



Transport of Delight

By Diana Cormack

If you were asked what your most unusual possession was, you'd probably have to think hard before coming up with an answer. But Laura Hyde-Smith of Leslie Road would have no trouble in answering, for she is the proud owner of a double decker bus.

It's not just any old double decker either, for her vintage Routemaster is one of the few produced that has a door at the back. In 1965 it was one of the original London Sight-seeing Tour buses, so it also has a removable top and the seats upstairs have a red waterproof vinyl covering. When she bought the bus from Wandsworth bus depot two years ago, Laura transformed its rather tatty red and cream paintwork to the colour instantly recognised throughout the world as that of a London bus. Therein lies a clue as to why Laura decided to buy one.

She has always admired



Laura's pride and joy

things that symbolise the British way of life, such as red pillar-boxes, phone boxes and buses. When the opportunity

suddenly presented itself, Laura thought "Why not?"

Route Mistress

Her family and friends thought of plenty of reasons not to, but the more they tried to put her off, the more determined Laura became. Having driven the bus on her standard UK licence, Laura enjoyed it so much that she took and passed the challenging PCV test. So her now admiring family and friends are often eager passengers on a variety of outings.

The bus, which is kept in north Kent, has a capacity of 67, but the number on board makes a great difference to the way it handles. It has power steering, a semi automatic gearbox and a top speed of 45 mph. Laura now knows a great deal about buses and is keen to find genuine parts. At present she is looking for a destination blind and glass cover and hopes to track them down through one of the many summer rallies or internet sites specifically for bus owners and collectors.

Laura has got used to the reaction of the public as she concentrates on her driving and she can ignore people who ask to get on or try to thumb a lift. But why haven't we seen her driving around East Finchley? If Laura ever tired of her present job, she could do lots of us a favour and take over the 263 route between here and North Finchley!



Children of the Martin Infant School nursery. Photo by Daniel Ferri

International Farewell Lunch

By Toni Morgan

On Friday, 19 July, an International Lunch was held for the children of the morning and afternoon nursery sessions at Martin Infants School. This is now an annual end of school year event for the children leaving to go up to Reception in September. It was set up six years ago by parents, each of whom provide a dish from their national cuisine, so that parents and children alike could meet each other before moving up.

It was a lovely sunny summer day; there was a delicious array of dishes from many countries including Italy, Spain, India, Mexico and Japan. The children brought flowers and chocolates to present to the team of four teachers they will be leaving behind, all of whom worked very hard to make this such a successful occasion.

Archer Bridge



By Mike Graham

Last month we looked at Blackwood, a convention for finding out the number of aces that partner holds. However, it can be improved upon. The ancient Italian system, the Roman Club, used the following responses:

- 5♣ - no ace or three
- 5♦ - one ace or four
- 5♥ - two aces of the same colour or rank
- 5♠ - two aces of different colour or rank

Although (in theory) there could be some ambiguity with the 5♥ and 5♠ responses, in practice you could usually work it out. Exceptions can occur if the 4NT bidder is missing three aces but has a compensating void, as I found out to my cost on one occasion.

In modern play, a large number of players have switched to Roman Key-Card Blackwood (RKCB). This extension, developed by Edwin Kantar of the USA, incorporates the king of trumps as a fifth ace. It also allows you, in some responses, to include the queen of trumps as well, so you get plenty of value. The responses to 4NT are:

- 5♣ - no ace or three
- 5♦ - one ace or four
- 5♥ - two aces without the queen of trumps
- 5♠ - two aces with the queen of trumps
- 5NT - five aces

Five aces? Yes, as one of the "aces", in any of the above responses, is the king of trumps.

Here is an example of the method at work:

♠ J7			♠ AK54
♥ A64	W	E	♥ J
♦ AQ32			♦ K109864
♣ K1084			♣ AQ

This hand occurred in a recent match, and our side was behind at the time. I was East and my brother was West. We bid as follows:

W	E
1NT (12-14)	2NT (transfer to diamonds)
3♣ (good diamonds)	4NT (RKCB)
5♠ (two aces, trump queen)	7♦ (good)

I'm not saying this was particularly good bidding - it wasn't. You can construct many hands where Seven Diamonds would have no play facing a Five Spade response. However, we were behind in the match with only a few boards left, and this seemed an opportune moment. Seven Diamonds made easily enough by taking a spade ruff in dummy. Not enough to turn the match, alas.

It was useful for East, on this hand, to know that West had the queen of trumps. Opposite a holding of (say) Axx, the grand slam would be a poor contract, but good opposite Axxx. Now there's a thought - Axxx is such a good holding that perhaps you should treat it as AQx! That's one to discuss.



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