



It is 6pm at Maitland Bridge Club on Wednesday, 20 August 2014 ...

The membership at Maitland Bridge Club has grown in the past 12 months from approximately 90 members to 138 members – an increase of 64%. Bridge is played every day of the week except Sundays.

This year there have been two lots of six lessons for beginners and one series of five lessons of 'card play' strategies for new players. These follow the "Play Bridge" series written by the ABF's National Training Co-ordinator Joan Butts. They have proved to be very popular and easy to follow with practice of the hands available on Joan's website. Another series of six lessons for beginners is scheduled to commence on Wednesday 8 October 2014.

One of the reasons we have new people who learn and keep playing, is the diminutive and wonderful Maureen who is the supervisor of Wednesday bridge. It does not matter how well you play bridge, Maureen makes it a fun, friendly and a non-threatening learning experience.



"It is intellectually stimulating without being threatening," said newcomer Kate with a smile.

Some of the Club's more experienced players are now taking on a mentoring role. One new player commented whilst enjoying pizza as she waited for the evening card play lessons to begin:

"This gives us a feeling of worth and we feel that our mistakes are not a burden, and we play more confidently".

This lady had played all afternoon, was enjoying dinner with other Wednesday afternoon players who were waiting for the 6.30pm Card Play lessons to start! What enthusiasm! I did check and there were no swags anywhere. I was just wondering if they might stay the night in order to be early for Thursday play!

Other comments included:

"Bridge is addictive and it is stimulating for the brain" and
"Absolutely supportive environment for us is why we stayed back"

Margaret exclaimed:

“We came along on Tuesday night this week. We did not know what to expect and to our delight the experienced players were very welcoming and tolerant of our level of play without being patronising”.



A recent social function saw nearly 300 people – members, their friends and partners – gather at the local cinema to enjoy “The One Hundred Foot Journey”. Great fundraiser as well ...

The organised lessons have made a phenomenal difference to our numbers and the momentum is building as we have introduced card play lessons and the mentoring of new players to assist them in gaining confidence.

“We want to continue to learn and I now play more often,” said another new member.

The fact that the a friendly atmosphere House helps. There is plenty of parking



tutorials are held in in our own Club easy access and beside the Club.

“I have wanted to for ages. I saw one of local paper, and I drive past that sign every day. So I just called in. It just occurred to me to start learning and playing before retirement,” said Ruth, who has just completed the six beginner lessons.

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Another new member, Michael, has played bridge on computer for many years. He decided that playing bridge with a human is a much better way to go!

“It gets me away from the computer and the TV,” he said.

Over the last 12 months and since receiving our share of the ABF Marketing Grant, Maitland Bridge Club:

- Has held training for advanced and intermediate members by Joan Butts.
- Has five members trained to deliver bridge lessons.
- Our trainers are running beginner lessons.
- Five members qualified as Directors in April 2014.
- Held our *first* Super Novice Congress, directed by John McIlrath, on 22 June 2014 for people with less than 30 master points. It was well attended by our members and members from other clubs.
- Is retaining beginners by offering ongoing assistance and mentoring.
- We are having Joan Butts return to deliver lessons to advanced and intermediate players in October 2014.
- Is holding more playing sessions, and
- Six of our seven Management Committee members are novice bridge players.

Jenny Coyle,
On behalf of the trainers at Maitland Bridge Club
21 August 2014