

WALES IN THE CAMROSE: DUBLIN - January 2011

Wales entered the first Camrose weekend of the new season with a notable absence from the team – Filip Kurbalija & Tim Rees having dropped out after many years as the leading Welsh pair. The team representing Wales was the team which scraped through to win the Spring Fours in May 2010 by one imp and then represented Wales in the European in Ostend last June – Paul Denning & Patrick Shields, Peter Goodman & Adrian Thomas, Dafydd & Gary Jones. This time the captain was Alan Stephenson.

Also present in the Camrose this year was a team representing the WBU – it being the privilege of the team hosting the second Camrose weekend to provide a second team. This team was Mike Best & Mark Roderick (who both last played in Oxford in Jan07), Alex Hogg & Alex Maddocks (the former played with Ted Martin many moons ago, and the latter once with Simon Richards in the late 90s), and the very experienced John Salisbury & Mike Tedd. Their captain was Gwynn Davis.

WELSH BRIDGE UNION & WALES. As always the country with two teams has a local match in the first round. This was a very low turnover first stanza (of 16 boards) with one 7-imp swing being the largest, but some of the hands produced larger swings elsewhere.

83 T863 AQ852 T2	AJ96 AKJ954 K4 6	KT75 --- JT3 AK9843	Wales bid 4C over 3H and played there doubled one off, against 2H+2 in the other room. In England-Ireland the bidding started with a phony 1D from East (either clubs or diamonds, not a single suiter, up to 15 hcp). and West responded 1H. North couldn't bid 2H (as Peter Goodman did for Wales) so passed and came in with 2H over 1S-P-1N. Opener (Peter Crouch) now showed his true colours for the first time with 3C, and after P-P Hanlon showed his extra values with a double and there it ended.
	Q42		
	Q72		
	976 QJ75		
			After a heart lead ruffed declarer ran DJ which is fatal as North can return a diamond and the threatened ruff either beats the contract or forces declarer to draw trumps losing his chance of spade ruffs. But North won DK and returned a club to the CJ. Declarer can make if he drops the CT under that (but he didn't) but South let him off with that and failed to play a second trump at the right time and 3C-X made to give England 9 imps.

A few boards later there was a bidding problem nobody solved. North opened 1N (14-16) over which East showed the majors and South held 4 – 432 – 5 – AKJ98754. Three players put their partner in 3N and the fourth transferred into clubs and put partner into 5C. Unfortunately that left the AKQ76 of hearts on lead and all contracts were quickly down. If the long club hand becomes declarer, the hand on lead has a natural spade lead and that would allow either 3N or 5C to make.

There was a nice option in the card play picked up by Peter Goodman on this hand

K6 AKJ732 J2 AJ5	J53 QT984 965 74	The most common auction was 1H-<2H showing spades+other>-4H-P-P-X and the big hand started off with the top diamonds. When declarer drew trumps and played ace and another club, RHO won that and a spade through meant two off. Peter ended trumps in dummy and led a club to CJ and CK. The big hand now got worried about declarer's potential club suit and cashed SA for a safe one off. That play might have been more psychological than real, but was worth 5 imps and was repeated by Charles Outred for Scotland.

The most interesting play hand of the set was the next board

	93 KQ95 K53 AJ62		The contract was usually 3N by North after he had shown hearts, so East led the D2. A few defenders (confusingly?) inserted the DQ at trick one. All declarers won the DK at some point and went first to knock out the HA, since that would establish eight tricks. Then it looks like cash one black AK and if nothing happens, finesse in the other suit. But which to choose?
Q87 42 AQ98 T983	542 A873 J762 Q4		After the fourth diamond either East or West would be on lead, and here is where the stories diverge. For Wales, it was West who led the C9, covered with the CJ-CQ-CK, but declarer failed in the ending to squeeze West in the blacks (and so went one off). For England, East led an ambitious CQ and that solved the Irish problem. For Ireland the C8 was run to the CK and declarer later cashed the CA, to find out that he didn't need the spade finesse after all. For N. Ireland, Greenwood was pushed into playing the top spades first (he had used one and they played a second), but he found a show-up squeeze on West and dropped the CQ offside. Nicely done.
	AKJT6 JT6 T4 K75		For Scotland the opening lead was the CT and the defence never tackled diamonds so declarer could afford to lose both black queens. And WBU? Somehow they stopped in 2S and missed all that fun.

At the end of that stanza Wales led the WBU 21-11, while in the other matches Scotland and Northern Ireland each conceded just 10 imps to the other, and Ireland and England turned over 46 imps between them.

In the second half, the Joneses replaced Denning-Shields for Wales and Salisbury-Tedd replaced the two Alexes. This stanza saw 82 imps change hands. The first board was this bidding exercise

6 AJ984 KQ4 T754	Q942 KQ J AJ9832	Although two other tables opened Gary Jones found a pass first in hand with his 10 hcp, and it proceeded P-1C-1S. He was now able to emerge with a very descriptive 3H fit jump, and Dafydd judged well to raise this to game and 4H was the only game to play in. The other room bid 2H over 1S and ended in 4C making an overtrick. 7 imps to Wales.
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The second board was a very quiet 1N by Wales in both rooms, making for a 5 imp swing – quite oblivious to the fact that Ireland were playing the same hand in 2C-XX which is perilously close to making but a bad view at trick one resulted in -1600 and 16 imps to England. A few boards later Scotland were doubled in 4S and with a hidden void John Matheson produced a redouble and +1280 gained him 13 imps. The Welsh match seemed very tame at this point.

753 Q7 K9632 T95	K2 KJT432 Q7 AQ7	9864 A985 AT4 64	This perennial bidding problem arose a few boards later. After (from South as dealer) 1C-1H-1S-2D how should South continue? It happened at 5 of the 6 tables (one South opened a Precision style 2C) and the answers were 2N (3 times) and one each for 2H and 3C. Two 2N bidders got to 3N (an easy make) while the others all reached 4H.
	AQJT 6 J85 KJ832		My preference is 2N (and one must be careful to avoid a long think then 2N) after which North bids 3H and South bids 3S to emphasise the spades and show doubt about 3N – but North bids 3N and everyone has described their hands well.
			Against 4H, Mike Best (for WBU) and Tommy Garvey (for Ireland) led DA and the contract was easily down, but for Wales the lead was C6 and now four rounds of spades allowed Mike Tedd to discard all his diamonds and bring home the game – for 10 imps to WBU.

That hand didn't quite put WBU into the lead but they gained 13 imps and 12 imps on the last two boards of the set to win the match by 20 imps.

This was the bidding exercise on the penultimate board -

K976	AJT4	For WBU the sequence was 1H-P-1S-<2C> and John Salisbury's 4C splinter provoked a 4D cue and seconds later they were in the good slam. In the other room it went 1H-P-1S-P-4S-end and a 75% slam was missed. Oddly, in two rooms the responder agreed hearts rather than show his spades, and only one other table bid the spade slam.
AQJ52	943	
AT5	K96	
A	Q65	

After the first match, the WBU team was leading the Camrose table with 18 VPs.

ENGLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND. The second round match for Wales was against England, while WBU played N Ireland. Wales played solidly to lead England by 22 imps, losing points on only 3 hands; meanwhile WBU played like heroes to go 50 imps ahead of the demons from Ulster.

An early bidding problem was this. You open 1S and it goes <2C>-X-P and you hold AT542-K73-Q62-K2. With a five card spade suit either guaranteed or strongly implied, nobody wanted to rebid that and the field found three for 2D and three for 2H. They all got raised but all the 2H raises went wrong, as did one of the 2D raises (when responder got over excited). Partner had 4 hearts and 5 diamonds.

There were swings in both Welsh matches on board 9 when the hand on lead against 4H had to choose from KJ84-743-J3-8532. For Wales he chose the DJ and for N Ireland he chose the SK – both of these killed the defence and let the game make; two cases of being overactive where a boring fourth best beats the contract instantly. The best play hand was this

Q92 QJ75 A98 K72	K763	J	England played in 4H by East and got DQ lead. Not knowing where the diamond length was he won DA and played two trumps and then a diamond to the DK but that was ruffed. Paul Denning carefully cashed SA and exited in trumps. Declarer tried a third diamond but Patrick Shields could play back D7 confident that declarer didn't have enough tricks even with the long diamond, and that was one off. Peter Goodman did better on a trump lead, winning and playing a spade immediately. On the trump return he learned that South had four hearts and so was the hand more likely to be short in diamonds. DK and then small towards the ace let him make his four top minor suit cards and six trumps. Against WBU declarer also had a heart lead and drew a second trump before the SJ; he could not recover now (with careful defence from Salisbury & Tedd). Well done, Peter.
	2		
	JT72		
	J543		
		AKT8	
		K6543	
		AT8	
	AT854		
	9643		
	Q		
	Q96		

Three consecutive hands exposed different approaches to weak twos bids (which all pairs played in some form). First came, with 85-AQJ83-97-9865 in second seat at red, there was only one opener (England). Next was 972-AT5432-82-A3 in first seat at amber, and two (Scotland & Wales) did not like this as a pre-empt and passed, avoiding the 800 penalty other openers received. Finally came T8-AQT532-J732-T in third hand at white, and here we had four weak twos but two players (England & Ireland) preferred a 3H opener. The last set of the stanza produced some interesting questions ...

AQJ64 6 QJ542 T6	KT	3	Four of the six tables opened 1S as West (vulnerable against not) and North has to decide – to overcall 2H or X? Two chose each option; in one case 2H was passed out but for Scotland West doubled. After 1S-X-P, South has an awkward bid – a problem faced only once because only England passed as East; Paul Denning chose 1N. The consequence was 4H at three of these tables and 3H at one. For Wales Patrick Shields was declarer in 4H, doubled by an East who had been silent until his opponents reached game. All tables started with S3 to the SA and the S6 back ruffed, and a diamond return. All tables went for a heart finesse now but that lost and if a heart was returned declarer lost the chance to ruff a club in dummy; that meant Shields went two off. A club toward the CQ before the heart finesse would have saved a trick.
	AQJT8		
	A3		
	A985		
		K732	
		T986	
		KJ43	
	98752		
	954		
	K7		
	Q72		

The second half of this match produced the lowest scoring segment of the weekend, with Wales beating England 12 imps to 8 imps, and only one swing above 3 imps. The same hand helped the WBU team – it was this –

JT72 52 T7532 J2	Q53 AQ98 J6 Q873	K86 KT73 A84 KT4	Declarer in 3N as North was Alex Maddocks for WBU and Patrick Shields for Wales – both after East had shown positive values, and East led the H3 in both cases. With the SK expected to be over the queen, this means declarer needs three tricks from the club suit.
	A94 J64 KQ9 A965		The king is almost certainly over the queen and declarer must play for the doubleton king, or to pin a doubleton T or J in the West hand. Both declarers got to the South hand and led a club to the C8 and CT. They set themselves up next to be able to lead out the CQ covered by the CK, CA and CJ to make the three necessary club tricks and they gained 9 and 10 imps for that. Even taking into account the 4-2 heart split, this is better odds than playing for a doubleton CK (restricted choice and the likelihood of East being 4333 play into this). No other declarer made game.

This hand was a major bidding problem and created a swing in two matches

5 KQ6 AKQ8532 AK	9732 T97432 7 82	Everyone started with a strong opener, a negative a 3D rebid and a 3H response. Then came the divergence – one bid 5D, one bid 4H, two bid 4D and two 4N. Confusion came over 4D as the Easts both bid 4H and West assumed that this promised the ace and bid a slam missing two aces. In both cases of 4N, we saw a 5D response and Gary Jones judged well to pass this (an easy make), while Mark Roderick bid 5H and his partner was lucky to get a soft defence allowing this to make.
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At the end of this match Wales had beaten England by 26 imps overall (19-11), their best result against England since the Camrose adopted this format. For WBU it was massive 25-5 win over Northern Ireland putting them 11 VPs clear of the field in the Camrose table.

NORTHERN IRELAND & THE REPUBLIC. The third match for Wales was against Northern Ireland, against whom we have not lost a match since 2005, but after their heavy defeat in the previous round they came out determined to do better – and they did. The interest centred around some play hands in the first half ...

A985 6 T865 Q942	KQJT32 97 QJ72 T	7 AKQT3 943 AJ83	There was (as always?) one who opened 3S in second seat (at amber) but most Norths settled for a weak two in spades. Four of the five Easts bid their heart suit and three got to play there. Once immediately, and twice after two top diamonds, came S6 to SA and declarer led a small club to the CT, CJ and CK.
	64 J8542 AK K765		In taking the club finesse declarer was giving North too many high cards and had turned a making contract into one destined for three off. But all three Souths came to the rescue, and continued spades – although they should know better than to reduce declarer's trump length. Declarer could now ruff, cash two top hearts and think. But only Hugh recognised that the diamond and club plays marked North with a 6241 shape, so he now cashed his clubs and was able to exit with his third diamond while South only had trumps, had to ruff and was end-played. Nine tricks, neatly done.

A few board later was this trap -

42 K6 87632 A832	975 T543 AQJT T6		A8 AQJ87 94 KJ54	After a pass from North all Easts opened 1H and over that South bid spades – four cases of 1S and two (better opposite a past partner surely) of 2S. Twice EW bid on to 4C making but the most common contract was 3S, against which the start of play was always three top hearts – the last round being ruffed (twice by the SJ and once by the ST). When the SK now went round to the SA East had a dilemma – to play for a trump promotion with a fourth heart or to try clubs. In fact the answer is easy – the contract is making if declarer has the CA, so you must play partner for it. But England fell into the trap and played a fourth heart. The way for West to avoid that happening is quite cute – under-ruff the SJ! Declarer in all cases could have tried harder by crossing to DQ and leading a spade from dummy – making their spade strength less obvious.
	KQJT63 92 K5 Q97			

and finally this problem which I feel nobody solved

AKQ65 A87 JT8 K3	93 J2 K63 QJ7654	Playing 3N from the East hand on D2 lead (as happened 5 times), the club suit is clearly entry-less, so the contract depends on making 5 spade tricks and four outside. Unless you hit a singleton CA, that means two diamond tricks, so you are glad of the lead. Everyone played a top diamond (sometimes covered, sometimes ducked) but now when they played the CK and it was ducked, they could no longer play diamonds for their second diamond trick. Even the sequence DJ- DQ-DK and leading one back doesn't work if they win and switch to hearts. The answer is to play D8 at trick one (lead was from A972) and now after CK scores you can lead DJ whatever North played at trick one. Fortunately the spades were 4-2 so the contract was doomed and much embarrassment was saved.

At the end of the stanza Wales were -17 against N Ireland, while WBU were just 10 imps down to the strong Irish team. Wales swapped out Goodman & Thomas for Denning & Shields, and WBU rested Maddocks & Hogg, moving in Best & Roderick.

The second half started with a curious board, where in each of the three matches only one side was declarer and five of the six contracts made – so double figure swings to England, Ireland and Wales (although only Wales, who reached game in both rooms, was in one impregnable game). The third board was a big hand

K532 --- T64 AQJT53	JT84 T9842 K975 --	A6 AQ53 AQJ8 987	Three pairs bid the excellent small here (either 6N or 6C) but one auction seemed like a total punt (bid by East after West opened and remained silent thereafter), one I am told came as a remedy to a mistaken answer to an asking bid earlier in the sequence, and the third was a Crouch-Paterson special full of asking bids and assessable only by the fact that they got to the best contract. It is hard to identify a confident natural sequence, although the Jones's got close after 1C-2N(16+ flat)-3C-3D-3S-3N but they stopped there where a 4C continuation would have done the job.
	Q97 KJ76 32 K642		Worth noting that over a 1C second seat opener from West, two Norths deemed the hand worth a 1H overcall (and argued for their bids later). With both minor suit finesses right 6N was easy but in 6C the C2 lead from South (West had systemically opened 1D!) led declarer to rise with the CA and he later went wrong in the end game and made only 11 tricks. ☹

The most interesting play hand of the set came along soon after

T6 J87642 96 QT9	A82	QJ94	All six tables played in 3N by N and four times the lead was a diamond. Winning DT and a club to the CJ and CA led to an easy 9 tricks. But twice, having bid diamonds and heard 3N, East led a top spade. It looks right to go after clubs and Mike Tedd won SK at trick one (necessary), lost the club finesse and won the second spade with the SA. Against Wales Ian Lindsay ducked the SQ lead from Dafydd Jones, but the continuation of SJ gave the contract back to declarer; today generosity was abounding and declarer blocked the heart suit to put the defence back in charge and the contract went one off.
	KQT9		
	KQ3		
	KJ4		
	3		
	AJ8752		
	A8		
	K753		
	A6		On a spade lead, declarer needs to win SK (immediately, ducking kills the ending), set up a club trick and win the spade continuation (as did Mike Tedd); he then needs to cash four hearts before exiting in spades to end-play East. Difficult but could be indicated by the bidding. Swings to Ireland and Wales on this hand – all down to the choice of lead.
	T4		
	76532		

And towards the end along came this monster for North

63 J97 AJ854 AKJ	AKQJT	54 Q65 T3 QT9865	West naturally opened first – four times 1N and twice with 1D. The suit opener made the auction much simpler since North could cue bid to show both majors and over partner’s spade response cue bid in clubs as a slam try, and pass out South’s return to 4S.
	AKT83		
	Q92		

	9872		
	42		
	K76		
	7432		
			After a start of 1N-X, East initiated rescue – twice with 3C, once with 2C and once with a redouble. The jumps led the 1N opener to sacrifice – once through over-excitement (they ended in 5C-X let off at just two down), and once because 3C was interpreted as a transfer and a 5D sacrifice led to 6C-X going for -1100 and a nice score for Scotland. Only once did South scrape up a cue bid of 4D after partner had supported spades and that was enough to get Whittaker for England to bid 6S. With all the suit breeding evenly (it needs that – not a good slam) he clocked up +1430 which meant the -1100 culprits actually gained on the board!

At the end of all that Wales had lost points on only two boards to N Ireland and won the stanza by 25 imps, and the match 16-14; meanwhile Ireland had taken four double figure swings off WBU to win that match by 35 imps (21-9) and move 1 VP ahead of them in the table. Equal third place is England and Wales.

SCOTLAND & ENGLAND : the first match on the Sunday morning was Scotland, against whom recent Welsh form has been poor (losses at the last three encounters). Boards two and three in this match offered the dealer, at favourable vulnerability, an 8-card minor suit. First case was J-92-K8-AT876532 and all but one table (the one where 4C showed hearts) opened 4C and the next hand had a clear takeout double. Partner held K862-KQ4-Q43-KJ4 and either directly or after the opponents had settled in 4S, we found 4 of the 5 Wests sacrificed in 5C. The winner on the hand was the 3C opener as his partner got to play the hand in 3N making, while 5C was a cheap but phantom sacrifice (opposition can make 2S and no more).

Next board dealer held 7-84-KQJT9732-83. This time there were four players who couldn't open 4D and all but one of them chose to open 5D (one wimped out with 3D) and that was the right choice since partner's two aces were not enough to beat 4H. There is a big difference in the defensive strength of the two hands but it was more the available choices than the hand texture which directed the level of opening. The first big swings of the match came with this hand

Q6 AKQ972 K6 T32	K854 65 AJ7 AK74	Two tables reached the slightly stretchy 6H contract and got the CQ lead. It looks like it needs a trump break and the diamond finesse and that is what both declarers went for (and the finesse failed). There was (with only minimal risk) one extra chance – playing a spade to the SQ and ducking one on the way back. When RHO had AJ9 of spades (as on this occasion), you get to ruff down the ace and avoid the diamond finesse. A third table reached 6N so that every match was guaranteed a swing on this board – it was 11 imps to each of Scotland, N Ireland and England.
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The other interesting hand was almost flat but need not have been

	JT932		South was dealer at green and this time the opening was more uniform – 5/6 opening 3C (one stretching to 4C), and the most common continuation was P-P-X over which West now emerged with 4H. When this came round to David Walker for Scotland he found a Lightner double, indicating a void somewhere and partner knew that had to be spades, so the defence started with the S3 ruffed by South.
	JT9		
	K92		
	Q4		
AQ6		K8754	There seems to have been some mixup over signalling at this point (surely the low spade is a McKenney?) and South cashed CA before playing a diamond. It was clear for Paul Denning to rise with the DA at this point and draw trumps and he had no problem making ten tricks. On a club lead no other declarer was threatened.
K742		AQ83	
A64		Q85	
T87		J	

	65		
	JT73		
	AK96532		

At the end of the first set Scotland had given away few imps to Wales, and England had given few to the WBU – and our two teams were down by 16 and 12 imps respectively.

The second half saw Wales recover the deficit for a small win, while WBU drifted a little to let England win 21-9. Board two provided a dilemma for the fourth hand – who heard the bidding start P-P-1S and found they had KQ982 – QJ – AKJ9 – KQ. Only one player was willing to pass and he heard the bidding go on his left 1N-P-3S. This seemed the time to step in but double could only net +300. Those who chose to double the opening bid (there were four of them) survived because partner turned up with five diamonds.

This hand produced a swing in each match, with all tables playing in 3NT

	Q5		At the five tables where South declared the lead was D4 and was won by the DJ. For England Liggins played CA and another club but now the defence had time to set up the long diamonds for one off. For WBU, Salisbury started the same way but when East won the CQ he switched to hearts and that gave declarer time to reach 9 tricks. For N Ireland, Anderson started with a small club to the CJ and CQ but fared no better when the defence continued diamonds. For Scotland, Vi Mitchell did the same. For Ireland McGann played a spade to the SQ at trick two and now lost two club tricks but had his nine tricks before the opposition had their five. For Wales, Shields played from North and got the HQ lead to the ace, ran the CT and that left West end-played. He tried a small spade won by the SQ but now the C6 picked up the queen and Shields cashed his club and heart winners, and the DA, before ducking a spade to West to end-play him again, to lead a diamond and allow an overtrick. Every match saw 10 imps swing on this hand.
	AT85		
	A8		
	JT876		
AT92		J83	
3		QJ976	
Q6543		T97	
K95		Q3	
	K764		
	K42		
	KJ2		
	A42		

and the last board of the match was this difficult 3N ...

	JT42		At most tables the bidding was P-P-3H-3N-end and the lead was HJ overtaken and ducked and the second heart was won by South. One exception was where West opened 2S (spades+minor) and never found out about his partner's hearts. So he led the C3 and that was declarer's ninth trick.
	9		
	AQ743		
	J86		
KQ873		96	As declarer in 3N, both Liggins and Denning cashed a couple of diamonds and ran the ST. West was unsure of the spade position and returned a small club giving declarer two tricks there and the contract. McGann ran all his diamonds before playing SA and another and got nine tricks on a club return, but when Vi Outred tried this against Goodman for Wales, Peter cashed his spades and exited with the killing CQ, which denied declarer the second club trick that was needed and that was one off.
J		KQT8432	
86		9	
Q9532		K74	
	A5		
	A765		
	KJT52		
	AT		

At the end of the match the Republic of Ireland were leading the table by 7 VPs from England, and Wales had for the first time overtaken WBU. The other two teams were below average.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND & SCOTLAND : the final match for Wales was against the leaders, against whom Welsh results had been improving over recent years. There were some sloppy defences early – Wales let though 3N with 6 cashing tricks, Ireland chose an esoteric squeeze end-play over a finesse and lost a game for that – and quite a few boards with no story. This bidding problem was resolved in only one match, the other two matches being flat in game ...

KT8	AJ9	Where West opened 1N and East bid 2C, South doubled and West got to show his hearts. At three tables East now cue bid clubs in support of West's hearts but at two of those the auction then petered out in game. Only Greenwood-Anderson bid the slam after that start. The sixth table saw Paterson upgrade the hand to 17 hcp and open 1C after which bouncing in clubs by the Hamilton brothers let them out in 6D. With 7H very good value, everyone ought to get to a slam.
AKQ2	8543	
AT94	KQ7632	
93	---	

The two biggest swings to Wales came on board 15 and 16. the first was

	K97	South dealt at NS vulnerable and two Souths found an opening bid – well sort of, one did open 1H and the other 2H showing hearts and a minor and less than an opening bid. Where South passed, three different opening bids were found by West - 2C(Precision) once, 3C twice and 3N once (showing a 4-level preempt in a minor). One 3C opener bought the contract (as did 3N-P-4C) but the other 3C opener caught X-P-4H.
	AJ2	
	AJ953	
	82	
J3		Much uncertainty arose after the 2H opener. West passed and North enquired with 2S (partly to stop the opposition bidding that) over which an undeterred East produced 3S. South bid 4D to show a maximum with diamonds and West contributed 4S. North couldn't tell who could make what and bid 5D as a two-way shot and there it rested. West led the CA and fearing declarer's shape was 2551 and his points were all in hearts and diamonds, switched to the SJ and suddenly the club loser was disappearing. Paul Denning managed to strip the hand and run the HT round to the HQ to guarantee only one heart loser, for eleven tricks.
875	QT86542	
4	KQ	
AKJT965	87	
	Q3	The 1H opener backfired when that South ended in 4H and saw the CA and CK cashed but then finessed twice in hearts. Where South had passed and West opened 3C, the position of the hearts is more marked.
	A	
	T9643	
	KQT62	
	74	

and the second was

	KT8543	The usual start was, from West, 1D-1S and now East had a choice. Two chose a double to get the hearts into the picture, and the others NT and of those it was two for 1N, and one for 2N. The last of these got an easy 3N but over 1N West signed off in 2D. This ended the auction in one room but North could not contain himself in the other and his 2S led to P-P-3D and now East woke up and bid 3N. South doubled but there was no defence and Wales gained 13 imps over Ireland.
	T	
	AJ	
	QT86	
7		Where East doubled 1S, Anderson's continuation with 2N on the next round got him to game for N Ireland, while Best let a 2S rebid by North go and WBU missed the game.
Q98	QJ92	
KQ86532	A754	
A5	97	
	K74	
	A6	
	KJ632	
	T4	
	J932	

At the end of the set Wales had trounced Ireland 51-7 in imps, while WBU were 10 imps down to Scotland. For the final segment Denning-Shields sat out and the Jones's came in for Wales, while for WBU Salisbury-Tedd came in for Hogg-Maddocks.

The set started with some fireworks - one Welsh pair offering the opponents a chance at +500 on a partscore, and the others missing a game everyone else bid. A mix-up over which two suits were shown by 1S over a strong 1C followed, but a mis-defence gave Wales +710 on the board for an unexpected gain of 12 imps. A few board later came this ...

AT763	Q854	West opened 1S in all rooms and it went P-P. One South passed while four others bid 2D and one (Peter Goodman) bid 1N. As a result five tables played in 3N but four of them by North. All Norths got a heart lead to the HQ and played a spade to West's ace. Three of the four led back the C2 and only Rex Anderson for N Ireland rose with the CJ; the others played the C9 and lost to the CT but East then switched back to hearts, to great merriment from the BBO onlookers. One defender played clubs from the top giving the defence no chance.
986	AQ	
T	AJ3	
AKQ2	J943	
	2	
	K7543	
	962	
	T865	
	KJ9	
	JT2	Played by South, West couldn't help leading a high club and on his C2 switch Peter Goodman rose with the CJ to make his contract. So everyone who bid it made 3N.
	KQ8754	
	7	

A close call came on the next hand too

J9643	T5	One misguided pair from Scotland played 3N but otherwise it was 4S mostly by West but once by East. The South and two Norths found a diamond lead – Adrian Thomas and Norman Selway leading out the DA and continuing the suit. Where it went to DA and a club switch, or an initial club lead, declarer had an easy time, throwing the diamond loser on a club and losing at most two heart tricks.
Q852	K974	
T8	AQJ4	
73	JT2	
	AKQ2	
	AT6	
	63	
	AKQ4	In the two cases where diamonds were cashed declarer has to play the hearts for one loser. Where Adrian Thomas had opened the bidding as North, declarer assumed he had the HK and eliminated the black suits before playing a heart to the H8 and now Adrian was end-played. where Norman hadn't opened the bidding declarer tried a heart to the HT and now he was down.
	87	
	J3	
	K9752	
	9865	

Another bidding test arose which wasn't well met anywhere ...

AK7	T54	After a 1N opener, LHO bid something to show the majors (one case was spades + other) and now South showed his clubs. The Irish and the Welsh Souths both had a chance to show slam interest and Peter Goodman did this by bidding his void heart, while Ireland bid diamonds. The heart cue got cooperation out of partner where the diamond cue didn't and only Wales bid the slam. It was however the inferior 6C slam which depended on no diamond loser, but it made when the diamonds behaved kindly. Lucky Wales!
T6	---	
KJ65	A987	
AT32	KQJ954	

When the smoke had cleared Wales had gained another 15 imps against Ireland for a 25-5 win, while the WBU pulled back 8 imps against Scotland to reach a 15-15 draw.

That's all for now. Wales produced its best first weekend score in this format (it once scored 89 on the second weekend) and the WBU exceeded all expectations, leading the table for a while and holding on above average. Next game is in [Llandrindrod Wells in March](#). Scores since this format was introduced are these ...

TEAM	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (half way)
England	171	176	167	196	92
Ireland	127	186	146	182	80
Northern Ireland	109	93	128	114	45
Scotland	131	138	119	150	69
Wales	155	168	150	167	88
(sixth team)	199 (holders)	126 (CBAI)	176 (EBU)	83 (NIBU)	76 (WBU)