



In this edition

- News from the Committee
- Winners – series, region & country
- "6 Days of Bridge Nirvana", NZ Bridge Congress 2025
- Treasurer's report
- Helpers needed for 2026
- Director's department
 - Ralph Robertshawe
 - Candice Ng
 - Simon Grant
 - Simon Webber
- Prizegiving Pics
- Thank you sponsors



Finesse

December 2025

Newsletter of the Hutt Bridge Club



**Hutt
Bridge Club**

News from the Committee

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou.

Warm greetings on these sometimes summer days, and to our December Finesse.

I hope you've got some summer plans in place, whether you're an active or a laid-back relaxer. I'm looking forward to time in the Marlborough Sounds – walking, swimming, boating and fishing.

Since our September Finesse, and alongside our regular sessions we've hosted:

- the annual Hutt/Upper Hutt Challenge
- our heat for the NZ-wide Loveblock pairs
- our In-House Fun tournament, sponsored by the Ron Fisher Trust.

We also had a contingent of 17 Hutt players at the NZ Bridge Congress in Palmerston North. More on those inside this issue.

Our improver sessions with Kathryn and Paul Badcock have concluded and we're pleased that a group of Wednesday players will be stepping up to Tuesday/Thursday nights in 2026.

In "committee land" we've set your subs for next year. There's more on our 2025 finances from James Fulton, our Treasurer coming up. We also published the 2026 Programme book.

In 2026 you'll meet our three new directors – Simon Webber, Candice Ng and Simon Grant. Read their profiles in this issue. We also say a big **THANK YOU** to Ralph Robertshawe, who's 'retiring' from regular directing after several years with us at Hutt Club. Ralph, we'll still enjoy your twinkly smile and kind manner as we meet you as a player around our tables.

And another big **THANK YOU** to all the people who've helped voluntarily this year, mostly behind the scenes, like our dealers, playing committees, dealing machine cleaner, library manager, bar tenders, kitchen helpers and all those who've baked for us.

Enjoy the last week of our bridge year, and have a safe and happy Christmas.

Ma te wa

Lesley



SERIES WINNERS

September	Event	Winners
Monday	Jan Devereux Pairs	John Ansell & PJ McWatters
Tuesday	Pitoitoti Pairs	Robin Hill & Profulla Hegde
Wednesday	Jason Brown Plumbing & Gas Repairs	Lyn Howes & AJ
Thursday	Overtrick Pairs	Jacob Plialis & Ian Pronk
Friday	Doreen Watson Memorial Pairs	Lynne Bruce & John Ansell
October	Event	Winner
Monday	Park Avenue Pairs	Candice Ng & Vivienne Gillespie
Tuesday	Tuesday Teams	Eleisha Hawkins, Walk Davis, Robin Hill, Lynne Bruce, Vil Gravis
Wednesday	Pyramid Pairs	TJ Dolstra & Brendan Carr
Thursday	Precision Pairs	Madeleine Askew & Deirdre Stallinger
Friday	Shona McFarlane Retirement Village Pairs	John Ansell & PJ McWatters
November	Event	Winner
Monday	Athlone Pairs	Cathy Gilmour & Steve Denholm
Tuesday	Eric McCarroll Memorial Pairs	Madeleine Askew & Paul Badcock
Wednesday	Fairfield Pairs	Amy Haste & Angela Banks
Thursday	Trump Coup Pairs	Ken Barnett & Juliette Lister
Friday	Sherwood Pairs	John Ansell & Candice Ng



AROUND THE REGION

Tournament	Congratulations to...	Placing
Wellington Region Interclub	Jeffrey Craanen, Deirdre Stallinger, Madeleine Askew, Marian Loader, Simon Webber	1 st Open Restricted Grade
Wellington Labour Day Match Point Swiss Pairs	Ellie Molloy & Nebojsa Djorovic	6 th overall Top open/junior pair
Paraparaumu Multigrade Tournament	AJ & David Haines	Top intermediate/junior pair
Kapi-Mana Multigrade Tournament	Simon Webber & Stephanie Grummitt	4 th overall Top intermediate/junior pair
Kapi-Mana Multigrade Tournament	Tani Blackburn & Martyn Hartigan	5 th overall Top open/junior pair
South Wairarapa Multigrade	Tani Blackburn & Partner	1 st
South Wairarapa Multigrade	Ian Pronk & Genevieve Pronk	Top intermediate/junior pair
Levin Multigrade Swiss Pairs	Eleisha Hawkins & Partner	Best open/intermediate pair
Wellington Sixes	Ellie Molloy, Ruth Gilmore, Ruth Brucker & teammates	2 nd
Masterton Multigrade	Eleisha Hawkins & Partner	1 st

AROUND THE COUNTRY – NZ BRIDGE CONGRESS, 8-15 November 2025

Congress	Congratulations to...	Placing
Intermediate Match Point Swiss Pairs	David Haines & Sam Macdonald	5th
Intermediate Match Point Swiss Pairs	Ian Pronk & Genevieve Pronk	8th
Goulash Pairs	Ruth Brucker & Marilyn Miller	1st



6 DAYS OF BRIDGE



Excellent location. Excellent venue. it was great meeting up with Bridge friends from over the years. More Intermediates and Juniors would be great.

It was great after twenty years - lovely catching up with old friends. Venue was great, well organized.

It was a lot of fun meeting players from all over the country and getting to know people from our club better. The players were not necessarily the best in the country - just players wanting to play their best bridge!



Congress was the best week of the whole year! It was great having so many Hutt people there to debrief all the crazy hands with.

Congress was tiring and a reality check, but the really positive side was the meeting with other Bridge players from all around NZ - sharing laughs, woes and good advice.

Enjoyed it so much, we've already made plans for the next one! Certainly worth attending.



I had a great time playing six days at the bridge congress finishing in the top third in two events and feeling lucky to have such a lovely

Congress - loved the scale and excitement of the events especially the experience of being in a room with 250+ players with every table playing the same boards at the same time...the so-called 'barometer movement'.



Overall Financial Performance to 31 October 2025

I'm pleased to report that 10 months into the 2025 financial year, the club's finances are in good shape. At end of October, we recorded a year-to-date surplus of \$15,079 compared to a budgeted surplus of \$2,735. The healthy financial position has allowed us to retain the member subscription at \$180 for 2026.

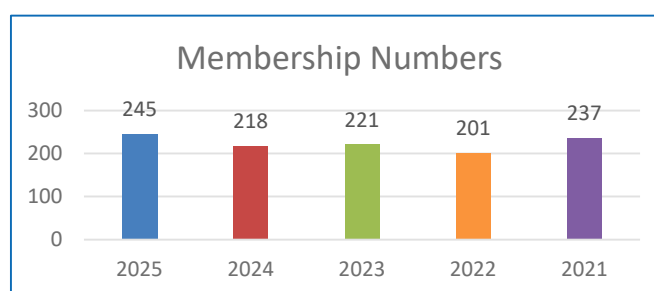
As a not-for-profit organisation, we do our best to generate sufficient income to cover our costs. Any surplus is used to cover the unexpected, like repairs and maintenance, less frequent or capital expenses such as furniture, carpet, dealing machines, Bridgemates, computer hard and software.

In the last four financial years, we've recorded a surplus for two years and a deficit for two years.

	2025 Budget	2024	2023	2022	2021
Income	\$163,829	\$162,212	\$151,731	\$137,777	\$136,193
Expenses	\$163,186	\$155,618	\$155,710	\$128,593	\$148,437
Surplus/Deficit	\$643	\$6,594	-\$3,978	\$9,184	-\$12,244

Membership Subscriptions

The club has 245 members, which is higher than pre-covid levels. A total of 52 learners attended the February and June lessons this year, compared to 35 in 2024. always, the challenge is to convert these learners into regular players in the coming year.



As

Sources of Income

While table money and subscriptions are our traditional revenue streams, we've been able to generate additional income from rents and fundraisers.

In recent years, we've secured a long term rental agreement with Hosanna Harvest Group, which brings around \$30,000 a year.

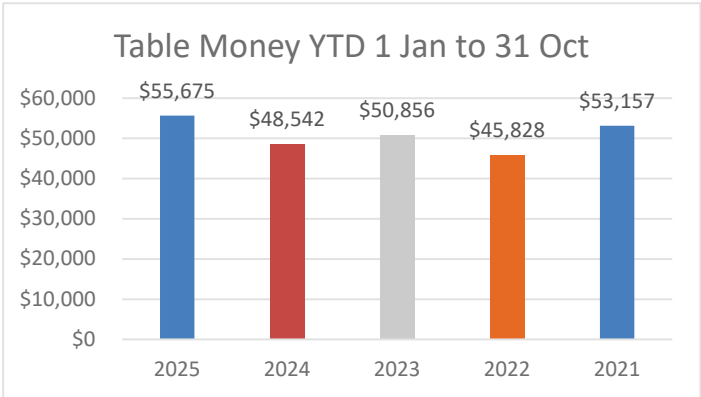
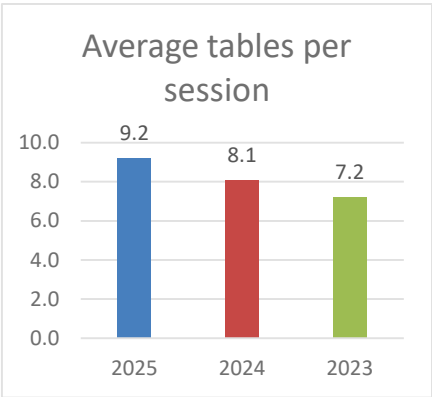
Fundraisers also bring in extra income, including our adapted Saturday Lotto draw (which raises about \$4,500 a year), and the \$2,000 raised from May's Fashion Fundraiser (thanks to our award-winning fashion retailer and committee member Janet Paape).

The table below shows the main sources of income for the club:

	2025 Budget	2024	2023	2022	2021
Table Money	\$56,700	\$56,297	\$58,411	\$53,730	\$61,310
Subscriptions	\$24,900	\$25,448	\$25,035	\$24,996	\$25,950
Rental	\$36,815	\$35,906	\$31,965	\$19,750	\$15,930
Sponsorship	\$8,124	\$7,200	\$6,550	\$3,700	\$5,500
Fundraising	\$15,300	\$14,711	\$8,423	\$4,099	\$1,286
Other Revenue	\$21,990	\$22,649	\$21,348	\$35,202	\$26,216
Total	\$163,829	\$162,212	\$151,731	\$141,477	\$136,193

Table Money Income

The Club’s largest revenue earner is table money. This year our average table numbers is significantly up on the previous two years, and table money income is higher than in each of the previous four years. We’re projecting table money income of \$65,000 for the 2025 year, which would be 15% ahead of budget.



Gross Profit and

Expenditure

While number of members and revenue continues to grow, the club’s costs continue to increase, including insurance, rates and repairs and maintenance.

Balance sheet

Overall, the Club has a healthy balance sheet with working capital (all current assets including bank and term deposits) at \$107,484 compared to \$77,959 at the same time last year.



Helpers needed for 2026

PLAYING COMMITTEES

Who unlocks the clubrooms, puts the billy on, gets out the bikkies and sets the playing tables? That’s the job of the playing committee.

They have one or two extra responsibilities too, like being in charge should anything untoward happen on playing day and reading the notices (although that could be delegated if you’re a bit freaked out by that bit).

We need some more people to be available, so are calling for volunteers if you regularly attend a particular session. If you’d like to help next year, get in touch with Ruth in the office.

Thanks

P.S. you may be rewarded!

WEBSITE DESIGN

We know we can make our website look and work a bit better for us, but we need the right person to do or help with it.

Do you know about website designing or know someone who is, or even someone who’s training and wants a project for practice?

Get in touch with Ruth, or someone on the committee, to set up a chat about it.

DEALERS WANTED

If you can spare some time to help with dealing the cards, give Ruth a call to check what’s required.

Director's department

In this newsletter we're saying thank you to Ralph Robertshawe, who's retiring from the rulebook, but not as a relentless rival at the bridge table. We're also introducing you to three people, all well known to [most of] you, who've agreed to change their name to 'Director Please', while they're managing sessions for us. We hope you enjoy their profiles as they tell you little more about themselves. But first, here are some words from Ralph.

Ralph Robertshawe, retiring 'referee'

I was born into a family of 6 children with bridge-playing parents. My mother believed card and board games demanding skill (but not overly-chance games like Monopoly) were allowed. Chess, draughts, cribbage, bezique, ludo and 500 were the ideal educational learning games but the master game was bridge because it involved a partnership as well as being social entertainment.

In winter in the days before TV, the younger ones were allowed to watch the older ones for a while. Gradually we were admitted to the playing numbers. We all learned simple bridge first with honour tricks, the newer high card count, then the addition of a point for a doubleton, 2 for a singleton and 3 for a void. In auction bridge you scored what you made, not only what you had called, so calling 2 but making 6 scored mini slam. Only as we met bridge outside the family did we learn more sophisticated bidding systems and contract scoring.

I met my life partner when I was 22 and we've been playing bridge together ever since. We married in 1960 and our first tournament win was on a ship sailing to England in 1962 – much to the annoyance of the much older and experienced pairs on the 6-week voyage!

I joined my first club when we got back to Masterton in 1967, playing just once a week and the occasional Saturday afternoon or evening tournament and have been 'sold' on the game ever since. I prefer it to reading or watching TV any day!

Sadly, Di could only play socially due to family and work commitments so only joined a club when we retired to Taupo in 1997, playing on rainy days when golf was not on, but still playing socially as well. I've played at the Masterton club, the Waikato club in Hamilton and at the Auckland Bridge Club in Remuera.

On retirement when we both joined the Taupo Bridge Club and I became a director. When we came to Petone in late 2019 we joined the Hutt Bridge Club. On learning I was an experienced director I was asked to join the team. I so appreciate and enjoy the game that I've taught bridge at various clubs and the schools I have been chaplain to over the last 60-odd years and never tire of its challenge to the old brain and the fun of competition.

I will miss directing (and won't avoid a fill in if required), but I'm starting to feel my aging and sometimes weary body. With some keen new additions to the directors' ranks coming up, I have asked the club to allow me to step back.

I wish all at the Hutt Bridge Club the fun and joy I've enjoyed throughout my life and thank you all for your acceptance of me as one of your directors and the friendships I've made. I hope the Club will continue to flourish and offer newcomers the same welcome you extended to us. **Go well,**

Ralph





Candice Ng, eager new director

My husband and I grew up in Hong Kong and moved to NZ in 1990. After living in a busy and over-populated city, I enjoy the simple and quiet lifestyle here. I brought my son up here and I became his study assistant when he was at school for his extra academic work and competitions – I didn't have much leisure time of my own. When he was at high school, I mentioned to him that I'd played bridge socially when I was at high school in Hong Kong, camping on beaches or on top of mountains, under the starry canopy. In 2010, when he was in Year 11, he found information on Hutt Bridge Club, bought me some bridge books, and encouraged me to join.

I attended the learners' lessons taught by Robin Hill and the late Linda Canton, where I rebuilt a solid foundation. I then joined the Wednesday morning development session, run by Alister Roper, who became a dear friend, my first mentor, and was the most patient partner. Because of my bold bids, he told me I had given him heart attacks — twice. I still remember his advice about my over-bidding, "Don't dig a bigger hole!"

After Alister passed away, I attended improvement courses mainly run by Vil Gravis at the club. I bought all of Vil's books and subscribed to almost everything he wrote. He was kind and helpful, always answering my questions. It certainly took my bridge to the next level. Because of him, I no longer have fear playing bridge with anyone, anywhere. It has certainly made my cruise holidays more enjoyable, where we play bridge on sea days. In addition to winning some prizes from the sea tournaments, I have also benefited from learning "Pinpoint Astro" and "Houdini" from my UK partner and "Roman Discard" from my South African partner.

A few months ago, Robin suggested I should become a director. "Our club needs new directors," she said, "and a good player should learn the rules." Because she's always kind to me, I couldn't say no. After taking one module of the online director training course, I thanked her as I really enjoyed the course and learned a lot. Plus, I had two wonderful classmates. Simon Grant gave me a copy of the NZ Law Book (before the course started), and Simon Webber compared learning notes with me.

Thank you to Robin for taking me to the next phase of my bridge journey, to Ralph Robertshawe and Marian Loader for sharing their practical directing experience with me, and Kieran Yates for answering my homework queries.

I feel lucky for having so many wonderful mentors and good partners along the way. Bridge is more complex than many other mind games, like mahjong, because it's not a solo game.

I wouldn't have achieved what I have without my past and current partners, who all put up with me. Thank you, partners.

See you all at the bridge table.

Candice



Simon Grant, budding director

Our esteemed President Lesley has asked me to write a few words about myself and why I wish to be a director. The second part of the brief floored me but eventually I came up with a reason or two.

I wrote a profile for this newsletter a little while ago, and I don't wish to repeat everything here. Suffice to write, the profile was quite boring but you're welcome to peruse it. All the juicy bits like sex scandals and exploits in the Antarctic Civil War are omitted.

From 1987 I was a Cub Leader at First Epuni, Lower Hutt. There I made good friends with (in fact most of my friends along with bridge) the

Boadens and the Haines. I always respected the opinions and thoughts of President Lesley, although she was plain Lesley then. Her son David was an ordinary Cub in those days, although his potential was obvious. Some of his bridge genius must have stemmed from lessons learned while toasting marshmallows around the campfire.



Anyway, reasons for wishing to be a bridge director, after much consideration...

1. President Lesley thought it was a good idea and like The Governess, she is usually correct
2. It is a way of paying something back to the Club – all I do at present is clean the rollers of the card sorting machine, which takes about five minutes per month
3. I also check stoat traps in the Orongorongos to help the kiwi population that has been introduced. Unlike the kiwis, the Bridge Club is appreciative of our efforts.

The Club has been a source of much pleasure for me over the years, through playing the game and friends I've made. I thank everyone who has made my time so enjoyable, particularly my long-term suffering (bridge) partner Kevin, ex NZ tin man champion Steve, ex NZ money man Alan, ex NZ bridge rep Vil, President and ex chief of the ladies' department Lesley, and at least two other Saint Patrickers.

Simon Grant

Simon Webber, buildup to directing

I was first introduced to bridge while working at a stately home in England. As it was 40 miles from where I lived the owner said it would be best if I stayed. There were 28 bedrooms!

The owner had 2 passions, cricket and bridge and hosted bridge sessions almost every evening.

It wasn't long before I took a keen interest and he taught me the basics. Around the same time, I met Jeremy who became my main playing partner. His sister represented England in the under 18's and his stepfather, John Beard, represented Wales in several European events.

John Beard was also a national director and used to run bridge holidays. Jeremy and I helped him and were able to sit in on his teaching sessions and we played when required. This gave me a very good grounding.

My early years were spent living in my parents Zoo near Stratford-Upon-Avon, and then in the Cotswolds. I trained as a cabinet maker and have been self-employed since 1975, starting furniture, waterbed manufacturing, joinery and shopfitting companies while in England.

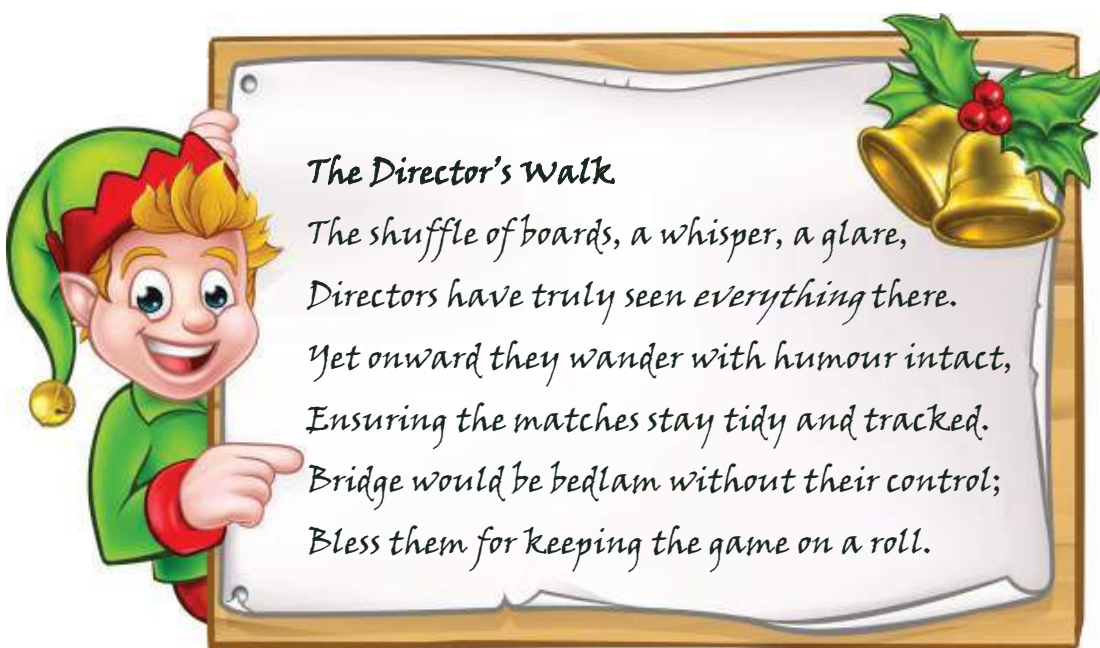
In 2000 we decided to move to New Zealand and I have been running building companies, concentrating on renovations and new builds.

The current company I run with my sons, who are about to take over so I can retire.

This means I can spend more time at bridge, and what a better way to help and be more involved in the club is to start with directing.

I look forward to this new chapter in my life and contributing to the ongoing success of our club.

Simon Webber





Ho - Ho - Ho!

Thanks to our sponsors



Finesse is the newsletter of the Hutt Bridge Club

Address: 1 Park Ave
Phone: (04) 567 1058
Email: manager@huttbridgeclub.nz
Web: hutt.bridge-club.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/huttbridgeclub
Editor: Toni Kane