

TALKING BRIDGE

Norfolk County Trials?

By John Aspinall

THE THORNY QUESTION OF COUNTY TRIALS is one that has been the subject of much debate over the last few years in the committee rooms of the NCBA. Personally I am all in favour of the principle and idea of trials because they allow up and coming and also established pairs to prove their ability to the County Selectors. They also promote the idea of a more open selection process rather than fostering the myth that county selection is a 'closed shop' which is the (mis-taken) view that I believe is still held by some of our County Members.

I am not however of the opinion that county trials should guarantee any pairs selection for county matches or the Tollemache competition simply because they have done well in the trials. Clearly the Selectors should take note of the result of the trials when picking a team but the final team should be left in the hands of the Selection Committee. There are four main reasons for this:

1. I believe that the best available team should always be selected to represent the County (with the possible exception of the County C Team which could be a bit more experimental.)
2. The result of a two session pairs event will inevitably be fairly random and there

are no guarantees that the best pair or pairs will necessarily finish in the top two or three.

3. As Norfolk is a relatively small county in terms of population, we do not have a large pool of county-standard players from which to choose. It is therefore relatively easy for a less experienced pair to do well in a one-off trial and I do not think that the Selection Committee should be forced to select such a pair if they were not felt to be of sufficiently good standard.
4. Unlike the EBU who run their Open Trials over up to seven weekends of intensive bridge, an already crowded bridge calendar and demands on peoples time makes anything other than a one-day trial difficult to organise and run at County level.

For the above reasons I believe that the Open Trial which the County are running on the 27th October represents a reasonable balance between giving pairs an opportunity without tying the selectors hands. For the avoidance of doubt the winners of this trial will not be guaranteed a place in the Tollemache Team as has been the case in the previous two years. However I would like to encourage as many aspiring county players as possible to play so as to make this a

cont'd page 2...

Norfolk Contract Bridge Association

Editorial

My first duty as the incoming incumbent of the post of Editor of Talking Bridge is a pleasant one: to thank Dave Thompson for all the time and effort that he has put into the production of the County Magazine. Having had just an introductory taste of the work required to collate, produce and print the magazine, I am already aware of the significant effort that Dave put into producing it each quarter, and can only hope to continue effectively from where he has left off.

Since this is my first opportunity to write as Editor, I think that it is fair to put some of the onus on you. The magazine is only as good as its content, and the wider the variety of material, the more interesting it becomes. So get writing! Whether you are

winning a national event or playing in a three table session at your local club, there are bound to be some events that are interesting or amusing enough to warrant putting pen to paper. Many of the articles appearing in print debate contentious issues, for example should we hold county trials, and in what format, or should we be using computer dealt boards for all county events? If you agree or disagree strongly with contributors, why not write in and say so?

As you will have already noticed, the format of the magazine has changed, and I hope that you like the new layout. Again, please contact me if you have any comments or suggestions regarding the construction or content of the magazine.

Enough ranting for now. Read on and enjoy!

...cont'd from page 1
worthwhile event. Please send your entries to Robbie by the 22nd October.

I appreciate that not all County Members share my views about trials and in the last edition of Talking Bridge Mike Virgo wrote an article suggesting that the top eight pairs from an annual trial (with four pre-exempted pairs) should be selected as of right for the county. Whilst I would not personally be in favour of such a system, I respect Mike's views and would invite him and any other County Members to contact me either by email: aspinalls@ntlworld.com or old-fashioned letter letting me have their opinions. This would be useful in assisting the relevant County Committees to decide the format of next year's trials.

I am very approachable and want to make the process of selection for county teams as open and as fair as possible.

More trials comment on page 18.

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Norfolk Abroad

THE COMMONWEALTH BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIP took place in Manchester recently. Bridge is still a demonstration event, having not yet reached full Games status.

Due to the fact that not all the Commonwealth Countries were competing, various other teams from around the UK were invited to play in a friendly event after the medals had been decided. Norfolk joined forces with Staffs to field a team comprised of Matt Millson, Mike Walsh, Sandra Fenton and Andrew Thompson.

Millson and Walsh demonstrated their usual expert bidding judgement on the following hand:

Millson

♠ QJ754

♥ A1042

♦ 653

♣ 6



Walsh

♠ AK1096

♥ K

♦ AKQ4

♣ KQ10

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♣ ¹	Pass	6♠ ²	Pass
7♠ ³	Pass	Pass	Pass

¹ Singleton club, agreeing spades

² Partner must have an ace

³ Partner doesn't know about the ♥A

In N/S's defence, they obviously didn't know what they were doing. It was evident that this contract suffered from a minor drawback, although this wasn't immediately fatal when West led a heart. After you get over the initial shock it becomes clear that if diamonds break 3-3 you will be able to dispose of dummy's losing club. Can you do better?

Yes! Win the ♥K, play the ♠10 to the ♠Q and ruff a heart with the ♠A. Play the ♠9 to the ♠J and ruff another heart with the ♠K. Now cash two top diamonds and lead the carefully preserved ♠6 to dummy's ♠7. This is the position, with dummy on lead:

♠54

♥A

♦6

♣6



♠—

♥—

♦Q4

♣KQ10

Cash the last two spades throwing clubs from your own hand and then lead the ♥A. East, who has reduced to ♦J10 and the ♣A, now has to choose between throwing the ♣A or unguarding the diamonds in a positional squeeze. A lucky make.

It goes without saying that at the other table the opponents only bid 4♠.

Mike Walsh

Arch-Riddle

West handled his dummy expertly. Despite several bad breaks he managed to fulfill his five club contract. Now, what is his occupation?

solution page 19

Computer Dealt Hands Appear to be More Distributional

THE NEW DUPLIMAT MACHINE (apart from the hiccup on dealing some hands, still not resolved as this is written, but possibly linked to my new operating system) has provoked considerable comment on hand distributions.

It is perhaps relevant to explain that at present the machine operator has no control over the hand patterns or point distributions at all. Norfolk would need to buy a separate editing program from Jannerstans to be able to have this control, and until there is a demand from teachers we do not aim to buy this add-on. Therefore at present all hands are completely random, dealt according to the dealing program that Jannerstans have supplied with the machine.

When there were initial queries raised about distributions, I not only checked with the EBU, but also with American sources of statistics (via the Web), to ensure that I knew the theoretically correct figures.

The EBU statistics, verified by the USA website, show that there are only six hand types that do not contain a singleton or void. These

hands with the theoretical percentages that occur are as follows:

<i>Shape</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
4-4-3-2	21.55%
5-3-3-2	15.52%
5-4-2-2	10.58%
4-3-3-3	10.54%
6-3-2-2	5.64%
7-2-2-2	0.51%
TOTAL	64.34%

All other hand types, of which 5-4-3-1 with 12.93%, is the most common, make up the other 35.66%.

I have to admit that I had never considered that there were only six hand-types that did not contain a singleton or void, and more importantly I had no idea that more than one hand in every three (35.66%), will contain a singleton or void. Had you?

Clearly no single set of 32 boards will produce the exactly correct statistics, i.e. with 25% of the HCP in each hand, and of course it is impossible to get a 7-6-0-0 turning up the appropriate 0.01% in just 32 boards. However, I have no doubt that the frequency of singletons and voids occurring in computer-dealt boards, although not always exactly 35.66%, is likely to be closer

to the expected figure more often than that occurring in boards dealt with the customary club shuffle.

This then raises a further significant topic: Are these more statistically correct random hands a good thing for Norfolk bridge or a bad thing?

Here I think that there is room for some debate. In county competitions or in county matches, I think we should be providing a true test of bridge skills. Clearly for those of our members who compete at national level, whether it is at congresses, one-day events, simultaneous pairs or knockout events, and are likely to be faced with computer dealt hands, it is sensible to have played with similar hands as often as possible. But what about at club level? I have no doubt where I personally stand. I like to see more testing hands, asking all of us to exercise more judgement and skill on each hand. However, not everybody is going to agree, and some people and clubs are going to prefer to see the 'flatter' distributions, as they are more comfortable bidding and playing a flatter hand type. At the end of the day I think this is going to be a decision for each club's committee: "Do our members want to play with more

technically challenging hands or not?"

For those of you who want to keep an eye on the statistics that are printed at the bottom of the Duplimat hand records – the theoretically correct figure for 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 and 5-3-3-2 combined is 47.61% (the four lots of hand records I hold show 52, 51, 45, and 45%), for 5-4-2-2, 5-4-3-1 and all 5-5s it is 27.58% (and has been 24, 25, 30 and 26), and for 6-3, 6-4 and 6-5 it is 16.48% (and has been 21, 18, 17, and 17). Very easy to remember in rough terms: 47-27-17!

Given that 35.66% of all hands should contain a singleton or void, then in a normal night's play of 24 boards, i.e. 96 hands, we should expect 34 hands with a singleton or void - on average well over one each board. Think about this and do not complain too loudly if the figures are actually close to the correct ones, even if they seem unusual compared with manually dealt hands. In fact for the four hand records I hold the actual figures were 26, 33, 33, and 35 (but the last figure was for a County Match, so only experienced by a few), surprisingly close to expectation twice, and only over just the once.

Roger Cortis

25 Years of League Participation

Congratulations to Ron Binks who has played in the same league team with various partners coming and going for the last quarter of a century. His current team which includes partner Les Rowe and Elizabeth Brown & Jim Outred has been promoted to division two this season. Ron was first asked to play with Ethel Hunt and team mates Tom & Audrey Swift after Clem Hunt had died in 1967. Ron's best ever league result was runner up in division one but the year is forgotten. Well done to Ron for captaining such a steady ship.

Problems in Defence

1. Dealer W, N/S Game

♠K8
♥943
♦AQ1097
♣1092

♠Q10953
♥107
♦K5
♣A753



South	West	North	East
	Pass	Pass	2♥ ¹
2NT ²	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

¹ Weak, 6-9 h.c.p., at least five hearts

² 15-17 h.c.p.

You are sitting West.

In deference to your partner's bid you lead the ♥10, partner overtakes with the ♥J, cashes the ♥K (declarer playing the ♥8 then the ♥2) and then leads the ♥6 to declarer's ♥A. Plan the defence.

2. Dealer S, Game All

♠AJ853
♥93
♦4
♣AK765



♠1042
♥QJ7
♦A2
♣Q10984

South	West	North	East
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

You are sitting East.

Partner leads the ♥A and then switches to the ♠K. Declarer wins and cashes two top clubs pitching a spade from hand. He then leads the second heart from the deck. How do you continue?

Solutions on page 16

System Interview: John and Julie Aspinnall

The first of a series of articles that investigate the bidding methods played by some of the county's leading pairs.

JOHN AND JULIE ASPINNALL are such well known figures in the Norfolk bridge community that an introduction scarcely seems necessary. They first played together at Nottingham University and later cut their teeth at the then star-studded Nottingham club before moving to the Fens in the early 1980's to pursue their careers; John as a solicitor and Julie as an accountant.

Although resident in Cambridgeshire, their nearest club was King's Lynn and they have remained loyal to club and county ever since, despite subsequently moving to Ely. They first played for Norfolk in the Tollemache in (we think) 1986 and have been regulars ever since.

They describe their bidding style as "sound rather than spectacular" and this is a recurring theme in their choice of system. They play a strong no-trump (what else?) and five-card majors with a natural 1♦ and a catch-all 1♣, which could be a doubleton in a weak no-trump hand.

John: "*Sometimes we miss the pre-emptive effect of a weak no-trump, especially at pairs, but we both prefer teams scoring and we like the*

extra safety of the strong no-trump."

It is pretty much essential to play inverted raises of the nebulous 1♣ (obviously the raise to three promises at least five cards) but as an opening 1♦ is natural they prefer traditional raises.

Thereafter they prefer to develop the auction slowly wherever possible with any change of suit by opener forcing for one round.

Julie: "*We very rarely make a jump in the bidding just to show a good hand. It is almost always showing support or pre-emptive.*"

They admit to being conservative in the slam zone and will not make a forward move unless there is a safe way of doing so, acknowledging that they will occasionally miss a good slam that can only be reached by taking a chance. Of course the other side of this coin is that they seldom have to apologise to teammates for overreaching in the bidding and arriving in a poor slam.

That said, they did better than most pairs on this hand from a recent county match. Too many subsided in 3NT, despite 7♣ being an excellent contract. John and Julie at least got to the small slam:

♠K63
♥9
♦Q98
♣AK9532



♠AQ
♥AQ432
♦A4
♣QJ104

John	Julie
1♣	1♥
2♣	3♦
4♣	4♥
4♠	6♣

An initial 2♥ force would guarantee a better suit so Julie responds only 1♥, in spite of the nineteen high card points. After the 2♣ rebid, a continuation of 2♦ would have been forcing and so the actual choice of 3♦ is a cue bid in support of clubs. Now John encourages with 4♣, which is ongoing but denying an outside ace. Julie shows another ace and John is now able to show the ♠K. 6♣ is perhaps a trifle precipitate but if John's shape were 2146 or 3226 the grand slam would be a poor proposition.

Wouldn't Blackwood have been easier?

Julie: "*Perhaps, but we prefer to take the cue bidding approach if possible. For example the ♠K is a much better card than the ♦K but*

Blackwood won't tell you that."

John: *"Unless we've definitely agreed a suit we don't even play 4NT as Blackwood - it is just quantitative."*

Two level openings include a game forcing 2♣ and a multi 2♦ which can be a weak two in a major (sound values of course, none of your Qxxx here), 19-20 balanced or a strong two in any suit. Isn't that a bit inconvenient?

Julie: *"It can be because, obviously, you can only introduce your suit at the three level."*

John: *"We take some of the weight off the bid by insisting that our Texas openings guarantee eight playing tricks."*

Obviously this approach works best if the rest of your pre-empts are sound but I think we can take that as read.

Julie: *"Oh yes. In first and second position we promise two of the top three honours."*


This kind of interplay between different parts of the system is too often overlooked by pairs who throw in all their favourite conventions and hope that they will fit together with no gaps in-between.

Opening two of a major shows a five-card suit with a four or five-card minor and eleven to fourteen points. These two suited openings are fairly common but are usually weaker, typically six to ten points. Playing them stronger is consistent with the safety

first approach but produces an unexpected spin off.

John: *"If we open one of a major and rebid in a minor it shows fifteen or more points and can be bid on three cards. This helps us to develop the auction slowly."*

Here's how it works:

♠K64
♥AKJ72
♦94
♣KQ6

♠AQJ3
♥Q5
♦J87
♣J843

It is all too easy to bid these hands to 3NT which has precious little chance on a diamond lead. John and Julie bid 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, 2♦ (fourth suit), 2♠, 3♥, 4♥.

Perhaps 4♠ is a fraction better but 4♥ is an excellent contract and the main trap has been avoided.

They allow themselves the slight frivolity of weak jump overcalls when non-vulnerable but otherwise all competitive bids are sound - for example a simple overcall in second seat is usually based on opening values.

John: *"We sometimes lose out by not pressurising the opponents but it's harder for us to be pre-empted because the hand opposite the overcall knows to expect good values."*

I can't resist the thought that the disciplined approach and the emphasis on sound values and avoiding a large penalty has more than a little to do with maintaining partnership, and marital, harmony. No comment. Very wise.

Unspectacular it may be, but it has led to a fair measure of success over the years. There has been a win in the Silver Plate and they have reached the semifinal of the Nicko but perhaps the best result was finishing second in the Pachabo Cup having led the competition almost throughout. They have also reached the later stages of the Hubert Philips Cup on a number of occasions belying any perception that they can only partner each other.

Away from the table they describe their interests as cats, travel and golf, the last providing the opportunity for a further bridge success. They competed for Ely Golf Club in the Golfprint Challenge - a national bridge competition for golf clubs. They were able to help the team to success in the final although the rules permitted only one player of Regional Master or above and so they could only play half the match each. Not as high powered as some of their other achievements perhaps but every bit as pleasing.

Mike Dignen

Mediterranean Mementoes

APRIL SAW 11 OF THE WYMONDHAM BRIDGE CLUB, plus one honorary member, jet off to the Med on their annual search for sun, shopping, sightseeing, sangria and a jolly good time. And of course, the chance to expand their experience of bridge systems used outside the sheltered enclave of Norfolk.

The first evening went very smoothly. In spite of little (and in some cases no) sleep the night before due to unsympathetic travel arrangements by the tour operator, Wymondham ladies claimed the top three places in the first duplicate session. This was termed a 'fun' session so perhaps some of the opposition weren't really trying...

The second evening, the opposition fought back and provided the first encounter with one of the dreaded NNFN systems (Not Normal For Norfolk). Using the rather rare Telepathy Transfer System, the bidding was as follows:

Opener: 1♠
 Responder: Shake of the hand, hovering over the bidding box
 [Opener: "He wants to bid 2♠, could you get it out for him?"]
 Opener: 3♠
 Responder: Two shakes of the hand, hovering over the bidding box
 [Opener: "He wants to bid 4♠, could you get it out for him?"]

By careful observation it has been deduced that this system is only allowable after at least two bottles of wine.

One of the Wymondham pairs, however, fought back in the use of unusual transfer bids and explanations (having worked hard during the day to qualify – see previous)

Dealer South

♠K109	
♥4	
♦AJ8742	
♣J105	
♠Q853	♠J64
♥AK95	♥QJ8762
♦K	♦63
♣K842	♣97
	□
	♠A72
	♥103
	♦Q1095
	♣AQ63

South	West	North	East
1NT ¹	Dbl	2♦ ²	Pass ³
2♥ ⁴	Pass	3♦ ⁵	3♥ ⁶
Pass	Pass	Pass	

¹ 12-14

² Because we're playing natural after a double.

³ Enquiry as to the nature of 2♦.
 Explanation that it is a transfer to hearts.

⁴ Because we're playing transfers

⁵ Partner's forgotten

⁶ Enquiry as to the nature of 3♦.

Explanation: well it's Extended Stayman.
 Oohhhh dear!

The next evening the Wymondham contingent decided on tactics and put a blanket ban on all "tired and emotional" systems in order to compete fully in the forthcoming teams event – particularly as one of the opposition teams contained two congress winners, a bridge writer and a highly successful rubber bridge player. The pair proficient in the Telepathy Transfer System had so impressed the Direc-

tor and his assistant that they were partnering them in this competition – no doubt in order to gain first hand knowledge. Fighting off stiff competition, Jola Allison, Kathy Liversidge, Sue Hutchings and Hazel Tindal came top of the 12 teams, a well deserved first.

The last evening of bridge for our group (we were off celebrating a special birthday the next night) saw a final encounter with an NNFN explanation. The opening lead was the ♣A, followed by the ♣K on which the second defender discarded. On being asked what discard system they were playing, first defender replied, “I don’t know”. Fair enough, holiday bridge partnerships are sometimes fleeting

affairs. Play continued with first defender leading a diamond. At the end of the hand, second defender enquired rather forcefully why first defender had failed to continue with clubs, thereby giving him a ruff. First defender’s response? “Well, partner, you signalled for a diamond, so I led one!”

Needless to say, we all had a wonderful holiday - including the bridge - and at least one of our pairs were in the top four for each of the seven sessions bar one. We even managed to acquire a collective name...

The Norfolk Broads.

Jan Anderson

Is the Tournament Director’s Word Sacrosanct?

Dealer N, Love All

	♠2		
	♥J83		
	♦AQ9632		
	♣Q43		
♠AKJ10984		♠765	
♥1042		♥A5	
♦J7		♦K84	
♣A		♣K9872	
	♠Q3		
	♥KQ976		
	♦105		
	♣J1065		

North East South West
 Pass¹

¹ Opening Pass out of rotation. TD Please!

THIS HAND FROM THE SENIOR PAIRS at Brighton highlights the need to know a little bit about the laws of our game. I committed the cardinal sin of passing when sitting on dealer’s left. TD please! Well do you know the correct ruling without recourse to the law book? As my LHO did not accept my call, what

should happen? Without recourse to the book, Madam TD ruled that I must pass when I could call next, but also that my partner had to pass at her first call. Reluctantly we accepted the decision, and N/S could not pass quick enough. Passed out on the traveller, when all the other EW pairs were making 4♠ (plus one or two on occasions).

All was not lost, as my partner had attended a TD course recently. At the end of the session, we sought the advice of another TD as our lady TD was on an appeals panel. As we suspected the book ruling is that the offending player only has to pass the next time it is his call. Partner can bid what she wants, and with her hand West would have punted 4♠. Now the question is, how many tricks can declarer make? It depends upon what North leads, and therefore makes awarding an adjusted score difficult. When our lady TD was free, she revised her ruling, and awarded both pairs 60%.

Moral? Always make sure the TD refers to his or her ‘bible’.

Robbie Roberson

Computers Facilitate Quicker Scoring in Clubs

Alan Hourd reveals some of the mysteries of scoring pairs events and reviews a selection of the computer scoring programs available to buy today.

THIS IS NOT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE SCORING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE, just a few notes on what I have tried and used while scoring for the Norfolk & Norwich Club. There isn't room to go through the mechanics of scoring all types of event but the scoring for teams is probably clear to everyone who has played in such an event. Swiss Teams involve some additional complications but the scoring method is much the same.

Pairs scoring is less clear to some people but is basically very simple. One compares one's own score with that of every other pair who played a board the same way (i.e. if one sits N/S one compares one's score with all the other N/Ss) and awards oneself two points for every pair that one has beaten and one point for every pair that one has drawn with. The margin of win or loss may not matter, as a score of -1100 can be a bottom and give you no points for that board just as easily as -500 might: a bottom is a bottom and worth zero. A top on a board will be worth twice the number of other times the board has been played – so in a 13 round movement you can beat all the other 12 players your way and get 24 match points for that board. Scoring programs may take a slightly different approach in calculating the results and deal in frequencies for each score but the end result is much the same. The computer can add the scores for all boards in a flash without making any mistakes, but the operator can still make mistakes in entering the data.

Scoring programs can handle the calculations very easily, but setting up anything other than the simplest Mitchell movements within the program is a far more involved process. Consequently, it is ideal if a program is sup-

plied with a wide range of movements and if directors do not dream up a peculiar movement or numbering system that the program can't handle, which can happen, particularly when something goes badly wrong in the middle of an event!

It takes little time to copy the data over from the travellers to a computer and calculate the results but more time can be taken in entering pair names and generating local points. Thus it is highly desirable that any pairs scoring program should have simple facilities for entering names; that it should have movements available within it (both Howell and Mitchell) and that it should be able to print local points for all the winners. More recently, most programs have added a facility to generate output ready for insertion into a web page. Scoring a 14 table pairs event should take 30-40 minutes, allowing for some double checking and care in data entry.

SCBridge 2000

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The program that I have used most over the last couple of years is Stephen Brown's SCBridge 2000 program, with two years of updates. This is the program that I would recommend to other scorers. Initially it cost about £40, but the price is now £75, or more if one adds some of the optional features to it. A club's copy of this program is licensed for use

by any member of that club and that makes the cost more reasonable. Stephen wrote his program for use by the Oxfordshire CBA and examples of output can be seen on their web site.

The program now has details of almost every movement one can think of, including most of the Manning (EBU) manual of movements, and can run two sections. New or modified movements can be entered, although doing so can be quite mindbending! Names are held in a club database and are entered into the scoring program by initials to begin with and then by selection from a list of names with similar initials. The movement is defined, together with details of missing pairs, boards per round, number of switch rounds and so on. Then one can get down to entering scores from the travellers and this is speeded up by omitting trailing zeros from scores and by having the opposing pair numbers already available on screen. Questionable or impossible scores are highlighted as one enters the score, including possible vulnerability errors.

The computer provides the numbers of pairs who should be sitting N/S and E/W and these can be compared with what appears to have happened on the traveller. Errors in pair numbers matter little, as the computer usually shows the correct situation. Forgetting to switch is no great problem either, as there is a facility to let the program correct them, although it is best if players highlight their mistake on the traveller as the scorer may not notice otherwise. Average scores or average +/- are also handled quite easily and penalties of some more arbitrary number of points can be awarded if the Director has so ruled. No penalties should be awarded unless the Director has made a clear ruling on the traveller. Most of the time I find it best to ignore question marks on travellers if they have no defined reason or director's note: almost anything can happen at the table!

Once all the data has been entered, one can check all the entries against the travellers and then the program calculates the results. The actual calculation takes barely a second and then one can print out the results in two or three formats. The web pages can be created simply by pressing another button.

Stephen Brown's program has been extended to include teams, Butler and other forms of scoring and (more recently) with a Swiss pairs routine. We haven't bought any of the extensions yet but we shall probably try out the Swiss pairs routine quite soon. This program has had some bugs in the course of its development but most of those have been eliminated and the remainder are trivial. A recent addition to this program was output to the SIMS scoring system run by Ecats etc.

Fin-S

Chris Stableford

web: www.btinternet.com/

~chris.stableford/fins/index.html

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Fin-S is a masterpiece of programming for the Excel spreadsheet: a massive set of macros or VBA programming in fact. This suite can handle pairs, Swiss pairs, Butler scoring, multiple teams (VP or IMP) and almost any other competition one can think of. It also handles any unknown movement easily, by entering pair numbers from the travellers. Above all this set of programs is cheap: about £5 for the lot, although one must have Microsoft Excel in order to use any of it. I have found it most convenient for scoring teams events and for a couple of peculiar movements that the SCBridge program balked at, as well as for a handicap and an individual event. This program has also had a facility added for generating web pages and, although it is very basic, it can be adjusted to generate any special requirements on a page. This suite has a potentially useful feature for collecting local point

data for transmission directly to the EBU, if one wishes.

Scorebridge

Stephen Bligh

web: web.onetel.net.uk/%7Esbligh/sb/scorebridge.htm

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I have tried several versions of Scorebridge over the course of time. It appears to be a very competent program that I could use without much trouble. It isn't too expensive, at £39 or so, but I found that I have become so accustomed to using SCBridge that I couldn't work as fast. This program is available as a 60-day demo that can be used as many times as one likes before it times out. At the time I last tried this program, it had few built-in movements but Stephen Bligh added the Manning movements soon after that.

Other Programs

One will find several programs advertised in the Bridge magazines or the EBU magazine

– a quick check revealed Superscorer from Mr Bridge (£53) but there others that have appeared from time to time. A search on the Internet will also throw up quite a few possibilities and I think the EBU are also developing their own. All the programs may have different restraints on usage but SCBridge 2000 can be used by anyone at a named club as the name appears on local point certificates. Ecats bridge, who run several SIMs events, also supply a simple pairs scoring program that is adequate for straightforward events. Their program was developed for scoring and submitting data for simultaneous pairs events, and as such is a very simple program that is not as flexible as the others mentioned, but it is free and adequate. See the Ecats site at www.ecatsbridgeclub.com for details.

If you would like more information or advice, please get in touch with me at nbbc@ukf.net

Alan Hourd

Declarer Play: Seeing The Whole Picture

MOST PEOPLE KNOW the right way to handle common suit combinations, but knowing when the hand as a whole dictates that you should play a little differently is a more difficult skill. There can be several reasons for this, and this article does not cover the most common, which is where the bidding tells you that the normal line is unlikely to work. I am going to take a look at the situations where your holdings in the other suits indicate that making an inferior play in one suit gives the best overall chances.

How would you play the following 5♥ contract on the lead of the ♦A?

♠AJ84
♥KQ962
♦74
♣72




♠K10952
♥A10543
♦—
♣KJ5

You ruff this, cash the ♥AK, ruff the remaining diamond and consider how to play the

spades. You know that with the queen and three small ones missing, you would normally play the ace and king. Here however, providing RHO has a spade, your contract is safe: cash the ♠A, then lead small towards the ♠K10, and if RHO plays low, finesse. If this wins you make 12 tricks; if it doesn't then LHO wins, and having no more spades must give you a ruff and discard or allow you to score the ♣K.

How about this contract of 4♠ on the ♣K lead?


♠AJ65
♥A976
♦8743
♣10

♠K1072
♥K4
♦AK2
♣A876

Normally, you would handle the trump suit by cashing one of the top honours and taking a second round finesse, but that is not the right answer here. If this loses and another trump comes back you are a trick short: you have five side suit winners and need to guarantee five trumps to go with them. A stronger line is to cash the ace and king of spades. This guarantees the contract if spades are 3-2 or the queen is a singleton, as you have scored two trumps and can take four ruffs, the opponents scoring their trump at some time by over-ruffing. Even if somebody has four or five spades to the queen, provided they hold at least two diamonds, three hearts and three clubs, you'll still get home on the crossruff. Another little bit of technique here: if you're playing this sort of line cash your side suit winners early. It would be

embarrassing to start the crossruff and then find that somebody discards a diamond and then later ruffs your ♦K. So if you find that spades are 4-1, cash both red ace-kings then start the club-heart crossruff. Provided that the first club ruff and first heart ruff stand up, a club ruffed by the ♠J ensures you will score either the jack or ten of trumps as your tenth trick.

I'm sure this is the line that you'd adopt if your trump holdings were Axxx opposite Kxxx, requiring simply a 3-2 trump break, and it pays not to be seduced by the unnecessary finesse.

Finally, try this 6♠ contract on the lead of the ♣Q.

♠4
♥J2
♦87632
♣A9732

♠AKQJ652
♥AQ6
♦A4
♣K

So, are you contemplating winning the ♣A (crashing your king) and taking the heart finesse? This will make the contract a little under half the time, i.e. when the heart finesse succeeds and your third round heart ruff stands up. You can do better, how-

ever. Allow the club to run round to your king and table the ♥Q. If either opponent wins this, the ♥J is the entry you require to take your diamond pitch on the ♣A. If the ♥Q is ducked, continue with ♥A and another, ruffing in dummy and making 13 tricks on a good day. If either opponent is good enough to duck with king doubleton or king to six hearts, denying you the dummy entry and allowing them to ruff the third round of hearts then they deserve their good result.

Leading the queen from AQx as declarer is actually more often correct than you might think. It happens usually when dummy has the jack and is short of entries, for example when you open 2NT and it's passed out. A reasonably common motif with AQx opposite J10xx is to lead the queen and expert defenders will duck. If the ace then catches the king, all is well, but if it doesn't, the third round may end-play the defender. Knowing this, a devious declarer may try this with AQ, and will sneak the Q through. I have with Jxxx on the deck slipped the queen through unmolested from Qxx with the honours split and one opponent believing I had KQx, the other thinking I had AQx.

Steve Dannell

Countering Interference over One No-Trump

DO THESE HANDS EVER FRUSTRATE YOU?

♠K976
♥103
♦QJ8
♣A652

Partner opens a weak no-trump and you are just about to go to the bar when RHO overcalls 2♥. Suddenly, the hand is a problem. We have the majority of points, but how do we find our best fit? Or is partner sitting with four hearts and should we be defending?

We need to establish whether or not the opposition have found an eight-card fit. We can do this by using a double to show two cards in the opposition suit and at least three cards in each of the other suits. Partner will pass holding four hearts and bid with less (using 2NT to ask for your better minor).

If you fail to double, partner will assume you have at least three hearts. He will pass with three or four and let the opposition struggle in a six or seven card fit. With a doubleton, he can reopen with a double and it is up to you to decide. You

can still take your penalty when holding four.

But what happens when the opposition use one of their infernal conventional bids like Aspro?

♠Q109
♥A542
♦76
♣KJ54

This time, the overcall is 2♦ showing spades and another suit. How would you deal with this hand at present? Would double promise spades and/or diamonds? Would partner bid hearts if he held four?

The good news is that you can use exactly the same methods. Double to show two cards in diamonds and at least three in each of the other suits. Of course, the opposition will generally bid on in these situations. If so, follow the general rule that, after responder has shown values by doubling or passing opener's double, all subsequent doubles are for penalties.

Opponents increasingly interfere over 1NT whenever they can, yet very few people have changed their methods to counter this. So why not try switching to take-out

doubles. It's much more fun than letting the opposition have a free run. You might miss the occasional large penalty but, far more often, you will gain by knowing whether to defend or bid on.

And if you get the odd bad score, don't blame me. Write to Philip Martin who proposed these methods in *Bridge World*, September 1996.

Paul Darby

Play Problem

♠AKQ854
♥K7
♦AQ7
♣65



♠9
♥AQ984
♦K5
♣AJ1072

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

♣K led, on which East shows out. Plan the play.

Solution on page 18

Not All the Monkeys Are in the Zoo

ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY OF BRIDGE PLAYERS ARE DECENT, SENSIBLE FOLK, they know that the rules pander to the fanatical few who delight in confusing decent, sensible folk with bidding conventions that have Mr. Acol turning in his grave, I'm sure. One renegade pair had re-discovered an old convention, Tartan Two opening bids, the sort of name that is honey to these B's. When one picked up: ♠K9764 ♥62 ♦7 ♣A10973 his heart jumped for joy: an ideal Tartan Two opener, deliciously weak and at favourable vulnerability. He could see the sequence going 2♠ - 2NT(partner) - 3♣ and there they are, at the three level before the opponents are off the ground. It did not quite work out like that, however, because this was the full deal:

Dealer South, EW Game

♠ -		
♥AKQJ84		
♦J943		
♣Q62		
♠1083		♠AQJ52
♥93		♥1075
♦AKQ52	<input type="checkbox"/>	♦1086
♣KJ8		♣54
♠K9764		
♥62		
♦7		
♣A10973		

South opened 2♠, alert. "Yes, please?" "Either an Acol strong two in spades or a weak hand with spades and another suit." Music to South's ears, but West had no time or respect for such whimsy and bid 3♦. North, who was all geared up to bid 2NT (enquiry) now had a problem. In their enthusiasm for their new toy they had neglected to cater for a possible overcall. He played for time to think by asking East what he understood by his partner's overcall, just in case the opponents were also deviants and were using some obscure defence. "Natural," said East, briefly and somewhat sharply. North was not sure if double would be for penalties or if 3♥ was natural or had some other meaning that South knew about and he didn't. He decided to bid 3♥ and risk it. East passed and the fog descended on South. Was 3♥ forcing? Was it an attempt to find South's second suit? Should he now bid 4♣? He resorted to that old maxim, when you don't know what to say, say nothing. He passed. West passed, of course, and North had to play 3♥. East led a small diamond to partner's ♦Q and West returned a

trump. North won and ruffed a diamond, then ruffed a spade in hand and drew the rest of the trumps in two rounds, throwing a two spades from dummy, West discarding a diamond. North can make his contract from here, of course, but he chose to run the ♣Q to West's ♣K. West cashed two diamonds on which declarer discarded two more spades from dummy, then exited with a spade. North ruffed, discarded a club from dummy and led another club to the 10 and Jack. West led another spade which North ruffed and discarded another club, then cashed dummy's remaining ♣A for one down.

The scoresheet had bad news for the Tartan lads. Ten tricks in clubs were available and 4♠ doubled, minus one by East for +200 to North-South was a top. But worse was to follow. News of the Tartan Two bid reached the ears of the TD, who promptly gave the perpetrators a bottom for the board and fined them half a top for using a convention not permitted at Level 3.

The moral of this story is: read the instructions before opening.

Harry Fox

Solutions to Defensive Problems

see page 5

1. Dealer W, N/S Game

♠K8 ♥943 ♦AQ1097 ♣1092 ♠Q10953 ♥107 ♦K5 ♣A753	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠762 ♥KQJ65 ♦J43 ♣86 ♠AJ4 ♥A82 ♦862 ♣KQJ4	
--	---	--	--

South	West	North	East
	Pass	Pass	2♥
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

a club to the king, followed at some time by a second diamond from hand. You will make your ♦K and the ♣A, but declarer will take the rest of the tricks. If when declarer leads a diamond towards the AQ you play the ♦K instead of the ♦5, declarer will simply duck, again preventing your partner's ♦J from scoring.

The solution is to discard the ♦K on the third heart! This apparently suicidal play ensures that partner's presumed ♦J will score. (Note declarer's error: had he won the second heart he would have made his contract.)

2. Dealer S, Game All

♠KQ7 ♥AK652 ♦1083 ♣J3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠AJ853 ♥93 ♦4 ♣AK765 ♠1042 ♥QJ7 ♦A2 ♣Q10984 ♠96 ♥1084 ♦KQJ9765 ♣2	
--------------------------------	---	--	--

South	West	North	East
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

In deference to your partner's bid you lead the ♥10, partner overtakes with the ♥J, cashes the ♥K (declarer playing the ♥8 then the ♥2) and then leads the ♥6 to declarer's ♥A.

Partner's enterprising weak two in hearts seems to have got you off to a good lead. Partner's heart holding is now known to be KQJ65 and on the bidding he can have at most one more jack. Does it matter which one?

A count of declarer's tricks shows that if he has five clubs he will make nine tricks via four club tricks, after forcing out the ace, two spades, two diamonds via the winning finesse and a heart. Assume therefore that he has only four clubs. There is no hope in spades for him, so he will have to set up a third diamond trick. If he has the ♦J he will easily make four diamonds, so assume that partner has this card. Now the difficulty is ensuring that partner wins his ♦J to cash two more winning hearts. If you discard a spade or a club on the third round of hearts, declarer will play a diamond to the ace, then a

Partner leads the ♥A and then switches to the ♠K. Declarer wins and cashes two top clubs pitching a spade from hand. He then leads the second heart from the deck. How do you continue?

Declarer is marked with seven diamonds on the bidding and he looks as if he is planning to ruff a heart on the deck. His shape must therefore be 2-3-7-1 and to beat this you will need three heart tricks and two diamond tricks. The timing is critical. You must take the diamond off the deck now before the third heart is ruffed. Win the ♥J then lead a low diamond, not the ♦A! Declarer will win the ♦K and, unless he can see through the backs of the cards, continue with ♦Q. On winning this you can cash the ♥Q then play a club to promote partner's ♦10. If after taking the ♥J you continued ♦A, ♥Q, club, declarer will play with the odds by ruffing high and therefore make his contract.

Crossed Wires

Dealer West, Love All

AFTER THE DEMANDS OF THE SWISS PAIRS AT BRIGHTON, we decided to have a change of partners and a little light relief in the teams on the Sunday evening. All was well until I picked up East's hand, and by the time I had remembered that we were playing a 19-20 2NT, rather than 20-22, I had overlooked the fact that our 2NT opening actually showed 6-10 points and at least 5-5 in the minors. Partner quite rightly alerted my bid, and upon enquiry revealed that I had 5-5 in the minors and 6-10 points. She opted for 3♣ (to play partner), and realising my error, I tried to correct it by punting 3NT. Partner very ethically called 4♣, and in desperation I bid 5♣.

It was obvious that the wheel had come of, and before North could lead, I confessed to the bidding mistakes and the TD was called. A long rigmarole ensued over the bidding, and I thought North, who I guessed to be Scandinavian by his accent, was making a meal of it. Anxious to get on, and miffed by my own stupidity, I suggested in no uncertain terms that he should get on with the play as they had a good result coming anyway. Our Nordic friend did not like this, and demanded an apology, not forthcoming. Partner played

♠K743 ♥J1062 ♦10 ♣K1062	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	♠8 ♥975 ♦J8742 ♣Q753 ♠Q92 ♥AK43 ♦KQ3 ♣AJ9 ♠AJ1065 ♥Q8 ♦A965 ♣84
----------------------------------	---	--

North	East	South	West
			Pass
Pass	2NT ¹	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣	Pass	Pass

¹ Alerted as weak 5-5 in the minors.

the hand well and was only two down for -100.

In some trepidation, we returned to our team-mates at the end of play, and to my relief discovered that they had taken Gunnar Hallberg's team-mates off three in 6♥: two IMPs to the good guys.

So what should have happened? If you can credit it, I must ignore the information I gleaned from the question to partner, and alert the 3♣ bid as a 5-card Stayman enquiry. Now I bid 3♦, and if no questions are asked, I as-

sume partner will go 4♣, suit preference, and I suppose I will go 5♣ to play. The general idea is that you must ignore information you have gleaned from partner's explanations of your bidding, and suffer the consequences.

Robbie Roberson

P.S. Gunnar Hallberg was a member of a team that reached the last 16 in the recent World championships.

It may be worth clarifying some of the laws applicable to this hand. In the original auction, it was the 3NT bid that was based on unauthorised information. Hence the requirement for Robbie to treat 3♣ as if 2NT was strong and balanced, and bid 3♦. If he had bid 3♦, his partner may have decided that this was an impossible bid in the sequence and therefore that 2NT is exposed as a mis-bid. She may then have elected to bid 3NT. It would be up to the director to decide whether or not 3NT is reasonable in the light of the bidding, and allow the result to stand or award an adjusted score accordingly. This is a matter of judgement that subsequently could go to appeal. Ed.

More Views on Trials

MUCH WAS WRITTEN ABOUT COUNTY TRIALS IN THE LAST EDITION OF TALKING BRIDGE, and as the main instigator of the trials system I feel that the following points are worth considering:

Everybody invited to play, as per the current England trials, is not a practical solution for Norfolk. The England trials consist of up to seven weekends of bridge, if you had to play from beginning to end, and in the region of 700 boards of bridge. The cream will come to the top. A single day trial in Norfolk will result in far more skewed results, and increased chances of a 'freak' win.

The debate surround selection for the Norfolk Tollemache Team is interesting. Assuming that about three pairs will be picked on track record, the dispute is who fills the fourth and fifth slot from half a dozen likely candidates. Which two pairs will go, and who will stay behind? With the trials guaranteeing a place to the winners and nothing stopping the selectors picking any other pairs who do well in the trial, I feel that everyone has a fair chance.

The trials are also used by the selectors to highlight potential candidates for the County Team. Once playing in the team, records of any pair's performance are kept so playing well is likely to both keep you in the team and allow you to move up. Conversely playing badly will see you dropped down or out of the County Team. Is this not a fair process?

By and large I believe that the system works. The selectors do a difficult job well and by having this system in place, if anyone believes that they are being overlooked for the County Team they can play themselves in by performing well in the trials. So - enter the trials this year on October 27th at Roundwood Bowls Club and show what you can do.

Play Solution

see page 14

♠AKQ854		♠106
♥K7		♥J10632
♦AQ7		♦J86432
♣65		♣-
♠J732	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	
♥5		
♦109		
♣KQ9843		
♠9		
♥AQ984		
♦K5		
♣AJ1072		

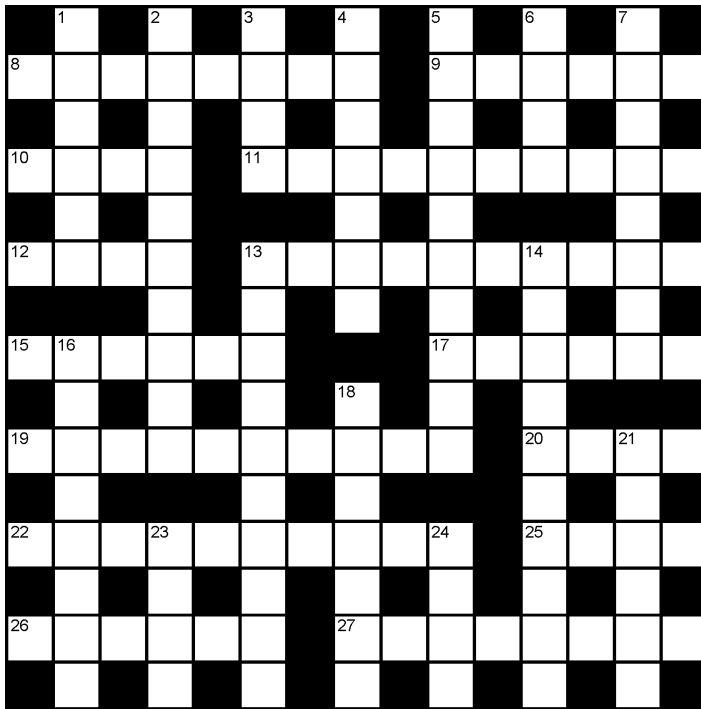
North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

♣K led, on which East shows out. Plan the play.

There are 10 top tricks and clearly if hearts or spades break 3-3 you'll be home and dry. In 6NT, however you must secure your contract if possible, and the strongest line is to attempt to duck a spade to East. Win the ♣A and lead the ♠9, intending to play small from dummy if West follows small. The spade suit is now established whenever it breaks 3-3 or 4-2. If you play spades from the top, you will go off!

Notice that in the actual layout it does West no good to play the ♠J on the first round of spades: now you will play them from the top and emerge with all 13 tricks. Had West held both the J and 10 of spades, you would have been defeated.

Mike Walsh

**Arch-Riddle Solution**

Mr West is a professional ventriloquist. He has had some bad times. But recently had signed a contract with five different night clubs for his act. His acts went down very well! Hey, have I been talking bridge?

Across

- 8 Quiet about ice in explosives (8)
 9 Mister's put out for ruffs (6)
 10 The team's suit (4)
 11 Extinguished type of play (10)
 12 Every man in Rio initially becomes chief (4)
 13 Stiffs feline actions perhaps? (10)
 15 A serum is unsuitable in capital (6)
 17 Alters to knock the table (6)
 19 Care I have given bid in 4th (10)
 20 Fish and cues? (4)
 22 Two unknowns in Opal's arm, shaky, be very shaky (10)
 25 One bridge player we stand to contain (4)
 26 Tom may be this colour (6)
 27 Prize I put Greek letter back for a metal (8)

Down

- 1 Hide a day to think up? (6)
 2 Sid turns up to son of Simpson holding guys to stop legally (10)
 3 Colour third and first person (4)
 4 Mark is one? one in order mark! (7)
 5 Tapestries of exotic dance? (10)
 6 Fish found content unattractive? (4)
 7 Blow this trump promotional play (8)
 13 Cry huh! in card play to God's acre (10)
 14 We enrolled somehow this goldbrick? (4-2-4)
 16 Sea by a classified open up twitch (8)
 18 Girl friend's suit it's said (7)
 21 Squabbier! less female supporter, set for starter (6)
 23 Gory wild party (4)
 24 Division of an auditor perhaps? (4)

County Results

Ladies Pairs Pam Allwood Trophy, 21/6 02

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Kitty Cozens / Connie Fuller | 59.2% |
| 2= | Barbara Harnden / Jill Innes | 57.1% |
| 2= | Par Reed / Jean Samuels | 57.1% |

Kings Lynn Trophy 23/6/02

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 1 | Maurice Lewis, June Scotting,
John Thickens, David Gage | 51VPS |
| 2= | Michael Whiting, Clare Ingham
Malcolm Connolly, Dennis Ingham | 47VPS |
| 2= | Gordon Allen, Peter Lofting
Richard & Grace Warner | 47VPS |
| 2= | Roger Cortis, Jill Innes
Mike & Barbara Harnden | 47VPS |

Shaw Trophy 26/6/02

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | John Aspinall / David Newstead | 68.1% |
| 2 | Steve Dannell / Mike Walsh | 67.4% |
| 3 | Philip & Kitty Cozens | 65.0% |

John Harrison /EDP Trophy, 21/7/02

(Club Champions Pairs)

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Mike & Barbara Harnden | 61.1% |
| 2 | Graeme Johnston / Tony Watson | 59.7% |
| 3 | Brenda Thomson / Mike Virgo | 56.7% |

Wymondham Trophy, 26/7/02

(Pairs below Regional Master)

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Andrew Brown / John Massey | 59.2% |
| 2 | Alan Hourd / David Birrell | 58.9% |
| 3 | Mary Smith / Jane Gough | 58.6% |

YMCA Trophy, 3/9/02

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Dennis & Clare Ingham | 62.3% |
| 2 | Gillian Gilvey / Margaret Ward | 62.2% |
| 3 | Roger Amey / Robbie Roberson | 60.6% |

Tournament Diary

Events start at 2pm unless otherwise stated

Robertson Cup Sun 15th Sept
(Handicap Pairs, Roundwood Bowls Club)

***Orb Paquot Trophy** Sun 29th Sept
(Swiss Pairs, Roundwood Bowls Club)

Buxton Trophy Sun 6th Oct
(Teams, Roundwood Bowls Club)

***Houston Trophy** Sun 13th Oct
(Swiss Teams, Roundwood Bowls Club)

***Eastern Counties Cup** Sun 20th Oct
(Championship Teams for Pachabo
qualification. Roundwood Bowls Club)

***County Trial** Sun 27th Oct
(Roundwood Bowls Club, 12 noon)

***Yarmouth Trophy** Sun 17th Nov
(Pairs Event, Shrublands CC, Gorleston)

****Beccles Swiss Teams** Sun 24th Nov
(Ringsfield Village Hall)

Allwood-Wharton Trophy Sun 1st Dec
(Club Teams of 8 for Garden Cities
qualification. Roundwood Bowls Club)

Barclays Bank Trophy Sun 8th Dec
(Pairs Event, qualification through club
events. North Walsham)

* Contact Robbie (01692 580455) to enter

** Contact Dennis Ingham (01502 717681)
to enter

Diary Changes

Norfolk Congress

4th - 6th April (from 11th-13th April)

Eastern Counties League vs Beds

Sun 15th Dec (from Sun 6th Oct)

Eastern Counties League (County Match)

Norfolk vs Herts

A Team (Aspinalls, Amey / Newstead, Walsh / Millson, Dignen / Faulkner) *won 17 - 3*

B Team (Harndens, Innes / Cortis, Massey / Lloyd, Hall / Green) *lost 0 - 20*

C Team (Inghams, La Chapelle / Holland, Roberson / Duncanson, Gill / Kuriger) *lost 7 - 13*