

## A Congress Organiser's Tale

After two years of minimal profits, the first bombshell to hit us was that the EBU had moved the date of its Autumn Congress which now clashed with our congress. Our next problem was that the Rest had extended their season so we couldn't have our congress there.

Finding another venue in the area was very difficult; we were looking from Port Talbot to Rhosce. By chance Barrie Robinson tried the Seabank at Porthcawl and whoopee! It was available, the price was right and they would arrange a special accommodation rate from £43 p.p. dinner, bed and breakfast. The only snag was that we had to be out by six o'clock on Sunday. Thinking back, we didn't finish playing until after six last year, and there is a lot of clearing up. We had to change the Sunday timing where possible, having already decided to finish early on Saturday evening at about 7.30. The majority of players preferred the new times.

After the brochures were produced and distributed everywhere, the entries started coming in thick and fast - four times faster than in other years.

Then the Seabank changed hands. Our booking was honoured, but we could only have a carvery and not a buffet lunch on Sunday. My sleepless nights changed from 'When are the entries coming in?' to 'How can' the hotel serve a carvery to over sixty people in the one hour we have allocated?'

As the time neared, the entries had already exceeded the two previous years, but I was told the venue could take fifty tables, so not too much of a worry. Other major concerns were transporting the tables and equipment from storage at the Rest, and preparing the hotel for the hordes of bridge players all wanting the same thing at the same time.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November arrived and there was sufficient room for the thirty tables needed that day. It was obvious that there was no room in the main playing room for the eight tables of novices I was expecting on the Saturday, in addition to the eighty-four pairs booked in for the main events. Fortunately,

## Porthcawl, 2010

the hotel had another room that they could use.

The main playing room was restricted by a large Christmas tree, and getting forty-eight tables in was a squeeze. It was very congested in one corner, but we managed it.

Amazingly, bookings were up 40% on last year, and the hotel was fully booked two weeks before the event.

The entries may have been better than expected but my bridge wasn't. The standard was very good. With my very tolerant partner we didn't manage to qualify for any of the three Pairs finals. We played in the 'Seagull' - a pivot teams event for the also-rans, only to find four Grand Masters, three Camrose players and three Lady Milne players, all in the same group. We didn't do very well; perhaps I was still concerned about how long now ninety persons were going to take over lunch the following day.

No rest on Saturday evening, as I had to calculate, identify, label and fill the 33 prize envelopes with the £1860 prize money. It took three of us two hours to complete this task. Sunday dawned and forty-eight tables, the maximum, were in play. The venue was FULL. The luckiest team was probably Barrie Jones' team. Their entry was the 48<sup>th</sup> and they won the Teams event. I'm sure they'll enter earlier next year.

My biggest worry for the Sunday, the carvery, was competently managed by the hotel staff, who served ninety-nine meals in three-quarters of an hour.

I like this congress format. It caters for, and gives prizes to, all standards of players as well as their being able to earn green points. Having the novices playing just added to it.

The full results of the nineteen separate events were on the WBU website by Monday evening.

I had difficulty trying to establish whether we could have the venue in 2011. Late on Sunday I had my answer: we could, and my happiest moment came when the WBU president announced the news and a resounding cheer came from the playing room.

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The mammoth task of packing and returning the 57 tables and equipment to The Rest was carried out by a band of volunteers, whose help is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Was the success of the congress due to change of venue, the early Saturday finish, or

some other factor? I don't know. Whatever the reason, if you want to play next year you'd better send your entry in early.

Irene Thomas

## PORTHCAWL CONGRESS RESULTS

Friday afternoon Open Pairs:

Ladies' Pairs:

Men's Pairs (Max Powell trophy):

Mixed Pairs:

Friday evening Open Pairs:

Championship Pairs Qualifier:

RED DRAGON Championship Pairs Final:

Mick Mahoney and Alison Nichols

Aida Aris and Liz Atkinson

Alan Williams and Jim Luck

Fiona Littlewood and Paul Littlewood

Pam Pearce and Susan Sharp

Gilly Clench and Gerald Tredinnick

1<sup>st</sup> Dan McIntosh & Tony Ratcliff

2<sup>nd</sup> Jeremy Dhondy & Alan Kay

3<sup>rd</sup> Gilly Clench & Gerald Tredinnick

3<sup>rd</sup> Ian Haston and Peter Milewski

Pru Knight & Adrian Knight

1<sup>st</sup> Pat Smith & Dorothy Legg

2<sup>nd</sup> Viv Brown & Cherry Cadwallader

3<sup>rd</sup> Pam & Alun Jennings

Barrie Cavell and Christine Dean

Marian Brooke, Mike Vail, Margaret Lane,

Patrick Jourdain

(Green) Chris Smart, Jackie Davis, Trevor

Thrower, Bill Thurl

(White) Gwynn Davis, Sue Ingham, Chris

Rochelle, Liz Atkinson

(Red) Diane Kurbalija, Filip Kurbalija, Alan

Kay, Jeremy Dhondy

(Blue) Carol Brown, Albert Brown, Jutta

Shadforth, Janet Miles

1<sup>st</sup> Liz Commins, Barry Jones, David Birt,

Philip Felman

2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Roderick, Mike Best, Trevor

Towers, Simon Richards

3<sup>rd</sup> Paddy Brown, Brian Browse, Robert

Mabley, Alan Biggs

Championship Teams final Winners:



**DON'T MISS!!!!**

East Wales Congress

St David's Day Sims

27<sup>th</sup> March

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> April

*For further details of congresses: brochure, entry form, etc. see WBU website*

Cwmbran 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2011

Clubs 28<sup>th</sup> February – 4<sup>th</sup> March

Portland Pairs North Wales

Swiss Teams Congress, North Wales