



News and Views

As usual, the Hawkes Bay Congress on Queen's Birthday weekend was a good-natured affair that attracted a large number of competitors, mainly from the North Island but also from the South Island and even Australia. There were 130 couples in the Open Pairs, 56 teams in the Teams competition and 80 couples in the Swiss Pairs. This was in addition to various other events such as the Junior/Intermediate and No Fear Pairs.

Although there was only a small contingent from the Palmerston North club, we made our presence felt. Wayne Burrows won the Open Pairs with his New Plymouth partner, Pam Livingston. Jan Whyte and Ken Bateman came fifth in the same event. Wayne's team came fourth in the Teams competition. Elizabeth Kemp and partner won the Swiss Pairs, with Alister Stuck and Lorraine Stachurski coming fifth equal.

I was unable to take part in our Charity Tournament but understand that it went well. A total of \$1580 was raised for this year's charity, the Manawatu Stewart Centre Trust. The Soroptomists provided the meal and numerous members contributed to the success of the day. In particular, we should thank Lorraine for her organization, Elsie Beale for arranging the sponsors and Dorothy Hodges for mobilizing helpers. Pam Mason and Elsie also did a lot of work sorting out prizes. The winners were Liz Burrows playing with Jan Whyte, with Alan Doddridge and Alister Stuck in second place.

Thanks also to those who helped raise funds for Wayne's trip to Macau. The raffles were a great money spinner with Elsie Beale organizing the weekly prizes. The fundraiser on the 12th June was a real fun evening. We played an individual event and then Wayne gave a demonstration of Bridge Base Online. With the raffles and Benefit evening I reckon we raised about \$600. There is an item on this event later in the bulletin.

As noted during the session on BBO, the New Zealand team will probably be featured on the vugraph coverage at Macau, so keep a lookout. You may be able to watch Wayne in action.

Ray Kemp

Fun Raiser

The word 'fun' is very much over-used nowadays when we have 'fun-runs', 'fun-days' and so on. These events are often organized by councils as PR exercises to sidetrack us from thinking too much about all the other ways they are misusing our rates. However, the fundraiser for Wayne, was a good old-fashioned evening of real enjoyment. I can't recall a session of bridge in which there has been so much laughter.

I recollected that, years ago, Bryan Northcott organized an individual event at the club, so I thought it would be an interesting experiment to repeat. Twenty-four members turned up for Wayne's benefit evening so we had exactly six tables which was good, but, unfortunately, our computer package was no help in directing individuals between tables or in scoring. However, with the aid of a book on bridge movements, Wayne devised an ingenious scheme on the spot in which everyone played with everyone else in turn.

Although we were ushered from pillar to post (apart from Dianne Haist who sat all evening at the head of top table like some dowager, entertaining all-comers) the movement magically worked. There were some near misses but we eventually all met up and no one played any board more than once. Liz Burrows later claimed that she never partnered me but I suspect the hand we played together was so traumatic (I raised her Acol one spade opener to two spades with four points and a three card spade suit) that she erased the encounter from her memory.

It was a great way for members of the club from different levels to get to know one another. We had players who were in the novices class last year coupled up with seasoned grand masters. But no one got too wound up. It wasn't that sort of evening. We all had about thirty seconds to discuss systems before playing hands. As Ann Hancock noted, it was a little like speed-dating or (as she corrected herself) how she imagined speed dating to be.

And so to the bridge. Many of the hands were quite demanding and would have taxed even established partnerships. There were several slams (some good, some bad and some downright ugly.) Since none of us had time to discuss the niceties of high level bidding, unsophisticated and disjointed auctions were commonplace. In some cases, it was like two people from different countries trying to converse in a third language with which neither is very familiar. Here are a few examples I encountered on my travels (no names, no pack drill):

North	East	South	West
1C	Pass	2D	Pass
2NT	Pass	4C	Pass
5C	Pass	6D	All Pass

North	East	South	West
2NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

North	East	South	West
	1D	Pass	1S
Pass	3C	Pass	4C
Pass	4D	Pass	4S
Pass	6D	All Pass	

North	East	South	West
	1C	Pass	1H
Pass	6H	Pass	7C
All Pass			

Of course, I have left out the groans, guffaws, and illegal body language that accompanied some of these bids. In the last auction, I laughed so much at the look of disbelief on East's face when West bid seven clubs that I forgot to double. This was despite the fact that I was on lead and in possession of the ace of hearts. As it turned out, it was a top board for us anyway. I felt sorry for East. Six hearts was solid, and no one else had bid the slam. Only the first of the above contracts actually made.

Despite the knock-about nature of the bridge, there obviously must have been some skill involved since the joint winners were both Seniors. Pam Mason and Ken Bateman shared

the prize of the bottle of Deutz. It is difficult to decide on the optimum approach by considering the winning players. One of them is careful and accurate, and the other is aggressive and risk-taking (Tuesday evening regulars will be able to distinguish between the two.)

I decided too late in the evening upon a pretty good strategy – to treat the event as if it were teams. That is, try to get a positive score on each deal, and not to worry too much about overtricks. In the following deal, in trying to gild the lily, I went down in a solid contract.

	♠	KJ	
	♥	K9743	
	♦	AK83	
	♣	J7	
♠	852		♠
♥	AT862		♥
♦	QJ6		♦
♣	82		♣
			♠
			♥
			♦
			♣

I was sitting South and the bidding went:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1H	Pass
1S	Pass	2H	Pass
2S	Pass	4S	All Pass

Not a pretty auction but the final contract looked OK. In fact, after West led the queen of diamonds and East contributed the nine, I was optimistic about making twelve tricks if the trumps behaved. So I duly played off two rounds of clubs and ruffed one in dummy. West discarded a low diamond on the third club, which should have been a danger sign but I carried on regardless, returning to hand by ruffing a heart and ruffing my last club in dummy. On this club, West discarded his jack of diamonds and now I was in trouble. I needed to get back to hand to draw the trumps so ruffed another heart, leaving the position shown overleaf with South on lead:

♠	-	♠	-
♥	K97	♥	A63
♦	K83	♦	Q
♣	-	♦	7
♠	852	♣	Q
♥	AT8		
♦	-		
♣	-		
		♠	QT9
		♥	-
		♦	T54
		♣	-

I had won the first seven tricks but time was running out. I was down to three spades in hand and had no option but to take out trumps. East took her ace and led the queen of clubs. I ruffed this but now had fewer trumps than either of my opponents. Whether I now led diamonds or my last trump made no difference. Either way, East-West would take three of the four last tricks and I was one down.

If I had not been overambitious and just taken out trumps from the start I could have made ten tricks with no problem. Only two other couples were in game.

So the message is: don't be too greedy in individual events. Perhaps I'll get the chance to try out this strategy sometime soon. As someone remarked afterwards, why don't we do this more often? Why not, indeed.

Ray Kemp

Postscript – Table Torque

We hope Wayne does well in the Macau bridge championships, but even if his team wins, we are sure he won't be as complacent when he returns as the fellow in the following story from the web:

Erik Paulsen comes back to his home town, Downey, California. after being a member of the U.S team that has just won a world championship. The local players are surprised to see him at one of their duplicate sessions. But there he is and he begins to play. About midway through the session he is competing in spades against opponents who are bidding hearts. Finally, he writes down 3S confidently, so he won't get doubled. It doesn't work. His LHO doubles. Erik looks at him and says: "Do you know who I am?" The guy says: "Yes I know who you are." Erik says: "Do you know how many master points I have?" The guy says, "No, but do you know how many spades I have?"

Ray Kemp