

BRIDGE

Number One Hundred and Twenty-Two

February 2013

2013 BRIDGE EVENTS with Bernard Magee



Chatsworth Hotel
Worthing BN11 3DU

APRIL continued

12-14 Chatsworth
Hotel
£245 Declarer Play

19-21 Inn
on the Prom
£245 Thinking
Defence



Cheltenham Regency Hotel
Cheltenham GL51 0ST

OCTOBER 2013

25-27 Queensferry
Hotel
£245 Finding
Slams

NOVEMBER 2013

18-20 Olde Barn
Hotel
£245 Better Leads
& Switches

MARCH 2013

22-24 Queensferry
Hotel
£245 Leads and
Defence

APRIL 2013

5-7 Blunsdon
House Hotel
£245 Losing Trick
Count



The Olde Barn Hotel
Marston, Lincs NG32 2HT

OCTOBER 2013

11-13 Blunsdon
House Hotel
£245 Splinters and
Cue Bids

18-20 Chatsworth
Hotel
£245 Playing &
Defending
1NT



Blunsdon House Hotel
Swindon SN26 7AS

JULY 2013

5-7 Blunsdon
House Hotel
£245 Signals
and
Discards

12-14 Cheltenham
Regency
£245 Thinking
Defence



Queensferry Hotel
North Queensferry KY11 1HP



Inn on the Prom
St Annes-on-Sea FY8 1LU

**Full Board.
No Single
Supplement.**

**See booking
form on
page 9.**

QPLUS 10

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- Advanced Basics
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- Strong Hands
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- Defence to 1NT
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- Suit Establishment in Suits
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- Ruffing for Extra Tricks
- Entries in No-trumps **£76**
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- Using the Lead
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- Endplays & Avoidance
- Using the Bidding

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- Making Overtricks in Suit Contracts
- Endplays
- Avoidance
- Wrong Contract **£81**
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- Playing Doubled Contracts
- Safety Plays

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- Lead vs Suit Contracts
- Partner of Leader vs No-trump Contracts
- Partner of Leader vs Suit Contracts
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- Discarding
- Defensive Plan
- Stopping Declarer
- Counting the Hand

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- No-Trump Openings **£89**
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- Pre-empting
- Doubles
- Overcalls
- Competitive Auctions



Make your cheque payable to Mr Bridge and send to: Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Knaphill, Surrey GU21 2TH

01483 489961 www.mrbridge.co.uk/mrbridge-shop Fax 01483 797302



System Requirements: Windows XP, Vista or 7, 8mb RAM, CD-ROM



BRIDGE

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Surrey GU21 2TH

☎ 01483 489961

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Better Hand Evaluation

Bernard Magee

Introduction

Better Hand Evaluation is aimed at helping readers to add greater accuracy to their bidding. It deals with auctions in which you and your partner, against silent opponents, can describe your hands fully to each other and, by evaluating them accurately, find the best final contract. The emphasis of all good, accurate bidding is on hand evaluation.

There are two general types of auction: a) a fit is found and b) no fit is found.

When you do not have a fit, you are aiming to describe the strength of your hand as soon as possible, most often using no-trump bids. This book begins by discussing balanced hand bidding in Acol, as it is very important that both members of a partnership have an accurate knowledge of how to show hands of different strengths.

When a fit is found, there is much re-evaluation of the hand to be done; point count, though still important, needs to be evaluated together with distribution. The best way of reaching an accurate assessment is to use the Losing Trick Count; this is an important method of hand evaluation and takes up a number of chapters.

Finally, we move on to different forms of evaluation including game tries and splinter bids. You can never know enough methods of hand evaluation; the more you learn, the better you get at judging your hand.

Although the Losing Trick Count is used more easily in tandem with your partner, a large proportion of the ideas in this book can be used by an individual. For example, evaluating your hand to be worth an extra point is going to help anyone you partner – as long as you get it right.

£14 including postage

See Mail Order Form on page 9.



BERNARD MAGEE

at **Denham Grove**
near **Uxbridge, Bucks, UB9 5DG.**

Tuesday **14 May**

From 9.30 am

Check in
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

10.30 am – 12 noon
Thinking Defence

12 noon – 2.30 pm
Supervised Play¹
3-Course Buffet Lunch

3 pm – 4.30 pm
**Pre-emptive
Bidding**

4.30 pm – 7 pm
Supervised Play¹
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Day guests may stay until 7pm.

Wednesday **15 May**

From 9.30 am

Check in
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

10.30 am – 12 noon
Splinters & Cue Bids

12 noon – 2.30 pm
Supervised Play¹
3-Course Buffet Lunch

3 pm – 4.30 pm
**Play & Defence
at Duplicate Pairs**

4.30 pm – 7 pm
Supervised Play¹
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Day guests may stay until 7pm.

Thursday **16 May**

From 9.30 am

Check in
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

10.30 am – 12 noon
**Hand Evaluation
(without a fit)**

12 noon – 2.30 pm
Supervised Play¹
3-Course Buffet Lunch

3 pm – 4.30 pm
Avoidance Play

4.30 pm – 7 pm
Supervised Play¹
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Day guests may stay until 7pm.

£100 per day². £270 for all three days³.

A limited number of bedrooms are available:

Dinner, bed and breakfast: £90 per person, per night.

Contact Mr Bridge to book your place or for further details: ☎ 01483 489961

These seminars are to be filmed. When ready, a full boxed set of DVDs will be sent.

¹Not with Bernard Magee. ²Includes buffet lunch. ³Day guests only.

DREAMS



Three years ago I decided that the way forward was to commission a series tutorial films covering every aspect of the game. These were to be scripted by Bernard Magee and delivered by a suitable presenter. I found the only way I could make this happen was to re-invent myself, this time as an executive producer. This is film industry jargon for the man who finds the money. Several personalities were considered but this would cost and as readers must know, Bernard Magee lives and breathes his scripts, so when by chance the organisers of Haslemere Festival suggested to me that they would like to have some bridge content as part of their happenings, we thought we would try some scripts out in 2011. I contacted TV director, Hugh Dehn, who had recently completed a bridge series for Sky Arts Two, *Celebrity Bridge*, so I knew his work would be up to my required standard. It was just a matter of Bernard's

suitability as a presenter. The rest is history.

For this year, I have relocated to Denham Grove, an altogether more audience convenient location but kept to the dates that were advertised for Haslemere. I profusely apologise for any inconvenience that these changes may have caused. I have also taken on board several of the suggestions as you will see from the adjacent advertisement.

Come along and meet Bernard and be filmed. Everyone booking will be sent a boxed set of this year's six DVDs when ready later in the year.

FADED DREAMS

In addition to my DVD project, I also hoped to develop North America as an extra market. After all, they sought to speak the same language. However, after three years, I have closed it down, cancelled the adverts and given up.

Part of the problem is that they kept things to themselves and are not at all outward looking.

Over there, if repeat buyers are quizzed about Bernard Magee software, they wax poetic about it, but don't want to tell their friends. It is their secret weapon and fountain of knowledge.

At least my back cover

advertising and promotion these last three years has stimulated changes in the quality of adverts over there but bridge is dying out faster than in the UK. And yes, it is dying and the market shrinking. Down from 1,850,000 players in 1987 when I started to below 300,000 last year.

MORE DREAMS

Hopefully, Voyager with some modifications will be a ship with a bridge party on board on every cruise, but this can only happen if bridge players tell the ship that is what they would like. I think this dream, which more or less worked on mv Discovery for eight years, is fading as the number of players in the 'pool' dwindles.

ANOTHER DREAM

A national chain of bridge centres is an obvious constituent of any promoters' wish list. It's a matter of getting the prototype right and then rolling it out. This is more difficult in a shrinking market place.

AND ANOTHER

It is obvious that my enthusiasm for promoting Just Duplicate Bridge Events is yet another of my dreams. I am giving it one more try at making these work but like the cost of

filming or developing the North American market or the bridge on board service, there is a limit to the amount that I can reasonably afford as a skier, (someone who spends the kids inheritance). I am past that, so if this doesn't work, I shall have to assume that it is just not wanted.

QPLUS NEWS

QPlus 11 is in the course of preparation and will incorporate all the improvements of the past three years. It should be ready in the early Autumn. Buy version 10 now for £92 and I will send you version 11 when it is ready (you may keep version 10 to give to a friend). For regular followers of this column, here are a few hands, for you to look at:

2941/02 – 1978/13
4616/06 – 6529/11
6656/01 – 302/09

BETTER BRIDGE

The first CD with six chapters, each with twenty hands and matching the six subjects covered by the DVDs at the 2011 Haslemere Festival is now on sale. Bernard Magee at his very best. An ideal gift at any time.

RECORDED

Please note that all calls to my office are recorded. ▶

The Inn on the Prom Bridge Events 2013

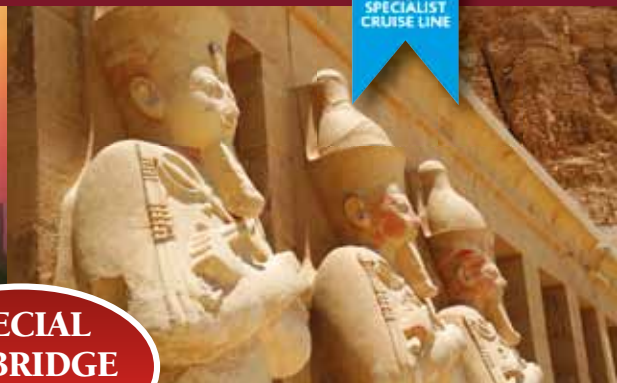
19-21 April	Bernard Magee	Thinking Defence	£245
12-14 July	Gwen Beattie	Just Duplicate Bridge	£169
16-18 August	Gwen Beattie	Just Duplicate Bridge	£169

Full Board – No Single Supplement. Booking Form on page 9.



St Annes-on-Sea FY8 1LU

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Muscat • OMAN
Salalah

Porbandar
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Arabian Sea

MARCH 20, 2013 – 16 days from £1,695

DATE	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART
MAR 20	Depart UK		
MAR 21	Arrive MUMBAI India		overnight hotel
MAR 22	MUMBAI India		
	Embark <i>Aegean Odyssey</i>		5.00pm
MAR 23	PORBANDAR India		7.00pm
MAR 24	At Sea		
MAR 25-26	MUSCAT Oman	2.00pm	2.00pm
MAR 27	At Sea		
MAR 28	SALALAH Oman	2.00pm	8.00pm
MAR 29 - APR 2	Cruising the Gulf of Arabia & Red Sea		
APR 3	SAFAGA/LUXOR Egypt		overnight hotel
	Disembark and drive to Luxor		
APR 4	LUXOR Egypt		
	Transfer to Luxor Airport for flight home		

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SINGLE SUPPLEMENT ONLY £100

* Prices shown are per person, double occupancy and include MR BRIDGE SPECIAL SAVINGS. This offer is subject to availability, is capacity controlled and may be withdrawn at any time.
BRIDGE PLAYERS: The bridge programme is completely optional and Mr Bridge passengers can participate as much, or as little as they wish. There is a supplement of £100 for those wishing to participate in the duplicate bridge programme.
Singles are made especially welcome and a playing partner will always be found.

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Enhance your voyage with the classical sights of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur at the beginning of your voyage. Known as India’s “Golden Triangle”, this 4-night land tour is an opportunity not to be missed! Please ask for details.



METAMORPHOSIS

As you can gather this publication is in a state of flux. Lurching and searching, looking for advertisers and sponsors. Anything that will keep it free of charge.

Support at the moment is thin on the ground. It is all the more disheartening that, on my travels celebrating my 25 years as Mr Bridge, so few had booked or registered to be part of the bridge party, just taking the on board Mr Bridge service for granted.

If my advertisers or sponsors aren't told, they won't know and if they don't know, they won't want to know. Minerva has no organised bridge on board now, but thirty-five passengers presented themselves to play on this week's cruise only to be given cards, bidding boxes and score pads and told to organise it for themselves.

MAEVE BINCHY

I was saddened to learn of the death of Maeve Binchy last year and did promise to tell readers about how she has helped to quietly promote the game.

I wrote to her in 1989, when I launched my first magazine, *Bridge Plus*. She offered to contribute, 'a diary of a bad bridge player,' but bad bridge is even more technically difficult to write about than more usual headings and nothing came of it. She also promised to write kindly about bridge in all her forthcoming novels and this she faithfully did. She also boosted my spirits, sending me hand-written postcards with helpful suggestions whenever I sent her a copy of BRIDGE.

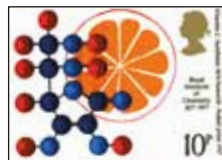
Indeed, she included a photo of herself, playing bridge at her home in Dalkey, near Dublin and she scribbled on the back that the bottle of red wine had contributed to the bad bridge, but it was great fun.

CLUB INSURANCE

Moore Stephens offer a club insurance package to cover clubs and more particularly their committee members for all the obvious risks. £60 for a club of 100 members... and most importantly, it covers the unforeseen.

I receive at least one letter a month telling me that I am scare-mongering, trying to drum up business, but it is the risks that aren't obvious that are the problem and need to be covered by insurance. Ring Moore Stephens on ☎ 0207 515 5270.

GOFFIES STAMPS



These days, I occasionally get to see the post before it is sorted and opened. When I do, I have noticed an increasing number of letters that have multiple stamps on their covers. This I put down to my promotion of Clive Goff and his discounted stamps. His support for this publication has been long, lasting and constant.

Value supplied in two stamps combined to make up the 50p 2nd class rate, 2nd class to you, 41p. 1st class 60p, only 50p to you. Available in lots of 100. ☎ 0208 422 4906 clive.goff@londonrugby.com

LITTLE VOICE

The offer of second hand copies of QPlus has raised £4,517 for Little Voice since it was announced. This is in addition to the £2,000 or so regularly coming in from the sale of used stamps. Thank you.

Charity organisers who would like some of the remaining stock of second-hand software to sell at their event in support of their charity should write in. This is an excellent way of increasing the sum total raised, without too much extra work. Another job for a committee member.

Amazing what can be raised from unwanted paper and software.

CHARITY

It always surprises me that charity promoters of bridge sessions, to raise funds for their good causes, do not use these pages more to advertise their events, along the lines of the adjacent column. After all, the space is given for no charge. All I ask is that the relevant dates and information is provided well in advance. It is also surprising that so few ask for prizes. When bothering to raise funds, perhaps the organisers should have one of the committee put in charge of collecting prizes. We never refuse to provide support for any good cause. So charity organisers and promoters, let's be hearing from you.

CHALLENGE CUP

This year's heat is to be held on Thursday March 7 in support of The Prostate Cancer Charity. To hold a heat, ring Anna Gudge on ☎ 01787 881920 or email her on anna@ecats.co.uk ▶

CHARITY BRIDGE EVENTS

MARCH 2013

- 8 **GARDEN HOUSE HOSPICE**
Letchworth Howard Rotary Club. The Settlement, Letchworth G. C.
1.30 for 2.00. £7.50pp inc afternoon tea and prizes.
Alan Fraser
☎ 01462 685448
alanf@letchworthrotary.org.uk
- 12 **ST NEOTS BOWLING CLUB**
(ARC). St Neots, Cambs.
10.00 for 10.30am. £14.00.
John Shaw
☎ 01480 475454
- 13 **ROTARY CLUB OF WIMBORNE**, Allendale Community Centre, Wimborne. £28 per table, inc. high tea & prizes.
Don Phillips
☎ 01202 891801
- 14 **HUDDERSFIELD PENNINE ROTARY CLUB**
Outlane Golf Club.
12 for 12.30. £44 per table.
Brian Noble
☎ 01484 427356

APRIL 2013

- 10 **RNLI**
Charity bridge match.
The Institute, Leatherhead.
Tickets £30 a table.
Ann Chapman
☎ 01372 720020
peter.chapman@btinternet.com
- 19 **MS THERAPY CENTRE**
Village Hall, Hemingford Abbots. 10.00 for 10.30am.
Tickets £14.00.
Jenny Lea
☎ 01480 455810

MAY 2013

- 9 **HUDDERSFIELD PENNINE ROTARY CLUB**
Outlane Golf Club.
12 for 12.30. £44 per table.
Brian Noble
☎ 01484 427356
- 15 **CHILDRENS CHARITIES**
Doddington Village Hall, March. £14. 10 for 10.30am.
Val Topliss
☎ 01354 653696

E-mail your charity events:
maggie@mrbridge.co.uk

BERNARD MAGEE

Filmed Live at Haslemere Festival

1. RUFFING FOR EXTRA TRICKS (2011)

This seminar deals with declarer's use of ruffing to generate extra tricks and then looks at how the defenders might counteract this.

2. COMPETITIVE AUCTIONS (2011)

This seminar focuses on competitive auctions from the perspective of the overcalling side to start with and then from the perspective of the opening side in the second part.

3. MAKING THE MOST OF HIGH CARDS (2011)

This seminar helps declarer use his high cards more carefully and then looks at how defenders should care for their precious high cards.

4. IDENTIFYING & BIDDING SLAMS (2011)

The first half of this seminar is about identifying when a slam might be on – one of the hardest topics to teach, because as soon as you announce the topic everybody is looking for slams. The second half covers some of the techniques used to bid slams.

5. PLAY & DEFENCE OF 1NT CONTRACTS (2011)

This seminar looks at the most common and yet most feared of contracts: 1NT. The first half looks at declaring the contract and the second part puts us in the defenders' seats..

6. DOUBLING & DEFENCE AGAINST DOUBLED CONTRACTS (2011)

The first half of this seminar explores penalty doubles and the second half discusses the defence against doubled contracts.

7. LEADS (2012)

Bernard takes you through all the basic leads and the importance of your choice of lead. If you start to think not just about your hand, but about your partner's too, then you will get much better results.

8. LOSING TRICK COUNT (2012)

A method of hand evaluation for when you find a fit. Bernard deals with the basics of the losing trick count then looks at advanced methods to hone your bidding.

9. MAKING A PLAN AS DECLARER (2012)

Bernard explains how to make a plan then expands on how to make the most of your long suits. The first half deals with no-trumps, the second with suit contracts.

10. RESPONDING TO 1NT (2012)

This seminar deals with Transfers and Stayman in detail. The 1NT opening comes up frequently, so having a good, accurate system of responses is paramount.

11. SIGNALS AND DISCARDS (2012)

This seminar deals with Count, Attitude and Suit-preference signals: aiming to get you working as a partnership in defence..

12. ENDPLAYS (2012)

Bernard takes you through the basics of the technique before showing some magical hands where you take extra tricks from defenders. In the second half, Bernard looks at how to avoid being endplayed as a defender.

DVDs Each £25.

Boxed Sets of 6 (2011 or 2012) £100.

See Mail Order Form on page 9.

SPRING CLEAN

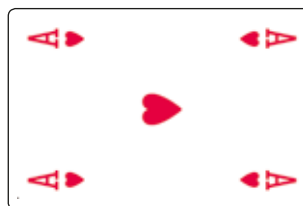
Once more I am re-stocking my bridge venues with new equipment. I will be selling the old boards and bidding boxes at knock-down prices. This is ideal for those wanting to start a new club. However, I am not packing it up. It will be sold to visitors who come by appointment.

☎ 01483 489961.

HELP WANTED

I am seeking to enlarge my team of hosts, helpers and lecturers. In the first instance please write in with your bridge CV plus a little detail of any earlier career. I warn applicants that they will initially be interviewed over the telephone and having a working knowledge of what I am trying to achieve will put you in a good light. I might suggest you look at recent issues of BRIDGE and read my pages at the front of every issue. Just being helpful.

VALENTINE



Just a quick tip I have been meaning to pass onto readers. If you are in need of a St Valentine's Day card, take the Ace of Hearts from an old pack and adapt it. Useful for birthdays too.

FILM BENEFITS

Watching and re-watching Bernard Magee's films has got me interested in trying to learn to play bridge properly. It's the over and over again bit that is such a

great help. Far better than any book, believe me.

MAC CONVERTER

I am looking into putting together an offer for the Bernard Magee tutorial software to include a Windows converter as part of the deal. Those interested please call.

NEW WRITERS

Just as I need new hosts, lecturers and helpers, I also need new ideas and columnists for BRIDGE. Let me have a sample in complete confidence and don't be shy or backward in coming forward.

BERNARD'S CRUISES

Bernard Magee is hosting three cruises on board my Voyager in the coming year. Details on page 16.

DISAPPOINTMENT

My widely advertised cruise of the year has to go without us as my wife's knee has suddenly become more of a problem. Indeed, a hospital slot has been found for an operation in early March and we must put first things first.

Now, shock horror, she has been admitted to hospital with severe pneumonia and pleurisy, where she has been for just over a week.

FINALLY

If you hear from your friends that they aren't receiving BRIDGE. Please tell them they have been presumed dead and deleted from the database.

All good wishes.

Mr Bridge

Mr Bridge MAIL ORDER

PLAY SOFTWARE

QPlus 10 / QPlus 11
when ready £92.00

QPlus 10
Trade-in £43.00

QPlus 9, clean,
second-hand £49.00

TUTORIAL SOFTWARE

Begin Bridge
Acol Version £66.00

Acol Bidding £66.00

Advanced
Acol Bidding £96.00

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If the Contract Looks Safe, Look for a Snag

Bridge is a hard game but, now and then, a hand comes along that looks simple. In these cases, it is easy to take your eye off the ball. Don't! Danger is often just round the corner. Be vigilant at all times. Take this deal:

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

You arrive in 3NT and win the heart lead. The contract looks easy with two spades, one heart, five diamonds and a club. You also see that you can pick up four diamonds with East by playing to the ace and finessing the ten if need be. Quite right, but did you see the need to play the seven of diamonds towards dummy? If you mistakenly played the two, the suit becomes blocked and you will make only four tricks in the suit!

		♠ 7 6		
		♥ 8 4 3		
		♦ A K Q 10 6 4		
		♣ 7 4		
♠ Q J 5			♠ 10 9 8 4 2	
♥ K 7			♥ Q J 10 6	
♦ J 9 8 7 5			♦ Void	
♣ K 8 2			♣ Q J 10 3	
		♠ A K 3		
		♥ A 9 5 2		
		♦ 3 2		
		♣ A 9 6 5		

Again, you reach 3NT. This time you receive the lead of the queen of spades.

A quick tally of your tricks shows that, with four tricks in the other suits, you need only five in diamonds for the contract – your target at teams or rubber. It looks so simple to play a low diamond to the ten, a safety play in case the suit breaks 4-1. I am afraid that's wrong. If West plays the five, you should cover with the six in case the suit splits 5-0, while if West follows with any other card you should duck altogether. How clever it would be for West to play the jack of diamonds and how much cleverer it would be for you to duck!

Sometimes built-in instinct takes over when a nice dummy appears, though this can at times lead you astray....

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

You arrive in 4♠ and receive the lead of the two of clubs. If you are playing on autopilot, you might be tempted to play low from dummy. That would be a fatal mistake. East takes the king and returns a club. West ruffs, plays the ace of diamonds and then a low diamond to his partner's king. Another club ruff puts the contract two down! If declarer stops to count his tricks, however, he will work out that he doesn't need two club tricks. Six spades, two hearts, a diamond ruff and a club come to ten.

Just take the ace of clubs, draw trumps and throw a club on a good heart. You lose just one club and two diamonds – your last diamond you ruff in dummy. A 6-1 club break was unfortunate but should not have mattered.

Sometimes it is hard to think as clearly as one should when an opponent has doubled the contract or you are in a slam. The excitement of the moment takes over and the adrenalin rush can get in the way....

		♠ Q 8 4 3		
		♥ K 7		
		♦ A Q 8 6 5		
		♣ K 3		
♠ Void			♠ J 10 6 2	
♥ J 9 6 5 2			♥ 8 4 3	
♦ J 10 9 3			♦ 4 2	
♣ 9 7 5 2			♣ J 10 8 4	
		♠ A K 9 7 5		
		♥ A Q 10		
		♦ K 7		
		♣ A Q 6		

After a well-judged auction, you arrive in a contract of 7♠ and receive the lead of the jack of diamonds. It is easy to be complacent in this sort of situation and rather take things for granted. Here, for example, it would be all too easy to assume that you had more than enough tricks. Don't! You have to be aware that trumps might break badly. If West has all four missing trumps, the contract is doomed. Luckily, you can cater for them all with East. What you must not do is play a top spade from your hand first! Instead, play low to the queen, whereupon you find out about the bad break. You now have nothing to worry about because, with plenty of entries to dummy, you can take repeated finesses against the jack and the ten to ensure a happy outcome. ■

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Raise to Two with Three Trumps

You are playing Acol with four-card majors. Your partner opens 1♠. What should you respond with hand A?

Hand A	Hand B
♠ K 7 6	♠ Void
♥ 3 2	♥ 9 6
♦ A 5 3 2	♦ Q J 7 6 5 4
♣ 9 6 4 3	♣ K 8 4 3 2

With seven points and a four-card suit, hand A falls well short on the Rule of Fourteen. Seven plus four is eleven, and you want a score of fourteen for a two-over-one response. This leaves two choices: 1NT and 2♣. If you go for 1NT, because you like four spades to raise 1♠ to 2♣, think again. Several factors make 2♣ the most practical bid.

1 As you may know, I like to describe the 1NT response as a ‘dustbin bid’. It has to include hand B because B isn’t good enough for a two-level change of suit. If opener has five spades (and he very often will), he cannot rebid 2♣ in case you have hand B. A 1NT response on A means that you will regularly miss a 5-3 spade fit.

2 What can partner have for 1♠ if he has only four spades? You never open a 4-4-4-1 with 1♠, so that leaves 4-4-3-2 and 4-3-3-3 shapes. With these shapes, assuming you play a weak no-trump, he opens 1NT if he has 12-14 points. Thus, he can only open 1♠ without five spades if he is balanced but too strong for 1NT. Even then, he will open 1♥ with 4-4 in the majors or he may well open a strong 4-card minor rather than a weak 4-card major. In practice, depending on your style, between 75% and 90% of Acol 1♠ openings will contain five

or more spades. If you respond 1NT to 1♠ with hand A, you are going to miss an awful lot of 5-3 spade fits!

3 Suppose opener has a balanced hand with four spades. What can he rebid if you raise 1♠ to 2♣?

- i With 15-16 points, opener passes. Game is unlikely opposite your 6-9. Note that he doesn’t say 16 points facing a possible 9 make game and bid on. You don’t look for perfect cards. You cannot allow yourself to keep getting too high just to avoid missing the odd game. How well will 2♣ play? It will be a 4-3 fit. While this is sub-optimal, you will have extra points to help and partner might well ruff a heart in your short trump hand. You can usually come to eight tricks playing in a 4-3 fit with fair values at the two level.

ii With 17-18 points, he bids 2NT over your 2♣. There is sometimes confusion about what 2NT shows. In rubber-style Acol, 1♠-2♣-2NT shows 15-16 points. That is logical because 1♠-2♣ shows at least nine points. 1♠-2♣ shows at most nine points, so 2NT here shows 17-18.

iii With 19 points, he rebids 3NT.

My advice is this: *If partner opens 1♠, you should prefer a raise to 2♣ to a response of 1NT if you have three-card spade support and some side suit shortage.* A few players even raise on a flat 3-3-3-4 shape; that is not my advice. It is equally valid to raise 1♥ to 2♥ with three-card support, though if you have three hearts and four spades a response of 1♠ is best. Don’t raise 1♠ to 3♣ on three-card support even if you have the values for jumping.

I finish with some examples.

♠ K 7 6		♠ A Q 8 2
♥ 3 2		♥ A 8 4
♦ A 6 3 2		♦ K 7 5 4
♣ 9 5 4 3		♣ A 7

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	End

2NT shows 17-18 and four spades. West must decide between spades or no-trumps and between game and part-score. With three spades, North prefers no-trumps. Being minimum, he passes 2NT rather than raise to 3NT.

♠ K J 6 4		♠ A Q 8 2
♥ 3 2		♥ A 8 4
♦ A 6 3 2		♦ K 7 5 4
♣ 9 5 4		♣ A 7

West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♣	End		

This time West has four spades and a maximum, so jumps to the spade game.

You raise to two with three trumps at other times. If partner overcalls – surely showing a five-card suit – it is clear to raise. Opener may also raise:

♠ K J 6
♥ K J 7 2
♦ A 9 6 3 2
♣ 9

If you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠, a rebid of 2♣ is much better than 2♦. You can ruff in the short hand and be sure of at least a seven-card fit.

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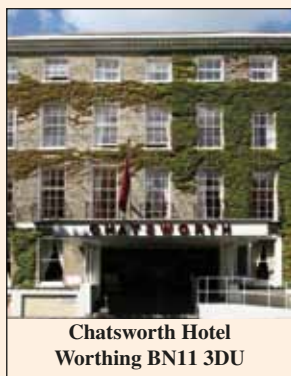
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