



# Cambs & Hunts Bridge



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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!



Congratulations to David Kendrick on becoming the County's eighth Grandmaster.

The County came third in the Tollemache final, after losing in the final round. As this was the County's best result for a number of years, there is no need for the customary article explaining how unlucky we were!

Congratulations to Paul Barden on the birth of his daughter.



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



In this issue Jonathan Mestel misses an opportunity for "a cow to fly by." Dave Harrison reports on the County Individual final, and David Carmichael describes an EBU ruling on the conundrum below. Chris Jagger discusses defence to strong club systems. In a rare lapse, Aunt Agony misses the best line in the fiendishly tricky hand below – can you do better? There is a further 'Back to Basics' article, a tip from an anonymous reader and the usual round-up of News and Results.



## How would you rule?

North opens 1♦, East overcalls 2NT, alerted by West. Noticing the alert, East looks down at the table and before South acts says "Oh – I pulled the wrong thing from the bidding box." Should the bid stand or may it be changed without penalty? (See page 3.)



## How would you play?

♠ KJ74		♠ A63
♥ KJ9763	W N E	♥ Q42
♦ 105	S	♦ A83
♣ Q		♣ A742

North opens 1♣, East makes a 'values' double, South bids 1♠ and you bid 4♥. North hesitates before passing and leads ♠2 to the Q & K. How should you play? (See page 8.)

## No cow flew by

by Jonathan Mestel

Sometimes I dream about doing something clever at bridge, emulating classic hands in the great books. Usually though, I have to accept almost getting somewhere close... I was West in the following hand from a Crockfords match

Dealer N	♠ Q6	Game All
	♥ A97532	
	♦ QJ	
	♣ KQJ	
♠ K4		♠ AJ975
♥ QJ104		♥ -
♦ A983		♦ K742
♣ 943		♣ A852
	♠ 10832	
	♥ K86	
	♦ 1065	
	♣ 1076	

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

Over 2♥ it would be nice to have a natural 2NT available, but that would have been Lebensohl. Perhaps a quick pass would have been best, but I opted for a responsive double, showing values and denying 4 spades. I hoped partner would bid 2♠ and I could then bid 2NT, but LHO scuppered me with his 3♣ bid. 3NT is a lousy contract; we could expect to lose 2 hearts and 3 clubs before looking at the other suits. -300 could be a normal result. However, declarer has a big advantage – the defence don't know how dire are our straits, and they often accept +100, and +200 they will regard as a good board.

♣K was led and ducked, followed by ♣Q which I also ducked. LHO now switched to ♠Q. Not so bad now. Surely with ♣J10 LHO would have continued the suit, so clubs appear to be

breaking. If LHO has ♠Qxx we even have 9 tricks, but the lead of the Q suggests a doubleton at most, so that North is 2-6-2-3 or 1-6-3-3. Not much point ducking ♠Q, so I won and led ♥Q from hand.

LHO won with ♥A and after some thought emerged with ♦Q. to dummy's king. I continued the suit to ♦9 and North's ♦J. If North exits passively in a minor now I can cash the clubs and diamonds ending in hand squeezing South in the majors. As North was clearly afraid that I held ♥KQ10 I had high hopes, but in fact he exited with a spade. This kills the entries for a squeeze; I cashed my clubs spades and diamonds and conceded ♥K for down one.

At this point I belatedly recalled a hand titled "A cow flew by" from Reese's classic 'Play these hands with me.' Suppose I throw ♠7 on the ♥Q. When North leads ♦Q I win with the king dropping ♦8 and follow with ♦7 to the ♦9 and ♦J. Now if North exits with the spade, in the two card ending dummy has ♠9 ♦4, and I hold ♥J ♦3. When ♦4 is led, South would have to choose between ♥K and ♠10, and would doubtless not have been watching the diamond spots assiduously. If he throws the wrong one, he could explain he was distracted as "a cow flew by."

Alas, a missed opportunity for bovine aviation. I didn't foresee the possibility and threw ♦2 on ♥Q. All I have left is a near miss and a Newsletter article.

But it's worse. I now see that playing ♦K on ♦Q was a bad error. Suppose I'd ducked – North then has a genuine problem as I might just have held K10 KQJx xxx xxx. If he continues diamonds I get a genuine squeeze. Perhaps I could blame that cow.

## Misbidding Boxes *by* David Carmichael

I recently approached the EBU with the following query:

My RHO opened 1 $\diamond$  and I made a WJO of 2 $\spadesuit$ . My partner alerted my bid and I wondered why until I looked down to see 2NT staring at me!! (2NT would show hearts and clubs.) I said ‘that bid is a mistake’ and LHO immediately called the Director.

The Director ruled that since I had not tried to change my bid immediately, it must stand and my partner was put on notice not to take account of unauthorised information. Was this the correct ruling?

I would have liked to change my bid to 2 $\spadesuit$  as intended; the 2NT bid was an accident or mechanical error in pulling out the bidding cards. I did not say I wanted to bid 2 $\spadesuit$  as I thought that would complicate matters further. My LHO had not bid or passed and so I would have thought that no-one would have been damaged if I had been allowed to change my bid.

*Nick Doe for the EBU responded as follows:* Law 25A allows an inadvertent call to be changed to the intended call if it is done without pause for thought and partner has not yet called after the inadvertent call.

‘Inadvertent’ means a call that at the time of making it was a different call from that which the player intended to make. This will usually be a slip of the bidding box. It does not cover mistakes made because a player was labouring under some other misapprehension, such as having mistaken his own system or the prior auction.

‘Pause for thought’ means pause for thought about changing the call. You cannot be thinking about changing the call until you realise that the call you have made is not the same as the call which you intended to make

and thought you had in fact made. A pause is not therefore crucial, provided that you can convince the director that you drew attention to the problem as soon as you were aware of it. A “Hey, wait a minute, I’ve pulled the wrong bid” (followed of course by “Director, please!”) is quite sufficient.

It is authorised information to a player that he has made a particular call. If you look down and find that you have bid 2NT when you intended to bid 2 $\spadesuit$  and thought you had bid 2 $\spadesuit$ , it is not a problem that it was partner’s alert which caused you to look down.

*Editor’s comment:* The key to this is to try to distinguish between ‘bridge errors’ and those errors merely caused by the use of the bidding box. Whilst the rules do have to be practical in this respect, generally they aim not to punish errors that occur merely through use of the bidding box. This is because it would be very hard without bidding boxes to bid 2NT accidentally without noticing it, whilst it is much easier with bidding boxes, where the cards may stick, or you may simply ‘miss.’ Most other ‘mechanical errors’ such as pulling out two cards or revoking because the cards are sticking, are treated simply as errors, and the law deals with them as such, usually involving some disadvantage to the side committing the act.

Nick also praised David for his careful use of language – merely saying the 2NT bid was a mechanical error, rather than saying what he had intended to bid. It is important when an infraction occurs to give as little away as possible about what your hand is. Obviously there must be something wrong, but let the other players guess what the problem is – in this way there is less (though still some) chance of unauthorised information passing.

## The County Individual *by* Dave Harrison

A disappointingly low entry of 77 players from only three clubs took part in heats to qualify for a 20-player final.

Board 19 caused problems all round the room:

Dealer S	♠ Q10954	EW Vul
	♥ J10	
	♦ 97	
	♣ 7643	
♠ A873		♠ KJ
♥ Q7	W N E	♥ K952
♦ K62	S	♦ AQ4
♣ AQJ10		♣ K852
	♠ 62	
	♥ A8643	
	♦ J10853	
	♣ 9	

The unopposed East-West auction began in four out of five cases 1♣ - 1♥ - 1NT. The West players settled for 3NT at this point, perhaps influenced by the pairs scoring and by having an unknown quantity for a partner. West having shown extra values with the 1NT rebid, a jump to 3♣ must be natural and forcing, as in the Individual event no gadgets such as a 2♣ ‘checkback’ are permitted. This might have enabled the very good contract of 6♣ to be reached.

After (say) a diamond lead, the plan is to ruff two spades in dummy. A trump to hand at trick 2 suggests a 4-1 break, but the ♣9 is a good card to see. Play the King and Ace of spades, ruff a spade with the 8, and play a heart to establish a trick in that suit. Then you can win the return, ruff the last spade with King, draw the rest of the trumps and you have your twelve tricks.

All five declarers however played in notrumps (the fifth one having been propelled into 6NT

by her partner.) I watched each declarer in turn take a successful spade finesse, and at some stage play a heart to the Queen, noting the fall of the Jack (or ten) from North. With eleven tricks assured whatever the lie of the cards, it can cost nothing to lead a heart back towards the King. When the other low heart honour conveniently pops up, the 9 in dummy becomes the twelfth trick. Sadly the declarers had all without exception cashed all their minor suit winners before trying the second heart, enabling South to take the last two tricks.

Congratulations to Sheila Barker on winning the event after a close tussle throughout with David Carmichael.

*[In no trumps it does feel natural to play off the clubs hoping someone throws a spade from 4. Once ♥Q holds marking South with ♥A, cashing the diamonds can never gain against sensible defence. North is under no pressure holding spade length, and if North held ♠Qxx, South will come down to ♠10x ♥AJ, and on the last diamond can afford to throw ♥J. So playing a second heart looks right, as Dave says. However, if North finds the difficult play of following to the first two spades with ♠9 and ♠Q, declarer will almost certainly go wrong, playing to endplay South. If North is good enough to do this, (s)he’s certainly good enough to drop the ♥10 from 10xx!]*

*One good reason for playing off the clubs is that South has an unpleasant guess with say 10xxx AJxx Jxxx 9. If you’ve been fortunate to have had an unrevealing auction a spade discard is very likely. If your auction began 1♣-1♥-1NT-2♣\*-2♠-3♣, however, it is much easier for South to throw red suits. (ed)]*

## Defence to a Strong Club by Chris Jagger

Here we present some sensible principles and methods for defending against a strong club, followed by some consideration of other conventions on the market.

**Strong hands pass:** Passing initially, and then bidding shows a strong hand. This is, to some extent, true. For example, with a balanced 20 count start by passing, since there is no need to get in now, and then come in later to show the hand (either by doubling them or by bidding no trumps). However, with a good suit, it is still necessary to show the hand even if it is quite strong – if you pass now, you may later find yourself trying to guess what to do at a high level, and regretting not bidding your suit earlier.

**Overcalls:** I would recommend that overcalls are natural, and can be wide-ranging, with jump overcalls being weak. To cater for this, many people play that a 1NT response to an overcall shows support – that is, a bid designed to show that you have some support for partner, and a fair hand. Since you have no cue available you cannot make a more normal ‘unassuming cuebid’.

**CRO:** Standing for ‘Colour Rank Other,’ this signifies the possible two suiters you can have. With two suits of the same colour, you double; with two of the same rank (ie majors or minors) you bid one diamond (the exception to overcalls being natural); and with any other two suiter (ie the pointed or rounded suits), you bid 1NT. Some people also play 2NT as majors or minors in addition to this (but more of them).

Partner then bids suits as ‘pass or convert,’ meaning that he only passes if he has the suit you have bid. With this scheme it is common to play that a 1NT (or 2NT) response suggests

that partner has a suit of his own he wants to play in.

The main problems with CRO are the fact that you lose the diamond overcall, that you don’t know immediately which suits partner has, and that it can give away much information during the play. Against this, it gives very little away to opponents during the bidding, and conveniently shows all the two suited hands.

**Fourth hand defence:** After 1♣-P-1♦, many people simply play that everything is natural, except that double shows the majors, and 1NT shows the minors.

**Escaping when doubled:** The general principle is that all redoubles are SOS – ie they suggest that you do not play in the current contract! There are also other principles, often similar to those after partner has done a takeout double. For example, if the auction commences 1♣-1♠-P-P, X-P-P (or 1♠-X-XX), then you use 1NT as being initially natural, but then if that is doubled, you have the option of redoubling to show the minors, or bidding a minor to show that minor as well as hearts.

**Other defences:** There are a plethora of other defences, many having reasonable merit. I would be reluctant to play a defence such as Truscott (double shows diamonds and spades, 1NT shows clubs and hearts, and suit bids show that suit and the one above), since it removes the very useful major suit overcalls, which is the thing you most often want to do over a strong club. (Similarly when defending against 1NT, it is vital to be able to show a single suited major suit.)

More useful (though not always licensed), are defences such as Amsbury or Panama, where



### Results Round Up

#### County Individual

1. Sheila Barker
2. David Carmichael
3. Brian Copping
4. David Jackson
5. Jo Patten
6. Bernard Buckley
7. Jane Woodhouse
8. Sheila Ferguson

#### County Pairs

1. Birdsall/McFarlane
2. Pagan/Jagger
3. Seaver/Bhagat
4. Constable/Larlham
5. Oakford/Mestel
6. Hamilton/Aldridge
7. Caldwell/Smith
8. Chaplin/Chaplin
9. Copping/Tedham
10. Man/Jackson
11. Curtin/Turner
12. May/Pimblett

In the **Eastern Counties League**, the County had results 16-4, 11-9, 7-13 against Beds, and 11-9, 14-6, 12-8 against Suffolk.

Mervyn Rogers and John Fairclough won the **New Players Tournament**.

In the **County Knockout** Round 2: CARMICHAEL bt HARRISON, JAGGER bt HOWARD, KENNEY bt RILEY, MURPHY bt DE VRIES, CHAPMAN bt MAN. Quarterfinal: JAGGER bt CARMICHAEL, LAST bt WARD, KENNEY bt MURPHY, CHAPMAN bt BROWN. Semifinal: JAGGER bt LAST, CHAPMAN bt KENNEY.

In the **Tollemache** the County (Birdsall, Gibbons, Jagger, Jagger, Kendrick, Mestel, Pagan, Wightwick) got the Bronze medal.

In the **Hubert Phillips Bowl**, Jagger, Jagger, Warren, Wightwick, Pagan is through to the final. In the **Nicko**, Cambridge are through to Round 6. In the **EBU Online Congress** Ian Hill won the Corby Cup, and Graham Dolan won the Teams. In the **Women's Pairs** Jagger/Teshome came 4th, with Oakford/Stelmashenko 5th. In the **Men's Pairs** Kendrick/Milman 3rd, who then came 4th in the one day Swiss Pairs at the **Easter Festival**. In the **Spring Congress** at Harrogate, Jagger/Wayne were 3rd in the main pairs. James Chapman & Geraint Harker came 2nd in the **Under 25 Pairs**.

#### Dates for your diary:

6th June 2004: Jubilee Swiss Pairs.

31st Oct 2004: Cambs & Hunts Open Swiss Teams, 2.00 Bedford Lodge Hotel, Newmarket. There will be a parallel but totally separate Newcomers' event. Entry Fee £15 per player.



### Letter to Aunt Agony

Dear Auntie,

Here is a very tricky play problem. I don't know anyone who found the right line first time, and so I thought I'd try you. North dealt at Love all at IMPs.

♠ KJ74		♠ A63
♥ KJ9763	W N E	♥ Q42
♦ 105		♦ A83
♣ Q		♣ A742

North	East	South	West
1♣	X(!)	1♠	4♥
P(slow)	P	P	

I doubt if you approve of partner's take-out double, but the final contract is obviously good. North leads ♠2 to the Q and K. How should one play at trick 2?

Yours faithfully, Frances Hinden

♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥

Dear Frances,

I'm more interested in answering genuine queries from genuine County members but no-one else has written to me for months. We won't discuss the auction. The lead is an obvious singleton. At first sight it seems clear to lead a trump at trick 2. If trumps are 3-1 we have 10 solid tricks, or 11 if they're 2-2. But you helpfully point out that North paused before passing 4♥; he can only have been thinking of doubling – perhaps he has ♥A1085. In that case we lose two trumps and a diamond and cannot afford to lose the 4th spade as well. Perhaps we can ruff it in dummy somehow. Suppose we lead a spade at trick 2. North can ruff a loser with a natural trump trick. If he doesn't ruff we win ♠A and lead a spade to the jack which he ruffs. But he can't draw all dummy's trumps so we will get

to ruff the 4th spade. This looks promising. What could go wrong? If South has a stiff ♥A North will get two spade ruffs unless we lead trumps at once; but with x xxx KQJx KJ10xx North would hardly have a problem over 4♥. But he could hold x A10xx QJxx KJ10xx say. He ruffs the next spade and leads a diamond. South will gain the lead with a diamond and give partner a second ruff.

Now that we see the problem, the answer is clear: we need to cut communications between the defenders – a scissors coup. At trick 2 we lead a diamond or a club and duck. Say it goes ♣Q, K duck. North switches to a diamond, we win, discard a diamond on ♣A and ruff a club to hand. Now we lead a spade to the ace as North discards and a spade to the Jack. Note North sacrifices a trick if he leads trumps or ruffs ahead of ♠A.

This line fails if South has ♥A stiff, but as we observed that it unlikely. I think even without the pause it is more likely that North holds A10xx than xxx.

Yours ever,

Auntie

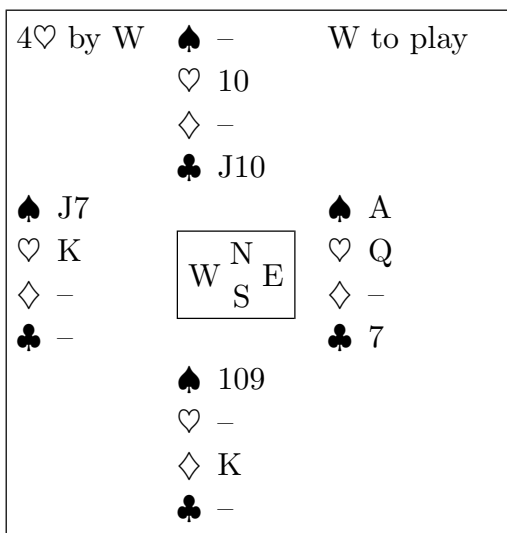
♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥

**Postscript:** In fact this line doesn't work – declarer runs out of trumps. When Auntie leads towards ♠A the position is

4♥ by W	♠ –	W leads ♠4
	♥ A1085	
	♦ QJ	
	♣ J10	
♠ J74		♠ A6
♥ KJ976	W N E	♥ Q42
♦ –		♦ 83
♣ –		♣ 7
	♠ 10954	
	♥ –	
	♦ K964	
	♣ –	



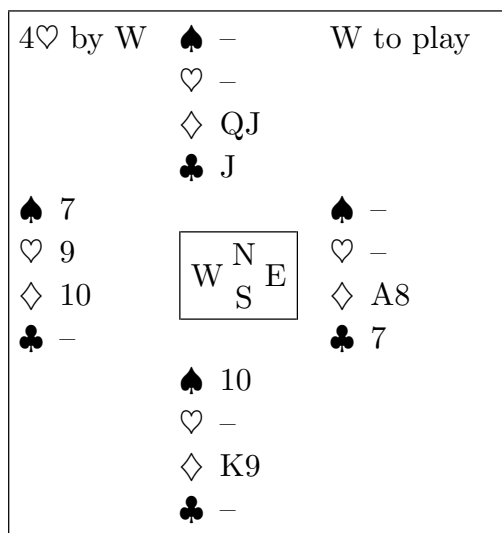
North ruffs in ahead of ♠A and forces declarer with a minor. Declarer must now attack trumps, but North wins the 2nd round and forces declarer to ruff a 3rd time. The three card ending is



North’s trump and the spade blockage ensure the defence get one more trick.

The winning line is to duck a diamond at trick 2. If North returns a diamond we win, ruff a diamond to hand and lead a spade up as in Auntie’s line. But now dummy’s trumps protect us against a diamond force. So the best defence is for North to lead ♣K at trick 3, pinning our queen. We win in dummy and cannot come to hand with a ruff or we get forced off as before. So we now lead a heart to the king, which North ducks, as he cannot attack trumps if he wins without blowing a natural trump trick. When we lead a spade to the ace North discards, as we have one more trump in hand than in Auntie’s line and so cannot be forced. We now ruff a club back to hand (to isolate the club menace – see

below!) and play ♠J. North ruffs and manages to prevent a spade ruff by playing ♥A and another heart. The position is now



West leads his last trump and a double squeeze has materialised. North must throw a diamond to guard clubs; now dummy throws a club, South must keep the spade and ♦3 wins the last trick.

A truly difficult but very elegant hand. The diamond duck combines three elements: it cuts communications to prevent a ruff, it prepares to void dummy in that suit to protect against a force and it rectifies the count for a squeeze. In fact Ms Hinden reveals that she didn’t play this hand herself, but solved it as a problem set by Richard Pavlicek ([www.rpbridge.net](http://www.rpbridge.net)). The editors feel that it is entirely reasonable for our expert analyst to have missed the best line, apologise to her unreservedly and wish to reassure her that we shall not deliberately send her ‘trick hands’ in future.



**Reader’s tip:** A reader sends us the following tip: Before taking a finesse, try to decide what you’ll do if it wins. If you continue in tempo, it is much harder for the defence to know if it was really a finesse or whether you hold the missing card yourself. Sound advice!