

Chairman's Report 2022

As I come to the end of my tenure as Chairman I look back at how bridge has been forced to change owing to the pandemic. With many clubs playing online - thank you to all the club TD's out there who have kept the game going. I am glad to say the NIBU was able to play a part in facilitating this. It is also great to report that a number of clubs are getting back to face to face and I wish them every success in their endeavours. My main regret is not having the opportunity to visit any of you in your clubs - however it was gratifying to see so many different people playing in our own weekly competitions.

My thanks go to a lot of people for helping out in this regard. Diane Greenwood for running up to three competitions per week - along with the Interclubs - for almost the full two years. My thanks also to Sandie Millership for taking on the Thursday night and for running several of our competitions during the year. I must also thank my husband Alan for his support and for his TD duties. Thanks must also go to Anne Fitzpatrick for distributing money to the clubs once she gets it from the CBAI

The Junior programme has continued under the stewardship of Norman Lacey and I would like to thank him and also Sandie Millership and Wayne Sommerville for working with the Junior Camrose and Peggy Bayer teams

Ian Hamilton has done a sterling job yet again with his organisation of the Simultaneous Pairs which takes a lot of work from him behind the scenes. To my Competitions Committee for organising publicity and in general drumming up support for our competitions. Thanks also to the rest of the Emergency Management Committee who have worked hard at keeping the show on the road- in particular Michael McFaul for keeping me right on occasions. He does an enormous amount of work for the Union - most of which people would not know about.

Our Home Internationals are very well run by Helen Hall and we had many compliments from the visiting Teltscher teams about her organisation. Helen and Brian McDowell also look after our website and their work is appreciated by many.

While our home international teams had a modicum of success congratulations must go to Diane Greenwood who was on the Irish Ladies team. They finished 9th in the European Championships and are first reserve for the World Championships - known as the Venice cup - next year.

I would like at this point to also thank Liz Scott who has dealt all the boards for our competitions for many years. She has regretfully decided that she is no longer able to make this commitment so another volunteer is urgently sought. A nominal payment is made for each set dealt and space for storage is also required. Any one interested can contact me or any member of the Management Committee.

While Council could not meet as I would have wished - we did manage one face to face recently - I always knew I could count on your support when we needed it. You responded to requests for input in many matters and this was much appreciated.

Our big challenge going forward is to encourage more Intermediate players to participate in open competitions. Many of you have played against 'seniors' in weekly online games and have great success - you have nothing to fear and are very capable of success in our main events. Seniors may appear intimidating but in general nothing could be further from the truth. We intend continuing with the online format in the Autumn until we see how things evolve. To this end we hope to start with the NI pairs run over three successive Friday evenings in September - the best two counting so you don't have to play in all three.

We are also considering a change in format for the leagues which means one big league involving as many people as possible run on a Swiss basis online once a month. This would be exactly the same as the one Harold Curran ran. However, as there would be a small entry fee there would also be prizes for each grade - you need to be in to win!

I am delighted to welcome Brian Mullan as incoming Chairman and wish him every success as our game faces different challenges. Brian hails from West of the Bann and has been a very welcome asset to the Management Committee.

Heather Hill
Chairman