



# Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Bulletin



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## Inside this issue:

- Deva fund-raiser by Annie Mead 1
- Northern League part 2 by John Hampson 2
- Tollemache qualifier by various 3
- Breaking the rules by Bob Pitts 4
- Calendar 4
- WBU Premier League by Bob Pitts 5

## A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

Congratulations to Paddy Murphy who was not only a member of our County team that qualified for the Tollemache final, but has also been selected to play for Wales in the first weekend of the Camrose trophy, which is being held in Mold in January.



## Deva Fund-Raiser

*by Annie Mead*

The members of the Deva Bridge Club are very keen on helping the local community in Christleton, where the club is based. So once again in October the club ran a Chicago bridge drive to raise funds to assist the refurbishment of the local Parish Hall. Well done to the organisers and thanks to everyone for supporting this good cause, for which £1,000.00 was raised.

The main prize winners were Peter and June Hulmes, and Barrie and Mary Harrison. Look out for next year's event as this is always a fun day.



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## Northern Bridge League (part 2)

by John Hampson



As chairman of selectors I would like to thank Bob for his excellent article in the previous issue about the Northern Bridge league and fully endorse his appeal for more players to come forward and represent the county. Please try and give it a go. They are really enjoyable days out that finish at a reasonable time with a fine buffet meal during the day. The standard in the C division is no higher than a good club night so don't be intimidated by the possibility of "well known" names that you might come across.

To add further to Bob's example of the errors that even the best players make, recently I sat opposite a top pair from Manchester who between them have won many world class bridge tournaments and awards.

As E/W they picked up the following hands.

♠ A Q 7 3

♥ A 10 5 4

♦ K 3

♣ 7 4 3

♠ K J 9 4

♥ K Q 7

♦ 4

♣ A K Q J 6

After a long a somewhat involved auction they arrived in four spades !!! The rest of the field including our team mates reached the obvious slam. It can happen to the very best.

The County teams have had a good year with two results standing out.

Firstly in June, the Deva representing the County came second in the final of the Garden Cities Trophy. This is the national event for the leading bridge club from each County. To finish so high against all the leading clubs from London and the South is something we can all be proud of.

The second great result occurred in November when the County team qualified for the final of the Tollemache Trophy. This is the national event for all the County teams within the EBU. This is the first time in 15 years we have achieved this and again we can all be very proud of the team involved.

The other County events this year:-

Presidents Cup at the end of June:- The team was 6<sup>th</sup> out of eight.

The Annual match against Derbyshire was lost.

Barbara Serres after many years is standing down as the organiser of this annual friendly and the selectors invite anyone interested in taking over to get in touch.

In this year's NBL the results have been very much middle of the road across all three divisions.

In the A division the county finished 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 6, in the B division we were 5<sup>th</sup> out of 8 and likewise in the C division we were 5<sup>th</sup> again out of 8.

My thanks and best wishes to everyone who turned out I hope you enjoyed the matches and are looking forward to next year's events.

### CHESTER CONGRESS

This popular Congress is being held over the weekend of January 26th/27th

Pairs on Saturday. Teams on Sunday

Further details are available on the Deva BC website.

Get your entry in while there are still spaces

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## Tollemache Qualifier

The Tollemache trophy is awarded to the winners of the National County teams of eight event and is one of the most prized trophies in the country. The qualifier is tough. The Counties are split into four approximately equal groups with only the top two in each group getting through to the finals in February. This year the Merseyside & Cheshire team performed magnificently to get through. Now over to the players:

Firstly Paddy - You hold ♠ J 10 9 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ J 3 ♦ Q 5 ♣ 9 and the hand on your right opens two diamonds, a 'trash' multi showing a very weak two bid in a major. You pass and so does Sally Brock on your left, giving me a chance to double. What do you respond? Tracy chose a practical jump to four spades and I used RKCB but once she showed no key cards I quickly signed off in five spades. The full hand :

	♠ A	
	♥ A 10 8 5 2	
	♦ J 10 9 4	
	♣ Q 7 4	
♠ J 10 9 6 5 4 3 2		♠ K Q 8
♥ J 3		♥ K
♦ Q 5		♦ A K 3 2
♣ 9		♣ A K J 10 2
	♠ 7	
	♥ Q 9 7 6 4	
	♦ 8 7 6	
	♣ 8 6 5 3	

South certainly had his bid! At one of the other tables in our match, the Merseyside South amazingly passed as did West allowing North to open one heart. After a double from East South jumped to four hearts and West ventured four spades. East also tried 4NT but for some reason West thought it showed a strong hand with the minors and tried to sign off in five spades - whoops! East thinking West had two key cards and long spades bid the grand slam. This deal probably went a long way to making Andy Prothero's weekend as sitting North he had no trouble finding a red card. As this deal came up against Avon who had been vying with us most of the weekend for one of the qualifying spots it was doubly important.

Dave Keen - This spade slam was bid only 4 times out of 16. Some pairs reached six hearts getting their just desserts when Q x x was offside and half were only in game

♠ A 5 2	♠ K Q J 10 9
♥ 10 3	♥ A K J 6 4 2
♦ K 10 9 4	♦ J 6
♣ A J 5 4	♣

Jean and I bid 1♦ - 2♠<sup>1</sup> - 3♠ - 4♣<sup>2</sup> - 4♦<sup>2</sup> - 5♣<sup>3</sup> - 5♥<sup>4</sup> - 6♠.

1 We follow the Italian style of forcing to game as soon as possible 2 1st or 2nd round control 3 Exclusion Blackwood (asks for key cards outside of clubs) 4 one ace outside of clubs.

The main problem on the hand is whether seven spades is on. Finding out that partner has two aces is not helpful if one is the club ace and the Exclusion RKCB solves that problem.

Well done to the team of Paddy Murphy, Tracy Capal, Dave Keen, Jean Keen, Andy Prothero, Chris Pope, Ted Reveley, Mike Swanson, Peter Hall, David Flacks with npc Simon Whitehouse.



**Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association**

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All of the club contacts are available on the County website

## Calendar

All events here are correct at time of publishing but you are advised to take the precaution of checking with the organisers in all cases.

December

9th Merseyside Cup Deva BC

January

26th/27th Chester Congress Deva BC

February

2nd County trials Deva BC

23rd Charity Pairs MBC

March

3rd Eric Howarth GP (Swiss teams) Deva BC

May

19th John Armstrong trophy (Swiss pairs) Deva BC

## Breaking the 'Rules'

*by Bob Pitts*



It is not usually a good policy to play in the same denomination at both tables in a teams event, but 'rules' are made to be broken so they say.

*Dealer North Love All*

♠ Q J 10 2

♥ Q 6

♦ A 5 4

♣ J 9 8 7

♠ K

♥ J 10 9 4 3 2

♦ J 10 9 8

♣ 10 6

♠ A 9 8 5

♥ A K 8 7 5

♦ 7 6

♣ K 2

♠ 7 6 4 3

♥

♦ K Q 3 2

♣ A Q 5 4 3

North opened a 10-12 hcp no-trump. East came in with a double and South tried to show his hand type by transferring to hearts with the idea that when this was doubled, he could redouble to show shortage in hearts and North could select their best fit. However, after a two diamond call from South and two hearts from North, all three players passed. Whilst North/South do have the agreement that this is part of their armoury (and East/West were told), South was the first to point out that his hand was too strong for this action as the opponents might not have sufficient strength to double the two heart bid. In two hearts North came to five tricks, two clubs, two diamonds and a trump (don't ask!). This did not seem like a good result with the club game making for North/South and East/West have only 9 tricks available in hearts their way, but at the other table North was on lead against four hearts and the spade queen was the obvious opening lead. West could now use the spade ace to discard a club loser so the game was made and South gained 7 imps for his side after all.



# Welsh Premier League

by Bob Pitts

Each year the Welsh Bridge Union run a Premier League to guide their selectors in the choice of representative teams, especially for the Home International Tournament, the Camrose Trophy. My four-some did not do enough this year to catch the eye of the selectors but it remains for me one of the most enjoyable events in the season.

♠ 10 7	♠
♥ K 10 6	♥ A Q 7 4 3 2
♦ A K Q 7 5 2	♦ J 10 4
♣ A 9	♣ K Q 4 3

In our match v the eventual winners Barry Jones and I bid the above hands to the solid seven diamond contract, but Julian Pottage, despite evidence to the contrary from earlier boards in the match, decided to trust our bidding and saved in seven spades. His logic was that at game all and holding a solid eight card spade suit he could not go for more than five off doubled which would be virtually the same as the small slam making. Right he was as we scored +1400 whilst at the other table Paddy Murphy and Mark Roderick had played in six hearts for +1460. We were the only pair in the event to bid a grand slam on this board and yet lost 2 imps for it! *Ars Gratia Artis*

This interesting play hand arose a few boards before the end of the second weekend.

*Dealer West. E/W Vul.*

	♠ J 7 2	
	♥ Q 5	
	♦ K J 6 5	
	♣ A J 7 3	
♠ K Q 10 9 4		♠ A 8 6 5
♥ 8 7 6 2		♥
♦ A 4		♦ Q 8 7 3 2
♣ 8 5		♣ Q 10 9 6
	♠ 3	
	♥ A K J 10 9 4 3	
	♦ 10 9	
	♣ K 4 2	

West passed and North opened one diamond (playing strong NT, 5 card majors). East passed and South responded one heart. West came in with one spade and when North rebid two clubs East raised conservatively to two spades. South now found the call that perhaps should have been made a round earlier of four hearts, but East was not finished and his four spade call ended the auction.

North started with the heart queen and West had to try to find a way home. It was clear that the majority of the tricks would have to come from a cross-ruff with the diamond queen being a late threat. If the defence could lead trumps twice that might beat the contract so it seemed that declarer needed South to have a club honour and only one trump. After ruffing the first trick a club was led from dummy, after all it might slip past the club jack in South. North won the trick and switched to a trump. West won in hand and led another club, which North had to duck otherwise South's king would be exposed to a ruffing finesse. When South won and had no spade to return, West could see the way home. He won South's diamond switch with the ace, and ruffed two hearts in dummy whilst ruffing two clubs in hand. Now he cashed the king and queen of trumps leaving North with K J of diamonds, and a diamond from hand left North having to win and return a diamond to the queen in dummy. Contract made! At every other table N/S played in some number of hearts; consider the advantage of the weak no-trump here, after a limited 1NT opening from North, South should bid the heart game immediately.