



County Bulletin

Issue 34

FEBRUARY 2016

Editorial

Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
Bridge in Indonesia by Paul Roberts	1
Camrose 2016 by Bob Pitts	2/3
Lucky hand for T.C. by Paddy Murphy	4
Calendar	4
Hand from Down Under by Tim Bourke	5

Along with my partner Barry Jones, I was lucky enough to play in the first weekend of this year's Camrose trophy as a member of the WBU team. I would like to thank all those players who wished us well in the weeks before we played and have been so complimentary about our performance once the event was over. We were both heartened by all the support though a little nervous knowing so many of you were watching on BBO. Thanks everyone!

There is an article by me in this issue about our experience and Barry has written a much longer piece (12 pages, so too big for this bulletin) which is available on both the North Wales Bridge Association website and the main Welsh Bridge Union site.

Bridge in Indonesia

by Paul Roberts

Whilst I was in Jakarta recently I had a game partnering an Indonesian Senior International called Bert Toar Polli.

We did OK but had one disaster:

Playing Standard American (five card majors, two over one game forcing) which I hardly ever play, partner opened one heart and I held : ♠ A K Q x x ♥ K x ♦ A J x x x ♣ A and decided to respond with two diamonds, since at least that would avoid the risk of any subsequent suit re-bid below game being passed. Partner now bid two hearts (which may still be only a five card suit of course) so I tried two spades and he now bid three diamonds. I decided to bid out my hand with three spades and he now bid four diamonds. Now Roman Key-Card Blackwood established that he had both missing key cards, but not the diamond queen so I settled for the diamond slam. Unfortunately his hand was ♠ x ♥ A Q J 10 x x ♦ K x x ♣ K x x so seven no-trumps was laydown. The grand slam in hearts is also a very good contract but six diamonds was a near bottom. Bert suggested that I could have bid three hearts over three diamonds (or I could have started with one spade after which his two heart rebid should show at least six cards) either of which should get us to at least the slam in hearts but I still do not know how I can discover that his hearts are solid in order to bid the grand slam with confidence.

Have you entered for the Eric Howarth Trophy?

This is the major one-day Swiss Teams competition of the County but a really friendly event. Do make an effort to take part. It takes place at Merseyside Bridge Centre on March 6th, start 1pm. £60 per team, food available if pre-booked. Entries to Liz Stevenson liz1@blakjak.org

Camrose 2016

by Bob Pitts

The Camrose Trophy is awarded to the winner of the Home International series. Each year England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland compete against each other over two weekends to see which nation is the best. In order that no team sits out for a match, whoever is hosting the second weekend is allowed to enter an extra team and this year that privilege fell to Wales. After a good performance in the 2015 Welsh Premier League, Barry Jones and I were selected to be part of the Welsh B team (we would be called the WBU team throughout the event) for the first weekend. Our team-mates were to be the current Commonwealth Gold medallists, Tim Rees, Gary Jones, John Salisbury, Mike Tedd, with Patrick Jourdain and Tony Ratcliff who would play the second weekend instead of Barry and I. As it is many years since any player from our County has played in the Camrose I have been encouraged to write about the experience, so here we go.....

Firstly, I must say that everyone was very encouraging to a couple of 'newbies'. Team-mates never queried our bad boards, praised our good ones and were always happy to offer advice if asked for. The organisation of the event was very good and the Irish welcome was as good as you would expect. We flew to Dublin on Friday afternoon and I was lucky that my wife Margaret could come along to support me. She has played in the Lady Milne for Wales and directed several Camrose matches in the past so it was hardly a surprise when she was warmly greeted by several people at the event who remembered her.

So, on to the bridge. We sat out for the first half match (each match comprises two 16 board sets) and watched our front four build up some points against the Welsh 'A' team - it was bound to be a needle match. We were in for the second set and starting your International career at 9.30 pm was not quite the perfect start, especially when the BBO operators lost our first two boards. Our third board was exciting. I held ♠ A Q 10 4 2 ♥ void ♦ K 9 3 ♣ K Q 8 6 5 at favourable vulnerability and got two passes to me. I started with one spade, two hearts on my left and two passes. I re-opened with a double and that was followed by another three passes! I hoped that I had not pushed too much opposite a passed partner, but Barry had a hand that some players in the event thought was a weak two heart opener and so he had an easy decision. This was +1100 to us, but turned out to be a flat board - I will not give you the auction at the other table in case this article falls into young impressionable hands.

Whilst trial bids are mostly useful for testing whether the hands fit well for game, they can also be used on hands with greater potential. This one arose on the next board. You hold ♠ A Q 10 4 2 ♥ A 9 ♦ J 2 ♣ A 8 5 4 (yes I know the spade holding is the same from the previous hand - the dealing machine was proving that it deals completely randomly). Partner opens one diamond and you reply one spade, which partner raises to two spades. You are going to game anyway and any trial bid is unlikely to help the defence too much, so why not test the water with three clubs? This gets a four diamond bid from partner who holds ♦ A K Q 10 3 and four spades to the king, so you can now cruise into the 98% spade slam. Missed at both tables; however we had beaten our 'A' team by 24imps and so could sleep content.

10:00 am Saturday, and Barry and I were in against Brian Short and Alan Goodman of Scotland. Both of these have many International caps to their name, with Brian having played 40 Camrose matches! We played sanely and on one hand they chose to play in 3NT with four hearts much better. Brian also forgot his system and got to a ridiculous five diamond contract that went four off vulnerable (we could not double on the information we had at the table but we gained 11imps on the hand anyway). Our other pair had a couple of great results and Barry and I sat out 44imps up. The team only dropped 1 imp in the next set so we had a big win, but England were already motoring and we had to play them next.

Again we were in for the first set playing Robson/Allfrey. Everything seemed to be going fine, with few swings, but a defensive slip at the other table allowed England to make a non-vulnerable game and we were 4imps down at the half. Barry and I sat out again and watched as Tim gave Tony Forrester a headache. Holding ♠ 8 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K Q 10 8 7 ♣ Q 10 8 6 5 Tim opted to open a weak two in diamonds (note one of the Wales A team tried a 3♦ pre-empt on this). Tony overcalled with a natural 2NT and went for 800 when Gary held a solid 6 card spade suit and some side values. By the end we had lost the match by only 5imps - David Bakshi told us on Sunday that we were the only team to give them a decent game over the weekend.

If you were watching me on-line on Sunday you may have wondered what was going on, certainly in the first match v Ireland I gave the vugraph audience some entertainment but notched up Margaret's blood-pressure considerably. The previous Monday a player at my club in Wrexham had turned up to play despite having a 'bug' and I had managed to catch it. By Sunday it was causing me some problems but our npc Patrick was keen to stick to his plan of having Barry and I play 48 of the 64 boards. So we trundled off to play Ciaran Coyne and Donal MacAonghusa of the Ireland team.

On the third board (see top of next page), Donal played against the odds to great effect. He reached three no-trumps from the South seat and I led the heart two. He won in hand, led the ten of clubs and when I played small he started to think. I could tell what was going through his mind. On the previous board he had pushed too much and they had played in five spades one off so he felt under pressure to recoup theimps. Eventually he went up with the king, dropping the bare queen, though this line would also win against a doubleton queen with East. Barry joked that he would keep his cards closer to his chest (of course declarer could not see Barry as he was on the other side of the screen) but Donal did explain that the Irish can see round corners. Not surprisingly, he was the only declarer in the event to bring home this contract

Dealer South E/W vul.

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

His next view was less successful. After an auction that I had completely messed up, he was on lead. Barry had opened 1NT and after several rounds of bidding I tried to sign off in six hearts. Barry had quite correctly thought that spades were the agreed suit and once he converted to six spades, I in turned called six no-trumps. I explained to Donal I expected six hearts to terminate the auction, but Barry had been misled by my bidding. Had he been on lead against three no-trumps Donal would have had no problem starting with a club from K J 10 x x and collecting the first 5 tricks (our clubs were singleton opposite Q x x), but that seemed dangerous when we were clearly in the wrong spot. So he tried a small diamond and Barry claimed 13 tricks. I apologised profusely to everyone - it was like a hand from a David Bird story. 3NT goes off but 6NT is a make!!

We finished this set 10 imps up, but with Barry and I sitting out we lost 23 imps in the second half. Everyone on our team was getting tired and it certainly showed during our poor final match against Northern Ireland. One hand from that last round did not show current methods in a good light.

Dealer South N/S vul.

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

Barry and I bid the N/S cards 1♦ - 1♥ - 2NT(gf 18-19) - 3♦ - 3♥ - 4NT(RKCB) - 5♠(2 +Q♥) - 6♥. On a trump lead the red suits were all cashed and East was squeezed in the black suits for 13 tricks. All quite normal you might think, but many players these days play strong NT, 5-card majors and a 'short' club. They open one club on many hands and play transfer responses, which was not best here. At our other table the N.I. pair were using these methods and sensibly stayed in game, surprisingly unable to reach the better six diamonds (or even six no-trumps) from the North seat. In the England-Ireland encounter the English pair had the same problem and played the heart slam from the South seat, which was quickly down on a spade lead. Ireland got to six hearts from North and the spade ace was led. Sadly this convinced the declarer that East had something useful in trumps and his early play of a heart to the ten meant a flat board!

England have a huge lead after winning all five matches. The situation going into the second weekend which is on 4th - 6th March is 1. England 2. WBU 3. Ireland 4. Wales 5. N. Ireland 6. Scotland

Finally I must praise Barry. This was our first time playing at this level but (unlike me) he was calm throughout and after looking through all the hand records I reckon he played better than anyone else on our team. Thanks mate. We are both looking forward to another such opportunity.

Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

Contacts and information

Bulletin 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.

February

19th-21st	EBU Spring Congress	Harrogate
21st	Jean Keen trophy (Ladies teams)	MBC

March

6th	Eric Howarth trophy (Open GP Teams)	MBC
20th	Portland Pairs	various
25th-27th	Northern Easter Festival	Ilkley

April

24th	Preece Rosebowl (Ladies pairs)	BBC
------	--------------------------------	-----

May

22nd	John Armstrong trophy (GP Swiss pairs)	MBC
------	--	-----

Lucky hand for T.C.

by Paddy Murphy

A greedy defender went astray on this hand from the recent Celtic Simultaneous pairs.

♠ Q J 5

♥ 9 8 6 4 3

♦ K

♣ 10 7 5 2

♠ 9 8 3

♥ K Q 7 2

♦ 5 3

♣ A K Q 9

♠ A K 10 6

♥ A J 10 5

♦ A Q 6 4

♣ 6

♠ 7 4 2

♥ void

♦ J 10 9 8 7 2

♣ J 8 4 3

West

North

East

South

		1♥	Pass
2NT (Jacoby)	Pass	3♣ (shortage)	Pass
4♣ (cue)	Pass	4NT (RKCB)	Pass
5♠ (2 + Q♥)	Pass	5NT (K excl.)	Pass
6♣ (club K)	Pass	6♥	All Pass

On the lead of a club, declarer won in the West hand and decided to take an immediate finesse in diamonds but got a surprise when the king 'popped up'. Re-thinking, East won then led a heart to the king finding out the bad break, and continued with another diamond, which North made the error of ruffing, as a discard by North would be fatal to the contract. A club was returned and declarer won in dummy whilst throwing a spade from hand and a further spade on the third top club. A spade to hand followed and then a diamond ruffed high in dummy. The remaining trumps could now be drawn and declarer claimed 12 tricks. Twelve tricks are always there by way of the double spade finesse which you will need, which you will need in six no-trumps but if you find this line in six hearts then you are Top Dog!

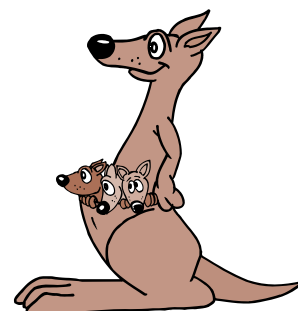
(Paddy is modelling himself on Top Cat - we have yet to allocate the rest of the 'gang').

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

Dealer South. Both vul.

Imp scoring



♠ 10 4 2
♥ J 6 2
♦ Q J 5 2
♣ A 8 6

♠
♥ K 10 9 4
♦ A 8 7 3
♣ K Q J 7 5

♠ J 7 5 3
♥ 8 7 5
♦ 9 6 4
♣ 10 9 4

♠ A K Q 9 8 6
♥ A Q 3
♦ K 10
♣ 3 2

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Double	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Against the obvious four spade contract, West led the king of clubs, which was allowed to hold. Declarer took the club continuation with dummy's ace and made the normal play of the two of trumps to his ace. When West discarded a club this contract was in jeopardy.

Declarer's next move was to try a sneaky ten of diamonds, intending to play dummy's queen if West played low. However, West was wise to this possibility and rose with the ace to continue with another high club (East having signalled his length in that suit). Declarer ruffed low and gave West a no-win problem: he advanced the heart queen. If West took this with the king, declarer would have a later entry to dummy via the heart jack, in order to take the spade finesse. So West allowed the queen of hearts to hold.

Declarer countered this by cashing the king of diamonds then advancing the eight of trumps and playing dummy's four. Now it was East who had no answer to declarer's strategy : if he ducked declarer would have six trump tricks and ten easy tricks in all. At the table, East took the jack of trumps and exited with a heart. Declarer rose with the ace then crossed to the trump ten. Next he discarded his losing heart on the queen of diamonds, to fulfil his contract. In all he made five trumps, two hearts, two diamonds and a club.

LADIES - it is not too late to enter for the Jean Keen Trophy.

Merseyside Bridge Centre February 21st

Contact Jean (jeankeen52@gmail.com) for further information ; she will even attempt to find partners/team-mates for you if required