

WOE BEGOTTEN

2014 Edition #1

West of England Bridge Club

£2.50

Celebrating 30 years

1984: New Bridge Club arrives on the Bristol scene

International Bridge player Jane Preddy founds her own Bridge Club

By **John McClaren** – Former Secretary of WOE

Over thirty years ago, when Bristol Bridge Club moved from its Clifton accommodation and bought the new premises in Hotwells it rapidly became the premier bridge club in the area. Jane Preddy was a larger than life character who had achieved great success nationally as a bridge player in her younger years. She then raised a family and later on returned to the game at an international level. She had a massive disagreement at the Bristol Bridge Club and walked out in a fit of pique declaring that she was going to set up her own club. Together with David Carlisle they acquired premises in St Paul's Road next to the Polish Club, and established the West of England Bridge Club. And they persuaded some well known people in the Bridge World to be Honorary Members.

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Jane Preddy and David Carlisle



The Very Beginnings

By **Andrew Robson** – International Bridge Player

I remember the very beginnings back in 1984: Jane (Baggage) Preddy, David (Uncle Fester) Carlisle, Marc (Smudge) Smith and Andrew (Professor) Thompson.

I also remember those afternoon 25p games with Bob (Hideous Hog) Baker; Graham (Garozzo) Hartley and myself (Belladonna). They were very high standard.

My "Bishop Desmond" 2:2 in Psychology would doubtless have been better without the West of England absorbing so much of my third year. Would I have achieved what I have in Bridge without it? I dunno - that's where I did my 10,000 hours.

Thank you very much West of England and I hope the next thirty years are even better.

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Agony Column
The Club Anthem composed by Bernard Mitchell

1984: New Bridge Club

John McClaren - Continued

At one stage during the St. Paul's Road days the club got into financial difficulties and was unable to pay the brewery bill. So Jane offered Honorary Life Membership to anyone willing to fork out £100. In that way the club was saved and there are still some of these people playing in the club today.

It soon established very successful afternoon rubber bridge sessions - where quite a lot of money was known to change hands.

There was also a selection of fine players on hand and it soon established lessons for beginners through to improvers. One of its early star pupils was Andrew Robson during his undergraduate days at Bristol University. And with a regular programme of evening bridge sessions it very quickly established itself as a reputable E.B.U. affiliated club. It was the first club locally to introduce computer scoring.

Jane and David soon collected an eclectic mixture of people around them - many of whom were quite eccentric. Whatever time of day one popped into the club there were always a collection of people talking avidly about the game.

In the early days, the relationship with Bristol Bridge Club remained poor, with some of the old guard in both clubs barely on speaking terms but over time, the relationship between the clubs has improved massively so that today there is a large cross membership between the two.

The club now at Golden Hill still feels homeless and it remains an ongoing wish to find a permanent home. We hope that in remembering its earlier days and celebrating its 30 years existence that we will one day see our dream realised.

Memories of Woe

By **Arnold Taylor**

I hadn't realized that it was thirty years since Jane Preddy asked me to be one of the four founding directors of, and a shareholder in, the West of England Bridge Club. When I agreed it was with total confidence in our success. The premises were excellent, if a trifle small, the Clifton address was prestigious and the staff were all very competent and willing to work hard. Surprisingly, it lasted only a few years as an owners' club - putting an end to my hopes of an additional pension in later years. I never fully understood why it failed to take off but I still remember those few years as the most enjoyable I ever spent playing bridge.

It wasn't strictly a bridge club at all. Jane always maintained that she wanted a social club in which bridge was played. Possibly that was the problem. In business - about which I know absolutely nothing - you have to define fairly precisely what you are trying to do. I believe they call it a 'mission statement' these days, which always brings up an image of little children saying prayers in some African jungle. Well, I suspect we didn't have one and if we had had one, perhaps we wouldn't have enjoyed ourselves so much.

The enjoyment came mainly from the personalities involved, some of whom I will never forget. David Carlisle was the bridge equivalent of Aussie fast bowler Mitchell Johnson - all aggression and confrontation. When he claimed a hand, he didn't just show you his cards. He would lean over the table and virtually thrust them down your throat. I only saw him bested once. Out of pure frustration he had doubled Andy - not Andrew in those days - Robson in a contract that was virtually impossible to make. Robson made it. He did it in his own time, of course, as he always did. I once played a match against him and unfortunately arrived half an hour late. Andy was politeness itself, as he always was, accepted my apology and said it was of no consequence. We began the 32 board match at 8.00 p.m. and hadn't quite finished by 11.00 p.m., though we had played the first set of eight boards. I can't remember now whether that match took two or three days to play. Bob Baker, who always arrived with a cry of 'table up!', was his absolute antithesis and the most natural bridge player I ever saw. Never stuck for a bid - almost always the right one - and playing the hand at the speed of light; if a contract could be made he would make it. Not only that but he would smile all the time, so that you never noticed you had been assassinated. It was at rubber bridge that these excelled and all you had to do was get one of them for a partner, relax, do nothing silly and wait to be paid at the end.

There was a lot of fun apart from the bridge. I remember a gentleman arriving one afternoon, beautifully turned out in a suit, tie, starched white collar and highly polished shoes. His hair was perfectly combed when combing was still something that people did, and he had a large blond moustache. He asked in what he clearly thought was a public school accent if he could get a game. We soon accommodated him but there was something about that accent - Eton with a touch of Knowle West - that made me suspicious and I eventually recognised him as Howard Jolly. I said nothing and he managed to keep it up for a couple of hours.

There was a running grand slam pool. I can't now remember precisely where the money came from but it was some sort of fine, perhaps for pointless hesitation, i.e. when you had no information to convey by hesitating. It was paid to the first person to bid and make a grand slam on the day. Naturally, there were many bid but rather fewer made.

The Running Grand Slam Pool

Arnold Taylor - Continued

I was partnering England international Andrew Thompson, and when he opened the bidding and found me with something approaching a 20 count I was always going to bid the grand, in spite of every effort he made to sign off at a slightly lower level. Trumps broke 3-2, the KJ doubleton was under the AQ and a side suit broke 3-3, allowing me to get rid of a loser. Even better, Andrew was a member of staff and couldn't claim his share of the pool, which was nearly £20.00 at a time when that would buy you a meal for two and a few drinks afterwards. I asked Bob, who knew all about statistics, what the odds were. "Don't ask", he said.



The quality of the rubber bridge became famous but it was at a price because it all took place in the afternoon or early evening. By the time that the evening sessions were beginning at Bristol Bridge Club everything was quiet at the West of England. Rarely did we get more than six tables and even that could only be done by bringing in the staff, together with one or two of us who did a regular shift. That couldn't go on forever and it was almost a relief when the decision was finally taken to sell up.

As a members' club today it is still a very pleasant environment but the magic of those first few years has never quite been regained. I find myself saying more and more frequently that "things ain't what they used to be" - a cliché, but, like most clichés, true.

More Memories of Woe

By **David Jones**

Jane Preddy formed the West of England bridge club in September 1984 since she saw the need and market for an alternative club to Bristol. The original premises were in St Paul's Road, Clifton (now the site of a hotel) and comprised a large four storey house with playing and teaching facilities on the first and second floors and a bar in the basement, which was the location for much convivial discourse about life, liberty, love and not a little bridge; the club was a wonderful place.

The ethos of the West of England was making it a club for bridge players rather than just a bridge club, and all those who recollect those wonderful days in the mid and late 1980s remember some fond and enduring friendships.

The club had the benefit of some top players to assist in its running including David Carlisle, Marc Smith, Andrew Thompson and John Gair. Rubber bridge was a staple game and the standard was high with some top performers playing, and indeed Andrew Robson cut his teeth in that game whilst at university in Bristol. Players acquired nicknames such as Hog, Tax Man, Lovejoy, Bag, Garozzo, TNV and Rude Boy.

High quality invitation events and a number of 24 hour marathons were held at the club and attracted many international players. Indeed, the only time I can recall seeing Larry Bennett looking at all nervous as a TD was when he was called to provide a judgement ruling at a table where Paul Hackett and Bob Rowlands were in opposition and the auction was at the 5 level and allegedly hesitation ridden!

Teaching was the lifeblood of the club and both Jane Preddy and David Carlisle were superb teachers and the courses were very well run. Many players can be grateful to David and Jane for the development of their bridge both through the classes and through their fantastic advice, skill knowledge and experience.

An Unforgettable Hand

by **David Jones**

I felt I should provide a hand and the following has never left me although it occurred around 1988! Partner and I were playing against a pair of internationals. First in hand at favourable vul playing teams, partner held

♠ x ♥ xx ♦ xxx ♣ AKQxxxx

He opened 3♠!! and the bidding continued pass-pass-3NT-pass huge think from Left Hand International who held

♠ AJxxx ♥ Kxx ♦ KQxx ♣ x

What would you do? the psychic pre-empt, if that was what had occurred, was very hard to expose and the bidding was just consistent with opener holding a 6 card spade suit, which was quite common at the time at this vulnerability, so eventually he passed. We took the first seven club tricks for +300 and opposition could make 1430 in spades. So who found this brilliant and imaginative bid? One of the founders of the West of England club, a true gentleman and that fine player, Arnold Taylor.

My Favourite Partner

By Mike Letts



I was so lucky to have Jane as my teacher. She was the kindest person although not everybody found this. She used to write in the bridge magazine and called herself 'the baggage' because some of the less kind men referred to women members of a team as just the guys' baggage. She was a very good player and would have been a permanent fixture in the ladies' teams if she had sucked up to the selectors ... but she did play many times. I would still call her my favourite partner. Before she died she was still good enough.

The West of England Scores a First in Computing Technology

By Tommo

A very nice guy Mike Tracey was the originator of computer scoring in Bristol for WOE not BBC! He had his computer on the lower floor, next to the cellar bar. Mike was kind enough to set his scoring up for BBC as well and John Hewitt, the BBC secretary, burst into tears! He did not want to lose his job of scoring manually, which he had done for many years. I believe Mike lives in the Nailsea area and has been seen on occasion at the BBC 'C' club.

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What can happen after a night of Bridge at WOE!

By **Larry Bennett**

Many were the nights when people didn't leave until after midnight. On one of those occasions, in mid-summer, I set out for home on my bicycle. It was really pouring with rain, and thunder was in the air. I was on Granby Hill, intending to turn left into Hope Chapel Hill, when I found that I had no brakes! I tried putting my foot on top of the front wheel, and wedging it against the forks. This seemed to be working so I applied more pressure. That locked the wheel. I went over the top and ended up lying horizontally across the road. It was warm, I was tired and water was building up against the dam of my body. Comfy, nice, sky, sleep. Luckily I broke out of the reverie, straightened the wheel and managed to ride home after walking down to sea level. Next morning, with a hangover, I had to peel multiple dried cuts, scrapes and tears off the sheets. Ow!

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Colourful Characters at WOE

By Marc Lee

Trouble was, I worked in the same road at the time, and it was SO tempting to skive off early and play some rubber in the afternoons. And the trouble with that was that they played for 25p per hundred (this was in the '80s, remember, when 25p was worth five bob) and I couldn't afford to lose at those stakes. And the trouble with that was...

Jane Preddy, "Baggage" to almost everyone, owner of the club and a formidable player. In her teens she'd been considered one of the country's brightest prospects, but then retired for thirty years to bring up five children. When I first came across her she was terrifying, able to reduce opponents to gibbering nitwittedness just with a look or a question. But that exterior of grumpy intolerance hid a generosity and willingness to help a young player that seduced me into moving allegiance from the BBC for good.

She told the story of being asked out to dinner by the great Terence Rees. It must have been some time on the late '40s or early '50s. All girlishly excited, she had dressed up to the nines for the evening's bridge and waited for him to take her out. The moment arrived. 'Right', he said, 'do you want fish and chips, pie and chips or just chips?' Oh well.

David Carlisle, foul-mouthed, short-tempered and fast even by my standards. A very good player and probably the finest bridge teacher I ever came across.

John Gair, the barman and general gopher was a little shorter than me, bald, bearded and almost spherical. In those days before bidding boxes, his bidding always sounded lugubrious and depressed, like Eeyore on Mogadon, but he was a

dangerous, creative player who was my favourite partner. A great shame that he gave up the game so early.

The three of them took me to my first Summer Congress (the one you all know simply as Brighton) the year they had it in Torquay. We camped somewhere or other, and John and I shared a VW camper van parked on rather a slope. Out of consideration for my health 20-something stone John slept at the bottom of the slope, leaving me perched at the top. Our number was augmented by Richard Coates, Jane's favourite partner, a destructively good-looking man with an endless stream of girlfriends. One of them, allegedly, was the wife of a partner where he worked, and suddenly he was relocated to their Warsaw office, or it may have been Skopje or Vladivostok – anyway, we never saw him again.

Where was I? Oh yes, the perils of playing rubber at stakes you can't afford against the best players in the county. Bob Baker, known as the Hog, an outstanding dummy player who could read a hand faster than anyone I know; Alan Williams, the Taxman, (no, not the Alan Williams you know) who once turned up after receiving the telephone summons "Sir Humphrey wants you in his office now" with no further details. Andrew Robson – yes, him, one of the world's best players. There was a raft of lesser players who were still dangerous: Howard Jolly, Paul Davis, Paul Blackman, all willing to take my money.

There were hardly any conventions allowed. Stayman, simple Blackwood, fourth suit forcing and that was your lot. Most doubles were for penalty, not takeout as they are today.

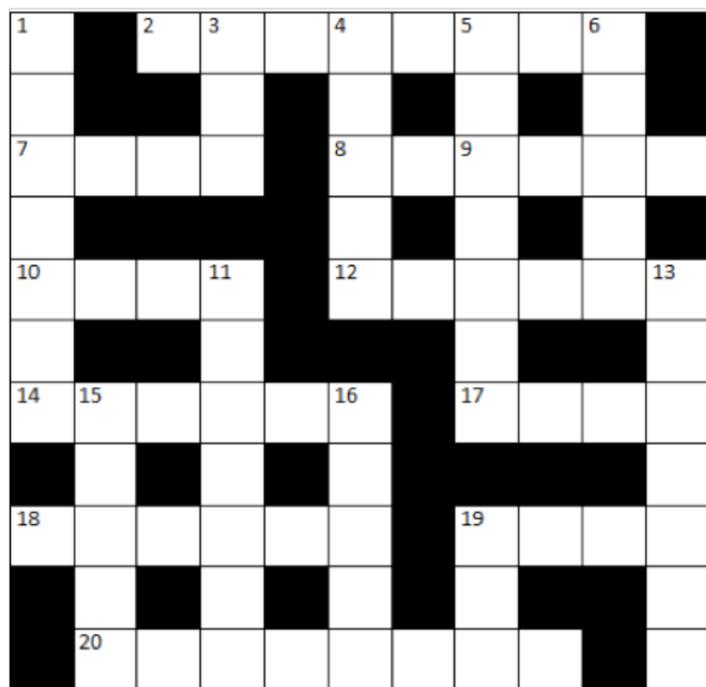
Oh, and there was Hollie, David's liver-spotted Dalmatian. She was probably the only dog ever to register EBU Master Points. One day I'd called in at lunchtime for a beer when the TV repairman was there. Hollie was fascinated and couldn't get close enough. Suddenly she screamed and backed away, shaking her head violently. 'I'm not surprised' said the man, 'there's about twenty thousand volts going through there.' Hollie had taken the whole lot through her nose. She wouldn't go near the TV for days after that.

The bar used to stay open for a couple of hours after play finished, and Jane, David and John were all available for a chat. They had as long as anyone wanted to help young players and I'm sure I'm not the only one who owes them a huge thank you for their endless patience and good humour.

Bridge Cryptic Crossword

By **Richard Farrer**

Stimulate your little grey cells!



Answers on page 10

Across

- 2) Be louder when stirring it up with this call. (8)
 7) Regretted sounding uncivil. (4)
 8) Take no notice of Italian after he starts. (6)
 10) Can do it if you have some table presence. (4)
 12) How do I inform the opponents? The method alters, changes. (6)
 14) Straightforward to run the event. (6)
 17) A nut roast suitable for a pescatarian. (4)
 18) Duck frowned upon at bridge without a double. (6)
 19) Not cold, but you are getting closer. (4)
 20) He made the slam easier to put down although it sounds like he made it easier to pick up. (8)

Down

- 1) No saint at the bridge table unless he brings the brandy. (7)
 3) Look up and down. (3)
 4) Board where it helps to pick the right card. (5)
 5) Was Larry involved with this murder? (7)
 6) For example, return half the bird. (5)
 11) Balancing when you play bridge. (7)
 13) Prison – the place for someone who is always at 6s and 7s. (7)
 15) My turn to open? Perfect! (5)
 16) One over the eight? Replace the end with the start. (5)
 19) Misery at the bridge club. (3)

MY BEST MOMENT

By **Laurie Barth**

My first Brighton. Driving wind, lashing rain, two thousand people crammed into a hall in a plush hotel: Swiss Teams on a Friday night. Partner and I are adequate club players; no more no less. It's all very nerve-racking, but we win a few matches and seem to be doing okay, I think.

Next morning we win again and team mates blithely inform us that our opposition is four members of the England International Squad. Partner and I are up against the husband and wife team of Jane and Tony Priday; names I had only read about in Bridge magazines.

Things don't start well:

I go one off in 5 clubs

I go one off in 2 diamonds

They go one off in 5 clubs.

There is a dodgy moment here. Jane asks partner for our discard system. "Dodds," says partner bluntly, revealing our true status as lowly club players

Jane shakes her head, "Dodds," she says, "I've never heard of that. Have you darling?" Tony shakes his head.

We come to board 4. Partner and I have nothing to say and sit entranced as Jane and Tony Priday, Husband and Wife, England Internationals, embark on a bidding sequence the like of which I have never seen. At least 10 bids go down before Tony bids 3N.T. Jane lays down 4 clubs and Tony goes into a long, long trance; so long I seriously worried about his health. Slowly he brings out the green card and Jane goes ballistic. "You're not fit to run an English girls' skipping team," she spits before racking up an angry 13 tricks for +210. At the other table at the far end of the room team mates Gareth Evans and Irene Robinson bid serenely to slam for a 15 imp match-winning swing.

Jane comes up to me afterwards, "I took him back to the table and he got a right bollocking," she says with a smile. Tony comes up to me afterwards, "I expect we will be seeing you in the final then." But alas like Icarus we had flown too high.

Young Innocent Lad Seduced by Woe

By **Robert Glass**



I remember joining the Club in 1991 when it was at Arley Hill, when I was still quite a novice at the game. At the time I was a member of BAWA Bridge Club and met Tim Bradbury. He had recently had lessons at the WOE and introduced me to the Club. In those days we regularly had a packed venue. Monday evenings were handicapped even then and I remember the enjoyment I felt when winning after handicap with Tim one evening when we had 20 tables. That kept me coming back for more.

Tim was a very friendly "happy-go-lucky" character who was keen on bridge. He moved to America to work for Boeing a few years later but he had an eye for the ladies and was always lusting after the young ladies at the Club and elsewhere. He used to give me a lift to the Club and on a number of occasions he almost ran into the back of the car in front if he noticed a pretty girl walking by. And he secretly lusted after Mandy Turnidge (as did a number of male players no doubt). But he was a naughty boy as he was married!

There were a number of characters who used to play at the Club in the 90s, who have now moved on or sadly passed away.

There was Rob Wills. He liked gambling and was known for always trying to save the pennies. One year I remember that he played in the

EBU National Newcomers Pairs, which I also went along to. It was the same time as the Grand National. I found out that he had slept in his car to save on accommodation costs but put a £50 bet on the Grand National! I never did find out if he made a profit.

Wills Transfers Convention

Rob Wills is also the inspiration for the "Wills transfers" convention, introduced by Michael Booker, a good bridge player who used to play with him occasionally. Mike was a regular at the West of England many years ago before moving to China to teach. In fact he came over for a visit very recently and played at our Club with Alan Williams.

For those who have not heard of "Wills (or one-way) transfers", over your 1NT or 2NT opening your partner is instructed to bid diamonds as a transfer to hearts and hearts as a transfer to spades. Nothing unusual there you say. However, when "you" bid diamonds or hearts over "partner's" 1NT or 2NT opening, it is to play. As the Hog would say: "to ensure the stronger player plays the contract".

I also remember playing in a Teams event with Rob Wills and Dickie Bird (not the cricket commentator) as team-mates. On one hand, Bernard Mitchell and I had managed a simple part score what was essentially a part score hand. We lost over 20 IMPs on the board. Rob and Dickie had played in 2D redoubled and gone for 2800. One of them had overcalled 1D over a strong 1C opening, intending it to show something like spades and another suit. This was doubled and passed around to the 1D bidder again. He redoubled (for rescue) but sadly his partner wasn't on the same wavelength. You can imagine the conversation when we scored up. "Plus 140" we said. "Minus 2800" our team-mates said. I couldn't stop laughing for about 10 minutes ...

Ross Anderson was another character. A grumpy Scot with a

heart of gold who has now sadly passed away. I have much to thank him for as he took me under his wing in the early days and we became a regular partnership. One evening I was not playing, and Ross was playing with Alan Peak-Payne.

For a laugh I fixed one board that had a really freaky distribution. Ross and Alan each had a long broken suit but with a void in partner's suit. The sort of hand where you would rebid your suit, partner would rebid his and the opponents would keep doubling you until you eventually stopped and went for a large penalty. The next day I heard that Ross and Alan had almost come to blows over it. Larry was directing and did enquire if I had fixed the board. "Me?" I said in my best innocent voice. Time to come clean about it Larry!

And there was John Steadman. A lovely elderly chap who was always punting 3NT and whom you had to keep an eye on when scoring on the traveller, as that extra overtrick would slip in if he made the contract, or if he went off, one less undertrick. He sadly passed away sometime in the mid to late 90s but he was always fixing up games with the newbies and encouraging them to play, and get involved in things. Similar to Colin Harvey and John Gair in that respect. The Club has a lot to thank them for.

There are a lot of other stories that I could tell you but I need to keep this fairly short. Jane Preddy has left a wonderful legacy and I hope that the Club will continue successfully for many more years to come.

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Not Just Bridge

By **Jane Bodin**

Four huge personalities dominate my memories of the early West of England Bridge Club – Jane Preddy, David Carlisle, Andrew Thompson and John Gair.

They taught all the time – not in formal lessons but just at the table and as we chatted in the bar afterwards. You'd often see a disgruntled player going the rounds, trying to find one of them to take their part.

You could also learn the hard way – by risking the afternoon Rubber Bridge sessions. Stakes were not that high. Usually the money went around and around, although of course it usually stuck to the better players. My worst experience was a rubber where on the one hand my illustrious partner gambled a small slam missing two aces, then Jane bid (and made) a grand slam.

Standards were very mixed – top players were attracted while the friendly atmosphere and nonstop informal instruction encouraged newcomers to the game.

There was also a very high level of directing and many learnt to direct there. You always knew when there was a novice director on duty because every opportunity was taken to ask for a ruling!

That bar – many of us risked our licenses going home at 1.00 or 2.00 am in the morning while surely being over the limit. But it was such a great social place.

The famous four entered the Hubert Phillips Bowl. A requirement is that every team has to include at least one woman. Because of the chauvinistic attitude of her gallant team mates, Jane - referred to as “the Baggage” - was required for the competition. Jane, serene in the knowledge of her own worth, just smiled.

John Gair won a huge toy panda in a raffle. This was the time of Chi Chi and An An: would they or wouldn't they get together. John took one look at his prize, held it high above his head and christened it Naf Naf.

The splendour of the new premises was remarkable compared to other clubs. However, the chairs took rather more punishment than their design intended. None of the four were that interested in housekeeping and the club soon acquired that “lived in” feel.

Most of the members were smokers and those who weren't had no choice, if they wanted to play there they had to cope.

Language was colourful. Those with more sheltered upbringings soon learned to ignore it. Trouble was, it was catching! At another club, a sweet old lady asked how it was going with my rather young inexperienced partner. Starting to reply in West of England mode, I got as far as – oh he has just got us a ridiculous top but he still got a boll***** er telling off.

Those were the days. Of course we were all younger then. But the memories are of exciting bridge, great social life and a unique atmosphere (not just the smoke).

Seeing what a Bridge Club could really be like, it inspired me to purchase Wolverhampton Bridge Club and have a go myself.

STOP PRESS JUST IN.

In The Beginning: There Was The Flat!

By **Brian Sharples**

It all really started when Jane Preddy and Mark Smith decided to start Bridge lessons in Jane's flat in Clifton.

The first few lessons were slow in numbers but after a few weeks it really took off and we were up to six tables. It doesn't sound much, but in Jane's flat I can assure you it was busy!

It was now that Jane decided to move to bigger premises, and that's when she bought the St. Pauls Road Property

We now had David Carlisle and Andrew Thompson working at the club, two well known top class bridge players.

Andy Robson was also a regular at the club.

After a few weeks the club decided to organize a Bridge 24 hour Marathon Competition, and after the first week it was sold out! We turned away a lot of people.

The names that entered particularly from the London area was like a “Who's who” from the Bridge World.

What a great time was had by one and all and what a great start for Jane.

Marathon Memories

By **Gareth Evans**

In the early 2000's we used to hold an annual 24 hour bridge marathon at the Polish Church.

The 2003 the event coincided with my 40th birthday, and many junior bridge players came from all around the country.

One, Arthur Wolstenholme, was only eight and came with his father. He arrived clutching a sleeping bag and when asked about this, Arthur stated that he had no intention of using it, but it was the only way his mother would allow him to come along. Arthur did play the whole 24 hours. He is still playing today and competed in this year's Brighton Congress.

During that same event in the early hours of the morning Christine Bickerstaff started falling asleep during the play and had to be regularly gently woken

up when it was her turn to bid or play.

In the year 2000 it was first suggested that we have team T-Shirts printed. It didn't take long to come up with the name “The West of England Bridge Club Formation Drinking Team”. In the following years a number of different designs were created around the theme. I'm sure that many of us still have shirts lurking deep in our wardrobes. And here they are back on their backs for a group photo September 2014.



Bernard, Marc, James, Richard, Damian, Karen & Lewis the Tiger.



Damian and Karen

WOE Formation
Drinking Team



Gareth Evans

Full Members: Bernard Mitchell, Marc Lee, James Taylor (From Worcester)
Richard Farrer & Damian Nicholls
Wags: Karen Nicholls, Julie Lee
Apprentices: Rowan Lee, Katie Lee and Shelley Whittington.
Chauffeur: Bernard

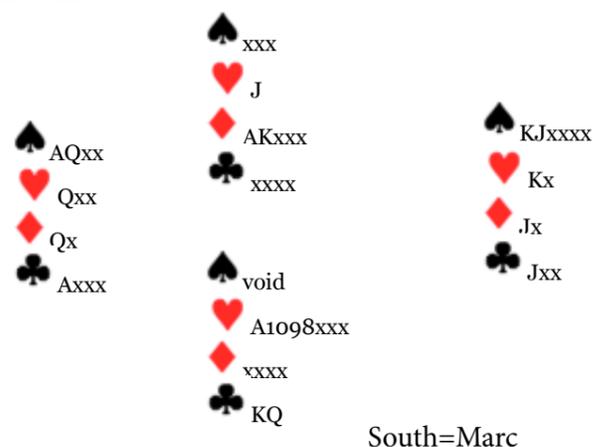
- FULL MEMBER
- WAG
- APPRENTICES
- CHAUFFEUR

The Hand That Did It For Me

By **Marc Lee**

Some years ago the club was graced for a few months by a certain Steve Knight. He may have been a good player for all I know, but he seemed to prefer to play with weaker partners so he could abuse them. Again, he may have been a charming chap, but if so he preferred to hide that side of himself.

I disclaim all responsibility for the rumour that went about the club that Marc was going to “get” Steve Knight. The hand that did it for me went something like this:



It was teams. N dealt with E/W only vulnerable. I was in the ideal seat to “operate”: South. Steve was on my left, the ideal spot to be operated on.

Partner passed and RHO opened 2D – Multi, a bid with assorted meanings, the most frequent by far of which is a weak-2 in a major, so often in fact that responder bids on the assumption that it will be a weak-2. Now, one of the drawbacks of using the Multi is that partner is often in the dark as to which major you have, and I decided to take advantage of that.

So I bid 3S – yes, I was South, you didn’t mis-read it. Pass from Steve, 4S from partner, pass to me. Well, I’m only going off in 50s and they can presumably make 4S, so I’ll pass. (This had an odd effect on the later play, as you’ll see.)

Steve now expressed the opinion, in the traditional way, that his side could make at least four tricks if spades were to trumps. Pass, Pass. Frankly, I could see no reason to disagree with Steve’s view, so I withdrew to the safety of 5H. Pass on my left.

Partner, bless him, gave preference to 5S. Now I don’t know about you, but when my partner gets doubled and then retreats to another suit, I don’t put him back into the first, at least, not until someone’s doubled him in the escape suit.

RHO expressed the opinion that if I couldn’t make ten tricks in spades, I probably couldn’t make eleven either. I was in full agreement with this suggestion as well, and I was running out of places to hide. In desperation, I tried 5NT. LHO doubled this and everyone passed.

N	E	Marc	W
No	2D	3S	No
4S	No	No(!)	X
No	No	5H	No
5S	X	5N	X

All pass

West had no idea which suit partner held, and was still under the spell that my pass of 4S had created.

He led a heart which went to the jack, queen and my ace. I played back another heart to clear the suit which LHO won with the king, then he started to think. He still thought I had spades, remember. After an age (these ages seem to go on for much longer when the right defence can cost you about a million!) he tried the effect of ace and another club, and when the diamonds broke I had eleven tricks and the unusual score for the side that’s not vulnerable of +670.

The best bit was there was no way Steve could blame his partner. 5NT on a combined 17-count – did I feel smug, or what?

Crossword Answers

R			R	E	N	T	H	G	I	L	
E			O			H		N		A	
M	R	A	W			G	N	I	K	E	P
M						I		N		D	
A	N	U	T			T	C	E	R	I	D
L			T					V		R	
S	T	R	E	L	A			E	L	B	A
		E		N	J						N
E	R	O	N	G	I			E	D	U	R
		G		E	U			Y			E
		E	L	B	U	O	D	E	R		B

Bridge Bestows its Own Immortality

By **Laurie Barth**

Stayman, Blackwood, Jacoby, Landy, McKinney, even Dodds (yes Robert) are names that are spoken everywhere Bridge is played.

Woe have their own players whose names are carved into club legend. Here is just one example:

He comes to the table innocent as a churchyard mouse. Peering short-sightedly at his cards, he hesitates, drops a card or two, finishing up in a contract bearing little resemblance to reality.

You hold singleton king, offside against A.Q.J. of trumps. Playing poorly, he winds up in dummy with no way back to hand. Sighing deeply, shaking his head, he calls for the ace and your king falls to its death.

When the score registers every pair in the correct contract has gone for a minus score. He smiles apologetically as he registers his top and your bottom. Maybe you manage a “Well played,” but you really don’t mean it.

To summarise: If your opponent is in the wrong contract, plays it poorly, scores a top then you Sir/Madam have just been Pinchbecked.

With fond memories and affection.



Why I Turned To Bridge

By **Lillian Skinner**

Lillian Skinner is at 92 our oldest member of WOE. Her partner is Laura Caldow who is 90 and the second oldest member of WOE.

Here is her contribution.

In 1984, whilst on holiday in Australia my husband had a heart attack and died. As you can imagine I was devastated and hardly knew whether I would be able to carry on. Sadly, I just sat around until in 1986 a friend persuaded me to learn to play Bridge with her. We joined a class with Jane Preddy as the teacher. I was intrigued at first but finally I became hooked. I eventually joined the West of England Bridge Club. They were so welcoming and friendly that I have stayed with them ever since. What would I have done without this game?

Bridge has changed in the last few years. There are so many conventions now. But my partner Laura and I have stayed with basic Acoll and over the years we have done quite well. We are now both in our nineties and still playing three times a week! Thank you West of England for Bridge for introducing me to the game. What would I have done without you?



Laura and Lillian

At 92 Lillian wins her own cup – The Lillian Skinner Cup!

In Memory Of

Far too many members of WOE have died. It would be too sad to list them all so Lewis Morton, and one of the most popular players ever to play at WOE, will represent all those members who have passed on to that Great Bridge Table in the sky, where finesses always work, trumps always break and partners always understand the system.

Lewis Morton

By **Damian Nicholls**



From left to right- Lewis, Ross Anderson & David Carlisle

When I was asked to write a brief article about Lewis Morton I must admit I wasn't really sure I could. Not only because I wasn't sure where to start but because a short article didn't seem possible.

I first came across Lewis whilst spectating at the late night rubber bridge at Arley Hill not long after I had started. Lewis and his partner were defending a hand and after a lot of thought Lewis eventually made his lead. At the end of the hand his partner stood up, went over to the library and came back with a book that he placed in Lewis' hands "How to Defend at Bridge". Maybe I should have realised how prophetic that could be! We probably both should have permanently borrowed the book and shared it.

Lewis and I started playing together because we were both interested in play a Strong Club system and wanted to play it not only at the club but in congresses and the local league.

It made sense for Lewis to be captain of any team we entered because at the time he was a wine buyer for Gateway and for some reason always managed to get the petrol spent on away matches put down to expenses. We did, however, have to put up with the occasional lapse of memory where Lewis would arrange a match but tell us and the opponents completely different venues!

Lewis was chairman of the club for a number of years and was always very enthusiastic and supportive of young players and bringing on beginners who had attended lessons. We had several youngsters who have gone on to represent their countries at National level.

He was a very kind and giving person and when I asked him to be my best man at my wedding to Karen he was there with ideas for wine at the reception and offered the use of his flat for after the reception as our 1 bed flat was too small.

He thoroughly cleaned the place, in fact having stayed the night; I woke up on my wedding day to find him scrubbing the tile floor. Maybe booking the taxi to get us to the registry office would have been a good idea too! We did make it on time though.

Unfortunately Lewis suffered from diabetes and a family history of heart problems and when he passed away from a heart attack at such an early age I lost one of my best friends and the club one of its biggest supporters.



Bernard holding Lewis the Tiger, the Team Mascot, Damian and Richard.

Forthcoming Events

Club Championship Pairs **Mon. Oct. 6th**
 Zodiac Pairs **Wed. Oct. 29th**
 Club Swiss Pairs Championship **Mon. Nov. 10th**
 Have a convention named after you at our new Convention Workshop **April 1st 2015**
 Aldous Huxley once opened the doors of perception now be prepared to have your bridge mind opened to the New 3 to 4 Club Revolving bidding System that is sweeping the Bridge World. Book your place now for our seminar **25th December 2014**.
 And don't forget the Christmas Party!

The Bridge Agony Column: Not Simply Bridge

By **Auntie Jo and Uncle Dodds**



Dear Uncle Dodds, I have fallen in love with the Tournament Director. When he reveals his little, red book, it sends a shiver down my spine. When he fondles the pages, I feel a slam coming on. He can take my tricks any time. Should I reveal my hand or keep my cards close to my breast?

Yours sincerely,

Hesitating Hannah

Dear Hesitating Hannah, your overtures will be completely wasted. All Tournament Directors have been chemically castrated in order to preserve their neutrality. I however have my own little red book.

(That will be quite enough from you Uncle Dodds, time for your medicine. Editor)

Dear Auntie Jo,

Is it true you've got a Bridge Convention named after you? Awesome!

Yours sincerely,

'Starstruck of Nowhere in Particular.'

Dear Starstruck, Yes there is a convention called Josephine, though I have to confess it's not named after me but after that shameless Jo Culbertson. Talk about being married to the right impresario at the right time. I had a fling with Eli myself before anyone ever heard of Mrs Perfect

Dear Auntie Jo,

My partner says Gerber is just a convention for old ladies, and that 'real bridge players' use something called RKCB. (How are you supposed to pronounce that? Was he an Eastern European?) What do you think?

Yours sincerely,

Misled.

Dear Misled, speaking as an oldish lady myself I see nothing wrong with Gerber. Indeed, I have to insist with all my regular partners that a bid of 3C is always Rolling Gerber, that way you can ask for jacks and still play at the five level if there is one missing. I accept that you can never play in clubs, but who does these days?

Dear Auntie Jo, My partner has this habit of taking out his glass eye and leaving it on the table. It's really embarrassing to have to go back to a table to ask if anyone has seen a spare eye there. Is there is something I can say to him?

Yours sincerely,

Horatio of Norfolk.

Dear Horatio, how about "goodbye?"

Dear Jo, I wish to ditch my partner in a way that causes no pain and I emerge with a clear conscience

Yours sincerely,

Troubled and Vulnerable.

Dear Troubled and Vulnerable, There is no way that this can be achieved. The real cause of the Trojan War was when Paris tempted Helen with the promise of the New Multi Two. The only way to keep your conscience clean is to have a sex change operation, possibly on the National Health, and join another club.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. BUT REMEMBER: NEVER CHANGE YOUR SHOES IN A REVOLVING DOOR.

How The West Of England Brought Me More Than Bridge.

MARY GERRY
By Gerry Gowling.



About 1990 I returned back to Bristol after twenty years abroad, and found a little place in Redland. One evening, after getting to know a few of the locals, I landed in at Sands, a local late night watering hole. Therein I spotted a scruffy, perpetual student type of chap; he hadn't changed at all.

"Ah" I said, I remember you; you used to go to Acker Bilk's Jazz Club". "Bloody hell," he said, "that was thirty three years ago". His name was Sam Nightingale and we got to chatting and eventually found we had a common interest; Bridge. So he introduced me to The West of England Bridge Club, which was playing at the time in an old, rundown theatre by the Colston Hall. I only played there a few times before I returned to Belfast.

Nine months later I came back to find that the club had moved to The Polish Church Hall and a much improved place it was. I joined the 'merry band' of bachelors, of which there are still a few around, and started on the 'strong club' system I still play today. Huw Oliver, Jeremy Rickard, Damian Nicholls and Marc Lee joined in and Damian and Marc still play a version of it today. At this time Sam was running the Friday Team evenings and when he dropped out I took it over.

One Monday evening two new ladies walked into the club, Mary and Greta. Eventually Mary and I played in the Mixed Pairs finishing second to Greta and Tony Gammon. Mary and I went on from there to be more than a Bridge Pair and later Damian took over the Friday Teams.

Another story in this series, not yet published, is:
How Ian Met Margaret

Friday Night = Fun Night

By Mary McKenzie

Friday is the highlight of the week for Bridge.

As a newcomer to WOE, I was over the moon when Gerry asked me to play on a Friday. I thought he was asking me to play with him, but I soon discovered he had rounded up me and several others to play in the "Odds Team." I tried not to be offended! The Odds Team was the ninth team so each week one team had a bye which provided a pool of players to fill any gaps in the other teams.

It was also pivot teams so you got the chance to play with other members of your team. One memorable occasion I was playing with Lewis Morton. Still very new to Bridge I just nodded when Lewis hastily listed the conventions we would be playing- one of which was the 'Unusual No Trump'.

Dickie Bird playing Acol opened 2C; "2NT" called Lewis which was passed around to me. I looked at the two points I had in my hand: the singleton 2D and the jack, rag of clubs. Well, clubs is my stronger suit, so 3C was my bid- and it was passed round to Dickie's partner who doubled. All passed and I was left to play in 3C doubled with my miserable 2 point hand.

Dickie led a diamond and Lewis's hand went down- he had 1 point- the jack of spades!

Dickie's partner returned the diamond lead which gave me a ruff! 7NT was a lay down of course, which our partners made and I did make one more trick than our opponents at the other table!

So do come along and have some Fun on Friday. Our numbers are low but the standard of play is high and the atmosphere is very convivial. Plus table money is only £2 if you have played on Monday and Wednesday.



Fun Nights at WOE

By Laurie Barth

From the beginning, Jane Preddy insisted that the club be more than just Bridge. Thus came about the concept of Fun Nights. It may seem that Fun and Bridge are not the most natural of dance partners, and there are some sceptics who insist that bridge and fun do not belong in the same room. But these nights thanks to the exceptional hard work of the individuals involved have always been a great success.

The first Fun event was Burns Night where we all dressed up in kilts, ate haggis and tatties, drank whisky and recited poetry in an indecipherable accent. After a lapse we have re-introduced Fun Nights.

In July there is Bastille Night where we all dress as revolutionaries, speak French and throw cake to the masses.

There is Jubilee night where we all dress in ermine, the women wear tiaras and everybody speaks in a posh accent.

Zodiac night with Mystic Meg was re introduced last year and further nights of fun are in the offing. For instance: The Celebration of the Communist Uprising where we will be calling each other comrade.



The revolutionary on the left has just realised that the revolutionary on the right has come dressed as a French letter.



Photo from the archives-Burns Night. From left to right Wendy Mellish, Pat Clowes, Amanda Bolton, Dennis Milnes, Liz Busustow carrying the haggis, Steve Turner with the whisky and Ross Anderson, who being Scottish, was in charge of the event.

We were delighted with the number of guest revolutionaries who turned up to celebrate, although we suspect that the man in yellow may have secretly infiltrated our Bridge Club and is indeed the Scarlet Pimpernel!



These are not just ordinary onions. They are Bastille Onions! Also, the mystery of the missing tea cloth has now been solved.



The Jubilee Party. But how did that convict arrive with her colonial flag?



WHO DO YOU THINK THEY ARE?



Someone lets their hair down



In the early hours dancing takes over from Bridge



Vlad the Impaler looks on



Some people never change...



Whilst others metamorphose into something completely different



Tall, dark and handsome, the 'pick of the bunch!'



Someone is 'kneading' a New Convention!

Dog Days on the WOE Committee

By Chris Frew

It has been my privilege and pain to serve on the WOE Committee for seven years or so, and I can honestly say that we, collectively, are as undisciplined a rabble as ever gathered around a table. Don't misunderstand me; the Committee is the mainspring of the Club, and its members are the source of all the good things that happen over the year. It's just that, when we gather around a table, something akin to 'white-line fever' takes over. The Chairman tries valiantly to keep discussion to the point (or any point); a doomed enterprise as the Agenda is blown away and we severally raise and discuss whatever we want to speak about, when we want to speak about it. For this reason the Minute Secretary is a latterday hero(ine). Truly an exercise in creative writing, minutes eventually appear that feature order, sequence, discussions, decisions and actions. A triumph of the art of creating order out of chaos.

It is not unique to us that the length of discussions is inversely proportional to the significance of the item. Move the Club to another location? OK, next item. Buy a new dealing machine? Through on the nod. Increase Table Money? Fine.

However, at the other end of the significance scale, discussion can rage. Nothing better illustrates this than the issue of Shaun's dogs.

Several years ago Golden Hill made Shaun their Bar Manager. Soon members noticed that small dogs were sniffing around their ankles when they played bridge; not to everyone's taste. They were Shaun's dogs, and his constant companions. The matter eventually came to Committee.



And the dogs are delighted. Woof! Woof!

You might imagine that the matter was open-and-shut. A complaint to the Golden Hill Chairman, touch on the Health and Safety issues, allude to a breach of our Lease Agreement, and the dogs would be gone forthwith. However, what was this? Some people actually liked having the dogs around. The dogs were undoubtedly cute; small short-haired brown things with the demeanour of one who has been freshly whipped. We of the hard-hearted rump said, what if one of our elderly members trips over a dog and breaks their neck? Unlikely, said the softies, and the old ladies are the worst offenders when it comes to fondling and feeding the dogs. What about our Lease Agreement, we countered. Ah, said the softies, Shaun is going through a difficult time at the moment and the dogs are his emotional support. But Bristol Bridge Club would never allow this, we said! Perversely, this was the clinching argument.

WOE is the Club that dares to be different, we were told, so if Bristol Bridge Club wouldn't allow it - we will!

So cute



and cuddly!

So far as I can recall, 'Shaun's dogs' has been the only issue where the Committee could reach no agreement and the matter had to go to a vote. Needless to say, we the hard-hearted rump lost and the dogs stayed. So whereas I generally subscribe to the doctrine of shared responsibility, if you trip over a dog on the way to the loo - don't blame me.



The Bridge Committee makes its decision

The Club Anthem

Composed by

Bernard (Music Man) Mitchell.

Sung to the tune of Amarillo.

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la (x3)

When the evening's dawning
After a gruelling morning
How I long to be there
With my friends who're waiting for me there
Right through the desert
Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha
Every mile I drive
Ha- ha-ha-ha-ha
Is worth the effort
For the fun when I arrive

Is this the way to the West of England
Such a place of joy and drinking
Longing to be at the West of England
To see my friends who wait for me
Show me the way to the West of England
Good people and great mingling
Dying to get to the West of England
And all my friends who wait for me

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la (x3)
And my friends who wait for me

The whole place is sparkin'
There's a car park no-one can park in
In the upstairs room
People play and standards bloom
There is no place elsewhere
Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha
That I'd rather be
Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha
There is nowhere better
'Cause laughter is the key

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la (x3)
And my friends who wait for me

Is this the way to WOEE Bridge Club
I prefer it to being in the pub
Longing to be at the WOEE Bridge Club
To see my friends who wait for me
Show me the way to the WOEE Bridge Club
Where no-one's ever stitched up
Trying to get to the WOEE Bridge Club
And all my friends who wait for me

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la (x3)
And my friends who wait for me

The Christmas Parties - Formal but Fun

Our Most Glamorous Night

A bit like the 'Oscars' where everyone dons their best Bib and Tucker.



The man on the left, Laurie Barth, won the Best Dressed Man Christmas 2012.



These Runners Up Christmas 2012 were the winners in 2013.

Glamorous Club members take a 'selfie' which goes viral on the internet!



The editor with the Best Dressed Man Christmas 2013.



The Bruce Forsyth & Len Goodman of the West of England Bridge Club

Memories of Jane Preddy



Jane Preddy

31st January 1928 – 24th February 2011

Jane Preddy started playing bridge at the age of 11, when her grandmother taught her the rudiments of the game in the air raid shelters during the Blitz. In the 1940s she played much Canasta with Terence Reese and her first, late husband, William Preddy, as well as bridge with many of the big names of the time including "Skid" Simon.

Having enjoyed a string of successes on the national bridge scene in the late 1940s, Jane stopped playing in order to raise a family of five – four daughters, including former bridge international Kay, and a son. However, she returned to bridge in the 1980s, when she revitalised her international career; among other successes, she represented Great Britain in the World Championships in Japan in 1991. It was in the early 1980s that Jane made her most significant contribution to bridge, when she founded the West of England Bridge Club in Bristol, a club that attracted many future internationals such as Andrew Robson, Marc Smith and David Carlisle, with whom Jane lived for the last thirty years and married in 2003. The star of the club was undoubtedly Jane herself, an exceptional teacher who attracted a very devoted following. Jane retired from Bristol to Kent, where she took up golf, in the late 1980s but soon after she moved again. First she briefly co-managed the Acol Club in London together with Andrew Robson, then she followed David Carlisle first to Aberystwyth, where he gained a PhD, and later to Essex, where he became a school teacher. Jane Preddy loved life and was much loved by all her family and friends. She leaves her second husband, four daughters and a son. She had thirteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Major International Appearances

Women's European Championships: 1985 and 1991

Venice Cup: 1991.

Memories of my Mother

By **Kay Preddy**

I am delighted that the West of England Bridge Club is thriving and celebrating this event. I hope the following will throw some light on the founder of the club.

I was the fourth of five children in my family. During our childhood, we often entertained ourselves on holidays and at weekends with card playing (television being quite rare in those days). Canasta was always a favourite and all of the children and most of the grandchildren (13 of them) are quite expert at the game. When I returned home after my first term at university I told my mother that I had begun to play a new game. It was fantastic, entertaining and challenging. "Why had we not played this game in our childhood?" I asked. Only then did any of her children realise that our mother (and father) was an expert at the game. She had been a leading light in the Bridge World with her brother, my father and herself being core members of a very successful young team. She played at the top-level at duplicate and at Rubber Bridge often playing against Tony Priday, Terence Reese and many other top players. Terence Reese often played canasta against my parents (for large sums of money). She did not share with me her successes at that time so I am unable to relate them to you.

She took me under her wing during my early bridge career often spending hours bidding hands with me and instructing me how to play hands. Although I only partnered my mother occasionally, one occasion was the Harpers & Queen's ladies pairs which in those days was a prestigious event with good prizes on offer. I remember arriving five minutes late and being extremely flustered, but we managed to overcome this to win the event. I also played in the same team as my mother in the Olympiad held in Kyoto in which the team came fourth.

Interestingly I have taken a similar path to my mother having played bridge (to a reasonable level) before having children and taking the game up again after children. However, what I find quite astounding was that my parents mentioned nothing of their accomplishments to any of us until I discovered the game. One other interesting fact is that I met and knew my mother's second husband before she met him, and my mother met and knew my husband before I met him.

We are currently looking for singers to join the Club Choir.

No previous experience required.

Gareth (The Voice) Evans will be holding auditions in October ready for the 2014 Christmas Party. See you all there.

THE FOUR HOUSES OF WOE

THE FIRST HOUSE OF WOE-

"The premises were excellent, if a trifle small, the Clifton address was prestigious and the staff were all very competent and willing to work hard," **Arnold Taylor.**

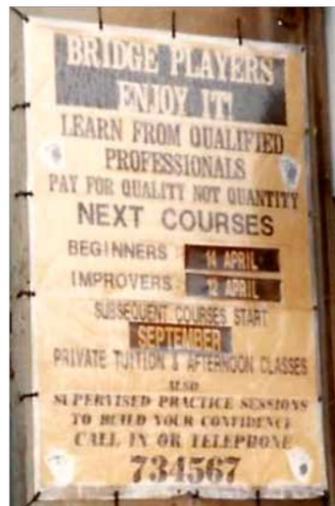
48 ST. PAUL'S ROAD
CLIFTON.



Situated next to the Polish Club; now the Arlington Hotel

"The premises, like some of its earlier adherents, were quirky. The playing area was in several rooms spread over two floors with a bar and kitchen in the basement,"

John McClaren



"If I remember correctly, St. Pauls Road had 3 levels: two upper floors were the playing area and the upper

floor had a bar. There was a cellar bar downstairs. So, a club with two bars! The chairs were rather ornate and not particularly comfortable. There was a car park that was approached by a fairly narrow road," Tommo

WEIRD OR WHAT?

By Larry Bennett AKA Pinky, and for some reason, Grumpy.

The West of England Bridge Club in St Paul's Road was one of the daily deliveries on my evening paper round in the 60's.

It came as a bit of a shock to me in several ways after 12 yrs at the Beeb. As well as being on three floors the whole atmosphere and look was completely different from the Bristol Bridge Club; very strange and new. Mock Louis XVI chairs; wide-striped wallpaper; wall lighting and serving hot food. After joining I worked behind the bar and directed for free meals, free beer and occasionally free table-money. Another weird thing was that many people acquired nick-names. A pal, and regular partner of mine, and I became Pinky & Perky, after two popular TV pig marionettes. I could not be Perky of course so Pinky it was.



Prizes for guessing which one's Larry!

Later on, when I wrote hand-dealing and curtain card computer programs, in order to play the 'new' Swiss Pairs, Pinkysoft became my nom-de-plume. I'd been on the club committee a bit and was one of the £1 directors when Marc Lee set up an interim company for the change over from proprietary to members' club status.

There were also at various times, a TV, a quiz machine and a one-armed bandit. Watching the Lone Ranger without the sound became a fetish for the early arrivals.

The quiz machine accumulated a cash prize, and at certain stages you could take the money or have another question. If you got it wrong, you lost the lot.

Very late one evening, with almost nobody left in the place, David Carlisle nickname 'Rude Boy' had achieved a substantial cash total and decided to go for the final double-or-nothing for the maximum prize. He got it wrong, lost everything and smacked the glass front of the machine with his hand.

The glass shattered and cut his hand and forearm quite badly. I drove him to the BRI (despite allegedly being a bit tipsy) and waited several hours with him before getting him back to the club.

Next day he complained to the rental company about the glass breaking!

WOE Player suffers from Amnesia

Now I am a forgetful soul, especially with names, but my experience one night at WOE went a stage further! One Wednesday, I was playing with a super guy called Sam Nightingale who somewhat resembled an Apache warrior. Sam incidentally was an excellent cook but I won't digress too much. Anyway I ascended to the upper floor one night to get a drink, and on returning to the lower playing area I had completely forgotten who I was playing with! I simply wandered around (nothing changes!) until Sam shouted out "Partner, it's time for the next round". Problem solved.

Who could this be?

HOME AND AWAY TO THE THIRD HOUSE OF WOE

"When Jane decided to sell the premises and move on the club became homeless moving for a short time to the old Y.M.C.A. building in Colston Street before renting the hall of the Polish Roman Catholic Church on the Cheltenham Road," **John McClaren**

HOME AND AWAY TO THE SECOND HOUSE OF WOE

"I was inveigled to drive a 12-seater mini bus, shuttling people and furnishings during the move to the YMCA." **Pinky.**



"This residential/office building was owned by the Y.M.C.A.. WOE rented the theatre for Bridge. Mike Tracey used to sit on the stage with his computer! Committee meetings were held in a little office upstairs." **Bernice Horseman.**

YMCA building on Colston Street

In 1989 after a brief stay at the Y.M.C.A. W.O.E. moved into its third home and stayed for twenty years.



"The Polish Reform Church at the bottom of Arley Hill, famous for its clock tower that never tells the right time, seems an unlikely setting for a Bridge Club. It sits at the centre of the rush hour traffic flow with no parking facilities. As 7:30 approaches, members can be seen circling the club, like birds of prey ready to swoop on the smallest of spaces.

But the church had its advantages: there was space, even a back room when things got crowded and at its peak in the mid nineties, the club was very, very busy with Bridge being played four week nights with an American Supper on a Saturday.

The second advantage, almost an imperative the church, being Catholic, had a liquor licence and bar." **Laurie Barth.**

Now let Jen Challoner, Editor in Chief, take you inside the church on a typical Monday night.

The Pope, painted large against a flat and out of proportion Vatican, looks down benignly but nobody in the room gives him the courtesy of a glance. Two tin angels, with bent backs and haloes askew valiantly lend him their support whilst an equally large portrait of Vlad the Impaler waving a sword adds drama to the scene.

Religious singing can be heard; and incense, smelling of formaldehyde and death pervades the atmosphere. After all, it is Easter. Apart from Sid, who is visiting for the first time, and always sensitive to his surroundings, the assembled congregation are absorbed in their own faith, which has little to do with Christianity, although to the outsider it is not without its own rituals and customs: the communal silences; the collection plate; the movements in a pre-ordained fashion; the superficial niceness. This is Bridge at the West of England on a Monday night.

Continued on next page



The High Priest of Bridge, distinctive by his badger hair, roams the room, armed with a book of 'The Faith'. And quietly, sometimes loudly, always too quickly and seldom patiently, polices the proceedings. Unapproachable and a law unto himself, he brooks no argument. He is the Tournament Director, and usually with ordination, these chosen few, swollen with power, turn sour. Common courtesies are now a thing of the past.

Sid nervously downs his second pint of cider; he is not playing well, intimidated by his Holiness staring down at him. Four pints later, almost incoherent, unable to stand, his head bows shamefully at yet another defeat. The Pope has triumphed for once.

At the next table, Jeff, a huge Australian with long blond hair and attitude, struggles to make another ambitious contract. The combined point count, as usual, is meagre. His partner, ever watchful and patient, sighs. Forever loyal to Jeff, and never afraid to voice his support, he knows like a drowning man, that they are doomed to another defeat. A sweet victory of 50% would never be theirs. Time to plan the play is frequently swept away as Jeff calls the Tournament Director to pass judgement on yet another minor disagreement. Jeff has many scores to settle and his partner quietly plans his assassination.

From the far end of the room a sudden eruption disturbs play. Eva, the sexy Latin Diva, hot, fiery and indignant with the Tournament Director, is refusing to abide by his judgement. This altercation would be prolonged and not quiet, though eventually, after various forms for the E.B.U. have been filled in, the general calm returns to the room.

Pat and Sandra are regular Monday players, but after several years, still regard the club as foreign territory. They battle their way, with their handbags from one table to the next, determined to stand their ground. Pat's bosom leads the way to the Ice Cruncher's table, while Sandra trots behind. They have had many a skirmish with the Ice Cruncher and are ready to take her on. But tonight she is still persisting with her fruit diet, eating yet another handful of blueberries from a punnet which is resting on the card table. Eileen, looking across from her table, fails to see why the Ice Cruncher is allowed to carry and eat so much fruit during the evening, whilst cigarettes are banned until 10:30. Memo to Eileen: possibly because nobody has yet died of passive fruit watching!

By **Jen Challoner**

The Fourth House of WOE Golden Hill Cricket Club.

By **Laurie Barth**

Hard to believe that we've been here for five years. It's gone by so quick.

Things aren't perfect: we seem as far away as ever from owing our own home. Every attempt having fallen through for one reason or another.

We are on the first floor which can be difficult for our more infirm players. And like many Bridge Clubs, we suffer from falling attendances. At its peak, the Polish Church ran Bridge five nights a week. Now we are down to three. And Friday night teams can be a struggle.

The situation is not all doom and gloom; there is a fair sized car park and, in this day and age, with a mad mayor on the rampage, parking spaces are like Grand Slams, often spoken about but rarely seen.

There is a balcony with a view across the cricket field where Bridge players can take a moment to watch the cricket and re invent their youth.



HOME AND AWAY

THE FOURTH HOUSE OF WOE



There is a bar: many, many Bridge clubs live in village halls or churches with no liquor licence. But a drop of alcohol can give the evening a more social feel and perhaps make one more tolerant of partner's latest foolishness. Not a great defence of alcohol but it's all I've got.

The best thing about it all; we're still here. After thirty years and four homes the House of WOE still exists. Finances are closely guarded by Treasurer Chris Frew. Prising free biscuits from his financial clutches was a major struggle if only his bidding was as disciplined.

So let us take advantage of our liquor licence and raise a glass to the next thirty years.



West of England Bridge Club Charitable Foundation (incorporated in the Cayman Islands)

Be part of the
FIFTH HOUSE OF WOE!

A charitable gift will help make new premises a reality, and make a local bridge player very happy.

Tick your gift:

£1000. Secures North-South seating for life. **Suit those with strong views on orientation.**

£10,000. Secures naming rights over the bar. **Suit those with a drink problem.**

£100,000. Secures a marriage proposal from the Treasurer. **Suit the desperate.**

Help build my holiday home our super new premises! Cheques should be made out to 'Cash' and handed to the Treasurer.

Your legacy is secure with me us!

The Editor in Chief would like to say thank you to all those who have contributed to what we hope will be a written history of WOE.

Many memories were awakened: some sad, when I recall the members who have passed on, but mainly good memories when I think of the friendships formed and the sheer pleasure that Bridge has given.

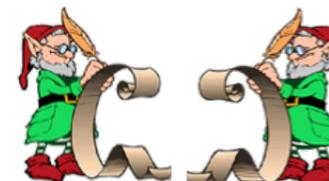
No matter the ups and downs of life Bridge has been a constant, for just a few hours nothing else matters but the play of the cards.

Yours sincerely Jen Challoner and her Editorial Elves.

P.S. From the Chief Elf (aka Laurie Barth) "As the Chief Whipping Elf, and the recipient of her constant 'badgering' may I say how hard she has worked. Jen has turned her vague idea into something worth keeping." Well Done.



Owen



Tom

Miscellaneous Mischief

Wanted Sixty something male seeks dominant, female partner to whip him into shape. Apply to: Box 7NT X

Wanted Volunteers for WOE Bridge Calendar.

If you've got it flaunt it. Show the world that Bridge Players can be beautiful. This product will surely be a best seller. Who would not pay to see Bridge Players in all their glory?

Male volunteers apply to J. Challoner.

Female volunteers send photos to L. Barth.

All proceeds to the Bridge Benevolent Society, Laurie B. C.E.O. Managing Director and Hon. Chairperson.

To Sell One used partner, brakes fail when in a crisis. A few too many miles on the clock, but steady and reliable if treated gently. Offers in a sealed envelope to Pauline Hart.

Thinking of selling Trade in your partner for a new updated model. Excellent part exchange offers now available in the Autumn Sale. Log in at www.tradeapartner.com

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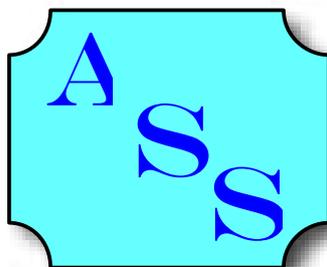
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