

The Ace of Museums

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Gerard Hilte is the founder of the Bridge Museum in Leerdam (The Netherlands). This is the only Bridge Museum worldwide. You really should pay a visit to the Bridge Museum to see the unique collection. We asked Gerard Hilte to tell us some more about this passion.

Why did you start collecting bridge articles?

I started collecting bridge books in 1972. The first paraphernalia I received as a gift from students of my bridge courses. In 1985 I founded Bridgesoft (together with Onno Jansens, member of the Dutch Senior Team). All the money we earned by teaching bridge and developing bridge software was used to buy new items for the bridge collection, especially for books and bridge magazines.

I think it is very important to preserve the collection for the bridge community, now and in the future. Therefore I founded the museum and every year make a donation to maintain and extend the collection.

What's so unique about your collection?

About 25% of all our books are signed by the author. And a complete collection of the most important bridge magazines are part of the library of the Dutch Bridge Museum, such as Bridge Worlds, Bridge Magazine, British Bridgeworld and the Dutch Bridge Magazine.

Which item is the most precious to you?

A lot of items are really funny, the electric bridge table, bridge tallies, whist- and bridge markers, scorepads, envelops with bridge stamps, autographed by the world champions, Culbertson- and Goren-phenalia, some are unique like the Culbertson Encyclopedia signed by Al Sobel, and Le Dentu's Championship bridge with an ode to Terence Reese, the badge-collection of André Boekhorst, a radio program about Culbertson on a LP, and many auto bridge devices.

How do you get new objects?

New objects are offered by old champs or their relatives, by searching on flea-markets and the explosion of offered items on internet-auctions like E-bay and Amazon.

Readers of the Daily Bulletin: in case you have any rare, old or unique objects that might be interesting to expose in world's only Bridge Museum, just contact:

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