



Surrey County Bridge Association

Newsletter #60, Autumn 2026

Introduction

Hopefully you are all starting the new bridge season well!

Metropolitan Cup Success

Surrey has enjoyed fantastic early-season success in the **Metropolitan Cup**, winning a highly competitive **A section**. A massive congratulations to our winning team: **David Norman & Peter Lee, John Dagnall & Andrew Bannock, Graham Sadie & Richard Granville**, and **Robin Clarke & Christine Dyer**. [1]

Tackling Slow Play

Slow play remains a notorious bugbear for most clubs. In this edition, we've included a dedicated article detailing practical solutions to improve the pace of the game. We highly encourage club committees to read through it, share it with their players, and consider adopting these guidelines to keep sessions moving smoothly.

Club Infrastructure & Membership Growth

It has been a challenging year for club retention, and we have unfortunately lost two clubs so far. However, we are thrilled to announce that a **new affiliated club at Epsom** is opening soon, which we hope will help redress the balance.

If your club is currently teaching beginners, please remember to register them as **student members** through your club dashboard. We are working hard behind the scenes to drive foot traffic back to our affiliated venues, and we would love to hear from you—please drop us a line to share what your club is doing to recruit new players!

Tony Cherrettt

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Calendar

Oct 29 th	Bridge at the Brewery	Cancelled
Nov 8 th	Mixed Pairs	Wimbledon
Dec 7 th – 10 th	Dorin Salver	Clubs
Jan 8 th	Teams of 8 – Garden Cities Heat	Richmond

Eastbourne – one hand 4 ways

Hand Diagram:

Declarer: West
Vul: All

North: ♠ 10 9 5, ♥ J 9 7 5 4 3, ♦ J 10 8, ♣ K

West: ♠ 8 6 3, ♥ - -, ♦ Q 9 7 5 3 2, ♣ 7 6 4 2

East: ♠ A K 4, ♥ A Q 10 6 2, ♦ A 6 4, ♣ 9 3

Bidding: NORTH 20, WEST, EAST, SOUTH

Score Table:

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	1	-	-	1	
S	1	-	-	1	1
E	-	4	1	-	-
W	-	4	1	-	-

Hand Values:

5, 2, 17, 16

Hand 2: ♠ Q J 7 2, ♥ K 8, ♦ K, ♣ A Q J 10 8 5

David Norman and David Dawson sitting E/W

At Game All the bidding at our table was:

N	E	S	W
	1H	2C	P
P	X	2S	?

Dave considered playing in 3D (via 2N Lebensohl after which East bids 3C, then 3D is a weak signoff), but reckoned the void in Hearts made it a better hand to defend.

He chose to Pass – probably the weakest option; if 2S is going off, then best to double – if it's making then play in 3D.

Dave led a D to the Ace; Ace Hearts and a H ruff; Club to King in dummy, and a Spade from dummy which East won and tried another Heart. Declarer ruffed high and played a Spade. East won and played a Diamond for one down.

This scored 34% . 2S doubled one off would have been about 82%, and 3D making +1 about 68%

Gerard Thompson and Andrew Mann sitting N/S

N	E	S	W
	1H	2C	P
P	X	P	2D
P	P	X	P
2S	All Pass		

This was not crazy, but the final contract was a bit tenuous, even if trumps are 33.

The play went thus:

DA, switch to the C9, won in hand

I set about the trumps, and East rose on the first round. He then played Ace and another heart (West possibly having signalled for a heart on the round of clubs).

At this point I want to draw trumps and cash clubs, and the counter is for West to force dummy with DQ and, winning the second round of trumps, East to force dummy again with HQ. This sets up DJ and HJ in North. I would make two clubs, two red tricks, two ruffs in dummy and one trump in hand, but end up one short.

However, this is not at all obvious and both defenders thought that the concealed hand had started with 4 trumps.

West instead switched back to clubs, hoping to give East a ruff, so I won on table and played another round of trumps, prior to ruffing and drawing the final trump. In the end the defence scored DA, HA, heart ruff and SAK, leaving me with 8 tricks.

This garnered them 84%

John Dagnall and Andrew Bannock sitting E/W

N	E	S	W
	1H	2C	P
P	2H	3C	All Pass

This bidding results in a spade lead, followed by AH (W discards a spade), heart ruff, spade and spade ruff and AD, -2 and so +200 and 83% for EW. If S is going to bid again, this shows that double can be superior, but only if partner does not rebid diamonds. At red vulnerability bidding over 2H with partner silent is probably trying too hard.

Julia Brough and Steve Bourton sitting N/S.

N	E	S	W
	1H	X	All Pass

Two questions here. Should S double (as I did) or bid clubs or is there a third way? Should N pass the double? Steve chose to do so. This did not count as one of our finest!

The end result was 1H* + 1. 360 for E/W. 10% for N/S

The most common scores for the board were +110 and +130 for 3D by E/W scoring 53% and 68% respectively. Any positive score for N/S was worth at least 77%.

If this year's summer bears out its current promise everyone's brains will already be nicely warmed up by the time this next puzzle appears. It was sent to me some time ago by Alan Brown, to whom I am indebted for his frequent contributions. Enjoy it. Another offering in the vein of it's-easy-when-you see-your-way-through.

	♠ A Q 10 2	
	♥ A K J 8 5	
	♦ A K	
♠ 9 7 6	♣ A 6	♠ J 8
♥ 4		♥ Q 10 9 7 3
♦ 10 6 5 2		♦ Q J 9 8 4
♣ Q J 8 4 2	♠ K 5 4 3	♣ 9
	♥ 6 2	
	♦ 7 3	
	♣ K 10 7 5 3	

South to make 6S

Lead ♥4

Several appreciative comments (thank you – always nice to receive), and the impression that a number of people I didn't hear from also had a go. Particular thanks to Alan Brown who sent me the puzzle some time ago.

Well done to all who sent in correct solutions : Bill Hodgkiss, Ian Swanson, Richard Fedrick, Robert Warriner, Frances Hindon, and Gerard Thompson whose was the winning name drawn out of the hat. He wins free entry to a SCBA event for himself and partner of choice.

There are various permutations of the way in which the initial tricks can be taken although all follow the same theme with East the unwilling victim – 3 superficial heart winners reduced to just one as declarer wins the heart lead, plays off the next 7 tricks : ♠AQ, ♦A, ♣AK of clubs and a club ruff, followed by ♠10 to ♠K in hand drawing the last trump. ♠5 at T9 then reduces everyone to just 4 cards remaining with dummy holding ♥KJ8 and ♦K, while East reduces to :

Either

- a) ♥Q109 and ♦Q, when ♦K followed by ♥8 end plays East in Hearts
- or
- b) ♥Q10 and ♦QJ, when ♥KJ gives East his heart trick with a forced diamond return into Dummy's winning ♦K and ♥8

I'm not sure quite why I like this puzzle. Perhaps because it bamboozled me for a while ... which of course is what I am hoping it will do to you too, giving you an extra bit of satisfaction when you see your way through. For all that, I need to see what responses I get to decide how difficult it is. None of which is meant to help you, but please send your entries to me at Johnmanches74@gmail.com by October 25th. I look forward to hearing from you.

	♠ K 9 8 7 6 5	
	♥ 6	
	♦ A K 10 4	
	♣ 7 4	♠ Q J 10 3 2
♠ 4		♥ 4 2
♥ 10 8 5 3		♦ Q J 8 7
♦ 5 2		♣ 9 3
♣ K J 10 8 6 2	♠ A	
	♥ A K Q J 9 7	
	♦ 9 6 3	
	♣ A Q 5	

South to make 6♥
Lead ♠4

Voice From The Deep

It's recently dawned upon me that there's a giant paradox, wholly unexplored to date, when it comes to bridge style, method and approach.

For there is a highly complex and sophisticated stratagem which the experts seem unable to grasp (at any rate it's never illustrated in their erudite articles), but which is meat and drink to all of us down in the lower echelons, once we acquire enough tactical nous to master it.

And it is this :- the art of timing one's ~~mistakes~~ temporary lapses of concentration in such a way as to gain the maximum advantage and profit.

Consider this hand :-

RHO opens 1H

I pass

LHO bids 2H

Partner passes

RHO leaps gleefully (invisibly of course) to 4H and the auction is concluded

I lead and dummy is revealed to contain a flattish hand of 9-10 points and 2 hearts

RHO is visibly aghast, but only momentarily and hardly perceptible to any but the most discerning (i.e. me), but quickly regains her composure and, recalling all she's ever heard about Best Behaviour at Bridge, applies commendable stoicism and resumes her customary ~~poker~~ bridge face.

Of course she goes on to make her contract

Everybody else in the room also makes 10 tricks in hearts, but of course none of them has bid it. Top for RHO and plaudits to LHO for her astute perception and exquisite judgement in timing this audacious technique to perfection.

Well, these examples of "incompetence rewarded" are like the No 11 bus, for shortly after the first incident, I'm sitting North in first position and have bid my way to game.

All the other norths have bid, and have made, a small slam, one of them with an overtrick.

Yet I get a top!

How could this be?

Well, my game bid was doubled (and I redoubled out of wounded pride) and I made 12 tricks, just like everybody else. But my 12 tricks were worth more than all their slams.

The explanation is that this was a thoroughly rogue hand, of the kind usually confined to examples in bridge magazines, containing 7 spades to the AQJ and 6 hearts to the AQ

Presumably all the other NS partnerships found their way conventionally (both meanings) to their slams and along the way discouraged EW from any intervention.

I, being NGS3 and thoroughly at a loss, opened 4S. It was then entirely reasonable for East, holding a barrel-load of points, to double.

As we all know - there's no justice!

Richard Granville Ackland

Metropolitan Cup 2026

Surrey entered three teams in the Metropolitan Cup for counties in the South-East of England held on September 5th. The outstanding performance was by the A team which won their division by a convincing margin in what was a very strong field with a number of teams featuring international players. All four pairs contributed to the result with positive cross-imps, but very well done to Graham Sadie and Richard Granville who led the way for Surrey. They will go onto represent Surrey in the national final next year.

Surrey A were represented by:

Graham Sadie and Richard Granville
Peter Lee and David Norman
Christine Dyer and Robin Clarke
Andrew Bannock and John Dagnall

The other two teams didn't quite reach the heights of A team. The B team had a tough day finishing 7th out of 8 teams. The C team finished 3rd. A creditable performance considering they had featured a number of players that were playing in their first representative event. Well done to Marion Hart and Kenneth Wilshire who had a strong butler.

Early in September Surrey members proved that not even a looming British deluge can keep determined card sharps away from climbing Leith Hill. The forecast was no rain but by 11:00 AM, a solid hour of torrential rain was forecast. Nineteen brave souls decided to go for a hike anyway. By some minor miracle, the clouds parted the exact moment the group conquered Leith Hill, and a mysterious twentieth person magically materialized at the summit just in time to join the group picture.



Damp but entirely undeterred, the walkers rolled into Leith Hill Place to join those who had less sense of adventure. We had seventeen tables for a relaxed afternoon of play.

Debbie Heineman and Fiona Kemp left the rest of the room in the dust to win by a 5% margin.



Next up, we are hoping to trade National Trust properties for craft pints. at Westerham Brewery. The plan involves bridge in the morning and a brewery tour in the afternoon. We thought the other way round might cause problems. With possibly another walk for the "intrepid". Tony ([Tony Cherrett](#)) would like some help to organise this, so please contact him if you are interested. Also, if there is interest he will launch a new club with weekly teaching and play sessions at the brewery.

Come for the strategy, stay for the beer.

Bridge Lessons on BBO



Special for NGS 10 and Below!

**NGS 10 AND BELOW
DUPLICATE ON BBO ON
WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS
WITH AN OPTIONAL SHORT,
FUN BRIDGE LESSON
BEFORE THE GAME**

Topic for the first lesson on **28 October** is **Differences between Responses to a Takeout X, with and without interference**. You will receive key slides after the lesson.

Sign up for the Lesson and Duplicate for £8 or for the Duplicate only for £3.

The first four boards of the Duplicate will be related to the topic; the rest will be random hands.

Restricted to players with an **NGS of 10 and below**. Random position numbers will be drawn each week, and those players will receive a **free game prize** at the end of the game!

Every Wednesday afternoon from 28 October:
2:00 pm: Lesson (optional)
2:30 pm: BBO Duplicate for NGS 10 and below players

To reserve your place for the lesson and / or game for the first time, please book from the Main Menu on the Fun 2 Play Bridge website:
<https://www.bridgewebs.com/fun2play>

**For more information, please contact Meena Samani
meena_samani@hotmail.com or 07845 278503**

Slow play does more than disrupt the session; it harms the social atmosphere of a club. When one pair falls behind, it creates a domino effect: the following players are forced to rush their own games to catch up, losing the relaxed, friendly experience they look forward to. Instead of enjoying a brief chat, they are left standing in the aisles waiting for tables to finish. Because this directly impacts player enjoyment, slow play remains the leading cause of complaints in club bridge.

Essential Habits for Speeding Up Play

- **Prioritise Play Over Chatting:** Save detailed board discussions or social discussions for the end of the round after all boards are completed.
- **Plan Ahead:** Think about your opening lead or your next bid during the auction to save time and avoid giving away information.
- **Streamline scoring (North):** Do not hold up the first trick to enter the contract into the Bridgmate.
- **Claim Early:** If you are the declarer (or defender) and the result is certain, claim immediately. It is discourteous not to claim when you can.

Unauthorised Panic

Shirley Pritchard

This is an expression commonly used by Tournament Directors for the situation where a partner tries to rescue a bidding sequence using Unauthorised Information.

Under these laws there are several things listed which partners cannot use to their advantage. The one most people are familiar with is a hesitation, and most players are usually quite ethical about not using this to make a further bid – or they are aware of the possible consequences if they do.

But when a partner fails to alert, players can engage panic mode.

Let me give you one of the most common examples.

You think you and your partner are playing Landy over 1NT.

Your LHO opens 1NT weak, and after 2 passes you bid 2 clubs holding both majors.

Your partner does not alert, and to your horror bids 3 clubs.

You bid 3 hearts thinking to yourself “why is my partner so stupid as to forget Landy”?

Before he leads, the defender asks your partner what 2 clubs means and he says natural.

What happens next is usually an argument about your system and the director is called.

You have to play the hand in 3 hearts and your partner only has 2 of them. You have used your partner’s failure to alert 2 clubs to try and remind him by bidding a major. This is not allowed. Neither 3 clubs nor 3 hearts are likely to produce a good score.

In the unlikely event that 3 hearts is a success, the director will adjust the score in favour of the opponents who have been damaged by your panicked “correction” of your partner’s forgetfulness.

So remember – don't panic when there is a system malfunction between you and your partner. Just pass your partner's bid, and say afterwards "but partner, I thought we were playing Landy over 1NT".

Congratulations

SCBA Green Pointed Multiple Teams

John Dagnall & Andrew Bannock
Conor Murphy & Imogen Davies

SCBA Green Pointed Swiss Pairs

Gilly & Ed Scerri



Victor Ludorum 2026 Peter Lee





Epsom Bridge Club



Tony Cherrett is launching a new bridge club at Christ Church on Epsom Common. Epsom Bridge Club is starting teaching on Monday 5th October with play starting from 19th October and weekly thereafter.

- **Launch Date:** Monday, **19th October 2026**
- **Timing:** **09:30 - 12:30**
- **Location:** **Christ Church Epsom Common**
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If you are interested or can help bring more players, please visit the [website](#).

And finally.....

The next newsletter will come out towards the end of December. So, please send me any club news, personal stories and photographs for the next edition. Is your club having a charity event you would like to tell people about? Let me know. Are you planning any club celebrations? Send me pictures.

[Julia Brough](#)

Editor