



## March Newsletter

### CIARA vs CAROLINE in CLAVERHAM

And the winner was .... Caroline!

I think Storm Ciara was worse than her brother Dennis in our part of the world, but 40 hardy souls, from more than a dozen clubs, still managed to get to Caroline Macpherson's excellent seminar in Claverham on Sunday, 9 February – and, to their credit, everyone who didn't make it let us know they wouldn't be there; that was massively appreciated – and saved us worrying about them!

Caroline's subject was 'Double' and over a very valuable and enjoyable day, she took us through the many uses of the double card – penalty, takeout, negative, responsive to name but a few – with her usual focus on declarer play and defence. Our grateful thanks to Caroline, and also to John Cockram, who helped her throughout the day.

The Kingston Seymour club organised the day, with generous funding support from the SCBA; the Claverham Village Hall proved to be an excellent venue and we've already pencilled a date in the diary to do it again next year. Hope to see you there!

**Graham Daniel**  
**Chairman, Kingston Seymour Bridge Club**

## Upcoming Events for your Diary

**\*STOP PRESS\*** Places still available for the **Bruton Weekend** – residential and non-residential spaces for March 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> Check out the website here:  
[https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?club=somerset&pid=display\\_page86](https://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwon/bw.cgi?club=somerset&pid=display_page86)

March 14<sup>th</sup> **Teams of Eight** – Woolavington 1pm

From April 1<sup>st</sup> – **The Pairs League** will commence at Cossington at 7pm with subsequent matches playing until May 4th at various venues. Please check the SCBA website for details. Entries close March 15<sup>th</sup>.

June 1st/2<sup>nd</sup> – **EBU Teachers Award Course** at Nailsea. Free of charge to all affiliated clubs. Details of this and other courses can be found here:  
<https://www.ebedcio.org.uk/club-teacher-training>

Following the Forum for the Future meeting SCBA has made available a course of 31 lessons to follow on from a Fast Forward introduction to the game. These include hand files, teacher notes, quizzes and student notes. In the first instance please contact Ceri Pierce [ceri.pierce@gmx.com](mailto:ceri.pierce@gmx.com)

October 18<sup>th</sup> – Championship Teams. The format of this competition will change this year to a multi-teams event on this day followed by the top four teams competing in semi-finals and a final. Entries are already open via the website.

TBA - SCBA are looking to put on a tournament directors course in the near future. Please contact Colin Simcox [simcox@orchard-view.co.uk](mailto:simcox@orchard-view.co.uk) if this is of interest.

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## Competitions and Results

### The County League

Division One was won by Taunton RS – full results here:  
<https://www.ebu.co.uk/leagues/SOM-000015-01>

Division Two was won by Winscombe RH – full results here:  
<https://www.ebu.co.uk/leagues/SOM-000015-02>

Division Three was won by Yeovil RP - full results here:

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/leagues/SOM-000015-03>

Division Four was won by Kingston Seymour – full results here:

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/leagues/SOM-000015-04>

Promotion and relegation issues cannot be resolved until the total number of teams entering in 2020-21 is known.

When the number of teams is greater than 30, the league is organised into four divisions. We had four divisions of eight teams last season and can increase this to nine in each division without adding to the number of teams playing each session.

SCBA are again encouraging individuals who wish to play, but cannot generate enough support within their own club, to form a 'Barbarians' team made up with players from two or more clubs.

Please try to encourage your less experienced players to form new club teams or put forward their names if wishing to play in a 'Barbarians' team.

An early indication of any new teams or players for a 'Barbarians' team. would be appreciated by contacting Tony Russ or Bob Warrender (marianandbob86@gmail.com)

### **The Championship Pairs**

Thirty three pairs played 52 boards on a busy day for players and administrators alike. When the dust settled **Steve Tomlinson** and **Ralph Smith** triumphed with a score of 67.47% with Graham Heal and Colin Juneman also cracking 60% in second place.

### **The Coda Cup**

A highly successful competition saw 209 pairs from Somerset clubs playing against each other. At £3 a head that should see a healthy charitable donation – in addition Chew Stoke Methodist Church reduced their evening hall rental enabling £15 to be added to the pot.

The winners were **Doreen Buck** and **Gill Rice** with an excellent score of 68.77% with Jill Moreton and Jane Craig in second spot with 67.15% and Malcolm Scard and Sue Gudgeon in third with 65.74%.

Well done to all competitors – full results can be found here:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/somerset/Michael%20Coda%20Cup%202020.htm>

The **Terry Girdlestone Award** for Club person of the year. Please forward nominations to Daphne Greatorex [daphnegreat@sky.com](mailto:daphnegreat@sky.com) – those previously nominated are very welcome – we have a great depth of worthy candidates and we cannot reward all of them at the same time so please remind us about the achievements of those that we have over-looked in the past. All names by April 30<sup>th</sup> please.

In addition if you have any ideas or innovations that you think that SCBA should be considering please get in touch. We are always open to suggestions and if you have the time, energy and inclination to assist in the development of the game in the county you can depend on us for support and advice. Please contact Tony Russ [tonyruss@icloud.com](mailto:tonyruss@icloud.com)

## **Practise your bidding on Bridge Base Online**

Bridge Base Online (BBO) is a wonderful free resource for bridge players who are happy to play their cards on a screen. Originally set up to allow people to play bridge on their computers over the internet, its facilities have expanded and it now offers many variations on this theme.

The lesser known BBO feature that I wanted to write about this month is its bidding tables. These let two people on different computers practise bidding the same deal. You can just bid random hands if you like but if you want to practise particular aspects of your system you can closely specify hands in terms of card distributions, high card points etc.. For example,

```
shape(east, any 4333 + any 4432 + any 5332 - 5xxx - x5xx)  
and hcp(east)>=12 and hcp(east)<=14
```

are the commands to ensure that east has a hand suitable for a weak NT opening bid without a 5 card major. After specifying these conditions, subsequent deals at your bidding table would then still vary but they would conform to the above conditions.

You can specify more than one hand, so in order to practise your defence to 1NT you can set up a situation where the opposition would open a weak NT and you (South) have a hand which may be suitable for competing. You want hands strong enough to consider competing but not strong enough to double and you don't want flat hands so you would add:

```
and hcp(south) >8 and hcp(south) < 16  
and not shape(south, any 4333 + any 4432 + any 5332)
```

This ready ability to tailor the hands dealt at the bidding table really makes it possible to practise almost any aspect of your bidding.

## Joining BBO

The following instructions apply to accessing BBO via a web browser such as Chrome or Firefox. If you use an iPad or Android tablet you can also download a BBO app but I suggest you first follow these instructions in a browser since the apps work a little differently.

You and your partner first have to register with BBO. Go to [bridgebase.com](http://bridgebase.com) in your browser and click on 'play bridge now'. On the next screen click 'Become a member (free!)' and fill in the form. You don't have to enter an ACBL Number and for 'skill level' you just say what you think it is, there are no exams or checks. Agree to the terms of service, click Register and then logout. Your partner must also register and then ***make sure you know each other's user names*** before attempting to start a bidding table.

## Setting up a bidding Table

To share a bidding table, one of you (the host) must start a bidding table and your partner must join it. To start a table, go to BBO, login and then: click 'practise'. Now click 'Start a Bidding table'.

On the next screen it's a good idea to click the button by 'Permission required to play' to stop unwanted people joining the table. You might also also click the button by 'Allow kibitzers' to stop people watching at this table. Leave 'Opponents bidding' set to pass throughout for simplicity at first but under 'Reserve Seats' click North and enter your partner's user name then click South and enter your username. You are now ready to click 'Start Table'.

At the table you will see that your username is already in the South seat but the North seat has your partner's username followed by (Reserved). You are waiting for your partner to join the bidding table.

## Joining the table

By contrast, your partner has it pretty easy. They just have to login, wait for an invitation to join the table, then accept the invitation. The invitation doesn't stay up for ever though so if they are slow they may lose the invitation screen. It's a good idea to be talking to each other by this point to synchronise things. You could use different computers in the same room, talk over the phone, use Skype or whatever. If your partner waits to login until you have started the table then the invitation will be shown as soon as they login.

As soon as they join the table a random hand will be dealt. You should now bid a few random hands to get used to using the system. If the hand bar in front of you is yellow then it is your turn to bid. At the top right or top left of the table you will see three horizontal light blue lines on a darker blue background. (A 'hamburger menu' as it is colloquially known.) Click on these lines then click 'Redeal' to get another random hand to bid. Only the host can do this.

When you are happy with bidding the random deals its time to move on to tailoring the deals to practise bidding in specific situations.

## Tailoring the deal

Again, the host does all the work. Click on the hamburger menu (three lines) and select 'Deal Source' then click on the 'Advanced' tab. Click in the checkbox for the 'Use this input for the Dealer program'. You can then enter your own hand descriptions. If you want to learn the language then click on Dealer syntax help and follow the links.

If you want to email me for code then you can just cut and paste from my reply email into the space under 'use this input for the dealer program'.

For the moment let's just practise our transfers over 1NT so we'll give South a 1NT opener.

To set South as dealer click on the line 'South, West, North, East' then untick all the blue boxes that appear except South then click somewhere off the dealer form to close it.

So that both you and your partner get the chance to practise your responses click the tickbox by 'Randomly rotate generated deals 180 degrees'.

Now copy the blue code below, click 'use this input for the dealer program' and paste the code into the deal source using CTRL-V. (hold down the Ctrl key and press V).

```
shape(south, any 4333 + any 4432 + any 5332 - 5xxx - x5xx)
and hcp(south)>=12 and hcp(south)<=14
```

Click the x at the top right of the deal source screen to close it and then click the hamburger menu and redeal. Either you or your partner should now be ready to open 1NT.

To practise responding with shapely hands with some points you could add:

```
and hcp(north)>10 and not shape(north, any 4333 + any 4432 + any 5332)
```

Please contact me at [geoff@profdavies.co.uk](mailto:geoff@profdavies.co.uk) if you have found this article interesting and would like to take it further. Let me know the conventions or bidding situations you would like to practise and I'll produce a web page with all of them worked out.

Thanks to Geoff for another erudite and instructive piece.

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## A MAJOR UPDATE TO THE GREAT BRIDGE TIMER PRODUCT

Some of you will remember me talking before about the great value the Kingston Seymour Bridge Club has had from Mike Rothwell's excellent Bridge Timer product. It's used by clubs (around the world), county associations and the EBU for timing duplicate bridge sessions and has, without any doubt, been a major factor in our getting to grips with slow play. It has now been updated and is even more help to who-so-ever is trying to keep the evening moving along. It has been closely integrated with scoring systems to automatically pick up details of the movement as well as:

1. Display how many boards each table still has to play.
2. Omit those 'last board' warnings if all the tables are already on it.
3. Display which tables haven't started their last board when the 'don't start another board' warning is issued.
4. Automatically pause the timer if too many tables are still in play towards the end of a round, and then automatically restart it when most tables have finished.
5. Automatically issue the 'move to the next table' announcement if all the tables have finished before the allotted time.
6. Automatically set the round for a break, if you have one.
7. Warn when there's an arrow switch or a skip round.

We use it with ScoreBridge and BridgeTab tablets.

Remarkably all of this comes at a one-time cost of just £50 with no recurring charge to follow that. Details and the download are at <https://rothwells.weebly.com/timer.html>.

**Graham Daniel (Chairman, Kingston Seymour Bridge Club)**

Many thanks to Graham for his articles.

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**Notice:** advice for clubs regarding the **coronavirus** has now been posted on the EBU website <https://www.ebu.co.uk/>

The general consensus seems to be that sensible measures might include hand sanitiser but that at this stage, awareness of general good practice with regard to colds and flu is sufficient. The situation is worth monitoring in case it changes.

The media might be accused of over-sensationalism of the situation but bridge clubs would be a high risk category for this virus should the contagion worsen and as card players we all appreciate the risk/reward balance.

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## Finally – a hand from the Championship Pairs

♠ A 10 6  
♥ A 6 5 4 3  
♦ 10 8  
♣ A 7 4

♠  
♥  
♦  
♣

♠  
♥  
♦  
♣

♠ K Q 7 5 2  
♥ -  
♦ A K Q J 7 5 4 3  
♣ -

With thirteen tricks available the only small problem is how to bid the Grand Slam. If you know there are three aces and three spades opposite you then the bidding is straight forward but how often does partner have the perfect hand for you?

Opening a weak NT as North the partnership needs a transfer to diamonds followed by a forcing spade bid, preference then given to spades, RKCB and with no aces missing and at least a doubleton diamond that would be that then. Unless of course false preference to diamonds is given – now would south risk a 4 spade bid (if you don't want your partner to pass then don't give them the opportunity)? The problem is even worse if the opening is 1 heart and south sees the risk of partner loaded up with clubs and hearts and a consequent spade loser(s) or a diamond ruff if in spades. The wild distribution suggests that there may be similar polarisation of other hands (there wasn't).

This would explain the fact that in the event most players settled for 6 diamonds or 6 spades – the glory goes to **Thomas Gibbard** and **David Porter** who were the only pair to bid the Grand Slam and in the higher scoring spade suit to boot. Hearty congratulations to them!

Any views on how to bid it in anything like a scientific manner would be greatly appreciated.....