

THE PORTHCAWL CONGRESS

by Gwynn Davis

After many highly successful years as Congress Secretary of this WBU flagship event, Diana Panniers this year passed the baton to Irene Thomas, herself no stranger to this kind of responsibility. The Congress continues to be held at The Rest, and given our ageing bridge population it is probably just as well that we have a venue boasting the latest in bathroom aids, medical emergency alarms, and resuscitation equipment.

My own Congress began on the Friday evening when I partnered Patrick Jourdain in the Men's Pairs. The result was a disappointment to us both, but perhaps especially to Patrick who had been looking forward to playing with me.

Saturday saw the qualifying round and final of the Red Dragon Pairs. Patrick Jourdain had found himself another new partner, Middlesex's Mike Vail and they won the Red Dragon final.

Championship Teams

Last year Sue Ingham, Production Editor of this organ, won the Porthcawl Teams, accompanied by Best, Sheridan and Scott.

On this occasion she was required to drag an even more benighted bunch across the finishing line - that is to say, myself, plus the Wiltshire pairing of Bannister and Law. Anyway, she managed it. Of course we had the odd spot of luck. How's this for a bidding problem? You hold:

♠QJ74 ♥Q876 ♦53 ♣J109

You are vulnerable against not. The bidding proceeds: 3NT (gambling) on your right; Pass from you; 4C (pass or covert) from left hand opponent; 5C from partner; Pass. It's your bid. OK? Decided? Before I give you the answer, here's another problem. By coincidence, this also involves an opening bid of 3NT, but this time you are in third seat. The bidding has gone: (3NT) P (4C).

You hold: ♠A5 ♥AK542 ♦AKJ1092 ♣-

The likelihood of your being able to make a slam must be extremely high, but of course you would like to play in the right strain. Is there a sensible way to explore? At the table, when I held this hand, I wasn't sure. In the end I opted for an agricultural 6D. This had to go one down when opener, in addition to eight solid clubs, proved to have Qxx of diamonds. Coupled with a 4-0 heart split, that doomed the contract to a one trick defeat. There was something about Sue's reaction to this effort which suggested that my 6D bash did not meet with her approval. I believe Mike Best's name was mentioned, somewhat nostalgically.

And what about the problem I started with? What did you do to decide to do over your partner's 5C? At the table, with our teammates sitting East/West, South (who lacked honour cards in either minor to help him decide what was going on) elected to pass. It is of course the same hand, the full layout being as follows:

I had gone for minus 100 on a hand on which 6H is 'cold'. At the other table, however, declarer's 5C contract proved a considerably inferior resting place for North/South, hampered as it was by the

♠A5	
♥AK542	
♦AKJ1092	
♣-	
♠K10962	♠83
♥J1093	♥-
♦64	♦Q87
♣85	♣AKQ76432
♠QJ74	
♥Q876	
♦53	
♣J109	

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unlucky 8-2 club break. So my feared 17 IMP loss was transformed into a 12 IMP gain. North/South, incidentally, took this reverse in good part. Probably 5C should not be natural on this sequence (if North has clubs he can afford to wait for opener to correct to 4D), but undiscussed sequences do tend to generate large numbers in the minus column. As to the rest, it was all down to our brilliant play, which enabled Sue to triumph yet again.

Disclaimer inserted at the request of
Gwynn Davies.

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ment of the editor.'