

# The Long Game

Newsletter of the Golf Society of Australia

No 31, May 2009



## Al Howard Hickory Challenge — 13 May 2009

A very pleasant few days were spent in Albury and Thurgoona where teams from the Golf Society of Australia in Victoria and the Australian Golf Heritage Society from New South Wales met at Thurgoona Golf Club to compete for the Al Howard Challenge Trophy. Al Howard was one Australia's leading golfers of the 1920's.



L-R: Barry Leithhead (AGHS), Cliff George, Michael Sheret (AGHS) and Ian Rennick on the tee at Thurgoona

The players, mostly dressed in plus fours and 1920's fashions, used hickory clubs and competed over 18 holes of match play. The team winning the most holes determined the winner, the New South Wales side winning by seven holes. All agreed the new format which allowed everyone to compete over the full 18 holes was more interesting and should be considered for future matches.

Thurgoona Golf Club had contacted local WIN Television and explained that an unusual golf event was to be played at the course, and a television crew arrived. After filming the players, they interviewed Ian Rennick and Michael (to p 3)

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### For the Diary:

**22 June - Don Lawrence Trophy**, Woodlands GC

**13 July - Golf Club Historians**, Huntingdale GC

**10 August - President's Trophy**, Royal Melbourne

The Golf Society of Australia was formed in 1982 to research and preserve the history of golf in Australia.

As part of this role, the Society manages the Museum and Library for Golf Australia.

Golf Australia supports the Society by providing office space and administrative assistance.

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## **Dinner: Victoria GC — 11 February**

### **Guest Speaker: Anne Lenagan, Chairman, Golf Australia**

We were extremely fortunate that Anne agreed to speak to the Society on the eve of the Women's Australian Open at Metropolitan Golf Club. She presented a comprehensive picture of Golf Australia activities, including recent developments and plans for the future.

Anne was elected Chairman of Golf Australia in February 2008 and was acting CEO from June to December 2008. She has 30 years experience in business management and marketing. A member of Royal Sydney Golf Club, she joined the Board of Women's Golf New South Wales in 2005, becoming President in 2006.

Amongst those present at the Dinner were GSA Life Member Burtta Cheney MBE and Women's Golf Australia Life Member Patricia Bridges OBE as well as members of the Golf Australia Board.



**Above:** Speaker, Anne Lenagan



**Above:** Patricia Bridges OBE  
**Below:** Burtta Cheney MBE

## **Hickory Day: Kingston Heath GC — 26 April**

Play for the Hickory Day trophies was abandoned due to severe weather, but one hardy group ventured out.

**Below:** Seeing them off. L-R: Max Findlay, Peter Gompertz, Ian Rennick, Brian Simpson, Cliff George and Michael Sheret.

**Left:** Peter Gompertz on the tee



## The Al Howard Trophy—from p1

Sheret who were questioned about golf in the early 1900's compared to today. Much interest was centred on the period golfing attire - especially the plus fours. The crew filmed play at the first tee and practice green, and it was broadcast on WIN News that night which created great discussion at dinner .

The dinner at the Adamhurst restaurant in Albury was attended by all players with wives and partners. An 1890's residence that has been restored as a conference centre and restaurant, it was an ideal setting for dinner.

During the evening the Al Howard Trophy was presented to the winning team. The trophy is a handsome silver ink stand won by Al Howard's father Tom in the New South Wales Amateur Championship in 1921.

On the following day golf was played at Wodonga Golf Club, with all competitors opting for modern clubs. The two best scores were recorded by Michael Sheret (AGHS) and Havel Rowe (GSA).

Scores for the Trophy event were :-

- Ian Rennick lost to Michael Sheret by 4 holes
- Cliff George lost to Barry Leithhead by 1 hole
- Havel Rowe defeated Ann Quinn by 1 hole
- Dick Kirby lost to Ken Hughes by 5 holes
- Paul Burgess defeated Roger Weik by 2 holes
- Neville Pearce square with Rod Jones

**Result:** AGHS by 7 holes

### New Members:

Welcome to:

Michael Reynolds

Graham World

## Forthcoming Event

**Don Lawrence Trophy, Woodlands GC, Monday 22 June**

This popular 4BBB event will again be held at Woodlands Golf Club.

Mark the date in your diary!

### Have you missed a Dinner but would like to hear the speech?

In most cases, when the speaker agrees, we record the after-dinner speeches at Golf Society functions.

If you and would like to hear any of the presentations, they can be made available on cd for playing on computer or cd player.

**Contact:** The Secretary

## From the President

The year got off to a busy start with the Golf Society manning a marquee at the Australian Women's Open at Metropolitan. A variety of visitors came to see the display. Most of the older generation stated that their parents had some hickories, and the younger generation were amazed that older clubs had wooden shafts. Hopefully they all went away with some appreciation of golf history. Ross Baker was once again the main attraction.

The 1800's style putter he made during the tournament was donated to Golf Australia who auctioned it for \$900, with the proceeds going to the Bushfire Relief Fund.

In March, a group of six members visited Bendigo for a meeting of Golf Club Historians. The show and tell segment revealed several interesting items including a pre-1900 spliced neck William Park wood, two old golf bags, a smooth faced William Park putter, and several interesting scrap books. Great interest was shown in our presentation of golf history and the preservation of golf memorabilia. (to p 6)



This article was provided by William G Clemow, golf statistician and golf book collector from Queensland. It is taken from the 75th anniversary publication **A history of Women's Golf In the Nepean & Illawarra 1934 to 2009**

## WALLACIA

A meeting was convened by Mrs Mabs Downes on March 10, 1933 saw the birth of the Wallacia Lady Members for, with ten foundation Members, they affiliated with the L.G.U. The Foundation officer Bearers were: Mrs M Leech (President), Miss H McManus (Vice President), Mrs M Downes (Secretary/Treasurer). The

men formed a Club in 1932, built a tin shed open on two sides, with a table and bench made from bush timber. The Lady Members who, at the end of 1933 affiliated with the newly formed N.I.A., felt this accommodation not adequate for entertaining visitors. They approached the Members suggesting that a combined Committee would towards raising money to erect a more presentable abode. This Committee was not formed.

Then, in 1934, the local Barber was selling his shop for thirty pounds sterling. With a pound deposit and the balance of twenty nine pounds (raised by five pounds loan from six Lady Members), they had a 'Club House'. The building was placed on skids and shifted to the Golf Course by a timber jinker.

The NSW Ladies' Golf Union heard that the Wallacia Lady Members owned their own Club House. They were dismayed; no one had ever heard of such a thing! They took the matter to the Australian L.G.U. who, in desperation, sent it to St Andrews for their opinion. Finally came the answer:

'That, owing to the unique situation, Wallacia could retain it, but under no circumstances could it be taken as a precedent'.

*Wallacia Panthers Club House*



The Lady Members set to work, cleaned, painted and furnished it but had to borrow a primus until funds permitted buying one for themselves. The Members were supplied with afternoon tea at 6d per cup. This edifice had a long and varied career.

When the Members built a Club House in 1937, the Lady Members sold their building and it was moved to a site near the local store and became the Bank of NSW Agency. Years later the Lady Members repurchased it and brought it back to the Golf Course. They sold it again and it went back to the store to become a Fish Shop. It was up for sale so the lady Members again bought it and had it dragged to the Course and attached to the additions Mr J K Fowler had made to the existing Club House. Eventually it ended its career as a Golf Buggy Storeroom until it was wantonly demolished in the late 1970's. In all these transactions the original price of thirty pounds was the stable price with no profit or loss by anyone, buyer or seller.

Originally the course was nine holes and, being on grazing property, the Greens were protected by fences and local rules gave players relief from cattle and rabbit nuisance. With the removal of the cattle the course was extended to 18 holes. With the outbreak of War in 1939, the Army took over the adjacent Wallacia Hotel as a Radio Physics school and portion of the Golf Course for wartime exercises. At the end of 1945 Mr Arthur Downes and Mr Walter Merriman voluntarily restored nine holes.

## Clayton's Corner

with Michael Clayton

One of the most fascinating parts of the game is its history. We can argue forever about the origins and whether it was the Dutch, the Chinese or the Scots who conceived the game but the unique crumpled and sandy ground of the Scottish coast separating the sea from the farmland beyond was the perfect place to popularize golf.

The great players have always attracted the attention of those wanting to witness a close match played to high standards and men like Allan Robertson, John Ball, Tom Morris and his brilliant son, Tom made golf a popular game to watch as well as to place a wager.

The standing of the professional game grew as men like Walter Hagen, Harry Vardon and Gene Sarazen spread the word through their skills.

Architects of the era between the two world wars have become revered figures, as students of architecture and its history have come to understand the contribution and the brilliance of men like Alister MacKenzie, Donald Ross, George Thomas, A W Tillinghast, Hugh Wilson and Perry Maxwell.

It is the courses over which the game is played that make the game unique and such great fun. Those who understand the history of the architecture and the philosophies of the original group of course designers are the ones with the understanding to ensure that the custodianship of our best courses is in reliable hands.

The late John Lindsay was one with a fine understanding of design and that knowledge came from years of playing and thinking about the game and reading the classic books on the subject. His club at Victoria is incredibly fortunate that his wife Joy has donated his fabulous book collection to the club.

Few members will take the time to pore over Lindsay's copy of **The Links**, Robert Hunter's classic book on the subject, or George Thomas' **Golf Architecture in America** but they should be compulsory reading for every greens committee member.

Golfers come to a series of conclusions about how the game and the courses are best organized. The experience of playing every course is entirely subjective and golfers who favour, for example, the isolation of holes, one from the other, may do so because their own beloved course champions that experience.

One man's isolation may be another's clutter but reading the books with an open mind may lead one to alter an opinion on architecture or a perception of a golf course.

Because I had always loved reading the history of the game I had assumed everybody knew what happened at the 1950 US Open, which years Peter Thomson won his Opens or the year Kel Nagle lost the US Open playoff to Gary Player.

I played last year with a club pro from Sydney who was involved in the education of trainee professionals and was shocked when he told me that the majority of kids working in the pro shops would not only have no clue 1965 was the year of the Nagle US Open playoff, they would be lucky to even know who Kel Nagle was.

Excuse me! These are kids hoping to make a living from the game as players or teachers or shop keepers and they don't know who Kel Nagle is.

Just as committees formed with members who don't understand the history of architecture are destined to make poor decisions when it comes to the golf course they control, kids who don't respect or understand the history of the great players who have come before will never be the fine players they hope to become.



## **Vale Michael Winneke**

In February this year, one of our members Michael Winneke died suddenly at his home in Shoreham, aged 72.

Michael had a very wide circle of friends and associates and will be sadly missed for his humorous personality and endless sound advice.

He had a distinguished career starting at Scotch College where not only was he Captain of the School but also captain of the cricket and football teams. He went on to do Law at Melbourne University, following in the footsteps of his father, Sir Henry, our popular, golf-supportive Governor, who established his own golf team.

Michael played District cricket for University and football for the University Blacks but more importantly met Heather Paton, daughter of the Vice Chancellor, whom he married in 1961 - a big year, as he also played in a winning Division 3 Metropolitan Golf Club pennant team off a handicap of 5.

In his work, he was retained by the VFL, Channel 9, the Moonee Valley Racing Club, the North Melbourne Football Club and of course, the AGU. In more recent times, when his brother John was appointed the inaugural President of the Court of Appeal, Michael became his Associate and for 10 years they had a profound effect on it's establishment and operation.

He was a Committee member of Metropolitan Golf Club and Honorary Solicitor, President of the Carbine Club and the Tripe Club of Victoria, a member of the National Golf Club and Senior Golfers, and a 50 year member of both Metropolitan Golf Club and the MCC where he was very much looking forward to enjoying the privileges that these offered.

On a lighter note, his good judgement was exercised at the British Open in 1996 at St Andrews. While staying with Colin Phillips and others, we visited Ladbrokes where we discovered that Peter Thomson's tip was John Daley at 80/1, but we ignored that only to see him win in a play-off!! However, Michael had £5 each way on Michael Campbell who led by 3 shots after 3 rounds but tired to tie for 3<sup>rd</sup>, which allowed him to collect £125 and be the only winner.

He touched so many of our lives and gave us so much pleasure when in his company. Our sincere condolences to Heather, Caroline, Peter and Richard, together with his grandchildren.

Michael Fitchett

## **From the President— from p3**

Another country visit is planned for 2010. The next Golf Club Historians meeting will be held on Monday 13 July at Huntingdale Golf Club. All members are welcome to attend.

The Hickory Day at Kingston Heath Golf Club on 26<sup>th</sup> April was cancelled due to strong wind and rain. The dozen players enjoyed a leisurely lunch, where many of the world's problems were solved. It is hoped that the event can be rescheduled for later in the year.

After several years of talking, a golf match resumed between the GSA and the AGHS for the AL Howard Trophy. Thanks to Michael Sheret, Captain of the Australian Golf Heritage Society, for organising the event. Both Societies have agreed to play again next year and it is hoped that more members will come and enjoy a very pleasant few days.

Ian Rennick

**Below:** Players in the Al Howard Trophy on the putting green at Thurgoona Golf Club, Albury - see story page 1-2



## Golf Club Historians

A meeting of Golf Club Historians was held at Bendigo on 2 March, 2009. A very informative and pleasant day was had.

The Chairman, Ian Rennick, after opening the meeting, presented Bendigo Golf Club with copies of seven pages taken from The Australasian newspaper showing photographs of golf on the Bendigo course in the 1920's and 1930's.

Keith Wood, past President of the Golf Society, gave a summary of the activities of the Golf Society, and the importance of recording the history of golf.

Moirá Drew gave a short presentation of simple steps for managing historical material in golf clubs, including handy hints for preventing or limiting damage to items.

Victor Cahill, a Life Member of Bendigo Golf Club, spoke of his involvement with the club over 68 years of membership and some of the major changes that had occurred during that time.

The Society President, Ian Rennick gave an overview of two projects of the Golf Society:

- Recording changes of golf club locations and
- collecting of golf club history publications.

Two books about publishing history were presented to the meeting:

- **Writing a Golf Club History - some experiences**, jointly published by the British Golf Collectors' Society and the Australian Golf Collectors Society (now the Australian Golf Heritage Society) and
- **Publishing History - a guide for historical societies**, published by the Federation of Australian Historical Societies.

The **Show and Tell** segment saw a range of clubs, bags, photographs and scrap books being shown and discussed.

The next meeting will be held at Huntingdale Golf Club on 13 July. All interested in golf club history are welcome.



## **Display at Women's Australian Open, Metropolitan Golf Club, 12—15 February 2009**

The Society mounted a display at the Women's Australian Open Championship at Metropolitan Golf Club in February. There was considerable interest in the displays, especially from European visitors who had not seen, or been able, to handle hickory clubs before.

Ross Baker again hand-crafted a putter during the four days of play. It was auctioned by Golf Australia during the event and the proceeds (\$900) donated to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

A collection of different more modern putters was available for visitors to try. This proved popular.

Other display items included clubs, photographs, scrapbooks, event record books and a map of Victoria showing changes in golf club locations. Mrs Patricia Bridges made two medals available for display - her Women's Golf Australia Life Member medallion, and the medal she received as Captain of Australia's winning Espirito Santo team in Fiji in 1978.

Thank you to the Members who participated and assisted with the display.

**Right top:** Ross Baker at work, watched by a visitor to the display. A display of hickory shafted clubs is visible in the foreground.

**Right:** A selection of clubs of interesting or unusual design

**Below:** A section of the display of photographs of women's golf

**Below right:** Ross Baker with the long nose putter he crafted during the event

