



# HBA Online News

Issue 1: February 2016

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## **Forthcoming events**

### **Cadet Pairs Final:**

Bridge Centre, 7.30pm on Friday 19 February 2016  
(for pairs who have qualified in one of the club heats)

### **Really Easy Pairs:**

Village Hall, Hatfield Heath, 2pm on Friday 4 March 2016

### **Marjorie Lukyn Charity Cup Final:**

Bridge Centre, 7.30pm on Friday 11 March 2016 (for pairs who have qualified in one of the club heats)

### **Seniors Pairs**

(including buffet lunch): Bridge Centre, 11am on Tuesday 19 April 2016  
Entry forms for all these events can be found in the 2015/2016 HBA Competitions Programme or via the "Entry Forms" tab on the left hand column of the home page at [www.hertsbridge.co.uk](http://www.hertsbridge.co.uk) "



## **Meet Our Chairman**

Richard Banbury took over this role from Bernard Eddleston who retired at the AGM in May 2015. This is Richard's second term as chairman having served in 2003/4, after originally joining the HBA Committee as Treasurer. However he was obliged to step down when his company asked him to take up a 6 year appointment in Moscow, where he was General and Finance director for Nortel.

Richard learnt to play bridge on a school cruise and followed this up at University when he won the British Universities Championship. He went on to play at the Owl and Pussy Cat Bridge club. Richard is now retired and fills his time playing bridge, mostly at Watford, where he is

Competitions Secretary and as a qualified TD running club sessions at Henley and Richmond, for Herts, London, Middx & Surrey counties and as a Trainee EBU Congress Director.



## **Hearty congratulations to Bernard for winning Dimmie Fleming Award 2015.**

Bernard joined the Executive Committee of Hertfordshire in 2002 as Treasurer. He was an EBU shareholder from 2002 until 2015 and attended most shareholder meetings. In 2008 he was elected President (Chair) of the County Association and was responsible for ensuring a smooth transition to Universal Membership. As Chair he placed particular emphasis on the executive committee being more accountable to members through the publication of all committee decisions, clear selection criteria for County representation

and the introduction of a regular newsletter to members. He established meetings with the Chairs of all affiliated clubs and made a point of visiting all affiliated clubs in the County.

Bernard became a trustee of English Bridge Education and Development (EBED) in 2014 and continues in that role with a particular emphasis on developing teaching bridge in schools.

Bernard decided to retire as President of the Hertfordshire bridge association in May 2015 but has been the driving force making the County association more efficient and relevant to its members and affiliated clubs.

## **Gerald Everitt**

As many of you know Gerald Everitt, a stalwart of the HBA and St Albans BC, recently passed away - and once again we would like to express our own sadness about that loss, and our condolences on behalf of the county's bridge players to his wife and family.

## An Interesting board from the HBA County Suffolk Match

By Derek Oram

**Board 10 BOTH Vul -  
Dealer East**

	♠ 7 ♥ Q72 ♦ 5 ♣ AQJT7653	
♠ 9653 ♥ J98 ♦ 9432 ♣ 42	N W            E S	♠ AKQJ1082 ♥ 5 ♦ KQ87 ♣ 8
	♠ 4 ♥ AK10643 ♦ AJ106 ♣ K9	

This dramatic board came up in the county match against Suffolk. A slam in clubs or hearts is cold on the N/S cards but East will compete vigorously with a strong hand. At our table, despite holding an Acol 2 in spades, we never even got to bid the suit! Celia opened a Precision 1♣, South overcalled 2♥ and I passed (0-4). North eventually came out of the tank with 5♣ and Celia judged the 5 level to be too high and passed. I would have thought that South had an obvious 6♣ but chose to pass so Suffolk scored a modest +620 with 5♠ due to lose -800. Roger Gibbons opened 2♣ (Acol 2) and after a competitive sequence in hearts and clubs, also judged to pass 5♣. At the other two tables in the A team, 5♠ was bid and doubled.

The most spectacular result was at Malcolm Harris's table for the B team. Unfortunately, N/S just kept bidding hearts over Malcolm's spades right up to the 6 level, whereupon Malcolm finally run out of patience and doubled. After a non-spade lead it took longer to fumble through the bidding card and establish the score of 1860 (6H\* +1), than to declare 13 tricks. At Jill Mumford's table, she opened 2♣ as East (game force or weak options), South overcalled 3♥, John passed and North bid 5♣. Jill bid 5♠. South bid 6♣ and John made sure he got his money's worth by (correctly) bidding 6♠ on his one count. This was done so convincingly that the final contract wasn't doubled for a fine -300!

For the C team, it looks as though both Herts pairs got away with playing in 5♠ undoubled and the N/S pairs made games at the 5 level.

**It has been another fantastic year for our Eastern Counties squads - The B team have already qualified for the national finals and almost certainly will be joined by the C team. The A team have a very good chance of making it a clean sweep again.**

**WELL DONE EVERYBODY IN THE THREE SQUADS!**

# A Tournament Director Problem

by Gary Conrad

	♠ AJ9732 ♥ 3 ♦ AQ95 ♣ Q6	
♠ KQ5 ♥ Q842 ♦ K76 ♣ KJ5	N  W            E  S	♠ 6 ♥ 976 ♦ 1042 ♣ 1098742
	♠ T84 ♥ AKJT5 ♦ J83 ♣ A3	

**E/W Vulnerable Dealer S**

South is the dealer, but before anyone else has bid, West opens 1NT  
 You, the director are called.

**How do you rule?**

After you have explained the options, North does not accept the 1NT bid.

**What law do you apply now?**

South opens 1H. West now passes.

**What do you rule now?**

The auction continues as follows so North is declarer in 4S.

West	North	East	South
			1H
P	1S	P	2H
P	3D	P	4S
P	P	P	

You should still be at the table, but if you have gone away, you are now called back.  
 Before East leads, North will ask you if there are any lead penalties.

How do you rule?

**ANSWERS**

North must be given the option to accept 1NT, but you need to explain all the other options before he decides – Law 29A

1NT is cancelled – Law 29B

As West substituted a Pass, then East is silenced for the remainder of the auction – Law 31A2(b)

As the bid was No Trumps and so no suit was specified, declarer can prohibit East from leading any one suit (only one!) for as long as he retains the lead – Law 26B.

## **Life is a Cabaret**

### ***Jonathan Mestel***

What good is sitting alone in your room?  
Right at the close of day.  
Bridge is the game to play, old chum,  
Come to the club and play.

Come count your points, come bid thin games,  
Come press for slams, start celebrating;  
Not too slow - your table's waiting.

No use permitting some prophet of doom  
To wipe every smile away.  
Suits sometimes break 3-3, old chum,  
Go down the club and play!

I used to have a girlfriend known as Elsie  
With whom I used to play at the Young Chelsea;  
She wasn't what you'd call a blushing flower;  
As a matter of fact she'd bid three slams an hour.

When dummy went down the kibbitzers would snicker:  
"Declarer's much too high - on pills and liquor."  
But when I saw her drop the missing Queen  
She was the happiest hog I'd ever seen.

And as for me, and as for me  
I made my mind up at the Young Chelsea,  
When I bid, I'll bid like Elsie.

Start by admitting that 24 boards Isn't that long a stay  
Life is a Cabaret, old chum,  
Come to the club and play!

## **Defending against weak twos**

### ***By Peter Clark***

"But I can't even spell Lebensohl, let alone remember it all", wailed John. Janet had some sympathy with her poor husband as she had come across a number of pairs who had experienced problems with this particular convention, but she was determined to try and get it sorted. "With all of these weak two openings being made these days we have to find a good bidding system to combat them" she explained. Janet carefully went through the key elements again and then suggested that they add on extras slowly from there.

The problem with defending against weak twos is that the opponents have already

removed a lot of bidding space. In order to get some of that space back many people play Lebensohl with their take-out doubles. A Lebensohl response of 2NT to a take-out double is an artificial relay that allows advancer to show a whole range of hand types whilst sacrificing a natural 2NT. This is a price well worth paying. One simple element of the system is that advancer can differentiate between a weak hand of approx. 0-6pts and one with 7-10pts, in the following way:

S	W	N	E	
2♠	Dbl	P	2NT*	*Lebensohl
P	3♣**	P	3♦	**Relay

**East has shown 4+ diamonds and 0-6 pts**

S	W	N	E
2♠	Dbl	P	3♦

**East has shown 4+ diamonds and 7-10 pts**

It was just the next day that Janet and John were playing in a duplicate session and John had picked up a very nice hand indeed when the opponents opened a weak 2♠ ahead of him. John made the obvious bid of a take-out double and Janet replied 2NT. John was ready for this eventuality and remembered that he had to make a relay response of 3♣. Much to his delight Janet now bid 3♥ and John was about to raise to 4♥ when he paused to consider. What did this bidding tell him? Yes, he remembered now, Janet had shown between 0 and 6 points for her bidding thus far. If she had both ♥Q and ♦K then game was a very good prospect but at Pairs Janet had warned that it is usually correct to bid more conservatively, so reluctantly John passed.

### N/S Vulnerable Dealer W

	♠ 4 ♥ AK63 ♦ AQ92 ♣ KJ82	
♠ AK10863 ♥ 75 ♦ J83 ♣ 103	N W            E S	♠ J9 ♥ Q108 ♦ K1075 ♣ AQ95
	♠ Q752 ♥ J942 ♦ 64 ♣ 764	

### Bidding

W	N	E	S	
2♠	Dbl	P	2NT*	*Lebensohl
P	3♣**	P	3♥	**relay
P	P	P		

West started with ♠A and switched to ♣10, which Janet covered with ♣J and East

won ♣Q. End-played at this early stage in three suits East exited with their only safe card which was their last spade and Janet ruffed in dummy before playing three rounds of trumps. In with ♥Q, East found themselves end-played once more and Janet had scrambled nine tricks. As North, John was in charge of the Bridgemate device (much like the TV remote control at home!) and he happily proclaimed 87% to N/S on the board as several pairs had played in 4♥ going one or two down. "Maybe this Lebensohl isn't so bad after all", thought John

Later that same evening West opened a weak 2♦ and John passed. Janet bid 2NT to show a balanced 16-18 points with a stop in the weak two suit. This time John was in easier territory. He clearly remembered Janet telling him that it was SYSTEMS ON over a 2NT overcall just as though partner had opened 2NT. He bid 3♦ as a transfer to hearts and then 3NT, before Janet returned to hearts. This was the deal:

**Neither Vulnerable Dealer W**

	♠ 42 ♥ KQ932 ♦ 96 ♣ A1065	
♠ 1098 ♥ 76 ♦ AQ10542 ♣ 98	N  W      E  S	♠ QJ753 ♥ J105 ♦ J8 ♣ K42
	♠ AK6 ♥ A84 ♦ K73 ♣ QJ73	

**Bidding;**

<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>	
2♦	P	P	2NT	
P	3♦*	P	3♥	* transfer
P	3NT	P	4♥	
P	P	P		

Janet rightly judged that her diamond stop was too fragile to stay in no-trumps so she agreed hearts despite her lack of ruffing values. On ♠10 lead Janet had a routine ten tricks. John again entered the score into Bridgemate and was pleased to see a 65% score on the board. 3NT had only made nine tricks or less for South and when North played in 4♥ the contract had failed on a diamond lead from East and subsequent trump promotion. The transfer had done its job well and justified all their extra work on defending against weak twos.



## THE THIRD WAY – 5 CARD MAJORS WITH A WEAK NO TRUMP

*Ian Kemp and Colin Haywood*

Acob, with four card majors and a weak no trump, is the dominant bidding system in Britain. Worldwide, five card majors with a strong no trump is by far the most common system, and Neil Rosen has eloquently argued its case in recent issues of English Bridge. But there is a “third way”, combining five-card majors and a weak no-trump, used by a significant and growing number of players. Our apologies at the outset to those readers who have been playing it longer than us!

### Five card majors

Probably the biggest advantage of five card majors is in competitive auctions. The days when you were peacefully allowed to bid unopposed to your optimum contract are largely gone, especially in tournament bridge. Opponents intervene vigorously, even on peanuts. For example, partner opens 1H at game all and right-hand opponent unhelpfully intervenes with a 3C weak jump overcall, taking away your bidding space. What do you do now with hand 1? Do you bid 3H, or pass?

Hand 1.	Hand 2.	Hand 3.
♠ A4	♠ K1074	♠ K1074
♥ Q94	♥ AK1062	♥ A1062
♦ J962	♦ AQ8	♦ AQ8
♣ J853	♣ 9	♣ K9

In Acob the snag is that if partner has hand 2, with 5 cards, you want to support hearts and indeed 4H should make. But if partner has a balanced hand with only 4 hearts, like hand 3, then even 3H may not be making (especially after a club lead and ruff) whereas 3C is going off. Playing 5 card majors there is no problem; you can confidently support partner with 3H.

It is often easier to judge the level of fit if opener has promised 5 cards, and hence to know whether to pass, bid on or double, using the Law of Total Tricks and the Total Trumps Principle. In high level contracts in particular, these decisions can swing an entire teams match.

5-3 fits are found immediately, but 4-4 fits need more care; negative doubles and checkback are essential. The main drawback with 5 card majors is that some minor suit bids must be “prepared”, showing 3 cards or less. There are a fair number of hands where you have no 5 card major and are out of the 1NT range, so have to open 1C on a 3 card suit. The most difficult shape of all is Hand 3; what do you bid as opener? There are two alternatives; allow 1D to be 3 cards (prepared minors) or bid 1C on two cards (short club). However, this shape is rare and for practical purposes you can assume that 1C shows 3+ cards and 1D is natural with 4+ cards.

### Weak no trump

The weak 1NT opening has two obvious advantages and one more subtle one. Firstly, it removes all the potential rebid problems on minimum balanced hands after a suit

opening. Secondly, it is moderately pre-emptive; if opponents want to overcall, they must now enter the auction at the 2 level. This is especially useful at Pairs, and a 12-14 point 1NT occurs twice as often as a 15-17. In addition, after a one-of-a-suit opening, the NT rebids show extra strength and this can help constructive bidding.

You may miss a 4-4 major fit with a weak NT. For example, consider hands 4 and 5. If you open 1NT on 4, partner passes. If you play a strong NT and open 1C, partner replies 1H and you raise to 2H. An advantage for the strong NT, apparently? But think further; opponents have similar points and an 8 card spade fit, which they are likely to find with a 1 level overcall or double, and outbid you with 2S. The obstructive 1NT opening is far more likely to shut them out of the auction, or they may enter too high on a misfit.

Hand 4.	Hand 5.
♠ K4	♠ 1074
♥ AQ94	♥ J1062
♦ 962	♦ A873
♣ KJ85	♣ Q6

The problem is less marked if one of opener's suits is spades; indeed, with 4 clubs and 4 spades, some traditional Acol players like Peter Donovan (Daily Mail) still advocate bidding 1C and rebidding 1S, rather than opening 1NT.

The main drawback of the weak NT is the risk of incurring a large penalty if doubled – most serious when vulnerable and in Teams competitions (in Pairs, at worst, it is just one bad board).

### **Combining five card majors and the weak NT**

At the simplest level, 5 card major openings can be adopted instead of standard Acol, with minor suit openings possibly being 3 cards. Responses are largely natural. After 1H or 1S, responder can make a minimum raise with 3 card support. Technically, he could also make a jump raise with 3 card support; however, it is more flexible to start with a forcing change-of-suit response, as in Acol, and then jump on the next round, e.g. 1S-2C; 2D-3S. This distinguishes between 3 and 4 card support, helping opener to judge the final contract better. After 1C, responder should bear in mind that opener may only have 3 cards; for example, with a 3-3-3-4 shape, he should respond in NT rather than raising clubs. A “prepared” opening is needed significantly less often when playing the weak NT rather than the strong NT.

Overall, the “Third Way” system presents a viable alternative to the two main natural systems, with both advantages and disadvantages. In Part 2 in the next issue, we will look at some further refinements to the system.

## **Hatfield Heath and Herts and Essex Bridge Clubs**

Hatfield Heath and Herts and Essex Bridge clubs are two clubs that meet in Hatfield Heath on the border of Hertfordshire and Essex. Both clubs place a large emphasis on friendliness. Their membership is drawn from as far afield as Chelmsford and Saffron Walden in Essex and Royston and Hertford Heath in Herts. They are two clubs that belong to the EBU but whose members also visit local non-affiliated clubs. Due to this they have managed to draw some of these players successfully into the more competitive field of the game.

Both clubs have a large membership, Herts and Essex having up to twenty three tables in an afternoon and Hatfield Heath having fourteen or fifteen tables on a Teams Night. Lessons are taught two nights a week and from there the pupils progress first to the Friendly Friday Club run on Friday nights, then to Herts & Essex and then on to Hatfield Heath Bridge Clubs. All clubs pride themselves on being friendly while still following the EBU guidelines and rules. These are however, somewhat more relaxed on the Tuesday afternoons as many of the members are still learning. One of the first things the members are taught is to call the director when there is a problem. It has been known for there to be up to thirteen calls on one afternoon, dealt with in an able and friendly manner. This has prevented any arguments or ill-feeling.

Hatfield Heath BC holds two social events in the year – a quiz (non bridge) and a dinner and dance with up to ninety people participating. It also runs a blue-pointed Swiss Teams in October and a charity pairs in January. Herts and Essex runs a bridge drive annually for charity. Both clubs support Grove Cottage the local Mencap Society.

For more information contact [www.hertsandessexbridgeclub.co.uk](http://www.hertsandessexbridgeclub.co.uk) or [www.hatfieldheathbridgeclub.org.uk](http://www.hatfieldheathbridgeclub.org.uk) or email Adrienne Tinn on [shine@adriennetinn.me.uk](mailto:shine@adriennetinn.me.uk)

## **Sonnet to Herts & Essex Bridge Club**

### ***Adrienne Tinn***

Bridge by any other name would be as great -  
An altered quote from verses of the Bard.  
Yet many say, "Oh no! It is too late.  
We cannot learn we'd find it much too hard."  
But, oh dear reader, come and find our place -  
The hall to which we tread with eager feet.  
When parked with care, with smiling happy face  
To red-clothed table head and take our seat.  
No arguments, for if we have a need  
We call, "Director!" who then heads our way.  
"Two Kings of Spades? A puzzle this indeed!"  
Still, wise adjudication wins the day.  
And oh, the chocolate biscuits and the tea!  
A friendly club and bridge – the life for me.