

COMPETITION SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT

4th June, 2014

Robb Cup - Kelvin – 8 tables won by Dean Bradley & Robert Caves.

East Down Teams – Spa GC – 8 tables won by Greer Mackenzie's team.

Belfast Pairs – Boat Club - 15 tables won by John Murchan & Ciara Burns.

Senior/Inter B Pairs – Kelvin – 13 tables won by Kathleen Cassidy & Stanley Lowe.

Mr. Monty Pairs – SMCOPA - 10 tables won by Ruth Connolly & John Murchan.

Bangor Inter AB Chall. – Bangor GC – 5.5 tables won by Derek & Rosemary Cannell

East Down Pairs – Millbrook Lodge - 11 tables won by Ian Hamilton & John Ferguson.

North Down Pairs – C'boye GC - 10 tables won by Ian Hamilton & John Ferguson.

Northern Ireland Pairs – Boat Club – 13.5 tables won by John Lavery & Mick Coffey.

NI Schools' Teams – won by Carrickfergus Grammar.

Mid Ulster AB Chall. – Portadown GC - 10 tables won by Joe Turner & Tom Horridge.

Mid Ulster Pairs – Portadown GC – To be played on 15/6/2014.

Louis Herbert Pairs – Kelvin – 7.5 tables won by Barbara Ewart & Rosemary Cannell.

Killyleagh Inter AB Chall. – Killyleagh BC – 10 tables won by Irene Holland & Helen Priestly.

Northern Ireland Teams – Coleraine - 17 tables won by Ciara Burns' team.

Inter A/Senior Pairs – Kelvin – 18 tables won by Dean Bradley & William Dukelow

The Helm Cup – La Mon Hotel - 24 tables won by Kelvin A Team.

NIBU Inter AB Pairs - Kelvin – 3.5 tables won by Dean Bradley & Robert Caves.

Our entrants in the Egan Trophy are Lindsay, Burns, Tranmer & Greenwood and Mackenzie, Mackenzie, Campbell, Hamilton & Ferguson and Murchan, Burns, Connolly & Sommerville. I would like to wish them all the best of luck this weekend at La Mon in the new expanded format.

The winners of Premier 1 were John Murchan's team.

The winners of Premier 2 were Derek Hanna's team..

The winners of the Senior league were Anne Fitzpatrick's team.

The Intermediate B League was won by Gerry Henry's team.

The Novice League was won by Mary Cormicain's team.

The Millership Cup was again cancelled due to poor entry. I would welcome help with this competition as it does have potential.

The Mackinnon Cup was won by the Hamilton team.

The Kelvin Cup final between Curran and Lindsay is to be completed on 16th June.

Entries in overall competitions were up and this was pleasing given the decision to forget about mixed pairs events which have been in rapid decline in recent years. The increased co-operation in scheduling and publicity between Paul Porteous, Jim O'Sullivan and Brigid Sheeran is slowly beginning to pay dividends.

The shift to SMCOPA's premises for some league nights worked well and was appreciated by the clubs which are always affected by matches. I would like to thank all our clubs for their tolerance and support while I endeavour to spread the load.

Our idea to try out having an alternative night for The Interclubs, although very sceptically looked upon by some has proved that behind every great competition there is a great worker. The sole credit goes to Ian Hamilton for all the work involved and generating much needed new revenue for the union.

My thanks also go to the tireless Chairman Burns, who despite her young age has surely proved to be our hardest working Chair and most popular ever. She has been to the vast majority of our clubs, on her legendary NIBU promotional visits. She has travelled the length and breadth of Ireland and beyond. We have welcomed many new clubs into our ranks because of her tireless efforts and her affinity with both old and new can be seen in the Gala Pairs being fully booked over two months ahead of schedule and sponsored to a degree never seen before in the NIBU, in my experience. We are eternally in your debt for proving that bridge at all levels can be resurrected, if we work at it. I have no doubt that John Bergin will continue your exemplary efforts and I hope he has the foresight to persuade Ciara to help him in some capacity since her vitality, diplomacy and enthusiasm are unrivalled and there for all of us to admire. Good luck to you, John, I hope that your time in office is as productive and visionary.

I would like to thank all the tournament directors who helped out at the leagues and events over the year. It is a thankless job and we are very lucky that our events run so seamlessly with such a very small, but dedicated team. Pat Johnston, Clare Watson & Nuala Mooney did a wonderful job with the new Novice League. Alan Hill continues to be a hero and the mainstay of our directing, but I must congratulate Colin Jeffries on doing some excellent work during the year and he is surely our rising star.

I would like to place on record again that obtaining new tournament directors is extremely hard, they do not grow on trees. When someone new does step up, they should be helped and encouraged and not overly criticized by ungrateful players. We are an amateur organization that has been blessed with some tireless dedicated volunteers over the years. Anyone who is interested, please telephone me on 07709312612 for a chat.

I would like to thank all the clubs who hosted events for the NIBU over the last year, especially the people within those clubs who helped organize events and in particular Kelvin who shoulder the main burden and the La Mon hotel who have excelled again this year. The Boat club and Killyleagh came on board this year and both proved very successful venues.

The proposed diary for next year has been on the website for the last six weeks to try and improve our scheduling and facilitate more input from clubs and members. I will continue to try and find new venues and competitions to stimulate interest next year. In particular I am looking at the introduction of a swiss pairs and individual events which have been suggested and to expand our AB challenges.

I wish to thank also Norma Percival Price, Eric McNicholl, Raymond Johnston, Helen Cole, Harold Curran, Thomas MacCormac, Martin Brady, B J O'Brien, Ian Lindsay, Robin Burns, Greer Mackenzie, Anne Brennan, Tom McKeever, Anne Hassan, Tom Young, Ken Hammond, Bill Scott, Anne Fitzpatrick, Ruth Connolly, Wayne Sommerville, Rosemary Kilpatrick, Cal Jones, David Leeman, Michael McFaul, John Bergin, Norma Franklin, Sandie Millership, Sam Jones, John Lavery, and Neill Cauwood, June Spiers, Leslie Robinson, Joan Morrow, Emmet Devlin, Pat Murdock, Christine Byrne, Melvin Warnock, James McAllister, Norma Irwin, Katherine Johnston, Wilson Hanna, Joe Fee, Alan Andersen and Stephen Cairns for their much appreciated help over the years. If I have forgotten anybody, it is not a slight but a memory lapse. I congratulate Derek Cannell on his P.R. work through our very professional magazine which helps make my job easier and lastly my sidekick Liz Scott, without whose constant work we just wouldn't have any pre-dealt boards for all our competitions.

I am always striving to improve our competitions, so if anybody has any suggestions, or wants to offer any help, please, write to me in confidence at jmurchan@yahoo.co.uk.