

## **President's Annual Report 2016**

This report is going to the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Invercargill Contract Bridge Club, and is my last as President. I want to firstly thank the Committee for their support and hard work over the past year, which has certainly had its moments. I have also appreciated the quiet words of appreciation that I have received from members, from time-to-time. It is those small comments of affirmation that mean so much.

### **Club Upgrade:**

Although not a major year from a fundraising perspective, the club has continued with the upgrade programme that was commenced a few years ago. This year, the most apparent step forward has been the installation of the automatic doors into the club rooms. It is a small thing, but has so many benefits for all club members. It has also allowed us to provide greater security over our assets, with the development of a key register and knowing who has what keys. The internal doors were recently removed, but will be replaced, until a decision is taken as to whether or not to install a second set of automatic doors.

At the same time we have upgraded the foyer with the installation of LED lighting. A small change, but it has made quite a significant difference to the light in that area, particularly in the winter months, and will make a small saving on our electricity accounts into the future.

We have also purchased a new dealing machine for the club – as the old machine was no longer able to be serviced, and was causing problems from time-to-time. This is not something that all club members will be aware of, but it is a benefit to all who play here. It forms part of the technology refresh that is also occurring, as the club is looking to upgrade its computing equipment as well, so that we can take advantage of the technological advances that come along. Although we haven't quite got the new computer system in place yet, it is hoped this will be with us shortly, and make the operation of some of the background work that is done go that much smoother than it has been.

We have also suffered some misfortunes this year – we had a leak in the newly refurbished women's toilet that lead to flooding, resulting in bucketing water over several hours, and then a significant drying out of and subsequent cleaning of carpets being required. In many ways we were lucky we caught it when we did, or the damage could have been much more extensive than it was. Luckily insurance was able to be accessed to meet a large majority of the costs associated with this incident, and the silver lining from that was that the carpets came up looking like new.

We have also made some changes to the electricity coming into the building such that we should see some cost savings coming through on a monthly basis on our electricity accounts. However, shortly after that occurred, we had problems with the car park lighting and the exterior lighting which resulted in some costs with trenching work, and tracking down the problems and correcting them. These sorts of maintenance costs we have not had to face for some time, and they were hard to swallow, when we have been trying to fundraise. However, they are a reality when you are dealing with installations that have been in place for many years.

At the same time we had novaflow installed to assist with the high water table in the grassy area to the north of the club. Hopefully all of this work will see us in good stead into the future.

**Membership:**

Jill McMeeking ran another successful group of Learners Classes this year. Although it started off with quite a sizeable bunch at the outset, as we know, there are always some who fall by the way side, realising the game is not for them, or they just don't have the time to take it on at this stage. However, we had six new members come out of Learners classes and join the Silver Reserve grade – which is a positive.

We would love to have more, of course – but as with many other clubs across the country, declining memberships are becoming a reality. We therefore need to ensure that we keep all new members that do come through from the Learner Classes.

It is a constant battle – the older we get the less tolerant we are of others errors. But we all need to remember that we too were once learners. Growling, snapping, or sarcastic comments do not help to improve anybody's play – and that applies to the Silver players as much as the Silver Reserve players. We are all trying to do our best at the time of the bidding and playing of cards. We all forget things and make errors. And as we grow and progress I know I have cringed as I remember some of the really dumb things I did when I first came into the main playing room.

Also, when you know there are learners who have graduated into the main playing room – please, make an effort and ask them to play. They feel intimidated asking current club members in the initial stages – even ringing the Convenor can be a big ask for some. It is much easier for us as established members, to contact them. So please do try your best to be pleasant and assist newcomers, and help us to grow our club, for the benefit of us all.

**Obituaries:**

We have an aging population world-wide, across New Zealand, and even down here in Southland, and at our club. This year I record the loss of the following members:

- Life Member - Ron Vial
- Eunice Tait – another long standing member and supporter of the club.
- Ailsa Forrest – an inspiration, as she only learned to play this wonderful game of ours in her 80s!
- Betty Davis – a long standing member, who worked tirelessly to build-up the Friday Social bridge group

The loss of each of these members has been sorely felt by the club.

**Finance:**

The financial position of the club will be presented by our Treasurer, Christine Dallas, but I note the club remains in a strong financial position. This could not have been achieved without support from our major sponsors

- Invercargill Licensing Trust
- Foveaux Communications
- Southland Real Estate
- Toyworld
- Rowena Jackson
- Martin & Lobb
- Quiffs Salon

Without their support, the club could not have continued to offer the variety of tournaments it has for its members, nor could we continue with the upgrade work that has been undertaken to date.

The Invercargill Licensing Trust has provided funding contributions towards the purchase of the dealing machine, the holding of the ILT Murihiku Teams and Pairs tournament, and the ILT sponsored tournament being held this coming weekend. Unfortunately we were not successful in our funding application to the Southern Trust seeking support for the installation of the automatic doors, which was a disappointment. However, the committee proceeded with this upgrade in any event. The funds raised from the successful quiz night, was put towards this cost.

A reminder, however, that our sponsors will only continue to support us if we support them - so please help us to help ourselves by supporting our sponsors in any way you can. And please let them know that you are supporting them because they support us!

Your continued support of the club through buying raffle tickets is also important. The more money we raise in other forms, the less likelihood we have to increase subs or table fees. We will always try to access external funding – be it through grants or donations, or the likes of the quiz night – which is largely supported by external participants – but the core fundraising done within the club is also key. In this regard I want to make special mention of two highlights this year:

- the donation of the lovely hand-made red pedal car to raffle – by Richard Beauchamp, and
- the beautiful blanket that was knitted by Noeline Richardson and donated to the club.

Both of these were very popular raffle prizes that were well supported by the club and a number of out of town visitors, who were wanting to win them. And they were generous gifts. Thank you to Richard and Noeline – it is these sorts of things that show the club remains in good heart.

#### **Club Successes:**

This year we have seen continued success of our players across a variety of tournaments. Two particular highlights include both Geoff Eyles and Marilyn Jackson achieving Grand Master status this year. That is no mean feat – and they are both to be congratulated on such a wonderful achievement. Marilyn Jackson (and her partner) also had success at National Congress in winning the Goulash Pairs. And of course we also have Lorraine Oliver and Kay Shand playing in the Interprovincial Pairs being held in Dunedin at the end of November, for which we wish them well.

#### **The Committee:**

I reiterate my earlier thanks to the Committee, who have continued to work hard on your behalf.

In particular I want to recognise the work done by Sue Scott, who is this year retiring after undertaking the secretarial duties for the past 10 years. Sue does much more than just the Secretarial duties require, and will be sorely missed on the Committee. Both her and Robyn Reidie, who is also retiring from the Committee this year, have been strong drivers of any

fundraising effort undertaken by the Club – and frankly without their drive we would not have been as successful as we have been over the last few years with our fundraising efforts.

An example of this, this year was the Entertainment Book fundraiser. Sue was approached on behalf of the club, and the next thing you know, we have raised \$300 through her promoting, pushing and encouraging members to participate in purchasing these books. They are/should be an easy fundraiser – as we get something back when we purchase them.

Thank you Sue and Robyn.

With the loss of these two valuable members, and my moving to the role of Immediate Past President, there are three gaps on our Committee. I urge you to consider becoming a Committee member. We all want our club to continue to survive and thrive, and to do that we need willing hands, and a full committee, to spread the load, and to come up with some fresh ideas. It is also important for the club that there is good representation on the Committee from across the grades. So please consider giving your time.

#### **Volunteers:**

This year we also had a “spring cleaning working bee” early in the new year. It hadn’t been tried before, but was very successful. It was wonderful to see the number of members that turned up to assist who were not on the Committee. It meant we were really able to give the place a good going over, and the rooms were sparkling at the end of that day. Thank you everyone who attended!

Also, once again - thank you to those who participate in the dealing roster so that we have boards to play every week; to the Directors who keep up-to-date with the rules and help our nights to run smoothly; to those who participate in the bar roster; those who have helped to keep our gardens tidy throughout the year, and everyone who has played a role in keeping our club running.

Again, a big thank you to Geoff Eyles for his continued oversight of the computer programme and for being at the end of the phone when needed. We are trying to get more people involved in this area, so that we can spread some of that load (and the knowledge), and provide support for the work that Geoff does. We haven’t quite got there yet, but will keep working on it.

#### **NZ Bridge:**

NZ Bridge is endeavouring to move with the times. It has upgraded its website, and it has a Facebook page to allow members to keep up-to-date. You can sign up for newsletters, and general updates. It is a great initiative, and I would encourage you all to link into the resources that are available through those facilities – [www.nzbridge.co.nz](http://www.nzbridge.co.nz) is the address.

Jan Brown  
**President**