

Risborough Bridge Club

June 2017

This is the first in what we hope will be a regular feature on the club's website. We expect to include in each issue a hand which was played or observed at the club or by a member of the club. We start with a 'double-dummy' problem contributed by Hugh Guilford.

Nightmare in the Wessex League!

In Aylesbury's last match of the season against Menagerie, Ian Hesslewood (for many years a member of Risborough) and I had a torrid time. Against us, our opponents bid three making slams not bid elsewhere in the room. Two were cold (12 tricks made at every table). What follows was the third. Disdaining the more plausible (but doomed) contract of 6♠, EW bid (via a transfer sequence) to 6♥ by East! Knowing our opponents to be experts, Ian felt that the lead of his singleton spade would be pointless, as he also held the only entry (♥A). Hence, I could never get in to give him a ruff. On the lead of ♣J, the contract was duly made with the loss of the trump ace only. After the match, we saw that the printout said that the maximum number of tricks in hearts was 11. Even double dummy it took me a while to see how this contract could have been defeated. Over to you, the reader, to figure it out!

	♠ K 7 6 4	
	♥ 10 9 2	
	♦ 6 4 2	
	♣ 9 8 4	
♠ A Q 3	<u>N</u> (me)	♠ J 10 9 8 5
♥ Q J 8 6 5 4		♥ K
♦ 9 3		♦ A K Q J
♣ 7 2		♣ A K Q
<u>W</u>	♠ 2	<u>E</u>
	♥ A 7 3	
	♦ 10 8 7 5	
	♣ J 10 6 5 3	
	<u>S</u>	

Moral of this sorry tale? Don't play these guys for money!

Which of our cards can take tricks? The solution will appear in the next issue.

Risborough Bridge Club

July 2017

A double bill this month; two hands each having a 'double-dummy' defence unlikely to be found in practice

First, the answer to the June problem, where you have to lead to 6♥ played by East:

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

At the table, knowing his opponents to be experts, South felt that the lead of his singleton spade would be pointless, as he also held the only entry (♥A). Hence, North could never get in to give him a ruff. On the lead of ♣J, the contract was duly made with the loss of the trump ace only.

Solution

In fact the only opening lead to defeat the contract is the singleton spade! Declarer must win with the ♠A (otherwise she goes down 2). But this takes away her crucial entry to dummy. Declarer can cross to the ♥K *which must be ducked*. She plays AKQ of both minors, discarding the two losing spades. She can safely reach dummy by ruffing a spade. But when she tries to draw trumps, South can win the forced lead of ♥Q. The lead of the ♦10 from South promotes the setting *trump* trick for North's (now singleton) ♥10. Easy game, bridge! (*when you can see all the cards*)

The stepping stone

The following hand was played in a League match last year. We will put you in declarer's seat, playing in a team of four and in 3NT without any opposition bidding:

Dummy: ♠ KJ93
 ♥ Q76
 ♦ J75
 ♣ JT5

You: ♠ Q4
 ♥ AK52
 ♦ Q643
 ♣ AQ2

West leads the ♦8. Tricks (if you have time): spades 2, hearts 3, diamonds probably only one, clubs 2, total only 8. Chances of a ninth? One if the club finesse works, one if the hearts are 3-3, one if the spades lie well (such as the T dropping). The lead? Top of nothing? Fourth best from AK? If you play low in dummy and the T forces the Q there will be only one entry to dummy and you really need two – one to reach a long spade and one for the club finesse. So you try the ♦J from dummy; it wins and E drops the ♦9. You lead the ♣J from dummy, but W wins with the ♣K. Still only 8 tricks. W leads the ♦A and E shows out, dropping a small club. So the diamonds are 5-1 and W still has ♦KTx.

Now W leads the ♥4. That is good news because West probably does not have the spade ace. If she had, the obvious play would be another diamond, and then W could sit back for declarer to broach spades, win with the ♠A and take two more diamonds – one down. You play the ♥6 from dummy and East plays the ♥8. What now? You need either four hearts and two spades or three of each to go with the two clubs and a diamond. You win with the ♥A. You lead the ♠Q. W plays the 5 and E the 3. You lead the ♠4, W plays the 5, dummy the J and E the Ace. Now E leads the ♥9, which runs to the ♥Q, W playing the ♥7.

The position is:

Dummy: ♠ K9 ♥ 6 ♦ 7 ♣ T5

You: ♠ - ♥ K5 ♦ Q6 ♣ AQ

You are in dummy (with no subsequent entry) at the critical point. You have four tricks and can afford to lose only one more. If East started with only three hearts and ♠ATxx(x) you can cash the ♠K and four heart tricks. It is however more likely that E has four hearts, first because a 4-2 split is inherently more likely and second because E started with only one diamond. But if E has four hearts and you cash the ♠K now you will be left with a losing spade and a losing heart for one down. So what will you play?

You have a resource. You play the ♥6 to the ♥K. W (as you hoped) shows out. You MUST remove all of East's possible exit cards, so now play off the ♣A and ♣Q, all following. You have now seen all the clubs (including East's discard at trick three). So East has only the ♥J and ♠Tx. You are apparently cut off from dummy but you play your last heart. East wins, but is 'thrown in'; he has to play a spade from Tx into the K9, so dummy wins the last two tricks, your eighth and ninth. East has been a 'stepping stone' to the last two tricks. The full hand was:

♠ KJ93
 ♥ Q76
 ♦ J75
 ♣ JT5

♠ 875
 ♥ 43
 ♦ AKT82
 ♣ K97

♠ AT63
 ♥ JT98
 ♦ 9
 ♣ 8643

♠ Q4
 ♥ AK52
 ♦ Q643
 ♣ AQ2

What is the connection with the previous problem? The 'double-dummy' analysis of the hand indicates only eight tricks. It so happens that at trick *three* if East, instead of (quite reasonably) keeping four spades and four hearts, discards a spade *and* later ducks the first two spade leads, he will be able to cash the thirteenth club at trick 12.

As the previous problem showed, 'double-dummy' is not necessarily what happens in real life. Incidentally, 3N went down at the other table. *Easy game, bridge, when you can see all the cards.*

Risborough Bridge Club

August 2017

Discovery & Intra-Finesse

This instructive deal is #16 from teams on May 17th 2017. E / W Vulnerable.

	♠ K 7 5 3	
	♥ 10 7 2	
	♦ A J 6 5 2	
	♣ J	
♠ A J 8	<u>N</u>	♠ 10 9
♥ K 9 4 3		♥ J 5
♦ 10 8		♦ Q 4 3
♣ K 10 8 5		♣ Q 7 6 4 3 2
<u>W</u> (Dealer)	♠ Q 6 4 2	
	♥ A Q 8 6	<u>E</u>
	♦ K 9 7	
	♣ A 9	
	<u>S</u>	

Assume the bidding starts: Pass Pass Pass 1♥
Pass 1♠ Pass 2♠

Now it's close between passing (as I chose to do – the ♣J doesn't amount to anything) or a trial bid of 3♥ in which case South should jump to game (4♠). As this is about play, not bidding, let's focus on making 10 tricks, the par maximum.

On the (actual) lead of ♥J, West seems surely to hold ♥K. Declarer cannot take the risk of an early ruff, so rises with ♥A and leads a spade towards the K which holds. So far so good! The only distribution which prevents 2 trump losers is for either defender to hold Ax, so you now duck a spade but West wins with the J, cashes ♠A and exits with ♣10 to ♣J, ♣Q and ♣A. So now you must play the diamonds for no losers i.e. avoid losing a trick to the queen. Where is she? Well, if West has ♣K, he can't have ♦Q too. Why not? Well, if West held 13 hcps, he would have opened as dealer. So we now have an opportunity for a 'discovery' play by leading ♣9. West doesn't know declarer started with a singleton, so will cover with ♣K if he has it. Then you will have discovered that ♦Q is with East. If so, finessing the ♦J will fail. If East holds ♦Q 10 x, you must lose a trick, so ignore that possibility. But you can play for West to have ♦10! Set up an *intra-finesse* by leading the J (hoping that, if the Q is doubleton, East's other diamond is the 8). This is much more elegant than playing to drop the doubleton Q, so I did and it worked. Ten tricks made!

Ah, I hear you say, but suppose West had *ducked* the ♣9 without twitching! What then? I can only suggest that you take Terence Reece's sage advice: Find easier opposition against whom to play!

Hugh Guilford

Risborough Bridge Club

September 2017

Caught in the cross-fire

We all hope if we have 8 trumps between us and dummy that the opponents' trumps will be 3-2. If they are 4-1 there is always some danger. Do you get depressed if they are 5-0? All is not necessarily lost, even in a slam contract if the distribution of the other suits is all right and there are high trumps in both hands. Here is an example (which I observed from dummy's seat). Let us put you as declarer: you pick up

♠. – ♥. AK754 ♦. Q9654 ♣. KJ5

and open 1H. Partner now bids 2S, showing 6+ spades and a strong hand (though not really good news). You reply 3♦ and W doubles. Partner now redoubles. This is a conventional bid which shows first round control of diamonds. You alert it but nobody asks what it means. You bid 3♥ and now partner bids 4♣. You (with some anxiety) presume this to be a slam try in hearts and shows first round control of clubs. You choose to bid 5♣. Partner now jumps to 6♥ and all pass.

W leads a small club and dummy goes down:

♠. KQJ853

♥. Q98

♦. A

♣. AQ8

♠. –

♥. AK754

♦. Q9654

♣. KJ5

Well, this should not be difficult. You win in hand with CK and lead ♥A. Alas, West shows out and East plays the ♥2. Oh dear, you may think; but do not give up! At least you know where all the trumps are! East has now precisely JT63 in

trumps. Obviously you cannot play trumps; for example, if you play a heart to the Q, then the 9 covered by the J and K, you would still need another trump for the fourth spade, leaving East with two trumps to your one.

The 'trick' in these cases is to use the long suit (spades), *which West cannot ruff*. East will have to hold the ace. You play a club to the Q and lead ♠K. You are pleased to see E play the ♠A and you ruff. A club to the A (both opponents following, fortunately) and you lead ♠Q and ♠J, discarding diamonds, both opponents following and then the ♠8. E plays the ♠T and you ruff.

Now the position is:

♠. 53

♥. Q9

♦. A

♣. -

♠. -

♥. K7

♦. Q96

♣. -

You now know E started with 4 spades, 5 hearts, 3 clubs and now has ♥JT63 and one other card. If his last card is a diamond you can succeed. A diamond to the ♦A stands up and now you play another spade. E is now caught in the cross-fire of the trumps. If E ruffs low you overruff, and make the ♥KQ with a cross ruff, losing only trick 13. E ruffs with the ♥J and you let him keep the trick, discarding a diamond. E has to play a trump from T63, and the lead runs to the Q or 9 in dummy and now you make the last two tricks with a cross ruff.

North to South: "Well played"

East to West: "What happened? I have only one trick"

West to East: "Never mind, at least you did not double"

The full hand was:

	♠. KQJ853	
	♥. Q98	
	♦. A	
	♣. AQ8	
♠. 964		♠. AT72
♥. -		♥. JT632
♦. KJ8742		♦. 3
♣. T742		♣. 963
	♠. -	
	♥. AK754	
	♦. Q9654	
	♣. KJ5	

Observant readers will see that a slightly different ending is possible. When E ruffs with the ♥J at trick ten, South can over-ruff and play a diamond, discarding a spade from dummy. E has to win and then lead from Tx into dummy's Q9.

Andrew Horton

Risborough Bridge Club

December 2017

Playing for an overtrick?

You are playing duplicate pairs and as dealer (love all) and after the simple sequence 1N – 3N and the lead of the ♠5 you see:

♠. Q98

♥. 76

♦. KQ653

♣. AQ7



♠. KJ

♥. AQ93

♦. JT42

♣. J85

You take a few moments to consider whether this is a 'room' contract. Even if S opens 1♥, 3N is likely to be the contract at most tables.

Next, it is easy to see that you are going to make two spades, four diamonds and two aces, making eight tricks if the heart and diamond finesses fail, nine if one succeeds and ten if both succeed. There is no prospect of any fancy end-play, so you will just have to try both finesses.

You play the ♠8 from dummy, and East plays the ♠T, taken with the Jack. You play the ♦4 to the K, East and West both following then a low diamond back, taken by East with the ♦A. East cashes the ♠A and exits with a spade, on which you discard a low heart and West follows with the 7 and the 3. You play off the remaining three diamonds, eventually discarding a club; East discards the ♣2, ♣3 and ♣9, West two hearts (2 and 5) and the ♣4. At this point you have won 6 tricks and the position is:

♠. -

♥. 76

♦. -

♣. AQ7

♠. -

♥. AQ9

♦. -

♣. J8

West has played middle-up-down in spades so probably has started with only three, so it should be safe to finesse the ♥Q. You lead a heart from dummy and put on the Q, which wins. You cash the ace, felling East's ♥K and now are certain for 9 tricks.

It is plain that E has two spades and one club. W has the ♥J and two clubs. East has already shown up with 11 of the outstanding 15 points.

East can see the clubs in dummy. If he had the king he would presumably have discarded a spade and expected to hold you to 9 tricks. If you play to the ace and lead a club to West's king again W makes the ♥J and you take 9 tricks for probably only an average match-point score.

You lead the ♣J. If W plays the K you will make the A, Q and the last club. West plays the ♣6 and now? The club ace for nine tricks or the Q for at least ten?

You played the ace? Well done.

Declarer played the Q but alas! E won with the (now singleton) K and cashed two spades for one down. East saw what was coming and early on decided to bare the CK. Welcome to deception in bridge.

The full hand was:

	♠. Q98	
	♥. 76	
	♦. KQ653	
	♣. AQ7	
♠. 753		♠. AT642
♥. JT852		♥. K4
♦. 87		♦. A9
♣. T64		♣. K932
	♠. KJ	
	♥. AQ93	
	♦. JT42	
	♣. J85	

Nine tricks in NT were made at every other table.

However, declarer should have been more suspicious. E had cashed the spade ace and had held onto the long spades. One might therefore suppose that E knew W had no entry to enable a spade lead and also had a possible entry, which could only be the ♣K.