



RUFFIAN



Autumn 2018 Edition



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The Whole EBED Team Says... “Welcome New Students!”

It’s that time of year again when the EBED office is overwhelmed by forms that have been completed from the Beginning Bridge, Continuing Bridge and Fast Track Bridge books for students to enrol as members of the EBU. We are thrilled to know that more and more students are wanting to learn this great game, coming back to it or continuing after a successful and enjoyable first year of learning. If you are a new student, you will have already received an introductory edition of The Ruffian in with your new member welcome pack. We also publish editions like this one every six months for Bridge for All students. In these you will find news from EBED, bridge tips and lots more about learning the game.

Hopefully by the end of your course you will be as happy as this jolly bunch from Northern Ireland were. All of us wish you all the best and thank you for choosing to learn bridge using the Bridge for All books – a fantastic way to learn a fantastic game!



Share Your Stories

We would love to hear your stories of your bridge experiences! Maybe you first played as a child and have now come back to the game decades later, perhaps you want to share one tip that your teacher gave you that you thought was particularly brilliant, if so share it with us by e-mailing info@ebedcio.org.uk.

Did you know?

The world record for the largest collection of playing cards is held by Liu Fuchang of China, who owns an unbelievable 11,087 packs of cards!

For more world records related to cards, go to <https://recordsetter.com/playing-card-world-records>, which includes videos of some very bizarre records, including “Most playing cards stacked on the back of a spoon” (313) and “Most playing cards incorrectly guessed in a row” (391).

What MiniBridge Teaches you about Bridge

Our students who read *The Ruffian* are at different stages of their bridge journey. This page is for those who have just started learning bridge, but could be of interest to others as well.



You will realise as you progress to playing bridge that there are basically three facets to the game: bidding, playing as declarer (trying to make the contract) and playing as a defender (trying to defeat the contract). The key to MiniBridge is that the bidding facet is greatly simplified, allowing new players to focus on the two remaining cardplay facets of the game.

Changing from having three things to think about to only two might not sound a lot, but remember that you will only ever be playing as declarer or a defender; so actually on each hand it's a change from two considerations to one. Half as much to think about at once can only be a good thing for a beginner!

However, it is also really important that MiniBridge doesn't remove the bidding process entirely – you are still definitely playing a contract game, and the information you get from knowing how many high card points everyone has can be crucial. Here's an example of how this can help your play:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠AJ2 ♥A43 ♦K654 ♣K82 	<p>Board 1: Dealer North</p> <p>North (at the top of the diagram) announces their points first as they are the dealer. They say "15", East has 4, South has 14 and West has 7. North will be declarer and South dummy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♠K103 ♥K652 ♦A32 ♣A54 	<p>North can see that he and his partner don't have a fit in either spades or hearts, but with 29 points and cover in all the suits decides to go for game in No Trumps.</p> <p>East leads the ♣Q. How do you make sure that you make nine tricks? Try dealing out the cards at home as it might help you get a feel for them.</p>

In bridge and indeed in MiniBridge, every card can have a meaning and that is the key here. First, count your top tricks. We have the Ace and King in every suit, which makes eight, so we are going to need one more trick from somewhere. Unfortunately, we don't have a long suit to play out and most of our other cards are small ones. The best chance looks to be the ♠J or 10 picking up a trick. To do this, we need to work out who has the ♠Q, so that we can take a finesse through that hand. What information might help?

We know that East only has 4 points, and they have led the ♣Q which is 2 points on its own. That means they only have 2 more points. Could the ♠Q be those 2 more points?

Because of what we have learnt about the opening lead, we know that we should not lead a high card unless we also have the one directly beneath it. That means East must have the ♣J. That only leaves 1 more point, so they cannot have the ♠Q, so West must have it.

We can lead the ♠10 from dummy, and win with the A if West plays the Q, or play the 2 if West plays low. The 10 either wins or helps to set up the J for our ninth trick.

Lots of experienced bridge players still find that MiniBridge can teach them a lot about their cardplay techniques, so imagine what it can do for a new player! We hope you enjoy exploring the interesting features of MiniBridge and that you agree that it is a great introduction to the game of bridge.



What else does EBED do?

EBED is the national charity for the promotion and development of bridge, so as well as helping bridge students and bridge teachers we have a couple of other main areas of ongoing work:

Junior Bridge

We help to encourage schools and bridge teachers to introduce the game to young people up and down the country. There are also two national events that EBED organise – the Young Bridge Challenge which includes the Schools Cup and also the Junior Teach-In. This is a weekend of bridge teaching, competition and fun, which was recently held at Phasels Wood Scout Activity Centre in Hertfordshire. There are also two visits for school bridge players to the House of Lords each year, by kind invitation of the House of Lords Bridge group. The most recent visit was attended by two schools from Lincolnshire and Highover JMI School, Hitchin, pictured here with Lord Skelmersdale from the House of Lords Bridge Group.



Academic Research



EBED are currently funding two different research studies.

The first is an fMRI study at Imperial College, London, comparing the brain activity of bridge players and suitable “controls.” The aim is to address the hypothesis that playing bridge can directly develop and maintain the neuronal pathways in the brain, occurring primarily as a biochemical process in the brain driven by the physical mental activity required to play bridge.

In the second research study we are co-funding a PhD student at the University of Stirling to undertake the first ever PhD in the Sociology of Bridge. The proposed title for the thesis is “Bridging the Gap: An Exploration of Transitions in Play during the Lifecourse”.

Details of both studies can be found at www.ebedcio.org.uk/health-wellbeing-research.



Don't be Shy when you have a Good Hand!

The hand below is from the recent match between the two Houses of Parliament, won by the Commons in a close finish. Neither side bid the hand to its potential – if they had the final result could well have been different! See later for the impact of a “Double” on the final hand of the event.

♠ AJ106	
♥ A54	
♦ Q1074	
♣ K9	
♠ 87	♠ KQ9543
♥ J10862	♥ 973
♦ 96	♦ J8
♣ 8765	♣ 103
	♠ 2
	♥ KQ
	♦ AK532
	♣ AQJ42

Once North opens a weak NT, the first key lesson is that South is in the driving seat and must take charge. When we first learn about responding to 1NT on unbalanced hands, the hands are typically focused on the major suits. Game in the minors always seems like hard work for a poor score - so the temptation is always to settle for the comfortable game contract in NTs. That's what the Lords did and after getting the friendly 4th highest lead of ♠ 5 Declarer made all 13 tricks.

When responder shows a strong hand with a minor suit by bidding (eg) 3♦ in this case, the intention is to indicate not just a game forcing hand but a genuine interest in the possibility of a slam if partner has

a fit. Here North with excellent diamond support and two outside Aces is certainly happy to cooperate by bidding 4♦, going beyond the safe resting point of 3NT. That's all that South needs to hear and after that it is a matter of just bidding “Blackwood” to check the number of Aces and bidding a slam. The text with the hand on the next page is from the commentary to the event by England international player Heather Dhondy, which gives a more advanced approach to bidding the top contract of 7NT, but even if you finished in “only” 6♦ or 6NT give yourself a big pat on the back. The Commons played in 4♦ making all 13 tricks after a bidding mishap!

		Board 8: Dealer West : Love All			
		West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT	Pass	3♦
		Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT
		Pass	5♠	Pass	6♣
		Pass	7♦	Pass	7NT
		All pass			
		<p>If you manage to get to the grand slam on this board you will have done very well. The contract is an excellent one, only failing if East holds all four diamonds.</p> <p>In the auction given above, South shows a natural slam try with 3♦, for which North could not be more suitable, so is happy to support. 4NT is Roman Keycard Blackwood, and the 5♠ response shows two keycards (the four aces and king of trumps being keycards) and the queen of trumps. Now 6♣ confirms all the keycards and invites a grand slam if North has a club honour. Knowing that North has the king of clubs as well, South can count thirteen tricks so corrects to 7NT.</p> <p>Whether in diamonds or no-trumps, start with a top diamond from the South hand in case West holds all four.</p>			
<p>♠ AJ106 ♥ A54 ♦ Q1074 ♣ K9</p> <p>♠ 87 ♠ KQ9543 ♥ J10862 ♥ 973 ♦ 96 ♦ J8 ♣ 8765 ♣ 103</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ KQ ♦ AK532 ♣ AQJ42</p>					

♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠

Developing Good Habits

The true story below was sent to EBED by one of our EBTA teachers, and shows the importance of good habits at the bridge table. Names used are not real names. To understand, it may be useful to know that for most bridge players there are two possible meanings when you open the bidding with 2♥ or 2♠. They can either show a weak hand with 6 cards in the suit, or a very strong hand with the suit that is bid. Each partnership must agree which version they play, and their opponents are entitled to know which version as well. If you have not started bidding yet, come back to this story when you have, but if you have hopefully you will also know that when you make any jump bid, i.e. miss out a level of the bidding, for example, opening with 2♥ or 2♠, you should also pull out the STOP card from your bidding box when you make the bid and put that on the table, leave it on the table for 10 seconds then put it back. No-one else should bid while the STOP card is on the table.



"We were playing at a very friendly club where members are friends and socialise. There is never any problem or argument. We moved to play the next round and I said, "remind me John, do you play weak or strong twos?". "We play both" came the reply. "That's interesting" I said "can you expand a little," thinking maybe it depended on vulnerability. "Oh it's quite simple" said John. "If we say 'STOP' 2 ♠ or 2 ♥ it is strong, but if we just open 2 ♠ or 2 ♥, without the stop, it is weak".

"Er, I don't think that's legal John."

"Oh it's OK, partner will always say if it's weak or strong, we wouldn't want to confuse or misinform anybody". They really are a lovely couple and would not deliberately bid incorrectly to gain any advantage. Not wishing to hurt their feelings I gently repeated what I had said and they were genuinely upset that I was implying they were doing something wrong. They were clearly not convinced!

The following week, obviously having thought about things, John asked me if I was sure that what I had said was correct. I said I was, and still not convinced he asked me if there was somewhere on the internet that actually said that they weren't allowed to do it.

Now that was quite a good question and I had to admit that I couldn't point him to such a place. In fact, I had never seen anyone do it before and it isn't the sort of question that crops up in Bridge magazines.

My only response was that the laws say that any (and EVERY) jump bid must be preceded by the use of the STOP card, but that didn't seem to satisfy him. I could tell that by the way he said "but nobody here much uses the stop card anyway", which was quite true."

Firstly, we should make it clear that John's method is definitely not allowed, though we are sure, as is the sender of this story, that there was no malicious intent. The most relevant law is Law 73 A. 1. which states that "Communication between partners during the auction... shall be effected only by means of calls..." A call means any bid, pass, double or redouble, but, importantly in this case, not a STOP card in and of itself. In John's method, the bid is the same but the STOP card or lack thereof is used as another method of communication. STOPS and ALERTs are for the benefit of your opponents only, to give them information about an unnatural call or fair warning of a jump bid. Rules about the precise use of the STOP card are not part of the laws, as not all bridge federations use them, so in England they are set by the EBU (see p. 13 of the EBU "Blue Book," which you can access [here](#)).

But the most troubling thing here is the last sentence – "nobody here much uses the stop card anyway." Unfortunately, this is far too often the case and it is very good to get used to using the bidding box properly very early on in your bridge career. Getting into good habits can avoid mishaps like the story above.

So remember that you should use the STOP card whenever you make a jump bid – i.e. a bid that is not at the lowest level available for the suit you are bidding. If you would like to know anything more about the laws of the game, ask your teacher or any of your club's Tournament Directors.



Doubling like a Champion

This section is written for those who are working on the Continuing Bridge book. If you haven't got that far, you may be a bit confused by it but keep going with bridge and you will understand before you know it.

English pair Fiona Brown and Sally Brock have recently become World Champions, winning the McConnell Cup, the World Championship for Women's Teams, at the World Bridge Series in Orlando, Florida. They are pictured here with the other members of their team. Sally then went on to win a silver medal in the Mixed Teams competition as well, a superb achievement.



This board was played in the final of the tournament, in which they beat a team including another English pair, Nicola Smith and Yvonne Wiseman, and Paula Leslie from Scotland, so British players had a great deal of success in the competition! The bidding sequence is from the table where both English pairs were taking on each other.

<p>♠ J3 ♥ KQ75 ♦ AQ9742 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ Q10 ♠ 9854 ♥ J84 ♥ 32 ♦ J105 ♦ 63 ♣ AKQ93 ♣ J10762</p> <p>♠ AK762 ♥ A1096 ♦ K8 ♣ 54</p>	<p>Board 47: Dealer South: NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Smith</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Brown</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Wiseman</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Brock</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♣¹</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♦²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>¹ Cue Bid showing first or second round control in ♣ ² Cue Bid showing first or second round control in ♦</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Smith</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Wiseman</i>	<i>Brock</i>				1♠	2♣	Dbl	4♣	4♥	Pass	5♣ ¹	Pass	5♦ ²	Pass	6♥	All Pass	
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You will have already learnt about doubles being used as a “takeout” bid when your opponents have opened the bidding, asking your partner to bid one of the other three suits. Most experienced players also use takeout doubles at the 2 and sometimes 3-levels, and in this case Fiona's double shows the two suits that have not been bid yet – hearts and diamonds (NB with five hearts she would usually bid hearts, so the double shows exactly four more often than not). Knowing that her partner has four hearts with her, Sally can bid 4♥ after the 4♣ bid from East. Fiona now knows that Sally has a good enough hand to go to game, so with her very shapely hand she can explore further. Sally's diamond cue bid is enough to persuade her to bid the slam, which makes.

If Fiona had taken the other option available to her after 2♣ of bidding 2♦, it is very difficult for Sally to bid after 4♣, as she does not know about the hearts in her partner's hand. That's exactly what happened at their teammates' table, South passed and North bid 4♥, which made +2 but only scores 680 compared to 1430 for 6♥ making. A good board for Fiona and Sally's team.

Doubles can also be used to ask your partner to lead you a suit. If the opponents bid a conventional bid (one that's not actually showing the suit bid, like 2♣ Stayman for example), then a double can be asking for that suit to be led. Here is an example, again from the World Bridge Series, from the Mixed Teams competition.

<p>♠ K82 ♥ 82 ♦ 752 ♣ AQ542</p> <p>♠ Q93 ♠ J64 ♥ 53 ♥ AKQJ97 ♦ AQ98 ♦ 3 ♣ K973 ♣ J86</p> <p>♠ A1075 ♥ 1064 ♦ KJ1064 ♣ 10</p>	<p>Board 20: Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Gawel</i></td> <td><i>Orlov</i></td> <td><i>Brewiak</i></td> <td><i>Dikhnova</i></td> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦¹</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rdbl</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>¹ Alerted, presumably showing extra length in hearts</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Gawel</i>	<i>Orlov</i>	<i>Brewiak</i>	<i>Dikhnova</i>	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦ ¹	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
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Rdbl	Pass	2♥	Pass																						
3NT	All Pass																								

Do not worry too much about East/West's bidding (unfortunately they are not using the **Bridge for All** Standard English system!) – the key thing is that the bid of 2♦ was alerted, meaning that it must be conventional. This means that when Tatiana Dikhnova, playing South, doubles the bid, it asks North to lead diamonds. West's redouble might put North off, as it must show good cover in diamonds, but, as is often the case, trusting your partner pays off here. North/South have four safe tricks in clubs and spades, but must set up a diamond to take the contract off. To do this, diamonds must be led twice, so that the ♦K and 10 can take out the A and Q, leaving the J to provide the key fifth trick. As East/West only have top tricks in hearts, declarer cannot establish nine tricks without losing the lead twice, so as long as North/South keep the right cards they should get the chance to get in and play a third diamond trick which they win.

Doubling for a lead is not just important for taking contracts off – it can also help ensure that the defence pick up any tricks that they can, especially against slam contracts.

<p>♠ AK108753 ♥ Q7 ♦ A4 ♣ 52</p> <p>♠ QJ94 ♠ - ♥ K1042 ♥ 953 ♦ J2 ♦ K987653 ♣ 1083 ♣ Q64</p> <p>♠ 62 ♥ AJ86 ♦ Q10 ♣ AKJ97</p>
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We will finish with the final hand from the Lords v Commons, in which the danger of doubling just because you have some good trumps is shown in a rather painful lesson. At three tables, the contract was a solid 4♠ by North – although in one case Declarer made only 9 tricks, after a passive heart lead which immediately put declarer on a guess. At the other tables, including against the slam bid on the 4th table, the opening lead was a Diamond, much to the relief of those declarers when the Queen won. **As a general rule, be wary about leading away from a King against a suit contract – it could easily cost a trick – or the Match!**

On the table where NS reached 6♠, it was then doubled for good measure. The double marked West as having a strong trump holding and North took full advantage of this to take repeated trump finesses, making all 12 tricks to score a handsome +1210 relative to the other +420s/-50. That was worth +13IMPs to the Commons – which happened to be their final winning margin. The hand is given with Heather Dhondy's commentary.

<p>♠ AK108753 ♥ Q7 ♦ A4 ♣ 52</p> <p>♠ QJ94 ♠ - ♥ K1042 ♥ 953 ♦ J2 ♦ K987653 ♣ 1083 ♣ Q64</p> <p>♠ 62 ♥ AJ86 ♦ Q10 ♣ AKJ97</p>	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love All</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>What do you open with the North cards? You are too strong to open 3♠, so your choices are to open 1♠ or 4♠. If you open 4♠ you are likely to play there. If you open 1♠ and partner responds 2♣ you have another decision. After partner has responded at the two-level, a rebid of 3♠ is forcing, and stronger than rebidding 4♠. Given that partner has values for the two-level you are happy enough to have a go at game so should jump directly to 4♠.</p> <p>On this auction, however, partner is likely to drive to a slam given the extra strength, and the bad trump break means that you are almost certain to fail. 6♠ is a decent contract, so those who fail in it can consider themselves unlucky.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass	6♠	All pass			
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Events for Student Bridge Players

EBED, the EBU and many county bridge associations run bridge events specifically for players who are new to the game to give people a way in to regional and national competitions without having to jump in at the deep end. Why not find an event that suits you and make it a target for the end of the year or the future?

EBED Events for Students

EBED run two events for students each year called Simultaneous Pairs. This means that groups from across the country all play the same hands and their results are combined to produce a national ranking list.

The EBED MiniBridge Simultaneous Pairs event takes place in October and November annually. This event is designed for new bridge students, and gives them a chance to put what they have learnt about MiniBridge in the first few weeks of their course into practice. You can take part in this event with just one table, so do ask your teacher to register your group so that you can join in and see how you compare with other students across the country. Playing the hands is a great way to consolidate your MiniBridge learning.



In the Spring, a simultaneous pairs event is run for all students and there are both bridge and MiniBridge competitions, so your group can play in whichever suits you best.

EBU Events



The English Bridge Union arrange almost all of the most prestigious national bridge events, but alongside these they also run events for less experienced players, though you will need to be able to play unaided to enter. These events are probably better for students who are currently working on the Continuing Bridge book and who already play in some sessions at their clubs.

At the Year End Congress and the Easter Festival, both in London, there is a special event called the Jack High Swiss Pairs. It is called “Jack High” because players must be ranked as a Jack or lower on the National Grading Scheme (you can look up your ranking [here](#), but you will only have one if you have played in sessions at an EBU-affiliated bridge club). “Swiss” means that you play against other pairs who are close to you in the overall rankings for the competition, so the system means that you should play against people who are of similar standard to you.

The EBU also run a “Really Easy Congress” alongside their Summer Festival in August each year, and “Really Easy Weekends” on other weekends throughout the year. These events are full weekends of bridge, but played in a relaxed atmosphere. They encourage the social side of the game, and players will often have their meals together and get to know each other away from the bridge table. Two of the winners from the recent Really Easy Congress are pictured here.



County Events

Many of the County Bridge Associations which make up the EBU run their own events for new players. Follow these links for information in your county:

Berks & Bucks	Hampshire & IOW	Manchester	Oxfordshire	Worcestershire
Cambs & Hunts	Herefordshire	Middlesex	Surrey	Yorks - Harrogate
Cumbria	Hertfordshire	Norfolk	Sussex	Yorks - Leeds (Apr)
Derbyshire	Kent	North-East	Warwickshire	Yorks - Leeds (Oct)
Dorset	London	Nottinghamshire	Wiltshire	



EBED Products

EBED supply books and other materials that can help your bridge learning. Special companion books with practice hands that can be used with your “Beginning Bridge” and “Continuing Bridge” books are available, as are a number of other interesting learning resources created by EBED and the English Bridge Union.



You can order online at

www.bridge-warehouse.co.uk

or telephone 01296 317217 to order from Lisa, our Education & Development Team Co-ordinator.



And finally... Bridge with Bots!

Alongside the recent World Bridge Series there was a Computer Bridge World Championships. This is a competition for the best bridge computers in the world to play against each other. The 2018 event was the 22nd time it has been run, and the winner was WBridge5, developed by Frenchman Yves Costel. WBridge5 has now won the event 6 times, including the last 3 in a row.

Bridge computers (often described as robots or simply bots), rather like chess computers, are designed to

analyse the probabilities involved in a hand of bridge to determine the best play and bidding in the system they have been programmed to use. They have been around for a little while, but are now coming into much more common usage, with the EBU running online tournaments where you play with a “robot” partner against two more robots using the FunBridge online platform. At Cheltenham Bridge Club, robots were used as part of their 24-hour “Bridgeathon” event, and other clubs are considering using them in the future. You may well be playing bridge against or even partnering a computer before too long!

