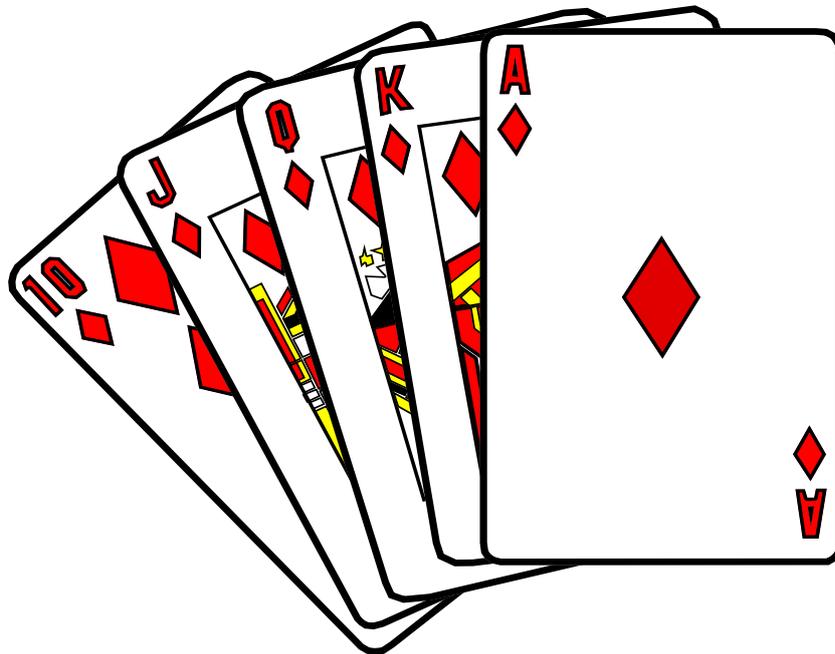




41st Bridge Match
HOUSE OF LORDS
v
HOUSE OF COMMONS

Sponsored by Lord Stanley Kalms



House of Lords
Wednesday 4th November 2015

Commentary by Paul Bowyer

This deal provided some interest in a teams-of-four match this year. One West opened 1♣, North overcalled 2NT (to show a red two-suiter) and East tried an ambitious 3♠. When North-South bid 4♥ East-West bid 4♠. This might make, although it can be defeated, so North did the right thing in going on to 5♥.

There is no way of beating this one and North-South racked up 450 points. Would the same degree of competitiveness occur

at the other table? Not exactly. There were three Passes to South who opened 1♠. North, hamstrung by his methods, was forced to reply 1NT (a two-level response promised 10 points, you see). Still, there was bound to be further bidding and North hoped to be able to show his six-card major on the next round. There was no next round; 1NT was followed by three rapid Passes. Deterred from a Spade lead East tried the passive ♦10. Declarer cashed six of those on which West unwisely ditched a Heart. North now cashed the ♠A and six Hearts for an unusual result of 1NT + 6 for 270. Still a loss, but a small one.

Hand 1 Love All, dealer North.

♠ None		♠ Q J 10 7 5									
♥ K 10 6 5 4 2		♥ 9									
♦ Q J 8 7 6 5		♦ 10 9 4									
♣ 2		♣ A J 6 3									
♠ K 8 4 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 9 6 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 3		♥ A 8 7									
♦ 2		♦ A K 3									
♣ K Q 9 8 7		♣ 10 5 4									

This may look like an easy 4♠ to North-South but it didn't prove to be such at the time. It appeared in a knock-out teams-of-four match where one table duly reached the Spade game and were favoured with the lead of Ace and another Diamond. That didn't test declarer one iota and North had eleven tricks on the table at high speed. At the other table East, as dealer, stirred the marmalade with an opening bid of 2♥ showing, in his methods, a

Hand 2 North-South Game, dealer East.

♠ Q 2		♠ A K 9 8 7 5									
♥ Q 9 8 5		♥ K									
♦ Q 10 9 3 2		♦ K J 4									
♣ 10 3		♣ Q 9 7									
♠ Q 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9 8 5		♥ J 7 4 3 2									
♦ Q 10 9 3 2		♦ A 8									
♣ 10 3		♣ K J 4 2									
♠ J 10 6		♠ J 10 6									
♥ A 10 6		♥ A 10 6									
♦ 7 6 5		♦ 7 6 5									
♣ A 8 6 5		♣ A 8 6 5									

weak hand with five Hearts and a four-card minor. South Passed and West had an interesting bid. What would you choose, with the vulnerability favourable and all the indications being that North has a big Spade suit and a good hand? Yep, you guessed it, West bid 2♠. Had North Passed that would have drifted six or seven off for 300 or 350 points (a somewhat unusual score!) but one which West would happily have accepted. Instead, North made a foolish Double and Passed when South responded 3♣. This inauspicious contract failed by a trick so East-West gained 750 points for their tomfoolery.

Hand 3 East-West Game, dealer South.

♠ 2 ♥ J 9 6 4 ♦ Q 9 7 4 2 ♣ 10 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 9 8 6 5 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A 5 ♣ 8 6	♠ A Q J 3 ♥ A Q 8 ♦ K 8 6 3 ♣ 7 4
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ 7 ♥ K 10 5 2 ♦ J 10 ♣ A K Q J 9 3												

Who is a disciplined bidder? If the evidence of this deal (from a large pairs field) is any indication, there are few pairs who can truly claim that they are. How should the North-South cards be bid? The start is clear – South opens 1♣, North responds with 1♠ (effectively silencing East) and South rebids 2♣. (A reverse of 2♥ or a jump rebid of 3♣ would be unjustified overbids). After this start North should rebid 2♠; anything more, with an uninviting 7-2-2-2 shape, would constitute another overbid. Back to South. After 1♣ – 1♠ – 2♣ – 2♠ what should you do now? Well there is only one sensible bid – Pass. This follows the hoary but entirely sensible maxim that when there is evidence of a misfit you should drop the bidding. The **only** pair who followed this dictum and achieved a modest score of 110 points on the North-South cards emerged with a virgin score and an undisputed top. All the others overbid to silly contracts (such as 4♠, which East was delighted to Double) and were turned over by conceding large and embarrassing penalties.

Hand 4 Game All, dealer West.

♠ 10 6 2 ♥ A Q 9 ♦ A 10 9 5 4 ♣ 9 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q 9 8 7 3 ♥ 6 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ 10 7 3	♠ A J 5 4 ♥ K 8 5 4 2 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ K
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ None ♥ J 10 7 3 ♦ J 8 ♣ A Q J 8 6 5 2												

This deal turned up in the modest setting of a teams-of-four league match. At both tables North had to decide what to do after West had Passed. With a marginal decision, both decided on a weak-two in Spades, the alternative being to open with 1♠. (Note that Pass never entered either player's head). East Passed and South faced an unpromising prospect. The problem with bidding the apparently obvious 3♣ is that it would have been forcing. Unwilling to hear 3♣ from the opposite side of the table both Souths Passed and 2♠ became the contract. One East led the ♣K and that gave North a chance. Although East took a Club ruff, two trumps and West took two Aces that was only five defensive tricks and the contract staggered over the finishing line. At the other table East elected to lead a Heart (a better shot than a Club when holding four trumps). The upshot of this was that declarer ran out of Spades in ruffing Hearts and 2♠ failed. Meanwhile, you may have noticed that 5♣ is makeable on the North-South cards. Is it biddable?

The bidding on this deal was easy enough: everyone bid a simple 1NT – 3NT. East had an automatic ♠5 lead and now the hand revolved around West's defence. Declarer called for dummy's Seven and West played...? Well, some West's were fearful that partner started with ♠A K × × (×) and that playing the ♠9 would make them look foolish. So they played the ♠Q and declarer had no further problem. Allowing declarer to sneak a trick with ♠10 × facing ♠J × × would have been embarrassing so it is important to get this right. Now, the Rule of Eleven tells West that declarer has exactly one card higher than partner's ♠5. However, it doesn't say whether that card is the ♠A, the ♠K or the ♠10. What about the point-count? Dummy has 14, declarer has 12-14 and West has 9. Simple arithmetic tells West that East has 3-5 points only. In that case it is impossible for North to have started with ♠10 × (and East with ♠A K × × ×). The right play is therefore the ♠9. Now when West gets in with the ♦K he can safely play the ♠Q and another Spade to defeat 3NT.

Hand 5 North-South Game, dealer North

♠ K 4 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ J 9 8 5 ♣ K Q 5 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 6 5 2 ♥ 10 6 4 ♦ 7 2 ♣ 10 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ Q 9 3 ♥ Q J 8 3 2 ♦ K 4 ♣ J 8 6		♠ J 8 7 ♥ K 9 ♦ A Q 10 6 3 ♣ A 9 7									

On the previous deal the bidding was trivial and the play was everything. Here it's the reverse. There are thirteen easy tricks for East-West in Clubs, Diamonds and No-trumps. However, is it easy to reach a grand slam? The deal comes from a multiple teams-of-four event where the order of the day was to bid (East first): 1NT – 6NT. Shortly after, with much shrugging of shoulders, everybody wrote down the obvious score of 1470 to East-West for 6NT with an overtrick. There were two exceptions. One pair took fifteen rounds (I exaggerate) of super-scientific bidding to alight in 6♦. That notched up just 1390. At the final table I can report a success story. Realising that he had prime values (no useless Jacks, for example) West responded to 1NT with the unusual bid of 5NT, telling East to bid either 6NT or 7NT according to strength. Although only endowed with 12 points, East bid 6♣ to show the five-card suit. West now thought he could see thirteen tricks (the ♣K Q must surely be gold-dust) so he leapt to 7NT. Good bidding or lucky punting? You decide.

Hand 6 East-West Game, dealer East.

♠ A 9 ♥ A 5 4 ♦ A K Q 10 2 ♣ K Q 6	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 10 4 3 ♥ 10 9 6 2 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ K Q 8 ♥ J 8 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ A J 8 5 3									
		♠ 7 6 5 2 ♥ K Q 7 3 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 10 4 2									

Hand 7 Game All, dealer South.

♠ 10 8 6 ♥ A K J ♦ Q 6 ♣ Q J 10 5 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		♠ 5 3 ♥ 10 9 8 6 4 ♦ A 5 4 2 ♣ 9 2	♠ A K J ♥ Q 7 2 ♦ 10 7 3 ♣ A 8 6 3
N												
W	E											
	S											

A sound understanding of partner's problems saved the day on this deal. At all tables South bid to 3NT (1NT – 3NT) and West naturally led a low Spade. Declarer scooped that up with the ♠J, crossed to a top Heart and ran the ♣Q. What now, West? Well, it's easy to see, with a view of all four hands, that a Diamond switch kills the hand. Should West get it right? Probably – South is marked with 8 points in Spades and appears to have the ♣A as well. Possession of the ♦A would swell South's point-count to 16; too much for an opening bid of 1NT. So West should switch to the ♦8, then? Not so fast! Where that defence was found East grabbed the ♦A and returned... a Spade! It wasn't so easy for East – how did he know that West hadn't started with ♠A Q × × and was desperate for a Spade through? The right defence (found occasionally) was for West to lead the **King** of Diamonds at trick four. Now after a Diamond to the Ace it was easy for East to play a third Diamond. Note that this defence works even with ♦10 × × in the South hand.

Hand 8 Love All, dealer West.

♠ J 9 2 ♥ Q 10 8 7 ♦ J 9 2 ♣ 8 7 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		♠ Q 10 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ K Q 6 3 ♣ A 10 9 6	♠ 8 6 5 4 3 ♥ A J 9 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ K 2
N												
W	E											
	S											

A simple enough hand to bid; most West players reaching 3NT via 1NT – 3NT. Almost everywhere North, with an unappealing collection of dross, fished out the ♥7 and West took stock. "Thank you, partner, play small, please". Immediately, at trick one, comes the crux of the matter – how should South defend the hand? Playing on autopilot, most players put the ♥J on dummy's ♥2 and took stock. What next? Too late, my friend – the contract is now cold; there is nothing that South can do to defeat it. The key moment made a fleeting appearance and has now left the building. Try the Rule of Eleven. If the ♥7 is North's fourth-highest Heart then declarer has no Heart higher than the Seven. So there is no point in playing a high Heart; South should play low and allow North to retain the lead. A further Heart lead allows the defence to rack up four Heart tricks and the ♣K follows in due course. If partner's ♥7 is from something else (top of nothing? A MUD lead?) then it doesn't matter what South does at trick one – playing low isn't going to cost.

East-West have 26 points on this deal but locating any making game contract may well prove elusive. The deal comes from a teams-of-four match. At one table North's opening bid of 1♣ was Passed round to West, who Doubled. North, reckoning the opposition must have game *somewhere*, tried the effect of a whimsical 1♥. A frustrated West blasted 4♠ and that was that. North led the ♣K and South had the wit to overtake with the ♣A

and return the suit. A third Club did for 4♠; South threw off a Heart and, after ruffing, West was helpless. If he played Hearts North-South would take a ruff; if he drew trumps the 4-1 break would leave him wide open in Clubs. All four players thought 4♥ was the place to be on the East-West cards – how could that fail? Well, a Spade obviously beats it (North gets a Spade ruff) but that was too difficult with South on lead. In fact, the ♣A and another Club was good enough. North played a third Club and South thoughtfully ruffed in with the ♥9. North's ♥A 10 8 were now good for two certain trump tricks and 4♥ was one down.

Hand 9 East-West Game, dealer North

♠ 8		♠ 10 4 2									
♥ A 10 8		♥ J 7 5 3 2									
♦ 10 7 4		♦ Q J									
♣ K Q J 10 6 3		♣ 9 7 4									
♠ A K Q J 9	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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										
♥ K Q 6											
♦ A K 8											
♣ 8 5											
♠ 7 6 5 3											
♥ 9 4											
♦ 9 6 5 3 2											
♣ A 2											

East is surely going to play this one in 3NT after another routine 1NT – 3NT sequence. That's what happened when the hand was dealt, anyway. There are eight on top (one Heart, four Diamonds and three Clubs) so declarer needs either the Heart finesse or a 3-3 Club break and, as neither favours declarer, 3NT should fail. Perhaps... What happened, though, when the hand was dealt was that all Souths cashed the first four

Hand 10 Game All, dealer East.

♠ 5 4 2		♠ J 10 7									
♥ K 8 3		♥ Q 6 2									
♦ 10 8 4		♦ A K 9 3									
♣ J 10 7 2		♣ K 6 4									
♠ 8 6 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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										
♥ A J 4											
♦ Q J 5											
♣ A Q 8 3											
♠ A K Q 9											
♥ 10 9 7 5											
♦ 7 6 2											
♣ 9 5											

Spade tricks before switching to the ♥10. Refusing the finesse, many declarers took the ♥A and ran four Diamonds. Sleepily assuming 3NT was just drifting off North was suddenly jolted from his slumbers. At this point there have been nine cards played (four rounds of Spades, one Heart and four Diamonds) so North has to keep four cards. Unable to keep the ♥K and four Clubs he has to concede the ninth trick in one way or another. In fact, the fault lies with South. If South refrains from cashing his Spade winners early and switches to a Heart 3NT cannot be made.

Hand 11 Love All, dealer South

♠ A K 5 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ A J 7 5 3 ♣ K 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 8 6 3 ♥ K 10 ♦ K Q 9 6 2 ♣ J 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ J 10 9 4 ♥ Q 4 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 10 8 6 5		♠ 7 2 ♥ A J 7 5 3 ♦ 8 ♣ A Q 9 7 4									

This deal from long ago was played between the USA and Italy. South should play the thing in Hearts so let's see how it might go. West leads the ♠J, won in dummy, and a Heart is led to the Ten, Jack and Queen. Winning the next Spade on the table declarer plays another trump and, on seeing East's King, twelve tricks are there. Declarer takes the ♥A, plays off the ♣K, the ♣A, ruffs a Club on table, returns to hand with a Spade ruff, draws the last trump and his hand is high. The USA duly bid and made 4♥ plus two. At the other table the formidable Belladonna-Garozzo reached a dubious 6♥ and looked to be heading for a useful swing. However, East found a brilliant defence to beat the slam. How? When declarer led the first trump from the dummy at trick two East played the **King** and now, remarkably, the slam cannot be made. If South tries to ruff a club in the dummy East can over-ruff. If, instead, declarer crosses to the table to play another trump West wins with the ♥Q and plays a third round, leaving South with a Club loser. Neat!

Hand 12 North-South Game, dealer West

♠ None ♥ K Q J 9 7 4 ♦ Q J 9 4 ♣ J 8 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 ♥ None ♦ A K 8 7 6 3 2 ♣ K Q 6 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ K J 10 9 ♥ A 2 ♦ 10 5 ♣ A 10 9 5 2		♠ Q 8 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ 10 8 6 5 3 ♦ None ♣ 7									

This is an evil hand from a teams-of-eight league match. 7♣ looks good for East-West but this contract founders badly on the rocks of distribution. Two East-West pairs played in 6♣ and were displeased to be defeated by two early ruffs. At the third table West opened 1NT (*not* recommended, I am merely reporting) North overcalled 2♥ and East eschewed any science when he punted 6♦. Not unduly alarmed when South's opening Spade lead was ruffed, declarer was annoyed to discover a second trump loser. The joke auction came after West opened 1♣, North overcalled 2♥ (weak) and East decided the time was right to launch Blackwood (not my idea of a good bid). South, in a desperate attempt to direct the lead against 6♣, made the remarkable bid of 5♦, trusting that West's Blackwood response would get him out of the mire. Nope. West and North Passed, allowing East to win the board by Passing and collecting the unusual score of +900. Alas, bitten by the slam bug, he Doubled 5♦ and then bid 6♣ over South's run-out to 5♥. One off.

An interesting part-score deal from a high standard event this year. The bidding started and ended with North's 1NT and East led his trusty fourth-highest Diamond. Declarer called for the $\diamond J$ from table and, after that held the trick, he played a Club to the $\clubsuit J$ and $\clubsuit Q$. Now, how should East defend? The Club layout was fairly clear and East knew declarer held the $\diamond K$ – so how could West be put on lead for a Diamond to be led through

declarer? After due and careful consultation with the ceiling, East led a low Heart and North claimed eight tricks. Now, this was sloppy defence by East. Had he thought about counting declarer's tricks he might have come to a different conclusion. If declarer has the $\spadesuit A$ then surely 1NT is going to make. Does declarer not have four Clubs, one Spade, one Heart and one Diamond? So, in this case, 1NT is making. If, however, West has the $\spadesuit A$ (and he is known to have 4-6 points) then a Spade lead defeats 1NT. True, leading the $\spadesuit K$ may look foolish, and concede an overtrick, but defeat of the contract is paramount.

Hand 13 Game All, dealer North

	\spadesuit 9 7 4 3 \heartsuit K Q 7 \diamond K 6 4 \clubsuit A J 7												
\spadesuit A J 10 \heartsuit 10 8 5 4 \diamond 10 8 3 \clubsuit 10 6 2	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		\spadesuit K 2 \heartsuit J 9 6 3 \diamond A Q 7 5 2 \clubsuit Q 4	\spadesuit Q 8 6 5 \heartsuit A 2 \diamond J 9 \clubsuit K 9 8 5 3	
	N												
W		E											
	S												

A deal from a local teams-of-four multiple teams. Most played this in $4\clubsuit$ and were given a cakewalk after the $\heartsuit K$ lead. One East found an excellent lead of a trump, though, after South had bid Hearts. This reduces declarer's tricks to just nine (he can no longer manoeuvre a Club ruff on table) and it makes the hand very tricky. $4\clubsuit$ can still make (you are hereby invited to see how you might play it) but, in practice, it failed. Credit to

East for his astute lead. If North was disappointed at his failure to land his game he had little cause to be. At the other table East opened 1NT and that floated to North, who Doubled. Nobody had anything else to say, so East had to toil away in an unpromising spot. South lead a Heart, won by the Jack, and East unwisely led a low Club. South took that and continued Hearts. Declarer belatedly played a Diamond but too late. South took the Ace, cashed the Hearts and played a Spade. North claimed the rest for 1400. At the form of scoring (IMPs) the difference between making $4\clubsuit$ and failing in it was of little account.

Hand 14 Love All, dealer East

	\spadesuit A K Q 6 4 3 \heartsuit 3 \diamond J 7 4 \clubsuit A Q 4												
\spadesuit 8 2 \heartsuit 10 5 2 \diamond Q 8 6 2 \clubsuit 6 5 3 2	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		\spadesuit J 10 7 \heartsuit K Q J \diamond K 10 9 \clubsuit K J 8 7	\spadesuit 9 5 \heartsuit A 9 8 7 6 4 \diamond A 5 3 \clubsuit 10 9	
	N												
W		E											
	S												

Hand 15 North-South Game, dealer South

♠ K ♥ 9 ♦ J 8 5 4 2 ♣ A K 9 8 6 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td><td style="padding: 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ 10 4 ♥ A K J 10 6 5 4 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ 5
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ J 7 6 3 2 ♥ Q 7 3 2 ♦ None ♣ Q 7 4 3											
♠ A Q 9 8 5 ♥ 8 ♦ A K Q 10 3 ♣ J 10											

An exciting deal from a knock-out teams-of-four match. North-South can make 6♦ with little difficulty but East-West can make a lot of tricks in Hearts; ten to be precise. So *absolute par* (the score when both sides achieve the best result possible) is 6♥ Doubled down two by East-West, giving North-South 300 points. Did that happen? Surprisingly (at one table) it did. South opened 1♣, North responded 2♣, East

lurched in with 3♥ and South tried 4♦. All fairly obvious so far. West now did well by bidding 5♥ (he felt 4♥ was a waste of time and wanted to make North's life miserable). North bid 6♦ looking confident (but not feeling it) and East sacrificed in 6♥, Doubled by South. Whatever the merits of this bidding it achieved the optimum result. At the other table the records of the auction have been lost. East-West bid 4♥ and North-South bid a cautious 5♦. Unwilling to push them any further neither East nor West ventured 5♥ so North-South recorded 620 points in 5♦ + 1, being pleasantly surprised to gain points on the deal.

Hand 16 East-West Game, dealer West.

♠ 9 8 7 6 ♥ 9 6 ♦ A J 8 7 ♣ 7 4 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 80px; height: 80px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td><td style="padding: 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"> </td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ J 4 3 ♥ K Q J 10 7 4 2 ♦ 6 5 ♣ K
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ A K ♥ A 8 3 ♦ Q 10 9 3 2 ♣ A Q J											
♠ Q 10 5 2 ♥ 5 ♦ K 4 ♣ 10 9 8 6 5 2											

A cruel hand from this year's Crockfords final. What do you want to play the East-West cards in? 4♥? 3NT? Perhaps so, as both of those are cold. At one table West opened 2NT, East transferred to Hearts and then blasted a slam after asking for Aces. Any good? Well, the spotlight turned to North. Should you obey *Burn's Law* (named after David of that ilk) which states that you should lead an Ace against any punted slam.

North thought otherwise and his Spade lead is unlikely to figure in any book on great defensive plays. West gratefully claimed all thirteen tricks. At the other table East-West were playing some scientific methods that allowed them (and their opponents!) to identify the lack of Diamond control. They subsided in 5♥, lost the first two tricks and felt pleased with their efforts. The deal still cost them 810 points, though, and their team-mates thought that there is much merit in the unscientific, bashing approach. Still, it's an age-old question: Is 6♥ a good proposition on the East-West hands?

This hand produced some weird bridge in a local teams-of-eight league match. Can East-West make 4♠? At first sight there are only three Heart losers so the answer would appear to be Yes. However, suppose South leads four rounds of Hearts against 4♠; how should the defence go? The answer is that North should discard all four Diamonds. Now declarer cannot make the hand; if he draws trumps he cannot ruff two losing Clubs in the

Hand 17 Love All, dealer North.

♠ 10 8 2
 ♥ None
 ♦ 10 5 4 3
 ♣ K Q 9 7 6 3

♠ K 7 6 4	N	♠ A Q J 9 3
♥ 8 7 5 4	W	♥ J 9 2
♦ K 9 8 2	E	♦ A
♣ A	S	♣ J 10 4 2

♠ 5
 ♥ A K Q 10 6 3
 ♦ Q J 7 6
 ♣ 8 5

dummy – if he tries anything else he will get the ♦A ruffed. So, what happened? One East-West played in 3♠ plus one. One East-West played in 4♠, making, after North threw **Clubs** on partner's Hearts. At one table North opened 3♣, East bid 3♠, South tried 4♥, West bid 4♠ and North, outrageously, Doubled. If you are going to bid like this you have to defend well. South duly led a systemic ♥K and North... *ruffed!* That put paid to that. At the final table North also opened 3♣ and that, believe it or not, ended the auction. Amazingly, this scrambled nine tricks after a defence I have been paid a large amount of money not to reveal.

A deal of difficult decisions. It comes from a Northern Ireland – England international match some time ago. At both tables the auction started the same way: East opened 3♥ (not exactly according to textbook but the favourable vulnerability must have swayed them. Or maybe it was the heady Belfast air...), South Passed, West raised to 4♥ and North had a really difficult decision. Should you flex your muscles and wade into the fray, vulnerable, with 4♠? This risks disaster if West were to turn up with a stonking good hand. Or should you cover in a corner, nibbling cheese, allowing West to smirk at you if he displays a pitiful dummy with the 4♥ raise being of the “sporting” variety? Both Norths **did** bid 4♠ (macho men?) and that went back to West. The Ulsterman Doubled, the Englishman went to the well gain with 5♥, Doubled by South. Both contracts are unbeatable so England achieved the unusual feat of a double Doubled game swing. 4♠ Doubled was worth 790 and 5♥ Doubled was worth 650, a total of 1440 to the visitors.

Hand 18 North-South Game, dealer East.

♠ A Q 5 3 2
 ♥ None
 ♦ A J 10 9 6
 ♣ 10 9 3

♠ K 8 7 4	N	♠ None
♥ A J 6 3	W	♥ K 10 9 8 5 4 2
♦ 5	E	♦ 7 4 3 2
♣ A Q 8 7	S	♣ 4 2

♠ J 10 9 6
 ♥ Q 7
 ♦ K Q 8
 ♣ K J 6 5

Hand 19 East-West Game, dealer South.

<p>♠ 10 ♥ Q J 5 4 3 ♦ A 10 ♣ K J 7 5 3</p> <p>♠ A K 8 7 6 4 2 ♥ 10 9 7 2 ♦ K J ♣ None</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ J 9 5 ♥ None ♦ 9 7 6 4 3 ♣ Q 10 8 6 4</p> <p>♠ Q 3 ♥ A K 8 6 ♦ Q 8 5 2 ♣ A 9 2</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

I do like collecting deals that have generated weird and wonderful results. This is one such, and is an interesting competitive deal with North-South able to make 4♥ (and no more) and East-West able to make 4♠ (and no more). So the right spot is for North-South to bid 5♥, get Doubled and go one down. At one table North-South did bid 5♥ over 4♠ but West then went on to 5♠. Eschewing the hoary advice that you should

lead trumps when your side has the majority of the high cards, North made the excruciating lead of the ♦A and another Diamond. West showed his gratitude by taking the ♦K and ruffing Hearts on table. Eventually he made seven Spades, three ruffs and a Diamond for +650. And at the other table? South chose to open 1♦, West bid a cunning 1♠ and North bid 2♥. East bid 2♠ and South bid 4♥. Knowing he would be outbid to 5♥ West tried the sneaky bid of 5♣ to attract the lead against 5♥. He is still waiting. North Passed (looking bored), and neither East nor South saw any reason to bid again. Six down and 600 away.

Hand 20 Game All, dealer West.

<p>♠ J 3 ♥ 9 6 3 2 ♦ K 8 6 3 2 ♣ 9 5</p> <p>♠ 5 2 ♥ A Q J 8 5 ♦ Q J 7 4 ♣ 6 2</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K 9 8 7 ♥ K ♦ A 9 5 ♣ A K 10 7 4</p> <p>♠ A Q 10 6 4 ♥ 10 7 4 ♦ 10 ♣ Q J 8 3</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

All roads surely lead to 3NT by East on this model; at least, that was the story when it first appeared in a large pairs competition. At many tables East opened 1♣ in third seat and South overcalled 1♠, a bid which should have influenced declarer's line of play. As East, how do you play 3NT after a low Spade lead (the ♠6) to North's Jack? Many declarers quickly took the King, unblocked the ♥K and tried to force an entry to

table with a Diamond. Nope, no good. North took the King and fired back a Spade to leave declarer with five losers. After a 1♠ overcall it is clear that Spades are 5-2 (or even 6-1) and it cannot cost to let the ♠J hold trick one. If declarer does that then North-South can no longer defeat 3NT. A Spade return is won by South's Ten but that player has nothing he can do. If he abandons Spades declarer can always make five Hearts, two Diamonds and two Clubs for his contract. The hold-up is clear-cut if South has overcalled 1♠; It is more obscure if there has been no opposition bidding.

A grotesque misfit deal from a teams-of-four match some time ago. At one table North opened 1♠ and South responded with a weird and wonderful 1NT. Pass and 2♠ seem better responses than 1NT but it's results that count at this game... West Doubled 1NT (for take-out), North tried 2♦, South gave preference to 2♠ and West Doubled again. East thought it best to Pass that and 2♠ Doubled became the final

Hand 21 North-South Game, dealer North

♠ A Q 6 4 3
♥ A J 7 4
♦ J 9 7 3
♣ None

♠ None
♥ K Q 10 6
♦ A K 10 6 2
♣ A Q 8 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K J 8 5 2
♥ 3
♦ 8 5 4
♣ J 10 9 7

♠ 10 9 7
♥ 9 8 5 2
♦ Q
♣ K 5 4 3 2

This might go down after an unlikely trump lead but East led his Heart and now there are always eight tricks. At the other table South raised 1♠ to 2♠. West Doubled that for take-out, naturally enough, and it would have been interesting to see if East was going to Pass or bid 3♣. Luckily for him North took a wildly indisciplined punt at 4♠ and that got the red card from East that it deserved. The card play matched the indifferent bidding and North ended an embarrassing four down Doubled for -1100. When added to the -670 from the other table the cost was a whopping 1760 swing.

A bizarre set of auctions was the story of this deal from a county match. The bidding should be simple: 1♠ – 2♦ – 3♦ – Pass. However, this was the sequence at only one table out of twelve. Far too many East's converted 3♦ to optimistic 3NT contracts believing, presumably, that the possession of a couple of stops in Hearts and Clubs would give an easy route to nine tricks. In fact, East was lucky that 3NT has any play at all (did West

Hand 22 East-West Game, dealer East.

♠ K 10 7
♥ Q 9 8 5
♦ 9 6 2
♣ K 10 5

♠ Q 8 5 4 3
♥ A J 4
♦ A K 10 8
♣ 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6 2
♥ K 10 7 3
♦ Q J 7 5
♣ A 6 4

♠ A J 9
♥ 6 2
♦ 4 3
♣ Q J 9 7 3 2

have to have 14 points?) To make nine tricks requires picking up the Hearts and, assuming North covers the ♥J with the ♥Q, there is no way of doing that on the lie of the cards. If South leads a Club to 3NT and East were to play a Heart to the Jack the cost would be as high as five down. As a matter of interest, 5♦ is playable and if declarer sets up the Spades he can emerge with eleven tricks. Not that 5♦ is a thing of beauty as it requires Spades 3-3 and trumps 3-2. At one table West raised the 2♦ response to 4♦, East bid 5♣ and West advanced to 6♦, achieving a flat board with 3NT down one at the other table. Barmy stuff.

Hand 23 Game All, dealer South.

♠ 8 5 3 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ A Q 8 6 5 4 ♣ 10	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q J 7 2 ♥ Q 9 ♦ 9 7 ♣ A 8 5 2	♠ 9 ♥ K 7 6 4 ♦ K 10 2 ♣ K J 9 7 3
	N											
W		E										
	S											

A deal from a local knock-out teams-of-four match where the bidding started identically at both tables. North opened 1♦ in third seat, East overcalled 1♠, South Doubled and West raised Spades. Following the principles of the *Law of Total Tricks* both Wests bid 3♠ (“bid to the level of the known number of trumps”). At one table that got Passed out, a contract that should make eight tricks for a modest loss of 100 points. However, South led

a low Diamond to the Ace and North switched to the ♣10. Instead of grabbing that with the Ace and drawing trumps (as he should have done), declarer woodenly played small. Not good... after the ♣K, Club ruff, Diamond to the King, Club ruff and the ♥A K East was three down for -300. At the other table South was not going to Pass out 3♠ with such a fine hand. He Doubled again (for take-out) and North decided to stick it. Once again a Diamond was led and a Club returned. Once again declarer failed to heed the warning signs and played low, the penalty for declaring without due care and attention being 800 this time.

Hand 24 Love All, dealer West.

♠ A K 8 7 3 2 ♥ None ♦ A Q 2 ♣ 10 7 6 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 6 ♥ A K J 10 9 7 ♦ 8 5 4 3 ♣ 5	♠ Q J 5 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ J 10 9 7 6 ♣ 9 2
	N											
W		E										
	S											

This deal first saw the light of day in a multiple teams-of-four event this year where few pairs made full use of their assets. The bidding started with 1♠ by North at all tables and most Easts bid Hearts; some chose 2♥ with the occasional East opting for a weak-jump overcall of 3♥. Where South elected to play for a penalty East made the obvious five trump tricks: -500 in 2♥ Doubled and -800 in 3♥ Doubled. At one table North

made a remarkable bid that consigned these scores into irrelevance. Here, after 1♠ from North and a 2♥ overcall South bid 3♣. Convinced his side had a slam North made the amazing bid of 5♥, guaranteeing a void as well as first-round controls in the other two suits. A startled South was nonetheless able to work out what was going on and converted that to 7♣, a contract that provided not a semblance of difficulty in the play. That was 1440 for North-South and a big swing. True, some pairs managed to reach 6♣ on this but only one other pair bid the cold grand slam.

Current victory totals:

Lords - 21 Commons - 19



The 2014 winners, the team representing the House of Commons:
Lord Hamilton, Evan Harris, Bridget Prentice, Duncan Brack, Steve Barnett,
Robin Squire, Tony McWalter, Bob Blackman MP - not present, Michael Mates

Each year the Tony Berry Trophy is awarded for the best played hand.
The 2014 winner was Robin Squire (pictured receiving the trophy from Tom
Townsend).

