

# Scottish Bridge News

The Official Magazine of the Scottish Bridge Union

Victor Silverstone 1941 - 2021



# Scottish Bridge ENews

## Editorial

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The online Ezine will be shorter than the previous printed version.

We shall cover international events such as the Camrose and European Championships; and important national events. (All contributions welcome!)

Other regular features will continue. But Results and Master Point Promotions are moved to the Monthly News.

The Bronze Bidding Challenge will be a separate, monthly, feature. Problems will be issued on the first day of the month; the panel choices and the best scores will appear on the last day of each month. The regular Bidding Challenge will continue in the Ezine. Prizes for the best overall performances in both will be presented at the end of the year.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Victor Silverstone, one of our greatest and best-loved players. His name may not be familiar to many of the current generation of players – he emigrated to London in 1975, and rarely returned to Scotland – but he never lost his accent and remained a true Scot.

We thank Ronan Valentine for his highly entertaining account of his early days in Junior Bridge. We hope this may be the first in a series – perhaps some more of our ex-Juniors will chip in.

In this issue we cover the delayed 2019 Scottish Cup Final, which was finally played face-to-face on 31 October 2021! Also the 2021 Scottish Cup Final, played online in November 2021.

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## SBU Hall of Fame

### Victor Silverstone 1941 – 2021



Victor is the latest entry into the record of the greatest Scottish players. He died on 19 November 2021, mourned by his inseparable wife Linda, his family and all who knew him.

Victor was born in Glasgow at the height of the blitz. He attended Glasgow High School, then Glasgow University, where he qualified as an accountant. His family enjoyed various card games, but it was at university that he really discovered bridge. He started a Bridge Club in the Union, where he played with Bill Whyte (they were notionally attending the same lectures). When Bill graduated and left Glasgow Victor formed a partnership with Willie Coyle, one destined for unique success. They played their first Camrose match in 1965 and were a permanent fixture in the Scottish team for the next ten years. After the 1966 match against England Terence Reese proffered rare praise: *“Silverstone is only 25, but he and Coyle played with courage and confidence.”*

These were Scotland’s glory years in the Camrose: they won the Trophy five

times and tied twice. Their talent was recognised by the British selectors when they were chosen to represent Great Britain in the 1967 Junior European Championships. (In those days the qualifying age was 27.)

They played regularly in Trials for the British team and were selected to play in two European Championships, in 1969 in Oslo, and 1973 in Ostend. They won a bronze medal for Britain in the Common Market Championships in The Hague in 1973.

Harold Franklin’s report on the 1969 championships concluded with these words:

*“Coyle and Silverstone... looked much the best pair in the British team...”*

Victor and Willie were part of the first Scottish team to win the Gold Cup in 1969. They won again for Scotland in 1973. John Matheson recalls the occasion:

*“On a Friday, Saturday and Sunday we played the quarter-final, semi-final and final, each of 64 boards. Victor and Willie were the spearhead and played throughout the final. My most vivid memory was of the calming influence Victor had on the team, and his wife Linda even more so. He had wonderful bidding judgement and a great knowledge of bidding theory. He was very flexible and could play any system.”*

Silverstone and Coyle were invited to the prestigious ‘Sunday Times’ Invitational Pairs for six years in succession. In 1973 Victor’s defence on this deal was too strong for the legendary Belladonna.

	♠AT63	EW Vul
	♥Q42	Dealer N
	♦-	
	♣KQ9873	
♠KQ874		♠J5
♥A3		♥T86
♦KJ2		♦AT954
♣AJ2		♣654
		♠92
	♥KJ975	
	♦Q8763	
	♣T	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Silverstone</i>	<i>Mondolfo</i>	<i>Coyle</i>	<i>Belladonna</i>
-	1♠	Pass	1NT
Dbf	2♣	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	Pass	3♥
End			

The Italians played a Strong Club System featuring canapé opening bids. Declarer ruffed the diamond lead in dummy and led the ♠K to Victor's Ace. How would you continue? Ace and another trump prevents a second diamond ruff – but declarer can establish clubs with the ♠A as an entry. You can remove the entry by switching to the ♠K – but now there are 9 tricks on a crossruff. Victor found the killing defence: he switched to the ♥3! Belladonna ruffed a diamond, cashed the ♣Q discarding a spade and ruffed a club, then exited with a diamond to Victor's King. He won the ♠K return with the Ace and led a club, but Willie ruffed and there were only 8 tricks.

In 1975 Victor left Glasgow and settled with his family in North London. Tom Townsend's tribute in *'The Telegraph'* ended with these words: "*Silverstone was renowned most of all for his kindness, patience and good humour –*

*at least when anyone could fathom his strong accent. Serving as first choice bean-counter as well as bridge expert to the North London set, he was a true mensch."*

The Coyle / Silverstone partnership came to an end, but Victor quickly became recognised by the London elite. He formed a partnership with Chris Dixon, winning a Gold medal for the British Open team at the Common Market Championships in Birmingham in 1981. He won a third Gold Cup in 1985. He played in the prestigious Lederer Memorial Trophy a record 31 times, winning on seven occasions.

Victor was still eligible to represent Scotland in the Camrose Trophy. In 1985 he returned to play with Barnet Shenkin for four seasons, culminating in another Camrose victory in 1988-89. (Barnet recalls that the match against England in Nottingham was videoed for use as a teaching aid for the English Junior teams. The tapes were somehow mislaid after Scotland won.)

A Seniors event was introduced to the European Championships in 1999, with a lower qualifying age than now, and Victor played in one of three British teams.

When England and Scotland were recognised as separate NBOs in 2000 Victor elected to use his residence qualification to represent England. He played for England in the European Senior Championships in 2002 and 2008, and the World Bridge Games in 2008.

He was persuaded to become Scottish again in time for the European

Championships in Dublin in 2012. With Derek Diamond, Willie Coyle, John Matheson, John Murdoch and Iain Sime he won a Bronze medal. The team thus qualified for the World Championships in Bali, Scotland's best ever performance at this level.

Unfortunately John Matheson was not well enough to travel to Bali. He was replaced by Gerald Haase. Early on it became clear that the Coyle / Haase partnership was not a harmonious one. So Derek Diamond played with Willie and Victor phlegmatically took responsibility for Gerald.

The Bali trip is covered in "*Scotland's Senior Moment*" by Alex Adamson and Harry Smith. Scotland finished a very creditable fifth, losing in the quarter-finals to the USA. Victor played again for our Seniors in Budapest in 2016 and Ostend in 2018.

Earlier in 2018 Victor formed a team to travel to Australia to represent Scotland in the Commonwealth Bridge Games. He played with Derek Diamond, and Barnet Shenkin partnered Gerald Haase. Shortly before departure he broke his arm in a serious fall. He played throughout with his arm in a sling, clutching his cards in his bad hand. His game still reached his usual standard of excellence, and the team won a bronze medal.

During the pandemic Victor rose to the challenge of Bridge online – not his natural habitat, but he coped well. He represented Scotland in the 2021 Teltcher Seniors Camrose with Barnet Shenkin.

His team (Derek Diamond, Steve Levinson, Barnet Shenkin) played in Division 1 of the Scottish Online League, winning the third iteration. In the most recent (fifth) SOL he had put the team in a good position before illness struck and he was unable to play. His big shoes were filled by Brian Spears. The team secured victory just a few days after his passing. They immediately donated their prize money towards the purchase of a Victor Silverstone Trophy for the winners of the Online League First Division in perpetuity. In recognition of all his achievements over so many years his name will be the first to be engraved.

Victor's play was quietly expert and he did not blow his own trumpet. But sometimes his play did receive deserved attention, and we can present some of his greatest efforts, as recorded in *Bridge Magazine*.

Our first example comes from the 1969 British Trials for the European Championships, written up by Harold Franklin.

	♠A5	EW Vul
	♥AJ942	Dealer N
	♦Q953	
	♣62	
♠32		♠JT97
♥K873		♥Q6
♦AJ4		♦T872
♣AT98		♣754
	♠KQ864	
	♥T5	
	♦K6	
	♣KQJ3	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Coyle</i>		<i>Silverstone</i>
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT

West led the ♣T, taken with the King. Victor ran the ♥T to East's Queen. East returned a club to the Queen and Ace. and a third club was taken with the Jack, dummy discarding a diamond.

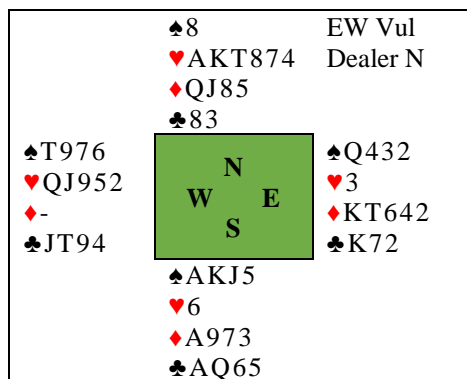
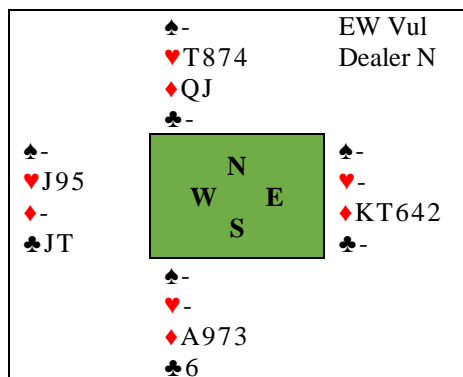
There were now six tricks on top and another heart finesse would produce a seventh. If either major broke 3-3 he was home, but Victor did not rely on that. He led a diamond to dummy's ♦Q. Then he cashed three top spades, on which West discarded the ♦J.

Victor read the hand well. He finessed the ♥9 and threw West in with the ♦A. He could cash a club, but then, with nothing left but hearts, he had to present declarer with a second finesse.

Robert Sheehan reported this deal from the 1973 European Championships.

West led a heart to the Ace. Victor played the ♥K and East discarded a club. Victor inferred from his failure to ruff that he must have good trump.

He discarded a club, finessed the ♣Q, cashed the ♠AK and ruffed a spade, then returned to the ♣A to ruff his last spade reaching this position:



When dummy led a heart East was helpless. Whatever he played South could overruff and ruff the last club with a high diamond.

Michael Rosenberg came up with the idea of publishing a Nobituary on *Bridge Winners* to express admiration for a bridge star while they still lived to enjoy it.

His first choice was Victor – “Stoney”.

*“I think because Stoney was quieter, less critical and more modest, that some regarded him as ‘lesser’ than the other ‘elite’ players. But I think this was totally wrong – I believe he was the strongest of all of them.”*

One comment from Normand Houle: *“We need a no-bid-tuary for the few experts who know how to pass, Vic Silverstone being a prime example.”*

WEST	NORTH <i>Coye</i>	EAST	SOUTH <i>Silverstone</i>
Pass	2♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	6♦	End	5♣

2♦ was a Multi, 2♠ to play opposite a weak 2♠, 3♦ revealed a strong 4=1=4=4. 4NT was Roman Blackwood and 5♣ showed 0/3 Aces.

This deal comes from a 1968 Master Bridge Weekend:

	♠J ♥AQ762 ♦AJ92 ♣AKT	All Vul Dealer E
♠AKT43 ♥KJT43 ♦T7 ♣9	N W E S	♠75 ♥985 ♦KQ4 ♣Q8542
	♠Q9862 ♥- ♦8653 ♣J763	

Silverstone opened 1♠ in third seat. North doubled, East passed and South bid a strangled 2♣. Victor passed and North tried 2♥. This was not a great success: declarer was two down, -200.

At the other table Terence Reese was East. After the same start to the auction he could not resist bidding 2♥ at his second turn. Victor Goldberg doubled and defended with his usual skill for one down and a further 200.

Barnet Shenkin wrote the Obituary for the SBU website.

*While his bridge success was enormous it will not be for that that his friends will most remember Victor. He was married for 56 years to Linda and they were tied as one. She was always by his side at every tournament. Their love for each other was clear to all. He joked that his greatest bridge achievement was a 79% game at the Acol club with Linda.*

*He had a quick sense of humour for all that went wrong in life that was a settling influence. I have known him since 1965 and never heard him say any harsh words even to an errant bridge partner – unique!*

*He will be remembered not just with love but with pride by those who had the chance to know him.*



Victor with his devoted wife Linda and Willie Coyle, a partnership no longer in their salad days....



Trophies? “Iwon a few, but then again, too few to mention....”

# The 2019-2020 Scottish Cup Final

A predictably tight match featuring many of Scotland's best players. The holders Brian **SHORT** / Alan Goodman; Les Steel / Dave Walker faced Mike **ASH**, / Miro Dragic; Malcolm Cuthbertson / Douglas Piper).

After the **first 16-board segment ASH** led 34-26. There were just 2 double-figure swings. **ASH** won 10imps on this board via a more effective opening lead and some expert play.

Board 3	♠65 ♥AKQ43 ♦T52 ♣K84	EW Vul Dealer S
♠J943 ♥T98 ♦Q8 ♣QT97	N W E S	♠KT72 ♥2 ♦97643 ♣AJ5
	♠AQ8 ♥J765 ♦AKJ ♣632	

Both Souths opened 1NT (15-17) and landed in 4♥ after a transfer sequence.

Miro led the ♣9 (0 or 2 higher) and continued clubs when it scored. After losing the first three tricks Alan naturally finessed in diamonds for -1.

Dave's trump lead gave Douglas an opportunity. He took the spade finesse, eliminated spades with a ruff in dummy and drew trump. Then he played ♦AK, dropping the doubleton Queen. Why? If the finesse works he does not need to take it: when East wins the third round with the ♦Q he is endplayed to lead a club or concede a ruff and discard.

The swing on board 12 came in the auction, though the opening lead also played a part:

Board 12	♠98642 ♥AQ54 ♦64 ♣K3	NS Vul Dealer W
♠KJT7 ♥- ♦A3 ♣AJT8754	N W E S	♠AQ5 ♥J862 ♦JT852 ♣Q
	♠3 ♥KT973 ♦KQ97 ♣962	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Dragic</i>		<i>Ash</i>	
1♣	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	End

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Walker</i>		<i>Steel</i>	
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
5♣	End		

Ash / Dragic play a short club with transfer responses. The 1♠ rebid showed an unbalanced hand with no heart fit and 2♣ was a second transfer.

The Steel / Walker 1♣ promised 3 cards and the other bids were natural. When Les did not rebid 3NT Dave decided 5♣ was a safer game

Alan led the ♦Q against 3NT. If the NS club holdings are reversed 3NT rolls home with overtricks. But the club finesse lost and Brian switched to hearts for three down.

5♣ is in danger only if North leads a spade. When he wins the ♣K he can



give partner a ruff, then wait for his inevitable diamond trick. But Malcolm had no reason to lead a spade. He would surely switch if the ♥A scored, but Dave ruffed and led a club towards the Queen and the contract could no longer be beaten. 11 imps to **SHORT**.

The second segment also featured two double figure swings, both to **SHORT**.

Board 19	♠97 ♥A3 ♦AKQ972 ♣KJT	EW Vul Dealer S
♠T4 ♥JT9865 ♦T8 ♣976	N W E S	♠AJ862 ♥K72 ♦65 ♣854
	♠KQ53 ♥Q4 ♦J43 ♣AQ32	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	<i>Cuthbertson</i>	-	<i>Piper</i>
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
-	<i>Steel</i>	-	<i>Walker</i>
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♦	End	

The 3♦ rebid at both tables was strong. Dave made a good bid, showing values in spades and expressing doubt about his heart stopper for no-trump. Douglas, who rarely resists an opportunity to declare 3NT, did not envision such a strong dummy.

6♦ is an excellent contract. Declarer can draw trump and pitch his losing heart on a club before tackling spades for the 12<sup>th</sup> trick. Mike speeded up play leading the ♠A. 10 imps to **SHORT**.

The second slam swing was created by the opening lead:

Board 31	♠Q65 ♥K7 ♦QT32 ♣Q975	NS Vul Dealer S
♠KJT ♥AQJ93 ♦J ♣AK43	N W E S	♠A7 ♥86 ♦A754 ♣JT862
	♠98432 ♥T542 ♦K985 ♣-	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Goodman</i>		<i>Short</i>	
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	6♣	End

2♣ was either natural or any 15+ hand. 2♦ showed at least 9 HCP and was game-forcing. 3♣ was natural, and Brian fancied his chances.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Dragic</i>		<i>Ash</i>	
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♥	Pass	6♣	End

After a similar auction North hoped for two tricks against the slam, the ♥K and a club. Partner could not have much. Which pointed suit would make the safest lead? Les chose a diamond, leaving declarer with little choice but to take the heart finesse and go down.

Malcolm chose a disastrous spade. When the 4-0 club break came to light Alan threw dummy's second heart on a spade. ♥A and a ruff felled the ♥K and allowed declarer to lead winning hearts through North, picking off his trump. 14 imps to **SHORT**.

**ASH** picked up a couple of small swings on the other deals, so **SHORT** won the segment 27-19 and the match was tied at half-time.

**The third segment** was unusually low scoring: **SHORT** won by 8 imps to 4!

**The fourth segment** was exciting.

Board 51	♠T85 ♥QJ92 ♦7 ♣T9875	EW Vul Dealer S
♠A94 ♥875 ♦AK98 ♣AK6	N W E S	♠K32 ♥AT3 ♦T543 ♣J32
	♠QJ76 ♥K64 ♦QJ62 ♣Q5	

Miro opened the South hand, Dave overcalled 1NT and so became declarer in 3NT.

Mike led the ♥Q and continued hearts. Dave won the third round and led the ♦T. Was he about to run it? Miro covered with the ♦Q. Over to the ♠K for another diamond, finessing the nine.

Declarer had 8 top winners now and could afford to duck a spade. North won and cashed the thirteenth heart, putting pressure on South. He threw a club, and in the ending Dave had a good enough count to cash three clubs.

Alan did not open as South. West opened 1♦ and East responded 1NT, thus becoming declarer.

The play tempoed differently on a spade lead. Douglas reached an ending where he could endplay North in hearts to force a club lead – South could not afford to overtake the heart because that would establish declarer's Ten. This time the doubleton Queen was Douglas' undoing. 12 imps to **SHORT**.

On Board 52 Goodman / Short found a cheap sacrifice against a vulnerable game to gain 9 more. They led by 25 imps. Was it all over? Two flat boards, and then:

Board 55	♠J87 ♥AJ3 ♦963 ♣QT98	All Vul Dealer S
♠QT ♥KT85 ♦AQ754 ♣53	N W E S	♠A432 ♥976 ♦T82 ♣AKJ
	♠K965 ♥Q42 ♦KJ ♣7642	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Walker</i>	<i>Ash</i>	<i>Steel</i>	<i>Dragic</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Redbl	1♥	Pass	Pass
2♦	End		

Reaching 2♦ after 14 calls must be some sort of record.

Malcolm opened the West hand, so his partnership was bound for game. The cards lay well and the 23HCP vulnerable 3NT rolled home. 11 imps to **ASH**, cutting the deficit to 14.

On Board 56 a weak 2♠ allowed Steel / Walker to find their diamond fit and a good save against 4♥ when Miro guessed to double rather than bid one more. A 3♠ opener silenced Douglas and Brian made 4♥ for an 8-imp gain.

**SHORT** led by 22 with 8 boards to go.

Board 59	♠AQ942 ♥T643 ♦J ♣A64	None Vul Dealer S
♠K653 ♥Q987 ♦T9742 ♣-	N W E S	♠8 ♥A ♦AKQ865 ♣KJ973
	♠JT7 ♥KJ52 ♦3 ♣QT852	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Cuthbertson</i>		<i>Piper</i>	
Pass	1♠	2NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♦	End

Malcolm thought the 5<sup>th</sup> diamond made his hand worth a jump to game opposite the Unusual No-trump. Dave was less optimistic, bidding just 4♦ and so stopping in game

Slam is cold when the ♣A ruffs down in 3 rounds: and easy when North tries to cash the ♣A. 11 imps to **ASH**.

On Board 61 (*See top of next column*) **ASH** gained another 11 imps when a light opener from Mike kept opponents out of game, while Douglas had another go at 3NT.

Malcolm's 2♦ was an inverted raise, forcing for one round. 2♥ was natural, perhaps an attempt to attract a spade lead.

Board 61	♠8753 ♥AK76 ♦K ♣J764	All Vul Dealer N
♠Q4 ♥4 ♦A9752 ♣AQ852	N W E S	♠AK92 ♥Q952 ♦QJ43 ♣T
	♠JT6 ♥JT83 ♦T86 ♣K93	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Cuthbertson</i>		<i>Piper</i>	
	Pass	1♦	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	3NT	End

Alan led the ♠J. There is a case for playing ♦A to try to keep North off lead, but the commentator's view is biased by seeing all four hands. Douglas finessed and Brian switched to a low heart for the 9 and Ten. A heart was returned to the Ace, but on the next low heart Douglas had no choice but to try the Queen. Contract made.

On the penultimate board Les Steel gained 3 imps in overtricks.

This was the last board:

Board 64	♠Q97642 ♥- ♦K632 ♣K84	EW Vul Dealer W
♠T8 ♥T32 ♦A874 ♣T932	N W E S	♠- ♥AKJ9765 ♦QJ95 ♣AJ
	♠AKJ53 ♥Q84 ♦T ♣Q765	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Cuthbertson</i>	<i>Short</i>	<i>Piper</i>	<i>Goodman</i>
Pass	2♠	4♥	4♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	End

Douglas' double showed extras, he expected 4♥ to make. How much defence did he have? Malcolm eventually made an agonised Pass.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Walker</i>	<i>Ash</i>	<i>Steel</i>	<i>Dragic</i>
Pass	2♦	4♥	4♠
5♥	Pass	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	6♥	End

2♦ was a Multi, a weak two in either Major, but the auction was unaffected. Dave avoided later problems by raising immediately. Les's 6♥ was a 2-way shot: either contract might make.

In 5♠ declarer has little choice but to play for East to hold the doubleton ♣A, making 11 tricks.

But Les's vulnerable sacrifice would cost 500 if South had the courage to double.

Events at his table turned out to be irrelevant when Brian notched up his overtrick to score 650 and 10 decisive imps.

If Malcolm had bid 5♥ and that had ended the auction the match would be tied again.

Everybody was quite relieved that the match had not gone into extra time – there had been enough excitement for one day.

*You can follow the play on all the boards by logging in to BBO and clicking on Vugraph, then Vugraph Archives  
Then do a search for 2019 Scottish Cup Final.*

## The 2019-20 Scottish Cup Plate Final

This was played on BBO on bonfire night, but without fireworks. In contrast to the main final this was never close. Some days bridge seems to be an easy game, as it was for winners **DURNING** (Bill Durning, Ian McClure, Duncan Rodger, Ian Brookes).

On other days it seems impossible to make a winning decision, as it was for runners-up **STRATHERN** (Kevin Strathern, David Ritchie, Stuart Thomson, Nicol Taylor).

They conceded after 36 boards by which time they were 100 imps down.

This was Kevin's only success.

Board 20	♠Q62 ♥6 ♦42 ♣A976542	None Vul Dealer S
♠KJ85 ♥T3 ♦QJ875 ♣J3	N W     E S	♠43 ♥QJ8754 ♦T963 ♣8
	♠AT97 ♥AK92 ♦AK ♣KQT	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Strathern</i>		<i>Ritchie</i>
-	-	-	2♦
Pass	2♥	Dbl	2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♣	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♣	End	

South showed a big balanced hand with 23-24 HCP. Kevin Strathern tried Puppet Stayman, then launched himself into slam. The other North was less ambitious, settling for 3NT.

# The 2021 Scottish Cup

## Final

The Scottish Cup was not played in 2020 because of the pandemic. It re-emerged online in 2021. Online made it easier to get the matches played in time, and allowed **John Matheson**, cruelly housebound with Parkinson's disease, to participate. He partnered **Patrick SHIELDS**, and with two English interlopers, **Dan McIntosh** and **Rob Myers**, sailed into the Final where they faced **Harry SMITH**, **Roy Bennett**, **Alex Adamson** and **Glen Falconer**.

After the first 16-board segment **SHIELDS** led by 24.

Board 9	♠J3 ♥K7 ♦J43 ♣AKJ875	EW Vul Dealer N
♠KQT865 ♥QJ9 ♦72 ♣Q3	N W E S	♠42 ♥A86432 ♦K986 ♣6
	♠A97 ♥T5 ♦AQT5 ♣T942	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Adamson</i>	<i>Shields</i>	<i>Falconer</i>	<i>Matheson</i>
-	1♣	2♥	Dbl
3♥	3NT	End	

Glen's weak jump might not meet with universal approval. When he led a heart declarer had 9 tricks; he made 11 when East obligingly covered the ♦J.

It takes a spade lead to beat 3NT, but if West bids 2♠. North will not chance his arm. 5♣ is a trick short on a spade lead provided East covers the ♦J.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Smith</i>
-	1♣	1♥	2♥
2♠	3♣	Pass	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	End

Rob settled for a simple overcall. Harry showed a good club raise, and Dan did introduce his spades. Harry led the ♣T against 4♥ and Roy tried to cash a second club. Declarer crossed to a spade to finesse in hearts; the 2-2 break gave him an entry to cash the spades.

Should Roy find the diamond switch at trick 2? A useful agreement is that when you have raised partner you should lead lowest from an odd number of cards and the highest one you can afford from 4 cards. If North knows partner has 4 clubs he should find the switch.

The double unmakeable game swing cost 14 imps – cheaper than letting through games on two separate boards.

There was another defensive mishap on Board 13.

Board 13	♠KJ53 ♥32 ♦J63 ♣J975	All Vul Dealer N
♠Q8642 ♥KT8 ♦K ♣KQ62	N W E S	♠T7 ♥A974 ♦AQT72 ♣83
	♠A9 ♥QJ65 ♦9854 ♣AT4	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Smith</i>
-	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	End		

The light opener propelled EW into game. Roy led his 4<sup>th</sup> highest club to the Ace and Harry returned the Ten, taken by the King, Declarer had 9 tricks now, thanks to the fortunate diamond position, but he did not know that. He cashed the ♦K and ducked a heart to South. The defence must cash 3 spades to beat the contract, but Harry did not know that: he returned a club and declarer was home.

Roy missed an opportunity to direct the winning defence: he can afford to drop the ♣J under the King. That tells partner that declarer has the Queen. Beating 3NT turns a 10 imp loss into a 6 imp gain when your other pair stop sensibly in 1NT.

The second segment was one-sided.

Board 23	♠953 ♥KQJT32 ♦QJ ♣K7	All Vul Dealer S
♠AJ72 ♥A98 ♦64 ♣5432	N W E S	♠KT4 ♥7654 ♦753 ♣A86
	♠Q86 ♥- ♦AKT982 ♣QJT9	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Falconer</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Adamson</i>
-	-	-	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♥	End	

The young English pair played a strong defence. East led the ♠4, West won the Jack and they cashed 3 spades, then exited with ♣A and another. When West won the ♥A the thirteenth spade promoted a trump trick for 3 down.

Board 29	♠9 ♥AJT8 ♦A872 ♣9874	All Vul Dealer N
♠QT2 ♥965 ♦96 ♣KQJ62	N W E S	♠AJ764 ♥4 ♦KQT53 ♣T3
	♠K853 ♥KQ732 ♦J4 ♣A5	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Falconer</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Adamson</i>
-	Pass	1♠	2♥
2♠	2NT*	3♦	3♥
4♠	End		

2NT showed a good 4-card raise, and 4♥, though tricky, looks likely to make. The young English pair stole the contract, undoubled. South led hearts, declarer ruffed the second round and led ♣3 towards dummy. South feared another singleton so grabbed his Ace and switched to the ♦J. North took the Ace and tried to give partner a ruff. Declarer had to lose a spade but could use his established diamonds to pick up South's trump and escape for -1.

John Matheson can be relied upon to punish overbidding.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Shields</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Matheson</i>
-	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♠	Dbl	3♠	4♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
End			

He led two rounds of hearts. Harry advanced the ♣T, and John ducked to cut the link with dummy. He won the next club and punched declarer with another heart. North won the ♦K with

the Ace and led his trump. John won and returned a trump. Harry cashed the ♦Q, but South ruffed the ♦T and he was left with a losing diamond in the ending. A rather painful -800.

So at the half **SHIELDS** led by 66. In such a situation the trailing team needs to create swings. Some recommended actions are punting thin slams, doubling on a wing and a prayer, and occasionally underbidding. The latter tactic backfired on Board 43.

Board 43	♠T9 ♥7652 ♦7632 ♣A84	None Vul Dealer S
♠A7532 ♥Q4 ♦T54 ♣JT5	N W E S	♠K864 ♥T8 ♦KQJ9 ♣932
	♠QJ ♥AKJ93 ♦A8 ♣KQ76	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>McIntosh</i>	<i>Bennett</i>	<i>Myers</i>	<i>Smith</i>
-	-	-	2♦*
Pass	2♥*	Pass	2NT
End			

Harry's Multi 2♦ turned out to be 20-21 balanced, and Roy viewed to pass. 8 tricks are theoretically the limit in NT, but 4♥ will make this time.

John Matheson does not believe that every semi-balanced 20-count must open 2NT Over his 1♥ opener West ventured a 1♠ overcall and East thought this might be a good moment to create a swing by overbidding. He raised to game, and John doubled.

The swing was a large one. The defence cashed 2 hearts, three clubs and the ♦A, then John played the thirteenth club for Patrick to ruff with the ♠T to promote a trump trick for four down. Ouch.

The third segment was tied at 40 imps apiece, and the final segment did not create many chances. The final margin was 156-94.

This was John Matheson's 18<sup>th</sup> Scottish Cup win, a record that should stand for a very long time.

*A complete record of the Final can be found on [RealBridge](#)*

# Adventures in Junior Bridge

*Ronan Valentine*

Junior bridge is akin to the Northern Lights. We know it exists, it's rarely seen, and arguably, even less well understood. To extend the comparison further, I would like to offer to be your tour guide, to deepen your understanding, to give you a glimpse into the world of junior bridge.

I have been incredibly fortunate in my bridge journey. Junior bridge has provided numerous opportunities that would have otherwise been unavailable to me, and I know that I am not alone in that. I want to make this a recurring feature so that the extent to which bridge has had a positive impact on me can be fully explored.

Across the articles, bridge, and the hands that were played, will hold a central role. However, it is not the be all and end all. Ideally, you'll see that every hand tells a story, reminds me of a person, of a place; that bridge merely facilitates the adventure and, if you're lucky, it can be a part of it.

Bridge, as we all know, is a funny old game. It has rarely been as strange as my first junior outing in Tuusula, Finland playing with Liam O'Brien and teaming up with Gavin Irvine and Scott Lorimer. Perhaps what is even stranger is how that tournament has book-ended my junior bridge career, given that it was played at a location which is approximately a 30-minute drive from where I now live. Funny indeed.

We were a very inexperienced team. Liam and I had been playing for just over a year, so Gavin and Scott were to be the

'anchor pair'. There were only two issues with this plan: they had only slightly more experience than us and they had never played a hand together prior to boarding the flight to Helsinki.

It was a strange journey. I would explain Gavin and Scott's system as 'back of the cigarette packet' but neither of them smoked. As such, scraps of paper were used instead. The only feature of the system that has stuck with me is that a 2♦ opener as Flannery (4♠, 5♥ 11-15 HCP) was agreed. Gavin seemed keen to emphasise the importance of this, to the demise of other agreements.

Our trip to Finland then was not one of ideal preparation. However, on arrival to Helsinki-Vantaa airport, a Finnish man was waiting, sign in hand, to collect us. This man was Mauri Saastamoinen who again, in the small world in which we inhabit, I have partnered in my new Finnish settings.

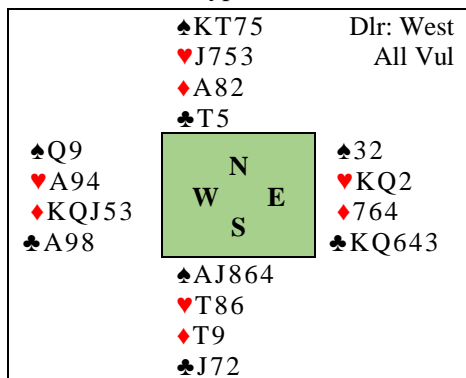
There were two memorable features about the drive. Firstly, there seemed to be the sound of cans constantly clinking in the passenger footwell, which did not provide the serenity that we all needed after an intense Flannery-focused flight. Secondly, in Mauri's estate car, there were 7 seats: 2 in the front, 3 in the back and 2 in the boot. The two seats in the boot faced into the traffic. It was quite a surreal experience to look at oncoming traffic when stopped at traffic lights, and not one which I shall forget in a hurry.

Once we had settled into our accommodation, graciously provided by the Finnish Bridge League, we were 'ready' for the Junior teams tournament to begin. The first of our 10-board matches was a sign of things to come, since we lost 59-0 to Estonia U26.



We were out of our depth. In our second match we played an English team that were expected to win the tournament.

It would be reasonable to conclude that the defeats would keep on coming. It would be reasonable to conclude that we were a sorry sparring partner for a champion boxer. However, for a fleeting second, a blink-and-you'll-miss-it-moment, our motley crew managed to do the unthinkable. We won a match. Against England. Well, to say we won is perhaps unfair. They decided to lose the match. Board 20 typifies this:



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
<i>O'Brien</i>	<i>Spencer</i>	<i>Valentine</i>	<i>Lam</i>
1♦	P	2♣	P
3NT	End		

At this point, Liam and I were playing an agricultural version of Benji Acol. 1♦ was opened as his best minor, and 2♣ was forcing for one round. 2NT from Liam would have been 15-17. (We had not been introduced to the idea of 2NT being 15-19.) Liam had no option other than the 3NT he selected to show his hand, and I had even less reason to remove the contract.

The defence started with the ♥3. It is clear to declarer that a diamond trick is needed to make 3NT, assuming the clubs are coming in for 5 tricks. Therefore, it is, and was, clear to win the trick in dummy and play a diamond to the King. This was taken by North.

Whether North-South played Smith Peters (High-Low on declarer's lead to show encouragement) is beyond my powers of recollection. Perhaps North thought he needed to cash heart tricks and get a Spade lead through the West cards. Whatever Spencer's logic was, he continued a heart for 12 tricks and a rare, good board.

At the end of the match, with Scott and Gavin performing well at the other table, we emerged with a 31-18 IMP win, which converted to 14.28-5.72 VP. This was our Icarus moment. We had soared too high, gotten too close to the sun. The bridge Gods, alongside our combined lack of skill, determined that we should lose every other match that we played in the Junior teams' event, including a humbling 78-0 IMP loss to a Norwegian U20 side.

After the round robin had been completed, and the competition was over, the standings looked like this:

1. *Norway U20: 103.20 VPs*
2. *England U26: 95.42 VPs*
7. *Scotland U26: 32.85 VPs*

There are some points of interest in these results. First, we were not last. We came an admirable, an astonishing, an awe-inspiring, second last. England, lost to only one team in the whole event... Scotland. If England had, as they should have, beaten Scotland, they would have won. Funny old game...

After the Junior teams there was a main pairs and main teams, which we all played in with limited success. We failed to register a win in the teams, meaning that our win against England was our only one of the entire event.

Scott and Gavin had been having a tough time, as had Liam and I, but we were faring slightly better in the pairs. In the prior 148 boards Scott had neglected to open Flannery on the one hand where it was applicable. What a tragic waste of a system discussion. He made up for it with expert judgement (read: unintentional brilliance) on the penultimate board of the pairs:

	♠KT98	Dlr: South	
	♥T762	NS Vul	
	♦QJ9		
	♣95		
♠J			♠A6432
♥QJ			♥AK84
♦T432			♦K6
♣K87642			♣Q3
			♠Q75
			♥953
			♦A875
			♣AJT

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
<i>Ozols</i>	<i>Lorimer</i>	<i>Klidzeja</i>	<i>Irvine</i>
1♦	P	P	Dbl
P	P!	P	

South opened 1♦ and Scott passed. North then passed and partner doubled. Prior to partner's double a commotion erupted stage left which was, naturally, significantly more compelling than the bridge. When Scott mentally returned to the auction, he saw it was his bid and had no call to make, failing to register partner's double, and passed.

Moments later he audibly announced his surprise, to North-South's delight. He

hadn't spotted the double. North gleefully passed, and, with a maximum passed hand, and 3-card support, was expecting a good board. What North didn't account for was Gavin's hand. Scott might not have the goods, but Gavin did. 8 tricks for the defence, -500 and 0 matchpoints later N-S weren't as amused as the four of us were.

After the final day's play, there was one more competition for the juniors. The most important competition. The one we thought we had a real chance in. The competition that we came for. The rowing competition. A competition where there was a prize for the best individual rower. A prize that had 'Ronan Valentine' written on it. In my head anyway.

The juniors were divided into two boats, and it was a race to the finish line. As a mildly (highly) competitive individual, I was determined not to lose this. When I think back on my performance, I imagine that it's one that Sir Steve Redgrave would have been proud of. I had rhythm. There was power. There was effort. There was co-ordination with the rower next to me. The sweat was pouring off me, and my hands blistered such was the effort of my exertions.

However, some of my fellow juniors perhaps didn't view this competition in the same spirit. They weren't prepared to be my Pinsent, my Grainger. Rather, the two juniors' oars in front of me spent more time out of the water than in it. More time colliding with my oar. This was a source of mild (less lemon and herb, more extra spicy) annoyance. I communicated calmly (loudly) my frustration. The juniors downed tools, which wasn't such a bad development.

The worse outcome, my worst fear, was realised. We lost the rowing race. Heartbroken, devastated, I knew that I would have to retire from rowing. As we brought the boat back into shore and left it, an organiser approached me and asked me what country I was from and my name. This was it. The prize. The individual rower prize. ‘Ronan Valentine, Scotland’ may never have been said with such smugness and a soupçon of pride.

Before the prize-giving, where I would claim my rightful prize, Liam, Scott and I went swimming prior to heading for the sauna which overlooked the lake. I now know just how culturally important saunas are to Finns. Finland is a nation of 5.5 million people, with over 2 million saunas. Most houses will have them, and apartment buildings will share one. A cultural icon in Finland with very strict traditions.

Anyway, after our swim in the lake, we entered the sauna building and went for a shower prior to entering the sauna itself. First tradition correctly observed. However, whilst in the shower, it was noticeable that the men around us were not inclined to wear swimming trunks. Three Scottish teenagers did not share the same inclinations.

In the shower, a rotund, middle-aged Finnish man was preparing for his sauna and looked suitable unimpressed at my preparation. He gave me a once over, before, in a most uncomfortable motion, gesticulating, pointing, at my swimming trunks and uttering a sentence I shall never forget: ‘OFF’.

I don’t know how often large Finnish men have told you as a teenage boy to remove your swimming trunks, but I

most assuredly was not doing that. If anything, I may have tied them that bit tighter. Although we ventured in, the whole experience was quite uncomfortable, so we left soon after.

My wife, who is Finnish, has subsequently explained that wearing swimming trunks is not the done thing on hygiene or on cultural grounds. Tradition incorrectly observed.

As a team, we then attended the prizegiving where we were suitably patient until I could collect my prize. They went to announce it, X-Factor style. The tension was unbearable. A rower had been singled out for hard work, determination. The rower was Irish... The rower selected was Liam O’Brien. Who isn’t Irish. Who shouldn’t have won. Whose prize was a string vest which might have looked like a crop top on me. Did I still want it? Yes. Have I gotten over it? Absolutely...

We returned from Finland chastened from our experiences at the bridge table (and the showers), but better prepared for our next competition. It opened our eyes to the levels at which we could play. The levels at which we would need to play to be competitive in these events. Some of us returned with a new item of clothing. All of us returned with a few stories and a sense that Bridge always has been, and always will be, more than just a few hands.

# Play Challenge

*Jim Patrick*

1 All Vul Dealer South

♠ Q53
♥ 72
♦ Q532
♣ KJ64

♠ AK6
♥ AJ8
♦ AT984
♣ A2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2NT

Pass	3NT	End
------	-----	-----

Contract: 3NT Lead: ♠4

How do you guarantee this contract?

2 NS Vul Dealer South

♠ 64
♥ 975
♦ 875
♣ AQ632

♠ A9
♥ AQJT864
♦ AT2
♣ 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
------	-------	------	-------

-	-	-	2♥
2♠	3♥	4♠	5♥
End			

Contract: 5♥ Lead: ♠3

You must justify this rare excursion to the 5-level.

(You were probably getting 500 from 4♠ doubled, so you had better make this.)

3 None Vul Dealer West

♠ J4
♥ KQ75
♦ 6
♣ T97643

♠ AQ3
♥ -
♦ AQJ98732
♣ K5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	3♥	5♦
End			

Contract: 5♦ Lead: ♥A

Just the lucky lead the enterprising player needs!

How do you continue?

4 All Vul Dealer South

♠ 64
♥ 874
♦ K75
♣ AT754

♠ AKJ98
♥ A6
♦ AQ9
♣ KJ9

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
------	-------	------	-------

-	-	-	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
End			

Contract: 5♣ Lead: ♥2

The ♥2 goes to the four, Queen and six.

The ♥3 is returned to your Ace.

You run the ♠J successfully, but West shows out on the ♣K. Carry on.

# Play Challenge Solutions

Jim Patrick

1 All Vul Dealer South

	♠ Q53	
	♥ 72	
	♦ Q532	
	♣ KJ64	
♠ J9742		♠ T8
♥ Q963		♥ KT54
♦ 6		♦ KJ7
♣ T73		♣ Q985
	♠ AK6	
	♥ AJ8	
	♦ AT984	
	♣ A2	

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2NT
Pass	3NT	End	

Contract: 3NT Lead: ♠4

You have just 7 Sure Tricks, and you need to get diamonds going before the opposition have the chance to clear hearts.

With correct play you have a double heart stopper. Win the ♠4 in dummy and play the ♦Q. If East covers win and clear diamonds.

Say West wins the ♦K and switches to a heart. You win the Ace over East's honour, cross to dummy with the ♣K and play another diamond. Even if West can win again he can't hurt you, as you still have ♥Jx left.

2 NS Vul Dealer South

	♠ 64	
	♥ 975	
	♦ 875	
	♣ AQ632	
♠ KJT32		♠ Q875
♥ K32		♥ -
♦ Q3		♦ KJ964
♣ KJ9		♣ T875
	♠ A9	
	♥ AQJT864	
	♦ AT2	
	♣ 4	

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	2♥
2♠	3♥	4♣	5♥
End			

Contract: 5♥ Lead: ♠3

You need the club finesse to work so that you can dispose of your spade loser. But there are still two diamond losers. Is there anything better than relying on the heart finesse?

A better bet is a 4-3 club break. Take the club finesse, discard a spade on the ♣A. Ruff a club; if they break 4-3 you are home. Lead a small trump towards dummy to create the extra entries you need to ruff another club and cash the fifth club for a diamond discard.

This line works even if trump are 3-0, and if clubs are 5-2 you still have the not insignificant chance of a singleton King of trump.

Note the importance of ruffing the third club high to guarantee two entries to dummy.

3 None Vul Dealer West

		♠ J4	
		♥ KQ75	
		♦ 6	
		♣ T97643	
♠ K876			♠ T952
♥ AT92			♥ J8643
♦ T4			♦ K5
♣ AJ2			♣ Q8
			♠ AQ3
			♥ -
			♦ AQJ98732
			♣ K5

4 All Vul Dealer South

		♠ 64	
		♥ 874	
		♦ K75	
		♣ AT754	
♠ Q7532			♠ T
♥ KJ92			♥ QT53
♦ J42			♦ T863
♣ 2			♣ Q863
			♠ AKJ98
			♥ A6
			♦ AQ9
			♣ KJ9

<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
1♥	Pass	3♥	5♦
End			
Contract: 5♦		Lead: ♥A	

<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
-	-	-	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣
End			
Contract: 5♣		Lead: ♥2	

That was a lucky lead, but how can you get to dummy to discard your clubs?

Easy: play the ♠Q.

If West has the ♠K what can he do?

If he ducks you cash the ♠A and ruff a spade; if he takes the ♠J has become an entry.

All you need now is for East to hold the ♦K singleton or doubleton.

Contract: 5♣ Lead: ♥2

You duck the heart lead and win the heart continuation. The lead and return suggest hearts are 4=4.

You successfully run the ♣J, but West shows out on the ♣K, so there is an inevitable trump loser,

You need to ruff dummy's third heart, so cross to the ♦K and take the ruff. Now cash your remaining diamonds before playing spades: if you do not East can ruff the second spade and put you back in hand with a diamond. You have to play another spade, promoting his ♣8.

If East can ruff a diamond he must have at least three spades, so you can safely reach dummy to draw his last trump.

# Alan Goodman's Lockdown Tips

## 1 A Bidding Dilemma

1	♠AQ8
	♥AKQ863
	♦4
	<u>♣KJ7</u>

What is your Opening Bid?

If you open 1♥ what is your rebid after partner responds 1NT?

## 2 Which card do you play?

2	♠QJT4
	♥Q7
	♦Q82
	<u>♣JT93</u>

Defending against a suit contract, which card do you play when partner leads:

- (a) ♠A
- (b) ♥A
- (c) ♦A
- (d) ♣A

(Assume that the lead of an Ace asks for an attitude signal)

## 3 Choosing a Lead

<u>♠Q962</u>
♥A85
♦J8754
♣3

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

What is your choice of lead?

## 4 What Do You Respond?

<u>♠63</u>
♥KQJ96
♦K7
♣AQT4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♦	Pass	?	

Your partner opens a vulnerable 3♦.

What should you bid as East?

*Solutions on Next Page*

# Lockdown Tips Solutions

## 1 A Bidding Dilemma

♠AQ8
♥AKQ863
♦4
♣KJ7

What is your Opening Bid?

If you open 1♥ what is your rebid after partner responds 1NT?

### Opening Bid

Those playing Acol 2s or Benji Acoll open at the 2-level and all will be plain sailing.

The rest of us are likely to open 1♥ (the hand is not suitable for either a strong 2♣ opener or a 4♥ opener).

Opening 1♥ risks the hand being passed out, but that's better than distorting your hand with an inappropriate opening bid.

### Opener's Rebid

This is a genuine problem for an inexperienced player. You want to be in game but slam is a real possibility.

Rebidding 2♥ or 3♥ are gross underbids. Rebidding 4♥ gets you to game but this bid is normally reserved for a longer suit and weaker hand with no slam aspirations.

An expert considers 2 possible rebids:

1. 3♣ which is game forcing but allows room for slam exploration. You would normally have 4+ clubs but partner would be aware of the possibility of you having fewer.
2. 4♦ which is called an auto-splinter showing a diamond shortage and 6+ good hearts in a hand such as this.

I SUGGEST YOU DISCUSS WITH YOUR PARTNER BEFORE YOU MAKE SUCH A BID

## 2 Which card do you play?

♠QJT4
♥Q7
♦Q82
♣JT93

Defending against a suit contract, which card do you play when partner leads:

- ♠A
- ♥A
- ♦A
- ♣A

(Assume that the lead of an Ace asks for an attitude signal)

### SOLUTION

The usual agreement is that playing the Queen promises the Jack (unless, of course it's a singleton).

- Play ♠Q to tell partner you've got ♠J. If you played the ♠J instead of the ♠Q partner will probably switch because you've denied ♠Q.
- Play ♥7. If you play the ♥Q partner may underlead from her remaining ♥Kx.
- Play ♦8 if you play high to encourage or ♦2 if low encourages. You are quite happy if partner chooses to play you for ♦Q
- Play ♣J. This card denies the ♣Q and warns partner of the danger of continuing the suit. You don't want to give declarer an easy trick when holding ♣Qxx. Don't play a lazy ♣T or ♣9 because partner may not read the position correctly.



### 3 Choosing a Lead

---

♠Q962  
♥A85  
♦J8754  
♣3

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

What is your choice of lead?

#### SOLUTION

When a responder to 1 NT or 2 NT does NOT use Stayman, the inference is that they do not have a 4 card major.

The chances of success favour leading your 4-card major suit rather than a broken 5 card minor.

The probability is that leading a minor suit will run into dummy's length.

### 4 What Do You Respond?

---

♠63  
♥KQJ96  
♦K7  
♣AQT4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3♦	Pass	?	

Your partner opens a vulnerable 3♦.  
What should you bid as East?

#### SOLUTION

It's tempting to bid 3♥ hoping to find partner with 3 hearts.

In fact there's only a 20% chance of a 5-3 fit.

Since partner is unlikely to hold two aces for a preempt, you can expect three major suit losers and may have a further minor suit loser if you play in diamonds.

It's true that if partner holds ♠K then 3 NT may make but you shouldn't bid games dependent on partner holding the right cards.

You don't need to bid games just because they are vaguely possible!

Play with the odds and PASS.

## Obituaries

### Rhona Diamond

Rhona was one of our best loved players, instantly recognisable with her unique style. Her presence lit up the room – she brought a smile to every face.

Rhona started playing bridge after meeting Derek at a charity bridge tournament he ran for the Blind Society. She accompanied Derek throughout his international career, supporting him and other Scots when they needed some TLC. She was incurably generous and kind.

Derek reports that at the card table she punched well above her weight. Her card play and defence were average, but her competitive bidding and table presence were legendary. She feared no-one. Among her successes were the Western District Pairs, the Haig Trophy (twice), and the Peebles Congress Teams. (Team-mates Mike and Michele Alexander had not won with professionals such as the Hackett twins and John Holland; they did not pay Rhona a fee!)

Her greatest triumph was at the Glasgow Year of Culture Congress in the RAC Club. Entries included every Scottish expert and some from beyond our shores. Rhona and Derek played in the teams with Jack Silverstone and Barry Rigal, a pair who had never previously played together. They reached the Final where they were seeded 12<sup>th</sup> of the 12 teams, Rhona's table presence and confidence led them to an unexpected win.

Derek would like to thank all those who have expressed sympathy for his loss: "I genuinely got a lift to see how highly Rhona was thought of and with affection by so many of the bridge world."

### Allan Gordon

Allan was born and had his early schooling in Crieff. His family emigrated to Africa, where he took his first Degree. He won a scholarship to Oxford, then completed his formal education with a doctorate from Cambridge.

He took a teaching post at St Andrews University in the early seventies and spent all his working life there, living in the same house and becoming a Reader.

Allan enjoyed bridge for over fifty years. He was a regular at the St Andrews Bridge Club. Shortly before retirement he joined Dundee BC so that he could play more often. I had the pleasure of partnering him in National events and Congresses, both at home and abroad. When I was President of the SBU we played in the Mixed Pairs at the World Championships in Verona (we were there to support the Scottish teams.)

Allan spent many holidays cycling round Scotland staying in Youth Hostels. Latterly when he was unable to cycle, he enjoyed walking holidays at home and abroad. When he decided he needed a car he bought a small one, and chauffeured the St Andrews ladies who did not want to drive at night to Dundee and beyond.

For 10 years, following his retirement, he served as Central District Secretary and represented the District on the SBU Council. He volunteered to proof-read the SBUNews and the DBC monthly magazine (the Grand Slam)

Allan was a true gentleman. Although quiet by nature, his demeanour at the table was exemplary. He is missed but will never be forgotten.

*Beryl Campbell*

## Carolyn Peplow

Another unique lady with a distinctive style, kindness and sense of humour.

Carolyn's family belonged to the Czech aristocracy – she was one of the last generation of debutantes to be presented at the Palace.

She was born in London just before the Second World War. She lived with her mother and elder brother, and they made their own entertainment playing 3-handed bridge. By the late 50s she was playing rubber bridge at Brendan's Club in London where she met the top players of the day, including Terence Reese and John Collings.

She met husband Charles on the ski slopes. They settled in Edinburgh where she soon became an integral part of the bridge scene.

Carolyn suffered a terrible accident in the mid-70s and nearly died. She fought back by sheer strength of will and a determination to play top-level bridge again. She represented Scotland in the Lady Milne with Kathy Copley and Veronica Guy; and was a member of the Scottish Women's Team at the European Championships in Malmö in 2004. She became a Grand Master in 2001.

She also contributed to bridge administration, acting as League Secretary to the East District Committee in the 1980s and 90s. She was also Secretary to the Carlton Bridge Club.

Carolyn was a fine player, perhaps underrated because she was that rare type of partner, one prepared to take the blame for every bad result. She struggled with ill-health and failing eyesight latterly but was always welcome at the table.

*Our policy is to publish obituaries of players who have represented Scotland in international events, and of those who have been active in bridge administration. We make exceptions for members of particular note in bridge or in the wider world,*

*We welcome contributions from any source.*

# January 2022 Bidding Challenge

*Liz McGowan*

*The new bi-monthly format will put extra demands on our panellists' good nature. Many thanks to them all, particularly guest Linton Horsfall, winner of the October competition.*

## Problem 1 Teams All VUL, Dlr East

♠3	W	N	E	S
♥JT4	-	-	1♣	1♠
♦A96	?			
♣A98732				

*The panel splits three ways on this one.*

**HORSFALL: 3♣.** Partner's opening bid could be only 3 cards but I need to show that I do have clubs and some points.

**SMITH: 3♣.** It's hard to see other options. Double would suggest a fourth heart and if the heart Moysian is the best game you will still get to it. You haven't agreed inverted minors, so this seems the value bid.

*I think 3♣ might be construed as preemptive with long clubs. The majority think this hand has too much potential for a weak-sounding response. Some choose the Unassuming Cuebid.*

**MARSHALL: 2♠:** I think I am full value for 3♣: If considered a slight overbid I contend that 3♣ is a greater underbid.

**PEDEN:** (*summarising* **WHYTE'S longer exposition**) 2♠. Denying four hearts, probably denying a spade stop, at least 4 clubs. Raise to 3♣ or better and see what partner bids.

*The 2♠ bidders are anxious to keep 3NT in the game.*

**ASH: 2♠.** ... the normal way to show 4+ clubs and values for at least the 3-level. Over 2NT (11-14) I will probably settle for 3♣ but 3NT could score a 'goal'.

**MILNE: 2♠.** A splinter is tempting, but partner could still have 4 spades and 3NT will make on a spade stop, 6 club tricks, ♦A and an outside card. ... if 4♣ comes in next and partner doesn't double it, I'll chip back in with 5♣.

*Abi realises that North might raise spades – is 2♠ prepared for that? Patrick thinks not:*

**SHIELDS: 3♠.** We have at least a 9-card fit; they have at least an 8-card fit, so I cannot feel safe letting them play 3♣, and over 3♠ I must bid again. After 2♣ partner will have little idea what to do if North jumps to 4♣. This slight overbid leaves partner in a sensible place.

*The Splinterers make a good case.*

**PIPER: 3♠.** Crisp Aces: I overbid.

**MCGINLEY: 3♠.** Splinter with clubs 'agreed'. Will pass 3NT; also 4♣ as partner typically has a weak NT opener and might cuebid or bid 5♣ instead.

**MCKAY: 3♠.** You have good defensive values if partner decides to double.

**GORDON: 3♠. 5♣** looks like a candidate but it will double-cross partner and it's like, well, playing with yourself.

	Votes	Marks
2♠	9	10
3♠	8	9
3♣	4	4
5♣	0	3
2♣	0	2

*Partner had A52 AQ53 7 KT654, so 3NT makes – as does 6♣, though that will be tough to reach in competition.*

**Problem 2 Teams NS VUL, Dlr N**

♠K8652	W	N	E	S
♥KT2	-	Pass	1♦	2NT*
♦Q9	?			
♣Q98				

\*2-suiter with ♥ + ♣

**SMITH: DBL.** I expect a variety of answers for this problem. Double is far from perfect but I am following the maxim that in a constructive auction when there is no clear action, take one that uses minimum space.

*Predictions are usually wrong! This is as close as we come to unanimity.*

*The 2-suited overcall has given us several extra options, summarised by*

**GUTHRIE: DBL.** I recommend the approach suggested by Eric Crowhurst: 3♠ = natural and constructive but NF

3♦ = natural and constructive

3♣ = cue, GF in spades

3♥ = cue, GF in diamonds

3NT = natural, to play

Traditionally dbl = penalty, but I prefer that double be negative.

*The panel agrees that neither cuebid is appropriate. A few are happy to introduce their spade suit at the 3-level:*

**WILKINSON:** (and **MARSHALL**) 3♣. Not forcing, as perhaps 3♥ would be forcing with spades.

**ROSS:** 3♠. Tempted to double but feel the spades might get lost.

*But should a new suit at the 3-level not be longer and / or stronger? Some plan to introduce spades more slowly.*

**MCGINLEY:** (and **PEDEN**) **DBL.** Usually showing Penalty interest, but on the next round I plan to bid 3♣, hoping this will show a moderate suit

and scattered values (as I didn't start with a cuebid of 3♥/3♣).

*Most of the doublers are in 'hope for the best' mode.*

**PIPER: DBL.** Soggy Queens. I underbid  
**SIME: DBL.** ...Defending or 3NT may be better than playing spades anyway.

**MILNE: DBL.** I'd love to bid 3♣ to show an invitational plus hand in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit (spades). Without that option I double to show interest in a penalty. It doesn't feel as if I want to force to game: the points are scattered and this looks quite pretty defensively.

**ASH: DBL.** ... If North chooses a suit and partner passes I will let them play. But if partner has extra strength he will double; with extra length he will bid again, and I will know what to do.

*I believe that doubling a 2-suiter shows interest in penalising a misfit. If third hand makes a minimum response and partner cannot double for penalties his Pass is Forcing in case I can.*

**SHIELDS: DBL.** ... I don't know what I shall do on the next round but at least partner has been encouraged to engage. Were I to pass (my only alternative?) I would be worse off on the next round. They are vulnerable, so I cannot assume the hand belongs to us.

*At the table I could not see a reason to force to the 3-level with this unexciting 10 count. I still can't. So I agree with*

**FREIMANIS: PASS.** If partner cannot produce another bid there are good chances that there is nothing on for us and defending could easily be the right call. Opponents are vulnerable, so I expect a decent hand on the right. Double risks a costly misunderstanding.

**GORDON: PASS.** Let pard express an opinion if he has one! If it goes 3X by North Pass - Pass I will double. This double is limited by my failure to double 2NT which shows the ability to double them in one or more of their suits and a 'decent' hand. If partner passes my delayed double he will lead a trump.

	Votes	Marks
Dbl	16	10
Pass	2	9
3♠	3	8
3NT	0	3

*Partner had AQJT Q4 AK8754 3 and can be relied upon to re-open with a takeout double of 4♥. But what should she do if you show penalty interest? And how high will she fly after 3♠?*

**Problem 3 Teams None VUL, Dlr E**

♠AKJ3	W	N	E	S
♥-	-	-	1♥	Pass
♦J864	1♠	2♦	Pass	Pass
♣QT632	?			

*A couple of panellists prefer a different initial response.*

**ROSS: DBL.** Why didn't I bid 2♣ first? Am now stuck for a bid.

**GUTHRIE: DBL.** Stay fixed by your cunning space-saving reply.

*But we have agreed to play 2-over-1. Even in modern Acol a responder's reverse (2♣ then 2♠) forces to game. Is this hand really worth a game force with that tasty void in partner's suit?*

*Most fear a misfit.*

**ASH: PASS.** Presumably I didn't respond 2♣ because I didn't think this hand should force to game – a very reasonable view. Why bid now on a misfit when partner has denied extras?

**PIPER: PASS.** If you double partner will bid hearts. Let them play their 5-1 fit.

**MURDOCH: PASS.** I want to defend. If I double I won't. Opener is most likely 5332 and minimum; if he is 2524 I may have done the wrong thing.

**PATERSON: PASS.** Occasionally we have a 9-card club fit, but could we stop in time after my double? Mostly the deal is a misfit and defence is best.

**MCKAY: PASS.** Partner has some clubs but you aren't strong enough for 3♣.

*Strength is in the eye of the beholder:*

**HORSFALL: 3♣.** I need to tell partner I have the points to bid at the 3-level but without support for his hearts

**MCGINLEY: 3♣.** Natural and a one-round force. I place partner with 4+ clubs, as he doesn't seem to have 3 spades or 6 hearts. A stronger sequence starts with Double, then raises clubs.

*A sophisticated agreement. Some might treat double then bid as the weaker sequence.*

**SHIELDS: DBL.** Partner reckons to be fairly minimum and 2533, 2524 or perhaps 3532 shape. Passing and collecting some 50s is not a winning strategy. If partner bids 2M I shall convert to 2NT, but if partner is 2524 we'll find a good club contract.

*Some feel that 2NT with this mighty diamond stopper is the least bad bid.*

**VALENTINE: 2NT.** Maybe an underbid, but it looks like I am struggling to establish tricks here. Partner should have doubled with 3 spades... by bidding 3♣ I may mislead partner into thinking my spades are longer. 2NT seems practical and sensible.

**MILNE: 2NT.** Can I go with yuck, is that a valid bid? RHO hasn't raised diamonds, so partner probably has 1 or 2, helping to bolster your own stop. Not ideal with no hearts, but there's a lot of hands available where 3NT could be on. Shame the opponents aren't vulnerable when pass might be more appealing!

	Votes	Marks
Pass	10	10
Dbf	5	7
2NT	4	6
3♣	2	5

*Partner held 65 AQ532 75 AK98, so you would probably like to play in 3♣.*

#### Problem 4 Teams NS VUL, Dlr N

♠A8643	W	N	E	S
♥AKQ542	-	2NT*	3♠	5♣
♦-	?			
♣52				

\* 2NT =5-5+ in minors, weak

**PATERSON: 5♠.** At this vulnerability opponents are serious. If opener is 2065 it could even be their hand. Obviously I am happy to be pushed into 6♠. An immediate 6♠ is also reasonable, but we should not make a minor bid that might help opponents assess the situation.

*The rest of the panel is in no doubt that the deal belongs to us. A few panellists fear that we have a club loser.*

**ROSS: 6♠** (can't think of any way of finding out if partner has the ♣A).

**SMITH: 6♠.** I'm ready to say sorry partner if either they cash the top 2 clubs, or if Grand is cold. With this sort of defensive bidding, there is no sensible way to find out.

**MARSHALL: 6♠.** Let them guess which minor to lead. I can bid "scientifically"

towards 7♠, but will partner be able to co-operate? Even if he does, who's to say there isn't a heart ruff awaiting? Beware of bidding Grand slams after much interference, I was advised.

**GUTHRIE: 6♠.** Unanimous, I guess.

*A poor guess. Most panellists wanted to investigate the Grand. But how?*

**SIME: 5♦.** Let's see if we can squeeze a 6♣ cue-bid out of partner. If so, 7♠.

**MCGINLEY: (and DRAGIC) 5♦.** A cuebid (it's not reasonable to expect it to be read as Exclusion RKC!). I expect partner to have at least second round club control, so over 5♠ I will follow up with 6♥, directing his attention to the club suit.

**ASH: 6♦.** ... When I have so much in the Majors it is possible that partner has first round club control and can bid the Grand. She may be looking at several losing hearts but an expert partner will ask "why is partner trying for Grand without lots of goodies?" In an unpractised partnership there is merit in just 'blasting' 6♠; this has the extra chance that, if North bids 7♣ and partner passes, showing first round control, we will still get to the Grand.

*6♦ promises first round control. Might it also be an Asking Bid?*

**MURDOCH: 6♦.** If he treats this as Exclusion RKC a 3-step response takes us to a Grand slam. Otherwise I will have to play in 6♠ and hope.

**SHIELDS (also PEDEN): 6♦.** I trust vulnerable opponents to be close to making. This makes it almost certain South has 5+ clubs and partner can control the suit. I am therefore willing to try for a Grand with Exclusion RKC.

*This seems fine provided partner reads it. Will she have the courage to go past 6♠ with a club void?*

*A couple of interesting suggestions:*

**WILKINSON** (and **GORDON**): 6♣. Let's try to encourage a diamond lead.

**FREIMANIS**: 5NT. Deliberate attempt to confuse partner and hear a 6♣ bid for 7♠. Otherwise will play 6♠.

We know what won the board, Liz. 😊

*Confession time! We were playing Poland, a country famed for aggressive slam bidding. I thought they would probably lead a diamond against a confident 7♠.... East had KQT752 JT KJ54 A. The Poles stopped in 6♠ in an uninterrupted auction! +13 smugimps. Since the majority voted for Grand slam tries I have marked 6♠ down a bit.*

	Votes	Marks
5♦	6	10
6♦	4	7
6♠	6	6
5NT	1	4
6♣	2	4
5♠	2	3

### Problem 5 Teams All VUL, Dlr E

♠AKJ32	W	N	E	S
♥QJ			1♣	Pass
♦JT5	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
♣A53	?			

*Most of the panel opts for a new suit forcing rebid with a 'what else' shrug, as summarised by:*

**WHYTE**: 2♦. Known as third suit forcing. Keeps the bidding open, no precipitate action here.

**GUTHRIE**: 2♦. Keeps No-trump, clubs and spades in the game, and the auction low.

**PEDEN**: 2♦. Asking for a heart stop and hopefully discouraging a diamond lead.

*There is nothing inherently wrong with bidding a 3-card suit – but here partner will expect more in diamonds and less in hearts. He may give false preference to spades with a doubleton, or raise diamonds, or bid no-trump. Do any of these calls solve your problem?*

*A minority prefers to bash the most likely game.*

**SMITH**: 3NT. The practical bid, the one I would make at the table. Partner must have some red suit values, so why help them with their lead problem?

**MCGINLEY**: 3NT. Partner is not 2335 or 22/45 with 12-14, (he may be 14/35). I expect 6 clubs usually: he may have the ideal Qx Kxx Ax KQxxxx but how to find out? Inventing a diamond suit brings its own problems: he may raise and fail to read your 3♥ bid on the next round as asking for Txx (= 1/3 stop)!

*A 3♣ suggestion would be fine if it were forcing but leads to an embarrassing +170. John is the only panellist to focus on showing where his values lie – and his choice works well on this occasion.*

**MURDOCH**: 4♣. Natural and forcing.

	Votes	Marks
2♦	13	10
3NT	4	7
4♣	1	5
5♣	0	4
3♣	1	3
2♥	0	2
3♥	0	2

*Partner has Void KT2 A84 KJT9864. Another slam missed at the EBL Qualifiers. 2NT forcing might be useful, but only if partner knows it is forcing.*



**Problem 6 Teams EW VUL, Dlr W**

♠AT65	W	N	E	S
♥AKJ42	1♥	2♦	3♥	Pass
♦A97	?			
♣A				

*Some have heard enough.*

**VALENTINE:** 4♥. May be wrong but I don't think I can or should pass. Lots of hands where 4♥ is cold, so bid and pray.

*Pass would never occur to me. If partner has xxx Qxxx xxx xxx, he will soon be ex-partner – we are vulnerable!*

**MARSHALL:** (also **FREIMANIS**) 4♥. Partner could bid 3♦ with a high card raise. He will raise to 3♥ with 4 heart cards and only slightly better than a 2♥ response had there been no interference. 2 losers seem very likely.

*I think the jump raise shows limited high cards but compensating distribution. Partner might have a singleton spade and a minor suit King. Most go for at least a mild slam try.*

**WILKINSON:** 3♠. As partner has denied decent values, 4♥ is likely to be the correct bid here, but I cannot resist a try; I can sign off over 4♣ or pass over 4♥.

**PIPER:** 3♠. Partner might bid 4♦...

**DRAGIC:** 3♠. Cue-bid. It would help to know what 3♥ meant.

*Is it just a cuebid? Some think the new suit is a Long Suit Slam Try.*

**PATERSON:** 3♠. Suit try for slam. Partner is light, but the vulnerability should mean he has some values. Kx xxxxx xx xxx would do nicely!

**ASH:** 3♠ .... I want to consult, and in particular focus on responder's spade holding. If I hear 4♣ I will sign off in 4♥ but if the rebid is 4♦ I will definitely

bid slam. One bid that will not help is 4NT. We will hear 5♦. Then what?

*Patrick has an alternative meaning for the cheapest new suit. One to discuss with partner.*

**SHIELDS:** 3♠. Not sure where this will lead. In an uncontested auction it asks for shortage, so if partner bids 4♦ I make another try; if not I stop in game.

**SIME:** 3♠. Our lack of pre-game discussion may leave us struggling against an organised partnership at the other table. They will have agreed serious / non-serious slam tries.

*Nigel believes we have such a weapon.*

**GUTHRIE:** 3NT. Serious slam try. 3♣ would just be a cue.

*A brave try that might end the auction. Two panellists preferred to cuebid their singleton Ace, trusting partner to realise they would not be making a try without spade control*

**MILNE:** 4♣. If partner can't reply with a 4♦ cue (indicating a probable shortage) I'll bow out in 4♥. There seems no harm in exploring slam....

**ROSS:** 4♣ (on my way to 6 or 7♥).

*Bill seems to expect more than most.*

*Our guest panellist cuts to the chase:*

**HORSFALL:** 6♥. Borderline, but if 6♥ is on and we stop in game we will get a poor score.

	Votes	Marks
3♠	13	10
4♣	2	8
4♥	4	6
6♥	1	6
3NT	1	2

*Partner has K9873 Q763 4 T52. Another missed slam....*

### Problem 7 Teams EW VUL, Dlr N

♠A3	W	N	E	S
♥T9	-	Pass	1♣	3♠
♦AJT63	Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
♣T843	?			

*Sometimes a hand improves mightily in the course of an auction. Now that we know partner has real clubs we must show some strength.*

*Half the panel choose the 9-trick game:*

**GUTHRIE: 3NT.** Let Paul Hamman's Rule resolve the difficult choices between clubs, diamonds and no-trump.

**SIME: 3NT.** Hoping for nine on top, or that I can freeze South out by ducking the first spade.

**SMITH: 3NT.** I would prefer partner playing this but we've run out of room. His double suggests a heart stopper.

*The others head for a minor suit game, via the direct route:*

**MURDOCH (and PEDEN): 5♣.** I could punt 3NT – or I can show my hand.

*Or more slowly, keeping diamonds in the game:*

**SHIELDS: 4NT.** I have too much to stop out of game and 3NT opposite short spades is too risky. When I leap like this partner will know I have some values but only four clubs, as otherwise I would bid 4♣ on the previous round.

**DRAGIC: 4NT.** 2 places to play. unlikely we will ever get to 5♦ but I want to bid my hand.

**PATERSON: 4NT.** Too good not to commit to game, obviously means pick a minor. I would bid 4♠ with my minors reversed, having passed previously due to possible weak NT opposite.

**ROSS: 4♠.** I hope partner will take this as a spade control agreeing clubs.

**FREIMANIS: 4♠.** Expecting 5♣ to be a better spot than 3NT. Given our initial pass a 4♠ bid cannot do much harm: on a good day, partner could have the right cards for slam.

**GORDON: 4♠.** You could hardly be better. Partner should bid 4NT to locate a fit and I will bid 5♣, having shown strength with 4♠. 4NT is the wrong idea - it shows only game aspirations and you are better than that.

*ASH is not certain that the cue promises first round control but bids 4♠ anyway. With other ways to show enthusiasm for clubs I think this should promise the ♠A.*

	Votes	Marks
3NT	10	10
4♠	5	8
4NT	3	8
5♣	2	5
4♣	1	3

*Partner had 9 KJ76 Q9 AKQ965. 3NT was unlucky, 5♣ was the spot.*

### Problem 8 Teams EW VUL, Dlr S

♠AT4	W	N	E	S
♥KQ98	-	-	-	1♣
♦J52	Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
♣743	Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
	End			

*The panel agrees on one thing: nobody led a club. Some opted for a diamond, mostly after rejecting other choices:*

**DRAGIC: ♦2.** ♠T would be more attractive if North jumped to 3N.

**SIME: ♦2.** It may look like a high heart won't cost against AJTxx on table. But it would look foolish if declarer has Ax?

**FREIMANIS: ♦2.** Leading a Major may solve some problems for declarer. The unbid suit will not cause too much disagreement in such situations.

**MILNE: ♦2.** Sounds like South has 9+ cards in the minors, but if partner does have 5 spades they must be poor as they didn't volunteer them in the auction.

**SHIELDS: ♦2.** They have nothing to spare so I want to be cautious. LHO cannot be short in diamonds or they would have raised clubs. I fear the ♥Q (which I would lead against 3NT) might give a tempo. Very tempted to lead the ♦J, but dummy could be 4522 and that might hurt the defence. I hope I wasn't so slow that I have telegraphed that I only have 3 diamonds.

*Mike does go all in with the Jack*

**MCGINLEY: ♦J.** Hoping to find partner with a goodish suit of say A10xxx but wanting to keep their holding intact until the 3rd round. Partner has 6-7 HCP so we may need to concede two diamond tricks before cashing out; if partner has poor diamonds, there may still be time for Plan B in the heart suit?

*A minority lead through dummy's presumed spade strength.*

**MARSHALL: ♠A.** What on earth is happening? South has clubs and not spades, and North knew that when he bid spades. He surely does not hold a 5=6 hand or he would have bid on. Conclusion: he doesn't have that many spades after all. But why make a bid that is usually considered game-forcing then Pass? Let's just see for ourselves. There is a case for leading the ♠A, to drop declarer's singleton honour. After all, why did partner not overcall 1♠?

**MCKAY: ♠4.** An odd sequence, it looks like North is "at it" and South will have diamonds well covered.

**ASH ♠T.** ... with the clubs lying well for declarer and partner holding about 7/8 hcp's, I think that the best chance of beating 2NT might be finding partner with something like ♠Q9xxx sitting over KJxx and an entry.

*But most go with a top heart.*

**ROSS: ♥K.** I can't think of anything else to lead.

**WILKINSON: ♥K.** ... may give declarer some communication problems, especially if North has no club.

**PATERSON: ♥K** Clubs lie well for declarer, so attack! On a good day we find South with a single Jack or Ten.

**PIPER: ♥Q.** Not a diamond. ♠T is tempting.

Whyte: ♥Q. Horrible choice, three suits, all could potentially give away this tightrope contract. My second choice is a small spade.

	Votes	Marks
♥K/Q	9	10
♦	7	8
♠	4	5
♥8	1	3

*I sympathise with the spade (my choice at the table) but a top heart is necessary to remove dummy's entry before his spades are established. Declarer has ♥Jx, so it has to be a high heart.*

*Congratulations to Douglas on his leading score and to Iain on just being pipped. And to those who went with what they thought was best, knowing it would not score well.*

## Panel Answers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<b>Top score</b>	2♠	Dbl	Pass	5♦	2♦	3♣	3NT	♥K/Q	
<b>Douglas Piper</b>	3♠	Dbl	Pass	5♦	2♦	3♣	3NT	♥Q	<b>79</b>
<b>Iain Sime</b>	2♠	Dbl	Pass	5♦	2♦	3♣	3NT	♦2	<b>78</b>
<b>Tim McKay</b>	3♠	Dbl	Pass	5♦	2♦	3♣	3NT	♠4	<b>74</b>
<b>Miro Dragic</b>	3♠	Dbl	Dbl	5♦	2♦	3♣	4NT	♦2	<b>72</b>
<b>Derrick Peden</b>	2♠	Dbl	Pass	6♦	2♦	3♣	5♣	♥Q	<b>72</b>
<b>Bill Whyte</b>	2♠	Dbl	2NT	6♣	2♦	3♣	3NT	♥Q	<b>72</b>
<b>Jack Paterson</b>	2♠	Dbl	Pass	5♣	2♦	3♣	4NT	♥K	<b>71</b>
<b>Mike Ash</b>	2♠	Dbl	Pass	6♦	2♦	3♣	4♣	♠T	<b>70</b>
<b>Irving Gordon</b>	3♠	Pass	Pass	6♣	2♦	3♣	4♣	♥Q	<b>70</b>
<b>Ronan Valentine</b>	2♠	Dbl	2NT	5♦	2♦	4♥	3NT	♦2	<b>70</b>
<b>Patrick Shields</b>	3♠	Dbl	Dbl	6♦	2♦	3♣	4NT	♦2	<b>69</b>
<b>Abi Milne</b>	2♠	Dbl	2NT	6♣	2♦	4♣	3NT	♦2	<b>68</b>
<b>Gints Freimanis</b>	2♠	Pass	Pass	5NT	2♦	4♥	4♣	♦2	<b>65</b>
<b>Mike McGinley</b>	3♠	Dbl	3♣	5♦	3NT	4♥	3NT	♦J	<b>65</b>
<b>Tony Wilkinson</b>	3♣	3♣	Pass	6♣	3NT	3♣	3NT	♥K	<b>63</b>
<b>Finlay Marshall</b>	2♠	3♣	Dbl	6♣	3NT	4♥	4♣	♠A	<b>61</b>
<b>Nigel Guthrie</b>	3♣	Dbl	Dbl	6♣	2♦	3NT	3NT	♥Q	<b>59</b>
<b>John Murdoch</b>	3♠	Dbl	Pass	6♦	4♣	3♣	5♣	♥8	<b>59</b>
<b>Bill Ross</b>	3♠	3♣	Dbl	6♣	3♦	4♣	4♣	♥K	<b>58</b>
<b>Harry Smith</b>	3♣	Dbl	2NT	6♣	3NT	3♣	3NT	♠4	<b>58</b>
<b>Linton Horsfall</b>	3♣	Dbl	3♣	5♣	3♣	6♥	4♣	♥K	<b>44</b>

## Competitor Results

Congratulations to **John Hamilton** (New Melville) and **Paul Maiolani** (GBC), joint first with an impressive score of **75**.

Other good scores:	<b>John Dick</b>	(Kilwinning)	<b>70</b>
	<b>Christine Howe</b>	(Buchanan)	<b>70</b>
	<b>Geoff Simpson</b>	(Torphins)	<b>70</b>
	<b>Ena Wood</b>	(Stirling & Union)	<b>68</b>
	<b>Robert Clow</b>	(GBC)	<b>67</b>
	<b>Clare Hargan</b>	(Dundee)	<b>67</b>
	<b>Russell Frame</b>	(GBC)	<b>65</b>
	<b>David Anderson</b>	(New Melville)	<b>64</b>
	<b>Cameron McLatchie</b>	(GBC)	<b>61</b>
	<b>Walter Ewing</b>	(Perth)	<b>60</b>

# March 2022 Bidding Problems

**NOTE: This set is based on a 5-card Major system**

15-17 NT, 5-card Ms, 1♣ = 3+; 2-over-1 game forcing; 3 Weak 2s. RKCB 1430.

(You were drafted in at the last minute – no time for further discussion!)

Please send your answers by Email to the editor: [liz.mcgowan@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:liz.mcgowan@blueyonder.co.uk) quoting your Home Club or SBU number.

The winner will receive an invitation to be a guest panellist.

## Problem 1 Teams All VUL

♠6	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥KQ9	1♦	P	1♠	P
♦AKQJ74	3♦	P	3♥	P
♣J96	?			

## Problem 5 Teams All VUL

♠Q4	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥4	-	1♣*	Dbl	Pass
♦A9752	?			
♣AQ852				

1♣ = 3+, not 15/17 balanced

## Problem 2 Teams All VUL

♠A8	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥AK65	1NT	2♥*	Dbl**	P
♦A9652	?			
♣Q3				

\*2♥ = hearts and a minor

\*\*dbl = takeout

## Problem 6 Teams All VUL

♠Q943	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥A4	-	1♠	2♥	2♠
♦J8653	P	P	Dbl	P
♣74	?*			

(\*2NT would be 2 places to play)

## Problem 3 Teams None VUL

♠Q8	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥K543	1♣	1♦	Dbl	P
♦A4	?			
♣AKQ95				

## Problem 7 Teams NS VUL

♠K62	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥AQT43	-	2♦*	P	P
♦AJT8	?			
♣A				

\*2♦ = weak two

## Problem 4 MP Pairs NS VUL

♠842	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥AKQJ972	-	-	1♣	P
♦T7	1♥	P	2♦	P
♣K	3♥	P	3NT	P
	?			

## Problem 8 Teams None VUL

♠Q754	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
♥AT	-	-	P	1♠
♦K765	P	2♠	P	4♠
♣Q74	End			

What do you lead?