



NEWSLETTER

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March 2021



We contacted Surrey bridge clubs to find out how they're faring under lockdown and present an overview in this newsletter. It's not all good news, but the results are much more positive than we'd feared.

Online bridge brings us new opportunities, and we have a report of a friendly head-to-head with Yorkshire. I think it's fair to say that – other than the result – this was a raging success.

Surrey came third last month in one of the country's top-ranking events, the Tollemache Cup, and we feature a great hand, one displaying top-class play from both counties involved.

The rest of us all have disasters at the bridge table, and in Confessions Corner we present another. Why not join in and tell us about one of your own – or of course interesting and/or unusual successes – for a future newsletter?

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Bridge During Lockdown

Amidst the hardship and anxiety of a year of lockdown, some bridge players have been able to find respite by going online to play. Some have played bridge in close proximity. We know of two couples who met in their garden each week in the summer playing online bridge with tablets, a safe 2m apart. Others have played online at a distance. A Selsdon and Bletchingley member joined an online club session from a nickel mine in Zambia, near the Zimbabwean border.

We contacted clubs to ask about their experience over the past year and 46 responded. There's a mixed picture, but much positive news. 28 clubs now host online sessions and they've reported "doing well", "thriving", "getting larger attendances than previous face-to-face", "100% attendance, nothing else to do". It's good to see that some clubs have joined forces for their bridge programmes.

On the downside, 18 clubs (40% of the sample) said they aren't operating at all, although individual members may be playing online at other clubs or socially. A few clubs expressed concern about whether they might survive.

EBU statistics showed that the number of people playing during September 2020 was less than half the number playing in F2F days. However, the total number of sessions was only 42% less, so those who had made the switch to playing online were, on average, playing much more often than before.

When face-to-face bridge returns, hopefully sometime in the summer, it will be a challenging time for bridge clubs as they consider when and how to re-open. We'll keep in touch with clubs to share information.

Hills and Dales Match - Surrey v Yorkshire

Tim Warren



Our online bridge world means we can try new things, and earlier this month Surrey played Yorkshire in a head-to-head match. We named the event the Hills & Dales, after our counties' well-known Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. (Yorkshire, of course, called it the Dales & Hills.)

With four teams, we took the opportunity to extend county representation to a wider range of NGS grades:

- A (Open) – David Norman & David Dawson, Roger Eddleston & Alan Bailey (2020 Lady Rose winners)
- B (~Q or below) – Peter Exworthy & Asanka Amarasinghe, Hilary Stewart & Graham Cunningham (Div 2 champs)

C (~10 or below) – Keith Fowler & Malcolm Ralston, Alan Smith & Stephen Quayle (Div 3 champions)
 D (~8 or below) – Sue Muggridge & Stuart England, Brian & Lynn Swift (top NGS 9 pair in the recent Mixed pairs + top NGS8 pair in the Victor Ludorum)

The match was a resounding success. We'd agreed beforehand that, while we both wanted to win, the main aim was to have fun, and it was clear that everyone took part with just that spirit. It isn't easy to have a friendly chat on BBO, let alone banter, but that is exactly what happened. Everyone has said how much they enjoyed it, including the Zoom chat session afterwards. Several Surrey members kibitzed the match.

Unfortunately, and unaccountably, Yorkshire trounced us 57-23. Among the swings and roundabouts, I spotted that Board 11 had seen a valuable gain for our A Team, so I asked the captain, David Norman, to tell us a bit about it. With him East and David Dawson West, this was their holding:

W David Dawson	E David Norman	West	North	East	South
♠ A J 8 6 5	♠ K 10 4 3 2	Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT (15-17)
♥ Q	♥ K 10 7 6 4 3	Pass	Pass	2♦*	Pass
♦ J 7 6 2	♦ 8	2♠	2NT*	3♠	4♣
♣ Q J 6	♣ 2	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

David N's 2♦ showed Spades and another suit. David D's 2♠ promised at least 3 Spades and suggested fewer Hearts. After North's 2NT showing the minors, the Surrey Davids judged well to press on to 4♠, making game on just a combined 17 pts.

At the other table, Surrey's Alan Bailey and Roger Eddleston were allowed to play in 4♣ as NS, making, for a much-needed 11 IMP swing.

We're hoping to wrestle the (virtual) trophy back in a return match in six months' time – probably on RealBridge this time – but will also be on the lookout for other new opportunities. We'll continue to seek to widen county representation.

Surrey Events

The Tollemache Cup The 2020/21 Tollemache Final was played on the new RealBridge platform over the weekend of 20th/21st February 2021. 27 Counties had entered originally of which the top 8 qualified for the final.

Surrey finished in third place in the final, just one VP behind second place Sussex, and 10VPs behind the winning team, Kent.

Congratulations to the Surrey team of **Frances Hinden & Graham Osborne, Martin Garvey & Jeffrey Allerton, Charles Chisnall & Bob James, Richard Granville & Graham Sadie, and Peter Lee & Mike Scoltock.**

Frances & Graham were top pair in the individual X-IMPs

Charity Sim Pairs Our recent charity event in the first week of December 2020 raised money for Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People. 22 clubs participated in the event over five days, a total of 509 pairs. Surrey members donated a very generous £2,169 to QEF. The overall winners were **Alan Brown & Colin Bailey** from Yateley & Hawley BC (Monday, 72.77%).

County Pairs This is the premier pairs event in the Surrey calendar. It is also the County qualifier for the Corwen Cup, an EBU event for the top pairs in each county. In the past 40 years this trophy has been won five times by Surrey pairs.

Online bridge has enabled us to broaden this event and allow anyone who wanted to play in the qualifiers. There were 52 pairs in the first heat in February and 38 in the second heat, rather more than the 50 pairs we can normally accommodate at Oxshott. 14 pairs go forward to the green-pointed all-play-all 39 board final on Sunday 25th April. This year there is an additional "Nine High" final for the 12 pairs up to NGS grade 9 who did not qualify for the main final.



25 April: Surrey County Pairs final for leading pairs in the qualifying heats and Nine-High final.

2 May: Club Pairs Championships (The Mary Edwards Cup). A pairs event for players nominated by their club.

Tollemache 2021 Final

Jeffrey Allerton

'The Tolle' is a Teams of 8 competition, and four pairs means that everything is not necessarily lost when there is a bad result at one table. Take this hand from Surrey's match against Manchester.

IMPs	♠ AKJ105
E/W Vul	♥ 10764
dealer	♦ J532
South	♣ none
♠ Q864	♠ 732
♥ AKJ5	♥ 3
♦ Q	♦ K1076
♣ 10764	♣ KQJ82
	♠ 9
	♥ Q982
	♦ A984
	♣ A953

At both tables where Surrey were North/South, Manchester played in 3♣. After the natural defence of ♠AK and a ruff, South had two minor suit aces to come. One off for +100 to both Surrey pairs.

There was more excitement at the tables where Surrey were East/West. This was the bidding at one:

W	N	E	S	
-	-	-	P	
1♣	1♠	2♠	P	1♣ = natural or 15-19 balanced (2+♣)
3♣	P	P	Dbl	2♠ = good raise to 3♣ or more
P	3♥	P	P	
Dbl	all P			

Manchester's John Holland, North, demonstrated why he has won a world championship. He won the ♣K lead in dummy (discarding a diamond), finessed ♠J, cashed ♠AK and then ruffed a 4th round of spades in dummy. He ruffed a club, crossed to ♦A and ruffed another club. Declarer had won the first 8 tricks, and this was the end position:

IMPs	♠ 10
E/W Vul	♥ 107
dealer	♦ J5
South	♣
♠	♠
♥ AKJ5	♥ 3
♦	♦ K10
♣ 10	♣ Q8
	♠
	♥ Q98
	♦ 9
	♣ 9

Now North led the established 5th spade, discarding dummy's last club. What could the defence do? If East discarded, West could ruff but would be endplayed. In practice East ruffed and West discarded his last club. But now South could discard at trick 10, West would be forced to ruff and then concede the last trick to ♥Q. Contract made: -530.

A well-played hand, but there is an old adage that it's often right to lead a trump against a double part-score. If the defence start with four rounds of trumps, declarer cannot come to more than three spades, one trump and two minor suit aces; just six tricks in total and three down. A score of +500 would have justified West's double.

The auction was different at the other table where Surrey were East/West:

W	N	E	S	
-	-	-	P	
1♣	1♠	2♠	P	1♣ = natural or balanced (2+♣)
2NT	P	3♣	P	2♠ = good raise to 3♣ or more
3♥	P	3NT	all P	3♥ = values in hearts

Surrey's Martin Garvey took a more optimistic view of the West hand. Could he justify his optimism in the play? North led ♠K and switched to ♦J (with declarer figured to be weak/short in diamonds, this is not as silly as it might look at first sight). South ducked this round to declarer's ♦Q. West played four rounds of clubs, South winning the final one.

IMPs	♠ AJ10	
E/W Vul	♥ 1076	
dealer	♦ 5	
South	♣ none	
♠ Q84		♠ 73
♥ AKJ5		♥ 3
♦ -		♦ K107
♣ -		♣ K
	♠ -	
	♥ Q982	
	♦ A98	
	♣ -	

This was the position with South on lead and declarer still needing five more tricks out of the last seven:

South switched to ♥9. West finessed ♥J, and played three more rounds of hearts (South following upwards, East discarding two spades and ♦7). In with ♥Q, South had to concede 2 of the last three tricks to dummy. Nicely played, contract made and +600 to Surrey. In IMPs, it was -10, -10, +12 and +12, so Surrey actually gained on the board overall!

It's hard to criticise the opening lead, but have you spotted how the defence could and should have beaten 3NT at the end? Look what happens if South unblocks the ♥Q8 under ♥AK, gifting a trick to the lowly ♥5. West makes an unexpected fourth heart trick, but he has to lead a spade at trick 11 and the defenders win the last three tricks with ♠AJ and ♦A, resulting in the contract drifting one off!

Confessions Corner

John Manches

Pay attention. Did your opponents bid?

My partner, Alan Cadge and I had a lovely misunderstanding recently, playing on BBO. We were vulnerable. Alan was North and I held an interesting hand as South:

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

Musing on what I might bid, I was somewhat taken aback to see Alan open 2♣, our strongest bid. A jump response shows a weak hand with a long good suit and nothing outside, and is shown on a transfer basis. So, here, a jump to 3♦ would show my weak hand with hearts perfectly.

A bit to my surprise, East overcalled 2♦ but I bid 3♦ as planned (its meaning not being changed by the overcall) and passed Alan's 4♠ reply (obviously holding a monster spade suit). West doubled, so the auction was:

W	N	E	S
1NT	2♣	2♦	3♦
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All pass		

Alan, with only the slightest hint of surprise (gentleman that he is) said a polite thank you when my hand went down. His hand was:

♠ K 10 9 5 2
 ♥ A
 ♦ Q 9
 ♣ A Q J 6 2

4♠ doubled vulnerable went 4 off for -1100, losing us 16 IMPS in the scoring and the consolation only of this story to relate. What went wrong? Just one tiny thing. Totally my fault, I confess. I hadn't registered that, actually, West had dealt and opened 1NT! Alan's 2♣ hadn't been an opening at all but an overcall which, on the system we play, showed Clubs and a Major.

After East's 2♦ overcall, my 3♦ was clearly then asking Alan to bid his major, and with a better hand than he might have had for his 2♣, he duly jumped to 4♠. Not with the best of results!

Prize Double Dummy Puzzle #10

John Manches

	♠ A K 9 8	
	♥ 7 6	
	♦ 8 2	
♠ J 5 2	♣ A K 10 7 6	♠ Q 10 3
♥ Q 9 8 2		♥ K 10 5 4
♦ J 7 5		♦ 10 9 6 3
♣ J 9 8	♠ 7 6 4	♣ 4 3
	♥ A J 3	
	♦ A K Q 4	
6NT by South	♣ Q 5 2	
Lead = ♥2		

Thanks to all those who sent in solutions to the December puzzle. I actually found it encouraging that not all the solutions were right, leading me to think that the puzzle had not been so easy that everyone gobbled it up, nor perhaps so difficult that it put everyone off, news of which will hopefully encourage others to have a go at this month's puzzle.

An easier problem this time, or at least easier when you see your way through. I will doubtless find out in due course. All responses welcome received.

Please send your answers to me at johnmanches74@gmail.com The Double Dummy Deadline Date is 19 April. Names of all those submitting correct first time solutions will be put into Tim's Morris hat and the winner selected randomly. The prize, which is open to all Surrey members, will be free entry to a Surrey event at Oxshott of the winner's choice once they resume.

Teachers' Top Tips



There is a "Teaching & Learning" section on our website. Learners and Improvers will find information about clubs that teach bridge and have gentle sessions and supervised play for less experienced players. There is also information about local teachers. Here is some advice from two teachers.

[➤ See](#) more Top Tips on the website.

From Hilary Stewart. Hilary teaches at Four Corners Bridge. The club offers online lessons and play for beginners, improvers and advancers.

1. **Plan your rebid:** If you open the bidding with one of a suit PLAN your rebid BEFORE you open. Your plan may change though:

- a) if a major suit fit is found or
- b) if partner makes a limit bid in your suit or in no trumps and you definitely don't have enough points for game

2. **Be A SWOT:** As declarer, on every hand, PLAN your play BEFORE you play from dummy to the first trick. First Analyse - the opposition bidding (including any initial passes), and the opening lead (what does it tell you about the defender's holding in the suit led?). Then Strengths (how many top winners?), Weaknesses (how many extra tricks do you need for your contract?), Opportunities (examine each suit combination you hold for ways of generating extra tricks) and finally Threats (your analysis of the opening lead may give an indication of a possible

danger).

From **Richard Banbury**. Richard teaches at Richmond Bridge Club and privately.

1. **Vulnerability**: Look at this before you look at your cards. Make it part of your routine on every hand. It's one of the most important things in a competitive auction. No dodgy overcalls when you are vulnerable !!

2. **No Trump contracts** are all about your combined high card points: If not sure about inviting - or accepting an invitation - to game, then don't! Avoid bidding on "in hope" or "just in case"

Junior Bridge

June Middleton






The Surrey Schools Cup was cancelled - only a couple of schools are managing to keep their bridge clubs running so there was not sufficient demand for an online tournament. Hopefully, next year we can go back to holding it face to face if things return to normal. The EBU successfully ran their annual Youth Challenge online using RealBridge in early March which was won by Eton College.

I am about to try to get some supervised play sessions running for juniors using RealBridge.

A New BBO Feature

We miss the personal interaction of face-to-face bridge. Bridge Base will be adding a new feature to bring back some of the friendly chat we used to have. A Thank You message will appear on the screen when dummy's hand is shown. To avoid slowing down the game while players type messages Bridge Base will automatically display a message from declarer, replicating the words and the expression declarer would show if she/he was sitting at the table. The message and image will be selected using an algorithm which takes into account the card distribution and the bidding.

This new BBO feature is on trial and will be used for just one day initially, **1 April**.

BBO Message	Declarer's intended message
Thank you partner 	"Very nice hand. Better than I expected"
Thank you partner 	"Very nice hand. Much better than I expected. Why didn't you bid on?"
Thank you partner 	"I was hoping for at least one useful card."
Thank you partner 	"We need to talk about our bidding conventions."
Thank you partner 	"You cannot be serious!"

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