



Surrey County Bridge Association

Newsletter # 55, Winter 2024-25

Introduction

Tim Warren

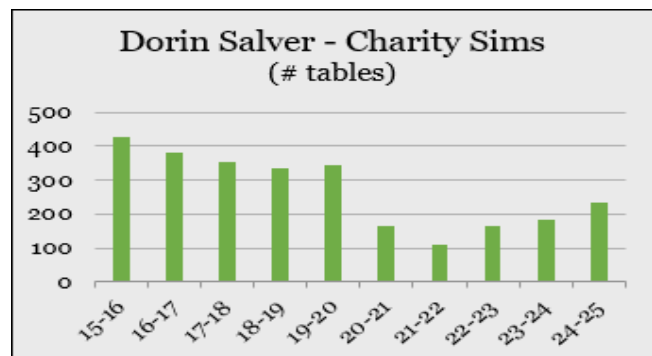
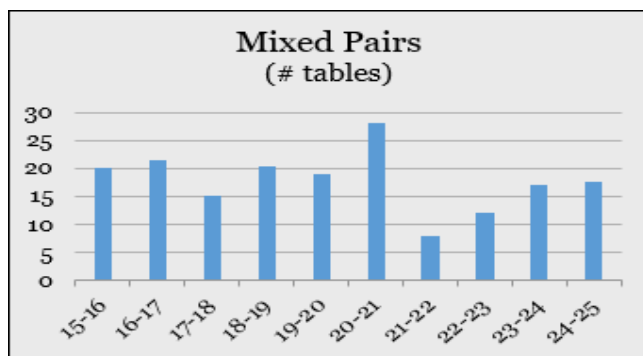
Happy new year to all Surrey members, and welcome to our first newsletter of 2025.

The EBU held its AGM in November. The last two years have seen a campaign from two people seeking to get elected to the EBU Board, with a view to instituting, they say, a significant change of direction. A key responsibility for us, representing Surrey, was to decide who to vote for. After much discussion and consultation, we put all our votes behind the current team. So did most other counties, and the current team were re-elected.

Some bridge clubs, and maybe bridge itself, are under threat, and arguments that Something Must Change can be attractive. So I thought I'd say a bit here about why we voted as we did. Our main reasons were:

- I'd say there's a palpable sense of strong new leadership at the EBU, with a clear direction of their own. We think they deserve the chance to follow that through.
- As well as looking at candidates' ideas, we need confidence that the people behind them have the approach necessary to deliver. Leading a body like the EBU requires a strong team-working ethos, and we feel the current team has that.

On a lighter note, it was good to see that numbers coming to recent face-to-face events have continued to improve gently post-Covid. The Dorin Salver – our simultaneous pairs in aid of charity, held in clubs across the county – is very different from our Mixed Pairs event, but both show similar recovery patterns:



You can argue that the idea of a Mixed Pairs event seems a bit archaic. We considered cancelling it altogether some years ago, but in the end decided it was for members to make that judgement, not us. While the Dorin remains some way below our pre-Covid run rate, numbers at the Mixed Pairs this year weren't far off.

And we're still very keen to find a couple of new volunteers to help – see page 6. Please step forward!

We hope you have a great and successful 2025.

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(This is a slightly shortened version; you can find the full tribute via [the Obituaries part of our website](#).)

I was saddened to hear of the death on 23rd September of my long-term bridge partner Bob Rowlands. He was in a care home in Eastbourne, having been discharged from St Mary's hospital following a broken hip suffered in late May, when he suddenly collapsed and died.

He was born in Swansea on June 1st 1942 – so was 82 at the time of his death – but moved to Lewes in 1954 when his parents separated, and attended Lewes County Grammar School. He taught himself bridge using “Bridge for Beginners” by Victor Mollo and Nico Gardener. Initially, he played rubber bridge and then, in 1962, made his first venture into duplicate, winning the London Teams of 4, including a quarter-final win by over 100 IMPs against a team including Boris Schapiro. He retired from his job in 1989, to concentrate on bridge teaching.

Bob showed his skill aged 21 years on his hand:

Dummy
 ♠ A 3
 ♥ K J 5
 ♦ K 9 3
 ♣ K J 10 8 5

Contract 3NT
 Lead ♠4

Bob
 ♠ K 10 5
 ♥ Q 10 7
 ♦ J 10 6 5
 ♣ A Q 2

After a weak 1NT on his left and 3NT on his right, partner led the ♠4, and dummy played low. Bob quickly played ♠10, and, on winning ♣Q at trick 2, exited with ♠K, beating the contract with partner having five spades to the Jack. Had he won ♠K at trick one the defence would only have taken one trick in spades, but on Bob's defence they took three. This was a very good effort for an inexperienced 21-year-old, Bob calculating that his partner was marked with one point at most.

In 1966 Bob played in the European trials with Brian Cowley and made the team with Harrison-Gray/Tony Priday and Louis Tarlo/Claude Rodrigue. They finished a close fourth, 3 VPs behind the winners, France. Bob would also have qualified in 1969, but one of his team led out of turn against 3NT, the resulting penalty meaning that his opponents won the trials and his team was second, whereas a normal lead would have resulted in his team winning the trials and representing Great Britain in the European Championships.

Bob also played in five Camrose matches, winning all of them, the last in February 1977. He retired from playing internationally aged 34.

His domestic successes included the following wins:

Gold Cup (2003), Crockfords Cup (1975, 1976), Spring Fours (1975, 1987), Pachabo (1967, 1968, 1987), Hubert Phillips (1980, 1982), Lederer (1970), Life Masters Pairs (1968), Grandmasters Pairs (1983, 1998), National Pairs (1976, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2014), Corwen (1986, 1999, 2011), Tollemache (2001), Brighton Pairs (1967) and Portland Pairs (1971) as well as numerous successes at County level – for Essex initially, and for Surrey in the last 40 or so years.

In 1966 he won the Sunday Telegraph Salver, for the most Master Points won in the year.

He was the youngest player to become a grandmaster when he achieved it, though I understand that his record was later broken. Though he played very little in the last 10 years due to a bad back, he is still in the top 10 of all time EBU Master points winners.

In recognition of his successes in international and national bridge events, and his support of junior bridge, Bob was awarded the EBU's Diamond Award in 2016. Earlier, in 2010 he was given the John Armstrong Award, an award for those who play bridge in the best spirit.

Calendar

Jan 5 th	Teams of Eight	Richmond
Jan 14 th	Chairmans Consultation	Bookham
Feb 7 th	Schools' Cup	Epsom College
Mar 9 th	County Pairs Cup & Plate	Richmond

Tollemache Cup 2024-25

'The Tolle' is the inter-county championships for teams of eight. It's one of the country's top events. This year's qualifier was held over the weekend of November 9/10th November on RealBridge. Surrey had qualified for the final last year, so was seeded.

The team selected was:

Graham Sadie & Richard Granville, Peter Lee & Ian Swanson, Andrew Southwell & Richard Fedrick, David Dawson & David Norman, Graham Osborne & Frances Hinden, Will Clennell & Dominic Cooke.

With the top four qualifying for the final, the team finished in 2nd place. They were consistently in a qualifying spot throughout the weekend. For the second year running, Osborne & Hinden were top of the Butler X-IMPs for the county's group.

The final in February will be a step up in quality, with all the usual strong counties qualifying, including Manchester, London, Kent and Middlesex. The selectors will meet shortly to consider the team for the final, which will only consist of five pairs (in a live event, six pairs involves too much sitting out).

Voice from the Deep

Richard Granville Ackland

Part One

We have all, experts, novices and long-time no-hopers alike, played in Simultaneous tournaments. We're familiar with them, comfortable playing in them and even sometimes curious about the results. We're versatile.

However, I claim a versatility beyond the norm and have created a unique variation of the meaning of the word "simultaneous" in the context of bridge matches. For on 10th June last I played two separate sessions of duplicate at the same venue and at the same time.

How did I manage it? Well, I haven't the slightest idea. I must have been asleep or drunk or under hypnosis, since I've absolutely no recollection of this momentous achievement. But achievement it was: it's all there in black and white on my EBU/NGS record.

In one of the sessions I scored 47.92%; in the other 47.22%. These scores are way above the expectations of an NGS three-er and so I'm very pleased with myself. I'm resolved to repeat the feat but first must arrange to fall asleep, get drunk or have somebody induce hypnosis. EBU/NGS will do the rest.

Part Two

One of my guiding principles in a life-time of unsuccessful bridge is that when playing with an unfamiliar partner, if something not discussed comes up, the best course is to "do what I normally do". That way at least 50% of the partnership knows what's going on, whereas if I try to second-guess what partner might be expecting of me, the chances are that 0% of the partnership will be alive to the situation.

So, there I am sitting North with 3 hearts and a dozenish points when partner calls 2♥ over East's opening bid of 1♠. West supports with 2♠.

So of course, I, with my characteristic nonchalant aplomb, confidently bid 3♠ (Unassuming Cue Bid). East passed and partner looked puzzled for half an hour or so (or so it seemed) before passing, as did West.

I had 1 spade; partner had 2. 4 down vulnerable.

And none of the rest of the roomful of EWs had the gumption to bid and make 4♠ which would have given us a top.



Later this month, we have Burns Night, the annual tribute to Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. One of his best-known works is [Ye Jacobites by Name](#). The failure of his country's Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 had given rise the following year to the strongly anti-Jacobite song "The Battle of Falkirk Garland". Burns rewrote it around 1791, giving it that new title, and making it more generally anti-war. Set to music, it's become a famous folk song.

But less well-known is that Burns produced a yet further version, just for his bridge-playing friends. Even then, the debate was raging between four- and five-card majors, and weak vs strong No Trump. It's clear that he was virulently anti-Acol:

Ye Acolytes by Name

Ye Acolytes by name, lend an ear, lend an ear,
 Ye Acolytes by name, lend an ear.
 Ye Acolytes by name, your faults I will proclaim,
 Your doctrines I maun* blame, you will hear, you will hear.
 Your doctrines I maun blame, you will hear.

What is Right, what is Wrong, on the card, on the card?
 What is Right, what is Wrong for system card?
 What is Right and what is Wrong, the weak No Trump or the strong?
 Should we open 1M with four, or is it barred, is it barred?
 The short club or the long, which to regard?

When opening 1 Heart, 1 Spade, play five card, play five card,
 When opening 1 Heart, 1 Spade, you need five card.
 Pard can raise on just three small, pre-empt th' opps an' all,
 Deter both from coming in, make it hard, make it hard.
 Deter both from coming in, make it hard.

What's the range for 1 No Trump, weak or strong, weak or strong?
 What's the range for 1 No Trump, weak or strong?
 What's the range for 1-N-T? Best fifteen tae seventeen,
 You'll ne'er be doubled there, cannae gae wrong, cannae gae wrong.
 You'll ne'er be doubled there, ye won' gae wrong.

And if nae major held, what tae choose, what tae choose?
 And if nae major held, what tae choose?
 If you ha'n't e'en one o' them, is it short club or di-amon'?'
 But there I hae nae view, 'tis doon tae you, doon tae you.
 There I hae nae view, al' doon tae you.

* must

Postscript

I'm deeply indebted to the Scottish folk band [The Corries](#) for introducing me to Burns' Ye Jacobites By Name some 50 years ago. In appreciation of their magnificent version, I've based the above on their wording, which is slightly different from how Burns put it (ears are lent, for instance, rather than given). [You can listen to it here](#).

Thank you, too, to my friend Gordon Trout for his help with the Scots dialect. My apologies for any remaining mistakes, and to aficionados of Burns' proper work.

You are sitting East and the bidding has gone

N	E	S	W
P	P	1NT	P
2C	P	2D	P
2NT	P	3NT	all pass

Dummy

♠ KJ103

♥ QJ105

♦ K54

♣ 107

Me

♠ 9874

♥ A73

♦ AJ10

♣ 832

Partner leads the ♦ 2, which you win with the ♦ 10. What do you play next?

Answer:

Surely the answer must be the ♥A.

Declarer has not shown a major and his raise to 3N must be predicated upon a long club suit plus an honour in one of the majors.

You need to find partner's entry so by cashing the ♥A it gives partner a chance to signal.

If declarer has the ♥K this can do no harm because had he wanted to set up the hearts that would have left you on lead anyway.

If he discourages with a low card you can switch to a club.

In fact partner plays the ♥9 so you are able to cross to his ♥K and take 2 more diamonds for one off.

The full hand:

	♠ KJ103	
	♥ QJ105	
	♦ K54	
	♣ 107	
♠ Q6	Contract	♠ 9874
♥ K964	3NT by S	♥ A73
♦ Q932	Lead ♦ 2	♦ AJ10
♣ 964		♣ 832
	♠ A52	
	♥ 82	
	♦ 876	
	♣ AKQJ5	

Sadly my partner was not thinking along the same lines and returned a club.



Could you be our honorary Accounts Examiner? We need someone to review our accounts, starting with the year ending 31st March 2025, in good time for them to be presented to the AGM the following July. The final accounts are not filed with any statutory bodies, but are used by the Committee for management information and forward planning. Receipts and payments records are maintained on an Excel spreadsheet cashbook.

Ability at Bridge doesn't matter, and given our level of turnover you don't need to be a qualified accountant, all you need is to be familiar with traditional accounting for receipts and payments.

If you might be able to help us with this, contact our treasurer, [Jackie Hawkins](#).

What does Python mean to you?

Trevor Hobson



- Is it a snake?
- Is it Monty Python?
- Or is it the easy to use but powerful, free, computer programming language?

Whichever group you are in, would you be interested in having a dabble with the Python programs the SCBA uses for some of its administration? Even if you know nothing about the Python language but are curious that is fine. No prior experience is needed.

I have written several Python programs for the SCBA and have run them for several years and, while I am happy to continue doing so, it would be reassuring to know that there are others happy to be involved, it would also be fun to share the knowledge and maybe develop things further.

Even if you are only slightly interested then please let me know and we can have a chat:
trevor_hobson@hotmail.com

Schools and Youngsters Bridge

This is an invite to interested players who would like to see 24 youngsters, from both Boxgrove Primary and Tormead, playing in Tormead Prep in the Surrey Cup Minibrige competition **Friday 17 January** and to see 100 youngsters playing in the Surrey Cup Bridge teams and pairs competitions, **Friday 5 February**. Any interested player contact douglaswright@3countiesbridge.com

Invite to Parents to watch their children play for the last hour at both events. Parents contact douglaswright@3countiesbridge.com

Please nominate any school who you think would enjoy having an After School Bridge Club. We will organise a Taster Session in the school in the New Year.

Spring Bridge Camp is on 5th and 6th April. Please contact douglaswright@3countiesbridge.com for more information.

L'Atout France

Would you like to join Douglas douglaswright@3countiesbridge.com and his players and have a wonderful week in France, enjoying French food and hospitality, as well as playing bridge?

L'Atout de France

I visited L'Atout de France, and met Sjoerd, Els, Annabelle, Floortje, Kia and Bobby.

It is wonderful for a bridge holiday in rural, rustic, and genuine France.

I would like to take group of 12 players, **31 May to 7 June 2025**, so if you like your bridge and enjoy French food and wine, please let's have a chat. Douglas 07801 989630.

Also planning **Cafe Bridge in Loche 6 June 2025**.

<https://latoutdefrance.com/>

Double Dummy Puzzle #24

[John Manches](#)

Happy Christmas to our merry band of DD puzzlers. A teaser this month for which I am this time indebted to Andy Poole. Not too difficult I think, but hopefully entertaining.

	♠ K2	
	♥ A9	
	♦ AK8764	
	♣ 854	
♠ Q109		♠ 863
♥ K8		♥ J1076432
♦ Q9		♦ 103
♣ KJ9762	♠ AJ754	♣ 3
	♥ Q5	
	♦ J52	
	♣ AQ10	

South to make 7♦.

Lead ♦9

The Deadline Date is Jan 20th. As usual, the winner will be drawn from all those with a clear, full, correct-first-time solution. The prize, which is open to all Surrey members, will be free entry to one of our county competitions for the winner and partner of choice.

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

12 tricks cannot be made against best defence (♥A lead to T1). West however chooses ♣4.

The start of the play is fairly straightforward. The challenging part comes when West is executed at T8.

T1-7 : win ♣Q, draw trumps (3 rounds) and, importantly, play one extra round.

Then cross to ♣AK, everyone being reduced to the position shown with 6 cards remaining:

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

T8 : On ♣J, South discards his remaining heart, but West is in trouble.

- a) If West discards a Spade, South leads ♠Q and can establish his long spade losing only ♠K, his last trump protecting against a heart continuation by West.
- b) If West discards a Heart he is left with a bare Ace. A Heart lead from dummy (South discards ♠3) forces West to win and, with only Spades remaining, is endplayed.
 - a. If West leads a small Spade, ♠Q, ♥K, ♠A and a trump give South the 4 tricks needed.
 - b. If West leads ♠K, South wins with Ace, followed by ♠Q, heart ruff to hand, ♠J for the 4 tricks needed

Winner of Prize Puzzle No.23

Andy Poole was the lucky winner out of the hat and wins free entry to one of our county competitions for himself and partner of choice.

Congratulations

Dorin Salver

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Overall winners

Adrian Filkins and Julie Kamieniecka

Judith Biles and Mark Stead

Julie Kennedy and Richard Sheridan

Renate Lane and Richard Arnatt

Judith Biles and Mark Stead

Bookham

Settle

Woking

Bookham

Settle

Mixed Pairs

David Wing and Cathy Barley



Congratulations to the 729 Surrey members who received Masterpoint promotions in 2024. [Click here for the full list.](#)

And to the 1,019 members who improved their NGS during 2024. [Click here for a list of the top 50.](#) Looking forward to a successful 2025.

Café Bridge

The 2025 events listed below are now open for booking. There are two new events in Notting Hill & Weybridge. Please give them your support.

Early in the New Year I will be reviewing the organisation of Café Bridge events. If you care about the future of Café Bridge please let me know and I'll involve you in the consultation process.

Wishing you a Happy, Healthy & Peaceful New Year.

michael@cafebridge.org

2025 Café Bridge events...

Wimbledon – Tuesday 28th January www.brianbridge.net/wima2025

Teddington - Tuesday 4th February www.brianbridge.net/ted2025

Weybridge – Wednesday 12th February www.brianbridge.net/vey2025

Parsons Green - Thursday 20th February www.brianbridge.net/pgreena2025

Notting Hill – Wednesday 5th March www.brianbridge.net/nhill2025

Guildford - Tuesday 1st April www.brianbridge.net/guila2025

Train to be a Bridge Teacher

Have you or any of your club members ever thought about becoming a bridge teacher?

Why not join one of the upcoming [Club Teacher Training courses](#) run by English Bridge Education & Development (EBED).

For 2025 the course dates are: **Eastbourne 1 & 2 March**
Horsham 26 & 27 April

The 2-day courses give aspiring bridge teachers the skills to teach bridge effectively. As an EBU affiliated club, you are eligible for discounts or concessionary places.

If you are interested, please contact Lisa Miller on 01296 317 217 (lisa@ebedcio.org.uk) or Clive Turner on 01296 317 212 (clive@ebedcio.org.uk).

Any questions please ask douglaswright@3countiesbridge.com 07801 989630

Andrew Robson Masterclass

Tuesday 18 February in aid of the Grange Centre grangecentre.org, more details and book at this link grangecentre.org/events

Advanced Seminars Spring 2025

Advanced Seminars Wednesdays 7.30pm with Chris Stableford

How best to compete against / play Strong 1NT + 5 Card Major systems eg SAYC:

12 Feb	Responses to Strong NT 15 – 17
19 Feb	Play & Review
26 Feb	Responses to Opening 1M
5 Mar	Play & Review
12 Mar	Openings when you do not have a 5 Card M (1C or 1D)
19 Mar	Play & Review
26 Mar	Other quirks of SAYC
2 Apr	Play & Review

[Please click here for more details to register your interest and to book](#)

Improver Seminars Spring 2025

Improver Seminars Thursdays 7pm with Douglas Wright

9 Jan	Negative Double
16 Jan	More on Doubles
23 Jan	Bidding After 1NT
20 Feb	Danger Hand
27 Feb	Counting By Declarer
6 Mar	Showing Shape
13 Mar	Bidding Awkward Hands

[Please click here for more details and to book](#)

There are Thursday 7pm Supervised Play on 20, 27 Mar & 3, 10 Apr

Fridge Bridge

As we all know bridge is a demanding game. At some clubs it is also played in demanding circumstances...



And finally.....

The next newsletter will come out towards the end of March. So, please send me any club news, personal stories and photographs for the next edition. Is your club having a charity event you would like to tell people about? Let me know. Are you planning any club celebrations? Send me pictures.

[Julia Brough](#)
Editor