

# WALES IN THE CAMROSE: LLANDRINDOD WELLS – January 2014

## MATCH ONE

The first weekend of the 2014 Camrose season brought together six previous caps in two well practised partnerships and one new partnership, the latter being Mark Roderick and Trevor Towers. The other pairs were John Salisbury & Mike Tedd, Filip Kurbalija & Patrick Shields. The team has, as before, engaged in on-line practice following the Welsh training weekend in September – for which we have to thank Julian Pottage. Tim Rees, whose partner was unable to play in the trials for this event, is non-playing captain.

This year's Camrose has two teams from the England and has the potential to be the strongest competition we've had for a few years. Northern Ireland, who had often in the past been the weakest team, have warmed up in recent years and had come above Wales last year. Scotland had also started to awaken from some earlier doldrums and were proving difficult to beat.

**WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND.** Wales have only lost this match once in the fourteen encounters since this format was introduced, and that was a year ago, when we played in Belfast and lost by 19imps. The first segment was fairly flat with 10 boards having 0 or 1 imp exchanged (the other two matches managed only 5 each) but there were 4 decent or better slams. In this match the 4 slam hands generated one swing, while in the EBU-England encounter there were four swings all to the EBU, and in the Ireland-Scotland encounter there were four swings, two in each direction.

This first hand was the slam bid least often

KJ98	AQT52	It was a competitive auction at all tables with either a 1D opener (4 times) or a 2D opener (twice) in front of the club hand, which now made a simple overcall at all tables. North raised to 3D (3 times), 4D (twice) and 5D (once) and – variety again – there was a pass over 3D and over 4D, a double over 4D and 5D, and two bids of 3S. Fegarty & Curtis for EBU bid constructively to 6S after a 3S bid and might have tried for the grand, and the Irish were bounced into the same by the 5D bid. The others all settled for 4S, so losses for England and Scotland.
K8	A9643	
--	63	
AQ98432	6	

and surprisingly this was bid to 6D at only one table (but to 7D twice) ....

JT98	643	Most tables opened 2N and got a 3S response showing the minors. The three Wests who now showed their diamonds all got to slam, but for England and N Ireland it was West who took charge with ace asking and with no losers in sight (but hardly 13 winners yet) they bid 7D. First thing needed is the diamonds breaking and then comes the need to pick up the clubs. If you have drawn three trumps then the optimal play in the club suit is the A and then the K, ruffing the third round as Qxx onside is a tiny bit more likely than Qxxx offside. But both of those are better odds than the successful second round finesse which David Greenwood found to make 7D against Wales.
K52		
T8		
Q987		
AKQ		
AT84	9	To be more accurate, the vacant places when North turns up with only two trumps affects it, but doesn't change the favoured line. Wales felt unlucky – although the fact that they had a pair stop in 3N did justify losing someimps.
KQ62	A974	
A3	KJT54	
752		
QJ763		
J53		
62		

The last board of the set was also of interest -

<p>QJ72 KQ42 AJ Q85</p> <p>-- 9873 KQ98 AT632</p> <p>T9653 6 T76432 7</p>	<p>AK84 AJT5 5 KJ94</p>	<p>Curiously 3 of the 6 pairs opening 4-card majors were sitting NS and got to open 1H as North. One table played there but the other two heard 1N-P-3S-P-3N with West showing short spades and East settling for 3N. Only one table was tested in 3N, after a diamond to the king and ace and a spade switch. The right play now is a heart from hand, as this never affects your ability to pick up the suit, and here when you learn that North has only four. Since he is playing a weak NT, you now know the North hand must hold the CQ, so it's easy to pick up that suit and collect 11 tricks. But Wales failed ☹</p> <p>Where North opened 1N twice, East was in with 2C showing the majors and West bid 4H. Wales passed this out but Ireland doubled and had to concede -990 to Scotland on the board. The Scot who played 1H felt good on this board, but wasn't quite as happy as Norman Selway who got to play in 2D-X as South and made it.</p>
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At the end of the set Wales and England were both 22 imps behind, while the Republic was 3 imps ahead of Scotland. Wales kept in Kurbalija & Shields, and switched Roderick & Towers out to let John Salisbury & Mike Tedd in. The next session was the one late evening session and it had plenty of tricky hands to keep the players awake – multiple strong 65 hands, a nine card suit, and some 7420 and 8311 thrown in. On a more tame front, John Matheson earned 11 imps for Scotland by responding 1N at favourable vulnerability to his partner's opening bid of 1S with a 1255 2-count, which stopped the opposition getting to their easy 3NT, bid at all other tables. Another example of why bridge success is referred to as a bidder's game.

Here are some of the play hands from this stanza ...

<p>AK8 KQJ9542 J5 9</p> <p>Q765 T8 Q983 653</p> <p>J92 A3 AK64 QJ82</p>	<p>T43 76 T72 AKT74</p>	<p>This was bid to 6H at most tables after a start of 1H-2C-3H; at one table the lady South took control with Blackwood, but at the others it was a 4D cue bid and then North took control. East led a top club and switched to a diamond. The same pattern of play emerged in a number of rooms - win DA and ruff a club, two trumps and ruff another club in case there was AKx coming down. And now run the trumps.</p> <p>Only two declarers made it (Senior for England &amp; Shields for Wales) although there is no defence. If East unguards diamonds and spades then West is squeezed, but unguarding just one allows declarer to cash that suit to create a double squeeze around the other. Swings in all matches as Scotland bid 1H-2C(game forcing)-2H-2N-3H-4H to stop there, which is not unreasonable as the slam is well short of being an odds on favourite.</p>
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and just a little later

<p>AT8 4 KQJT8652 K</p> <p>J943 QT96 A J852</p> <p>K76 AJ2 94 T9643</p>	<p>Q52 K8753 73 AQ7</p>	<p>All tables played in 5D and three of them made it. Opening leads varied – three times a heart, twice a spade and once a trump. Success revolved around the opposition playing on the spade suit. Where the spade suit was led by East, when West got in with the DA he continued the suit to save declarer a loser there. Where the trump was led, West switched to a spade at trick two; the S3 cost the contract. This was unlucky as the alternative switches look less appealing; but given that danger, and the hint from the trump lead that partner holds something in every other suit (and hence the HK), it might be avoidable.</p> <p>With no help in the spade suit, the other declarers were left with hoping for some bonus in clubs – but to no avail. It is surprisingly easy to give away a trick if you happen to lead the wrong suit. There were gains for the two Irish teams and for England on this board.</p>
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with just behind that

KQT9  
84  
7  
KT7432

J5                    73  
A52                  K976  
AT95                QJ82  
AJ95                Q86

A8642  
QJT3  
K643  
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Every table played this in 4S, usually by South, and in two cases doubled. Every table found the lead of a trump, which was a good start. With 5 top trumps and two ruffs, declarer is struggling for tricks, but the defence almost invariably allowed some tricks to slip through.

After winning in the North hand, two declarers tried hearts, two diamonds, and one ruffed a club (the other we lack records for). What surprised is that on winning a red suit, only David Greenwood continued with the second trump which guarantees two off. However it takes more than that – East must let South win the second heart. This is difficult but not impossible to find as South must have heart length to go with the club void which you must deduce from the failure to play clubs. In fact, Nevena Senior's club ruff at trick two is the only way to make 9 tricks by force (can you see how?) although she stumbled later and ended two down. It is surely the right line as the DA is known to be offside from West's entry to the bidding and the best chance of making is finding the club ace in a short club hand. Curious that the only table to start off in the right direction was the only one to end down two.

After we had scored up both England and Wales had recovered their positions, to a near draw (EBU winning by 1 imps, N Ireland by 4 mps) while Scotland had grown their margin to 45 imps to take a clear lead in the Camrose table.

The match ended with 7 slam hands in total – and the minus scores from those were one hopeless grand going off (Wales), one poor grand going off (England), and one tight small slam which went off at 3 tables out of 5. All the rest made but there were 18 instances (41%) of not bidding the slam – so potential for all to improve there.

END OF MATCH ONE

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