

BRIDGE TE AROHA: lovely place, lovely game ♠♥♦♣

June 2023



Thanks, Hermanna and everybody

The true worth of a club is at a time of crisis either for the club itself or maybe for its members. There can be no better member of our club than Corolyn who contributes so regularly to the enjoyment of our club sessions and special events. Times are tough at present for Corolyn and Tom. What a nice thought, then, for Hermanna to donate raffle prizes where the proceeds went to help Corolyn and Tom. The raffle, a spontaneous raffle one Tuesday night, and donations raised a significant sum of money. Thanks to all who contributed. Our thoughts go out to Corolyn and to Tom.

From Eemnes to Te Aroha

There are those of us (well me certainly!) who have trouble with the second of those names above because of a certain inability to roll those “rrs”! A quiz though for any non-Dutch reader to pronounce the first name. Can you? You will find the answer as a reward for having read this article!



This is the story of Ari Rigter who comes originally from this small Dutch town in the centre of Holland not too far from Amsterdam. Ari grew up before and during World War Two, with occupied Holland not being a great place to be living. However, Ari and his family were very fortunate to survive the war unscathed, indeed nothing worse than one shattered window when a US plane was shot down. The Germans occupied the area, including the school Ari would have attended, but the Rigter family managed to live through this difficult period.

The area was rural and Ari dreamed of having his own farm but in post-war Holland, this remained just a dream. Then in the early 1950s, shortly before his 25th birthday, he and two of his five brothers decided to try their luck in New Zealand. They arrived together in Auckland but the Labour Department there could not give them work. So, they bussed to Hamilton and were offered freezing works jobs but that certainly did not appeal.

There was and remained a really strong bond between the three brothers. Ari and one brother got jobs at the then dairy factory in Matangi and the third brother joined them after briefly working in Morrinsville. They stayed there for three months before the three brothers got a sharemilking job together in Piako Road. Ari left after 4 years. Firstly, one brother returned to Holland to find himself a bride, then the other. Both returned married.

Ari then got a farming job near Waitoa. Then, it was Ari's turn to return to Holland. At that point, Ari had been at this job for three years. The farm owner allowed him a year's leave of absence on condition that when he returned, he would stay there a further three years. This he did.

He returned a year later with Thea. Thea had a sister living in Auckland, married to Joe, the Avondale milkman. Ari and Joe's families knew each other. Joe's wife told Ari of other potential partners in Holland, in Armesfoort, not far from where Ari spent his own youth. So, Ari went back to Holland to meet one such young lady, a long way you might say to go for a blind date! Yet, there was more than one date and they were married in Holland before returning within the year to New Zealand.

After 7 good years at Waitoa, Ari and Thea were able to buy their 56 hectare farm in Rawhiti Road. "After all," as Ari said, "we needed a bigger place as we had more children by then." They have seven in all (4 sons and 3 daughters), three farmers including Tim and Adri in the Te Aroha area, a newspaper printer on the West Coast, a Council Auditor in Tutukaka a vet assistant in Taupiri and an electrician. They stayed in Rawhiti Road for 55 years only moving into town a couple of years ago. They have been married for 60 years, well worth that trip back home.

Cards have always been a big part of the Rigter family. One of Ari's brothers was in the Dutch army in Indonesia and learnt lots of games there. With cold winters, few cows to milk (by hand, of course) and no television, card games were an important way to pass the time. Ari and Thea still play Dutch card games and a weekly 500 game with Hermanna and Henk.

Then in the early 1990's, Ari saw bridge lessons advertised in the local paper. So, he thought he would give it a go and played regularly at the club for the next 30 years. He learnt from Barry Jones, a former Te Aroha President, and now one of the country's top players. Barry remembers one story about Ari.

"There was an awkward number of 13 learners. So, while the other 12 played at 3 tables, I gave the 13th player a little quiz.

One of the 13 was Ari Rigter. One of the questions was what you open with a 5530 13 count, that is with no clubs. Ari remembered the lesson about

opening 1NT with 12-14 hcp and gave that as his answer. When Barry asked Ari what he would do if the opponents led clubs, Ari said simply that that was partner's job to provide a hold in that suit.

Many years later, I played against Ari at Te Aroha and had totally forgotten the above incident. Ari opened 2NT which his partner raised to 3NT. Normally, that would end the bidding. Not this time, though, as Ari then bid 4H, that bid ending the bidding. This quite normal contract (Ari held 6 hearts and a 4-card minor) made. When quizzed about the 2NT opening, yes, you've guessed. Ari held a 20 count! Somehow, that triggered off something back in my memory."



Was this the 20 count Ari opened 2NT? I think we all agree that Ari's second bid of 4H was very wise.

One year at the club, Tim and Ari were playing the Championship Pairs together. It came to the last night and they were doing well in the event. However, Ari had an appointment for a knee operation which would mean he would miss the last night. What to be done? Why, cancel the operation,

of course! They won the Championship that year and Ari never had the operation!

Tim learnt to play around 2000 having met Greg Saxon but being encouraged to play by his father. Later, it was Tim who suggested Adri should learn. One other brother, Bob, did learn but the game was not for him.

Ari and his two brothers found what they sought in coming to New Zealand, even if it took a few years. It's a long way from Eemnes to Te Aroha (pronounced " amnas") At least there are no "rrs" to roll in that name!

Three Generations at play



Three generations of a Te Aroha family currently at play in the Championship Pairs at Cambridge. They may be daughter, mother and grandmother but they all have different surnames: Greta Casey, Anna Kalma and Hermanna Hemmes.

Bragging rights on the first night went to Anna and her partner (no relation to the Kalmas!) but only by a couple of per cent and honours were very definitely

even on the 2 boards they played against each other. However, on the second night with both pairs sitting North/South, a very happy Hermanna and Greta came out top not just in the family battle but overall, by 1%...60% a great score. A very proud grandmother and (secretly) mother as well. However, the overall "bragging battle" will continue in the third week at Cambridge.

Portless...not pointless

Those who at the club sat West on one Tuesday in mid- June may have felt they were doing a lot of passing and defending game or slam contracts. They were. However, an even worse event happened the previous Tuesday and it did not matter in which seat you sat. Sometimes, pictures speak louder than words. So, I shall remain silent on the matter...

Port stock prior to play.....



The cupboard was much fuller by the following Tuesday.

Congratulations, Peter



Peter Daffurn is holding the certificate Rochelle presented to him this month for advancing up to Provincial Master. It looks like you had better enjoy your last year as an Intermediate player, Peter as next year you should be moving up to Open.

Te Aroha “Tops”.

At the club

Victor won the five night Jim Shine Individual competition by 4.54% with a fine 65% on the last night. Yours truly was second and Rochelle third.

Elsewhere

Anna Kalma and I went a little better in Hamilton’s 5A mid-week Swiss Pairs than we did last year. In 2022, we came equal first with Brett Glass and Gary Foidl. After three weeks and 9 rounds this time, we finished clear first beating Brett and Gary by a massive 1.76 vps. Never in doubt!

Club History

Just a little note to say that this project is coming along a little slowly but is progressing. As well as the information gleaned from club minute books and by

talking with club members and families of past club members, I have just obtained a lot more records and hopefully information from Greg Saxon's sister, Ann. So, I now have a full set of minute books and will hopefully piece together the club story for the period when I was rather struggling.

Waikato Bays Inter-Club Tournament: Waikato Qualifying

The top two teams in this qualifying day in mid- June, in each division (Open, Intermediate and Junior) qualified for the finals involving Bay of Plenty clubs later this year. Te Aroha had representative teams competing in each division.

There were only 4 teams in the Open field but our team of Tim Rigter, Hermanna Hemmes, Alan Mace and Peter Daffurn were up against it against some strong Open partnerships. We fielded two scratch partnerships with two of the players being Intermediate. So, to finish second and qualify for the top four final with Bay of Plenty was a great achievement.

They won 3 of their 6 matches (double round-robin) and only a poor result in the final match against the ultimate Waikato Club winners (Gwyn Lobb, Richard Fletcher, Brian Gallagher and Brian Sullivan) prevented them from winning.

In any Teams match, successful slams are really worthwhile. In short matches, they are gold-dust! Our Open had a great day in slam bidding and had a little piece of good fortune when they needed it most.

Firstly, we have a great slam bid by



and by Peter:

North Deals ♠ J 9 8 4
 N-S Vul ♥ K 7 6 2
 ♦ 8 6
 ♣ 10 7 3

♠ K Q 5 3
 ♥ A Q J
 ♦ 5 3
 ♣ K 5 4 2

♠ —
 ♥ 9 4 3
 ♦ A K Q 7 4 2
 ♣ A Q 9 8

♠ A 10 7 6 2
 ♥ 10 8 5
 ♦ J 10 9
 ♣ J 6

West	North	East	South
<i>Peter Daffurn</i>		<i>Alan Mace</i>	
	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
6 ♣	All pass		

Alan chose the right moment to be a little aggressive with his 3C bid. Peter did not need any further invitation. 5S showed 2 key cards and CQ with clubs, the last bid suit, as trumps. Peter settled for small slam and Alan made all 13 tricks after the SA was led. That was 10 imps in when 3NT was the contract at the other table. The good fortune came when Tim and Hermanna bid as follows:

North Deals ♠ 5 4 3
 None Vul ♥ A K J 10 7 5
 ♦ Q 2
 ♣ J 9

♠ 9 7
 ♥ 6 2
 ♦ K J 6 5 4
 ♣ K 10 5 2

♠ Q 2
 ♥ 9 8
 ♦ 10 9 7 3
 ♣ A Q 8 7 6

♠ A K J 10 8 6
 ♥ Q 4 3
 ♦ A 8
 ♣ 4 3

West	North	East	South
	<i>Hermann</i>		<i>Tim</i>
	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥
All pass			

Tim is not shy in looking for slams and he launched into a Key Card ask after Hermanna rebid her hearts. Hermanna had 2 (HAK) and Tim took a chance on the club suit. It is a moot point whether you should lead an ace against a slam. When East went passive with a trump lead, Hermanna needed no more help. SQ came down very obligingly and Hermanna made all 13 tricks. The less scientific is the auction, then there is more reason to lead an ace, obviously the right move for the defence here. On this occasion, it was 11 imps in for Te Aroha.

Our Intermediate team of Jan Baker, Hanna Frischknecht, Malcolm Kirkby and June Zhu had a hard day recording just 2 wins in their 5 matches to finish 7th out of 8 teams.

The host Hamilton Club had some organising issues on the day particularly affecting the Junior event where there were 7 teams competing. At this point, we are unclear where the Te Aroha team of Adri Rigter, Ross Macintyre, Austin Brown and Shirley Townsend finished.



Friday is Prize Day!

Or at least it was in early June at the club. Enjoyment is the key word at the club and that was certainly the case on 9th June when a lot of novelty prizes were given out. Somewhere lost amid all the chocolates, Hanna and Jan won the bridge with a score approaching 65% but the important winners on the day seemed to be found elsewhere.

It was not clear as to why this day was chosen and no-one seemed to mind. The day started with compulsory whiskey jellies for everyone. The first prize given out was for the first pair to get a 100% score on a board. An objection was immediately raised by visitors Jenna from Thames and Noel from Matamata who had to start with a pile of feed-in boards: all 50% when they played them!

The prize for the player to travel the greatest distance was hotly contested by Jenna though after many appeals, the prize went to Jerry, a regular traveller

from Hamilton. He had a whiskey to celebrate victory while Jenna was placated with a jar of marmalade preserve for being a close second.

Meanwhile, a special prize was given to Noel for “a player being born on the West Coast of the South Island”.

Despite many government members being in trouble over conflict of interest issues, Peter TJ, who had dealt the boards, won the prize for the first to win a trick with a black 2. Rumour has it that hearts were trumps at the time!

Tim came home with the prize for the “most patient partner.” He did play with Peter TJ, after all! Yet, Peter himself was a clear winner in the “can’t count prize”. The board got passed in with each of the 4 players holding a 9 count. A lengthy check revealed that one player had a card slightly hidden, an ace!

Meanwhile Nick (oh, thanks, Nick, for bringing the Morrinsville players with you) was rumoured to have taken a bag of mandarins as he had not won any prize...but he was not to go home empty-handed.

There was also a prize for the worst bid of the day.. surely not many nominations? Anyway, you get the gist of the prizes and atmosphere of the day: nice.



Hermanna and Laurie, there as always to enjoy Friday bridge.

Everyone including Nick did get a prize on a day when enjoyment exceeded many players’ scores...and that’s the way it should always be.

We will be back with more stories, in July.

Richard

