

Beckenham Bridge Club

Newsletter

July 2005

Message from the Chairman

I am glad that we are able to resume issuing a Newsletter to members of the Club – thanks to Chris Lamb who has nobly volunteered to take on the role of editor.

Sadly, my first task here is to mention the recent deaths of two of our long-standing members, John Durden and Gillian James, to whose families we extend our sympathies. A short appreciation of both of them appears later in this Newsletter.

Looking ahead, Club events through to August next year are set out in the 2005/2006 programme which accompanies this Newsletter. Its contents largely follow the pattern of previous years, but there are two points which I should like to draw to your attention.

First, for a few days around Christmas, Bromley Mytime (the new managementspeak name for that part of the local authority which deals with public hall lettings) has denied us access to our usual playing accommodation. Fortunately, we have been able to arrange for the Club meetings affected to be held in the Methodist Church hall just along the road, which you will remember we used for several weeks some time ago when the Public Halls were closed for alterations.

Second, the Sam Russell Championship Pairs competition will again be held over two sessions, in June 2006. Your Committee is, however, considering some change to its format in view of criticism from some members that the entry for a major Club competition like this should not be restricted to a maximum of 24 pairs. The reason for the restriction was to enable the competition to be on an all-play-all basis. In past years the problem has been to attract a full entry rather than the risk of having to turn away would-be entrants. This year, at least two pairs found themselves too late to enter because the entry list was full, and it is to try to avoid such disappointment in future that we are looking again at how the competition is to be organised.

David Lightfoot

New Memberships

We welcome the following new members who have joined or rejoined the club since the last newsletter: Reggy Tarrab, Lawrence White, Paul Goldsmith, Oscar Bayley, Leigh Chapman, Shirley Mills, Ossie Saeed, Martin and Elizabeth Clarke, Michael Galgut, Will Roberts, Annie-France Jackson, Farah Diggins, Lesley Pechey, James Short, Liora Eveleigh, Ewa Hardwick, Philip Goodwin, Eric Davies, Ros Wallis, Jalil Bhuia, David Pallister, Ivan Collins, Kenneth Beaton, Gwyneth Davies, Gill Aranja and Beryl and Fred Tedore.

May their association with us be long and enjoyable.

www.beckenhambc.co.uk

John Durden

On the 3rd June 2005 one of the biggest characters in the bridge world died.

John was a member of Beckenham for over 40 years. Although he sadly suffered the discomforts of ill-health in his latter years, most of us remember John as a witty and entertaining man, and there was always laughter at his table. He made reasonably good bridge players of a lot of people but when you partnered him all he promised you was "blood, sweat & tears" (in my case quite often the latter) but it was the most exciting game of bridge you have ever played. He was, however a perfect gentleman to the opposition. I have never heard him gloat, criticise or give advice unless asked, when he was always pleased to help.

John was a Grand Master and was the highest earner of EBU masterpoints of all time, regularly winning the annual prize for the greatest number of masterpoints earned in a year.

I think this story sums John up - I was at a party in Guernsey - quite a lot of bridge "stars" were there and one of them said "you play bridge with John Durden don't you? He is very exciting to play against so it must be very exciting to play with him - there are two types of bridge players - the technical player and the street fighter and John is the best street fighter I have ever played against"

On another occasion, we were playing at Harrogate and the very prestigious Gold Cup finals were taking place, which we could watch in the open room when our bridge events were not taking place. John wanted to watch horse racing so I went to "kibitz" two of the most outstanding players. They bid a contract to 7 NT with the most lengthy auction - the opposition had run out of pass cards and when dummy went down declarer tabled his hand and claimed and we all clapped. I was so impressed with this that I took the hand to John who was annoyed at being interrupted at his horse racing but eventually I made him look at the hand and said "your partner opens 1 D - your bid" - he took one glance at the hand and said 7NT and went back to his horse racing - so much for technical bidding!!

I should just mention that he did play football for Millwall and Wimbledon in his young days - when he told me that his transfer fee from Millwall to Wimbledon was 17/6d – I don't know if this is true but it made me laugh anyway!

Thanks for all the good times John - from the members of Beckenham Bridge Club

Marie Horlock

Gillian James

Gillian was an extraordinarily active and hard-working member of the Club. As well as playing with a wide variety of partners and being one of our regular directors, she did all sorts of unsung behind-the-scenes jobs – from providing transport to scoring and buying provision for the tea breaks. Over three years ago, Gillian took on the post of Treasurer at rather short notice when her predecessor moved away from Beckenham during his term of office.

It is typical of her commitment to the Club that when she finished her stint as Treasurer, Gillian opted to continue as a member of the Committee. While expending so much time and effort on Club affairs, Gillian somehow contrived to be similarly active in Livesey Bridge Club and to work as a bridge director for Saga Holidays. It is no cliché to say that she will be much missed by her many friends inside and outside the Club.

David Lightfoot

Masterpoint Promotions

Congratulations to the following club members, who have attained Ranking Promotions since the last Newsletter:

Jack Hibbert - National Master
 Keith Ashcroft - 1* Regional Master
 Paul and Jean Fishleigh - 1* Regional Master
 Steve Burton - Premier Life Master
 Rex Flin – Tournament Master
 Roy Cornelius – 3* Master
 Lawrence White – County Master
 Norman Osborn – 2* Master
 Bryn Rolland – Advanced Master
 John Griffiths – Premier Regional Master
 David Hudson – Tournament Master

Mike de Winter - National Master
 Bernice Prior - Regional Master
 Joe dos Santos - 5* Master
 Ted Marner - 5* Master
 Brenda Cambray – 1* Master
 Neil Benn – National Master
 Neville Grant – 3* Master
 Helen Gibbons – 3* Master
 Ewa Hardwick – County Master
 Rachel Bingham – Life Master

For those who have had more than one promotion during this time, only the latest is listed here. This list is incomplete, because not all the recent EBU Masterpoint Promotions lists were available at the time of writing. So if your name has been omitted, please inform the editor, and it will be included in the next newsletter. Special apologies to anyone who has been misidentified with a namesake, and is credited above with a ranking that is too high or too low; if this has happened, a correction will be made next time.

The Rankings System - a New Approach?

Those of you who take the EBU Magazine will have noted some recent correspondence regarding the imperfections of the current EBU Masterpoint ranking system.

Indeed, Bridge must be one of the few, if any, competitive games played where one's Ranking may improve over the course of, say, 2 years, while at the same time one may become less adept at the game!

It seems to me that one possible alternative strategy is for a computer program to monitor all Pairs results in a given Club over, say, the period of one year.

- 1/ each member would be given an initial/notional ranking based on his/her actual EBU ranking.
- 2/ your results would be "weighted" according the relative ranking of your partner on each session.
- 3/ your results would be further weighted according to the relative rankings of all the other individuals playing in the same direction.

At the end of a year, one's individual ranking would be suitably adjusted up or down. Perhaps a computer program could be devised to run concurrently with the EBU rankings process.

At Beckenham we have a healthy (and quite often justified) disregard of our fellow players' 'paper' rankings. Needless to say, those who feel their EBU rankings do not adequately reflect their playing ability might be quite keen for a new approach along these lines, while those who suspect that their ranking flatters their ability may not be quite as enthusiastic! What do you think?

John Penwill

PS. See also Neil Benn's comments on this topic in a recent KCBA Newsletter

[If you'd like to respond to this article, please send your comments to the editor]

Inter-Club Competitions 2005-2006

With the notable exception of Beckenham's win in the Mitchell Salver last year, we have had little to be pleased about in the Kent and national inter-club competitions in recent years. We are thinking of adopting a slightly different approach for next season but, before doing so, would like to hear the views of Club members on the subject.

An important factor in any successful team is good team spirit and confidence in the other team members. With this in mind we propose to invite the nomination of teams of four, both to play in the National Inter-Club Knock-Out (NICKO) competition, and to form the units from which the teams of eight for the Corbett Cup, Corbett Plate and Mitchell Salver will be selected. It will be a condition of playing as a Beckenham team in the NICKO that all the members of the team are also willing to represent the Club in one of the Kent teams of eight inter-club competitions. If a team wishes to play only in the NICKO and Mitchell Salver that would be acceptable.

When the teams of four nominations have been received each team captain will be invited, in confidence, to provide me with their ranking of the other teams of four in order of preference as potential partner teams for the Corbett competitions. These views would then be taken into account when team nominations are required by the Kent competitions secretary in early September.

Any comments on this set of proposals would be welcome.

Jack Hibbert

Club Members' Achievements

Congratulations to the many club members who have achieved fine results in various external competitions during recent months. Here is a list of those we know about, with apologies to anyone whom we've missed. If you do well in a competition away from Beckenham, please tell Marie Horlock or the newsletter editor, so that we can record your achievement in the next newsletter.

Pachebo Cup – awarded to the top team of 4 from all the EBU counties was won by Catherine & Ian Draper & Stuart & Gerald Tredinnick, only the fifth time Kent have won it since it started in 1934

Kent Green Point Swiss Teams was won by Catherine & Ian Draper playing with Peter Crouch & Jeremy Willans

BGB Spring Pairs - out of 3,118 pairs Catherine Draper & Michael Prior were the highest placed Kent pair and were sixth overall with 70.02%

Easter Festival "B" flight Swiss Teams - 2nd overall were Bill & Bernie Prior & Gillian James playing with Chris Wright

Tunbridge Wells Swiss Pairs - joint first were Keith Ashcroft & Gary Wiles with John Amor and Marie Horlock.

S.E. Regional Final of National Pairs Winners: Jack Hibbert & Tim Lloyd Williams

Harrogate Spring Congress - Swiss Pairs Winners: Steve Burton & his partner Mike Fletcher

Ranked Masters (Regional Masters) Jack Hibbert & his partner Robbie Kingston were 3rd in their rank

Arnold Cup (Premier Kent Teams) Winners: Catherine & Ian Draper, Stuart & Gerald Tredinnick

Buck Cup(Kent Mixed Pivot Teams)	Winners: Catherine & Ian Draper, Stuart Tredinnick, Jeremy Willans, Phil Bailey
Larsky Cup (Premier Kent Pairs)	Winners: Jack Hibbert & Marie Horlock
Fleming Femina (Kent Ladies Pairs)	Winners: Marie Horlock & Doreen Charteris

Last, but certainly not least, Catherine Draper, playing with Jeremy Willans, represented England in one of this year's home internationals for the Camrose trophy. See below that experience.

A Controversial Ruling

Brief mention was made, in the Spring 2004 issue, of a controversial deal in the final of the Gold Cup (Plate), in which the team of C. and I. Draper, P. Bailey, J. Willans, A. Rosen and S. Burton played the team of Dan Crofts, A. Thompson, S. Fenton and D. Stevenson. This was played in 2004 with three Beckenham members in the ultimately losing team. **Steve Burton** now relates more details:

Dealer North, North-South vulnerable	♠ J932		
	♥ 986		
♠ none	♦ K7	♠ A1087654	
♥ 104	♣ 9642	♥ A2	
♦ 10642		♦ 93	
♣ AQJ8753	♠ KQ	♣ K10	
	♥ KQJ753		
	♦ AQJ83		
	♣ none		

Dealer South – N/S Game

S (Ian D.)	W	N (Cath. D.)	E
1H	3 C *	-	4S
5 D	-	5H	- **
-	-		

* described as Ghestem showing a Spade/ Diamond Two Suiter[!]

** After a considerable pause, during which North requested West to refrain from tapping his exposed Pass card.

Comment :

The Draper team argued that, having failed to make a slam try at his first turn, East should surely now bid 5S at favourable vulnerability. East, who was David Stevenson, the top 'Rulings Director' of the E.B.U., countered by saying he felt he had enough evidence from the auction that his partner had forgotten the system. This apparently had happened before.

Since an adjusted score of 5S* - 4 (= +800) - the likely result on the lie of the cards - would have decided the Match in our favour, we asked for a ruling. The initial ruling was that the inevitable 5H-1 (= -100) stood, which was confirmed on Appeal by the E.B.U. Rules and Ethics Committee.

How would **you** rule??

Steve Burton

Beckenham Open Swiss Pairs, Spring 2004

Here are some hands from this event, with comments by Mike de Winter and David Blacknell:

HAND 13 SESSION 1

	♠ AKJ2	
	♥ 82	
♠ Q97654	♦ QJ972	♠ –
♥ AJ	♣ 94	♥ K10964
♦ 106		♦ A853
♣ A65	♠ 1083	♣ K732
	♥ Q753	
	♦ K4	
	♣ QJ108	

An innocuous looking hand, but contracts ranged from 1S*-3 by N to 3NT-5 by E. Only two pairs made their contract, 2H by E with the other ten pairs failing in spades or diamonds by N, or in NT by E or W.

HAND 25 SESSION 1

	♠ K108543	
	♥ Q63	
♠ –	♦ 6	♠ AQ9762
♥ AJ852	♣ AK6	♥ 974
♦ KJ10975		♦ Q8
♣ Q10	♠ J	♣ J5
	♥ K10	
	♦ A432	
	♣ 987432	

A declarer's nightmare. Both N and E tried playing in Spades, with disastrous results. Only two declarers fared well - S bid and made 3C* at one table, and E played in 3H+1 at another. Ten declarers all told went down, both N and E finding Spades stacked against them, and W in 4D going two down for a relatively good score.

BOARD 14 SESSION 2

	♠ 73	
	♥ Q9	
♠ AK8542	♦ QJ9765	♠ J10
♥ 72	♣ 984	♥ AJ8654
♦ A108		♦ K432
♣ 32	♠ Q96	♣ Q
	♥ K103	
	♦ –	
	♣ AKJ10765	

No one vul., dealer E. East opened 1H, Greta o/called 3C and W jumped to 4 spades. I as N chose to sacrifice with 5C, which was doubled. A and K of spades were cashed and a third spade ruffed by E with his single QC (unlucky). A heart also had to be lost: +300 to E/W. Question – could E/W make 4S and would most E/W pairs bid the game anyway? Answer – (a) no, if S forces dummy with a club, and (b) I don't know; it was getting late!

Opening 1NT with a Singleton

Some of us might have come across an ambitious former member named Pyers Pennant, who in the 1990s experimented by occasionally opening 1NT with a hand containing a singleton. He often gained a good result as the other three players were not aware of this ploy, and the director, when later called, could only classify it as a psyche and had to let the result stand. Most of our members are probably not aware that since August 2002 a 1NT opening can be made with a hand containing a singleton in competitions licensed at Level 3 or higher (which applies to virtually all Beckenham competitions) provided the hand satisfies the following 3 conditions:

- 1) it is strictly within the point range agreed by the partnership (i.e. 12-14 for a weak NT etc.)
- 2) the shape is either 5-4-3-1 or 4-4-4-1
- 3) the singleton is an honour card and not a minor card (2-9).

The opposing pair must be notified by a prominent notice on your Convention card and the 1NT bid must also be alerted by your partner. So if you intend to enrich your system by making use of the novel legislation of 1NT openings, test it out in practice, perhaps making life a little more complicated not only for your partnership but also for the opponents. Good luck!

Slavek Michalek.

Camrose Trophy

My friends Neil Rosen & Peter Crouch found themselves without team-mates at short notice for the Camrose trials. Luckily for me they asked me to fill in - Ian wasn't keen to play so they roped in Jeremy Willans from Tunbridge Wells. We practised like crazy as we were not a regular partnership and at the end of 2 long weekends of trials against the who's who of bridge we finished 2nd overall. We had to wait for 5 weeks for the EBU selection committee to choose the team that would represent England in the Camrose series and we were so delighted to hear that we were to play a weekend in Ballymena, NI. It has been many years since any woman played in the England Open team and as far as I know, the only other Kent woman to have played was Dimmie Fleming. Incidentally, at the gala dinner on the last night, I sat next to one of the winning Republic of Ireland team. After the initial introductions, he asked me why I was there. Was I helping with the administration!?. It will obviously take a few more years yet for equality to reach the bridge table.

Jeremy & I were honoured to play in a team with 4 of the players that will later this year represent England in the Bermuda Bowl - Colin Simpson, David Price, Tom Townsend & David Gold. We could not have wished for more pleasant team-mates and NPC Raymond Brock, the most capped England player, sat right by our side when we played the matches - that was when chief team supporter Marie hadn't asked him to move so she could get a better view! The matches were broadcast live on the internet and Neil Rosen was one of the expert commentators, so we were hoping for a few favourable comments from him.

We played this hand against Wales:

All vulnerable

<p>♠ 104</p> <p>♥ AKQ86543</p> <p>♦ J73</p> <p>♣ -</p>	<p>♠ K9765</p> <p>♥ J2</p> <p>♦ 10962</p> <p>♣ 107</p> <p>♠ Q32</p> <p>♥ 10</p> <p>♦ K</p> <p>♣ AKQ86432</p>	<p>♠ AJ8</p> <p>♥ 97</p> <p>♦ AQ854</p> <p>♣ J95</p>
--	--	--

South 1C	West 4H	North P	East P
South 5C	West P	North P	East x

They led 2 rounds of hearts, so I ruffed and ran all but one of the trumps. East discarded the Jack of spades for some reason. When I played a spade to the King & Ace, he greedily played his partner to have the Queen of spades and instead of cashing the AD he returned a spade so I made the contract doubled. Teammates had made 5H doubled so we made 15imps on the board.

Apparently whilst I was playing the hand an American commentator put up "he's going to be 2 down here, losing 1H, 1D & 2 spades" and Neil typed up "SHE!" Then when they'd thrown the Jack of spades, the American typed "now he'll only be one down for a good result" and Neil typed "SHE!" Finally when they returned the spade to let me make the contract, the American typed "he's only going to make this contract " and Neil typed "SHE has made the contract! "

Catherine Draper

Committee responsibilities and other duties

The following allocation of duties has been agreed by the Club Committee for 2005-2006:

Tournament Controllers and Referees	Jack Hibbert and David Blacknell
Club Captain & Inter Club Competitions	Jack Hibbert
Web site	Dorothy Holland and Neil Wotherspoon
Club Trophies	Jack Hibbert
Stationery / Playing cards	Norma Cruickshank
Duty Roster	Roy Creamer and Tony Smith
Master points	Alan Gearing
Membership roll	Lindsey Lamb
Newsletter	Chris Lamb
Refreshments supplies	Tony Smith
Membership applications	Lindsey Lamb
Banking and recording table money	Paul Fishleigh
Sweepstake and Ingram Bowl	Dorothy Holland
Directors' Controller	Gretta Blacknell
Haycocks Trophy	Brian Richards
Ladder Co-ordinators	Denis Russell and David Blacknell

Please contact the appropriate person if you have a query or comment about any of the matters listed above.

An Appeal from the Editor

Having just agreed to take over as newsletter editor, I am immediately decamping to the furthest ends of the country for the rest of the summer. In pursuit of a long-held ambition, I am planning to walk from Lands End to John O'Groats, using public footpaths, a distance of around 1100 miles, which is likely to take about two and a half months to complete. Through sponsorship, I am aiming to raise some money for the Stroke Association during the walk, so if you would like to support this worthwhile charity, and give me encouragement, you can visit my webpage: http://www.justgiving.com/LEJOG_05 or ask Lindsey for a sponsorship form.

I'll be back in September, in time to prepare the next newsletter, so please have your contributions ready by then. You can e-mail them to me at any time at chris7lamb@yahoo.com, or you can give them to me on my return. I can usually be contacted at home on 020 8778 2851, so do phone me or speak to me if you have an idea for something you'd like to see featured in the newsletter. In particular, please do make a note of any interesting hands that you play this summer, so that others can share your thoughts on them.

Chris Lamb, Editor