

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

December 2012

Editor: Bill Jacobs

Vale Blaine Howe 1949 - 2012



It saddens me to report that Blaine Howe passed away peacefully on November 29 following a short illness. Many of you will know Blaine as the VBA's webmaster, fine bridge player and good friend.

I have personally known Blaine since I began my bridge career in the late 1970s. I called him Bear, he called me Button. Blaine came to Australia in 1972 as a qualified chemical engineer and worked in his profession for some time. A true bookworm, movie buff, music addict and passionate bridge player, Blaine was always in my life. We spent time playing together on teams, having dinners and early on went horse riding; we worked together at Praxa Limited, an IT company for many years along with Rex Livingston. Blaine worked in book shops. He was there when my children Lucy and Max were born. Blaine loved computers and following his retirement from Praxa pursued his passion. He helped his mate, a pizza shop owner, with his computers. He purchased the (now retiring) server and computers for the VBA shortly after I started there. He helped fledgling bridge clubs, Williamstown, Bayside, RSY to mention a few. He helped them with the set-up of the websites, dealing and hand records.

Blaine formed his most successful bridge partnership with Neil Ewart, shortly after Neil came to Melbourne from Canberra. Together they were a fearsome pair. They worked

endlessly on their system, Blaine always updating the system notes. They won the Victorian Open Pairs in 2006 and 2009. Blaine was also a Victorian representative on the Seniors Team in 2006, and won the Victor Champion Cup in 2007.

His most recent achievement was winning the Spring Nationals Senior Teams playing with Chris Hughes (see photo on front page of the VBA website). Blaine was so excited. He rang me at work to tell me about it and also told me about his gold points and the choices of national events he could play in.

There is so much more I could tell you about Blaine.

Our thoughts are with Jenny (pictured), her daughters, their children, Blaine's mother Ursula, Sally and Geoffrey.

... **Cathie Lachman**

(For a recent example of Blaine's bridge skills, see Panache on page 4.)



Barometer Pairs

The VBA invites all VBA members who have played in at least 4 duplicate sessions since 1st September to participate in a Barometer Pairs event held over 2 nights, 12th and 19th December at 7.30 p.m.



At the conclusion of the second night's play the winners will receive a boxee box, and the raffle for the boxee box will be drawn.

You are also invited to stay for the Xmas Party commencing at about 9.00 p.m.

Enter: via the website: www.vba.asn.au or phone 9530-9006.

COUNCIL NEWS

Revised Congress Calendar Policy

After much consideration, the VBA council has ratified an update to the Congress Calendar Policy. As part of the allocation policy, the VBA plans to liaise with clubs over the next two years to manage some re-arrangement of congresses where possible so that congresses for clubs which are in close proximity geographically are held at different times of the year.

The new policy can be found on the VBA website in the Document library under "Match & Tournament".

New Club

The VBA is pleased to welcome U3A Knox as an affiliated Victorian club.

Teacher Training Program

The VBA plans to hold a Teacher Teaching Program with Joan Butts on the weekend of April 6, 7 at the VBA. This program was very well received when last run in 2011, and we trust that existing and aspiring teachers will pencil this date into their diaries. More details will be sent to clubs in February 2013, once the program is finalised.

AGM

A reminder that the AGM of the VBA will be held at the clubrooms on Tuesday December 4th commencing at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend and enjoy a free, friendly game of duplicate bridge and supper after the AGM has concluded.

December/January Congresses

December kicks off with the VBA's 2-day Summer Congress (see ad on this page), and finishes with the Kings and Queens congress from December 26 to January 3. You can enter at <http://www.bridgeunlimited.com/>.

In January, the Summer Festival of Bridge will once again be held at Rydges in Canberra. Events are available for players of all standards. Details available on the ABF website.

Meet Laura Ginnan

The VBA is very pleased to announce that Laura Ginnan has been appointed the new State Marketing and Promotions Officer. As the peak State body, promoting bridge in Victoria is a critical part of the VBA's role. Laura will be working from the VBA two days a week and supporting all Victorian clubs in promoting our wonderful game.



Laura is originally from Canberra, where she learnt bridge at the age of 7, although she took a few years off in her teens to play representative softball. She came to Melbourne to undertake a Bachelor of Business and Commerce at Monash Uni, which she finished earlier this year.

In bridge, Laura has played on numerous Australian youth teams and is a national champion. She has won the prestigious Hellman-Klinger award for her extensive contributions to youth bridge, and has been active in promoting youth bridge.

She is very enthusiastic about pursuing her passion for promoting the game she loves, and looks forward to working with everyone in Victorian bridge. She is also fascinated by lighthouses, so don't be surprised if you find yourself playing a congress at the Cape Otway lighthouse one day!

VBA Summer Congress

A Red Master Point event

Saturday 8th December – Swiss Pairs
Sunday 9th December – Swiss Teams

Starting time: 10 am

Tournament convenor: Cathie Lachman
Tournament director: Laurie Kelso

Enter via the VBA web-site at
www.vba.asn.au.



Melbourne Bridge Weekend with Joan Butts



3 - 6 May 2013 The Langham, Melbourne, VIC

Joan Butts, National Teaching Coordinator and one of Australia's most popular and respected bridge teachers, invites you to join her at the wonderful The Langham, Melbourne. Featuring the very best in modern bridge techniques, the weekend will include lessons and games for all levels of player – beginner to advanced. No need to bring a partner, Joan will arrange one for you.



3 Night Package: \$1,095 per person

Comprises two daily bridge lessons with Joan and games each afternoon and evening.

Includes:

- 3 nights accommodation (twin share)*.
- Breakfast daily.
- Welcome Cocktail Party.
- Victory Dinner at Melba Restaurant.

*Single Room Supplement \$370.

Daily Package: \$65 per person per day (without accommodation)

Comprises two daily bridge lessons with Joan and games each afternoon and evening.

The Langham, Melbourne is situated in the exclusive Southbank precinct and offers stunning views of the Melbourne city skyline. Ideally located near the National Gallery of Victoria, Federation Square, the Arts Centre and the Crown Casino, the five star The Langham, Melbourne is also surrounded by al fresco cafés, restaurants and boutiques. Combining personalised service, spectacular food and a luxurious atmosphere, why would you want to stay anywhere else?

For bookings and more information on Joan's future bridge events contact Cove Travel:

Tel: +61 7 5577 9211 or www.covetravel.com.au

All bridge, packages, airfares, transfers and other travel arrangements available exclusively through Cove Travel.

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PANACHE - XXIII
Ben Thompson

Blaine Howe and Chris Hughes won the Spring National Seniors Teams last month, together with Peter Buchen from Sydney playing with Henry Christie from Perth. There are a lot ofimps in part scores, and Blaine handled this one from the 3rd set of the final very well, and combined nicely with his teammates to gain 6imps.

Dir: West	♠ 7						
Vul: E/W	♥ Q2						
	♦ 109532						
	♣ KQ842						
♠ QJ10	N	E	S	♠ K865			
♥ A97654	W			♥ J103			
♦ AJ7				♦ 85			
♣ A				♣ J653			
	♠ A9432						
	♥ K8						
	♦ KQ6						
	♣ 1097						

West	North	East	South
1♥	2NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led ♠Q to Blaine's ace, and he continued with a club towards dummy.

West won ♣A and had a few options, all bad. He could see 4 tricks in his hand, so he tried ♥A, hoping that partner had ♥K (and presumably ♠K also) but struck out. Blaine carefully unblocked his king so that the queen would be an entry to dummy. When West continued a heart, he used that entry to play a diamond to the king and West's ace. He's no better off ducking – Blaine just switches back to clubs, and can eventually ruff the clubs good while conceding West's 2 natural diamond tricks to him.

So West was on lead with ♦A, and he now tried shortening dummy's trumps with a second round of spades. Blaine ruffed and continued his good work by playing a diamond to the queen. If diamonds had been 4-1, the defence would have been more enthusiastic about tapping dummy. By preserving the little diamond in his hand, Blaine made sure he could handle the more likely danger of a 4-1 club break – which is what actually happened.

That was 9 tricks courtesy of Blaine's careful sequence of plays.

In the other room, North didn't overcall after 1♥, but South overcalled East's 1NT response with 2♠. West ended the auction with 3♥, and despite the spade ruff, made 3♥ comfortably. The double part-score swing was worth 6imps to Chris and Blaine's team on their way to the win.

Expert aside: Paul Marston analysed a lot of world championship hands to test all sorts of bidding and card play propositions. Amongst other things, he came to the conclusion that it is right on average to overcall your 5-5's virtually regardless of the vulnerability, your suit quality, and your point count. At favourable vulnerability with a medium hand, Paul's analysis says that overcalling with the North hand is clear-cut.

The takeaway

In a trump part-score, the right general plan is frequently to set up your side-suit first, rather than to draw trumps immediately. It's often a good idea in higher level contracts too, even though it can be scary to leave some defensive trumps out there.

RECENT RESULTS

Victorian Pennant

- 1 W. Jacobs, B. Thompson, L. Gold, S. Hinge, M. Henbest, P. Hollands
- 2 C. Hughes, H. Blakeman, S. Arber, H. de Jong, D. Hohor, T. Chira
- 3 D. Morgan, B. Wein, N. Ewart, B. Howe, B. Kingham, J. Rosen

Ern Palfreyman Teams

- 1 T. Strong, J. Magee, L. Harmse, N. Ewart
- 2 L. Gold, E. Hardy, F. Halmos, J. Hall
- 3 S. Klofa, P. Fent, R. Gallus, S. Weisz

VBA Matchpoint Swiss Pairs

- 1 S. Gerdan – M. Balint
- 2 H. Stewart – M. Allison
- 3 W. Jacobs – I. McCance

Regional Victoria GNOT Teams

Henty: Nimal Weerasinghe, Frank Vearing, Kerry Delcourt, Dan Delcourt

Australian Nationals

Elsewhere in this bulletin we have noted Blaine Howe and Chris Hughes winning the Bobby Evans Seniors teams event in Sydney.

We also warmly (if belatedly) congratulate Peter Hollands and Ben Kingham on comfortably winning the Australian Swiss Pairs championship held in Launceston in October. Peter has won national events before, but this is Ben's first, and we expect not his last.

CHRISTMAS WISH

Dear Santa

Next year, if it's not too hard
 Would you bring me some decent cards?
 Opening points would be divine
 I'd soon make sure that contract's mine

Monday's cards are just the pits
 I never know which way to sit
 On Tuesdays, the director makes me go
 To where the cards are always low

Wednesday's cards are diabolical
 Evidenced by my receding follicle
 And Friday's cards just make me sick
 I'm lucky if I take ONE trick

I'm told the cards are dealt at random
 But opponents bid with gay abandon
 One more Yarborough and I'll scream
 A weak 2-bid would be a dream

Usually when my hand is nice
 The opposition find a sacrifice
 And once again our score is bad
 No wonder that I'm feeling sad

4 spades by opps and we're in trouble
 But give me cards and I'll soon double
 I'll play those aces – make them frown
 Before they know it – they'll be down

Grand slams, small slams, games and such
 (I guess 13 spades would be too much)
 I'm not greedy – not a bit
 13 points would be a hit

Life Master, Silver, Gold and Grand
 All I need is a decent hand
 So Santa please, just do your best
 Cards for me, I'll do the rest

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dlr: North ♠ 7632
 Vul: E/W ♥ AK1084
 ♦ Q7
 ♣ Q7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ KQ
 ♥ Q973
 ♦ KJ2
 ♣ 10542

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♠	2♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♠	D'ble	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Partner leads ♦10 and you cover dummy's ♦Q. Declarer wins ♦A and continues ♦3, partner playing ♦8.

How will you defend?

Problem 2:

Dlr: West ♠ QJ4
 Vul: nil ♥ Q7653
 ♦ K93
 ♣ 65

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 1075
 ♥ AJ984
 ♦ 2
 ♣ KJ84

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♥	1NT
2♦	3NT	All Pass	

Partner leads ♦7, which runs to ♦J. Declarer plays ♠2 to ♠J, then a club to ♣10 (partner ♣7), which holds. He exits with a spade, and partner takes ♠A, ♠K then ♠8 (♥, ♥, ♣ discards from the next hands). Next his ♦Q runs to ♦A as you let go another heart.

Now comes ♥2 to ♥Q as partner discards a diamond, and you need to decide on your defence.

Solutions over page.



SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS

Ian McCance

Problem 1

Dir: North	♠	7632							
Vul: E/W	♥	AK1084							
	♦	Q7							
	♣	Q7							
♠		AJ1098	N	KQ					
♥		J5	W	E	♥				
♦		109864	S	♣					
♣		8							
	♠	54							
	♥	62							
	♦	A53							
	♣	AKJ963							

Declarer will have at least 5 clubs and probably 6. She is clearly intending to trump a diamond, so seemingly holds only 4 cards in the majors. You must hope for 2 tricks in spades; your holding in hearts will prevent their establishment unless declarer has ♥J. It must be right to play a trump now, since declarer has obvious problems with communication. If dummy's ♣Q has to be used for ruffing, your ♣10 becomes the setting trick. The trump must come from your hand: if partner plays one it will be into declarer's hand. This won't matter if partner has ♣9, but otherwise your ♣10 will be swallowed up. So overtake to play ♣2. If this is won in dummy you will be able to get in with a spade and lead another trump. Declarer can still prevail, but the winning options would seem less likely than winning the trump in hand and playing for trumps 3-2.

Problem 2

Dir: South	♠	QJ4							
Vul: All	♥	Q7653							
	♦	K93							
	♣	65							
♠		AK83	N	1075					
♥		-	W	E	♥				
♦		Q1087654	S	♣					
♣		72							
	♠	962							
	♥	K102							
	♦	AJ							
	♣	AQ1093							

You can't be sure whether partner started with 6 or with 7 diamonds, but his carding in

clubs makes 7 more likely. If so you can leave ♦K stranded by taking ♥Q with your ♥A and exiting anything you like - you will come to a fifth trick eventually. If you duck, though, ♦K will fatally squeeze you.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Graduate Master	Indira Wettasinghe
*National Master	Flossie Aizen
Life Master	Anna St Clair
Bronze Life Master	John Hare
Grand Master	Dee Harley Alexander Ivanyi

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

2012 PENNANT: DOWN TO THE WIRE

Ben Thompson

The 2012 Pennant culminated in a ding-dong battle between last year's winner Jacobs (Bill Jacobs – Ben Thompson, Leigh Gold – Simon Hinge, Peter Hollands) with Max Henbest added to the lineup, and the experienced Hughes team (Chris Hughes – Hayden Blakeman, Henri de Jong – Sam Arber, and Dan Hohor with Meredith Woods filling in for an unwell Traian Chira).

The country champion team has played in the Pennant Round of 6 for the last few years, and snagged a couple of wins each time. This year the country champs from the Northern Region (David Thompson – Jamie Thompson, Michael McQueen-Thompson and Jan Hackett replacing Wayne Leppard) scored a nifty game swing on the way to beating the Hughes team.

Dir: East	♠	K106							
Vul: N/S	♥	K53							
	♦	KJ9432							
	♣	J							
♠		Q743	N	852					
♥		106	W	E	♥				
♦		AQ7	S	♣					
♣		A865							
	♠	AJ9							
	♥	AQJ8							
	♦	1085							
	♣	432							

The Hughes team stopped safely in 2♥ by South and scored an easy 9 tricks. Things were more exciting in the other room where Michael McQueen-Thompson played 3NT on the auction 1♦ – 2♦ (inverted) – 3NT. He won the spade lead in hand, ran ♦10 successfully and followed up with a diamond to the queen and king. When that held, he claimed 9 tricks as quickly as he could. That was 10 handy imps on the way to their 19-11 win over Hughes.

Jacobs topped the Round of 6 and started the final against second-placed Hughes with a 4.5 imp carryover courtesy of a 9 imp win in the head-to-head.

Hayden Blakeman did well to make 4♠ in the 1st set, although an expensive 800 point sacrifice in the other room meant it was to hold his team's loss to 5 imps instead of 14.

Dir: South ♠ J1096
 Vul: All ♥ K102
 ♦ K52
 ♣ 985

♠ Q	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 873
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ A953	♥ QJ8764										
♦ Q64	♦ 872										
♣ AKQ106	♣ 7										

♠ AK542
 ♥ -
 ♦ AJ109
 ♣ J432

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♣	2♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

I cashed 3 top clubs and continued a 4th one (there's no need to cash ♥A if it's a trick, and if it's not I need to stop Hayden pitching dummy's 3rd diamond on his ♣J). Hayden glumly ruffed high but perked up when Bill couldn't overruff. Now he drew trumps, ruffed a heart to hand to see if anything interesting would happen, and then ran the ♦J, protecting against Qxxx in my hand.

Jacobs took a low-scoring opening set 17-5 to lead by 16.5.

In the 2nd set, I had a rare and beautiful squeeze finesse that I can't resist describing.

Dir: East ♠ J54
 Vul: All ♥ AQ5
 ♦ 10752
 ♣ Q54

♠ 76	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A1083
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ J43	♥ K862										
♦ K9864	♦ J										
♣ J103	♣ K872										

♠ KQ92
 ♥ 1097
 ♦ AQ3
 ♣ A96

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

In the closed room, declarer got a favourable diamond lead into the AQ, but didn't pick up the spade suit and eventually went one off. I got a heart lead, playing low to East's king. He continued a heart, so I won on the board and took the diamond finesse, losing to another king.

After a 3rd round of hearts to dummy's ace, I played a spade to the king and another back to the jack. East won and cashed his carefully set up heart winner (I pitched clubs from both hands) and exited with ♠8. I was pretty confident he was 4414. They both gave count, but more importantly, why did West choose a 3 card heart lead over a spade lead? Likely because he only had two spades. So I finessed ♠9, cashed ♦A (to verify the position) and led ♠Q.

Here's the position with South's ♠Q on the table and West to play.

	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N			S		♦ -
		N						
		S						
♦ 98		♦ 3						
♣ J10	♣ A9							

♦ 107
 ♣ Q5
 ♣ K872

If he ditches a diamond, dummy's diamonds are good. When he threw ♣10, I threw dummy's little diamond, crossed to the ♦10, and led the ♣Q pinning West's now-singleton ♣J for contract and 12 imps.

The 2nd set was high-scoring where the first was low-scoring, and Hughes won it 53-41 to get the margin back to 3.5.

Sam Arber and Henri de Jong selected consistently well between 3NT, 4 major and 5 minor throughout the final. Here's an example from the start of the 3rd set.

Dir: North	♠ 986		
Vul: nil	♥ 9763		
	♦ 107		
	♣ 9763		
♠ AQ107	N	♠ KJ5	
♥ J	W E	♥ 842	
♦ AK9642	S	♦ QJ5	
♣ J5		♣ KQ108	
	♠ 432		
	♥ AKQ105		
	♦ 83		
	♣ A42		

Henri opened the East hand 1NT (weak). Max Henbest liked the idea of defending NTs so he passed. Nevertheless, E/W navigated smoothly to 5♦. In the other room, South decided to overcall 2♣ showing some single-suiter. E/W didn't find out the suit was hearts, so they landed in 3NT going an immediate 2 off for 11 imps to Hughes.

Winning the 3rd set 30-13, Hughes led by 13.5 going into the last. With both tables on vugraph, this was going to be fun for the audience. The last set kicked off with a doozy.

Dir: East	♠ AQ872		
Vul: nil	♥ KQ		
	♦ KQ4		
	♣ Q84		
♠ 6	N	♠ KJ10542	
♥ 63	W E	♥ 102	
♦ J98732	S	♦ -	
♣ A1052		♣ J9763	
	♠ 9		
	♥ AJ98754		
	♦ A1064		
	♣ K		

Both tables got to 6♥ after East pre-empted in spades. The difference was that Bill Jacobs doubled for a diamond lead, whereas it was passed out in the other room. I led ♦2, asking for a club back and we went +300. With 980 from the other room, Jacobs had gained 15 imps and gone straight back into the lead, but it could have been a flat board if North had run to 6NT.

The lead changed hands 4 more times with a mixture of good, tough, and tired bridge along the way. Board 58 was one of the lead-changers and had a curious quality to it.

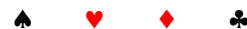
Dir: East	♠ Q9		
Vul: all	♥ AQ107		
	♦ J7		
	♣ A7652		
♠ 32	N	♠ KJ864	
♥ 9	W E	♥ 8643	
♦ K9842	S	♦ AQ103	
♣ KQJ93		♣ -	
	♠ A1075		
	♥ KJ52		
	♦ 65		
	♣ 1084		

Simon Hinge passed the East hand, but when Leigh Gold opened the West hand 1♦, they rapidly ascended to 5♦ on the back of their excellent shapes and fit. In the other room, East opened 1♠, West responded 2♦, and now East felt he was only worth a minimum 3♦ raise. That was enough for West, and Jacobs had regained the lead again, if that's even grammatically possible.

Jacobs ran out winners by just 3.5 imps, 1 less than the carryover.

But wait! There was an appeal outstanding from the 2nd set. In fact there were two appeals on the same board. Both teams wanted more, and it was left to an appeals committee to sort out the mess on the Wednesday night after the final. It was unfortunate that an appeals committee couldn't be put together during the day, but it's better to wait than to rush the decision.

In the end, the appeals gave 1 more imp to Jacobs. Congratulations especially to Max Henbest on our team, who won his first Pennant, and commiserations to the gallant Hughes team, who played a tough final out in great spirit.



Vu-Graph quotes from Edgar Kaplan

"In the old days, you had to grit your teeth and pass with the North hand. Now you can make a negative double with the result that you go down instead of the opponents."