

Welcome to our 21st edition.

It has been suggested that I write something about our Constitution and the current position so here we go!

Way back in, I think, 2011 it was decided that the Constitution was not, in the current jargon, “Fit for Purpose” and a new one proposed. The gestation period for this is making that of an elephant look positively meteoric.

The first one ran to around 20 pages and, after being sent out for comment, was presented to the AGM in June 2012. Some of us felt that, despite the huge amount of work done on it and the obvious attention to detail, there were some aspects that we were not happy with. Looking at the minutes of that meeting, one member actually confessed that he had not read it but that we should forget the minutiae and agree it. The document was then passed by the meeting with a show of hands, although one wonders how many others had actually read it. It soon became apparent that in some respects it was too prescriptive, making no allowance for human frailties and another committee was set up in order to overcome this. Some minutiae!

Wind forward to June 2014 where an EGM was arranged prior to the AGM in order to accept a revised version which deleted some of the deadlines that were proving hard to meet and to incorporate other changes. This was passed and the AGM conducted under the new Constitution. One of the changes was the deletion of the provision of club delegates and another was the change from a single club nomination to a need for three clubs to nominate a Council member if not nominated by Council. The problems that this could cause were unforeseen and have led to difficulties related to the 2015 AGM which, at the time of writing, are still being resolved. So we now have yet another sub-committee tasked with correcting the corrected version! Oh dear, where will it all end? Perhaps we should bring back the old one?

Having said all this, it must be remembered that a whole lot of members put in a huge workload trying to ensure that things run as smoothly as possible. When things go wrong, let them put it right and don't be too condemnatory.

Which brings me to another related point. Chairman John asked me to include his statement from the AGM (on the grounds that more read this than look at the website). I reluctantly agreed because there are so many other members worthy of mention as I have noted above.

Following my plea for comments and/or suggestions for consideration by a hopefully soon to be formed Newsletter panel, we got only one response! Well, thanks Liam McCloskey – we will be in touch when things die down a bit! Surely somebody else has something to say – even if it is critical. Do you really want a crossword? It's a lot of hard work. Would someone else like to compile one? Should we have a quiz? What about a volunteer to be editor?

One change introduced at the AGM is a new approach to the Competitions Secretary's role. More about this inside, but getting members to take part in competitions is nearly as hard as getting articles for this mag – our regular contributors excepted of course! There are 1,570 Inter A and B members out of 1,776 so if those of you that never enter an event went in for just one, we could run more. Try it – you never know, you might enjoy it!

As we go to print the sad news of the death of **Robert Plunkett** has been announced. A full tribute to Robert will be printed in the next issue.

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Chairperson's Report

By John Bergin

My first year as Chair of the NIBU has been a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience working with the many members who have given of their time to support and grow our sport. We have all benefited from their dedicated efforts. Two of our long-serving members, Ian Hamilton and Derek Cannell, exemplify the commitment of NIBU volunteers. Ian is the motivation behind the Interclub Duplicate Pairs. These competitions are important as they provide us with opportunities to compete province-wide within the relaxed confines of our local clubs. Derek is the editor and driving force behind the NIBU Newsletter. The Newsletter has been a long standing success and is always enjoyable, informative and enthusiastically received. On behalf of everyone I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to Derek, Ian and all our NIBU volunteers.

There were memorable highlights this year, too many to list here. Many of us will remember the inaugural Novice and Intermediate Gala Pairs and the Fun Bridge event in Enniskillen organised by the newly-formed South West Bridge Association. Both were a resounding success. One of the challenges for our bridge-playing community is to encourage more players to take the game outside their club and try tournament play. In recognition of this, the NIBU Council has agreed to set up a new Tournament Committee to review, manage and coordinate our impressive array of tournaments, competitions and congresses. The drive to encourage greater participation from club members will be a key focus for the Committee.

The NIBU hosted the very successful Camrose Home Bridge Internationals in March with competing teams from England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In a nail-biting finish Republic of Ireland snatched the Trophy from Wales in the last round. There was much praise for the

organisation of the event and many compliments for our International Match Manager, Brian McDowell and Assistant Match Manager, Anne Hassan.

Coaching has been high on the NIBU agenda with our Selection and Youth Committees providing training for Intermediate and young players. Through their hard work, supported by some of our top players who provide coaching and mentoring, both committees have worked tirelessly preparing our future stars for national and international competition. The Youth Committee has also been busy developing safeguarding procedures for the NIBU with support and guidance from Sport NI.

The decision to invite affiliated clubs to host the AGM is a new departure for the NIBU. It is hoped that this will reach out to a wider membership and encourage greater interest in the running of our organisation and the game in general. We are keen to hear the views of the wider bridge community.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on Council, our Committees, and our Officers for their invaluable work and commitment. I would also like to thank all our members for the warm welcome I have received as Chair. I am very much looking forward to the coming year and the challenges ahead.

The Card Turner

We don't normally do book reviews but this is one with a difference. It's a novel with bridge as the main theme and it involves a blind bridge genius who uses a wayward teenager to turn the cards for him. It's by Louis Sachar who is a Newberry Medal winner, it's quite an easy read with some bridge in it although you can skip that bit if you wish. I enjoyed it so thank you Mark Lennon for recommending it to me.

Derek Cannell

The Language of Bridge III

Simon Cochemé

In which we cross continents to see what the world has to say.

Doubles and penalties are a rich source of colourful expressions. The Dutch say *under the tram* for a contract that has been doubled and beaten. In Thailand they call an 1100 penalty a *Fiat*. The Italians themselves have a broader definition and say *getting a Fiat* for any penalty that coincides with a Fiat model number: 500, 800, 1100 and 1400. The Poles call an 800 penalty a *snowman*, and for them a big swing at IMPs is known as a *fat man*. In Iceland players say they have been *christened* if they concede a redoubled penalty of 1000, referring to the year in which Christianity came to Iceland.

The *kiss of death*, an expression borrowed from everyday language, has become a bridge cliché in English. It means you have conceded 200 at pairs (usually one down, doubled and vulnerable) on a part score deal. I wonder whether the first person to use it had spotted the connection between kiss and double, both often abbreviated to 'X'. It hadn't occurred to me until I was told that Malaysian bridge players use *kiss* as slang for double.

In English a small card is occasionally called a *rag*, as in 'I held king-*rag*'. In Iceland small cards are known as *dogs*, and the Bulgarians call them *vushki*, fleas.

Romania sounds like a fun country in which to play bridge. I understand that, when running a long suit, it is traditional to cry '*After me, boys!*'. They also have a saying '*One down is not down*', and, should you happen to misplay a contract, you might be told you play *like a boot*. A knave is known as *Jimmy*, presumably reverse-engineered from Jack, by way of James.

Many countries use their word for 'dead' for dummy, following the French example of *le mort*. Other countries prefer an inanimate male; Sweden has *wooden man*, Norway, Iceland and the Netherlands have *blind man*, Germany has *straw man*. Poland opt for the animate and say *dziadek*, which means grandfather.

Clubs compensate for being the most lowly ranked suit by having the widest variety of names. The Turks call them *sinek*, flies, the Poles call them *żołądz*, acorns, and the Italians say *fiori*, flowers. The Chinese are more specific and call them *plum blossoms*.

Italy's many world-class players know all the advanced plays, squeezes and the like. Lesser Italians are more familiar with these potentially costly card-play techniques: *il colpo dello struzzo*, the Ostrich Coup, taking a useless ruff in the hand with the longer trumps, and *la battuta dell'ammiraglio*, the Admiral's Salvo, drawing an extra, unnecessary, round of trumps. The one that is always costly is *il colpo dell'impiccato*, the Hanged Man's Coup; blocking a suit so that there is no entry to winners.

I am told the Chinese are taking the World Bridge Federation to court over the phrase *Chinese finesse* (where you lead an unsupported honour in the hope that it won't be covered), insisting that it be renamed a *Taiwanese finesse*. Maybe we should follow the Danish model and go for an elitist label rather than a national insult. The Danes say *knibning* (a pinch) for a finesse, and a Chinese finesse is known as *knibning polytekniker*, a Polytechnic finesse.

Landy (where a bid of 2Cx over an opponent's 1NT shows both majors) is sometimes referred to as *Staymanesque*. The Dutch for Landy is *Stayman-om-het-hoekje*, literally Stayman-round-the-corner. The Dutch also have a rather confusing meaning for *telefoonnummer*; not a

large penalty, as in English, but a long suit without any honours, such as 10-8-7-5-4-2.

Here is a deal to see if you have been paying attention. South was in 4Sx on the lead of Jimmy-Hearts.

Game All. Dealer South.

♠ 9	♠ Q J 10 8
♥ J 10 9	♥ K Q 6 3
♦ Q 9 7 2	♦ J 10 8
♣ Q 10 8 3 2	♣ J 5

♠ K 7 3
♥ 8 7 5 4 2
♦ A 5 4
♣ 9 4

♠ A 6 5 4 2
♥ A
♦ K 6 3
♣ A K 7 6

Declarer won in hand, drew two rounds of trumps and then played ace, king and another club, ruffing in dummy. He was soon one down, losing two trumps, a diamond and a club.

‘Can you believe it?’ he said. ‘Trumps were 4-1!’

East and West were too polite to point out the correct line. Declarer should have played on flowers before touching trumps. He ruffs one of his acorn fleas with the blind man’s dog. East over-ruffs but the contract is safe. Declarer cashes the king of trumps and comes back to hand and ruffs his other fly. East makes both his long trumps, but declarer doesn’t lose any plum blossoms.

It was North who broke the silence. ‘In my country we have a saying for when a hand is played like this; we say “One down is ...”’

‘Not in England, we don’t,’ interrupted East, whose politeness didn’t go as far as surrendering a good result.

‘I was going to say “... is played like a boot”,’ concluded North.

(This article was first published in English Bridge.)

Is This Allowed?*

Alan Hill

South bids 1NT. N alerts strong. West bids 2 clubs natural. North changes description of the NT to weak. West changes bid to Pass (this is legal). N bids 2 spades natural. East now bids 3clubs holding only 2 clubs. Is this allowed?

The solution is that West’s withdrawn 2C bid is authorised information for E/W but unauthorised for N/S so East may bid, at his own risk of course. Should E/W be defending N/S must play the hand as if East has the length in Clubs until the declarer becomes aware of the situation from the hand itself.

**See last issue*

Prize Crossword 20 Solution

	U	N	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	D	H	A	N	D
T	A	T	M	U	I	L	R							
R	A	T	I	O	B	I	P	A	R	T	I	T	E	
O	I	N	E	I	E	B	D							
P	I	O	N	E	E	R	D	U	C	K	I	N	G	
I	N			G				T						E
C	L	A	I	M	R	E	S	P	O	N	D	E	R	
	L	I	I	I	R	U								
N	A	S	A	L	I	S	E	D	S	U	P	E	R	
O			L				E			L	E			
T	R	A	D	E	I	N	P	O	R	K	I	E	S	
R	C	N	O	I	E	M	I							
U	N	T	E	N	A	B	L	E	B	O	A	R	D	
M	I	I	I	I	C	I	T	E						
P	I	N	S	A	N	D	N	E	E	D	L	E	S	

Twenty entries were received but amazingly only six were correct, these being from **Anne Burns, Gerry Hegarty, Ronnie Morrow, Leslie Robinson, Richard Sutton** and finally **Ian Hamilton** whose name was drawn out of the hat.

The clue that caused the trouble was 18D Ulster Party = DUP weather = CLIMATE out cold = LIMATE giving DUPLIMATE which is the machine used for dealing hands i.e. handy distributor.

Bridge at the Top Level

By *Brian McDowell*

I watched some of the recent European Bridge Championships on BBO; there was some great play and interesting hands providing an insight into the thought processes at the top level. Sometimes these were rather obscure as on the hand described below. One of the world's leading teams plays under the Monaco name and is sponsored by Pierre Zimmerman a Swiss property tycoon. He has recruited the Norwegians Geir Helgemo and Tor Helness along with the 'Fantunes' – Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes from Italy.

Since their formation they have won a number of tournaments in the USA and at European and World level. When this hand cropped up they were handily placed in the first three of the European Final and were playing the Netherlands – also recent World Champions.

Dealer E NS Vul

♠ 532

♥ AQJT5

♦ 4

♣ 9843

♠ AKJ6

♥ 762

♦ AQ75

♣ K2

♠ 4

♥ 5

♦ KJ9863

♣ AQJT6

♠ QT987

♥ K983

♦ T2

♣ 75

E opened 1D, overcalled 1S by S (a bit dubious but who am I to argue); EW then bid their way to the cold 6D to match the result in the other room. For some reason Geir Helgemo – West – converted this to 6NT – he possibly thought he would be playing it with a spade lead. The Dutch North had heard East bid Diamonds and Clubs naturally and 4NT Blackwood so decided to ask for a Heart lead by doubling. This looked like an 1100 penalty added to 1370 from the other room for a 20 IMP gain, however South now started to think.

As we all know when partner starts to think it is the time to start worrying and sure enough out came the 10 of diamonds! East gratefully wrapped up 13 tricks for an 11IMP gain – a swing of 31IMP.

Monaco went on to finish a close 2nd behind Israel, helped to a great extent by this board.

If this is indeed bridge at the top level of the game maybe there is hope for the rest of us.

IBU Seniors Congress

By *Ian Hamilton*

The NIBU hosted this event again this year, previously having done so in the City Hotel, Londonderry two years ago.

This time La Mon House did the honours on 17th-19th March, and it proved a popular mid-week Congress, attracting 57 entries to the Senior Pairs, and 38 Teams of 4. There was representation from all over Ireland, plus several visitors from England and Scotland. There was an Open Gala Pairs the evening before the main events began, won by John Murchan and Ruth Connolly, one MP ahead of Irving Gordon and Roy Bennett of SBU.

In the Congress Pairs BJ O'Brien and Terry Walsh managed 66.83% in the first session only to be just overhauled by Eddie Fitzgerald and Michael McDonagh, who had an even bigger second session score.

This proved a competitive hand where either side could make game, and a rare set-back for the winners.

Dealer North

N/S Vulnerable

♠1084

♥AJ432

♦AK98

♣9

♠A9732

♥9876

♦65

♣Q7

♠6

♥void

♦QJ1072

♣AKJ10432

♠KQJ5

♥KQ105

♦43

♣865

East usually overcalled 2NT, for the minors, over North's 1♥. Those N/S's that doubled East's 5♣ on power soon regretted it, the defence unable to muster more than the diamond tops, dummy's trumps just good enough to allow declarer to ruff the 4th round good.

Here the winners ceded 550, doubling E/W in 5♣, whereas BJ and Terry were allowed to play 5♥, chalking up 650 N/S.

5♥ would be beaten on a ruff had East any trumps, but in the event rolls home, assuming declarer elects to use North's little trumps to ruff clubs, rather than South's high trumps to ruff diamonds.

There was understandably a wide range of scores on the hand.

The Congress Teams was won by English International Paul Hackett, playing with SBU's Stewart Duguid, along with BJ O'Brien and Terry Walsh. In the last match they needed to ensure they did not lose by 11IMPs to the then 2nd placed team. In the event they won by a similar score, allowing Tom Gibson, David Jackson, Paul Porteous and Fred Barry, all Dublin- bred or based, into 2nd slot.

This proved the pivotal hand, both sides declaring 4♠ on a trump lead, after South had shown his diamond shortage.

♠AQJ10	
♥QJ10	
♦7642	
♣ J7	
♠K95	♠763
♥8752	♥93
♦KQ83	♦AJ1095
♣83	♣Q109
	♠842
	♥AK64
	♦void
	♣AK6542

In the losers' room declarer won the spade 10, ruffed a diamond, returned to a heart, and ruffed another diamond. He then tried to cash hearts. However, East ruffed the third round, and the defence now took two diamonds and the trump king, resulting in a one trick defeat.

Paul Hackett showed superior technique by winning the spade lead, and immediately playing three rounds of clubs, ditching a diamond. With dummy's trumps preventing the defence from cashing diamonds, and the trump king tripleton on-side, 12 tricks eventuated. This line makes every time the clubs are 3:2, hearts no worse than 4:2, and west has the trump king, no more than three times guarded.

The ante-post favourites would probably have been the Irish Seniors team of Adam Mesbur, Nick Fitzgibbon, Pat Barry and Rex Anderson. However, they suffered an early heavy defeat to the eventual 3rd placed team, and never recovered.

This bidding exercise went the wrong way from their perspective.

Partner opens 2NT (20-22) and you West, holding ♠QJ6, ♥J7432, ♦A1084, ♣J, bid 3♦, transfer to hearts. Partner wakes you up with a super-accept of 4♥, showing 4-5 hearts, and non-minimum. After due consideration Rex Anderson passed, worried about his poor trumps. At the other table responder decided to advance, but spent some time deciding on the best way to proceed, every possible bid being flawed in some way.

Cueing 5♣ puts a lot of pressure on partner to cue a putative diamond king, and strongly suggests the ace. 5♦ at least shows the ace, but may leave partner unable to sensibly proceed without committing to slam, since the next available bid is 5♥, ostensibly a sign-off. A "fake" cue of 4♠, hoping to hear 5♣ (to be followed by 5♦), was another possibility, but could result in slam off two aces.

Eventually Roman Key-Card Blackwood was selected. This is also flawed, as the top spades could be AWOL, but partner HAS opened 2NT. All was well when 1 or 4 Key Cards were shown, and responder bid 6♥, hoping it wasn't one Key Card opposite (improbable). For the record East held ♠A7, ♥AK1096, ♦KQ9, ♣A108, and when both trumps and diamonds behaved, declarer didn't even need the (working) spade finesse for 13 tricks.

The Congress was run very smoothly as usual by the team of Alan Hill, Fearghal O'Boyle and Mairead Basquille, and the hotel was very comfortable with good playing conditions and helpful staff. It has already hosted Bridge Great Britain and NIBU events, attracting favourable comment.

Going Up?

By Michael McFaul

(First published in the Irish Bridge Journal)

One of the toughest decisions facing a defender on dummy's left is whether to rise with an ace in a side suit when declarer leads a singleton from the table. Getting it wrong, especially against game or slam suit contracts, can be very costly indeed.

Most defenders quickly learn that the decision whether to play low or go up with an ace is one that should be made well in advance of the singleton being played – ideally as soon as dummy goes down. A defender who fumbles and hesitates before ducking will give the game away, perhaps literally.

I watched a hand played recently that clearly demonstrated just how vital it is to make the right decision:

♠ AQ3 ♥ J943 ♦ 1064 ♣ 1073	♠ 9864 ♥ AK10852 ♦ 3 ♣ 85
♠ KJ1075 ♥ Q6 ♦ AJ72 ♣ J6	♠ 2 ♥ 7 ♦ KQ985 ♣ AKQ942

Game All. Dealer North.

W	N	E	S
	2H	2S	3C
3S	No	No	4D
No	5C	Dbl	No
No	No		

Against 5Clubs doubled West led the Ace of Spades and, without much thought, continued with the Queen. Declarer ruffed, swiftly played a heart to dummy, cashed a second heart discarding a diamond and led his singleton diamond. East hesitated and then, with a slight shrug, went up with his ace and switched to a trump. Declarer won, ruffed a diamond, ruffed a spade back to hand, drew the remaining trumps and tabled his hand. He made 2 Hearts, 2 top diamonds and 7 trumps including one diamond ruff in dummy.

West berated his partner: “It must surely be right to duck with that diamond holding. You can see that 1 ruff will be enough to set up the suit if you take your ace. In any case every decent player knows it is usually correct to duck in this situation unless you are taking the setting trick.”

East looked crestfallen. “Sorry partner. I felt I needed to stop declarer ruffing twice in dummy and in any case, after my hesitation had given the game away, I felt I may as well take the ace anyway.”

West countered by pointing out that the hesitation, while inexcusable, was actually irrelevant – clearly the ace could not be ruffed out.

And so it went on.....except that in reality, East DID in fact duck smoothly when the singleton diamond was played. Now the contract could no longer be made. Declarer won with the Queen but despite being able to ruff 2 diamonds, found himself in this position after doing so:

<p style="text-align: right;">♠ 9</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♥ 10852</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♦ -</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♣ -</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♥ J9</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♣ 1073</p>	<p style="text-align: left;">♠ KJ</p> <p style="text-align: left;">-</p> <p style="text-align: left;">♦ A</p> <p style="text-align: left;">♣ J6</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">-</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♥ K</p> <p style="text-align: right;">♣ AKQ9</p>	

Declarer had no safe way back to hand to draw trumps. If he tried to ruff a spade with the 9, West could overruff while ruffing high would set up a certain trump trick for the defence. If he played a heart, East would ruff in with the Jack setting up his partner's 10. Either way he still had a losing diamond.

West offered some instant analysis for the edification of those at the table. "It is of course obvious to duck holding AJ72 but equally obvious to rise with the ace holding just AJ7. To duck would be fatal with that holding."

East raised an eyebrow as he scored up +200. "I agree partner", he said "To go up with the ace from that shorter holding is indeed obvious – almost as obvious as the trump switch you didn't find at trick two which sinks the contract no matter how many diamonds I hold".....

Bridge – Beginner's Blog 2

I arrived as a visitor to play Bridge at Kelvin Malone recently – with a Police Escort!

Banish, dear reader, any images of motorcycle outriders, or prison vans and tactical support unit. A few of us just got lost! I was sure I was heading for the Lagan, next stop Ailsa Craig! When the Harbour Police came upon us, they were bemused and felt it easier just to herd us round to Heron Road.

But... why was I there in the first place?

My home club has a supportive ethos towards its 'Novices'. Under the tutelage of the Hon Sec we are being 'shooed' out from the comfort zone of club play to experience the 'big world'. I am more than happy to trot along behind my more experienced colleagues, clutching their coattails tightly. I gleefully accepted encouragement and invites to play in charity competitions, trials, and a CBAI event. In my 'Bambi'-esque naivety what could possibly go wrong...

Well, in the short term, I got pulverised! But – had so much fun! Medium term, I met some delightful people and was 'enabled' to attend some truly top notch tuition. Long term – and here's the real dividend – I stopped procrastinating. Suitably overawed by some of the upcoming events, I settled down to re read a Bridge 'Primer'. I didn't feel I could go public with hitherto undeclared vast fogbanks of uncertainty and confusion. Many, many 'light bulb' moments...but let's see what percentage of the information I can retain (the stats are not encouraging!)

I had thought any progression in Bridge would be linear. Hmm...not so much...bit more like the FTSE index... oscillating wildly. My play remains 'superficial' and one dimensional. I am still consumed by my own 'cunning plan' and am very often oblivious to the pincer movement that the opposition are executing. I'm becoming (um...belatedly) aware of the 'active' nature of defence which I had really been approaching more in hope than expectation. My concentration wanes through an evening's play. Towards the end of a session, especially if it hasn't gone that well I

become demob-happy. Earlier punctilious attention to detail gets subsumed by a more 'carefree' attitude towards bidding. The old adage 'Bidding is a conversation' gets metamorphosed into an internal monologue. And, quelle surprise, I crash and burn.

The scoring systems in Bridge – both process and product- are of interest. You have just got to admire 'Bridgemates' technology! It allows private (praise be) post mortem review- to the level that I understand the analysis. On other occasions I have found completion of the traveller salutary and humbling: immediate accountability for my silly errors. I've encountered IMPs- which I don't really (by which I mean – not in the slightest) understand. A recent check reveals that I have – wait for it – accumulated the impressive total of 1.93 (local) Master Points!! I'm gonna be a Novice for a very very long time!

Finally, I have recently attended my first NIBU AGM. It was very informative and gave me gossamer threads of insight into the structure and operation of the organisation. On that note, I've developed a passing interest in the history of Bridge. Seamus Dowling's 2005 article¹ on the genesis of the IBU as it celebrated its Golden Jubilee was illuminating. As in all things, history shapes where we are today.

So in conclusion, dear reader, I've now 'fessed up' to my transgressions/misdemeanours/ (? felonies). It's been quite cathartic. Alas, I'll now need to find a new Bridge Club- preferably one without an extradition agreement with my present one. Any offers? ☺

¹ <http://www.cbai.ie/ibu/documents/ibujubilee.pdf>

COMPETITIONS

By Liz Scott

At the Annual General Meeting on 21 June 2015 in the U3A Centre in /city I was elected Honorary Competitions Secretary of the NIBU, after the retirement of John Murchan who did a great job in that role for a number of years. I have worked with John over the years

and have enjoyed his chat and I hope this will continue and also that I can persuade him to assist whenever possible. The job of Competitions Secretary is an onerous task and I will do it to the best of my ability and so to that end a Tournament Committee has been set up comprising:-

Myself (Chair), Michael McFaul (Hon Secretary NIBU), June Spiers, David Leeman, Ian Hamilton, Anne Hassan and Stephen Cairns.

Our remit is to organise all competitions for the NIBU, all venues and arrange all TDs and we hope to do this to the best of your abilities. David Leeman will have responsibility for ensuring the availability of the necessary equipment; Ian Hamilton will continue to have responsibility for all Interclub Duplicates and Celtic Sims; Stephen Cairns will be responsible for events held in the West of the Province, June Spiers will assist me with the advertising of events and the collation/taking of entries for the various competitions, Anne Hassan will help with the venues. Michael is Hon Secretary of the NIBU and won't be given any tasks as he has a lot on his plate already. I will continue to deal the boards and I may well train some of the Committee as well. All this will make the job of Competitions Secretary much easier.

We have set up a TD rota with newcomers Helen Cole and Philip Dufton agreeing to TD some events - we'll break them in easy at first!! This will take the burden off Alan Hill a little bit. Sandie Millership and Colin Jeffries have both agreed to continue Directing.

I have asked Pat Johnston to organise the Novice League, Ian Lindsay to organise the Premiers 1&2, Senior and Inter A&B leagues, Rex Anderson to organise the Kelvin and Mackinnon Cups and Jeff Millership to organise the Millership Cup, all four have enthusiastically agreed to do so.

Watch out, I'm thinking of something for you to do!!!!!!

We hope to take a few of the competitions out of the Greater Belfast Area or perhaps

introduce a few Intermediate events in the North West/West of the Province. We have a big bridge playing membership in these areas and it is only fair that they don't always have to travel to the Greater Belfast area.

I would implore you to help the NIBU in all its endeavours by playing in events. If you have any problems please do not hesitate to let me know and I will try to address these to the best of my ability.

Please enter as many competitions as you can to either myself, Liz Scott at lizscott@nibu.co.uk or to June Spiers at june.spiers@ntlworld.com and we will acknowledge all your entries.

I Used To Renege. Now I Revoke *By Liam McCloskey*

Readers, even those younger than me, will remember these words.

Something wrong here.

Surely the action of revoking must be subsequent to the action of renegeing ?

So these two words are not simply interchangeable.

When and why has this change happened? Is it sensible?

I've tried contacting Susan, but the 'COUNTDOWN' mailbox is permanently full.

Hopefully some interested reader of this august journal will have an answer.

ALAN HILL

Alan Hill attended the European Bridge League's (EBL) regional TDs course in Alicante in January and was awarded an A grade. As a result he has been invited to the main TD course in Prague next February. The Prague course is designed for National Bridge Organisations (NBOs) to update their leading TDs and give the TDs the opportunity to achieve the title of NBO International TD and to be appointed to the official EBL TD register. There were 10 graded A who received

the invitation out of 50 on the Course. Our good friend Fearghal O'Boyle has been at that level for some years and has recently been promoted to Assistant Chief TD a measure of the high regard he is held in Europe.
Ed.

AGM

Some members will have been aware of a serious difference of opinion within the Union about some aspects of the recent AGM. These related primarily to the procedure for electing councillors when proposed by clubs, but also to the absence of a Competitions Secretary's report and another connected with the Selection Committee. The finer points are too convoluted to explain in detail here but four clubs were sufficiently concerned to commence proceedings to hold an EGM in order to correct what they saw as an invalid election process. After some weeks of lengthy exchanges of emails and discussions a final meeting took place on August 5th. This was a lengthy assembly with lively exchanges and eventually it was agreed to accept a compromise proposal whereby it was conceded that four of the persons were not correctly nominated. There was then a secret ballot held by the Officers and three properly elected members of Council. The result was that the original four members were re-elected and backdated to June 21st. It was also agreed that business transacted since the AGM was ratified and the Selection Committee was confirmed as being reappointed without change.

The report from the Competition Secretary will be posted on the website in due course.

All this only confirmed that the decision to re-visit the Constitution was the correct one as most of the problem was of one of interpretation – see my editorial comments on page 1. Some strong opinions were held by both sides and it was vital that it was resolved and lessons learned. It is therefore sad but not unexpected that many clubs showed no interest in the matter.

LAWS AND REVOKES

By Alan Hill

Laws are there to be obeyed and alongside golf, Bridge has one of the highest expectations of ethical behavior of any sport. No shirt tugging. No quick kicks or punches when the referee is not looking.

So your partner hesitates and passes? Must have something to think about. You must ignore this. Indeed you actually have to avoid doing anything that might be suggested by the hesitation. The argument I would always do that or I was going to do that anyway is considered self-serving and usually is held against the player who uses it.

The rules use the term 'logical alternative'. Is there a logical alternative to what was suggested by my partner's action. The answer is often yes, pass. Therefore that is the action you must take. Have you a choice of bids? Then do not take one that might be suggested by your partner's action.

At times this is difficult. If the TD rules against you do not take it personally. He should have where possible asked other players what they would do and would they consider any other bids in the situation.

Another example of unethical behavior is to ask a question that alerts the interest of your partner, particularly if you already know the answer. The bidding proceeds 1 club on your left, one heart on your right 1 No trump on your left three no trumps on your right. You hold AKQJxxx in clubs you would not ask if declarers club bid was natural or not would you? If your partner asked that question you would avoid a club lead from 3 small wouldn't you? It happens.

The revoke laws have changed several times over the years and so there tends to be a lot of confusion over them. Let us assume that the revoke is agreed. The TD will ask questions. Let him ask don't interrupt. You will get the opportunity to query his decision. Did the person who revoked win the trick? Then there is a 2 trick transfer provided that their side

wins a subsequent trick. If the revoker did not win the trick even if their partner did it is only a one trick transfer. The non offending side is not entitled to do better after the revoke than they would have done if there had been no revoke – they may or may not do so according to the circumstances. Just the luck of the game. However if they would have done better without the revoke they are entitled to recompense. (E.G. being cut off from dummy unable to take tricks they would have got.)

A revoke at trick 12 must be corrected and is without penalty. If the TD is unable to determine whether a revoke occurred, because it is not possible to determine in what order a player played his cards, then that player may be ruled against. The TD must always be called. A TD may reverse a ruling made by players at the table.

South bids 1NT. N alerts strong. West bids 2 clubs natural. North changes description of the NT to weak. West changes bid to Pass (this is legal). N bids 2 spades natural. East now bids 3clubs holding only 2 clubs. Is this allowed?

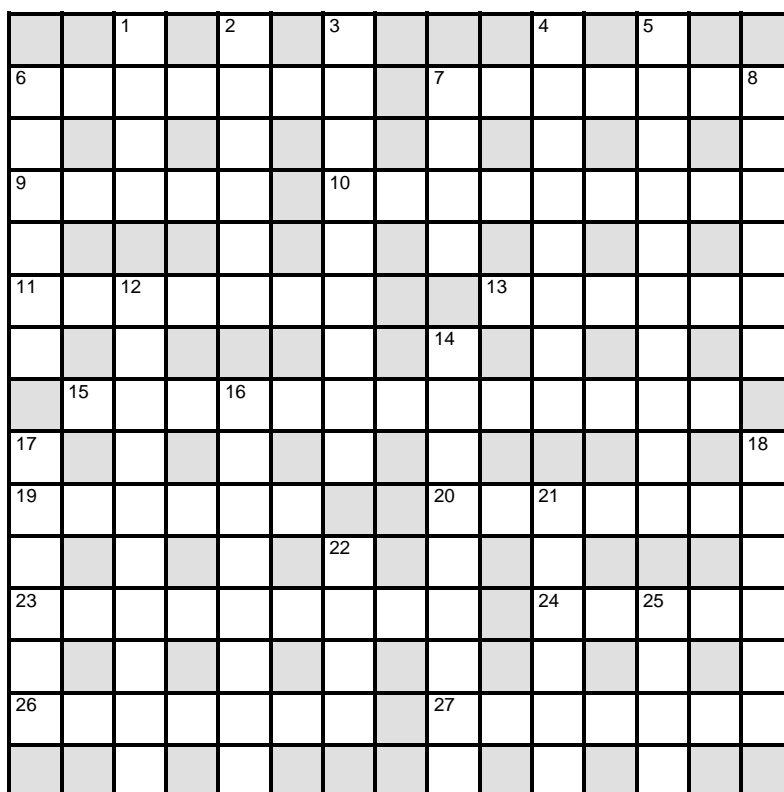
The answer is yes.

At the table some information is authorized (AI) to players and some considered to be unauthorized (UI). Some may be AI to one side and UI to the other. If because of an error by your opponents you are allowed to withdraw your bid and substitute a pass, this becomes AI to your partner but UI to your opponents. That means that your opponents may not take any action based on this knowledge.

So in the example given East knows and is allowed to use the information that West has a club suit (at their own risk) but N & S cannot until the play shows up what has happened. This will dictate the way they have to take club finesses for example and they cannot draw conclusions about the distribution from it.

Please note that the content of articles in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor.

SUMMER 2015 PRIZE CROSSWORD



Across

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| <p>6 Diamond lead with real mix-up in opponents croupiers (7)</p> <p>7 Potter has second class papers making signs (3,4)</p> <p>9 Refusal saves holding a dance (5)</p> <p>10 Andrew Robson initially called from home, good for sorting cards (9)</p> <p>11 Normal peacekeepers? Just the opposite! (7)</p> <p>13 Get Daisy from in a car (6)</p> <p>15 Awful cry too hampers international (7,6)</p> <p>19 Puts back in - tastes erotic! (6)</p> <p>20 Stop following band with no class, it's all over (7)</p> <p>23 Company Walter heard in group (9)</p> <p>24 Bounder! One unknown city (5)</p> <p>26 Initially not likely anything found in a hole but results in a tanner (7)</p> <p>27 Line in narrow rejection (5,2)</p> | <p>2 Unusual Jade, very useful at first but seen before (4,2)</p> <p>3 Confirm English Arab home out East is Hearts (9)</p> <p>4 No ordeal mixing for painter (8)</p> <p>5 Woman in front of small hut got smaller (10)</p> <p>6 Party enrols ugly scary thug starting a fight (6)</p> <p>7 Eccentric King (4)</p> <p>8 Aligns letters for partner's information (6)</p> <p>12 Modest offer (10)</p> <p>14 Conduct strangely quiet film at the end of which alien returns (9)</p> <p>16 Wines found left out in cellarets in Alsace (8)</p> <p>17 Fiddles shown by Eliot lapping haystack (6)</p> <p>18 Female flower (6)</p> <p>21 Neat box, not on a barrow (6)</p> <p>22 Jump!- Reversing vessels (4)</p> <p>25 Dive! Submerge right away (4)</p> |
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Down

- 1** Can a late lady start to bid? (4)

As usual solutions to Solutions to Derek Cannell, 1 Cranley Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7HE or derekcannell@gmail.com by Nov 1st.

