



## **Filip Kurbalija 1954-2021**

Filip died on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021, aged 67, after a short illness. He will be missed by all his many friends. Condolences go to Diane, his wife, particularly.

He was a top class bridge player as his record demonstrates. He played for Wales in the Home Countries Championship (Camrose) on no less than 55 occasions between 1987 and 2014. More recently he played in the Seniors (Teltscher Trophy) on four occasions, the last in 2020.

Filip represented Wales in European and World competition starting with the Rosenblum World Teams in Lille in 1998 and including five European Championships and one European Seniors Championships during his career.

I first played with Filip in a BBL Premier League match more than 25 years ago. Our temporary partnership came about as a result of his regular partner attempting to stop a car sliding away, on an icy slope, with his leg with predictably poor results.

We got on well, won our match and continued to play for many years in various events. I even managed to get him to smile a few times but whether it was amusement or pity I never discovered. What he was though was a partner who tried hard the whole time and had fine skills of concentration. He was also good company when the bridge wasn't on. More recently when stopped from travelling we used to exchange comments on Facebook on political matters. It was fair to say our politics didn't exactly dovetail but he always was civil and argued his corner with great conviction.

Domestically his record was very strong. He won the major Welsh competitions on many occasions and when venturing to England also had a lot of success. Perhaps biggest amongst those was winning twice in the Spring Foursomes, traditionally England's strongest teams event, the second time in 2008 with a team not highly seeded but his team beat a lot of very good teams along the way. The EBU archive shows him winning a lot of English events, at Brighton, Eastbourne and Bournemouth for example and also the Grand Master Pairs, Premier Grand Master Pairs and Tollemache Cup (The County teams Championship).

We will miss you Filip.

Jeremy Dhondy

December 2021