

Cambs & Hunts Bridge

Number 57, January 2011

Cambs & Hunts news

Mary & Terry Knights and Graham & Berry Hedley won the County Swiss Teams and the county qualified for the Tollemache Final.

Paul Fegarty, Catherine Curtis, Jonathan Mestel, David Kendrick and Catherine Jagger won Division 2 of the Premier League, earning them promotion for next year's season. David rounded off his good year by winning the Year End Swiss Teams, teamed up with Nadia Stelmashenko and Victor Milman. Meanwhile, Chris Jagger won the Swiss Teams at the Autumn Congress.

County events coming up in 2011 ...

County Pairs Final	Sunday 6 th February	1pm Trumpington
Novice Pairs Tournament	Saturday 12 th March	10am Trumpington
Garden Cities Qualifier	Saturday 9 th April	1pm Peterborough
County Swiss Pairs	Sunday 17 th April	1pm Trumpington

In this issue...

Chris Jagger reports on the qualifier for the **Tollemache** – this year the county found itself again in a tough group (remember *The Group of Death* article from last year?), but managed to win through. We talk to **John Phelps** about bridge, life and his new novel. Chris Larlham supplies the vital statistics of the **Eastern Counties League**, looking at the winners through the competition's five decades. Jonathan Mestel is still in Christmas Party spirit, busy **Making Surprisingly Many Tricks with Bad Hands**, while back in the real world of bridge Chris Jagger discusses the whys and wherefores of **When to Compete**. That is followed by the usual round-up of results from international, national, county and club competitions.

Visit the county's website at

www.cambsbridge.org.uk

- information on bridge clubs
- this and previous newsletters
- details of competitions and results

Please send items for the website to **David Allen** on david@djallen.org.uk

The next newsletter will be published in May.

Please send in news, letters and hands no later than 15th April. All contributions welcome!

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The Group of Life

by Chris Jagger

After last year's Tolle qualifier it was a relief to find only Surrey and London in our group again – possibly still the hardest group but considerably easier than last year. All three would be expecting to qualify but there were only two places, and another five teams eager to upset the apple cart. Representing Cambs: Kendrick/Cooke, Barden/Mestel, Wightwick/Woodruff, Jagger/Jagger.

We got off to a powerful start with 56 out of 60 from the first three matches. It included a nicely defended 4♠ contract by David Kendrick. He found a key play to beat the contract on the ♥10 lead. Have a look at the hand below and plan the defence.

Dealer E	♠ AQJ5		
NS Vul	♥ KQ52		
	♦ 86		
	♣ 1087		
♠ 1063		♠ K7	
♥ 106		♥ J9874	
♦ A542		♦ J109	
♣ A942		♣ J53	
		♠ 9842	
		♥ A3	
		♦ KQ73	
		♣ KQ6	

The heart ran round to the ace, and declarer took the spade finesse. David ducked, whereupon declarer played a diamond to the queen and ace. A second heart was returned. Declarer won, crossed to ♦K, and took a second spade finesse. The king won, and a third heart was ruffed, leading to one down. With the favourable diamond position, 4♠ is in fact unbeatable. There are plenty of players who are capable of ducking, which is often wrong – the key is to see the position as here, and duck when it counts! Good defence.

Dealer W, NS Vul											
♠ A6		♠ KQJ98									
♥ K54		♥ A86									
♦ 84		♦ AQ6									
♣ A109853		♣ K4									
	<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		
	N										
W		E									
	S										

We found this one hard – many weaker players just drive slam with a 19 count opposite an opening bid. It is often better to take it more slowly – but not on this occasion:

1♣-1♠, 2♣-2♦, 2NT-4NT

This was a common auction, missing the slam (in fact even 7♠ isn't a bad spot). The weak hand might just about venture on, but without knowing about the source of tricks in clubs it is not easy. A better start might have been

1♣-1♠, 2♣-2♦, 2NT-3♣

This should almost certainly show a strong balanced hand with 2- or 3-card support, which then makes it easier to evaluate the power of the weaker hand.

By Sunday all we needed was to hold our nerve. We started against Worcestershire, who got the better of us in spite of this board:

Dealer S											
EW Vul											
		♠ Q									
		♥ J64									
		♦ J765									
		♣ Q7652									
♠ 8		♠ J109762									
♥ AK1098732		♥ Q5									
♦ 943		♦ 82									
♣ 8		♣ 1094									
	<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		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ AK543									
		♥ -									
		♦ AKQ10									
		♣ AKJ3									

S	W	N	E
2♣	3♥	P	P
4♥	P	4NT	P

What does 4NT mean? North thought it was pick a minor. South thought it was time to let partner go five off! Strangely this hand defeated everyone except Paul and Jonathan, who continued with

5NT	P	6♣	P
P	P		

There were some recriminations for missing grand slam in either minor, but in fact they were the only pair to go plus on the hands!

This was another key hand:

Dealer E	♠ K653					
NS Vul	♥ J8765					
	♦ A106					
	♣ Q					
♠ 1084		<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ AQ9
N						
W E						
S						
♥ K10			♥ Q3			
♦ 942			♦ J875			
♣ 98764			♣ A1032			
	♠ J72					
	♥ A942					
	♦ KQ3					
	♣ KJ5					

S	W	N	E
			1♣
1NT	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	2♠	P
?			

Should you bid 2NT or 3♥? Having already decided from breaking the transfer (even though I had four-card support), I thought I'd better own up to having some heart support and bid 3♥, but fortunately Cath correctly offered 3NT, the only making game, and I had no hesitation in passing.

Another swing in against Worcestershire, but sadly, though we were guessing the right contracts, we were also guessing the wrong finesses. Cath and I each got a game-swing guess wrong, and we ended up losing that match.

We then played Berks and Bucks, in second place, who we thrashed – real teamwork as all our pairs seemed to have exactly the same card, each a little bit plus, and that was enough to add up to a big win.

Finally we were playing Surrey, and by now we only needed two points from the last match to qualify, and even zero might well have seen us through. Surrey were in second place.

A couple more slightly fortuitous choices of game contract, and we narrowly lost the match, but enough to win comfortably, Surrey just hanging on to their second place.

P2♠	P	3♥
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Dave Harrison and fellow winners collect their awards at the 2010 Dimmie Fleming Awards Ceremony (photo in larger version of pdf). The County has very much appreciated all Dave's hard work over many years and we are delighted that he has received the Award.

An interview with John Phelps

When John Phelps was asked by an opponent, while playing at Cambridge BC, whether his first novel, *Agent from Hell*, was going to have any bridge in it and he said “No”, the opponent’s reaction was to say: “So you’re sticking to what you know then?!”

John, an enthusiastic but comparatively inexperienced player, could not fail to see the funny side: “The person concerned would never be knowingly rude to anyone!”

That was about a year ago. In 2005, when he and his partner Andrew Hawthorn were second in the Novice Pairs, he did not even know what masterpoints were! Since then, John has entered a few more exacting tournaments ... and hopes to sharpen up his game in 2011.

Have you always lived in Cambridge? I came to Cambridge in 1969 to work on the local newspaper, got married in 1972 and, apart from a brief defection to Leicester, stayed with the *Cambridge News* and its associated weeklies ever since. I was property correspondent for about 25 years before taking early retirement in 2003.

When did you take up bridge? I played a bit of very basic “kitchen table” stuff with friends during my early 20s and then stopped altogether until 2002, when I joined an evening class run by Brenda Holliday.

It sounds as if you then became hooked on the game. What other tournaments have you played in? Yes, I spend more time playing bridge than originally planned. I have managed to reach the second stage of the National Pairs and County Pairs, played in the Jubilee Pairs three times and once in the County Swiss teams and, with John Ayres, once won a trophy in a pairs

competition at the Blinco Club. Still pretty small beer!

What is your novel Agent from Hell about? It is a thriller with the world of estate agency as its backdrop. It is about a mysterious estate agent who arrives in an East Anglian market town, performs several heroic deeds and becomes highly popular ... until his murky past comes to light.

What other writing have you done? I have written about residential and commercial property for a number of national newspapers and magazines, including *The Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Express*, and, with my father, the late Gilbert Phelps, compiled the material for *Animals Tame & Wild*, which was published in the late 1970s. I have also written two short, unpublished books for young children, and have recently started doing some freelancing for the new newspaper, *Cambridge First*.

What are your other interests? Since retiring, I have done a certain amount of voluntary work, including helping the homeless, selling newspapers to patients at Addenbrooke’s and writing and presenting programmes for 209radio, a now defunct community radio station. I am a member of the Cambridge Rambling Club and also enjoy swimming, films and following cricket and boxing.

Thanks for talking to us, John.

Footnote: *Agent from Hell* (£8.99, ISBN 9781848764101) is available in shops, online or direct from Matador Publishing, 5 Weir Road, Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicester, LE8 0LQ. Tel: 0116 279 2299.

Email: books@troubador.co.uk

Making (surprisingly many) Tricks with Bad Hands

by Jonathan Mestel

Last newsletter, I asked how many tricks could conceivably be made holding the gem of the hand:

♠432 ♥432 ♦432 ♣5432

assuming a favourable lie and perhaps some help from the other players.

First of all, I don't think this hand can ever make a trick if none of the other players helps, although we saw last time that a 4432 shape could guarantee a trick.

So suppose all three of the opponents help our cause. What then?

The following lie was submitted by Anna O'Donovan. Clubs are trumps:

♠ —		♠ —
♥ AKQJ10		♥ 98765
♦ AKQJ10		♦ 98765
♣ AKQ		♣ 876
♠ AKQJ109	N W E S	♠ —
8765		
♥ —		
♦ —		
♣ J109		
		♠ 432
		♥ 432
		♦ 432
		♣ 5432

West leads a spade and both North and East ruff. West ruffs the heart return and leads another spade, ruffed twice.

After three spades and three hearts, West, North and East are all out of trumps. West now leads a fourth round of spades on which everyone discards a diamond.

South ruffs the fifth round of spades, cashes three more clubs allowing North and East to throw four more diamonds apiece. South's last two diamonds are now high, and he scores

a surprising six tricks! We have been unable to improve on six, and so congratulations to Anna.

What if partner helps but opponents don't? The best we can then do is three tricks. For example:

♠ —		♠ 98765
♥ —		♥ AKQJ10
♦ 1098765		♦ KQ
♣ QJ109876		♣ K
♠ AKQJ10	N W E S	♠ 432
♥ 98765		♥ 432
♦ AJ		♦ 432
♣ A		♣ 5432

North ruffs a major and leads a trump, ruffs a major and leads a diamond, ruffs a major and leads a diamond.

North/South will now cross-ruff in diamonds/majors with South scoring three tricks by ruffing North's diamonds.

What if two other players help, but one (say, partner) tries to stop us making tricks?

A variation of the above hand, giving West a 0-0-7-6 shape and East the remaining three trumps permits South and West to cross-ruff the reds, and so South can make four trump tricks.

But can we do better? I have not been able to make five tricks with an unhelpful partner, but there are several ways of making four tricks.

It's even possible to make four tricks in a short suit. Suppose hearts are trumps and the lie is:

♠ — ♥ AJ109 ♦ AKQJ10 ♣ AKJ10	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ AKQJ1098765 ♥ KQ ♦ — ♣ Q ♠ — ♥ 8765 ♦ 98765 ♣ 9876 ♠ 432 ♥ 432 ♦ 432 ♣ 5432
N					
W E					
S					

West cashes ♣A and ♥A and throws North in with a heart. Perforce, North leads four spades on which East/West throw clubs. South ruffs the fourth spade and cashes three good clubs.

Are you at all attracted by this sort of problem? If so, let me draw to your attention the competition "Yarborough Fair" on Richard Pavlicek's website, to which we have referred in the past, www.rpbridge.net/cgi-bin/8f23.pl. Closing date is the end of January, so hurry!

Forthcoming events

Conservatives Bridge Drive

Gog Magog Golf Club, 10.45-15.30
 Friday 21st January. £15 per person –
 inclusive of a ploughman's lunch.

Everyone is welcome.

For tickets, please contact Susan Miles,
 4a Hedgerley Close, Cambridge, CB3
 0EW Tel. 01223 352339 or Robert and
 Linda Yeatman Tel. 01223 357047
robert.yeatman454@btinternet.com

Charity Bridge Drive

The next charity bridge drive in
 Fulbourn is on Saturday 22nd January.

Addendum from Julian Wightwick:
 What are the worst combined hands on
 which it is possible to make 3NT?

Consider this sorry tale for East:

♠ J109 ♥ J1098 ♦ AJ ♣ AKQ7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 8765432 ♥ 765432 ♦ — ♣ — ♠ AKQ ♥ AKQ ♦ KQ109 ♣ J109 ♠ — ♥ — ♦ 8765432 ♣ 865432
N					
W E					
S					

South opens 3NT, intended for the minors. West doubles. North knows that 3NT is natural, but redoubles for rescue anyway. South feels constrained to pass for ethical reasons: the 3NT had not been alerted. East is quietly confident.

West leads ♣K, for count or unblock. East follows with J, which West takes as showing an even number given the natural 3NT opener. West cashes the other top clubs, then ♦A.

Playing reverse attitude, East encourages with ♦9, but West misreads this as a high card and exits with ♣7 on which East pitches ♦10. On the next club, West pitches ♦J to clarify the position, and East signals with ♦K. Unfortunately, the ♦Q was stuck to it and it falls on the table becoming a penalty card. Thus, on the last club, East has to throw ♦Q and South's hand is now high. The defence could have done better.

Away from the bridge table...

Victor Milman (Cambridge Club) is raising money for Action for Blind People by running the Virgin London Marathon 2011 and invites bridge players to support this charity on <http://www.justgiving.com/VictorMilman>

ECL facts and figures

by Chris Larlham

I collected a piece of ECL history, in the form of the "A" division trophy, at Trumpington last Sunday. The names of the winners are engraved on the trophy, starting 50 years ago with 1960-61, when Oxford won.

The winners among the current teams have been:

Essex (12)

Norfolk (5 – all in the current decade)

Northants (4)

Cambs & Hunts (4)

Herts (4 – all in a row in 1968/9 to 1971/2)

Beds (3)

Camb. University (1 – 1998/9)

Suffolk (0)

[There are no winners engraved for 1989/90 to 1996/7 inclusive. The division has been won nine times by teams no longer taking part: B&B (3), Lincs (4) & Oxford (2).]

Previous C&H wins were:

1972/3 (when the team included Violet Lax / Richard Fleet, Brian Callaghan / Richard Granville and Peter Shawdon)

1983/4 (Edmund Linfield, David Kendrick and Steve Siklos)

1988/9 (Martin Atherton, Steve Siklos, Robin Barker, Philip Wood, Ann Curtin, John Turner, Dave Harrison and Axel Johansson).

The names of the players haven't been engraved since 1988/9.

When to compete

by Chris Jagger

"How do you know whether to compete?" my father asked me the other day.

It is a relatively simple question, and while the answer can be complex, there are some easy principles, which even many experienced players struggle to take on board.

Bidding games is all about point count, coupled with some judgement on more distributional hands. But point count does play a large part in it.

Competing is all about your trump fit, and points have absolutely nothing to do with it! (This only applies to trump contracts.)

The fact is, that if you and your partner have an 8-card spade fit, and your opponents have a 9-card heart fit, the

chances are that the total number of tricks (TNT) you can make in spades plus your opponents can make in hearts is 17 (ie 8+9). That is, you can perhaps make 2♠ while opponents can make 3♥, or you can make 3♠ and opponents only 2♥, or perhaps you can make 4♠ and opponents only 1♥.

It is harder to say which of these will be the case, but generally, if you are in 2♠, then it will pay for your opponents to compete with 3♥. If you are going down in spades, then they should be able to make 3♥, and it is quite likely that both 2♠ and 3♥ will be making.

You do not really need to count your points for this decision unless it is still possible that game may be on.

Let's start with an example to show you WHY it works.

Dealer W	♠ Kxxx		
Love all	♥ Ax		
	♦ Qxx		
	♣ K109x		
♠ Jxx		♠ xx	
♥ KJ10x		♥ Qxxx	
♦ Kxx		♦ J109x	
♣ xxx		♣ AQJ	
		♠ AQxx	
		♥ xxx	
		♦ Axx	
		♣ xxx	

With the hand above it looks like NS will make 2♠, simply losing a heart, a diamond and three clubs. EW can also make eight tricks in hearts. The TNT is 16, and with each side having an eight card trump fit, then indeed we would expect a total of 16 tricks to be available.

What happens if you swap the ace and queen of diamonds? Now NS will only make seven tricks, while EW will make nine tricks, thus preserving the total number of tricks. On the other hand, if you also let West have the ♣A, then you will go back to both hands being able to make eight tricks.

Note – if you give East ♠QJx, then EW can make no more tricks in hearts, and NS can make one fewer trick in spades. In this case the principle is out by one trick. This will of course happen in many situations, but TNT is nevertheless a very good principle.

Now let's have a look at an example to show HOW this works:

♠1098x ♥AKx ♦109xx ♣Ax.

The auction starts

1♦-1♠-2♠-3♠, P-P-?

Have a look and decide whether you think you should bid or not.

Now let us analyse the sequence. Our 2♠ bid showed an invitational hand with 4-card diamond support. Partner

has not bid, so it is clear that we are not thinking of game here – it is a question of passing, competing, or possibly doubling. What we choose will depend on the size of the fits.

We know that we have at least a 4-8 diamond fit. Since partner has taken no action over 3♠ he must be fairly weak, and because he has not opened a weak no trump, he is likely to have five diamonds. Opponents should have a five card suit for the overcall, and at least 3-card support for the raise, so they have an 8 or 9 card fit.

If partner has six diamonds, he should have been bidding, knowing that we have at least a 10-card diamond fit, and expect opponents to have at least 8 spades. Thus it is reasonable to expect that we have 9 diamonds, opponents have 8 spades, and so the TNT should be 17. If we can make 4♦, then opponents will be two down in 3♠. If they can make 3♠, then we will be two down in 4♦. It now becomes an easy decision not to bid – it is highly unlikely that both 3♠ and 4♦ are going to make, so therefore we should not even be thinking about bidding. (Note that if it were a question of bidding 3♦ over 2♠ then even if the TNT was not enough, it is possible we might compete in the hope that they bid on, but here it is highly unlikely that opponents are going to bid again, so the only consideration is the TNT).

Note that playing pairs I would go further and actually double 3♠. With three defensive tricks, a possibly useful holding in spades, and the balance of the points, I am fairly confident that 3♠ is going down. My main worry would be that partner might have a void spade, but then with that I would expect him to pull the double (even if he has not bid already).

Of course, it should be admitted that this method is not infallible, but only

an indication of what will work, but it is the best guide there is to working out when to compete or not.

For more information you may wish to see the Amsbury/Payne book *Bridge: TNT and Competitive Bidding* (a very

sound but somewhat out-of-date book), or the excellent Robson/Segal book *Partnership Bidding at Bridge*, which has lots of good ideas although takes some of them a bit far!

Results round-up

International competitions

The U21s won silver at the World Championships in Philadelphia. The team included ex-student Graeme Robertson and current student Tom Rainforth.

National competitions

Catherine Curtis, Paul Fegarty, David Kendrick, Jonathan Mestel, Sarah Teshome & Cath Jagger won Division 2 of the Premier League. Paul and Catherine finished top of the field in the Butler rankings, with an impressive average of just over an imp a board.

Catherine Curtis's team reached the quarter-finals of the Gold Cup, where they lost to the No. 1 seeds.

At the Year End Congress, David Kendrick finished fourth in the Swiss Pairs, and then teamed up with Nadia Stelmashenko and Victor Milman to win the Swiss Teams.

At the Autumn Congress, Chris Jagger finished second in the Satellite Pairs and won the Eastbourne Bowl Teams.

Joanne Caldwell and Ian McDonald reached the 'A'-final of the Seniors Congress, finishing 18th.

Cambridge 'A' lost the final of the 2009/10 NICKO to Horsham 'A'.

John Haslegrave won the Regional Master prize in the *Tournament Focus V Play Quiz*.

In the Thursday event of the BGB Autumn Simultaneous Pairs, Fred Allen & Roger Salmon from the Thursday Club finished third nationwide.

In the Monday event of the Children in Need Simultaneous Pairs, Margaret and Roger Chaplin finished 17th.

In the EBU Schools Pairs, Mohammed Zia and Pratap Singh from the Perse School finished 17th.

Eastern Counties League

The county scored 7-13, 10-10 against the University; and 7-13, 7-13, 3-17 against Norfolk.

ECL Dates

23rd January 2011 v Beds (A)
20th February 2011 v Suffolk (H)

County Knockout

In the PRELIMINARY ROUND
SEAVER beat ANDERSON
LARLHAM beat FARIA
RUSSELL beat JONES

In the FIRST ROUND
STEVENSON beat KUEH
JAGGER beat MAY
COPPING beat EBERHARD
SEAVER beat RILEY
KING beat LARLHAM
CURTIS beat POLLARD
OAKFORD beat RUSSELL
PATTEN beat JACOBSBERG

Cambs & Hunts Swiss Teams

The Cambs & Hunts Swiss Teams was won by Mary & Terry Knights and Graham & Berry Hedley (pictured here). David Man, Annette Gerloch, John Phelps, and Tanawan Watts won the ascenders' prize.

Full results:

- 1 M. & T. Knights, G. & B. Hedley
- 2 R. & S. Oakford, M. Seaver, P. Bhagat
- 3 R. & M. Chaplin, M. Anderson, S. Goodwin
- 4 T. & M. King, B. Vadja, B. Hope
- 5 C. Jagger, J. Mestel, J. Wightwick, G. Woodruff

- 6 J. Deacon, D. Dickson, R. Miller, R. Davis
- 7= C. White, R. Griffiths, M. Tilley, U. Cotuk
- 7= M. & B. Harrison, M. & D. Sayers
- 9 A. Gerloch, J. Phelps, D. Man, T. Watts
- 10 K. & P. Riley, C. & N. Bull
- 11 G. Dunn, H. Keith, J. Porter, J. Crane
- 12 M. Keogh, J. Brewer, R. Brewer, M. Kennedy
- 13 S. & B. Evans-Evans, S. O'Kell, B. Martin
- 14 M. Edwards, P. Newnes, D. Windsor, R. Kitchen

Around the Clubs

Cambridge

The club raised £200 for Children in Need while participating in the Simultaneous Pairs.

The Swiss Pairs was won by Sue & Rod Oakford.

The Handicap Teams was won by Wendy Pollard, Tony Oram, Brenda & Philip Jones.

Cottenham

The Crompton Cup was won by Lorraine Waters, Alan Edwards, Tanawan Watts & Roger Courtney.

The Evans Handicap Cup was won by David Newman & Kit Orde-Powlett.

Huntingdon

The Random Club Teams Trophy was won by Malcolm Anderson, Roger Farrington, David Williams & Ian Hill.

The Club Pairs Championship Final was won by Ken Firth & Roger Millington. The Club Pairs Final was won by Damian Reid & Chris Murray.

North Cambridge

The monthly Prize Pairs have been won by Liz Ireson & Joy Hart (October); Susan Mealing & Alison Lloyd (November); Peter Morgan & Frank Padgett (December).

Thursday

The Teams Ladder was won by Neil Matthews & Verity Joubert.