

Cambs & Hunts Bridge

Number 51, January 2009

Cambs & Hunts news

Congratulations to Jonathan Mestel on his promotion to Grand Master – taking the county's tally to eight, and Jonathan's to two.

The Cambs & Hunts Swiss Teams was won by David Kendrick, Chris Larlham, Rod & Sue Oakford (right).

Ely Bridge Club has two new initiatives – they have begun daytime duplicates on a Monday afternoon, and from the New Year Paul Fegarty will be running bridge classes at the same time – see page 7.

Also in this issue...

Chris Jagger recalls an expensive three consecutive boards, Aunt Agony responds to a larger-than-usual Christmas postbag, and we follow up another successful Tollemache qualification for the county with a review of the last 14 years.

Visit the county's website at

www.cambsbridge.org.uk

- information on bridge clubs
- this and previous newsletters
- details of competitions and results

Please send items for the website to **David Allen** on david@djallen.org.uk

The next newsletter will be published in April.

Please send in news, letters and hands no later than 15th March. All contributions welcome!

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4500 in three hands

by Chris Jagger

You pick up: ♠87 ♥AQ94 ♦A1087
♣AK7, and the auction proceeds 1♦-
P-2♦-3♠, and it is your turn to speak.
The 2♦ bid was an inverted raise,
showing ten or more points with
diamond support. If partner had been
weaker he would have bid 3♦, or 1NT
if balanced.

So what should I bid? In an ideal world
we should have discussed everything
to the nth degree, and know exactly
what everything means, but we
haven't. I do know that double is
penalties - it would show the same
hand but with the major suits reversed.
I do know that I want to go to game,
but that could be in no trumps, hearts
or diamonds, or if partner has a good
spade holding we may wish to double
them.

With so many options it would be nice
to let partner choose – either by a
takeout double (which we don't play
here), or by making a forcing pass. If
they had bid only 2♠ then the pass
would have been forcing, as we were
always intending to go to 3♦ anyway. I
suspect here that pass is not forcing, as
they have bid above 3♦, and we
wouldn't want to commit ourselves to
a higher contract. Even so, I note that it
would make a lot of sense to play the
pass as forcing.

I have four hearts, and if we don't bid
them now we will never find them, so I
bid 4♥. Now will partner think this is
natural or a cuebid for diamonds? We
have never discussed the matter, but I
have 100% confidence he will think it
is natural – if I am not prepared to play
there then I would not give him the
chance to go wrong – clearly 4♥ is a
possible contract (as we do not play
that the 2♦ bid denies a major), so 4♥

may well be the right game. If I simply
wanted to try to slam, I would bid 4♣
or 4♠.

In actual fact I suspect that 4♣ is only
necessarily a game try – I might bid it
on a hand interested in slam, but in the
first instance it is simply a game try.
Why can we not play in 4♣? Because
we have a diamond fit so we would not
want to play in the other minor.
Partner deliberates, no doubt going
through similar thoughts, and emerges
with 5♦. I suspect we are going to be
off two spade tricks and then need to
make the rest, and anticipate dummy
with interest:

♠Q2 ♥K86 ♦KJ642 ♣863

A meagre nine count, including a
worthless ♠Q. This contract is going to
take some work. The ♠3 is led, and
two spades are cashed, before South
switches to the ♣10. I win and play the
♦A and ♦10. The odds are that the
queen is with North, so after some
pointless agonising, during which I
know that I am going to finesse but I
need to work myself up to doing it, I
take the finesse, and almost turn my
card over, convinced I am going to be
wrong. I am not, so I continue with a
third diamond.

I now cash ♥AK, getting to a critical
point. The jack has appeared from
North, and the percentage play in
isolation is to play for South to have
10xxx (that oft-misunderstood
'principle of restricted choice'). What
about in this situation? North has got
three spades and three diamonds, while
I know that South has got six spades
and one diamond. This makes it more
likely that North has three hearts. I can
work out the odds, but at my time of

life that will take some time, and I am pretty sure the odds still favour playing for South to have four hearts. In addition, I note that North followed low to the first club to indicate an odd number, so that suggests only two hearts. South followed low high in hearts, but he is a good player and it is a late stage of the play, so I think he would never give true count from four – whether he would give false count from three I am not so sure (good players tend to be scared of playing high low as true count and having someone take advantage of that, but are a lot happier to play low-high when that is true count – this shouldn't be so, but it often is).

The full hand:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|--|----------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|------|
| | | ♠ 1093 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♥ J5 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♦ Q93 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♣ QJ542 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ 87 | <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ Q2 |
| | | N | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | | E | | | | | | | | |
| | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ AQ94 | ♥ K86 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ A1087 | ♦ KJ642 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ AK7 | | ♣ 863 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♠ AKJ654 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♥ 10732 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♦ 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | ♣ 109 | | | | | | | | | |

Sadly we lose 350 on the board, which turns out to be a good board for the strong no trump. West opened 1NT, which was raised to 3NT, with South doubling for the lead. South thought she was asking for a spade lead, and North simply to lead his shortest suit. A heart lead netted ten tricks. On the other hand, a spade lead would have netted -500, and then it would have been a disaster for the strong no trump, and another 1450 points to the good guys!

A good bit of kit

Know any partners that love a good bit of system? Ever played with a partner that has forgotten your favourite bit of kit? Like many things, conventions are really about people's enjoyment of the game, and much less about improving one's results, but there are some areas that can do with a bit of discussion, and these are generally simply about knowing what some bids mean.

Take the next hand:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|-----|
| ♠ AQJ973 | <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | ♠ K |
| | | N | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | | E | | | | | | | | |
| | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ A9 | ♥ QJ43 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ KQJ6 | ♦ A53 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 7 | | ♣ A10865 | | | | | | | | | |

Uncontested the auction has the fairly normal start: 1♠-2♣, 2♦-3NT.

But now what?

With a 17 count, we are known to be reasonably close to slam, but on the other hand, it sounds like partner has a fairly misfitting hand, and it is not clear that the five level is safe. How do you show interest with this sort of hand?

There is a simple solution. 4♥. With at least five diamonds you would continue with 4♦, so this bid denies a fifth diamond, shows interest in slam, and since you could have simply raised no trumps, it must show a sixth spade. It is clearly what the bid ought to mean.

Over to partner. He looks to have a good hand here, but he is missing a heart control. He jumps to 5♠, and the other hand can gratefully bid 6♠. The heart finesse is right, and sure enough, an overtrick makes.

This is merely 430 away. Opponents have fallen into 7♦, and with nothing too bad happening in spades or

diamonds, and the heart finesse working, this rolls home! If one of those had not been, it would be another 1490 to the good guys!

Two boards later you have:

♠8 ♥AJ6 ♦AKQ94 ♣AKJ10

| | | | |
|----|----|---|----|
| N | E | S | W |
| | | | 1♦ |
| 1♠ | P | P | X |
| 2♥ | P | P | X |
| P | 3♣ | P | ? |

Game may not be on here, with the minors likely not to be splitting well, but equally, if partner has six clubs you wouldn't mind having a shot at slam. You try a 4♠ splinter, and partner signs off in 5♣, with ♠K743 ♥982 ♦7 ♣Q9752. They have a diamond ruff off it and an ace, and you make 11 tricks.

In the other room they bid to 6♣, after the auction 1♦-2♦-P-2♥, 3♣. The majors hand is on lead, and with the clubs splitting 2-2 and the ♠A onside, the contract cannot be beaten.

The full hand:

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| Love all | ♠AQJ1096 |
| Dealer W | ♥KQ743 |
| | ♦— |
| | ♣83 |
| ♠8 | |
| ♥AJ6 | |
| ♦AKQ94 | |
| ♣AKJ10 | |
| | ♠K743 |
| | ♥982 |
| | ♦7 |
| | ♣Q9752 |
| | ♠52 |
| | ♥105 |
| | ♦J1086532 |
| | ♣64 |

Another potential 1470 to the good guys. In three boards we might have had nearly 4500 points!

Diary Dates

- 18th January County Individual Final
- 1st February ECL v Northants (H)
- 8th February County Pairs Final
- 22nd February ECL v Norfolk (H)
- 14th March Novice Pairs Tournament
- 19th April Garden Cities Qualifier
- 26th April Jubilee Swiss Pairs

Auntie in Grand form

Dear Auntie,

Thank you for the last piece of advice you gave. You were right – giving up bridge was absolutely the right thing to do.

However, the addiction never quite dies and last weekend I ventured out again to play in not just one, but three distinguished matchpoint pairs events at the Autumn Congress – the primary event qualifier, then the secondary event qualifier and finally a random Swiss Pairs.

This hand from the latter was perhaps the most memorable. With opponents only vulnerable, partner, sitting west, was dealer:

| | | |
|---------|--|---------|
| ♠AKJ876 | | ♠Q10 |
| ♥86543 | | ♥AQ1072 |
| ♦4 | | ♦KJ7 |
| ♣K | | ♣AQ3 |

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Ptnr | RHO | Giles | LHO |
| 1♠ | P | 2♥ | 3♦ |
| 4♦* | P | 5♣* | P |
| 5♦* | P | 7♥ | P |
| P | P | | |

By the time partner bid 5♦ I thought he must have a void and expected at least the ♠AK and ♥K as well. Unfortunately he had a cunning plan which I had ruined with my 5♣ bid – he was hoping I'd sign off with 4♥

enabling him to ask for key cards. (He probably thought that an immediate 4NT would confuse me given my propensity to treat such bids as natural, or unusual, or in fact anything vaguely interesting that isn't a useful key card-asking device.)

LHO cashed the $\diamond A$ and continued with a club to the king. I mulled over what seemed an interesting play problem. All my attempts to keep in practice by reading *The Times* bridge columns for the past five years proved in vain – this sort of thing never seems to happen to Andy Robson.

It seemed to me that probably we were the only pair in the grand, but I noted that small slam was not cold. Also the 3 \diamond overcall might well not be found at most tables, but even a maniac should have at least seven of them.

I led a heart from table and the nine appeared on my right. The normal play (certainly without the overcall) would be to finesse the queen. My only hope to score any matchpoints was that the normal play should fail while an abnormal play would succeed. Two choices seemed available – to drop the singleton king offside or to play RHO for $\heartsuit KJ9$. The 3 \diamond overcall and lack of tension led me to favour inserting the ten. When this held I was only one off, drawing level with many declarers who had bid to six.

A score of 20% in a freely bid grand slam missing a cashing ace (that was cashed at trick one) must be a good one for your collection?

Although 7 \heartsuit -1 felt much more pleasing than 6 \heartsuit -1, I have not yet resolved how this should be bid. Partner and I would appreciate your wise counsel.

Yours,

Giles Woodruff

Dear Giles,

Oh my goodness me. Poor old Easley. In his day they'd have jump-shifted on the first round, but it seems to me either of you could have bid key-card Blackwood on your second turn to reach an appropriate level. Most grand slam accidents are missing 3 aces not 2, so your disaster does have a certain novelty value. Your pairs problem reminds me of this hand from "Play Bridge with Mike Lawrence":

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|------------------|
| \spadesuit KQ4 | <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | N | | W | E | | S | \spadesuit A32 |
| N | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | |
| | | S | | | | | | |
| \heartsuit 975 | \heartsuit KQ3 | | | | | | | |
| \diamondsuit AQ10 | \diamondsuit KJ8 | | | | | | | |
| \clubsuit AQ96 | \clubsuit KJ53 | | | | | | | |

Young Michael and his partner bid 1NT-5NT-7NT. No one doubled, but South gave it some thought. North led a spade. So how should West play?

Once again you can see everyone in the room will be in 6NT, presumably on the same lead. Unlike you, declarer does not know who holds $\heartsuit A$ and will play a heart to the king. The poorer Souths will win this trick and the contract will be one down. Surely most of the room will duck $\heartsuit K$ smoothly, and declarer, will come back to hand and lead a heart to the queen and will likely finish two down! If you can manage one down you will get a good board. So at trick 2 you lead a small heart off table. If South does not have $\heartsuit J$ to back up her ace, she will have a nasty decision – might you not hold $\spadesuit KQx$ $\heartsuit Jx$ $\diamondsuit AQxxx$ $\clubsuit Axx$ and be trying to steal your 13th trick? On the day South hopped up with her ace at trick 2 – and received a 20% board for her pains. So, Giles, your hand is not a record. A better player than us both bid worse, and got a far better score.

No, don't give up the game – there's hope for us all. Even my nephew. Just

the other day he too had a grand slam to play:

| | | |
|----------|-----|---------|
| ♠ Q642 | | ♠ AK |
| ♥ AKQ | | ♥ J5 |
| ♦ AKJ107 | N | ♦ Q832 |
| ♣ 6 | W E | ♣ AQ974 |
| | S | |

He reached 7♦ and North led ♦4 on which South showed out. He won in hand with the ♦7 and then started thinking (too late as usual). The 4-0 break meant he couldn't draw trumps so he cashed ♠AK and when they stood up he proudly claimed. Proudly! Completely unaware that he'd have gone down needlessly had spades been 6-1. You, Giles, I'm sure would have won trick 1 with an honour and played ♣A and ruffed a club high. You'd then cross to ♠A, ruffed another club high, cashed ♦A and led ♦7 to ♦8 finessing.

Yours sincerely, Auntie

Dear Auntie,

I write from a blizzard on the Alps. The ski-slopes are closed and I have nothing better to do than ruminate on the failings of my teammates:

| | | |
|----------|-----|----------|
| ♠ AQ7 | | ♠ 632 |
| ♥ AKQJ84 | | ♥ 9 |
| ♦ 6 | N | ♦ AK3 |
| ♣ Q72 | W E | ♣ AKJ954 |
| | S | |

North opened 3♦ and East bid 3NT. West cued 4♦, East leaped to 6♣, and our hero unerringly selected the third best grand slam, with 7♥. Naturally this drifted one off on ♦Q lead – I have never observed any vestige of women's intuition in him. Would you have managed to run ♥9 at trick 2, Auntie?

Yours,

Windswept and Snowbound

Dear W & S,

Women's intuition is just what men call cool, calm and collected logic, a trait they apparently fear and seldom exhibit, especially at the bridge table.

I wonder whether you realize what an interesting contract this is. Of course, the only question is what to do about a possible ♥10xxxx with South. No, Windswept, I would not have run ♥9. But I would have given some thought to a trump-coup. For this to work we have to come down to the same number of trumps as South and arrange to play a sequence of winners through him. It is a little tricky in this case because dummy lacks entries outside clubs. If South can ruff a club while we still have a spade loser in hand we will surely fail. We shall therefore need the spade finesse to be right. North would be unlikely to preempt with a 5-card spade suit, so suppose South holds ♠Kxx ♥10xxxx ♦xx ♣xxx. Can we make then?

Suppose at trick 2 we ruff a diamond to hand and cash some trumps, discovering the bad break. We enter dummy with a club, take the spade finesse and cross to dummy with a 2nd club. If we now cash a 3rd club before ♦K, South will ruff the ♦K and we have a spade loser and no entry back to the table. But if we cash ♦K first South discards his last club. There is no way of making this way.

You know, I am often portrayed in this Newsletter as a bit of an arrogant know-it-all, of a somewhat unsympathetic disposition. Nothing could be further from the truth. I make mistakes occasionally. Why, I went down in a cold game in 2006. I freely admit that, at the table, I would likely misplay this contract. The difficulty is that at trick 2 hearts will probably break – it's a waste of effort to think too long about such things. Of course I

would have considered the possible need to shorten my trumps but would likely have ruffed a diamond at trick 2 on general principles, without giving the hand the thought it deserved.

In fact the key to success is to aim to ruff a spade in hand! Once you think of that it is clearly the correct play. Begin by drawing a few trumps, cross to a club, win ♠Q and ♠A, cross to a 2nd

club, throw a spade on ♦K and ruff a spade to hand while South must follow and cross to table with a third club.

The trump coup materializes.

Four grand slams! That's enough for 2008.

Yours ever,

Auntie.

New ventures at Ely

Peter Burrows says: 'When we arrived 7 years ago 14-15 tables were normal, but at the start of this year it was down to 6-7.' However Bryan Wynne is trying to turn things around as Chair, operating with enthusiasm and energy. There are two new initiatives, both on Mondays, that might be of interest to other members of the county.

Editor's comment: Incidentally, while Peter talks of a decline over the years, Ely 1 (P and M Burrows, J and J Aspinall, P Fegarty, C Curtis) have won the County League three times in the last five years, and the newly formed Ely 2 (B Ransley, P Watson, B Wynne and M Bradley) started off with a 20-0 win this year.

Daytime Game, 2pm, Mondays

Ely Beet Club, Lynn Road, Ely.

What initially started as around 3 tables is now up to 6 or 7, and offers a slightly slower and lower standard than the main club, having attracted many recently retired and part-time workers. Singles normally can be accommodated.

Restarts 5th January.

Bridge for Beginners

2.15-4.30 Mondays, from 12th Jan.

Ely Beet Club, Lynn Road, Ely

Taught by Paul Fegarty, Grand Master, 20 years of teaching experience.

Classes for beginners and relative newcomers. If you are interested, please contact Paul on 01353 649563 or pfearty@yahoo.co.uk

Tolly Tally

The list of number of qualifications for the Tollemache Final over the last 14 years (1995/96 to 2008/09 inclusive) shows that Cambs & Hunts have now drawn level with top-placed Surrey:

- 10 Cambs & Hunts, Surrey
- 8 Gloucestershire, Kent, London, Middlesex
- 6 Warwickshire
- 5 Leicestershire, Manchester, Yorkshire

- 4 Avon, Berks & Bucks, Hants & IoW, Northants
- 3 Merseyside & Cheshire, Norfolk, Staffs & Shrops, Sussex
- 2 East Wales, Essex, Lancashire, North East
- 1 Bedfordshire, Dorset, Hertfordshire

Interestingly Oxfordshire, which one might imagine would be comparably successful to Cambs & Hunts, have failed to qualify even once!

Results round-up

National competitions

Catherine Curtis, Paul Fegarty, Jonathan Mestel & Rod Oakford have reached the final of the Silver Plate.

Cambridge A (Chris & Cath Jagger, Julian Wightwick, Jonathan Mestel) finished as runners up in the 2008 NICKO. Cath Jagger has been selected for the 2009 Lady Milne, after finishing second in the trials with Catherine Seale.

Cambs & Hunts won their qualifying heat of the Tollemache. The team was Julian Wightwick, Giles Woodruff, Catherine Curtis, Paul Fegarty, Victor Milman, Rod Oakford, Paul Barden & Jonathan Mestel.

At the EBU Autumn Congress, Cambs & Hunts players were in three of the top 10 of the Two Stars Pairs: Cath Jagger finished 4th playing with David Jones. Ian Pagan & Chris Jagger were 8th with Paul Fegarty & Catherine Curtis 9th. David, Ian, Cath & Chris finished 2nd in the Eastbourne Bowl (Teams A final) with Catherine & Paul on the 4th-placed team.

In the EBU Autumn Simultaneous Pairs, David & Liz Kendrick (Cambridge) finished fourth nationally, while in the Children in Need Simultaneous Pairs, Jim Ross & Brian Copping (Dry Drayton) finished tenth.

Eastern Counties League

The county scored 1-19, 6-14 and 1-19 against Hertfordshire; and 13-7, 13-7 and 7-13 against the University.

County Knockout

In the First Round

CURTIS beat STEVENSON
SEAVER beat TILLEY
HASLEGRAVE beat RICHER
COWLEY beat COPPING
JAGGER beat ANDERSON

JOHNSON beat MAN
HOWARD beat POLLARD

In the Second Round

HASLEGRAVE beat JONES
COWLEY beat LAWRENCE
JAGGER beat KUEH
JACOBSBERG beat JOHNSON
KING beat LARLHAM

Cambs & Hunts Open Swiss Teams

- 1 Chris Larlham, David Kendrick, Rod Oakford, Sue Oakford
- 2 Mark Tilley, Mike Trask, Rob Miller, Dan Baines
- 3 Trevor King, Marion King, Bab Vajda, Brian Hope
- 4 John Pearce, Darren Cotterell, Roger Courtney, Robin Cambery

Around the Clubs

Cambridge

The May Pamplin Handicap Teams was won by Nick Bull, Cynthia Bull, Bryan Last & John Pearce.

The Swiss Pairs resulted in a tie between Alan & Margaret MacFarlane and Rod & Sue Oakford.

The club raised £140 for Children in Need during its charity evening.

Cottenham

The Club Teams was won by Penny Seely, Michael Lewis, Brian Robinson & Bernard Buckley.

The Evans Handicap Cup was won by Derek & Tanawan Watts.

Huntingdon

The Stuart Morton Handicap Teams was won by Len Scofield, Barry Ransley, Alex Green & Iain Watson.

The Club Pairs was won by Alex Green & Iain Watson. The Porter Trophy was won by Pauline Baily & Michael Krause.