

Taupo Bridge Club – 50th Anniversary -- September 1970 – September 2020

The club's first playing session took place at Taupo's Lake Hotel on Wednesday September 9, 1970 after an initial meeting in the previous month attended by around 60 locals to gauge interest in setting up a bridge club.

The club moved to premises in the old Taupo Golf Club house in Tauhara Road in 1971. The house was totally destroyed in a fire in July 1990. A new clubhouse that was built on the site re-opened in 1991.

Over the past 50 years, there have been many games of bridge and great friendships formed.

Congratulations to Nicola Chapman and Frances Rankin, the only two remaining inaugural members from 50 years ago! Nicola is a past president, director, dealer and convenor. Frances was on the committee and secretary for several years. We are sure you both have seen a multitude of changes.

We would like to acknowledge the passing of many of our great members. You are loved and missed by so many of us, and you gave us such inspiration and tuition. We miss your smiles and laughter and, of course, your cunning play of the cards. Many of these members made donations including our trophy cabinet, the club sign on the building, art work and of course trophies. The memories and your generosity will not be forgotten!

Congratulations to Barbara Wright, a past president (1980, 81 and 84) and valued player of the club for reaching the wonderful milestone of her 100th birthday in June 2020. The trophy that she donated is played for by the junior members on a Monday.

There have been 25 club presidents over the 50 years, the first being Gordon Melville (1971-1972) to our current president in our 50th year, Chris Younger.

There have been many upgrades to the clubrooms. A heat pump has been installed to replace the electric underfloor heating. The inside of the playing room has been painted with new curtains and blinds. The chairs have been re-upholstered and new tablecloths made. But even becoming more upmarket, a dealing machine was purchased which cut down the amount of time it took to shuffle, deal and write up the hands. Also, the program used gives us a hand record of each board with the makeable contracts.

To go along with the dealing machine, tablets were purchased which send the results of each board straight to the computer, eliminating the need for scorers to input the results, usually the next day. In the past, the C-points were saved on the computer and once a month these were posted to New Zealand Bridge to update members' files. Then with an upgrade, the points were emailed to New Zealand Bridge at the end of each week. Now the C-points go straight to New Zealand Bridge after each session so there is a current update to your points tally after each day you play. The results of each session are also sent to X-Club and this scores each pair against players in many other New Zealand clubs.

As well as the computer upgrades, we now have the new swipe card system for paying our table money. A big thank you goes to Derek Rankin who has spent so many hours devising and upgrading our systems and for always being at the end of the phone when the directors need your help to fix a problem! Thank you, Derek!!!

Bridge lessons are a big part of our club and part of the reason we have so many members. Several years ago, the lessons used to be a part of night classes supported by the government. When this system was abolished, the clubrooms became the venue for these. We now hold beginner lessons, supervised play, improver lessons and intermediate lessons. We thank Rona Driscoll, the current teacher, who has given her time and energy over the last several years.

The club holds four bridge sessions a week – Monday evening, Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday evening and Friday. In the winter, Sunday afternoons have been introduced once a month April through September. We used to hold a few social days during the year, but as the numbers attending these dwindled, we now have our mid-winter dinner at the end of June. Also, we have Melbourne Cup day for which members are encouraged to wear a hat and prizes are given, slightly different from the days when the ladies totally dressed up and also produced wonderful cooked dinners. We do now hold potluck finger food meals on various occasions over the year, and these are always enjoyable.

Our 50th Anniversary is a time to celebrate our achievements, our friendships and most of all our enjoyment of the game of “Bridge.”