

	Page
John's Thoughts	2
A helping hand – Alison Nicolson	3
What's the point of points? – Sandra Landy	4
Sim Pairs results	5
Bridge at Wroxton House Hotel	7
Introduction to transfers.....	8/9
Your EBU	10
Events for Novices	11/12

John's thoughts

I'm pleased to send out the latest Ruffian to all current Bridge for All students. Many of you will be coming towards the end of your first year while others are nearing the end of the second year. Whether you are first or second years it's not too early to think about playing in a Really Easy event.



We are advertising three events especially for novice players coming up in the next year. I know two of them are not until early next year but that gives you time to think about coming along. Details of each one – together with the target audience are given later on.

Celebrity Grand Slam Bridge

I hope you were able to follow the first bridge programme on TV for several years. I watched the series with great fascination – particularly the exploits of Kay Burley who had only been playing for 3 weeks when the programme was filmed. I really enjoyed it – it showed them all having a great time which is what bridge should be. I raised the odd eye-brow here and there at some of the bidding sequences. I hope the idea for the series doesn't disappear as has happened with previous attempts at bridge TV programmes.

Pay 2 Play

You will have seen in *English Bridge* that a universal membership scheme will be starting next April. Every time you play in an affiliated club a small part of your table money will go to the EBU, instead of paying an annual subscription. There is an exemption, however, for groups playing less than 16 boards. That means that most teaching groups will not have to make a P2P contribution but, providing at least 12 boards are played, master points can be awarded. So, for example, 5 tables can play 15 boards and benefit from the exemption.

Contact Us

If you need to get in touch with us at the Aylesbury office then Lisa deals with *Bridge for All*. membership, general queries about classes and teachers. Mike Amos deals with Youth bridge and I deal with almost anything else!

Lisa Miller – lisa@ebu.co.uk 01296 317217

Mike Amos – mamos@ebu.co.uk 07720 401067 (but the signal isn't always very good!)

John Pain – john@ebu.co.uk 01296 317218



A helping hand – Alison Nicolson

At this time of year many teachers and County Bridge Associations will be busy organizing student events. For many of you this will be your first trip out into the wide world of bridge beyond the classroom. It is your chance to practice all the things you have learned.

One of the first things you will have been taught is to be nice to partner. Treating partner well enables both of you to do your best. So here are a few simple rules:

When dummy goes down, thank your partner, keep quiet (no shaking the head or muttering) and play the hand calmly. The bidding is history.

Don't watch partner play the hand! This is different to class when you were learning and is difficult for dummy. If you don't watch, you'll have nothing to say and you won't be getting mad or thinking about how you could have played it better. This will also help you save your energy. It is very easy to tire towards the end of an event, especially if you are playing more boards than you are used to.

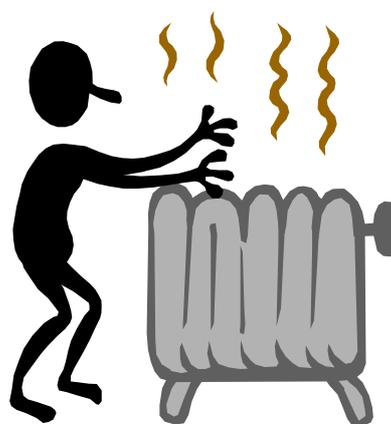
A final tip before going out to play your first event is to warm up beforehand. You wouldn't

dream of going to run a marathon without first stretching your muscles. Do the same with bridge. Bid and play a couple of hands before you leave home. A computer based bridge program is ideal for this. If you don't have a computer, try a couple of quiz questions from your Bridge for All notes. But don't overdo it, you don't want to be worn out before you start.

Bridge is a game and should be enjoyed. Relax, have a good time and be nice to partner. If you have a pleasant partner you need never be bored or lonely. Do let us know what you get up to in the summer, we would love to receive your letters and contributions.

It pays to remember the First Rule of Bridge:

Be Nice to Partner



**Bridge playing warming up
before the game**

What's the point of points? – Sandra Landy

When I started to play bridge, I was taught a lot of rules that seemed pretty illogical. For instance, why, with a pair of balanced hands containing about 26 or more points between us, should partner and I think of playing in 3NT. Is there any logical reason or is it just witchcraft?

An American lawyer called Milton Work, born as long ago as 1864, was a keen whist player. When bridge came along he switched games and eventually gave up the law to be a professional bridge player. In 1928 he was paid \$7,000 a week to give lectures on bridge (a lot more than your teacher earns today!). Sadly, he lost his fortune in the stock exchange crash of 1929-30. He wrote a series of bridge books and was the world's best selling bridge author, until Ely Culbertson produced his Blue Book in 1930. Work died in 1934.

Milton Work's greatest contribution to the game was to promote the point count, we still use today. A pack of cards has four suits. Each suit has one ace, one king, one queen and one jack, so a pack has four of each of those honour cards. Work suggested counting four for an ace, three for a king, two for a queen and one for a jack for evaluating a hand. That means a pack of cards contains 40 points and an average hand is ten points.

As each deal has 13 tricks, if we divide 40 by 13 we get three. So each three points we hold should be worth one trick. We have a hand that is a trick better than average when we have 13 points.

If we have 13 points, everybody else will average a bit less, only nine points instead of ten. So we can expect our

side to have 22 points to the opposition's 18 points and those extra four points should mean our side can take at least one trick more than the opposition. So we always open the bidding when we have 13 points and, because human beings are optimists, we usually open most 12-point hands as well.

Of course, partner may have a hand below our expectations. In that case our contract may fail. Or partner may have a hand better than we hoped for, in which case we may be able to go for game. To make game in no trumps means taking nine tricks. Nine tricks at three points a trick means that we should definitely go for game with 27 points. A bit of optimism means we try for game with 26 points and real optimists bid game with 25.

The Milton Work point count is best in no trump contracts. With suit contracts, shortages allow us to ruff losers and that gives another way to make tricks; so points are only one thing to take into account when we decide whether to go for game in a suit.

Whether playing MiniBridge or bridge, count your combined points every time you play a hand in no trumps. Divide the answer by three and see how close it comes to the number of tricks you take. The method isn't perfect; it undervalues aces, overvalues jacks and completely ignores tens (which can be valuable cards and are counted as ½ point by some people). But points are an easy rough-and-ready guide, as you will no doubt realise as you become more expert.

Sandra Landy is a former European and World Champion.

Read Sandra's articles in English Bridge for more on this theme.



Students Sim Pairs results

The results of the Spring 2009 Sim Pairs have now been finalised. Once again we ran two competitions – one for bridge and the other for MiniBridge.

In the main bridge event, 373 pairs took part with 11 pairs scoring over 70%. The top four pairs nationally were:

1 Pam Hall & Janet Baker	(Huddersfield U3A)	78.87%
2 Judith Thomas & Anna Marriot	(Bridge and Games – Bath)	77.23%
3 Colin Robinson & Jenny Robinson	(Aylesbury Vale Bridge)	76.20%
4 Chris Richards & Jo Fitzmaurice	(Time and Talents)	74.36%

In the MiniBridge competition we had an entry of 68 pairs mostly from schools and clubs with junior sections. The top 3 pairs were

1 Riley Clements & Nathan Hereward	(Claremont Fan Court School)	85.19%
2 Natalie Wood & Emily Dan	(Newport Free Grammar School)	70.38%
3 Chirs Derrick & Felix Dibb-Fuller	(Blatchington Mill School)	69.18%

Special congratulations to Riley and Nathan – 85% is a massive score!

Here's a hand from the event where most pairs ended up playing in spades, with a good number bidding to game. That's quite a good effort because West will interfere with clubs which makes it difficult for South to press on to game, with only seven points.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ A 8 7 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ Q 9 7 5 ♣ Q 10 5</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ - ♠ K 9 5 3 ♥ 8 4 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ A J 10 6 ♦ K 8 4 2 ♣ A K J 9 7 2 ♣ 6 4 3</p> <p style="margin: 0;"> ♠ Q J 10 6 4 2 ♥ K J 10 6 5 ♦ 3 ♣ 8</p>	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	2♠	3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
West	North	East	South																		
	1NT	Pass	2♠																		
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♥																		
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠																		
All Pass																					

It's quite difficult for South playing normal Standard English Acol as 2♠ is a weakness take out, but the hand is actually quite strong because of the second suit, so a further attempt by South may push North/South into game. It's easier if you have learnt 'Transfers' – see the article on page 8 – because the transfer bid of 2♥ is unlimited rather than just a weakness take-out. Congratulations to any pairs that bid and made the game, despite the 4-0 trump break.

On the surface, it might appear that 5♣ could only be one off and a good sacrifice, but it is rarely right to sacrifice when you are vulnerable and your opponents are not. 4♠ making non-vulnerable is worth 420. 5♣ doubled down one vulnerable would be 200 but two down would be 500. So it's a fine line between success and disaster. But then that's bridge for you.

Use classroom equipment at home ***Available from the Bridge Shop***

Pellisier tables - folding wood tables	£92.00
798mm square; Mahogany coloured frame; folding for easy stacking	
Club tables - folding plastic tables	£62.00
Black with metal legs; top 34 inches square	
Corded velvet table covers - Green, wine or blue	£15.50
Bidding boxes , set of four - Red or green	£22.00
Bidding buddies , set of four - Red, green or dark blue	£22.00
Card holder	£ 6.70
NEW!! - Plastic card holder for players who have difficulty holding a fan of cards (set of 4 red, green, yellow, blue)	£ 9.99
Carta Mundi Superluxe playing cards - per dozen	£14.75
Black Jack cards - per pack	
Large figures for easy reading (Min. order 2 packs)	(per pack) £ 1.61
Plastic wallets , set of 16	£15.50

EBU members get a 20% discount on all these items. Prices include VAT.

Books in the ***Really Easy Series***

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All books in the
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Standard English System Summary Card	£ 2.50
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Carriage costs will be added to orders.

Also available EBU Diary and handbook, covering 18 months from August 2008 to January 2010, All members get a free diary, additional copies £ 4.00

How to order: Telephone 01296 397851 between 9am and 5pm and ask for the Bridge Shop, or send an email to bridge.shop@ebu.co.uk. Alternatively, an order can be faxed (01296 317220)

You can pay by credit card or we can send you an invoice with your goods.

Bridge at Wroxton House Hotel

For the second time in three years a group of intrepid players made their way to the Wroxton House hotel just outside Banbury for a spring bridge break at the beginning of February. Most of the players came from the Aylesbury area but we had some hardy folk who came from Devon and Hampshire. Cast your mind back to the beginning of February and you may remember we had a little bit of snow. Well



actually they said it was the worst snow the South of England had for 18 years. All week beforehand Gill and I were worried that we might have to cancel and even another snow load on Thursday evening meant the weekend was in doubt right up to the Friday morning. But bridge players are a hardy race and a little bit of



snow isn't going to put them off following their favourite pastime. So by 6 O'clock on Friday evening everyone bar two had arrived. Unfortunately the snow was too much for Iain and Gill Kirkman who couldn't get out of their house high up on Haytor in Devon, but I see they have already booked for the Really Easy Summer Congress in Brighton when the journey might be a bit easier.

The bridge was keenly fought and included four sessions. A pairs' event on Friday evening followed dinner in the restaurant. Ian Mitchell gave a light-hearted lesson on Saturday morning and on Saturday afternoon there was a 'teams of 4' event with just the right number playing which allowed a couple of the men to sit-out and go and watch the rugby. A further pairs session in the evening was followed by a Swiss Pairs event on Sunday. Surprisingly a break for food or for tea/coffee was never far away.

Next year's date is already fixed and places will be at a premium as the weekend break is limited to just 32. See the advert later in the magazine.

**Ian Mitchell presents prizes to
Chrissie Vernon and Margaret Place**



Introduction to Transfers

When you started learning I'm sure your teacher said something along the lines of 'there are only 35 bids in the bidding box to describe every possible type of hand'. Over the years players have experimented with some bids to see whether better use can be made of them. The most obvious example of that is Stayman. When partner opens 1NT you reply 2♣. 2♣ asks whether partner has got a 4-card major and says nothing about clubs. You were probably taught that replies of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ to partner's 1NT show a 'weakness take-out' and offered a better place to play than a doomed 1NT.

Many players believe that better use can be made of the replies of 2♦ and 2♥ and 'transfers' are a very popular first extra gadget that people add to their bidding armoury and solves some problems that arise with natural responses to 1NT.

Over partner's 1NT

2♣ is still Stayman, asking whether opener has a 4-card major

2♦ shows at least 5 hearts and tells partner to bid 2♥

2♥ shows at least 5 spades and tells partner to bid 2♠

2♠ can be used in a variety of ways and will be discussed next time.

2NT continue to use as 11-12 HCP balanced with no interest in the majors

Other bids keep their meaning.

Once partner does as he is told (by bidding either 2♥ or 2♠) you can show a variety of hands in a more precise way than before.

Your hand	Auction goes		
♠ K 9 7 6 4 ♥ 10 2 ♦ J 7 5 2 ♣ 6 3	You 2♥ pass	Partner 1NT 2♠	The 2♥ bid promises 5 spades. You have used 'transfers' to get to the weakness take out of 2♠. Partner, with the stronger hand, is declarer.
♠ Q J 9 8 4 ♥ J 8 ♦ A 7 ♣ K 10 5 2	You 2♥ 2NT	Partner 1NT 2♠	This time the rebid of 2NT shows 11 or 12 points in addition to the 5 promised spades. Opener can choose whether to go on or to pass. This hand is difficult to bid without transfers. The hand is too good for a weakness take out, but not good enough to force with 3♠.
♠ 9 5 ♥ K Q 6 4 2 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A 5 2	You 2♦ 3NT	Partner 1NT 2♥	The 2♦ bid promises 5 hearts and the jump to 3NT shows 13 or 14 points. Partner can pass with only two hearts or remove to 4♥ with three or four hearts.

♠ 9 ♥ A K J 9 8 ♦ K Q 10 9 ♣ A 7 5	You 2♦ 3♦	Partner 1NT 2♥	With a strong hand you can introduce a second suit. 2♦ promises 5 hearts and 3♦ shows 4 diamonds. Partner can choose from 3NT, 4♥ or possibly higher.
♠ Q 9 8 6 ♥ A K J 4 ♦ K J 9 ♣ 6 5	You 2♣ 4♠	Partner 1NT 2♠	You only use transfers with 5-card major suits, but Stayman is still available with 4-card majors.
♠ 9 7 ♥ Q 6 3 ♦ A K Q J 7 5 ♣ 9 8	You 3NT	Partner 1NT	Your hand is too strong to make a weakness take out in diamonds, but you couldn't bid 2♦ anyway which is a transfer to hearts. You are not good enough for 3♦ which shows a slam interest, so just bid 3NT.

The one downside of using transfers (or any other artificial bid) is that you lose the natural meaning, so you cannot make a weakness takeout into diamonds any more, but then you couldn't make the weakness take out into clubs because that was Stayman. But the gains outweigh the losses. If you have a poor hand with long clubs or diamonds, pass as confidently as you can and hope partner doesn't do too badly. Just smile as you put the dummy down wishing partner 'good luck'.

Of course, if you have a bad hand and partner opens 1NT it is possible that the intervening hand might double for penalties. In that case most people play 'system off' after the double. In other words all bids revert to their natural meaning which allows you to bid 2♦ or 2♣ as weakness take outs.

A final cautionary word about transfers. You have to agree with your partner that you want to play them. It's always unfortunate if you sit down opposite a new partner and don't discuss it. You might make a transfer bid thinking that partner 'is bound to understand' and partner passes you out. I've played in a 3-2 fit because I thought partner was on the same wavelength only to find he wasn't.

Next time I'll suggest how to use the 2♠ bid which is no longer needed for its natural weakness take out role.

♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠



Diana King and Phil Green's students playing bridge on safari in Kenya

Your EBU



When you joined your **Bridge for All** course, part of your fee paid your annual subscription to the English Bridge Union. You are now a fully paid-up member of the governing body of bridge, which serves about 30,000 players.

The Union is made up of 39 counties, each staging its own tournaments and leagues. You are now eligible to go to county meetings and have a say in how things are run. In turn, your elected county delegate will represent you on the national council where policy is formulated.

The English Bridge Union headquarters are in Aylesbury, Bucks. Over 20 professional staff implement your policies, promote your game and serve you, the member.

- Your teacher has been trained by the English Bridge Union, as have over 1000 other teachers.
- We operate a network of county youth officers and promote the game through teaching in schools and universities as well as adult education centres.
- We organise over 30 national championships and train the tournament directors that run them and organise bridge in hundreds of clubs the length and breadth of the country.
- We run competitions and weekend events especially for students learning through *Bridge for All*.
- We send teams to European and World Championships. At the Mind Sports Olympiad in Beijing in 2008 the English Ladies won the gold medal, the open team and the U19s both won silver medals.
- We ran the Junior European Championships for under-25s and under-19s in Torquay and the Commonwealth Nations Championship in Manchester in 2002.
- We operate a Master Point scheme. You will be winning points as soon as you start playing in competitions. You'll be a Local Master in no time and, one day, you may even become a Grand Master.
- We run a shop that sells everything bridge players and clubs need at competitive prices. See page 6.
- We publish English Bridge, a magazine with news and views from the bridge world, which is distributed six times a year as a service to members.

If you have any enquiries, please ring the Bridge for All department at the English Bridge Union on 01296 317217.

Events for novice players

Really Easy Summer Congress

Brighton Metropole Hotel: August 17th to 19th 2009

£24 per person (accommodation not included)



Now firmly part of the **EBU Summer Congress** the *Really Easy* allows players the chance to experience the atmosphere of the biggest and best tournament in the EBU's calendar.

4 sessions of bridge are played over the 3 days starting at 7.30pm on Monday and finishing about 4pm on Wednesday. In addition there are two instruction sessions.

Suitable for 1st years finishing their 1st year plus 2nd/3rd year students and novice players up to about 3 years or even slightly better. With sufficient numbers we start by splitting into 3 groups with some merging as the event progresses.

For further details contact Peter Jordan at peter@ebu.co.uk or ring 01296 317203

I'm pleased to say that Phil Green and Diana King (Wiltshire teachers) will be assisting as Tournament Directors and hosts at next year's event

Really Easy Winter Break at Wroxton House Hotel,

Wroxton St Mary, Banbury,
Oxfordshire OX15 6QB

☎ 01295 730777

January 29th to 31st 2010



The hotel package is £145 per person (£121 per person sharing).

4 sessions of bridge plus two days half board at this charming country house hotel. The bridge fee is £36 payable to the EBU – see details at the end.

The event starts with dinner on Friday evening at 6.15pm followed by the first session of bridge. A bridge lesson on Saturday morning followed by bridge in the afternoon and evening with dinner. Finally on Sunday a Swiss Pairs event with a break for a light lunch. The event finishes around 3.30pm.

Entries limited to 32 people.

Suitable for the more experienced novice with up to about 5 years experience.

Really Easy Spring Break at the Midland Hotel Derby

The Midland Hotel, Midland Road, Derby DE1 2SQ ☎01332 345894

April 16th to 18th 2010 (and another April 8th to 10th 2011!)

This will be our 5th visit to the Midland Hotel.

The event, will be divided, where appropriate, into two sections according to ability – so first-year students will play in one section and more advanced students in the other. There will be an instructional session on Saturday morning.



An attractive package has been arranged at **The Midland Hotel, Derby** offering a welcome sherry reception, two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast and sandwich lunch on Sunday. Tea and coffee will be available twice on Saturday and once on Sunday. **The hotel package is £126 per person**, with no single person supplement. Please book the hotel accommodation directly with the Midland Hotel quoting 'April Bridge Weekend 2010'. A £20 deposit per person will be required to secure your reservation. The Bridge fee is £34 payable to the EBU – see below.

This weekend is limited to 56 people

Suitable for 1st and 2nd year students and novice players with up to about 3 years experience.

For further details on any event contact Education on 01296 317218 or email john@ebu.co.uk

How to book the bridge:



You can book the bridge for any of these events by calling Peter or Dawn on EBU Competitions – 01296 317203 or email peter@ebu.co.uk .