

# A day in the life of . . .

## Artur Malinowski

*Artur Malinowski was born in Poland, moved to Norway and then England where he is now a full-time bridge professional. He won the silver medal at the 2007 European Pairs in Antalya, and was in the England Open team that took the silver medal in the World Mindsport Games in Beijing in 2008. He also has two bronze medals in the European Mixed Teams, and has won Crockfords as well as the Gold Cup.*

MY wife, Marilyn, is the manager of TGR, one of the most prestigious bridge clubs in London, so her life and consequently mine revolve around the club. This is not a sacrifice for me because, although bridge is our work, as far as I am concerned it is also my hobby and I can happily talk, play and breathe bridge all day!

My day starts before Marilyn's, and I cherish my private time in the morning. I spend it reading *The Times* over several cups of tea; I like to know what goes on in the world and I enjoy learning about it from a good-quality newspaper. You won't catch me reading the news on the computer or, worse, on my mobile phone. I avoid technological gadgets, though I recognise and take advantage of some of their uses.

By the time I have finished reading the paper, I am ready to face whatever domestic matters need sorting out. When the chores are done, it is time for us to go to the club; fortunately we don't have to go far, as our flat is quite close by.

I like living in London. It is such a cosmopolitan city, and people don't mind where you come from. You can always find someone to chat to, and learn about new cultures. I find it quite invigorating after the twelve years I spent in Norway, where I thought people were much more insular and inward-looking. Mind you, I also like to get out of London and motor around: Marilyn and I will do so whenever we can, and we just stop where our fancy takes us. There are thousands of little villages in England full of character and history. I'm quite interested in history anyway, but

sometimes I think that I am starved of the physical evidence of it because so many buildings were destroyed during the last war in my native Poland.

Not that we go away all that often, because we like to spend time with our family – especially our 'little monsters', grandchildren Jake (10) and Spencer (6).

Also, Marilyn's a busy lady and, as a professional player, I play in all the events that my regular partner and friend, Janet de Botton, wishes to enter – and every now and then I enjoy partnering other bridge pros: it sort of helps with sharpening the tools of my trade.

At the club I am happy to partner players of different standards. I usually play rubber bridge, which is my

favourite form of the game. It is much more relaxing than duplicate as it has no time constraints: you can pause for chatting and socialising. All of my friends are people I met playing bridge, and I see most of them at the rubber bridge table. I always think that the club performs a huge social role in providing members with the opportunity to enjoy each other's company. This relaxed atmosphere is enhanced by the fact that meals are served, which adds a note of conviviality (and keeps me nourished: Marilyn is a fabulous cook, but only has time for cooking at weekends).

Although I am not employed by the club as one of its teachers, I like to help with the supervised play sessions on offer. I have reached the stage where I have had so much out of bridge that I want to put something back into the game, and helping newcomers is both satisfying and worthwhile.



### Artur's Top Tip

#### ***Nothing ventured, nothing gained!***

We all have our 'bridge fears'. Some of us are afraid of playing in a new club in case it is not as friendly as the one we are used to. Others are afraid to have a game with a new partner in case he/she is not as good as or much better than us. Others still are fearful of playing in a tournament, at county or national level, because the required level of expertise is perceived as too high. Or we might be afraid of going on a bridge holiday because we think the other players may be too good – or too bad – for us to enjoy the experience.

My tip is: don't be afraid of new challenges! There is a lot to be gained in terms of learning by playing with or against better players. Equally, you can improve a lot by playing with weaker players. What's that old English saying? *Nothing ventured, nothing gained!* A new club, a bridge holiday, and even a big tournament may open new doors to you and provide you with a growing circle of friends, as well as the opportunity to improve your game.

And if I am not playing or coaching, I get involved with promoting and organising new activities, such as the very successful Auction Pairs recently held at TGR. There is always something to do at the club, and I enjoy doing anything to do with bridge – which is just as well, given that Marilyn's working day finishes very late.

My involvement with the game started by chance: I read a bridge book together with a friend from football at the age of 17, and I have not stopped learning and playing since. When I was in Norway, I worked for the Norwegian Bridge Federation and for a while I was the editor of the national bridge magazine. This was a welcome change from the odd jobs I had had to do for the first few years after leaving Poland with very little money in my pocket – and proof that an ear for languages helps in all walks of life. I am fairly fluent in seven languages, and I sport a proud Polish accent in all of them. This is not a problem in England, where people are tolerant, and it is this tolerance that, to me, represents the major charm of this country. I came to visit for two weeks nine years ago and I still live here very happily. □