

## Bits and Bobs 4 (and last) – Vanishing Tricks

There are a number of ways that what seems to be a certain trick for the defence can vanish. This is due to the fact that bridge is a positional game which a declarer can leverage to her advantage. The more impressive instances of vanishing tricks are outcomes of advanced plays such as end plays, squeezes and trump coups.

In the following hand, it appears that South has 4 certain tricks by way of 3 x spades and the AH.

♠ --

Dlr: South  
Vul: None

♥ 762  
♦ QJ10643  
♣ K1096

♠ 832  
♥ KQ  
♦ AK7  
♣ QJ743

North		East	
West	27	East	
South		East	

♠ AJ10765  
♥ 10983  
♦ --  
♣ A82

♠				
N	-	2	-	-
S	-	2	-	-
E	3	-	1	4
W	3	-	1	4

♠ KQ94  
♥ AJ54  
♦ 9852  
♣ 5

**Lead QD**

Bidding			
W	N	E	S
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	Dble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

# 15-17 HCP  
\* Transfer to spades

In the event, East did go one down but this Board is not only a fascinating example of a hand where a trick can be made to vanish but also an example of the fascination of bridge, in general. Even double dummy, see if you can work out how to make the contract before reading further.

To provide a bit of space, here is another hand where a trick vanishes, once again extracted from the highly entertaining book by Victor Mollo, entitled "Bridge in the Menagerie". In a high-stakes rubber bridge game, Vallance is in 7S.

<p>Chuck</p> <p>♠ 7 6 5 4 ♥ 7 6 ♦ 7 ♣ 9 8 7 6 5 3</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> <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		<p>Macpherson</p> <p>♠ K 10 3 ♥ A K J ♦ A Q 4 3 2 ♣ A J</p> <p>H.H.</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ Q 8 5 3 ♦ J 10 9 8 6 ♣ K Q 2</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										
<p>Vallance</p> <p>♠ A Q J 9 8 ♥ 10 9 4 2 ♦ K 5 ♣ 10 4</p>											

The solution to making the contract on Board 27 above is really just one for the bridge gods or the computer. **Successful execution requires a double reduction trump coup and a throw-in (end play) combined with both natural and ruffing finesses and a winner being ruffed along the way!?!**

♠ --

Dir: South  
Vul: None

♥ 762  
♦ QJ10643  
♣ K1096

♠ 832  
♥ KQ  
♦ AK7  
♣ QJ743

West	North	East
	27	
South		

♠ AJ10765  
♥ 10983  
♦ --  
♣ A82

6		9
15		10

♠ KQ94  
♥ AJ54  
♦ 9852  
♣ 5

	♠	♥	♦	♣	N
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	3	-	1	4	-
W	3	-	1	4	-

You ruff the diamond lead in order to have sufficient entries to do the double trump reduction and then lead a heart. South wins and her best defence is to continue a heart. She cannot lead a trump without forfeiting a trick. You win the heart continuation and run the QC. Assume North covers but it does not matter. You take a ruffing finesse with the 9H, South covers with the JH and you ruff. You cash the AD discarding a club and ruff the KD winner in dummy.

♠ --

Dir: South  
Vul: None

♥ 762  
♦ QJ10643  
♣ K1096

♠ 832  
♥ KQ  
♦ AK7  
♣ QJ743

West	North	East
	27	
South		

♠ AJ10765  
♥ 10983  
♦ --  
♣ A82

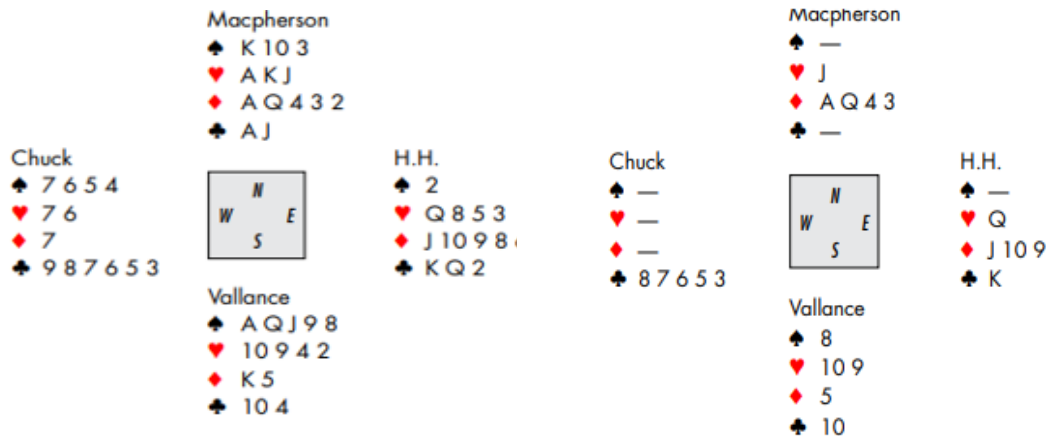
6		9
15		10

♠ KQ94  
♥ AJ54  
♦ 9852  
♣ 5

	♠	♥	♦	♣	N
N	-	2	-	-	-
S	-	2	-	-	-
E	3	-	1	4	-
W	3	-	1	4	-

The end position is shown above and so far you have only lost one trick. You cash the 10H and lead a small club. Whether South ruffs now or discards her diamond she is going to be end-played eventually and be forced to forfeit a trump trick when declarer plays the 10S (or JS) from dummy.

In the "Bridge in the Menagerie Hand", a club was led against 7S. Vallance won and then drew trumps discarding his JC on the fourth round and then played the AH from dummy. A low-odds break in diamonds or a successful finesse in hearts plus other favourable distribution offer possible routes to 13 tricks. Vallance plumped for the finesse but then proceeded to lead a heart from hand while still being in the dummy. Cursing to himself he then decided to plonk the KH down from dummy instead. I'm sure Hideous Hog would have been more than willing to accept the heart lead from hand had he been given the chance to speak out but, knowing all along that neither red suit would behave favourably for declarer, he could now see that he was about to be subjected to a **progressive squeeze** from which there was no escape and 7S would make. The end position is shown below.



Vallance would throw the JH on his last trump and the Hog could neither discard a heart nor a diamond. If he discarded his KC the 10C would then squeeze him again. What to do??

Just as Vallance started forlornly to table the 8S, Hog suddenly exclaimed that he only had four cards left to everyone else's five. The QH was somehow missing. Hog bent under the table to look for the missing card but came up empty-handed but red-faced. Despite extensive searching, the offending card could not be found and the game was abandoned. It might be concluded that most felt relieved but for different reasons; declarer and probably his partner for having no idea that he would make an over-bid contract, the Hog for avoiding losing a bundle and his partner, holding a Yarborough, from boredom. Of course, the Hog had to put up with a bit of post-match indigestion from the cardboard roughage in his stomach generated by that vanishing lady.

*Alchemist 19/10/22*

*Dear Reader(s)*

*I hope you have gained something either in entertainment or learning from the "Bits and Bobs" articles, the "Rubens Pearls Articles" the "Tidbits (Barbara's Idioms) Articles" and those "Hands of the Week" articles and others that came before them over the last couple of years. These are all in the Documents Section of the club archives.*

*It is now time for me to vanish at least for the foreseeable.*

*Thankyou*

*The Alchemist.*