

# IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Autumn 2025

## Welcome

Welcome along to the  
Autumn 2025 Journal.



Enda Murphy, Editor

I trust you've all been enjoying the great weather. The day cannot be far away when some smart cookie will offer outdoor bridge. You heard it here first.

You'll all be aware by now of the deliberations about amalgamating CBAI and NIBU. Beyond observing that it appears to make eminent sense, I wouldn't have anything in particular to add.

July saw the immensely successful Regent Centenary Congress in the superbly appointed O'Reilly Hall in UCD. Zia Mahmoud fetched up, surely the GOAT, and always kindness personified whenever I've sought a favour. Those other excellent friends of the Journal, Thomas Bessis of France and his wife, Italian star Irene Baroni, also showed up and they duly won everything. They're both Bidding Panel members, and are close friends of Tom Hanlon. Thomas and Irene have kindly contributed an account of their Dublin experiences

Indeed, the merits [or otherwise] of couples playing bridge is a rare old chestnut. Ever since Myrtle Bennett shot her husband John in 1929, the debate has raged. John slapped Myrtle after she made a remark about "bum bridge players" at the table. Myrtle shot him dead in response. She was acquitted at trial. Please note I am merely stating facts, not giving life advice!

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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



At the recent US Mixed Trials for the upcoming World Championships, it was notable that a number of couples featured. Michael and Debbie Rosenberg. Kevin and Cecelia Dwyer Rimstedt. Sylvia Shi and Daniel Korbel [married, divorced but still a bridge pair]. Emma Kolesnik and fiancé Adam Grossack. Maybe it's a coming thing.

I'm delighted to announce a fresh initiative in this issue. Ever since the excellent Fearghal O'Boyle took a step back from his "How Would You Rule?" articles, I've been casting around for a successor to cover rules and ethics. My good friend and former classmate, Jim Doyle, has now stepped up to the plate. He has contributed a very timely and necessary piece called "S/he who hesitates". Hesitations and breaks in tempo are a scourge of our game, and there is a glaring need to educate players about the damage they can do, as well as the consequences of these ethical breaches.

On the international front, Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell notched a superb win in the European U-26 Pairs. Luca is one of our columnists and also a Bidding Panel member. I'm delighted to announce that Matthew will be joining him on the Panel going forward.

Joining the Panel right away are Diane Greenwood and Ian Hamilton. Ian as you will see, weighed in with a maximum score, thereby thoroughly vindicating Bob Pattinson's judgement in co-opting him. And speaking of judgement, be sure to check out Tom Hanlon's answer to Question 4! Some of our readers also scored very well – keep your answers coming in.

This issue also features a "bio" by Séamus Dowling, our pre-eminent bridge author and historian. It's a most entertaining read, and I freely admit I was unaware of many of the events Séamus recounts. I'm indebted to him, and Irish bridge is lucky to have him.

Enjoy the Journal

*[ps please feel free to email me – see below- with comments and suggestions about Journal content. Thanks]*

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



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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.

♠ A85	N	♠ K Q
♥ AKJ86	W	♥ 7
♦ KQJ102	E	♦ 753
♣ -	S	♣ AK109743

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

<sup>1</sup> 3♦ = 5+ cards, GF

<sup>2</sup> 5NT = Pick a slam (a 4♦ bid would lead to 6♦)

### The Play

North leads the ♠6 against 6♦. How do you plan the play?

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

♠ KQ10632	N	♠ AJ94
♥ A106	W	♥ QJ
♦ 5	E	♦ AQ1096
♣ A83	S	♣ 52

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

<sup>1</sup> 2NT = Enquiry, agrees spades (usually with ambitions above game)

<sup>2</sup> 4♠ = Maximum, denies a shortage

<sup>3</sup> When partner freely raises your six-card major and you control all the side suits, one should make at least one slam try.

### The Play

North leads the ♣K against 6♠. How do you plan the play?

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

♠ 943	N	♠ AQ
♥ AKQ32	W	♥ J8
♦ J98	E	♦ A754
♣ A7	S	♣ K6542

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

<sup>1</sup> 3♠ = Applying the 'rule of 4' when 1st in hand at green

<sup>2</sup> 4♥ = Not without risk!

### The Play

North leads the ♠6 against 4♥. How do you plan the play?

## Board 4 Dealer West. Vul All.

♠ Q107	N	♠ A
♥ A862	W	♥ 75
♦ 832	E	♦ AKQ109
♣ AK10	S	♣ QJ742

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

<sup>1</sup> 2♦ = Natural, GF

<sup>2</sup> 3♣ = Strong Jump Shift based on club support

<sup>3</sup> Cue Bid

<sup>4</sup> 5NT = Pick a Slam

<sup>5</sup> 6♣ = 6NT was an alternative

### The Play

North leads the ♥K. How do you plan the play?

Answers on page 34

# Bidding Quiz 11

By Bob Pattinson



All eight hands are from teams events. Entries to [Bobpattinson@ymail.com](mailto:Bobpattinson@ymail.com) by 7th November 2025. Good luck!

## Question 1

Dealer South. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ QT752  
♥ J3  
♦ AJ94  
♣ A6

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

<sup>1</sup> 3♣=4th suit forcing

## Question 2

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

♠ AKT92  
♥ AQ9  
♦ AK98  
♣ J

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

<sup>1</sup> 2♠=6+

## Question 3

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ QJ754  
♥ 8  
♦ AQJ  
♣ QT85

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	?		

## Question 4

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ KQ63  
♥ AJT74  
♦ J2  
♣ 83

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

<sup>1</sup> 1♠=2+

## Question 5

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

♠ Q985  
♥ AQT98  
♦ -  
♣ AT75

W	N	E	S
			1NT <sup>1</sup>
P	2♦	P	2♥ <sup>2</sup>
P	2♠	P	3♠
P	?		

<sup>1</sup> 1NT=14-16: no 5 major  
<sup>2</sup> 2♥=2+ (no super accepts)

## Question 6

Dealer East. Vul All. Teams

♠ T52  
♥ AKQJ53  
♦ A5  
♣ 73

W	N	E	S
		1♥	P
1♠	P	?	

## Question 7

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ T2  
♥ AQT7  
♦ AKT  
♣ 9742

W	N	E	S
	2♠ <sup>1</sup>	P	P
X	P	3♣ <sup>2</sup>	P
?			

<sup>1</sup> 2♠=6-10 5431 or 5-5: any 2nd suit  
<sup>2</sup> 3♣=constructive (2NT = weak)

## Question 8

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams

♠ A32  
♥ KJ83  
♦ -  
♣ KQ9642

W	N	E	S
1♠	1NT <sup>1</sup>	?	

<sup>1</sup> 1NT=16-18: 2 stops

## Entries to:

[bobpattinson@ymail.com](mailto:bobpattinson@ymail.com)  
by 7th November 2025

Please remember to state your  
grade in your entry

- Novice/Intermediate
- Master (below Life Master)





# 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.

# Thoroughly Modern Millie - now showing in Bray!

Editor



*[Editor's note: Thoroughly Modern Millie was a stage musical and a 1967 movie, starring Julie Andrews and Mary Tyler Moore].*

**So there you are, minding your own business on a balmy June afternoon when the phone rings. It's BJ [O'Brien thereof] asking you to play that evening in Bray. Having washed your hair earlier that very day, and being unable to contrive a family emergency at such short notice, you grit your teeth and accept.**

It's always an enjoyable experience to play in Bray, and this night is no exception. Early on, BJ serves notice of intent when he overcalls 1♥ on KQ63, further adorned by an outside Queen and two outside Jacks. Holding ♥972 plus ♣AK, you venture a support double [showing 3 hearts], then when opponents bid 1NT you bid 2♥. Minus 3. It's going to be one of those nights.

Later on you pick up

♠ K
♥ K97
♦ KQ62
♣ KJ972

You're playing strong NT and five-card majors. What to do? If you open 1♣ and partner responds in a red suit you can raise it, but if [as seems likely] he responds 1♠, what then? One option is to downgrade to 14 points and rebid 1NT. But as the immortal CJ [Reggie Perrin] said "I didn't get where I am today by downgrading decent 15-counts".

What remains? You are not strong enough to reverse into 2♦. Looks like you'll just have to rebid 2♣. But

wait! A memory stirs! In the most recent Journal, there was a very interesting article by leading Junior, Luca Crone, discussing modern bidding approaches to opening 1NT. Specifically, Luca made the case for opening 1NT with a singleton King.

Being a Thoroughly Modern Millie, you duly open 1NT. BJ bids 2♣ and you bid 2♦. He now jumps to 3♥ [showing five hearts and four spades], so you raise to 4♥ and get ready to table your dummy, reserving a particular flourish for that stiff ♠K. But you suddenly see that BJ is thinking. Almost 50 years playing with the guy, so you know it's trouble when he starts to think. Sure enough, he foosters in the bidding box and your heart sinks. Out comes Ole Black. 5♣ from you to show 1 or 4, and the way you slap it down leaves no room for doubt. Dear God in heaven, he's thinking again!! Twice in one hand. The Guinness Book of World Records beckons. After a lengthy squirm, he bids 6NT. LHO leads a diamond and dummy hits:

You		Dummy
♠ K		♠ J1098
♥ K97		♥ AQ842
♦ KQ62		♦ A
♣ KJ972		♣ AQ5

You can kind of see what he was fretting about. If my Ace is ♥K, 6♥ is probably the spot, but if it's ♠A we might have two heart losers yet have 12 tricks in NT. Anyway, you've evaded a spade lead, so things are looking up. If hearts break, we'll just be claiming our 13 tricks thanks very much. But what if they don't? You can't detect and handle J10xx with either opponent. But if either one has stiff J or

Ten, you can still pick up the suit. Proper technique is to cash ♥A. LHO plays ♥J! If this is a true card, you can now finesse ♥9 and claim 13 tricks [absent LHO having five clubs which is highly unlikely]. But as Al Pacino observed in Scent of a Woman "I've been around, you know?" Playing ♥J would be a standard falsecard from J10 doubleton. If LHO was really good, he'd play ♥J from J10x to give you a chance to go wrong [you're marked with three hearts on the bidding].

If you finesse a heart into LHO's ten, he may continue diamonds, and we'd survive for 12 tricks. As Zia tells us "If they don't lead it they won't switch it". Another Zia ruse would be to win ♦A and play ♠J to ♠K. Hmmm. I decided to pay off to the falsecard, and played a heart to ♥9, LHO showing out. 6NT plus 1, and a much-needed top. Result for Thoroughly Modern Millie! Who needs Zia when you've got Julie Andrews on your side? [Memo to self – remember to ask BJ if the J stands for "Julie"].

Well done to Neil English and Adrian Meagher, the only pair to reach the rock-solid 6♣. Anyone playing in 6♥ went down – a spade lead and continuation forces you to ruff, and now you cannot play trumps for no loser.

You'd think that Millie would now rest on her laurels, wouldn't you? But no – prepare yourself for "Thoroughly Modern Millie 2 – This Time It's Personal". This present-day version stars Kim Kardashian and Jason Statham. Water finds its own level.

So it transpires that at the final table, vul against not, you pick up as Dealer:



♠ 4
♥ Q6
♦ A872
♣ J106542

Modern bidding theory at expert level says that you should pre-empt at every opportunity. As one US world champion puts it "The only valid excuse for not pre-empting is that it isn't your turn to bid". I'm a card-carrying member of that school of thought. So for me, this hand is a 3♣ opening every day of the week. It puts pressure on your opponents. You have three cards in the majors, so the hand likely belongs to opponents. Why make it easy for them? Yes, you are vul and yes, you are opening in front of an unpassed partner. I would never open 3♣ with a three-card major, but otherwise it's open season as far as I'm concerned. Never ever let it be said that your mother reared a jibber.

So I opened 3♣, Thoroughly Modern Millie that I am. LHO held:

♠ AKJ6
♥ A98
♦ KJ93
♣ A3

What do you want him to do? He's got 20 points. Give me eight or so for my pre-empt. That leaves 12 points between partner and responder, therefore six on average each, and that makes overcalling 3NT an option. But it looks best to double, as partner may be able to show one or both majors, and if not you can rebid 3NT, showing pretty much what you have.

In practice, LHO doubled and RHO bid 3♥. What now? Very few pairs have agreements for this situation – another justification for the original 3♣ pre-empt. LHO bid 3♠, which doesn't look right to me, and there he played.

BJ leads ♣K. Dummy has Qx and Declarer has the Ace. Ouch, but fair enough – I did tell him to lead a Club. Declarer wins ♣A and dummy later scores ♣Q. You gain the lead late in the play. Old fuddy-duddy that you are, you "know" that BJ has two clubs and

therefore declarer has three. So a third club looks the right return – might promote a trump trick for BJ. Imagine my rapture when declarer discards, BJ follows [!!] and dummy ruffs. BJ's clubs were K87. Grrrr and brr. As it turned out, it didn't matter. RHO held.....

♠ 10982
♥ J10543
♦ Q5
♣ Q9

Both 4♥ and 4♠ make, played by LHO. If you didn't open 3♣, the bidding would go 2NT-3♣-3♠-4♠. So misdefending 3♠ did not cost. Every other table played in 4♥ or 4♠. [RHO should of course raise to 4♠ on the actual auction, though I'm still not having 3♠].

BJs hand was Qxxx Kxx 10xx Kxx. His "logic" for ♣K lead was to retain the lead at trick two, and having had a look at dummy he'd know what to do.

### Action Points for Journal Readers

1. Re-read Luca's article from the last issue [cbai.ie], and gird your loins to open 1NT with singleton Kings [preferably Majors]
2. Pre-empt at every opportunity
3. Tell all your friends to read the Journal
4. Next time you see BJ, call him Julie or Millie or Kim – and tell him I sent you.

# The Art of Defence

James Heneghan



I gave a series of classes last Spring in the Regent and Malahide clubs. These were given to a largely Inter A standard or better players. The topics covered bidding in competition, defence and declarer play in both teams and a matchpoint setting. The attendees engaged very well with the subjects and I was very pleased with the feedback.

It's generally understood that the most challenging aspect of bridge is defence so that's what I'll try to give you a flavour of in this column.

Experience is generally a great teacher but if you are repeating the same play by rote style without challenging yourself on your actions or seeking input from other (better) players, you are not deriving the maximum from your experience. My goal in teaching is to provide a framework to help you quickly zone in on the issue that needs most attention so that you pour your focus into addressing that problem.

I think the main reason defence is hard is because the defenders have only very simple signalling tools in order for two minds to get in sync on any individual hand.

## The tools of the defender's trade

The **Count** signal → High - Low indicates an even number and vice versa an odd number

The **Attitude** signal → High indicates interest in the suit and low discourages

The **Suit Preference** signal → High indicates strength in a higher suit, low card prefers the lower suit.

**Note:** Sometimes you have to give counter intuitive signals in order to help partner continue with the right card.

		♠ KQJ10	
		♥ 74	
		♦ AK63	
		♣ 852	
♠ 5			♠
♥ AKJ105			♥
♦ 97			♦
♣ J10963			♣
	♠		
	♥		
	♦		
	♣		

W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	1S
P	2S	P	3♦
P	4S	All Pass	

Lead: K♥ - Partner plays the 9, declarer the 6. You continue the A♥, partner plays the 2 and declarer the Q. How do you continue?

Analysis: It looks like the heart suit is divided 5-2-4-2.

Why is partner asking us to continue Hearts given we'll be giving declarer a ruff and sluff?

The auction and partner's signal leads us to think that declarer is in a 4-4 spade fit leaving partner with four spades to the Ace.

Solution: Continue playing Hearts.

♠ KQJ10	
♥ 74	
♦ AK63	
♣ 852	
♠ 5	♠ A632
♥ AKJ105	♥ 9832
♦ 97	♦ 102
♣ J10963	♣ K74
	♠ 9874
	♥ Q6
	♦ QJ854
	♣ AQ

Partner will win the third round of Spades and continue a fourth Heart, promoting their ♠6.

# Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



**Migry Campanile is one of the top Israeli players and is often in the headlines because of her brilliant cardplay. She's now a US international. Here she and her partner, Sweden's Peter Fredin, defended perfectly for a near top in the European Mixed Pairs.**

Dealer South. Vul All.

<p>♠ 1065 ♥ AKJ106 ♦ 75 ♣ J84</p>			
♠ AQJ3	N	♠ 987	
♥ Q7432	W	♥ 85	
♦ Q4	E	♦ J6	
♣ K10	S	♣ AQ9752	
<p>♠ K42 ♥ 9 ♦ AK109832 ♣ 63</p>			

W	N	E	S
			1♦
1♥	1NT	2♣	2♦
2♠	P	P	3♦
All Pass			

On a heart lead 3♦ would have made, but even one down would have been a good matchpoint score for North/South as East/West can make nine tricks in either black suit.

Here, however, Fredin led the ♣K. Migry overtook with the ace and returned the ♠9. There was no danger of West playing her for a doubleton spade because she had shown at least three spades when she passed West's 2♠ bid. West won his ♠J and continued with the ♣10.

Declarer ducked, but Migry won her queen anyway and played a second round of spades. West won the ♠Q, and then cashed the ace. That was five tricks to the defenders, but when West continued with a fourth round of spades and Migry ruffed in with the ♦J, a sixth defensive trick had been created for West's ♦Q. +200 was worth nearly all the matchpoints.

Two English teams won bronze medals in the Mixed Teams at San Remo in 2009 - Frances Hinden, Graham Osborne, Jeffrey Allerton and Paula Leslie, as well as Janet de Botton, Artur Malinowski, Nick Sandqvist and Nevena Senior.

Today's deal comes from the de Botton team's quarter-final encounter against a strong Dutch squad:

Dealer South. Vul N/S.

<p>♠ AK10 ♥ A103 ♦ A643 ♣ KJ2</p>			
♠ 52	N	♠ J83	
♥ Q9862	W	♥ J	
♦ Q1098	E	♦ KJ75	
♣ 84	S	♣ 109765	
<p>♠ Q9764 ♥ K754 ♦ 2 ♣ AQ3</p>			

The Dutch North/South failed to reach slam but this was the auction when Artur Malinowski and Janet de Botton were North/South:

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

There are two possible lines of play on this deal; one is a dummy reversal. Declarer wins the lead, cashes the ♦A and ruffs a diamond, plays a spade to the ace and ruffs another diamond, cashes the ♠Q, plays a club to dummy and ruffs the last diamond, then a club to hand, draw the last trump and cash two more winners in hearts and clubs, simply conceding a heart at the end.



# Making My Way

Melissa Brady



**Reflecting on this past year, I feel deeply grateful for everything it's brought—the unexpected highs, the new opportunities, and the experiences that opened my eyes in ways I never saw coming.**

When the season began, I found myself in a position that felt unfamiliar, even uncomfortable. I've said it before, and I still carry the feeling: I didn't believe I deserved to be an Area Master at that point. There was a sense of doubt that lingered, a voice inside me questioning whether I had truly earned it because the pace at which National points accumulate—especially in team competitions—felt overwhelming, almost surreal. I felt that I'd been thrown into something too big for me. Every mistake felt huge. Every board I played badly stuck with me for days and some still linger in the back of my mind. Imposter syndrome kicked in as I feel like I had a lot of luck getting to where I was. It was hard to reconcile recognition with readiness. Over time, I started to understand that growth doesn't always begin from a place of certainty or confidence. Sometimes, it begins in the moments where you feel out of your depth but you choose to have the courage to rock up anyway.

Sligo Congress made its highly anticipated return in June following a hiatus due to the Covid pandemic. This marked my first opportunity to participate "live" in the event, as it had been conducted online every year since I began playing bridge. In the lead-up to the weekend, everyone we spoke with expressed genuine enthusiasm about its revival—and having now experienced it firsthand, I can fully appreciate why. The atmosphere was vibrant and engaging, people were

genuinely thrilled to be there, and it is fair to say the congress was an outstanding success. The weekend proved to be a successful one us on the bridge front also. We were pleased to secure the Area Master prizes in both the Congress Pairs and the Teams event, the latter in partnership with fellow journal contributor Nicola O'Dowd and her partner Declan Byrne. We also achieved a second-place finish in the Gala Pairs, narrowly missing out to our final-round opponents—former CBAI President Gordon Lessels and his partner, Denis Sheehan. Gordon, ever the mathematician, suggested we had been in the lead until facing them in the final round, though I suspect he may have just been teasing us!

## Sligo Congress - Teams

### Session 2 Board 7.

Dealer South. Vul All.

			♠AK843		
			♥872		
			♦A93		
			♣K3		
♠J109		N		♠75	
♥Q1053				♥AJ6	
♦4	W	E		♦J1086	
♣97542		S		♣J1086	
			♠Q62		
			♥K94		
			♦KQ752		
			♣AQ		

Given how many things went right for us in Sligo, you might wonder why I'm choosing to focus on a board that didn't go so well. The truth is, I knew there was a slam on in this board — I just wasn't confident in how to bid it.

My partner [South] opened a strong 1NT, and the auction continued: 2♥ (transfer), 2♠, 4♣ (Gerber), 4♥, 5♣, 5♠. At that point, the only information I had about my partner's hand was that 10 of her points were

made up of one Ace and two Kings. I had no way of knowing whether she held three spades, so I went for 6NT. She got a club lead and won in hand with the queen, then ran off five spades tricks but it quickly became clear the contract wasn't going to make as on the third round of spades, East discarded the ♣6, and on the fourth spade, West dropped the ♥3 — both signaling interest in hearts.

I didn't feel I could bid 3NT on my second turn — if my partner only had two spades, she would pass. [But that would be ok, Ed]. I couldn't bid 6♠ either, since I didn't hold six spades myself (or even five strong ones). *[There is the option of bidding 5NT which means "pick a slam", but if partner has only two spades you have 29-31 combined points and no known fit, Ed].* It really is no fun sitting there knowing you have your partner playing in the wrong slam.

At the end of the board, our opponents kindly told us to come find them after the session — they said they'd show us how to bid it properly.

True to their word, after the competition ended and they wrapped up their victory speech, they told us that once my partner accepted the transfer, I could have bid 3♦ (or whichever minor I had more of) to ask if she had three spades. The reason I didn't do that was because, in our system, that bid shows five spades and at least four diamonds. Knowing I was pushing towards game, Anna—with a doubleton club—would then have bid 4♠, and we'd have ended up in 6♠ not 6NT. It always seems simple and obvious once someone else explains how to do it. It's good to learn from your mistakes so that's a small tweak we've made to our bidding going forward.



## Regent Congress - Congress Pairs

## Session 2 Board 8.

Dealer West. Vul None.

<p>♠ K6532 ♥ KJ105 ♦ KQ9 ♣ 3</p>		
♠ 98	N	♠ 107
♥ A86432	W	♥ Q9
♦ 103	E	♦ AJ752
♣ KJ9	S	♣ 7542
<p>♠ AQJ4 ♥ 7 ♦ 864 ♣ AQ1086</p>		

The Regent Centenary Congress was held in O'Reilly Hall, University College Dublin, over the weekend of July 11th to 13th. I extend my sincere compliments to the Congress Committee—the event was impeccably organised, and I doubt there was a single cause for complaint. It may well have been the largest congress in which we have participated. We were fortunate to face many of the visiting international players. We had our share of ups and downs, this board in particular stood out—not just because it earned us a shared top, but because it reminded me that sometimes the best call you can make at the table is... pass.

The auction began with West opening a weak 2♥. Sitting north and holding four hearts to two honours and the ten, I saw no reason to intervene and passed. West's partner raised to 3♥, which my partner doubled for takeout. I looked again at my hand and felt extremely confident that 4♠ would make. Had we been vulnerable, I would have taken the plunge. However, at that moment I recalled something Gay Keaveney said at the Donegal Congress earlier in the season: "Take the money and run."

I did a quick calculation and concluded that we were very likely to defeat the contract by at least three tricks, so I passed again. The only real danger was missing a slam—but with my holding in hearts and partner short in the suit, that seemed unlikely.

I led my singleton ♣3, which fortunately found my partner with the ace. She returned the suit, allowing me to ruff. I then switched to the ♦K, with the declarer winning on the table with the ace. He played the ♥Q next, which I won with the king. A low spade to partner's ace followed, and she returned a diamond to my queen. I cashed the ♠Ks, then led the ♥H, putting declarer back on lead as I didn't want to give the dreaded ruff and discard on the spade, and my ♥10 eventually scored us a seventh trick—down three, for a penalty of 500.

Twelve months ago, I would likely have launched into 4♠ without a second thought. Bridge has a funny way of teaching you patience—and sometimes, pass is the most powerful card in your bidding box.

## Regent Congress - Congress Teams

## Session 1 Board 2.

Dealer East. Vul N/S.

<p>♠ K1054 ♥ KJ2 ♦ A965 ♣ AK</p>		
♠ 832	N	♠ Q96
♥ 8653	W	♥ Q10974
♦ J7	E	♦ Q102
♣ 10986	S	♣ 74
<p>♠ AJ7 ♥ A ♦ K843 ♣ QJ532</p>		

One of the more "how-did-we-get-here?" moments of the weekend came when we found ourselves as one of only four pairs bold (or mad) enough to reach 7NT on this board.

The auction began innocently enough: partner opened 1♣, I responded 1♦, and she came back with a jump to 3♦—showing 15+ points, at least five clubs, and no more than four diamonds. I followed up with 4NT (RKC3014), and got a reply of 5♣, showing three keycards.

At this point, we can all deduce that 11 of her 15+ points were tied up in just three cards. That's all fine and dandy—unless you're trying to

bid a grand slam and your bidding system is held together with duct tape and hope. We didn't have the tools to ask about the ♦Q, so I did what any bridge optimist (lunatic) would do—I closed my eyes, muttered a small prayer to the card gods, and reached for 7NT, hoping partner had the ♦Q... or the ♠Q... or, if luck was truly on my side, both.

Dummy came down and, surprise! She had neither Queen. Not even close. The opening lead was the ♥10—about as useful as a chocolate teapot. At this point, that classic bridge wisdom came to mind: "You should never be in a grand slam if it depends on a finesse." But there I was, finessing for my bridge life.

I figured if I was going down, I might as well do it quickly and with dignity (or at least speed). So after winning the first trick with the ♥A in dummy I played to the ♣A, then the ♣K, and lined up to finesse the ♠J into West knowing that if the finesse failed no matter what they came back I'd get 12 tricks... and it held! I had to check the card twice to make sure I wasn't hallucinating as it was a 50/50 option as to which way to finesse the spade. I then ran off all the remainder of the tricks. Houdini himself would've been impressed!

*[Nothing exceeds like excess! Melissa correctly highlights the problems that can arise if using 4NT Keycard when a minor suit is trumps. The solution is a convention called "Minorwood". If Clubs are trumps, then 4♦ is Keycard, if Diamonds are trumps then 4♥ is Keycard. This allows you to stop at five of the minor, or even 4NT, if you need to. Ed.]*

Bridge: the only game where your best results come from blind leaps, questionable judgment, and the occasional miracle.

A lot of my friends have been saying they're dreading the jump from Intermediates knowing that they'll be promoted to Area Master in September and they find themselves staring up at the Congress Pairs like it's the Mount Everest of Bridge. I thought long

and hard about whether to include this last paragraph — because honestly, most days I feel like I'm the last person who should be giving advice. I often feel like I need both a personal coach and a therapist just to get through some sessions! I decided to include it because it's something I wish someone had told me last year.

And that is this..... It won't always be easy — there will be days when you feel like walking away. There will be days when you question everything you thought you knew. You'll make mistakes — big ones, silly ones — the kind that replay in your head while you're brushing your teeth and leave you thinking, Did I really do that? But don't let those moments drag you down a rabbit hole of self-doubt. Don't measure your progress by comparing yourself to others because comparison is the thief of joy. Instead, look for the small wins. They'll start to appear, quietly and gradually. A few months from now, you'll look back and realise how far you've come — not because you suddenly became a brilliant player overnight, but because you didn't let fear stop you from showing up and trying. Eventually, little by little, it does get easier. You start to believe in yourself and you'll notice that a lot can happen in a few months.

So if you're stepping into this next stage and feeling all those nerves and doubts — hold on. Keep going. Keep learning. Keep questioning—yourself, your partner, and even your opponents—because most people are more than willing to share their encouragement and wisdom.

Don't listen to that voice in your head that says you don't belong there. You do.



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# I have been things and seen places

Séamus Dowling



## Background:

Bridge has enhanced my life but I was a jack of many trades, middling good at some, great at none. In a memoir I wrote, bridge covered just one of 22 chapters or 15 of 258 pages, but for more than half my life I submitted to its addiction. A native of Co. Kildare, born in 1936, road cycle racing was my sport. I was a musician and played violin with bands from age 16, in dance halls, on stage, on radio and television. I never recorded; the only musical activity absent from my CV. There is a connection between music and bridge. At 1950s Dublin Grand Opera Society performances, a dapper little man in the audience caught my eye: Jimmy Powell, one of Ireland's leading tournament directors, whom I would later get to know. Two of my bridge partners [John Comyn and Jimmy McCormack] also were ardent opera fans.

## Beginning:

I became a bridge player reluctantly. Come Autumn 1977, Maura and I had three young children and little social life. We decided to go out. Maura mentioned bridge classes. Not for me. Having played card games, I was not interested in another. Then, one evening Maura got a baby sitter; bridge classes were starting. I surrendered and was converted. Minor, encouraging successes followed: second in a novice pairs at Blackrock congress, novice prize in 'the Flitch' in Clonmel. Later we won the husband-and-wife pairs in Dun Laoghaire; behind us were some legendary names. We went close in the Spiro once.

Fellow beginner Eric Pelly and I won the national novice pairs (JJ Murphy Cup). Behind us were a North Dublin pair, Róisín Shortall and her husband. The following weekend they reversed the placings in a Dublin region competition. Róisín later abandoned bridge for politics.

## National champion

Noel Brown, aiming at a place on the Irish team, decided my then partner Kevin O'Dea was the one to get him there. However, there were problems. Kevin did not have sufficient master points to play in the trials; fixable, according to optimistic Noel, by winning a few national championships. But what would Noel's regular partner, his fiancée Margaret Morgan do? The solution: I would play with Margaret. The next national tournament was the Shamrock Lodge Trophy, in Athlone. Margaret and I, who had never played a card together previously, won. It was Margaret who went close to playing for Ireland. She and Katherine Lennon from Wexford once finished fourth in the women's trials, with the first three selected. Following marriage she dropped bridge for some years. Had she not, she would doubtless have played on Irish teams.

## Lucky

Win one national championship, especially pairs, and you may be deemed lucky; win a second and you are lucky surely. Win a third and perhaps there was another factor. I won five open national events: the one mentioned above, three with John Comyn as partner [the Davidson Cup and the IBU pairs twice]. I also won the inter-

county Burke Trophy with BJ O'Brien (Comyn and Joe Moran completed the team). Add an inter-provincial with Leinster, regional titles, congress pairs and teams and earlier the novice pairs and intermediate A teams. I was very lucky indeed.

## Playing an opponent, up in the world

In 1985 three women invited me to join their team in quest of the national intermediate A championship (Bankers trophy). Friends had won the previous year; honour and pride were challenged. Leading from the start, near the end we met a team on the move. Led by an occasional partner of mine, a man fired up, they were now third. I made sure to play the same hands as my friend; I knew how his mind worked. My partner opened 1NT (12-14). I held Kxxxx, Kxxxx, x, xx, but I knew my opponent would bid game. I bid to four hearts. It didn't matter if both went down. We were leading comfortably, but could not afford a game swing against us. Ironically, defensive error allowed me to make the game. I believe you should play the cards, not the opponent. I had gone against my philosophy.

In 1998 Martin Keane and I finished fourth in the World simultaneous pairs. Originally placed third, a late result pushed us down. My writer's itch twitched and I penned a tongue-in-cheek piece for the Bridge Journal entitled: How to be Third in the World. The truth is that out of 24 boards only one good score resulted from our own efforts. For the remaining 23, opponents were kind.



## Playing for Ireland:

Seniors bridge was initially ignored by the Irish Bridge Union, so in 1999 I was one of five players who formed a team for the European seniors in Malta. In 2002 Joe MacHale invited me to join the team in Salsomaggiore; advancing in years, he feared he might need a rest during the long tournament. World championships [Istanbul, 2004] and Europeans [Pau, 2008] followed. By this time senior trials had been introduced.

In serious competition amusing moments can occur. In Pau, a Welsh opponent and I, having made our bids and pushed the tray through to our respective partners, experienced a long delay. A muted conversation was heard from the other side. Eventually, my Welsh opponent leaned towards me and whispered, 'I think they're discussing their former wives,' to which I responded, 'In that case, we could be here a long time.' A kibitzer at our table had our remarks published in the Daily Bulletin.

I also participated in open World and European events: Lille 1998, Warsaw 1999, Bermuda 2000, Sorrento 2001, Montreal 2002, Estoril 2005, Verona 2006. Partners included Seán Ó Lubaigh, Paul Hanratty, John Godden and John Power. I became non-playing captain of the women's team at the Europeans in Malmö, 2004, when BJ O'Brien became ill. The closest to boastable achievement was when Paul Hanratty and I missed a place in the European senior pairs' final in Warsaw 1999 by 0.1 of a percentage point. However, it was in Malta in 1999 that I blew my chance of fame. Against a slam I led small from four clubs to the King. Partner won with the Ace, then switched. Slam made; declarer had another club. At the other table Omar Sharif led the King of clubs! He explained his thinking. If he led small and partner had the Ace, partner might not believe he would lead away from the King. Omar's play, described as brilliant, was written up in newspapers and magazines. It helped France to win bronze medals.

I played in a number of friendly matches - ten times against England [a record that stood for a while], five times against Northern Ireland, once against Wales, and on official's and open teams.

## Celebrities

In Malta Omar Sharif posed for a photo with an Irish kibitzer. When I was 14, she told him, I fell in love with you. He responded: I hope you are not disappointed in the old man now. White-haired, he still oozed charm. Zia Mahmood is the current charismatic one. When he played in Dublin in 2005 I met him at the airport and brought him to his hotel. A long time elapsed before he emerged from arrivals. Holding a Pakistani passport he had not realized he needed a visa and was being denied entry. It says much for his personality that, visaless, he talked his way into the country. I met him recently in Dublin. He remembered the occasion but not me. I played against him at the table in Istanbul in 2004.

I also knew Albert Benjamin, creator of the weak-two openings in the major suits. He told me a woman partner once upbraided him for getting the system wrong. "I only invented the bloody thing", he said. Benjamin published what he claimed was the first and only bridge newspaper in the World, just before the outbreak of World War II. Newsprint was rationed to a percentage of the previous year's usage; he had used none the previous year, so the newspaper ceased.

A Bulgarian player told me his daughter had lived in Galway and loved Irish music. When I told him I was a fiddle player he gave me an affectionate hug. I was informed later he had previously been head of his country's secret police, seemingly not always such an affable fellow!

In Lille in 1998, opposite partner's 1NT (15-17), I forced to game with slender values. Famed Italian Benito Garozza failed to bid game at the other table. I was told he

was less than gracious about it.

Perhaps my greatest achievement was to make Boris Schapiro smile. Playing against the party to the Buenos Aires cheating scandal of 1965, I revoked early in the play. Later I tried to slip in the revoke card unseen. Schapiro's finger shot out and in thunderous tone exclaimed: You revoked. We tried to outstare each other, before I said, I didn't think you'd notice. Sensing I was having him on, he smiled. Followers at the table smiled when he smiled.

Alan Truscott had originally exposed the Buenos Aires cheating allegation against Schapiro and Terence Reese. In Maastricht in 2000 we stayed at the same hotel; he was reporting for the New York Times, I for the Irish Times. Together we walked the 40 minutes to the bridge venue every morning and discovered common interest in Gilbert and Sullivan and the songs of American satirist Tom Lehrer. As we walked, we sang from the respective repertoires, to the amusement of passing Dutch cyclists. I bought a copy of his book, *The Bidding Dictionary*, but he insisted on refunding my money and wrote a dedication on the title page.

In the run-up to the 1991 Killarney Europeans I had close dealings with Grattan Endicott, active in the English Bridge union, the executives of the European Bridge League and the World Bridge Federation and an acknowledged authority on the laws. Named after the late 18th century Irish politician Henry Grattan, he attended the South of Ireland congress in Killarney for many years.

## Memorable partners

Pride of place goes to Seán Ó Lubaigh. 'A fellow of infinite jest,' as Hamlet described Yorick to Horatio. Playing against a team of South American women, Seán called the director before we even sat at the table. "I want to object", he announced; "these ladies cannot possibly be seniors!"





On another occasion he disputed an interpretation of a rule with director, Hans Hallen from Sweden, whom I knew personally. Mr. Hallen wrote the rules, I told Seán. "Oh!" my partner back-pedalled, "very good rules!"

Jimmy McCormack, a brilliant raconteur, regularly regaled companions with stories in which he himself was often the fall guy. He could quote freely in English, Irish, Latin, Greek and Italian. Following a match against Alex and Anne Montwill in which IMPs flew back and forth resulting in a net difference of just one, Jimmy, borrowing from Latin poet Horace, came out with "Parturient Montwills, nascetur ridiculus mus". Jimmy had inserted "Montwills" in place of the original "montes". The meaning: Mountains will give birth, a ridiculous mouse will be born - or as Jimmy saw it, such Montwill effort to gain an insignificant, single point.

### Schools' bridge

Gay Keaveney's schools' championship became so popular in the 1980s that Galway bridge centre was unable to accommodate everybody. I organized a qualifying competition in Dublin and discovered how to attract students to bridge. Future CBAI president Tom Burke introduced the game to boys in Gormanstown College but had difficulty getting them actively involved. I was at the time teaching young girls in Inchicore. We arranged matches in our respective colleges on alternate Wednesdays. Following my girls' first visit, Tom had difficulty keeping the young Gormanstown lads away! The secret of furthering schools' bridge is to foster inter-school activity and a girls v. boys element guarantees success.

### National office

When I became secretary of Ballyroan club it was the beginning of a journey that led to national office. During the late 80s, with membership soaring, CBAI leadership considered the future.

Daring minds even thought of a full-time official and a national headquarters but it was too soon. Conservative thinking still ruled. The part-time position of Public Relations-cum-Press Officer was created and I was appointed. Able to condense my work at Inchicore College of Further Education into four days, Mondays were devoted to bridge. As preparation, I attended a week-long, European-Bridge-League designed promotions seminar in Amsterdam. Bridge results appeared on RTE's Aertel on Monday mornings. Newspapers, provincial and national, were fed with bridge news. Ryan Hotels sponsored a tournament for over-55s, ending with a final and banquet at Dun Laoghaire's Royal Marine hotel. Provincial papers were pleased to receive photos of finalists and featured success stories about local readers. The sponsorship lasted only two years. Ryan hotels were too early. Older players had not yet begun to take off-season, mid-week breaks in the numbers they did later when the Celtic Tiger roared and hotels competed for the patronage of senior citizens. I did manage to negotiate a grant from Co-operation North towards the cost of the annual North-South match.

### European Championships 1991

The Royal Dublin Society in Dublin was the original chosen venue for the 1991 European championships. European Bridge League president José Damiani visited the RDS in advance. Unfortunately, his visit coincided with the opening morning of the Dublin Horse Show. The perfume that wafted from the RDS stables was somewhat offensive to the sensitive nostrils of the Parisian! What he had to walk on was not a red carpet either. The RDS was out. Fortunately, the manager of the Great Southern Hotel in Killarney guaranteed that a leisure centre, then no more than an architect's drawing, would be completed in time.

Marie Gleeson was a key member of the organizing team. Ireland's delegate to the EBL, she had attended many championships. However, her husband Tom became ill and would sadly die before the championships took place. Marie was out so far as input in the preparation was concerned. My day job afforded me sufficient flexibility that I could take on Marie's workload. What a variety of tasks! Persuading Soviet Union teams to come [roubles were valueless here]. Joe Moran's parish-priest brother persuaded the Bishop to let them stay in St. Brendan's seminary; students would be on holiday. The bishop was not told that half of the Soviet party would be women! Bulgarians had visa problems. Czech players could not afford accommodation. Israelis demanded extra security. Southern Health Authorities wanted numbers, to be prepared for casualties. The legendary Rixi Marcus required extra wardrobe space. There was frequent liaison with a local committee in Killarney.

Throughout the event I had results broadcast on RTE radio every morning following the 8.00am news. Visitors were recruited to give interviews on Kerry radio but I failed to persuade RTE Television to cover the event. Joe Moran's PR company got the cameras in once and we got brief coverage on the evening news. Many members of the press had contacted me as they, like the players, had to be transported from their point of entry to the Kingdom! I retained a souvenir letter, really a piece of paper torn from a child's lined copy book with red writing. It reads: Dear Mr. Dowling, My wife and I shall be arriving at Kerry County Airport. We shall get a taxi into Killarney as my wife will be encumbered with much baggage. Signed, Terence Reese. An aloof, reserved man, I met him just once more in the few years left to him and again witnessed the sense of humour I discerned in that little note. In 1991, of course, clouds of uncertainty hung over Eastern Europe. The map was changing almost daily. Yugoslav players



learned of the breakup of their country while in Killarney. Players from former iron-curtain countries faced an uncertain future.

### Defeat in ballot, president

In 1991 Marie Gleeson retired as secretary of the CBAI. I contested the election to succeed her but was up against a popular opponent, Úna Walsh from Galway, a former president who had served the game for much longer than I had. A whistle blower among the tellers leaked that she won by four votes. Some said it was a case of country v. city. Perhaps, but there was no personal rivalry between Úna and me and we continued to support each other in whatever roles each of us subsequently filled. Two years later I was elected regional secretary, a position I held for seven years, and in 2001 I finally became president of the CBAI. The AGM had been held in Athlone for years. CBAI management agreed with my suggestion that it should be held in the region of the incoming president - the practice continues to this day. In 2003 I was honoured to become president of the Irish Bridge Union.

### Fás Community-Employment Scheme:

Eric Pelly was Fás Placement Officer for Dublin 14. He approached me with a proposal. Would Dublin South consider employing a person under the Fás Community-Employment Scheme? The region had to provide 19½ hours' work weekly. Great idea, I thought, but surely impractical. However, Eric had a list of tasks - pre-dealt, duplicated boards, plus curtain cards (pre computer dealing), typed correspondence (pre-email), licking envelopes, licking stamps, collecting master-point returns and affiliations from clubs (regional secretaries still did these tasks) and so on. Regional president Jimmy Powell bought the idea and convinced the regional committee. CBAI CEO Paul Porteous also lived in Dublin 14 and still worked from home. He too took on Fás employees who,

officially, were working for Dublin South Region. Efforts were made to interest the bigger regions in the scheme but without success.

### Teacher training

In 1993 CBAI Executive delegates criticized the way bridge was being taught. I suggested the Executive itself was to blame, whereupon I was elected convener of a subcommittee charged with investigating the situation and making recommendations! I insisted on selecting the other members of the sub-committee. I had previously served on sub-committees; some had never met; few were productive. I remained a one-person committee for two years, during which time John O'Keeffe conducted seminars in Waterford and Malahide. I went to England to learn how things were done over there. In 1995 I put a proposal to Paul Porteous to run a week-long, full-time, training course at Inchicore College of Further Education. Those who passed practical and theory examinations would receive certificates validated jointly by the CBAI and City of Dublin VEC. Paul gave his support but would we get the numbers to justify the project? When applications reached 100 we drew a line. 98 turned up. With emphasis on how to teach, half of the instructors were from the world of education. Paddy Walsh from Galway, skilled in both teaching and bridge, was the ideal anchor-man. The only qualified bridge teachers in Ireland were a small number who held the English Bridge Union's certificate. I thought that should be acknowledged so, Alice O'Brien from Cork and Marlene O'Connor from Galway were engaged as tutors. The bidding-and-play exam revealed that, whereas most got through basic bidding, the standard of card-play was very poor, a factor in the failure of 21 candidates to reach the required standard. During the years I was involved this situation improved very little.

We ran further week-long courses the two summers following,

catering for the backlog of people who wished to qualify. Thereafter, teachers could attend weekend seminars and the practice of employing highly-qualified people from the universities, teacher-training colleges and renowned psychologists, was continued.

Inchicore also was the venue for a six-week, club tournament directors' course in 1997. A lecture hall contained 48 seats; 51 applied. They won't all attend at the same time, I thought, so I enrolled them all, but all did attend, resulting in steps between the rows of seats being occupied.

### Apocalyptic vision; hurling greats:

I taught a group of military personnel and their friends at McKee Barracks, Dublin in the early 1990s, among them Tony Wall, who had he chosen to compete, would have been very good, having retained that will to win that made him one of Tipperary's great hurlers. One evening, looking at my bridge class and seeing generals and colonels before me, I had an apocalyptic vision: a foreign power invading the country on a Thursday evening when our defence chiefs were at bridge!

Through bridge I met Jimmy Smyth from Clare, by consensus the greatest hurler never to have won an all-Ireland medal. Neither bridge nor hurling was the basis of our friendship - rather it was a mutual interest in poetry. Jimmy collected verse, published two volumes and wrote some himself. We introduced one another to obscure poets.

### Teaching manuals

On a bookstall at a world championships in the Netherlands I examined teaching manuals from different countries and decided I could do better. So, I put together teaching notes I had used, added to them and the result was the Teachers' Manuals now in use. The originals were hard copy with notes and hand-outs that could

be copied. I recently transferred copyright to the CBAI which is now the legal owner.

### Ron Klinger

In 2000 I invited Ron Klinger, Australian player, teacher and author, who was visiting Britain, to Templeogue to conduct a seminar. It being the weekend of the all-Ireland hurling final, every hotel and guest-house within a wide radius of Dublin was booked out, so Ron and his wife Suzie stayed in our house. He orchestrated the 100+ attendees in a masterful demonstration of how to teach. Irish teachers, of course, had been using his text books prior to this, and still do. Ron also co-authored the excellent "Better Balanced Bidding" with our own David Jackson, who as NPC par excellence masterminded an unprecedented 20-year run of international success for "Team Ireland".

### Eric Kokish

I knew the renowned Canadian coach Eric Kokish from press rooms at world championships. He was coaching the Netherlands national squad and I suggested that next time he was flying over he might drop in and do some work with Irish teams. Since I knew Eric I was recruited as a helper at his coaching sessions. John Comyn was another helper. The fact that John and I later won three national championships in partnership I attribute largely to what we learned from the fringes of these sessions.

### Bridge breaks

In 1996, age 60, I retired from teaching. I had given 42 years service to the state. News of my retirement spread. Four hotels telephoned asking me to run bridge breaks. When I mentioned my terms, which were modest, three were no longer interested. Happily my terms did not deter the marketing manager of Hotel Westport. She had actually researched my credentials. Maura and I worked for that hotel for 21

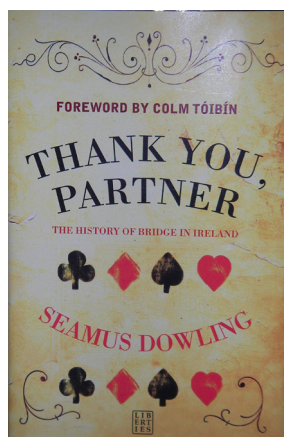
years. We were soon doing seven weeks every year. Sadly, advancing age eventually determined I should give it up as my energy levels began to wane. A side effect of the Westport commitment was that I missed several national competitions.

### Cruises

Bridge Breaks led to Bridge Cruises. The marketing manager at Tour America, Cruise Holidays, exploring ways to extend the company's business, noticed that bridge was popular in Dublin. Her father had been on bridge breaks in Westport. As in Westport, my only function was to run the bridge games. We ran three bridge cruises, 2007 to 2009. When I realized I was paid to go on cruises, I reckoned I had it made, although instead of payment I accepted credit towards other cruises.

### Historian

When Ireland returned to the Camrose championship in 1998, I decided to mark the occasion by writing a piece for the Irish Bridge Journal. Nobody in Ireland knew when we had last played in the tournament. Nobody knew why we had left it. I decided to find out and to inform people. Ten years of research followed and in 2009 Liberties Press published "Thank You Partner", the History of Bridge in Ireland. Writer Colm Tóibín, whose brother Niall was one of Ireland's greatest players, wrote a foreword. Fortunately for my research, the minutes of IBU meetings were intact and also most CBAI minutes.



Records of some regions had been preserved; old newspapers and magazines were valuable sources; old correspondence turned up; I interviewed old-timers. The book sold out. An interesting discovery was that everybody who has played on an Irish open team, took up the game when young, as teenagers or in their early college years. Liberties Press recently contacted me with a view to updating Thank You Partner. They wanted a certain guarantee. In 2009 I could give that guarantee, confident I would personally sell a certain number. I cannot give that guarantee now.

During research I collected hands played by Irish players. These became "Great Players, Great Plays – 80 years of Irish Bridge Deals 1932-2012", published privately in 2013 and gifted to the Junior Committee of the Irish Bridge Union to raise funds.

### Dublin V Liverpool

Dublin and Liverpool were twinned by their respective City Councils in 1997. Martin Cantor from Liverpool contacted me and suggested an annual match between the two cities. The first took place in Liverpool in June 1998. They continued for 21 years. The series ended when Liverpool had difficulty getting people to travel. Covid would have decided its fate anyway. The Cantor-Dowling Shield, donated by the co-founders, was awarded to the winners. Liverpool won it 11 times, Dublin 10.

### Journalist

My first efforts at journalism came in the late 1950s when I wrote reports on the multi-stage cycle race Rás Tailteann for the Leinster Leader. I did not see myself as a journalist but there must have been one within me wanting to get out because in the '80s I began to submit pieces to the Irish Bridge Journal. I wrote a column for Ireland on Sunday and pieces for Senior Times and One to One, an in-house publication of Allied Irish Bank.



I wrote for The Irish Bridge Player, a newspaper launched in 1994 by Joan O'Mara who was in the publishing business. A commercial venture, it folded after four years when advertising revenue declined. To my knowledge, it was the only bridge newspaper in the world since Albert Benjamin's original pre-war one.

I did not go unnoticed as a journalist. The British Bridge Almanac 2004, editor Peter Hasenson, includes me on a list of the top ten bridge journalists in Great Britain and Ireland. Flattering, but it was Hasenson's way of thanking me for supplying material. In his book Celestial Cardplay, David Bird, one of a few authors to successfully write humorously about bridge, used Michael O'Connor and me as props to illustrate the brilliance of his bridge-playing monks, Brothers Lucius and Paulo, in a fictional England v Ireland friendly. Michael and I played against England in Hursley, Hampshire in 2006, but not in partnership. Bird was present.

### Irish Times bridge correspondent

In 1991 the Irish Times asked me to cover the European championships from Killarney. From then until Ireland next hosted the championships at CityWest in 2012, I reported from major World and European events. When George Ryan retired as bridge correspondent I was nicely placed to succeed him. Fearghal O'Boyle had advanced the technology to the extent that I could sit at home and gather material from my laptop. He and Diarmuid Reddan make the job easy. I'm now 11 years doing it but a bit short of George Ryan's 44½ years!

### A former player

I did not return to the clubs when Covid ended. I am now a former player. I have won as much as my limited talent allowed, probably more than anyone who took up the game in their 40s. I met the great Irish players of my time and partnered some of them. During the 22 years I attended international championships I encountered the World's best and played against some of them. I have filled many roles: tournament director, official, teacher, journalist, author. Bridge brought me to places I would not otherwise have visited. As Hollywood icon Mae West once said "I have been things and seen places".



Bermuda 2000: Jimmy McCormack, Paul Hanratty, Seán Ó'Lubaigh, Séamus Dowling



Séamus Dowling with Ruth Giddings

# 30 years of developing our Juniors

Karel DeRaeymaecker

## When did you first get involved with coaching Juniors?

Gosh that's a good question. My first NPC role was in Romania 2009, so a few years before that - around 2006/2007. Romania was a revelation. The gap between the other teams and ourselves was notable.

## Why did you see it [and still see it] as a worthwhile investment of so much of your time [unpaid]?

When I was a junior, there was a notable bias in the then juniors largely based on whom you knew and had access to. My partners and I were the black sheep who produced a few notable upsets but were inevitably beaten largely due to inexperience and lack of advice (training). So one of my motivations is to level the "who you know" playing field by being personally accessible to any junior. It makes a huge difference to a young player to have access to "resources".

Bridge itself is an unbelievable game. The skills you learn are 100% applicable to life. I strongly believe it should be part of our education system. I am a teacher by profession, so I enjoy seeing people especially young ones develop and blossom through bridge.

## Who are the best Juniors you've been involved with and what have been the best results?

That's a hard question. It depends how you define best and in what period. Wayne Sommerville, Conor Boland, Kelan O'Connor are probably our best known juniors who have been very successful. There have been many others who showed huge potential but they followed a different path in life. I'm particularly interested in our young female players as (1) top bridge is mainly male dominated [it shouldn't be] (2) I'd like to evolve a ladies team to win the lady Milne and more. I think female players in general, as in other sports are hugely under rated. I'd like to change that in Irish bridge.

## In a typical year with the Juniors, what would your activities be?

This is hugely dependent on the number of active juniors at any time. With sufficient numbers, there is competition for places on teams to represent Ireland in various events. We have criteria in place such as regular play on BBO/Real Bridge, play in several live congresses especially the Holmes Wilson, attend any training sessions put on, play with mentors/coaches, attend monthly meetups, culminating in going abroad and representing Ireland. The junior committee is continuously busy all year and involved at all levels making all this happen.



Karel De Raeymaecker receiving the President's Merit Award from CBAI President, Catherine Byrne

## What would it take [financial/ other resources] to take Junior bridge in Ireland "to the next level"?

As I mentioned earlier my first NPC experience in Romania was an eye opener. It seemed the other countries had a lot more financial support and in some cases dedicated full time paid personnel promoting junior bridge. The Netherlands had bridge as an option in their school curriculum. Many of the countries had top level players involved with their juniors as resources/partners/coaching. A recruitment strategy to ensure a steady stream of new juniors all the time. In summary the successful countries have huge backing. Ireland is voluntary.

So we need the afore mentioned to start. On top of that, some recognition and funding from the government [given the huge



number of bridge players country wide I can't understand why some politician/government hasn't seen the mutual benefits of backing bridge]. A push to get bridge into schools as part of the curriculum or as a serious contender for students to participate in. Targeting universities and changing the bridge brand from old to young and social is essential and where I think currently we would get most bang for buck.

But to do all this requires backing from all corners.

I must take this opportunity to mention the dedication, investment of time, commitment of so many people who have voluntarily given to junior bridge. I'm fairly well known in the bridge community and I use that to try and promote/ recruit junior bridge. But, be under no illusions there are and have been so many unseen/ unheard heroes without which junior bridge would never even have got off the ground.

I'll mention a few

- ▶ **Thomas MacCormac**, a constant presence who pushed hard for junior bridge and has given our juniors so many opportunities.
- ▶ **Margaret Murphy** our current no bullshit "Mammy" who does so much work with the juniors, encouraging and cajoling them, and frankly does a lot of the groundwork. We could use a lot more Margarets.
- ▶ **Dermot O'Brien** who I can't recall ever saying no to any junior idea or event, always doing what he can to promote bridge.
- ▶ **Paul Porteous** our current treasurer again always supporting junior bridge in any capacity he can.
- ▶ **Liz Ann Doyle** who put much needed structure to our committees and her work in the Limerick area.

- ▶ **John Phelan** who has NPC'd and mentored numerous juniors - always positive.
- ▶ **Martin Brady, Paul Delaney and Peter Pigot** in coaching/NPC roles.
- ▶ All the parents who support/ encourage their children.
- ▶ Lastly I want to mention **Mary Howley** who runs an after school club in St Vincents in Dundalk. The positive effect she has had on so many generations of girls is unbelievable. She is a legend.

I apologise to any I have forgotten but every one of you was/is brilliant.

I'd like to also mention that any general junior training sessions I run online (usually a brief presentation, play some hands, zoom discussion of hands) is free to anyone to attend, the only caveat being we need you as opposition for our juniors. Contact anyone on the junior committee if this appeals to you.



Karel (NPC) with the squad at the Junior Home International Championships 2023

# A week-end in Dublin

Irene Baroni & Thomas Bessis



**When our good friends Tom Hanlon and Nuala Hyland asked us, about nine months ago, whether we would like to come for a week-end at their place, it didn't take us long to accept; holidays, friends and cards, what could go wrong?**

Whereas it was my third time in Dublin, Irene was discovering the city for the first time, and I must confess that she embraced the local traditions with great enthusiasm: she now wants to play "4 and weak" and more importantly her first pint of Guinness was such a success that she refused to drink anything else for the rest of our stay.

I for myself don't adapt to different cultures as easily as Irene, so it'd take more than travelling to Ireland for me to order my steak anything else than very blue!

We landed in Dublin on Thursday, and after a short tour in the city center in the early afternoon – where we were amused by some of the pubs' names like The Hairy Lemon, or the Bleeding Horse – and, as bridge players of course, Drury street (: We also drove to the magnificent Miltown golf course, where the bridge legend Zia Mahmood was entertaining a room full of entranced bridge players. "An evening with Zia" was a smash hit.

When we were asked to join Zia at the end of his conference to answer a few questions, Irene fulfilled one of her long time biggest dreams: talking with Zia, in front of a large audience, about psyching. What a thrill!

Next came the Regent Centenary Congress at O'Reilly Hall, UCD. The three-day competition started with a two-session IMP tournament.

We were both quite surprised and delighted to realise how friendly all of our opponents were with us. I guess it's because everyone believed we brought the sun to Dublin in our luggage.

We did fine with Irene in the tournament, the important thing was finishing ahead of our host for the week-end, so that first box was checked. Let's say that we may have done better had Irene realized before the last three tables that the scoring was cross-IMP and not pairs.

We didn't repeat the same mistake on the next day in the pairs tournament, and after a first very good session that gave us the lead, we managed to add another good session in the evening to win the tournament.

We were absolutely bowled over with the fantastic picnic during the dinner break organised by Tom's sister Carmel (but we all know it was Giles who did all the cooking) and Deirdre Linnane (Mark Moran's better half). What a spread of amazing food, wine and champagne. blankets, rugs, chairs appeared from nowhere. Thanks Carmel and Deirdre!

We came back to the beautiful UCD campus on Sunday for the Team event, and here we had the chance to play with Tom and his young partner Conor Boland.

Conor is not only the future star of Irish bridge but he's also a great fellow, who I believe is unanimously appreciated by his peers. I don't say that because he's lived in Paris last year, but I mean... it obviously helps!!

Tom and Conor played absolutely fantastic during the whole day, so much that Irene and I can't take too much credit for winning the

tournament. Here is a hand from the fifth round where Irene judged very well the situation to help us land in a good spot:

## Regent Congress - Congress Teams

### Session 2 Board 6.

Dealer East. Vul E/W.

<p>♠ 85 ♥ 62 ♦ 10954 ♣ KJ1073</p>			
♠ KJ96432	N	♠ Q	
♥ J7	W	♥ AKQ1098	
♦ 3	E	♦ AQ2	
♣ AQ8	S	♣ 962	
<p>♠ A109 ♥ 543 ♦ KJ876 ♣ 54</p>			

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

<sup>1</sup> 2♣=Gazzili: (1) 5+♥, 4+♠, 10-15 or; (2) ART 15+ HCP

<sup>2</sup> 2♦ = ART 8+ HCP

<sup>3</sup> 2NT=ART 15+, GF, no 3 cards in ♠

<sup>4</sup> 4♦ = key-bid of the auction : good hand for ♠, doesn't show anything about ♦ (4♣ would show a good one-suited hand for ♥)

<sup>5</sup> 4NT=RKCB

<sup>6</sup> 5♣=2 KC + Queen of ♣

Despite holding a minimum hand for her 2NT bid – only 17 HCP and only one spade – Irene judged brilliantly that her hand, with the ♠Q, the two Aces, and the almost running heart suit, deserved to make a positive bid. Yes I know, I had told her I had the ♠Q, which she must have found interesting since she had it herself! But it is common to tell a little lie about the trump Queen when you have extra



length in trumps. And anyway, I always like to tell my wife what she likes to hear!

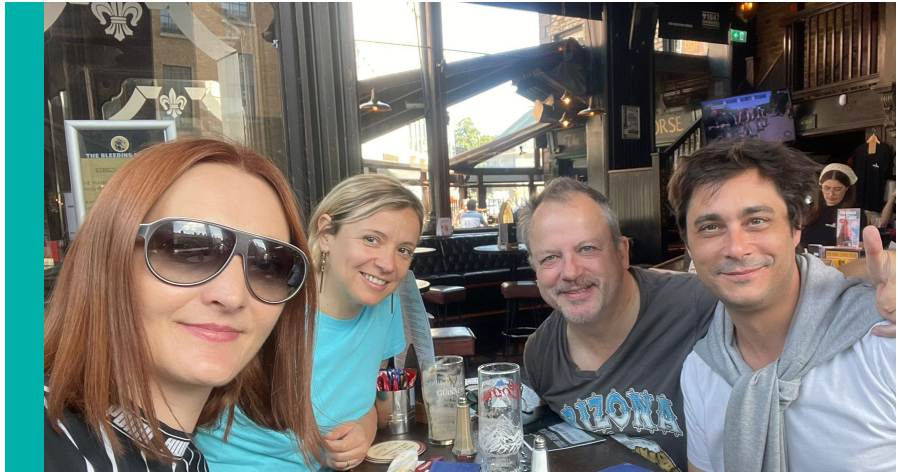
And right she was to see the chance for slam! Had she only bid 4♠, I would definitely have passed!

Here I knew that she had a good hand for me, and that I should be relatively safe at the five-level had there been missing two key-cards after 4NT.

6♠ is not laydown – we would go down if someone had 10xxx or A10xx of trump, or if the opponents could manage to get a heart ruff -, but it was overall a pretty good contract, that happened to make.

This hand helped us win the match and take the lead, and despite a small defeat in round seven, our team could secure the first place on the last match and claim the crown.

Thank you, Dublin. A bientôt!



Nuala, Irene, Tom and Thomas



Picnic time!

# A win for Ireland!

Luca Crone



This summer, Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, hosted the 18th European Youth Pairs Championships. In the U21 category, we had David Hoyne and Bence Orosz and Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan, while in the U26 category, we had Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell, Leah Finnegan and Denise Walsh and Isabel Burke and Tom Gorey.

The EBL used the recently popular hybrid approach of bidding with tablets and playing with the cards. There has been positive feedback in general. Matthew and I won the U26 President's Cup, the first Irish podium in over 10 years. We were asked for five words to describe our success. "Slow, steady and searching penalties" were mine, while Matthew could find "only two, double trouble". Below is the reasoning for such descriptions.

Gradually, throughout the tournament, we were getting more and more in the groove. It was the second session that won us the tournament. I'm not sure I've had a 68.5% session before, but I hope to have more. After scoring only 59% in the first session, we finished with 63.6% overall. This was enough to pip our closest competitors at 62.88%.

There is one clear theme in both, and that is "if it moves, double it". Playing against youthful bidding, it is imperative that one learns to "take the money". I must admit, I relish the opportunity to defend doubled contracts, so much so that a third of our contracts were doubled in the second session. I call it character building. Here is a hand we played against an Estonian pair. I'll set the scene. On the first hand, favourable, they doubled us in 5♦, which was one too many off against their 4♥ contract. Unfortunately, we chose the wrong minor as 5♣ is off three. Second board, they doubled me in 4♥, making.

Now comes this hand. All vulnerable it is your bid with:

♠ A109xx
♥ 10xx
♦ Jx
♣ xxx

The bidding has gone [We were EW]

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♠
2♥	X <sup>1</sup>	P	3♣
P	P	?	
<sup>1</sup> X=3 card ♠ support			

Bidding 3♥ could be right, but if you want to do it, you really should have done it last round. This is a good principle in general. Get in and out of the auction early. Fortunately, this junior couldn't resist temptation. By passing the first time, he had given us the time to exchange enough information to double 3♥. It helped that we knew they could be a tad frisky given the history. This drifted three off. It was enough for a joint second and 95.27% of the matchpoints.

This was the full hand:

			♠ J843			
			♥ 2			
			♦ 1043			
			♣ AKQB5			
♠ A10962	N		♠ Q			
♥ 1064	W	E	♥ AKJ83			
♦ J5			♦ K872			
♣ 976	S		♣ J32			
			♠ K75			
			♥ Q975			
			♦ AQ96			
			♣ 104			



Luca and Matthew - runners-up in the President's Cup at the European Youth Bridge Championships in Salsomaggiore, Italy

I would like to say age has made us wiser to the temptation of such bids. But that doesn't mean we can't have fun. I got the question of what my favourite hand of the tournament was. I must admit it was one that could have gone wrong. You probably know at this stage that you can have some fun third in hand, knowing the fourth hand has values. You hold this hand in your favourite seat, at your favourite colours, third in hand, NV vs V. It goes P P to you.

♠ QJ876
♥ Kxx
♦ xxx
♣ Kx

Oh my, I'm tempted. My junior instinct kicked in, and I pressed a dramatic 2♠ on the tablet. It can go wrong, but it is the perfect time if I am ever going to bid on a hand like this. Purists will hate it, but who cares? The hand couldn't have gone better. It proceeds X from LHO, 3♠ from partner, all pass?! The opponents must have gone wrong here. Notably, LHO struggled to pull his second pass. This, with some care, went off two.



Wonder what the opponents could make? Only 6♥. That sounds like a win to me. What made it more amusing [to me at least] was that my young French screen mate, who spoke no English, said to me in French, "I think we make 4♥". In broken French, I replied, "I believe 6". Needless to say, he wasn't happy.

There were some other respectable performances, with Denise and Leah coming out fourth after the first session. They missed qualification by only a few spots. All our U21 squad came out with at least one above-average session.

Hopefully, this is the start of more to come, and I wish to bring you all on the journey. I picked up the game randomly, learning in Transition Year. Now, I don't know what I would do without it. We don't know how many more young people are out there just waiting to be introduced. If you hear of any or would like a young person you know to learn, please contact [irishyouthbridge@gmail.com](mailto:irishyouthbridge@gmail.com)



Bence, David, Matthew, Luca, Tom and Isabel



# My Journey Continues

Nicola O'Dowd



**"Bridge: the game that gives you just enough good boards to keep coming back."**

*- Every bridge player ever!*

In my last article, I talked about how I'm somewhere in the middle not brilliant. I even wrote a song about it (and if you haven't listened to it yet, go back and have a listen! [see link in the Summer Journal, Ed]).

I'd really been looking forward to playing in the Lambert and Cooper, the CBAI's National Confined Pairs and Teams Championships, held this year in Loughrea.

The Lambert was on Saturday, April 26th, with 70 pairs competing, and the Cooper followed with 35 teams. Both events were confined to Intermediate A and Area Master players and that's exactly what made them exciting for me.

There were no higher grades in the room. No Grandmasters or National, Regional Masters. It felt more balanced, more open, like everyone had a genuine shot. That kind of field brings its own buzz not because it's easier, but because it feels fair. You know you'll be tested, but in a way that's encouraging rather than intimidating. It's nice going into an event knowing the playing field is level and anyone could have their day.

As regular readers know, since moving up to Area Master, I've felt a bit out of my depth and that I've been trying to find my footing. It's been a steep learning curve, and at times, I regularly found myself having "brain freeze" and forgetting conventions. So for this event, my partner and I made a conscious decision to strip our system right back. Keep It Simple Stupid. We took out a lot of the extra conventions and focused on the basics - simple, natural bidding. And honestly, it made a huge difference

to me. I wasn't second guessing myself or scrambling to remember what I should do when I looked at my hand. I could just focus on the cards and play with a clear head. It felt calmer, more manageable, and way more enjoyable.

When the final scores came in, we'd finished 10th overall, and honestly, we were delighted. We played well, stayed steady, and for me, the big win was that my simplified system really did help. It took the pressure off and helped me settle in and enjoy the game without overthinking everything. That, more than anything, made the whole day feel like a success. [Super advice for every improver. Spot on, Nicola. Ed]

For the Teams on Sunday, sticking to my reduced, back-to-basics system, we played steadily and won three of our four matches in the first session. Declan and I were playing with Breda Tuite and Blánaid Morris, and we worked really well together right from the start. We lost our first match in the second session, but then found our momentum and went on to win the next three. That run secured us an overall 4th place finish and a prize to top it off.

It was great fun and a fantastic weekend all around. Huge credit to the organisers and, of course, the TDs for keeping everything running so smoothly. And a special thanks to our teammates it was a pleasure to play alongside you.

Next up was the 4Fun Teams and honestly, the name says it all. It's a great format: each team has to include a Master playing with a Novice, and an Intermediate A paired with an Intermediate B. The whole idea is to give newer players a chance to try out teams in a relaxed and friendly way and in my opinion it really does exactly that.



The TDs Fearghal O'Boyle and Máiread Basquille were calm, helpful, and encouraging as always. A big part of what makes the event so special is the way more experienced players support and guide the newer ones. That's really what it's all about.

We played for Mid Leinster region this year and my team was myself as the Master, Bernadette Brereton as the Novice, my mum Ena as the Intermediate A, and Fiona Murray as the B. Even though Bernadette is still a Novice, she's played out a good bit. But just like most novices, she was still really nervous on the day which is completely understandable. It's a different format, and there's always that bit of extra pressure when you're part of a team. But she settled in really well, and it was lovely to see her confidence grow as the day went on.

What I don't understand is why more people don't want to play in it. I know a few who tried it previous years and didn't come back and I don't get it, because I think it's such a fun and welcoming day. Maybe some people feel a bit under pressure, especially if they're playing with or against more experienced players. In pairs, it's just you and your partner, but in teams, maybe some people worry they'll let the rest of the team down if a board goes badly. They might also feel a bit awkward being put into teams with people they don't know, especially if they're worried

about being judged or making a mess of things. But honestly there is no need to feel like that - everyone really is lovely, and I know myself from experience those feelings pass once you settle in. Another nice feature of the 4Fun Teams is that no conventions are allowed, everyone plays the same simple Acol system. It really puts everyone on the same page and takes the pressure off a bit, especially for the newer players. [Recently at a CBAI "Teach the Teachers" seminar in Tullamore, I extolled the virtues of Teams Bridge. Nicola has very ably restated my case! All I can add is that at Teams, compared to Pairs, you have two extra people to blame for your bad results. Ed.]

We finished 6th overall and picked up the prize for winning the first session. It was such a lovely day, and so nice to walk away with an envelope. If you've played before and weren't sure about it, or if you've never tried teams at all, maybe give it another go next year. You might end up really enjoying it.

Well done to the overall winners and runners-up, who held the top spots from start to finish.

1st – Offaly: Doreen McInerney (M), Patrick Martin (N), Pattie Ryan (A), Patricia Mahon (B)

2nd – Westmeath: Sean Galligan (M), Patricia McCormack (N), Kevin Woulfe (A), Joan Peppard (B)

The Sligo Congress was back this year for the first time since COVID, and I'd never been before so I was really looking forward to it. I'd heard good things, but honestly, it completely lived up to the hype. The atmosphere was amazing. It was just so friendly and relaxed everyone seemed genuinely delighted to be there. There was a lovely, easygoing feel at the tables. You could feel how much it meant to people that the Sligo Congress was back after such a long break and it was clear people had missed it.

The last time I played with Melissa Brady was at the Kelburne, so it was lovely to be back on a team with her again. Anna Shalvey, Melissa Brady, Declan Byrne and myself made up

our team. The four of us had great fun together. The bridge was good, the laughs were even better, and to top it all off, we won the Area Master prize!

The Regent's Centenary Congress was a very special event this year and what a weekend it was. Friday the 11th of July – Sunday the 13th. It was held in UCD's O'Reilly Hall, which is a gorgeous venue, and the sun was shining all weekend. There was a great buzz around the place. Loads of Irish players, of course, but also players from Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, USA, and the UK.

It all kicked off on the Thursday evening with a talk by Zia Mahmood in Milltown Golf Club. I was lucky enough to be there, and it was absolutely brilliant. He was funny and charming and full of great stories but he also spoke really well about the more serious side of the game. Zia was joined by Thomas Bessis, Tom Hanlon & Irene Baroni, for questions at the end. I even got my photo taken with Zia and was very happy with that!

The congress itself ran like clockwork. Regent President Paul Porteous and his committee did a great job pulling it all together, with help from Club Manager Declan Byrne. The TDs Fearghal O'Boyle, Diarmuid Reddan, Huey Daly and Bernard Higgins kept everything moving smoothly. It just felt like one of those weekends where everything came together great bridge, great company, and the kind of atmosphere that makes you glad you showed up. Playing against some of the stars was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I imagine I'll never get to play against them again although it's something every bridge player dreams of doing.

I love competing, and yes, it's great when things go well. But what really drives me is the people. It's the buzz of the room, the laugh you had at the table, the bit of encouragement from someone you admire, or just the feeling that you actually belonged there. And of course, there's still the game itself.



A good bid or a tricky hand played well can stay with you just as much as the chat and the craic.

All summer, we ran Monday night bridge in Trim and the numbers were amazing, getting between 22 and 27 tables every week, and 32 on our charity night. As people came to my table. "Fair play to you," they said. "You're great at organising this." But the truth is, it's not just me. If people didn't show up, if they didn't make the effort to come out and play, to chat and laugh and have a night out then none of it would matter.

I stood up with the mic that night and said exactly that. I love organizing and running events, trying to create something fun and competitive for people but I'm not doing it for the praise or the belly rubbing. I'm doing it because it genuinely makes me happy to see others enjoying themselves. Bridge has changed my life. It's given me friendships, confidence, and joy I never expected. So if I can give a little of that back by encouraging someone to play, by running a club night, by organising a competition then I feel I've done something worthwhile.

Now all roads lead to Trim again this time for the very first Bridge Bash. Players will be coming from all over the country, and I hope when I stand in that room, I'll feel the same buzz I did on those Monday nights. Grateful it all came together, glad I had a hand in it, and happiest of all seeing others enjoying themselves. Hopefully I'll be telling you all about it in the next article!

*[Nicola continues to epitomise everything that is positive and forward-looking about our game. Hers is a very important voice as we chart the future of Bridge in Ireland. Thanks Nicola, and keep it up! Ed.]*

# When I was a Boye!

[Editor's note: Fantoni/Nunes were exposed as cheats shortly after this article was written]

## When I was a Boye

Taking on the Angelini team on their home ground

By **BOYE BROGELAND**, FLEKKEFJORD NORWAY

IT WAS Saturday 3rd of October and Espen and I had been invited to the Grotta Championships in Rome. This was quite a special tournament in that only three teams were to compete and play was to take place in the home of Francesco Angelini – the President of the powerful Angelini Group which employs over 3,300 staff and has an annual turnover of roughly 400 million dollars.

We were taken by taxi from the beautiful hotel Villa Tuscolana on the mountain slopes just outside of Rome to Angelini's residence in the village of Grottaferrata. Before the gates would open we had to identify ourselves to Angelini's head of security: "Bridge, Brogeland and Lindqvist" worked like "Open Sesame". On the other side of the gate was a 300-metre avenue leading up to the home of the 64 year old Pharma Chief.

Inside there are many familiar faces: Fulvio Fantoni, Claudio Nunes, Lorenzo Lauria and Alfredo Versace. So, Angelini hasn't invited just anybody to his team – a team that has dominated Italian bridge for the last few years, to the annoyance of the "coffee queen" Maria Teresa Lavazza.

Angelini has won nine Italian Gold Cups, eight Italian league championships, six Champions Cups, one world championship (the Rosenblum in 1998) and one European Championship (on home ground in Salsomaggiore in 2002). The polished trophies from these triumphs are one of the first sights when we enter the living room in the magnificent villa.

This wealthy Italian, who earlier in the year made an offer for half of the shares in the football club Roma.

makes a faultless first impression and gives the appearance of a jovial guy. The only warning we receive is that we are not allowed to leave until we have lost! This won't be any great failure should it happen, playing against a team of such stars, but together with the Argentine Pablo Lambardi and our Spanish sponsor Juan Carlos Ventin we hope to at least inflict a few wounds on our opponents. The third team consists mainly of some good players from Barcelona.

The tournament is arranged as eight matches of eight boards, IMPs converted to VP after each match. The team that has amassed the most VPs in the end gets to share 5,000 Euros.

The Grotta Championship kicks off at 3pm in the bridge cellar of Angelini. Guilio Denna at short notice steps in for Pablo Lambardi who lost his Argentine passport the previous day and is now frantically looking for it. Despite this setback Ventin has a great start against Barcelona. Thereafter we thrash in turn Angelini and Barcelona. My favourite hand so far:

**K73**  
**87543**  
**942**  
**AK**

**52**  
**AQ96**  
**AKT85**  
**QJ**

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Lauria	Espen	Giubilo	Boye
			1NT
dbl <sup>1</sup>	2D <sup>2</sup>	pass	2NT <sup>3</sup>
pass	3D <sup>4</sup>	pass	3H
pass	4H	all pass	

1. Clubs and another. 2. Transfer to hearts.  
3. Maximum, four hearts. 4. Retransfer.



Lauria leads the C2 (3rd/5th). The duplication in clubs is unfortunate but you still have good chances of making. How do you plan the play?

West appears to have the black suits and his double is good grounds to place the SA with him. If you only have one spade loser you can afford to lose a trump. It might be a reasonable line to play a heart to ace to guard

against a singleton king?

West's bid has increased the chances of bad distributions, including all the trumps with East. A heart to the nine would deal with this but what do you do if it loses to the ten or jack? If you finesse the queen you risk losing two trumps. Hmm, can you see a way of combining your chances?

Without taking too long planning, I play the H8 from dummy. The Italians have been on the back foot all day so perhaps I can elicit a reaction from East if he has KJ102. With any other holding I expect him to smoothly play his lowest card. My ploy works as Valeri Giubilo contributes the 10. My queen holds and Lauria discards a club.

The double finesse in diamonds which has looked like an additional chance in the case of two trump losers or the SA with East is no longer attractive. To prepare for the possibility of East having a singleton diamond I cash the ace. Both follow low and I play a spade to the king which holds. When I lead a diamond from dummy Giubilo starts to think so he obviously has no more.

Eventually he decides to sacrifice a second heart trick by ruffing with the two, but together with the SA those are the only tricks the Italians make:

S/Nil	<b>K73</b> <b>87543</b> <b>942</b> <b>AK</b>	<b>T986</b> <b>KJT2</b> <b>6</b> <b>8643</b>
<b>AQJ4</b>		
<b>QJ73</b>		
<b>T9752</b>		
	<b>52</b> <b>AQ96</b> <b>AKT85</b> <b>QJ</b>	



At the table I thought I was in control even if East had discarded a black card on the second round of diamonds. I would have won with the king and exited with a spade. In the endgame surely East's hearts would be trapped? No, not if East discards clubs at every opportunity including when the fourth round of diamonds is ruffed in dummy. My best counter is to ruff a spade and ruff the H10 in this position:

	— 754 —	
AQ	K	T
—		KJ2
—		—
T 97		
	— A9 T Q —	

Again East must discard and not over-ruff! This secures a second trump trick to go with a high spade and a diamond. One down.

Deep Finesse (a program that works out the maximum number of tricks makeable with best play against best defence with open cards) later tells me that I could still have made the contract even if East discards clubs instead of ruffing the second round of diamonds. The reason is that Lauria erred by not unblocking the SQ or DJ! Against this best defence after winning the DK I would need to enter dummy with a club and lead a heart towards hand before exiting with a spade. Now East only makes one trump trick. (If West unblocks in spades an entry is created for East to play king and another heart leaving me with a spade loser).

Deep Finesse also tells me that the contract is makeable if Giubilo plays low on the first heart and I risk running the eight. So, it turns out that it was Lauria who let the contract through whereas Giubilo played a perfect defence – at least in the world of computer analysis!

Neither I nor Versace come anywhere close to duplicating the play of Deep

Finesse in the heat of battle so when he asks me during the break, "Would you

really have let the H8 ride?", I answer politely, "We will never know," although deep down I know that I would have played the Ace.

Before dinner is served new rules are introduced for the Grotta Championship. After five of the eight matches the standings are: Ventin 113, Angelini 68 and Barcelona 42. Perhaps you remember that one is not allowed to leave before one has lost. Therefore the round robin format is abandoned and the last three matches are replaced by a 24-board final after dinner. Espen and I are reassured by Ventin that our Euros are safe regardless but we are of course also keen to take the scalps of these Italians!

With one board left in the final our carry-over has evaporated (yes, they did give us a few imps' lead) and we're now three imps behind. On board 24 3NT is the best contract but Fantoni - Nunes end up in a second best 5C on their 5-4 fit. The distribution is not friendly and they are one off.

Espen and I are in 4S on a 5-2 fit, an inferior contract to both 3NT and 5C but it makes when I manage to get away with only two trump losers on this holding:

K7643  
Q9

I start with a small spade from dummy to the queen. Angelini follows with the eight and Versace wins the ace. After entering my hand I lead the nine and Versace follows with the two. What do you do?

If the suit breaks 3-3 it makes no difference. The more likely 4-2 break is more interesting. If East started with J8 or 108 you need to play the king and later force out West's jack or ten whereas you run the nine if East has 85.

This second possibility requires Angelini to have false carded on the first round so I play the king and the jack appears which ensures we are amongst the very few who are allowed to leave Angelini's undefeated:

K7643  
AT52      J8  
Q9

However, this would not have been the outcome if Versace had let the queen hold. I would surely have run the nine on the next round even if in theory the chance of J8 or 108 with East is greater than A8.

Tip: Put the opponent under pressure when you have the chance. It's often at no cost and makes you a more difficult opponent. Even the best make mistakes or give away important clues about the distribution.



Valerio Giubilo, Alfredo Versace, Francesco Angelini, Ercole Bove, Fulvio Fantoni, and bottom row Lorenzo Lauria, Claudio Nunes



# High level decision making

Peter Pigot



**We've all been there. The worst feeling in Bridge is seeing the dummy at the five or six level and realising that we're too high and doom is imminent. With such good hands between the two of us, you feel you've wasted those lovely cards by writing a score in the 'out' column.**

So what do we need if we are to bid slams with confidence? There are three key requirements - Good trumps, Source of Tricks and Controls.

The controls are discovered (or not as the case may be) using cue bidding, trump quality can be established using RKCB (and some other methods) and the source of tricks is either ruffs, extra length, a second suit or simply high cards.

With balanced hands the source of tricks are the HIGH cards, with single suited hands the source is the extra length, high cards and ruffs and with two suited hands with decent values, one suit is trumps the other is tricks when made good, if required.

## Example 1

Dealer South. Vul All.

<p>♠ Q52 ♥ AKQ ♦ KQ54 ♣ QJ3</p>			
♠ 76	N	♠ 94	
♥ 10987	W	♥ 6432	
♦ J632	E	♦ 109	
♣ AK4	S	♣ 98765	
<p>♠ AKJ1083 ♥ J5 ♦ A87 ♣ 102</p>			

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	2♦	P	2♠
P	3♠	P	4♦
P	4♠	All Pass	

In a 2/1 auction South shows a single suited hand of Spades and about 12-15HCP (some like to play 2♠ is all weak hands, 2NT has stoppers and 3♠ is natural but extras). North supported Spades

with 3♠ which you should agree as demanding a cue bid (A, K, singleton or void) from South, i.e. Slam interest. Some play 3NT as 'Serious' [ie slam interest] and others play 3NT is a trump cue! Here, when South bypasses 4♣ and bids 4♦ the problem is solved, North knows that South cannot have Ace, King, singleton or void in Clubs and therefore there are TWO Club losers off the hand. No slam. 'I held a 19 count and partner opened, surely slam was on!'

The use of 'Splinters' (shortages with support) and 'Fit Jumps' (a second suit of KJxxx or better with trump support) in your methods help enormously when assessing whether slam is on or not. There was a very nice hand from the EBL Transnationals in Poznan last June that comes to mind.

## Example 2

Dealer North. Vul All.

<p>♠ A ♥ AK1087 ♦ 7643 ♣ Q65</p>			
♠ 764	N	♠ QJ982	
♥ J	W	♥ 32	
♦ KQJ82	E	♦ A95	
♣ 8432	S	♣ J107	
<p>♠ K1053 ♥ Q9654 ♦ 10 ♣ AK9</p>			

W	N	E	S
	1♥	1♠	4♦
P	6♥	All Pass	

North opened 1♥ and East overcalled 1♠. When South bid 4♦, splinter, he was showing about 9-13 HCP, a diamond shortage and heart support. With the

Spade call from East, North knew that South was favourite to have decent Club cards along with his Qxxx(x) in Hearts. North goes to work to COUNT the tricks to play, something he/she should be doing on EVERY hand. He can see five hearts in hand, one spade, at least three clubs plus three diamond ruffs, thus playing South for something like Jxxx, Qxxx, x, AK10x. Therefore North jumped to 6H. Plus 1430 was quickly claimed and a gain of 13 IMPs recorded.

When bidding in competition at a high level, the decision to play or defend is probably the hardest call you face. To help in this regard you MUST use the full suite of support bids, splinters, fit jumps, pre-emptive trump raises, courtesy raises, lead directing raises and the most important one, the constructive raise. The constructive raise shows a hand that has the values for that level, is usually reasonably balanced and has decent defence... i.e. 'its OUR hand, we are recording a plus'. When you make a constructive raise (some partnerships use 2NT to show this hand, some simply cue the opponents' suit and some use both, one for four-card raise and the other for three-card raises) to game then a forcing PASS is available when the opposition try and save or otherwise muddy the waters.

**Example 3****Dealer North. Vul E/W.**

<p>♠2 ♥AKJ98 ♦QJ87 ♣K86</p>			
♠KJ98	N	♠AQ10765	
♥7		♥1065	
♦A52	W	♦643	
♣95432	E	♣7	
<p>♠43 ♥Q432 ♦K109 ♣AQJ10</p>			
W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♠	3♠ <sup>1</sup>
4♠	P <sup>2</sup>	P <sup>2</sup>	5♥
All Pass			
<sup>1</sup> 3♠=Constructive raise to 4♥ <sup>2</sup> P=Forcing			

South's 3♠ shows heart support, the values for game, probably a balanced hand and some defence (i.e. Not just trumps - with only trumps, we support by bidding OUR suit). Now when the bidding is back with North he is in a forcing Pass position (the bidding cannot go Pass Pass Pass). With no extra shape and if he can possibly see THREE quick losers at the five-level, North will double. With clear extra shape and if he cannot see three losers off the hand at the five-level, North will bid 5♥ or even 5♣ or 5♦ as a slam try (Passing and later Pulling partner's double is also a slam try). So when North PASSES he is somewhere between these hands - he will have a little extra shape but no certain extra value. That Pass will help South make the decision.

Over to South. Since North Passed he must be interested to bid on, i.e. he/she must have a singleton Spade. South can see that all his cards are working to play and tries to work out North's hand. North should be something x, AKxxx AQxx, xxx or x, AKxxx, Qxx, Kxxx or the hand he has so 5♥ is in with a good shout. And 5♥ is indeed the bid, collecting 450.

Go to work with your favourite partner on developing plenty of high level agreements to help you consistently make the right decisions.

## Peter Pigot Bridge

All Seminars include Afternoon Tea/Coffee and a light Snacks.

€35 per person.

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## Dates & Venues (and more to come!)

When	Time	Where	Level	Seminar Topic
<b>August 29th</b>	1.30 - 5.30pm	Castlebar, Co Mayo,	Intermediate	Judgement and Partnership Defence
<b>September 5th</b>	1.30 - 5.30pm	Cavan	Intermediate	Judgement and Partnership Defence
<b>September 19th</b>	1.30 - 5.30pm	Westmanstown	Intermediate	Judgement and Partnership Defence
<b>September 20th</b>	1.15-5.30pm	Westmanstown	Advanced	Uses of Double and Suit Preference signals
<b>October 10th</b>	1.30 - 5.30pm	Confey GAA Club Leixlip	Intermediate	Bidding in Competition and Declarer play in No Trump
<b>October 24th</b>	1.15-5.30pm	Confey GAA Club Leixlip	Advanced	Uses of Double in Competition and Top tips for Declarer

# S/He Who Hesitates is lost Should be Shot

Jim Doyle



## A hand in a recent club game threw up an interesting question.

No opposition bidding and I am South in 3NT

The club holding is as follows:

North	South
♠ AQ987	♠ 105

No problem with entries to either hand. When I play the ♠10, Left Hand opponent hesitates, thinks for a while, clearly having a decision to make, and then plays the ♠6. I play ♠7. East wins the ♣J.

When I regain the lead, I play the ♣5 and left hand opponent plays the ♣3. I finesse the ♣8 and it loses to the ♣K

The hesitation made no difference to the actual play of the hand or to the final result as there was no other source of tricks.

When the hand is over I ask my left hand opponent what were they thinking of by hesitating when they had nothing to hesitate about.

The player in question is playing about ten years but is a relatively good player.

"I was thinking about the play of the hand in general" was the reply.

I suggested to them that thinking at this stage of the hand was not a good idea and to at least put the card they were going to play face down and then state something like "Thinking about

hand in general" and when they are finished turn the already selected card face up.

On further investigation online (and an email to fob.ie!) if the player in question has a clear play to this trick but requires time to think about the rest of the defence they should play immediately to this trick but leave the card face up at the completion of this trick while they think about the hand in general.

An interesting example of this type of situation arose in the Spring NABC in Memphis in 2019. The bidding was as shown. (**Hands rotated to make S declarer**).

### Example 2 Dealer South. Vul None

		♠ A1076	
		♥ J85	
		♦ AJ8	
		♣ 754	
♠ KJ943	N	♠ 52	
♥ 1093	W	♥ Q762	
♦ 1072	E	♦ K65	
♣ J6	S	♣ 10982	
		♠ Q8	
		♥ AK4	
		♦ Q943	
		♣ AKQ3	

West lead ♠3 (3rd and 5th). ♠6 was played from Dummy and East took about a minute before playing the ♠2. South won ♠8. South now assumes that E must have either ♠9 or ♠J to have any reason to hesitate. Accordingly S played ♠Q covered by K and A and E followed with ♠5. South then played ♠7 reasoning that even if East held three spades to the 9 the suit would be blocked and there would

still be a chance of making 10 tricks. However West had all the remaining spades and declarer ending up with only 9 tricks for a very poor score as if Declarer had played on diamonds there are 10 top tricks.

The Director was called at the end of the hand. North indicated that he believed East unintentionally deceived South with his tempo and mannerisms to his play at trick 1, causing South to err in the play of the hand. East had taken almost a minute to play to the first trick.

The Director polled three players asking them what it would mean if RHO took approximately one minute before playing to trick one. He inquired if that is indicative that RHO has a problem with the play to trick one or a problem with the hand. Two of the three players felt that RHO could be thinking about any number of things and does not indicate that they have a problem with trick one.

The Director ruled that the result was unchanged based on the fact that a player is entitled to think, specifically at trick one, for as long as he needs without it indicating that there is a problem with this trick.

N/S requested a review of the ruling. There was video of the hand in question. The video showed that after the opening lead and after Dummy was tabled, South inquired about opening leads and, after receiving the information, called small from dummy after about 3-5 seconds. East studied the dummy and, after about 10 seconds, detached the two of spades and moved it towards the end of his hand, folded up his hand and continued thinking for another 40 seconds. At this point,



East detached the same card and held it in front of him for another 2-3 seconds before playing it. South felt that the detaching of the card, coupled with taking 56 seconds prior to playing a card, indicated that East was not only thinking about the hand but also had a significant problem with his play to trick one. He felt that the most likely spade holding for East was Jxx or 9xx. He knew he was taking a chance in his choice of line of play if East held 9xx, but the suit would be blocked and he would still have ways to take 10 tricks. The Reviewer polled four experts asking what they thought was going on in East's mind after a 56 second break in tempo before playing to trick one. The Reviewer included the facts that a card was detached and moved towards the end of the hand and that the card selected was held in front of the player for 2-3 seconds prior to playing it. Three experts felt strongly that East had a problem that related specifically to trick one, the other said East could be thinking about the whole hand, however the movement of the cards makes it less clear. The Reviewer also asked about the play that Declarer took, given the play to trick one. While South's specific line was not replicated, the pollees felt that it was a reasonable line to take given the pause and actions by East.

Review Panel Findings: Law 73E addresses Deception: "If the Director determines that an innocent player has drawn a false inference from a question, remark, manner, tempo or the like, of an opponent who has no demonstrable bridge reason for the action, and who could have been aware, at the time of the action, that it could work to his benefit, the Director shall award an adjusted score."

Based on the data from the Reviewer's poll, the Panel judged that East's actions qualified as deceptive and overturned the Director's ruling. The table result was adjusted to 3NT by South, making 4, N/S +430.

*[Editor's Note. This is a common enough occurrence, sadly. The perpetrators ought, in my humble opinion, to be shot at dawn. The lessons for us all are firstly to endeavour to play in tempo at all times. Second, if you need time to think, say "no problem with this trick, just thinking about the hand"]*



# Lemmy Was Right!!

Editor



**Watching the knockout stages of the Spingold [a major annual US event], I was following the fortunes of our good friend and columnist, Boye Brogeland. Motorhead fans would have hit the jackpot on this deal.**

Dealer East. Vul All.

			♠AQJ10		
			♥Jxx		
			♦Qxx		
			♣Xxx		
♠8765		N	♠9432		
♥Xxx			♥-		
♦Jxxx	W	E	♦K10xx		
♣Xx		S	♣AK109x		
Boye					
♠K					
♥AKQxxxx					
♦Ax					
♣QJx					

East opened 1♣ and Boye had a decision to make. It's easy to bid 4♥, but was he too strong for that? Should he double and then bid hearts, showing real strength? He opted for 4♥.

When this came back around to East, he elected to re-open with a double. Boye could be pre-empting, and partner might have a bid or a penalty pass. West bid 4♠ and North, Christian Bakke, expressed an opinion about it's chances.

Bakke led a heart and declarer managed two heart ruffs, two clubs and a club ruff for five down, minus 1400. A big swing for N/S.

Had Bakke been a Motorhead fan, he'd have taken lead singer Lemmy's advice. "I don't share your greed, the only card I need, is the Ace of Spades". On that lead, defenders take four spades, seven hearts and ♦Ac. Nine down for 2600!!

Rest in peace, Lemster.



# 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.

♠ 9632 ♥ 1093 ♦ A986 ♣ 52			
♠ A85	N	♠ KQ	
♥ AKJ86	W	♥ 7	E
♦ KQJ102		♦ 753	
♣ -	S	♣ AK109743	
♠ J1074 ♥ Q542 ♦ 4 ♣ QJ86			

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

<sup>1</sup> 3♦ = 5+ cards, GF  
<sup>2</sup> 5NT = Pick a slam (a 4♦ bid would lead to 6♦)

### Lead:

North leads the ♠6 against 6♦. How do you plan the play?

### The Play

In a knock-out team match, declarer won the spade lead in dummy, played a heart to the ace, ruffed a heart and played a diamond to the queen which held. North headed the diamond king with the ace and exited with a spade won in dummy. Declarer pitched two hearts on the top clubs and ruffed a club but North's overruff was the setting trick. Had the trumps been 3-2 this line would have easily delivered 12 tricks.

As is so often the case when a contract looks easy, declarer failed to look for the danger. When the ♦Q held, declarer should have gone to dummy with a spade, pitched two hearts on the top clubs and only then played a diamond to hand.

At the other table, South led the ♠J against 6NT (by East). Declarer won and went after the diamonds. North won the third round and after some thought returned the ♥10. Winning with dummy's ♥J, declarer cashed two diamond and two heart winners, pitching clubs from hand. After crossing to hand with the ♠Q, declarer tried the top clubs but eventually had to lose a trick in the end.

Had declarer foreseen the danger posed by a heart switch against 6NT, he could return to hand with the ♠Q after the second round of diamonds. After pitching two hearts on the top clubs, he can finesse the ♥J and only then knock out the ♦A. When North is out of clubs this results in twelve tricks.

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

♠ 8 ♥ 9852 ♦ K7 ♣ KQJ1074			
♠ KQ10632	N	♠ AJ94	
♥ A106	W	♥ QJ	E
♦ 5		♦ AQ1096	
♣ A83	S	♣ 52	
♠ 75 ♥ K743 ♦ J8432 ♣ 96			

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

<sup>1</sup> 2NT = Enquiry, agrees spades (usually with ambitions above game)

<sup>2</sup> 4♠ = Maximum, denies a shortage

<sup>3</sup> When partner freely raises your six-card major and you control all the side suits, one should make at least one slam try.

### Lead:

North leads the ♠K against 6♣. How do you plan the play?

### The Play

In the absence of a club lead, declarer in 6♣ would have time to take the heart finesse and eventually dispose of one of dummy's clubs. Here, having taken the club ace, play a diamond to the ace and ruff a diamond. When North drops the king on the second round, draw trumps ending in dummy and cash the ♦Q before taking the ruffing finesse against South's ♦J. Then, having disposed of two clubs on the winning diamonds, take the heart finesse for an overtrick.

Questions on page 3

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

<p> ♠ 6  ♥ 10975  ♦ K102  ♣ QJ1083 </p>			
♠ 943 ♥ AKQ32 ♦ J98 ♣ A7	N  W  S	E  	♠ AQ ♥ J8 ♦ A754 ♣ K6542
<p> ♠ KJ108752  ♥ 64  ♦ Q63  ♣ 9 </p>			

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

<sup>1</sup> 3♠ = Applying the 'rule of 4' when 1st in hand at green  
<sup>2</sup> 4♥ = Not without risk!

**Lead**

North leads the ♠6 against 4♥. How do you plan the play?

**The Play**

Declarer wins with dummy's ace and plays back the spade queen. South wins with the king and switches to the ♣9 seeing North's discard of the ♣Q. After taking the ♣A, declarer should ruff his last spade, then overtake the ♥J and continue with the top hearts. When South shows out on the third round of trumps, declarer can use the ♣K and ♦A as entries to ruff two clubs in hand, which gives ten tricks.

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

<p> ♠ J86432  ♥ KQ104  ♦ 5  ♣ 93 </p>			
♠ Q107 ♥ A862 ♦ 832 ♣ AK10	N  W  S	E  	♠ A ♥ 75 ♦ AKQ109 ♣ QJ742
<p> ♠ K95  ♥ 983  ♦ J764  ♣ 865 </p>			

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

<sup>1</sup> 2♦ = Natural, GF

<sup>2</sup> 3♣ = Strong Jump Shift based on club support

<sup>3</sup> Cue Bid

<sup>4</sup> 5NT = Pick a Slam

<sup>5</sup> 6♣ = 6NT was an alternative

**Lead**

North leads the ♥K. How do you plan the play?

**The Play**

After the heart lead, declarer can win, cash a top club, go to dummy with a diamond, return to hand with a club and play a second diamond. If either defender discards but cannot ruff, declarer will have a blueprint for securing twelve tricks by way of the ruffing finesse in diamonds.



# Bidding Quiz 10 - Results - Bob Pattinson

## Question 1

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

♠ -  
♥ AK54  
♦ AQ84  
♣ A8652

W	N	E	S
	3♠ <sup>1</sup>	P	?
<sup>1</sup> 3♠=7 suit: 6-10			

**Votes:** 4♠=11; Pass=4

Has partner a good enough suit to make game in spades opposite a void?

**Sally Pass:** Obviously could be right to bid but I go for the low road. It's only a non-vulnerable game.

**Peter G Pass:** Much depends on partner, many of whom may often be 6-4, and we could then miss a minor suit slam. Vulnerable I bid 4♠.

**Karel Pass:** Obviously 3NT is out-no way to get nine tricks without spades. So do we pass or bid 4♠ with our 4-5 top tricks. This a pure guess depending heavily on partnership style and what mood partner is in. In particular, the quality of the intermediates will be key. Even opposite a textbook 3♠ partner has to get to hand at least twice to start drawing trumps. My motto which has served me well is when a misfit looms get out as soon as possible. So I pass. Two side notes, if my right hand opponent observes the 10 second rule after a jump bid, and I pass smoothly, then my left hand opponent may back in with a double. Also if vulnerable I will bid 4♠. Non-vulnerable who knows.

**Roy Pass:** This really depends upon partner's style. Both 4♠ and pass are reasonable depending on how aggressive how partner might be. One positive for passing is that you might hear a balance from your left hand opponent, then it becomes Christmas.

**Ciaran 4♠:** Pass or raise. If we agreed that this is always a seven card suit as the note says, then I raise to 4♠.

**Joe 4♠:** Very close to passing but I'll bid 4♠

**Diane 4♠:** For partner's 3♠ I would hope for five tricks, and I have three sure tricks plus one finesse. Good enough game prospects even if non-vulnerable.

**George 4♠:** Hope this makes.

**Micheál 4♠:** Club suit will be an asset.

**Peter P 4♠:** Assuming my partner is adhering to some sense of decorum, I would expect about six tricks or at worst five with two trump losers. Since I have four or five winners, game is a decent prospect. Not that probably I need to say it, but one must play in spades on these hands.

**Tom 4♠:** By far the most likely game and I expect to make it. Partner will have a decent suit.

**Adrian 4♠:** Four definite tricks, even five with a diamond finesse, so partner needs to have only six, or possibly five, to make 4♠ a fairly clear bid at teams.

**Anna 4♠:** No matter how much I hate this bid, the rest is much worse.

**Ian 4♠:** Partner has been known to have a decent suit, and we have four or five of partner's losers covered. Hopefully the trump losses can be kept to two, and an outside card may promote a sixth side suit winner. Pass might be the winner, with opponents lured into the bidding.

**Luca 4♠:** At teams don't want to miss out on game. I hope for just two trump losers and ♦K onside, or good trumps and ♦K offside. One useful guide is the 5/6/7 rule denoting the number of tricks partner should have in their suit at favourable/equal/unfavourable vulnerability.

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

♠ QJ97632			
♥ T6			
♦ KJ			
♣ 74			
♠ T84	N	♠ AK5	
♥ J97		♥ Q832	
♦ 7632	W	♦ T95	E
♣ KT9		♣ QJ3	S
♠ -			
♥ AK54			
♦ AQ84			
♣ A8652			

W	N	E	S
	3♠ <sup>1</sup>	P	?
<sup>1</sup> 3♠=7 suit: 6-10			

## Summary

The controls suggest that if partner has a decent spade suit then game is on. The 36% 3-3 spade break brings this contract home. As partner is at worst 7222 shape there are enough opportunities to return to hand to draw trumps.

In fairness the void in partner's suit creates some pressure, but a 4-2 trump break should hold trump losers to two.

The worry about bidding 4♠ is based on the possible quality of partner's suit, but this is subject to partnership agreement. The potential gains from making game, even non-vulnerable, edge the bidding to 4♠, and you can blame partner if the spade suit is too poor.

**Marks:** 4♠=10; Pass=8

## Bidding Tips

- ▶ It helps to improve these tight decisions if the partnership has an agreement on the quality of the three-level openings, such as two of the top three honours or two of the top four.
- ▶ With a stronger responding hand holding some spades (plus a better trump suit from partner) a handy convention





over a three-level pre-emptive opening by partner is 4♣, (or 4♦ over a 3♣ opening), agreeing the trump suit and asking for any outside control. Opener simply bids the control, either a king or singleton, or signs off in trumps with no control.

## Question 2

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ AKJ2  
♥ 98  
♦ Q832  
♣ KQ3

W	N	E	S
1♦ <sup>1</sup>	?		
<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+			

**Votes:** 1NT=10; 1♠=3; Pass=2

The balanced shape and 15 points suggests 1NT, with a slight worry about hearts. Double looks wrong due to the heart shortage.

**Adrian 1♠:** Seems automatic, even on a four card suit.

**Peter G 1♠:** 3NT looks a long way off even if partner has 9-10 points. I prefer to have "softer values" to overcall 1NT with a bare 15.

**Karel 1♠:** Two options I see are 1NT which can't be faulted or 1♠. If partner is in the 4-7 range with spades, 1♠ works well. With 4-7 without spades it's not so great, but possibly a club fit is available if we get doubled (unlikely). I am bidding 1♠ as this offers more options if there is no fit. We can still reach an alternative contract if partner has 9/10+. I predict I will not have a lot of company on this with most bidding the obvious fairly routine 1NT.

**George 1NT:** Stay with the field. This way you can easily find spades.

**Sally 1NT:** A bit pushy perhaps. Tell me I am going for 1100.

**Ian 1NT:** Looks clear cut. We have 15-18 and a diamond stop, and that is what the bid shows, albeit we are minimum. Passing could miss a vulnerable game, and it may

be awkward to bid in round two otherwise. Yes we could go for 800, but we have all been there.

**Ciaran 1NT:** Why complicate the game.

**Peter P 1NT:** I'm a believer in overcalling 1NT because it might be my best game try as I've immediately shown I am in the upper echelons of value for my intervention. I mostly have the suit they've opened covered!! My partner can talk majors if need be in reply.

**Micheál 1NT:** If you pass it will be difficult to reach a successful contract.

**Luca 1NT:** Looks very normal.

**Anna 1NT:** I do have a stopper and 15 points.

**Diane Pass:** Unfavourable vulnerability- too minimum for a 1NT overcall.

**Tom 1NT:** Get my hand off my chest, and might be more dangerous to come in later. If I get doubled I might judge to pull to 2♠ as with all these honours the opponents will be a bit slower to double this contract.

**Roy Pass:** 1NT is reasonable, but it is a bare minimum, and my diamond pips are poor, so the bid is a little dangerous. I hope to get a chance later to double hearts if the opponents balance.

Dealer West. Vul N/S. Teams.

				♠AKJ2																																			
				♥98																																			
				♦Q832																																			
				♣KQ3																																			
♠8743				N	♠Q6																																		
♥AQJ7					♥642																																		
♦AJ54				W	E	♦876																																	
♣A					S	♣J9875																																	
				♠T95																																			
				♥KT63																																			
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<table><tr><td></td><td>♠</td><td>♥</td><td>♦</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>											♠	♥	♦	♣	NT	N	1	2	2	2		S	1	2	2	2		E			1			W			1		
	♠	♥	♦	♣	NT																																		
N	1	2	2	2																																			
S	1	2	2	2																																			
E			1																																				
W			1																																				
W			N			E		S																															
1♦ <sup>1</sup>			?																																				
<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+																																							

## Summary

On balance 1NT has the triple advantages of confirming a flat 15-17 hand, with diamonds stopped, and partner still has the chance of using Stayman to discover the four spades. Some players would expect five spades for the 1S overcall, or if holding four spades then denying a diamonds stopper and a balanced hand. At teams either bid works on this hand for gaining a plus score, with 1NT producing extra imps. The problem with pass on this hand is that the bidding might stop in 1H, which just makes.

**Marks:** 1NT=10; 1♠=9; Pass=7

## Bidding Tip

Partnerships need to be agreed on the requirements of both the 1NT overcall and a major suit overcall.

## Question 3

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

♠ Q4  
♥ A87  
♦ J1087  
♣ Q1053

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠	2NT <sup>1</sup>
P	?		
<sup>1</sup> 2NT= 5-5; 6-10 or 14+			

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

With an upper range pass hand, a double fit in the minors, and a major suit ace, plus a pass by responder, how can you invite partner holding the strong version.

**Adrian 5♣:** They have a lot of major suit cards between them, so expecting four of a major to be bid, so let them guess first by bidding 5♣.

**Diane 5♣:** A fit for both minors. With these fits best to go as high as we can, as quickly as we can.

**Tom 5♣:** Seems like the value bid and we can make it. Double fit, an outside ace, plus any minor suit finesse should work through the



opening bid. We also stop them discovering their double major suits fit. As I am never defending a 4M contract let's put the pressure on now.

**Sally 4♣:** Seems worth an invite to me.

**Roy 4♣:** Maybe partner can raise or maybe it shuts the opponents out of the bidding. I don't think I would buy it with just 3♣.

**George 3♦:** Stay low with this assortment. Most will bid 3♣, but bidding your weaker suit is better, and should score the same as 3♣.

**Peter G 3♣:** If partner bids 4♣ I am well placed to raise to 5♣, but Qx in spades opposite a silent West is not great news.

**Ian 3♠:** Making five of a minor looks improbable unless partner has the upper range, and can bid again, since we have only one control card, plus likely wasted values in the opponent's suit. Granted, there are useful fillers in partner's suits, but I don't think they will offset the negatives.

**Anna 3♠:** Show good support for partner's suits.

**Peter P 3♠:** Not a fan of good or bad two suited overcalls as this tries to take the judgement out of partner's hand (some might say this is a positive!). I'll try a forcing 3♠, showing the values to play at the four-level opposite the lower version, or even 3NT if partner is Ax K Axxxx Kxxxx.

**Karel 3♠:** Why no spade raise or some heart call from West? If partner is weak, West rates to have 3♠ and 8-10 points on average, and yet passed. Inference is that my partner is 14+. Doesn't really help as we have a nine- loser hand with no way of showing a double fit. Is this hand worth a 3♠ unassuming cue bid? Probably not as the cards are all soft....but it's the call I am going to make for three reasons.

(1) If partner has a decent hand my hand is probably good enough to go to game, and slam may even be on.

(2) Far more importantly the opponents have a double major suit fit as of yet undiscovered. If I bid 3♦ this allows opener, who in my opinion is marked with a fair chunk of points, to bid 3♥ or 3♠. My 3♠ cue bid may make any such action appear to be too dangerous and thus silence opener.

(3) In the quite possible event opener finds a bid over 3♠ partner will be well placed to decide what to do.

**Luca 4NT:** Partner shouldn't have nothing for the vulnerability, and can choose which minor. I can ask for aces with a spade bid if stronger.

**Ciaran 4NT:** At game all partner should have something sensible, so 4NT now to let partner choose the preferred minor, and at the same time take away opener's 4M bid.

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams.

		♠ Q4	
		♥ A87	
		♦ JT87	
		♣ QT53	
♠ J72	N	♠ KT9853	
♥ Q98542	W	♥ JT3	
♦ 3	E	♦ AK4	
♣ 962	S	♣ 8	
		♠ A6	
		♥ K	
		♦ Q9652	
		♣ AKJ74	

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠	2NT <sup>1</sup>
P	?		
<sup>1</sup> 2NT= 5-5: 6-10 or 14+			

## Summary

Several members of the panel make a strong case for making an effort in case partner has the stronger version of the 2NT bid, rather than leaping to five in a minor. Although the opponents have strong majors, with both sides vulnerable, it is less likely that a major suit sacrifice will be attempted when West has not attempted to take action over 2NT.

Whilst the jump to 5♣ works on this occasion the different lower

level bids show strength but allow for a stop at the four-level if the weaker version of 2NT is held. Is there a difference between bidding 3♥ or 3♠ when expressing interest in game if partner is at the higher points range? Will 3♠ lead to 5♣ rather than 5♦?

Interesting that 3♦ finds the better minor suit fit.

**Marks:** 3♠=10; 3♦=10; 3♣=10; 4♣=9; 4NT=8; 5♣=8

## Bidding Tips

Partnerships need to distinguish between invitational raises and direct game raises with these 5-5 minor suit hands. There is also scope for agreeing any differences between the majors when making the invitational raise.

## Question 4

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

♠ -  
♥ AJ1064  
♦ A75  
♣ KQJ93

W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♠ <sup>1</sup>	P
P	?		
<sup>1</sup> 2♠=6 suit: 6-10:			

**Votes:** X=14; Pass=1

Both the responder and your partner have passed so does your partner hold some decent spades or a poor hand?

**Sally X:** I might regret it but partner should pass with pretty spades. You need to know exactly what you're playing because different people bid very differently.

**Roy X:** It's not always perfect even if partner has a nice penalty, but I think you have to do it.

**Ciaran X:** Doubling with a void works badly sometimes, but as West may raise with a fit but has passed, then double it is. I've plenty of defence if partner has good spades.



**Peter P X:** Bidding 3♣ would suggest a hand that could not cope with a pass with the final contract 2♠ doubled. With two aces, some intermediates, and a very robust club suit, I am happy to defend. My right hand opponent would bid with three or four trumps and moderate values, so I am nearly certain that my partner has trumps and some values.

**Adrian X:** Partner is waiting for me to re-open with a double so why disappoint?

**George X:** Tough between this and 3♣, but partner could have a stack. Usually wrong to double with a void, but 3♣ is too committal.

**Anna X:** Have the other suits covered. Not so happy with the spade void but I can't have everything.

**Ian X:** Partner looks to have a penalty pass of 2♠, evidenced by the lack of a raise by East. Second choice is 3♣, but that could get us into the wrong spot, with partner lacking a proper diamond stop, bidding hearts. We can still get to 3NT over the double, if partner elects for that.

**Peter G X:** Aces are good for defence and a safe lead. Never frightened to concede 470/570, as the plus side of knocking the contract is high.

**Micheál X:** I want to give partner the opportunity to convert to a penalty if holding good spades.

**Luca X:** This is the most flexible. I am happy for partner to convert to penalties.

**Karel X:** The only options for me are double or 3♣. West with almost any hand with three or four spades will raise 2♠ to 3♠, so partner likely marked with at least four or five spades. The book says defending with a trump void is generally poor as you can't lead a trump through declarer. Still I like defending so I will double. If partner pulls it will be ok.

**Tom Pass:** Time to get out of dodge, no fit and no profit in moving forward.

Dealer North. Vul None. Teams.

		♠—	
		♥AJT64	
		♦A75	
		♣KQJ83	
♠Q76	N	♠AT9543	
♥KQ32	W	♥98	
♦Q96	E	♦KT3	
♣A87	S	♣52	
		♠KJ82	
		♥75	
		♦J842	
		♣T64	

W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♠ <sup>1</sup>	P
P	?		
<sup>1</sup> 2♠=6 suit: 6-10:			

## Summary

Whilst all but one of the panel doubled, there were some worries expressed that having the void in opener's suit may turn out to be problem.

Although 2♠ can be made by finessing the ♦9 (so the losers comprise two spades, one heart, one diamond, one club), it is a difficult contract to make, especially doubled. Apart from pass it is hard to find a viable alternative to double on this hand, and surely South has nothing better than a pass?

The panel offer sound reasons for the double, yet the lone wolf with the pass gets it right on this hand, so well done Tom.

**Marks:** X=10; Pass=9

## Bidding Tip

Experts argue that if none of your penalty doubles fail to work then you are not doubling enough. Certainly the role of the void came to pass!

## Question 5

Dealer East. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ KQ  
♥ AKQ6  
♦ K  
♣ KQJ932

W	N	E	S
		P	1♦ <sup>1</sup>
?			
<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+			

**Votes:** X=15

Between South's opening bid and your huge hand there will be few points left between the remaining two players, so shape and some kind of fit will be critical. Will the panel all agree with double?

**Adrian X:** So heavy with points I can't see I can do anything but double, and then decide what to do.

**Roy X:** I don't like doubling off shape but with 23 points it's a bit of a stretch expecting partner to bid over 2♣.

**Peter G X:** Looks like we are going to end up in 3NT/4♥. May have to pretend I have Kx in diamonds at some stage.

**Sally X:** Too strong for anything else.

**Ian X:** Nothing else for it with 23 points. Where we will end up is anyone's guess. I raise 1♥ or 1NT to game, otherwise bid clubs.

**Ciaran X:** Too strong to just bid a suit, and whatever partner does, my suit is good enough to bid next.

**Anna X:** I have a monster hand. Hopefully partner can bid something that I like.

**Peter P X:** Start with a double and if partner bids hearts, all good. However, I expect a reply from my left hand opponent and a pass from partner. Next bid could be interesting with plenty of options. We'll see, but too good for a simple 2♣.





**Diane X:** Don't like having a doubleton spade, but you have a lot of points. If partner respond spades you simply bid clubs.

**Karel X:** 23 points and right hand opponent has opened, leaving very little for the remaining two players. It is likely that five of the 23 points will lie badly, but the hand is too good not to start with a double. Our best bet for game is to find partner with four+ hearts. Be amazed if there isn't a unanimous vote for double.

**Luca X:** This is a huge hand. Partner could easily have the magic two aces, so I will show this as a power hand.

**George X:** All big hands start with double. If we bid 2♣ partner may pass with xxx Jxxxx Qxx xx, when there is an easy make in 4♥.

**Tom X:** I also like 2♣ but I am worried it could go all pass. 2♣ might work better if they bid, but they may preempt in diamonds and I will have to follow with 3♥. I can make 4♥ if partner has zero points but five small hearts.

Dealer East. Vul N/S. Teams.

					♠ AT7432														
					♥ —														
					♦ T763														
					♣ 765														
♠ KQ					N					♠ 85									
♥ AKQ6					W					E					♥ J987632				
♦ K															♦ 954				
♣ KQJ932										S					♣ T				
															♠ J96				
															♥ T4				
															♦ AQJ82				
															♣ A84				

		♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N		4		4		
S		4		4		
E	2			4		
W	2			4		

W	N	E	S
		P	1♦ <sup>1</sup>
?			

<sup>1</sup> 1♦=4+

## Summary

Full agreement on the panel with the takeout double offering the best initial description of the hand, and game in hearts should be easily bid and made [though opponents may reach 4♠/5♦]. If partner bids spades there are several follow up bids to choose from.

**Marks:** X=10

## Bidding Tip

On the infrequent times you pick up these huge hands start with a double and your follow up bid in a new suit is forcing.

## Question 6

Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 5  
♥ J632  
♦ 7  
♣ AKQJ987

W	N	E	S
			1♣
P	1♥	1♠	?

**Votes:** 4♠=6; 3♥=6; 4♥=2; 2♣=1

A conventional jump to 4♣ shows a 6-4 hand with four-card trump support for the major. Is this the best solution or are the hearts too weak on this occasion?

**Adrian 4♣:** Solid clubs and four-card heart support, textbook stuff.

**Peter P 4♣:** I like 4♣ for these hands, showing a solid 6-7 Clubs, four-card trump support, and definitely a shortage in one of the other two suits (with just a solid club suit I would rebid 3♣ angling for 3NT). 4♣ is probably coming on my left and I want my partner to know my hand type and shape. If I simply bid 4♥ over 1♠ my partner may think I have a balanced 18-19 with four trumps, and misjudge the next call.

**Ciaran 4♣:** Heart fit with good clubs.

**Anna 4♣:** This should show four hearts and a solid club suit.

**Luca 4♣:** Without the 1♠ intervention this would show the hand exactly, good long clubs and hearts. It is a little less clear over 1♠. That being said I have a bunch of other ways to show clubs, so hopefully partner will be on the same page.

**Karel 4♣:** 4♥ is what you would like to bid as opposite a load of hands this rates to be a good spot whether you make or go down.

For me I would expect more for 4♥. 4♣ here is generally agreed as 4♥ and a very good club suit. Could bid a simple 2♥, and on the assumption the opponents will compete, and go back into clubs. If the opponents don't compete and partner jumps to 4♥ we may have missed a slam. I think 4♣ is best as it gives a good picture of our hand.

**Sally 3♥:** I don't usually invite with such distribution, but partner knows that aces and the trump honours are good. I might bid again if they bid 4♠. This way I can bid 5♣ and partner should know what I have more or less. If I bid 4♥ directly and they bid 4♠ I am less well prepared.

**Tom 3♥:** Doesn't need a lot to make game. I won't sell out to 4♣ and will bid 5♣. If partner is strong and wants slam and bids it over my key card response we will make it.

**Ian 3♥:** This could work poorly if partner has a poor four-card suit. Dummy could be shortened of trumps, unable to pull same, and unable to get dummy's losers away on clubs in time. But anything less is feeble.

**Joe 3♥:** Too much strength to raise only to 2♥.

**George 3♥:** Some will bid 4♥ but 3♥ is enough. Dummy may get tapped, Depriving you of the use of the clubs. With robust hearts partner may go on. 2♥ is illegal!

**Roy 3♥:** It might be better to just bid clubs but I think I'll do that over 4♠.

**Peter G 4♥:** Still only 11 points and poor hearts, but will compete if partner bids 5♦ over 4♠.

**Diane 4♥:** Only two places you want to play - too weak to do anything else.

**Micheál 2♥:** 4♥ may still be a successful contract.



Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

		♠ 972	
		♥ AT974	
		♦ K985	
		♣ 4	
♠ AK43	N	♠ QJT85	
♥ 6		♥ KQ8	
♦ QJ643	W	♦ A72	
♣ 632	S	♣ T5	
		♠ 6	
		♥ J632	
		♦ T	
		♣ AKQJ987	

W	N	E	S
			1♣
P	1♥	1♠	?

## Summary

Although the conventional jump to 4♣ leads to minus one and a loss of 50, the opponents can make 140 in spades. The advantages of 3♥ are that over either 3♠ or 4♠ the good clubs can still be shown, and partner with an eight-loser hand will not stretch too far by themselves.

4♣ is a useful convention getting the 6-4 shape over in one bid, where as a direct 4♥ fails to do the same as 4♣.

The poor layout of the heart suit contributes to the failure of game on this hand.

**Marks:** 3♥=10; 4♣=9; 4♥=8; 2♣=7

## Bidding Tips

4♣ gives you two bids for one and partner has a clear insight to your hand. 3♥ takes into account that partner may be minimum with weak hearts, but also keeps in reserve the opportunity to compete further depending upon further developments of the bidding.

## Question 7

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

♠ 85  
♥ A7654  
♦ 3  
♣ Q10732

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	X	P	1NT
P	P	?	

**Votes:** Pass=7; 2♣=5; 2♥=1; 2♠=1

Six points, seven losers and two five-card suits, is this enough to take some action, or is this too risky?

**Luca Pass:** It is a bit too risky to come in now. I'm not afraid we are missing anything. If North had bid 1NT then I would overcall 2♥ if the bid showed hearts plus a minor.

**Adrian Pass:** Maybe wrongly, but I can see a misfit, so go quietly and pass. If I was going to bid I should have tried 1NT immediately.

**Peter P Pass:** Partner is either a weak 1NT with five spades or a minimum 5-4 in spades/diamonds. My suits are poor, so I'm going to let this go.

**Diane Pass:** Frightened of where this could go if I do anything else.

**George Pass:** Sometimes we defend with bad breaks.

**Joe 2♣:** Pass and 2♣ are reasonable. I wouldn't bid 2♥ as the opponents made a takeout double of spades. As I didn't bid 2♣ first time bidding, 2♣ now would be non-forcing and show a six+ suit but could be quite light. If partner has a stiff club a pull to 2♠ should be ok.

**Peter G Pass:** Guessing if partner has clubs and don't fancy 2♠ as partner has a weak no trump range and spades seem to be 4-2 or 5-1.

**Sally 2♣:** It would be nice to make a take out double, but even then partner would probably bid diamonds. Bidding 2♣ might give me the chance to bid hearts next time.

**Ian 2♣:** Even at teams you can't let opponents declare 1NT at nil all if at all possible. The doubler presumably has hearts so I pick my other five-card suit. If partner reverts to spades that isn't necessary bad.

**Anna 2♣:** Don't want to pass. Hearts are probably not great. You expect partner to have diamonds and spades, so should not be too bad.

**Karel 2♣:** Having passed correctly I think 2♣ is a reasonable gamble. If partner hates clubs we go back to 2♠. Downside – the opponents may find 2♦.

**Roy 2♣:** This should show more than one place to play since I didn't bid directly, hopefully partner will agree.

**Tom 2♣:** I hate selling out but I have to review if they double me. I have both 2♥ and 2♠ to escape to.

**Ciaran 2♣:** If partner tries 2♦ then 2♠ from me.

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

		♠ 97	
		♥ KQ3	
		♦ 98652	
		♣ AK6	
♠ AQJ42	N	♠ 85	
♥ J8		♥ A7654	
♦ KQ74	W	♦ 3	
♣ J5	S	♣ QT732	
		♠ KT63	
		♥ T92	
		♦ AJT	
		♣ 984	

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	X	P	1NT
P	P	?	

## Summary

As the bidding has developed it appears that the opponents have minimum values, and at nil all entering the bidding has some risk but, nothing too dangerous. If taking action then 2♣ seems the safest bid as it offers two escape hatches if this is doubled. This is a close decision between 2♣ and pass, with the non-vulnerable status shading 2♣.

**Marks:** 2♣=10; Pass=9; 2♥=8; 2♠=8



## Bidding Tips

When balancing try to envisage the strength of the opponents based on their bids and non-bids, and most importantly the vulnerability.

## Question 8

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 84

♥ 105

♦ 65

♣ AKJ9632

W	N	E	S
		1♥	X
?			

**Votes:** 2♣=14; Pass=1

A fine seven-card suit, which raises the question of whether 2♣ is forcing or not?

**Ciaran 2♣:** Forcing for one round. 3♣ next.

**Roy 2♣:** I can't think of a reasonable alternative.

**Adrian 2♣:** Club suits like this are made to be bid, so why not 2♣?

**Joe 2♣:** This is a heavy 2♣ in my opinion.

**Ian 2♣:** Absent a re-double this surely shows something like this? I'll rebid 3♣ over partner's red suit rebid (if any).

**Sally 2♣:** I play this as non-forcing these days. The perfect hand for it. But I bid it even if forcing, and then rebid clubs the next time.

**Peter P 2♣:** Showing length, natural and forcing for one round I'd expect.

**Tom 2♣ (or 1NT if we play transfers):** Happy to bid again later. Too good a suit to jump to 3♣ (if allowed). Can keep this good suit to myself.

**Anna 2♣:** Show my long suit.

**Karel 2♣:** This is the old chestnut of what is forcing and what isn't. Years ago (and mostly still) 1's and 3's were forcing, if using that 2♣ would be non-forcing. The

Americans play 2♣ as forcing, and in my opinion this is a better way. 3NT may well make if partner holds a spade stop. So bid 2♣ forcing and hear what partner, or indeed right hand opponent, have to say, before deciding your next move. Some play 3♣ as a fit bid or as a mixed raise along Bergen lines. A really good current treatment is to play transfers over takeout doubles, so on this hand over the double of 1♠ then redouble would show clubs (1NT is always natural).

**George 3♣:** This should end the bidding. Opponents have spades so pre-empting is correct.

**Peter G Pass:** I will compete to 3♣ later, or close to 2♣, but we don't want to play in 2NT on a stiff club.

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

						♠ 976						
						♥ 632						
						♦ KJ984						
						♣ T4						
♠ 84						N	♠ KQ32					
♥ T5						W	♥ KQJ874					
♦ 65						E	♦ 2					
♣ AKJ9632						S	♣ 85					
						♠ AJT6						
						♥ A9						
						♦ AQT73						
						♣ Q7						
		♠	♥	♦	♣	NT						
N		3										
S		3										
E	3		2									
W	3		2									

W	N	E	S
		1♥	X
?			

## Summary

With such a fine suit nearly all the panel agree to take action with a 2♣ bid, although there seems to be no firm agreement as to whether this bid is forcing or non-forcing. Karel and Tom both mention this issue can be easily resolved by playing transfers over an opponent's takeout double, and this makes a lot of sense.

The advantage of 2♣, in the absence of playing transfers, is that it leaves plenty of bidding space for further developments. The non-vulnerable opponents may win the auction with a diamond contract but at least you have tried to reach your own contract by bidding 2♣. 3♣ has the advantage of taking up more bidding space and is bid here as non-forcing.

**Marks:** 2♣=10; 3♣=10; Pass=8





## Summary of the Expert Panel Results

Well done to Panel debutant Ian Hamilton, who kicks off in style with a maximum!

**Readers' scores:** 75 Denis Callanan, 72 Fiona Garrick and Marie Lynch; 69 Eilish Dempsey. Well done all.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sally Brock	8	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	<b>77</b>
Ciaran Coyne	10	10	8	10	10	9	10	10	<b>77</b>
Luca Crone	10	10	8	10	10	9	9	10	<b>76</b>
Karel De Raeymaeker	8	9	10	10	10	9	10	10	<b>76</b>
Diane Greenwood	10	7	8	10	10	8	9	10	<b>72</b>
Joe Grue	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	10	<b>78</b>
Peter Goodman	8	9	10	10	10	8	9	8	<b>72</b>
Ian Hamilton	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	<b>80</b>
Tom Hanlon	10	10	8	9	10	10	10	10	<b>77</b>
George Jacobs	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	<b>79</b>
Micheál Ó Briain	10	10	10	10	10	7	8	10	<b>75</b>
Anna Onishuk	10	10	10	10	10	9	8	10	<b>77</b>
Peter Pigot	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	10	<b>78</b>
Adrian Thomas	10	9	8	10	10	9	9	10	<b>75</b>
Roy Welland	8	7	9	10	10	10	10	10	<b>76</b>



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September 2025

# CBAI News

## REGENT BRIDGE CLUB 100 YEARS



IRELAND'S OLDEST BRIDGE CLUB  
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## NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

REPORTS FROM REGIONAL  
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## MESSAGE FROM INCOMING PRESIDENT

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## CBAI CALENDAR

WHATS COMING UP FOR THE NEXT SEASON





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# CBAI National President's Welcome



**I am very honoured to have been invited to represent the South Eastern Region as the National President of the CBAI for the coming year, and thank all the members of the region for their confidence in me. I am looking forward very much to my year in office.**

I will reiterate my motto for the year, which I outlined at the recent AGM. "Be nice to your partner, be nice to the opponents, and be especially nice to the TDs!"

One of the roles of the President is to act as the eyes and ears of the Association at grassroots level as they travel the country. I hope to meet as many of our members as I can in my travels to congresses and national competitions, and I will welcome any feedback you have for us, and promise you that I will pass it on as appropriate. We need to take every opportunity we can to promote this great game of ours, and no committee, no matter how well staffed it is, has a monopoly on good ideas!

I look forward to a wonderful bridge season, and to meeting as many of you as I can at the bridge table in 2025/2026.

**John Phelan**  
National President, CBAI

## CBAI Officers 2025/2026

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### President

John Phelan, Waterford

Tel: (087) 241 3399

Email: johnphelanwaterford@yahoo.ie

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### Vice President

Martin Brady, Dublin

Tel: (085) 844 7755

Email: thomas.brady@ucd.ie

---

### President Elect

George Ryan, Kildare

Tel: (087) 210 1461

Email: georgejosephryan@gmail.com

---

### Honorary Secretary

Linda O'Riordan, Macroom

Tel: (085) 7671632

Email: oriordan5@hotmail.com

---

### Honorary Treasurer

Brendan Martin, Bray

Tel: (087) 220 9152

Email: bamartin108@gmail.com

---

### Chief Executive

Dermot O'Brien

CBAI National Headquarters

Templeogue House,

Templeogue Road, Dublin D6W F822

Tel: 01 492 9666

Email: dermot@cbai.ie





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# Chief Executive's Welcome



**Welcome back to all our members for the 93rd season of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland.**

In early July, we had our Annual General Meeting, which our Honorary Secretary Linda O'Riordan has written about in more detail elsewhere in this issue. At the AGM, we drew members attention to a couple of significant projects currently being undertaken that are occupying an increasing amount of my time, and that of our committees and volunteers.

The first is the potential amalgamation with the Northern Ireland Bridge Union, to form a 32-county national body for bridge in Ireland. Discussions are progressing on the key issues that need to be resolved, and we have reached the point where we feel it is worthwhile to seek external professional advice on some of these issues. There is still a good deal of work to be done, of course, but we now have broad agreement on what a potential new organisation will look like, and assuming everything continues to go smoothly, the intention is to circulate a full plan to the membership (probably via the regions in the case of the CBAI) in the new year, with both bodies presenting a formal amalgamation resolution at their respective AGMs in the summer. So watch this space.

The second is the upgrade of the CBAI's member database. I'm pleased to inform you that we are making good progress on this and hope to unveil at least some elements of it shortly. The plan is to bring our processes firmly into the 21st century, and, in particular, to allow members, clubs, and regions to access the relevant data directly and to make appropriate changes themselves without having to go through Head Office as is currently the case. So members will be able to check their grade or masterpoints, for example, or change their email address; clubs likewise will be able to amend their own data, and will also be able to register their members, or upload masterpoint returns, via the database rather than using the current paper methods.

We are confident that this will represent a major improvement for the users of the system and the for CBAI as the administrators of it. It will of course require some training, and that is part of the rollout plan. As with all such systems, a valid email address will be required for a member to access the database. If you have not previously given us your email address, or you have changed it and haven't told us of the change, I'd encourage you to correct that as soon as possible.

I also want to draw members' attention to two very notable achievements in recent months. The first is that the Regent Bridge Club has been celebrating its centenary, which makes it seven years older than the CBAI itself. At first glance, that seems odd, but I suppose on reflection that without bridge clubs there would have been no need for a national bridge body. Anyway, the Regent has pulled out all the stops to make the year a memorable one, including publishing a wonderful book of reflections on the hundred years, which is available from the club, and holding a great congress in UCD in July. Congratulations to Centenary President Paul Porteous and his committee on a job very well done. If your club is planning to celebrate any notable milestones of this kind, please keep us informed; we'll be delighted to give you any publicity we can.

The second noteworthy achievement was that of our juniors Matthew O'Farrell and Luca Crone in winning a silver medal in the President's Cup at European Youth Pairs Championships in Salsomaggiore, Italy in July. This represents Ireland's first podium finish at any level in more than ten years, and our first junior podium in considerably longer than that. Both Matthew and Luca are making quite the impact on the Irish bridge scene, and Luca has recently extended his range to the US, as he has gone to Chicago to pursue his studies there. Some of our other juniors are also making good progress, thanks to the tuition and support of volunteers like Karel De Raeymaeker (winner of the President's Merit Award last season for his contribution to junior bridge), Margaret Murphy, Martin Brady, John Phelan, and Paul Delaney. The big challenge is to get more juniors playing bridge to increase the pool of talent available; if you know of any likely candidates – either playing a bit of bridge already, or with the potential to learn – please give us their details and we'll line them up with the Junior Committee.



And finally, the housekeeping. 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. Please support these competitions whenever you can.

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, with the funds going entirely to junior bridge, as has been the case since it was introduced a few 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.

This traditional start-of-season “Newsletter” has been incorporated again 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.

With best wishes for an enjoyable, competitive, and sociable, bridge season in 2025/26, and I hope to see you at the table very soon.

Sincerely,

**Dermot O'Brien**



*The heart of the Kingdom*

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3 Dinner, B&B (Single Room) <i>from</i>	€370	€350	€345

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# Regional Secretaries 2025/2026



---

## Eastern Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Easternregion/>

### Bernie Rountree

Tel: (086) 1045848

Email: Brountre28@Gmail.com

---

## North Western Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/northwestregioncbai/>

### Tom McNicholas

Tel: (086) 2426691

Email: Norwestbridge@Gmail.com

---

## North Midland Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Northmidlandregion/>

### Mary Macken

Tel: (087) 2774616

Email: Mmacken1@Gmail.com

---

## Northern Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Northernregioncbai/>

### Anne Murray

Tel: (087) 6144544

Email: Fintrabay1@Gmail.com

---

## Western Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Cbaiwesternregion/>

### Fiona Place

Tel: (085) 1003895

Email: Fionaplace@Gmail.com

---

## North Eastern Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Northeasternregion/>

### Seamus Costello

Tel: (087) 2890814

Email: Shaybridge@Gmail.com

---

## North Munster Region

<https://northmunster.bridgecongress.com/>

---

## Gordon Lessells

Tel: (085) 8509071

Email: Cbainorthmunsterbranch@Gmail.com

---

## Dublin North Region

<http://www.dnrbridge.com/>

### Aidan Synnott

Tel: (087) 2469129

Email: Aidansynnott@Mac.com

---

## South Munster Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Southmunsterregion/>

### Linda O'Riordan

Tel: (085) 7671632

Email: southmunsterbridge@gmail.com

---

## South Midland Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Southmidlandregion/>

### George Ryan

Tel: (087) 2101461

Email: Georgejosephryan@Gmail.com

---

## South Eastern Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Cbaisoutheasternregion/>

### Melwyn Godinho

Tel: (087) 6383127

Email: melwyn.godinho@Gmail.com

---

## Dublin South Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/Dublinsouth/>

### Teresa Gavin

Tel: (087) 2576572

Email: Dsrsecretary@Gmail.com

---

## Mid Leinster Region

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/MLr/>

### Paul Dunne

Tel: (087) 2317277

Email: MLrsect@Gmail.com





# AGM Report

Linda O'Riordan, Honorary Secretary, CBAI

**The CBAI's Annual General Meeting was held in the Greenway Manor Hotel, Waterford, on Saturday 5 July. In spite of the gorgeous day, well over 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.**

In particular, there was a great turnout from the local area to support the incoming CBAI National President, John Phelan of Waterford, with quite a few extra chairs called into service.

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.

There were five main speakers on the day. Chief Executive Dermot O'Brien gave his report on the 2025/26 season, and outlined some plans for 2025/26, noting the continuing progress in rebuilding post-pandemic. Attendance at national competitions exceeded the previous year's already good numbers, and congresses were also generally growing strongly. Three congresses returned live for the first time since the pandemic, and a fourth was due back next season. He also outlined the investments in bridge being made by the CBAI, which are possible because of the Association's solid financial position – accrediting new bridge teachers, and a major development workshop for existing teachers, training new

Tournament Directors, which are badly needed at club level in many areas, and a significant overhaul of the member database, which will modernise it and allow members, clubs, and regions to interact directly with it in ways not currently possible, which should make life simpler and more efficient for all. Dermot's 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 the CBAI's officers, committee members, volunteers, and staff.

Treasurer Brendan Martin presented the signed accounts for the year to 30 April 2025, and took some questions from the floor. The Association made another surplus for the year (in spite of some agreed additional spending commitments) which has added to the reserves available for investment in suitable projects for the Irish bridge infrastructure such as those Dermot had discussed. Brendan outlined briefly a few expenditures which are anticipated but have not fallen due for payment yet – notably a refurbishment of the CBAI office and the database revamp. He concluded by showing an analysis of the financial position versus 2019 (the last full pre-pandemic year) and 2022 (the first year of re-opening post-pandemic), which demonstrated



Bridge game after the AGM in the Greenway Manor Hotel



John Phelan with Catherine Byrne

that the Association has recovered very well from the impact of the pandemic.

Outgoing President Catherine Byrne, who put her heart and soul into her year as President as representative of the Dublin North region, reflected on her year in office. She thanked all the congress organisers and members who had welcomed her so warmly throughout the season, and the TDs who had treated her so graciously in all the events she had played in. She was very grateful to her region and her club (Malahide Regional BC) for nominating her for the role, which she had enjoyed enormously. She also thanked Dermot and the CBAI staff, and her good friend Mary Breen, for the benefit of their guidance and support during the year.

Catherine then presented the ceremonial chain of office to the incoming President, John Phelan, who addressed the meeting. John said what an honour it was to have been nominated as President, and assured members that he will take the role very seriously and will work tirelessly to continue the good work of his predecessors, noting that Catherine would be a hard act to follow. He promised to keep the speeches short, and exhorted everyone to be "nice to their partner, nice to the opponents, and especially nice to the TDs!" He was very grateful to the South Eastern region for nominating him, and would do his very best to justify the region's confidence in him. The meeting then paused briefly for some photographs of John, first with Catherine and then with his family, and for the presentation of a celebratory cake by the region.

Martin Brady, Vice-President of the CBAI, concluded the formal part of the meeting with a presentation to members on the progress of the potential amalgamation with the Northern Ireland Bridge Union (NIBU). Work is continuing, no insurmountable obstacles have been identified, and the expectation is that a formal plan will be shared with the CBAI's Governing Council and regional committees during the next

number of months, and, assuming the response is favourable, that a formal amalgamation proposal will be tabled at next year's AGM; ultimately the members will have the final say on the proposal. The NIBU is following a similar process with their membership. Martin and Dermot took a number of questions from the floor following this presentation. The main issues raised were around the costs of amalgamation, the likely legal structure, name, and domicile of a new body, the relative sizes of the two bodies currently, the plans for an office for the new body, and what might happen to the various competitions. There were some strong endorsements from the floor of the plan to amalgamate, and Damien Nee suggested that Co-Operation Ireland, which has funds available to support suitable cross-border initiatives, should be approached.

There was also some "other business" raised by the attendees, including advice for clubs going cashless, some questions on the criteria used for qualification for some of the national finals, and updated materials for bridge teachers.

The meeting concluded with finger food, and then a game of cards, with a whopping 27 tables participating and Diarmuid Reddan as TD, which raised almost €1,400 for the President's nominated charity, Autism Friendly Waterford. The President, and the charity, have expressed their gratitude for such generous and helpful support.

Next year's AGM will be in the South Midland region, the home of our President-Elect, George Ryan, 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.



John and Lucy Phelan and family



# Junior Bridge Report

## Martin Connell, Junior Committee

**The Irish Youth Bridge Committee comprises the following people:**

**Secretary and Convenor:**  
Luca Crone

**Treasurer:** Paul Porteous

**Member:** John Phelan

**Member:** Karel De Raeymaeker

**Member:** Margaret Murphy

**Parent's Representative:**  
Martin Connell

**Parent's Representative:**  
Paula Flanagan

**NIBU Representative:**  
Sandie Millership

**NIBU Representative:**  
Wayne Somerville

The committee generally meets online about once a month usually just after the Junior Bridge Club meetings (see below) or in the run up to events where our juniors are involved. Meetings are well attended and last about an hour.

This year, the committee was very grateful to Martin Brady (U-26) and Paul Delany (U-21) who offered their coaching and mentoring services to our junior players; both have contributed substantially to the juniors' continued development. In addition, Peter Pigot has very kindly provided some online training sessions to our juniors and these have proven to be very popular, informative and helpful.

### Kilkenny Congress 2024

The Kilkenny Bridge Congress took place in the Kilkenny Bridge Centre from 22-24 November 2024. There is a strong link between Kilkenny and junior bridge in Ireland because of the

tireless work of Kilkenny-based committee member Margaret Murphy on behalf of our juniors. Some of our juniors took part in the various sessions over the weekend and attended the presentation by Karel De Raeymaeker on declarer play in the bridge centre on the Saturday morning. It was a very enjoyable congress and the bridge centre in Kilkenny is an excellent venue with plenty of parking and facilities.

### Junior Home Internationals 2024

The Peggy Bayer and Junior Camrose competitions were hosted by the Welsh Bridge Union from 14-16 February. Amanda Knox (WBU President) and Ceri Pierce (WBU CEO) did a fantastic job of making all the Irish contingent feel really welcome. It was a great weekend of bridge in Newport and it was so good to see all of the young bridge players mixing together and making new friends.

Of course, any friendships formed between bridge sessions were soon forgotten when they met each other at the bridge table! England, once again, dominated both competitions. In the Junior Camrose, the CBAI team (Luca Crone, Matthew O'Farrell, Isabel Burke, Denise Walsh and Leah Finnegan with NPC Martin Brady) finished second overall behind England. The CBAI's Peggy Bayer team was weakened this year because two of our more experienced players had important exams taking place. Fortunately, the NIBU was able to come to the rescue and Marc Campbell was drafted in to fill the fourth spot on our team. And he did really

well! There was some mention over the weekend of the CBAI trying to keep him and he was being compared to the soccer player Jack Grealish who was encouraged to switch from playing for the Republic of Ireland to playing for England! Could the same precedent apply to junior bridge internationals? Despite only having limited opportunity to practice together before the weekend the CBAI team (David Hoyne, Bence Orosz, Eve Connell and Marc Campbell with NPC Margaret Murphy) finished third behind the English and EBU teams (the WBU was unable to provide two teams for the Peggy Bayer competition this year so the EBU sent a second team to complete the line up).

It would be so great to win one or both of these competitions in the not too distant future! Ireland has one previous Peggy Bayer win, but has never won the Junior Camrose. Is it crazy to dream of successful junior bridge teams being driven on open-top buses through the streets of Dublin as jubilant fans hug each other and cheer? Or are we getting carried away again?



## Malahide Congress 2025

The Malahide Congress took place in the Grand Hotel Malahide from 28 February-2 March of this year. Karel De Raeymaeker held a masterclass seminar on the Saturday morning which was well attended by some of our junior players from Kilkenny, Dundalk and Navan as well as some of the less junior congress attendees! Some of our junior players also featured in the prizes over the weekend.

## CBAI President's Merit Award

The CBAI President's Merit Award is given each year to one of the unsung heroes or heroines of Irish bridge. The nominees for this award are usually the people who you might not hear about. They work behind the scenes, not looking for personal recognition but all the while making sure that things are managed efficiently and to maximum advantage. This year, Catherine Byrne's President's Merit Award went to Karel De Raeymaeker for his efforts with Irish junior bridge players for so many years. He gives so much of his spare time

voluntarily to coaching and mentoring young people at all levels to play bridge. Karel was nominated by several people, including some current junior players, a former Convenor of the CBAI Junior Committee, and several other well-known players with knowledge of his work. Karel himself played as a junior in 1985, and that experience led him to understand how much of an impact the guidance of more experienced players could have on young bridge minds, so in 2007, he volunteered his services to the Junior Committee. Since then, he has worked without a break as coach, organiser, non-playing captain, and committee member. Other coaches, and other members of the Junior Committee, have come and gone, but Karel has been a constant presence. His style is helpful, challenging, and inspiring, and he is incredibly generous with his time and his expertise.

Three of the top "graduates" from the junior programme in that time, Conor Boland (now on the IBU Open Team), Wayne Somerville (on the NIBU Open Team), and Kelan O'Connor (international triallist), have

benefitted enormously from Karel's coaching, as have the current crop of talented junior players, including Luca Crone, Matthew O'Farrell, and Isabel Burke; in his nomination, Luca commented on Karel's "unwavering commitment to teaching the future of the game". Karel has also very selflessly played in big national events with junior players on many occasions, voluntarily forfeiting his opportunity to add to his already impressive tally of national titles in the interests of developing junior players. And as BJ O'Brien and Paul Porteous noted in their nomination, "Karel is also a tireless advocate for junior bridge, never missing the chance to engage with the general bridge-playing population to seek their support for our junior players. Irish junior bridge is very lucky to have him".

## Scottish Training Camp July 2025

A group of our young CBAI players attended a Junior Training Camp organised by the Scottish Bridge Union. It took place on the campus of Stirling University from 11-13th July. The SBU had very kindly



CBAI President, Catherine Byrne with junior players at the Malahide Congress



Karel De Raeymaeker receiving the President's Merit Award from CBAI President, Catherine Byrne



opened up this training camp to all other Bridge Unions from the home nations. The CBAI sent 19 young players, accompanied by some of their parents and by Margaret Murphy, the NPC of the CBAI U-21 teams. The upper age limit to take part in the camp was 18 years old so it was great for our newest recruits to bridge to see that there are other young people playing the game. They learned a lot over the weekend and left it wanting more which hopefully means that they will stick with it into the future.

### European Youth Pairs Championship July 2025

Several of our juniors have just finished competed in the 16th European Youth Pairs Championship in Salsomaggiore Terme, Italy, from 18-23 July. In the mixed pairs, we had Luca Crone playing with Isabel Burke and Matthew O'Farrell playing with Sheila Walsh. This was followed later in the week by the U-26 and U-21 pairs. In the U-26 pairs we had Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell, Denise Walsh and Leah Finnegan, and Isabel Burke and Tom Gorey. The U-21 pairs were Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan and David Hoyne and Bence Orosz. They were accompanied by Martin Brady as Coach. There were some great performances by the young

players during the week with the highlight being the performance of Luca and Matthew in the President's Cup where they finished second overall. This was a fantastic achievement by the young Irish pair, and represents Ireland's first junior medal in many years.

### The Year Ahead

As a committee we look forward to next year's junior bridge programme. Hopefully, the enthusiasm for the monthly Junior Bridge Club 'meet-ups' in Templeogue will continue and those young novice players will catch the bridge bug that will lead them on to being involved in more advanced training at U-21 and U-26 level. We can always do with some new players, so if you know anyone under the age of 25 who plays a bit of bridge or would be interested in taking it up with people of their own age, please put them in touch with any of the Junior Committee members.

The proposed amalgamation of the CBAI and the NIBU is a very positive development from a junior bridge point of view. This amalgamation would provide us with synergies for promotion of

junior bridge, and ultimately a larger pool of players to choose from to represent us internationally which will lead to more competition for limited places and hopefully a return to annual junior trials.

Finally, it was great to see our very own committee member, John Phelan, being appointed as President of the CBAI for the year ahead. John has been a great advocate for junior bridge in this country and a very popular NPC for the junior teams on a number of occasions. Not only is he a fantastic bridge player, he is hugely popular with the young players, he offers great coaching advice and is very generous with his time. On behalf of the Junior Bridge Committee, I would like to wish John the very best for the year ahead as President.



*Luca and Matthew - runners-up in the President's Cup at the European Youth Bridge Championships in Salsomaggiore, Italy*

# CBAI & IBU Calendar 2025-2026



## SEPTEMBER 2025

13-14 Sept	Duais an Uachtarain <i>Tower Hotel, Waterford</i>
20 Sept	Fermoy Gala Day <i>(Incorporating Munster Pairs)</i> <i>Fermoy Mart</i>

## OCTOBER 2025

2-5 Oct	Drogheda Congress <i>ABCD Bridge Centre</i>
10-12 Oct	Limerick Congress <i>Kilmurry Lodge Hotel</i>
18 Oct	Spiro Mixed Pairs <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
19 Oct	Coen Mixed Teams <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
31 Oct-02 Nov	Carlow Congress <i>Seven Oaks Hotel</i>

## NOVEMBER 2025

3-7 Nov	IBU Sims Week
7-9 Nov	Donegal Congress <i>Abbey &amp; Central Hotels</i>
14-16 Nov	Kenmare Congress <i>Kenmare Bay Hotel</i>
21-23 Nov	Kilkenny Congress <i>Kilkenny Bridge Centre</i>
29-30 Nov	IBU Interregionals <i>Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim</i>

## DECEMBER 2025

6 Dec	Regional Pairs <i>Various Days/Times/Locations</i>
13-14 Dec	Master Pairs <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>

## JANUARY 2026

9-11 Jan	Waterford Congress <i>Tower Hotel, Waterford</i>
17 Jan	Jackson Cup Women's Pairs Revington Cup Men's Pairs <i>Westgrove Hotel, Clane</i>
18 Jan	McMenamin Bowl Women's Teams Geraldine Trophy Men's Teams <i>Westgrove Hotel, Clane</i>
23-25 Jan	Cork Congress <i>Maryborough Hotel</i>
24 Jan	Regional Teams <i>Various Days/Times/Locations</i>
31 Jan	Confined Regional Master Pairs Championship <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>

## FEBRUARY 2026

1 Feb	Confined Regional Master Teams Championship <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
6-8 Feb	Ennis Congress <i>The Inn at Dromoland</i>
14-15 Feb	Holmes Wilson Cup <i>Mount Wolseley Hotel</i>
20-22 Feb	Galway Congress <i>The Ardilaun Hotel</i>
27 Feb-1 Mar	Malahide Congress <i>Grand Hotel Malahide</i>

## MARCH 2026

2-6 Mar	CBAI Sims Week
7-8 Mar	National Pairs Finals <i>Falls Hotel, Ennistymon</i>
21-22 Mar	IBU Burke & O'Connor Trophies <i>Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim</i>
27-29 Mar	Clonmel Congress <i>The Talbot Hotel</i>

## APRIL 2026

10-12 April	CBAI Novice & Intermediate Congress <i>Tower Hotel, Waterford</i>
11-12 April	IBU Moylan Cup <i>Malahide Bridge Centre</i>
18-19 April	National Teams Finals <i>Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise</i>
21-23 April	IBU Seniors Congress <i>Cavan Crystal</i>
23-26 April	Greystones Open Week <i>Greystones Bridge Centre</i>
24-26 April	Tralee International Congress <i>The Rose Hotel, Tralee</i>

## MAY 2026

9 May	IBU Pairs Championship - All grades <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre - 12 noon</i>
11-15 May	Celtic Nations Sims Week
16 May	JJ Murphy Trophy <i>Loughrea Hotel &amp; Spa</i>
16-17 May	Lambert & Cooper Cups <i>Loughrea Hotel &amp; Spa</i>
23 May	4Fun Teams Final <i>Westmanstown - 12 noon</i>
23-24 May	IBU Egan Trophy <i>La Mon Hotel, Belfast</i>

## JUNE 2026

5-7 June	Yeats (Sligo) Congress <i>Clayton Hotel</i>
12-14 June	Killarney Congress <i>Castlerosse Park Resort</i>



For more information on CBAI/IBU Events see:

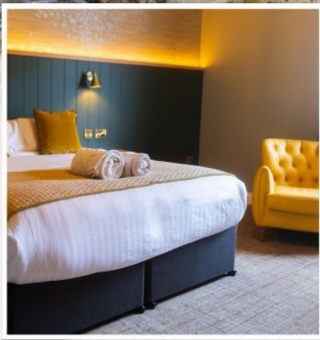
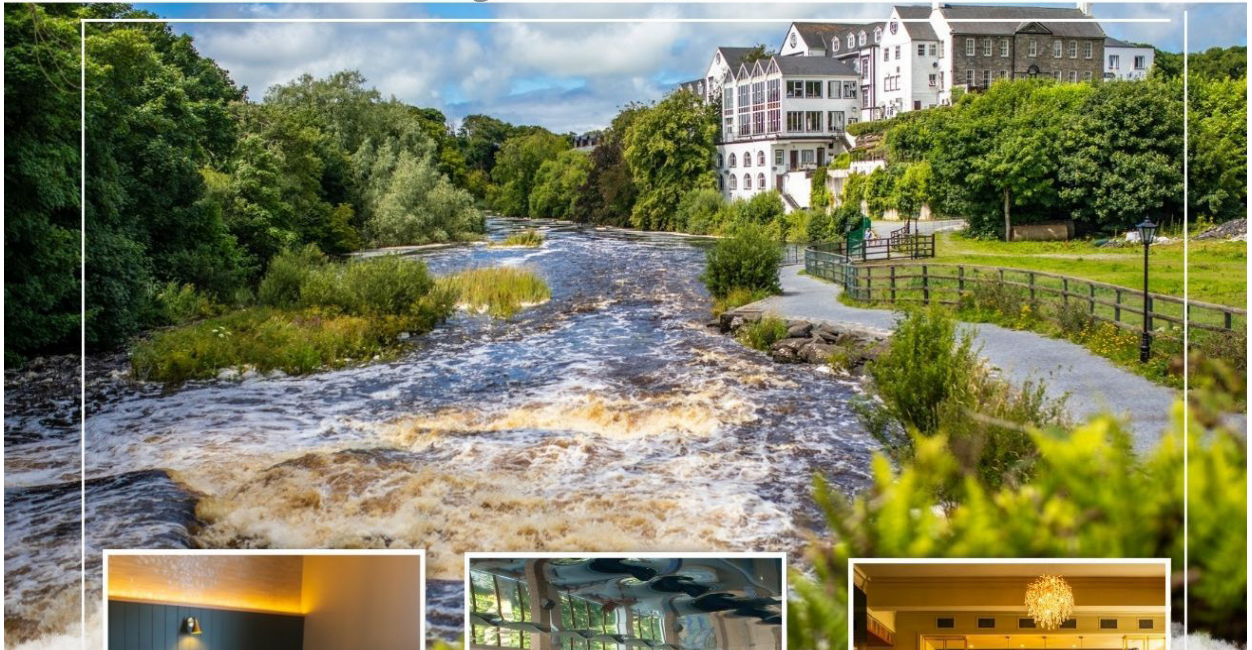
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# DUBLIN NORTH REGION REPORT

Aidan Synnott, Regional Secretary

**Dublin North Region had the honour of supplying the President of the CBAI for 2024/25.**

The successful candidate for this prestigious post was Catherine Byrne of Malahide Regional Bridge Club. During the year, the region thus hosted both the Duais an Uachtarain in September 2024, in Portmarnock, and the Novice & Intermediate Congress in February 2025, in Roganstown. Both events were very successful. In addition, Catherine attended many other national events, congresses, and meetings in what is always a gruelling presidential schedule. She performed her duties admirably and her year as President was very successful. The DNR Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank her for representing us so well.

Returning to the more routine work of the DNR Committee, the bridge world in North Dublin appears to have settled further, and we now seem to be in an established "post-Covid" pattern of activity. There are good and bad aspects to this. The good news is that several clubs in the region are now running



Catherine Byrne receiving her chain of office from Gordon Lessells

Novice classes once more, and this is reflected in the increased number of Novices playing in various clubs and in the consolidation of entry numbers in our two regional Novice events (Novice Pairs and Novice Teams). The other tournament for which we had good entry numbers was the 4Fun Teams Qualifier, again fuelled by strong demand from Novice players.

The less good news is that membership levels at Master and Intermediate grades have stagnated a little, and this is reflected in poor entries for many of our regional tournaments aimed at those grades. Hopefully, as our new group of Novices rise through the ranks, this issue will resolve. The overall number of clubs in the region remains stable at 30 and all clubs who wished to return after Covid appear to have done so, albeit that several are in new venues. With the improved situation for live bridge within the clubs, activity in the two major virtual clubs (Clontarf Area & Glasnevin Regional) has ceased. However, we continue to support their infrastructure so that they could be revived quickly if there was a requirement to do so.

Our regional league (Kirwans League) was held as a series of face-to-face events in 2024-25, having been held online or as hybrid events for the preceding few years. All sections were well supported, and the players seemed pleased to be back live; we would like to thank our league co-ordinations Mary Deane and Dan O'Mahony for their hard work and, of course, Kirwans for their continued generous sponsorship.

**The winners in each category were:**

**Novice:** Glasnevin

**Intermediate B:** Vernon

**Intermediate A:** Vernon

**Area Master:** Malahide

**Open Master:** Malahide

The Region continued to run its highly successful Improvers' classes, delivered by Seamus Costello. These were oversubscribed, further evidence of the healthy situation at Novice & Intermediate B levels. We did not run a Tournament Director Course in 2024/25 but plan to do so in 2025/26.

We held our AGM in June 2025. Mary Breen's term as President has expired, but she will continue to provide the committee with the benefit of her experience, taking on the position of CDO alongside Dan O'Mahony. Our new President for 2025/26 is Patricia Quigley, nominated by St. Gabriel's Bridge Club. We wish Patricia the best of luck in her new role. John Kehoe will continue as Honorary Treasurer and Aidan Synnott has agreed to continue as Regional Secretary and Webmaster. The committee welcomed a new member; Deirdre McGann of Iona Bridge Club



Patricia Quigley DNR President for 2025/2026





# WESTERN REGION REPORT

Fiona Place, Regional Secretary

The past year has seen some success within the Western region and our Congress was back in the Ardilaun Hotel over Valentine's weekend and was well attended. A big thank you to David Walsh and Louise Mitchell for their trojan work in ensuring a successful congress.

## Women's Internationals

Galway Bridge Centre had the honour of hosting the prestigious Lady Milne trials at the weekend run over three days 26-28 September.

We had three members from the Western Region competing in the event, Joan Kenny, Louise Mitchell, and Deirdre O'Halloran and big congratulations to Joan, who along with Jeannie Fitzgerald, Teresa Rigney, and Siobhan Part, won the event and represented Ireland in the Lady Milne Trophy in England in April 2025.

It is with much sadness that we learnt of the passing of Una Walsh. Una was a secretary of the Western Region for a number of years and also a past president of both the CBAI and the IBU. She was a founder of the Galway

Bridge Centre and for many years she single-handedly produced the Irish Bridge Journal.

The picture below was taken when Una received a presentation from the then-President of the CBAI (Peter O'Meara) for all the work she contributed to bridge throughout her lifetime, at Galway Bridge Congress in April 2019.

It was an honour to have Joan Kenny represent Ireland in both the European Championships in Herning in June and the World Bridge Games held in Argentina in October. Louise Mitchell was also part of the team for the latter event.

## Coen Trophy

Hearty congratulations to two of our Western Region players, Joan Kenny and Enda Glynn, who along with their team mates Teresa Rigney and Conor Boland took the number one spot and won the prestigious National Mixed Teams Championship, for the Coen Trophy.

The event took place in the CBAI headquarters in Templeogue with 58 teams competing. Also

well done to Deirdre O'Halloran and her partner David O'Brien who finished in 4th place (of 97 pairs) in the National Mixed Pairs event (Spiro Cup) held the previous day.

## New Grand Master



David Walsh with CBAI president Catherine Byrne and Tom Quinlan from AL Homecare

We were very honoured to have one of our own reach Grand Master status. Huge congratulations to David Walsh, who continued a proud family legacy, following in the footsteps of his late father Paddy Walsh, who was celebrated as one of Ireland's top bridge players. David becomes only the fifth person in the Western Region



Peter O'Meara and Una Walsh



Coen Trophy winners Enda Glynn and Joan Kenny with team mates Teresa Rigney and Conor Boland

to reach this esteemed status, joining Gay Keavney, Enda Glynn, Rory Timlin, and Joan Kenny at the highest level within Irish bridge.

Well done David on this outstanding achievement.

## Regional President's Prize

A big congratulations to Don Coen, President of the Western Region, for hosting a super event with 25 tables in the Lady Gregory Hotel, Gort. The event raised much-needed funds for the chosen charity, Gort Cancer Care West. Congratulations to Margaret Forde and Rhona Bolger who won the event, followed closely by Billy Cuniffe and Michael Waldron in second place.

## National Teams Finals

The CBAI National Teams finals were held in March in Portlaoise. Very well done to Joan Kenny, Paul Scannell, Gay Keaveney, Enda Glynn, and David Walsh who put up a terrific performance finishing second in the Kelburne Cup, narrowly failing to add to the substantial track record of Gay, Paul, and Enda in particular in that competition.

Our Inter B team also performed very well, finishing in 5th place in the Tierney Trophy. Well done to Carmel Walsh, Tony Faherty, Trina Byrne, and Frannie Byrne.



Winners of President's Prize = Margaret Forde and Rhona Bolger

## Senior Camrose

Congratulations to our Western Region players, Gay Keaveney and Enda Glynn, who represented the CBAI team in the Senior Camrose (Teltscher Trophy), in Gormanstown in May, alongside teammates Donal Garvey, Pat Quinn, Fred Barry, and Paul Porteous, with Joan Kenny as non-playing Captain. The team was leading with only a few boards to go, but a great finish by the Welsh team meant that had to settle for second spot ... but ahead of the Ireland team in the bragging rights!

## Regent Centenary Congress

The Regent Bridge Club celebrated its centenary with a congress in UCD from in July. Congratulations to our players from the Western Region, Patsy O'Donohue and James Ward, along with their teammates Margaret Holmes and Eugene Gath on winning the Regional Masters Teams competition.

## Regional Officers for 2025-2026 are as follows:

**President:** TBC

**Secretary:** Fiona Place

**Treasurer:** Michael O'Connor

**CDO:** Michael Waldron

Patsy O'Donohue and James Ward, along with their teammates Margaret Holmes and Eugene Gath on winning the Regional Masters Teams competition.







## SOUTH MUNSTER REGION REPORT

Linda O'Riordan, Regional Secretary

**South Munster held its Annual General Meeting on June 10th, 2025, with Jean Kelly presiding. During the meeting, Jean presented awards to the players with the highest masterpoints in each grade at the regional competitions during the season.**

The recipients were Cian Holland & Derek O'Gorman for Masters, Geraldine Browne & Mary Beausang for Intermediate As, and Karen & Liam Magnier for Intermediate Bs.

The South Munster region showed good growth in membership during the season has grown, as the hard work of our teachers is reaping rewards in terms of new Novices; many clubs are offering Improver classes as well. A new club has opened in UCC for staff, and a former club has rejoined for the first time post-COVID, confirming the positive outlook for bridge in the region.

Regional qualifying events this year saw an increase in participation. The Intermediate A & B pairs event comprised

26 pairs, with Caroline McGeer & Nick Addy winning the Intermediate A category, and Karen & Liam Magnier winning the Intermediate B category. The Intermediate A & B teams event took place on 7 February, 2025, marking the first time since Covid that enough entries were received to run this competition. Ten teams entered; the Intermediate A team winners were John O'Donovan, Dermot Houston, Sean Houston, and Kryle Allen, while the Intermediate B team winners were Liam and Karen Magnier, along with Des and Marie O'Sullivan. There were 23 entries for the Regional Pair qualifiers, with Liam Hyde & John Whelehan taking first place. Eleven teams competed in the Kelburne Cup qualifier (Barry O'Connell Trophy), which was won by Derek O'Gorman, Cian Holland, Tom McCarthy, and John Russell. Many congratulations to Cian Holland, who has achieved the title of Grand Master, although the presentation of his silver salver is proving elusive. The Novice competition had 30 pairs; winners were Denis Callanan & Tricia Dorgan.

The South Munster region organised bridge games for Novice and Intermediate B players at four venues in November, addressing members' reluctance to travel. These events were positively received and will continue to help players gain confidence for wider competitions.

Munster took first place in Regional/Master category at the Inter-Regionals, second in the Open, and third in Intermediate teams. Ronnie O'Shaughnessy, Brian Madden, Verna Roberts, and Geoff Roberts from South Munster were on the winning Master team event. Alan Auchincloss, Kyrle Allen, Hugh Twomey, and Declan O'Brien claimed the Cooper Trophy, with Twomey and O'Brien also securing second in the Lambert Cup.

Killarney Congress resumed after more than five years. The event received strong support, with Ciaran Broadbery and the committee organising a most successful return. Kenmare and Cork Congresses also saw increased participation. In the past, congresses served as an introduction for players to compete outside their clubs and connect with other bridge enthusiasts, and hopefully bridge players will continue to support these very social occasions.



Fermoy Committee, Fermoy 90th Celebration

Fermoy Bridge Club commemorated its 90th anniversary last September. A special commemorative event was led by President Nora O'Driscoll and included both past and present members. Attendees enjoyed light refreshments followed by an evening game of bridge as part of the celebration. On 20 September 2025, Fermoy Bridge Club will hold their Gala Day event.

We extend our condolences to the families and clubs who lost members this year. In particular, we remember Anne Dillon, an important figure in South Munster bridge and a European Mixed bronze medallist for Ireland, who passed away in March.

Ciaran Broadbery has been appointed as the new Regional President for the upcoming season, and we wish him well for his presidential year.



Novice Competition winners Tricia Dorgan and Denis Callanan



(Intermediate B winners Karen and Liam Magnier)

#### Winners of Regional Competitions:

**Intermediate A & B:** Caroline McGeer & Nick Addy (Intermediate A), Karen & Liam Magnier (Intermediate B)

**Olive Rose Memorial Plate:** Hugh Twomey & Declan O'Brien

**Regional Master Pairs:** John Whelehan & Liam Hyde

**Raymond O'Leary Trophy:** Pat Twomey & David Sheehan


**Intermediate A Teams:** John O'Donovan, Sean Houston, Dermot Houston & Kyril Allen

**Intermediate B Teams:** Liam & Karen Magnier, Des & Marie O'Sullivan

**Barry O'Connell (Qualifier for Kelburne Cup):** Derek O'Gorman, Cian Holland, Tom McCarthy & John Russell

**Novice Competition:** Denis Callanan & Tricia Dorgan


**Specsavers Competition:** Martin Delaney & Tony Fitzgerald



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Stephen (Galway)

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# NORTH MUNSTER REGION REPORT

Tom Hardiman, Outgoing Regional Secretary

## Regional Overview

The North Munster Region is thriving as we continue to foster and expand our vibrant bridge community. Our dedicated efforts are bearing fruit, with an increase in enthusiastic new players joining our ranks. Many are now participating in lessons and novice events with good entry numbers.

It is vital that we welcome these new members into our clubs and provide them with ample opportunities to develop their skills and enjoy the game. Collaboration among bridge teachers in our region will be key to supporting this objective.

The region hosted numerous successful events throughout the year.

## Regional President's Charity Event

Our Regional President, Maureen Pattinson, hosted a charity event at Clare Bridge Centre, raising over €3,000 in aid of Clare Youth Services. This was a remarkable achievement and a testament to the generosity of our community.

## Regional Events

The Intermediate Pairs, which now rotate venues with the President each year, continues to be a success. This year's event saw 20 pairs participating, with a separate Novice Section that attracted new players.

## Irish Teams for European Competitions

### Women's Team:

Congratulations to Jeannie Fitzgerald, who was selected for the national team for both the European Championships and the Lady Milne Trophy.

### Mixed Team: Captained by Diarmuid Reddan.

Teltscher Trophy (Senior Camrose): The CBAI Team containing two North Munster players, in Donal Garvey and Pat Quinn, finished a very narrow second.

### Sonya Britton Trophy

Ireland won the Sonya Britton Trophy with Jeannie Fitzgerald on the team.

### Moylan Cup

2nd Place: Pat Quinn; 7th Place: Jeannie Fitzgerald

## Interprovincial Competition

In the Area Master Competition, Munster emerged victorious. North Munster players included Margaret Holmes, Eugene Gath, Joe Carroll, Gerry McCague

## Regional Competition Winners

### Regional Pairs:

Cathal Dillane & Bosco Clarke

### Regional Intermediate Pairs (Jim Whymys Trophy):

Carmel Daly & Gerald Walshe

### Regional Intermediate B Pairs:

Liz Collins & Donie O'Shea

### Regional Novice Winners:

Ben Valley & John Clohessy

### Thomond Cup Winners:

Kay Cussen, Denis Sheehan, John O'Connor, and Justin Spratt

## National Events Participation

Regional players have performed admirably at national events:

**Davidson Cup:** 2nd – Maureen Pattinson & Bob Pattinson

**Holmes Wilson:** 3rd – Kelan O'Connor

**Burke Trophy:** 4th – Gordon Lessells, Paul Barrett, Kelan O'Connor, John O'Connor

**Revington Cup:** Joint 2nd – Kelan O'Connor & John O'Connor

**Geraldine Trophy:** 2nd – Gordon Lessells

**Spiro Cup:** 2nd – John O'Connor

**Duais an Uachtaráin:** 2nd – Diarmuid Reddan

**IBU Senior Congress Pairs:** 2nd – Paul Barrett; 4th – Gordon Lessells

**IBU Gala Pairs:** 2nd – Willie Corby, 4th – Gordon Lessells

**CBAI Women's Pairs:** 4th – Louise Mitchell

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the volunteers, players, directors, and organisers who have contributed to the success of this past year. Special thanks go to our Regional President, Maureen Pattinson, for her unwavering support and dedication.

Let us continue working together to nurture and develop our novice players, while encouraging the growth of our Intermediate A and B players. We look forward to another very busy and successful year ahead, and I wish the incoming committee, particularly my successor as Secretary, Gordon Lessells, every success.



# SOUTH EASTERN REGION REPORT

Melwyn Godinho, Regional Secretary

**The South Eastern Region regional AGM took place in Waterford Bridge Centre on 30 May 2025.**

**Regional Officers elected for Year 2025/2026 are:**

**President:** Johanne Powell

**Chairperson:** Larry Mordaunt

**Treasurer:** Jim Doyle

**Secretary:** Melwyn Godinho

**CDOs:** Jim Kennington, Jim Doyle and Johanne Powell

The Committee made a special presentation to Oona Dwyer, who stood down as Regional Secretary after many years of loyal and dedicated service.



Presentation to Oona Dwyer, who stood down as Regional Secretary after many years of loyal and dedicated service.



Celine Smyth and Anne Kearney (Wexford) winning the Laird Trophy (National Intermediate A Pairs Championship)

Congratulations to John Phelan, Waterford, who was inaugurated as President of the CBAI at the AGM in July 2025. The AGM went off very smoothly, with an excellent attendance; the traditional game of bridge after the meeting was also very well supported, and raised €1400 for Autism Friendly, Waterford. Our thanks to all who attended.



John Phelan

Affiliation numbers have increased and table numbers are up, but, unfortunately, we lost one club this year. Waterford held its 42nd Congress early January with a successful turnout. The 43rd Waterford Bridge Congress will be held in Tower Hotel from Friday 9 to Sunday 11 January 2026. Congress rates p.p. for 2 Nights B&B + 1 Dinner apply.

In the season just past, the region scored a couple of notable successes, with Celine Smyth and Anne Kearney (Wexford) winning the Laird Trophy (National Intermediate A Pairs Championship), and Maria Donegan & Sean Mulvaney (Waterford) the Pat McDevitt Trophy (IBU Senior Pairs Championship).

In Wexford, Beginners' classes start on Tuesday 16 September at 7:30pm, in The Ross Inn, Neville Street, New Ross run by Martin Burke (mburkenr@gmail.com, 086 2669836), in Poulpeasty Hall (Y21 NY80) on Thursday 25 September from 7:30-9:30pm run by Jim Doyle (jimdoylebree@gmail.com 086 3619911). Jim is also running classes in Wexford Community Bridge Centre starting on Monday 22 September from 10:30am-12:30pm, and on Tuesday 23 September from 7-9pm

In Kilmuckridge, starting in September, there will be classes run by Podge Ussher (podgeussher@yahoo.ie 087 2487540) in the Upton Court Hotel (Sean Og's, Kilmuckridge).

In Gorey, Kerry Anne O'Connor (kerryanneoconnor@gmail.com 087 9583168) is running classes starting on Wednesday 1 October, in the Adult Ed Gorey Community School.

In Waterford, Beginners' classes will take place in the Teachers Centre, Newtown Road, Waterford, starting on Tuesday 9 September, 2025 at 10.30 a.m., while Beginners' classes in the Waterford Bridge Centre, Thomas Street, Waterford, start on Wednesday 10 September 10, 2025 at 7:30pm. Contact: Lucy Phelan 086 8275192 in relation to both sets of classes.

Beginners' bridge classes in the Tramore Bridge Centre are fully subscribed for September 2025.

Improver classes in Waterford in Sts Joseph & Benildus, Waterford, are being run by Pascal Browne starting on Tuesdays at 6pm for six weeks from 16 September 2025.

As new Regional Secretary, I have created WhatsApp groups for Waterford and Wexford to encourage exchange of information between local clubs in each of the counties.



# EASTERN REGION REPORT

Bernie Rountree, Regional Secretary

## Bridge Promotion

The season kicked off on 31 August with Eastern Region hosting a bridge promotion event in Stillorgan Shopping centre. This was very well supported by committee and friends. Leaflets were distributed giving details of local clubs and lessons available. We set up two tables and gave demonstrations of MiniBridge to interested passers-by. There was also a game of bridge going on most of the day. Pens, packs of cards and sweets were distributed. There was particular interest in lessons. The event was very well attended by locals promoting their own clubs and seemed to be a worthwhile effort for the region.

Our Presidents' & Delegates' night was held in Dun Laoghaire Bridge Club on Friday 6 September and was well attended with the majority of packs collected. Refreshments were offered to delegates and we had an enjoyable game of bridge.

## New Clubs

The region was delighted to welcome Rathdown Bridge Club, a new venture which has opened in Greystones Bridge Centre. The club runs on Tuesday mornings. It is primarily aimed at Novice and B grades but welcomes more advanced players also. Brendan Martin is TD and offers assistance with bidding and play when requested. Brendan also prepares commentary on some of the boards each week. We wish the new club every success. The region now has a total of 63 clubs with over 4,000 members.

## TD and Bridgemate Courses

Four very successful TD training courses were organised for the end of last season and during the Autumn with a total of 45 attendees. One Bridgemate training course was held with 17 attendees. Joe Dempsey facilitated them and designed and presented excellent courses. They were all very interactive and sociable with light lunch/refreshments supplied when the attendees were able to chat and intermingle. The region subsidised the cost of the courses to facilitate member attendance.

## Training Seminar

Following feedback from clubs visited by our President and our CDO, a training seminar was organised in February. Hilary McDonagh facilitated the event which was attended by 80 Eastern Region club members. A further 54 applicants for places were disappointed! It was extremely successful and enjoyable with a presentation and play followed by discussion of completed boards. Lunch was provided and responses to the survey circulated were excellent. Most participants asked for more of the same. Another seminar is planned for autumn.

## Competitions

Competitions were well attended with increased numbers at most events.

### The winners were:

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

**Inter B Pairs:** Dorothy Collins & Niamh Hogan

**Inter A Pairs:** Robert Wolfe & John Corcoran

**Master Pairs:** Eoin MacNeill & David Scannell

**Inter B Teams:** Thomas Wade, Louise Webb, Deirdre Wall, Rachel Bell

**Inter A Teams:** Philip O'Dwyer, Ciaran O'Huiginn, Carol Vambeck, Michael Kenny

**Master Teams:** John Noonan, Eoin MacNeill, Alan O'Sullivan, Carol-Ann Cummins

**4 Fun Teams:** Paschal Doyle, Lucy Mulcahy, Ann Lynn, Margaret Hawes

**E. O'Doherty:** Gabriel McGovern & Eva Reynolds

**ER Memorial:** Fergal O'Farrell & Teresa Hynes

**Britton Trophy:** Alan O'Sullivan & John Noonan

It was great to see the Greystones Open returning to the calendar, with its early April slot. The two Dun Laoghaire events (O'Kennedy Teams & Muldoon Pairs) were also well supported.

We tried a new format for the Massey Bros League this year and had great success with 34 teams taking part. Congratulations to Fedelma Martin on all the work that she and her team put into this.



### The winning teams this year were:

**Seniors:** Dun Laoghaire BC (MP)

**Inter A Div 1:** Dun Laoghaire Golf Club BC (VR);

**Inter A Div 2:** Elm Park BC (AMT)

**Inter B Div 1:** The Well BC (MS)

**Inter B Div 2:** The Well BC (ED)

On the national front, the Eastern Region had great success, with a number of winners in national competitions, at a range of levels:

**Mairead Haugh & Roisin De Jong** were half of the team to win the McMenamin trophy

**Simon Burrell & Paul Twomey** won the Gala Pair in the Intermediate Congress

**Helen Locke & Robyn Conway** were winners in the Novice Championship at the congress

**John Biggar & Brenda Biggar** won the Malahide Inter A pairs

**Mary Devine & Ruth Keogh** were winners of the JJ Murphy Trophy with Helen Locke & Robyn Conway a very close second

**John Noonan & Carol-Ann Cummins** won the IBU Master Pairs

Finally, the region also saw another member elevated to Grand Master status, with John Noonan following very closely on the heels of his partner, Carol-Ann Cummins, in achieving this rank. Many congratulations on a well-deserved achievement.



*John Noonan being presented with Grand Master Salver by Catherine Byrne, President, CBAI*



## Bridge Break

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# DUBLIN SOUTH REGION REPORT

Teresa Gavin, Regional Secretary

**John Coulter is the new President for Dublin South Region elected at the annual DSR AGM on 23 May. John plays in the Milltown Golf Bridge Club and is also a member of Regent and Bankers Bridge Clubs and has been an active member on the committee over the last few years.**

The committee also welcomed three new members, Julie Anderson, Tom Flood and Brendan Ruddy, and we look forward to working together in the years ahead. We say goodbye to our departing committee member, Fiona O'Gorman, former President of Dublin South Region, who carried out huge work on the annual Fanagan League and who together with John Coulter got the league back up and running after the pandemic securing large entries and making it a very successful league within the region. We are grateful for all her help with Dublin South Bridge over the years.

Last season Dublin South members had great success, securing many titles.

## National Competition Winners in 2024-2025

**Coen Trophy:** Joan Kenny & Partner, Conor Boland & Teresa Rigney

**Spiro:** Suzanne Hill & Hugh McDermott

**Revington Cup:** Conor Boland & Thomas Hanlon

**Geraldine Cup:** Peter Goodman, Dan McIntosh, Micheal O Briain & Pdraig O Briain

**McMenamin Cup:** Mairead Haugh, Roisin De Jong & teammates

**Holmes Wilson:** Matthew O'Farrell, Tommy Garvey, Peter Goodman & Dan McIntosh

**Inter A Championship:** Philomena Sweeney & Paul Twomey

**Davidson Cup:** Derek O'Gorman & Partner

**Regional Master Teams:** Pam Harrington, Eamon Martin (Jnr) & teammates

**IBU O'Connor Trophy:** Simon Burrell, Vicky Pigot, Sarann Doyle & Kay Falkner-Sheridan

**Moylan Cup:** Anna Onishuk & Karel De Raeymaeker

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

**Lambert Cup:** Brendan Rushe & Partner

**IBU Inter Pairs:** Charles Alken & Anthony Alken

**IBU Master Pairs:** John Noonan & Carol Ann Cummins

**IBU Senior Teams:** Conor Moore, David Ryan, Jim McAndrew & Finian O'Donoghue

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

**Kelburne Trophy:** Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, David Dunne & Martin Brady

**Teltscher Trials:** B.J. O'Brien, Randal Milne, Pdraig O Briain, Micheal O Briain, Peter Goodman & Terry Walsh

**Lady Milne Trials:** Joan Kenny, Teresa Rigney, Siobhan Part & Partners

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

## Dublin South Competition Winners in 2024-2025

**Carroll Cup:** Matthew O'Farrell, Peter Stewart, Siobhan Part & Ronan McMaugh

**Paul O'Reilly Trophy:** Simon Burrell, Su Li, Ian Kingston & Maura King

**Quin Cup:** BridKemple & Terry Walsh

**Duffy Cup:** Jane Harbourne & Joan Meade

**Joe Moran Cup:** Maura King & Ian Kingston

**B.J. O'Brien Trophy:** Simon Burrell, Vicky Pigot, Maura King & Ian Kingston

**Pigot Cup:** Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, David Dunne & Martin Brady

**Ruth Giddings Trophy:** Tracey Pelosi, Meg Escott, Deirdre Doyle & Yvonne Keane

**Kay Downes Trophy:** Tara Crowley & Noelle Sweeney

## Dublin South Members at World Bridge Championships:

Dublin South Region members were well represented at the World Championships held in Buenos Aries in Argentina

**Open:** Mark Moran, John Carroll, Tom Hanlon, Conor Boland, Adam Mesbur, Nick FitzGibbon, NPC Gráinne Barton

**Women:** Joan Kenny, Anne Fitzpatrick, Mary Kelly-Rogers, NPC Paul Porteous

**Mixed:** Marcin Rudzinski, Mairead Haugh

## Youth Bridge

Congratulations to Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell who finished runners up at the President's Cup at the European Youth Bridge Championships in Salsomaggiore in Italy in July 2025.

## CBAI President's Special Merit Award 2025

Congratulations to Dublin South Member, Karel De Raeymaeker who received this award from CBAI President, Catherine Byrne, for all his tireless work with junior bridge over the years. This award is given out to those who contribute so much to bridge without fuss or favour and is very well deserved.



*Karel De Raeymaeker receiving the President's Merit Award from CBAI President, Catherine Byrne*

## Dublin South Region Clubs

Membership was up in Dublin South Region during the year and it was particularly pleasing that there was a substantial increase in numbers for our Novice and Intermediate competitions. Our Novice Pairs competition for the Kay Downes Trophy attracted huge numbers with 42 pairs taking part. Our Regional Teams and Pairs competitions also reported increased numbers competing. Our Inter Club League, the Fanagan League was extremely well supported with nine divisions across Confined Masters, Novices and Intermediate As & Bs. This is a very enjoyable and social league which sees club teams play home and away team matches throughout the year. Thank again to Fiona O'Gorman and John Coulter who organised and ran a superb league culminating in a Grand Finale on 11 May 2025 with refreshments and wine afterwards. A massive thank you to our sponsors, Fanagans, without whose sponsorship we would not be able to organise and run this league each year.

The Regent Bridge Club held a Congress in July to celebrate its 100th Anniversary and we enjoyed the presence of some world-famous bridge players such as Zia Mahmood who travelled to play in this tournament, which was held in the O'Reilly Hall in UCD in July 2025. Congratulations to Paul Porteous, President of the Regent Bridge Club, and his committee who made this special event happen. The club has also created a special 100th Anniversary Yearbook to mark this special occasion. The Regent also runs three open bridge leagues throughout the year starting in September called the Premier League organised by Sheila Kelly (text 087-2942332), an Area Master League organised by Fergus O'Rafferty (text 087-2786810) and an Intermediate League organised by Mairead Ni Oistin (087-6750393).

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

**14/11/25:** Carroll Cup hosted by Regent Bridge Club

**14/11/25:** Paul O'Reilly Trophy hosted by Regent Bridge Club

**06/12/25:** Regional Pairs (Quin/Joe Moran/Duffy Cups) at Templeogue Bridge Centre at 11.00am

**06/12/25:** Regional Teams (Pigot/O'Brien/Giddings Cups) at Templeogue Bridge Centre at 11.00am

**26/01/26:** 4Fun Teams Qualifier at Milltown Golf Club

**20/04/26:** Kay Downes Trophy Novice competition at Milltown Golf Club

**10/05/26:** Fanagan League Grand Final Night at Templeogue Bridge Centre

**Fanagan League:** Details of the 2025/2026 Fanagan league will be sent out to all clubs in or about September/October 2025 and details will be made available on DSR website.

Details of bridge Classes and bridge teachers are located on our website.

Please check out our website at [www.bridgewebs/dublinouth](http://www.bridgewebs/dublinouth) for competition entries and competitions.





## SOUTH MIDLAND REGION REPORT

George Ryan, Regional Secretary

**It was another busy year within the South Midland Region, as the Committee continued the work of the previous year in getting out and meeting as many clubs as possible.**

The region has 35 affiliated clubs, with more than 1,700 members. We ran four regional tournaments, all in the Bridge Centre in Kilkenny, and all very capably and professionally run by Brian Lawlor. These are now firm fixtures in our annual calendar, and we hope to see numbers increase as members become more familiar with them.

The Regional President's Prize was held in May in Kilkenny, with Melanie Hill and Pat Dempsey emerging victorious.



*South Midland President's Prize winners Melanie Hill and Pat Dempsey*

Another major event during the season was the special fund raising even held in July in Durrow, at which Daniel O'Donnell very kindly offered his services. Daniel was a wonderful guest, and nothing was too much trouble to him. He also finished the evening by singing a few songs. He has attended similar functions in the past, is a great ambassador for bridge. A wonderful evening saw more than €4,000 raised for the local St Vincent de Paul, and it is planned to repeat it next summer.



*Daniel with Damien Nee, Paul Conroy, George Ryan and William Prior*



*Daniel with Jo Coffey*

The South Midland team of Kathy Monks, Carmel Gleeson, Nora Kelly, and Kathleen Cassidy won the second session prize at the McMenamin Bowl (National Women's Teams Championship) and are pictured below with CBAI National President Catherine Byrne.

Thanks to all the Committee, especially President Phil O'Reilly, for all their hard work during the season, and best wishes to incoming President Anna Kavanagh for her year of office.



*Kathy Monks, Carmel Gleeson, Nora Kelly and Kathleen Cassidy second session prize winners at the McMenamin Bowl (National Women's Teams Championship) pictured with CBAI President Catherine Byrne*



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# NORTH WESTERN REGION REPORT

Tom McNicholas, Regional Secretary



The season 2024/25 was unremarkable and unfortunately some of our clubs in the North West are still struggling with numbers. Some good work was started in teaching bridge and we can hope that this effort will result in some new faces joining our clubs in the new season.

The big news of 2024/25 was the return of the Sligo Congress to face-to-face play after a long absence. The numbers flowing in on the opening night were remarkable, and were a great tribute to the esteem in which the organisers, in particular Fearghal O'Boyle and Mairead Basquille, are held. Committee members were scrambling to set up more tables as the numbers were growing. Congratulations to all the Sligo team for making the event such a success.

Three charity events in Castlebar, Sligo, and Carrick-on-Shannon attracted great entries and we hope this trend continues.

In the Inter Provincials we joined with the Western region to compete in Cavan.

The Region, at its AGM in Carrick-on-Shannon, elected Ms Kathleen Walsh as President for 25/26 and Ann Lenehan as Vice-President. We thank the outgoing committee, under President Kathleen Carty, for their service, and wish this year's committee a very successful season.



Sligo Congress



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# NORTHERN/DONEGAL REGION REPORT

Anne Murray, Regional Secretary

**The dates for this year's Donegal International Bridge Congress 2025 are 7-9 November in the Abbey and Central Hotels on the Diamond in Donegal Town.**

Our wonderful Congress secretary Jim O'Sullivan and his team are busy organising the Donegal Congress 2025 weekend. Jim's daughter Ita is the 2025 Congress President, and looks forward to welcoming all the visitors to Donegal for a great weekend of bridge and socialising. Now is the time to book your accommodation, as some players had to travel a long distance daily to play at last year's Congress.

The 2024 Donegal Congress was a great success, under the stewardship of President Margaret Doherty (Moville) who had previously been secretary of the Northern/Donegal Region for many years. Indeed, she graciously extended her term as secretary as we endeavoured to recover from the changes brought about by Covid. Margaret has also been working behind the scenes doing a lot of the secretarial work for our Donegal Congress over the last 20 years, we were all delighted to have her as our 2024 President.

It was a busy year as President for Margaret travelling to clubs around the county of Donegal. We had nine Open Cups and two Charity nights. Margaret finished her year and the season as President with a bridge/golf day with the golf in Ballybofey/Stranorlar Golf Club followed by a great night of bridge and a meal in the Finn Valley Centre. As a sign of the high esteem in

which Margaret is held, Dungloe Bridge Club closed for the night so their members could attend, along with bridge players from all over Donegal and Northern Ireland.

At national level our Donegal women had great success, with Anna Carr and Margaret Farren (Moville and Carndonagh) in particular continuing their fantastic form of the previous few years.

In Duais Na Uachtarain Competition Anna and Margaret, emerged victorious to win CBAI President 2024 Catherine Byrne's prize as the best of the 82 pairs that contested the first National Championship of the season.

In the CBAI Women's Pairs 2025 (Jackson Cup) Anna and Margaret placed 3rd of 76 pairs with less than 1% between 1st and 3rd place.

The following day, in the CBAI Women's Teams Margaret and Anna were outright winners with their teammates Mairead Haugh and Roisin de Jong. Close behind them in 4th place were Donegal's incoming president Ita O'Sullivan and Marion Gallagher with their teammates Sonya Hills and LizAnn Doyle

In the annual friendly Donegal v Derry teams competition, our Donegal women won bringing the cup back to Donegal. Congratulations to the team: Margaret Farren, Anna Carr, Marion Gallagher and Ita O'Sullivan. This competition was held in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly and was hosted by Limavady Bridge Club, winners of the competition in 2024.

In the CBAI 4Fun Teams, with 32 teams competing, the Donegal team of Una Carthy, Kathleen Kelly, Maryjo Hanlon and Geraldine Harkin came a very creditable 10th overall.

We have a new CDO in Pauric Burke who is full of enthusiasm and intends holding classes for new members. We wish him every success in his endeavours, and thank his predecessor Marion Gallagher for all her hard work over the past few years.



*President Margaret Doherty at the Donegal Golf Day*





# MID LEINSTER REGION REPORT

Paul Dunne, Regional Secretary

**Yvonne Dalton continues as President of the Mid Leinster Region for the second year of her term leading the 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 where we hope to build on last year's success.

We started our season with two training seminars. John Crimmins delivered a very popular and successful session for club Tournament Directors, while Yvonne and Neil facilitated a workshop focused on the use of Bridgemates.

**Congratulations to the winners of our regional competitions, and to the MLR players who performed well in national competitions:**

**Cunningham League:** Premier Master - Westmanstown (Tomás Roche); Area Master - Declan Byrne Bridge (Declan Byrne); Intermediate A1 - Cnucha (Kitty McCabe); Intermediate A2/B - Confey Castle (Martin Carley); Novice - Louisa Bridge (Noreen Naughton).

**Regional Pairs:** Master - Roisin & Willie O'Gorman; Intermediate A - Kathie McGrath & Anne Downey; Intermediate B/Novice - Mary Meaney & Shay Caffrey.

**Regional Teams:** Master - Liam Gaynor, David Redmond, Mary Timoney, Donek Szenejko; Intermediate A/B - Anne Downey, Kathie McGrath, Valerie Giles, Sheila Daly.

**President's Cup:** 1st Liam Gaynor & David Redmond; 2nd Roisin & Willie O'Gorman; 3rd Mags Kelly & Joseph Coyne; Best A Susan Conroy & Damien Griffin; Best B/N Ann Gilton & Walter Rockett.

**IBU Pairs:** 1st Inter B Brian Prendergast & Maurice Boland; 1st Novice Dermott Bradshaw & Patricia Kinch-Underwood.

**Civil Service Cup (Inter B National Pairs):** 3rd Dermott Bradshaw & Patricia Kinch-Underwood.

**Davidson Cup:** (National Open Pairs): 4th David Redmond & Liam Gaynor, 7th Donek Szenejko & Mary Timoney.

**Kelburne Cup (National Open Teams):** 4th Joe Coyne, Kevin O'Dea, Liam Maher, Brian Cleary; 6th David Redmond, Liam Gaynor, Donek Szenejko, Mary Timoney.

**IBU Seniors' Congress Pairs:** 3rd Donek Szenejko & Mary Timoney.

**Cooper Cup (National Confined Teams):** 4th Declan Byrne, Nicola O'Dowd, Breda Tuite, Blanaid Morris.

MLR committee is working with Peter Pigot to host two training seminars in September - one for Intermediate players and one for Advanced.



Presidents Cup winners - Liam Gaynor & David Redmond





# NORTH MIDLAND REGION REPORT

Mary Macken, Regional Secretary

On the 13th June 2025, we held our AGM in Mullingar Bridge & Amenity Centre when our outgoing President Patricia Mahon handed over the seal of Office to George Farrell from the Ballymahon Bridge Club.

George on accepting the seal of office said "I wish to thank Ballymahon Bridge Club for nominating me as Regional President. I am delighted to accept this honour. I'd like to thank outgoing President Patricia for all her work over the past year. I look forward to working with the committee."

Outgoing Regional President Patricia Mahon and incoming Regional President George Farrell.



Outgoing Regional President Patricia Mahon and incoming Regional President George Farrell.

**All our regional competitions were well attended, and the competition winners included:**

**Paddy O'Toole Memorial:** Frank & Brenda Kelly

## Regional Pairs:

**Masters/Seniors:** James Connolly & Sean Masterson

**Intermediate A:** Pdraig McKenna & JJ Donlon

**Intermediate B:** Tom Roche & Joan Peppard

**Regional Gala Pairs:** Sean & Bríd Galligan

## Regional Teams:

**Masters/Seniors:** Sean Galligan, Bríd Galligan, Liz O'Reilly, Joe Brady

**Intermediate A:** Mary Dunne, Bridie Nugent, Geraldine Regan, Gerry Manning

**Intermediate B:** Joan Peppard, Tom Roche, John Higgins, Dillon Murtagh

**John Cunningham Cup:** Liz Taaffe & Michael MacDonagh

**John Cunningham Intermediate B/Novice:** John Fagan & Gerry Manning

We were delighted to have members of the Hanlon family in attendance for the cup presentation and also to have Tom and Carmel playing.

The regional President's Prize was held on Sunday 8 June 2025 in the Tullamore Bridge House Hotel, and attracted an attendance of 16 tables. The contestants enjoyed a good afternoon of bridge before Frances O'Toole and Marie Lynch were announced as the worthy winners.

On the National Front, our region was certainly to the fore in season 2024/25. Gerry and Monica O'Gorman were 2nd overall in the Simultaneous Pairs.

John Kiernan and Tony Ward were 3rd in the IBU Master Pairs. Margaret Martin, Lorraine Barry, Maura Conway and Kathleen Shaw placed 3rd in the Cooper Cup.

Frank Higgins, Mary Macken, Susan Tuite and Maura Hogan won Best Area Master in the IBU Senior Teams. The region did a first/second double in the

**The winners of the Annie Hanlon Cup confined were Evelyn Corrigan and Mary McCormack.**

L-R: John, Kay, Mary McCormack, Evelyn Corrigan, Tom Hanlon, Carmel Murnin (Hanlon)



4 Teams with Doreen McInerney, Patrick Martin, Pattie Ryan, and Patricia Mahon (Offaly) winning and Sean Galligan, Joan Peppard, Patricia McCormack, and Margaret Deegan (Westmeath) placing 2nd.

By far the region's greatest achievement was Tom Roche and Joan Peppard winning the Civil Service Cup (National Intermediate B Pairs Championship) and, along with John Higgins and Dillon Murtagh, retaining the Tierney Trophy (National Intermediate Teams Championship).

In addition, our Intermediate A Team of Kevin Woulfe, Mary Macken, Padraig McKenna and JJ Donlon also emerged victorious in the national finals, winning the Bankers Trophy.

These successes, and a solid performance from our Open team in the Kelburne Cup led to my personal highlight of the year as Regional Secretary, accepting the Marie Cummins Trophy in Portlaoise for the best performing region overall. It was the first time our region has won the trophy since its inception in 2007.

Finally I wish to express our sympathy to all who lost loved ones during the year.



L-R: Mary Macken, Padraig McKenna, Kevin Woulfe, Catherine Byrne, National President CBAI and JJ Donlon



Presentation of Marie Cummins Trophy Back Row L-R: Dillon Murtagh, Jo Brady, Liz O'Reilly, Sean Galligan, JJ Donlon, Brid Galligan, Padraig McKenna. Front Row L-R: John Higgins, Tom Roche, Kevin Woulfe, Mary Macken, Catherine Byrne, President CBAI and Joan Peppard



L-R: Frances O'Toole, Regional President Patricia Mahon, Marie Lynch



L-R Tom Roche, Joan Peppard, Catherine Byrne, National President CBAI, Dillon Murtagh, John Higgins with Tierney Trophy





# NORTH EASTERN REGION REPORT

Seamus Costello, Regional Secretary

During June/July I arrange the fixture list for the coming year, in consultation with the club secretaries. Our 34 fixtures are 7 Regional events and 27 open events which include 4 new events, i.e. Hugh Owens Cup for Monaghan Club, Riona Carolan Team of 4 for Ardee Club, Joe Browne Memorial for Ashbourne Club and the Bridge Bash in Trim.

The last-named is an extension of the one-day event held for the first time last season, under the extremely effective organisation of Nicola O'Dowd, our new Regional President. Pictured below are just some of the North Eastern Region Winners at this year's Trim Bridge Bash, with Nicola.

A review of the role of the County Development Officer was carried out in July last year and the North Eastern Region County Development Officers were allocated a number of clubs from our total of 41 clubs, depending on their location;

**Meath North:** Mary Timoney 11,

**Meath South:** Nicola O'Dowd 9

**Cavan:** Melissa Brady 6

**Louth:** Eileen McEntegart 4

**Monaghan:** Con McCrossan 3

**North Fingal and Louth South:** Kay Goldsworthy 8

We will have two additional clubs next year as Laytown/Bettystown are reaffiliating and a new club Deerpark, Carolanstown is joining the CBAI.

A number of our clubs, Trim, Oldcastle, Virginia, Balbriggan, Skerries, Monaghan and Drogheda carried out bridge promotion events. The clubs reported that lots of people expressed an interest in learning bridge. A large number of our clubs held beginner's classes this year.

**Numbers for our Regional events were again up this year and the winners were;**

**Pat Taaffe Trophy:** Frank Davey & Paddy Bonner

**Regional Mixed:** Mary O'Gorman & Francis Bellew

## Regional Pairs

**Masters:** Mary Timoney & Donek Szenejko

**Inter A:** Jacinta Kangley & Boris Dobroykov

**Inter B:** Madeline Heeney & Michael Spillane

## Regional Teams

**Masters:** Margaret Winters, Maureen Walsh, Sean & Frances Newcomen

**Inter A:** Jacinta Kangley, Boris Dobroykov, Geraldine Healy, Pat O'Halloran

**Inter B:** Madeline Heeney, Michael Spillane, Jeff Young, Sylvia McCann

**Reg Ladies Pairs:** Mary Timoney & Mary Brady

**Reg Men Pairs:** Donek Szenejko & Joe Coyne



1st Inter B - Michael Spillane and Sylvia McCann



1st Area Master - Martin T. O'Brien and Dave Doherty



2nd Inter A - Sean Keane and Bridget Hession



### National Competitions – notable performances

**Inter Provincials:** Ulster A Team Winners: Anna Shalvey, Melissa Brady, Mary Maguire, Kathleen McCabe

**Master Pairs:** 3rd Frank Davey & Tom Lawlor

**Jackson Cup:** 2nd Melissa Brady & Anna Shalvey

**Cooper Cup (Teams):** 2nd Debbie & Barry Leahy plus two

**Seniors Congress Pairs:** 3rd Mary Timoney & Donek Szenejko

**Seniors Gala Pairs:** 3rd Phil Geoghegan & James Newman

**National B Teams:** 3rd Madeline Heeney, Michael Spillane, Jeff Young, Angela Everitt

**National A Teams:** 2nd Jacinta Kangley, Boris Dobroykov, Geraldine Healy, Pat O'Halloran

**Civil Service Cup Inter B:** Madeline Heeney and Michael Spillane

### County Championships

**Burke Trophy Masters:** 2nd Overall Deirdre Tuckey, Seamus Costello, Noreen Pender, Antoinette McGee

**O'Connor Intermediate:** 3rd Overall Simon Ridley, Mary Mulvey, Christine Griffin, Mary Elvers

Two members of the regional committee, Sheila Grimes and Kay Goldsworthy retired this year. I thank them both for their many years of service to bridge in our region. We welcome Fiona Murray, Trim who joins our committee.

This time of year, sees many changes in club secretaries and I take this opportunity to thank all our secretaries for the work they do in the smooth running of their clubs. To those retiring I wish you well for the future.

I thank our outgoing President Mary Timoney and the members of the executive committee for their commitment to bridge in our region. Finally, I wish our incoming Regional President, Nicola O'Dowd, a very successful year.



Presentation to Sheila and Kay by President Mary Timoney



Nicola O'Dowd making a presentation to outgoing President Mary Timoney

BOYNE VALLEY BRIDGE

# BRIDGE BASH 2026

## SAVE THE DATE

### AUGUST 22ND & 23RD, 2026

KNIGHTSBROOK HOTEL & GOLF RESORT  
TRIM, COUNTY MEATH

**ALL ROADS LEAD TO TRIM FOR THE BRIDGE BASH !**

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# 2026 IBU Seniors Congress

hosted by IBU President Gordon Lessells  
Cavan Crystal Hotel

**21-23 April 2026**



## Tuesday 21 April

**7:00pm:**  
Official Opening

**7:30pm:**  
Gala Pairs\*

## Wednesday 22 April

**1:00pm:**  
Senior Pairs Championship  
(Pat McDevitt Trophy)

**1:00pm & 6:00pm:**  
Open Pairs\*

## Thursday 23 April

**11:00am:**  
IBU Senior Teams  
Championship

**11:00am & 3:00pm:**  
Open Pairs\*



\* No age/grade restrictions. To enter Seniors events, players must have been born in 1961 or earlier.  
Pre-entry required for Seniors Pairs and Teams via [www.cbai.ie](http://www.cbai.ie)

# 2026 Novice & Intermediate Congress

hosted by CBAI President John Phelan  
Tower Hotel, Waterford

**10-12 April 2026**



## Friday 10 April

**7:15pm:**  
Official Opening

**7:30pm:**  
Gala Pairs

**7:30pm:**  
Mixed Pairs  
- Jim Fitzgerald Trophy

## Saturday 11 April

**1:00pm:**  
Intermediate A Pairs - New Ireland Trophy (2 sessions)

**1:00pm:**  
Intermediate B Pairs - Kervick Trophy (2 sessions)

**1.00pm & 6:00pm:**  
Open Pairs

**6:00pm:**  
Novice Pairs - Waterford Glass Trophy

## Sunday 12 April

**11:00am:**  
Team of Four - JJ Kiely Trophy  
(extended session with short break)

**11:00am:**  
Open Pairs

All Novices & Intermediates welcome.  
Pre-entry required via [www.cbai.ie](http://www.cbai.ie)



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ASSOCIATION  
OF IRELAND  
SINCE 1932



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 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*

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*