

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

October 2022



A “Grand” Meeting and Evening

Every night at the Te Aroha Bridge Club seems to be an enjoyable occasion. However, the night of Tuesday 27th September seemed just a bit special. Excuse me if the story takes a bit of telling.

I had Martin Lofgren, a very fine bridge player from Sweden, staying with me that evening. He has come to 15 National Bridge Congresses and that was his main reason in coming to NZ this time, or so it seems. I think his journey from Sweden was really for a night out at the Te Aroha Bridge Club. Martin is also President of the Swedish Bridge Federation. It was neat to have him here. Of course, “here” meant a meal at “The Grand”, a night at the club and of course a port after play.

So, to the pub and introductions all round when we got there. Yet, two who were sitting at the bridge table, were strangers to me. Rochelle helped out with the introductions, Sylvan and Annie from Richmond. A long way from home. Why?

Sylvan and Annie reach “The Grand”

Now Annie does have a second name but Sylvan does not...or does not have a first name...or one of the above. I never really established which. They had retired a little while back, packed up their home and had set off with a caravan in tow. 6 years in the UK, where Annie comes from, 6 years in Australia, maybe 6 years in New Zealand. Whatever, it seems like a long trip!



Sylvan and Annie preparing for bridge at Te Aroha

Sylvan comes from these parts and has connections with the Te Aroha Bridge Club. Joan Darby Smith is Sylvan's cousin's mother-in-law (family trees for anyone who is lost are available from Sylvan and probably from Joan!) His bridge club relative here was Minni Lawrence, a Life Member of this club, and winner of the Auckland Cup 9 times between 1965 and 1984 and 8 times Championship Pairs winner between 1968 and 1983. Minni's sister, Belle Baraball, also played at the club.

Te Aroha Life Members and Presidents



So, it was only natural that Sylvan and Annie came to town and to a night at the bridge club. They left their caravan in Rotorua, visited Hobbiton, climbed Wairere Falls and headed up the Old Te Aroha Road.

About 10 minutes from town, Rochelle was following them. Both cars pulled up at the bridge club and when they got out, Rochelle asked them if they were coming to the bridge club.

“Most definitely” was the answer. Hence, our very mindful President soon had them at the Grand’s bridge table. From there, it was on to a club session, an above 50% round, not bad for 2 Junior players and all the camaraderie and warm welcome that all visitors to this club get. A gorgeous supper and time for a glass of port before they headed off back to Rotorua at 11pm. I am sure they will be back for another glass of port..whoops, sorry, another game of bridge at the club. I think, well know, that they really enjoyed themselves.

Martin too enjoyed our hospitality and thanks to a fine performance by his bridge partner (Tim’s words, not mine!) won their way with 63%.

p.s. Sylvan and Annie played in a couple of Junior events at the National Congress including a 3rd place finish in the Junior Teams. They reaffirmed then that they will be back at Te Aroha again soon.

And saluting our own Congress successes.

Pride of place to Joy and Peter Daffurn who won the New Zealand Intermediate Pairs, scoring 64.25 and 61.93 in the two rounds. They needed every bit of those scores as the margin of victory was just 0.57%. While victory was achieved at the bridge table, it was only confirmed after they won an appeal when a director's decision rather harshly went against them and was reversed by the Appeals Committee. A nervous wait but a great celebration when the final results were confirmed.



Joy and Peter

Tim and Rochelle also had success in the Plate event of the NZ Restricted Pairs. They averaged an impressive 58.98% in the 81 board three-session final and won this event by 4.59%.

The general feeling from Te Aroha and other players that this Congress, the first at Bay Park, was a great success. It will return there at the end of September next year.

Another honour (CK) for Tim

It has happened before to our Tim that this honour and Tim have been associated with each other. Something to do with having this honour and not leading the club suit bid by Rochelle. The incident is rightly rewarded on the bridge club wall.

On Friday 9th September, Tim once more showed, or tried to show no respect for this honour. Tim's last two cards in his 4NT contract were DA and CK. We understand that Tim revoked on trick 12 by throwing the CK and in the process failing in his contract. It took the opponents to bring Tim to his senses as of course, you are not allowed to revoke on tricks 12 or 13. Order, or the correct play of the cards, was restored and Tim ended up making his contract. Hence, the photo below is entirely appropriate.



We can report that the fingers above are not Tim's. There is, of course, a story to the H4 too, not Tim's story and we will tell that on another day.

Other Achievements

Success at the club is just as important as success elsewhere at tournaments. It was thus lovely to see Martin Nelson and Moira Lagaluga won at the club on the Tuesday evening session on 20th September and not just came first but scored 67.73%. They left 17 other pairs including some Open and one Gold Grand Master well in their wake. Well done.

Meanwhile, Joy and Judith were equal first, Peter Daffurn 4th and Malcolm 5th in the 2022 Waikato Bays region Intermediate League event. Points are won over a series of events and are won both for performance and attendance. Congratulations.

Te Aroha members performed well in the two-night event involving Thames and Te Aroha players. Joy and I scored rather well in the Te Aroha heat and well enough at Thames to win the Gilligan Barclay Cup for 2022.

The real reason to play bridge in Thames



The selection of food at Te Aroha the previous week was pretty nice too!

And coming up:

Hopefully some of you will come to Matamata on the night of Friday November 11th. That is the annual New Zealand Wide Pairs, this year sponsored by Loveblock Wines, and with the same 24 deals being played at 55 clubs around New Zealand. The event raises funds for New Zealand Bridge Foundation which supports bridge clubs and especially young bridge players around the country.

However, it is an event to have a good time playing a national event at your own club. We are hoping Te Aroha will run the event next year. For this year, it would be great to see some Te Aroha players at Matamata. At the end of play, everyone gets a booklet about the hands just played, written by yours truly. So do come along...on board 1, I can tell you...well, not much just yet!

It's Not All Science

That's bidding, I mean. Sometimes, you have to take a guess, a reasonable guess, and hope you come up with the right answer.

Take the following. I held recently :

S QT62


H AK73

D-

C QT42

and was about to embark on a scientific auction to see if partner and I had a slam to bid. Anna, my partner, had opened 1S. Slam looked promising but...

my right-hand opponent intervened with 5D. Not much room for investigating now. It was a case of guessing and hope I guessed right. What would you bid with my hand?

<p>South Deals Both Vul</p> <p>♠ K ♥ 6 ♦ K Q J 8 7 6 5 4 3 ♣ 6 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 6 2 ♥ A K 8 7 3 ♦ — ♣ Q 10 4 2</p>	<p>♠ 8 4 ♥ Q J 9 5 4 2 ♦ 10 9 ♣ J 9 8</p>	
			
	<p>♠ A J 9 7 5 3 ♥ 10 ♦ A 2 ♣ A K 7 5</p>		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
5♦	6♠	All pass	1♠

I chanced 6S. Well, we would not have any diamond losers. It seemed Anna's honours should mainly be high spades and clubs. Hopefully, she had enough and not too many of them! She had just enough!

West led H6, very likely a singleton which meant they had at least one of the missing trumps. As you can see winning HA and playing a spade to the ace would have produced 13 tricks. Anna decided to finesse and thus lost to the SK though there were no other losers.

Opponents just should not be allowed to intervene like that, unless it was I who held all those diamonds! See you all next month.

Richard

