

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

September 2017

Editor: Bill Jacobs

GUEST EDITORIAL Christopher Leach

I am often asked by those who don't play bridge, or even those who play at a basic social level, to characterize what draws me (and very many others) so powerfully to the game. Increasingly, I have come to interpret such questions as an opportunity for me to make a case for playing bridge.



Sometimes this can be an arduous task, especially when my carefully considered answer sinks in the face of persistent and simplistic negative responses like: "I am just not a cards person" or "I've never played cards." Yes, but...

However, what has become increasingly obvious to me is that one may respond to such an enquiry at a variety of levels, with personal factors only the beginning. Indeed, many will cite their love of competition or the huge personal challenges of the game, absent both from other pastimes or generally in day-to-day life in work or retirement ... or maybe the extent to which bridge provides an activity that can be enjoyed virtually every day of the year.

But recent studies are powerfully telling us that the reasons we should be playing bridge go well beyond subjective factors relating to our own personalities and abilities. Indeed, they extend, in the big picture view, to reveal a way of life with fundamental benefits.

Several studies published this year have greatly enhanced, either directly or indirectly, the already strong "case for bridge". The first

was a very specific discussion of bridge and its role in preventing cognitive decline, published in the U.K. This is one of the first specific papers on bridge in recent times. Much remains to be learned, but any one of us who has played reasonably serious bridge all day long, knows what a cognitive workout we can get from the game. It may just be proven to forestall dementia.

Just last week, two meta-analyses made the headlines. The essence of them is that loneliness and social isolation are killers on the scale of obesity and even smoking. A sometimes unheralded aspect of bridge is its capacity to get us out, interacting with others and, while immersed in the game, to forget our troubles ... all very important characteristics of healthy aging, according to the authors of these studies.

Thus it is essential we build the social aspects of our clubs and transform them into vibrant social hubs and not just bridge facilities. A place where people congregate for healthy social intercourse and the forging of friendship.

Finally, data reveals a strong rationale for young people to play our game.

It is an extraordinary and worrisome fact that the average intelligence quotient among successive generations of young men (in particular) is dropping relentlessly. It is estimated that the mean IQ score of a teenager in Britain has dropped 14 points since the Industrial Revolution. The same score declines are repeated throughout the western world, though not in Asia.

There is some evidence that this decline is accelerating in Gen Y. Many difficult and rigorous activities, like bridge, attract small adherence and then only at an elite level. A key reason postulated for the IQ phenomenon is mental passivity, including too much time in front of screens, at the wheel of cars and a drop in the number of hours per week of rigour at an educational

level, with precipitous declines in participation in maths and science.

It should be a strong marketing impetus for bridge that we offer young people in particular, a game which, as a young player at the North American championships recently commented in the wonderful video placed on our website, is like a marathon for the brain. To say nothing of the benefits of exposure to the ethics and etiquette of the game.

So next time a neophyte asks what bridge means to you and why they should consider playing it, don't overlook the ever-growing range of compelling answers. In short ... be an advocate for bridge. Somebody you know may thank you greatly.

NEWS FROM THE VBA COUNCIL

2018 Victor Champion Cup

The VBA is pleased to announce the appointment of Geoffrey Schaller as Tournament Organiser for the 2018 Victor Champion Cup. Geoff has extensive experience in organising congresses having convened the highly popular Yarra Valley Congress for several years.

Council Meeting Summaries

The VBA Council has followed the lead of the ABF and is now providing summaries of its Council meetings for clubs and players. We trust this format will assist players in keeping abreast of key decisions made each month. Meeting summaries are circulated to Affiliated Clubs as soon as possible following the meetings, and are also available on the VBA website.

Special Councillor Elections

A call for nominations for Special Councillors has now been circulated to all clubs. Members interested in supporting the administration of Victorian bridge are encouraged to consider nominating for one of these positions. Nomination forms are available on the VBA website at <http://vba.asn.au/documents/club-notice/> and nominations close on October 6th 2017.

TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOPS WITH JOAN BUTTS

Join ABF National Teaching co-ordinator Joan Butts for two *free* Professional Development Days at the VBA.



Lunch, morning and afternoon tea will be provided.

Participants receive 10 points towards teaching accreditation.

Saturday September 23, 10 am – 2:30 pm
Teaching Two-over-One Game Force

Sunday September 24, 10 am – 2:30 pm
Teaching Declarer Play

To register your attendance, click on <http://www.abf.com.au/education/workshops/> and select the event(s) you wish to attend.

DOUBLES WORKSHOP

Join champion youth player Jamie Thompson for this workshop on bridge's most ubiquitous bid, the double. Learn about the versatility of using the double in all its forms, its origin, and how you can take on the extensions from negative and penalty doubles.

Saturday September 23, 10 am – 3 pm
Venue: VBA Clubrooms, Murrumbidgee
Cost: \$50 per player, lunch provided

Contact Bianca at bianca@vba.asn.au or ring 9530 9006 for more information.

Well done to Victorians Peter Hollands and Justin Mill for a solid performance at the recent Bermuda Bowl world championships in Lyon, France.

You can learn more about their experience by watching their Q&A session at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5E2N8CHeE8&feature=youtu.be>.

STATE EVENT RESULTS

Thwaites Mixed Pairs

Final

- 1 K. Muntz – N. Ewart
- 2 G. Bailey – K. Bailey
- 3 D. Morgan – D. Smart

Plate

- 1 A. St Clair – D. Harley
- 2 S. Hall – M. Gurfinkiel
- 3 S. Collins – J. Yang

CONGRESS RESULTS

Phillip Island Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 J. Lawrence – H. Stewart
- 2 P. Hill – R. Livingston
- 3 J. Yang – M. Gurfinkiel

Swiss Teams

- 1 K. Bailey, G. Bailey, G. Lovrecz, P. Fent
- 2 S. Klofa, D. Harley, A. Czapnik, K. Kat
- 3 S. Murray-White, G. Whiting, P. Schroor, D. Sheather

Knox Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 J. Yang – M. Gurfinkiel
- 2 C. Ding – D. Nie
- 3 L. Gold – L. Gold

Matchpoint Pairs

- 1 C. Hughes – K. Bechet
- 2 R. Gallus – S. Weisz
- 3 S. Klofa – D. Harley

Melbourne Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 B. Wein – S. Sharp
- 2 G. Lovrecz – P. Fent
- 3 J. Gray – L. Persson

Traralgon Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 R. Graham – F. Sundermann
- 2 P. Nolan – M. Porter
- 3 S. Klofa – R. Gallus

Swiss Teams

- 1 M. Christopher, F. Sundermann, J. Anderson, C. Van Lier
- 2 J. Hackett, T. Hackett, P. Corrigan, K. French
- 3 P. Goode, J. Brazier, M. Cornell, K. Elkington

Victorian Daytime Championship

- 1 D. Newland – D. Newlands
- 2 D. Harley – A. St Clair
- 3 R. Gallus – S. Klofa

Queen's Slipper Nationwide Pairs

Event 25 (August 5)

- 1 C. Bailey – V. Whitby (Yarra Valley)
- 2 K. Delcourt – P. Burt (Bendigo)

UPCOMING CONGRESSES & EVENTS

Ballarat Congress

Saturday 9th September, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 10th September, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue cnr Eyre & Ripon Streets
 Ballarat

Contact: Tim Woodley, 5342 4847

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Peninsula Congress

Saturday 16th September, 10 am: Swiss Pairs
 Sunday 17th September, 10 am: Swiss Teams

Venue St Francis Xavier Hall
 Cnr Baxter and Davey Streets
 Frankston, Melway 102 D3

Contact: Lindsay Young, 0414 824 313

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

Macedon Ranges Congress

Sunday 24th September, 10 am: Swiss Pairs

Venue St Mary's Norma Richardson Hall
 14 Buckland Street
 Woodend

Contact: Ron Watkinson, 0422 622 658

Enter: <http://bridgeunlimited.com>

FOR STARTERS

In a matchpoint duplicate game, you run into the following interesting problem

♠ 62 ♥ AQ32 ♦ AK4 ♣ J984

No one is vulnerable and RHO is the dealer. You are all ready to open the bidding, when RHO bids 2♥, which your LHO tells you is a natural weak two.

You have to bide your time. You can't double (wrong shape) or bid 2NT (wrong strength). Learn to pass smoothly in these situations, to avoid putting partner in an ethical bind.

2♥ rides around to partner, who doubles. That's for takeout, showing short hearts, support for all the unbid suits, and at least opening strength.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2♥	Pass
Pass	D'ble	Pass	?

Now what?

With 14 HCP and partner with opening strength, there is enough for game, and the obvious choice is 3NT, with your excellent heart stoppers.

But there is one other possibility: you could pass partner's takeout double and play for penalties in 2♥. Let's look at the maths: 3NT making (one presumes!) will score 400 points (plus 30 points for any overtricks). 2♥ doubled will score you 300 for down two, or 500+ for down 3 or more.

So to show a profit, you need to defeat 2♥ by at least three tricks: that means winning 8 tricks on defence. You can see 4 tricks in your hand: two hearts and two diamonds, so partner would have to provide 4 more: possible, but not too likely.

Another way of looking at it is that your ♥2 and ♥3 don't have much value: they are likely to be drawn. If one of them was, say, the ♥9, then that is worth a trick, which affects the equation.

It's a close decision, but you bid 3NT, which ends the auction.

LHO leads the ♥8, and you see:

3NT, South	♠	AK108
	♥	7
	♦	QJ8
	♣	Q6532
♥8 led	N S	
	♠	62
	♥	AQ32
	♦	AK4
	♣	J984

What's the plan?

Notrump planning involves trick counting, followed by threat assessment.

Counting tricks: 2 in spades, 2 in hearts 3 in diamonds makes 7. Clearly you need to develop the clubs for your extra tricks.

Now the threats. Hearts. You have two stoppers, which might not be enough. You have to lose the lead twice in clubs, so there is a risk that the hearts will become established.

If you win the first heart trick, and then lose a club trick to West, he will play his second heart (presumably East has six hearts, West two). Then if East wins the second club, it's bye-bye 3NT.

You can circumvent this by letting the defence win the first round of hearts, and winning the second round of hearts with your first stopper. Then if West wins the first round of clubs, then he won't have a heart to play.

You're finally ready to play to trick 1. You call low from dummy, East overtakes the ♥8 with the ♥9, and you play low! East now plays the ♥10. And you?

Put in the queen. This will win the trick. Ducking again is unnecessary, and may cost you an overtrick. West follows with the ♥5, and it's your lead.

Final hurdle - what now?

All will be well if clubs divide 2-2: East will not have both the ace and king, unless he plays very strange weak two openings. But if clubs are 3-1, you are in danger of losing three club tricks. For example, if you now play a club to the queen, and East wins with the singleton king or ace, West will have two more club tricks coming. Similarly if you cross to dummy, play a club to the jack, and West wins with a singleton honour.

It's far more probable that East is short in clubs: after all, he has 6 hearts to West's only 2. So go over to dummy's $\heartsuit Q$ to play a club through the presumed shortage. This all passes off OK, as the full deal is:

\heartsuit AK108		\heartsuit 743									
\heartsuit 7		\heartsuit KJ10964									
\heartsuit QJ8		\heartsuit 62									
\heartsuit Q6532		\heartsuit K10									
\heartsuit QJ95	<table style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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		\heartsuit 62
	N										
W		E									
	S										
\heartsuit 85		\heartsuit AQ32									
\heartsuit 109873		\heartsuit AK4									
\heartsuit A7		\heartsuit J984									

Points to remember:

- Smoothly pass balanced opening hands when RHO opens with a pre-empt.
- In deciding between playing for penalties or going for your own contract, take notice of your spot cards in their trump suit. Good spot cards (tens, nines and eights) often translate into tricks.
- *Trick counting* followed by *threat assessment*. Make it a habit in notrump contracts.

Trick counting will tell you where you need to look for the extra tricks required.

Threat assessment will guide you towards a counter-measure: usually a holdup play or an avoidance play (keeping the danger hand off lead at a crucial point). Both applied on this deal.

TEST YOUR BIDDING

Partner's takeout double is 'cancelled'

All vulnerable, matchpoint duplicate

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
$1\heartsuit$	D'ble	$1\heartsuit$?

In this auction, partner has made a takeout double of $1\heartsuit$ and RHO has gone ahead and responded anyway.

The $1\heartsuit$ bid changes the situation. If RHO had passed, a new suit bid by you could have been on as little as, well, nothing, as you were being forced to bid. But the $1\heartsuit$ has cancelled the scoring effect of the double, and now with nothing you can pass.

That means that a voluntary new suit bid by you shows *something*. Let's say around 6-9 HCP. A 1NT bid shows similar strength, and should include a stopper in opener's suit (the one partner is short in) rather than responder's suit.

If you happen to have a stronger hand than 9 HCP (not particularly likely with all that bidding going on), then you can make a jump bid to get your strength across.

That leaves a double of $1\heartsuit$. What should that mean? I recommend you play it as a penalty double, based on the principle that when your side has made a takeout double, then any double of a new suit should be for penalties, that suit having been 'shown' by the takeout doubler.

So what do you bid with each of the following?

- (a) \heartsuit J642 \heartsuit 103 \heartsuit J852 \heartsuit 643
- (b) \heartsuit AJ42 \heartsuit 53 \heartsuit J852 \heartsuit 643
- (c) \heartsuit J2 \heartsuit AJ103 \heartsuit QJ985 \heartsuit 43
- (d) \heartsuit A2 \heartsuit J32 \heartsuit QJ985 \heartsuit 643
- (e) \heartsuit AJ42 \heartsuit 103 \heartsuit A852 \heartsuit Q43
- (f) \heartsuit 642 \heartsuit 5 \heartsuit KQJ985 \heartsuit Q43

Solutions over page.

TEST YOUR BIDDING - SOLUTIONS

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	D'ble	1♥	?

(a) ♠ J642 ♥ 103 ♦ J852 ♣ 643

Pass. If RHO had passed the double, you would have had to bid a strangled 1♠, but now you are off the hook. You can sit back, relax, and forget your income tax.

(b) ♠ AJ42 ♥ 53 ♦ J852 ♣ 643

1♠. If RHO had passed the double, you would have bid a comfortable 1♠, and you still can. Rather than showing 0-8 HCP (after RHO's pass), it now shows 6-9 HCP. Perfect!

(c) ♠ J2 ♥ AJ103 ♦ QJ985 ♣ 43

D'ble. It feels like RHO thinks he's in trouble. Perhaps he was worried about 1♦ doubled being left in, so is trying to escape. Make a penalty double, and if the opposition return to diamonds (or notrumps), double that as well. If they go to a black suit, then you hope partner will be able to wield the axe.

(d) ♠ A2 ♥ J32 ♦ QJ985 ♣ 643

1NT. A good description of the hand, with 8 points and solid diamond stoppers. Your lack of a heart stopper is not a big concern. Partner probably has them stopped, and even if he doesn't, 1NT will still likely be your best contract.

(e) ♠ AJ42 ♥ 103 ♦ A852 ♣ Q43

2♠. Again the bid you would have made if RHO had passed. Here it is showing about 10-12 HCP.

(f) ♠ 642 ♥ 5 ♦ KQJ985 ♣ Q43

Pass. What's going on here? It's hard to say, but again RHO might be bidding because he is scared of a contract of 1♦ doubled. But unlike on hand (c), here he may have lucked out, finding his port in the storm. Whatever, there's nothing you can do right now: any diamond bid by you is likely to be misunderstood by partner. Time to 'await developments'.

**BLACK MAGIC
Bill Jacobs**

Dir: West ♠ AK52
Vul: N/S ♥ 643
♦ 7
♣ AKJ83

	N		♠ QJ1084
W		E	♥ 7
	S		♦ A952
			♣ Q97

West	North	East	South
2♥*	D'ble	Pass	2NT**
Pass	3NT	All pass	

* natural weak 2
** natural

Test yourself on defence on this tricky deal.

Partner leads ♥K, which wins, and follows with the ♥10, as you throw a diamond.

Declarer wins ♥A and plays the ♣4, ♣5, ♣J ...

Your play.

		♠ AK52	
		♥ 643	
		♦ 7	
		♣ AKJ83	
♠ 7	N		♠ QJ1084
♥ KQJ1082	W	E	♥ 7
♦ 10843			♦ A952
♣ 52	S		♣ Q97
			♠ 963
			♥ A95
			♦ KQJ7
			♣ 1064

Did you win the ♣Q and return the ♠Q? No good, I'm afraid. Declarer wins and plays a diamond. The ♣10 will be an entry to hand for declarer to take 2 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 4 clubs.

It is the same outcome if you return a diamond, or a club.

What does that leave? The magician *lets the club jack win*. This sacrifices a club trick but kills declarer's entry back to his diamond winners. Declarer can take 2 spades, 1 heart, 5 clubs but alas no diamonds.

Is this play findable outside of Fantasyland? Perhaps. East is looking at the dummy and says to himself: I will play my hand against dummy - you only have 7 tricks there, plus the ♥A won earlier.



**JUST FOR CLUBS ...
SETTING UP YOUR BRIDGEMATES
Bill Jacobs**

Does your club use bridgemates for scoring? Do you provide pre-dealt hands, hand records and a results website?

If you answered 'yes' to these questions, then this article is for you.

Bridgemates, particularly the hideously expensive Bridgemate II, provide a host of options for how they operate. I want to focus on just one of them: the display of what other tables did on a board.

At the clubs where I played and directed, the other table results were available for display. You would enter your result, the bridgemate would say: "View Results?", and you could then discover how well you scored.

Then I started directing at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club, and they have set up their bridgemates *not* to display this data. I was shocked: wouldn't it vastly detract from the players' enjoyment not to see how good, or bad, each score was?

Surprisingly, they didn't seem to mind.

And then I started to notice that the game was a little bit quieter than normal. And quicker. No rising hubbub every 7 minutes as someone read out the other results, and the table discussed them.

And volume and speed are not the only benefits of being unable to view the other tables' results. No longer do the North-South pair have to peer over or ask, whilst the East or West player (the one who verified the score) looks at the results. No longer do players argue over why they got a bottom, and assign blame. No longer does one have to listen to an opponent say, nauseatingly: "it's a top for us, partner".

Such relaxation! And what do you lose? Nothing really. You have the hand record at the end of the game. You can go home and look at the web-site in privacy. That will have all the details you need. Whether your club uses Altosoft, or Bridgemaster, or Bridgewebs, the data is all there, pleasingly arranged for your viewing pleasure.

I decided to try switching off the display of results at my club, Northern Bridge Club in Rosanna. I turned it off for a few sessions, then polled the players on their opinions.

There was over 90% approval for not showing results. And trust me, just about everyone voted: this was no postal plebiscite! People have a real opinion on these matters. And the approval was forceful: "so much more pleasant" was a constant refrain. I hadn't realised how much rancour and discomfort this reviewing of other table results had been causing.

Of the few people who didn't like the change, a common reason was: "I want to know how I am going, during the game." There is a solution to this (with Bridgemate IIs). You can allow players to view their ranking *at the end of each round*. Essentially, this is barometer scoring. I switched that option on, and now players can optionally take a look at their rank at the end of each round.

Not too many pairs bother, and the feature is entirely non-intrusive, but it's there if players want to know their current position.

There are a couple of side effects of not displaying other table results. Players cannot pick up blatantly incorrect scores from other tables, although the best scoring programs do a decent job of this anyway. That's a small negative, but a big positive is that should a score get entered against the wrong board (usually the board the table is about to play), you no longer see *those* results. This of course is a Very Good Thing.

In summary, I recommend your club at least trial turning off the display of other table results. You might be surprised by the response.



TIP OF THE MONTH

Consider this auction:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠

How many cards are each of the players promising in their suit?

Well, the number of clubs held by the 1♣ opener will vary according to system: typically 2, 3 or 4 clubs are promised.

The *overcalling* side – North and South in this example, need 5 cards to bid their suit. They are at a statistical strength disadvantage, because of the opposing opening bid, and the 5-card suit requirement is the necessary compensation to get into the auction.

1♥ on the other hand only promises 4 cards, just as it would without the intervention.

Now let's continue the auction, bizarrely:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♦	1♥	1♠
2♣	2♦	2♥	2♠

Everyone has repeated their suit: how many cards are they promising? Here's the tip:

Repeating your suit, in any position, "promises" at least 6 cards in that suit.

This is an extremely important principle, and no matter how wrong it might appear to you, you will do well to adhere to it whenever possible.

The beauty of requiring six cards to repeat a suit, in any auction, is that it allows partner to potentially pass in relative comfort with a singleton, or to possibly bid further in that suit with a doubleton.

Want to rebid a 5-card suit? Well first, look elsewhere ... can you support partner or bid a new (4-card) suit? Can you bid notrumps? Or even pass (if not in a forcing situation)? Consider this hand and auction:

♠ x ♥ Kxx ♦ KJxx ♣ AJxxx

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♣
			?

Don't rebid 2♣! Partner will expect 6 of them. Nor should you bid 2♦, which would be a reverse bid, promising 16+ HCP. 1NT is the correct rebid. Note the beauty of this scheme: even though you have a singleton spade, partner won't rebid the spades without a 6-card suit, in which case, spades is probably where you want to play.

Yes, there are circumstances where you might have to rebid a 5-card suit. (That's why the "promises" in the tip is in quotes). And yes, this 6-card requirement may result in the occasional missing of a 5-3 fit, not that this is always a calamity.

But over a lifetime of bridge, you will do well to adhere to this month's tip.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

State

Este Collins	Benalla
Evelyn Ebbs	Ballarat
Henry Frolich	MCC
Peter George	Williamstown
Fred Kaminski	Traralgon
Sharon Landers	Moonee Valley
Bruce Le Quesne	Yarrowonga
Rosemary Nurse	Kooyong
David Woolf	Mornington

*State

Barbara Barr	Traralgon
Leon Cohen	Dendy Park
Lisa Yoffa	Waverley
Kailun Zhang	VBA

National

Barry Bromham	Yarra Valley
Helen Jones	Yarrowonga
Peter Lardy	Mornington
Richard Sicree	Dendy Park
Wilbert Smits	Sale

*National

Helen Cantwell	Sale
Kath Connors	Ballarat
John Engelman	VBA
Valentine Ratnayeke	Bendigo
Simon Rose	VBA

**National

Anne Fennell	Ballarat
Michael Zarb	Sale

Life

Penny Blankfield	Kooyong
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Gold Life

Desma Sampson	Macedon Ranges
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