

# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

October 2009

Editor: Bill Jacobs

## HAVE A LEAD

Many think the opening lead is a blot on the game: too often a meaningless guess.

Here are some auctions where the opposing bidding hasn't exactly been informative.

You are South, to lead.

1. 875 ♥ A42 ♦ 97 ♣ J8753

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All pass

2. ♠ AQ5 ♥ A42 ♦ 97 ♣ Q10763

West	North	East	South
		1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	All pass

3. ♠ 865 ♥ AJ42 ♦ Q97 ♣ K107

West	North	East	South
		2NT*	Pass
3♣**	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

\* 20-22

\*\* Stayman

4. ♠ A54 ♥ 86 ♦ J763 ♣ K842

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♥	All pass

\* strong jump shift

5. ♠ J54 ♥ 86 ♦ K763 ♣ A842

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♥	All pass

\* strong jump shift

6. ♠ J83 ♥ 972 ♦ AJ5 ♣ A653

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥*	Pass	Pass	Pass

\* weak raise to game (fast arrival)

7. ♠ 762 ♥ 85 ♦ 943 ♣ J9742

West	North	East	South
		1NT*	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

\* 15-17

8. ♠ - ♥ K1073 ♦ K985 ♣ K10643

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT*	Pass	4♠	All Pass

\* limit raise in spades



## MELBOURNE CUP DAY PAIRS AT THE VBA

Come along on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November for the VBA  
Melbourne Cup Day Pairs  
Barriers open at 11.30 a.m. sharp and finish line will be  
visible by 3.00 p.m. Lunch served approximately 1.00 p.m.



A fun-filled pairs event with prizes throughout the day as well  
as prizes for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place getters (subject to correct  
weight and Steward's approval).

Prizes for the best hat, jockey, horse, outfit  
Lots of cup sweeps

Lunch and drinks provided

Watch the race on the big TV in the lounge room

**Bookings essential – Cost \$20**

Register by phone – 9530 9006

or e-mail – clachman@vba.asn.au



**FOR STARTERS**  
**Bill Jacobs**

Today you hold:

♠ AQ5 ♥ A42 ♦ 97 ♣ Q10763

With everyone vulnerable, RHO deals and opens 1♥. Do you risk 2♣?

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No thank-you. Even *thinking* about 2♣ is an overbid.

You pass, LHO raises to 2♥, partner passes, and RHO finishes the auction with 4♥.

What do you lead?

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For a discussion of the lead, see "Bridge Aphorisms". You lead ♣6, and this appears:

♠ AQ5	♠ 84
♥ A42	♥ J105
♦ 97	♦ KQ8642
♣ Q10763	♣ 84

The club lead goes to partner's king and declarer's ace. The heart king is played next. What do you do?

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Clearly declarer has ♣A and ♥KQ. To justify his 4♥ bid, one would expect him to have both ♦A and ♠K.

Does that give you a further clue on the defence?

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Apparently declarer is poised to draw trumps and run the diamonds, making at least 10 tricks. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and you desperately need to get partner in to play a spade through declarer's king.

You should continue with a second low club and a prayer that partner holds the club jack. If so he will win that card, and have no difficulty returning a spade. The full deal:

♠ AQ5	♠ 84	♠ J9763
♥ A42	♥ J105	♥ 3
♦ 97	♦ KQ8642	♦ 1085
♣ Q10763	♣ 84	♣ KJ95
	♠ K102	
	♥ KQ9876	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ A2	

That defence should give you a warm feeling for at least a week.

However, a nit-picker might claim that it wasn't your best play. Why?

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Perhaps there was little harm in playing *low* on the first round of hearts, and taking your ace on the second round. This might give partner the opportunity to make a helpful signal. For example, with:

♠ Kxxxxx ♥ x ♦ xx ♣ Kxxx

if partner discards a highly encouraging spade, you might change your mind about the defence and successfully cash the club queen and two top spades.

This would leave declarer with:

♠ Jx ♥ KQ98xx ♣ AJ10 ♣ AJ

I gave that hand to Victoria's (and maybe the world's) most aggressive game bidder: Helen Snashall. Her bid after 1♥ - 2♥? 4♥.

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*Points to remember:*

- Don't overcall motley suits at the two-level. Don't even think about it.
- When things are grim, you need to mentally place partner with a required card, in this case the club jack, and defend accordingly.
- It can sometimes be helpful to hold up a card (like the ace of trumps) simply to give partner the opportunity to make a signal.

**SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS**

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: S      ♠ Q102  
 Vul: Both    ♥ KQ94  
                  ♦ QJ4  
                  ♣ K53

♠ -  
 ♥ A752  
 ♦ 98532  
 ♣ 10842

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♣*	Pass	2♦
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

\* 2♥ would show five

You don't think much of your hand, but partner's trumps may cause problems. You make an enterprising start with ♥A – 4, 3, 8. What follows?

**Problem 2:**

Dealer: N      ♠ 8763  
 Vul: E/W     ♥ J63  
                  ♦ KJ63  
                  ♣ 109

♠ 10  
 ♥ AQ10984  
 ♦ A97  
 ♣ 652

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	1♠
3♣*	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

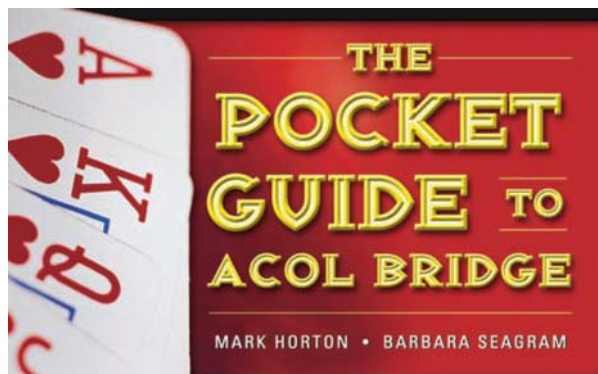
\* fit-showing

Partner leads ♥2 and you take ♥A and another heart forces declarer. He cashes ♠A and leads ♣3, partner's ♣Q winning. Declarer trumps ♥K, cashes ♣A and trumps his ♣J, which was covered by partner's ♣K. Now a low trump from dummy is won by ♠K, partner's ♠Q falling, and ♦4 is led to partner's ♦2 and dummy's ♦J.

You seem to be in the grip of some sort of endplay. How can you escape?

Solutions on page 5.

**BOOK REVIEW**



This compact book provides a no-nonsense introduction to the Acol system. In 64 pages, it will introduce the novice player to point-counting, opening bids, responses and rebids, when to support partner, and three bidding conventions: Stayman, transfers and Blackwood.

The authors stick to the numbers and rules – little attempt is made to explain the “why” of bidding. For example, you need 33 combined points to bid a small slam, but no insight is given to why this is so: perhaps it is appropriate for beginners to work this out themselves.

If you like Acol, you might recommend this book to a friend who is starting out in the game. But beware, this book teaches Acol to Englishmen. If you speak Acol with an Australian accent, you will see some stylistic differences. And there are some strange inconsistencies.

For example, with

♠ AQJ8 ♥ K108 ♦ A542 ♣ 63

you are told to open 1♠, the *higher* of the two 4-card suits (why not 1NT, we wonder). But with

♠ QJ87 ♦ KQ3 ♦ AKJ2 ♣ K5

open 1♦, and over partner's 1♥ response, jump to 2♠. Neither of these approaches would be familiar to a Victorian Acolyte.

The Pocket Guide to Acol Bridge retails for \$14.95, and is available from The Bridge Shop (<http://www.bridgeshop.com.au/>).

## BRIDGE ACROSS VICTORIA

### Paynesville Bridge Club

In 1988 the Bairnsdale Bridge Club had been operating for about 12 years when Betty Dawson, a Bairnsdale player, decided to start up a new group, catering for beginners and players wanting to get back to the game. They met every Thursday at Picnic Point Hall in Bairnsdale. After a few months it became obvious that most of these players were residents of Paynesville, some 16kms from Bairnsdale, and Betty suggested that they form a new club based in Paynesville. Betty had already assisted with the formation of Lakes Entrance Bridge Club 5 years earlier and was willing to direct and score for Paynesville until they got more established.

A "Dutch auction" was organised which raised enough money to purchase card tables, boards and cards and the fledgling club commenced playing at the R.S.L. Hall in Paynesville on Wednesday afternoons.

A couple of minuted items from an early committee meeting in 1989 stated –

*"after discussion it was decided that persons who are currently studying the rather complex rules of bridge, shall on occasions be invited to be the director for the day"*  
and

*"it was agreed to request Mr C. Clymo to use his penetrating voice to attempt to keep our playing sessions as quiet and orderly as possible"*

The club averaged between 5-8 tables during the first year of operation and some of the original members who are still playing today include Charlie Clymo, Helen Cantwell, Dick and Sally Bales, Pat White and Glenda Moulton. Playing venues varied during the early years moving from the R.S.L. Club to the Football Clubrooms, the Country Club, the Cruiser Club, and in 2002 back to the R.S.L. Club where play is still held every Wednesday afternoon.

Home club membership remained small over the years – about 10 – but Paynesville's close proximity to Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance meant that table numbers were usually 9-10 with the occasional 12-14.



The "Orbost Promotional Bridge Day" held in April, 2009, was an outstanding success with 64 players travelling from Sale, Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance.

Paynesville Bridge Club continues to offer value for money with annual membership fees of \$15 and weekly table fees of \$3. Members receive a free lunch for the Bridge Club's "birthday" in September and a free Christmas lunch in December. The table fees for the first Wednesday in each month are put aside to be donated to charity – at the annual meeting in 2009 it was agreed to donate \$1,000 to the Gippsland Relief Fund to assist bushfire survivors.

A new President in 2009, Graham Pollard, has introduced some innovative ideas for Paynesville Bridge Club including a new novice duplicate session (for players under 50 masterpoints) which operates from the Bairnsdale clubrooms each Monday afternoon, and a bus trip to Orbost where players from Sale, Bairnsdale, Paynesville, Lakes Entrance and Orbost played two sessions of bridge at the Orbost Golf Club on 16<sup>th</sup> April. Paynesville Bridge Club has also challenged the Sale Bridge Club to an annual Teams event – the winner to hold a perpetual shield for 12 months.

The three East Gippsland clubs – Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance and Paynesville – work together to promote bridge in this area. Bridge teachers, directors and scorers assist each other in a spirit of co-operation – stepping in to various roles at neighbouring clubs if people are away on holidays, other commitments or ill health.

The late Betty Dawson, the founder of both Paynesville and Lakes Entrance clubs, has

been remembered by both clubs with their annual staging of the "Betty Dawson Pairs" at Lakes Entrance and the "Betty Dawson Teams" at Paynesville.



Some of the early members of Paynesville Bridge Club include Ilma Clark, Joan Freshwater, Thea Mitchell, Charlie Clymo and Helen Cantwell, pictured with Graham Pollard (President)

**Bairnsdale Congress:**

Sat Oct 17<sup>th</sup>, 1 pm: Pairs  
 Sun Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, 10 am: Teams  
 Venue: St Mary's Church  
 Main Street, Bairnsdale

Entries to:  
[www.bridgeunlimited.com](http://www.bridgeunlimited.com)  
 email: [bbridgeclub@bigpnd.com](mailto:bbridgeclub@bigpnd.com)  
 phone: Barry Stokes, 5152 2645

**RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS**

Local Master	Geoffrey Stanning
*Local Master	Martha Van Der Hoek
**Local Master	Phillip Geschke Max Henbest Pat Makinson Valmai Shearer Steven Tiomkin
Regional Master	Stephen Crawford
*State Master	Cecelia Silverman
National Master	Ian Bram Irene Hamilton
Bronze Life Master	Mary Allison
Silver Life Master	Alister Murray Kenneth Pearson

**SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS**  
**Ian McCance**

**Problem 1**

Dealer: S	♠ Q102	
Vul: Both	♥ KQ94	
	♦ QJ4	
	♣ K53	
♠ -		♠ 87653
♥ A752		♥ 1063
♦ 98532		♦ K
♣ 10842		♣ AQJ7
	♠ AKJ94	
	♥ J8	
	♦ A1076	
	♣ 96	

Obviously those hearts will allow declarer to get rid of at least one losing club, so a switch to clubs is indicated. A careful defender will choose ♣10. That lets the defence lead three rounds of clubs for the fatal force.

**Problem 2**

Dealer: N	♠ 8763	
Vul: E/W	♥ J63	
	♦ KJ63	
	♣ 109	
♠ Q2		♠ 10
♥ K52		♥ AQ10984
♦ Q52		♦ A97
♣ KQ874		♣ 652
	♠ AKJ954	
	♥ 7	
	♦ 1084	
	♣ AJ3	

From the bidding and play, declarer clearly has 6133 shape. The solution is to duck – allow ♦J to hold. Now declarer must lead diamonds himself, losing to both ♦Q and ♦A.

Congratulations to Eve and Alex Hart who have achieved a 5-Star Food Safety Rating when assessed by the Glen Eira Environmental Health Officer in August.

This is a reflection of The Bridge Players' Café's professional approach to providing us all with delicious meals in a wonderfully clean environment.

Well done Eve and Alex.

**BRIDGE APHORISMS – III**  
**OPENING LEAD APHORISMS**  
**Bill Jacobs**

*When in doubt, lead trumps* 2.2

It was S.J. Simon who said that if you followed this rule, you were never in doubt! That's a man right into paradoxes.

"More contracts are given away by the defence because of trump leads than any other single cause"

... *Respondent channelling Norma Borin*

"So wrong so frequently, and so lazy"

... *Ben Thompson*

"-1"

... *Cathy Chua*

"A trump lead can be very effective, but you need a reason, not a rule" ... *Ian McCance*

"Usually my last choice when in doubt"

... *Robert Fruewirth*

*Fourth highest of your longest and strongest* 7.4

"10 because this is mostly my leading style"

... *Cathie Lachman*

"Good rule for NT. But leading fourth best from long suits headed by the ace at suit contracts is only for the highly gifted"

... *Ian McCance*

"Usually right at NT, unless I have few points, in which case I try to lead partner's longest suit"

... *Kitty Muntz*

"I need compelling reasons not to lead 4<sup>th</sup> best at NT"

... *Robert Fruewirth*

"A good guideline against NT. Many NT contracts get let through because someone is too creative on lead" ... *Ben Thompson*

The opening lead is really one of the most undervalued skills in the game. Yes, there is often some guesswork involved, but over a lifetime, there is a huge edge to be gained with well thought out leads.

Time to look at the quiz.

1. 875 ♥ A42 ♦ 97 ♣ J8753

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	1♥ 4♥	Pass All pass

Forget the trump lead – pointless. What about the doubleton suit, looking for a ruff? There are two indicators for short suit leads:

- a. Not too strong, so that partner will likely have an entry to give you the ruff.
- b. Length and preferably control in trumps, to prevent the fast removal of trumps.

Both criteria exist here – I like ♦9.

2. ♠ AQ5 ♥ A42 ♦ 97 ♣ Q10763

West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	1♥ 4♥	Pass All pass

Forget the trump lead – pointless. Here it is unreasonable to expect that you can get a diamond ruff; it's just too unlikely that partner will have a timely entry. Fall back on the 4<sup>th</sup> best lead, trying to establish a club trick whilst there is time.

3. ♠ 865 ♥ AJ42 ♦ Q97 ♣ K107

West	North	East	South
3♣*	Pass	2NT 3♠	Pass Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

\* Stayman

Lead a trump. There's a genuine reason to do so, albeit a negative one. Leading from any of those side suits up to a 2NT opener is just asking to give declarer a free trick. A trump lead could perhaps pickle partner's queen, but it's the least of evils.

4. ♠ A54 ♥ 86 ♦ J763 ♣ K842

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♥	All pass

\* strong jump shift

Lead a club, hoping to build a club trick before your ♠A is knocked out. No second choice!

5. ♠ J54 ♥ 86 ♦ K763 ♣ A842

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	3♥*	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♥	All pass

\* strong jump shift

The spades are threatening, so you need to attack. It's a choice between the minors. Partner is more likely to have ♦Q than ♣K, but will the ♦Q suffice? Declarer might win ♦A and then take 6 hearts and 5 spades.

Conversely, leading ♣A (hoping to cash ♣AK) implies East bid slam with two fast club losers. Well, he didn't have a lot of room to investigate. This is a hand where human factors might come into play. Is declarer a basher or a careful bidder who would have found a way to investigate with 2 low clubs?

6. ♠ J83 ♥ 972 ♦ AJ5 ♣ A653

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥*	Pass	Pass	Pass

\* weak raise to game (fast arrival)

Is there a sound reason to lead a trump? Will your lead prevent diamond ruffs? No! Dummy has 4 hearts – you won't be able stop the ruffs, and your diamond holding is short; the diamonds will get established with just one ruff, in all likelihood.

The auction screams for leading the unbid suit. This hand is plucked from real life. East-West held:

♠ KQxxx	♠ A
♥ Qxxx	♥ AKJx
♦ x	♦ KQxxx
♣ xxx	♣ Jxx

7. ♠ 762 ♥ 85 ♦ 943 ♣ J9742

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

This is the classic 4<sup>th</sup>-best test. Lead a club, or try to "hit" partner with a major suit lead? In my view, the clubs are just good enough

that they might get established – is there any rule that partner can't have four of them? Or maybe ♣AKx with the queen dropping.

A major suit lead (not diamonds, likely to be dummy's suit) could be the killer, but you have the issue of which one to try. There are arguments that could be mounted in favour of either the doubleton or the tripleton.

8. ♠ - ♥ K1073 ♦ K985 ♣ K10643

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT*	Pass	4♠	All Pass

\* limit raise in spades

From the recent GNOT heat, I accept this is just about a blind guess. At my table, South tried a diamond – an interesting choice, perhaps attempting to protect the tens? E/W held:

♠ K9742	♠ A10865
♥ Q2	♥ AJ6
♦ J10	♦ AQ2
♣ A972	♣ J8

So 4♠ made irrespective of the lead, but the post-mortem was curious. At the end of the hand, North exploded to South: "You know I've told you *never* to leads from kings!!!"



### Funny Post Mortems

More a Pre-Mortem than a Post-Mortem but the Italian stars Giorgio Belladonna and Benito Garozzo had a passionate partnership where emotions occasionally took over. So they made an agreement that when one of them was declarer, and dummy was put down, declarer would say "thank-you" if all was well with the auction and contract, but say "grazie" if there were problems.

This worked fine for a while, but then there was the occasion when Garozzo was declarer. Belladonna laid down dummy and Garozzo, already thinking about the play, accidentally said "grazie".

Belladonna bristled and loudly exclaimed: "Grazie? Grazie?!? What do you mean Grazie?"

