



The SBU Monthly News

March 2022

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(February 2021)

Contributions to the Monthly News should be sent to the editor: liz.mcgowan@blueyonder.co.uk

We have experts ready to answer any queries you may have about bidding, play, table etiquette or how to interpret the Laws of Bridge. Please send them in.

What's on Offer in April

International Events

The SBU received a surprise invitation for its **Women's Team** to participate in the **Venice Cup** (World Championships) after Russia was forced to withdraw. **27 March- 9 April** in Salsomaggiore, Italy.

You can follow their progress on the WBF website www.worldbridge.org. Click on the Banner labelled **The 45th World 2021 Bridge Team Championship** for Results and Daily Bulletins.

The team is
Fiona Greenwood & Julia Palmer Liz McGowan & Fiona McQuaker
Sam Punch & Anne Symons npc: Brian Short

Wish them luck – they will need it!

The **Lady Milne Trophy** (Women's Home International) will be played face-to-face in Newport in Wales on 22-24 April.

You can watch the action on BBO Vugraph: Friday evening from 7pm; Saturday and Sunday from 10am

Our team is:

Sheila Adamson & Abi Milne ; Liz McGowan & Fiona McQuaker
Sam Punch & Anne Symons npc: Gints Freimanis

National Events

The **National Bronze Teams** is on **Sunday 3 April, on BBO**. Open only to Bronze category players. 7 x 5-board matches in a Swiss format, with a break after 4 matches - 11am-4.30pm approx. Entry fee = 15BBO\$. You can pre-register, or just come along after 9am.

The **Easter Simultaneous Pairs** incorporating the **Bobby Allan Mixed Simultaneous Pairs** is run by your local Club on any night from 4-9 April. For details consult your Club/District website.

Scores appear on the Ecats website: <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/results.asp?eventid=005684>

The **National Pairs Final** is on **Saturday 9 April**.

(This is a **Quali-final** event for the leading players in **District Heats** on **20 March – not too late?**)

The **Ranked Masters Individuals** are on **Saturday 30 April**.

The **Harrison** (Regional Masters and above) **Shenkin** (Masters, Star Masters, Senior Masters) and **Alan Fairlie** (from Novices to District Masters) play different numbers of boards and have staggered starts: 11am; 11.15am and 11.30am

For more information and how to enter go to the SBU website: [Home - SBU](#). Click on **Events**, then select **Upcoming Events** from the Menu. Scroll down patiently till you reach the event you want.

Weekly Events

The SBU runs these events **on BBO** for your enjoyment in the dark winter days:

Tuesdays at 7pm:	Match Pointed Pairs
Saturdays at 7pm:	Swiss Pairs
Saturdays at 11.45 am:	Bronze Brunch
Sundays at 3 pm:	Teatime Individual

To enter go to www.bridgebase.com. Click on **Play or Watch Bridge**; then select **Competitive** from the menu.

Under **Tournaments** click on **All Tournaments**. Enter **sbu** in the search box (top right).

Select your tournament and when your partner is online, invite them to play, using their BBO nickname.

Payment is made in BBO\$, you can purchase those by clicking on the shopping cart next to your name.

The Casebook of Samantha Spade, Bridge Detective

The Case of the Killer Lead

I must now recount my first ever encounter with Miss Samantha Spade. It was, naturally, at the bridge table, but rather than playing with her, she was my left-hand opponent. I was fresh from my bridge classes, a little nervous but keen to put all I had learned into practice. It had all gone reasonably well until we sat down at their table. It wasn't that she wasn't friendly – she and her partner introduced themselves and said how lovely it was to see new faces at the tournament, but...well, you will see...

I was dealt this hand:

♠ KJ83
♥ QJ9
♦ 98742
♣ K

Miss Spade on my left opened the bidding with 1♦. My partner had a think, then produced the red double card – a little nervously but resolutely. My right-hand opponent passed – and I knew exactly what to do. I had 10 High Card Points, so I jumped to 3♠ (as if partner had bid 1♠ rather than doubled) and my partner raised me to game, 4♠.

When dummy went down, I was quite pleased.

♠ AQ94		♠ KJ83
♥ AK2	N	♥ QJ9
♦ Q	W E	♦ 98742
♣ J8643	S	♣ K

It looked like a textbook crossruff. I would win the lead, cash my outside winners – the hearts – first. Then I would set up the cross ruff. All going well I could count 11 tricks, eight from the cross ruff and three from the hearts. It seemed perfect...

Miss Spade led, not unexpectedly, the ♦K. Then there was a little pause while she contemplated dummy. I could see a frown line running down the middle of her forehead as she pondered. She sighed softly and then led a trump. I won, and played my winning hearts (outside winners first, I could hear my tutor's voice in my mind). Then I led a small club towards my ♣K. This lost to Miss Spade's ♣A, whereupon again she led back another trump.

There was no possible recovery. I won both trump leads, my three winning hearts and four tricks from the remains of my cross ruff – and found myself one trick short. To rub salt in the wounds other players had made the contract with an overtrick. I could only apologise to my partner.

Later, during the coffee break, I was nursing my coffee and feeling a little sorry for myself, when there was a gentle cough from beside me. Miss Spade was sitting beside me, and I could smell the aroma of her Earl Grey – something that still reminds me of our bridge playing days.

"It wasn't your fault you went down in your contract," she explained, "After I led with my ♦K I looked at dummy. Diamonds were its short suit – hence the double – and clubs were its longer suit. I reasoned that you might well be making tricks by ruffing diamonds – and that cross ruffing the clubs and diamonds was a distinct possibility. So, by leading trump I was taking an extra trick away from you each time as you only win one trick rather than two separate tricks."

"I see – so it wasn't my fault I went off when other people were making their contract!"

"Certainly not - it was exemplary defence! No one should have made eleven tricks with the right defence." There was a twinkle in her eye which faded to one more thoughtful.

"My usual Wednesday afternoon partner has "gone to a better place..."

I broke in with my commiserations, but Miss Spade corrected me with a smile:

"Bath, actually. To be nearer her daughter and grandchildren. I only hope she's correct. Anyway, I am looking for a partner for that day and wondered if you'd like to play with me next week."

I agreed with alacrity – and thereby comes my chronicles.

	♠ T72	None Vul
	♥ T874	Dealer S
	♦ 65	
	♣ T975	
♠ AQ94		♠ KJ83
♥ AK2		♥ QJ9
♦ Q		♦ 98742
♣ J8643		♣ K
	♠ 65	
	♥ 653	
	♦ AKJT3	
	♣ AQ2	

WPP or OTT?

There is probably only one thing more irritating than totally messing up the defense of a hand, and that is seeing “wpp” appear in the chat a second or two later. I like to think the best of everyone most of the time, but I can’t help wondering if those messages are a tactic designed more to irritate the opposition than congratulate declarer.

I try not to look at undeserved “wpp” messages because they have a bad effect on me. I feel the urge to type a reply like “No, it wasn’t actually well-played – if my partner had made a half decent lead and I’d remembered what trumps were, you would have been three off”.



Many is the time I’ve typed a message then deleted it without sending it to the chat because I know it would appear ungracious and unsporting. Once or twice in extreme circumstances I have allowed myself the phrase “with a little help from your friends” followed by a smiling emoji, but that’s all.

It’s a funny thing, the “wpp” message. Sometimes, of course, it is well-deserved, and on those occasions, I will certainly also type a “wpo”. But how many times do you see “wpp” when declarer has simply taken his nine tricks off the top in 3NT, or managed to make 6H when 7NT was laydown? Perhaps, given the time constraints online, these superfluous “wpp” messages are the only way people can replace the social contact of face-to-face bridge. They don’t need to be taken to excess, however. Is it really necessary to type “wpp” followed by “vwpp”, for example? Would anyone even say those one after another in real life?

As a latecomer to texting and someone who still spells out in full every message on my phone, including capital letters and correct punctuation, the abbreviations on BBO were quite puzzling to me at first – I only started playing bridge online during lockdown and had never seen it all before. I spent several months thinking “glp” meant “gulp” – as in the exclamation one would make having landed in a terrible contract. It fitted most of the time, but I did laugh to myself when I realized my mistake.

But now I’ve got into it, I can’t help thinking there’s more scope for use of abbreviations. Perhaps they could be used to comment on frustrating elements of a hand like “wntlms” (why not try leading my suit?) “ihmbp” (I had *my* bid partner) or “nhwts” (nice hesitation with that singleton). Maybe some amusement could even be had by putting up random selections of letters which have no meaning at all?

For now, however, we have enough text abbreviations. And there’s no doubt that some players use them freely just to make the game more pleasant for everyone. They say “wpp” every time their partner makes a contract and “wpo” every time we do. I have no quarrel with those people. The only slight disadvantage is you must acknowledge a “wpo” with either “tx” or “ty” – a bit embarrassing when you have misplayed your 3♥ contract, made 9 tricks for 140 and know that every other pair your way will be scoring 420.

So “wpp” has mixed reviews as far as I’m concerned, unlike “hlp”, which can only have the best of intentions. After bidding the unmakeable and then going on to make a total dog’s dinner of playing the hand, “hlp” is what everyone needs to hear from their partner. I never use that abbreviation, though. Perhaps it’s because he’s my husband but I always feel more like typing “wt**”.

Sue Gordon

Sue is a member of Perth Bridge Club. She was inspired to take up her pen again after receiving favourable responses to her first contribution – please keep these responses coming!

How Are Your BBO Manners?

Some quotations from Damien Byron's New Melville Newsletter on this subject...

Unpleasant behaviour

We are getting more and more complaints from players about being harassed by their opponents, sometimes accompanied by unpleasant comments. Please be aware that every word you type in the chat is recorded and can be retrieved by the TD during the tournament. We expect the same high standards on-line as we would in a F2F tournament. Rude and unpleasant behaviour will not be tolerated. Please report any unpleasantness to the TD during the tournament. In very serious cases, as has happened recently, we can report this to BBO as they keep all the chat stored in their logs.

Slow play

This is another area that is causing more and more frustration and aggravation. Time and time again the same players are selfishly eating up the time on the clock with their very slow play. We are now keeping a note of the serial offenders and may take action if they continue to upset opponents. I am convinced that a lot of time gets wasted by players studying the results of previous rounds when they should really be getting on with the bidding. Please keep your eye on the clock and please keep to time. The record of the chat is also time stamped so it is possible for us to check how much time each of the four players has used up in every round.

Describing your system and methods

You are expected to greet your opponents with a short description of your basic system, leads and discards. Please remember to do so every round.

But some people write far too much making it very difficult to take in; others don't say enough.

For example, is it really necessary to tell your opponents which version of Keycard Blackwood you play? Slams don't come up that often. You would not do that F2F at the club, so why on-line?

Some examples of suitably succinct greetings:

'Weak NT, 4-card majors, 3 weak twos, Leads 4th and 2nd, reverse attitude discards and signals'

'Strong NT, 5-card majors, 1C = 2+, Multi 2D, Lucas 2M; Leads 3rd/5th; reverse attitude, standard count
That's enough for anybody to digest! You can self-alert RKCB and other things when needed.

Undo Requests

The New Melville Board has decided to disable the ability of players to request Undos on BBO in their club games for a trial period of one month. This action has been taken because more and more players are requesting Undo's for a change of mind rather than a mis-click.

If you are prone to mis-clicking, there is a simple solution. You can change your BBO preferences so that you have to confirm your bids, and to confirm cards played. Damien has recorded a short video which demonstrates this. You can view it by clicking this link:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!AmoPazjEhUZJhS4n7b9EBK2rxrrW?e=UdVgsP>

The video is also available from the 'Useful Videos' section of the New Melville website.

Self-Alerting

Not enough players are doing this correctly. All bids that you make which are not natural should really be self-alerted including Stayman (note the correct spelling!). This includes bids above 3NT and ideally you should self-alert any opening NT bids or re-bids stating their range. I recorded a video a long time ago demonstrating how to correctly self-alert. A link is below, and it is available on our website.

I recommend that all our members view the video. <https://youtu.be/b6O4RhC90e0>

Damien is the General Manager of the New Melville BC, our largest club. He has been doing sterling work in organising tournaments online, and trying to encourage players back into the real world of face-to-face.



Ask Derek



Derek Sanders is a Scottish International who teaches bridge and runs the Edinburgh No Fears Bridge Club, with its own website:
www.bridgewebs.com/dereksanders.

Derek is always willing to answer your queries.

Here is a question from Joan:

♠KQ84	NS Vul
♥2	Dealer W
♦J972	
♣9652	
♠AT965	♠2
♥A9	♥JT76543
♦AT	♦843
♣QT83	♣A4
	♠J73
	♥KQ8
	♦KQ65
	♣KJ7

Bidding			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	-	2♥	2NT
3♥	Dbl	Pass	?

I held the South hand and when East opened a weak two in hearts and chose to overcall 2NT.

(I appreciate the hand is not that great but wanted to get across the values, 15-18 pts with a heart stop.)

West raised to 3♥ and my partner Eilidh then doubled.

Feeling that I had expressed the hand I passed with the expectation of defeating the contract.

As you can see this was a disaster as 3♥ made comfortably.

Derek's Answer

Thank you, Joan for sending this interesting hand.

The general rule of thumb is that if the opponents have bid and raised a suit, double is for takeout.

Although Eilidh had perfect shape for her action the values were minimal (I would have taken the same action) and combined with your marginal hand 3♥ doubled was never going to have a happy ending.

Looking at your cards on the screen, with the double heart stop I would click the 3NT button rather than pass. Sadly, missing all four aces 3NT can be defeated and held to seven or eight tricks but even so a great save against 3♥ at match points! Not the minus 730 you ran into 😞. Never mind, a good hand to learn from.

Thank you for your hard work and being a great President of the SBU 👍

(And so say all of us!)

Clap Our Clubs

Milnathort

Milnathort has its own website: <https://www.bridgewebs.com/milnathort>

It is an active club that provides a monthly report in the local Community Newsletter.

Their officials have been making huge efforts to Keep Bridge Alive locally during the pandemic.

Jim Marshall, their scorer, set up an on-line league which has been very popular.

As soon as three and four households were allowed to meet up the secretary organised "Host a Table at Home". Every three, then, every two weeks she matched up pairs (Hosts & Guests) to play against each other in the Host's house, day, and time to suit them. This also proved very popular.

It was the members' wishes that they had a phased in return to normal play so with that in mind they held a Bridge evening in November, one in December and one in January. A poll at the January meeting made it clear that the membership wished to return to weekly Bridge. With all documentation and protocols in place they started with six and a half tables on 7th February.

The club meets on Mondays at Milnathort Bowling Club.

They play with computer dealt hands, normally scoring by match points.

Table money is £2.50 (£3.50 for visitors); hopefully, they will soon be able to include the traditional tea and biscuits at half time.

Accommodation in the Bowling Club is limited so, while guests are always welcome, you should inform the Secretary in advance if you would like to play – the game starts at 6.45pm.

For more information contact the Secretary, Gloria Wilson

gairneyview@gmail.com



Your Questions Answered

David Stevenson is a qualified European Bridge League Director with an encyclopedic knowledge of all aspects of the Laws.

He used to write a column in the magazine edited by Mr Bridge and has kindly agreed to answer any queries about laws, rules, and ethics that you may have.



Alisdair asks:

Over 1♣/1♦ is it legitimate to bid 1♦/1♥ with a flat 10-14 and only 1 major 4-card suit, intending to pass partner's response?

If so, given that overcalls are normally a 5-card suit, is the overcall alterable as possibly a 4-card suit?

David replies:

Dear Alisdair

It is perfectly legal to overcall by agreement on a four-card major.

What is not so clear is whether you should alert it!

The Scottish regulations say (paraphrased) that you should not alert any natural overcall however strong, but that you should alert bids with special meanings.

This seems to suggest that you should both alert them and not alert them!

I believe the solution depends on how you play them.

If your overcalls are normally five cards but might occasionally be four cards, generally when you have a good suit, for example AKJT, then I see no reason to alert.

But if your style is to overcall often on a four-card suit whether a good suit or not then I think you should alert it because it really is an unusual agreement which opponents will not expect.

Quick Quiz

Mike Gallacher



1) Counting high card points

You are sitting North. From the bidding, what is South's point range in each of the following?

	NORTH	SOUTH		NORTH	SOUTH		NORTH	SOUTH
a)	1♣	1♥	b)	1♣	1♠	c)	1♣	1♥
	2NT	3♦		2♥	2♠		1♠	2♥
	3NT	Pass		3NT	Pass		2NT	Pass

2) Counting distribution.

Playing against a 5-card major system, in

- what is responder's likely distribution?
- what is opener's likely distribution? (2 probable answers)
- what is responder's likely club holding?

	OPENER	RESPONDER		OPENER	RESPONDER		OPENER	RESPONDER
a)	1♠	2♥	b)	1♥	1♠	c)	1♣	2♣
	2NT	3NT		3♦	3♥		2NT	3♣
	Pass			3NT	Pass		Pass	

3) Counting Tricks

♠Q94
♥A96
♦3
♣KQJ874

♠752
♥K8
♦Q965
♣A952

Bidding

North	South
	1♥
2♣	2NT
3♥	4♥
End	

You are East, declarer (South) is in 4♥.

West leads the ♣3.

How many tricks can you see for the defence?

How will you play to give yourself the best chance of defeating the contract?

Answers: at the end of the Newsletter

Mike's home club is Kirkcaldy, but he is also a member of the New Melville club in Edinburgh. Pre-Covid, he taught beginners on Wednesday evenings and improvers on Tuesday afternoons.

It's a Funny Old Game

Linton Horsfall of the Carlton BC shared an unusual experience.

He picked up the following quite promising hand:

♠AQ432
♥AK652
♦932
♣void

His RHO opened 1NT, so he overcalled 2♣, the Landy Convention, showing both Majors.

LHO passed – and so did his partner!

Had his wife forgotten the system? How bad would this contract be?

LHO led a spade, and dummy appeared

♠75
♥74
♦65
♣JT98654

Partner had a point. (and LHO must have been waiting for further developments.)

He was able to cash four major suit winners. Then by leading trumps every time he could reach dummy he ultimately made eight tricks for the contract.

This was in the pre-pandemic days when people could see a traveller, and questions were asked. Frequently.

Well, how often have you encountered the situation when Declarer is void in trumps?

Ros Thomsen was inspired to write a poem:

PARTNERS!

Have you got a heart?
Yes, I've got a heart
Remember all those diamonds
I gave you at the start?

Why did you not use it
When you had it in your hand?
I was frightened to expose it
Until the final round.

This time you're dummy
You're not allowed to speak.
I will give you my heart
But the diamonds I will keep.

I'm holding a big club
To use it later on...
You better face it now
Or you'll be at least one down.

Let's make that two
Keep watching this space.
Remember: make a plan
Or have at least one Ace.

How was that end play?
Done with great finesse?
What a wonderful partner
Glory in success!

Results Page

Some results from events run in February

Mixed Pairs and Teams

The **National Mixed Pairs (Ruby Martyn Trophy)** on 12 February on RealBridge had 44 pairs.

1	Alison Carmichael & Bill Whyte	118 VP
2	Sandy Duncan & Ying Piper	114 VP
3	Susan Aitchison & Jim Forsyth	110 VP
4=	Lucia Barrett & Derrick Peden	101 VP
	Dilys Gellatly & Nicol Taylor	101 VP
6	George Plant & Gosia Rozman	99 VP
7	Fiona Greenwood & Troy Van de l'Isle	95VP
8	Julia Campbell & David Hartley	94 VP

The **National Mixed Teams (Helen Walton Trophy)** on Sunday 13 February on BBO had 26 teams.

1	Cathy Ferguson & Bob McKinnon; Joyce Benson & Martin Diamond	93 VP
2	Fiona Greenwood & Derek Sanders; Sheila Adamson & Alan Goodman	92 VP
3	Jim Hay & Abi Milne; Lucia Barrett & Derrick Peden	78 VP
4=	George Plant & Gosia Rozman ; Charles & Vi Outred	76 VP
	Peter Hodgson & Ileen MacGregor; Gwynn Davis & Susan Ingham	76 VP
6	David Hamilton & Eilidh Rennie; John P Hamilton & Fiona Lawson	72 VP
7=	Roger & Sue Gordon; David Campbell & Trish Martin	70 VP
	Kevin Strathern & Sandra Withers; David & Sandra Wiseman	70 VP

Men's and Women's Pairs and Teams

The **National Men's Pairs (Buchanan Cup)** on 26 February on RealBridge had 24 Pairs

1	Ian Hamilton & Angus MacDonald	112 VP
2	Mark Menzies & Tam Penman	100 VP
3	David Pollard & Jack Suchodolski	99 VP
4	James Mason and Eddie McGeough	97 VP

The **National Women's Pairs (Cyril Breene Trophy)** had 34 Pairs

1	Susan Aitchison & Joan Lees	108 VP
2	Karen Bartlett & Gosia Rozman	105 VP
3	Moyra Forrest & Maureen McMillan	104 VP
4	Liz McGowan & Ying Piper	103 VP

The **National Men's Teams (Benny Dexter Trophy)** on 27 February on BBO had 14 teams

1	Alex Adamson & Glen Falconer; Gints Freimanis & Derek Sanders	88 VP
2	John P Hamilton & Angus MacDonald; John Dick & Kevin Strathern	74 VP
3	Roy Bennett & Harry Smith; Liam O'Brien & Ronan Valentine	73 VP
4=	Grant Harrower & Andy Philip; Andrew Symons & Iain Taylor	72 VP
	Jim Hay & Derrick Peden; Sandy Duncan & Bob McPaul	72 VP

The **National Women's Teams (Bulletin Cup)** had 22 teams.

The Runners-up win the **Beatrice Craig Trophy**

1	Sam Punch & Anne Symons; Paula Leslie & Nicola Smith	95 VP
2	Joan Forsyth & Eilidh Rennie; Marina Evans & Sarah Gunn	84 VP
3	Dilys Gellatly & Anne Perkins; Bron McWhinney & Irene Sime	79 VP
4	Sheila Adamson & Abi Milne; Liz McGowan & Fiona McQuaker	78 VP
5	Diana Fairlie & Maria Jackson; Jean Bidwell & Anne Ritchie	75 VP
6	Laura Middleton & Rona Moss; Lucia Barrett & Veronica Guy	67 VP

Master Point Promotions

February 2022

Scottish Master

Shona Anderson E
Gosia Rozman E

Regional Master

Margaret Anne Byron E
Robert Dickson W
Graham Johnson N
Anne Murdoch A
Jack Suchodolski W

1 Star Master

Norma Findlay C
Joyce McNaught W

Master

Jim Fairfield W
Jonathan Gibson E
Joanna Harvie W
Fiona Martin E
David Martyn W
Eric Price E
Joyce Shannon W
Richard Sparrow W
Diane Thallon A

District Master

Richard Coleman N
Alan Dawes N
Carol Goodwin W
Susan Lafferty W
Lifang Lamb C
Peter MacLaren E
Trish MacLaurin W
Catriona Marshall C
John Russell W
Mike Sweet N
Niall Tennant E

Local Master

Alec Brown E
Patricia Burnett W
Liz Crichton W
Andy Dytch H
Liz Forbes W
Kate Fulton E
Jennie Greenwood A
Jane Hyde N
Charles Jackson C
Michael Loochin W
Marie McQuillan E
Mairi Raeburn A
John Ramsay E
Eileen Wilkie E

Club Master

Blanche Gordon W
Derek Gordon W
Margaret Houston W
Gege Kroner A
Sue Powrie A
Elizabeth Watt E

Answers to Quick Quiz

- 1 a) 18-19 b) with an unbalanced hand play declarer for 19 points c) 16-18
- 2 a) responder has fewer than 3 spades, 5 hearts and no 4-card suit to bid at the 3 level, play her for 2=5=3=3
b) With 5-4 in the reds opener's likely distribution is 1-5-4-3 or 2-5-4-2
c) 15-17 with 6/7 card suit
- 3) The ♠3 looks like a singleton so you can see the club ♣A + a club ruff+ ♥K The ruff can wait. You need to find West with another trick. If she has an Ace, it does not matter but best to play her for the ♠K now.