



Five Minutes With...

Barbara and Peter Young



SABA in the Outback

Introducing Barbara (second L) and Peter Young (R) who, like many SABA members, balance Bridge with a strong commitment to both family and volunteering. Their passionate involvement in the Farina Restoration Project, which has gained considerable media attention, will surprise many.....but more of that later.

Life before Bridge

Barbara: When I completed high school, like many of my peers, I was faced with the choice of settling down and working towards buying a house, or travelling. I chose to work in accounting to earn money, and when I was 19 I headed overseas. On my return I worked in Sydney for 3 1/2 years, then came back to Adelaide and worked with Telstra for 20 years. During that time I married, had children and worked with the Department of Transport, retiring at 59 to care for my husband Peter who had cancer at the time.

Peter: I was in the Army for six years, then had an adventurous three years travelling overland from Nepal to London, working and discovering Europe (in an old 2CV), and then returning overland via Africa. Back in Australia most of my work was sales and/or engineering related. Like Barbara, children and family were a strong focus.

How did Bridge come into your life?

Both Barbara and Peter discovered Bridge early in their lives, and after a significant gap took up Bridge again 6 years ago after signing up for a refresher intensive beginners' course at SABA. They play with different players (avoiding potential tensions that might emerge if they played competitively together).

Barbara: From the age of five I played cards. I enjoyed Canasta, and my father played Bridge at work. But it was my aunt Enid, a keen Bridge player who persuaded the girls in our family to learn to play. I was about 24 when I did a beginners course at SABA with Phil Gue. I played there for a short while after, but then played socially with my aunt and cousins (assisted by a glass or two of brandy). I didn't have much chance to practice, so didn't fully 'get it'. My time was taken up with work and family, so my initial engagement with Bridge frittered out. After a gap of nearly 45 years, a friend encouraged me to take up Bridge again.

Peter: In my late 20s (before I knew Barbara) I attended a WEA introductory course to Bridge. However, I found it too regimented after enjoying card games with an element of risk (eg 500), so didn't go back. 6 years ago I was cycling past SABA and thought I might give Bridge another go. So when Barbara signed up, I joined her.

What keeps you motivated to continue playing?

Barbara: I think that Bridge is 'the top of the tree' of card games and manage to play about 3 times a week at both Walkerville and Unley. I stick to the basics (helped by my reliable 'cheat sheet') and am happy to play without the complication of numerous conventions. Winning is a bonus - I want to enjoy the game, but don't feel a need to come top. I am also linked in to a positive social group that has been strengthened by playing at various congresses together.

Peter: I play each week at Payneham and Burnside, and occasionally Unley. I have found partners who, like me, primarily play solid basic Bridge for enjoyment - not to be seriously competitive. I like working out the strategy with each game. There are so many permutations - a life-long challenge. My approach dates back to primary school (where I was described as 'slow but methodical') and also reflects my engineering-related background. I enjoy developing spreadsheets that reflect potential decision-making pathways, working out the best tactics and exceptions to rules.

What are your greatest challenges playing bridge?

Barbara: Keeping focussed on self-improvement. A recent move to practice on BBO

has been helpful.

Peter: I am a very active person, so I drift off into another world when other people are too slow. I then have to make an effort to get back in focus.

What comments would you make about SABA ?

Both Barbara and Peter expressed a strong sense of loyalty to SABA: Barbara through her aunt Enid who introduced her to Bridge; and both because of the quality of teaching. Barbara has enjoyed playing competitions, and is keen to play more. Peter used to play at Walkerville but unfortunately had to stop when classes were moved from 1 pm to 12.30 pm (like a number of people with morning commitments, he couldn't make that earlier time).

Barbara: Given both the changes over time and diversity of players it might be a good time to do a stocktake of the club eg a survey to get feedback re what is working well and where there are opportunities for development/improvement.

And what about life outside of bridge?

Farina (Italian for 'flour' - an abandoned outback railway town of hope with visions of wheat fields stretching into the distance...)

Both Barbara and Peter volunteer with the Farina Restoration Project Group dedicated to restoring the former 300-resident town between Lyndhurst and Marree that became a pile of rubble. Key restoration projects have included a famous underground bakery, hotel, post office, police station, general store and house, the railway station and cemetery.

Another project is a story-in-progress, and if you visit Farina you may wonder what a huge railway engine is doing in the middle of nowhere.

A railway enthusiasts' group from Peterborough had a 'spare' engine (an original that would have been used in Farina) and offered it to the Farina Restoration Project Group. The Group managed to move it over 360 kms (at a cost of \$25,000 and with the help of low loaders and cranes) where it is now being restored. It is an important symbol of Farina's history as one of many SA outback railway towns.

Farina has become a major tourist attraction as well as a stopping place and camping ground for people traveling through the outback. The old town and its dedicated group of volunteers have been featured in a number of short TV documentaries (including the ABC) as an example of exemplary historic preservation and community activity.

There are many interesting stories to tell, and SABA is proving a great gateway to this

project via Barbara and Peter who spend two weeks each year working at Farina. Their passion is infectious as they talk about the work of the Group and their specific experiences.

But if you like to explore the outback and would enjoy linking in with other travellers and SA's history of exploration, dreams and endurance, you can see Barbara and Peter in action or have a game of bridge with them in Farina each June. And if you search 'Farina' on YouTube you might catch a glimpse of Barbara and Peter in a video - our very own modest 'influencers'.

What has particularly caught the wider community's attention is the bakery and coffee shop at Farina, with people (locals and tourists) travelling long distances to buy its famous bread - with the proceeds funding restoration work.

Barbara (aka chief barista extraordinaire): My main role is in the cafe. I started in 2018 working out of a tent, then we moved to one of the earliest restored buildings. I now consider myself to be a very good barista and manager, and have trained a range of staff. We often have a long queue of travellers/caravans prepared to wait in line for our coffee, pies and cakes. This in turn becomes a social hub.

Peter: (a self-described personality extraordinaire): I am not a 'meet and greet' person like Barbara, but I am a valued 'personality' behind the scenes, able to adapt to any task and help fix anything that needs attention - easy-going and flexible. For example, I was earmarked to help restore the old railway engine, but then was headhunted to work in the bakery where we still bake bread in the underground wood-fired ovens. And now we have a modern, well-equipped bakery adjacent to the cafe as well for pastry and cake products.

In Adelaide.....

Barbara and Peter live very active lives.

Peter is involved in a number of volunteer groups and positions: the eastern suburbs Shed (a men's social group); a community bus driver for the Norwood, Payneham, St Peters Council; and helping at the Norwood Cultural Heritage Centre based in the St Peters Library. He cycles 30 - 40 kms with a group each Wednesday, and has regular catch-ups with a couple of social groups. He also enjoys reading about ancient history and undertaking genealogical research regarding the family tree.

Peter also has an ambition to be part of a 100 club of countries visited. He's currently up to 72 (including walking the Kokoda track).

Barbara combines Bridge with volunteering, swimming, walking the dog, reading (mysteries), socialising and time with her family.

They both assist with community surveys eg bike usage.

Still in planning is a trip to the Antarctic next year.

What might some people find surprising about you?

Barbara: People who look at me now would have no idea that when I was in my 20s I completed the last Gawler to Adelaide marathon.

Peter: I am an expert apple-pie maker.

Barbara: That is yet to be confirmed - our family is still patiently waiting to see/smell/taste one of his pies.