

Welsh Bridge Union



From the Chief Executive

Since the last issue, Laura and I have had the pleasure of working – and playing a bit – together at the Madeira Bridge Festival, before we were locked up for the winter. It made us realise how much we all miss face to face bridge. (Note the perspex screens, for Covid-19 protection.)



Here's the latest important information for members:

Membership Subs 2021/22

After suspending membership subscriptions for 2020/21 due to the pandemic, the WBU has set the membership fee for 2021/22 at £10 per person (plus Area Membership). Some clubs may be unable to collect subscriptions as they would do in more normal times, in which case WBU and Area membership can be obtained via the WBU Website.

Mailing List

Subscribe to the WBU mailing list to get the latest news and events directly to your email inbox. Sign up on the WBU website under Contacts>Mailing List, or

<https://welshbridgeunion.org/mail-list-subscription>

New Afternoon duplicate sessions

On BBO commencing 26 January 2021:

Tuesdays 2pm (Matchpointed Pairs)

Fridays 2pm (IMPs – Pairs with Teams scoring)

These events are for WBU members and their guests. Master points will be issued, and the entry fee will be BBO\$2.50. There is no better way to spend a lockdown winter afternoon! Do join us and make this a popular event.

To enter a tournament, search for **Competitive->All Tournaments->wbu_1**. Entry is available approximately 2 hours before the start of the session.

It is essential that you pre-register your BBO name on the 'WBU List' (you only need to do this once). To see if you are already registered, please view the BBO User Names on the WBU website, otherwise please register by email to [wbunbo@gmail.com](mailto:wzunbo@gmail.com) giving the following details:

BBO User-name; First Name; Surname; WBU/NBO Number.



Photo Gallery

Many of us have not seen each other for almost a year now. To keep us connected, please email a photo of yourself playing bridge whilst locked up – including those lockdown hairstyles and beards. A selection will be published on the website and in the next newsletter.

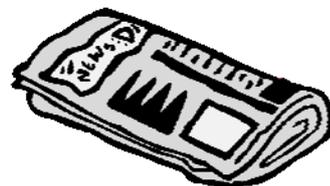
Email info@wbu.org.uk, including your name and club(s).

(The Management Committee will be first on the hitlist!)

Ceri Pierce

ceri@wbu.org.uk

NEWS



East Wales

Gwynn Davis provides this report from the East Wales Bridge Association:

* * * * *

Our delayed AGM was held online on 13th December.

Gwynn Davis and Bill Parkinson were elected Chairman and Secretary respectively; Helen Houston and Simon Gottschalk were re-elected as ATO and Treasurer; Susan Ingham will be our new webmaster; Richard Welsford will continue to be responsible for the Western League; and Adrian Trickey will continue to run the East Wales leagues.

Retiring officers were thanked for their contribution, especially Geoff Evans whose work on behalf of East Wales spanned many years.

Recent results

The East Wales Mixed Pairs was won by Adrian Thomas and Mieke Deschepper.

The Arthur James Bowl was won by Mike Best and Mark Roderick; and the Beatus Cup was won by Veronica Burrows and Martin Joseph.

Upcoming events

East Wales Congress (Pairs and Teams), Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st February

To enter contact ato@ewba.org.uk

Further information is provided on the East Wales website: East Wales Bridge Association, Wales (bridgewebs.com)

The East Wales League is still taking entries for the 2021 season. Contact Adrian Trickey at adriantrickey1@gmail.com

The Western League will run online this season. If you are interested in representing East Wales, contact:

mikebest778@gmail.com (A team)

hejason095@aol.com (B team)

rtw76@sky.com (C team)

WBU SEMINARS

(Continued from back page)

The WBU is presenting a number of free online seminars on various common conventions, aimed at average Club players, particularly those who aspire to winning their Club championship (many experts will still find them useful and instructive).

Initially Tony Haworth will be presenting them, but it is hoped that later, others will also contribute.

The seminars will be on Zoom on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons at 3-weekly intervals, starting at 2.30pm and 4.30pm prompt and lasting \approx 45 minutes (the seminars are repeated owing to limited numbers).

Zoom Instructions

You do not need to pre-register – just turn-up.

You are requested to be in the seminar lobby at least 2 minutes before the scheduled start time. If you are late arriving we cannot guarantee admission: the presented will be focused on the presentation rather than on the people waiting in the lobby.

The Zoom seminar entry credentials are:

Seminar Id – 92372596404

Password – 854371

Please join with both audio and video on (although the host will mute you just before the seminar starts). To un-mute if you want to ask a question, press and hold down the space bar.

Please keep questions to a minimum during the seminar.

Post-seminar access

After each seminar a write-up will be posted on the WBU site (under the Education>'Seminars menu).

The Powerpoint presentations themselves will be available only upon special request by email, for copyright reasons.

Obituaries

Some of the friends who will be missing when real-life bridge resumes.



Mike Hirst

28th October 2020



Wales has had many talented bridge players, but few have brought to the game the same adventurousness and all-round exuberance as characterises the approach of Mike Hirst.

Born in Yorkshire in 1936, Mike started his bridge career at the age of 11, having watched his parents playing the game with neighbours. Having taught himself from a book, his first competitive event at the age of 16, was in the Yorkshire Pairs Championship, and despite being shouted at for being late (by the infamous Harold Franklin), he came third.

His first job was with Woolworths as a trainee manager, but he soon switched to Beechams in South Wales (Penarth). He joined the local club and paired up with Bill Griffiths and Peggy Fletcher, his early mentors. Very soon he met Patrick Jourdain, with whom he entered his first Camrose trials, and was selected for his first Camrose against Northern Ireland.

He had a successful playing career with Patrick until 1973, winning many major events with team-mates David Johnson and David McAndrew amongst others. Mike represented Wales in the Camrose on 42 occasions, winning 13 of those matches – an achievement matched by few. He also represented his country in a host of other international tournaments from the late 60s onwards, and won the Welsh Cup

twelve times. Even in his later years, when he played in few major events, he still maintained his fifth-placed ranking of Welsh Premier Grand Masters. But Mike, as well as being a metronomic Master Point accumulator as far as it is possible to imagine, played bridge for the enjoyment and friendships forged at the table, which he cherished as much as his competitive success.

He married Ann, also a Welsh international, and as well as playing bridge together, they shared a keen interest in golf (they for many years owned an apartment on a golf course in the Canaries). Mike was also captain of both his local golf club and rugby club – a truly versatile man.

We will all miss this larger than life character. Our condolences to Ann.

* * * * *

Some of the above content was sourced from a 2007 interview of Mike, published in the WBU Magazine. The full interview can be viewed at:

<https://welshbridgeunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Mike-Hirst-Full-Interview.pdf>



Mike and Ann

John Waller

Castle Bridge Club at Welshpool, and Mid-Wales bridge, lost one of its best players with the sudden death of John Waller in early December.

John had represented Mid-Wales regularly in the Perry for a good number of years, first with Roger Bowles and more recently Keith Shuttleworth, and some years ago John and Roger won the Welsh Open Pairs.

John was a schoolmaster by profession; he had studied music at Bangor University, and he became Head of Music in a number of schools before turning his attention to Mathematics where he acquired an Open University degree. In recent years he spent a good deal of time exploring the world of Mathematics via the internet, with a particular interest in statistics; he delved into the world of bridge movements and scoring programmes, demonstrating their flaws at least to his own satisfaction!

John was also a very fine pianist, giving a number of individual recitals of the classical repertoire in spite of being restricted by a back injury sustained following his retirement; he was also a conductor and accompanist with various music societies, especially during his time working at schools in the Cotswolds area.



In recent years John lived quietly at Meifod, in Powys, but, until Covid 19 came along he was nevertheless still playing bridge (and chess) regularly. He will be sadly missed. RIP.

Keith Shuttleworth



JUNIOR BRIDGE

That's not as young as it sounds: anyone up to the age of 25 counts as a Junior.

We need more young players. Please encourage your children or grandchildren (or even great-grandchildren), nieces, nephews, random teenagers in the street ...

The current vogue for online bridge lends itself to attracting young players. Not only does it relieve them of the burden of turning up on a school night to sit in a draughty scout hut with a load of wrinklies; they actually like online games.

There are plenty of online teaching tools. The Acol version of the Learn to Play Bridge software is available on the EBU site at:

<https://www.ebu.co.uk/education/ltpb>

Or if you prefer 5-card majors and Strong No Trump:

<https://web3.acbl.org/newmembers/free-learn-software>

[Requires registration, but it's free. just click No to 'Are you a member of the ACBL?' You have to download the software within 48 hours of receiving the link, so don't do it when you're about to go away on holiday. There are two .exe files, Learn to Play Bridge 1 and 2. Save them to the Desktop and run them one at a time. Then you can start following the lessons. The appearance is a bit clunky – but the content seems fine.]]

Meanwhile, good luck to our Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer teams:

Junior Camrose:

Mel Thomas and Soozy Nesom
Stephen Loat and Iwan Williams

Peggy Bayer:

Steph Dux and Sophie Akers
Alua Serikbayeva and Joe Bentley

Our Junior Coordinator is Melanie Thomas. She will welcome new young players into the Welsh bridge fold and get them playing.

melaniethomaswork@gmail.com

☎. 07849 936867

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD SUIT



Online bridge makes it much easier to review and analyse hands after each session. But how many of us actually look at our better scores as well as the poor ones to see if there is room for improvement?

Example 1
Love All
Dlr South

♠ A 6 4 3
 ♥ A K
 ♦ Q 5 2
 ♣ K 8 3 2

♠ J 8 7
 ♥ Q 8 7 6 4
 ♦ K 9 8 6
 ♣ 5

♠ K Q 2
 ♥ 3
 ♦ 7 4 3
 ♣ A Q J 9 7 6

♠ 10 9 5
 ♥ J 10 9 5 2
 ♦ A J 10
 ♣ 10 4

Now 3NT is defeated on the Diamond lead. That was "unlucky" and most of the field were also going off for an average-board. So again, this bidding sequence may be unlikely to be scrutinised further. However, you will notice that 5♣ is an easy make and 4♠ spades with the Moysian (4-3) fit will also be successful much of the time. So is this the best bidding sequence?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3NT	All pass	

Another small change to the south hand sees 3NT defeated but the minor suit slam is available.

How does North proceed after partner's 2♣ minimum rebid?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	?		

There is still a wide range of possibilities including slam if South has a suitable hand. Many of us would make the pairs bid of 3NT and be suitably rewarded after the defence fails to take its three diamond tricks: North claims either 10 or 12 tricks (5♣ is more likely to be defeated). The best contract is 3NT, so this bidding sequence is unlikely to be further analysed. But is it technically correct?

Let's change the hands a little:

Example 2
Love All
Dlr South

♠ A 6 4 3
 ♥ A K
 ♦ Q 5 2
 ♣ K 8 3 2

♠ 9 5
 ♥ Q 8 7 6 5 4
 ♦ K 10 9
 ♣ 10 4

♠ K Q 2
 ♥ 3 2
 ♦ 7 3
 ♣ A Q J 9 7 6

♠ J 10 8 7
 ♥ J 10 9
 ♦ A J 8 6 4
 ♣ 5

Example 3
Love All
Dlr South

♠ A 6 4 3
 ♥ A K
 ♦ Q 5 2
 ♣ K 8 3 2

♠ 10 7 5
 ♥ Q 9 8 6
 ♦ K 9 8 3
 ♣ 10 4

♠ K Q 2
 ♥ 7 3 2
 ♦ 7
 ♣ A Q J 9 7 6

♠ J 9 8
 ♥ J 10 5 4
 ♦ A J 10 6 4
 ♣ 5

There could be a post-mortem if you stopped in 3NT. So how should this one go?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass	2♠ ²
Pass	3♣ ³	Pass	3♦ ⁴
Pass	4NT ⁵	Pass	5♣ ⁶
Pass	5♦ ⁷	Pass	5♠ ⁸
Pass	6♣	All pass	

- ¹3rd Suit Forcing
- ²Secondary spade support
- ³Agreeing clubs as trumps, and forcing
- ⁴Diamond control
- ⁵RKCB
- ⁶1 keycard
- ⁷Asking about ♣Q
- ⁸Shows ♣Q and ♠K

We all know about Fourth Suit Forcing. But you can see from the above auctions that 'Third Suit Forcing' is less likely to be spotted. The Third Suit here is 2♦, which does not have to be natural after opener's minor rebid. As with 4th Suit Forcing it asks partner to describe his hand further. South can show his good 3-card spade support, and North can quietly bid 3♣: forcing, just like suit agreement in a 4th Suit Forcing sequence. This leaves South room to cue-bid 3♦ which is all North needs to check key cards for the slam.

Let's backtrack to our first example. The bidding could go:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass	2♠ ²
Pass	3♣ ³	Pass	3♥ ⁴
Pass	3NT ⁵	All pass	

¹3rd Suit Forcing

² Secondary spade support

³ Agreeing clubs as trumps, and forcing

⁴ Cue bid

⁵ Stop quickly with duplicated values in hearts

And in our second example:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦ ¹	Pass	2♠ ²
Pass	3♣ ³	Pass	5♣ ⁴
All pass			

¹3rd Suit Forcing

² Secondary spade support

³ Agreeing clubs as trumps, and forcing

⁴ Nothing more to show

In summary, 3rd Suit Forcing after a minor rebid asks opener to define his hand further:

- *bid NT with a stop in the unbid suit (hearts in our examples)*
- *raise the 3rd suit with 4 card support*
- *show good secondary support for responders first bid suit*
- *rebid the first bid suit with extra length*
- *or make a 4th suit forcing bid with none of the above*

This is by no means a full explanation of Third Suit Forcing, so if you have any 'Close Encounters With The Third Suit' please let me know: while these occur often, they are easily missed and well worth further investigation.

Simon Gottschalk

IT'S WHAT YOU MAKE IT

If you can contribute to the newsletter, please email me at newsletter@welshbridgeunion.org

Details of forthcoming events, results, letters, stories, opinions, tutorials ... all welcome, but of course if you have an interesting hand or match report we will put that in too.

I cannot guarantee to fit everything in, and reserve the right to edit articles to fit in the space available; but I will do my best to publish everything I am sent.

Laura



NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

If you are sending a bridge hand, it would be a kindness (to me) to observe the following conventions:

- Unless they're at the start of a sentence, ace, king, queen etc. do not have a capital letter.
- Nor do hearts, spades etc.: "holding five hearts ..."; "If the king of spades holds ..."
- When using abbreviations, the suit comes before the card: HK, DQ (or ♥K, ♦Q) etc.
- Please use 10 rather than T for the ten.

Screenshots of hands are generally not of high enough resolution: if you do include one in an article, please send me the .jpg file separately, as well as the picture pasted into the text.

It is better to send hands and bidding sequences as text, though (otherwise I nearly always have to type them out myself).

(But I will accept articles even if they don't comply – this is not a learned journal ☺)



ONLINE ON BBO

EWBA February Congress

Entry

By email to Helen Houston:

Email: ato@ewba.org.uk

- include name, BBO username & membership number of all players
- entry only completed upon payment
- Payment details will be sent upon entry

Swiss Pairs Saturday
(scored and assigned by match points)

Swiss Teams Sunday
(format to be confirmed)

20th-21st February 2021

Green pointed events

Entry fee

Saturday: £20 per pair

Sunday: £40 per team

Playing times

Saturday:

12:00 – 15:15: 4 x 6 boards

16:15 – 19:30: 4 x 6 boards

Sunday:

start: 12:00

1 hour lunch break

finish: 19:30

Health & Safety

As per health & safety advice, the time set to complete a round will include extra 'eye rest' time.

We also advise players to use a desktop or laptop with a 17+” monitor, not a tablet or mobile phone.

THE HUMOUR SLOT



Bridge players at dinner break: "Sorry sir before you pay can I just ask, was there anything you were happy with?"

[Thanks to Paddy Murphy for this. All cartoons welcome, as long as they're clean and not copyright.]

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Can you name all the players in this photograph (kindly provided by one of the people pictured) which we believe dates from 1976?



Answers to Laura at:
newsletter@welshbridgeunion.org

[A curious snippet: the England team included Tony Forrester and Roman Smolski. They didn't win. Sadly, neither did Wales.]

THE SPACE-FILLER

This is what happens when not enough people send me material: you have to put up with whatever ramblings I can conjure up at 2 o'clock in the morning, to fill whatever space remains available. It is true that since this is an entire page, I could have left it out altogether; but odd numbers of pages are slightly offensive to the tidy mind (you almost got three pages so that the thing would be printable in booklet form).

My three sisters and I have been keeping in touch on Zoom or WhatsApp or Skype or whatever face-to-face medium is most convenient. Being family and all that, we don't bother too much with coiffures and lipstick and tidy clothes, though I do usually try to remember to brush my hair before I click 'JOIN 'MEETING'. We've all read about businesspeople who have adopted the swan approach to online meetings: beauty (jacket, shirt and sex-appropriate accessories) above the desk; inelegant practicality (pyjama bottoms or even undies) below the desk. It's all very well until one forgets to switch the camera off before standing up. Pity the poor chap who soaped up in the shower in front of the President of Brazil (yes, really).

I can't say I'm a great fan of face-to-face chat, though it's an improvement on the telephone, which I loathe, making exceptions only for my immediate family and for Gilly Clench (as I said to her yesterday, I'm not usually required to say much). In these socially-distanced times, however, it's a case of needs must. I only wish I could persuade my nonagenarian parents to join in.

As Ceri mentioned on the front page, we experienced the deep joy of playing real live bridge in November. Madeira was still on the airbridge list, and had almost no infections at the time. The Madeira International Bridge Open took place as it has for the past 23 years, albeit with reduced numbers for social distancing and a lot of precautions, such as acrylic screens, masks required except when seated at the table, and some social events taken off the schedule. (No one caught the virus during the tournament.)

I live here (lucky me) most of the year, and do a certain amount of work for the local



Bridge Association. Ceri was drafted in in 2019 to help Ron Tacchi with the bulletins, and made a second appearance in 2020. She has fitted right in, even to the extent of adopting Ron's pithy epithets for various of the local and imported characters (tempting, but I'd better not).

There are definitely worse places than Madeira in November.



Ceri with Sveinni the enormous Icelander

Meanwhile, the cat and I are making the most of the enforced inactivity by watching endless reruns of CSI and Hoarders, and doing a spot of knitting (the cat's a big fan). I kind of feel I ought to be doing something useful, such as improving my Portuguese. I did get as far as registering with the online language app mentioned in a Guardian article recently, but unfortunately it doesn't offer European Portuguese, and the Brazilian variety is a false friend: too many differences in vocabulary and verb construction. Instead, I was lured into testing my primary-school Welsh, and was amazed to discover how much I remembered, given that the last lesson I had was in 1970.

I knew *Mae'r plismon ar y ceffyl* would come in handy one day.



STAYING CONNECTED

Gone in a Flash

It seems almost flippant, in light of 100,000 deaths from Covid-19, to mourn the demise of Flash Player, but mourn I do.

Those who have been playing on BBO will have noticed the differences between the old, greenish Flash client and the new - well, not very new, but newly solitary – blue web-based version.

For one thing, My BBO is no longer there. If anyone can tell me how to do the things one used to be able to do on it, I'd be delighted to know.

For another, the Undo button is now cunningly concealed behind the three little lines in the blue box at top left, instead of plainly visible – and readily accessible – at the bottom of the table. Quite often these days the bidding goes (1♠)–2♦–(Pass)–2♠* before an Undo request suddenly appears from second seat, who actually meant to bid 2♥. It doesn't make for harmony at the table when the opponents have to accept one's Undo request, *after* they've revealed useful information about their hands, or else appear churlish.



And why can't the bidding appear at top right, as it used to? Now one has to click on the contract at the left-hand side of the table to view the auction, which then obscures the table.

I know BBO has had to adapt fast to unexpectedly large numbers, but it's had years to get ready. Please, please may we have some of the old functionality back?

[Even Adobe is treating Flash's death as ... well, a death. The link to instructions as to how to remove Flash from one's computer is called

www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/end-of-life.html

Laura

Face to face in cyberspace

You can now use **RealBridge** for a private match, or perhaps for a bridge party on a Saturday night with a glass of wine.

RealBridge is easy to use and has video and audio so you can see and hear everyone at the table.



Some non-Welsh people playing on RealBridge

You can purchase a session for your own RealBridge match for £6 per table for up to 32 boards, or £10 per table for unlimited boards, payable in advance to the WBU.

Please book your RealBridge session at least 24 hours in advance by emailing ceri@wbu.org.uk

The match organiser will be emailed links and instructions on the day of your bridge match for you to set up the match and start it when you wish.

You must then email your players the player link for them to join at the appropriate time.

Give it a whirl. It makes a change from BBO and Stepbridge and is much more sociable.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

LADY MILNE TRIAL

Saturday 30th – Sunday 31st January
(RealBridge)

JUNIOR CAMROSE & PEGGY BAYER

Friday 19th – Sunday 21st February
(RealBridge)

EWBA SPRING CONGRESS

Saturday 20th – Sunday 21st February
(BBO)

CAMROSE

Friday 5th – Sunday 7th March
(RealBridge)

NATIONAL PAIRS

Sunday 14th March
(BBO)

PERRY & SPICKETT

Saturday 5th - Sunday 6th June
(TBA)

MIXED PAIRS

Sunday 20th June
(TBA)

TEAMS of 8

To be announced

WELSH & CAMBRIA CUPS

Green-pointed knock-out teams

Closing date: 6th February 2021

Entries to David Stevenson:
wbu@blakjak.co.uk

Further details at:

WELSH CUP:
<https://tinyurl.com/Welsh-Cup-2021>

CAMBRIA CUP:
<https://tinyurl.com/Cambria-Cup-2021>

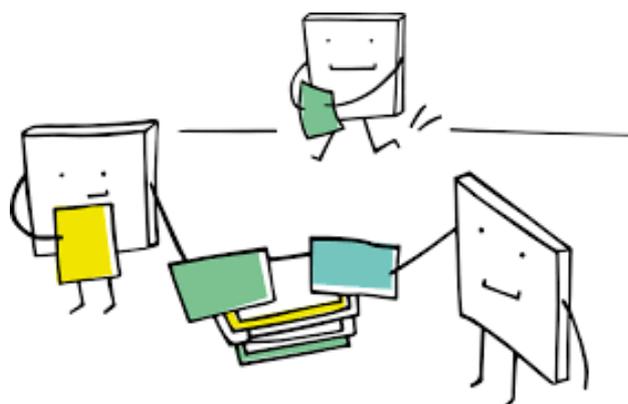
- New improved format:
- Initial rounds online
- Fairer Green Point distribution
- Double elimination
- £40 per team

If you haven't played before, why not try it?
It's the perfect opportunity to dip your toe in the water without any travelling

WBU SEMINARS:

CONVENTIONS

(See p.2 for more information and instructions)



Tuesday Jan 5th MICHAELS CUE BIDS

A method of overcalling with two suits.

Thursday Jan 28th SPLINTER BIDS

Focusing on supporting opener's suit, and also showing singletons or voids.

Thursday Feb 18th NEGATIVE DOUBLES'

Primarily focusing on responder's action following an interference after partner's opening bid; but other aspects will be covered.

Thursday Mar 11th ROMAN KEY-CARD BLACKWOOD

The modern way of asking for aces and kings.

(Subject to change)