

THE HISTORY OF THE BUNDABERG BRIDGE CLUB



A meeting was held in the CWA rooms in 1971 to ascertain the level of interest in commencing a Contract Bridge Club in Bundaberg.

The instigator Fred Bush had recently arrived from Sydney to work at the Distillery and had joined the Burnett Club where some members viz Dr Eric Schmidt, Carl Neilson, Clyde Allan, Dr Brian Freeman, John Perry and Peter Young played contract bridge. Other interested players to attend

the inaugural meeting were, Mrs Penefold from Toowoomba, Ivy Dahler from Brisbane and Judy Valentine from Maryborough.

Thirty people attended the meeting and the first games of bridge were held in the Girl Guides Hut at the back of the Federal Hotel.

Fred Bush gave lessons and they were supervised by Peter Young and Clyde Allan. The still increasing membership necessitated yet another change to the Sailing Club in Quay Street, the club flourished with games held 2 nights each week.

The committee decided to take up an offer from Brothers Sports Club and with the benefit of a Sport and Recreational Grant, club premises were built at the rear of the Brothers Club on a 30-year lease.

Now with our own club rooms, games commenced there in 1975, later the building was enlarged to accommodate Congresses, on which attracted 30 tables.

Key members concerned with the building work were Eric and Betty Schmidt and Carl Neilson, all very astute and experience business people.

Membership soon grew to over 100, and Congresses attracted some top players, Easter Congresses were held with Friday night- Welcome Pairs Saturday Duplicate – 3 sessions Sunday and Monday Teams 3 sessions, all scoring was hand done by Jessica Mortess, Peter Young, Fred Bush, Fay Gayton, they also played in each session as well.

This was the time when everything closed from Thursday night until Tuesday morning which made catering and accommodation arrangement difficult.

Lessons by Jessica Mortess and Peter Young commenced in the new club house using Standard American System.

Later Fay Gayton and Peter Yong continued with the lessons supervised by Ruth Smith.

The Brothers Sport Club had expanded considerably, and they required our club house and agreed to buy out the lease.

The money together with a loan from QBA and club members, a new club house was built on Bundaberg City Council Land in Kendall Road, the club being granted a 99 year lease.

Unfortunately, when all of this took place, the transition from Brothers Club and the New

Clubhouse, the entire Club Records disappeared and most of the current members have little knowledge or no knowledge of the early days of our club, and those who made it possible.

The majority of this information has been provided by Fay Gayton, who attended the first meeting at the CWA rooms, and later became Secretary for a number of years, she is now the Club Historian.

