

# **GREAT LAKES BRIDGE CLUB**



## **HISTORY**

### **The First 25 Years.**

Compiled by GAIL GORMAN. 2007.

# **HISTORY OF GREAT LAKES BRIDGE CLUB.**

## **THE FIRST 25 YEARS.**

- \* The very first meeting of The Great Lakes Bridge Club was held, after a series of lessons conducted by Mrs Peg White from July, in the Board Room at Forster Golf Club at 8p.m. on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1980.
- \* Twenty one potential members attended this meeting which was chaired by Mr Eric White. Eight apologies were received.
- \* **The first President** elected was Dr Alex M<sup>c</sup>Kay MacIntosh, who remained as President for 6 years. He became the first Honorary Life Member in 1986.
- \* Other Office Bearers who were elected at this meeting were:  
**Vice President:** Mrs Peg White (1 year). She also became the first Tournament Director in 1981, (for 4 years), then President for 1 year as well as Master Points' Secretary for the first 9 years.  
 Peg also held Beginners' and Improvers' lessons for a number of years.  
**Secretary:** Mrs Jan Lynch (1 year)  
**Treasurer:** Mrs Ruth Bettington (2 years)  
**Committee:** Mrs Elizabeth Kidd (3 years)  
 Mrs Lola Dickson ( 2 years)  
 Mrs Kath M<sup>c</sup>Culloch (3 years). She also became Vice President for 9 years.
- \* Foundation members were charged a \$5 joining fee only. This Foundation period closed on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1980. There were 43 members at this time. Their names appear on the Honour Board inside the Clubhouse. Subsequent members were charged a \$5 joining fee as well as a \$5 yearly subscription. The first member to join the club after this period was Mrs Gwen Street. (January, 1981).
- \* Monday afternoon at 12.45 p.m. was the agreed time for a weekly Duplicate session. The first Session was held in the RSL Hall in Tuncurry on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1980. Seven pairs played a Howell Movement game. Only half a point separated the first three placegetters. Winners were Mrs Vi Dixon and Mrs Mary Pearce, with Mrs Elizabeth Kidd and Mrs Judith White, second. In third place were Lady Madgwick and Mrs Ruth Bettington.
- \* Table fees were set at \$1 per member and \$1.50 for visitors.
- \* After one year the yearly subscription was raised to \$6. The Club had a Credit Balance of \$445.57.

- \* The Great Lakes Bridge Club was officially opened at a Gala Opening Day of “Chicago Bridge”, held at 11a.m. on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1981. The winners at this session were Dr Alex MacIntosh and Mrs Vi Dixon, (North/South) and Mrs Kath Reynolds and a visitor from Port Macquarie (East/West).

Mr George Stephens, a noted Bridge Teacher from Sydney, performed the ceremony and at this time suggested that an Event be held in which players could only play with each partner once in the year. This became known as The Stephens Trophy but was later renamed The President’s Trophy in 2001. Mr & Mrs Stephens were presented with a set of pottery mugs, made by Mrs Helen Moncrieff.

- \* During the early 1980’s, several venues were used for Bridge sessions. In 1981, Bridge was played at the Masonic Club in Forster. This was very noisy and had very limited space, so sessions were moved to the School of Arts Hall. Players had to take their own tables and set them up before play could commence. The Club then moved to the Board room of the Golf Club, before taking up a more permanent residence at the Memorial Services Club in Strand Street in August, 1982.
- \* In 1981, the first GLBC Pairs Championships were played over 6 sessions. Winners were Mrs Peg White and Mrs Gertrude Heathcote.
- \* The Inaugural Congress was held in the Multi Purpose Hall at Forster High School in February, 1982. Silent Bidding Pads were introduced for this Congress ( and into the whole club in August, 1982.) The Tournament Director, Mr Terry Wright, from Sydney had his plane flight cancelled on the morning of the Congress, so he hurriedly drove the distance to Forster, arriving just a few hours late.
  - In the 1983 Congress, there were 140 entries and some had to be returned because of lack of space.
  - In 1984, it was moved to the Services Club auditorium and attracted 176 players. (with 43 teams competing on the Sunday event). Mrs Peg White and Mrs Gertrude Heathcote were the only local pair. On Sunday, the best local team, of Mrs Peg White, Mrs Gertrude Heathcote, Mrs Lola Dickson and Mrs Kath McCulloch, finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

- \* The **first GLBC Teams Championship** was held in October, 1982 and was won by Mrs Peg White, Mrs Gertrude Heathcote, Mrs Kath M<sup>c</sup>Culloch and Mrs Thelma Smith.

In 1983, it was won by Mr Bill Tyson, Mrs Jean Tyson, Mrs Gwen Perkins and Mrs Olga Moore.

- \* The **Individual Championship** played in 1982 was a victory for Mrs Kath M<sup>c</sup>Culloch from Mr Theo Rijdsdijk and Mrs Vi Dixon.

In 1983, it was won by Mrs Anita Rijdsdijk, from Mrs Peg White and Mrs Kath M<sup>c</sup>Culloch.

- \* The first **“Stephens Trophy,”** played in 1982 was won by Trevor Walker, from Thelma Smith and Gwen Perkins.

- \* The first Ron Klinger Teaching Tour was held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1984, with 30 players attending each session. Another was held in 1985 and again in 1986. Other tours have been held at various times since, the latest being in 2003, when 75 members attended.

- \* By 1985, many members were conducting private games at home using club boards cards etc., so it was decided that a second session be introduced as from Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1985.

- \* In August, 1985, Mrs Hazel Middleton set up a library of Bridge Books and became the first Club Librarian. Subsequent librarians have included, Mrs Diane Hinchcliffe, (who purchased a wide variety of new Bridge Books), Mrs Jacqueline Polack and Mrs Alma Barr.

- \* A Gala Invitation Day was held on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1985, but was run at a loss. It was held again in 1986 and 1987- also at a loss.

- \* At the AGM in 1986, the Annual Subscription and Joining Fee were both raised to \$10. At this time there were over 100 members.

- \* Slow play was a recurring complaint for at least the first 7 years- despite timers being introduced. It seemed to have been resolved in 1987, with our 6 active Directors insisting that an average be taken. It resurfaced as an ongoing problem again in the 1990's.

- \* An Incorrect Scoring Penalty was introduced in 1987 as “Twinning The Boards” caused many problems. Five points were deducted for scoring on the wrong line. This was used until 1990, when it was changed to a penalty of ¼ of the top board score.

- \* By 1987, complaints about the air conditioning at the Memorial Services caused many problems, as did difficulties in securing times and dates for events. We were also being charged \$50 per session by the Club. Licensing laws also required our Bridge Club members to become members of the Services Club, creating ongoing problems. This resulted in many members requesting that The Great Lakes Bridge Club seek an alternative venue for the weekly sessions.
- \* In May, 1988, a special General Meeting was held to recommend alternative venues, but this motion was defeated even though the problems with the Services Club persisted.
- \* In May, 1989, The GLBC became part of the Australian Bridge Federation. A “No Smoking At The Table “ Rule was introduced.
- \* The State Regional Teams Event was programmed to be played in Forster on July, 23<sup>rd</sup> 1989, but after some “mishap”, was rescheduled for August 13<sup>th</sup>. Players from Port Macquarie to the Central Coast took part.

The local team of Mrs Peg White, Mr Bruce and Mrs Mary Hunter and Mrs Phyl Mc Onie won this event from Mrs Gwen Perkins, Mrs Gaby Tipton, Mrs Kath McCulloch and Mr Theo Rijdsdijk.

- \* Thursday night sessions were commenced in February, 1989 and were very popular for a time-- up to 20 pairs in early 1990. In September, 1998, it was suggested that Thursday afternoon session replace the night one as a trial for one month. This was not successful so Thursday night continued until very poor attendances caused this session to be abandoned late in 2002.
- \* *Until 1990, new players had to be assessed as to their playing ability and standard, before being allowed to join the Club and then had to be supervised by the Director of the day, until such time as they were considered proficient enough by the Tournament Director.*
- \* At June, 1990, on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, The GLBC had investments amounting to \$20 500 as well as \$1494 in bank accounts. Membership had risen to 132 players.
- \* Noise was also a very common complaint during 1990. Players were often requested to defer discussion until scoring was complete. Noise has been a constant source of annoyance and remains a problem today.
- \* On 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1993, the first Bridge session was held on Saturday afternoon.

- \* In 1994, the first **“Malcolm Clarke Trophy” for Master Pairs** was played and won by Mr Ron Aiken. The following year, it was won by Mrs Elizabeth Frewin.
- \* In March, 1997, the first recommendation was made for new premises to be built in Lake Street. A Committee was set up to prepare the Club’s presentation to the Great Lakes Council for the erection of our own premises. This Committee comprised Mr Jack Ellerton, Mr George Bendixsen, Mrs Helen Moncrieff, Mr Bob Mavin and Mr Fred Marr (Ex-Officio).
- \* A Finance Sub-Committee, consisting of Mr Bob Weekes (Chairman), Mr Jack Ellerton, Mr Neville Hinchcliffe, Mrs Alison M<sup>c</sup>Gregor, Mr Dan Tipton and Mr Fred Marr (Ex-Officio), was set up to research costs and viability of such a project
- \* In October, 1997, an application was made to the Great Lakes Council for the erection of our own Clubhouse.
- \* In February, 1998, because a record number of 78 players attended, new premises were urgently needed.
- \* In March, 1998, the Master Pairs event was held in 2 sections as a trial for 3 months.
- \* In March, 1998, a Building Development Sub-Committee was set up to obtain agreement with the Arts Society and to appoint a joint Project Management Committee. This Sub-Committee included Mr George Bendixsen (Convening Chairman), Mr Dan Tipton, Ms Penny Hunt and Dr David Cunningham.
- \* In May, 1998, our Club’s first ever win (reported in the Sydney Morning Herald,) in a major event was recorded by Mrs Alison M<sup>c</sup>Gregor and Mr Eric Lindh, when they won a 2 days Pairs Event at Port Macquarie.
- \* Later that year, the Joint Project Management Committee was formed, with Fred Marr as Chairman, Mr Dan Tipton, and Arts Society members, Mr Vince Pauley, Mr Joe Pickard and Mrs Betty M<sup>c</sup>Kinnon participating.
- \* In September, 1998, a Building Application was presented to the Great Lakes Council as a joint venture with the Arts Society. Total cost of construction was expected to be \$320,000, with our share of \$185,000.

This amount was later increased to a total cost of \$365 000, with our portion being \$205 000, in February, 1999, because of extra demands from council regarding car parking, drainage etc.

- \* In March, 1999, Mr Jack Ellerton commenced a Members' Loan Scheme, with 22 members showing interest. Members could subscribe up to \$5000 per share for a minimum of 3 years, to be paid 7% interest. A total of \$35 000 was raised in this way. Total interest commitments were estimated to be \$2695 per quarter. Commencement date was 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1999. These members' loans were paid up in full by the end of 2003.
- \* An interest only loan from the ANZ Bank was organised for \$150 000 to cover cost of construction but not all of this original loan was ever drawn down. After one year (as at June, 2000), The Bridge Club owed \$104 000 to the ANZ Bank.
- \* In April, 1999, the initial "pegging out" of the site was completed and work commenced on the new building in May, 1999. The majority of the building and painting work was done by voluntary labour provided by members of both the Arts Society and the Bridge Club. Mr Fred Marr undertook the job to oversee and control the progress of the building. Fred spent innumerable hours in researching, designing, negotiating, and supervising the work on the new building. It is estimated that, because of his efforts, and also the volunteer labour, the Club saved in excess of \$150,000. A plaque in the foyer expresses the members' gratitude for his efforts and for his tireless work in this most significant project.
- \* In August, 1999 a new computer was purchased to replace the laptop that had been previously used.
- \* In October, 1999, 38 Bridge Card tables were purchased from the RSL Club at \$6 each. Many were in a state of disrepair so Dr David Cunningham undertook to repair these and make them suitable for use. David also volunteered to make 52 Side Tables for use in the new Clubhouse. He was ably assisted by Mr Bob Weekes in these ventures.
- \* On the 25th November, 1999, the Great Lakes Bridge Clubhouse and Arts Society Building was officially opened by Forster Mayor, Mr John Chadban who unveiled a plaque in the foyer of the building.
- \* Great Lakes Bridge Club began the move into their new premises on Christmas Eve, 1999.
- \* The Great Lakes Council issued a Certificate of Occupancy in January, 2000.  
Committee meetings were then held in the new Clubhouse from January, 2000.
- \* On 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2000, Mrs Peg White dedicated the Bridge Club before the first Congress in the new building. A plaque to commemorate this event is found in the Clubhouse.

- \* Thursday morning lessons were commenced in April, 1999, by Mrs Gwen Perkins. Supervised sessions started afterwards for an initial period of 6 weeks. (They recommenced again in July, 2000 after another series of lessons.) Throughout the 25 years, many members have donated their time to give lessons and to help improve the standard of the Beginners who take up Bridge for the first time.
- \* Restricted sessions were also begun on Tuesday afternoon in the new clubhouse in February, 2000. These were supervised by Mr Jack Ellerton (with some assistance from Mrs Jan Lawless) for many months.
- \* These two sessions for beginning players were amalgamated in October, 2000 and Mrs Gwen Perkins (with the assistance on occasions from Jack) has supervised this ever-increasingly popular session on Thursday mornings until the present day.
- \* On 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2000, an inaugural Festival of Bridge Pairs Competition was held as part of the Great Lakes Oyster Festival. The Open Event was won by Mr Don Scown and Mrs Judy Scown, from Mrs Anne Clendinning and Mrs Pam Nelson.
- \* In January, 2002, a new event, The Anniversary Pairs, was introduced into the programme, to celebrate the move to the new Clubhouse. This event was won by Mrs Elizabeth Frewin and Mrs Gwen Perkins.
- \* On 9th January, 2003, Thursday night bridge was reintroduced at 7.30 pm. It was abandoned later the same year as the winter months set in.
- \* In March, 2003, a Restricted Pairs Event was introduced into the programme. This was won by Mr Michael and Mrs Colette Lawrence, from Mr David Goldsmith and Mr Geoff Yarnold.
- \* In November, 2003, The GLBC connected to the Internet for the first time, developing our own website.
- \* Lottery tickets were awarded as prizes (as well as Master Points) until 1989, when a Members' Cash Incentive Award Scheme was introduced as part of the 1990 schedule. This scheme was replaced in 2004, when extra events which attracted prize money were programmed.
- \* On 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2004, the club used their newly purchased Dealing Machine (which is still in use.) Hand records became available for the first time.
- \* In January, 2004, the highest average scored in any one session at the GLBC of 83.3%, was scored by Mr Charles Lees and Mrs Gail Gorman. (This broke a long-standing record of 78.7% held by Mrs Gaby Tipton and Mr Theo Rijdsdijk, set in 1992.)



- \* In March, 2004, Mr Don and Mrs Judy Scown introduced a monthly session of “Friday Night Dinner and Bridge,” which remains very popular.
- \* In April, 2004 an ANZAC Day Pairs Competition was commenced. Mrs Dawn Ellis, Mrs Eileen Parker, Mrs Betty Blackshaw and Mrs Merle O’Shea were the first winners of this event.
- \* In June, 2005, the first Winter Pairs Championship was won by Mrs Molly Wittrien and Mrs Gaby Tipton.
- \* In 2005, several new events were also introduced with cash prizes. These included, The Australia Day Pairs in January, The Queen’s Birthday Pairs in June and The Labour Day Pairs in October.
- \* In 2005, a second Congress was introduced in September. This involves a Walk-In Pairs Event on Friday night, a Pairs’ Event on Saturday and Teams’ Event on Sunday. Both this September Congress and the February Teams Congress remain very successful.
- \* Noise remains a recurring problem in the new Clubhouse, with various reports having been commissioned to try to solve the problem. As yet, no satisfactory guarantee can be given that any action will provide an adequate solution.
- \* **By the A.G.M in August, 2005, after 25 years,** The Great Lakes Bridge Club had 191 members. - Annual subscriptions were \$25 and Joining Fees set at \$10.
  - Table fees remained at \$4 for members and \$6 for visitors.
  - The yearly profit was \$20 863.
  - Playing numbers increased, giving the club an additional increase of \$1822 on the previous year’s figure. - There were 10 Directors of the Club by the end of 2005. Two of these Directors, Mrs Gwen Perkins and Mrs Jan Lawless were Foundation Members of the Club and have remained active Directors throughout the 25 years.
  - In September, 2005, Mr Jim MaCauslane arranged for our outstanding loan of \$49 999 to be converted to an Overdraft Facility. This debt was paid out completely in August, 2006, leaving the club debt free.
  - A new 20 year lease was signed with the Council in December 2005, consisting of a 5 year lease, plus three options of 5 years.
- \* By 2005, 6 Honorary Life Memberships had been awarded (Mr Alex MacIntosh, Mrs Peg White, Mrs Kath M’Culloch, Mr Charles M’Culloch, Mrs Gwen Perkins and Mrs Jan Lawless) in gratitude for their outstanding commitment and participation in forming and developing The Great Lakes Bridge Club.

- \* Founding member, Mrs Peg White continues to award her annual trophy to the Most Improved Player.

Skip to 2018 ....

- \* Mrs Jan Lawless, a Foundation Member, is still playing regularly and has recently celebrated her 96<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- \* Another lady mentioned in this history: Gwen Street is about to celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday. She no longer attends the Bridge Club but is happy to play a casual game at her residence. *[P1, The first member to join the club after Foundation was Mrs Gwen Street. (January, 1981)]*