

Outgoing chairperson

I would very much like to thank the NIBU for giving me the opportunity to serve as chairperson for the last 2 years.

It has been a period of transition with the adoption of a new constitution in 2012, setting in place a new management structure. Although there were elements of the new structure which are improvements, unfortunately, the constitution made many aspects of the day to day running of the Union unworkable and I am sure that the replacement constitution allows the smooth running of the NIBU.

I believe we have achieved a great deal in the last 2 years.

This year we have attracted 10 newly affiliated clubs and we have been striving to work out strategies as to how to make the NIBU more attractive to both new and existing clubs. Thank you to all the clubs who have welcomed me over the past 2 years.

I am really looking forward to the Gala Pairs in August. It is a new and generously sponsored event for Inter As, Inter Bs and Novices. Already this has been very well received, with entries now closed at 52 tables, 3 months before the event. We hope it encourages club players to come to more of our competitions, especially the congresses.

Thanks to Harold Curran, we have developed a strong relationship with La Mon Hotel. They generously agreed to store 50 newly purchased bridge tables for us. It is a superb venue for both our international and national competitions.

I have many people to thank for their help and support during my term of office. The NIBU is an amazing organisation with everyone giving generously of their time and efforts. I would like to thank the workers of the NIBU, among others – Anne Hassan, John Murchan, Robin Burns, Greer MacKenzie, Liz Scott, Michael McFaul, Neill Cawood, Brian McDowell, Derek Cannell, Alan and Heather Hill and Ian Hamilton for all their efforts. I am sure many of them are looking forward to a calmer life next year, when they will get peace from yours truly.

I have enjoyed my time as Chair immensely. The Council and the NIBU Committees expend too much time dealing with issues around senior bridge and disputes between elite players. This time could be put to better use in working for our club members.

Finally, I wish John well as Chairperson. He showed his skills as an accomplished diplomat many times last year. I hope he enjoys his term of office as much as I have. It has been incredibly rewarding albeit, exhausting.

Ciara Burns (chairperson)