

Palmerston North Bridge Club Newsletter

July 2020



be kind
to partner

President's Welcome

What a pleasure to write my Welcome in our regular newsletter following the return to relative normality after COVID. Last week, we re-opened the evening playing sessions, kicking off with our deferred AGM. For those of you unable to attend, I am reproducing my address to the room – for those of you who did attend, well you can skip over the next few paragraphs...

“On 2 July, the Club held its 73rd AGM. This means that next year will be our 74th and the Club will be celebrating 75 years. I understand that in 1946, when the Club opened, people would attend in full evening dress – it was seen as such an occasion. Of course, it probably reflects the socio-economic status of bridge players at that time and that has changed, like so many things over these past 75 years.

Palmerston North will coincidentally be celebrating its 150th birthday so the Club has been in existence for half the time that our City has been around. That is quite some achievement. Reflecting on these two points leads me to some other observations.

Firstly, that the Club is one of the more significant Clubs in New Zealand – reflected in our wonderful Club Rooms - and it is important that we step up and play our part in supporting the game at a local and national level. Our Christmas Cheer tournament is one of, if not the, best tournament in the country and our Committee is dedicated to ensuring that we maintain that “market position”. We would like to elevate our other tournaments to a similar level and are also playing our part by hosting the National 15A Pairs tournament in August. These events are a huge part of the

Committee’s work and we have been really pleased with the support of members who rally round to help when needed. My challenge to everyone is to step forward with offers of help to support your Committee to ensure that our Club remains a driving force in New Zealand bridge.

Secondly, that like many other clubs and societies, we are facing challenges in retaining and maintaining membership. Again the Committee has tried to focus on being the kind of Club where playing bridge is primarily for pleasure as a social occasion and again, I’d like to thank everyone for being part of what I think is a renewed sense of purpose: ensuring that we all model the behaviours that we want to see in others. I was so aware of this during the lockdown while the Club was closed: a group emerged, based in the Novice Plus room on Monday, that provided a huge amount of support and opportunity to play on line during the COVID crisis and keep our Club connections alive. If we are to grow and nurture our game and our membership, then I would like to see much more of this kind of camaraderie in all our activities.

Of course, there are always too many people to thank and I hope I have covered just about everyone in my annual report. I don’t want to single people out but two long-standing members of our Committee are standing down and I would like to take a few moments to acknowledge them.

Firstly, Liz Burrows is stepping down from being the secretary over many years. This role is not easy, but it is vital for the smooth running of the Club’s business. Liz has a huge amount of institutional knowledge about the Club and about bridge generally which she has always shared with enthusiasm. Liz has also been

the key driver behind organising our tournaments (which I hope she'll continue to do) and of course, the Christmas Cheer tournament wouldn't be what is today without her vision and commitment to it. Thank you so much Liz – including for partnering me at several tournaments and thereby blowing your own chances of winning!

Secondly, Tony Clear is also standing down after 5+ years on the Committee. Tony's good nature and cheerfulness is known to everyone but probably many of you are less aware of the work he has done behind the scenes and, particularly looking after the building but also turning up to set up for events, making sure we have cash floats for raffles and also as an ever cheerful bar man, quiz master and mischief maker at our Spring Fling tournaments.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge William Laing who is standing down as treasurer after two years in the job. We are not an easy organisation to manage, it took us a long time to find someone who was willing to take over from Debbie Marcroft and my sense is that William saw himself as a caretaker, until we could find someone with the finance background necessary for such a complex operation. William has done a sterling job and I'd like to give him our thanks too."

The new committee and contact numbers are given below.

Position	Name	Phone
President	Denise Servante	06 353 0664 027 353 0664
Vice-president	Julie Bunnell	06 355 2896 021 127 4143
Secretary	Gayle Leader	06 358 3572 021 116 1073
Treasurer	Grant Elliott	027 235 4435
Committee member 1	Robyn Anderson	06 358 7813 027 273 5113
Committee member 2	William Laing	06 358 4876 022 09907988
Daytime Room Rep	Tony Fayerman	06 357 7834 027 350 4689
Novice Plus Room Rep	Maxine Keay	027 534 7410
Tues Social Room Rep	Anne Gordon	027 327 8276
Open Room Rep	Morgan Booker	021 167 0195
Multigrade Room Rep	Laura Griffin	021 436 905

A quick reminder for those of you who pay online (for subscriptions or table cards) to change over to our new account with BNZ (02-0727-0231184-000).

After such a long break, it is also great that we have a number of our key annual events in the next few months. Details are given below of two of them and if you are able to offer help at any of the events, please don't be shy!

I hope to see as many of you as possible at one or more of our regular and irregular sessions. Happy Bridging everyone!

Denise Servante

Upcoming Events

Two dates to mark in your diaries for upcoming events:

August 1-2 National 15A Pairs

Our Club will host the National 15A Pairs on August 1-2. Club members are warmly encouraged to play in the tournament; registration is now open at nzbridge.co.nz/events. For those who do not wish to play, there will be ample opportunities to contribute to the success of the occasion by helping during the tournament. Room reps will have sign-up sheets available soon.

September 13 Interclub Teams

The three-way Interclub Teams with Hawera and Wanganui is scheduled for Sunday September 13. Our Club will need to field two teams at Junior, Intermediate, and Open levels. To express interest in taking part, please make contact with your room rep – Tony Fayerman for Monday and Friday daytimes, Maxine Keay for Monday evening, Morgan Booker for Tuesday evening, and Laura Griffin for Thursday evening.

Julie Bunnell

Club and Tournaments Results

Welcome everyone back to bridge. Let's hope that we don't have to go into lockdown again anytime soon.

Here are the much delayed club results for February and March. It is very sad that Pat Nolan didn't get to find out that he had won the Novice Plus event in March.

	February	March (3 weeks)
Monday Afternoon	Anita Thirtle Alan Doddridge	Dianne Hunter Gayle Leader
Novice Plus	Dianne Gardner Grant Elliott	Pat Nolan
Multigrade	Jan Whyte Jack James	
Friday Luncheon	Val Pain Pete Avery	Alistair James Jack James

Congratulations to all Club members who have featured well in the following tournaments.

Feilding Open	Evelyn Hurley Bob Hurley	1 st
	Charles Ker Jack James	3 rd
	Anne Gordon Hans Van Bunnik	4 th
North Island Teams	Wayne Burrows Clair Miao Carol Richardson Andi Boughey	1 st
Wellington Regional Teams	Jack James Nigel Kearney Annette Henry Stephen Henry	2 nd
	Wayne Burrows Paul Carson Colin Carryer Sandra Calvert	3 rd

Liz Burrows

Lessons

It was great to be able to restart lessons again in June and see some familiar faces. Some learners have been joining Jack online with lessons during lockdown and it was pleasing to see their efforts paid off with a definite advantage in confidence. Going over previous lessons is a good way to consolidate and take everything onboard as there is a lot to learn. We also welcomed a new member for lessons as they had recently moved in nearby.

Remember YouTube has some great videos including those produced by NZBridge and Jane Stearns. Jack has also recently set up a page for Palmerston North Bridge Club where he has posted some improvers lessons, so take a look.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwaCSHX3P80>

Anne Gordon

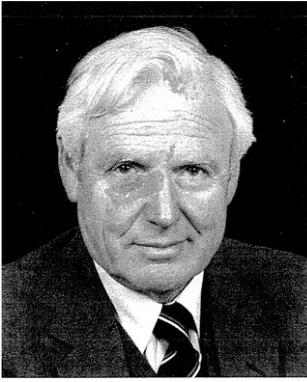
Social Tuesday – August

The month of August will be an interclub event with pairs from all grades entering. There won't be any selection requirements for this as only the top pairs score in each category will count to represent their club. The more people we have from each grade the better chance we have to score well so I encourage everyone to come along. There is no need to play on all four nights through the month to qualify. We are hoping to attract several other local clubs to join us so it will be a chance to meet some new people too.

I will need to make sure that we have representatives for all grades so it would be useful to let me know if you intend playing.

Anne Gordon

Bob Lawrence 18 December 1927 – 3 June 2020



Bob was a member of PNBC for at least 50 years, the earliest findable record being that he served as Club President 1973-4. One could describe him as “an institution”, usually to be found in the north-west corner on a Monday afternoon. Bob was a complex and very private man, but with a very dry and pithy sense of humour – as shown by some of his remarks which appear here and there throughout the more factual remarks about his life.

Bob served in the Royal Navy immediately after the Second World War. He was trained as a Meteorologist and was heard to sometimes say “I can look into a woman’s eye and tell whether . . . “

There are other humorous naval stories that could be told, one involving Nelson’s flagship and another during an inspection by Lord Louis Mountbatten

After arrival in New Zealand, Bob taught at Scott’s College in Wellington for a time – but decided early on that “there has to be a better way to earn a living!”

He joined Massey University as a Junior Lecturer in the late 1950s, studying for his PhD in Microbiology at the same time. He then joined the New Zealand Dairy Research Institute (NZDRI) in the mid 1960s, resident at that time in “The Old Science Building” at Massey. NZDRI is now known as the Fonterra Research and Development Centre.

In many ways, his professional life and his bridge life were completely intertwined. He is believed to have already been a bridge-player when he arrived in New Zealand. He started his dairy industry career at the NZDRI under Director Dr Hugh Whitehead, who was also PNBC’s first president. His mark is to be found all over our club - the honours boards contain a very large number of his (then) colleagues, and there are still members of our club who worked with him.

At the time of his retirement in the early 1990s, Bob was an Assistant Director of NZDRI, responsible for the research groups of Applied Biochemistry, Cheese Technology, General Microbiology, Microbial Genetics, and (Cheese) Starter Technology.

While Bob’s professional life encompassed aspects of most dairy products, his passion was cheese. At the time, the dairy industry was in a time of great change. Amalgamation of the myriad of small local dairy companies meant bigger, and then bigger again cheese factories. Highly manual methods with forming hoops were replaced with enclosed and automated systems still used today. To achieve product uniformity at very large scale, a far greater degree of control of all the many fermentation and biochemical aspects of cheese manufacturing was essential. New Zealand was at the world fore-front of this highly complex transition, and Bob, and his team of colleagues were front and central of it all.

He was the author and co-author of a great number of articles in prestigious scientific journals, and was even published in “Nature”, probably the most prestigious journal of all those in the biological sciences. He was also invited to write many book chapters.

As time went by, Bob became in much demand to make presentations to dairy conferences and the like, and to help others to overcome their technical difficulties. He became regarded as one of the world greats in cheese science and technology. His knowledge, erudition and his sense of humour also made him much in demand as a very gifted after-dinner speaker at dairy conferences.

However, when, as happens, he made the occasional gaff, and people looked at him in in astonishment or took issue with him, he would sometimes defuse the situation by saying “I should have listened to my mother when I was younger”. That’s all he said.

Eventually somebody would ask “Why, what did she say?” To which he would reply: “I don’t know, as I didn’t listen”.

His belief that he was always right (and that sometimes others didn’t listen either) also extended to his bridge. Relatively recently, he opened with a strong 2C while partnering one of our stronger players on a Monday afternoon. The (uncontested) auction went on for several rounds, the contract eventually getting to 6NT by partner. When Bob’s hand went down, partner exclaimed “that’s not 23 points!”, his initially mild reply was: “I didn’t promise you 23 points, I promised you 9 playing tricks”. Outcome - 4 light, vulnerable. The resulting partnership discussion went on for some time However he was right - again!

Bob will be missed.

Tony Fayerman & Ken Bateman

Five Card Majors Anyone?

A while back I was playing against a pair who stated that they played Acol. One of the pair opened with a one spade bid and when I asked their partner whether they played four or five card spade suit openers I was told in no uncertain terms that they played ACOL and therefore it could be a four card suit. Mysteriously, some players get precious about playing 'pure' Acol whatever that means. In the early days of the system, if you said you played Acol, opponents would assume you played strong two openers in the majors, and another common agreement was to play a strong no trump when vulnerable. So what price 'standard' Acol?

I've noticed at our club that many Acol players have moved over to use five card major openers or maybe a halfway house of five card spade openers but four card heart suit openers. Our opponents on one Monday afternoon session in June were using this halfway house approach and paid the price. The deal is shown below.

Board 22	♠ A 10 7 4 3	
East Deals	♥ K Q 7	
E-W Vul	♦ A Q J	
	♣ Q 4	
♠ Q 2		♠ J 9 8 5
♥ 9 6 2		♥ 4 3
♦ 10 8 3 2		♦ 7 6 4
♣ J 10 8 2		♣ K 9 6 5
	♠ K 6	
	♥ A J 10 8 5	
	♦ K 9 5	
	♣ A 7 3	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

By his rebid, South has shown at least four hearts and 15-17 points. North doesn't mess about. She knows that NS have at least 33 points between them so bids 6NT.

After the lead of the jack of clubs, South stands no chance unless EW go to sleep. Our South ducks the first trick. He is obviously more pessimistic than me. I would venture the queen from dummy on the off chance that West has led away from the king. West continues with another club which South takes. There is no squeeze or possible endplay so the contract fails by one trick.

At three tables the NS pair were playing five card heart suit openers and finished in the superior contract of six hearts with a five-three fit. In this case declarer has the choice of throwing a losing club on a fifth established

spade or of ruffing his third club before taking out the last trump.

That isn't the end of the story, though. For example, the best contract is 6NT played by North. The reason is that the only lead that can take the contract down is a club and if East leads a club to North's contract, that sets up the queen for the twelfth trick.

So the club suit is the fly in the ointment for South in NTs. Perhaps surprisingly, if West gets creative and decides to lead anything but clubs at trick one then South can make 6NT. Suppose West leads a red card. Declarer plays off both red suits leaving East with five black cards. If he keeps three spades and two clubs then declarer plays three rounds of spades throwing him in with the third spade and he has to lead away from the king of clubs. If he keeps three clubs then that reduces his spade holding to two and South makes three spade tricks. East can't win.

Ray Kemp

Bad News, Good News, Better News, Worse News

Are you starting to get nostalgic about lockdown? One of its downsides was that we lost face-to-face bridge unless you were in a bubble with three other enthusiasts and had a very large card table. Many of us resorted to playing remotely, and the most popular site for that is BBO (Bridge Base Online).

Online bridge has a number of advantages to my mind over the face-to-face version. First, you don't have to worry about the menial side of the game - scoring, passing on boards or sorting your cards, the computer does all that for you. Secondly, top players cannot impose their undoubted superiority by their body language, and thirdly alerting is done by the person making a conventional bid. At first, having to alert one's own bids seems odd. But since partner cannot see your alert it is the obvious way to do things. So many times in face to face play, opponents signal they have a potential misunderstanding by alerting their partner's natural bid or by failing to alert their conventional one.

A group of us had great fun in private games and I also enjoyed playing in the Auckland Club's competition which was a Swiss style event. Play three hands against the same pair and you go up or down the imaginary room depending upon your performance.

One one occasion we got to the top table and played against Michael Cornell. For those who haven't heard of him he is certainly one of the best, if not the best player in New Zealand. Amongst his many achievements he and his partner were joint winners of the World Bridge Games in 2016. So he didn't need body language to daunt us when we met online.

How were the gods of bridge going to treat us? Here is a run down on hand one:

Bad news: Cornell and his partner are the only pair in the room to get into a grand slam in hearts.

Good news: They are missing the king of trumps.

Better news: The king is offside.

Worse news: He and his partner have twelve trumps between them so Cornell drops the king when he plays the ace of the suit and quickly claims the rest of the tricks.

So what did we learn from our encounter? Cornell couldn't have possibly known from the bidding that he and his partner had twelve trumps between them, so even international grand masters make mistakes. But that wasn't much consolation for our bottom board.

Ray Kemp

Gambling Three No Trumps

What do you bid with a hand that contains a long running minor suit but with little or nothing outside? Such a hand occurred on the first day of Monday afternoon bridge after the lockdown.

Board 1	♠ 6 4		
North Deals	♥ Q 8 5 3		
None Vul	♦ 4 3		
	♣ J 9 4 3 2		
♠ J 9 7 5		♠ 8 3 2	
♥ A J 10 7 6 4		♥ K	
♦ —		♦ A K Q J 9 7 6 2	
♣ A K Q		♣ 6	
	♠ A K Q 10		
	♥ 9 2		
	♦ 10 8 5		
	♣ 10 8 7 5		

East's hand could turn out to be a goldmine or garbage depending upon partner's holding. There are eight tricks in diamonds but if partner has nothing to offer that will be it. Minor suits have that designation for a good reason. A major suit holding with these cards would be much more appealing. So what to open? One diamond seems like a distinct under-bid. A pre-emptive bid of two or three diamonds would be even more so. Opening bids of four or five diamonds are similarly uninviting since three no trumps might be the right spot.

Seven or eight card minor suit holdings headed by the ace-king-queen don't turn up very often but when they do it can be difficult to get to the best contract. Many partnerships use a speciality bid to describe such a hand – the gambling 3NT opener. This should only be employed if there is little or no cover in the other suits (if there is then the hand is too strong to start at this level). The gamble is that partner has enough cover in the other suits so you can run for home in your minor before the opponents cash their outside winners.

Now over to partner. If partner has stops in the other three suits then no-trumps will probably be the place to play. If not, then partner can convert to a minor. If it is not obvious which minor to convert to then bid clubs and partner will either pass or correct.

That is the broad outline of the convention but there are lots of twists and turns, and unless both partners are on the same wavelength then a poor contract may be reached. For example, is it allowed for the gambling no trumper to have a 'half stop' in an outside suit as in the above case? How can West find out if East has any singletons or voids? What happens with intervention? I doubt if there are more than one or two partnerships at the club who have a system sufficiently sophisticated to deal with all eventualities.

Sitting East, reluctantly I decide to open 3NT. It is a little strong with the outside king, but I'm worried that the opponents may have a major suit fit, so if they want to compete they will have to start at the four level. South passes so now over to my partner, who wriggles in her seat. She knows I must have diamonds but should we be in diamonds or no trumps, and what level? In the end she passes. My partner is counting that I have something in a major suit which will allow me to get to the diamonds, otherwise the contract is going to go way down. North also passes, so 3NT by me it is.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

South has an easy lead. Leading an ace to a gambling 3NT is often a good idea. It maybe the defence can take five or more tricks before declarer runs the minor suit. Imagine his dismay after leading the ace of spades to see four to the jack in dummy. He tries a second spade and everyone follows. A third spade would set up the jack so he switches to a club. He hopes that I have no entries to hand and will eventually have to lead spades having lost two hearts. At this rate the contract could easily go two down.

Unfortunately for the defence, and fortunately for me, the singleton king of hearts provides a precious entry to my diamonds and I end up with eleven tricks. Not pretty, but I'll take it.

Now that you have the hang of the gambling three no trump bid it is over to you. The next deal is again from a Monday afternoon session but this time BC (Before Covid). You are sitting South and this is your hand:

♠ K 6
♥ A K Q J
♦ A 8 7 4
♣ 9 6 4

Quite a useful collection you might think with seventeen HCPs. You would probably open this with 1H in Acol and then rebid no trumps unless partner supports the hearts. Unfortunately, things aren't that simple since partner and your pesky right-hand opponent have got in before you. The bidding is shown below:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	3 NT	4 ♠	?

So North is showing a seven or eight card minor headed by the AKQ and very little else. Just one other piece of information – the opponents are vulnerable and you are not. Decide what action you would take, and then read on.

You can infer that partner had seven or eight top clubs unless she has forgotten the system. She may therefore have a total of nine or ten HCPs (possibly eleven or twelve with an outside jack or queen). Added to your points that will give you twenty-six to twenty-nine altogether. This would normally be enough for a comfortable game but not for a slam. So what to do?

It is tempting to double for penalties but the opponents are likely to have most of the spades between them and you can do better than that. Instead of asking how many points you need for a slam, ask yourself how many tricks you need. The answer is twelve, of course. If you add partner's seven or eight clubs to your four hearts and one diamond that adds up to at least twelve tricks. If East doesn't lead off his ace of spades then your partner might even make all thirteen. So the best bid is six no trumps! OK, if North has a spade void then seven clubs might be the right spot, but unless you have a sophisticated way of checking this out, stick with the small slam in no trumps.

The four hands are shown below:

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 10 9 4 3		♠ A Q J 8 7 5 2
♥ 10 5 4 2		♥ 8 3
♦ Q 10 9 5		♦ K 6 2
♣ 2		♣ 10

♠ K 6
♥ A K Q J
♦ A 8 7 4
♣ 9 6 4

As a footnote, what do you think of East's overall of four spades? Four spades doubled only goes two down for 500 which is a good advanced sacrifice against a potential slam. However, the intervention makes it easy for South to find the 6NT bid. If East had passed then South might worry about a spade lead coming through her Kx and the Ace being with West. In that case, she might go for the safer option of six clubs to be played by South.

Ray Kemp

You must be joking

Bruno the Bear is a special guest at the Griffins Bridge Club. At his table they cut for partners. He draws Papa the Greek, while Hideous Hog, much to his disgust, is left with Rueful Rabbit.

On the first hand Rueful Rabbit opens a weak two hearts and his left hand opponent, Bruno, shuffles rhythmically around in his seat (he used to dance for a living). After a painful couple of minutes he finally passes. HH gets annoyed, being aware that this technique has been used from time immemorial to say "Actually I have quite a decent hand partner but can't just think of a good bid at the moment."

HH takes a long hard look at Bruno and finally says "Why the big pause?" Bruno shrugs his shoulders and replies, "I dunno. I guess I was born with them."

Ray Kemp