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### Latest Results

In the North Wales Swiss pairs congress in early July, Neil Thomas won partnering Sue Richmond of Lancashire.

The Jim Davies Swiss teams organised by the Wirral club was again a success. The winners were Paddy Murphy, Liz Commins, David Stevenson, Matt Foster. Second place only 1vp behind were Ann and Peter Hall, Danny Milner, Paul Holt.

Well done to the County team in the match v Derbyshire that took place in June. They pulled back a 66 imp deficit at half time to win by just 4 imps.

Dave & Jean Keen, David Stevenson and Liz Commins were equal 2nd in the Mid-Wales teams Congress in July.

The County team finished 3rd out of the 9 teams in this year's President's Cup, which we hosted this year at the Merseyside Bridge Centre.

## Editorial

*Many of you will remember Olwen Brown who died in February. She was a lovely person both at and away from the table. The Merseyside Bridge Centre are dedicating this year's Anniversary Pairs to her memory. It is a two session event which is being held on September 23rd and entering in advance is recommended. The organiser is Jill Oddie who can be contacted on 0151 653 0603.*

In the previous issue I promised you a fuller report from the Killarney Congress, where M&CBA players dominated the event. Sadly none of the participants could produce any hands of interest, so rather than leave a piece of the newsletter blank, here is a well played hand from a recent match.

♠ 10 7 2

♥ A J

♦ Q 10 7

♣ K J 9 7 6

♠ 5 4

♥ Q 10 9 8 6 5 4

♦ 4 2

♣ 3 2

♠ K Q J 8 6

♥ K 7 3

♦ J 3

♣ Q 10 8

♠ A 9 3

♥ 2

♦ A K 9 8 6 5

♣ A 5 4

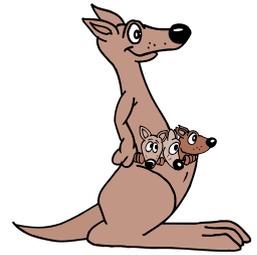
Partner opts not to start with a weak 1NT as North and East opened 1S. You overcall 2D and now partner shows his maximum pass with a 2S call, which East doubles. Despite 3NT being safer, you subsequently finish in 5D on the lead of the spade 5. How do you intend to play it? Well there is no rush to take the club finesse. Win the first trick and test the trumps. When they break 2 - 2 you have a virtually sure thing. Play the ace of hearts and ruff a heart, then exit with a spade. For his bidding, East must have the top spades, so after taking them both, he has to lead a club or give you a ruff and discard. A flat board, so well played by both declarers.

Congratulations to Alex Roberts who was a member of the England under-20's team for the recent Junior World Championships in Beijing. Alex and his partner Shivam Shah were easily the best of the English pairs, playing every board in the round robin, earning an average of +0.83 imps per board. Sadly the team went out in the quarter-finals to eventual winners Poland. Alex was a pupil at the Grange School in Hartford and is now studying Mathematics at St. John's College, Oxford. He is a member of the Hartford club though understandably rarely has an opportunity to play there these days.

**Congratulations also go to Liz Commins on reaching the rank of Grand Master.**

## HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

By Tim Bourke



Dealer North. All Vul.

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

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
1NT	Double	2♦	2♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West took the perfectly reasonable option of bidding in the pass out seat, but the consequences were not comfortable when his opponents then bid to a game in hearts. West led the ace of diamonds and not wanting to open up any other suit he continued with the diamond king.

Declarer saw that he would need to reach his own hand to play spades to any advantage. So, he ruffed the second diamond with the queen of trumps and continued with a small trump from dummy towards his jack in hand. West took this with the king and played the queen of diamonds. Declarer continued with his plan to reach his hand in trumps and ruffed with dummy's ace. Next he crossed to hand with a trump to the ten and drew the remaining trump with the nine, discarding a spade from dummy. The contract now depended on a correct guess in spades. As the West's re-opening one no-trump promised eleven to fourteen points and he had already shown up with twelve points in the red suits, he almost certainly did not hold the spade ace. So, declarer led a spade and finessed the ten. If East ducked, declarer could unblock dummy's clubs and make two of the last three tricks with a trump and the jack of clubs. When East decided to take the spade ace and play a diamond, declarer ruffed, throwing another spade from dummy and repeated the spade finesse. As dummy was now high declarer claimed ten tricks - two spades, three trumps, two diamond ruffs and three clubs.

Note that if declarer had ruffed the king of diamonds with a low trump and then played the queen of trumps, West could have defeated the contract by ducking.

## Inter - County League Finals

These days, counties rarely play all day head-to-head matches against each other, preferring instead to meet in area county leagues. For us this means taking part in the Northern Counties League which involves playing over four Saturdays during late Summer/early Autumn. Last season we were the winners in the A division - quite an achievement with teams like Manchester and Yorkshire to defeat. Winning your division qualifies you to play in the national finals against the top placed teams of the other four leagues in the EBU and this event took place a few weeks ago. I am pleased to report that the Merseyside & Cheshire team dominated their final, winning by a huge margin, with our pairs taking 4 of the top 5 places in the Butler.

The team offered me a couple of deals from the event. In this first one, Dave Keen sitting South reached the normal contract of 4 spades. West began with ace then a small club, Dave winning the second round in hand. He then crossed to the ace of diamonds and played a trump, getting the bad news. He put up the ace and continued with the seven. West took his king and exited with another spade to dummy's queen. With another trump to lose, the situation looked hopeless, but as you will see, there was a chance! The king of clubs was played next and West decided to ruff this. Not seeing any potential problems he now exited with a diamond and Dave seized his chance. He threw a small heart on that trick and the diamond nine was ruffed in hand. The final trump was drawn and East was in serious trouble. Dummy had the eight of clubs and the doubleton heart ace remaining, whilst Dave held Q 7 4 of hearts. East could not keep the club eight and three cards in hearts. With the singleton heart king making up for the poor trump break the contract came home. West could have prevented the squeeze ending after ruffing the king of clubs, by exiting with the heart king, which destroys the late dummy entry.

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

Another deal that brought in a useful swing was this. You hold ♠ A Q 5 ♥ K Q ♦ K Q J 10 8 ♣ A J 9 at favourable vulnerability. Partner in first seat opens 3 diamonds!!! The next player overcalls 4H, so what now? When he held this hand, Stuart Matthews thought it unwise to defend, especially as they pre-empt aggressively at this vulnerability. So he tried a hopeful 5D. When the opponents went on to 5H, Stu doubled and took the contract 2 off. The hand opposite was ♠ 9 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A 9 7 6 5 4 3 ♣ 8 4 . This looks like a normal pre-empt and it was bid at every other table, though against Dave and Jean Keen, the strong hand decided to double 4H rather than bid on. This was correct in principle but turned out wrong, when the defender played for the 4H overcall to be a 4-7-0-2 shaped hand when it was actually 5-7-0-1. The key decision was whether to take the club ace early and once it was ducked, the Merseyside team had another big swing -15 imps.

Congratulations to our team of National Champions who are Dave Keen, Jean Keen, Stu Matthews, Alan Stephenson, Liz Commins, David Stevenson, Andy Prothero, Chris Pope. Also well done to all those who played in the A' team matches in the 2011NCL, but were not playing in the final.

The 2012 NCL season started last weekend. After the first round the A team were lying 4th out of 5, the B team were 4th of 8 and the C team 5th of the 7 teams in their section. Good luck to them all for the remaining three rounds, especially in the sessions I am playing.

## Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

Editor : Bob Pitts  
21 Dingle Road  
Leeswood  
Flintshire CH7 4SN

Phone : 01352 771304  
E-mail: bob.pitts1@btinternet.com

### Contacts and information

MBC : [www.merseybridge.org.uk](http://www.merseybridge.org.uk)

LBC : email [jo-rogerarnold@talktalk.net](mailto:jo-rogerarnold@talktalk.net)

Deva BC : [www.bridgewebs.com/deva](http://www.bridgewebs.com/deva)

Angus Clark (county secretary) :  
[aandsclark@aol.com](mailto:aandsclark@aol.com)

Dave Keen (chief selector) : email [admin@mcba.org.uk](mailto:admin@mcba.org.uk)

County website : [www.mcba.org.uk](http://www.mcba.org.uk)

## 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.

### August

25th Northern Counties League Round 2

### September

10th-14th EBU simultaneous pairs Clubs

22nd Northern Counties League Round 3

23rd Anniversary Pairs MBC

### October

8th - 12th BGB simultaneous pairs Clubs

13th Northern Counties League Round 4

14th Chester Bowl (charity pairs) Deva BC

### November

12th 'Children in Need' sim. Pairs MBC

24th/25th WBU Swiss teams Llangollen

### December

9th Waterworth Cup (county gp pairs) MBC

Lady Connell heats - Oct. 9th LBC/Oct. 12th Deva BC/Oct. 18th MBC

## Bridge Terminology

*Merely explaining conventions in Conventions Corner seemed a bit limiting, so we are upgrading and this is the first article about all those annoying little terms, as well as conventions, that we come across in this game.*

### Morton's Fork

Many of you will be familiar with a Morton's Fork, but if you are not then in essence it is a position where one of the opposition are put in a 'heads I win, tails you lose' situation. Here is a perfect example from a matchpointed pairs session at my club.

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

West opens a weak two in hearts and is raised to game. North leads the spade queen and it looks like declarer is merely looking for possible overtricks. The club position may well produce 3 tricks, but in case it does not, declarer can try for a Morton's Fork against North. After winning the first trick in hand, he leads a small diamond towards the king. If North takes this trick, then there are sufficient entries to unblock the diamond queen and get back to dummy to throw away two clubs on the spade and diamond kings. If North ducks the ace of diamonds then the king wins in dummy, the diamond queen is discarded on the spade king, and declarer can draw trumps and play on clubs for 11 or 12 tricks depending on the lie of that suit. Poor North cannot win either way. I am sure you have spotted that the same position is available against South, should he have been dealt the ace of diamonds – declarer crosses to a heart at trick 2 and leads a small diamond towards his hand. It is not uncommon for there to be a choice of defenders to play this option against, so it can be a 'coin toss' to decide.