## WALES IN THE CAMROSE: BELFAST - March 2010

Wales entered the second Camrose weekend with a team which was making its sixth appearance, namely Paul Denning & Patrick Shields, Dafydd & Gary Jones, Filip Kurbalija & Tim Rees. The captain – a repeat of the first appearance of this squad 5 years previously– was Mike Tedd.

This year the extra team in the event was a team representing the Northern Ireland Bridge Union (NIBU), this organisation being the host for this weekend. All six tables played the same hands allowing for some fascinating comparisons.

Wales had amassed 78 VPs, against an average of 75, during the previous Camrose weekend. While being in its perennial 3<sup>rd</sup> place, this was not one of Wales better starts in the Camrose – indeed it had outscored that on all but one of the other six Camrose weekends in this format. The two leading teams (Ireland and England) were well ahead with 100 and 99 VPs respectively.

This report covers the matches against Scotland, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, England: and NIBU.

**SCOTLAND** : the first match was against a foe against whom we have a fairly even record – over the 7 sessions in this format we have clocked up 2 wins, 2 losses and three draws. This match started off with a small goal by John Matheson for Scotland when he was the only player to pass in second seat with AQ9 - J65 - A4 - 96532 and then he bid only 1N over his partners fourth in hand opener. This proved enough and his +90 was the only positive score for a declarer. First 5 imps to Scotland.

Board two was a bidding exercise no-one passed

J93 AK7632 AJ AJ	Q QJ Q72 KT97642	You would like to play 6C (depends just on finding the CQ) but Wales played in the safe 4H making overtricks. In the England-Ireland match both tables ended in 3N, the Irish with a small spade led to an honour and a spade return. Declarer guessed wrongly (putting in the S9) and that was one down. Played the other way up the lead was the top spade and there was no guess. Notice how leading second best from T8652 would have solved declarer's problem on this hand.
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Things were quiet until

KQ986	AJ2 JT975 KQ5 74	T753	East dealt at RED and everyone opened 1H over which all but one bid his clubs, mostly at the three level but the Scot bid 4C. Tim Rees doubled this to show the other suits but it looked best for Filip to play in the solid heart suit and that he did. North passed quietly and it drifted two off.
AJ9864 85	4	AKQ862 3 AQ	At our other table over 3C, West was able to show each of his suits in turn and 3S was raised to 4S. North doubled (it was doubled at three tables) and declarer had no problem making it. This cost Wales 14 imps.
	4 43 T72 KJT9632		In the other matches Ireland were doubled in 4H and ran to 4S also doubled and made, while England bid smoothly to 4S undoubled and lost 8 imps. The NIBU team got lost and ended in 5D-X losing 15 imps to N Ireland who played in 4S.

There were some small swings after that leading up to a hand where the Scots bid to a slam on a finesse – a two way finesse. Declarer played with the odds and went off. The margin was 29-38 in favour of the Scots at the end of that segment, and now the Jones came in to replace Denning & Shields for segment number two.

The first board was flat around the room, but the second generated a swing in every match as each match had one table in 4H and the other in a part-score. Two finesses were right so it was +6 imps to Wales. A few boards later partner of a (natural) 1D opener held 5 - AKQT8532 - 85 - T6. it was curious to see three bid 2H and then 4H (England and both NI pairs), while two other pairs couldn't and one other pair didn't. Everyone ended in the same contract.

Wales hit a bad patch next - on a hand which was more interesting for others

J76 KQ7 QT532 J6	8532 862 64 9732 Q4 JT5 K97 KQT54	AKT9 A943 AJ8 A8	The contract at most tables was 3N and a top club was led by South. There are 9 tricks if you take a winning finesse in either spades or diamonds. The NI declarers looked no further and quickly went off. The other three spotted the chance to combine chances in those two suits, and started by playing off the top spades. When the SQ fell they had nine tricks without finessing into the danger hand. On this hand Wales was the exception, wandering off into a 6D contract that has play but no chance as the cards lie. 12 imps away.
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There were two more – much wilder - attempts at slam by Wales in this match, one of which cost 14 and one which was a flat board but could have been a gain of 13 imps, Here's one Wales gained on –

K864 T72 A842 T8	A53 AQ9 Q7 Q9763	QT7 J654	By a path we cannot explain, Tim Rees found himself playing 3N from the North seat. The lead was a heart which he won to start on clubs with small to the CJ. He must now play for Kx onside or Tx offside, each equal a priori chances. He chose the losing one (it would be a boring hand otherwise <sup>(i)</sup> ) and when he gave up a club he got a second heart back.
	J92 K83 9653 AJ2	KJT K54	He now cashed his winners and the defence came down to the same shape as he had, with three spades and two diamonds. This allowed Tim to exit in diamonds and the opposition had to open up spades. After a spade to the SQ and a small spade back, he wasn't going to guess wrong – the S9 fetched the SK and that meant 9 tricks and 7 imps for Wales.

When the dust had cleared Wales had lost another 23 imps to lose the match 10-20 in VPs. This year's two matches against Scotland have been our worst results in recent years, although we have always come ahead of them in the overall rankings. Scotland won the Jourdain Trophy as a result of a 40-20 win over the two weekends.

**REPUBLIC OF IRELAND** : the second day started with a difficult team, one we had beaten only once in seven outings. Denning-Shields went in to bat with Kurbalija-Rees in the other room. The first hand was awkward – North opens a strong NT but the par contract is 3N for East-West. No table found it. Then came this --

K52 T4 AJT9654 K	AJ8 Q62 K732 JT3 Q763 K7 Q8 AQ974	T94 AJ9853  8652	East opened at all tables, with a weak 2H four times and a multi-2D twice. Over one of the 2H openers and both 2D openers South doubled, and in those three cases North bid 3N. Shields got the lead of the C5 run to the CK and a HT switch. Patrick has to duck this in both hands, but since West overtook with the HJ, it was West on lead. Most awkwardly she switched to the ST. Declarer has one trick in each red suit, four clubs and two spades at this point (clearly the SK is onside or East would have cleared the hearts) and needs one more. The plan is for an extra in spades and this can come from end-playing West to lead from SK, or from finding West with the S9. Declarer went for the latter (covering with the SQ), reasoning that an attractive holding like T9 of spades would have been led at trick one. Not so. One off and Wales lost 4 imps where they might have gained 11. Without the ST switch, there is only the winning option, so well done Anna Onishuk!
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There were some interesting pre-empting decisions later in the match. First in hand at green, three of the six tables (the three leading teams over the weekend) opened 3S with T987653 - T832 - void - T7 and this was the right thing to do, as 2 of the 3 earned a game swing. On a different round, only one of six (from the team who came sixth) opened 3C with 9 - T97 - K42 - QJT973 at both vul, and he succeeded only in pushing his opponents into the safer game the others missed!

This hand came along towards the end of the set

AK	72	By the time the big hand got to bid for Wales, it had gone the equivalent of 2S-P-3S, so it was 3N-end. The Irish with a free run in the other room atomad in 3N alog for a flat heard but 3 tables managed to get to 6C.
AKQ85 A843	K7	stopped in 3N also for a flat board but 3 tables managed to get to 6C. With clearly only trump losers an issue, one declarer tried starting with the CA as a safety play, another with small to the CJ. Only Paul
Q2	AJ9763	Tranmer for NIBU knew to run the queen first (covered) and then return to finesse the C9. He was rewarded with 14 imps.

Filip Kurbalija got to play in 3S doubled making on the next board to gain Wales 10 imps and then came this monster

K	Q62 Q96 72 2 T8	Every West opened 1H and only one North came in over that (Ireland, with a double). Every East bid 1N and over that two Souths chose 2N to show the minors but Paul Denning sensibly (what suits does East have?) passed. In every case West continued by bidding spades.
A875432	Т	The most successful auction at this point (with a 1H opener limited to 15 hcp) went
К	T954	P-P-P but against the (still silent) Welsh it was 2S-3C-3H-4C and when this was
	KQJ765	passed around to Shields he doubled. South smiled and when the smoke had
73	3	cleared that was +1700 for the defence. The fact that Filip Kurbalija had been
J		doubled in 3H for -500 (almost inevitable after North's initial double led South to
-	J863	show he had values) didn't matter any more. Wales gained 15 imps, to finish the segment 13 imps ahead.
A	T943	

The Jones pair came in for the second segment, and got off to a flying start. After a small misunderstanding they bid a grand slam on a finesse and today the finesse was successful – that pulled in 9 imps, and on the very next board they bid a game missed at 4 of the other 5 tables for another 11 imps. They also had this hand to bid

3 KT632 AQ9875 3	KQJ6 AQJ9 T3 AK6	At all the other tables the two suiter opened second in hand, but Dafydd passed and then cue bid after he heard 2C(Precision)-X-P. The Joneses ended in the same 6H found at all six tables and got the same CQ lead as at five of them. At the other table the opening hand had bid out her long diamonds as well, and the man on lead with the SA and the DK was listening and led out his ace. 14 imps to England but flat	
		elsewhere.	

It is worth noting the way in which opening bid strength has come down in recent years. Three out of the six tables opened, vulnerable in first seat, with KJ32 – K9874 – void – K865, and just a few minutes later four out of six opened in second seat again vulnerable with T8 – AT95 – AQJT – T98. Both tables opened both hands in our Ireland-Wales match.

Pre-empting style was an important part of this segment too - look at

	AKQJT82	Five of the six tables opened the heart hand 3H (second seat, red) while the Irishman opened 4H. Over 3H, the Jones were able to bid 3N which
KQT9542	3	worked easily when the 3 card diamond suit was on lead. Over 4H the
94	A82	other hand bid Blackwood and they came to rest in a very uncomfortable
Q732	K4	5H which could have gone off but they escaped. One stroke of luck, and
		then

KT987632	AQJ54
Q	K86
82	A43
K5	J8

Half the field opened this 3S and half 4S (first seat, both vul). The Irishman (same one as the previous hand) chose 4S and got raised to 6S by his partner. When Shields led a diamond, he found himself 3 off, and much relieved that he couldn't even make game! What's more he gained points as the 3S opened by Jones in the other room allowed the opposition into the bidding (ditto 3 times) and the result was 5S doubled and that was 500 for a 5 imps swing to Ireland. Lucky people!

The segment finished with another 10 imps to Wales who had won the match 19-11, giving them possession of the Cyfeillion Beiriste trophy for a score of 32-28 over the two weekends.

**NORTHERN IRELAND**. Wales have a good record against Northern Ireland, not having lost to them since Jan05, but recently they've had a few close encounters. The first set saw Denning-Shields sit out. There were three slam-ish hands in the set. The first was this

and later there was a good slam only bid by Wales

		The Jones started 1C-2N, which shows 16+ balanced. Now 3H brought
KQ53	T4	the fit to light, and after hearing a 4D cue, opener had enough spare to
KJ74	AQ85	use Blackwood and bid the slam. The lead of the SA made a tricky slam
К	AQ43	very easy to play. The unlucky pairs were those whose auction started
K984	A75	1C-1D-1H and now the FSF bid in spade was raised to 3S and suddenly
	7.1.0	there was no room to explore in hearts.

I found this hand interesting also

A8	T96542	The curious feature about this hand is that it was played in spades 5
AK94	T7	times and there were 5 different results, ranging from six tricks (Wales
96	K75	unfortunately) to ten tricks (Ireland). Deep Finesse tells us it is an eight
A9762	J5	trick hand – exactly the average of all the experts' results!

The most interesting play in the set was this hand

At the end of the set Wales were 17 imps up while on the same set of boards England were 42 up and Ireland were 43 imps up! The second half saw Wales move into overdrive, collecting 68 imps more than the opposition. Here are three examples of Welsh declarer play

93 Q92 J8543 QT2	6 /	AKT752 64 AT8 J5	North passed as dealer but then bid 2H after East's 1S opening was passed round to him. Partner raised to 4H and after one top spade, East switched to the CJ. With three outside losers it is all about finding the trump lady. Shields set about to show that it wasn't. Winning the CA and diagnosing the club distribution he cashed a second one and then ruffed a spade and led a diamond up to the DK. A second diamond went to the DT and East exited with the DA, ruffed. Now declarer ruffed a third spade and exited with the third round of clubs, won by West. He didn't want to lead a heart from the queen, so he played a fourth diamond but this let declarer ditch the C8 and ruff in dummy. Now he ruffed the last spade safely and had the AK of hearts as the last two tricks. He never knew who had the HQ!
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2 AT5 AQ975 AQJ7	6 K642 KT4 98542 KQJ9874 J97 J8 3	AT53 Q83 632 KT6	North dealt at red and South opened 3S. After a takeout double the future was in East's hands – two tables chose 3N (very sensibly) while the others passed for penalties. West has an awkward lead and different tables chose different minor suit aces. But actually it takes HA to beat the contract. Paul Denning got CA and another club, ruffed – and then the DJ won by the DA. Another club ruff and a diamond finesse of the ten allowed a losing heart to go. Now another club ruff and a heart towards the king. The KQJ9 of spades could not be denied three tricks and that was +730 for Wales. The other defenders all managed to beat 3S, but often giving declarer a chance he didn't take. The secret is getting a heart switch – can East tell that clubs will wait, and signal to his partner for a heart switch at trick two?
	J964	KQ A752 AJ54 Q64	After P-1S-X-P, Filip Kurbalija jumped to 3H and was raised to game. There are two sure losers outside trumps so it is vital to play trumps for one loser. Filip's first play was towards the J9 and he covered the 8 with the 9 and it fetched the king. Next he led out the HJ and pinned RHO's ten. And then there was a doubleton CA which he did find, so only one loser there. Just made!

**ENGLAND**. With only one win in the past 7 encounters, and England leading the table at this time, this was not going to be an easy match. There were some interesting bidding problems

A9864 K8 AQ643 9	K5 AT96 K52 8652	The bidding had, at four tables, gone 1m-P-1H before the two suiter got to bid (the others were 1N-P-P). It proceeded 1S and now opener suggested a weak NT hand, sometimes showing 3cd heart support en route. Bidding diverged then – two tables ending in 2H (by oppo), two in 3N and 5D once. The play in the last of these was the issue, since the spades are 4-2. The winning answer – missed by the English declarer – is to ruff one spade low (over-ruffed by the 3 card trump holding) and then ruff a second spade with the DK. Wales gained 12 for the Jones' 3N in the other room.
AJ8765 A65 A A73	T2 KJT72 KQ872 4	Another bidding problem – after 1S-1N, or 1S-2H, what does opener rebid? Over the former the choices were 3S (twice) and 2C (once). The first of these got 4S while the last uncovered the heart fit. After 1S-2H the only comfortable people were the pair who could bid a forcing 3H. England and Wales both invented bids and ended in 6H and 5H respectively. Only the latter was successful, so Wales gained 13 imps. The 3 strong club pairs playing at this time, for whom it would bid so easily (1C-1H-1S-2D-2H) were all sitting the other way,

KQJ87	A3	This proved a bidding challenge for all. Three tables opened 1S and three opened 1N. After 1S-2H it ended in game in hearts and a 4-1
AK8	T7652	break scuppered that. After a 1N opener two responders treated their
J42	983	hearts as a 4 card suit and used Stayman, successfully playing in 3N
86	AKQ	(diamonds are 4-3). Nobody got to the best contract – 4S. Wales lost 12
		imps on this one.

Wales had 4 double figure swings, one part score swing and 9 flat boards in this segment. In this segment there were 3 boards with identical contracts at all six tables (out of 7 instances over the weekend) on two of these boards the results were also identical (1 other case). The segment ended with Wales ahead by 32 imps – an excellent start.

The second segment didn't start well. On the first hand Wales bid a slam on a finesse, a bit worse than 50-50 and that failed. A different suit would have delivered 12 tricks and two other tables managed that. On the next hand muddled play cost 13 imps. And shortly after that a slam at the other table had a trump suit of 983 opposite KQ652 and that had two trump losers – an awkward hand.

A5	KQJ76	There were two pairs who bid the 6C slam (failing), two pairs who
	A976	played in 4S (the best place to be) and two pairs who stopped in a part-
AK9645	7	score. Scotland gained 6 imps for stopping in 4C, much to their surprise.
KQ652	983	The Welsh started well with 1D-1S-2C-2H-3C but failed to stop in 5C.

But here's a Welsh success ...

KQJT5	A2	Both rooms started 1S-1N but after that Rees-Kurbalija play transfers so
J9	T83	Tim bid 2C to show diamonds. Over a double of that, Filip bid 3D and
A7542	KJ96	Tim bid 5D. The best game (4S) was reached only once but making
	Q654	game in diamonds (the double got a club lead) gave Wales 6 imps.

There was one monster hand : K - 9 - AKQJT8543 - AQ. A nine card suit has a frequency of once every 700 deals, so we should expect it about one Camrose weekend in four. Everyone found it simplest just to bid 5D on this. If the spade opening bid on your left had been supported they continued to 5S and you had to defend, but if not then you entered dummy with a diamond (dummy had 4, yes the opposition had a double void) and took the winning club finesse.

862 Q863 AK863 K	A9753 A4 92 J843 KQ T52	JT4 KJ97 J5 AT62	The Englishman sitting East opened 1D (the Irish also opened quite a few 10-counts but what can one say when these teams ended first and second?) and after raising hearts Peter Crouch bid 4H and got the D9 lead. He could do no better than win, cash his top club and enter dummy with a diamond ruff to throw a losing spade. He was still very short of tricks and ruffed a club before playing a fourth diamond. North threw a club on that (necessary, else it makes). He could overruff the next club with the HA but missed the need to return a heart immediately and declarer was able to scramble 10 tricks on a cross ruff at the end. This was 7 imps away which could
	T52 QT74 Q975		have been 5 imps in.

Wales lost that set by slightly more than they won the first set, and ended the match with a 14-16 score in favour of England.

**NIBU**. This was the weakest team in the competition and we hoped to do well. This expectation was realised when we had double figure swings gifted to us on boards 3, 6 and 11 - but we did earn some swings too. Look at this one –

AKQT	732 KT2	Paul Tranmer for NIBU opened a strong 1C, and heard the bidding go 1H - X(usually 5-7) – 4H. He expected a slam to be straightforward and he doesn't need much in partner's hand. He chose 7C and that was too much when the DK was offside. A little unlucky but well done the Jones
AJ4 AKT976	QT952 Q5	for pushing him there. Playing even 6C is quite tricky – the consensus after the event favouring drawing trumps and then leading the DJ to the DQ. If it loses you are fine and if not you are in dummy and can decide on whether to finesse diamonds or spades.

## The most interesting hand was this

975 974 54	KQJ65 J972 KT72	AT863 A83 AKT86	With EW vulnerable, North opened 1H four times and each time East showed his two suiter. South liked what he saw and in three cases (once in each match) got to double 3S. If he had been on lead he might have found the only lead to beat it – a top spade – but in practice it was West who bid spades and partner could not lead one. The consequence was that EW could cross ruff the hand happily and it was not possible to stop 9 tricks. This hand cost Wales 11 imps.
QJ865	KQJ42		Would you have found the SK lead if East had played the hand?
	T2 Q3 A943		[The only other table on record had North open a canapé 1D over which East bid just one spade after which NS ended in 3N making]

There was one other slam hand (that's two slam hands in the set, even though NIBU bid slam four times!). It was this –

	QT54 JT62 6 A974		There were 3 1N openers from West and 3 1D openers after which five of the six tables reached a slam – only NIBU stopping out, in 4S against Wales. That was unlucky as Wales were in 6H, which with CA and a trump loser, could not be made.
KJ83 83 AKJT8 K8	9762 5 97432 Q62	A AKQ974 Q5 JT53	One pair (for NI) reached 6N and got the HT led (according to system either shortage or promising the J) but he burned his bridges very quickly by playing a second heart. He saw the bad news and led the CJ, guessing well to duck that. North also ducked – and that was fatal – for declarer cashed his red suit winners and the SA and came down to S-KJ C-K in his own hand. North was in trouble. He bared SQ but declarer had no guess since South had thrown all his spades too! So 6N made.

At the end of the penultimate segment Wales were ahead by 35 imps. The second half started with two slam-ish hands (one of which – and a reasonable one this time – was only bid by NIBU).

KT4	AQ75	After P-1H-3C-X-P, the Irishman took a shot at 6H. With no losers
AJ98764	52	outside it was all down to the heart suit and with KT onside he had no
AQ4	KT7	problems. Every other table had a similar start but settled for 4H, making
	Q543	12 tricks. That cost Wales10 imps.

and next was

AKQJ874 AK7 K 53	2 T9864 853 AQJT	After a 3D opener (found at 3 tables) the big hand doubled, and then over 4D the weaker hand bid 4H. It continued 4S-5C-5H, which depended on the club finesse and hearts behaving, while 6S depends just on the club finesse. Two tables got to 6S, but at least this was a flat board for Wales.
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More bidding exercises followed.

J7	KQ43	There were two tables which passed this out (not opening the 12 hcp in
9753	AT642	4 <sup>th</sup> seat), two which got to 2H, and two which got to 4H. One game
A64		bidder was NIBU, who opened a weak NT, used Stayman and raised 2H
AQJ5	9862	to 4H. Easy game!

and this which didn't look to be an issue, but you can never tell.

KQ752	AJT83	It was flat in 6S in the Wales-NIBU match, and flat in different slams in
A2	K76	the Ireland-NI encounter. But when Scotland played England the English
K9832	AQT5	stopped in game, and gained 11 imps when the other table bid 7S (one
8	3	off)!

The next hand showed something about the standards of pre-empts at favourable vulnerability: holding J3 - JT7653 - JT8 - 42 we find four of the five tables (one record missing) opened a weak two. Actually the Welsh player with this hand opened with 3H, and gained 13 imps for his efforts when his partner was able to double 3N and collect +800.

A63 J KT875 KQ32	74 AK974 92 A964	After a start of 1D-1H-2C most players raised to 3C, but our opponent bid 2S (FSF) and ended in 3N. Even with the unthreatening but natural lead from JT7 of clubs, there is a lot to do. Today the QT5 of hearts was onside and declarer guessed that, and made 3N to take 10 imps away from Wales.
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Finally – was this lucky or unlucky? There were two pairs playing weak NT in the last set and they both chose to open 1N holding AJ954-A73-QJ6-54 and when their partner had only two points, that froze the opposition out of their easy game. So it was 1N-4 and 1N-3 in the Wales-NIBU match, while other matches were all in a vulnerable game making the other way.

When the smoke cleared Wales had only gained 2 imps on that set, and won the match 21-9 and that gave Wales a total of 89 VPs (against an average of 75) for the weekend. Only one team – England – scored more VPs over the weekend. When the two weekends were combined, England had won the Camrose trophy, while Wales had stayed in third place, but had put some space between itself and Scotland. Over the four years of this format, Wales has been 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 6 every time, and only once closer to second than this time, when Wales had 168 VPs over two weekends (just 167 this year). This weekend's 89 VPs is Wales' best yet, but even doing that on each weekend will only sometimes win the Camrose!

That's all.

TEAM	2007	2008	2009	2010
England	171	176	167	196
Ireland	127	186	146	182
Northern Ireland	109	93	128	114
Scotland	131	138	119	150
Wales	155	168	150	167
(sixth team)	199 (holders)	126 (CBAI)	176 (EBU)	83 (NIBU)