



Cambs & Hunts Bridge



Newsletter Number 35

30 September 2003

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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!



We repeat! All contributions welcome. Has your club no news? Did no one play an interesting or amusing hand over the summer? Even Aunt Agony has been reduced, somewhat transparently, to writing a letter to herself. The Newsletter/would be better/with your views/not Clerihews.



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



In this slightly slender issue Chris Jagger discusses sequences over a 2NT rebid and the Lady Milne over a telephone. Aunt Agony receives a squeeze from a suitor. John Turner describes a nail-biting finish from the Cambs & Hunts League, and another Laws & Ethics article discusses whether or not 'he who hesitates is lost.' There is the usual round-up of News and Results.



Play problem

♠ AJ	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; 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;">S</td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td><td style="padding: 2px;"></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S			♠ Q2
W		N	E					
S								
♥ K97		♥ J						
♦ A842	♦ KQJ97							
♣ QJ104	♣ AK975							

You are playing 6 of a minor from the West hand, after North has opened 1♥ and competed again in hearts at a high level, South passing throughout. North leads the other minor. You discover that South has 4 trumps. How do you play? (See page 3.)



The Lady Milne by a husband

Ring-ring. I answer the phone.

“You hold – AQx Jx AJ10xxxxx. Partner opens 2♠, showing 5-5 in two suits. What do you bid?”

Normally I would be hesitant at this point – there’s no crime worse than getting bridge problems right. However, it is Friday night, and having had a whole week of being at work to recover from last weekend’s labours, I am wide awake, and more than capable of spotting a clue. My wife does not play a two-suited weak two, so one of the opponents obviously held this hand – no harm getting this one right.

“3♣.”

“That would have worked okay. The Irish lady passed, missing a thirteen card fit and going quietly off in spades.”

I’m not the sort of chap who makes Irish jokes, or comments about women’s bridge, so I move swiftly on to establish how things are going. It is the Lady Milne – between the five home nations – and the first match has got off to a narrow win for England.

Actually another possible shot on the hand would be 3NT. You are expecting partner to have diamonds as her second suit, and so on a perhaps likely heart lead, 3NT may well scrape home.

From then on I received matchly news bulletins of the progress of the team, only missing out when Cath cunningly contrived to sit out a set in order to watch the French Open Ladies’ Final.

After a while the following hand came down the wire:

Game All	♠ QJ54	Dealer N						
	♥ AK87432							
	♦ K							
	♣ Q							
♠ 1073	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♠ K82
W	N	E						
	S							
♥ –		♥ 106						
♦ 107542		♦ A96						
♣ J8632		♣ AK1097						
	♠ A96							
	♥ QJ95							
	♦ QJ83							
	♣ 54							

Cath had an uneventful auction to 4♥, after East overcalled in clubs, and West did not deem the hand worthy of any action. At the other table the auction was far more exciting, but also instructive:

North	East	South	West
1♥	2♣	3♦*	P
4NT*	P	5♣*	6♣
P	P	X	all pass

5♣ showed 1 or 4 of 5 aces. Can you spot the five crimes? The first I think belongs to South – one assumes that 3♦ was a fit jump, but this looks like someone with a new toy who wants to use it! Passing with five card support for partner is rather timid, whilst the Blackwood bid was not only optimistic, but would not have helped at all if partner had two aces but two spade losers off the top. Passing and then later saving is usually a bad strategy, as opponents are far less likely to go wrong. Here it is doubly bad as the opponents have just found out whether they have enough aces for slam – surely they are not going to have much of a problem deciding what to do over 6♣?!

Perhaps the greatest crime lay with North – having found out that there were two aces off the slam, she passed, presumably allowing her partner to bid on should she fancy!

Overnight England had gone into the lead, with the crucial match being against the second favourites, Scotland, who had been faring badly but had a team full of experience.

N/S Vul	♠ Q2	Dealer W
	♥ J	
	♦ KQJ97	
	♣ AK975	
♠ K9865		♠ 10743
♥ AQ106432	W N	♥ 85
♦ 3	W S E	♦ 1065
♣ –	S	♣ 8632
	♠ AJ	
	♥ K97	
	♦ A842	
	♣ QJ104	

West	North	East	South
1♥	2NT	P	5♣
5♥	P	P	X

Cath opened 1♥, and the auction came back at the five level. Undaunted, it seemed to be a choice between 5♥, and 5♦. In this situation, where it is quite likely that you might have a big spade fit, it is sensible to use the cue of their suit as showing both majors, with better hearts. However, given the quality of this heart suit it is far from clear whether it is wise to show the spades – in spite of the four card spade support, 5♥ actually plays better.

Strangely enough, the auction was completely different in the other room, though the same principle could have been applied: 1♥-2♦-P-3NT. West could have considered bidding 4♦, but instead passed. This made +660 to go with –300 for a valuable swing to England.

By now England had only one match to play – and the event was already won! So time to take a well earned break and prepare for the most important session of the weekend – the banquet!

(The other editor takes over at this point to fill up some space.)

I note that 6 minor is excellent on this last hand. Many people claim that their UNT is either weak or strong but not intermediate, yet in my experience they mostly bid it anyway with a hand like North's. This can make it difficult to reach the right level. Once North has bid 2♦, it seems to me that 3NT is a lazy bid, and I prefer to temporise with 2♥. Give West the ♦K and 5♦ could make while 3NT fails, and 6♦ could be on, as here.

So how should one play a minor slam? This was the hand on the front cover. If trumps are 3-1 there is no problem, as a spade ruff in hand or two heart ruffs in dummy provide the 12th trick. But suppose we are in 6♣ on a diamond lead. A diamond ruff is quite possible if spades have not been mentioned, so we start by drawing trumps. Once we find out West had 12 major cards we could argue that with either 6-6 or 4-8 she would have bid differently. If we're confident of reading the bidding and discards we can play off all our minor winners forcing her to come down to either Kx A, when we endplay her in hearts, or K Ax, when we drop her king. But we might misread the position on a bad day.

An alternative line is to leave one card in each minor in dummy and then run ♥J. If West wins with ♥Q she is endplayed, while if it goes ♥Q, K, A and West exits with a low heart we can run it to ♥9, making unless East has ♥Q10. Both these lines are excellent; I prefer the latter on most plausible auctions, because I don't always count to 13 reliably.

Letter to Aunt Agony

Dear Auntie,

Last night I let through a slam by discarding from the wrong suit. This made me wonder – can one ever be squeezed in just one suit?

Yours sincerely, A Single Suitor.

P.S. Are you married?



Dear Single Suitor,

Strange that you should ask – for the first time in my life I recently came across a ‘one suit squeeze’ – they are very rare in practice. The idea is that if you throw a low card you can be endplayed, but if you throw a high one declarer can establish another winner.

In a recent Gold Cup match we played in 4♥, West having overcalled in diamonds.

	♠ A.Jxx							
	♥ 9xx							
	♦ 8xx							
	♣ K.Jx							
♠ Qxxx	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♠ K10xx
W	N	E						
	S							
♥ Qx		♥ Kxx						
♦ A.Q.J.7x		♦ 10x						
♣ xx		♣ 10xxx						
	♠ x							
	♥ A.J.10.8x							
	♦ K.9x							
	♣ A.Q.xx							

West led a club to the king, and partner now finessed ♥10 to West. Winning the club continuation with ♣J, declarer played off 3 more trumps and the other clubs. West now had to come down to 5 cards. If he keeps Qx – A.Q.J – declarer can play to ♠A and ruff a spade and then exit with a low diamond. But if instead he keeps ♦A.Q.x. declarer crosses to ♠A, and leads a diamond from dummy to the 9 and Queen. When West exits with his last spade, declarer ruffs and leads ♦K

pinning East’s ♦10, making the last trick with dummy’s ♦8!

So West maintained a flexible diamond position by coming down to ♠Q and ♦A.Q.J.x. My partner now led his last trump, while I beamed approvingly. The position was:

S on lead	♠ A.J	4♥ by S						
	♥ –							
	♦ 8xx							
	♣ –							
♠ Q	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E		S		♠ K10.9
W	N	E						
	S							
♥ –		♥ –						
♦ A.Q.J.7		♦ 10x						
♣ –		♣ –						
	♠ x							
	♥ x							
	♦ K.9x							
	♣ –							

West threw ♠Q, dummy a small diamond and East ♠9. But now my heart sank as partner began to ponder. All he had to do was play a spade to the ace, and West would be caught in a ‘single suiter.’ If he throws ♦7 he is endplayed with ♦J, but if he throws ♦J, declarer leads towards ♦9. If East inserts ♦10 declarer covers and makes the last trick with ♦9. But note this doesn’t work if East held two diamond honours, say ♦J10, as he has an entry to a winning spade.

Do you see how to make if East holds ♦J10? My partner did. He exited with ♦K before cashing ♠A! The defence would have had a choice between establishing ♦9 or leading into dummy’s ♠A.J. But on the actual hand, West cashed 4 tricks while I gnashed my teeth. Should partner have got it right? I think so. Is West really likely to have kept ♦A.Q.x.x and thrown all his spades? This would be a tremendously farsighted defence, the actual lay-out was much more likely.

Yours, still seeking a perfect partner, Auntie.

Continuations after a 2NT rebid by Chris Jagger

Modern thinking is that sequences such as 1♣-1♥-2NT-3♥ are forcing – it is important to be able to find the right fit when game is on, and since many now play that the 2NT rebid is 18-19, finding the right game is more important than being able to play in 3♥.

At the same time, some people would be reluctant to pass many hands with a six card suit, even if they are below the traditional 6 points required for a response at the one level. (The reason for this is two-fold: passing these hands may well miss your best fit, and also it allows opponents an easy entry into the auction.)

You may notice that these two attitudes do not sit very happily together! On the one hand you respond light on the basis of a long suit, and on the other you are not even allowed to play in it if partner responds 2NT – not unlikely given how weak you are!

To combat this, I recommend the use of Puppet Signoff, involving a 3♣ enquiry (not to be confused with 3♣ checking for majors, a more popular convention, but not one I'd recommend). This has two benefits – you can sign off in your suit, and also have extra ways available to show other hands. The downside is that you lose 3♣ as a natural bid (don't underestimate this downside, though this can be accommodated to some extent).

When the auction starts 1♣-1♦-2NT, 3♣ asks partner to bid 3♦, no matter what he has. [*Incidentally, many people inaccurately describe this as a transfer to 3♦. Technically it's a relay to 3♦, as it doesn't show anything extra in diamonds. (ed)*]

Then after 3♣-3♦:

Pass = wanting to play there.

3♥/♠ = four card suits, denying five diamonds, unless you have no slam interest.

3NT = mild slam try with a natural 3♣ bid.

4♣ = stronger slam try, natural.

4♦ = what you fancy.

4♥/♠ = splinters, with five diamonds and four clubs.

If you don't use 3♣, but directly bid something else, what does that show?

3♦ = 6+ diamonds with a slam try, no major (then major bids are cues.)

3♥/♠ = 4 card suits with at least five diamonds, and some slam interest.

4 level = splinters for diamonds (over which 4NT is to play, other bids are cues.)

Finally, for those that like puppet Stayman over a 2NT opening – where you bid suits you haven't got, in an effort to get the stronger hand playing the contract – you will notice that there is another chance to use that principle here. If the auction starts 1♣-1♦-2NT-3♣-3♦ you can now reverse the meanings of 3♥/♠, so that you bid the suit that you haven't got. Over 3♥, partner can then bid 3♠ to deny spades, but show that he has four hearts, in case responder has both majors.

I've glossed over what happens when it starts 1minor-1Major-2NT. The principle of using 3♣ to sign off in your original suit is the same. Some of the other continuations are different – I leave you to devise your own, or drop me a line and I'll send you full details!



The C & H League *by* John Turner

Last Newsletter, Chris Larlham described the League position at the end of April, at which point the Division 1 outcome was nicely poised, with three teams in contention. Saffron Walden had scored 75VPs (max 20 per match) from their six matches, whilst Cambridge 1 and the University were on 70 and 59 respectively after five matches. With Cambridge 1 playing their final match (v Ely) before the University (also v Ely), this meant that Cambridge 1 had to score at least 6 VPs to outscore Saffron Walden, but would have to score at least 9 VPs (i.e., not lose by more than 4 IMPs) to be certain of beating the University too and winning the League.

Cambridge 1 (Cynthia Kirkby, Bob Speller, Ann Curtin & John Turner) began against Ely with three dreadful results, but then things improved a little. After 23 of the 24 boards, it was extremely tight as we were down by 3 IMPs, but on the last board we gained 8, so we had done just enough for victory.

Of several interesting hands in the last match I offer two quite close bidding decisions. Firstly, non-vulnerable you hold KQ109x xxx K Qxx and your partner opens 1NT (12-14), oppo being silent. Suppose you try Stayman, as I did: partner responds 2♥. Do you try for game? After some agonising I decided to pass - lots of winners, sure, but perhaps too many losers. This worked out well even though pard had a maximum Ax AKJx Qxxxx xx, because hearts were Q10xx offside. Oppo went to 4♥, going one off doubled, so we gained 6 IMPs. The other hand (the critical Board 24) also involved a borderline decision opposite a weak NT opener. At love all you hold A108x x A109xxx Q10 and hear pard open 1NT (12-14). Again, it initially seems to be just a ten count but, with the extra tens, the 4-card

spade suit and the strongish diamond suit this seems to be worth a game try. 4♠, 5♦ and 3NT are well within range, and even 6♦ is excellent opposite Kx Axx Kxxx Kxxx. What do you do if your RHO (1) passes, (2) overcalls 2♥? With (1) it looks clear to try Stayman, as Ann did, getting a 2♠ response from me. She then jumped to 4♠, which made with an overtrick, even though I held a minimum J9xx Axx xx AKxx. Had I responded 2♥, Ann could bid 2NT; if I had bid 2♦, she could of course Pass, but that's a bit feeble and I'm sure she would have bid on with 2NT or perhaps 3♦. At the other table Cynthia came in with 2♥ over 1NT, giving responder a more cramped decision. Lebensohl, if you're playing it, allows responder to show both his 4-card major and his lack of a heart stop: depending on which version you're playing, responder bids either 3♥ directly or 2NT followed by 3♥ after opener's required relay of 3♣. If opener has neither a spade suit nor a heart stop himself he'll usually bid 4♣, which in this case responder will convert to 4♦ - or possibly even 5♦, since on that sequence there are no values wasted in hearts and the fit may be terrific. Thus Lebensohl deals with this case pretty well. The Ely responder, however, (who I assume wasn't playing Lebensohl) bid 3♦, Bob competed with 3♥, passed back to responder, who now chose to pass. 3♥ went two off undoubled, and 8 IMPs to us.

The League's first year in its new format has been a huge success, attracting a remarkable 30 teams, arranged in 4 divisions of 7 or 8. It replaces the South Cambs League, which for various reasons had not attracted such interest. Those who campaigned for it and sorted out the finer details are to be congratulated. As one would expect, Chris Larlham runs the new League with exemplary efficiency. The C & H League is here to stay!

Laws & Ethics part 2 – Hesitations *by* Chris Jagger

Last issue we considered the unauthorised information that can arise from alerts – this time we consider hesitations. Before we go on though, let me stress – that thinking is part of the game! There is absolutely nothing wrong with hesitating (provided that it is because you are thinking about what you are going to do – if instead you are dreaming about the delights of supper, then a quick apology and at least everybody knows that you were just daydreaming).

However, hesitations can lead to unauthorised information. If you hesitate then partner is not allowed to use any information from knowing that there was some doubt as to what you should do. One of the most obvious instances of this is where a player makes a slow double. Compare the following:

1. You see opponents bid, exclaim in amazement, and slam the double down.
2. You firmly but in tempo place the double down.
3. You scratch your nose, look thoughtful, and carefully lay the double down.
4. You look lugubriously at the ceiling, then ask partner to get you a drink, and when he returns, you sigh a little and say ‘Double?’ with raised inflection.

In each case your partner must assume that you have simply doubled the contract – the only authorised part of all this is the double. Deliberately using the unauthorised information is against the rules, and should lead the director to adjust the score.

However, more often it is the case that people do not deliberately use the information, but may nevertheless use the information, and this may still lead to an adjustment. Many decisions are difficult ones, and people frequently

are subconsciously influenced to do what they know to be right. So if the director is called in this situation, and even if he adjusts the score, there is no implication that you have been ‘cheating’ or ‘unethical,’ but merely that you took a decision that *perhaps* would not have been taken in the absence of the information.

This last point is too often misunderstood – I recall a top county player making the decision ‘I am not adjusting because I know that Y is a very ethical player.’ Whether or not Y is ethical is not at issue. (Closet lawyers may like to spot the subtle second reason that this statement may be a misjudgement.)

In each case your partner should aim to take the same action as if you had simply doubled. If he has an obvious course of action he should take it. But what if he does not? What if he is 50-50 as to what he would normally do? Should he toss a mental coin to decide? Unfortunately not. He should actually take the action he thinks is least likely to succeed. So if you doubled in a voice of thunder, and your partner has a marginal decision, he will know that it will actually be right to pass. However, he must stray the other way, and remove the double. On the other hand, if he doubled after a considerable pause, you should err towards leaving the double in. But bear in mind that this is only for close decisions – if your partner makes a slow double and most people would remove on your hand, there is no reason why you should not do likewise.

WARNING: Laws and ethics articles can seriously damage your health! When playing bridge try to be fair to others, and hope that they will be fair to you. But bear in mind that you are not playing in the World Championships!

