

## A LANGUAGE ALL ITS OWN - DAVID LAW

Many sporting terms have found their way into common usage and vice versa, for example, "par performance", "goal", and card games are no exception. We talk of "putting our cards on the table" and "revealing one's hand". No claims are made however, as to the birthright of "calling a spade a spade", which, if originated from bridge, must have been devised before the strong club and weak opening systems, when players often call a spade something else. Certain bridge phrases may raise eyebrows to the uninitiated but are perfectly innocent to the bridge player. One suspects that our bridge forefathers were not completely devoid of imagination when coining them. In what other sport can one speak of "squeezing partner" or "finishing a rubber" while keeping a perfectly straight face?

Then again it may be difficult to differentiate between the origin and the derivative. With absolutely no authority, the following are submitted as bridge terms which worked themselves into the English language as we now commonly understand:

- dummy - a slow player, so slow that the cards are played by partner
- alert - to tell the opponents that you are awake
- finesse - playing with panache, such as leading towards A-Q and nonchalantly playing the queen, hoping it will win
- slam - to hit the table whenever one's side has bid and won twelve or thirteen tricks; with moderate force if twelve tricks are won ("small slam") and great strength ("grand slam") when all tricks are won
- endplay - something quite distasteful which is inflicted (from which an opposite meaning is given to "foreplay")
- cue - to prompt (partner to bid again). As on stage, disasters may happen if a cue is missed
- discard - the card referred to at present, later to mean an unwanted card; possibly first used when replying to an inattentive partner's question of which card was played ("discard" as opposed to "dat card")