



Bridgemates

Issue No. 22 February 2020



SANDI'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

First of all I would like to welcome our learners for 2020. You have taken the first step in your Bridge journey and we will be with you all the way. Linda Boyle is your teacher and each week there will be club members attending to assist you. Our aim is to teach you the wonderful frustrating game of Contract Bridge.

At the end of the lessons and supervised play, we look forward to you continuing your membership with us and we will do all we can to make this a great experience for you.

Our club was accepted by U3A to run a bridge course. We had a stall at their open day and are in their course hand book. This exposed us to another 2000 people.

This year we have a record number of learners thanks to our extensive advertising on local radio, local newspapers, and retirement villages and of course word of mouth by our members. A big thank you to Daphne for the time and effort she put in contacting all these sites.

We continue to offer a series of education sessions as a way of giving our members an opportunity to improve their Bridge. Twenty seven members attended the last session on transfers and Michaels cue bids. Steve has put in a huge effort in planning and preparing these sessions and I sincerely thank him for that.

Please check the notice board for future sessions and other presenters in the coming months.

It was been lovely to see the increase in table numbers and some old friends returning to our club.

On behalf of your committee, I thank you for the support and encouragement you have shown us and look forward to seeing you at a bridge session soon.

Sandi



Wonderful Event to look forward to:

Bridge at the Buderim Bridge club.

Continuing our series of conversations with Bridge Club members

David and Shelagh Graham



David was born in Hong Kong in the dying years of the British Empire his parents having moved there after World War II.

David and his brother had a pleasant childhood roaming the Peak and going on boat trips from Aberdeen harbour. This all changed when he was sent to boarding school at Cheltenham College in UK at 13. It was an enormous culture change....different sports, more discipline and a hideous climate. He did manage to survive and avoid expulsion and then went to the Royal Free Medical School in London. After six years spent in squalid digs, excess alcohol and cigarettes, and no money he graduated as a doctor.

David had never had any wish to do anything other than general practice and had an abiding dislike for pompous specialists so went to work for the National Health Service in London, choosing busy and difficult jobs for experience rather than kudos.

Shelagh grew up in London in the fifties and sixties my parents having moved from Scotland for work after World War II. I have fond memories of my early childhood growing up near Hampton Court on the outskirts of London. We had the best of both worlds as we spent summers in Scotland, travelling on a steam train and then by land rover through the larch forests, red spotted toadstool clusters and the moors, purple with heather, to the idyllic spot in the hills where my grandmother lived in an old estate house.

There was no electricity, just kerosene lamps and a black iron range with an open fire to keep us warm, a huge oven where something was always cooking, a kettle and a massive cauldron to heat water. We washed in a tin tub out in the barn or under the stars. There was a rambling fruit and vegetable garden where my grandmother grew raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, potatoes, carrots, peas and beans. I can still smell those tomatoes and strawberries sixty years later!

Once a week "the Van" would come to the tiny hamlet over the hill and we would walk across the paddocks along the sheep tracks with our baskets to buy beef and bread and chocolate snowballs, my little sister trailing a rope with her imaginary dog "Davey" at the end of it. They were happy times with the exception of the terrifying outside only toilet hidden in a tangle of huge rhododendron bushes way down the garden. I'm not sure what we feared lurked there!

London in the "swinging sixties" was an exciting place to beit felt like the capital of the world where anything and everything was possible. School was never a chore for me. I won a scholarship to a grammar school at 11 and went on to take O and A levels and then a place in an experimental course at Surrey University to study nursing and public health. It was interesting and varied but also very challenging. At 18 I found myself running a hospital ward at night, contemplating life and death for the first time. Following that I was introduced to the whole spectrum of London life and crime in the casualty department of a busy London hospital. At 19 I was riding a bicycle around the East End of London caring for patients in the tenement blocks of Hackney. Four years later I was a registered nurse and happily running one of the busiest heart surgery units in London.

It was during this time that David and I met and discovered we had the same yen for adventure and hatched a plan to travel. There were plenty of options.....Belize,Tristan da Cunha,..... Papua New Guinea. We decided on Papua New Guinea, were married at Hampton Court Palace, packed up a few belongings and set off on a the journey to the other side of the word via India, Hong Kong and the Philippines eventually to Port Moresby.

At Port Moresby, we received the “good news” that David had been promoted to Provincial Health Officer and was not only going to be running a hospital but also the whole Province. The “bad news” was that we were going to Kerema, capital of Gulf Province, a massive area of mangrove swamps, mosquitoes and malaria. Somewhere apparently that nobody wanted to go.



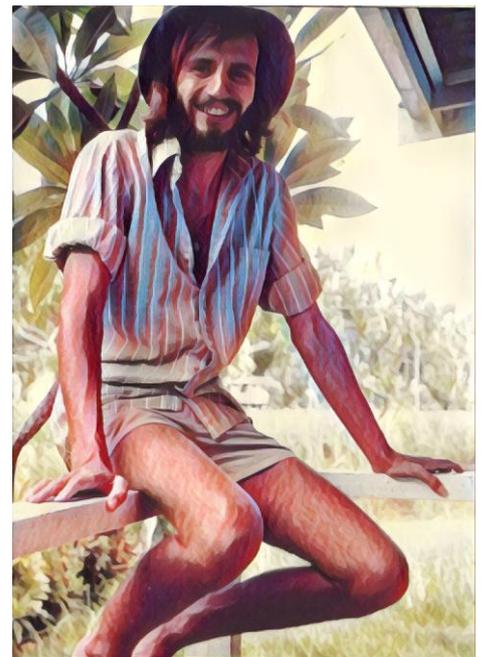
The next day we boarded a tiny plane and several hours later disembarked in Kerema to find that the British doctor who was there had been threatened with a machete by a psychiatric patient and was leaving for UK the next day! So that left just us. Kerema is situated on the Gulf of Papua, surrounded by crocodile infested swamp and thick jungle. There were no bitumen roads, just red dust in the “dry” and red mud in the “wet.” There was one trade store in Kerema, run by an alcoholic ex crocodile hunter which sold tinned fish, rice, twisties and not much else.

The staple diet was sago often served with sago grubs and everyone chewed betelnut or buai, the seed of the Areca palm, a stimulant which stained their mouth and teeth bright red. The village gardens produced kaukau (sweet potato,) taro, taro



leaves, cassava, breadfruit, kumu (green leaves), pit pit (member of the sugar cane family) pineapple and coconut. The local market sold pork, flying fox and possum.

There were more than twenty languages spoken but we quickly found out that to be understood we needed only to learn key words in Tok Pisin and Motu. Coming from state-of-the-art London hospitals the hospital was a shock. Stone slab beds, very little equipment, old boxes of donated expired drugs, one old fashioned steriliser, no sterile dressings, syringes or needles.



In our eighteen months there we used only two syringes and needles, one for *chloroquine* to treat malaria and the other for penicillin to treat tropical ulcers. We never in eighteen months saw an abscess or infection caused by them!



The major medical problems were malaria, tropical ulcers, tinea infections of the scalp and skin which we painted with green sipoma paint, measles, diarrhoea, feeding and malnutrition problems, and trauma. The complexities of treating patients in this remote region soon became glaringly obvious.

Most people lived in remote small communities and had to travel for days on foot through jungle and by canoe so could not return regularly for treatments.

David flew around the province regularly, landing on nightmare airstrips, tiny gaps in the jungle or perpendicular strips on mountain sides, to check the work being done at Aid Posts by the Orderlies. We had a few terrifying experiences early on. David had to perform a tracheotomy on a young woman with me holding her head and someone else holding the text book. And the young man who walked for several days to the hospital with a bandaged arm saying he had a cut and when we took off the bandage his arm was pretty much in two pieces.



Amazingly we seemed to adapt to life in Kerema almost overnight and I am still amazed at how quickly we were accepted and trusted by the people there and how well we coped. David became ill with malaria during our time in Kerema but fortunately recovered quickly. Our small trunk of belongings never made it there as the shipping company went into liquidation, but we didn't really miss it.

Our work was our life and we were welcomed into villages and missions for celebrations, weddings and events. It was the adventure we hoped for.

Our second posting was to Bougainville in 1977. Bougainville is an island close to the Solomon Islands but part of Papua New Guinea. It is stunningly beautiful with active volcanoes belching smoke, dense jungle, white sand beaches and coral reefs.

The Bougainville Copper Mine had opened at Panguna in 1972 so there was a large expatriate population there, mostly Australian, in Arawa and Panguna and western civilisation was well and truly established with shops, supermarkets, restaurants, social clubs, sporting clubs and even a bridge club where we made many good friends. We initially worked at Arawa hospital and at the end of our contract stayed on to work at the private medical clinic run by the mine for two more years. We had a very nice life there but unrest was growing as the Bougainvillians aired their grievances against the Panguna mine and we felt the clock was ticking and we needed to make a plan for our long term future.



In 1979 we made a decision to leave and spent several months travelling through Irian Jaya, Indonesia, Burma and Kashmir on to UK. We had already made a plan and registered our medical qualifications to come to Australia and obtained working visas and late that year travelled back to Brisbane.

Within a few months we found ourselves in the Pioneer Valley outside Mackay where we set up a medical practice and spent the next thirty years. Our three daughters were born there and we all have happy memories of our lives in the Mackay area.

We retired to Buderim twelve years ago and David continued to work part time doing rural and remote locums throughout Australia.

Our yen for travel and adventure is still with us and we have been lucky enough to travel to so many fascinating places in our retirement....Bhutan, Patagonia, Peru, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Colombia, Mexico, Sri Lanka, India, Jordan, and Egypt. Our plans this year are to visit Ethiopia and the Caucasus.