



Cambs & Hunts Bridge



Newsletter Number 31

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



This and previous newsletters can be found on the County Web page, whose URL is given above.

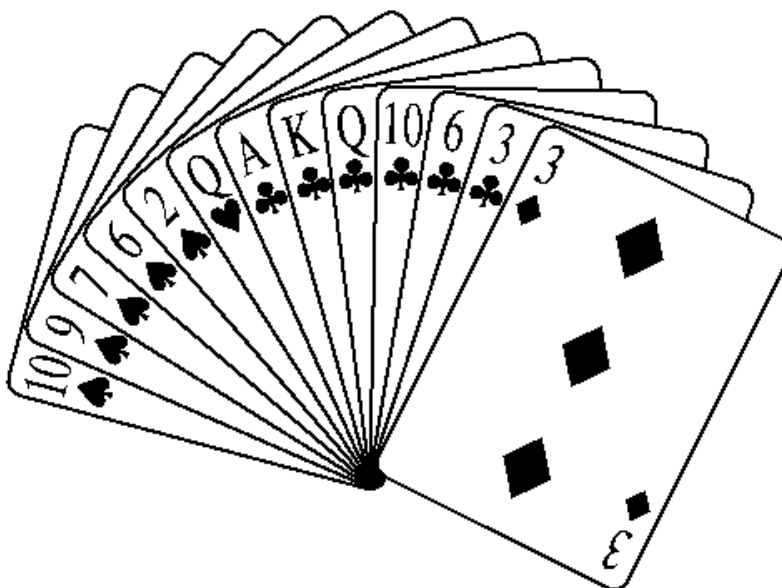
The County must shortly bid farewell to Sally & Philip Wraight, who are moving to Cumbria, and to John Young, who is off to the Western USA. They have all done much for the County, and we wish them well.



In this issue we have reports on the County Pairs by John Turner, the County Individual by Philip Wraight and the National Pairs by Jonathan Mestel. Chris Jagger discusses continuations over 2NT and after opener's jump rebid. We have two valedictions, an interview by Ann Curtin of Philip Wraight and an appreciation of John Young by the Jaggers. David Carmichael reports on various events and trends in the County. There is the usual round-up of News and Results.



Inside: Partner opens 3♣. What do you say when he loses a trump trick though you hold:



The County Pairs Final by John Turner

Game All, Pairs, you are third to speak in the West seat and hold – 865 AKQJ8754 108. The bidding starts Pass from your partner, 1♥ from South on your right.

- (1) What do you bid?
- (2) Say you bid 4♦, your LHO Blackwoods, RHO bids 5♠ (two key cards + trump queen), LHO bids 6♥ passed out, partner having stayed silent. What do you lead?
- (3) Suppose instead South opened 1NT, not 1♥, and the contract is 6♥ played by North – what do you lead?

On the bitterly cold morning of the County Pairs Final I unwisely played some outdoor tennis and unfortunately pulled a small muscle in my shoulder. Was that an omen? On the only previous occasion that Ann & I'd won the County Pairs I had pulled a muscle that very morning (a calf muscle, and I was hobbling around for several days). Well, omen or not, we certainly had a following wind this time and were fortunate enough to win with 59.29%, just ahead of Graham Dolan & Ben Tarlow (58.05%) and Kevin Smith & Joanne Caldwell (57.96%).

That earlier problem. The full hand was

	♠ KJ7							
	♥ AK10974							
	♦ 2							
	♣ K75							
♠ – ♥ 865 ♦ AKQJ8754 ♣ 108	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♠ 1098543 ♥ – ♦ 96 ♣ J9432
W	N	E						
	S							
	♠ AQ62							
	♥ QJ32							
	♦ 103							
	♣ AQ6							

At some tables, after Pass-1♥, West bid 4♦, allowing Norths a reasonable Blackwood route to 6♥ by South. At at least one table West bid only 3♦. However, Ann is made of sterner stuff and went straight in with 5♦, which really fixed North, who understandably settled for 5♥, and a fine result for us.

Question 2 is quite interesting – do you go for the brilliancy and underlead your diamonds, hoping to get partner in for the spade ruff back? It always works in newspaper articles but on this occasion 6♥ by South is solid and all that happens is you concede the over-trick. Actually, you still get some matchpoints because one West made a Lightner double, forgetting he was on lead!

Oh, and question 3? This was quite comical. I don't know the sequence but at one table North declared 6♥, not South. Forgetting that he was not on lead, West led ♦A out of turn. The Director explained to North his five options, one of which was to prohibit a diamond lead. You've guessed it – North took this option, East led a spade...one off! Was the ♦A a sort of Lightner lead?

An interesting ending developed on this hand at one table:

	♠ AQ10976							
	♥ 763							
	♦ 8							
	♣ AKJ							
♠ K432 ♥ J94 ♦ J743 ♣ 105	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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;"> </td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♠ J8 ♥ KQ10852 ♦ 105 ♣ 943
W	N	E						
	S							
	♠ 5							
	♥ A							
	♦ AKQ962							
	♣ Q8762							

At most tables East (the dealer) opened with a weak 2♥ or a Multi 2♦. This made the N/S hands very hard to bid, and few pairs reached the reasonable slams. However, at one table East passed and N/S had a free run, eventually landing in 6NT by South, which is quite a decent spot. The ♥4 was led. Declarer ran the clubs, pitching hearts from dummy, West throwing one spade and (significantly?) the 9-J of hearts, then took two rounds of diamonds. If the diamonds are breaking he should obviously just continue diamonds. But if declarer judges that LHO had four diamonds originally, he must not play a third diamond

at this point: he should finesse the ♠Q, cash the ♠A and endplay West with the third spade to lead into South's diamond tenace. Unfortunately he took the first line and now had to go one off.

Many thanks to Philip Wraight for organising and directing the event with his usual calm efficiency, and once again we all appreciated having the hands prepared by the Duplimate machine with hand records available after each session. The Fulbourn Community College was a pleasant place to play – an improvement, surely, on the hall at Comberton, which is dank and has erratic heating.



The County Individual Final *by* Philip Wraight

Individual Tournaments are usually lotteries and this year's County Final was no exception. However there was some fine play and a lot of interesting hands.

First a lead problem – after your partner makes a protective double of 1NT, what do you lead holding ♠KJ854 ♥J4 ♦T864 ♣95 ? (Answer below)

As an example of excellent play, what about this sparkling defence I encountered as East on board 6?

East	South	West	North
1♣	P	1♠	2♥
p	p	3♣	P
3NT	P	P	P

	♠ K7	Dealer E
	♥ QJ9843	
	♦ 84	
	♣ K106	
♠ AQJ98		♠ 63
♥ K10		♥ A542
♦ 763		♦ AJ
♣ 952		♣ AQ873
	♠ 10542	
	♥ 7	
	♦ KQ10952	
	♣ J4	

and I found myself in a rather thin 3NT. I won the heart lead in hand, to preserve ♥K as a subsequent entry to the spades, and immediately finessed ♠Q. North (Robin Cambery) ducked without a flicker. I now finessed ♣Q, which also held, and things were going well. I next ducked a club, to establish the suit and 9 tricks. Robin did well to overtake his partner's jack, and cleared the hearts. I cashed 3 more clubs, discarding two diamonds, and lured by the mirage of overtricks at Pairs (I should have realised that simply making 3NT would be a good result when few of the field would be in it) I finessed again in spades. Robin won with his now stiff K and cashed four more heart tricks to set the contract by two tricks for a well deserved top. Incidentally if South had led ♦K at trick 1 or North had won the

second trick above and switched to a diamond, the contract is always making provided South (now the danger hand) is kept off the lead after the A is held up for one round.

This was my hairiest hand:

Board 21	♠ Q65	Dealer E
	♥ QJ6	
	♦ J64	
	♣ J1082	
♠ AJ8		♠ K7
♥ AK952	W N E	♥ 103
♦ AQ	W S E	♦ K9753
♣ A96		♣ KQ53
	♠ 109432	
	♥ 874	
	♦ 1082	
	♣ 74	

As East, needing a good board towards the end of the competition, I took an optimistic view of my 5th diamond and opened a sub-minimum, off-centre, 1NT. Lacking transfers, Roman Key Card Blackwood and other similar toys, I think most West players with their rather nice 22 point hand would have bid 5NT, asking me to choose between 6NT and 7NT. (There are no prizes for guessing which action I would have chosen). My partner for that round (Victor Milman) was made of sterner stuff and having used Gerber to check that I had 3 kings, rapidly propelled me to 7NT(!) and 3♠ was led. If this was away from the Q, the finesse could wait, so I played small from dummy and N was fixed. Whatever she played I had 13 tricks when the diamonds broke 3-3. Finally that lead problem, which came up on board 11 after East had doubled South's opening 1NT. (I was an interested spectator

at N)

Board 11	♠ Q32	Dealer S
	♥ 752	
	♦ A97	
	♣ J1083	
♠ KJ654		♠ 8
♥ J4	W N E	♥ AQ1096
♦ 10864	W S E	♦ 52
♣ 85		♣ AKQ64
	♠ A1097	
	♥ K83	
	♦ KQJ3	
	♣ 72	

There is always a risk, doubling 1NT in the "protective" position, that partner, with nothing to go on, will find the wrong lead. Here a spade let the contract through trivially. South (that man Cambery again) won cheaply, crossed to ♦A, led a heart and East was fixed. On a heart or club lead the contract should always be off and even on a diamond lead, South will have to take a good view in spades, which, on the bidding, he is likely to get wrong. I do not know what the answer is. At the Leeds Swiss teams after this auction with a similar holding I decided not to lead fourth highest from a broken spade suit. There it would have led to a two trick defeat and my alternative was the only lead to let the contract make! [*Editor's tip: You are right – these hands are lotteries, but a good rule is to lead your five card suit every time – it may not be the right lead but at least you won't worry about it!*]



John Young - a Whirlwind Romance *by* Cath & Chris Jagger

A chance meeting on holiday ...two people who clicked on first sight ...then separated by 4,000 miles ...married after spending 15 days together ...still forced to live in different continents ...until ...

Is this Hello magazine? No, it is the true story of how John met Linda, an enchanting lady from Washington State. They were married last December and John will shortly be leaving these shores to live in the USA. Not only will he be joining his new wife, but he will be moving to within 1,000 miles of his two daughters, Georgina and Rochelle, who have been living in Los Angeles for the past three years. We wish him all the best for the future, and hope to see him back from time to time.

John has been a regular on the tournament scene for a number of years, but first started playing bridge in Cambs & Hunts about six

years ago, very much boosting the strength of bridge in the County, and becoming its first grandmaster. With wins in the Corwen, Bournemouth Pairs, Nicko, Men's Pairs, Men's Teams, Portland Pairs and a string of other good results, he is now 3rd in the Gold Point 'current ranking' list. He also won more masterpoints than anybody in the 2000 season.

John spent many years working for Thomas Cook, initially travelling the globe and later managing projects. He left seven years ago and took up various jobs including a stint at the EBU, before becoming the County's only full-time professional bridge player. His combination of quality play and sparkling personality have won him many clients and rarely a free evening. If you want a game his Seattle number is ... – but I warn you the travel expenses will be high!



PROFILE: Philip and Sally Wraight

It is with a real sense of loss that we learn that Philip and Sally Wraight are to leave Cambridge. The flourishing fortunes of both the Cambridge Club and the County in the last few years are very much due to Philip's efforts and enthusiasm and he will be much missed. The really exciting event of the last year has been the purchase of a duplimate dealing machine by the Cambridge Club. The idea was Philip's, after he borrowed one from Hertfordshire (this involved two trips to Welwyn) to test it, and the organisation of its purchase and subsequently its use has been his responsibility. The County has the benefit of the machine for all its events. Philip's interest in the game and the time he has given to running events will be hard to replace.



When did you start playing bridge?

About twenty-five years ago. I learned to play by reading books and started to play rubber bridge once a week with a group of similarly inexperienced players.

I believe you and Sally met at the bridge table. How did that happen?

Sally and I were introduced to one another by some mutual friends who said they were desperate to get two more to play rubber bridge. We actually met for the first time on their doorstep. Only a lot later did we discover that the wife hated bridge and had made a noble sacrifice in the interests of a bit of matchmaking!

I first started playing bridge at the Cambridge Club round about 1982. I remember vividly my first County event – it was a teams event of some kind – that you directed. I was much impressed then with your competence

and friendliness as the director. How did you become involved?

When Sally and I first started playing duplicate we found the Cambridge Club much too fierce for us and we migrated to the gentler pastures at Cottenham. I had not been playing there long when I was persuaded to be the club's rep on the County Committee and a bit later they twisted my arm to be County Tournament Organiser as no one else would do it. This led to the amusing (in retrospect) situation of my directing the County Pairs Final with no previous experience of directing. I vividly remember being called to rule on a revoke and not being too sure what a revoke was, let alone how one ruled on it!

Twenty years later you have been Tournament Organiser at the Cambridge Club and again of the County. How does it seem to you that bridge in the County has evolved during that time?

I think the overall standard has improved. Club heats of the County Pairs and Individual remain popular and entries are good for the Teams Knockout, where a lot of people are prepared to risk meeting some of the perceived better teams and they often do very well against them. The introduction of Swiss Pairs last year proved very popular and I suspect this will become an increasingly important fixture in the calendar. The advent of Green Pointed Swiss tournaments has had an adverse effect on some county events. Entries for the Swiss Teams club challenge have been disappointing recently, particularly as it is designed for less experienced players in the county who would not play in other events (although the S Cambs League remains very popular). There was a slight increase in the entry for the Newmarket

Open Swiss Teams this year, with all playing the same predealt hands and having hand records, but numbers are less than half what they were 20 years ago. We would see greatly increased numbers again if this became a green pointed event, which it could be if someone was prepared to take on the organisation together with the EBU.

One suspects you grew up in the West Country. When and where did you acquire your enthusiasm for mountains?

I first went to the Lake District when I was a student and after that I went walking there or in Snowdonia at every available opportunity. I "discovered" the Alps about 25 years ago and since then have got to them about every other year on average. For me, getting high in the mountains, with the physical challenge and the wonderful views, is the best exercise there is.

Please tell us about your recent trip to Mount Everest.

I have been fascinated with the mountain since I was a boy and for a long time have wanted to trek in that region (having given up ambitions to climb it). When the opportunity presented itself I thought this was unlikely to recur, so deliberately chose the toughest trek that was not actual mountaineering. There were 16 in the party (sleeping in two person tents) with about the same number of porters, 4 yaks, 5 sherpas, and a cook who produced the most wonderful meals three times a day, often under the most adverse circumstances. We flew from Kathmandu to Lukla (landing on a dirt strip on a mountain ridge at 9000ft) and trekked (for 19 days in total) through increasingly awesome scenery, first up to Namche Bazar and then east for a week, gaining less than 1000 ft a day to give time for acclimatisation, until we were at 16000 ft, right below the face

of Lhotse, with Everest out of sight just beyond. Then it got really tough. We came back across the grain of the country, crossing three passes all about 18000 ft and climbing 4 minor peaks, all also about 18000 ft. There were three superb viewpoints of Everest itself, one on Kala Patar (looking down on Everest base camp) less than five miles from the summit.

Please remind us of the Wraight Convention. Having played it for some years, what is your considered view of its value?

Playing Acol, you may have a problem as responder with a balanced 10 count, if you are unable to bid a four card suit at the one level, since 1NT shows 6-9 except over 1♣, and the 2NT rebid shows 11-12. You are also in difficulty with a balanced 3334 hand with 6-7 points if partner opens 1♣, when a raise in clubs takes you past what may be the best contract of 1NT. This can be true of both minors if you are playing "inverted minor" raises. All these problems can be solved by making all 1NT responses 6-10 points, (which also means that a 2 level response can show at least 10 points and a good 5 card suit or 11 points with a 4 card suit). With this wider range, if opener wants to make a game try, 2♣ can be used as a conventional enquiry. (In response, 2NT shows 9-10, a 3 level bid shows 8-9 with a six card suit, and 2 bids 6-8 points, with 2 of major = 3 card support for partner or 2♥ = 5 cards if partner opened 1♠, and 2♦ = none of those). In my experience one does not usually miss 2♣ as a natural bid (we play 2♣ followed by 3♣ as "I wish I'd never heard of 'Wraight'") and the convention has often proved useful, both to bid some simple hands which are otherwise surprisingly difficult, but more important to be able more frequently to stop in 1NT when this is the right spot.

Notes from the County Secretary *by* David Carmichael

New Players' Tournament: This popular event, in its second year, attracted 48 players, who played 30 boards over two sessions. Pre-dealt hands were provided by the Cambridge Club's Duplimate machine along with hand records and commentary by Chris Jagger. The Association's President Andrew Lansley CBE MP presented the prizes.

The aim of this event is to provide an opportunity for inexperienced players to sample an organised Duplicate Bridge event and to encourage them to join Clubs in the area.

Schools Bridge: Locally and nationally there has been a decline in the number of schools and young people participating in Bridge activities. The County Association would like to reverse the trend if it can and all lovers of the game will share this desire.

A sub-committee of volunteers has been set up under Ed Linfield to interest schools in bridge and to explore the possibilities of providing 'Taste Bridge' sessions. The EBU is very keen

for Counties to do this and provides active support including evidence of the benefits of Bridge, improved maths results for example.

If anyone wishes to join the sub-committee or help in any way, please get in touch with either Ed Linfield or County Secretary David Carmichael (Tel 01223 871367 or email dc2000@tesco.net). Even if you don't want to participate but you have a contact at a school or have school age children (or grandchildren!) which might give us an opportunity to get a foot in the door, please get in touch.

Club directing training courses: The County Association is arranging for a series of EBU approved Director Training Courses to take place in Cambridge. The first course, 'Essentials', has already happened. The second course, 'Book Rulings' will take place on May 25th. The final two stages, 'Judgement Rulings' and 'Assessment' will be in the Autumn, dates to be advised. For further information, please contact David Carmichael as above.

Continuations after a jump rebid *by* Chris Jagger

1♠-2♦-3♠-4♣ is a common problem sequence. Every time I sit down to play with a good player in the County and this sequence comes up I know I am in for a murky time. The question is – is 4♣ a cue or a second suit? I would like to suggest the following as a standard version, based on responder only wanting to show a second suit with at least 5-5. There are three basic sequences:

1. Minor jump rebid: The only way to agree a minor jump rebid is to raise it. For example, 1♦-1♠-3♦-4♣ is natural. If you wanted to agree diamonds, raise them!

2. Two level response over one of a major:

1♠-2♦-3♠-4♣ is a cue unless responder's next

bid is 5♣, 6♣ or 5NT, all showing big minor two suiters. Opener responds initially as to a cue. Thus 1♠-2♦-3♠-4♣-4♦-5♦: The 4♦ bid was a cue, as is 5♦, since responder did not bid 5♣.

1♠-2♦-3♠-4♦ is natural.

1♠-2♦-3♠-4♥ is a cue (unlikely to want it as natural since with 5-5 would respond 2♥).

1♠-2♦-3♠-5♣ is a splinter raise.

1♠-2♦-3♠-5NT is 5-6 with the red suits!!

Note that 1♥-2♣-3♥-3♠ is basically natural, looking for 3NT.

3. 1♥-1♠-3♥: The only sequence left, and a special one. Four of a minor is a cue here. With a big two suiter, rebid 3♠, and then if partner raises leap to six of a minor.

The National Pairs by Jonathan Mestel

The County did well in the Regional Final of this year's National Pairs, coming 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 5th, respectively Sue Oakford & Victor Milman, David Carmichael & William Tunstall-Pedoe, Rod Oakford & Don McFarlane and Alastair Brodie & myself. Sue & Victor are thus Eastern Counties champions for the year. The eight of us duly trekked over to the Coventry Hilton hotel, for possibly one of the last EBU events to be held there, as apparently bridge players do not spend enough in the bar. Each of fifty pairs plays two boards against every pair over the weekend. The event was deservedly won by Pat Davies & Chris Dixon. Alastair & I were 3rd, Sue & Victor 10th, Rod & Don 11th, and David & William in the lower half. William comments that this was his first National event, and that he was impressed by the consistency of the scores on some hands. Not, I imagine, on the following two boards which were the most entertaining round of the event:

E/W Vul	♠ 109762	Dealer S					
	♥ Q						
	♦ 3						
	♣ AKQ1063						
♠ AQ83		♠ J5					
♥ 1087		♥ AK5432					
♦ AQ9742	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>E</td></tr> </table>	W	N	S	E	♦ KJ106	
W	N						
S	E						
♣ –		♣ J					
	♠ K4						
	♥ J96						
	♦ 85						
	♣ 987542						

At our table the bidding was:

South	West	North	East
3♣	3♦*	6♣	6♥
P	P	7♣	X

West's 3♦ was for take-out. Lest anyone suggest my hand was too weak for a preempt ("Loony" – Don), let me point out that To & Rowlands had a similar auction. Against them West led ♠A, so they achieved –500, an excellent score. At pairs, sacrifices against slams only tend to score well if, as here, the penalty is less than the game. Against me a heart was led, ♠J returned, and after two spades, ♦A and a third spade, partner was somewhat surprised to find that his trumps weren't good enough to avoid a loser. –1100 is 'Par' on the board, but was clearly bad for us. For example, Sue & Victor took a penalty from 6♣. David & William had the auction as N/S:

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

2♦ showed the black suits, and South opted for the slow approach, as E/W seemed in some doubt over the meaning of the double. Somewhat confused, West bid 4♦, apparently not realising it was a jump. Judging correctly that opponents might have a slam, our men settled for –680, which was worth 60%. After the hand West stated she had merely forgotten to use the 'Stop' card and East claimed that if he'd realised that he'd have bid the slam, showing somewhat poor ethics. The director's comment was 'Oh, this hand again!'

Don feebly passed my hand but Rod psyched:

South	West	North	East
P	1♦	1NT!	3♥
P	4♥	P	P
5♣!!	P	P	X
P	P	P	

This outcome seemed more hilarious to N/S than E/W, for some reason, who were somewhat caustic about North's 1NT. This needed Rod into mischievously borrowing a point or two on the next board:

Both Vul	♠ A74	Dealer W
	♥ K1042	
	♦ Q2	
	♣ AJ63	
♠ KJ10653		♠ 982
♥ AQ5	W N E	♥ J986
♦ 765	W S E	♦ 1083
♣ 10		♣ 542
	♠ Q	
	♥ 73	
	♦ AKJ94	
	♣ KQ987	

E/W Vul	♠ AKJ762	Dealer S
	♥ 952	
	♦ 4	
	♣ Q85	
♠ -		♠ 1095
♥ AQJ1084	W N E	♥ K6
♦ AQ1052	W S E	♦ J987
♣ 92		♣ AK74
	♠ Q843	
	♥ 73	
	♦ K63	
	♣ J1063	

West	North	East	South
1♠	1NT!	P	2NT*
P	3♥*	P*	4♣*
P	4♠*	P	6♣

West	LHP	CHP	RHP
1♥	1♠	X*	2♠
3♠*	P	4♠*	X
XX*	P	4NT*	P
6♦	6♠	P*	P
7♦	P	P	P

Here 2NT was a minor suit enquiry, 3♥ showed a top honour in both minors, 4♣ was RKC♣ for clubs, and 6♣ was convertible to 6♦. A good scientific sequence given the overcall, which of course would have been less successful if you swap the East and South hands! We also reached the slam after a pass by North, on the uninterrupted sequence: (1♠)-P-2♦; 2♠*-3♣; 3♥-3♠*; 4♣-4NT*; 5♥*-6♣ as Alastair judged well in the 3NT-zone. Against Sue & Victor, North tried a take-out double, South responded with a non-forcing(!) 3♦, North bid 3♠ and South's 5♣ ended the auction, for a deservedly poor score. William also doubled but East raised obstructively to 2♠. Slightly unsure of their methods now, they stopped in 4♦.

Later on, we held another big hand. You know how even your favourite partner sometimes

seems to be on the other side? I've seen him referred to as "CHO" (centre-hand opponent). Well, for once everyone seemed on my side this time – let's call them left-hand partner and right-hand partner.

RHP might well have bid 3♠ on her first turn, and LHP 4♠ or 5♠ on his second, but the really helpful bid was RHP's double of 4♠ enabling me to show first round spade control. CHP's 4NT was forward going, support for all suits. When LHP sacrificed over 6♦, CHP argued that he wouldn't have done so with a possible trump trick, and hence that if I needed a trump finesse it would be working. He therefore made a forcing pass over 6♠ and I felt able to bid the grand. This was quite satisfying, but it's worth noting that Sue & Victor only got 50% for defending 5♥ on the unconvincing auction 1♥-2♠-X-3♠; 5♦-P-5♥; So +800 for 6♠x was already a big score. Should I really be going against this kind of odds? Well why not – it's fun to bid grands.

System over 2NT *by* Chris Jagger

Whenever you open 2NT, overcall 2NT, or open a strong 2♣ and rebid 2NT, it is useful to have some effective system to find the right contract. The bidding is already uncomfortably high, so some artificiality is useful in order to find the right contracts.

A good basic system: 3♣ is five card stayman, 3♦ and 3♥ are transfers, and 3♠ shows the minors. 4♣ and 4♦ are single-suited slam tries with that suit. Over the 3♣ bid, opener shows his 5 card major, or else bids 3♦, over which responder bids his four card major. Some examples:

1. AQxx Kx AKxx Axx opposite Kxxx J10xx Qxx xx. 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♥-3♠-4♠.
2. AKxxx Kx AKx Kxx opposite Qxx Qxx xx AQxxx. 2NT-3♣-3♠-4♣-4♦-4♠-5♠-6♠. After hearing that partner has five spades, cuebid 4♣ to show slam interest.
3. With QJx xxx xxxx Kxx, simply raise to 3NT.
4. QJxxx x Kxxxx xx. 2NT-3♥-3♠-3NT. Show partner your spades and then offer him a choice between 3NT and 4♠. Do not bid 4♦ – whilst this would be natural, it should also show a slam try as you should not try to play in 5♦ rather than 3NT.
5. Kxx Axx Kxx Qxxx. Raise to 4NT, invitational to 6NT.
6. AQx KQxx Kxx Ax opposite xx J10xx AQxx xxx. After opponents open a weak two in spades it proceeds (2♠)-2NT-3♣-3♦-3♥-4♣-4♥. The 2NT bid here shows about 16-18 points, then the four card heart fit is found. Note also that the overcaller cuebids 4♣ on the way, since he is suitable for slam so he must tell his partner in case he is too.

A problem: You may notice with this system that with a single-suited major slam try

you have something of a problem. You can transfer to the major, but what then? The only way to show the hand is to invent a second suit to show the slam interest, and then later pull back to the major. Even worse is that if it starts 2NT-3♥-3♠-4♣-4♦ you do not even know whether partner is cuebidding for spades or for the clubs you don't have! A good solution to this problem is to play all four level bids as single-suited slam tries - but for the suit two up! Thus 4♦ is a slam try in spades (over which partner can sign off with 4♠, or show interest with 4♥). Similarly, a 4♥ response is showing a slam try in clubs.

Describing and right-siding: There are two aims over 2NT - to be able to show all the hand types, and to right-side the contracts. Most people will be content with the above system, but below we give some fine-tuning to achieve those ends. In my opinion it is the best of many versions on the market, although what follows is somewhat simplified!

The big difference is over the 3♣ bid. 3♠ and 3NT responses are used to show 5 spades and hearts respectively. 3♥ denies a four or five card major, and 3♦ shows at least one four card major. Over 3♦, responder bids the major he hasn't got with one of them, 3NT with neither, 4♣ with both and a slam try, 4♦ with both without a slam try. 4♥ and 4♠ are also used to deny a major and show a five card club/diamond suit respectively.

Other possible auctions include:

1. 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♥-3NT-4♣. This shows 4 spades and 5 clubs, with slam interest (and opener is known to have four hearts). If instead responder had bid 4♥, that would have been 4 spades and 4 clubs (he has already

denied hearts so it cannot be natural, and hearts and clubs are 'linked' suits).

2. 2NT-3♣-3♥-3♠-3NT-4♦. 3♥ denies a major, and 3♠ over this shows the troublesome hand with five spades and four hearts. Over 3NT, which denies a fit, partner can now show a three (possibly 4) card diamond suit, with a slam try, leaving opener in a good position to judge if slam is on. Alternatively responder could have rebid 4♥ to show a 5-5 majors slam try.

3. 2NT-3♠-3NT-4♣. The 3♠ bid shows at least 44 minors, and now responder shows a fifth club. With 55 minors he would instead bid 4♥ or 4♠ to show his shortage.

4. 2NT-3♣-3♠-4♣. Opener has shown five spades, and responder makes a general slam try with 4♣, agreeing spades. If instead responder had a balanced hand with five diamonds or clubs, he would now bid 4♦ or 4♥ respectively. Or if responder had a strong hand with 4-4 in two suits would now invite slam with 4NT, since opener is unlikely to have a second four card suit - if he has, he can still bid it later.

Now consider what hands types responder might have. Without a slam try he simply looks for a major suit fit and otherwise plays in 3NT. He finds all these via a transfer or 3♣. With a slam try, then if only four card suits he starts off with 3♣ with a major, or 3♠ with both minors. With a five card major he starts off with a transfer and then invites with 4NT if balanced, or bids a 4 card suit (with 5 spades and 4 hearts he starts off with 3♣ as above). With a 5 card minor he starts with 3♣, then either shows the minor immediately if balanced, or shows his major, and then the

minor later. With a 6 card suit he shows it at the four level immediately. Everything covered!

Another key feature of the system is that whenever possible retransfers apply to enable opener to play the contract. For example:

A. 2NT-3♥-4♣-4♥. The 4♣ bid was showing a good hand with spade support. Responder is not interested and retransfers with 4♥. If instead it went 2NT-3♥-4♣-4♠, this would show a heart cue and non-forcing. (If responder wants to go beyond 4♠ with a heart cue, he starts with the retransfer, and then bids on over 4♠.)

B. 2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠-4♣-4♦. The 3♠ bid shows four hearts, and opener agrees this suit and shows slam interest by bidding 4♣. His partner is not interested, but rather than playing the contract by the weak hand, transfers it to partner by bidding 4♦.

C. 2NT-4♣-4♦-4NT-5♣-6♦-6♥. Responder shows a single-suited heart slam try, and when his partner shows interest, uses his favourite version of RKCB. He then leaps to 6♦ to allow the strong hand to play it. In this case 6♥ would also have been to play, so responder can choose which way to play the hand.



Dates for your diary:

9 Jun 2002	Jubilee Swiss Pairs
21 July 2002	ECLv Herts (A)
1 Sept 2002	ECL v Essex (H)
13 Oct 2002	ECL v Northants (H)
5 Jan 2003	ECL v Norfolk (H)
9 Feb 2003	ECL v Beds (A)



