

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

**OCTOBER 2023**



### **After Congress.**

There's plenty to talk about after the National Congress: indeed, there's always plenty to talk about after a session of bridge at the Te Aroha Bridge Club. That must be why the following were sitting around after play....surely the port glasses were just incidental!



## **A Long Long Way from Thames to Te Aroha!**

Well, it must be because the Thames players recently made sure they were in time for the recent Tuesday session between the two clubs..very sure! They did not want to miss out on the start.

So, off they set and with the minimum of traffic and the wind behind them (did they really sail up the Waihou?), they reached Te Aroha around 6.45pm, two weeks early! Maybe they knew of the awesome suppers and wanted a drink or two before play. If so, they certainly had time for plenty.

They had a great warm-up too as Carol Crowfoot and Pat Johansen won the session with a great 62.35% to be followed by Alex Barshai and Jena Robinson on 61.95%. Rochelle and Cam led the way for the locals “miles behind” on 61.40, comfortably ahead of June and Joan on 61.20%.

So, if you saw any Thames players around during the following two weeks, you will know why... acclimatisation!

Of course, they returned on the right date in mid- October though the best scores that night were recorded by Victor and Alan (64.93% N/S) and Foster and Jan Meertens (64.88% E/W).



*Alan and Victor on the way to a winning score in Te Aroha*

## And then to Thames



Looking at the above two photos, you would imagine that Alan and Victor came first in the Thames rematch while the other pair finished well down. That was not quite true for although Alan and Victor won the prize for the top Te Aroha pair on the night, it was the other pair who won overall (over the 4 nights) and collected both wine and chocolates! I blame the cameraman for the pained expression on the player's face.

Many of the Te Aroha contingent came by the Presidential bus thanks to Ross, the driver. As always, Thames' hospitality was first rate and I am sure all present enjoyed the evening.

### **Well done, Matamata on "Benefit Night".**

There was a great turn-out at that club on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October when it held a charity evening and raised \$3,000 for the Matamata Community Health Shuttle. There were silent raffles, many donations from local businesses and 14 tables of bridge players from Putaruru, Cambridge, Te Aroha and the host club. I counted 21 players who turn up regularly to play on Tuesdays at Te Aroha. Everyone went home with a donated gift, some quite worthwhile prizes. Well, they all were in some way even Victor's bar of chocolate.



However, the real beneficiary was the Health Shuttle. Congratulations to all those at the host club who made it all possible...and thanks also to Hermanna who organised a raffle at our club with the proceeds going to this excellent cause.

### **A Long Long Way from Te Aroha.**



*Kath and Richard in Hawaii, at a time when he was not playing bridge. Volcano spotting.*

This is not to make you envious but you may remember I had recently some difficulty with entry requirements to the USA. Nothing that could not be resolved with a delayed flight, a little extra money and some face-saving! Yes, Kath and I made it to the Big Island, Hawaii for a couple of sun-baked weeks in early October.

The main problem we had was to get our walking done before 8am when temperatures reached around 30 degrees, centigrade! I promise, though, not to make you envious. I am sure your temperatures in Te Aroha were above 30 degrees, Fahrenheit! Oh it was pretty sunny too.

However, what do real bridge players do to escape the heat? Why, visit Hilo Bridge Club, of course. I was there one Sunday afternoon: they start at 12.30 pm and play for about 3 hours with no break for tea, coffee, biscuits, sausage rolls, cakes or any kind of sustenance. No pub meal first and no port afterwards. They were friendly enough but it was not like Te Aroha. 4 and a half tables and they play twice a week. You can check my score if you wish. All I will say is the percentage number began with 4! Tough school: maybe!

I played with an elder, a lady named Lynn who had cruised round NZ last year and who remembered Milford Sound and Rotorua but not Te Aroha. She is well known at her club for not understanding take-out doubles. She plays 5-card majors and says just occasionally, her minor suit openings can be short, too. Did someone say “openings”? This was an early board:

East Deals	♠ A 9 7 5											
Both Vul	♥ 9 8 2											
	♦ A 7 6 4											
	♣ J 9											
♠ J 10 8	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q 3 2	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 10 6 3		♥ Q J 7 5										
♦ J 8 5 3		♦ K 2										
♣ K 7 4		♣ Q 6 5										
	♠ 6 4											
	♥ A K 4											
	♦ Q 10 9											
	♣ A 10 8 3 2											

West	North	East	South
	<i>Richard</i>		<i>Lynn</i>
		1 ♣	1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 NT
All pass			

Now, it seems that Lynn has a problem when she has less than 5-card majors and the opponents open 1C. 1D it seems is always natural, except when it is not! I tried for a spade fit but Lynn bid 1NT (evidently 12-14 second time round).

I was still under the naïve impression my partner held at least 5 diamonds, hence 2D. However, when she bid 2NT, I left her to it. West was kind enough to lead a club and although Lynn lost as many tricks as she won in the diamond suit (2 each way), she set up the club suit for 4 tricks and managed 8 in all for the top scoring result on the board, +120.

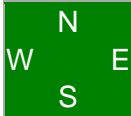
Maybe before I return, she will have learnt what a take-out double is! On the above South hand, her initial best action is to pass 1C. However, you cannot argue with such success!

Anyway, the bridge was a nice break from 30 degree gins!

## A useful Dummy.

I am sure your partner produces the occasional one for you, even if it was 7 or 11 years ago. Actually, it was more recently than that for me! Anna and I struggled at the Hamilton Labour Weekend Pairs event but did better in the Teams finishing 5<sup>th</sup>. However, it was during the second round of the Pairs that Anna excelled.

When the vulnerability is in your favour and you have a long suit, it is often right to bid just a little aggressively. Make it tough for your opponents. So I thought when first to speak not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, I held:

East Deals		♠ 10 9 8 6 5 4 2	
N-S Vul		♥ J 8	
		♦ —	
		♣ 9 7 6 4	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		?	

(if any new players are reading this, please shut your eyes to the next sentence. Have you heard the saying “do as I say not as I do!”)

I was a little light in high-card points but tried the effect of 3S. My left-hand opponent passed with not a care in the world but Anna reached for a “Stop Card”. “Oh, dear, I will surely not have what she needs if she is going slamming.” She wrote down an immediate 6S! At least, my hand would be hidden, hopefully for ever.

Fear not, though, as Anna was looking after me. Indeed, by opening 3S, I had made getting to the top spot very easy. Take a look at the West hand below:

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

“Not too bad” I said with some relief as she put down her hand as dummy. South led CA and I had little difficulty in wrapping up the other 12 tricks very quickly. There were a few “hoots” around the table when I could not even produce SJ! “Thanks, Anna, a more than useful dummy!”

### Tim the Traveller.

Yes, he is all set, rearing to go, to the US and Caribbean. He even has his ESTA form for getting into the USA. A very organised man is Tim. He even reads red tape correctly!. No rebooking for the Rigger family. Enjoy your lengthy trip and we look forward to hearing about it on your return.

**Loveblock NZ Wide Pairs** Tim is excused from hopping back from Florida but for everyone else, here’s hoping you have Friday evening November 10<sup>th</sup> marked down for a night at the club. There will be a pot luck dinner around 6pm with bridge starting about an hour later...supper, too, of course. Bridge and supper costs 15.00..and for that you get a booklet of the deals which are to be played at 56 clubs around the country as well.

The event raises money for NZ Bridge Foundation and there are nice Loveblock wine prizes, including for the top two Junior and top Novice pairs.

I have inside knowledge of the deals and I know there are fun ones for all. Maybe Tim will change his mind and come! If you would like to come and need a partner, let Rochelle know.

See you all at the club in November.

*Richard*

