

FROM SHORT WHIST TO CONTRACT BRIDGE

THE HISTORY OF CONTRACT BRIDGE
AND ITS PREDECESSORS

Hans Secelle

Translated by Herman De wael



An Honors eBook from Master Point Press

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| PREFACE | 1 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 2 |
| PAUL MAGERMAN | 3 |
| FOREWORD | 5 |
| INTRODUCTION – HOMO LUDENS, THE PLAYING MAN | 6 |
| To play by the rules : a short history | 6 |
| From Sorel to Cotton..... | 8 |
| PART I – PRECURSORS | 11 |
| CHAPTER 1 – HOMBRE AND QUADRILLE | 12 |
| Triumphus Hispanicus..... | 12 |
| Hombre..... | 13 |
| Quadrille..... | 16 |
| CHAPTER 2 – WHIST, BOSTON, CAYENNE AND PRÉFÉRENCE | 22 |
| 1674 - Hold your Whisht ! | 22 |
| The Compleat Gamester – the rules of the game according to Cotton | 25 |
| Sir Edmond Hoyle | 27 |
| Short Whist..... | 29 |
| James Clay | 31 |
| Cavendish..... | 32 |
| Boston | 33 |
| Boston Whist | 35 |
| Maryland (English Boston) | 37 |
| Boston réformé and Boston of Fontainebleau | 38 |
| Boston of Lorient and Boston of Nantes ... Playing without trump | 40 |
| Cayenne Whist, a forgotten precursor..... | 40 |
| Préférence (Preferans)..... | 44 |
| PART II – DIRECT ANCESTORS | 48 |
| CHAPTER 3 – RUSSIAN WHIST AND VIST-PREFERANS | 49 |
| 1839 : For the first time ... Russian whist..... | 49 |
| Moscow 1848 : Vist-Preferans..... | 50 |
| 1861 : Russian whist according to Joseph Sigmund Ebersberg..... | 52 |
| CHAPTER 4 – STURMWHIST AND YERALASH | 57 |
| Whist with trump void and dummy in 1853..... | 57 |
| Yeralash..... | 59 |

From Short Whist to Contract Bridge

| | |
|---|------------|
| Russian whist : a misnomer ? | 68 |
| Yeralash after 1888..... | 72 |
| Siberian Whist..... | 74 |
| Whist-à-Préférence..... | 75 |
| Kupang Whist..... | 76 |
| CHAPTER 5 - VINT AND SWEDISH WHIST | 78 |
| Vint | 78 |
| Vint – The rules according to A. Hertefeld (1882)..... | 79 |
| Swedish Whist | 84 |
| PART III - BRIDGE..... | 88 |
| CHAPTER 6 – BRITCH, BIRITCH AND BRIDGE | 89 |
| 1886 – the first rules..... | 89 |
| Where and when did britch originate ?..... | 95 |
| What card games did britch derive from ? | 105 |
| The crucial moment | 113 |
| Britch, biritch and bridge – etymology of a neologism | 114 |
| CHAPTER 7 – FROM THE OLD WORLD INTO THE NEW..... | 126 |
| Bridge arrives in Paris | 126 |
| ... and New York | 126 |
| 1894 - Bridge conquers London | 129 |
| The Ferry: a whist club for diehards..... | 133 |
| The first bridge books | 134 |
| 1886 – Collinson’s paradox | 136 |
| For the first time ... new rules..... | 137 |
| 1905 - Dr. Richard Münzer | 139 |
| CHAPTER 8 – THE FIRST BRIDGE VARIANTS..... | 141 |
| Dummy Bridge (bridge for three) | 141 |
| Double Dummy Bridge (bridge for two)..... | 143 |
| Draw Bridge..... | 144 |
| Duplicate Bridge..... | 144 |
| Progressive Bridge | 145 |
| King’s Bridge | 145 |
| Short Bridge | 146 |
| Pivot Bridge | 146 |
| Six-Hand Bridge | 147 |
| Reversi Bridge..... | 148 |
| Misery Bridge..... | 148 |
| Auction Bridge..... | 148 |
| CHAPTER 9 – OPPOSITION | 149 |

From Short Whist to Contract Bridge

| | |
|--|------------|
| The dealer's privileges | 149 |
| Opposition with declaration ('avec déclaration')..... | 150 |
| Opposition without declaration ('sans déclaration') | 151 |
| An untimely demise..... | 152 |
| CHAPTER 10 – AUCTION BRIDGE | 154 |
| Auction bridge – a British soldier in India..... | 154 |
| Misery Bridge – a bizarre interlude | 156 |
| Auction bridge in 1903 – the variants of Crawford and Foster | 157 |
| Auction according to Foster – a variant for four players | 157 |
| Auction according to Foster – a variant for three players..... | 160 |
| Auction bridge in 1904 – Francis Roe | 161 |
| Pennell's variants | 162 |
| 1908 – Uniform rules | 164 |
| Forgotten variants | 170 |
| Le bridge aux enchères : auction in France..... | 171 |
| CHAPTER 11 – ROYAL AUCTION BRIDGE | 173 |
| The new count | 173 |
| Auction with nullo: a forgotten variant for sore losers | 176 |
| The rule of 20..... | 179 |
| Flag-Flying, taking out 'American style' | 179 |
| Signalling..... | 180 |
| Compass Auction: the 'foursomes' break through | 181 |
| Team Auction..... | 182 |
| Tournament Auction | 182 |
| A look into the future: Monckton or Diehl..... | 182 |
| 1914-1918 – Auction matures | 183 |
| Royalton - the short life of a meritorious bridge variant | 188 |
| Pirate Bridge | 190 |
| Miss Auction, a new variant for three players | 196 |
| Slam bonuses, a touchy subject | 197 |
| CHAPTER 12 – S.A.C.C. , CONTRACT AUCTION AND PLAFOND | 201 |
| S.A.C.C. | 201 |
| The Times of India..... | 202 |
| The oldest preserved contract bridge-hand | 203 |
| Contract Auction..... | 205 |
| 1920 - How to win at Royal Auction Bridge..... | 206 |
| Bascule's prediction | 207 |
| 1922 - Foster on Auction..... | 207 |
| 1923 - Contract Auction in the Netherlands | 210 |
| Plafond..... | 212 |
| The 'Beaulieu' system..... | 215 |

From Short Whist to Contract Bridge

| | |
|--|------------|
| Plafond comes ... and goes | 216 |
| Bridge-intégral..... | 217 |
| CHAPTER 13 – CONTRACT BRIDGE | 218 |
| A new variant : the birth | 218 |
| ... and the breakthrough..... | 220 |
| Vulnerable : from Grumme to Bellanger | 222 |
| Rubber Bridge | 224 |
| Duplicate Contract Bridge (tournaments for teams-of-four or pairs) | 227 |
| The Challenge..... | 228 |
| Contract Auction Bridge – the prodigal son returns..... | 229 |
| Goulash (Hollandaise, Mayonnaise)..... | 231 |
| Dummy Up..... | 232 |
| A glance into the future | 233 |
| Clayton or Vanderbilt..... | 235 |
| PART IV – CONTRACT BRIDGE CONQUERS THE WORLD | 239 |
| CHAPTER 14 – THE NEW BRIDGE SCENE | 240 |
| The final breakthrough of contract bridge | 240 |
| Ely Culbertson..... | 240 |
| The first showdown : Culbertson - Lenz | 242 |
| The International Bridge League (IBL) | 246 |
| The European Bridge League | 247 |
| The World Bridge Federation..... | 247 |
| The Bermuda Bowl | 248 |
| The Venice Cup | 257 |
| APPENDIX 1 – BOSTON OF LORIENT - BOSTON OF NANTES..... | 262 |
| APPENDIX 2 – VIST-PREFERANS..... | 264 |
| APPENDIX 3 – BIRITCH, OR RUSSIAN WHIST..... | 271 |
| APPENDIX 4 – THE LAWS OF BRIDGE..... | 275 |
| APPENDIX 5 – 20 YEARS OF BRIDGE LITERATURE (1886-1905)..... | 289 |
| REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED LITERATURE | 294 |
| References | 294 |
| Recommended literature | 298 |
| INDEX OF NAMES AND TERMS | 299 |

Card-playing by some is regarded as reprehensible,
 and by others as contemptible:
 I do not agree with either.
 I look upon cards in general as a rational amusement.
 In some instances indeed they administer to evil;
 but which of man's enjoyments does not ?

(*Q. Quanti* — *London, 1822*)

In *From Short Whist to Contract Bridge*, the author takes the reader on a fascinating journey through space and time and introduces him to such games as Karnöffel, Whist, Hombre, Quadrille, Boston, Cayenne, Vist-Preferans, Russian Whist, Yeralash and Stormwhist. These old and mostly forgotten games will eventually lead to the assembly of a number of 'proto-bridge' variants, of which only Collinson's *Biritch or Russian Whist* will survive the labor pains. In its turn, this 'mother of all bridge variants' will be superseded by its more sophisticated successors: bridge-opposition, auction bridge, royal auction bridge, plafond and, finally, contract bridge, the world's most popular card game...



HANS SECELLE (Schelderode, Belgium) is an expert chess and shogi player who turned to bridge in 1991. Having taken an interest in 18th and 19th century card games, he decided to investigate the transition from short whist to contract bridge and published his first book, *Bridge — The history of a card game*, in 2014. As his research continued, blind spots were identified, errors were corrected and more missing links were discovered, to the extent that reworking his first book became an absolute necessity.



HERMAN DE WAEL (translator) has been an international tournament director since 1993. He has visited European and World Championships since 1988 and was the regular scribe for the Appeal Committees of the European Bridge League since 1998. When the Appeal Committees were abolished, he continued to be on the staff of European and World Championships, often as assistant reviewer. His main interests outside of bridge are the Olympic Games, on which his website has been made complete up to 1956. He is a keen quizzer, and has competed in the Antwerp Quiz Federation since before he was born.