



Cambs & Hunts Bridge



Newsletter Number 39

30 December 2004

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



A reader points out that the chronology of last issue's MacBeth article was flawed, as Banquo should meet his end after Duncan, not before. The editors apologise and vow to cut down on wanton literary allusions.

The County has again qualified for the Tollemache final. NPC "Pip" Larlham comments that he has "Great Expectations" for the team, despite a chance encounter with London clerk Jagers regarding the source of his fortunes and declining to be involved.



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



In this issue we report on the anagrams competition and suit holdings quiz from last issue, despite castigation from a reader. Victor Milman reports on the Bournemouth Two Star pairs. Chris Jagger advises on when 4NT is and isn't Blackwood, while Jonathan Mestel presents two hands to test your post mortem analysis. We pose a "smallest impossible score" teaser and of course, there is the usual round-up of News and Results. Aunt Agony is on holiday, but sent us a card.



Play problem

How would you play 5♣ by West on the ♡A lead? (See page 2.)

♠ J532		♠ A94									
♡ –		♡ 1094									
◇ AK863	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		◇ J95
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♣ KQ102		♣ A863									

West	North	East	South
1◇	1♡	2◇	3♡
4♣	P	5♣	PPP



Solution to Play Problem

The problem on the front cover was to make 5♣ by West on the ♥A lead:

♠ J532		♠ A94
♥ -	W N E	♥ 1094
♦ AK863	S	♦ J95
♣ KQ102		♣ A863

The full layout for this hand can be found (rotated) on page 3. The auction was also of some interest

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	2♦	3♥
4♣	P	5♣	all pass

East had a slightly awkward call over 1♥. A double would have shown four spades or more strength, while 2♦ was both an underbid and misdescriptive of hand type. Personally, I think 2♣ is the best of a bad job. Over 3♥ West stretched to compete and struck gold.

In 5♣, there is some chance of avoiding a diamond loser, either by dropping a doubleton queen, or finding Q10x outside. Suppose you

play off ♦AK dropping the Q. You now play off ♣K and ♣A and lead ♦J. If this is not ruffed you come to hand drawing the last trump, while if it is ruffed you can get to hand with a heart ruff, making 4 diamonds, ♠A and a total of 6 trumps. This line needs both minors to break and the ♦Q to be doubleton, which is better odds than Q10x outside.

Assuming both minors break, however, there is a better line. At trick 2 you lead a small diamond from hand. If North wins ♦Q you aim to ruff a second heart in hand, play off ♣KQ, enter dummy with either ♠A or ♦J to draw the last trump and run the diamonds. This works whenever North holds ♦Q, as ♦J provides an entry for the dummy reversal.

And what if North plays small on the diamond – do you rise with the J or put in the 9? I suppose it depends how smoothly North ducks. Even if you guess wrong, and lose a diamond cheaply, it would be very easy for South to misdefend by forcing you again with a heart.

Now see if you can find the killing opening lead (see next page)!



Teams Teaser

When you score up with teammates do you sometimes doubt they were playing the same boards as you, so disparate are the scores? Have you ever heard or said something like “+330? What on earth’s that? We were -1040; I thought it would be flat.”? Well then, this puzzle is for you.

What is the smallest net score which is impossible in a single board comparison? We refer, of course, to scores divisible by 10. The above example would have a net score of 710. If you can’t be bothered working it out why not guess: Do you think it’s (a) less than 300 (b) less than 1000 (c) less than 3000 (d) less than 5000 (e) more than 5000? Answer next issue.



Bournemouth 2004 by Victor Milman

This year David Kendrick and myself managed to improve on our previous performance in the Two Stars Championship at Bournemouth Autumn Congress – we were fifth last year – by winning the competition. The format of the championship has been essentially unchanged for a few years: there is a qualifying round, a semi-final, and eventually a 28-pairs all play all final. One has to score slightly above 50% in the first two rounds to get to the main final, so that in some sense, this is the most selective pairs competition in the EBU calendar. By the time you get to the final there are mostly strong players left, and the results become a lot more predictable.

The last third of the final is barometer scored, so one can see the results and the rankings after every two boards. Our 57.7% was sufficient to win by half a board or 1% , while the last place scored 43% – such small scatter of results usually means there was a fairly even field in the event. Two other Cambridge pairs, Catherine Jagger & Jonathan Mestel and Chris Jagger & Ian Pagan also qualified for the Two Stars final. Roger Courtney & Robin Cambery and Mike Seaver & Peter Bhagat qualified for the Satellite Pairs final.

The final, as expected, was a lot tougher. We had exactly 50% in the first session of the final, and not surprisingly we were exactly 14th out of 28 pairs. Fortunately this was followed by a 64% session which put us in the 2nd place before the dinner break. A very good advice from David helped to keep concentration through the barometer-scored last session: not to keep a score card, not to look at the score slips brought to the table, and not to join the crowd discussing previously played hands. Our 59% score in this session was enough to move us into 1st

place. Interestingly enough, we had not been in the lead at any stage of the competition – we needed the very last board to win the event.

I'd like to mention our bidding system (“Standard Kendrick”) before showing any hands. We played a 15-17 notrump, 4-card majors, Acol two openings, and essentially no conventions beyond Stayman and Blackwood. We were laughed at on few occasions for using such a “primitive” system: hey, it worked, so perhaps there is enough mileage left in simple systems.

There were quite a few interesting hands in the qualifiers. Here is an example of David's declarer play on our first round in a delicate 3NT contract:

Dealer E	♠ A3	N/S Vul				
	♥ QJ10643					
	♦ K					
	♣ K874					
♠ K984		♠ QJ				
♥ 52	<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	♥ K87
W	N					
S	E					
♦ AQ8643		♦ J97				
♣ 9		♣ AQJ62				
	♠ 107652					
	♥ A9					
	♦ 1052					
	♣ 1053					

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

The defence started with ♥A followed by ♥9 overtaken by North and won by declarer's king. Placing North with all the remaining

points for his contribution to the bidding at the adverse vulnerability, David took the extra precaution of leading the $\diamond J$: it would be very difficult for South not to cover holding the king. When South calmly played low, declarer called for $\diamond A$ dropping the singleton king, finessed in clubs on the way back, cashed the ace of clubs, and finessed against the $\diamond 10$ to make his contract. Another illustration of the “careless talk costs tricks” concept in the bidding - the $2\heartsuit$ bid helped declarer to land a difficult contract, and gave us an easier option of defending $2\heartsuit$ doubled.

David brought in another tight 3NT against Jonathan and Catherine in the semifinal. The bidding below is close to reasonable on the actual hands

Dealer S	\spadesuit AK952	E/W Vul				
	\heartsuit J8					
	\diamond 10732					
	\clubsuit 104					
\spadesuit 84		\spadesuit Q1063				
\heartsuit K106	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>E</td></tr> </table>	W	N	S	E	\heartsuit A532
W	N					
S	E					
\diamond Q96		\diamond KJ4				
\clubsuit AQ987		\clubsuit 62				
	\spadesuit J7					
	\heartsuit Q974					
	\diamond A85					
	\clubsuit KJ53					

CJ	VM	JM	DK
P	$1\clubsuit$	$2\spadesuit$	3NT
P	P	P	

$1\clubsuit$ is on a light side, but it looks normal; $2\spadesuit$ on a good 5-card suit at favourable vulnerability also happens quite often; 3NT, on the surface, is an overbid in high card strength but the spade holding after the preemptive $2\spadesuit$ bid may be worth two tricks for declarer; a fact which persuaded David to upgrade the hand.

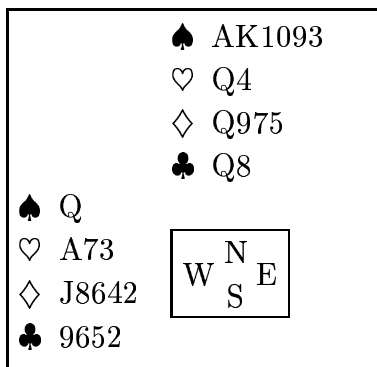
Actually, as David pointed out afterwards, 3NT is not a good bid: you don't need to push for thin games at pairs. Getting +120 would have been 80%, +150 was 90%, so trying to get an extra 10% and risking a near bottom for 100 is not winning pairs bridge. The hand was passed out at many tables...

The $\spadesuit J$ lead was ducked to the queen. Now the club finesse and a 3-3 break would have given an easy nine tricks, since declarer has time to establish two diamonds to go with a spade, four clubs and two hearts. On the actual layout David took the club finesse and played two more rounds of clubs. Now N/S can cash two clubs, a diamond and two spades - easier said than done! One must appreciate that throughout the hand N/S expect declarer to have more values. South does not know that North has AK of spades; North hopes that South led from J10x when the contract will be defeated via a club and four spade tricks. On the third club North does not want to throw away a spade which might be a setting trick or bare the $\heartsuit J$ with K106 on the table. In practice Jonathan discarded the $\diamond 7$ (intending it as count, but it was probably encouraging in their methods). South now switched to the $\diamond A$, followed by another diamond. After three rounds of diamonds declarer leads a spade from the table, and defensive communications are broken beyond repair. North goes up with the king, cashes another spade and switches to a heart. Declarer is now home and dry. The heart switch is taken with the ace, and the ten of spades squeezes South who holds $\heartsuit Q9 \clubsuit K$ in front of dummy's $\heartsuit K10 \clubsuit Q$.

The final mostly went smoothly for us. We had our share of luck, of course, but sometimes we had to work hard to get our good scores. You know the feeling: after a card perfect defence against $4\heartsuit$, where declarer believed

every wrong clue he was given, you open the traveller to score your well earned +50 and find that the earlier results were 6♥-1!

Before the last two-board round we were only 3 matchpoints behind the leaders. The penultimate board was flat, so the last board decided the fate of the first three places. The hand presented a defensive problem for our opponents - they got it wrong, and so did the pair that played against Forrester-Allfrey. This meant first place for us, and a jump to second place for Forrester. Let's see if you get the defence right.



Unopposed, the opponents bid:

1♥-1♠, 2♥-3♦, 3♠-4♥.

You lead your singleton ♠Q taken in dummy, while partner plays the five and declarer the four. The ♥4 is led from dummy, the trick goes: 4-2-J-A. Obviously you need to find partners entry to get your spade ruff. Is it a club or a diamond?

There were at least two pointers the correct switch: the auction and the cards played at the first trick. Our unlucky defender switched

to a diamond, while his partner in fact held ♣AK. Firstly, opponents showed no sign of no-trump interest after bidding three suits; they are likely to lack a club control. More importantly, partner's card at trick one is surely suit preference. He can see from the bidding that your lead was a singleton, so he should play the lowest of his spades as a club preference signal, and the highest would ask for a diamond switch. So which one is the S5? You know from the bidding that opposition has at most a 5-3 spade fit (possibly even 5-2 if the 3♠ bid was a preference on Jx, for example). This marks partner with at least four spades, and so his ♠5 cannot possibly be the highest. One thing is clear: if partner has an entry, it's not in diamonds. There is only one card lower than the five that you cant see: either declarer is hiding the deuce, or partner has it. You might as well try a club at this point: either partner has no quick entry and is showing count, or his entry is in clubs.

One last point about the hand, regarding declarer's play. Concealing the ♠2 is automatic, but note also the piscatorial aspect of the play in the trump suit. A low heart to the jack creates an illusion of partner possibly having the king of trumps, in which case it is not so important to try and find his minor suit entry.

The end of the session came as a great relief - at last we could have a look at the standings, and it became immediately clear that 4♥+2 missing the ace of trumps and AK in a side suit was good enough to win the final.



Postcard to the editors: We have received the following from Aunt Agony: "Having a wonderful time. Tell S. she was quite right not to cash out – partner should have given her a count on the diamonds. AA." We hope this makes sense to S.

Suit holdings quiz

Last issue we asked how best to handle the following suit combinations.

1. AQxxxx opposite Jx. The technical way to play this suit is to cash the ace, which picks up a singleton king on either side and is never worse than any other way of playing the suit. (See a previous issue for what to do if this is the trump suit in a grand slam!)
2. KJxx opposite A9xx. The safe play for three tricks is to cash the king and play low to the nine. If the suit splits 3-2 you are fine, and any 4-1 break can be picked up with only one loser. If you want as many tricks as possible you cash the ace and finesse the J, don't you? Do you? Cashing the ace gains a trick over a first round finesse only against a stiff Q offside, whereas leading to the J and cashing the K if it loses picks up Q10xx offside which is 3 times more likely. So low to the J is better.
3. AJxx opposite Q9x. Running the queen or cashing the ace first and then low to the queen are both good options, depending on the rest of the hand.
4. A8xxx opposite 10xx. Running the ten is the correct line, gaining against a singleton 9 offside and never losing to any other play of the cards. It's very satisfying when these small extra chances crop up!
5. A8xx opposite J9xx. Low to the 9 is the best play, then hoping to run the jack. This wins when there is 10x on your left. You are also on a guess when there is K10, Q10, or KQ doubletons on your left. Restricted choice arguments would suggest running the J on the next round.
6. Axx opposite QJx. The technical play is to cash the ace, catering for a singleton king, as running the queen never gains a trick. In practice squeeze chances may suggest running the queen, or a defender may be guessing

whether to cover if you advance the queen and he has Kx (since you may have A98 in hand, when you will win and then finesse against the ten, whilst if you duck declarer will have to guess whether to play you for Kx or your partner for 10x). An advantage of leading small from the QJx is that a defender with Kxx may decide to hop up with the K to preserve his partner's ace as an entry.

7. Q1098x opposite Axxx. Cashing the ace first is marginally best. With only Q1098 in hand it is better to start by running the ten for three tricks, or the queen if you want the maximum number of tricks. (The former gains when the next hand shows out, the latter gains against a singleton jack.)

♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠

Dear Editors,

I suppose this 'Suit Holding Quiz' was set by some so-called expert. They're all the same these people, infused with delusions of adequacy. They invent complicated questions so they can give even more complicated answers. This is all beyond the capacity of anyone not being a Mathematics Ph D and not playing Bridge for 100 hours per week to even understand, let alone figure out or remember. In reality, the answer to these and similar questions is very easy to remember and is always the same. I will reveal it so that we can get on with more important things.

The solution is that you cash all the 'plenty of entries to both hands' and make your contract that way, and then you guess.

If you guess right, then fine, if not, tough luck. None of this staring at the ceiling, calculating the odds and 'taking views'. If you get on with it, take more guesses and play more hands, then you'll get it right more times. QED.

I am sorry but this letter must remain anonymous as I don't want to lose my position as County Secretary (well, actually, I do).

What does 4NT mean? *by* Chris Jagger

In response to fan mail from my loyal reader, I have revisited the subject of what 4NT means. A simple agreement is for 4NT to be Blackwood (or some variety of it), no matter what the sequence is. However, if you sit down with an unfamiliar partner without discussion, he will probably assume that this is not the case.

Instead, there will be a certain range of sequences he is likely to consider to be natural, inviting slam, usually those sequences where no trumps are involved. For example, raising a no trump bid to 4NT would be invitational. In addition, sequences involving Stayman and transfers would be invitational, unless a suit is agreed. Thus 1NT-2♣-2♥-4NT would be showing around about a 19 count with four spades, inviting partner to bid slam. Similarly 1NT-2♦-2♥-4NT would show the same strength with five hearts (and a balanced hand). However 1NT-2♦-2♥-3♣-3♥-4NT would be Blackwood (since now hearts have been agreed).

Other sequences involving no trumps would follow similar principles – if a suit is agreed, then 4NT is Blackwood (some people still keep it as natural if a minor suit is agreed), and otherwise it is invitational. Thus 2NT-3♣-3♥-4NT would also be invitational.

If you bid 4NT directly over a suit when no trumps have not been bid, then this would be Blackwood, agreeing the last bid suit if you play Roman Keycard Blackwood. Although even this would not be the case for many experts, who include many natural 4NT bids – after all, how else do you invite slam?? But this is into the realms of deeper agreements, which we consider later.

However, there are a couple of other sequences that would generally not be considered to the Blackwood. For example, in the last newsletter we mentioned 4♦-4NT which should definitely be natural. Another common sequence that few would play as Blackwood would be over a 4♠ opener from the opponents. Now 4NT is best used to show at least 5-5 in two of the other suits. It is highly unlikely that you will have a strong enough hand to ask partner for aces, but may well have two good suits and want to find the best fit.

4NT – Deeper agreements

Sequences such as 1♣-1♥-2♣-4NT are much better played as natural than as Blackwood. The reason for this is not that Blackwood is not a useful convention, but simply that there are plenty of other ways of agreeing clubs and then using Blackwood – for example, many people would play that a 3♦ bid here is a splinter (since they play 2♦ as forcing), or could use 4♣ to agree clubs. If you'd like to Blackwood but first need a way to agree a suit, then it really doesn't matter whether you have a diamond shortage to make the splinter – after all, you only wish to know how many aces partner has so you don't really care if he knows what sort of hand you have. Anybody who has wanted to invite slam with perhaps a balanced 19 count here will know how difficult it can be if 4NT would be Blackwood.

A useful rule I play with some partners is that if the auction includes fourth suit forcing in it, then a later 4NT bid is natural and invitational, unless opener has jumped to 4 of a major, or unless a suit has been agreed. Thus 1♠-2♣-2♥-3♦-4NT, 1♠-2♣-2♥-3♦-3♠-4NT, 1♠-2♣-2♥-3♦-3♠-4♣-4♠-4NT are all natural, whilst 1♠-2♣-2♥-3♦-4♠-4NT and

Results Roundup

The County's results in the **Eastern Counties League** were: v Northants A: 10-10 B: 1-19 C: 19-1; v Beds 7-13/12-8/2-18; v University 0-20/12-8/18-2.

In the **County Knockout**, in R1 HARRISON bt LAST, CARMICHAEL bt KENNEY, MILMAN bt RILEY and HARING bt COPPING. In R2, JACOBSBERG bt CLARK, JAGGER bt RICHARDSON and JONES bt DE VRIES.

The **Cambs & Hunts Open Swiss Teams** was won by Margaret & Roger Chaplin, Malcolm Anderson and Peter Somerfield. Second were Iain Watson, Alexandra Green, Catherine Curtis and Paul Fegarty, while Roger Courtney, Robin Cambery, Mike Seaver and Peter Bhagat were third. The **Newcomers' Teams** was won by Peter Grice, Keith Fearn, Andrew Wilkinson & Ruth Katz.

In the **Garden Cities Qualifier**, Cambridge A won, followed by the University and Cambridge B. Once again, Cambridge A lost in the individual match to Cambridge B!

The County (Wightwick & Gibbons, Mestel & Barden, Kendrick & Milman, Oakford & McFarlane) came second in the **Tollemache Qualifying Round**, yet again qualifying for the final.

Victor Milman and David Kendrick won the Main Pairs at **Bournemouth Autumn Congress**. Catherine Jagger came a convincing second in the **Women's Trials**, qualifying for a second time to play in the Lady Milne Trophy.

Around the Clubs:

PM Bridge meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month, in an excellent venue in Renhold Village Hall, on the Cambridge side of Bedford. Contact Peter Mohan

on 01234 212066 or 07884 332523 for more details.

The **Cambridge Club** Wednesday venue is moving to the Royal Cambridge Hotel.

♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠

Answers to Anagrams (see page 9)

Here are the solutions to the anagrams overleaf:

1. Roger Courtney
2. Eryl Howard
3. Jonathan Mestel
4. Fiske Warren
5. Giles Woodruff
6. Julian Wightwick
7. Dave Kendrick
8. Sue Oakford
9. Brian Copping
10. Tony Oram
11. Pete Burrows
12. Nadia Stelmashenko
13. Ed Linfield
14. Gareth Birdsall
15. Roger Chaplin
16. Annette Gerloch
17. Nick Bull
18. Peter Shawdon
19. Carl de Vries
20. Ian McDonald
21. Tristan Williams
22. Sonia Zakrzewski
23. Eric Lancaster
24. Sally Dempster
25. Dennis Mayo
26. Bernard Buckley
27. Rod Oakford
28. Susan Mealing
29. Iain Watson
30. Myriam Warburton
31. Ken Jackson
32. David Carmichael
33. Rosanne Mattick
34. Don McFarlane