



The 2021 Charity Challenge Pairs Wednesday 17th March

This year we are raising funds for two different, but closely related Charities – Cancer Research UK and Marie Curie. And we have extended the event to run all week, with different hands each day.

It's been what can only be described as an extraordinary year – one year ago you joined us to raise money for RNLI, with a final cheque at the end for £5,595.88 and a total for RNLI over the past three years of £17,349.05 for which they were more than grateful.

The past year has seen charities receiving less and less as the pandemic has taken hold – many people of course have less disposable income and the charities themselves have found that many of their traditional avenues, such as the Charity Shops, Street Collections etc, are unavailable to them. Which is why we ask you to donate, through our website, so that we can send as much as possible to them. If you haven't already done so, please [click here to go to the page](#) that gives you all the information.

The future year for Simultaneous Pairs has other Charity events to enjoy - there will be one in July to raise funds for Kidney Research and of course there will be the Children in Need Pairs in November – well we couldn't NOT run that could we ! We are also looking at the possibility of taking on the Bill Hughes event in June ...

.. and who knows, we may be able to run a WorldWide event again, and maybe one or two events to raise funds for Youth Bridge. Our website will let you know what and when – I will put things onto the front page at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/> and our calendar at <https://www.ecatsbridge.com/sims/info/calendar.asp> will be kept up to date.

Do join us for some of these events if you can – whether virtually or actually joining in “round the table”. We love to have your company.

We do hope you have enjoyed yourselves, and you will know by know whether the commentator has got it right! Probably most of you are still playing online but there may be one or two clubs getting back to face-to-face bridge. And let's hope that by next year or better still later this year we will all be back at the green baize table!



Be well – stay safe – and thank you so much for joining us. And because some of you wonder why on earth we moved to Orkney, well it's just a beautiful place to be, and this is the view from our office window – who can argue with that ! And there's even a rainbow to enjoy – we get a lot of rainbows here, something to do with the rain I guess, and the lovely light we have from being so far north.

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Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

Some high level action to wake everybody up and get the show on the road! E/W make 5♠ ... any N/S who gets to play the hand in 5♣ will do well, but hard to see that happening as E/W will bid on if necessary.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

System might decide the fate of this hand. The East players opening a weak NT will see themselves in 3NT off the diamond suit. But the Easts who have to open that lot 1♣ will, strangely enough, be more likely to find themselves in a making game, declarer in 5♣. At Pairs surely there will be the odd enterprising pair who gets to the Moysian Major fit...4♥ makes, 4♠ doesn't.

I guess it will be obvious enough to take the tap in the short hand and that therefore hearts is the spot.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

E/W will have faced interesting problems on this deal. If South opens 3♣, will West double and correct hearts to spades – much to partner's irritation? Or overcall 4♠? What about a gambling 3NT...a top on a club lead, a bottom on a diamond lead. In any case, mere speculation as if South does open 3♣, then surely North is raising that to the five level. Even if South stays quiet at his first turn there are some difficulties for E/W: after the normal 1♠ opening by West, what is East's rebid? He will be sorely tempted to insist on hearts as trumps as there will be severe danger of losing access to the heart suit if it is the side suit in a trump contract. In practice, they are both the same, hearts and spades, 11 tricks for each.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

Those using a strong No Trump get lucky on this Board, as they will, presumably, get to play spades by East which avoids the problematical heart lead. But, the questions remain – how does East make 12 tricks in spades? The simple double-dummy way is to ruff out the heart queen. I don't think the layout is suitable for a successful ending.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ AK64	
♥ J3	
♦ AK105	
♣ Q93	
♠ 102	♠ 983
♥ KQ74	♥ A1082
♦ Q43	♦ J2
♣ J742	♣ AK106
	♠ QJ75
	♥ 965
	♦ 9876
	♣ 85

With equal assets it is a part-score deal, 2♠ being the limit for N/S, 3♥ for E/W. If N/S push on to the three level will E/W double? Presumably at Pairs somebody will think that is the right action.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

	♠ Q1092	
	♥ —	
	♦ Q106543	
	♣ 1095	
♠ 8765		♠ KJ4
♥ A54		♥ KJ97632
♦ J72		♦ —
♣ K62		♣ Q74
	♠ A3	
	♥ Q108	
	♦ AK98	
	♣ AJ83	

N/S make 5♦, but if, as seems likely, E/W get to game in hearts, at the vulnerability N/S do best to double and take their 5 tricks for +500.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

	♠ Q98	
	♥ J7	
	♦ 10432	
	♣ K1096	
♠ K		♠ A10752
♥ AQ1083		♥ 42
♦ QJ97		♦ K65
♣ QJ5		♣ 743
	♠ J643	
	♥ K965	
	♦ A8	
	♣ A82	

E/W make a variety of 2 level contracts. Notrumps seems most likely.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

	♠ KJ1065	
	♥ AJ53	
	♦ AK	
	♣ Q2	
♠ A8		♠ Q42
♥ K		♥ 96
♦ Q975432		♦ J1086
♣ J95		♣ A874
	♠ 973	
	♥ Q108742	
	♦ —	
	♣ K1063	

N/S make 11 tricks in hearts. Some North-Souths may have to decide whether to push on after a 5♦ save by E/W.

In practice it is better to defend as it is +500 as long as the defence doesn't play a black suit when they shouldn't. But after an auction like 3♦ Double 5♦, South is going to bid 5♥. Now West has a chance to shine with a low spade lead! Deep Finesse might get the play to trick one right but your average human opponent won't.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

	♠ 6	
	♥ Q64	
	♦ K8765	
	♣ A986	
♠ AKJ92		♠ 103
♥ A985		♥ K1072
♦ A		♦ QJ104
♣ K52		♣ QJ4
	♠ Q8754	
	♥ J3	
	♦ 932	
	♣ 1073	

Forget the 11 tricks in hearts that Deep Finesse wants. In practice E/W are making 10 tricks. Anybody making 11 is playing like a computer. Take that as you will!

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

	♠ 92	
	♥ 42	
	♦ AQ1094	
	♣ 10963	
♠ AJ7		♠ 1043
♥ J975		♥ K6
♦ J6		♦ 832
♣ AQJ8		♣ K7542
	♠ KQ865	
	♥ AQ1083	
	♦ K75	
	♣ —	

With everything behaving N/S make 11 tricks in diamonds, but will they get there? It looks

unlikely to me unless some Souths decide to bid their shape out via showing 3 diamonds rather than the 5th heart at some point in the auction. For example:

South	North
1♠	1NT
2♥	2♠
3♦	

But South isn't nearly good enough for that course of action. If anything Souths will rebid 3♥ and play 3♠ just making. West, meanwhile, is a good chance to make a take-out double over 1♠, but even though they have a nine-card fit and half the HCP, clubs makes only 7 tricks.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Nobody is going to make anything above the one level. The strong No Trumpers will play 1NT. Although Deep Finesse give that contract 7 tricks, in practice it is nevertheless likely to go down. The weak No Trumpers will play 2♠ and that is certainly going down. Not a kindly hand that's for sure!

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

If E/W happen to land in 3NT on this deal N/S have to get to the spade suit early or it'll make. In fact I guess if they do get to 3NT it is likely to be after West has shown a strong hand with the minors and if it is East playing 3NT the spade lead will be natural by South. Maybe if West is playing 3NT it'll be harder for the

defence. If North began with a heart South would have to decide to shift to a spade...

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

I can't see slam being reached on E/W's collection, so who plays the notrumps will decide the score on this Board. If West then 12 tricks, if East then 10 tricks. In fact North is going to open. Anybody who downgrades the hand to a 3♦ opening will either get a splendid reward or a terrible punishment. East will be making a takeout-double over that and West is going to bid clubs, ending in either five or a gambling six...If, on the other hand, North begins with 1♦, E/W should easily be able to bid 3NT from the right side.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

N/S can do no better than a major suit partscore, but will they be able to stay low? I guess

South	North
1♦	1♥
1♠	2♥

will be enough for South.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

On this deal the weak No Trumpers get lucky as missing the 4-4 heart fit will score them a top. INT and 2♥ will both make 8 tricks. My preference is to stretch to Stayman opposite weak NT, so maybe there are some others out there thinking the same way. Of course, sometimes West will open a NT, passed around to South who will likely decide to get into the action. Greatly will he regret that decision.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

The thin 3NT by N/S just sneaks home.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

I'm guessing that there will be some Souths facing the following interesting problem:

North	East	South	West
1♦	1♠	Pass	2♠
Dble	Pass	?	

Does South have too many diamonds to defend? If they are making a game is it 3NT or 5♦? If only a part-score then surely defending will be best hoping for +300. Or should South feel comfortable that 3 down and +500 will be in the bag? I'm glad I'm only asking the questions. Supposedly N/S can only play 3NT by North. I am suggesting a special prize for any West who is on lead to 3NT and starts with the ♥10!

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

Yet another hand where direction of play is critical. If played by East, then 13 tricks is likely on a low heart lead. Played by West a heart lead will beat it, but if South has overcalled hearts it will be played the right way up. If South has not overcalled then 3NT might be played the wrong way up but North's opening lead will be between a heart and a club...

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

With no fits and half the assets each, E/W's 5-2 fit plays best for +90 if diamonds are picked. If South opens 1♣ a diamond partscore is a real possibility. If South opens INT he will play it there. Technically this may go down, presumably on the ♦J opening lead, but in practice I'm thinking it'll make pretty easily. Diamonds is probably the last suit West would be looking at beginning with.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

There will be N/S declarers going down in 3NT on this deal as there doesn't seem to be any particular reason to pick diamonds. Making should get you a good score.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

Spades E/W is a good save against the heart game which makes 11 on the diamond pick. But it will require East to get in there with a Michaels cuebid over 1♥. Anybody nervous about that and passing will not get another chance. I can't see West coming in opposite a passed partner and an auction start like 1♥ 2NT or similar by N/S. Of course, any N/S which does push on to 5♥ when E/W compete will pick diamonds by virtue of the Michaels bid.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Some Easts might open 3♦ and maybe some partners opposite that will try 3NT. The club lead will punish that in a big way. The hand is E/W's but only to the level of 3♦.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

A routine 4♠ E/W making 11 tricks.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

Another routine game, this time 3NT N/S. There will be lots of variation to the opening lead and play, I expect: a club lead from East is worst for the defence, but East is more likely to be leading a spade, while West will begin with a diamond, presumably. Declarer too has possibilities in several suits. Overtricks? Not according to Deep Finesse.