Matters Arising 141
being some thoughts prompted by hands played at Kendal BC 24 - 28 July 2023

Accidents

```
              A 9 6 2
              K 9 2
              Q 8 6
              A 6 3
K 7 5 4       ┌──────────┐      Q 3
- -           │    22    │●     Q 5 4 3
10 7 4        │          │      5 3 2
K 10 9 8 7 5  └──────────┘      Q J 4 2
              J 10 8
              A J 10 8 7 6
              A K J 9
              - -
```

Five Souths declared this Tuesday hand in hearts against silent opposition, yet none made 12 tricks even though it doesn't take too detailed an examination to spot 6 trump tricks, 4 in diamonds and 2 black Aces, leaving just a spade loser.

One tackled trumps by cashing the A first and so was never able to pick up the Q. Unlucky, though one could be really picky and say that since there is no natural way of picking up Qxxx West as you would need to finesse straight off, play the K first as this reveals a marked finese you can take if East holds all the missing trumps.

Others found other ways of not picking up the hearts suit:
leading towards the K and ducking in panic when West showed out;
K, finesse and cash A leaving Q to win;
K, finesse twice and leave the Q outstanding to ruff:
largely ignoring the drawing of trumps, ruff clubs with help of KH as entry and cash winners so that declarer found themselves trapped in hand to lead from AJ H.

Having played KH at T2, following up with the 9 so as remain on table should East duck solves the trump problem quickly and painlessly. But apparently not on Tuesdays.

Dead, Free and Split

```
A K 8 3       ┌──────────┐      J 6 5 4 2
A 2           │    15    │      Q 7 3
K J 8 7 2     │          │      A 6
Q 5           └────●─────┘      A J 4
```

Imagine you are East playing in 4S against silent opposition on the lead of 9H on this hand from Monday. North might have K to seven in the suit so that if allowed to win they could give their partner a ruff by returning the suit. However that seems a sufficiently outside chance to justify running the lead to hand with intent to make a second trick in the suit.

North does produce the K and switches to a club. Over to you.

There is a strong temptation to run this around to dummy on the same principle that led you to run the opening lead, but closer inspection tells you this is wrong.

Looking at side suit losers there are now none in hearts as the K has gone, none in diamonds, and by discarding a low club on the third heart there will be none in clubs. That will require us to ruff 2 clubs, but that can be done - play off top two trumps (unless someone shows out on first round) and then use dummy's small ones for ruffs.

At trick 2 the club finesse is an example of what I call a dead finesse. It should never be taken as there is nothing useful to discard on the extra club trick if the finesse works. Thus it can only lose when K offside, never gain when on.

```
              Q 7
              K J 6 4
              9 5 4
              10 9 8 6
A K 8 3       ┌──────────┐      J 6 5 4 2
A 2           │    15    │      Q 7 3
K J 8 7 2     │          │      A 6
Q 5           └────●─────┘      A J 4
              10 9
              10 9 8 5
              Q 10 3
              K 7 3 2
```

Rise with AC at T2, cash 2 top spades. Now AH, AD, QH throw club. C ruff, KD, D ruff, C ruff and you are down to trumps. 12 tricks as the cards lie, 11 if trumps are 3−1.

The dead finesse is a remarkably close relative to the free finesse, which should always be taken.

The difference between the two finesses lies in what you discard. With a dead finesse you have nothing useful to discard, with a free one you do.

A K 8 3		J 6 5 4 2
A K 2	15♣	7 5 3
K 8 7 3 2		A 6
5		A Q 4

Consider a club lead against 4S by West on this adjusted hand. This is a free finesse, for if it loses you will have a useful heart discard on AC later which you wouldn't get if you rose with the A at T1. You get your lost trick back. And if the finesse works you don't lose a club and you do get the discard. What's not to like? You will arrange to take this finesse whatever is led.

On the original hand I regard running the opening lead as taking a split finesse as the AQ normally in the same hand for a simple finesse are split between the two hands. Split finesses only occur when the opposition lead.

Around The Club

This weeks winners were
Monday (6½ tables) Mike Howse & Martyn Harris
Tuesday F2F (7 tables):
     Sheila Wilson & Chris Needham
Tuesday BBO (6 tables): Catherine & Roger Preston
Thursday (6½ tables): Mike & Sally-Ann Rothwell

Total 26 tables for the week.

I welcome any comments or queries sent me at martyn@orpheusmail.co.uk though they may be used in future issues should I choose to produce such. Or they may not. You have been warned.

NB, I do try replying to mails raising a specific point, so if I seem to ignore you do check your spam folder after a day or three.

Martyn Harris
spadeilike on BBO