

A History of Bega Valley Bridge Club

Compiled by Brian Harrap and Paul Corbett

Bridge was played in the Bega Valley on a social or informal basis from the 1940's, possibly earlier. By the 1960's there were at least two groups playing once or twice a week in people's homes. Anecdotes from players of those times suggest that it was very 'social', with afternoon tea being quite a ritual - silver tea service, walnut and vegemite sandwiches and beautiful sponges and slices.

Some of the early bridge players who are known to have played socially include Jean Parbery, Bess Branson, Pearl Ayres, Edna Goetz, Bertha Gowing, Gladys Sawyers, Norma Gowing and Penelope Dingle (known as 'Nep'). Bridge was a big part of Nep Dingle's life, especially in later years (she passed away in 1981 aged 92). She was quite a character, and was often heard to say "I haven't had a decent card all afternoon", and "that woman licks her fingers when sorting her cards - I can't stand that"!

Nep's daughter, Margaret Settle took up bridge in 1975 when daughters Elizabeth (Maxted) and Rebecca (Skinner) left home. Jann McNeil recalls a conversation with Margaret in early 1975 when they discussed how people who kept their "marbles" in old age were the bridge players. Shortly afterwards, Margaret arranged for her mum Nep Dingle and Bertha Gowing to run bridge lessons. There were six students: Margaret Settle, Jann McNeil, Nancye Apps, Annette Warby, Norma Gowing and Alison Otton, and they played on Tuesday afternoons, alternating at people's homes. Sybil Gauld, a bridge teacher from Sydney who started 'Trumps' Bridge Club at Mosman with Richard Brightling, ran a lesson on one occasion as did another prominent player, Paul Lavings.

Others who were playing bridge around that time, (in the '70's), were Margaret Chapman (Fergusson), Lillian Clinch, Joyce Searle and Ann Long. Ann's involvement with bridge goes back to the '60's, when, in Malaysia, she played social bridge with other young army wives. Ann continued playing socially upon moving to Bega in the early '70's and later introduced her children, Gareth and Kerrie to bridge, as well as son in law, Anthony Dowd.

Another group that played social bridge regularly over many years included Irene Renard, Hazel Rixon, Mary D'Arcy, Joy Lee, Hazel D'Arcy, Pat Leonard and others.

There was an attempt to form a bridge club in the Pambula/Merimbula area in the early 80s when Maida Packer, a resident of Pambula Beach, placed an advertisement in the Merimbula local paper, seeking people interested in playing bridge. However, she only received two responses.

In 1983 Kevin Tant moved to Tathra. Kevin was a police officer and had always played cards - Canasta, Euchre and Five Hundred. The Tants first lived in Illoura Street, next door to Sue and Dick Day (Dick later became the boss of Bega Cheese), who they played cards with socially, and Sue told Kevin she had taken up "bridge". He became interested. It was rubber bridge, Wednesday afternoons, so he lined up with a bevy of little old ladies who told him that they played "Goren Five Card Majors", according to the book. Kevin bought a copy of a book on the Goren bidding system and soon found that there were a few similarities with the ladies' bridge techniques, but not many! He recalls that they were a lovely group, usually two tables playing at various homes: Jean Parbery, Margaret Settle, Nancye Apps, Susan Bullock, Bertha & Norma Gowing, Alison Otton, Wendy Tobitt, and her mum Jill Davidson,

Sue Day, Val Little, Jenny Brown and Margaret Woolley. Kevin remembers they were enjoyable Wednesday afternoons, with a draw for partners and playing for big money (one cent a point!). The afternoon tea goodies were to die for.

In 1988, Bega Cheese brought Russell Bourke from New Zealand to Bega as a specialty cheese maker. Russell was a bridge player but he had never played rubber bridge. Kevin Tant recalls inviting him to a game of bridge at Val Little's house at Tathra with Sue Day, and Russell was surprised that there was no actual bridge club, and he became the driving force behind the formation of a club to play duplicate bridge in the Bega area. At about the same time Di & Tony Woolford had moved to Merimbula and were running Stephen's Restaurant, and had started a club there.

1989

The inaugural meeting of the *Bega Valley Duplicate Bridge Club* was held on 4 April 1989 at Bega RSL Club, where it was decided that a club be formed. The meeting was attended by Russell Bourke, Kevin Tant, Nancye and Ron Apps, P. Butler, F. Page, Michael Hickie, June Jones, Alison Otton, Margaret Settle and Wendy Tobitt. There were 22 apologies for that meeting, many of whom subsequently joined the club, and continued playing for many years. A Committee was elected, with Russell Bourke as the inaugural President, Kevin Tant as Secretary/Treasurer and a Committee comprising Wendy Tobitt, Margaret Settle and June Jones. A joining fee of \$15 was set, with an annual subscription of \$5 and playing fees \$2 for members and \$3 for visitors. Ron Apps is the only one from that meeting who is still playing (2018). Honorary membership was offered to Jean Parbery and Bertha Gowing in recognition of their influence in the establishment of a Bridge Club in the Bega Valley.

A bank account was opened with IMB Bega, and the necessary supplies were purchased through Contract Bridge Supplies. Bridge was played mainly at the Bega RSL Club (which, initially, provided facilities free of charge) on Tuesday nights and the 1st Thursday of each month, in the afternoon. The Club affiliated with the ABF not long after its formation but did not have a qualified Director at that time.

Within six months of the club's inauguration there were 38 members, there regularly being 5 or 6 tables. A handicap event was played once a month. A prize of \$6 was awarded to the winning pairs at each session, to accumulate over the year and presented at the annual prize-giving and Christmas Party. The Jean Parbery award was established at that time, with a perpetual trophy to be awarded for the highest individual percentage. To qualify, players must have played a minimum of five games, with the highest and lowest scores disregarded and the remainder averaged. The criteria was later changed, where players were required to play in at least 50% of available club events to be eligible, and in 2018 a minimum of 20 games was set. The first Christmas Party was held at the RSL Club and was subsidised by the Club to the extent of \$500.

1990

In early 1990 Peter and Suzanne Donoghue and their young family moved to Tathra. Like Kevin Tant, Peter was a police officer. Kevin was teaching bridge at the time and Peter and Suzanne were two of his students. They picked up the game very quickly and Kevin and

Suzanne started playing together as partners on a regular basis. They teamed up with Di and Tony Woolford, playing in the Grand National Open Teams competition beating Batemans Bay, Cooma and then playing off in Canberra and winning through to the National final at Lindfield in November. At the end of the year they had something like 2 green points and 18 gold. In July, Suzanne and Peter lost all their possessions in a devastating house fire. The club donated \$400 to assist them recover.

At committee meetings, issues such as excessive smoking at the tables and slow play were discussed *ad infinitum*. Handicap events were abandoned along with the weekly prize allocation, with excess money going towards the cost of a Christmas party.

Within a year of the club's formation, membership stood at 44. Players at this time included Jean Parbery, Margaret Settle, Norma and Bertha Gowing, Margaret Royle, Margaret Woolley, Colleen Atherton, Ann Long, Kevin Tant, Russell Bourke, June Jones, Kevin and Mary D'Arcy, Nancye and Ron Apps, Alison Otton, Colleen Atherton, Annette and Brian Warby, Suzanne and Peter Donoghue, Di & Tony Woolford, Joan Sutton, Patsy McCulloch, Nancy Dufty, Michael Hickie, Eileen Scollay, Rhonda Jones, Mike and Maree Bradley, Wendy Tobitt, Jenny Brown, Jill Davidson, Pat Clarke, Jann and Vern McNeil. The latter pair remained amongst the club's staunchest players, and Jann later served as President for many years. There was a close association with the Merimbula club with some players playing bridge at both clubs.

1991

At the 1991 AGM Russell Bourke stepped down as President. Kevin Tant was elected in his place, Suzanne Donoghue became Secretary with Ann Long as Treasurer and Di Woolford Director. Smoking was banned during play, but a break of 5 minutes every hour was allocated for smoking (presumably smokers remained at the tables). At the 1991 prize giving, Jann and Vern McNeil were nominated for the first encouragement award, which at that time was sponsored by Di and Tony Woolford (it later became the Nancye Apps encouragement award). There were now 41 financial members.

1992

In 1992 Kevin Tant and Suzanne Donoghue undertook the Director's course and exam with all costs being met by the club. Di Woolford stood down as Director, with Suzanne Donoghue and Kevin Tant (both now qualified) taking over. The joining fee was abolished and an annual subscription set at \$10. It was resolved to purchase a clock, because of slow play with a five minute warning to be sounded towards the end of each round. The issue of smoking again came up, with suggestions for extra breaks and longer breaks to accommodate the smokers. However, breaks remained at five minutes between rounds since *'the smokers tended to be fast players, and therefore they had sufficient time to finish a cigarette'* (*quote from minutes*) Play was at the RSL Club, and occasionally at the Red Cross rooms in Church Street and the room under, what was then, the Bega Bowling Club (now Club Bega).

Also in 1992, play commenced every 2nd Monday afternoon at the Tathra Beach Bowling Club, initially in the club itself, and later, the Bridge Club was offered use of the Indoor

Bowling Centre, the "Green Shed". In those days it was merely a shed, no lining and no heating or cooling. It was oppressively hot in Summer and bitterly cold in Winter.

Arrangements were made for a joint congress with Merimbula, a teams event on 29th November, with Ailsa Tandy directing. Red-Point events were being held, two per year, one pairs and the other teams. Club members played in the Australia Wide Pairs competition in April, and an 'Epson' in June. The club was saddened by the passing of Margaret Settle during the year. A trophy, in memory of Margaret, named the 'Margaret Settle Award for Improvement', was awarded for the first time to Jean Daniel.

1993

Daytime bridge at Tathra was going well in 1993. The function of the bell was again emphasised. It is also recorded that members should have a systems card on the table at all times. This matter was to come up numerous times subsequently. At the AGM, the executive remained the same, and the only change to the committee being the appointment of Alison Otton who replaced Russell Bourke. Russell had been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, and died soon after at a relatively young age. Finances were reported as being in a good state with \$900 in the bank. The financial year was changed to January - December to coincide with ABF billing. The club participated in two Australian Wide Pairs events, the Statewide Pairs and a Worldwide Epson.

1994

At the 1994 AGM, a new Constitution was issued and accepted. Ann Long stepped down as Treasurer, being replaced by Alison Otton. The club had \$1969 in the bank. There was no play at Tathra in June, July or August as it was too cold in the Green Shed in those months.

As well as many of the original members, regular players now included Tom Gorman, Beata Denkiwiecz, Peter Lewin, Jenny Kyle, Helen and David Bruce, Francis Herbert, Lorna Kelaher, Hazel Adamson, Rob and Charles High, Dave Mullens and Chris Maxted. Chris' introduction to bridge came from a brush with the law, when a police car pulled into his driveway one afternoon - it was Kevin Tant who had come to invite Chris to learn bridge.

The Christmas function and prize giving was held at Mandeni, a beautiful 600 acre resort on Sapphire Coast Drive, with the generous hosting by club members Charlie and Rob High. Suzanne Donoghue and Kevin Tant teamed up with Greg and Win Phegan from Batemans Bay and made it to the finals in the Grand National Open Teams Competition of 1994. Suzanne won a Green Point Achievement Award that year.

1995

By 1995, the bank balance stood at \$2608 and it was decided that the money should be spent rather than accumulated, so the largesse was used to subsidise members to participate in outside competitions, provide lunch at red point events, pay for social membership of all members at TBBC and a barbeque at Bournda Reserve was also paid for from club funds. It is reported that there were 5-7 tables every Monday at Tathra. By then,

Suzanne Donoghue was running supervised sessions on Friday afternoons. An approach was made to TBBC to install fans in the green shed, with the club to meet the costs.

Players did well in the Australia Wide pairs, with Kevin Tant and Suzanne Donoghue scoring 65.7%, Helen and David Bruce 63.8% and Nancye and Ron Apps 56.1%. The club also participated in an Epsom event in June, a worldwide tournament played over two days. The Bega Valley team comprising Kevin Tant, Suzanne Donoghue, Rhonda Jones and Patsy McCulloch won the South Coast Teams trophy. Dave Mullens & Chris Maxted won the Nancye Apps encouragement award and Rhonda Jones the Margaret Settle award for improvement in 1995.

Linda Holdsworth began playing bridge around this time. Linda was eighty when she took up bridge, and was to continue playing until her 99th birthday. She was a very shrewd player, renowned for her judicious holding back of aces in No Trumps contracts, much to the exasperation of her opponents.

1996

Kevin Tant was transferred in his job as a police officer and stood down as President in mid 1996, being replaced by Ron Apps. Annual subscriptions were increased to \$15, and it was agreed that table money for Friday lessons and bridge should go to Suzanne Donoghue as compensation for the time that she devoted to the Club. A roster system was set up for Friday players to take turns to provide afternoon tea. This tradition continues.

The Club's finances were quite healthy, and it was decided to purchase a photocopier for club use (\$325), particularly in view of the large volume of lesson notes that required copying. Heaters were installed in the shed at the Bridge Club's expense (\$174). The date of the AGM was changed to February to fit with other administrative arrangements.

Many of the original players remained, with the "*tennis girls*" being the mainstay of the daytime players. This was a group of women who played tennis weekly at the App's court at 'Yarranung'. A number of them felt they should look to the days when they could no longer play tennis and they learnt to play bridge from Margaret Settle. These included Helen Johnston, Margaret Royle, Marie Swinbourne, Mary D'Arcy, Joan Sutton, Margaret Fergusson (Chapman), Annette Warby, Nancye Apps, and others.

It was also around this time that Brian and Ruth Harrap joined the club. Brian's association with bridge went back over forty years to when he was returning to Australia at the end of 1952, after he had completed his second Ph.D. at Cambridge. During the five week sea voyage he was introduced to bridge, playing a very simplified version with a few friends, none of whom knew much about the game, though most had played Solo. On his return to Australia Brian re-joined CSIRO, where he had worked before going to England. In 1953 he decided to take some bridge lessons at the Victorian Bridge Association in Melbourne, the teacher was a Mrs Thwaites who taught the Culbertson system, which bears little relation to today's bridge. Notably, one of the members was John Gerber, who had devised the system of ace-asking with 4C (in 1938), instead of Blackwood 4NT - it was known then as Victorian Blackwood. Ruth and Brian married in 1954, and bridge went on the back burner for several years, especially as Ruth had little interest in it then. In the late 60s Brian joined a small lunchtime bridge group which played at work and he played duplicate bridge at a club in Heidelberg for a short time. The system then was Goren 4 card majors. There was then a

long hiatus in bridge for Brian. The Harraps transferred to Canberra in 1979 with work and then came to live at Pambula Beach when Brian retired in 1984. In 1993, Ruth decided that she would like to take up bridge. Di Woolford was running lessons at SCBC, at the old RSL, and Ruth went along, but it was not a success. Later, they were in Canberra for a few weeks looking after grandchildren and attended lessons at the Grand Slam Bridge Club, run by Anne Weber as a franchise of Paul Marston of the Double Bay Grand Slam Centre. Subsequently they joined both the SCBC and BVBC playing Standard American 5 card majors - alternate Mondays at Merimbula and Tathra and Thursday evenings at Merimbula.

Suzanne Donoghue won a Green Point Achievement Award in 1996, but the pinnacle of success was Suzanne and Kevin winning the Australia Wide Pairs Competition - first in Australia, competing against almost 4000 players!

1997

The AGM scheduled for 4th February 1997 had to be postponed for lack of a quorum, and was subsequently held a week later. In view of the difficulty in obtaining a quorum it was proposed that the constitution be changed to provide for quorum of 12. Gwen Williams was appointed as the new Treasurer. All financial and membership records had now been *computerised*.

Kath Jennings, Barbara Chambers and Anthony Dowd began playing bridge in 1997.

Suzanne Donoghue and Kevin Tant (who was now stationed in the Wollongong area) played in many local congresses over the years, the Summer Festival in Canberra and as far afield as Leeton. Their first major success was at the Shoalhaven Congress in 1997, when they had a clean sweep - Walk-in Pairs, Pairs and Teams with Kaye & Jeff Carberry from Illawarra.

1998

In 1998 it was decided to have a bottle of wine as a lucky door prize whenever there were 4 tables on a Monday and 5 tables on a Tuesday. There was concern about the lack of Tuesday night players though Friday numbers were good. Chris Maxted became treasurer. Discussion took place on compensating Suzanne for all the work she was doing at home - Sapphire Coast Bridge Club were already doing this, and it was agreed to discuss with them how to arrive at a suitable amount. There was discussion on whether the club should play in the national open teams competitions, and when. The advantage of winning gold points was emphasised. Additional heaters were purchased for Tathra. There were now 57 members, with a number from the Merimbula/Pambula area making the trip North each week.

1999

In 1999 outgoing Treasurer Chris Maxted reported that the club ran at a loss the previous year. Pat Ubrihien took over as treasurer from Chris. It was decided to charge \$5 for luncheons. It was also agreed that all fees, subscriptions and table money be waived for Director Suzanne as compensation for the work that she did. The President also spoke of

the need for more directors. There was a proposal for the wearing of name tags but no action was taken. The Christmas barbeque lunch and presentation day was at the Apps' property, followed by a game of bridge with tables set up in the lounge room, dining room and hallway of the historic (1851) 'Yarranung' homestead.

2000

At the AGM in 2000 the importance of members arriving in good time to allow the movement to be decided and play to start on time was reinforced. There was some conflict of dates with the indoor bowlers, and the schedule for daytime bridge needed rearranging. One of the club's founding members, Jean Parbery, passed away in May, 2000 at the age of 93. A new trophy, replacing the original one, was purchased and renamed the 'Jean Parbery Memorial Trophy', and as previously, was awarded to the player with the highest individual percentage each year. Bega Valley took out the South Coast teams competition in 2000.

2001

In 2001, Ron Apps retired as president and was replaced by Rhonda Jones. Rhonda was one of the early members of the club, and partnered Mike Hickie for several years, before spending two years (1998 and 1999) in Wollongong, where she played bridge regularly. The need for more directors was again emphasised. This issue comes up time and time again in the ensuing years.

Assistance in setting up for games was discussed but not resolved. A bell is to be rung 5 minutes before the start of play, at which time players should be seated. A charge was instituted by TBBC for use of the green shed of \$10 per session. Members wished to continue the bi-monthly barbeque lunches during the summer months at Mandeni with jobs to be split among committee members.

At a special meeting, Pat Ubrihien resigned as treasurer, being replaced by Tom Gorman. A paper on the duties of the executive officers was circulated. At another committee meeting later in the year there was discussion on SCBC's decision to play every Monday at Tura, clashing with our event and potentially making it unviable. It was decided that our club would continue to play every second Monday at Tathra with many SCBC members continuing to play at both Tura and Tathra. This year's end of year presentations were made at App's with a barbecue luncheon followed by bridge, with a dinner at the Bank hotel for the night-time players.

2002

At the AGM in 2002 it was decided that the Mandeni barbecue would be held in March with an invitation to be sent to Sapphire Coast Bridge Club. A letter was sent to SCBC requesting further discussions on playing times. Again, the need for more directors was pointed out. Table money for visitors was increased to \$4. 10 grand slams were made during the year.

Suzanne Donoghue was placed third in Australia in the Australian Pairs Open with Peter Donoghue and Alison Otton in the top fifty. In the 2002 Australia Wide Spring Pairs Suzanne

Donoghue and Hazel Adamson came 92nd with a percentage of 63.3.

2003

It was reported at the 2003 AGM that there had been no reply from SCBC to our letter seeking further discussions. Thanks were conveyed to TBBC for installing a ceiling in the green shed and the promise of air conditioning. The turnover of treasurers continued with Peter Donoghue being elected Treasurer, Publicity officer was Tom Gorman. Table money remained at \$2 for members and \$4 for visitors. The timing of annual awards was discussed and, again concern shown at the small numbers every second Monday (coinciding with the SCBC event).

Bruce Griffin, Jannene Harnett and Catherine Bray began their playing careers in 2003. Other regular players at this time included the Donoghues, Nancye and Ron Apps, Annette and Brian Warby, Norma Gowing, Mildred Austin, Joan Sobels, Chris Maxted, Dave Mullins, Alison Otton, the McNeils, Rhonda Jones, Hazel Adamson, Robyn Steinberg, Martin Sims and Alison Sandwith, Patsy McCulloch, Colleen Atherton, Ann, Gareth and Kerrie Long, Anthony Dowd, Peter Abramowski, Linda Holdsworth, Joan Sutton, Kath Jennings, Don and Margaret Fergusson, Margaret Freeland, the Harraps, Tom Gorman, Lorraine O'Brien, Helen Bruce, June Jones, Freda Simmons, Edna Shoebridge, Margaret Royle, Joan Kennedy and Jean Daniel.

14 grand slams were bid and made during the year with bottles of champagne presented to the winners. The value of publicity was recognised and a number of articles were published in the Bega District News. Although the auditor recommended changes to the accounting procedures, the financial report was accepted and no changes made.

2004

Subscriptions were increased to \$20 in 2004. At a meeting with TBBC in May 2004, it was reported that council was proposing to cancel the Bowling Club's lease on the green shed land. BVBC undertook to send a letter to Council supporting the bowling club to retain the shed (and sub-lease to us). Air conditioning of the shed was put on hold because of this. TBBC agreed that we are now the sole users of the shed and can leave the tables up and have use of locked storage room. Prior to this it was necessary to stack furniture against the wall so the indoor bowling rinks could be used.

24 grand slams were made in the year. In the 2004 BFACT Pairs in Canberra, Suzanne and Peter Donoghue came 1st. In the Australia Wide Pairs Autumn Competition, Suzanne Donoghue & Hazel Adamson were 5th with 73.40% and in the Australia Wide Pairs Spring Competition Suzanne & Hazel scored 66.70% to come 17th. Hazel relocated to Dalmeny at the end of the year thus ending the successful partnership with Suzanne.

2005

The club lost one of its greatest stalwarts with the passing of Nancye Apps on January 25th 2005 at the age of 68. Nancye had contributed so much to the club since its inception. The Nancy Apps encouragement award continues in her memory. Brian Warby and Joan Sutton also passed away in 2005. Rhonda Jones retired as President due to work commitments, with Jann McNeil being elected in her place. A bench top oven was purchased and the acquisition of a more modern scoring program was authorised to replace the old DOS based system that had been in use for 12 years. Evening red point events were held at Tathra and included supper. In the Australia Wide Pairs Spring Competition Peter & Suzanne Donoghue came 42nd in Australia with 64.6%.

2006

The major issues in 2006 centred around maintenance of the green shed and difficulties with the new manager of TBBC due to his perceived lack of interest in our occupancy of the shed. Suppers and lunches were held throughout the year to coincide with members' birthdays (those ending with a '0'). It was reported that membership numbers were down on previous years. The performance of the old refrigerator at Tathra was mentioned - however it was still going strong in 2020! The club, indeed the whole community, was shocked and saddened by the untimely death aged 39 of Gareth Long in a farming accident in August. 2006 was another successful year in National Competitions for Peter & Suzanne Donoghue, 9th (70.8%) in the Australia Wide Pairs Spring Competition and 48th in the Australia Wide Pairs Autumn Competition (64.9%).

2007

In 2007 there were still problems with maintenance of the shed and apparent lack of interest by TBBC. There was considerable discussion at the AGM on how the issues might be resolved. By now, the Club had accumulated a large collection of books on Bridge. It was mentioned that there were problems with people borrowing books from the library and not returning them so it was proposed to introduce a system to record who had borrowed book(s). ASE8 scoring software was purchased at a cost of \$399. Christmas functions were hosted by Ron Apps and June Jones at their respective homes. The bank balance was quite depleted and a motion to increase table money to \$3 was agreed to. Suzanne & Peter Donoghue came 15th in the State Wide Pairs with 68.8%.

2008

By 2008 the borrowers' book for the library had been instituted, and Rhonda Jones had covered the books. The new scoring software had been implemented and was working well. The new manager at TBBC seemed more attuned to our needs than his predecessor and it

was hoped that urgent maintenance of the shed would be attended to. Discussion took place on the need for lessons to increase membership.

2008 was a very successful year with competitions; in the State-wide Pairs Session 1, Jann McNeil & Marie Palamountain came 1st with 71.0% and in Session 2, Suzanne Donoghue & Alison Otton came 2nd with 69.4%. Suzanne and Alison were 42nd in the Australia Wide Spring Pairs in 2008 with 63.9%, and 18th overall in the State Wide Pairs with 59.1%.

2009

In 2009 a meeting with the new manager of the Bowling Club was reported as being 'very satisfactory', with a number of the Club's requests agreed to. Lessons were being run in the daytime by Suzanne, and Chris Maxted planned to conduct lessons at night, but they will only be run for a minimum of 4 people. Comprehensive lesson notes were prepared by Suzanne, and these proved to be a valuable resource for new players.

In the State Wide Pairs for 2009 Suzanne Donoghue and Alison Otton won with 67.1%, Elizabeth and Chris Maxted came 27th with 58.9% and Rhonda Jones and Jann McNeil also in the top 100 scoring 54.5%. Suzanne and Alison came 40th in the Australia Wide Autumn Pairs with 65.3% and Suzanne partnered with husband Peter in the Australian Wide Pairs Spring Competition for a 10th (70.8%).

2010

The Club's finances were sound, with over \$7000 in the bank at the beginning of 2010. The club made a number of donations to charities throughout the year. Discussion took place about putting up a sign at the green shed.

Six new players started playing after completing the lessons run by Chris; Ross Ritchie and Paul Corbett were amongst those who began playing in 2010. Paul had moved to Bega in 1977 with the Water Resources Commission. He had played cards since childhood, and in the early 1970's played Euchre during the morning commute on the train to North Sydney and Solo at lunchtime (instead of going to the pub like many of his work colleagues). One of the Solo group was a bridge player and he tried to teach the others, but no-one could 'get it' and they went back to playing Solo.

In the 2010 State Wide Pairs, Suzanne Donoghue and Alison Otton came 7th with 60.2%.

2011

At the 2011 AGM the Donoghues stood down as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Chris Maxted was appointed as the new Secretary with Paul Corbett as Treasurer. Many of the jobs previously done by Suzanne were divided amongst other members. There had been a break in play in Bega, but it resumed in April in the Meals on Wheels room (the old Bega Times office). Max Jones and former member Eileen Scollay passed away in 2011. Ron Apps hosted an end of year barbecue at his home, with presentation of prizes followed by bridge. There was also a barbeque at Tathra Lions Park for the daytime players.

2012

Uncertainty of tenure of the Green Shed dominated club discussions in 2012, with the shed now managed by Council. Whilst the Department of Lands supported our occupancy there were doubts about Council's policy on the use of shed and responsibility for repairs and maintenance. Negotiations with council continued. Finances were in a good state, with income up by 10% and expenditure down by 3%. Suzanne and Peter Donoghue won the 2012 State Wide Pairs with 65.2%.

2013

At 2013's AGM, the future use of the green shed was again the prime topic of debate. Council intended to lease it to the Chamber of Commerce for an Information Centre and they proposed to sublease it to the Bridge Club, Hospital Auxiliary and others. There had been an announcement by local member Mike Kelly that an Information Centre would be established in the shed. Members were unhappy as rent would be higher and we would have to maintain the building at our cost. Any lease should include reference to the view by the Lands Department that BVBC has the right to remain in the green shed under *existing use* rules. At a meeting in December 2013 there was a report on discussions with council. Those promoting the Information Centre had now withdrawn with rumours that a Visitor Centre would be established at the wharf instead. BVBC became the sole lessee and occupier of the shed with the Hospital Auxiliary a permitted user. As such, for insurance and liability purposes there was a need for incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act (2009). A rental figure was being negotiated with Council, with a 50% reduction sought as a not for profit organisation. Responsibility for maintenance of the shed was still to be determined.

Members Don Fergusson, Chris Short, and Alison Otton died during 2013. Alison was a very astute bridge player who had played with the club from the start. She possessed a strong personality, was a stickler for the rules and always called a 'spade a shovel'. Her partner towards the end of her playing days, Andrew Thomson, credits her with teaching him everything he knows about bridge (though perhaps doesn't account for his aggressive bidding style). Alison was known to reduce some players to tears at the bridge table.

Former members Margaret Royle and Margaret Woolley also died that year. Margaret Woolley is remembered as a particularly nice lady in the old sense of the word. She had been director of the Bega pre-school and a teacher and had actually taught some members in kindergarten.

There was discussion on the need for publicity and Brian Harrap agreed to take this on. Peter & Suzanne Donoghue were again in the top 100 nationally coming 78th in the Australia Wide Open Pairs with 61.8% while Jann and June Jones came 12th in the State Pairs with Martin and Alison, Chris and Dave and Ron and Annette also in the top 100 of that competition.

2014

By early 2014, lease arrangements for the shed had stalled because Council maintained that there was no official record that the club was a user of the green shed, despite us having played there for over twenty years. The amount of rental was still to be finalised. The new Bega venue, the 'Toussaint Room' in the Meals on Wheels Centre was proving excellent for bridge on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings and for lessons. Jann McNeil was re-elected President, Eric Myers as Vice-President and Chris Maxted re-elected Secretary. Paul Corbett stepped down as Treasurer due to travel plans during the year and Rob Robilliard was elected in his place. The general Committee comprised Annette Warby, Kate Jennings and Paul Corbett.

A new constitution was adopted to enable incorporation and Chris Maxted was appointed Public Officer, and therefore an *ex-officio* Committee member. A proposal for electronic scoring was deferred until we have more players. The club was successful in obtaining a grant through the "Clubs Grants" scheme, which was used to purchase a 'Handidup' dealing machine and bar-coded cards, however it was not put into use until 2018.

Foundation member June Jones and long-term member Helen Johnston passed away during the year and former member Marie Swinbourne died just short of her 100th birthday. Another long-time player, Margaret Fergusson, moved to Sydney to be closer to family and disability services (Margaret's eyesight was deteriorating at this time). She continued playing bridge at Peninsula Bridge Club.

Suzanne & Peter Donoghue came 2nd in the State Wide Pairs, scoring 64.9%, having won that competition two years earlier. The Christmas dinner was at Pepperberrys in Bega, with a barbecue at Tathra Lions Park for the Friday players.

2015

By early 2015, the Green shed occupancy had been sorted out and incorporation of the club was accomplished. The club decided that quarterly meetings would be held. At the AGM, Chris Maxted stood down as Secretary with Suzanne Donoghue resuming that role after a four year break. Tom Gorman replaced Eric Myers as Vice-President with the remainder of the executive unchanged. Finances were healthy, though down slightly on the previous year. Maintenance was carried out on the Green Shed during the year – white ants were eradicated (but only after they had destroyed most of the kitchen cupboards), plumbing, repairs to the kitchen, aluminium panels on the doors and new carpet was laid in the playing area of the green shed. Water ingress during heavy rain events remained an issue. The club was approached by a childcare group to use the shed six times per year. However, after the group used the facility once, the right to use it was cancelled.

Club members Helen Porter and Bruce Griffin died in 2015. Bruce, who had been a regular Tuesday night player for twelve years, was a very unconventional and canny player, using a bidding system he called '*Griffin's Rules*', to the amusement of other players and the frustration of his partner Jannene Harnett.

2016

Lessons by Chris Maxted in 2016 were bearing fruit with several new players. Thanks were conveyed to him for running lessons. The committee remained unchanged, with the exception of the appointment of an additional member, Bridget O'Reilly. Several minor maintenance issues at the club house were addressed during the year. A proposal for a sign was agreed to, and Mal Ramsey attended to this. Table money was increased to \$4 per session (members) and \$5 for visitors. A large purchase was made of new cards, bidding slips and travellers and the club bought a new vacuum cleaner and a heater. It was resolved that Friday players should pay \$4: \$1 to the club and \$3 to Suzanne as per the arrangement of the past twenty years. Pat McRae made name tags to be worn whenever we have visitors.

The club's 'senior' player, Linda Holdsworth, died at the grand age of 100 years. Linda had played regularly until 2015.

Discussion took place at a committee meeting on the practice of giving champagne to players who made grand slams, but any change to the custom was abandoned with confirmation that champagne would still be given for all grand slams. The end of year dinner was held at Littleton Cafe in Bega, but no formal awards were given in 2016. Tom and Rhonda provided light entertainment on the night, with a hilarious send-up of various member's playing styles. A second luncheon for Friday players was held at the green shed. Eighteen members took part in the Australia Wide Pairs in 2016, with Rhonda Jones and Marie Palamountain coming in the top 5%.

2017

At the 2017 AGM, discussion took place on the need for better communication and publicity for coming events. All positions were filled by the previous year's incumbents, with the exception of Vice-President, where Mal Ramsey was elected to replace Tom Gorman. Renewal of the licence on the shed went before council - the Lands Department supported the club's continuing occupancy, and we were granted a further three year lease.

There were further suggestions for occasional handicap events and team events. The use of system cards, which are mandatory according to the Rules, was again discussed, however few players displayed them. Electronic dealing and bidding machines were talked about but were again deferred. Due to ill-health Suzanne resigned as Secretary and Paul Corbett was elected to fill the casual vacancy from September. Chris Maxted was performing the Director's role, with Rhonda Jones Director on Fridays. There was reinforcement that players should call the director whenever an infringement occurs rather than making their own decisions (this is one of the Rules of Bridge). Players should not move for the next round until called upon. It was proposed that players should pair randomly with different partners occasionally.

The Scorebridge scoring program trial was performing well and a decision was made to purchase it to replace the old ASE9 system. It was also recommended that a club web site be created, and Paul was tasked with the job of "Webmaster". The end of year dinner and prize-giving was again held at Littleton Cafe, with Rhonda and Tom again providing the

entertainment. The Donoghues attended the function but advised that they would be withdrawing from bridge totally due to Suzanne's ongoing health issues. Former long-term members Pat Ubrihien and Patsy McCulloch died during the year, both in their late 80's.

2018

2018 was a year of growth and rejuvenation for the club, with 54 members at the start of the year, growing to 62, largely as a result of lessons conducted by Chris Maxted. There are regularly five or six tables (sometimes seven or eight), and we are frequently joined by visitors from other clubs. Supported bridge sessions continued on Fridays at Tathra. The 2018 calendar included two handicap events each month, two team events and eight red point events in the year as well as various external competitions.

Chris and Rhonda also ran monthly *intermediate* lessons at the Green Shed, which were followed by a barbecue lunch and then bridge. All of the lesson notes originally compiled by Suzanne were re-written by Chris, Paul and Martin and made available to members.

Paul has the web site up and running and it is well utilised by members with an average 50 "hits" a day. Deals are computer generated and hand records are provided on a routine basis and published on the website as part of the results. An electronic 'on table' scoring system to interface with Scorebridge was adopted with the Bridgemate® system being implemented in March.

At the AGM, Jann McNeil was re-elected President (her fourteenth term), Mal Ramsey as Vice President, Paul Corbett Secretary and Masterpoints Secretary, Rob Robilliard Treasurer with Committee members Mary Armstrong, Bridget O'Reilly, Vicki Kennaugh and Julie Colwell. Martin Sims qualified as a director during the year.

A resolution to change the constitution to provide for Life Membership was adopted. The membership then resolved that Suzanne Donoghue be conferred with Life Membership, and that all future subscriptions and playing fees be waived. This was a first for the club, and is a very prestigious award which recognised Suzanne's '*meritorious service, dedicated support and outstanding achievements as a member of the Club for 28 years, Masterpoint Secretary for 25 years, Secretary for 20 years and Director for 25 years.*' The citation also acknowledged '*her expertise as a Bridge player, director, teacher, mentor and administrator and her achievements in competitive Bridge, at club level and in local, regional, state and national competitions. She was top of the club percentages for 24 years, came in the top 100 in Australia Wide Pairs Competition on eleven occasions, was first in national competitions on two occasions, in the top 20 in State Wide Pairs Competitions six times, coming first on two occasions.*' Her ABF Status of "Gold Life" with 1168 Masterpoints, is the highest of any player in the club. She was presented with the award at a surprise ceremony on 2nd March.

Norma Gowing, one of our early players, who had transferred to SCBC some years earlier, passed away in February, 2018. Tathra based members were severely impacted by the devastating bushfire on Sunday 18th March, with two players losing their homes and several others suffering damage.

Members competed in several external competitions during 2018 with four pairs in the top 100 in the Statewide Pairs - Peter Abramowski & Rhonda 56th, Martin and Alison 61st, Chris

& Elizabeth 72nd and Ann and Paul 81st. Mal and Bridget came 124th in the Australia Wide Novice Pairs. Chris & Elizabeth came 25th (2nd in Australia) in the Bill Hughes Worldwide Pairs with 62.9% and in the Australia Wide Open Pairs, Ann Long and Fay Steward were 151st in Australia with 59.1%. There were 22 grand slams and 140 mini slams made during the year.

The end of year dinner and prizegiving was held at Littleton Cafe, and a luncheon for the Friday players at Tathra (where Santa made an appearance). Prize winners for 2018 included Chris Maxted winning the Jean Parbery Award for Highest Individual Percentage with 58.2%, Ken Sullivan taking out the Nancy Apps Encouragement Award and Paul Corbett the Margaret Settle Award for Improvement. The Director's Award was won by Alison Sandwith, Best on Handicap Julie Colwell and Aggregate Pointscore (8 for a win, 7 for 2nd, 6 for 3rd etc). was Rhonda Jones. Teams prize went to Julie, Vicki, Ross & Paul and the Pairs to Jann & Rhonda.

2019

The start of 2019 saw a significant decline in membership with a number of members not renewing for various reasons. The drop in numbers continued throughout the year, mainly due to ill-health. The club was deeply saddened with the passing of long-term member Mal Ramsay who lost his battle with cancer in April.

However, there were many positives, with events on Mondays and Tuesdays and supported bridge sessions on Fridays being well attended. There were nine Red Point events during the year, 15 handicap events, one teams event as well as several external competitions. We welcomed many visitors during the year and in January hosted Sapphire Coast Bridge Club members for the first of, what is hoped will be, a regular event. SCBC reciprocated when we visited their club in October. The club also celebrated its 30th anniversary in April with a luncheon and fancy dress on the day. Finances were healthy with over \$14000 in the bank, after the purchase of a number of *big-ticket* items.

The club was successful in gaining a 'Clubs Grant' which enabled the purchase of an automatic dealing machine. This has certainly reduced the time and effort in dealing cards and in producing interesting and challenging hands. A roster system was put in place for dealing.

Alison's intermediate lessons were well attended and well received, with many players adopting some of the practices which she taught.

Members competed in several external competitions in 2019 with Martin and Alison 75th in the Australia Wide Open Pairs and Paul Falvey and Bridget high in the order in the Australia Wide Novice Pairs. But it was Jann and Rhonda's year, coming 7th in the Statewide Pairs and 16th (out of 2360 participants) in the Bridge for Brains Challenge. They also dominated other competitions taking out the pairs and achieving >70% on 12 occasions. There were 24 grand slams and over 200 mini slams made during the year, with bottles of bubbly to the winners.

Two end of year functions were held, one at Tathra for the Friday players and another at Bega for the others. “Among the presentations were the Jean Parbery trophy to Rhonda for the highest individual percentage (56.7%), Margaret Settle award for improvement to Julie and the Nancye Apps Encouragement award to Libby. Mark was awarded the Directors’ prize and Ross the “Crack-up Award”, along with recognition of his innovative *gambling three notrump*” bids.

2020

2020 was to be one of the most turbulent years in the club’s history. The year began with the devastating ‘Black Summer’ bushfires which resulted in the destruction of millions of hectares of land, property loss and also a number of lives lost. Many of our members who lived in the area north of Tathra spent a nervous few days as the surrounding bush burnt and their homes were threatened by the fires. Ironically, later in the year the region was severely impacted by floods.

The club, however, was able to host the annual interclub visit from Sapphire Coast Bridge club in January which saw twelve tables of keenly contested bridge.

Another plus was the successful application to lease the “Green Shed”, with Council granting the club a five-year lease with a further five-year option, assuring the club of a ‘home’ for the immediate future. With BVBC as the prime lessee, we were able to make the shed available to other groups: the Tathra Community Garden Group, Hospital Auxiliary, Book Club, Bega-Tathra Safe Ride group, Bushwalking Club and Tai Chai.

At the AGM in February, the existing committee was reappointed, with the addition of Mark Oakley.

Unfortunately, in March, the club was forced to shut down as a result of the world-wide COVID19 pandemic. All face-to-face bridge was suspended for almost five months, including the lessons that Alison had started in February. Casual “online” bridge was played by some, and communication by “Zoom”, with the lessons also conducted on-line. Due to Covid, we were unable to compete in any State or National competitions in 2020, nor was it possible to make any presentations due to insufficient bridge having been played. There was, however, a low-key end of year function at Peanut café.

In order to resume bridge, the club had to develop a COVIDSafe Plan, which meant a range of safety measures to ensure the health and safety of our members: social distancing, formal “check-in” procedures, hand sanitising, changed procedures for bidding, scoring and board handling. Late in the year, a series of beginners’ lessons were run by Rhonda, picking up from where Alison had left off.

By the end of the year, some normality had returned, however 2020 will be remembered as a year of massive disruption and upheaval.

2021

2021 was one of the most challenging years in the club's history, with shutdowns and disruptions due to the COVID pandemic and interruptions to play as a result of three floods during the year.

Due to low attendances, face to face night time play was abandoned with online bridge using the RealBridge platform being adopted. As players got used to playing online, many found it just as enjoyable as normal play, with the advantage of not having to leave the comfort of home. RealBridge has integrated audio and video where players can interact with one another and replay the cards as they were played. There were regularly 5 or 6 tables on Tuesday evenings.

At the AGM the same committee was re-elected, however because of COVID, meetings had to be held online or by phone hook up.

Minor maintenance was carried out on the Green Shed with replacement of the doors and upgrade of fire safety equipment. Grants under the Community Halls Program and Clubs Grants Scheme enabled the purchase of new fans, tables and an automatic sanitising station.

Alison and Martin's *Bridge for Improvers* sessions on Thursday nights was popular, and there was a noticeable improvement in the bridge of those who attended.

There was considerable curtailment of outside competitions, although members did take part in the State-wide Pairs and Novice Pairs competitions. Several Red Point events were held during the year.

The club website was further enhanced during the year and for the first time since its inception the number of hits exceeded 40000. Members were encouraged to use the "register to play" and "find a partner" functions. The *Hand-of-the-Week* analysis proved popular.

Club members were saddened by the passing of long-term member Vern McNeil at the end of 2021, whose sense of humour and intelligent play will be missed at the bridge table.

A small-scale end of year celebration and presentation was held at PeaNut restaurant in Bega. Presentations included the Jean Parbery trophy to Jann for the highest individual percentage, the Margaret Settle award for improvement to Julie and the Nancye Apps Encouragement award to Dave Steer who also took out the Directors' prize, and Helen the "Crack-up Award".

2022

To be continued.....