



New Plymouth
Contract Bridge Club



Dedication

*This history is dedicated to all those members who worked so hard
in establishing the New Plymouth Bridge club.*

*Special thanks go to Miss Belle Allen who initiated the club
and to Mrs Shirley Fraser who ensured the early history was recorded.*

Introduction

This year, 2020, there were plans to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the New Plymouth Bridge club and the 25th year of the opening of our Hobson Street Club Rooms.

Unfortunately, for the first time in the history of the club, a forced closure occurred due to the Covid 19 pandemic and all members were in lockdown. However it created an opportunity to record and publish the club's history.

Thanks go to all those who provided information and photos. Special thanks to Helen Shearer, Marian Biggs and Jude Hansen for their support and contribution to this project.

Lyn Muller

Collator and President

New Plymouth Bridge Contract Bridge Club 2020

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The Beginning

Our club had a very modest beginning when on 20 April 1950 a meeting was held in the YWCA rooms for the purpose of forming a bridge club in New Plymouth. Miss Belle Allen, a Fitzroy school teacher and a very enthusiastic bridge player had issued invitations to selected members of the community.

There were 23 equally enthusiastic women attending the meeting. It was resolved this be AGM of the new club. Mrs Lylie Liffiton was elected President, Mrs Connie McCormick Vice-President, Miss Belle Allen Secretary and Miss F Cleary Treasurer. The remainder of those attending formed the general committee. Play was to take place fortnightly and the fees were set at Subscription 5/- and Table money 1/-.

- 1951 At the AGM only a resume was given of the inaugural meeting, as the Secretary had left the minute book on a tram.
- 1952 Miss Belle Allen was elected an Honorary member and Mrs Dot Allen became a member.
- 1953 Membership had risen to 20 full time playing members two country members and ten players ready to act as substitutes when necessary.
The club moved to the Victoria League rooms (in the basement of the Trades Hall) but these had proved unsuitable due to noise above and it was decided to return to the YWCA rooms for the following year.
- 1954 Until this stage there had been strong insistence that males were not to be included in the membership. However by 1954 discrimination was abolished and Dr Dennis Allen, Mr G (Peter) Ewart and Mr Graeme King braved the 'Lioness' den'.
- 1955 Membership had increased to 27
- 1956 The club moved to the National Party rooms.
- 1959 Regular weekly playing nights were introduced and it was decided that the annual Open Tournaments be biennial.
- 1960 The club played at the Vogeltown Bowling Club.
- 1963 A drive was made to acquire new members. Action was taken by Mrs Barbara King and Mrs Pat Quirk.
- 1964 The club became an incorporated society in 1964. It was decided to purchase club premises. A sub-committee was formed to investigate the suitability of several houses on the market. After many meetings and discussions, purchase of the Medley property, Wallace Place, was approved at the AGM.
- 1965 The first open tournament in the new premises was held on 25/26 September. It was filled to capacity, mostly with outside entries (only ten New Plymouth pairs were able to participate). The following month the club hosted a visiting ladies bridge party from Australia. Members of the Hawera club were also invited .
- 1966 Our library was started with funds from a raffle with prizes being donated by Mrs Gwen Meiklejohn.

- 1968 Daytime Friday bridge began. The club is indebted to Mrs Janet Ayckbourn who for many years donated the monetary prize awarded to the winner of the Friday aggregate. The club decided to reject the award of Master-points for club play. NZCBA pointed out that *"...regarding the award of C points this means that the club cannot become a licenced club, and therefore cannot award A or C points to any player taking part in any tournaments held under its jurisdiction"*.
- 1969 A special general meeting held on 11 February resolved that "the club reluctantly agrees to operate the full master-point system from today, the commencement of the 1969 season".
- 1970 The club hosted the Central District pairs for the first time. This tournament was reported in a full page account in the local paper.
- 1973 Two further sections were purchased for \$7,800 from the Medley family with a view to enlarging the building at some stage. However in 1974 one section was sold for \$4,848, but an easement was retained over the right of way.
- 1974 The New Zealand Pairs was successfully hosted, the first time a national event had been held outside a main centre. Considerable time and effort went into the organisation to ensure a successful tournament. Many members assisted in numerous ways, catering, scoring, taxiing entrants to and from the club, etc. The event ran very smoothly and many compliments were received. The decision to serve lunch was particularly appreciated. (see Tournaments)
- 1975 The year of our Silver Jubilee. A special Silver Jubilee Open Tournament was held and concluded with a celebration supper. Ex-members who had done so much for the club in it's infancy were invited as well as Mr Bruce Bell. At the commencement of the evening session the five original foundation members, who were still active in the club, were elected Life Members.
- 1976 Our increased membership warranted holding a Junior Tournament in addition to our annual Open and Intermediate Tournaments. The programme in booklet form was introduced, still half yearly but the following year it included the full playing season. Modifications weremade to our grading system to incorporate national rankings and credit must go to Colin Johnson and Reg Thurston.
- . Because 1976 was New Plymouth's Centennial year, the Mayor presented a special Centennial trophy to the winners of the Open Tournament. A cup which had been donated during the year for the C Grade championship was aptly named the Centennial Cup.
- On 22/23 July the club hosted the Dunhill Inter-Provincial Teams tournament on behalf of Central Districts. New Plymouth set a splendid example of how to organise and cater for such a prestigious tournament, endorsed by a subsequent NZCBA newsletter - *".....From all reports the organisation and hospitality were superb. Congratulations to Central Districts for setting a new standard for the running of this event."*
- 1978 Our grading system was modified by senior members of the club who spent many hours working on it. It became one which NZBCA commended and later included in it's official manual. In August gas heating was installed in the building. Sadly that year we were all shocked to hear of the passing of Mr John H Fullarton.

- 1979 In June we ventured into the modern age of computing with the assistance of a \$1500 loan from TSB. Saturday social nights were introduced. The Premier Fours competition was instituted for which we had a trophy donated by McKechnies Ltd. This was the last year that catering for tournaments was undertaken by club members. It was the first year that players who gained first and second placings in the Liffiton and Centennial Cups were not automatically promoted.
- 1980 In 1979 and 1980 we lost two of our outstanding members Mrs Jean Grayling and Mr Peter Ewart who had been bridge partners for many years. In 1980 Mr Ewart had donated a trophy for what was known then as the Egmont Pairs but was renamed the Grayling Pairs in Jean's memory. The club purchased a trophy from donations and the club funds for the equivalent competition in the B Grade (the Paritutu Pairs) and renamed the event the Ewart Pairs 'in recognition of Peter's assistance to the club in many areas, in particular coaching and legal advice'.
- 1981 We were fortunate to be visited by a six member Australian Bridge Team. At the AGM it was passed that the club revert to two playing nights due to poor attendances. This decision was reversed the following year and once again we were a three night playing club.
- 1984 The first national trophy was awarded to members of the club when Dr Dennis and Mrs Dot Allen took first place in the NZ Veteran Pairs (over 55 years). Dot and Dennis Allen qualified in the first 28 pairs after two sessions in the NZ Pairs (there were 100 pairs competing) and further improved their position in the final two rounds to win the trophy.
- 1986 Attempts were made to hold Open nights on Friday evenings but attendance was small so they were aborted.
- 1988 Once again open nights were given a trial on Wednesday evenings but lack of support earned their demise. Sunday afternoons were given a trial but also lacked support.

At the AGM two members, Mrs Ngaire Clark and Mr Reg Thurston were elected Life Members in recognition of their valued contribution to the club over the past 20 years. It was also resolved that the club institute a fourth playing night, members to be allocated to the four grades by ratio.

A suggestion that the AGM and Prize Giving be held on separate nights in 1989 with the latter being held in the form of a social night was greeted with approval and implemented with great success the following year.

- 1989 A hot water urn was installed with instant popularity.
A Special General Meeting was held in July whereby the resolution regarding four playing nights was rescinded.
The AGM of that year gave approval for the committee to proceed with investigation of a suitable relocation site on the understanding that a special meeting be called when a suitable site had been found.
In October a novice pairs (for players with less than three years' experience) was held.

During the first 40 years considerable progress was made through contributions from so many members of the club. Our present day members must give thanks to those early, intrepid and enthusiastic bridge players who worked so very hard to give us the premises that we now enjoy.

1960s members



Club rooms

Rented Premises

- 1950 YWCA rooms, Powderham Street (opposite the Powderham Petrol station)
- 1953 Victoria League rooms in the basement of the Trades Hall.
Corner Powderham/Carrington streets
- 1954 YWCA rooms
- 1956 Old National Party rooms
Corner Powderham/Brougham streets
- 1960 Vogeltown Bowling Club rooms

The tables have now turned and our Club rooms are rented to other groups (ironically including the Victoria League). Allowing other community organisations to use our facility was a condition of the TSB building loan and provides an income of approximately \$5-6000 per annum.

Bridge House Wallace Place

After many years of renting various premises in New Plymouth the Committee in 1964 investigated the feasibility of purchasing its own property. Mr Peter Ewart was the club president at this time.

A Building Advisory Committee was formed consisting of:- Mr Mincher (Clerk of works), Dennis and Dot Allen, Richard Court, Beryl Jameson and Graeme King. At times feelings were a little acrimonious and communication was made by letter within the sub-committee, however as all were in accord that they were endeavouring to do the best for the club, agreements were reached.

Several properties were investigated, the most suitable being a large house (currently in three flats) in Wallace place with a purchase cost of approximately £12,700.

This was a tremendous venture and the clubs' finances were rather meagre but over the next three years members 'came up trumps' with donations and assistance. Members were canvassed to determine how many would be interested in taking out £10 debentures for a term of 10 years, thus raising capital of £2,000 to £2,500. A TSB loan of £12,500 covered the balance, subdivision and alterations to the property £1,765 while cash in hand of £1,000 brought the total of available funds to £16,000. The total estimated expenditure being £15,165.

Club members then enthusiastically set about raising funds towards furnishing the rooms.

Activities included raffles, trading tables, used clothing sales etc. Labour was also contributed in the form of working bees, making curtains, table cloths, boards, gardening etc. Many made donations both monetary and equipment, paying for rubbish removal, smaller items such as teapots, crockery (previously member's brought their own cup and saucer), Director's bell, relay tables, foyer cupboard etc. Dot Allen recounted that when she was cutting out curtains, Mr Mincher told her she was doing it incorrectly which caused her the only sleepless night of her bridge career.

Bridge House was officially opened on 16 September 1965 by the Mayor Mr Honnor. If the club members felt they were over the worst of their problems they were soon disillusioned as neighbours were very shortly on the doorstep complaining of the noise of the bell, the revving of cars, the rowdy farewells late at night and the inconsiderate parking in the streets.



A further special general meeting was called in June 1976 to consider proposed alterations to the Club building and a car park at the rear of the building. With the continued growth of the club it was felt that there should be sufficient room to accommodate 27 tables. This was agreed to and a loan of \$10,000 was obtained from the TSB for this purpose. It was necessary to build a retaining wall to reclaim sufficient land for the car park. Jim Sharkey and many male club volunteers worked with dumped broken concrete to build a three layer retained area.

Numbers quickly grew and soon Bridge House was becoming inadequate for its membership. In June 1989 the committee decided to look around for sites on council land with a view to erecting new club rooms. It was felt that premises on council property would considerably reduce our rates.

A Building committee headed by Reeve Pring, was formed to investigate suitable buildings and building sites. Following a long search, the Hobson Street site was selected. In 1994 the build of new club rooms designed by Ian Pritchard, Architect, commenced. Bridge House sold with a settlement date 30 June 1995 for \$152,000.

TSB Bridge House Hobson St

After six years of planning in 1995 the new club rooms (TSB Bridge House) were completed on budget for \$600,000.

This entailed many hours of work by many members but special mention must be made to Norman Chalk who became a defacto Project Manager and Susan Sykes who managed the financials.

Funding comprised:

| | | |
|---|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| TSB Loan | \$230,000 | |
| Lottery grant | \$60,000 | |
| TSB Community Trust | \$40,000 | conditional on naming rights |
| Pub Charity Grant | \$5,000 | |
| Debentures | \$24,500 | used to fit out the kitchen and bar |
| (interest free in \$250 lots with 10% repayment per annum, completely repaid within 10 years. Some members generously did not accept repayment) | | |

Don Betts planned and landscaped the grounds of new bridge club. Shirley Crowe, Mary Young, Sybil Collins, Buzz Standish and Christine Burton completed the planting.

TSB Bridge House was formally opened on Friday 11 August 1995, by the New Plymouth Mayor Claire Stewart. This was followed by cocktail type nibbles supplied by the club and organised by Sue Rollo, Judy Holdom and Dinnie Hall. Rubber bridge was then played until 8pm. The Opening Tournament was held the next day.

In 2009 a building extension was planned to increase office, storage and dealing space. A Special General meeting was held to propose the sale of 500 square metres of land adjacent to the rear car park for \$95,000. This would fund the extension, to be built by club member Mark Eichstaedt. Independent Technology Ltd (Kim and Graham Gilkison) provided the engineering service free of charge. It was completed the following year.

Club members Anne Smith and Sally Alexander have provided art work, while Dot Allen's painting of the old club rooms hangs in the foyer.

Further cupboard space was added to the Committee room in 2018. There has been a recent general refurbishment of the rooms (2019) including air conditioning, improved lighting, new carpets, new curtains, chair re-upholstering, air conditioning and resurfacing of the front car park.

Visiting Directors have commented that we now have one of the most functional club rooms in the country



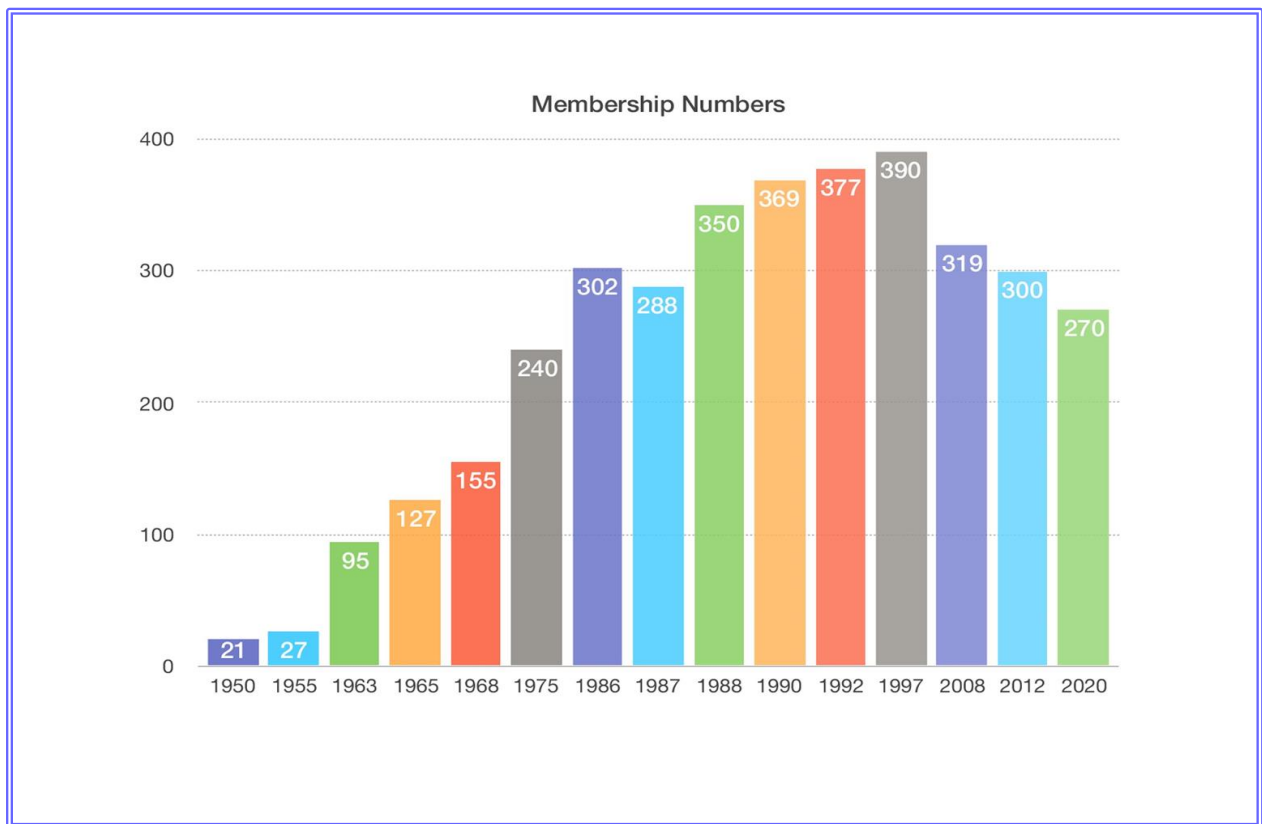
Membership

All 21 people who attended the first AGM in 1950 became members of the Bridge Club, and since then membership has slowly increased.

There had been strong resistance to men joining the club, however by 1954 discrimination was abolished and Dennis Allen, Peter Ewart and Graeme King braved the 'Lioness' den'.

For some time it had been felt a drive should be made to acquire new members. Barbara King and Pat Quirk made a concerted effort to attract new members through telephoning clubs, 'friends of friends' etc. Their outstanding efforts meant membership nearly doubled to 95 in 1963.

Accurate numbers are difficult to determine in the early years. In 2020 the membership list was tidied up creating a more accurate list.



Our longest continuous member is past president Helen Shearer who joined in 1966 and has been an excellent source of club knowledge.

Finances

| | Subscriptions | Table money |
|------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1953 | 25/- | 1/- |
| 1963 | £2-2 | 2/6 |
| 1965 | £3-3 | |
| 1970 | \$6 | 30c |
| 1973 | \$8 | |
| 1975 | \$10 | |
| 1977 | \$10 | 40c |
| 1980 | \$20 | |
| 2013 | \$80 | \$4 |
| 2015 | \$85 | \$4 |

Members now have the option of bulk purchasing table tokens rather than using cash. This year an Eftpos facility will be installed.

Sponsorship

The club has appreciated sponsorship over the years in order to keep subscription fees and table money down. Increasing costs in 1986 made it necessary to seek further sponsorship - Wrightsons, NMA assisted for some time with the open tournament (All of our tournaments are now sponsored).

Other forms of sponsorship are for competition prizes, programme and bidding pad advertising. The majority of our preferred suppliers are also sponsors.

For major projects the club applies for grants. We have received the following assistance:

| | | |
|------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2015 | NZCT | Bridgemates |
| 2016 | Pelorus | TV screens x2 |
| 2017 | Lion Foundation | external lighting upgrade |
| 2018 | TSB | re-sealing the front car park |
| 2018 | Southern Trust | carpet for small room |
| 2018 | NZCT | air conditioning |
| 2019 | TSB | reholstering chairs and new curtains |

Special mention must be made of the support given to the Bridge Club over the years by the TSB Community Trust who give a yearly administration grant as well as the above grants.

Several bequests have been bestowed to the club by past members and their families. Some of these being Ina Rout, Reg Thurston, Richard Stephens, Monty Shearer. Other members have donated trophies, equipment or financially supported club events.

We have had excellent service from our Treasurers from our first Treasurer Miss T Cleary to our two longest serving Jo Boon who held the position for 14 years 1952-66 and Maggie Garnham our current Treasurer who has held the post for the past ten years. Other long serving Treasurers were Monty Shearer 1969-74, Mr N Turner 1980-85 and Reg Thurston 1987-1993.

Susan Sykes kept a tight financial rein during the building of the new club rooms. Several of our members have been accountants thus providing advice and auditing services, namely, Monty Shearer and Ross Smith.

We have been supported with legal advice by our lawyer members particularly Peter Ewart, Russell Wilson and Paul Fitzgibbons.

Considering the three month Covid Lockdown in 2020, todays club is in a sound financial position with a freehold property and no debt.

The Generation Game

Many of our members became bridge players after watching another family member play and thought why not? You may be aware of some of these connections (spouses and siblings excluded).
Current members*

Madge Middleton (VP 1959) and Grandson John* (Committee 1986-88), his wife Eileen* (card dealer). Madge was phoned during a bridge session to be informed of John's birth.

Mr N Mincher (VP 1962, committee member 1965-67) who made relay tables, card boards, laid tiles etc. Mrs Mincher and daughter Mary 1980 and son in law Norman Chalk (committee 1991-95 Secretary, CD Committee 1985-87. A tireless worker during the building of TSB Bridge House.

Jack (John) Medley (Committee 1964-68, VP 1969-81, President 1974-75), wife Rene and daughters Margie and May. The Medley homestead became our first club rooms.

Ena (Hectrina) Robson (Committee 1966-67) husband Dr Noel Robson, son Will and niece Helen Carryer 1980 (Committee 1983-86, Head Dealer and Tutor)

Dr Gavin Forrest, wife Joan and daughter Jean Forrest.

John Fullarton (see page 26), wife Molly (Committee 1973-78) and their daughter Pat Scaife 2008.

Barbara McClellan 1964 (Committee 1984-86) and husband Dick 1964 (Committee 1978 79, President 1980) also Dooney Hudson, Barbara's mother.

Elsie Horner 1965, daughter Mary Young 1980, Grand daughters Christine Burton* 1980 and Frances Baron 1982 and husband Phil Baron 1982 (Committee 1994-96). Mary's daughter in law Leanne Young*. Mary, Christine and Leanne have served on the Committee. Mary was Secretary for 9 years and Christine a Bridge Tutor. The Young family donated the bench at the club entrance.

Mrs Fay Bond, daughter Caroline O'Sullivan* 1986.

Sheila Downes 1967 (Committee 1971-72, Convenor) and daughter Chris (McCullough) Thurston 1985, Reg's second wife (Committee 1997-99).

Reg Thurston 1969, (President 1976-77 and Life Member 1988), wife Maryan and daughter Cathy Thurston (1993)

Zena Sole (Committee 1977-78) and husband Ivor, son John (Committee 1980), daughter Jude (Alsweiler) Hansen 1973 (Committee 1979-80, 96-97) and her husband Mike Hansen.

Weston Carryer (Committee 1972-76) and son Colin* 1975 (Life member, past President).

Dr Bill Frengley 1974 and son Jonathon. Bill taught a group of high school students.

Lettie Burton 1974 (Committee 1978-79 and Librarian), son Mark (Committee 1992-93) and his wife Deborah, daughter Sue Geraghty*.

Ralph Wilson, wife Amy and son Nigel.

Anita Swafford 1974, brother Pip Eichstaedt 1975, nephew Mark Eichstaedt 1975 (Committee 1984-78, President 1988), his wife Trish (Gilhooly) 1979 (Committee 1991-95).

Ava Robinson and daughter Anne (Billinghurst) Russell* 1976

Nancy Priest and son Campbell* 1978 (Committee member, lawns and maintenance).

Helen (Rasmussen) Lang* 1978 (Committee 1986-88, Tutor 1992-97 and current coach), son Brian Rasmussen, daughter Chris (1989) and her husband Derek Shotbolt* (Committee 1991-92), their children Karsten and Annalisa (2016).

Graham* and Kim Gilkison* 1986 (Committee, club sponsor) and daughter Deborah 2011.

Jennifer O'Shaughnessey* 1986 (Committee 1997-2004, President 2004-07), husband Peter 1998, son David* 1993 (re-joined 2018) along with his wife Lynne* (2018).

Maggie Gilhooly and daughter Trish (Committee 1992-95). Maggie a former proof reader had a photographic memory and played her cards without sorting.

Pamela Livingston* (Secretary 1994, Tutor 2010) and daughter Phoebe 2010.

Russell Wilson* 1987 (President 1995-96, Director), daughter Emily Riordan* who rejoined 2018.

Madeline Potter, daughter Ngairie Riley* 2000 and husband John 2000

The Carrington Crew, Zella Carrington (1966), daughters Jill* (2010) her husband Gary Dunlop* (2019), Maree* (2018) and her husband Brian Rowlands* (2019), Sue Carrington* (2019) and niece Phillipa Blinkhorne*. Gary's mother Joyce Dunlop 2012 played as well as Zella's brother Bernie Sullivan* and his wife Margaret*.

Barbara Howard 1995, husband Mike 2005, son Tim* 1992-95/2012 and daughter in law Sandie* 2014. The later two are both Directors

Then in 2018 three generations learned together. John Mason*, daughter Hannah* and grand daughter Libby Winkyawonk*, the youngest member ever at age 14 years.



Mary Young aged 90 years sitting on the bench donated by her family

Club Play

Initially there were enough members to fill three tables in a small room, but by 1953 membership had risen to 33. This was made up of 21 full time playing members, two country members and ten players ready to act as substitutes when necessary. These substitutes were required to keep the table numbers up to five! Play took place every second and fourth Thursday.

The club moved to the Victoria League rooms 1953 but these had proved unsuitable as dance music reverberating from above was distracting to players and it was decided to return to the YWCA rooms for the following year. Members had to take their own tables.

Mr Bruce Bell, an early member who moved to Auckland often travelled down to advise and assist in any way he could. In 1954 he organised a visit by eight members of the Auckland Club, including the Auckland President Mr Tonks to participate in a pairs match and fours tournament to give our members a chance of higher grade competition.

Subsequently in 1954 the Auckland Centre donated a cup for a competition which was to be awarded to the player gaining the most points during the season. This cup is still competed for in the club's Senior Championship, but after 12 years it was decided that it should be awarded to the Champion Pair. Forty-four players have won the cup with 24 having done so more than once:

In 1956, the club purchased its own duplicate boards. Previously they were lent to the club by Miss Allen.

At the 1958 AGM it was moved to penalise late arrivals. Players were requested to be seated 10 minutes prior to play. Today they are sent home unless required to prevent a half table!

In 1959 regular weekly playing nights were introduced, but due to growth in membership in 1963 a 'B' group was formed. By 1969 there were four playing sessions. Several members namely Lylie Liffiton, Jean Grayling, Dorothy Fowler and Peter Ewart were making prowess, achieving ranking in the Dominion wide championship known as the Allard cup.

In 1960 members had to take own tables to Vogeltown Bowling club and take them home each night. Chairs were provided. The story is told that Rose Allum drove home in Madge Middleton's Rover one night! (both women had the same make of car)

In 1965 members compulsorily cut for position and all events had to be pre-entered onto lists displayed on the wall. The correct table money was required, something we still request today. In 1989 marbles were used to draw for seating positions. This lapsed after a few years but was re-introduced in 2020 for the Intermediate section to mix players up. A timer and Microphone were also purchased in 1989 an attempt to speed up play.

A weekly Rubber Bridge session was inaugurated in 1966 but after a year was abandoned due to lack of support. However in 2016 a competition was reintroduced in the form of a round robin, played by about 10 pairs in private homes.

Dorothy Fowler was a hostess in the early years, spending some hours at the club rooms arranging for partners to ensure there were no half tables. There have been many Convenors over the year encouraging players by arranging partners, setting up the playing rooms, making announcements and generally ensuring the club session runs smoothly. Thank you Convenors for all your help.

To summarise the playing sessions over the years:

1950 monthly

1951 fortnightly

1959 weekly

1963 twice weekly

1976 three playing nights

1968 Friday day session commenced

1981 reverted to two playing nights

1982 three playing nights

1989 four playing nights and one day time session

2017 three night and two day time sessions

Supplementary sessions such as the Premier Fours, Grand Master teams and Swiss pairs are also held.

2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic there was no club play from 23rd March to 12th June while all New Zealander's were in Lockdown, confined to their "bubbles". A group of senior bridge players Pam Livingston, Christine Burton, Russell Wilson, Kevin Turner and Lyn Muller decided to set up a Taranaki bridge group with it's own competitions (Pairs, Swiss and Teams) to play on Bridge Base Online. Over 100 members now participate.

This initiative was reported on in the Taranaki Daily Newspaper and NZBA site 20th May 2020:

New Plymouth Bridge Club

We reported on this club a few days ago. However, in just the last couple of days, The Taranaki Daily News ran a feature which included the following report about the very active bridge club:

"The New Plymouth Bridge Club has also made a change during the lockdown, starting local online competitions three times a week. President, Lyn Muller, said they usually play at the club every day but now that isn't an option, they have started the competitions for members to keep in contact and "keep the brain going".

"People are really enjoying it," Muller said. "We wanted to keep it local so people know who they're playing against." Muller said the club of 300 was like a "little community", so keeping in touch was essential - especially with older members.

And while she admitted not many of the folk around 90 were playing online, they were checking in on them.

The New Plymouth Bridge Club is like a "little community", its president says, so keeping in touch throughout lockdown is important.

As for the members taking part in the competitions, there was the option of writing to each other in a side bar while playing.

"And then you ring your partner after and say 'we could have done that better'."

And while it would have to do for now, Muller was missing the real thing.

"It's still good bridge but it's nothing like chatting to people."

Lessons

Early players of the bridge game learned socially through family or friends. Most members played the Culbertson or Schenken (a strong 1 level opening system) and would not dream of opening without holding at least 13 points. Many were the hands that were thrown in.

Lessons began in 1963, although not in the structured form of today. As there were no official club rooms, lessons were often held in the home of the Tutor. These included Jean Grayling, Barbara King, Pat Strombom, Jean Sandel, Connie McCormick and Graeme King.

Structured classes began in the in 1965 when Mrs Refvy took lessons at Vogeltown School these continued in the Wallace Place club rooms with Dorothy Fowler teaching the Goren system.

More recently Dr Bill Frengley tutored some students at Francis Douglas College.

In 1978 John Martin commenced a series of 12 lessons based on the Acol system. These were followed up by a four night improver class. Today we are deemed an Acol club although many members play now Standard American and Precision.

Since then we have had numerous tutors: John Fullarton, Peter Ewart, John Martin, Reg Thurston, Helen Lang, Judy Holdom, Pam Livingston and Christine Burton/Helen Carryer. The tutors these days are supported by Bridge Buddies who provide ongoing support and extra coaching groups for learners.

Improver lessons are listed in the club programme and are provided by various club members.

Over the years these have included Dennis Allen, Jean Grayling, Peter Ewart, Dr Harry Lenk, John Fullarton, Richard Stephens, Paul Warren, John Martin, John Warner, Kevin Turner, Murray Carter and Lyn Muller. Advanced lessons have been provided from time to time by visiting senior players, the most recent being Richard Solomon NZBA Developmental Officer in 2020.

NZBA has set Acol lessons for learners and improvers available electronically, consisting of lesson plans and notes, quizzes, and deals. The club has 2 large electronic screens (purchased in 2016 at cost of \$3,500).

During the 2020 Lockdown electronic coaching was set up by Christine Burton, supported by John Warner and Kevin Turner.



Tournaments

Rosebowl competition

The first tournament held by the Bridge Club was the inaugural Rosebowl competition with Hawera in 1957. It alternates between the two clubs and is contested annually.

Many was the time that a bus was hired to transport players. They were a lot of fun and very memorable trips!



2019 Successful New Plymouth Rosebowl winners

Open Tournaments

In 1958 the first Open Tournament was held at the Westtown Bowling Club. This then became a biennial tournament. The first open tournament in the Wallace Place premises was held on 25/26 September 1965 and was filled to capacity, mostly with outside entries – in fact only ten New Plymouth pairs were able to participate.

1970 the club hosted the Central Districts pairs for the first time

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------------------|------|--------------|
| NEW | PLYMOUTH | CONTRACT | BRIDGE | CLUB | INCORPORATED |
| "NEW PLYMOUTH PAIRS" | | | OPEN TOURNAMENT 1964 | | |
| to be held at | | | | | |
| R.S.A. BOWLING CLUB ROOMS, OCTAVIUS PLACE | | | | | |
| on | | | | | |
| SATURDAY 20th JUNE 1:30 p. m. & 7:45 p.m. | | | | | |
| SUNDAY 21st JUNE 9:30 a.m. | | | | | |
| LUNCHEON WILL BE SERVED AT THE CONCLUSION OF PLAY | | | | | |
| ENTRANCE FEE - 35/- per Player | | | | | |
| The entries will be restricted to 25 tables. Would Club Secretaries please list entries in graded order. | | | | | |
| Entries close through Club Secretaries on 6th June 1964, with the Honorary Secretary :- | | | | | |
| Mrs. W.P. Quirk, 77 Belt Road, NEW PLYMOUTH. | | | | | |

Intermediate and Junior Tournaments

The first B Grade tournament was held in 1964 in the Girls' High School lunch room.

By 1976 it was felt our increased membership warranted holding a Junior Tournament in addition to our annual Open and Intermediate Tournaments. Unfortunately Junior Tournaments have ceased due to lack of entries and are now combined with Intermediate tournaments.

New Zealand Pairs

Hosted 1974 for the first time by a club outside a main centre.

There were certain reservations about the number of large men participating who pushed back their chairs, thereby showing the limited capacity of our room for 25 tables. It was necessary to squeeze three tables in the scoring room and a blind was fitted to inhibit players from perusing hands in the adjacent room!!

A few weeks later one of the participants requested a copy of the 100 boards played from our Secretary and these were duly copy and forwarded. However a few days later she was forced to write once again to this person and here is a copy of her letter.

"Dear Mr Benson,

This is a truth rather than fiction. We called in all the cards for the four sessions from our library to have them copied for you. The second session was returned later than the others so that our President had the other three sessions copied first. Mr Medley then returned them to the club and at the same time collected the second session cards, had them printed and forwarded the lot to you. However before he could get these last cards returned to the library his car was stolen from the Bridge Club and the score cards scattered over our newly acquired back section which is being prepared for a car park, and the cards were duly bulldozed into the ground the next day. My request is that you now lend us your copy of the second session for us to have copied once again"

Allard Cup

Our second minor problem in 1974 was with the Allard Cup (a NZ simultaneous tournament) when the hands failed to arrive by the day this competition was scheduled to play. Fortunately Hawera had received their copies and after a phone call to their President, it was arranged for the hands to be photocopied and sealed in an envelope. A hasty trip was then made to Hawera and back and our Director together with his daughter was busy making up boards right up to the time we were due to play!!!! There was of course no dealing machine!!!

Central District Trials

Staged in May 1975 for the Dunhill Teams. The competition scoring used was completed in what was Butler Scoring (see scoring). Trials are now held annually at one of the centrally located CD clubs.

Silver Jubilee Open Tournament

1975 was the year of our Silver Jubilee and a special Silver Jubilee Open Tournament was held, concluding with a celebration supper. Former members who had done so much for the club in it's infancy were invited. At the commencement of the evening session the five original foundation members who were still active in the club, were elected Life Members. A special commemoration trophy was awarded to the tournament winners.

Fullarton Teams

Mr John H Fullarton's deep interest in Teams play is perpetuated in the Central Districts Fullarton Teams event competed for nationally. Sadly he passed away in 1978

Overseas Visitors

1975 the club hosted a visiting ladies bridge party from Australia to which Hawera was also invited. The following year we invited the Japanese Team, who were in New Zealand to attend the Far Eastern Championship, to visit New Plymouth and play at the club.



A six member Australian Bridge Team visited in 1981. Two pairs from Hawera and Wanganui were invited to compete and New Plymouth fielded seven pairs namely:- Dennis and Dot Allen, Richard Court and Rob Finlay, Bill Frengley and Monty Shearer, Barbara and Graeme King, John Martin and Richard Stephens, Barbara and Dick McClellan and Maryan and Reg Thurston. There is a story told of one particular player being delighted to score an exceptionally good board from Mr Ron Klinger and his partner.

National Tournaments

In recent years we have hosted the North Island Teams and the National Swiss Pairs. We continue host National Tournaments are as requested.

Weekend of Bridge

Due to the heavy Tournament Schedule in 2010 the Committee decided to hold the Open Pairs, Junior/Intermediate pairs and the Swiss Pairs over a weekend in August. The Junior Tournament had been merged with the Intermediate Pairs a few years earlier due to the lack of entries.

Tournaments currently held in New Plymouth

| | | |
|---------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| Picnic | 8B | January |
| Restricted Pairs | 5B | June |
| Rosebowl | 5B | July |
| Open Pairs | 5A | { |
| Junior/Intermediate pairs | 3B | { August Weekend of bridge |
| Swiss Pairs | 5A | { |
| NZ Wide Pairs | | October |
| Anniversary Pairs | 8B | November |

Taranaki Bridge Congress

While a separate entity, mention must be made of the Taranaki Bridge Congress. For a long time Colin Carryer had a dream of organising an annual mini congress in Taranaki, over Taranaki Anniversary weekend. Planning involved approval of NZCBA and the co-operation of the Stratford and Hawera Clubs.

Colin was elected President, a position he has held ever since. The first congress was held at New Plymouth in 2010. Hawera and Stratford clubs took turns at hosting the event, but logistically this proved too complicated and hosting has returned to New Plymouth. It incorporates Teams (Open and Intermediate/Junior), Marian Hill Open Pairs, Intermediate and Junior Pairs and Swiss pairs..

Tournament Funding

Our current tournaments are sponsored and this money goes towards prizes. Being conscious of outside players having to travel, we strive to keep entry fees low and aim to break even. Most players now enter tournaments electronically via the NZBA site and pay directly into the Club bank account, simplifying the Tournament Secretary position.



The New Plymouth team who contested the western CD club playoffs in Whanganui 2009

Back left: Dinnie Hall, Ken and Margaret Crawford, Matthew Schumacher, Graham Gilkison,
Judy Holdom, Derek Shodbolt, Lyn Muller, Reeve Pring.

Front: Judy O'Neill and Mark Eichstaed

Refreshments

The Bridge club like most other evening gatherings always had a supper break midway through the session. It wasn't until 1958 that this was discontinued.

During 1981 a poll was taken to determine members' preference for tea and coffee either mid way through the sessions or at the end of play, also alcoholic beverages at the end of play. An overwhelming majority decided against either. Now Friday afternoon sessions have an afternoon tea and biscuit break, all other sessions play straight through.

A second day time session was introduced in 2017 commencing at 11am with a 20 minute break for lunch. However those attending favoured a 1pm start and play straight through. All sessions have chilled water, tea and coffee facilities available.

Social Club

Bridge players have always enjoyed socialising following a session of bridge. There's nothing like a good post mortem and a few drinks to come to terms with "if only" etc.

Initially alcohol was included as part of the tournament entry fee then in 1965 drinks were sold by tickets, until a user pays system was finally introduced.

In May 1990 our Social Club was formed and has proved very popular enabling the purchase of drinks after play. Current legislation means we now require a bar licence and we have two licenced barmen (John Holdom and Matthew Schumacher). The social club's accounts are managed separately but profits are returned to the club. A pod coffee maker was recently purchased from bar funds.

Catering

In 1965 the New Plymouth Bridge club was the first to provide lunch on the Sunday of an open tournament. Open tournaments generally commenced at 1pm on Saturday, followed by a break for the evening meal. At this stage everyone would change into evening wear, dinner suits for the men and evening gowns for the women. Next came session two, a break over night then session three and prize giving. Lunch saved time for those travelling and was a good way to fill in time while the scores were manually calculated.

Catering since then has fluctuated to adapt to the changes in tournament format. From the club providing cooked meals, to soup and buns, to Subway, to Bare Bones. When national tournaments are held a coffee cart and an extra water cooler are required. However the tradition of providing a hearty morning tea continues thanks to our many volunteer plate providers.

Throughout we have had some very dedicated, organised House Convenors/Caterers to rally the troops.

1960s Tournament Menu guidelines

Tournament of three sessions

(100 people (23 Tables and Helpers)

Afternoon Tea:

Sandwiches – fillings supplied by members

Supper and Morning Tea

Biscuits and cheese and cool drinks on tap

Sunday Lunch:

Curries or Casseroles

6 people to make up 25lbs of cut beef

17 size 6 chooks

4 legs hogget

Salad dressing 4 people to make

15 bread rolls (large)

1 box tomatoes (6 kilos)

1 box lettuce (10 plus)

2 large heads of celery

10 or 12 people to make small biscuits or cakes for coffee
(approx. 20-20 pieces each)

Hire Centre: Plates

Knives and forks

Salt and peppers

200 Table Napkins

?wine instead of spirits

Single men to contribute 1 packet pf biscuits

Beetroot was donated

Scoring

Scoring like everything to do with Bridge has evolved over the year and few of the newer members are able to score the "old way".

This to some extent has been detrimental to players as there is a lack of awareness as "knowing something about scoring will govern your tactics in bidding and play"

D Allen, President NZCBA 1981

Duplicate bridge scoring involved recording the dealt hands onto a travelling score sheet once they were first played, then entering the result and attaching to the back of the board. On completion of each session the scores on the travelling sheets were checked. The complicated system allocated the result from one less from than the total number of pairs playing to zero. The travellers were then collected and the scores entered onto a spreadsheet, tallied for each pair and then given a percentage. Balancing the numbers was an onerous task, often going past midnight. Scores when finalised were displayed in the club room window so members were able to check their results. For many years the results were also published in the Taranaki Daily News. The maths skills of many members was excellent, however when the first adding machine was purchased many heaved a sigh of relief.

Tournament scoring involved preparing slats with partnership names printed on them. At the end of each session the scores were displayed, apart from the final session top placings where the winners were revealed at prize giving.

The Master Point Controversy occurred 1968 when NZCBA instigated the awarding of master points for affiliated clubs. The New Plymouth Committee declined to reject the award of MPs for ordinary club play, due to the cost and time it would take to administer. A resolution was passed to this effect at the AGM. Correspondence went back and forth with NZBCA, pointing out that tournament participants would not be able to gain MPs, as New Plymouth would not be a licenced club. A Special General Meeting was held in February 1969 and *"this club reluctantly agrees to operate the full Master Point System from today"*.

In May 1975 the club held the Central District Trials for the Dunhill Teams and Butler Scoring was used. Our scorers, not being familiar with this method were coached prior to the event, by Dot Allen and were relieved when it went without a hitch.

Rob Finlay with support from his McKechnies work colleagues wrote the first computer programme in the early 1980s. He put in many months of work, using the McKechnie firm's computer until the club purchased its first computer in 1985 for \$2,300. The programme was entered by club members, it was then upgraded to one with a greater capacity two years later. Shirley Fraser was involved when the system was upgraded one of the main people.

The Compass package was purchased in 2015 at a cost of \$9,000. The package incorporated dealing, scoring, masterpoint and other membership data. Bridgemates were part of the system enabling the scores to be electronically entered at the table and thus sent wirelessly into the scoring package. Results are available instantly at the end of each session, and board by board analysis can be accessed from any computer via the club website. New Plymouth players, as part of the X-club, can also compare their score against other New Zealand X-club members. Master points go directly to NZBA. Managed by Kevin Turner, it is a far cry from manual scoring.



Helen and Anne

A dealing machine and a new computer were purchased in 2011 for \$7,577. This technology enables a hand to be dealt within 7 seconds, a session within 15-20 minutes. Hand records are able to be read on the Bridgemates and also printed for partnership analysis.

Helen Carryer assisted by Anne Fitzgibbons heads the volunteer dealing team. By 2020 over 70,000 hands had been dealt.



Intermediate Tournament 2019:
The first session scores are displayed on the electronic screen on the rear wall

Directors

As the club grew, self directing was no longer satisfactory. In 1973 the club appointed Wally Clark as permanent director. He was supported by his wife Ngaire. Others involved were Shirley Fraser, Barbara King. Wally continued in this role until 1990 when he retired. From the mid 1980s other interested club members trained as club directors. Wally always wore a dinner suit when directing the evening session of an open tournament. Additional coaching by senior New Zealand Directors, such as Brian Northcott (1980) and Ari Guerson NZ Chief Director (1990), took place from time to time.

In 1991 Reg Thurston was the first person outside the major metropolitan areas to become a qualified Tournament Director.

Written bidding was briefly trailed in 1984 but was later rejected by members. It was finally introduced in 1987. Although controversial it assisted in ascertaining bidding infringements. Two years later a timer was purchased to enable Directors to keep play moving smoothly. Today there are still complaints about slow play!

The Director's role has now expanded to include familiarisation of various movements and linkage to the computer.

We now have a team of ten NZBA certified club Directors, led by Reeve Pring.



Some of our Directors 2018

Gilliam Gonthier, Liz Crawshaw, Sandra Calvert, Sue Rollo, Reeve Pring (Head Director), Jenny Cleaver, Anne Fitzgibbons, Amanda McIntyre

Life Members

Life Members

The contribution of Life Members is detailed below:

Miss Belle Allen 1952

A very enthusiastic bridge player, Miss Allen issued invitations to selected members of the community to attend a meeting on 20 April 1950. 23 people attended and the New Plymouth Contract Bridge Club was formed. Belle was elected Secretary and continued to work towards establishing the club. At the 1952 AGM Miss Allen was elected an Honorary Member (Life Member) acknowledging her enthusiasm and dedication in the club's infancy.

Mrs Jo Boon 1975

A member from the club's inception Jo served on the first committee then most years until 1974. During this time she served as Secretary, Secretary/Treasurer, Vice-President and President in 1964. She was well known as a character.

Mrs Dorothy Fowler 1975

Mrs Fowler served on the original Committee in 1950, continuing off and on for over two decades and holding the positions of Secretary, Secretary/Treasurer, Vice-President and President 1964.

Mrs Lylie Liffiton 1975

A foundation member, Lylie was the first President of the club, a position she held from 1950 to 1961. She donated the Liffiton cup in 1963, which is awarded to the top B section pair.

Mrs Jessie McDowell 1975

A founding member honoured at the Silver Jubilee for her work in establishing the club.

Mrs Mollie Powell 1975

Mrs Powell a founding member, served on the Committee from 1950 to 1952 and Vice-President in 1957.

Mrs Dot (Doris) Allen 1983

Mrs Allen joined the club 1952. Vice-President 1965/66, President 1967/68 and continued on the Committee from 1971 to 1975

Central Districts Committee 1968 to 1978 becoming President 1977/78

NZCBA President 1981. During her year of office Mrs Allen compiled a pamphlet on Duplicate Bridge which was duly published by NZCBA. In 1983 the club recorded it's deepest appreciation of her outstanding contribution almost since it's inception, by electing her as a Life Member.

Mrs Ngaire Clark 1988

Committee 1973 1974 1977. Director and a tireless worker encouraging many people to play bridge. She convened Friday bridge for many years.

Mr Reg Thurston 1988

Committee 1971-1974, 1987, Vice-President 1974 then President 1976-77

Treasurer 1987 to 1993. Involved in the building extension 1979 and Building Committee 1989

Central Districts Committee 1979- 1985, being President in 1982/83

Vice President NZCBA

Teacher of learner classes for 8 years, Director, Scorer, organised sponsors, helped with grounds and maintenance.



Life Members: Mrs Dot Allen, Mr Reg Thurston, Mrs Ngaire Clark

Mrs Shirley Fraser 1994

Joined 1972. Committee 1974, 1986-87, 1992-93 and 1997, Secretary 1975-1979, Vice-President 1988 and President 1989/90
 Secretary Central Districts 1982/83 and 94/95
 Researched and documented the club's history
 Computer resource, Master-points Secretary, Director, Chief Scorer, organised sponsors
 Made an enormous contribution over many years.

Mrs V (Dinnie) Hall 2000

Joined 1972. Committee 1974 – 1976, 1983, 1993 to 1996. Vice-President 1984 to 1985
 President 1986 to 1987, Secretary 1997 – 2000 and a Director
 Secretary Central Districts 1988 - 89, Committee CD 1990-91, 1996-1999
 Senior Vice-President CD 1992-93, President Central District 1994-95

Mrs Barbara King 2000

Joined 1952. Committee 1963-64, 1968-71 and 1979-80. Very active in increasing membership
 Convener, Director and Master-point Secretary
 Barbara and her husband Graeme donated a cup for the Monday teams which is now presented to the winner of the Multiple Teams

Mr Monty Shearer 2009

Joined 1968 Committee 1969-77, President 1978-79, Treasurer, Honorary Auditor
 CD Treasurer 1982-83.
 His family presented the Monty Shearer Memorial Cup for the pair with the highest aggregate score in the Monty Shearer Pairs.

Mr Colin Carryer 2013

Joined 1975. Committee 1986-89, President 2010-12
 Currently on Central Districts Committee and past President
 Instrumental in forming the Taranaki Congress in 2010, he has been President since its inception. While the Taranaki Congress is a separate Society, our club members benefit by being able to compete locally against top opposition. Colin is a club sponsor and mentors beginners.

Mrs Judy Holdom 2017

Joined 1985. Committee 1990-95, President 1993-94

Committee CD 1993-75, Treasurer CD 1994-95

Involved in planning the Hobson Street club rooms. Organised debentures for new club rooms.

Took Learner lessons, mentored new players and was a Recorder.

Mr Reeve Pring 2018

Joined 1982. Committee from 1988-92 . President from 1998-2000. Convener of Building Committee

Member of CD Committee 1999 for 9 years.

Currently Head Director organising Director training and introduces learners to the Director's role. Instrumental in establishing the second Day Bridge session, directing this session as well as being the guaranteed partner and coaching junior players.

A strong supporter of Rubber bridge, he revived the club's Rubber competition in 1977.

Other Members who made significant contributions to the club

Mr John Fullarton

Committee 1966-70. Vice President 1967-68, President 1969-70

Recorder for club tournaments and championships.

Provided coaching for members

CD Committee 1972-78, Vice President 1978-99,

President 1970-71

President NZCBA 1972

Involved in the development of the national Master Point Scheme.

His deep interest in Teams play is perpetuated in the Central

Districts Fullarton Teams event and the Fullarton Trophy for our

senior teams competition.



Mr John Martin

Joined 1972. Committee 1977-79, Vice President 1980, Club President 1981-82.

CD Committee 1981-84, Vice President 1986-87, President 1988-89.

Vice President NZCBA 1990

Tutored learners (7 years) and improver classes

Donated the candle sticks for the Rose Allum Trophy and the open, intermediate and junior memorial plates for the Anniversary Pairs

One of our leading players, representing Central Districts in the inter provincial teams

Mr Richard Stephens

Joined 1971. Committee 1983-85. Vice President 1997. Club President 1998 until his sudden death.

CD Committee

1971 promoted the summer pairs and donated the trophy

Took Improver lessons. Wrote a weekly bridge column for the Sunday Taranaki Herald

Memorial Trophy cabinet donated by his wife Shirley

Mr Rob Findlay

Joined 1975. Committee 1979-82, 86-87, 95-96, President 2003-4

Central Districts Committee

Rob introduced computerised scoring to the club putting in numerous hours developing the i programme

Mrs Helen Shearer

Joined 1966. Helen holds the longest continuous membership

Committee 1981-1985 and Vice President 1983, President in 1984-85

Helen has worked tirelessly for the club in the kitchen, gardens, hosting players etc

(see Helen's reflections page 40)

Mr Kevin Turner

Joined 1988. Committee since 1992 and Match and Grading Member.

Manages Information technology for the club, set up the Compass scoring system and the club website

Maintains the club calendar. Assists with odd jobs.

Volunteers Recognised for their Service

| | | |
|------|-----------------|--|
| 2004 | Barry Marsh OBE | Turning seat cushions, clearing rear area of club rooms, planning Hobson St club rooms. Since then Barry has been involved in setting up the second day session, donating the Marsh Cup and mentoring new players |
| 2004 | Maureen Malone | Card dealing, Recorder and Committee member 1993 |

The volunteer recognition scheme was reintroduced in 2018 to acknowledge club members for their behind the scenes contribution to our club:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Audrey McKay | kitchen and table cloths |
| John Holdom | bar management |
| Sybil Colins | gardens and front desk |
| Campell Priest | Committee member, lawns and maintenance |
| Yvonne Scott | convening and catering |
| Helen Carryer | dealing, lessons, and refurbishment |
| Lindy MacDiarmid | gardening |
| Raewyn McLean | newsletter |
| Shirley Chapman | dealing, room tidiness |

Other Volunteers

There are so many people involved behind the scenes. I tried to tally the number when preparing last years annual report and discovered that over 26% of the membership are involved in some way. Thank you.



Campbell Priest and Reeve Pring having a cuppa after clearing storm fallen trees in the club grounds 2019

Presidents New Plymouth Bridge Club

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1950-52 | Mrs L Liffiton | 1991-92 | Mr A Kirk |
| 1952 | Mrs C McCormick | 1993-94 | Mrs J Holdom |
| 1953-54 | Mrs L Curtis | 1995-96 | Mr R Wilson |
| 1955-56 | Mrs N Liffiton | 1997 | Mr D Brown |
| 1957 | G L Ewart | 1998 | Mr R Stephens |
| 1958 | Dr D N Allen | 1999 | Mrs S Rollo |
| 1959-60 | Mrs E G King | 2000-01 | R Pring |
| 1961 | Mrs C McCormick | 2001-02 | E Gundesen |
| 1962-63 | G L Ewart | 2003-04 | R Findlay |
| 1964 | Mrs D M Fowler | 2005-07 | J O'Shaughnessy |
| 1965-66 | E G King | 2008-09 | R Shearstone |
| 1967-68 | Mrs D N Allen | 2010-12 | C Carryer |
| 1969-70 | J H Fullarton | 2013-14 | S Calvert |
| 1971-72 | R A Court | 2015-17 | M Carter |
| 1973-74 | L C Reid | 2018 | L Muller |
| 1974-75 | J S Medley | | |
| 1976-77 | R J Thurston | | |
| 1978-79 | M A Shearer | | |
| 1980 | R McClellan | | |
| 1981-82 | J Martin | | |
| 1983 | R H Findlay | | |
| 1984-85 | Mrs H Shearer | | |
| 1986-87 | Mrs V Hall | | |
| 1988 | M Eichstaedt | | |
| 1989-90 | Mrs S Fraser | | |

Presidents Night Charity Fundraiser

Prize giving nights now incorporate raising funds for a charity nominated by the president.

To date the following organisations have benefitted:

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| 2009 | Heart Foundation | \$1,098 |
| 2010 | Red Cross | \$1,500 |
| 2011 | St Johns | \$1300 |
| 2012 | Taranaki Hospice | \$1,169 |
| 2013 | Arthritis Foundation NZ | \$1,060 |
| 2014 | Rescue Helicopter Trust | \$1,390 |
| 2015 | Multiple Sclerosis/Parkinsons | \$680 |
| 2016 | Taranaki Retreat | \$1,400 |
| 2017 | St Marys Cathedral | \$ 2,800 (earthquake damage repair) |
| 2018 | Fred Hollows Foundation | \$1664 (Cataract surgery in the Pacific) |
| 2019 | Riding for the Disabled | \$1,750 (towards a covered arena) |



Members supporting the Fred Hollows Foundation in 2018

Members' Achievements

Member of British Empire (MBE)

1980 Mr Bruce Bell for services to Bridge

While a club member for only a short time, following his move to Auckland, Bruce continued as a mentor during the early years, putting in a tremendous amount of work towards establishing our club.

Silver Grand Masters

2018 R Wilson (GM 2008)



2019 P Livingston (GM 2010)



Russell and Pam being recognised for achieving GM status

Grand Masters

1974 P L Warren

2008 S Green

2009 J O'Neill

2010 D Whittle

2012 C Carryer

2014 D Hall

2015 L Muller

2018 S Calvert



Paul Warren

Placings in NZ events

(only New Plymouth club members included)

New Zealand Teams (25A)

| | | |
|------|-----|-------------------|
| 2007 | 3rd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2008 | 3rd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2013 | 2nd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2015 | 2nd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2019 | 3rd | Pamela Livingston |

National Teams (15A)

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 2017 | 3rd | Russell Wilson | | |
| 2018 | 2nd | Pamela Livingston | | |
| 2019 | 2nd | Russell Wilson | 3rd | Pamela Livingston |

New Zealand Pairs Plate (15A)

| | | |
|------|-----|-------------------|
| 2003 | 1st | Pamela Livingston |
|------|-----|-------------------|

NZ National Pairs (15A)

| | | |
|------|-----|----------------|
| 2017 | 1st | Russell Wilson |
|------|-----|----------------|

Centre Island Teams (15A)

| | | |
|------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 2007 | 3rd | Russell Wilson and Gerry Palmer |
|------|-----|---------------------------------|

South Island Pairs (15A)

| | | |
|------|-----|----------------|
| 2018 | 1st | Russell Wilson |
|------|-----|----------------|

NZ Congress Pairs

| | | |
|------|-----|----------------|
| 2019 | 1st | Russell Wilson |
|------|-----|----------------|

NZ Congress Mixed Pairs (5A)

| | | |
|------|-----|----------------|
| 1998 | 1st | Elwyn Schimmel |
|------|-----|----------------|

NZ Congress Restricted Pairs (5A)

| | | |
|------|-----|-------------------------|
| 1998 | 1st | Joan Gower, Judy Holdom |
|------|-----|-------------------------|

NZ Intermediate Pairs

| | | |
|------|-----|---------------------------|
| 2011 | 1st | Margaret and Ken Crawford |
|------|-----|---------------------------|

National Swiss Teams (15A)

| | | |
|------|-----|-------------------|
| 2013 | 3rd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2018 | 3rd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2019 | 1st | Pamela Livingston |

North Island Teams (20A)

| | | |
|------|-----|-------------------|
| 2018 | 2nd | Pamela Livingston |
| 2020 | 2nd | Pamela Livingston |

South Island Teams (20A)

| | | |
|------|-----|-------------------|
| 2009 | 1st | Pamela Livingston |
|------|-----|-------------------|

NZ Multiple Teams (10A)

| | | |
|------|-----|--|
| 2000 | 1st | Sarah Green, Lyn Muller, Dinnie Hall, Russell Wilson |
|------|-----|--|

Inter-provincial Central Districts Open Team (15A)

| | | |
|------|-----|--|
| 2009 | 2nd | Russell Wilson and Gerry Palmer |
| 2010 | 1st | Pamela Livingston |
| 2015 | 3rd | Russell Wilson, Colin Carryer and Sandra Calvert |

Inter-provincial Central Districts Womens Team (10A)

| | | |
|------|-----|---|
| 2002 | 1st | Elwyn Schimmel, Sarah Green |
| 2008 | 1st | Sarah Green, Judy O'Neill |
| 2012 | 1st | Sarah Green, Judy Holdom, Lyn Muller, Colin Carryer (npc) |

Inter-provincial Central Districts Senior Team (10A)

| | | |
|------|-----|----------------------------|
| 2002 | 1st | Judy O'Neill, Effie Gallie |
| 2007 | 1st | Judy O'Neill, Effie Gallie |

NZ Club Teams

| | | |
|------|-----|--------------|
| 2009 | 1st | New Plymouth |
| 2010 | 2nd | New Plymouth |



New Plymouth National Club Team 1st 2009

Back: R Pring, K Crawford, J Warner, S Calvert, G Gilkison, P Livingston, R Wilson
Front: D Shotbolt, J O'Neill, S Green, H Shearer, M Crawford

Allard Cup/NZ wide Simultaneous Pairs

| | | |
|------|-----|------------------------------|
| 1956 | 4th | Mrs Grayling and Mrs Coulson |
| | 6th | Mrs Curtis and Mrs Liffiton |
| 1959 | 4th | Mrs Grayling and Mr Ewart |
| 1987 | 3rd | Mrs V Hall and Mrs S Fraser |
| 2017 | 3rd | Mrs K Carter and Mr M Carter |

NZ Veterans Salver

| | | |
|------|-----|----------------------|
| 1984 | 1st | Dot and Dennis Allen |
|------|-----|----------------------|



The first national trophy ever won by New Plymouth Contract Bridge Club members will be defended this weekend.

Mrs Dot Allen is pictured with the New Zealand Veteran Pairs Salver she won last year with her husband, Dr Dennis Allen.

With the NZI-South British Pairs competition in Hamilton this weekend, the trophy goes on the line. The salver goes to the highest veteran qualifying duo.

Originally both players in the partnership had to be aged 60 years, but now the limit is 50 years old.

The five-year-old trophy, presented by long-time New

Zealand Contract Bridge Association president Mr Les Schneideman, has also been held by pairs from Christchurch (twice), Auckland and Palmerston North.

Two qualifying sessions will be played, then the top twenty pairs go forward to a final two sessions to find the winners of various national trophies.

Last year 28 pairs went forward.

Those eliminated go into the plate section.

Barometer scoring is used in the competition.

Mrs Allen said 78 pairs entered last year and she expects about the same number this time. About a sixth of those are veterans.

Celebrations

Wallace Place Club Rooms opening 1965



Silver Jubilee 1975

A special Silver Jubilee Open Tournament was held, concluding with a celebration supper. Ex-members who had done so much for the club in it's infancy were invited, as was Mr Bruce Bell. At the commencement of the evening session, the five original foundation members who were still active in the club, were elected Life Members.

A special commemoration trophy was awarded to the tournament winners.

40th Anniversary 1990



Committee: Graeme King, Mark Eichstaedt, Denis Allen, Rob Findlay, Monty Shearer, Helen Shearer, Dinnie Hall, Barbara King, Ngaire Clark, Reg Thurston
Seated: Dot Allen, Shirley Fraser, Madge Middleton (oldest member)

Opening of TSB Bridge House 1995

Cocktails and nibbles followed the opening.

Debenture Draw TSB Bridge House, Hobson Street Club Rooms

Every year a Debenture dinner was held for “the draw”. The meal was prepared by Dinnie Hall and Judy Holdom and drinks provided by the club. As you can imagine the Debenture draw was very popular.

Golden Anniversary 2000

Celebrations took place in the form of a cocktail party, followed next day by a lunch and a tournament.

Fullarton Teams 40th Anniversary

New Plymouth and a Hawkes Bay club alternately host the Fullarton Teams. In 2008 we were the hosts. Reg Thurston spoke about John Fullarton and his passion for teams events. John's daughter the Reverend Pat Scaife (a Hawera bridge player) cut the cake, baked by Judy O'Neill'



BB teams

These fun events were organised by tutors for graduating players. The teams were required to dress according to the theme and consisted of two learners

and two other more experienced players.



The dress up winners 2016: Lou Stolt, Barry Marsh, Frances , Kevin Turner

My Fifty Years of Bridge Memories

Helen Shearer 2016



Of the current members of our Bridge Club, I believe that I now hold the longest continuous membership. I have served on the Committee, chaired the House Committee, and have been club President. My proudest bridge “moment” was in 2008 when I was one of the team of 12 from our Club, representing Central Districts and winning the inaugural New Zealand 'Clubs' Championship, at Hamilton National Bridge Congress.

Here is my story:

During February/March of 1966, Mary Glasgow and I were members of a group of 12 who took a course of Bridge Lessons at the recently opened Bridge Club rooms on Wallace Place. Our tutor was Connie McCormick, a well-known player of the time. After 6 lessons, we were thrust into playing at the Club on Thursday nights. This was probably the start of Thursday bridge. On some nights there would only be 5 or 6 tables, which necessitated playing a number of boards per table. There was no set limit as to the number of boards that had to be played for “C” Points hadn't been invented then.

In early 1967 we moved with our young family to Wallace Place and became neighbours of the New Plymouth Bridge Club – and so it was for the next 22 years. Monty became a member and was soon on the Committee, becoming Treasurer and later President. Over the years we acted more-or-less as honorary caretakers! Opening up the rooms so that members could retrieve property left behind; putting on the hot water urns on tournament dates; switching on the heating early on cold playing nights; our boys mowed the lawns; I became the gardener; and one son who was apprenticed at NGC occasionally had to crawl under the basement to relight the gas pilot flame when southerly winds blew it out. Our home became the place Directors would go to for the latest rugby/cricket scores to be announced during intervals of tournament play; and many times liquid refreshments consumed there while waiting for the sessions scoring results!!

This was the time when many of our named trophies were all playing members. In recent years some trophies have been rearranged from their original awards - but here is a little bit of history:

Auckland Cup was donated by Bruce Bell and fellow Auckland bridge members. He had been a local resident and had reported for our local newspapers, but by then was resident in Auckland. He was one of NZ's top bridge players, and a regular attendee at all tournaments held in New Plymouth for many years. This has always been the highest senior grade award.

Ewart Plate, named after Peter Ewart, a renowned local solicitor, and a very wily competitor.

This trophy goes to the runners up in the senior championship.

Thurston Cup was presented by the late Reg and Maryan Thurston, and was added to the championship trophy list when Monday nights were introduced at the Club.

Liffiton Cup. Named after Mrs Liley Liffiton. She was a precise and gentle lady, and because of immobility always sat at a table nearest the exit door. This cup was originally the trophy for Thursday night championship, and now goes to the runner-up of Monday championship.

Grayling Plate bears the name of the late Jean Grayling, a keen golfer and bridge player who partnered Peter Ewart in many club events and tournaments.

Dennis Allen Trophy awarded for highest average over Senior grade events including the D & D Allen pairs. Dennis and Dot were foundation members of our Club, and a colourful pair both at and away from the bridge table. Dot was a former Club and National Bridge President.

Madge Middleton Trophy an award for Friday players was inspired by Madge, who enjoyed Friday bridge in her latter years; a woman with a sparkling character!

Rose Allum Trophies go to the recipients of the most C points awarded each season in each of the grades. Rose was a former head mistress of New Plymouth Girls' High School. While C points weren't around in her playing days, it's possible that the trophies could have initially been awarded for other bridge honours.

There have been many other colourful characters as members of our Bridge Club over the years bringing with them much knowledge of the game. To name a few, Jean Sandel, a diminutive lady and New Plymouth surgeon; the Dubrovays, a Hungarian couple; Graeme and Barbara King; John and Molly Fullarton; John and Rene Medley; (Bridge House, Wallace Place was the original Medley homestead); Dr Harry Lenk and Paul Warren both masterful players, who gave improver classes to keen playing members; John Martin who attracted many of our members to bridge with his lessons; Richard Stephens, a teacher and studious player of the game as well. (The trophy cabinet in the main playing room was a gift in his memory). Also during the early days of the gas exploration, 'think big' projects, and Hospital recruitments, a number of internationals became short term and interesting members of our Club. We have also been lucky over the years to have had a number of 90+yr old members playing with keen and sharp minds, Nancy Robertshawe, Elsie Horner, Peg Blyde and her sister Madeline Potter, Joyce Lindsay, more recently Marj Kerr and Dulcie MacDonald, and still playing very competitively, Mary Standish and Mary Young.

50 years ago Tournaments were usually played over three sessions and very formal occasions, when dinner suits and long frocks were worn for the evening session. Most club members played Goren system, with a few playing Schenken, and Culbertson. The change to Acol came with John Martin's lessons, and since those days many conventions and newer systems have been introduced. Bidding was spoken, later we had boards that were tapped with the bids, and finally the written bidding pads we now use. Club nights were run by knowledgeable members until the membership reached a stage when Directors classes were introduced and we had our first non playing Director, Wally Clark. He and wife Ngaire were both keen directors, and Ngaire convened Friday Bridge for many years. In fact, when Friday bridge first started in the late 1960's, play began at 11am, players brought their lunch, and after lunch-break play resumed until approx 3pm. Some members worked part-time, so later it developed to an afternoon session only, and even later "Friday memberships" were developed. Many was the time when I remember our small boys leaning over the gate saying "hello" as members came for Friday bridge, and to their delight, Mr "Doob" giving them lollies!

This was the time when smoking was accepted for half of the playing period (after 8.30pm). Much later it was quite common to have members carrying around little cards to put on their tables saying "thank you for not smoking at this table"! Eventually a total non-smoking ban was adopted by the Club.

Bridge really is an international language. Some thirty years ago visiting international Australian and Japanese teams came to play at our Club rooms and give demonstrations. It was an eye-opener to see a male member of that team sit on his chair in a lotus yoga position !! At local tournaments it was quite common to have a 'gallery' around certain table so that local on-lookers could view the cards and play of top and senior tournament players.

Scoring was tedious before the days of computers. It was done manually; each night requiring a number of people to score and add up the individual board sheets, which were transferred to a master score sheet. These were then totalled and multiplied to make a grand total of thousands, and finally the percentages could be calculated. We were pretty good at mental arithmetic in those days! It could take up to an hour to get a final result, and these were published in the local papers or midweek edition.

The first computer came in the early 1980's when Rob Findlay and some of his McKechnie 'buddies' wrote a programme. I actually entered this system on a big, boxy computer the Bridge Club had purchased. Within a few years we were able to get a yearly average score for each player, and eventually a five year average, so grading of players was could be fairly introduced. In fact, for a number of years the New Plymouth Bridge Club's scoring system was held up as a model system by NZCBA. Grading has always been a contentious issue, and the advent of our system saw a few disgruntled people leave because of being downgraded! Awarding "C" Points in the late 80's has enabled the grading of players on a National level, and this NZCBA system is the grading system our Club uses today.

Card dealing machines have been used for a number of years now, avoiding the strict protocol of hand dealing boards at the table each playing session. Many would say that the hand-dealt cards weren't as bizarre as those that we are dealt nowadays! And, of course we come to the present day with the Bridgemate scorers on each table, giving quick results to the computer for each sessions results. There have been many changes, and when these modern inventions break down, we find it hard to remember the way things always used to be done manually and were so time consuming!

Membership numbers have varied over these years, and playing nights increased so that the Club rooms were being used 5 nights/days weekly, with some weekend tournaments and social nights. The Wallace Place venue was becoming inconvenient, parking was posing a problem, so new and younger committee members set about securing a Council owned site, resulting in the Club rooms we have today. What surprises me still, is that since the early 1980's when our club membership reached around 300 members, it has varied little from year to year – resignations and natural attrition seem to match the introduction of new members and those graduating from learner classes! Graded playing nights have been re-arranged giving all members the availability of playing at least two or more graded or handicapped sessions of bridge each week. The game of Bridge has offered our members affordable membership at an affordable price, and also a sociable and enjoyable interest from which many friendships have developed!



Pam being farewelled at Auckland Airport.

Pam Bridges the Gap

Omata's Pam Livingston reckons jellyfish is a delectable delight and the Chinese have impeccable traffic manners.

Part of a three-team New Zealand contingent playing against teams from 12 countries in the 10-day annual Asia-Pacific Open Bridge championships in Shanghai in August, Pam did not know what to expect from her first trip to Asia.

She admits to only sampling the local delicacy of jellyfish by accident, although she was pleasantly surprised at how nice it was. Pam was also impressed with the politeness of the local people. "There were lots of people on bikes and they all gave way. People were very quiet and serene," she says.

The mother of three feels New Zealand did extremely well as some of the teams were professional. "We were amateurs in comparison. Wealthy people pay to play with a good partner in most countries, but not here," she says.

New Zealand's top team came fourth, while the women's team won their section and the seniors' were placed seventh.

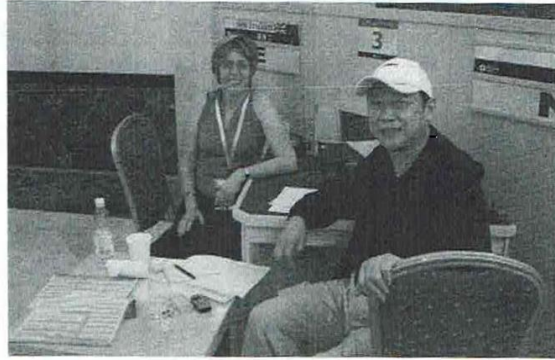
Added pressure came with the sudden death of her bridge partner's mother the day before the tournament started. "His family wanted him to stay and play as his mother was very proud he had got to the competition and he coped really well."

It was Pam's first time playing bridge internationally and she is the first woman in 50 years to be selected to the national top team.

"It was one big buzz. I enjoyed the challenge of playing against different countries. It was great representing New Zealand," she says.

Pam has played bridge for about 15 years but only seriously for five years, when she teamed up with Wayne Burrows from Palmerston North. About an hour a day is spent training on the internet and they meet once a month to practice in person.

They decided to have their first go at the national side earlier this year and after a gruelling six-day trial playing eight hours a day in Wellington, managed to secure places in the three-pair team.



Pam relaxes after the China Macau game.

"I had no expectations of getting in. I was doing it for the experience. People don't usually succeed the first time."

Although there wasn't much time for sight seeing, what Pam did see was fantastic. The row upon row of 30-storey apartments made an impression, as did the sheer volume of people.

"It was a huge culture shock. The very surprising thing was it was very quiet considering there were all these people."

Omata's honorary ambassador says she is particularly grateful to the New Plymouth Bridge Club for its fundraising efforts and to husband James and children Callum (14), William (12), and Phoebe (9), who have been very supportive all the way.

New Plymouth Bridge Club president Jennifer O'Shaughnessy says Pam Livingston is dedicated to the game and deserved to be part of a prestigious team.

By Anne Stembridge

Bridge Epidemic

Published in the Club Newsletter February 2007

Bridge is a highly contagious, progressive and incurable disease. WHO estimates there are currently between 50 and 100 million infected people worldwide. Unlike other epidemics of this scale, bridge attacks primarily in developed countries. While rarely fatal, the disease has enormous negative impact on the lives of infected individuals and on the of whole society.

Origins of the epidemics

The bridge epidemic started around 1890, almost simultaneously in Great Britain and the USA. It appears that a relatively benign bacteria causing, whist mutated itself into *Bacillus Bridgeus*. While the reasons for this mutation are not completely determined, a likely hypothesis suggest that it was a result of exposure of the whist bacteria to high doses of alcohol and boredom among civil servants in certain parts of the British Empire (mostly Egypt and India)

Symptoms and Relief

Stage 1 - which is not at all unpleasant, the infected individual enjoys an occasional social game of bridge and does not think of bridge in between those. Only a small area of the brain has been attacked and there are not infrequent reports of a spontaneous arrest of the disease and even complete recovery. Stage 2 – usually marked by the victim starting to analyse the hand just played. It can be also recognised from the fact the patient is buying their first bridge book, usually with a title like 'Improve your play technique' or 'Killing defence at bridge'. During this stage the victim often joins a bridge club and participates in the first tournament. Once this happens, the prognosis is almost always bad. Stage 3 – can be recognised by the victim being able to name the current World champions, winners of the Bermuda Bowl and other major tournaments. It is also marked by the patient owning a full bookshelf of bridge books and/or a subscription to a bridge magazine. At this stage the infected individual loses interest in other pursuits, is a common sight on the tournament circuit, and often dabbles in bridge theory. In extreme cases the victim neglects even the most elementary functions such as eating or personal hygiene.

While there may be periods of marked improvement, which often lull the patient and concerned relatives into a false sense of security (with the patient thinking 'I can take it or leave it') it is important to recognise that a relapse is unavoidable.

Nevertheless, some symptomatic relief can be achieved by simple methods such as getting the victim interested in other pursuits (sex, fly-fishing, crocheting), taking away his/her pocket money, and keeping the patient locked up during club games and local tournaments.

Cure

Currently the only available cure for bridge is lobotomy. This is performed only in extreme cases.





