



County Newsletter



Inside this issue:

Editorial	1
President's Cup & NCL by Bob Pitts	1
Latest Results	1
Menagerie reprised by Barry Rigal	2
Corwen Trophy report by Paul Roberts	3
Calendar	4
Llandudno Swiss Pairs by Bill Niccol	4

Latest Results

There was an excellent turnout of 22 teams for the annual Jim Davies Swiss teams in mid-June. The winners were Sheila Shea, Wyn Williams, Andrea Martin, Margaret Barnes, with John Hampson, Simon Whitehouse, Julian Merrill, Paul Roberts second.

The annual Liverpool v Dublin resulted in the third consecutive win for our guests from across the Irish Sea - full details on the county website.

In the North Wales Swiss pairs congress in early July, David Stevenson and Liz Commins finished 2nd in a field of 94 pairs.

There is a brand new bridge website run by Jan van Cleeff which is worth a visit. Have a look at www.bridgebig.com

Editorial

So - what events are you planning to compete in during the forthcoming season that you have not played in before? How about getting out there and trying something new. If you only play in your club, why not try a County event or enter a teams league. If you are feeling a bit more adventurous how about a national competition like the Gold Cup or the NICKO where you can represent your club (and they may subsidise your entry). The best way to improve is to play against more experienced players and not only will you pick up ideas but you may also realise that they are quite beatable. You never know, before long you might be the player(s) 'to beat'.

We win the Presidents Cup!

This event is an inter-county competition which is arranged every year by M&CBA with David and Liz Stevenson the organisers. The venue changes each year so that all competing counties can play host and this year it was held at Sheffield BC. There were 10 counties taking part (full results on the website). Our successful team were Dave & Jean Keen, Alan Stephenson & Stuart Mathews, Colin Humphrey & Mike Swanson, Julian Merrill & Paul Roberts, Daniel Miller & Peter Hall. Well done everyone.

Stuart Mathews gave me this 'almost' hand from the event..

Stu held ♠ A J 9 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ A K Q J 5 3 ♣ 6 and heard a multi 2♦ opener on his right. With a weaker hand and diamonds, he could pass and bid later, so when he made a transfer overcall of 3♣ he was showing a good diamond suit in a strong hand. The next hand passed and AI responded 3♥ showing some values and at least 4 hearts. Stu tried 3♣ asking for some help there and AI replied 3NT showing a spade honour. Now 4♦ from Stu was looking for slam but when AI repeated his hearts Stu was not sure that there would be such a good suit opposite, so settled safely in the diamond game. He felt this was a missed chance, but the good news was that our other pair had also reached 5♦ and both opposing pairs had played in 3NT one off on a club lead, for a huge swing to the good guys.

Northern Counties League

The first two weekends (of 4) have taken place. The Merseyside & Cheshire teams won the first session of both B and C leagues but slipped back in the second weekend. The B team now lie 2nd, but the C team had a disaster and are at the foot of the table. The A division are only having 3 sessions this year so there was no matches for them on the first weekend but they played excellently on the second one and are currently leading their division. Good Luck to everyone for the remaining matches.

MENAGERIE REPRISED

By Barry Rigal

(This deal comes from the Women's event at the recent Open European Championships and if like me you are a fan of the Victor Mollo's bridge stories, then this should make you smile - Editor)

Despite their natural disappointment at failing to reach the final, the French women made no mistake in the play-off for the bronze medal. They were in sparkling form, as this little gem by Véronique Bessis and Catherine d'Ovidio illustrates:

Dealer North. All Vul.

	♠ 7 3		
	♥ K 8		
	♦ 10 9 8 7 6 5		
	♣ 6 5 2		
♠ Q J 9 6			♠ 10 8 4 2
♥ 10			♥ 6 5 2
♦ K Q			♦ A J 2
♣ K 10 9 8 7 4			♣ A Q J
	♠ A K 5		
	♥ A Q J 9 7 4 3		
	♦ 4 3		
	♣ 3		
West	North	East	South
<i>Joel</i>	<i>d'Ovidio</i>	<i>Sokolow</i>	<i>Bessis</i>
	Pass	1♣	4♥
Double	Pass	4♠	All Pass

One could engage in a lengthy discussion about what East should do when West doubles. My simplistic view is that West has doubled for takeout and East should act accordingly. With four hearts being stone cold, bidding four spades was certainly the right thing to do on this deal.

South led her singleton club and declarer won in hand to play three rounds of diamonds. South ruffed in with the five of spades and declarer discarded dummy's heart. Now South played the ace of hearts and declarer ruffed in dummy and played a spade, South winning with the king and playing a further heart. Declarer had to ruff, but now if she played a spade South would win and cash a heart trick, so she played a club to her ace. South ruffed with the ace of spades and played a third heart. As declarer ruffed in dummy, North discarded her remaining club, so that when declarer now played a club North was able to ruff in and defeat the contract.

'Curious hand', said Oscar the Owl, 'both defenders scored a ruff in the same suit.'

Declarer can get home by playing a club after ruffing the first heart. South ruffs and plays a heart, but declarer ruffs in dummy and plays another club.

The Corwen Trophy by Paul Roberts

The Corwen trophy is awarded to the champions of the EBU county pairs event. Each County sends the pairs who have finished highest in it's own pairs competition for that season, giving a quality field of over 100 pairs. The best placed Merseyside and Cheshire pair this year were Julian Merrill and Paul Roberts who came in 12th - very creditable.

Paul writes : We had a disappointing first set, after which little went right for us. Typical was a board against the eventual winners (*Bob Rowlands and Peter Lee*), who were embarrassed to miss an obvious six spades with ♠ Q J 9 8 7 5 ♥ K 9 7 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ 4 opposite ♠ A K ♥ A 6 5 4 ♦ 10 ♣ A K 9 8 6 3. They made 11 tricks, getting 70% of the matchpoints because whilst slam can make double dummy, pairs who bid it went off due to the complication of a 4 - 1 spade break.

By contrast, we had some luck in session 2. As East at game all I picked up ♠ A 9 8 4 ♥ 4 ♦ A K 10 7 6 4 ♣ 8 6. With South the dealer passing throughout, Julian opened one heart, North bid one spade, so I bid two diamonds (showing a good 10+ points). Julian raised to three diamonds and remembering the old adage that if you have a choice of bids at pairs it's usually right to bid 3NT, that's what I selected. South led a spade (presumably remembering the other old adage that you won't lose the post-mortem if you lead partner's suit). Julian put down ♠ K Q 7 ♥ A K 7 6 2 ♦ Q J 9 2 ♣ 5 and it seemed a good idea to take my 11 top tricks (for a 70% score). South was not impressed by North's spade suit of J 10 5 3 2 as part of his vulnerable overcall, though had he not interfered we might have reached the cold diamond slam.

I think that the hand I was most pleased with occurred in the Sunday morning session, long before most bridge players are up, let alone awake.

Sat East, non vulnerable against vulnerable I held ♠ A J 2 ♥ 8 ♦ Q J 8 6 4 2 ♣ A 8 7. North dealt and passed and I opened one diamond. South bid one heart and Julian bid two hearts (an unassuming cue bid). North passed and I bid three diamonds showing a minimum opener. South now came back in with four clubs and Julian jumped to game in diamonds. Now I reasoned as follows

- Julian has a good hand he has bid to game opposite a minimum opener
- He does not have defence to four clubs as he has not given me a chance to offer a penalty double, thus his values must be in diamonds and spades
- North has shown no values or a heart fit, hence Julian may have a potential heart stopper. Therefore some pairs might be allowed to play in 3NT and if it makes 10 tricks, being in five diamonds will score poorly.

Therefore I bid six diamonds and our 2 hands were

♠ K Q	♠ A J 2
♥ J 7 6 5 2	♥ 8
♦ A K 10 7	♦ Q J 8 6 4 2
♣ 6 4	♣ A 8 7

South started with a top heart, but with trumps breaking 2 - 1 no lead could defeat the slam, as after drawing trumps, a club could be thrown on the third round of spades and two clubs ruffs were then available in dummy.

(Paul's presumption was proved correct. 3NT+1 got 63% of the matchpoints whereas 5D+1 got 39%, and the slam 94% - Editor)

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Calendar

All events here are correct at time of publishing but you are advised to take the precaution of checking with the organisers in all cases.

August

12th-21st EBU Summer Congress Brighton

September

10th Northern Counties League Round 3

12th/13th EBU simultaneous pairs Clubs

17th/18th Merseyside BC Congress MBC

October

12th/13th BGB simultaneous pairs Clubs

16th Chester Bowl (charity pairs) Deva BC

22nd Northern Counties League Round 4

November

13th Waterworth Cup (county gp pairs) MBC

14th 'Children in Need' sim. Pairs MBC

19th/20th WBU Swiss teams Llangollen

December

4th Merseyside Cup MBC

Lady Connell heats - Sept. 29th MBC/Oct. 11th LBC/Oct. 14th Deva BC

LLANDUDNO SWISS PAIRS JULY 2001 by Bill Niccol

Providing you have one bridge hand which gives you immensurable pleasure, then the effort is worth it. Such was the case for myself this year at this excellently organised event. Even though my partner, John Gladders and myself hardly shone. Well, in fact the opposite was the case. We could not manage a single 8 board match without a demonstrable error rearing its ugly head. In the final match, first board, for example, I had 'decked' a cold slam, cold on the lead anyway. Enough of that – this is why we play.

Dealer South. N/S vul.

♠ K Q J 10 5

♥ A Q 8 6 2

♦ 10 4 3

♣ void

♠ A 2

♥ J 5 3

♦ Q 2

♣ A K Q J 10 4

♠ 8 7 4 3

♥ K 10 7

♦ 8 5

♣ 8 7 6 3

♠ 9 6

♥ 9 4

♦ A K J 9 7 6

♣ 9 5 2

West	North	East	South
			2♣
3♣	4♣	5♣	Pass
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

The auction in itself gave all the players pleasure. Some sort of symmetry involving the club suit I guess. John Gladders opened 2C showing either a weak 2 bid in diamonds or an Acol 2C opener. What my 4C was is unsure. I have a penchant for liking to bid the opponents suit to show 5/5 in the majors and here was a perfect opportunity. Partner, however, announced the bid as a cue-bid agreeing diamonds. Well who was I to argue? Anyway how would you play on the King of Clubs lead? Presumably you ruff and play a spade to the 9? R.H.O. wins and returns a spade, won in hand. Now what?

After considerable thought I saw a masterful line – a first round finesse of the Jack of trumps! The contract then makes if L.H.O. has Q x x or if the trumps are 2-2! (Win the presumed heart return and cash the 10 of diamonds). So I made 11 tricks. Only afterwards did I realise the inferior line of bashing out the two top trumps gives an overtrick! Grrr! (*the game was rarely bid so Bill and John got 97% of the matchpoints on the deal - Editor*) Well done to Liz Commins and David Stevenson who finished 2nd in the event.