

Table Talk

Otago Bridge Club: October 2008

Club Library

Our librarian Judith Smeijers reports that the following books are missing from the club library. If you have inadvertently borrowed any of them without signing them out please return them.

Author	Title		
Ackerley, Chris	Bridging of Troy	Mahmood, Zia	How to play slam contracts
Ackerley, Chris	History of the OBC	Marston, Paul	Winning play in tournament ...
Bergen, Marty	Better bidding with Bergen	Marston, Paul	Advanced play at bridge
Bergen, Marty	Introduction to neg. doubles	Miles, Marshall	Match-point bridge
Bergen, Marty	Negative doubles	Miller, Richard A	Cue Bidding to Slams
Bird & Forrester	Secrets of Expert Card Play	Mollo, Victor	Guide to Better Card Play
Bird & Smith	Deceptive Card Play	Mollo, Victor	Guide to Better Bridge and ED Rev
Bird & Bourke	Avoidance Play	Mollo, Victor	Trump Management
Blackwood, Easley	Human element in bridge	Mollo, Victor	Know Your Suit Combinations
Brown, John	Winning defence	Mollo, Victor	Opening Leads for ACOL Players
Brown, John	Winning tricks	Mollo, Victor	Bridge my way
Cohen, Ben	All about Acol	Mollo, Victor	Principles of card play
Daniels, Mark	"Bettabridge" handbook	Mollo, Victor	Winning decisions in ...
Goren, Charles	Contract bridge complete	Mollo, Victor	All fifty-two cards
Goren, Charles	Winning partnership bridge	Mollo, Victor	Bridge brilliance and blunders
Goulah,	Defence at contract bridge	Mollo, Victor	Bridge a la Carte
Hardy, Max	Advanced ... 21st century	Mollo, Victor	Bridge in the Menagerie
Hardy, Max	Splinters and ...	Mollo, Victor	Bridge psychology ...
Hoffman, Martin	Bridge: Defence in Depth	Mollo, Victor	Card play technique
Horton, Mark	Better Signalling Now	Mollo, Victor	Instant bridge; a textbook ...
Hughes, Roy	Building a Bidding System	Mollo, Victor	Masters and Monsters
Jannerston, Eric	The art of guessing right	North, Freddie	Victor Mollo's Bridge Club
Kantar, Eddie	Topics in Declarer Play	Pottage, J & M Smith	Bridge with Aunt Agatha
Kantar, Edwin	Bridge humour	Pottage, Julian	The Golden Rules of Defence
Kantar, Edwin	Introduction to declarer play	Priebe, Jim	Play or Defend? 68 Hands ...
Kantar, Edwin	Kantar for the defence	Priebe, Jim	Thinking on Defense
Kantar, Edwin	Test your bridge play	Reese, Terence	Matchpoint Defense
		Reese, Terence	Art of defence in bridge
		Reese, Terence	Bridge by question and answer
		Reese, Terence	Complete book of bridge
		Reese, Terence	Most puzzling situations...
		Reese, Terence	Play bridge with Reese
		Reese, Terence	Play these hands with me
		Rigal, Barry	Precision bidding...
		Rigal, Barry	Precision in the 90s
		Roth, Danny	Test Your Bridge Judgment
		Roth, Danny	Discarding
			Spot the Bridge Writer's Blunder

Seagram & Lee	Splinter Bids
Senior, Brian	Clever Bridge Tricks
Sheinwold, Alfred	Bridge puzzles
Sheinwold, Alfred	Five weeks to winning. . .
Sheinwold, Patricia	Husbands and other men. . .
Squire, Norman	Card Play Technique
Wei, C C	Precision bidding system

Michael Albert in Limerick

Contrary to some reports your editor, i.e. me, has not been enjoying an extended overseas holiday since mid June. I did however take time out from my arduous schedule to return to Limerick, and take part in the 44th Limerick Bridge Congress. This event has become a feature of my sabbatical travels – I last played in it in 2003, while on sabbatical in Scotland. On that occasion, I partnered Gordon Lessells in the Pairs event on Saturday, finishing an ignominious last, and then, with Gordon directing, was a member of the winning team in the teams event on Sunday!

This year Gordon, as Congress President, had no official duties during play and, in an attempt to get in at least one day's good bridge with me, took the chance of partnering me both in the Pairs and the Teams. Irish congresses have a number of differences to New Zealand ones, and I'll focus on these below. Probably the most significant difference comes in the prize money. This year's Pairs event had 21 tables, and an entry fee of 20€. The prizes for first through third places were 600€, 400€, and 200€ respectively. The same prizes were awarded for the Teams event with an 18 team entry. Even the intermediate pairs event provided prizes of 400€, 200€ and 100€. Obviously, this level of prizes can only be supported by significant sponsorship arrangements – but many local businesses in Limerick, with or without bridge connections choose to sponsor this signature congress. It should be noted that regional and national events, roughly the equivalent of our A point tournaments, do not offer such lucrative prizes – at these events the prizes are much

more comparable with those at the corresponding NZ events.

The next major difference concerns the mechanics of play. Bidding is conducted using bidding boxes. I was once a great proponent of these, but have come to appreciate the virtues of written bidding – particularly as a director, where having a permanent and incontrovertible record of the bidding can be very useful! Scoring made use of BridgeMate machines. These small keypads at each table send a wireless signal to the PC running the scoring program. The mechanics of entering the contract and result are a little fiddly, but one could rapidly get used to it. The effect of course is that results are instantly available – particularly useful this year in the Pairs, which was run as a Swiss Pairs event, and could be scored and drawn without the need to operate a round in arrears. Mind you, the financial lay out to set this up is not insignificant – the base units cost 120€ each (and one is needed per table). I was hardly surprised to find out that a grant from the EU had figured somehow in the initial purchase!

Finally, the pace of play. The Swiss Pairs event was run as nine 6-board matches. The time limit for each match was an extremely generous 50 minutes. Likewise, the Teams event was a seven round Swiss of 7-board matches. Each match had a 55 minute time limit. Despite these seemingly generous limits, bridge players being bridge players, there were still always one or two tables who were not finished after the allotted time, and in the Teams event several matches had to have a board canceled due to the slow play at one table. I think this is one area where the brisker pace of NZ congresses is a clear winner – the number of boards per match in both events made it very difficult to recover from even one poor result (I will, unfortunately, have more to say on this below!)

I suppose that I should say a little bit about the bridge! All I'll say about the Pairs event is that Gordon and I improved on our showing in 2003. Desmond Houlihan and Paul Barrett, who were to

be our teammates on Sunday won it. This was a good thing for Desmond, whose firm of solicitors had regularly sponsored the event. This year the sponsorship had continued but, as Desmond had retired, came out of his own pocket. So I suppose that this result could be considered as limiting his exposure to risk, particularly appropriate in these troubled financial times. We did have a better time in the Teams, finishing (a fairly distant) second to the Quinn team, which included several Welsh internationals. We scored 25 in our first match. My regular partners, knowing my hoggish tendencies, will not be surprised to hear that I declared the first five hands. Next we scored 20, and then 16 against Quinn, which placed us in a first place tie. This of course meant that we would not face them again (probably a mistake with so many rounds relative to the number of teams – a serious argument could be made for a fixed match up in the final round of 1 v. 2, 3 v. 4, etc. regardless of whether or not those teams had met earlier). Therefore, both of us would need to attempt to rack up big scores in the remaining rounds. Quinn managed this very effectively, but we did not – scoring 16, 14, 25 and (a largely irrelevant) 8. In each of our three poor matches, I can point to a single hand where a mistake on my part led to a swing of between 6 and 8 VP. Had we scored all of those VP, the final round would have been a much more interesting affair!

The first of those mistakes occurred in defending a 6♣ contract. Opponents, clearly annoyed at not having bid a relatively easy slam on the preceding hand, had stretched to reach this one. Somewhere in the run of the trumps I miscounted a side suit, and, believing myself, but not my partner, to be squeezed, discarded my heart guard. Of course the truth of the matter was that as a result he was squeezed, and the slam rolled in. The second mistake was also in defense. Opponents had bid: 1♣-1♦, 1♥-2♦, 3NT. The 1♣ opening was possibly short, and I had to lead from ♠QT643 ♥9 ♦T9 ♣AK983. I decided to lead

a club, and hoping that partner could read it as fourth best, chose the ♣8. Dummy had a singleton ♣7, ♦AKJ876, and no other high cards. To my delight, partner won the first trick with ♣Q, and returned ♣2. Declarer played ♣T on the second round (having played ♣4 on the first round), and I won. Now what? To my shame, I completely failed to live up to partner's thoughtful return from his remaining ♣652, and switched, hoping that the diamond suit would not run. Why was this so very wrong? Because, the only time a second club finesse through declarer is both available and necessary is if partner's original club holding was exactly three cards – ♣Q62 or ♣Q52, and in neither of these case would he return the ♣2. So, declarer either had five clubs, or three. In the former case, partner had no more clubs to play, and in the latter the suit would run. As it should have. This showed up on the score sheet as a push, but should really have been 10 IMPs in.

The final exhibit in this catalog of errors comes from the final match. I, South, was declaring 4♥ with the following layout:

Dealer: W	♠ KQT96	Vul: E-W									
	♥ A852										
	♦ 96										
	♣ 95										
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ AJ										
	♥ KT964										
	♦ 4										
	♣ KT843										

I won the opening spade lead in hand, and crossed to the ♥A. On this, West played the ♥Q. At Pairs, my next play, finessing the ♥T would have been absolutely correct on the "principle of restricted choice". However, at the table it lost to the ♥J, and the defense then cashed a diamond. They continued diamonds, but I could not dis-

card enough clubs on the spades to avoid playing clubs myself, losing two tricks there and the contract when both the Ace and Queen were offside. Here, restricted choice was an illusion – considering the losers in dummy’s hand, I can surely succeed even if I lose a heart trick, provided I lose no diamonds. In other words, I should simply cash the ♥K, cross to the spades in dummy, and discard my diamond on the third spade. Even if, as expected, west holds a singleton heart and I lose an unnecessary heart trick, the contract is secure (barring very unlikely spade and heart breaks) and that of course is the name of the game at Teams.

The Irish have a well-deserved reputation for hospitality, and as a result I had a delightful time away from, as well as at the bridge table during the Limerick Congress. I can certainly recommend the experience to any of you who might find yourselves in the Emerald Isle with a spare weekend for bridge.

Director’s Classes

Dennis McCaughan will be taking 3 to 4 sessions for those interested in becoming a director. Classes will be once a week, beginning on Wednesday November 5th, from 7 to 9pm (supper included!). These dates may change depending on what time best suits everyone. Please consider taking up this opportunity or encourage someone you think would make a director.

Correspondence received

Derek Tingle writes:

When reading David Green’s book about the history of the club and the characters therein, I was reminded of an ex-member of the Taieri and Oamaru clubs, called Mike Green. Mike (aka the Sergeant Major from his military career and military bearing) was a devotee of the Nottingham Club system. The Nottingham Club system, which was popular in the English Midlands, was introduced in 1932 by Marjorie Burns, of the,

you’ve guessed it, Nottingham Bridge Club. In essence it was a five card major system (1♥/♠ = 12 – 15 points). The 1♣ opening showed 16–21 points with a 1♦ response showing less than 8 points. 2♣ showed 12–15 points with long clubs. Hang on a minute, I hear you cry, isn’t that what the Precision players do. Well there is only 1 point in it. The 2♦ opener was a strong bid with 22+ points, (like many of the Benji Acol players do today). Ah well. Maybe there’s nothing new under the sun after all.

Famous bridge quotes by Alfred Sheinwold

Alfred Sheinwold was a wit as well as great bridge player. Here are some of his bridge sayings.

1. It is not enough to win the tricks that belong to you. Try also for some that belong to the opponents.
2. The real test of a bridge player isn’t in keeping out of trouble, but in escaping once he’s in.
3. Since the average person’s small supply of politeness must last him all his life, he can’t afford to waste it on bridge partners.
4. One advantage of bad bidding is that you get practice at playing atrocious contracts.
5. A player who can’t defend accurately should try to be declarer.

Next Table Talk

I’m planning to produce one more issue of Table Talk before the end of the year. Please send me copy by the end of November to profmda@gmail.com.

Mike Atkinson.