



President's Welcome

And so 2019 is drawing to a close. Looking back over the year, I can see the results of lots of hard work from our members. The Club Rooms are looking great - thanks to the efforts of Anne and her team of helpers last summer. We have made some improvements to the building - namely a plumbed-in water cooler and a new post box at the gate - with other improvements in the pipeline - a new stationery cupboard and new table cloths.

We have held four very successful events - the Junior/Intermediate tournament, the Open tournament, our Club "Spring Fling" tournament and the Christmas Cheer tournament. Our lessons attracted almost 30 new members and many of them are now playing regularly at Club sessions.

The Committee did a thorough review of our playing programme for 2020 and, with your feedback, have made some changes to our Tuesday night Open session. The competitive senior night will now take place on Monday evenings, running parallel to the Novice Plus session. Tuesday evenings will be a twice monthly social event. Full details are in the new programme booklet which is available to collect from the Club Room office. Meanwhile, Summer Bridge will take place during Monday daytime and Thursday evening. Players from all grades are welcome.

Financially, the Committee has spent a great deal of time looking into all areas of expenditure to see where we can trim our costs. As a result, I am confident that we will almost breakeven this year. However, we do need to move to a situation where we at least actually breakeven and so the Committee took the decision to make a small increase in both our subscription rates and table money for next year. I hope that this will not cause any difficulties. Please let me know of any issues.

There are always too many people to thank for their outstanding contribution to the Club during 2019. Of course, many thanks to the Directors, Room Reps and Hosts - you have made a real difference to how our sessions run for the enjoyment of everyone. The Committee has been a very active Committee and I have been so grateful for all their support and hard work. I hope that you enjoy reading articles by the Committee members and, more importantly, that they give you a connection to the "behind-the-scenes" of Club matters. A special mention for Ray Kemp who compiles, edits and formats the newsletters as well as providing articles on hands played during sessions at the club. Thanks to all for your efforts.

I hope to see as many of you as possible over the summer and look forward to a fantastic start to our playing programme in February. Season's Greetings to all!

Denise Servante

Club and Tournaments Results

Congratulations to the following winners of our club competitions:

Monday Afternoon

August	Mary Scott Jan Whyte
September	Ken Bateman Jan Whyte
October	Morgan Booker Zheng Zhang
November	Anita Thirtle Zheng Zhang

Novice Plus

September	Margaret Foss Colleen Fraser
October	Judy Jenkins Rita Hodson
Bronze Championship	Jeremy Neild Elwi Beshlawi

Multigrade Night

August	John Whibley Memorial Pairs	Tim Coolbear Charles Little
	Maude Nash Tray	Anne Gordon Morgan Booker
September	Stubbs Jewellers Handicap Teams	Cindy Lowndes Alistair James Tony Fayerman Roxanne Brassington
October		Jack James Alistair James
November	Silver Championship	Garry Hodges Debbie Marcroft
	Gold Championship	Morgan Booker Zheng Zhang

Tuesday Open

October Butler Pairs	Sue Lynch Heather Simpson
Platinum Championship	Evelyn Hurley Bob Hurley

Points Cups

Bronze	Dianne Gardner
Silver	Garry Hodge
Gold	Jack James
Platinum	Evelyn Hurley
Monday	Zheng Zhang

Over Seventies Club

Huge congratulations to Dan Mateer (a Novice player from the 2019 lessons) for joining this group so quickly. I can only dream about getting a score of 80+%.

Dan Mateer & Alistair James 81.75%
Novice Plus 10/9/19

Pat Oyston & Zheng Zhang 71.17%
Monday Afternoon

Jack James & Maree Roberts 74.64%
Novice Plus 25/11/19

Grand Slam Club

Tony Fayerman & Roxanne Brassington
7D 6/6/2019

Morgan Booker & Zheng Zhang
7S 23/7/2019

Annette Gregg & Peter Avery
7NT 29/8/2019

Pat Nolan & Ray Kemp
7NT 25/11/2019

Maree Roberts & Jack James
7S 25/11/2019

Congratulations to all Club members (especially Jan Whyte who has dominated Open tournaments recently) who have featured well in the following tournaments.

Waipukurau Swiss Pairs	Ken Bateman Zheng Zhang	2 nd
Hastings Open Pairs	Jan Whyte Carolyn Yeomans	1 st
Taradale Open Pairs	Jan Whyte Carolyn Yeomans	1 st
NZ Senior Teams	Bob Hurley Evelyn Hurley Tom Kiss Alasdair Beck	1 st
NZ Youth Teams	Jack James Matthew Hughes Evie Senior Leon Meier	3 rd
Palmerston North Swiss Pairs	Jan Whyte Ken Bateman	1 st
Hawkes Bay Christmas Cheer	Jack James George Masters	1 st
Hawkes Bay Christmas Cheer	Wayne Burrows Dennis Apperley	3 rd
Hawkes Bay Christmas Cheer	Evelyn Hurley Debbie Smith	4 th
Palmerston North Christmas Cheer	Tony Clear Sue Baty	Best Mixed Grade

Also, congratulations to Jack James who was in the New Zealand Youth Team that beat the Australian Youth Team.

Liz Burrows

2020 Subscription Invoices and Table Money

Invoices for 2020 subscriptions will be distributed in early January. Prompt payment would be appreciated! As mentioned in the October newsletter, the Committee has approved a small increase in subscription rates for 2020. The new rates will be:

Ordinary, Home club	\$110
Ordinary, Second club	\$87
Country, Home club	\$80
Country, Second club	\$57
Youth member	\$60

Table money will also increase from 1 February to \$6 per session if paid in cash, or \$5 if paid by concession card. Concession cards purchased before the increase remain valid for use throughout 2020.

Julie Bunnell

Next Year's Lessons

It was good to see some of our beginners playing at Summer bridge and some from other clubs too. Unfortunately my own buddy couldn't make it, so I'm looking forward to playing with her later on.

We have been planning our next bridge lessons for next year and these will begin a bit earlier this time at the beginning of March. So now is the time to start thinking about family and friends that you might be able to encourage along to join us. The more the merrier! Also anyone who might be returning to bridge or would like to learn Acol and might like to attend just some of the lessons.

Jack is also planning an improvers lesson for early next year. Watch this space...

Anne Gordon

New Zealand Bridge Board Elections

The New Zealand Bridge Board has two vacancies so will be having elections in early 2020. If anyone wants to know more about the positions please call Alan Morris (President of NZB) on 021 909231. To become nominated, please contact Liz Burrows by January 20th 2020.

Liz Burrows

Psych Oh

Denise has asked if I could write an article on psychic bids or “psychs” (rhymes with “likes”). That’s a bit like suggesting Hillary Clinton say a few kind words about Donald Trump, but here goes.

First of all: what is a psych? You have heard of fake facts. Get ready to hear about fake bids. A psych is a bid that has no connection to the contents of the hand you have and to the system you are using. It is not like an artificial or conventional bid which would be part of your system. Instead, it is a total misrepresentation of the hand in front of you either in terms of points or suit length or both. Let’s look at an example.

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

After two passes, what do you call as South? That’s a daft question you might say. There is only one sensible action with this load of rubbish, and that is to quickly pass and hope partner isn’t tempted to enter the auction at a later stage. But where you and I would see only dross, the habitual psycher would see opportunity and might write down a confident 1S. South would be gambling that West has a very good hand, maybe a monster with lots of spades and that the one spade bid will stop EW getting to their optimal contract.

What is West going to do about it? A two spade overcall for most players would indicate a two-suiter with hearts and a minor. One no trump is a risky option with the poor heart suit. Maybe West could start with a double and bid spades later. But even then East is unlikely to get the message and may assume that partner is asking for a stop in the suit.

In short, the psych has stymied EW and made it very difficult for them to get to the optimal game contract in spades. “Foul” you may call and protest that South can’t do this. But, perhaps surprisingly, yes he can, because

psychs are a legitimate part of the game. Any player at any point in the auction can make any bid they like as long as it is legal. So why aren’t psychs a common phenomenon? Well, for a start you would have to have a very understanding partner who is prepared to put up with occasional squibs thrown into the auction from across the table. Also, opponents can get even more upset if they believe they have been messed around.

So, like CCTV in toilets, psychs may be legal, but not necessarily very popular. What *is* illegal, however, is for a partnership to have a prior arrangement about the circumstances in which they may use this bid or to have a predilection for psyching in particular situations (eg third in hand at favourable vulnerability). A World Bridge Federation document on psychs observes: “random psychics may occur as the laws allow, without warning, *so long as these can no more be anticipated by the partner than by the opponents*” (my italics).

There have been a small number of psychs at the club that I am aware of over the years and I think the victims have generally taken them as pranks to be accepted and possibly even amused by. If such bids became commonplace, however, I for one would be very concerned.

We have had flurry of such bids at the club in recent weeks which is why I have been asked to let members know what to do if they believe an opponent has made a psychic bid at their table. First, after the completion of the deal, check opponents’ hands and if their bidding is at odds with their stated system and conventions then call the director. If the director decides there has been a psych then they may check to see if their partner has fielded the bid. If that is the case, then that pair may be penalized. In any case, the psych details have to be entered into the “Psych book” kept at the club. This is important since if it transpires that, over a period of time, there is any perceptible pattern to the psyching that could be picked up by a partner then that would be unacceptable.

The committee in discussion with Lorraine has decided that psyching should not be allowed in the junior room since less experienced players may be unable to cope. My understanding is that players are only allowed one psych per session. This is like the old cricket rule of only allowing one bouncer per over. If you have reached the last ball, the batsman knows what to expect.

Here are a couple of examples of successful psychs from the November platinum championship pairs.

East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 5 4
♥ Q 8 7 5
♦ K 8 7
♣ Q J 4 3

♠ J 7 6 3 2
♥ A
♦ Q
♣ K 10 9 8 7 2



♠ K
♥ J 10 9 2
♦ 10 9 6 5 4 3
♣ 6 5

♠ A Q 10 9 8
♥ K 6 4 3
♦ A J 2
♣ A

North	East	South	West
	3D	Dbl	3H
Pass	Pass	3S	All Pass

Here the psych of three hearts by West third in hand at favourable vulnerability puts a spanner in the works of NS's bidding. Note that if West is doubled they have an escape route of four clubs or four diamonds. Even doubled, such a contract would give EW a good score. If NS are bolder and get to 3NT or 4S then those contracts still give a poor result compared with the optimum spot of 4H making five.

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J
♥ J 8 7 6 4 3
♦ 7
♣ 9 6 5 4 3

♠ A K 9 7
♥ A K Q 9
♦ A K Q 4
♣ K



♠ Q 10 8 5 4
♥ 10
♦ J 10 5 3
♣ A 10 2

♠ 6 3 2
♥ 5 2
♦ 9 8 6 2
♣ Q J 8 7

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1NT	2C
4H	4S	6S	All Pass

Again, we have a third in hand psych at favourable vulnerability, leaving West with a tricky decision. Although he may suspect the 1NT bid is a fake, it is just conceivable that South has 11-12 points for their opener. West could double but he may think South has a long club suit and would take the contract out. The only forcing bid West can make is 2C asking East to bid a major. North, not surprisingly, fancies a four heart contract which further muddies the waters. Arguably, and with 20/20 hindsight, West could ask for aces once partner has bid four spades but the whole picture is so confused he chooses to go straight to the spade slam, much to the surprise of his partner. This is a poor result since 7NT is cold.

So what's your verdict on this method of disrupting the bidding? A bit of harmless fun? Clever exploitation of the laws of bridge? Or just not cricket? I'll leave you to judge.

Ray Kemp

Goofs and gadgets

In the 1950s there was an American cop show called *Dragnet* which started with a dramatic voice-over. "Ladies and gentlemen: the story you are about to hear is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent." I normally indicate which session a hand is played in and even the hand number. I am not going to divulge those details in this case, only to say that it was played on a Tuesday evening in November. You will understand why when we get to describe the deal and bidding. The identities of the players will be covered by a cloak of anonymity to spare their blushes.

It is a story worth telling, however, to show that even Tuesday night players can trip themselves up with their use of gadgets. Anyway, for the uninvolved it provides an amusing "Goodness, I would never get into that sort of pickle." Are you sure about that?

North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A 10 9 6 3
♥ A 8 6 3
♦ Q 8
♣ A Q

♠ K J 8 7 4
♥ K 10
♦ A K 7 6 5
♣ 10

♠ Q 5
♥ Q 5 4 2
♦ 9 4 3
♣ 9 8 7 5

♠ 2
♥ J 9 7
♦ J 10 2
♣ K J 6 4 3 2

North	East	South	West
1C*	1NT*	Db1*	Rdble
1S	Pass	1NT	2H
All Pass			

You could be excused for thinking I had made a mistake here. Surely, the bidding and hands are taken from different deals. Either that or I am describing a new version of bridge where the bidding has little to do with the cards the players are holding (perhaps a game called "egdirb"). But, dear reader, this is the hand and this is the actual sequence of bids. Let's see if we can follow the thought processes of the players involved as the auction develops.

NS are playing Precision, so North's 1C bid shows 16+ points and could be any shape. East's overcall needs some explanation. The 1NT bid has nothing to do with points but shows a particular distribution. In this case, it shows either a clubs/hearts or diamonds/spades two-suiter hand. With so few points and such a minimal distribution it is a very risky bid although it is not a psych since EW have no lower limit specified for overcalls of a strong club bid.

Are EW playing a variant of the game called "Kamikaze bridge"? In fact, such an overcall can be very effective. East does not expect to be left in 1NT or even necessarily for their side to be playing the contract at all. Do the Maths. Add North's (at minimum) sixteen points to East's four. That leaves an estimated twenty points to be distributed among the other two players. If South has ten or more of those points then NS have an almost certain vulnerable game on their hands. On a good day, they may even have a slam. West is going to have to guess what two suits East has and how strong their hand is but so are the opponents. In short, East is trying to put a spanner in the works of the opponents' bidding.

South doesn't have much to worry about now. Often following an intervention over one club, Precision players use the double to show about 5-7 points. This

gives partner a pretty good idea of the situation. North can then decide whether they should be fighting for the part score or looking for a game or slam.

As it turns out West has got most of the rest of the points and is keen to fight for the part score or at least put the opponents off their game altogether. If East happens to have diamonds and spades then EW are motoring. If it is clubs and hearts then they have complementary suits (otherwise known as a "misfit") but West is something of an optimist. North finally gets chance to bid a real suit and comes in with 1 spade. East swiftly passes, thinking they have been saved from a potentially damaging contract and hoping West will get the message. South has no spade support but has got a few outside values so bids 1NT.

This is when North (a bit of a party pooper) observes that the bidding pad contains two separate 1NT bids. An investigation reveals that North earlier made an insufficient spade bid but in their eagerness to get out of the auction East has quickly passed, effectively accepting the call.

So now West is in the spotlight. It looks as if partner has clubs and hearts and that South might easily make 1NT. West is loath to allow the opponents to get away with this cheap contract since partner has already bid and they themselves have 14 points. It must be worth raising the stakes so bids 2H hoping partner has five cards in the suit. On a good day for EW, North may even rebid spades which would be a nice contract to defend. Unfortunately, this is not a good day and West is left to play in a contract that made at two other tables when played by NS but goes four down played by West.

So NS scoop all the match points but I reckon both sides deserve a zero. What do you think?

Ray Kemp

Improvers Corner

At some stage if you want to improve your bidding power you need to incorporate conventional bids into your repertoire so why not start now? A useful definition of the term "bridge convention" is given in Wikipedia as "a specific agreement between partners to give an unusual meaning to a bid". In introductory lessons you have been taught to call a spade a spade. That is, if you have a specific suit then bid it. Occasionally, however, there will be hands where simply calling your best suit doesn't cut it. The hand below is taken from the last week of the bronze championships and obviously caused consternation. None of the junior partnerships got to the optimum contract of seven no trumps or even to a small slam.

Board 12

West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 10 3
♥ Q 7 4 2
♦ J 7 2
♣ 10 8 6 5

♠ K 8
♥ K 5
♦ A K Q 5 4
♣ A K 3 2



♠ A Q J 9 6 4 2
♥ A 10 9 8
♦ 6 3
♣ —

♠ 7 5
♥ J 6 3
♦ 10 9 8
♣ Q J 9 7 4

What do you open with West's 22 point hand? Bidding your longest suit, diamonds, at the one level is a possibility but not very useful. What if partner has only three or four points and passes? You may have 25 plus points between you but be stuck at the one level. You could be bullish and open three no trumps, but that itself may cause problems when partner has a half decent hand. You would be starting too high to effectively find the best fit and best level.

The answer is to use the conventional opener of two clubs. In standard Acol, this says nothing about the number of clubs in your hand which could even be zero but announces to partner that you have a monster hand and if they dare pass you will never play with them again. So, assuming no one intervenes, partner has to say something. The responses to a two club opener should be decided by each partnership beforehand. A simple understanding is that with eight plus points partner should bid a decent suit. This positive response commits the partnership to at least a game contract. Again, if partner stops short after a positive response you are perfectly at liberty to defriend them.

With less than a decent responding hand (0-7 points, say) the conventional reply is two diamonds. Again, this has nothing to do with your diamond holding but just tells partner that you have very little to offer and it might be wise to pull the plug as soon as possible unless they can go it alone.

In the above case, however, East has a pretty good hand. Should they make a jump bid in spades? No need to hurry. A two spade response commits the partnership to game. Let's see what West can come up with. What happens now will depend upon partnership agreement. West may decide to show a no trump distribution with a 2NT bid, or show the five card diamond suit, in case a diamond slam is in the offing.

Now, East can show the four card heart suit. At this stage, West knows that they have no obvious suit fit with partner but can count points and knows after East's initial response that they have thirty or more high card points between them. This looks like slam territory, probably in no trumps. The snag now is that even with thirty points there may be a couple of aces missing, or even an ace-king combination.

This is where another convention comes in useful: Blackwood. The bid of four no trumps asks partner how many aces they have in their hand. Responses might be (again by partnership agreement):

- 5C zero or four aces
- 5D one ace
- 5H two aces
- 5S three aces

What if West actually wanted to play in a four no trump contract? Well, this is unlikely, since three no trumps is enough for game. Partner must realize that the Blackwood bidder is interested in a slam and must respond accordingly.

In the above case, if West bids four no trumps, East might respond "five hearts" to show two aces. There is an extension of Blackwood to use five no trumps to ask for kings. West already knows about the king situation, however, and with all the aces and kings decides to try for 7NT. As you should be able to work out West can claim at least fourteen tricks but there is no bonus for overtricks in a grand slam so EW content themselves with a score of 1520 and a top board.

Here is a suggested bidding sequence:

North	East	South	West
			2C
Pass	2S	Pass	2NT
Pass	3H	Pass	4NT
Pass	5H	Pass	7NT
All pass			

So incorporate the strong two clubs bid and Blackwood into your armoury now. But remember that a convention is a specific agreement *between partners*. Otherwise, next time you pick up a twenty-two point monster hand you may find your two clubs opener is passed out and you are left to play in that low-level contract with a three-two fit in the suit.

Ray Kemp

Christmas Cheer 2019

Our Christmas Cheer tournament was held on Saturday 7 December. There was a full house for the event, with 78 pairs rocking up to make merry. The club rooms were decorated, a festive morning tea was contributed by members, the Christmas fairies sprinkled chocolates, and a scrumptious Christmas dinner was held at the end of the day.

Oh, and bridge was played! Brothers Anthony Ker and Charles Ker (Wellington and Hokowhitu, respectively) were crowned the winners, with a total score of 132.34. Sandra Calvert and Colin Carryer (New Plymouth) came second, and Lorraine McArthur and Eleanor Morel (Wellington and Kapi Mana, respectively) were third.

Highly placed club members included Bob Hurley and partner Scott Smith (6th), Michael Hardman and Gayle Leader (9th), Susan Baty and Tony Clear (12th), Ken Bateman and Jan Whyte (14th), Anne Gordon and Hans Van Bunnik (19th), and Jack James and Wayne Burrows (22nd). Susan and Tony also took out the title of top Open/Intermediate pair, while Anne and Hans were the top Intermediate pair.

But it's not all about winning! So well done to all club members who took part in the tournament, for helping to make it a welcoming and fun event for our guests. And thanks to all members who contributed in different ways to the success of the day. See you next December...

Julie Bunnell



Daytime Bridge Christmas Party



Photos By Tony Clear