

Louis Shenkin 1917-2003



Gold Cup Camrose National Trophies

25th President of the SBU:
1964-65
Louis Shenkin, Barnet's
father, played almost
exclusively with his brother
Len. They were also in

business together, importing carpets (Len's main interest) and rugs (Louis's preferred area).

The brothers had considerable success in the post-War era. At that time the sports pages of the Glasgow *Evening Times* were printed on pink paper. In 1949 there was a Stop Press Item covering the Gold Cup Final: "Shenkin leads Gray by 1100." On another occasion they won a magnificent trophy, the Cheltenham Rose Bowl, in competition with others eliminated in the later stages of the Gold

1949 runners-up
1948-63, 8 matches, 2 wins
Scottish Cup x5, Rayne Cup

Cup. It was too big to fit into Albert Benjamin's car, so they strapped it to the roof. An hour later it could be seen bouncing down the A1.

In his Presidential year Louis won the teams at four different Congresses: Gleneagles, Dunblane, Rothesay and Portrush with different partners.

He represented Scotland on the British Bridge League, and became the first Scottish President of that organisation, just in time to have to cope with the aftermath of the Buenos Aires scandal.

"His legendary tact and diplomacy were severely tested when he was asked by the British Bridge League to become acting chairman of the enquiry into allegations of cheating by Terence Reese and Boris Shapiro at the 1965 World Championship.

He continued as BBL Chairman for the next ten years, captaining British teams at international events. Before stepping down he had the pleasant experience of presenting the 1976 Trophy for the prestigious Sunday Times Invitational Pairs Championship to his son Barnet. He was made honorary President of the BBL in 1986." (*Jewish Chronicle*, May 2003)

Louis always presumed that Reese and Schapiro were guilty. While watching a 'Sunday Times' in the 70s, when Schapiro was playing with Jeremy Flint, he innocently asked Boris: "What system are you playing?" "We're playing hearts, Louis," was the instant reply. (The original accusations of cheating centred on alleged finger signals indicating the number of hearts held.)

Louis captained British teams at two European Championships: the Open team finished fourth in Warsaw (1966) and the Women's Team won bronze medals in Dublin (1967).

The Women's team in Dublin contained perhaps the most famous, certainly the most volatile, women's pair in bridge history, Rixi Markus and Fritzi Gordon. After Rixi had one of her infamous tantrums, complaining about her teammates and her partner, he left them out for one set. Her retort was: "Zo, Louis, you don't want to win?"

Louis also captained the first Junior British team in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1968, just a couple of months before the Russian tanks rolled in. He had made many good friends there and was very upset by their unfortunate situation.