

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

Te Aroha News January 2025



Good News for a New Year

We start the New Year with lots of good news. Firstly, we have a new picture for the start of these newsletters. That's because we have a swish new frontage to the building. Thanks, Peter, for organising that and to Tanya Austin who felt many Te Aroha buildings needed a face-lift and who obtained Council funding to do the work, as on the bridge club.

Then, more good news. Congratulations to Charlotte and Tyrel on the arrival on December 24th of Sophie Diana Glass. What a great Christmas present for you both.



A very happy grandmother....and Sophie is being well trained as to which are the important cards to hold!

Congratulations as well to the happy grandmother, Diana. I am sure one of you will be showing off some pictures at the club very soon.



Now, surely you are not trying to type, Tyrel?!

Our next piece of good news is a new arrival but of a different kind. This is the kind of email I would have liked to have written myself as it sums up my own feelings about our bridge club. However, I can report this was received by Victor who like me feel it is worthy of publication.

“Hi there Victor, absolutely I am going to be a full member. Just love your club, especially the Fridays they are so relaxed and almost fun days but I might add everyone is still very competitive. I've never quite struck a club quite like it, I hope it will always be like it is now.”

We have as a club a high standard to keep up. Our club serves as a wonderfully friendly place to play bridge. That does not mean it is not competitive because it is. However, the social side is never forgotten and that side is well served on both Tuesday nights and Friday day sessions. A small pat on the shoulders to all members.

You cannot keep them away!

I happened to drop into the club on Friday January 3rd, the first non-Public Holiday of the year...and there were 20 members playing, yes, 5 tables, more than we had on most Friday sessions last year. You just cannot keep them away. Great to see.

President Peter and Malcolm led the way North-South with 57.50% while money man Victor and Alan Mace eclipsed them with 63% East-West. I mention "money man" as I am sure Victor would like to give you a gentle reminder that subs for 2025 are due... and of course you can pay your whole 2025 Tuesday table-money in one hit...or else pay weekly if you prefer.

We had some early leaders in both the Friday Slam Cup and Strike One (the player with most successful slams bid against them all year). Victor and Alan and Nick Whitten and Grant James made small slams with Laurie and Jan the unlucky pair each time.

I got "the call" to come to the club on a Friday later in the month to come up and fill up the gap to make 5 tables. I could experience the nice atmosphere myself and could experience a rather tough session which Tim and I were most relieved to escape with 49%. Maybe I should stick to Tuesday nights!

Classes 2025

That's lessons for new players which will start at the club on **Thursday 27th March (7.00pm)** and it's nice to report that Charlotte and Tyrel will be running them again. We had a great response for the lessons last year (and a pretty good retention rate too). One of the best way to attract new players is by "word of mouth"that is from existing players like you.

You must know someone who has been saying "I must learn". Well, tell them this the year...and get them registered. Commitment! That's what we want. The Club will become even better with more new players..and this is a small way all existing players can contribute.

Oh, and if you feel you need a refresher on the basics, you are most welcome to come too. After getting two self-inflicted total bottoms against Laurie and Jan and Shirley Bailey and Hanna late last year, maybe I should pop along!

Twin Turbos!

Have you ever wondered what makes a successful bridge partnership? I am sure you could list a few very worthy attributes like being understanding of one's partner's lapses (just in case you have the occasional one yourself!), complimenting your partner when they find an opening lead that does not cost three tricks or even one who gets you the occasional cup of coffee!

However, Rochelle and Tim seem to have taken bridge partnership to new extremes:



That's right! Drive the same vehicle! Here they are parked at a well-known Te Aroha landmark (commonly known as "Tim's paddock" from the time he left huge divots in the pristine grass) showing off their unity. I am sure it must help them to know when they are struggling to decide about whether to finesse or play for the drop of an honour that their partner is right there with them, in body, mind and motor!

Nice one, Cam



A few more master-points to become a grand-master but he's on the way!

The Wisdom of Solomon



Aces and long suits are so useful

It is often said that aces are worth more than 4 high card points. A recent tournament deal showed why they, coupled with a long suit, can enable one to bid and make games with far less than the recommended 25 hcp.

Let's look at the North and South hands below. Both hands have 11 high card points. You are supposed to need 25 minimum for game. That is not always true.

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A K 6 3
♥ 10 2
♦ 10 5 3
♣ A 8 6 4

♠ Q J 10
♥ Q J 5
♦ J 8 6 4 2
♣ J 10

♠ 9 8 5 4 2
♥ 8
♦ K Q 9
♣ K Q 9 5

♠ 7
♥ A K 9 7 6 4 3
♦ A 7
♣ 7 3 2



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	?

When their partner bid only 2H as their second bid, South was showing only a minimum opening hand. They could hold as many as 14 with a long heart suit or as few as 11 (very occasionally even 10). 2H should be showing a 6+ card suit but sometimes may only have 5.

North has only 11 hcp but that is made up of two aces and a king, pretty much always 3 tricks. DA is worth so much more than say DKJ, both being 4 hcp. Although North only has 2 hearts, they have a hand worth inviting game, opposite hopefully 6+ hearts, hence 3H.

South has only 11 hcp too and having three little clubs and a singleton in their partner's spade suit are not great assets. Yet, they too have 2 aces and extra length in hearts, the length producing extra tricks. So, even though they are minimum in high card points, they should accept the invitation, 4H. Let's see why.

West will lead SQ. Declarer takes SA in dummy and plays HAK. When the queen does not fall, they have one heart loser. No worries. Lose a third round of hearts. It does not matter what West returns. Let's say SJ. South wins SK, discarding a small minor card, say a diamond. They will lose just 2 club tricks along with a trump. Game made with a combined 22 hcp.

This is because of the power of aces, first round control in each suit, and the extra trump length. Aces are probably worth more than 4 hcp. That extra trump length is also worth more than a jack. Don't underestimate trump length and the power of aces!

Off to The Gold Coast... for the last time!

No doubt, I can bring you a few pictures next month from the Gold Coast Bridge Congress. There's only a small Te Aroha contingent going this time, Rochelle, Tim, Anna Kalma, Guy, Victor and yours truly...but we will enjoy ourselves ..and hopefully do well at the table too.

This is the last Gold Coast Congress as the organisers have lost the use of the wonderful Convention Centre there and there is nowhere else big enough to take the 2,500 ish players. That's a real pity.

Can You help?

At the bridge club stand at Domain Day **Sunday March 9th**. We need at least 4 people, ideally a couple more than that to man our stand, both from 10am until midday and from midday until 2pm. If you can, please let me know in advance so that we have some cheerful faces to promote our club and encourage new players to the lessons.

See you in February, no doubt with some news from the Gold Coast. *Richard*

Stop Press News: Austin bid to a making 7NT on Friday January 24th at the club, his time ever. He bid it and left it to Barbara to make it! Meanwhile, both Peters, Malcolm and Nick picked up 2 points in the Strike 1 competition for being in the wrong place at the table for this board.