

## 2012 Seniors Last Train at the NOT by Richard Wallis

This year was my first visit to the NOT since 1997, and only my 4<sup>th</sup> overall, but in contrast to the other times, I was there for the whole 2 weeks, the first event of which was the Seniors Last Train.

I was playing with John Brockwell, and we had a shaky start, losing our first 2 matches to be near the tail of the field of 22 Pairs, before storming back with 3 maximum wins to hit the lead with just 3 matches to go.

Our 6<sup>th</sup> match was a 14-16 loss to the eventual winners, Richard Brightling and Kathy Boardman which still kept us in a close second, but our final 2 matches were not much better, being a 16-14 win and a 15-15 draw, but luckily there were no bolters, and we stayed in second position to the end.

This was a very enjoyable event and I hope to play again in it next year when we can try to improve just a little.

<b>M 1</b>	AQ976543				The first match did not go well for us in general, but this board saved us from a bad loss when West was not content to pass out my opening bid of 4S, and a very satisfactory dummy was placed on the table.
<b>Bd 5</b>	JT84				
<b>Dlr N</b>	5				
<b>Vul NS</b>	-				
KJ			T2		I did not look up the scores from other tables, but I expected a few duplications of our result, and was pleasantly surprised when we got an 11 Imp pick-up.
532			K97		
AT72			9643		
AQ65			K932		
	8				East led the C2, and since it was likely that West had the DA and I would not be able to discard my 3 hearts, I led to the HQ at trick 2 and was pleasantly surprised to see it win.
	AQ6				
	KQJ8				
	JT874				A greater surprise followed, when the spade finesse worked at trick 3 and they broke 2-2. Thus I conceded a diamond for 12 tricks and +1190. The board average was only -670, so most of the other tables must have played it in 4S undoubled.
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>		
	4S	/	/		
X	//				

<b>M 2</b>	T				Impetus is a double-edged sword. Sometimes it can work, and other times it backfires. On board 20 in match 2 it worked when John raised pre-emptively over North's Michaels Cue-bid, and I went with the flow and continued on to game.
<b>Bd 20</b>	QT963				
<b>Dlr W</b>	KJT986				
<b>Vul All</b>	A				
AK542			Q98		North led the CA, and luckily did not find the diamond switch that would have allowed South to give him a club ruff to defeat the contract, instead switching to a heart. A diamond switch may give up a trick unnecessarily, but after the lead of the CA, it should have been automatic at teams scoring.
K7			5		
Q7			5		
KJ65			T9832		
	J763				I won in hand and cashed the SA and then another trump to dummy to take the club finesse, then conceded a diamond, losing just a club, a diamond and a spade, for +620.
	82				
	A432				
	Q74				
<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>		
1S	2S	3S	/		5C is a safer contract, just needing a club finesse, although almost impossible to reach, but the field stayed out of game on this one, or NS took the cheap sacrifice, so we gained 10 Imps.
4S	//				

**M 3** -  
**Bd 3** 7  
**Dlr S** KQJT9853  
**Vul EW** AK84  
 Q9432 A5  
 JT94 AKQ32  
 - A6  
 T976 QJ32  
 KJT876  
 865  
 742  
 5

W	N	E	S
/	5D	5H	2S
/	6D	/	/
6H	X	//	

Board 3 in match 3 had everyone bidding too much, but luckily we started the doubling first.

When I picked up my hand even 6D looked possible, but this was dampened somewhat when John opened with a weak two in spades.

Nonetheless 5D is still a chance, so that is what I bid, expecting to go close to making it, and on the actual hand only 2 rounds of trumps put it off, and leading the SA will allow an overtrick.

When East ventured 5H, the favourable vulnerability would not let me take the chance that he had got it right, so I bid 1 more for the road.

Now West woke up to his diamond void and bid his one more for the road.

I was not certain of beating 6H, but was sure a diamond lead would not be right, so doubled to ask John to lead something else, and he dutifully led the C5, enabling me to win the AK and lead back the C8 so he would return a spade for me to ruff and his final ruff led to 4 off and +100 for 13 Imps.

**M 3** 7  
**Bd 12** Q63  
**Dlr W** AQJ98  
**Vul NS** T632  
 Q96432 KJ  
 AJ52 T9874  
 - T32  
 K87 J95  
 AT85  
 K  
 K7654  
 AQ4

W	N	E	S
/	/	/	1D
1S	2S!	/	3D
3S	4D	/	5D
//			

On board 12 in match 3 we struggled our way to game in diamonds, thinking about the possibility of 3NT on the way. My 2S bid showed at least a limit raise in diamonds, which is all I am likely to have being a passed hand.

John has a difficult hand to evaluate, but accepted my willingness to go to the 4-level as encouragement and bid the cold game, complicated only slightly by the 3-0 trump break.

After the lead of the S4 John won in hand and ruffed a spade in dummy to lead first the DA, finding out the 3-0 split, and then the H3, losing to West. Another spade came back from West, but dummy's trumps were too high for East and the HQ provided a discard for the C4.

John was able to ruff his 3 spades and take the club finesse for an overtrick, but had to settle for +600 when it lost. This was worth 10 Imps, when other tables either stayed out of game or tried 3NT which has only 8 tricks.

**M 4** K962  
**Bd 27** 653  
**Dlr S** AKQT9  
**Vul Nil** 4  
 Q83 J7  
 J AK  
 J863 742  
 K9862 AQJT75  
 AT54  
 QT98742  
 5  
 3

W	N	E	S
/	1D	2C	2H
4C	/	4NT	/
5C	/	/	5H
//			

John has a policy of overcalling 2C over 1D on possibly lighter values as it has good pre-emptive value, so I was not sure where we were going when I jumped to 4C on board 27 in match 4.

I thought his 4NT was a good hand, possibly asking for Aces, but he was responding to 4C as Minorwood, as we had agreed that after a minor had been bid naturally by either partner, 4 of the minor was always Minorwood, but I had forgotten.

Despite the bad fit and no support from partner, South rebid their 7-card suit and there the matter rested, with the lead in my court.

This looked like the time to have a look at dummy if possible before deciding on the next play, so I led the CK, and even though this held, prospects did not look good when dummy had 3 trumps and a singleton club.

Low and behold, John had 2 certain trump tricks, so we took 3 tricks for +50 and 6 Imps, the biggest swing of the match, a match that we won 40-0 for 25 VPs, our second in a row.

**M 4** Q952  
**Bd 30** 3  
**Dlr E** 762  
**Vul Nil** 97542  
A4 KJT8  
AKJ874 QT5  
Q AT3  
KJ86 QT3

763  
962  
KJ9854  
A

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
4NT	/	1NT	2D!
6H	//	5D	/

Board 30 in match 4 was set to be an easy slam to bid after John opened 1NT, as I could make an immediate slam try with 3H.

However, South had other ideas and interposed his long suit, taking away the 3H as a slam try, so I decided to bid 6H as long as John had 1 Ace, since 6H had chances even if the HQ was not in John's hand, and was likely to be cold then if I could find it as he would have a lot of other fitting cards.

Luckily 4NT was Ace-ask, not quantitative, and his 5D response confirmed only 1 Ace was missing, so I bid the slam.

North led a predictable D6, and the sight of dummy was much more than I could expect, to I was able to win on the table, draw trumps, and claim.

This was only a 5 Imp gain, as most other pairs bid the slam, but at least it was a gain.

**M 5** -  
**Bd 5** AQJ8542  
**Dlr N** 93  
**Vul NS** K987  
Q72 K864  
KT7 63  
K864 AJT52  
QJ5 32

AJT953  
9  
Q7  
AT64

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	1H	/	2S!
//	3H	/	4S

I did not think it was politic to ask the systemic meaning of the 2S response on board 5 in match 5, but whatever it was it appears to have been wrongly applied.

We have 4 tricks in the normal 4H contract, but the field was making +620, so EW must have been contriving to throw one of them away, and in 4S I make the potentially costly lead of the CQ!

South took the heart finesse and pitched a diamond, so he was off to a good start after my lead gave away our club trick, declarer now just having 3 losers, 2 spades and a diamond, but he continued by ruffing a heart on which John pitched a club, and whenever we got the lead we forced him again with diamonds, so he lost control.

Towards the end game he was a little rattled and forgot about my lead so we made a club trick after all, and 4S finished 3 off for +300 and 13 Imps.

**M 5** AQJ974  
**Bd 15** 2  
**Dlr S** Q763  
**Vul NS** 98  
6 T853  
Q954 AJT76  
AT52 J  
KJ43 762

K2  
K83  
K984  
AQT5

<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>
/	2H!	X	1NT
3H	4S	/	2S
5C	/	/	X
/	5D	/	5S
//			

On board 15 in match 5 NS were playing a strong 1NT, and thus were able to right-side the hand by transferring with the North hand and making South the declarer in 4S.

The bidding after that is a bit wonky, even to John passing 5C when I had shown hearts, expecting a 5-card club suit in my hand, but NS let us off the hook.

4S is defeated by a diamond ruff followed by a club return before the HA is knocked out, but that was too hard to find from my hand, and I led the H4, which allows South to make 5S unless a diamond comes back immediately, but John, with 4 trumps, led back a club.

Declarer won the CA, pitched the losing club on the HK, and then led out the trumps, probably expecting to have 2 diamond losers and being 1 off.

However, while the favourable diamond position allows my DT to be picked up, there is no way for declarer to get back to hand after drawing all of the trumps, so 5S finished 1 light after all, for +100 and 12 Imps.

**M 6** KJ3  
**Bd 18** QT8  
**Dlr E** 642  
**Vul NS** AK73  
 Q95 T8764  
 A76 954  
 AKJ75 T98  
 J4 T9  
  
 A2  
 KJ32  
 Q3  
 Q8652  
  
**W N E S**  
 1NT  
 X XX 2S /  
 / 3NT //

Board 18 was a crucial hand in our top of the table clash with the eventual winners, and I got it wrong, bidding a vulnerable game that failed instead of doubling the opponents in a part score.

West's double was for penalties, and I meant my redouble as showing the balance of power, but that was not we had agreed to play.

The systemic meaning was thrown out the window when Kathy bid 2S, and when this came around to me I bid the 'obvious' 3NT, as must have many others as the board average was only +30 to NS.

Richard unkindly led the DK, getting count from Kathy, and proceed to cash the first 6 tricks for 2 off and -200, 6 Imps away.

It is hard for us to stop in a part-score after the 1NT opening, but that is all we can make, 3H or 4C, but wait there is another contract we can make, - 1S!

If I had been playing the system as we agreed, I would have passed the double to allow John to redouble, but Kathy would still have bid 2S, and now I can double 2S for +300.

**M 7** KT82  
**Bd 4** J4  
**Dlr W** 654  
**Vul All** AT87  
 - 5  
 A9863 KQT7  
 983 AKQJT2  
 K9654 J2  
  
 AQJ97643  
 52  
 7  
 Q3  
  
**W N E S**  
 / / 1D 4S  
 //

On board 4 in match 7 we were both too tentative and let South get away with keeping us out of the bidding. To make matters worse I did not lead hearts, and when John tried to cash 2 diamonds, declarer entered dummy with a trump and ruffed another diamond before exiting with a heart to force us to open up the club suit. Lucky for us, and under his partner's scorn, he got it wrong so was 1 off.

At the least I should have doubled to show some values, but that would be scant reward, being +200 instead of +100, and only saving 2 Imps. It is hard to get to 6D, but even 5D would be 7 Imps

Since I have 3 diamonds and a void spade, I could have risked a 4NT bid to show the other 2 suits, but I was concerned that John would take this as RKCB.

John on the other hand, even with only 16 KCPs has a relatively safe haven in 5D, rather than take the risk that 4S will make.

**M 7** QT754  
**Bd 8** Q984  
**Dlr W** J  
**Vul Nil** J62  
 AK82 93  
 AJ3 2  
 QT63 AK9874  
 53 AKQT  
  
 J6  
 KT765  
 52  
 0974  
  
**W N E S**  
 1D / 4D! /  
 5C / 5NT /  
 6D / 7D //

On board 8 in match 7 we bid our only grand slam for the event to pick up a handy 11 Imps.

We had agreed to open 4-card suits up the line, so my 1D opening showed at least a 4-card suit, and we had also agreed that any raise to 4 of a minor was to be treated as a Minorwood, so I showed 2 key cards and the DQ.

His next bid asked for outside Kings, and I showed 1, so John could count 13 tricks.

In retrospect, since he could count 13 top tricks, he should have bid 7NT, since there may be a ruff by the opponents in a diamond contract, but all was well.

North led the DJ as before he put dummy down John proclaimed 13 tricks, and as soon as the dummy went down I claimed. It was surprising that the board average was only -890, even less than the small slam.

**M 8** QT54  
**Bd 23** A87  
**Dlr S** 4  
**Vul All** KJT53  
 82 AK97  
 K52 QJT943  
 Q852 73  
 A874 6

J63  
 6  
 AKJT96  
 Q92

W	N	E	S
/	/	2H	2D
3H	/	4H	/
/	X	//	

Board 23 in the eighth and last match was against George Gasper and Bobby Richmond, playing an unusual system, but this time the 2D opening was a normal weak two!

Since I had some values and 3 trumps, I gave John a raise, but believed I had made the wrong decision when John immediately raised to game and Bobby doubled.

It looks like 2 rounds of trumps will defeat 4H, but DF has it making 10 tricks, so there must be a squeeze or throw-in.

John was not tested by the defence as George led the top diamonds and then a club at trick 3, and he was able to ruff the spades in dummy and clubs back to hand, just conceding a trick to the HA after this had been carried out.

Surprisingly game must have been bid at most of the tables as -620 was the board average, so +790 was only worth 5 Imps.

**M 8** 6  
**Bd 25** 92  
**Dlr N** QJ6543  
**Vul EW** AQ64  
 AJ983 4  
 AKJ65 T84  
 A T987  
 32 JT975

KQT752  
 Q73  
 K2  
 K8

W	N	E	S
	1NT!	/	2D
3D!	X	3H	/
4H	/	/	4S
X	//		

Board 25 in the eighth and last match was against George Gasper and Bobby Richmond, playing an unusual system, and the 1NT opening showed both minors and less than opening points.

I do not know why George preferred diamonds, but he was right this time, and my 3D was intended to show the majors, and interpreted so by John.

George passed over 3H, but when I raised to game, he then showed his spade suit, in spite on my also showing spades. I fully expected the double of 4S to be removed to 5D, and I thought I had enough high cards to deal with that, but not enough to go to 5H, and I was pleasantly surprised when George passed out 4SX,

After the heart lead, I cashed the SA and kept leading hearts, and George succumbed quickly to the force, losing 7 tricks for 4 off and +800.

There is no game listed by DF for EW, but other NS pairs must have succumbed to spades or diamonds, as the average was -340, but that was 10 useful Imps.