

**Castleknock Bridge Club  
Golden Jubilee Night April 2024  
Presentation by John Macnamara**

- 1. It is a great privilege for me to speak to you here tonight. I wish to thank Our President Willie O’Gorman for inviting me to do so. Indeed I wish to thank him and his wonderful committee for organising this wonderful occasion. Thank you Willie.**
- 2. First of all I need to state that I am not a founder member of this Club. But I have been associated with it since July 1973 when I was appointed a teacher at St Brigid’s NS after spending 10 years working in education in Zambia. .**
- 3. Harry Allen, (now deceased) Principal of St Brigid’s NS, was encouraged by his wife, a Bridge Player in Templeogue, to start a bridge Club as they thought it might be helpful to the school financially, as money for teaching resources was in short supply in 1972-1973.**
- 4. The new school was an eight teacher school, 8 x 46 pupils = 368 pupils. The members of staff were: Principal, 8 teachers and one remedial teacher. It was a newly built school replacing the original one where apartments now stand. Today there are about 1000 pupils enrolled in the school and there are about 80 members of staff in the school. I taught Rang a IV. I had the privilege of teaching Des O’Keeffe, Edel O’Farrell, Kieran Higgins (Children of Bridge Players) and many more wonderful children. An amazing and wonderful class in every respect.**
- 5. So the Castleknock Bridge Club was established. Rita Riordan, a secondary school teacher, and a friend of the Harry Allen family, was very instrumental in setting up the Club. A special clause in the Constitution emphasised that the Club would help the school financially. Today, we are of course most grateful to Rita and to Harry for their work in setting up the Club which has accomplished so much good in so many ways over the past 50 years.**
- 6. At this stage, I must and I need to pay tribute to one person in particular. That is ‘David Melody’. He has been associated with the Club since its very foundation. No person has contributed as much as David to the running of the Club. Indeed we owe him a great debt of gratitude and appreciation for the amazing amount of work he has done over the years for the Club. Thank You David.**
- 7. What was life like in 1973? Well we joined the EEC. Petrol was about 50p per gallon. A pint of milk was 6p. Shopping for Castleknock families was done in Superquinn in Finglas. About £5 covered the weekly shopping bill for an average family. Milk was delivered in glass bottles to the homes in those years. Very limited TV stations and programmes, etc were available. A semi-detached four bedroomed house cost about £7000. A Volkswagen Beetle or a Ford Escort cost between £500 and £600.**

8. We had no computers, no mobile phones, no WhatsApp, no text messages, no printers, etc. We had biros and typewriters. It should be noted that: the first small computer (Personal/Schools) was the Commodore Pet in 1977. The Apple business in Cork opened in 1980. Internet in 1991. Smart Phone in 2010. Computer memory: cassette tape, 7.25in disc, 3.5in disk, memory sticks, eventually the hard disk. Arrival of computer software: Microsoft Word 1983. Microsoft Excel 1985.
9. Bridge Rooms: We used the School Library at first, then the General Purposes Room. Years later we moved to our present venue. Smoking was allowed during Bridge. This was terrible. Later on we ruled out all smoking in our Bridge venue. We also had a tea-Lady as we stopped playing for a tea-break during 'play'. Biscuits were supplied. We also had a supervisor for our cars in the carpark.
10. Bridge Tournaments. A great deal of work was involved in organising the 'Club Pairs' and the 'President's Prize'. David Melody and myself spent many hours organising and scoring these competitions. We always needed a prime number of entrants for the President's Prize. Weekly competitions were a smaller problem. Score sheets and recap sheets were utilised. At the end of Bridge each night the scoring was calculated and completed. Results were submitted to the National Newspapers.
11. Artificial Intelligence comments on the Club: "Overall, the history of Castleknock Bridge Club is likely one of growth, camaraderie, and a shared passion for the game of bridge. As with many bridge clubs, its story is shaped by the dedication and enthusiasm of its members over the years."
12. St Clements's Secondary School opened in Mansa, Luapula Province in Zambia in January 1964. John Macnamara was the first Headmaster of the School. The motto of the school was : "Imiti Ikula Empanga" (Chibemba - local language) "If you look after the young trees you will got a beautiful forest". In addition to playing Bridge all our members have adhered to this motto over the past fifty years.
13. It should be noted that Dave Nolan succeeded Harry Allen as Principal of the school and he in turn fully supported the Club in all aspects of its undertakings.

