

Dora Black c.1902 -1963

* Foundation member; Director of tournaments for Women's events; Treasurer 1945-63; won 44 Club titles; NZ Pairs champion 1953 (Allard Cup); 1945 handicap = -4

JM writes: "*Gerald Black, son of R.S. Black, (known as "Rabbit Skin Black", an exporter of frozen rabbits and also Mayor of Dunedin 1931-2) enlisted in the 1st New Zealand Expeditionary Force (INZEF). He fought at Gallipoli and in France where he served as an adjutant to Brigadier J Hargest. While on leave Gerald met a petite, soft-spoken English lady with a wonderful complexion. He married her and brought her out to New Zealand. Her name was Dora. Both were very good bridge players. When the Club was formed Dora became a member but Gerald continued to play private bridge. Of all the women who joined the Club in its early years none made a greater contribution to the standard of play and to the day-to-day running of the club than Dora. Apart from winning the Club Pairs 21 times with Baden, her name appears at or near the top with other partners in countless club, provincial and national events. Her power of assessing the strength and possible winners in her opponents' hands after the dummy*



Dora Black, 44 Club titles



Baden Wilson & Dora Black
receiving the Allard Cup in 1953

went down was uncanny. She played every hand in the same manner – carefully and deliberately but never irritatingly slowly."

Dora and Baden did not have it all their own way in the early years as the records indicate, coming 2nd to Norman Allan & Len Pickering (1936) for the first four years of the Championships, 1939-42, sometimes by quite a margin. In the 1940 Pairs Champs (the first recorded in Club archives - *see p.161*) Norman Allan & Len Pickering won with an average of 57.8% over 9 nights (one dropped), Baden Wilson & Dora Black were 2nd with 54.3%. Six years later Baden & Dora averaged 62.18% over 11 nights (two dropped) including a 74.1%) while Norman Allan & Ivan Penrose were runners-up with 58.26%.

Norman enlisted with the NZRAF in December 1942 not returning to civilian life till 1946 & in 1943 Len played the Pairs Championships with his wife. This gave Baden & Dora the opening for their amazing record partnership. They were also national winners of the Allard Cup in 1953 (Norman Allan & Ivan Penrose had finished 2nd in 1950). This was the equivalent of winning a national simultaneous pairs competition.