

The Newsletter

I shall shortly be moving away from Mosgiel and the Newsletter will require a new editor from the beginning of 2008. The editor has complete freedom in choosing the content and a new editor does not have to follow the format and tradition of their predecessor. If you are interested in the position please have a word with one of the committee members.

Mike

More international signs

ROMAN DOCTOR: Specialist in women and other diseases.

MOSCOW HOTEL: If this is your first visit to the U.S.S.R., you are welcome to it.

NORWEGIAN LOUNGE: Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar.

BUDAPEST ZOO: Please do not feed the animals. If you have any suitable food, give it to the guard on duty.

ACUPULCO HOTEL: The manager has personally passed all the water served here.

JAPANESE HOTEL: colles and heates: If you want just condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.

TOKYO CAR RENTAL FIRM: When passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage then tootle him with vigor.

News Letter 2007

Taieri Bridge Club

Issue Number 130 October 2007



Tournament roundup

The annual New Zealand Bridge Congress took place in Hamilton in September. It was an 8 day bridge extravaganza with almost 600 participants - wall to wall bridge at all levels. In the two days preceding the Congress there were inter-provincial competitions between the provinces: Otago/Southland, Canterbury, Central District, Wellington, Auckland, and Waikato Bays. The competitions were organised as: youth, intermediate, senior, women, and open.

Judy Robertson represented our province for the women, and Mike Atkinson for the seniors. Our fortunes were, as ever, a mixture of heartbreak and high hopes. When the dust had settled the women's team had come second and the senior's third (with the youth and intermediates both second and the open team a disappointing fifth). Both the seniors and the women started well, then faded markedly, and recovered towards the end.

Hands from the interprovincials

I make no apology for giving examples of success stories only. These hands are from the final round of the round-robin which saw good wins by both the women's team and the senior's.

	♠ K T 8 2	
	♥ 5	
	♦ Q T 7	
	♣ A K J 8 2	
♠ A Q 9 4		♠ 7 5 3
♥ J 9 8 2		♥ A T 7 4 3
♦ K 8		♦ J 9 6 5 4
♣ Q T 7		♣ void
	♠ J 6	
	♥ K Q 6	
	♦ A 3 2	
	♣ 9 6 5 4 3	

My partner David Stewart opened the West cards with a precision 1♦, an artificial bid showing 11-15 HCP with no 5 card major. Somewhat timidly North passed and so I was able to bid 1♥. David raised to 2♥ which caused me to think beyond my means. We had at most 20 HCP points between us and yet if David had diamonds..... Anyway, I eventually made a game try by bidding 3♦ and David jumped to 4♥. When I saw dummy I estimated the chances of success at around 50% but, as you will

penultimate session I played against one sweet lady who held

♠ A K Q J 8 2; ♥ 7 5; ♦ A Q; ♣ A K Q

and opened this very good 25 HCP hand as 1♠ only!

It proved impossible to recover even though her partner held

♠ 9 6; ♥ A K J 2; ♦ K T 9 8; ♣ 8 7 6

and they bid to 6NT only. But perhaps the more astonishing thing was that, in the entire field of the best bridge players in the country, many more failed to bid the grand slam with their combined 36 HCP - everyone was evidently tired.

The congress finished with a huge dinner on Saturday night (followed by dancing for those who were inclined). During the dinner there were prize presentations and many thanks to all the organisers - all conducted in spirited humour and laughter.

Next year the congress will again be held in September. The majority of entrants seem to feel that this is a better time than July, partly because "Congress flu" is not so much in evidence. It was wonderful to see so many bridge players at play and learn some lessons from the top players. I look forward very much to my next congress. In the meantime there is the Queenstown congress this month (19-22 October) to prepare for!

Taieri at Hamilton

Four members of the club attended the National Bridge Congress in Hamilton in September: Derek Malloch, Donna Ruwhiu, Judy Robertson, and Mike Atkinson. Derek was there as a national director. Donna, Judy and Mike played together in the NZ Teams event (in a 6 person team with Patricia Haden, Adrien Dever, and David Stewart from the Otago club) and finished well above halfway in a strong field.

Judy and Adrien played in the NZ pairs and suffered a heart-breaking moment. After the two qualifying sessions they were placed a very creditable 105= and the top 104 pairs then went in to the final. They had therefore just missed - but worse was to come. One of the top 104 pairs had to withdraw. The two pairs which were placed 105th then had to toss a coin for a place in the final - and Judy and Adrien lost the toss.

We all enjoyed the bridge very much but returned home very tired. More than 60 boards per day for 8 days in a row is gruelling and I personally found the hands going round and round my head through the night - especially the ones that I had mangled.

Although the standard of play was generally very high tiredness often took its toll. In the

see, too many things were wrong and I was eventually one off. At the other table our North-South team-mates had made 3NT so we gained substantially on the board.

In the following hand (non-vulnerable against vulnerable) I had no agonising decisions at all.

♠ Q J T 8 7 6 3 2

♥ 4

♦ 3 2

♣ J 3

♠ 5 4

♥ K 7 6 5

♦ K Q 9

♣ A Q 5 4

♠ A K

♥ A Q 8 2

♦ A J 7 5

♣ 9 8 2

♠ 9

♥ J T 9 3

♦ T 8 6 4

♣ K T 7 6

David opened 1NT as West (13-15 HCP) and aspirations of slam danced before my eyes. These were rudely squashed when North overcalled 4♠! I had a clearcut penalty double of course and the contract went four off for 1100. At the other table the East-West opponents had bid to 6♥ which failed unluckily on the bad heart break. Oddly enough East-West can make 6NT on a club-heart squeeze (details omitted in the interests of brevity and levity).

Sinclair and Minnie at Congress

Mr Sinclair Whitlands had managed to persuade his retiring partner, Miss Minnie van Driver, to play in the Hamilton Congress. Persuasion had been difficult because Minnie felt it would be highly inappropriate for them to share a room together, and her modest proprieties had resulted in them having separate rooms in different buildings. Nevertheless they had spent some hours together on the journey north and Sinclair had impressed on Minnie the need for a rather more aggressive style than she was wont to cultivate. So, when this hand arose in the second round of the New Zealand Teams, Minnie took these lessons to heart.

	♠ T 9 8 5 3	
	♥ Q T 6 5 2	
	♦ 4	
	♣ 7 6	
♠ A 7 4		♠ K Q J 6 2
♥ A J 9 3		♥ K 8 4
♦ J T 6 5 3		♦ 9 8
♣ K		♣ Q T 4
	♠ void	
	♥ 7	
	♦ A K Q T 2	
	♣ A J 9 8 5 3 2	

Sitting South as dealer she opened 2NT which, in their system showed both minors. Poor Sinclair!

He had little choice but to bid 3♣. The opponents competed in spades and Minnie gamely (even slamly) bid 6♣! After all, wasn't this exactly the sort of courage that Sinclair was trying to engender in her? East doubled thunderously.

Somewhat shaken Sinclair was favoured with the K♠ lead. At least this was better than a trump lead. Was there anything that could be done? Gritting his teeth, his jaw firm, his gaze resolute Sinclair set about minimising the damage. The contract was hopeless so all that mattered was not to go to pieces. He ruffed the opening lead and played A♦ followed by a diamond ruff in his own hand. Then a spade ruff back to dummy and a further diamond ruff (over-ruffed by East) left the defenders scoring two trump tricks (including the ruff) and the A♥. Down 2 for -300, surely a disaster.

But all was well. For their team-mates had played 2♠ doubled making! (*Editor's note: Sinclair had done well to retain his equanimity. Had he tried to draw trumps before ruffing diamonds he could have been down 4 for -800 and an aggregate loss on the board.*)

Even before knowing the result Sinclair gravely complimented Minnie on her bid. "A brave bid, fair lady, that only one steeped in courage and judgement would make. My compliments on your fortitude and resolve." 5