



# Cambs & Hunts Bridge



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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!



**Press release:** Whilst top Tory MPs battle it out for the leadership, one Conservative Minister has been elected to a top job in his home constituency without dissent.

Shadow Cabinet Minister and MP for Cambridgeshire South, Andrew Lansley, has been unanimously voted in as President of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Bridge Association.

Mr Lansley, who lists bridge as one of his interests in 'Who's Who', follows in the footsteps of MP Clement Freud who held the post before him.

Why not enter the Open Swiss Teams (entry on back cover)? This enjoyable event has the added attraction this year that we'll be using preduplicated boards with hand copies available afterwards. Also the top two county teams will be selected to represent the county in the Telegraph and Beck Cups.

This newsletter, and past issues also, can be found on the County Web page, whose URL is given above.



In this issue John Turner compliments the players at the Trumpington club, and reports on the County Swiss Pairs. Chris Jagger discusses the cue-bid in response to a take-out double, and analyses the Opening Leads Quiz from last issue. The other editor is viciously chastised by Aunt Agony, while Giles Woodruff clowns around in Brighton, despite a lack of Big Tops. There is the usual round-up of News and Events.



## FIRST-EVER COUNTY SWISS PAIRS by John Turner

The Cambridge Club recently invested in some leading-edge technology – we bought a “Duplimate” computerised dealing machine. No, it isn’t just a question of saving the players the arduous job of shuffling and dealing, which of course is hardly a chore. Its main advantages are

- (i) that the deals are perfectly random, which in practice means that they are more exciting, and
- (ii) that a printout of all the hands is available to each player at the end of the session.

A further advantage is that running a Swiss Pairs becomes feasible. The Club is happy and indeed keen to hire out this facility to the County and this has enabled the County to run its first ever Jubilee Swiss Pairs, which was held in June at Trumpington. After five of the six rounds, Ann & I were in the lead with 92 VPs out of 100 but we then met Jonathan Mestel & Rod Oakford, who were in cracking form, crushed us 20-0, and won by 11 VPs.

The new technology ain’t cheap and takes some work to set up initially. Philip Wraight and Bob Gittins both put in a lot of time and effort here. But once the equipment is set up, producing a set of boards and printouts is, I understand, quick and easy.

A disadvantage of having printouts is that scrutiny of the hand records generally reveals that one played much more badly than one realised at the time! This was one of my poorer efforts in the Jubilee Pairs (with the hand rotated for convenience):

Board 18	♠ AK103	N/S Vul						
	♥ A54	Dealer W						
	♦ 5							
	♣ Q10542							
♠ Q82	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ 5
W	N	E						
S								
♥ J1093		♥ Q872						
♦ KQ6		♦ J9842						
♣ KJ8		♣ A63						
	♠ J9764							
	♥ K6							
	♦ A1073							
	♣ 97							

West (Gareth Birdsall, partnering Sonia Zakrzewska) dealt and opened a weak 1NT and Ann (N) came in with an Asptro 2♦, showing spades and another. Sonia passed and I jumped to 3♠, which Ann raised to 4♠. Gareth led the ♥J.

After a fairly cursory look at dummy I could see that prospects looked good. The line of ruffing diamonds in dummy seemed to offer a strong chance of ten tricks and a good score surely, though the absence of the ♠8 was slightly worrying. Pursuing this line I won with dummy’s ♥A, crossed to ♦A + ♦ ruff, back to ♥K, ♦ ruff, ♥ ruff, ♦ ruff with the ♠K, Gareth pitching a club. Now I played the ♠A, but no sign of the ♠8 so far. Then I played a low club off dummy, low from Sonia, Gareth winning with the ♣J. Gareth then played the ♣K, smartly overtaken by Sonia with the Ace, and she continued with the fifth diamond (a club would also have worked, but not a heart). I am now down to ♠J97 of trumps whilst Gareth is sitting over me with ♠Q8 and a heart. I ruffed the diamond high but Gareth didn’t make the mistake of overruffing: he

discarded his heart, and now his trumps are worth two tricks – one off. Gareth would have been slightly more tested if his clubs had been AJ, not KJ: in that case he'd have had to win the first round with the Ace, not the Jack of course, though Gareth would have seen this instantly.

But now that I look at the printout I see that a much stronger and certainly more successful line would have been to win the first trick in hand and play on clubs immediately. Then I'd have made an overtrick!

Congratulations to Jonathan and Rod, of course, and many thanks to Philip & Sally Wraight for their huge input as non-playing directors of this very enjoyable event.



**Addendum** by Jonathan Mestel

My thanks too to two great County stalwarts. The event ran very smoothly and was enjoyed by all.

This was a nice 'find the queen' hand from the critical match:

John	Me	Ann	Rod
1♥	2♠	P	3♥*
4♦	P	4♥	4♠
P	P	P	

Not a very good contract objectively. Rod considered doubling 4♥, which would have

been a cooperative effort, but I might well have removed to 4♠ anyway.

Board 25	♠ Q6	E/W Vul
	♥ AK652	Dealer N
	♦ AJ1092	
	♣ 7	
♠ A42		♠ KJ10873
♥ QJ9	W N E	♥ 87
♦ KQ75	S	♦ 3
♣ A84		♣ Q1065
	♠ 95	
	♥ 1043	
	♦ 864	
	♣ KJ932	

Ann led ♥4 to the J and K, and after a little thought, John cashed the red aces and exited with a diamond, South showing an odd number in each suit. So who has the ♠Q?

The bidding and carding indicated that North was 5-5 in the red suits, and so South has three of each and it is safe to cash ♥Q and ♦KQ before drawing trumps, throwing clubs. At this point, cashing ♣A is a slight risk worth taking, as when North follows, a club ruff in hand completes the count, and the 2-2 break is a certainty. Had North followed a second time, the finesse through South would have been marked.

But if North had held xxx AKxxx AJ10xx – it would have been a different story, as after the diamond return I would probably have lost two trump tricks, my equanimity, many Match Points and partner's respect...



## Responding to takeout doubles *by* Chris Jagger

The aim of this article is to improve on the use of a cue bid after partner has made a takeout double. We shall start by reviewing standard methods, then explain why these methods are in need of improvement, and finally present an improved version.

Standard methods are as follows:

1♦-X-P-1♥ = 0-7 pts

1♦-X-P-2♥ = 8-10 pts

1♦-X-P-2♦ = 11+ pts

The last sequence is ‘forcing to suit agreement’, hence:

1♦-X-P-2♦, P-2♥ = Forcing since no suit is agreed

1♦-X-P-2♦, P-2♥-P-3♥ = Non-forcing.

1♦-X-P-2♦. P-2♥-P-3♣ = Forcing.

There are three basic problems with the use of the cue-bid in standard methods:

(a) The bidding can get too high (to 4♣ if you are agreeing clubs.)

(b) The sequence 1♦-X-P-2♥ may or may not include 4 spades, so that a minimum 4-3-2-4 doubler is fixed.

(c) There is a traditional view that a takeout double should show opening values, whilst an overcall need not. This leads to people overcalling on hands that would be better suited to a double, or passing and doubling later (at a time when it is actually more dangerous to come in, and involves giving your own side ‘the last guess’, rather than opponents). If you are to double more frequently it is even more important to be able to stay low.

### Suggested methods

Let’s see how these methods can be improved. The meaning of the natural calls will remain the same, save that the sequence 1♦-X-P-2♥ cannot be 4-4 in the majors.

One of the main ideas is to use 2NT to show some of the weak hands. The key in the following sequences is that if partner has a natural no trump he should have bid it earlier.

Thus:

1♥-X-P-2♥, P-2♠ = Forcing (does not require extra strength)

1♥-X-P-2♥, P-2NT = Weak, partner picks a minor

1♥-X-P-2♥, P-3♣/♦ = Forcing

1♥-X-P-2♥, P-3NT = 19-21 balanced.

1♥-X-P-2♥, P-2♠-P-2NT = Weak with a minor (by the responding hand this time)

1♥-X-P-2♥, P-2♠-P-3♣/♦ = Forcing

Over a 1♠ opener it works in much the same way. Over the minors, the cue now only shows 8-10 points with both majors, or 11+ any shape.

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♥/♠/3♥/♠ = Non forcing (eg 3♥ is invitational opposite 8-10).

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♦ = Forcing (may be minimum, but it is better though not necessary to bid 2♥ with both red suits and less than 14 pts)

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♦-P-2♥ = 8-10 both majors

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♦-P-2♠ = Forcing, 11+ pts

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♦-P-2NT = Non-forcing (but with 4 hearts, else the response would have been 2NT instead of 2♣).

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♦-P-3♣ = Game-forcing

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2♥-P-2♠ = Forcing

1♣-X-P-2♣, P-2NT = 19-21.

Over a 1♦ opener it works similarly, though in fact I prefer to play that 1♦-X-P-2♦, P-2NT is weak without a major.

As you can see, these methods need a little more thought and partnership discussion, but I think you will find the accuracy of your bidding is improved. Give it a go!

**A weak field at Trumpington?** by John Turner

We were playing in the usual pairs game on a July Tuesday at Trumpington. The opponents who came to our table for the last round were not impressed with the general standard. “There are some absurd results on the travellers. On one hand, for example, the whole field was in 6NT+1, with 12 solid tricks and a simple finesse for 13, but one declarer managed only 12!”. We nodded gravely at such incompetence, but exchanged a knowing glance with each other – for it was my partner who had made only 12 tricks! Actually, I thought she played it well, though she (& I) missed an interesting point at the end.

Dealer S	♠ 64	N/S Vul
	♥ AK52	
	♦ AQJ8	
	♣ AKJ	
♠ 7532		♠ KJ9
♥ J98764	W N	♥ 10
♦ –	S E	♦ 1095432
♣ 953		♣ 1062
	♠ AQ108	
	♥ Q3	
	♦ K76	
	♣ Q874	

South opened 1NT and ended in 6NT, oppo passing throughout. West led the ♥7. There are indeed 12 top tricks and there’s the easy shot of the spade finesse for 13. But pard saw that if the spade finesse were wrong, and if LHO also held at least 4 hearts, then LHO could be squeezed. To find out more, she won the opening lead in hand and started by cashing the minor suits. When it transpired that LHO had 3 clubs and no diamonds, and therefore 10 cards in the majors, it became very likely that he had longish spades. Then

pard continued with the remaining two top hearts, discovering that LHO had started with 6 hearts and therefore 4 spades. The lead is now in dummy. Dummy is down to a low spade and a losing heart; declarer’s last two cards are the ♠AQ. LHO’s last two cards are known to be a master heart and a spade, and RHO’s are known to be both spades. The fact that LHO had started life with 4 spades means that LHO is 4:3 on to hold the SK, other things being equal. Are there any contrary inferences to be drawn from the opponents’ failure to bid or the play to date? I don’t think so. *Ergo*, it was correct to play for the drop, not finesse. On this reasoning pard played unsuccessfully for the drop and we got a complete bottom.

That’s what I thought at the time. However, my attention was later drawn to Mestel’s Law Of Useless Semi-Yarboroughs, which observes that in many situations, a defender holding a LOUSY hand having signalled a few times, gets bored and simply follows suit or simply discards up the line. This principle can be surprisingly powerful. In the above hand, the fact that RHO has played the ♠9 and then the ♠J suddenly becomes deeply interesting and significant. The Law suggests that his remaining card in spades is the King. Or, to put it the other way round, if his remaining spade is the 7 (the only other card out), is it likely that he was awake enough to play the 9 and then the Jack from J-9-7?

Of course, the LOUSY Law holds less well in a game where the standard is high, and on this hand an expert RHO might indeed find it routine to play the spades out of order like that. In practice, RHO was an excellent player – as one would expect at Trumpington – so maybe declarer’s reasoning was right after all.

### Results Round Up:

In the **Eastern Counties League**, against Herts the county lost (A) 1-19, (B) 0-20, (C) 9-11, against Suffolk the results were 18-2, 0-20, 6-14 and against Essex 6-14, 2-18, 1-19.

The new **Jubilee Swiss Pairs** was won by Jonathan Mestel and Rod Oakford, with John Turner and Ann Curtin second. The **County Plate Knockout** was won by Bryan and Peter Last, David and Kiki Allen. In the **County Knockout** GREIG (Kelly, Wade and Ashe) beat ZAKRZEWSKI.

The Cambridge University team represented the county in the **Garden Cities**, coming second in the qualifier, but finishing disappointingly in the final.

On the wider scene, Gareth Birdsall playing with Ollie Burgess were the top British pair in the **World Junior Pairs**, finishing 25th. Victor Milman and Nadia Stelmashenko represented the County team in the England friendly against Sweden, winning convincingly.

Around the competition circuit, C and C Jagger came second in the **Summer Congress Swiss Pairs** (in Shrewsbury), 3rd and 4th in different partnerships in the **Summer Festival Teams and Pairs** (in Scarborough). Jagger and Young were 2nd in the **Brighton Swiss Pairs**, and Young won the midweek **Mixed Pairs**. The Cambridge Club reached the sixth round of the **Nicko** but progressed no further.

### Masterpoints round up:

Congratulations to John Young, who won more masterpoints this year than anybody else, narrowly beating Jon Williams, of Beds. The County inherited a Grand Master this year, in the form of Roger Gibbons, from Herts, and has three potential promotions to Grand Master within its own ranks coming up – watch this space! Well done also to P Morgan, N Pimblett and B Knight, who won the county sections for categories 4, 5 and 6 (respectively at most tournament master, advanced master, and district master).

### Dates for your diary

14th October 2001	ECL v Beds (Trumpington)
19th October 2001	Closing date for County Knockout
4th November 2001	Newmarket Swiss Teams
5th November 2001	Closing date for Garden Cities Qualifier
9th November 2001	Closing date for Golfprint Trophy
11th November 2001	ECL v University (Trumpington)
14th November 2001	Nat pairs and Newcomers heat at Cambridge Club (open to all)
6th January 2002	ECL v Northants (A)
22nd January 2002	County Pairs Heat, Cambridge Club (open to all county members)
27th January 2002	County Individual Final
10th February 2002	ECL v Norfolk (A)
10th March 2002	Swiss Teams Club Challenge
23th March 2002	New Players Tournament
9th June 2002	Jubilee Swiss Pairs

### Agony Column

Dear Aunt Agony,

I was dummy (as usual) on the following hand from a pairs evening. West led the ♡9 against 6NT to partner's 10. A spade was led to the K and partner (Rod Oakford) now led ♦9 to his king. After a little thought, West won and returned a spade, but when all the black suit winners were cashed, East had to unguard ♦J to protect his hearts. After the hand it occurred to me that if West holds up the ♦A, the contract can't be made. Should he have known?

Yours sincerely, Jonathan Mestel

Love all	♠ KQJ97	Dealer N
	♡ AJ64	
	◇ 9	
	♣ 1092	
♠ 106543		♠ -
♡ 9	W N S E	♡ Q8732
◇ A432		◇ J865
♣ Q83		♣ J764
	♠ A82	
	♡ K105	
	◇ KQ107	
	♣ AK5	

North	East	South	West
1♠	P	2◇	P
2♡	P	3♣*	P
3♠	P	4NT*	P
5♠*	P	6NT	

Dear Nephew,

Well really. This dry and technical hand is not the sort of thing I want to write about in my column, but it just so happens my postbag has been empty these last few months. There are points of interest in this hand, but needless to say, you have completely overlooked them in your facile analysis.

Swap the red queens, and ♦K is declarer's 12th trick. How could West possibly have known which way round they were? You would do better to concentrate on your own mistakes, rather than criticise opponents.

First of all, why did you interpret 4NT as RKCB? Partner had slower ways of reaching 4NT had he wished to force, such as a cue bid of 4♣. If that was your system, I suggest you improve it. 4NT should be quantitative, and you should have passed rather than reaching this dubious slam.

Secondly, as it was your partner rather than yourself who was playing the hand, ducking the ♦A would not have helped. When the last spade is led the position is

	♠ J	♠ J led
	♡ AJ6	
	◇ -	
	♣ 1092	
♠ 10		♠ -
♡ -	W N S E	♡ Q87
◇ A43		◇ J8
♣ Q83		♣ J7
	♠ -	
	♡ K5	
	◇ Q10	
	♣ AK3	

East has already been forced to unguard clubs to keep the red suits, and must now throw another club (although if he were to throw a diamond we might misread the position.) Declarer now throws ♦10 and cashes ♣A, dropping East's Jack, and ♡A and ♡K. West must throw diamonds to guard the clubs, and is then endplayed with ♦A.

It's a sort of guard squeeze without the count – ask Paul Barden if you don't understand it. Now get back ton your typesetting and please encourage your readers to write to me. **AA**

## How Clowns Communicate *by* Giles Woodruff

There's always something on in Brighton at the same time as the bridge. Usually it's something like a 60s music festival. This year the main side attraction was a vibrant gay and lesbian carnival procession. There was a circus too...

The final ranking list of the Brighton Swiss Pairs only tells half the story. The County's Grandmasters Chris Jagger & John Young walked the tightrope over the heads of most of the other 599 pairs for the duration and just missed out on the star billing. Close behind were juniors Gareth Birdsall & Ollie Burgess surviving in the lions den and finishing 8th. The pair have had an excellent Summer, also winning the U25 trials by quite a margin. Rod Oakford & John Short performed a stunning acrobatic display and landed in 33rd. Congratulations to them all. This is the tale of two clowns who kept tripping over and getting pisted about hundred places lower, behind several other class acts from the County.

I start with a sad story. At trick nine you have two touching cards (the ♣QJ). Everyone at the table knows you have them both. If a suit-preference signal is not a consideration, can it ever matter which you choose to play?

	♠ Q10764	
	♥ 85	
	♦ AQ1092	
	♣ A	
♠ J5		W N S E
♥ A93		
♦ 875		
♣ KQJ52		

West	North	East	South
1NT	P	P	2♥
P	P	X	P
3♣	3♦	P	3♥

I led the ♣K, partner playing the 7. Declarer led a spade to the ace, ruffed a club, cashed the ♦A and played the ♦9, covered by partner with the ♦J and ruffed. He ruffed another club, ruffed the ♦10 (covered by the ♦K), and then led a spade to the J, Q and K.

Partner chose to play back a diamond at this point, declarer pitching his club. You ruff and your last four cards are ♥A9 and ♣QJ. Why does it matter which club you play?

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry over the next one! (Those of you who know me will not be surprised to hear that I compromised and just sat there impassively). It appears to be a distant cousin of the previous hand. When might it be wrong to cash an ace when you know that technically it will make no difference to the play of the hand?

	♠ KJ63	
	♥ AQ93	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ A72	
♠ Q107		W N S E
♥ J8542		
♦ K109		
♣ 93		

East	South	West	North
1♣	P	1♥	1NT
X	XX*	P	2♣*
P	2♦	P	P P



Redouble was an escape mechanism forcing 2♣. Should I have doubled on the way out? However, there is still an easy opportunity for a top. Or do you prefer a custard pie?

I led the ♣9 to the A, partner showing an odd number. Declarer played the ♥A and ruffed a heart and then curiously led the ♠8 to the 7, 3, and 9. Partner cashed the ♠A and played the ♣K then the ♣Q, declarer following twice. How many different ways can you take this contract two off?

We were also made to look foolish by Monica Lucy, a regular in the Bedfordshire A team. With Q872 A107643 AK 9 you are playing 4♥ on the auction 1♣-1♥-X-2♥, 3♣-4♥ all Pass. The negative double had shown precisely four spades. LHO led the ♣5 and RHO (after winning with the K) switched to the ♠A and another.

If by this time you haven't followed smoothly with the ♠8 and ♠Q you have gone off. You should still go off anyway, but first thing on a Sunday morning you have every chance of pulling a fast one on two clowns, as Monica did here. Although a spade continuation was fairly obviously safe, we didn't find our spade ruff.

This was the full hand on the first problem:

N/S Vul	♠ Q10764	Dealer W
	♥ 85	
	♦ AQ1092	
	♣ A	
♠ J5		♠ K932
♥ A93		♥ Q7
♦ 875		♦ KJ64
♣ KQJ52		♣ 1097
	♠ A8	
	♥ KJ10642	
	♦ 3	
	♣ 8643	

The issue is that you know that there is no possible trump promotion and you don't want partner to ruff high. How can you tell partner this? Well, I think it's clear that the ♣Q (the normal card) should tell partner to discard (normal) and the ♣J (the abnormal card) should tell partner that something special is required. When I carelessly played the ♣J, partner ruffed in with the Q from Q7 (as I believe he should) and we lost a trump trick. It would have been the right thing for him to do had my last two trumps been KJ or K10.

On the second defensive problem, I assumed partner was 2-3-3-5 and therefore it didn't matter whether I discarded (and let us come to three natural trump tricks – he is marked with the ♦A) or alternatively ruffed his winner and gave him a spade ruff. I chose the latter to “reward” him for cashing the ♠A. Sadly, the full hand was:

N/S Vul	♠ KJ63	Dealer E
	♥ AQ93	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ A72	
♠ Q107		♠ A95
♥ J8542		♥ K107
♦ K109		♦ A8
♣ 93		♣ KQJ64
	♠ 842	
	♥ 6	
	♦ J76543	
	♣ 1085	

and this meant that we only scored +100 for a near bottom instead of +200 for a near top. His rationale for cashing the ♠A was to let me know he had it (nice insult, partner – as if I couldn't work it out from declarer's play in the suit!) and make it easy for me to discard my third spade for a ruff. However, it is entirely my fault because I declined a 100% play for something uncertain which could never be better.

## Opening Leads Competition *by* Chris Jagger

Last newsletter you were given seven auctions for seven hands, and asked to select a lead. My marking scheme and comments follow. A maximum of seven points were awarded for the choice of lead, and three for justification.

1. Q10843 Q2 752 Q93. Teams, game all. 1♣-1♥-1NT-P-3NT.

Marks: ♥Q 7, ♠ 6, ♥2 3.

This problem is to me a straight choice between a heart and a spade, and I think it is a close call. Opponents are expecting a heart lead, whilst on the other hand they need not necessarily have a double stopper. Personally I think it is more culpable to lead your partner's suit blindly than not to lead it. Having said that, I don't know what the long term winner would be here. Giles Woodruff says '♥Q. Opponents don't always have a double stop...I think it's close to a spade lead, but partner will often have a good suit on this auction (as he's vulnerable and not loaded with high cards).' A good summary, though I suspect AJx A109xx xxx xx would be a routine overcall in most people's books.

2. QJ94 Q6 54 J10762. Teams, love all. 1♠-P-2♣-P, 2♠-P-3NT.

Marks: ♦5 7, ♣6 6, ♥ 3.

As John Young says, 'This is a choice between the minors, but I'd go for a diamond, even though this is less safe than many will think. A heart is too aggressive when we have both their suits sewn up.'

3. QJ32 K852 973 A4. Pairs, Oppo vul. 3♥-3♠-P-4♠. (3♠ showed takeout with spades).

Marks: ♣A 7, ♥ 5.

It looks instinctive to lead a heart, for a potentially forcing game, but I think Paul Hankin is right – '♣ A – hoping to make the

ace of clubs, partner's A♥, a natural trump trick and a club ruff.'

4. KJ96 A954 76 K102. Pairs, Oppo vul. 1NT-P-2♣-P, 2♠-P-3NT (Sequence likely to have hearts but not guaranteed.)

Marks: ♦7 7, ♠6 6, ♥4 4, ♣2 2.

I actually think there is a lot to be said for a spade here, the fact that declarer has four of them not changing the odds that much. Alternatively the popular choice of a diamond has a lot going for it, though doubleton leads are not as safe as many would like to believe. A heart is quite likely to cost and not that likely to set up tricks.

5. KJ5 Q108 K3 AJ1087. Pairs, Vul. 1NT-P-♦-P, 2♥. (Normal transfer.)

Marks: ♠5 7, ♣A 4, ♥ 3.

As my esteemed coeditor says, 'a spade looks normal.' I suspect we'd have everybody leading a spade with KJxx, so why so reluctant with KJx? A heart here has so much potential for blowing tricks I had to demote it in spite of it receiving some support. (As a tip for the future, if you want to score marks with me, don't lead a trump!)

6. KJ862 10643 K J52. Pairs, Game all. 1♠-P-2♥-P, 3♣-P-3NT.

Marks: ♣ 7, ♠ 5, ♦K 3.

As Fiske Warren says '♣2. No other suit is attractive. It might be right to lead the ♣J to pin the singleton 9 or 10 in declarer's hand but I shall not try to win the brilliancy prize.' I thought this was merely a choice of which club to lead, the jack having the downside that declarer might have singleton queen or king. Those who don't like Jxx leads have my sympathy but in my view are missing

the point, whilst those trying to set up spade tricks are a little optimistic.

7. 4 J94 KJ7642 K54 Teams, oppo vul. 2♦-3♦-5♦-5♥, P-6♥.

Marks: ♦6 7, ♣4 6, ♠4 3, ♥4 -2.

A spade lead hoping for a ruff is a possibility but optimistic. A club is the majority choice of those who don't know the hand, and a diamond the majority of those that do, hence the 7 marks! Against two-suited hands where dummy cannot have two losers in the bid suit, conventional wisdom suggests you should lead the other, to cash these before they go away. It can of course be very wrong! Here, the normal principle of finding an attacking lead against a slam, is not so likely to be correct because opponents have been preempted and so may well have misjudged the hand, hence there is something to be said for a safer diamond lead.

A good set of solutions received from all entrants, the winner being Fiske Warren, who receives a free pat on the back, a signed newsletter, and the offer to publish an article should he submit it.



While on the subject of leads, suppose you hold KQ7 9853 984 983 and have to lead against one of the auctions 1NT-3NT, or 2NT-3NT. I suspect against the first there would be a high proportion of people leading a top spade, whilst against the second a heart would find more favour. What do you think?

In fact a spade is clearly best against both auctions (and even if partner has had a chance to open a weak two and rejected it). Instincts tell us to be more passive against the second auction, but here a quick think should convince you that the spade is the most likely way to defeat the contract - and if it does not then a friend of mine informs me that a computer

simulation is very decisive on the issue. (Much closer would be KQ2 K953 982 432, when any lead would be reasonable, a diamond coming out just on top.)



Finally, a cautionary tale from Shrewsbury:

4♥ by S	♠ Q1074	♣ led
	♥ 842	
	♦ AQ73	
	♣ K6	
♠ KJ93		♠ 652
♥ Q3	W N	♥ 107
♦ J54	W S E	♦ K1092
♣ J742		♣ AQ95
	♠ A8	
	♥ AKJ965	
	♦ 86	
	♣ 1083	

How do you play 4♥ by South on a club lead? It is a tired adage, but true nonetheless, that declarer is often careless at trick 1. Of course we don't think ♣A has been underled, but surely we may as well put the king up?

But look what happened: The king lost to the ace, and East realised that declarer would not have played the king with the jack in hand. So she returned a low club to her partner's jack. He switched to a low diamond, ensuring taking the contract one off.

In fact declarer should have played low on the opening club lead. West cannot get in, and declarer at some point plays ace and another spade, to set up a diamond discard. Note that if at trick two East switches to a spade, declarer must rise as otherwise West fires a diamond through before declarer can unblock the spades.

Of course, every now and again some joker will have underled ♣A. Don't worry - you'll get back on other hands what you lost on this one!