

Newspage 4

Sorry for the delay – I did offer to resign, as I have been “chasing kangeroos” and “going to the wrong Perth” for six weeks to visit my daughter. Since coming back I was privileged to play in yet another Lady Milne. I am fortunate that I am not short of money as it is an expensive hobby at National level. Compare this to £2 at a club and the derisory £15 membership fee. The trip to Perth was a flight with parking, a taxi from the airport as the tram and train didn't work out and an extra night at our own expense, which came to about £400. If the WBU didn't help with accommodation costs it would have been another £400 or thereabouts. Currently we have no hardship fund, so anyone who cannot afford is stuck really, but if we had more money this should be remedied.

Anyway, it was a good weekend and our final position of fourth does not really reflect the effort that the team put in. It was a nail-biting finish as the top four teams were so close going into the last match (we bobbed about between 2nd and 3rd throughout). It was expected that England would probably win as they were playing against the SBU second team. Like us, there is a paucity of players, so the second team is invariably quite weak by comparison with the National teams. It was on Realbridge and anyone could have watched – or kibitzed as it is called for some unknown reason. It is a Yiddish term, which originally meant to look on and offer unwelcome advice or at the amusement of the onlookers. I hope that is no longer the case, as it is no fun playing on Vugraph for all to see your mistakes, whatever level, but can be extremely beneficial with the right commentators.

Our congratulations to Richard Plackett, the only Welsh player in the team, who achieved a Gold medal at the European Winter championships. We think this may be a first in Welsh History but do let me know if anyone remembers otherwise. I dread to think how much Tignes must have cost at this time of year..... Hot news is that Richard is obviously on top form as he also won the prestigious Spring Fours last weekend. Brilliant.

I am trying to make the point that our best Welsh players are not profiting greatly from the WBU. There is always a great deal of criticism of the amount of money that these competitions cost, but surely the top players deserve some recompense and recognition, as in any sport. I do believe, however, that the structure should change, as it is ridiculous that a small Union such as ours hosts Major events most years, which puts us in the red, but which the other countries can cater for relatively easily. Either we should miss hosting and do it every eight years or there should be a central fund which pays for the accommodation, tds and admin, wherever it may be, proportionately funded by each Union according to their membership.

There is a BGB meeting this month and Ceri will bring this up. I wish her luck. She will also bring up the point I made about Welshness and parentage, which needs to change.

I am pleased to report more enthusiasm for F2F bridge. All the area competitions of late have been successful with increasing numbers of tables. In North Wales a one day competition will now be over two days and the lovely Llandudno Congress is going ahead as normal on the 1st and 2nd July.

Special appeal. July 8th & 9th in East Wales. I would like to invite clubs from all over Wales to enter a team of less experienced players to play against other teams at the same level in the President's Cup event (alongside the Spicket and Perry). Not just one from each area but the more the merrier. We can find accommodation for you if it's a problem. Please contact me to enter (or via your area) – don't worry, no Vugraph, no Kibitzers – but a nice meal ☺

A new working group has been set up for Juniors – to support our current few and to encourage new Juniors, but this needs individuals to give up their time.

Finally, please support a marvellous new initiative by Tony Haworth and Simon Gottschalk, who are giving talks at any bridge club who will have them – free of charge other than covering travel. They appeal to a wide ranging audience (probably not Internationals) and can be tailored to suit. Do look on the website and take advantage. Other people are being coerced into this including our successful Richard. I wouldn't mind a talk on how to win the Spring Fours ☺

From our President, Gilly Clench