



— Ballina Bridge Club —

Newsletter June 2016

Teaching at Ballina Bridge Club

BALLINA BRIDGE CLUB had a long and proud history of teaching the game of Bridge for many years, even before 1998, when the Club moved into the building it currently occupies. At that point, we had 113 members. The building was made possible only through enormous effort and determination. The history of our Club is currently being written by Barbara Meaney and John Fraser in preparation for our 20th anniversary in 2018.

People who learn Bridge at Ballina Bridge Club, and stay to play, are very lucky. They are catered for from their first lesson through to the highest levels of Bridge. We give new, inexperienced and rusty players a Supervised Play session every Friday morning. Starting in May, we offer a revision lesson on the last Friday of every month; after the lesson, players will use a set of boards that give them the opportunity to practise the lesson topic. The first of these, on Friday 27th May, was on Takeout Doubles — always a popular topic!

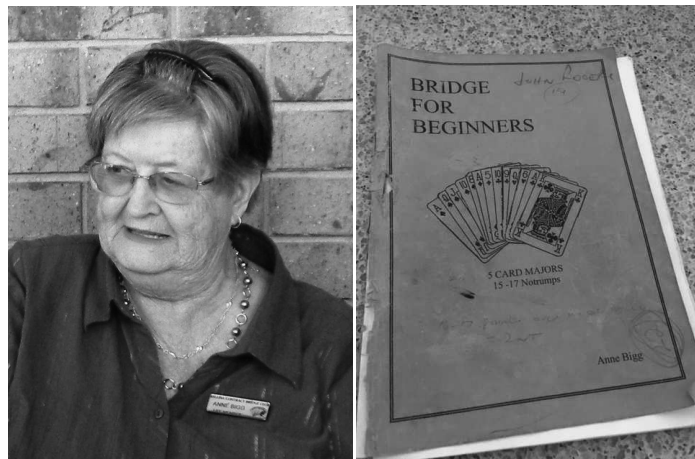
In addition to beginners and revision lessons, we have guest lectures by Marjorie Askew and Bill Powell, who give an occasional series of Advanced, Intermediate and Improvers lessons. All of these are well attended by our members.

We know that our members are always ready to learn, and it is a healthy club that has senior players willing to mentor new players and share their knowledge and experience to help them find their feet in our Bridge-playing world. 'Fun' sessions, such as Teams of Three, are a great way to help new and nervous beginners.

Our Play Committee offers new events for beginners, and our Directors of Restricted sessions are well practised in handling newer players in the field, so thank you to both groups for actively offering encouragement.

ANNE BIGG

When Anne Bigg retired from school teaching in 1995, she offered herself for the position of Club teacher, as it was apparent that the Club needed to be able to teach people enquiring about lessons.



Anne Bigg

The Bigg 'Green Book'

Anne, who had learned from Janet Brown, took to the task like a duck to water. Ably helped by others, it is a testament to her dedication that she has run our teaching program for 20 years.

In 2004 Anne wrote her *Bridge for Beginners: 5 Card Majors, 16–18 Notrumps* (later changed to 15–17 Notrumps after Anne, Lyn and Karl attended a Bridge teacher training weekend in Sydney.) This book has been the mainstay of the teaching program ever since.

Very very few, if any, other clubs have such a valuable resource in-house. The Green Book, as it is known (it started life as The Blue Book!) is well-thumbed, scribbled in and copied by every student.

As the Club grew, teachers spent many hours each January sorting and setting boards, and copying teaching folders, making enough to last the year.

Anne established Monday morning play and gave lessons to players on Monday nights. (Monday night sessions were discontinued as more members joined the Club.)

Many people in the Club helped out when other teachers were unavailable; among these are Jenny Hurley, Lesley Burford, Jill Theakestone, Ellen Watson, John Fraser, Judy Forsyth, Henry Hirschhorn and Mary Hoare. Jim and Merrilyn Roche, Barbara Meaney and Jenny Wardley also made themselves available.

Continued ➤

Teaching at Ballina Bridge Club (continued)

We have also had the benefit of occasional lessons for advanced players, given by Eric Hurley, on Wednesday mornings. These are extremely well attended and well received.

Our Club nurtures new players by allowing them to consult their Green Book during supervised play sessions; during their first year they may consult their own system card when playing in any session.

Lessons were given on Friday mornings with numbers varying from five or six up to 20 players. The most pleasing aspect of our teaching and support initiatives is our high retention rate; low retention is a constant source of concern in most clubs, and is continually being addressed by the ABF Marketing Manager, Sandra Mulcahy.

LYN GRAHAM

When Lyn Graham retired from school teaching, she and her partner Karl Gombru (now deceased), shared the load with Anne.

Lin Hault, another retired teacher, joined the group, and Barbara Meaney did more teaching as the numbers rose.

The teachers sought a special session so that beginners had somewhere to play; so began the Thursday afternoon sessions for partnerships with 0–200 Master points. This session continues to this day as a very popular afternoon for eligible players.

New methods of teaching have changed the way we now handle classes. Joan Butts, ABF National Teaching Co-ordinator, ran a workshop for our teachers in 2014 and we incorporated her methods into our program, particularly the ‘face-up’ method (showing all hands face up), which is very popular.

Students who have taken lessons at other clubs have expressed their pleasure, and surprise when they hold cards and make bidding decisions immediately on starting in our program, rather than learning from written notes on a whiteboard. Currently we run two sets of lessons each year: one usually beginning in February, the other around July. Lessons are given twice a week over a 6–8 week period.

So, you can see from all this that the teaching group has a heavy workload. Current members of the teaching group are: Anne Bigg, Lyn Graham, Peter Forsyth, Liz Jeffery, Rebecca Rogers, Dawn Horder and Jill Theakstone. ✍

A new set of lessons will start in July, if we have the numbers to make it viable. If you know someone who would like to learn Bridge, please ask them to call Lyn Graham on 0499 868 417.

DEALING MACHINE

The dealing machine made a huge saving in time and effort required to set up teaching boards. Jack Pierce, Judy Forsyth and Ellen Watson gave their time to set up boards to suit the lesson subject.

ABF GRANTS

In recent years we have won two grants from the ABF. The first allowed us to run a Friendship Day, in September 2014, restricted to players with fewer than 100 Masterpoints; prizes were given in divisions. The day was a huge success for the Club and we now have members whose first visit to our Club was on that day.

The second grant, in 2015, allowed us to purchase equipment (computer, camera and screen) so we can give PowerPoint presentations for training.

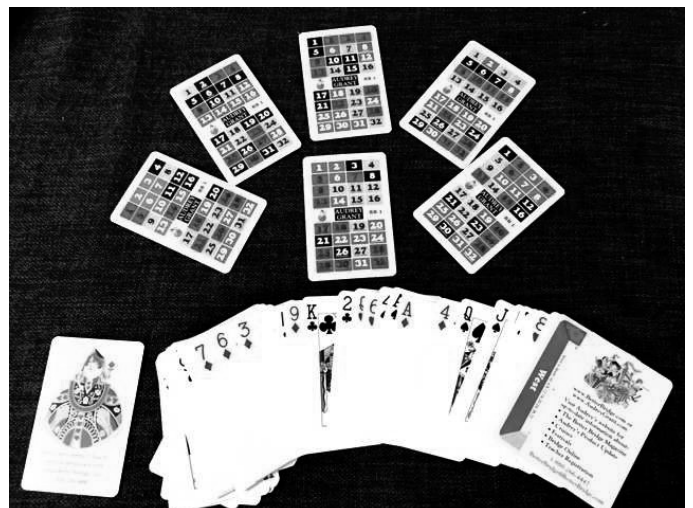
— Rebecca Rogers, President

Revision Lessons start again this year

THE FIRST IN our new series of revision lessons for novice players was held on 27 May. It was very well attended, with 30 players coming to further their knowledge of **doubles** and how to play them.

Lyn Graham ran the morning's lesson; after a whiteboard presentation, she handed out packs of Audrey Grant's Bridge Basics cards.

Players were able to use the workbook to make up and play boards highlighting the use of **doubles** when bidding. Lots of discussion, as you would expect, and some ‘ah–ha’ moments too!



Audrey Grant's 'Bridge Basics' cards ✍



Sorting the Audrey Grant cards to create a deal which allows players to practise the chosen technique; in this case, takeout doubles

The next lesson, on **Popular Conventions**, will begin at 9 am on Friday 24th June.



Play Report

MCDERMOTT MEMORIAL DAY Congratulations to the two teams who represented Ballina recently at Lismore and 'brought back the goods.'

The Open team won their division, and both teams scored well enough to win the competition overall.

The teams were: Open — Judy Woodward, Judy Forsyth, Liz and Howard Jeffery. Restricted — Elizabeth Fletcher, Vicki Ivoševac, Lorraine Bryant, Beverley Peart-Kuter.

P-PLATERS

Please remember to inform each new pair that your side is carrying a P-Plate.

CLUB REGULATIONS

The Club's regulations were reviewed by the Play Committee recently and some minor changes made. A copy of the revised regulations is available on the Club website and on the noticeboard at the Club. If there are any questions, please discuss these with a member of the committee.

AUSTRALIA WIDE NOVICE PAIRS

More congratulations — the Australia Wide Novice Pairs, played at the Club on 26th May, attracted a good field. The winners were:

Ray Ghioni and Bruce Mathieson	70%
Beth Martin and Phill Robbins	65%



Australia Wide Novice Pairs winners, with 70%, Ray Ghioni (L) and Bruce Mathieson (R), with Ballina Bridge Club President, Rebecca Rogers



Australia Wide Novice Pairs second place-getters, with 65%, Beth Martin (Centre), Phill Robbins (R), with President, Rebecca Rogers

With members of our Club scoring such great percentages, we are now eagerly awaiting the combined scores from all over Australia.

CROSS IMP SCORING

After the June Teams Congress, there will be a short survey on tables for a week, asking for your opinion about this method of scoring which has been used over the past three weeks.

Please fill in and return the survey form to the front desk to a container marked Surveys.

If you do not have your say, constructively, about what happens in your Club, the Play Committee will not know your wishes.

Sometimes a change is a good thing. Thanks, in advance, for your time.

— Judy Forsyth, Chair of Play

National Membership Profile

THE AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION (ABF) National Marketing Manager, Sandra Mulcahy, recently put out some interesting figures on memberships at Australian-affiliated Bridge clubs.

Data mining with the help of the ABF Masterpoints Centre allows a comparison between the national membership profile (centre column) and that of Ballina Bridge Club (right-hand column), at April 2016.

Masterpoints	% of Membership	
Range	National	Ballina
0–5 (Super Novice)	26	22
0–20 (Rising Star)	44	32.5
0–100 (Novice)	71	55.5
100–350 (Restricted)	18	26.5
350–750 (Intermediate)	6	9.6
750+ (Open)	5	8.4

What does this tell us? How closely do we mirror the national averages? The conclusions we can draw from this are that we are short on Novice members (under 100 MPs), and have an above-average number of players who are more experienced.

Reasons for this can be the subject of conjecture. Is there a city versus country factor? We perhaps need to look at how we bring new players into our regular club sessions and retain them.

I think these figures, as Sandra Mulcahy observes, reinforce the need for all of us to ensure that we understand the needs and wants of our *newer* members.

Thanks to our Play Committee we are adding to our calendar new events for Novice players, and we are adding further teaching initiatives.

What can you, as a member, do to encourage new players?

- give help where and when you can if you see someone struggling
- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- introduce yourself to someone you do not know
- don't chastise them for petty infringements of etiquette, just explain the rules
- encourage them to call a Director if they do not understand what is happening at the table — it is not a punishment to call the Director!
- let them know you were once a beginner too.

— Rebecca Rogers, President

Hasn't <my direction> had terrible cards?

By Paul Smith

EVER HEARD THAT? I feel genuinely sorry for Bridge players who feel like that — sorry that they don't realise that at least one pair, holding exactly the same cards, has just scored over 60% and had a great, fun day. It's not the cards that count — it's what you do with them. (Duh! As my kids would say.) If you don't enjoy defending, then that is like living in Ballina and not liking sunny days!

Warning — what follows is advanced card play. You could lose a trick! (Don't blame me.)

"I had only four points. Can't do much with that."

Oh, really?

How dull is this hand? Four points and no shape.
 ♠ 5 3 2 Your left hand opponent, North, opens
 ♥ 8 6 5 3 1♦. Your partner passes throughout the
 ♦ 8 7 4 auction. (Typical!) The full auction is 1♦—
 ♣ A 9 3 1♠ — 4♠. Sounds like North has a corker of a hand. What to lead? First question should be 'What do we know or can we guess?' North opened 1♦ so they probably don't have a four card Major. South's response only promises four cards, so North must also have four cards in Spades. North is most likely to have 4–4 in the bid suits or, next most likely, to have five Diamonds and four Spades. South probably doesn't have four Hearts (if they have five Spades, they may also have four Hearts).

Having worked out a little about N/S, what should I lead? Nothing is a standout. OK, try the other way — what *don't* I want to lead. Well the Club suit would probably be a mistake, Aces are meant to cover Kings. Leading trumps might help to stop declarer getting a ruff, but if partner has the Queen, and declarer has a two-way finesse, you just made life easy for them. An anaemic second-best from four small Hearts seems the best of a bad lot.

Dummy goes down showing:
 Partner plays the Ace of Hearts,
 denying the King. Back comes a Club.

I might as well take the Ace, maybe partner has a singleton. STOP! I am playing on autopilot and that is the first sign that a mistake is looming. Just because I have only four points is no reason to stop concentrating.



Terrible cards? (continued)

In fact, any fool can cash Aces and Kings; it is how you handle 'weak' hands that really counts.

After that little bit of self-admonishment, what can I work out. How are we (note well: — *we*) going to beat this contract? We already have one Heart trick, and can take only one Club trick. A Diamond seems unlikely. Two tricks short of beating the contract. Partner has to have the Ace of Spades for us to have any chance. That is still only three tricks, the fourth will have to come from a ruff. Partner must be angling for a Club ruff. If partner has a singleton, then I should take the Ace and send one back. If partner has a doubleton and I take the Ace and return a Club, then she won't be able to get me on lead to play a third round for a ruff.

If they have a doubleton I need to duck first; then, when partner gets in with the Ace of trumps, they can lead a second Club — which I take — then play a third round for partner to ruff. So, which is it? Rise with the Ace for an immediate ruff, or duck to give a later ruff? One option is right and one wrong.

The answer is — duck. Did you work it out? If partner had a singleton Club then they should cash the Ace of Trumps first! That would tell me that they do not need the Ace of Trumps for a later entry, the ruff is immediate. In this case, partner did not cash the Ace of Trumps, so they must need it for a later entry, therefore they must have a doubleton Club, therefore I need to duck.

On cross-IMP scoring this is likely to be our best board of the day — not bad for 'only four points'.



Contributions invited

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER; please help your Club Committee and Editor) to make it what you want it to be — informative, entertaining, funny, and well worth reading.

As Bridge is a social game (mostly), you are welcome to write to us with any event worth sharing — humorous incidents at congresses, not so funny breaches of play etiquette, anything which tickled your funny bone, or annoyed you, or you wish to see changed.

Contact: kuteredit@gmail.com

Lexophilia

How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.

Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.

Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!

A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.

I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crêpes.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.

They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Typo.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

I know a guy who is addicted to brake fluid; he says he can stop at any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I had never met herbivore.

When chemists die, they barium.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity; I just can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns: it was a play on words.

Why were the Indians in the US first? They had reservations.

I didn't like my beard at first; then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

Broken pencils are pointless.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

All the toilets in New York's police stations have been stolen; the police have nothing to go on.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Velcro — what a rip off!

A final, consoling thought:

Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last.

Who on earth dreams these up? Why, a lexophile of course!

— *Contributed by Winston Guymer*

Current Members who have taken lessons at Ballina Bridge Club

Arranged in alphabetical order by first name. List compiled by Anne Bigg and members themselves.

Apologies for any errors of inclusion or exclusion.

Please advise Michael Kuter if your name is not spelled correctly: kuteredit@gmail.com.

Ailsa Farrell	Angela Bettess	Angela Ryan	Ann Griffiths
Ann Miller	Ann Ward	Anne Flanagan	Anne Riley
Arthur Renshaw	Barbara McCall	Barbara Proctor	Barbara Selman
Beth Martin	Betty Clark	Betty Johnson	Beverley Peart-Kuter
Bill McLeod	Bill Parsons	Bill Thorne	Brian Perry
Bruce Ashworth	Bruce Mathieson	Carleen Ashworth	Carmel Pollard
Carol Hocking	Carolyn Anderson	Chery McCallum	Chris McDowell
Chris Newman	CJ Johnson	Col Gale	Col Lewis
Colleen Spencer	David Cows	Debra Duplock	Dennis Hall
Don Cox	Doreen Stabb	Edna Moss	Elsbeth Lacey
Gay Warburton	Gaye Jackson	George Connell	George Connell
Gerri White	Greg Lester	Greg Maley	Gwen Smith
Gwen Wilson	Gwynne Glendenning	Helen Glasson	Helen Pearce
Ian Frith	Ian McLean	Irene Charman	Isobel Johnstone
Jan Blay	Jan Gasteen	Jan Ryan	Jan Ryan
Janice Carney	Jean Lowe	Jenny Hurley	Jenny Maley
Jenny McDowell	Jill Cox	Jill Theakstone	Joan Charteris
John Cade	John Crethar	John Heaton	John Kable
John Rogers	Joyce Shepherd	Judy Carroll	Judy Forsyth
Judy Woodward	Julie Harwood	June Orford	Karyn Scanlan
Kate Lee	Ken Hope	Leone Frogley	Les Spake
Lesley Burford	Lexie Teakle	Linda Maslen	Lorraine Bryant
Lorraine Cannell	Lyn England	Margaret Caldwell	Margaret Faulks
Margaret Gilchrist	Margaret Steele	Marie Carter	Marie Ferguson
Marj Hill	Mary Blanch	Maureen Baker	Maureen McDermott
Michael Kuter	Michael Letts	Michelle Zyznikow	Nan Garlick
Pam Frith	Pat Hope	Pat McAlpine	Pat Preston
Paul Blanch	Peter Forsyth	Rebecca Rogers	Robin Greenhalgh
Robyn Egan	Roger Gregor	Ros Collins	Ros Wilson
Rosie Hall	Russell Burford	Ruth McDonald	Shelley Taylor
Shirley Henry	Sonja Bridson	Sue Burns	Sue Fielder
Sue Mason	Suzi Mould	Terry Lowe	Tom Harwood
Toska McLeod	Trevor Stabb	Trisha Groth	Val Audrun
Val Gurn	Vanessa Reynolds	Vicki Ivosevac	Wendy Doyle