Sandra Penfold (1946-2026)

Though originally from Paignton in Devon, Sandra Penfold lived most of her adult life in Yorkshire, having had the good sense to marry a Yorkshireman, Martin Penfold. Together they built Swift Research, a highly successful market research company, based in Wetherby, North Yorkshire, and lived in the countryside a few miles south-west of Tadcaster.

Sandra was a teacher until it was time to have a family – one girl and two boys – and it was only then that she took up bridge. She took to it like the proverbial fish to water and had her first taste of international ladies' bridge partnering Rita Oldroyd in the Lady Milne in 1982 and 1983 – England winning on both occasions.

She had a number of other partners whilst representing England or Great Britain in ladies European or World championships, as well as many more Lady Milne outings, more often than not successful ones. She won several bronze and silver medals in European and World championships, including a silver in the 2017 Venice Cup partnering Nevena Senior, and has also represented England in Senior competition on a number of occasions.

Domestically, Sandra has won Crockfords Cup, Spring Foursomes, Faulkner Salver, and had several appearances in finals of the major team events.

She was a tough competitor, one who could rebound from disaster on one deal by playing the next as though it had not happened, something which even many strong players struggle to achieve. She made the most of her talent at the bridge table, and that is all we can ask of anyone.

Unfortunately, in her last few years Sandra seemed to stumble from one health issue to the next, impacting both on her ability to play at the level she would have desired and on her enjoyment, but she loved the game and was willing to put up with a lot from some of her more demanding partners, myself in particular. She was a popular figure in the British bridge scene, and will be sadly missed.

Brian Senior