

Gerry Fitzgerald R.I.P.

Gerry was a pharmacist in Downshire Hospital where he established a bridge club in 1974. He was its first and only Chairman until he relinquished the office in 2018 - when he became the club's first President. In this role he continued to be very involved in club affairs until his untimely death.

A great supporter of bridge in East Down - particularly in the Killyleagh club where he played on a regular basis up to the lockdown . He always encouraged players from his region to become involved in the wider NIBU community by playing in competitions. He himself became Chairman of the NIBU and was also President of the Irish Bridge Union when the European Championship was played in Killarney. During this time he also established the Officials match to be played as part of the Sonya Britton trophy - playing for a trophy presented by his then partner David Hannon.

Gerry was an accomplished player himself -many will recall the little smile he gave when he outwitted you at the table. On Thursday 27th May - playing with his partner Damian - he came 3rd E/W in the NIBU online competition. He passed away on Saturday 29th May.

He will be remembered by many for his prowess at the bridge table - and deservedly so - but above all else he should be remembered as a gentleman - with the emphasis on the gentle.

My thanks to Geoff Booth of Killyleagh and Maureen Kelly of Downshire for their contributions.

Heather Hill ( Chairman)