

Successful Dundalk Bridge Congress, 18th/ 20th November

Dundalk was the major focus for Bridge players last weekend when competitors flocked to the Crowne Plaza Hotel for this year's Congress. Players gathered from throughout Ireland, North and South, Wales and Italy in large numbers including many international players. The tournament named 'The East of Ireland Open Bridge Congress' is now well established as one of the top Bridge competitions in Ireland. This was the 69th holding of the event.

The Congress opened on Friday evening when Ronnie Roche, Congress President, welcomed and invited Sheila Gallagher, President, Contract Bridge Association of Ireland (CBAI), to officially open the Congress. Special welcomed guests included Patrick McDermott, Regional Vice President, CBAI, and Mae Mc Ardle, President, Dundalk Bridge Club. Ronnie Roche also extended a warm welcome to all the visiting players and wished them an enjoyable stay and the best of luck in their competitions.

President Sheila Gallagher said that it was a privilege to be invited to open a Congress in Dundalk a place which had a most interesting and distinguished history. The inclusion of the Leinster Schools Championship was most welcome and would help to encourage and promote bridge playing at schools level.

Play continued throughout Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Prizes were presented after each days play by President Gallagher.

The team from St Vincent's School, Dundalk, comprising Roisin Watters & Michaela Begley regained the Leinster Schools Championship and were presented with the Margaret Nugent Salver from donor Margaret Nugent.

The extensive programme provided competitions in every grade from Novice to Master level. All competitions were strongly supported.

Main prize winners were:-Masters Grand Prix Billy Ronan, Inter Grand Priz Rita Duff; Teams 1st BJ O' Brien, M Mac Donagh, T Walsh, P Goodman. Pairs B Ronan & P. Cassidy; Inter A Pairs B O' Mahony & A Russell; Mixed Pairs Fri CA Cummins & J Noonan. Open Pairs Fri N/S A Mc Nee & T Flood; E Martin & A Meehan (tie) E/W J Kiernan & A Sweeney. Inter B Pairs B. Fenton & M Callan.

At the closing of the Congress the Congress President, Ronnie Roche, thanked President Gallagher for her presence and active support throughout the weekend, the players for their support in such numbers, the sponsors for their generosity, the Tournament Directors for their smooth organisation, the Crowne Plaza Hotel for their excellent service and facilities and last but not least the organising Committee and Volunteers for their contribution.

Ronnie also acknowledged the welcome boost to the local economy which the Congress generated particularly as all those involved with its management did so purely on a voluntary basis; local Heroes indeed.

Ronnie Roche,
President, Congress 2011,
20th November '11.