

Rick Hanley  
1953-2024

Rick Hanley, who this week finally lost his battle with motor neurone disease (MND), was a stalwart of Suffolk bridge for many years. In 2000 Rick was appointed a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Essex and immediately made his mark as a highly skilled bridge player. His main club was Colchester but he also played at Ipswich & Kesgrave. At Colchester he had several regular partners including Graham Beeton, David Willson, and Ray Clarke, and his preferred system was Standard American with Bergen raises and Reverse Drury; in fact Marty Bergen was undoubtedly one of Rick's bridge heroes and he would be in regular correspondence with Marty, seeking his opinion on a hand he had played recently. More recently, and especially since he contracted MND and could not leave home, he formed partnerships with Jo Harpur, Jeff Orton and me.

Rick and I played together in the Suffolk Online Teams League (SOTL), the Suffolk Teams Championship, and the National Teams League (NTL) where we had considerable success. Rick was an instinctive bidder; he knew when to take risks – like opening on a shapely 10 points – and when to use the green pass card. He would not be backward in telling you when you had made a mistake in the bidding or the play (or both!) but he was always constructive with his critique. I remember one hand when he could not understand why I didn't bid with S106542 H873 D93 C864 after he opened 1S! But once he made his criticism that would be the end of the matter, he wouldn't refer to it again.

Over the years Rick won many Suffolk events including the Pairs Championship, the Teams Championship and the Division 1 League. And just a few weeks ago Rick fulfilled the "double double" winning the Teams Championship and the SOTL title for the second year in succession. Rick was very proud of all his achievements at the bridge table but he was especially pleased when he was a member of the Suffolk team that qualified for the Tollemache Final three times and, just last year, when he was a member of the team that came second in the Pachabo Cup, the national competition for winners of their County Team Championship.

As well as being an excellent bridge player, Rick was a superb communicator and administrator. He was Chairman of the Colchester Bridge Club for 10 years and County Captain for seven years from 2017, only passing on the baton to Paul Whetton a few weeks ago. Whilst County Captain Rick only ever missed one match – when he had tickets for the Wimbledon Men's Final! Rick was very keen to give as many players as possible the opportunity to play for the County and he succeeded in driving up the standard of all three teams, with the result that Suffolk now consistently punches above its weight in national competitions.

Rick will be sorely missed by so many people, for his skill and creativity at the bridge table, for his courteous behaviour to everyone he played with or against, for his strong liberal beliefs, and above all, for his courage and bravery in the face of his crippling illness. He will be mourned by Maureen his children Simon and Nicola, four grandchildren, and his many friends and colleagues. RIP.

Michael Sherer  
24<sup>th</sup> May 2023