

2015 ANC Seniors Butler by Richard Wallis

Entry to the Seniors Butler, which is run as an overworked Swiss movement on the second week of the ANC, in conjunction with Stage 2 of the Open and Womens Butlers, is available up to Sunday night, and attracts some of the pairs that did not make the Open or Womens Stage 2. This year that included Bruce Neill and Simon Hinge, and other well-known names such as Paul Lavings, Peter Gill and George Bilski, so it was always going to be tough in the first half and less tough as the over-swissing kicked into gear.

Therese Tully and I started off badly, losing by 3 Imps to a local pair in a give and take match. This turned out to be our second-worst result, the worst being a 6 Imp loss to John Wignall and local Di Brooks in match 12 when we were actually leading.

The first-match loss was followed up with our biggest win of 37 Imps against a Victorian pair, which brought us up to 4th. The third match was against the favourites, Neill and Hinge, which we won by the barest of margins, 1Imp, and this dropped us down to 7th.

A 1 Imp loss and 2 modest wins pushed us up the leader board to 2nd behind Neill and Hinge, before a big win against an ACT pair in match 9 put us in front, and we were never headed after that. It was exciting to be leading for over half of the event, but we always had Neill and Hinge breathing down our neck. We were quietly confident going into the last match with slightly more than a 10VP lead, especially after the match was finished and we had no disasters. We had won by 29 Imps, and even though Neill/Hinge won by 35 Imps to reduce the VP margin to just below 10, we had won..

M 1	-			On board 5 in the first match our opponents were playing Match-Point Precision, and South thought that she had a 4414 distribution, hence the 1D opening bid.
Bd 5	JT75			My 4S overcall ended the auction, and North had a natural lead of the DK, so therefore, since I could discard a heart on the third club, 4S was cold, or so I thought!
Dlr N	KQ943			As long as the spades were not 5-0, I did not need the finesse, so I cashed the SA at trick 2, but imagine my surprize, when it was North who showed out! If I had only gone to dummy and pitched a heart on the third club before running the S9, 10 tricks were easy, but now I had 4 losers again even with the pitch on the 3 rd club.
Vul NS	JT75			However, I used dummy's club entries to try and reduce my trump holding by ruffing diamonds, and after I entered dummy for the last time with a club and took my heart pitch, South ruffed a diamond in front of me so I could over-ruff and make 10 tricks after all for +8 Imps.
AKJT753		9		
862		943		
A		T87652		
32		AKQ		
	Q8642			
	AKQ			
	J			
	9864			
W	N	E	S	
4S	//		1D!	

M 1	K52			On board 10 in the first match we were the victim of South's hazy idea of a Lebenshol 2NT bid!
Bd 10	T8752			My first instinct after Therese opened 2S was to bid 4S over 2NT and that is probably still the best action on the hand. On a good day 4S may even make with my honours poised over South.
Dlr E	83			I failed to bid the 4S save after North bid 4H, thinking after the 2NT overcall, that a spade lead through dummy, the strong hand, would give us a good chance to cash 4 tricks!
Vul All	A65			After North bid 4H, and before Therese had led, South explained that she bid 2NT as Lebensohl, and North was supposed to bid 3C and allow her to bid 3D, so North had shown 5+ hearts and 9+ HCPs.
A4		QJT8763		
KQ		43		
K9542		J		
KT92		J43		
	9			
	AJ96			
	AQT76			
	Q87			
W	N	E	S	
3S	4H	2S	2NT!	The unlikely lead of the CJ will beat 4H, but otherwise it is cold, so 4S is a good save, and could have gained us 1 Imp if not doubled, or reduced the loss from 10 Imps to 2 Imps if it was doubled.

M 2	92				On board 15 in the second match I doubled the second time for penalties, although this is the losing action as it only goes 1 off, but Therese repeated her spades and I incorrectly rebid 3NT, instead of the obvious 4S.
Bd 15	K942				
Dir S	A85				
Vul NS	A984				
-					
QJ6				KJ76	East led the DQ, and since I could not afford a club switch, I hoped that the diamonds were 4-4, however likely that was on the bidding, and passed the S9 at trick 2.
KT32				T753	
QJT532				QJ64	
				K	I expected the spades to be well placed on the bidding, because I did not think West would be so keen to bid again with a spade loser. I could now set up the spades for a lucky 9 tricks.
	AQT8543				On the spades West discarded diamonds, so East led the CK when he won the 4 th spade, and I made +630 against the board average of -400, for +6 Imps.
	A8				
	97				
	76				
W	N	E	S		
			1S		
2C	X	/	2S		So my bad bidding got a lucky result. Note that with the spade pips, 10 tricks in spades are easy, even if declarer does not run the S9 at trick 2.
3D	X	/	3S		
/	3NT	//			

M 3	T732				On board 9 in the third match against Neill/Hinge, a Relay system was used by Neill to establish Hinge's shape, strength and distribution.
Bd 9	QJ82				
Dir N	J743				
Vul EW	7				
9				AQ65	The 1NT response to the 1C opening showed a positive response with 5+ clubs, and 2C asked about strength with 2H showing first-round control and more than a minimum hand.
AK6				4	
T865				AKQ	Now 3C asked for shortage and 4S was a splinter, so Neill was sure that Hinge's honour cards were well placed (no singleton SK, thus CA and HA) and jumped to the cold Grand slam.
AJT96				K8542	
					When there was no double, he could be fairly certain about the CA in the West hand.
	KJ84				This is one of the vagaries of Imps Butler matches, as only 2 pairs bid the Grand, and only 4 bid the small slam, and the board average was only -1130.
	T9753				
	92				We lost 14 Imps because our opponents did the right thing. In a teams match at least there was a chance that our team-mates would also bid the Grand.
	Q3				
W	N	E	S		
	/	1C	/		
1NT!	/	2C	/		
2H!	/	3C	/		
4S!	/	7C	//		

M 4	A98				On board 18 in the fourth match the Vulnerability was in favour of EW, but they failed to take full advantage of it with a rescue sequence.
Bd 18	5				
Dir E	AK965				
Vul NS	AJ93				
QT65				J73	1NT was 12-14 and my double was for penalties, and West thought the pass by East showed more values than he actually had. East, with no shape, though he had nowhere to go, but with such an even distribution the minimum fit is 4-3, and there might be a 5-3 of 4-4 fit.
A843				QT96	
QJ				T42	I led the D6 and declarer won in hand and led back the CK, instead of a small spade, and then had to find a number of discards as I ran the diamonds.
KQ8				642	
					A spade lead at trick 2 would have looked attractive to me as it is likely a spade trick can be set up, but the CK at trick 2 only sets up 1 trick for declarer and 3 for the defence!
	K42				
	KJ72				
	873				
	T75				
W	N	E	S		
			/		Declarer only made 3 tricks for +800, against a board average of -180, so we gained 12 Imps.
1NT	X	//			

M 4 Bd 24 Dlr W Vul Nil	AK5 5 AQ9642 642		On board 24 in the fourth match East chanced her luck with a weak-jump overcall on a ratty suit, but in spite of her partner producing the trump Ace, her luck was not in! 3H may be okay at favourable Vulnerability, but at equal, I think 2H is more than enough.
JT4 A3 J875 T853		Q98 J98742 T3 AJ	I had some trepidations about doubling 3H when it came back to me, as I have a minimum hand and only 3 spades, but I felt a whole lot happier when Therese passed for penalties.
	7632 KQT6 K KQ97		Therese led the CK and declarer won and immediately led back the CJ, which Therese won and led the DK, then the S7.
			The SK and DA followed by the D6 gave Therese 3 heart tricks to go with 2 spades, 2 diamonds and a club, for 4 off and +800, against a board average of -240, so we picked up 11 Imps.
W / /	N 1D X	E 3H //	S / /
			According to Deep Finesse, 3NT can make NS, but it would require careful play and good card reading skills.

M 5 Bd 1 Dlr N Vul Nil	T92 KQ AK52 AT63		On board 1 in the fifth match South took a flyer just based on his partner's good hand for clubs.
Q75 JT9762 T8 94		AJ A543 QJ9764 5	A 2S response to 1NT was transfer to clubs, and 2NT was a super-accept. Now 3S was natural, and obviously North preferred clubs, although why not 3NT over the diamond bid by Therese?
	K8643 8 3 KQJ872		It would seem logical for South to offer 4S next, but maybe that would be a cue-bid for clubs, and South just jumped to 6C, which Therese wisely declined to double.
			South was known to have spades, so Therese cashed the SA then the HA when dummy showed a heart, and North had nowhere to park the losing spade, so that was 2 off for +100.
W / / //	N 1NT 2NT! 4C	E / 3D /	S 2S! 3S 6C
			Thus as long as the HA is cashed early, even 5C does not make, but 4S and 3NT are both cold, with 3NT being the safest and surest.
			This looks like a nothing hand, but NS manufactured an 8 Imp loss out of nothing! It could have been worse for them if 6C was doubled.

M 6 Bd 17 Dlr N Vul Nil	J74 JT Q974 KQ72		On board 17 in the sixth match Therese opened 1D, promising at least a 4-card suit, but it does not have to be a very good suit.
KT92 9743 - 98643		AQ53 AQ65 T862 T	South overcalled 1NT, and North, a passed hand, jumped to 3NT and it was my lead.
	86 K82 AKJ53 AJ5		Fourth highest of longest and strongest is only really applicable when you have some strength, and clubs are not my strongest, so it was a spade or a heart to lead.
			Since I could offer help in spades, I led the ST, showing the S9, denying the SJ, but could have a higher honour.
W /	N / 3NT	E 1D //	S 1NT
			Declarer tried a desperate SJ from the table, but we took the first 4 spades tricks and Therese wisely cashed the HA for 1 off and a modest 3 Imps.
			Note that on a heart lead Therese has to rise and lead spades herself, and on a club lead, 9 tricks roll home.

M 7 Bd 10 Dir E Vul All	754 - AJT7632 J62		Board 10 in the seventh match caused consternation and joy around the room, but the greatest was at our table when South made a Michaels' cue-bid over my jump to game.
KJ3 84 KQ9 AT853		AQ9862' KQJ73 54 -	System-wise, my jump to game is weak, but I wanted to give NS less space to exchange information, and if they kept quiet, 4S looked safe and any higher contract was out of the question!
	T AT9652 8 KQ974		Expecting me to have a weaker hand, Therese bid 5S out of fright, in spite of the unsatisfactory heart values, and now South made a very undisciplined bid of 6C, allowing me to come out of the woodwork with a penalty double.
W 4S X	N 5C //	E 1S 5S	S 2H 6C!
			North had fun for a while, cashing the 2 red Aces and cross-ruffing, but after 2 ruffs in hand and 3 in dummy, I ruff in with the CA and led a trump, restricting declarer to only 2 more tricks, and 4 off for +1100. One EW pair made 4S, another doubled 5C for +500, but all the rest were left to play in 4S, going 1 off, so we gained 14 Imps.

M 8 Bd 15 Dir S Vul NS	KJ3 A4 Q8 Q98543		On board 15 in the eighth match I decided my 12 HCPs and reasonable 6-card suit was enough to force to game by bidding 2C, and rebid 3NT over Therese's 3C raise, showing a minimum hand.
8764 9875 K7 T72		QT52 KT62 AJ64 A	Double-dummy, East can defeat 3NT by leading the D4, and West returning a heart when he wins with the DK at trick 1. Of course East was not psychic, and led the S2, which enabled me to win the SJ and lead a club to establish the suit for 5 tricks.
	A9 QJ3 T9532 KJ6		Luckily I had the perfect diamond holding to prevent EW from cashing 4 diamond tricks, and when East continued spades, I just cashed 9 tricks for +600.
W / /	N 2C 3NT	E / //	S 1D 3C
			All 4 NS pairs in 3NT made the contract (played by South 3 times), and 1 South even made 10 tricks, but 3C and 2NT were the contracts at 6 tables, making 10 tricks in 3C and 9 tricks in 2NT. Against a NT contract, a small heart was the popular lead, occurring 5 times out of 6, and our table was the only one to lead a spade.

M 9 Bd 5 Dir N Vul NS	T3 AQT9642 AT5 8		On board 5 in the ninth match NS had a reasonably scientific auction to 6H, with 2NT being game forcing, 3C showing an outside singleton, and 4C pin-pointing the singleton in clubs.
KJ964 87 62 QT65		A872 5 J8743 J32	The singleton club is not good news for South, a singleton spade being much more desirable, but he jumped to 6H anyway, without first checking on Key Cards.
	Q5 KJ3 KQ9 AK974		It is not clear if he would have continued to slam if he knew a Key Card was missing, after all North is likely to have the SK for his opening bid.
W / / //	N 1H 3C! 4C	E / / /	S 2NT 3D! 6H
			Therese is an avid Ace leader in a freely bid slam with no other obvious lead, and this was another time she hit the jackpot when we cashed the first 2 tricks for +100. According to the records, slam was bid 7 times, going off each time except where an enterprising East led the S2, but even then it is hard to see how EW still cannot cash the first 2 tricks. The board average was +330, so +100 was a handy 10 Imps.

M 10	Q843			On board 16 in the tenth match East did not know whether to show her 5-5 hand with a Michaels 2D, or just bid her reasonable spade suit at the 1-level. Eventually she opted for 2D, but in my view, the adverse Vulnerability makes that too risky.
Bd 16	A7			
Dir W	KT43			
Vul EW	A92			
K9			AJ652	Therese's initial double was values, and the second was take-out, and I passed the second double for penalties. Therese led the DA to look at dummy, and declarer made a deceptive play of the DJ at trick 1, but it cost a trick, and more importantly set up the force!
QJ9862			5	
Q95			J6	I think declarer got a little rattled towards the end as after the SK was played to dummy and Therese won the CQ with the CK, she led back the ST and declarer won with the SA instead of the SJ.
64			QJ753	
	T7			I am not sure if it actually made much difference, but I was able to later draw a trump with the SQ, and the contract went 4 off for +1100.
	KT43			
	A872			There was nothing much on for us, and the board average was only -150, so that was a massive 14 Imps.
	KT8			
W	N	E	S	
/	1D	2D	X	
/	/	2S	X	
/	/	//		

M 11	943			On board 11 in the eleventh match we bid to a good slam, requiring a good trump position, or the spade finesse, and when the latter came up we scored up +980.
Bd 11	AJ9742			
Dir S	AKT9			
Vul Nil	-			The 2NT rebid showed 18-19, and my 3H rebid showed a 6-card suit with slam interest.
T875			KJ62	Therese cue-bid first or second round control in spades, and that was all I needed to jump to slam.
3			QT5	
76			QJ5	Since the 1D opening showed at least a 4-card suit, I offered 6D as an alternative slam, but Therese converted to hearts.
J75432			T86	
	AQ			North led the C6, and I could immediately see why Therese preferred hearts to diamonds.
	K86			
	8432			I discarded a diamond on the CA and cashed the HK and played the H6, getting the bad news about the heart loser, so my only option was the spade finesse, which worked.
	AKQ9			
W	N	E	S	
/	1H	/	1D	
/	3H	/	2NT	
/	6D	/	3S	
//			6H	That was 12 tricks and 10 Imps when few pairs bid and made slam on this hand.

M 12	AT			On board 18 in the twelfth match I learned that you cannot always trust your opponents to lead the suit that they pre-empted in.
Bd 18	Q62			
Dir E	KT			
Vul NS	AKQ875			Therese wanted to transfer to hearts, but was not sure I would recognize 4D as transfer to hearts and she is probably right. I would have likely assumed it was both majors, but luckily that would mean I would actually bid 4H. Actually 4H should go 1 off on a spade lead.
KJ9752			863	East led a diabolical HT to 3NT, which allows a psychic West to win the HA and lead back the DJ for 4 off!
A84			T	
J2			AQ98643	West did not to give up the heart suit so easily in case I had the DA, so he ducked at trick 1 and I was able to win the HQ and cash 6 more tricks in clubs.
J3			42	
	Q4			On the run of the clubs I gave thought to East having underled the HA, but discounted that and finally played SA and another, hoping East had the SK but to no avail. -100 was 5 Imps away.
	KJ9753			
	75			
	T96			
W	N	E	S	
/	3NT	3D	/	
		//		

M 13	-			On board 9 in the thirteenth match the bidding escalated very quickly and before I knew it I was in 5DX, to which East led the HT.
Bd 9	AQ96			When dummy tracked I expected West to have all of the diamonds, but I could also see 3 top club losers, so the game was in the balance and required careful play.
Dlr N	KJ982			However, to my surprize both followed to the top diamonds, so I was able to discard 1 club on the SA and another on the fifth heart, contract made for +550.
Vul EW	J973			If East had chosen to lead his other singleton he would have struck paydirt, as he could discard his heart on the clubs and then ruff a heart, winning 4 tricks in all for -300.
876			KQJT95432	
743			T	
Q5			T4	
AKQT2			8	
	A			
	KJ852			
	A763			
	654			
W	N	E	S	
X	1D	4S	5D	While we were lucky on the lead, the winning action is to double 4S and take the 4 top tricks for +200, which is still worth 9 Imps, compared to 12 Imps for our actual score.
	//			

M 14	8			On board 23 in the fourteenth match I was reluctant to raise to game in spades on my singleton, but I had too good a hand to pass and the weak clubs did not make 3NT attractive.
Bd 23	K8643			West led the H7, and Therese won in hand and led to the DA in dummy for a club discard. The diamonds were now good, so she led the DT and cut communications by discarding her last club even though East ruffed.
Dlr S	AKT98			East led a heart for West to ruff, but the SA was the only other trick for EW, scoring +620.
Vul All	87			If EW had managed to cash their clubs initially, then lead the H7, since West had the SA, there was no way to defeat 4S, so it is surprising that the board average was only -450, and we gained 5 Imps.
A92			74	
7			JT52	
76542			QJ	
A962			KJT53	
	KQJT653			
	AQ9			
	3			
	Q4			
W	N	E	S	
/	1NT	/	1S	Maybe some pairs did not get to game, but I did not check.
/	4S	//	3S	

M 15	Q98			On board 9 in the fifteenth match we got to a good spot, but West felt compelled to balance with a double, even though she only had 3 hearts and a weakish hand!
Bd 9	K865			The unfortunate thing for EW was that East only had 3 hearts also! The best contract for East is 2NT, which can make 7 tricks, but is likely to make only 6.
Dlr N	A			Therese led the SA and switched to the C3, won by East who then tried to cash the CK, but the roof fell in.
Vul EW	QJT84			Therese ruffed the CK and led to my DA and I could cash a club and lead the CT, which East ruffed low, so Therese could lead a diamond for me to ruff.
75			J632	
QJ9			A72	
KQ85			T42	
9652			AK7	
	AKT4			
	T43			
	J9763			
	3			
W	N	E	S	
/	1C	/	1S	In the end East only made 4 tricks, for 5 off and +500 to us instead of +110 if West had kept quiet. This was 9 Imps to us for nothing, and we gratefully accepted it.
X	2S	/	/	
	/	3H	//	

M 16	874			On board 21 in the sixteenth match we had a very lucky escape when West led the SK to our 1NT and, after East discouraged, West switched to the DT!
Bd 21	Q			
Dlr N	QJ43			
Vul NS	QJ764			Therese now cashed a very quick 10 tricks, actually showing her hand and claiming 5 tricks in both minors, and we scored up +180, for 6 Imps.
AKJ9		6532		
K43		AJT652		
T92		7		When Therese dropped the ST under the SK, he must have been suspicious of a false card when East discouraged, and guessed wrongly with the Diamond switch.
852		T3		I had given serious thought to transferring to clubs via 2S, and would definitely have done so with a 6-card suit, but decided to try for 7 tricks rather than 9!
	QT			
	987			
	AK865			
	AK9			
W	N	E	S	
//	/	/	1NT	How wrong I was to pass, but you take your luck when you get it.

M 16	AJT7			Board 23 in the sixteenth match was very unusual in that Therese passed the 1H overcall on the first round of the bidding, and yet jumped to game on the next round, even though I had only shown 4-4 and at least 11 HCPs, without heart shortage (no take-out double).
Bd 23	Q54			
Dlr S	QT42			
Vul All	AJ			Therese could have shown her 5-card spade suit by responding 1S over 1H, but she was very minimum and did not have any safety net in the form of diamond support.
843		K		
J72		AK986		
K93		AJ865		East led the top hearts and was confused by West's signals and led another heart at trick 3, allowing me to pitch the D7!
KT93		62		After this good start I decided to cash a couple of spades and hope for the club finesse, but to my great surprize the SK dropped singleton, and I now had the club finesse for an overtrick.
	Q9652			
	T3			
	7			
	Q8754			
W	N	E	S	
/	1D	1H	/	The second spade was won on the table to take the club finesse, and when this won, a third spade entry and 2 diamond ruffs set up the 5 th club for a total of 11 tricks.
//	1S	/	4S	

M 17	J86			On board 6 in the seventh match I had a lapse in attention when it was my turn to lead to 4S by West, and forgot that East had opened 1D. Nothing is really attractive to lead from my hand, with the short suit lead most likely, but of my 2 doubletons I selected the D8.
Bd 6	QT9653			
Dlr E	82			
Vul EW	62			EW were playing Acol, so the 1NT rebid was 15-17, and West had used New Minor Forcing, to get spade support from East. West then invited game, and East accepted with her crisp hand and excellent controls.
QT753		942		
J4		AK7		
JT9		A543		I might still have led the D8 even if I had been aware of the opening bid, but declarer played low and Therese won the DQ and returned the DK!
KQ3		AJT		
	AK			
	82			
	KQ76			
	98754			
W	N	E	S	Therese won the spade off the dummy and gave me my diamond ruff, at the same time setting up her D7.
1S	/	1D	/	
2C!	/	1NT	/	My club return was won in dummy and another spade played, but I was now out of trumps so declarer could ruff the diamond and claim the rest of the tricks for 1 down and +100. A very generous 8 Imps.
3S	/	2S	/	
	/	4S	//	

M 18	9873			On board 22 in the eighteenth match it was touch and go as to whether I opened the North hand after 3 passes. It only has 10 HCPs and 4 spades, so does not meet the 'Rule of 15', but I thought that having both majors made it worth the risk.
Bd 22	KJT84			
Dir E	A5			
Vul EW	Q3			
J62		KQT5		Therese's 2C response was Drury, and my 2H rebid showed no interest in going any further, so possibly against her better judgement holding 2 Aces, Therese passed.
Q5		962		
KJ98		T72		East led the SK, and when dummy tracked I was glad that I was not any higher, as while 3H may make, or even 4H if the defence got careless, an initial heart lead may have put even 8 tricks in jeopardy.
AT76		KJ5		Needing ruffs, I ducked the SK, won the continuation, and played the DA and D5, ducking in dummy when East played low.
	A4			
	A73			
	Q643			
	9842			
W	N	E	S	
/	1H	/	/	EW cashed clubs and I ruffed the third round, ruffed a spade in dummy (pew), then a diamond, before ruffing the 4 th spade with the HA to guarantee 8 tricks for +110 and a miserly +2 Imps.
/	2H	//	2C!	

M 19	KJ973			The bidding was short and sweet on board 7 in the nineteenth and final match, as West's spade jump took away all of my higher aspirations.
Bd 7	75			
Dir S	64			
Vul All	A963			
AQ86542		T		Although minimum in point-count, because of her great shape and no clear-cut bid, Therese doubled for take-out when 2S came back to her, and I had no hesitation in passing for penalties.
AJ3		KQ62		I led the H7, and when dummy went down I am sure West must have been quietly confident, holding an extra spade and 2 Aces, but this disappeared when Therese showed out on the first round of trumps!
3		KJ9752		I had too many exit cards to be end-played in trumps, and 4 spades, 2 clubs and 1 diamond was 2 off for +500.
85		JT		
	-			
	T984			
	AQT8			
	KQ742			
W	N	E	S	
2S!	//	/	1C	This was surprisingly only worth +4 Imps, as many Wests jacked the bidding up higher with their hand, even to the 4-level once for -1100, but 7 Wests played 2S or 3S undoubled.
			X	