

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE SEA END – MARCH 2016

Your author is still old-fashioned enough to like reading actual books (rather than some text on a modern device) and he recently came across a copy of Fischer's *60 Memorable Games* which had inspired him in his University days when he thought that Chess was one of the careers that would provide his daily bread and indirectly led to him eventually trying to mine a million from the vagaries of the law.

Flicking through the yellowing pages brought back many half forgotten thoughts on how I had played some brilliant mating attacks as well as making horrendous blunders which had won or lost what at that time seemed important games in my chess life. Now it is a fact that I can still remember the details of some of my chess games of some 40 years ago, and indeed there are a few bridge hands which I have played over the last 20 years or so which also stick in my mind for one reason or another and I thought my readers might find a few of these both interesting and instructive and I propose to re-tell them occasionally in this column.

I was playing with the Balkan Dragon in the qualifying round of the European Open Mixed Teams in Tenerife against a married Danish pair. I held S AK1096 H AJ95 D J843 C Void and with everyone vulnerable opened 1 Spade, my LHO passed and partner bid 2NT which was a forcing (limit+) hand with at least 4 Spades. Now my RHO bid 5 Clubs and I thought that I was good enough to bid 5 Hearts and the Balkan Dragon after a little more thought bid 6 Spades. This was doubled by RHO and dummy was displayed as S J852 H K63 DAK75 C J6.

LHO led the 10 of diamonds which struck me as a little odd, but since the doubler who clearly had a fistful of clubs was likely to be short in some suit and the double may well have been lightner, I decided to duck in dummy and RHO ruffed with a low trump. He then tried to cash the Club Ace which I ruffed and I then cashed 2 rounds of trumps finding with a little surprise that RHO had started with three. This seemed to indicate that RHO had a 3-2-0-8 shape and if this was indeed the case then I could squeeze my LHO in the red suits.

The only fly in the ointment was that I would have to find the heart suit favourably disposed, namely RHO holding Qx or 10x, AND I would have to pick the right option, namely on the first layout I would have to cash the AK of Hearts or on the second layout I would have to take the so-called "Chinese" finesse and run the Heart Jack from my hand to pin the 10.

I thought for a while and finally decided that the a priori odds meant that any particular card (in this case the Heart Q) would be in the hand with more cards in the suit and I therefore played the oriental finesse. Whether or not this was correct logic it was the winning line of play\* and I was quite chuffed that I had found it. All the players congratulated me on my play and said that the hand should be submitted for publication in the competition bulletin which it was. But there was a piquant twist which made it memorable for a strange reason.

In this international event, all the hands are duplicated over the whole field and at another table the same contract was bid and made in a similar fashion. However the declarer was a well known World Champion and in the bulletin the hand was attributed to him alone! This was no Machiavellian plot by the bulletin editor, who assured me that in his prepared copy he had given me a suitable separate named mention but he explained that unfortunately during the printing process it had been edited out for space reasons!

So for me my reward must be the contented purring of my darling pussycats and the possible future success of the England cricket team.

Geoffrey Wolfarth, Hove.

\*The exact details of the play can be run though on *Deep Finesse* if the reader is interested in them