



WBU NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

JUNIOR BRIDGE IN WALES

Junior Camrose 2019 – Le Mon Country Hotel, Northern Ireland

The Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer were held in Ireland, at the lovely venue of Le Mon Country Club outside Belfast on a glorious sunny weekend. The organisation was superb, with large playing rooms, plenty of team tables, BBO on all six tables, vugraph room and constant coffee and homemade shortbread, which just kept coming.

The schedule, however, was gruelling, with matches against all the Home Countries and the Sixth team this year supplied by Southern Ireland as the North have similar difficulties to Wales fielding enough teams. The matches were 16 boards, but as they were Juniors there was no danger of time penalties as they raced through everything at lightning speed, but that still meant a midnight finish on the Friday and early morning start times.

Wales was represented by our most experienced pair, Sarah Greener and Stephen Loat, who played nearly the whole time and showed great potential. Melanie Thomas, David and Iwan Williams (brothers) have all been playing for about a year, yes that's right.... a year. Joe Mullaly played in the Peggy Bayer, but has had a five year gap whilst training to be a Doctor. Now qualified, he flew over to play after a 53 hour week and then had to miss the final Banquet to relieve the night staff.

To represent Wales at this level was a huge ask of these very inexperienced youngsters, who were truly thrown in at the deep end, but it was so worth it. Many would have floundered and lost

confidence; these players did anything but. They rose to the challenge and played their very best, raising their game well beyond their experience and we should be extremely proud of them. The most welcome outcome is that they have now all got the bug and are determined to improve by next year 😊 As their Captain I am also motivated by the weekend to try and raise the number of children playing in Wales and hope we can field four teams (2 under 20 and 2 under 26) next year, as it is our turn to host. The camaraderie, exceptional professionalism and good spirits in which this event took place is a lesson to us all. From the beginners and youngsters at one end and the soon-to-be Camrose players and a professional player at the other extreme, who receive masses of training, mentors and International support, it just shows what an extraordinary game this is to attract people of all standards and give them not only a satisfying competitive hobby, but also friends for life.

The highs of the weekend were definitely not coming bottom, despite the inexperience and then almost beating Ireland in a solid and exciting match. Our slam bidding was very good indeed (apart from passing a 5NT enquiry – we've all been there!). For Sarah and Stephen it was certainly being one of the few in a terrific 6NT and knowing quickly how to play it at trick 2 and later bidding and making 7NT. For Melanie and Joe it was bidding and making a lay-down 7 Spades (how many grand slams did you bid after only a year and on vugraph too?). David and Iwan demonstrated a fine beginning to a great partnership, with

several excellent defences and bidding decisions, which led to a resounding win over the CBAI team. The other was, of course, the Speedball on the Saturday night, when the only rule was not to play with your own partner and to relax and have fun – playing even more cards! (Go on - ask me who won 😊) I am sure I was more exhausted than any of them by the end, but hope I can do it again next year as it was a real honour and complete pleasure.

The pairs all need further training and their systems need to be honed, but I am confident that after the weekend they will work on that and have a great future. We all need to dig deep to bring on the Welsh youth as that is the only way forward. Nearly all our current Camrose players began as Junior Camrose players and so we need to create our future teams at this early stage. If you know any potential players under the age of twenty five, then tell them they can be trained and possibly play next year. We need to start now to have any chance of fielding four teams.



David, Mel, Gilly, Sarah, Steven & Iwan. Sadly Joe had to fly back to work before the photo!

Junior News

You may have noticed that Mark Roderick and Sarah Greener recently made an appeal for a Junior Co-ordinator. There have been various kind offers of help, every one will be needed, and I am asking you all to join in. Dennis Backer has kindly offered to co-ordinate our efforts (dennis.d.backer@gmail.com). We need to provide four teams for next year's Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer competition.

We want to begin a programme to teach youngsters in schools, to identify any individuals in Wales who can play, however little, but we don't

know where they all are. We have had extremely kind offers from the other Home Countries to join in with their training programmes, which is absolutely great. The first is coming up shortly on March 9th and 10th in Oxford with the English under 20 squad (but open to all). If you know of ANY youngsters under the age of 25 who may be prepared to undergo a crash course over the next year, with a view to being in a national team, get in touch via the link below. Also make contact if you would be prepared to take a course and teach it in a school near you. There is plenty of help and material, so you wouldn't be on your own. We have to start now and it could change the future of bridge in Wales forever!

I make no apologies for my usual unbridled enthusiasm and the drama, but I wish everyone could have been there to witness the positive attitude of dozens of young people enjoying this fantastic game. Just think how many friends you have made due to Bridge. Now is the time to give something back.

Gilly Clench

To register an interest or to find help follow this link

[WBU Junior Bridge Stakeholder Information Form](#)

The WBU will also fund attendees at the

Wessex Youth Bridge Weekend

6 – 7th April 2019

at Cheltenham Bridge Club

Come and enjoy a packed weekend of bridge tuition and play for young people 8 - 21 years.

(Parents and grandparents can come too!)

All levels welcome from beginners to junior experts.

There will be fun competitions, tournaments & prizes.

£60 per person with overnight accommodation at Cheltenham Ladies' College, £35 non-residents.

For more information contact WBU President Sarah Amos sarahamostd@gmail.com

WBU NATIONAL MIXED PAIRS

Sunday 25th Feb was the first staging of the Mixed Pairs as a four centre simultaneous event and a total of 53 pairs took part. The biggest heat was held in the West at Tumble with nine full tables, there were eight tables at Gwent Academy, Newport, five in the Mid and four and a half in the North. A huge thank you to all who helped organise the various heats and all of you who took part.

The overall winner were Ceri Pierce and Eric Cummings (E) with 63.15% closely followed by Emer Disley and Tony Howarth (W) with 63.02%. The highest placed Mid Wales pair were Dai Hayes and Jennifer Harris and Margaret Barnes and Wyn Williams topped the North rankings. Full results are on the new WBU Results Bridgewebs site

<http://www.bridgewebs.com/wburesults/>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



WEBBER CUP

The first time I played in the Webber Cup Final was around 30 years ago. (I had only been playing a couple of years and I did start very young!) In those days teams from all over Wales had to battle through two rounds of qualifying and then a weekend of top-class competition in Porthcawl awaited. I can still remember my mother and step-father, Ruth and Eric Williams being thrilled to come home with the Phillip Angel Cup (consolation prize!) one year. Sadly, these days there is no need for qualifying events and even with direct entry numbers have continued to decline. The WBU have decided that in future The Webber will circulate around the areas and this year it will be held at Cardiff Bridge Club on the 9th & 10th March. The format is all play all multiple teams and entries are welcome from all WBU members. Space is limited so entries to

Jean Hand or Helen Houston as soon as possible please.

WBU CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

March 17th sees the inaugural Champion of Champions competition at The Metropole in Llandrindod Wells.

The idea behind it is to encourage every affiliated club to feel part of the organisation by sending their Champion Pair to play in this prestigious competition. Clubs can choose the pair by any method, so if you don't hold a formal Championship Pairs it can be the pair with the best results over a given period. Runners up can represent the club if the Champions are unable to play.

Full details from the WBU website.

The hotel needs to know how many to cater for so please get you entries in to Jean Hand by 5th March.

NWBA GREEN POINTED WEEKEND

WREXHAM

6th & 7th April 2019

SATURDAY SWISS PAIRS * SUNDAY SWISS TEAMS

There will be six eight board matches each day with green points for winning matches and further ranking points. If you haven't played in a Swiss event before this would provide an ideal introduction.

The venue is the beautifully refurbished St Margaret's Church Hall in Garden Village, Wrexham.

Access from the A483 junction 6 is straightforward and there is ample parking. Bring a picnic or pop across the road to The Acton Park for a hot meal.

Full details of all up coming competitions are on the WBU website or contact Jean Hand for National events.