



News and Views

We were saddened to hear of the death of Olwen Culpan last month. For many years she was a stalwart of the club and was made a Life Member for her efforts, particularly for her organizing of daytime bridge. Often partnered by her husband, Derek, they were formidable opponents, by all accounts. They won the inaugural Intermediate Championship in 1965, and subsequently won the Senior Championship several times.

If you are available on Friday 21st August then don't forget to come along to Ada Smart's 100th birthday celebration. As usual, the session will start at 10.30 a.m. and during the break at midday there will be lots of goodies available including a special birthday cake. Get in touch with Barbara Eglinton if you need a partner for the event.

Congratulations to Wayne Burrows on his performance at the PABF Championships in Macau. The New Zealand Open Team started well and were in second place at one stage but fell away towards the end. However, they had the consolation of beating Australia (always a pleasure) to win the South Pacific Championship Zone 7 play-off. Wayne tells us about his experiences, later in this newsletter.

Congratulations, also, to Ken Bateman and Jan Whyte who have qualified for the final of the National Rubber Bridge Competition to be held during the National Congress in Hamilton in September. They won the event last year, of course. In this issue, Ken provides us with a description of how the competition works and some tips on the best strategy.

The club just lost out in the Interclub Championship qualifiers held in the clubrooms last month. Napier won the event with our team coming second equal. Many thanks to Liz Burrows for getting the team together. Evelyn Hurley has agreed to organize some lessons for club players on strategies for teams matches. Lessons start on Wednesday 12th August at 7.30 at the clubrooms, so just turn up on the night if you are interested.

Evelyn analyzed a deal from our Charity Tournament but the item just missed our last newsletter. However, the point she makes about hand evaluation is an important one so we have included it in this issue.

If you are eligible, give some consideration to playing in the next club tournament: the Intermediate Pairs. This will be held at the clubrooms on Saturday 29th August.

Lastly, John Holterman has asked me to mention that his phone number has changed. It is now (06) 350 3047 so please make a note of his new one in your programme.

Ray Kemp

Charity Tournament

Eighteen tables played in the tournament with entries from many of the neighbouring clubs, but most coming from our own club. We played two sessions of 25 boards. Here is a hand from the first session that some of you may remember:

With both vulnerable, North held:

♠ Q107
♥ AJ108
♦ 10763
♣ A3

And South, the opening bidder held:

♠ A5
♥ --
♦ AKQJ9542
♣ 864

South's hand counts up to just 14 hcp's but is far too good for a 1♦ opening. There are nine tricks available as soon as you get in. You should consider opening your strong bid here. I would expect the bidding to go something like:

2♣:2NT
3♦:4♦ (you are already going to game so no need to jump)
4NT:5? (showing two aces, however you do that)
6♦

All on 25 hcp's. And those who didn't bid it can't use the excuse that they didn't have enough hcp's – this is an important matter of hand evaluation. Quite an exciting hand!

Evelyn Hurley

Dan Gifford Bridge Competition

I'm not sure that I should be writing this article. You see, each year Jan Whyte and myself enter the nationwide Dan Gifford Rubber Bridge Competition. The preliminary rounds are played within our area as a knockout competition. The provincial winners then go on to play in the final rounds at Congress. One of the attractions is that the winners play for the largest prize money at Congress. Whereas the NZ Pairs winners win \$200, the rubber bridge winners win \$1000. Now that you are aware of the prize money to be won, more of you may enter the event, thus making more competition for Jan and myself!

Seriously though, it's a great game. Each match is played over 30 boards. As you progress through the competition you will be drawn against other pairs from Central Districts. If you win four or five matches, you will find yourself preparing to go the finals at National Congress. And as an added bonus, Central Districts Bridge will even help with your accommodation and travel expenses.

I suppose the main difference between duplicate and rubber bridge is the scoring. Whereas in duplicate you are playing pre-dealt hands against the rest of the field, in rubber bridge the cards are shuffled after each deal, and you just have to make do with whatever cards you pick up each time. The goal is to win rubbers and hence accumulate points. It can either be a two game rubber (bonus scoring points of 700) or a three game rubber (bonus scoring points of 500.) It becomes a three game rubber when your opponents win one game whilst you are trying to win your two games. Also in rubber bridge there is no part score bonus (50) or game score bonuses (300 or 500) as in duplicate. The aim is to make "game" (100+ points), either in one step (as in bidding and making 4 hearts) or by a series of steps as, for example, making 2 diamonds (40) plus 2 clubs (40) and 1 spade (30). The best advice I can give when playing rubber bridge is "always try to make a positive score".

Another feature of the Dan Gifford event is that only very simple bidding systems can be used. Jan and I play Acol with Stayman and simple Transfers. 2Ds, 2Hs & 2Ss are weak twos, 2Cs is game force and 2NT is 20-22 balanced. Every other bid we make is standard Acol. There are no splinter bids, pre-emptive suit raises, etc etc. This all makes for a very even competition.

Luck tends to play a large part. If you and your partner get the cards and you don't squander them, you can be winners. Last weekend, Jan and I played in the final round to determine who went to National Congress. Our opponents were juniors from Hastings. On about hand five they bid and made a slam. This gave them game, the two game rubber and the slam bonus. In all they scored 1630 points from this one hand. It took Jan and myself about 15 hands to slowly whittle away this advantage and I think it was only about hand 24 (of 30) before we caught up. Luck now turned in our favour and we bid and made a grand slam. With only two hands left to play of the 30, our opponents were still in with a chance, a slim one but still a chance. They needed to bid and make two grand slams. No luck for them on this occasion and we won the match.

At last years finals in Hamilton, a similar situation arose. In the quarter finals, on the very last hand of the 30 board match, one pair needed to bid and make a grand slam to win. And they did just that.

As only very simple systems can be used in the Dan Gifford Rubber Bridge competition and luck plays a significant part in the final result, I would strongly urge all bridge players to enter next years competition.

Good cards and good luck.

Ken Bateman

Macau 2009

Macau was the host of the 2009 Pacific Asia Bridge Federation Championships (PABF). I was lucky enough to attend as part of the New Zealand Open Team. It was the third PABF that I have played in having previously played in Shanghai, China in 2006 and Bandung, Indonesia 2007. In both of those previous events our New Zealand Open team has finished 4th. We were looking forward to improving on that performance.

The format was a double round robin of 16 board matches against each of the 13 other teams – 208 Boards – played over eight days.

Early in the event we were doing very well. We held 2nd or 3rd position for much of the first round robin behind China who were the overwhelming favourites to win the event. The Chinese team included Fu Zhong and Zhao Jie

(Jack), the current World Pairs Champions. In the first round robin we had only one loss - to Indonesia. We had wins over all of the favoured teams including China (20-10), Japan (20-10) and our perennial foes, Australia (21-9). Pam and I playing against Australia featured in Ron Klinger's bridge column in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 23rd of July where Pam's pre-empt of 3♠ pushed the Australians into the wrong game.

For reasons that no one could discern the team imploded a little in the second round robin and we drifted back to finish a disappointing 8th. Although there were still some high points – a good win over Japan 22-8 and a draw against Australia.

Our work was not done though as this year for the first time the Zone Seven Championships (think South Pacific Championships) were held immediately after the PABF. Officially the Zone Seven Championships determined which countries have the right to attend the World Bridge Championships in Sao Paulo later this month. Perhaps prematurely, the New Zealand trial at Easter had chosen a team for that event. That team therefore was mostly reliant on our performance in Macau to secure their spot.

Australia by virtue of their slightly better overall performance in the PABF had the choice of opponents in what was effectively a semi-final. They chose French Polynesia. And therefore we were playing New Caledonia. There were to be three sets of 16 boards in the semi-final and final. After 32 of the 48 boards in the semi-final it was looking like there was potential for upsets – Australia led French Polynesia by the narrowest of margins, one solitary IMP, while, in our match, New Caledonia, after a great second segment where they gained 44 IMPs, were leading us by 27 IMPs.

Our captain Alan Turner (Tauranga) couldn't bear to watch and retreated to the grandstand – the event was being played in the Macau Forum which in part was a converted volleyball stadium – whilst Chef de Mission Kris Wooles (Christchurch) kibitzed at our table and relayed to the grandstand our progress with occasional hand signals. In the end we did well making two or three thin games and amazingly defeating our opponents in 5♥ on one board where at the other table the auction spiraled out of control and a hopeless 7♥ was bid by our teammates but the opponents believed them and took a very costly phantom sacrifice in 7♠ -

when the five-level was already too high for both sides. So we clawed back 62 IMPs and advanced to the final. Australia had also ended with a comfortable win against French Polynesia.

My favourite hand of that set was board three where I got to declare 4♠.

		♠ KJ3			
EW Vul		♥ KJ87			
Dealer South		♦ A652			
		♣ K8			
	♠ Q76		♠ 8		
	♥ 103		♥ AQ542		
	♦ Q98		♦ 1073		
	♣ AQ1074		♣ J653		
		♠ A109542			
		♥ 96			
		♦ KJ4			
		♣ 92			
West	North	East	South		
Pass	2NT*	Pass	2♠		
Pass	4♠	Pass	3♥**		
Pass		Pass	Pass		

My opening was a weak two although it could have been only five cards such is our aggressive style especially at this vulnerability. Pam optimistically asked how good I was and 3♥ said I did in fact have six spades and I was a maximum.

West led the ♥ 10 and East won dummy's jack with the queen before cashing the heart ace and playing a third heart – the two!!!.

You will see that if I ruff low West will over-ruff with the ♠ Q and cash the ♣ A for a quick one-down. Given that East appeared to have five hearts I reasoned that West was an overwhelming favourite to have the trump queen and accordingly ruffed with the ♠ A. West discarded the ♣ 7. I then immediately played the ♠ 10 intending to finesse. West's play was a little soft here when he covered with the queen and I could draw trumps. However I was not yet out of the woods. I had six spades, the ♥ K and the ♦ AK for nine tricks. There were two chances for a tenth trick the ♣ A could be onside allowing me to win the king or the ♦ Q could be onside giving me a third diamond trick. The dilemma was enhanced as it appeared that both West and East were telling me that they had the ♣ A – East had led back her lowest heart which is normally a suit preference signal for the lower suit but on the same trick West had discarded high in clubs saying that he too liked the suit.

Trying to delay my decision as long as possible and because of West's injudicious cover with the ♠ Q I could run all of my spades and see what happened. West clung tightly to all of his diamonds while East parted with a small diamond on the last spade. With this information I chose to lead towards the ♣ K and made my tenth trick.

In the final against Australia we jumped out to a handy 39 IMP lead before losing five IMPs in a tight second segment. In the final segment Pam and I did not play. We went for a short walk and found some lunch and returned to watch the last few boards on vugraph – it was actually being broadcast world wide on BBO. When we arrived we were up by 24 IMPs with three boards to play. The next two boards saw a couple of disasters and suddenly having led the entire final we were trailing by one IMP with one board to play. The Australians had played aggressively in the last segment and in fact throughout the match and they continued that on the last board where they failed in 4♥ at one table while failing in 4♦ at the other. This meant a three IMP victory for New Zealand.

And a very happy New Zealand team in contrast to how we had been two days earlier. Officially we are Zonal Champions. It is at least ten years since a New Zealand team has won this title.

After the victory dinner later that night Pam took the lift to the lobby with some of the Australians. When they got in one of them said "Press G". "For Gee - where are our 3 imps?" and "For Gee I wish I had made that 1NT contract".

Macau was a great place to visit, steeped in history and influenced by its Portuguese heritage. It was formerly a Portuguese territory in China in a similar way that its near neighbour, Hong Kong, was a British Colony. There is a mixture of this European culture – churches that are centuries old; Portuguese tiled roads and architecture – alongside Buddhist temples; and Chinese markets and shops. And a modern influence from the multitude of casinos. One only needs to look at the quality of architecture in some of the casinos to realize that gambling is not a winning proposition for the average punter.

Macau is a very small place. The total land area is less than 30 square kilometres – approximately the size of Palmerston North at a guess but with a much larger population of about 500,000. The main land area is a peninsula on the

South coast of China with two islands Taipa and Coloane connected by stunning bridges. Some of the land area is reclaimed. The small area meant that you could get to most places on the mainland by foot if you were happy walking in the humid 30°C temperatures or by a short and cheap taxi ride.

The event was impacted upon by the swine flu scare. There was high security in Hong Kong and Macau with scanners taking everyone's temperature as they passed. The Philippines women's team had to withdraw when one of their members sat next to an infected person on the plane. At the venue face masks were handed out every day – although not everyone wore them.

Next time you are having a bad session or tournament of bridge think of the Mongolians. They withdrew from the PABF after two days. At that point they had played seven matches and had lost every one 25-0. So their total score was zero right? No!!! One match they had arrived late and been penalized two victory points so their score stood at negative two!!!

I thought of our president, Ray Kemp, after our second round robin match against New Caledonia. At the Dannevirke Open earlier this year he was discussing with me the unlikely odds of two or three eight and nine card suits. He would have fallen off his chair if he had been sitting in the West seat for that sixteen board match. Board two he might have heard his partner open 1NT while he was still counting his hearts – seven, eight, nine!. Board three the opponent's opened 1♦ and he would have been looking at 4=0=1=8. He might have spent the next eleven boards thinking about the odds of these extreme distributions only to pick-up ♠ 103 ♥ K7 ♦ - ♣ AKQ987543.

What are the odds?

Overall, I had a great time with some challenging bridge. I would like to thank the Palmerston North Bridge Club Committee and members who supported me with a fundraising night and some raffles. I plan to organize a night to show some photographs and a few of the interesting hands from the event. Look out for a notice in the near future.

Wayne Burrows