

Ho! HO! HO! Yes, I know, I know . . . indeed, 'tis the season to be jolly and it's also that time of the year to be inundated with Christmas newsletters . . .

THE BILL SEWELL MEMORIAL CHRISTMAS PAIRS

This final tournament for 2019 was generously sponsored by Forsyth Barr and a spokesman for the company spoke briefly before the presentation of the prizes.

The room was full, attractively decorated in accord with the season and jam packed with good cheer.



There were plenty of Christmas styled earrings on display and others dressed to complement the Christmas theme. And even some of the men turned up in red and green accessories.



Doug Galyer was a study of casual, understated elegance . . . in a simple black shirt setting off the Christmas tie.

(or, perhaps Doug has a personal stylist at home?)

And, on the other hand . . .

No one could ever describe **David Stagg** as understated!!!

Candy striped braces, backed by a mélange of red and green colours in the tie, with green reindeer antlers poking out over his beaming grin.



While nearby, **Elva Brown** and **Chris Farrow** were right into the mood of the day.



And so too were another partnership full of goodwill and good cheer, **Ray and Margaret Cachemaille**.



But the Editor's prize for a Christmas combination of elan and elegance goes to



Jos Graves!

(Please note: regarding the Editor's Prize for Elan and Elegance – absolutely no correspondence will be entered into.)

When all the hurley-burley was done and then the raffle prizes distributed, the real winners emerged. **Robyn Michelson and Francie Vagg** won Section A from Doug Galyer and Jane Bradbury. **Lyn Dash and Gillian Travers** won Section B from Lou Macdonald and Ruth Futter. Gillian and Lyn were also in second place overall. In Section C **James Winskill and Marie Groves** prevailed over Jill Browne and Yvonne Rowe.

Section D was won by **Alan Stevens and James Jones**, from Fay Manley and Jenny Prendeville (more about this section later). Section E winners were **Ken Thomas and Jan Foley**. **Linzee Inkster and Trish Schroder** took the honours in Section F from David Stagg and Ian Mitchell.

But the most impressive result perhaps lies with Alan and James . . . from Section D, they were the overall winners across the whole field! Top place in a field of 45 pairs. It should also be noted that Fay and Jenny from the same section (D) were placed 5th overall.

Congratulations to all these members for bidding and playing so well.

Thanks to a host of volunteers for helping on the day, such as Noella organizing the catering and the kitchen (and to Marg and Jill), to David and Ian for the bar, to Michael Stace for directing and a big, big ups to Trevor Smith for his cheerful but efficient management of the very successful day. Bill Sewell would have loved it.



The smiles say it all. **Gillian and Lyn** with their section and overall (2nd) prize.

THREE NEW LIFE MEMBERS

At the November AGM the club honoured the contributions of three members by approving their nominations by the Club's Committee. It needs to be noted that a pre-requisite before even being considered is that the nominees have been members for at least 15 continuous years and have made substantial voluntary contributions for at least 12 of those years.

The three elected to life membership were Robyn Michelson, Jane McArthur, and Marion Sillick. A brief summary of their involvement in the club appears below, a summary of the tributes to each made by President Tony Davies at the AGM

Robyn Michelson (member since March, 1997) has been at various times the President (2009-2010), Interclub Manager, a Director, committee member, Editor of the Newsletter (4 years) and instructor for the learners' lessons. She has been the Club Recorder since 2017.

Jane McArthur (member since May, 2003) has been the Club Treasurer (7 years), Kitchen Manager, a committee member, a session and tournament scorer, a (joint) organizer of the 50th Anniversary, and responsible for the running of the Entertainment Book fundraiser.

Marion Sillick (member since October, 2004) ran learners' lessons from 2005-2009, has been a committee member, the Master Points Secretary, Tournament Manager, a Director, a scorer, Interclub Manager, and responsible for the accuracy and maintenance of the Honours Book over many, many years.



Jane and Robyn, moments after receiving their life membership badges from President Tony Davies on the afternoon of the Christmas Pairs. Unfortunately, Marion was unable to attend.

OBITUARIES

Those at the meeting also stood for a moment in silence to note that 5 members or ex-members had died since the previous AGM: Bill Sewell, Anne Pearce, Bruce Kilminster, Bev Ferrier and Des Pritchard. Bill was a popular and enthusiastic Tournament Manager and this year his name was attached to his favourite event, the In-house Christmas pairs, in 2019 the Bill Sewell Memorial Christmas Pairs. Bruce Kilmister was a life member, as was Bev Ferrier.

Bev was a friend and long time playing partner of Irene Galloway. Together they formed a powerful partnership. For example, they won the Kilmister Jug, for the Friday Pairs, a massive 19 times between 1987 and 2013.

THE SLAM CLUB

Jane Bradbury took out this award for 2019. She just drew further and further away from the cluster headed by Irene Galloway, with Pauline Reid, Kevin MacManus and Yvonne Rowe in close attendance.

THE 70% CLUB

Here, I only have the results to the beginning of December and there is a slight possibility they may have changed in the last couple of sessions. As the year draws to a close, **Lyn Dash and Gillian Travers** reign (at a massive 75.7 %) from Ian Nicholls and Barbara Bourke (72.6) and Dennis Lahman and Barbara Compton (72.2).

2019 AWARDS

Congratulations to **Myra Kunowski**. She won the Eileen Hofland Award for the Most Improved Player in 2019. And the winner of the Couch Award for the Most Promising new player went to **Lindsey Bryson**.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOK PURCHASES

As from next year, the Entertainment Books will only be available to purchase in digital format. If you have registered your card for this year, you should have received an e-mail advising that you have a three month free trial until March 2020 to try the new format. (If you do have any problems accessing that, please contact the Entertainment Book customer service team on 0508 326657.)

The organiser for our club, Jane McArthur, acknowledges that the new format will not suit everyone, and that you may not wish to purchase any further books. On behalf of the club, Jane thanks you for your past support and gaining the 20% of the purchase price that went into our club funds.

This has been a very useful, ongoing contribution to the club finances over the last few years.

THE RETURN OF THE ELVES

Those familiar with bridge activity at the North Pole will remember the animosity which reigned between the reindeer and the elves after last year's match to determine which group would load the sleigh. Tempers had cooled (as things are wont to do at the North Pole!) as the year passed. After a relaxing January and February, the reindeer began training for their strenuous circle of the globe on Christmas Eve. The elves were busy year round creating toys and games. But excitement grew in both camps as this year's teams of four match approached.

Both squads fielded their top pairs for the final 16 hands. The critical action took place when Dancer and Vixen faced the Frost siblings, Jack and Dee.



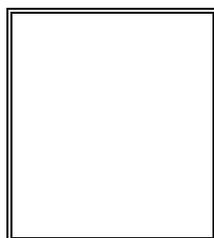
South (Jack)

♠AQJ953



♦Q6

♣AJ875



South (Dee)



♥Q97653

♦A54

♣KQ103

<i>South</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>South</i>
Dee	Dasher	Jack	Vixen
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	6♣	All Pass

(Some readers may be confused with all positions recorded as South, but at the North Pole the only possible direction is South.)

After an intelligent auction (Jack Frost's bid of 2 Diamonds is "fourth suit forcing" and asks the opening bidder to further describe their hand, while Dee Frost's bid of 4 Diamonds is a cue bid of the Ace) Dee became declarer in a club slam. The opening lead was the ♠6. Dee inserted dummy's queen which held, Vixen following with the ♠4.

Before playing from her hand, Dee thoughtfully considered her line of play. How would you plan to score twelve tricks?

Some defenders like to underlead the king in dummy's suit against a slam, feigning a singleton and hoping that declarer will reject a winning finesse. However, this auction seems to scream for a trump or diamond lead. Dee drew the inference that Dasher's desperate lead of a spade was because he held the diamond king and no trumps. A successful cross-ruff would require all nine trumps to be scored separately. This would necessitate Vixen holding at least three hearts, not so likely in view of the presumed four-card holding in clubs.

Instead, Dee decided to play to establish dummy's spade suit. For this to succeed the low diamonds in her hand were needed to force an entry with the ♦Q, so Dee discarded a heart on the first trick. The second trick was a spade ruffed with her low club, both defenders contributing low spades. Declarer next led a low diamond towards the queen. Dasher rose with his expected king and continued the suit, but the defence was helpless.

Dee ruffed a third round of spades (both opponents following), cashed the club honors in her hand, ruffed a heart and claimed with dummy's top trumps and good spades. If Dasher had forced dummy with a heart instead of continuing diamonds, the ♦Q could have been used as an entry to dummy at the end.

The slam had been made without winning a trick with the ♦A!

The cautious reindeer pair stopped in game (5 Clubs) at the other table. Declarer had to play well to bring in eleven tricks after a trump lead. The difference was enough to win the match for the elves. The reindeer appreciated the good play of their opponents and harmony has thankfully been restored in Santa land.

THE THREE WISE MEN

So it's Christmas, and the story goes that three Wise Men were seeking the Star of Bethlehem.

"Three Wise Men? You cannot be serious! Three Wise **Women** would have asked for directions, arrived on time, delivered the baby, gift-wrapped the presents, cleaned the stable . . . and there might even have been a chance for Peace on Earth."

And finally -- *May your Christmas turn up "Trumps" and may the New Year be full of the "Honours" you deserve.*

EDITOR: KEITH LEES