

# A day in the life of . . .

## Sandra Landy

*Sandra Landy taught herself to play bridge as a child, using Autobridge and a bidding pamphlet given to her by Freddie North. As a maths student, she joined Oxford University Bridge Club despite it being a 'gentlemen only' club, and continued to play bridge at Cambridge, where she studied for a postgraduate diploma in Numerical Analysis and Automatic Computing. A former university lecturer and head of the EBU Bridge for All project, Sandra was a major force in international Women's bridge, winning many titles including two world and five European championships.*

I LIVE on my own, in a fourth-floor flat in Hove, and often wake early to see the great sunrises visible at that height. But I am not by nature an early riser, so I often stay in bed, plan my day, read a book and drink my morning coffee till it's getting up time around 9am.

I had resolved that in my retirement I would find new interests and not devote so much of my life to playing bridge. So I set out to do more reading, walking, theatre-going, entertaining friends and actually having time to do more interesting cooking. I certainly planned to take more and longer holidays, the only thing on my wish list that actually happened, and I have been twice on long trips

to Australia to see my cousin, as well as shorter trips nearer home. My daughter couldn't bear to see me idle and as she works full time running a local charity, she set about finding a suitable volunteer activity for me. I was swiftly enrolled as local rep for Keep Britain Tidy.

I had hardly got settled in that job when I found myself suggesting that the money raised for the Freddie North Memorial Fund should be spent on increasing the membership at Worthing Bridge Club, where Freddie had played until his death. I wanted us to recruit non-players and teach them to play. Naturally, having made the suggestion, I had to agree to do the teaching – using Bridge for All materials, of course. With the club treasurer taking over all the admin, our advert in the local paper produced more than enough students for not one but two classes.

Fortunately, with so many students enrolled, Worthing Bridge Club produced enough volunteers to help run two afternoon classes. Particularly wonderful is the fact that the helpers make up the boards – five or six copies of each deal, as I like all tables to be playing the same board simultaneously. The helpers also make up the numbers, as needed, at the tables, and are there to make sure that basic bridge procedures are correctly followed. We use duplicate boards, bidding boxes and proper scoring right from the start. That means I can talk about the deal directly after it has been played, while the students can see the full deal spread out on the table. We can replay the deal several times, with every student having a go, or see what happens in different contracts.

Two days a week teaching in Worthing naturally involves a fair bit of lesson preparation. But I also help at the Avenue Club in Hove on Wednesday afternoons and sometimes give private tuition at home. The two phrases 'you can always tell a teacher but you cannot tell them much' and 'teachers never stop teaching' are both true about me! But teaching three or four days a week, still allows me time to play bridge quite often and I have a variety of partners, all of whom have to agree to play my version of Standard English, since nowadays I can only remember one system!

My morning is usually spent on my computer, answering e-mails – no, I don't want any more of your bidding and play problems, I have enough of my own!



Photo: Richard Landy

### Sandra's Top Tip

*If partner opens a weak 12-14 1NT and you have two aces and one king, you should pass.*

Most players think that when partner opens 1NT, they should raise to 2NT with 11 points. This is reasonable as if partner has a good 13 or 14 points, your side can probably make game. But what constitutes a good 11 points needs thinking about. Two aces and one king may look like a good 11 points, but the hand will only provide three tricks. It is very unlikely that the 1NT opening hand will provide the other six!

Good 11-point hands are not just about honour cards, but those where there are suits to be developed, say Q-J-10-9-8 where three tricks are certain but the point count for that suit is only 3. Put that holding with a pair of aces and nine tricks are far more likely to materialise. After all, partners' hand now only needs to generate four winners.

In fact if you, or your partner, think that you are not very strong dummy players, you should pass more often on 11 points. You can get a top just as often by scoring +120 for 1NT plus one or even 1NT just making, when the rest of the room is going down in 2NT or 3NT.

I write my notes for next week's lessons and decide which hands to use from the text-book, making up more if needed. By now we are in year two and extra material is required to supplement the book. I also use my computer to watch Bridge Base Online; I often collect useful material for my advanced teaching. We are currently planning year three onwards, which will aim to get the students playing duplicate regularly and gradually make the transition to club bridge.

Despite a long break from playing bridge after my husband died, I am now happily back at the club, playing with different partners several days a week. No longer an international or even a national player, I don't have to worry about winning and playing well – I am just happy to enjoy my bridge without any pressure. But all my early training means I take each hand seriously and always play to make the most tricks for our side. Some habits never die! □