

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

Te Aroha News April 2026



Wonderful WAPS at Te Aroha

ANZAC Sunday saw 32 pairs take part in the second heat of the Waikato Area Pairs at Te Aroha. The room was just about full and the day went off extremely well. There was a huge amount of morning tea brought by our club members, the food lasting to lunch-time and even after play. Thanks to all who brought food and also to Nick Whitten, the director, and Michael Neels who scored the event.

Te Aroha players were very generous in letting non-club members take out the top positions with Mereana Cullen and Rob Davies being comfortable winners of the 2 session event with a very impressive 63.88% average.

The top Te Aroha pair were Guy and Victor who finished 9th while Laurie and Ross were 12th and Tim and Rochelle 15th. Alan and Malcolm were 16th and were the closest to 50% average.

Two “Average” Guys



Nearest to 50%: that's Alan and Malcolm

Posers!



That's Damien and Debbie along with Thames' Alex Barshai and John Peppiatt, who finished 2nd overall in the event.

The day was all about competitive bridge in a friendly relaxed atmosphere..and it certainly lived up to that billing.

99 and going strong

That's Sonia Crawford who celebrated her 99th birthday at the Matamata Bridge Club recently. Matamata has been her home club over the years but she has made many visits to our club, in more recent years as a guest at our Christmas Party evening. She stills plays a strong game of bridge, drives herself around and has lived in the same home for the past 76 years. She has a big celebration next year and in the meantime looks forward to many more games of bridge.



Sonia at home and very much at home with a glass of wine at hand and cutting the birthday cake with Heather Kneebone watching.

The Race for the Jim Shine.

It was a tense competition this year. After four of the five nights on scratch, Joy was in the lead by about 0.5% with Cam, Alan and Hanna in hot pursuit within 5%. That was anyone's contest. On Handicap, it was a 2-horse race with Alan 17% ahead of Cam.

On the last night, Joy and Katrina posted a respectable 54.79%. Hanna and Norma recorded 53.18%. Cam had a night and a score to forget. However, Alan, with more than a little help from June, was "on fire"! 71.67%. That left Alan the winner on Scratch by some 15% from Joy second and Hanna third. Cam was the Handicap winner followed by Hanna and then Jan. Well done to all the above.

April Quiz



Who is in this car and where is she going? Now, that's a clue as to who is inside. It's not me nor any man!

Tournament Toppers

That's Anna and I who had a great day at Matamata's Open Swiss Pairs earlier in the month. We won all six of our 9 board matches and came to the front at just the right time, at the end of the 6th match. We won by 8.15 vps, quite a significant margin over the 6 matches.

We also headed to Wellington over ANZAC Weekend and played in their major Congress finishing 6th with Auckland teammates in the 10A Teams, only 4 vps off 2nd place over 9 x 12 board rounds.

In the Beginning

Yes, time to teach some more locals about the game of bridge. Charlotte and Tyrel are once again the teachers and they have a small but keen group of new players coming along on Thursday evenings. Thanks to those club members who are coming along to help with the lessons. It was nice to see one of the "newbies", Thomas Clothier, come on a recent Tuesday night.

Actually, Thomas is not brand new to the game but has had a long gap away and needed some refreshers. He and Lee did well and scored nearly 54%.

On that same evening, Alan and June led the way at the club with a fine 69.39% though on X Club, they and everyone else in the country were eclipsed by Laurie and Ross Stewart who were first nationally out of 218 pairs.

A Bridge Beach Hopper

That's Debbie who spent several days recently with her Cadillac at Whangamata's famous Beach Hop. Well, it was not that famous to me until I heard about what happens around Whangamata and neighbouring places like Pauanui and Waihi. Plenty of similar cars. Plenty of good talk and perhaps just a few celebratory drinks.



It's a big car and hence we needed a full-width picture to show it!



So, that's what you do, Debbie, when you are not playing bridge, working or milking. Pretty smart.

Wisdom of Solomon

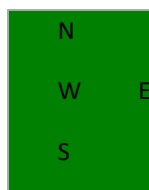


Debbie's Devious Discard!

Yes... it's Debbie's feature month!

What's this month's piece of advice? Maybe simply, you cannot trust anyone at the bridge table. Here's a pleasant board for one pair...and less so for the other!

West Deals ♠ K 10 8 4
 N-S Vul ♥ 4 3
 ♦ J 10 7
 ♣ A 9 5 3



♠ A J 6
 ♥ Q 8 7 5
 ♦ K 2
 ♣ K Q 8 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 NT	All pass	

You open a 15-17 1NT in 4th seat. Partner uses Stayman and then invites game with 2NT. With a minimum 15, you sign off.

West, Debbie, leads DA followed by a second small diamond, with East following with 2 small diamonds. You win DK and play CK and a second club to the ace. On the second round of clubs, Debbie discards S2.

So you have 3 club tricks and DK and realistically have to get 4 spade tricks to make your contract. To do that, you must not lose a trick to SQ. Which defender holds SQ?

Get it right and you make your contract. Get it wrong and you will be at least 2 down...-200 a terrible score.

Since Debbie had discarded a spade, I decided to play her partner, for the queen. So low to the jack... and the roof fell in for the declarer!

West Deals N-S Vul	♠ K 10 8 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ A 9 5 3		
♠ Q 5 2 ♥ J 10 9 6 ♦ A Q 6 4 3 ♣ 7	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 9 7 3 ♥ A K 2 ♦ 9 8 5 ♣ J 10 4 2	
	♠ A J 6 ♥ Q 8 7 5 ♦ K 2 ♣ K Q 8 6		

West	North	East	South
<i>Debbie</i>	<i>Anna</i>	<i>Norma</i>	<i>the dejected declarer!</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 NT	All pass	

Debbie took 3 more diamond tricks and then played a heart to Norma who took her two top hearts.. down 2!

Debbie did well as she felt she had to keep 4 hearts as she knew from the bidding I held a 4-card heart suit. I thought she would not discard from a 3-card suit headed by the queen. Wrong!

As this is the learning part of the Newsletter, I will just suggest that as Debbie has no clear entry to win remaining diamond tricks if her partner has only 2 diamonds, she is better to lead a low diamond rather than the ace at trick 1. I would still have to make the same horrible guess.

Great discard, Debbi, worth 100% of the matchpoints at Te Aroha.

Improvers' Night

On Wednesday April 22nd, I organised an Improvers' Night at the club. There were 16 pairs present, a mixture of players from Thames, Matamata, Morrinsville and the host club. It was "play and learn" as they played 12 boards in three hours, each having points of interest about which I talked after all had played. The points raised were a mixture of bidding, play and defence.

I will run two more similar evenings later in the year on Wednesday evenings, the next **on July 15th** at the club.

In the Future Some of you might like to travel to Cambridge on **Sunday May 24th** for the third round of the Waikato Area Pairs.

Closer to home, we have the Spa Town Teams and Spa Town Restricted Open Swiss Pairs at the Silver Fern Farms Event Centre on **Saturday June 6th**. If the Teams event is a bit "heavy" for many of our club members, please join in the Swiss Pairs event.

There are already 16 teams entered but only 10 pairs so far and only 3 of the 20 players in the latter come from our club. So, come on, home town players, it's time to have a great day's bridge "across the river". If you want to enter but are not sure how (on NZ Bridge website), just let me know and I will do it for you.

Sunday June 21st is another date for some of your diaries. It's the Waikato Region Inter Clubs' Teams heat for Open, Intermediate and Junior players. We hope to have teams in each category, 2 pairs per team. If you are interested, please tell me or put your name on the entry sheet on the club notice-board, ideally in the next two weeks.

That's all for April. See you again next month. Richard.

