



## Editorial

The County now have a Facebook page. Just search for Merseyside and Cheshire Bridge Association and 'like' the page to get regular updates on results, news etc.. Now as it's Christmas time - you don't want anymore boring editorial stuff, so let's get on with some interesting deals, but please can EVERYONE read the article on page 4.

### Just one more

by Matt Foster and Bob Pitts

When the hands are highly distributional, especially ones where both sides have a double fit, normal bidding principles often go out of the window. The general policy in these situations should be to try to bid to your appropriate level as quickly as possible and sometimes be prepared to 'bid one more' to hopefully avoid a large adverse swing.

Dealer West E/W vul.

	♠ A J 10 9 6 5	
	♥ A K Q 7 4 3	
	♦	
	♣ 9	
♠ 8 2		♠ Q
♥		♥ 8 6 2
♦ A K J 10 8 4 3		♦ Q 5 2
♣ K Q 7 4		♣ A J 10 8 5 2
	♠ K 7 4 3	
	♥ J 10 9 5	
	♦ 9 7 6	
	♣ 6 3	

One of the Deva teams in the NICKO had this 'freak' in their first round match. Matt Foster was sat West and the full auction was 1D - 2NT - 3C - double - 4H - double - 5C - pass - pass - 5H - pass - pass - 5NT - pass - 6C. 2NT showed the majors (weak or strong). 3C was a "fit non jump". South's first double showed equal length in the majors. 4H was a splinter.

Now Matt Foster takes up the story - *when 5C rolled back round to me I concluded that Paddy couldn't have both black aces. With the opponents fairly silent it seemed almost certain we would be missing a black ace, and a spade trick, so I contented myself with a 5 level contract, being unable to see the singleton spade in Paddy's hand (the opponents haven't mentioned their 10 card spade fit). When North went on to 5H I followed the teams maxim of bidding on in case it was the right thing to do. The opponents led a heart (I should have shown a spade void if I knew they were going to lead the suit I showed a void in!) and Paddy quickly wrapped up 13 tricks. I did try to ensure we reached the stone cold diamond slam with my 5NT call, but partner was having none of it. +1390.*

*When the board was replayed the auction began with a strong club (!) from West. 1C - pass - 1D - pass - 3D - 4D - 5D - 5S - 6D - 6S - pass - pass - double. Teammates follow the principle of interfering immediately with weak hands, so David Stevenson's belated entry showed a good hand and Liz Commins' raise to 5S made it easy for David to bid a slam. The opposition were not up to finding their heart ruff so we recorded +1210 at this table for a swing of 21 imps.*

*Quite a monster hand for the principle of Total Tricks, as the true TNT on the hand is 24(!) with 6 of both red suits being cold (one each way) and 6 of both black suits needing sharp defence to beat it (one each way).*

You can see why we both advocate bidding one more when in doubt..

## HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

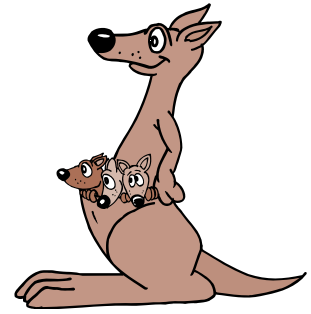
Dealer North. N/S vulnerable

♠ K Q  
♥ A J  
♦ J 9 8 3  
♣ A K 10 5 3

♠ 9 6 5 2  
♥ 3  
♦ 7 6 4 2  
♣ J 8 7 2

♠ 4  
♥ K Q 10 9 6  
♦ K Q 5  
♣ Q 9 6 4

♠ A J 10 8 7 3  
♥ 8 7 5 4 2  
♦ A 10  
♣



West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♥	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West led the three of hearts against South's extremely adventurous six spade contract. Declarer called for dummy's ace and could see only one chance to bring home the contract; he needed to make three diamond tricks.

At trick two declarer led the three of diamonds from dummy. His prospects improved when East played the queen of diamonds. Declarer took this with the ace, crossed to dummy with a trump to the queen and played the king of clubs, discarding the ten of diamonds from hand. After discarding a heart on the ace of clubs, declarer played dummy's jack of diamonds. East covered this with the king and South ruffed with a low trump, thereby establishing two diamond winners in dummy.

After crossing back to dummy with the king of trumps, he was delighted to find that neither of his good diamonds was ruffed and he was able to discard two more hearts. All that remained was to ruff a club with the ten of trumps and draw West's two remaining spades with the ace and jack.

Declarer took six trumps, the heart ace, a fortunate three diamonds and two clubs for a total of twelve tricks, while East-West considered themselves very unlucky.

**The North Wales Spring Congress takes place on 5th-6th April. Don't miss this excellent event. This year it will consist of two one-day events with a Swiss format. Pairs Saturday and Teams Sunday. The venue is the Ramada Plaza in Wrexham. For more information contact Nigel Worthington on 01829 770511 or email him at [nigeldw@googlemail.com](mailto:nigeldw@googlemail.com).**

## Have you discussed? by Bob Pitts

In his book *New Bridge Complete*, Charles Goren advocated opening three no-trumps with balanced hands in the 25 - 27 point range. Players soon realised that this was far too space-consuming for a strong hand and these days most of us use this opening bid in a more pre-emptive form. One use is to show a solid seven card minor and whilst most players I know have adopted that conventional agreement, not many seem to have discussed the route that responder can subsequently use to find the best final contract.

If you hold something like ♠ A 5 4 3 ♥ A 6 4 2 ♦ 7 ♣ Q 10 9 8 and partner opens 3NT, then you can safely pass as the contract should roll home, but what if you have ambitions for a game or even a slam in partner's suit? Let me suggest a scheme which will hopefully give you a good way to develop the auction.

When partner opens 3NT showing a solid 7 (or 8) card minor, responder bids as follows

4♣ or 5♣ is pass or correct.

4♦ asks for any shortage [opener bids his short suit as follows 4♥ = short ♥ ; 4♠ = short ♠ ; 4NT = no shortage (thus a 7-2-2-2 type) ; 5♣ = short ♦ ; 5♦ = short ♣]

4NT asks for prospect of an 8<sup>th</sup> trick (extra length or a guarded side suit queen).

There is a logical reason for reversing the order of how you show the shortage in the other minor - it is so that you don't bypass your known minor at the five level, just be careful not to forget it.

This deal from the North Wales Swiss pairs in October seems to show that few players have suitable agreements, as only one pair found their way to the excellent slam.

*Dealer East Love All*

	♠ Q J	
	♥ A K J 5 4	
	♦ 6 5 4 2	
	♣ 9 5	
♠ A K 2		♠ 8 6 4
♥ 7 6 3		♥ Q
♦ J 9		♦ A K Q 10 8 7 3
♣ A K J 7 2		♣ 8 6
	♠ 10 9 7 5 3	
	♥ 10 9 8 2	
	♦	
	♣ Q 10 4 3	

Using our scheme the auction should be a straightforward 3NT - 4♦ - 4♥ - 6♦ and this was the auction used by the one successful partnership Jeff Smith and Peter Jones (a bit unfair on their opponents, but that is matchpoints for you). There is no problem in the play, even if North cashes the heart ace and switches to a spade. Declarer starts on the clubs immediately. Cashing the ace and king, and then ruffing a third round in dummy. A trump to the jack followed by another club ruff sets up the fifth card in the suit. Now the rest of the trumps are drawn and a spade to hand gives access to the club to discard dummy's losing spade.

The slam bidders got a complete top and even those in five diamonds got a decent score as many groped for the magic land of three no-trumps. I did hear of one local pair whose auction started with one diamond, a pass from South and a two club call from West. North could not be kept quiet and came in with two hearts. East repeated his diamonds and when West tried three hearts to ask for a stopper in that suit, East confidently admitted to one by calling three no-trumps. North believed him as well, because when South led a heart, North **ducked** to preserve communications. He subsequently had to find an awful lot of very painful discards.

---

**Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association****Contacts and information**

Newsletter editor : Bob Pitts

Phone : 01352 771304

E-mail: bob.pitts1@btinternet.com

Richard Alcock (county secretary) :  
ralcock@altrad.comJohn Hampson (chairman of selectors) :  
john73hampson@btinternet.com

County website : www.mcba.org.uk

All of the club contacts are available on  
the County websiteNews and results are also available via  
the County Facebook page.

## Calendar

All events here are correct at time of publishing but you are advised to take the precaution of checking with the organisers in all cases.

January

6th - 10th	EBU simultaneous pairs	Clubs
18th-19th	Chester Congress	Deva BC
26th	Merseyside & Deeside Cup (Pivot teams)	MBC

February

2nd	County Trials	MBC
16th	Jean Keen Trophy (Ladies teams)	MBC

March

9th	Eric Howarth Cup (GP Swiss teams)	Deva BC
-----	-----------------------------------	---------

April

9th	BGB simultaneous pairs	BBC & MBC
13th	Annual Charity pairs event	MBC
27th	Preece Rosebowl (Ladies pairs)	BBC

May

5th	Mayday Swiss pairs	MBC
-----	--------------------	-----

## Northern Bridge League

*by John Hampson*

The Northern Bridge League was set up eight years ago by several of the Northern Counties with two main aims:

Firstly to encourage Club players within the North of England to step out of their "comfort zones" of club bridge and play competitively against players of a similar standard from the other counties. Hopefully this would provide an enjoyable day out against different opponents and at the same time help players to improve their all round standard.

Secondly for the better players with ambitions to play for the County in the President's and Tollemache competitions, the league would provide dual opportunities for the selectors to compare the various pairs and at the same time give the contenders opportunities to practice their game against similar players from across the country.

There is no doubt that some counties, for example Manchester, have a far deeper pool of players to select from, with the result that they figure far more often in the final frame. Nevertheless M & CBA have had some success over the years. In 2009 our C team won their division of the NBL and were third in the National final. In 2011 our A team won their division and went on to win the National Final. A very fine achievement considering the small size of our player base.

This year our results have been mixed the A team finished fifth, the B team finished second and the C team finished fifth.

As selectors, we are always looking for new players of all levels to represent the County. One of the high spots from this year's league was that for the first time we have had three players from Hartford Bridge Club to play for the County and one pair Paul Mathews and John Gibb topped the Butlers in their first outing, which was a great effort.

So a plea from the selectors, give the NBL some consideration and if you and your partner would like the odd Saturday out next Summer playing for the County (the dates are below) please get in touch with me or any of the selectors, who will be delighted to hear from you.

Finally a couple of points which have caused misunderstandings in the past.

Firstly there are no restrictions, and never have been, on any player playing in any of the 3 divisional teams. For example David Stevenson as a Premier Grand Master, if willing and available could turn out for the C Team without a problem.

Secondly although a player commits themselves to a County allegiance for EBU Tollemache purposes, that player can play for any other County in the NBL. The only restriction being that once they have played for a specific County they may only play for that County in that season's NBL matches.

**Next Year's NBL matches will be on:-**

Saturday August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Saturday August 30<sup>th</sup>, Saturday September 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday October 11<sup>th</sup>.

John Hampson: Chairman of County Selection Committee

My contact details are [john73hampson@btinternet.com](mailto:john73hampson@btinternet.com) Phone 01270 524525

---