



## **60<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY EDITION**

Plus...

- Presidents' messages
- Winners & Interclub teams
- Hutt Multi-grade Tournament
- Improving accessibility – bidding boxes
- Birthday celebration, memories and the AGM in pictures
- Thank you sponsors

# **Finesse**

## **April 2026**

Newsletter of the Hutt Bridge Club



**Hutt  
Bridge Club**

## Welcome to our April Finesse, 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday edition and the first edition for 2026



**Kia ora koutou.**

Lesley here, signing out as president. I am very pleased that my good friend Doug O'Halloran is your new President.

Our AGM went very well on Sunday – it was a special one, celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club. A much enjoyed and well attended event, with club member Sharon Bowen doing the honours, cutting the big birthday cake. Sharon's father Bob Watson was one of the two players who took the initiative to set up the club in 1966. Thank you, Bob.

I haven't played much bridge over the summer, largely because I've been pursuing another of my passions – the great outdoors, and in this case, cycling. With my husband Rick, in February and March we cycled from Picton to Bluff via the Tour Aotearoa route. We cycled for 19 days, had only one wet day, saw lots of beautiful scenery, and met many interesting people on the way.

It was a privilege to be your president over the last three years. Thank you for all of your support. See you around the tables!

*Lesley*



**Kia ora – Hi**

At last Sunday's AGM, I achieved something truly remarkable: I was elected President of the Hutt Bridge Club, unopposed. Yes, that's right – not a single soul leapt forward to wrestle the role from my grasp. Some might call it a landslide victory; others might call it everyone else taking one strategic step backwards. Either way, I'll take the win.

I'm delighted (and only mildly alarmed) to take on the presidency for the coming year. I promise to wield my new powers responsibly – no sudden rule changes, no compulsory lessons on 'multi 2 of a minor opening bids', and absolutely no renaming the club after myself. Probably will continue to try and keep Making HBC Great Again though.

A big thank-you Lesley and the committee of the past year, who are all stepping forward again with the addition of Simon Webber and Esavra Delaney. Their hard work and Lesley's guidance and leadership mean I'm stepping into a role that's already on very solid footing. You'll all appreciate with me that past presidents of our club have all continued to provide welcome leadership and mahi to keep the club growing in spirit and strength.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to work with our brilliant committee, directors, volunteers and other members to keep the club thriving. If we can continue playing great bridge, laughing often, and embracing the many opportunities for improvements our committed membership provides, I'll consider my term to have been fun and successful.

Cheers

*Doug*

## SERIES WINNERS



January	Event	Winners
Monday	New Year pairs	1 <sup>st</sup> equal: Caryl Turner & Ian Possenniskie 1 <sup>st</sup> equal: Ruth Brucker & Ian Possenniskie
Tuesday	Te Tau Hou Pairs	Sam MacDonald & Jacob Pilalis
Wednesday	Ava Pairs	AJ Jennings & Karen Grandy
Thursday	Ruff 'n Sluff Pairs	Simon Webber & Jeffrey Craanen
Friday	January Pairs	Ren Davies & John Ansell
February	Event	Winner
Monday	Daysh Pairs	Ruth Brucker & Candice Ng
Tuesday	Bob Scott Retirement Village Pairs	Madeleine Askew & Tani Blackburn
Wednesday	Woodvale Pairs	Peter Hawkes & David Moss
Thursday	Cleopatra Pairs	Jacob Pilalis & Jeffry Craanen
Friday	Kings Pairs	Deidre Stallinger & Jeffry Craanen
March	Event	Winner
Monday	The Three Walkers Pairs	Kevin Bateman & Simon Grant
Tuesday	Tuesday Swiss Pairs	Madeleine Askew & Andrew Cushnie
Wednesday	Bob Scott Retirement Village Pairs	Peter Blucher & TJ Dolstra
Thursday	Raldi Inc Pairs	Eleisha Hawkins & Jeffry Craanen
Friday	Huia Pairs	Simon Webber & Lynne Bruce

## AROUND THE REGION

Tournament	Congratulations to...	Placing
<b>Hutt Multi-grade</b> (feature on the next page)	• Charles Ker & Anthony Ker (ex-Hutt)	Winners
	• Jeffry Craanen & Deidre Stallinger	2 <sup>nd</sup> place
	• Simon Webber & Marian Loader	5 <sup>th</sup> place
	• Jeffry Craanen & Deidre Stallinger	Top Open-Intermediate
	• Nebojsa Djorovic & Ellie Molloy	Top Open-Junior
	• Stephanie Grummit & Angus Kirtlan	Top Intermediate-Junior
	• Cecelia Henderson & Elle Abel	Top Novices
Wellington Intermediate Pairs	Ellie Malloy & Kim Tate	5 <sup>th</sup>
Wellington Junior Pairs	Chris Manson & Claire Stainton	5 <sup>th</sup>



## HBC INTERCLUB TEAMS for 2026



Intermediate	
<b>Pronk</b>	Ian Pronk, Genevieve Pronk, Jacob Pilalis, Andeana Pilalis
<b>Craanen</b>	Jeffry Craanen, Simon Webber, Eleisha Hawkins, David Haines
<b>Tucker</b>	Nathan Tucker, Daniel Marks, Neil Sargisson, Peter Snethlage, Diana Snethlage, Doug O'Halloran
<b>Gallaher</b>	Margaret Gallaher, Mel Rowe, Stephanie Grummitt, Amy Haste, Angus Kirtlan
<b>Banks</b>	Angela Banks, Ren Davies, Jill Herman, Robert Kusel, Kathy Graves
Junior	
<b>Fulton</b>	James Fulton, Anne Harland, Brendan Carr, Karen Grandy, Sharmini Jones
<b>Kane</b>	Toni Kane, Jill Nickel, Debbie Komarkowski, Sarah Gilbert, Sharmini Jones



## Hutt Multigrade Tournament - 1 March 2026

Back on 1 March, we held our first major tournament of the year, the Hutt Multigrade which was very kindly sponsored by Gee and Hickton Funeral directors. It was lovely to have Liz Pereira from Gee and Hickton to present prizes at the end of the day's play.

There were 36 pairs playing, 11 full Hutt teams, 2 Hutt/other teams, and the rest came Marlborough, Wellington, Palmerston North, Waikato, Feilding, Taranaki, Masterton, South Wairarapa, Victoria and our neighbour in Upper Hutt.

The day finished a little late because for the first time in many years a small Committee had to be established to consider an appeal against a Director's ruling, before scoring can be finalised.

The winning team was Anthony Ker, Charles Ker and his sorting and bidding assistant the very proud **Esavra Delaney**.

We also congratulate Cecelia Henderson and Elle Abel, top novices who were both playing in their first ever tournament.

*Anthony Ker giving his victory speech*



*Deidre Stallinger, Liz Pereira, Doug O'Halloran, Jeffry Craanen*



*Nebojsa Djorovic,  
Ellie Molloy*



*Cecelia Henderson,  
Elle Abel*

## Improving accessibility to bridge – Bidding boxes

Bridge is a game for everyone. Clubs work hard to make playing easier for people who may face challenges. Accommodations should always be made so the game is inclusive and accessible to everyone. This can include 'seating rights' and having other tools available like card holders and bidding boxes.



Soon you may be at a table where bidding boxes need to be used. We hope you find the following information helpful, so you're prepared if the time comes. Your director should also be able to explain how to use the bidding box if you're unsure.

### Making a call or bid

- To make a bid, select the appropriate card by placing your thumb on it and pulling out the entire stack of lower-ranking cards beneath it. For example, when bidding 1♥, you'll remove 1♣ and 1♦ along with 1♥ and place it in front of you with the desired bid (1♥) on top. Ensure your bid faces outward for the other players to see. Lower bids will be a slim stack, while slam bids will be thick.
- As you make each new bid, you place it to the right of the previous bid, so the bids are laid out in a horizontal row.
- For a pass, double, or redouble, place the card as though it were a bid in the same row as the bids.
- When placing a bid or call don't cover the previous, put it slightly to the right.
- See the image below for a sample auction.



This is how the bids would look in front of you. Notice how they face the opponents, and how the Double is inserted into the auction in the same way it would be if you were speaking out loud.

### When is a call deemed to be made?

A call is deemed to be made when the bidding card is removed from the bidding box with apparent intent. Players should decide which call they are going to make before touching any card. To hesitate between choices is *unauthorised information* to Partner.

### Correction of call

A call may be changed without penalty *only* if it is inadvertent, i.e. a mechanical error, not a change of mind. The player must change or attempt to change

the inadvertent call without pause for thought from the moment that he REALISES he has made the wrong call. If LHO made a call before the change was allowed, he may withdraw that choice and replace it with another without penalty.

### STOP and ALERT Cards

- The STOP card should be placed on the table before any jump bid and stay there for about ten seconds. The next player may not call until it is removed and should wait about ten seconds however fast it has been removed.
- When the Alert card is required, it should be taken from the box and shown to both opponents (making sure that it has been seen by both) before being replaced in the box.

### Incorrectly exposed bidding card

Calls not made should not be visible. An incorrectly exposed call can be subject to penalty if the Director judges that an opponent has been misled.

### At the end of the auction

The bidding cards should remain in place until the opening lead has been made face down and all explanations have been obtained, after which the final bid is placed on the traveller and the other bids should be returned to their boxes.

### At the end of trick one

It is the duty of **players** to make sure the final exposed bid on the traveller is concealed by turning it over. (The same as a bidding pad).

### At the end of play

The final bid on the traveller is turned over, exposing the final bid, and East checks it has been correctly entered into the BridgeMate. The bidding cards are then returned to the box.



## 2026 AGM and Birthday Celebration

What a fantastic afternoon on 27 March 2026 celebrating 60 years of the Hutt Bridge Club.

Bridge play kicked off at 2.30pm with 12 tables of enthusiastic bridge players tackling 22 boards — and loving every minute of it.

By 4.45pm the bar was open, drinks were flowing, and the atmosphere lifted another notch.

At 5pm, members gathered for the AGM, where Lesley Haines was warmly thanked for her outstanding leadership over the past three years as President. "It's been a blast! I'm delighted to be leaving the Club in such capable hands," said Lesley.

The baton now passes to Doug O'Halloran, with Simon Webber as Deputy. The committee was re-elected unchanged, with two additional people coming on board.



*Lesley Haines, Ruth Brucker*

A lovely moment saw flowers presented to Ruth in recognition of her dedication to the Club, and in a touch of humour, Doug was gifted a Club shirt — despite famously not wanting one last year!

It was special to have extra-long-time members Chris and Heather Jared there to celebrate, and a real highlight hearing from

Sharon Bowen, her mother was a life member and whose father Bob helped start the Club 60 years ago, before she cut the cake... which vanished in record time!

The day's activities all wrapped up around 6pm — a wonderful celebration and a great reminder of what a special club this is.

Thank you to all those who work tirelessly behind the scenes and make everything run smoothly.

*Janet Paape*



*Ann Barnett, Stephanie Grummitt, James Fulton*



*Most of the 2026 Committee – see below for the line-up*



*Sharon Bowen*

2026 Committee	
<b>President</b>	Doug O'Halloran
<b>Vice president</b>	Simon Webber
<b>Treasurer</b>	James Fulton
<b>Committee</b>	Kathryn Badcock, Madeleine Askew, Steve Denholm, Toni Kane, Janet Paape, Sharmini Jones, Esavra Delaney



## Continuing our history

In our golden jubilee year back in 2016, our programme book featured *'Fifty Years On'*, a timeline of some significant events in the club's history. It drew on material compiled by past Life Member the late Doreen Watson. Doreen's late husband Bob along with the late Eric McCarroll, led the charge to form a bridge club for the Hutt Valley.

In this article, we've included the timeline and added a few more highlights of the past ten years.



*Doreen Watson*

**Early 1960s:** Encouraged by Hutt residents who were members of Wellington bridge clubs, Bob Watson and Eric McCarroll began investigating the possibility of forming a bridge club in Lower Hutt.

**February 1966:** Fifty bridge players turned up for an evening of duplicate bridge at the first of three trial runs held at the Shandon Golf club House. The journey had begun.

**March 1966:** The Hutt Bridge Club was officially inaugurated. It had 102 foundation members. Fifty years on, Doreen Watson and Margaret Fyfe were still active club members. A third foundation member, June Small, was no longer an active bridge player but continued to support the club as an affiliate member.

**July 1967:** The club moved into its own premises at 10 Huia Street in a building leased from the Hutt City Council.

**Late 1960s:** The club rapidly grew, leading to four playing sessions – Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Friday afternoons.

**1969:** the club established a grading system under which members were graded according to their abilities and played at sessions allocated for each grade.

**June 1969:** Fire broke out at the Huia Street premises, resulting in irreparable damage. The club set up temporary premises in Lower Hutt's NIMU insurance company building.

**End of 1969:** The club took up a lease on council-owned premises in Queens Road. From the time of the Huia Road fire, in June to the opening of the Queens Road premises six short months later, the club did not miss a single playing session – a tribute

to member's hard work, good organisation and sterling dedication.

**1970s:** Membership rose to more than 250, a part-time administrator/secretary was employed, tournaments became regular events and computer-aided scoring replaced manual scoring. Tournament success and steady membership growth meant that, in the space of 10 short years from its inception, Hutt had become one of the leading bridge clubs in the Wellington region.

**1980:** Hutt became the first bridge club in the Wellington region to purchase its own computer.

**1982:** The club purchased its own premises, a two-storied commercial building in Park Avenue, Naenae. It then leased the building for the next four years.

**1986:** The club moved from Queens Road to Park Avenue.

**1991:** The club celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**2007:** The club sold the top floor of its Park Avenue premises.

**2010:** The electronic scorers – BridgeMates – were introduced, not without some protest.

**2011:** Real-time scoring – where progress is continually updated during the sessions and displayed on a large screen for all to see – was introduced. Initially there was some resistance to its introduction, but over time, members have become more familiar with the new innovation.

**2012:** The club instituted a major change to its playing environment, opening up all sessions to all grades, to provide more opportunities to play bridge and in doing so, get more value from their membership fees.

*[continued]*



**2016 and beyond:** In the 1960 and 1970s, bridge enjoyed huge popularity and clubs like Hutt prospered as a result. As we move into our second half century, the club is facing new challenges. Bridge's popularity is waning, reflected in nationally declining club membership numbers. Younger people, asset rich and time poor, are less interested in taking up a recreation that takes time to learn and time to play. On the other hand, they can afford the new computer and internet-based technologies that give them immediate access to a wide range of leisure activities. After all, who needs three like-minded companions, a deck of cards, a table and four chairs when you can entertain yourself on your mobile phone?

Despite this, bridge enthusiasts believe there will always be people who enjoy challenges of the world's best and most absorbing card game and clubs, like our own, providing and infrastructure to support their chose leisure activity.

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**2000s:** The club moved to teaching bridge using the NZ Bridge lessons and online resources, alongside other supplements to help learners.

**2020s:** We continue to have a big focus on teaching and improving players, with two ten-week sets of lessons each year, alongside revision classes (for learners), improvers classes and occasional seminars.

With the national restrictions resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic many people began playing bridge online.

Membership didn't wane too much. The Wellington Region interclub competition continues to be played online, successfully, with many benefiting from not travelling.

**2024:** The club, in need of external signage, undertook a brand refresh. Much thought was put into the new logo which was created especially for us. The motif is a Mangopere / spade. It's the symbol for a hammerhead shark in Māori, which represents strength, leadership, determination and a fighting spirit. Although there are other meanings, these best describe the competitive and social aspect of bridge.

The colours introduce the green of the hills and the blue of Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River and Wellington Harbour. The logo gives nod to the spade and blue of our previous logo, and the stylised cards and colours also acknowledge New Zealand bridge. There's a diamond as a dot over the letter 'i' in the wordmark

**2026:** To mark our 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday the size of our Honours Board was increased by craftsman and new Vice President Simon Webber!





25 March 2026

## Memories of the older times

I decided to learn bridge and went to the club which was in the transport centre in the Hutt, and the headmaster of Hutt High took the lesson. He spoke all evening, even talked about slams. No cards! I found it completely beyond me and didn't go back. I took my lessons at Kairangi Bridge Club. There could have been at least 50 people at the first lesson.

I joined the Hutt Club in 1969/70. We dressed up to go to Bridge. I remember wearing long skirts also, for warmth.

You had to be seated 10 minutes before play - you could be sent home if not.

I lived next door to Sadie Williams\* who practically single handed insisted the clubrooms be extended after we bought the premises. She was a force to be reckoned with - a very determined lady!

There were times we used both downstairs rooms to play Tuesday bridge and Director stood between the two rooms. Not only was it very full of tables but the lack of air made it necessary to spread out, and of course smoking was allowed at that time. I used to come home from bridge and I would undress in the bathroom, put my clothes in the bath and have a shower to get rid of the smell of smoke on my skin. People had a bad habit that when they were going to play the hand, first of all they lit up a cigarette then they put it in the ashtray and the smoke drifted over the table as they played the hand. They didn't smoke the cigarette until they had completed playing the hand. As time went on we were allowed to refuse them permissions to smoke.

We used to have social days of bridge for different occasions.

I remember seeing ladies take a lace hanky from their bag and put it on their chair seat and sit on it when they played a hand at these functions. The hanky was for luck I understand.

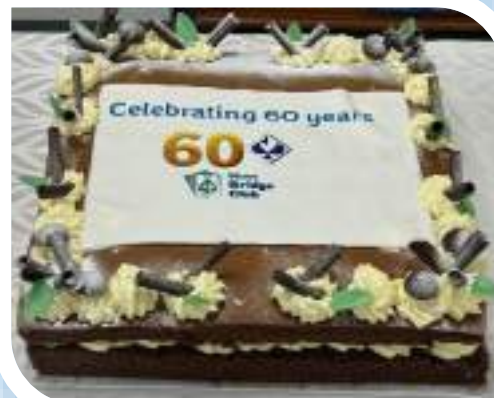
The supper stop at the Transport Centre Bridge club was a regular fixture and it was quite a loss when the supper break stopped. We enjoyed that 10 minute break. After that the members brought their thermos' and stowed them under their chairs.

Bev Lust

\*Note: the Sadie Williams Memorial Pairs are played throughout the year on Monday afternoons.

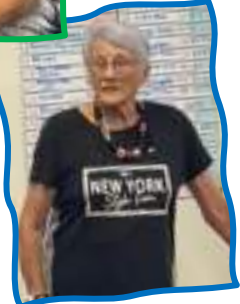


LOWER HUTT



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

60



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Finesse is the newsletter of the Hutt Bridge Club

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