

# CLUB COUPLE OF THE YEAR...



## WORKING WITH THE INTERESTS OF THEIR FELLOW MEMBERS AT HEART

Sally and Bert Barford are the club's 'couple of the year' for 2005!

They have been prominent, enthusiastic and hardworking executive members of the very successful seniors' (now 'Sixty Plus') section for many years and so have fully deserved any plaudits that have come their way.

Bert has been a club member for 30 plus years while Sally joined as soon as women became eligible for membership in the early 1990s.

He has been chairman of the seniors' section since 2002 while Sally has been section secretary for nine years.

Before becoming a member Sally had already attended club functions with Bert and they had enjoyed many evenings socialising and dancing the night away! She had also tried her hand at indoor bowls.

Sally joined the seniors' section and was soon elected to the committee. "With the increasing number of women joining the section, the then-committee had decided a lady member should represent their views and I was the one chosen. It was a great honour to be the first female allowed on the committee."

The following year, due to club stalwart Frank Haines standing down after long service as secretary-treasurer, the positions became vacant. It was decided to split the roles and Sally was elected secretary, a position she holds today - nine years later!

Bert joined the seniors' section in 1992 and in 1997 was elected on to the committee. Four years later, in 2001, Bert became vice chairman

and a year later was elected chairman, a position he still holds. The previous chairman, Don McKnight, had moved to Mt Maunganui and so became unavailable.

Bert took over organisation of the bus trips when Syd Allott retired. He spends many hours planning the excursions. He and Sally tour in their car to check out future venues, the suitability of places, price of club meals etc and decide on destinations they have not been to before.

He seeks travel quotes and with the help of his bus committee - Clair Banton, seniors' treasurer, and Dawn King, seniors' vice chairperson, makes the trip decision. Clair looks after the money side of things while Dawn helps supervise the event. They plan for seven or eight bus ventures each year. Numbers of participants range from 40 to 61.

The first overnight stay was to Whitianga and Coromandel in mid-November with 40 people on board. Bert explained: "Everybody seemed to enjoy their two days away with lots of good company, gorgeous scenery and fine food. All are now awaiting the next big trip away."

Last February a three-hour cruise and lunch on the Waipa Delta paddle steamer proved most worthwhile.

Sally had helped Frank Haines and Jim Tweedie run the Wednesday afternoon indoor bowls before she took over the reins herself in 1994 and she's still in the chair!

The bowler numbers have gradually increased and now, on average, approximately 70 players attend.

"The most we've ever had was 84 of our own players plus a number of visitors. It took some organising. I hope all of those eligible to play never all turn up on one afternoon!" Sally said with a smile.

"It's not the end of the world if that planned magnificent play doesn't quite come off. There is lots of laughter, a constant buzz of conversation and the occasional scream of anguish."

She's quick to praise Dawn King who ably assists on the day.

"These afternoons would not be possible without the help of all the committee. Clair purchases the meat for the raffles; Dawn buys the bowls prizes; Bert brings the in-house raffle prizes; Allan Stewart puts out the bowls and mats; and the rest of the committee, John King, Doug Hapi, Winston Scott, Fred Paetai and John and Dawn Reid help in any way they can. Our non-committee members ably lend a hand selling meat raffle tickets.

"We run a Christmas bowls tournament the week before the 'big day' and then take a three-week break. Doug Hapi also organises a Christmas snooker tournament for the section. I can tell you the tins of biscuits, Christmas cakes and puddings and other festive goodies are hotly competed for!"

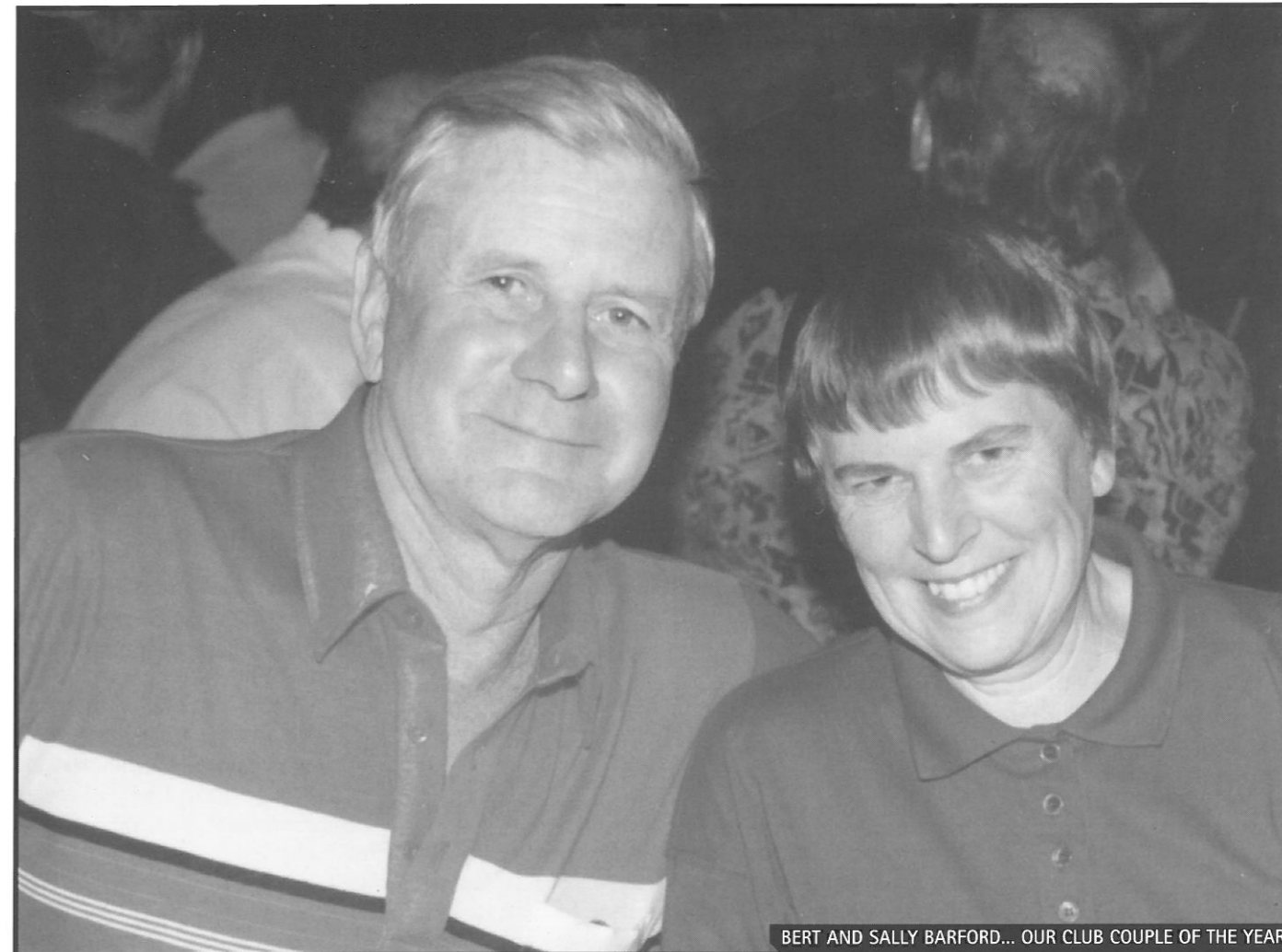
Sally also finds time to organise home and away social indoor bowl visits with other clubs.

The seniors hold two luncheons each year. Both the mid-year and Christmas functions attract between 150-170 members and Sally maintained some splendid singing talent and skills on the dance floor were often discovered!

At present the 'Sixty Plus' section has 365 members. Because of the ages of its members, Sally has been kept busy sending get well cards. She also phones to check on progress after sickness or operations. Unfortunately, posting sympathy cards to families has also become a regular happening.

Bert Barford, born in 1931 to farming parents in Matamata, worked in Auckland before he returned to farm in Matamata. He farmed at Te Poi and later at Taupiri where he was on a larger property. He soon became involved in the Taupiri scene and was chairman of a newly-formed Progressive Association. With the help of the county council, the association got projects, such as the kerbing and channeling of open drains in the township and better street lighting, started. Other projects followed. Bert agreed, after being asked by the county council, to form a civil defence post for Taupiri District.

Then, right out of the blue, the Public Works decided to survey for a future motorway right through the centre of his farm. That led to Bert's decision to sell up and move into Hamilton, where he became a



BERT AND SALLY BARFORD... OUR CLUB COUPLE OF THE YEAR

real estate salesman. Almost immediately he linked up with the Workingmen's Club in Harwood Street.

Bert's favourite colour is red. Meat dishes are his favourite food. Tea, coffee and rum and coke (not necessarily in that order!) are drinks he enjoys. Sport, good films and nature programmes are TV shows he looks forward to watching.

Sally likes dry white wine and joins Bert in his choice of TV programmes. She loves to watch tennis and is often out of bed at 3am to watch her favourites play 'live' in the US Open or at Wimbledon. She also admits to being a Coronation Street addict!

A keen member of the cards section, she really enjoys her Thursdays playing 500 and/or euchre. She looks forward to the one-day euchre tournaments held at various clubs during the year.

Sally was born in England

in a small village in Buckinghamshire. At the age of 17 she trained to become a nurse at a large London hospital. She worked there until she got married and she and her first husband, Frank, immigrated to New Zealand. They settled in New Plymouth and both worked until the family arrived. They then moved to Hamilton where the marriage broke up.

Sally had to go back to work and after a few years she became a supervisor at a local supermarket. After bringing up her family and being on her own for more than 12 years, she met Bert at a dance. Their friendship flourished and they were married two years later.

After a few years they decided to travel. Their 'itchy feet' took them to Australia where they stayed for two years. They travelled around the whole country in a car and a small caravan. Following that experience, they stored the car

and caravan at Coolangatta and returned each winter for two months holiday. They found Australia a great place for clubs and social life and they made many friends.

To be able to continue that lifestyle, Bert took on repairs and maintenance of properties and also worked part time for 11 years for a security firm.

After 40 years experience of taking caravans around New Zealand and Australia, Bert decided it was time to stop, so he sold both his caravans.

"It had been a great lifestyle, fishing, happy hours, seeing new sights and making many friends. It was a cheap way of seeing both countries!" he said.

Between them they have six children and nine grandchildren. Because some of the family live in Australia and England, contact has not been as frequent as they would like.

Sally sums up their situation. "That's what makes club life so important to us. It's great being involved with so many people who basically have the same interests as us."

### SPECIAL MEMORY OF ORIGINAL CLUB HOME

One of our long serving members can remember the original Harwood House, owned by Jock Merchant. "He and his wife ran it as a home for single men. I think there was about 20-25 chaps there in my day. It was mayhem in the early morning with everyone trying to use the toilet and shower facilities at once. It was a breakfast only arrangement and he keep a close watch on proceedings to ensure we didn't have a second helping!"