

EDITORIAL

The county enters the new competitive season in what could be a make or break year for the game within the county and beyond.

On the playing front the League is now down to two divisions (a total of 12 teams) and the Knockout Cup has a mere 9 entries.

On the administration and political front, there is much controversy regarding the latest proposals from the EBU regarding changes to the method of funding the game, by the introduction of a Pay as you Play charge.

Although it must be right to have a National body to organise the game throughout the country, many consider that the current EBU structure, and lack of ability in the past to modernise the organisational side of the game and implement effective change, does not bode well for the current plans. It is indeed a brave body that wishes to change a membership system, based on regular annual membership fees, preferably collected by direct debit, and replace such a system by an as yet unwritten computerised Pay as you Play system, which will need to be implemented across a thousand or more clubs, rather than thirty nine counties.

The EBU is very good at certain things, tournament administration being one, but as yet implementing computer systems for administration does not appear to be their strongest point.

As you will see under County News, the BBA is giving the EBU its support/advice, and many of us within the county hope that the plans will be successful, though there must be a sizable number of current members who probably feel, that all they need is a couple of games at their local club per week, and as they get that now why all the need to change and put the cost up (not by much)?

Of course there is a need to change is for the county to work with local clubs and set up teaching facilities to bring new players into the game. Teaching is important but co-operation at club level is vital. New players need somewhere to practise and play before they join in fully at club level. Here is a role for the county to work with clubs and try to set up an atmosphere where beginners and

newcomers are welcomed into the game and properly looked after.

Brian Keable (Editor)

COUNTY

2007 AGM

The AGM passed off relatively peacefully. The existing committee remains intact with the exception of Niall Perry, who retired. An unusual step was taken, in that there was no vote to decide which of seven candidates should be included as the normal five committee members. Instead all seven candidates were accepted on the basis that the main committee would have co-opted them on to the committee at the earliest opportunity, as they were all willing to serve the county. Not exactly constitutionally correct, but a reasonable pragmatic approach in today's world where volunteers are hard to find.

A highlight of the meeting came when Ron Davis announced that a special presentation was about to take place. The County Committee had decided it was time to bestow Life Membership on one of its members. Ron made a speech announcing that the recipient was Jon Williams, who had done much for the game of bridge within Bedfordshire and beyond. Fellow Life Member George Goddard spoke his appreciation of Jon and welcomed him to the elite (small) group. Jon Williams thanked the Committee for the honour.

As part of any other business Mike Vogel offered his personal thanks to the County Committee for their support of the boys from Bedford School. He said that Graeme Robertson and Justin Bell were particularly grateful for having been chosen to play in the County Team.

2007-2008 Committee

Officers:

Chairman, Ron Davis.

Secretary, Janet Marsh.

Treasurer, Chris Parkin.

Vice-Chairman, Val Lawson.

Committee Members:

League and Cup Secretary, Richard Chester.

Membership Secretary, Louise Smith.

Les Calver, Monica Lucy, Stewart Pye, Peter Scott.

New Format for One Star Pairs.

For several years the One Star Pairs has run with heats at various clubs and a Final held at Wilstead. Although more clubs are running heats, and despite a personalised invitation to the qualifiers, turnout for the final remains low. The county committee has taken input from some of the local bridge clubs and teachers to find out how we could improve numbers and as a result, this year's One Star Pairs will have a different format. New One Star Pairs events will have no club heats; instead we will hold a single session event in the daytime, with a break for lunch. PM Bridge have agreed to host the event, which will be held at Renhold Village Hall. Play will start at 11.15 am and finish about 3 pm. Table money will include lunch and to ensure there is plenty of food for everyone, we will be asking players to book their places either through their local club or directly with the BBA.

This will be a friendly event suitable for players who are relatively new to club duplicate bridge. It is open to non-members and only EBU members up to One Star Master can take part.

Further details of the event (including the date) will be circulated to local clubs during the autumn.

Proposed Changes to EBU Membership

As most members are doubtless aware the EBU are putting proposals to the affiliated counties that make up the Union, to introduce a new membership scheme, whereby all players playing at EBU affiliated clubs contribute to the EBU finances on a Pay as you Play scheme. Membership of the EBU will be free to such club members and in return the EBU will provide clubs, members and counties with a range of "free services". This proposed scheme is the latest idea to try to hold the falling membership of the EBU and eventually attract new membership. The proposed scheme is highly controversial but does at last represents an attempt to address the problems of falling membership of the official English bridge scene. For this reason the county committee who may not entirely agree with all parts of the

current proposals appear to have decided to that the enterprise should be backed. "To do nothing would be negative".

Official BBA view of the proposed new EBU membership.

The county is currently putting together an official response from the BBA regarding the current EBU strategy proposals. Here is a summary of the official county view of their views.

"The BBA agrees with the principle of universal membership which underpins the EBU proposals. If all members of all our affiliated clubs were also EBU members, we would have a much stronger voice to influence the decision making process: more members equals more votes!"

In the formal response to the EBU Board, the BBA will be suggesting some alternative approaches both to the funding model and to the proposed IT systems. Drawing on expertise in organisational change and the rollout of IT systems across dispersed user groups, the BBA committee feels very strongly that changes on the scale proposed are more likely to succeed if the implementation is phased over time. Also that, if a decision can be reached early in 2008, the rollout of the initial changes should begin within that year if at all possible.

New Membership Secretary

Louise Smith will take over the role of Membership Secretary from Chris Parkin.

Welcome to the following new members

Full Members: Mick Francis, Sharon Richmond, Roger Perrott.

New County correspondent to English Bridge

Peter Scott has taken over responsible for input of County News to English Bridge. Peter would welcome members input in this area. Peter can contacted: email peterjscott21@yahoo.co.uk or ☎01582 668488. English Bridge is published bimonthly at the beginning of the month (February onwards) and Peter needs to hand in his copy about a month in advance.

Connolly on Defence

Part 3: Trump promotion

In the third part of this series I take a look at trump promotion in defence. As a reminder the five types of defence are: Forcing, Active, Trump Promotion, Passive and Cutting down on declarer's ruffs. We defend about 50% of the games we play and I find it useful to run through these five categories when trying to work out a strategy.

Here's a real hand that actually happened in an online match and my partner, bless him, found the right defence. It may seem a routine play but others in the same seat let the vulnerable game slip through.

You pick up ♠A6 ♥KQT3 ♦T8 ♣JT953

Your partner deals and passes, teams scoring, opponents vulnerable. RHO opens 1D, you pass, LHO replies 1S, RHO re-bids 2D, you avoid the temptation to bid, keeping your counsel and LHO jumps to 4S.

Partner leads H5 (if only his leads were always this good) and dummy goes down with ♠7♥4642♦AKQJ963♣Q2

Dummy

♠7

♥4642

♦AKQJ963

♣Q2

Defender

♠A6

♥KQT3

♦T8

♣JT953

You nod wisely at opener's sound bidding, agreeing with his assessment that the hand is too good for a weak 2D, particularly with a 4 card major side suit. You play the HQ and declarer unsurprisingly wins the Ace. Declarer crosses to dummy with a top diamond and discards H8 on a second top diamond. He then ruffs a diamond back to hand (you discarding a club) and plays a club the Queen. He ruffs another diamond back to hand (a heart going from your hand) and leads CK (an apparent attempt to keep your partner on lead). Partner takes this with the CA, thinks for a while, and then plays the S4 which you

take with the Ace of trumps. You cash the CJ, the third trick for the defence, and with four cards left in everyone's hand the moment of truth has arrived.

By now you have an exact count on the hand. Declarer followed to three rounds of clubs and discarded a heart on a diamond. Partner must have three hearts or he would have led top from a doubleton, so declarer is exactly 7213. Partner is looking at you expectantly with two trumps and two hearts in his hand. If he has a natural trump trick it is not going away, so your only chance is that he has the SJ and if you lamely attempt to cash a heart, declarer will ruff low, draw trumps and claim his vulnerable game. Not this defender. He placed the CT on the table and declarer was skewered. Ruff high or low and either way he had to lose a trump trick to your partner.

Postscript:

Here, partner must over ruff to beat the contract if declarer ruffs low, however the general guideline in circumstances where there are TWO potential trump tricks coming your way is 'do not over ruff with a trump that will win a trick anyway - you might promote a second trump trick'.

Take the case where you hold Q954 over declarer with AKJT87. If you over ruff declarer's Ten with the Queen, you will concede the remainder of the tricks. However, discard and you will eventually make your 9 as well as your Queen.

Slow Play

An article taken from the internet by Les Calver

The biggest irritant in duplicate bridge, claimed a survey not too long ago, is not table rudeness, or complicated systems, or even anything to do with smoking. It is slow play. You can point to a lot of reasons attendance is falling, but one of the big turn-offs of this game is following a pair who is slow every round, or waiting for the North-South pair one table lower to complete the round and hand you the boards.

And what do you read about slow play, and how to prevent it? They tell us to play quickly, don't conduct post-mortems, don't waste time getting coffee or talking to friends

between rounds, claim when you can, and all sorts of obvious things like that. The real keys to playing fast are in forming habits that serve to keep the game moving, and staying alert at the table.

To play fast you don't need to '*play fast*', you just need to play slow less often.

Suppose the auction goes 1NT (12-14) on your right, you pass an eleven count, LHO makes a transfer. You should see that there is a great chance for you to be on opening lead eventually, and you should start figuring out what your best lead might be against no trumps, or against the suit about to be bid by RHO. Once the auction is over, you can immediately place a card on the table. After your lead is turned face up, you can write the contract on your convention card as declarer studies dummy.

You scoff. "*That might save five seconds,*" you say. "*Over the course of the night that might save a minute or two at most.*" Point taken. But how often have you seen one or more of these:

- a fourth pass by the player whose bid was passed out
- "*whose hearts; is it my lead?*"
- "*what did we do on board seven, partner?*"

These events don't cost five seconds; they cost minutes. But if you get into the habit of keeping the game moving, it will speed up the game a little bit, by getting opening leads onto the table quicker and saving time figuring the best defence because you need to go over the bidding again in your mind before leading to trick three; and, it will speed up the game a lot, because players who are really at the table almost never ask "*is it my lead*", or make a fourth pass, or forget what happened on the previous board.

So let's go over the ground and look at a single deal and how time wasted can be extra time saved:

Arriving at the table: this is where most of the time goes. The smoking ban in effect now at most clubs forces smokers to go outside or to a special room to smoke, where you can't hear the round being called. Many clubs have washrooms, or coffee and other refreshments that are far away from the tables. None of these is any excuse for arriving at the table

late. The only excuse for arriving at the table late is that you were still playing boards when the round was called. Even this is not an excuse if you finished the boards late and then went to get some refreshments while your next opponents were waiting (although we will make an exception for biological urgency, provided you follow it up with bridge urgency to make up for the lost time).

Greeting the opponents: too many of us don't greet our opponents. But some of us do so with such profusion that by the time the first bid is finally made, other tables have played three tricks already. The happy medium is to greet and pull cards from the slot simultaneously. This keeps everybody happy. If someone wants to tell a story, fine, but don't let it hold up the bidding. If you are not confident in simultaneously bidding and being the jovial raconteur, simply mention that you have a funny story to tell after the round, and almost certainly you'll have time--trust me.

Sorting cards: even with my bizarre method of sorting cards, I take about the same amount of time as everyone else. What isn't cricket is when somebody is forced to say "*still sorting*" because the dealer has passed his 2-count without sorting. This slows things down for everyone, since there is the awkward knowledge that the dealer passed quickly. Time gained by the quick pass can be swiftly lost by the other players as they try to ignore this unauthorised information. Sort your bad hands and your good ones. We also need to recognise that some players have genuine trouble in sorting their cards and need a few extra seconds. Rushing them inevitably causes more time wasting later.

Bidding: Take a few seconds before sorting to check the dealer and vulnerability on each board. Reduce the essential information to two words: "*We/They/Both/None*" for vulnerability and "*1st/2nd/3rd/4th*" for the seat you are in. If you're East on Board 15, you simply remember "*They; 4th.*" If those new boards with the green hands and the funny vulnerability stickers confuse you, you won't be confused when you make it a habit to look for this information every deal. The number one timing problem in bidding consists of players not realising it is their turn.

Either the dealer hasn't seen that he is the dealer, or the player due to make the next bid is waiting for LHO to say something. If you are next to call and are thinking for more than a few seconds, it's a good idea to give some indication that you know it is your bid, to put minds at rest.

Before the opening lead: Once the bidding is over, somebody should say aloud (but not loudly) the contract and declarer ("*...so, Six Hearts Redoubled, by East...*") and the players should write the contract down now on their score cards--except the player on opening lead, who should open the proceedings before writing the contract down.

The play: The opening leader should have the contract written down by the time the thirteen cards in dummy appear. At this point, no matter how obvious the play to the first trick, declarer should think for a half-minute or so before playing. Opening leader's partner may also wish to take some time, either before or after he plays his card. Time taken at the first trick is not time wasting; this is virtually always a time of planning and deep thought. Later in the hand, however, there are all sorts of needless irritating time wasting tactics that happen frequently:

Declarer thinks for a minute, then leads towards an ace-queen in dummy, LHO follows low smoothly, and declarer now goes into the tank again. Surely during the first tank he should have considered that the most likely outcome was a low card from LHO. His decision whether to finesse or not should have already been made.

A player pulls a card from his hand, holds it unseen in mid-air, then replaces it again. Ten seconds later, the same act with a different card (or is it the same one again?). Some declarers even go so far within their blue funk of deep thought as to play a card at a speed of about three millimetres a minute, until everyone in the club can see what it is, only to quickly pull it back at the last moment! This often causes the opponents to throw their cards on the table in disgust, which undoubtedly contributes to the time wasting, but under such torture who can blame them? many inexperienced players (especially when trying to learn from a better partner) go out of their way to make the absolutely 100%

perfect and proper signal on defence on every card. This results in ten seconds to decide whether to play the five or the three first as declarer runs his solid nine-card suit. Partner is usually so zonked by the repeated tanks he doesn't even notice the signals.

It is my impression that people who look at the ceiling usually have nothing to think about at that time.

The solution to all of these is to stay ahead of what's happening. Don't detach a card until you're sure you want to play it. Don't lead up to dummy without some idea of what card you'll be playing in the likely circumstances. Don't take on too many defensive conventions at once: the proper way to learn how to signal is to start slow and add things little by little. The ceiling won't help you.

Claiming: Many players have run into the Laws while trying to claim and have decided apparently to never try it again. This costs them time. If you fear claiming because there's a trump out and you might muff the claiming statement, just play a few more tricks until all you need to do is show your cards. If you're on defence and you can see that dummy is good (and you **know** that partner cannot win another trick), concede. It saves time.

Irregularities: There's nothing sillier than players debating over whether the director should be called after an irregularity occurs. Call him. You may have heard that you can't call the director if you're dummy. Call him anyway. Don't waste time dillying over whether the irregularity means anything. Keep calling until your call is acknowledged.

After trick thirteen: Whoever is closest to North's convention card is responsible for seeing that North grabs the traveller first, before he enters the score on his own score sheet. If North tries to enter the score on his scorecard first, I suggest slapping your hand down on it. If North wishes to blab on, I suggest one of East or West take the score sheet themselves and open it up for him. There is so much opportunity for time to be lost here that all four players should be especially vigilant. Get the job done before discussing the hand at length. Don't let anyone have an extended look at the score sheet while there are still boards to play. A

glimpse or two, or a quick (and quiet) recap of the most popular scores by North, fine. A comprehensive analysis of who bid the slam against whom, by counting tables to figure out who is pair 13, is not at all proper.

At all times: Be aware of how much time you have before the round is to be called.

Directors could do a lot more to help players in this respect. Few directors anymore say "*you should be on your last board*", or something like that. It's better for a director to announce when a round is half-over, so that players can speed up if necessary.

The Golden Rule: There is one misapprehension that almost all players share with regards to slow play, and that is the fault principle. Too many players adamantly refuse to speed up their game (which as we've seen, does not necessarily mean to play fast, but just to avoid playing slowly) after a pair arrives late, since they feel that they were not responsible for the original delay. This sort of thing happens:

Round One: Played 3NT and needed to engineer a difficult endplay to make it, then a difficult defence for the needed 800 against our vulnerable game. Left the table three minutes into the next round.

Round Two: Got to table to find no opponents, they were fetched from the smoking area outside five minutes into the round, and sat down saying "what took you so long?" Three times during the round we tried to speed this pair up, but they insisted on post-morteming the first board, and South took two minutes before being reminded it was his lead on the second. Left five minutes late, with opponents behind us waiting to take our seats.

Round Three: Asked North, explaining system to South, to fill in the score slip after the first board and he exploded. "*Not my fault you guys arrived late; you'll have to play quicker. Bloody slow players.*" Continued post-mortem.

Do you think the East-West pair is going to be back next week? Probably not, but the two North-South pairs will. Notice that the East-West pair had a few tough hands and got behind. *Editor: Thanks Les, a appropriate summary of the behaviour of many BBA club players re speed. I trust this information is being applied by both parties in your regular partnership? Perhaps*

some of our players and clubs will take some heed of this article and attempt to play just a little bit quicker?

New Grand Master

Congratulations to Alan Cooke who has just won his six hundredth green point and joins the ranks of Bedfordshire Grand Masters.

Mike Vogel "retires"

Mike Vogel who teaches at Bedford School has decided to end his bridge teaching activities for the last two years of his teaching career. Over the years Mike has put in an enormous amount of work at Bedford School in nurturing junior bridge, and has assisted a long series of talented juniors during their early years in the game. Not just teaching and coaching but acting as chauffeur, guardian, and general helper he has helped many juniors gain experience around the country in junior bridge events. The county is sad to know that some of his activity will cease, but thanks him for his immense contribution over the years.

Battle of the Blackies (& Greens)

Many of you are aware that every year the EBU awards prizes to the players who collect the most master points in a year. In recent times Bedfordshire's Jon Williams has won the main Prize for collecting the most points, regularly clocking up some 30,000 odd points in the year. This year is slightly different. The EBU wish to make the master point year start in January and finish in December. So this year has been extended to end in December, giving contestants a total of 18 months to compete. Naturally Jon has set out his stall and is making massive attempts to reel in the blackies at simultaneous pairs, but this time Ron Davis the county chairman has decided to take Jon on. Rumour has it that they are both neck and neck at the moment, with Ron possibly in the lead. So fierce is the battle that on several occasions recently they have played together, each player being sufficiently confident that he is just in front and just playing to ensure that his rival does not gain any advantage. Have some sympathy for those that undergo this strange compulsion to collect small pieces of coloured paper. Could it happen to you? Good luck to all the contestants.

What would you bid? Answers to April Competition

The Panel

Back up to five panellists. Congratulations to Jeremy Dhondy (plus wife Heather and team mates) on winning the European Mixed Teams. More congratulations to Peter Lee and team mates for winning the main teams final in the August Brighton Congress.

Thanks to those who have taken part, including the competitors, four this month, Dominic, David, Mike and newcomer Stewart (Pye). Apologies to Terry Pearce, for the umpteenth time I have lost your paper answers. Please get access to a computer so that you can email me the answers.

Hand 1

Hand 1: Dealer West Love All, Pairs.

West: ♠AK62♥AJT3-♦T753♣Q

W	N	E	S
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? Playing a weak no trump and four card majors, (a) Do you open?
(b) If yes what do you open?

of clubs each time) and I opened each time 1NT – one was a success and two were failures (missing a 4 - 4 major fit)

Jeremy Dhondy (a) Yes (b) 1H

Only a trappist monk whose tongue had been cut out and was narcoleptic would pass. I open 1H. 1NT is worth considering only because it will upset aged opponents when they discover you have broken the eleventh commandment “Thou shalt have no singleton when you open 1NT even if your partner announceth thus”.

Alan Kay: (a) Yes (b) 1H

1H. As this is Pairs I think that many will open and if partner can respond you have at least half the points. I assume you do not have the agreement to open One No Trump with a singleton. With a poor twelve count and 4441 shape a pass is often the best strategy. With a black singleton the suggested opening is the middle suit giving you a re-bid. If partner bids two clubs you have to bid two diamonds suggesting a five four shape, however you will be close to holding sufficient points for game. If partner gives preference to hearts at the two level implying a ten eleven count I think I would then bid two spades to show a 4441, inviting partner to bid no trumps if he is unable to support spades. A response of two diamonds would not be ideal as your only re-bid is to support diamonds.

Peter Lee: (a) Yes (b) 1H

(a) I do open - don't think I have ever passed a 14 count, (unless I miscounted my hand) (b) 1H. 1D leaves one snookered over 2C, and 1S - 2C - 2D/2H shows 5 spades.

Victor Silverstone: (a) Yes (b) 1NT

Yes – Just enough, 1NT.

Hand 2: Dealer North Love All, Pairs.

West: ♠QT♥AK2♦AKQ9765♣2

N	E	S	W
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1C	P	1S	2D
----	---	----	----

P	3D	3H	?
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Do you bid? What do you bid? Why?

Keith Bennett: (a) Yes (b) 1H

a. Yes although 4441 shapes are awkward I do have an opening bid and if I pass and come in later partner is never going to expect me to have these values.

b. 1H I have to lie in some way and if partner responds 2C and I bid 2D he will expect 5 cards in hearts however I think other bids will cause more problems. I have held a similar hand with the same shape and points 3 times recently (including strangely the single Q

Hand 2 (a) Yes (b) 5D

Keith Bennett:

Yes I bid - 5D - I think there is a good chance that partner can cover 2 of my losers but 6D is probably not there. If I make a try of 4H or 5C it may make it possible for the opposition to find a save (or even a make).

Jeremy Dhondy: (a) Yes (b) 5D

I assume 2D was an attempt at underbid of the week. I would have doubled. Yes I bid again and if I am the aforementioned trappist and don't speak then I use my bidding box. I bid 5D because even if by some magic partner held the SK and the CA six would still not be cold and I don't think I want to play for totally magic cards.

Alan Kay: (a) Yes (b) 5D

5D There is only about a maximum of ten points between your partner and south. South could be weakish with a major two suiter with at least five spades. Your defensive prospects are not good against a spade contract with a possible diamond void. Four of a major for the opposition is a distinct possibility. Bidding Five diamonds gives the defence a guess and even if they can double for two off against a possible major suit contract would be a reasonable save.

Peter Lee: ((a) Yes (b) 5D

I bid 5D. 3NT is very unlikely to make, and I don't see how a game try of 3S or 4C can ever help. Partner must have something, and K of spades should be enough for 5D on a spade lead. However we may have 3 top losers and there is a case for only bidding 4D.

Victor Silverstone: (a) Yes (b) 3NT

Do I bid? – For sure – only laryngitis or no bidding box would stop anyone.

What do I bid? – **3NT** -3D promises little but should have something. There seems to be a lot of Miltons in this deck and it sounds like LHO has opened with long clubs and shape and RHO is bidding with 6-5 in majors. If partner can stop clubs and not spades then West will have to switch to the right major. If all partner has is a spade stop in an otherwise paralytic hand he will be mindful of the fact that I did not bid 3S over 1S if we play that as asking for a spade stop and will remove to 4D. If 3NT is doubled I will think again. 3 spades (showing spade values as I play) is a pointless effort as is double. 4 diamonds is a sensible alternative and rates to make 10 tricks for an easy 130 if they let us play. If opposition continue to 4 hearts I will double (nervously) and lead a club.

Moderator:

Hand 3 Dealer North NS Love All, Pairs.

North: ♠AT2♥KQJT54♦KJ♣J6

N	E	S	W
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1H	P	1NT	P
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? Do you bid? What do you bid?.

Rank the possible bids.

Hand 3

Keith Bennett: 2NT

Yes I bid prefer 2NT. Rate Pass, then 3H, then 2H then 3NT as possible alternatives. We are likely to make the same number of tricks in NT as H unless partner can provide some ruffing value with 2-3-4-4 shape for example and this gives him the opportunity to go back to hearts. This of course is a gamble that

the opposition can not set their own suit first and at teams I would be more likely to play in hearts.

Jeremy Dhondy:2H

I would only consider 2H or 3H. Raising NT is out because it needs more magic cards, say two aces and one of those needs to be the HA. I would, uncharacteristically, underbid slightly by bidding 2H. If it were teams and I was vulnerable I would bid 3H.

Alan Kay:3H

You have an excellent heart suit and game is a possibility if partner is maximum for his bid and has something in the minors, which is a distinct possibility. A pass is possible but I would prefer to play in a heart contract, as you have to set up the hearts. Three hearts is a slight overbid whereas, Two hearts is in my view an underbid. Two No Trumps does not describe your shape and I think you are too strong to pass.

Peter Lee: 2NT

I bid 2NT. 3NT is probably the most likely game to make. I rate 2H a close second as this may be the limit. 3H is next but does not bring NT into the game. Pass next, though if we are making 2H which is very likely we need to make 2NT, and if so bidding 2NT brings game into prospect. 3NT and worse still 4H are both wild punts. Can't think of any other vaguely intelligent bid.

Victor Silverstone: 2H.

2H Going for the safe plus at pairs, **Pass**- Easy to visualise hands where NT is best as well as disastrous 3H. **3 hearts** - 4 hearts is a possibility and may even be lay down. The problem with 3 hearts, is that many of the hands on which partner raises will provide poor chances and when he passes 1 down will be a real possibility.

2NT Since I suspect that the field will be playing in hearts and that some will reach 4 hearts facing a maximum then on the basis that this will fail there is little point in trying for 3NT. and if there are more tricks in hearts than its best to stop in 1NT.

As an aside, transfers after a 1NT response has an increased following. Using this method provides the option of bidding 2 diamonds – showing a 6 card heart suit and following with 2NT over partner's 2 hearts to show an invitational 6-3-2-2.

Hand 4

Hand 4: Dealer West EW Vul, Pairs.

West: ♠6♥76♦AKJ72♣QJT74

W	N	E	S
1D	P	1S	P
2C	P	2H ¹	P
3C	P	3H	P
?	What do you bid now? Why?		

¹ 4th Suit Forcing. Your agreement with partner is that a direct bid of 3H (rather than 2H), would have shown 6S and 5H. You have not discussed the actual sequence.

Keith Bennett: 4C

4C I seem to have a strange agreement that I have discussed the 6S 5H option but not what other corresponding bids would mean. I think that partner is expecting 3H to be forcing otherwise how are you able to develop strong hands. I have described my 5 5 shape already but there does not seem to be any other suitable bid available.

Jeremy Dhondy: 4C

I would bid 4C showing that I had at most one spade and no heart stop and a fifth club, so not a

bad description really. If 3NT is right then partner has had about 41 goes to bid it. 3H in my book was forcing to game so I could consider 5C but it is too unilateral and if partner bids 4S over 4C I will pass because 10 tricks will be easier than eleven.

Alan Kay: Pass

Partners two hearts fourth suit forcing is forcing for one round as his initial bid was at one level (two level would be game forcing). You clearly have a misfit and partner is not interested in bidding no trumps you would have possible communication problems in No Trumps. His heart re-bid must show a genuine suit and he knows you have a maximum of three cards in the majors and is probably five five. I do not think Three hearts is forcing and I favour a pass, with any luck partner can ruff one or two spades and manage to make Nine tricks in hearts. If partner wanted to make a game force he could have bid four hearts.

Peter Lee: 3NT

I bid 3NT. This is to some extent an unfair question. You tell us about this strange agreement (much better to play 3H as a splinter probably agreeing clubs, though could be diamonds), but do not tell us more relevant facts as to whether 2H is game-forcing, or 3C is forcing. I assumed that 2H is not GF and 3C is passable. I have already suggested I do not have a heart stop, and 3NT shows my likely shape. What else could one bid anyway - I don't like 4C as it suggests more shape and goes past what may be the only making game, and other bids seem worse. Partner may be 5-5 in the majors anyway.

Victor Silverstone: 3S

3 Spades – Under the conditions I would treat 3 hearts as 5th suit. This is 1 of many parallel sequences where 3 hearts paints partner into a corner and 3S just says I cannot bid 3NT and I am bidding because I have to make a bid. I probably have 2-1 either way in majors but 1-1 or 2-0 either way is also possible.

Moderator: Yes I am inclined to agree with Peter that this was an unfair question, since most people don't have the agreement that a jump in the fourth suit could be natural showing 6/5 or a good 5/5, and perhaps I should have spelled out more detailed agreements, but at the table there were no more agreements, just two fair players have a game after a minimum of discussion.

ECL Fixture List 2007-2008

Date	Venue	Versus
Oct 14 th	Home	Hertfordshire
Oct 28 th	Away	Norfolk

Dec 9 th	Away	Northants
Feb 3 rd	Away	Cambs & Hunts
Feb 17 th	Away	C University

Panel	Hand 1	Marks	Hand 2	Mark s	Hand 3	Mark s	Hand 4	Mark s	Score
Keith Bennett	1H	10	5D	10	2H	10	4C	10	40
Jeremy D	1H	10	5D	10	2H	10	4C	10	40
Peter Lee	1H	10	5D	10	2NT	7	3NT	7	34
Alan Kay	1H	10	5D	10	3H	7	Pass	6	33
Victor S	1NT	7	3NT	7	2H	10	3S	8	32

Well done Keith and Jeremy, a rare treat to see a Trappist Monk and a up and coming player seating at the same table. I trust Jeremy pays his spokesperson well?

Competitors Comments

Hand 1

Dominic Connolly: 1NT. I'm not adverse to opening 1NT occasionally with this kind of hand, particularly with the systemic tools in place to locate a major suit fit. The problem I want to avoid is a rebid over 2C from partner as a second suit misrepresents the shape of the hand (I like partner to be able to rely on my having 5 cards in the first suit 99% of the time). There is no reason to upgrade this hand and rebid 2NT, particularly over a 2C response. Occasionally there is the chance for a mis-defence. A few years back, representing Bedfordshire in the Telegraph Cup, David Burn on my left opened 1NT with a singleton and a few hands later I had the opportunity to do exactly the same against different opponents. Playing in a major suit game, imagine the surprise of the defender on my left as he confidently attempted to cash the setting trick only to see it ruffed (the director was called but to no avail).

David Woulds: 1D, hoping to hear partner bid a major. Over a 2 club response I will add a point and rebid 2N. 1D may also deflect a diamond lead. The other option may be 1H, but I don't want partner raising me to 2 hearts with only 3 card support.

Stewart Pye: 1H. As this is Pairs I think that many will open and if partner can respond you have at least half the points. I assume you do not have the agreement to open One No Trump with a singleton. With a poor twelve count and 4441 shape a pass is often the best strategy. With a black singleton the suggested opening is the middle suit giving you a re-bid. If partner bids two clubs you have to bid two diamonds suggesting a five four shape, however you will be close to holding sufficient points for game. If partner gives preference to hearts at the two level implying a ten eleven count I think I would then bid two spades to show a 4441, inviting partner to bid no trumps if he is unable to support spades. A response of two diamonds would not be ideal as your only re-bid is to support diamonds

Mike Vogel: 1H. This is the traditional treatment with this distribution, and I will not be dismayed by a 2C response. My queen of clubs, though singleton, will be worth its full value, the diamond 10 is a good card and my values are in top cards. I'll upgrade and rebid 2NT.

Hand 2

Dominic Connolly: 3NT. I might be in the minority here but partner has some values in the black suits somewhere and it might just be where I need it. 5D seems a long way off and even at Pairs 4D seems unadventurous. I look silly if LHO cashes five clubs, but the bidding may not be over anyway.

David Woulds: 4D, if we're lucky we might be allowed to play in 5D X'd, but not if we bid 5D straightaway. This deal seems to be a 60 point deck but I suspect South is bidding on exceptional shape alone probably a 6502. 4H is almost certainly coming from North now they have found their 9 card fit. I will then bid 5D (fully expecting this to make) which North will whack and give South a real headache whether to pull it to 5H.

Stewart Pye: 5D There is only about a maximum of ten points between your partner and south. South could be weakish with a major two suiter with at least five spades. Your defensive prospects

are not good against a spade contract with a possible diamond void. Four of a major for the opposition is a distinct possibility. Bidding Five diamonds gives the defence a guess and even if they can double two off against a possible Major suit contract would be a reasonable save

Mike Vogel: 3NT. N/S don't seem to be supporting each other, so I suspect partner may hold clubs and spades, though not with much on top. 3NT might also stop them bidding a making 4H [If they do I'll lead my club and then under lead the diamonds]. I know 3NT is a gamble but I don't come intending to impersonate a lobotomised cabbage [even though that's often winning bridge!].

Hand 3 2NT

Dominic Connolly: 2NT With all my soft values I think I'm worth one more go and 2NT appears so much more suitable than re-bidding some number of hearts. 2NT:10, 3H:7, 2H & Pass:5

David Woulds: 3H, this is close between 3H, 2NT & 2H. It's pot luck really. I wouldn't be 100% happy with any rebid as there's no rebid to show your exact strength as your hcp (KJ stiff and Jx) are very suspect and all you know about partner's shape is that he a maximum of 3 spades, but for me 3H is the closest to state the nature of your hand. Rank the bids as 3H 1st, 2NT 2nd, 2H 3rd.

Stewart Pye: 3H You have an excellent heart suit and game is a possibility if partner is maximum for his bid and has something in the minors, which is a distinct possibility. A pass is possible but I would prefer to play in a heart contract, as you have to set up the hearts. Three hearts is a slight overbid whereas, Two hearts is in my view an underbid. Two No Trumps does not describe your shape and I think you \are too strong to pass

Mike Vogel: 3H, 3NT, Pass, 2H, 2NT. 3NT may see your entry knocked out and/or the oppos establish their tricks before the HA is knocked out. 2NT is neither here nor there and partner won't know on what to base his decision. 2H will go plus, but is rather pessimistic for the hand. Ditto pass, but it has the merit of going for the extra 10 points. 3H looks to me the safest and most informative way of inviting game and informing partner of why you are doing so. If diamonds are the danger suit, at least you are protected in 3H.

Hand 4

Dominic Connolly: 4H. I support partner at every opportunity and this hand doesn't feel like a NT hand. He should be aware that I may only have a doubleton on this bidding.

David Woulds: 4C, partner obviously has club support here and is possibly asking for a heart stop looking for 3NT, or 3H may be an advance cue bid. If the 4sf bid was game forcing, I'd bid 5C to show I'm minimum not interested in slam.

Stewart Pye: Pass Partners two hearts fourth suit forcing is forcing for one round as his initial bid was at one level (two level would be game forcing). You clearly have a misfit and partner is not interested in bidding no trumps you would have possible communication problems in No Trumps. His heart re-bid must show a genuine suit and he knows you have a maximum of three cards in the majors and is probably five five. I do not think Three hearts is forcing and I favour a pass, with any luck partner can ruff one or two spades and manage to make Nine tricks in hearts. If partner wanted to make a game force he could have bid four hearts

Mike Vogel: 4H. Partner seems to be 5-5, but should still be good value for his 4th suit 2H, i.e. at least opening values himself. With a lesser 5-5 he shouldn't use this sequence [bidding an off-centre 2NT]. He is fully aware of my holding and I am being told to bid again. I prefer 4H to 3NT because of communications.

Moderator: Did all the competitors read the question? If a jump in the 4th suit was being played as natural showing 6/5 (or good 5/5) in spades and hearts, surely a repeat of the fourth suit as in the sequence of hand 4 cannot would be unlikely to show length in spades and hearts. A difficult scenario but can it be right to support the heart "suit"??.

Competitors	Hand 1	Marks	Hand 2	Marks	Hand 3	Marks	Hand 4	Marks	Total
Stewart Pye	1H	10	5D	10	3H	7	Pass	6	33
David Woulds	1D	7	4D	6	3H	7	4C	10	30
Mike Vogel t	1H	10	3NT	7	3H	7	4H	5	29
Dominic Connolly	1NT	7	3NT	7	2NT	7	4H	5	26

BBA Competitions

AGM Simultaneous Pairs Heat 10th May 2007

Pl	North South Pair Names	%
1	Phil Gee & Bob Brown	58.77
2	Chris Parkin & George Goddard	58.36
3	Liz Talbot & Josie Noble	55.89
4	Rita & Brian Keable	52.84
5	Anne & David Gilling	51.98
6	Mike Vogel & Maggie Willis	51.89
7	John Neville & Michael Bale	51.20
8	Tony Dyer & Eric Mason	51.14
9	Tim & Erika Sharrock	50.68

Pl	East West Pair Names	%
1	Les Calver & Terry Pearce	69.65
2	David Harris & Jon Williams	63.48
3	Lynne Emmett & Ron Davis	60.30
4	Brian & Maureen Stairs	57.68
5	Derek & Janet Marsh	54.22
6	Alan Oddie & Dave Dickson	54.13
7	Bert Shiebert & Barry Parkins	53.80
8	Colin O'Hara & Larry Redmond	50.25

Parkin Cup –Inter-county Invitation Teams of 4 Event 15th July 2007

Pl	Team	Names	Session 1 VP's	Session 2 VP's	Total VP's
1	Bedfordshire	Rita & Brian Keable, Alan Shillitoe & Graeme Robertson	55	49	104
2	Hertfordshire	Maria Budd, Malcolm Harris, Rick Irwin & Peter Clark	51	46	97
3	Hertfordshire	Martin & Bobby Rodney, Anne Flockhart & Mike Hancock	26	66	92
4	Gloucestershire	Judy & Allan Sanis, Guy van der Gucht & Paul Ford	44	44	88
5	Bedfordshire	Ron Davis, John Neville, David Dickson & Gina Dunn	44	41	85
6	London	Simon Cocheme, Tim Gauld, Brian McGuire & Brian Ransley	51	26	77
7	Bedfordshire	Chris Parkin, Mike King, Val Lawson & Ian Wilson	41	34	75
8	Bedfordshire	Tim Sharrock, Bernard O'Connor, Les Calver & Terry Pearce	39	17	56
9	Suffolk	John & Maureen Heath, Rick & Fleur Waters	9	37	46

This was the second year of the Parkin Cup, with five teams of four from neighbouring counties taking on four teams of Bedfordshire players. Last year the event was played as teams of eight, and Bedfordshire found it hard to put out top teams to attract interested visitors. This year Bedfordshire did manage to win the event, but on the whole our representation was poor with many so called good players absent, and though the day was enjoyed by all present (particularly the Suffolk squad) it is difficult to see this event surviving, unless a formula can be found for selecting the strongest possible Bedfordshire teams, and hoping to attract strong teams from outside the county.

Champions Cup 14th June 2007

1	Angela & Richard Chester	65.50
2	Maggie Willis & Mike Vogel	64.59
3	Monica Lucy & Les Calver	60.27
4	Stewart Pye & Chris Challinor	57.82
5	Sharon Richmond & Roger Perrott	56.21
6	Phil Titchner & Miram Jones	56.20
7	Bill Stanley & Bert Shiebert	55.85
8	Derek & Janet Marsh	55.32
9	Ron Davis & Alan Oddie	55.28
10	Brian & Maureen Stairs	53.22
11	Colin O'Hara & Peter Scott	52.97
12	Annabel Nelms & Joan McKillop	52.91
13	Margaret Jones & Alf Hitchcock	52.44
14	Peter Dredge & Tony Drakard	52.41
15	Bob Brown & Phil Gee	50.79
16	Liz Talbot & Josie Noble	50.52
17	Anne & David Gilling	50.23

An excellent turn out for the event (31 pairs), with Angela & Richard Chester just holding off Maggie Willis & Mike Vogel. An interesting statistic five mixed pairs appearing in the top six. What does that prove? A excellent performance from Sharon Richmond & Roger Perrott on fifth position, newcomers on the Bedfordshire bridge scene. We hope to see them return.

Taking the pain -a winning Psyche!

Suppose you and partner are playing North and South with the following cards, dealer East, NS vul.
Dealer passes, how do you proceed? Seeing all the cards you would want to reach 6H wouldn't you?

Piece of cake you say no problem.

North South So how would you fare in the following auction:

♠J9	♠AKxxx	E	S	W	N	
♥AJ64	♥QT9xx	P	1S	P	2C	So far no problem.
♦AKQ	♦-	2H	P	P	?	
♣Axxx	♣KTx					

What would you do as South over 2H? One normal "expert" approach is to play takeout doubles in this position, so you pass and hope partner can reopen with a takeout double. Now what should North do? Well the winning move is to double for takeout, and consider ones options after partners action. If you do that you may smoke out East, who doesn't have hearts but J to 8 diamonds!.. Now you have a chance to get back to hearts or take a penalty. It may not be easy to reach 6H but you might. Now be honest would you have doubled 2H at the table or bid 3NT as did North at the table? Unlucky. Make a note that East is a dangerous player. Take the pain!.

Bedfordshire Teams of Four League and KO Cup 2007/2008

Only two divisions this season, an elite division 1, with four teams, playing each other on a home and away basis and a larger eight team division 2 in a simple all play all format.

Division 1

Double Shuffle: Maureen Stairs, Brian Stairs, Barbara Taylor, Brian Taylor, **Eagles:** Richard Last, Peter Last, Bob Brown, Bob Gillett, Terry McCann., **Grasshoppers Kempston:** Alan Shillitoe, Greg Ward, Rita Keable, Brian Keable. **Late Entry:** David Woulds, Mike Lawson, Angela Chester, Richard Chester. **Tudor Rose:** Alan Oddie, Ron Davis, David Harris, Jon Williams.

Tudor Rose must be favourites, with Grasshoppers Kempston, a new name for the old Spartak Kempston, in the second slot. Are Late Entry robust enough to succeed at this level of play?

Division 2

Cricketers: Ted Lowther, George Goddard, Paul Kilduff, Keith Bennett. **McTitans:** Phil Titchner, Elaine McAllister, Miriam Jones, Martin McAllister. **Scratch:** Maureen Westley, Judi Malpass, Roger Gaudoin, Peter Malpass. **Tanglin:** Roy Drage, Gwynne Hughes, Melek Drage, Graham Pointer, Colin O'Hara, Larry Redmond. **Tetrad:** Chris Parkin, Val Lawson, John Hurst, Ian Wilson.

Ultimate Force: Linda Tigwell, Chris Challinor, William Marsden, Stewart Pye. **Valiant Warriors:** Tony Drakard, Valerie Eaton, Bharat Sanghrajka, Val Jarrett. **Wrest Park:** Eric Audsley, Paul Miller, Wendy Audsley, Vic Rees.

A difficult call, all the teams have some experienced players, but no one stands out as a clear winner. My best guess is that Tetrad or Ultimate Force could do the business, but William Hill won't be getting a visit from the editor this side of Christmas.

Knockout Cup

<i>Round 1</i>	<i>Round 2</i>	<i>Round 1</i>	<i>Round 2</i>
<i>Late Entry</i>		<i>Grasshoppers</i> <i>Kempston</i>	<i>Grasshoppers</i> <i>Kempston</i>
<i>Eagles</i>		<i>Bye</i>	
<i>Ultimate Force</i>	<i>Ultimate Force</i>	<i>Double Shuffle</i>	<i>Double Shuffle</i>
<i>Bye</i>		<i>Bye</i>	
<i>Tetrad</i>	<i>Tetrad</i>	<i>Valiant Warriors</i>	<i>Valiant Warriors</i>
<i>Bye</i>		<i>Bye</i>	
<i>Tudor Rose</i>		<i>Exiles</i>	
<i>Bye</i>	<i>Tudor Rose</i>	<i>Bye</i>	<i>Exiles</i>

Double Shuffle: Maureen Stairs, Brian Stairs, Barbara Taylor, Brian Taylor. **Eagles:** Richard Last, Peter Last, Bob Brown, Bob Gillett, Terry McCann. **Exiles:** Michael Bale, John Neville, Tim Nash, Mark Westley. **Grasshoppers Kempston:** Alan Shillitoe, Greg Ward, Rita Keable, Brian Keable. **Late Entry:** David Woulds, Mike Lawson, Angela Chester, Richard Chester. **Tetrad:** Chris Parkin, John Hurst, Val Lawson, Ian Wilson. **Tudor Rose:**, Alan Oddie, Ron Davis, David Harris, Jon Williams. **Ultimate Force:** Linda Tigwell, William Marsden, Chris Challinor, Stewart Pye. **Valiant Warriors:** Tony Drakard, Bharat Sanghrajka, Valerie Eaton, Val Jarrett.

Only nine teams, an all time low?. In the top half of the draw Tudor Rose look to be the betting mans favourite. The bottom half the draw contains three teams of Division 1 standard, and Grasshoppers – last years knockout winners will have much harder route this season, if they are to retain their title. I predict a Tudor Rose v Grasshoppers Kempston final, with Tudor Rose as the favourites.

PERRY DARWEN

Perry Darwen a member of the county at various times during the nineties and the early parts of the this decade, died in Jersey in June 2007 after a protracted battle against cancer of the oesophagus. Perry had played bridge for forty or more years, at national, county and club level, and loved the game. At heart he was a rubber bridge player, knowing how to play the opponents just as well as he played the game, yet he played duplicate at county level for many counties including Bedfordshire, Suffolk and the Channel Islands.

He was a kind gregarious man, fond of good food (a great cook), and the odd glass (or even several) of wine or beer, who was always good company. A good friend to many.

He will be greatly missed by his family and friends, his partner Ros Bavin, and by many bridge players across the country.

Brian Keable

Hands for the January Bidding Competition

Hand 1: Dealer South Game All, Swiss teams.

East: ♠♥AT2♦AKQ9652♣1042

S	W	N	E
1S	P	P	2D
P	P	2S	?

(A) Do you agree with East's 2D bid. What would you have bid? (B) What do you do now?

Hand 2: Dealer East NS Vul, Swiss Teams

North: ♠T7♥984♦A6♣AQJ542

E	S	W	N
P	1D	4H	?

Do you bid? What do you bid? Why?

Hand 3 Dealer North, NS Vul All, Pairs.

North: ♠102♥QT87632♦-♣9876

N	E	S	W
2C ¹	2S	P	4S
X	P	?	

¹ Acol 2C Game force or 23+ bal

(A) Do you agree with South's pass over 2S. What would you have done?

(B) What should South do now?

(C) What would you do if North had passed 4S?

Hand 4: Dealer West Game All, Teams of 8.

West: ♠K854♥K432♦T542♣7

N	E	S	W
P	P	1NT ¹	P

¹ 12-14

What do you bid? Pass or 2C Stayman?

Eastern Counties League 2007-2008

Essex Home 9th September 2007

Team	IMPs	In	Out	VPs	Players
A	77	116	39	20	Alan Shillitoe, Greg Ward, Alan Oddie, Ron Davis, John Neville, Mike Bale, Brian & Maureen Stairs
B	72	65	137	1	Angela & Richard Chester, John Hurst, David Willett, Maggie Willis, Mike Vogel, Mike Lawson, David Woulds
C	-14	96	112	7	Val Lawson, Ian Wilson, Les Calver & Terry Pearce, Brian & Barbara Taylor, Niall Perry, Barry Holmes

The second match under Alan Oddie's leadership and a bit of a mixed bag. At the coalface the A team provided him with an excellent second victory. The other matches were less successful. Unavailable pairs and last minute changes left an unfamiliar B team without resource against an aggressive Essex squad. The C team had a small loss due mainly to one terrible set when 34 imps were lost.

Bridge Humour

Hugh Ross (US expert) is playing 7NT and the fellow to his right is dying to lead an ace. Hugh says to him: "I have some good news and some bad news for you. The good news is that know you have an ace to lead, the bad news is that your partner is on lead." Partner leads the wrong suit and Hugh makes the contract.