

Sadly, years and events have conspired against me and this has to be my last Newsletter as Editor. Before I launch into other matters I just want to say a big Thank You to all those who have contributed over the past fourteen years or so. When I recently checked the first few issues it was surprising how many articles were written by people still sending in material.

Several years ago I reported that Andrew Robson had written in his column in The Times that *“Northern Ireland do not expect to win the Camrose Trophy often...but if there was a prize for playing Bridge in the right spirit then they would win it almost every year. Underestimate them at your peril however”* and he went on to describe a hand played by Hastings Campbell and Greer Mackenzie. He also wrote about a Crocodile Coup played by David Greenwood but that’s another story. On the same page Tony O’Gallagher, the current Chairman, wrote about *“Bridge With a Smile”* stressing the importance of ensuring that competitors enjoy events, otherwise they will vote with their feet. Taking this a bit further, you will read inside that there is much controversy about a decision the Selection Committee took in selecting the Camrose Team for the second weekend. Also about other matters related to this. Disagreement is fine, especially for magazines such as this, but we must not let our eyes off the need to conduct ourselves in the right spirit. I will leave others to continue the discussion.

I note from the current EBU journal that they are conducting an on-line survey of members’ opinions about the magazine, complete with a modest financial inducement to participate. (That’s probably where I went wrong some years ago when I asked for feedback. No inducement, so minimal response.) They will

then use the information to shape the journal in the next couple of years. Sounds good to me – perhaps whoever takes over will bear this in mind.

It is very sad when I look up some club results and find such significant drops in attendance over the last few years. It’s sad for two reasons. Firstly, it means that many of those no longer playing have passed on, a number of them old friends. Also, it means that we are no longer attracting new young members despite club committees’ best efforts to do so. Of course, we have to define what we mean by young members before agreeing what might attract them. In this month’s EBU Journal there is a message from their Chairman discussing this problem. It’s worth reading.

Normally I print this magazine by hand. The shorter ones such as this are twelve pages and I print around 650 copies - sometimes more. This means 3,900 sides of A4 paper which then has to be folded, stapled and put into envelopes for sending to clubs. I will be recommending to the Council that, as an experiment, we issue it electronically for printing by clubs. Whenever I post these, in many cases they disappear into a black hole and I have no idea if there were too many or not enough. The best feedback that I get is from the crossword puzzle solvers who are all enthusiasts despite my amateurish attempts at compiling them. Even that is becoming difficult because there is only a limited number of Bridge terms that can be inserted and the number is dwindling. It’s fun though, and that’s what we need.

Heartfelt thanks again to those who have contributed, commented or helped in any way.

Derek Cannell

What If?

By Neil Cauwood

The 1975 Bermuda Bowl final between Italy and the USA remains one of the most exciting of all time. At the half-way point the Americans had built a substantial lead of 78 IMPS, whilst the second half saw the Italians stage a stunning recovery. With the outcome now too close to call, the following hand appeared:

<p>♠ J ♥ K ♦ A K 10 9 8 7 6 ♣ 9 7 5 3</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 4 ♥ A 8 3 ♦ 5 4 ♣ K 10 8 6 2</p>
<p>♠ A 4 2 ♥ 9 7 5 4 ♦ Q J ♣ A Q J 4</p>	<p>♠ K Q 8 7 6 3 ♥ Q J 10 6 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ void</p>

At Table 1 the American North played in 3 diamonds making 12 tricks when the Italian pair failed to produce the optimum defence.

At Table 2, featuring two of the world's greatest-ever partnerships, the bidding proceeded as follows (E/W vul):

West (Kantar)	North (Garozzo)	East (Eisenberg)	South (Belladonna)
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Dbl	2♦	3♣	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠

Eddie Kantar led a club (best) which Giorgio Belladonna ruffed. Declarer now knocked out Billy Eisenberg's ace of hearts. Eisenberg realised that a club continuation would not be a success (it is a good exercise for the reader to figure out why), so he switched to a diamond

hoping to cut declarer off from dummy's diamond suit. Winning in dummy declarer now played the jack of spades which Kantar ducked (again best). Belladonna now ruffed a club and knocked out the trump ace. The remaining cards were as follows:

<p>♠ void ♥ void ♦ A 10 9 8 7 ♣ 9 7</p>	<p>♠ 4 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ Q ♣ Q J</p>
<p>♠ 10 ♥ 8 3 ♦ 4 ♣ K 10 8</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 ♥ Q J 10 6 ♦ 3 ♣ void</p>

The defence had taken 2 tricks and declarer 4. At this juncture less experienced players, looking at all four hands, may be wondering what declarer's problem was. We can see that he simply needs to win the next trick, return to hand via a club ruff if necessary, draw the outstanding trumps and cash his hearts. However, to be successful, the foregoing play requires an initial 3/3 trump break and one of the world's greatest-ever players was not going to stake all his hopes on that possibility. A 3/3 break is against the odds *a priori* and was even more unlikely as West's double had suggested a spade shortage.

So back to the play. Kantar is on lead and followed his partner's defence by continuing with a diamond, thereby removing declarer's remaining entry to that suit (still the best defence). Declarer now played yet another diamond from dummy to tempt the player likely to hold both outstanding spades to ruff. On the diamond Eisenberg and declarer each

discarded a heart and Kantar ruffed with his little 4 of spades. I would expect that 99% of the world's players would have done the same. Which of us would refuse to ruff a winner with our one remaining tiny trump? Yet now declarer was home and dry. He simply ruffed the club continuation, drew the last trump and cashed his hearts.

Let us now rewind to the point at which Belladonna played the third diamond from dummy. Suppose that Kantar had refused to ruff this. We shall never know what Belladonna would have made of this, but might he not have concluded that West had failed to ruff simply because he had no trump left in his hand? In other words that East must hold both remaining trumps as he had suspected all along. If declarer had drawn this conclusion he would certainly have continued to play diamond winners from dummy, overruffing when Eisenberg trumped, drawing the remaining trump and cashing his hearts. If the play had continued thus, Eisenberg would have discarded his final heart, so Kantar would **now** have ruffed and then given his partner a heart ruff to defeat the contract.

We shall never know of course, but this hand helped the Italians to complete their stunning recovery on the 96-board final and eventually emerge victorious by a margin of 25 IMPS.

A Hand From the Spring Congress

By Ken Hammond

Dealer N - Both Vul

♠ AJ53
♥ K10982
♦ AJ7
♣ Q

♠ K1098764.
♥ -
♦ 1043.
♣ J63.

♠ Q
♥ Q743
♦ 982
♣ K9852

♠ 2
♥ AJ65
♦ KQ65
♣ A1074

The bidding went;

North.	East.	South.	West
1♥(1).	P.	3♠(2).	P
4♣(3).	P.	4♠(4).	P
5♣(5).	P.	5♥(6).	P
5♠(7).	P.	6♥(8).	P
6♠(9).	X.	7♥(10).	P
7♠(11).	X.	P.	P

P.

Bids and understanding of responses.

North	South
(1) 5card major	(1) 5 card major
(2) At least 5spades + points	(2) Splinter bid Support, single or void in spades
(3) Ace asking	(3) Ace asking
(4) 2 Aces	(4) 2 Aces
(5) King asking	(5) King asking
(6) 1 King	(6) 1 King
(7) Sign off	(7) Confusion
(8) ?	(8) I mean Hearts
(9) It must be spades	(9) Definite misunderstanding
(10) Wants me to bid 7	(10) Must be Hearts
(11) Must be Spades	(11) They must have a 12 card suit

Playing in 7S doubled, going 6 off for minus 1700 imps. At another table EW played in 4S doubled going 4 off for a score of 1100 imps, giving a swing of 2,800 imps. Fortunately it was pairs and not teams.

The moral of the hand is to learn your system and both you and your partner play an agreed system.

In Fractions

Ken Hammond tells me that he is trying to introduce some new bids called half-bids. For example, 1.5NT indicates 13 pts (weak) and 2.5NT shows precisely 21. Unfortunately it seems that these are considered bidding infractions. Oh dear!

Donegal Congress 2016.

By Tyrone Currie

The congress was busy as ever with a great turnout for the various pairs events and over 50 teams on the final day. Congratulations to Mickey O'Kane for doing the double in the Congress Pairs and Teams.

A few hands of interest:

<p>♠AKT654 ♥AJ8 ♦AK ♣K2</p>	<p>♠83 ♥T9743 ♦7 ♣Q7643</p>	<p>♠QJ72 ♥KQ652 ♦Q32 ♣9</p>	<p>♠64 ♥KT52 ♦2 ♣AKQJ64</p>
<p>♠9 ♥ ♦JT98654 ♣AJT85</p>	<p>♠J92 ♥QJ98 ♦AKJ5 ♣T5</p>	<p>♠K8 ♥A643 ♦T863 ♣982</p>	<p>♠AQJ753 ♥7 ♦Q974 ♣73</p>

Sitting E/W at our table the bidding was opened 3♦ by S, X by W and 4♥ by E. We bid Blackwood and then on to 6♥ going 1 down instead of the superior 6♠. It is difficult to see how we could have done better; if W bids 4♦ instead of 4♥ that works but it will not always be the right bid. One pair got to 7♠ when S sacrificed in 7♦ and made it when N didn't find the ♣ lead.

On the next hand it worked for S not to bid their pre-empt !

<p>♠AQ4 ♥K62 ♦KJ7643 ♣7</p>	<p>♠K9863 ♥T973 ♦Q5 ♣98</p>	<p>♠T52 ♥AQJ5 ♦A98 ♣JT5</p>	<p>♠AJ8 ♥K863 ♦A9852 ♣6</p>
<p>♠J7 ♥84 ♦T2 ♣AKQ6432</p>	<p>♠QT65 ♥Q72 ♦K ♣AJT82</p>		

The bidding went:

W	N	E	S
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass*
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass**

3NT Pass Pass Pass***

* intending to come in on the next round

** this is looking good!

*** no X in case they run.

3 down was scored by several other pairs so a few Souths were keeping their powder dry.

I played this in 2♠ after a Multi sequence. W led the ♦K followed by the ♠2 to the K. Without thinking I gratefully took the A and was then stuck, managing to make +1 after W is able to cash their second diamond when in with their trump. However if you duck the ♠K, W will likely continue with a black suit and you can draw trumps to cash out for +3, and no worse if they continue with a red suit. **Always** sit and think before playing to the trick, not after !

Playing S, the bidding went:

W	N	E	S
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT*
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* cautious not liking my singleton K

W led the ♥4 to the A and E returned the ♣7 won by the ♣J. I led the ♠Q which held and finessed the ♠J (holding). The contract is now secure for +1 with 3S, 2H, 2D and 2C tricks; however it looks like W is covering both Majors and should be susceptible to a squeeze. The next step is to duck two tricks to rectify the count. I crossed with the ♦K and played ♣T (to keep E on lead), ducked their continuation (C or D makes no difference) and then cashed winners reach:

	♠	
	♥K86	
	♦	
	♣	
♠K		♠
♥xxx		♥x
♦		♦JT
♣		♣Q
	♠T	
	♥7	
	♦	
	♣A	

The ♣A now squeezes W for +2.

The full hand was as expected:

	♠AJ8	
	♥K863	
	♦A9852	
	♣6	
♠K732		♠94
♥JT54		♥A9
♦Q43		♦JT76
♣53		♣KQ974
	♠QT65	
	♥Q72	
	♦K	
	♣AJT82	

Finger Licking Bad.

When you are considering your bid do you ever think with your fingers on the bidding box cards? Your opponents will not mind but you are actually giving information illegally to your partner that you have a choice of bids. Think, decide and then reach for your bid.

Unintended Call

By Alan Hill

When may you change an unintended call? You may not change your call if partner has made a call after you or after the auction period ends. (See below.) This suggests that a significant period of time may have elapsed and you may still change your bid. The common view that a change may and may only be made if it is in the same breath is not supported in any way by the rules. The key phrase in the rules is without pause for thought. Thus pulling out the 4 spades card instead of 4 hearts is likely to be allowed by the TD. If it was the final bid in the auction and you did not notice until your left hand opponent doubled you could still be allowed to change. Changing a pass to 4 hearts is unlikely to be allowed because the bids are in different parts of the box and it would be difficult to persuade a TD that you had made a mechanical error. In the days before bidding boxes players sometimes said pass instead of the bid they should have made. Now people pull the wrong card. This is usually due to being 'mixed up' in your mind - you were thinking pass when you pulled it and so that was the thought in your mind at that instant and may not be changed. (Law 25A.)

Ethical opponents will usually know when you make an unintended call and will routinely be happy with a change. I am always wary of opponents who appear more interested in gaining from the situation.

Law 22A defines the end of the auction - no one else has a legal bid.

Law 22B defines the end of the auction period - when an opening lead is faced (Legal or illegal!) If no one has bid it ends when the 4 hands have been returned to the board.

Sonya Britton trophy

By Tyrone Currie

The annual North South match took place over the 6th/7th of August, six teams from each union playing 8x10 board sets. NIBU were comprehensively defeated by 618 to 341 VPs., however congratulations to Inter B's (Marian Diamond & Seamus Fyfe, Suzi & Colin Jeffries) who came out above average. Our team won just two of our eight sets, best play came against the ladies team on the Sunday when a couple of squeezes went our way.

<p>♠AJ5 ♥J92 ♦75 ♣AKQ82</p>	<p>♠74 ♥KQ8 ♦J962 ♣JT73</p>	<p>♠K86 ♥AT5 ♦AKQT3 ♣65</p>
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N/S bid to straightforward 3NT and after a ♠ lead to the J it was just a case of overtricks. Declarer played on ♣, when E got in with the J she lead ♥K and declarer was able to run winners, coming down to:

<p>♠QT ♥7 ♦8 ♣</p>	<p>♠ ♥J9 ♦7 ♣2</p>	<p>♠ ♥Q ♦J96 ♣</p>
	<p>♠ ♥T ♦KQT ♣</p>	

The ♣2 squeezes E in the red suits for +3. 1 IMP to NIBU.

The next hand was more unusual:

<p>♠K6 ♥J8542 ♦97 ♣AQ74</p>	<p>♠72 ♥K96 ♦AKJ8 ♣JT98</p>	<p>♠AQ8 ♥AQ ♦Q65 ♣K6532</p>
	<p>♠JT9543 ♥T73 ♦T432 ♣-</p>	

E/W bid to 3NT and S lead ♠J. Declarer won on the table and took the ♥ finesse. She played on ♣, discovering the bad break, and cashed the ♥A, leaving the following:

<p>♠6 ♥J85 ♦97 ♣4</p>	<p>♠7 ♥K ♦AKJ8 ♣J</p>	<p>♠AQ ♥ ♦Q65 ♣65</p>
	<p>♠T95 ♥T ♦T43 ♣-</p>	

At this stage she can still make the contract by cashing ♠A and playing a ♣ to endplay N. Instead she played a ♣ first; N wins and cashes ♥K to strip squeeze declarer who must discard a winner and is then endplayed in ♠ and must lead up to ♦AKJ. 10 Imps to NIBU as game was made in the other room.

I Have Heard That...

Tom McKeever reports:

I played weekly with the late Agnes Sloane in Merville Garden Village. Agnes was a joy to play with and a stickler for bridge rules. The dictate that one could either say Pass or No Bid had just been clarified and when one of the two elderly ladies had Passed on the first board and said No Bid on the second board I waited for the inevitable. Agnes informed in no uncertain terms that one must be consistent and either say No Bid or Pass all evening. The offending opponent informed Agnes that this was not how they responded. Pass indicated 0 - 9 points and no bid showed a hand with 10 - 11 points.

Tom also told me that on one occasion "My partner, who is well known in NIBU and a formidable opponent, was distracted during a Congress and when the bidding went Pass/Pass/Pass/Pass discovered that his hand was still in the wallet."

An extract from the Kelvin Malone News Sheet might be of interest to NIBU directors:

Punctuality:

In an attempt to ensure that members arrive in a timely fashion we are investigating an innovative system. All members will be required to have a micro-chip implanted which will be linked to the computer so that time of arrival will be recorded automatically. Every chip will have its own unique ID which is the member's NIBU number. Persistent latecomers will then be revealed and punitive measures can be applied. It has been found that a small electric shock fed back through the chip is sufficient to ensure that the misdemeanour is not repeated. The chips will be fitted by members of the Building Committee who have been trained to do this and we understand that it is a relatively painless procedure. If you have any concerns you can see the way it is carried out on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rYUbmwFogI and we are certain that you will be reassured.

Squadron Leader Tom Long

By Derek Cannell

I never met Tom, though he was secretary of Merville Bridge Club for some time, but sadly he died in December so now I never will. However, my interest was ignited as an aviation enthusiast who was given some brief details of his career in the RAF. I read about some of his exploits and just couldn't resist writing about them. I just wish I knew more.

Tom joined the RAFVR in August 1939 and learned how to fly Wellington bombers. His first operational flight was to Le Havre in December 1940 followed a few days later by Bremen. Just think about it. In little over a year he not only learned how to fly what was then a heavy bomber but took part in raids to Germany.

After a number of these raids, in 1941 he flew to Malta and then Egypt. Targets were attacked in Rhodes, Corinth, Greece and Benghazi to disrupt supplies to Rommel.

Eventually he was returned to the UK to instruct a bomber training unit but after two years he volunteered to return to operations. That was when he converted from the lumbering Wellington to the Mosquito as part of the Pathfinder force and what an amazing transition he found it. Like exchanging a lorry for a Ferrari he said. He made 55 operational flights in the Mosquito then, just as the Japanese surrendered, he had a brief trip to Madras. In 1945 he was demobbed.

There can't be too many bomber pilots that joined up in 1939 and survived the whole war. What a man.

European Bridge League Disciplinary Commission.

Last year Rex Anderson was asked to be one of the four members of the European Bridge League Disciplinary Commission to consider cases in which players were accused of cheating. The first case was against Messrs Lotan Fisher and Ron Schwartz of Israel. Allegations were made after analysis of videos of certain boards being played during the 2014 EBL Championships in Opatija. An Investigation Committee found that there was evidence that the bidding tray and board were used by the players to indicate which suit that they would be happy for partner to lead at trick 1. The hypothesis was that the partner of the opening leader removes the tray and places the board on the table in a position to indicate which suit he prefers to have led. Positioned on his own side of the table, in the centre, near the corner of the screen opening or on his partner's side indicates clubs, diamonds, hearts or spades respectively. Not removing the tray showed no preference and if the opening leader didn't need a signal he would lead without waiting.

Obviously the players denied these allegations and three statistical experts were brought in and they found that the chances that, in the nineteen boards studied, the positioning was random was very close to zero. A Disciplinary Committee was appointed to follow this up but one of the players challenged the partiality of one of the members – who then withdrew. It was at this stage that Rex was asked to join Mr Jurica Caric (Cro) and Mr Gabor Winkler (Hun). At the hearing there were five statistics experts, one polygraph expert and two bridge experts as witnesses. Video recordings of the event were also utilised.

Further legal details can be seen at:
<http://www.eurobridge.org/Data/Sites/1/media/documents/2016.07.18FNDecisionoperative.pdf>

The commission ruled that the players were:

1. Banned from playing as individuals at EBL events for 5 years.
2. Banned from playing as a pair in EBL events for life.
3. To bear the cost of the proceedings, including the costs incurred by EBL, in the investigation and prosecution stage.

Rex was also a member of the Disciplinary Commission which heard the case against Mr Fulvio Fantoni and Mr Claudio Nunes) in July and awaits another hearing this year.

Visit to Teconnaught Bridge Club

By Ciara Burns

In early January, I had the great pleasure of playing at Teconnaught Bridge Club in County Down. Teconnaught is located between Ballynahinch and Downpatrick and the club play in the very comfortable Parish Hall behind the Church.

Denis Cahill founded the club in 2003 and worked hard at promoting bridge, giving up a great deal of his own time teaching the game. The club now boasts some 60 members and became affiliated to the NIBU in 2012. They now play on 2 week nights - Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with about 7 tables each night. The Tuesday night game allows beginners to enjoy playing in a relaxed atmosphere.

When my mum and I turned up, we received an amazingly warm welcome from everyone and in particular from Denis himself, who gave a short speech advocating the benefits of affiliation to the NIBU.

We really enjoyed the game. We did not win but I got some really useful tips from my mum for the next time...We all had a lovely cup of tea, a bun and a chat at half time. So if you are in the area and fancy a good game in a relaxed atmosphere

I cannot recommend this club highly enough. Well done to Denis and his team for all their hard work!

Home Internationals

By Rex Anderson

“Only two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity. And I’m not sure about the universe.” [Albert Einstein]

There are rumours that Bridge Great Britain is again to review the format of the home internationals. When the Camrose started in 1937 there were matches between England, Republic of Ireland [then the Irish Free State], Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales with each match played head to head over one weekend. After Republic of Ireland dropped out in 1951 the matches between the remaining four teams retained that format. Republic of Ireland rejoined in 1998. Since 2005 matches have been played over two weekends. For the first two years there were five teams with a sit out round for each team. From 2007 there have been six teams each weekend. The sixth team is now provided by the country which hosts the final weekend.

There are around 230,000 members of the English Bridge Union. Scotland has around 7,500 members; Wales around 5,000; and CBAI has 23,000 or so. Northern Ireland with less than 2,000 members has by far the smallest membership of the participating countries.

There have been suggestions that the home internationals should be restructured so that there are only 4 countries competing with a double round robin each weekend. This could be achieved by amalgamating Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland to form one Ireland team. After all in European Championships there is one all Ireland team.

This is the background to the current home internationals competition.

In 2014 the Northern Ireland Bridge Union fielded a team in the Teltscher Trophy which deliberately excluded at least one of the best

pairs in the NIBU and did not play the team which finished second in the Camrose that year. There was no trial. This year the NIBU Lady Milne team will exclude what is considered by many [including the Selection Committee] to be the strongest pair in NI as that pair has declined to play for NIBU. The Camrose team for the second weekend of the 2017 event deliberately excludes at least two of the best pairs in the NIBU.

If NIBU continue to treat the home international competitions with apparent contempt by not selecting the best players or the strongest teams then there can hardly be a valid complaint if Bridge Great Britain restructures the competitions by excluding Northern Ireland.

The actions of NIBU seem to prove that Albert Einstein was correct.

Crossword 23 Solution

	C	O	L	L	E	C	T	I	V	E	F	A	R	M
B	C	A	R	D	X	L	I							
R	I	C	I	N	O	V	E	R	C	A	L	L	S	
I	I	D	W	A	H	A	U							
D	I	P	T	Y	C	H	L	E	E	C	H	E	S	
G	I				U		Q							
E	X	T	R	A	R	E	D	O	U	B	L	E	S	
	A	N	S	U	E	E								
F	I	L	T	E	R	T	I	P	R	E	B	I	D	
O			C				L			E		E		
R	E	C	E	D	E	D	I	N	F	A	N	T	A	
C	L	O	U	M	R	S	L							
E	X	A	N	T	H	E	M	A	A	N	O	D	E	
P	I	A	T	T	N	H	R							
S	I	M	P	L	E	O	V	E	R	C	A	L	L	

Correct entries were received from:

Robin Burns, Charles Foster, Ronnie Morrow, Dymphna Friel, Anne Burns, Seamus Donaghy, Drew Lindsay, Judy Gallagher, Marie Ferguson, Edward McQuilken, Mrs McClintock, Jim Tinsley and Gerry Henry.

The successful entry drawn by Anne Hassan at the last Council Meeting was that of **Jim Tinsley.**

Camrose Selection

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ireland and England now regularly feature professional and semi-professional players. The NI team for the first Camrose weekend were 1, 2 and 3 in the trials. All excellent players with a wealth of experience behind them. However, they did have a difficult time. With this in mind the non-conflicting members of the SC committee had a job to do which they undertook very seriously. We were aware of the need to expand the panel of pairs who need to gain experience to take up the mantle in the future. We were armed with the Trial results, which included the placing in individual matches, the IMP scores from the EBU web site, the NPC report both written and verbal, and an awareness of results in various leagues and Congresses. We decided to select a completely different second team. We did not *dump* anyone. We thought that this might be considered revolutionary, but we felt it essential to show that we had more than 6 players capable of representing NIBU. "Our team" had limited experience *but* they were all sound players.

We thought that we had made a positive effort to improve the image of NIBU in home internationals. We had no idea that our reasoning would receive such ridicule and negative reactions.

Unfortunately the pair that we selected to be reserve were greatly disturbed and refused to take their place. This led to a knock-on effect and a pair of the selected team also refused their caps, a third pair refused to act as reserves and our chosen NPC refused the position also.

Why???

NI has a very small group of players who are willing and able to contest at the highest level. Hopefully the proposed coaching will increase this group. In the meantime, is the Union to be 'held to ransom' by our best players who will

not give our 'second best' an opportunity to develop and gain experience?

Nuala Mooney, Clare Watson, Norma Irwin

CORRESPONDENCE

Over recent years, I have become concerned about a change of mood within the NIBU administrative structures. I perceive that they are becoming more confrontational and unfriendly environments. If this continues, it could lead to a situation where disinterested people within these structures 'vote with their feet' and the future viability of the NIBU is endangered.

When I was first involved with the NIBU in the 1980s, there was generally an ethos of goodwill and an acceptance that people acted in good faith. To give an example: a Selection Committee of which I was a member made a controversial decision not to select a pair that had done well in the trials. The GP Committee (the predecessor of today's Council) refused to get involved presumably because it believed that the Selection Committee had acted in good faith. At the following AGM, the matter was considered and put to rest. This was accepted with good grace by the pair and we became good friends. I fear that things would not be so straightforward today.

My strong belief is that the NIBU would be in a far healthier (and happier) position if all of its members gave their support to those who are trying to carry out demanding and difficult tasks. In particular, members should seek to intervene only if they believe that a decision has been reached in bad faith - incidentally a very serious accusation. The far less serious 'crime' of making stupid decisions (I have made a lot!) can be remedied by changing the membership of the committees and/or Council at the next AGM.

Philip Dufton

European Bridge League. NBO Officers Seminar

Belfast received a visit from President Yves Aubry and EC Committee members Josef Harsanyi (Hon Treasurer EBL) and Paul Porteus (Hon Secretary EBL) recently. They were warmly welcomed by members of the Irish Bridge Union, executives of the Visit Belfast team and the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Brian Kingston.

The visit was instigated by IBU joint Hon Secretary Harold Curran, who felt that Belfast would be an ideal venue for the next NBO Officers Seminar, scheduled for 1 – 4 February 2018. Officers from most of the 48 European

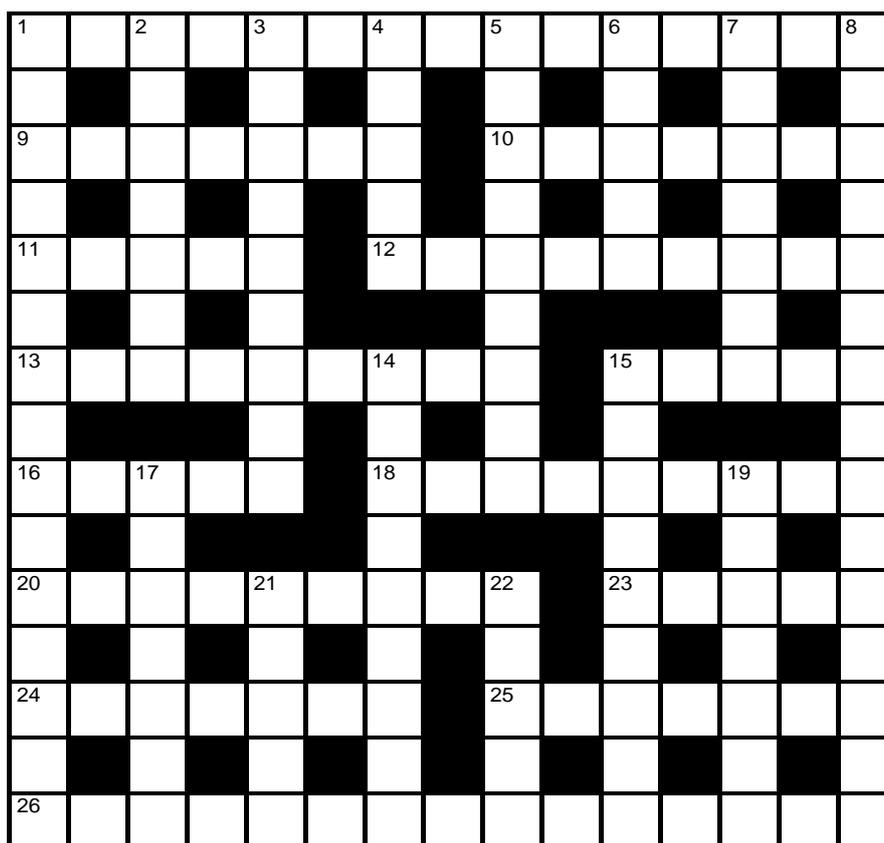
National Bridge Organisations who are part of the European Bridge League will attend this seminar, with the expected attendance of approximately 120 people. Topics affecting bridge and its promotion will be addressed, with the representatives sharing their experiences, successes and failures!

Various hotel venues, such as Hilton, Europa and Wellington Park were visited with this in mind. Also visited were the Titanic Museum and the wonderful Waterfront Centre which could be an ideal venue for a future Championship.



Visiting the Lord Mayor of Belfast on a fact finding mission, pictured from left, are:
John Murchan (Irish Bridge Union), Josef Harsanyi, Lord Mayor of Belfast Brian Kingston,
President Yves Aubry, Paul Porteus and Harold Curran joint Hon Secretary Irish Bridge Union.

Prize Crossword 24



Across

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Unexpected visit ruined TV dinner, ate everything after end of biopic (11,4)</p> <p>9 Band gets endless time (7)</p> <p>10 Membranes surround second gas (7)</p> <p>11 A small drink first can be exciting (5)</p> <p>12 Hey! Listen, to plot for proles! (3,6)</p> <p>13 Cancel a soldier for Anne of Cleves (9)</p> <p>15 Quiet mat with raised shoulders (5)</p> <p>16 Totally knackered in Central Line (3,2)</p> <p>18 Thoughtful facing North with cotton belt. (4,5)</p> <p>20 One island holds another with a brown lid (9)</p> <p>23 Aztec Latinos hold a brilliant display (5)</p> <p>24 Learner Queen after jump (7)</p> <p>25 Rubbish boulder heard with arrow (7)</p> <p>26 Sweet beginning to be eaten by brown rodent (9,6)</p> | <p>3 Heard dinar price estimate (9)</p> <p>4 Heave right first then engrave (5)</p> <p>5 Expunge period with timeless decree (9)</p> <p>6 Rhythm in totem pole (5)</p> <p>7 Abolish a rectangle initially round (7)</p> <p>8 Elevating a BLT he munched, vacating his seat (7,3,5)</p> <p>14 Counter first class back to seating areas (9)</p> <p>15 Sustained help to tune rewritten (9)</p> <p>17 Yearn with a game well past (4-3)</p> <p>19 University coppers hold a transfer of information (7)</p> <p>21 Port Said holds back Convention (5)</p> <p>22 Bottle found in corner, very dusty! (5)</p> |
|---|---|

Solutions to Derek Cannell, 1 Cranley Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7HE or derekcannell@gmail.com who will pass them on to whoever will take on the task. If you would like any of the clues explained please just email me.

Down

- 1** Atmospheric airs from occasion crook added notes (10,5)
- 2** Letter made out I'm a liar! (7)

