



# County Bulletin

Issue 36

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## Editor's News

The Summer is often a time when we play less bridge but there are plenty of local events that would love your support. If you have not participated in some of these competitions previously, give one or two a whirl and they may become permanent features on your calendar. Liverpool BC have an Open pairs soon and a teams event in July. The popular Jim Davies teams is also taking place in the next few days and don't forget the Bill Hughes simultaneous pairs heat at Deva BC at the end of the month.....and if you feel like contributing to the running of our County please attend the AGM on June 16th. Your help is very much needed.

Larry Cohen of the US has put a series of ethics videos online. If you are interested go to <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-learning-center/category/50>

## The Shropshire Congress

by Bob Pitts

This excellent Swiss weekend Congress was held in the middle of April, with Pairs on Saturday and Teams on Sunday. I can heartily recommend it, though there was one problem this year - the catering on Saturday. Those of us who had pre-booked meals in the hotel received poor quality food served 40 minutes late. The hotel have promised to correct the problem for next year. Having not opted to eat in the hotel on Sunday my team walked to the Shopping Centre which is 3 minutes away and bought some excellent sandwiches in M&S which is an option worth remembering if you play next year.

Some of our local players did well, with Barry and Beth Wennell winning the pairs after a tight last round match against Mike Amos and Pete Foster who finished equal 2nd. In the teams my quartet (myself, Mark Weeks, Alan Stephenson, Stuart Matthews) were the runners-up behind a foursome from the Midlands.

This deal from the final round of the pairs demonstrates an important tactical point for events of this type.

Dealer North All vul.

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

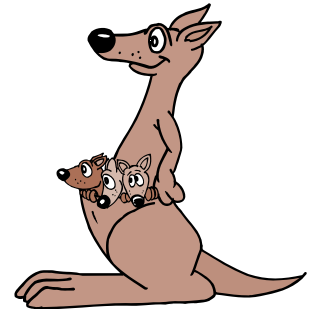
Sitting N/S, Julian Merrill and I reached seven hearts which as you can see goes one off on the bad trump break. A shame as the odds are 67.8% for the 3-2 heart break. The no-trump grand slam is even better as if the hearts do not break you can pray for 3-3 diamonds, a total chance of 79.26%. However, in a field of mixed quality it is more pragmatic to just bid the solid small slam as here. You rarely get a bad result for bidding and making a slam in a pairs event. With only one pair other than us in a grand slam and some misplaying the small slam in an attempt to make an overtrick (I did not ask the pair who played in six clubs how they got there) the inferior six hearts got 36 matchpoints out of 54. Those who sensibly opted for the cold six no-trump contract did even better getting 48 matchpoints.

# HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

A characteristic of any good declarer is to look for alternatives when the normal approach is unlikely to work. Such was the case here :

Dealer East. N/S vul.



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

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
2♦	Double	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

.Whilst North's raise to game was an overbid, the final contract did have only three top losers. West led the queen of diamonds. East took this with his ace and continued with the ace and another trump, West discarding a small club on the second round.

Declarer noted that West had already implied three points in diamonds with his opening lead. Also if the contract was to have any chance, declarer needed West to have the king of clubs. If this were the case, East would require the heart ace for his opening bid.

If all this came about, declarer saw that playing a heart to the king at this point would only bring success if both the jack and ten of hearts fell in three rounds, a rather unlikely possibility. Instead, declarer adopted a different approach to developing the heart suit; after winning the second round of trumps in hand with the jack, declarer led a heart towards dummy and finessed the eight (the plan was to 'pin' the jack or ten with West on the third round of the suit or to find East with exactly ace-jack-ten of the suit. East won the first heart trick with the jack and continued with another trump to dummy's queen.

Declarer continued with the king of hearts, which East covered with the ace. Declarer ruffed this with his final trump and played the king of diamonds discarding the two of clubs from dummy. Declarer then took a successful finesse in clubs and drew East's remaining trump followed by cashing the heart queen. His careful play was rewarded when West followed with the ten. The final tricks were won by North's last two heart winners and the club ace.

**DON'T FORGET** - The Jim Davies Swiss teams takes place on Thursday June 9th starting at 7pm at Heswall Hall - for more information [www.bridgewebs.com/wirral/home](http://www.bridgewebs.com/wirral/home)

## Bridge: But Not As We Should Play It.

Bridge is such an addictive game.....both at and away from the table. It's one we enjoy, or suffer, because it is so sophisticated and nuanced; it is so intellectually and psychologically challenging. We so much want to improve that many tournament players spend hours poring over hand records. Match points, frequencies, Butlers are also closely studied.

As it so happens, I was looking at the hand records of a recent week end tournament. What could I learn from my play?

*Dealer South N/S vulnerable*

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

Partner and I had recently decided to adopt a new defensive system against strong bids called Suction\*. After all, Suction had been used against us with devastating results; so why not adopt it ourselves?

The auction at our table proceeded as follows:

S	W (Partner)	N	E (Me)
Pass	Pass	1C (Precision)	1NT

Quite sane, so far. Except, partner alerts the 1NT bid. He's asked and explains that this is Suction.

Suddenly, I'm awake. A hot and cold moment. He's right. I've just used Suction! The auction continues:

S	W	N	E
Pass (alerted as 0-4 points)	2C	Pass	Ethical dilemma

I think we can make 2C, but I would not describe my hand as single suited. I therefore decide that my only recourse is to continue the bidding as if I were still using our original system. Partner has used Stayman and asked for the Majors and so I reply 2D. Partner bids 2 Spades and there the auction ends.

S	W	N	E
Pass	Pass	1Club	1NT
Pass	2 Clubs	Pass	2 Diamonds
Pass	2 Spades	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Partner plays the contract with an outwardly calm demeanour and goes one off. After all, it's not surprising that the defence is less than brilliant when our bidding abounds with such confusion.

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## 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.

### June

8th	Liverpool Open Pairs	LBC
9th	Jim Davies Swiss teams	Heswall BC
16th	County AGM	MBC
18th/19th	President's Cup	Bradford
28th	Bill Hughes simultaneous pairs	Deva BC

### July

19th	Liverpool Open Teams	LBC
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In the other room, the bidding goes:

S	W	N	E
Pass	Pass	1 Club (Acol)	1NT
Pass	2 Diamonds (transfer to Hearts)	2 Spades!	

If the auction had ended at this point, our team could have ended up playing in 2 Spades in BOTH rooms, by E/W and N/S! Indeed, if East had had the presence of mind to Double.....

But East raised to 3 Hearts which made, and we lost 6 IMPs on the Board. We deserved to lose more.

Ah, what a pleasure it is to play such an intellectually demanding game and to study one's results later.

*The names of the participants have been withheld in order to protect the guilty.*

\*Suction - A suit bid shows either the next suit or the following two suits, and no-trump calls show either Clubs + Hearts or Diamond + Spades

## Garden Cities Qualifier

by Bob Pitts

This national event is a teams-of-eight competition for the champion clubs of each County. In our County, for various reasons, we have not played our internal event for many years and the County committee usually ask the Deva to represent us. This year our team of John Hampson (capt.), Matt Foster, Paul Roberts, Julian Merrill, Liz Commins, David Stevenson, Barry Jones, Bob Pitts finished 2nd in the Northern heat to qualify for the national 8 team final.

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

On this deal against current trophy holders Manchester BC, my partner Barry Jones found a very good defence. Sitting East he opened a weak no-trump, South showed his heart suit and North declared three no-trumps. With my hand unlikely to have more than one trick in defence Barry started by cashing the spade ace and continued with the queen. Declarer ducked so spades were continued and I had the spade ten to cash when I got in with the heart ace. It looks like declarer can succeed by taking the second spade, blocking the suit, but this is not so as long as I play my small spades to the first two tricks (a good argument for playing reverse signals where small cards encourage). If declarer takes the second spade I have to later hold up my heart ace until the third round and Barry can discard his final spade honour on that. We can then win the ten and nine of spades and Barry's club ace to beat the contract. Fortunately, declarer did not test us with that line.

