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.freeserve.co.uk

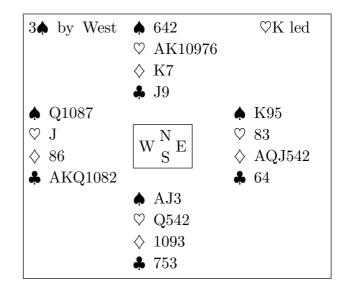
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In this issue Giles Woodruff presents two interesting hands, the first below. Peter Burrows describes three slam hands and invites you to spot the link between them. In a letter he also discusses selection practices for the Tollemache from long ago. 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.



30 September 2000

♣♢♠♡♣♢♠♡

Detective Story

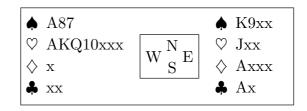
One of the advantages of having an absolutely terrible memory is the necessity to commit everything that you want to remember onto some sort of permanent record; so that it never gets lost, or anyway, not permanently. One of the disadvantages is that the said permanent record (most of mine having been 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:-

by Peter Burrows



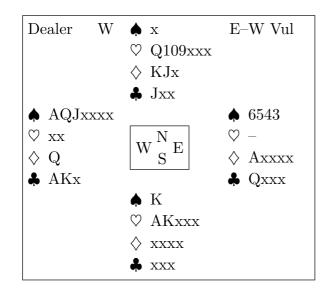
West, my partner, dealt and opened $2\heartsuit$ (Acol), our style at the time being to make use of the bid on practically any 8-trick hand, provided that at least one trick (preferably an Ace) was outside the long suit. With North-South silent, I raised to $3\heartsuit$, and West, deciding that she had little in reserve, bid a quiet $4\heartsuit$. At this stage, I flirted with 6NT in order to protect my \bigstar K, but eventually decided that $6\heartsuit$ 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 \blacklozenge 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 \blacklozenge 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:



The auction began with another ACOL 2:

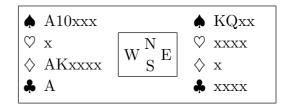
West	North	East	South
2♠	$3\heartsuit$?	

In my view, East has quite a difficult bid now. $4\heartsuit$ would get by this round safely enough, but it is likely to be followed by $5\heartsuit$ from South, and then, assuming that West cue-bids $6\clubsuit$, East will be more or less honour-bound to say $6\diamondsuit$, 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, $7\clubsuit$ 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 \heartsuit , then 4 \heartsuit 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 $6\diamondsuit$, partner doesn't have to launch $7\spadesuit$, as surely both $6\spadesuit$ and $6\heartsuit$ are grand slam tries. Rather than bid $4\heartsuit$, which I play as a general strong raise, I think I'd show the void with $5\heartsuit$. (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 $\Diamond A$, 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:



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

West	North	East	South
$1\diamondsuit$	Р	P(a)	1♡(b)
2	Р	4 ♠ (c)	Р
	all pass		

a) The subsequent explanation was that partner did not want to bid $1\heartsuit$ with such a poor suit, but could not bid $1\clubsuit$ because to do so would deny holding four hearts!

b) South is presumably still kicking himself!

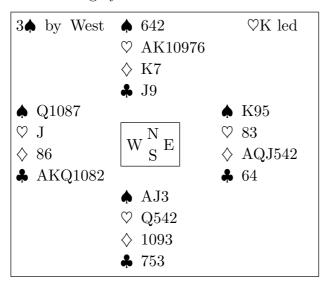
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c) East's $4 \spadesuit$ on the second round raises a point of theory which I don't recall ever having seen mentioned in print. Assuming that West's $2 \bigstar$ is not forcing, there is a case for saying that in this position $3 \spadesuit$ by East would show modest scattered values, with the actual 4bid reserved to show good trumps. We did have a firm agreement that in game-forcing situations an un-necessary jump in partner's suit would show good trumps but limited values in the light of the auction thus far. Once I had decided that this agreement should also apply to this situation by extension, I was not hard pressed to bid the slam.

[I'd be worried partner held \blacklozenge Qxxxx, and have

Rien ne va plus!

Play on the hand from the front page was rational, if not necessarily optimal. You should by now have placed your bets as to who won the second round of trumps, with which card, and on which trick, and it's too late to change your mind.



North won the first trick and tried to cash a

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used RKCB (AJM)]

Rather more pairs than I would have hoped found this good 20 HCP slam, and so it was worth only 6 IMPs to our side. But that is not the point of the article. By now you have all the information necessary to win the editors' special prize (If we were offering one...eds.) If you need another clue, you might like to know that I originally wrote up these three hands in an article entitled "Simple Slam Bidding", and that it was not until much later that I noticed the common theme which I mentioned earlier.

[My comments may provide a further clue: I couldn't have written this article! (AJM)]

by Giles Woodruff

second round, which West ruffed. West cashed two top clubs and then took the diamond finesse, followed by cashing the ace. When that held she attempted a cross-ruff. First a diamond ruff. Then a club ruff. Then a diamond ruff. Then a club ruff with the nine ... and an over-ruff with South's jack. Now at trick eleven South drew declarer's and dummy's last trump with the ace (North following with the four) and then played a heart, which North ruffed high with the six (having discarded four hearts during the crossruff). At last, at trick thirteen, North led his two of spades to South's three.

I confess – it wasn't quite like that at the table: the four and three of spades were interchanged. But otherwise it all happened and I have never seen anything like it before (obviously I don't play enough).

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.)]

The Millennium Trophy

This Open Pairs competition, substituted for the usual Jubilee Pairs, was run by the Balsham Club on behalf of the County and in support of The Save the Children Fund, the EBU's charity of the year.

Whilst it was good to see our efforts reported in English Bridge magazine, their headline "Club goes-it-alone" was – to coin a phrase – a bit over the top! It hardly conveyed the huge support provided by the 17 clubs who ran heats and then rallied round to provide equipment and last-minute substitutes when a qualified few pairs could not make the final.

In all 203 pairs took part in heats and 42 pairs contested the semi-finals and finals at Fulbourn on Sunday, 11th June. This event, which comprised 3 semi-finals and A & B Flight finals, was organised and directed in masterly fashion by Giles Woodruff. It also threw up some interesting results for, whilst star players dominated the heats, good club players came through in the finals.

Winners of the A Flight final were Sheila and Ken Barker of Blinco BC with 63.3%, followed by Tapan Pal and Rod Oakford with 60.45%. The B Flight final winners were Barbara McWhinney and Ken Everett of Ely

by Susan Hollingworth and Peter Beavan

BC with 62.5%; second were Brenda Day and Philip Jones with 60.31%.

For a little relaxation while Giles was devilling away on his computer to provide the results before all went home, Fiske Warren produced a quiz which caused a good deal of goodhumoured banter and head-scratching among participants!

We are indebted to all who took part and helped, not least the sterling support from Balsham Club members on the refreshment front, and proud of the fact that $\pounds 1,048$ was raised for Save the Children, a very good proportion of the EBU's $\pounds 30,000$ target for the whole country.

Addendum, from Margaret Jude: I wonder if many people who attended the final of the Millennium Trophy feel, as I do, that the Fulbourn Community Centre made a great venue for a county event. Not only is it in the centre of our region, but it is a very pleasant site. It has plenty of parking, plenty of space and a decent heating system. It has to be beneficial to everyones play to be in a spacious room where you do not find that you are having your feet frozen while, at the same time, your head is being fried.

Play problem

Teams of Four (IMPs). Love all.

♠ K5		أ 10862
\heartsuit Q53	W N E	\heartsuit A
\diamondsuit J5	W S E	\diamond AQ42
♣ AQ10732		♣ KJ94

by Giles Woodruff

West	North	East	South
1♣*	Х	XX	$2\heartsuit$
Р	$3\heartsuit$	$4\heartsuit$	Р
5 ♣	Р	Р	Р

North leads a low heart. How do you plan the play? Solution on page 10.

Pulling 2NT - Forcing or not? by Chris Jagger

One common area for misunderstandings are those sequences where one person pulls 2NT at some stage in the auction to a suit at the three level - is this merely trying to find a better partscore, or is it forcing? For example, try the following (all uncontested):

- 1. 1♡-1NT-2NT-3♣
- 2. $1\heartsuit -2\clubsuit -2\diamondsuit -2\mathsf{NT} -3\diamondsuit$
- 3. 1♡-1**♠**-2NT-3**♠**
- 4. 1♠-2♡-2♠-2NT-3♣
- 5. 1**♠**-2**♣**-2♦-2♡-2NT-3♦

The last one you ought to know - going via the fourth suit and then bidding again is generally agreed to be forcing (see Newsletter 15).

Some of these sequences are standard, whilst others are merely a matter of agreement. The first clearly should be non-forcing, simply showing a hand too weak to respond at the two level. The second probably sounds nonforcing, so perhaps it should be for that reason. The third is clearly useful when you simply wish to play in $3\spadesuit$, but most people play this as forcing, helping to reach the right game. Sequence four is a classic - it should be weak, simply showing 5-5 if you would open $1\spadesuit$ on such a hand.

This is all very well, but trying to learn every different sequence is a difficult business, and there are plenty more. Can we find some sensible rule that agrees with one's intuition in the simple cases, but can also be applied to the more obscure situations?

Responder:

• Pulling 2NT is forcing unless the hand is already limited, when it is non-forcing.

Note that this fits in with our decision on auctions 1, 3 and 5. For example, in 1, the 1NT bid limited responder's hand, so now the 3. bid is non forcing. We can also apply the rule to sequences such as $1\heartsuit -2\clubsuit -2\heartsuit -2\bigstar -2$ NT-3. Responder is unlimited, thus the 3. bid is forcing. Not everybody would agree with this one, but it is surely better to know what the bid means than not?

Opener

• New suits are forcing unless the hand is already limited.

• Old suits are forcing only if supporting partner for the first time.

Note that these rules tie in to our comments above on 2 and 4. More generally, consider the sequences below.

- A. 1♠-2♦-2♥-2NT-3♣
- B. 1 2 2 2 3
- C. 1♣-1♠-2♠-2NT-3♣

Sequence A is forcing, as opener has not limited his hand $(2\heartsuit$ was forcing). Sequence B is forcing as opener is supporting partner for the first time (showing 5431 shape, trying to find the right game, or possibly slam). The last sequence is non forcing - suggesting only three spades and good clubs.

These rules are not set in stone, and will quite possibly not be the rules for you - think up your own ones. But if you want a serious partnership, then having a rule is a useful thing.

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 $\pounds 10$ per team and you are guaranteed at least two matchesas those knocked out in the first round get free entry to the plate. All rounds of the Knockout proper are greem 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.

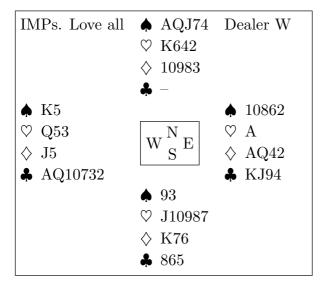
If you have any comments on these ideas, or any other suggestions for improvements you would like to see in the County programme, I should be delighted to hear from you. You can write to me at 51 Glisson Rd, Cambridge, CB1 2HG; telephone 01223-526210; or email at philipwraight@ntlworld.com.

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

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



West	North	East	South
1♣*	Х	XX	$2\heartsuit$
Р	$3\heartsuit$	$4\heartsuit$	Р
5 ♣	Р	Р	Р

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?

by Giles Woodruff

At trick two I tried the effect of cashing the $\Diamond A$ and leading a low diamond. Had I lost the trick to the $\Diamond K$ on my left, I would still have made the contract: even if the $\blacklozenge A$ 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 then 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 **East-ern 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 Allin70.45%
- 2. Emile Habib & John Pearce 69.89%

Evans Handicap Cup (Spring)

- 1. Peter Morgan & Malcolm McBryde74.83%
- 2. Haydn Emery & Sheila Emery 65.25%

Championship Pairs

- 1. Kiki Allen & David Allen 61.31%
- 2. Peter Morgan & Malcolm McBryde59.60%

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.