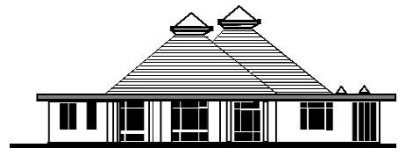


Hamilton



Hamilton Contract Bridge Club

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Newsletter Editor: Catherine Cameron

Newsletter - February 2026

From the President

Hi everyone

My name is Michael Davies and I am your new President. I enjoy playing Bridge which I started just 5 years ago. I regularly play in the O'Neill Room Fridays and less often on a Tuesday afternoon. I'm also one of the Club's regular dealers. Outside bridge I am a keen fisherman.

Welcome to the new year and I hope good bridge for all. I am pleased to say that the club has grown over the last year as many of the new players have stayed on. Our lessons this year start in March - Tuesday evening and Thursday morning.

We now have a new committee working hard to get things under way. During the Christmas break we have had a quote for one of the flat sections of roof which has been having serious recurring leaks. We have accepted the quote and this new roof should be completed soon. The club steriliser has also been having old age problems [25years old] so we have a new industrial dishwasher on order.

To help with these extra costs the committee has decided to stop paying any prize money this year to winners of our club competitions. This will save the Club in the order of \$4000 which will be used towards paying for these necessary items!

Michael Davies

2026 Subscriptions now due

Invoices for members' 2026 subs were emailed out in December. It is important for the financial health of our club that these are paid soon - the due date is 31 March 2026. This year the full subscription is \$120 for the year - this includes the NZ Bridge levy increase. If you have not received your subscription invoice, please email the secretary.

Player Grade Changes

The latest grades have been published by NZ Bridge. These grades are valid for the whole of 2026. Congratulations to these members who have improved their grades:

From Junior to Intermediate:

- Don Weston
- Iain Paterson
- Ken Couper
- Larissa Eyre
- Mark Beavan
- Michael Davies
- Stewart Lawrence



From Novice to Junior:

- Cate Anderson
- Rosalind Millar

2026 Changes to Programme Book

By now, many of you will have had a chance to look at the new programme book. (If not, collect one from the club either when you come in to play a session or from Julie during office hours). Every year a few mistakes get missed and these are ones we have identified so far:

- **Hamilton Soup & Bun II** is Sunday 26 July (error in date page 14)
- **Hamilton Soup & Bun III** is Sunday 20 Sep (error in date page 15)

Learners Lessons 2026

This year's lessons will start on Tuesday 17 March from 7 - 9 pm and Thursday 19 March from 10 - 12am. The lessons will run for 12-15 weeks and cost \$80, or \$40 for a second family member or a learner aged 25 years or younger. This includes club membership to the end of the 2026 year. Anyone wishing to take part in the lessons is asked to email: lessons@hamiltonbridge.co.nz



Have questions or want more information? Contact: Michael (027 488-9014) or Mereana (027 292-3233) or look at the club website under the [Lessons tab](#).

The lessons are the main way we recruit new members to the club so we encourage all members to let family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours and anyone else they know who may enjoy playing bridge to give it a go!

Club Security

During the playing break two new cameras were installed inside the playing rooms so we can access them if there is any trouble inside the building - over the new year one of our curtains was removed from inside the Richmond room without triggering the alarm system. Checking our outside camera recordings to see if they could help explain the disappearance, we found an unexpected number of people crossing the front carpark when the Club building is not in use or at night. This suggested to the committee that similar cameras in the rear carpark could be a good idea.

Unfortunately, there were too many blind spots in the current cameras' coverage to help with "curtain gate".

The recordings made by the Camera System(s) are not viewed in any way unless there is a request to the Club that meets the requirements of the NZ Privacy Act. Assuming no requests for the content, the recording media in each system will in time overwrite the previous recording.

Special trophies for 2025:

Most Promising Player 2025 (Mike Barton Trophy) - Aini Su

Most Improved Junior 2025 (Audrey Dixon Cup) - Bruce Bettany

Congratulations to both of you!



Aini and Cherie Barton



Nigel Gresson and Bruce

From the Director's Table

Visitors to our club. It is important any visitors are introduced to the director before the session starts so table money can be collected from them and their name can be added to the scoring system if needed.

Seating. Please make sure you are seated at the table ready to play at least 5 minutes before the start time for your session. This means you have already got your drink from the kitchen! This allows the director to set up the movement for the session correctly - if this is wrong it usually means the whole scoring system needs to be restarted to correct it.

Seating rights. If you cannot easily move let the director know when you arrive, as the movement can require you to be seated at particular tables.

Partner Required?

Keen to play bridge but your partner can't make it? Or your regular partner has left Hamilton, given up bridge, is too busy at work etc ? Don't worry, the club has a solution for you!

For all evening sessions we have a WhatsApp group specific to that session to help you find a partner. Contact the partner steward listed below (or Programme book) or talk to your director to be added to a group. On *Tuesday evenings* you may turn up without a partner, and the director will find a partner for you. Please however be at the clubrooms 15 minutes before the start time and tell the director that you need a partner.

For daytime sessions we have a friendly partner steward for each session who will attempt to arrange a partner for you.

Their names and contact details are also inside the front cover of your programme book. If possible, contact them a few days before the session you want to play so they have time to sort out a partner for you - problem solved!

Monday	- Pam Burns 027 646-6077
Tuesday afternoon	- Lucie Armstrong 027 283-8837
Thursday daytime	- Lois Jones 854-0453 or 021 155-1838
Thursday evening	- Pam Burns 027 646-6077
Friday Richmond Room	- Lucie Armstrong 027 283-8837
Friday O'Neill Room	- Milwyn Rees 022 646-7709

Club Rules for 6 session events

At the AGM there was discussion about substitutes and dropped scores for 6 session events at the Club (the Club Championship events).

For these events the rules for 2026 are:

- The overall result will be based on the best 5 results
- If both players in a pair miss a session this will be scored as zero
- 2 substitutes are allowed but these must be of equal or lower grade than the member being substituted for

Interested in Directing?

Our club is always looking for people willing to learn to direct and to be added to the directors' roster. If you want to learn more about directing, scoring or just the Laws of Bridge (and there are plenty of these!) NZ Bridge is running online courses for you. Allan Joseph runs these courses and is a very personable and helpful tutor. This year there are going to be 2 courses for potential directors:

- A self-study course from February to June
- An online course from July to September

These courses allow you to study from home when you want - the online course has sessions every 2 weeks but these are all recorded so you can watch them whenever it suits you.

For more information visit [2026 Director Training](#)

Pianola and X-Clubs

Interested in how your bridge results compare with players who also played that session from across NZ? You can find your ranking!

The results from NZ bridge clubs that play the same boards at the same time are collected up in X-Clubs and re-scored over all the clubs which use Compass. The results appear on the X-Clubs website very shortly after all session results are received.

You can access these through the [X-Clubs Results](#) link under **Results** on the front page of the Hamilton club website.

If you'd like to learn more about X-Clubs there is lots of detail under the About tab under the X-Clubs Results website.

Players of X-Club deals can register to receive Pianola session report e-mails - see the "button" on the right-hand side of the X-Clubs Home page. Here you can get more information about your playing game, including:

Personal results history

Your average score with different partners

Your score as declarer, defender - even as dummy

Read up on Pianola at www.pianola.net.

Our Mate - the Bridgemate

Here are some simple ways to get the most out of your Bridgemate.

1. Check that the people at the table are those whose names are on the screen (if past the front screen, click on Names on the board entry screen)
2. Check that the number on the boards you have are the same as the ones shown (in small print!) at the top right of the Bridgemate screen
3. Enter the number of the board you are going to play (make sure the board is the right way up with North facing north)

Now - you are ready to take the cards out of the board.

If everyone follows this simple procedure we will not have fouled boards and the Director will be happy. 😊



From the 2025 Annual Report

Over this year the club has had 46 new members mainly through lessons on Tuesday night and Thursday morning, run by Mark Thomson, Pam Burns, Cherie Barton and Lois Jones. Also, Barry Jones, Jenny Millington and Richard Hooper give additional lessons before sessions on Tuesday nights and Friday Mornings.

Thank you to all those who helped with this great result.

COMING UP AT OUR CLUB

Calling all Juniors and Intermediates!

On Saturday 15 March, Hamilton is holding a tournament day for Junior and Intermediate players (a separate tournament for each grade). Novices are welcome to play with the Juniors as well - your chance to try playing 48 boards on the same day.

This is a great opportunity for anyone who has never entered a tournament before to play in a friendly atmosphere. Talk to your regular partner about playing - or if they are not available ask at the club for anyone else who wants to play. Practising with your partner before a tournament is a good idea so you can discuss and understand your partnership bidding, discards and general playing style etc.

On the tournament day there will be two sessions of play, starting at 10am, and you will need to bring your own lunch. More details on our webpage under tournaments or on the Notice Board at the Club.

Restricted Pairs

Sunday 19 April is the day the Club holds its annual restricted pairs tournament. In this tournament Open players cannot play together. Intermediate and Junior members are encouraged to partner with an Open player. There are also prizes for other combinations such as Intermediate/Intermediate, Junior/Junior, Intermediate/Junior and Novices if enough of these pair combinations are entered.

Hamilton 3A Swiss Pairs

On Tuesday 26 May the club will hold a different event - a 3A Swiss Pairs. This tournament is for all Intermediate and Junior players, and for Open players who are National Masters or below. This will be a fun day so put it in your diary now.

2026 Club Programme

The programme for this year has several significant changes to the timing of events, the duration of events and the type of the event being competed for -

Timing of events - where one of the sessions would fall on a Public Holiday the Public Holiday session has been replaced by a single session event and the event moved so the event is played continuously over 3 to 6 weeks. In addition the time of the year that certain events are played has been changed for various reasons including to fit in with tournaments.

Duration - where possible, events of the same type e.g. Championship Pairs and Individual pairs will be played over the same number of sessions.

Format - once a year in June the clubs in the Waikato compete in the Waikato Interclub Teams played in a Teams Format event each with a Junior, Intermediate and Open Team. The top two placing in each grade go on to compete against the Bay of Plenty in August.

In the past, to select the Hamilton Team we have had a "Teams" event for each grade prior to June to provide guidance for the Club selectors (2 or 3 of our top Open players). Running this "Teams" event has proved more difficult as Club numbers change so this year the event format has been changed to a Swiss Pairs format which has much lower requirements about playing numbers. We hope this change will provide the selectors with a better indication of players' abilities so the best team to represent the Club will be chosen. The Swiss Pairs will be run over 3 weeks, each of three 8 board rounds. At present, Swiss Pairs is proving to be a very popular format amongst Open players and with this change we hope to introduce the format to more members.

Thursday Day - with the success of the 2025 Bridge Lessons and the hope this will be repeated this year the Club has started a Thursday Morning session to support last year's players and provide opportunities for this year's learners.

Upcoming Events

COMING UP AT OUR CLUB

Hamilton Junior/Novice Pairs	Saturday 14 March
Hamilton Intermediate Pairs	Saturday 14 March
Hamilton Restricted Pairs	Sunday 19 April

EVENTS COMING UP IN OUR REGION

Junior Tournaments:

Cambridge Junior & Novice Pairs	Cambridge	Saturday 28 March
Matamata Junior Pairs	Matamata	Saturday 9 May

Intermediate Tournaments:

Taupo Intermediate Pairs	Taupo	Saturday 28 Feb
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Open Tournaments:

Waikato Area Pairs (WAP) 1	Matamata	Sunday 8 March
Kelly Peirse Memorial Teams	Rotorua	Saturday 21 March
Waik/Bays Regional Champs Trial	Online	Saturday 28 March
Matamata Open Swiss Pairs	Matamata	Saturday 11 April
Mt Maunganui Multigrade Pairs	Mt Maunganui	Saturday 18 April
Waikato Area Pairs (WAP) 2	Te Aroha	Sunday 26 April
Taupo Open Swiss Pairs (2 days)	Taupo	Sat/Sun 9-10 May

Books Wanted!

The book table in the Richmond Room has books (mostly fiction) available for members to take in exchange for a gold coin. The avid readers in the club would like a change in the selection of books. Have a look through your collection at home and bring along any books you are happy to donate to the club.

WAIKATO-BAYS COMPETITIONS 2026

These aim to develop partnerships and a better grasp of the game. Both the Junior and Intermediate leagues are individual competitions so you don't need to play with the same partner each time. The leagues are generally quite social and good fun with the added bonus of meeting other players from throughout our region.

Waikato/Bay of Plenty Junior League

This runs for 6 rounds with the overall top place-getters winning cash prizes. The first tournament is at Hamilton bridge club on Saturday 14 March. If your goal for 2026 is to become an Intermediate, playing in the Junior tournaments will help you get well on the way.

Waikato/Bay of Plenty Intermediate League

Starting on Saturday 28 February at Taupo bridge club, followed by Hamilton on Saturday 14 March, this competition covers eight intermediate tournaments throughout the Waikato and Bay of Plenty, with the last one in October at Cambridge. Good prizes are on offer for overall success.

Waikato Area Pairs (WAPs)

This competition is aimed at open and good intermediate players. The competition runs for 5 rounds with prizes awarded to the winning pair of each round and to the top overall and top non-Open pair at the end of the competition (both players must be non-Open).

The first heat for 2026 is on Sunday 8 March at Matamata. Please enter online up until the day prior. Play starts at 10am. The entry fee for each round is \$15, paid on arrival, and you need to bring your own lunch. The other WAP dates and locations are listed under tournaments in your 2026 programme book.

Intermediate players are encouraged to attend the WAPs to experience the friendly WAP sessions and have a chance to win A points. More information can be found at their webpage [WAP dates](#)

LAST YEAR AT OUR CLUB

Melbourne Cup Afternoon - Tuesday 4 November

The annual special Melbourne Cup event was held on Tuesday, November 4th starting at 12.15 (and replacing the usual Tuesday afternoon bridge session). In Melbourne the weather was very wet but in Hamilton it was a beautiful sunny day - perfect for fancy hats! 42 keen players gathered in the clubrooms with many dressed in very fetching clothes and hats. The bridge winners were Mary Fear and Margaret Boyd (1st East-West and overall) with Janice Wilton and Kevin Turner 1st North-South.

The Best Hat judges awarded the prizes to:

- Posh Hat: Margaret Boyd
- Most Natural: Carolyn Downey
- Wacky: Donna Prentice

A sumptuous afternoon tea provided largely by players was followed by watching the race on the TV and the lucky sweepstake winners being paid out. Thanks to Judith Brooks for organising the event, Malcolm Smith for directing (and handing out spot prizes - nobody won the prize for winning a trick with the 2 of Spades!), and to Jennifer Humphries for running the kitchen.

Annual General Meeting - Sunday 23 November 2025

Over 40 members turned up to the AGM to discover who will be running our club in 2026, and to thank those who helped run the club in 2025. Michael Davies is the new President in 2026, with Richard Wagstaff as Vice-President. We have a full 6 members on the committee. Welcome to new committee members Ken Couper, Mereana Cullen, Raewyn Higginson and Lois Jones who will help run the club.

The AGM was followed by bridge and a delicious Christmas dinner organised by Jenny Seavill, Nigel Gresson, Ros Millar, Cate Anderson and other helpers. The bridge winners were Colleen de Luen and Judith Brooks, with Sean Dwyer and Kevin Lawrence winning the handicap prize.



Regional Champs 2025 Results

Every year the 7 bridge regions of New Zealand play each other in a Teams event. The 2025 competition was played over 2 days in Palmerston North in early November just before the National Congress. Overall

Waikato/Bays came 3rd, with Central Districts and Wellington tying for first. The Women's team, including Jenna Gibbons, came 2nd.

Congress 2025 Results

The NZ Bridge National Congress was held in Palmerston North for the first time in 2025 and was a great success with over 800 people attending. By all accounts it was a very enjoyable and well-run event.

Top 10 results from our club in the Open and Restricted Open events:

Restricted Teams: 5th Mereana Cullen and teammates

Congress Open Teams: 2nd Blair and Liz Fisher

7th Gary Foidl and Brett Glass

NZ Open Pairs: 9th Blair Fisher and George Masters

Baden-Wilson Results 2025

The Baden Wilson trophy is for the top overall 'A' point earners in a calendar year based on points earned in New Zealand only.

The winners in both sections (female and male) for 2025 have now been announced. Congratulations to Liz Fisher, the top female for the fourth year running, and to Blair Fisher who is top male again, after missing out last year.



Regional Championship Teams 2026

NZ Bridge runs the Regional Championship Teams each year between the 7 regions of NZ (our region is Waikato Bays). Each region is represented by an Open, Women's, Senior and Intermediate team. The Waikato Bays trials are scheduled for Saturday March 28 (may take 2 days depending on entries). These will be online and will only take place if there are sufficient entries. Entries and the trials are as a pair and the team will be selected on the results of these pairs. Only those who enter the trials will be eligible to be in the Waikato Bays team. This team will then play online in a double round robin contest against the 6 other regions over the weekend of 2 and 3 May. The top 2 teams in each section after this weekend will then play off in the finals in Palmerston North on the Friday before Congress starts in November

NZ Mixed Team- Asia Cup India 2026

New Zealand Bridge has approved the following self-funded team to attend the 5th Asia Cup in Goa, India.

- Ian Berrington and Fuxia Wen
- Murat Genc and Anne Somerville
- Barry Jones and Jenny Millington

The event starts on June 21.



Rule of 20

Sometimes when we look at our hand, we are not sure whether to open the bidding. The shape is good, but we lack the points. Rule of 20 helps with this dilemma.

When you are considering opening in first or second position, statistically speaking your hand is strong enough to open if :
Your HCP (high card points) plus the number of cards you hold in your two longest suits comes to 20.

If the count is less than 20 your hand is not strong enough.
So count your HCP, Add the length of your two longest suits.
If you reach 20, INCLUDING 2 quick tricks, OPEN.



Te Awamutu Xmas Party 22 November Te Awamutu
1st Karen Harris & Barry Jones

Rotorua Xmas Party	6 December	Rotorua
2 nd	Gary Foidl & Ant Hopkins	

2026:

Tauranga Mini Congress	24-26 January	Tauranga
W/Bays Provincial Pairs	2 nd	Blair & Liz Fisher
Congress Teams Plate	1 st	Blair & Liz Fisher & teammates

Congratulations



2025

Monday Finale Pairs

Scratch

- 1 Mark Thomson & Richard Hooper
- 2 Karen Thomson & Cathy Nolen

Handicap

- 1 Mary Fear & Jan Hancox
- 2 Karen Thomson & Cathy Nolen

Tuesday Afternoon Finale Pairs

Scratch

- 1 Richard Fletcher & Kim Thompson
- 2 Linda Lin & Cynthia Clayton

Handicap

- 1 Richard Fletcher & Kim Thompson
- 2 Peter Levin & Gael Levin

Tuesday Evening Finale Pairs

Scratch

- 1 Sean Dwyer & Alan Grant
- 2 Steve Davies & Sharon Davies

Handicap

- 1 Sean Dwyer & Alan Grant
- 2 Steve Davies & Sharon Davies

Thursday Finale Pairs

Scratch

- 1 Mark Thomson & Richard Hooper
- 2 Iain Paterson & Larissa Eyre

Handicap

- 1 Iain Paterson & Larissa Eyre
- 2 Pam Burns & Marilyn Webby

Friday Richmond Finale Pairs

Scratch

- 1 Lindsay Reid & Phil Thompson
- 2 Kim Thompson & Nigel Gresson

Handicap

- 1 Elaine Rayner & Mary Girvan
- 2 Lindsay Reid & Phil Thompson

Friday O'Neill Finale Pairs

Scratch

- 1 Roger Johnstone & Michael Davies
- 2 Ken Couper & Bruce Bettany

Handicap

- 1 Judy Simonson & Nigel Judson
- 2 Stephen Thwaite & Jenny Bailey