

HISTORY OF THE NORTH SHORE BRIDGE CLUB INC.

The club had its beginnings in 1957 when Dorothy Bollard and Kathleen Mowbray convened a meeting at which the North Shore Duplicate Bridge Club was formed and the game of bridge was introduced to many who had played the popular games of 500 or Mah Jong. One of the original members from those early days, John Pinder, was still a regular at club sessions until his death in November 2020.

The club began in the dining room of Beach House where three tables of bridge were played. Membership grew rapidly thanks to the efforts of the committee and with the help of Phyllis Coutts a bridge teacher from the Auckland Bridge Club. Rex Evans, a top New Zealand Bridge Player, donated the Club's first trophy, to be awarded to the player who received the most match points for the year. Rex later became the Club's auditor. There were over 100 members in the club after just a year and in 1958 a special meeting was convened to discuss whether the club should shift to new premises.

The club hosted its first tournament in 1959 in the RSA Hall in Takapuna with entries limited to 30 tables. North Shore became famous for its hosting abilities, so much so that ballots were needed in future years to select entries.

In 1964 the club moved into the RSA Hall but the premises were not ideal as card tables and chairs had to be put up and taken down after each session. It was also very cold in winter with many members wearing coats and wrapping rugs around their knees to stay warm. After several cold winters it was suggested, at the 1966 AGM, that a building account be established with a view to the Club owning its own premises. A subcommittee was set up and under the chairmanship of John Pinder began to investigate properties that might be suitable. Discussions were held with the North Shore Horticultural Society and it was agreed to take a 21 year lease on a building to be erected in Killarney Street. A design was produced to allow both organizations use of the building and a scale model of the building was produced. The only problem was that once it was costed it was way beyond the means of the Horticultural Society. In 1969 it was decided that a separate building for the sole use of the Club would be a better option.

In 1973 the Council resolved that they would make land available and in 1974, after the Horticultural society abandoned plans for the development in Killarney Street, the Council offered the Bridge Club the leasehold of the section they had considered back in 1969. The Club accepted the Council's offer and fundraising for the building project began. All officers of the Club gave their time voluntarily,

bridge parties, market stalls, wine and cheese evenings and raffles raised many thousands of dollars. In 1976, when the Council had doubts about the suitability of the site, they decided to advertise the proposal for public objection. With only 5 objections the Council agreed to zone the land for bridge club use and later that year the Club lodged an application with Council to erect a building at 39 Killarney Street, Takapuna. Once word got out that the Club had approval to build on reserve land petitions were circulated and over 4400 signatures obtained demanding the council rescind their original decision. Several appeals were lodged but after much debate they were dismissed and in 1977 the Town and Country Planning Board granted consent provided the Club provide 50 parking spaces.

The financing of the building now began in earnest with members taking out debentures and the Club negotiating a bank loan to fund the difference. Debentures were offered in denominations of \$50 with many members gifting them outright to the club. With building costs now budgeted at \$100,000.00, \$50,000.00 raised in debentures, \$12,000.00 from fundraising and the council guaranteeing a bank loan of \$40,000.00 the Club was ready to advertise for tenders. By August 1968 the building was ready for occupation but could not be used until the tribunal had reached a decision on the council's application to build 62 car parks. Many objections were received but the tribunal finally granted a specified departure provided the car park was available for general public use. The Council however still wanted the Club to pay for 50 spaces but eventually they paid 75% of the cost of 50 car parks. The new premises were officially opened by the Mayor on March 31st, 1979.

In 1983, again under the chairmanship of John Pinder, and with finance in place, the building was extended and a room with bathrooms and kitchen facilities was added below the clubrooms to cater for the membership which was now up to 400. This room also catered for teaching, committee meetings and storage as well as the playing of bridge. Today these rooms are also leased out to other community groups, providing the Club with an income.

Originally bridge was played on Wednesday and Friday nights and Thursday afternoons. With the increasing membership a Monday night, Tuesday and Friday sessions were added. In 1994 a Wednesday morning session was added for beginner players with disappointing results. Eleanor Fourie one of the Club's Life Members was however determined to make it work. It was suggested that this session be given over to those who wanted to play bridge in a casual atmosphere and Wednesday social bridge was born. Today this session attracts the largest number of members that play in one session and another social session has been introduced on a Thursday evening for those

members who cannot play during the day.

Back in 1988 bidding was still done verbally but later in that year bidding pads for silent bidding were introduced on Monday and Wednesday nights. This met with opposition at first but eventually the committee made it standard practice for all sessions as did all other clubs throughout the country. In 2004 an over 70's Honour Roll was initiated, not age related, but for any partnership scoring over 70% in a competitive session. The highest score on record is 79.17% accomplished by Pat Chessum and Lew Glover in 2007. In 2009, with the innovation of technology, a dealing machine was purchased which allows pre-dealt computer-generated boards to be available for every session. Then, in 2017 bridge tablets were introduced to record the score at the table, as each board is played, and relay it back to the Director's computer, so that results are available immediately at the end of each session. Also in 2017, a Grand Slam Honour Roll was initiated to record grand slams bid and made in competitive sessions.

In 2007 the Club celebrated the Golden Anniversary of its establishment. It is nearly 40 years since the clubrooms were first occupied and recent Committees have been addressing maintenance, renovation and replacement. Today the Club has a very happy atmosphere with a strong, stable membership of 300+, new members being introduced with regular beginner lessons to replace those founding members who no longer play bridge. We salute them for their foresight and hard work in establishing the North Shore Bridge Club.