

After our 'Bridge Too Far' season in Div. 6 it was back to familiar territory in Div. 7 as we started the new season at the same venue and against the same opponents as our last match in March.

We got off to a 'flyer' in the first round, with four individual slams bid by our team against two by Harrogate with an amazing four slam hands out of eight! Both our E-W pairs bid slams on Board 2 (6C & 6NT) with both opponents settling for 3NT with 7NT available (+14 imps). Harrogate gained 12 imps on Board 4 when one of their pairs bid 6C but Kevin & Chris were the only pair to bid 6H rather than 4H on Board 8 (+11 imps). A further 11 imps were won on Board 5 when Shirley & Joan made 4H with just 7 trumps, Kevin & Chris getting similarly bold opponents two off. Shirley & Joan were also the only pair to bid game on Board 7 for a further 10 imps and a tremendous 40-imp gain overall.

Round 2 yielded another 27 imps for an excellent 67-imp halftime lead. Kate & Brian made 5D on Board 10 when 4S, 5D and an over-ambitious 6D (with two aces missing) all failed elsewhere (+14 imps), whilst Chris & Pauline made a tricky 4HX for a further 11 imps on the next board. Board 13 saw all E-W contracts go down, but our superior play earned 9 imps. Chris & Pauline's opponents were the only ones to make game on Board 14 (-8 imps) and Kevin & Chris were the only pair not to find 6NT on the next board (quantitative bidding proving more useful than Gerber) (-11 imps). They more than made up for this by making 4H on the final board, however (+13 imps).

After an excellent tea, including a nice selection of homemade cakes, our dominance continued. Board 21 was the 'hand of the day' with both our N-S pairs making 6H, one opponent making 12 tricks in 4H and the other unaccountably stopping in 2S+4 for +18 imps! Shirley & Joan again starred with the only game score on Board 19 (+7 imps) and Chris & Pauline were relieved when their opponents' aggressive bidding of Spades over their 4NT and 6H turned into +4 imps when the likely-looking 6H was not after all available, presumably after AC and a Club ruff, all other pairs stopping in 5H or 4H on Board 22. A further 24 imps took us to a lead of 91 with a 20-0 win now looking 'on the cards'.

The final round started with a rare blip from Shirley & Joan, failing to make 3NT (-10imps) but this was more than made up for on the next board as Kevin & Chris got 4H one off (+12 imps). Four plus scores on Board 27 yielded another 9 imps and 11 imps were gained on each of Boards 30 and 32 with slam bidding again crucial, Shirley & Joan being the only ones to find 6C on the latter and their opponents stopping in 4S on the former. So another 42 imps in our favour on the last round gave us a whopping 133-imp victory for a conclusive 20-0 scoreline, all the more satisfactory after a whole year without a single win last season.

Our new pair, Kevin & Chris, added their undoubted class to our team in an excellent debut, whilst all other pairs contributed almost equally to this decisive result. Well done everybody!

BRIGHOUSE B PAIRS	1st ROUND	2nd ROUND	3rd ROUND	4th ROUND	TOTAL
Chris & Pauline (E-W)	+700	+1470	+1040	+120	+3330
Shirley & Joan (N-S)	+270	-850	+370	+910	+700
Kevin & Chris (E-W)	+1890	+980	+100	+600	+3570
Kate & Brian (N-S)	-770	+190	+690	+440	+550
HARROGATE C PAIRS					
Ted & Kath	-700	+850	-100	-440	-390
Jack & Ruth	-270	-980	-690	-120	-2060
Roger & Elizabeth	-1890	-190	-1040	-910	-4030
John & Sheila	+770	-1470	-370	-600	-1670