

A day in the life of . . .

Chris and Cath Jagger

Chris and Cath Jagger are a young married couple who share a passion for bridge and Latin American formation dancing. Chris has won most of England's national bridge titles; Cath has played in the England women's team at European and World level.

THE first impression the Jaggers give is of two young people really good at enjoying life together. The next is that although Catherine has amazing stamina, Chris is like a Mexican bean, always leaping from one activity to the next, one step ahead of everyone else.

Take their morning routine: by the time Catherine, who needs her sleep, drags herself out of bed at 8.30 and cycles to her office in Cambridge, Chris has already caught a train to London and often put in a couple of hours of work. Chris works for Deloitte, an accountancy firm, writing and running national training programmes in London, Cambridge, the Midlands and sometimes overseas. Catherine does not rush around quite so much: as a co-director of a small current affairs publishing company, she scrutinises the world and does all her research and editing from her computer.

Whoever gets home first in the evening starts cooking, then it's a quick dinner before rushing out: twice a week to a dance training session, or the theatre, or perhaps a bridge match. Free nights are few – and often occupied by one form of work or another. They have collaborated on a couple of travel books, reflecting their other interest in seeing the world. In fact if they are not spending weekends playing bridge or training with their dancing team, they're off travelling – Chris (who had a head start) has visited 58 countries, but as Cath knows well from compiling her firm's atlases there are still 137 to go. Relaxing just doesn't seem to be part of the agenda.

Both the Jaggers learned bridge as kids. Chris played with his brother under the

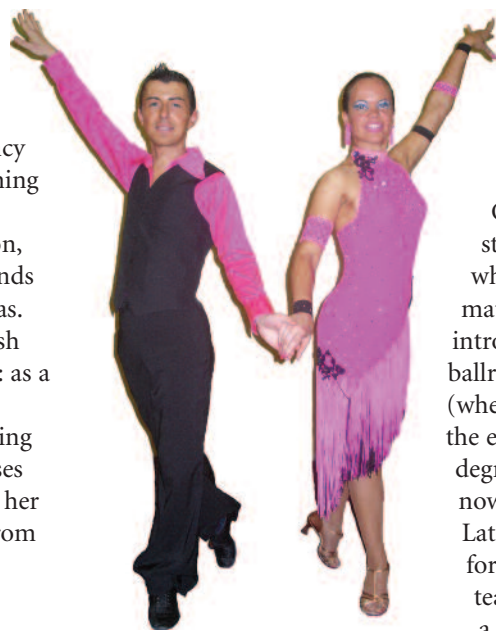
guidance of his parents, while Catherine's interest in the game goes back to an earlier age when, as a little girl, her rubber-bridge-playing father allowed her to stay up a bit later than usual on the once-a-month Friday when the 'lads' came round to their house for bridge. She would sit on a stool beside her dad, and was allowed to sort his hand. Then at age 13 she and her mother started taking lessons. By 26 she had become the

youngest ever female Grand Master.

As far as the Jaggers' other passion, dancing, is concerned, Chris led the way, starting at university while doing his maths Ph.D. He then introduced Cath to ballroom dancing (when she was nearing the end of her maths degree) and both have now danced on the XS Latin formation team for ten years. The team competes twice a year in the Winter Gardens Ballroom at

Blackpool, has won two British Championships, and regularly represents England at the World Championships, dancing overseas in Germany, Austria, Lithuania and Belarus. The team's routines combine rumba, samba, jive, cha cha and paso doble, with music currently taken from 'Saturday Night Fever', though past themes include 'Tom Jones', 'Moulin Rouge' and 'Aladdin'.

With all of their commitments, it's no wonder they don't play bridge regularly – but when they do compete, on the same team or separately, their results are usually excellent. Whether at bridge or dancing, Chris and Catherine Jagger are a class act. □



Chris Jagger's Top Tip

Try to work out why opponents do what they do.

Take this deal from the Pachabo in which both defender and declarer were striving to understand the other's point of view – defender to try to lure declarer into the wrong line, and declarer to ensure seeing through it:

North	South
1♥	2♣
2NT	3♠
4♦	6♣
6♦	6♥
7♣	

You have a good descriptive auction, if a little ambitious. The layout is:

♠	K J 7 2
♥	J 10 6 3
♦	A K Q
♣	A 5
♠	A 10 5 3
♥	Void
♦	6 2
♣	K Q 7 6 4 3 2

You ruff the ace of hearts lead, play two rounds of trumps and ruff another heart. Then you play a third trump (always cash another round of trumps if you can afford it to see what happens). Both opponents throw diamonds. Not so exciting, eh?

You cross to a diamond and ruff another heart, before cashing two more diamonds. On the last one West throws the king of hearts; so you play dummy's last heart, both hands following, East playing the queen. Who should you play for the queen of spades?

That's right: you have a complete count of the hand; you know that West started with 3-5-3-2, so what's the problem?

But hang on a minute. You have a reasonable county-level player on your left, whose greatest strength is that she really tries to win. Why did she pitch a diamond on the third trump? She had an easy heart discard. Did she want you to have the count? Why did she pitch the king of hearts with a small card left in hearts – did she want you to think she had difficult discards?

I hate placing too much faith in opponents, but then again I hate them to get the better of me; my instinct is that East has the queen. And sure enough, thirteen tricks roll in – West has ♠ 9 8 6 ♥ A K 8 7 2 ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ 9 8.