



THE RUFFIAN

The magazine for bridge students



**Don't be glum...
your Ruffian is here!**

**A bridge magazine
like no other**



Contains:

goats

fairies

**1940s movie references
and great bridge hands**

**"And now for something
completely different...."**



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Bridge is a game.....

It may seem strange to say, but it is sometimes necessary to remind ourselves that bridge is first and foremost a game.



As with all competitive activities, bridge requires focus as well as a belief in one's ability to improve and perform to one's best.

But while winning at bridge is an important element of the enjoyment which we may draw from the game, the way we play the game and the environment must allow us to enjoy ourselves even when we lose.

An ability to laugh at those silly, crazy things which "happen" in bridge is therefore an essential attribute to bring to the table.

It takes a special kind of "sang froid" when one has just gone five down in a freely bid game or slam to dust oneself down and say to partner "At least we weren't doubled". And it takes a special kind of person as the partner to share in the moment – and not to scowl from the other side of the table.

Bridge humour is often wry and no doubt somewhat "dark" – it can involve elements of irony, parody and even a bit of gallows humour – and many bridge stories have a bitter-sweet "cringe" feel about them. Imagine Woody Allen meets Monty Python.

Eddie Kantar, one of the great teachers of the game tells this story:

I'm giving them a class on counting losers. I start out by saying: "This will be a class on counting losers." A voice from the back of the class: "Where were you when I needed you 30 years ago?"



This magazine is intended more than anything else to entertain and to inform – not to instruct (although we certainly hope that you find instructive elements within the stories). In this issue we have therefore included a range of articles to cater for our wide readership. You may find some of the bridge "too advanced", although we have tried to make it all as accessible as possible. Challenge yourself: read as far as you can and come back to the hard bits a little later – feel free to involve your teacher – or write to us: we'd love to hear from you!

Simon Barb
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Editing this issue of Ruffian is one of Simon's last tasks as Manager of EBED as he is moving on to new adventures. We thank him for his work with the charity, and wish him well.

Vu-Bridge: A new way to boost your bidding & card play technique!

As we all know (perhaps to our chagrin), it is one thing bidding to the “right” contract – it is quite another thing making the “right” number of tricks!



Through your hard work in class and your teacher’s inspiring technique, I am sure that you are gaining confidence in your ability to bid a hand to the right spot (well, most of the time, anyway), but what about those tricky suit combinations, managing entries and playing on the right suits in the right order. I suspect that it isn’t quite such plain sailing.

For that reason, I am delighted to introduce you to VuBridge, an internet-based software programme which allows bridge students to play set hands, structured to help you build your technique both in bidding and play, at the same time complementing the lessons which you have undertaken. Vu-Bridge can be accessed via any web browser on computers, Android or iOS devices – it looks particularly good on iPads!



In collaboration with the well-known writer, teacher and cruise bridge director, Paul Bowyer, Vu-Bridge has created three series of 24 lessons (each with 20 interactive deals and a quiz consisting of 10 bidding questions) known as V-Blue, designed to help teach beginner level students of bridge. Students are guided through the carefully sequenced deals by Paul’s pithy and supportive commentary. The bidding system employed is Bridge for All Acol (with strong two’s, four card majors and a 12-14 weak no trump).

A Vu-Bridge minibridge course of ten lessons is available free on the web at: www.vubridge.com/minibridge. You can use this to test out the interface and check your skill level. It’s easy to use but challenging to get the solutions first time!

V-Blue provides material covering a three year curriculum, corresponding to the three initial years of bridge learning for players who already have a basic understanding of the game: i.e. the rules of contract bridge and the playing of Minibridge.

I am also particularly pleased to advise that V-Blue is available at a specially discounted rate to readers of the Ruffian. Please see www.vubridge.fr/FR/EBU-Online-Shop.php for details.

To take advantage of this offer, you will need an EBU number. Talk to your EBUTA teacher about how to get enrolled as a BfA student or contact info@ebedcio.org.uk for assistance.

How do they do it (Part II)

You may have met or heard experienced bridge players who – amazingly - can remember not just one deal but the whole evening's deals. They'll recall the bidding, the cards and the play apparently effortlessly. How do they do it?

In the last issue of the Ruffian, I explained a little about the "art" or "skill" of memorising deals. I pointed out that this feat is largely accomplished by deconstructing and reconstructing deals sufficiently fast in one's brain that it appears that one has the complete deal stored for recall.

The reconstruction is done through a step by step process of replaying the deal utilising the key points which have made an impression. These key points include:

1. Memorable aspect(s) of the deal in the bidding, play or defence
2. Placement of top honours, particularly aces and kings
3. Hand patterns. Especially any singletons or voids
4. Placement of two's and three's
5. Sequences in the deal or during the play e.g. J109, Q109, 987 or JQKA

I also mentioned the idea of trying to encapsulate "the story" behind any deal into a sequence of just four words plus the final contract. The example I gave – not quite four words was: "The **6D doubled** contract after the **goulash** deal. They **led** the **wrong** card and the contract **made** via an **endplay**".

Refining this technique is done through the development of a shorthand of one letter for a word. Now there is no one solution for this and the method which I was taught – no I didn't just grasp it from the ether – dates from when I was an impressionable young man under the tutelage of David Burn (and other Cambridge players of that generation). I recall it now for illustrative purposes only:

Some elements of the shorthand will be immediately clear, starting with the players at the table:
LHO = Left hand opponent, RHO= Right hand opponent, P = Partner, M = Me

Then some aspects of the deal: P = Play, D = Defence, OL = Opening Lead

Next come the adjectives, V + = Good view, V- = Poor view, W = Warped (i.e. Bizarre), L= Ludicrous... etc.

A good result was described as a R = Rake (in other words raking in the matchpoints), a poor play – usually as declarer - was a C = Carve (butchering a contract)

(You will note that we were not reluctant to be critical of opponents or ourselves)

From this point the vocabularies diverged to suit individual preferences and styles.

Using this shorthand and with practice, one could distil the essence of a deal into a few concepts which could then be further reduced to a few letters.

So, reverting to the goulash deal above, we might ascribe the acronym, V-OLL, in other words a poor view on the opening lead by left hand opponent.



Canadian Dave Farrow, who set the World Record in 2007 by memorising on single sighting, a random sequence of 59 separate packs of cards - 3,068 cards(!).

The acronym for each deal would duly be noted on our personal scorecard in the left hand margin next to the contract.

Of course the scorecard would also record the number of tricks made and the score. There was still one piece to be added to the jigsaw puzzle – an estimate of the result.

In those days it was standard to use paper travellers which moved with the board, so that when one scored, a quick glance would reveal how one had performed in terms of matchpoints. Nowadays the results may well be displayed in terms of a percentage on the Bridgmate, or in big tournaments where there is so-called barometer scoring, the Tournament Director delivers your results to your table on a piece of paper. If you are scoring as you go along, you may do an instantaneous post mortem on the deal – say you forgot to cash an ace against a slam, you know that this is a result which may well not be repeated at other tables, and so, depending on the exact circumstances, you will generally make a mental estimate of your score as being somewhere below 5 on a 0-10 scale.

This ability to make an accurate mental assessment of one's performance on a particular board is something which develops with practice, but one quickly learns that opponents making a slam is rarely an above average result for your side, a score of -200 on a part score deal is nearly always close to a zero, doubled making games are invariably very good etc.

I should add at this point that conducting a post mortem at the end of a deal (while positive in the terms of getting you into the habit of analysing mistakes or brilliancies) can easily have adverse side effects. First, it can affect the way in which you play the next deal because you have not put the last deal out of your mind and are therefore "away with the fairies". Secondly it can affect your attitude towards your partner and/or your opponents – almost invariably this will not be to your advantage and in extreme cases can adversely affect the atmosphere at the table. I should therefore say "don't do it" – but I would instead advise you strongly not to enter into discussion at the table (which I equate with scratching a mosquito bite) BUT also to remember: a deal analysed from one side of the table may look very different when analysed from the other side of the table. Even very good players make errors and omissions of every possible kind when replaying deals through in their minds!



Of course, what is good practice is to sit down with your partner after the session and go through the deals as noted on the annotated scorecard **without** immediately referring to the hand record. Try to work together - using only your scorecards as aide memoires - to run through what happened at the table: the plays which succeeded and the errors which were made. For icing on the cake, by all means look at the hand record and the Deep Finesse analysis (to show you how many tricks each side might have made in the available contracts). Ideally, you should also look at the results achieved at other tables if that information is available via Bridgewebs or Pianola. This kind of rigour will boost your technique as well as your memory!

When I was preparing this article, I took the opportunity to talk the technique through again with David Burn to see if he any new ideas. Instead David related to me a story involving Brian Callaghan, a very fine Cambridge player with an extraordinarily dry sense of humour. Apparently at the end of a particular duplicate Brian had notated against one deal the letters PTGOS. David had asked him what it meant but

did not give me the answer - and I had no idea what this was referring to until a couple of months later when I saw the following deal being played at the European Junior Championships at Tromsø, Norway.

15 5♣x East 0 0		N North ♠ AQ1054 ♥ A86532 ♦ K ♣ 4		West North East South Pass 1♠ 2♣ 2NT Pass 4♠ 5♣ Pass Pass Dbl Pass Pass Pass
W West ♠ 987 ♥ J10 ♦ Q964 ♣ 8753		E East ♠ ♥ KQ7 ♦ A1075 ♣ KQJ1092		
		S South ♠ KJ632 ♥ 94 ♦ J832 ♣ A6		

As you can see, after some spirited bidding by N/S, East bought the contract in 5♣, doubled by North.

South (whose bid of 2NT showed a hand with spade support rather than a balanced hand), duly led a spade and declarer ruffed.

East next played a top club won by South's ace and the defence continued by playing ace and another heart. Declarer then drew the outstanding trump and took stock. He had lost two tricks at this stage and could not afford to lose any more if he was to bring home his contract. Can you see how he might have played?

In order to make four tricks in diamonds, declarer needs a very special diamond holding in the opposing hands. One possibility is that North holds exactly: K832 and South the singleton knave. If that is the case the lead of

the ♦Q from dummy will ensure four tricks in the suit whether North plays the king or not. Let's say North covers, declarer plays the ace and the knave falls from the South hand. Declarer can now cross to dummy's ♦9 and lead through North's known holding of ♦83 towards his ♦107.

Alternatively declarer can lay down the ♦A and hope that North has the ♦K singleton. If that is the case – as it actually was – he can follow with the ♦10 towards dummy; South will cover and the trick is won by dummy's ♦Q. Returning to hand with a spade ruff, declarer can lead ♦5 through South's ♦83 towards dummy's ♦96, again taking the marked finesse if necessary.

But what did declarer actually do?

He played the ♦10 from hand and ran it round to North's singleton King. What a shame! That play was sure to lose a trick however the diamonds were distributed. Definitely PTGOS.

Finding a Lead - by Martha Jaynes EBUTA member

Many years ago I found myself on lead against the world champion lady player Rixi Markus (pictured). It was at a congress in London. She and her partner had bid to a small slam in hearts. I was staring at a flat hand holding the Ace of clubs.

I was new to all this. I was very nervous. Time was ticking away so I lead my Ace of clubs. Dummy went down. My hands were shaking and my mouth was dry. Now what? There were 3 clubs left in dummy. Our system didn't tell me what partner's six of clubs indicated. So I lead another club. I was hoping to vaporise ...until my partner trumped!

Rixi Marcus said to ME..."Where did you find that lead?" The thing is; there are good leads, there are bad leads, there are serendipitous leads and there's the one nearest your thumb. I'll never tell.



Leaping Michael's

The Michaels Cue Bid (MCB) is a conventional bid of opponents' suit to show a two suited hand.

In days of yore, a direct bid of the opponents suit, or cue-bid, was used to show a very strong hand without reference to suit or shape. Partner was expected to make some kind of intelligent bid in response (without having any idea what his partner might be interested in), the cue-bidder would then show more about his hand with a further bid (by now usually at the three level) and the auction proper would commence.

The problem with this style of bidding was that (a) hands suitable for the cue-bid did not occur very often (so it was using up valuable space in the golf bag) and (b) when they did occur, it basically gave carte blanche to the opponents to pre-empt (c) the cue-bid consumed a lot of bidding space before the constructive part of the auction could start.



In the late 1940's Alvin Roth and Tobias Stone (pictured left), two great American players, started to use a convention called the Unusual No Trump. Under their scheme, a jump overcall of 2NT over the opponents opening bid of a major showed, not a strong balanced hand, but a defensive hand (i.e. good playing strength but not necessarily many high card points) with both minor suits (usually 5-5 or better).

A typical 2NT overcall over one of a major might be:

♠83 ♥5 ♦KJ1076 ♣AQ954

So, for those of you who count losers, we are talking about a six-loser hand with reasonable intermediates. Since those days, there has, however, been some serious inflation, so do not be surprised if it is used against you with a hand such as:

♠x ♥x ♦QJ10xx ♣J10xxxx

It is a fundamental tenet of bidding theory that bids which use up a lot of space need to be very descriptive because you have taken away a lot of the room which might otherwise have been used by you and your partner to explore the right contract. Thus the idea is that after an unusual no trump bid, partner should have all the information he/she needs to place the final contract.

The next part in this tale involves Mike Michaels who was a favourite partner of Charles Goren (one of the three original inductees to the Bridge Hall of Fame) and who ghosted many of his newspaper articles. Michaels extended the idea of two suited overcalls to cover both major suits. So a cue-bid of 2♦ over 1♦ (or 2♣ over 1♣) showed both majors. This proved to be a very efficient way of indicating to partner whether and where to compete for the contract, and at the same time used up a lot of the opponents bidding space while offering up a relatively low chance of being penalised.

The idea was later further extended to cover a cue-bid of a major suit to show the other major and an (unspecified) minor.



The strength required to make a Michaels cue-bid (or an Unusual No Trump bid) is to some extent a matter of partnership agreement, but generally the assumption is to assume that partner will have three card support for one of the long suits and a couple of useful cards so you are not inviting your opponents to take a healthy penalty on a deal on which there is nothing more than a part-score at stake.

Here's a typical Michael's Cue Bid auction:

West	East	West	North	East	South
♠ Q J 10 8 5	♠ A K 3 2				
♥ 5	♥ 6 4 2				1♥
♦ A J 10 9 8 5	♦ K 7	2♥	pass	4♠	all pass
♣ 6	♣ J 10 9 6				

East's 4♠ bid may seem rash – but it shows a good appreciation of what his partner would have for the cue-bid. West's bid of 2♥ was effectively pushing his partner to the three level in the event of no spade fit, so it required a hand with at most six losers. East's ace plus the two kings cover three of those, meaning that provided there was a good trump fit of at least nine cards, contracting for ten tricks looked a good shot.

Now, you might think that this is as far as you want to go, but experts always want to push things one step further than good sense would dictate, so there is a further opportunity to use this idea: the Leaping Michael's Cue Bid.

Spoiler Alert: Do not try this at home - you have been warned.

The Leaping Michael's Cue Bid is designed to show very powerful two suited hands after your opponents pre-empt with a weak two or weak three opening.

The scheme is similar to that over a one level, so a jump cue-bid of a minor shows both majors, a jump cue-bid of a major shows the other major and a minor.

So, for example, if your opponents open a weak 2♦, your bid of 4♦ would show hearts and spades and obviously a very good hand because you are effectively bidding to the four level all by yourself.

You might hold:

♠ KQJ109 ♥ AK109xx ♦ A ♣ x

This hand would be tricky to describe if your opponents escalate the pre-empt in diamonds, so you need to get across the two-suited nature and very good playing strength of your hand in one bid. Leaping Michael's to the rescue.

The confusion occurs when the opponents 2♦ bid **doesn't** show diamonds, you're not quite sure of the agreement between you and your partner, and you are playing in the final of the Open Teams at the 7th European Open Bridge Championships.



The winning 'Orange White' team from the Netherlands

Here is the deal:

Board 3; Dealer S; E/W Vul

♠ K J 10
♥ J 10 5 4 3
♦ 7 3
♣ 6 4 2

♠ A ♠ Q 8 2
♥ A Q 9 8 6 ♥ 2
♦ K 9 ♦ A Q J 10 5 2
♣ A K J 10 9 ♣ 7 5 3

♠ 9 7 6 5 4 3
♥ K 7
♦ 8 6 4
♣ Q 8

In the room where the young Dutch team were E/W the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
			2♦(1)
4♣(2)	Pass	4♦(3)	Pass
4♥(4)	Pass	5♣(5)	All Pass

(1) This is the multi 2♦ opening showing a weak two in an unspecified major. You may think that the spade suit quality is rather poor, and you'd be right!

(2) Leaping Michael's showing precisely clubs and an undisclosed major (specific agreement)

(3) Conventional request for the major, **not** showing diamonds

(4) I have hearts

(5) Ok, let's play in clubs

With the favourable lie of the cards, thirteen tricks rolled home. 6♦ looked an altogether more sensible spot and the spectators of the match anticipated a possible swing in favour of the opposing Norwegian team. However, the auction there started the same way with the same anaemic multi 2♦ opening, but then developed rather differently:

West	North	East	South
			2♦
4♣(1)	Pass	4♦(2)	Pass
4♠(3)	Pass	Pass(4)	Pass

Bid	Meaning according to West	Meaning according to East
(1)	Leaping Michael's showing precisely hearts and an undisclosed minor	Leaping Michael's showing clubs and an undisclosed major
(2)	Roman Key-card Blackwood for Clubs	Relay – what is your major?
(3)	Four key cards	West has spades and clubs
(4)	????	He'll be pleased with my dummy

Sad to relate, the moment when dummy went down was not captured by the VuGraph cameras or microphones. 4♠ was not a success as a contract and represented a fundamental lack of respect for Burn's Law*.

You have been warned!

* - For an explanation of Burn's Law of Total Trumps see: http://blakjak.org/burn_law.htm



The Welsh Lightner Double

Theodore A Lightner (pictured) was one of the greats of Contract Bridge in its infancy. A stockbroker of somewhat doleful demeanour, he was not only a fine player but also a major contributor to the theory of bidding. Ely Culbertson, the great showman who popularised bridge in the 1930's developed significant parts of the Culbertson System from Lightner's ideas.

Not many people alive today could tell you much about the Culbertson system – but the convention which bears Lightner's name lives on and is an integral part of the bridge lexicon: a Lightner double.

First mentioned (as far as I can see) in a November 1933 Bridge World magazine article entitled "The Slam Double Convention", the double indicates to partner that he should make an unusual lead against a slam with the idea of finding partner void in the suit and being able to ruff. Declarer not expecting to lose a first round trick to a ruff goes off in his slam.

In the absence of a clear indication otherwise, the double calls for dummy's first bid suit.

It (almost) goes without saying that if the Lightner double is employed against a small slam, the defenders must be confident of taking a second trick later in the play.

The idea has been extended to also apply to defending against a no trump contract, where the doubler has an exceptionally strong holding in dummy's suit (and this is not uncommon at all: since most suits are considered "biddable", it would not be extraordinary to find the next hand holding AKQ10x).

A very clever idea, although not without its occasional drawbacks. Partner might not lead the right suit, or he might be void in it, or leading that suit might give away a "natural" trick, and of course the opponents might "hear" the double and convert to an unbeatable no trump contract. For all that, the convention has stood the test of time with far more successes attributable to it than failures.

However talking of failures.....I perpetrated the following grotesque example recently:

Board 10; Dealer E; All Vul

♠ 9 5 ♥ K 10 6 3 ♦ K 9 5 ♣ A 10 4 3		West	North	East	South
♠ A Q 4 ♥ - ♦ Q 8 ♣ K Q J 9 7 6 5 2		2♣	3♣ (2)	pass (1)	1♥
♠ K J 10 8 7 6 3 2 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ J 4 ♣ -		5♥(4)	6♥ (5)	4♠(3)	5♦
♠ - ♥ A Q J 8 4 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 3 2 ♣ 8		Pass (7)	Pass	Dbl(6)	Pass

(1)	Lurking - 3♠ or even 4♠ would be normal
(2)	A cuebid of opponents suit showing a good raise in partner's suit
(3)	Coming out of the woodwork
(4)	Cue-bid guaranteeing no losers in the opponents suit
(5)	Holding two losing spades this was either brilliant or extraordinarily foolish
(6)	This was just foolish
(7)	As was this

Partner duly led ♠A (not best) and declarer wrapped up 13 tricks.

"Aha" said partner "You made a Welsh Lightner Double*". He went on "The double which indicates that I have to make an unusual lead in order to stop the contract making an overtrick"

Our score of -1860 did not look good. In fact that worked out to -21 IMPS when teammates allowed the opponents to play in 4♠ (undoubled and making 13 tricks on a club (!) lead)

Now you may think this is absurd – and you'd be right – but consider this example from a match I watched a few days later on Bridge Base Online.

South opened the bidding first in hand with a sporting 6D which was passed round to East who held:

♠KQ104 ♥K109763 ♦1084 ♣ -

Sure that his partner must hold a fistful of clubs, Mr Rovyshin (the East in question) found an imaginative Lightner double – not totally displeasing his partner who held two aces. What could go wrong?

Well, this:

Unsurprisingly his partner led one of his aces rather than from his small doubleton club and the contract duly made with an overtrick. Score -1190

At the other table, the auction was more spirited:

11		6♦x South		N Rudakov		West	North	East	South
0		0		♠ QJ542		Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
				♥ J		Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
				♦ AK108652					
				♣					
W Chumak				E Rovyshin					
♠ AJ9876532				♠ KQ104					
♥ A8				♥ K109763					
♦ 43				♦ 1084					
♣				♣					
S Orlov									
♠				♠ AKQ976532					
♥				♥					
♦				♦ QJ97					
♣				♣					

South started proceedings with a "playful" 1NT to get things rolling and matters proceeded:

West	North	East	South
4♠	6♣	6♠	1NT
Dbl	Pass	7♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Although South would gladly have bid 8♣ if the laws permitted him so to do, he found himself on lead against 7♠ (doubled of course).

That too was impregnable, resulting in a score of -1770. Put these two scores together, consult the IMP conversion table, and what does one get: yes -21 IMP.

Is there a pattern here somewhere?

* - The origin of the term Welsh Lightner Double was explained to me by Nick Doe, a former Secretary to the EBU Laws & Ethics Committee.

"The story is that years ago (nearer 30 than 20) I lived in Harrow and played in Middlesex. A pair that I played with regularly as team-mates was a married Welsh couple called Pam and Wyn Williams. Pam was a fine player who sadly suffered from very poor health and died in her 40s. Wyn was a less good player but had a certain amount of flair, and we won some events with them as team-mates.

One day some bridge acquaintances had some other players to stay and we arranged a friendly teams of four match. Since there were four women and four men we had a battle of the sexes, which involved no regular partnerships. I played with Wyn and we had a pretty good card with the exception of one board where Wyn doubled a small slam and I duly found the lead to give him a ruff and save the overtrick. It was light-hearted and friendly and the manoeuvre was christened the Welsh Lightner Double, and the name stuck. Despite our good card, team-mates results were abysmal and we lost by 70 odd IMPs over 24 boards".

For Gary - A Dummy Reversal

"I hope I haven't got too much" said North as he put down the dummy. A sure warning sign!



♠ -
♥ A Q 5 3 2
♦ K 9 8 7
♣ A 10 5 2

♠ A K 6 5 4 2
♥ -
♦ Q 6 4 2
♣ J 9 4

♠ J 9 7
♥ 9 8 7 6
♦ A J 3
♣ Q 7 6

Dealer West, N/S Vul
West North
1♠ Dbl
Pass 4♥

East	South
Pass	3♥
All pass	

♠ Q 10 8 3
♥ K J 10 4
♦ 10 5
♣ K 8 3

Declarer ruffed the spade lead in dummy, led a heart to his ten and received a nasty shock when West showed out. He then tried a diamond to dummy's king, but East took the trick with the ace and led a second trump, won in dummy. Declarer now tried to establish the clubs by leading to his king and back to dummy's ten, but East won with the queen and played a third round of trumps. In spite of the favourable spade position and clubs splitting evenly (the thirteenth club being a winner), with a trump still outstanding in the opponents hands, declarer could not take advantage of this and had to lose three diamonds and a club to end an ignominious one down.

Let's rewind.

Although the two hands fit reasonably, if we look at the problem from the perspective of dummy, declarer can only count five heart tricks, two diamond ruffs and the ace king of clubs as sure winners. Even with that the need to ruff twice means that he needs to be careful not to draw trumps too early (in case there is a bad break) AND he also needs to establish another winner either in diamonds or in clubs for his tenth trick.



The positive between the hands are the pretty diamond pips which means that he can always establish a diamond given time – but how to handle them?

Suppose declarer starts at trick two by leading a club to his king and advancing his diamond ten, West playing low; declarer now gives himself the best chance by finessing this to East, who as it happens wins with the knave.

East can see the risk of declarer making his contract on a cross ruff and plays back a trump, won in the South hand with the ten. Declarer can now play a second diamond towards dummy and if West plays low, finesse again (this time against the queen) by playing a low card from the dummy! This maximises the chance of making two diamond tricks (if East started with ♦Qxx) and will only lose if East started life with both minor diamond honours (see the article on goats and boxes to understand why this is against the odds). East wins the diamond with the ace, leaving position A:

A

♠ -
♥ A Q 5
♦ K 9
♣ A 10 5

♠ K 6 5 4
♥ -
♦ Q 6
♣ J 9

♠ J 9
♥ 9 8 7
♦ 3
♣ Q 7

East continues with a second trump but this time declarer has control of the hand. He can win this trump in hand, cross to dummy's club ace and throw a club on the diamond king. When the diamond queen doesn't fall, he ruffs a CLUB (not a diamond), establishing the suit (making dummy last club a winner).

Position B has now been reached. It is now straightforward: declarer plays his trump king overtaking with dummy's ace and plays the queen to extract East's last trump. He is now able to enjoy the club five (with a flourish) for his tenth trick: five trumps in dummy, a diamond, three clubs and one club ruff in hand.

B

♠ -
♥ A Q
♦ 9
♣ 5

♠ K 6 5
♥ -
♦ Q
♣ -

♠ J 9
♥ 9 8
♦ -
♣ -

♠ Q 10 8
♥ K
♦ -
♣ -

(I dedicate this little article to Gary Ames, one of the EBED trustees for his particular love of dummy reversals).

The Young Bridge Challenge

5th March 2016 - Loughborough Grammar School

A **free**, one-day bridge event for school-age players of all experience levels consisting of:

- ♥ Schools Cup for teams from the same school
- ♦ Minibridge Pairs

- ♣ Swiss Teams for mixed teams
- ♠ Short pairs game for adults.



Please phone Lisa Miller on 01296 317217 or e-mail info@ebedcio.org.uk for more information.

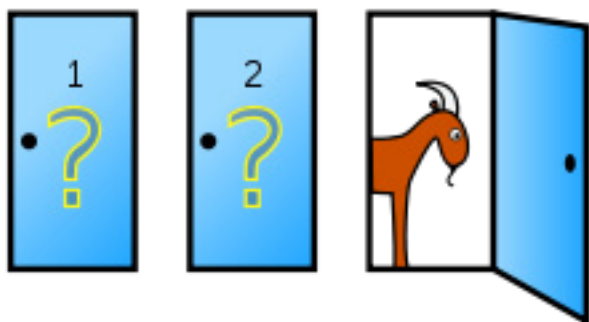
Goats and Doors

An American game show called Let's Make a Deal is the introduction to one of the most profound truths in bridge: the principle of restricted choice.



Suppose you're on a game show and you're given the choice of three doors. Behind one door is a car, behind the others, goats. You pick a door, let's say No. 1, and the host, who knows what's behind the doors, opens another door, say No. 3, which has a goat. He then says to you, "Do you want to pick door No. 2 instead?"

Is it to your advantage to switch your choice?



What's the answer? Well, before I explain, I should perhaps mention that when the answer to this problem was posed in a magazine called Parade, it drew about 10,000 responses from readers (Including – anecdotally- nearly 1,000 PhD's) who assured the author that she had it completely wrong.

The correct answer is that you can double your chance of winning a car (in the literature described as a Cadillac, although I prefer to think of it as a Chevrolet) by switching.

The veracity of this can be shown through the use of a decision tree (a method with which some readers may be familiar). However perhaps the best way of appealing to one's sense of logic is that – assuming that the car was behind door No. 1, the host could have picked either door No. 2 or door No. 3 to provide you with an option. It was 50:50 which door he chose – and if you switch you would lose. However if the car was not behind door 1, he had to choose the door with the losing option (his choice was restricted). In that case, you would always win by switching to the remaining door (in my example door No 2).

The chances of you choosing the correct door to begin with are only 1/3. So 1/3 of the time you would lose if you switch, but 2/3 of you win if you switch - so you double your chances of winning by switching.



Well done if you got that right. Here's your prize*

What does this have to do with bridge? There are a number of illustrative examples, but the following is a simple situation. You have to play this suit combination in isolation of any other information:

Dummy	You
♠ A J 10 9 8	♠ 7 6 5 4

You, as declarer, lead small towards the tenace in dummy, your left hand opponent plays low. You play the 10 and your right hand opponent plays the queen. Imagine that he then gets off lead by playing another suit, which you win in hand. You again lead a small card from hand towards the tenace – do you play the ace (playing for the suit to have originally been 2-2, or do you finesse?

* - sorry but the EBED budget only stretches to awarding as prizes digital pictures of old cars

he answer is that it's not even close: the odds are at least* 2:1 in favour of taking the finesse again. Why?

As with the goats and car problem, had your right-hand opponent originally started with the KQ doubleton then the first time you finessed he might have played either the queen or the king. The fact that he played (say) the queen is a strong indication that he did not hold the king (or vice-versa). Therefore, the next time you lead towards the tenace, you should again finesse.

If you are dubious about the logic of this – you are in good company. It is related that the great Hungarian mathematician, Paul Erdős, refused for a long time to accept the truth of the box and goat problem until he was “shown” through extensive mathematical modelling!

(* I write “at least” because many players – for some reason – holding KQ doubleton in this situation, always play the king, believing it to be “more deceptive”. If this idiosyncrasy is known to your opponents, you are simply reducing your chances of your opponent taking a losing second round finesse.)

Don't believe me? See www.rpbridge.net/4b73.htm for this and other bridge paradoxes!



Students National Simultaneous Pairs

This unique event will be run between the dates of Monday 22nd February and Friday 1st April 2016 and a heat may be at any time during this period: be sure to ask your teacher if your club will be participating.

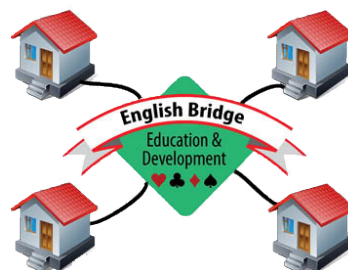
The event covers both bridge and minibridge and is open to all bridge students in both year one and year two, those playing in supervised duplicates and especially to all those youngsters playing in schools.

A minimum of one table is all that is needed and there is no charge for entries.

A booklet of the hands with expert commentary will be available for the students to browse through after the event.

Information packs for organisers are available through Lisa Miller at lisa@ebedcio.org.uk. Further details can be found at www.ebedcio.org.uk/node/72

Congratulations to those who got the highest scores in the 2015 event. Arthur Anstis and Cameron Butcher were the highest scorers in the bridge section of recently completed Education Simultaneous Pairs. They scored 72.58% playing at the heat run by the Chiltern Bridge League in conjunction with Oxfordshire Bridge Association. Hayley Lyne and Holly Newport were the highest scorers in the minibridge section with 65.53%. Hayley and Holly were one of twelve pairs who played at New Scotland Hill primary school in Berkshire.



Never give a sucker an even break

"Never give a sucker an even break" is the title of a 1941 movie starring W C Fields and this is also a very useful way of remembering that when there are an even number of cards outstanding, the odds favour the suit breaking unevenly. So a 2-0 break is marginally more likely than a 1-1 break, similarly a 2-2 break only occurs 41% of the time, whereas the suit will break 3-1 half the time, and the odds widen the greater the number of cards outstanding.

There is a very useful chart showing the odds on Richard Pavlicek's excellent website www.rpbridge.net which has many useful lessons and tips for the beginner and intermediate player.

However the really remarkable statistic from the chart is that when there are seven cards outstanding, the odds of a 4-3 break are a massive 62% compared with 31% (half as likely!) for a 5-2 break.

That means that even with a suit as unpromising as A5432 opposite singleton, if one can engineer a way to ruff the suit three times, the fifth card in the suit is likely to be a winner almost two-thirds of the time – much better odds than a simple finesse, for example.

Seeing this opportunity at the card table and taking advantage of this is the sign of a beginner player who is truly 'coming of age'.



Here is a beautiful example of a deal played recently in the Champions Cup, held for the first time in England where the top teams from all over Europe compete against each other for this prestigious prize.

In both rooms, the final contract was 7♠, played by South and at both tables the Wests made the opening lead of a trump..... usually considered a safe lead against a grand slam.

The declarers won in hand and played off a second high trump, discovering the original 3-1 break. At trick three they both lead a heart to dummy's ace and ruffed a heart, hoping that the King might appear. Then their paths diverged.

In the closed room, declarer now tested the diamonds, playing the ace, then the king and ruffing the third round with dum-

my spade knave when West showed out on the third round of the suit. He then ruffed a second heart but the king did not appear. Having a losing diamond in his hand, he then played off all his trumps, keeping ♣AK8 in dummy, opposite his two diamonds and a small club, but the opponents weren't squeezed and he had to lose the third club to go one down. Unlucky, maybe.....

In the open room, the young Danish champion Dennis Bilde (pictured below) was declarer and he played the odds. After the same four first tricks, he crossed to the diamond ace and....played a third heart, ruffing in hand with the ♠7! When that passed off peacefully, he cashed his diamond king, ruffed a diamond in dummy, West showing out (as before), but this was now the end position with the lead (crucially) in dummy:

	♠	
	♥ Q 10	
	♦	
	♣ A K 8	
♠ 9		♠
♥		♥ K
♦		♦ Q
♣ J 10 6 4		♣ Q 9 7
	♠ Q 10	
	♥	
	♦ 10 9	
	♣ 5	



Bilde now ruffed the fourth round of hearts with ♠10, bringing down the king, and leaving West unable to over-ruff and gnashing his teeth. It was now a simple matter to draw West's outstanding trump and cross to dummy's ♣A to discard the two diamond losers on the club king and the established fifth heart! Well done, Dennis.

Was there any risk to Dennis' line – well, yes, West might have started life with only two hearts and would then have been able to overruff the ♠7 – and all the time the diamonds might have been 3-3. However a 3-3 break was only a 36% chance and the 4-3 break (as we said earlier) is a massive 62% chance – almost twice as good (please don't let's quibble over my ability to divide 62 by 36!).

Really Easy Events

Really Easy Events are organised by the EBU, and are aimed at less experienced players. Players are probably below the rank of Master and lower than a Jack on the NGS - there is no lower limit, other than the player being comfortable playing unassisted. So 'club standard' is ideal.

Take part and see how your game is progressing, compete with your friends, and have fun.

Really Easy Afternoons

These events are held as part of some of our larger congresses, with 'satellite' heats at other venues round the country. The scores are collated, and prizes awarded based on the stratified results.

27 December 2015 - London & other venues
 25 March 2016 - London & other venues
 28 May 2016 - Stratford-u-Avon & other venues

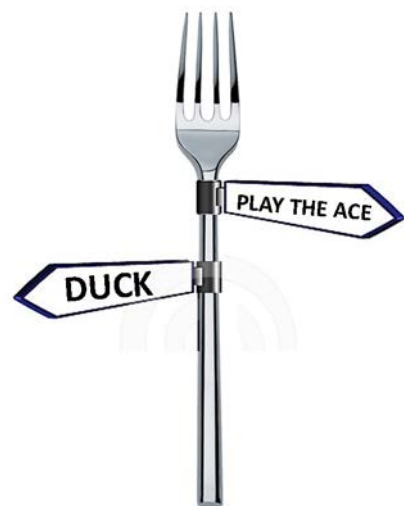
Really Easy Weekends

Bridge-based 'house' parties, over a long weekend, for those looking for social, yet competitive, bridge.

1-3 April 2016 - Wroxton House Hotel, nr Banbury
 24-26 June 2016 - venue TBC
 28-30 Oct. 2016 - Star Inn, Alfriston, E. Sussex

See www.ebu.co.uk/competitions/less-experienced-events for more information on these events

A Morton's Fork is a bridge encapsulation of the idea "damned if you do, damned if you don't". I certainly hope that you don't feel that this is the perpetual state in which you find yourself opposite critical partners, but it is certainly something which you may indeed face at the table: it is a stark choice between seizing a trick early – and thus gaining a tempo - but only at the cost of giving away a trick; the final outcome, i.e. the opponents' contract making, being the same.



This is a simple example of how the situation can come about:

QJxx
K109x xx
Ax

South leads a low club from hand and what can West play?

If he plays low, dummy's queen will win the trick – and with declarer now holding the ace singleton, you may well have "lost" your chance to make the king. If on the other hand, you play the king, declarer has three club tricks.

Here's a pretty example of a Morton's Fork from a recent teams match.

♠ A Q	♠ 9 4	Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable			
♥ Q 10 5 4 2	♥ K 7	West	North	East	South
♦ 10 4	♦ A K J 7 3 2	1♥	Dbl	2♦	2♠
♣ A 10 9 7	♣ Q J 2	Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
		3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
		3NT	All Pass		

North led ♠2 to ten and declarer's queen.

Taking stock, declarer realised that while he could lead ♦10 at trick 2, but this might be covered by the queen and if an opponent started with four diamonds – meaning that there is still a diamond trick to lose - there will be problems in establishing a ninth trick before the opposition knock out the second spade stopper.

Given the paucity of points between the opponents, West figured that North was likely to be holding the ♥A, in which case leading a heart from hand might well give North an insoluble problem. If he ducked, West would win and could then play the diamonds "safely" by ducking a round to the queen (which he thought would be in the North hand). That way he would make one heart, five diamonds, two spades and a club.



In fact this was the full deal:

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

When he led the heart North was caught in Morton's Fork. If he takes ♥A, declarer can make his contract via four hearts, two spades, two diamonds and one club, so he ducked and heart king won in dummy.

Now when a small diamond led from dummy, South (not North) was put to the knife.

If South rises with the ♦Q and plays a second spade – as occurred at the table – declarer makes his contract via five diamonds, two spades, one heart and one club.

So South does best to duck and the ten wins (somewhat to declarer's surprise).

When a diamond is played back to dummy, however, North's show out reveals the original 1-4 diamond break but now declarer wins on table, cashes his third diamond and plays on clubs, establishing three tricks in the suit.

Three diamond tricks together with three clubs, two spades and a heart adds up to nine tricks and once again the contract makes.

Forthcoming Junior Events

Junior Learn Bridge in a Weekend

9th - 10th January 2016 - Roke and Berrick Salome Village Hall, Oxfordshire

A free course for all those in full time education. Learn to play bridge from scratch in just a weekend.

Run by Oxfordshire CBA. See www.bridgewebs.com/bridge4schools/ for more information

Surrey Schools Bridge Event

5th February 2016 - St. Pauls Boys School, Barnes, Surrey

An annual event, in it's 17th year, including bridge and minibridge competitions.

For more information on participating contact Tim Warren: tim@corbiere.globalnet.co.uk



Oxfordshire Junior Congress

21st February 2016 - Roke and Berrick Salome Village Hall, Oxfordshire

Includes minibridge, and bridge competitions for different abilities. For more information on participating contact Joan Bennett: joanmbennett@hotmail.co.uk