

Scottish Bridge News

Editorial

This month we have coverage of the selection process for the Camrose team. Entries were invited from Teams of Four. There were two online weekends of National League, from which the leading four teams qualified to play in a face-to-face Trial.

While teams trials may seem the best preparation for a teams event, one might mildly suggest that allowing pairs to select their own team-mates may not produce the best available team. It is interesting to note that the Women's and Senior Trials will run as Pairs. As we have previously noted, the Women and Seniors have a far better record at home and abroad than the Open Teams.

We have a contribution from Sam Punch, with news of her research into the sociological impact of bridge. This material could be useful in persuading your local school to let you start a bridge club? We need to catch them young!

Our player profile features Jill Arthur, wife of the late Jimmie Arthur. She is a well-known figure at home and abroad, having accompanied Jimmie on all his successful trips as Captain of the British Women's team, then the English Women's team, and, with rather less success, various Scottish teams. Her fund-raising feats are truly extraordinary, as all of us who have been persuaded to enjoy her tablet will testify.

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The National League

9 teams of four took part, with the leading 4 teams to qualify for the Camrose Trials in November.

Several hands featured the (mis)handling of long suits.

Board 3	♠Q76	EW Vul
	♥J85	Dir S
	♦QT	
	♣AQJ85	
♠5432		♠KT
♥T9		♥AKQ7642
♦K6		♦32
♣K9763		♣42
	♠AJ98	
	♥3	
	♦AJ98754	
	♣T	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	2♣	3♥	4♦
Pass	5♦	End	

West led the ♥T and declarer ruffed the second round. Most crossed to dummy with the ♠A to take the losing trump finesse. West returned a trump to dummy's ♦T. Now it was essential to play spades for no losers. There are no more entries to dummy, so declarer needs East to have the doubleton King, or West the doubleton Ten. The latter is unlikely, given that East has shown up with 9 red cards. The only real chance is to play a low spade to the Jack.

5♦ was bid 6 times but made only once. One East switched to the ♠K(!) at trick 2, and declarer fell for it, later running the ♠9 and losing to the Ten. Another South tried for an extra chance. He finessed the ♣Q, cashed the ♣A and ruffed a club. When the ♣K did not drop he might recover by leading a low

diamond to create a dummy entry for the spade finesse. But he played ♦A and another, hoping to drop the singleton ♦K, or endplay East.

Board 52	♠86432	All Vul
	♥-	Dir W
	♦AK54	
	♣A854	
♠QJT97		♠A5
♥64		♥J732
♦QT8		♦J9732
♣K92		♣QT
	♠K	
	♥AKQT985	
	♦6	
	♣J763	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	4♥
End			

West led the ♠Q and East's ♠A dropped the King. Declarer ruffed the spade return and cashed his top hearts, but the suit did not break. South lost a heart and 2 clubs for one down.

Declarer makes his game with a trump reduction play. After cashing two top trump cross to dummy with the ♦A, cash the ♦K discarding a club, and ruff a diamond. Return to the ♣A and ruff a spade to reach this position:

Board 52	♠8	None Vul
	♥-	Dealer W
	♦4	
	♣85	
♠JT9		♠-
♥-		♥J7
♦-		♦J9
♣K		♣-
	♠	
	♥QT	
	♦	
	♣J7	

With 8 tricks in the bag you can exit with a club and wait to make 2 more heart tricks. Once the ♥ J does not drop there is a good case for taking this line. Declarer might argue that opponents' silence in the auction suggests their hands are balanced, but when spades look to break 5-2 that is rather feeble. At one table West opened a weak Multi; at others where North passed West overcalled 1♠ - were these clues?

An East who was awake to the possibility of a trump reduction should not allow South to ruff a spade at trick 2 - now declarer is an entry short.

Lots of Easts were disappointed on Sunday to find that this deal was flat.

Board 17 ♠Q64 None Vul
♥K853 Dlr E
♦KT52
♣98

♠A752 ♠KJ9
♥T ♥AQJ764
♦AQJ9873 ♦4
♣7 ♣KJ6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠T83
♥92
♦6
♣AQT5432

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-		1♥	3♣
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	End

What should South lead against 3NT? Roy Bennet was the only player not to overcall 3♣: he led 4th best of his longest and strongest and the contract failed.

Two Souths chose an 'expert' ♣Q hoping to pin the Jack in dummy. But declarer ducked, and the clubs were dead. (If dummy does have the singleton Jack it will score, but provided partner has a second club to lead

through declarer's remaining Kx that will not matter.) All the others tried a spade, or a diamond, hoping to get partner in for a club through. This requires partner to have ♣Jx, or declarer to have precisely ♣Kx; if partner has only one club declarer will likely have a stopper. If partner has two clubs, 4th best should work well - it is only wrong if declarer has 8 running tricks and ♠K is his ninth.

There was a companion hand on the second weekend:

Board 21 ♠982 NS Vul
♥7 Dlr N
♦Q65
♣AKT762

♠7 ♠KQJ53
♥AT54 ♥KQ2
♦A9 ♦KJT43
♣Q98543 ♣-

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠AT64
♥J9863
♦872
♣J

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	End

Several Norths led a low club, hoping partner might have a useful doubleton. (At the tables where EW were playing two-over-one West had responded 1NT, so a club lead was automatic.) Declarer played on spades, and when South was unable to return partner's suit the contract was an easy make.

Two Norths trusted West to have a real club suit; they chose to lead the unbid suit. West ran the heart to his hand and tackled spades. The unlucky declarers naturally misread the deal and covered the ♣J when South switched late in the hand. Hindsight does not cover!

Another lead problem:

Board 27	♠T972 ♥AK94 ♦64 ♣J52	None Vul Dir S									
♠A83 ♥JT6 ♦872 ♣T876	<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		♠KQ65 ♥Q532 ♦AQ ♣AK3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠J4 ♥87 ♦KJT953 ♣Q94										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	2♦
Pass	Pass	3NT	End

There is some point to the 'expert' lead of the ♦K here: either West or North might have the singleton Queen, and it does not cost when declarer has AQ. Here any diamond lead gives declarer a 7th winner. Bob McPaul promptly played 3 rounds of clubs, removing South's entry and making 3NT when North had both top hearts. Jun Nakamaru-Pinder played a heart towards dummy. North won and cleared diamonds. A second heart went to the Jack and Ace, and Jun did not miss the significance of South's pips. He won the club switch, crossed to the ♠A and ran the ♥6 to make 3NT. Others failed when they did not appreciate the heart situation.

The killing lead this time is a heart. North switches to a diamond and declarer has no chance.

After two weekends where 9 teams battled it out on RealBridge, the leading 4 teams – Short; Sanders; Duncan and Smith – went forward to a face-to-face Trial.

The Camrose Trial

Here are a few play problems faced by the competitors. Can you do better? (Problem 3 is rotated to make East declarer.)

1	♠AJT94 ♥64 ♦943 ♣J86	<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		♠KQ8732 ♥AT52 ♦KJ8 ♣-
	N											
W		E										
	S											

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♣	2♠*
4♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
End			

South has shown hearts + a minor. He leads ♥K. How do you play?

2	♠84 ♥KQJ ♦J9642 ♣Q94	<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		♠K632 ♥873 ♦AKT3 ♣AK
	N											
W		E										
	S											

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	End		

South leads ♥T. North plays ♥2 under dummy's ♥J. How do you play?

3	♠KT765 ♥T6 ♦K85 ♣A63	<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		♠AJ8 ♥K3 ♦AJ943 ♣K82
	N											
W		E										
	S											

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣	End

South leads ♥5 to North's ♥A. North returns ♥Q, won by dummy's King as South follows with ♥8. How do you play?

The Camrose Trial was held face-to-face in the Carlton Bridge Club on the weekend of 12-13 November. The four teams involved were due to play three 16-board matches each day.

The first play problem arose in Match 1.

Board 8	♠65 ♥83 ♦65 ♣K975432	None Vul Dir W
♠AJT94 ♥64 ♦943 ♣J86	N W E S	♠KQ8732 ♥AT52 ♦KJ8 ♣—
	♠— ♥KQJ97 ♦AQT72 ♣AQT	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♠	2♠*
4♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
End			

South has shown hearts + a minor. He leads the ♥K.

Declarer must hold his losers to one heart and two diamonds. South's double marks him with most of the outstanding high cards. He might lead a club from the ♣AK, so it would be unwise to bank on North's holding the ♦Q. An elimination play looks safest.

Declarer should duck the ♥K to be sure North does not gain the lead. Win the continuation and eliminate hearts and clubs, ruffing high if necessary and simultaneously drawing trump. Then lead a diamond to the Jack to endplay South. Timing is important to be sure that dummy still has a trump if South gives a ruff and discard.

The only declarer to make 10 tricks was, unfortunately for him, in 5♠.

The next exhibit comes from Match 3.

Board 37	♠QJ7 ♥542 ♦Q85 ♣T862	NS Vul Dealer N
♠84 ♥KQJ ♦J9642 ♣Q94	N W E S	♠K632 ♥873 ♦AKT3 ♣AK
	♠AT95 ♥AT96 ♦7 ♣J753	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	End		

Every South guessed to lead the stronger heart suit, rather than the more troubling spades. How should declarer play diamonds? "Nine never" should lead to defeat: when North wins the third round he can switch to the ♠Q. (South can encourage this by discarding the ♥9.) Declarer ensures his contract by finessing diamonds into the South hand. If the finesse loses he has 8 tricks and will make a 9th from hearts while protecting his ♠K.

The only declarer to fail played from the West hand: he had no chance the lead of the ♠Q.

The third example (See top of next page) was flat in both matches. Two declarers made 4♠+1, two went down.

The unsuccessful declarers decided to play North for all the missing points – he did open the bidding after all.

They won the ♥K at trick two and crossed to the ♠K to finesse through North. When he showed out on the second round they ducked to South's ♠Q to avoid being forced in hearts. South switched to clubs.

Board 39	♠2 ♥AQJ974 ♦T7 ♣QJ94	All Vul Dir W
♠KT765 ♥T6 ♦K85 ♣A63	N W E S	♠AJ8 ♥K3 ♦AJ943 ♣K82
	♠Q943 ♥852 ♦Q62 ♣T75	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	1NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠	End

Declarer is not done yet: he can win the club, cash the ♠A, and cross to the ♦K to finish drawing trump. When the diamond finesse loses he is still in control and can discard his club loser.

The successful declarers took the right view in spades – you can pick up Qxxx in South but not in North. Deep Finesse does even better. Peeking as usual he runs the ♦J to pin the ♦T and make 12 tricks.

Unfortunately Sandy Duncan had to withdraw after the first match on Day 2 and adjusted scores were awarded for matches against his team.

The winners of the Trial were SHORT (Brian Short, Alan Goodman, Stephen Peterkin, Sam Punch).

Runners up were SMITH (Harry Smith, Roy Bennett, Liam O'Brien, Ronan Valentine)

Since Brian and Alan are unavailable for the first Camrose weekend (6-8 January in Northern Ireland) the team picked itself. We wish them luck.

Scottish Bridge Players Fantasy Football League

We are now in our third season with a record 19 teams. Seventeen of them are easily in the top half of all teams (more than 10 million of them) proving again that bridge players are good at this.

The top five at the World Cup break includes former champions Marina and Jim:

1. No One Likes Us (Marina Evans)	922
2. Inter Nolan (Tony Nolan)	914
3. Nodrogila (Ali Gordon)	909
4. Unsporting Lisbon (Jim Mason)	904
5. East Lothian Buddies (Tom Robertson)	901

It is all very close for the £100 first prize and there is more than 60% of the season to go. If you would like to join, please email iain.sime63@gmail.com

It is FREE to play and be included in the standings.

We ask for £10 to be eligible for the prizes (new players only from next season).

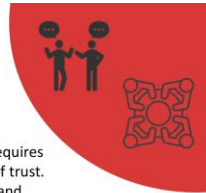
BAMSA News

Bridge: A MindSport for All is working on producing accessible resources based on our academic research findings. We hope these might be useful for bridge teachers, clubs or organisations to promote bridge as a mindsport.



THE MINDSPORT BRIDGE

As a card game of incomplete information, bridge requires partnership communication and the development of trust. Bridge teaches the value of loyalty, cooperation and mutually supportive relationships.



STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Reading opponents strategically

Thoughtful and logical analysis of situations enables players to assess the best course of action.



Preparation and cooperation

Top players need to prepare in advance as well as work on strategies with their partner away from the bridge table.



PARTNERSHIP

Building a strong partnership takes time, effort, empathy and understanding.



Supportive silence

Bridge is a game of mistakes that requires a calm demeanour when things go wrong.

Disciplined planning

Successful players respond to events in a disciplined manner and learn to anticipate possible problems that might occur.



According to research by BAMSA at the University of Stirling, life skills such as strategic planning, flexibility in problem-solving, concentration and focus can be developed at the bridge table. Players learn and practice interpersonal skills, resilience and emotional self-control.

Punch, S. and Snellgrove, M. (2021) [Playing your Life: Developing Strategies and Managing Impressions in the Game of Bridge](#). *Sociological Research Online* 26(3): 601–619.



Please let us know what you think of our first attempt - feedback on style, content and format much appreciated, please contact: bamsa@stir.ac.uk

What other formats or types of resources might be useful?

The infographic poster is based on this paper:

Punch, S. and Snellgrove, M. (2021) [Playing your Life: Developing Strategies and Managing Impressions in the Game of Bridge](#),

Sociological Research Online 26(3): 601–619.

Other papers and this poster from the *Bridging Minds* project along with two-page summaries of each paper are available on [the BAMSA website](#)

More from Nigel

We unearthed another esoteric problem composed by Nigel Guthrie for Elena Jeronimidis and published in "The Joy of Bridge."

Single Dummy Problem

♠T	None Vul									
♥AQ654	Dir E									
♦65432										
♣AJ										
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	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠AQ65432										
♥32										
♦6										
♣K432										

Contract: 7♠ Lead: ♦A.

Can you produce a layout of the East-West cards that will allow this absurd contract to make?

(Solution on next page.)

..and More about Ian

Thanks to the efforts of Walter Buchanan, we have unearthed one of Ian's articles from Scotland on Sunday.

"In the five years since he left Scotland to live in the United States, Barnet Shenkin has continued to show why he was one of this country's best ever players. This year, playing in a scratch partnership, he was part of the Pavlicek team that reached the final of the prestigious Vanderbilt teams of four. They lost to the top American team of

Nickel (Freeman, Harriman, Soloway, Meckstroth and Rodwell).

This hand is from Pavlicek's quarter final victory by a massive 145-74 over the number one seeded Cayne team.

♠KQT2	NS Vul									
♥T53	Dir s									
♦KQ2										
♣986										
♠65	♠J874									
♥92	♥J876									
♦98653	♦J									
♣AJ75	♣T432									
<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #c8e6c9;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>			N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
♠A93										
♥AKQ4										
♦AT74										
♣KQ										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	-	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	6NT		

Barnet was sitting East and since his teammates at the other table played in a quiet 3NT contract, 22 IMPs rested on whether Bobby Levin, sitting South, could make his slam.

Barnet's partner, Bob Jones, led a low diamond to the Knave and Ace. Declarer played two more rounds of diamonds, Barnet pitching clubs, and then a club to the King which held the trick. Now South cashed the ♦T and turned to the majors, playing three top hearts and the ♠AK. That left just three cards for everyone. Barnet as East was down to ♠J8 and the ♥J. The winning line is for South to throw him in with a heart to force a spade lead into dummy's QT.

However, Levin thought that East had started with the ♣A so he played for

spades 3-3. When West showed out on the third spade he was down and the Pavlicek team had gained 11 IMPs instead of losing the same amount. Barnet's partner did well on two counts. If he wins the ♣A on the first round of the suit Barnet will be squeezed in the majors when the last diamond winner is cashed. Just as importantly, he ducked the Ace smoothly when a pause for thought would have given away the actual lie of the cards."

Malcolm Cuthbertson reminisces:

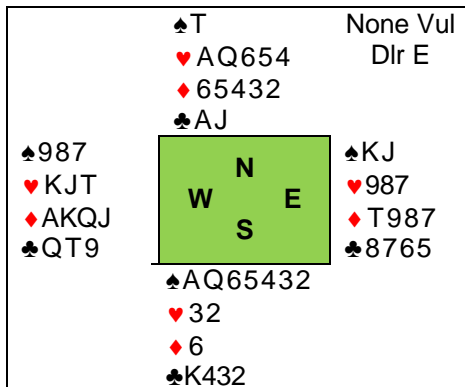
Ian was the npc of the first two Scotland Open teams to play in the European Championships and was liked by all.

He missed out on playing in the European Championships in 2002 only because his opponents in the last set bid 6NT, missing the ♣AK. Ian, not on lead, held both. But he also controlled another suit and was squeezed out of one top club when the remaining suits were run. Surely the unluckiest way to miss a Scotland cap ever

His strengths as a player were in his analysis and general knowledge, which helped with his Vugraph commentary. He was a good, fair and witty commentator. On one occasion he and his co commentators had a private bet on how many Abba song titles they could work into their commentary. One line was to the effect that Queen hit the table so quickly - it was a 'Dancing Queen'.

My memories of Ian are all positive and through the sadness of losing him I smile at remembering the time I spent with him. As a person it is hard to think of anyone more universally liked.

Solution to Single Dummy Problem



Contract: 7♣

Lead: ♦A.

The only possible way to avoid a trump loser is to reach a 3-card ending where East has ♠KJ doubleton and club; you have ♠AQ and a club; West has ♠987; and dummy has ♠T and 2 red cards. When you lead your club West must ruff, you overruff with the ♠T and lead a card from dummy to scoop East's trump.

To reach this position you must ruff 5 times in hand, starting with the opening lead. You will need 4 entries to dummy, so the finesses in hearts and clubs must work. You can cross to the ♥Q and ruff a diamond, cash the ♥A and ruff a heart, finesse the ♣J and ruff a diamond, cross to the ♣A to ruff a fourth diamond. Now cash the ♣K and you have arrived at the winning position. All it needs, apart from this specific spade position is a 4-4 diamond break, a 3-3 heart break with the King in West, and West to have precisely Qxx in clubs.

(We have not calculated the odds!)

Player Profile:

Jill Arthur

What would you like to share about your background?

I was born in Glasgow in 1940 and shipped off to Arran to avoid the bombs. Aged 2 or 3, I would invite soldiers and sailors who I met near my house to come home for a cup of tea with my mother! I can't be sure what anybody else thought about it, but it was entirely innocent. I haven't changed much.

I went to Laurel Bank school but left at 15 because I wasn't academic. I went to work for my father, who fired me 3 months later, for taking too long over tea breaks and lunch breaks. I found myself a job at Boots and was there for 3 years. My father took me back on the proviso that I took shorter lunch breaks, and I started working at one of his businesses, Ingles of Argyle Street, where I worked my way up to become manager. I was 21 by then, and I remained with them until I was 23, when I got married to my first husband and then had two children. The marriage didn't last long. It was about that time, after my divorce, and aged about 28, that I decided to take up bridge, considering my grandfather, mother and aunt all played.

What about your bridge history?

Mum and Aunty Jenny (*Chrissy Harrison and Jenny MacDonald*) took me in hand at the Buchanan Club and to my surprise, and everyone else's, I seemed to be rather good at it. My first congress was in Aberdeen, when I took over from my aunt, after she broke her leg, and I played with my mother.

Two years after that, I met Jimmie. We first met at the Rothesay Congress, when he asked me to play on the

Sunday night. I kept seeing him at various congresses, and eventually he asked me out. The rest is all history. As everybody knows, Jimmie was a very kind, loving man, and also very good with my children, Iain and Christine. In 1971 we got married.

After I met Jimmie, we became partners, and played in many congresses and tournaments. I started playing in trials with Pam Kissen in the early 80's, but when my daughter, Christine, became ill, in 1984, I gave up playing serious bridge. Fortunately, she made a very good recovery, and I started playing again, with Sheila MacDonald, in 1994.

I played with Sheila for 9 years, 4 times in the Lady Milne, which we won twice, and in European tournaments in Maastricht and Malmo. Sheila and I gave up playing after my mother's health deteriorated, and my daughter and I cared for her.

My son Iain, with his wonderful sense of humour, was a huge help with both Christine and my mother. And now Christine helps me and was great company during lockdown, except when she kept beating me at Rummy Cub.

Finest Bridge Moments?

I am a sociable creature, which is why I first started playing bridge, and I have a very good sense of humour, particularly at the bridge table. I was playing bridge with Pat Davies at a congress at Peebles and during the auction, Pat had bid 2♠. I was on lead, and I thought Pat might not know I had 4 Spades, 6532. I thought I should let her know I had 4, so I led the ♠2. She was not amused. Later that evening, she said I am annoyed with myself because I gave you a row. I was able to respond: "I played bridge

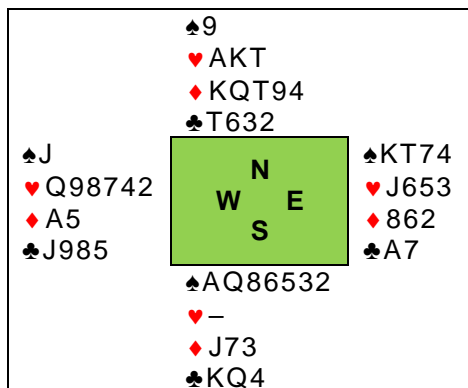
at Peebles for 3 years with Jimmie and we never won a thing. Playing with you ! have won 3 trophies.”

Nicola Smith is another very good friend of mine who won't play bridge with me for which I am truly relieved, but I got to know these two through Jimmie's amazing captancy. They are both still very good friends, as is Liz McGowan, who is without doubt Scotland's best women's bridge player.

At a congress in Rothesay, I was sharing a room with Marion Hill and my mother was in the room on the other side of the shared bathroom. Marion and mum were going for drinks about 6 o'clock. I didn't go because I had to wash my hair and came out of the bathroom with my hair in big rollers and wearing nothing but a pair of pants. Suddenly the door burst open, and Martin Jacobs came in. I was so embarrassed about being seen wearing rollers, that I put my hand up to cover my rollers, forgetting how little I was wearing. Martin Jacobs said: "I will take this vision of you to my death!"

Favourite Hand?

This was written up in "King Arthur and the Square Table" a selection of bridge tales published by Jimmie in 1989. Jill features as 'Eve', playing with 'Adam'.



“West led a heart against Eve's contract of 4♣ and Eve paused to consider the situation. There appeared to be one club loser and one diamond loser which were inescapable, the two discards on dummy's ♥AK being of no value. The success or failure of the contract seemed therefore to depend on holding the spade losers to one. With the unbalanced nature of her hand Eve decided this was rather unlikely and set about preparing a smokescreen.

She won the first two tricks with the ♥AK, discarding the King and Queen of clubs from her own hand! She finessed the ♠Q, cashed the ♠A and conceded a spade to East, who returned a heart, forcing Eve to ruff. Eve played another spade to East's King, who played a fourth heart, forcing Eve to ruff again. Even now lost a diamond to West, who saw no reason not to lead another heart to remove Eve's last trump, being fully convinced that a club would have the same effect. The expression on the faces of East and West when Eve discarded her ♣4 on dummy's winning diamonds were a joy to behold.”

Do you have a Bridge Hero?

My bridge hero is Zia Mahmoud. I met Zia in London about 2000, when he was introduced to my tablet and shortbread. I saw him several months later, in a club; he was on the phone and he said into the phone, when he saw me: "I have to go now, I have just seen a lovely lady who gives me something better than sex!"

Any views on how bridge is run in Scotland?

I was disappointed when they changed the format of the final in various congresses, so that people were not playing all the other pairs.

Any other interests?

In 1998, Lady Julia Edmonstone asked me to help raise money for Scottish Mental Health, which I was very happy to do because my daughter, Christine, has had her own mental health issues. I begged for donations for prizes from all and sundry, and an extremely successful raffle was held which raised over £9,500 from ticket sales. Among the prizes was a sizeable cash donation from Omar Sharif.

Around the same time, Linda from Scottish Mental Health, asked if Jimmie and I would go on This Morning on STV to talk about mental health issues.

Bridge commitments kept me busy until Jimmie died from cancer, in 2007. I decided I wanted to raise money both for mental health issues and for cancer. I made my first big batch of tablet for Children in Need in 2009 and raised £300. I was begged to make more, which kick-started twelve more years of making tablet and shortbread, and I have now raised over £80,000 which has been shared by Strathcarron Hospice, Macmillan Cancer Support, CHAS, cancer charities, Help for Heroes, Combat Stress and mental health charities.

Favourites?

Film: I like true stories, especially about wars. Last Full Measure, Blood Diamond

Music: Modern - Paul Carrick, Michael Buble

Book: The Far Pavilions and Trade Winds by MM Kaye.

Food: Crispy bacon sandwich, like a good Jewish girl.

Colour: Blue.

Jill omits to mention that, with Sheila MacDonald, she qualified for the round of 16 at the World Olympiad in Maastricht in 2000, which is one of the best ever performances by a Scottish team since we achieved separate NBO status. The team profile, on the theme of 'ambition' was published in the Daily Bulletin. Here is an extract:

“Sheila MacDonald lives and works in Glasgow, devoting much time to her family, which, amazingly enough, includes grandchildren. She played in the British Ladies team in the Common Market Championships in Bordeaux.

Her (impossible) ambition is to get through an entire session with a silent partner. Her play is good enough to render anyone speechless with admiration – that is, anyone except –

Jill Arthur, who lives in Dunblane with husband Jimmie, and has made a name for herself as his essential support staff when he captained the British Ladies Team.

Her (nearly fulfilled) ambition is to introduce every bridge player in the world to the delights of tablet and shortbread. If you do not know what these are, just ask her for a sample.”

We should stress that Jill's fundraising efforts are truly remarkable. She pays for all the ingredients (mainly sugar) herself.

Play Challenge

Jim Patrick

1 Both Vul Dealer North

♠64
♥A7
♦QJ73
♣QJ954

♠AQJT95
♥2
♦962
♣AT2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	Pass	1♥	2♠
3♥	4♠	End	

Contract: 4♠ Lead: ♥Q

How do you justify your side's slight overbidding?

2 NS Vul Dealer West

♠QT75
♥T97
♦K965
♣43

♠A6
♥AQ64
♦AQJT72
♣7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♦*	Pass	5♣	5♦
End			

2♦* Precision style: 3-suited with a singleton diamond, 4=4=1=4 or (3=4)=1=5

Contract: 5♦ Lead: ♣K

How do you avoid 3 losers after West starts with the King and Ace of clubs?

3 NS Vul Dealer North

♠975
♥764
♦A42
♣Q762

♠AT4
♥AKJ95
♦Q
♣AJ94

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	End	

Contract: 4♥ Lead: ♦3

You had a good sequence (North might want to play 3NT opposite a 3=5=1=4 hand) to a slightly optimistic contract. How do you play? Would you choose a different line against expert players?

4 NS Vul Dealer East

♠QJ5
♥32
♦AK74
♣T654

♠KT932
♥AKJ
♦6
♣Q732

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	Pass	1♠
2♥	3♠	4♣	4♠
End			

Contract: 4♠ Lead: ♥T

You win and play trump. West wins the second round of spades (East throws a club) and returns a heart. Clearly West is void in clubs, so how do you make this contract? Could the defence have beaten you?

Play Challenge Solutions

Jim Patrick

1 Both Vul Dealer North

♠73 ♥QJ965 ♦K54 ♣863	♠64 ♥A7 ♦QJ73 ♣QJ954 N W E S ♠AQJT95 ♥2 ♦962 ♣AT2	♠K82 ♥KT843 ♦AT8 ♣K7	
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WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1♥	2♠
3♥	4♣	End	

Contract: 4♣ Lead: ♥Q

On the auction this is a very good game. Singletons in the defensive hands are unlikely when they have 10 trumps between them and bid only to the 3 level. And assuming that West has ♥QJ, he probably has exactly one other high card. If these assumptions are true, you cannot go off when West has a diamond honour.

Take the trump finesse, play the ♠A and knock out the ♠K. Ruff the likely heart return, play a diamond to dummy and ruff another heart return. Play another diamond and, when West has a diamond honour, you will eventually get to dummy to take the winning club finesse.

You have an extra chance if the ♠K falls. After drawing trump play a small club to dummy. It does not help East to take and an unwary West may step in with the king from ♣Kx. Even if you lose the trump finesse to West, you have a slight chance. Play East for ♦AK bare.

2 NS Vul Dealer West

♠KJ94 ♥853 ♦4 ♣AKJ98	♠QT75 ♥T97 ♦K965 ♣43 N W E S ♠A6 ♥AQ64 ♦AQJT72 ♣7	♠832 ♥KJ2 ♦83 ♣QT652	
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WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♦*	Pass	5♣	5♦
End			

2♦* Precision style: 3-suited with a singleton diamond, 4=4=1=4 or (3=4) 1=5

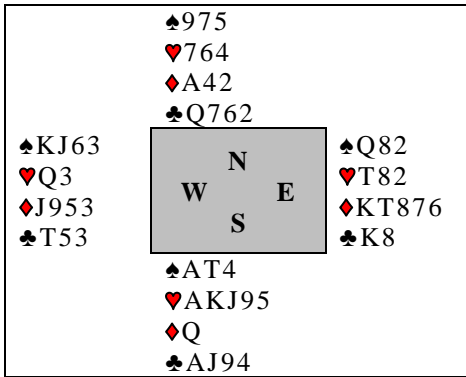
Contract: 5♦ Lead: ♣K

You really need hearts to be 3-3 (unless East has ♥KJ doubleton.) The only 3-card holding that West can have to help you is ♥8xx. If he has to open the suit, you can put in the ♥7, then finesse successfully against the King and Jack in East. So after drawing trumps, you play ♠A and another:

♠J9 ♥853 ♦— ♣J9	♠QT ♥T97 ♦K9 ♣— N W E S ♠A6 ♥AQ64 ♦AQJT72 ♣7	♠8 ♥KJ2 ♦— ♣QT6	
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If West wins the ♠K and plays a club you can discard the ♥7, cross to a trump, finesse the ♥Q, ruff a heart and discard your last heart on the ♠Q. A spade gives you 2 discards for the hearts if you can guess his spade holding.

.3 NS Vul Dealer South



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-			1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	End	

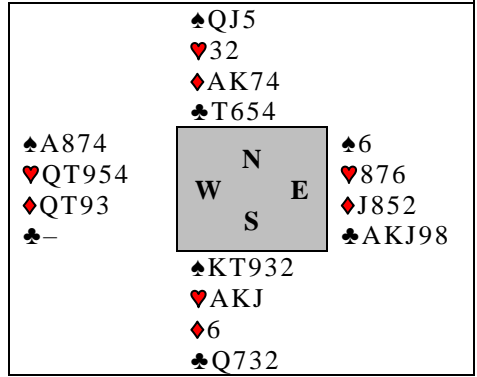
Contract: 4♥ Lead: ♦3

Unless you find a singleton ♥Q or ♣K you almost certainly need clubs and hearts 3-2. You can win in dummy and take the heart finesse, gaining when East has ♥Qx or ♥Qxx. Simplifying and considering only 3-2 breaks in the vital suits this works 50% of the time.

You improve your odds by playing a club to the Jack. You make your contract against ♣Kx in East. If he has ♣Kxx you can drop the doubleton ♥Q. If the finesse loses, you can return to dummy with the ♣Q to take the heart finesse. As before, neglecting good singletons, you gain in 57% of the 3-2 breaks.

The problem with this line is that West may duck with ♣Kxx to deny you an entry to dummy for the heart finesse. The optimum strategy is to take when he has the ♥Qx but duck when he has ♥Qxx. If he will always find this, he reduces your odds to 48% and you are better just finessing in hearts.

4 NS Vul Dealer East



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	-	Pass	1♠
2♥	3♠	4♣	4♠
End			

Contract: 4♠ Lead: ♥T

When clubs are 5=0 you cannot lead that suit before you draw the last trump. Now the problem is how to secure a club trick with only one dummy entry to lead towards ♣Q. The answer lies in counting. Draw trump and cash hearts, reducing East to 6 cards. East must have 2, 3 or 4 clubs and the corresponding number of diamonds.

If he has 2 clubs, it is easy - play clubs any way you like. If he has 3, cross to the ♦A and play a club. He has to let you score a club trick or put you back in dummy with a diamond to lead clubs again. If he has 4, he has 2 diamonds. Cash ♦AK before playing a club and you must come to a club trick.

It would have been better technique for West to win the third round of trumps to help cut communications but the play really required in this hand was to take out dummy's diamond entry while he still had a trump. Winning the third round of trumps would have been necessary also if declarer's clubs had been KJxx.

November 2022 Bidding Challenge

Iain Sime

Welcome to the Bidding Challenge. I have gone with 15/17, 5-card Majors etc. only because that was the system in use when most of the hands were played. My apologies to those who would prefer Standard Acrol. The hands all arose in 2022, either online or (sorely missed) Face to Face.

Problem 1 Teams All Vul

	S	W	N	E
♠976	-	-	-	1♣
♥Q543	P	3♣*	Dbf	P
♦T5	?			
♣AK43				

1♣=3+♣ (15-17 NT)

3♣*=5+♣, 6-9 HCP

A common bridge tip is that when you are thinking about penalising the opponents, Ace-King of their trump suit is not such a great holding. Better to have something like ♣QJ9x and your Ace and King in other suits. Despite this, we have a small majority for going after their blood here. Some of the blood-seekers have a plan:

SHIELDS: PASS: The choices are Pass and 3♥, as I cannot bid game opposite what might be a minimum opener with short clubs, when so many of my values are in clubs. Defending by trump, trump, trump will keep declarer to either 3 or 4 trump tricks.

WILKINSON: PASS. Trump leads should cut this contract down to size, and a game our way looks doubtful.

SMITH: PASS. Looks like a weak NT or equivalent on my right. I'm on lead and this contract is unlikely to play well after I start with three rounds of clubs.

3♣ will play less well if you reconsider before persevering with trumps. Partner had ♠T843, ♥AJT76, ♦AK73, ♣void. Provided that you obtain your diamond ruff, 3♣ is two down for 500. Some defenders were more thoughtful:

SHORT: PASS. Pretty routine I think. Will probably beat this (though not 100%). We may get +500 instead of +620 but with not many high cards in clubs the opponents may have sufficient in our suits to beat our game. I also may have control in the defence. I could perhaps draw trump if I get in and alternatively may develop a diamond ruff. Pairs harder, as we must bid a game if we can make it.

GORDON: PASS. And lead a big trump. If I had a side Ace for a quick re-entry, I would lead a small trump in case partner has the bare Queen or making Jack.

MURDOCH: PASS. The other choices are 3♥/4♥ or double. The ♣AK are not full value in a heart contract but they are in 3♣ doubled.

That would depend upon West's lead. The heart finesse fails, but West had to lead an unlikely spade to beat 4♥. Otherwise, South can pitch two of dummy's spades on the "worthless" clubs. So, I would expect that the following will win 3 imps; make that 9 imps where the diamond ruff is missed.

FREIMANIS: 4♥. I expect us to be (close to) making 4♥ here as partner should have quite a good hand for the double. Pass is a decent alternative, albeit a bit risky, should either of the opponents have a hand with substantial shape.

PIPER: 4♥. Their good hand is over partner's good hand, maybe 3♥ is better. Also short of entries to hand.

SYMONS: 4♥. A choice between 3NT and 4♥, but as partner has at most a singleton club, I think it will play better in a suit, despite the quality of my trumps.

Good decision. Whatever the lead, 3NT will be a trick short. Some settle for scraps:

MCKAY: 3♥. Your ♠K is very likely wasted so you really only have a five count.

MCGOWAN: 3♥. Partner has (near) opening strength and a club shortage. She sits under the opening bidder's cards. Pass looks wildly optimistic.

DRAGIC: 3♥. Not enough for game opposite a minimum double. Finesses will not work.

They will need partner to do some lifting. That is unlikely opposite a hand which has shown nothing. I do not agree that North won't have a decent hand. Only our own hand indicates that East is probably 12/14 balanced. On another day, partner could have been wandering into 18/19.

Problem 1	Votes	Marks
Pass	10	10
4♥	3	7
3♥	5	6
3NT	0	5

Problem 2 Teams NS Vul

♠A52	S	W	N	E
♥Q7	-	2♦*	P	P
♦QJ87632	?			
♣K				

2♦*=Multi (usually a weak 2 in a Major)

Watch Out! There's a thief about! This is the first of two hands where the panel have been mugged. Or at least most of them have. Unwilling to meekly surrender 6/8 imps are:

MCGOWAN: 2NT. This really smells. Why did East pass? He can't have diamonds, so must think we have game and is happy to go down in 50s. But he is clearly untrustworthy, so I cannot assume we actually have game. Partner could not bid over the Multi but may have a reasonable unbalanced hand with no convenient call. This could be very wrong, but I can't bear to pass.

ROSS: DBL. Since East has passed partner must have majors. Will double and see what happens.

What happens is that partner will persistently bid suits you don't have. The only other bidder was Douglas, who bid 3♦ without comment. That looks like another road to a minus score.

SHIELDS: PASS. I note that partner did pass, but, more importantly, there is nothing sensible I can say. I might miss a higher plus, but what can I do unless I have agreed that 3♦ here is natural, and I have not.

Yes, when the Multi is passed, it is normal to defend as if they had opened a weak 2♦.

ASH: PASS. Assuming that partner would double with the equivalent of a weak 1NT it looks like we are unlikely to have a game. So collecting a plus score looks right.

Good point about the double of the Multi showing 12/15 balanced. But partner was waiting to double Two Spades with his ♠Q9, ♥AJ96, ♦54, ♣AQJ74.

SHORT: PASS. Middle of the road.

A good place to be mugged as there will be witnesses. If that is of any consolation.

MURDOCH: PASS. I am confident I have more diamonds than them.

Some passers were less oblivious to danger:

PATERSON: PASS. Given the vulnerability, this could be any sort of psyche. Since we will not have agreed double as penalty, and partner has passed (implying game may be marginal at best), I just go for a plus.

FREIMANIS: PASS. The pass from East is a clear sign of a weak hand to make it harder for us to get into the auction in a meaningful way. We could have a game on but that feels like any bid I make would involve putting partner under a lot of pressure to get it right.

DRAGIC: PASS. The problem here is that 3♦ cannot be natural as East's pass is showing long diamonds. More likely East has forgotten the system or came up with a very effective psyche. I'll stay fixed as it is not clear that we have game as partner has passed.

Some victims passed on their congratulations to East along with the imps.

VALENTINE: PASS. This is horrible and I am even less happy that we are vulnerable. Normally, you would expect East to have diamonds for passing the multi. Therefore, aiming for any contract is aiming for a thin range. If we miss a game, I think I can just say that it was a good pass of 2♦.

GORDON: PASS. If East is coffee-housing, then good bid (maybe).

Either 3NT or 5♦ was bid and made at 85 of 96 tables at the 2022 World Championships in Salsomaggiore. Two diamonds by West made only two trump tricks, but that was seven imps to the thief (Kit Woolsey).

Problem 2	Votes	Marks
Pass	15	10
2NT	1	7
Dble	1	4
3♦	1	4

Problem 3 Teams EW Vul

♠QJT	S	W	N	E
♥KQ652	-	-	1NT	P
♦QJ2	?			
♣K4				

1NT = 15-17

There is a clue that this has been set as a problem. Many have chosen to ignore that. They have gone into robot mode. Shape 5332. Total points 25-31. Computer says: "transfer to major then bid 3NT."

WILKINSON: 2♦. After the transfer, bids other than 2NT are a game force, so see no harm in this.

SYMONS: 2♦. I assume my excellent partner will be playing transfers.

PEDEN: 2♦. If partner breaks, strongly try for slam.

SMITH: 2♦. OK, I give up. When partner opens 1NT and I have a good 5-card major I show it. 3NT might be better than game in the 5-3 or 5-4 heart fit, but it might not be. This isn't a question of judgement; doing other than showing your suit in line with system is guesswork. System is there to take away guesswork.

Robot ignores two important issues:

- Where are your points? Controls (Aces and Kings) are more valuable in suit contracts. Softer honours pull their weight in Notrump contracts. This hand could hardly be softer.*
- With 25/26 points we bid games-3NT (9 tricks) and 4 of a major (10 tricks). By 32/33 points we are looking at a small slam (12 tricks in a suit or NT). Therefore, at some point in the 25-32 spectrum the number of tricks in a suit contract converges with the number of tricks in a Notrump contract. That point*

must be near the top end. Our combined hands make 29-31.

DRAGIC: 2♦. Will do the obvious: transfer and jump to 3NT. For every layout with 5-3 heart fit where 3NT makes and 4♥ goes down there will be more than one where a club lead beats 3NT and 4♥ makes. For example, ♠Axxx ♥AJx ♦Axxx ♣Qx, or no club stop from partner. And partner is allowed to pass 3NT with three card support.

At least Miro is aware that there is a problem. I don't agree with the odds. Soft cards make 3NT, Aces and Kings make Four of a Major. Miro's minimum has all the Aces except the one we need most. And 3NT will still make by running the hearts, then take whichever finesse you judge is working. Or, trivially, on a non-club lead, perhaps from a defender who doesn't fancy leading from ♣A.

Some looked at the hand more closely:

GORDON: 3NT. Too many quacks to think of a slam. 3NT reckons to be safer than 4♥ which may go down on a ruff or bad trump split. I wouldn't bother with Stayman.

McGOWAN: 3NT. Plenty HCP, lots of slow values, if this goes down with 4♥ on ice I shall apologise insincerely.

The other refinement to robot bidding caters to a 5/4 heart fit:

SHIELDS: 2♣. It is impossible to see 4♥ being beaten on high cards but it could suffer a ruff. But if we have a 5-4 heart fit then a weakness elsewhere becomes more likely, and I'd rather not be in 3NT opposite ♠AKx ♥JTxx ♦AKxx ♣xx. So, I play the 9-card fit in hearts but if an 8-card fit, will settle for NT.

WHYTE: 2♣. I will play in 3NT unless partner has a 4-card heart suit.

ASH: 2♣. Stayman. I think this is the best way to ensure a plus score. This

will reveal a 5-4 fit, when I think 4♥ will be the best spot. However, it is possible that 3NT will fail when opener has three hearts and poor clubs. But even then, with so many high cards, it might just be a matter of overtricks.

SHORT: 2♣. I want to play 4♥ if partner has four hearts, but 3NT otherwise. I won't score well for this (correct) answer.

In the "Scottish" Online League, John Murdoch bid 3NT. That won 10 imps opposite ♠AK7, ♥743, ♦84, ♣AQJ93. Deservedly.

Now John (without comment) and the other transferrers win 10 marks. Undeservedly.

Problem 3	Votes	Marks
2♦	12	10
2♣	4	9
3NT	2	8

Problem 4 Teams All Vul

♠AKQ8543	S	W	N	E
♥63	-	3♦	P	3NT
♦54	?			
♣Q3				

Watch Out Again! There is another thief about! Once again most of the panel are accepting only 300 for a vulnerable game.

GORDON: PASS Hope to take them off in hundreds. Is this the same East as in problem 2?

No, there are a lot of villains these days; it seems to be easy pickings around here.

ROSS: PASS. If I double I would have to bid 4♠ over their inevitable 4♦ which may even push them to a makeable 5♦. 3NT should be at least three off.

FREIMANIS: PASS. No reason to bid 4♠ which look likely to go down quite a few, whilst double might get opponents away from a possibly failing 3NT contract.

MCKAY: PASS. You never know your luck, and 4♠ could be disastrous.

Again, some sensed danger, but still walked into East's trap:

ASH: PASS. The traditional way to expose that East is 'playing games' is to double and then bid 4♠ if East pulls this to 4♦. However, I think that would show a stronger hand and invite partner to possibly bid on over 5♦. Also, the vulnerability suggests that East may well have a genuine bid and so our best chance of a plus score is to hope that we can cash seven spades.

SYMONS: PASS. The danger is that East is messing about, but in that case, partner will be short in diamonds and didn't act, so maybe East does have a good hand. Well, I may have a surprise for him, and if he is messing, he will go lots off vulnerable.

SHORT: PASS. Anything could be right. East may be psyching with a diamond fit, a poor hand and a singleton, or he could have a very good hand. Pass at least allows me to perhaps cash spades even if he is strong, or cash much more if he is bluffing. If partner has enough for me to make 4♠, 3NT will go sailing off. I'll be happy with 500 at teams.

Partner had ♠xxx, ♥KQJTxx, ♦void, ♣Kxxx. The critical decision on the hand should have been partner's. Do we accept 200 from Five Diamonds doubled or bid the making Five Spades? Most of our panel didn't reach that crux.

But some were unwilling to be robbed again:

SMITH: Dbl. If East-West were non vulnerable, I would expect a quick return by East to his partner's diamond suit. It's a very old trick to try to throw opponents – after all nine down in 3NT would only be -450 – and, astonishingly, it still works sometimes.

Vulnerable, however, is a different matter. If East has ♠Jxxx, then -950 is possible, a loss of 8 imps over the undoubled -630. If he doesn't then I am making a profit of 500 with the double. Sounds like a reasonable shot to me. If he does retreat to diamonds, then I'll go for the spade game.

WHYTE: Dbl. I don't know whether they will make it, but neither do they.

WILKINSON: 4♠. Let's ignore the opponents for now.

PATERSON: 4♠. I doubt if vulnerable opponents are indulging in antics. Occasionally both 3NT and 4♠ make. Otherwise, 4♠ is probably a good save. I do not like double, which I think should be take-out of diamonds.

I agree, although with this hand we can correct to spades.

Problem 4	Votes	Marks
Pass	13	10
4♠	3	8
Dble	2	7

Problem 5 MatchPoints All Vul

♠AQ87	S	W	N	E
♥AK986	-	-	-	1♥
♦42	P	P	Dbl	2♣
♣J3	?			

Having had majorities on the first four hands, this one split the panel six ways. All the predictions I have marked with an asterisk occurred on the hand. So, our panel were largely aware of what*

was likely to happen, but not agreed about what to do about it. The top vote went to another penalty hunt:

McGOWAN: Dbl. This says "I was about to pass 1♥ doubled, and can tolerate your passing 2♣ doubled if that seems like a good idea." Let opponents play the misfits... hopefully he will pull this with inadequate clubs and we can still reach our game if one exists.

FREIMANIS: Dbl. I expect for many this indicates a penalty double of 1♥. Otherwise, if partner finds a bid, I will likely steer towards a 3NT/4♠ contract.

ASH: Dbl. This shows a hand that was going to pass 1♥ doubled. It does not show long clubs so I will expect partner to pass 2♣ doubled only with 4+ trumps. If this is the case and we have a 4-4 spade fit, then again the Law suggests a total of 17 tricks. So, whilst not ideal we will get a plus score. If partner removes this double to 2♦, I will bid spades but I suspect that 4♠ will not be an easy make.*

If they only have a 7-card fit, the Total Tricks should be 15. But relying on The Law for probable total tricks when we have AK986 sitting over opener's main suit seems illogical. The total fits would be unchanged if the North-South hands were switched, but the total tricks would surely increase.

MURDOCH: Dbl. It is not impossible that responder will convert to 2♥* with 2/2 or that partner will take right* with his 9-10 hcp.* The double in the pass out seat may not be full value but he probably has four spades so 2♥ could be the way to go. If North has four spades he will bid them and you can bid the spade game or raise cautiously to 3♠.

GORDON: Dbl. And lead ♣J. Partner is favourite to have 3+ clubs.* I expect to make at least three heart tricks, maybe

more. There's no guarantee of game – partner should double in the protective seat with a good 8+HCP. Partner is favourite to have four spades,* but a 4-1 split is likely* on the bidding.

SHIELDS: Dbl. Since partner is expected to have short hearts,* this double is pointless unless I hold hearts, and its primary function is to show that (along with values). Game is possible but (a) we might lack a 4-4 spade fit, and (b) even if we have one a sensible RHO with 55+ shape* hints that spades might not break well.* This is match-points and +200 will be a good score* unless we have game. I shall lead a trump.

If only you were on lead.

The non-doublers were divided as to how to locate our best contract. Even those who were unsure about strain were divided:

SMITH: 3♣. A general force to elicit more information from partner. Any 4-4 spade fit is likely to meet with a poor break* and, especially at match points, it might be safer to look for a NoTrump contract.

VALENTINE: 3♣. I don't want to commit partner to 4♠ here, that could punish partner for balancing. I think 3♣ is a flexible enough call that will allow us to find the right strain and hopefully level. Partner should bid 3♠ over 3♣ with four.

SHORT: 2♥. Force the 'noo (this shows a good, near game-going hand) and see what develops. We should be able to find our correct game now. Jumping to 4♠ may produce 3-card support and a bad break, as opener is at least 5/5*, probably with good clubs.

PATERSON: 2♥. I do not wish to defend an 8-card fit at the 2 level! If partner bids 2♠ I raise; otherwise 3NT noting that without four spades he would be less likely to stretch to reopen.

Finally, there were those who wanted to play in spades, but how many spades?

WILKINSON: 3♠. Allowing partner a little leeway; instinct says bid 4♠ but this may not play well.*

WHYTE: 3♠. Double shows hearts, but with an unknown partner it would be too risky.

MCKAY: 3♠. Partner is in protective position and it is match points.

ROSS: 2♠. I don't want to punish partner for bidding my hand.

DRAGIC: 2♠. Partner protected, so I am discounting my ♥K.

We enter the strange world of BBO Robot Individuals. North, East and West are BBO Robots. I think that they are great fun, but you do need to take account of the Robots' eccentricities. The good news is that the Robots will commit the same atrocities at every other table.

On this hand it was impossible to double for penalties. If, like most of the 350 players, you doubled a heart contract, Robot North would remove to Four Spades if you bid them and to 3NT if you didn't. North had ♠K942, ♥Void, ♦QJ983, ♣KT54.

I bid 2♠, which gave me a chance of a near-top if I had been smart enough to pass 3♥ (going 3 down). I wasn't. 4♠-1 scored 49%, as many did worse.

Problem 5	Votes	Marks
Dbl	7	10
3♣	3	7
2♥	2	7
2♠	2	7
3♠	3	6
4♠	1	4
2NT	0	2

Problem 6 Teams NS Vul

♠A	S	W	N	E
♥2	-	-	3♥	P
♦AKJ86543	?			
♣KT6				

This time the majority of the panel found winning bids. But some found a plan with an obvious flaw. Or two.

ROSS: 4NT. I will bid 5♦ over 5♣, 6♦ over 5♦ and 7♦ over anything else. (*such as 5♥/♠ showing two key cards?*)

MURDOCH: 4NT minors then 5♦ over 5♣.

Showing diamonds and heart tolerance? Even if 4NT is not interpreted as RKCB for hearts.

The rest settled for game, but which game is best?

PATERSON: 3NT. If 3NT is a feasible spot, go for it! (*Bob Hamman's Law*).

SMITH: 3NT. The odds strongly favour the diamond suit running, and no lead worries you. 5♦ might well find no entry to table and you would have to play the club suit from hand.

DRAGIC: 3NT. On a really bad day diamonds will not run. More bad days are possible for 4♥.

ASH: 3NT. Assuming that the diamonds will run this is obviously the best game. If the diamonds are not running, I wouldn't be confident that 5♦ or 4♥ will make.

WILKINSON: 3NT. In case it makes, though oppo may bid spades now.

SHORT: 3NT. I'll only need diamonds to run, even if partner is unsuitable. 5♦ could be completely hopeless and 4♥ needs partner to have a good heart suit. If that's our style first in hand, I probably try 4♥, but I've got a strange partner.....

GORDON: 3NT. Seems the easiest way home. If diamonds don't come in for 8 tricks (8 tricks is a big favourite since North might have more than 0 or 1 diamond).....dummy might have a running heart suit. AKQ/AKJ to 7 times is quite 'normal' at red 1st in hand.

FREIMANIS: 4♥. Hoping that partner has a decent enough suit here.

McGOWAN: 4♥. I am sure partner is an upright citizen whose first hand VULNERABLE pre-empts are sound, so this may have better chances than 5♦.

VALENTINE: 4♥. First in at unfavourable, 3♥ should be a sensible pre-empt. Therefore, there is little point in looking for alternative strains. My hand rates to be of use only in suit contracts and 4♥ seems the most sensible spot.

Good point, although Ronan and Liz may have been known to have a different idea of what a sensible pre-empt looks like.

SHIELDS: 5♦. Opposition have a spade fit that they might well bid if given a chance, so I am willing to overbid here rather than pass.

McKAY: 5♦ You want to keep spades out of the auction and it is teams.

SYMONS: 5♦. Could be right to bid 4♥, but I'll take my chances in my 8-carder.

The last three had better hope that their partner doesn't think that 5♦ is Exclusion KeyCard for hearts. "Don't fight partner's major" was a John Matheson doctrine. And none of the panel chose 4♦, which should be a cue bid for hearts.

Partner had ♠954, ♥AKJT95, ♦9, ♣J97. All games were makeable, but 5♦ was the limit.

Problem 6	Votes	Marks
3NT	8	10
4♥	4	8
5♦	4	6
4NT	2	2
4♦	0	2
6♦	0	2

Problem 7 Teams NS Vul

♠-	S	W	N	E
♥KQJ96532	-	-	1♠	P
♦7	2♥	4♦	4♠	P
♣AQT2	?			

4♦ = pre-emptive

Your teammates have beaten 4♠. Can you win a game swing? One way to a flat board was:

GORDON: 6♥. Forget 5♦ looking for 7♥ – that's accident prone unless with a very regular partner. 5♥ instead of 6♥ is worth a look – it's forward going on the basis that you don't argue with partner as to strain. But you are too good not to bid six. Partner is still there and should bid 7♥ with three Aces.

WILKINSON: 6♥. There may be diamond losers playing in spades.

PATERSON: 6♥. I fear any other move will be taken as agreeing spades.

SHIELDS: 6♥. We can never tell on this – partner could have lots of high cards and decent spades, or just lots of spades. I probably need 2 of 3 useful cards with partner, and partner will usually have more high card points here than the other two pairs combined. I could easily guess 5♥ another day.

Another losing option was:

SYMONS: 4NT. Always risky with a void, but as partner chose to rebid 4♣ when in a Forcing Pass situation, he

must have a very good suit. I'll likely end up in either 6♥ or 7♥. It's also possible we're off two red Aces, when partner shows me the ♠King as a keycard.

SMITH: 4NT. Pre-empts work and this one certainly has. My heart suit is self-supporting, and I cannot afford to pass with slam or even Grand in hearts possible. He will of course take 4NT as RKC in spades. Assuming West has most of the diamond honours, partner cannot have just 0 or 1 key cards for that freely bid 4♠, so 4NT could get us to the heart slam if he shows 3 or 4. However a 5♠ response (2 with ♠Q) would be awkward. 5♥ might get a raise if he has ♥A, but not if he has a doubleton diamond. Either bid can be wrong, and apart from a bash at 6♥ I can see no other options. I think there is more risk of missing slam with 5♥ than of running into problems with 4NT, so the latter it is.

*I think Harry has made the case for **not** bidding 4NT. That (quite likely) 5♠ response is much worse than awkward. A couple of the panel are banking that the defence is less optimal than that of their team-mates:*

SHORT: PASS. Trust partner (we can always complain about him in the bar afterwards). Good problem – tough answer. They may cash two diamonds and ♥Ace against 5♥ and two diamonds and a spade against 4♠. But 4♠ makes! Partner could have doubled with a good hand and even 6 spades, so is likely to have 7 spades or a really good 6.

VALENTINE: PASS. What else can I do? 4♦ has totally consumed the room that we have. Partner won't have 3 hearts and doesn't have a penalty double of 4♦. Partner should also have more than 6 spades for this action. I think changing

the strain or level is potentially exchanging a positive for a minus.

If they can guess clubs, 13 imps to the following:

FREIMANIS: 5♥. Does not look like passing is a good idea and feels as if a 6♥ bid relies too much on partner having the right cards here. Partner often will be able to find the 6♥ bid when it is the right spot to be in.

MCKAY: 5♥. Your suit will probably play better.

MURDOCH: 5♥. Slam try - not rescue. I would probably bid 6♥ at the table,

MCGOWAN: 5♥. Must be a better spot if partner has as many hearts as I have spades. Hope she appreciates that I would never do this unless I had a void spade.

DRAGIC: 5♥. Partner will have more losing diamonds than me and my hearts are probably longer - opening bid was just 1♠.

ASH: 5♥. My first reaction was to Pass on the basis that I haven't promised any support. But an 8-card suit is pretty exceptional. The fact that partner has opened at the 1-level suggests that he has some cards outside his suit. I do not think that it is practicable pursuing a slam even though opener could well have ♠K and a red Ace.

Partner had ♠AQJT9876, ♥T, ♦A3, ♣87. Five Hearts was makeable, Four Spades lost a trick in each suit against best defence.

Problem 7	Votes	Marks
5♥	9	10
Pass	2	7
6♥	5	6
4NT	2	4

Problem 8 Teams NS Vul

♠AJT92	S	W	N	E
♥AJ8		1♣	P	1♥
♦AQ	1♠	3♥	P	4♥
♣432	End			

What is your lead?

DRAGIC: ♣2. East's problems are entries, not cashing tricks. A spade lead might resolve this for declarer.

SHIELDS ♣2. With most of the missing points likely to be on my left, leading anything else is doing work for declarer and gambling too much on any one suit.

SHORT ♠A. A Scottish "safe" club is far too dangerous as it may provide discards for declarer. There may be a ruff if partner has 1 or 2 and partner having the ♠K is not 0%.

This one was from the 2022 EBU Spring Fours Final. Brian was right. A "passive" club lead proved anything but safe. Declarer could dump spade losers on dummy's clubs and guess the hearts.

The majority kept their chances alive.

WHYTE: ♦A. Actually I favour the ♦Q but that will not win any marks.

FREIMANIS: ♠A. Keep options open for when I see dummy with a likely spade shortage.

PATERSON: ♠A. That or a club. I cannot expect to setup a club trick, but the lead may save the declarer a guess. The spade lead might set up a trick if partner has Qx.

ASH: ♠A. Nothing looks attractive but this will allow me to see dummy and judge how to continue. If it looks like partner is bereft and I am not likely to get 2 diamond tricks – perhaps because the clubs look like providing a lot of tricks - then I will have to play partner for two trumps and a doubleton spade.

SMITH: ♠A. Nothing else appeals. I'm not leading from either red holding, and a club lead seems puny. Best hope is for shortage in spades in partner's hand and the only downside would be diamond discards on declarer's ♠KQ.

VALENTINE: ♠A. I have three likely tricks in my hand with good chances of a fourth. I don't want to go passive and allow a potential discard for declarer. The ♠A may set up a trick for declarer, but it also should give a chance to look at the dummy and work out what to do at trick two.

MURDOCH: ♠A. May induce declarer to play North for long trumps.

ROSS: ♠A. Toss up between ♠A, and ♣3. ♠A won.

Lucky tosser! Leading the spade ♠A would work had South continued the suit. That would have forced dummy to ruff, eventually promoting ♥J. Graham Osborne switched at trick 2 and declarer lost only three Aces. But Graham had the last laugh as his team won the Schapiro Trophy.

The other successful lead was ♦A and another. On winning the trump Ace, put partner in with the ♠K to get a diamond ruff.

Dummy had ♠4, ♥QT73, ♦K97, ♣AKQT5 and declarer ♠Q85, ♥K964, ♦JT842, ♣9.

Problem 8	Votes	Marks
♠A	14	10
♣2/3/4	3	5
♦A	1	5

Thanks again to our panel and well done to Mike for his near-perfect score.

Panel Answers

November 2022

Problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Top Scoring Choice	Pass	Pass	2♦	Pass	Dbl	3NT	5♥	♠A	Tot	
1	Mike Ash	Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass	Dbl	3NT	5♥	♠A	79
2	Gints Freimanis	4♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	Dbl	4♥	5♥	♠A	75
3	Irving Gordon	Pass	Pass	3NT	Pass	Dbl	3NT	6♥	♠A	74
4	Brian Short	Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	3NT	Pass	♠A	73
5=	John Murdoch	Pass	Pass	2♦	Pass	Dbl	4NT	5♥	♠A	72
	Ronan Valentine	Pass	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣	4♥	Pass	♠A	72
7	Jack Paterson	Pass	Pass	2♦	4♠	2♥	3NT	6♥	♠A	71
8	Tony Wilkinson	Pass	Pass	2♦	4♠	3♠	3NT	6♥	♠A	70
9	Liz McGowan	3♥	2NT	3NT	Pass	Dbl	4♥	5♥	♠A	69
10=	Miro Dragic	3♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	3NT	5♥	♣2	68
	Tim McKay	3♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♠	5♦	5♥	♠A	68
	Harry Smith	Pass	Pass	2♦	Dbl	3♣	3NT	4NT	♠A	68
13	Anne Symons	4♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	Dbl	5♦	4NT	♠A	67
14	Patrick Shields	Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass	Dbl	5♦	6♥	♣2	66
15	Bill Whyte	Pass	Pass	2♣	Dbl	3♠	4♥	5♥	♦A	65
16	Douglas Piper	4♥	3♦	2♦	Pass	3♣	3NT	6♥	♠A	64
17=	Derrick Peden	3♥	Pass	2♦	4♠	4♠	5♦	5♥	♣2	59
	Bill Ross	3♥	Dbl	2♦	Pass	2♠	4NT	5♥	♠A	59

Competitors Top Scores

Congratulations to our top scorer, **Bob Clow**, with a magnificent **78**.

Other good scores:

Matthew Pumphrey, (Loreburn)	74
Jane Anderson (Prestwick)	72
Gosia Rozman (New Melville)	70
David Hodge (Kilwinning)	67
Paul Kerr (Troon)	67
Moyra Forrest (New Melville)	66
Anne Perkins (New Melville)	66
Ena Wood (Stirling & Union)	66
Walter Ewing (Perth)	65
Janice Thomson (Direct)	65
Alasdair Adam (Direct)	64
Bill Murray (Buchanan)	64
Alan Kirk (Bearsden Academy)	62

SBNews Bidding Problems

January 2023

You are always South, playing with an excellent first-time partner. You have agreed to play Acol with a weak No-trump.

Please send your answers to the Editor:

liz.mcgowan@blueyonder.co.uk

quoting your SBU Membership number.

Closing date: 26 January 2023

Problem 1 Teams None Vul

♠QT	S	W	N	E
♥K752	P	P	1♠	2♣
♦A8765	Dbl	P	2♠	3♣
♣T2	?			

Problem 2 Teams NS Vul

♠632	S	W	N	E
♥AQJ72	-	1NT	Dbl	2♣
♦A8	?			
♣732				

1NT = 12-14. Dbl = PEN

Problem 3 Teams NS Vul

♠-	S	W	N	E
♥KJ53	-	-	-	1♠
♦AQ942	Dbl	2♠	3♣	P
♣AJ64	?			

Problem 4 Teams All Vul

♠J7	S	W	N	E
♥A64	-	-	1♦	1♠
♦943	2♣	2♠	3♥	P
♣AK942	?			

Problem 5 Teams None Vul

♠J73	S	W	N	E
♥AKJ	1♦	P	1♥	P
♦AKJT3	?			
♣T9				

Problem 6 Teams NS Vul

♠AKQT	S	W	N	E
♥5432	-	-	1♣	P
♦QJ	1♠	P	3♣	P
♣J53	?			

Problem 7 Teams NS Vul

♠QJ3	S	W	N	E
♥K7	-	1♦	2NT	P
♦KQ6	?			
♣JT652				

2NT = 5-5+ 2-suiter with ♥ + ♣

Problem 8 Teams NS Vul

♠KJ42	S	W	N	E
♥J8		1♥	P	1♠
♦QJ64	P	2♦	P	2NT
♣K52	P	3NT	End	

What is your lead?