

WALES IN THE CAMROSE: LLANDRINDOD WELLS - March 2011

Wales continued its 2011 Camrose campaign on home ground – in Llandrindod Wells in Powys, having ended the first weekend very respectably placed just 4 VPs behind England. 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. 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 Alex Hogg & Alex Maddocks, John Salisbury & Mike Tedd, and making their debut this weekend was Simon Richards & Trevor Towers. Their captain was Mike Close.

WELSH BRIDGE UNION & WALES. As always the country with two teams has a local match in the first round. The traffic in the first stanza was mostly one way in favour of the senior team. The first play hand of interest was this

J3	AQ	Each match saw one pair in game, one in slam. Each slam came with a club lead (JT from North, or A from South) which meant there were no black suit losers. The two playing sensibly in 6H drew trumps and then both cashed the AK of diamonds, going off when the hand with short hearts held Q85 of diamonds. The odds on the finesse are over 59% unless some other inference about the empty spaces is available (can't see any myself), so that was a surprise. The third match saw Patrick Shields forget the system and end in 6D and he had the CJ led to the CQ-CA, and the C6 returned to the CT-CK. This looked so much like a short club suit was led, that he played opening leader for longer diamonds (as the 6H declarers should have) and finessed for the DQ and made 12 tricks. Curiously the clubs were 4-4 and if the defence had been completely honest about the distribution in that suit, there is no reason to finesse. Defenders should be careful about telling lies! Swings to N Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
QJ96	AK75	
AJ432	KT96	
97	KQ8	

The standard of opening bids is not very high - two strong club pairs opened on K98-QJT-J65-A853 in second seat at both vul; the outcome was their opponents played a part-score while all the others bid game. Game was excellent so they gained loads. The next hand the same players held was no stronger, Q – QT654 – KQ94 – Q93 and again these two were alone (in the records we have) in opening 1H, which led inevitably to partner putting them into 4H and going two off. Neither lost from that venture, so I suspect the tactics will continue!

Another slam hand later in the set produced some big swings

	AKT9754	South opened 1C (sometimes natural, sometimes just 16+) and all Wests bid 3H. Over North's 3S, the English and both Welsh chose 3N while the Scots and the Irish bid 4C. Twice – when 1C was natural – they settled for game while the two strong club openers heard 5S from their partner. Over that the slightly ambiguous 6C try got 6S while the clear 6H grand slam try got 7C in response. In 7C on a heart lead, Adam Mesbur drew trumps and played for the SJ to fall but not today, so he went one off.
	J2	
	Q9	
	Q2	
62		J83
KQT8754		3
K32		T8764
7		9853
	Q	That was slam swings to the same three teams as earlier, N Ireland, Scotland and Wales. But in only one case (Wales) did a team bid both slams (and they made them both).
	A96	
	AJ5	
	AKJT64	

At the end of that stanza Wales was 61 ahead of WBU, Scotland was 31 ahead of England, and Northern Ireland was +14 against the Republic. Wales was now leading the Camrose table! The Welsh captain kept in the same foursome, while WBU swapped out Richards & Towers to let in Salisbury & Tedd.

The second half started with a slam and swings in the same direction as the other slams - N Ireland picking up 10imps when the slam went down in the other room, and Wales gaining just 5 (by stopping in a part-score). England played a reasonable slam in 3N going off when the Scots cashed their 5 top spades (the stopper being J643 opposite a void) but that was a flat board when 6C went off also. The next hand was another slam (excellent and making) not bid by N Ireland or Wales who both lost 11imps there. There was still one more slam to come later in the set, bid by everyone except Wales and making easily. And there was a non-slam, avoided by everyone except Wales and failing quickly. Across those four boards Wales lost 30imps to WBU, while other matches swung 2imps and 3imps!

Two interesting play hands emerged late in the set

AK763 KQT2 J5 J7	Q 76 AQT932 AT53		T5 AJ84 876 K982	The auction started (on the records we have) 1S-2D-X-P (am surprised at no XX) and two Wests bid 2H and the other 3H. How two of the other tables reached 4H is a mystery. Against the heart part-scores North led a trump and two of them were rewarded two tricks later with a spade ruff! They could not play a second trump, but Paul Denning for Wales signalled with the SJ on the second spade and Patrick Shields could underlead to the DK and a second trump was played. Declarer won and tried the CJ but when the CA rose there was no longer any defence (ducking leaves a club entry to South to play a third heart and beat the contract).
	J9842 953 K4 Q64			

KJ9 T7 AQ862 AKJ	A72 AK3 T93 Q972		T8654 86 7 T6543	It looks to be a part-score hand but two pairs bid game. For England Martin Jones, who had bid showing all the missing points led of the top two clubs and now it was easy. In the Irish match, John Carroll was tested by a trump lead from David Greenwood, who had not bid at all on this hand. He drew two trumps and then took a losing diamond finesse.
	Q3 QJ9542 KJ54 8			

When the set was scored up WBU had gained 36imps to claw back to 11 VPs, Scotland had put on another 24imps against England to win 24-6, and despite that last hand the Republic of Ireland had pulled back 24imps to win 16-14. After the first match Wales were in the lead in the Camrose table, 9 ahead of England; and Scotland had moved up one place, pushing back the WBU team.

IRELAND & SCOTLAND. The second round match for Wales was Ireland against whom their last result was they best they had ever achieved. Meanwhile WBU lined up against Scotland. Slams abounded in the first set but bidding was fairly consistent with one 75% slam bid by 5 of the 6 teams, a fair slam missed by all, and an excellent slam missed by all. Aside from that we had Scotland bidding a horrendous slam making when the ace led at trick one got ruffed, the hopeless slam bid at 3 tables which gave 13imps to Ireland, and N Ireland outbid England on the last slam to gain 11imps. WBU also lost 13imps when a slam try led to a contract of 5H one off.

The opening bid prize for this round is shared by Michael Byrne & Tom Hanlon, whose first in hand 1S with QT654-KQ-QJ97-63 kept the opponents out of an easy vulnerable game.

The long established N Ireland pair of David Greenwood & Rex Anderson shone on this hand ...

Q93 QJ9876 9832 ---	842 AT AKT4 AK74	KJ76 K532 75 Q95	Every West opened a weak two bid in second seat (two via a multi 2D) and every North overcalled 2N. The spot light now fell on East and those who bid 4H "forced" South into bidding 5C and there the auction ended. Where East bid just 3H, most Souths chose 3N and his partner played there. 3N looks a fair contract but the 3-0 club break kills it and they all ended down one.
	AT5 4 QJ6 JT8632		In 5C, South starts off being disappointed at missing this excellent slam but cheers up when the club break kills the overtrick. But one 5C declarer was less lucky. For N Ireland, Rex Anderson bid 3S after 2D(multi)-2N and this told his partner that he had both hearts and spades (usually more of the former). David recognised that there was no heart trick to set up, but that spades could be the answer, and his S3 lead was good enough to beat 5C.

and the last hand of the first stanza was this

AJT5 T82 JT85 Q9	K J7654 Q43 K762	Q64 AQ9 AK97 543	The common choice here was a no-trump contract by EW; we had two in 2N, and two in 3N (and two exceptions). South led a spade each time, twice the S3 and twice the S8. It was disappointing to see neither declarer rise on the S8 to drop the (advertised) offside king, so in all cases North won and switched to a low heart.
	98732 K3 62 AJT8		Playing in 2N, Adrian Thomas for Wales rose with the HA and played for his four diamond tricks to make exactly. At the other three tables, East played the HQ losing to the HA. Two Souths (John Murdoch for Scotland and Normal Selway for England) could tell from the lead that declarer had 3 hearts, and worked out that if they didn't have the H9 they were scared to lose the HJ because of a weakness elsewhere. So they switched to clubs in both cases - vital to beat the contract.

At the half way point in the match Ireland were 37 ahead of Wales, with England and WBU both 21 ahead in their matches (against N Ireland and Scotland respectively).

The second stanza produced no slam hands – at least no slam hands unless you share an illusion with one particular Scottish pair about board 26! This hand tested both sides ...

J85 A652 32 AKJ6	976 Q83 T98 8432	KT42 KJ4 A5 QT97	At the four tables recorded, in fourth seat, South got to overcall with 2D and three tables continued up to 3N. After the diamond ace was knocked out, declarer needed a heart finesse and a 3-3 break and this appeared, so he scored +600. The other three tables took fright – one played 4H and the other two in 4S. All got a top diamond lead but only one made. In 4S, WBU won DA and led the S2 which the wily Scotsman ducked; declarer put in the S8 and when this lost to the S9 he was doomed. At the other table the SQ went in and now the winning defence is too difficult to find (club switch with a later diamond under-lead for a ruff). Against 4H the English declarer played back a diamond at trick two and a third diamond now was too much for him.
	AQ3 T97 KQJ764 5		

and this hand nobody got right ...

	Q932		South opened 1S and over either a double or 2C, North raised pre-emptively to 3S. Over the double (found by most Easts) South bid 4S. It was natural for EW to continue and three pairs came to rest in 5C, plus Wales, unfortunately, in 5H (doubled). Against 5C, North led a small spade and twice South won and switched to hearts, declarer rising with the ace. Drawing trumps comes next and then diamonds. It was disappointing that no declarer judged the shape correctly (even after the HQ falls) and they played diamonds from the top. Where South didn't switch a heart but led a second spade declarer was better off. He drew trumps and started hearts by small away from the ace. However he committed then himself in diamonds before testing the hearts and he too went off. A chance missed there by England, Ireland and Scotland.
	Q		
	J972		
	T642		
5		86	
A975		J643	
Q8		AKT63	
AKQ953		J8	
	AKJT74		
	KT82		
	54		
	7		

When the match had scored up Ireland had beaten Wales 25-3, England had beaten N Ireland 21-9 and WBU had beaten Scotland 19-11. The table now had a new leader, with the Republic of Ireland 2VPs ahead of England, and Wales in third place. Meanwhile WBU had just moved back ahead of Scotland.

SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND . Wales needed to improve here as WBU was now only 4 VPs back and Scotland just 6 VPs behind them. Wales faced Scotland while WBU faced N. Ireland against whom they had scored the maximum 25 VPs in the first weekend. The match started with a relatively flat set, producing the second totally flat hand (same result all 6 tables) and the first (only?) hand with identical auctions at all tables (1N-2C-2D-3N). There was only one slam hand, respectable odds but unlucky and could not make – but it was only bid twice and that was in the one match – so no swings. For those not worn out, the last two boards of the set proved of most interest ...

	K6		West opened 1S in second seat and most Norths overcalled 2D – pass being reasonable, vulnerable opposite a passed partner. All Easts started by showing hearts first, and after they introduced clubs next it led most times to 3N by West. Spotlight on North – which diamond to lead, or indeed whether to lead one. The key differentiator is when declarer has Kx-Jxx and Kxx-Jx and thinking the latter more likely we had two leads of the DQ. Now the spotlight swung to declarer – two declarers played the CJ to the CK and then cashed the CA. Mike Bell had the misfortune of silent oppo until his FSF of 3D (over 3C) was doubled, so he had a sense only of where the diamond length lay, rather than where the opposition high cards lay. So he followed the odds and finessed South for the CQ and he went two off. ☹ That issue was averted at a fourth table, when David Greenwood led the H9 and Rex Anderson was able to win and push through the DJ giving declarer no chance.
	T98		
	AQT732		
	Q3		
A98542		Q	
7		AQJ52	
K94		6	
AJ7		KT9862	
	JT73		
	K643		
	J85		
	54		

		West opened with 1D (or a strong 1C) and North overcalled 1S. East had a choice – with X getting three votes, 2D one, pass one, and 1N only one. Over a double, South produced 3S and West felt a very strong slam interest. Scotland expressed this by bidding 5N (pick a slam) but that was too much. ☹ Wales expressed this by bidding 4S which led to 5H. The third double was opposite a strong 1C, so West had to start by introducing his diamonds and when raised to 5D he let that go. Two tables who didn't get a negative double bid only 2S as South and here West could explore better and they both stopped in game (one 5D doubled and the other 3N). The sensible 1N (by England) provoked 3S and a takeout double by West, who converted his partner's 4H to 5D. North doubled this (reasonably) but that contract could not be defeated, the top heart lead taking away declarer's only losing option
AT976 KQ 53 AT52		
-- AT98 AKJT74 KQ7	KJ54 J753 Q86 98	
	Q832 642 92 J643	Two contracts in that collection proved more interesting than the others. For Wales East played 5H, on a spade lead; he ruffed and crossed in diamonds to take a heart finesse. North won and played CA and a diamond. The significance of this (he had failed to force dummy down to stiff HA) was lost on declarer who ruffed a club to hand to finesse again in hearts. The other interest was WBU in 3N on the lead of a spade to the ace and a spade back. There is the chance to block the spade suit (rising with the SK on the third round, not the second round as chosen in the hope the spades were 6-3) but even without that the long standing recommendation to cash your winners (diamonds) would have put intolerable pressure on North and he has to discard a spade or a top heart, which lets 3N make.

The stanza finished with Wales 15 imps ahead of Scotland, N. Ireland 22 ahead of WBU, and a 21-21 draw for England-Ireland. The second half featured two slams – one easily bid at 5 tables and missed only after a system mix up at the sixth, and one featured below. You could add in the slam try one Irish pair that led to 5S-1 as another slam hand. One curious hand was

		With East dealer at green, we saw 4 of 6 tables opening 3D, one opening 2D and one passing. The top NS score went to Ireland who chose to defend 3D after North doubled, and collected +800. The bravest bid of the weekend goes to David Greenwood raising 3D to 4D and inducing North to bid 4S which was cheaper than 3D doubled. The curiosity of the weekend went to the two cases where North doubled and South ended in 4H. Even after starting with DA and then HA, Espen Erichsen (for England) managed to make his game by discarding one club on a spade and then ruffing a club, before end-playing West to lead into his KT of trumps.
T65 Q97532 2 J64	AQ973 AJ4 A3 AT8 J42 KQT874 Q753 K8 KT86 J965 K92	

A bidding problem we have seen before came up here

		Each table started 1S-2H and in response three bid 2S and two bid 3D. When the same opening shape came up in the Camrose a year ago, the best contract was 6D on a 5-3 fit but nobody found that (most raised to 3H). From today's starts 4 tables meandered to 3N/4N and stopped there, while the N Ireland stars ended in 7D (and didn't get a spade lead, after which it's still only about a 20% make, but today it did make – unlucky for WBU). The winning auction was when Martin Jones raised 2H to 4H and Neil Rosen checked on aces before stopping in 6H, a contract with lots of chances. They duly gained 11 imps.
KJ753 A9 KQ654 3	4 KQJ64 AT AKJT9	

and this part-score gave the defenders a chance to shine, but they didn't really – or did they?

	KJT863		South opened and West overcalled but that didn't stop North playing in 2S at three tables – at the others EW competed to a making red suit part-score.
	T9		East led the HJ and that gave West two winners after which he played a third heart round to dummy's potential winner. It seemed no cost to ditch a losing diamond, which Shields and Erichsen did. East ruffed and recognised the heart led as the higher of the spare hearts and he switched to diamonds.
	73		Declarer could win, draw trumps and give up two clubs to make his contract.
	432		When David Walker played back the higher of his spare hearts his spare hearts were the 32, and his partner took his ruff and returned a club. (There is logic that says to ignore partner's signal here, since a diamond discard by declarer with 3 makes no sense) Clearly a club ruff was now going to beat the contract but David took CA and tried a fourth heart. With no loser to discard, declarer had to guess the spade position and he duly got this wrong by ruffing with the SK and running the SJ to the SQ. Insult followed injury as now West went for the club ruff and 2S went two off! At the third 2S table, Martin Jones cleared things up for partner by cashing CA before playing the third heart but that highlighted the club ruff and Tom Hanlon knew he could not afford to ditch his losing diamond but must guess the spades. With the suit as yet untouched, he had to try the ST and when this won he drew trumps and knocked out the CK to make an overtrick.
Q2		96	
AQ832		J6	
K975		QJ864	
A9		K875	
	A74		
	K754		
	A2		
	QJT8		

The Wales-Scotland match had continued to be tight with 8 flat boards and a score of 28-13, while N Ireland continued to gain against WBU (but would have lost a lot if the grand slam had failed), and England pulled 13 imps clear of Ireland. When this was converted to VPs England were 2 VPs ahead of Ireland, who were 4 VPs ahead of Wales – while Scotland had moved up to be level with WBU.

ENGLAND & REPUBLIC OF IRELAND : the first match on the Sunday morning for Wales was England, whom they had beaten in January, and for WBU it was Ireland. The first stanza was flatish boards, two being completely flat at all tables, and there were no slams – as Ian Sime told one N. Ireland pair when he doubled their 6C for +800!

Wales could have done better on this board against England

	52		Two tables stopped in 3H but the other four all bid game, often with mild competition by EW in spades. Wales led a neutral trump, and declarer won HQ and started with a club to the CJ and CK. Still on the same track West persevered, but the second and third round of trumps enticed East to discard two clubs and now a club could be established to throw a spade - and so game made. Where spades were bid, they were led and that simplified the defence, but Ian Sime survived even that by starting the clubs leading the CQ; East covered and – oops – found he had telescoped two club tricks into one. Well done, Ian for creating the possibility.
	KQ863		
	K32		
	Q53		
K9763		QT84	
942		5	
T854		A76	
K		A9876	
	AJ		
	AJT7		
	QJ9		WBU gained on this board by stopping in 3H while the Irish bid 4H (and this same pattern played out a few other times for them in this set).
	JT42		

A few hands later declarer was faced with playing 3N and a diamond suit of QT9 opposite an entry-less dummy with K87542. The blockage is uncomfortable but losing two tricks in the suit could prove fatal if they attack your weakness. The SUITPLAY software tells us that running the 9 on the first round is the best chance of 5 tricks against perfect defence (but plenty will duck with Jx in second seat). Everyone, however, started instead with the queen.

K432 T654 J3 A62	T6 73 K87542 973	J95 Q92 A6 QT854	Two tables played in diamonds but the other were in 3N by South, all with the S2 lead. Declarer won and started with the DQ. Instinct says to duck when declarer offers a trick but this isn't the time to do so – as either declarer has the DJ or partner can stop the next round (or both). After you win the ace here, you might deduce that declarer has four spades (S2 led) and four hearts (else partner would have longer hearts) and find the club switch. Even if declarer guesses right here that's still only 8 tricks and the defence will prevail. For Scotland John Matheson won the spade lead, cashed the DQ; when the DJ appeared on the second round, he assumed that LHO must have AJ3 and he overtook with the king to at least ensure two tricks there. The spade continuation gave him three tricks there and he managed three in hearts and then guessed the clubs right – nine tricks the hard way!
	AQ87		
	AKJ8		
	QT9		
	KJ		

At this point Wales had again moved into the lead in the Camrose table, and Ireland (despite trailing the WBU) had overtaken England.

In the next stanza England-Wales scored 4-4 imps, apart from the two game swings to England which levelled the 32 board match. Both other matches turned over rather more imps with WBU gaining a small amount over Ireland and Scotland continuing to pound N. Ireland. There was – might be the only one – a totally flat slam hand – all six tables in 6S making. This was the other slam hand and it proved way too difficult to be a flat board

AK 6 AKJ AQT9642	QJT74 QJ432 5 K8	North dealt on this hand and two Easts opened in second seat with both majors (1S); West took charge and just made the decision, in one case 6C (clearly best) and the other 6N (but he escaped the killing heart lead). Good scores but can't award high marks for the bidding. At one table Peter Goodman got to open in third seat with (2C to show) a weak two in diamonds and this did make life seriously awkward for the opponents who proceeded X-P-4D(both majors)-P-4S(preference) and there it rested. Hard to say anyone was at fault there but they got a poor score as well as no prize for their bidding.
		The other tables all got to start with a strong 2C by West in fourth seat. The Welsh pair muddled their way to 5C so we'll bypass that. The N Ireland pair never mentioned the spade suit and got to 6N (but this time Ian Sime knew what to do and led the HA as North). Which leaves us with the Scots who showed how easy it should be with 2C-2S-3C-3H-3S(preference)-4C(support)-4D(ace asking)-4S(one)-6C-P. The bidding prize goes to John Murdoch & Brian Spears.

This next hand was 3N making at all tables – but in different ways

QJ6 62 AJ9 K7652	K942 943 QT764 T	A873 AQ5 K53 QJ3	This was played five times by East and once by West. Only once did South get to bid hearts but all five Souths led one into the AQ5. Declarer won and led clubs (some careful declarers C3 in case South had stiff ace) and the second club revealed the bad news there. Except where Michael Byrne played CJ and then small to the CK, that saw the hearts cleared. After two club tricks in the bag, Michael was able to lead out SQ and SJ to make his contract easily when ST fell.
	T5		
	KJT87		
	82		
	A984		

The final hand of the set proved a death trap for some pairs

KJ9865 43
AK75 J
A3 T62
J AT98754

West opened (1S) at red and all but one of the Easts responded with 1N. When South jumped to 3D (weak), West had a dilemma – bidding hearts suggests 5 of them while a takeout double offers clubs as an option. Three of them chose double (better choice of 3H by Gary Jones) and the winner of that bunch was Michael Bell who quietly passed out 4C and it was allowed to escape for -100. Those who went back to 4S found the opposition doubling and Scotland & Ireland lost -500 in the end, on a partscore hand. John Salisbury for WBU made a disciplined pass on the first round as East and over 3D Mike Tedd backed in rather pushily with 3S and was doubled by North. Imperfect but plausible defence allowed this to make for a huge +730 to WBU.

With England-Wales scoring 15-15 and Ireland losing 13-17 there wasn't much change in the overall table at the end of this match (England then Ireland then Wales), although Scotland were now clearly ahead of the WBU. One match to go !

NORTHERN IRELAND & ENGLAND : in the final match Wales was to play Northern Ireland against whom they had had big wins before, while WBU played England and Scotland played Ireland. Any of these three matches could produce the Camrose winner, but (except for a big win by England) the fate of the trophy would depend on the results in the other matches also.

Board 5 was the first double figure swing of the match, when everyone played in game but only 3 made the contract.

QJ52
6532
A4
QJ8
A64 T983
KJ 984
762 QT83
K5432 T6
K7
AQT7
KJ95
A97

It was mostly 4H – the exception being England who played 3N. The four Wests on lead against 4H avoided the club lead, all choosing the D6. In Wales – N. Ireland both declarers rose with the DA to take a heart finesse and West won that and continued diamonds. Rex Anderson sneaked a spade to the SQ for a second heart finesse but that meant after winning HK West could easily play SA and another and would always get his club trick. Daffyd Jones played SK after winning the second diamond, and that was won by the ace and a spade was returned. He won and finessed again but West had another spade on which to exit and await his club trick (cashing the third spade would have left West end played). Trevor Towers for WBU also got a diamond lead but ran that to his hand and then crossed to the DA to finesse in hearts. West was now forced to give away a trick on the return and so 4H made. Ireland played 4H by North and got the lead of a spade to the SA and a club returned – making this hand a walk in the park. For Scotland David Walker ran the first diamond to hand and continued with SK after which play proceeded much as for Dafydd and he ended down one.

This hand from later also proved interesting.

J542
QT7
J8
AK86
A7 KQT986
AKJ2 864
93 AQT
T9432 J
3
953
K76542
Q75

Even though four Norths opened the bidding in first seat, five tables managed to end in the excellent 4S by East. Each of the four suits was led by some South. The diamond lead gave John Murdoch an easy ride as when he ruffed the third diamond in dummy, North over-ruffed with his potential trump trick. For Scotland David Walker led a heart; declarer tackled diamonds first but later played spades from the top and lost a trick in each suit for one down. In the WBU-England match the opening bid by North and the implied-by-the-play diamond shortage there led John Salisbury to finesse on the second spade, so he picked up that suit without loss and made ten tricks. The bidding had also told Neil Rosen to do that but the spade lead saved him from having to bother – flat board in that match. In a similar vein, for N. Ireland Ian Hamilton finessed in spades to make his 4S. The last table stopped in 2S and didn't trouble the scorers. We note that the only NS with a plus score were the Scots – only they had been silent throughout.

There was a lead problem a few boards later, with Q65 – T83 – 9862 – AK5, against a man who had opened 1N and accepted an invitation from his partner. 3N would have been a great struggle on a spade lead but a diamond lead gives declarer an easy ride. David Greenwood for N Ireland found a heart lead which gave declarer an attractive losing option, and gained his side 6 where a diamond lead would have given Wales 6 imps instead. In the England-WBU match the man led a top club from this hand and continued the suit when his partner encouraged with Q92; this gave Mike Tedd an extra winner and forced him into a making line and so WBU gained 6 imps.

The final big swing hand of the set was this

9853 QT52 T83 K6	K42 8 AKQJ T9853	With only NS vulnerable, as dealer three Easts were able to open 2H showing hearts and a minor. It was very awkward now for South, except where Anderson-Greenwood were playing that 3C shows clubs and spades; this was bid and over 4H, North took a pot at 6C. Spotlight on West who can lead a heart (4 cards) to give declarer 0% chance of making today, or a spade (4 cards) to give declarer 100% chance, or a diamond (3 cards) to give declarer a 50% chance (cash CA, throw hearts on diamonds, and guess the spades). Wales managed a diamond and Rex guessed the spades wrong (reasonably) to go one off. The other two 2H openers were allowed a raise from West and NS never entered the auction, giving very attractive scores to Ireland and WBU.
	Q7 A7643 97542 Q	
	AJT6 KJ9 6 AJ742	The three tables where South opened found contracts of 6C (which got S8 lead and 13 imps to Ireland) and 5C once (sensible auction by WBU) and 3N which made on the lead of heart, heart, heart when declarer guessed spades right. If he had cashed his winning diamonds first and found out East was 5-5 he might have gone wrong.

At the end of the first half of the last match, Wales were 46 imps ahead of N Ireland, WBU were 33 ahead of England, and Scotland were 18 ahead of Ireland. The Camrose table now looked quite different, with Wales respectably clear of Ireland and England, and Scotland only 4 VPs behind them and WBU 2 back from Scotland (and all those teams above average). Last set !

In some ways there were not many swings. The two slam hands (see below) produced the only double figure swings apart from the magic sacrifice which only N Ireland found against a Welsh vulnerable game. But on the other hands Wales beat N Ireland 42-0 while England beat WBU 30-7 and Ireland beat Scotland 20-15. So the Welsh lead had grown while in both of the other matches there was a recovery by the “stronger” team.

There were a few interesting bidding problems along the way. Try Q72 - A75 - Q5 - 75432 at red after 1S-2D-P. The two who responded (3D and 2N) were rewarded by a vulnerable game, while the pass saw LHO rebid 2S and the passer let it end there. Another hand was, at love all, they open 1H on your right and you hold K – AQ843 – AT84 – AQ5. The three who passed defended that and (curiously) all led a small trump at trick one for either 2 off or 3 off or 4 off. The two who couldn’t avoid an immediate double of 1H heard partner bid spades either to the 3 level or the 4 level, and they had to go minus.

The most spectacular hand of the weekend was this monster, on which only NS were vulnerable ...

		Every West opened 4S and only one North felt strong enough to bid. After 4S-P, surprisingly all Easts passed and gave South an easy entry to the auction. Three chose X and two chose 4N. Over that one North bid straight to a slam but the others didn't (yet). Every East woke up on the second round but his 5S bid made life easy as then an encouraging pass from South persuaded North to bid the slam. Twice the contract was 6C-X but one defender was not awake to the Lightner double and didn't give his partner a heart ruff at trick one. After that ruff the contract does not look brilliant but you soon find out West has two clubs and you don't expect 9 spades so you get the diamonds right. Four Easts sacrificed in 6S, two over 6C and two over 6D but the Irish pressed on to 7D and the WBU pressed on to 7C. The latter got doubled and was beaten by the heart lead. The 7D contract is not the sort of grand slam you want to be in, except on this layout, and Brian Short did well – was this supposed to be a complement to sound Irish bidding (?) – by bidding 7S to keep the loss to 5 imps.
	T	
	A7	
	Q642	
	AJT632	
AQJ97642		K853
--		Q98642
J85		K
94		87
	--	
	KJT53	
	AT973	
	KQ5	

The last hand of the competition was also a slam hand. It was curious in that at different tables all four hands got to open. One table saw West open a Lucas 2S with five spades and five diamonds. When he passed, one North also had five spades and he opened a Lucas 2S. At another table third hand got to open a multi 2D with his weak two in hearts, and at two tables it was fourth seat who – looking at 83 – A96 – AK – AKQT53 was pleased to have a free choice in the bidding. Oh – and the other table – that was where a certain Irishman opened a weak 2S with only 5 of them and his partner had the hand just given. He enquired and then bid 6S; is that a typical Irish slam – just the three trump losers? The swings on the two slam hands had given something to each team in this set, so honours were shared.

The final Camrose table hadn't changed much in the last set. Wales were still clear on 170 VPs, but England had moved back into second place with 165, and Ireland came third with 160. This a fantastic result for Wales – not only did the Wales team win the Camrose (first time since the competition started in 1937) but instrumental in that was an excellent performance by the WBU team, beating both England and Ireland on the last day. Scotland performed admirably over the weekend, scoring top of the six teams but with too much catching up to do from a poor performance in Dublin. This was the lowest scoring winning score since this format was introduced, indicating a levelling of the field with everyone except N Ireland taking home some notable scalps. In the bilateral trophy market we should say well done to England for beating Wales, to Wales for beating Scotland, and to Scotland for beating England! And the Republic of Ireland picked up a few too! Scores since this format was introduced are these ...

TEAM	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
England	171	176	167	196	165
Ireland	127	186	146	182	160
Northern Ireland	109	93	128	114	99
Scotland	131	138	119	150	154
Wales	155	168	150	167	170
(sixth team)	199 (holders)	126 (CBAI)	176 (EBU)	83 (NIBU)	147 (WBU)