



Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Bulletin

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Editor's News

Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
Year End Teams by Paddy Murphy	1
Hand from Down Under by Tim Bourke	2
Manchester Congress by Bob Pitts	3
Llangollen Swiss Teams by Bob Pitts	4
Irish Men's Teams by Dave Keen	5

The Women's Home International event for the Lady Milne trophy is being held this year in Wrexham at the Ramada Hotel on the weekend of 21st-23rd April. We rarely get a chance to see International bridge at first hand locally, so go along and support the event - I guarantee you will enjoy it much more than merely watching on the internet.

Sadly the team of Liz Commins, Simon Edwards, Julian Merrill, Paddy Murphy, Paul Roberts, David Stevenson fell narrowly at the final hurdle in the EBU Silver Plate, losing in the final by only one imp; who says that overtricks are not important in teams events. Our commiserations to them and good luck to them and everyone in their matches this year (unless you are playing against me of course).

Blackpool Year End Teams

by Paddy Murphy

I played in the Northern year end teams event partnering Peter Jones of Manchester with David Stevenson and Liz Commins as team-mates. We finished second overall with Peter's good judgement on this hand contributing to a fine win in round 6 against strong opponents.

Dealer West. Love All

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

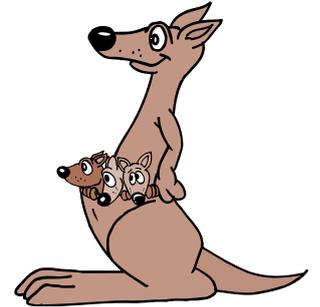
I opened one club and North was in with a weak jump overcall in spades. Peter bid three diamonds and South upped the ante with four spades. This went back to Peter who tried four no-trumps and when I replied with five diamonds he gave me a sixth. As you can see there was nothing to the play and we gained 11imps when the slam was missed at the other table. On checking the travellers later I noted that only seven of the thirty-four East-West pairs had managed to reach the correct contract.

HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

Dealer North. E/W vul.

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



West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2NT ¹
Pass	3♥ ²	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. 20-22

2. Transfer to spades

The bidding was identical at both tables in a teams match, with both South players a little optimistically super-accepting the transfer to spades. It was somewhat surprising that neither South player bid three no-trumps to suggest a 4x3 shape along the way to four spades. Anyway, the contract was a good one with ten top tricks, an eleventh available in diamonds and multiple prospects for a twelfth.

The opening lead was the same at both tables, the ten of hearts. The first declarer played the jack of hearts as a 'free' finesse. It proved not to be so when East covered with the queen. After winning the first trick with the heart king, declarer cashed the ace of trumps, then crossed to dummy by playing the eight of trumps to dummy's jack to lead a diamond.

East played low because he knew from the auction that declarer had to have both the king and queen of diamonds. Consequently playing the ace would give declarer two tricks. After the diamond king held, this declarer cashed the king of clubs and followed with one to the jack. When East produced the queen the contract had to fail as declarer still had a heart trick to lose.

The second declarer reasoned that the jack of hearts might be more useful if preserved and demonstrated that as long as East held the diamond ace the contract was all but assured.

After winning the first trick in hand with the king of hearts, declarer drew two rounds of trumps ending on the table. When he led a diamond, this East also found the best play of ducking and declarer's king won the trick. After ruffing the two of diamonds in dummy, declarer returned to hand with a trump and led the diamond queen. Instead of ruffing it he discarded dummy's six of clubs and East was endplayed, forced to lead into one of the tenaces in dummy, or concede a ruff and discard. Either option would give away the twelfth trick.

The Manchester Congress Teams

by Bob Pitts

The Manchester Congress took place on the weekend of 7th/8th January. I was unable to play in the pairs event but was pleased to be asked to play in the teams. The most encouraging thing about the day was the number of players taking part who were clearly in their twenties, and most of them got through to the strong A final. Admittedly several of them were junior Internationals but it was still good to see.

I partnered Ted Reveley, with Tracy Capal and David Sherman at the other table, but other than us and Sheila Shea's foursome no other 'local' players were to be seen. Happily both of these teams had no trouble qualifying for the thirteen team A final.

I thought that Sally Brock could have given me a tougher time on this deal.

Dealer North N/S vul.

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

Sitting East I reached 3NT on the lead of the club six from Barry Myers. From their carding methods this looked like it was from club length so I ducked. Sally took the queen and reached the same conclusion as me, returning the suit. Now it was easy to knock out the spade ace and come to nine tricks for a flat board. Had she 'read' the lead and switched to a heart I would have been in trouble. Barry would play 3 rounds of the suit and Sally would have had a heart to cash when she gets in with the spade ace. Barry said that he ought to have started with the club eight, but then I would have risen with a top club and attacked spades. Sally can take her ace and play a heart but cannot get back in quick enough to cash the long heart. In that scenario, a heart from Sally at trick 2 and a switch back to clubs is testing, but dummy's heart eight is a huge asset.

Gary Hyett and Bill Hirst failed a bidding test on this hand.

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

I opened three diamonds in front of Gary and he made a take out double. Ted did well to resist raising which left Bill room to cue bid four diamonds. Naturally Gary responded four spades and after that they were doomed. Bill asked for key cards and got a five club reply showing one. Now five diamonds elicited the news that Gary did not hold the spade queen. Bill felt that this all did not add up but bid the small slam anyway; two off when I held the singleton spade queen and Ted had J 9 7 5. How should they get to the right spot. Perhaps after Gary denies the spade queen, five no-trumps should be 'pick a slam' but I doubt it. Better might be to assume a grand slam unlikely and for Bill to jump to five no-trumps at his first turn, and six clubs should result. How would you and your favourite partner bid it? It was certainly a struggle for most of the twelve N/S pairs with only one reaching a making slam, two taking a penalty from a diamond sacrifice and six settling for game. *(Despite this deal, Gary and Bill's team still won the event).*

Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association

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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

5th	County trials	MBC
26th	Jean Keen trophy (Ladies teams)	MBC

March

5th	Eric Howarth GP (Swiss teams)	Deva BC
19th	Portland Pairs (British Mixed Pairs)	various

April

1st/2nd	North Wales Swiss Congress	Wrexham
21st-23rd	Lady Milne (Women's Home International)	Wrexham

May

21st	John Armstrong trophy (Swiss pairs)	MBC
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Llangollen Swiss Teams

by Bob Pitts

Regular readers will know that this is one of my favourite events, but sadly I still cannot bring you news of a victory involving local players. I did not have time to write anything in time for the December issue, so here it is.

I thought that this was the most interesting bidding hand of the weekend (though I am biased).

Dealer North. Game All

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

At our table, after a pass by me, John Holland opened one spade and Barry doubled. Jackie Pye passed in the West seat and I responded one no-trump, which we play as showing a spade stopper and about 6-9 points (very useful here). Barry jumped to the no-trump game and John led a small spade. Now folks, look how well those black suit values are working! I could win the lead in hand and play a club. Jackie took this to return a spade, but I inserted the jack and the defence could not prevent me from establishing a ninth trick, without having to guess the heart position. Of the 32 tables in play, only three North-South's reached the no-trump game, with most going down in heart contracts at various levels. Sadly one of the other successful pairs were John and Jackie's team-mates, Rhona and Bernard Goldenfield, so it was a flat board and this foursome went on to win the event.

If you want a good weekend of bridge this is really worth entering. Look out for the 2017 event.

The Irish Men's National Teams 2017

by Dave Keen

Having led at the halfway stage, along with my three Irish team-mates John Godden, Tomas Roche and David Ryan, one unfortunate match against the eventual winners left us finishing in a very creditable 5th place in a strong field.

There was one hand of instructive interest.

Quite often you have a decent suit in the dummy and playing in a trump contract can afford to lose one trick in developing this side-suit. What is often missed is the simple pressure play of leading away from the suit towards hand. e.g. with

A Q 6 3 2 opposite 7 5 4

What does RHO holding (a) K x ; (b) K x x ; (c) K x x x do if you lead small from dummy? Many defenders will play the king, especially if this is a side-suit in a suit contract. Your intention is to finesse on the second round, there is no hurry to finesse on the first round.

Dealer North

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

Auction : 1D – pass – 1H – 1S

 4C – pass – 4H END

 4C was a splinter bid – just what I was wanting to hear :-)

 Opening lead : Jack of spades

Most declarers appeared to not realise the importance of the ten as the 4th ‘big’ diamond and crossed to hand with a club and took the diamond finesse. Closer inspection shows that if the double heart finesse leads to only one heart loser you can afford to lose two diamond tricks. Add to that the pressure play mentioned above.

So, I played a small diamond from the dummy. Look at RHO's position – I must have 2 diamonds and so his partner must have a singleton (not the best of reasoning but at least I gave him the chance of getting this wrong). He won and returned a diamond and was not best pleased when his partner followed suit. Now the ace of hearts followed by another, then I just played on diamonds winners over-ruffing when East ruffed small – hand over and 11 imps to the good guys.

(Hands up all those who knew that Dave was Irish!)