



# Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Bulletin



Issue 33

DECEMBER 2015

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## Editor's News



Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this publication throughout the year, especially Dave Keen, Chris Pope and John Hampson who have offered pieces for this issue. It would be really hard work to produce a County bulletin without your stories.



I hope that everyone has a great Christmas and enjoys a Happy New Year.



### Hand from the Tollemache Qualifier

Chris Pope sent this hand from the Tollemache qualifier. As South you play in the normal 3NT contract and West leads the spade two (E/W are playing standard leads). East wins with the ace and returns the four. You know it is not going to work, but just in case you insert the jack, taken by the queen. West surprises you by switching to a heart and now you are in trouble. If you duck, East will win with the king and revert to spades and if you mis-guess in diamonds (as is likely on this layout) the defence will have five tricks.

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

So, go back to trick two. If you win with the spade king and tackle diamonds, even if you lose a trick to the queen, you still have good prospects. After all the spades and diamonds have been cashed you will have the chance that one defender is under pressure, or at worst the club finesse is working as here. Easy to doze off at trick two assuming a spade continuation isn't it?

CHESTER CONGRESS - JANUARY 30th/31st.

Deva Bridge Club, Christleton. Check the club website for details

Director : Sarah Amos

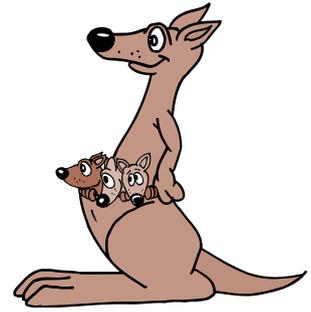
# HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

Dealer South. E/W vul.

Imp scoring

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



West North East South

After the straightforward auction of 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♠ - 3♣ - 3NT, West had an easy lead of the queen of hearts, taken by dummy's bare king. Declarer counted seven sure winners and so he needed to develop two extra tricks from spades or diamonds. Declarer saw that it was possible to improve his chances of doing that by tackling the suits in the correct order. If the diamonds broke 3-2 he would always have at least nine tricks.

He then considered what he could do about a 4-1 diamond break. If East had four diamonds, declarer would have to hope for five tricks from spades. However, if West had four diamonds he could succeed as long as East held a singleton honour. So, he cashed the ace of diamonds at trick two. When the queen appeared from East declarer saw the needed to unblock and retain the four for a later possible finesse in the suit. Consequently he played the diamond eight on this trick and continued with the three from the dummy, playing the nine from his hand.

West was fixed; if he took the nine of diamonds with the jack or ten, then declarer would later be able to finesse in the suit and get his required extra tricks. In practice, West let the diamond nine hold the trick, so declarer countered by switching his attention to spades, starting with a low one from hand to allow for a 4-2 break and to retain an entry back to his winners. As a result, declarer made four tricks in spades, two in hearts and three in diamonds for his contract.

Well Played by Dave Keen

We were playing in the Merseyside Bridge League Swiss Teams - the opening event of the league's season. In one match this suit layout came up and the question is how to handle this combination.

J 3 2

K 9 8

Kate Hodgkinson was playing the contract and required one trick, so what is the best line?

Kate started with the jack from hand and as I held Q x x I was stuffed!. Covering would lead to J Q K A and then the 9 8 are good for a trick. Ducking does not help as she runs the jack, forcing out the ace and the king becomes her required trick.

It is really a double finesse needing the hand on her left to hold one of the following Q or 10; A or 10; A or Q. As long as you play for one of these you have a great chance of making that necessary trick. Running the jack however also gives you the slight chance of pinning a singleton ten on your right, when two tricks would result.

What you must not do is play a small card towards the king and when it loses then play small to the jack, which also loses.

Well played Kate and a deserved 11 imps gained as a consequence.

## Llangollen Swiss Teams

by Bob Pitts

Regular readers will know how much I favour this event and in my eyes the 2015 Congress was as good as ever. Thirty teams, with some VERY good players involved contested twelve eight board matches. The event was excellently run with sensible finishing times and on the Sunday the hotel staff served the complimentary food to everyone at the table (though not during play of course!!). If you had to pick a likely winner before the start you would have probably selected correctly, though some of us gave them a good run for their money.

It is not every day you have an 8-5 distribution, but on the second day the North players had this holding **twice**. The first occasion was this one. At favourable vulnerability in first seat you hold ♠ void ♥ void ♦ Q 9 8 5 3 ♣ A Q J 10 9 8 7 5. Some of the field who had this convention available tried 2NT showing both minors, but it looked like a five club opener to me. The auction continued double - pass - six hearts passed around to partner who held four small clubs, the spade ace and diamond king but still correctly judged to save in seven clubs. Doubled and one off with slam making in either major the other way. Many had found the save, but those pairs allowed to play in the E/W slam gained heavily in the cross-imping results.

This was the second one, where we were playing the eventual winners.

Dealer East N/S vulnerable

	♠		
	♥ A K Q 9 8 7 5 2		
	♦		
	♣ Q 9 6 4 3		
♠ K Q 5 2			♠ A 10 9 8 3
♥ J 3			♥ 6 4
♦ A K 10 5 3			♦ Q J 9 7
♣ A 5			♣ K 10
	♠ J 7 6 4		
	♥ 10		
	♦ 8 6 4 2		
	♣ J 8 7 2		
West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
2NT	5♥	Pass	Pass
6♠	All Pass		

West's two no-trump bid was game forcing with spade support. Sitting North I felt that my opponents, Irish Internationals Hugh McGann and Tommy Garvey, were too experienced to fall for me bidding four hearts and then 'saving' in five hearts, so I went straight for the jugular (well somebody's throat anyway). Garvey passed and McGann jumped to the spade slam, which went one off when two rounds of hearts survived. West, Hugh McGann made a very interesting point. He felt that as they were in a game forcing auction, East should act the same as in a slam forcing auction, and only pass the five heart bid with heart control (singleton, void or the ace). This would help West to judge how high to go in a crowded auction. Had East doubled to show two losing hearts, then West would have settled for five spades.

As you can imagine, this deal caused havoc around the room with quite a few North's registering big scores in four or five hearts doubled, especially against opponents who had not opened that marginal East hand.

**Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association**

*Contacts and information*

Newsletter editor : Bob Pitts

Phone : 01352 771304

E-mail: bob.pitts1@btinternet.com

Richard Alcock (county secretary) :  
ralcock@altrad.com

John Hampson (chairman of selectors) :  
john73hampson@btinternet.com

County website : www.mcba.org.uk

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

27th-29th Northern End of Year Congress

January

30th/31st Chester Congress Deva BC

February

7th County trials TBC

21st Jean Keen trophy (Women's Teams) MBC

March

6th Eric Howarth trophy (County Teams) TBC

April

24th Preece Rosebowl (Women's Pairs) BBC

## North Wales Autumn Pairs

*by Bob Pitts*

This green-pointed pairs event took place on October 11th and the winners were Alan Stephenson and Bernard Burns. Bernard lives in Yorkshire and had only recently started playing bridge again regularly after spending many of his earlier years turning around failing UK companies.

To win these one-day competitions you need some luck, but also some skill in the play of the cards. When we played them, Alan showed this latter quality in **spades**. After Alan, sitting East had passed, South opened with a weak two bid in hearts. Three diamonds from West seemed normal and East could introduce spades, safe in the knowledge that as he had not opened a weak two, his bid was showing a five card suit with diamond support. This inference was lost on Bernard and he happily raised to game, but the play is the thing.....

*Board 26 Dealer East Game All*

	♠ Q J 10 2		
	♥ J 8		
	♦ J 9 8 6		
	♣ K 10 9		
♠ K 9		♠ A 8 7 4 3	
♥ 7		♥ A 9 5 3	
♦ A K 10 7 2		♦ 5 4 3	
♣ A 8 6 4 3		♣ Q	
	♠ 6 5		
	♥ K Q 10 6 4 2		
	♦ Q		
	♣ J 7 5 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
3♦	Pass	Pass 3♠	2♥ Pass
4♠	All Pass		

The opening lead was the heart king, won by East with the ace. Alan played a diamond to the queen, king and eight, before cashing the club ace and then ruffing a club in hand. Another diamond was led towards dummy and South ruffed (discarding makes no difference). A club exit was ruffed by East. Now came a heart ruff in dummy and the spade king was cashed. A further club from dummy saw North desperately ruffing with a spade honour, but East could over-ruff with the ace, cross back to the West hand with a diamond to the ace and lead another diamond which he could ruff with his last trump. Ten tricks and a complete top on the board. There are many variations depending upon the opening lead, but the computer analysis says that four spades can always get home and Alan did well to find a making line. Had he gone off his partnership would have been 3 or 4 vps worse off and as at the end of the event, the top six pairs were separated by only 5 vps, you can see how much difference that would have made to their final position.

## County Teams report for 2015.

The county teams have had some mixed results this year.

<b>Presidents Cup</b>	County Team finished 4 <sup>h</sup> out of 13
<b>Annual match versus Derbyshire</b>	County Team won by 28imps
<b>Northern Bridge League</b>	<b>A</b> team finished 4 <sup>th</sup> out of 6: <b>B</b> team finished 5 <sup>th</sup> out of 8: <b>C</b> team finished 3 <sup>rd</sup> out of 7.

**Tollemache qualifier** County Team Finished 6<sup>th</sup> in group

I would like to thank all players who represented the county this year and hope that you have enjoyed the matches. I would also like to add a special thanks to those pairs who in addition to turning out for their selected matches have stood in on other occasions for players who for one reason or another had become unavailable.

**The Chairman's Xmas Appeal** this year is to all our current and potential A team players.

At the selection meeting for the Tolle team we only had seven pairs who were available for selection. This had the great advantage of only requiring a short meeting but in truth we would have preferred to have several more pairs to consider. Our record over the last 10 years in the Tolle qualifier has been disappointing to say the least. We desperately need some new blood. If therefore anyone has ambitions of playing in this major county event please enter one or more of the events listed below and try and keep the weekend of the Tolle qualifier free.

### Major County events for 2016:

County Trials:	February 7 <sup>th</sup>
Presidents Cup:	TBC
NBL: Round 1	Saturday July 16 <sup>th</sup>
Round 2	Saturday August 6 <sup>th</sup>
Round 3	Saturday September 10 <sup>th</sup>
Round 4	Saturday October 8 <sup>th</sup>

Tollemache Qualifier 2016 Saturday/Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> November

My best wishes to all our County players

John Hampson Chairman of selectors