

IRISH BRIDGE Journal

Autumn 2026

Editorial

Welcome all to the Autumn Journal.



Enda Murphy, Editor

Autumn – season of mists, and mellow fruitfulness. Although given our heatwave summer, things may not be as mellow or as fruitful as in the days of yore.

Your Editor has just returned from a week in Istanbul – what an amazing confluence of Eastern and Asian cultures. If you have not yet visited, make it a priority.

Whilst I was away, a coup d'etat took place, as a result of which I now find myself captain of our squad for the imminent 26/7 Regent Premier League competition. We shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight them at the table, we shall nevaah surrendah. Harrumph. You have been warned.

Massive kudos to our columnist Luca Crone, who took a marvellous gold medal at the World U-31 teams B Final in China. Luca had a German partner and two Croatian teammates.

Equally honourable mention to Rebecca O'Keeffe-Brown and Gilda Pender, who finished a superb 5th in the Women's Pairs in the World Bridge Championships in Katowice.

A very special piece appears in this issue – the great Pat Barry took the trouble to document his life/bridge story. It's a great read. Pat is a gentlemen's gentleman.

This issue is also delighted to carry a piece on no fewer than three 50th anniversary celebrations, including the Teacher's Club in Wexford. I was a callow youth in 1976, but I have the fondest of memories of this club. I know that a number of other clubs are coming up to significant milestones – we want to feature you! Contact me at enda1612@gmail.com. You are pushing an open door.

Enda Murphy
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Extra

CBAI News
Inside!



The Annual CBAI newsletter is now included as a supplement in the Journal - see page 36

Includes CBAI News Update and Fixtures Calendar

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 E/W.

♠ 6	N	♠ AJ74
♥ KJ9843	W	♥ Q10
♦ 3	E	♦ J952
♣ A9742	S	♣ K63

W	N	E	S
	P	P	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	2NT	P
3♥	P	4♥	All Pass

The Play

North leads ♦K followed by ♦Q. How do you plan the play?

Board 3 Dealer South. Vul None.

♠ AQ8653	N	♠ KJ742
♥ K7	W	♥ Q1084
♦ K5	E	♦ J6
♣ 873	S	♣ KQ

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	X	3NT ¹	P
4♠			

¹ 3NT = Game raise in spades, emphasis on strong trumps

The Play

North leads ♠10. You win the trump lead and play a club honour. North takes the ace and exits with a club. How do you plan the play?

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ AQ4	N	♠ J96
♥ AKQJ106	W	♥ 9754
♦ A	E	♦ KQ9862
♣ J104	S	♣ -

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

¹ 4♣ = Splinter agreeing hearts
² 4♦ = Cue Bid

The Play

North leads ♣A. How do you plan the play?

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul N/S.

♠ KJ108	N	♠ AQ42
♥ A	W	♥ J98754
♦ AKQ62	E	♦ 53
♣ AJ2	S	♣ 6

W	N	E	S
2♣	P	2♦	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
3♠	P	5♣ ¹	P
5NT ²	P	7♠ ³	All Pass

¹ 5♣ = Splinter agreeing spades
² 5NT = Josephine Grand Slam Force
³ 6♠ = Two of top three honours in spades

The Play

North leads ♠5. How do you plan the play?

Answers on page 27

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Bidding Quiz 15

By Bob Pattinson

All hands are from teams events. Entries to bobpattinsonymail.com@yahoo.com by 7th November 2026. Good luck!

Question 1

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

♠ A6542

♥ A876

♦ 9

♣ KJ2

W	N	E	S
			1♠
P	1NT ¹	P	2♥
P	3♠ ²	P	?

¹ 1NT=6-12 - F1
² 3♠=11-12 - 3 spades

Question 2

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams.

♠ KQ876

♥ 653

♦ AQ4

♣ KJ

W	N	E	S
		P	1♥
P	1♠	P	4♦ ¹
?			

¹ 4♦=Splinter: 4 spades: 4 losers

Question 3

Dealer South. Vul None. Teams.

♠ 75

♥ 92

♦ 104

♣ AJ87542

W	N	E	S
			1NT ¹
P	?		

¹ 1NT=15-17

Question 4

Dealer East. Vul None. Teams.

♠ 98653

♥ A

♦ AQ8

♣ QJ105

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
2♦	P	?	

Question 5

Dealer South. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ -

♥ KQJ976

♦ AJ653

♣ 52

W	N	E	S
			1NT ¹
P	2♦	P	2♥
P	3♦	P	4♦
P	?		

¹ 1NT=15-17

Question 6

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ K1098

♥ J

♦ Q96532

♣ 98

W	N	E	S
		P	1NT ¹

¹ 1NT=15-17

Question 7

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A873

♥ J7

♦ AK652

♣ 63

W	N	E	S
			P
2♥	P	?	

Question 8

Dealer North. Vul All. Teams

♠ -

♥ AK4

♦ AQJ963

♣ KQ108

W	N	E	S
	1♦	2♦	2♥
4♠	?		

¹ 2♦=5-5: 6-10: Extremes spades and clubs

Entries to:

bobpattinsonymail.com@yahoo.com
by 7th November 2026

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.



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My Journey Continues

Nicola O'Dowd



"The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena."

- Theodore Roosevelt

I had absolutely no idea what I was going to write about for this issue. Fifteen articles in, here I am sitting looking at a blank page and wondering what on earth I am going to write about this time. And I really was looking at a blank page. Usually something comes to me. Something happens, somebody says something, or I see something in bridge that gets me thinking. This time, nothing. I started a few different ideas. Deleted them. Started again. Still nothing. But maybe the problem was that the obvious thing was staring me in the face.

The Bridge Bash. I didn't want to write about it. Anyone who knows me, follows me on Instagram or Facebook or has been within a fifty mile radius of me for the last 11 months has probably heard enough about the Bridge Bash to last them until next August.

But after it was all over, amongst all the lovely messages and emails I received, one in particular stayed with me. The person who sent it told me that there are really two kinds of people. Those who do things, and those who devote their time to criticising the people who do things. He told me I was a "doer of things". I liked that.

He then pointed me towards Theodore Roosevelt and his famous words about "the man in the arena", the person who is actually in there doing, trying, sometimes succeeding and sometimes getting it wrong. And suddenly my blank page wasn't quite so blank anymore. Because maybe that's the part of the Bridge Bash I haven't really talked about. Not the results. Not the numbers. Not the

photographs, videos or even the song. I've talked plenty about what happened over the weekend, but not so much about what it took to get there.

The doing of it.

And I should probably say now, this isn't really an article about the Bridge Bash. The Bridge Bash is just my example. It's about the people who are prepared to do things. To have an idea, put themselves out there and give it a go, knowing it might not work, they might get things wrong and, once they put themselves out there, people might have plenty to say about it too.

Last year was the first Bridge Bash. I had an idea in my head of what I wanted it to be. Separate sections for the different grades, players who have never played out before, who have never dreamed they would be fit to play in a two session event and I wanted something that felt a little bit special when people walked into the room. But having an idea and finding out whether anyone else thinks it's actually a good idea are two very different things.

Thankfully, they came. So having survived the first one, the sensible thing this year would probably have been to do exactly the same thing again. Naturally, I didn't! I made it two days. Pairs on Saturday. Teams on Sunday. More sections, more players, more TDs, more tables and a whole lot more organising.

Then I had to get people there.

I advertised it everywhere I could think of. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, emails, posters, bridge clubs, websites, newspapers, even a song. I asked people to share it in their clubs, on their WhatsApp groups and with other bridge players, and they did. If there was

somewhere I thought a bridge player might see or hear about the Bridge Bash, I wanted it there. I probably drove everyone mad with it, but it worked.

Then the entries started. And the emails. And the messages. Partners changed. Teams changed. Grades had to be checked. People couldn't remember what they had entered. People thought their partner had entered them. Their partner thought they had entered them. Someone wanted Saturday but not Sunday. Someone else wanted Sunday but not Saturday. Someone had entered the Pairs but now wanted the Teams as well. Someone had a team but was missing a fourth. And every change seemed to lead to another change somewhere else. The closer it got, the more there was to think about. It wasn't just getting all the entries sorted and everyone into the right sections. It was trying to think ahead to the actual weekend and all the things that could go wrong, preferably before they did.

And then there were the things that mattered to me personally. I wanted a start and finish time to suit everyone but especially the locals who were not used to playing two sessions, out late and back the next morning, I wanted the room to look well. I wanted people to know where they were going when they arrived. I wanted every grade to feel that their event mattered just as much as anyone else's. And especially the people who had never played in something like this before, I wanted them to walk in and feel that they belonged there.

There were times when I wondered why on earth I had made it two days. And then suddenly it was Friday and we were in Knightsbrook setting up. Huey, Diarmuid, Declan and loads of others came along

to help. Tables had to be put out, boards sorted, table numbers, bidding boxes, cards, Bridgemates and all the equipment had to be put in place. Not forgetting the balloons! People just got stuck in and did whatever needed doing.

By Friday evening, after months of organising, advertising, entries, emails and changes, the Bridge Bash was no longer something I was planning. The rooms were set up. The tables were there. Everything was ready.

Well, as ready as it was ever going to be.

And then Saturday morning arrived. And this is the strange thing about organising something. For months, you know every little thing that has gone into it. Everyone else just walks through the door, and that is exactly how it should be. They shouldn't need to know what happened behind the scenes. They shouldn't need to know about the phone calls, the spreadsheets, the changes or the things that nearly went wrong. They should walk in, find their table and play bridge.

And they did.

The room filled up. The cards came out. The noise level rose and suddenly this thing that had existed in my head, on my laptop and in hundreds of messages was actually happening. We had 96 tables on Saturday and 71 on Sunday. I don't think even I had really taken in how big it had become until I saw those rooms full of people playing bridge.

Then, almost as quickly, it was over.

I think I was running on adrenaline by that stage, because it was only afterwards, when everything had quietened down, that I really started taking it in. Then the messages began arriving. One person said it had "run like clockwork". I had to laugh at that because if something like the Bridge Bash looks as though it runs like clockwork, there are an awful lot of people behind that clock. I certainly didn't do it on my own.

Huey Daly and Diarmuid Redden directed the two days. Declan and Peter Byrne helped enormously, as did all the people who came along to help set up, pack away or just stepped in when something needed to be done. That is another thing I have learned about organising bridge events. You need people who will just get stuck in. People who see something that needs doing and do it.

Doers of things.

Maybe that is why the phrase stayed with me. Because when you organise something, you put yourself out there. You can plan it. You can prepare for it. You can try to think of everything. But eventually you have to open the doors and let people in. And once you do that, people are entitled to have an opinion, and they will. Not everyone will like everything you do. Somebody will always think something could have been done differently. And sometimes they will be right.

There are certainly things I learned from the first Bridge Bash that I changed for the second one, and there are things I learned this year that I will change next year. I don't think being the person "in the arena" means believing you got everything right. Far from it. It means being prepared to have a go in the first place, but also be prepared to listen to criticism too, because sometimes that is how you learn.

And I think that applies to far more than the Bridge Bash. We have all sat at meetings where someone says, "Wouldn't it be great if we..." and everyone agrees it is a great idea. Heads nod around the room. Then comes the dangerous question. "Who's going to organise it?" Suddenly everyone is very interested in their cup of tea, or looking at their phone. But eventually someone says, "I'll do it."

And I think we need more of those people in bridge. Not people who have all the answers. Not people who know exactly what they are doing. Just people who are prepared to give something a go.

So if you are sitting there thinking about encouraging someone, starting something, changing something, running something or trying something new, don't wait until you are sure it will work. Sometimes you just have to say, "I'll do it." and remember if everybody was to wait until they are guaranteed success, nothing new will ever happen.

Five years ago I was a novice learning four-card majors. I couldn't possibly have imagined then that bridge would become such a huge part of my life, or that one day I would be standing in Knightsbrook watching hundreds of people playing at an event I had created.

I certainly didn't have a master plan.

I still don't.

If you had told me back then where bridge would take me, I probably wouldn't have believed you. I was just trying to remember what I was supposed to bid next.

And maybe that is the point. You don't have to know everything before you start. I forget things. I make mistakes. I send an email and realise five minutes later that I left something out. I organise something and afterwards think, why didn't I think of that? I have had plenty of ideas that sounded very simple in my head and turned out to be anything but and I ask for help. Lots of it. But every time you



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do something, you learn something. The next time you remember the thing you forgot the last time. Or at least you hope you do.

One thing leads to another. You say yes to helping with something. Then you get another idea. You try that. Some things work, some don't. You learn as you go. And before you know it, you are doing things you would never have thought you were capable of doing. I still get things wrong. I still forget things. But I would rather have a go and get some of it wrong than never have tried it at all. I am not writing any of this because I think I am particularly good at doing things. I'm writing it because five years ago I wouldn't have imagined I would be doing any of them.

So perhaps Roosevelt was right.

The credit really does belong to the people who are prepared to get into the arena.

That message I received after the Bridge Bash meant more to me than the person who sent it probably realised. He meant those words for me, but they stayed with me. So thank you. And I would like to pass them on.

To all the other "doers of things" out there in Irish bridge, keep doing them.

We need you.

If you would like to see how the Bridge Bash turned out, the results and video can be found here:

Results and website:

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

Video:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/JPhPhK8rgfc>

[As I said when Nicola first wrote about the Bash, this is a super initiative and the template really ought to be adopted by others. Ed].

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Hesitations at the Bridge Table

Jim Doyle



It's OK to think at the bridge table, sometimes a person has to take the time to consider what they are going to do. It is not illegal to hesitate before bidding.

BUT If your partner take longer than usual to bid or pass, you know they had something to think about. If you have a choice of possible bids, you can't select one suggested by your partner's hesitation. If your opponents are not happy with the bid made by you they are entitled to call the Director.

The Director may ask a number of players of what they consider to be of equal standard to you to determine what they would do with your hand but without knowledge of your partner's hesitation. Their answers will help the Director decide on whether your action was a reasonable choice. The result may be changed but this does not mean you have done anything wrong. It just means you inadvertently made a choice that is not allowed by the laws as above.

The following hand was the subject of an appeal in the Leventritt Silver Ribbon Pairs at the 2018 Spring NABC in Philadelphia. The Silver Ribbon Pairs is an event open only to players who are at least 55 years old and who have pre-qualified by placing first or second in a regional or national-rated senior event and consists of two qualifying and two final sessions.

This was the hand and corresponding bidding:

Board 21 Dealer North. Vul N/S

♠A86 ♥3 ♦Q53 ♣987632			
♠J1097	N	♠KQ52	
♥QJ108	W	♥942	
♦K1096	E	♦84	
♣Q	S	♣AK104	
♠43 ♥AK765 ♦AJ72 ♣J5			

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

¹ Announced as 12-15
² Break in tempo

3♠ by E finished one down.

The Director was called after the conclusion of play. All four players agreed that South broke tempo "noticeably" after East's 1NT opening.

The Director polled the North hand to three national-calibre players. All three passed at every opportunity. He asked if a break in tempo by South made bidding more attractive, and all three answered in the affirmative.

Director Ruling: The Director determined, based upon the poll, that Pass was a logical alternative, and that the hesitation by South suggested 3♣ was more likely to be successful than passing. So, per Law 16B1a, the 3♣ call was disallowed, and the result adjusted to 2♠ by East, making two, E/W +110.

N/S requested a review of the ruling. They felt that it was a bad matchpoint decision for North to pass 2♠ in a known fit. Based upon the auction, South was marked with values and at most two spades, so there was an implied N/S club fit. North stated she would never pass here, playing matchpoints.

The Reviewer, an official who checks whether proper procedures and correct laws were applied rather than re-judging bridge play, interviewed the appellants. He explained the ruling and the polls on which it was based and asked the appellants where they felt the Director went wrong. North repeated her claim that she would never pass, and that passing was wrong at matchpoints. The Reviewer reminded North of the poll results and asked her to clarify why she felt this did not disallow her action. North insisted that passing was wrong. The Reviewer cautioned the appellants that an appeal which failed to find fault with the ruling was likely to be deemed to lack merit.

The Appeal Panel then heard the appeal. They considered the Director's poll. They agreed that when all three players polled choose Pass that it demonstrates passing to be a logical alternative; that the choice of pollees was representative of North's peers; and that the Director's polling procedure was sound. The Panel found that the Director's poll established Pass as a logical alternative, while bidding was suggested by the Unauthorized Information. There was no reason to think the play in 2♠ would be particularly different from that in 3♠. In accordance with Law 16B, the Panel therefore upheld the Director's ruling of 2♠ by East, making two, E/W +110. The appeal, since it presented no substantive reason to question the initial ruling, was found to lack merit. An Appeal Without Merit Warning was issued.

Bric-A-Brock

Sally Brock



In the quarter-finals of the Mixed Teams at San Remo, today's deal featured some high-level competitive bidding decisions.

Dealer South. Vul All.

♠ A763 ♥ 6 ♦ AQJ532 ♣ J3		
♠ 5	N	♠ K942
♥ AQJ102	W	♥ K8743
♦ 1097	E	♦ 84
♣ 10972	S	♣ AQ
♠ QJ108 ♥ 95 ♦ K6 ♣ K8654		

At one table West opened 2♥, showing a weak hand with five hearts and a four-card or longer minor. North, quite reasonably, chose to overcall 3♦. East jumped to 4♥ and neither North nor South had reason to bid further. They compounded their error by letting 4♥ make when North ducked her ♠A.

At the other table South and West both passed and North opened 1♦. East overcalled 1♥, but here South introduced her spades. Now when West bid 4♥, North went on to 4♠.

In the event the defence did not tax declarer. West led the ♥A and switched to a club. East won the ace and returned a club and declarer could lose a trick to the ♠K before drawing trumps and claiming the rest.

It is more difficult if the defenders persevere with hearts. Declarer has only one winning play now which is to play a low spade from the dummy at trick three. Best is for East to duck this, but declarer must now abandon trumps. It is not good enough for him simply to play diamonds (if he does, East ruffs and declarer overruffs,

crosses to dummy with the ace of trumps and plays more diamonds, but eventually he must play a black card and East rises with his winner, draws the last trumps and cashes a winning heart). Instead, he must overtake the ♦K with dummy's ace and play a club, setting up the trick he needs in that suit while he is still in control.

When an opponent has given us valuable distributional information in the bidding it is tempting to play him for a singleton in any relevant long suits we hold.

But if we hold two long suits then he is unlikely to hold singletons in both, so we need to see if we can work out which.

Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ 42 ♥ K1042 ♦ A9742 ♣ A7		
♠ 1093	N	♠ AQ765
♥ 93	W	♥ Q5
♦ QJ105	E	♦ 6
♣ 10632	S	♣ KQJ95
♠ KJ8 ♥ AJ876 ♦ K83 ♣ 84		

W	N	E	S
		1♠	P
P	X	2♣	3♥
P	4♥	All Pass	

North's balancing double after the 1♠ opening might have been made on a much weaker hand, so South advanced cautiously, and North raised the 3♥ invitation to game.

At many tables West led a club and the declarers played trumps by finessing into East's queen doubleton. There was now a loser in each suit and declarer went one down.

Declarer should realise that there is no rush and that he has time for a discovery play. He wins the ♠A and plays a spade. No doubt East wins, cashes a club and plays another spade. Declarer wins the king and ruffs a spade in the dummy.

Now it is just a question of red-suit losers. But declarer should next discover whether or not East has a singleton diamond. He cashes the ♦A and plays a diamond towards his hand. If East ruffs in, declarer's problems in the trump suit will go away. When East discards on the second round of diamonds, it is reasonable for declarer to play him for only one singleton and thus play trumps successfully.

Try this one.

♠ AJ73 ♥ - ♦ AKQ76 ♣ 9863		
♠ K2	N	♠ Q106
♥ AJ863	W	♥ K9542
♦ 5	E	♦ 10943
♣ KQJ102	S	♣ 4
♠ 9854 ♥ Q107 ♦ J82 ♣ A75		

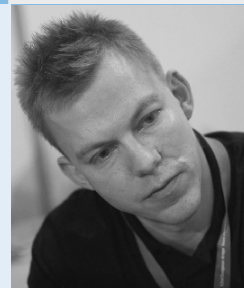
W	N	E	S
	1♦	P	1♠
X	4♠	All Pass	

You lead the ♠K against 4♠. Declarer wins with the ace, partner playing the four, and plays a low spade. Plan the defence.

If declarer has five spades you can count his ten winners so you must assume he has only four. It looks as if partner has a singleton club and if declarer can duck a trump to him, he will win the return, cash the ♠A and run diamonds. To foil his plan you must put in the ♠K!

When I was a Boye

Boye Brogeland, Flekkefjord



"If we don't lose the boards before dummy comes down, we will win every tournament."

This statement comes from Zia in the middle of an intense system discussion over bacon and eggs in Seattle. It's only a couple of hours before the start of the Blue Ribbon Pairs, one of the most prestigious pairs tournaments in the world.

There is much truth in what Zia says. As long as we manage to keep the ball in play until the bidding is over, there aren't many who will have the better of us in defence or play of the cards. The problem is that we are both a bit like the scorpion who had help from the turtle to cross a lake. Halfway across the scorpion stings the turtle so that both will die. "Why on earth did you do that?" the turtle manages to ask. "It's in my nature," answers the scorpion.

"Let's have a \$20 fine if we lose a board because we are too greedy." Zia wants a financial whip that can help keep us on the straight and narrow when we are about to stray. Not that I think that this will have any effect whatsoever once we have thirteen cards in our hands, as we are both too happy to play on the edge.

The last time we had played together was in San Diego three years earlier, also in the Blue Ribbon Pairs. After two days of qualifying we were in third position. The final started without incident but in round three partner opened a weak 2♦ at Love All. I held:

♠ AQxx
♥ Kxxx
♦ T
♣ AQxx

Right hand opponent passed, what do you bid?

Pass feels right even though Zia has a reputation for some unusual weak two openers. If I bid 2NT looking for a four card major (or a hand any Norwegian player would have opened 1♦) I'll let my left hand opponent off the hook if he has enough to balance. I therefore pass without much hesitation and 2♦ is passed out. This gave us a clean bottom as partner had a rather eccentric

♠ x
♥ AQTxx
♦ KJ98xx
♣ x

No one in his right mind would think of opening 2♦ with such a hand, but Zia, in his crystal ball, saw me responding 2NT after which he would rebid 4♥ – clearly 5-6, after which I could place the final contract. Well, so much for not losing the board before dummy comes down...

♠ 98653
♥ KQ9
♦ Q9
♣ KQ9

W <i>Upmark</i>	N <i>Zia</i>	E <i>Fallenius</i>	S <i>Brogeland</i>
	1♦	1♠	X
P	3♣	P	4♦
P	4NT	P	?

While you're thinking about what to do over 4NT, what do you think about my first bid? I'm afraid a lot of Norwegian players would bid some number of notrumps, but to bid notrumps at any level is poor judgment. If these hands are to be played in notrump partner must be declarer to avoid a spade lead through the king.

After a double partner will rebid 1NT with a balanced hand without four hearts. Yes, we could end up in a 4-3 fit after the negative double

(which indicates at least four hearts) but this need not be a bad thing. In fact, 4♥ could easily be the only makeable game.

When Zia and I gave this bidding problem to a panel of experts in Seattle there was a third bid which turned out to be popular: Pass. Not in order to make a penalty pass, but because if partner doubles you intend to rebid 2♠ to show good values with no suitable first-round bid. Should partner pass 1♠, typically holding a weak notrump hand with at least a doubleton spade, you'll be happy with your small plus score. Maybe not so stupid – although it goes against my nature to pass with 12 HCP in a hand that is not expecting a reopening double from partner.

If Zia has a good hand with diamonds, even both minors, too good to bid 3♣ or 3♦, he would temporise with 2♠.

3♣ should therefore be reserved as a splinter for hearts. Quite clear in my head but one should not be too sure that others think the same.

I bid 4♦ as an attempt to find out what was behind Zia's 3♣ bid. Over 4♥ I would have been convinced that all my twelve points were working and made another move. There are probably many who would struggle anyway to find the best contract with these cards.

I interpreted 4NT as RCKB for hearts. I'm not keen to play slam in hearts on a 4-3 fit when Zia's hand is likely to have to ruff the second round of spades.

Partner's aggressive bidding implies a long good diamond suit as a source of tricks. I try to get us back on track by bidding 6♦.

The good news is that Zia understands this bid so he passes happily.



The bad news is that he has a completely different hand type to what I had imagined:

♠ 7
♥ A4
♦ AK863
♣ AJ752

Diamonds are 4-2 and even Zia must go one off.

"Didn't I tell you at breakfast that 4NT was Blackwood agreeing the last suit bid when we hadn't agreed trumps?" Yes, that's right, but I thought hearts had already been agreed as trumps.

While he's talking at a hundred miles an hour I manage to interject between breaths: "But why didn't you bid 2♠ first and follow up with clubs? 3♣ must be a splinter for hearts." Zia hasn't quite finished: "You Norwegians, your splinters. Just respond to Blackwood, and I will bid 6♣!"

That was not our only bottom in this session; there were another three or four, including one where Zia paid out a \$20 fine for a much too aggressive preempt. Luckily we also collect ten tops to score over 60% for the session which is a superb start to the tournament and we eventually qualify ninth. The carry-over means we are only 29 points behind the leaders, Thomas Bessis and Steve Weinstein.

N Zia
♠ 65
♥ KQ9765
♦ AQ
♣ KT3

S Brogeland
♠ AT
♥ A2
♦ KJ932
♣ J652

W	N Zia	E	S Brogeland
		P	1♦ ¹
P	1♥	P	1NT ¹
P	2♦ ²	P	3♦ ³
P	3♥	P	3♠ ⁴
P	3NT ⁵	P	4♠ ⁶
P	4NT ⁷	P	5♥ ⁸
P	6♥	All Pass	

1. With 5-4-2-2-shape and scattered honours I prefer to rebid 1NT, particularly at Matchpoints. Note the ♠A10 which would go very well with partner's Jxx or K9x.
2. Game forcing checkback.
3. Shows a good five-card suit (with a weaker suit I'd bid 2NT).
4. Control bid, or showing doubt about strain and/or level.
5. Suggestion to play.
6. Control bid (confirming 3♠ was also a control bid).
7. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
8. Two key cards without the ♥Q

Do you see the best contract? 6NT by North, protecting the ♠K. This needs hearts 3-2 (68%) and diamonds 4-2 or singleton ten, altogether approximately 58% chance of making. 6♥ was almost as good. After the spade lead and drawing trumps, Zia had to rely on diamonds 3-3 or doubleton ten, falling back on doubleton ♣Q onside.

Luckily both red suits behaved and after this board we are surely in the lead.

Compared with earlier in the tournament we manage to limit the number of bottoms in the last session of the final. The opponents were also less generous and the tops/bottoms ratio didn't improve. In addition I misguess twice in game contracts and once in a part-score. This is always costly regardless of whether the guess is for the contract or overtricks.

Finally, I may have been guilty on the following deal. You judge. (South dealer, E/W vulnerable):

♠ AK2
♥ T9
♦ J654
♣ KT42

W Welland	N Zia	E Bramley	S Brogeland
			1♣ ¹
P	3♣ ²	X	P
3♥	P	4♥	?

¹ 1♣=At least two.
² 3♣= Preemptive

At favourable vulnerability I like to open a useful eleven count. 1♣ could have been a doubleton so Zia should have at least five for his preempt. If he has six I believe we have a good sacrifice in 5♣. Even opposite five clubs with a 2-4-2-5 or 1-4-3-5 shape (not unlikely, as the opponents have chosen spades as trumps) there must be a good chance of escaping with -500.

What would you have done?

My inner scorpion couldn't resist; 5♣. This was doubled by Roy Welland and soon I was scoring -1100.

♠ 96			
♥ J6			
♦ Q932			
♣ J9763			
♠ Q1084	N	♠ J753	
♥ Q732		♥ AK854	
♦ K8	W	♦ A107	
♣ Q85		♣ A	
	S		
♠ AK2			
♥ 109			
♦ J654			
♣ K1042			

Perhaps you could argue that Zia didn't have his bid but I might have involved him in the decision by bidding 4♣ over East's double. I had hoped that the opponents would stop in 3♥ but looking at my hand this is against the odds.

Two Hearts Doubled

Pat Barry



My earliest memories are of going out to the barn shed in the morning to collect the eggs laid by the hens. We were then living in Cloughjordan House, a circumstance that arose from my father's bank clerk job.

His father had also been in the Bank, I had followed suit, and the result has been that for some 130 years we were part of the travelling community, and between the three of us the Bank transferred us on 22 occasions to different parts of Ireland.

After Cloughjordan it was off to Cork where me and my three brothers were into all sports, anything with a ball in it. My big sister Anne (later wife of Denis Dillon) bossed me around, while my baby sister Gráinne (later Barton) was rightly spoiled. With no TV, card games were a feature of evening life, canasta, 110, rummy, snap, old maid.

There were further transfers to Mallow, Waterford and Clonmel. My father was now the Bank Manager and lived over the shop. It was at this time that I joined the Bank, and my first posting was to Clonmel where I too lived over the shop. I was quite speedy in those days and was able to get out of bed at 9.28am and be in the office for the 9.30 start.

It was 1963 when my mother Grace Barry asked me to play with her one night in the local bridge club in Clonmel.

Some years earlier she had asked me if I would like to learn how to play the Piano. I said, "no way", that I had to go out and play football with the lads. That was a huge mistake, for mother was a

fine concert pianist, a Feis Ceóil medallist, with many concert and Radio Eireann recitals to her name.

I am very glad that I accepted her offer to go down to the bridge club that night. Being a handy player in her own right, she was well equipped to pass on the rudiments. As ever she was gentle and encouraging.

It appeared that the many non-bridge card games that were played in the family home had given me some card sense. But there was much to learn about bridge. I took to voraciously reading the classics. No these were not about Greek or Roman Civilisation, but were bridge books written in the main by Terence Reese. As well as being an expert player, he had an appealing style of writing and presentation.

Nowadays that there is a vast amount of reading material available to the aspiring bridge player, and I strongly recommend that to improve one's game, reading the books is essential.

After Clonmel my bank job next took me to Cork City, where I continued with lots of ball sports and just a little bridge. The Cork bridge players stressed that there was also a lighter side to the game, and they introduced me to well-known hostels like the Vineyard and the Chateau.

In early 1965 I was sentenced to 18 months in Portlaoise, where I remember a thriving bridge club with warm and friendly faces. One player who always played North was noted for sitting back in his chair and was very attentive to the bidding at the next table from where the boards were coming to him. But one night he was set up, and he overheard "6NT made".

So, when the board reached him, he duly bid the slam, which went three down. There were lots of characters around in those times.

It was here that I met Risteárd P De Barra who was putting in the telephone exchanges for LM Ericsson. Apart from bridge he was also into alternative medicine and homeopathy. At bridge we shocked the establishment when the two of us came up from the sticks to Dublin and won the under 35-Championship of Ireland.

My next posting was to Dublin. It was the swinging 60's and a most exciting time for a twenty-year-old to be in the big city. There was very little time for sleep. The Beatles were in their prime. While I didn't make it to Woodstock, the social diary was heavy, and there were many nights in dance halls trying to do the twist in the hope of attracting a young mini-skirted beauty.

There was much bridge too. The game had become very popular; there were many young players including university students taking it up. Weak No-trump, four-card majors were the rage. One or two were experimenting with Little Major, Precision Club. The Regent, Bankers, Civil Service, and The Arts were the prominent clubs.

My game was improving and father Eddie Barry must have noticed for he invited me to partner him in Congresses held in Portrush and Tramore. We also played together in the Inter Banks Competition, and I was really honoured when he later asked me to play with him in the International Trials. He had been a top player himself and in my partisan view he was the "Tom Hanlon" among the bridge players of the 1930s. For those Trials, we didn't make the team, but it was a great learning curve.

Some success followed. I was just turned 23 when I won the first of four Davidson Cups and was later fortunate to win most of the majors in the Irish Bridge calendar, some on multiple occasions.

Apart from the major tournaments, the highlight for me at that time were the many bridge congresses held throughout the country. Whether you won or lost there was much fun and camaraderie to be had at these events. Galway at Easter, Sligo, Tramore, Clonmel, Malahide, and Ballybunion come to mind. It was at the Ballybunion Congress in September 1969 that Maria Nolan and I first exchanged glances. Maria had come from a similar background, with her father also a bank manager. Both of her parents were handy bridge players, as were her siblings.

Not long after Ballybunion, we started dating, leading to engagement, and then marriage in May 1972. Despite the grief of losing both parents between November 1969 and February 1971, the siblings were able to host the wedding reception in the family home in Merton Drive, Ranelagh. It must be said that the Nolan siblings were most welcoming to me, particularly the Matriarch Carmel (later Beatty).

The four-week honeymoon was spent firstly in Kellys Rosslare (with

no bridge), and in the following weeks we were both selected on an Irish bridge team that travelled overseas to play matches against Poland and Czechoslovakia. Maria partnered David Scannell, while Rex Anderson played with me. Our very generous hosts were part of the ruling Communist Regime, and we were royally treated.

Then reality struck, the honeymoon was over and we had to go back to work. My new bank posting was to the vibrant city of Galway where we set up our first home. We played a lot of bridge, much of it as partners. Husbands and wives playing opposite each other could present some challenges, but Maria made it very clear. If at any time her bridge decisions were questioned then she would pick up her handbag on the spot, and head straight back to Galway. With the ground rules firmly in place, we were able to enjoy much success together, including several majors, the highlight being winning the Davidson Cup three years in a row.

Our international journeys had followed similar paths.

In 1970 following trials we were both successful in qualifying for the European Junior Championships held in Dublin. Maria played with David Scannell and I with Rex Anderson. (Rex is the top player in Northern Ireland and has been

so for many years. It is my great fortune that he has been a major part of my bridge journey, and that he continues to play with me today.)

In 1972 as above we went to Poland. In 1973, Maria and David, plus Rex and I were selected to represent Ireland in matches against a touring Lancia Team which included the actor Omar Sharif, and the famous Italian bridge players Belladonna and Garozzo. The matches were held in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin. I have never seen so many spectators at a bridge game, there were thousands of young ladies who readily admitted that they did not know an ace from a king. They were there to see Omar. Maria said his eyes just melted, and as she tried to make advances to him, for a split second she forgot that she was now some seven months pregnant!

In 1975 we both played in the European Championships held in Brighton, Maria partnering Ruth Giddings in the Ladies, while Rex and I had qualified from Trials, and played in the Open.

Thereafter bridge took a back seat as the family grew, Simon, David, Judy and Peter had come into the world. These were very happy and exciting times. Sadly, we had to leave Galway when another bank



Maria Nolan in 1970



Omar Sharif with Pat Barry in 1973



posting took us to Athlone. In 1988, with university education looming for the kids, Dublin became the destination for the final bank transfer.

Maria was now able to resume her international career, and Barbara Seligman was her partner for the World Championship in Geneva, for the 1991 European Championships in Killarney, and later the EU Championships in Greece. In 1998 she partnered Ann Montwill and teamed up with Aileen and Rebecca O'Keeffe to represent Ireland and win the Silver Medal at the EU Championships in Salsomaggiore. In 2009, Maria partnered my sister Gráinne to win trials to represent Ireland in the Lady Milne Trophy. However they had to withdraw when Gráinne's husband, the late great supremo of Irish bridge, Pat Walshe very sadly died in June of that year.

I joined the senior circuit. In May 2024 after success in the Trials, I got my first cap for the Republic of Ireland, partnering Dave Terry in the Teltscher Trophy at Stirling, Scotland.

In the years 2000/2015, I was fortunate to play for Ireland in European/World Bridge Championships in Ostend, Verona, Maastricht, Tenerife, Geneva, Beijing, Chennai, Lille. For these events my partner was either Rex or the great David Jackson.

Of all these events, Chennai, India stands out. It was the 2015 World Senior Championships; Ireland having qualified from the European Championships played in Ostend. At the end of the Round Robin having played the other 22 countries we were in third position. If this had been a European Championship we would have received a medal. But we had to go into a knock-out and sadly the USA beat us. Our team was Mícheál O'Bráin and his brother Pádraig, Nick FitzGibbon and Adam Mesbur, along with Rex and myself (NPC was Derek O'Gorman).

The following hand helped us in Chennai:

Dealer West. Vul N/S.

♠AJ109863 ♥J53 ♦6 ♣J8			
♠KQ7	N	♠42	
♥K1096	W	♥A8	
♦Q1082	E	♦AJ93	
♣A9	S	♣Q10432	
♠5 ♥Q742 ♦K754 ♣K765			

W USA	N Pat	E USA	S Rex
1♥	2♠	X	P
2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

This was board 28 in a low scoring tight quarter final match v the USA. Most of the Norths I know would have overcalled 3♠ rather than 2♠! North led ♠J. Declarer, playing North for a six-card suit, decided to duck. Now if North continues spades, declarer has an easy route to nine tricks via one spade, two hearts, three diamonds, and three clubs. North switched to a low heart, to the Q and K. Declarer lost the diamond finesse to South, who returned a heart. Declarer came to hand with a diamond, gave up a heart to North, who cashed the ♠A, got out with a spade, and waited for the setting trick in clubs. The defence took two spades, one heart, one diamond, and one club. 3NT was made at the other table for a nice swing to Ireland.

I love swingy hands and this is my all-time favourite [I came out on the right side!]:

While apart from Chennai, our senior international results have been about average, it is very heartening to note the performances of the Irish Open Team in recent years. The team has put Ireland firmly on the world bridge stage and has now become a most respected and even feared opponent. Undoubtedly the inspiring leadership of Non-Playing Captain Gráinne Barton is a major factor!! But the players spearheaded by the great Tom Hanlon could have had a hand in it too! Tom's recent Hall of Fame

award was fully deserved and is a further boost for Irish bridge. I have had the pleasure of playing quite a bit of golf with Tom and let me assure readers that he is even better at the golf than the bridge.

Summary

I have been blessed to have lived such a long and full life, with rarely a dull moment. Bridge has been such a huge and satisfying part of it and has taken me all over the world to places that otherwise would not have been visited. I have met so many fabulous people of all ages and from so many different walks of life. My grateful thanks must go to all the partners who played with me and provided support, friendship and success.

Above all I have been so very lucky to have met, through bridge, Maria Nolan my life partner and my rock. Our high-calibre kids have created Robbie, Emma, Isabelle, Hannah, Amy, Evie, Annie Rose, and James. Each displays exceptional talents and they are much doted upon by their grandparents

At the end of the day, one must say "thank you God".

And yes, the two hearts doubled was made!

Things you might expect:

Plays golf and BBO bridge a few times each week.

Things you might not expect:

Is into the addictive sport of genealogy. Enjoys listening to classical music.



Maria and Pat Barry, July 2026

Senior Moments in Riga

Fred Barry



Dealer South. Vul All.

♠ J6532		
♥ J86		
♦ -		
♣ 98432		
♠ AKQ9	N	♠ 8
♥ AQ9	W	♥ 104
♦ A2	E	♦ Q10976543
♣ AK76	S	♣ J5
♠ 1074		
♥ K7532		
♦ KJ8		
♣ Q10		

6♦ is the right contract, but how do you bid the E/W hands?

Open teams:	15 of 22 bid 6♦
Women	10 of 20 bid 6♦
Mixed	10 of 24 bid 6♦
Senior	14 of 22 bid 6♦

5♦ was a popular alternative bid, some languished in 3NT while a few more optimistic teams tried 7NT!

Bidding it was the easy part. How do you play it?

A safety play (running ♦10) guards against ♦KJx in either defender's hand. Spade ruff to enter the east hand, then lead the ♦10, running it if not covered.

If a spade is led declarer has to worry (a tiny bit) about South having a singleton spade and a singleton ♦J. Very unlikely, as South would have opened a heart or a Club pre-empt.

If East is playing the hand, and South leads a heart, Declarer has to throw a heart on a spade, then ruff back to hand with a third round of spades. Running the ♦10 is then a tiny bit risky, as Norths may win with the singleton ♦J and give South a ruff with the ♦K. Less probable than ♦KJx in South's hand, but not impossible.

Anyway, some made the safety play, others simply laid down the ♦A, and started working on their excuses.

Happiest of all were the wimps in 5♦, who all scorned the overtrick.

Open teams:	15 of 22 bid it 7 of that 15 made it 32%
Women	10 of 20 bid it 2 of that 10 made it 10%
Mixed	10 of 24 bid it 3 of that 10 made it 12.5%
Senior	14 of 22 bid it 6♦ 7 of that 14 made it 32%

Overall performance on this hand

Best result:	Denmark bid and made 6♦ at all four tables
Worst result	Spain Seniors in 7NTX - 5 for 1400
Biggest swing:	Portugal Seniors in 7NT-5 in one room, Norway bid and made 6♦ in the other for 1370 in one room, 18 IMPS on one hand.

Ireland's performance on this hand

Ireland Open	Bid and made 5♦; opponents 6♦-1 + 12 imps
Ireland Women	Bid and made 3NT, Sweden bid and made 5♦ Flat
Ireland Mixed	Were sitting out for this match
Ireland Seniors	Ireland 6♦-1, England bid and made 5♦ - 12 imps



*Irish Seniors Team at Riga:
Paul Porteous, Fred Barry,
Donal Garvey, Sheila Kelly
NPC, Pat Quinn, Michael
McAuliffe and David Dunne*

Mastering the Game

Maura King



Tis the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, and I find that I am a new Area Master.

The “appellation” Area Master is somewhat of a misnomer. Every outing at the bridge table tends to confirm that I have neither a particular nor general area of mastery of bridge. Becoming an Area Master feels like the bridge equivalent of being rewarded a long service medal. Intermediate players who diligently turn up to national events, win a few matches here and there and serve their time gradually accumulate the 10 national points necessary to become an Area Master.

Less cited among the many advantages of playing bridge is that bridge is metaphorically an international passport and an international connector. If one can play bridge, one can travel to other countries and play bridge. One can forge friendships with bridge players in other jurisdictions. Online bridge games can keep one in touch with family and friends who move abroad. This year I derived enormous pleasure from winning a session prize at the Malahide bridge congress playing with my friend Ana Ghita. Ana and I started out in Leinster Bridge Club as novices. Ana is Romanian now working in Paris. These days Ana plays SEF and I play 2/1 but our common bridge language is Acol 4 and weak and so that is what we played for old times' sake in Malahide. A bridge resolution for this year is to encourage every bridge player I know abroad who has time and disposable income to play at least one Irish Congress. Come for the bridge and stay for the golf, Guinness, whatever.

I have a particular fondness for the big EBU congresses which can be both quirky and eccentric. My fondness stems back to a day when

scarcely out of novice nappies my daughter Phedra and I rocked up at the Year-End Congress in London. I hardly slept the night before, knowing that a full cast of stellar bridge players would be present. Sure enough, the playing room was teeming with European champions, bridge writers, international players and teenage bridge prodigies. Yet everyone we played was friendly and expressed relief at escaping from the obligations of family to the relatively free, relatively safe haven of the bridge table. That was until we came to one particular table where two gentlemen of mature years sat glaring at each other across the table. There was no welcome on the mat. “Sit down quickly – you are late” (we were not of course late) they roared at us in unison as we approached with trepidation. The non greeting was followed by “You are both young, you have no excuse, what took you so long to get here”. In a flash I realised they were the living embodiment of Statler and Waldorf the two grumpy old men from the Muppets. Waldorf informed us that they were now going to recite (yes recite) their system. The club might have been short but the rote recital of conventions that followed was interminably long. When it finally ended, I politely said our system is the first two lines of your recital and reached for the cards. “Stop” roared Stadler. “I want you to tell me the last three conventions I have recited for you”. I confidently started “Puppet Stayman”. “No” roared Waldorf triumphantly “I knew you were not listening properly; we are playing Muppet Stayman not Puppet Stayman”. I stared in disbelief. Firstly, that there was a convention called “Muppet Stayman”.

Secondly that the Muppets were playing Muppet Stayman. I then

realised that no card play was going on at the adjoining tables. Everyone was holding tight to their cards and pretending not to listen to my interrogation. I started to giggle and the next two tables followed suit. The Muppets had the last laugh. We never settled after such a riotous start, and we handed the Muppets two tops. Why I wonder would anyone choose to play a game conducted in silence like chess when they could be playing bridge?

Apropos of nothing I found myself in a group of Regional Masters recently. None of them, I learned in response to my question, had ever heard of Muppet Stayman. On further consideration maybe I have sold myself short as I have in fact an area of mastery namely “Muppet Stayman”. Too bad that I am not yet playing it but come the day it is in my arsenal I will be a force to be reckoned with. *[Journal readers can check the archive, but a half-dozen issues or so ago we carried a thorough treatment of Muppet Stayman by Randal Milne – who is neither Statler nor Waldorf, in case he's reading this. Ed.]*

August took us to the Eastbourne Congress, a jewel in the EBU crown. There were so many Paddies bound for Eastbourne on our flight over it had the feel of an outing to Cheltenham race week. Our team of four consisted of my husband Ian Kingston, Siew Kwan Chang aka SK, Agit Gokhale and my good self. We know each other from the Monday duplicate game in Windsor Bridge Club Berkshire. SK had experience of high-level team bridge having played for Malaysia in the Commonwealth Games as a university student back in the day. Notwithstanding SK's bridge pedigree, collectively we were a team of little experience



holding many passports with no expectation of going places in Eastbourne. What can I say about how we did save that we won some and lost more. *[More won against than winning; Ed]* Occasionally we displayed flashes of potential and surprised ourselves more than the opponents. Maybe there is a degree of selection bias on my part, but this is my pick as the most interesting hand from the teams event.

Dealer West. Vul N/S.

			♠ KJ7		
			♥ AK9652		
			♦ 9765		
			♣ -		
		N		♠ AQ103	
				♥ Q4	
		W		E	♦ -
		S		♣ AKQJ962	
♠ 982					
♥ 107					
♦ 832					
♣ 108753					
			♠ 654		
			♥ J83		
			♦ AKQJ104		
			♣ 4		

I am sitting west. Pass from me, 1♥ from North, 3♣ from SK sitting East alerted by me as we were playing a form of Ghestem popular in Windsor whereby the bid of 3♣ is a two-suited overcall showing the extreme suits - in this instance clubs and spades. The opponents, possibly because it was the last round "punch drunk" stage of the competition, did not seek an explanation of the bid either then or later - something that was fortuitous as I was expecting my partner to have five spades. On mature reflection I realise that SK's space taking but not points limiting 3♣ was higher ordered thinking. Traditional bidding might be double first and be ready to show clubs on the next round, but when one's strength is in a minor that runs the risk of the opponents taking the bidding too high with their likely major fit before East gets their spoke in. East's hand is slammy but not jammy slammy. It needs some help from partner so useful to find out whether partner has a fit in either clubs or spades. South after some consideration bid 4♥. I bid 5♣. North bid 5♥. Now SK who

knows where the missing clubs are bids 6♣. South passed which was alerted as a forcing pass. North doubles. I believe double after a forcing pass in the opponents' system is showing a minimum opening hand. South ponders and ponders before passing the double. SK ruffed the diamond lead, got to dummy with a club, ran the ♠9 not covered, spades again North plays Jack taken by the Queen, back to dummy with a club to try the spade finesse, finally throwing a heart loser on the fourth spade. 6♣ doubled made. Beautifully played.

The forcing pass is a weapon widely deployed by young EBU players in similar sequences to great effect. Unluckily for our young opponents holding 22 points they only just had the balance of the points. In this instance the sophisticated tool of the forcing pass hindered rather than helped. North being void in clubs and neither hand having any club defence, once the heart fit was found 6♥ was the way to go. Played by North it is on ice. It is the sort of hand that makes the anti-convention bridge camp tut-tut and view as proof that conventions confuse. I love conventions and am firmly in the pro-convention camp. I will happily play the forcing pass when we have bid game holding constructive values and the opponents sacrifice with any partner who is up for it because over time it gains more often than it backfires. Peter Goodman in a talk at the Regent Friendly Fridays commented that "bridge has become a bidders' game". Bidding is the language of bridge. I observe even at my lowly level that the more nuanced the language of bridge the better the communication, the better the contract and the better the results. The four words I have come to dislike most in bridge are "let's keep it simple". The incentive for me to sacrifice weekends to become an Area Master was to move into a field where I can play with partners who do not want to keep it simple against players who are not keeping it simple.

Playing 2/1 our opponents did not find the 10-card diamond fit at our table. In contrast our teammates playing Acoll (4 card majors) showed diamonds on the first round of the bidding when Agit as South responded 2♦ [over a 2♣ overcall] to Ian's 1♥ opening. After a competitive bidding sequence with Ian and Agit showing hearts and diamonds the opponents got to 6♣. Agit, a fearless American, took the plunge and bravely bid 6♦ which was doubled. Fortune as it so often does in teams' bridge favoured the brave. After the favourable ♥10 [*ye Gods and little fishes!! Ed.*] lead Agit comfortably made 6♦ doubled plus one. Four teams bid 6♦ of which one went down, one made 6♦ undoubled and two were doubled and made.

Kudos to Marcin Rudzinski, Wojciech Gorczyca, Matthew O'Farrell and Ronan McMaugh who were the pride of the Irish and finished an impressive 13th in a field of bridge giants. No pressure lads but next year you could do it. They are all nice fellows, but the extrovert Marcin is particularly appreciated by us recently Intermediate players as he always takes the time to lend a word of encouragement or a bit of sage advice.

While it is certainly true that I care more about getting better than winning, now that Mayo no longer need the Saw Doctors song "To Win Just Once" as their pre-match anthem, I think I will adopt it as my bridge anthem.

*"To win just once against the odds
And once be smiled on by the Gods"*

On second thoughts maybe not, I do not have 75 years ahead of me.

Junior Bridge Focus

Luca Crone



The summer is always a busy time for international bridge, with this one no different. Since the Spring Fours, the juniors have been preparing for the European Youth Team Championships, which were held in Riga, Latvia, this July.

They have been ironing out system and attending sessions provided by the generous Irish coaches; Peter Pigot, Karel De Raeymaeker and Margaret Murphy to name a few. The championships were held just after the open, women's, mixed and senior championships in the same venue. It was decided we would send one team to the U26 category under the guidance of the ruthless Karel De Raeymaeker, otherwise known as KDR. The team was Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan, Luca Crone and Matthew O'Farrell and Leah Finnegan and Denise Walsh. KDR was playing in the mixed series and, therefore, became our local guide when we arrived in Latvia. U26 is always a tough field, although there was some controversy as they chose to clash the Youth Championships with the US Summer National. What was the bidding like, I hear you ask? All I'll say is the youthful exuberance made me feel like I'm getting old.

Let's have a look at a board which illustrates an idea that kept cropping up throughout the tournament. Bidding judgement is arguably the hardest part of bridge, so why not give this six-level call a go? Put yourself in Matthew's shoes with the West hand below, playing against a Hungarian pair, who are currently 8th out of 23 teams. Everyone is vulnerable. You thought you might pre-empt until everyone else at the table finds a bid.

♠ KQJ9832
♥ 86
♦ 10
♣ J93

W	N	E	S
	1♥	2♥ ¹	2♠
5♠	P	P	6♦
P	6♥	P	P
?			
¹ 2♥=5+S 5+m			

Any 6♠ bidders? Do you agree with 5♠ earlier? Maybe you want to play some poker and pretend to go low first, even with the known minimum 12 card fit. Or maybe you wanted to blast 6♠ immediately? It is ironic that I put a slam sacrifice in my last article, as this is the exact point that was hammered home for me this tournament. The law of total tricks says maybe you should try the six-level, but we know this law is not very accurate for high-level judgment. How many spades do you think you are making? Likely not 6. What do we need from partner for them to go down? Two aces outside of spades (we have 12) or a cashing AK, albeit unlikely given the auction. In fact, North's pass of 5♠ was encouraging to bid 6 as 2♠ set up a GF. This is a very hard problem

in pairs, as you need to bring a positive score home no matter what you do. What about taking some insurance? The next question is how many do we expect to go down in 6♠? Not many is the answer; nonetheless, let's count our losers. No spades (partner must have the Ace for bidding 2♥), on a bad day, maybe one heart, one diamond, and two clubs. Pessimistically, it could be down three, which is 800 (assuming doubled), but you can easily construct hands where you might even be -1. The more diamonds partner has, the better. Something like 6052 is very possible, and then it is 200, giving partner the ♦A and ♠A, a super minimum for 2♥. But 200 is way cheaper than their even their game contract. What happens if the other side just plays 4♥? I have learned that if the slam sacrifice may be cheap than their game, you need to take it, making 6♠ the bid here. Even if they were going down, you are risking +100 for likely -200, but -500 vs -1430 is a big difference. At teams, insurance in the slam zone is worth a ton of imps. In fact, on this hand, they need to lead a club to beat you in 6♠. There were a total of 136 imps spilt on this board over 11 tables, which is an average of just over 12 per table. It seems a lot of people got it wrong!



Matthew O'Farrell, Denise Walsh, Leah Finnegan, Klara Flanagan, Eve Connell and Luca Crone

Here is the full hand:

♠ 7 ♥ J10975 ♦ AJ ♣ KQ642			
♠ KQJ9832	N	♠ A10654	
♥ 86		♥ -	
♦ 10	W	♦ Q9874	
♣ J93		♣ A87	
	S		
♠ - ♥ AKQ432 ♦ K6532 ♣ 105			

In the end, we finished with four teams below us, which is a lot more than many Irish junior teams have managed in the last two decades.

Then in August, I travelled to Hefei, China, for the World Youth Transnational Championships. After two ten-hour flights with a nine-hour layover, far from ideal, trust me, I arrived in Shanghai. The plan was to stay in Shanghai for a few days before the tournament to get over the jet lag. Unfortunately, Matthew was otherwise occupied. Work is a terrible thing to hinder a summer of bridge. Consequently, I decided to play with a German junior. We have known each other for years, so we were hoping that would help us understand each other throughout the bidding. We quickly discovered we both enjoy a system with a short club and transfers. This resulted in our motto being "if in doubt (and it makes sense), it's a transfer". The scary part was that I started to see more positions where transfers make sense than I ever thought imaginable. I'm not convinced I will be making this agreement with a new partner again without more discussion.

We started the tournament playing the U31 teams with a Croatian pair. We were unfortunately put in the same room as the 254 U16 pairs. Pretty quickly I realised I should have taken the earplugs from my flight as it was impossible to think or score up given the noise. I am blaming that and the jet lag for our slow start, resulting in us missing out marginally on the A final. Thankfully, we knocked off some of the cobwebs and steamed our way through the field in the B final, leading the whole way.

I have a question for you. What does the auction 1♠-1♣!-2♣!! mean? Maybe having my hand will help.

♠ Q10973
♥ 9
♦ A9
♣ A10652

Surely you agree with opening 1♠, you fit the rule of 20. You push the tray to the other side of the screen and a few moments later, it comes back with the auction above. I must say that I haven't had that one before. Nonetheless, I trust my partner, so he has chosen to accept the 1♣ bid, and the auction now continues from there. The real question is what he means by 2♣. He chose not to notify the 1♣ bidder to take back his bid. He must feel he is gaining an advantage by allowing the 1♣ to stand. As I am mulling over my rebid, my screen mate lets out an exclamation and says, "Are we meant to call a director?". I calmly comfort him by telling him my partner knows what he is doing. In the end, I take 2♣ for a good spade raise, which makes my hand look quite good, and we end up in 4♠ making.

In fact, partner has no good bid over 1♠. His hand doesn't look good enough to make a limit raise but 2♣ feels like an underbid. 2♣ allows us to stop in 2♠ if we need, a genius bid. Without 1♣, I admit it is not so easy to bid these two hands to 4♠, as I will let 2♣ go. It goes to show that sometimes you have to think outside the box.

♠ A85 ♥ 10432 ♦ Q108632 ♣ -			
♠ KJ4	N	♠ Q10973	
♥ Q765		♥ 9	
♦ 754	W	♦ A9	
♣ KJ8		♣ A10652	
	S		
♠ 62 ♥ AKJ8 ♦ KJ ♣ Q9743			

This was a 10-imp gain, with only one other pair in the field reaching 4♠. We went into the last round with a 17VP lead over second and won the last round, much to the annoyance of the Chinese team from Guangdong, who did pull a 20-0 in the last round but finished in second. Somehow, we had made ourselves World Champions. I will admit we were not champions of the event we had hoped for, but wins are so seldom in bridge that you must take them when you can. The worst part was that there was no champagne shower, and we had to play bridge the next day.

Stay tuned, I have not forgotten that I promised you some defensive tips. There have just been a few stories to tell lately, but I will be returning to this topic in the next edition. As always, please try to encourage our junior players. If you would be interested in giving some of our learning players a game, let me know or email irishyouthbridge@gmail.com.



Luca with his teammates at World Youth Transnational Championships in Hefei, China

The Teachers' Club

Celebrating 50 years of playing bridge in Wexford

Marguerite Sweetman

The Teachers' Bridge Club, based in Wexford Town, celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2026.

The club was founded, following bridge lessons, provided by Jim Begley, in the old "Tech" [Wexford Technical College]. The first Annual General Meeting was held on 7th April 1976 with a confined membership of 60 and an annual subscription of £1.50. The earliest membership records are from 1982 and there are approximately fifteen of those still playing bridge.

As the name of the club suggests, membership was initially teachers only and the first venue for the club was the Teachers Centre in Summerhill.

Non-teachers joined the club soon after its foundation and the group played in a number of different venues around the town. They moved to a room in the Kincone Lodge for a short while. Whites Hotel was used in the late 1970s. The Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS) was used for a period. By 1980 the committee was hoping to move to the Talbot Hotel though moves were already afoot between the various clubs already present in the town regarding the possibility of having a dedicated Bridge Centre.

Members were delighted to have a permanent home when the "old" Wexford Bridge Centre was opened in the early 1980s. At the Teachers' AGM in February 1982. Billy Sweetman paid tribute to all of those who had made it possible. The club are now playing in the "new" Wexford Community Bridge Centre built in 2014.

The handwritten minutes of the early committee meetings, from 1976 onwards, are not only legible but beautifully penned and provide a fascinating insight into the club development and the wider evolution of the game in Wexford. From inception the club was proactive and sociable with Christmas parties, Presidents' Prizes and closing nights. In-house competitions, including player of the month, pairs' events and the Barbara Stone trophy (commemorating a founder member) have been held annually for the last 50 years.

Despite the difficulties of the Covid pandemic, today there is a good membership including children and grandchildren of past members. There is a sometimes a perception that bridge is an older persons' game. In the Teachers' Club, members' ages range from 20's to 90's with players from France, Canada, Germany and Poland. Garfield Lindo, the very popular 2025-26 President of the Club, was born in Jamaica and lived in North America and Costa Rica before relocating to Wexford. It has been rumoured, though not confirmed, that he selected Wexford with the sole intention of joining the Teachers Bridge Club.

The club today prides itself on being friendly and supportive to new members and is unique in welcoming members of all grades from novice to masters.

At an event to celebrate to 50th anniversary during the summer, the contribution of all previous and founder members and committees was acknowledged. A presentation was made to Jim Begley who gave the initial lessons. Presentations were also made to Tom Bolger, Mary



Above: Garfield Lindo with Jim and Miriam Begley
Below: Garfield Lindo with Finola McManamy



O'Donoghue, and Finola McManamy, three of the early presidents who are currently members of the club in appreciation of their leadership and dedication to the club.

So, what for the next 50 years? Undoubtedly, the game will evolve with the increase in digitization and potentially new bidding methods. We do not know the challenges ahead. If the past 50 years are any indication, the Teachers' club will manage them adeptly and, more importantly, wholeheartedly embrace all opportunities this wonderful game brings.

The Teachers' club always welcomes new members. For more information on bridge in Wexford and bridge lessons, please see our [Facebook page](#).

[Editor's note. The Teachers' club is part of my bridge DNA, and some of the names mentioned are part of my life's journey. Jim Begley was Principal of Kilrane National School, where he had the great misfortune to teach me. Barbara Stone was my equally unfortunate teacher for Junior and Senior Infants, and Bagenalstown's finest, Tom Bolger had a narrow escape when I did not darken his door during my time in St Peter's College. The Journal's doors are firmly open for articles of this kind, which mark club milestones and summarise the attendant history. History needs to be for the living, guys. If not documented / recorded for posterity, vital context is lost and society is the poorer.]

Tralee International Bridge Congress 2027

Nicky Fitzgibbon



A new home, a full weekend of bridge - and one thought worth taking to the table.

It is a great pleasure to invite bridge players from across Ireland to the Tralee International Bridge Congress 2027, taking place from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st March at our new home, The Meadowlands Hotel in Tralee.

The venue may be new, but the character of the Congress remains the same: competitive bridge played in a friendly atmosphere, a programme for different grades, opportunities to learn, and plenty of time to enjoy the company of the wider bridge community.

A new home at the Meadowlands

The move to the four-star Meadowlands gives us an excellent base for the weekend. The Congress package is €185 per person sharing for two nights - Friday and Saturday - including bed and breakfast on both mornings and dinner on Saturday. The single rate is €275. The hotel has only 60 rooms and a limited number of singles, so early booking is strongly advised. The special offer is available, subject to availability, for bookings made before 19 February 2027.

We are delighted to welcome players during the year of CBAI National President George Ryan, North Munster President Dolores O'Donnell and Tralee Congress President Pat Fitzgibbon. Huey Daly will be our Tournament Director for the weekend.

Bridge for every grade

The weekend opens at 7.15pm on Friday, followed at 7.30pm by the Gala Pairs and an Intermediate B & Novice Pairs. Saturday offers a full afternoon and evening programme, including the two-session Congress Pairs for the Marie Fleming Trophy, a two-session Intermediate Pairs, Open Pairs and a dedicated Novice Pairs. Sunday brings the extended-session Congress Teams and Intermediate Teams, with Open and Intermediate B & Novice Pairs also beginning at 1.00pm.

One of the features we are particularly pleased to continue is our Saturday morning hand discussion. At 11.00am, Grand Master Dónal Garvey will look back over hands from Friday night's play. It is a chance to revisit the decisions that felt obvious at the table - and the ones that did not - with the benefit of time, discussion and expert analysis.

The Tralee table thought: make the next decision easier

One of the wisest observations I have come across in bridge writing is that the best partnerships do not simply guess better than everyone else. Very often, they have arranged the auction so that the difficult final guess belongs to somebody else. There is a useful companion thought in the play as well: before committing to the critical move, use every scrap of information that is already available - and, where possible, gather a little more before deciding.

Put another way, good bridge is not just about finding brilliant answers. It is about making the next decision easier for yourself and for partner.

Try this at the table

Partner opens 1♥. Right-hand opponent overcalls 1♠. You hold:

♠ 6
♥ Q1074
♦ AJ853
♣ 962

What is the most important message in your hand?

The exact call depends on your partnership methods, and that is the point. You have four-card heart support, useful shape and a side suit. If your methods allow you to describe the fit now, you give partner information while there is still room. If you first make a bid that conceals the heart fit and the opponents take away space, one of you may later be forced to decide at the four or five level with much less certainty. The lesson is not a convention: tell partner what will matter to the next decision before the auction makes it expensive to do so.

At adverse vulnerability, this hand still has strong competitive qualities — four-card heart support, a singleton spade and a useful five-card diamond suit — but the cost of going down means you cannot value shape quite as freely as you might at favourable vulnerability. The singleton spade is a major asset when hearts are trumps, yet contributes little on defence, so the key is to recognise that the hand is stronger offensively than defensively and let the vulnerability temper how far you are prepared to compete.

The same habit is valuable when dummy comes down. Before taking a finesse or touching the critical suit, ask three questions: **What do I actually know? What happens if this loses? Do I have to decide now?**

The auction, the opening lead, the count and the cards already played may all change the odds. Sometimes a safe winner can be cashed, a side suit can be tested or a defender's shape can be clarified before the irreversible guess is made. Every reliable fact you collect turns a little piece of guesswork into judgement.

That is exactly why the Saturday hand discussion is such a valuable part of the Congress. The traveller tells you the score; the discussion asks how the decision arose, what information was available and whether there was a way to make the problem easier. If everyone leaves with one such idea to carry into the afternoon session, the hour will have been well spent.

All competitions are subject to sufficient entries. The Congress Committee reserves the right to amend the schedule, rules or format of any event.

Getting to Tralee

Tralee is well connected for players travelling from around the country. Rail services from Dublin Heuston and Cork connect to Tralee Casement Station via Mallow. Bus Éireann serves Tralee from Cork, Limerick and Waterford, while Dublin Coach provides direct services from Dublin and Limerick. Kerry Airport is approximately 20-25 minutes from Tralee by bus or taxi.

Booking Your Stay

To avail of the Congress package, contact The Meadowlands Hotel on 066 718 0444, email info@meadowlandshotel.com, or book at www.meadowlandshotel.com using the offer code BRIDG and ask for the Bridge Package. The offer is subject to availability and should be booked before 19 February 2027. With only 60 rooms in the hotel, and limited single accommodation, we would encourage anyone intending to stay on site to book early.

Thank You to Our Supporters

The Congress is grateful for the support of Kerry County Council Community Support Fund, T1 HealthCare, The Meadowlands Hotel, Harbour House, Bridge With Trish and Tralee Community Bridge Club. Their support helps us continue building an event that combines competition, learning and a warm Kerry welcome.

Join Us in Tralee

Whether you are coming to compete for the Marie Fleming Trophy, play in the Open or Intermediate events, enjoy the Novice programme, take on the teams on Sunday, or simply make a weekend of bridge in Tralee, we would be delighted to welcome you.

The Tralee International Bridge Congress 2027 runs from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st March at The Meadowlands Hotel. Full information is available at TraleeBridgeCongress.com. For Congress details and entries, contact Nicky Fitzgibbon on 087 212 6040 or email: TraleeBridgeCongress@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you in Tralee.

Programme at a Glance

Day	Time	Event	Entry
Friday 19 March	7.15pm	Official Opening	-
Friday 19 March	7.30pm	Gala Pairs	€15pp
Friday 19 March	7.30pm	Intermediate B & Novice Pairs	€12.50pp
Saturday 20 March	11.00am	Grand Master Dónal Garvey - discussion of Friday night's hands	-
Saturday 20 March	1.30pm	Open Pairs	€12.50pp
Saturday 20 March	1.45pm	Congress Pairs 2 sessions (Marie Fleming Trophy)	€25pp
Saturday 20 March	1.45pm	Intermediate Pairs 2 sessions	€25pp
Saturday 20 March	7.15pm	Novice Pairs	€12.50pp
Saturday 20 March	7.30pm	Open Pairs	€12.50pp
Sunday 21 March	11.00am	Congress Teams - extended session	€25pp
Sunday 21 March	11.00am	Intermediate Teams - extended session	€25 pp
Sunday 21 March	1.00pm	Open Pairs	€12.50 pp
Sunday 21 March	1.00pm	Intermediate B & Novice Pairs	€12.50 pp

TRALEE
INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE CONGRESS 2027

19-21 March 2027 (Fri-Sun)

The Meadowlands Hotel
Tralee, Co. Kerry
V92 DC83

TraleeBridgeCongress.com
TraleeBridgeCongress@gmail.com

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SCAN TO BOOK

Congress Programme on other page

Guests may book directly by phone, email, or via the hotel website using code "BRIDG"

All competitions are subject to sufficient entries. The Congress Committee reserves the right to amend the schedule, rules, or format of any event at its absolute discretion.

Balbriggan & Moville Bridge Clubs Celebrate Golden Jubilee 1976-2026

Seamus Costello (Balbriggan)
Margaret Doherty (Moville)



Balbriggan - Cutting of the Cake L-R: Brendan Sheridan, Rita McGoe, Seamus Costello.

A week of celebrations took place in Balbriggan Bridge Club from Monday 22 to Friday 26 June, being held in the clubhouse and a marquee located in the rear garden of the club.

Bridge tournaments were held on each of the five days starting with a team game on the Monday, where each team was composed of Masters and Inter A players paired with Inter B and Novice players. The major events of the week, which were held in the marquee in lovely weather, were a Remembrance Mass on the Thursday evening and a Celebration Party on the Friday evening.



Club President Kate Tammemagi

Friday's party, which was attended by 126 people, started with a game of bridge, followed by a meal. A number of addresses were given by our Club President Kate Tammemagi, CBAI CEO Dermot O'Brien, Regional President Melissa Brady and Seamus Costello. A special presentation of a bouquet of flowers was given by President Kate to Deirdre Tuckey for all her hard work in planning the week of celebrations.

Next, we had the cutting of the celebratory cake by Rita McGoe (founder member), Brendan Sheridan (long-standing member whose father Tom was very instrumental in the development of the club including the purchase of the premises, and Seamus Costello. To finish the evening, well nearly, all sung a special bridge-themed song, composed by Seamus and based on Billy Joel's 'We Didn't Start the Fire'. All were agreed it was a great week.



Club Committee 2026/2027 L-R Deirdre Tuckey, Kate Tammemagi, Martina Ward, Geraldine O'Hagan, Phyllis Carew, Sean Newcomen. Marie Kenny, Marie O'Shea, Malcolm Goldsworthy, Bridie Kirwan, Seamus Costello, Frances Newcomen, Susan McNulty, Brendan Sheridan.



Party Bridge Game



The Bridgerettes L-R: Mary Smith, Marie Kenny, Catherine Clarke, Bernie Bissett, Yvonne Howard

Moville Bridge Club celebrated its golden jubilee with a special party in Ballybofey/Stranorlar Golf Club on 1 May.

Like Balbriggan, Moville also had the privilege of having a founder member in attendance, in the person of 94-year-old Margaret Casey. A great day was had by all.

[Many congratulations to both Balbriggan and Moville Bridge Clubs on their golden jubilees, and thanks to both for submitting the notes of their celebrations. I'm sure both clubs acknowledged the hard work done by all the members over the years – it takes a lot of effort to run a bridge club for fifty years. Wishing both clubs many more years of good bridge and good fun. Ed]



L-R Paddy Doran, Betty O'Loughlin, Mary Doherty



Moville Celebratory Cake



L-R Founder Member Margaret Casey, Club Secretary Margaret Doherty, Club President John McClenaghan

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 E/W.

♠ 1095 ♥ A752 ♦ KQ86 ♣ Q7			
♠ 6	N	♠ AJ74	
♥ KJ9843	W	♥ Q10	E
♦ 3		♦ J952	
♣ A9742	S	♣ K63	
♠ KQ853 ♥ 6 ♦ A1074 ♣ J104			

W	N	E	S
	P	P	P
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	2NT	P
3♥	P	4♥	All Pass

Lead:

North leads ♦K followed by ♦Q. How do you plan the play?

The Play

After ruffing the diamond continuation, your first thought might be to play trumps. But a 4-1 trump split will defeat you when North wins the second round of trumps and continues the force in diamonds. As you need a 3-2 break in clubs, play ♣A, ♣K and concede a club. If the defence now continue the force in diamonds, you can embark on a cross ruff for ten tricks. And if the defence switch to the spade suit, win the ace and play trumps. After conceding to the trump ace, ruff the next spade (or diamond) in hand, draw the outstanding trumps and claim the last two tricks with your two established club winners.

Board 2 Dealer East. Vul All.

♠ K832 ♥ 832 ♦ 4 ♣ AK963			
♠ AQ4	N	♠ J96	
♥ AKQJ106	W	♥ 9754	E
♦ A		♦ KQ9862	
♣ J104	S	♣ -	
♠ 1075 ♥ - ♦ J10753 ♣ Q8752			

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

¹ 4♣ = Splinter agreeing hearts
² 4♦ = Cue Bid

Lead:

North leads ♣A. How do you plan the play?

The Play

It looks as though you have missed 7♥ but that is just the time for you to be extra careful in 6♥.

Suppose after ruffing the opening club lead, you enter your hand with the ♦A and ♥A to ruff your two remaining club losers. In dummy, if you now play the ♦K, discarding a spade from hand, North will ruff and exit with a club. Eventually the defence will make the ♠K to defeat the contract.

Win the ♣A by ruffing in dummy and cross to hand with the ♥A to learn the trumps break 3-0. Unblock the ♦A and draw trumps ending in dummy with the nine. Two club losers can be discarded on the ♦KQ and when the diamond suit does not break 3-3 (or neither opponent has ♦JT doubleton), you can finesse the ♠Q for an overtrick hoping South has ♠K doubleton.


Board 3 Dealer South. Vul None.

♠ 10 ♥ A9532 ♦ AQ7 ♣ A1054			
♠ AQ8653	N	♠ KJ742	
♥ K7		♥ Q1084	
♦ K5	W	♦ J6	E
♣ 873		♣ KQ	
♠ 9 ♥ J6 ♦ 1085432 ♣ J962			

W	N	E	S
			P
1♠	X	3NT ¹	P
4♠			

¹ 3NT = Game raise in spades, emphasis on strong trumps

Lead

North leads ♠10. You win the trump lead and play a club honour. North takes the ace and exits with a club. How do you plan the play?

The Play

North's take-out double probably means that he holds both red aces. Cross to hand with a trump and ruff a club in dummy. You could now play a heart to the king and later finesse the ♥10, but better is to come back to hand with a trump and lead a heart towards the queen. If the queen is allowed win, play a heart back to the king and after winning with the ace, North is end-played. This play gains when South follows with the ♥J or ♥9 on the first or second round of hearts.

Board 4 Dealer West. Vul N/S.

♠ 7653 ♥ Q1032 ♦ J8 ♣ K98			
♠ KJ108	N	♠ AQ42	
♥ A		♥ J98754	
♦ AKQ62	W	♦ 53	E
♣ AJ2		♣ 6	
♠ 9 ♥ K6 ♦ 10974 ♣ Q107543			

W	N	E	S
2♣	P	2♦	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
3♣	P	5♣ ¹	P
5NT ²	P	7♠ ³	All Pass

¹ 5♣ = Splinter agreeing spades
² 5NT = Josephine Grand Slam Force
³ 6♠ = Two of top three honours in spades

Lead

North leads ♠5. How do you plan the play?

The Play

The success of this contract is a matter of timing and communication. Win the trump lead in dummy with the ♠A, play a club to the ace and ruff a club. Re-enter your hand with the diamond ace and ruff another club low in dummy. Play a second diamond to the king and ruff a low diamond with the ♠Q. Return to hand with the ♥A, draw the outstanding trumps and claim the last two tricks with your winning diamonds.

If North had found a red suit lead, you can still succeed on a similar line of play. After ruffing two club losers, ruff the third round of diamonds high in dummy and lead the trump queen planning to overtake with the king in hand. You need a 3-2 trump split or one defender to hold the ♠9 singleton.

Bidding Quiz 14 - Results - Bob Pattinson

Question 1

Dealer East. Vul None. Teams.

♠ QJ73

♥ AK106542

♦ -

♣ 95

W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♠
2♥	P	3♣	P
?			

Votes: 3♥=8; 3NT=2; 4♥=2

Seems to be a classic misfit, so do we repeat our own suit or with spade stoppers bid 3NT?

Peter G 3♥: There's a lot of bad news here. Opponents have not raised spades and we have a void in partner's suit, and are likely facing a heart shortage.

Diane 3♥: Show what I've got.

Luca 3♥: I hope partner passes or bids 4♥. Failing that, we may be in trouble. 3♣ is not showing extras so 3♥ can be passed. I prefer to play 4♥ opposite a singleton than 3NT as we will have horrible entry issues. So over 3♣ or 4♣/♦ I will bid 4♥.

Karel 3♥: Non forcing and trying to get partner's input. North has made no noise, such as a courtesy raise of partner's spades. Bidding 4♥ now by-passes 3NT which may be the best making spot.

George 3♥: This is a very hard problem. Opposite a stiff heart your hand would be hopeless in 3NT, which many will bid. If you play game in hearts it could go ♠AK and a ruff. Maybe partner can over-ruff the first one, but you have zero high card help in the other suits. Since no trumps, clubs and diamonds are eliminated (Hmmm you might have a 4-3 spade fit). We will play in hearts, but I am not good enough to force to game. So I will bid 3♥.

Peter P 3♥: As left hand opponent has not supported spades then partner is likely to be 3055 shape.

Matt 3♥: The lack of a spade raise leaves me worried partner is 3154 or similar, leaving risks of spade ruffs. Also our hearts are not particularly solid and we seem to have a misfit, but I suspect that this won't be a common choice.

Anna 3♥: If partner has a source of tricks and wants to be in 3NT then a 3♠ bid asks me for a spade stop.

Roy 3♥: I'm not sure whether that's forcing in these methods, but if partner passes, so be it. The lack of a spade raise by the left hand opponent gives me concern that partner could have three spades which would bode very poorly for game prospects.

Ian 3NT: Nine tricks are easier than ten says the old dictum. It goes against the grain to fail to rebid an excellent seven-carder, but a 3♥ bid now could work out poorly. Would partner put us to the heart game, or pass our 3NT after a 3♥ and a 3♠ probe? A direct 3NT suggests a sound stop, which we have. There could easily be too many losers anywhere else, despite partner's 3♣ promising extra values. [not according to Luca!]

Sally 3NT: Tricky but with the chances of tricks in all suits 3NT seems the most likely to work out.

Tom 4♥: Cannot think of a more likely game make, even facing a heart void.

Dealer East. Vul None. Teams.

		♠ 842	
		♥ 98	
		♦ QJ98	
		♣ 8742	
♠ QJ73	N	♠ -	
♥ AK106542	W	♥ Q	
♦ -	E	♦ AK10643	
♣ 95	S	♣ AQJ1063	
		♠ AK10965	
		♥ J73	
		♦ 752	
		♣ K	

W	N	E	S
		1♦	1♠
2♥	P	3♣	P
?			

Summary

A clear majority go for the simple rebid of hearts, expressing some doubts about the likelihood of a positive fit due to the minor suit shortages and the lack of action by the partner of the intervenor. This latter point is worth noting as inferences can be drawn from the silence of opponents as well as their bids. Anna raises another relevant advantage of rebidding 3♥, and that is partner can rebid 3♠ if looking for spade stoppers for a 3NT contract.

It is likely that over 3♥ partner with ♥Q will explore a potential slam either in hearts or a minor.

Is 3♥ forcing, and is 4♥ a better description of the value of the suit? Perhaps the answer to the first question depends on the nature of the initial free bid of 2♥ which is usually non-forcing and in the 6-9 range with a 6 card suit. Hence the key bidding decision of whether to simply rebid 3♥ or to go to 4♥ based on the suit quality. If you decide to downgrade due to the void in partner's opening suit then 3♥ is the bid, and you can catch up later if the opportunity arises. On the other hand, if you like the suit quality of the hearts and 10 points then 4♥ looks the better bid.

With a void in spades partner may also look for a minor suit slam if you rebid 3NT directly, but may lay less emphasis on the quality of the ♥Q. On the other hand 4♥ certainly expresses the suit length and shape.

Marks: 3♥=10; 4♥=10; 3NT=9

Bidding Tips

- ▶ Try to take account of all aspects of the bidding of the opponents, including silence
- ▶ Bidding out the shape of a decent six-card major is worthwhile when you have no real fit for partner's two suits.



Question 2

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A94
♥ QJ
♦ KJ10753
♣ T3

W	N	E	S
			1♥
P	1NT ¹	P	2♥ ²
P	?		

¹ 1NT=6-11
² 2♥=6+

Votes: 4♥=6; 3♥=6; 2♠=1

A maximum for 1NT in high card points but eight losers, so do you pass, or are you tempted to bid 2NT or raise to 3♥?

Ian 3♥: We are maximum with good trump fillers, so can't just pass. All depends on what partner's 1♥ looks like, with standards slipping every year. A stab at 4♥ is far from crazy, but partner won't pass with a decent opener.

Sally 3♥: Showing more or less I think. Maybe I should bid 4♥ (if playing constructive weak 2♥ openings).

Tom 3♥: Certainly worth an invite, although maybe starting with 2♠ (must be a heart raise with something in spades), and bidding 3♦ over 3♣ might get us to 3NT. The only downside of these bids is that it gives the opponents extra opportunities to make lead directing doubles. Partner can always bid 3NT over 3♥.

George 3♥: You have a super maximum and close to bidding 4♥ but that would violate partner trust. With 15-16 partner will go on. Even a solid 14 could make this a laid down game, but 3♥ leaves the ball in partner's court.

Anna 3♥: A very decent hand. Good support for hearts but not enough to bid 4♥.

Peter P 3♥: will depend on partner's diamond holding, but we need to give a small lift.

Karel 2♠: The impossible spade bid showing a doubleton heart support and 10-11 points.

Matt 4♥: Excellent trump support and an extra chance of tricks in diamonds.

Diane 4♥: Maximum for my bid. Two trump honours and the doubleton club may come into play.

Roy 4♥: A bit of an overbid, but I would be very unhappy playing a part score and partner might be concerned about having a bad trump suit.

Peter P 4♥: ♥QJ should help build partner's suit and thus bring in six tricks in that suit: Kxx AKTxxx Qxxx.

Luca 4♥: I wouldn't be surprised to see some people bidding 2♦ the first time rather than 1NT. My hand looks awfully good after 2♥ with ♥QJ, an ace and a source of tricks in diamonds, so far too good for just 3♥.

Dealer South. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A94			
♥ QJ			
♦ KJ10753			
♣ T3			
♠ 108763	N	♠ KJ5	
♥ K982		♥ 6	
♦ A	W	♦ Q986	
♣ K92		♣ 87654	
	S		
		♠ Q2	
		♥ A107543	
		♦ 42	
		♣ AQ3	

W	N	E	S
			1♥
P	1NT ¹	P	2♥ ²
P	?		

¹ 1NT=6-11
² 2♥=6+

Summary

As the cards lie 2♥ or 2NT(S) are the limit of makeable contracts (♦A lead and spade switch gets a diamond ruff). However, 3♥ looks a reasonable destination with the combined strengths of the two hands and would deliver most days. On this hand the presence of the ♥QJ in partner's suit tends to suggest that an adjustment upwards in the strength of the hand is warranted.

Not an easy hand to bid as shown by the close split of the panel between 3♥ and 4♥. Karel's 2♠ bid, also mentioned in Tom's answer, has the advantage of offering useful information on other values as well as showing heart support and keeping the bidding still within part score range.

Opener's rebid of 2♥ is possible the clue to refrain from jumping to game based on the losing trick count, as opener would have jumped a level with only six losers.

Marks: 2♠=10; 3♥=10; 4♥=9

Bidding Tips

- ▶ The losing trick count often helps with hand evaluation in that it gives a steer early on in the bidding about the likely destination of the upper limit of a contract.
- ▶ When making invitational raises if possible make use of clear-cut cue bids such as the 'impossible' 2♠ example employed by Karel.

Question 3

Dealer East. Vul None. Teams.

♠ A95432
♥ KJ984
♦ -
♣ Q4

W	N	E	S
		1♦	?

Votes: 2♦=10; 1♠=3

With 6-5 is a simple overcall of 1♠ better than immediately describing a two suited hand?

Peter G: 1♠: Hopefully will be able to show hearts later. With six hearts and five spades I would have tried a two-suited overcall.

Sally 1♠: I don't like showing a two-suiter when my higher suit is longer (partner might have to give preference to the lower of the two suits).

Ian 1♠: It is wrong to use Michaels with partner normally bidding the lower of the two suits with equal length. We could therefore end



up in hearts, with spades the best fit. It is easier at love all, where we have to strive to bid our second suit in competition.

Karel 2♦: An easy Michael's convention showing the two majors. I have found playing this convention at any range, rather than weak or strong, works well.

Diane 2♦: Even if partner and I don't play Michaels or Ghestem this seems a good enough way to show a two-suiter (certainly denying the two lowest suits).

Peter P 2♦: Michaels: see no reasons to alter my actions just because I have a void and an extra spade.

Luca 2♦: Looks normal for showing both majors.

George 2♦: If not now, when? It could be at 4 or 5 diamonds when it comes back to you if you just call 1♠. As often as possible show a two-suiter.

Anna 2♦: Showing both majors. I am sure I'll have another chance to bid.

Roy 2♦: I know I have a spade too many, but I don't want to be forced to guess whether to bid hearts or not, especially if the level gets higher.

Tom 2♦: Both majors.

Matt 2♦: Some people prefer 1♠ with 6-5 in the majors, rebidding hearts next, but my hand isn't good enough for this sequence.

Dealer East. Vul None. Teams.

		♠ Q108	
		♥ 10652	
		♦ 754	
		♣ K107	
♠ KJ8	N	♠ 7	
♥ 73		♥ AQ	
♦ A1093	W	♦ KQJ862	
♣ A865	S	♣ J932	
		♠ A96432	
		♥ KJ984	
		♦ -	
		♣ Q4	

W	N	E	S
		1♦	?

Summary

3NT is available for the opponents. Which of the two bids suggested by the panel will contrive to either prevent this, or even better, reach a makeable major suit game contract our way? The panel's choice of 2♦ [at least 5-5 in the majors] describes the hand perfectly, but will partner be more likely to compete to game in the 5-4 unmakeable heart contract rather than the makeable 6-3 spade contract? (a spade ruff defeats 4♥). Overcalling 1♠ may offer the opponents a better chance of being allowed to play in 3NT. On balance the 2♦ cue bid does express the strength and shape of the hand more effectively.

Marks: 2♦=10; 1♠=9

Bidding Tip

- ▶ Playing cue bid overcalls of the opponent's minor suit openings to show 5-5 or better in the majors works well. A major fit can be found at the two level, and profitable sacrifices also come into play.

Question 4

Dealer North. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ QJ63
♥ AJ63
♦ 9
♣ AK93

W	N	E	S
	P	1♦ ¹	X
1♥	1♠ ¹	2♦	?
¹ 1♦=4+			
² 1♠=4+			

Votes: 3♠=7; 2♠=2; 1♠=1; 2♥=1; 3♦=1; 4♦=1

A perfect takeout double with 4441 shape, 15 points, six losers and both four-card majors facing a passed partner. Holding the top suit, with game looking unlikely when 1♠ shows limited values, is a single raise the safest bid, or could there be magic cards opposite?

Ian 2♠: "4441 hands play badly" claimed Terence Reece 50 or

more years ago, and nothing has changed. Partner has voluntary responded so we can make a single raise but not a game try. I will push on to 3♠ if necessary, as there is a decent chance we are in a nine card fit. Therefore, we should be obeying the law of total tricks and bidding to the level of our fit.

George 2♠: Close between 2♠ and 3♠. The deciding factor is the voluntary 1♥ bid behind you. Go low with 2♠. Maybe something good happens like your right hand opponent competing to 3♥.

Sally 3♠: I don't think partner needs much more for 1♠ in this situation.

Roy 3♠: It's a little light again, but I don't really need much, five spades to the king and not too many hearts is enough.

Karel 3♠: Invitational as 1♠ is a free bid promising some values.

Diane 3♠: Just showing a bit extra for my takeout double.

Peter G 3♠: Don't want to punish partner for competing here. As we are non-vulnerable 2♠ is not enough.

Tom 3♠: Seems like the value bid of my hand as partner has bid freely, and it lets partner know I have four-card support.

Anna 2♥: Should show support in spades and invitational. Don't want to bid 3♦ as we can be too high. If partner bids 2♠ I'll pass. 3♠ is an overbid.

Matt 3♦: I hope partner is not messing with the 1♠ bid.

Luca 4♦: With partner bidding 1♠ freely I definitely want to be in 4♠. I am afraid of 5♦ coming next so I will stretch to bid 4♦ to help partner judge with forcing passes 100% on. At this vulnerability I want to make sure we are getting this right. I expect partner to double with most balanced hands or with Hxx or Hxxx in diamonds.

Peter P 4♠: Bid what I think I can make. Partner has made a voluntary action over responder's 1♥ so there should be a few tricks in support.



Dealer North. Vul N/S. Teams.

		♠ K1082	
		♥ 9874	
		♦ K104	
		♣ 107	
♠ 75	N	♠ A84	
♥ KQ102		♥ 5	
♦ 763	W	♦ AQJ852	
♣ QJ84	S	♣ 652	
		♠ QJ63	
		♥ AJ63	
		♦ 9	
		♣ AK93	

W	N	E	S
	P	1♦ ¹	X
1♥	1♠ ¹	2♦	?
¹ 1♦=4+			
² 1♠=4+			

Summary

Another hand where the limited strength of partner's "free bid" might suggest game could be a step too far. George and Ian were more pessimistic about their values opposite a minimum response. West's 1♥ bid behind your five points in hearts could be a further warning about the limitations of the hand.

Anna's 2♥ bid replicates the "impossible 2♠" used by Karel in hand two earlier, allowing the partnership to stop in 2♠. The diamond cue bids seem to expect rather a lot from a passed hand.

Marks: 2♠=10; 2♥=10; 3♠=9; 3♦=8; 4♦=7; 4♠=7

Question 5

Dealer East. Vul N/S. Teams.

♠ AJ10742
♥ 2
♦ KJ632
♣ J

W	N	E	S
		1♣ ¹	P
1♠	P	2♥ ²	P
3♦	P	3♠	P
?			
¹ 1♠=2+			
² 2♥=4 and 17+			

Votes: 4♦=5; 4♠=4; 4NT=4

A 6-5 hand with nine working points, six losers, two singletons in partner's two suits. It sounds that partner is 3415 shape. Is there anything better than either confirming five diamonds or six spades by bidding 4♦ or 4♠?

Tom 4♠: If my diamonds were headed by the ace I would cue, but as it is I have too many losers to take care of and have zero points in partner's suits.

Ian 4♠: Yes, partner has reversed and we have a six carder. However, partner's bidding suggests 3415 or 3406 shape. Either way, our diamonds are of dubious value, and our club singleton likewise. Lacking controls, I give up, unless partner can do more. I am promising five+ spades.

George 4♠: You've already shown a decent hand and want to avoid any accidents. Hard to get to a slam on a misfit.

Diane 4♠: Should promise six spades as partner may only have a doubleton. Partner can still bid on if so inclined.

Peter P 4NT: I know I have a serious 3NT available and 4♣ is a cue bid. However, cueing in partner's second natural suit to show shortage is misleading. Hoping partner has Kxx Axxx A AKxxx, or at least Qxx AKQx x AKxxx.

Sally 4NT: This has to be a key card ask and not a natural 4NT, as I would have rebid 2NT and not 2♥ with a natural 4NT.

Roy 4NT: I would just hope for partner to have some aces and decent trumps.

Luca 4D: I think 4NT should be key card here but 4♦ followed by 4NT is definitely key card. Partner's shape has been shown and slam is starting to look great. I can't be introducing diamonds with partner having a known singleton or void in the suit.

Karel 4♦: Hopefully showing 6-5 and let partner to decide how to proceed.

Peter G 4♦: In the fourth suit bidding lottery here but really need to give bidding a slam an option despite poor holdings in partner's suits.

Anna 4♦: My hand is great but I do not think we are making 6♠. I need to convey my three losers in diamonds (hope I can ruff one) and bring in the spade suit without loss. But still worth a shot. See what partner has to say.

Matt 4♦: This sounds as if it is agreeing spades. I would prefer to have bid a forcing 2♠ instead of 3♦ but I think 4♦ should be setting spades here

Dealer East. Vul N/S. Teams.

		♠ 85	
		♥ K876	
		♦ AQ5	
		♣ 8632	
♠ AJ10742	N	♠ KQ9	
♥ 2		♥ AQJ4	
♦ KJ632	W	♦ 7	
♣ J	S	♣ AK1075	
		♠ 63	
		♥ 10953	
		♦ 10964	
		♣ Q94	

W	N	E	S
		1♣ ¹	P
1♠	P	2♥ ²	P
3♦	P	3♠	P
?			
¹ 1♣=2+			
² 2♥=4 and 17+			

Summary

Although 4NT will identify three key cards in partner's hand, plus the queen of trumps and the ♣K, you are uncertain which specific key cards are held. The 4♦ and 4♠ bids provide information on your hand and allow partner to employ 4NT if required.

Marks: 4♦=10; 4♠=10; 4NT=9



Question 6

Dealer East. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ A1074

♥ KQ96

♦ Q5

♣ 972

W	N	E	S
		2♣	P
2♦	P	3♣	P
3♥	P	3♠	P
?			
¹ 2♠=23+ ² 2♦=waiting bid ¹ 3♠=5+			

Votes: 4♠=6; 4♦=4; 4NT=2; 5♠=1

With 11 points, eight losers, good controls in the majors and a 4-4 spade fit, does this look like a small or a grand slam?

Sally 4♦: Cue bidding spades. Seems best to agree spades and see what partner does. Plan to drive on to a small slam if partner signs off in 4♠.

Joe 4♦: Cue for spades.

Luca 4♦: This should show a good hand with spade support as I would bid 3NT with diamonds. I would have bid a temporising 3♦ over 3♣ as I like to bid a major suit here with at least five cards.

Karel 4♦: With this cracking hand 4♦ shows a good hand for the bidding to date. 4♠ risks a pass from partner, and 4♣ agrees clubs, and I am not sure I want to do that.

Ian 4♣: We are game forced, and any game bid now is a signoff. However, 4♣ shows at least three and is forcing, leaving maximum room for exploration. The only ways to show good spade support is to jump to either 4NT or 5♠, seriously cramping the auction. I will advance over anything partner bids. Yes, we may miss a higher scoring spade contract, but this is teams.

Tom 4♣: I have already made this auction too difficult for myself. I would have raised clubs earlier in the auction.

Peter G 4♣: Tough to find a good bid that keeps the grand slam in the picture. Partner is likely to be 6-4 shape in the black suits, but may have ♥A and a diamond control. Hate the idea of taking control with 4NT or semi-psycho 4♦ cue.

Matt 4♣: To set the suit and see about a diamond control, driving towards slam if partner confirms the latter. Please note I find the earlier bid of 3♥ ambiguous as this is only a four-card suit. I would bid 3♣ at that stage looking for a 4-4 major fit.

Roy 4♣: Or 4♦ if that is the agreed key card ask. I have a very nice hand. I think I should have raised clubs earlier.

Peter P 4♣: This is getting messy and partner could be advance cue bidding or simply showing spade cards.

George 4NT: Although rare for the weaker hand to take control how do you show spade support aside from a pusillanimous 4♠ bid?

Anna 4NT: There is no winner after that sequence. I have no idea why over 2♣ a response of 2NT was not bid. At least then we can investigate the hand further.

Diane 5♠: Showing extra values and inviting slam.

Dealer South. Vul E/W. Teams

♠ 953 ♥ 1052 ♦ 10983 ♣ QJ10			
♠ A1074	N	♠ KQJ6	
♥ KQ96	W	♥ A	
♦ Q2	E	♦ AK7	
♣ 972	S	♣ AK653	
♠ 82 ♥ J8743 ♦ J842 ♣ 84			

W	N	E	S
		2♣	P
2♦	P	3♣	P
3♥	P	3♠	P
?			
¹ 2♠=23+ ² 2♦=waiting bid ¹ 3♠=5+			

Summary

A similar theme here to the previous hand - whether to use cue bids or key card with the weaker hand when exploring slams. For this hand cue bids win the day as opener can seek further information either via cue bids or key card. Keycard clarifies that responder holds ♠A and the ♥K.

Marks: 4♠=10; 4♦=10; 4NT=9; 5♠=8

Bidding Tips

- ▶ The 2♦ waiting bid is used by lots of experts in order to keep the bidding low and allow the initial strength and shape of the strong hand to be expressed first.
- ▶ Some experts use control showing responses whereby a King is worth one control and an ace worth two controls. Now 2♦ shows zero or one control, 2♥ confirms two controls, 2♠ is three Kings, 2NT an ace and a king, etc. So on this hand the response would be 2NT.

Question 7

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A92

♥ QJ98542

♦ A7

♣ A

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	?		
¹ 1♦=4+			

Votes: 1♥=8; 4♥=2; X=2; 2♥=1

Only five losers, 15 points, three aces and a seven card heart suit, but missing the two top honours. Is 1♥ sufficient at this stage, or is double followed by showing the long hearts suggesting a stronger suit a better option?

Peter P 1♥: With three certain defensive tricks it is much better to start low than to open with 4♥.

Karel 1♥: A simple overcall for me.
With this hand do you want to
double or bid a direct 4♥?

Roy 1♥: I could try 4♥, but with such a nice hand, I don't see why I should not get partner involved.

Diane 1♥: Too strong for any kind of jump in hearts.

Matt 1♥: I am allowed to be maximum for my bid if 1♥ is passed, as then 4♥ is unlikely to have been good.

Anna 1♥: Unlikely to be passed. Great chances for slam if partner can bid, and if not then game is unlikely.

Peter G 4♥: Auction likely to get competitive when I can double 5♦ after showing my seven hearts. An initial double may make a later judgement a bit tough.

Sally 4♥: I need very little from partner. I'll double on the next round if there is one.

Ian X: Then bid hearts at the lowest available level. This is the classic way to describe a hand too strong for a simple overcall.

Tom X: Seems a normal way to start to describe this strong hand.

George 2♥: For now, more later. No need for a double. If the auction ends, it ends.

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams.

♠ A92
 ♥ QJ98542
 ♦ A10
 ♣ A

♠ 87
 ♥ A3
 ♦ KJ764
 ♣ KQ96

N
 W E
 S

♠ K63
 ♥ K106
 ♦ 85
 ♣ 108754

♠ QJ1054
 ♥ 7
 ♦ Q932
 ♣ J32

	♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N		2	3		
S		2	3		
E	3	2			
W	3	2			

W	N	E	S
1♦ ¹	?		
1♦ = 4+			

Summary

A strong majority to take the bidding steadily as our heart suit needs some support for higher level bidding. Double guarantees a response either from partner or the opposition (the best making contract is 3♠). 4♥ is pre-emptive and 2♥ is normally a weak jump overcall (but partner has no interest in advancing with that hand).

Marks: 1♥=10; X=10; 2♥=9; 4♥=

Question 8

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams

♠ A7
♥ AK92
♦ KQ98
♣ 843

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♠	X
P	2♣	P	?

Votes: Pass=10; 2♠=3

With 16 points and four decent hearts and only a doubleton ♠A the initial takeout double looks fine if your system requires two stoppers for a 1NT overcall. Partner passed initially so do you now take the safe option and pass or do you advance over 2♣, and if so which is the best rebid?

Sally Pass: Seems unlikely game can be made if partner can't bid 1NT or 3♣.

Ian Pass: We almost certainly don't have a heart fit, or partner would have bid the suit. We could be missing a better diamond fit, but there is no way to advance without showing extras we don't have. If the opposition bid spades again I may double again, but this is risky vulnerable.

Luca Pass: Sounds like our only possible game is 3NT since partner didn't jump in clubs. For that to be possible I need partner to have a spade stop. If they have that they couldn't bid 1NT, so they are on the weak side and game doesn't look odds on.

Tom Pass: As partner is a passed hand game seems a long way away even with my “poor” 16 count.

Diane Pass: Partner has made the cheapest bid to suggest minimum values.

Peter G Pass: Close to 2♠ or 3♣, but lack of 2♠ raise or bid makes me think partner has some length here.

Peter P Pass: Why am I making all of these problems for myself? Surely overcalling 1NT would be fine.

George Pass: My work is done here. Butterfly.

Matt Pass: Not ambitious with this hand opposite a simple 2♣ response.

Anna 2♠: I would not be doubling to start with. I would have bid 1NT over 1♠.

Karel 2♠: You should bid whatever you planned to bid over a 2♣ response when you decided to double. If this is an issue then your initial double was wrong. 1NT showing a balanced 15-17 was a better bid with a promise of a spade stop. Now a choice between pass and 2♠, neither are good. Heavily influenced by West's pass I'll try 2♠.

Roy 2♠: For me a good hand without full support, so fits the hand perfectly

Dealer West. Vul All. Teams

♠ QJ53
 ♥ 5
 ♦ 32
 ♣ Q107652

♠ 82
 ♥ Q10843
 ♦ 10765
 ♣ K9

N
 W E
 S

♠ K10964
 ♥ J76
 ♦ A J4
 ♣ A J

♠ A7
 ♥ AK92
 ♦ KQ98
 ♣ 843

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

W	N	E	S
P	P	1♠	X
P	2♣	P	?

Summary

A strong majority for pass as game looks to be a lost cause. However, even though the favourable lie of the cards means the 2♠ cue bid will still result in a makeable 3♣ contract, should the bidding advance with only three small clubs?

Marks: Pass=10; 2♠=9

Summary of the Expert Panel Results

Tom Hanlon, newly ennobled in the EBL Hall of Fame, shades it with 79. Among readers' entries, Dolores Walsh recorded a really excellent 77 – well done!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Sally Brock	9	10	9	9	9	10	10	10	77
Luca Crone	10	9	10	7	10	10	10	10	77
Karel De Raeymaeker	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	9	78
Peter Goodman	10	10	9	9	10	10	8	10	76
Diane Greenwood	10	9	10	9	10	8	10	10	76
Joe Grue	10	9	10	9	9	9	10	10	77
Ian Hamilton	9	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	78
Tom Hanlon	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	79
George Jacobs	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	10	78
Matt O'Farrell	10	9	10	8	10	10	10	10	77
Anna Onishuk	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	9	78
Peter Pigot	10	9	10	7	9	10	10	10	75
Roy Welland	10	9	10	9	9	10	10	9	76



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September 2026

A YEAR OF IRISH BRIDGE HEROES

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MEDAL
FOR PAUL
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MESSAGE
FROM
INCOMING
PRESIDENT

GEORGE RYAN



EBL HALL
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FOR TOM
HANLON

CBAI CALENDAR

WHAT'S COMING UP FOR NEXT SEASON



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CBAI National President's Welcome



George Ryan
National President
2026-2027, CBAI

I have been greatly privileged and honoured by the South Midland Region electing me to be the National President of the CBAI for the coming year (and, all going well, to be the first President of the new Bridge Ireland, which is a singular honour).

I thank all the members of the region for their support in me and I hope that I can live up to their expectations.

I intend to travel to as many events as possible all around the island of Ireland. I have already been to several tournaments since taking office at the AGM at the end of June and I have noticed that bridge players are a very respectful group of people and view the office of President of CBAI with great regard. I have been delighted at the number of players introducing themselves to me and wishing me well in office.

My motto is "Please do not kill anyone at the bridge table this year."
[Editor's Note: For those who weren't at the AGM, George in his speech referenced the famous Myrtle Bennett case in Kansas City USA in the late 1920s, where Mrs Bennett shot her husband dead after a row over a hand at the bridge table where they were playing a house game with two friends. Our President is hoping to avoid a similar incident during his term of office!]

Please be kind with your leads when you meet me at the bridge table.

Looking forward to meeting you all during the year and sharing this great game of ours.

George Ryan
National President CBAI 2026-2027

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CBAI & IBU Calendar 2026-2027

SEPTEMBER 2026

19-20 Sept	Duais an Uachtarain <i>Mount Wolseley Hotel, Tullow</i>
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OCTOBER 2026

1-4 Oct	Drogheda Congress <i>ABCD Bridge Centre</i>
17 Oct	Spiro Mixed Pairs <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
18 Oct	Coen Mixed Teams <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
23-25 Oct	Limerick Congress <i>Castletroy Park Hotel</i>
30 Oct-01 Nov	Carlow Congress <i>Seven Oaks Hotel</i>

NOVEMBER 2026

2-6 Nov	Autumn Simultaneous Pairs Week
6-8 Nov	Donegal Congress <i>Abbey & Central Hotels</i>
13-15 Nov	Kenmare Congress <i>Kenmare Bay Hotel</i>
20-22 Nov	Kilkenny Congress <i>Kilkenny Bridge Centre</i>
28-29 Nov	IBU Interregionals <i>Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim</i>

DECEMBER 2026

5 Dec	Regional Pairs <i>Various Days/Times/Locations</i>
12-13 Dec	Master Pairs <i>Mullingar Park Hotel</i>

JANUARY 2027

8-10 Jan	Waterford Congress <i>Tower Hotel</i>
16 Jan	Jackson Cup Women's Pairs Revington Cup Men's Pairs <i>Westgrove Hotel, Clane</i>
17 Jan	McMenamin Bowl Women's Teams Geraldine Trophy Men's Teams <i>Westgrove Hotel, Clane</i>
22-24 Jan	Cork Congress <i>The Cork International Hotel</i>
23 Jan	Regional Teams <i>Various Days/Times/Locations</i>
30 Jan	Confined Regional Master Pairs Championship <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
31 Jan	Confined Regional Master Teams Championship <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>

FEBRUARY 2027

5-7 Feb	Ennis Congress <i>The Rine Hotel (formerly The Inn at Dromoland)</i>
12-14 Feb	Galway Congress <i>The Ardilaun Hotel</i>
20-21 Feb	Holmes Wilson Cup <i>Mount Wolseley Hotel</i>
26-28 Feb	Malahide Congress <i>Grand Hotel Malahide</i>

MARCH 2027

1-5 Mar	Spring Simultaneous Pairs Week
6-7 Mar	National Pairs Finals <i>Falls Hotel, Ennistymon</i>
19-21 Mar	Tralee International Congress <i>Meadowlands Hotel</i>

APRIL 2027

1-4 April	Greystones Open Week <i>Greystones Bridge Centre</i>
2-4 April	Clonmel Congress <i>The Talbot Hotel</i>
9-11 April	Novice & Intermediate Congress <i>Lawlors Hotel, Naas</i>
17-18 April	Burke & O'Connor Trophies <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre</i>
20-22 April	IBU Seniors Congress <i>Cavan Crystal</i>
18-19 April	National Teams Finals <i>Great National Hotel, Ballykisteon</i>

MAY 2027

8-9 May	Moylan Cup <i>Malahide Bridge Centre</i>
10-14 May	Celtic Nations Sims Week
15 May	JJ Murphy Trophy <i>Loughrea Hotel & Spa</i>
15 May	Lambert Cup <i>Loughrea Hotel & Spa</i>
16 May	Cooper Cup <i>Loughrea Hotel & Spa</i>
22 May	IBU Pairs Championship - All grades <i>Templeogue Bridge Centre - 12 noon</i>
29 May	4Fun Teams Final <i>Westmanstown - 12 noon</i>
29-30 May	IBU Egan Trophy <i>La Mon Hotel, Belfast</i>

JUNE 2027

4-6 June	Yeats (Sligo) Congress <i>Clayton Hotel</i>
11-13 June	Killarney Congress <i>Castlerosse Park Resort</i>

AUG 2027

21-22 Aug	Boyne Valley Bridge Bash <i>Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim</i>
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For more information on CBAI/IBU Events see:

www.cbai.ie/cbai-events/





Chief Executive's Welcome



Welcome back to all for the new season of the Contract Bridge Association of Ireland.

As it turns out, this will be our final season under the CBAI name, because as you are probably aware, the proposal to amalgamate has now been accepted by both the NIBU and the CBAI, and we are beavering away to do all the work necessary to transform the combined operation into the new structure, with a start date of 1 January. There is a lot of work to be done, and we may need volunteers for some aspects, so please leave your phone switched on! One of the first tasks is the composition of the Board of the new company; we have recently put a notice on our website inviting expressions of interest for the Director roles: [Board Applications](#), with a closing date of 16 October 2026.

Until the amalgamation date of 1 January, everything will proceed as it normally does, in terms of competitions, affiliations, masterpoints, committees, and so on. The season has already got off to a great start, with a huge turnout for the excellently run Boyne Valley Bridge Bash a few weeks ago, and the first "major" of the new season, President George Ryan's Duais an Uachtarain in Tullow on 19-20 September, which was also a great success. The full season calendar is on our website and on page 4 and the upcoming events are open for online entry. I hope you'll find plenty of competitions and congresses that will appeal.

While the amalgamation is a very important matter nationally, its impact on our clubs will be more limited. Another change in the offing will be of much greater significance to clubs – our move to a new membership database. As you know, our current model is creaking a bit, and is pretty old-fashioned in many respects. We have therefore been working on developing a new one, better suited for the demands of the twenty-first century. We had hoped to have it fully ready for the new season, but unfortunately we are still in the final testing phase. As a result, few of the new facilities will be available in the near term.

The new database will create three main improvements for members, clubs, and regions:

1. Members will be able to access their data directly, and to change some elements of it. For example, all members will be able to check their grades and masterpoints through the system, and to change their contact details. Likewise, clubs and regions will have up-to-date access to all their members' data at the press of a button, and will be able to make amendments where appropriate.
2. Clubs will be able to upload their membership registrations directly to the system, rather than sending paper or digital files to head office (although doing-it-yourself will not be mandatory, and we will continue to accept registrations in the old format if that suits the club better).
3. At the end of the season, clubs will be able to upload their masterpoints directly to the system, although again this will not be mandatory, and we'll continue to process them as currently if the club would prefer.

We are very close to rolling out the first of these enhancements – live and up-to-date member data. As previously noted, members (and club and regional officials) will need a valid email address to access the database online. We hope the second development (membership registration) will be ready shortly, and will keep you all posted. The third feature (masterpoint upload) should be ready well before the relevant time, which is the end of the season. We have committed to producing training material (videos and "how-to" guides) on using the new database, which we will share online as soon as they are available.



In light of the transition to the new database, the decision was taken not to print membership cards this year because we were so close to the roll out of the new database. When it was still not quite ready, however, we recognised that it was important that all members be able to see what masterpoints they had been awarded last season, so the start-of-season pack provided to your club includes individual statements of masterpoints awarded to members. Apologies that the presentation is less formal than usual, but all the information is there.

On a similar note, we have also taken, with some regret, the decision not to produce the CBAI diary anymore, on the grounds that sales have dwindled dramatically, to extent that the printing was no longer economically viable – two of our largest regions sold hardly any diaries last season. All the information contained in the diary is available on our website. Again, apologies to those of you who found the diary valuable.

For a small bridge nation, we had a lot to be proud of in 2026, with Tom Hanlon, the first Irish person elected to the EBL Hall of Fame, Paul Porteous, the first Irish recipient of an EBL gold medal, Luca Crone winning a gold medal at the WBF Transnational Youth Games, and our first Camrose win since 2017. Here's to another enjoyable, successful, and sociable bridge season in 2026-2027, and a seamless and harmonious amalgamation with our fellow bridge players from Northern Ireland.

Sincerely,

Dermot O'Brien
Chief Executive



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Junior Bridge Report

Martin Connell, Junior Committee

Introduction

It was another busy year for the Junior Committee, with lots of activity, including regular meetings, coaching sessions both over zoom and face-to-face, several international tournaments, and a special summer camp in Kilkenny.

Spiro and Coen October 2025

Some of our juniors were involved in the mixed pairs (Spiro Cup) and the mixed teams (Coen Cup) held in Templeogue during the weekend of 18-19 October. While they didn't feature on the podium on this occasion, it is good to see them competing at this level and it will be interesting to see if they can move a little further up the leader board in the years to come. The pairs were: Klara Flanagan and David Hoyne, Grace Gissing and Wayne Somerville (NIBU Junior Camrose Coach) and Eve Connell and Bence Orosz. The junior representatives in the teams event were: (O'Connor) Kelan O'Connor, Denise Walsh, Karel De Raeymaeker, Leah Finnegan, (Walsh) Sheila Walsh, Matthew O'Farrell, Isabel Burke, Tom Gorey, (Gissing) Grace Gissing, Wayne Somerville, John Phelan, Lucy Phelan, (Orosz) Bence Orosz, Eve Connell, David Hoyne, Klara Flanagan.

Kilkenny Congress November 2025

The Kilkenny Bridge Congress took place in the Kilkenny Bridge Centre from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 November 2025. Junior committee member, Margaret Murphy, was there to ensure that the junior players who

turned up were made to feel very welcome. Some of our juniors took part in the various sessions over the weekend and attended the presentation by Junior Coach Karel De Raeymaeker in the bridge centre on the Saturday morning. John Phelan, who had a very busy year as President of the CBAI, followed through on his promise made in July 2025 at the AGM in Waterford, to focus some of his attention for his year in office on the young bridge players of the country. John played with junior international player David Hoyne in the open pairs on the Friday night and won the first session of the Congress pairs with junior player Eve Connell on the Saturday morning. He followed this with two sessions of the congress teams on the Sunday. He played in the teams with Tom Gorey, Denise Finnegan and Leah Walsh ensuring that their team had the lowest average age of any team in the competition. Junior player Matthew O'Farrell also played in the congress teams competition but despite his best efforts he could not bring the average age of the team below the level of senior citizen!

Holmes Wilson Trophy February 2026

Matthew O'Farrell, who had been on the winning Holmes Wilson team in 2025, featured strongly in this year's event as well. His team was fifth this year which is a fantastic achievement for someone who is still playing junior bridge. Sheila Walsh (recent junior international), her sister Denise Walsh and fellow junior international Leah Finnegan also performed strongly, finishing 19th overall

out of a field of 123 teams. This competition, like the Spiro Cup and the Coen Cup offers our juniors a great opportunity to play against some of the best players in the country.

Peggy Bayer and Junior Camrose February 2026

In February, our junior teams packed their bags and headed to sunny Prestwick for the annual Junior Camrose (Under-26, JC) and Peggy Bayer (Under-21, PB) home international competitions hosted this year by the Scottish Bridge Union. In the JC, the CBAI was represented by Denise Walsh and Leah Finnegan, Tom Gorey and Isabel Burke, and Matthew O'Farrell and Luca Crone. The NPC was (former Junior International) Conor Boland, making his debut in the captaincy role. In the PB, we were represented by Klara Flanagan and Eve Connell, Bence Orosz and Sam Connolly, and Grace Gissing and Paul Luo with NPC Margaret Murphy. England won both competitions again this year. As in the last few years, the CBAI teams in both events were runners up with the NIBU teams further down the list. We live in hope that next year one of our teams can go one better and bring home the coveted trophy!



Kilkenny Bridge Camp - junior bridge players and coaches

Kilkenny Bridge Camp 26 to 28 June 2026

In June 2026, after all exams were over, a junior bridge camp was held in the picturesque City of Kilkenny. Committee member Margaret Murphy secured an excellent venue in Kilkenny College which was made available to us for the weekend. It was a fantastic success. Junior bridge players, from all over Ireland, ranging in age from 10 to 25 years old played bridge, attended some bridge lessons from the more experienced players and coaches, and took part in other activities such as rounders, tennis, speedball

and a campus hike. Kilkenny College provided the classrooms, accommodation and the catering for the weekend. Coaching was provided, completely free of charge, by Karel De Raeymaeker, Margaret Murphy, Wayne Somerville, Peter Pigot, Martin Brady, and Paul Delaney, and the juniors were very fortunate to benefit from their combined wisdom and experience. Hopefully, this successful event can be held again next year.

European Teams 9 to 15 July 2026 (Riga, Latvia)

We were represented, under the IBU banner, in the 2026 European National Youth Teams Championships by our Under-26 team of Denise Walsh, Leah Finnegan, Matthew O'Farrell, Luca Crone, Eve Connell and Klara Flanagan. Their NPC on this occasion was Karel De Raeymaeker who had spent the previous week representing the IBU in the Mixed Teams competition at the same venue. The standard was very high and unfortunately the team did not finish in the top eight which would have guaranteed them qualification for the world teams championships next Summer. They finished 19th out of 23 countries.



CBAI Peggy Bayer team 2025: Paul Luo, Bence Orosz, Sam Connolly, Eve Connell, Grace Gissing, Klara Flanagan with NPC Margaret Murphy



Margaret Murphy with some of her young bridge proteges

At the time the team photograph was being taken, the notoriously camera-shy Karel was “unavailable”. When the team tried to cajole him into being included in the picture he said, (and this is a direct quote): “*The only way you are getting me into a photograph is if there are two stuffed penguins sitting on a table in front of me*”. True story. With such an impossible request, we had to just settle for a picture of the team without their NPC.



Under 26 NPC Karel De Raeymaeker

It is worth noting that this event marks the final outing for Denise Walsh and Leah Finnegan will be representing us at under-age level. Denise and Leah have been representing the IBU since they took part in an under 16 competition in Oslo, Norway many years ago. As mentioned earlier, they performed very well together in the Holmes Wilson competition last year and hopefully this is not the last we hear of this partnership. We wish them all the best in their future bridge careers and we look forward to following their successes at national and hopefully, international level.



IBU under 26 team: Matthew, Denise, Leah, Klara, Eve and Luca.

The Star Performance

The best performance of all came late in the season, via junior stalwart Luca Crone, who finished on the podium in a major Youth Games for the second year in a row.

Luca went one better than in 2025, when he won a silver medal as runner-up in the President's Cup at the European Youth Bridge Championships in Salsomaggiore, Italy. in partnership with Matthew O'Farrell. This year, Luca's "Teletubbies" team won the gold medal in the B Final of the Under-31 category at the World Bridge Federation's Transnational Youth Games in Hefei, China. Luca's partner was Ole Farwig from Germany and they teamed up with two Croatians; Filip Katusic and Matko Ferenca.

A great result, and a gold medal to be proud of. Very well done, Luca.

The Year Ahead

We should be optimistic about the future of Junior Bridge in Ireland. The Summer Camp in Kilkenny was a demonstration of the increased numbers of young people playing bridge in Ireland at the moment. The young people had a great experience there, got to know one another a little bit better and benefited from the teaching of the more experienced players. Hopefully, those young people will tell their friends about our great game and numbers will be even higher next year.

In February of next year, we will be hosting the Peggy Bayer and Junior Camrose competitions. It would be an amazing achievement if we were to end the dominance of England in this event. Can we snatch a victory on home soil? It is certainly worth working towards that goal.

We also encourage our junior players to take part in as many national, regional and club competitions as possible. Taking part in congresses, regional and national competitions is a great way to improve. Hopefully, we will see more of those names in these competitions in the next year.



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News

Junior Fundraiser

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 If you can't make it, donations gratefully accepted on
 Revolut below!
 More information here:
<https://imgur.com/a/junior-bridge-fundraiser-uV4Fj22>

Bridge Holiday 2027

<https://www.sunway.ie/tour/s/special-interest-tours/costa-del-sol-bridge-holiday-with-peter-pigot/>

Contact Peter Pigot

at 086-8146230



Classes for September-December 2026

♠ PeterPigotBridge provides ON-LINE Private instruction to Partnerships, Groups and Clubs using ZOOM, BBO and Realbridge (virtual play with Camera/Microphone)

♠ Topics on request!

♠ ALL Grades; Novice to MASTER

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Beginners

Wednesdays 20.15-21.45
 In person, commence 16th September 2026
 Venue: St Pauls Church Hall, Glenageary, Co. Dublin
 12 Sessions €200, Payment methods below.

Next Step (post Beginners)

Tuesdays 18.30-20.15
 In person, commence 15th September
 Venue: St Pauls Church Hall, Glenageary
 12 sessions €200

Fundamentals (stage after Next Step)

Wednesdays 18.30-20.00.
 In Person, commence 16th September @ €190 for series of 12.
 Venue: St Pauls Church Hall, Glenageary

Improvers+ (a continuation)

Mondays 19.30
 In person, commence Monday 14th September
 Venue: St Philips Church Hall, Dartry, Dublin 6.
 12 Sessions €200, Payment methods below.

Improvers + (a continuation of the current class)

Thursdays 11.00-13.00
 In person, commence 17th September
 Venue: St Pauls, Glenageary
 11 Sessions €190

FRIDAY or SATURDAY AFTERNOONS 13.30 - 17.30

Seminar, either Novices (coming soon), Improvers, Intermediate or Advanced
 Contact me for more details.
 Countrywide, upcoming

Intermediate

Cork Bridge Club 7th November
 @13.30-17.30

Improvers ++ (a continuation)

Wednesdays 11.00-13.00
 In person, commence 16th Sept 2026
 Venue: St. PHILIPS HALL, Temple Road, DARTY, Dublin 6.
 12 sessions €200

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DUBLIN NORTH REGION REPORT

Aidan Synnott, Regional Secretary

2025-2026 was another successful year in Dublin North Region (DNR).

The number of people taking Novice Classes remains strong, and this was reflected in the increased number of Novices playing in various clubs and in the consolidation of entry numbers in our two Regional Novice Tournaments (Novice Pairs and Novice Teams). Numbers in clubs running these classes generally increased more strongly than in other clubs.

There was also an improvement in numbers competing in most of our other regional tournaments with the notable and important exception of the Regional Pairs and Regional Teams events, where numbers remain disappointing.

The overall number of clubs in the Region remains stable at 30 and there was a modest increase of 3% in the overall number of members in the Region.

Our Regional League (Kirwans League) was very successful and culminated in a highly appreciated Gala Event.



Patricia Quigley DNR President, 2025-2026

We are very grateful to Kirwans for their continuing financial support of the League. All sections were well supported, and we would like to thank our League co-ordinations Mary Breen and Kay McDonald, who looked after the Master League and particularly to Dan O'Mahony who looked after all the other grades, a truly gargantuan task.

The Region continued to run its highly successful Improvers' Classes, delivered by Seamus Costello. As always, these were oversubscribed, further evidence of the healthy situation at Novice and Intermediate B levels.

The Malahide Congress took place in March 2026. This was very successful, thanks to the huge organisational skills and hard work of Mary Kelly-Rogers who led the team that organised it. Attendance was up more than 50%, and it turned out to be the largest Congress in the country in the 2025-2026 season. DNR are not directly involved in this event but helped promote it and made a financial contribution. In addition, our president, Patricia Quigley, provided a great deal of hands-on assistance throughout the event and our Regional Secretary, Aidan Synnott, ably assisted by his bridge partner Thérèse Gumbrielle, directed the Novice events.

We held our AGM in June 2026 in Marino Institute of Education, under the auspices of Iona Bridge Club. This was attended by Dermot O'Brien, CEO of the CBAI, who made a major contribution to proceedings, particularly in relation to the proposed amalgamation of the CBAI with the NIBU.

Patricia Quigley's term as President came to and end at the AGM. Patricia proved to be an excellent president and was instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of the Region during the 2025-2026 season. She will be a very challenging act to follow.

Our new president is Deirdre McGann, from Iona Bridge Club. We wish Deirdre the best of luck in her new role. John Kehoe (Sportslink BC) continues as Honorary Treasurer, Aidan Synnott (Glasnevin BC) continues as Regional Secretary and Webmaster, Dan O'Mahony (Vernon BC) as CDO and Norma Madden (Glasnevin BC) as President Emeritus. Patricia remains on the committee ex-officio. The other members of the committee are Mary Breen (Malahide BC), Catherine Deegan (Malahide BC), Denice Harver (Vernon BC) and Máire O'Gorman (Dublin Teachers' BC).

Finally, Kay McDonald resigned from the committee at the end of the 2026 season after many years of faithful service, not just as a committee member, but in the various officer roles she occupied down the years. She will be greatly missed.



Deirdre McGann, DNR President, 2026-2027



WESTERN REGION REPORT

Fiona Place, Regional Secretary

The 2025-2026 season has been a successful one for the Western Region, with our members participating in a wide range of national competitions and achieving excellent results.

The season began with the Duais an Uachtarain: President's Prize in Waterford, where the Western Region was proudly represented. A special mention goes to Louise Mitchell, who, partnering the then CBAI President John Phelan, achieved the highest score in the competition. As the President's Prize cannot be officially awarded to the sitting CBAI President, the title was not awarded to the pair. Nevertheless, Louise's outstanding performance deserves special recognition, and we congratulate her, on what was, in effect, a winning performance.

Throughout the year, Western Region players competed with distinction in national events, regularly finishing among the top ten in many competitions. This is a testament to the strength of bridge across our region.

Congratulations to Joan Kenny on an exceptional performance at the CBAI Women's Pairs and Teams weekend in Clane in January 2026. Partnering Jeannie Fitzgerald, Joan won the CBAI Women's Pairs, claiming the prestigious Jackson Cup after an outstanding performance.

Joan also enjoyed further success in the Women's Teams event, where she, together with Jeannie Fitzgerald, Teresa Rigney, and Siobhan Part, won the McMenamin Bowl – a very notable double.

Winning both the Jackson Cup and the McMenamin Bowl at the same congress is a tremendous achievement. On behalf of everyone in the Western Region, we extend our congratulations to Joan and her team mates on their well-deserved success.

A huge thank you to Louise Mitchell and David Walsh for their tremendous efforts in organising a hugely successful and well-attended Galway Congress in February this year. Their hard work, dedication and attention to detail ensured that the event ran smoothly

and enjoyed by everyone who attended. The Congress is an integral part of the CBAI's calendar, and players from near and far look forward to the weekend every year. The Western Region is extremely grateful for the time and commitment they gave to making the Congress such a memorable success.

A particularly outstanding achievement was the success of David Breslin and Anne Farragher, who won the Intermediate A National Pairs Championship (Laird Cup) at Ennistymon on the 7-8 March. This was a tremendous accomplishment, and on behalf of everyone in the Western Region, we extend our warmest congratulations to David and Anne on a truly memorable victory.

Huge congratulations also to Deirdre O'Halloran on her outstanding achievement in winning the 32nd Women's Online Bridge Festival, held from 13-19 April 2026. The festival attracted more than 1,000 competitors from across the



Anne Farragher and David Breslin with CBAI President John Phelan



Declan Harte and Margaret McCarthy with Ann McElwain President, Michael Waldron CDO

world, making Deirdre's victory all the more remarkable. We are incredibly proud that it was one of our own who bought home the gold medal. As the overall winner, Deirdre received free entry for herself and a partner of her choice to the Women's Pairs Championship in Poland (although unfortunately as it transpired she was unable to attend), together with recognition and master points awarded by the World Bridge Federation (WBF).

This is a fantastic accomplishment and a wonderful reflection on the high standard of bridge within the Western Region. We extend our heartiest congratulations to Deirdre.

Our Western Region President's Prize, hosted by Ann McElwain, took place on 1 March 2026 and was a great success, attracting an excellent attendance and providing an enjoyable day of competitive bridge and socialising. Congratulations to the winners of the Stack Trophy, Declan Harte and Margaret McCarthy.

And congratulations to the other winners:

First Novice – Monique Murphy and Debbie Joyce

First Intermediate B – Martin McCarthy and Ann Treacy

First Intermediate A – Aoife Tucker and Janet Naughton

First Area Master – Michael Waldron and Michael O'Gara

A major highlight of the year was the 55th anniversary celebration of the Tribes Bridge Club. It was a wonderful occasion that brought together members past and present to celebrate five decades of friendship and bridge. Special thanks go to Paul Scannell, who captured the event beautifully with photographs of members spanning the club's 50 year history and produced a superb commemorative video. The celebration was made even more special by the warm atmosphere,



President Marion Coy, Secretary Kathleen O'Connell

excellent food and refreshments, and the opportunity for so many members to reconnect. It is an occasion that will be remembered for many years, and we hope other clubs will be inspired to mark their own milestones in a similar way.

The Western Region enjoyed a wonderful series of charity bridge games this year, all of which were very well supported and very successful.

These events have become a real highlight of our bridge calendar, combining friendly competition with the opportunity to raise money for many deserving charities.

We always look forward to our charity games in Abbeyknockmoy and Caltra, not only for the bridge but also for the legendary hospitality! The tables are laden with homemade apple pies, sandwiches, cakes and countless other delicious treats, all lovingly prepared by the members. Some of us even joke that we only go for the food! Tuam also hosted two excellent charity events, with a fantastic turnout and generous support for very worthwhile causes.

A sincere thank you to all the clubs, organisers, volunteers and players who contributed to making this year's charity games such a success.

To my horror, I discovered that it was the Western Region's turn to nominate the CBAI President for the 2027-2028 year! Thankfully, we were fortunate to have the wonderful Gay Keaveney agree to accept the nomination. I am delighted that Gay was willing to take on this prestigious role, and I know he will be an outstanding ambassador for both the Western Region and soon to be Bridge Ireland. We wish him every success and look forward to supporting him during his presidential year.

Sadly, during the year we also said goodbye to one of the Western Region's most respected and long-standing members, Bob Hackett. Bob enjoyed remarkable success over many years, winning numerous competitions and earning the admiration and friendship of players throughout the bridge community. He will be remembered not only for his exceptional ability at the bridge table but also for his kindness, sportsmanship and contribution to the game. He is deeply missed by all who knew him.



Rest in Peace, Bob

Regional Officers for 2026-2027 are as follows:

President: Ann Gardiner

Secretary: Fiona Place

Treasurer: Michael O'Connor

CDO: Michael Waldron, Helen Gunning



SOUTH MUNSTER REGION REPORT

Linda O'Riordan, Regional Secretary

South Munster held its Annual General Meeting on 9 June 2026, chaired by Ciaran Broadbery and attended by a strong gathering of members.

The meeting included the presentation of awards to players who earned the highest masterpoints in each regional competition grade over the season. Cian Holland and Derek O'Gorman were recognised for Master grade, Carol O'Sullivan, Dermot Houston and John O'Donovan for Intermediate A, and Kevin Fraher for Intermediate B. Incoming President Gretta Scully thanked her club for nominating her and said she looked forward to serving the region in the year ahead. Members also discussed the proposed amalgamation of the CBAI and NIBU, which South Munster supported unanimously.

The 2025-2026 bridge season was a positive one for South Munster, with membership increasing by 4%. This growth reflects the dedication of teachers and clubs throughout the region. CBAI teachers continue to provide valuable lessons, while clubs that offer supervised play for novice

players play an important role in welcoming and retaining new members. Membership returns show that clubs with access to teachers, or with their own teaching support, are seeing encouraging growth.

South Munster also encourages clubs to promote bridge in local newsletters, whether by sharing results, highlighting charity bridge events, or showcasing club activities. Raising awareness in local communities remains one of the best ways to introduce more people to this wonderful game. During the year, the region held club tournament directing courses with the assistance of Carmel Connolly. Demand was very high, and another course is expected to run at the start of the next bridge season. Peter Pigot also delivered improvers seminars for Intermediate A players, which were very well received.

Regional Competitions and National Success

Participation in regional qualifying events increased during the year. The Fermoy Gala returned with a strong entry and included the Munster Pairs, won by Brian Madden and Marie

Whyte, while Karen and Liam Magnier won the Intermediate section. The regional Intermediate A and B qualifying competition attracted 30 pairs, with 20 in Intermediate A and 10 in Intermediate B. The Master Pairs, a qualifier for the national finals, drew 20 pairs.

The Intermediate A and B Teams event had 10 teams, while six teams competed for the Barry O'Connell Trophy, the qualifier for the Kelburne Cup. The Novice competition was held in March with 28 pairs, and the Inter-Club Specsavers competition took place in April with 43 pairs competing. South Munster thanks Specsavers for its continued support of this competition.

There were also notable South Munster performances at national level. At the National Pairs final on 7-8 March, Derek O'Gorman and Cian Holland won the Davidson Cup for Master pairs, while Stephanie Kiely and Cliona Murphy finished second in the Civil Service Cup for Intermediate B pairs. Congratulations are also due to Paul Hogan and Kyrle Allen on winning the Lambert Trophy and to Brian O'Sullivan and Hugh



Specsavers Competition Winners: Breeda Cahill and Rosaleen Fitzgerald



Munster Pairs Winners: Brian Madden and Marie Whyte, Intermediate Winner Liam Magnier

Twomey on placing second in the Cooper Trophy. Noel Bradfield, Donie Cahill, Rosaleen Fitzgerald and Breeda Cahill won the 4Fun Teams. As South Munster's only representatives in that event, their success is a reminder of the benefits of encouraging more clubs to take part.

Attendance rose at the region's three congresses in Kenmare, Cork and Killarney, reflecting the hard work of the congress committees and Tournament Directors whose expertise ensures that these events run smoothly. Looking ahead to 2027, the Cork Congress will move to a new venue, the Cork International Hotel, beside Cork Airport. All are welcome!

Supporting Clubs and Players

To support players at all levels, South Munster continued to provide bridge games for Novice and Intermediate B players at three venues, helping to address members' reluctance to travel. The strong support for these events shows that players are willing to enjoy bridge beyond their own club settings when opportunities are accessible.

Sincere thanks are extended to club secretaries and committee members for the work they do to keep clubs running smoothly throughout the region. The regional committee remains available to support all clubs and looks forward to another active and enjoyable bridge season.

Winners of Regional Competitions:

Intermediate A: John O'Donovan and Dermot Houston

Intermediate B: Ciaran Broadbery and Michael McHugh

Master Pairs: Ger McSweeney and Mary Clancy

Olive Rose Memorial Plate: Hugh Twomey and Brian O'Sullivan

Intermediate A Teams: Joan Meagher, Anne Cronin, Mary Murphy and Noreen Kelleher

Intermediate B Teams: Joe Moran, Pauline Wilson, Ber O'Sullivan and Kathleen Murphy

Barry O'Connell Trophy: Cian Holland, Derek O'Gorman, John Russell, Tom McCarthy and Ciarán Coyne

Novice Competition: Michael Horgan and Joni Murphy

Inter-Club Specsavers: Breeda Cahill and Rosaleen Fitzgerald



Intermediate A Teams Winners: Joan Meagher, Anne Cronin, Mary Murphy, Noreen Kelleher



Novice Pairs Winners: Michael Horgan and Joni Murphy



Winners of the Davidson Cup: Cian Holland and Derek O'Gorman



Winners of the 4Fun Teams: Rosaleen Fitzgerald, Breeda Cahill, Noel Bradfield and Donie Cahill



NORTH MUNSTER REGION REPORT

Gordon Lessells, Regional Secretary

The Region has 48 Clubs, 16 in Co Clare, 15 in Co Limerick, nine in Co Tipperary and eight in North Kerry. Three Clubs in Kerry have been lost and replaced by two new ones Mounthawk and the 1430 Club. Templemore is a new club in Co Tipperary.

Affiliations are up from 2,242 in 2024-2025 season to 2,442 in 2025-2026, growth of almost 9%. This growth comes from new players learning the game. Thanks to all those bridge teachers who are driving this growth. It is up to the rest of us to make our new novice players welcome and encourage them.

One of the notable events of the bridge year is the Interprovincials. Munster had a great performance winning two of the three events, the Intermediate and the Area/Regional Master events with the North Munster teams playing a prominent part in those victories. Congratulations to Mary Frost, Shirley Mangan, Mary Doherty-Ryan, Eilish Ryan, Eugene Gath, Margaret Holmes, Joe Carroll and Gerry McCague.

The Regional Pairs event in December had an entry of

14 pairs while the Regional Intermediate Pairs had an entry of 16 pairs. Three teams played in the regional teams held on a Friday but only one Intermediate team entered. None of our pairs or teams went on to distinguish themselves in the national finals.

The highlight of the year was the Regional President's Charity event in Newcastle West which attracted 74 pairs to the main event, and 12 pairs to the Novice event. A total of over €5,700 was raised. €2,700 went to Milford Hospice and €3,000 to the Friends of St Ita's.

Winners

Regional Pairs: David Coyne and Pat Quinn

Regional Intermediate Pairs: Pat and Catriona Carney

Regional Teams: John and Kelan O'Connor, Denis Sheehan and Gordon Lessells

President's Charity: Dymrna Ryan and Majella Ryan

President's Charity Novice: Declan Hanley and Sheila Begg

In Congresses and National events, a number of players from this region have distinguished

themselves, Pat Quinn, Donal Garvey, Kay Cussen, Denis Sheehan, Kelan O'Connor, John O'Connor and Gordon Lessells being the most prominent. There has been considerable growth in the number of Intermediate pairs playing in North Munster Congresses but most national Intermediate events are dominated by players from outside North Munster. Perhaps, the region should do more to improve our Intermediate players. One idea is that the counties should organise County Pairs events restricted to Intermediate Pairs. In the past County Pairs events were used as qualifiers for the Regional Pairs. With the Regional Pairs being open entry, these events could be run strictly for Intermediate Players.

Three players from North Munster represented Ireland in the European Championships in Riga. Pat Quinn and Donal Garvey were on the Senior Team and Jeannie Fitzgerald on the Women's team. In addition, Diarmuid Reddan was the NPC of the Irish Mixed Team. Pat Quinn also won John Phelan's Duais an Uachtarain in September 2025, in partnership with Tom McCarthy of Cork.



Prizewinners at the President's Charity day

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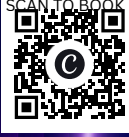
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Máire O'Keeffe

A long felt need in the bridge-book market has at last been met with the publication of Máire O'Keeffe's Bridge Made Simple. There are many beginners books whose value is experienced only following a series of classes. This is different. Designed for use step by step, week by week as the teacher introduces the various topics to the learners, it contains beginners' homework, revision and reference source all in one.

Máire O'Keeffe is one of the country's leading bridge teachers. No-one is better placed to understand what learners need. Few coming into the game nowadays have the tradition of card-playing behind them. The game that once was an easy progression from Twenty-five, forty-five, solo or whist, has become a foreign country with a strange language through which the traveller needs slow and patient guidance. What Máire has put in print here is based on her experience of the difficulties encountered by her learners.

"Bridge Made Simple is what bridge teachers but more importantly their beginner students have been waiting for"

Seamus Dowling, Irish Bridge Journal

"Maire 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 Comyn, Sunday Independent





SOUTH EASTERN REGION REPORT

Melwyn Godinho, Regional Secretary

Our regional AGM took place in Wexford Bridge Centre on 22 May 2026.

Regional Officers elected for Year 2026-2027 are:

President: John Phelan

Chairperson: Larry Mordaunt

Treasurer: Jim Doyle

Secretary: Melwyn Godinho

CDOs: Jim Kennington, Jim Doyle and Johanne Powell

Waterford held its 43rd Congress from 9-11 January with an excellent successful turnout. The 44th Waterford Bridge Congress will be held in the Tower Hotel from Friday 8 to Sunday 10 January 2027.

Congress rates p.p. for two Nights B&B + 1 Dinner will apply, and all are welcome.

The Wexford team of Trevor Murphy, Ciaran Allen, Marguerite Sweetman and Michael Lennon came 4th and another Wexford team of Pawel Turczynowicz, Christine Clarke, Clare Doyle and Mary Power got the 2nd session prize in the 4Fun Teams tournament in May 2026.

John Phelan ran a course for TDs in Waterford Bridge Centre. The course was well attended by people from the region.

As part of John Phelan's Presidency, Waterford hosted both the Duais an Uachtarain and the CBAI Novice and Intermediate Congress at the Tower Hotel, Waterford in September and April respectively. Local pair Patricia and Paddy Drennan of Ferrybank BC, were winners of the Jim Fitzgerald Trophy at the latter, while at the former, John finished in first place (with Louise Mitchell) but graciously declined to accept his own President's Prize!

Close to 50 beginners started in the Tincone Club in the Wexford Community Bridge Centre in March 2026 and it is very likely that the Tuskar Club which folded after Covid will be revived in September 2026. Affiliation numbers have increased and table numbers are up across the region, which is most welcome.

In New Ross, Beginners classes by Martin Burke (mburkenr@gmail.com, 086 2669836) start on Wednesday 23 September at 7:30pm, in The Ross Inn, Neville Street, New Ross.

Also, Martin is launching a new club (Viking Beginners Bridge Club) in the Brandon House Hotel, on

Tuesday 15 September at 7:30 pm. Students will be mentored by the TD to ease them into the playing environment.

Jim Doyle (jimdoylebree@gmail.com 086 3619911) is running classes for Beginners in Wexford B.C. starting on Monday 21 Sept, 10:30am-12:30pm and Tuesday 22 Sept 7-9pm

Kerry Anne O'Connor (kerryanneoconnor@gmail.com 087 9583168) is running online bridge classes.

In Waterford, Lucy Phelan (086 827 5192) is conducting Beginners' bridge classes in the Teachers Centre, Newtown Road, Waterford, on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. and on Wednesdays at 7:30pm.

Pascal Browne is hosting a series of six lessons of mini-Bridge in the Tramore Bridge Centre in the winter season. Contact pbrowne312@gmail.com or 051-345114 087-9718586 for further details.



Nora Moloney with CBAI President John Phelan

Nora Moloney (100 years young) and her partner John Phelan came 6th of 24 pairs in the Open Pairs event on Saturday 24 January at the Cork Congress. Nora turned 100 in September 2025, and was attending her first ever congress.

Many congratulations to Jim Doyle on being chosen for the President's Merit award. It was presented to him at a surprise party in the Wexford Bridge Centre with more than a 100 well-wishers from the region as well as his wife, three daughters, and grandchild.



Jim Doyle and family with CBAI President John Phelan

Congratulations from all of the South East Region to John Phelan who represented the region with such distinction in his role as President of the CBAI for 2025-2026. Not alone was he busy in his role as President of the Association but he also quite regularly directed various competitions around the country, and, in partnership with his wife Lucy, represented Ireland in the European Mixed Teams Championship in Riga, Latvia in July 2026.



EASTERN REGION REPORT

Bernie Rountree, Regional Secretary



Some young players being introduced to bridge at our promotion day Stillorgan

Bridge Promotion

Another successful bridge promotion event was held by the region in Stillorgan Shopping centre on 23 August. This was very well supported by committee and friends.

Leaflets were distributed giving details of local clubs and lessons available. The volunteers 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 is a worthwhile effort for the region.

Our Presidents' and Delegates' night was held in Dun Laoghaire Bridge Club on Friday 5 Sept and the majority of packs were collected. Refreshments were offered to delegates followed by an enjoyable game of bridge.

Clubs

The region was delighted to gain a new beginners' club, Club Philo Hassett. It is primarily aimed at Novices emerging from Philo's lessons and Philo offers assisted play on Monday and lessons on Wednesday evenings. The venue is St. Mary's National School, Sandford.

The Arklow 68 club made a welcome return this year and we now have a total of 66 clubs in the region with over 4,500 affiliations.

Seminar/Workshop

Following the success of our seminar in February facilitated by Hilary Dowling-Long, we organised a second seminar/workshop in October which was again very popular and booked out immediately. Carol-Ann Cummins presented and her subjects were Overcalling and Transfers/Breaking Transfers. A lecture was followed by prepared boards and discussion/Q&A on each topic with a break for lunch. The event was very interactive and attendees completed our survey with well over 90% giving an "Excellent" rating and all asking for more of the same.

Thanks to Carol-Ann for her first-rate delivery, to all the helpers on the day and to Greystones Bridge Centre.

Competitions

Competitions were well attended with increased numbers at most events. The Britton trophy was particularly successful this year. We introduced a separate Intermediate grade section and entries more than trebled on last year! Well done to CDO Brendan Martin and his team with promoting the event.

Winners of our regional competitions were:

Novice Pairs: Ruth Keogh and Veronica Kidd

Inter B Pairs: Louise Webb and Rita O'Sullivan

Inter A Pairs: Robert Wolfe and John Corcoran

Master Pairs: Catherine McCann and Brendan Martin

Inter B Teams: Ann Cafferky and Mags Smith, Eilish Dempsey and Daisy Downes

Inter A Teams: John Corcoran and Robert Wolfe, Kathryn Ryan and Maeve Pelly

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

4 Fun Teams: Finola McDonald and Maureen Quinn, Kathryn Ryan and Rachel Bell

Eileen O'Doherty: Charles and Jacinta Broadhead

Britton Salver (Inter A&B): Brendan Ward and Deirdre French

Britton Trophy (Masters): Marie Callinan and Maria Whelan



Marie Callinan and Maria Whelan receiving the Britton Trophy from ER President Marie Fitzgerald

The Massey League continues to be a great success. All competitors appear to prefer the new format. Fedelma Martin and her team are doing a fantastic job and we see the benefit in the number of players coming forward to play in other competitions.

Winners this year were:

Seniors: Dun Laoghaire BC (MP)

Inter A Div. 1:
Ace of Clubs (BS)

Inter A Div 2:
Dun Laoghaire Golf BC (VR)

Inter B Div 1:
Dun Laoghaire BC (RB)

Int B Div 2:
St. Crispin's BC (MD)

Greystones Bridge Centre ran their successful Open week in April and the two Dun Laoghaire events (O'Kennedy Teams and Muldoon Pairs) were also well supported.



Intermediate A Division 1 Winners: Ace of Clubs Bridge Club with ER President and representatives of Massey Bros.

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

John Noonan and Carol-Ann Cummins won the Coen Trophy

BJ O'Brien and partner won the Spiro Cup

Adam Mesbur won the Revington Cup and the Holmes Wilson with his partner/team

Catherine Neary and Gay Conroy won the Inter Congress Mixed/Gala Pair

Louise Webb and Mick Stuart won the Inter Congress B pairs

Deirdre French and Brendan Ward, Mary Ryan and Richard Lister won the JJ Kiely Trophy

Liz Murphy and Margaret Haughey, Yvonne Sheerin and Jean Hennebry won the Bankers Trophy

Dorothy Nolan and Maeve Pelly won the IBU Intermediate Pairs

Jeremy James and Mia Delaney and their team won the Cooper Cup

We look forward to another great bridge year in 2026-2027.

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DUBLIN SOUTH REGION REPORT

Moya Murphy, Regional Secretary

Our Regional AGM took place in the Bridge Centre in Templeogue on the 12 June 2026. Anne-Marie Feeney was elected as President for the year 2026-2027 and Brideen Downes as the President-Elect.

Thank you to John Coulter, our outgoing President, who in addition to carrying out his presidential duties, very successfully organised the Fanagan League.



John Coulter - outgoing President

He was ably assisted in this by committee member Julie Anderson. Bríd Kemple will take over from Julie this coming year. The prizes were presented by David Fanagan, on behalf of Fanagan Funeral Directors who are long-standing supporters of this competition, and to whom the region is very grateful.

The evening was rounded off by a very nice supper.

The winners were:

Novice, Division 1:

Beechwood (winners also of the Marie Cummins Salver for the best overall performance)

Novice, Division 2: Cypress

Intermediate B, Division 1:

Grange Golf Club Bridge Club

Intermediate B, Division 2:

Leinster Cricket Club Bridge Club

Intermediate B, Division 3:

Fitzwilliam Tennis Club Bridge Club

Intermediate A, Division 1:

Milltown Goff Club Bridge Club

Intermediate A, Division 2: Knocklyon

Intermediate A, Division 3: Railway Union

Senior Intermediate: Knocklyon

Confined Masters: Cypress

Regional Competitions

Carroll Cup: Marie Morrissey, Liz Sherlock, Carol Hawkins and Kay Russell

Paul O'Reilly Trophy: Anne Donnellan, Claire Counihan, Ciara O'Leary and Penny Gleeson

Quin Cup: Bríd Kemple and Terry Walsh

Joe Moran Cup: Robert Browne and Austin Leahy

Duffy Cup: Clodagh Sweeney and Mary McDaid

Pigot Cup: Peter Stewart, Marcin Rudzinski, Matthew O'Farrell, Noerbert Van Woerkom and Wojciech Gorczyca

BJ O'Brien Trophy: Naomi Mooney, Kathleen O'Grady, Julie Anderson and Deirdre Lemass

Ruth Giddings Cup: Charles and Anthony Alken, Pauline and Paul McCarthy

Kay Downes Trophy: Jean Moran and Ciara Ryan

National Competitions

Revington Cup: Adam Mesbur and Tommy Garvey

Spiro Cup: Siobhan Part and B.J. O'Brien

Cooper Cup: Giles Murnin, David Connolly, Jeremy James and Mia Delaney

Geraldine Cup: Mark Moran, John Carroll, Tom Hanlon and Conor Boland

McMenamin Bowl: Teresa Rigney, Siobhan Part and teammates

Holmes Wilson Trophy: Tom Hanlon, Mark Moran, Adam Mesbur and Nick FitzGibbon

Tierney Trophy: John Hogan, Sarah Hogan, Marian Nugent and Pat O'Hanlon

Kelburne Cup: Paul Delaney, David Dunne, Tomás Roche and David Ryan

Burke Trophy: Paul Delaney, Tomás Roche, David Dunne and Martin Brady

O'Connor Trophy: Russell Down, Maura King, Mary Cox and Ian Kingston

Egan Trophy: Matthew O'Farrell and teammates

Moylan Cup: Peter Goodman and Terry Walsh

CBAI Master Pairs: Karel De Raeymaecker and Anna Onishuk



Holmes Wilson winners: Suzie Berkery, Cantor Fitzgerald (Sponsor) with Nick FitzGibbon, Adam Mesbur, John Phelan (CBAI President), Mark Moran and Tom Hanlon.



Master Pairs Winners 2025-26: Anna Onishuk and Karel De Raeymaeker

Dublin won the 2026 President's Cup, played on Realbridge against a number of teams from Great Britain. Paul Delaney very kindly managed the team. Congratulations to Paul and his team members Wojciech Gorczyca, Marcin Rudzinski, Alan O'Sullivan, Carol-Ann Cummins, Martin Brady, Mairead Haugh, Roisin de Jong, Matthew O'Farrell, Liam Maher, Derek O'Gorman, Kevin O'Dea and BJ O'Brien.

I would like to thank our Competitions Secretary Mairéad Ní Oistín, and our Tournament Directors John Royds, Brian Lawlor and Martin Brady for all their hard work during the season.



Teresa Gavin - outgoing secretary

Teresa Gavin stepped down from the committee and she was highly complimented for her service as Honorary Regional Secretary. Teresa was replaced by Moya Murphy (RDS Bridge Club).

Members of Dublin South Region were involved in the promotion of bridge at the CBAI stand at the 50Plus Show at the RDS in March. Over the course of the two days, volunteers chatted to existing bridge players and encouraged them to get their friends to take classes, answered queries from prospective players and sold bridge gifts and books. In addition, Michael O'Loughlin (Sandyford Village Bridge Club and author of "Bridge: Basic Card Play") gave demonstration sessions on bridge.

On behalf of Dublin South Region, we extend heartiest congratulations to Paul Porteous who was awarded a gold medal by the European Bridge League (EBL) for his outstanding contribution to European Bridge.

Paul has just completed two years as President of the Regent Bridge Club and is a former Chief Executive of the CBAI. His contribution to both Irish and European Bridge has been tremendous. This is a fitting tribute to an extraordinary man.

Finally, to all the Club Secretaries, your help and cooperation is very much appreciated.

Please checkout our website at www.bridgewebs/dublinsouth for competition entries and competitions, details of Bridge Classes and the Fanagan League.

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SOUTH MIDLAND REGION REPORT

Paul Conroy, Regional Secretary

It was another busy year in 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 a total of 35 CBAI affiliated clubs spread across our four counties, South Kildare, Laois, Carlow and Kilkenny. We now have 1,832 affiliations compared to 1,735 at this time last year, growth of almost 6%.

We held four Regional Tournaments, all in the Sevenoaks Hotel, Carlow, and these are growing in number each year, and they were all professionally directed by Brian Lawlor.

We would like to see them continuing to grow further in the future, so please support them if you can. The tournaments were:



19 October Regional Pairs: won by Carmel Gleeson and Kevin Kennedy



14 December South Midland Trophy: won by Marie O'Meara and Fran Swift



25 January Regional Teams: won by George Ryan, Fran Swift, Peter Ryan, Liz Jennings



18 May Presidents Prize: won by Jo Byrne and Michael Byrne



Novices Competition: won by Mary Tierney and Michelle Heery

Members of the region did us proud in National events and Nora Kelly and Kathy Monks had an outstanding result in finishing second in the Jackson Cup (Women's National Pairs Championship) in Clane in January.

Mary Tierney and Michelle Heery were second in the Civil Service Cup (National Intermediate B Pairs) in Ennistymon, a great result, particularly as both are still novices. Along with Jack Nolan and Louise Kavanagh, Michelle and Mary later came third in the Tierney Trophy (National Intermediate B Teams) in Portlaoise.



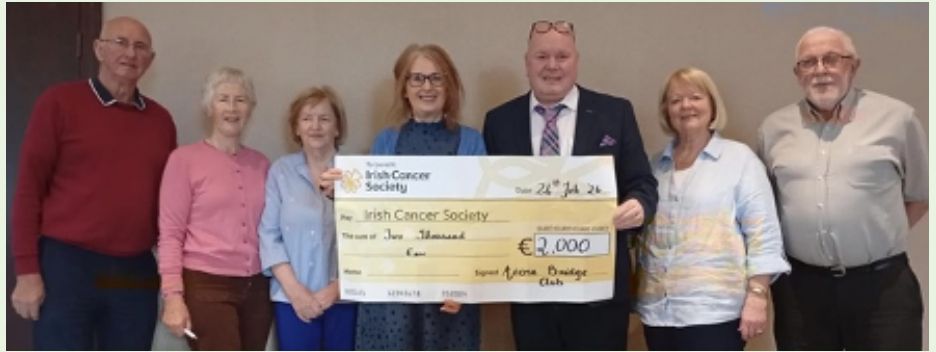
Mary Tierney and Michelle Heery - 2nd place in the Civil Service Cup



Jack Nolan and Louise Kavanagh, Michelle and Mary - 3rd in the Tierney Trophy

Some important events in the South Midland Regional clubs:

Acorn Bridge Club hosted the Sheila Gallagher Cup on 24 February 2026. This is the inaugural running of this perpetual trophy charity bridge tournament. The event raised €2,000 for the Irish Cancer Society.



Carlow Congress returned to the calendar in November 2025, for the first time since the covid pandemic. The venue was the ever-popular Seven Oaks Hotel, in Carlow, and the event was a great success. Well done to the organising committee for all their hard work



Opening ceremony, L-r: John Phelan (CBAI National President), Ken Murnane (Cathaoirleach, Carlow County Council), Anna Kavanagh (South Midland Region President), Paul Doogue (Mayor of Carlow)

Kilkenny Bridge Centre hosted the Kilkenny Bridge Congress on 21-23 November 2025. Kilcullen took second place in the Master Teams competition.



L-r: Kathy Monks, Nora Kelly, Carmel Gleeson, Marie O'Mara, with John Phelan (CBAI President) and Hugh Donnelly-Swift (Treasurer, South Midland Region).

Killenard Bridge Club (Laois) -
Winners of the Lily Slevin Cup 2025



L-r: Paul M Conroy and Geraldine Duffy (photo courtesy of William Prior) (Treasurer, South Midland Region).

Portlaoise Bridge Club held a fundraiser for Cuisle Cancer Center on 27 June 2026. €1,410 was raised for this very worthy charity.



L-r: Eileen Fingelton, Damien Nee, Margaret Nee, Anne Doolin (photos courtesy of Damien Nee)

Ryston Bridge Club hosted the "James O'Rourke" Competition on 29 June 2026.



Winners: Fran Swift and Marie O'Mara. All prizes sponsored by Margaret Gill. (photos courtesy of Maggy McElroy, Secretary Ryston Bridge Club)

A great charity night out was held in over the summer in Durrow, hosted by John Bowe, with celebrated singer and avid bridge player, Daniel O'Donnell, raising substantial funds for the local St Vincent de Paul. Thanks to Daniel who never hesitates to give his time to a good cause. He is pictured here with John Bowe and Margaret and Damien Nee, prizewinners on the night.



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NORTH WESTERN REGION REPORT

Tom McNicholas, Regional Secretary



The 2025-2026 season was unremarkable in the North Western Region, with little in the way of change. Member numbers increased slightly with the biggest growth in the Swinford and St Louis Bridge Clubs.

Following its 2025 return face-to-face for the first time since covid, the Yeats Country (Sligo) Congress once again proved why it is one of the best and most popular congresses in the country, attracting almost 700 players to the weekend in the Clayton Hotel, with the usual Sligo hospitality in full force.

Another highlight was the ascension of Hilary (Dowling-Long) McDonagh, of Ballaghaderreen, to the highest rank of bridge players in Ireland, that of Grand Master. This is the result of a lot of talent and a lot of effort by Hilary, who has always been a great supporter of bridge in Ireland, playing regularly at her local club in Charlestown as well as at the highest international level. She has always been very generous with her time in helping less experienced and developing players.

President Kathleen Walshe was very active in her role this year and did great work in promoting bridge by her visits to numerous clubs and encouraging novices. The President's prize in Kiltimagh was a huge success with a total of 37 tables playing.

Communication within the region is difficult. A large number of clubs do not respond to any emails, nor do they participate in regional competitions or meetings.



Intermediate Section, Sligo Congress

Despite many efforts to have email addresses updated to club only I am still seeing personal emails being used. Perhaps all clubs could make a new season's resolution to be more active within the region in the 2026-2027 season. The regional committee would also welcome some new members and/or volunteers.

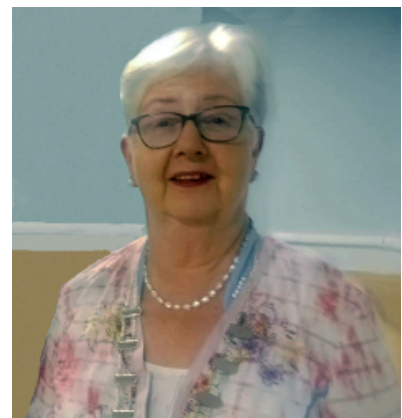


The late Niall Kilroy

We had one very sad note during the year, when we lost one of our most successful and respected members, Niall Kilroy who died suddenly in January 2026. Niall will be sorely missed both locally and nationally.



New Grand Master Hilary (D-L) McDonagh



2026-2027 Regional President Anne Lenihan

The newly elected President of the region for 2026-2027 is Anne Lenihan from the Boyle Club. We wish Anne every success in her year of office.



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NORTHERN/DONEGAL REGION REPORT

Anne Murray, Regional Secretary

The dates for this year's Donegal International Bridge Congress 2026 are 6-8 November.

The event will be held at our wonderful local venues, the Abbey Hotel and the Central Hotel, both located on the Diamond in Donegal Town, and all are welcome!

New Congress Secretary: Ita O'Sullivan takes over the role of Congress Secretary this year. Many of you will remember Ita as last year's President of the CBAI Northern (Donegal) Region. In a wonderful tradition, Ita is following in the footsteps of her father, Jim O'Sullivan, who served as our dedicated Congress Secretary for many years. Jim famously kept the congress running with great enthusiasm as covid restrictions eased, inspiring many other regions to resume their events. Thanks to Ita's efficiency, the event brochures are already printed and were distributed at the beginning of the summer. If you haven't got your supply please let me know.

We in Donegal are extremely fortunate to have Fearghal O'Boyle and Mairead Basquille run our Congress and manage the computer scoring annually.

New Congress Treasurer: Phyllis Murphy joins us this year, succeeding the excellent Shaun Coll, who has decided to retire. We thank Shaun for his years of fantastic service.

Accommodation and Travel

Please book your accommodation as soon as possible in the local hotels, B&Bs or apartments. If you prefer not to drive, Bus Éireann stops directly outside both the Abbey and Central hotels. Excellent restaurants, local shops (including the famous Magee of Donegal), and boutiques are all within short walking distance.

Weekend events and highlights

The Donegal Congress committee works hard to ensure all players enjoy a fantastic weekend both at and away from the card tables.

Bridge Competitions: Available for all competitive levels, alongside ongoing Open Pairs sessions for casual play.

Saturday Fashion Show: A stylish interlude during the weekend.

Bridge Workshop: Hosted at the Abbey Hotel on Saturday by Dr. Gay Keaveney. Our thanks to Gay for his long-standing support for the Congress. We look forward to welcoming him as President in 2027-2028.

Gala Dance: A celebratory social event held on Saturday evening in the Central Hotel.

Sunday Reception: Hosted by the committee on Sunday morning just before the prize-giving ceremony in the Central Hotel. Donegal Bridge members look forward to welcoming you all to a fantastic weekend of bridge and socialising.

If you haven't attended our Congress previously, please come this year. You'll be very welcome, and we are sure you'll enjoy yourself and make new friendships with bridge players from all over the country, and beyond.

CBAI Northern (Donegal) Region Annual Review 2025-2026 Season

It was a highly successful and exceptionally busy year for the President of the CBAI (Donegal) Northern Region, Ita O'Sullivan. Kicking off the season with the Donegal Congress, President O'Sullivan went on to secure several major victories across multiple high-profile team competitions throughout the year.



Bridge Winners Denis Ellis and Daniel O'Donnell

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Men's Golf Champion, Barry McMenamin



Ladies' Golf Champion, Wendy Buddin

Competitions

McDevitt Teams Cup (U3A)

28 April 2026 Winners: Ita O'Sullivan, Mary Duffy, Anna Carr, Margaret Farren

Derry v Donegal Teams 6 May

2026 Runners-Up: Ita O'Sullivan, Margaret Farren, Marion Gallagher, Anna Carr

Moylan Cup (IBU All-Ireland Pairs)

2025-2026 Runners-Up: Anna Carr and Margaret Farren

Education and Regional Development

To cultivate and support new talent within the region, several dedicated instructional bridge sessions were held during the 2025-2026 season. Pauric Burke, the County Development Officer (CDO) for the Northern (Donegal) Region, successfully initiated and managed beginner bridge classes in both Downings and Letterkenny. To bridge the gap for advancing players, Maeve Costello served as the primary tutor for the advanced bridge classes held in Letterkenny.

Club Membership

The region faces clear demographic and logistical contrasts. In smaller towns, local clubs encounter a continuous struggle to stabilise active player counts due to an aging membership profile. Recruiting new members remains difficult because traveling to local clubs requires significant journeys. Conversely, larger urban hubs like Letterkenny find it significantly easier to recruit and sustain new bridge enthusiasts. Despite these hurdles, regional participation remained resilient with a total of nine Open Cups successfully contested across the area during the bridge season.



Moylan Cup Runners Up Anna Carr and Margaret Farren, with Harold Curran, IBU Joint Hon Sec

Annual Bridge and Golf Day

To mark the conclusion of her distinguished presidential term, Ita O'Sullivan hosted her final official event of the year: the annual Bridge and Golf Day, at the Ballybofey and Stranorlar Golf Club on 19 May 2026. The highly popular dual-sport gathering drew a strong turnout of 43 participating pairs. Prizes were presented by Regional President Ita O'Sullivan, joined by Ballybofey and Stranorlar Golf Club Captain Iggy Larkin.

The Bridge Golf Champions were Barry McMenamin and Wendy Buddin.

The Bridge Competition

Winners: 1st Place Denis Ellis and Daniel O'Donnell (the celebrated singer, who is also a very keen bridge player); 2nd Place Anna Carr and Margaret Farren; 3rd Place Graham Laird and Seamus O'Neill;

Best Intermediate A: Marian Skelly and Carmel Gallinagh;

Best intermediate B: Eamonn Gallagher and Sean Dunne; Best Novice: Brenda Long and Sabri Gozkese

Strategic Structural Changes and Amalgamation

The regional bridge landscape is entering a historic phase of transformation. The organisation is actively preparing for a major organisational merger, as it warmly welcomes the amalgamation of the Irish bridge clubs North and South. Reflecting this unified, cross-border restructuring, and the district is formalising a geographic identity update, officially updating its name from the Northern Region to the Donegal Region within the new structure.

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MID LEINSTER REGION REPORT

Paul Dunne, Regional Secretary

Yvonne Dalton was re-elected as our President for her second two-year term. Other committee members include Marian McKay, Barbara Burke, Marie O'Brien, Aine Kelly, Maura Colgan, Helena McIntyre, Owen Cummins, Neil Burke and Paul Dunne.

We would like to thank those committee members who stood down this year. In particular thanks to Blanaid Morris for her many years of excellent service to the region.

The committee looks forward to the new season of Cunningham League matches where we hope to continue building on recent success.

We recently completed a highly effective and well-received training session for Intermediate players hosted by Kathie McGrath and Declan Byrne. Many thanks to Kathie and Declan for a great session. We hope to run more sessions in the coming season.

We would like to congratulate all Mid-Leinster players who competed successfully in our regional and national competitions.

In particular, congratulations to

Joe Coyne, Kevin O'Dea, Liam Maher and Tony Smyth for their 2nd place in the Kelburne Cup

Manus Cannon and Anne McGettigan for bringing home the JJ Murphy Trophy for Novice Pairs

Shout outs also to...

JJ Murphy Trophy: 3rd place
- Helen Moore and Cora McDermottroe

Lambert Cup: 3rd place - Declan Byrne and Nicola O'Dowd

Intermediate Congress Inter B: 4th place - Virginia Pye and Patricia Gardiner

Geraldine Trophy: 4th place - Joe Coyne, Tony Smyth, Kevin O'Dea, Liam Maher

Cooper Cup: 5th place - Declan Byrne, Nicola O'Dowd, Mags Kelly, Brendan Doyle

Tierney Trophy: 6th place - Colin Townsend, Derek McLoughlin, Patricia Kinch-Underwood, Dermott Bradshaw

Cunningham League winners:

Premier Masters:

Westmanstown (Liam Gaynor);
Area Master - Castleknock (Ann Clerkin);
Inter A1 - Confey (Brendan McHugh);
Inter A2 - Confey Castle (Bridie Leonard);
Inter B - Confey Castle (Martin Carley);
Novice - Louisa Bridge (Noreen Naughton)

Regional Pairs:

Master - David Melody and Tony Smyth;

Inter A - Mary Bell and Maura Colgan;

Inter B - Virginia Pye and Maurice Quinn

Regional Teams:

Master - Liam Maher, Joe Coyne, Tony Smyth, Kevin O'Dea

Inter A - Eamonn Kelly, Anne Dunne, Anne Crossan, Marian Horkan

Inter B - Colin Townsend, Derek McLoughlin, Patricia Kinch-Underwood, Dermott Bradshaw

President's Cup

Overall Winners - Eleanor Greene and Renee Kelly; 2nd- Donek Szenejko and Mary Timoney;

Best A - Fiona Murray and Ena Souhan;

Best B - Virginia Pye and Maurice Quinn;

Best Novice - Manus Cannon and Anne McGettigan

MLR 4Fun Teams

Carmel Shanley, Annette O'Toole, Margaret Kavanagh and Kathleen Fitzsimons



Renee and Eleanor receive the MLR President's Cup



Anne and Manus receive the JJ Murphy Trophy



NORTH MIDLAND REGION REPORT

Joan Peppard, Regional Secretary

Our Regional AGM took place on Friday 21 June in the Mullingar Bridge and Amenity Centre.

Outgoing President George Farrell (Ballymahon) thanked his committee, the tournament directors, bridge teachers and all volunteers for all their hard work during the season and offered best wishes to incoming President Frances Coffey (Ennell Club, Mullingar) for her year of office before handing over the seal of office to Frances. Frances thanked all for the honour and said she was looking forward to her year in the role.



George Farrell and incoming President Frances Coffey

All our Regional Competitions were well attended and the winners were:

Paddy O'Toole Memorial:
Sean and Brid Galligan

Midland Cup: Sean and Brid Galligan Liz O'Reilly and Helen O'Reilly

Regional Pairs:

Master/Senior: James Connelly and Sean Masterson

Intermediate A: Brendan Murtagh and Rory Duncan

Intermediate B: George Farrell and Margaret Lynn

Regional Teams:

Master/Senior: Sean and Brid Galligan, Liz O'Reilly and Helen O'Reilly

Intermediate A: Joan Peppard, Tom Roche. Dillon Murtagh, Kevin Woulfe

Intermediate B: Enda Carroll, Margaret Layde, Patricia McCormack, Marie Colgan

Regional President's Prize: Liz O'Reilly and Jonathan Williams

Bridge Classes continued through the autumn and a big thank you to all our teachers and Development Officers for promoting and encouraging more people to take up the game of bridge. Sean Galligan also ran a highly successful seminar for tournament directing in clubs.

During the year the region was well represented at National and Congress events with competitors taking part at all levels all year long. The year was bookended with Joan Peppard and Tom Roche winning Best Area Masters at the Spiro Cup in October 2025 (pictured with 2025-2026 CBAI President John Phelan) is Dillon Murtagh and Kevin Woulfe winning the Intermediate A competition at the Trim Boyne Bash in August 2026 (pictured with Nicola O'Dowd, Bridge Bash Organiser and George Ryan, 2026-2027 CBAI President, Melissa Brady, President, North Eastern Region.



Joan Peppard and Tom Roche



Dillon Murtagh and Kevin Woulfe



Picture Aonghus McAnally, Sean Galligan, Cllr Aoife Davitt, Cathaoirleach of Westmeath County Council, Barry Kehoe, Chief Executive of Westmeath County Council

Volunteer Award 2026

Westmeath County Council hosted the 20th Annual Community and Cathaoirleach Awards 2026. This year the event was celebrated in Belvedere House and Gardens, Mullingar on Friday 5 June 2026. The Cathaoirleach Awards in County Westmeath recognise and celebrate individuals and organisations that have made an outstanding contribution

to community life and whose dedication, commitment, and service have helped to build strong, vibrant, and inclusive communities across the county.

Sean Galligan (Lake Club Mullingar) won the Cathaoirleach award as the Recreation and Sports Category Winner 2026 for his work with the Mullingar Bridge and Amenity Centre and Bridge Community. Pictured

is Aonghus McAnally, Sean Galligan longtime volunteer and winner of the Recreation and Sports Award for his 40 years of dedication to the Mullingar Bridge Club, Cllr Aoife Davitt, Cathaoirleach of Westmeath County Council, Barry Kehoe, Chief Executive of Westmeath County Council)

Finally, my sincere thanks to my predecessor in the role, Mary Macken, for all her hard work over the past years both locally and regionally.

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NORTH EASTERN REGION REPORT

Nicola O'Dowd, Regional Secretary

A Year of Growth, Success and Community

The 2025-2026 season has been another successful year for the North Eastern Region, with growing participation at regional events, continued club development and excellent performances at both regional and national level.

We were delighted to welcome two additional clubs to the region during the year. This brought the total number of affiliated clubs in the North Eastern Region to 41.

Bridge promotion remained a major focus throughout the year. Clubs in Trim, Oldcastle, Virginia, Balbriggan, Skerries, Monaghan and Drogheda all organised promotion events, helping to introduce new players to the game and encouraging participation within their local communities.

As part of the Regent Bridge Club Centenary Celebrations, two teams from the North Eastern Region were invited to compete in the inaugural Alfie Sexton Trophy. The region also

had the honour of selecting the nine Leinster teams for this year's Interprovincials, held in the Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim.

The North Eastern Region was also very well represented at the popular 4Fun Teams, with eleven teams taking part. Louth 2, represented by Fiona Kelly, Frank Davey, Kathleen Healy and Marie Savage, secured an excellent second place.

Regional Competition Winners

Pat Taaffe Trophy - Pat Duff and Seamus Costello

Regional Mixed Pairs - Mary Timoney and Donek Szenejko

Regional Pairs

Masters

Deirdre Tuckey and Seamus Costello

Intermediate A

Veronica Buttimer and Vincent Bissett

Intermediate B

Madeline Heeney and Michael Spillane

Novice (Pat Thornton Trophy)

Mary Bowe and Elaine Doyle



4Fun Teams - Margaret Duffy, Christine Griffin, Louis Burke and JJ Mulligan

Regional Teams

Masters - Joan Kiernan Memorial Shield

Deirdre Tuckey, Seamus Costello, Noreen Pender and Frank Davey

Area Master - The Rose Bowl

Nicola O'Dowd, Declan Byrne, Martin Staunton and Leila Warner

Intermediate A

Deirdre Daly, Sinead Kennedy, Paul Brennan and Jeff Young



Novice (Pat Thornton Trophy) - Mary Bowe and Elaine Doyle



Alfie Sexton Trophy - Runners-up: Declan Byrne, Debbie Leahy, Peter Byrne, Phil Geoghegan, Barry Leahy, Nicola O'Dowd, Dara Voyles and Melissa Brady



4Fun Teams - Runners-up: Fiona Kelly, Frank Davey, Kathleen Healy and Marie Savage

Intermediate B

Sylvia McCann, Angela Everitt,
Madeline Heeney and Michael
Spillane

Men's Pairs

Sean Keane and John Gray

Ladies' Pairs

Antoinette McGee and Noreen
Pender

National Successes

North Eastern players once again
enjoyed success at national
level, producing several excellent
performances throughout the
season.

Coen Trophy (National Mixed Teams) - Winners

Deirdre Tuckey, Seamus Costello
and teammates

McMenamin Bowl - National Master Prize Winners

Melissa Brady, Anna Shalvey,
Frances Daly and Josephine Brady

Davidson Trophy - Runners-up

Seamus Costello and Deirdre
Tuckey

Burke Trophy - Runners-up

Seamus Costello, Deirdre Tuckey,
Noreen Pender and Antoinette
McGee

Inter & Novice Congress - Novice Pairs Winners

Laetitia MacMahon and Mary
Brennan

IBU Master Pairs - Best Area Master Prize:

Nicola O'Dowd and Dara Voyles

Lambert Cup - Third Place:

Nicola O'Dowd and Declan Byrne

4-Fun Teams - Runners-up:

Fiona Kelly, Frank Davey, Kathleen
Healy and Marie Savage

Two Flagship Events

The North Eastern Region is
fortunate to be home to two
highly successful events on
the Irish bridge calendar - the
Drogheda and District Bridge
Congress and the Bridge Bash in
Trim.

Held in the excellent ABCD Bridge
Centre, the Drogheda and District
Bridge Congress continues to
attract players from across the
country. The fantastic facilities,
welcoming atmosphere and high
standard of organisation make
it a firm favourite on the bridge
calendar.

The Bridge Bash in Trim has also
quickly established itself as one of
the region's major events, bringing
together players of all grades for a
weekend of bridge. Its continued
growth and support from players
throughout Ireland has been
wonderful to see.

We are very fortunate to have
both events within the North
Eastern Region. They showcase
our region on the national bridge
calendar and are a tremendous
credit to the organisers,
tournament directors, volunteers
and players whose support makes
them possible.



*Inter & Novice Congress - Novice Pairs
Winners - Laetitia MacMahon and Mary
Brennan*



*Drogheda & District Bridge Congress
President Catherine Clarke and North
Eastern Regional President Nicola O'Dowd*

Bridge Bash Area Master

Winners - Mary Delaney and
Martin T. O'Brien

Bridge Bash Intermediate

B Winners - Kay Henry and
Catherine McGuinness

Bridge Bash Novice Pairs

Winners - Jonathan Doogue and
David Fitzpatrick



*Bridge Bash Intermediate B Winners - Kay Henry and
Catherine McGuinness*



*Bridge Bash Novice Pairs Winners - Jonathan Doogue
and David Fitzpatrick*



Coen Trophy - Deirdre Tuckey, Seamus Costello and teammates



Bridge Bash Area Master Winners - Mary Delaney and Martin T. O'Brien

Balbriggan Bridge Club Celebrates 50 Years

This year Balbriggan Bridge Club celebrated its Golden Jubilee, marking fifty years since the club was founded in 1976. The club was formed following a meeting of local bridge players in the Grand Hotel, Balbriggan, on 3 May 1976, and later acquired its own premises in 1987, where it continues to flourish today.

A week of celebrations took place from 22-26 June, with bridge played on each of the five days. The week also included a Remembrance Mass on Thursday evening and culminated in a Celebration Party on Friday evening, attended by 126 people. Addresses were given by Club President Kate Tammemagi, CBAI CEO Dermot O'Brien, Regional President Melissa Brady and club stalwart Seamus Costello.

Congratulations to everyone involved in organising such a memorable celebration. Particular thanks go to the committee for all their work before and during the week, and especially to Deirdre Tuckey, whose vision and planning helped bring the celebrations together. All who attended agreed it was a week that will be remembered for many years to come.



North Eastern Region president Melissa Brady with Eileen McEntegart and Seamus Costello

A Special Thank You

This year also marks the retirement of Seamus Costello and Eileen McEntegart from the North Eastern Regional Executive after many years of dedicated service to bridge within the region.

Seamus in particular has played a huge part in the North Eastern Region over many years. His commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to give his time have contributed enormously to regional bridge, both at and away from the table. His knowledge and experience have been invaluable, and his contribution to the region will be greatly missed. We thank Seamus sincerely for everything he has done and wish him every happiness for the future.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Eileen McEntegart for her many years of service and commitment to the Regional Executive and wish her every happiness for the future.

Looking Ahead

Following the North Eastern Region AGM, a new Executive was elected for the coming season.

President: Melissa Brady

Vice-President: Sean Newcomen

Honorary Secretary: Nicola O'Dowd

Honorary Treasurer: Ian Baker

As we begin a new season, we look forward to working closely with all our clubs and keeping players up to date with what is happening throughout the region. We want to make information easily available to all players, with our calendar, upcoming competitions, events and other useful information kept up to date on the North Eastern Region website. We would encourage clubs and members to check the website regularly, share the information and help us reach as many players as possible. We hope to see more players of all grades getting involved in events both within and outside their own clubs.

We wish all our members an enjoyable and successful season and look forward to seeing you at regional events throughout the coming year.



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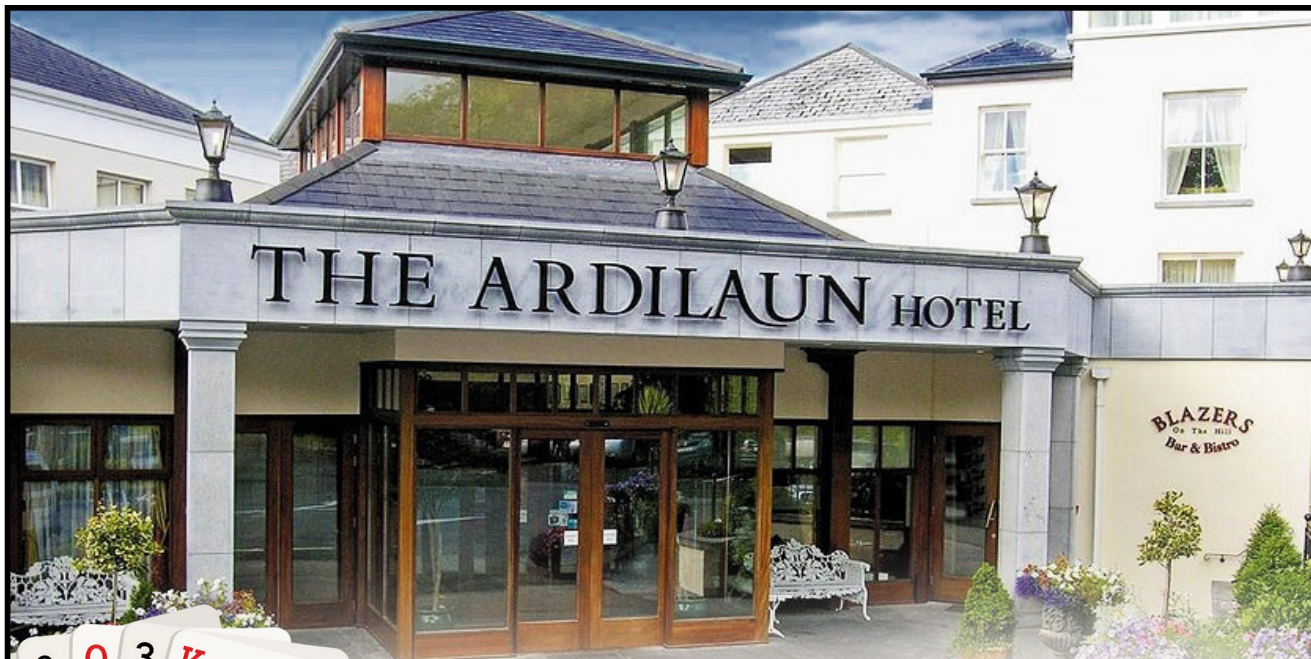
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