

VIDA BINGHAM



Photo: Rupert Thornely-Taylor

FRIENDS of Vida Bingham who forgot to place a bet on her horse, Mon Mome, are now kicking themselves! Mon Mome, a rank outsider at 100-1, won the Grand National in April: 'It is impossible to describe how I felt at winning the Grand National,' says Vida. 'Many adjectives have been bandied about – awesome, unbelievable, fantastic – but nothing imparts the sense of shock I felt when it happened, for of course one never dares to believe that one's wildest dreams can come true.'

Her horse's triumph has catapulted Vida into a whirlwind of glamorous engagements, from parading Mon Mome at various racecourses and festivals to partaking of dinner in the Royal Box at Cheltenham. Mon Mome, says Vida, is not impressed: 'He hates being groomed,' she explains, 'and once on the course thinks he should be racing!'

Vida's interest in race horses is the second of her passions in life, the first one being bridge. She plays once a week at the Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club, on the club's strongest night, and once a month at The Avenue Bridge Club in Hove. In addition, she takes part in most of the Sussex CBA competitions, though now that she is in her 70s she is no longer as active as before on the national bridge scene.

Vida Bingham's bridge achievements include representing England in the Lady Milne (playing with Dimmie Fleming) in 1980 and 1981.

2009 Lady Milne

WE arrived in sunny Limerick in mid-April, only losing one suitcase en route. Three members of the English team were receiving their first ladies' caps: Fiona Brown (with Susan Stockdale), Kath Nelson (with Tracy Capal), and Catherine Seale (partnering me). Three of us were called 'Cath', so non-playing captain Martin Jones had a sporting chance of getting his team's names right! It also raised much discussion over the possibility of England fielding a team full of 'Catherines'.

In the first match the Scots secured a handy swing in this 3NT contract:

Game All. Dealer East.			
	♠ 10 4		
	♥ K 10 8 6 3		
	♦ A Q 5		
	♣ A 9 5		
♠ Q 5 3		♠ J 8 7 6 2	
♥ 9 5 4		♥ A Q J 2	
♦ J 9 8		♦ K 4	
♣ J 7 4 3		♣ 6 2	
	♠ A K 9		
	♥ 7		
	♦ 10 7 6 3 2		
	♣ K Q 10 8		

In our room East had passed initially, and then overcalled 1♠. Her partner led the three of spades (playing third and fifth). With few clues about which of the missing honours East would have for her actions, I



Catherine Jagger

took the diamond finesse. The spade return lost to the queen, and spades were cleared. When the jack of diamonds did not fall under the ace and the ace of hearts was offside, we were left counting the under-tricks.

At the other table, however, the English East opened 1♠, which gave Scottish declarer Veronica Guy a much clearer picture of the layout. She won the spade lead (discovering West held the queen for her low-card lead) and deduced East must hold the king of diamonds. She cashed the ace of diamonds, crossed to a club, and played a second diamond, ducking to the king. A good example of the difference that the auction can make to placing the defenders' cards – and 14 IMPs out for England, though we did manage to hold on and win the match 16–14 VPs.

The final set kept spectators on the edge of their seats, as Scotland (Anne Martin – Sheila Adamson, Sheila Macdonald – Maida Grant and Sam Punch – Veronica Guy) closed the gap on the Northern Irish, claiming the trophy by just 1 VP.

Final table: 1. Scotland 92 VPs; 2. Northern Ireland 91 VPs; 3. England 83 VPs; 4. CBAI 70 VPs; 5. Republic of Ireland 69 VPs; 6. Wales 41 VPs. □

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CONGRATULATIONS to Alexander Allfrey, David Bakhshi, Tony Forrester and Andrew Robson who won the final of the Schapiro Spring Foursomes by beating John Carroll, Adam Mesbur, David Mossop, David Price, Colin Simpson and Gojko Zivkovic by 1 IMP.

In the Punchbowl Knock-out final, heavy-weights Ralph Katz, Zia Mahmood, Andrew McIntosh, Reese Milner, Jack Mizel and Brian Senior beat Juniors Alice Kaye, Ben Paske, James Paul and Graeme Robertson by 11 IMPs.

Fiona Brown, Simon Cope, Alex Morris and Susan Stockdale won the Swiss Teams. Colin Simpson will report on the event in the next issue.