

# IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Summer 2024

## Welcome

Greetings all, and welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of the Irish Bridge Journal.



Enda Murphy, Editor

I must start by noting, with deep regret, the passing of John Comyn in June. He was 88 years old, and had been the Sunday Independent Bridge columnist for over 50 years. John called it as he saw it, frequently courting controversy. But the reality is that we all went straight to the inside back page every Sunday, and that is surely the hallmark of highly effective journalism. John gave a prodigious amount to our game, and it gave him immense pleasure in return. I had the great enjoyment of playing with him on a number of occasions.

He was the only partner I ever had who burst into the chorus of "Shenandoah" in the middle of a hand! [John was an accomplished singer.] My thanks to Séamus Dowling, who has contributed a touching appreciation to this issue. Rest in Peace, John.

Sadly, bad news comes in doses. We also lost another of our long-serving TDs, Joe Murray. Unflappable, courteous and genial, I lost count of the number of edgy situations Joe effortlessly defused. May he too rest in peace.

A few of our columnists and bidding panel members showed up well in the recent European Championships. Norway brought off a notable double, winning the Open and the Women's events. Boye Brogeland was on the Open team. France qualified for the Bermuda Bowl [Thomas Bessis on their team]. England [Sally Brock] qualified for the Venice Cup. Thomas' wife, Irene Baroni, collected a bronze medal in the Mixed event. Well done to all.

The performance of the Irish teams was, I'm sorry to say, lamentable. The Open squad had a nightmare first few days, and the best they could do was recover to finish

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**Extra**  
**CBAI News**  
**Inside!**



The Annual CBAI newsletter that circulates in September each year is now included as a supplement in the Journal - see page 44

**Note:**  
Includes CBAI News Update and Fixtures Calendar



mid-table, seven places and over two matches away from a Bermuda Bowl spot. As for the others, the less said the better. 20th of 22, 17th of 20 and 21st of 23. Oh dear.

As many readers will know, a number of high-profile international players were found to have cheated by self-kibitzing during the Covid phase when play was exclusively online. Several have now served their bans and are back playing on sponsored teams and [in some cases] representing their countries. I won't name them here, though it's public knowledge. What I find interesting is the degree of controversy that has arisen. Some people feel that cheats should never again be allowed to play representative bridge. Another issue is that the length of the bans has varied from country to country. In three prominent cases that were documented, there was a two-year ban. Yet an English international player got a complete ban for four years and six months, plus a ten-year ban on representing his country. All were for self-kibitzing. [In the latter case the charges were denied, whereas they were admitted to in the others.]

Yet another thorny issue is whether we should draw an equivalence or a distinction between self-kibitzing online, and collusive cheating "live at the table" by a pair. Are they sins of equal magnitude? Yes, say some. No, say others – collusion is a mortal sin, self-kibitzing only venial. You pays your money. I'm not about to inflict my views on you. I do think, though, that we should reflect upon the purpose of a punishment. In part, a sentence should be a deterrent against re-offending. It should also encompass atonement/penance. But there is also the aspect of rehabilitation – having done the time, there should normally be a route back to being a useful member of society. Anyway, food for thought.

Moving on – happy thoughts, happy thoughts, happy thoughts! Ohmmmmm. Ah yes, let me congratulate my fellow denizens of the Model County – Messrs Murphy, Lennon, Sweetman and Pinaqui – for winning the 4Fun Teams for Wexford. I'm prepared on this occasion to overlook the fact that I was not asked to grace the team with my presence. You can't argue with success.

I want to commend two articles in particular to you – the pieces by our regular columnists Nicola O'Dowd and Melissa Brady. As I've noted at the end of both, our game needs

this kind of enthusiasm and humility in large doses. It's catching.

Finally, let me re-iterate my willingness to carry features on particular clubs and significant local events – club milestones, noteworthy initiatives, whatever. I very much see the role of the Journal as all-inclusive; I don't want it to speak only to those at Master level, I want it to have relevance for all players.

Enjoy the Journal – and don't forget to have a go at the Bidding Quiz.

**Enda Murphy**  
[editor@cbaie](mailto:editor@cbaie)



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# Test Your Declarer Play

Tomás Roche



You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

## Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

♠ AK93	N	♠ J8
♥ 7	W	♥ A1062
♦ Q76	E	♦ A85
♣ KQ874	S	♣ AJ92

W	N	E	S
	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	2♥	P
3♣ <sup>1</sup>	P	4♣	P
4♦ <sup>2</sup>	P	4♠ <sup>3</sup>	P
6♣	All Pass		

<sup>1</sup> 3♣ = 5+ cards in clubs, 4 cards in oM, interest in slam  
<sup>2</sup> 4♦ = "Redwood" for clubs  
<sup>3</sup> 4♠ = 0 or 3 key cards

### The Play

North leads the queen of hearts against 6♣ and all follow to the ace and king of trumps. How do you plan the play?

## Board 3 Dealer South. Vul E/W.

♠ AQ543	N	♠ 10
♥ A5	W	♥ 7643
♦ AQ	E	♦ 1098
♣ Q764	S	♣ AKJ82

W	N	E	S
			P
2♠	4♥	X <sup>1</sup>	P
3NT	All Pass		

<sup>1</sup> X = Negative, not enough values to bid a game-forcing 3♣

### The Play

Against 3NT, North leads the ♥K followed by the ♥Q, South follows suit to both. How do you plan the play?

## Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

♠ J74	N	♠ 3
♥ K9852	W	♥ AQJ3
♦ Q7	E	♦ AK10643
♣ A106	S	♣ 82

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♥	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	4♦ <sup>2</sup>	4♠
5♣ <sup>3</sup>	P	6♥	All Pass

<sup>1</sup> 3♦ = 5+/5+ cards in spades and clubs  
<sup>2</sup> 3♦ = Fit-Jump in support of hearts  
<sup>3</sup> 5♣ = Control in clubs, denies control in spades.

### The Play

The defenders begin with two rounds of spades, forcing dummy to ruff. West draws two trumps with the ace and queen, finding the trumps 3-1. How do you plan the play?

## Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ J	N	♠ A5
♥ J75432	W	♥ AKQ
♦ 983	E	♦ K76
♣ A92	S	♣ K8765

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♣	1♠
X <sup>1</sup>	2♠	X <sup>2</sup>	P
3♥ <sup>3</sup>	P	4♥	All Pass

<sup>1</sup> X = Negative, not being strong enough to bid 2♥  
<sup>2</sup> X = Strong no-trump type hand  
<sup>3</sup> 3♥ = Extra length in hearts, non-forcing.

### The Play

North leads the ♠10 against 4♥. How do you plan the play?

Answers on page 27



# Bidding Quiz 7

By Bob Pattinson



All eight hands are from live pairs events. Entries to [biddingquiz@cbaie](mailto:biddingquiz@cbaie) by 7th October 2024.

Good luck!

## Question 1

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

- ♠ A107
- ♥ J103
- ♦ KQ9
- ♣ 8732

W	N	E	S
1♦ <sup>1</sup>	1♥	1♠ <sup>2</sup>	?
3♣	P	?	
<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+; <sup>1</sup> 1♠=5+			

## Question 2

Dealer West. Vul E/W. Teams.

- ♠ A94
- ♥ AQ864
- ♦ 52
- ♣ 982

W	N	E	S
1♦ <sup>1</sup>	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	?	
<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+; <sup>2</sup> 1NT=12-14			

## Question 3

Dealer West. Vul E/W. Teams.

- ♠ K5
- ♥ AJ3
- ♦ Q1097
- ♣ K1098

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	1♥	P
2♥	P	2♠ <sup>1</sup>	P
?			
<sup>1</sup> 2♠=reverse: trial bid			

## Question 4

Dealer North. Vul E/W. Teams.

- ♠ 10842
- ♥ AJ8
- ♦ A3
- ♣ Q532

W	N	E	S
	1♦	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	3♦
?			
<sup>1</sup> 2♦=Spades and clubs: 5-5: 6-10			

## Question 5

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ J986432
- ♥ KQ2
- ♦ 63
- ♣ 10

W	N	E	S
	1♦	X	3♦
?			
<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+; <sup>2</sup> 3♦=4+ 6-9			

## Question 6

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams

- ♠ AK984
- ♥ A
- ♦ AJ832
- ♣ A6

W	N	E	S
2♣ <sup>1</sup>	P	2♦ <sup>2</sup>	P
2♠	P	3♦ <sup>3</sup>	P
?			
<sup>1</sup> 2♣=ART GF; <sup>2</sup> 2♦=ART waiting bid; <sup>3</sup> 3♦=natural 5+			

## Question 7

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ -
- ♥ J4
- ♦ AKQ832
- ♣ AK1063

W	N	E	S
	P	P	1♦
1♥	1♠	P	?

## Question 8

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams

- ♠ AJ84
- ♥ QJ83
- ♦ 102
- ♣ AQ9

W	N	E	S
	1♣	X	1♥
X	2♣	2♠	P
P	3♣	?	

### Entries to:

[biddingquiz@cbaie](mailto:biddingquiz@cbaie)  
by 7th October 2024

In every issue a €50 CBAI gift voucher will be awarded to the leading contestant in each of the following categories:

- Novice/Intermediate
- Master (below Life Master)

Please remember to state your grade in your entry



# Bidding Quiz System

## General Approach:

Five card majors, three+ minors, 2/1 GF,

1NT = 15-17,

2♣ = art GF with 2♦ waiting response

## Balanced Hands

4333, 4432, 5332

(with five minor)

12-14 and 18-19 open 1♣/♦

20-22 : 2NT (may include five card major hence play puppet Stayman)

## Major Suit Responses

1NT = 5-10 F1:

2♣/♦/♥ = 2/1 GF

3♣/♦/♥ over 1♠ opening and 2♠/3♣/♦ over 1♥ opening = four card+ trump support: 8-11 : first or second round control in bid suit.

3M = 4-7 and 4+ trumps

2NT = Jacoby 16+:

4+ trumps:

Opener bids a singleton at the three-level, a second five card suit at the four-level, rebids 3M with 17-19, 4M with 12-14, and 3NT with 15-16.

## Responses to the forcing 1NT:

example for 1♥: 1NT: 2♣ = Gazzilli : either 11-16 with 5M and 4+ clubs or any 17+ hand

2♦ = 11-16 : 3+ diamonds

2♥ = 11-16 : 6+ hearts

2♠ = 14-16: 6 hearts and 5 spades

2NT = 14-16 : 6 hearts and a 4 card minor : now 3♣ pass/ correct; 3♦ = GF asks for minor; 3♥ - to play

3♣/♦ = 14-16: 5-5

3♥ = 14-16 : 6+ hearts and strong suit

## Example of Gazzilli after 1♥:1NT:2♣

2♦ = any 8+ suit

2♥ = 5-7 : 5+ hearts

2♠ = 5-7 : 6+ spades

2NT = 5=7: 3 suiter with short hearts

3♣/♦ = 5-7 : 6+ minor

After responder bids 2♦ opener rebids 2M with 11-16 and 5M and 4+ clubs 2NT = 17-19 balanced : other bids game forcing

## Responses to 1nt Opening (15-17)

2♣ = non-promissory Stayman

2♦/♥/♠/NT = transfers

3♣/♦/♥/♠ = long suits with slam interest

## Two-Level Suit Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
2♣	23 + or equivalent unbalanced	2♦ = waiting bid
2♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six card suit, using rule of two, three or four depending upon different vulnerability of the two sides	2NT = enquiry: opener signs off with three-level rebid of own suit with minimum and bids a new suit to show a feature or 3NT with a feature in the opening suit

## Three/Four-Level Opening Bids

Bid	Meaning	Responses
3♣/♦/♥/♠	6-10 : six or seven card suit	New suit forcing
3NT	Eight card broken minor suit	4♣ = pass / convert 4♦ = interested in club slam but only part score in diamonds 5♣ = willing to play in game in either minor 4M = asking bid; interest in game in either major: seeks control in bid major 4NT = name suit and quality: 5♣/♦ = confirms suit but denies Ace or King : 5♥/♠ = respective suit and holds Ace or King in that minor
4♣/♦	Namyats: eight card solid major in ♥/♠ : three key cards	Bid of intermediate suits 4♦/♥ asks for shortage and 4M denies any shortage
4♥/♠	Eight card broken suit: less than three key cards	4NT = Roman key card Blackwood : 1430
3NT	Ace asking	5♣ = no ace; 5♦/♥/♠/6C = ace in bid suit; 5NT = two aces

## Opening Side Action over Interference

Bid	Meaning
Negative double	Shows values in the remaining two suits
Support Double	Opener confirms three card trump support, so a raise of the suit shows four card support
4th suit	Forcing: asking for more information
Cue bid	Unassuming and forcing: asks for more information
Jump cue	Has a long running suit: seeks NT stop
2NT	Relay to 3♣: this may then be passed or converted to a new long weak suit; thus a direct new suit at the 3-level is GF
Transfers after own 1NT is overcalled	Double /new suit/2NT are all transfers to the next suit (2NT over 2♠); follow up in second suit is game forcing; transfer to intervening suit asks for NT stop, and now accepting the transfer denies a stop and 3NT confirms one

## Intervening Bidding

Bid	Meaning
1NT overcall	16-18
Weak jump overcalls	6-10
Two suited overcalls	Direct cue = two highest suits 2NT = two lowest suits; 3♣ = two remaining suits
5-5 : either 6-10 or 15+	
Defence to 1NT	Double = minor two suiter or major two suiter: advancer assumes minors first 2♣ = three suiter with clubs; 2♦ = three suiter with diamonds 2♥/♠ = either six card suit or the bid suit plus a minor side suit: 2NT asks for the minor

## Slam Bidding

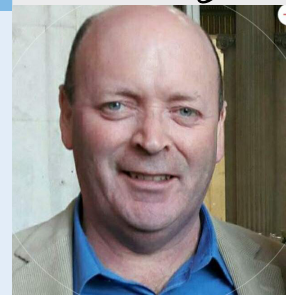
Roman key card Blackwood (1430) and Kickback in the minors (1430)

Non serious 3NT: when a trump fit is found 3NT is artificial confirming a minimum hand still prepared to show controls if partner fails to sign off. By passing 3NT shows a strong hand, bidding 1st or 2nd controls up the line.



# Teltscher Trophy 2024

Derek O’Gorman



The Teltscher is an annual teams event where Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland participate. The host country provides a second team to give the event an even number of teams. It is open to Seniors only, which is presently players aged 64 and over. This is increasing to age 65 next year, and will then fix at that age.

The hosts this year were Scotland, and the event took place in Stirling. Stirling is 37 miles north east of Glasgow, and 37 miles north west of Edinburgh. Stirling is a University city, with a population of approx. 30,000 people. It is a lovely city, and the hotel is on the campus of the University with a student population of an additional 18,000 people.

England won the event narrowly, overturning a decent Scottish lead in the direct last match. Placings were 1st England 2nd Scotland 3rd Wales 4th Scottish Bridge Union 5th Ireland 6th Northern Ireland

Ireland were represented by Terry Walsh, Peter Goodman, Pat Barry, David Terry, Gay Keaveney and Enda Glynn, with Derek O’Gorman NPC. My first hand features Terry Walsh as North against the Welsh.

Dealer West. Vul None.

			♠ K84		
			♥ AK875		
			♦ 65		
			♣ Q97		
♠ A1097		N		♠ Q653	
♥ 1032				♥ Q96	
♦ 10984	W	E		♦ J7	
♣ 105		S		♣ AJ62	
			♠ J2		
			♥ J4		
			♦ AKQ32		
			♣ K843		

Terry opened 1♥, and quickly landed in 3NT. A small spade lead from East was taken by Terry’s king at trick one. When Terry played a low club from his hand at trick two, East went up the ♣A. East hoped for four more spade tricks in defence, and was obviously afraid the diamond suit would yield five tricks for declarer. This added to one spade, one club and two hearts would deliver 3NT for North South.

As it was, East West cashed their three spade tricks and exited a diamond.

This left the remaining cards:

			♠ AKxx		
			♦ xx		
			♣ Qx		
♠ 10xx		N		♠ Qxx	
♥ 10984				♥ Jx	
♦ x	W	E		♣ Axx	
		S			
			♠ J		
			♥ AKQxx		
			♣ Kx		

Terry now cashed three top diamonds, discarding a heart from his own hand. He cashed his two top clubs ending in South hand. West discarded a heart to keep his diamond, and East had discarded a heart on the third diamond as they thought they had to keep three clubs. A, K and another heart now from Terry produced the ninth trick and a very good +10 imps, with 3NT-1 at the other table.

The second hand features Gay Keaveney as North against the Scottish team:

Dealer South. Vul E/W.

			♠ 6		
			♥ KQ9		
			♦ A8		
			♣ QJ97653		
♠ AKJ92		N		♠ Q1043	
♥ J10				♥ 8763	
♦ KQJ5	W	E		♦ 632	
♣ 42		S		♣ A8	
			♠ 875		
			♥ A542		
			♦ 10974		
			♣ K10		

Gay as North ended up in 5♣X after East/West bid to 4♠. Two rounds of spades ruffed by North, followed by two rounds of clubs and a diamond exit. North then cashed four clubs, with West discarding three spades and a diamond. The following position was left with five cards remaining:

			♠		
			♥ KQ9		
			♦ 8		
			♣ 6		
♠		N		♠ Q	
♥ J10				♥ 8763	
♦ KQJ	W	E		♦	
♣		S		♣	
			♠ 8		
			♥ A542		
			♦		
			♣		

East is now squeezed when Gay plays his last trump, so 5♣X makes for +550 with 4♠-1 by their teammates at the other table so again a very good +10 imps.



# European Senior Teams Championships

BJ O'Brien



**The senior team representing Ireland at this year's Europeans consisted of Hastings Campbell, Sam Hall, Ian Lindsay, Ian Hamilton, Terry Walsh, BJ O'Brien with NPC Harold Curran.**

We had great support from our SWAGS (senior wives and girlfriends) Sheila Hillan, Anne Fitzpatrick, Angela Curran and Brid Kemple.

The event was fabulous and great credit to the 150 or so local volunteers from the Herning Bridge club who made everyone welcome. The town of Herning has a population of circa 60,000 with terrific restaurants reasonably priced and as clean as you can get. The venue itself was outstanding with plenty of room and all kinds of catering facilities.

It appeared that all four Irish teams were overawed for the first few days, but competed well thereafter albeit after the horse had bolted. *[More like City of Troy in the Guineas, I'd say. Ed]*

We did manage to bid and make a couple of lucky [?] grand slams.

Terry Walsh held:

♠ -
♥ AQJ2
♦ 542
♣ A108542

Partner opened 1♠, RHO bid 2♥ and partner reopened with 3♣. Terry bid 7♣!!

I held J10942, 7, A7, KQJ73 and with the marked heart finesse the grand rolled home. At the other table our team played 3♥-1 for a huge gain of 16imps.

Ian Lindsay and Ian Hamilton bid these cards to 7♥:

♠ AKJ6	♠ 95
♥ 10965	♥ AKJ7
♦ 5	♦ AK
♣ J943	♣ AKQ105

The lead was a small spade to the Ace, Queen and 5. You to play from dummy. Declarer ran the ♥10 successfully and claimed 13 tricks when the suit divided 3, 2. His logic was that his left hand opponent must have led from a six-card suit and therefore his RHO should be longer in hearts. QED. That was worth 11imps and helped us to a good win over Switzerland 15.56 to 4.44 in our last match.

Great teammates, great captain, great venue, great atmosphere. I would heartily recommend our bridge playing community to enter trials and endeavour to get on an Irish team to play at International level.

## Dargle Club Initiative

**Here at Dargle Bridge Club in Bray County Wicklow we noticed that so many people had completed bridge lessons and then did nothing further.**

So we decided to have a Novice Section for those people where they could bring and refer to their bridge notes during the bidding process and then go on to play against each other.

We have a club member or two (depending on attendance) to mentor and offer advice-not to teach.

So far those who have attended have felt relaxed and at ease and more to the point comfortable.

We have the Novice Section in at the same time as the main body but completely separate, so far all is good.

**Michael Mullen**  
President Dargle BC

### Clarification & Correction

The Spring Journal carried an insightful article by **Ronald Milne** entitled "Muppet Stayman", a detailed treatment of sequences after a 2NT opening or equivalent. One minor error slipped through the editorial net. Here's the correction.

Minor suit Slam tries versus 5-5 major hands:

- ▶ 2NT-3♣-3♥-3♠-3NT-4♣/4♦ is a slam try in the relevant minor and
- ▶ 2NT-3♣-3♥-4♣ shows 5-5 in the majors

# Intermediate's Progress "Be a Good Partner"

Nicola O'Dowd



**Máire O'Keeffe, in her book "Bridge Made Simple," shares what she considers the best tip of all: "Be to partner very kind, be to his faults a little blind."**

In my last article, I mentioned how fortunate I've been with my partners, and this is absolutely true. Dara Voyles and I began taking lessons together, and once we discovered we lived just 20 minutes away from each other, we decided to team up. This bridge partnership has been fantastic (at least from my perspective—hopefully, Dara agrees!).

Together, we've experienced both wins and losses, and we've advanced through the grades by participating in national competitions. Dara also partners with his brother-in-law, Paul Dunne, in their local clubs and at national events. They truly make a remarkable bridge duo.

At my local club, I was very fortunate to team up with Maria Rusu, who moved to Ireland from Romania over 15 years ago, and is playing bridge from the young age of 8 or 9. When I joined the Trim club as a novice, Maria was already an Intermediate A player, and I was very lucky that she agreed to play with me.

Recognising my passion for the game, Maria was happy to accompany me to national competitions, congresses, and leagues, and she has enjoyed every one of them. Although Maria was used to playing Strong NT and five-card major I persuaded her to play weak and four with me until I am ready to change, I am not sure if I will ever be ready, but that is another day's writing!

My mum had been playing bridge for about three or four years before I started and had her own partners in our local clubs. When everything went online during COVID, Ena set up her computer and guided her partners through playing on BBO. Noticing the valuable information I was gaining from Declan Byrne Bridge, Ena enrolled in Declan's improver lessons.

It is a real privilege to have my mother as one of my bridge partners and to travel around the country to various congresses with her. Many people comment on how lucky we are to have each other, and it truly is a blessing.

At the start of the 2023/2024 bridge season, I asked Declan Byrne if he would partner with me in the Duais An Uachtaráin in September 2023. We both enjoyed the event immensely, and once again, I felt incredibly fortunate to have found another great partner. Declan seems happy to play at bridge events with me whenever he is available.

Our small island has a fantastic calendar of bridge events, both local and national. Here's my advice for fellow bridge enthusiasts: diversify your partners. It's crucial since no one can participate in every event, given the variety—some are mixed, some are women-only, some are team-based, and others are regional. Multiple partners offer flexibility and enhance your playing experience.

Additionally, stay informed about available competitions. Inquire at your local club, explore your region's calendar or website, and consult the CBAI events calendar. Participating in these events not only sharpens your skills but also

allows you to connect with players at various levels, exchanging experiences and advice. These events are not just about the game; they are enjoyable and socially engaging.

When speaking with novices, I've noticed they often start with a partner from their lessons and are hesitant to ask or play with someone new, fearing they might let their partner down. This tendency to stick with one partner can become problematic when one is on holiday or otherwise unavailable. As a novice, it's important to understand that everyone feels the same way. The rewards and learning experiences from playing with different partners are absolutely worth it.

Partnerships won't always work out and it is important to recognise this, talk and discuss why it is not working and be prepared to move on without any ill feeling. In my short time in the bridge community I have come across people who gave up bridge rather than "break up" with their bridge partner. But not everyone will get on and that is only natural. Don't give up, try a new partner for a while, you don't have to commit to it forever, just see how it goes.

**Here are some essential tips I received during my bridge lessons that I believe are incredibly important:**

- ▶ Treat your partners with respect.
- ▶ Don't criticise or embarrass your partner in front of others; try to discuss hands in private.
- ▶ Don't assume your partner has made a mistake until the hand is over and you have both had time to think it through.





- ▶ Don't side with an opponent against your partner. If you can't support your partner, say nothing.
- ▶ Always thank your partner for the game when it is over.

The Lambert Cup and Cooper Cup (National pairs and teams championship Intermediate A and Area and the JJ Murphy Trophy National Novice pairs championship, took part in Templeogue on the weekend of the 27th of April 2024.

It was super to see 33 novice pairs competing in the JJ Murphy Trophy. For many of these it was their first time to play outside their local clubs. Junior players Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan won with a super 70.96%.

Sixty-five pairs took part in the Lambert Cup, with only 18 being Intermediate A players. I would strongly encourage all Intermediate A players to participate in this national competition. It offers the opportunity to compete with both Area Masters and other Intermediate A players. I think it is a true level playing field.

This was one of the last competitions Dara and I participated in as Intermediate A players, highlighting the effectiveness of the CBAI masterpoint grading system. While we earned many points from team events, the true value lies in the experience gained from competing in these competitions. I cannot speak for Dara but I certainly feel that next year will be a lot less about winning and a lot more learning for me.

Come September 2024 Dara and I will find ourselves moving from A1 with five national points to Area Master needing 10 national points, I expect Dara and I will have around 15 National points in September. As the saying goes "sometimes you need to jump in to a bigger pond". This will help you grow and experience something new. It will always be challenging to leave your comfort zone, and you may not always be ready to do

so but you don't just get the points for turning up. You earn them, playing out and up, competing against your own level and higher. The bigger pond is the next step in my journey.

Overall, in the Lambert Cup, Dara and I finished just under 50%, placing 40th out of the 65 pairs. We had luck with us and a gamble from Dara on Board 10 in the 2nd session, we didn't get many top scores in the Lambert so it was nice to see this one.

**Board 10. Dealer East. Vul All.**

		♠K5		
		♥QJ72		
		♦Q984		
		♣AJ10		
♠Q764	N		E	♠932
♥1043	W		S	♥95
♦73				♦AJ652
♣K854				♣962
		♠AJ108		
		♥AK86		
		♦K10		
		♣Q73		

W	N	E	S
		P	1♥
P	2NT <sup>1</sup>	P	2NT
P	4♣	P	1♠
	4NT <sup>2</sup>	P	5♦
P	6♥	All Pass	

<sup>1</sup> 2NT=Jacoby 2NT Showing four card support, game forcing  
<sup>2</sup> 4NT=RKCB 1430

My 3NT showed 15-17, so it was pushy for Daragh to go on via a 4♣ cuebid. But he felt we needed a good score. Only four pairs bid 6♥ and two made it.

The Cooper Cup, the National Confined Teams Championship [Intermediate A and Area Master grades only] took part in Templeogue in April. There were 53 teams overall, 10 of which were Intermediate As.

Declan Byrne was my partner and the other half of our team was Deirdre Linnane and Carmel Murnin. As the only Intermediate A on the team I definitely proved to be the "weakest link".

We finished in 16th place, and while everyone seemed content, I found myself frustrated with one board in particular, where I let down our defence.

**Board 22. Dealer East. Vul E/W.**

		♠K4		
		♥K53		
		♦AQ9		
		♣A10865		
(me)				
♠10732	N		E	♠AQJ5
♥AQ876	W		S	♥102
♦J105				♦K87432
♣9				♣2
		♠986		
		♥J94		
		♦6		
		♣KQJ743		

W	N	E	S
	P	1NT	P
4♣	P	1♠	P
5♣	P	5♥	P
7♦	All Pass		

North played in the hopeless contract of 3NT. After a diamond lead she won ♦Q and proceeded to play out all the clubs. When she then led a heart off the dummy, I should have played my Ace and then switched to a spade which my partner had signalled for. That would have been 3NT-1, but I failed to rise with the ♥A.

Congratulations to the winners Alan Auchincloss, Eugene Gath, Konstantin Rabkin and Andrew Cole. Well done also to the Intermediate A winners Paul Clinch, Simon Burrell, Austin Leahy and Mark Ryan.

Players in our local clubs often ask experienced players, "How do you remember everything?" The truth is, none of us do. If we were all flawless on every board, bridge wouldn't be the fantastic game that it is. I believe many beginners don't realise this truth: improvement in bridge comes through reading your notes, playing, competing, repetition, reviewing boards, analysing errors, and taking notes to learn and avoid repeating mistakes.

Nikica Sver (Croatian international) Said "Bridge usually puts a smile on my face but even if it puts a tear or two it always makes me feel alive"



Personally, unlike some others in lessons who seem to grasp information effortlessly, I find that I need to go over things repeatedly. In school, I was the type of student who had to study hard to pass exams, and the same applies to bridge. Despite what some people in my local club might think due to my frequent play, I'm far from a natural at the game, and constantly make mistakes. Each of my four regular partners would attest to this.

The European Bridge League (EBL) has been offering free women's team training sessions on RealBridge. Teams of four can sign up to play 12 boards, after which a speaker provides guidance and tips on some of the boards. July's speaker was Tim Verbeek from the Netherlands. Previous months featured Sophia Baldysz, a Polish professional bridge player, and David Gold, an English professional bridge player, among others. I have participated in several of these sessions whenever I was free and found them to be both enjoyable and educational. More information on upcoming training sessions can be found on the EBL Facebook page or at [womenbridge.org](http://womenbridge.org)

The inaugural Online European Women's Teams Championship was held on RealBridge in June, featuring nearly 300 women from 24 countries and a total of 48 teams. Despite having many partners and teammates, I found it challenging to assemble a team willing to compete for the entire three days. Each team could have 4-6 female playing members and up to two substitutes. The competition followed a Swiss format, with matches running from 9am to 5pm on Friday and Saturday, consisting of five matches of 10 boards each day.

Six Irish teams took part. The best result was achieved by Ireland (Hilary Dowling-Long McDonagh, Gilda Pender, Jeannie Fitzgerald, Joan Kenny, Siobhan Part, Teresa Rigney, Lucy Phelan (NPC), and Louise Mitchell (Coach), who came fourth in the qualifying round and finished seventh overall. The

Kamana team (Anna Carr, Margaret Farren, Aoife MacHale, Antoinette McGee, Noreen Pender, Kathleen Vaughan, Deirdre O'Halloran, Orla McEntee) came ninth in the qualifying round, just missing out on the top flight, and finished tenth overall.

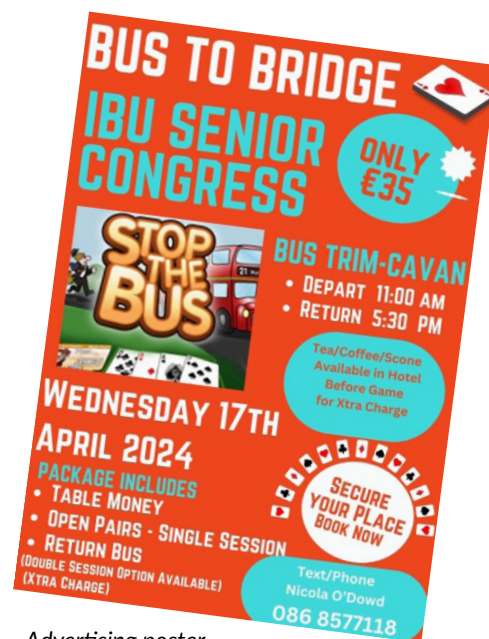
Our team was called The Green Theme and as mostly intermediates our aim was to gain from the experience and not to come last. On Friday the 7th I played with Sandra Peden, Vicky Pigot and Mia Delaney. Saturday I played with Maria Rusu, Fiona Place and Carmel Murphy and on Sunday my partner was Sandra again and Fiona and Carmel.

Participating in the event was a fantastic experience. Despite our familiarity with RealBridge, the entire event felt unique and unlike anything we had done before. Even the registration process, filling out forms, and assembling our convention cards became a valuable learning experience for everyone involved.

Screens were used so that during each board, we could only see one opponent, and partners couldn't see or hear each other. Our system cards were uploaded to RealBridge, and we were not allowed to have anyone else in the room, use phones, or leave our computer screens, even when we were dummy. For bathroom or coffee breaks, we had to wait until each match was over and we had returned to our home table. Most of these rules were in place to prevent cheating.

If we finished our rounds early, there could be a long wait until the next match, But I have to say this is when we had the laughs and discussed the matches. Or emptied the dishwasher and hung some clothes on the line!!

Over the three days, we played 148 boards, and we all truly enjoyed the experience. It was our first World Bridge Federation event, and we survived. I would like to thank Maria, Sandra, Vicky, Mia, Carmel and Fiona for agreeing to play.



Advertising poster I created.

The IBU Seniors Congress was scheduled midweek from April 16th to 18th, 2024 at the Cavan Crystal Hotel, conveniently just an hour from Trim, I took the initiative to organise and promote a 'Bus to Bridge' outing. The committee supported my idea, eager to gauge the interest.

Fifteen of us embarked on the journey to Cavan (with my partner Dara driving separately), and it turned out to be a fantastic day. For many players, this was their first time playing outside of the Trim club in years, making it a special occasion. Upon arrival at the hotel, the hotel staff had prepared delightful coffee and scones, which I believed was organised by Aileen Timoney. We then participated in the Open Pairs single session, with by a total of 16 pairs.



Members on the Bus to the IBU Seniors Congress in Cavan



After the bridge session, while waiting for the bus, we all gathered in the bar for soup and sandwiches. It was clear that everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day out, and there is hope that we can make this an annual event. Additionally, we hope to organise a bus to other congresses, particularly the Drogheda Congress, which is also within an hour's travel from Trim. Maybe this is something other clubs currently do, or may in the future.

Bridge is played by people of all ages from all walks of life, Learning to play bridge has proved to me that you are guaranteed to make a new network of friends and acquaintances. Some people enjoy the break from all the competitions and the club nights during the summer and others will travel to find a game. There is no doubt which I am, so I might see you at a table over the summer.

**[Editor's note.** Nicola's account of her ascent from Novice to Area Master in no time at all, has been a must-read column. She embodies all that is best about our great game and its ability to captivate participants at all levels. Her enthusiasm and humility are things you can't buy. I've no doubt that Nicola is nowhere close to running out of road. So while we can no longer use the word "Intermediate" going forward, I'm anxious to have Nicola continue to document her progress.

Here's a little vignette, by way of contrast. A great friend of mine, X, has invested years in mentoring Y. Y has come through the ranks and represented Ireland. X called me recently to ask what I'd bid on a hand. X and Y were bidding spades, opponents [average ability] had hearts. X had shown a weak 2 and Y had 8 points. Opponents bid 3H and it went Pass Pass to Y. What would I bid? I burst out laughing. "You surely don't think I'm bidding 3S", I told him. "Opponents are probably cold for 4H, and they might bid it if you give them a chance". At the table, Y bid 3S, opponents 4H, which was doubled and made. I told X not to worry, Y still obviously had some way to go in developing their competitive technique. Then X told me that Y had rounded on them, complaining about X's bidding!! Empathy is not my long suit, folks, so I told X they'd created a monster and had nobody to blame but themselves. I also suggested an urgent non-negotiable reset of the mentoring arrangements. Anyway, you see my point. X has forgotten more about bridge than Y will ever know about it. Here endeth the sermon].



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# Making My Way

The latest instalment of Melissa's progress

Melissa Brady



**The season's end really crept up on us. This has been my busiest and most enjoyable season of bridge to date. I think I can count on one hand the number of Congresses I didn't attend.**

It was marked by numerous firsts and lasts, highs and lows, successes and the odd disaster! Most importantly, it has been filled with invaluable lessons and advice that will surely enhance my bridge game and make me a better player. I want to take the opportunity to thank all the players who took the time to point me in the right direction with advice on bids, play, and conventions that we should look into adding to our repertoire.

In September 2023, when I called the CBAI head office while trying to register for the Duais, I spoke with a staff member who recommended some competitions I should definitely participate in. I ended our conversation by stating that my goal for the year was to score at least 40% in all of these competitions. I'm pleased to say I achieved that goal.

The IBU Seniors Congress took place in The Cavan Crystal Hotel, our home venue. On Tuesday evening, Anna and I participated in the Gala Pairs event where 19 tables made up the competition. During one of the rounds, I picked up this hand against IBU President Peter O'Meara and his partner.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vul All.

		♠A1076			
		♥A432			
		♦Q984			
		♣KQ1087			
♠KQ65		N		♠10984	
♥QJ10		W		♥52	
♦Q9		E		♦KJ10875	
♣AJ64		S		♣9	
		♠AJ732			
		♥K843			
		♦6			
		♣532			

Peter (West) opened 1♣, potentially short. Despite having a void in spades, I doubled, even though I was 99% certain Anna would respond in that suit. East bids 2♦ which is alerted as a weak hand with a six-card suit. As anticipated, Anna bid 2♠. West passes, leaving me with no choice but to bid 3♥, which really shows five. With a heart fit and a diamond shortage, Anna raised to 4♥. East led their club to the Ace. A club return went to my Queen and was ruffed. A spade is returned, Ace winning, me pitching a diamond. I play a diamond to the Ace, followed by the AK of trumps. There is no advantage in playing another trump, as I need two trumps in each hand for cross-ruffing. I then play the ♣5, knowing East has none, allowing me to capture all the clubs even if West plays the Jack. My ♣8 wins the trick, and I follow with the King, on which the Jack falls, discarding a spade from the dummy. I play another club and again discard a losing spade. West wins with the Queen of trumps, and I cross-ruff the diamonds and spades to make 4♥. Everyone else who tried went down. I think there is a valuable lesson in this board. We have

all been taught to draw trumps ASAP, but sometimes there are exceptions and this contract was only makeable by not fully drawing them, using them to cross-ruff my losers instead.

Tralee was another Congress that we attended for the first time. Similar Donegal, they had a discussion on Saturday morning about the boards from the previous night. I enjoy hearing from the experts about the optimal strategies. The expert in this case was Donal Garvey, whom we faced in the Gala Pairs where Anna made a 4♠x against him and his partner Pat Quinn. We were thrilled to secure a second-place finish in the Intermediate A pairs. Initially, we planned to stay and compete in the Opens on Sunday. However, one evening, while socialising with Nicola O'Dowd and her mother Ena, we decided to join forces and enter the team event instead. *[Our columnists are getting together! Ed.]* Anyone who knows me is aware that I take bridge seriously but also enjoy a good laugh. So, as Ena and Nicola headed off for the first round, I jokingly said to Ena, "Don't come back unless you bid and make 7NT!" We outdid ourselves and were sitting in second place after the first session. In the second session, playing North, I picked up this hand with 21 HCP.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vul None.

		♠KQ5			
		♥AHJ			
		♦J108			
		♣AK83			
♠8732		N		♠J1094	
♥864		W		♥10532	
♦432		E		♦7	
♣QJ4		S		♣10765	
		♠A6			
		♥Q97			
		♦AKQ965			
		♣92			



I opened 2♣ (20-22), though I considered a Multi 2♦. Both openings would have led to a 2NT rebid, so I'm not entirely sure why I chose 2♣. Anna bid 2♦ [relay] and I rebid 2NT. If I had opened 2♦, she would have responded 2NT, indicating she had 15+ points, which would have panicked me! We used Gerber to check for Aces and Kings (4♣, 4♠, 5♣, 5NT) and ended up in 7NT. Oh, did I mention this was against Donal Garvey and Pat Quinn, who were likely seeking revenge for the earlier 4♠x? Donal even told us his son rang from London to ask how Anna made it! [This would be Irish international, Tommy Garvey. Ed.] The pressure was on, knowing they would exploit any weakness, but I completely trusted Anna's bid as she has never bid us to a grand slam we have failed to make. I just had to play my part and not mess it up! I received the lead of the ♠J, and as you can see, there are 14 tricks in it. The board itself wasn't particularly special, but it came up right after all our jesting about it. Ena jokingly asked if I was satisfied now that I got my 7NT. I briefly considered teasing her by saying we didn't bid it, but I didn't as she has fast become one of my favourite people to see at Congresses.

This year Anna and I added the Lucas 2s to our game. Opening 2♥/2♠ shows five, plus a 4/5 card minor and 5-11 points [readers may know these as Tartan 2s. Ed.]. I encountered this bid multiple times last year while playing in the Sonya Britton, and John Forsythe was kind enough to give me his notes. Anna often jokes that without having it in our repertoire we would struggle to have an opening bid in many tournaments. She's quite right about that! During the Lambert Cup we frequently opened 2♥ or 2♠. On the hand below, I opened 2♥ as East and everybody else passed.

**Board 6. Dealer East. Vul E/W.**

			♠QJ2		
			♥Q52		
			♦AQ962		
			♣109		
♠7543		N		♠AK10	
♥J109				♥K8763	
♦J8	W	E		♦4	
♣AQ82				♣6543	
		S			
			♠986		
			♥A4		
			♦K10753		
			♣KJ7		

South led a spade to the Jack and Ace. I played the Ace as when South gets in again, I want her to think that her partner has the King and she would play into my K10 enabling me to catch the Queen if North has it. It's something we all do as declarer - make your opponents believe that their partner holds better cards than they actually do. (I would never do this as defender though as I would not want to mislead my partner. It is perfectly acceptable to confuse your opposition but it's important not to confuse or lie to your partner.) My plan is to now finesse the club and I'm delighted when the Queen holds but North drops the nine. This puts me on notice that it may possibly be a singleton. I play ♥J which is covered with the Queen, King and Ace. As I had hoped South came back a spade, the 9, and North is snookered. She puts up her Queen and I win with the King. That second spade lead from South was clearly MUD so I take two more rounds of trumps. I now play a spade from dummy to my 10 followed by a club back to the Ace and North plays the 10 so I'm thrilled as I know I'm now making three club tricks. I then dump my losing diamond on the ♠7 and give up a club, making 2♥+3 and getting ourselves an outright top. In Anna's words "It's a great bid!"

While traveling home from Navan after a Bridge session, Anna mentioned that you must be able to enjoy watching your partner play. I must admit I hadn't considered it until she brought it up, but it's very true. I have enjoyed watching her and Paddy

play many hands throughout the year, especially the following two boards. One from a Swiss team event and the other from a club game.

**Balbriggan Swiss Teams**

**Board 19. Dealer East. Vul N/S.**

			♠A105		
			♥-		
			♦QJ986		
			♣KJ843		
♠864		N		♠Q3	
♥AKJ42				♥Q107	
♦A107	W	E		♦532	
♣A6				♣Q10752	
		S			
			♠KJ972		
			♥98652		
			♦K4		
			♣9		

West opened 1♥. Playing Ghestem two-suited overcalls, I, overcalled 2NT as North, showing the two lowest unbid suits. East passes and Anna bids 3♦ which West doubles. ♥A is led, ruffed. Anna plays a spade to ♠K a club towards the King which wins as West holds off his Ace. She ruffs a club in hand, noting the fall of the Ace. She plays ♦K, which West wins and continues hearts, again ruffed. She draws trumps in two rounds and then plays the ♠A on which East's Queen falls making all her spades winners. The result is 3♦x +2 earning us 11 IMPs. I often joke with her, saying "It must be your birthday getting presents like that" when she managed to avoid losing the club trick. However, in this case, that remark was fitting because it actually was her birthday that day!

Anna has been an amazing sport throughout the year, willingly travelling all over the country with me. She attended every tournament, congress, and regional competition I asked her to. We've been playing together for about a year and a half now, and she has significantly improved my game. She has challenged me to become better. I greatly admire her thinking and logic. I highly value her opinion and appreciate her insights on boards I may have played poorly or could have played better, knowing it's never criticism. We are both



comfortable and confident in our partnership and, more importantly, in our friendship, allowing us to discuss our reasoning without offending each other. It's essential to recognise that when we sit down at the table, we are as responsible for our partner's enjoyment as we are for our own so whatever is said is done so with the best of intentions. I believe we complement each other so well and make a great team.

**Longford Club night**

**Board 9. Dealer East. Vul None.**

			♠ 1094				
			♥ J852				
			♦ Q95				
			♣ Q107				
♠ A		N		♠ KJ52			
♥ AK1096		W		♥ -			
♦ J832		E		♦ K1074			
♣ 532		S		♣ AK964			
			♠ Q8763				
			♥ Q743				
			♦ A6				
			♣ J8				

I open 1♣ as East, Paddy replies 1♥ and I rebid 1♠. Paddy bids 2♦, I bid 5♦ and to my shock he bid 6♦! I really didn't know how to show him the weakness of my hand and the void apart from bidding all three suits and quickly agreeing diamonds. He got the lead of the ♠10 to his Ace. Quite the challenge lies ahead of him trying to make a slam missing the Ace and Queen of trump! He plays ♦J, which goes Q, K and A. South returns a heart which Paddy wins with his Ace and now plays the ♦8 and lets it run. To my and also his surprise it wins! A real Houdini moment!! He takes out the last trump with ♦10, followed by the ♠K on which he discards a club. He now plays the top two clubs which win and then ruffs a club, establishing the suit. ♥K and a heart ruff, concluding with the winning clubs. It's a real adrenaline rush watching boards like these!

Paddy and I concluded our club year on a high note. Over the past two years of playing together regularly, we won the Captain's competition and came second in the Club Championship both years.

This year, our third year of playing together, we reversed those results and finally won the Club Championship. Finally securing the win was especially thrilling and rewarding.

The playing season concluded with a trip to Westmanstown for the 4Fun Teams. Throughout the season, we faced numerous lineup changes. Every time we found replacements for those who withdrew, someone else would drop out. Securing a novice player was particularly challenging, but we eventually managed to get Julie Lynch registered with the CBAI. Julie had just completed her lessons and courageously joined us for the competition. (Paddy said she played a blinder!) We believe she was the CBAI's second newest player, as it was announced that another player had registered just the day before! Our team consisted of Paddy McDermott and Julie Lynch, and Betty Courtney and myself. We kicked off the competition by playing against Frank Kelly, the creator of this event. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day, filled with many promising novices. From

my experiences, I can say that the competition was played in the intended spirit of fun!

I wrapped up the year by attending my first Governing Council meeting, which I must say was a real eye-opener. I had no idea how much effort went into allowing us to sit down and play this game we all dearly love. I left the meeting with an even greater level of respect and admiration for Dermot and all the members of his team in CBAI HQ.

Without any congresses or tournaments to attend this summer, I'm not sure how I'll manage! Bridge really is such a fantastic game that sweeps you through a whirlwind of emotions, from elation to frustration, desperation, and even exasperation. There's always a new convention to learn, making it a truly endless adventure. I'm excited to see where our next adventure brings us!

*[Editor's note: I can only echo my observations on Nicola Brady's article. This kind of enthusiasm and humility is pure gold dust, it's what allows our game to flourish. Well done Melissa]*



The 4 Fun Teams squad.



# Master Defence

Rory Timlin



This is the first article in a new series on Defence, Declarer Play and Bidding. It is aimed at aspiring Master players and for Masters who want to keep sharp.

Assume that it is Teams scoring, unless otherwise advised. Assume lead style is 4th highest and defensive signals are normal, i.e. high-low to show an even number or high encouraging.

We start with six defensive problems, in order of increasing difficulty. All six hands here are based on hands in "The Second Daily Telegraph Bridge Quiz" by GCH Fox.

## Questions:

### (1) Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

<b>North (Dummy)</b>			
♠ Q7			
♥ 63			
♦ AKQJ72			
♣ K108			
		<b>You</b>	
N		♠ AKJ	
W	E	♥ 10754	
		♦ 965	
	S	♣ Q62	

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	1♥
P	3♦	P	3NT
All Pass			

West leads ♠3, Q, K, 4. You cash ♠AJ, declarer playing ♠69, West ♠25. What next?

### (2) Dealer South. Vul N/S. Teams.

		<b>North (Dummy)</b>	
		♠ 10973	
		♥ A5	
		♦ K964	
		♣ QJ8	
<b>You</b>			
♠ Q84		N	
♥ QJ1084		W	
♦ J5		E	
♣ 762		S	

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	3♠	P	4NT
P	5♠	P	5♠
All Pass			

You lead ♥Q to the A, 2, 3. Declarer cashes ♠AK, East following once and then letting go a heart. Now ♣5 to the 2, Q, 4, a heart ruff, ♠AK, East playing ♣39, and declarer exits in trumps, East discarding ♠10. What do you lead now?

### (3) Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams.

		<b>North (Dummy)</b>	
		♠ QJ863	
		♥ AKJ63	
		♦ 53	
		♣ 5	
<b>You</b>			
♠ A1097		N	
♥ 72		W	
♦ A6		E	
♣ A9874		S	

Playing 4 card Majors, South opens 1♠ and North raises to 4♠. (North might have splintered with 4♥ (or even bid 2♥?). You cash two minor suit aces, all following low. What next?

### (4) Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

		<b>North (Dummy)</b>	
		♠ Q1082	
		♥ 972	
		♦ A4	
		♣ AQ103	
<b>You</b>			
N		♠ 65	
W		♥ AKJ86	
E		♦ K103	
S		♣ KJ9	

W	N	E	S
P	1♣	1♥	1♠ <sup>1</sup>
P	2♠	P	4♠
All Pass			

<sup>1</sup> 5+ spades (neg. double with four spades)

Against 4♠, partner leads ♥4. You win ♥K and play ♥A followed by ♥J. Declarer plays ♥Q at trick two and ruffs at trick three. All follow to two top trumps and South leads ♣7, ♣8, ♣Q, ♣K. What now?

### (5) Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

		<b>North (Dummy)</b>	
		♠ KQ	
		♥ Q62	
		♦ A106	
		♣ 108642	
<b>You</b>			
♠ J8		N	
♥ J1083		W	
♦ J952		E	
♣ Q95		S	

South opens 2NT (20-22) and ends up in 6♣. Against 6♣, you lead ♥J. Declarer wins ♥K and cashes ♠AK, East discarding two small spades. Then declarer cashes ♥AQ, all following, and ♠AK. Then declarer exits in trumps to your queen, East discarding another spade. What do you lead now?



(6) Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

		North (Dummy)	
		♠ J762	
		♥ Q74	
		♦ K93	
		♣ 1063	
You			
♠ Q4		N	
♥ 653			
♦ AQJ1064	W	E	
♣ Q5		S	

W	N	E	S
			1♠
2♦	2♠	3♣	4♠
All Pass			

Against 4♠, you lead ♣Q which wins. You continue clubs and partner scores ♣K and ♣A, declarer following with ♣48J. How do you defend?

Answers:

(1) The full layout was:

		North (Dummy)	
		♠ Q7	
		♥ 63	
		♦ AKQJ72	
		♣ K108	
You			
♠ 108532	N	♠ AKJ	
♥ J9	W	♥ 10754	E
♦ 104		♦ 965	
♣ A743	S	♣ Q62	
		♠ 964	
		♥ AKQ2	
		♦ 83	
		♣ J95	

The key to the defence here is to watch the spots in spades. West leads ♠3, then ♠2 to show a 5 card suit, then ♠5. This is a **suit preference signal**, low card asking for the low ranking suit, clubs. If he wanted a heart shift, then he would play ♠10 at trick three. So switch to a club. Down two.

(2) The full layout was:

		North (Dummy)	
		♠ 10973	
		♥ A5	
		♦ K964	
		♣ QJ8	
You			
♠ Q84	N	♠ 6	
♥ QJ1084	W	♥ K9762	E
♦ J5		♦ Q73	
♣ 762	S	♣ 10943	
		♠ AKJ52	
		♥ 3	
		♦ A1082	
		♣ AK5	

In 6♠, South has won the heart lead, played two top trumps, eliminated hearts and clubs, and thrown you in with a trump. What now? **You have a full count of the hand.** Declarer is known to be 5143. So we must hope partner has ♠Q. Exit with a heart. The ruff and discard is no good to declarer. The defence will come to a diamond trick. One down. Note that a diamond exit instead of the heart will potentially blow the whole suit and let out the slam.

(3) The full layout was:

		North (Dummy)	
		♠ QJ863	
		♥ AKJ63	
		♦ 53	
		♣ 5	
You			
♠ A1097	N	♠ -	
♥ 72	W	♥ Q10954	E
♦ A6		♦ J9842	
♣ A9874	S	♣ J62	
		♠ K542	
		♥ 8	
		♦ KQ107	
		♣ KQ103	

You have cashed two minor suit aces. **The key to this hand is to see that the contract is defeated if you can prevent declarer entering his hand twice after discovering the trump distribution.** The sure way to kill an entry is to play a diamond. Declarer wins the diamond and leads ♠K (safety play in trumps). You win and play a heart. Declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a heart and plays a trump. You go ♠9. Declarer

wins in dummy, but cannot get back to hand to pick up trumps. One down. In the Bermuda Bowl in 1970, West played a heart at trick three, allowing the contract to make.

(4) The full layout was:

		North (Dummy)	
		♠ Q1082	
		♥ 972	
		♦ A4	
		♣ AQ103	
You			
♠ 43	N	♠ 65	
♥ 1054	W	♥ AKJ86	E
♦ 9762		♦ K103	
♣ 8654	S	♣ KJ9	
		♠ AKJ97	
		♥ Q3	
		♦ QJ85	
		♣ 72	

In 4♠, declarer ruffs the third heart, draws two rounds of trumps and plays a club to the queen. What do we know? Declarer started with seven cards in the Majors and six cards in the minors. If declarer started with 5242 or 5233 or 5224 distribution, then a **club exit will leave him with an inescapable diamond loser.** The big danger is that declarer started with 5242 including ♦Q. In that case a diamond exit blows the contract. 5242 is the most likely distribution for declarer, as she didn't finesse ♣10. Note that 5215 is less likely per se than 5242. And if declarer was 5215, she might have played the first club to the ace, to protect against a guess on the second round if East started with singleton ♣K or doubleton ♣KJ (or West might have led a singleton club at trick one).





(5) The full layout was:

				North (Dummy)						
				♠KQ						
				♥Q62						
				♦A106						
				♣108642						
				You						
♠J8		N		♠10976542						
♥J1083		W	E	♥974						
♦J952				♦Q43						
♣Q95		S		♣-						
				♠A3						
				♥AK5						
				♦K87						
				♣AKJ73						

In 6♣, declarer has drawn two top trumps, eliminated hearts and spades, before exiting in trumps. Back on lead, **you have a full count**. Declarer is 2335. To protect ♦Qxx in partner's hand, the winning defence is to exit with ♦J.

(6) The full layout was:

				North (Dummy)						
				♠J762						
				♥Q74						
				♦K93						
				♣1063						
				You						
♠Q4		N		♠105						
♥653		W	E	♥J9						
♦AQJ1064				♦8752						
♣Q5		S		♣AK972						
				♠AK983						
				♥AK1082						
				♦-						
				♣J84						

On a club lead the defence cashes three rounds of clubs. What are your thoughts? The setting trick **may** come in diamonds, but **will** certainly come via a trump promotion if partner continues clubs. So discard ♦A. Looking at ♦K in dummy, partner will get the message and will come a club to beat the game. Note that bidding a new suit 3♣ on a passed hand is likely to be lead directing with a diamond fit, thus increasing the chances of South being void in diamonds.

**Last Word:**

To sum up, some of the keys to good defence are to **concentrate hard** on **counting the distribution** and **watching the spot cards**. In these examples, counting the hand is key on hands 2, 4 and 5, watching the small cards is key on hand 1, and visualising the play is key on hands 3, 5 and 6.

# Making Bricks From Straw – Zia strikes again

Editor

**If I told you that in a suit contract, with a sidesuit KQ2 in dummy opposite the singleton 4 in your own hand, you'd make two top tricks and a ruff in that sidesuit, you'd assume I'd been spending too much time watching Fox "News". But the rules of Bridge gravity have never applied to Zia.**

Here's the great man in action at the 2020 European Winter Games in Monte Carlo, in partnership with Jeff Meckstroth.

Dealer North. Vul None.

				♠73						
				♥KQ2						
				♦A742						
				♣AK53						
				You						
♠AQ109		N		♠J8						
♥J953		W	E	♥A10876						
♦J9				♦Q853						
♣964		S		♣Q2						
				♠K6542						
				♥4						
				♦K106						
				♣J1087						

The bidding went:

	W	N	E	S
		1NT	P	2♣
P		2♦	P	2♠
All Pass				

There would appear to be four trump losers plus ♥A. A heart winner can park a losing diamond, but there's no reason to expect declarer to drop the ♣Q doubleton offside. So your "at a glance" expectation is down one. Read on!

West led a low heart, Zia put up the King and East decided it would be a good idea to duck. Zia led a spade to the K and A. West played another heart, low from dummy and East decided it would be a good idea to put up the Ace now. Zia ruffed, crossed to ♣A and led a second trump, East's J winning. The diamond return was won in hand. Zia led ♣J and put up the King, felling the Queen. He could now play his winners in the three sidesuits, meaning West could score his two remaining trump winners but no more. 2♥+1 !!

The ability to induce defensive errors is indeed a rare and priceless commodity for a declarer. Zia has always had it, so has Meckstroth. Joe Grue is another. Here at home, my partner BJ O'Brien has it, as does Tom Hanlon. I well remember David Jackson telling me he'd never seen anyone make as many unmakeable contracts as Tom. I think there's a good book waiting to be written there, but the good news is I won't be writing it! I can, however, suggest a title – "The Rumpelstiltskin Factor"



# John Comyn 1936-2024

A tribute by Séamus Dowling



**John Comyn, one of the all-time, best-known personalities in Irish bridge, died in a Dublin nursing home on the 4th of June. He was 88 and had been ill. Originally from Drogheda, he was bridge correspondent for Independent newspapers for 60 years.**

His criticism of players and officials (although he never mentioned names), and of the state of the game in general, infuriated many readers but his abrasive and trenchant style gave rise to debate and was instrumental in generating and maintaining widespread interest in the game. In fact, his column was the first thing that many bridge players turned to when they opened the newspaper. When he ceased to write the weekly column it was missed – what he wrote was intelligible to the mass of club players who were the majority of his readers. During the early 1990s when the Independent dropped his column there was country-wide protest. The editor got the message and John's column was quickly restored.

John was a sports journalist by profession and was head of sports for Independent newspapers for many years. Known principally for his reporting on horse racing, he could be as caustic in his criticism of horses, as he was in his comments on humans. When the Dublin city marathon started he was on the RTE panel of commentators and he maintained he could walk faster than some of the runners. That was John. It was his style. He told it as he saw it. In a strange way it endeared him to his readers.



John loved the game of bridge. It was an essential part of his life and apart from keeping bridge on the pages of a national newspaper, he was a dedicated supporter of the game. If a pair dropped out of a national championship final at the last moment a phone call to John ensured that the vacancy was filled. During the early years of the annual inter-city match between Dublin and Liverpool there was difficulty filling places on the open team but you could depend on John and he became a fixture on the team for some years. He was a keen golfer and he organised a number of golf classics to support junior bridge and used his horse-racing connections to get a generous donation from one of racing's best-known personalities, J.P. McManus.

In the late 70s John approached Rothmans, the cigarette manufacturer, with a proposal that would raise the profile of the game and benefit clubs throughout the country. The Rothman's Kings, led by John, toured the country meeting challenges. John was

able to guarantee publicity for the sponsor, players throughout the country met top-class opponents they would not otherwise have met and Rothman's table covers and playing cards were distributed to clubs.

I partnered John at the bridge table on occasions. You had to be patient when playing with John – following a session, you were likely to be described as the 'world's worst player,' or worse still 'a right tulip,' but you knew you were joining a big club and in good company. However, we won three national championships together – the Davidson cup and the IBU club pairs twice and once we were on the same Burke trophy, inter-county winning team. John won other national events, of course with a number of different partners and played on Irish senior teams in World and European championships as well as representing the country in the annual Corn Cairdis match against England.



He never made the Irish open team, although he went close - he and Maurice Roche from Wexford once finished fourth in the open trials when the first three pairs won automatic selection. He was a frequent member of the Leinster team and probably won more interprovincial championship medals than anyone else. He attained the rank of life master, and was just short of being a grand master. When Eric Kokish came to coach the Irish team in the early '90s John was one of those recruited to assist at the coaching sessions. Not one to lavish praise on fellow players, nonetheless he was greatly impressed by the Canadian and there is little doubt but his experience during those sessions was a factor in his subsequent successes.

John Comyn was a multi-talented man. He was an accomplished athlete in his youth and was one of the country's leading 440 yards (now 400 metres) runners. He was useful on the tennis court. However, it was as a singer that he won the highest accolades. One of the leading Irish tenors of his era, he won the John McCormack

cup at the Dublin Feis Ceoil in 1961. The cup is contested by the winners of various classes - tenor, soprano, baritone, contralto and so on. John was the unanimous choice of the adjudicators. He possessed a big voice and sang with the country's most prestigious light opera groups. Jussi Bjorling was his favourite singer and if you wanted to distract him from bridge you only had to mention a singer or an opera. He and his wife Anne, who survives him, attended the Verona Arena many times. Nothing caused him more distress than the deterioration in his voice following treatment for cancer in the late 90s. He went back to singing lessons afterwards but the voice failed to recover to his satisfaction and it remained silent.

With a lifetime in the game behind him it was fitting that John should commit some of his reminiscences to paper, so in 2010 he published, *Doubled Up: Laughing at the Game of Bridge*, an account of humorous experiences at the bridge table. This time he did mention names but in jovial and fond remembrance. The book ends on a sombre note - his tale

of surviving cancer three times. Despite the fact that he once did a deal with a tobacco company for the benefit of bridge, he was a life-long non-smoker. He deprecated the habit, describing smokers as having 'suicidal tendencies.' His fight against his repeated illnesses and his recovery each time showed resilience - you might call it stubbornness, an unwillingness to give in that transferred to the bridge table and made him an exacting partner and an intractable opponent.

The once tall, athletic, handsome man, who basked in rapturous applause when he played the Student Prince in Sigmund Romberg's operetta, declined in recent years. At the end he went 'gently into that good night.' John Comyn shall be missed. I know it is an oft-repeated cliché, nonetheless 'his like will not be seen again' is a truism.

## Comyn's Corner

*Anecdotes from John Comyn's book "Doubled Up".*

*John played bridge for over 70 years and was Bridge Correspondent of the Sunday Independent for 59 years. In 2010 he published a personal memoir "Doubled Up", recounting the funniest episodes he'd encountered. Before he died, John kindly agreed to let us dip into his treasure trove of funny recollections.*

*In our earlier issues we featured 'Comyn's Corner'. We re-publish one of the stories here...*

### Heard it through the Grapevine

This story comes from the pre-bidding box era, when bids were spoken.

The late, great Pat Walshe saw his partner play 4H and make plus one. He went ballistic. "Partner that was terrible!! Can't you see that 6H is cold!! His poor partner [John Comyn] was perplexed. "Pat there are 11 tricks and out". Pat wasn't having it. "6H is cold", he shouted. "End of story".

After the game, a grinning Pat showed John the scoresheet. 4H+1 everywhere bar one table, which played 6H-1. "That guy at the next table was earwiggling all night, so I gave him something to chew on", Pat explained happily!!



# Enniscorthy Bridge Club – 75 not out

Jim Doyle



**Enniscorthy Bridge Club is a relatively strong club in terms of playing standards. Club nights are Wednesdays at 7pm, on the ground floor of the Bailey Bar & Eatery, with ample parking just outside.**

Current membership stands at just over 40 which is down about ten members from pre covid times. The weekly game averages seven tables, with a “hardcore” playing group of about 35. Sheila McGrath is the current President, Kathleen Minnock is the Treasurer and Jim Doyle is Secretary. Well known players to Journal readers include Anna Kavanagh and Hugo Kelly, both with over 50 years’ membership, as well as Katherine Lennon, former CBAI President.

Enniscorthy Bridge Club President Sheila McGrath welcomed members and former members to a very pleasant function in the Bailey Bar & Eatery on 10th April, as the club celebrated a significant milestone - the 75th anniversary of the founding of Club in the Railway Hotel on 11th April 1949.

In her welcome address, Sheila expressed appreciation to all those who had helped the club flourish over the years and especially thanked the current members for their loyal support. Sheila made a special presentation to two long serving members, Hugo Kelly and Marjorie Mulligan, both of whom have been members for over 50 of the club’s 75 years. A third long serving member, Anna Kavanagh, received a similar presentation later in the month.

Following a very pleasant meal, the group adjourned to the card tables for their regular game. The cards for the night were hand dealt and

some very interesting deals came up. Two in particular gave the N/S pairs some trouble.

**Board 1. Dealer North. Vul None.**

		♠AQ			
		♥Q10			
		♦AKQ8543			
		♣AK			
♠1042		N		♠K975	
♥J987432		W	E	♥A	
♦-				♦J76	
♣543		S		♣QJ976	
				♠J863	
				♥K65	
				♦1092	
				♣1082	

W	N	E	S
	2♣	P	2♦
P	3♦	All Pass	

North faced a problem on rebid. Two players rebid 3♦ and played there making the obvious 11 tricks. South felt that they had nothing to add. One pair bid and made 5♦. Four of the Norths rebid 3NT, making +2 three times and one player holding themselves to +1. Two pairs got to 6♦ by south and both went off. 6♦ makes Double Dummy if played by North. If 6♦ is played by South, a spade lead knocks it straight away. If you escape a spade lead and West leads a heart, East takes the Ace and has a safe return of a club. South is unlucky with the 3/0 break in trumps as otherwise the ♦10 would provide an entry to the ♥K to discard the losing spade. The run of the Diamonds and the ♣AK leaves East trying to mind the ♣Q and also keep a guard on the ♠K. They can’t do both so South can win the last two tricks. When you play to the ♥K East has to discard either ♣Q or his ♠ guard. South can then either play ♣10 winner or drop the singleton ♠K on their

right. On a club lead, play off three rounds of trumps and then play a heart. East can take the ♥A but has to return a club. Run the diamonds as before and East is squeezed.

Unlikely way to make the contract as most players would simply finesse the ♠Q and go down 1 in 6c.

I think the North hand should be happy to bid 3NT over 2♦ following Hamman’s Law -

“If you have a choice of reasonable bids and one of them is 3NT, then bid it.”

**Board 4. Dealer West. Vul All.**

		♠2			
		♥KQJ8			
		♦6			
		♣KQ87653			
♠K984		N		♠1053	
♥5		W	E	♥10976432	
♦AQ10743				♦-	
♣A9		S		♣J42	
				♠AQJ76	
				♥A	
				♦KJ9852	
				♣10	

W	N	E	S
1♦	2♣	P	2♠
P	2♣	P	?

Board 4 also caused problems.

West opened 1♦ and North overcalled 2♣. South can bid 2♠ forcing as it is not a passed hand. North is hardly strong enough to bid 3♥ and will probably bid 3♣. South should probably bid 3NT - Hamman’s Law strikes again. Double Dummy 3NT cannot make as there are serious communication problems between the two hands but two declarers did make 3NT as it is not always easy for defenders to defend correctly on this sort of hand.



The best contract for NS, in theory, is in clubs where they can make 10 tricks. The score sheet showed that people in general got too high as there were -100, -200s and even one -400.

Players would be well advised to remember another well known bridge maxim

“With a misfit, bid cautiously; with a good fit, bid boldly.” [Indeed. And as Moreen McCarthy drilled into me “With a misfit, play in no-trumps”. Ed.]

The winners on the night were Joan Kavanagh and Eilish Fenlon with Maurice Delaney and David Garahy second, Eileen Kehoe and Jim Doyle third and Jim Byrne and Charlie Kavanagh fourth.

## Club History

On April 11th 1949, eleven people met in the Railway Hotel in Enniscorthy and decided to form the Enniscorthy Bridge Club.

There was already a thriving bridge community in the area. There were quite a number of small groups playing in private houses and also in the Catholic Workingman’s Club. Newspaper reports tell us that four teams of four had played against the Wexford club in 1940 and that Enniscorthy players travelled to play in the Stafford Cup in Wexford in 1945. It was also noted in the minutes of the first meeting that a surplus existed from weekly play in the Railway Hotel and these funds were to be part of the club funds.

After the official founding, members continued their travels around the country. Some travelled to Portlaoise to play in the Jessop Cup in 1950 and four teams travelled to Waterford to take on the home side with Enniscorthy winning the top match but losing the other three. In 1951, members travelled to Tramore for a turkey competition.

The strength of the club in its early years can be gauged from the fact that in 1953 the team of Tom Brick, Jack Kelly, Mike O’Brien and Johnny Lynch won the Kelbourne

Cup, the National team event of the CBAI. They beat a Cork team in the final and this was the first time ever that the competition was won by a team from outside Dublin.

The club also had the honour of having two players [Rory Kelly and Niall Tóibín] representing Ireland in the European Junior Championships in the early 1980s. Rory’s mother, Dolores, was a great servant to the club and to Wexford bridge. Niall went on to play on the Irish Open team a number of times in World and European Championships before his untimely passing in 2004.

Other players who brought great honour to the county and the club include Moreen McCarthy. At a time when it was a major feat for a non Dublin player to get on an Irish team, she played on the Women’s team in the European Championships on four occasions and also played on the Camrose team (open to men and women) three times. She was elected CBAI President of the CBAI in 1968 and IBU President in 1969.

Katherine Lennon also represented Ireland in the Geneva World Championships in 1990. She was CBAI President for the 2010-11 season and is now an Honorary life member of Enniscorthy Bridge Club.

One of our Arklow-based members, Maria Whelan, was a member of the Irish Women’s team in the European Championships in Belgium in 2018.

On the National scene Hugo Kelly, Murray McDonald, Anna Kavanagh and Katherine Lennon won the Bankers Trophy for Intermediate A teams in 1982.

Katherine was also involved in 2013 when she plus Frank O’Farrell, Jim Sexton and Jim Doyle won the IBU Burke Trophy for Inter-county teams. This is the only time in its history that the trophy came to Wexford.

Club members compete each year for a number of prestigious trophies. The Boragh (Boro) Cup was presented by Mrs E Davis,

one of the founding members and was first played for in 1951. The Jack Kelly Cup was presented by the Kelly family in Jack’s memory, another of the founding members and was first played for in 1989. Both of these events were formerly two session open events and would have attracted good support from around the region. Declining entries meant that the decision was made some years ago to make them club competitions.

One event which was very popular for many years was the Strawberry Fair competition held in or around the time of the Strawberry Fair in Enniscorthy. The event attracted a large entry from all over. 1976 saw players travelling from Belfast and Cork and of course a good contingent from Dublin and Waterford with a total of 101 pairs playing.

Like most bridge clubs, Enniscorthy Bridge Club do not have their own premises. But we have been lucky with the venues that were made available to us. First was the Railway Hotel in the 1940s (later renamed the Slaney Valley Hotel). The Athenaeum was a venue for a while and then Murphy Floods Hotel, where games were played in the Ballroom, a couple of small rooms up the stairs including the Blue room and of course a long stint in the Marconi Room commencing in the 1981-82 season.

The club spent a while in St Patrick’s Special School in 2003-04 because of renovations to Murphy Floods. Sadly, after the fire in Murphy Floods in September 2005, we were homeless again. We spent a short while in the IFA Centre and moved back to the Market Square to “Shenanigans”. Our latest move was to the Bailey in 2012 where we are still happily ensconced on the ground floor. To all our hosts over the years, our sincere thanks.

We have been fortunate over the years that the standard in the club was high enough to warrant support from beyond Enniscorthy. We certainly benefited from attendees from Wexford and



Arklow, as well as Bunclody and Ferns. The club has a long tradition of members travelling to Arklow and, of course, many members were also members of clubs based in the Wexford Community Bridge Centre

One of the reasons the club has thrived and survived has been the dedication of club officers who have been willing to serve for many years. Many clubs regularly struggle to find a secretary or a treasurer, then find someone who will do it for only one year. We are therefore eternally grateful to special people like Dolores Kelly who served as Secretary for 45 years, Malachy Smith who was Treasurer for 29 years and Kathleen Minnock who has been Treasurer of the club for the past 22 years.

The CBAI President's Merit Award every year recognises the unsung heroes and heroines of Irish bridge – the volunteers without whom clubs or regions could not function, but who never seek acclaim or put themselves forward for formal office. Dolores Kelly was a very worthy winner in 2011. [And so say all of us. Ed.]

A perusal of the minute books available over the years show a number of recurring topics. Problems with a current venue for various reasons and the resulting search for a suitable new location crop up every so often. The issue of slow play also features regularly (some things never change!). The size of club membership which reached over 90 at one stage and resulted in membership being closed for a while has not featured recently!

The club has survived 75 years and something called Covid. Here's looking forward to the 100th Anniversary.

*[Editor's Note. I'm from Wexford myself, a classmate of Jim's in fact. He once memorably described me as "a former native of Rosslare". When I was cutting my teeth at this game, you went to Enniscorthy to get your ass handed to you. But you learned. In addition to the names Jim gives, I can recall Larry Codd and the wonderful Aodh ["Ogie"] Nolan. I played in that 1976 Strawberry Fair competition – can you believe 101 pairs played?! I'd been playing for two years and my partner was Jim Fox*

*from Rosslare. We finished 6th. I was walking on air afterwards. Like Jim, I hope the club reaches its centenary. But the challenge is clear – new blood is badly needed. This issue is by no means unique to Enniscorthy. CBAI supremo Dermot O'Brien is a progressive thinker, and I've no doubt this matter is front and centre for him. Sharing of best recruitment practice must be a good idea. What works in the schools and universities? What works in Golden Years circles? How to attract members in the intervening 50 years? What is working in other countries? Can we do more to sell the benefits of Bridge to National and Local Government?]*



Enniscorthy Bridge Club President Sheila McGrath making a special presentation to Marjorie Mulligan and Hugo Kelly who both have over 50 years' continuous membership



Enniscorthy Bridge Club President Sheila McGrath (fourth from left, front row) with members at Clubs 75th Anniversary Function



# When I was a Boye!

Tales from the 2014 Spingold and Reisinger winner

## Boye's bridge

Helgemo and Helness at the Cavendish Invitational

By **BOYE BROGELAND**, FLEKKEFJORD NORWAY



**E**ACH YEAR during the second week-end of May the world's biggest money tournament, The Cavendish Invitational, is played. The auction of the 48 pairs prior to the start in 2009 brought in \$958,500 and four Norwegians were dreaming of taking a large slice of that cake.

Odin Svendsen and I arrived directly from the Spring Fours in England where we had reached the quarter finals in the Gillis team. That was our first international tournament together – we had in fact not played much more than a hundred hands together – so it was a perfect warm-up for the Cavendish. After a shaky start we played a tight and good game for many matches in a row, although the quarter final turned out to be an anti-climax. Nevertheless, it was comforting to see that Odin had full control of the system and that we thought along similar lines in most situations (I had sent him the system notes that I use when playing with Espen Lindqvist in the national team). After intensive bidding practice on the flight from Atlanta to Las Vegas (remove the twos, threes, fours and fives from the deck and deal thirteen cards each and you'll be surprised how many slam hands appear) and painstakingly committing the system to memory whilst sitting by the poolside at Green Valley Ranch, we feel ready to play ball with the big boys.

Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness had made their way to Las Vegas a couple of days before us. They were to play the John Roberts Teams, which is a warm-up event for the Cavendish with good money prizes (entry fee however, is \$10,000). They were to play in a team with new sponsor Pierre Zimmerman.

The Swiss national, who last year played in the French national team, had also hired Geir and Tor for this summer's European championships in San Remo and the Transnationals in Sao Paulo in September. This last named playing engagement clashed with the Bermuda Bowl and this was the reason Geir and Tor chose to skip the national team this year.

The lucrative deal with Zimmerman appears to hang by a thin thread as the European Bridge League will not permit Geir to take part in the European championships because of the infamous Heimdal case. (Geir and others were sanctioned by the Norwegian Bridge League, NBL, for reporting the result of a match that did not take place). Geir's only hope is a reprieve from the NBL. Rumours had suggested that the ban might be lifted in time, but on the day before the Cavendish the NBL announce that the ban will stay in place until September – no European Championships for Geir. Their mood is not helped by coming third-last in the warm-up event.

Odin and I have a great start in the Cavendish when we manage to make a doubled partscore against Curtis Cheek and Joe Grue on the third hand of the day. The rest of the day turns out to be a long uphill struggle and at the end of the day we are lying last. It doesn't help much that only two of the last three sessions are counted – we end up in a very disappointing 39th place.

Things are more exciting for Geir and Tor. Having played a steady game they are lying fifth with one session remaining. The Cavendish-Kings Bobby Levin and Steve Weinstein, who have won this event three times before, have opened up a big lead on the rest of the

field. But a second or third place is not to be sneezed at these days with the players collecting \$17,010 and \$11,340 respectively.

Make yourself comfortable in Tor Helness's chair for the first hand of the last session. On your left is Ton Bakkeren from the Netherlands whilst Huub Bertens, also from the land of the clogs, is on your right. Your partner is none other than Geir Helgemo:

♠ AQ   ♡ 10 6 5 4   ◇ AKQ3   ♣ Q95

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Bakkeren	Geir	Bertens	You
pass	2♣	pass	1NT <sup>15-17</sup>
pass	3♡	pass	2♡
pass	3♡	pass	?

2♣ is Stayman, and the raise to 3♡ is game forcing with 4+ support. What do you do now?

Your trumps are very weak but you are otherwise maximum with a possible ruffing value in spades and a decent honour structure. You therefore should cue bid to indicate that your hand is not unsuitable for slam.

Now Geir takes control. First he bids 4NT, Roman Key Card Blackwood, and over your 5♡ response – two key cards without the ♡Q – he bids the grand in hearts!

This is the sequence so far:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Bakkeren	Geir	Bertens	You
pass	2♣	pass	1NT
pass	3♡	pass	2♡
pass	4NT	pass	3♠
pass	7♡	pass	5♡
pass	7♡	pass	?

Do you trust Geir to have the complete picture, or do you have anything to add?

Geir is of course as keen as you are for a slam swing your way, and he may have gambled on a five-card side suit coming in. The odds must surely be that Geir has the ♠K, the three top hearts and ♣AK for him to jump to seven over the 5♡ reply? If that's the case you have twelve on top in notrumps – thirteen if hearts break – and extra chances if hearts don't break.

Nevertheless, Tor chooses to pass 7♡ and Bakkeren leads the ♡7.



♠ K 10 9 4  
♥ A K 9 8 2  
♦ 10  
♣ A K 8

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

Well, Geir had gambled that the hearts would play for no loser! The hope was of course that Tor would have five hearts, but four to the jack would have given a 53% chance of avoiding a heart loser. In the worst case (opposite four small) trumps needed to be 2-2 which is a 40.7% probability. The presence of the ten increases the chances to 46.4% (playing in accordance with the theory of restricted choice).

At trick one you of course play an honour from dummy – no sane person leads a small trump from QJxx against a grand. Huub Bertens follows with the queen. Can you sniff out the heart layout?

The Cavendish is scored as IMPs across the whole field. This means that the score at your table is compared against the other 23 tables. Say the rest of the field plays in 6♥ making thirteen tricks collecting 1010 points for North-South. If you go one off in 6♥ you lose 1060 – 16 imps – against every table, a total of 368 imps. If you bid and make the grand and record 1510 in the Bridgmate you gain 500 points – 11 imps against every other table, a total of 253 imps. Your play of the trump suit could in other words swing as many as 621 imps and I can assure you that will make a big difference to your placing and your dollars. Can you feel your heart beating a little faster?

You now need to ask yourself the right questions. Does anyone lead a trump from three to the jack against a grand? And, will this person, whose heart rate is likely somewhat elevated, choose the 7 from J73? On the other hand isn't it less dangerous to lead a trump from two small after this bidding sequence? The opponents are hardly missing QJxxx having bid this grand but they might be missing the queen of trumps?

Have you made up your mind?

Tor has no wish to analyse this seven of hearts to death. He chooses to go with the odds for this suit combination and not to be fooled by Bakkeren. According to the theory of restricted choice, it is correct to finesse against West when the jack or queen appears on the first round of the suit. In practice this fails:

♠ K 10 9 4	♠ 5
♥ A K 9 8 2	♥ Q J
♦ 10	♦ J 8 7 6 5 4
♣ A K 8	♣ 10 7 4 3
♠ J 8 7 6 3 2	♠ A Q
♥ 7 3	♥ 10 6 5 4
♦ 9 2	♦ A K Q 3
♣ J 6 2	♣ Q 9 5

Just bad luck? Or something else?

Everyone plays the same deals simultaneously in the Cavendish and this deal is naturally the subject of intense debate in the break before the next round. I have to say I have much sympathy for Tor's line as I know that I would much prefer to lead from three to the jack than two small against a grand. However, both Tor and I have overlooked an important point which Geir shares with us midway through the next session: "There is no restricted choice here, is there?"

The theory of restricted choice is based on the assumption that the defender has a choice of whether to follow suit with the queen or the jack when holding queen-jack doubleton. The best defensive tactic is to pick the card to play at random. In the long run therefore the jack will appear half the time and the queen the other half.

In this particular case though East is forced to play the queen from queen-jack doubleton. No one leads from three to the queen of trumps against a grand and therefore the position of the queen will become clear if East follows with the jack. Ergo, the theory of restricted choice cannot apply in this case. In order to play with the odds and disregard any psychological as-



Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness

pects you therefore need to focus on the probability of queen-jack doubleton with East (6.8%) versus singleton queen (6.2%). I can assure you that Tor would have cashed the top hearts if he had appreciated this finer point at the table.

Did you also go wrong? Don't despair. Perhaps you had the courage to convert 7♥ to 7NT. In that case you should score 1520 points and heaps of imps, which will bring you third place instead of an unprofitable eighth.

♠ K 10 9 4  
♥ A K 9 8 2  
♦ 10  
♣ A K 8

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

How do you play 7NT? Let's assume a club lead to your king.

If you don't pause for thought and play to drop the ♥QJ, because you now know the distribution, you probably haven't come across the "Bridge Master" software. Using this program, the cards always redistribute themselves so that you go down if you don't follow the best line. So, if you play the hearts from the top you will discover that West actually started with three to the jack. Without any information about the other suits, the so called "vacant places" in the defenders' hands, it is correct to take the heart finesse on the second round according to the theory of restricted choice.

You do a lot better not taking an immediate view in hearts. Cash the ♠AQ and ♦AK, throwing a heart from





# Junior Bridge Focus

Luca Crone

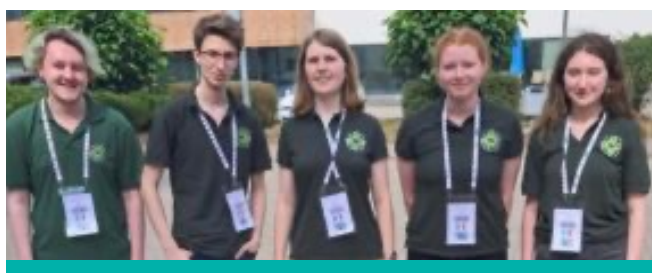


This year Ireland had two teams in the 29th European Youth Team Championships held in Wroclaw, Poland, in July.

The teams were:

## U21 Team:

David Hoyne, Bence Orosz, Phedra Kingston, Eve Connell & Klara Flanagan. NPC: Margaret Murphy



Pictured: David Hoyne, Bence Orosz, Phedra Kingston, Eve Connell & Klara Flanagan.

## U26 Team:

Luca Crone & Matthew O'Farrell, Isabel Burke & Tom Gorey, Leah Finnegan & Denise Walsh. NPC: John Phelan



Pictured: Fearghal O'Boyle, Isabel Burke, Matthew O'Farrell, Denise Walsh, Leah Finnegan, Luca Crone, Tom Gorey and John Phelan.

Wroclaw is Poland's third-largest city and is known for its collection of roughly 400 gnomes. They originated as communist satire in the 1950s and have multiplied in recent years. The bridge was held in a sports complex on the outskirts of the city while the teams stayed closer to the centre. It is safe to say the weather was sweltering, particularly compared to the Irish "summer" so far. Additionally, there was no air conditioning in the playing area. This made it an experience we will never forget, needless to say, lots of liquids needed consumption!

The U26 team started well with a win on the first day against Denmark, a strong team that won gold at the World Team Championships last year. Then it was the U21s who taught us the importance of punishing overbidding at a junior event.

2♥ P P to you and this is your hand:

♠ 10982
♥ 6543
♦ 762
♣ 86

Five-card weak 2s are a big trend among juniors and I have to admit I have been known to dabble now and then. A Swedish player wanted some excitement and opened 2♥ on a five-card suit headed by the queen. Fortunately, Phedra and Bence were experienced enough to give it what it deserved. Bence passed with his trump stack and when Phedra choose to double with the hand above, in the balancing position, he eagerly passed. Phedra's double crucially leaves open the opportunity for partner to punish, which is more often than you think against juniors. *[No it isn't. I was a junior once. Ed]* Declarer only ended with three tricks and -1100. That was +15 imps for Ireland against Sweden, one of the pre-tournament favourites.

Full Bidding and hand:

Board 14. Dealer East. Vul None.

		♠KQ875		
		♥4		
		♦A7		
		♣AQJ65		
♠A632		N		♠1094
♥75		W		♥Q10863
♦KJ852		E		♦Q1096
♣104		S		♣K
		♠J		
		♥AKJ92		
		♦43		
		♣98732		

W	N	E	S
Swede 1	Phedra	Swede 1	Bence
		2♥	P
P	X	All Pass	

Next an interesting board from Ireland U26 against Germany. Partner opens 3♥ first in hand NV vs V, your right hand opponent doubles and you are sitting in my seat with this hand:



♠ J4
♥ Q10982
♦ A
♣ Q9654

What is your plan? How high are you willing to bid to? How many tricks do you expect them to make?

A rule that I like to go by is bid to the level that gives your opponents the last guess. You make the bid while unsure if it is the par contract [i.e. if they double you, they may be right that they can't make anything if they bid on, or it may be wrong and they would get more by bidding on]. Either way the opponents have the almost impossible guess and you have no idea which of their decisions is correct. With that in mind I took the full-blooded approach and bid 6♥! They might make 6♠ but equally partner could have a cashing ace with his 3♥ opening. The German East bid 6♠, as expected and proceeded to go off 1. It is very satisfying when they

guess wrong but the more guesses you give the opponents the more often they get them wrong. Not everyone would agree with 3♥ on the South cards but dynamic openings are needed to keep up at a junior event. *[You're too hard on yourself. That's a 3♥ opener every day of the week chez moi. Ed.]*

Here is the full hand:

**Board 3. Dealer South. Vul E/W.**

♠ J4					
♥ Q10982					
♦ A					
♣ Q9654					
		N		E	
♠ K873					♠ AQ10652
♥ K5		W			♥ -
♦ K932					♦ 1076
♣ KJ10			S		♣ A732
					♠ 9
					♥ AJ7643
					♦ QJ854
					♣ 8

The next day the U21s had the highlight of their tournament with a win against France. The U26s had a few more wins and close matches but both teams ended outside

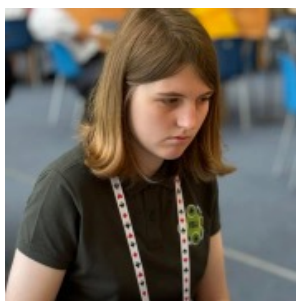
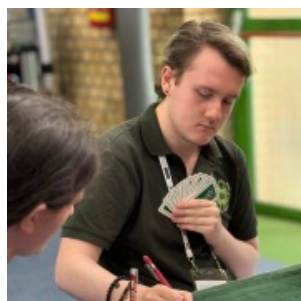
qualification for the World Team Championships next year.

Right after the Europeans, the World Transnational Championships were held in the same venue. Matthew and I played with Hungarian teammates as the rest of the Irish had to go home. While some good bridge was played, exhausted and with no break from the Europeans, we finished just outside the top 10. In the U26 pairs, we were lying 8th after 2/3rd of the qualification stage, however we had a rough last two sessions to finish outside the top 14 of 41 pairs, so we missed the A final.

Overall, many penalties were conceded but all the players enjoyed themselves and some solid bridge was played. While the weather was mostly scorching, there were also numerous torrential bouts of rain and storm warnings. The "Polish bipolar" weather was quite reflective of the bridge - swingy, hot and cold, but great fun.

# The Junior Teams in Action

Matthew, Luca, xxxx





# Answers to Test your Declarer Play

You are West as declarer, playing teams. What is your play strategy on each board?

## Board 1 Dealer North. Vul None.

♠ 1054 ♥ QJ94 ♦ K1072 ♣ 63			
♠ AK93	N		♠ J8
♥ 7	W	E	♥ A1062
♦ Q76			♦ A85
♣ KQ874	S		♣ AJ92
♠ Q762 ♥ K843 ♦ J93 ♣ 105			

W	N	E	S
	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	2♥	P
3♣ <sup>1</sup>	P	4♣	P
4♦ <sup>2</sup>	P	4♠ <sup>3</sup>	P
6♣	All Pass		

<sup>1</sup> 3♣ = 5+ cards in clubs, 4 cards in oM, interest in slam  
<sup>2</sup> 4♦ = Redwood™ for clubs  
<sup>3</sup> 4♠ = 0 or 3 key cards

### Lead:

North leads the queen of hearts against 6♣ and all follow to the ace and king of trumps.

How do you plan the play?

### The Play

Declarer could play South for the ♦K but a better chance is to lead a low spade towards the J 8. If North plays the queen, dummy's diamonds will go away on the ♠AK. If North plays low without a quiver, West puts in dummy's eight. At worst, this will lose to the ten, and declarer still has the option of playing South for the queen.

## Board 2 Dealer East. Vul N/S.

♠ KQ1062 ♥ 7 ♦ 8 ♣ J97543			
♠ J74	N		♠ 3
♥ K9852	W	E	♥ AQJ3
♦ Q7			♦ AK10643
♣ A106	S		♣ 82
♠ A985 ♥ 1064 ♦ J952 ♣ KQ			

W	N	E	S
		1♦	P
1♥	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	4♦ <sup>2</sup>	4♠
5♣ <sup>3</sup>	P	6♥	All Pass

<sup>1</sup> 3♦ = 5+/5+ cards in spades and clubs  
<sup>2</sup> 3♦ = Fit-Jump in support of hearts  
<sup>3</sup> 5♣ = Control in clubs, denies control in spades.

### Lead:

The defenders begin with two rounds of spades, forcing dummy to ruff. West draws two trumps with the ace and queen, finding the trumps 3-1. How do you plan the play?

### The Play

At this point declarer should switch to the queen and ace of diamonds. If the diamonds are 4-1, there is an extra chance of finding the same player with four diamonds and the outstanding trump. That allows you to ruff a diamond in the West hand to establish the suit.

Questions on page 3



**Board 3** Dealer South. Vul E/W.

				♠ KJ6				
				♥ KQJ102				
				♦ J762				
				♣ 9				
♠ AQ543		N		♠ 10				
♥ A5				♥ 7643				
♦ AQ	W		E	♦ 1098				
♣ Q764		S		♣ AKJ82				
				♠ 9872				
				♥ 98				
				♦ K543				
				♣ 1053				

W	N	E	S
			P
2♠	4♥	X <sup>1</sup>	P
3NT	All Pass		

<sup>1</sup> X = Negative, not enough values to bid a game-forcing 3♣

**Lead**

Against 3NT, North leads the ♥K followed by the queen, South follows suit to both. How do you plan the play?

**The Play**

West can avoid the guess of which finesse to take for the ninth trick. After winning the second heart, play the ♣Qs and a club to the ace. When North showed out on the second round, a heart is led at trick five as West knows North has only three hearts remaining. Once North finishes cashing his heart winners, he is end-played, forced to give declarer a ninth trick by leading a spade or a diamond into declarer's A-Q.

**Board 4** Dealer West. Vul All.

				♠ 10982				
				♥ 986				
				♦ J52				
				♣ QJ10				
♠ J		N		♠ A5				
♥ J75432				♥ AKQ				
♦ 983	W		E	♦ K76				
♣ A92		S		♣ K8765				
				♠ KQ7643				
				♥ 10				
				♦ AQ104				
				♣ 43				

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♣	1♠
X <sup>1</sup>	2♠	X <sup>2</sup>	P
3♥	P	4♥	All Pass

<sup>1</sup> X = Negative, not being strong enough to bid 2♥  
<sup>2</sup> X = Strong no-trump type hand  
<sup>3</sup> 3♥ = Extra length in hearts, non-forcing.

**Lead**

North leads the ten of spades against 4♥. How do you plan the play?

**The Play**

Declarer needs to establish the clubs without giving North the opportunity to lead through dummy's diamond king. Therefore, duck the opening lead to South who has nothing better to do than exit with a spade on which declarer is careful to discard a club, not a diamond. Then, after playing two rounds of trumps, it is easy to set up dummy's club suit by ruffing the third round with the ♥J. West will draw the last trump and enjoys dummy's last two club winners, to make an overtrick.



# Pass, Bid or Double?

Peter Pigot



**In the ol' days you'd look at the vulnerability and if ye were vul, and they were non vul, they'd be saving against your vul game... Only then would a forcing pass apply!**

The usual spot where the above 'DECISION' faces you is the five level. In this article I have a few guidelines from both sides of the perspective, and I offer you a checklist of the **4 Key Factors** to guide you to the right solution.

Here's a hand from the recent Europeans against Turkey. Board 6 of the Tournament. You are in the East seat, E/W Vul. Should you Bid, Pass or Double?

**Board 6. Dealer North. Vul E/W.**

♠ 862		♠ K	
♥ A1043		♥ K9872	
♦ AJ1076		♦ K5	
♣ J		♣ K10963	
♠ QJ9	N	E	♠
♥ QJ65	W		♥
♦ 84			♦
♣ AQ74	S		♣
♠ A107543		♠ KQ1064	
♥ -		♥ 752	
♦ Q932		♦ 982	
♣ 852		♣ J8	

W	N	E	S
	P	1♥	2♠
2NT	4♥	?	

E/W had agreed to play 2NT as a constructive raise in partner's suit, even in competition. [Personally, I'd prefer 3♠ to show that same hand type]. Anyway, what should you do with the East hand?

The **4 Key Factors** you need to be thinking about are the following: -

1. With extra shape, lean towards **Bidding**.
2. If you're certain there aren't three quick defensive tricks against you in 5♥, think of **Bidding**.
3. With no shape or good defensive cards in your short suits, think of **Doubling**.
4. Where "none of the above" seem to apply... make a **Forcing Pass**.

So which of the above do you have on this hand?

Yes, you have extra shape in your very nice 5-5 hand BUT the ♠K is a terrible card from a playing perspective. Also, it looks like there are probably three quick losers at the 5-level [you've no Aces]. So Factor 4 is the way to go - you make a Forcing Pass.

Why is Pass Forcing? Because you have agreed with partner that when one makes a 'constructive' raise to game, **all subsequent actions are forcing** (to a double or bid. So... Pass, Pass, Pass cannot happen). More to the point, the constructive raise is usually a balanced raise which includes defensive high cards. So on the hand we're looking at, when Pass comes back to West and IF she held xxx AQxx xx AQxx, she'd think of bidding, as her good cards are complementing partner's known shapely hand [Factor 3 - with a balanced hand, East would have doubled].

So on our example hand, East should PASS and West with the expected balanced hand and ♠QJ9, should double. So the final result should be a flat board : 4♠x-1 for +100 instead of -200 or even -500 playing in 5♥.

Here's a hand from the recent President's Cup on RealBridge. Kathleen Vaughan and Gilda Pender earned an 8 Imps swing for Dublin by following good technique. Once again, the question is - should you bid, pass or double as East?

**Dealer West. Vul All .**

♠ AJ97		♠ 32	
♥ J		♥ A1085	
♦ J76		♦ K53	
♣ AQ542		♣ K976	
♠ 85	N	E	♠
♥ KQ963	W		♥
♦ AQ104			♦
♣ 103	S		♣
♠ KQ1064		♠	
♥ 752		♥	
♦ 982		♦	
♣ J8		♣	

W	N	E	S
1♥	X	2NT	3♠
P	4♠	?	

West opened 1♥ as we all would and North doubled with Heart shortage and only five Clubs, over to East. At the table East bid 3♦, playing Bergen raises. However I think 2NT is better to show the same hand in competition. It shows a balanced constructive raise to the three level or better. South was in a corner and bid 3♠, delighted with their spade support but not too thrilled with their shape, as 5-3-3-2 has far too many losers. West passed to show a weak NT type hand and North just couldn't resist and bid game with decent shape and hoping for ♠K10xxx,



maybe ♣Kxxx and short Diamonds. 'Hope springs eternal', as Alexander Pope once wrote.

Should the East hand Bid, Pass or Double?

In practice one pair played in Hearts at the three level and made a surprising eleven tricks.

The rest played in Spades, two at the three level, one making eleven, one eight... The remaining four tables played in 4♠ and only ONE was DOUBLED.

East has a balanced hand and knows West has a minimum opening hand with five Hearts and is probably balanced. East is balanced, no extra shape and can see three quick losers off the hand.

So applying the **4 Factors**, it's clear that a Forcing Pass or bidding 5♥ are the wrong moves. So East should Double. [remember - we don't go Pass, Pass, Pass in these auctions].

Noreen Pender found the Double, and enjoyed writing +500 on the scoresheet. Well done.

# Peter Pigot Bridge



Bookings to:

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Peter Pigot has won many National Titles over the years, has played for Ireland in the Europeans a few times, has played on many Eire Camrose teams (winning in 2006) and has performed well in European and WBF transnational team tournaments.

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# President's Cup - July 6-7

Paul Delaney



The President's Cup is a UK regional event for County Teams, offering UK Green Points (CBAI B points). Given the long tradition of Dublin v Liverpool bridge matches, last played in 2018, the EBU invited a Dublin South team to participate in this prestigious two-day Realbridge team event.

Since the advent of Covid, the Realbridge online bridge platform has gained prominence, offering excellent facilities with superb replay and analysis capabilities.

Dublin South selected a 16 player panel with Paul Delaney as captain. The team members were:

**Teresa Rigney & Siobhán Part**

**Michael McAuliffe & David Dunne**

**Peter Pigot & Karel De Raeymaeker**

**Kevin O'Dea & Liam Maher**

**Kathleen Vaughn & Noreen Pender**

**Terry Walsh & Derek O'Gorman**

**BJ O'Brien & Dan McIntosh**

**Paul Delaney & Tomás Roche**

We played four matches of 22 boards each against four top English regions. Eight players from our panel play at a time, divided into two teams (Dublin 1 and Dublin 2), with IMPs available across two matches.

## Round 1:

In the first round, we faced Yorkshire, who as defending champions fielded a powerful team with many internationals. Dublin won this first match by 16-4, mainly thanks to this board where we gained 21 imps (10 imps + 11 imps) with aggressive vulnerable game bidding from O'Dea/Maher and Delaney/Dunne.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vul N/S.

		♠ J10973			
		♥ QJ8			
		♦ AQ83			
		♣ 5			
♠ 852		N		♠ AQ4	
♥ 974		W	E	♥ A5	
♦ K76				♦ 10542	
♣ A974		S		♣ J1086	
				♠ K6	
				♥ K10632	
				♦ J9	
				♣ KQ32	

W	N	E	S
	P	P	1♥
P	2♣ <sup>1</sup>	P	2♦ <sup>2</sup>
P	4♥	All Pass	

<sup>1</sup> 2♣ = Reverse Dury and shows a maximum passed hand with 3+ hearts

<sup>2</sup> 2♦ = Shows a full strength opening bid with any shape (alternatively 2H shows no game interest)

## Round 2:

We had a comfortable 19-1 win against North East in the second round, gaining 22 imps on this board.

Board 43. Dealer South. Vul None.

		♠ Q			
		♥ 975			
		♦ J10642			
		♣ J1087			
♠ A764		N		♠ 95	
♥ AQJ103		W	E	♥ K2	
♦ 8				♦ AKQ3	
♣ K65		S		♣ A9432	
				♠ KJ10832	
				♥ 864	
				♦ 975	
				♣ Q	

W	N	E	S
			2♠
3♥	P	3♠ <sup>1</sup>	P
3NT	P	4NT	P
5♠	P	6NT	All Pass

<sup>1</sup> 3♠ = ??

The English declarer failed in 6NT at one table. After Michael McAuliffe's well-judged 4NT slam invitation David Dunne played the same 6NT contract. Winning the spade lead David Dunne made 6NT by squeezing North in diamonds and clubs. North had to discard before dummy on the run of the hearts.

## Round 3:

We suffered a disastrous match against Cumbria in round three, losing heavily until Siobhán Part was allowed to make 4♠ on this board, holding our loss to 7-13 VPs.

Board 25. Dealer North. Vul E/W.

		♠ 642			
		♥ 43			
		♦ J97632			
		♣ AQ			
♠ J5		N		♠ AKQ873	
♥ 962		W	E	♥ KJ	
♦ KQ85				♦ 4	
♣ J1096		S		♣ K54	
				♠ 109	
				♥ AQ10875	
				♦ A10	
				♣ 873	

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠	3♥
P	P	3♠	P
4♠	All Pass	All Pass	

South led the ♠10, which Siobhan won in hand to immediately play ♦4. South won with ♦A as their partner North followed with ♦2 (!). South now continued spades (??) and Siobhán made 11 tricks +650 for 13 badly needed imps to the Dublin team. South missed partner's ♦2 suit preference signal for a club switch with a heart return from North defeating 4♠.



### Final Round:

In the final round, we faced the strong Merseyside & Cheshire team. The match finished 10-10 in VPs, with BJ O'Brien and Dan McIntosh collecting +800 with sharp defense against 4♠x on this board.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vul All.

		♠KQ64		
		♥A62		
		♦62		
		♣AKQ3		
♠AJ8753	N		♠1092	
♥KQJ104	W	E	♥98	
♦-			♦KJ108753	
♣J10	S		♣7	
		♠-		
		♥753		
		♦AQ94		
		♣986542		

W	N	E	S
1♠	1NT	2♠	3♣
4♠	X	All Pass	

Dan led ♣K, and with a singleton in dummy, BJ played ♣2 suit preference for a diamond switch. Declarer ruffed the diamond continuation and fell from grace by cashing ♠A. Declarer later lost trump control, finishing 4♠x-3 +800 to N/S. The correct play at trick three was demonstrated by Peter Pigot at the other table: ♥K, setting up the side suit before playing trumps, leading to 4Sx-1 -200.

In their last match Yorkshire beat Cumbria by 17-3 to retain their title. "Close, but no cigar" for Dublin once again.

Final Scores	VPs
Yorkshire	54
Dublin	50
Merseyside/Cheshire	43
North East	40
Cumbria	23

Best Individual Performance	Cross Imps per Board
Kevin O'Dea	1.23
Liam Maher	1.12
Terry Walsh	1.04
David Dunne	0.95
Michael McAuliffe	0.86
Paul Delaney	0.82

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# A Generous Hand: North Munster's Charity Bridge Day a Resounding Success

By Tom Hardiman

**On Sunday, May 19th, the Tralee Community Bridge Centre was bustling with activity as it hosted the North Munster President's Charity Bridge Day.**

The event, spearheaded by President Liam Lynch of the North Munster Bridge Congress, successfully raised €2,100 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), an organisation renowned for its dedicated volunteer lifeboat crews who provide a 24-hour rescue service around the UK and Ireland coasts.

Significant support from various sponsors, including a notable contribution from Bon Secours, was pivotal to the event's success. Their generosity underscores the strong bond between community businesses and charitable causes, which is essential for the success of such events.

In a heartwarming highlight of the day, Mike O'Connor, representing the RNLI, was presented with the raised funds. This gesture was captured in a photograph that celebrated the collective effort and spirit of the bridge community.

The event transcended the mere collection of funds, fostering a sense of camaraderie and unity among participants. Bridge players of all levels joined in, each contributing to the cause through their participation fees, and shared in the joy of both competition and charitable giving.



*Liam Lynch (North Munster President) presents Mike O'Connor (RNLI) with the funds raised, alongside Trish Stack (North Munster Treasurer), Nicky Fitzgibbon (County Development Officer), Renee Fitzgibbon (Secretary of Tralee Community Bridge Centre) and Tom Hardiman (North Munster Secretary) at the Tralee Community Bridge Centre*

This successful charity day sets a hopeful precedent for annual events to come, blending the passion for bridge with philanthropic endeavours. It is a testament to the bridge community's commitment to societal contributions beyond the game.



We extend our deepest gratitude to all participants and sponsors. The bridge community not only plays cards but plays a significant part in supporting vital services like those provided by the RNLI. We look forward to building on this success in future events, continuing to support worthy causes one hand at a time.

For more information on this event and future initiatives, please visit our website. Join us in our next gathering to make a difference—one hand at a time.



# Regent Premier League 2023-2024

Editor



**This excellent competition is by far the most enjoyable Teams event on the calendar for me. It also features teams of the highest standard. There is a Premier League, one for Area Masters and one for Intermediates. A total of 37 teams took part.**

Some 18 teams contested the Premier League. The format consists of six matches of 24 boards, on the last Monday of each month from September to February, in Swiss format. At that point, the top four teams contest semi-finals on Week 7 and Finals night is then Week 8. The teams outside the top four continue the Swiss competition in weeks 7 and 8.

The competition is generously sponsored by Audico, whose CEO Ann Tuite was on hand to present the prizes. Please give them your business, as we must take care of our sponsors.

Yours truly is part of the Paul Porteous squad [Miriam McConville, Margo English, Ray McConville, Fred Barry, James Heneghan]. Last season we just missed the knockouts but won the Swiss, so our objective was Top 4 this time. We won four of our six qualifying matches, beating Tom Hanlon's outfit along the way, but again fell just short of qualifying. Truth be told, I did feel that we left a few VPs behind in those wins, and it duly cost us. A big win in Week 7 left us on top of the Swiss going into Finals night. We won the last match 15-5, only to be pipped by Seamus Costello's team, who won 18-2 and finished 1.2 VPs ahead of us.

Tom Hanlon's team were the winners [see photo], beating Paul Delaney in the final [Tomás Roche, Martin Brady, David Dunne, David Ryan].

There were a couple of interesting deals on the last night:

### Dealer West. Vul All.

		♠ Q76		
		♥ 97653		
		♦ 97		
		♣ Q82		
♠ 108532	N		E	♠ A4
♥ QJ42	W			♥ AK108
♦ J2				♦ KQ83
♣ 43	S			♣ AJ9
		♠ KJ9		
		♥ -		
		♦ A10654		
		♣ K10765		

In our match, East opened 2NT. Our opponents did not have the machinery to find their heart fit, instead transferring to spades and ending up in 3NT. This meant they fortuitously avoided the 5-0 break [East can make 4♥ but it's far from easy].

South got off to a good start by choosing a club lead against 3NT. Declarer won ♣A and played a diamond to the jack and one back to the Queen. South did well to duck, because a minor suit exit would give away the contract and a spade could be into AQ. Declarer now cashed his hearts, South pitching two clubs, a diamond and a spade. Next came ♠A.

South, down to KJ, needed to unblock the King, allowing partner to gain the lead with SQ and push a club through for one down. In practice this was not found.

### Dealer North. Vul None.

		♠ A98764		
		♥ KQ7		
		♦ 10		
		♣ K107		
♠ 2	N		E	♠ K53
♥ 9542	W			♥ A863
♦ K8762				♦ A53
♣ J63	S			♣ Q84
		♠ QJ10		
		♥ J10		
		♦ QJ94		
		♣ A952		

In the Final, Tom Hanlon [playing with Peter Goodman] declared 4♠ as North. East found the best lead of a low trump. Tom won ♠Q and led a low diamond to the ten and Ace. He could now run ♦Q through West, setting up a club discard for his tenth trick. West has to rise with ♦K on the first diamond lead in order to defeat 4♠ – not at all easy.

The Leagues are open to all-comers, and there were a number of teams from outside Dublin. I strongly encourage you to take part for 2024/2025.



*Pictured are members of the winning team: Tom Hanlon with Anne Tuite (Audico Sponsor), Terry Walsh, Mark Moran, John Carroll and Peter Goodman*



# Bidding Quiz 6 - Results - Bob Pattinson

All hands from live pairs events.

## Question 1

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ QJ32
- ♥ A65
- ♦ AKQ85
- ♣ 7

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	2♥
3♣	P	?	
<sup>1</sup> 2♦ = Inverted			

**Votes:** 3♥=8; 3♦=2; 3♠=2; 4♥=1

This first hand is interesting in that no member of the panel signed off in 3NT as it was felt higher level contracts were still a possibility. A variety of cue bids were suggested with 3♥ being the most popular choice.

A number of members mentioned that they would not make an inverted minor raise before showing a 4-card major, which is a relevant point, reflecting different agreements in bidding styles.

**Micheál 3♥:** A slam, or even grand slam, looks quite a possibility if partner has a shape such as 3154. Difficult to see how a diamond contract will play. Let's try to involve partner in exploring a slam.

**Sally 3♥:** Let's put us into a game force and then we can go slowly.

**Peter P 3♥:** Start the ball rolling. On a lucky day might find the club ace, two spade cards and a heart shortage. However, on a bad day I might find ♠Kx ♥Jx ♦Jxxxxx ♣AQJx.

**Christina 3♥:** I don't expect a stopper and I am not really looking for 3NT, but I need a spade cue bid for what seems a likely slam. After partner's 3♠ or 4♣ cue bid I will investigate slam. Most of partner's values are surely in clubs, yet slam could still be cold opposite a minimum hand. If partner bids 3NT, well, then I need to adjust my plan.

**Rory 3♥:** Not sure yet where this auction is going.

**Anna 3♥:** Lovely hand, but I don't like that my partner did not bid 3♠ showing a stopper, but 3NT does not look promising either. I think 5♦ would more likely make than 3NT, and if partner has a singleton spade we might make 6♦.

**George 3♥:** Bid for a couple of reasons. As I have considerable extras, slam might easily be reached. If we wind up in 3NT, it should be played from partner's side. Over 3NT I will make another try, and if 3♠ is bid I can now bid 4♣, letting partner take the helm. A mundane collection of Kxxx Xxxx AQJx make us favourites.

**Karel 3♥:** My hand is looking better and better. 3♥ allows me see what partner has to say. Partner has freely bid missing all my stuff. Their values should be where we want them given the 2♥ bid. A slam is certainly in the picture.

**Luca 3♦:** Partner sounds at least 5-5 which sounds good but I need to know the shape of the majors, particularly hearts. 3♦ should be forcing over a freely bid 3♣, and will hopefully get a heart cue. When I then bid 4♣ partner will go on with a spade cue.

**Adrian 3♦:** Forcing, and expecting something like 2254 opposite with good clubs, as with a scattered minimum partner would bypass 3♣ and rebid 3♦.

**Thomas 3♠:** When my partner managed to make a free bid over 2♥ and I happen to hold AKQxx of trumps and all these cards, it seems very likely that we will play in at least 6♦, which we will claim opposite as few as Kx x Jxxxx AQxxx. I bid a natural 3♠ to be followed by 4♦.

**Joe 3♠:** I guess 3♣ denies four spades but I want to bid spades anyway. If partner is short in hearts we don't want to be in 3NT.

**Irene 4♥:** Want to show that I am interested with a huge fit. If I hear the control in spades, I will ask for ♣K.

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ 1097		
		♥ 6		
		♦ 742		
		♣ J109632		
♠ K5	N		E	♠ QJ32
♥ 987	W			♥ A105
♦ 10963				♦ AKQ85
♣ AKQ4	S			♣ 7
		♠ A864		
		♥ KQJ432		
		♦ J		
		♣ 85		

W	N	E	S
1♦	P	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	2♥
3♣	P	?	
<sup>1</sup> 2♦ = Inverted			

## Summary

Whilst questions were raised about making an inverted minor suit raise rather than showing a four-card major suit first, the bidding made at the table helped to establish the possibility of a slam, and this is reflected by the panel in the range of cue bids made to explore the best resting point for the final contract.

After the 3♣ rebid the most popular follow up was the 3♥ cue bid, giving partner space to describe their hand further. 3♦ is equally effective and 100% forcing after the initial inverted 2♦ raise. A potential problem of 3♣ is that it bypasses 3♥, thus denying a heart feature. 4♥ is certainly forcing, but more ambiguous as well as taking up bidding space, possibly conveying a splinter in the suit.

All these variations should help the exploration of a diamond slam.

**Marks:** 3♥=10; 3♦=10; 3♠=9; 4♠=7

## Bidding Tip

Once game going values are expressed keep cue bids low in order to maximise space for exploring the best final destination.



### Question 2

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ AK105
- ♥ A4
- ♦ 1082
- ♣ A1096

W	N	E	S
		P	1♦ <sup>1</sup>
P	1♠	P	1NT <sup>2</sup>
P	?		

<sup>1</sup> 1♦ = 4+; <sup>2</sup> 1NT = 12-14

Votes: 3NT=12; 2♣=1

This hand is deceptive in that the point count matched to the limited range shown by the 1NT rebid suggests 3NT is the natural home for this contract. Certainly the hand is packed with controls and contains three tens.

**George 3NT:** I have a smudge extra, but not enough to make a move. Partner is likely to have a heart stopper so there is no reason to explore further.

**Anna 3NT:** I cannot see us making anything else. Maybe 5♦ would make and 3NT would not, but could be the other way round and we would be too high.

**Luca 3NT:** Hard to envision anything else being any better. Partner needs to be a specific super maximum for 6♦ to have any remote chances, and if 5♦ is making, 3NT almost certainly is too.

**Thomas 3NT:** 4♠ in a Moysian 4-3 fit could be the right contract, especially if my partner has xx in hearts, but I don't think it is my job to look for another game with 4432 and stoppers everywhere. Investigating could help the opponents find the killing lead, which they would otherwise not find if I jump to 3NT immediately.

**Karel 2♣:** The opponents have a 7+ heart fit and will most certainly lead it. If partner has 2 or Jxx, etc, this could prove problematic. Maybe we can bid 2♣ new minor forcing, but this is likely to give more information away than gain

anything useful. I might suggest a Moysian 4-3 spade fit. At pairs I bid 3NT but as this is teams then 2♣.

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams.

			♠ AK105		
			♥ A4		
			♦ 1082		
			♣ A1096		
♠ J874		N		E	♠ 93
♥ 9875		W		E	♥ QJ632
♦ 5					♦ K976
♣ K754			S		♣ J2
			♠ Q62		
			♥ K10		
			♦ AQJ43		
			♣ Q83		

W	N	E	S
		P	1♦ <sup>1</sup>
P	1♠	P	1NT <sup>2</sup>
P	?		

<sup>1</sup> 1♦ = 4+; <sup>2</sup> 1NT = 12-14

### Summary

This is one of those hands where there is a perfect fit for a small slam, but the combined points and the balanced shape of the two hands suggests this is rarely in reach for the vast majority of hands. Karel raises the interesting point about differences between pairs and teams, and as the hand is teams, employs 2♣ to discover more about opener's shape in case 3NT could be in danger and an alternative 4-3 spade fit could be safer. However, the North hand is balanced and has stoppers in all of the other three suits, and slam looks a remote prospect.

Marks: 3NT=10; 2♣=8

### Bidding Tip

Don't despair if your disciplined bidding system means that you occasionally miss marginal contracts where every card is working.

### Question 3

Dealer North. Vul All. Pairs.

- ♠ KQ105
- ♥ AK86
- ♦ Q2
- ♣ A92

W	N	E	S
	3♣	X	P
4♦ <sup>1</sup>	P	?	

<sup>1</sup> 4♦ = GF: 6+ suit

Votes: 4NT=6; 5♣=4; 4♥=1; 5♦=1; 6♦=1

Opposite a game forcing hand containing a six-card suit East holds a powerful hand with four of the top eight controls plus the ♦Q. Slam looks a great prospect, but is it to be a small one or a grand one, and how best to explore this?

**Peter P 4NT:** Key card Blackwood. Partner could be Ax xxx AKJxxxx x And 7NT laydown.

**Micheál 4NT:** KCB: the obvious action.

**Luca 4NT:** Tricky one. I guess I will key card and hope for the best. If partner confirms two I will give 6 a go, and if just one I will stop in 5♦.

**Rory 4NT:** RKC: depending on the response play in 5♦/6♦/7♦, with a risk of a bad trump break after the opening pre-empt.

**Anna 4NT:** Key card.

**Karel 4NT:** I have a pretty good double - I presume ♦Axxxx is not a 4♦ bid so I'll bash out key card and we will probably end in 6♦. I don't want to bid 4M as this may be taken as natural suggesting to play as opposed to a cue.

**Joe 5♣:** I'm assuming that 4♥/♠/NT are all natural.

**George 5♣:** While this may not score well, it is the thoughtful thing to do. 4♥ might sound as a long suit where I wish to play. 4♠ definitely will, or at least deny a heart control. 4NT can easily be taken as natural. What remains is 5♣. I am making a slam try so I must have extras. Partner, look at your hand. I will respect a 5♦ signoff, and co-operate in looking for a grand.



**Christina 5♣:** I don't play 4♦ as forcing on this auction. If I do, then assume new bids are cue bids. If they are not, I have to bid 5♣, yet that makes key card difficult. I cannot rule out a grand. I think 4NT should be key card here, yet without agreement I have to settle for 5♣. If partner bids 5♦, I bid 5NT, pick a slam.

**Irene 5♣:** I have a lot of controls and want to play in at least 6.

**Adrian 4♥:** As I have a lot more than I could have I feel bound to make a slam try even if I would feel more comfortable with a third diamond. Worried that partner has something like Ax Qx AJxxxx xx, when a club lead will decide whether to take a diamond finesse or try to pitch a club on one of the majors, but which one? Think 4♥ is a better forward move than simply rolling out Blackwood.

**Thomas 5♦:** I don't play 4♦ as forcing here, but I guess some pairs play this way. It is still possible that we have a good laydown slam to play, opposite for instance Jxx xxx AKJxxx x, but I fear my partner would bid slam over 5♣ when holding two key cards in this context. Also with x Jxx AKJxxx xxx, or AJx Jx K10xxxx xx, a slam would be a terrible bet. When in doubt against pre-empts, I prefer to go low.

**Sally 6♦:** I am impressed that 4♦ has such a specific meaning.

Dealer North. Vul All. Pairs.

			♠ J32
			♥ Q10
			♦ J10
			♣ QJ10854
♠ A764	N	♠ KQ105	
♥ 32		♥ AK86	
♦ AK9543	W	♦ Q2	
♣ 6		♣ A92	
	S		
			♠ 98
			♥ J10754
			♦ 875
			♣ K73

W	N	E	S
	3♣	X	P
4♦ <sup>1</sup>	P	?	
<sup>1</sup> 4♦ = GF: 6+ suit			

### Summary

As there are many different conventional defences to minor suit pre-emptive openings this problem stated clearly that the 4♦ bid showed a game forcing hand with a six-card suit, so the responding hand had ample assets suggesting a slam was a real possibility, even though there could be bad breaks due to the pre-emptive shape of the opening hand.

4NT has the twin advantages of discovering whether or not a slam is on, plus the safety net of stopping in 5♦ if necessary. 5♣ is a clear cue bid, whereas 4♥ might be seen as ambiguous unless there is a firm agreement. 5♦ tends to be a sign off, whereas 6♦ reaches a makeable slam but deters the grand slam.

**Marks:** 4NT=10; 5♣=9; 6♦=9; 5♦=8; 4♥=8

### Bidding Tips

1. Clarify the details of your defensive bids over pre-empts so there are agreements on natural bids, cue bids, competitive bids and game forcing bids.
2. Having more precise agreements on the standards of your pre-emptive openings can also make life much easier for partner.

### Question 4

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ Q852
- ♥ A7
- ♦ AQ762
- ♣ AJ

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	3♦ <sup>1</sup>
X	?		
<sup>1</sup> 3♦ = 4+;6-8			

**Votes:** XX=5; 3NT=3; 3♠=2; 4♦=2; 3♥=1

This hand might have been easier to express if the partnership allowed for the 15-17 1NT opening to include two doubletons which contain a top honour. On the current bidding sequence no panel member is passing with such a strong hand, but there are a wide variety of options taken to portray these values.

**Adrian XX:** Despite my 17 count I am not excited by my hand and think game is unlikely unless partner has a doubleton spade and good hearts to go with a string of diamonds. Redouble shows the good hand.

**Rory XX:** 3NT is too much of a punt for now.

**Sally XX:** Consultative, seeking partner's opinion.

**Thomas XX:** I am not considering doubling the opponents, because they for sure have a heart fit, and I have too much length and values in diamonds. Going through XX, before probably bidding 3NT over opponents' likely 3♥ bid, will now show some doubt about the right game, so partner can pull with a hand not suitable for the 3NT contract.

**Anna 3NT:** I'll try 3NT.

**Luca 3NT:** If I don't bid it now they are more likely to bid hearts and then find a heart lead. If they now bid 4♥ at least partner will have a forcing pass to give me more information.



**Christina 3NT:** Always put pressure on opponents in teams by bidding games where they have to defend carefully to beat it, which this looks like.

**George 4♦:** As the opponents have at least eight hearts, why let them find their fit too easily? I might make 3NT but probably not. It will be hard for them to double me, and harder yet for them to get to and make game. I will have the red card ready.

**Peter P 4♦:** I'm pretty sure I can't make 5♦ and I have far too much defence against 4♥, so I'll simply bid 4♦ and not gift the opponents minus 100 or even 300. 4♦ puts the pressure on East, and if 4♥ is bid I am doubling.

**Karel 3♥:** Not sure what 3♥ is here but it sounds like a good hand, and it might deter a heart lead if we end up in 3NT. I am not bidding 3NT at this stage in the auction.

**Micheál 3S:** Shows distribution and extra values.

North. Vul All. Teams.

			♠ Q852
			♥ A2
			♦ AQ762
			♣ AJ
♠ K9743	N		♠ AJ106
♥ KQJ854	W	E	♥ 72
♦ 8			♦ J95
♣ 3		S	♣ K652
			♠ -
			♥ 1096
			♦ K1043
			♣ Q109874

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	3♦ <sup>1</sup>
X	?		
1 3♦ = 4+:6-8			

### Summary

It is interesting that although a number of the panel were concerned about the opponents having a potential heart contract, when in fact it is a spade game that E/W can make. A number of moves forward are offered by the panel. There is a narrow majority for making a XX at this point in the

bidding, and this seems sound in that it reflects the extra strength of the hand and asks partner for more information on their holding. Whilst 3NT looks attractive with potential stops in all suits, it tends to shut down the bidding when there is still a further chance to explore the best contract, which turns out to be 5♦ with 3NT failing.

**Marks:** XX=10; 4♦=9; 3NT=8; 3♥=8; 3♠=8

### Bidding Tip

Rather than rush into 3NT it often gains to consult further with partner to see if there is a superior contract, and both X and XX offer opportunities to do this.

### Question 5

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

- ♠ Q
- ♥ AQ109
- ♦ K432
- ♣ QJ75

	W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♥	1♠
P		2♣	P	4♣
P		?		

**Votes:** 5♣=8; 4♥=3; 4NT=1; Pass=1

Having gone beyond 3NT and found the 4-4 club fit there is ample space to explore a potential slam and still stop in game if necessary. However, the majority of the panel opt for 5♣ as the strong heart holding in the opponent's suit looks to be more useful in a no trump contract and less effective in a suit contract

**George 5♣:** Well, I want to go back and bid 3NT but I cannot so I will bid 5♣. If partner was better there was a 3♥ bid available. I hope to make this and it is cowardly not to attempt a vulnerable game at teams. East is on lead.

**Christina 5♣:** I would have bid 1NT the first time. My heart values are wasted in any other contract. Now I want to signoff for the same reason. I bid 5♣ because I doubt 4NT would be natural here.

**Thomas 5♣:** I would have bid 1NT and not 2♣. Now that partner shows a good raise in clubs, I'd go for game, especially vulnerable in teams. Partner could have something like: Axxxx xx x Kxxxxx or Kxxxx Jxx \_ Axxxxx. In both cases I have good hopes to make it.

**Peter P 5♣:** Don't like this one and don't like the way I have bid so far! Why didn't I rebid 1NT? Is partner AJxxxx x x K10xxx or the like. I hope so.

**Luca 5♣:** 2♥ and then a club bid would be stronger. My hearts are not positioned well but I feel I have enough for game but not much extra.

**Karel 5♣:** I wouldn't have bid 2♣, I'd have bid 1NT. Now we are past 3NT. Given the 1♥ overcall suit isn't great East should have values elsewhere. Again not good if we are considering 5♣. 4♣ should be at least 5-5 but it is not forcing just invitational. Vulnerable with the lead coming into us I have to bid 5♣ in teams, but with no real conviction of success.

**Adrian 5♣:** I would have rebid 1NT over partner's 1♠ bid, but now have to bid 5♣ as I think 4♣ is forcing and not suitable for 3NT as partner by passes 3♥.

**Rory 4♥:** Cue bid. Some play 4♣ as keycard.

**Anna 4♥:** Not sure why we rebid 2♣ and not 1NT. Now I really hope we are making 6♣ because we have missed 3NT.

**Micheál 4♥:** Why did we rebid 2♣ on the previous round instead of 1NT? Now I cue bid 4♥.

**Irene 4NT:** Natural, and saying I'm not interested in slam with a big stopper in hearts.

**Joe Pass:** Why didn't I rebid 1NT after 1♠? I guess I pass now.



Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ Q	
		♥ AQ109	
		♦ K432	
		♣ QJ75	
♠ 10852	N	♠ 764	
♥ 432	W	♥ KJ875	
♦ Q1075	E	♦ 96	
♣ 83	S	♣ A62	
		♠ AKJ93	
		♥ 6	
		♦ AJ8	
		♣ K1094	

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	3♦ <sup>1</sup>
X	?		
<sup>1</sup> 3♦ = 4+:6-8			

### Summary

The consensus of the panel is the dislike of the earlier rebid of 2♣ by North, rather than 1NT, to avoid suggesting that we have a minor two-suited hand. However, this was how the hand was bid at the table and it allowed the small slam to be bid. Whilst the heart honours in North's hand look ideal for 3NT, they do contribute to 6♣ via the ruffing heart finesse

It is difficult to bid the 6♣ slam and 3NT gains an imp over 5♣ +1. On the given bidding sequence, expecting a more shapely hand, and at teams, 5♣ looks the safest bid. 4♥ cue bid is more likely to help reach the small slam

**Marks:** 4♥=10; 5♣=10; 4NT=7; Pass=5

### Bidding Tip

Early in the bidding try to differentiate balanced hands from semi-balanced or unbalanced hands by rebidding 1NT.

## Question 6

Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 2  
♥ 10874  
♦ -  
♣ KQ986432

W	N	E	S
			2NT <sup>1</sup>
P	?		
<sup>1</sup> 2NT = 20-22			

**Votes:** 6♣=9; 5♣=3; 3♣=1

A five loser hand with an eight-card suit headed by KQ opposite a 20-22 hand suggests that a slam could be on the cards. The question is how to proceed.

**Irene 6♣:** I don't have space to investigate too much, and don't really need a good fit in clubs, just the right key cards, so fingers crossed.

**Anna 6♣:** Even if we are missing the two major suit aces they might lead diamonds.

**Adrian 6♣:** A good eight card suit opposite at least two, or on a bad day singleton ace, are biddable even if we have a heart fit. Not able to find out if partner has all the right cards so we will pot 6♣ and not try to find a heart fit.

**Luca 6♣:** I am not going to mess around looking for a 4-4 heart fit, I want to play in my eight card suit.

**Peter P 6♣:** I'd like to have the bidding method to show a club single suiter slam try. Without this option I'll simply take a punt.

**Thomas 6♣:** Let's see!

**Christina 6♣:** Practical bid. Voids after strong two level openings are often hard to handle. Playing in hearts or no trumps is never an option on this hand.

**George 6♣:** This is not a hand for science. I will gather all the others who bid 6♣ and we will go out to dinner together and be known as the Blasters' Club. The ♥AK could be with West just as easily.

**Rory 5♣:** with four Aces and a King partner will go on.

**Micheál 5♣:** I do not have suitable methods to explore whether partner has the cards I need for slam.

**Karel 3♣:** I play 3♣ as a transfer to clubs here. If 3♣ is puppet Stayman then I follow up whatever response partner makes with 4♣ as a natural game force. I don't intend to stop below 6♣.

Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

		♠ 2	
		♥ 10874	
		♦ -	
		♣ KQ986432	
♠ A10743	N	♠ KJ65	
♥ KQJ5	W	♥ 932	
♦ 92	E	♦ J87543	
♣ 75	S	♣ -	
		♠ Q98	
		♥ A6	
		♦ AKQ105	
		♣ AJ10	

W	N	E	S
			2NT <sup>1</sup>
P	?		
<sup>1</sup> 2NT = 20-22			

### Summary

Playing 4♣ as key card makes this an easy hand to bid, otherwise you have to go for the small slam, if only because it is likely that the room will go for the slam at pairs. If you play 3♣ as a club transfer as suggested by Karel you are in a stronger place in that the big hand will be declarer. George's Blasters' Club win the day!

**Marks:** 6♣=10; 3♣=9; 5♣=7

### Bidding Tips

1. Playing 4♣/♦ over a strong 2NT opening keeps the enquiry process low, but it may leave the weaker hand as declarer.
2. Being able to transfer long minor suits with potential slam prospects to the strong hand may work even better.



### Question 7

Dealer North. Vul /W. Pairs.

- ♠ Q
- ♥ AK104
- ♦ AK107
- ♣ A1097

W	N	E	S
	3♣	P	4NT
P	5♣ <sup>1</sup>	P	?

<sup>1</sup> 5♣ = one key card

**Votes:** 6♠=6; 5♠=6; 5♥=1

This is a tight call when the opening 3♣ is a non-vulnerable bid and may be on the lighter side. The panel are divided between the more cautious and the more optimistic approaches.

**Luca 5♠:** I always seem to be pessimistic on hands opposite a pre-empt, but at favourable vulnerability partner is not going to be solid. I might have just bid 4♠ the first time.

**Christina 5♠:** This is why 4♣ should be the poor man's key card. With most of my partners I could not bid 4NT as key card as we might already be too high. Now I can't gamble on a slam. Partner is favourable and might have K109xxx(x).

**George 5♠:** At favourable vulnerability partner might hold K109xxxx, leaving two losers in trumps. There is always tomorrow.

**Sally 5♠:** At favourable vulnerability I would just make a 4♣ cue bid and then pass a 4♠ sign off. I need partner to have a good trump suit before I am interested.

**Peter P 5♠:** Firstly, we are non-vulnerable and partner could have opened with only six spades holding a 6-4 combination. Secondly, if partner has a seven-card suit it might be missing the Jack. Lastly, I can only see a clear 11 tricks if partner is KJ10xxxx or AJ10xxxx. However, I will probably find another trick in the wash with threats everywhere and 10s throughout.

**Irene 5♠:** If I'm playing with my father I bid 6♠ with confidence, with a younger partner I bid 5♠ hoping not to go down!!

**Micheál 6♠:** I trust partner to have good spades for the bid.

**Anna 6♠:** Pity we don't have any bid to ask about controls in clubs. I would like to know that before asking about the number of aces.

**Rory 6♠:** Key card is used to stay out of a slam missing two key cards. So I won't talk myself out of slam here. Partner is favourite to hold ♠J and even A109xxxx may be good enough. Yes there is some chance of a side suit loser, but against the odds.

**Thomas 6♠:** As a general rule I think it is wrong to ask for key card if you have to think on the next round as it means you shouldn't have asked in the first place. Opposite a favourable 3♣ opening I could be at great danger at the 5-level, as for me partner could easily have ♠J10xxxx. I would have started 4♣, optional key card, over which partner would bid 4♦ with a terrible hand, and answer key card otherwise.

Now it is a complete guess, as partner could have Kxxxx(x) as well as AJ10xxxx.

**Karel 5♥:** This surely depends upon partnership style. Some 3♣ openers would require a swift pass with the South hand. 5♦ is a Queen ask, which is pointless. I bid 5♥, basically asking partner to evaluate the hand opposite a clear slam try, but missing a key card, strongly suggesting a good suit is required.

Dealer North. Vul /W. Pairs.

			♠ KJ97642
			♥ Q7
			♦ J
			♣ QJ5
♠ A	N	♠ 10853	
♥ J93	W	♥ 8652	
♦ Q86542	E	♦ 93	
♣ 862	S	♣ K43	
			♠ Q
			♥ AK104
			♦ AK107
			♣ A1097

W	N	E	S
	3♣	P	4NT
P	5♣ <sup>1</sup>	P	?

<sup>1</sup> 5♣ = one key card

### Summary

The problem posed by this hand is the lack of certainty about the quality of the pre-emptive opening. Those going to 6♠ had more faith in partner's strength than those stopping in 5♠. Two useful suggestions if playing wide ranging quality standards of pre-emptive openings are firstly, substitute 4NT key card with 4♣ recommended by Christina, or use 5♥ advocated by Karel as a last try seeking quality trumps in order to take the final step to slam. The irony of the hand is that there is no 6♣ contract, yet 6NT can be made.

**Marks:** 5♠=10; 5♥=10; 6♠=9

### Bidding Tips

1. Agree the strength of your 3-level pre-emptive openings, as this makes partner's life easier when they hold a hand with potential slam prospects.
2. Consider playing 4♣ as key card over partner's 3-level pre-emptive openings rather than 4NT.

### Question 8

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams

- ♠ 53
- ♥ A63
- ♦ AK654
- ♣ J43

W	N	E	S
	1♦	1♠	2♣ <sup>1</sup>
4♣	?		

<sup>1</sup> 2♣ = 5+ F!

**Votes:** Pass=7; X=4; 5♣=21

Surprising that the majority of the North with an eight loser hand has no immediate reason to take action, especially when partner has another bid available, hence the majority opting to pass for the time being.

**Thomas Pass:** We play here with my partner that we are not in a force, and that a X by me would be penalty with values in spades. Here I have a balanced 12 count with zero points in spades. I don't have anything to





say so I pass, hoping that partner can balance 4NT, or 5♣ if short in spades.

**Sally Pass:** I see no reason to bid with a balanced minimum.

**Rory Pass:** No compelling reason to bid 5♣ or double, and partner is still there.

**Christina Pass:** I opened the bidding, so partner will take action if we are supposed to.

**Adrian Pass:** Have nothing to say and leave the decision to partner about what to do next. Partner is almost certainly looking at a shortage in spades. Double by me may deter partner from going on with very good long clubs

**Micheál Pass:** This shows my hand type. Partner can then make the decision as to whether we double, pass or bid 5♦.

**Anna X:** I have a potential three tricks. Partner might have one or two. I am doubtful we are making 5♣. Holding lots of clubs partner will bid on.

**Peter P X:** This a very interesting hand where we are judging the situation on their bidding just as much as ours. I have a balanced weak no trump hand with two aces and a king. With these hands I double. Partner will not expect spade tricks on the bidding so with a hand like x Jxx Qx KQ10xxxx I hope my partner will pull my double to 5♣. A tricky hand.

**Luca X:** Depends how light 2♣ can be. I would like to make a forcing pass here if I was sure partner would take it as such. Failing that I will guess to take the money and double since I am so balanced and maybe partner will pull it if we have a double fit.

**George X:** We are guessing if 5♣ makes. It feels that beating 4♠ is on firmer ground. After partner leads a diamond I will see if there is a ruff to give, or to make a passive trump return.

**Irene 5♣:** With the same hand but with a singleton spade I would have bid 4NT showing a good 5♣ or a slam try with diamonds, but I don't have enough.

**Karel 5C:** No double so odds are opponents have 7+ or 8+ hearts. Assuming partner has a likely singleton spade 5♣ is looking good. 6♣ may make with some key cards but we are jammed for space. With say ♠AKQxxx and ♦Q and a singleton spade 6♣ could be on, and partner can bid this over a free 5♣ bid.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams

			♠53
			♥A63
			♦AK654
			♣J42
♠KQJ87	N		♠A10962
♥9854	W	E	♥KQ107
♦1087			♦Q
♣9		S	♣Q106
			♠4
			♥J2
			♦J932
			♣AK8753

W	N	E	S
	1♦	1♠	2♣ <sup>1</sup>
4♠	?		

<sup>1</sup> 2♣ = 5+ F!

### Summary

As the cards lie there is a double fit in the minors with a singleton ♦Q, so 12 tricks are available in either minor. The key to bidding the slam is the singleton spade in the South hand, and passing 4♠ allows for the possibility of a 4NT bid implying both minor suits with slam interest.

The danger of the double is that it might be left in with 4v making.

5♣ does produce a plus score, but likely deters a raise to slam.

Marks: Pass=10; X=9; 5♣=9

### Bidding Tip

In competitive bidding staying silent tends to confirm a minimum hand.

### Summary of the Expert Panel Results

Karel just pips Anna on the set – showing why they're one of our top pairs.

We had a reader, Konstantin Rabkin, score an excellent 78.

Well done - €50 voucher on its way!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Baroni Irene	7	10	9	8	7	10	10	9	70
Bessis Thomas	9	10	8	10	10	10	9	10	76
Brock Sally	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	79
Crone Luca	10	10	10	8	10	9	10	9	76
De Raeymaeker Karel	10	8	10	8	10	7	10	9	72
Grue Joe	9	10	9	10	5	10	9	10	72
Jacobs George	10	10	9	9	10	10	10	9	77
Lund Madsen Christina	10	10	9	8	10	10	10	10	77
Pigot Peter	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	9	78
O'Briain Micheál	10	10	10	8	10	9	9	10	76
Onishuk Anna	10	10	10	8	10	10	9	9	76
Thomas Adrian	10	10	8	10	10	10	9	10	77
Timlin Rory	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	10	78



# Card Sense & Card Spirit

Seamus Costello



Seamus Costello sent in this extract from “The Gold Book of Bidding and Play”, by the great Ely Culbertson, published in 1936. Food for thought.

## Card Sense

Card Sense is usually spoken of as one of the mysterious minor talents, an innate knack of grasping easily and applying in practice the logic of playing situations. Cards do have an inner logic and form a bizarre world governed by their own inexorable laws. But I do not believe in an innate faculty called Card Sense. Certainly a man is not born with an invisible deck of cards in the convolutions of his brain. Card Sense is largely an understanding of the Spirit of Cards, their remarkable structure and the few underlying principles that make up Contract Bridge.

## The Spirit of Cards

The greatest source of bridge losses is to be found in something far deeper and more imponderable than the transgression of mere rules and mechanics of the game. A bridge player, however careful and skilful, may still lose if he does not understand the spirit of cards.

Most card players treat a deck of cards like a personal slave. They try to build their own desire, fears and hopes into a deck of cards. Their system is - I. The veriest dude feels, at least subconsciously, omnipotent before a deck of cards. He is like a poor driver who jams on the breaks, clashes his gears, always starts and stops with a jerk, whipping his car into a mechanical frenzy until the day when, maddened, it kills the driver; or like a poor rider who instead of following his horse and riding with it, over-manages it until he is thrown off.

Some players ‘push’ their cards when in luck and ‘pull’ them down when they are running against them. One cannot push or pull the cards to suit his whims. Cards hate to be nagged or smothered with attentions. They cannot be ‘managed’ or forced. A wise player knows that at their own time and in their own way the cards will start working for him. He has learned the greatest lesson - how to wait.

Lack of true faith and patience in cards is at the root of most troubles that beset the player. The player who does not understand the spirit of cards plays every game as though it were the only and last game that he will ever play.

He thus loses sight of the essential continuity of a deck of cards and consequently misses the true laws under which the cards operate.

There is 635,013,559,600 possible hand combinations (13 cards) a player may be dealt from a deck of 52 cards - the average bridge player will handle something like 100,000 new hands in a lifetime. Viewed from the angle of a perpetual game, the players treatment and reaction to the events of each deal will necessarily be quite different from the usual attitude of card players who fret and fuss about the isolated, infinitesimal events of a few deals.

He will learn calmly to expect the unexpected and he will never fear that the cards will deprive him of his just share of wealth in the future. He will stop forcing his game; will let the cards do most of the bidding and playing for him. This is the greatest of the safety devices to make or save points. He will then be astonished to observe how the cards, when freed from pressure, with their inner logic will blend the suits and plays into a harmonious sequence and carry him rhythmically on the crest of their waves.



# Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



I don't very often write about constructive bidding hands in this column. This is mostly because the bidding systems of international players is generally very different from that of my average reader. This was Board 93 (of 96) of the semi-finals of the world championship.

Dealer South. Vul All.

		♠5			
		♥AKJ104			
		♦Q			
		♣J108732			
♠876	N	♠QJ932			
♥95	W	♥QJ932			
♦65432	E	♦10			
♣543	S	♣94			
		♠AK104			
		♥7			
		♦AKJ987			
		♣AK			

At this stage our match was irrecoverable, but nevertheless I thought Nevena Senior and Heather Dhondy did very well in the bidding:

W	N	E	S
			2♣
P	2♥	P	3♦
P	4♦	P	4NT
P	5♦	P	5♥
P	5♠	X	7♦
All Pass			

The first three bids of the auction seem straightforward enough but North's second bid is far from easy. In the event her choice of raising her partner's suit made the bidding easy. Her partner checked on key cards, and then on the queen of trumps, and ended in the excellent slam. 13 IMPs for our side.

Although our match was virtually over, the other semi-final was very much alive, with Sweden leading by just 5 IMPs when this board landed on the table.

The Polish pair had a similar auction to the English pair although it started with a Polish one club opening rather than two clubs. But the Swedes had more trouble:

W	N	E	S
			2♦
P	2♠	P	3♠
P	3NT	All Pass	

South's 2♦ opening showed either a weak two bid in a major or a game-forcing hand with diamonds. Presumably 3♠ showed the latter with a spade suit as well as the diamonds. North had a tricky choice of bid here but the actual choice made seems a little conservative and led to a 16 IMP swing to Poland, and leaving them 11 IMPs ahead. On the next board, however, the Poles bid a roughly 50% slam which went down, giving the advantage back to Sweden, who held on to win by 2 IMPs.



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September 2024

# CBAI News

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# CBAI National President's Welcome



**I am deeply honoured to have been invited to represent the Dublin North Region as the National President of the CBAI for the coming year and I look forward very much to my year in office.**

I will be delighted to play in all the congresses and national competitions during the year, and I look forward to making new friends as well as catching up with old ones. These friendships, of course, are created because bridge is a game of courtesy and respect, a fact that we all need to be conscious of whenever we play.

During my year, I will be encouraging all players to expand their horizons by adding one new gadget to their system. Doing this on a regular basis will help to improve your results, and will broaden your outlook, no matter what level you play at. One of the truly great things about bridge is that, from beginners to world-class experts, players never stop learning.

Part of my role is to act as the eyes and ears of the Association at grassroots level as I travel the country. In this capacity, I will welcome any feedback you have for us, and promise you that I will pass it on as appropriate.

I look forward to a wonderful bridge season, and to meeting as many of you as I can at the bridge table in 2024/25.

**Catherine Byrne**  
National President, CBAI

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# Chief Executive's Welcome



**Welcome back to all our members for the 92nd season of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland.**

In early July, we had our Annual General Meeting, which I have written about in more detail elsewhere in this issue. The main conclusions that came out of the AGM were that our rebuilding post-pandemic is going well, but that more remains to be done. The good news is that we have funds available to invest in bridge, if the right opportunities can be found.

Some projects are already underway, and our Treasurer, Brendan Martin, reviewed them briefly at the AGM. We have agreed an increase in the rates paid to our Tournament Directing cohort for our national events, to reflect the seriously professional job that they do, which takes the pressure off the organisers and allows all the participants to enjoy themselves. We have also committed to going deeper into the field in terms of prizes at national events wherever possible, to give more back to the loyal players who support these competitions.

We also have plans to upgrade the CBAI's member database, which will allow greater automation of tasks currently done manually, and free the office staff up for work that will be more productive in terms of developing bridge. We are planning more TD and teacher training, including a weekend workshop for current teachers in late-October, and some pilot programmes to try to get schools bridge up and running again more widely. In addition, we remain poised to support regions and clubs in any promotional efforts they want to undertake, with lots of suitable materials available. Just let us know if you would like help with any promotional events.

We also announced at the AGM that we have begun discussions, and project work, with our neighbours in the Northern Ireland Bridge Union to see what might be involved in an amalgamation of the two bodies to form a single 32-county bridge organisation. Everyone working on this concludes that an amalgamation, if it could be done, would be to the benefit of both bodies, and would put bridge in the island of Ireland on a more stable long-term footing. We hope to put some proposals to the membership (which of course will have the ultimate say on this matter) in due course.

All the CBAI and IBU competitions and congresses for the season are listed on our website, and the "majors" up to Christmas are now open for online entry. A full calendar is included elsewhere in this publication, which will also be sent to clubs for their noticeboards. The first is the Duais an Uachtarain in Portmarnock on 14/15 September (three sessions). Please support these competitions whenever you can. Some of the dates at the beginning of the season are a bit earlier than usual, to facilitate the players representing Ireland at the World Bridge Games in Argentina in late-October/early-November. We wish them all the best of luck.

We will have three sets of Simultaneous Pairs again this season – the IBU's in the first week of November as usual, the CBAI's in the first week of March, as last year, and the Celtic Nations Sims in early May; we have moved the last of these in response to feedback that the previous December date clashed with Christmas parties and festivities for many clubs. The funds raised from the Celtic Nations Sims will go entirely to junior bridge, as has been the case since it was introduced a couple of years ago. Please encourage your club to support these three Sims weeks if you can; aside from raising much needed funds for good causes, they are also great fun. We're currently in the process of preparing the commentaries for the IBU week in November, and our expert analysts report that some very exciting deals await.

The traditional start-of-season "Newsletter" has been incorporated this year into the Autumn edition of the Irish Bridge Journal, and is being sent by email to all members. I'd like to thank our editor, Enda Murphy, and designer, Sue Power, for all the work they put into the Journal; I'm sure you'll agree that it is a most professional publication. Thanks also to all our advertisers – please support them with your custom whenever you can.

I hope that the CBAI office and staff (Bernard, Eimir, Fran, Siobhan, and myself) are continuing to serve you well. As ever, if you have any comments or suggestions for the CBAI, feel free to drop me a line or chat to me in person whenever you see me.

With best wishes for an enjoyable, competitive, and sociable, bridge season in 2024/25, and I hope to see you at the table very soon.

Sincerely,

**Dermot O'Brien**



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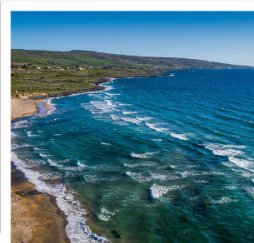
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# AGM Report

## Dermot O'Brien, Chief Executive CBAI

**The CBAI's Annual General Meeting was held in the Hilton Hotel, Malahide, on Saturday 6 July. Around a hundred people attended, some of them official delegates representing our thirteen regions, others ordinary members - all members of the Association are entitled to attend this annual meeting.**

The AGM is always a most enjoyable day, a gathering of the bridge community to meet old friends, hear what is going on within the Association, and have a say in how bridge is run in Ireland. Sometimes, resolutions are submitted in advance proposing a change in operations; these will be put to the floor for a vote. This year, as is often the case, there were no such resolutions - hopefully, a sign that the membership is generally happy with the way things are being run. Aside from the obligatory change of President (the Presidency of the CBAI is rotated through our thirteen regions every year), all the other officers were reappointed - Martin Brady as Vice President, Brendan Martin as Honorary Treasurer, and Linda O'Riordan as Honorary Secretary.

This year's guests were entertained in style, as incoming President Catherine Byrne and her Dublin North Region team pulled out all the stops. The meeting room was large, comfortable, and airy (vital on a warm summer's day), the hotel staff were most accommodating, and the finger-food served after the meeting was very tasty.

There were four main speakers on the day. I gave my Chief Executive's report on the 2023/24 season, and outlined some plans for 2024/25, noting the progress continuing to be made in rebuilding post-pandemic. I also drew members attention to two potentially exciting developments:

(1) the establishment of pan-European working groups within the EBL, backed by the two largest members, France and the Netherlands, to work on developmental projects for bridge, and (2) discussions being held with our equivalent body in Northern Ireland, the NIBU, exploring a potential amalgamation of the two bodies to form a single 32-county bridge federation. Any proposal on this will need the approval of the members of both bodies, if it is to proceed. My presentation concluded with an "In Memoriam" remembering some of the notable bridge players and administrators who passed away during the season, and a series of thank-yous to our officers, committee members, volunteers, and staff.

Our Treasurer Brendan Martin presented the signed accounts for the year to 30 April 2024, and took some questions from the floor. The Association has made a surplus in all recent years (pandemic issues notwithstanding), and we are now in the happy position that we have funds available for investment in the Irish bridge infrastructure. Brendan outlined briefly some of the projects and expenditures planned: an increase in the pay of TDs, and in the number of prizes given, at our national competitions; an upgrade of the member database, which has begun to creak; some marketing supports for congresses; further teacher and TD training; a pilot programme introducing bridge into some schools using a new

model; and the purchase of two new trophies for the new confined Regional Masters competitions, along with a catch-up of engraving on the existing ones.

Outgoing President Gordon Lessells, who did a wonderful job in his year as President as representative of the North Munster region, reflected on his year in office. He began by thanking all the essential members of clubs throughout the country, who do the behind-the-scenes (and unpaid) work without which their clubs could not function. One of the highlights of his year had been presenting the President's Merit Award to one such individual, Martin Keane of the Templeogue Bridge Centre in Dublin. His theme for the year had been "Cherish our Novices", and he was delighted that the Association had registered more than 1,000 new novices, and that healthy numbers were taking part in Novice competitions. These players represent the future of bridge in Ireland, and it behoves us all to make them welcome and encourage them in their bridge journey.

Gordon thanked all who had helped him during his Presidential year: his partners; the TDs and congress committees who had looked after his so well; the CBAI staff for their assistance; and all the members who had greeted him with warmth and friendliness wherever he had gone. He had hoped to play bridge in all 26 of the CBAI's counties during his year, but a few had sadly eluded him. He hoped that he might have

the opportunity to visit the remainder during his term as IBU President in 2025/26!

Gordon then presented the ceremonial chain of office to the incoming President, Catherine Byrne, who addressed the meeting. Catherine said what an honour it was to have been nominated as President, and assured members that she will take the role very seriously and will work tirelessly to continue the good work of her predecessors. Bridge has been a wonderful outlet for her, being social, mentally stimulating, and enabling her to meet wonderful people and build lifelong friendships. She noted that bridge was "A passion for some, and a pastime for most", and that the Association had a duty to look after all its members, from social to expert. She echoed Gordon's comment that the future of the game depends on attracting new players, and that experienced players need to be welcoming and encouraging to newcomers.

She thanked her club (Malahide) and region (Dublin North) for nominating her, and her Dublin North sub-committee of Mary Breen, Norma Madden, Dan O'Mahony, and Aidan Synnott for all their help, including the organisation of the current meeting. She was looking forward hugely to her year as President, and resolved to represent the members of the CBAI to the best of her ability at all times.

There were also some contributions from the floor. Perhaps the most notable was an eloquent description from Peter O'Meara of the North Midland Region, who very sadly lost his son during the season after a long illness, of how much the kindness of his friends in the bridge community, locally, regionally, and nationally, had helped him and his family during that very difficult time. They were most grateful, and it had brought home very clearly to him that bridge was more than just a game.

The meeting concluded with finger food, and then a game of cards, with fourteen tables participating and Eamon Galligan in charge as TD, which raised a tidy sum for the local St. Vincent de Paul.

Next year's AGM will be in Waterford, the home of our President-Elect, John Phelan, at a venue and date to be decided, but which will be publicised closer to the event. All members are welcome to attend. If you haven't been to an AGM before, why not come along and enjoy the annual gathering of the Irish bridge community.

## CBAI & IBU Calendar 2024-2025



<b>14-15 Sept</b>	Duais an Uachtarain, <i>Portmarnock</i>
<b>3-6 Oct</b>	Drogheda Congress
<b>12-13 Oct</b>	Spiro & Coen Trophies, <i>Templeogue</i>
<b>18-20 Oct</b>	Limerick Congress
<b>1-3 Nov</b>	Donegal Congress
<b>4-8 Nov</b>	IBU Sims Week
<b>8-10 Nov</b>	Kenmare Congress
<b>16-17 Nov</b>	IBU Interprovincials, <i>Cavan</i>
<b>22-24 Nov</b>	Kilkenny Congress
<b>14-15 Dec</b>	Master Pairs, <i>Templeogue</i>
<b>3-5 Jan</b>	Waterford Congress
<b>11 Jan</b>	Men's & Women's Pairs, <i>Clane</i>
<b>12 Jan</b>	Men's & Women's Teams, <i>Clane</i>
<b>17-19 Jan</b>	Ennis Congress
<b>24-26 Jan</b>	Cork Congress
<b>1-2 Feb</b>	Regional Master Pairs & Teams, <i>Templeogue</i>
<b>8-9 Feb</b>	Holmes Wilson Cup, <i>Tullow</i>
<b>14-16 Feb</b>	Novice & Intermediate Congress, <i>Portmarnock</i>
<b>22-23 Feb</b>	National Pairs Finals, <i>Ennistymon</i>
<b>28 Feb -2 Mar</b>	Malahide Congress
<b>3-7 Mar</b>	CBAI Sims Week
<b>8-9 Mar</b>	Burke & O'Connor Cups, <i>Cavan</i>
<b>22-23 Mar</b>	National Teams Finals, <i>Portlaoise</i>
<b>28-30 Mar</b>	Clonmel Congress
<b>3-6 Apr</b>	Greystones Open Week
<b>4-6 Apr</b>	Tralee Congress
<b>18-21 Apr</b>	Galway Congress
<b>22-24 Apr</b>	IBU Seniors Congress, <i>Cavan</i>
<b>26 Apr</b>	JJ Murphy Trophy, <i>Loughrea</i>
<b>27-28 Apr</b>	Lambert & Cooper Cups, <i>Loughrea</i>
<b>27-28 Apr</b>	IBU Moylan Cup, <i>Malahide</i>
<b>10 May</b>	IBU Pairs Championship, <i>Templeogue</i>
<b>12-16 May</b>	Celtic Nations Sims Week
<b>17 May</b>	4Fun Teams, <i>Westmanstown</i>
<b>24-25 May</b>	IBU Egan Trophy, <i>Belfast</i>
<b>6-8 June</b>	Yeats Country (Sligo) Congress



# DUBLIN NORTH REGION REPORT

Aidan Synnott, Regional Secretary

**Following a challenging season in 2022/23, things settled quite a bit in Dublin North Region during the 2023/24 season.**

While one club (Beann Eadair) closed, the vast majority of the other thirty appear to have stabilised. With the improved situation in the normal clubs, activity in the two major virtual clubs (Clontarf Area & Glasnevin Regional) decreased. Both continue to run weekly games, but numbers are significantly reduced.



Catherine Byrne receiving her chain of office from Gordon Lessells



Mary Breen

This overall relative stability was reflected in a significant improvement in entries for our regional tournaments, such that it was possible to hold all of them this year.

**The winners in each category were:**

**Novice Pairs:** Caroline Mahon & Joan Butler and Julie Taylor & Eithne Higgins (tie).

**Novice Teams (Paddy English Trophy):** Gay Connolly, Mary Chambers, Mary N Cahill, Eilish Timoney (Malahide RBC).

**Intermediate B pairs (McLoughlin Cup):** Mary Doyle & Rosemary Byrne (Malahide RBC).

**Intermediate A2 pairs (Norma Madden Trophy):** Cliona McCarthy & Bridie Hogan (St. Cronan's BC).

**Area Master/Intermediate A pairs (Maureen Meade Trophy):** Lillian Foley & Angela Mitchell (Malahide RBC).

**Regional Pairs Intermediate B:** Jim Miley & Catherine McManus (Glasnevin BC).

**Regional Pairs Intermediate A:** Mairead O'Gorman & Yvonne Power (Malahide RBC).

**Regional Pairs Master:** Sean Maguire & John Moyles (Glasnevin BC).

**Regional Teams Intermediate:** Dan O'Mahony, Lorraine Maxwell, Ann Keegan, Ria Malone (Vernon BC).

**Regional Teams Master:** Tom Gilligan, Pat Cassidy, Dave Terry, Conor O'Hara (Malahide RBC).

**4Fun Teams:** Mary Deane, Mary N Cahill, Rosaleen Moody, Helen Fagan (Malahide RBC).

It should be noted that while things have undoubtedly improved, overall activity remains significantly reduced when compared to pre-Covid times. That said, it was encouraging to see the re-emergence of newly qualified Novices, and the fact that we were able to run our Novice Teams tournament, for the first time since Covid, was especially gratifying, and hopefully bodes well for the future.

Our Regional League (Kirwans League) was held as a hybrid event, having been held online for the previous few years. Team captains were given the option of holding games face to face or on BBO, the majority opting for the former. All sections were well supported, and we would like to thank our League Co-ordinators Mary Deane, Ria Malone and Dan O'Mahony for their hard work and, of course, Kirwans for their continued generous sponsorship.

**The winning teams were:**

**Novice:** St. Gabriel's BC, Captain Maria Keane.

**Intermediate B:** Malahide RBC, Captain Orla Duffy

**Intermediate A:** Malahide RBC, Captain Deirdre Lonergan.

**Master:** Malahide RBC, Captain Tom Gilligan.

The region increased its educational activities. The first event held was a series of "Bridge Taster Sessions". These were organised by Liz Sherlock and Bernice O'Halloran and consisted of a series of three introductory lessons, using the MiniBridge format, held in two local libraries. They were run free of charge, attracted large numbers and were deemed very successful.

The region continued to run Tournament Director courses during the 2023/24 season. A day-long club level Tournament Director course was run by Norma Madden and Aidan Synnott followed by a further day-long "hands on" Bridgemate operators' course, directed by Aidan Synnott, assisted by Mary Connell, Thérèse Gumbrielle, Dan O'Mahony and Patricia Quigley. These courses continue to be very popular, both being over-subscribed.

We were particularly happy to revive our Improvers classes this year. These were run under the direction of Mary Breen and consisted of two topics, Defence and Weak-Twos, delivered by Seamus Costello. These were also over-subscribed and were repeated on a third day.

We held our AGM in June 2024. Dan O'Mahony's term expired but he will continue to provide the committee with the benefit of his experience and hard work. He will continue as the coordinator of the B & Novice sections of the Kirwan League. Dan also agreed to take up the role of CDO. Mary Breen, one of our DNR stalwarts, took over as President, while Patricia Quigley was nominated as Vice-President/President Elect. Aidan Synnott agreed to continue as Regional Secretary and Webmaster.

Ria Malone resigned from the committee having provided huge service in her role as Honorary Treasurer and A League coordinator. She will be sorely missed. Another DNR stalwart, John Kehoe, agreed to take on the role of Honorary Treasurer. Both of our CDOs, Liz Sherlock and Mary Deane, resigned from the committee, however Mary graciously agreed to continue in her role as Master League coordinator. Moira Lonergan also resigned. She will be greatly missed, particularly in her role as curator of the regional trophies.

The Committee welcomed two new members. Denice Harvey (Vernon BC) joins as an ordinary member. Patricia Quigley (Vernon, St. Gabriel's, Raheny & Malahide BCs) joins as Vice-President/President Elect. Mary Breen President, DNR

Of course, 2024/25 promises to be a very special year for DNR, because it is our turn to nominate the CBAI President. The successful candidate for this prestigious post was Catherine Byrne of Malahide Regional BC. She will have taken up her post by the time you are reading this. She was appointed

ex-officio to the DNR Committee in September 2023 and various members of the committee have been assisting her in preparation for her presidential year. The first event in her presidential year has already taken place in the Region during July 2024 in the form of the CBAI AGM. Two further events are scheduled for Dublin North Region: Duais an Uachtarain in September 2024 and the Novice & Intermediate Congress in February 2025. We wish Catherine the very best for her year as President of the CBAI and look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to the associated events being held in the region.



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## REGIONAL NOTES

## WESTERN REGION REPORT

Peggy Cheevers, Regional Secretary

**The past year has been a successful year with live bridge returning successfully in most areas.**

Competitions were reasonably well supported but further work will be undertaken to encourage greater participation in the coming year. Timing of some of the competitions may be changed to facilitate better participation.

The President, Kathleen Kilroy, Mountbellew Bridge Centre, had a very successful President's Prize day in March, in Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew. The incoming President for the coming year is Don Coen, Gort Bridge Centre. We have found that rotating the President's office to all bridge clubs in the region is very successful and thank our CDO Margaret Forde for this idea.

Lessons are continuing in many areas as well as online classes provided by the CBAI which is continuously promoting the game of bridge. Charity tournaments have been well attended during the year and efficient tournament directors have ensured success. Local congresses were also well attended in the past year, with Louise Mitchell and David Walsh taking over the organisation of the Galway Bridge Congress, at a new venue.

The region provided a several excellent performances in national competitions during the year. Joan Kenny & Enda Glynn were victorious in the Davidson Cup (National Open Pairs Championship), and Joan was part of the McMenamin Bowl winning team (Women's National Teams Championship), and represented us internationally on several occasions, while David Walsh was on the Irish team that competed in the Camrose Trophy, and Enda Glynn and Gay Keaveney were on the Irish team in the Teltcher Trophy (Senor Camrose). Patsy Hanbury and Patsy Donoghue won the Laird Trophy (National Intermediate A Championship).

**Enda Glynn & Joan Kenny, Davidson Cup Winners**

**Patsy Donoghue & Patsy Hanbury, Laird Cup Winners**

We extend our sympathies to all who have lost members during the year and wish continued health to all others.

**Regional officers for 2024-2025 are as follows:**

**President:** Don Coen

**Secretary:** Peggy Cheevers

**Assistant Secretary:** Emily Deavy

**Treasurer:** Michael O'Connor

**CDOs:** Margaret Forde & Fiona Place



Enda Glynn & Joan Kenny, Davidson Cup Winners



Patsy Donoghue & Patsy Hanbury, Laird Cup Winners



## REGIONAL NOTES

## SOUTH MUNSTER REGION REPORT

Linda O'Riordan, Regional Secretary

**The 2024/25 season has been a very successful and busy year for South Munster.**

The AGM was held on 18 June 2024 with Jean Kelly, Youghal Bridge Club, becoming the Regional President of South Munster for 2024/2025 and Ciarán Broadbery, Killarney Bridge Club, as President Elect.

During the year, Carmel Connolly, President for 2023/24, organised an advanced workshop. Rory Boland and Ciaran Coyne kindly provided their expertise. Many topics were discussed, and it was very well attended with €1,500 being raised for Marymount Hospice. A big thank you to everyone who gave their time free of charge. Many clubs also ran events raising funds for charity over the year.

Membership for South Munster is up, from 3063 in 22/23 to 3304 this year. This is a significant increase and clubs that have active teachers have seen the biggest growth in membership. While the total number of clubs has declined, many have amalgamated. There is a demand to learn bridge and promoting bridge within your local community and raising awareness is essential for clubs to survive.

**South Munster had a very successful year on the national front.**

The **Masters team** of Derek O'Gorman, Cian Holland, Tom McCarthy, Ciaran Coyne and John Russell won the Kelburne Cup (National Open Teams Championship).

The **Intermediate A team** of Pat Twomey, David Sheehan, Alf Davis and Martin Delaney led throughout the competition but were pipped in the final round, coming a very close second.

Our **second Intermediate A team** came fifth, with our two Intermediate B teams coming in fourth and fifth.

The combined results gave South Munster the accolade of best region and winners of the Marie Cummins Trophy.

This year the Inter-Club Specsavers Competition was highly successful with forty pairs representing fourteen clubs. It would be nice to see more clubs running a qualifying round as there are prizes for all the grades. The winners were Imelda Cullinan & Phil Murphy. Our thanks to Specsavers Ballincollig for their kind sponsorship. The Regional Novice Pairs was held in February 2024, and there were 24 pairs.



The winners were Maurice Keohane and Mossie Murphy (pictured above with President Carmel Connolly). Other winners for the year were: Intermediate A Pairs: Pat Twomey & David Sheehan; Intermediate B pairs: Dermot Houston & John O'Donovan; Master Pairs: Hugh Twomey & Declan O'Brien; Barry O'Connell Trophy (qualifier for Kelburne) Marie Whyte, Declan O'Brien, Brian Madden and Genie O'Regan.

For the coming season, we have changed some of the dates of the regional qualifiers. The Intermediate A & B teams has been changed to 9 February 2025. Hopefully with the change of date we will be able to run this event. Also, each area within the region will run a Novice & Intermediate B social game of bridge. The CDOs will work with teachers and clubs to encourage as many to participate.

I want to thank secretaries for continuing to inform their club of these events and to ask members who have played in regional competitions to encourage new members to play outside of their clubs. This year we would like to update emails for members so we may email them directly about competitions that are relevant to them. It would surprise you how many members still have an "eircom.net" as their email.

Finally, I wish to extend our condolences to the families and friends of deceased members over the last year.

**We look forward to seeing everyone for 2024/2025 bridge season.**



South Munster win best region and winners of the Marie Cummins Trophy.





## REGIONAL NOTES

# NORTH MUNSTER REGION REPORT

Tom Hardiman, Regional Secretary

## Reflecting on the past year, the North Munster Region has seen growth and success within its bridge community.

The number of players has increased, thanks to the enthusiasm of new members joining our ranks and participating in lessons. Our priority remains to integrate these new members into our clubs, fostering an environment where they can develop their skills and enjoy the game. The collaboration among bridge teachers in our region has been instrumental in achieving this goal.

This year, our region hosted numerous successful events. We are grateful for the invaluable support from Gordon Lessells, the CBAI National President, who has consistently provided information, advice, and guidance. Our appreciation also goes to the Limerick and Tralee Centres for hosting our meetings, regional, and charity events, as well as the Clonmel Centre and Willie Corby for supplying equipment for the Intermediate & Novice Congress. A highlight of the year was our first President's charity event, held at the Tralee Centre, which raised over €2,100 for the RNLI, with support from players across the North and South Munster regions.

Liam Lynch, North Munster President, presents Mike O'Connor from RNLI with funds raised at Tralee Community Bridge Centre. Also pictured are Trish Stack, Nicky Fitzgibbon, Renee Fitzgibbon, and Tom Hardiman

## Celebrating Leadership and Achievements

Gordon Lessells has been a remarkable leader, bringing innovation and dedication to his role as President of the CBAI. His efforts to modernise our bridge community have been evident, and his continuous availability for guidance has been invaluable. Gordon's leadership has significantly contributed to the success and growth of our region, and we are deeply grateful for his unwavering support.



Winners Teams & Thomond Cup: Derek O'Gorman, Cian Holland, Donal Garvey, & Pat Quinn



Liam Lynch, North Munster President, presents Mike O'Connor from RNLI with funds raised at Tralee Community Bridge Centre. Also pictured are Trish Stack, Nicky Fitzgibbon, Renee Fitzgibbon, and Tom Hardiman

### Our regional events this year were a testament to the talent and dedication within our community.

Jeannie Fitzgerald and Pat Quinn triumphed in the Regional Pairs, while Catriona and Pat Carney won the Jim Whyns Cup for the Regional Intermediate Pairs.

Mary Keane and Joan McEnery excelled in the Regional Intermediate B Pairs, and the Thomond Cup was won by Donal Garvey and Pat Quinn.

### Our members also shone on the national stage.

Notably, in the Civil Service Cup, pairs from Kerry, including Mary Keane & Joan McEnery, and Liz & Liam Lynch, showcased their skills by placing second and sixth respectively.

The President's Charity event saw Bob and Maureen Pattinson take first place, with Joan Duggan & Michael Keane and Bernie Tynne & Freddie Langford securing the second and third places.

Eugene Gath was part of the team that won the Cooper Cup.

At the Novice & Intermediate Congress the Jim Fitzgerald Trophy was won by Mary Madigan & Mossie Stack.

In the Holmes Wilson event, Kelan O'Connor was on the second-placed team, while Maureen & Bob Pattinson placed fourth in the Spiro Cup.

The CBAI Coen Trophy saw a third-place finish by Gordon Lessells, Liz Ann Doyle, Kay Cussen, and Denis Sheehan, while Louise Mitchell achieved fourth place in both the CBAI Women's Pairs and Teams.

Diarmuid Reddan also earned a fourth place in the CBAI Men's Team event.

The Duais an Uachtarain event, hosted in Limerick in September with 132 players, saw Jeannie Fitzgerald & David Coyne win the first session.

In the Sonya Britton competition, Gordon Lessells led the CBAI team to another victory.

The CBAI Novice & Intermediate Congress in Tipperary saw a fantastic turnout, with 112 players for pairs and 14 teams, marking the best attendance in many years.

## Interprovincial and Simultaneous Competitions

The Munster team led the Interprovincial Competition's Open category from start to finish, thanks to the contributions of six players and their captain from North Munster, including Gordon Lessells, Bob & Maureen Pattinson, Diarmuid Reddan (PC), Randal Milne, Pat Quinn, and Kelan O'Connor. Our area master and intermediate teams also performed admirably, finishing in second place.

During the CBAI Simultaneous Pairs Week, Maureen & Bob Pattinson emerged as winners, with other notable performances from Noreen Doyle & Anne Harte, and Helene Lafferty & Cathleen O'Connor. The IBU Simultaneous Pairs saw a first-place finish for Anne Hynes & Gordon Lessells.

We extend our congratulations to Jeannie Fitzgerald & Louise Mitchell for making the IBU Women's Team, and to Captain Diarmuid Reddan for leading the Mixed Team, in the recent European Championships. Their selection for these teams is a significant achievement, and we are proud of their dedication and representation of our region.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers, players, directors, and organisers who have contributed to our successes this year. A special thanks to our Regional President, Liam, for his steadfast support and dedication.

Winners Teams & Thomond Cup: Derek O'Gorman, Cian Holland, Donal Garvey, & Pat Quinn

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## REGIONAL NOTES

## SOUTH EASTERN REGION REPORT

Oona Dwyer, Regional Secretary

Our regional AGM took place in Waterford Bridge Centre on 17 May 2024.

Regional Officers elected for Year 2024/2025 are:

President: Melvyn Godinho;

Chairperson: Larry Mordaunt;

Treasurer: Jim Doyle;

Secretary: Oona Dwyer;

CDOs: Jim Kennington, Jim Doyle, Delia Smith, and Johanne Powell.

Congratulations to John Phelan, Waterford, who was nominated by the South Eastern Region as President-Elect of the CBAI at the AGM in July 2024. John will take up the role of President of the CBAI for the 2025/2026 season.

### 4Fun Teams Winners

Congratulations to the Wexford team of Trevor Murphy, Michael Lennon, Marguerite Sweetman and Eric Pinacqui who won the CBAI Fun Teams.



Affiliation numbers have increased and table numbers up and thankfully we have lost no clubs this year.

Waterford held its 41st Congress early January with a successful turnout. The 42nd Waterford Bridge Congress will be held in Tower Hotel from Friday 3 to Sunday 5 January 2025. Congress rates €170 p.p. for 2 Nights B&B + 1 Dinner.

Beginners' bridge classes in Wexford B.C. starting on Tuesday October 1 2024 @ 7 p.m.

Contact:  
Jim Doyle @ 086 3619911.

Beginners' bridge classes in the Teachers Centre, Newtown Road, Waterford, starting on Tuesday September 3 2024 @ 10.30 a.m.

Contact:  
Lucy Phelan 086 827 5192.



**Mary Kilgallen**, a long-term member of Waterford Bridge Centre passed away on 26/06/24. Mary was very involved

in bridge affairs and was Chairwoman of the Bridge Centre for eleven years. Her enthusiasm and love of the game was universally admired. A tour de force in life and bridge she got involved in all aspects of the game in Waterford. Our annual bridge congress benefitted from Mary's fundraising skills for many years and she served as Congress President and committee member. Mary was also heavily involved in the South Eastern Region Committee, as both President and Chairperson. A friend and mentor to all members throughout the region, she will be sadly missed but her energy and enthusiasm for bridge will be her legacy.

The region extends its sympathies to the families and friends of our bridge players that passed away during the year

I wish to thank all the club secretaries for their work and support during the year

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## REGIONAL NOTES

## EASTERN REGION REPORT

Bernie Rountree, Regional Secretary

The season was kicked off with a promotion event in Blackrock Shopping Centre in August where we gave MiniBridge demonstrations and distributed information on clubs and lessons available.

Maura Kavanagh, Eastern Region President for 2023/24, hosted the Presidents' & Delegates' night which was a very well attended sociable evening followed by a game of bridge. The region was delighted to welcome one new club during the year, Shankill Tennis Bridge Club. Some of our clubs amalgamated to keep numbers viable and we now have 62 active clubs in the region.

### Competitions:

All our competitions were held live again this year and numbers were well up on last season. We are now back to 87% of pre-2020 participant-levels.

#### Regional Competitions Winners were:

**Novice Pairs:** Denisa Newton & Mary Coyle

**Intermediate B Pairs:** Nicole Kennan & Gabriel McGovern



Britton Trophy Winners BJ O'Brien & Alan O'Sullivan with Regional President Maura Kavanagh



4Fun Teams winners Gerry McCarthy, Beryl Dunne, Clodagh McCloskey & Ray Breen with Maura Kavanagh

**Intermediate A Pairs:** Simon Burrell & Martina Lee

**Master Pairs:** Michelle Moloney & Sandra Newell

**Intermediate B Teams:** Robert Wolfe, Kevin O'Connell, Brian Corkery, Con Bushe

**Intermediate A Teams:** Simon Burrell, Martina Lee, Cora Ryan, Jean Henneby

**Master Teams:** Mairead Haugh, Roisin De Jong, Maria Whelan, Eileen O'Donovan

**4Fun Teams:** Beryl Dunne, Clodagh McCloskey, Ray Breen, Gerry McCarthy

**Eileen O'Doherty:** Mary McDaid & Clodagh Sweeney

**Eastern Region Memorial:** John Noonan & Carol-Ann Cummins

**Britton Trophy:** Alan O'Sullivan & BJ O'Brien

**Lambert Cup (Area Masters):** Winners were Pam Harrington & Eamonn Martin

**Intermediate B Teams final:** 2nd Robert Wolfe, Kevin O'Connell, Brian Corkery & Con Bushe

**Duais an Uachtarain:** Winners BJ O'Brien & Partner

Adam Mesbur was a member of the Holmes Wilson winning team

Sandra Newell & Michelle Moloney were part of the Mixed Team winners, and represented Ireland in the European Championships in Denmark and will travel to the World Bridge Games in Buenos Aires later this year, as is the case with Adam Mesbur on the Open Team.

Mick Stuart and Jeannette Gribben won Friday's CBAI Sims pairs.

The biggest success of the year for Eastern Region has probably been the great numbers for the Massey Bros. League. Congrats to Fedelma Martin (and helpers) on the energy she puts into this!! A change in the format in 2023/24 has been a major contributor to this success, with all teams playing their matches on designated dates. This adds to the certainty of the event, with no cancellations allowed, and means that all teams know after each of the nights where they are placed. Two 12-board matches were played on three assigned Sunday evenings. This format also provides a collective audience for promoting upcoming regional events. The grand finale was played in the stunning setting of Dun Laoghaire Golf Club Bridge Club with 22 teams playing across various competitions.

Blackrock College Bridge Club (SK) were the winners of Intermediate A league, the Well Bridge Club (Mick Stuart's team) won Intermediate Bs, and Abbey Bridge Club took the Senior title.

Many thanks to Massey Bros. for their continued sponsorship.

### Tournament Directors Training Course

We organised a very successful TD training course facilitated by Joe Dempsey in Greystones Bridge Centre. Thanks to Joe for an excellent event and to Greystones Centre for the venue. The course was extremely popular and was filled within a few hours of advertising it. Feedback was very positive and a second one was conducted in June. There is a long waiting list for more TD training courses in 2024/25 season. We also plan to run a Bridgemates course next season. Our finances are in a very healthy condition and we were able to subsidise the cost of running these courses.

Here's to another great year in 2024/25!!!



## REGIONAL NOTES

## DUBLIN SOUTH REGION REPORT

Teresa Gavin, Regional Secretary



In May 2024 Dublin South Region welcomed a new President, Moya Murphy.

Moya plays in the RDS

Bridge Club and the Railway Union Bridge Club and has been an active member on the committee for many years.

The committee also welcomed two new committee members, Anne Marie Feeny and Colette Stokes, and we are grateful for their assistance with our busy schedule. The Committee also say goodbye to our committee member, Brid Kemple, former President of Dublin South Region and Honorary Secretary for the last three years who has moved on to the IBU; the Committee are grateful for all her help with Dublin South Bridge over the years.



Kay Downes Novice Pairs winners Aisling Rooney and Adrienne McCann

**Dublin South members had great success in the 2023/24 bridge season securing many titles:**

**Duais An Uachtarain:** Derek O'Gorman & BJ O'Brien

**Coen Trophy:** Fred Barry, Marguerite English, Paul Porteous, Mirian McConville

**Spiro Cup:** Noreen Pender & Partner

**Master Pairs:** John Carroll & Mark Moran

**Revington Cup:** Peter Goodman & Partner

**Jackson Cup:** Mary Kelly Rodgers & Anne Fitzpatrick

**Geraldine Cup:** Wojciech Gorczyca, Ronan McMaugh, Marcin Rudzinski & Partner

**McMenamin Cup:** Teresa Rigney & Siobhan Part & Partners

**Holmes Wilson:** Tom Hanlon, Mark Moran, Adam Mesbur, Nicholas FitzGibbon

**Moylan Cup:** Thomas McCormac & Partner

**Egan Trophy:** John Carroll, Conor Boland, Adam Mesbur, Nicholas FitzGibbon

**IBU Seniors Pairs:** Kevin O'Dea & Liam Maher

**IBU Senior Teams:** Peter Stewart, Dolores Gilliland, Kevin O'Dea, Liam Maher

**IBU Burke Intercounty Open Teams:** David Dunne, Martin Brady, Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche

**Teltscher Trials:** Peter Goodman & Terry Walsh, Pat Barry & Partner

**Lady Milne Trials:** Teresa Rigney & Siobhan Part & Partners

**IBU Open Trials:** Tom Hanlon, Conor Boland, Mark Moran, John Carroll, Adam Mesbur, Nicholas FitzGibbon

**IBU Women' Trials:** Teresa Rigney, Siobhan Part & Partners

**IBU Mixed Trials:** Karel De Raeymaeker, Anna Onishuk, Marcin Rudzinski & Partners

**Camrose Trials:** Tom Hanlon, Conor Boland, Mark Moran, John Carroll & Gráinne Barton (NPC)

### Junior Bridge:

A good number of our leading juniors are from Dublin South Region with special mention for Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell who had outstanding performances throughout the year and who represented Ireland in the Junior Camrose. Phedra Kingston, at just seventeen years of age, represented Ireland in the European Youth Bridge Teams Championship and got a special mention in both the Championship Bulletin and in the Colorado Springs Gazette for bidding and bringing home a slam in no trump, with the Gazette choosing it as their deal of the day in a column entitled "Fancy Footwork, Irish Style."

### Dublin South Region Clubs:

The good news to report is that bridge has most certainly rebounded after the Covid pandemic. Dublin South Region has seen increased entries in our Novice and Intermediate competitions in the last year. Our Novice competition for the Kay Downes Trophy attracted huge numbers with 15 ½ tables, a big increase on the year before. Our Regional Teams and Pairs competitions also reported increased numbers. In addition, the Fanagan League was extremely well supported in the last year with nine divisions across Confined Masters, Novices, and Intermediate A & B divisions. This is a fantastic inter-club league which is a great way of meeting other club members in the region

throughout the season. Huge thanks to Fiona O’Gorman and John Coulter who organised and ran a superb league and thank you to our sponsor, Fanagans, whose sponsorship is so essential to the success of this league.

One of our clubs the Regent Bridge Club, 25 Waterloo Road, Dublin 4 is having its centenary celebrations this year so 2025 will be a very special year for the Regent and its members. It is older than the CBAI itself. Many congratulations to the Regent and we wish them well for their special year. Paul Porteous is the President of the Regent for what will be a momentous year which will include special bridge events,

a 100th Anniversary Yearbook produced to mark this special occasion as well as a celebratory dinner dance so keep an eye out for all these exciting events to come. The Regent also runs three open bridge leagues throughout the year starting in September: the Premier League organised by Sheila Kelly, an Area Master League organised by Noreen Pender and an Intermediate League organised by Mairéad Ní Oistín. Contact regentbridgeclub@gmail.com for details. In addition, we understand that the Regent will continue to run its very successful Friendly Friday open events throughout the year with bridge, light refreshments, and a discussion of the hands after the game by an expert.

**Dublin South Region has a busy calendar of events in the coming year as follows:**

**01/11/24:** Carroll Cup hosted by Regent Bridge Club

**01/11/24:** Paul O’Reilly Cup hosted by Regent Bridge Club

**30/11/24:** Regional Pairs (Quinn/Joe Moran/Duffy Cups) at Templeogue Bridge Centre at 11.00am

**25/01/25:** Regional Teams (Pigot/O’Brien/Giddings Cups) at Templeogue Bridge Centre at 11.00am

**27/01/25:** 4Fun Teams Qualifier at Milltown Golf Club

**April/May 2025:** Kay Downes Novice Pairs Trophy (venue to be announced)

**11/05/25:** Fanagan League Grand Final Night

**Fanagan League**

Details of the 2024/2025 Fanagan league will be sent out to all clubs early in the new season and will be made available on DSR website.

Details of bridge classes and teachers are also located on our website. Please check out [www.bridgewebs/dublinsouth](http://www.bridgewebs/dublinsouth) for competition entries and competitions.

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## REGIONAL NOTES

## SOUTH MIDLAND REGION REPORT

George Ryan, Regional Secretary

2023/24 was another very busy year in the South Midland region. We ran five regional competitions, which is a record for the region, and one of these was a Novice competition, which was a first for our region.

We had six tables of Novices competing keenly for this inaugural competition. This augurs well for the future of bridge in our Region, and the competition will definitely be run again this year.

We continued with some great fundraising within the region; the most notable example was a special event in Killenard Bridge Club that raised €5,000 for the Portarlington Meals on Wheels charity in January of this year.

Due to a quirk of the calendar post-pandemic, the region held two AGMs in the past twelve months.

The first was in Killenard in September 2023 and this had a huge attendance of 74 members. We were honoured to have our CBAI National President, Gordon Lessells, attend the meeting.

Our second AGM was in Kilcullen in May 2024. The picture shows our CEO Dermot O'Brien very happily sandwiched between our incoming President Phil O'Reilly (Kilkenny) and our outgoing President Derna Wallace (Kilcullen).

We also ran a very well-received Tournament Directors' course, courtesy of Bernard Higgins of the CBAI, and hope to run more of these in due course.

The Committee looks forward to another successful season in 2024/25.



Gordon Lessells in full flow in Killenard in September 2023, closely marked by (l-to-right) CBAI CEO Dermot O'Brien, outgoing President William Prior, Regional Secretary George Ryan, and incoming President Derna Wallace.



Members of Killenard Bridge Club who raised €5,000 for the Portarlington Meals on Wheels charity



Dermot O'Brien very happily sandwiched between our incoming President Phil O'Reilly (Kilkenny) and our outgoing President Derna Wallace (Kilcullen).



## REGIONAL NOTES

## NORTH WESTERN REGION REPORT

Tom McNicholas, Regional Secretary



The year 2023/24 got off to a very shaky start with the AGM in July 2023 failing to produce a nomination for President or Vice-President. The meeting was subsequently declared invalid as a quorum was not present. An EGM on 10 September elected as Secretary Tom McNicholas and Treasurer Paul Waldron. At this date we still did not have a nomination for President or Vice-President.

A further meeting on 28 October elected Mr Richard White as President and Ms Kathleen Carty as Vice-President, and we thank them for putting their names forward.

The region now has a total of 34 affiliated clubs. The numbers at the moment are reasonably steady but the age profile in clubs is very high. The region, like many throughout the country, really needs to attract new members to join our clubs.

On the competition front we joined with the Western Region to represent Connaught in the interprovincial championships. This competition in Cavan in November was a very enjoyable and well-run event but sadly Connaught did not perform very well. A major factor in this, I believe, is the lack of strong competition on a regular basis within the region. The fact that we have lost the face-to-face competitions of the Ballina and Sligo congress events is a huge loss. Sligo and Friends online is proving to be very popular but we hope that the live event can make a return. *[Hopes are high that the Yeats Country (Sligo) Congress will indeed be back live in 2025. Editor]*

**The regional pairs winners were:****Masters:** Ray and Helen Norton**Intermediate A:** Mary Naughton and  
Attracta McGettrick**Intermediate B:** Robert and Frances Healy**The regional teams winners were:****Masters:** Angela Murphy, William Enright,  
Ray and Helen Norton**Intermediate A:** John and Mary Bourke,  
Ann O'Malley, and Olive Mahon

There was no regional entry for the Tierney Trophy (Intermediate B)


**A highlight of the competitive year was the great win by Niall and Ian Kilroy (Ballina) in the inaugural Regional Masters Pairs Championship.**



Another highlight was the President's Prize (Mr Richard White) which was held in the Park Hotel, Kiltimagh, on 18 February. A wonderful turnout of 32 tables was superbly run by TD Donal Geraghty. The winners of the President's Prize were Angela Murphy and William Enright.

Post-covid we do not seem to have quite as many charity events as were historically run throughout the region. This year we did have two very successful events drawing in more than 30 tables in each case. The first was the Sligo event dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. Orla Banks, and the second was the Good Friday Charity event in Carrick-on-Shannon, which is run to support elderly citizens in the area.

*Regional Masters Pairs Champions Niall & Ian Kilroy, with Martin Purdy (IBU)*



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*Máire O'Keeffe*

'A long felt need in the bridge-book market has at last been met with the publication of Máire O'Keeffe's Bridge Made Simple. There are many beginners books whose value is experienced only following a series of classes. This is different. Designed for use step by step, week by week as the teacher introduces the various topics to the learners, it contains beginners' homework, revision and reference source all in one. Máire O'Keeffe is one of the country's leading bridge teachers. No-one is better placed to understand what learners need. Few coming into the game nowadays have the tradition of card-playing behind them. The game that once was an easy progression from Twenty-five, forty-five, solo or whist, has become a foreign country with a strange language through which the traveller needs slow and patient guidance. What Máire has put in print here is based on her experience of the difficulties encountered by her learners. Bridge Made Simple is what bridge teachers but more importantly their beginner students have been waiting for.'

*Seamus Dowling, Irish Bridge Journal*

*Máire O'Keeffe*

'Máire O'Keeffe the exceptionally successful bridge teacher has published Bridge Made Simple. This well-written book is a must for all students taking up the game of Bridge.'

*George Ryan, Irish Times*

*Máire O'Keeffe*

Bridge Made Simple 'is an absolute must for those starting this great game. I know there are so many people taking up the game these days that something of this nature is a great help to those taking Bridge Lessons.'

*John Conyn, Sunday Independent*



# NORTHERN REGION (DONEGAL) REPORT

Anne Murray, Regional Secretary

The dates for this year's Donegal International Bridge Congress 2024 are 1-3 November at the usual venues the Abbey Hotel and Central Hotel on the Diamond in Donegal Town.

Jim O'Sullivan our Congress Secretary never rests and has been working all summer to ensure you will all have a bridge weekend to remember. If traveling from Dublin, Cavan, or Enniskillen, a bus will leave you to the door of the Abbey Hotel. Donegal Town has everything one could wish for – delightful restaurants, coffee shops and bars, many quality shops and boutiques including the famous Magee of Donegal. Given the timing in early-November, the ideal opportunity to buy some Christmas gifts with a difference.



New internationals Margaret Farren & Anna Carr

Our Donegal International Bridge Congress is held in high esteem by bridge players as an enjoyable weekend with lots of entertainment and bridge at all levels; congress pairs and teams for the competitively minded, Open Pairs for those looking for a more social game. We are looking forward to seeing our many friends and new players at our congress can be assured of a warm Donegal welcome.

Congratulations to Donegal's Anna Carr and Margaret Farren who were on one of the Irish Lady Milne teams this year – their first international cap. Margaret returned to bridge immediately after the covid lockdown following a long gap when she was busy with family matters, and with her partner Anna Carr they have been very successful, winning the CBAI National Women's Pairs twice as well as their international honours.

In the first European Bridge League Online Women's Teams Championship, six completely Irish teams competed. There were 48 teams in total and **on the Kamana team were Donegal's Anna Carr and Margaret Farren with Aoife McHale, Antoinette McGee, Noreen Pender, Kathleen Vaughan, Deirdre O'Halloran, Orla McEntee**. They came ninth in the qualifying round and finished tenth overall. The Northern Region is proud to have Donegal players as part of this event. Anna and Margaret also came eighth (with Mairead Haugh & Roisin De Jong) in **the McMenamin Bowl (National Women's Teams)**.

In the Jackson Cup 2024 (National Women's Pairs), Dungloe's Cass O'Donnell and her daughter Hanna were eleventh of 76 pairs.

In the Holmes Wilson (National Teams Championship) three Donegal teams participated; the best finishers were Shaun Coll, Grace Gallagher, Jim O'Sullivan and Mary Duffy who came 23rd.

In the IBU Burke Trophy Competition. There were again three Donegal teams, with Connell McLoone, Dennis Ellis, John and Sandra McGinley amongst the prizes, finishing 3rd.

Two Donegal Teams participated in the CBAI 4Fun Teams in May. Ailish O'Boyle, Maeve Costello; Marian Skelly and Geraldine Harkin were 9th overall, with Declan Gallagher, Kathleen Kelly, Eamon Gallagher, and Carmel Gallinagh not far behind in 11th

Seven Open Cups took place in the Region during season 2023/24. Unfortunately we lost our Donegal Town Bridge Club this year as a result of an expensive venue and a decline in local players.

## Bridge Teacher Training Course

Marion Gallagher the CDO of the Northern Region organised a bridge teacher training course on the 18/19 May in Jacksons Hotel, Ballybofey. In order to run this teaching course in Donegal a local group of at least ten candidates were required. Marion contacted bridge players in Donegal, Northern Ireland, Sligo, Cavan, Leitrim and Mayo, to ensure a quorum. The result is that there are now eight newly-accredited bridge teachers in Donegal, four in Northern Ireland, and three in other areas of the North-West. Well done to our CDO Marion Gallagher who continues to do trojan work on all aspects of bridge within the region.

## Tournament Director Workshop

There was a great turnout at the recent workshop delivered by Fearghal O'Boyle and Huey Daly at Jackson's Hotel in Ballybofey, on 29 June. Fearghal introduced the Howell and Mitchell movements, and went on to focus on specific scenarios relating to Skip and Relay Mitchells. This was followed by an explanation of some of the basic laws relevant in tournament direction: revokes, leads out of turn, bidding and passing out of turn, etc. In the afternoon, Huey gave some training in the application of the Jeff Smith Scoring programme, which is one of the software applications used by TDs. After an initial overview and explanation, Huey gave each participant an opportunity to use the software, in order to set up bridge movements. There was good engagement from all participants and some excellent discussion on the challenges of tournament direction. This course was initiated by a member of Letterkenny Bridge Club, Una Carty, who is a lecturer at Letterkenny Institute of Technology and is keen to promote the game of bridge.

## Bridge & Golf Day & Night

The outgoing President of the Northern Region, Gerry O'Keeffe held his final event of the year a bridge & golf day & night in the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Golf Club on 24 May. This event was held annually before Covid and the 2023 President Mary Roullier revived it. Early on the day many of the bridge players played golf, followed by the game of bridge. A delicious meal was served during an interval from the game.



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**The AGM of the Northern Region was held in Ballybofey/Stranorlar Golf Club on 30 May 2024. Newly elected officers are follows:**

**President:** Margaret Doherty (Moville Bridge Club);

**President-Elect:** Ita O'Sullivan (Cloughaneely Bridge Club);

**Hon Secretary:** Anne Murray (Killybegs Bridge Club);

**Hon Treasurer:** Declan Gallagher (Letterkenny Bridge Club);

**Hon Auditor:** John Bilberg (Dungloe Bridge Club);

**County Development Officer:** Marion Gallagher (Glenties Bridge Club);

**PRO Anne Murray:** (Killybegs Bridge Club);

**Masterpoints Secretary and Player-of-the-Year Compiler:** Pat McLoone (Letterkenny Bridge Club);

**Hon Congress Secretary:** Jim O'Sullivan (Letterkenny Bridge Club);

**Hon Congress Treasurer:** Sean Coll (Cloughaneely Bridge Club).



We welcome our new **President Margaret Doherty**, who was the Regional Secretary of the Northern Region during the turbulent Covid years, and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to her office.



## REGIONAL NOTES

## MID LEINSTER REGION REPORT

Paul Dunne, Regional Secretary

**This year we welcome Yvonne Dalton as our new President and thank Owen Cummins for his years of service as President and his continued service on the committee.**

Yvonne begins her two-year term with a new committee of Neil Burke, Marian McKay, Blanaid Morris, Barbara Burke, Siobhan Canty, Tracey Macken, Marie O'Brien, Owen Cummins, Helena McIntyre and Paul Dunne. The committee looks forward to the new season of Cunningham League matches which will return to our Westmanstown venue.

At the AGM, Marian and Bert McKay were specifically acknowledged for thanks by the committee and CBAI representative Dermot O'Brien, for their tireless work on behalf of the region.

The Committee has organised a TD training seminar hosted by John Crimmins for late-August focused on how to resolve common issues at club level, with a view to increasing the fairness of our game for all. This will be followed by a Bridgemate course in October.

### Congratulations to the winners of our Regional and National competitions:

#### Cunningham League:

Master - Westmanstown (LO'S);  
Intermediate A1 - Cnucha (KMcC);  
Intermediate A2 - Castleknock (CG);  
Intermediate B Kill Village (BP);  
Novice: The Vue (TM)

#### Regional Pairs:

Master - Kevin O'Dea and Liam Maher;  
Intermediate A - Dara Voyles and Paul Dunne;  
Intermediate B/Novice - Maurice Boland and Pat Duffy

#### Regional Teams:

Master: Tony Smyth, Joe Coyne, Kevin O'Dea, Liam Maher;  
Intermediate A: Dara Voyles, Paul Dunne, Nicola O'Dowd, Maria Rusu;  
Intermediate B: Bernadette Brereton, Annemarie O'Donnell, Kate Jones, Marie Cusack

#### President's Cup:

1st - Mags Kelly and Joe Coyne;  
2nd - Kevin O'Dea and Liam Maher;  
3rd - David Melody and Tony Smyth.

#### Laird Cup - National Intermediate A Pairs:

2nd - Dara Voyles and Paul Dunne.

#### Bankers Trophy: National Intermediate A Teams:

1st Dara Voyles, Paul Dunne, Nicola O'Dowd, Maria Rusu.



Bankers Trophy Winners receiving their trophy from CBAI President Gordon Lessells

**In April, Castleknock Bridge Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a gala dinner at Castleknock Tennis Club.**

In his speech, John McNamara reflected on the growth of the club over the past fifty years and thanked all those instrumental in its success, including Rita Riordan, David Melody and the late Harry Allen.

“**What was life like in 1973?** Well, Ireland joined the EEC. Petrol was about 50p per gallon. A pint of milk was 6p. Shopping for Castleknock families was done in Superquinn in Finglas. About £5 covered the weekly shopping bill for an average family. Milk was delivered in glass bottles to the homes in those years. Very limited TV stations and programmes, were available. A semi-detached four bedroomed house cost about £7,000. A Volkswagen Beetle or a Ford Escort cost between £500 and £600.”



*Former Presidents at the Castleknock Golden Jubilee Dinner*



*Members enjoying the Castleknock Golden Jubilee Dinner*



## REGIONAL NOTES

## NORTH MIDLAND REGION REPORT

Mary Macken, Regional Secretary

On 21 June 2024 we held our AGM in Mullingar Bridge & Amenity Centre when our outgoing President Eamon Bray handed over the seal of Office to incoming President Patricia Mahon from the Tullamore Central Bridge Club.

During his term, Eamon played in all the clubs in the Region. He was delighted to note that most of the clubs were back after covid. His big concern is the age profile of the members and how best to encourage a younger generation to take up the game. Otherwise the region, and bridge generally, will face an uncertain future.

Eamon's last official duty was to make a presentation to Peter O'Meara on his retirement as Region Secretary.

Peter has given many years of dedication and hard work to the Region. We congratulate and wish him a very successful reign as President of the IBU.

Patricia on accepting the seal of office said:

*"I wish to thank Tullamore Central Bridge Club for nominating me as Regional President. I am delighted to accept this honour.*

*I am a relative newcomer to bridge and am grateful for the lessons and support I received from the members of my club and the many friends I've made. I hope to visit most of the clubs in the region during the year to get to know you all, if I can.*

*I'd like to thank outgoing President Eamon for all his work over the past year. I look forward to working with the committee, and I invite all bridge players in the region to the President's Prize which will be held in Tullamore in the spring"*



Eamon hands the seal of Office to incoming President Patricia Mahon from the Tullamore Central Bridge Club.



Eamon's presentation to Peter O'Meara on his retirement as Region Secretary.

**All our regional competitions were well attended. The winners were:**

**Paddy O'Toole Memorial:** Joan Peppard & Tom Roche

**Regional Pairs:** Master Tony Ward & Bill O'Hanlon, Intermediate Dillon Murtagh & Judith Balfour

**Regional Teams:** Master Frank & Breda Kelly, Tony Ward & Bill O'Hanlon, Intermediate Joan Peppard, Tom Roche, John Higgins, Dillon Murtagh.

**John Cunningham Cup:** Kevin Woulfe & Dillion Murtagh.



**The winners of the Annie Hanlon Cup confined to Mullingar Clubs were Peggy Murtagh and Ellie Muldoon. The cup was presented by leading Irish player Tom Hanlon, whose mother it commemorates.**



Peggy Murtagh and Ellie Muldoon with Tom Hanlon.

**Regional President's Prize** was held on 19 July in Mullingar Bridge & Amenity Centre attracted an attendance of seventeen tables. The contestants enjoyed a three-course meal before John Higgins and John Regan were announced as the worthy winners.



Winners of Regional Presidents Prize: John Higgins and John Regan

**At national level our representatives did us proud**

**Inaugural Regional Master Teams:**

Winners were Olive Kilbane, Una Flynn, John Kiernan and Joan Donnellan from Longford. Third place were Sean and Brid Galligan, Liz and Helen O'Reilly.

**Coen Trophy**

Sean & Brid Galligan, Melissa Brady & Paddy McDermott won best Regional Master Team in Sean & Brid Galligan, Liz & Helen O'Reilly won the second session in the IBU Teams in Cavan.

**Cooper Cup**

Brid Galligan, Una Flynn, Liz and Helen O'Reilly were second place

And last but not least, many congratulations to our Intermediate B Team of Joan Peppard, Tom Roche, John Higgins and Dillon Murtagh who won the National B Teams. They are seen pictured being presented with the trophy by CBAI President Gordon Lessells.




**Bridge classes** continued through the autumn and a big thank you to all our teachers and Development Officers for promoting the game and encouraging more people to take up bridge. In March we ran a very successful one day Tournament Directors Course in the Mullingar Bridge & Amenity Centre with over 25 people in attendance.



**"New Class at the Show"**

On Sunday 14 July we kicked off our season with a stand at the Mullingar Agricultural Show. It was a great success with more than 20 people expressing an interest in classes and leaving their contact details, for when we start them again in October. This is something we will be doing again next year.

Finally I wish to express our sympathy to all who lost loved ones during the year and in particular to Peter O'Meara on the death of his son Peadar.

  
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## REGIONAL NOTES

# NORTH EASTERN REGION REPORT

Seamus Costello, Regional Secretary

In August 2023 a number of clubs within the region carried out bridge promotions and these were hugely successful in that they produced a large number of people interested in learning bridge. With beginner classes organised in more than 60% of our clubs the outlook is very bright for our region and overall, our affiliation numbers are heading back towards pre-pandemic levels.

Crannog Bridge Club celebrated their 25th anniversary on 31 January 2024. Presentations were made to the founder of the club Aileen Timoney, all the past presidents, and to Teresa O'Reilly who has been the club's bridge teacher throughout that time. The Regional President, Kay Goldsworthy, and the Regional Secretary were in attendance and received presentations. It was a great night of celebration and bridge. Many thanks to club President Gloria Good and all that helped.

Aside from national competitions our region holds Six Regional Championships and this coming year we will have 25 Open club events on Sundays during the season as Monaghan club has added an Open event. Many of our clubs also hold events in support of various charities.

**Numbers for our Regional events were up this year and the winners were:**

**Pat Taaffe Trophy:** Martin T.O'Brien and Dave Doherty

**Regional Mixed Pairs:** Lesley O'Shea and Noel Fanning

**Regional Pairs:**

Masters - Tos and Antoinette McGee

Intermediate A - Melissa Brady and Anna Shalvey

Intermediate B - Sylvia McCann and Angela Everitt

**Regional Teams**

Masters

Martin T O'Brien, Dave Doherty, Tom Lawlor, Frances Bellew

Intermediate A

Bridget Hession, Frances Dunne, Lucia Farrell, Sean Keane

Intermediate B

Susan McNulty, Marie O'Shea, Jarek Wojciechowski, Oliver Lawless

**Regional Ladies' Pairs:** Denise and Sheila Walsh

**Regional Men's Pairs:** Pat Duff and Brian Carroll

**Regional Novice Pairs:** Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan



Crannog members and guests enjoying the anniversary party



Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan with CBAI Vice President Martin Brady

Apart from competing in regional events lots of our players play in congresses and national events. Some notable winners were:

**Drogheda Congress - Intermediate A Pairs:**

Anna Shalvey and Melissa Brady

**Spiro Cup:** Noreen Pender and Dave Terry

**New Ireland Trophy:** Melissa Brady and Anna Shalvey

**Malahide Congress Area Master Pairs:**

Josephine Brady and Frances Daly

**IBU O'Connor Trophy:** Dara Voyles, Nicola O'Dowd, Sandra Peden, Linda Walsh

**Seniors Congress Gala Pairs:** Phil Geoghegan and James Newman

**IBU Pairs:** Deirdre Tuckey and Seamus Costello

**JJ Murphy Trophy (National Novice Pairs Championship):** Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan (below, with CBAI Vice President Martin Brady)

I thank the regional committee for their support during the year and a big thanks to all the club secretaries in the region I have the pleasure to work with. You do a great job!

Finally I wish our new Regional President Mary Timoney all the very best for the coming season.

Many of our clubs had players who died during the past year. It is notable how supportive bridge players are at these times to the families of the bereaved. We remember in particular three people who contributed hugely to bridge in our region.



In October 2023 Aidan Rodgers died unexpectedly at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda. Aidan was a very popular bridge player who played regularly in regional and national events. Aidan was also the publisher of the CBAI Annual Newsletter.



In January 2024 Riona Carolan died. Riona was a lovely lady who will always be associated with Ardee Bridge Club where she organised club events and bridge classes. She was a past winner of the CBAI President's Merit Award for her contribution to bridge.



In April 2024 Paddy Brennan died. Paddy was an absolute gentleman and a great mentor to all the many players who learned their bridge in Drogheda. The North Eastern Region has a huge debt to Paddy for the inspiration and drive he showed with the building of the ABCD Bridge Centre in Drogheda, which is one of the best in the country and is now home to all our regional events.

**2025 IBU Seniors Congress**  
 hosted by IBU President Heather Hill  
 Cavan Crystal Hotel  
 22-24 April 2025



**Tuesday 22 April:**

7:00 Official Opening  
 7:30 Gala Pairs\*

**Wednesday 23 April:**

1:00 Senior Pairs Championship (Pat McDevitt Trophy)  
 1:00 & 6:00 Open Pairs\*

**Thursday 24 April:**

11:00 IBU Senior Teams Championship  
 11:00 & 3:00 Open Pairs\*



\* No age/grade restrictions. To enter Seniors events, players must have been born in 1960 or earlier. Pre-entry required for Seniors Pairs and Teams via [www.cbai.ie](http://www.cbai.ie)



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**2025 Novice & Intermediate Congress**  
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**Portmarnock Resort & Golf Links**  
**14-16 February 2025**



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**Friday 14 February:**

- 7:15 Official Opening
- 7:30 Gala Pairs
- 7:30 Mixed Pairs (Jim Fitzgerald Trophy)

**Sunday 16 February:**

- 11:00 Team of Four (JJ Kiely Trophy, extended session with short break)
- 11:00 Open Pairs

**Saturday 15 February:**

- 1:00 Intermediate A Pairs (New Ireland Trophy, 2 sessions)
- 1:00 Intermediate B Pairs (Kervick Trophy, 2 sessions)
- 1:00 & 6:00 Open Pairs
- 6:00 Novice Pairs (Waterford Glass Trophy)
- 7:30 Mixed Pairs (Jim Fitzgerald Trophy)



All Novices & Intermediates welcome. Pre-entry required via [www.cbai.ie](http://www.cbai.ie)