



### Welcome

It has been said that a recession is good for the game of Bridge. Certainly it is an opportunity for our clubs and members to publicise what good value an evening or afternoon out at a bridge club represents and what a wonderful game bridge is. Where else can you spend a few hours in good company, not to mention all the health benefits that a bit of gentle mental exercise brings, often for the princely sum of just one or two pounds and that frequently including tea, coffee and biscuits. Compare this to the price of a cinema ticket, a meal at a restaurant or an evening out at the theatre. The difference is astounding, yet the enjoyment at the bridge club equals if not betters all other forms of entertainment. Spread the word among your non-bridge playing friends and relatives. Perhaps you could try phoning up the editor of your local newspaper and see if you can interest him in this and the story of your local bridge club and/or bridge classes?

Meanwhile duplicate bridge clubs everywhere are contemplating the implications of the new scheme involving Universal Membership through Pay-to-Play being introduced by the EBU. Do bear in mind that the current membership arrangements remain in place for another whole

### Club Administration in the Age of Pay to Play

The Universal Membership Project Board and the Club Committee are aware from their consultations that some clubs are concerned about the level of administration that they believe will be required when we implement Pay to Play in April 2010.

Aylesbury is working very hard to ensure that the level of work is low. The initial effort will be the transfer of membership data, name address etc... and then an ongoing programme which will be able to be undertaken as and when the secretary needs to do the work for the club – it is not necessary just to update records for the EBU.

We know that the majority of clubs have the names and addresses of their members in the administration section of their scoring programs, thus making the transfer very easy.

To ensure that any wrinkles are ironed out, we will begin testing the system in a few months' time with clubs that have volunteered to help us get the process right for their fellow members. We would like to

membership year until the end of March 2010, and Universal Membership through Pay-to-Play comes in for the membership year beginning April 2010. At the moment some of the benefits for EBU clubs and members are still being negotiated with suppliers. In June this year the EBU will be sending out a form of membership agreement to all clubs, and this will include explanatory notes, the final figure for the Pay-to-Play fee (including a county element, if any), and a full list of the benefits and services which will be provided to clubs and members in return for subscribing to Universal Membership through Pay-to-Play. When this arrives, clubs will have all the facts available to them to make a properly informed decision, but until then any information they may have does not show the full picture. We think it makes a lot of sense for clubs to wait until they have all the relevant information before they make any decisions on Pay-to-Play. Please pass this on to your committee.

Until the next issue,

**Matt Betts and Krys Kazmierczak**

announce our thanks to those clubs that have agreed to take part in this process.

So please be assured we are going to keep the work level low. Help will also be available on electronic scoring and data transfer for those affiliated clubs that have never undertaken it before.

We will be mailing all this information out with the Club Contract in the second week of June 2009, with clubs being able to begin uploading data towards the end of 2009.

**Sally Bugden**

#### Focal Point

Does your club have a website? Why not put a link in to Club Focus? Our permanent web-address is:  
[www.ebu.co.uk/cf/](http://www.ebu.co.uk/cf/)

### Limerick Competition

Congratulations to the winner of the limerick competition from our January issue - Paul Littlewood from Hertfordshire who put together the following entertaining rhyme:

*A Keswick pig-farmer called Hank*

*Found bridge-playing hard, to be frank:*

*He was skilled at the game,*

*But no partners came,*

*'Cos somehow his hands always stank*  
....

As his prize he receives a copy of *Playing to Win at Bridge* by Ron Klinger. Many thanks to everyone who sent in entries for the competition.

Limericks for our next competition must have a Bridge theme and include the name of a place in the (Bridge) County of Derbyshire. Entries should be in to the address on page 7 by 15 April 2009. The winner will receive a copy of *Bridge is Fun*, by Ron Klinger (worth £8.99)\*

### This Issue

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Club Administration</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Limerick Competition</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Down Our Club</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Banking</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Bridge Tails</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Bidding Tools</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Club Insurance</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Club Committee Update</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Marvellous Start to 2009</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Strong 2 Openings</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bridge on TV</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Minibrige initiative</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Events</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bridge Tales</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Contact Us</b>	<b>7</b>

\*Visit the EBU Shop ([www.ebu.co.uk/shop](http://www.ebu.co.uk/shop)) for many useful bridge books!

## Down Our Club - Horley Bridge Club

Horley Bridge Club held a variety of events to celebrate its 25th Anniversary Year. It was founded on 9 March 1983 when a group of people who had attended Adult Education Classes could not find a Club willing to accept them into membership so they decided to form their own club.

There were just 15 founder members but, under the guidance of the founding Chairman Geoff Sumner, the Club grew from these humble beginnings to a membership of 100 in 1990 and has never fallen below this number since. This is in contrast to nationally falling numbers and is attributable to the Club never forgetting its roots and so, actively encouraging less experienced players into playing bridge in a Club environment.

The first special event was a visit by Ed Scerri on 16 April when, with a certain irony, the Club suspended its usual Wednesday evening playing session (the only other time being in the 1980s when the boiler broke in the hall on a particularly cold evening!), to listen to Ed speak on "Reading Your Opponents' Cards". Ed Scerri will be familiar to readers of English Bridge. His informative and engaging presentation was interspersed with a break for a finger buffet. This was a super

evening and I can only recommend other Clubs invite him along as he has the ability not to make your average Club player feel moronic!

On Sunday 12 October a celebratory luncheon was held at a local hotel attended by 64 members and guests. The Club was especially pleased to have as their guest of honour one of the two surviving founder members and the Club's first treasurer, namely Cecil Tulley. Following a drinks reception and buffet lunch, the anniversary cake (as pictured) was cut by Cecil. There followed a pleasant afternoon spent playing not too serious Chicago bridge.

For those not able to attend either event there has been the benefit of reduced table money for all playing sessions throughout the year. The Club will run up a deficit for the year but, unlike the country, we are funding this out of savings built up over the previous years and we will remain solvent.

Regular events like the Teams Event played on a Sunday, an autumn Invitation Evening to encourage less experienced players and the weekly Improver sessions for those new to bridge have continued as usual. At the Christmas party (rumoured to be the best Bridge Club Christmas

party in the area) we always have a raffle for the local hospice, St Catherine's. This year we raised over £200.

The local newspaper has taken up the Club's story and published a two page centre spread in their "Yesteryear" series.

Anyone visiting the area and wanting a game of bridge on a Monday afternoon or Wednesday evening is welcome to contact the Secretary on 01737 761560 or visit the Club's website at [www.bridgewebs.com/horley](http://www.bridgewebs.com/horley)



Joan Young, President

## Banking for Bridge Clubs

A few years ago when our local club treasurer was looking around for a better way to organise the banking for our bridge club, she was confronted with the problem that all of our local banks would only offer her a business account with attendant heavy bank charges. She ended up putting the money in a building society account, which only offered very limited banking services.

In the intervening years, however, the situation seems to have changed considerably, and most banks and building societies now offer special so-called "community accounts" for clubs and other non-profit organisations (usually those with an annual turnover of less than £100,000). These types of account are available in spite of the "credit crunch". If your club has not looked at its banking arrangements for some time, it might be worth reviewing them.

When Pay-to-Play is introduced in April 2010, the EBU will be offering a discount of £2 per invoice to those clubs which pay by Direct Debit. A modern community account should offer this facility, along with the usual cheque book and instant access to your club's money, without applying bank charges for cash and cheques, Direct Debits, standing orders, or bill payments

made from your account or for credits paid into it.

If your club has some savings, you might wish to keep the bulk of those in a separate savings account offering higher interest rates. Decent interest rates are hard to come by these days, but some financial institutes offer special community savings accounts for clubs and other non-profit making organisations. Online banking can make it easier to transfer money between accounts when necessary. Often the best rates are offered by so-called e-savings accounts if your bank will give you one of those.

Spending some time shopping around and taking advice from your local banks and building societies could save your club some money as well as making your banking easier. You should, of course, still check and understand the individual terms and conditions for any bank account very carefully before signing up to it, in case there are any unwelcome clauses in the small print.

Krys Kazmierczak

## Bridge Tails



Godfrey refused to put the card down and a fight ensued.

If you have a pet who likes to play cards, please send a photo in to Club Focus at the address on page 7.

## Bidding Tools: Responding to 1NT – Baron 2♠

In the last issue we assumed that you are playing Stayman and Red-suit Transfers in response to partner's 1NT opening and explained how you can use the responses of 2♠ and 2NT to ask partner to bid 3♣ and 3♦ to play. Can we improve on that? The answer is yes: Respond 2NT whenever you want to make a weak take-out into **either** minor. This is a relay bid forcing partner to bid 3♣, which you will 'pass or correct'. In other words, using our two examples from last time

1) ♠9 ♥874 ♦J93 ♣K87642

2) ♠9 ♥874 ♦J97643 ♣K82

with hand 1 opposite a 1NT opening you bid 2NT, partner will bid 3♣, and you will pass; with hand 2 you would also bid 2NT, but when partner rebids 3♣ as requested, you bid 3♦ which partner must pass.

This way of using 2NT as a transfer to either minor leaves the 2♠ response free to be used for a convention known as 'Baron 2♠', which is quite popular and is part of the Standard English Modern Acol Bidding System. Basically, it is used to find out more about the opening hand. Responder can use this bid with two types of hand:

i) With an 11- or 12-point balanced or semi-balanced hand, where you wish to play in 3NT if opener is maximum. Usually denies a 4-card major.

ii) With a very strong hand, usually 18+ points, where you wish to find out whether slam might be a possibility, and whether you have a suit fit.

In either case, a response of 2♠ asks opener to rebid 2NT with a minimum opening, but bid his 4- (or 5-) card suits up the line at the three level if maximum. With a type-i hand you either pass 2NT or, if partner shows a maximum, you bid 3NT. With a type-ii hand you continue bidding 4+ card suits in ascending order until you find a fit or agree on NT, and then possibly explore for slam using cue bids or Blackwood.

Let's take a look at some examples where partner opens a weak 1NT showing 12-14 points and you have:

3) ♠A9 ♥K87 ♦J103 ♣KQJ107

With a combined point count of 26-28 there is plenty enough for game, and you should have no interest in playing in anything other than No Trumps – partner doesn't have a 5-card major, and 5♣ may be too ambitious. **Don't bother to mention the club suit** – just bid 3NT.

4) ♠QJ9 ♥K87 ♦QJ103 ♣K107

The hand is totally flat but you have 12 points and a couple of useful tens. There is a good chance of game if partner is maximum for his opening. Bid 2♠ and go

on to 3NT if partner shows a maximum, but pass 2NT.

5) ♠AK5 ♥K8 ♦K1093 ♣AK98

You have 20 points but a flattish hand without a 4-card major. You could simply bid 4NT inviting partner to go to 6NT with a good 13 count or 14, but bidding 2♠ allows you to stop in 3NT rather than 4NT if partner is minimum.

6) ♠A5 ♥K ♦KQ1095 ♣AKJ98

Bid 2♠. If partner can reply with 3♣ or 3♦, investigate the minor slam. If partner replies 3♥, drive to 6NT. If partner replies 2NT, bid 3♦ – partner will know you have a very strong hand and will bid again. You can bid clubs at your next turn to show a two-suited hand.

7) ♠AK75 ♥K ♦KQ72 ♣AK98

You have 22 points, enough for slam opposite partner's 12-14, but it might be safer to play in a minor if partner doesn't have much in hearts. Bid 2♠ and continue with 3♣ if partner responds 2NT. Now you both continue bidding your suits until you find a fit or end in NT.

As always with any new convention, you need to discuss the full implications with your regular partner and practise some hands before putting it to the test at your local club.

## Club Insurance

After detailed negotiations with our insurance brokers and consultation with the Financial Services Authority, the English Bridge Union is delighted to announce the provision of a new and valuable service for all of our affiliated clubs, whether or not you currently use the insurance services provided by Osbornes.

The Union will provide a group policy for all clubs, regardless of size with an unbeatable package of cover at a very economic price.

For clubs that are interested the facility will be provided with a start date of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. If you state your intention to proceed with this, all we will need is your club name and the location of where you meet, and the type of policy required.

The EBU will provide suitable documentation to the brokers. That will be the entire administrative requirement for our clubs, other than to pay us in a timely manner to ensure that your coverage is continuous.

We will be able to provide the words of the policy booklet by email in due course, but we do not want to go into the cost of mailing the entire pack, because of cost.

Further details can be viewed on the EBU website. If you require any additional policy details you will also have to contact Osbornes directly for just those parts.

**Barry Capal**



### Focal Point

Does your club run any duplicate events, charity drives or lectures open to non-members? If so, please drop us a line, and we can advertise them in Club Focus and on the EBU Website under "Club Events".

### Local Event

Ed Scerri Seminar - South Bucks Bridge Centre

Thursday 12th March 2009

Seeing the Error of your Ways

10.15 am to 12.15 pm

£9.00 PAY AT THE DOOR- no advance booking.

For more information:

[www.southbucksbridgecentre.co.uk](http://www.southbucksbridgecentre.co.uk)

## Club Committee Update

The EBU Interim Club Committee held its second meeting recently. The Regional Representatives have now been in contact with all affiliated clubs in their areas and obtained feedback from many of them on a number of issues. If your club has not yet heard from its Regional Representative, please ask your club Secretary or Chairman to email [cc@ebu.co.uk](mailto:cc@ebu.co.uk) or write to me at the EBU address.

The main items covered at the meeting were:

The Interim Committee is working towards creating a permanent Club Committee, with regions probably based on the current county leagues, but it was decided that the current Committee should remain in place until the introduction of Universal Membership through Pay-to-Play was completed in 2010.

The Committee members consulted clubs on the proposed new rules on doubling. The majority of those who responded wanted the status quo to be retained. The Club Committee has therefore recommended to the Laws and Ethics committee, that the current doubling regulation continue to be used.

A questionnaire circulated about club IT needs, had shown that 20% of clubs that responded would need assistance with these matters before the implementation of Universal Membership. This will be provided by the EBU.

The EBU members' magazine *English Bridge* was discussed with its editor Elena Jeronimidis. All were agreed that she had improved the magazine considerably since she took over as editor last year, but it could still be made more attractive to club players. We would like readers' opinions, ideas and suggestions.

- What would you like to see more or less of in *EB*?
- Would you like less advanced material?
- Would you like more letters or forum talk on bridge matters?
- Comparing other bridge magazines could you give details of columns/presentation you particularly like/dislike?
- Would you like columns aimed at club players to occupy a special place in the magazine, or to be colour-coded accordingly?

Please write with your suggestions to your local Regional Representative. Please see box on the right.

**Krys Kazmierczak, EBU Club Liaison Officer**



## Marvellous Start to 2009

Beccles Bridge Club, which is actually in Suffolk, although affiliated to the Norfolk CBA, had a wonderful turnout at their Swiss Teams event on Sunday 18 January. Praises have flown in from everybody about the lunch that was laid on and the way the bridge was controlled and directed.

There were 26 teams, and the event went from start to finish with perfection. The committee of the club must be congratulated for all the hard work they had put in before, during and after the event, which made it such a success and also Gillian Hall who acted as Director for the event. Directing 26 teams is no mean task especially as Gillian was also playing in one of the teams.

Coffee and tea were available on arrival, and two matches were played before we had a break for what can only be called a wonderful display of cold meats, salads

and selection of sweet dishes, followed by a fine collection of cheeses, grapes and biscuits. Four more matches were then played, and finally the fine array of prizes was presented to the winners and those who came near the top.

The overall winning team was Tony Metcalf, Meta Douglas Jones, Paul Quinn and Masuma Ali, and the team who won the Non-Master's prize was Charles Parker, Andre Gray, Jacqui Driver and Jean Clarke. It was very pleasing to see 26 teams at an event put on by a small club like Beccles.

Congratulations to the committee of the Beccles Bridge Club and Gillian Hall, and may this large number turning up at the beginning of 2009 encourage other clubs to lay on events like theirs.

PS - I should add I am not a member of the club.

**Thomas Beven**

### Club Committee Regional Representatives

**Margaret Eddleston:**

[mee.hitchin@ntlworld.com](mailto:mee.hitchin@ntlworld.com)  
Beds, Essex, Herts, Middx

**Tom Garrett:**

[gtomgarrett@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:gtomgarrett@tiscali.co.uk)  
Berks and Bucks, Glos, Hants, Oxon

**Suzanne Gill:**

[suegill@btinternet.com](mailto:suegill@btinternet.com)  
Cambs/Hunts, Lincs, Norfolk, Suffolk

**Phil Green:**

[greenretailsystems@btopenworld.com](mailto:greenretailsystems@btopenworld.com)  
Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wilts

**Barbara Herold:**

[lattyherold@aol.com](mailto:lattyherold@aol.com)  
Channel Islands, Kent, Surrey, Sussex

**Terry Jacobs:**

[terryjacobs@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:terryjacobs@blueyonder.co.uk)  
Derbyshire, Isle of Man, Lancs, Manchester, Merseyside/Cheshire, Notts, Staffs and Shrops

**Tim Johnson:**

[TFNJ@talktalk.net](mailto:TFNJ@talktalk.net)  
Herefordshire, Leics, Northants, Warks, Worcs

**Lesley Millet:**

[lesley-mil@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lesley-mil@tiscali.co.uk)  
Cumbria, NEBA, Westmorland, Yorkshire

**Stefanie Rohan:**

[daisy\\_duck@btopenworld.com](mailto:daisy_duck@btopenworld.com)  
London

### Christmas Competition Winner

Congratulations to Elizabeth Bingham who won our Christmas Bridge Tails Caption Competition:



**Fresh from his recent triumph at the Feline Mind Olympics, Theodore "The Paw" Lightner demonstrates his new signalling method.**

Elizabeth wins a Pelisser Table, worth £85!

## What is allowed as an artificial Strong 2 Opening?

Most club bridge players play either Acol or some version of Acol with weak two bids: maybe Benjaminised Acol or three weak two bids. In that case at least one of your two-level openings is artificial: 2♣ if you play Acol, 2♣ and 2♦ if you play Benjaminised Acol.

Artificial bids need to be licenced by the regulating authority. In England the EBU shareholders (representing the counties) elect the Laws and Ethics committee (often called the L and E) for this purpose. Part of their role is to provide a framework which allows the game to be played in a manner consistent with the laws. When deciding whether conventions should be allowed, they have two particular things to bear in mind.

Firstly, too many artificial conventions can make bridge very hard for less experienced players. Therefore there are various levels of licensing. Some conventions are not allowed in competitions which attract less experienced players.

Secondly, the laws of bridge oblige you to disclose your methods to opponents if they ask. Artificial strong two bids have for a long time caused considerable problems in this respect. Let me explain.

When you were taught bridge you were probably taught that an Acol two opener promised eight playing tricks. You should also have been taught that it shows a hand of power and quality with good defensive strength, but somehow this bit gets forgotten. Therefore you open a Benjaminised 2♣ with:

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

It takes quite a bit of creative accounting to make this eight playing tricks, but even if you manage it, it certainly is not a hand of power and quality with good defensive strength. It is a pre-emptive hand! Your opponents ask the meaning and you either say 'Strong' or you say 'Eight playing tricks' which they interpret as strong. They are therefore deterred from bidding by what is in effect an ambiguous or misleading explanation.

This problem is so widespread that the L and E have decided that the only way to protect opponents is to put strict criteria on which hands can or cannot be opened with an artificial two bid or a strong

(Precision) 1♣ bid. Their criteria are described in the Orange Book (Handbook of EBU Directives and Permitted Agreements) on page 50, which refers back to page 41. Provided you fully explain your methods to opponents, artificial two-of-a-suit openings which purport to be strong may be played as any one of the following three conditions:

(1) It corresponds to the Extended Rule of 25. That means that if you add your high card points to the number of cards in your two longest suits, the total should come to at least 25. In hand (b) you have 14 high card points plus 7 spades and 4 diamonds. That comes to exactly 25 so it is permitted to open it 2♣. Hand (c) only comes to 24 because it has one fewer diamond, so it doesn't qualify.

(b) ♠ A Q J 8 6 5 4 ♥ A ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ 3

(c) ♠ A Q J 8 6 5 4 ♥ A 2 ♦ K 8 7 ♣ 3

or

(2) It contains eight clear-cut tricks, not dependent on finesses or good breaks. Hand (d) is allowed: hand (e) isn't.

(d) ♠ A K Q J 8 5 4 3 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 9 7 ♣ 5

(e) ♠ A K Q 9 8 5 4 3 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 9 7 ♣ 5

To understand this, suppose partner has no spades. Hand (e) will provide eight tricks only if the missing five spades break 3-2. This will only happen about two thirds of the time, so there are not eight clear cut tricks. Admittedly hand (d) will not provide eight tricks if an opponent has five spades, but that is very unlikely.

I would comment that whatever is or isn't allowed, opening hands (d) and (e) with a Benji 2♣ is not good bridge anyway. Both hands have considerable playing strength, but neither has any realistic defence if opponents bid to 6♥. You would do far better to open each of them with 4♠, making it hard for your opponents to enter the bidding. Equally hand (a) should be opened 5♦ or maybe 4♦ if vulnerable. None of the conditions placed by the L and E are a handicap to playing good bridge.

or

3) It contains at least 16 high card points.

Note that hand (a) fails on all three tests and therefore **cannot** be opened with a Benji 2♣: total high card points plus length of the two longest suits only adds up to 20; it does not have eight clear-cut tricks; it only has ten high card points.

What happens in practice? Club players often choose to play conventions but do not check in the Orange Book to see whether their interpretation is allowed. An opponent is misled and asks the director for redress. The club player is then highly indignant. However, you do need to bear two things in mind:

i) The L and E are not out to 'get you'. They are only doing their best to protect everybody. Do see it all from the other point of view. I doubt if you would enjoy your bridge if there was a free for all in which everybody could play whatever conventions they liked and explain them in a way which left you misinformed.

ii) That if you choose to play a convention, you do have a responsibility to check whether it is allowed. If you find the Orange Book hard to understand, ask your teacher or a director, or even ring or email John Pain at EBU headquarters. They are all there to help you.

Note that these restrictions only apply to **artificial** opening bids that purport to show an Acol two bid, (or strong, or eight playing tricks). If you are playing straight Acol and you choose to open a hand with an Acol 2♣ with a hand that does not meet these criteria you can do so, but you have a responsibility to describe accurately to opponents the sort of hand it might be. You could open hand (e) with an Acol 2♣, but you should not describe it as 'strong' or 'eight playing tricks'.

Equally, there are much weaker hands that can be shown with an artificial two-level opening, the Multi-2♦ being an obvious example. I cannot cover all eventualities in this article: all I can do is to plead with you to check in the Orange Book that your favourite methods are licensed. Your club should have a reference copy. It is also available on the EBU website on the right hand side menu of the home page.

**Andrew Kambites**

### Try advertising at your local bowls clubs

Megan Taft reports that Brierfield Bridge Club's best recruitment year (32 students) came when the club put its posters in all the local bowls clubs. Almost all of them joined the club after graduating through the bridge classes. The posters also mentioned "Want to go on a cruise and join in the bridge sessions? Learn to play first at Brierfield - and enjoy the cruise even more".

If you would like a list of other ideas for advertising your bridge club and bridge classes, drop Krys an email to [krys@ebu.co.uk](mailto:krys@ebu.co.uk)

## Bridge on TV: Celebrity Grand Slam

Sky Arts 2 and Sky Arts HD will air a brand new programme on bridge this April, featuring eight celebrity players.

**Bridge: Celebrity Grand Slam**, shows a side of bridge away from tournaments, complex bidding systems and double squeezes. This is social bridge, as played by hundreds of thousands of people in the UK, for fun and the love of the game.

The eight players are:

**Sue Lawley**, radio and TV presenter, host of *Desert Island Discs* for 18 years.

**Mike Gatting**, former cricket captain of England and Middlesex.

**Susan Hampshire**, actress, most famous for her role as *Fleur* in *The Forsyte Saga*.

**David Rowntree**, drummer with pop group Blur.

**James Mates**, ITN journalist and news-caster.

**Pattie Boyd**, photographer and writer, former wife of George Harrison and Eric Clapton

**Val McDermid**, best-selling author of crime thrillers, including *Wire in the Blood*.

**Kay Burley**, Sky news anchor. Kay is a bridge novice who only started to learn to play Bridge three and a half weeks before the series was filmed.

The programmes are compered by **Clive Anderson**, who played bridge at university. He is assisted by bridge experts and England internationals Glyn Liggins and Andrew "Tosh" McIntosh who chose the hands. Andrew also taught Kay to play.

### The Format

There are eight half hour programmes in the series. In each episode the celebrities play four hands with a new partner. Then they swap.

## Minibridge initiative

The English Bridge Union has launched a funded scheme to bring Minibridge into the primary school classroom over the next three years.

Minibridge has proven suitable for classroom use, allowing children the opportunity to improve their logical and lateral thinking skills within the framework of play, which offers dynamic brain training.

A study commissioned by the EBU at St Paul's School in Manchester showed that bridge and Minibridge taught skills in numeracy, problem solving, probability, speaking, listening, rule following, team

Over the course of the series everyone ends up partnering everyone else with a special twist in the 8<sup>th</sup> and final show. The same deals are played at both tables, greatly reducing the element of luck, and aggregate scoring is used.

Tosh and Glyn are in the control room with Clive Anderson, commenting on the bidding and play. Once the bidding is over they are joined by dummy to comment on the play of the hand.

The players are competing for a £20,000 charity pot. The winner will donate £10,000 to his or her chosen charity, the runner-up £3,000, down to eighth place, who will donate £250. The real winners will be eight charities!

The players use a simple Acol system - weak no-trump, strong 2s, Stayman and Blackwood.

Here is a deal from the very first programme:

Game all; dealer East

- ♠ K3
- ♥ A75
- ♦ QJ1092
- ♣ 632
- ♠ 76
- ♥ QJ4
- ♦ A843
- ♣ KJ97
- ♠ AJ952
- ♥ K82
- ♦ K7
- ♣ AQ5
- ♠ Q1084
- ♥ 10963
- ♦ 65
- ♣ 1084

The auction might go:

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North will lead the queen of diamonds, and we would expect most club players to get this one right. You have seven tricks on top, and knocking out the ace of hearts provides an easy route to two more. Will our social players succeed? Or will they be seduced by the length of the spade suit and try for extra tricks there?

We are told that the declarers on this deal, to be shown on April 20, are Susan Hampshire and David Rowntree. We don't know the contracts they reached, nor the results. Our predictions are that both East-West pairs will bid to Three Notrumps, and that one will make it and the other will go one down.

**Bridge: Celebrity Grand Slam** will be shown on Sky Arts 2 (channel 257) from April 20 and ending with the grand final on Sunday 26 April. The programmes will also be available on Sky Arts HD (channel 258)



building, mental capacity and much more.

For further information on this project or to put your primary school forward, please visit [www.ebu.co.uk/Minibridge](http://www.ebu.co.uk/Minibridge), email [Minibridge@ebu.co.uk](mailto:Minibridge@ebu.co.uk) or call Matt Betts on 01296 317 200.

PS Do you know a primary school in the North West? We will be in Manchester on 24 April showcasing our initiative.

Please contact Matt for more details and come along!

## EBU Teachers Weekend: 8 - 10 May 2009

**Hilton Hotel, Old Common Road, Black Dam, Basingstoke, RG21 3PR**

Only £188 which includes 2 days FULL BOARD from Friday evening dinner through to Sunday lunch; tea and coffee breaks and the course fee. This price is per person. There should be no other costs, other than personal expenses.

Only 45 rooms are available. If everyone takes single occupancy then the weekend is limited to 45 people.

### Provisional Programme

Friday afternoon - arrive in time for dinner

Friday evening - 1st session of instruction/ teaching tips

Friday evening (Late) - pairs bridge session

Saturday morning and afternoon - 2nd and 3rd instruction sessions

Saturday evening - individual tournament for the Philbrick Salver

Sunday morning and early afternoon - 4th

and 5th instruction sessions

Sunday approx 4pm - close of weekend.

### Booking and payment

Initial booking is through John Pain at the EBU, but do not send any money yet.

I will need to know name, address, contact email and/or phone and type of accommodation required (single/double or twin).

I will forward your details to Hilton Special Events who will then contact you for a £30 deposit with the balance to be paid 2 weeks before the event. All monies will be paid direct to Hilton Special Events - NOT TO THE EBU.

(Briefly) Cancellation terms: more than 28 days before event - deposit refunded; 14 to 28 days deposit forfeit; 0 to 14 days; whole fee forfeit. You should consider cancellation insurance.

## Forthcoming EBU Events

**Portland Pairs: 29 March (see more details on right)**

**Baker Tilly Easter Festival: 10 - 13 April, London**

**Baker Tilly Easter Festival: 10 - 12 April, Buxton**

**Spring Bank Holiday Congress: 23 - 25 May, Bournemouth**

**English Riviera: 26 - 28 June, Torquay**

**Northern Summer Congress: 23 - 26 July, Scarborough**

For more information, please email [comps@ebu.co.uk](mailto:comps@ebu.co.uk) or see the EBU website.



### The Portland Pairs

Sunday 29 March 2009

The Portland Pairs is one of the few **Mixed Pairs** events held in England, and is a really enjoyable day's bridge.

It is a two-session tournament held at various venues. The event is match-pointed over the entire field using the ECatsBridge scoring system.

The Portland Pairs is a Level 4 event.

The starting times at all venues will be 1.00pm, and 2 sessions of 24 boards will be played with a break between sessions. The second session will start at approximately 5.30pm, but this may vary by up to half an hour either way to allow for local circumstances.

Entry Fee: The entry fee is £21 per player.

Closing date for entries is 16 March 2009.

## Bridge Tales

On board 5 at the local club duplicate Wife played in 3NT and slightly muddled the play, going one off. Hubby commented loudly that a mentally confused baboon would have made the contract.

Things didn't improve as the evening went on, and neither did the good humour or concentration of the couple. A few rounds later they managed to go to the wrong table without anyone realising and (illegally) reversed polarity, so that Hubby was sitting South. The same board 5 appeared again on the table, and the same bidding sequence left Hubby in 3NT - two off. Wife's comments, when she realised that this was the same board she had played earlier, cannot be printed in a family newsletter: it is sufficient to say that when she had been scraped off the ceiling, the term 'mentally confused baboon' received quite an airing.

**Andrew Kambites**

## Contact us

We hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of Club Focus. Are you interested in writing for the next newsletter? Have you started learning bridge? Have you got any funny stories about bridge? Does your club have any interesting ideas or solutions to common problems which other clubs might benefit from? Would you like to publicise any special events open to non-members and members? Do you have a special pet who likes to play cards? Please let us know!

If you would like to contact us or send us your articles, feedback or comments, please email: [clubfocus@ebu.co.uk](mailto:clubfocus@ebu.co.uk) or post to: **Club Focus, English Bridge Union, Broadfields, Aylesbury, HP19 8AZ.** Deadline for submissions is 15 April 2009.