

Illawarra Bridge Association

Newsletter September 2024

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1 Editorial

This edition of the Newsletter is not as long as recent editions but is not without significant content. Lots of things are coming up: new lessons, the Spring Nationals, our Swiss Pairs Congress, and our IBA Teams Championship (see below for all these details). The Recent Results section clearly shows how our club is increasing its presence on the NSW bridge scene, with excellent results from several events held over August and early September. We have included an article written by Paul Lavings a few years ago just for your interest; it explains a lot about bridge that you may not have known. It is a very interesting read.

2 From the Management Committee

2024 Registration Cards

There are still a lot of people who have not yet collected their 2024 ABF registration cards. These can be found in plastic boxes on the table beside the fridge at Figtree. Please check the boxes if you are unsure whether you have collected yours.

Barbara Overington has already collected and distributed cards for our Thirroul members.

Membership Fees.

Many of you will have read in the ABF Newsletter or the Bridge NSW Newsletter that the ABF has increased their affiliation fees to apply in 2025. These, together with last year's doubling of the NSW fee, means IBA's annual membership no longer covers the amount we pay out to the ABF and Bridge NSW. IBA will probably increase its fees accordingly. Details will be advised later.

Special Friday Afternoon session to replace Saturday, 9 November

The State Novice and Restricted Teams event will be held at our premises in November. As a result, there will be no regular bridge session on Saturday, 9 November. An extra session will be held on the afternoon of Friday, 8 November.

Starting Time on Saturdays

As of January of next year, the start time for Saturday afternoon sessions at Figtree will be 1pm. It will remain at 1.30pm for the remainder of 2024.

Congress venues

Both the Management Committee and the Tournament Committee have received complaints about the venue used for our congress. It is felt that the lighting at Port Kembla Golf Club is inadequate at many tables. If anyone knows of an alternative venue that could accommodate 30 (or more) tables, please speak to one of the committee members. (Each table requires a square of about 2.7 metres on each side; a long rectangular room is preferable to a square one).

Melbourne Cup party.

The IBA Melbourne Cup party will be held at Figtree again this year. It is a very popular event, so please keep 5 November in mind.

IBA History Project

There are plans to write up a booklet on the history of IBA in time for the 2025 birthday celebration. Sue Bochan has kindly offered to chair a committee and is seeking volunteers from the club who would be willing to assist.

What bridge means to me...

Our publicity officer, Chris Yates, has been working on an application for inclusion in the **Wollongong Council Seniors Festival Activities Program** for March 2025. We propose to hold "Bridge Taster" sessions on two Mondays from 10am to 12 noon.

Chris has also been touring around the country recently and encountered the Roma Bridge Club in Queensland. She obtained one of the club's flyers, which reproduced answers to the sentence 'What bridge means to me.....'

Among the responses were:

- Stimulation
- Connectiveness
- Meeting new people in new places
- Competitiveness
- Fun and laughter

We expect that all our members can relate to one or more of these responses !!!

3 Upcoming events

A new set of Tuesday night lessons started on 10 September. It is not too late to get those who've said, "I've thought about learning bridge" to go along.

Thursday night bridge will resume on 3 October. "Bidding with Stuart" at 6pm and play at 7pm.

Our second Congress, the IBA Swiss Pairs, is coming up on Sunday, 22 September. This is again being played at Port Kembla Golf Club, and entry is via MyABF

(<https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/event/view-event-entries/1676/2703>)

The club Teams Championship is also coming up in September, to be played over (up to) three weeks commencing 28 September. Remember there will be no duplicate pairs on these Saturdays, so if you want to play some bridge, you'd better join a team. Because we need an even number of teams, the field will be determined by the order of entry. We are using MyABF to manage this (<https://www.myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/1829>). Payment can be made by using your table fees account (click the option Club PP System under Payment method – the fee of \$15 per player represents the three weeks at \$5 per week).

If you aren't a MyABF user yet, please see the information on the ABF website about how to sign up (<https://www.abf.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MY-ABF-INTRODUCTION-FOR-PLAYERS.pdf>). If you need assistance, please ask Marie Pickering or Dave Havyatt.

On MyABF, several members recently attended a webinar hosted by Bridge NSW. The ABF intends for the MyABF platform to eventually provide all of a club's software needs, including membership, table fees, scoring, results publishing, and masterpointing. As envisioned, it would simplify many tasks at the club that occupy many hours of volunteer time. The webinar can be viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/s0RySD5Q1FQ>.

Our 'local' national gold point event – the Sydney Spring Nationals – is coming up in October. This year, there are events on nine days, including two weekends. Many events exist for all experience levels. Canterbury Racecourse is an easy drive from Wollongong.

Sat 19	Sun 20	Mon 21	Tue 22	Wed 23	Thu 24	Fri 25	Sat 26	Sun 27
Spring Nationals Mixed Teams Qualifying	Spring Nationals Mixed Teams Semi-Final	Spring Nationals Mixed Teams Final	TBIB Open Teams Qualifying			TBIB Open Teams Semi-Final	TBIB Open Teams Final	
	Gerda Stern Mixed Pairs		Bobby Evans Seniors' Teams Qualifying <i>incorporated in the TBIB Open field</i>			Seniors' Teams Final		
			Linda Stern Women's Teams Qualifying <i>incorporated in the TBIB Open field</i>			Women's Teams Final		
Penline Butler Swiss Pairs Open Intermediate Restricted Novice	Spring Nationals Matchpoint Pairs Qualifying	Spring Nationals Matchpoint Pairs	Bridgegear Intermediate Teams Qualifying		Bridgegear Intermediate Teams Final	Dick Cummings Open Pairs Spring Nationals Intermediate Pairs Ted Chadwick Restricted Pairs Spring Nationals Novice Pairs		
	Open & Under 500 MPs	Finals, Consolations, & Plates	TMAAT Restricted Teams <i>incorporating Novice Teams</i>		Rainbow Swiss Pairs			

4 Recent results

The **Past President's Cup and Shield** was contested at the club on 26 June and 3 July. This event was traditionally played as a qualifying event, with the second stage being a split field. The Cup was awarded to the winners of the top half, while the Shield went to the winners from the bottom half. Because we were unsure of numbers this year, it was just run as a two-week event with the trophies going to the first and second-place getters:

Cup Winners Liz and Steve Hurley

Shield Winners Paul and Helen Lavings

July finished with the **Tuesday Pairs Championship** on 23 and 30 July. Congratulations to the following:

1st Helen Lavings and Ruth Neild

2nd Catherine Power and Carolyn Githens

3rd Margaret Clarke and Trikki Young

August's only club event was the **Karhof Trophy** on 24 and 31 August. A big thank you to the Management Committee, who have provided refreshments after major events where we can present the trophy. A special thanks to Lyn and Ken Soldi for doing the work.

Congratulations to our Trophy winners, Paul and Helen Lavings (pictured with Director Dave Havyatt).



Congratulations to all the placegetters:

- 1st Paul and Helen Lavings
- 2nd Cathy Ashcroft and Andrew Smith
- 4th Bill Fotheringham and Martin Bunder

August also saw both the Statewide Pairs and the Open Australia Wide Pairs. Paul and Helen Lavings won the **Statewide Pairs**, an outstanding result. Ron Kinloch and Jeff Carberry came in 19th, while Ruth Neild and Steve Brell were 22nd.

With some results still to be verified, Steve and Liz Hurley were our best performers in the **Australia Wide Pairs**, coming in 17th position.

We were also well represented in the results of the **Nationwide Pairs 16** held on Saturday, 17 August. 29 clubs from every State and Territory fielded a total of 475 pairs. In the EW direction, we had three pairs in the top 10, including Ruth Neild and Steve Brell, who were 1st, Steve Szatmary and Phil Barker (3rd) and Ian and Vicky Lisle (6th). When results from all 475 pairs (from both Mitchell and Howell movements) were combined and arranged on percentage, Ruth and Steve were 2nd overall (behind an NS pair). Steve and Phil were 8th, with Ian and Vicky 16th.

Finally, five IBA teams went to Bowral on Sunday, 1 September to contest the **Regional Final of the Grand National Open Teams (GNOT)**. After the fifth of six matches, three IBA teams were well clear of the rest of the field, with the Green team coming first, the Hurleys second and the Lavings third, with only 4.55 VPs between first and third. A big win by the Lavings team and a surprise loss by the Green team saw the final finishing order:

- 1st Paul and Helen Lavings, Ian and Vicky Lisle
- 2nd Liz and Steve Hurley, Grant Cowen and Steve Szatmary
- 3rd Murray Green, Bill Fotheringham, Timothy Marchant, and Martin Butler

Our congratulations to all three. Thank you to the other two IBA teams for representing us (Cathy Ashcroft, Andrew Smith, and Roger and Glenda McNee; Conny Szency, Erica Gray, Cheryl Waters, and Graham Jones).

5 New Members

Murray Green is a new club member but isn't new to bridge. Murray is a Silver Grand Master who has also previously represented Australia.

We have also recently had Paula Corbett return after many years away. Murray and Paula have been joined by a host of new members this year, some transfers and some from our lessons.

We warmly welcome Murray and Paula along with Phillip Carey, Derrick Milling, Bevan Clouston, Catherine Gregory, Carl Matchett, Penny Potter, Diana Watson, David Wood, and Anne Ingram.

6 News from the North

IBAND is flying almost as well as this magnificent bird.



A photo of an Austinmer Sea Eagle, taken by David Rooney, sent by John Spira

Back to bridge business:

We have held 2 red point events over the last 2 months:

The **Pairs Championship** on 6 June:

- 1st Alex Tavan and Michael Turner
- 2nd Bruce Loomes and Wayne Hunt
- 3rd Jack Regan and Rob Mathie

Wednesday Red Points on 10 July:

- 1st Jack Regan and Rob Mathie
- 2nd Lily McCabe and Mike McCabe
- 3rd Bruce Loomes and Dennis Aubourg

Congratulations to Pamela Middleton for doing so well in the Hi-Lo teams; her pair datum:

- 5th, with Dave Havyatt
- 8th, with Steve Szatmary

Until next time, Happy Bridging,

Barb

7 Why isn't bridge more popular?

In February 2019, Bendigo Bridge Club ordered 40 books for their beginner lessons. I thought this was pretty amazing since Bendigo is a mining city in Victoria with a population of under 100,000 at the time. I emailed the teacher, Sue Napier, asking how the club attracted so many pupils, and she emailed me back this picture with the comment "This did the trick":



Ads for bridge lessons are normally bland and colourless and attract the expected results. Why not jazz it up a little? Local newspapers are keen to print interesting snippets. A little creativity would attract much more interest.

When bridge was in its infancy in the 1920s and 30s, virtually everyone played. Bridge was often headline news. When Oswald Jacoby had a swipe at one of his opponents between sessions at a major bridge tournament in 1929, it made the front page of the New York Times – centre column.

A big reason bridge approached its true potential in the 1930s was the impact of Ely Culbertson. Culbertson had an American father and a Russian mother. He arrived in the USA in 1921, aged 30 and made his living playing rubber bridge for many years. By 1928, Contract Bridge was overtaking Auction. Ely decided he and Contract were made for each other and began to build an empire.

By 1932, he had sold half a million bridge books, and his magazine “Bridge World” had a monthly circulation of 80,000. He had made 6 movie featurettes, 4000 teachers taught his methods under his banner, and his bridge columns ran in 200 newspapers across America.

The population of the USA at the time was 125 million, and according to government figures, 20 million were keen bridge players. Countless millions wanted to learn. Bridge was indeed bigger than baseball. I always thought 1 in 10 people would enjoy playing bridge; nowadays it is something like 1 in 700 that plays. Culbertson achieved 1 in 6 people!

Well into COVID-19 lockdown, Barbara Woolfe, the bridge teacher at Bathurst Bridge Club, called me to ask if there was some way she could look after her batch of 20 new players online. They had learned the game but never played. “Wow”, I enthused, “how did you get so many new players?”

Bathurst has a population of 44,000, and the bridge club has less than 100 members. Barbara responded without thought, “Hard work. Giving out pamphlets on street corners and in malls, mail-drops, advertisements”.

Often I come across people who show some interest in learning to play bridge. I try to engage them in conversation, but I notice that they do not understand how bridge works. How could they, with so many other things competing for their time and attention? Many think bridge is a gambling game, once it was. Others think it is a sedate game for older folk. I reckon a short description of how bridge is played might well convince people bridge is well worth trying.

HOW IS BRIDGE PLAYED

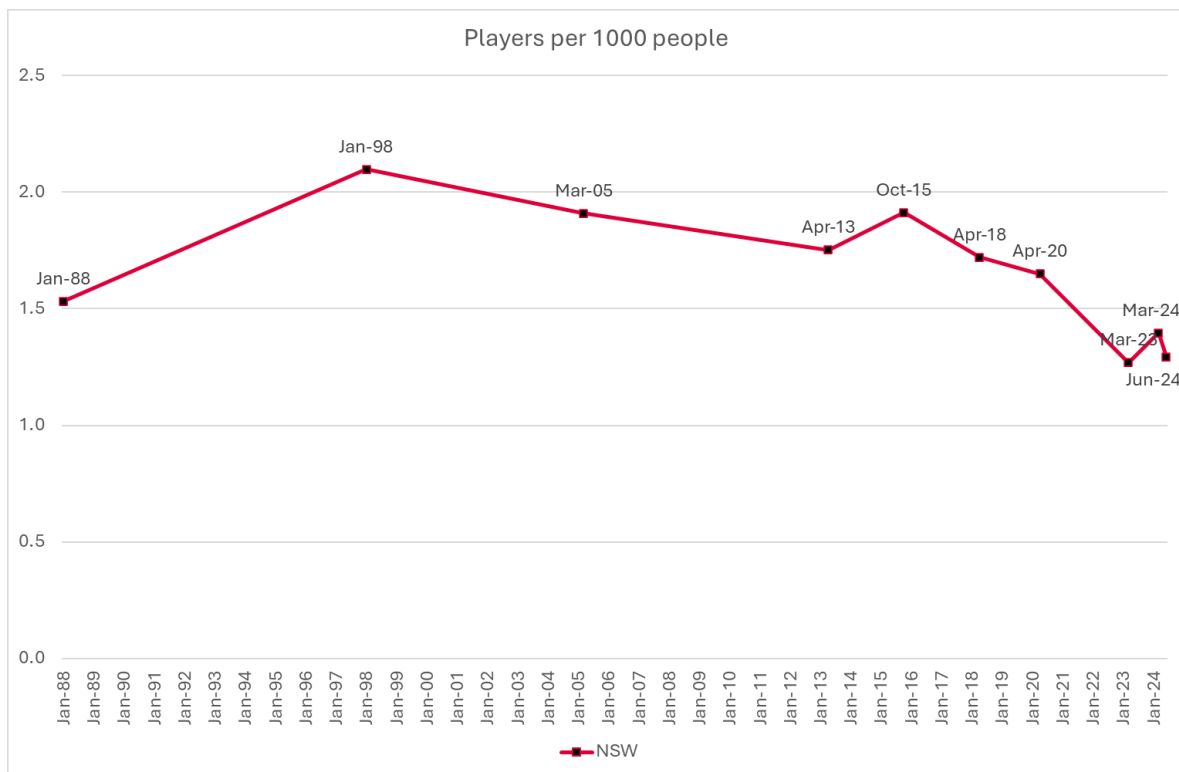
Bridge is a partnership game in which you normally play 26 or 27 hands in a 3-hour session. You can play online or at one of Australia’s 350 bridge clubs, many with over 100 members. Bridge is a very social game, inexpensive, a great mental exercise and no gambling is involved.

Many famous people have played bridge and play it now. Bill Gates and Warren Buffet both declare themselves to be bridge addicts. Also bridge involves the mind in much creative thinking and is a great mental stimulant.

Computers play most games better than humans, and the best chess program crushes the human world chess champion. Not so in bridge; there are too many imponderables and too much psychology rather than straight-out calculation. Computers (so far) aren’t so good at judgement, intuition, backing a hunch and hoping for the best.

Paul Lavings (This column first appeared in the ABF Magazine in September 2020)

Editor: Peter Gill collated some data points on the number of registered players per state starting in 1988. The chart below shows the statistics for just NSW converted to players per 1000 people. The “saw-tooth” at the end results from the ABF only processing membership cancellations on 31 March each year. Paul’s calculation of about 1 in 700 playing is right, but it was as high as 1 in 500 in 1998.



8 ANC in Orange

This year's Australian National Championships held in Orange were a great success, both as a tournament and the success of NSW teams. The core two events at the ANC are the Interstate Teams held in four divisions (Open, Seniors', Women's and Youth) and the Butler Pairs (held in Open and Restricted). The NSW teams won all but the Youth category, which was a great result. The NSW teams themselves are chosen through a separate Interstate Teams Selection process. These events are played as Butler Swiss Pairs, and the winning three pairs make up the state team.

The Butler Pairs at the ANC used to be the equivalent event for selecting national teams. These days, national teams are chosen from playoff events. To qualify for these, you must earn Playoff Qualifying Points (or PQPs) at various national events.

You can see how the teams played in the Finals at <https://kibitz.realbridge.online/>. Then, after you log in, click on 2024/07. You can then scroll to AU (Division) Interstate Teams Finals. There are three entries for each final covering Stanza 1, Stanza 2-3 and Stanza 4-5. (A Stanza is a twelve-board block). Once you've clicked on one of these, you will see the board numbers and the result for each table. Clicking on a result opens a window that shows the bidding and the hands. Clicking on the chevrons (<, >) in the bottom left advances (or reverses) the play a trick at a time.

Next year, we will get another Gold Point in NSW as the Central West Festival becomes a regular feature of the bridge calendar.

Acknowledgements

Phil and Dave would like to thank all those who contributed to making this newsletter possible.