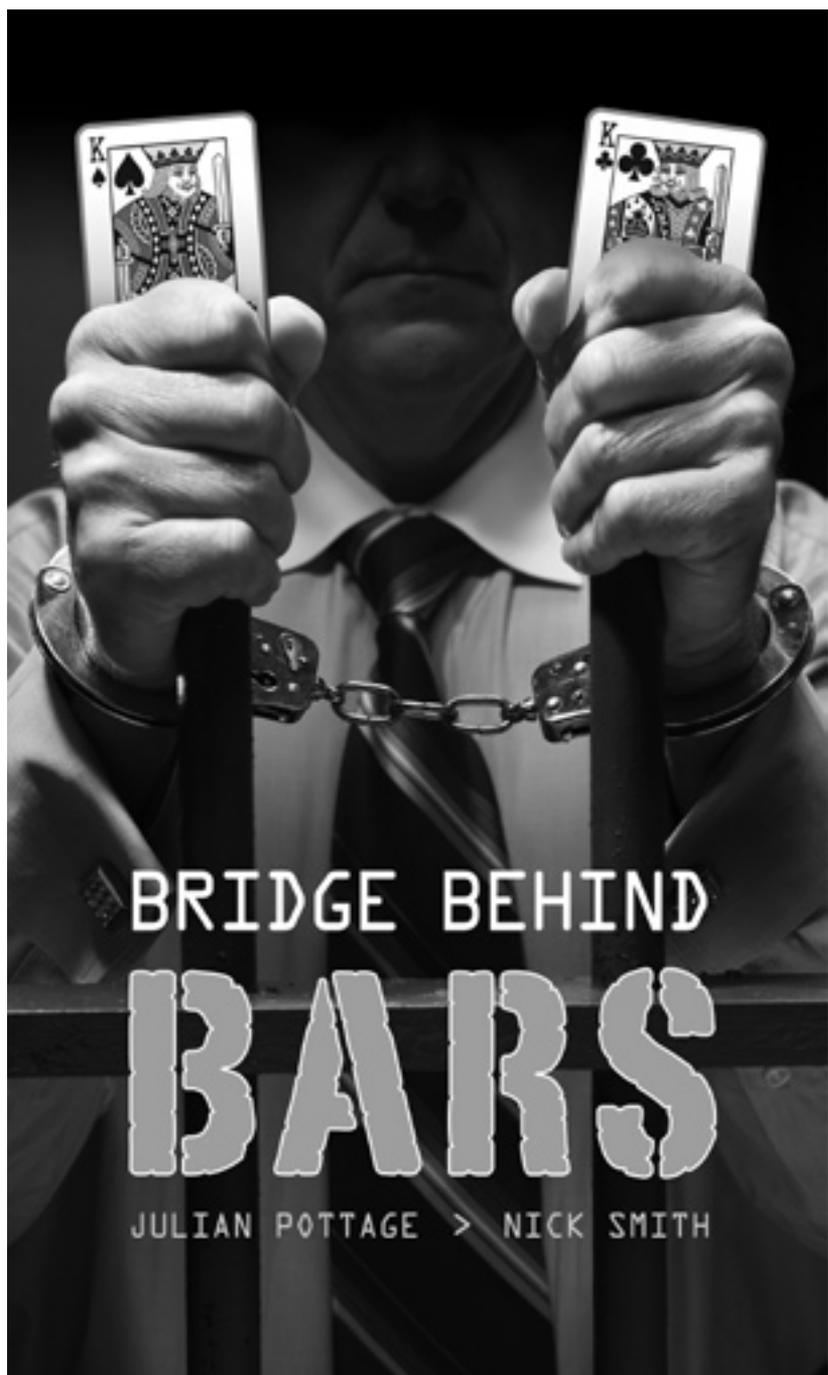


BRIDGE BEHIND

BARNS

JULIAN POTTAGE > NICK SMITH



BRIDGE BEHIND

BARNS

JULIAN POTTAGE > NICK SMITH

Text © 2009 Julian Pottage, Nick Smith.

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press
331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2 (416)781-0351
Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Websites: www.masterpointpress.com
www.masteringbridge.com
www.bridgeblogging.com
www.ebooksbridge.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Pottage, Julian
Bridge behind bars / written by Julian Pottage & Nick Smith.

ISBN 978-1-55494-050-9

I. Smith, Nick II. Title.

PR6116.088B75 2009 823'.92 C2008-907545-5

Editor	Suzanne Hocking
Copy editor/interior format	Sally Sparrow
Cover and interior design	Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13 12 11 10 09

Table of Contents

1	The New Man Arrives	5
2	Great Yarborough	16
3	Opening Gambits	25
4	Christmas with Goat	39
5	Harry Comes and Goes	49
6	Tim and Goat Go for the Knockout	58
7	Prisoners' Restricted Choice	69
8	Psychic Powers	79
9	Superman Gets Held Up	88
10	An Unholy Alliance	99
11	Pompy and Circumstance	110
12	Ethics Man	121
13	The Horse Reaches the Fence	130
14	Tim Plays a Card He Doesn't Have	140
15	Bossman's Power Failure	151
16	Breaking the Law	163
17	Big Girl's Blouse	171
18	Some You Lose	181
19	Turn Back Time	190
20	A Reversal of Fortune	198

1 The new Man arrives

There was a loud metallic thud as the outside door closed behind Timothy Newman. So this is my new home then, he thought. Prison. Clink. The slammer.

Tim looked down a seemingly never-ending corridor and up at an equally distant ceiling as his handcuffs were unclipped. He walked in a daze, wondering what he would miss most about life on the outside. Would it be his Sunday roast with all the trimmings? Would it be his Audi coupé? Would it be little Millie and George? A tear welled up in his eye at the thought of his two lovely children. And yet, in a way, they had been the cause of his downfall..

Prison is no place for an ordinary, law-abiding, middle-class guy like me, he reflected. Not even Great Yarborough Prison. Open to the usual collection of psycho-killers and drug-dealers running amok, no doubt. He'd be lucky to last a week in this company before someone beat him to a pulp because of his accent or some petty slight. There would be no golf or bridge in here. Probably no crossword either unless you counted the one in the *Daily Sport*.

Tim was deposited in a tiny cell without ceremony or explanation. He gazed round at his new home. There was a cast-iron bed with a thin mattress, a grubby washstand, a cupboard, a table, a couple of upright chairs and little else. Tim was not alone for long. Emerging out of the shadows outside came a figure clad in the same drab uniform he had put on himself. The guy in the next-door cell, no doubt. He was a well-groomed man of about forty-five with a confident bearing – a little like an overweight Johnny Depp, Tim thought. Pray God he's just an arsonist or petty thief. And pray God he hasn't read the newspapers recently. The two men examined each other warily.

'Hi, I'm Bossman,' the second man said, holding out his right hand. His accent was surprisingly normal, middle class even. 'Well, that's what people round here call me anyway – except the backs, of course.'

'Backs?' repeated the new arrival, shaking hands tentatively.

'Back yards – guards.'

The new arrival nodded. 'I'm...'

The second man quickly interrupted him. 'Tim Newman. Tiny

Tim, as you will no doubt be known. The backs give us a list of all new arrivals.'

'Who's "us"?'

'The Yarborough Prison Bridge Club committee.'

'The *what?*'

'You don't by any chance play bridge do you?'

Tim raised a smile for the first time in weeks. Life might not be so bad here after all. 'A bit,' he admitted.

'Not too well, I hope!' Bossman laughed, a glint of fire in his eyes.

'Well, let's find out, Tiny Tim.'

'I'm six foot four. I'd rather you just called me Tim, actually, Mr., er, Bossman.'

'I'm doing you a good turn, believe me. Wait till you hear some of the other names.'

Two other prisoners were ambling by outside the open door.

'Oi, Turnip-Head. And Goat!' The two men shuffled in uncomplainingly. 'What say you to a few hands of bridge before dinner, with my new young friend, Tiny Tim?'

'Sure thing, Bossman,' muttered the man whose ruddy features indeed seemed to have been carved from a root vegetable. 'I'll fetch a couple more chairs from next door.'

Tim looked on in amazement as the men set up the table and retrieved some battered packs of cards from the solitary cupboard. Bridge! In a prison! Surely Neanderthals like Turnip-Head and Goat would have trouble telling their clubs from their diamonds?

The four men cut for cards and Tim found himself sitting opposite Goat, a thuggish man with prominent ears. Bossman dealt the cards in near-silence, although Turnip-Head seemed to be wheezing slightly. Did nobody want to know who Tim was? Or what bidding methods he could play?

'Can I just ask what system we're playing?' Tim enquired as the last cards were dealt. The three locals laughed heartily.

'*System?*' replied Bossman at last. 'This isn't the Bermuda Bowl, you know. We're hardened criminals, rebels, rule-breakers, are we not? System is for the backs and the boring straights outside.'

'But what about an opening notrump range? Stayman? Transfers even?'

Bossman shook his head in a condescending fashion.

'It depends.'

'It depends on what?'

‘Well, the state of the game, of course. What you had for breakfast. Whether your partner has got two brain-cells to rub together...’

Tim glanced at Goat and concluded that this was unlikely. Tim soon picked up the East cards shown below:

<p>♠ 10 9 8 7 5 ♥ K 8 6 5 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ 2</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p><i>Neither Vul.</i> <i>Dealer S</i></p> </div>	<p>♠ K 6 ♥ 10 7 4 ♦ A 9 3 ♣ A Q 10 9 3</p>	<p>♠ 3 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ J 6 5 2 ♣ 8 7 6 5 4</p>
		<p>♠ A Q J 4 2 ♥ J 9 2 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ K J</p>	

Tim and his nervous-looking partner were silent as the bidding proceeded thus:

West	North	East	South
<i>Goat</i>	<i>Turnip-Head</i>	<i>Tim</i>	<i>Bossman</i>
pass	2♣	pass	1♠
pass	3♣	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	pass	3♥
pass	6NT	all pass	4NT

Before his partner could lead to the first trick, Tim had a few questions.

‘How many points does two notrump show?’ he asked Turnip-Head.

‘Fifteen plus, forcing to game,’ he grunted.

‘And the three heart rebid?’

‘Natural. Might be a cuebid, I suppose.’

‘And the four notrump?’

Turnip-Head was getting more than a little impatient by now.

‘Look, sunshine, we don’t tend to ask too many questions round

HARD TIME — AT THE BRIDGE TABLE!

There was a loud metallic thud as the outside door closed behind Timothy Newman. So this is my new home then, he thought. Prison, clink, the slammer. Prison is no place for an ordinary, law-abiding, middle-class guy like me.

But it turns out that prison life in Great Yarborough has a silver lining for Tim – bridge. An expert player, he finds that his ability earns him unlooked-for respect amongst his fellow-prisoners, many of whom pass their ‘time’ at the card table. This is a bridge novel filled with unusual characters and great deals — and a bridge game that gives new meaning to the term ‘cutthroat’!



JULIAN POTTAGE (Wales) is well-known as one of the world’s best creators of challenging bridge problems. His previous books include IBPA Books of the Year *Play or Defend?* and *A Great Deal of Bridge Problems*.



This is a first book for **NICK SMITH** (UK).

