

President's quarterly report No 3, March 8th, 2011

I sit writing this 2 days after Welsh bridge history has been made, a first ever Welsh Camrose victory since the trophy started in 1936. I have been trying since my Camrose debut with Geoff Evans in the 1985-86 season. My partner Peter Goodman made his debut, not with me, a year later. Pat Shields made his debut in 1978 but then did not play again until 2005 – nothing to do with ability, just whereabouts and family.

Early in the year after a discussion with one of Welsh selectors, Mike Close, I sent out an email to experienced Camrose players with the Question "Why hasn't Wales won the Camrose". Much to my disappointment I had 4 replies from current regulars (I don't intend to name those disinterested parties) because Mike and I have our answer. The missing ingredient was definitely, in my opinion, *team spirit* and not just from those playing for Wales but those in the WBU team; other countries just could not cope with the Welsh charge on Sunday March 6th, 2011. While we had a draw and a huge win against Northern Ireland the WBU team with seasoned campaigners Mike Tedd and John Salisbury and some new kids on the block, Alex Maddox and Alex Hogg, Trevor Towers and Simon Richards were recording victories against the Republic and then England who needed 19 VPs in the last match against WBU to win yet again. They got 14 VPs after WBU were 30 or so Imps up after the 1st stanza. Understandably, England rallied in the second half of the match but WBU hung on. The 6 named above (and Mike Best and Mark Roderick who played in the first weekend) may not appear on record books but all the Wales team know that without them Wales would not have won the Camrose

The team effort did not just come from players, but also the supporters at the venue, including some Irish defectors for weekend, but I think even the vibes were coming through from those watching on BBO and those looking down, such as Alan Pierce, from above. Wales didn't win his trophy this weekend but as his widow Maggie observed many times after it finished: he wouldn't have cared less – we've done it (well words along those lines – she was very very happy). The helpers and all the workers at the Metropole were incredibly supportive and encouraging.

In the past I have heard the criticism that supporters were only watching to look at our mistakes and lay claim for a place in the team themselves. There was none of that here. I believe everybody whether present or watching at home were truly behind the team. I conclude this from the many messages of congratulations flooding in from home and away from people I didn't even know had my email address .Perhaps special mention should be made to Laura Woodruff who had been there encouraging on Friday and Saturday and helping on BBO, but had family commitments at home on Sunday. When the result was known she put on her posh frock and drove from Porthcawl to get there virtually in time for banquet, and she doesn't even drink!!

Thanks to everybody for your support, I think I have had about 4 hours interrupted sleep since, in case I wake up and find it is a dream.

So what else have I been doing as President? Besides involvement in many issues, most of which seem to have concerned change of dates, and at such a happy time I do not wish to dwell on these items. Giving me most enjoyment has been my continue touring of clubs but I assure members issues are being dealt with regularly by the whole of the newly appointed

management team. The team sometimes have differences of opinion, but are working together to try to improve bridge in Wales. Of course not everybody will agree with all decisions reached but be assured we are trying to listen and learn.

So back to my tour. To date I have visited 32 out of 52 affiliated clubs in Wales with 18 more visits arranged to affiliated clubs, 2 to unaffiliated. Some, mostly in my local area I have visited on more than one occasion.

The welcome everywhere, no exceptions, has been tremendously encouraging and made myself and all members of Management Committee and Council feel it very worthwhile. I have met some wonderful characters, had many laughs and I believe shown that WBU wants to help and provide for all members, not just tournament and international members.

At some point I and one other volunteer, separately as a double check mechanism, will sit down and analyse data collected from these tours and then MC and Council will use this to shape future WBU policies, help to members etc . So far I have collected about 270 questionnaires. If you read this and you are thinking 'what questionnaire?' then ask your club secretary as they all should have copies in those clubs I have visited to date.

I hope nobody begrudges me "my jollies", it is hard work and time consuming but totally worthwhile on both a personal level and bridge administration level.

People who now know who I am, and can put a face to name, will know I care for bridge as a whole. I will still have my critics but these appear to be few and far between.

I may not remember your name or where I have seen you but mostly I am remembering I have met people before.

So carry on enjoying your bridge and supporting the WBU

Aid with both player and presidents hat on