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Finesse

September 2025

Newsletter of the Hutt Bridge Club



**Hutt
Bridge Club**

News from the committee

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou.

Warm greetings to you on these (slightly) warmer days. Welcome to our September Finesse. I've been lucky enough to spend a couple of weeks in the warmer climes of French Polynesia, largely as a passenger on a half cruise/half cargo ship from Tahiti to the Marquesa Islands. Warm, beautiful, most interesting, a diverse group of 160 passengers, mostly French speaking, and a warm, musical East Polynesian crew. Just fabulous!



Since our last Finesse, we've held the regional club champs, Quiz night, and most recently our Intermediate Tournament. More on all of these later in this issue, along with profiles of Committee members and how each one helps the Club thrive.

Our second group of learners for the year have graduated – welcome to the Club and to *Finesse* you guys!

Our improver sessions with Kathryn and Paul Badcock continue, alternating with AJ's popular revision class on Saturdays.

In September we have a four-week series of social bridge on Monday nights. All are welcome, especially recent learners. We're also looking forward the Back to the Future teams series on Thursday nights.

The annual **Hutt/Upper Hutt Challenge** is on **26 September** (a Friday night) is– and it's our turn to host this year. All are welcome and we promise a bit of extra fun this year.

Note, the date has been changed since we published the programme books.

On Saturday **11 October** is our **In-House Fun Tournament**. It's a "tournament taster" and all are welcome. Though it's a multigrade mini-tournament open to all pairs, we encourage experienced players to team up with a Junior or a Novice. It's **free entry for Juniors and Novices**, thanks to the Ron Fisher Trust.

In "committee land" we've replaced the Club's ovens, and we are purchasing Bridge Rule books for our three trainee directors – Simon Grant, Simon Webber and Candice Ng. It's great to have your training underway.

At our next Committee meeting we'll set the subs for 2026, begin working on next year's programme and confirming sponsors. If you'd like to become a member sponsor or you have ideas or connections with businesses we could approach as sponsors, please let Ruth know.

Ma te wa

Lesley

SERIES WINNERS

July	Event	Winners
Monday	Derwent Lee Pairs	Simon Grant & Kevin Bateman
Tuesday	RH Watson Memorial Pairs	Marian Loader & Ken Barnett
Wednesday	Knights Pairs	Chris Manson & Alan Jennings
Thursday	Do-It-All Pairs	Vil Gravis & Jeffry Craanen
Friday	Hegde Pairs	Jeffry Craanen & Deidre Stallinger
August	Event	Winner
Monday	Bob Scott Retirement Village Pairs	Trish Dive & Russell Dive
Tuesday	The Bridge Boys Pairs	Paul Badcock & Robin Hill
Wednesday	Wingate Pairs	Ken Depczynski & Tjeerd Dolstra
Thursday	Thursday Swiss Pairs	Nelson Proctor & Vil Gravis
Friday	Trimmer Pairs	Miriam Swanson & Robin Hill

AROUND THE REGION

Tournament	Congratulations to...	Placing
Hutt Intermediate	David Haines & Sam MacDonald	2 nd
Hutt Intermediate	Lesley Haines & Jill Herman	Session Prize, 5 th overall
Hutt Intermediate	Simon Webber & Jeffry Craanen	4 th overall
Hutt Intermediate	Candice Ng & John Ansell	6 th overall
Otaki Junior	David Haines & Stephanie Grummitt	2 nd
Upper Hutt Multigrade	Simon Webber & Madeleine Askew	1 st N/S afternoon, 3 rd overall
Upper Hutt Multigrade	Lesley Haines & Ruth Brucker	2 nd N/S afternoon
Waikanae Multigrade	Charles Ker & Russell Dive	1 st
Waikanae Multigrade	Tani Blackburn & Kahu Livingstone	6 th
Karori Intermediate	Jeffry Craanen & Simon Webber	1 st
Wgtn Regional Club Champs	Eleisha Hawkins & Marian Loader	Top Intermediate



Hutt Intermediate 5B Tournament

The Tournament was held on Saturday, 30 August and was sponsored by Ryman Healthcare. Our own bridge buddy, Debbie Komarkowski

presented prizes on behalf of Ryman.

Going by the smiles in the pictures, everyone had a great time. Thanks also to Bluebridge for their kind donation of a \$200 travel voucher.

- **1st** – Pauline Edwards & Hilary Patton
- **2nd** – Sam MacDonald & David Haines
- **Session Prize** – The Humble Presidents Present and past, Lesley Haines & Jill Herman
- **Bluebridge raffle winner** – Sharyn Bowen



First, Pauline & Hilary



Second: Sam & David



Humble Presidents



Raffle winner Sharyn

BLUEBRIDGE
COOK STRAIT FERRIES

Quiz Night

Annual Quiz Night Fundraiser – emphasizing FUN!

A room full of brain-boxes took part in this year's quiz night, and by all accounts everyone had a great night as they raised around \$2,500. Quiz master Toni Kane made sure everyone had fun and a jolly good laugh, with a bit of competition and cheekiness thrown in.

A whole bunch of other brilliant organisers and helpers did everything from arranging the room, checking everyone in to make sure they were in for spot prizes, keeping our whistles wet and the worms from biting, arranging prizes, running around the room collecting answer sheets and \$2 coins from those buying points – many hands make light work for a great night!



Deirdre & Ruth

It was great to see club members bring along other friends and family, and partners we only usually hear about. And for others, joining in and building a team of bridge buddies makes for really great time.



Dita & Ngaire

We had 12 teams take part, so we had loads of 'clever' answers. As usual the questions weren't the usual history, geography, and such, but a rather eclectic mix of subjects like words containing A and Z, King and Queen questions not really about the royals – who knew there were 69 Queen Streets in New Zealand? And a quiz round about horses! Did you know stallions have more teeth than mares?

Place-getters for the night were:

- **1st – Team Golden Gate**
- **2nd – Inverted Minors**
- **8th – 50 Shades of Stayman** (with a self-confessed best team name)
- **Best dressed team – 50 Shades of Stayman** the only team that got the memo it seemed. They embraced a gardening theme with style, humour and table decorations. They did look (and smell?) amazing!



Winners: Team Golden Gate



8th & best dressed: 50 Shades of Stayman



Runners Up: Inverted Minors



There are more pictures on our Facebook page – check them out. You don't need a Facebook account.

Youth Bridge Weekend, 25-27 July 2025

A review by Esther Haines (age 11) – our youngest club member

From the 25th to the 27th of July, I (Esther Haines) and Rosie West (aged 13), who recently moved to Dunedin, went to the NZ Bridge Youth Weekend at the Wellington and Victoria Bridge Clubs.

Overall it was a really great and fun weekend. On Friday night we started on a high note (aka pizza), which was followed by a fun night of an individually scored session. On Saturday it was a really big day (9:30am to 9:30pm!!!!), but it meant that we got to do heaps of cool stuff.



In the morning we did the first round of pairs champs and then a lesson from Alan Grant about the law of total tricks, which was really interesting. After all of that, we stopped for a lunch of yummy rolls.

Now here's the crazy stuff: next we did speedball! We had to bid and play two boards in just 3 minutes!!!! It was crazy but really fun. I was not playing with Rosie for this one, but my partner's and my strategy was just to bid random things and play random cards.

After, we played the second round of pairs champs.

Next we played crazy bridge and had a blast. You stayed with the same opponents for the whole time, and on each board there was a little slip of paper that had a crazy rule on it. One of them was if you and your partner played the same card on the same trick (had to be the defenders), the contract would be 7NTxx -13, but we didn't do it sadly.

Then we stopped for dinner, which was \$500 worth of fish and chips!!!! After dinner some experts from around Wellington and the Hutt came in, and each one joined a team of three, and we played a teams match with them.

On Sunday morning we had a lesson from Peter Newell about opening leads. Next we had a really great time in the teams match, which we came second in!!! Lunch was very yummy—buns again, but this time with fresh donuts and juice!!

Next was the prize giving, and we both won a block of very delicious chocolate blocks! Sadly now Rosie had to go, so we said our goodbyes, and off she went back to Dunedin after an awesome weekend.



Esther

Welcome to our new members – Class II of 2025

A huge warm welcome to our second set of new members for 2025.

Graduation night was Wednesday 10 September when the enthusiastic bunch were presented with their Graduation Certificates by Janet Paape.

Thanks once again to AJ for your training and all the wonderful helpers who helped with lessons and made graduation night a success. The supper table was overflowing, especially when we had to make way for an awesome birthday cake too. Happy Birthday AJ!

The night was just the beginning of a journey of delight, frustration, fun and friendship that all centres around a deck of cards. Here's to new friendships, new skills, and many great times ahead!



Want to keep learning?

We have options available to everyone in the club, not just new members, to keep learning and improving. You can go along to:

- **AJ's review lessons** – every second Saturday at 10:15, \$5 each (new members first 3 are free). If you have questions want to go over hands you played that week, or just want a refresher on something specific, go along. It's informal and you'll get plenty out of it.
- **Improver lessons with Kathryn & Paul** – every second Saturday – 9:45am for a 10am start. Topic-related lessons.
- **Social Bridge for new members** – Monday nights 6.45pm for 7pm start. We're trying this out so people can improve their skills before launching into regular Wednesday club sessions. Talk about the hands after each game and learn how to score without the bridge-mate!

Do you know who your Committee are?

Since our last Finesse, we've been featuring our Committee members on our Facebook page, and letting you know a little about what particular skills they bring to the table. Apart from Ruth, our Club Manager, everything is organised and run by loyal volunteers, who together make an awesome team. So, those of you who haven't seen the yet, here's those who've featured so far. We've love you to acknowledge their efforts when you meet them at the bridge table next.

Kathryn Badcock



You'll usually find **Kathryn Badcock** with a grandchild in her arms and a quiet determination to keep things running smoothly behind the scenes at the bridge club.

A dedicated committee member for the past seven years, Kathryn has lent her hand to just about everything — from organising tournaments and fundraising events to guiding new players.

These days, she's putting her energy into running the Improvers Sessions every second Saturday morning, helping members build their confidence and sharpen their game. She's not one for the spotlight, but her steady presence and generous support have made a real difference to our club.

Say hello to **Sharmini Jones** – our numbers whiz!

Sharmini joined the Hutt Bridge Club in 2022. She was keen to learn the game that's been in her blood for generations. Her dad and grandfather were both avid bridge players so naturally she's now carrying the torch – or should we say, the cards?!

By day, Sharmini's a chartered accountant so when she offered to help with the accounts, we thought we'd struck gold. Next thing you know, she's on the committee in 2024. We're lucky to have her keeping things in order behind the scenes and carrying on a proud family bridge tradition always with a smile.

Let her know you care if you see her around the tables on a Wednesday night.

Sharmini Jones



James Fulton



Meet **James Fulton** – our numbers guy with a card trick or two.

James joined the Hutt Bridge Club committee this year to keep our finances shipshape. He's a real-life accountant at Barnardos NZ and has kindly volunteered to work his spreadsheet magic for us too. (We're not sure if he volunteered but we're glad he's here.)

James grew up in the Hutt and had early exposure to bridge thanks to a family of keen players. His brother once declared the game "stupid" when told to put his hand down as dummy — but James clearly disagreed and stuck with it.

He first joined a club in Pukekohe about 10 years ago, played among legends, and then moved around a bit before landing back in the Hutt, lured in part by our 7pm start times and relaxed Wednesday night vibe.

These days, James plays regularly on Wednesdays, enjoys online Friday night sessions with his neighbour and also represents us in Junior Interclub.

When he's not playing bridge or balancing budgets, James chairs a body corporate and keeps a Wellington apartment building running smoothly.

Meet **Steve Denholm** – our Biscuit Baron 🍪

Steve's been playing bridge for six years now, drawn in by a love of maths... though he's still not entirely convinced it helped.

He joined the Committee two years ago and has been a friendly, helpful face ever since—especially if you're partial to a cuppa and a bikkie. Why? Because Steve holds the most powerful card in the club: the Milk & Biscuits Card. That's right, he's the man behind the snacks—and we all know how important they are after a tricky hand.

When he's not keeping us all happily fed, Steve says he really enjoys being part of the committee and getting to know the wonderful people at the club (even if they occasionally eat all the chocolate wheaten before he gets one).

Steve Denholm



Madeleine Askew



Madeleine Askew – assistant extraordinaire

Madeleine's been playing bridge since 1998. Her parents played, and once her kids were old enough they hooked her and her cousin and sisters in. "It's in our genes", she said, although only the girls' genes because her brothers missed them.

Madeleine's our awesome admin back-up, often helping out in the office and looking after the member database. She lives not too far, which can be a help and a hindrance, especially if the alarm is misbehaving! Finding her smiley face behind the bar is common too, even if she only intends to be there for a while, it's not uncommon for her to be there till the end.

How about showing her your appreciation if she serves you next.

Meet **Janet Paape** – our new members coordinator and Facebook whiz.

Janet joined the Hutt Bridge Club in February 2023 and now plays regularly on Wednesday nights.

Having retired with no hobbies (her words!), Janet was introduced to bridge by her friend Juliette Lister—and promptly declared, "It saved my life!" She swears learning something new is the secret to keeping the brain ticking and the social life buzzing.

In June 2024, she stepped onto the Committee with her sleeves rolled up and her usual energy dialled too high. Her role? Welcoming new players into the club with warmth, structure, and the occasional baked goods.

She runs a Saturday afternoon tea for each new intake, introducing them to AJ (our wonderful teacher), the club atmosphere, and a preview of play with our trusty volunteer players.

She shepherds them through their first few weeks, checks in to make sure they're not lost in the bidding wilderness, and gently nudges those who've graduated but haven't yet made it back to the table.

Janet's also introduced Social Bridge on a Monday night with volunteers, especially for freshly minted players. It's the perfect way to build confidence before mixing it with the more seasoned members.

Whether it's a post on Facebook, a welcome smile at afternoon tea, or a tactful follow-up email—Janet's got it covered. And if you've ever heard her say, "Let's just make it happen," you'll know she means it.

Janet Paape



Toni Kane



Meet **Toni Kane** - Energiser Bunny.

You know that one person in 100,000 who gives back to their community, never asks for anything in return, and somehow still has the energy to do more? Toni's energy is the stuff of legends. Some call her the Energizer Bunny (NZ edition). Yeah... that's Toni Kane. And for that, we salute her.

She's also a powerful member of our committee – the kind who brings a perfect mix of humour and reality to the table. She keeps things moving, keeps us laughing, and keeps us grounded. And before you ask, no, she does not want to be President! (Even though everyone thinks she should be. We've tried. She's not budging.)

A graduate of AJ's Class of 2019, she quickly discovered that bridges over rivers are nice, but bridge with people is way better... and slightly more complicated.

Toni's fingerprints are all over the club – from our shiny new logo to the sign at the gate, the bridge pads, name badges and soon Club shirts (yes, really – watch this space). As well as working full time she also moonlights as a quizmaster – sometimes assisted by her long-suffering husband Eddy, who (weirdly) prefers a peaceful evening watching sports on TV when Toni is out playing bridge.

You'll usually find Toni on Wednesday nights, parked at Table 1 with the EFTPOS machine and the perfect view of all the action. From next year, she'll be popping up on Thursdays too. You have been warned!

We don't just like Toni. We love her. And we're very glad she's on our team.

Meet **Doug O'Halloran** – our multi-tasking Vice President - part VP, part handyman, part tech wizard.

Doug joined the world of bridge in 2011, taking lessons with AJ, and clearly hasn't looked back (possibly because he's been too busy looking after everything else).

As Vice President, Doug is a man of many hats:

Unblocking toilets one minute, rescuing our IT systems the next. Thanks to Chris Jarad, he even knows the secret passageways of Compass, our scoring system – a skill few dare to claim.

He's also the guardian of our Microsoft Office 365 systems, runs the Financial Sub-Committee with a team of sharp minds, and for years wrote and compiled The Finesse our bridge magazine.

These days, he lets the wonderfully capable Toni Kane take the reins – though he's still on hand to keep her on her toes.

Doug's a bit of a bridge-playing nomad, splitting his time between Lower Hutt and Mount Maunganui (where three grandchildren keep him busy), jetting off to Scotland twice this year to visit two of his children and three more grandchildren.

One of those trips is still on the horizon – lucky him!

We're fortunate to have Doug on our committee – he's the sort of person who quietly makes sure everything works... and if it doesn't, he'll probably fix it before you've even noticed!



And lucky last – it's **Lesley Haines**, our Prodigious President.

Lesley first learnt Bridge in her late 30s on the advice of her mother-in-law. She thought it sounded like a good game, but she'd never played cards before! Despite that, she had a go, loved it and played quite a bit.

But, like many of us she'd go home from bridge, and replay hands in her head half the night, which, with working full time and being a single mum of three kids, something had to give. It was Bridge, but she thought "it's something I could pick up again when I'm old"!

"Old – Lesley? No way! She's got to be one of the least 'old' people in the club, surely! You've all seen the mountain biking and hiking adventures she goes on – and puts most of us to shame!

Lesley picked Bridge up again during Covid. She did lessons with AJ and soon after got coerced by Jill Herman to come to committee meeting to see what it was like. I'm pretty sure she stayed and now here she is our President.

This is Lesley's last term as President, and what a fine job she's done. She has an eye for the bigger picture and says in her time as President she's been lucky to have a really good team around her that work well together and do their bit. She's got a knack for working out where attention needs to be put, and has tapped into people's skills for great club outcomes. But, every team needs a leader and she's done this with grace, compassion and determination.

Lesley's on the hunt for her successor. She's been keeping an eye on how much time she spends doing 'president' things' and reckons its about six hours a month (including phone-calls). It's meant she's still had loads of time for Bridge and going away on bikes and hikes.

When you see Lesley next, let her know she's been awesome!

Lesley Haines



2026 Programme Book

We're beginning to prepare next year's programme book, it's time to make sure your details are correct.

Your details: Shortly we'll be emailing you individually. We want you to reply straight away with any corrections (or not) to the details we have for you. Please make sure you **check and reply** so we can tick you off,

Can you sponsor a series?

We have some sessions open for sponsorship. There are two options:

- \$150+gst for a 3-4 session (monthly) series
- \$250+gst for 10-11 sessions through the year.

You'll have naming rights for the series, we promote you in our handbook, every night of the series, in Finesse.



Club polo shirts

Pre-orders and expressions of interest

- Do you play interclub?
- Do you go to tournaments?
- Do you want to look smart at club events?
- Do you just want to support the club?



We'll be placing an order for some swish new club polo shirts, but before we can, we need to get an indication of interest. The more orders we get, the lesser the price.

The polos are navy-blue with white piping, and our new logo is on the front and back.

They're exceptional quality, dry-fit fabric, they stay in shape, don't fade and last for years.

Look out in the clubrooms for the display sample soon, and the order form. There are men's and women's styles – you can choose your preference.

There are no size samples to try on, but there will be clear instructions so you can make sure the one you buy fits you perfectly.

For pre-orders, or for any questions about them you can contact Toni Kane, 021 210 3655 or email her at toni.eddy@xtra.co.nz

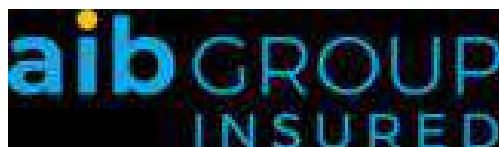
Tournaments around the region

Have you thought about playing in a grade above at a tournament? Playing against good opposition increases your skills and can be a great confidence booster. If you think you're ready, give it a go... and wear a nice Club shirt, I'm sure it'll make you play better!

Dates for your diary

21 September	South Wairarapa Multigrade Pairs
26 September	Upper Hutt Challenge all welcome at Hutt Club
28 September	Waikanae Intermediate Pairs
5 October	Kapi Mana Multigrade Pairs
8 October	Poppy Roberts 5A Pairs (Prelim 7)
11 October	Fun Multi-grade, play with a novice or junior is encouraged
12 October	Paraparaumu Multigrade Pairs
15 October	Poppy Roberts 5A Pairs (Final 1)
16 October	Kapiti Horowhenua Area Pairs (8) - ONLINE
17 October	Loveblock NZ Wide Pairs 2025 Hutt Club (different from book)
19 October	Otaki Open Swiss Pairs
22 October	Poppy Roberts 5A Pairs (Final 2)
27 October	Hutt Club Labour Day Event
29 October	Poppy Roberts 5A Pairs (Final 3)
2 November	Waikanae Junior Pairs
20 November	Kapiti Horowhenua Area Pairs (9) - ONLINE
23 November	Masterton Multigrade Pairs
13 December	Wellington Region Christmas Cheer

Thanks to our sponsors



Finesse is the newsletter of the Hutt Bridge Club

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