

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

March 2023



It's amazing what one discovers over a glass of port after a Tuesday night bridge session at Te Aroha. There's a bit of talk about the hands we have just played...and then there is this:

Story of a Kiwi Bloke...who plays bridge!

This is a story of a bloke you may know. It's heavily censored, abridged and redacted to protect the not so innocent.



A clue to our man's identity. Do you know him?

“I was born in New Plymouth and spent early years growing up on the family farm on an unnamed road of Newall Rd Warea, which is some 30 or so km’s south of New Plymouth on what is now the “Surf Highway”. Newall Rd was where an infamous massacre occurred and over the back of our farm was the Parihaka Pa also infamous as all know.

My parents’ families arrived in NZ in 1842 and 1843 so in NZ terms the family have some roots here.

My ancestors had some bearing on NZ history.(“Pity it wasn’t catching” I hear you say.) What I say here has some bearing on my early years: bear with me.

Fred Mace (did I give a clue to my name?) was the first Surveyor General of NZ and “discovered” the Waitomo Caves..as if of course they were not well known to local Māori. During the Māori Wars, another Fred Mace and his sergeant were awarded the only two NZ Crosses awarded. So....

Mum had to milk the cows on the family farm, yes strip milk (milk by hand, this has a bearing... stay with me). Dad marched off to war (WWII) and in 1943 invalided out . After 9 months in a wheel chair, he married my mother and a year later a marvellous strapping baby arrived.

Remember mum and the cows: she hated them. So, when the Korean war started, wool was far more lucrative. So, we became sheep farmers, but it was a short boom. This resulted in a change and Dad and Mum were awarded the contract to develop the farms you see today around Bennydale, Atiamuri and stretching to Arohena, a very large area and many farms. Of course, we shifted north to Kikiki living across the road from the Te Awamutu Golf Course, (this has a bearing on later events.)

The youth now with 2 sisters grew up and of course was going to be an All Black and play golf, (Dad was very good and Mum played.)

At the end of fifth form and with no guiding hand, I decided I wanted to fly. The RNZAF beckoned. No. My eye sight finished that so in January 1962, I arrived at Woodbourne (Blenheim). I was part of the first Cert. of Engineering course, a new engineering path to Registered Engineer. My lack of higher secondary learning soon told and I became an engine fitter (baggie). Time past (abridged and redacted).

In 1967, myself and a mate joined the Marlborough Bridge Club in Blenheim. We didn't know a thing. No lessons just started playing, made up our own system, which was a strong club system of no value. After several months of creating havoc, Club President, Mrs Waters, suggested we have a look at Goren (never heard of it , ask Richard).

During the 60's, RNZAF interfered with the pleasure of life. I had a year in Christchurch (63/ 64), a year at Ohakea on 14 Squadron (64/ 65) which was great. There were so many different shifts that several of us discovered how to report for our shift at 8am and sign out at 9am. During this year, we obtained a list of every licensed premise (public) in the North Island and had a beer in every one. *Any exaggeration? One beer or more?*

Back to Woodbourne and into the high tech area. A distraction. You may be old enough to remember the crayfish boom and the venison boom. We spent a large amount of time in both.



the narrator of this story. Do you know him?

You have heard about Govt. agencies. We boldly rolled up to the Fisheries Dept for a cray licence. "No! Get out. You must have a required fish boat!" Oh no woe is me. So, a busy weekend building a pram dinghy: no plans, just do it. Monday, yes they registered and we had our piece of paper, (also the

smallest registered boat in NZ 8ft long.) 10 shillings a pound: get the Rolls polished. Heard of the RNZAF, they were a considerable distraction from playing sport. Never mind: forget the Rolls.

Played sport as well: rugby, basketball both of some note, cricket, golf, water polo, athletics and taught ourselves to scuba dive making up our own equipment. Yes, a humble boy from the boonies. *He actually played basketball for NZ Services and provincial rugby for Canterbury, Manawatu and Marlborough.*

No, I'm not going to talk about partying where I majored, or about shooting adventures. Port anyone?

Still playing bridge when December 1969 comes and I elect to leave the RNZAF where on reflection I had a great time. Last day, went to the pub in full uniform, woke Saturday morning with nothing but undies. Next chapter.

Working as a shift engineer during the construction on first year's processing at the Kapuni Natural Gas Plant. Had met a beautiful woman who became my wife. We raised a family in Te Awamutu, Hamilton then on to Matamata. (children) Played Golf while settling injury claims in pre ACC days, elected to the committee (Vice Capt.) then a bad decision : bought a business in Paeroa (1981) boats, outboards, chainsaws, caravans and mowers.

Then along came "Piggy" Muldoon and the 20% caravan and boat tax. No turnover overnight **no panic**, started making insect screens then security doors. Leah went to work. She had a series of top jobs allowing us to survive just. Bought a house: you thought you had high interest. First mortgage was limited to \$10,000. We had 3 mortgages just for \$34,000 at 34% yes not a misprint. Played golf and advanced through the committee to President, President Waikato Golf Ass. Then Waikato Golf when we were the first association to form women and men into one governing body.

Elected to NZ Golf Association and yes had started playing bridge again. Nick Whitten arrived and taught me Precision, Had a great partner, Rose Fowlds. Played North Island Teams or something similar (against NZ Women's and mixed teams as well as all leading men's players) Somebody playing FERTS *opening at the 1 level with 0+ points!*), a short guy with curly hair, hated

carrots, name escapes me: a character though. Rose moved to Hamilton And then I teamed up with Bill Stewart, the best at maths. I have never seen faster match pointing and % results than the then system we were using (early what is now Compass). Played in all major competitions in the middle of the Island and usually in the results. Have a few stories but have been abridged.

The boys grew up and flew the coup raising families along the way. Leah and I expanded the business having a marine business, Upholstery shop, dive shop, Aluminium Joinery and Boat building Business with a partner. We split the business and I retained the Joinery shop.

Disaster struck in 2011. Leah had stage 4 cancer and died in December 2013. She didn't want to go to a hospital. So, I closed the business and became a nurse. Life resurfaced in 2016. Bridge again. Got my 4th or 5th number from NZ Bridge. No idea and here I am 8 star local master and usually when I play in a local B point event, several players will question my playing status. Thank you NZB it's un-pleasant.

But...discovered a new bridge club at Te Aroha. That's pleasant.....very!

Cheers sport or is that port?

"A maceing". Thanks, Alan.

A nice mention for Te Aroha Bridge Club on the radio

Some of you would have been at the club on the day Sharleen Grounds called to play. A Wellingtonian, she has now achieved her aim of playing at every bridge club in the country...and that was the focus of her recent interview on National Radio on Jesse Mulligan's afternoon show. One of Jesse's questions was about her favourite club visits and she replied some of the smaller friendly clubs with specific mention of Te Aroha.



Thanks to those who made her so welcome, something we would do for all visitors to our club.

Club and outside winners

Rainbow Pairs at the club this month saw Hermanna and myself win off scratch (one each week) and Moira and Corolyn on Handicap. Second were Victor and Tineke off scratch and Holly and once again Tineke on handicap. For the Gilligan Barclay Teams encounters with Thames, see the last feature below.

On the tournament scene, I had a nice day at Howick's 5A winning the event comfortably with Pat Carter. Then, Anna Kalma and I had a good time in Blenheim just recently. We won the 5A Teams with a couple of Christchurch friends before Anna had to go to an NZ Bridge meeting in Wellington. I found a nice local partner and came 2nd in the Pairs the following day.

Beginners' Lessons at the Club

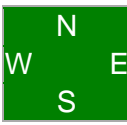
Charlotte and Tyrel are giving them this year starting in early May.... **Thursday May 4th** at 7.00 pm to be exact. Now, they want a nice quorum. So please encourage friends and relations along. You must know someone who has been saying they must learn. Now is the time. A little bit of gentle encouragement

from you, please! And if you know of someone you can “coerce” into coming, please let Charlotte, Tyrel or Rochelle know.

Great Bid, Hermanna

Yes, it certainly was and ruefully I have to say that I was on the receiving end of it! Hermanna’s partner, Rochelle, opened a standard Weak 2 in first seat and after a pass on Hermanna’s right, she held the following at favourable vulnerability: S 8543 H AQT732 D 3 C T8

She had no hesitation with her modest values in bidding 4S and that ended the bidding. Let’s look at all 4 hands:

<p>West Deals N-S Vul</p>	<p>♠ K ♥ K 5 4 ♦ K J 8 7 5 ♣ 9 7 6 4</p>	<p>♠ 8 5 4 3 ♥ A Q 10 7 3 2 ♦ 3 ♣ 10 8</p>	
<p>♠ A J 10 9 7 2 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ Q 10 ♣ Q 2</p>		<p>♠ Q 6 ♥ J ♦ A 9 6 4 2 ♣ A K J 5 3</p>	
<p><i>West</i> 2♠</p>	<p><i>North</i> Pass</p>	<p><i>East</i> 4♠</p>	<p><i>South</i> All pass</p>

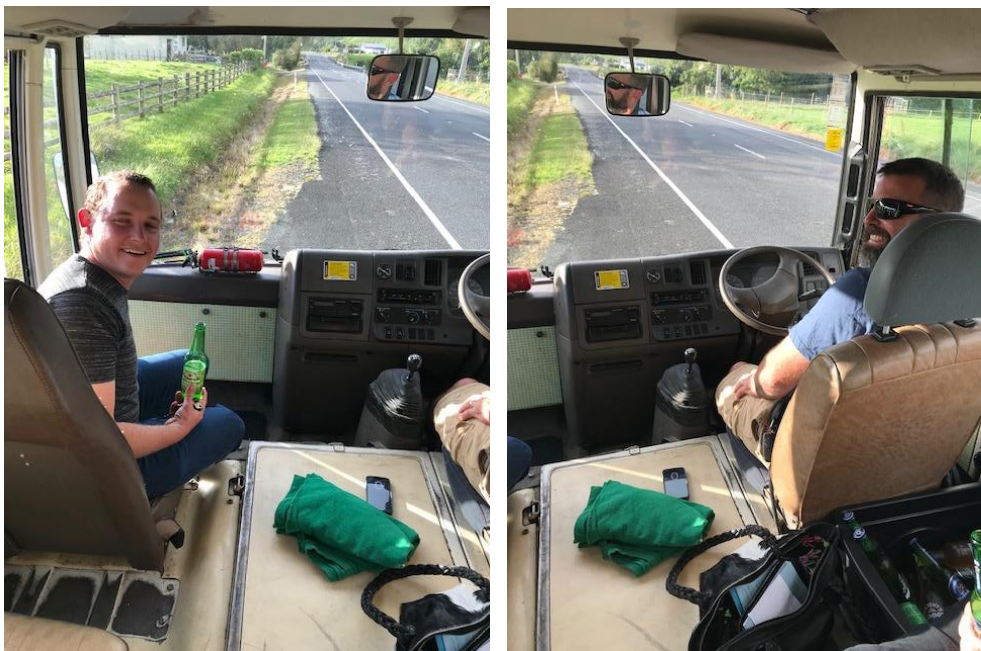
The defence took the first three tricks, DA and CAK. They could then await their trump trick. If declarer managed to play a heart to the queen, then 4S would be just one down. Even misguessing the lie of the heart honours would still be a great result for East-West since North-South could make 5D assuming declarer played for the clubs to break 2-2.

However, at adverse vulnerability, it did not seem very attractive for South to enter the auction with a 4NT “Pick a minor” bid. That was the beauty of Hermanna’s bid because had she bid any less, South would be able to enter the bidding much more comfortably.

Two Nights with Thames.

When Thames came to Te Aroha, Victor and Alan (our feature man) came a very close second North/South while Hermanna and Rochelle were 1st East-West with a nice 62.05%. Then, the following Tuesday, it was over to Thames with Rochelle's bus transporting 12 of the 20 players who made the trip. A number of prize Easter Eggs headed back to Te Aroha with Joy and yours truly winning East-West while the North-South handicap winners were Peter TJ and Shirley Townsend..and guess who won the handicap East-West :

Inside the Bus



We have the assistant driver and the bus driver, Cam and Ross, who must have been discussing system on the way over as they won the East/West handicap prize that evening. It's OK. Cam was not the driver!

So, a good night for all at Thames with two more rounds of this competition later in the year.

More news in April. Happy Easter to you all.

Richard