far from Cambridge, and it features three deals, which, taken as a unit, constitute an event which is completely unique in my (fairly extensive) experience of the game. The challenge is to identify the common theme which creates that uniqueness, and the editors may care to award a small prize to the first correct solution to be opened, provided, of course that it is posted in an envelope stamped with an unused Mauritius 2d. blue and accompanied by a suitably inane comment to act as a tie-breaker. Alternatively they may prefer to print the answer upside down at the bottom of the back page.

[Or even right-way-up on page 10. (ed.)]

Early in the evening, the following came up at game all:-

♠ A87		♠ K9xx
♥ AKQ10xxx	W N E	♥ Jxx
♦ x	S	♦ Axxx
♣ xx		♣ Ax

West, my partner, dealt and opened 2♥ (Acol), our style at the time being to make use of the bid on practically any 8-trick hand, provided that at least one trick (preferably an Ace) was outside the long suit. With North-South silent, I raised to 3♥, and West, deciding that she had little in reserve, bid a quiet 4♥. At this stage, I flirted with 6NT in order to protect my ♠K, but eventually decided that 6♥ would have better chances, praying that partner’s spades /or the lie of the enemy cards /or the quality of oppo’s opening leads would be such as to avoid the loss of two quick tricks in the suit.

(I’d be content with a slam try (AJM))

In a sense, my bid was over-aggressive, for West has only eleven top tricks, and appears to be dependent on a 3-3 spade break and a non-club lead. But, as often happens in such situations, the defence came to the rescue, without, in this instance, seeming to do anything much wrong. North, with a worthless hand apart from ♠Q10xx, decided to lead the suit, after which it was a simple matter for declarer to draw trumps and establish an extra spade winner in dummy for the discard of her losing club. +1430 was worth 12 IMPs to us on the Butler scoring, and I gravely assured partner that I would never have bid the slam without the ♠9!

[Note declarer may still get home on a red suit lead, as the natural play is to draw trumps ending in dummy and lead a spade to the

8 and 10. Declarer wins the return, cashes ♠A dropping the Jack, and now guesses well. I don't think "restricted choice" arguments apply here, if North plays the 10 and Q equally often, but against most Norths I would finesse if they play the 10, and go for the drop if they play the queen! So against me, if you hold QJx as South you should drop the J not the Q... (AJM)]

Later on came:

Dealer	W	♠ x	E-W Vul
		♥ Q109xxx	
		♦ KJx	
		♣ Jxx	
♠ AQJxxxx			♠ 6543
♥ xx			♥ -
♦ Q			♦ Axxxx
♣ AKx			♣ Qxxx
		♠ K	
		♥ AKxxx	
		♦ xxxx	
		♣ xxx	

The auction began with another ACOL 2:

West	North	East	South
2♠	3♥	?	

In my view, East has quite a difficult bid now. 4♥ would get by this round safely enough, but it is likely to be followed by 5♥ from South, and then, assuming that West cue-bids 6♣, East will be more or less honour-bound to say 6♦, but will be uncomfortably aware that his spades, while solid enough in their modest way, may be slightly disappointing to his partner, and that his overall values may be rather less than she will expect. In fact, as you can see, 7♠ is frigid, but on balance it must be preferable to stop in six with Kx of trumps missing, especially in a relatively

weak Butler field. Of course, if South could be relied upon not to bid 5♥, then 4♥ from East would be a stand-out, and pigs might fly. By the time I had worked all this out, oppo and TD were showing signs of impatience, so I bid 6♠. As expected, South raised the hearts, and partner's double closed the auction.

[But after our cue bid of 6♦, partner doesn't have to launch 7♠, as surely both 6♠ and 6♥ are grand slam tries. Rather than bid 4♥, which I play as a general strong raise, I think I'd show the void with 5♥. (AJM)]

Woodenly, I led a spade, and for some reason which is not clear to me even now, partner then played three rounds of clubs instead of switching to diamonds, after which I played ♦A, diamond ruff. So a trick had disappeared in the play, but +1100 was still worth 6 IMPs. Don't ask me why!

Finally, I was rather amused by this deal:

♠ A10xxx		♠ KQxx
♥ x		♥ xxxx
♦ AKxxxx		♦ x
♣ A		♣ xxxx

West (me this time, positions having been switched for convenience) dealt at love all, and the auction proceeded:

West	North	East	South
1♦	P	P(a)	1♥(b)
2♠	P	4♠(c)	P
6♠	all pass		

- a) The subsequent explanation was that partner did not want to bid 1♥ with such a poor suit, but could not bid 1♠ because to do so would deny holding four hearts!
- b) South is presumably still kicking himself!

Letter to the editors:

I was very pleased, on returning to Cambridgeshire after an absence of almost 20 years, to be greeted with a copy of the C & H newsletter, which *inter alia* allowed me to bring myself up to date on local developments. Some of the names are the same as they were, and I was pleased to discover that some of the people don't even look any older. Well, not much anyway. I was distressed, however, to read a letter complaining about the non-availability of "top players" for ECL matches. That was a problem 30 years ago as well, but I am not sure that the answer is on the lines suggested by your correspondent.

When I was asked whether I would consider becoming chairman of C & H, a post in which I served for some years, I replied that I would do so on a number of conditions. Most of these I have long since forgotten, and they are probably not relevant to current circumstances anyway. But one which I do remember was that we should make a serious attempt to win the Tollemache, putting into place a 5-year plan designed to ensure that we would be represented by the best team which we could field and raising the standard of that team to such a level that we could reasonably expect to have a chance of success.

I hesitate to say that it was solely due to the conditions which I laid down, but the simple fact is that we did win the Tolly, and qualified for the final the following year as well. In those days even qualifying was something of an achievement, as only one team from six went through and we always had either London or Middlesex in our heat. We had never previously qualified for the final, and I think I am correct in saying that we have never won it since, so perhaps my thoughts on the factors which contributed to our success may be of some interest.

The first thing to note is that we did not have a particularly outstanding team. I think that one or two of us might just have made it to National Master; I was a Regional Master at the time, and several of the team had not made it that far. It was a far cry from the situation now, when a glance at the county ranking list reveals a positive galaxy of Life and Grand Masters. What we did have, however, was a team rather than a collection of pairs, or even worse, as was the case when I first arrived in Cambridge, a collection of individuals who sometimes deigned to play with each other.

Two things, in my opinion, were essential to creating the team spirit which was important to our success (we did a lot of other things as well, most of which helped, but these two were vital.) First, we decided that the ECL and the Tolly should be treated entirely separately, with no presumption that regular membership of the "A" team in the former would entail selection for the latter. The reasons for that are very simple: the Tolly is a one-off (or hopefully 2-off) event, whereas the ECL is a 6 or 7 match event. It is (or at least it was in those days) simply not realistic to suppose that people can make themselves available on 8 or 9 week-ends in a season simply to demonstrate their commitment to playing on the one (or hopefully two) big ones. Given that, the question one has to ask is this; do we want to be represented in the Tolly by the best team which we can put out, or merely by the best team selected only from those with most time to spare? Certainly there can be different views on this question, but I made it clear that I personally was not prepared to play unless the team was selected on the former basis; I was convinced then, and remain convinced now, that if we wanted to do well, never mind win, nothing else was good enough.

The second thing which we did was to arrange regular meetings at which the team would play together and discuss the hands and results in considerable detail. We had a nucleus of 5 pairs

who did not expect to play in ECL matches (though they might sometimes be asked to do so in an emergency), but who did undertake to attend the team sessions whenever they were able. Usually at least 4 pairs would be available for these sessions, and if they were not, a pair from the ECL “A” team would be invited to fill in. They would be delighted to do so if they could, as a good result at one or more of these sessions could be one of the factors leading to an invitation to join the Tolly squad (bear in mind that this was at a time when the University contingent in the C & H team was particularly strong, but necessarily “floating”, so that opportunities for “promotion” were fairly frequent).

The reasoning behind this approach was again quite simple. The ECL was, with all due respect (and I suspect that the same is still true today), simply not a strong enough competition to provide our top pairs with adequate preparation to meet the likes of London, Middlesex, Hampshire etc. with any realistic chance of success. Our view was that our team would gain more benefit from trying to beat hell out of each other in an informal but competitive atmosphere than from playing against relatively low-class county teams. After all, we had to make the assumption that we could actually win the Tolly, in which case it seemed to follow that any one of our pairs would benefit more from playing against one of the others than they would from toiling against lesser competition.

As I have said, the policy worked. It was not the only possible policy, but in my view it was the best. One of its important side advantages was that it led to a much greater stability of personnel in the ECL teams as well. The pairs in the “A” team were consistently trying to establish that they were in line for promotion to the Tolly squad, while those in the “B” and “C” teams were equally trying to advance a step. Perhaps not surprisingly, our concentration on the Tolly meant that our ECL results improved significantly as well. Our experience would certainly lead me to recommend the approach to any county hoping to improve upon the level of results achieved by its teams.

Perhaps I could close on a different note. Whatever the basis of selection, it does not seem very helpful to me to denigrate the Tolly team for finishing “only” 7th. The Tolly is one of the toughest events around, not admittedly on a par with the Gold Cup or Spring Fours, but certainly well above the standard of the ECL or any of the random one-day green pointed events which have proliferated in recent years. Merely to make the final is a fine achievement, even now that qualification is slightly less difficult than it was in my heyday. There is no disgrace in placing 7th from some 40 or so counties fielding presumptively the strongest teams which they can put out. Of course, that is not to argue that we should not aim to do even better next year. But in my judgement we are unlikely to do so if a criterion for selection is the amount of time which a pair can afford to make available for matches against relatively low-class opposition.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Burrows.

[An interesting historical perspective. Of course some things now are different – the overall standard has improved and I don't think the ECL is regarded with disdain, but there are many more competing events today. Also “7th” was in fact our lowest placing for 5 years. (eds.)]

New Competition Season by Philip Wraight

Summer holidays are a distant memory for some and the new County bridge programme is now under way. The calendar and details of events are outlined elsewhere in this newsletter but I would like to highlight a few matters here.

The County Teams Knockout was particularly exciting last year with a large entry and many of the fancied teams being knocked out in early rounds. Entry is only £10 per team and you are guaranteed at least two matches as those knocked out in the first round get free entry to the plate. All rounds of the Knockout proper are green pointed. Please send entries in by 20th October at the latest. If you need teammates, let me know and I will try to put you in touch with someone similarly seeking.

We are planning a number of changes which we think will improve the County programme. As an experiment we are enlarging the County Pairs Final so that a greater proportion of each club heat will qualify. The Jubilee Pairs will now be played as a Swiss Pairs. This is an exciting new departure for the County. Those of you who have played in a Swiss pairs will know how enjoyable and interesting these events are and for those of you who haven't, this is your opportunity to find out.

We are also hoping to reinstate the Swiss Teams Club Challenge which lapsed last year, and the Garden Cities club teams of eight will revert to a knockout format.

If you have any comments on these ideas, or any other suggestions for improvements you would like to see in the County programme, I should be delighted to hear from you. You can write to me at 51 Glisson Rd, Cambridge, CB1 2HG; telephone 01223-526210; or email at philipwraight@ntlworld.com.



Dates for your diary:

20th October 2000	Closing date for County Teams Knockout entries.
29th October 2000	Newmarket Open Swiss Teams
12th November 2000	ECL v Essex (H)
20th November 2000	Closing date for Garden Cities
24th November 2000	Closing date for the Golfprint Trophy
17th December 2000	ECL v Norfolk (H)
28th January 2001	County Individual Final
4th February 2001	County Pairs Final
11th February 2001	ECL v Northants (H)
25th February 2001	ECL v University (A)
11th March 2001	Swiss Teams Club Challenge
10th June 2001	Jubilee Swiss Pairs



Giles wouldn't ruff *by* Giles Woodruff

The full hand for the play problem on page 7 was:

IMPs. Love all	♠ AQJ74	Dealer W
	♥ K642	
	♦ 10983	
	♣ -	
♠ K5		♠ 10862
♥ Q53		♥ A
♦ J5		♦ AQ42
♣ AQ10732		♣ KJ94
	♠ 93	
	♥ J10987	
	♦ K76	
	♣ 865	

West	North	East	South
1♣*	X	XX	2♥
P	3♥	4♥	P
5♣	P	P	P

You were playing a strong no trump, which is why you opened what might have been a prepared club. North leads a low heart.

The contract is only in danger if North has the ♠A and South has the ♦K. Is there anything you can do in this situation?

At trick two I tried the effect of cashing the ♦A and leading a low diamond. Had I lost the trick to the ♦K on my left, I would still have made the contract: even if the ♠A was sitting over the king, South would not have an entry and a spade could be discarded on the queen of diamonds.

The bonus came when South failed to play the king at trick two (thinking that I wouldn't play the diamond suit in this way with anything other than a singleton). When the jack scored, I was home. Had he risen, I would have gone off, but I would have gone off anyway on any other line.

This is the sort of play which will work more often than it ought to, and in case you think the opposition in this instance were weak, I would point out that RHO was one of England's top players, and the partnership was a recent winner of the Corwen trophy.

[Nice line. It would have failed if North had held say AJxx J10xx Kxxxx -, when partner might have argued that the finesse was superior! Apologies to Giles for the title - I dare say he's heard it before (ed.)]



Solution to Peter Burrows' detective problem: (see pages 2-4.)

The answer is that at the time I could not recall any other session in which our side bid three slams without making any use of (a) cue-bids, (b) 4NT, (c) 5NT. Subsequently I have been actively looking out for a repeat performance, and certainly it has never happened since.



Results roundup:

In the semi-final of the **County Knockout**, JAGGER bt TAHSEEN, and then went on to beat MILMAN by the narrowest of margins. They went on to come fourth in the **Pachabo**.

CURTIN bt RILEY in the **County Plate** final.

Saffron Walden represented the County in the **Garden Cities** regional final at Peterborough, but just missed out on qualifying for the final.

The County has had a poor start to the **Eastern Counties League**, losing both opening matches, against Beds. and Suffolk; the green point awards so far being of no interest!

Nationally, there was strong representation in the **U25** final, Wade/Zivan winning, Jagger (but not your editor, who is a more likely contender for the seniors) second, and Greig/Zakrzewski third. There was a disappointing set of results at the **EBU Spring Congress**, best being Jagger winning the B final of the pairs. Rather more was achieved at the **EBU Summer Congress** (Brighton); Young/Jagger were 7th in the pairs, Woodruff 4th in the Four Star Teams, and Young/Jagger/Jagger won the Brighton Bowl. In the **Chairman's Cup**, Sweden, Young/Jagger made the semifinals. In the **Coventry Congress**, Young, Deacon, Milman, Stelmashenko won the swiss teams event.

Whilst some people have already played their first round matches for 2000/01 **NICKO**, the Cambridge Club are still awaiting their final for the 1999/2000 season, against Bradford.

Master Point Update

Congratulations to John Young who came third in the national ranking lists for most masterpoints won (he also came second in terms of Green points only). Fiske Warren in now getting perilously close to becoming Grand Master – will he be next in the County?

The category prizes for the County are as follows:

- Star masters, tournament masters: P Morgan
- County masters - advanced masters: P Last
- Up to District masters: J Harrison

Around the Clubs

Cottenham:

Evans Handicap Cup (Autumn)

- 1. Sybil Attwood & Angela Allin 70.45%
- 2. Emile Habib & John Pearce 69.89%

Evans Handicap Cup (Spring)

- 1. Peter Morgan & Malcolm McBryde 74.83%
- 2. Haydn Emery & Sheila Emery 65.25%

Championship Pairs

- 1. Kiki Allen & David Allen 61.31%
- 2. Peter Morgan & Malcolm McBryde 59.60%

Club Teams Championship (Crompton Cup)

Kiki Allen, David Allen, Peter Morgan, Malcolm McBryde beat Jimmy Cheung, Jim Fisher, Barrie Harrison, Mary Harrison



STOP PRESS: Cambridge Club win NICKO by 6 IMPs! Congratulations to Chris Jagger, Catherine Jagger, John Young and Ed Linfield.

