

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

May 2023



70 Years Old, Alive and Very Well

That heading, of course, refers to the Te Aroha Bridge Club. It is a little more than 70 years since the first game of bridge took place at this club, on the evening of 17th March 1953. There has been bridge in this town ever since. There have been good times and less good ones. The club nearly folded but has been saved by many of those who still play regularly at the club.

I will be producing soon a booklet to celebrate those 70 years. In the meantime, the celebration of the past 70 years took place over the weekend of 27th and 28th May and what a neat celebration it was.

New Zealand Bridge allowed the regular Spa Town Teams to be upgraded to a 10A event and that decision would have encouraged more stronger teams from Auckland, Waikato Bays and Central Districts to take part. On Saturday, there were 22 in the Teams event and a further 8 tables in the Multi Grade Swiss Pairs. The 3B Pairs on Sunday attracted 24 pairs. It was lovely seeing so many local players taking part.

We will come to the winners of those events shortly. Firstly, though, the celebration dinner on the Saturday evening. Corolyn and her helpers produced

a lovely feast for us. A huge table full of mains and my own little favourite was those chocolate rolls filled with cream on the dessert menu.

There were over 90 present including the partners of several local players rarely seen at the club. Special guests for the evening were:

Adrienne Wilcox, Mayor of Matamata-Piako and her husband.

Allan Morris, Chairman of New Zealand Bridge and his wife, Beverley
(They played both days.)

Hermann and Henk Hemmes, Life Members of the club

Rochelle van Heuven, Tim Rigter, Henk Hemmes, Barry Jones and Dave Henson, present and past Club Presidents

Lindsay Reid, one of the original 16 Foundation Members 70 years ago and still playing at the Hamilton Bridge Club

We heard the (brief) history of the club, the good, the bad and once again the good years. We toasted the club, its past and to its future. There were short speeches from Adrienne Wilcox, Allan Morris and Lindsay Reid and then Lindsay cut the birthday cake, a lovely mud cake.



Lindsay, the cake cutter

The Presidents and the Foundation Member



Let's list our Presidents from left to right:

Henk 1997

Dave 1983-1985 (there is a chance we can attract Dave back to the club)

Rochelle 2022-2023 (and we hope for a while longer)

Barry 1996

Tim 2015 – 2021

Lindsay here in 1953 and back again in 2023..our Foundation Member

The bridge, well it was nice too. There were many compliments about Allan Joseph, the National Director who came especially from Wellington for the weekend and for the scorer, Jan Spaans, who had less distance to travel from Cambridge.

When asked whether there were any scoring hitches, Jan replied: "Did you notice any?" The answer was "no". "Well, then, there could not have been any, could there!"

Smart dressers and smart players, too!



Eileen and Anne, successful in the Multi Grade Swiss

Eileen Barker and Anne Berben from Putaruru won the Multi Grade Swiss Pairs by 9 vps from Morrinsville's Nick Whitten and Irene Gubb with Matamata's Judith Howard and Margaret Wilson in 3rd place, a further 6 vps behind. The Te Aroha players in this event were perfect hosts.

However, I am pleased to say that the club had more success in the other two events. Going into the last round of the Spa Town Teams, my team with Anna Kalma, and Waikato Club's Jenna Gibbons and her Australian partner, Julian Foster, had a relatively comfortable 7.57 vp advantage over our final opponents, Kathy and Ken Yule and Jan Cormack and Grant Jarvis. When the match had finished, that lead was down to just 0.43 vp. Very finally judged, you may say. Anna and I lost 6imps on the last board of the afternoon. It was just as well we did not give away an overtrick in 1NT!

Spa Town Team winners



Jenna, Julian, Anna and Richard

Anna and I had a much more convincing win in the Sunday 8B Pairs, winning by over 11% from Diana and Hugh McAlister with Richard Fletcher and Yuzhong Chen a further 11% back in third place. Diana, now resident with Hugh in Tauranga after spending years in Queensland, is Te Aroha born and bred.

Finally, with respect to the weekend, a big big thank you to all who helped with the set up, catering and clear up. Rochelle has already thanked you all by email by name. It was a splendid all-round effort from the club members whether one's skill is in dealing, catering or just general helping. It left a very good impression of the club for our guests. Rochelle named a long list of people in her email. The leadership of the weekend came from the top. So, a big thank you to Rochelle too who as well as trying to interpret what Tim's bidding was all about, could be seen in the kitchen, at the bar, dealing with whatever crises

occurred (like a shortage of toilet paper!). Now, that is not normally a presidential task! All part of making the weekend a big success.

Victor summed up her contribution well:

“Thank you for all your kind words, and yes we are all lucky to be involved with the most social bridge club in the country and there is always someone willing to help, but..

I would say a very big thank you from members of Te Aroha Club to Rochelle, our President, for always being there and putting in the endless support, even if it keeps your brain going at night and give you some sleepless nights. We love you for doing what you do.”

Now, a small breather until planning for the club’s 75th starts!

What is capturing these players’ attention?



The answer is they are listening to Tyrel give the third lesson to our new beginners’. We started at week 1 with around 12 beginners but by the third week, we had 19 attending.



Charlotte gives a helping hand while Tim oversees in the background.

How could YOU think that of ME?

The interesting question is who is “you” and who is “me”? It really depends whether it is Rochelle telling the story or Richard. Enough riddles...

Week 1 of the Jim Shine and Rochelle and Richard are defending a 4S contract. Rochelle leads DA but dummy only has one of that suit. So, she switches to a club, taken by dummy’s ace.

Dummy has the following heart suit: KT6532 and rather surprisingly, the declarer plays HK which **wins** the trick. Next comes a low heart on which Richard plays a low heart, declarer ruffs and Rochelle contributes HQ.

Let’s hone in to what both defenders are thinking:

Rochelle “I thought Richard was a good player. Cannot be so...the idiot has gone to bed with his ace!”

Richard “Has she been on the booze? It must have got to her big time to play small on the first round holding AQ and a small card. A real life misclick!”

Actually, several adjectives have been deleted from what was actually said..but you get the gist!

The play continued with declarer wrapping up 11 tricks. However, a few tricks from the end, they laid down the HA from their hand!

There were two large shouts for the director. "Director Tim" arrived promptly. On hearing the offence and seeing who was involved, he had but one aim...**not** to penalise the declarer 2 tricks which would cause them to fail in their contract. Life, alas, is full of disappointments as Tim discovered! Meanwhile, Richard and Rochelle were heard saying that they never thought their partner held the missing ace, not for even 5 seconds...much!

Great Performance in Quilty Trays

This event may take place at the Matamata Bridge Club on three Monday nights in May but it is open to players from all Waikato clubs. This year saw 10 teams take part in the round-robin event and the all-Te Aroha team of Rochelle, Tim, Peter Daffurn and Victor were one of them.


It was to their great credit that in going into the final round they still had a chance of winning the event, the only team which could catch the eventual winners. In the event, they lost to the winning team of Kathy and Ken Yule, Liz Fisher and Mike Curry 6.88-13.12 but the Te Aroha team gave the winners a good fight and held on to their second place. Against many teams containing Open players/ grandmasters, they won 6 and drew 1 of their 9 matches.



2nd in the Quilty Trays

A Great Bid, Joan.

I played 3 boards against Joan Darby Smith and Shirley Bailey on a recent Tuesday night. I was greeted with a “be nice: be gentle with us” as if I would be anything else! On the first board, I put partner into a dicey game which he made. “Not my fault, Joan. I was dummy!” I wish I was dummy or a defender on the next board. Joan held as South:

West Deals Both Vul				
	♠ A Q J 6 5 ♥ A 8 7 3 2 ♦ — ♣ Q 6 4			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
Pass	1 ♥	1 ♠	4 ♥	
4 ♠	5 ♥	Dbl	?	

Joan’s 4H was quite a conservative bid. She had rather a good hand after Shirley opened 1H. However, there is nothing wrong in being a little strong at times, like this one!

Joan would have been rather disappointed to see Shirley’s 5H bid. After all, she had a big red double card ready to use after 4S was bid on her left. Sitting East, I decided that 5H would not make (I held a couple of aces and partner had bid vulnerable at the 4-level). Joan disagreed with me because she pulled out the “**redouble**” card.

Now, this can be a dangerous card to use when one’s opponents can go scurrying off to their own suit at the 5-level. However, nothing would have pleased Joan more than to hear someone bid 5S. Indeed, that is just what the redouble induced as this was the complete bidding, ending with a very quiet and polite double from Joan, a bid Shirley left in:

West Deals	♠ —		
Both Vul	♥ K Q J 9 6 4		
	♦ K 8 7 2		
	♣ K 10 7		
	♠ 8 4 3	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K 10 9 7 2
	♥ —		♥ 10 5
	♦ Q J 6 5 4		♦ A 10 9 3
	♣ J 9 8 5 2		♣ A 3
			♠ A Q J 6 5
			♥ A 8 7 3 2
			♦ —
			♣ Q 6 4
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	1 ♠	4 ♥
4 ♠	5 ♥	Dbl	Pass
5 ♠	Dbl	All pass	

You only redouble when you can handle the opponents running to their own suit...and Joan could do just that. That is why the redouble was such a good bid.

I thanked partner for his dummy but I did not mean it! I believe I said a none-too-polite word when I tried one rounds of trumps. A minute or 7 later (that comment is aimed purely for "timekeeper Tim"), I emerged with 6 tricks, or -1400. Now, had partner stood 5Hxx, this contract makes 12 tricks and that equates to a score of +1600, better for North-South than bidding a slam (undoubled). Now you might say that +1400 was not as good as bidding a 6H slam (1430). That is true but no-one at Te Aroha bid the slam.

We moved on to the third board, 3NT by Richard down 3 for a pretty rotten score for the declaring side.

My only words to you Joan, and Shirley, are next time we play each other, "be nice to me." Oh, by the way, a great redouble, Joan.

And it has been a great few days at the Te Aroha Bridge Club. Hopefully, there will be more exciting bridge and stories in June. *Richard*