



**Palmerston North
Bridge Club
December 2009**

News and Views

Our Christmas Cheer Tournament this month was a great success, and as popular as ever. This is due in no small measure to the effort put in by a large number of helpers. Alister Stuck managed the whole event with his usual efficiency and was ably assisted by Liz Burrows. So many other members helped that it would be invidious to try to list them all – I might miss someone out! A special thanks, however, to Santa, also known as Lorraine Stachurski who directed the thirty nine tables with ease and good humour and still found time to wander around the room with her sack of goodies. As I noted at the time, if Alister had done nothing else but employed the Bristows to produce the Christmas meal we would be greatly in his debt. Someone mentioned that the meal was better than one they had had recently at a restaurant which had cost fifty dollars. Terrific value. Well done, everyone.

It was good to see a number of local players at the top of the leader board in the tournament. The winners were Alan Doddridge and Jan Whyte in what Alan termed a virgin partnership (obviously top bridge players are more well-behaved than top golfers.) Later in this issue he describes one of the hands that they played. Ken Bateman and Liz Burrows were third, and the pairing of Gail Kirton and Janice Willoughby were fourth.

At last, we appear to have settled the fence issue. Those who attended the SGM this month will know that we passed a motion that we should employ Manawatu Security Fences to produce a fence of height 1.8 metres around the whole section. The total cost will be \$22,700 (after Ken Bateman managed to negotiate a reduction of \$2000.) The fence is due to be erected in February and should take about four days to complete. Many thanks to all who have helped out with specifications and negotiations over the years. Martin Carryer did a lot of work

in the early days, and, more recently, Andrew Brodie has spent a great deal of time ensuring that we get the best solution possible whilst satisfying the needs expressed by our members. Thanks also to Ken Bateman, Susan Baty and Bev Colville's son, David, who provided invaluable advice and assistance.

Numbers at Summer Bridge in the first week were reasonable (nine tables) and were a good mixture of Junior, Intermediate and Open players. Remember, even if you don't have a partner you can arrive on the night and we will find you one. Our director, Graham Donaldson is always looking for an excuse to play!

Finally, a merry Christmas and happy new year to all our members. Players from our club have been highly successful both nationally and internationally this year and we have a number of talented juniors and intermediates coming through. More importantly, most of our members play their bridge in a good spirit, and let's make sure this continues next year.

Ray Kemp

Lucky Last

Movie-goers may remember a British film from the 1980s called "Shirley Valentine." Not one of my favourites, I have to say, but it did provide a few good laughs. At one point, Shirley is at dinner in a Greek hotel, having to listen to fellow English holiday-makers discussing the relative merits of various brands of jacuzzi. She reflects that it was a good job there was no bowl of soup in front of her or she would have stuck her head in it and drowned herself. I occasionally feel the same way, when, on the final hand of a bridge session, someone brightly observes that it is "lucky last." Maybe it is just me.


At our Christmas Cheer tournament, my partner and I cheered up a lot of opponents in the morning session by presenting them with good boards. Somehow, we couldn't get the auctions right, either underbidding, overbidding or doubling opponents who proceeded to make their contracts with apparent ease. In the final round, however, we rescued our morning from total disaster by getting two near-top scores.

On the very last board, with both sides vulnerable, the bidding went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	3D
Double	Pass	4S	All Pass

Take over North's cards and see if you can defeat this game. Your hand and the dummy are shown below.

♠ A	
♥ K8652	
♦ 6	
♣ AJ8643	
♠ QT43	
♥ AQJ4	
♦ T32	
♣ K9	




South leads the king of diamonds which East wins in hand with the ace, divesting you of your only card in the suit. At trick two declarer leads a low spade from hand, inserting the ten from dummy. You, perforce, win the trick with the ace of trumps. You now have a daunting dummy to lead into. It turns out that the next card you play will determine whether you get a top or bottom board. Try working out what you would do, before looking at the answer below.

If you need a hint, there are only two bad cards and nine good ones. You could shuffle your hand, extracting a card at random and still stand an excellent chance of getting it right.

At the table, North led the ace of clubs, followed by another club, hoping (not unreasonably) that South had a singleton or void. Unfortunately, this was a bad choice. The hands are shown at the top of the next column.

♠ A		♠ KJ872
♥ K8652		♥ T73
♦ 6		♦ A8
♣ AJ8643		♣ 752
♠ QT43		
♥ AQJ4		
♦ T32		
♣ K9		



♠ 965	
♥ 9	
♦ KQJ9754	
♣ QT	

Even double-dummy it is not so obvious what to do. It may be clear that cashing the ace of clubs presents East with the contract, but doesn't leading a low heart have the same effect? The answer is no. East has to give you a heart trick later anyway at which point you can safely return another heart. It is imperative, though, that you do not lead off your ace of clubs.

The other bad card to choose (I am sure you did not consider this one anyway) is the king of hearts. Now you may think that there is a mistake here, since I have not excluded a low club from the possible bad leads. However, it turns out that a low club is an OK choice! Declarer can win with the king of clubs in dummy but when you get in later with the king of hearts, you can lead another low club. This allows South to win with the queen of clubs and cash another diamond to take the contract down. There are so many good choices and so few bad ones. Even if South leads her singleton heart or a club at trick one, the contract cannot make.

We were sitting EW and you can tell how desperate we were, bidding four spades on twenty points and no compensating distribution. Still, it worked; fortune smiled upon us for the final board of the session. But do me a favour, just don't utter those two fateful words....

Ray Kemp

What a Difference a Point Makes

Hugh Kelsey was a well-known Scottish bridge player who wrote dozens of interesting books, some of them classics, on a variety of bridge topics. In "Match Point Bridge" which is in our library he describes how to play in pairs competitions. He explains that the scoring by rank in this version of the game makes it very different from teams and rubber bridge in bidding, playing and defence.

Your aim in playing a contract in pairs may superficially seem pretty simple – don't you just have to try to take more tricks than everyone else? However, Kelsey points out that you need to answer a number of questions even before deciding how to play the hand. Are you in the same, a better, or a worse contract than the rest of the field is likely to be in? Have you had a better, the same or a worse lead than might be expected at other tables? Would it have been better if partner had played the contract? The list goes on. The answers might determine whether you approach the contract conservatively, play with the field or go for broke.

Most of us would probably stop reading the book at that point and say we have enough to worry about without taking these issues into consideration. That may be so, but any of these factors may make the difference between a top or bottom board. Here's one deal from Tuesday night bridge in November where the side the contract was played from was crucial. Dealer was South, with both sides vulnerable.

♠ QT7
♥ K97
♦ J87543
♣ 8

♠ K8
♥ Q62
♦ AKQ2
♣ JT93



♠ AJ6542
♥ 84
♦ 96
♣ AQ6

♠ 93
♥ AJT53
♦ T
♣ K7542

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2H	Pass
2S	Pass	4S	All Pass

We were sitting EW, playing a 12-15 no trump. Playing transfers, I have an obvious bid of two hearts as East. But is it so clear cut? One of the main reasons for using transfers is to allow the initial lead to come into the hand with tenaces like AQ, KJ etc. Given that I have tenaces in the black suits maybe I should just bid four spades straight away so the lead comes into my hand. In the end, I decided West might have tenaces in the red suits so I should let her be declarer.

The initial lead was the 8 of clubs. I was dummy but was uneasy when my partner hesitated a long time before playing the ace. Perhaps I should have bid four spades straight away after all. She then played two rounds of diamonds, but South unexpectedly ruffed the second round. South then led the king of clubs on which North discarded a diamond, and a third club which was ruffed by North. NS then collected two heart tricks for two off.

These were unlucky distributions, but everyone else had to play the same hands so we weren't expecting the results to be much different from the other tables. Opening up the score sheet, however, revealed that all the other EWs had made the contract, some with an overtrick. How so?

Closer examination revealed that in every other case it was played from the other side of the table and East had either received the lead of the ten of diamonds or a friendly club. Most of the Tuesday group play a 12-14 no trump, so West would have opened the bidding with one club or one diamond, with East bidding spades first. With those who played a 15-17 no trump, the bidding appeared to have gone 1NT-4S, again with East playing the contract.

This is where the Kelsey analysis could come in. West was unlucky to get a club lead, but things could have been worse. The defence could have started with two heart tricks and then North could have led a club. My partner was trying to minimize the damage by trying to get one heart away on the extra diamond before taking the spade finesse, but all this turned to custard because of South's singleton diamond.

Now look what happens if South is on lead to the contract. He may lead a club, which makes things easy, or the ten of diamonds which looks very much like a singleton or doubleton. Either way, East has little alternative but to take the spade finesse and hope for the best. As you can see, that


works which gives declarer a comfortable eleven tricks.

The different possibilities were getting too complicated for me, so I checked with Bob Hurley who admitted that it was a difficult hand for West to play. In teams, where the aim is just to make the contract, he suggested that playing off two top spades looked like the best idea. You could be lucky and drop the queen, but even if this didn't happen you could then play on the diamonds and hope the player with the queen had at least two diamonds, so you could get one of those losing hearts away. In pairs, there are several alternative lines of play, with not much to choose between them.

So what turned out to be a simple contract for East was a difficult one for West. All because of the one point difference in the no trump opener.

Ray Kemp

Go For It

♠ A		♠ T9873
♥ J9872		♥ AKQ
♦ AKQ962		♦ T2
♣ 5		♣ KQ4

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
2D	Pass	2H	Pass
3D	Pass	4H	Pass
4NT	Pass	5S	Pass
6H	All Pass		

East, having such a poor Spade suit, was unwilling to open 1S (very reasonably, in my opinion.) West's diamond bid asks East to bid 2H. West then shows a good second suit in diamonds. Since East is top of the 1NT range of 12-14 and has good heart support, she jumps to four hearts.

West's hand now becomes very strong and we proceeded to 4NT, 5S showing two key cards (where the five key cards are the four aces and the king of the agreed trump suit) and the heart queen. That was good enough for 6H. The lead from South was the 3 of diamonds.

Looking at dummy, East can see that if the diamonds run without a loser, we only need to lose the A of clubs. BUT look at the lead! That

certainly looks like a singleton to me. If so, this means that the diamonds are not running. So we have to be able to ruff a diamond in hand at some point. But our opponent is going to ruff before us, so what's the solution?

Our only hope is that the man with the singleton (or in this case lady) has only two or fewer trumps. So you draw two rounds of trumps, cross to dummy with a spade, and play a top diamond while crossing your fingers very tightly! Lo and behold, she pitches a spade! Now it's easy. Ruff a low diamond with your last remaining trump in hand, cross back to dummy, draw the last trump and just lose the ace of clubs for a top board!!

The message of the hand is that if you can only see one chance of making a contract, then you just have to go for it! At other times, the player with the singleton diamond will have length in trumps and the contract is doomed.

Alan Doddridge

Postscript - It's Not (Necessarily) Unusual

A local couple were bemoaning their bad luck in one of the Christmas Cheer hands where a smart move by an opponent turned their potentially top board into a bottom one. They bid to a good slam but then one of opponents came in with a Lightner double. For those who haven't come across it, a Lightner double of a slam asks their partner to make an unusual lead in order to defeat the contract. In their case, the tactic was successful since the partner of the doubler did make an unusual lead which turned out to be the only one to take it down. Of course, what constitutes an unusual lead from one side of the table may not appear the same from the other side, so the ploy can sometimes misfire as noted in this little ditty from the internet:

I once bid a Lightner double
 And my partner went into a huddle.
 He found the wrong lead
 Allowed the slam to succeed
 And a bottom I got for my trouble

Ray Kemp