



County Bulletin

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Editor's News

Congratulations to Simon Edwards, Stuart Matthews, Paddy Murphy, Chris Pope, Andrew Prothero and Alan Stephenson who won the major Welsh KO teams event the Welsh Cup. The foursome of Liz Commins, Barry Jones, Paddy Murphy and David Stevenson came close to making it a double success as they reached the final of the Welsh mixed teams competition but they sadly lost to a quartet of very experienced International players.

Paddy also saw success in the recent Mid-Wales teams Congress winning the two day event with South Wales teammates Mark Roderick, Laura Woodruff and Mike Close. I asked this team if they had any interesting hands to report and Mike has sent in a great article that you can read on pages 2 and 3. Many thanks Mike.

Congratulations also to Paul Roberts for his recent promotion to Grand Master

Message Received

by Paul Roberts

In our recent Silver Plate match I held ♠ A Q J ♥ K 10 x x x ♦ A Q 10 x ♣ x and my partner Julian Merrill opened one heart - how nice I decided to bid four clubs agreeing hearts and showing at most a singleton club (a splinter bid). He responded with four diamonds which showed first or second round control so I continued with four no-trumps (Roman Key Card Blackwood) and his reply was five spades showing two key cards and the queen of trumps.

I know knew that we had all five key cards so it was time to ask about kings. I bid five no-trumps to enquire and his response was six clubs. This bid showed either the club king or the other two kings i.e. spades and diamonds. Ideally I should have had at least one king outside of the trump suit to bid five no-trumps in order to be able to interpret his response accurately but no other route else seemed better. Since his four diamond bid could show a small singleton I decided to try six diamonds hoping that he would interpret it as looking for the two king option (the king of clubs was less likely to be useful opposite known shortage). Even though we had not specifically discussed this sequence my six diamond call was clearly a grand slam try looking for extras which he had.

Being on the correct wavelength Julian jumped to seven hearts which proved to be laydown when he held ♠ K x ♥ A Q x x x x ♦ K J x ♣ A x. Fortunately at the other table they stopped in six hearts.

(Well done to Paul's team - himself, Julian Merrill, David Stevenson Liz Commins, Paddy Murphy, Simon Edwards who are now through to the quarter-finals of this national event).

MERSEYSIDE LEAGUE

The season restarts in September and new teams would be very welcome.

If you are interested contact Earl O'Keeffe earlokeeffe@yahoo.co.uk

THREE GRAND SLAMS

by Mike Close

Laura Woodruff and I usually play in the North Wales Swiss Pairs at Llandudno in July – it is our seaside jaunt - but this year Laura was playing in the Budapest Ladies' Pairs with Gilly Clench, so we fixed up to play the following weekend in the Mid Wales Teams in Llandrindod Wells instead, with the North–South combination of Paddy Murphy and Mark Roderick. It was quite successful.

As we travelled up together, Laura commented that she would have to “put her overbidding head back on”, a remark I let pass, since I wasn't sure whether it was a dig at my own sound bidding style, or something else.

They say that to bid a grand slam you need odds of about 70% plus. This is about equivalent to a 3-2 break (68%) plus some extra little chances.

Session 2 Board 10 Game All

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

We bid as follows:

West	North	East	South
-	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT ¹	Pass
2♣ ²	Pass	3♥ ³	Pass
4NT ⁴	Pass	5♠ ⁵	Pass
5NT ⁶	Pass	6♦ ⁷	Pass
7♥	All Pass		

1 12-16 2 Checkback 3 Maximum, 5 hearts, not 4 spades 4 RKCB 5 2 keycards + queen of trumps 6 Asking for kings 7 1 king

Laura always sits East (and North): I know my place. We play a little twiddle whereby the exact sequence 1♥–1♠–1NT shows 12-16 and 2♣ is an enquiry as to shape and length of the majors. After the 5♠ response to Blackwood (put on the table with the amusing comment “I hope that's enough for a slam”) I could see that a grand slam was possible, the 13th trick coming from a club ruff or a 3-2 break or at worst a finesse, so I asked for kings, partner told me she had one and I bid it.

Partner played two rounds of trumps before taking her club ruff, to cater for the chance of clubs 5-2 and trumps 3-2 with the doubletons in the same hand. As it turned out, trumps were 4-1 but the singleton was the jack (see what I mean about those extra chances?) so we were +2210. At the other table, the East-West pair were playing some sort of strong club system, so when East opened 1♥ it showed a maximum of 15 points and West just bid six. Such are the effects of different bidding systems sometimes.

How would you bid this with your favourite partner?

Session 4 Board 8 Love All

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

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♦*	Pass
2NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

We missed the grand.

Now, we have an agreement where if the bidding starts 1x-1y-1z, partner must keep the bidding open unless she is sub-minimum, by giving preference, raising a bid suit or bidding 1NT. My 1♠ can therefore be up to 18, leaving the jump shift 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♠ to show 19+. 2♦ was game-forcing 4th suit, and 2NT was stronger than 3NT on the principle of fast arrival. That was enough for partner to bid the slam without further ado.

Afterwards she wondered whether 3♣ was a better bid, and perhaps she should have bid more slowly, but I think it was I who missed the best chance, for this is no ordinary 18 count: it is a super-duper 18-count with aces and all minor honour cards supporting each other. I should have upgraded and bid 2♠, not 1♠, and that would have given partner the chance to go looking for the grand.

We got lucky. The opponents only bid to 6♣ and that was 2 IMPs to the good guys.

Session 1 Board 22 East-West vulnerable Dealer East

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

You are playing Gilly Clench and Sheila Shea, an enthusiastic, fizzy South Wales–North Wales pairing. You almost fall off your chair when partner opens 1♠ (we have rules about our Weak 2s, and never open one with more than 9 points). You bid 2♣ to find out which hand type she has, and when you get 2♠ in response you launch into RKCB. You find one 'ace' and three kings opposite. Surely that's enough? You bid 7NT.

The lead is the ♦J, and you search dummy in vain for the queen that will allow you to claim. Ah well, there are squeeze chances, and a finesse as a last resort. You win in dummy, and cross to the ♠A. The ♠10 drops on your left. On the ♠K Gilly (North) discards a diamond, so you cross to dummy with the ♠K to pick up the ♠J. As you cash the remaining clubs Gilly's hand turns to mush, because she started with ♠ J 9 4, ♥ Q 6 5 3, ♦ J 10 7 6 2, ♣ 10; so can only afford a heart and a diamond before her fourth discard gives away one of the pointy suits or exposes the heart queen. Rats, the finesse of the jack of hearts would have worked, so any fool could have made it.

You rashly mention that you enjoyed squeezing Gilly, but she is less than impressed. You gain 13 imps, because at the other table East has opened a weak two.

Much later that evening, after one of your bridge buddies from West Wales has been carted off to the local hospital, having consumed a quantity of white wine and then staggered out of the bar, head-butting a lamp stand and a chair on the way (it all happens in Welsh Congresses you know, much more fun than English ones), you go back to your hotel to find a small selection of Cardiff players enjoying a late night drink. One of them insists that he buy you a drink. You are a bit wary – it is not unknown for Welsh bridge players to nobble the opposition with drink (we had already played the West Walians and lost, so I had no motive to befuddle the victim of the lamp stand, honest) – so you check with your partner, who knows your limits better than you do, and you get a quiet nod of permission. The round is a Scotch for the host, beer for you and Fireman Steve, a Malibu for the estate agent, and a pot of tea for Laura.

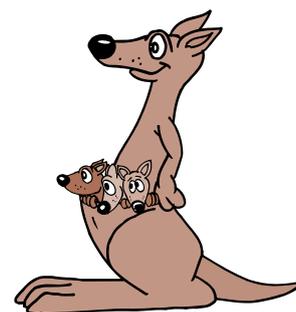
The round-buyer has a story about a hand and wants sympathy. There was this hand where he and his partner bid to 7NT, and on the first round of clubs he does not notice the ♠10 dropping on his left. So eventually he concedes a trick to the presumed ♠J10 on his right. But everybody knows where "sympathy" is in the bridge players dictionary and I failed miserably to suppress a guffaw!

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

Dealer North. Both vul.

Imp scoring



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

West	North	East	South
	2♣	Pass	2NT*
Pass	4NT	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* 2NT showed 8 -10 hcp balanced

West led the nine of diamonds. Declarer played low from the dummy and won with the ace over East's jack. When declarer led a club to the king, East discarded a heart and declarer was in trouble. Regretfully he saw that even if the spade finesse worked, he still had only eleven tricks. So he played on clubs and settled for a sure eleventh trick.

"You did not need to make four diamond tricks," said a disappointed dummy. "You did need five club tricks though. If the clubs were no worse than 3-1, then any normal play would produce five tricks. However if they were 4-0, as here, you could only have done something about it by winning the opening lead with the diamond queen and playing the king of clubs. West takes this with the ace and can do no better than play a heart. You win this and enter hand with the spade eight to your king and continue with the eight of clubs. West has to cover this with the nine or ten and you can win with dummy's jack."

"Now, thanks to you having won the first trick in dummy you can lead the diamond six to your ace and you can now finesse in clubs. As a result you would have made two spades, two hearts, three diamonds and five clubs for a total of twelve tricks."

CHESTER BOWL 2016

This ever popular charity pairs event takes place on October 23rd at the Deva BC Christleton. It is advisable to book early, especially if you want to take advantage of the excellent catering : details will be available very soon on the club website.

Advance warning - the club's annual Congress takes place on January 21st/22nd. This will be a blue point event with the pairs competition taking place on Saturday and Teams on Sunday.

Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

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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.

September

10th	Northern Bridge League round 3	
13th	Andrew Rosebowl (County Mixed Pairs)	LBC
October		
8th	Northern Bridge League round 4	
23rd	Chester Bowl (charity pairs)	Deva BC
November		
6th	Merseyside Cup (Intermediate teams)	TBA
27th	Waterworth Cup (County pairs/Corwen Q)	MBC

Quiz Time

by David Stevenson

This deal comes from an event in which I was partnering Liz Commins. West opened one club, which might be a short suit. North (Liz) doubled, East passed and I bid two hearts. A somewhat optimistic sequence propelled us into the heart slam with no further bidding from the opponents. West led the queen of clubs and the hands were :

Dealer West

♠ A 10 3

♥ A Q 9

♦ A Q

♣ A 8 7 6 3

♠ Q 9 4

♥ K 10 8 6 3

♦ J 6 4 3

♣ 4

I took the first trick with the club ace and ruffed a club in hand, with East following to this second trick with the club king. A diamond was played to the queen and East played the nine (standard count). What next?

I could see 12 tricks in a way via the diamond ace, come back to hand, ruff a diamond, West probably has K x x in diamonds so my jack will now be established. Come back to hand to lead the spade queen (West needs the king for his opening bid) to the king and ace. Now I can set up a spade trick with 10 3 opposite 9 4. All very well, but it seemed to me that I have not got enough entries to the South hand and I may lose control. In fact I could see no way of making it at all, unless there was some freak distribution like a singleton king of spades.

There were no singleton honours, but Deep Finesse had no difficulty making twelve tricks, by making one particular assumption. Of course it does not play fair as it can see all the hands. But I do not think this is impossible : what assumption do I need to make to bring home six hearts?

The answer will be revealed in the October issue.

The North Wales Bridge Association Autumn Swiss pairs event takes place on October 9th at the Holiday Inn, Northop Hall. Seven 7 board matches. Entry forms are available from the website or contact organiser Jean Hand tel : 01244 830246 email : jeanhand15cc@gmail.com