



# New South Wales Bridge Association

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## ♠ ♥ Bulletin ♦ ♣

Editor: Peter Jamieson

## Chairman's Corner

### *Promoting Bridge*

In December and January, the NSWBA will be running a series of promotions on radio 2MBS-FM, which broadcasts classical, jazz and contemporary music. Depending on how it goes, we may consider using other city or country media later.

Our aim is to promote awareness that bridge provides mental sport like no other game, and encourage people to come to lessons for beginners. As well as NSWBA lessons (commencing in February and in August), we are keen to direct interested people outside our vicinity to other clubs.

If you are planning lessons in 2010, please contact Liz Fanos at the NSWBA office on (02) 9264 8111 with details. We will put your dates on the NSWBA website, as well as holding them for telephone enquiries.

### *Representing your Club*

At the NSWBA Annual General Meeting in December we will be electing the 2010 Council. The Council includes four councillors elected by affiliated clubs. Clubs are split into four zones: metropolitan, outer metropolitan, northern NSW, and southern NSW.

If you may be interested in representing your zone, or know someone who may be, we encourage nominations. Simply contact Liz Fanos at the NSWBA office on (02) 9264 8111 to nominate. Please also feel free to talk to us if you simply want to know what's involved.

**Bruce Neill**  
 Chairman

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The NSWBA AGM is to be held on Wednesday December 16 at Level 1, 162 Goulburn St East Sydney at 6:30 pm. All members of NSWBA are invited to attend.

NSWBA would like to have more councillors to help carry out its various tasks.

Nominations should be made at least 1 week before the meeting

### DOUBLE BAY BRIDGE CENTRE

The Double Bay Bridge Centre has moved back to Double Bay. It is located 1st floor, 45a Bay St. This club now has more duplicate sessions. Bridge lessons are available.

Tel.(02) 9326 2072 or visit their web site.

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### Dealing Machines

The ABF has advised it is illegal to alter settings on dealing machines to suit clubs and players participating in ABF masterpointed events. Deals in masterpointed events must be randomly dealt.

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### DIRECTORS' COURSE

The next directors' club level course will be held at Trumps Bridge Club on November 29. Enquiries/ bookings to Derrick Browne, (02) 9969-5959 or Tony Howes (02) 9960-1354

[Course details](#) at web site

# The Future of Bridge

By Peter Jamieson

This is a subject that really deserves a thesis or a White Paper as there are so many aspects that need to be explored. Over the last 12 years or so there have been some interesting thoughts about the future of bridge expressed in books, magazines and bridge bulletins and web sites. This article quotes selectively from various sources with Internet links or Google search advice where appropriate - look for **LINK** plus a number. **Brown Sticker Conventions** (BSC's) are mentioned several times in this article.

Readers unfamiliar with BSC's should look up the Australian Bridge Federation regulations or search on Google. Probably the most common BSC bid encountered in Australia is an 'unanchored' type multi 2 bid of the **RCO** (two suits of same **R**ank, **C**olour, or two **O**dd suits) type. Also popular in some Australian cities are **MYXO** 2 bids eg 2 Clubs= weak two in diamonds or weak both majors or two types of strong hands!

In November 1997 at the 71<sup>st</sup> North American Bridge Championships the Daily Bulletin (**LINK 1**) carried writings by top players Bob Hamman and Chip Martel. Both writers focused on matters such as weak multi two bids (especially where the suit or suits within that multi are not known) and similar issues. Hamman's article was titled "Bridge needs simplicity for public acceptance". He makes this important statement early on: "In order for any sport to rise above the niche level, it must be comprehensible to a public of amateur enthusiasts. This means that bridge -- from the world championships on down -- must be understandable to existing fans and to potential fans. If we consider that one of our game's most serious problems is lack of comprehension by the public, where do we go for a remedy?" Hamman then offers remedies which embody some technical discussion (not repeated here as it would make this article too long). Chip Martel talked about BSC Bids (principally multi two bids of the more exotic variety). Half way through his rather technical article, Martel said: "It is totally unreasonable to expect players to memorize defenses to literally dozens of different bids, most of which are unlikely to arise".

At the ORBIS WORLD BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS in 2000 held in Bermuda, the DAILY NEWS issues of Bulletins 6 and 15 carried articles (**LINK 2**) by Alan Truscott (now deceased but then Editor of New York Times bridge column) about *Systemic Germs*. Truscott wrote "Some of you will have noticed that

Bob Hamman, the World Bridge Federation's top-ranked player, is carrying around a large book. He is doing so reluctantly. It was prepared by two world-class experts and has 450 pages. It lists the counter-measures his team is using against the methods of the 57 pairs they may have to play against in the Bermuda Bowl. He cites an opponent who used a canape overcall of one spade over one diamond to show either clubs, or hearts, plus three or four cards in spades, but maybe two. The system card did not give any point count, but the style was 'aggressive'. This requires advance preparation by the opening bidder's side, since you may need to play in spades".

"Unlike most of the pairs in the event, Hamman was, up to a point, prepared for this. Since he is allowed to have prepared defenses at the table, he consulted his book and his partner did the same. This wasted 10 minutes, and they were still at some disadvantage: They were in a position that they had never been in before. The opponents had experienced the situation, and there were nuances that were not available to Hamman". In Bulletin 15, Truscott's article was titled "GERM REBUTTALS REBUTTED" and his closing sentence was: "If we wish the public to be able to follow the bidding and play in VuGraph theatres, in magazines, newspapers and on television, we must make sure that what they encounter is not the equivalent of Ancient Greek."

In 2003 Fred Gitelman (a top international player and developer of the Internet site *Bridge Base Online*) made the following comments in an online debate (**LINK 3**) about Brown Sticker Conventions. "I have played against BSCs many times. I see these conventions as being akin to germ warfare and I strongly believe that they should be barred. Some reasons:

- 1) Nowadays it is all but impossible for a team to properly prepare themselves to play in a tournament in which they rate to encounter BSCs.
- 2) The "stranger" the bidding gets, the harder it becomes to interest "average players" in watching high-level bridge.
- 3) In my experience a significant percentage of BSC partnerships do not do a proper job of disclosing everything they know about how they use a particular BSC. I am not claiming that this is done intentionally - it is more a function of "the nature of the beast" (the beast being BSCs, not the people who use them).
- 4) *The game of bridge has more than enough beauty to be appealing without BSCs being allowed (italics by P Jamieson)*. In my view these conventions add nothing to the fascination of the game.
- 5) In my opinion most BSCs randomize the results, but the players that use them have an edge (especially when they play against weak teams) due

to their opponents' unfamiliarity with the methods (and due also to points 1 and 3 above). This just doesn't seem fair to me."

The debate concludes with some wise comments from Manoj Nair of India. He concludes by saying "From the Sims/ Culbertson days to the new century, system development has been at the core of bridge innovation and progress." Nair mentions bidding systems such as Precision Club, Polish Club and the Italian systems and ends with "Bridge would be a lot poorer had any of these contributions been taken away from it, no doubt about that".

Many readers of this article would protest if they were not allowed to play Roman Key Card Blackwood, Jacoby 2NT, Support Doubles, Bergen raises, Truscott 2NT, Drury, Hamilton, Lebensohl, or the latest fad of transfer responses in suit auctions.

In the 1999 book, **World Class**, subtitled **Conversations with the Bridge Masters (LINK 4)** UK bridge expert and writer Marc Smith talked to twenty-six of the world's best players about bridge – their memories, favourite hands and partners and so on. The aspect that is relevant to this article is the final segment of each conversation titled **The Future**. Some of the comments are brief and rather bland. But the majority express concern about where bridge is heading - declining club membership, ageing of players, complexity of bidding systems and destructive bidding, the need to attract youth players and so on. Although their views were expressed 10 years ago, many of the issues raised are still relevant.

In this book, Sweden's Magnus Lindkvist said (about the future): "There have been endless discussions of late on the subject of regulating systems, but we seem to be going backwards. It is important to find a balance between allowing complete freedom and restricting which systems are allowed. Today most federations seem to be following ACBL's example and disallowing more and more conventions and systems. That puts a stop to the progress of the game, which is not good. On the other hand I understand that we have to make bridge easy for the average player to understand, otherwise we'll have too few people playing and we'll have difficulty getting sponsors (which is hard enough already). So on the one hand we want to (and must) allow the game to progress – for example, where would we stand today without transfers, negative doubles and splinter bids? It is crucial that we allow young players to express their interest in the game by trying out new systems and conventions. If we don't then we are likely to lose their attention. On the other hand,

we must also avoid scaring players away from the game by allowing too many artificial bids, especially destructive ones. My solution would be to offer players two classes of tournament – one 'freestyle' and one 'classic style'. By doing this I think we would be able to attract more players, while taking care of the preferences of the naturalists as well as the scientists". This lengthy extract from the book is printed with the permission of the publisher **Master Point Press** – (whose wide range of bridge books are available from *The Bridge Shop* in Sydney).

The current rules as to what bridge systems you can play in different strength bridge tournaments in USA are complex. See <http://www.acbl.org/play/charts.html> and then select '**Convention Charts**'. Any person relatively new to bridge who studies the ACBL "charts" may well become discouraged. Some might think "it's all too hard" and even abandon the game! It is interesting to note that in USA you cannot play the MULTI 2D (shows weak 2 major) unless you are playing sets of six boards or more thus excluding this popular gadget from most pairs events – a good stance in my opinion.

Similarly in England there is the 74 page Orange Book subtitled "handbook of EBU Directives and Agreements". In England some doubles must be alerted (contrast to Australia where no doubles are alertable). In UK and USA some bids attract 'announcements' eg after 1NT opening the partner announces the range and special features. England also has the White Book of 196 pages (mainly for tournament directors but there is crossover to the Orange Book). Visit EBU web site for details. If the WBF issued rules about all these aspects which all countries adhered to it would surely be good for the promotion and growth of contract bridge.

Australia has a fairly relaxed policy about permissible conventions. Most weekend congresses state 'No Yellow Systems allowed' which really doesn't mean much as there are very few people trying to use such systems. It would be sensible as well in my opinion to ban BSC bids in many congress events.

North Shore Bridge Club in Sydney recently introduced a ban on BSC's in all sessions except major club events – a good move in my opinion and one which other clubs should consider adopting.

In the September 17, 2007 issue of The New Yorker magazine is David Owen's three page article **Turning Tricks** subtitled **the rise and fall of contract bridge**. This article is well worth reading – or reading again if you have already read it (**LINK 5**).

Owen's article traces the history of bridge from whist to auction bridge and then to the invention of contract bridge in 1925 by Harold Vanderbilt. He discusses its popularity in the 1950-1970 period and the impact of television and later personal computers and Internet activities (other than bridge).

The growth of playing bridge on the Internet is being watched by many bridge administrators. The dominant force at present is Bridge Base Online (aka BBO) – which provides a free service where you can play bridge with people in other cities or countries for just a few hands or compete in an on line tournament. BBO is popular when the finals of major tournaments are broadcast as you can watch the top players in action in real time with expert commentary. It is also great for bridge partnerships who wish to practice from home or for people with mobility impairment as well as for older players who do not wish to go out at night.

If you Google the words **Generali World Masters** you can open up the WBF web site for the 2004 competition. In this event (now defunct), players were all required to play the same bidding system, a natural system containing only a few conventions. The convention card can be viewed in PDF format.

Some top bridge professionals are on record as saying they refuse to play tournaments where they are compelled to play a 'set system'. But imagine if Bill Gates and Warren Buffett provided seed money for a worldwide bridge circuit featuring a major bridge tournament say four times a year that required a set 'Standard' system (like in the Generali) with first prize each time of over US \$1m — sponsors could probably be found to boost the prize pool upwards. I think you would find that most top guns would toe the line and be willing to use 'set systems' # to try to win the huge prizes and glory on offer.

# It may be necessary to have three set systems – Standard, Acol (the overwhelming dominant system in UK) plus Precision to cater for strong 1C system fans.

Unrestricted systems would still be playable in the Bermuda Bowl and most other established 'major' tournaments. This echoes Magnus Lindquist's suggestion above re Classic and Freestyle systems.

Establishing a world circuit for 'classic' contract bridge on the above lines would add weight to acceptance of bridge as a sport by the Olympic movement and by High Schools.

Young people today have a plethora of digital Internet and mobile phone attractions and options – consider the following: Texting, FaceBook, YouTube, My Space, Google, MP3, IPod, Twitter, iPhone,

laptops (notebooks), Wi Fi connectivity, Google maps, digital photography via mobile phones and so on. As well many young people like to play computer games via Xbox and PlayStation. Then you have online gaming –especially Texas Hold Em poker. Young people typically seek to do what their friends are doing and going to bridge clubs whose members are predominantly senior citizens would not be a first choice. More needs to be done to promote Youth Bridge. One hears of development programs that succeed in some countries. Bridge administrators around the world should be able to liaise and build some templates for youth bridge development based on what has been shown to work.

Bridge administrators should be mindful that much of the above Internet & mobile phone technology is also highly attractive to adults. On a winter night some bridge players may prefer to stay home and watch their wide flat screen digital or high definition TV's or watch a DVD, rather than go to the bridge club.

I like to think that by 2025 when contract bridge will be 100 years old that there will be a bidding system called **International Standard**. A book on that system could be issued under the auspices of the WBF. That system would surely replace Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC) as the preferred system for on-line Bridge. Bridge teachers would probably continue their current lessons for beginners (and sell or issue their own books and notes) but could give lessons later in International Standard.

Bridge will never die out. But there is a danger that it might wither and thus become a very minor (niche) sport. I have been playing contract bridge for over 40 years and still love the game. It is by far the best card game ever invented and deserves to prosper. But more needs to be done at both the WBF and National level to make that happen.

LINK 1 Google the following words— **Bridge needs simplicity for public acceptance Bob Hamman** ...then follow the ACBL LINK to read the article

LINK 2 Google the words - **systemic germs Alan Truscott** and make the appropriate selections.

LINK 3 To read the full (50 pages) online debate <http://chrisryall.net/bridge/debates/brown-sticker.htm>

LINK 4 This book is published by Master Point Press of Canada – it can be purchased (RRP\$34.95) from The Bridge Shop of Willoughby, Sydney

LINK 5 Google the words **david owen rise bridge** to reach this LINK

## RESULTS OF GNOT SYDNEY METROPOLITAN FINAL

On the weekend of October 10-11, forty one teams from bridge clubs around Sydney competed to win four entries to the national GNOT final at Banora Point in late November.

Results can be viewed at the NSWBA web site.

All NSW Regional and Metro GNOT selection events have now been held.

If you visit the ABF web site and look at the **What's New** section on their Home Page you will see

**2009 GNOT** — Letter to Captains of the 2009 GNOT Finals is available.

Open up that link and you will see the home page for the GNOT National Final.

Now select **National Final** from the menu at the left of that page.

You can now view all the teams (and players' names) from all around Australia who will be competing

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Manzoni Accessories are one of NSWBA's sponsors.

Since its beginnings this family business has emerged as a major player in the Australian accessory market. Principal items sold are fashion handbags, luggage, wallets, and jewelry. Their products are widely available in retail stores.

They have a showroom in Sydney but it is for trade only. However you can view the product range in their catalogue ( in PDF format).

Go to: [www.manzoni.com.au](http://www.manzoni.com.au)

## New Bridge Books

Master Point Press of Canada, the world's leading bridge book publishers have recently published:

- **The Pocket Guide to Acol Bridge** by Mark Horton and Barbara Seagram. This half size booklet of 64 pages recommends basic treatments on all the common bidding situations. The target audience is newcomer/social. The authors are well credentialed. RRP \$14.95
- **Planning the play of a Bridge Hand by Barbara Seagram and David Bird.** This 225 page book is aimed at newcomers who have finished their beginners' class and seek to improve their card play skills. The book explains how to go about making a plan in conjunction with counting winners and losers. It covers both NT and suit contracts and the constant refrain is **make a plan** (even a simple plan) before playing from dummy at trick 1. There are regular quizzes (but not too many) and of course it gets a bit harder towards the end. RRP \$29.95
- **Patrick Jourdain's Problem Corner** is a collection of declarer play bridge problems that have appeared previously in the UK through various outlets. The author was for many years president of the International bridge Press Association and presently lives in Wales. Each right hand page features two problems –one difficult and one for average players. The always concise answers appear on the overleaf page. Some deals have been constructed and some are from real life. If you are an avid reader of bridge magazines and books you may recognize a few deals but even so you may still fail! This book will appeal to any bridge problem solver. RRP \$29.95

The previous issue of this Bulletin carried a review of Larry Cohen's book **My Favorite 52**. Since then I revisited several deals. I really enjoyed deal 9 and deal 44. The overall style and presentation is very good – a bit like the 'bridge movies' that some bridge magazines carried years ago. Cohen takes you slowly through each deal in stages posing questions as he goes along. A great read. RRP \$29.95

These titles are available in Australia through the usual bridge product retailers. In NSW these are The Bridge Shop (Willoughby) and Post Free Books. If you **Google Masterpoint Press** and visit their web site you can find out more about these books

**Reviews by Peter Jamieson**

## Tilligerry Bridge Club's First Congress

You may well ask "where is Tilligerry"? It is on a peninsula in the shire of Port Stephens — about 2½ hours by road North of Sydney. Tilligerry is a small club with only 50 home club members. This was their first congress and their achievement of 27 tables was a most valiant job. Credit must be given to their President Janet Kieran and convener Michael Skelton in attracting players to this congress.

The winners were Ann and Normand Maclaurin  
Equal second were Janet and Peter Kieran with  
Marcia Lewis with Paul Rooms

Of the 54 partnerships, 11 had masterpoints between 100 and 180 (Restricted field) and 22 had <100.

The Restricted was won by Kay and Bruce Baguley.

The Novice prize was won by Janet Ritchie and Cheryl Pletz.

Club member Paul Rooms and Marcia Lewis came 2nd overall. Paul has only been playing for a year.

**Next year's congress is on March 14.**



**Tournament Director John McIlrath making an announcement to the players**



**From left to right Tilligerry President, Janet Kieran with Paul Rooms and Marcia Lewis**



**1<sup>st</sup> in Restricted Pairs- Bruce and Kaye Baguley**



**Winners Novice Pairs, Bev Cleary and Liz Brown**

## NSW 2009 State Wide Pairs

This event had three sessions over three weeks in August. Hands were provided together with a booklet giving brief commentary on each deal. The event was scored across all participating clubs and session and overall winners determined.

There were cash prizes, as well as gift vouchers from the Bridge Shop and certificates for the winners in each club. Prizes were also awarded to best Under 25, Under 50 and Under 100 masterpoints..

Results can be found at the NSWBA web site.



## Congress Results

### Wollstonecraft Pairs Congress

#### Pairs Final

- 1 Peter Cizak - Witold Chylewski (Jr)
- 2 John Mottram - Helena Dawson
- 3 Les Varadi - Elly Urbach

#### Plate

- 1 Patricia Matheson - Judith Twigg
- 2 Margaret Synnott - Beverley Rogers

### Great Lakes Congress

The Pairs was won by: Ted and Marilyn Chadwick.

The teams was won by Liz Fanos, George Finikiotis, Marilyn Chadwick and Ted Chadwick

### Taree Teams

- 1 Garry and Sally Clarke and Greg and Sharon Mayo.
- 2 Paul and Rosalie Broughton, Ken Wilks and Ian Price
- 3 Daphne Yarnold Jackie Polack and Judy and Don Scown

### Trumps Spring Teams

- 1 John Newman, Alex Cook, Derrick Browne, Josh Wyner
- 2 Al Simpson, Theo Antoff, Jamie Ebery, Nevena Djurovic

### Hunters Hill Teams

- 1 David Weston , Michael Wilkinson Nevena Djurovic , Jamie Ebery
- 2 Wayne Smith, Warren Dobes Chris Dibley, Peter Livesey
- 3 Pauline Gumby, Warren Lazer Andrew Peake, Orlando Wu

## Dubbo Congress

### Pairs Final

- 1 Louise Montz – Louise Kobler
- 2 Helen Wilson – Jane North
- 3 David Reddel – Ian Lincoln

### Teams

- 1 Bernard Huxtable, Desmond Mulcahy Ian Lincoln, David Reddel
- 2 Kerrie Johnman, Peter Johnman Tom Carr, Janet Clarke
- 3 Les Brown, Pamela Brown David Lander, Helen Lander

### Pennant Hills Teams

- 1 Peter Gill, Peter Livesey, Elizabeth Adams and Tony Nunn
- 2 Jane Dawson, Bob Richman, Helena Dawson, Sartaj Hans, Geo Tislevoll
- 3 Jamie Ebery, Nevena Djurovic, Theo Antoff, Al Simpson

### Muswellbrook Congress

#### Pairs

- 1 Catie James – Michael Johnson
- 2 Barbara Hunter – Emil Battista
- 3 Christine Chandler – Eileen Humphery

#### Teams

- 1 Barbara Hunter, Emil Battista, Normand MacLaurin, Ken Berry
- 2 Lorraine Harkness, Jack Lindsay, Ellie Fitzgerald, Jim Fitzgerald
- 3 Robyn Anderson, Esma Baker, Olive Carter, Rosemary Barclay



### Sydney Spring Nationals

The Open Teams was won by Bruce Neill, Avi Kanetkar, Andrew Peake and Sartaj Hans

The Dick Cummings Pairs was won by Peter Gill and Paul Gosney

The Manzoni Women's teams was won by Elizabeth Havas, Candice Berman, Margaret Bourke, Paula McLeish, Pele Rankin, Therese Tully

The Bobby Evans Seniors Teams was won by David Lilley, Zolly Nagy, Ron Klinger , David Hoffman , Andy Braithwaite , Bill Haughe

## DIARY OF UPCOMING CONGRESSES IN NSW

NOTE: visit NSWBA web site and select *Congresses in NSW*, to send email to the convenor or enter the Congress online or, where available, view PDF of advertising brochure.

Date	Club	Event	Contact	Phone
Nov 8	Club Willoughby	Margaret Smith Memorial Charity Teams	Ron Smith	0418 272 335
Nov 7-8	Southern Highlands	Sat : Congress Pairs Sun: Congress Teams	Marina Beaumont	4883 7285
Nov 8	Tweed	Birthday Teams	Mary Knight	07 5536 1570
Nov 13	North Shore	Black Friday Swiss Pairs	John McIlrath	0437 274 343
Nov 14-15	Tumbarumba	Congress Pairs Congress Teams	Alison Farthing	6948 3158
Nov 14-15	NSWBA	State Open Pairs <b>Sat</b> : Qualifying 1 <sup>st</sup> session 12 noon — 2 <sup>nd</sup> session 4pm <b>Sun</b> : The Final with sessions at 10:am and 2pm	NSWBA	9264 8111
Nov 15	NSWBA	Congress Swiss Pairs	NSWBA	9264 8111
Nov 15	Ballina	Novice Pairs	Mary Goodall	6681 5533
Nov 21-22	Armidale	Congress Pairs (Sat) Congress Teams (Sun)	Pam Moore	6772 4578
Nov 22	Central Coast	Teams	Margaret Reid	4334 1294
Dec 5-6	North Shore	Summer Swiss Pairs (Sat) Summer Teams (Sun)	John McIlrath	0437 274 343
Dec 13	Christmas Party	Walk in pairs	NSWBA	9264 8111
Starts Dec 26 continues until Jan 3	Trumps	Festival of Bridge  See brochure or visit NSWBA web site and open Congress Calendar for details	Derrick Browne	9969 5959
Jan 10	NSWBA	Summer Teams	NSWBA	9264 8111
Jan 9-15	ABF Canberra	Australian Youth Championships	Ed Barnes	0415 750 401