



Newsletter April 2026

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When Irish Eyes are Smiling

In the Camrose, the country that hosts the second weekend has two teams, and this is a bit of a strain on the smaller federations such as Wales and Northern Ireland. This year was particularly hard as two of the selected Welsh players were unable to make the first weekend because of other commitments. The team to play in Ireland in January was therefore not the first one selected and we approached the event with some trepidation.

The first match is always between the country with two teams, to prevent any hint of collusion in the last round, and Wales started well with a win against the WBU team. Most of the swings were in the Open Room. In the Closed Room, Pottage and Ratcliff played throughout against Jones and Lamford and that room was level, with just one double figure swing on the Butler. Wales ran out winners by 81-43. A crucial board:

Bd 9, Dlr N 3NT = E		N Gary Jones (WBU) Other table 3NT-2 E	
W Julian Pottage (WAL) ♠ Q852 ♥ 642 ♦ AKJ63 ♣ 8	♠ J973 ♥ K ♦ Q1085 ♣ K1064	E Tony Ratcliff (WAL)	♠ K4 ♥ AQ10 ♦ 72 ♣ AQJ732
0 0	♠ A106 ♥ J98753 ♦ 94 ♣ 95	W N E S P 1♣ 2♥ X P 3NT P P P	
Paul Lamford (WBU) S			

Lamford's 2H overcall was not a thing of beauty and he elected to lead a passive diamond against 3NT, won in dummy. Now Tony Ratcliff needed to run the eight of clubs in theory, but naturally enough played a club to the jack, the ace of clubs and another club, on which South discarded a discouraging three of hearts. In with the ten of clubs, North needed to switch to a low spade when the defence can take five tricks eventually. He naturally played for South to have better hearts and led the king. Ratcliff could now set up the clubs in time and had nine tricks. In other rooms, on a heart lead, declarer needed to lead the king of spades from East at trick two, a play that would never be found. If

South ducks declarer will make two spade tricks, and if South wins and plays a diamond, declarer wins in dummy, finesses the jack of clubs and then leads a heart to the ace. North is squeezed in three suits.

In the other room, Mark Roderick and Paddy Murphy played well – except when Mark was going 3 off in 3NT! Murphy's law seems to be that if a finesse needs to be right it will be. It came to Mark's rescue on this hand. West led the nine of diamonds to dummy's ace and Mark took the spade finesse at trick two. Now he played a heart to the queen and ace. East could give his partner a trump promotion but that was the last trick for the defence. This contract went off in two other rooms, and the king of clubs lead would have made life harder.

Bd 18, Dlr E 4♥ = S		N Paddy Murphy (WAL) Other table 1NT = N	
W Liz Commins (WBU) ♠ 1093 ♥ 10974 ♦ 98 ♣ KQJ9	♠ A542 ♥ Q8 ♦ A1054 ♣ 1087	E David Stevenson (WBU)	♠ Q86 ♥ A ♦ KQJ73 ♣ 6532
0 0	♠ KJ7 ♥ KJ6532 ♦ 62 ♣ A4	W N E S P 1♣ P 1♥ P 2NT P 2♠ P 4♥ P 3♥ P P	
Mark Roderick (WAL) S			

One More for the Road

This expression was popularised in a song popularised by Frank Sinatra but is actually from a discussion in Parliament.

Lady Astor asked if the Prime Minister would bear mind the fact that even a moderate quantity of alcohol was dangerous.

Captain Wallace replied: I have read the report and know very well that the noble lady is not in favour of what is known as "one for the road".

Mark decided to add one for the road judging that any finesse would be through the overcaller and he was right. Two pairs had gone off in 3NT, and Lamford and Jones did not think their result of 5C+1 in the other room was likely to be a loss, but it cost 13 IMPs.

Hand details: Board 31, Dlr S, 6♣ = N. North: ♠ AJ106, ♥ KJ, ♦ 9, ♣ KQJ1054. South: ♠ K2, ♥ Q974, ♦ QJ6543, ♣ 7. Other table: 5♣+1 N. Pairs: Paddy Murphy (WAL) N, David Stevenson (WBU) E, Mark Roderick (WAL) S. Score: 0-0. Contract: 5♣.

Hand details: Board 3, Dlr S, 5♦ = W. North: ♠ J42, ♥ AJ, ♦ Q42, ♣ K10974. South: ♠ AK987, ♥ Q62, ♦ A873, ♣ A. Other table: 1♠ = W. Pairs: Ian Hamilton (N.IRL) N, Steve Auchterlone (WAL) E, Ian Lindsay (N.IRL) S. Score: 0-0. Contract: 5♦.

Round 2 saw Wales continue their good form against Northern Ireland and they had an early gain when Andy and Steve bid a reasonable game, missed at other tables. Would you respond to 1S on the East hand? Steve did and West's 2C was Gazilli, showing diamonds. East showed a good raise and they were soon in game. If the diamonds are 2-2 there is no problem as you can ruff two clubs in West. North led the ace and another heart, and West won and played ace and another diamond, as he is home if they are 2-2, but North won and played a third diamond. Now Andy played the ace and king of spades, ruffed a spade, crossed to the ace of clubs and ruffed another spade. On this trick South was squeezed in the

major suits. A nice dummy reversal and the only pair to make game.

Leap of Faith

Most leading players use 4m over a weak two to show that minor and the other major, but what does one do over a multi? There is some danger in playing it as 5-5 in that minor and either major as the opponents will not tell you which major they have. In the Wales v Northern Ireland match the Welsh pair reached the top spot. Over 4D, Steve bid 4S as "pass or correct" and Andy was pleased to bid 5D. North led the king of spades, pretty sure his partner had spades, and Andy ruffed, crossed to the ace of diamonds and led a heart. South played the king and Andy won and cashed another top diamond. Now he cashed the queen of hearts and ruffed a heart and made the key play of ruffing a spade, a dentist coup. He could now draw the missing trump and exit with a heart. North could cash the other heart but was endplayed to lead a club into the West hand. Another well-played hand and a 84-18 win.

Hand details: Board 10, Dlr E, 5♦ = W. North: ♠ K10, ♥ J8743, ♦ J74, ♣ KJ3. South: ♠ -, ♥ AQ1052, ♦ KQ10863, ♣ AQ. Other table: 4♦+1 W. Pairs: Ian Hamilton (N.IRL) N, Steve Auchterlone (WAL) E, Ian Lindsay (N.IRL) S. Score: 0-0. Contract: 5♦.

The third match was not on Real Bridge because of a technical glitch, so I do not have the play or bidding other than at my table. There was a very good defence by John Athey against a makable game. The auction, with South dealer, was 1H-2C-4H-Pass-Pass-Double-Pass-4S-All Pass. South led the queen of hearts and Lamford, East, discarded a diamond. North won and switched to a diamond, won by the ace. Now declarer played ace and another spade, won by South who

DLR: S		VUL: All	
♠ J2		♠ Q986	
♥ A1095		♥ K632	
♦ QJ9763		♦ 52	
♣ 7		♣ 1093	
♠ A1053		♠ K74	
♥ --		♥ QJ874	
♦ A108		♦ K4	
♣ AQ8642		♣ KJ5	

played a diamond to North's jack. Now John Athey played another diamond. Declarer can now make by ruffing this and running the ten of clubs, but elected to play for clubs to be 2-2 with the king onside, unsuccessfully as can be seen. John Holland faced a less testing defence in the other room and was able to make even though he also got the clubs wrong.

WBU lost to England 49-80, but felt that they had played reasonably. Wales was beaten 68-88 by Ireland but again not disgraced, so they still had hope going into the Sunday.

Bd 21, Dlr N 6NT = E		Steve Austerforde (WAL) N Other table 6NT-1 E	
W Neil Rosen (ENG) ♠ AKQ4 ♥ J4 ♦ A32 ♣ J874	♠ 10763 ♥ 872 ♦ KJ64 ♣ 65	E John Athey (ENG) ♠ J5 ♥ AK9 ♦ Q10975 ♣ AKQ	
Andy Hughes (WAL) S ♠ 982 ♥ Q10653 ♦ 8 ♣ 10932		W N E S P 1♦ P 1♠ P 1NT* P 2♦* P 2♠* P 3♦ P 3NT P 4NT P 6NT P P P	

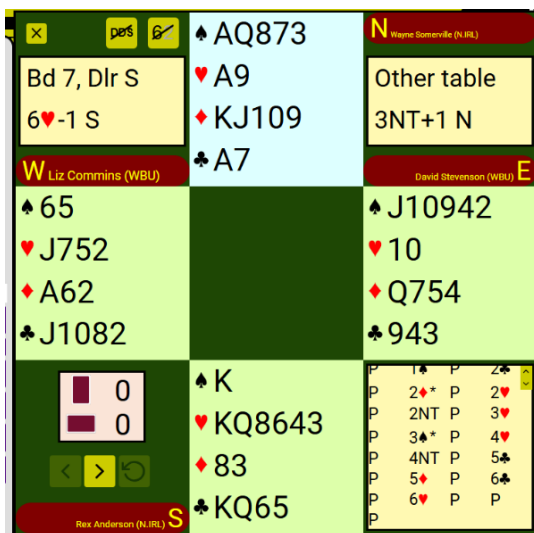
Round 4

When three players make a slam and three don't the lines must be close. There was more to it than that and the lead was crucial. The percentage line in isolation in diamonds for four tricks is to cash the ace and then lead low to the ten. This comes out at 67.26%. If you have the eight, then the right line is either running the queen or running the ten. Both are equal at 71.22%. However, you only need two diamond tricks, as you have ten tricks outside the suit. That changes the line and now the right play is to run the queen or run the ten, both around 76%. And it is complicated by the fact that if North has QTxxx in hearts he can often be squeezed. Athey and Mesbur both had a heart

lead into the AK9 so they were playing for the overtrick. Sanders was the only declarer playing in 6D and his percentage line was to play ace and low to the ten, but he went for the double finesse, helping WBU to a win against Scotland by 66-50. Lindsay was unlucky. He had a heart lead from North and took the right line now of running the queen, and down he went. Ratcliff was just as unlucky. He played 6NT by East on a club lead and played the right line of running the queen of diamonds. Huge swings on the way to a 87-59 win for England.

What do you bid on AKx Txx 9xx JTxx at love all after 3H-Double-Pass-?. This was the problem facing Alan Mould. He decided to pass, hoping to beat it and how right he was. His partner had a balanced 21-count and that was 500. Lucky or well-judged. A bit of both.

The fifth and final match was going to set the target for the second weekend in Newport in March. There is always a good kibitzing opportunity on Real Bridge. There was a lot of discussion about the right lead and the right line on the following hand which had quite a few different results. 6D was a common contract and Andy admitted that he had provided a soft defence. He led the ace of spades, which was fatal, but his switch to a club make declarer's task even easier. Declarer was able to ruff a club in dummy and set up the hearts to push through North. Ratcliff also received the lead of the ace of spades from Barnet Shenkin but faced the better switch to a heart. He won the ace, ruffed a heart and now crossed to the king of diamonds, discovering the bad trump break. But there was no recovery as he could not set up and enjoy the hearts. Lamford as South led a heart against Rex Anderson's 6D, on a more informative auction, and there was no winning line. The odd board was Frances Hinden going off in 5D as East. As she had received a club lead she could have made it, but North was able to overruff the third club and push a spade through while he still had a trump.



This was a bit of an unlucky slam, in that it would probably have made if hearts had broken 3-2. It was reached three times and twice West led the ace of diamonds, confident that he had a trump trick. If South had the ten of hearts, that might have triggered a first round finesse, but it would have been a big view. In the WBU v Ireland match, West did not lead the ace of diamonds and now it could have made, but declarer unblocked the king of spades and then played three rounds of trumps. The bad spade break meant that he went off anyway – the diamonds went away but there was still a club loser. The winning line was to cash the king of spades, cross to the ace of hearts and then play the ace, king and another club, ruffed in North before cashing two spades to get the diamonds away while West ruffed with her trump trick. An improbable line. The cross-table at the half-way point:

rank	team							VP tot
1	IRELAND	♠	16.90	13.78	13.12	15.63	18.69	78.12
2	ENGLAND	3.10	♥	14.96	15.37	17.87	17.21	68.51
3	WALES	6.22	5.04	♦	16.24	7.95	18.83	54.28
4	WBU	6.88	4.63	3.76	♣	13.12	15.10	43.49
5	SCOTLAND	4.37	2.13	12.05	6.88	♠	13.46	38.89
6	N. IRELAND	1.31	2.79	1.17	4.90	6.54	♥	16.71

The second weekend was in Wales, and this was the reason that the Principality had two teams. Sadly, Adrian Thomas who had played so well in the Premier League withdrew, and Dafydd Jones and Adam Dunn were transferred to the Wales team from the WBU team, and Martin Garvey and Andrea Knox came in.



Andy Hughes

Hughes and Auchterlonie were the best pair in this match. Andy brought home a game that should have been defeated on this board. West led a spade against the pushy game and declarer won in dummy and led a

heart. East did not spit, but there was no reason to run the eight and South won with the jack. Now South gave up a heart and ruffed the next spade. He now cashed the king of hearts discovering he had a second trump loser. He now led the queen and nine of clubs. West had to split and East ruffed dummy's king of clubs and exited with a spade. South ruffed this and played a diamond. West correctly went in with the ace of diamonds but now needed to exit with a diamond to defeat the contract. When that was not found the contract made.

Bd 2, Dlr E 4♥ = S		Steve Auchterlonie Other table 3NT-2 N	
W Andrea Knox ♠ Q952 ♥ 74 ♦ A8 ♣ J10765		Martin Garvey E ♠ K10764 ♥ A1092 ♦ Q104 ♣ 4	
0 0		W N E S 3♠ X 1♠ 2♥ P P P 4♥	
Andy Hughes S ♠ 3 ♥ KQJ653 ♦ J92 ♣ Q93			

There were a few game swings in the first round between Wales and the WBU, and on the following hand, Ratcliff showed better judgement than Lamford when he upgraded the West hand .



Tony Ratcliff

Bd 23, Dlr S 4♥+1 W		Martin Garvey Other table 2♠+3 W	
W Tony Ratcliff ♠ KJ10 ♥ AJ1064 ♦ A54 ♣ 108		Julian Pottage E ♠ AQ865 ♥ K75 ♦ 72 ♣ 974	
0 0		W N E S 1♥ P 1♠ P 2♠ P 3♥* P 4♥ P P P	
Andrea Knox S ♠ 43 ♥ Q93 ♦ Q103 ♣ KQJ32			

The excellent software known as KR, the Kaplan-Rubens Hand Evaluator, upgrades the West hand to 14.8 HCP and was wrongly opened with a weak NT in the other room. Ratcliff could have rebid 1NT showing 15-17 but elected to raise to 2S and Pottage made a game try of 3H. Most pairs have an agreement whether or not this is forcing. Your correspondent has a rule that all ABBA bids are forcing. This means that any reversion to the first suit on the fourth bid is forcing. Game is just a touch under 50% as you can pick up Qxxx in hearts with South, so it is effectively on the heart

finesse. Tony Ratcliff had no reason to play the hearts other than the normal way and that was 10 IMPs to Wales on the way to a comfortable win by 13.12-6.88.

The other two matches were interesting with Ireland winning 15.63-4.37 against Northern Ireland, while Scotland surprisingly triumphed over England by 11.27-8.73. A good Friday for Ireland who had stretched their lead to over 16 VPS. They had two new players and Anna Onishuk and Karel de Raeymaeker played very well throughout.



Steve Auchterlonie

The second round saw Wales play Scotland and the WBU play Northern Ireland. A problem for Steve Auchterlonie was to lead from xx xx xxxxx KQxx after the uncontested auction 1S-2NT-4S. South had shown an invitational 3-card raise. Whenever I lead a top club after this type of auction, the dreaded Jxx appears in

dummy and it costs a trick. However, it turned out that it was necessary on this hand. Steve led a diamond and now the two club losers went away on the QJ of diamonds. The other room had a different auction 1S-2S-4S and Harry Smith led a top club against Dafydd Jones. The declarer could not avoid four losers. Several declarers were in 4H and in theory a top club was fatal against this. But only if declarer can see through the back of the cards. Declarer wins with the ace of clubs, draws trumps and leads a diamond. West can win and play a club to East, but declarer wins the next club, cashes his diamond winners and leads the queen of spades. West must cover but now ace and another spade endplays East to concede a ruff and discard. And West cannot afford to overtake the ten of spades as South then wins the eight of spades.

Bd 7, Dlr S 4♠ = N		♠ A7632 ♥ AQJ9 ♦ K ♣ A108		N Derek Sanders Other table 4♠-1 N
W Andy Hughes ♠ KJ4 ♥ 1052 ♦ A1092 ♣ 732		Steve Auchterlonie E ♠ 109 ♥ 83 ♦ 86543 ♣ KQ96		
0 0		♠ Q85 ♥ K764 ♦ QJ7 ♣ J54		W N E S P 1♠ P 2NT* P 4♠ P P P
Gints Freimanis S				

Bd 20, Dlr W 3NT+1 E		♠ A97532 ♥ Q76 ♦ 87 ♣ 32		N Wayne Somerville Other table 5♣-1 E
W Gary Jones ♠ KQ106 ♥ A3 ♦ 943 ♣ AQ109		Paul Lamford E ♠ 8 ♥ J94 ♦ A102 ♣ KJ8765		
0 0		♠ J4 ♥ K10852 ♦ KQJ65 ♣ 4		W N E S 1♣ P 2♣* 2♦ 2♠ P 2NT P 2NT P 3NT P P P
Rex Anderson S				

Just a Minute

There was an amusing incident in the WBU v Northern Ireland match and I used photoshop to replicate the auction, which was as stated. I was reminded of the Radio program Just a Minute when a second 2NT came through the screen. This seemed to be a **hesitation** to me, as Gary was doubtful whether to raise to 3NT, but the excellent TD, Sarah Amos, ruled that it was a **repetition** but



Gary Jones

there was no penalty for the **deviation** from the rules that bids have to be at a higher level than the previous one. East decided his partner had probably intended to bid 3NT and chose that call. South led the king of diamonds and declarer ducked the first round and won the second. When South discarded diamonds on the run of the clubs, it was clear that he did not have the ace of spades and it was an easy matter to play on spades for ten tricks. The other room played in 5C and the lead of the king of diamonds beat the contract.

Wales lost to Scotland, 8.73-11.27, while the WBU team had a good win over Northern Ireland 15.63-4.37. The crunch match between Ireland and England was won by the latter 12.05-7.95.

Saturday evening was a bad match for Wales. Some of the losses were unlucky, however. Pottage and Ratcliff bid to an excellent slam – and one that could have been made – on the hand



Julian Pottage

opposite. Only one other pair reached slam, and they also failed. North led the ace of diamonds and when Julian played a trump he could not longer make it as he could not ruff three diamonds in dummy without losing a second trump. The

winning line is to cross to a heart, ruff a diamond, cash the ace of hearts discarding a diamond, ruff a heart and ruff a diamond, Now you cross to the queen of clubs and ruff the last diamond. This reaches a four-card ending in which you play any card from dummy and ruff with a low spade. North can overruff but is endplayed to lead into the AK9 of spades. Julian’s line of play would have succeeded if trumps were even 3-1, so he was particularly unlucky in a contract around 90% to succeed.

Bd 6, Dlr E 6♠-1 W		♠ Q1063 ♥ 975 ♦ AK97 ♣ 32	N Anna Onishuk Other table 4♠+1 W
W Julian Pottage ♠ AK975 ♥ K ♦ Q6543 ♣ QJ		Tony Ratcliff E ♠ J842 ♥ A8632 ♦ – ♣ AK108	
0 0		♠ – ♥ QJ104 ♦ J1082 ♣ 97654	W N E S 1♥ P 1♥ P 4NT P 5NT P 6♠ P P
Karel De Raeymaeker S			

Bd 19, Dlr S 7♦= S		♠ AJ7 ♥ A72 ♦ Q5 ♣ AK942	N Tim Rees Other table 6♠+1 S
W Gints Freimanis ♠ 85 ♥ KJ96 ♦ 763 ♣ Q1075		Derek Sanders E ♠ 1032 ♥ 10543 ♦ 108 ♣ J863	
0 0		♠ KQ964 ♥ Q8 ♦ AKJ942 ♣ –	W N E S P 2♣ P 1♦ P 3♥* P 2♠ P 4♦ P 3♠ P 4NT P 4♠ P 6♠ P 5NT P P 7♦
Mia Deschepper S			

The WBU fared no better against Scotland, with a number of defensive errors proving costly. One pair did have a good auction to the grand on this hand with a mainly natural auction. 2S was a reverse and 3H by North now game-forcing. Mia showed her shape by rebidding her spades and North’s 4D set the suit and 4NT asked for key cards. South showed two with a void with 5NT and North made a grand slam try with 6C which Mia was happy to accept. There was nothing to the play and she had 13 top tricks.



Mia Deschepper

♠ 76 ♥ AJ10654 ♦ AJ3 ♣ 74
♠ AQ10983 ♥ 832 ♦ 5 ♣ A109

How would you play the hand opposite in 4H with no opposition bidding on the lead of the queen of clubs? Dafydd Jones was particularly unlucky here. He won the ace, played a diamond to the ace, ruffed a diamond, crossed to the ace of hearts with both opponents following with small cards and ruffed his last diamond. Now he exited with a club. East won and led a low spade, and Dafydd finessed, but now the roof fell in. West won with the singleton king and gave his partner a diamond ruff (they were 6-3) to complete the dénouement. Dafydd could not afford to play a second round of hearts, but it was better to duck the opening lead. Wales lost this match 18.76-1.24 and the WBU fared only slightly better losing by 16.57-3.43 to Scotland, while England won 16.12-3.88 against Northern Ireland. So Ireland still led.

Sunday started well for Wales who were in a close fight with Scotland for the bronze medal. A very good auction to an excellent slam was conducted by Julian Pottage and Tony Ratcliff. Tony opened his 4-card major as per their style and 3C was a useful gadget asking for the range of the 2NT bid, with 3D showing 18-19. Now 3H showed six and set the suit and 4C was a cue. 4NT was RKCB in hearts and West showed one with 5C. Now East asked for the queen of trumps and 6C by Julian said that he did have the queen and also had the king of clubs, leading to the good final contract. Played by West this is cold as North cannot attack spades and Julian just drove out the ace of hearts, making twelve tricks.

X pos ♠ K7 Bd 10, Dlr E 6♥ = W		N Diane Greenwood Other table 3NT+3 E																												
W Julian Pottage ♠ AJ5 ♥ QJ9843 ♦ 32 ♣ KJ	♥ A52 ♦ 875 ♣ 76432	E Tony Ratcliff ♠ Q1083 ♥ K10 ♦ AK10 ♣ AQ95																												
 < > ↻	♠ 9642 ♥ 76 ♦ QJ964 ♣ 108	<table border="1"> <tr><td>2♥</td><td>P</td><td>1♠</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>3♠*</td><td>P</td><td>2NT</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>3♥</td><td>P</td><td>3♦*</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>4♥</td><td>P</td><td>4♣</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>5♣</td><td>P</td><td>4NT</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>6♣</td><td>P</td><td>5♦</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>6♥</td><td>P</td></tr> </table>	2♥	P	1♠	P	3♠*	P	2NT	P	3♥	P	3♦*	P	4♥	P	4♣	P	5♣	P	4NT	P	6♣	P	5♦	P	P	P	6♥	P
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5♣	P	4NT	P																											
6♣	P	5♦	P																											
P	P	6♥	P																											
S David Greenwood																														

X pos ♠ AK Bd 20, Dlr W 3NT = N		N Dafydd Jones Other table 5♣-3 N																				
W David Greenwood ♠ QJ10953 ♥ AQ6 ♦ J95 ♣ J	♥ 72 ♦ AQ42 ♣ AK1043	E Diane Greenwood ♠ 2 ♥ 10943 ♦ 1073 ♣ Q9752																				
 < > ↻	♠ 8764 ♥ KJ85 ♦ K86 ♣ 86	<table border="1"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>2♦*</td><td>X</td><td>2♠</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>2NT</td><td>P</td><td>3♠*</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>3♦*</td><td>P</td><td>3NT</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	2♦*	X	2♠	P	P	2NT	P	3♠*	P	3♦*	P	3NT	P	P	P	
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2♦*	X	2♠	P																			
P	2NT	P	3♠*																			
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P	P	P																				
S Adam Dunn																						

There is a school of thought that you should not lead a singleton in partner's suit against 3NT, but the defenders who did defeated the contract on this hand. Two of the defenders led a club fatally as declarer had enough time to develop a heart trick. At trick two he played a heart to the jack, the right percentage line, and West won and switched to spades. Now Dafydd led the seven of hearts and East covered, saving declarer a guess. West captured the king with the ace and cleared the spades, but Dafydd cashed three diamonds in dummy and then led the eight of hearts, pinning the six. East won but had concede a ninth trick.



Dafydd Jones

The hand opposite was a difficult play problem with a choice of lines in three suits. Espen Erichsen led a heart and declarer elected to play low. North won with the king and switched to the eight of diamonds giving Lamford a nasty guess. He got it wrong and played low and South won and played back a diamond to North who played a third round. Now declarer ruffed a club and lead a low spade off dummy and North played low. It is much closer than you might think between playing the ace or the queen. The latter is right provided North will play the jack at least some of the time from Jx. Anyway down declarer went and the WBU lost the match 1.47-18.53. Wales stretched their lead over Scotland with a convincing win over Northern Ireland 19.85-0.15 while Scotland kept in touch with a surprising win over Ireland by 11.27-8.73

X pos ♠ J4 Bd 22, Dlr E 4♠-1 E		N Simon Cope Other table 4♠-1 E												
W Gary Jones ♠ 109875 ♥ AQ65 ♦ J764 ♣ -	♥ K982 ♦ A108 ♣ 10986	E Paul Lamford ♠ AQ632 ♥ J ♦ K53 ♣ KJ75												
 < > ↻	♠ K ♥ 10743 ♦ Q92 ♣ AQ432	<table border="1"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>4♠</td><td>P</td><td>1♠</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>4♠</td><td>P</td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	4♠	P	1♠	P	P	P	4♠	P
W	N	E	S											
4♠	P	1♠	P											
P	P	4♠	P											
S Espen Erichsen														

The final match saw England playing Wales and Ireland playing the WBU so the host country would have a major say in the destination of the trophy, although Ireland were big favourites.

Tim Rees was bemoaning the fact that the opponents bid four slams, including a grand, against them and none of them could be beaten. This was the grand, which Martin Garvey and Andrea Knox did well to bid and flatten the board. Martin had a spade lead so he could just ruff two spades in dummy.. Tim Rees overcalled 3C on the North hand at his first turn, so Mia Deschepper led a club, but Adam Mesbur used his five entries to dummy to set up and enjoy the long diamond.

Wales led for a while against England, but in the second half Forrester and Crouch bid two slams missed in the other room. By then Ireland had won the event but there was still time for Pottage and Ratcliff to pick up a game swing on this board. The auction looks very normal, but in the other room, 2H ended the auction which seems a remarkably conservative action by Espen Erichsen with a five-loser hand. I expect that 2D by Simon Cope would have shown a good raise to 2H and this was weaker, but even so. In the WBU match there was a gain as well when Andrea Knox overcalled 1NT on the West hand, without a heart stop, causing South to just compete with 3H. The final table:

Pos	Team	Team	Players	C/F	Total VPs	Final	Master Points
1	1	IRELAND	John Carroll & Mark Moran Adam Mesbur & Nick Fitzgibbon Anna Onishuk & Karel De Raeymaeker	129.19	18.29	147.48	20
2	4	ENGLAND	Artur Malinowski & Janet De Botton Peter Crouch & Tony Forrester Simon Cope & Espen Erichsen	123.94	14.54	138.48	10
3	5	WALES	Adam Dunn & Dafydd Jones Andy Hughes & Steve Auchterlonie Julian Pottage & Tony Ratcliff	97.22	5.46	102.68	
4	2	SCOTLAND	Derek Sanders & Gints Freimanis Iain Sime & Derek Diamond Harry Smith & Roy Bennett	89.27	9.78	99.05	
5	3	WBU	Gary Jones & Paul Lamford Andrea Knox & Martin Garvey Tim Rees & Mia Deschepper	70.90	1.71	72.61	
6	6	N IRELAND	David & Diane Greenwood Ian Hamilton & Ian Lindsay Rex Anderson & Wayne Somerville	29.48	10.22	39.70	

Lady Milne Trials 2026

The WBU held trials to select the Lady Milne team in Belfast. It was good to see six tables and this event would have been a useful experience for all the players. A first time partnership came out ahead with Sue Ingham playing with Mia Deschepper and the selectors had an easy task to pick the team, with a big gap between third and fourth. The future looks good as well with a young partnership in 4th performing well, ahead of more experienced players. You can watch the Lady Milne on Real Bridge on 17-19 April 2026.

LM Trial 2026 Overall				
Pos	No	Players	IMPS	Master Points
1	11	Mia Deschepper & Susan Ingham	+212.80	54
2	3	Gilly Clench & Suzy Lawson	+153.00	45
3	1	Sophie Cunningham & Ceri Pierce	+81.20	36
4	10	Soozy Nesom & Mel Thomas	+9.00	27
5	6	Miriam Handren & Veronica Burrows	+6.20	18
6	2	Andrea Knox & Julie Milewski	-21.40	9
7	7	Helen Houston & Jenny Vaughan	-32.20	
8	9	Susan Biggin & Bev Cox	-38.20	
9	5	Jo Copping & Mrunalini Dewan	-49.60	
10	8	Ann-Marie O'Brien & Sophie Akers	-50.40	
11	4	Elizabeth Renaut & Sarah King	-128.00	
12	12	Johanna Hunt & Sarah Wilcox	-142.40	

This was an interesting hand, with only Gilly and Suzy bidding and making slam. It looks like one needs the heart finesse at first sight, but when South led a trump there were enough entries to ruff out the diamonds and enjoy them. If South had led a spade, then declarer was unlikely to succeed as the winning



Suzy Lawson

line is quite obscure.

Declarer wins with the ace, leads the ace of diamonds and then the jack, pinning the doubleton ten. North must cover but East ruffs, finesses the eight of clubs and leads the nine of diamonds which North covers again, Now East ruffs high and finesses the nine of clubs, cashes the queen of clubs and enjoys the two long diamonds. On the actual club lead, there was no need to pin the diamonds as there was enough entries to set up the long diamonds.

Dir: South
Vul: All

♠ K 8 6 2
♥ J 10 8 5 2
♦ K Q 5 4
♣ -

Optimum
NS 6Sx
NS 6Hx
-800

♠ A 7
♥ 7 3
♦ A J 9 7 3 2
♣ Q 9 8

		NORTH			
WEST	7				EAST
		SOUTH			

♠ J 3
♥ A Q 9
♦ 8
♣ A K 10 6 4 3 2

		♠ Q 10 9 5 4			
		♥ K 6 4			
		♦ 10 6			
		♣ J 7 5			

		9			
11		6		14	

		♣		♦		♥		♠		N	
N	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
W	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-

After one session, Gilly and Suzy were out in front, ahead of Sue Ingham and Mia Deschepper, with Miriam Hendren and Veronica Burrows doing very well in third place.

There was an interesting hand in the second segment when Sophie and Ceri had to defend against 6H. South led the three of diamonds and declarer, not unreasonably,



Sophie Cunningham

took the heart finesse.

North gave South a diamond ruff

and that resulted in one down. The winning line was obscure. Declarer wins the diamond lead with the jack, cashes the king of spades and now crosses to the ace of hearts to discard the ace of diamonds on the ace of spades, Now it is fatal to play a second heart. Instead, declarer must take the club finesse, cash the ace, and ruff the third club with the two of hearts. North can overruff and play a diamond, but East ruffs high.

Now either

heart is again fatal, but declarer can succeed by pushing clubs through South who will eventually be overruffed and lose her potential trump trick. Of course, declarer had no reason to do any of this and the contract failed for a big gain to Ceri and Sophie.

Mia Deschepper has started a new partnership with Sue Ingham and it seems to be going well. They were the only pair to bid and make game on the hand opposite:

West opened the bidding with a thin 1NT and was soon in 4H. Despite the bad split this cannot be defeated. The defence started with two rounds of clubs, but declarer was able to ruff the second round and play on spades. The defence could continue with a third club but East



Sue Ingham

could ruff again, and play another spade. Once the spades were established declarer could draw trumps. A nice dummy reversal, making two spades, four trump tricks, two top diamonds and two club ruffs in the long trump hand.

Fortunately spades were 3-3 so there was no spade ruff.

Dir: South
Vul: N/S

♠ Q 9 2
♥ K 8
♦ Q 10 9 7 6 5
♣ K 9

Optimum
EW 6H
-980

♠ A 10 6
♥ A J 7 2
♦ K 8 4 2
♣ 10 8

NORTH
WEST 15 EAST
SOUTH

♠ K
♥ Q 9 5 4
♦ A J
♣ A Q 7 6 5 3

10
12 16
2

♠ J 8 7 5 4 3
♥ 10 6 3
♦ 3
♣ J 4 2

♣♦♥♠N			
N	-	-	-
S	-	-	-
E	5	2	6
W	5	2	6

Dir: West
Vul: All

♠ A 8 2
♥ -
♦ Q 8 7 6 3
♣ Q J 8 7 5

Optimum
NS 5Cx
-100

♠ J 10 6 5
♥ K 8 6 4
♦ A K
♣ 10 4 2

NORTH
WEST 20 EAST
SOUTH

♠ Q 7 3
♥ A Q J 10 3
♦ 9 5 4 2
♣ K

9
11 12
8

♠ K 9 4
♥ 9 7 5 2
♦ J 10
♣ A 9 6 3

♣♦♥♠N			
N	4	2	-
S	4	2	-
E	-	-	4
W	-	-	4



Mia Deschepper



Steve Jarvis (WWBA Chair) presents the trophy to Chris and Angela Overton

have gone wrong when South played an honour under the king. Percentage play would be to finesse the ten on the second round, but then there would have been no story!

West Wales News

The West Wales Mixed Pairs had an exciting finish with the popular couple Chris and Angela Overton winning by just two match points. They had a bit of luck, overbidding on the hand below. 6C and 6NT would have been better, but our heroes were in Six Spades which appears to have no play at all. But they managed to play it by West and North found the unlucky and fatal lead of the seven of spades, telescoping their trump trick. Angela still had to drop the doubleton queen-jack of clubs and she might

Dir: North Vul: None		♠ 10 7 ♥ Q 10 6 3 2 ♦ 10 9 6 3 ♣ 9 7																									
♠ Q 8 ♥ A J 8 ♦ Q 5 4 ♣ 8 5 4 3 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">NORTH</td></tr> <tr><td>WEST</td><td>EAST</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">2/17</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">SOUTH</td></tr> </table>	NORTH		WEST	EAST	2/17		SOUTH		♠ A K 9 6 5 ♥ K 9 ♦ K 8 ♣ A K 10 6																	
NORTH																											
WEST	EAST																										
2/17																											
SOUTH																											
<table border="1"> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td></tr> </table>	2	9	20	9	♠ J 4 3 2 ♥ 7 5 4 ♦ A J 7 2 ♣ Q J	<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="4">♣♦♥♠N</td></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>1 5 6</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>2 5 6</td></tr> </table>		♣♦♥♠N				N	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	E	6	2	1 5 6	W	6	2	2 5 6
2																											
9	20																										
9																											
♣♦♥♠N																											
N	-	-	-																								
S	-	-	-																								
E	6	2	1 5 6																								
W	6	2	2 5 6																								

East Wales News



Tony Davies and Andy Fryer win the 2026 Brecon Claret Jug (bridge not golf)

A

East Wales Bridge Association presents

Last Sunday event of the season!

Arthur James Pairs & Beatus Cup

for highest scoring pair below regional master

Sunday 10th May 2026, 11am
Gwent Bridge Academy
TD – Angela Gilbert

Entries to Gill O’Keeffe:
ato@ewba.org.uk

FREE ENTRY!
Free tea & coffee.
Please bring your own lunch.

EWBA AGM
between 1st & 2nd session.

V

Mid Wales News

The Evans-Jones Swiss Pairs was a convincing win for Keith Shuttleworth and Dave Berry :

Rank	Pair	Names [OVERALL]	Total	Max	%Score
1	7	Keith Shuttleworth & Dave Berry	303.50	468	64.85
2	2	Andrew Phillips & Brian King	265.66	468	56.76
3	10	Jean Cufley & Fiona Noyce	259.50	468	55.45
4	5	Judith Gethin & Liz Tomlinson	256.50	468	54.81



The wonderful prizes at the Harrop-Griffiths



Peggy Humberstone and Norman Turner

Rank	Pair	Names [OVERALL]	Total	Max	%Score
1	5	Peggy Humberstone & Norman Turner	167.00	288	57.99
2	7	Alan Screen & Judith Gethin	165.00	288	57.29
3	1	Tony Davies & Belinda Davies	160.00	288	55.56
4	10	Paul Gagne & Diana Harris	156.00	288	54.17
5	6	Kay Taylor & Peter Smith	155.00	288	53.82
6	4	Elenid Thomas & Andrew Loat	146.00	288	50.69

The Harrop-Griffiths in February was closer and Peggy Humberstone and Norman Turner just edged it by less than 1%.

North Wales News

LASZLO PAIRS
 This years event will be on Sunday the 19th of April
LLANDUDNO BRIDGE CLUB
 Penhryn Bay.
 at 12-00 until 6.00 approx.
 36-40 boards - Free tea/Coffee
 please bring you own food
 To enter please contact Rod Sheard
 rsestates1@hotmail.com

LLANDUDNO
SWISS PAIRS
CONGRESS
 JOIN FOR 1 OR 2
DAYS
AUGUST 1-2 2026
OLIVER COWAN
 ocbridgecomps@gmail.com

BRIDGE CLUB MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Online bridge playing platforms like Real Bridge, Bridgebase Online and Stepbridge offer a new dimension for bridge clubs looking to expand their normal face-to-face bridge club activities. Collecting payment for these online bridge sessions may present an administrative challenge. The number of tables in play on a typical club night may be between 4 and 12. But for an “open” club online event, this could well be unlimited. How does your bridge club process payments from 80+ competitors (some in different countries with different currencies) playing in an online bridge session? “CLUB TICKETS” is a complete bridge club management “app” that can enable a bridge club to move towards cashless payments for all sessions of bridge. Bridge clubs can now grow their membership without a corresponding increase in administrative overhead.

For more information checkout our Audio

Link <https://www.msg.uk.com/wav/clubtickets.wav>

or to arrange a demonstration please email simon@msg.uk.com.

CALENDAR

Apr Sat. 18th	Dragon Pairs
Apr Sun. 26th	NIBU - SWISS PAIRS
May Sun. 10th	EWBA - ARTHUR JAMES & BEATUS
May Sun. 10th	EWBA AGM
May Wed. 13th	Cake Club
May Thu. 14th - Sun. 17th	EUROPEAN TRANSNATIONAL
May Sat. 16th - Sun. 17th	Perry and Spickett and President's Cup
May Sat. 16th	Dragon Pairs
May Sun. 17th	WBU AGM
Jun Fri. 5th - Sun. 7th	Llanbryon Congress 2026
Jun Wed. 10th	Cake Club
Jun Fri. 19th - Sun. 21st	YOUTH CAMP
Jun Sat. 27th	Dragon Pairs
Jun Sun. 28th	CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS
Jul Sun. 12th	WWBA SUMMER TEA-PARTY
Aug Thu. 20th - Sun. 23rd	Bridgestedford - National Welsh Congress
Sep Sun. 6th	WWBA SWISS PAIRS
Sep Sun. 13th	EWBA - STAN BERGER PAIRS
Sep Sat. 26th - Sun. 27th	PREMIER LEAGUE First Weekend
Oct Sun. 11th	WWBA VINCE BEVAN
Oct Sun. 18th	EWBA - P.JOURDAIN TEAMS
Oct Sat. 24th - Sun. 25th	PREMIER LEAGUE Second Weekend
Nov Fri. 13th - Sun. 15th	Porthcawl Congress

All contact and venue details on the wbu site at welshbridgeunion.org

Starting them Young *by Maggie Pierce*

Moving on from Sophie Cunningham's 'Grandparents' Day' - Nalini's grandchildren and friends are meeting regularly and are starting to bid. They are attracting more learners and moves are underway if this happens to move the sessions to Cardiff Club. The students are aged 9-11.

Llanishen Fach Primary's "after school club" – year 6 – is flourishing. We were able to run a tournament during school hours – five tables! Each table had six duplicated boards – no moving. Match-pointing was made a little difficult by one table changing polarity half way through - but it was sorted to produce one N/S and one E/W winner. Prizes were presented at school assembly.



They are still on Minibridge but we aim to start bidding with them in the Summer. The teacher involved will introduce year 5 to the club in the Summer Term. We have an inroad to the Secondary school they feed – an hour a fortnight during next term during school hours.

Crickhowell Secondary are running a successful lunchtime Bridge Club – twice a week.

Anyone wishing to start with their young family members – the WBU have some excellent Minibridge brochures for introducing them. The WBU will be happy to send to clubs – or look to pick one up at tournaments. Contact mpiercewales@gmail.com Many thanks to the helpers – particularly Sonia Griffiths who has been extremely hardworking.

The best quote from these keen youngsters was "We are so excited to play Bridge we barely stop to take our coats off!"



Junior Spring Bridge Camp 2026

by Sophia Rehman

Held in the countryside of Kidderminster at the Pioneer Centre, the Spring Bridge Camp was an excellent opportunity for the Welsh juniors to hone their bridge skills. The facilities were beautiful and the juniors were lucky enough to be coached by the under 21s England captain Stephen Kennedy.

After arriving on Friday, the juniors learnt about the best leads against 3NT including the bias towards leading a major. They then played in a Bridge Duplicate with the rest of the players at the camp featuring several players from both the English U21 and U26 teams. Sophia and Emma came 5th out of 22 total pairs which was 3rd out of the 14 junior pairs!

On Saturday, the juniors learnt about how powerful singletons/top of doubletons can be as leads against a 4M contract but were also taught the importance of considering their own natural trump winners and calculating how many points partner is likely to have. As part of the weekend the juniors were also able to take part in ziplining and a high-ropes obstacle course at the Pioneer centre to get a well-deserved break from all the bridge and to bond with their fellow campmates.

In the evening, they took part in the fourth Youth Grand Prix of the year. Sophia and Emma placed 13th out of 26 total pairs which was 7th out of 15 junior pairs.



In their last tuition session with Stephen on Sunday, the juniors took part in a bidding challenge where they had to bid set hands and were awarded a certain number of points based on how close they ended up to the optimum bid. Sophia and Emma scored 55/60 and earned several sweets as a prize.

The juniors immensely enjoyed their weekend and learnt a lot as well whilst making friends with other young bridge players from across the country.



Despite Emma only playing for 6 months, the juniors achieved 48 Master Points over the weekend and received prizes in the weekend's award ceremony for their strong performance!

Iceland 2026



He teamed up with John Holland and Raymond Semp, regular raiders at Porthcawl, and John Hassett whom he partnered. The winning team was very strong, Klukowski-Kalita, Brink-Drijver, Edmonds-Woolridge.

Try the above play problem in 6H by South on the lead of the king of diamonds. Answer on the back page.

Friday Pairs!

Pos	Cat	No	Players	Match Points	Score %	Master Points
1		8	Michael Byrne & Alexander Conlon	235.90	65.53	96
2	J	2	David Sargent & Lucy Norman	230.80	64.11	84
3		6	David & Samuel Howells	222.20	61.72	72
4	J	3	Wilfred Marshall & Samuel Akayan	214.10	59.47	60
5	J	19	Sophia Rehman & Emma Furniss	213.60	59.33	48
6	J	14	George Knight & Ayrton Stefaniak	211.40	58.72	36
7	J	13	Sophia Ward & Annabel Sutton	208.80	58.00	24
8	J	11	Harriet Cork & James Cole	207.60	57.67	12
9		1	Sue Johnson & Ethan Kay	204.70	56.86	
10		15	Katherine Twamley & Emilia Grau-Twamley	196.30	54.53	
11		9	Annie Harris & Allan Banks	193.40	53.72	
12		16	Cornelia Winter & Tim Young	193.20	53.67	
13		7	Agnieszka Stefaniak & Stephen Kennedy	179.70	49.92	
14	J	17	Fraser Cooper & Henry Jones	168.10	46.69	
15	J	5	Xander & Seth Chatham-Young	160.00	44.44	
16	J	4	Daniel Cabatic & Benjamin Carey	154.50	42.92	
17	J	10	Lottie Sutton & Kyle Davies	149.90	41.64	
18		18	Sheila Bown & Valerie Carey	148.90	41.36	
19	J	20	Maegan Cabatic & Alba Martin	148.50	41.25	
20	J	12	Chloe Parsons & Ellie Lowe	114.30	31.75	
21	J	21	Shivam & Taarini Kodlikeri	109.10	30.31	
22	J	22	Patrick Stephenson & Beau Bennett	92.12	25.59	

N North
♠ 5
♥ AJ73
♦ A8732
♣ Q109
S South
♠ AQ10
♥ KQ9864
♦ 64
♣ A8
W N E S
P 2NT 3♥ 1♥
4♠ P 5♣ 3♠
P P P

Adrian Thomas had a fine result in the Reykjavik tournament, his team coming third in a world-class field.

LlanBrighton

WELSH BRIDGE UNION

GREEN POINTED & DRAGON POINTED

(nearly) OVERSEAS CONGRESS

LLANBRIGHTON, EUROPE

5th – 7th JUNE 2026



LlanBrighton – a little corner of Wales in Europe!

362 average days of sunshine a year (sometimes)!

Solution to Play Problem on P17. Cash a top heart at trick two. If South follows, as he does, you cannot set up the long diamond, so you need to run the queen of clubs and hope East's shape is 5-1-1-6. If he shows out, then play for him to be 5-0-2-6 and ruff out the diamonds.