



From the PRESIDENT'S TABLE

Speech for the Cromwell Bridge Club 50th Anniversary



Good afternoon everyone, and welcome. My name is Carole Bee and I have the great privilege of serving as President of the Cromwell Bridge Club this year, its 51st year of existence.

Today, we celebrate something truly special: 50 years of bidding boldly, playing bravely, and—let's be honest—occasionally blaming our partners for things that were definitely our own fault. The Cromwell Bridge club was first incorporated by a group of keen players with the foresight and drive to make this happen on the 15th of October 1976 and as you all know, recently was reincorporated on the 16 May 2025.

Fifty years is an extraordinary milestone. When this club began, many of us were still learning the basics (most of us were born but the odd one or two maybe able to claim that they were not)—like how to count to thirteen under pressure, or how to look confident while holding a hand that resembles a collection of supermarket receipts. And yet, here we are, half a century later, still turning up, still laughing, still competing, and still arguing about whether that 5♣ bid was “creative” or “catastrophic.”

One of the things I love most about this club is that bridge has always been our excuse—but community has always been our purpose. We all come to a club different reasons but at the heart of it is always the people you meet. Over the years, we've welcomed beginners, nurtured talent, and watched friendships form across the table. We've seen partnerships forged and tested. And through it all, we've kept our sense of humour. Because if bridge teaches you anything, it's humility. Nothing builds character quite like confidently bidding game, only to discover you've got a combined total of 17 points and a void in the wrong suit. Or the joy of watching your partner lead the one card you prayed they wouldn't—while smiling sweetly as if they've just handed you a winning lottery ticket.

But today isn't about the disasters or triumphs at the table—though we all have a few favourites. Today is about celebrating the people who built this club, sustained it and kept it thriving. The founders who had the vision, the committees who kept things running, the directors who kept us honest, and the members—past and present—who brought life, laughter, and the occasional dramatic sigh to every session.

On typing up the honours board lists to be put into this folder I realised that there are a lot of names in here that represent the history of this club that sadly I never got to meet. People who had a passion for the game and the club and were willing to serve. People who's names are attached to the trophies that we hand out at the end of the year:

Pisa Pairs - Audrey Wright;
Lindis Pairs - Joyce & Morgan McCombe;
Teams - Carol & David McDougall;
Clutha Pairs – Bell;
Nevis Pairs – Jack McLachlan;
Kawarau Pairs – Terry & Melva Story;
Best Junior - Barbara Hughes;
Best Individual - Eileen & Graham Crabbe;
Championship Pairs – Glenys Coleman.

And we honour our Life Members who have been recognised over the years for their ongoing work for, and support of, the club: The first awarded in 2000 were Audrey Wright, Jack McLachlan and Barbara Hughes. In 2006 John Mitchell was added and more latterly we gave this honour to Murray Jaquiere in 2020. These people gave freely of their time to the club over many years and also embodied what a bridge club is. A team above all else.

However today is also about looking forward. If the last 50 years have taught us anything, it's that this club is resilient, welcoming, and full of people who genuinely love the game—and each other's company. That's a combination that never goes out of style.

We could not celebrate today without mentioning the remarkable playing record of Elwyn Hughes, who's name appears in the honour lists here an unbeaten 51 times, with varying partners, and in two years was the winning individual champion and a member of the winning championship pairs and teams. He and John Mitchell had an unbeaten 12-year winning streak in championship pairs (I hope I have not put the commentators curse on you Elwyn).

So as we raise a glass this afternoon to celebrate the stories, the friendships, the triumphs, and yes, even the misplays that brought us here. Let's honour the legacy of those who came before us, and let's look ahead to the next 50 years with the same enthusiasm we bring to a fresh hand — hopeful, optimistic, and ready to make the best of whatever we're dealt.

Thank you all for being here, for being part of this remarkable community, and for making the Cromwell Bridge Club the vibrant, joyful, slightly competitive family that it is. Here's to 50 years — and many more to come... "The Cromwell Bridge Club!"



Carole

Two new Life Members were honoured at the 50th Celebration: Elaine Moir and Vivian Willson. It is acknowledged that this is a prestigious award which recognises voluntary service to the Cromwell Bridge Club by members who have, throughout the majority of their membership period, shown a dedication to the well-being and enhancement of the club by a consistent role of service in a variety of areas, with special emphasis given to teaching and nurturing new members from lessons to the clubroom.

We extend a warm welcome to New Members

Jane Lancaster
Lynda Thwaite
Rose Copeland

June Programme

Championship Pairs May 28th

Goldfield Pairs. June 4th, 11th, 18th

Monday Bridge 1.00pm start

Please check Monday Whatsapp group or text Carole to confirm it is on as we need three tables to proceed.

Upcoming Tournaments

30 May	Otago/Southland Provincial Pairs @ Oamaru
31 May	Otago/Southland Intermediate Pairs
31 May	Otago/Southland Provincial Pairs
06 June	Temuka All Grades @ Timaru Bridge Club
14 June	Sunday afternoon Junior event at Alexandra - entries to alexandracontractbridge@gmail.com by Friday 12th June
28 June	Oamaru All Grades

NZB has winter 2026 sorted for our learners and emerging and improving bridge enthusiasts.

SUPPORTED PLAY is back following a successful season in 2025.

WHEN? EVERY SUNDAY from June 7 till August 30, from 4.00pm to 6.00 pm! From the comfort of your own home.

WHERE? ONLINE, on RealBridge (which really is “real bridge” as you can see and talk to the players at the table!)

These two-hour Supported Play sessions are designed for players who:

- Have just finished lessons.
- Have a year or two experience.
- Are forming new partnerships.
- Want to practice bidding, playing, and defending the hand.

There is no better way to spend a cold winter afternoon, than to practice bridge, with a team of teachers on call to guide you when you need it.

To call for help, simply click the Director button, and a teacher will visit your table to assist.

HOW? Pay \$5 a session, or buy a WINTER PASS for all thirteen weeks for just \$25_ less than \$2 a session). Registering is easy:

- [Go to nzbridge.helloclub.com](http://nzbridge.helloclub.com)
- Put money in your account
- In Calendar, click on the sessions you want to attend, or pay \$25 to register for all! Our amazing admin guy Nick Saunders will automatically register you for all sessions when he sees your \$25 payment.

What happens next? All players will receive a **RealBridge link** before each session.

If you can help us as a teacher, or to fill a space at a table, email mary_christensen@live.com

Any other questions email nzb.online.lessons@gmail.com

Happy bridging from your Teaching and Learning Committee!

Tips for good bridge...

The “Invisible” Math: Counting During the Bidding

- **The Rule of 40**
- Start every hand by subtracting your points from 40. Now you are looking for where the remaining points live.
- **The “One-Sided” Conversation:**
- If you do not have an opening hand, and your partner passes and the opponents open, your side likely holds fewer than 18 points.
- **The Math of an Overcall:**
- If an opponent overcalls at the 1-level, “tag” them for 8-12 points. If they jump overcall, give them 6-10 but a lot of shape.
- **High Card Point (HCP) Brackets:**
- Open: 12-20
- Inverted Minor: 10+
- NT Opener: 12-14 or 15-17 (the most precise math you will get)
- **The “Silent” Opponent:**
- If one opponent opens and the other stays silent through the whole auction, give the silent partner 0-5 points.

Bridge isn't just about the cards you can see. It is about remembering the ones you can't. The best bridge players are constantly counting:

- How many cards each player started with.
- Which suits have been played.
- What is still out there.
- And what that reveals about the hidden hands.

Counting transforms bridge from a guessing game into a game of logic, deduction and strategy. It is the moment players stop reacting... and start predicting.

That is why bridge is often called the ultimate mind sport. Every card tells a story - if you are paying attention.

Good Bridging Everyone