



# SUSSEX COUNTY

## Contract Bridge Association



Newsletter — February 2010  
Editor - Bryan Stephens - karladog@tesco.net

## CENTENARIAN BERTHA



Bertha  
Kremer  
Dersch

100 years  
16th January

Congratulations  
from us all

See pages 3 & 10

**An Apology—** when you are somewhat peeved at your editor having missed your names from the results pages, then what you have to do is to firstly congratulate him and say how much you enjoyed the newsletter, which is most important and then very politely tell him about the omission. That is exactly what Chris Rebbitt did and I promised a very discrete correction and surely there is no better place for that than on the front page.



This is Chris Rebbitt and Alastair Dunbar taken after they had played in the Pairs Final Main event in the Autumn Congress last year having attained joint second place.

A relatively new bridge

partnership, I wish them well and I look forward to printing their names on future results pages.

Chris and Alastair—Am I forgiven?

## Webmaster

**Mervyn Wotton**

looks after the SCCBA website and if you want interesting information on the East/West Sussex bridge scene then visit

**The Sussex County  
Website**

**[www.sccba.co.uk](http://www.sccba.co.uk)**

for

County News and Results  
Clubs & EBU information

Spring Congress

Autumn Congress

Sussex League

Teams competitions

Pairs competitions

Individual competitions

Calendar & Education

Entry forms

Regulations & useful links

Bridge Webs

Newsletters

**Don't just take my word  
Check it out yourself.**

# Something from your Editor

I was never going to print anything that was unpleasantly rude but I did hope to have some mildly rude responses to my invitation for you to let me have your thoughts on meeting Brian Hart on a blind bridge date. You may recall three photographs of Brian wearing garish shirts on the front cover of the October edition. I could easily make up some comments but that's not my style.

I've already apologised once and now I'm going to apologise again and this time to those readers who very kindly had a go at my crossword and found that a couple of clues had less letters indicated than the answers required. Were they put there on purpose to get a reaction?

Talking about the crossword, several got all the answers right except the second word in 18 across where the clue was—*According to Victor, by far the club's best player, but also an insufferable shark who seeks to humiliate opponents for their mistakes.* I had Hideous Bod - Boy & Cow. The correct answer was Hideous Hog which was one of Victor Mollo's vivid characters of bridge players depicted in his *Bridge in the Menagerie* series of books. Victor Mollo died in 1987. He was an editor in the European Service of the BBC, he wrote 30 books on bridge & hundreds of articles and was very active in developing bridge cruises. He had an exceptional life style. Each afternoon he would play bridge at his club, then enjoy a good meal with his wife, affectionally known as the Squirrel and then work through the night until 6am when he would just take a nap.

Perhaps you can identify players in your club with some of Victor's other characters but best you keep the names to yourself.

Apart from **Hideous Hog (HH)** others include:

**Rueful Rabbit(RR)**, a small, timid man who can barely hold his cards together and can't always tell diamonds from hearts, but has such incredible luck that even the cards he accidentally drops (several at once at times) become the right ones.

**Secretary Bird**—who knows the laws of the game perfectly and insists that they are applied to the letter, always to her or his downfall.

**Colin the Corgi**—among the club's younger members, a strong player who is often sarcastic and testy and thus has "all the makings of a future master".

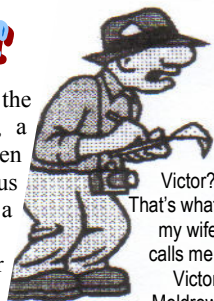
**Oscar the Owl**— Senior Kibitzer at the Griffins, whose role is usually limited to acting as an audience for HH's exploits.

**Walter the Walrus**— whose expertise in and devotion to the Work (*Milton Work*) point-count are matched only by the utter mess he makes of bidding and play.

**Molly the Mule**—the lone recurring female character, who is always certain that she is right and is as stubborn as the proverbial mule.

**Charlie the Chimp**—would rather post mortem the last hand than play the next. He's an exponent of sharp practice at the table, famously producing a remarkable (and impossible under normal bridge circumstances) quadruple squeeze against himself by retaining a small card in order to conceal his own revoke.

**Timothy the Toucan**— as hopeless a player as RR but without RR's engaging qualities. TT tries to make up for his shortcomings by means of an oozing deference for the Menagerie's better players.



I've got an article up my sleeve which identifies club types who regularly sit in the same seat in the club room and who arrive at the club particularly early so as to secure 'their seat'. Perhaps for the June issue.

I am grateful to Andrew Robson for his contributions which I was able to include in all three of last year's newsletters but he has hung up his hat. However I am delighted that Richard Fedrick agreed to write a few words and his very interesting article appears on page 14.

# From the Pen of your Chairman



Hello everyone and I wish you all a very happy and healthy 2010. Snow seems to have featured large so far this year and I'm sure, like me you have missed your regular bridge sessions.

The weather was the cause of cancelling the Basic Bridge Pairs at East Grinstead and we also had to postpone our Charity Sims Pairs until the week beginning March 5th. I am hoping more will enter this event having suffered withdrawal symptoms in January. Our charities this year are Worthing Churches Project for the Homeless and Sussex Wildlife Trust—two very worthy causes so please play if you can.

April will be here before we know it—P2P will be live. I am pleased to tell you that 30 Sussex clubs will be affiliating. If your club or you as a member has any concerns, (your club will have received the Club Package) do ask your committee to let you see this document. On February 16th I will be attending a meeting of EBU County Chairman in London. If you wish, I will take with me any of your concerns, so please get in touch because I hope to have the opportunity of posing many questions.

I hope I can still be playing bridge at 100 years old like Bertha Kremer Dersch who attributes her longevity to our wonderful game. Enjoy your bridge—Jackie Clinton

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## Notes from John Williams as he recalls Bertha Kremer Dersch when she played bridge in the Brighton Area 20—30 years ago

The Avenue had a very strong Tuesday evening duplicate. Worthing had a very successful club also and West Sussex was on the way up. John recalls the best players—Bertha of course, Rene Crouch, Benita Carr, Tom Bradley (the then Chairman) and Dennis Crouch. There was also Ron and Margaret Buddery, Miles and Gladys Hakki and Maurice Weissberger. John also recalls Joan Durran and her husband, Muriel Bailey and her husband Brian. In their Avenue circle in a four week period Bertha would mostly have a game with Rene, Benita, Dennis & himself

Bertha and John had some pretty good sessions together but when she stopped playing in the evenings that is when he started to lose touch. However John remembers one particular afternoon when he made himself available at a little club starting up on the seafront called the Palmeira. Had there been betting on the result, Bertha and John should have been odds on favourites. However lady luck was not on their side and they just had to sit there whilst their opponents did the right thing or the wrong thing at the right time all afternoon.

John's note mentions the one thing at the bridge table Bertha loved and that was to become the declarer and play the hand because if a hand could be made then it was highly likely that Bertha would find the solution.

Bertha and her first husband Aubrey Kremer played for England—and won.

## *A Terrible Start - A Doubtful Start*

Quotes from winners of the **SCCBA Ladies Pairs** at Patcham on 29th November attended by 54 ladies.

Ably assisted by his 'Scorer in Chief' Ron, Director Peter Langston whilst making sure everyone had a good day, did not get off lightly because he was called several times during play just to keep him on his toes so it was said and to give him some gentle exercise. 42 boards were played and a very enjoyable tea was provided by Peter's wife Marit and Joan Hootman and apparently all the ladies wanted the recipes for the super cakes.

Tilly and Fran achieved 56.05%, Sandy Blunt and Brenda Garrini 54.96% and the third place went to Alice Thorpe & Linda Southward with 54.66%.

A close finish on the 4th place Jackie Clinton & Carol Watson 54.46% & equal fifth place were Sally Bugden & Linda Gardner 54.07%, Ann Bennell & Maureen Topley 54.07%



Winners  
Tilly Hennings & Fran Thornton

**NEW YEAR SWISS TEAMS 2010** The New Year Swiss Teams took part at Henfield Village Hall on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Only 28 teams this year instead of the usual 40 but they all enjoyed some excellent bridge hands and a wonderful spread buffet by John Porteous who lived up to his usual high standard with a wide range of hot and cold food.



It was a closely contested match at the top with the overall winners pictured left to right with Jackie Clinton being David Benjamin, Mike Keeping, Matt Read and Philip Hunt with 111 victory points. This team won the trophy last year as well but with one team change. We shall be looking to see if they can do the hatrick next year.

2<sup>nd</sup> Keith Baker, Moira Baker, Tilly Hennings and Roger Pyart with 104 Vp's, 3<sup>rd</sup> Muriel Bailey, Valerie Benson, Nanette and Alan Gillespie with 91 Vp's

Thanks go to the three directors David Galpin, sitting left in the picture, Eddie Williams on the right and David Cross who made the day run so smoothly. These events cannot run without a lot of help from various members so a big thank you to Peter Langston and Ron Robbins for duplimating the boards, to Malcolm Wright for transporting the equipment and to Martin Pool for printing all the entry forms.



**ELIZABETH NORTH TROPHY  
FINAL—** Winners left to right  
David Williams, Alan Gardiner,  
Bill Hensby & Ed Barter.



(Well done guys. Good to see your faces after all these years. Bryan)

**2nd place team**

Richard Shuker, Mike Williams,  
Judy Leddy and Brenda Jones

**3rd place team**

Simon Fishburn, Peter Gannon  
Alan Vandersluis & Bryan Twaite

The SCCBA Devonshire Club Cup event scheduled for Sunday 8th November was cancelled because only two teams entered.

**Henfield Duplicate Bridge Society  
St Barnabas Charity Pairs**

from Bob Whiting

The 7th Charity Pairs event for the Worthing Cancer Hospice on 1st November was extremely well supported with 27½ tables in play. The Henfield Friends of St Barnabas provided an excellent ploughman's lunch and the whole Simple systems event was played in an enjoyable, relaxed but competitive atmosphere watched over by our director Ian Macgregor.

Hilary & Jenny Breeden (Crawley BC)	67.03%
Brian Spears & Jack Vidler (Adur Valley BC)	63.59%
Pat Allen & Joan Morecroft (Thakeham BC)	61.14%
Sue & Bob Best (West Sussex BC)	60.51%

The net proceeds on the day amounted to £1,528 with an anticipated matched donation from the Abbey National Charitable Trust of a further £700, helping to break through our target to raise a tremendous £2,248 for the cancer hospice. The success of the event brings the total raised over the seven events to £10,001.

Our thanks go to the County for the making and loan of the duplimated boards; to the catering team; our director and, of course, to all those who entered and made donations.

This year's event will be held on Sunday 31st October (avoiding the Patcham BC monthly teams) and entry forms will be circulated in due course, but if in doubt please refer to our website for progress and a downloadable entry form.

[www.henfieldduplicatebridge.org.uk](http://www.henfieldduplicatebridge.org.uk)

SCCBA Basic Bridge Pairs held at Bognor on 6th December was won by Barbara Trenchard & Brian Nutt who achieved 64.81% and so narrowly beaten into second place by only 0.23% were Paul Williams & Sheridan Stevens with 64.58% and in third place with 60.42% were Jon and Sonia Fitton

Thanks go to organiser Richard Lowe and Director David Galpin





## Bridge Laws in Practice—Episode 2

Your editor exposes a common, but illegal, practice.

Perhaps you are one of the guilty ones.

Now there's a thought.

Four cards have been played and you have placed your card, face down on the table in front of you as have the other players and then you decide you would like to see the cards that have been played in that trick. What do a lot of players do? I'll tell you what they do and it's illegal but it makes me smile.

The guilty ones, knowing full well what card was played by themselves, nevertheless pick up their own card from the table and without looking at it, because they don't need to look at it, they ask the other players at the table to show the card they have just played and defaced and generally the other players do what is asked without question. The reason I smile is because it seems that the action of facing their own card which they never need to see justifies their asking to see all the other cards. I suppose it would feel uncomfortable to ask for the other cards to be faced and not face their own card.

Law 66 indicates that until a lead is made to the next trick, the declarer or both defenders may re-examine their own defaced card. They may not examine cards of a previous trick. Any player who has not yet turned over their card, thus hiding its face, can ask that all cards or any particular card just played, be shown. **However once a player's own card has been turned over and defaced then the right to see the cards of the declarer, dummy or defenders, is withdrawn.**

### Are you guilty?

On the same subject there's something else I have noticed which although perfectly legal causes me some amusement. If a player asks a specific player to face their defaced card, whether or not their own card has been defaced or otherwise, you will find that inevitably everybody at the table including dummy will face their cards.

What is the big problem about opening 1nt with 12 points comprising three aces?

I'd rather have 3 aces than a 12 point balanced hand consisting of three suits each with KJ.

What do you think?  
Email Bryan at  
[karladog@tesco.net](mailto:karladog@tesco.net)

## THE HENFIELD CANDLES

by Peter J Bates



Photograph kindly provided by  
Roger Poulter who with Jeanne Boydell,  
David Benjamin & David Howard-Huston  
won the trophy in 2009

In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was in Henfield a Rubber Bridge Club which met on Thursday evenings in a room above the George Hotel (the landlord and landlady were bridge players), playing for stakes of 1/2d (one old halfpenny) per 100 points.

In the autumn of 1974 the new Henfield Village Hall was opened and a Village Evening held involving the many thriving village organisations then in existence. Bill Starr from Burgess Hill was a bridge club member and came forward to offer lessons for beginners. A table of four players that

evening invited and encouraged those attending to sign up for the lessons. That event, together with a similar notice in the Parish Magazine, resulted in 70 people signing up for the lessons, which started in early 1975 under Bill's tuition in the Hall on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

The lessons evolved into the formation of Henfield Duplicate Bridge Society (the term 'Society' was felt to be upmarket and differentiated it from the continuing rubber bridge club), with Bill Starr as chairman and Monica Watts as secretary. Bill suggested a bridge congress, using the then relatively new Swiss Teams format, which he christened the **Henfield Candles**. That inaugural event took place in 1976 with some 35 teams participating in the Henfield Village Hall, and catering provided by HDBS members and their spouses.

The Director of that first and many subsequent congresses was Eric Seldon, for many years SCCBA's tournament director, with his wife, daughter and friends. The congress grew steadily and became the largest one-day event in Sussex, with 62 teams crammed into the Hall one year, and that was before the latest hall extension was built.

The quality of the catering was high from the start, and the event was especially noted for variety and quality of summer desserts provided by members and their spouses. However in-house catering became an increasing burden and led to the employment of outside caterers. With the exception of one disastrous year, the standard of catering has remained one of the main attractions of the Henfield Candles, continued over the past few years by John Porteous and his able staff.

The 2010 date for the 35th Henfield Candles is Sunday 6 June at The Henfield Hall, director Martin Pool, cost per team remaining at £84. See HDBS website [www.henfieldduplicatebridge.org.uk](http://www.henfieldduplicatebridge.org.uk) for a Candles entry form, or contact the Congress Secretary, Kathy Whiting on 01403 711707.



## Mandatory or Optional????

Should you bid whilst the stop card placed by a previous player is on the table? The answer seems to depend on whether you use the Orange book from the EBU or the Yellow book—Duplicate Bridge Rules Simplified from Mr Bridge.

The answer revolves around two words 'should' or 'may'.

Law 7B4 in the Orange..... hold on a second.

Sorry about the interruption, but the lady in my house has just remonstrated with me because apparently she was in the small room and the phone was ringing which I did not hear

because—and “can you tell me something—why don’t you put your hearing aids in? - you are going to miss something important one day.” “Yes dear.”

Now where was I? Oh yes. Law 7B4 in the Orange book on page 31 states, that the LHO should not call until the Stop card has been removed yet the Yellow book on page 43 states that the next player may not call until the stop card is removed. Is it should not or may not? It was my understanding that the reason the Stop card should stay on the table for about 10 seconds was to give the opposition a reason to hesitate because in bridge, especially tournament bridge, hesitation can result in a punishable offence for the partnership because of the possible giving of unauthorised information. So I ask the question— **Should you bid whilst the stop card, placed by a previous player, is on the table?**

I sought the answer to this question from our Vice Chairman Eddie Williams who said that the wording in the Orange Book is much clearer so I will reproduce on the next page, the wording from the sections in the Orange Book to which Eddie referred.

Contrary to what your editor believed, Eddie pointed out that there is no punishment for hesitating and then passing because it is the action the partner takes that would be in question. So, no punishment for hesitation and it is perfectly legal to think about what action you might take but players should be aware that if they pause for thought, their partner may take some action that they might otherwise have not taken and their partner may be in trouble if the director deems they have taken action based on the hesitation.

Continued on next page





## The Law states— when using bidding boxes.

7B4 Before making a jump bid (ie a bid at a higher level than the minimum in that denomination) a player should place the Stop card in front of him, then place his call as usual, and eventually remove the Stop card. His LHO should not call until the Stop card has been removed.

7B5 The Stop card should be left on the table for about ten seconds, to give the next player time to reflect. It should not be removed prematurely.

7B6 After a jump bid, the next player **MUST** pause for about ten seconds before calling. It is an offence either not to pause or to show indifference when pausing. If the Stop card has been removed prematurely or has not been used, an opponent should nevertheless pause as though the Stop card had been used correctly.



## The Law states—when bidding boxes are not used.

7C1 Before making a jump bid, a player should say “stop” or “skip bid” to give the next player time to reflect.

7C2 Just as when passing, a player can use “pass” or “no bid” but should not change from one to the other during a session, so players should be consistent in the use of “stop” or “skip bid”.

7C3 After a jump bid, the next player **MUST** pause for about ten seconds before calling. It is an offence either not to pause or to show indifference when pausing. If the opponent does not say “stop” or “skip bid” as required, the next player should pause as though the warning had been given correctly.

So in a nutshell then—If you intend to jump either as opener, overcaller or responder and are using bidding boxes, display the stop card clearly before you bid by placing it on the table and leaving it there for about 10 seconds. The following player should not call until the Stop card has been removed.



How many times have you experienced the player on your right having made a jump bid without first tabling the stop card and then quickly showing the stop card after you have either bid or passed?

Perhaps that previous player is you!!

Bertha Kremer Dersch celebrated her 100th birthday on January 16th. Born in Leeds in 1910, she has lived through two World Wars, travelled all over the world and, no matter where she went, she played bridge at international standard.

Her first marriage was to handsome lawyer, Aubrey Kremer who partnered her when they played for England - and won! They were not only a brilliant partnership but also one of the best looking couples in the tournaments.



Bertha's life was not without tragedy. She lost her only child, Valerie aged 22 years. Aubrey died not long after and Bertha had to face life without her adored husband and child. It was bridge that gave her the will to go on. She made friends through bridge; it encouraged her to go out and socialise and she became a role model for many other women who were widows and had faced tragic loss.

If you were to ask Bertha to what she owed her longevity, she would undoubtedly tell you that bridge has kept her brain active and she is, at 100 years old, a remarkably alert and intelligent woman.

Bertha is also a brilliant cook and specialised in baking wonderful pastries and cakes. When she lived in Brighton, her legendary parties, which she catered herself, were famous for her good food and delicacies. Her artistic presentation was a feature of her dishes. At 95 she produced the most beautiful meal for dozens of guests, rising at 4 am to make sure everything was ready on time.

When her second husband Mark Dersch died in April 2007, Bertha decided to move to London to be near her family. There she has made a new life for herself. At Christmas 2009, she was desperately ill in St Mary's Hospital Paddington but with her usual determination and fortitude, she rallied and went home where she celebrated her 100th birthday in her own home, receiving her card from Queen Elizabeth during a weekend of family celebrations where she reigned as usual -



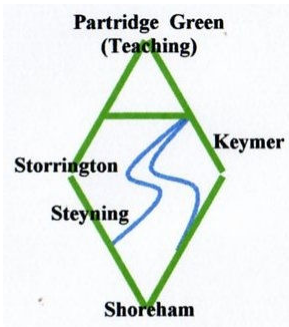
Wording on the Cake  
Auntie Bertha  
Our living Legend

Bertha, The Queen of Diamonds.

## The Adur Valley Diamond

The Valley Bridge Clubs was born by the handing over of Storrington Duplicate Bridge Club by the late and much missed Beryl Pitman, to Kathy & Bob Whiting in January of last year. One year on, Adur Valley comprises four clubs with over 200 members, two teaching sessions and a newly launched Mini-bridge club at West Hoathly Primary School.

Kathy & Bob put the success of the clubs down to the host system which operates throughout Adur Valley, and the friendly atmosphere in which their sessions are played. All experience levels are welcome and those seeking an improvement or broadening of their game are welcome at one of the two teaching sessions held at Partridge Green. Over 50 players have attended the first two teaching blocks which, if space permits, also offer access to the sessions on a pay-as-you-go basis rather than having to commit to a full ten week course.



Plans for 2010 involve two one-day events for club members.

Full details can be found on the club website at [www.adurbridge.org.uk](http://www.adurbridge.org.uk) by emailing Kathy or Bob at [adur.bridge@btinternet.com](mailto:adur.bridge@btinternet.com) or telephoning them on 01403 711707.

## Peggy Eastwood by Peter Bates

Peggy, a member of the SCCBA for many years, died at Patcham Nursing Home after a long illness on the 8th December, a few days after her 92nd birthday. She was a long standing and much loved member of Henfield DBS and will be remembered for her countless 3nt contracts and aggressive bidding style. A service to celebrate Peggy's life was held at Woodvale Crematorium with a reception afterwards at Preston Park Hotel.



1917 - 2009

Peggy was a member of the Sussex committee in the 1970s/80s and for some years was part of the EBU organising group for the Brighton Summer meeting. One of her tasks was a find fill-in local players to replace those who had either not turned up or had fallen sick during the congress. Some of us remember receiving welcome 1/4 green points in that situation at no cost.

### *Following the June issue*

Words that describe the joining of two words and combining their meanings like Guesstimate, brunch, motel and smog are PORTMANTEAU words and as has been pointed out by one reader, that word in itself is a combination of porter (a case to carry) and manteau (coats).

Thanks go to the several readers came up with the correct word.

# Grand Slam

*Pyers Pennant September 2009*

Earlier this afternoon, Judith picked up a hand containing nine Hearts to the Ace King Queen. When her partner opened the bidding with one Diamond, she knew she was going to finish in seven. Her left-hand opponent doubled and led the Ace of spades, but she ruffed that and easily ran off the next twelve tricks. That was 2470 points on one hand. When did she last bid and make a Grand Slam? Last year? What a story she has to tell!

She is on a high, turning the event over in her mind, as she drives gently home through the countryside, bluebells below, oak trees above with leaves just unfurling, olive gold in slanting sunshine. Filling her rear view mirror is an SUV, a Cherokee, swerving about. Stupid man, he should know that there is nowhere to overtake along here.

He is spoiling her reverie. He is much too close, but she knows how to deal with that. A light touch on the brake. The response from behind is immediate. A screech of brakes is followed by a prolonged blast on the horn and flashing headlights. Oh well, she will soon be turning off this road.

Two miles later, he is still there, two inches behind her, fist on horn. There is half a mile of straight road up the hill, his first chance to overtake, except that there is a stream of vehicles coming down fast towards her. She has to cross that stream to get into the narrow lane leading home. She puts out her turn-right indicator and slows down. But what is this? The Cherokee is turning right too! What business does he have down the lane? There is a moment of panic as she realises that his business is with her; she is to be the victim of a road rage incident.

Bridge players often need to make unexpected decisions quickly. In the stream of oncoming vehicles, there is a small gap where a heavy lorry has not quite kept up with the cars in front. She turns right through that gap, but in the entrance of the lane she stops, her tailgate barely off the main road. Yes, he is still two inches behind her. She waits just long enough, and then, ignoring the screeching tearing shattering twisting spectacle behind her, she drives the last few hundred yards home to tea. A vulnerable Grand Slam, and doubled as well; what a story she has to tell!

## It happened at the club

An elderly gentleman in a 1c contract, says to elderly lady partner when her dummy hand goes down.

"You've got 6 points my dear! Why didn't you bid? We should be in 3nt."

Said lady "I never respond with 6 points and how should I know you had 19 points?"

Play continues with no further comment 9 tricks are made, score 110 and a top because all the 3nt bids failed by 1 trick.

Wry smile on lady's face  
"that's bridge my darling"

## A Priori - Hmmm I'm 'avin a bit o trouble Betty as Frank Spencer used to say.

I come across the adjective 'a priori' many times but only, it seems, when reading bridge articles and am never and still not entirely satisfied with the answers I get when either consulting the dictionary or 'those that know' at the bridge club. Strange that the 'a' in front of priori is not an indefinite article but part and parcel it seems of the main word as demonstrated in the following sentences:

*I investigated further and came up with the following explanation based upon the a priori expectation of the hand distribution. Another one In a court of law, a priori assumptions about guilt and innocence can be dangerous. Also in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's The Poison Belt – we should not a priori have expected it, but it is undoubtedly a fact.*

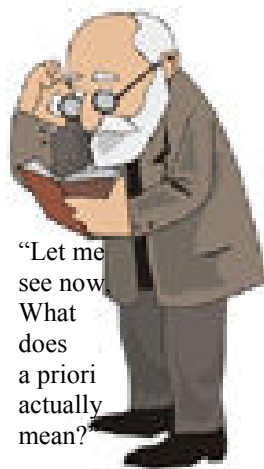
Betwixt April Fools Day and Apron in my dictionary three definitions are given of 'a priori'. 1) Based on something known – working from something that is already known or self-evident to arrive at a conclusion. 2) Assumed known or assumed without reference to experience or 3) Made beforehand – conceived or formulated before investigation or experience. Yes, well.

I can better understand the definition as an idiom which comes out as – Accepted without being thought about or questioned. So using that definition, if I cannot understand a word or phrase or if I come across a situation in the street or at home and accept the situation without being thought about or questioned, is that – a priori? If I come across a situation at the bridge table and accept that situation without being thought about or questioned, is that – a priori?

Then I come across – **a priori assumption** as a noun from Latin. An assumption that is true without further proof or need to prove it. It is assumed the sun will come up tomorrow. However, it has a negative side: an a priori assumption made without question on the basis that no analysis or study is necessary, can be mental laziness when the reality is not so certain.

When I read Andrew Robson's column for example and see the printed words or is it word? – a priori – I start 'avin a bit o trouble Betty.

Somebody please sympathise with my problem and let me have some simple definitions on the meaning of – a priori – as it relates to bridge. (ed)





## The Principle of Restricted Talent

by Richard Fedrick

AKxxx

xx

AKQxx

x

xx

AK109xxx

x

xxx

The hand on the right occurred in the penultimate round of the Brighton Swiss Teams this summer:

South opened a feisty 4♥, North wheeled out Blackwood and the partnership duly ended in 6♥. West led a top club, and at trick 2 switched to a spade. A heart to the Ace brought the Jack from West; South crossed back to dummy and led another heart, on which East followed with a small card. Decision time! Finesse or drop?

In isolation, almost everyone knows that the odds favour (by nearly 2:1) taking a finesse on the second round; some people even know why that is true (just mumble ‘Bayes Theorem’ if anyone asks, it’s bound to impress them). The cognoscenti refer to this as the ‘Principle of Restricted Choice’.

On this deal, the textbook odds of 11:6 on the finesse are irrelevant – if you believe West is even vaguely competent (West was me as it happens, so you can make your own mind up), then playing for the drop is practically 100%. Think about the switch at trick 2; West could have played another club, and by forcing dummy to ruff would have given you no option but to play Hearts from the top. Instead, West went out of his way to allow you to take a second-round finesse: therefore he must have the QJ doubleton.

At the table, declarer (eventually, after much angst) drew the correct inference and played the King of hearts to earn 13 imps for his team.

The importance of negative inference – drawing conclusions from what opponents don’t do – is not as widely appreciated as it should be. Another common example is a layout like this on the left:

Kx

Axxx

xxxx

Axx

J10x

KQJxxx

AQx

x

South plays in 4♥ on the auction (East dealer): (1♠)-2♥-(2♠)-4♥- All Pass.

West leads a trump. You win, draw trumps and take a diamond finesse.

West wins the King and plays a low spade. Decision time again! King or small?

Again, the mathematical odds diverge from reality. It may seem sensible to play East for the Ace (he opened the bidding, therefore has the preponderance of the outstanding high cards, and West has already turned up with the diamond King), but no experienced player would make such a mistake: West is almost certain to be under-leading the Ace now, and the correct play is the King from dummy.

Why? Think back to trick 1. Why didn’t West lead a spade, the partnership’s bid-and-raised suit?

People who regularly get these hands right are often lauded for their ‘table feel’, a mysterious second-sight that enables them to see through the backs of the defenders’ cards. Conversely, people who often get these ‘guesses’ wrong can be heard bemoaning their bad luck. Neither characterisation is correct – it’s just a case of being alive to the available inferences.

Competing against top ladies in the country in the  
**Lady Milne Trials**  
 over three days January 22-24th  
**MURIEL BAILEY & VALERIE BENSON**  
 Achieved 8th position.

Very well done Sussex ladies against stiff opposition  
 including names such as Nevena Senior, Catherine  
 Jagger, Sally Brock and Catherine Seale



## The October Crossword

First home with a correct  
 solution was our webmaster  
 Mervyn Wotton,  
 closely followed by  
 Ken Shillam  
 Muriel Bailey  
 Jan & Mike Barker  
 Jerry Emery

26 down - Kin Gin Rin caused  
 a slight problem—a variety of  
 koi. The English translation is  
 Gold Silver Scales so it is said.

Another problem was Hideous  
 Hog which I have mentioned  
 on page 2.

I am very grateful to the kind  
 words sent in by Doreen and  
 Don Cork who were saddened  
 by the lack of support and said  
 that hard work deserved better  
 (*here here*) and had a go at the  
 crossword. In spite of problems  
 over the Victor Mollo question  
 they had fun doing the  
 crossword and were glad they  
 did not have to do the hard  
 one!!!!!!.

Thankyou Doreen and Don.  
 See how you get on with the  
 new 'easy' one over the page.

## SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting at Uckfield Civic Centre  
 on Sunday 11th April 2010 at 12 noon

1. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2009
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Chairman's Report
4. Constitution (see note below)
5. Honorary Treasurer's Report
  - 5.1 Adoption of the Audited Annual Accounts
  - 5.2 Appointment of Honorary Auditor
  - 5.3 Subscriptions for the Year 2011 – 2012
6. Election of Officers
  - 6.1 Chairman 6.2 Vice-Chairman 6.3 Honorary Secretary
  - 6.4 Honorary Treasurer 6.5 Honorary Membership Secretary
  - 6.6 Tournament Manager
7. Election of a Maximum of Fourteen Committee Members
8. EBU Shareholders 9. Any Other Business

Prize giving ceremony after the formal business of the meeting.

All members of the SCCBA are invited to attend the AGM and can  
 contribute to any item on the agenda. Refreshments will be provided.

### Item 4 note

The Management Committee recommends the following minor change  
 to para 11 of the SCCBA Constitution replacing "fee" with  
 "subscription":

*11. The annual subscription and the county element of the EBU's Pay to  
 Play fee **subscription** shall be determined by the Management  
 Committee, subject to ratification by a General Meeting. The annual  
 subscription shall become due on 1st April each year, together with the  
 annual subscription and Club affiliation fee **subscription** payable to the  
 EBU. Where relevant, subscriptions may be accepted on behalf of the  
 Association by individual Clubs. Subscriptions may be paid by a Direct  
 Debit scheme subject to such a scheme having been introduced by the  
 Association & the EBU and subject to the agreement of the individual  
 member.*

SCCBA Feb.2010

## CROSSWORD-

Please send your  
solution to ed. at

karladog@tesco.net

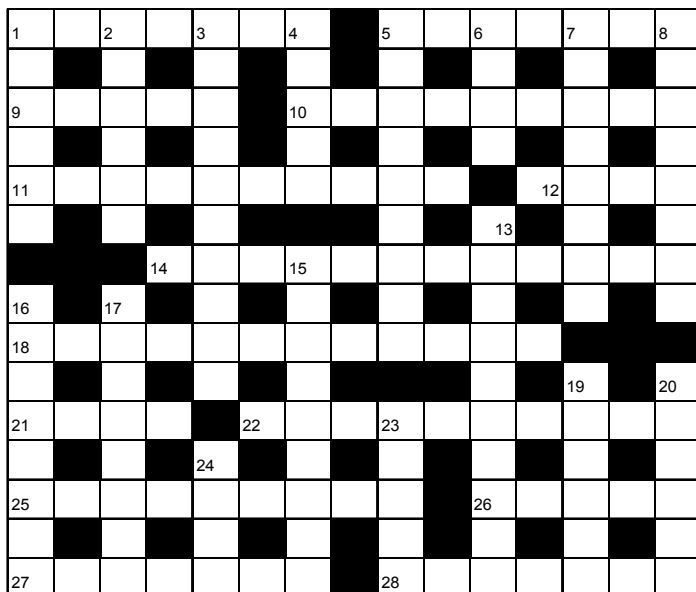
Oct. solution page 15

### Across

1. Done under EBU rules when, for example, partner bids Stayman. (7)
5. Cats Lee was somewhat muddled whilst playing this instrument. (7)
9. Wicklow bobby perhaps feels at home visiting this Italian water spot. (5)
10. Chauffeured in this after adding an 'e' to this breed of large hardy beef cattle(9)
11. Sounds fruity but could describe couples in Interlaken or Zurich for example. (5.5)
12. Pen name. (4)
14. Wanting this colour, even this suit. (5.7)
18. Contemporaneous luminous seat changes(12)
21. This deer sounds like a major. (4)
22. Stop—giving about 10 seconds to allow for this. (10)
25. Family name for the swordfish. (9)
26. Intervene at the completion of a rubber. (3.2)
27. It happened before Alfa & Lima made a start, then a Yankee finished after a read. (7)
28. Having made a legally valid will before death. (7)

### Down

1. A large richly laden merchant ship. (6)
2. Perhaps a listener's hairpiece this insect. (6)
3. Inedible fungi, comprising a couple of seats and a tailless amphibian. (10)
4. Ideally converted to a noun and then stirred for this cook. (5)
5. Where to find a Cantabrigian. (9)
6. The support for this chap's mitre was removed on 10th January 1645 (4)
7. Lad with ICI and us, round the other way, could be deadly. (8)
8. Lymphoid tissue rear of the nasal cavity. (8)



13. Pledges or promises. (10)
15. 1958 'Rebel Rouser'. (5.4)
16. Condition causing lack of oxygen. (8)
17. Describes a 6/4 fraction for example. (8)
19. Brand of beer from Corsica. (6)
20. The Goddess of Necessity. (6)
23. A child's Safe-T-Bike seat or a French composer. (5)
24. Christian name of the lady whose horse won the Grand National last year. (4)

### Confessions of a Crossword Compiler

In order that I could try some of my own medicine, it seems, a gentleman 'kindly' sent me a crossword which he had compiled for his club's members, which several had completed satisfactorily. I regret to say that I had to ask him for the answers and, I am ashamed to say, an explanation for some of the clues.

I did get the vivid impression that he was left thinking that I was a bit of a twit. No further comment.