



# Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association County Bulletin

Issue 50

OCTOBER 2018

Editor's News

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*This is the 50th edition of the bulletin and I would like to take the opportunity to heartily thank everyone who has taken the time to send information and news to me. I especially want to thank those who have sent articles for inclusion. Without those contributions this publication would not be as diverse as it is. However, I would love to have more stories, views and even advice that I could include to assist the readers with their game.*

*Also please consider letting me know about what is happening at your club, what events you have played in and any new conventions that you may have tried which have worked (or not!). This bulletin should be a forum for everyone so please use it.*

## A Teams Slam does well at Pairs

*by Paul Roberts*

Playing in the green pointed Swiss pairs event in Llandudno in July, at love all, my partner Julian Merrill opened a 12-14 one no-trump and I was looking at ♠ A 10 ♥ 9 6 ♦ A Q 10 6 ♣ K Q J 10 4. Clearly I have an easy raise to the no-trump game but if we have a fit in one of the minors there might be a slam available. I decided to do some no cost exploration, so started with two spades, a forcing enquiry. Julian replied with three diamonds, showing a non-minimum with less than four clubs and 4/5 diamonds.

Now what? In teams it's clear to make a try, but this is pairs and if the slam is not on we'll get a near bottom if we stop in five diamonds. However, I do have a way of playing in five no-trumps if partner has too few key cards for a slam so I opted to continue with Key Card Blackwood (choosing not to go via a cue bidding route as that might help the defenders to find a damaging lead).

In response to my four no-trump call, Julian replied five clubs showing 0 or 3 key cards. With 14 points he must have three rather than none, but with thirteen points he could have no key cards but would then be unlikely to show a non-minimum hand (and in that case we are probably overboard anyway) so I just jumped to the diamond slam.

Julian's hand was ♠ J 5 4 ♥ A 8 7 ♦ K J 9 2 ♣ A 9 2, so there were twelve tricks provided diamonds broke 3-2 (unless clubs are 5-0 with the club length on lead) with some chances on a 4-1 rump break.

As it happened both minors broke 3-2 so Julian took his 12 tricks in some comfort.

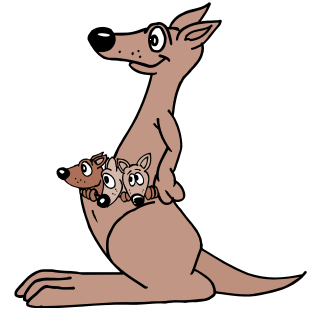
Surprisingly we were the only pair in the event to reach this cold slam!

# HAND FROM DOWN UNDER

by Tim Bourke

Dealer South. E/W vul.

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



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

In a team match, the auction and lead (the spade queen) were identical.

At the first table, declarer played without apparent thought. He took the first trick in dummy with the ace, drew trumps and cashed the ace of diamonds. Thus he had to lose two diamond tricks and his contract.

The second declarer was more circumspect. He saw that the only danger to the contract was a 5-0 break in diamonds. As nothing could be done if West had all five diamonds declarer turned his attention to the case where East had all of the outstanding diamonds; he would need to lead the suit twice through East. If East held five diamonds then West would be more likely to have the length in trumps, possible all four, so the ace of spades would be needed as an entry to dummy in case all the trumps needed to be drawn before tackling diamonds. Thus he won the first trick in hand with the spade king and played four rounds of clubs, East discarding two cards from each major. He then played a small diamond to the ace, West discarded a spade, and a small diamond from dummy drew the nine from East and South won this with the queen. Declarer was now in a position to pick up East's diamonds, losing only one trick in the suit by crossing with the spade ace for the next play in the suit.

South claimed twelve tricks: two spades, four diamonds and six trumps.

There is still time to enter for one or both of the popular local pairs events taking place in the first half of this month. Why not take part?

On the 7th the North Wales Association is holding a green pointed Swiss pairs at the Holiday Inn in Northop (contact Jean Hand 01244 830246).

On the 14th the Deva club is holding it's annual two session charity pairs event for the Chester Bowl (contact Jean Stelfox 07771 594764)

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# Northern Bridge League

by Bob Pitts

In the distant past, local Counties used to arrange matches against each other to widen the experience of their players. These matches were often sorted out on a bit of an ad-hoc basis, fitted in whenever seemed suitable. These days there is an excellent structure for Counties to play against each other within the Northern Bridge League and head-to-head matches are a rarity (though we usually play a friendly match v Derbyshire each year). The NBL holds four one-day events on Saturdays within the late July to early October period and within each category each County team-of-eight plays in a multiple teams format. There are 3 levels, A, B and C, thus giving players a chance to play against a variety of opponents usually of a similar standard. Play starts at 12.30 and is usually completed by 7pm and includes a meal at the scoring break. This means the day is not too arduous, though as central venues are essential, the events are normally held in Bradford, Leeds or Brierley.

Our County selectors are keen to hear from anyone who might like to participate, even if it is for only one 'taster' match, so please do consider such an excellent opportunity to enhance your game. You will meet players of a similar standard - don't be scared of making any errors, there are mistakes made in abundance by players at **all** levels. Just look at this one of mine from the most recent round in the A flight!! My only excuse is that it was the last board of the day and I was hot having been sat for 45 minutes next to the water boiler that the caterers had left on in case anyone wanted to make a cup of tea.

*Dealer West. Game All.*

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

Sitting West I opened a weak two diamonds and North made a take out double. Thereafter they reached four hearts from the North seat. Partner duly lead the diamond jack and I lazily played two more rounds to enable partner to ruff out the diamond queen so it could not provide a discard of a club from dummy. I was hoping that if I could stop a discard and partner had a winner in a black suit then that might beat the contract. However, that was a failure as declarer could overruff the third round of diamonds in dummy and draw trumps. The club ace was marked in partner's hand and North's third club was discarded on dummy's fourth spade. If declarer had the club ace and not one of the spade honours we would still not beat it as there would still be a discard from declarer's hand on the long spade. The correct defence is to switch to a club at trick two, which partner would continue to set up my queen. Declarer can draw trumps and discard his club on a long spade but then has no trumps left in his hand, so the contract should go one off. At none of the other tables was four hearts defeated, though one of our pairs did really well to reach the solid contract of three no-trumps.

If this is not a big enough error to encourage you then let me tell you that the two Grand Masters playing N/S on the above hand had two boards previously bid their combined 21 points to 3NT which we doubled for four off and 800 to the good guys. I heard of a very experienced Manchester pair who missed a game when one of them dozed off and passed a forcing bid, whilst in another part of the forest I know of a pair who bid a grand slam missing a cashing ace!

*P.S. Well done to the Merseyside & Cheshire team who won this third round of the NBL A flight.*

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**Merseyside & Cheshire Bridge Association**

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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.

October

6th	Northern Bridge League 4	
7th	North Wales Swiss pairs	Northop
14th	Chester Bowl (Charity pairs)	Deva

November

10th	Waterworth Cup (County GP pairs)	MBC
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December

9th	Merseyside Cup (Intermediate Teams)	Deva
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February

2nd	County Trials (Butler pairs)	MBC
23rd	Charity Pairs	MBC

## World Class Defence

*by Paddy Murphy*

I recently played in the excellent Michelle Brunner Memorial Charity Event with my good lady wife (Lorrie) and two friends from Middlewich bridge club, Bernie Baker and Karen Harvey. This is a superb event 30 boards, three different partners, slap up meal at half time and all done by 5:30pm. I would recommend it to all especially as it is all in such a good cause.

Bernie and Karen are new to the tournament scene and are enjoying their baptism of fire! Having said this Bernie came up with a "world class defence" against a world class player (these exact words were stated by the unlucky victim). The contract was 3NT by East and South was on lead and led the queen of hearts. East ducked and now the pressure was on South to switch which she duly did to the club eight which went to North's king. A heart switch was taken by the Ace and East finessed the queen of spades to the king and a third heart was led establishing the heart jack in the South hand as the later setting trick. When the spades didn't divide the contract was two down for -200. It was a lovely compliment for Bernie who was very pleased.

This is a tricky contract and a few declarers came a cropper as the entries to the East hand are under pressure from trick one, however a finesse of the spade nine or the diamond ten might see the contract home.

*Dealer North E/W vul.*

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