

# Thomas Peter Seres

*Tim Seres 1/4/1925 – 27/9/2007*

by Peter Jamieson (acknowledgement – some of the above was drawn from an article titled *Quite Simply, The Master* by Debra Jopson that appeared in the May 27-June 2 1983 edition of the National Times).

Widely considered to have been the best bridge player ever produced in Australia, Tim Seres passed away September 27. He had been suffering from Parkinson's disease for over 5 years plus some cancer problems had arisen recently.



He was born Thomas Peter Seres in Hungary and was raised (with his brother George who was four years older) on a 3000 acre farm part owned by his parents. Some 100 employees worked on the farm. With the outbreak of World War II the family suffered badly – Tim lost his parents to the Germans, survived (with his brother) the bombing and siege of Budapest, and survived the Russian occupation. Their aunt and uncle helped them to get a passage to Australia in 1947 via France and Vietnam.

He obtained a job in a textile factory 24 hours after disembarking despite his lack of English. Seres had played nearly every form of cards from the age of six and was an accomplished chess player. But he loved bridge and was soon playing bridge six nights a week as an outlet after long and boring days in the factory. Less than a year after arriving in Sydney, Seres had won the Australian National Championships, representing NSW (*New South Wales*).

In 1958 Seres and his long time tournament partner Dick Cummings visited Europe to test themselves and discovered they could hold their own and more. Their team mates at Juan-les Pins that year were fellow Australians Bill Schaufelberger and Mick Sullivan. Seres represented Australia in the Open Team at the Olympiad 1960, 1964, 1968, 1972, and 1976. He represented Australia in the Open Team at the Bermuda Bowl 1971, 1976, 1977, 1979 and 1981.

He represented Australia in the Open Team at the Pacific Asia Bridge Federation Championships (PABF) - formerly Far East Bridge Championships on 14 occasions. He represented Australia as a Senior in PABF championships in 2002 and 2003. His main bridge partners in international bridge were Dick Cummings, Denis Howard and Roelof Smilde. Seres helped to develop the New South Wales System – a bidding method used by him and some partners based on the Vienna Club system. The system went out of fashion in the late 1970's.

At one period in Australia's bridge history, Seres was automatically selected (choosing his own partner) and was joined by four other players who had gone through selection trials. For much of his tournament career Seres would play every session in recognition of his exceptional stamina as well outstanding bridge skills. Seres always displayed good temperament at the bridge table and was renowned for his politeness towards both partners and the opponents.

Seres attributed much of his success to his card play – he was noted for his high quality declarer play and defence. He was a very fast player and could work out card play problems in 10-15 seconds – problems that would take ordinary players several minutes to figure out. He had a photographic memory - he once said "I have hardly ever forgotten a card in my life if it's been played in front of me".

Seres was a truly formidable rubber bridge player. He was the backbone of the Sydney rubber bridge scene for more than 50 years being almost part of the fabric of the Double Bay Bridge Club (later Double Bay Bridge Centre). He played 5 to 6 afternoons a week

(and in the early days evenings as well). In fact it was estimated that he had played between 800,000 and one million hands of bridge in his lifetime - probably double that of any rival for the title. Keith McNeil (a top Adelaide bridge player – who died in 1993) was quoted in 1983 about Seres at rubber bridge - “He is so good, you just hand your money over. He makes it feel quite painless”.

Another quote from Seres was “Most top players have mathematical ability. They don’t need it. I know it is about 60 to 40 in my favour. I know the percentages by feel. The feeling of the table is more important than the mathematical chances. To read the people is more important. I know when to play the unexpected card to put you on the spot.”

In 1965 Seres was credited with discovering a new type of squeeze play - known as the Seres Squeeze. You can find details under that title in the Official Bridge Encyclopedia or if you have Internet just google the words *seres squeeze* and details are on the bridge Guys web site. Seres was one of the world class experts who contributed to the BOLS Bridge Tips series. His tip for defence (with example deal) can viewed on the Internet - <http://www.haroldschogger.com/timerseres.htm>.

Away from the International Bridge scene, Seres won over 70 state titles and his name appears many times on the honour boards at the NSWBA in 162 Goulburn St Sydney. If you visit the QBA web site and look at the Gold Coast Congress results history you will see that Seres had wins in the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s partnered by Mary McMahan. Seres’ name appears many times in Cathy Chua’s 1993 book History Of Australian Bridge - check the index in that book. If you peruse the book you will find several photos of Tim Seres. In 1995 Michael Courtney ‘s book Play Cards with Tim Seres was published. At 137 pages it contains many fine examples of declarer play drawn mainly from rubber bridge at Double Bay Bridge Centre.

In 1973 Seres along with Roelof Smilde, Jim and Norma Borin, Don Evans, Ian Weiss, Dick Cummings and Edward Griffin participated in a memorable bridge event held in Sydney Town Hall. They played a match which was displayed on Bridgerama ( a pre computer predecessor to View-graph) with 700 paying customers in the audience. Commentary was by Ron Klinger.

Away from the bridge table Seres had an enduring interest in horse racing. He developed a betting system, which at one time was used on every horse race in Australia. Unlike most horse racing punters, Seres was successful (some say very successful). A life long bachelor, Seres lived in a flat in Randwick overlooking Botany Bay. He never owned a car and got about in taxis. Seres was noted for his willingness to encourage promising young bridge players and if you look back at tournament and congress results in the 1970-s and 1980’s you will often note his team mates and partners were not always from the ranks of top internationals.