



John Isaac

When West Wales reported the death of John Isaac, in January, the sad news spread across the country, for though John was most prominent in the West his influence was nationwide. He had long been an important part of Welsh Bridge. He was twice President of the WBU and was active in all aspects of the game. He played at the old MHPC club and was a founder member of the Haverfordwest club. He was also non-playing Captain of the first competitive team to visit Northern Ireland after the troubles there.

John was the consummate sportsman and had been admired and respected in the world of County Cricket as a player, umpire and administrator. He was honoured with life membership and the Presidency for his 35 years of service to Cricket.

He earned respect, both at the Bridge table and in the WBU administration. He will long be remembered as a sportsman and a gentleman, at the Bridge table and in life. His passing leaves a sad gap, but the legacy of this

truly nice man is the memory of all that is best in the game.



John Isaac

Jill's Quill

Well, what a winter! All that snow! Beautiful to look at on Welsh TV from the comfort of the armchair, but hard on the farmers, on motorists – on everyone, including Bridge players. Several meetings had to be cancelled, so progress towards resolving plans to improve the WBU was interrupted. Qualifiers were affected by the hazardous road conditions, and one National Final was a table and a half short because of illness, undoubtedly caused by the rapid changes of temperature. Only viruses found the conditions friendly.

The meeting called in January to discuss further the Management committee proposals, had to be cancelled, too. The Executive Council met for their scheduled meeting - on Mother's Day – and after discussing the usual items on the agenda, they resumed discussion on the proposed Management Committee. I leave our President to tell you about it.

'The proposed new structure for management of WBU by a compact unit known as The Management Team, was discussed in some detail. Council agreed to proceed with the modernisation scheme in the basis that each Area would have one member, to be appointed by that Area, on the team.

'Mike Tedd will draft the amendments to our
continued on Page 2

Erratum: Welsh foursomes

Brid Kemple, Terry Walsh, Peter Goodman and **Aiofe McHale** won the Welsh Foursomes in 2009. For some reason, Aiofe's name was replaced in the results list by that of Filip Kurbalija. Well done, **Aoife!**

Filip's team was second. Both teams were well ahead of the rest of the field.

Jill's quill (continued from previous page)

constitution to reflect the proposed changes which will be put to a Special General Meeting, or if Areas report general agreement from their members, to the AGM.

'Initially, the management will report to council twice a year.'

Now that spring is on the way, things are starting to move ahead again and we look forward to the busy time for competitions. For areas, an important issue is the continuing success of their congresses. Much has been done to make congresses even better and more accessible to less experienced players. Most organisers will tell you that more English than Welsh people grace their congresses and it seems a shame some local players feel that congresses are not for them. Only a small percentage of the Bridge players in Wales use the opportunities afforded by a Congress in their area. If they knew the benefits (see 'Congresses in Wales'), they might have a go. Organisers work tremendously hard to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Their brochures go out months in advance to regular patrons, areas

David Stevenson – from Iceland to Italy to gain honours

Our universally once-seen, never-forgotten TD relates his latest adventure:

From February 1st - 5th the European Bridge League ran a course in San Remo for Europe's top TDs. To get there I had to leave the Iceland Express tournament in Reykjavik with three matches to go. The four Icelanders and Liz Commins did well without me. I had been invited by the Iceland Bridge Federation to be Chairman of Appeals, and was very worried when I realised they clashed.

Staying overnight at Gatwick, and setting my alarm for 5.42am (I did not know such a time existed), I travelled via Nice airport and coach transfer. That evening there was an entry test in which I did poorly by misreading two questions. But it mattered little.

The main part of the test was many simulations over the next few days. Despite not always agreeing with the official view, I finished with the best score of over 80%. However, the final test was still to come. In the final test, three others got a better score, but these three had not done well in the simulations, so my overall mark of over 80% was a few % ahead of second. Gordon Rainsford, the only other TD from England or Wales, did reasonably well.

I was made a European Bridge League TD. Only the person with the leading score gets this honour first time, otherwise it takes two successful exams, so I was very pleased.

I met many old friends and made many new ones in San Remo. I have been trying to get the opportunity of taking that test for many years, and it's a long, sad story as to why I never have. Now I can forget that.

Will I get to direct in Europe? I hope so, but it is not guaranteed. They tend not to use English or Welsh TDs. But we shall see ... *Well done, David! You kept telling us how clever you are. Now you have been proved right! Bonne chance in your European quest.*

and clubs. I do know from personal experience that not all club members get to know about congresses, so I am making a plea to all secretaries to take brochures to their clubs, and to all chairpersons to announce Welsh congresses to their members. The main aim of running a congress is to provide a service to WBU members. Apart from the WBU licence fee, any profit goes to the area concerned, so it seems logical for local people to support them as much as possible.

As most of you know, at big matches there is a room where an audience can see the hands displayed and listen to an expert commentary. Edgar Kaplan, a brilliant analyst, was famous for his humorous comments. I have included some of them that I found on David Stevenson's web page and got his permission to use. I hope you enjoy them.

Because this newsletter is yours, I should love to hear suggestions for improving it.

Enjoy your Bridge and may the sun shine for you all summer!

Jill



The WBU Senior Trial

by Patrick Jourdain



Ten pairs lined up for the trial for the team to represent Wales in the Senior Home International for the Teltscher Trophy.

It was my first visit to Pen-y-bont Village Hall, next door to an attractive country pub, just north of Llandrindod Wells. The playing conditions were good except, for some, the temperature was too cold.

The field looked much the same as the previous year when Gary Jones and I had failed to shine. But the headwind we had struggled against then was now in our favour. I thought this deal had an interesting defensive point that would escape the double-dummy analyser that tells you the maximum number of tricks you can make:

Session 2 ♠ A 10 5
Board 9 ♥ K 9 7
Dlr: South ♦ J 10 9 7 2
Vul: EW ♣ J 8

♠ Q J 2	♠ 9 7 6 4
♥ A Q 10 8 2	♥ J 5 3
♦ A K Q 5	♦ 6 4 3
♣ 3	♣ Q 7 5
	♠ K 8 3
	♥ 6 4
	♦ 8
	♣ AK109642

West	North	East	South
<i>Baker</i>	<i>Jourdain</i>	<i>Penton</i>	<i>Jones</i>
-	Pass	Pass	4♣
Double	5♣	Pass	Pass
Souble	All pass		

In third seat at favourable vulnerability opposite a passed partner Gary Jones decided to put the pressure on West with an aggressive pre-empt. West could do little other than double this and my raise to Five Clubs.

The double-dummy analyser tells you South can always make 11 tricks, which you may find surprising. But Gary found the winning line.

West led the king of diamonds to get count from his partner. He could tell declarer had a singleton but seeing nothing better pressed on

with the suit. Jones ruffed, cashed one high trump unblocking the J, and then led a heart. West went up with the ace and continued with the ♥Q. Jones won in dummy, took the finesse in trumps and then ran the rest of the suit. In the ending West did not have space to keep both the top diamond and three spades, so the squeeze produced the eleventh trick and a useful +550 for us. Well done, Gary.

It occurred to me later that there is a good case for West, at trick two, to switch to a LOW spade. South is expected to have at least seven winning clubs, and dummy's heart king and spade ace will provide two more. If South has the ♠K that will be the tenth trick and then West can foresee the squeeze that will turn ten into eleven. If East has the ♠K a switch to any spade will do, but should South hold the king then a low spade is better. Where South has the nine you will have conceded a trick quickly that you must concede later, but where South only has the eight, as here, you put him to a very difficult decision.

The odds favour playing low from dummy at trick two, hoping West has led from Q9x or J9x, but if declarer does that the defence prevails. The nine from East forces out the king. When West gets in with the heart ace he can play another spade destroying the entry for the squeeze.

It did not prove possible for the top three pairs in the Trial to make up the team. The WBU calendar showed the event as the first weekend of June, but Scotland, who had offered to host the event for the first time, had booked a hotel for the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May (the same weekend as the Welsh Seniors congress). One of the trialists had a commitment that weekend and the team that will represent Wales is: Gary Jones & Patrick Jourdain; Peter & Jean Hand; Sheila Shea & Wyn Williams. Congratulations to the latter who represents Wales for the first time.

- Results:**
1. Gary Jones & Patrick Jourdain +83;
 2. Peter & Jean Hand +43;
 3. Mike Tedd & John Salisbury +42;
 4. Sheila Shea & Wyn Williams +31.

Who'd be a Selector?



Selectors have a bad time of it all round. They have to sit and watch the bidding and play at the table without cringing or saying anything. They have to make notes, knowing this will put some players off, so it has to be done discreetly – not easy when sitting close enough to see what's going on at the table – and yet it must be legible afterwards. No wonder one selector used to head for the bar before play began, and return there at regular intervals during the day.

They take their job very seriously, but no matter how hard they try to be accurate and fair, they come in for stick from many players – those who know they should be in the team (and most of them do have this view); those who are peeved because the rest of the chosen team are not who they wanted; those who disagree if someone has been exempted from the pre-trial – ‘What about that hand they played against us a year last February? It was terrible!’- Selectors just can't win.

Selectors have to be very good players themselves, obviously, and this makes for problems. When there is a small field of very good players, most of them take part in trials themselves, so they have to organise themselves so that men selectors watch the women's trials – easy enough. But, let's face it! Most women players are not of the standard required to judge the best men players, so there's a problem (Are those shrieks, I hear?) With so few very good players all wanting to play, how can they judge fairly? At one time you could not be a selector and play in the trials, but the suggestion that has now been made is that you CAN be a selector and trial, but you must declare an interest and leave the room when you are being discussed. Not the ideal solution, but needs must. Even they would prefer there to be more disinterested people around, but there aren't. Whatever the selectors decide, there will always be criticism. Job description is simply ‘a thankless task.’

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Camrose Open teams

This year's series has been completed (see Mike Tedd's report). I was unable to see much of the play during the second weekend in Northern Ireland, but I did manage to see what I imagine was the most exciting stanza of the weekend: Wales against England, on the Sunday. Some of what I did see was marred by inexperienced BBO operators*, who attributed the wrong bid to the wrong person; put up the wrong hand – the wrong team, even; and got so far behind, that viewers must have thought they were going senile. It was really exciting, though. Wales were eating up the big deficit from the first weekend and were threatening to beat England with some excellent bidding and play, achieving great scores. Patrick Jourdain, commentating on BBO with Peter Goodman, said that everyone there was cheering for Wales. An England commentator, one of Hacketts, seemed pretty hacked off! But it was not to be. England came back strongly. Wales played some very good Bridge, though, and their final third place score was very encouraging for Welsh Bridge.

**Bridge Base Online is a wonderful facility that enables people to see the play live on their computer. They have experts at all kinds of matches all over the world, but they do need local people to help operate the system.*

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS

The Selectors have announced the teams to represent Wales in Ostend (22nd June – 3rd July). They are:

Open: Paul Denning/Patrick Shields; Peter Goodman/Adrian Thomas; Gary Jones/Dafydd Jones; Non-Playing Captain Mike Pownall.

Women: Judy Belcher/Daphne Patrick; Gilly Clench/Laura Woodruff; Sheila Shea/Beth Wennell, Non-Playing Captain Mike Close.

Seniors: Paul Gagne/Diana Harris; Jean Hand/Peter Hand; John Salisbury/Mike Tedd.

Good luck to all of you!

Anyone who fancies can go to Ostend to support the teams. They will be welcome. Start booking now. Those who can't get there can see it on **Bridge Base Online** free.

Say That Again! – Two bidding hands from Chris Davies

It is not often that you see the director taking a photograph of the bidding at a table. This happened at the East Wales heat of the Teams of Eight in the match between Cardiff A and Cardiff B.

West	North	East	South
1NT ⁽¹⁾	Double ⁽²⁾	Redble ⁽³⁾	Pass
2♣	Double	Redble	Pass
2♦	Double	Redble	Pass
2♥	Double	Redble	3NT
All pass			

- (1) 12-14
 (2) Balanced 21
 (3) 0 hcp, explained as East has a suit somewhere

3NT made 9 tricks for a flat board!

Advice in bidding (after BOLS bidding tips)

At the club's New Year's party the players were well fed and a number of bottles of wine had been emptied. The bidding and play were a bit ragged and several score slips recorded odd contracts or big penalties. But my partner and I had done well by applying our new year's resolution of more discipline in our bidding. With one round to go we are on about 65% and heading for a well deserved win! So we arrive at the last table and the bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♥	2NT ⁽²⁾
3♥	?		

- (1) 5-card majors
 (2) Balanced 6-count with hearts

North is thinking of bidding; South says "Don't bid!" (this is party night) but North does not hear...

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♥	2NT ⁽²⁾
3♥	3♠	4♥	Pass
Pass	?		

North again thinks and South says more loudly "Don't bid any more!" but North does not hear...

West	North	East	South
-	-	1♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
1♥	1♠	2♥	2NT ⁽²⁾
3♥	3♠	4♥	Pass
Pass	4♠	Double	All pass

South has a void in hearts so their 4♠ doubled rolls in – for a complete bottom and second place; passing 3♥ or not doubling would have been enough to secure first place.

Now South is a well known 94-year-old and the bidding tip is:

When a player over 90 bids her suit three times and twice ignores her partner's instructions not to bid – DO NOT DOUBLE!

Heard at the table A: Why didn't you cash your winners? B: I only had five points.



Blowing in the Wind I really enjoy sandwiches made with M&S multiseed bread. One evening, after eating sandwiches, I was embarrassed by trying to suppress burps – not always managing it. The club is quite chatty, so only the people at the table could hear me. As I began to apologise to them, the room fell uncharacteristically silent, just as I said, 'It's those Marks and Spencers bloomers' Men's heads shot round; their faces told a story. Strange creatures, men.

Wind of Change Everybody in the club was chatting, as usual when a low, deep sound cut through the chat until there was complete silence. Our thoughts of serious digestive problems turned to enlightenment as the source of the noise revealed itself to us as a mobile phone vibrating on a Bridge table. The guilty party announced, 'Better out than in' and the silence was broken by loud laughter.

Area news *(This will be a regular feature, so make sure you get your news to Jill Knight)*

East Wales

Our main activity has been organising the East Wales Congress. Feedback tells us that players were well pleased, and hope this will lead to increased attendance



next year. Numbers have stabilised at 52 tables, of which only 25% were Welsh players and, of those, only 17% were local. We know early finishes are appreciated, facilitating eating out on Saturday and travel home on Sunday. Our prize structure is generous and well spread.

The Novice Event was well attended. We hope many players will be encouraged to progress, and are also introducing an EWBA-sponsored Handicap competition, to encourage less prominent players.

East Wales were 6th in the final of the Tollemache (the most prestigious English county teams event). Congratulations to the team of Filip Kurbalija, Diane Kurbalija, David Birt, Geoff Evans, Trevor Towers, Simon Richards, Jim Luck, Adrian Thomas, Tony Ratcliff and Patrick Jourdain.

East Wales is doing well in the Western League. The A team are in the lead at present.

Mike Best, Chairman

Perry and Spickett teams

The team for the Perry Open competition is: Filip Kurbalija/Tony Ratcliff; Tim Barsby/Steve Webb; Simon Richards/Trevor Towers

The team for the Spicket Ladies' competition is: Joan Jenkins/Noelle Bond; Gilly Clench/Sue Ingham

Events

Seniors Congress, May 29-31 2010 *****

Saturday 29th Seniors Swiss Pairs Sunday 30th Seniors Swiss Teams Monday 31st Open Swiss Pairs

Brochure available from the website or phone (see 'Congresses in Wales' in this issue)

EWBA Swiss Pairs Saturday, 7th August

EWBA Swiss Teams Sunday 8th August

Cwmbran Bridge Club *(a poignant tale from Jeff Morgan, Vice Chairman)*

It is with heavy heart that I report the demise of our Bridge Club. What started in 1983 with five stalwart members of a former club, during the 80s and 90s Cwmbran fairly regularly boasted 7 or 8 tables.

In recent times, however, numbers have dwindled so far that it has become unviable to continue running what was once a flourishing club. Some members have fallen to the Queen of Spades, others to green baize new. Our favourite saying was "If most of the bridge players who live in the Cwmbran area played at Cwmbran just once a week (Thursday) what a thriving club it still could be".

Despite all our efforts to attract members over recent years it was not meant to be. Our finesses failed, trumps seemed to be stacked against us and most often our contracts didn't make. Our Ace of trumps during most of this time was our erstwhile and formidable secretary Mrs. Edna Wilford, without whom the club would not have survived. Edna is now well into her 90s - still as smart and sprightly as ever - and still played bridge with us until Christmas 2009. Past and present members alike owe her a debt of gratitude.

Also a big thank you to our Queen of Diamonds, Mrs Mollie Francis, who in recent years has been heroic in her efforts to keep our club functioning each week.

So our last deal has been dealt, our last hand played, and the cards have now finally been folded. From everyone at Cwmbran Bridge Club, 'bye for now.

Results

East Wales Congress 13th & 14th February

52 teams played 14 matches.

- 1st Peter Lindon, Dee Lindon, Derek Oram and Celia Oram
- 2nd Janet de Botton, Arthur Malinowski, Justin Hackett and Jason Hackett
- 3rd Pamela Pearce, John Sansom, Stewart Fishburne and Stephen Gore

Mid Wales

Several clubs in Mid-Wales are reporting increased numbers. Of course, the cold winter led to some of our bridge evenings' being cancelled, as icy car parks and senior bones don't go well together. In Aberystwyth at least, though, numbers are up by a couple of tables now we have restarted – clearly people missed their bridge!

Unfortunately we lost our Area Tournament Organiser, William Pink, who returned to England at short notice. We are very grateful for his efforts as ATO, notably in reviving the area league and setting up an Area Simultaneous event. We are very pleased that Jo Davies has stepped into the breach, and everything is running very smoothly. The weather and the hiatus led to the cancellation of our area heat for the National Mixed Pairs; just a one-year hiccup we believe.

Mid-Wales is a large area. It is 90 miles from Cardigan to Knighton, each of which is 60-70 miles from Dolgellau. It was thus a great pleasure to see the Area Sims allowing all three of these clubs to compete against each other and several other area clubs.

Preparations are well in hand for the Perry and Spickett in May, when we welcome other areas to the Metropole in Llandrindod Wells for these inter-area events, and members generally for the AGM. I gave a light-hearted talk to the club about my early life in bridge, which seemed to go down well. I've promised to write it up for a future edition of this Newsletter. *Mike Tedd, Chairman*

Results

Open Pairs Qualifier

- 1st John Waller and Roger Bowles
- 2nd Mike Tedd and John Salisbury
- 3rd Jean Cuffley and Alan Screen

The Norman Riches Cup

- 1st Dorothy Harris & Joyce Outred, Cardigan
- 2nd Chris Blackman & Monica Garbett-Edwards, Newtown
- 3rd Robert Havant & Dewi Jones, Aberystwyth

The McKinley Cup

- 1st Jean Cuffley, Alan Screen, Diana Harris and Paul Gagne

2nd Dewi Jones, Dylan Raw Rees, John Evans and Andrew Phillips

3rd: Sylvia Hilton, Stella Park, Sadie Morton and Margaret Evans

Congratulations to our chairman, Mike Tedd on captaining the Welsh team in the second (and final) Camrose weekend. The team improved on their creditable performance of the first weekend and came a sound third, beating Scotland, Northern Ireland and the NIBU.

Congratulations: Mid-Wales players are having a busy year representing Wales. The Welsh Camrose teams this year have been captained by John Salisbury, in Edinburgh, and Mike Tedd in Belfast. The creditable performance of the first weekend was followed by a better one in the second weekend so Wales came a sound third, well ahead of Scotland, Northern Ireland and the NIBU.

Paul Gagne & Diana Harris are reserves for the Senior Camrose team, and have been selected for the Welsh Seniors team in the European Championships in Ostend in June. Mike Tedd and John Salisbury are also in that team.

ABERYSTWYTH CONGRESS *** The good news is that the congress will now be Green-pointed. We are hoping that this will attract more players, as well as inspiring loyal participants who come year after year. We look forward to seeing you all. Brochures may be downloaded from the WBU site or from Dai Hayes (congress Secretary) (01239 851876.

North Wales

It has been a quiet few months, but we have the Spring Congress and the Swiss Pairs under preparation. Thank you to all those who help the organisers of the congresses. It is much appreciated. I urge members of the WBU in North Wales to take advantage of the congresses in Northop and Llandudno.

Congratulations to John Wain who held his **Swiss Pairs for Novices Congress** again in January. The weather made travelling extremely difficult and a few people from the more outlying areas were forced to cancel at the last minute. All who went thoroughly enjoyed it and, again, as well as the top prizes, there were random ones - not quite so random – every 12th pair on the final placings list got a

prize. A strangely novel yet well received idea. John hopes that this introduction to congresses will encourage many to move on to the main ones eventually.

Congratulations to Jean & Peter Hand and Sheila Shea & Wyn Williams on their selection for the Senior Camrose. Congratulations, also, to Jean Hand, Mary Lee, Sheila Shea and Beth Wennell on their selection for the Lady Milne, this year being held in Scotland. We wish them and their teams all the very best for a successful and enjoyable experience. *Allan James*

Perry and Spickett The team for the **Perry Open competition** is: Pam Edwards and Brian Edwards; Paddy Murphy and Barry Jones; Sheila Shea and Wyn Williams. Peter Hand is NPC The team for the Spickett Ladies' competition is: Margaret Barnes and Beth Wennell; Jean Hand and Mary Lee; Jill Knight and Joan Marray. Mike Clare is NPC.

Results

National Mixed Pairs Qualifier Winners:
Martin Thorne and Olwen Brown

National Open Pairs Qualifier Winners:
Chris Pope and Andrew Prothero

National Teams of 8 Qualifier Winners:
Llandudno

Valance Cup Individual Competition
Regina Evans and Allan James tied winners

NORTH WALES CONGRESS 10th and 11th April The Spring Swiss Teams congress is on April 10th and 11th at the Holiday Inn, Northop. Jean Hand has been busy with final preparations for the event and we wish her all the best for another successful congress.

WBU SWISS PAIRS 3rd & 4th July 'The best congress in Wales' At Venue Cymru (Conference Centre, Llandudno). Margaret Smith is busy taking bookings and would like anyone going out and about to take brochures with them. This is the best-supported congress in Wales, but there is still room for more players. Capacity is easily 70 tables and the venue is expensive. Good luck to Margaret.

West Wales

This has been a successful year with entries to our area competitions up again. Much of this

is due to the hard work of our ATO, Jennifer Wardell. We are also lucky to have found an excellent venue at Saron, which is centrally located and popular with players.

We are also delighted to have a new club at Llandybie but we are also aware that the main growth is in social bridge clubs. This shows that the game remains popular but many players prefer less regulation. This is a challenge for WWBA and the WBU. All our affiliated clubs are looking at how they operate, so as to attract these new recruits to the game.

On a sad note we have lost some popular and influential people in the last six months. As well as Sid Craven (see below) there was John Isaac, who was a major influence on the development of bridge in West Wales, and then in early March we were saddened to hear of the death of Mari Powell, the widow of Max.

Chris Davies (Chairman)

PERRY & SPICKETT TEAMS The West's team in the Perry Open competition is: Mike Close/Laura Woodruff; Roger Penton/Rob Charlesworth; Mike Baker/ Eric Hartland. The team for the Spickett is: Judith Graham-Jones/Gloria Walters; Colette Davies/Margaret John; Beryl Warner/Wendy Thornton

CONGRATULATIONS Val Kennewell and Margaret Lane have been selected to represent Wales in the Lady Milne. All the best to you both, and your team.

CONGRATULATIONS Wendy Thornton and Wally Heaton of Tenby club have won the National Mixed Pairs competition. Congratulations on a fine achievement.

JOHN ISAAC & WWBA AGM At Awel Y Mor, Porthcawl, 11 am. Event of the year, lunch included! Please get your Entries in early to Jennifer Wardell: postmaster@jendwar.plus.com

Obituary We were sad to learn of the sudden death of Sid Craven who had been a member of the Mumbles and Porthcawl clubs for ten years. He had also been involved in establishing a small club in West Cross. His funeral took place in October and donations were given to the Red Cross. Donations were sent to the British Heart foundation. Sincere condolences to Kate Craven, our secretary and webmaster.

A SPARKLING PERFORMANCE

This year Sheila Shea and Beth Wennell formed a new partnership. They are already beginning to sparkle. Below, each lady shows a hand from the Lady Milne trials they particularly enjoyed. After their amazing winning score, they must have had problems choosing just one hand each.

HOPE FOR THE BEST!

Beth's hand

How often have you read about players visualising their partner's hand, leading exactly the right card and defeating the contract? And does this ever happen when you're playing?

Right! Just like me, you're expecting to lead a card which, although you think you've thought about it logically, plays straight into declarer's tenace.

North-South (us) having stayed silent throughout (itself a minor miracle), the contract is 3♦ by East, who has shown a weak hand with a long diamond suit. West has bid clubs, and then NT.

Take your pick of this lot: ♠ Q J 8 6, ♥ Q J 7 6, ♦ A 4, ♣ 8 3 2

One of the majors looks right, from both your holdings and the bidding. You decide, very scientifically, that you will lead the ♠Q (because this suit is stronger - marginally - than the hearts). Can partner possibly have the missing aces?

The ♠Q is covered by the king and the trick is taken by partner's ace. She returns a spade to my jack. So far, so good. OK. Now's the time to switch to hearts. The ♥Q is covered by the king and partner's ace, and a heart is returned to my jack. The ace of diamonds is the setting trick.

This was the complete deal:

	♠ A 5 2	
	♥ A 9 2	
	♦ 9 3 2	
	♣ J 10 6 4	
♠ K 10 3		♠ 9 7 4
♥ K 10 5 3		♥ 8 4
♦ Q		♦ K J 10 8 7 6
♣ A Q 9 7		5
5	♠ Q J 8 6	♣ K
	♥ Q J 7 6	
	♦ A 4	
	♣ 8 3 2	

Not the most difficult of defences, but one where the magic actually happened to you.

(Rixi Marcus often said that most contracts can make and most contracts can be defeated. In this case, even if Declarer ducks the first trick, after the ♠J, continuation, North should find the high trump switch (asking for a heart) to let her partner in to lead through the king of hearts. Beth's lead earned the partnership 4 BMPs. Declarer's failure to duck, though, gave them an easier ride than they might have had. At the other tables, the contracts were 3♦ making and 2♦ up 2).

IT PROBABLY WON'T HAPPEN

Sheila's hand

Beth Wennell and I had played all of five times before we entered the Lady Milne Trial in December 2010; once we had decided to enter we spent hour after hour torturing Beth's husband Barry and my Open Pairs partner Wyn to death by going over parts of our very different systems and different they were!!

Some elements were quite easy to agree while others seemed strangely alien; we agreed the basics, ironed out the differences, Beth making major concessions to pander to my various idiosyncrasies, and agree to be less specific about the rest, the odd things that "probably won't happen". All agreements were then written down in a big black book (Beth's).

So, we sit down to play.

Beth as dealer opens 2NT (5/5 in the minors - a bid that "probably won't happen".)

West passes and I now have to decide that presuming this is 5/5 in the minors, what strength is this and could Beth have two spades. If she has, could I find out? I couldn't.

I bid 5♣ (after all who has the hearts??), and East doubles. This ends the auction.

The complete deal:

Love all ♠ J 9 8 6 3 2
 Dlr: S ♥ 2
 ♦ 7
 ♣ K 9 6 5 2

♠ 10 7 4 ♠ A K 5
 ♥ Q 10 6 4 3 ♥ A K 9 8 5
 ♦ K J ♦ A Q 8 6 2
 ♣ 10 8 4 5 ♣ void

♠ Q
 ♥ J 7
 ♦ 10 9 5 4 3
 ♣ A Q J 7 3

East is on lead and cannot lead a club, so the ♥A was led, followed by the ♥K (ruffed), I led ♦7 to the ♦10 won by the ♦J and a club was returned. I now lost a spade for 10 tricks, setting up my spades that had worried me at the outset of the bidding. Although 7♥ would make East-West, most pairs missed the grand slam.

Is there a moral here? Bidding to your level of known fit makes life difficult for the opposition.

(A triumph for weak pre-emptive bidding and good hand evaluation, but, if West had had East's hand, it might have been a different story. A take-out double in second seat would no doubt have persuaded the hand with the weaker hearts (now East) to take out into 5♥, visualising a club void in her partner's hand. At the other tables, the contracts were 4♥ + 3 and 6♥ + 1. This pre-emptive bidding earned Sheila and Beth 10 BMPs)

Well done, ladies, and good luck to all the players in the Lady Milne!

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CHANCE OF A LIFETIME!

Wales in the Camrose



The home internationals for the Camrose trophy are still the highlights of our annual calendar. In the current format we play matches against each of the other five teams in each of two weekends. The matches this year were in Edinburgh and Belfast, with Northern Ireland having two teams as hosts for the second weekend; Wales will have that honour next year.

The Wales team for the first weekend in January was Paul Denning & Patrick Shields, Dafydd & Gary Jones, Filip Kurbalija & Tim Rees with John Salisbury as NPC.

In the Friday evening match against England, Wales went into an early lead but fell away with some poor decisions and bad luck to lose the match 9-21 in VPs. Then the first match on Saturday saw us lose 10-20 to Scotland. After this wretched start, the team rallied well, beating the second Northern Ireland team ("NIBU") 25-4 and Northern Ireland 21-8 with a small loss 13-17 to the strong Republic team. After this weekend Wales lay 3rd behind England and Ireland, with everything to play for in the second weekend.

This was a quirky hand from our match with Northern Ireland. South opened a weak two and after a bidding misunderstanding the Irish ended in 4♥ doubled played by East. There is only one defence – can you see it?

♠ A
 ♥ 9 8 5
 ♦ J 10 2
 ♣ AK10652

♠ 5
 ♥ K J 10 6
 ♦ AK7653
 ♣ J 3

♠ KJ10963
 ♥ 7 3 2
 ♦ Q 4
 ♣ 9 7

♠ Q 8 7 4 2
 ♥ A Q 4
 ♦ 9 8
 ♣ Q 8 4

After North wins the first three tricks, he continues with a third club and South must throw a diamond. This prevents declarer setting up the suit without drawing trumps, and if he does there is no ruff to set them up!

This simple defence evaded the BBO commentators who could see all four hands, as well as the Welsh South who ruffed the ♣Q at trick 4.

The selectors fielded the same three pairs for the second weekend in March, with Mike Tedd taking over as non-playing captain.

On the Friday evening, Wales started against Scotland and again lost 10-20. Clearly Friday evenings are not our best times. We then started to play much better. The early match on Saturday saw us beat Ireland 19-11 and then Northern Ireland 25-2. So with two matches to play on Sunday the three leaders were England 164, Ireland 149 and Wales 132. A good win over England and the other matches going in our favour could still see us winning, but not one to put one's shirt on.

On Sunday morning we played England and at halfway led by 32 Imps. But the second half saw us fall back to lose narrowly 14-16 in VPs. In the final match we beat NIBU 21-9 while England beat Scotland 16-14. Meanwhile Ireland, playing the two Northern Ireland teams, had only scored 33 VPs in the day. So the final scores saw England taking the Camrose with 196, Ireland on 182 and Wales third with 167, well clear of Scotland. We had scored 89 VPs over the weekend, our best performance since the format changed.

This hand from the last match had several interesting variations:

♠ 6 5	
♥ A Q 9 8 4	
♦ K 7 3	
♣ 8 4 2	
♠ A K Q 10	♠ 7 3 2
♥ none	♥ K 10 2
♦ A J 4	♦ Q 10 9 5 2
♣ AK10976	♣ Q 5
♠ J 9 8 4	
♥ J 7 6 5 3	
♦ 8 6	
♣ J 3	

Five different contracts were attempted! Wales played in 3NT+2, NIBU 7♣-1 and Scotland 4♠+1. England had an easy ride in 6♣ on the lead of the ♥A. But Northern Ireland played in 6♦ by East on a spade lead, and Ireland played in 6♣ by West on a trump lead. What's the best play in these contracts?

Greer MacKenzie in the best contract of 6♦ won the ♠A and carefully led the ♦J so that he kept a trump to be able to ruff a heart when the ♦K won. When the ♦J held he played the ♦A and ran clubs to make his contract,

although I think it is better to continue with the ♦4, retaining the ♦A to keep better control if someone has four diamonds.

In 6♣ the problem is that you would like to reach the long diamonds to discard the potentially losing ♠10. Anna Onishuk, in her first Camrose match, took the ♣AQ and ran the ♦Q, dropping the jack under it. North fell for this fine ruse and took the king, so the long diamonds could now be reached. Of course South should have given count so North could know to duck the ♦K.

On the train back to Dublin, Adam Mesbur pointed out the right technical play in 6♣. You draw a few rounds of trumps and lead the ♦J to the queen. If this loses, there is no problem. If it wins, it will be very hard for the defence not to reveal who holds the ♦K. If South has it, finesse in diamonds; if North, try the spade finesse.

Patrick Shields pointed out the first hand; he writes a great report on each weekend, with lots of the critical hands. You can find his reports on our website at www.wbu.org.uk.

* * *

Lloyd Lewis quotes from my article on the Camrose: 'Before Wales became a separate international country, Welsh players could play in British teams', and he asks: 1. How many Welsh players were selected to play for the British Open Team? 2. How many Welsh ladies played for the GB Ladies? I already know Jill Casey did. 3. Who partnered Jill Casey? I contacted Mike Tedd who contacted Patrick Jourdain who sent the following:

"I am not aware of any WBU-eligible member selected for a British Open team. We had a few selections for Mixed teams in the Common Market Championships (e.g. John Salisbury, Jessie Newton, Maggie Pierce), and a couple for British Junior teams (Yes, I was one with Austin Barnes, before there was an EBL or WBF Junior event, and so was Tony Ratcliff)."

Patrick mentions Jill Casey, our star lady player, who writes: 'I played for GB in the Common Market Ladies team with Maggie Pierce once, with Elaine Pencharz once and with Kay Preddy once. I also played in the European, Olympiad and World Championships, all once. I hope this info helps!

Yes, Jill, and thank you and Patrick and Mike for your prompt responses. Lloyd, have you thought of starting your own version of Facebook? JK

PERSISTENCE PAYS

Daphne Patrick recounts her experience teaching Bridge to young people

Jill Knight asked if I would write about Junior Bridge in Wales, so here goes!

Many years ago (violins), I was the Chairperson of East Wales. Graham John was the Chairperson of West Wales (later to be President of the WBU). Graham had introduced mini-bridge into some Primary schools in West Wales, ably assisted by Marion Brooke. Graham had written to a number of schools, extolling the virtue of bridge in developing various skills eg social, educative, mathematical, planning, logical etc. A school had taken up his offer of teaching mini-bridge and so it began.

I was interested in this as my background over the last 30 years had been in teaching. So I too composed a letter and sent it to a number of comprehensive schools in East Wales (accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope). I actually received **one** reply which was from the Barry Boys Comprehensive School. I went to see the Headmaster who agreed we could set up a bridge club in the school. We played after school finished on Wednesdays. It began with 12 boys but dropped to 8. At first we played mini-bridge but graduated to standard bidding. Partnerships were formed and it was



easy to spot those who had natural ability. Then it was Diane Kurbalija, who at that time was head of English at the Girls School (later to be deputy head) suggested I took a group of girls at Barry Girls school, meeting during the lunch hour on a Wednesday.

So every Wednesday for about 2 years I made a round trip of 50 miles – taking the lessons.

Eventually we amalgamated into one group. I would pick up four girls and take them after school to join with the boys' class. I had proper permission from parents and schools.

We had some fun – we had Christmas and birthday parties, matches and also attended the EBU summer school at Loughborough University.

The Welsh bridge Union were very supportive. They paid for my petrol! And also gave grants to pupils to attend the summer school at Loughborough. We travelled to Bill Nicholls's Club in Mumbles to play against West Wales and Bill kindly allowed us to use his club premises and provided refreshments.

Sadly after about two years with the class being now 14/15 years old, they began to lose interest as sport, the opposite sex etc. came to the fore. I was quite disheartened but now feel this was a natural process and at least all the children knew and had enjoyed bridge so they might return to bridge in later life.

A few years later Patrick Jourdain with Maggie Pearce, Diana Jones and myself, having been cleared by the Criminal Records Bureau, went into a comprehensive school in Cardiff to give all of Year 8 an experience of mini-bridge. This was a great success. The Gwent Bridge Academy in Newport also allowed us to use their premises free of charge and we held a couple of day seminars. Elaine and Keith Sharp (whose son, Johnny, played in the under-25s) took charge of the Juniors and at one point 25 Juniors were "on the books". At least Wales would be represented at Junior level.

There are some competitions for mini-bridge – the EBU held a simultaneous event recently which included mini bridge.

The EBU are trying to persuade schools to include bridge on the curriculum – as in many European Countries (in Turkey they have 7000 registered juniors).

In Wales perhaps Bridge Clubs could encourage Juniors to play free of charge (many do this already). We could advertise our bridge clubs at Universities – again offering free play for students (possibly free lessons too!)

Perhaps teachers who are bridge players would consider starting bridge clubs in their school. Trevor Towers ran a lunchtime club at Pontypool for many years before Graham John began his initiative. Some great Welsh players of today, such as Adrian Thomas and Paul Denning, were taught by a teacher called John Tremayne who taught at a comprehensive school. John was a founder member of the Gwent Bridge Academy. Adrian is a member of GBA and gives seminars there.



I have retired from all this now but hope that efforts will continue throughout Wales to at least give youngsters the experience of bridge. Also parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles etc. could teach their young relatives mini-bridge. The rules for this are published and can be obtained from the EBU (I can also send copies if required – email me at joepatrick@globalnet.co.uk).

If we don't want bridge to be a dying sport, we all need to try and do something to encourage youth bridge.

Hear, Hear, Daphne! And thank you for sharing your experience.

Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer Trophies 2010

by Margaret Lane

It was Wales's turn to host the competitions for the two trophies this year, so on a glorious February weekend in Porthcawl five teams (from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) competed for each of the trophies. The Junior Camrose trophy (for under-25s) has been contested 40 times. The Peggy Bayer trophy for under-20s is a more recent innovation and has yet to reach its 20th birthday. So far in their history only England and Scotland have won the trophies.

Preparations for the event had started last autumn and as the weekend approached

emails and phone calls flew across the Irish Sea and up and down England, Wales and Scotland. Our first task was to ensure that all the players, captains and supporters arrived safely at The Rest Hotel. When countries host a Home International they are responsible for transporting competitors from point of arrival to the place where the event is being held. Sounds easy? That's what I thought until planes were delayed, train connections were missed and two players arrived at Bridgend three hours early. But the team of volunteers who waited on Bridgend station to collect the arrivals kept smiling as trains arrived with no sign of the 11 Scottish players we were expecting. The staff at The Rest rose to the occasion and were completely unfazed by the changes in arrangements as 75 players and officials drifted in over several hours.

Down to the bridge. The Peggy Bayer trophy was won by Scotland with Wales a comfortable 3rd. Our team won five out of their eight matches



which is a proud attainment for a group of young inexperienced players. I hope that they will go on to greater achievements next year. Our Junior Camrose team were not so fortunate but collected one notable scalp in beating an experienced England team on the Saturday evening. However, the Scottish won the Junior Camrose by 1VP over the Republic of Ireland team who sat out last and watched the Northern Ireland team bid a Grand Slam missing an Ace against Scotland. The weekend finished with an exuberant speedball contest organised by Mike & Sarah Amos in which players and officials competed.

My thanks to everyone who helped out at the weekend. Without willing and helpful volunteers the WBU could not stage these events.

Where are they now?

Dr. Rory McKinley

Many readers will remember, Rory McKinley, especially those in North and Mid Wales. When the Mid area was formed, Rory, who owned an hotel in Tywyn with his partner, Philp Dunn, began a Bridge club which met at the hotel. Rory gave Bridge lessons and the club thrived. They eventually sold the hotel and embarked on Bridge holidays which were very successful. Rory also passed his Director courses and directed events in Wales. He and Philip organised a successful Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer competition at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells and played in the friendly match between Wales and Ireland in Beaumaris, North Wales, while, in the return match in the Boyne Valley, Philp's sons, Adam and Jake, played.

At the table and as a Director, Rory was known for his good decisions and his charming and courteous manner. Rory also served on the WBU Executive Council. Then he decided he wanted to fulfil a long held ambition to study English, and went to Bangor University where he gained a first-class honours degree. After this, he embarked on his thesis to gain his Doctorate, enjoying the peace and tranquillity of a lovely house overlooking the River Shannon, south of Limerick. After a spell living in Ireland, he moved to Penn, in the Midlands, where he now lives, and finished his thesis. The flair he demonstrated for restoring property in Wales and Ireland and turning them into delightful and beautiful homes, he now uses in his latest venture as an estate agent – work he loves, though it leaves him little time for Bridge. He very kindly agreed to write an article for this newsletter.

Thoughts of an occasional bridge player

by Rory McKinley

I don't play bridge any more – or at least to be strictly truthful my bridge playing activities are confined to sitting once or twice a year opposite a very dear and long-standing friend at some competition. Trust me, there is much

wry amusement to be gained from the genuinely hurt and pained expressions that cross my partner's face after another egregious error on my part. Her continued belief in my ability, though deeply misguided, is a touching testament to her warm heart and generous friendship. The nearest approach I make to a Double Squeeze these days involves trying to fit my behind into a pair of jeans from the cobwebbed end of the wardrobe.

If I were more honest with myself, despite my thirty years' of experience, I would do well to attend Betty's Bridge for Beginners (a night school class at a nearby church hall) for the fifty-one weeks that I am not playing, in preparation for the one that I do. However, those unfortunate enough to know the Black Country will appreciate the questionable pleasure to be gained from paying 35p to spend a winter's evening shivering in front of the solitary paraffin heater that mockingly serves to semi-defrost the damp three acre hall of St. Faggots and Peas ad Vincula, and where the highlight of the evening is a cup of tea made with sterilised milk and a rich-tea biscuit (of the Asda Savers variety, and already a few days out of date). In any event, the rebel in me still finds it hard to accept Betty's advice that you need ten and a half playing tricks to open a Strong Two and that to pre-empt you need at least 18 points and a solid nine card suit headed by the top four honours. So I continue to attend one or two Welsh competitions on an annual basis, highly ill-equipped, and older and plumper by the year, but buoyed up by the knowledge that some of the others (though few in number) will be even older and plumper than I.

At these competitions, I must confess, though I may *appear* to be thinking deeply about how to make 3 spades redoubled on a 2-2 fit, I am actually acting. Indeed, the concentrated expression more usually stems from the memories that come flooding back while sitting at the table – I have always been

inclined to wander mentally, and I have no doubt that with age I shall add to this skill with physical wandering – I fully intend to be that old person found in a nightgown on Ilkeley Moor at midnight in sub-zero temperatures, oblivious to who he is, where he lives, or how he got there (though, rest assured, I do **not** intend to wear a purple hat – it's not my colour). Anyway – I seem to have been wandering right now. The memories that come back are usually about Bridge Players I Have Known Over the Years, many of who have sadly (and some of whom, in my cynical view, happily) departed to the Great Green Baize Firmament (or should that be Fundament...?)

Why is it that the players interest me so much more than the play these days? I guess it may be my lack of skill in the latter, coupled with an unhealthy dollop of conceit that forces me to delight the former. Perhaps, custom *has* staled the infinite variety of bridge hands but not that of bridge players. We are certainly a mixed bunch, and a bridge competition or congress reveals Human Nature as effectively as any Jane Austen ballroom. The charming, the charmless, the polite, the rude, the generous, the mean, and the good, bad and truly ugly are all to be found round the table. It is a mix I find utterly fascinating and irresistible, and has supplied me with an endless source of dinner party stories over the years. Perhaps I may share some of them in a future edition.

I will leave you with one of my favourite memories from the table. Many years ago, I used to play occasionally at a very small bridge club in a northern Welsh county town, where the average age of the players was almost certainly in excess of eighty. They were a delightful mixture, but with a preponderance of rather posh Welsh ladies. Included in these, was a delightful pair of octogenarian sisters (so like Hinge and Brackett it was uncanny), the younger and more mouse-like one of whom had been Chairman of the Bench in the local Magistrates Court (and whom we secretly and ironically nicknamed Hanging Evans). I sat down to play against them one evening to hear the following conversation:

Hanging Evans: What was that competition we played in last week, dear?

Miss Evans: Competition, dear?

Hanging Evans: Yes, yes, you remember, we played in a simultaneous pairs last week

Miss Evans: Did we?

Hanging Evans: Yes, it was something for charity -you must remember, dear.

Miss Evans: I am not sure, perhaps we did.

Hanging Evans: For the life of me, what was it?

Miss Evans: Oh, I remember now, dear, it was the Alzheimer's Pairs

Latest results

National Mixed Pairs Final

- 1st: Wendy Thornton, Wally Heaton 57.87%
- 2nd: Gilly Clench, Patrick Jourdain 57.42%
- 3rd: Aida Aris, Adrian Thomas 56.07%

National Open Pairs Final

- 1st: John Salisbury, Mike Tedd 62.06%
- 2nd: Kevin Maddox, Tony Ratcliff 60.42%
- 3rd: Wally Heaton, Wendy Thornton 56.26%

Portland Pairs (Welsh winners)

- 1st: Sheila Shea, Wyn Williams
- 2nd: Jean and Peter Hand

What a terrific year for Wendy and Wally! I would have put a photo in but try as I might, I couldn't find one on the web.

Could we have a photo gallery on the WBU website? Or could members upload their own bridge photos to <http://wbublog.eu>? You can email them to pics@wbublog.eu if you don't want to register with the site.



Master Point Of View

by Noelle Bond



I gave up my letter space in last December's Newsletter, to make sure all those who were promoted after May 2008 saw their names in print, so it's nearly eighteen months since my last Masterpoint of View. Such a long time!

So I feel I should begin with "It is only after a prolonged and much regretted absence and with a gladdening heart I once more pick up my pen..." But that's because I live with someone whose bedtime reading is mostly Victorian novels and who must share such bits as a character losing his fortune playing whist (no bridge then!). All those stilted sentences are catching! But of course there's no pen for me. I hope I have the glad heart but otherwise I just clatter on my keyboard with three or four fingers (who needs touch typing?).

Recently Mike interrupted my own reading so I could hear about another whist party, one where two very experienced players, always competing against each other, took part. During the evening, one gleefully counted the half-crowns won, (young people can look up "half-crowns" later) and the other partnered, yet again, with the elderly lady who scarcely knew one card from another, eased her suffering by constantly shouting at her shaking partner, until the host whispered "I'm sure she'll kill her one day". Finally the poor victim sat stiff in her chair, eyes closed, mouth open, apparently unable to move. Uproar. Before her tormentor's horrified eyes, she was carried home (no calling paramedics then) where she soon revived and said (something like) "That'll teach the old cat!" I had to admit that evening had a certain familiarity, but we all behave much better these days, don't we? I remember when we were teaching beginners Mike used to say "You should never criticise your partner - after all there's only one person on your side in the whole room."

I seem to have had more masterpoint letters than usual in the last few weeks, but no jokes. Although I did hear from a member who'd arranged with his wife to put their masterpoint slips in a drawer until sent to me in March.

Unfortunately, it seems they had more drawers than required, and recently he stumbled on a pile of old points. It was a huge bundle of slips, containing many hundreds of points, but sadly I found only four that weren't now out of date.

This letter glut could be good or bad news. "Good" if it means everyone is sending in early for the year end, "bad" if it means more letters this year and I'll have to work day and night to clear my backlog. Of course I don't really mind, I like to see everyone send in their points! But please remember that they must get to me by April 30th. And please with correct postage, so I don't have to make yet another tiresome trip to the post office to pay for a letter (£1.00 penalty, and usually just a few pence excess). I know I've complained about this before, but why we can no longer pay the postman, I do not know!

Those of you who play in EBU events or clubs in England have probably heard that the EBU are no longer accepting "paper" masterpoints. However, I've been told that although EBU and its clubs will no longer issue them they will be accepted for the next three years. (Sigh of relief!)

www.welshbridgeunion.info is a new WBU website, for all the masterpoint and membership information, but I don't think everyone knows about it yet. You can look there to see if I've received your points or when I entered them (all information is still on the other sites as before). By the way, if anyone can tell me, categorically, if "web-site", or "website" or "web site" is correct I promise to smile on their masterpoints.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you should read about the closure of the Cwmbran club, what a sad event. Whilst some clubs thrive, a number struggle, and the common cry, from our club as well, is "we can't get new members and those we have are getting older" - as of course we all do every day. When the snow was thick on the ground here, first our young neighbour offered to get our shopping, and then

our daughter told us that on no account should we go out in case we fell and broke bones. If there was anything calculated to make me feel old, that was it.

The snow (and cold) was terrible wasn't it? I hope we've seen the last of it (for ever would suit me) So many people *were* falling and breaking limbs. Even in the town some roads remained closed or skating rinks for days. Personally I'll never criticise the weather forecasts again (at least until next week). After a warning of more snow we closed our club for one night; if we hadn't we'd have all

been trapped till morning. I really feel the cold terribly so I'm trying not to think of the bill for our heating which I have on nearly all the time. It's bad enough having Mike complain the rooms are too hot. Did you hear a woman on the radio who said she's turned her heating down and when her feet get cold she just runs round and round her coffee table? I just wish I could run round and round anything.

Sincerely,

Noelle



Promotions from 8th June to 2nd December 2009

Club Master		Advanced Master		Tournament Master	
Kevin Collins	K	Lorna Davey	WS	David Rowley	WS
Hazel Craig	PN	Margaret Evans	Y		
Peter Craig	PN	Jeff Morgan	CB	Premier Master	
Chris Davis	PN	Valda Vanloo	GA	Steve Burgoyne	BR
Catherine Hadwen	S	Gary Williams	P	Martin Thorne	M
Jim Kelly	PR			Geraint Williams	PW
Jack Lott	K	One Star Master			
Elunid Thomas	A	Regina Evans	PW	Regional Master	
		Malcolm James	NT	Paul Smith	BRE
Area Master		Mair Ley	S	Premier Regional Master	
Darren Bellamy	C	Martin Ley	S	Rex Acton	AG
Terry Parkes	C	Vivien Penny	MG	Margaret Barnes	LD
Arnold Sandrey	MG	Neville Richards	K	Terry Evans	MG
Brian Thomas	CD	Two Star Master			
Elaine Watterson	DM	Malcolm Cousins		Premier National Master	
Herrick Westcott	GA	Roger Plant	BRE	Andrew Young	NT
Joan Westcott	GA		P		
Kath Williams	F	Three Star Master		Life Master	
District Master		John Arundale	LD	Kevin G Thomas	T
Pat Ashcroft	BRE	Eirwen Brown	GA	Beth Wennell	LD
Dawn Claxton	AA	Vida Halford	PC		
Roger Draper	S	Four Star Master		Senior Life Master	
Thelma Wright	F	Peter Saunders	M	Liz Commins	W
County Master				Wyn Williams	CBY
James Boulton	GA	Five Star Master			
Terry Brunnock	GA	Chris Draper	MER	Grand Master	
Master		Mick Rogers	MG	Gordon Roxburgh	GA
Dylan Raw-Rees	A				

Congresses in Wales

So many bridge players balk at the idea of congresses. The main reasons they give for not going are ‘They are too expensive; they are too competitive; they are too exhausting.’

Expensive? Well, compared with club evenings, yes. But when you consider how much a theatre ticket costs, these days, less than £20 for a day’s bridge, meeting people from all over England and Wales and enjoying visiting places of interest in the surrounding area, is not a lot. You are also gaining experience in the game and meeting real characters. If you are a people-watcher, there’s nowhere better than a bridge congress for indulging yourself. You could, of course, just stay at home and watch TV. I know I can run the gamut of emotions at TV, as in the theatre. I can cry at adverts! But being a spectator is not *mentally* stimulating, and this is where bridge congresses provide the mental exercise the more mature person needs. GC H Fox and his wife were still playing bridge in their nineties. Julia Chadwick, from Torquay, used to grace congresses in Wales well after her 100th birthday. She and her eighty-year old companion (a mere girl) would drive all over the British Isles to bridge congresses. Porthcawl Congress could count on seeing Hylda Townsend, from Solihull, year upon year – always smart and always mentally tough well into her nineties. I would not be at all surprised if she didn’t still go there. I played against someone last year who told me Hylda still plays at ninety-six. Mr and Mrs Lamb, from Mid Wales are a great example of letting congresses keep them active. They go to most of the congresses and take part in national competitions. Research has shown that bridge is a wonderful way of keeping mentally alert – living longer, even.

Too competitive? Hello? I see very few people in our local bridge clubs who go there just for the company. Most people want to do as well as they can, and most get a great kick out of beating players they think are better than they are. In the olden days, when congresses were longer and more varied, the people who would not dream of playing in the championship events, but were happy to gain their black point in the open events, were the

most competitive of the lot. Those days are gone, now, but most people who play in congresses are polite, pleasant and sociable. If someone breaks the code of good behaviour the Director is there to be called and s/he will soon deal with them. Nowadays, more and more congresses are turning to Swiss events. This means that people who are not at the top of the list in experience can still enjoy playing against - and beating - their opponents, because, after each round, people are assigned to play against opponents with a similar score to theirs until, after a few rounds, you are playing in a field where your opponents at the same level as you, so it’s a great opportunity to win a few matches and gain some green points (each equal to 100 black points, which are the ones that were given out on green slips. Are you with me?).



Photo of an English bridge congress (courtesy of the EBU) because I couldn't find a picture of a Welsh one on the internet.

So, are they exhausting? Well, you certainly feel tired at the end of the day, but this is a good thing. You will have been using your brain for short periods (about an hour, then a short break) throughout the afternoon and, after a longer break, for food, refreshment and chat, some more short periods of play, together lasting about as long as a club night’s Bridge. You can climb into bed, after two sessions of bridge and, perhaps, a nice walk in town or along the beach etc., and get a good night’s sleep and be up, refreshed, the next day. Ready for another session.

Welsh congresses attract more people from England than from Wales. They come because they are *cheaper*, they are *friendlier* and the *prizes* are better. More Welsh people might consider this and have a go. Congresses are socially and mentally stimulating. They are good for you. For what you gain from them, they are money well spent. **Do** try them.

Congresses in Wales (contd.)

Congress Calendar for the Summer months (details on the WBU website or you can phone and ask for a brochure or make a booking)

10th-11th April North Wales Swiss Teams at the Holiday Inn, Northop. Jean Hand 01244 830246

29th -31st May Senior Congress and Swiss Pairs, David Lloyd Tennis Centre, Cardiff. Joan Jenkins 02920 512079

3rd & 4th July WBU Swiss Pairs, Venue Cymru Conference Centre, Llandudno. Margaret Smith 01248 852588

10th & 11th July Mid Wales Congress, Mettrpole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, Jean Cuffley 01686 625744, Mob: 07790 90415

23rd-25th July Aberystwyth Congress, Penweddig School, Aberystwyth. Dai Hayes 01239 851876

7th & 8th August WBU Green Point Events Cwmbran, Irene Thomas 01446 407734

4th & 5th September Welsh Foursomes, David Lloyd Centre, Cardiff, Irene Thomas 01446 407734

Look out also for, in October and November:

One Day Green Point event in North Wales - contact Jean Hand (see above)

South Wales National Congress now back in the popular Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl Contact Irene Thomas (see above)

Llangollen Congress

I can honestly, if implausibly, say that I've had more fun at bridge congresses than anywhere else in my life (yes, yes, I know it's tragic). It's true that the days when we used to sit in the bar till the small hours, howling with laughter at the tales of our friends' (and enemies') mistakes are no more, casualties of the smoking ban as well as of our advancing decrepitude. But I still enjoy the buzz of competition and the pleasure of renewing old acquaintances, even after 20 years.

*Do dip your toe in the water. You won't know how much fun it is till you try. **Laura***

Curse of Scotland



Our indefatigable Chief Executive shows a sense of humour by couching 'disaster' in a palatable form. He found the article below to interest the reader and as an

introduction to a bit of bad news. The nine of diamonds playing card is often referred to as the 'Curse of Scotland. There are a number of reasons for this connection.

1. It was the playing card used by Sir John Dalrymple, the Earl of Stair to authorise (cryptically) the Glencoe Massacre. Certainly there is a resemblance between the nine of diamonds and his coat of arms.
2. The Duke of Cumberland is supposed to have scribbled on a nine of diamonds playing card the order that no quarter be given after the Battle of Culloden.
3. It has also been suggested that it is a misreading of 'The Corse of Scotland', i.e. 'Cross of Scotland' or St Andrew's Saltire. There is a resemblance between the pattern of the nine of diamonds and the Saltire
4. Nine diamonds were at one time stolen from the crown of Scotland and a tax was levied on the Scottish people to pay for them. The tax got the nickname 'The Curse of Scotland'.



The first two explanations are the ones most commonly given. NOW IT SEEMS TO BE THE CURSE OF WALES AS WELL! The current issue of WBU playing cards has an incorrect Jannersten Bar code on the nine of diamonds making it impossible to deal the cards in a Duplimate machine. The card printers are reprinting the offending card and these will be distributed as soon as possible.'

I am pleased to report that the offending cursed cards have now been replaced by ones with the correct barcode. The dud ones have been kept by those who dream of would flashing them before Scottish opponents in future competitions!

LAURA WOODRUFF

Continuing Gwynn Davis's excellent series of interviews with Welsh bridge personalities, your Editor recently chatted (no hardship to either) to your Sub-Editor, Laura Woodruff. Laura was, as most of you know, National Tournament Organiser from 2000 to 2004, and also produced the Newsletter from 2001 to 2005, all while working full time. She has represented Wales in the European Championships, Olympiad and Lady Milne with Gilly Clench; and with her long-time (and, she says, long-suffering) partner Mike Close, won this year's Open pre-trial convincingly, finishing 5th in the main trial. In November 2007 she became guardian to the two children of her close friend Ruth, who died of breast cancer at the young age of 39. Laura is married to former Welsh Junior International Jon Seavers.

JK: Laura, you don't sound Welsh. How long have you lived in Wales?

LW: I am in fact Welsh. I was born in Cardiff Maternity Hospital, as were my three sisters, my mother and my aunt. I confess that my father was born in a suburb of Leicester, but he has lived in Wales for more than half his life and supports Wales at rugby. My mongrel accent is the product of my teenage years in London, and my twenties in Leicester, though I don't think I ever sounded very Welsh (Penarth, you know). I came back to Wales in 1990.

JK: Did you play cards as a child?

LW: Up to a point. My mother played rummy with us but doesn't enjoy cards, largely because her father played every night of his adult life - they lived in a pub. My uncle Gerald (*Gould, of Penarth Bridge Club*) taught me every other card game known to humankind when I was young - bezique, canasta, clobyosh, pinochle, leopard, pontoon - but we moved to London when I was 10 so my card-playing career ended. Neither my father nor his sister, Gerald's wife, plays cards at all, a consequence of their Methodist upbringing I suspect.

JK: When did you start playing bridge?

LW: During my brief and inglorious career at Cambridge I played for the Trinity Hall 'D' team a couple of times. Curiously enough, during one practice session someone said in

tones of awe, "Tim Rees is coming tonight", and this *crachach* duly appeared. Despite having known Tim for ten years now, I had forgotten that I had ever met him before, until a few



months ago this incident replayed itself in my head like a video, completely unprompted. (Tim and I also grew up in Penarth at the same time, but he went to a posh school.) I played kitchen bridge at Bristol University, almost to the exclusion of everything else, though I did manage to get a degree this time. We would start when the pub shut on Friday night, and by Monday morning the flat would be knee-deep in empty beer cans and Marlborough packets. After I started work I didn't play for 10 years. I went to Barrivale Bridge Club in October 1991 intending to enrol in Mike Bond's classes. Noelle asked whether I knew Stayman and Blackwood; when I replied that I did, she said: "Oh, you're much too good for the classes" and set me to play with the host for the evening, Paul Cunningham. Blackwood came up on the first board; we came 3rd and earned 30 locals. The rest, as they say, is history. We were together for seven years but I think he's much happier now with Sophie, whom I like very much. I'm pretty hard to live with.

JK: So you never went to classes after all?

LW: Not a one, and it sometimes shows.

JK: When did you start playing in competitions?

LW: Almost straight away. I was very lucky: Susan Ingham, who is a couple of years younger than me (and was at Bristol at the same time, though we didn't know each other) was playing regularly with the late Margaret Calder but was keen to find a younger partner for tournaments. Paul's regular partner was Richard Trew, who is a distant cousin of mine. The four of us started to play in Congresses, and earned our first half Green at East Wales the following February.

JK: You've done well for a woman who's not married to a top player. Have you had a lot of help? And do you play with Jon?

LW: As I said, I've been lucky. Sue and I won a lot of club competitions, and the National Ladies' Pairs three times. She's very talented, but in those days she found it hard to get away for weekends because she had a young

daughter. I asked Maggie Pierce if she would play with me, and we had a few games in Cardiff. She and Alan were very kind to me. Through them I started going to Camrose matches, and met David Burn [*the English international player*], with whom I had a certain amount in common, having grown up in the same area of South London; our school playing fields were next to his school, Dulwich College, and it turns out that I knew his best friend's older brother very well. We corresponded by email every day for several years, and he played with me in a few tournaments. He completely changed my thinking about bridge. Then I started playing with Gilly, who was short of a partner for the 2000 Olympiad in Maastricht. I was quaking in my boots – the night before we went to Holland I wanted to get on a ferry to Ireland instead – but I stuck it out and, great friend that she is, she shepherded me through one of the formative experiences of my bridge career. And of course, no account of my bridge career would be complete without a



mention of my dear, patient partner Mikey Close, who has maintained a buttoned lip and an un-raised eyebrow through 15 years of daft contracts, usually bid by me to be played by him. He's the best partner in the world for me, because he never says a word until we're in the bar afterwards: he says that if he twitches after a mistake on Board 1, I'll carve Board 2 as well. What a wise man. I play with Jon very occasionally. We'd probably be divorced by now if we played together regularly.

JK: Will you carry on playing for Wales?

LW: I'd like to, if I'm good enough and if I can afford to. It's quite expensive, what with the hotels, flights, eating out and so on, and of course I have to use up my precious leave from work. The WBU sometimes gives us a subsidy, but it never covers more than half the cost. I do wonder whether our rugby and football players would be so keen if they had to pay their own International expenses!

JK: Your life must have changed enormously since you acquired the children. How did that come about?

LW: Ruth and I used to work together in Cardiff's Housing Department in the early 1990s, and had stayed in touch ever since. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004, I knew that she must be desperately worried about her children, so I told her to concentrate on getting well and I would have the children if the worst happened. I don't think either of us expected it would. Then in 2005 she developed secondaries, and it was clear that she wouldn't survive more than a couple of years. She couldn't cope with the house any more so they all moved from Carmarthen to live with us – luckily we've got a big house – and the children started school here. Ferdi and Hope have different fathers but wanted to stay together, so this arrangement seemed best.

JK: Did you have any other children?

LW: No, I've never wanted children. My youngest sister says it's because I felt as if I'd had three children already. I don't think I could have done it if Ferdi and Hope had been very little, but they were 14 and 9 when Ruth died.

JK: Has it affected your bridge?

LW: In some ways. I had to pull out of the WBU Swiss Pairs this year because Hope was knocked off her bike by a car and broke her leg. It was a disappointment because Mike and I have enjoyed the outing to North Wales every year, especially stopping off in Llanidloes for tea and cakes. We often encounter the early stages of the carnival when we pass through the town; it was surreal the first time, driving along a normal shopping street and meeting people dressed as bumble bees or in 18th Century costume. Most of the time, though, I can still play when I want – Jon does almost everything around the house, and actually likes children as a species, so doesn't mind if I abandon him. I have cut down on my week nights at the club.

JK: What about the rest of your life? Have the children changed things?

LW: Goodness me, yes. I like silence and solitude, and there's none of that any more. It's like a kibbutz, with a constant stream of the children's fathers and grandparents and cousins

and friends. The house used to be tidy, but now I've simply given up until the children leave home. I've never met two untidier people. It's a bit depressing, really. Also I hate cooking – it's utter drudgery – so the need to feed the children is a bit of a tie. Jon does most of that, too, though I cook Sunday lunches, Christmas dinner and so on, and I do enjoy baking, which Hope has become quite good at. The other thing is holidays: we have to go somewhere suitable for two children with incompatible interests, and can't go in term-time, so it's much dearer.

JK: Do you get any financial help?

LW: No, we're not entitled to anything unless we put the children into care. We're simply not prepared to do that – it would feel like a betrayal. There would be no guarantee that the Council would choose us as their foster-parents, and the Council would decide about things like education and health care. We do get maintenance from their fathers, though.

JK: How do you manage about work?

LW: My employers have been fairly tolerant, and Jon can rearrange his work up to a point. Hope lets herself into the house after school (she's 11 now). My parents have also been very good. My father's 83, and mum's nearly 80, so I don't like to ask them too often.

JK: What about your job? What do you do? Do you enjoy it?

LW: I'm a Housing Officer with the next-door local authority, having come to the conclusion early on that in my job it's unwise to live and work in the same area. People have been known to turn up on colleagues' doorsteps on a Saturday morning asking to be given a house that's just become vacant, usually because the previous tenant died an hour ago. I love my job; it's the best job in the world, but the pay's terrible. There's a great camaraderie in the office, and plenty of funny stories, like the man whose lavatory wouldn't flush: his Housing Officer suggested he use a bucket; the following day he rang and said "The bucket's full, what do I do now?" I used to be a manager, but was made redundant in 1998

in the aftermath of reorganisation, and management jobs weren't available, so after a few years of temping I went back to Housing, which is what I qualified in nearly 20 years ago.

JK: What about your interests, if you've got time for any apart from bridge?

LW: I've been obsessed with cats since I was a small child. I don't know why – we didn't have them at home – but I find them endlessly fascinating and very good company. We've got three, plus



a lodger who sleeps in our kitchen at night. I'm also a football fan. I went to every home match at Filbert Street for seven years. Now I only go to internationals and the occasional game at Cardiff, but Match of the Day is compulsory viewing in our house. I once came home from a bridge match to find Paul watching a Tom Cruise film. "Why on earth are you watching this when Match of the Day's on?" I asked. When he relayed this story at work, his colleagues couldn't believe his luck. I'm interested in most sports, really: as the eldest of four girls I was taken to every sporting event my father would have taken a boy to. When I was 7, he took me to the Welsh trials at the Arms Park. There was a big sign above the gate: "Boys and OAPs half price". I was neither, so they let me in free. We went to football matches at Selhurst Park when we lived in London, and cricket at the Oval. I was popular with the cricket team at University because I was willing to do the score-book (Laura the Scorer). I used to get a tan on one side because I couldn't turn round. Dad and I were big fans of snooker when it was first televised in the 1970s. We had a black-and-white television long after everyone else bought a colour set, so heard "Whispering" Ted Lowe's famous comment: "For those of you watching in black and white, the pink is behind the brown" with some irritation. The only thing I won't watch is golf, which is about

as exciting as waiting in a check-in queue.

JK: I hear you've taken up knitting.

LW: It was very odd. My father taught me to knit when I was 4, but I was more interested in sewing. The only thing I'd knitted before was a square for a blanket for poor people, at school. My cousin Ben Gould's girlfriend had a baby in August 2008, and I suddenly thought: "I'm going to knit that baby a cardigan". It had never occurred to me to knit anything for my seven nephews and nieces, but now I can't bear to be without my knitting. I've had to buy some bamboo knitting needles so that I can take it on the 'plane when I go away. Lee Collier, who's exactly the same age as me, tells me that she has also become a fanatical knitter. Perhaps it's something that happens when you're 49. Sad, really.

JK: What's the most interesting place you've been to on your travels?

LW: Not a place, but a journey. I loved all of Paul Theroux's railway-journey books, so when I went to see my sister in Los Angeles a couple of years ago I flew to Boston and then caught the train across America. I did side trips, to Montpelier in Vermont (the only state capital without a McDonalds' – they're very proud of it), New York, St. Louis to see the Mississippi, and the Grand Canyon, also by train. The trains are terrible, always hours late and freezing cold because of the air conditioning, and often no means of getting from the railway station to the town. Montpelier, for example, has no buses *and no taxis*. The Americans I met thought I was mad: only poor people travel by train there. It's such a pity that most of the railway lines have been ripped up, though I am planning to take the Empire Builder across the Dakotas and Montana next time I can string three weeks' holiday together.

JK: It doesn't sound as if you're daunted by travelling alone.

LW: No, but then I caught the train to school in London from the age of 11, and went to France on my own when I was 13 – I couldn't go with everyone else on the French exchange, so I was put on the boat train at Victoria and met at the Gare du Nord. I try to encourage our two to get used to travelling by public transport.

JK: What are your hopes for the future?

LW: Well, I've achieved my only bridge ambition, which was to become a Grand Master before I was 50. I made it by about two weeks. I'd like to see Popocatepetl, Chimborazo and Cotopaxi before I die (I read *Romance* by W J Turner at a formative age); perhaps I'll do it by train. Otherwise, I'd like to have a job that I enjoy until I can retire on a sensible pension, then I might go and live somewhere where one can still smoke in bars and restaurants. Madeira, for example, or Uruguay.

Thank you, Laura. You have had a very full life and I really enjoyed hearing about it. I am sure our readers will enjoy it, too. You have always been one who tells it as it is. You speak matter-of-factly about your children. But I know that promising a dying friend that you would look after her children was a very loving and noble thing. To keep faith with that promise is, to my mind, of all your considerable achievements, the greatest one of all.

Photos:

Penarth, her childhood home; Laura and Mike, her buttoned lip competition partner; Little Laura; Laura and Jon (below) ensuring that Wales wins the prize for most glamorous supporters, if not the Camrose Trophy itself.



Information page *(Please mark changes and corrections in your copy of the current Journal)*

Item	Page	Details
Old Hall Bridge Club	5	The new contact for Old Hall club is Anne Hughes ☎ 01446 781510, email annehughes@hotmail.com
Sully Bridge Club	6	The new contact for Sully club is Sean MacDougall, tel: 01466 739131* *Sean's details will change to 7, Cefn Mount, Dinas Powys, CF44 4AR ☎ 02920 512763
Haverfordwest Bridge Club	8	Change of Secretary: John Gardener, 17 Atlantic Drive, Broad Haven SA62 3JA; ☎ 01437 781827 email: 2bus@jgardener5.wanadoo.co.uk The club meets Monday and Thursday at 7.15 pm
Llandybie Bridge Club	8	Llandybie Bridge Club has affiliated to the WBU. Contact Frances (San) Williams – fransan@talktalk.net . ☎ 01269 592305 www.llandybiebridgeclub Old Age Pensioners' Hall, High Street, Llandybie, Carmar. Lessons 6 – 7 pm, Beginners/Intermediates; Duplicate 7.00 pm

Neville's contact details: Neville Richards, Chief Executive, Welsh Bridge Union
Meadow View, Llanddewi, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6SE
Telephone: 01597 850050/05602 941492, email: neville@wbu.org.uk

How to format your article

I hesitate to ask anything more of kind members who take the trouble to send in articles, but it would save an enormous amount of time if you could, without too much hair-tearing, use the same format for your material as I use in the Newsletter.

I've asked Mike Tedd to put a formatting guide on the website, but in brief, the Newsletter is formatted as follows:

Font: Times New Roman 12-point

Margins: 2cm all round

Paragraph: Single spaced, justified, 0 points before, 6-points after

Bridge notation: no capitals on cards and suits (ace of hearts rather than Ace of Hearts)

Auctions: all auctions start with West, whoever the dealer actually was; just put a dash under West and so on if the auction really started with someone else

Hands: South is always declarer (unless you are describing a real board from a real event and the board number is important to the story, in which case you can use the real declarer).

If all this is Greek to you, don't worry: We'd rather have your article in Comic Sans double-spaced than not at all.

Laura

And finally ... a huge thank you to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. Without you there wouldn't be one. Another one to Laura Woodruff who type-sets and seeks out photographs and all the relevant little pics, proof-reads and does a host of other things to get the newsletter out. She does a wonderful job. I am always glad to receive material the reader thinks would be of interest – 'Where are they now', letters, 'Heard at the table' humour – anything that the reader would enjoy. Thanks to Gwynn Davies, too, for providing us with an interview format. It was too good not to emulate. Contact me at Polly64335@aol.com, or telephone 01248 853033

Jill Knight