



Cambs & Hunts Bridge



Newsletter Number 38

30 September 2004

Editors: **Chris Jagger**, 2 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD, Tel: 01223-526586 and
Jonathan Mestel, 180 Queen's Gate, London SW7 2BZ, Tel: 01223-329671.

E-mail: ajm8@cam.ac.uk or christopher.jagger@deloitte.co.uk

Web page: <http://www.cambsbridge.org.uk>

Items for the Web page should be sent to David Allen on david@djallen.org.uk

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!



Shortly after we went to press last time, the County was devastated by the news of Ann Curtin's death. Ann's contributions to the County, both in administration and as a player, were manifest. It is a great loss for us all.



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



In this issue we present appreciations of Ann Curtin from John Turner and Steve Siklos. Aunt Agony displays both aspects of her Jekyll & Hyde personality at the expense of Roger Courtney and ex-County member Jeffrey Allerton. Mick & Beth describe scenes from a recent tragedy, while Chris Jagger advises how to proceed after partner opens at the 4-level. An anonymous reader recounts his partner-induced suffering in a redoubled slam. There are two readers' competitions this issue: one for thematic anagrams of County members and one on the best way to handle certain suit combinations. And of course, there is the usual round-up of News and Results.



How do you play?

♠ xxx	<table border="1"> <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		♠ AKx
W		N	E					
		S						
♥ x		♥ AKQJxx						
♦ AJxxx	♦ Kx							
♣ AQxx	♣ xx							

How would you play 6NT by West at Pairs?

North made a lead-directing double of 4♣ during the auction and leads ♠9. A good result on this board and you'll win the Shrewsbury Swiss Pairs! (See page 6.)



ANN CURTIN (1940 - 2004) – a tribute from her husband John Turner

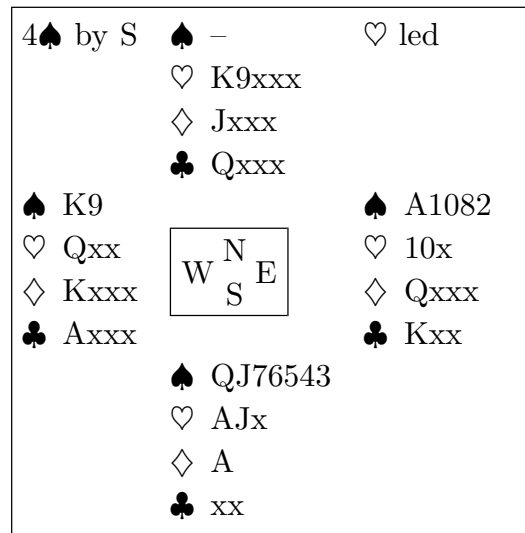
Ann was born and brought up in South Africa and came to England as a student in 1961. Shortly afterwards she got married and spent many years living in different parts of Africa (Rhodesia, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt) whilst bringing up her two children. She finally settled in Foxton in 1981. She did some teaching in Africa and when she settled in Cambridge taught Latin and Maths at King’s College School and the Leys. Later she worked as an Editorial Assistant for scientific publishers for some years. In 1999 she started her own business in property investment and management, which she ran very successfully until her final illness.

Ann was a fine tennis player and was one of the stars of the Wits University tennis team, and she later won a cup at the Kenyan Open. She was still playing a formidable game at the beginning of this year. She was very fit and it was hard to keep up with her when she was walking. She brought immense enthusiasm and talent to many different activities - for example, her Shakespeare-reading group (which she had started) and her book discussion group. On committees she was very effective, performing her own duties meticulously and contributing incisively to discussions. She loved travelling and in the last few years visited many exotic places, sometimes re-visiting them. Last Christmas she was riding elephants in Thailand. As a hostess, friend, relative, mother and wife, she was altogether exceptional.

Ann adored bridge and adored the Cambridge bridge scene. She and I in fact met at the Cambridge Bridge Club, around 1986. She was very determined and successful, winning numerous Club and County events and doing well in National events. She also contributed much to the organisation of bridge in this area

and loved hosting bridge matches and bridge parties.

A powerful memory that will stay with me forever is the Cambridge Club’s Butler Pairs competition for 2003/04. This is played over eight months, one session a month, and the winning pair is the one with the best four scores. After playing four times we had three pretty big scores but one smallish one and were lying in second place. It was clear that one more big score would do it. In February, therefore, with Ann already feeling quite ill, we turned out to play our fifth session. We had huge luck, this being an example:



After two passes I opened the South hand 4♠, to which all passed. Ann put down a grossly unsuitable dummy, with four top losers and the virtual certainty of at least one more trump loser, but I thanked her nevertheless. West had kicked off with a low heart, round to East’s 10 and my Jack. I then tried a low trump to West’s 9, but East after a few seconds’ thought overtook this with the 10 and returned a heart, won by my Ace. Now another low trump taken by West’s K, East following low. (I threw diamonds from

dummy.) West was thinking and not looking entirely comfortable! A third heart would be devastating (East would ruff low, ruining the hand for declarer) and would lead to three off, whilst a club switch obviously would also be successful for the defence. But West was unsure of the true position. Eventually he tried a diamond round to my Ace, and I now played a top trump round to East's Ace, West discarding. At this point East was nervous of leading away from his ♣K up to dummy's Queen, so persisted with diamonds. I was able to ruff this, draw the last trump and run the hearts, losing just three trump tricks, making a very surprising +420.

With that sort of luck and perhaps some good bridge by us too we rattled up a record score for us of +87 on the evening and a four-score aggregate of +277, surely a Club record. That evening was perhaps our most successful session ever. It was Ann's last game at the Club.

She did manage to play bridge once more, in the County Pairs Final a few days later, but by then she was feeling very tired and increasingly ill. She died in Cambridge on the 29th April, 2004.



Steve Siklos adds: I knew Ann for about 20 years. We played bridge and tennis, and met socially – all too infrequently, as I now realise.

Ann was great fun on the tennis court and she played a beautiful game. Niven, with whom she had some coaching sessions, used to tell me how much he had enjoyed hitting the ball with Ann: high praise indeed from a tennis coach. She was encouraging to partners and opponents alike, willing to overlook the most terrible shots if they were dispatched with an enthusiasm that matched her own.

I remember that in one of my first games partnering Ann, one of my serves, hit as usual with the frame, went about 30 degrees off target and wacked into the small of her back. The only reaction she permitted herself was a fleeting expression of mild surprise and the game continued smoothly, with Ann unflinchingly sticking to her correct position in the danger zone.

Ann was equally tolerant when playing bridge, though she could be scathing of pompousness or uncharitable behaviour. It was always a pleasure to talk after the game, when she would revel in the absurdities of the day with that infectious and inclusive laugh of hers. Home matches were a treat, because of Ann's legendary hospitality. Time after time she was the perfect hostess to high-powered visiting teams whose prowess was far more evident at the bridge table than at the dinner table.

A social dinner with John and Ann was also a great treat. Of course, the cuisine was of the highest order. Just when you thought that you couldn't eat any more, a plate of Ann's special huge and irresistible meringues with the chewy centres would arrive. But the best thing was the conversation, at which Ann, with her wide knowledge, good humour and interest in everything, excelled. Often, when going out to dinner I find myself thinking 'I hope there is a good collection of other guests'. Driving out to Foxton, I always thought 'I hope it is just John and Ann'.

And that is how I shall remember Ann. In time, I suppose, the memory of all the material things will fade – all those elegant backhands, the three no trump contract brought home, and even the meringues. But when those more tangible memories have passed, the glow from the warmth of her personality will long linger.

Mick & Beth to beat King hereafter *by* a Scottish player

It was Beth's idea that we could actually win the NICKO. It was shortly after we'd won our first battle against a team from Hampstead. On the way back we got lost and I stopped to ask directions from three weird-looking women.

"Excuse me, we've just been playing a bridge match somewhere on this blasted Heath. Can you direct us out of here?"

One of them giggled drunkenly that the only cards she and her sisters knew about were Tarot ones and offered to tell our fortunes. Bianca, who was then my partner, thought it would be fun and so I crossed their palms with silver. The first woman cackled

"OOh, I bet you're a master bridge player dearie – you're not? You will be soon."

And the second joined in "and this competition – you're sure to win it."

Bianca butted in "And what about me? Any good news for me or my family?"

"Why yes, pet. Even if you don't win this event, your children certainly will." And with that the third sister directed us to the road home.



I awoke late the next morning and picked up the post. There was a letter from the EBU – I'd been promoted – I was the first Regional Master of Cawdor Bridge Club! So then I remembered the weird sisters and told my wife Beth about it. She looked thoughtful.

"You could do it, Mick, you know. It's only that partner of yours holding you back."

"Bianca? But she's an old friend. I couldn't dump her."

"But she's the weak point in the team – our fears in Bianca stick deep! She's so pernickety about signalling – you'd never catch me worrying about damned spots. We play King's team next round – they're better than us. Imagine it, Mick & Beth to beat King hereafter! We must cultivate a deceptive style. Thou wouldst not play false and yet wouldst wrongly win? Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't."

So I told Bianca that from then on I wanted to play with my wife rather than her. I hardly think I am to blame for what happened. Yes, she took it badly, and drank too much at the club Christmas party. That terrible scene when she accosted one of our players crying "Is this a Jagger I see before me... come, let me clutch thee!" The tragic accident that followed was not of my doing.



We were home for the crucial next round. Duncan King sat in the open room throughout, because he took a liking to one of our armchairs – 'a pleasant seat,' he called it, as he ran his hand through his graying locks.

"I'm going to do something about that," he confided. He should have dyed hair after.

We were 22 IMPs down going into the last set as Beth and I took on Malcolm and Donald Bain. Malcolm asked if he could smoke.

"What, in our house?" responded Beth disparagingly.

North dealt the first hand of the set with EW

vulnerable:

♠ A982		♠ KJ105						
♥ A		♥ J106						
♦ AQ72	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>S</td> <td>E</td> </tr> </table>		N		W	S	E	♦ 4
	N							
W	S	E						
♣ AK109		♣ QJ853						

North	East	South	West
P	P	P	2♣*
2♦	3♣	P	4♣
P	4♦*	P	4♥*
P	4♠*	P	7♣
P	P	P	

When I opened with a game force Beth rapped the table excitedly.

“You’ll waken Duncan with your knocking,” warned South.

A few cue bids later and I declared a grand as North led ♥K. All I had to do was find ♠Q. It looked normal to play South for it, as North was a passed hand, with presumably ♥KQ and ♦K, but I couldn’t be sure.

“Look how our partner’s rapt,” joked Beth nervously. I ignored her. Perhaps I could find out more about the distribution.

“Small, please,” I directed.

“Unsix me here,” she babbled on, playing ♥6.

I led ♦A and ruffed a diamond high, crossed to hand in trumps and ruffed another diamond high, South pitching a heart. I ruffed a heart in hand on which North dropped ♥Q. I had no need now to ruff the third diamond and so drew trumps, North showing out on the 2nd round, and paused again to count the hand. North had shown 6 diamonds, two hearts, a singleton club and hence 4 spades. He might have opened with Qxxx KQ KJ10xxx x, but equally, he might not.

Beth began to get restless.

“If it were done, when ’tis done, then ’twere well it were done quickly,” she mumbled. For all her faults, Bianca was at least silent when dummy.

So I drew trumps, cashed ♠A, unblocking ♠10, and ran ♠9.

When South won with the ♠Q I was quite unmann’d in folly. For I swear in place of her usual visage, the spade queen bore Bianca’s head, shaking her gory locks.

“Which of you have done this?” I cried. “For false face must hide what the false heart doth show.”

“Er, yes, I false-carded in hearts,” admitted North, “but please don’t get upset.”

“Avaunt! And quit my sight!” I cried at Bianca’s image on the ♠Q, much to the consternation of the opponents, who thought I’d merely lost a finesse rather than having to look on that which might appal the devil.

Well, I eventually calmed down, but not so Malcolm & Donald who threw away 70 IMPs over the set. I heard them apologising to team mates.

“Sorry, I was quite distracted by that bloody man.”

“What bloody man is that?” enquired Duncan.

I didn’t hear the reply. We’d won, narrowly, and I consulted the draw to see who our next round opponents would be.

Two unknown clubs are playing. Apparently Birnam Wood is away to Dunsinane. Well, I can’t see either of them giving us much trouble.



Letter to Aunt Agony

Dear Auntie,

I spent a good 5 minutes thinking about this hand from the Shrewsbury Swiss Pairs. What's the best line?

♠ xxx		♠ AKx
♥ x	W N E	♥ AKQJxx
♦ AJxxx	S	♦ Kx
♣ AQxx		♣ xx

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

It was game all, North led ♦9.

Yours, Jeffrey Allerton

♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥

Dear Jeffrey,

If the hearts break you have 12 tricks on the lead, with some squeeze chances for the 13th. But consider: (a) The ♦Q looks marked onside from the lead into your first bid suit. (b) If hearts don't break you need either 5 diamond tricks, the club finesse (which is surely wrong from the double), or a squeeze. If you run the diamond to hand, play hearts from the top finding they don't break, unblock ♦K, and concede a heart to RHO, he can play a club through and the squeeze doesn't work. If on the other hand you rise with the ♦K and set hearts up you will have a non-simultaneous double squeeze on the run of the hearts which works as long as RHO is guarding diamonds. (c) If hearts do break you have a double squeeze for an important overtrick. Really you want to cash ♣A early on to clarify the position, but you can't do that if you run the diamond to hand.

So tempting as it is to run the diamond to hand, the best play is to rise with the ♦K and play off the hearts, conceding one if necessary. Then unblock ♣A, cross to dummy with a spade and run the hearts. playing for this 5-card end position

6NT	♠ Jx	E to play
	♥ -	
	♦ x	
	♣ KJ	
♠ x		♠ Ax
♥ -	W N E	♥ x
♦ AJx	S	♦ x
♣ Q		♣ x
	♠ Qx	
	♥ -	
	♦ Qxx	
	♣ -	

If RHO discards a spade on the last heart you throw a diamond, and then take the diamond finesse to squeeze West in the blacks. If RHO discards a diamond, throw the ♣Q and take a diamond finesse.

Yours,

Auntie.

♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥

Dear Auntie,

Yes, that's how I played it. On the last heart RHO discarded a diamond so I took a diamond finesse, but LHO had led from an initial holding of ♦Q9 and I went two off. Dummy, my wife, fixed her steely eye on me and said "Perhaps you didn't notice you had 12 top tricks and an automatic squeeze for 13?" This brings me to my real question: do you think this constitutes grounds for a divorce?

Yours,

a Worried Husband.

♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥

Auntie again

Dear Auntie,

Do you believe in the supernatural?

We've all heard tales of the Rueful Rabbit and his guardian angel. It occurs to me that not all ethereal kibitzers are so benign. I've suspected for a while but it came to a head in last nights pairs.

2♠ was opened on my left and partner doubled. After a slightly optimistic slam try I found myself in 5♥ by West.

♠ 94		♠ K3
♥ Q986	W N	♥ A752
♦ AKQ2	S E	♦ J105
♣ K108		♣ AJ97

LHO played ♠A and another spade. I cashed ♥A and the J appeared on my left. I played a ♥ to the 9 LHO throwing a spade (restricted choice, chances of KJ doubleton etc). I crossed to dummy with ♦J and played another heart, RHO put paid to my endplay chances by going up with ♥K and playing ♥10 to the Q (otherwise I win ♥Q and play on diamonds) . Delaying my decision in clubs I played off some top diamonds – an interesting thing happened – LHO showed out on the third round. LHO has thrown just one club, all other discards have been spades.

It was at this stage that disaster struck. I know that the possible shapes for LHO are 6-1-2-4 or 5-1-2-5. I also know that where LHO is 55 in the black suits playing KC followed by ♣10 is a 100% play, where LHO is 6-4 in the black suits its still 2-1 on. It's also unusual for LHO not to be throwing losing clubs with a fistful of winning spades. I knew the right play, I paused to double check my counting and smoothly played a club to the ace and ran the jack.

LHO actually held AJ10853 J 74 Q642.

It seems to me that an evil presence is at work. Have others reported similar strange events? Do you think the ghost of some grumpy declarer is haunting the Cambridge club or should I just play more carefully?

Regards, Roger Courtney



Dear Nephew,

No – indeed I don't believe in the supernatural. I do believe however in the dark angel of punishing innocent partners who haven't deserved such a fate.

Glossing over the merciless, you might almost say callous, way in which you contrived to be declarer when clearly your partner, indeed anybody's partner, would have been better suited to the task, and skipping lightly over the outrageous overbidding that pushed you to the five level (not that I imagine 420 would have been worth any matchpoints for such a basic hand), we must turn our attention to the play, if play is not too generous a term for it. Your handling of the dummy at trick one and two were no doubt impeccable, if a little slow. (I take it for granted that you followed with the ♠4, in case leader might take his partner's card as a suit preference for clubs.) Failing to cater for the preemptor having the likely 6160 shape by unblocking the ♥8 one might describe as culpable, but your worst crime was yet to come. Taking the club finesse the wrong way was merely unlucky. As you observed, a third of the time you would have been right, and your partner would no doubt have been very content with those odds given who was at the helm. The most dastardly deed was surely the hours you whiled away counting the hand, tormenting the poor unfortunate sitting opposite, fully in the knowledge that you would be incapable of remembering your conclusions when you returned to the play. For this, I am afraid there can be no forgiveness.

Yours, Auntie.

Responding to 4 level opening preempts by Chris Jagger

As with most articles written by this keyboard, one day my co-editor flippantly suggests a theme, and the next day an article appears in his inbox.

Standards required for a four-level preempt vary with position, vulnerability and partnership style. Some people prefer to play 4minor openings conventionally as stronger versions of 4major, giving more definition of those hands at the cost of some preemptive possibilities. Here, we assume all 4 level suit openings are natural, and assume that we have sufficient values to invite a slam, and ask what are the best methods to proceed?

The question is actually pretty simple, although it is remarkable how few people know the right answer! Over 4 minor, the most frequent thing you will want to do other than raising partner's suit or passing, is to play in no trumps (this is true both at pairs and teams). Thus 4NT is a natural response, asking for a sight of dummy. Equally you may well want to play in four of a major, which requires only ten tricks for game rather than eleven, thus four of a major is natural too. Difficult this, hey?!

'What is 4♣-P-4♦?', a partner e-mailed me a while back. 'Roman keycard for clubs', I responded confidently. Several days later he told me he had done a simulation, and this was far more useful than using 4♦ as a cuebid or another cue-asking bid. So there!

Similarly, 5♣ should be used as RKCB over 4♦, albeit with modified responses – 5♦ showing 0 or 1. Let's face it – partner ought to have one of the top three honours for a four level opening!

Over 4 of a major suit it is easier still. Basically the same, except that 4NT is RKCB, as there is less mileage trying to make ten tricks in no trumps now, and five of a minor is a cue for the major (or natural constructive if you prefer – neither will come up very often anyway, and either is sensible). My only word of warning is to suggest caution over a four of a major opener – somehow the sight of partner opening at the four level often seems to drive people crazy – perfectly ordinary hands that may not be enough for game suddenly start leaping to slam!



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Results roundup

Jubilee Pairs

1. R and S Oakford
2. M Carlisle, S Evans
3. L and E Manning
- 4= J Caldwell, I. McDonald
- 4= I Watson, A Green
6. D Oxbrow, P Morgan
7. D Collier, D Hodge
8. D Carmichael, W Tunstall-Pedoe
9. A Stenner, P Somerfield
10. R Courtney, R Cambery

Prizes went to the top two, to the leading pair below Regional Master, P Beavan & S Hollingworth, to the leading pair below Master, A and R Newman, to the first half ascenders Caldwell & McDonald, and to the second half ascenders Collier & Hodge.

In the **Eastern Counties League**, the county lost to Essex 0-20/3-17/12-8 and lost 0-20/0-20/7-13 to Herts.

The Cambridge Club did not qualify from the **Garden Cities Regional Final**. However, they are still going strong in the **Nicko**, having reached the final again.

Jagger, Jagger, Mestel & Wightwick beat Chapman in the final of the **County Knock-out**, and went on to win the **Pachabo**.

In the **Portland Bowl** (Universities knockout competition), Cambridge University (Haring,

Birdsall, de Souza, Brown, Foley, Elstein) bt Trinity (Kenney, Tahseen, Collier, Hodge).

In the **1 Day Swiss Pairs** in Northampton, Mike Seaver & Peter Bhagat came second. Porter & Porter won the Veterans Pairs at **Eastbourne**, and P Burrows was 3rd in the seniors swiss teams. Jagger & Jagger won the **Scarborough Teams**. Jagger & Pagan came second in the **Brighton Swiss Pairs**, with a very creditable 15th for Iain Watson playing with a partner who had not played since the previous time the event was held! C.J.Jagger came 4th in the B Final of the **Brighton Swiss Teams**, whilst S Cohen was 2nd in the consolation event. P Huggins won the Wednesday open pairs.

Jagger, Jagger, Pagan & Wightwick lost to Brock in the final of **Hubert Phillips**.

Dates for your diary

- 10 Oct 2004 ECL v Northants (H)
- 16 Oct 2004 Closing date for County KO
- 31 Oct 2004 Newmarket Open Swiss Teams
- 7 Nov 2004 ECL v Beds (A)
- 21 Nov 2004 ECL v University (H)
- 5 Dec 2004 Garden Cities Qualifier
- 23 Jan 2005 County Individual Final
- 30 Jan 2005 ECL v Suffolk (H)
- 20 Feb 2005 County Pairs Final
- 19 Mar 2005 New Players Tournament
- 24 Apr 2005 Jubilee Swiss Pairs



ANAGRAM COMPETITION: Prizes will be awarded for amusing anagrams of any County player, preferably bridge-related ones. Entries to either editor by December 15th.



Not my day *by* an anonymous reader

One morning in June, I made the mistake of getting up. I compounded this folly by making my way to the Young Chelsea Bridge Club in London and then by picking up the East cards below:

E/W Vul	♠ AQ10632	Dealer W					
	♥ J5						
	♦ –						
	♣ AKJ52						
♠ 54	<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	♠ 8	
W	N						
S	E						
♥ K98643		♥ A2					
♦ Q10764		♦ KJ95					
♣ –		♣ Q109843					
	♠ KJ97						
	♥ Q107						
	♦ A832						
	♣ 76						

In the other room the auction was

West	North	East	South
2♥*	4♣*	P	4♦*
P	4♠	all	pass

2♥ was weak, and 4♣ was ‘leaping Michaels’ showing 5-5 in the blacks. South cued her ace, and North signed off with two heart losers. My opposite number found the inspired lead of a club, and two ruffs and two hearts soon followed. Bad luck to play the game the wrong way up; worse luck to score up with us...

Our auction went as follows:

West	North	East	South
P	1♣*	P	1♠*
P	2♠	P	3♠
P	6♠	P	P
X	XX	all	pass

1♣ was Precision and the 1♠ response showed 8+, balanced. North then introduced spades, two natural raises followed and partner, bless him, made a Lightner double, only to find that he was on lead, redoubled.

Well, a heart would have been two off, for one of the harder ways to make +600, but he chose a trump.

Declarer drew two rounds, threw a heart on ♦A, led a club to dummy, verifying the expected void, and advanced ♥J. I now had the choice between allowing partner to win ♥K and have my ♥A ruffed out (declarer knows from the lead partner can't have ♥AK), or going up with the ace and allowing declarer to take a ruffing finesse in hearts. I chose the latter for –1620.

The next day I stayed in bed. It was a great improvement.



Suit holdings quiz

In no trumps, with plenty of entries to both hands, how do you play:

1. AQxxxx opposite Jx
2. KJxx A9xx safely for three tricks
3. AJxx Q9x for three tricks
4. A8xxx 10xx for maximum number of tricks
5. A8xx J9xx for three tricks
6. Axx opposite QJx
7. Q1098x opposite Axxx

Answers next issue. A suitable prize may be awarded to the best solutions received by either editor before 15th December.

