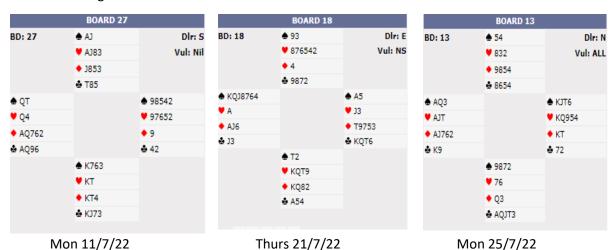# Bits and Bobs 2 – Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics?

Back in the days of Whist the ancestor of bridge, Charles Anderson Worsley Anderson-Pelham, the 2nd Earl of Yarborough (1809-1862) was well aware that the occurrence of a hand of thirteen cards without any Aces, face cards or tens was extremely rare. 1 out of every 1828 hands is the calculated probability for the average occurrence, *(source: https://jlmartin.ku.edu)*. Thus, the Earl placed an ongoing 1000/1 bet on the chance of a Yarborough being dealt and it is rumoured that he made many thousands of pounds over the years, as a result.

"Over the years" is the key phrase because the source emphasises that one must appreciate that this 1/1828 is the calculated average occurrence and doesn't mean that you can't have four Yarboroughs in a row or go fifteen years without being dealt one!

This rings true with me because I have encountered 4 x Yarboroughs out of the 500 odd boards (1/125 odds) I played this July. (B27 on 11th, B18 on 21st, B13 on 25th and B27 on 30th). If I had been the modern Earl of Yarborough, my bank balance would certainly have suffered of late, paying out $4000 in return for a payment of $496. But, just as with shares which encounter intermittent bear markets, based on statistical average, one can still remain confident that one would have come out well on top over the longer term.

Even Yarborough can sometimes hold some value. Here are the hands:

BOARD 27		
BD: 27	♠ AJ ♥ AJ83 ♦ J853 ♣ T85	Dlr: S Vul: Nil
♠ QT ♥ Q4 ♦ AQ762 ♣ AQ96		♠ 98542 ♥ 97652 ♦ 9 ♣ 42
	♠ K763 ♥ KT ♦ KT4 ♣ KJ73	

Mon 11/7/22

BOARD 18		
BD: 18	♠ 93 ♥ 876542 ♦ 4 ♣ 9872	Dlr: E Vul: NS
♠ KQJ8764 ♥ A ♦ AJ6 ♣ J3		♠ A5 ♥ J3 ♦ T9753 ♣ KQT6
	♠ T2 ♥ KQT9 ♦ KQ82 ♣ A54	

Thurs 21/7/22

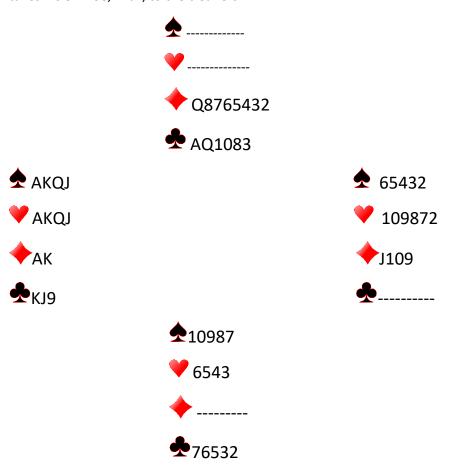| BOARD 13		
BD: 13	♠ 54 ♥ 832 ♦ 9854 ♣ 8654	Dlr: N Vul: ALL
♠ AQ3 ♥ AJT ♦ AJ762 ♣ K9		♠ KJT6 ♥ KQ954 ♦ KT ♣ 72
	♠ 9872 ♥ 76 ♦ Q3 ♣ AQJT3	

Mon 25/7/22

In an improbable contract of 2C, West actually managed to get 2 x diamond ruffs and thus set up the diamond suit on this hand because of difficulties for the opponents communicating in the majors. West ended up one off.

If North/South had an agreement that a redouble by South after being left in 1D doubled by West asks for rescue, if necessary, the 6 x hearts in North's Yarborough would prove very helpful.

This was the worst Yarborough of all with a flat distribution and only 1 x 9. The opponents played successfully in 6H but an unlikely and sixth-sense 1C psyche by North would certainly have put the "cat among the pigeons".

Unlike B13, which had at least an unlikely opportunity to psyche, nothing useful could be found in the Yarborough in B27 on 30/7 to make it worthy of publication!

Yarboroughs clearly can have some value in their own right but to see one that has remarkable value, let's return to those days of Whist. The following is a hand popularised by none other than Eli Culbertson whereby the Duke of Cumberland is alleged to have played West and lost a packet. The same hand was used by Ian Fleming in his novel, "Moonraker", wherein Bond, in similar fashion, takes his evil foe, Drax, to the cleaners.

♠ ------------
♥ ------------
♦ Q8765432
♣ AQ1083

♠ AKQJ
♥ AKQJ
♦ AK
♣ KJ9

♠ 65432
♥ 109872
♦ J109
♣ ----------

♠ 10987
♥ 6543
♦ ---------
♣ 76532

I have no idea how bidding was conducted in early 19th century Whist but, let's bid as one might in contract bridge. Assume you are South holding the Yarborough. North is the Dealer and chooses to trap pass. After East and yourself also pass, West decides to open 2C Game Forcing hoping to find out what her partner holds in clubs. North now bids 4NT which has to be for the minors and South bids ….what? Your partner must have extreme distribution to force you to game in a minor after a 2C Game Forcing bid from an opponent! You could just bid 5C but with your 5 card trump support and void in partner's other suit you have a "Yarborough Monster" and could justifiably bid 6C. Poor West. 7C makes on any defence.

Alchemist 4/8/22