

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

Te Aroha News July 2026



“A little of what you fancy” may come your way!

Norma likes a dram or two of whiskey. I did not press her on whether that was every week, every day...maybe every hour! I am sure not the last!

However, on a Tuesday morning in late June, she realised she had run out of her favourite nip. She would certainly reimburse very soon.. but, for a change, thought she would like to try gin instead.

So, that evening, she came along to bridge. It was the Social Bridge night when we had a “Rainbow” Individual Movement, 7 tables and 21 boards. You get to play one board with 21 of the 28 players present. Norma had a pretty steady night coming 3rd off Scratch with a very respectable 64.29%. In the Handicap competition, she led the way.

Now, Paul had returned from Bluff with a bottle of rather nice gin from a company of which he is a director and which makes the drink. The committee decided that the winner of the Handicap would win this bottle. So, Norma got her wish come true very quickly without going near a liquor store.



Norma and the gin

Well played, Norma, and here's hoping you enjoy the gin as much as you do the whiskey. Oh, she did comment that she would need to buy a bottle of tonic to supplement the gin. A good call.

Well, maybe I should alter the phrase in the title: "a little of what you fancy does you good!"

Nice Time with Morrinsville

The Morrinsville and Te Aroha clubs had two very friendly social evenings at each other's clubs during July. The atmosphere was key, the result secondary though we should record that the overall result saw Te Aroha with 50.11 and Morrinsville 49.82. Now, we will leave it as one of life's big mysteries as to why the total is not 100%. My guess is phantoms but the answer will remain hidden with the scorers!

Guy's gone walk-about

You may not have seen Guy at bridge much these last couple of months. There's a good reason for that. What's the highest mountain in Africa? You do not need to race off to Google if you do not know... just look here!



You have all you need to know in the picture above. That's Guy, with his wife, Liz, at Africa's highest point, just a bit higher than Mt Te Aroha. They are well clothed as there were patches of snow around, far far colder than at ground level below! Talking of which:



Back down again. Guy met up with lots of the friendly locals.

Guy gave me a description of their ascent of Kilimanjaro. It is not your everyday holiday jaunt.

“The Mount Kilimanjaro trip lasted 8 days and we summited on day 7. The first 6 days were building capacity to endure altitude hypoxia. They had the side benefit of increasing my fitness level as a lack of pre-trip training due to work and lifestyle distractions had limited it to one ascent of Mt Te Aroha a week before the flight.

The way to climb “Kili” is “pole pole” (pronounced “powlie powlie”)... slowly, slowly in Swahili. Most days we would walk for 5-6 hours, climbing 700 m and descending 450 m to sleep slightly higher each time. We started off in tropical rain forest and went through 5 different vegetation zones. The last zone was rock and snow.

Night 6 saw us at base camp (4700 m altitude). I got up at 11.15 pm and there was already a continual line of summit aspirants trudging past my tent. We set off at midnight. There were some stomach gripes and headaches/nausea

among our group of 4 the higher we ascended but we managed to harden up and push through. We got to the top (5895m) around 8.30 am. Bloody hard thing to do was our opinion. They say 25% of those who attempt it fail, but we had the best weather which probably made the low oxygen struggles a bit more bearable. It was minus 18 degrees just before sunrise, though. When we got back down, we discovered that the younger porters had wagered that we couldn't do it, but the older heads among them backed us!

We got back to base camp about 11.30am and had lunch and a 30 minute rest, but then we had to stand up and walk another 6 hours to drop down to 3100 m altitude for the last night. That was the straw that almost broke both my knees! The last day was another 6 hours and we were out of the park.

We pretty much stayed in Tanzania our entire trip except transiting through Oz, Qatar and Kenya. Our plane passed over Hormuz during one of Trump's bombing blitzes which was the most dangerous part of the journey. After Kilimanjaro, we went 9 days on safari through 4 game parks and then 5 days on the beach in Zanzibar before returning home."

Thanks, Guy. Whoever said Mt Te Aroha was a bit of a slog cannot be right!

Debbie's Alter Ego

More on the Rainbow Evening

A strange thing happened when we saw the results of the Rainbow Individual held on Tuesday 30th June. Coming in 4th place that evening was Susie Warren with a very respectable score of 61.51%. "Susie who?" you may well ask as she may well not be a familiar name at the club.

Hours and hours of research by our ace scorer, Cam, (well, he was certainly late that night for the "port session") revealed the player's true identity. Stand up the real Debbie Hughes because that was your score.

A check of the computer numbers of the two players revealed no similarity, no slip of the hand when entering the numbers. It remains a mystery as to why Susie claimed Debbie's score though you can understand why she would like a 60+ percentage.



Debbie and Susie..well, Debbie and someone... but who?

Now, a couple of weeks later, at a pool afternoon (the game of rather than a swimming afternoon) at Rochelle's home, Debbie disappeared but the lady on the right above appeared and though the picture may not be conclusive, the lady resembled Debbie but doubt remains as to whether Susie had turned up?

One connection between the two is that Susie was seen drinking Jager and Red Bull, Debbie's favourite beverage.

Actually, Debbie would be delighted to always use her "alter ego" name if she can score 60+ %s at the club all the time.

Rubber "Tears"

The club had three pairs taking part in the Waikato Bays heat of this year's National Rubber Bridge tournament. Considering only 12 pairs entered the Waikato Bays heat, that's a sizeable 25%. Each match consists of 30 boards scored Rubber Bridge style.

It was neat seeing Debbie and Lisa having a go. They took on Rotorua's Alan Dick and Heini Lux in the first round but unfortunately came off second best. The other two pairs, Rochelle and Tim and Anna and myself had first-round

byes and both had comfortable wins in the second round. They thus had reached the semi-final stage with both matches being played on Wednesday 22nd July. Alas, for Te Aroha, the news was bad. Tim and Rochelle were beaten by some 2000 points by Tauranga's Di and Hugh McAlister.

Our match was closer and on Board 30, we had to beat Heini Lux's 2S contract to progress through to the final. Alas, the contract slithered home.

Wednesday Improvers' Sessions

My second session took place in mid-July and we had 6 tables (12 pairs) taking part, including 6 pairs from the host club. All three sessions involve playing boards and then discussing them afterwards. In both sessions so far, we have played 12 boards.

The final session is on 16th September when as well as introducing a few new suggestions, I hope to cement some of the ideas from the first two sessions. Again, advance notice if you intend to come would be great... cost is just \$5.00 per player and it would be great if you can come with a partner.

Tournaments Past and Future

The fourth round of the Waikato Area Pairs took place at Te Awamutu a couple of weeks ago. The last round is at the Hamilton Bridge Club on Sunday August 30th. Joy finished 5th at Te Awamutu playing with Clare Coles from Cambridge.

Meanwhile, Tim and Alan finished 6th at Waitomo's Open Restricted Swiss Pairs earlier in the month.

Wisdom of Solomon



Aggression and Care

The following board from a very recent Tuesday night session at the Club showed that the way to success can be a mixture of aggression and care.

West Deals	♠ A 10 4		
E-W Vul	♥ 9 7		
	♦ 10 9 8 4 3		
	♣ A Q 5		
♠ 7		♠ 9 8 3	
♥ J 8 5 4 2		♥ A 6	
♦ A Q J 6 5		♦ K 7	
♣ 9 6		♣ K J 10 4 3 2	
	♠ K Q J 6 5 2		
	♥ K Q 10 3		
	♦ 2		
	♣ 8 7		
West	North	East	South
	<i>Damien</i>		<i>Richard</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♣	1 ♠
Dbl	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

Both East and I, South, had 11 counts but it was I who found the fit with my partner when Damien did well to show me a value raise to 3S. I had a sixth spade and nice shape with a singleton and accepted the invite to game.

West led C9 and I could see there was no point in finessing, dangerous if West had a singleton club.

So, I won CA and needed to play hearts before trumps. So, a heart ducked by East to my king was followed by a spade to the ace and a second heart. East won and played CK and a third club.

I ruffed high (SK) and then ruffed a low heart with S10 in dummy. I still had a small spade in dummy and could play 2 more rounds of trumps after which I could claim 10 tricks, losing just CK, HA and a diamond.

It was a contract that needed care in the play (a low ruff in dummy would have been fatal) but also the right amount of aggression from both North and South in the bidding. Of the 7 declarers who played in spades, only twice was game bid and only 4 declarers made 10 tricks.

Notice that game was made with effectively 8 hcp in dummy (CQ was not needed) and 10 hcp in the South hand (HJ was also superfluous).

That's all for now. As I will be "jetting" across to Australia for most of August, the next Te Aroha News will be near the end of September. Happy Bridging,
Richard