

REGENT BRIDGE CLUB 1925-2020 95th Early History



Fred T. Quin

The Regent, founded by Mr Fred T. Quin in 1925 is Ireland's oldest bridge club. It was, almost certainly Ireland's first bridge club. Bridge had been played in gentlemen's clubs and in golf clubs from the end of the previous century but there is no evidence that a club exclusively dedicated to the game existed before 1925. Quin responded to a newspaper advertisement inviting people interested in playing bridge to come to a meeting, following which he hired a room in the County Hotel in Harcourt Street where the club's inaugural meeting took place.

Many Regent members >>>



May McNulty

Quin, who gained his sole international cap at the European championships in Paris in 1949 was acknowledged as the founder of the club when, in 1950 following the silver jubilee celebrations, May McNulty, one of the all-time great Irish players, *paid a generous tribute to Mr. F.T. Quin, the founder of the club.*



Lionel Wigoder, a bridge-playing dentist had his surgery at No. 42 Harcourt Street and it was in an annex at the rear of that building that the club rented its first premises. After a brief period, the club moved to No. 13 where Fred Quin resided and remained there until 1937 when it moved to No. 84.

There it remained until 1953 when it moved to its present address, 25 Waterloo Road. It is thought that the club purchased No. 25 from C.H. (Charlie) Day who was a prominent member of the club. Wigoder was a generous patron of bridge and donated trophies both to the club and to the CBAI following its founding in 1932.

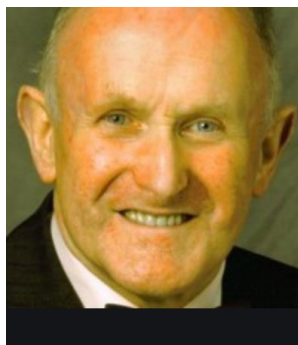
Dr Lionel Wigoder was born 1896 in Dublin and died in London in 1984. Lionel's first cousin Esther Wigoder was the mother of Don Seligman. Lionel was a first cousin once removed of the late Lord Basil Wigoder QC.



Surviving CBAI founders, March 1958. Front: J. E. Hogan, F. T. Quin, Mrs Holmes Wilson, W. J. L. O'Connell (president CBAI), Mrs Hogarty, Geraldine McConkey. Second row: Dr B. Solomons, H. Hackett, Ina McMenamain, D. R. Pigot, J. P. Morgan, Lady Huggard, Miss Holmes Wilson. Back row: C. O'Neill, J. Monaghan, M. Collins, Dr F. McMenamain, Mairéad O'Neill, S. Woods.

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Seamus Dowling has written this



article for us and gives credit to member Gerry Murtagh saying 'Valuable research

into the origins of the club was carried out by Gerry Murtagh in the late 1990s.'

Seamus is Bridge Historian, Irish Times Columnist and author of Thank You Partner



Gerry Murtagh
The early history of the Club was researched by member Gerry Murtagh in the 1990s

and in doing so Gerry has done the Regent a great favour. Gerry's research is immense, has not been published and hopefully will be published in the future.

Mrs Charles Bailey
Another Dublin Player
Central Hotel
Times Pictorial
Sat Jan 30th 1943
Competing for Peace
on "Internationals"
Nation
(Miss Bailey after
"Internationals")



Sarah Bailey of Kelburne Cup playing in the Central Hotel

Founded during a time of political turbulence - only three years after the establishment of the Irish Free State people from all sides of political and religious persuasions played together and worked together in the Regent to advance the game of bridge.

Prominent early members included John Morgan World War I veteran and recipient of the Military Medal and a future prominent official of the CBAI; also, Mairéad O'Neill, an avid nationalist and her first husband, 1916 veteran Gerard Crofts, a leading tenor of his day who recorded for Beltona records. Joseph O'Neill, who later became Mairéad's second husband and was bridge correspondent for the Irish Independent played a major role in the development of the CBAI.

Older members of the Regent may remember Mairéad O'Neill who lived to be a great age. She holds a singular honour in the history of the CBAI being the only person to have been conferred with life honorary membership of the association. Founder members also included Harold Williams the first bridge correspondent for the Irish Times; Harry Freehill who performed a similar service for the Irish Press and who wrote *The Squeeze at Bridge*, published by Faber and Faber in 1949, a book that features the skills of many Regent members.

Bethel Solomons who had played rugby for Ireland and who became master of the Rotunda Hospital and whose sister, Estella Solomons was an acclaimed artist was a member as was Andrew Davidson (of Davidson cup fame) who succeeded Solomons as master of the Rotunda. Sarah Bailey who donated the Kelburne Cup was also a member.

Most of Dublin's leading players were members of the Regent from the start but it was not until 1942 that the club won the CBAI inter-club (later the IBU inter-county) championship for the first time - the team was: John Lynch, Robert Sheehan, Noel Peart and Gerry Read, although earlier winning clubs included members who also were members of the Regent. From the inaugural home-international championship for the Camrose trophy in 1937 and from the time Ireland first entered European competition in 1948 members of the Regent dominated international selection, there were few Irish teams, open or women without Regent representations; many Irish teams consisted solely of members of the club.

Article by Séamus Dowling

Photos courtesy of Séamus , David Jackson and Gerry Murtagh
Collated by Mary Kelly Rogers