

# HEREFORDSHIRE BRIDGE

## **Newsletter 104 – Spring 2012**

**Editor: Martyn Moxley**

### **Chairman's Chat.**

It was very kind of Fownhope Bridge Club to invite me on Feb 25 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the club. Everyone had a splendid lunch catered by Ken and Heather and some pleasant bridge followed. It was great that some founder members were present and to know that the club is flourishing. They are sponsoring two of our events in the near future and both are not to be missed. Do get your entries in for **The Championship Pairs** at Hampton Bishop Hall on Sat April 21 and the **Multiple Swiss Teams** at The Riverbed Restaurant, Fownhope on Sat May 19. Both events will include a superb lunch, with Heather and Ken catering for the first and The Riverbed for the second.

**The Interclub Teams** has now ended and congratulations to the winners Wyese B. With 16 teams entering, it meant that only four sessions were needed so we have a spare date on Friday, 27th April. Your committee has come up with the idea of running **A Charity Event** on this evening with St Michael's Hospice suggested as the beneficiary, but I am open to other suggestions. We need at least 12 teams to enter, so all those teams who played in the Interclub Teams, and any others, please get your entry in now. There will be a trophy and wine prizes for the winners and I hope to run a raffle to boost the amount we can raise for charity. For those who are interested in their ranking status within the EBU, may I remind you that, if you look in the members section on their site, you will find that there is a national grading scheme and you can see how you rate. On Barry's Blog, there is a link to a full explanation of the detailed calculations to arrive at your rating, and you can view the ratings of others.

**Ben Britton**

## **Remembering Robin**



**Robin Lewis (24.11.1937 – 17.12.2011)**

Robin William Lewis was born at Idle, near Bradford. He was educated at home until he was 14 when Robin went to Ludlow Grammar School, where he proved a skilful chess player, becoming Shropshire joint open champion.

Robin was also a gifted musician – a pianist, accompanist and conductor.

Robin read Natural Sciences at Cambridge and having graduated began a teaching career that was to span nearly 30 years. In 1964 he and his wife, Ruth, moved to Wales, where Robin was to spend 25 years as maths master at Christ College, Brecon.

Another of Robin's passions was bee-keeping. After moving to Wales he established a full-time honey producing business, run in tandem with his teaching career. In the late 1980s he retired from teaching to form the Brecon Honey Company which became the third-largest honey packer in the country. In 2004 he became chairman of the British Bee Farmers' Association. Robin will be remembered by us all as a fine bridge player. He played for Warwickshire with Roger Quincey, before forming a formidable partnership with Eva Robinson, with whom he won several bridge congresses in Wales in the 1990s. Five years ago he resumed playing at county level, this time for Herefordshire. In 2011, despite his deteriorating health, he competed in the Tollemache, England's premier inter-county event.

## **HBA Events**

17 Club Teams entered the **Inter-Club Teams League** (run by Ledbury Bridge Club) this season. The Winners were Wyeside B with 266 VPs (83 %) having won all of their 16 matches. Second were Hereford B with 245 VPs and Fownhope a very creditable third with 185 VPs just ahead of Hereford C with 184.

When the HBA Annual programme is determined, it is not known how many entries there will be in this event, so a date is reserved for a possible fifth round. But this year, the fifth date (Friday April 27) was not necessary. The Committee decided to explore whether this booking at Ledbury could be used for a **Club Charity Swiss Teams** event and all Clubs have been invited to enter. To date, entries fall short of the number required to run the event, so Clubs please encourage your members to make up teams (these do not have to be those who played in the Teams League) and enter advising Ben Britton and/or Chris Chowney.

Each year, all EBU affiliated Clubs are invited to stage a local Qualifying Heat for the **National Pairs Championship**. The Hereford Bridge Club does this every year and this is open to members of all HBA Clubs. This year the Heat was won by George Richardson and Paul Smith and 6 pairs qualified for the Regional Final in Bristol. The best Herefordshire pair in this Regional Final was Mike Ralph and John Thacker with 51.1 %.

This year 6 Clubs entered in the **Teams of 8 Championship** (run by Wyeside Bridge Club). The event was won by the Wyeside team with 61 VPs followed by Hereford (57), Marcle (56), Fownhope (54), Ross (40) and Ledbury (32). The winning Club represents the county in the Garden Cities Trophy Regional Final at Bristol in May.

The HBA **Mixed Pairs Championship** (run by the Marches Club) attracted 20 pairs this year – rather less than last year. The winners were John Crowe and Evie Whitfield with 61.3%, with Chris Chowney and Sue Shore second (59.8%) and Peter Watts and Heather Brace third (59.2%). Both the **KO Teams** competitions have reached their final stages. In the final of the main event, John Thacker's team will play Peter Watts' team. The final of the Consolation Plate will be between Dave Weller's and Chris Chowney's teams.

Following discussion with the Birches Club, your County Committee has decided to separate the 2 restricted events scheduled to be played as a joint event run by that Club on Monday May 14.

**Next Steps Pairs** (less than 15,000 local points) will now be run at 7pm on that date at Much Birch while the **Ace of Spades** (for players with less than 7,500 local points) will be played at Much Birch at 2pm on Wednesday May 16. Clubs are asked to ensure eligible members are aware of this change and are encouraged to enter.

**Geoff Harrington**

## **County Squad**

The County have continued to have a stop-start season in the Western League. Following good results against Wiltshire and a fine A team victory in the Avon match, there were two defeats and one victory against Devon, leaving all the sides in the bottom part of their respective leagues. The remaining Western League fixtures for 2011/2012 is on *May 12 – Cornwall (to be played in Somerset)*

Following the departure of Tony Truluck to South Africa and the very sad loss of Robin Lewis, the County Squad is having to re-group somewhat and one or two new faces have joined the group, and a juggling of partnerships will be required as we go forward.

The County have been invited to participate in the President's Cup again during the Summer and this will take place over the week-end of June 30.

Outside the County events, Martyn Moxley and Neville Shorricks finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the Midland Counties congress in January, while Sarah Mathews, Bob Underhill, Steve Booth and Peter Watts were 7<sup>th</sup> in the same event in the Teams from large entries. Neville Shorricks and John Crowe came 9<sup>th</sup> out of nearly a hundred pairs in the recent Avon Congress at Bath.

**Peter Watts**

*Sat March 31<sup>st</sup>* - Another tough day for the County in the long trip to Dorchester, the A team lost 19 -1 being in catch up from the first few boards. A good result came from the B team who recovered from a poor start to win by 6 imps (11 - 9 in VPs), while the C team were in contention until the last phase, but this went badly and another 19 -1 result came our way.

## The "LAW"

You may have heard people say "... *bid up to the level of the fit*"; or read about experts referring to "The LAW". What are they on about? The answer is the Law of Total Tricks.

The law of total tricks as stated in 1992 by Larry Cohen is "*The total number of tricks available on any deal is equal to the total number of trumps*".

Total Number of Tricks is the combined total tricks available to both sides if they play in their best (longest) fit. For example, if North-South can make ten tricks in their 5-4 spade fit, and East-West can take seven tricks in their 4-4 diamond fit, then the total number of tricks would be  $10+7 = 17$ .

Total Number of Trumps means the combined total of cards in both sides' best trump fit. For example, if North-South's best (longest) fit is a 5-4 spade fit, and East-West's best (longest) fit is a 4-4 diamond fit, then the total number of trumps would be  $9 + 8 = 17$ .

If North-South's longest fit is ten cards, and East-West's longest fit is nine cards, then the LAW says that there are 19 total tricks available.

Those 19 tricks can be divided in many different ways – maybe North-South can take 11, and East-West can take eight, or vice versa – but the Total Number of Tricks is fixed at 19.

Based on the assumption that there are (for example) 19 tricks available, you can work out possible scores for a particular contract depending on whether the tricks are divide 12-7, 11-8, 10-9, 9-10, 8-11, 7-12, etc. This then provides an optimum strategy for N-S and E-W. But in practice, you are not going to work this out for every hand, even if you could deduce the total number of trumps from the bidding.

But you can forget about the why, and just use the following maxims based on the LAW:

- *You should always bid to the level equal to the combined number of trumps held by your side*
- *Try not to let the opponents play at a level equal to their number of trumps*
- *The five level belongs to the opponents*  
*When in doubt, bid four spades over four hearts*
- *When in doubt, bid one more on freak deals*
- *When you hold four trumps, consider making a penalty double*

The first of these is the most useful (and important). What it means is that if you and your partner (for example) have nine trumps between you, it should be safe to bid to the three level. Either you will make, or it will be a good sacrifice. Like all maxims in bridge ("*cover an honour with an honour*", "*lead fourth highest from your longest and strongest suit*", etc), these are only guidelines, there are always exceptions, so use your judgement. In particular, double fits and long suits make for more tricks than the total number of trumps. Defensive type hands tend to lower the number of tricks available. And take notice of the vulnerability, and what you think the opponents are likely to make on the hand. I'll give some example hands in the next Newsletter, but if you want to learn more have a look at Larry Cohen's book, "*To Bid or Not to Bid – The LAW of Total Tricks*". There are also subsequent books where he further refines his ideas.

**Chris Chowney**

## Cue Bidding

Often, when you wish to investigate a Slam, you need to know which Ace(s) partner is holding. Usually the Ace-asking bids of Gerber & Blackwood don't give you the information you need. The answer, when you have agreed a suit, is to Cue Bid = control of the first round, usually an Ace but could be a void. This is essential when trying to investigate a Minor-Suit Slam. This was Board 9 (E-W Vul) at the Inter-Club Teams on the March 9 at Ledbury and I was sitting North (unfortunately the bidding is not factual).

	♠	
	♥ KQT9x	
	♦ KJ9x	
	♣ KQJx	
♠ A98xxxx		Tx
♥ AJx		xxxx
♦ x		xxxxx
♣ T9		xx
	♠ KQJx	
	♥ x	
	♦ AQT	
	♣ Axxxx	

The bidding, with partner opening and playing weak NT, goes

S	W	N	E
1Cl	Pass	1Ht	Pass,
1NT	2Sp...		

What next? Do you Double...bid 4Cl (is it Gerber?)...5Cl...4NT, which, when partner responds, gives us our problem = which two Aces does partner hold? What about 3Sp? (forcing & normally asking partner to describe his hand further), Pass, 3NT (giving confidence about his Spade holding). At Pairs you might pass this as the probable best contract (+460/490) v the possible 5Cl outcome (+400/420). At Teams, however, you need to ignore this small loss, in the hope of a much larger gain. If partner holds Ace of Cl + a red suit Ace, we need to know. We push on with 4Cl = slam interest – any bid removing a game shows Slam interest. Partner can now show his Ace of Di = 4Di, Pass, 4Sp from us = denying the Ace of Ht, because we would have bid 4 Ht, but showing the void / Ace of Sp. Partner can now bid 6Cl with confidence. Hang on! – what if Partner holds Ace of Di & Ace of Sp? – then Partner now bids 5Cl = sign off (bidding the agreed suit is always a sign off, not a cue bid). There's also much more on 2nd round control bidding to whet your reading appetite and enhance your partnership enjoyment.

**Stephen Booth**

### **Mid Wales Congress**

An interesting hand from the Mid-Wales Congress at Llandrindod Wells. Do you want the good news first or the bad news? Here's the bad news:

North: ♠ KJ9	South: ♠ AQT7
♥ KQJT876	♥ -
♦ 64	♦ 532
♣ 8	♣ AQJT42

Where do you want to play? I am sure the best contract is 4♥, the contract we reached. Unlucky. East had ♠65432, ♥A942 ♦A9 ♣K7

Three rounds of diamonds promoted East's nine of hearts for the setting trick. He then led a spade, so when he won the Ace of hearts he could give West a spade ruff. Two off.

The good news? Opposing team played in 3NT going 3 off, so we gained 2imps.

**Mike Ralph**

### **Ledbury Competition Winners 2011/12**

*Ladies Pairs joint winners:* Lindsay Ray & Denise Robertson, Pam Crisp & Evie Whitfield

*Men's Pairs:* Richard Manuel & Peter Flagg

*Mixed Pairs:* John Paterson & June Homes

Individual: Sarah Wendon

*Teams Cup:* Keith Ray & Richard Manuel and Lindsay Ray & Denise Robertson

*Winter Pairs:* John Paterson & Ken Brookes

*Caley Cup:* Tony Teale & Peter Flagg

**John Paterson**

### **Fownhope**

After three successful years, Heather Brace stood down as Fownhope Bridge Club chairman at the AGM. She is succeeded by Sue Shore, a previous chairman. Heather thanked all the people who had helped to make the club so friendly and successful. Tributes were paid to Heather for her hard work which had contributed a great deal to the success of the club. Former County Chairman, Tony Shadforth, paid his tribute in verse before presenting the prizes (*see over*). The prize winners were Mary Panniers, Joyce Lewis, Heather Brace, Ted Dutton, Wendy Jones and Lorena Blower. Engraved glasses were the prizes and Heather added to her collection as winner of the Championship Pairs (Wednesday) with Joyce Lewis, Teams (Monday) with Joyce, Ted Dutton and Mary Panniers, and Teams (Wednesday) with Joyce, Lorena Blower and Wendy Jones. Winners of the Championship Pairs (Monday) were Daphne Whittaker and John Gray.

## **Heather**

*She mixes her work and leisure in an artful way  
Plays her Bridge with conviction and speed.  
Her accomplishments are many, indeed more  
than I can say;  
A restive follower and quite content to lead.*

*Her members at Fownhope have come to admire  
The way she organises our festive occasions.  
Quite often with Ken, she works to conspire  
Or cater perhaps, the most eatable of luncheons.*

*But there is more than this to chairing a bridge  
club well.  
There's the enthusiasm and energy to inspire  
support;  
There's the leadership required to make things  
jell,  
And yet still remain just Heather, a jolly good  
sport.*

*Yes, it is Heather Brace of whom I chunter in  
hesitant rhyme.  
Her spell as Chair is over and we can express our  
thanks  
for all that she has spent for us in energy and  
time.  
Now let's welcome her back to our appreciative  
ranks.  
**Tony Shadforth***

## **Deals on Meals**

Fownhope Bridge Club celebrated its 20th anniversary in style in Hampton Bishop Village Hall - thanks to the catering and organisation of retiring Chairman Heather Brace and honorary member Ken Nelson (*below*).



More than 70 members attended, including founder members (*below from the left*) Joyce Lewis, Phyllis Waters, Kathleen Watkins and Vera Briggs, who made the cake cutting ceremony a joint operation!



Ken made the journey from Torquay to preside over the catering, ably assisted by Heather who specialised in the sweets. The mouth-watering menu and wine meant that members were spoilt for choice when lunch was served.

### **AN ACE MENU - FIT FOR A KING!**

*Venison & Beef with apricots in port wine sauce  
Supreme of Pheasant with Calvados and apples  
Rich fish pie  
Curried Chicken Penang with Jasmine rice  
Vegetable Mille Feuille*

*Minted potatoes, Spiced red cabbage  
Roasted winter vegetables*

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*Warm apple and blackberry pie  
Fruit Pavlova  
Chocolate roulade  
Poached pears in cinnamon & cider  
Treacle tart  
Trifle  
Cheeseboard*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Coffee*

That lunch was served so swiftly was a tribute to the organisation as members made up 17 tables. County Chairman Ben Britton (*standing below*) was in attendance to congratulate the club on its anniversary and on being so successful.





Newly elected chairman, Susan Shore, thanked Heather and Ken for all their efforts and made a presentation to them on behalf of the club. Lunch over, members settled down to Bridge. The winners were:

- N/S:* 1. Jutta Shadforth & Janet Holder  
 2. Jean King & Joyce Lewis  
*E/W:* 1. Ben Britton & David Lait  
 2. Tony Shadforth & Neville Shorrick

### ***Fishy Stuff?***

Members of Fownhope Bridge Club are always there when the chips are down! Especially since Club Chairman Heather Brace (*right of picture below*) arranged for visits from a mobile fish and chip service.



Previously Fownhope's day-time Bridge was played at Wye Leisure's Riverbed Restaurant with a lunch break at the half-way mark. But the restaurant was closed to enable building works to be carried out. To continue the Monday Bridge it was decided to play at Hampton Bishop Village Hall - the club's Wednesday night venue. Members enjoyed their hot lunches at Fownhope and wished to have something similar

at Hampton Bishop. Heather made inquiries and negotiated an arrangement with *Starchip Enterprise*.

Cod and chips have proved very popular with the options of baked potatoes with various fillings or a vegetarian dish available.

Attendances at the new (temporary) venue have been maintained at or above those at the Riverbed. Normal Monday Bridge will resume there on March 19.

***PS A note for your diary!*** Fownhope is sponsoring the ***County's Championship Pairs*** on Saturday April 21 at Hampton Bishop and entrants will be able to sample Ken's lunch skills for themselves as he has generously agreed to look after the catering.



***Ted Dutton***

### ***Partnership Agreement - 3***

*For the next in an occasional series of articles focusing on some of the county's familiar pairings, the spotlight falls on Mary Panniers and Ted Dutton. Both are regular partners at Fownhope Bridge Club on a Monday. Both also play on Wednesday evening but with different partners. Whilst a member of Fownhope, Ted is currently Chairman of Wyeseide Club.*

Mary's Bridge career began with Bridge lessons at Worcester Tech. after which she became a founder member of Bromyard Bridge Club. To improve her Bridge, she attended lessons given by John Thacker before joining Fownhope and Wyeseide Bridge Clubs. Mary's husband played Bridge but was not as keen as she was.

They played Bridge at Fownhope, Ross, Wyese and Bromyard. When Michael died, Mary found new partners and in addition to Fownhope, she plays at Bartestree and Wellington Heath. Mary says Bridge has played a large part in her life: "It makes sure you get out to meet people and make new friends. It's a very social game and after bereavement this is a positive influence".

Ted first played "kitchen" Bridge in the 6th Form common room at Stretford Grammar School and clandestinely in the Library during private study periods! Whilst in the RAF the card games were Brag, Poker and Solo. At home, Ted had played Whist and Solo but after demob, journalistically irregular hours made it difficult to play regularly. Ted's wife, Joan, had played Contract Bridge with her parents and after they moved to Surrey she took lessons together with other Young Mums and found a partner as Ted again could not play regularly or take lessons. Ted found the prospect of occasional Club Duplicate Bridge a bit off-putting.

The chairman of one of the clubs where Joan played organised cut-price holidays and Joan persuaded Ted to go on one - without letting Ted know it was a Bridge holiday! This saw the first Duplicate session for Ted and they did not fare badly. Joan employed a similar ruse when they went on a cruise. After this Ted made occasional forays into Club Bridge.

It was not until Ted took early retirement and moved to Hereford that he and Joan decided to join a club. When they made inquiries of the Hereford Club the Chairman said players had to be up to standard to become members. Despite trepidation, Joan and Ted played and presumably came up to standard as they became members. They also joined Wyese and later Bromyard. Later, Joan qualified as a Bridge For All teacher but, sadly, she said this did not seem to include Ted, though she tried hard especially whilst driving home after an unsuccessful night! After Joan's death, people realised that Ted was without a partner and phoned to ask him to play. "It was good if a bit overwhelming," says Ted. "I ended up playing too much Bridge if anything - I was playing at Fownhope on Mondays, Bromyard on Tuesdays, Fownhope on Wednesdays and Wyese on Thursdays, often augmented by County events and competitions

on Fridays and weekends. All too much really but it was a great help over a very sad period." Sadly, Ted's regular Monday partner had to give up Bridge because of failing eyesight. This was when Mary became Ted's Monday partner and they've played together since.

"We play fairly basic Bridge, only fairly recently taking up 5 Card Suits. Neither of us is keen on way-out conventions requiring convention cards like encyclopaedias. We both consider Bridge a game - not a religion - but that does not mean we don't take the game seriously - just that we feel it should be fun to play," says Ted.

## VOIDWOOD

Voidwood (sometimes known as Exclusion Blackwood) can be a useful tool when deciding whether to bid a Small Slam or a Grand Slam. Once a suit has been agreed, it relates to a jump beyond game of the agreed suit, usually to the 5-level and asks for Roman Keycard Controls ignoring the bid suit in an escalating way. For example, in a bidding sequence **1C-1H-3H-5D**, the **5D** bid would say to partner "I have a VOID in Diamonds, it would also ask how many controls with hearts as trumps do you have ignoring diamonds". Then: -

*5H - shows 0 or 3 controls*

*5S - shows 1 or 4 controls*

*5NT - shows 2 controls without Q of trumps*

*6C - shows 2 controls with Q of trumps*

Similarly in a sequence 1H - 1S - 3S - 5C, responses would have the following meaning :-

*5D - shows 0 or 3 controls*

*5H - shows 1 or 4 controls*

*5S - shows 2 controls without Q of trumps*

*5NT - shows 2 controls with Q of trumps*

In using the tool, as with many others in bridge, it depends on what information you need from partner to decide the best contract. If we take an example from Hereford Bridge Club recently (a quite extraordinary hand), you hold the following after partner has opened the bidding 1H: -

♠ A K Q J x x x x

♥ K Q x

♦ A x

♣ Void

Clearly if partner holds 2 Aces, a Grand Slam in spades is more or less a lay down, unless one of the opposition holds the other 5 hearts. If

partner holds one Ace, it is not so clear-cut. If it is the AH, again the Grand Slam will almost certainly make given that partner has opened. But what if partner holds the AC, 12 tricks will probably be certain but not the Grand. So making use of Voidwood with a 5C bid during the bidding will tell us how many Aces and which ones partner holds. A 5D reply would say No controls in this case, so we stop at 6H or 6S, a 5H reply would show 1 Control in this case and a Grand is there and we bid 7H or 7S. 5S would also give us the reply we need and again we would bid 7H or 7S, The 5NT reply cannot apply on this hand.

Using the normal Roman Keycard Blackwood of 4NT, all you may learn is that partner has one Ace without knowing which one. Whereas in the above example, it is reasonably certain partner has the AH. Bridge can be a strange old game as we all know to our cost.

**Peter Watts**

**HEREFORDSHIRE AND  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**GREEN POINT CONGRESS**

**SWISS PAIRS SAT 21<sup>ST</sup>**

**SWISS TEAMS SUN 22<sup>ND</sup>**

**LARRUPERZ CENTRE, ROSS**

**ENTRY FORMS FROM THE HBA  
WEBSITE AND YOUR CLUB**

## **A Hand That Got Away**

Dealer East – N/S game.

♠ KJ5	
♥ KJ104	
♦ AJ106	
♣ Q5	
♠ --	♠ 10972
♥ 96	♥ 52
♦ Q8752	♦ K94
♣ KJ9842	♣ A1076
♠ AQ8643	
♥ AQ873	
♦ 3	
♣ 3	

The bidding:

N	E	S	W
	P	1♠	4NT
dbl	5♣	5♥	P
6♥	P	P	7♣
dbl	End		

At that vulnerability West chose (with a passed partner) to bid 4NT for the Minors rather than a puny 2NT, but N/S still reached the slam. After that 7♣ sacrifice there was nothing for it but to double. N/S could make no more than two Heart Tricks and two Diamonds, so that was 800 to N/S rather than the 1430 hoped for.

The print-out said 6♥ doesn't make, (while 6♠ is a doddle) and of course (annoyingly) it's right. Club to the Ace and Spade ruff. The ♣9 lead would (perhaps, in my case) alert partner to the need for a Spade switch. I wonder if our E/W opponents would have found that if they'd allowed us to play 6♥. If they bid like that – probably.

**George Richardson**