

Hamilton Bridge Club Newsletter - August 2019

Meet Our Members - Joan Egger

Joan is one of our longer-standing members, joining the club thirty years ago when a friend persuaded her to attend the lessons being run by Malcolm Smith. The friend has since given up playing but Joan persevered and has enjoyed the challenge of learning such a stimulating game. She became an Open player in 2013 and plays most Mondays and Wednesdays with Pam Burns, also Friday mornings with other regular partners.



Joan is an Aussie import, coming to New Zealand in her early twenties with a friend on an 'OE' working holiday, in those days by ship. The Tourist Hotel Corporation (THC) were always looking for staff for their hotels at that time and Joan started off in the THC at Milford Sound where she met her Austrian husband, Sepp, who was also working at the hotel. They spent time in the Hermitage at Mount Cook and the Wanaka THC, all beautiful parts of the country, before a visit to Austria for 18 months where their son was born. Quite an adventure for a young wife who didn't speak the language! On their return to Wanaka for the season (as the THC hotels were not open all year), Sepp was offered a permanent job as pastry cook at the newly opened Waikato Motor Inn in Te Rapa and so the young family headed to Hamilton. In 1969 they started in their own business, the Vardon Home Cookery in Te Rapa. Sepp has supplied delicious scones to our tournaments on many occasions!

Joan has seen many changes in the club over the years and has been involved with the introduction of these during her time on the committee including two years as President in 2008 / 2009. Initially, playing sessions were graded (apart from Monday nights when anyone could play as it still is now), with learners starting on Tuesdays then progressing to Thursdays when the tables in both rooms were full of players. You then had to be invited to play on Wednesday nights where the serious competition took place. Of course, there were no Bridgemates back then, with everyone doing manual scoring which Joan then entered into a computer to calculate the results. She also spent many years as a card dealer for the club.

Australia's loss has definitely been New Zealand's and the Hamilton Bridge Club's gain!