

2013 ANC Seniors Butler by Richard Wallis

The event on the weekend following the ANC Teams in Adelaide was Stage 1 of the Open and Womens Butler, and Seniors Pairs were able to enter the Open Butler Stage 1 for practice and pull out on Sunday afternoon to play in the Seniors Butler commencing on Monday morning. After the solid week of the ANC Teams, Therese and I decided to have the weekend off and start fresh on Monday morning, a decision that was vindicated by our good showing to finish second.

With pairs pulling out and at least one Open pair aspirant that did not make stage 2, the field for the Seniors Butler gained 3 pairs from initial entry to start Monday morning with 26 Pairs, comprising 15, 12-board matches to be played as a Swiss over 4 days. The Womens Butler, was reduced to a single Stage played as a round-robin over 6 days to the same schedule as the Seniors, but the Open Stage 2 played an extra match on each of the 4 days for a total of 19 matches.

We made a few mistakes, but also had quite a few good boards, and until match 14 our worst result had been -7 Imps, to have us in a good second place with one match to go, and only 3 VPs away from the leaders. Some of our wins astounded us, as we thought that we had lost, only to find that a large win was posted! Butler scoring is often hard to predict.

However, our tiredness finally caught up with us on the last mach. We had the mis-fortune to sit EW, and we suffered our worst loss by 32 Imps in match 15 to be vulnerable to being overtaken for second place. Luckily, only the third pair could catch us, and they only had a modest win, so we stayed in second place behind David Lusk and Peter Chan, who had led throughout.

Thursday night's dinner for the Lusk household turned out to be a victory dinner, as Sue had won the Womens with Margaret Bourke, David had won the Seniors with Peter Chan, and Therese and I had come second in the Seniors.

M 1	T964			Board 9 in the first match was too difficult for us to diagnose and we missed an easy slam. Not 6S, which can be defeated by a diamond ruff, but 6D.
Bd 9	-			
Dlr N	QJ9863			I opened because I had a reasonable suit, a second suit, a void, and an outside AK. Over 1H from Therese I would probably have rebid 1S, but maybe 2D to limit my hand, especially because the void is not as effective in partner's suit.
Vul EW	AK4			Therese made it easy for me by responding 1S, and over her 2NT game-forcing enquiry, my 3S confirmed 4-card support.
853			7	Over her 4NT enquiry my hand gained in strength, and I thought about ways to show the void, or even bid 6S over the sign-off, but decided I had no way of knowing which Ace Therese was missing, so passed.
A8654			QT93	West did lead the singleton D2, but their partner was mesmerized by Therese dropping the DK under the DA and did not deliver the diamond ruff, so we scored up +480.
2			A754	This looked like a possible 1 Imp gain to us, but was in fact a loss by the same margin as the average was -510.
J876			Q953	
	AKQJ2			
	KJ72			
	KT			
	T2			
W	N	E	S	
/	1D	/	1S	
/	2S	/	2NT!	
/	3S!	/	4NT	
/	5D	/	5S	
//				

M 1 Bd 12 Dlr W Vul NS	AQ6 T543 74 KJ43		Board 12 in the first match was a potential disaster that actually fell our way, but could still have lost us 1 Imp. The bidding looks odd, and that is because even with the bidding boxes in use, I did not notice Therese's take-out double of 2S! Of course, once the bidding was over and declarer played from dummy at trick 1 (often even before this) the bidding cards were returned to the boxes, so I could not see the final contract during the play. When 2S came around to me I knew Therese had values but could not double for take-out, in spite of my hearts and clubs because of my doubleton diamonds, so meekly passed. I was glad to see Therese had enough usefull stuff to lead to a 1-trick defeat of 2S, and it was only then when I entered the result that I was told it had been doubled by Therese and I had passed it out. As we could make 3H I thought that we had still lost on the board but in fact gained 3 Imps.
T97543 72 QT8 82		J2 A86 AK65 QT96	
	K8 KQJ9 J932 A75		
W / 2H /	N / / /!	E 1NT 2S	S / X

M 2 Bd 13 Dlr N Vul All	AK42 AKJT3 A7 AJ		On board 13 in the second match East appeared to have been inhibited by the vulnerability, and his nothing bid of 3C actually helped us to get to the right contract from the right side! Left to our own devices, if East passes, Therese is forced to bid 2H, which shows a hand of any shape with zero controls. It is not fatal to make South declarer in 4H, but it could have been the case on other hands. We had an easy sequence over 3C, as I could show my suit, and Therese had an easy raise, but over 4C by East, 4H may have been too high if the South hand was a bust, or South with the actual hand might be tempted to make a slam try. Thrying for slam appears to have been the case at some tables as the average was only 400, and it seems unlikely that NS would not get to game, so we gained 6 Imps for +620. It could have been +650 by end-playing West in spades to lead away from the DK, but no more Imp!
JT965 94 KJ962 4		- 752 85 KQT97532	
	Q873 Q86 QT43 86		
W / //	N 2C 3H	E 3C! /	S / 4H

M 2 Bd 24 Dlr W Vul Nil	AK7432 Q98765 K -		Board 24 in the second match was another that was too difficult to diagnose. My 2D cue-bid to show both majors would have forced Therese to bid if East passed, but when East bid 2NT, assumed by West as showing a limit raise in diamonds, she was able to make a free-bid of 3S. I have not got much except great shape, and my DK is likely to be useless, but I thought 4S would have chances. At that stage I did not know what I was going to do if East bid 5D! West led the CA to 4S, and I could tell from Therese's reaction to dummy that it was a good contract, but until she cashed the HA and ruffed a heart after drawing trumps I did not realize that we had missed a slam! 5D by EW only goes off by the unlikely lead of a heart and a spade back allowing South to get a heart ruff, so +480 still have been okay, but it was a flat board.
J K4 97643 AKJT9		Q9 JT32 AQJ2 876	
	T865 A T85 Q5432		
W 1D /	N 2D! 4S	E 2NT! //	S 3S

M 3	84			<p>On board 5 in the third match I am sure that my 4H overcall was duplicated at many tables, and I assume that South's double was for penalty, but many would bid their reasonable 6-card spade suit in preference to a penalty double.</p> <p>Holding equal length in the minors, North bid his second suit, but must have considered passing, or maybe he did not consider the double was for penalty?</p> <p>I led the SQ, and declarer cover in dummy and I ruffed the next round of the suit, and prudently cashed my DA to take the contract 1 off.</p> <p>Declarer still had a lot of losers and could do little else but concede another trick to Therese for 2 off and +200.</p> <p>Since 4H had no play, and should be 2 off, the board average of only +20 suggests that North was not alone in going on to 5C, but we gained 6 Imps in a tight match.</p>
Bd 5	A			
Dlr N	KT865			
Vul NS	AKJ85			
AT76			Q	<p>Holding equal length in the minors, North bid his second suit, but must have considered passing, or maybe he did not consider the double was for penalty?</p>
4			KJT97652	
QJ742			A3	<p>I led the SQ, and declarer cover in dummy and I ruffed the next round of the suit, and prudently cashed my DA to take the contract 1 off.</p>
QT2			76	
	KJ9532			<p>I led the SQ, and declarer cover in dummy and I ruffed the next round of the suit, and prudently cashed my DA to take the contract 1 off.</p>
	Q83			
	9			<p>Declarer still had a lot of losers and could do little else but concede another trick to Therese for 2 off and +200.</p>
	943			
W	N	E	S	<p>Since 4H had no play, and should be 2 off, the board average of only +20 suggests that North was not alone in going on to 5C, but we gained 6 Imps in a tight match.</p>
/	1D	4H	X	
	5C	//		

M 3	87			<p>On board 12 in the third match North found his partner with a good hand when he balanced over our 2S bid, but with 3 cards in each minor, South predictably picked the wrong one to bid!</p> <p>Therese has a difficult hand to lead from, although a diamond lead is safe on the actual layout, and chose the CJ as the opening lead, which seemed to screw my club holding. However, declarer, not aware of the danger at this stage, won the CQ in hand and led another club!</p> <p>In the fullness of time I was able to extract his last trump and we made 6 tricks for +200 and 7 Imps.</p> <p>2NT is a good contract for NS, not considered by South, and another successful option is to pass the double, as according to Deep Finesse NS can make 2S, thus EW have no chance in this contract!</p> <p>In fact according to DF, EW cannot make any contract. 1H looks promising for EW, but would need a lot of help as the East hand has no entries.</p>
Bd 12	82			
Dlr W	AK873			
Vul NS	AT82			
Q6543			T9	<p>Therese has a difficult hand to lead from, although a diamond lead is safe on the actual layout, and chose the CJ as the opening lead, which seemed to screw my club holding. However, declarer, not aware of the danger at this stage, won the CQ in hand and led another club!</p>
AQJT3			765	
J2			Q94	<p>In the fullness of time I was able to extract his last trump and we made 6 tricks for +200 and 7 Imps.</p>
J			K9643	
	AKJ2			<p>In the fullness of time I was able to extract his last trump and we made 6 tricks for +200 and 7 Imps.</p>
	K94			
	T65			<p>2NT is a good contract for NS, not considered by South, and another successful option is to pass the double, as according to Deep Finesse NS can make 2S, thus EW have no chance in this contract!</p>
	Q75			
W	N	E	S	<p>In fact according to DF, EW cannot make any contract. 1H looks promising for EW, but would need a lot of help as the East hand has no entries.</p>
1S	/	1NT	/	
2H	/	2S	/	
/	X	/	3C	
//				

M 4	8			<p>Board 13 in the fourth match was difficult to stop in a part-score, although the obvious miss-fit could have warned against getting too high.</p> <p>Over 3NT I should have rebid my clubs, and warn Therese about my extreme distribution, although another possibility is to offer 4H as a contract, especially if she chose to rebid 3H instead of 3NT.</p> <p>All games can go off, although 5D is the better chance, apparently only going down if East least 2 rounds of trumps!</p> <p>In 3NT, Therese had no chance, although if I had Kx in hearts, both 4H and 3NT are reasonable contracts. This again emphasizes how shortness, and often even worse, a void, in partner's long suit is often not an advantage.</p> <p>Going 2 off for -200 was not catastrophic, losing 4 Imps against the board average of +70.</p>
Bd 13	K			
Dlr N	QJ9752			
Vul All	AKJ32			
432			KJT976	<p>Over 3NT I should have rebid my clubs, and warn Therese about my extreme distribution, although another possibility is to offer 4H as a contract, especially if she chose to rebid 3H instead of 3NT.</p>
Q852			J3	
KT6			A3	<p>All games can go off, although 5D is the better chance, apparently only going down if East least 2 rounds of trumps!</p>
876			QT4	
	AQ5			<p>In 3NT, Therese had no chance, although if I had Kx in hearts, both 4H and 3NT are reasonable contracts. This again emphasizes how shortness, and often even worse, a void, in partner's long suit is often not an advantage.</p>
	AT9764			
	84			<p>In 3NT, Therese had no chance, although if I had Kx in hearts, both 4H and 3NT are reasonable contracts. This again emphasizes how shortness, and often even worse, a void, in partner's long suit is often not an advantage.</p>
	95			
W	N	E	S	<p>Going 2 off for -200 was not catastrophic, losing 4 Imps against the board average of +70.</p>
/	1D	1S	2H	
//	3C	/	3NT	

M 4 Bd 15 Dlr S Vul NS	AK96 AJ53 QJ85 4		On board 15 in the fourth match our systemic flow of information was interrupted by a 3C overcall from East, but this could have warned us about club values not pulling their full weight. My 2NT response was a forcing raise, showing 4-card support, but the meaning of Therese's 3H rebid after the overcall was unclear. Having club control I was interested in slam, and thus bid 4C, after which Therese showed her diamond control with 4D, both bids showing 1 st or 2 nd round controls. Next I continued on with 4S, and Therese checked on Key Cards and bid the slam. Bidding the slam is easy, but how to make it? After the overcall, an obvious line is to take the ruffing finesse in diamonds, discarding the losing spade, but this line failed. Another line, not so obvious, is to draw trumps and ruff some clubs and diamonds, and after 2 such ruffs, the final trump squeezes West in spades and diamonds. This line is successful, and probably explains why we lost 9 Imps against the board average of -300.
J732 42 KT964 T9		QT 97 732 AQ8653	
	854 KQT86 A KJ72		
W	N	E	S
/	2NT	3C!	1H
/	4C	/	3H!
/	4S	/	4D
/	5H	/	4NT
//			6H

M 4 Bd 17 Dlr N Vul Nil	AJ965 8 J52 8653		On board 17 in the fourth match we received a bonus 8 Imps when West took a 75% line for 10 tricks, but failed to improve the chances by giving up a diamond trick early in the hand. Played by West, 4H is always held to 9 tricks by the unlikely lead of a club, which West must duck, and then a spade return allows North to lead another club with a diamond trick to come. However I led the SA and now 4H is cold. In isolation, the chance of getting 2 club tricks by taking 2 finesses is 75%, and my double, must have increased these odds, as I am likely to have a club honour for the double. Declarer played along these lines, but since a diamond must always be lost, it does not hurt to lose a diamond early and see if that suit breaks 3-3, and when it does, there is no need to find the club honours well placed.
T3 KJ943 AK4 J92		K8 AQT2 9876 AT7	
	Q742' 765 QT3 KQ4		
W	N	E	S
1H 4H	/ X //	1D 2H	/ 2S

M 4 Bd 21 Dlr N Vul NS	T75 QJ4 QJT42 62		On board 21 in the fourth match Therese made a game try with 2NT after the overcall and my simple raise, but we were not getting to game with my weak hand, so I signed off. There were a few hand out of the 15 sets where we received an unexpected positive score from an indifferent result, but this hand was one where I expected to receive a good score and we has a 2 Imp loss! West apparently did not fancy leading his own modest suit, and the spade holding was not one to lead from, so chose a 'MUD' lead of the D8. Therese won in hand, tested the hearts for a 3-2 break, unblocked the DK, and led a trump to dummy to draw the last trump and run the diamonds. The defenders got muddled in the discards and allowed Therese to also score a club trick, for +200, but we lost 2 Imps.
AQ6 93 986 AT983		KJ83 T85 753 K54	
	942 AK762 AK QJ7		
W	N	E	S
2C	/ 2H 3H	/ / //	1H 2NT

R 6 Bd 15 Dlr S Vul NS	AJ86 AQJT84 - AQ8		The bidding on board 15 in the fifth match (round 6) was short and sweet, and maybe I should have investigated further when Therese showed her heart support.	
KQ9753 92 8742 6		T2 63 KQ63 J7542	From my point of view, even if Therese had the worst spade holding of xxx, my AJx over the overcaller guaranteed a second trick in the suit, so slam was almost certain.	
	4 K75 AJT95 KT83		Even if Therese had solid diamonds opposite my void, any other King would provide the entry to enable me to take a few discards. Note that if I had just a singleton diamond under these circumstances, I would not need another entry except on an unlikely diamond lead.	
W 2S /	N 3H 6H	E /	S 1D 4H	At the worst I expected slam to depend on the club or heart finesse, but when Therese had both of these cards, as well as the DA and a singleton spade, 12 tricks were easy, and the show-up finesse in clubs allowed 13 tricks for +1460. This was bid at most tables, but was still worth a valuable 5 Imps.

R 7 Bd 7 Dlr S Vul All	Q842 KT4 AT9 J63		On board 7 in the sixth match (round 7) my 1NT was almost forcing, and asked for more information.	
AKT96 AQ98 86 KT		5 76532 KQ7 Q842	The 2H response was very encouraging to me with my 5-card support, 7 points and singleton spade, so I invited game, which was accepted by Therese.	
	J73 J J5432 A975		4H has 4 top losers, and if North had shuffled his cards and led the top one, there was a 10/13 chance 4H would have been defeated, but luckily for us, North had read somewhere that when dummy has shown preference for declarer's second suit, a trump lead is needed to protect the defending side's tricks in the first suit!	
W 1S 2H 4H	N / / //	E 1NT! 3H	S / / /	Accordingly, North led one of only 3 cards that gives us 10 tricks, the H4! Any other heart is equally damaging, as without a heart lead declarer must lose 2 trump tricks. Therese wrapped up 10 tricks without fuss now, since the DA was on side, and we scored up +620 for 11 Imps. Many got to game but went off on a non-trump lead.

R 8 Bd 22 Dlr E Vul EW	J84 AQ76543 5 J2		On board 22 in the seventh match (round 8) I was not strong enough to introduce my own suit at the 2-level after the 2C response from West, especially since I had 3-card support for Therese's spade suit, so I simply made a minimum raise.	
K6 92 J987 K9653		753 T AQ62 AQT74	However, Therese had a good hand, and made a game try of 3D over the 3C rebid by opener, so now was the time I could show both where my values lay, and also at least a 5-card suit, although it appeared a futile bid at the time.	
	AQT92 KJ8 KT43 8		Holding 3-card support herself, Therese offered 4H which I was happy to accept, although pleasantly surprized to get support, and East led the CA.	
W 2C / //	N 2S 3H	E 1C 3C /	S 1S 3D! 4H	Probably not expecting me to have a 7-card heart suit, East switched to a trump after the CA, and I drew trumps in 2 rounds and took the losing spade finesse, but when West also failed to switch to a diamond, I gained an overtrick for +450. Due to the vagaries of Butler scoring, this was still only +3 Imps against the average of 330.

R 8 Bd 23 Dlr S Vul All	T93 A8642 87 KJ3		On board 23 in the seventh match (round 8) Therese's 2D reverse was a 1-round force, and my weakest response is the next suit up the line, even though it is my own suit, Since I had enough for game most of the time, I bid a forcing 3C, which also shows our minimum 5-3 fit.
Q7642 3 JT65 QT5		KJ86 T975 AK3 97	Therese now showed her heart support, and I raised to game in hearts, to which East led the DA. Looking the spade shortage in dummy, a trump switch may be required, but East has 4 hearts, so if dummy is forced to ruff spade, East will get a trump trick, which may be enough to defeat 4H, so East had 2 choices.
	A KQJ Q942 A8642		Probably due to the tenuous spade holding, East chose to lead trumps, but when I cashed a second round I could see some difficulties making 10 tricks unless the clubs behaved, so I finessed the CJ at trick 3, and when this held, another trump to dummy and a club to hand enabled me to draw trumps and enjoy the 5 club tricks for 11 in total and +650, and 9 Imps!
W	N	E	S
/	1H	/	1C
/	3C!	/	2D
/	4H	//	3H

R 9 Bd 5 Dlr N Vul NS	32 8 AQJ652 T732		On board 5 in the eighth match (round 9) against the eventual winners, I opened 1S because of the good shape, but after Therese had shown 3-card support and game values, I back-pedalled and signed off in game instead of investigating slam.
A86 A94 T84 AKQJ		KJ9754 KQJ65 - 86	Of course Therese had a very sharp hand, but I would have bid the same way holding QJx in diamonds, so there was no sensible way for her to bid slam unless I showed my diamond control.
	QT T732 K973 954		Over 2S, forcing to game, I had a number of ways to advance, the most obvious being 4D, showing a diamond control, but I did not want to imply extra values. If I had just rebid my hearts it would have gone part of the way to showing my shape, and at least gives us a chance to get to slam.
W	N	E	S
	/	1S	/
2C	/	2H	/
2S	/	4S!	//
			We would never get to the grand slam, and judging by the average of just -740, only about half of the field got to slam, so the loss was only 6 Imps, but it could have been 6 Imps to us!

R 9 Bd 6 Dlr E Vul EW	K9 Q852 QT5 JT75		On board 6 in the eighth match (round 9) South described his 6-5 shape, but North did not disclose his 4-card club support, so that suit withered and died.
AT2 KT63 K9743 3		J73 J974 AJ86 64	I can understand North preferring the 9-trick NT game instead of the dizzying heights of the 5-level on such a modest hand, but he put too much faith on the DT as a potential stopper help and paid the price. Maybe 3C instead of 2NT after the 2S rebid by South would have allowed the hand to stop below game, but 2NT goaded South into raising to game, having shown the short red suits, and relying on North to control them.
	Q8654 A 2 AKQ982		In spite of North bidding 1H, a heart was a viable lead after Therese's take-out double, since she will have at least 3, but if Therese only has 3 hearts, South will be void in diamonds, so I led the D6 and we took the first 6 tricks for +200.
W	N	E	S
X	1H	/	1C
/	1NT	/	1S
/	2NT	/	2S
//			3NT
			In fact as long as we are not asleep on the run of the clubs, any lead defeats 3NT as North can only run 7 tricks. A few pairs must have stumbled into 5C, as the average was +240, so we gained 8 Imps.

R 11	2			On board 7 in the ninth match (round 11) West was apparently playing a 12-14 1NT opening, but devalued her J8 in hearts, hence the 1NT opening on 15 points! However, in my view, the 2 sets of AKs outweighs the doubleton Jack, and therefore it is still a 15 count, so in there system should have been opened 1C, and followed up with 1NT. They might still have got to the same contract, as over a 15-17 1NT rebid, East may have bid a direct 4H, but could equally likely have invited game by bidding just 3H, and West would decline. West was not pushed to make 10 tricks in hearts, and simple won the opening lead of the S2 and played 2 rounds of trumps, giving up 2 trumps and a club for -170.
Bd 7	K9			
Dlr S	QJ6532			
Vul All	AQT9			
AK5			QJ64	The looked like a small gain to us, but to my surprize, the average was +420, so about half the field must have got to game after all, and we gained 6 Imps.
J8			A76532	
AK97			84	
8642			7	
	T9873			
	QT4			
	T			
	KJ63			
W	N	E	S	
1NT!	/	2D!	/	
2H	//			

R 12	QT7632			On board 16 in the tenth match (round 12) North's 2S barrage stopped me from describing my hand accurately and I did not want to bid a scrappy heart suit at the 3-level so I guessed to bid 3NT, since I likely had a second spade stop. As it turned out this was a very lucky guess, as after the obvious spade led by South, 4H has no chance due to cross-ruffs, and will finish 2 off for -200. That most pairs played in their 5-3 heart fit is borne out by the -50 average.
Bd 16	875			
Dlr W	A972			
Vul EW	-			
K84			AJ5	South had a surprize for me in the form of a long club suit, but she was the one who got the surprize when they led the C5 and North showed out. Everything was well placed, so after the club lead I came out with 10 tricks for +630 and 11 Imps.
KT4			J9632	
KJ854			3	
Q2			KJ93	
	9			
	AQ			
	QT6			
	AT87654			
W	N	E	S	
1D	2S	3NT	//	

R 12	J653			I opened board 17 in the tenth match because of my 6-5 distribution, but I opened 1H because of the quality. Things took a turn for the worse when Therese bid my void suit over the 2C overcall, but since it was forcing, I had to now show my diamonds suit. To my surprize, Therese did not repeat her spade suit, but jumped to game in diamonds! South has a very difficult lead problem after that bidding, and many would lead the CA, giving up the contract immediately. However, to my dismay, South found the only lead to beat 5D, the HT, which is one that I would never have considered. Put me in with the CA leaders.
Bd 17	A6542			
Dlr N	74			
Vul Nil	T8			
AQT82			-	On any other lead I am able to discard a club on the SA and garner 11 easy tricks, but North was able to win the HA and push a club through, allowing NS to cash 3 tricks for 1 off and -50. The board average was -290, so we lost 8 Imps.
9			KQJ87	
AKQ8			JT9632	
542			K9	
	K974			
	T3			
	5			
	AQJ763			
W	N	E	S	
2S	/	1H	2C	
5D	//	3D	/	

R 12	J954			<p>On board 23 in the tenth match Therese's 2H response to the 2C opening shows any hand without an Ace or a King.</p> <p>I was still interested in slam, and my 4D was meant to show a self-sufficient suit (it does not really qualify), looking for a cue-bid, which after the 2H response has to be a singleton or void. Logically, having denied an Ace or a King, it could also be used to show Queens, but we had no agreement in this regard.</p> <p>It seemed highly unlikely that Therese also had a singleton club, so I assumed I had got the system wrong (I had), and signed off in 5D.</p> <p>Therese realized that I was looking for slam in diamonds in spite of her denying any Aces or Kings, so bid the slam based on her good fit and major suit Queens.</p>
Bd 23	J643			
Dlr S	2			
Vul All	K932			
QT6			2	<p>South led a hopeful SA and followed it with the SK, but nothing could deny 12 tricks in diamonds, so we scored up +1370. Thanks to the spade holding, 11 tricks are available in 3NT, and the board average of -660 reflected this, for 12 Imps to us.</p>
Q82			AK95	
QT64			AKJ8753	
JT5			A	
	AK763			
	T7			
	9			
	Q8764			
W	N	E	S	
2H!	/	2C	/	
5C	/	4D	/	
6D	//	5D	/	

R 13	JT53			<p>On board 5 in the eleventh match (round 13) East did not consider his hand good enough to overcall 1S, and when he next had a chance to bid, I had bid 1S in front of him, so his chance to suggest a spade lead had passed.</p>
Bd 5	J2			
Dlr N	Q			
Vul NS	AQJ876			
76			KQ984	<p>Therese forced to game with the 2H cue-bid, and when I could not bid NT, she bid it herself hoping her heart holding was good for at least 1 stopper.</p> <p>True to the overcall, West led the H5 to 3NT, so Therese won the first round with the H9 and could lead a diamond to dummy while she still had a certain entry in the SA.</p> <p>West won the heart lead from dummy and now East could signal for a spade lead, but it was too late, as Therese had 6 diamonds and a trick in each of the other suits for 9 in total,</p> <p>Not realizing that West had the stiff CK, and wanting to exert as much pressure on the run of the diamonds, Therese discarded one too many clubs, so only ended up with 10 tricks, but still 8 Imps.</p>
AKT853			6	
T964			87	
K			T9543	
	A2			
	Q974			
	AKJ532			
	2			
W	N	E	S	
1H	1S	/	1D	
/	3C	/	2H	
//		/	3NT	

R 13	J74			<p>On board 11 in the eleventh match (round 13) we had an insufficient bid of 2NT by East, and Therese was not sure what to do but guessed right in the end, since 2NT was probably only a suggestion.</p> <p>If we do not accept the insufficient bid, East is virtually forced to upgrade the hand into 3NT, and this could be cold after my weak-jump bid of 2H, so she decided to accept 2NT and then the bidding stopped at 3C since West had nothing to spare for the original opening bid.</p> <p>Of course it is possible that declarer could have miss-guessed the play of the diamonds when playing 3NT, but I think this is unlikely, and since the spades are breaking well, 9 or 10 tricks would have been easy.</p> <p>In 3C I led the HA and declarer did not need to guess the diamonds since the spades were friendly, so finished with 10 tricks for -130.</p> <p>The board average was only +190, but this does suggest that some EW pairs made 3NT, or maybe some NS pairs got too high in hearts, and we finished up with 2 Imps.</p>
Bd 11	AK9654			
Dlr S	94			
Vul Nil	64			
K3			AQT92	<p>Of course it is possible that declarer could have miss-guessed the play of the diamonds when playing 3NT, but I think this is unlikely, and since the spades are breaking well, 9 or 10 tricks would have been easy.</p>
7			QT8	
AJT7			K52	
QJT832			97	
	865			
	J32			
	Q863			
	AK5			
W	N	E	S	
1C	2H	2S	3H	
/	/	2NT!	/	
3C	//			

R 13 Bd 12 Dlr W Vul NS	J 4 AQJ86432 A83		Board 12 in the eleventh match (round 13) was too difficult for us to unravel after West opened with a weak 1NT. We play 2D is a single-suited major, and 3D and above is natural, but bidding first in hand I did not want to stick my neck out too far at adverse vulnerability, so I bid a 'safe' 3D. With two outside AKs, Therese should have enough to allow 3D to make, but how can she raise with a void! Obviously 3NT has no chance on a club lead if Therese bids it, and even if there is no club lead, where are the tricks coming from without even one diamond to lead from hand towards dummy? Those that got venturesome, or did not have to deal with the weak 1NT opening, had an easy time, as 6D is cold, and we were probably lucky only to lose 7 Imps for +170 versus -460.
T742 QJ6 K7 KQJ2		Q85 T972 T95 72	
	AK963 AK853 - T95		
W 1NT	N 3D!	E //	S

R 14 Bd 18 Dlr E Vul NS	976 Q8 AK82 AK32		On board 18 in the twelfth match (round 14) North's 1NT rebid after the re-opening double shows a normal 1NT overcall, and South explored with 2H, probably planning to play in the 4-3 fit if raised. When North showed 3 spades, South eschewed a game try of 2NT or 3S, and unwisely jumped to 3NT. Since there are 5 unavoidable losers in a spade contract, at least he got to a possible making game. Anxious not to give away the 9 th trick on the opening lead, I opted for a 'MUD' D7, and was satisfied when the DQ won trick 1. Looking at all 4 hands, on a club lead, declarer rises with the CJ, unblocks the diamonds, and gives up a heart, and we cannot now unravel our 4 spade tricks before declarer takes his 9! Declarer has nowhere to go except spades for 9 tricks, so pulls a small spade at trick 2 and to her surprise, Therese wins the trick and returns a diamond. Declarer loses another trick in the wash and finishes up 2 down for +200, and 5 Imps to us against a zero average.
Q T9732 T653 954		AKJ6 A64 974 QT7	
	T8532 KJ5 QJ J86		
W / / / //	N X 1NT 2S	E 1C / / /	S / 1S 2H 3NT

R 14 Bd 23 Dlr S Vul All	K964 87 K643 J85		On board 23 in the twelfth match (round 14) we missed a good slam and I am not sure how we could have bid it scientifically. My 2NT opening shows a good 19 to a modest 21, so opposite Therese's hand, slam looks good if there is a fit, but the 5-2 spade fit that came to light is not a good fit unless the spade finesse works. Since the spade finesse works, and the clubs break, both 6S and 6NT make, but for the same reason, 7C is cold. Maybe if I had devalued my short Jacks and opened 1S, rebidding 3C over Therese's 1NT response, we would have got to a slam, but otherwise there does not seem to be any way to unearth the club fit. Obviously 6C does not need the spade finesse, as on a diamond lead 3 rounds of clubs followed by HA and then overtaking the HJ allows a diamond discard before touching the spades. Most pairs languished in game, but enough pairs reached slam to push the board average up to -820, so we lost a modest 4 Imps for +690.
Q2 KQ64 AT5 9764		AJT73 AJ J7 AKQ2	
	85 T9532 Q982 T3		
W / 3C! 3NT!	N / / //	E 2NT 3S	S / / /

R 15 Bd 2 Dlr E Vul NS	AK 72 AQ76 AQT95		On board 2 in the thirteenth match (round 15) Therese opened light, third in hand, with 1H, and North came forth with a take-out double! Since the double suggested that our fit was likely to be poor, I kept out of the bidding initially, and was pleased to see South bid spades.
Q3 A98653 K542 J		J9854 QJ 9 K8432	Therese's rebid of 2D forced me to give preference to hearts, and now South put too much faith in his partner's take-out double when he bid his motley 4-card suit a second time. I was happy, but not enough to double it, but on the bidding I should.
	T762 KT4 JT83 76		Therese led the CJ, and South could see he was in a bad contract when dummy went down. In desperation declarer tried the club finesse, but that lost and the HK was taken by the HA on the second round and a heart was returned so I could give Therese a club ruff.
W 1H 2D //	N X / //	E / / 2H	S / 1S 2S!
			Therese returned another heart, and I ruffed low to return a club for a ruff with the SQ, and we had taken the first 6 tricks! Now Therese had to return a diamond, and declarer negotiated the diamond finesse, but still had to allow me a diamond ruff and the SJ for 3 down and 6 Imps.

R 15 Bd 10 Dlr E Vul All	Q9 QT53 AK6 AQ42		On board 10 in the thirteenth match (round 15) NS had an uninterrupted auction to slam, with South showing a club shortage and 4-card support by the 3C splinter bid. After 5D showed 1 or 3 Key cards (unlikely to be only 1 after the jump raise), North eschewed the grand slam and signed off in 6H.
K864 876 974 753		T32 94 Q52 KT986	Warned by the splinter bid about ruffing potential, I led a trump, and declarer could now make slam by the simple expedient of leading a low spade towards dummy, but instead entered dummy with a diamond and took the losing spade finesse.
	AJ76 AKJ2 JT83 J		I led another trump, and it seems as if declarer had run out of options to both ruff the losing spades and losing diamond, and he finished 1 off for +100 to us and 14 Imps.
W / / /	N 1H 4NT 6H	E / / / //	S 1D 3C 5D
			It seems that a couple of declarers had made 6H, and after the trump lead a small spade to dummy sets up a cross-ruff for 12 tricks if my hand does not rise, or a diamond discard on the 4 th spade thus only requiring 1 diamond ruff when the trumps and diamonds behave,

R 18 Bd 20 Dlr W Vul All	Q875 AQJ AKT8 KQ		On board 20 in the fourteenth match we got doubly lucky, both in the bidding and during the play. My 2NT opening shows a good 19 to a modest 21 points and may contain a 5-card major. 3C asks, and 3D shows at least 1 4-card major.
KT42 T976 J96 42		9 5 Q432 J987653	Therese's next systemic bid is 4C, showing both majors with slam interest, and her 3H rebid shows spades and denies hearts, but after along fortnight she had reverted to natural bidding.
	AJ63 K8432 75 AT		After a club lead 6S looked to be a good spot, although the club wastage was disappointing, so to preserve entries I won in hand and led to the SA, as a safety play.
W / / / / //	N 2NT 3D! 4S 5S	E / / / /	S 3C! 3H! 4NT 6S
			Now I played to the HA and led a spade up, and with the 4-1 split, I was glad we had a reserve of tricks, or so I thought! West had not bid, so I was aware of the long clubs and did not expect a 4-1 split in both majors, so I should have cashed the hearts before leading a spade to dummy, as a club return will defeat 6S, but luckily East returned a spade so I was able to finesse the spade, unblock the hearts and claim.

R 18 Bd 23 Dlr S Vul All	K765 QT 873 9643			On board 23 in the fourteenth match (round 18) EW paid a heavy penalty for failing to check for the possibility a 5-3 heart fit after West opened 1NT. With no entries I nearly did not lead a spade, as I was afraid it might present declarer with a 9 th trick, but nothing else was attractive, When Therese played the S9 at trick 1 I thought that I had blundered, but when declarer ducked, I heartened up. Especially when declarer took the next spade lead it looked like Therese had a 5-card suit.
A8 AK432 J65 AT7		J3 J98 AKT92 KQJ		Of course none of this is a major problem for declarer if the contract is 4H, but in 3NT the contract now depended on the red suits. In these situations the finesse is always better odds than playing for the drop with 5 cards missing, but it is often worthwhile picking one suit to finesse, and firstly cashing the AK of the other suit before finessing, just in case! Good technique would have netted 12 tricks, here, bad luck garnered -100 and 13 Imps to us.
	QT942 765 Q4 852			
W 1NT	N /	E 3NT	S / //	

R 19 Bd 11 Dlr S Vul Nil	AKT987 53 Q754 3			Board 11 in the fifteenth match (round 19) was one of the few bright spots in our worst match of the week, and even then it was not all that bright. Under many systems now in use, South could have doubled my 3C jump overcall to show hearts, 3 spades, or possibly both, but here South bid 3S and hit the spot! Strangely North now offered 5D as an alternative contract, and South, probably fearing that 3-card spade support may not be enough accepted. Therese led the CA to look at dummy, and I played the C4, suggesting a heart switch and she duly obliged, leading to a quick 1 off.
42 K96 J862 AQ52		Q6 AT42 - KJT9864		Declarer now has a fair idea of the diamond holding, but ruffed in dummy when Therese gave him a ruff-sluff, and now could not avoid a trump loser, so finished 2 off for +100, and a rather disappointing 4 Imps, as many declarers in 4S must have taken the trump finesse.
	J53 QJ87 AKT93 7			
W / 5C	N 1S 5D	E 3C //	S 1D 3S	