

WELSH BRIDGE

The magazine of the
Welsh Bridge Union
September 2007

MIKE HIRST

Wales has had many talented bridge players, but few have brought to the game the same adventurousness and all-round exuberance as characterises the approach of Mike Hirst. Mike has represented Wales in the Camrose on 42 occasions, winning 13 of those matches. He also represented his country in a host of other international tournaments from the late 60s onwards. Even today, when he plays in few major events, Mike ranks 4th amongst current Welsh Grand Masters. But Mike is as far from being a metronomic Master Point accumulator as it is possible to imagine. For him, bridge is a game to be enjoyed, and friendships forged at the table are cherished along with competitive success.

GD: Could you tell me a bit about your early life?

MH: I was born in Castleford in Yorkshire in 1936. My grandfather was Chairman of Castleford rugby league club. I still follow them. I started playing bridge when I was eleven. My parents played bridge with the next door neighbours, but I mostly taught myself - my friends and I got a book. We were all keen golfers, but if there was a cloud in the sky we played bridge.

GD: When did you first play competitively?



MH: I remember when I was sixteen I came 3rd in the Yorkshire Pairs Championships. Harold Franklin was running it and he shouted at me for being late. That upset me and I revoked, which cost us the Championship. I've still got my first Master Point certificate - 'Club Master 1966'. I was a junior and it said I had 645 Master Points. I was proud of that. But I played golf and rugby mainly. After I left school I didn't play much bridge - I was too busy working. I got a job with Woolworths as a Management Trainee. Then I switched to Beechams and in 1960 they moved me to South Wales.

(Continued on page 19)



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This is the second issue of the WBU magazine since its reinvention last March. We are now set, I believe, on a six monthly schedule. Two key developments since the first issue are the inclusion of adverts - for which my grateful thanks go to ex-President Daphne Patrick for adding yet another string to her bow and taking responsibility for liaising with advertisers - and, secondly, the inclusion of an exciting bidding challenge, courtesy of Tim Rees. As last time, editing the magazine was a joint effort, with Sue Ingham being responsible for design and layout. Unfortunately we still do not have a reliable address list for WBU members, so the magazine continues to be distributed (unreliably) through clubs. This glaring deficiency will, I hope, soon be remedied.

This is a time of change in Welsh bridge, with Linda Greenland's retirement as Chief Executive (a position comprising a unique set of responsibilities in respect of which the word 'thankless' might well have been invented), and likewise Peter Hand's resignation as Tournament Organiser, to be replaced by Mike Amos. Both Linda and Peter gave countless unpaid hours to the WBU. Neville Richards will now show us what he can do. There are signs in his focus upon the club scene, and in his keenness to foster schools bridge, that we may see a change of emphasis. Let us hope he can achieve the infusion of new recruits to the WBU to which he aspires. The success of the missionaries to Cowbridge school (see page 26) is encouraging.

It is also to be hoped that Neville and Mike will initiate a review of the WBU's tournament structure. This is not so much 'tired' as flat out exhausted. Some Congresses continue to do well, but as far as WBU championship events are

concerned, we have the same programme year on year, with the same poorly supported regional heats, leading to national finals for which the qualification is not so much success in earlier rounds as a willingness to keep turning up. In order to inspire the next generation of players we need competition that is attractive to all levels of ability and experience.

Reports, letters, and unstinting praise will find me at 32 Durdham Park, Bristol BS6 6XB, or (whilst changing e-mail address) on 0117 9706866.

CONTENTS

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1/19. | Mike Hirst |
| 5. | President |
| 6. | Camrose Trophy |
| 7. | Lady Milne |
| 10. | European Open |
| 13. | Bonn Cup |
| 14. | WBU Accounts |
| 15. | Chief Executive |
| 16. | Spring Foursomes |
| 17. | Spickett Trophy |
| 23. | Forthcoming |
| 24. | Junior Bridge |
| 27. | Results Round-Up |
| 28. | Master Points of View |
| 29. | John Hockey Trophy |
| 29. | Obituary |
| 30. | MP Promotions |
| 33. | Mike Close |
| 34. | David Hamilton |
| 35. | Simon Richards |
| 36. | Captain Cat |
| 37. | Port Talbot |
| 38. | Bidding Challenge |

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THE PRESIDENT

I am delighted to introduce the second issue of our magazine. The first issue was well received, and thanks to our energetic editors, Gwynn Davis and Sue Ingham, I am sure that this edition will be equally well appreciated. I must express my personal thanks to all those concerned with this initiative, in particular my predecessor, Daphne Patrick, who was a driving force behind the resurrection of this important channel of communication between the WBU and its members.

Here in so called High Summer we are looking forward to various Congresses around the Principality, followed over the autumn and winter by the Area and National events in which every single member can be involved. If you have not already done so, why not compete in an Area event? You will have the interesting experience of playing against pairs whom you may not have met previously. And quite often, relatively inexperienced

players achieve good results in these events.

We are looking ahead to a number of changes in the personnel running our organisation. Neville Richards is our new Chief Executive, and Mike Amos, who many of you will know as a director, is our new National Tournament Organiser. Our thanks go to Peter Hand who has stood down from the demanding role of NTO after three years in the post. Linda Greenland has been our most capable and energetic Chief Executive for seven years and will be greatly missed. We count ourselves fortunate that she will remain closely involved with the WBU as our Treasurer, and I look forward to working with her in that capacity.

It is too early for seasonal greetings, and when Issue 3 of the magazine is published it will be too late, so I simply say to you all: enjoy your bridge in 2007/2008.

Mrs Judith Graham-Jones



Presentation of the Perry Shield: Mrs. Judith Graham-Jones and, thanks to the wonders of modern technology, a smiling Filip Kurbalija.

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

THE SECOND CAMROSE WEEKEND by Patrick Shields



The sixth session of Camrose bridge under the new format (all teams at the same location

for each of two weekends) took place in Aberdeen in March 2007. This was the second occasion when there was a sixth team - a second, and very strong team from the Republic, holders of the Camrose Trophy. Wales fielded Paul Denning & Patrick Shields, Dafydd & Gary Jones, Filip Kurbalija & Tim Rees. The team produced a good performance, scoring 85 VPs against an average of 75, moving themselves up from 4th to 3rd place overall. The Holders team from the Republic again produced the best score of the weekend, to win the Camrose Trophy by a large margin. The format of the event brings a good number of strong players together, and with each hand played six times there is an excellent opportunity (by being there, through BridgeBase on the Internet, or from the hand records) to see different styles in action. It was rare to see an identical result across all six tables. Wales generally played sensible bridge, and many times had the fewest swings of any of the three concurrent matches.

One of the most pleasing results was this hand against Northern Ireland.

♠ 876	♠ A42
♥ K108654	♥ QJ973
♦ A	♦ Q43
♣ AQ8	♣ 105
♠ QJ953	Dealer West
♥ -	EW Vul.
♦ K10952	♠ K10
♣ J97	♥ A2
	♦ J876
	♣ K6432

Tim Rees, sitting North, found himself in 4H after an auction in which East-West had bid and supported spades. The lead was the spade Ace and then the ten of clubs to Tim's Ace. The trump suit looks particularly unfavourable, and East was looking happy. But Tim knew nothing yet of the bad break! At trick three he led a spade to his King, and then back to the diamond Ace in order to ruff his last spade. Only now did he cash the Ace of hearts and find the bad news. But Tim wasn't worried. He continued with a diamond ruff, and then back to the King of clubs for another diamond ruff. That was eight tricks and he still had the King, ten, eight of trumps remaining. When Tim led out his third club winner, East had to ruff and now had only trumps left. He played the Queen of hearts, but Tim ducked, and so the last two tricks were won by Tim's King and ten of hearts. Contract made and 11 IMPs to Wales.

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 ☆
 ☆ **POSH FROCKS AND SPARKLY DRAGONS -** ☆
 ☆ **THE 2007 LADY MILNE** ☆
 ☆ *by Diana Jones* ☆
 ☆
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

October 2006. My playing partner, Mary Moore, suggests we enter the Lady Milne trial - a tad presumptuous as we've only been playing together for three months. But what the heck - we'll be doing the selectors a favour. Ladies' trials in Wales are notoriously sparsely attended and they could do with some additional pairs.

December 2006. Arrive at Gwent Bridge Academy and eye up our rivals. Jill Casey and Diane Kurbalija are unavailable for the trial, but as an established international pairing will doubtless be selected anyway. Dismiss Linda Greenland and Peter Garner-Grey who are fairly obviously ineligible and playing simply to make up the numbers. So, perm any two from five. 'Not impossible', was the best I could come up with.
 In the event, cards/luck/natural brilliance work in our favour and we finish just 1 IMP behind Sheila Shea and Liz Commins. This does not guarantee selection, so there follows a tense ten minutes. Eventually white smoke emerges from the selectors' conclave. We're in! Immediate reaction? Where to buy a posh frock for the Lady Milne dinner.....

January 2007. Liberty's of London. An awful lot of money well spent on a demure yet sexy, flouncy little number.

February/March 2007. Several afternoons of gossip, tea, and fine honing of the system. Some important semantic

clarification. For example, discover what Mary means by 'weak'.

April 2007. Nightly prayer: 'Please God, don't let me do anything too stupid'. I know we're not going to bring back a faultless card, but let's not appear ridiculous in front of our friends in East Wales, not to mention on the Internet.

Friday, April 13th. Not the time to start feeling superstitious. Anyway, sparkly dragons should strike fear in opposition ranks. That's our secret weapon - each member of the Welsh team is resplendent in a red top with the silhouette of a dragon picked out in diamante.
 So, what does it feel like to sit down and represent your country? A no-brainer on the first board would be nice, just to get me in the swing. No such luck. This was my first hand:

♠J953, ♥KJ53, ♦void, ♣AK864.
 Partner opens 1NT (weak). Let's be optimistic and investigate the majors. Over my 2C, LHO bids 2D. 3D from partner. An intelligent bid, I feel sure, but can you tell me, hand on heart, that you know what it means? Is it, for example: a) I have a diamond stop; or b) do *you* have a diamond stop? or c) who cares about diamonds? - pick a major. Perhaps you think it's obvious, but remember, this is your first hand, and you're nervous and unsettled. I chose 3H, raised by partner to 4H - bid, no doubt, as if this were an everyday sequence at Bridgend. The ♦Ace

is led and this is what you see.

♠AQ72	♠J953
♥A982	♥KJ53
♦QJ2	♦ -
♣32	♣AK864

Plan the play, and remember that your every move is being scrutinised. Club duplicate this is not. As it turns out, the Queen of hearts is onside; spades behave for four tricks; there are no bad breaks. Flat board! But that is not the point. The point is that I got the bidding and play right even though I was very nervous. This hand put me in the right frame of mind for the rest of the weekend. I felt myself growing in confidence.

Saturday, April 16th. Team discussion. All six of us in anxious deliberation. What was it about? The best line-up to face England? How to contain the Scottish surge? Should we be more aggressive against the Irish teams? More serious than any of those - we were discussing the design of the Welsh ladies' tops for 2008. Quickly followed by another set, another decision. You are dealer and you pick up: ♠J, ♥AKJ65, ♦J1094, ♣KJ10. You open 1H (5 card majors). Partner responds 2NT (game force with hearts). You bid 3S (singleton). A nanosecond later you're in 6H and Liz McGowan, no slouch at defending, has led the ♦3.

♠K983	♠J
♥Q1093	♥AKJ65
♦AK8	♦J1094
♣A3	♣KJ10

Options..... Immediate diamond finesse? Delayed diamond finesse? Club finesse? (which way?) Ace of spades well placed for a club discard? Will they be in this at the other table? (They weren't.) Our

bidding has pinpointed the spade switch if I lose the lead in a minor. A high diamond from dummy would only prolong the agony.....so I call for the eight. Close my eyes. Eyes open.....♦6 on my right. Whew! And the reasoning behind this astoundingly correct play? Mess up early and play for the opponents to revoke? No, not really. I thought Liz McGowan was trying to put me under pressure at trick one, before I knew anything about my opponents' holdings. And there was a little bit of bloody-mindedness on my part: I wasn't going to allow myself to be hoodwinked by an awkward lead.

Sunday, April 17th. It's all over and we've finished in a very satisfying third place. Mistakes? I've made a few, but then again (and this bit doesn't scan) not too costly, and not enough to dent the confidence gained from that crucial first board.

If I'm ever famous enough to be asked to offer a bridge tip, it will be this: choose your partner wisely. It's good to know that there's intelligence, resourcefulness and bravery on the other side of the table. Thanks Mary. And what about 2008? Will we put ourselves forward for selection again? You bet. After all, I now have two of the key ingredients - a posh frock and a sparkly dragon.

Welsh team:

**Jill Casey and Diane Kurbalija
Liz Commins and Sheila Shea
Mary Moore and Diana Jones**

Result:

Scotland	136
England	131
Wales	117
Republic of Ireland	111
Northern Ireland	101

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE 2007 LADY MILNE *by Margaret Lane*

The annual Women's Home International Match was hosted by Wales at the Hilton Newport on a gloriously sunny weekend in mid April. It produced a dream finish in which the leading contenders for the trophy were drawn to play each other in the last stanza. With a 9 VP lead over Scotland, England were the favourites to retain the trophy, but it was not to be, and the full drama of the match unfolded on BridgeBase Online. Scotland ran out the 25-3 VP winners, snatching the Lady Milne Trophy on the finish line. Unfortunately this dramatic conclusion meant that the Wales v Northern Ireland match which was to determine 3rd spot took place 'off the radar'. The best the support staff could do was to score it board by board and send the running totals in to the Vugraph commentary team. After an initial scare when Northern Ireland forged ahead by 14 IMPs, Wales bounced back and secured an 18-12 VP win for a clear 3rd place. Well done our team!

This article looks briefly behind the scenes at how the volunteer support team, admirably organised and directed by the Match Manager Linda Greenland, coped with the highs and lows of the tournament. Maggie Pierce ensured that a small but willing band of volunteer recorders (amongst them the then WBU President, Daphne Patrick) sat in the Open Rooms to record the bidding and play to the first six tricks. Runners picked up the records to feed to the BBO operators for progress to be entered and displayed on Vugraph with a running IMP score. Anyone new to recording and anxious about clarity of handwriting was shown a copy of one of Peter Lane's completed records – he was declared the undisputed winner of the

worst handwriting competition.

A fifteen minute break between stanzas saw the support team going into overdrive, clearing rooms, setting up new BBO broadcasts, and chasing captains for line-ups and results. If only it had been a cold, wet weekend the captains would not have been so far flung and difficult to locate! The highs of the weekend were the willingness of the volunteers to turn their hand to anything and the friendliness of the players and their captains - the latter being all male, I'm afraid. On Sunday, Jane 'Madame Defarges' Scott-Verdon stood sentinel outside the four playing rooms, patiently moving record sheets and accompanying players when they needed to leave the playing area.

The lows of the weekend were the problems with the internet connections that required the drafting in of extra recorders until the BBO broadcast was up and running, and the accessibility of the Match Manager's office. On Friday evening the door wouldn't lock so it was secured with a chain and padlock. By Saturday night the problem had been solved - or so we thought. On my arrival on Sunday morning I was greeted by Linda cheerily saying: "Today's disaster is we are locked out of the office, the electronic key system won't work, and the widget to override the system has failed - so it's down to brute force". Two crowbars and twenty-five minutes later, Ken 'Muscles' Richardson and a member of the hotel staff managed to wrench the door open. That man has hidden talents. After that everything was straightforward, thanks to the huge amount of preparatory work put in by Linda to ensure that the event ran smoothly.

(Continued on page 15)

THE EUROPEAN OPEN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS, JUNE 2007, ANTALYA, TURKEY

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED.....

by Mike Tedd

The 3rd European Open Bridge Championships were held in Antalya, Turkey on June 15-30, 2007. This element of the four-year international cycle is open to everyone approved by their national organisation. Players can also form pairs and teams with people from other countries. The Welsh representation was small. Sharon Winter and John Marshall played in the Mixed Pairs, while Patrick Jourdain and I played in the Senior Teams and Pairs. Patrick's and my only success was to reach the Senior Pairs Final by means of romping away with the 'B' Semi-final (although you can well ask what we were doing there).

The weather in Antalya was very hot, reaching 43°C at times, with even the locals complaining. The venue resort was very good, with a superb pool to enjoy – if you reached it before breakfast. Playing conditions were excellent, the air-conditioning being almost up to the job. Events like this are a very good experience. My only complaint was that the programme was too intensive, with each pairs competition having too many sessions. It is likely that this will be changed in future championships, at least in the Seniors.

Patrick Jourdain is a fine dummy player, with a flair for winning lines that one can write up. On this hand Five Hearts doubled was the contract at 17 of the 39 tables in the Seniors' and Women's Teams.

West	North	East	South
	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass	5♥	Pass	Pass
Dble	All Pass		

♠ J ♥ AJ87632 ♦ 65 ♣ AJ2	♠ KQ1095432 ♥ - ♦ 873 ♣ 74
Dealer East Love All	
♠ A7 ♥ K105 ♦ KQJ9 ♣ Q986	♠ 86 ♥ Q94 ♦ A1042 ♣ K1053

Five Hearts doubled attracted a top spade lead. West overtook with the ace and switched to a top diamond. Patrick won and led the heart Queen, covered all round as East discarded. Now there is a marked finesse against the heart ten, but only one entry to dummy, so the club finesse can only be taken through East, in which case it loses. Patrick instead played a club to the King, finessed again in hearts, and then ran the trumps. In the three card ending he had reduced to a diamond and two clubs in each hand; but what was West to keep? He elected to bare his diamond Jack, so Patrick exited with a diamond and West had to lead into Declarer's club tenace. This was contract made for +650, with Four Spades cold the other way. Only six of the 17 declarers made the hand, at least one of those being presented with a club lead. Unfortunately for us, our opponent Paul Hackett duplicated this play to the letter, so there was no swing.

MIXING WITH THE STARS

by Sharon Winter

In February 2007 John Marshall and I won the Welsh Mixed Pairs in Builth Wells. As a result we were encouraged to compete in the European Championships in Antalya, Turkey, with the WBU offering to pay our entry fee. We decided that this was an opportunity not to be missed and so on 15 June 2007 my husband Michael and I, and John and his wife Susan, flew to Turkey.

I had no idea what to expect and before we left I felt as if we were a pair of innocent Christians about to be fed to a pack of very hungry lions. Neither of us had any experience of this level of competition and I in particular, despite being a regular club player, had hardly any competitive experience at all. And yet, here we were, about to propel ourselves into the cut-throat world of international bridge. I kept telling myself that I had nothing to lose, but I still had a fear of being utterly humiliated.

The application process was done on-line, and in the weeks before we left we would occasionally check the growing list of our fellow competitors. It began to read like the who's who of world bridge. "Oh look!" said my non-bridge playing husband, "there are some new names in the mixed pairs. Have you heard of any of these people, Sharon? - Zia Mahmood?, Paul Hackett?, Martin Hoffman?, Heather and Jeremy Dhondy?". I was feeling terrified.

Well, I shall put you out of your misery and tell you straightaway that, despite my misgivings, we had a fantastic week in Turkey. We enjoyed every minute of the bridge and, although I cannot say we shone, we were not annihilated. It was a truly wonderful experience. The Championships were held in the Kremlin Palace Hotel in Antalya. The hotel is, as its name suggests, a replica of the Kremlin. It



is a huge, all-inclusive resort hotel. Picture, if you can, a blend of Disneyworld, Butlins, Las Vegas and the Kremlin. On the plus side, our bedroom was large, comfortable and air conditioned, the swimming pool was enormous, lagoon-style and beautifully clean, the playing rooms were bright and air conditioned. The sun shone all week and we were right by the beach. I do not think that I am being unduly critical in saying that the style of the place was rather vulgar, while the food scored more for quantity than quality. However, we spent a wonderful week enjoying the pleasures of the bridge competition, interspersed with swimming, sunbathing, and alfresco dining.

Now to the bridge. The Mixed Pairs was held over four consecutive days, Monday to Thursday. There were 266 pairs from forty-one countries competing. The morning session was from 10.30 to 2.00 pm and the afternoon session from 3.30 to about 7.00pm. The standard was incredibly high. Needless to say, there were very few gifts. Out of the 182 boards that we played, we only had two real presents. One was from a volatile American couple who, through a bidding misunderstanding, bid to Seven No Trumps. I was on lead with Ace, King of hearts, whilst John held the Ace,

King of clubs! It's good to know that even the best players get it wrong sometimes.

Our other gift was from an equally explosive Bulgarian couple who bid to Seven Clubs. The contract depended on finessing John's King of spades. With eleven tricks made, declarer led a small spade from dummy. John had no option but to play his singleton King..... and declarer played her Queen! She immediately realised her mistake, but despite a lot of screaming and shouting, the Director calmly told her that the Queen was on the table and therefore played - two off. I actually felt sorry for her, but we still accepted the gift! The rest of the hands were very hard fought. We found it a struggle to score 50%. We finished in the bottom third of the field, but we didn't feel outclassed or overwhelmed.

I have now been home for a week and I have had time to reflect on the whole experience. Firstly, I would recommend to any reasonable player that they have a go at playing in the next European Open. The atmosphere is terrific, there is a sense of taking part in something very special, and the organisation is superb. I now realise there is nothing to fear. You need to be very focussed and play your own game, and not to be intimidated by the big names. There was enormous pleasure in competing against some of the best players in the world. We realised that the top players do not overbid their hands - they just play a very accurate, tight game. Our experience in Turkey has undoubtedly improved our game, and far from undermining our confidence, we have come away on a 'high', with some unforgettable memories. If there were a prize for being a totally supportive, forgiving and noble partner, I would award it to my partner, John. We returned home even better friends than when we left, having shared a fantastic bridge experience.

WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?

Film buffs will be familiar with the iconic Western, 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid', in which implacable lawman Joe Lefors pursues Butch and Sundance across the old West. 'Who are those guys?' is the outlaws' despairing refrain as Lefors and his men, visible only as tiny figures in the far distance, maintain their dogged pursuit. These days the question 'Who are those guys?' is applied with the same mixture of awe and reverence to another group of dedicated men (and quite possibly women), the Welsh bridge selectors. Are they, perhaps, stars of another era, giving one last service to their country in their twilight years? Or are they ordinary bridge players like the rest of us, but with a special talent for selecting? In an attempt to penetrate this mystery, the Editor made contact through an intermediary and invited this elusive band to reveal themselves to their public. He also asked them to outline the programme of events for 2008, including invitation events at which Wales might be represented, and the basis upon which teams would be selected (standard practice in the rest of the bridge universe). The response to these entreaties is contained in the box at the foot of this page. Whilst some may regard it as bordering on the terse, it has to be understood that the selection of Welsh bridge teams is a covert operation, with communication permissible only by word of mouth to trusted intimates (although no communication at all is preferred). The latest rumour we heard was that the selectors (or 'operatives' as they prefer to be known) would make themselves available on August Bank Holiday Monday, on the sea front at Pwllheli (or possibly Aberystwyth), where they might be seen strolling along the Promenade with their trouser legs rolled up. Should you spot them, and address them with the words: 'Aren't you a Welsh bridge selector?', you will win £5. Unfortunately you're too late for this year.



THE 2007 BONN NATIONS CUP

by Patrick Jourdain

Bonn Bridge Club can be proud of its annual Invitation Teams, an event of international standard held in May to coincide with the German Bank Holiday for Ascension Thursday. The Club hosts twenty teams for a two day competition, meeting the cost of meals and accommodation for each team. The event is paid for by means of a popular Pairs competition, run alongside the Invitation Teams, which itself attracts a hundred tables.

In the early years I received an invitation as a journalist to bring a team, but when the Welsh Bridge Union was promoted to a National Federation it was logical to pass this on to the Federation. Where there are more than four members of the Welsh squad willing to go, the WBU selectors choose the team. The players pay their own expenses and have to take four days off work in a month when every weekend has national events, so it is not easy to raise a team. For the last three years the invitation has not been taken up, so it was important that Wales attend this year if the invitation was to continue.

Of the original four selected, only one, Gary Jones, actually travelled, and three individuals - Tim Rees, Mike Tedd and I - filled the vacant slots. The format is two qualifying pools, each playing a round robin of eight-board matches, followed by a final for the two pool winners and a Consolation Swiss for the remainder. The best spin I can put on our result is that we finished ahead of Switzerland, Estonia and Luxembourg, and only one place behind a team representing All Ireland. Heavy losses to Ireland and England cost us the chance of Wales's usual mid-table finish. This was the most interesting deal from the

match against Ireland.

♠ 8		
♥ Q986		
♦ QJ84		
♣ AK65		
♠ 10742		♠ KJ6
♥ AK7	Dealer South	♥ J532
♦ K92	EW Vul.	♦ 65
♣ 1042		♣ QJ97
	♠ AQ953	
	♥ 104	
	♦ A1073	
	♣ 83	

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1S
Pass	2C	Pass	2D
Pass	2H	Pass	2S
Dble	3D	Pass	3H
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Over South's rebid of 2♦ an immediate 2NT or 3♦ by responder would be invitational, but after the use of the fourth suit the 3♦ bid was forcing. My light opening and partner's choice of a forcing 3♦ meant we reached the ambitious 3NT. David Greenwood led his fourth highest heart and Rex Anderson played three rounds of the suit, the third round being taken by Mike Tedd with his Queen. The diamond finesse lost and West switched to a middle club. Declarer won and ran the diamonds. This was the position (over page) when the third diamond was led. East knew declarer's shape, but not the position of the black 10s. He planned to throw a card from each black suit on the

♠ 8
♥ 9
♦ J8
♣ K65
♠ 10742
♥ -
♦ 9
♣ 102
♠ KJ6
♥ J
♦ -
♣ QJ9
♠ AQ95
♥ -
♦ 107
♣ 8

last two diamonds and rely on his partner for the spade ten. To clarify the position, as he thought, East threw the jack of spades first, but on the last diamond West erred by keeping all his spades. Declarer cashed the top club to remove West's exit card in that suit and led the eight of spades. East felt compelled to cover with his King because he knew that if the eight was run to the ten, West would have to concede the last three tricks to dummy (although an alert West would let the eight win, so that declarer would have to give up tricks to East!) There was now a three-card ending, with dummy on lead holding ♠Q95, West holding ♠1074, and East having the ♠6 along with a winning heart and club. Declarer exited with a low spade, the winning play if West had been left with ♠1076. But West was able to play the ♠4 and East won with the six to claim the remainder of the tricks. With the cards as they were, the successful play would have been to exit with the *nine* of spades. This pins East's six and leaves West to lead from 7 4 into dummy's Q 5 at the end! At the other table Ireland also reached 3NT on this combined 22 count, but the Welsh defence gave declarer no chance.

THE TREASURER

A summary of the accounts for the last two years is shown below. Our financial target is to achieve a surplus each year equivalent to interest received. Taking the last two years together, we have exceeded that, although there are some worrying downward movements in income. I anticipate that the WBU will break even at best in the present year, but we have in excess of £80K in the bank and our finances are secure. For this reason we have decided to maintain the annual subscription at £6.00 next year.

Income	2006	2007
Subscriptions	9,274	7,687
Masterpoints	7,832	8,865
Congresses	10,714	7,152
Competitions	3,062	2,664
Interest	4,246	3,907
Other Income	222	1,874
Total Income	35,350	32,149
Expenditure		
Internationals	11,428	10,660
Administration	11,587	12,334
Publications	1,876	4,228
Training	499	929
Other Exp	1,836	2,563
Total Expenditure	27,226	30,714
Surplus	8,124	1,435

In addition to the above, we have the World Fund, which we use to finance WBU members to play in Europe and further afield. This is financed by profit from BGB events, divided between the home unions. The WBU's World Fund currently stands at a very healthy £38,864. Agreement has been reached with the other home unions to maintain the World Fund's income at current levels until 2010.

Linda Greenland

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I was asked by the Editor to introduce myself to the membership, so here goes. Because of the magazine's summer deadline I am drafting these lines in June, some six weeks before I take over from Linda Greenland as the WBU Chief Executive.

I am Welsh and can trace my Welsh ancestry back many generations on my father's side. (I was in fact enrolled as a Hereditary Freeman of Swansea in 1963.) My parents however left Wales and moved to Gloucestershire, where I was born in 1942, the eldest of three children. I attended Cheltenham Grammar School from 1952-58 and then became a Police Cadet with the Gloucestershire Constabulary. I remained a serving officer until 1968 when I left to start my own business. I have formal qualifications in Business Management, and have been a successful businessman since that time until my retirement four years ago. I retain some business links and continue to be an internet entrepreneur and web host, now based near Llandrindod Wells.

My wife and I have played bridge socially, in the local bridge league, and as members of several clubs over the past fifteen years. In Gloucestershire I qualified as a Club Director and directed at Churchdown and Southgate bridge clubs on a regular basis. My wife, Margaret, was Secretary at Southgate and Treasurer at Churchdown, and together we scored up most evening events at both clubs on computer. Even our daughter, Isobel, was roped in to prepare the boards for the various Simultaneous Pairs events. I designed, set up and maintained the internet sites for both those Gloucestershire clubs and, since joining our local Rhayader club, have set up a similar site for the benefit of members and visitors there.

Margaret and I are enthusiastic club members, although neither of us professes to be more than a moderately accomplished club player. My interest is in promoting the

club game, whether to social players, lapsed members, or to new players who may feel that the bridge club atmosphere can be slightly intimidating. I hope to prompt existing social clubs to affiliate to the WBU; to facilitate increased membership at existing clubs; and to get new bridge clubs to form.

I believe that the vital key is to engage with schools in the promotion of the game and to provide the support they require. It is hoped that more experienced players will use their knowledge and skills to give lessons, thereby feeding the clubs with new players. Effective communication at all levels is essential, and the WBU Website is the ideal platform for this. Local and national competitions must be more widely publicised and facilities improved. These are difficult times for the national Unions, and the WBU can lead the way with new initiatives to promote and revitalise the game.

I intend to visit clubs all over Wales to get the views of club members on the way forward for the WBU. I am looking forward to meeting you all.

Neville Richards

(Margaret Lane continued from page 9)

This was Linda's last event as Wales's Match Manager. She will be a hard act to follow - I know this as she has gently twisted my arm to take on the job. My first event will be a Camrose weekend in January 2009. It might seem a long way off, but planning will begin in the middle of this year. Don't be surprised if I try a little (less gentle) arm-twisting of potential volunteers. You'll see good bridge being played, and for the really dedicated there'll be an invite to the post match dinner.

For all those Lady Milne volunteers not mentioned in this article, a big thank-you for sparing your time on such a lovely weekend. But the biggest thank-you goes to Linda for her dedication and patience. Have a great 'retirement', Linda.

REPORTS...

THE SPRING FOURSOMES 2007

by Mike Tedd

The first May Bank Holiday sees the English Bridge Union hold its annual teams event in Stratford upon Avon, the Schapiro Spring Foursomes, the strongest EBU weekend event of the year. All the top English teams were there, together with a number of strong teams from the continent, plus the Camrose holders (and European Silver Medallists) from Ireland. The format involves 32-board head-to-head matches. Teams are only eliminated when they have lost two matches, at which point they can enter consolation events.

Welsh teams have had some success over the years in this event, and there was a good turnout again from Wales, with at least five teams partly or wholly Welsh. It was especially nice to see Jean and Peter Hand with Sheila Shea and Liz Commins enthusiastically enjoying the event.

The seeded draw kept arranging for 'Welsh' teams to play each other. Right at the start Tim Rees and Filip Kurbalija's team found themselves playing Patrick Jourdain, Tony Ratcliff, Mike Tedd and John Salisbury. A nail-biting match saw the Rees team winning by just three IMPs. They continued in fine form, losing their first life to the top seeds and eventual winners, the Liggins team. On the Monday evening their quarter-final match was against a largely Norwegian team including Brogeland and Saelensminde, former Bermuda Bowl finalists. It was very close – Rees was two IMPs ahead with 8 boards to play, and the final margin was again just 3 IMPs, but this time against them, meaning it was time for them to

come home.

Meanwhile my team, captained by Patrick Jourdain, had won several matches, including eliminating Peter Garner-Gray's team – it's always important to play well against the selectors – before losing our second match on Sunday evening. This hand from that session played a considerable role in our loss, and led to much discussion. You have to play Six Hearts with the following hands (both sides vulnerable):

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>
♠5	♠AK84
♥QJ1082	♥A9753
♦K98	♦-
♣K1093	♣A842

At my table South opened One Heart and West overcalled Two Diamonds. I splintered with the North hand, which helped us reach the reasonable slam. At most tables, including ours, West led the Ace of diamonds. There are three plausible lines of play after ruffing this Ace:

1. Take the Heart finesse;
2. Cash the Ace of hearts; eliminate spades and diamonds to reach

♠-	♠-
♥QJ	♥97
♦-	♦-
♣K109	♣A84

Now, when you exit with a trump, a defender who started with ♥K will have to lead clubs or concede a ruff-and-discard,

so you will make your contract if the club honours are split, or if you correctly judge that this defender holds the QJ of clubs (although a good defender with one club honour will always exit with that honour in this situation, so playing for ♣QJ to be in the one hand is usually inferior.)

3. Similar to line 2, but also cash the AK of clubs before exiting with a trump. Now you succeed if the holder of ♥K had at most two clubs, and so is forced to give a ruff-and-discard.

All these lines are quite reasonable, and your decision really depends upon what you infer from the bidding and the lead. For his bid, and from his keenness to cash the Ace of diamonds, you might place the ♥K with West. On the other hand, East's failure to support diamonds suggests that West has length there, and you can cross-ruff for a while to discover that he also has

four spades, leaving little room for the ♥K. I thus sympathise greatly with my partner's decision to finesse the trump.

At other tables West doubled, so he was less likely to have long diamonds and more likely to have the ♥K on values grounds. This probably points to line 2 since West is likely to have 3 or more clubs for his double, but this line also fails as West held:

♠Q973
♥K6
♦AQJ54
♣65

So only line 3 succeeds. Tim and Filip held the defending hands and kept quiet. They gained when the declarer, Andrew McIntosh of the winning Liggins team, took the losing line 2, while Tim and Filip's team-mates stayed in game.

SPICKETT GOES WEST!!!

by Mary Moore

This year's Spickett Bowl was won by the Western area. It is a great competition which I love playing in. It is so *civilised* playing against ladies! I have two main memories of the hands. One was bidding to a Grand Slam on a finesse following a misunderstanding with partner over Roman Key Card Blackwood. Good for the score, as it turned out, but bad for the blood pressure. The other hand generated a good deal of discussion.

Sitting North, at favourable vulnerability, I held: ♠1065, ♥QJ75, ♦KJ106, ♣KQ. You could hardly find a less appetising twelve count. I would like to have passed, but I could hear Adrian Thomas's voice in my ear: 'If you *must* play a weak no trump, then open all hands that meet the criteria'. So that's what I did. 1NT from me; pass from my left hand opponent; 2D (transfer) from partner. So far so good. But now came 3D on my right. And I started

thinking (unusual, to say the least). If I bid 3H now, would my partner (with whom I don't play regularly, so no agreement) think I was maximum? Give my opponents the Ace of clubs and I have an effective nine count. Also, given that the opponents are vulnerable, how will 3D fare? Eventually I decided to pass. (I must stop this thinking malarkey!!) My left hand opponent also passed. Partner now bid 4C. 4H by me. Tick.

Our opponents called the Director, who was Ken Richardson. The hesitation was agreed. Was my partner's bid of 4C allowable? Ken had a think and was inclined to rule in favour of East/West. He went away to consult. On his return, he told us that all the women he'd asked had bid 4C, whilst the one man he'd spoken to had bid 5C!! So the score was allowed to stand. 420 to North/South. This was the full deal (see over).

	♠ 1065	
	♥ QJ106	
	♦ KJ106	
	♣ KQ	
♠ AQ84		♠ KJ92
♥ 6	Dealer North	♥ 1092
♦ AQ983	EW Vul.	♦ 7542
♣ A82		♣ J10
	♠ 73	
	♥ AK843	
	♦ -	
	♣ 976543	

Well, what would you have bid on the South hand following partner's hesitation? The discussion continues....

JOURDAIN RESCUES WELSH FOOTBALL

by Maggie Pierce

Although born in England, Patrick Jourdain is a passionate supporter of his adopted country. He is regularly to be found in the Millennium Stadium, cheering on the Welsh football team in their perennially doomed quest to qualify for some major tournament. Now Patrick has made his own contribution to Welsh success. How has he managed that?, you may well ask. Has he, perhaps, honed his technique at set pieces, a la David Beckham? Not quite. Whilst Patrick's ball playing skills are, he believes, underrated, his days as a marauding midfielder with Scunthorpe United are now but a distant memory. No, Patrick's latest contribution has been made off the field of play, although no less valuable for that.

Those of you who watch international football matches (or even Cardiff City) will have noted that before the game begins, the stadium announcer will read out the names of those players who will start the match. Patrick has always had difficulty with this, his problem being that the names are read out too quickly for him to make the necessary corrections in his copy of the programme. So Patrick would

often find that he had recorded the substitute goalkeeper as playing at right back, and so on. Errors of this kind drew a certain amount of ridicule from neighbouring spectators as Patrick would be heard shouting 'Come on Ryan!' as a rather overweight Welsh forward trundled hopefully towards the opposition goal, only for him to be informed that the player in question was John Hartson, Ryan Giggs having, as usual, been announced as unavailable for selection because of a strained hamstring. The problem was compounded by the fact that the page in the programme on which the players' names were printed was invariably a dark colour, so that Patrick could not read his own writing.



Finding that his inability to identify the players was detracting from his enjoyment of the game, Patrick decided that something had to be done. Accordingly, he wrote to the Welsh FA - WHO CHANGED BOTH THE MANNER OF THE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE PROGRAMME. The announcer now reads out the team changes very.....very.....slowly. And all the spectators, perusing their copy of the programme, are confronted by little white squares, known as 'Jourdain Squares', in which they are invited to place the numbers of those players who will actually take to the pitch. Their enjoyment of the game is thereby enhanced - and they all thank Patrick, seated unassumingly in their midst.

(Mike Hirst continued from page 1)

I lived in digs in Penarth. My landlady said: 'I'll charge you £1.50 a week'. I said: 'Make it £2 and do my washing'. 'Done', she said.

GD: What prompted you to resume playing bridge?

MH: I joined Penarth Golf Club and there was a guy there called Bill Griffith. He said to me one day: 'Can you play cards?' 'I play every game you can think of', I said. 'Can you play bridge?' 'I can', I said. 'We'll go along to Cardiff Bridge club on Monday'. The club was in The Walk in those days. I remember that first evening Bill opened 1NT and I responded 3C, which when I started we used to play as strong Stayman - 2C weak Stayman, 3C strong Stayman. But it had all changed between 1956, when I learned to play, and 1963. No-one played strong Stayman any more. But Bill and I had a couple of games and I got the bug. I said to the Steward: 'If you get anyone who wants a game, give me a ring and I'll be happy to play'. So he introduced me to a lady called Peggy Fletcher. She took me under her wing.

GD: When did you start to play with Patrick Jourdain?

MH: The Steward rang me one night in 1965: 'What you doing tonight, Mike?' 'Nothing'. 'Well, I've got a game for you with a young guy who's come down from Scunthorpe, name of Patrick Jourdain'. Patrick worked for British Steel in those days and we hit it off from the start. One of the first events we played in was the British Juniors - under thirty-five in those days. Cansino, Collings and all those great players were playing. We finished 6th. I was very pleased - I don't know whether Patrick was. Anyway, we had some very good results. We were a partnership as far as I was concerned, although whenever there was an international the selectors used to pick him with someone else. But in

1969 I entered the trials with Patrick and we were selected for the Camrose.

GD: Who was that against?

MH: Our first match was against Northern Ireland. That's when I met Desmond Deery. He was a famous guy in those days - he could win a match on his own. Anyway, he says to me: 'Are you Mike Hirst?' 'I am'. 'Well', he says, 'we're playing together this weekend, so you'd better know, the drink of the Irish is Chivas Regal'. 'Well, I'm game for anything', I said. So we went to the bar: 'Two Chivas Regals, please'. That was my introduction to the Camrose. In those days we didn't finish until two or three o'clock in the morning.

GD: Who were your team-mates?

MH: Johnson and McAndrew, and Hamilton and Samuels. I don't remember the result.

GD: Too many Chivas Regals?

MH: Possibly. Anyway, I played with Patrick until 1973. We played with Johnson and McAndrew - they were a very good pair. That used to be our Gold Cup team. Then Johnson left to live in South Africa, so I played a bit with McAndrew. This was when Patrick went to live in Scotland for four years. After that I played a bit with Alan Pierce, when Tony Casey decided to pack in. I even had one match with David Carlisle, who lived in Wales at that time. By the end of it I was a nervous wreck, the same as him. We went up to North Wales to play against Scotland. It was a disaster.

GD: How did you get on with Alan Pierce?

MH: I enjoyed playing with Alan. I remember one Camrose match we got to Seven Spades because I got the response to Blackwood wrong. But Alan made it on a squeeze and it won us the match. Alan drank brandy, so after this hand I said to the bar lady, whom I knew: 'I want you to

get us the best brandy you've got.' Well, about half an hour went by and I was getting worried. But eventually she came back: 'We've been down in the cellar', she says, 'and we've found you a bottle of 1888'. 'Right', I said, 'you'd better make them doubles. How much is that?' 'Sixty-four pounds.' But Alan had played very well - he was very good - and winning a Camrose match is worth celebrating, isn't it?

GD: How about Welsh events?

MH: I've won the Welsh Cup twelve times. Patrick's won it twelve times as well now. The twelfth time, he rang me up to tell me he'd equalled my record. I said to him: 'Patrick, I've won it playing in all kinds of terrible teams. You always play with the best players available. Don't talk to me about records', I said. He's got more Master Points than me now as well. I've still got my Grand Master certificate - 'Grand Master 34'. That was in 1980. I was the 34th to achieve it. Bernard Goldenfield said to me: 'I'm Grand Master 39'. 'That's nothing', I said, 'I'm Grand Master 34'. I overtook Patrick once, but he plays every weekend now so I've got no chance. But I think Patrick's a marvellous player. We won the Brighton teams in 1971, playing with David Hamilton and Cyril Samuels. I was partnering Cyril, and in the last match he took me out of 3NT into Four Spades. The opponents doubled, and I was so annoyed with Cyril, because I knew it was the wrong contract, that I redoubled. Anyway, they made a mistake in defence and Cyril made it. And because I'd redoubled, we won the Brighton teams. If I hadn't redoubled, we wouldn't have won.

GD: Have you played in many international tournaments?

MH: I got a bronze medal in the European Common Market, partnering Phil Laddin. That was playing with Patrick and David Hamilton. Phil Laddin never put a foot

wrong throughout the whole event. And I played with Robert Upton in the World Pairs in Biarritz. We qualified for the semi-final, and there were forty pairs to go through to the final but we finished forty-first.

GD: Any other memories of the Camrose?

MH: I can remember one match against Scotland when on the last board I played in One Spade doubled. Patrick was playing in the other room and the Scots had bid to Two Spades, but Patrick forgot to double. Anyway, that went three off. I had to go just one down in One Spade doubled for us to win the match, and I managed it.

GD: Any bad ones?

MH: I remember in 1973 I was playing with Patrick against England. I think we'd won the first two matches, but then I bid Four Spades over their Four Hearts, when neither contract was making. And the next hand I led a spade against 3NT, when if I'd led Patrick's suit he had Ace, King to five and they'd have gone down. They dropped me after that. I didn't play the rest of the weekend. That was the famous occasion I met this bird and we drank champagne all night. Patrick saw me walking across the fields to the team hotel at 9.30 in the morning.

GD: With a smile on your face.

MH: Probably. But I was out of favour for a while after that.

GD: When did you start to play with Jim Luck?

MH: Jim was quite high up in the Patent Office, and he got moved with them to Newport. We started playing together around 1992. Jim and I had some great results together. We beat England, and I remember Tom Townsend saying that if he



ever lost to Wales again, he'd give up the game. Well he did lose to us after that, but I wasn't there to remind him. But my best memory playing with Jim was when we won the EBU Grand Masters. It was my 60th birthday. He's a nice guy, Jim, and a very good player. When we missed a year, the Welsh selectors made us play in that ridiculous pre-trial. They said they'd pay our expenses - I'm still waiting for those. They had an English pair in to make up the numbers and they bid a Six Diamond contract against us that nobody else bid. So that was that. That was the end of it.

GD: How long have you and Ann been together?

MH: We've been married twenty-six years. We got together in 1979, at Llangollen. I'd just won the Men's Pairs with Barry Clowes. He got rushed to hospital and Ann went with him. She and her friend, who was another doctor, looked after him. That was Barry's last game of bridge. I said to Ann - 'Give us your number, and I'll give you a ring on Monday.' So I rang her on the Monday and I said: 'May I take you out to lunch?' She said: 'Where are you thinking of? You're in Cardiff and I'm in Liverpool.' I said: 'The Chateau Impney in Droitwich - one hundred and sixty miles for you and one hundred and sixty miles for me'. 'All right, we'll meet there'. So I rang them and I said: 'I want a nice bottle of champagne on ice.' So we had lunch, and we had a walk, and she said: 'All right, I'll come down and live with you.' 'Right', I said. Easy going.

GD: Do you and Ann get on well at the bridge table?

MH: She wasn't a strong player at first, but she's a very good player *now*. She got better and better. She was in the Welsh team that won the Lady Milne. That was when Jessie and Jean Newton were playing. We've won loads of things. We've won the Cambria twice in the last three years. We

won the Pairs at the Blackpool Year End Congress. Paul Hackett was in 6NT and he had a club suit with Axxx opposite Qxxx, and he played the Ace and then towards his Queen. Ann had KJx in front of the Queen, but she played the Jack on the second round. Hackett didn't think she'd do that, holding the King, so he ducked and went off in a cold contract. She's a wonder, she is. She's lost a bit of interest now, but she did it. She got there.

GD: Who are the best players you've played against?

MH: I've played against Flint, Cansino, Collings, Rose, Forrester, Brock.....

GD: So who impressed you the most?

MH: The most difficult to play against was Forrester. He towered - it was his table presence. I partnered him once and he said: 'Every card has a meaning'. Bloody tires you out. And Reese was a friend of mine. I introduced him to Patrick. They wrote a book together - Squeeze Play Made Easy.

GD: And who's been your favourite partner?

MH: Patrick, I think. He wrote a book on me! I said to him once: 'All those things you wrote about - stepping-stone squeezes and all that - they happened when you were playing with me.' He was always very excited when those things happened. When they worked he was over the moon. I think he's a fantastic player. I've played in I don't know how many Championships with him. In 1970 we went to Stockholm to play in the World Pairs. There were about a hundred and sixty pairs, and after four boards we were 2nd. It was barometer scoring, so you knew how you were doing.

GD: Did you hold your position?

MH: No, we came about 130th.

GD: What are your main strength and weaknesses as a player?

MH: I've never been put off by anyone, in any game. And I loved defending. I was good at finding leads that were a bit off-

beat. If you get off to the wrong lead, everything falls apart. I can still play well, except I make silly mistakes. I think in bridge there should be time faults. How can you enjoy it if you sit there for hours without moving? If you had to play every hand in six or seven minutes or take an average, that would suit me fine. I can remember playing with Barry Clowes, when Cyril Samuels had a two-way finesse for a Queen to make his contract. Cyril was thinking and thinking, and Barry said: 'Excuse me, I'm going for a walk', and he left the table. And Cyril thought, well, he wouldn't do that if he had the Queen, so he played me for the Queen. But of course Barry had the Queen. The game's psychological, isn't it? If you get into the bidding on crap hands, it's very rarely you get carted, and it helps your partner to know where your values are. You have to play them at their own game. We seem to lie down.

GD: You mean in Wales - that Welsh players are too cautious?

MH: 100% too cautious. And you know why? - they don't want to be criticised. Playing against Armstrong and Kirby, I bid to Seven Hearts. They wrote it up in Bridge magazine and said Hirst didn't know what he was doing - his partner might have held five small hearts. Rubbish. I knew Jim had the King, and I had AQ, so that was enough. You don't get anywhere by being too cautious. I remember playing against Monty Rosenberg. I was playing with Jim, and when the dummy went down I thought Christ Almighty, I'm at least five off here. But every single card was in the right place, and I made it. You should never give up, no matter how bad the contract - and I've been in some bad ones.

GD: How do you view the International bridge scene now, from a Welsh perspective?

MH: In my opinion, they've never picked the strongest team to play for Wales - never.

They have these trials, and the pair that should win have a bad game, or an unlucky game - it happens. You've got to play at least ninety-six boards, like a full international. And I always feel people think they're better than they are. We should have won that Commonwealth event in Manchester five years ago - Rees and Kurbalija played very well.

GD: How do you view Wales' prospects for the future?

MH: Dafydd Jones is a good player, but apart from him I can't see any young players coming through. I haven't seen a young player, say under thirty, who's any good. The average age at my golf club is fifty-nine. The average age at most bridge clubs must be sixty-nine. If you want to play in the EBU Seniors Congress in Eastbourne you've got to enter months in advance. But bridge in Wales is the weakest it's ever been. I always feel the ladies could have done better as well, if certain players could adapt to playing with certain players.

GD: Have you involved yourself in bridge administration?

MH: I was BBL selector for a time. It's more complicated now, with sponsorship coming in. Sponsorship is fine, as long as you don't have to pick them. Anyway, there's no-one to sponsor a team in Wales. If I was wealthy enough I wouldn't mind sponsoring a team, but I'd have to pick it.

GD: Perhaps if you win the Lottery?

MH: That's right. I'm captain of Cardiff Rugby Club this year, and I'm captain of my golf club next year. When I've finished those two I might have a go.

GD: The next Chairman of the Welsh selectors?

MH: I wouldn't mind. I'd be quite happy to put some work into it. I know who can play, and who should play with who. I did offer ten years ago, but I wanted carte blanche. You've got to know the players. Maybe after next year, if they ask me nicely.

FORTHCOMING...

WBU CHAMPIONSHIP and OPEN EVENTS, SEPTEMBER - MARCH

At the time this magazine went to press we were awaiting publication of the Masterpoint and Competition Journal of the WBU. That and the WBU website (www.wbu.org.uk) provide the most reliable and comprehensive guide to forthcoming WBU events. The following is a summary of events from mid September to March 2008, but some dates are provisional and all need to be checked against the Journal and/or the website.

September 2007

- 22-23** WBU Invitation Pairs (St Mellons Golf Club, Cardiff)
- 29-30** WBU Open Trial [1]
- 30** WBU Men's Pairs ('the North')

October

- 7** WBU Men's Teams (Cardiff)
- 10-11** BGB Sim Pairs (clubs)
- 20-21** WBU Open Trial [2]
- 21** Green Point Event (North Wales)
- 28** Area Teams Finals

November

- 9-11** South Wales Congress (Porthcawl)
- 16-18** WBU Swiss Teams (Llangollen)
- 24-25** Tollemache (EBU Teams of Eight) qualifying
- 25** Veterans Pairs

December

- 2** WBU Mixed Pairs Area qualifying
- 7-9** BGB Sim Pairs (clubs)
- 8-9** Lady Milne Trial (Cardiff)

January 2008

- 11-13** Camrose [1]
- 20** WBU Open Pairs Area qualifying
- 26-27** WBU Graded Masters (Porthcawl)

February

- 3** WBU Teams of Eight Area qualifying
- 9-10** Tollemache Final
- 16-17** East Wales Congress
Junior Camrose
- 23-24** WBU Mixed Pairs Final

March

- 3-7** St David's Day Sim Pairs (clubs)
- 7-9** Camrose [2]
- 15-16** WBU Open Pairs Final

JUNIOR BRIDGE

JUNIOR CAMROSE 2007, BUNRATTY, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND *by Simon Richards (NPC)*

Thanks to the excellent organisational skills of the Wales Junior Co-ordinator, Elaine Sharp, the entire Junior Camrose (U-25) and Peggy Bayer (U-20) teams assembled at Bristol Airport for the short flight to Shannon for the Junior Home International series. This had been arranged by the Contract Bridge Association and North Munster Region of the CBAI at the Bunratty Shamrock Hotel, County Clare.

The Wales Junior Camrose Team comprised: Alan Jones and Jonny Sharp; Catherine Evans and Eve Hatfield; and Tom Stephenson and Christopher Owen. The latter three players were making their debut for Wales, and prior to meeting at Bristol Airport Tom Stephenson and Christopher Owen had never met – communication between the two players had been limited to a few e-mails!

Further team bonding at Dirty Nellie's on arrival at Bunratty helped ensure an excellent team spirit throughout the weekend. The Bunratty Shamrock Hotel had a full viewgraph facility (with coverage on BBO), which attracted a knowledgeable audience. The event ran smoothly throughout, with true Irish hospitality. The one criticism might be that whilst the organisation by the CBAI was generally excellent, and copies of the hands were available immediately after each match, there were no full hand records provided to the Captains with

details of bidding, play and scores. Consequently, detailed match by match analysis was difficult.

Wales started against an experienced Scottish team, including one player who had represented Scotland this season at Camrose level. The boards were relatively unexciting and resulted in a low scoring match, which Scotland won by 20-7 IMPS



Elaine Sharp

(19-11 VPs). There were only two swings of note, one when Wales missed a simple game, and the other where Wales wrong-sided a 1NT contract that resulted in a five trick difference. The next match against England was anything but flat, resulting in a 0-25 VP loss for Wales. This was followed by a further defeat to the Republic of Ireland by 11-19 VPs.

In Match 4 Wales easily beat Northern Ireland and finished the Saturday evening with a convincing win against Scotland, who were at the time challenging England

for the overall lead. This match was particularly encouraging from a temperament perspective as the first three boards in the Open room were each big swings to Scotland. Wales went to bed in 3rd place, although some way behind Scotland and the overnight leaders, England.

Sunday started with England taking another maximum 25 VPs against us, although Wales did fare better than in their previous match against England, salvaging 5 VPs. However, this was followed by defeats to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Wales finished the event in 5th place, although the final scores did not reflect the overall performance of the team and the promise shown.

Christopher Owen and Tom Stephenson had not met prior to this weekend and Tom had not played bridge at this level previously. They played four stanzas, with the additional playing time towards the end of the event being designed to give them experience for the future.

Alan Jones and Jonny Sharp were the most experienced pair and have been involved in the Wales junior team for many years, separately and, latterly, as a partnership. Although they brought in a lot

of IMPs, their aggressive style, coupled with occasionally misunderstandings, also led to IMPs being lost. Both should be available next year and it would be of benefit for them to play regularly together on the internet, with some coaching also being of value.

Eve Hatfield and Catherine Evans played steadily throughout the weekend, although an occasional lack of aggression in pushing for thin games or competing for part scores did cost IMPs. It was Eve's first junior Camrose and she shows potential. Both players will be available for a number of years and should become established within the team as a regular and dependable pairing.

The final scores were as follows.

England	155
Scotland	136
N Ireland	126
Republic of Ireland	100
Wales	76

Thanks once again to Elaine Sharp for all her hard work in ensuring that Wales was able to enter teams in both the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer this year.

PEGGY BAYER 2007 **by Keith Sharp (NPC)**

The Peggy Bayer (under twenty) Home International matches took place alongside the Junior Camrose at the Bunratty Shamrock Hotel on the weekend of 17th and 18th February. As always the Irish were wonderful hosts and made everyone welcome. The playing conditions and organisation were excellent - our thanks to Paul Porteous of the CBAI.

Wales had not fielded a Peggy Bayer team in Scotland in 2006, and those selected this

time served their country well. The team finished 4th of the five nations, but this does not truly reflect their achievement as they were in contention for 3rd place in the very last match which was only narrowly lost. England - with a very experienced squad - and Scotland were the favourites for the top two places and so it proved. The Wales team of five players had only one member who had played in the Peggy Bayer before - Claire Evans. Despite their

lack of experience the players acquitted themselves very well, including a winning draw in their first encounter with England. Of the eight matches played, Wales won four (including the 1 point win against England) and narrowly lost two others. They went into the last match with Northern Ireland with only one point separating the two teams – any win by Wales would have put them 3rd. Despite a valiant effort they lost by a 3 IMPs (14-16 VPs) and so finished 4th, 3 VPs behind Northern Ireland. The team comprised:



Claire Evans and Becky Watkins

Claire is the most experienced member of the team, having played in the Peggy Bayer, and also on occasion in the Junior Camrose, since she was nine. She and Becky played throughout. Becky overcame her initial nervousness to play very steadily for all 96 boards.

Matt Stephenson, Jonathan Richards and James Boulton

These three alternated. Matt played

thoughtfully and with very good presence at the table. He combined well with both Jonathan and James. Jonathan, the youngest member of the team at thirteen, impressed everyone with his playing ability and his manner at the table. James has only been playing the game for sixteen months, but proved a thoughtful player as well as a relaxed and considerate partner. Away from the table the team mixed well with the other players and made a lot of friends. They behaved impeccably and I was immensely proud of them.

MINIBRIDGE AT COWBRIDGE

Patrick Jourdain, Maggie Pierce, Diana Jones, Steve Webb and Liz Atkinson were invited to Cowbridge Comprehensive to run Minibridge sessions in July. In all, seventy-two students of years 9/10 learned to play, in two groups, and it seems they thoroughly enjoyed the experience. A tournament was held for each group - see photos of winners on page 27 (plus bloke in yellow shirt, believed to be the school caretaker). It is hoped to start a minibridge

lunchtime club at the school - any local volunteers please contact Patrick, Maggie, or Elaine Sharp for advice.

Group A winners

N/S Thomas Williams & Alex Edwards
E/W Toby Dobson & Sam Dowell-Bennett

Group B winners

N/S Rebecca Hain & Louise Edwards
E/W Evan David & Lewis Elliott

RESULTS ROUND-UP.....

Results of all WBU events can be found on the Welsh Bridge Union website (www.wbu.org.uk). Look firstly under 'Recent Results'; secondly under 'Competitions'; and thirdly under 'Congresses'. The following is a summary (winners only) of results from 1st February to 16th July 2007.

WBU Championship Events

WBU Mixed Pairs 2007

Sharon Winter and John Marshall

WBU Open Pairs 2007

Gordon Roxborough and Tony Ratcliff

WBU Webber Cup 2007

F Kurbalija, D Kurbalija, P Jourdain,
T Ratcliff

WBU Ladies' Pairs 2007

Eileen Hughes and Anne Johns

Ladies' Welsh Cup 2007

C Wiseman, L Collier, G Clench,
L Woodruff

WBU Teams of Eight 2007

Haverfordwest: E Hartland, L Collier,
M Baker, S Jarvis, John O'Sullivan,
Jill O'Sullivan, I Haston, P Milewski

WBU Swiss Pairs 2007

Mike Close and Laura Woodruff

Inter-Area Events

Perry Shield 2007

East Wales: F Kurbalija, T Ratcliff, M
Best, M Roderick, D Kurbalija, J
Casey

Spickett Bowl 2007

West Wales: M Moore, M Morris,
L Collier, C Wiseman, J Wardell,
B Job (NPC J Seavers)

Congresses

East Wales Swiss Teams

T Rees, F Kurbalija, P Jourdain,
T Ratcliff

North Wales Spring Congress

N Woodcock, S Woodcock, A Petrie,
V Petrie

WBU May Bank Holiday Congress

Pairs: Richard Harris and John Dakin

Teams: B Niccol, T Reveley,

J Williams, T Prior

Swiss Pairs: Ted Reveley and

Bill Niccol

WBU Seniors Congress

Pairs: Patrick Jourdain and Mike Hirst

Teams: J Patrick, K Shuttleworth,

B Dyde, P Sherry

Open Pairs: Colin Nash and

Peter Milewski

Mid Wales Swiss Teams

P Denning, F Kurbalija, J Casey, D
Kurbalija



Master Points Of View *by Noelle Bond*



I've been MP secretary for fifteen years now and I always find the Year End work hard and long, but afterwards I relax with a cup of tea and a happy glow of accomplishment. But

this year I felt I needed to lie down for a week in a darkened room. First, my seven year-old WBU computer began to play up. When I was entering points, it would suddenly turn itself off, or just lie there squealing and refusing to work anymore. To use a technical term, it was giving me the screaming abdabs. I was afraid it would totally collapse, leaving me to recover all my records from backups and put them on a new machine, in a state of total panic. So the WBU gave me a lovely new computer. But nothing is ever simple. Due to Bill Gates and good old Microsoft the old MP programs would not run on the new computer, so Mike has had to modify them. Of course he could not resist the chance to make improvements (which in most cases were things I wanted), so programs I'd been using for years had to be learned anew (old dogs... sigh!). And although we had tested everything, only after each program had been used for real could I breathe a sigh of relief.

And then, to match the EBU, we made changes to the ranking list. The first seemed simple: Local Master (LM) changed its name to District Master (DTM). But those promoted before the Year End were in the list as LM and those after, as DTM, so we had to sort that out. After this, incorporating the new ranks - Premier Master (PM) [50 MPs, including 10 Greens], and Premier

Grand Master (PGM) [1500 Greens, no locals required!] - was relatively straightforward, only requiring recalculation of every member's rank, plus checking. But again, it interfered with the promotions list. So you can probably understand why my head was spinning and I had no time for anything else. Mike, whose ironing skills are nil, was reduced to wearing increasingly strange shirts, some safely hidden since the 1970s. He thought this was my revenge for his pestering me for numbers for new WBU members.

Enough complaining! I've seen some strange things enclosed, presumably accidentally, in letters recently - plenty of shopping lists, of course, but the most fascinating I can't reveal. Sorry. At an event in April, someone whispered in my ear: "Did you find anything that should not have been there in my letter?" My mind raced wildly: Sordid love letters? Uncooked bacon? Drugs? Ten Pound notes? (No, I can't be bribed!) But no, it was Tesco vouchers! What a disappointment, and they weren't there anyway. I mentioned how long I've been in this job, but one lot of points were re-addressed from my predecessor, Barbara Cornish, who died recently. I'm wondering how long it takes to become established around here.

Since I mentioned our grand-daughter Emily's Polish friend, Jola, I've been asked if I've heard more about her. I have heard a little. Apparently a new teacher called out "Jola" with a hard J, as in jam, rather than soft, as in yellow, and the whole class of so knowledgeable nine year-olds convulsed. And each morning Jola greets the class in Polish. She has taught them a Polish reply. Mike told Emily that whilst they think they are saying "Good morning," they're

probably saying “We are very silly children.” I mentioned the new teacher: Emily has had thirteen different ones during the year. I wonder if this is a record? And what does it do for her education? When my daughter asked this question at a parents’ evening, there was silence.

In all there were 238 promotions from 1st February to 16th May 2007. There were so many new Premier Masters in the promotion list that the Editor made me swear to be brief, so I’m afraid I won’t be able to tell you the story of the seven of diamonds, the plumber, and the trained kangaroo.

Sincerely, Noelle

noelle@glanmor45.freemove.co.uk

JOHN HOCKEY TROPHY 2006/7

(most points registered in one year)

Top 20 at year end [16/05/07]

John Cox	293
Tony Ratcliff	239
Liam Sheridan	213
Filip Kurbalija	197
Joan Jenkins	172
Kevin Maddox	172
Gordon Roxburgh	161
Dave Barwood	159
Patrick Jourdain	148
Adrian Thomas	144
Geoff Evans	140
Mike Best	138
Sheila Shea	131
Brian Harden	123
Ivor Owen	120
Terry Evans	120
Andrew Young	117
Mike Hirst	115
Graham Simmons	112
Dai Hayes	111

BARBARA MARY CORNISH

Born in Plymouth in 1919, Barbara Cornish died peacefully at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, on the 16th June 2007, aged 88 years. Barbara's first and only employment was in a large department store in Plymouth, where she worked as a beautician. Throughout her life she displayed a vivacious and loving personality. She was very pretty and everyone loved her. During World War 2 she volunteered for the National Fire Service in Cornwall. She married Ken in 1943. Their only child died shortly after birth - a tragic episode in Barbara's life.

In 1954, Ken, a Chartered Gas Engineer, was transferred to South Wales. Barbara had never been to Wales before and was devastated that she had to leave her beloved Plymouth and all her friends. Through a mutual friend she contacted the Robinson family in Porthcawl and stayed with them for two weeks until she bought a house in Newton, overlooking the bay, where she lived for the next fifty years.

Barbara joined the Porthcawl Bridge Club and never looked back. She soon took an active role in bridge at both local and national level. For many years she was the Master Points Secretary of the Welsh Bridge Union, a task that was both onerous and time consuming.

In 1985 Barbara was honoured as President of the Union. As a result of her devotion to Welsh Bridge, Barbara was also made a Life Member, one of only six honoured in this way since 1948. Barbara did not have a nasty bone in her body. She was one of the nicest ladies you could ever wish to meet.

Barrie Robinson

**PROMOTIONS...
PROMOTIONS...
PROMOTIONS...**

by Noelle Bond

Since the last list of Master Points was published there have been a number of changes to the Master Point scheme, with the addition of several new ranks, including a new top rank of Premier Grand Master. This latest list of promotions reflects this.

Club Master

Sheila Banham	DEE
Dorothy Bugden	P
Jeremy Dawes	CAS
Elinor Ellis	PW
David Griffiths	S
Jennifer Harris	CD
John Hodgeon	T
Mary Hodgeon	T
Carol James	PN
Glan James	L
Maureen Madden	PT
Rick Malpas	S
Freda Owens	MH
Christine Redman	MON
Pamela Richards	T
Frances Robinson	BEN
Delma Simon	MER
Robert Squire	MON
Sarah Squire	MON
Liz Taylor	MER
Mike Taylor	T
Vaughan Thomas	GA
Roz Thompson	GA

District Master (formerly Local Master)

Wyn Bowen	CAR
Anna Croft	CBY
Tricia Davies	H
Peter Dumelow	S
Angela Gilbert	C
Ian Grove	S
Muriel Harrison	D
Moira James	MH
Dylan Rees	BEN

Hazel Rudland	GA
Cath Simpson	R
Judy Springett	OH
David Stewart	S
Susan Thomas	NP
David Wainwright	S
Byron Williams	S

County Master

Keith Butt	S
Belle Chaney	MH
Colin Easterbrook	VOG
David Foot	CAR
Joan Gallagher	GA
Gwynne Hall	PN
Christine Jones	S
Hilary Laurence	BV
Allan Mabley	GA
Robert Millinship	GA
Phil Roberts	MER
Marion Vanstone	PN
Gary Williams	P
Shirley Williams	MG

Master

Sara Bartlett	OH
Peter Blackwell	VOG
Glanville Dodd	L
Margaret Evans	Y
Vida Halford	PC
Allan James	RH
Kim Morgan	L
John Owen	BEN
Avis Sowels	SU
David Stevens	CN
Rosemarie Yates	GA

Advanced Master

Elwin Ackon	BEN
Patricia Ackon	BEN
David Batterley	AA
Jean Cufley	NT
Derek Earle	MER
Maura Gough	WS
Peter Lowes	SU
Kath Moore	NT
Sheila Morri	MH
David Nichol	WS
Alun Richard	A
Pat Sullivan	PN

One Star Master		Connie Clancy	BR
Jean Chuter	MON	Pat Cogbill	BR
Sue Coffin	C	Liz Crockford	T
Sadie Daniel	P	Ray Curry	S
Pat Evans	SU	Joyce Dale	P
Marjorie Morgan	BV	Iorwerth Davies	PD
Eileen Parry	MB	Jo Davies	A
John Roberts	MG	Stroma Davies	PV
Two Star Master		Mair Davison	S
John Arundale	LD	John Dewsnap	ROF
Iain Brisbane	ROF	Emer Disley	P
Anne Johns	SU	John Dow	CBY
Megan Jones	WS	Edna Draper	BRE
John Lowther	DM	Roger Eastwood	PR
Joyce Lowther	DM	Catherine Evans	P
Mike Miles	AG	Gail Evans	P
Theresa Pollard	OH	Graham Fifield	S
Three Star Master		Malcolm Fox	MG
Rae Bowen-Jones	OH	Elaine Galpin	LD
Amy Britten	SU	Donald Gorst	LD
Alan Clegg	WS	Judith Graham-Jones	H
Rosemary Evans	MG	Corina Grove	MB
Mair Jones	A	John Harris	S
Amy Owen	VOG	Robert Havard	A
Marcia Rogers	MB	Kevin Hayes	AG
Four Star Master		John Henson	BR
Joan Davies	S	John Hinton	GA
Barbara Ellis	S	Roy Hobson	PR
Godfrey Lewis	MB	Celia Holt	A
Frank Long	PV	Audrey Howells	L
Dorothy Williams	F	Doreen Hughes	R
Christina Wiseman	PN	Joe Jackson	GA
Five Star Master		Jimmy James	S
Sheila Clarke	S	Barrie Jenkins	PC
Ann Cook	R	Tony Jodo	AA
John Cook	R	Edna John	P
Barbara Easterbrook	OH	Coral Jones	T
George Ellis	S	Derek Jones	CD
Tournament Master		Dewi G Jones	PD
Mary Benton	S	Huw Jones	S
Allan Lewis	MG	June Jones	H
Colleen Lloyd	LD	Phyllis Jones	NT
Jean Parry	MB	Diana Kendrick	BV
Su Summerhayes	VOG	Jack Loxton	C
Premier Master (New Rank)		Ted Lucas	F
Churchill Al Temimi	MON	Ann Maslin	A
Jill Alexander	DM	Peter McColl	R
Jim Arthur	WS	Ted Merrette	PN
Cath Bailey	GA	Mary Merriman	H
Jane Bartlett	PN	Cindy Middleton	H
John Bell	M	Bob Miller	CAS
Peter Bennett	P	Ken Millington	LD
Ian Beverley	PC	Chris Morley	CAR
Roger Bowman	PV	Christine Norman	MB
Dorothy Bretherton	CR	John Old	LP
David Brooke	MB	Marnie Owens	T
Pearl Browning	CBY	Martin Page	A
Mair Cameron	NT	Tony Parish	MB

Sally Parkes	Y	Chris Overton	H
Syd Phillipps	MON	Premier Regional Master	
Tony Pinder	W	Keith Davison	S
Eric Podd	BR	Ann Dolan	P
Anne Raw-Rees	A	Yvonne Evans	F
Paul Relph	GA	John Wain	F
Muriel Richard	WS	National Master	
Hannah Roberts	PV	Dorothy Harris	CD
Rob Roden	GA	Dai Hayes	A
Jon Seavers	C	Joan Jenkins	PN
Mary Smart	S	Ralph Lamb	A
Christine Smith	S	Beth Wennell	LD
Geoff Smith	ROF	Andrew Young	NT
Val Smith	ROF	Premier National Master	
Keith Stonehouse	S	Bob Alderdice	S
Joyce Taylor	RH	Brian Harden	AR
Helga Towers	CB	Gwen Hurst	W
Trish Tracy	PN	Louise Orme	M
Hazel Trew	S	Senior Life Master	
Marjorie Turcan	CR	Mark Roderick	BV
Newman Vincent	T	Grand Master	
Derek Walmsley	PR	Alex Maddocks	R
Gloria Walters	H	Premier Grand Master (New Rank)	
Norma Wells	A	Peter Goodman	C
Alan B Williams	P	Mike Hirst	C
Sharon Winter	C	Patrick Jourdain	C
George Woolf	MB	Filip Kurbalija	C
David Wright	VOG	Tony Ratcliff	PN
Regional Master		John Salisbury	A
Christine Evans	MG	Adrian Thomas	GA

CAPTION COMPETITION

What is the penguin on the top of the snow mound saying to his (bridge) partner?

Entries to the Editor by 31st October. The winner will receive £5 and the winning caption will be published in the next issue of the magazine.



ARTICLES

THE EDITOR'S REDOUBLE

by Mike Close



I often have a hankering to punish those who double my final contract, or interrupt my neat bidding sequences with a lead-directing double, by resorting to the

blue card. I mentioned this recently to a one-time team-mate, who disagreed. He said that all too often, rather than punishing the opponents, the redouble heaps pain and ignominy upon whoever pulls this ill-starred card from its well-merited hiding place at the back of the bidding box. He reminded me of this hand.

Several Wests went quickly off in 3NT after a spade lead. At the table where my team sat North/South, the bidding was as follows:

South	West	North	East
Pass	2D*	Pass	2H*
Pass	2NT	Pass	3C*
Pass	3D*	Pass	3S*
Pass	4H		

West showed 20-21 balanced via a Multi sequence and East/West employed Puppet Stayman to locate their 4-4 heart fit, making East declarer. The ♠6 was led and declarer erred at trick one by playing low from dummy instead of the Queen. The play of the Queen would surely have created a second entry to hand (as I don't know of a North who would duck) and thus allow the club finesse to be taken later. When the Ace of spades was forced out, declarer failed to realise his entry problems and drew trumps. Thereupon my partner trapped declarer in dummy by continuing spades, requiring him to lead from the AQ of clubs and so go one off.

This misplay naturally led North/South to hope for a game swing on the board, provided their team-mates avoided the doomed 3NT. Well, they did avoid it. The bidding began similarly, but then diverged:

South	West	North	East
Pass	2D*	Pass	2H*
Pass	2NT	Pass	3C*
X[1]	XX[2]	Pass	Pass[3]
Pass			

	♠ QJ864		
	♥ QJ4		
	♦ K107		
	♣ 62		
♠ 97		♠ A102	
♥ AK63	Dealer South	♥ 9875	
♦ AQ3	All Vul.	♦ J85	
♣ AQJ7		♣ 108	
	♠ K53		
	♥ 102		
	♦ 962		
	♣ K9543		

[1] Goodness knows why, but I have formed the view that I want a club lead. I feel bound to communicate this intelligence to partner.

[2] I have the clubs well guarded. Might this be our best chance of a game contract?

[3] No-one invited me to this party.

I have diplomatically forgotten the identity of the doubler, South. Also, in light of what follows, I'd better invent a pseudonym for West. Let's just call him 'the Editor'. [4] East also requires a pseudonym, so we'll call him 'the Editor's long-suffering partner' (ELSP for short).

At the conclusion of the bidding the ELSP looked at North: 'It's your lead', he said. 'No it isn't', said North, 'you're the one who bid clubs'. There was then a short interval whilst smelling salts were administered to the ELSP, following which South led a spade. The ELSP rallied bravely, but it was unsurprising that in his traumatised condition he failed to find the best line. (The play is complex, but if we assume that declarer takes the diamond finesse when in hand, there is actually an intriguing symmetry with the 4H contract in that declarer must play to the *Queen* of diamonds and take the club finesse when

in hand for the final time.) As it was, the ELSP finished two down - 1,000 points to North/South. Thus my team lost 900 points on the board, the Editor's redouble having cost approximately 28 IMPs and almost as many VPs.

Had East/West continued bidding, rather than West allowing himself to be diverted by South's double of Three Clubs, I fancy 3NT would have made on a club lead, especially if the play went 8-9-Q, followed by Ace and a small heart. A bemused North would win and probably play another club as per orders, giving declarer time to knock out the King of diamonds for his ninth trick (and ten tricks when the diamonds break). I also think that if East/West had played in 4H, declarer would have remembered to take the known working club finesse at an appropriate moment.

And what is the moral of this story? It is this: when the opponents wander into your auction with a self-harming double, they may be gifting you the contract, but in general it's still best to play in your suit rather than theirs.

[4] *You call that a pseudonym? Ed.*

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

by David Hamilton

A few weeks ago, having nothing better to do, I thought I'd look in on the rubber bridge game that I'd heard takes place every Saturday afternoon at Cardiff Bridge Club. The stakes were modest, I'd been led to believe, but maybe I could persuade whoever played in the particular game to live a little more dangerously?

When I arrived there was just the one table in play. Italo Basiletti and Don Jenkins sat North/South, with Brian Rich and Jack Fine, East/West. 'Mind if I kibbitz?', I enquired in a deceptively casual manner.

'Go ahead', said Jack, 'never too late to learn.' 'What are the stakes?', I asked. '5p a hundred', said Don. I groaned inwardly. Still, the hand on the table looked to be of some interest (next page).

I was informed that West had opened the bidding One Heart, and that there had then been a competitive auction, with East/West bidding to Four Hearts before Italo, South, had bought the contract in Four Spades, which Jack Fine, sitting West, had doubled.

Jack started with a ruff-threatening ♣5

	♠J76 ♥A7 ♦AK732 ♣K92	
♠AK8 ♥Q85432 ♦QJ5 ♣5	Dealer West All Vul.	♠10 ♥KJ6 ♦864 ♣Q87643
	♠Q95432 ♥109 ♦109 ♣AJ10	

and Italo captured Brian's ♣Q with his Ace. An immediate trump was clearly called for, so Italo led a low spade from hand. Jack rose with the ♠K and then attempted to reach his partner's hand by leading the ♥2. 'Good play,' I thought to myself. The ♥2 left no room for doubt that a club return was required. But Italo spotted what was afoot and rose

immediately with the ♥A. He then, without appearing to give the matter too much thought, played ♦A and ♦K, followed by a third diamond on which he discarded the ♥10!

I sat back in my chair. It couldn't be..... but yes, no doubt about it, Italo had performed a Scissors Coup, denying West a heart entry to his partner's hand! But then, just as I turned to congratulate declarer, I saw that Jack Fine in the West seat was looking expectantly at his partner. 'It's your lead, Brian', he said casually. 'Is it?', said Brian, turning over his ♦8 and gazing at it bemusedly. 'What happened to the other high diamonds?' 'He dropped the Queen and Jack under my Ace and King of diamonds,' said Italo resignedly. 'Did he?', said Brian. 'Well in that case I'd better give him his club ruff.'

It was at this point I made my excuses and left. It may only have been a 5p game, but those 5p's add up. Know your limitations, I thought to myself.

BID WITH THE JUNIORS

by Simon Richards

Warning! This article is X-rated. Junior bridge players (yes, they do exist, albeit not in large numbers in Wales) have a reputation for wild bidding, with anaemic jump overcalls, emaciated pre-empts, and nauseating Weak Twos, often coupled with other weird and wonderful systems designed to spread fear and trembling through the opposition ranks. (It is rumoured that the Editor of this Magazine has modelled his bidding on that of the typical Junior as part of some pact with Mephistopheles in order to retain his boyish good looks.)

Whilst attending this year's Junior Camrose

and Peggy Bayer Home Internationals it became obvious that the true 'Junior' mentality only emerges at the age of about eighteen, when it is acquired, like some nasty infection, from their immediate elders (i.e. 20 year olds). It can then be some time before maturity brings about a necessary corrective and the Junior re-emerges as a normal bridge player.

I watched the following hand (over page) in the penultimate session in Ireland, so perhaps tiredness came into play.

I was watching the Welsh player sitting East. As a Junior, Acol Two openings had long been dispensed with in favour of

	♠ A1098642	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 109865	
	♣ -	
♠ K75	Dealer East	♠ -
♥ 83	EW Vul.	♥ AKQJ109765
♦ 7		♦ K2
♣ KQ107654		♣ J3
	♠ QJ3	
	♥ 2	
	♦ AQJ43	
	♣ A982	

destructive opening Two bids, so the choice lay between 1H, 4H and 2C. As this hand was at least two heart cards and probably an equivalent number of honour cards too strong for a Junior to open 4H, East began with a game forcing 2C. At favourable vulnerability this is a red rag to most Junior opponents, practically forcing them to stick their noses in with some pre-emptive effort, but in this instance South held an opening hand - so he felt obliged to pass! Following 2D from West, North had the right hand for a Junior overcall and so bid 3S - probably an underbid by Junior standards. The bidding then proceeded 4H-4S-5C-5S-6H-X-all pass. This perfectly routine Junior auction resulted in two off, for 500 to North/South. How would this fair, given that North/South have a slam on

their way? Perhaps a small Welsh gain? Unfortunately not. At the other table, East had South African Texas available and so opened 4C (possibly planning to bid again if there was intervention), and after some limited action by North/South, East/West bought the contract in 5H, undoubled, for a large Welsh loss.

Returning to my earlier suggestion that manic bidding is learned by Juniors, rather than being the inevitable consequence of some uncontrollable hormonal surge, the Wales under-20 team picked up a load of IMPs on this board when the Welsh East opened a conservative 4H, which was sufficient to silence North/South. At the other table East opened 1H, and South, who had probably had drummed into him the requirement to have four spades in his hand before it was permissible to make a take-out double of 1H, made a simple overcall of 2D. The bidding thereafter proceeded pass-pass-pass! This somewhat conservative Two Diamond contract made thirteen tricks on a club lead.

Never mind. Before they know it these under 20s will learn to bid like true Juniors, whereupon they will discover that -1100 is commonplace, and -500 simply rub of the green. For most of them this will be a phase they pass through, before they emerge once again as normal bridge players.

BRIDGE WITH THE VIKINGS

by Captain Cat

Readers of the previous issue of Welsh Bridge may have noted my admiration for bidding methods which succeed in painting a full and accurate picture of partner's hand despite the limited vocabulary available. The illustration given on that occasion was a hand bid by Groetheim and

Helgemo to 7H - the only making Grand Slam despite its being played in a 4-2 fit. That may have struck some sceptical readers as a bit extreme, so here is a more mundane example. The hand in question is taken from the 2001 World Bridge Championships.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠K108	♠AQ74
♥2	♥AQ3
♦A1092	♦KQJ8
♣KQJ62	♣A8

Admittedly, most of us would hope to reach a Grand Slam on this hand. But how easy is it for East/West to bid the Grand with confidence? If West opens 1C, what is your poison as East? 1D, 1S, 2S, or maybe 2NT? If you choose 1D or 1S, how many cards is opener showing if he makes a simple raise of that suit?

It is at this point that I feel another plug for the Viking Precision Club coming on. Admittedly, most pairs reached the Grand Slam by one route or another, but this was how the Norwegian pair of Groetheim and Aa bid the hand. As with the 7H sequence by Groetheim and Helgemo that I reported

last time, all the East bids except the last are ciphers, asking for information. I have to admit that the opponents must have been very bored by the end of the auction.

- 1D 1H
- 2C 2D
- 2H 2S
- 3H

At this stage East knew that his partner had a 3-1-4-5 shape. The bidding continued.....

- 3S (for Aces)
- 3NT (one) 4C (for Kings)
- 4S (two, same col.) 4NT (for Queens)
- 5D (one) 5H (which Queen?)
- 5S (of clubs) 5NT (for Jacks)
- 6D (one) 6H (which Jack?)
- 6S (of clubs) 7NT

That gained 2 IMPs. More persuasively, the Norwegian team reached the final of the Bermuda Bowl that year, losing narrowly in the final to USA 2, by 286 IMPs to 260.

PORT TALBOT CLOSURE CASTS A LONG SHADOW
by Kate Craven

The British Steel Bridge Club in Port Talbot closed its doors at the end of May. Not only were bridge players in the West saddened by this, a long shadow touched players throughout Wales, for this was a club which in its heyday - not so long ago - was one of the most successful and prestigious in the country.

Founded over fifty years ago by the Young Turks in the new computer department at British Steel, the club thrived. Fred Hyatt was Chairman for almost half of the club's fifty years. He and his wife Anne gave lessons to newcomers and sent them off into the club duplicate imbued with their enthusiasm for the game. Meanwhile, there was a monthly competition for a £5 prize, with players from Bridgend, Cardiff and even Newport travelling to compete in this tough event. There was much despondency

in the club if the prize went to a visitor. Within this climate the club nurtured and honed a profusion of Grand Masters, such as Fred Hyatt and Dr Arwyn Evans, whilst many others went on to represent Wales. These included Max Powell, Colin Hurd, Viv Walters, Austin Barnes, Ray Mahoney, Tony Howarth, Nattie Gable, Gwyneth Mahoney, Pat Howarth, and of course Anne Hyatt, who last year was still the highest ranking lady player in the WBU.

As Ann Dolan, club secretary for many years, observed: 'Closing the door on the club for the last time was really sad. So many people had got so much out of it. And if bridge at a free venue, with excellent access, free parking and ideal facilities is no longer viable, it really does make you fear for the future of the game.'

A long shadow indeed.

WBU BIDDING CHALLENGE

This is a bidding challenge with a difference. It is entirely the work of Tim Rees, who has been an automatic selection for the Welsh team for some years and is one of the UK's top players. Rather than have an expert panel, as is usual, we invited Tim both to set the problems and, in due course, to judge the entries and determine the prize-winners. The results will appear in the next issue of the Magazine, with a commentary from Tim in which he explains his marking.



In the eight problems below, you are South and you have to find the right bid. The problems selected for this series are from simple auctions and there will be at least three sensible alternative bids to choose from for each problem. I shall award marks based on several factors: what I think is the right bid; what worked at the table; the number of votes given to each bid; and the comments given in respect of each bid. Although there is no need for you to include comments, if you do so you may increase your score. Also, good comments will be included in an article for the next issue of the Magazine, so there's

a chance you'll see your views in print.

The system is straightforward: Acol; 4-card Majors; Weak Twos in D/H/S; 12-14 NT; Stayman; Transfers; Blackwood. Defensive bidding methods comprise: Sputnik Doubles; Weak Jump Overcalls; and Double for take-out following pre-empts.

The closing date for entries is Monday, 5th November. Anyone may submit an entry, but only WBU members are eligible to win prizes. In addition to your **name and address**, please supply your **WBU membership number** when you enter.

The prizes will be £30, £20, and £10 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd; and there will also be two **non-expert prizes** of £20 and £10. To meet the definition of non-expert you have to be below the rank of Regional Master. If you qualify, please state clearly 'Non-expert' on your entry.

Entries may be submitted by email to trees@trl.co.uk or by post to: WBU Bidding Competition, 163 Dukes Ride, Crowthorne, Berks RG45 6DR. Alternatively, you may enter via the WBU website. Good luck!

Tim Rees

Hand 1	Love All - Scoring : Teams				
S 8 H K72 D AJ873 C 9865	West - 3S	North - Dbl	East - 4S	South Pass ?	
Hand 2	All Vul. - Scoring : Pairs				
S 76 H 983 D AQ32 C KJ92	West 1H	North Dbl	East Pass	South ?	
Hand 3	NS Vul. - Scoring: Teams				
S 4 H 98 D 5 C J98765432	West -	North -	East 1S	South ?	
Hand 4	NS Vul. - Scoring: Teams				
S AK64 H QJ63 D 93 C AJ10	West 1D ¹	North Pass	East 1H	South ?	¹ Precision: 11-15, 2+ diamonds .
Hand 5	EW Vul. - Scoring: Teams				
S 9 H A9432 D A3 C K7432	West 1S	North Pass	East 2S	South ?	
Hand 6	EW Vul. - Scoring: Teams				
S 8 H Q986 D QJ84 C AK65	West - Pass	North 1S 2D	East Pass Pass	South 2C ?	
Hand 7	EW Vul. - Scoring: Teams				
S K10985 H 63 D - C AKJ1098	West -	North 2H	East Pass	South ? ¹	¹ 2S and 3C would both be invitational; 2NT would be a range enquiry.
Hand 8	Love All - Scoring : Pairs				
S AKQ53 H A D KJ7 C J1064	West - Pass	North - 1NT	East Pass Pass	South 1S ?	

First for Bridge

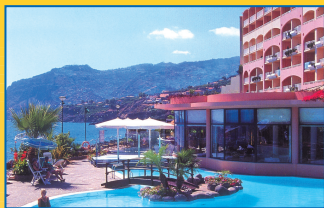
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PESTANA BAY HOTEL,

MADEIRA 19th-26th November 2007

(Daily seminars) Situated on Praia Formosa, one of Madeira's only beachfront sites, this luxury 4-star hotel offers generously sized bedrooms with balconies. Seven nights from **£579.00**. Director **Andrew Kambites**.



VILAMOURA BEACH HOTEL,

ALGARVE 17th-31st January 2008

This Portuguese 5-star hotel is ideally located within easy walking distance of the sandy beach, Vilamoura's elegant marina and the market town of Quartiera. Two weeks from **£979.00**. Director **Graham Hedley**.



LA QUINTA HOTEL, MENORCA

25th April-2nd May 2008 (Tuition based)

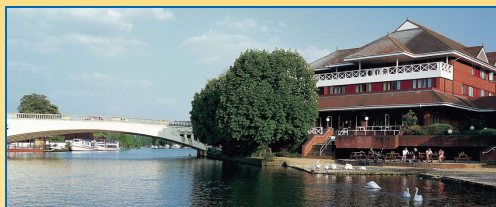
Our fifth visit to the luxurious 5-star La Quinta Hotel. It has 82 rooms including six suites all with their own balcony or terrace overlooking the pool and the beautifully landscaped gardens. Facilities include a heated indoor pool, sauna, Jacuzzi, gymnasium and hair salon. One week from **£567.00**. Director **Andrew Kambites**



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Help us celebrate the tenth anniversary of this unique holiday. The Hotel S'Algar is renowned for its welcoming atmosphere and superb sea front location, and offers a choice of double or twin rooms on ground or first floor. Plenty of fine sports and leisure facilities. One week from **£537.00**. Director **Andrew Kambites**



CROWNE PLAZA, READING

New Year 2007/8

Our first visit to this superb, recently upgraded hotel on the banks of the River Thames. The Crowne Plaza offers 122 bedrooms with air conditioning, mini-bars and broadband internet access, and a fully equipped indoor health club with gym, pool and sauna. Choice of three breaks from **£243.00**. Director **Graham Hedley**.



WINCHESTER HOTEL, WINCHESTER

13th-17th March 2008

Located close to the heart of this historic city, this recently upgraded, 4-star hotel offers 71 well-appointed bedrooms, a superb health club and an award-winning bar and brasserie. This break provides the perfect mixture of relaxed bridge and stylish accommodation. Five nights, half board from **£253.00**. Director **Graham Hedley**.

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