

REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY NIBU – 2013

This has been a strange year for the NIBU. Council has met 4 times, twice at Kelvin and Malone, once in Maghera and once in Armagh. We have discussed many topics which have all been adequately covered in the minutes sent out to clubs so I don't consider there is any need to reiterate these.

A good deal of our time has been spent discussing the peculiarities of the Constitution and the problems arising. Several inaccuracies have apparently come to light and these need to be addressed during the next Council year.

This year we hosted the Camrose match between the 5 Countries in the La Mon Country House Hotel in January. This proved to be a great venue and judging by the feedback we received from various participants it was deemed to be the best organised event of all the matches played. Our congratulations are due to Brian McDowell and his team. Fearghal O'Boyle and Mairead Basdquille were the TDs and their quiet but controlled manner was appreciated by all Countries involved. The report of the Selection Committee (of which you all should have a copy) tells us of the results. Indeed this report tells us of the results of every competition we sent a team to. As you will see we also sent teams to the Lady Milne, Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer. One gentleman wrote to me complaining about how the team was formed. This letter I passed on to Robert Plunkett, Chairman of the Selection Committee. Robert duly replied explaining the process by which the teams are selected and we have not had any further correspondence from the said gentleman

The Interclub competitions and Celtic Sims competitions were organised by Ian Hamilton who puts a great amount of work into running them. The Celtic Sims was particularly onerous as Ian also made a booklet for the hands. Thank you Ian for all the work you do and have done and will, I hope, do for the NIBU in the future.

Our Autumn and Spring Congresses this year were very successful with an increase in the number of people attending, especially the Derry Congress in the Autumn. We hope these continue to flourish. And for this we must thank our Congress Organiser, Anne Hassan, and also our Chairman, Ciara for all the cajoling she did to encourage all those she came in contact with from the CBAI and further afield to attend our Congresses.

Early this year I was approached by Stena to try to get a 'bridge cruise' up and running. I thought it was worth trying and so after discussion with Council, through email, we decided it wouldn't do any harm to try this venture. Ciara did all the negotiations and we now have a 'bridge cruise' on the first Tuesday of each month hosted by John Murchan and Colin Jeffries. I have not had the opportunity to avail of this cruise so far but from all accounts it has been very successful and those who have been cruising are extremely enthusiastic about it – lauding both John and Colin. Again thank you both.

Last June saw the running, by the IBU of the European Teams Championship in City West Hotel in Dublin. Anne Hassan, Sandie Millership, Heather Hill, Alan Hill and myself worked throughout the whole of the Championship, at our own expense I might add. Anne was the guardian of all mobile phones and computers owned by the players and kibitzers, Sandie, Heather and myself were BBO

operators while Alan was a Tournament Director. The event was very successful and all were praised by the President of the European Bridge League.

The Union has 33 affiliated clubs and there are many more out there who choose not to affiliate. We had two new clubs affiliating this year, Bann Bridge Club in Portadown and Lisburn City Bridge Club. We hope that these clubs continue to build on their initial membership. We are intending to run some bridge seminars for Intermediate A & B players to endeavour to encourage them to improve their play. Again Ciara is co-ordinating these and a very successful one was held in Downpatrick. We hope to run one in Mid Ulster, Fermanagh and Derry throughout the coming year. We also hope to run another TDs course – perhaps the next step from the last one which was very successful and well supported.

John Murchan is our Schools Development Officer and he is trying to encourage more schools to participate in Bridge teaching. In the past we had a number of schools who participated in teaching bridge however this has been diminishing, mostly due to the retirement of bridge playing teachers, but we are endeavouring to reach more young people. Again our thanks to John Reid, Stuart Graham, Andrew Walker and Willie McCluskey for their support. A copy of the Schools Report compiled by Stuart Graham is on the table.

The NIBU have been fortunate over the last 9 years in having Norma Irwin as their Treasurer. Norma has decided to retire as Treasurer but I do hope she joins us in Council as she is a tireless worker for the Union. Norma thank you for your friendship and your trustworthiness.

John Murchan has been the Competitions Secretary and he works tirelessly for the good of the Union, encouraging many people to play in competitions. At the Senior/Inter A competition we saw a number of senior players whom we rarely see, new to this competition alone so well done John.

Robin Burns our Masterpoints Secretary, again Robin works quietly in the background without complaint, thank you Robin for your support and guidance.

The members of Council have all worked very hard to encourage bridge in their areas, and will I am certain continue to do so

Alan Sharp our President – what can we say about Alan. A wise counsellor, again one who works diligently in the background. Thank you Alan for your support and guidance over the years.

Derek Cannell our Magazine editor works very hard to try to issue a magazine every quarter. Derek needs contributions from you or else the magazine will flounder. Derek we thank you for your hard work and for a magazine well worth reading. I note the crossword seems to have a big impact judging by the number of entries received.

Finally, last but not least, Ciara our Chairman. What oh what does one say about Ciara. My phone bill increased greatly this past year – boy can she talk!! She is one of the most enthusiastic persons I know. She reminds me of a dog with a bone, when she gets her teeth into something she worries it to death and this has proved very successful. Ciara volunteers to do every job that needs doing and we have to hone her in sometimes and say, let others get on with it.

To all my 'cronies' who listen to my gripes, Derek and Stephen especially, thank you. I do so enjoy being your Secretary and yes I have had the odd moan this past year but 'getting it off my chest' does me the world of good and I am then ready to carry on again.

Thank you for the privilege of being your Honorary Secretary.

Ciara I have enjoyed working with you this past year, your energy and enthusiasm are infectious.

Liz Scott

Hon Secretary

31.05.13