

## GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA.

### GOLF CLUB HISTORIANS' MEETING.

Report of the meeting held at Yarra Yarra Golf Club on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

Attendance - See attached sheet.

1. Ian Rennick, the Golf Society President, welcomed all in attendance and thanked Yarra Yarra Golf Club for allowing the Society to use their club for the meeting.  
Paul Burgess, the Golf Society Secretary stated the Society's aims, listing the projects that are conducted to encourage an interest in golf history. Paul mentioned that the Society had a marquee at the Australian Ladies Open where we display of golf memorabilia, including old golf clubs attracted great interest. Max Findley demonstrated how to look after and restore wooden clubs.
2. Graeme Harrison spoke on the activities of the Yarra Yarra Historical group. The group have accumulated their documents from libraries, historical societies, newspapers, club records and past and current members. He considers club records the most valuable, particularly club newsletters and subcommittee minutes, as these show the thinking behind some of the club decisions. He stated that club members must be made aware of what is valuable to the club, such as old photos, trophies, letters and documents that are often lost when members die. He told that the club has recently received all of Hartley Mitchell's trophies, and have had them repolished and displayed in a dedicated cabinet.  
The historical group are particularly conscious that today's events should be recorded properly and automatically saved. Graeme acknowledged that standards such as dress regulations change, but the historical group should be the clubs watchdog for maintaining club traditions.
3. The next speaker was Des Tobin, who has written four biographical books and set out the criteria that are necessary for him to agree to undertake the project. Firstly, he needs to identify with the subject and to gain trust and mutual respect. He stated that he had to be sure that there is a story to be told that will of interest to the readers. He also has to feel that he has access to sufficient research material, and have permission to include some private information. The main difference between a biography and a golf club history, is that the writer should not be influenced by members' bias in regards to certain events.  
Des stated that before he starts a book he needs to know what the quality of the finished book will be. The books he has written have been hard backed with quality paper, and include many photos. This gives the author confidence that the book has a chance of being a success. A good book requires skill, enthusiasm and the diligence of the author, the professional skills and creativity of the book designer, and the meticulous attention of the editor.
4. Mark Wade from Commonwealth Golf Club covered the role that the club's 'history fund' has within his Club. Commonwealth's history group, was started after Hedley Ham from Yarra Yarra gave them a collection of cuttings about the club, that he had found at the State library. Following that, Mark found that a former club manager, Sloan Morphett, had kept 21 boxes of correspondence from his 33 years as manager. The history group have read every letter in the boxes, and correspondence that concerned other clubs has been returned to them. Many of the letters that Commonwealth retained are interesting historical documents, and they are fortunate that Morphett had the foresight to keep them.

5. Gillian Ednie gave a visual talk on her book "A Life in Golf", the biography of Burtta Cheney. Gillian had regular meetings with Burtta and over time was able to capture Burtta's strong passion for golf, her war effort, and other social activities she felt strongly about. The book is about the Cheney family that rose from humble beginnings, to become a major car dealer in Australia. It also takes you through a period when amateur golf was treated as superior to professional golf, and the press had weekly reports in all the papers on amateur tournaments.

Gillian was able to put Burtta's feeling into her book because of the close relationship they developed together during their interviews. Gillian's book is full of stories that are told as though Burtta is telling them. Many of the stories are about golfing highlights, but others are about her struggles with very low self esteem when she was young, before she discovered that golf could change her life. Gillian contributes the success of her book to the help she received from the golfing community, who lent material from the 1940's 50's and 60's. One of Burtta's loves was coaching girl golfers for 40 years; many of those girls became successful senior golfers and willingly contributed stories to the book.

6. Ian Rennick spoke about searching for club details on the internet using the National Library of Australia, records with TROVE. This is a very easy way to scan through a list of references of any golf club. You have to search TROVE and it's lists of Australian newspapers that have been scanned. If you are looking for a Melbourne club, go to the Argus, and enter your club name, and you will be told how many times your club has been mentioned in that paper since 1845. You can then read through each reference, and can print off any article you need. If there is a photo with the article, and you want a clear copy, this can be ordered through the State Library

7. General Business.

Max Findley, a Golf Society member and a keen collector had a number of hickory clubs on display. He spoke about what clubs he was interested in collecting, and described how to recognise them. Clubs sold by Australian professionals from 1900 onward, usually had the professionals names stamped on the back, together with the golf club he was employed by. Clubs were usually sold one by one, and the golfers ended up with mixed sets of clubs. Max is interested in matching clubs, and has now got many sets of hickories that have got the same stampings on them.

John Green spoke about a new golf book he has been researching for many years. John who is an Historian at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, realised that there was no accurate recording of the location of the holes since they moved to Sandringham in 1898. His research for the book through minutes and letters are the basis he used for the book. Only a limited number of copies are to be printed and John hopes to launch the book in July, 2011.

Tad Woznica from Moe Golf Club told an amusing tale of when he was a member of the Meredith Golf Club. The Club wanted a special trophy to be played for at their open meeting. Henry Bolte was a club member, and he was asked if he would donate a cup, but declined saying it was too expensive. He was again approached by the club to see if he would pay for the engraving, if the club paid for the cup. He agreed to that suggestion, but was later dismayed when he found out that the engraving cost more than the cup. Several items were shown including an old Yarra Yarra score card with a mention of stymies on it, and old golf magazines signed by professionals.



Ian Rennick closed the meeting at 2.20pm by thanking the speakers and the participants for coming, and indicating that the next Historians meeting will probably take place at a Victorian country location.

Graeme Harrison invited everyone for an inspection of Yarra Yarra's History room and storage area.