



# Cambs & Hunts Bridge



## Newsletter Number 24

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



The County is now on the hunt for a new County Secretary – talk to Eryl Howard or any of the County committee if interested.

Do you know anybody interested in learning bridge? The new 'Bridge for All' scheme is a nationally accredited scheme which guarantees quality materials, teaching, and consistency from one area to another. Why not encourage a friend to sign up for your local 'Bridge for All' class.

There was never a better time than now to pay your EBU subs by Direct Debit, ensuring it is processed smoothly and automatically, year after year. Contact the EBU for further details.

We hear of a successful joint venture in Darlington. Three clubs have joined together to buy new shared premises. Whilst each club is going to retain control and its individuality, gone are the days of hunting for venues, putting out bridge tables, waiting until next week to see the scores, collecting keys. Come are the days of the on site bars, instant computer scoring, sharing of resources, more adequate playing space, availability for extra events. Isn't it time that Cambridge had its own bridge venue?!



In this issue Ann Curtin confesses a recent vice, while a letter from England international Alan Mould improves on the analysis of last Newsletter. Chris Jagger discusses when 4NT is and isn't Blackwood, and how to bid over a 1NT overcall. He also presents a hand illustrating some techniques of card-placing. Jonathan Mestel proposes a competition to find the best bidding system in 'four card bridge.' There is the usual round-up of news and events.



## THE VICE SQUEEZE      by Ann Curtin

This article is to give encouragement to all those average players, like me, who do their best, but find that the finer points of declarer play are often elusive. Occasionally, for whatever reasons, the adrenaline is flowing, you have a clear picture of the hand and play it really well. Your partner doesn't notice but fortunately you are playing against a most friendly and lively Australian who is so interested in the hand, and so impressed by your play, he decides to write it up for the **Australian Bridge Magazine**. Here is his article:

### False Impressions      by Michael Courtney

Bridge books and articles tend to give one or two utterly false impressions. The first is that the winning line is something like a miracle, only approachable by divine inspiration. The second is that the expert unerringly finds the correct line. Here I give a problem, from my own recent play, that confute both of these extreme views.

Try to solve it, certainly, but when you read the answer remember these two points:

Firstly, that finding the winning answer required only care and particularly, arithmetic. Secondly, that a so-called-expert failed to find the solution on the deal. Believe me, 'cause I was that "expert" ... Cover the West and South hands if you want to follow my problem.

♠ 95	♠ 873
♥ K863	♥ Q1072
♦ K1072	♦ A83
♣ Q109	♣ A85
♠ KQ62	
♥ 9	
♦ QJ65	W N E
♣ 7642	
♠ AJ104	
♥ AJ54	
♦ 94	
♣ KJ3	

Margaret	John	Michael	Ann
P	P	P	1NT
all pass			

This deal is from a Swiss Teams. Partner, Margaret Courtney, leads ♠2, dummy plays low and your seven draws the ten. Declarer continues with a heart to dummy's king and a heart to her jack. Partner discards ♣4. Now declarer advances ♣J, partner plays ♣2 and declarer plays ♣9 from dummy.

Partner's failure to make a takeout bid, her choice of a fourth-highest ♠2 lead and the count signals in clubs, combine to say it all: Partner has a 4-1-4-4 shape. So declarer is 4-4-2-3.

You win ♣A and return ♠8, and it goes ♠6, ♠Q, ♠9.

Partner now exits with a low diamond. This is a tad odd given dummy's holding. Partner probably holds QJxx, and is playing us for the nine. When you slot the eight over dummy's deuce, declarer wins the nine.

Declarer now plays ♣6 to dummy's ten and continues with a low heart. When you follow, declarer ducks.

What is happening in this picture?

Clearly you won't beat the contract. Overtricks at IMP scoring, however, are of great

importance (in spite of popular myth to the contrary).

How do you play to take as many tricks as possible for your side?

It is important. We (the Courtneys with Vivian & Tony Priday) lost this match by 1 IMP to nil and that was 9-11 in Victory Points. This was certainly (as many Australians will attest) the lowest IMP turnover match I have ever played.

The whole hand is more or less known. Did you lazily return a spade? If you did, declarer won the ace and cashed her winners. Partner was vice-squeezed on the last of these:

♠ -	
♥ -	
♦ K10	
♣ Q	
♠ K	♠ -
♥ -	♥ -
♦ QJ	W N E
♣ -	♦ A3
♠ J	♣ 8
♥ -	
♦ 4	
♣ K	

On the play of ♣K West must part with a diamond honour lest ♠J score. A diamond play now produces a ninth trick from dummy's ten.

This is an example of the vice squeeze, introduced to the world by Terence Reese in *The Expert Game*, written around 1960.

Declarer played well and deliberately to effect this rare coup - it was the point of ducking the third heart. Even so, you could have kept her to eight tricks! How? By cashing ♦A before exiting with any card but a diamond. That was easy, because you knew her shape, so you knew declarer had no entry to dummy. Even without knowing the ending you and I should have got this right.



*Addendum by JM:* I accidentally played a vice squeeze once:

♠ QJ62	1NT by S
♥ A765	
♦ 65	
♣ 1064	
♠ 843	♠ 109
♥ QJ43	♥ K98
♦ AK32	♦ 1098
♣ K9	♣ QJ753
♠ AK75	
♥ 102	
♦ QJ74	
♣ A82	

I won the ♥3 lead in dummy and led a club to the 8 and 9, mainly to encourage them to lead diamonds. A heart to the K was followed by ♦10 to the J and K, and West cashed two more hearts on which I threw a spade and a diamond. West now exited with the ♣K. I won and cashed 4 spades on the last of which the position was:

♠ J	
♥ -	
♦ 5	
♣ 10	
♠ -	♠ -
♥ -	♥ -
♦ A32	W N E
♣ -	♦ 98
♠ -	♣ Q
♥ -	
♦ Q7	
♣ 2	

East is forced to throw a diamond and the 7 comes into its own.

I couldn't honestly say I'd foreseen the end-position at trick 1...

### Card Reading by Chris Jagger

Playing a bridge hand is all about detective work. Even before dummy goes down, we should have many clues about opponents hands, and once we see the opening lead, nearly the whole hand may unfold.

Love all	♠ A104 ♥ J105 ♦ AK42 ♣ A62	Dealer North
♠ J2	♠ K8	
♥ AQ43	♥ K962	
♦ QJ8	♦ 7653	
♣ K1053	♣ QJ8	
♠ Q97653		
♥ 87		
♦ 109		
♣ 974		

North	East	South	West
1♦	P	P	1NT
P	P	2♠	all pass

The auction has been very revealing. West has shown 11-14 points with a balanced hand, giving East 8-11 points, and, judging by his painless pass, probably not an eleven count. One would guess that neither defender has a five card heart suit – there has been plenty of chance of bidding it, either as an overcall, or transferring out of 1NT. The lead of the ♣3 indicates that the clubs are 4-3, although we don't know which hand has the four. The diamonds are also likely to be 4-3, as with five West would have surely preferred to let opponents play in that suit as trumps, and with as few as two he would presumably have made a take out double or overcall.

Thus far we are guessing that West has 12-14 points, East 8-10 points, the hearts are 4-4, the clubs and diamonds 4-3. Thus the spades are no worse than 3-1.

What about the actual position of the high cards? It seems likely that West holds at least one diamond honour. He doesn't have KQ or QJ of clubs, as he would not have underled them against a suit contract. He would probably lead a heart holding the AK or KQ, so those holdings are less likely too.

So far we have only seen dummy and the opening lead, and fortunately we can still find out more by playing the hand. Whilst it would be foolish to put too much faith in our analysis so far, it certainly seems as if there is no danger of any of our tricks being ruffed, so we do not need to play trumps yet. Indeed, with a certain four outside losers, we merely need to avoid losing more than one trump trick, so it would be wise to find out more information before we tackle the trump suit.

We duck the lead to the jack, and the ♣Q is returned. After winning the ace, we exit with a club to the nine and West's king. He switches to the ♦Q to the ace. We run the ♥J, East playing low and West winning with the ♥Q. We are now in a very good position to count the hand. We know about all the club honours, and it would seem as though West has ♦QJ. I don't think East would duck with ♥AK, so it looks like West has one of those too.

By now I'm guessing that West has ?? AQxx QJx K10xx. Possibly the hearts are only KQxx, and possibly he has one fewer club or heart and an extra diamond or spade. Either way, he has at least eleven points so far, and ♠KJx would give him more than a fourteen count. It now seems safe to play ace and another spade for eight tricks.

The full hand was much as we anticipated. Don't tell me you'd have made the contract half an hour ago! As the cards lie, you probably would!



## Defending against a 1NT overcall      by Chris Jagger

In this article we shall consider the sequence beginning 1♦–(1NT). This is a common enough sequence, and one which many players find hard to deal with, in spite of its relative simplicity.

1♦–(1NT)–X: No surprises here. This shows that you think they are not going to make 1NT. Typically you might do this whenever you have about 8 or more points. The exact number you require will depend on how aggressive you are, and how accurate your defence is! But conceding 1NT doubled is not such a disaster, so don't worry if the odd ones here and there make.

1♦–(1NT)–2♣/♦/♠: Weak non-forcing. You haven't got enough to double and are trying to compete the part score. Should be a six card suit, and partner should normally pass it, only pulling to his own suit with a good six card suit of his own, and little support for partner.

So far so good? This is most of what you need to know about this sequence. Of course you can also raise partner, but aside from that most hand types seem to have been catered for

pretty well. If you follow the above you won't go far wrong, but the big worry some people have is what to do when they have enough strength to double but too much distribution.

The simple answer is to say that these hands don't exist, and carry on as before, but this is not the end of the story. The two sequences undiscussed so far are three level bids, and the use of 2NT. The latter is an easy tale to tell – the traditional use is for a big two suited hand (possibly including a weak hand with the minors) – at least 5-5 in two suits. (Close your ears whilst I mention that some people like to combine a good raise in hearts into this.)

1♦–(1NT)–3♣: Much of this is a matter of opinion. This could be preemptive in clubs, strong with lots of clubs, or showing a heart fit and clubs. If you generally play fit jumps then I feel that the last meaning is the most useful. If not, preemptive is probably the best meaning, sticking to the philosophy that you will double with a strong hand. Of course, you are not really expecting opponents to stand 1NT doubled, and you hope to be able to show the suit later.



## Know your English Bridge Union

Sally Dempster sends us the following precis:

The English Bridge Union is the union of 39 county associations. Over sixty years ago, six associations joined together to form a national organisation for bridge. Over the years, this has grown to 39, not always coinciding exactly with county boundaries. For example, much of Peterborough is within the county boundary, but affiliates to Northants, whilst Saffron Walden sensibly prefers Cambs to Essex.





## What does 4NT mean? by Chris Jagger

Most people play that a bid of 4NT asks partner for aces – some form of Blackwood. We shall not concern ourselves with which variety you may wish to play, simply referring to any form as Blackwood. Instead we shall be addressing the question as to when 4NT is Blackwood, and if it is not, what it does mean.

Those who play 4NT as Blackwood in all situations, and have no wish to do otherwise, stop reading now! Part 1 goes through the fairly standard, commonly known sequences which are not Blackwood. In Part 2 we shall aim for those areas only common amongst the more advanced player.

### Part 1

1. Raising no trumps is always invitational. Thus 2NT–4NT simply asks partner whether he is minimum or maximum for his 2NT bid. He passes with a minimum, and bids 6NT with a maximum. This usually extends to sequences such as 1NT–2♣, 2H–4NT, showing an invitational hand with four spades, and, if you play transfers, 1NT–2♦, 2♥–4NT – an invitational hand with five hearts. (The idea is that knowing how many aces partner has is irrelevant for 6NT – you need 33 points generally speaking, and with that number you won't have two aces missing anyway.)

When partner opens 2NT and later bids 4NT this is normally natural, denying a fit. Thus 2NT–4♦, 4NT, where 4♦ showed a slam try with diamonds, and 4NT just denied much interest. Playing transfers, 2NT–3♦, 3♥–4♣, 4NT denies much interest in either suit.

2. When partner opens four of a minor, 4NT is natural, suggesting this may be the last

making game contract. This is a surprisingly useful bid. Similarly, when partner overcalls four of a minor, 4NT is natural. However, over four of a major, 4NT should be Blackwood, since you are far less likely to want to correct the contract in this case as you are already in game.

3. When opponents open four of a major, 4NT is showing two places to play, that is, at least 5-5 in two suits (with three suits, try doubling them). If they open 4♥ it is the minors, but over 4♠ it can be any of the other two suits. If partner doubles their 4♥ or 4♠ opener, then again 4NT is showing two places to play, although they will not necessarily be 5-5 this time.

If opponents preempt with only 3♠ or 3♥, then 4NT is showing the minors.

### Part 2

4. We start by considering fairly normal uncontested auctions. There is a good case for playing 1♥–1♠, 2♦–4NT as invitational (there are surely plenty of ways to raise a suit and then use Blackwood later?!), but most people don't, so we won't advocate it here. However, the sequence 1♥–1♠, 2♦–3♣, 3♦–4NT definitely should be natural and invitational. If you want to Blackwood, start off by cueing 4♣, and then use your favourite convention. However, when are you ever going to get a chance to show your misfitting 18 count? Partner may still have a minimum opening bid, or may be much better, and the only way to bid these hands sensibly is to use 4NT at this point. Even for those fans of the Baron 2NT, you would presumably start with 1♠ with five spades, so the same applies.

I would think most of the top players play the above sequence as suggested. More controversial would be the rule that whenever there is an unambiguous cue available below four of partner's suit, then 4NT is natural. If you want to play this, you'd better have a good discussion with partner!

5. 4NT when a minor suit is agreed. Many people feel that when a minor suit is agreed there is not enough room for partner to respond to Blackwood, and still be able to stop short of slam. For this reason, many people play 4NT as discouraging, with five of the minor being a slam try (or vice versa). It also gives you a valuable help at pairs where you can try for slam and still end up in no trumps if it does not seem to be there. Not as easy as it sounds, but quite sensible.

6. Competitive auctions: 1♥–(4♠)–4NT. Some people would play this as Blackwood, and it certainly could be useful in that way on certain hands. Most experts would probably tell you that this sequence shows the minors (the all important principle when being pre-empted is to find the right fit rather than

the right level). The more thoughtful expert might add that you can also use it with a slam try in hearts. You wait for partner to pick a minor, and then convert to hearts, and he'll get the message. Realistically, these auctions need a lot of discussion, and I confess that I wouldn't know the meanings of these with many of my partners.

Now consider 1♦–(4♠)–P–P, 4NT. Is partner suddenly launching Blackwood?! Definitely not! He is showing at least six diamonds with either four hearts or four clubs on the side. A 5♣ bid instead would have shown at least 5-5.

### Conclusion

There are of course many other sequences we have not covered, but these are the main types of auction. Most people should be thinking of playing those things in Part 1, partly because they are essential to accurate bidding, but also because they are fairly standard. Part 2 is reserved more for those who seriously want to devote some time to bidding, though I've restricted myself to the genuinely useful sequences.



### Dates for your diary:

Sun 16th Jan	Garden Cities Qualifier	Trumpington
Sun 23rd Jan	ECL v Essex	Away
Sun 30th Jan	County Individual Final	Comberton
Sun 6th Feb	ECL v Suffolk	To be announced
12th/13th Feb	Tollemache Final	Coventry
Sun 20th Feb	County Pairs Final	Comberton
Sun 27th Feb	ECL v University	To be announced





### Letter to the editors:

Dear Editors,

It strikes me that you give people far too powerful hands when they are making 7NT in the “help” situations (Newsletter 23). Look at all that distribution! So useful in no trumps.

It is perfectly possible to make 7NT with much more balanced hands, e.g.

	♠ 975	7NT by S
	♥ 98765	
	♦ 97	
	♣ 876	
♠ AKQJ10864	♠ -	
♥ AK	♥ QJ10	
♦ -	♦ AKQJ1086	
♣ AKQ	♣ J109	
	♠ 32	
	♥ 432	
	♦ 5432	
	♣ 5432	

South opens 7NT which floats. West makes the Attitude lead of a low spade and North cashes three spades and two diamonds. East-West take the opportunity to signal profusely in hearts. The hearts are then run and East-West have plenty of time to take care of their clubs. Lucky North had such a good hand for South!

I wanted to produce a solution where South has the worst possible hand (432, 432, 432, 5432) and North still has a Yarborough, but I

cannot find one. The best I can do is:

♠ 86	7NT by S
♥ 8765	
♦ 86	
♣ 109876	
♠ AKQJ10975	♠ -
♥ AKQ	♥ QJ10
♦ -	♦ AKQJ10975
♣ AK	♣ QJ
	♠ 432
	♥ 432
	♦ 432
	♣ 5432

Can you improve on this?

Alan Mould, Manchester.

*Ed: Well well. Who would have guessed that the readership of C & H Newsletter included players so distant and so exalted!? So that's how Gold Cup winners prepare for their matches... Thanks to Alan for his correction.*



### The man who locked himself in dummy



(Webster).



## RESULTS ROUNDUP

In the **County Knockout** there have been a record 22 entries. Results so far from the Preliminary Round TAHSEEN bt CURTIN, PAL bt MAY, ASHE bt RILEY, KEEVASH bt JONES, COPPING bt SHAW. Into Round one, we have LARLHAM bt COPPING, and LAST bt MAN.

The **Newmarket Swiss Teams** was won by Ann Curtin, Tapan Pal, Peter Shawdon and John Turner.

In the **Eastern Counties League** against Herts the A team won 8-4, the B team lost 0-12 and the C team 2-10.

The A team now has 28VPs from 4 matches and is in second place, 1VP behind Essex. The B team has 19 from 4 and is 5th, while the C team has 16 from 4 and lies 6th.

In the **South Cambs League**, Cottenham, Saffron Walden, and Thursday are tying with 3 wins each, although Thursday have played more games.

In the **Tollemahe Qualifying Round**, the County (Barden, Jagger, Kendrick, Linfield, Mestel, Warren, Wightwick, Young) finished second in its group after a nail-biting finish, to qualify for the fourth time in five years. They qualified on a split tie, exacting revenge for their worst recent result, when they lost on a split tie. Apparently this makes Cambs the most consistent county in the country! NPC Chris Larlham is especially to be congratulated on this achievement, for the calm manner in which he stoically recorded disasters while keeping tempers low, and factually observing “We can still do it!”

### **Other results:**

Young and Roberts came 3rd in the **Two Stars Final** at **Bournemouth**, whilst Woodruff was in a team coming third in the Multiple teams, and Kendrick 5th.

Jagger, Jagger, Linfield and Young got through to the last eight of the **Hubert Phillips** competition.

Woodruff was in a team reaching the final of the **National Men's Teams**, whilst Jagger reached the semifinal of the **Women's Teams**.

In the **Year End Congress**, Michael Ashe won the Charity Pairs. Giles Woodruff and Chris Jagger were 2nd in the main pairs, while Catherine Jagger was 2nd in the women's pairs. John Young and the Jaggers came 2nd in the Swiss teams.

### **Around the clubs:**

**Cambridge Club:** The Marie Johnson Trophy was won by Jagger, Jagger, Wightwick and Young, whilst the May Pamplin Swiss Teams was won by Jagger, Jagger, Linfield, Mestel and Woodruff.





## Four Card Bridge

by Jonathan Mestel

Isn't bridge difficult? Defence certainly is, and even declarer play, which we all think we can do more or less ok, is beset with traps, mainly because of the need to count to 13. Wouldn't it be easier if we all held just one card? Then the play would be easy and we could concentrate on the bidding.

So let's play with a 4-card deck, containing the ♠A, ♠2, ♣A and ♣2. The legal calls are 1♣, 1♠, 1NT (contracting for one trick) together with pass, double and redouble.

Now clearly if we hold ♠A we can make 1♠. The danger is that our LHO can choose to overcall 1NT. This will make if partner holds ♣2, and we won't be able to blame him/her for a poor lead. It can be dangerous to give away too much about your hand. Perhaps the best system has a mixture of constructive and destructive elements...

So what system shall we play? Possibilities include:

**Natural:** 1♣ shows ♣A, 1♠ shows ♠A. Pass denies an ace.

**Strong Club:** 1♣ shows an ace.

**Good/Bad:** 1♠ shows either ♠A or ♣2.

**Weak 1s:** 1♠ shows ♠2, 1♣ shows ♣2, Pass is strong.

**Strong NT:** 1NT shows an ace; other bids do not necessarily deny an ace.

It's all a bit complicated. I shall therefore award prizes to the following competition:

(a) What are the best defensive methods to play against the Natural system?

(b) What is the best system of opening bids?

In each case, 'best' is defined with respect to total points scored over a long match.

Parts (a) and (b) will be judged separately, so you can enter just one part. For part (b) try to include details of action over a double or an overcall. You may have a probabilistic strategy if you wish (e.g. 'If I hold ♣A I open 1♣ 33% of the time, pass 67%'), but please be precise.

Entries to me (JM) by either e-mail or post by 15th April, please. If I receive enough entries I may simulate a tournament (total points scoring) to decide the winners.

You will need to know the scoring system to fine-tune your sacrifice bidding. I haven't thought about this too much, but I suggest:

To make a contract undoubled: +100

To make a contract doubled: +130

To go one off undoubled: -90

To go one off doubled: -180

Redoubles do not affect the scoring – they merely indicate contempt for the opponents (although they may be useful in the bidding).

I don't really see this catching on as the game of the next millennium, but 8-card bridge could be quite fun... Any more than 8 would clearly be far too difficult a game to be contemplated.

