

# The Long Game

Newsletter of the Golf Society of Australia

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## 2010 Hickories at Kingston Heath

Seventeen members met at Kingston Heath on the first day since 9<sup>th</sup> December last that the temperature did not reach 20. A severe thunderstorm was predicted for half way through the afternoon but, while there was a gale of wind the rain, and lightening, held off.



President with the days winners

The winners were:-

- Frank Shepherd Trophy – Max Findlay with 15 points
- Burtta Cheney Trophy – Beverley Wait with 11 points
- Nearest the pin on the 15<sup>th</sup> men – Bill Wilson
- Nearest the pin on the 15<sup>th</sup> women – Paula Gompertz
- Longest Drive on the 12<sup>th</sup> men – Brian Simpson

## Vale Janet Hibbins

We note with much sadness the passing of Janet Hibbins, a member of our Society for 10 years, on our Committee for 5 years and Secretary for four years.

Janet was a member of Peninsula Golf Club for 35 years where she was Associates Captain for 4 years. She became a District Delegate to the WGV in 1995, Chair of WGV Match and Tournament for 3 years, and went on to become WGV President in 2001.



Janet's passion for golf was evident through her many years volunteering her time and expertise for the administration of women's, and junior, golf in Victoria. Janet will be sadly missed.

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### For the Diary:

31st May - Dinner at Woodlands GC

22nd June - Don Lawrence Trophy at Woodlands GC

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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**A recent donation to the Heritage Committee at Green Acres Golf Club has highlighted a little known fact of golf history - the world's first fully forged clubhead was made in Melbourne (West Footscray) in November 1995.**

**The partly-machined titanium driver head with the COBRA name and logo on it, came via Super Alloy Technologies, who 'finished' the clubheads for National Forge, the forgers!**

**Once this was known, the Golf Club Historians network sprang into action and in no time, Keith Wood, Chairman of the Green Acres Heritage Committee, had received this account of the story from Roger Sayers, Chairman & Managing Director of National Forge at the time. National Forge made clubheads for most of the major golf club companies in the late 1990's. Here is Roger's account:**

Although not many are aware of the significance, December 17<sup>th</sup> 1995 is a landmark date for the golfing fraternity. For the first time the incredible power of a thin forged face driver was unleashed.

Along with many others, a Melbourne based company, Super Alloy Technologies Pty Ltd was well aware that a forged face of a driver head would yield enormous benefits in strength and durability. The problem was that despite a search worldwide no technology seemed to be available to carry out the forging process. Titanium drivers were made at the time from



Partly machined titanium driver head donated by Robert Dunbar of Super Alloy Technologies.

cast material which was brittle and limited in flexibility and size.

Enter National Forge Ltd, a Melbourne based company that had made its name by manufacturing jet engine compressor airfoils. Since the early 1960's, National Forge had been manufacturing components for the major jet engine manufacturers of the world. Rolls Royce, General Electric, Pratt and Whitney, Allison engines, Airfoil Textron and Sikorsky all graced the National Forge order book. Engines such as the RB211, the CF6 and the PW229

all had parts from National Forge.

Not too many Australians know that for many years there was a

thirty percent chance that whenever, and wherever, they flew they would be pushed along by Australian made aerofoils.

The special talents of the National Forge designers were focussed on thin forging sections in titanium. The incredible standards needed for the aviation industry demanded tolerances of 40 microns (0.04mm) on a 1000 degree centigrade forging produced by a 2,500 tonne press. Just imagine, dropping a naval frigate on its bow and expecting to control it to 1 twenty-fifth of a millimetre. This was just the technology needed for the next breakthrough in golf.

A financial advisor to Super Alloy Technologies (SAT) had previously worked at National Forge a few years before and suggested it was worth going round the corner to National Forge to see what they could do.

It was destined to be. Within nine months the R&D was complete and the first forged driver head came into being. SAT developed the machining capability such that any driver



Fully forged clubs

design could be accomplished, including logos and proprietary shapes.

The first discussions were with Callaway, then with Taylor Made and Cobra. The first commercial product was released for Taylor Made in the US. They were the second largest club manufacturer in the world.

Cobra and a number of other manufacturers sought SAT and National Forge products. Each of them increasing the distance obtained off the tee. Finally Callaway joined the National Forge team and designed the new shape that had a variable face thickness to optimize the advantages of forging. The Callaway design team worked with National Forge to produce the ultimate driver, the ERCII.

ERC are the initials of Eli Callaway; it was the first time that he had put his name to any of his products.

The driving distances rocketed and it began to look as if it would cause all the golf courses in the world to need re-designing. Such a furore broke out that the USGA banned their use in tournaments in the US. The Royal and Ancient was a little more circumspect and allowed the clubs to be used for another year, effectively phasing them out of competition. Forging is still the preferred manufacturing technique but detuned to reduce the spring like effect of the driver face.

A great Australian technology was defeated by its own success. However another unexpected benefit arose from the golf business that reflected back into the aerospace sector. Historically, when a new jet engine was designed it would take about nine months to design the tooling for the new forging and to forge the first prototype. In the golfing industry with fashion trends and technology advances happening in the turn of a season such lengthy design times were totally unacceptable. Thanks to the innovative nature of the National Forge team, a completely new design and cutting technique was developed that effectively cut the time from nine months to nine days for a first production prototype. This technology was taken up for aerofoils and re-energized the manufacture of jet engine parts rendering National Forge even more competitive internationally.

### **New Members:**

Welcome to:

**Peter Swan**  
**John Surridge**

### **From the President**

The women's open was once again a busy week for the Society manning a marquee throughout the tournament, and holding a dinner on the Wednesday prior to play. The display in the marquee was different from last year, with a collection of golf memorabilia lent by Leon Rowbell, and a wonderful collection of hickory clubs from Max Findlay. A highlight was a visit from Burtta Cheney and Patricia Bridges. The dinner was attended by over 90 members and guests who were entertained by Sandra Mackenzie with tales from her playing days on the Women's tour.

I would like to thank all the members that help at our social events. It takes an enormous amount of organization and planning to run these events successfully.

I congratulate Society member David Greenhill on his appointment as CEO of the Victorian Golf Association. David grew up in a golfing family, and for the past 19 years has been in charge of golf development in Victoria. David has agreed to be our guest speaker at the next Society dinner at Woodlands Golf Club on 31st May. This makes two reasons to attend, firstly to see Woodlands new clubhouse and of course to hear David.

*Ian Rennick*

## **Claytons' Corner with Michael Clayton**

I recently played in South Africa at the course specifically designed for the 2003 Presidents Cup. The brief was to make it one of the worlds most difficult courses and they easily succeeded.

That is always an odd brief to give an architect because, almost by definition, it eschews fun and playability for the average player, it also makes membership hard to sell, except to those who delight in the playing of demanding, penal, golf. It seems many play the course once and don't bother going back. I have played a few courses now in South Africa but not Durban Country Club, a course that seems to be the country's most highly- rated design.

From my limited experiences it seems what their courses really lack is the sophistication of design that is so much a part of our best courses. Highlighted most obviously by the sandbelt, our courses are clever, strategic designs where players have to think clearly about how best to proceed.

Epitomised by the stout defence put up by the holes at Kingston Heath in the face of an on-form Tiger Woods last November, our best courses cannot be conquered by sheer force alone. Long hitters are always going to have an easier time of it if they are straight and that is exactly how it should be. However, the shorter hitters can manoeuvre their way around and the sophistication of the strategies, and the difficulties, posed by the short shots around the green give everybody a chance to compete.

The day after an event I played a course that was rated by Golf Digest in South Africa as one of the top ten in the country and it is fair to say it would not make the top fifty here in Australia. It was soft, and the fairway bunkering rarely had any relationship to the geography of the green so it never really rewarded a player for flying close to the hazard and that is nearly always the case on the best strategic designs here in Melbourne. There are any number of fine examples including the 16<sup>th</sup> at Commonwealth, the 2<sup>nd</sup> at Spring Valley, the opening hole at Metropolitan and the quintessential dogleg to the left hole, the 17<sup>th</sup> West at Royal Melbourne. Come to think of it those four holes are essentially exactly the same hole built on different pieces of land.

The greens were a decent surface but like the fairways they were soft and there was nothing to match the class of a green like the 8<sup>th</sup> at Huntingdale, the 5<sup>th</sup> at Yarra Yarra – let alone their great 11<sup>th</sup> green, or the 7<sup>th</sup> at Long Island.

What was really brought home to me is the huge debt we owe Alister MacKenzie, Alex Russell, Mick Morcom, and those who had the foresight to employ an architect who had the power, and imagination, to transform golf in Australia.



7<sup>th</sup> green at Long Island

One wonders where we might have been, left to our own devices. MacKenzie had written *Golf Architecture* in 1920 and clearly it was a book well read by local enthusiasts. Cargie Rymill who designed Kooyonga in Adelaide left his copy to the club and it is full of notes and his own



pencil sketches of how he saw that course developing. As an aside, Rymill – a feisty character it seems - had a well-reported dispute with the committee of Royal Adelaide and there is a paragraph or two in Golf Architecture where MacKenzie was writing of his well-known frustration with the involvement of committees that knew nothing of the subject.

In a pencil note at the side of a page, Rymill had written 'They still haven't learned this at Royal Adelaide'.

Charles Lane, the principal designer of Commonwealth did a brilliant job without the direct input of MacKenzie, but it would be reasonable to assume that he was more than familiar with what MacKenzie was saying.

South Africa has no such design heritage and, as a consequence, their courses are nowhere near ours in terms of architecture. What the best designs here also do is serve to educate the interested and the observant, while creating a benchmark of quality.

Perhaps we take them for granted, and we can be overly critical at times, but we are all benefitting from an important decision made almost ninety years ago.

### **Golf Historians at Peninsula Golf Club**

The first speaker was Michael Caraher from Peninsula Golf Club who told of his club's history from 1922 when the club was founded and called the Tower Golf House Company. In 1965 the club was forced to move to their present site. Fortunately the club owned the land they moved to and were able to sell the original property. This enabled the club to develop two 18 hole golf courses with a modern clubhouse and member accommodation. Like all clubs, Peninsula has had troubled times, but Michael told how the club was fortunate to have the right people in charge over the years and is now in a great position for the future.

The second speaker was Eric Lucas a well known Flinders personality. Eric started his interest in golf as a caddy and told several amusing stories. He caddied for the top Australian Professional golfers in the 1940's and this early association with professional golfers has left him with the greatest respect for their ability, and their contribution to Australian golf. Eric can relate the Clubs where each professional worked and the courses they helped design. He would like a book written showing the great contribution the early golf professionals made in the development of golf in Victoria. Eric joined Flinders Golf Club in 1934 at the age of 14. He was a scratch golfer for over 35 years and has been blessed with good health and an amazing memory. He can remember when Walter Hagan and Joe Kirkwood came to Flinders for an exhibition match and remember how much that contributed to his enthusiasm for golf.



Keith Wood talked about the manufacture of the modern club head for drivers in the 1990's. A Melbourne company Super Alloy Technologies designed the heads and had them forged by a company National Forge. They were then finished by Super Alloy before sending them to Thailand for painting. The finished club head was then sent to America where the club was assembled and sent around the world for sale.

In the show and tell segment a number of interesting golf clubs were shown. These included an early spliced neck driver with a four way splice, a mallet head hickory putter, an anti shank iron and a putter with a half round shaft.

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## **Vice Regal Golf Links by Graham World**

A nation wide search for golf trophies directly linked to Australia's Governors-General since Federation has located four Cups and shed light upon some intriguing links between a former Prime Minister and a top Australian golfer.

The search for vice-regal golf trophies began in 2006 when the then Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery presented one of the trophies at Federal Golf Club in Canberra.

The latest to be identified is The 'Lord Denman Cup' presented at Victoria Golf Club in Melbourne in 1914, soon after the country's fifth Governor-General left office and returned to England.

The trophies located so far include the Stonehaven Cup (Australian Open, 1930), the Sorrento Cup, (Sorrento GC, 1912), The Governor-General's Services Day Cup (Federal GC, 1960) and the Lord Denman Cup (Victoria GC, 1914).

A file in the National Archives from 1960 covering Governor-General Viscount Dunrossil shows that Federal Golf Club had purchased a trophy for him to present at the Club's inaugural Services Day. But he was unavailable on the nominated day so the Club then sought his approval for an inscription.

The Governor-General's Official Secretary, M. Tyrrell advised there was already an annual 'Governor-General's Trophy' given to the school cadet corps "most efficient in rifle shooting". Mr Tyrrell suggested either "The Governor-General's Services Day Cup" or "The Governor-General's Golf Cup".

Viscount Dunrossil approved the first suggestion but another 20 years passed before a Governor-General, Sir Zelman Cowan presented the Cup. The second such occasion was 2006 when General Jeffery handed the Cup to the winner.

Addressing the Services Day dinner, General Jeffery said then there were only three known golf trophies directly associated with

Governors-General and he'd had the honour of being asked to present all three.

It was The Manager of the Sorrento Golf Club who alerted Government House to the fourth trophy, the Lord Denman Cup. After hearing General Jeffery speak about the trophies at Sorrento Golf Club's Centenary function he noticed the Lord Denman Cup in a trophy cabinet at Victoria Golf Club

Lord Denman presented it to the club in 1914 shortly before he returned to England. A year earlier Lord and Lady Denman visited Canberra in 1913 to lead the ceremony for the naming and start of construction of the Capital.

Canberra was a long way from Melbourne in those years. The Federal Parliament had sat in the Victorian Parliament since Federation and Members enjoyed the comforts of working in a capital city, and for some, the pleasure of playing golf on Melbourne's famed sand-belt. The relocation of the national Parliament to the bush capital in 1927 was like a journey off the fairway into deep rough. Despite some grumbling the link between politics and golf did not take long to make the transition.

One of the names inscribed on the Stonehaven Cup is Alex Russell, winner of the Australian Open in 1924, when he played as an amateur. A man of many talents, Russell also worked as an adviser to Prime Minister, Stanley Melbourne Bruce. Both were members of the Royal Melbourne Golf Club where Bruce won the Club's Macleod Cup in 1928 when he was Prime Minister. The previous year he became the first Prime Minister to move into The Lodge and was enthusiastic about having a course of championship standard developed in Canberra.

Alex Russell is listed amongst Australia's great golf course designers. His legacy includes the east course at Royal Melbourne and the Yarra Yarra course. In 1927 he was a partner in the Melbourne firm, Mackenzie and Russell, Golf Course Architects.



Lord Denman Cup



Stonehaven Cup

Governor General Services  
Day Cup

Perhaps it comes as no surprise then that in 1927 Russell was called upon to advise the Federal Capital Commission on a layout for a new golf course in Canberra. Russell chose a site on Red Hill, behind Parliament House, from three proposed by the Commission. He designed an 18 hole course layout and walked the proposed course with the construction supervisor explaining exactly what should be done.

But Russell's course never got beyond being laid out on paper. There was a delay after the Commission overpaid the architects by ten pounds "due to clerical error". Russell eventually repaid the money but the file closes in 1929, the year his colleague Stanley Bruce became the first Australian Prime Minister to be voted out of office at a federal election.

Nearly two decades later in 1946 the Red Hill site became Federal Golf Club's new home when the club left its original course at Acton, now under the waters of Lake Burley Griffin.

Russell's design was not used, it can be examined in the National Archives and to honour Russell's selection of the site, one of the function rooms at Federal is named the Russell Room.

Some would say Stanley Bruce went on to even bigger things in 1954 when he became the first, and still the only, Australian to have been appointed Captain of the Royal and Ancient Club of St. Andrews. His uniform is held by the National Archives, and is on display at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club.

*\*Graham World is a member, and former director, of Federal Golf Club, and editor of the Club's monthly newsletter, 'The Federalist'. Graham was media adviser at Government House during General Sir Michael Jeffery's term as Governor-General.*

Governor General Michael Jeffrey with GSA Member, and  
Sorrento Club Captain, Bruce Langford-Jones and the Sorrento Cup

**Life goes, you see, to golf's own ditty; Without the rough there'd be no pretty.**

## **Australian Women's Open Championship at Commonwealth Golf Club**

**(A dinner was arranged for the eve of this major tournament and I am grateful to Elizabeth Hodgkins for this report – Ed.)**

The first dinner for the year was held on the eve of the Australian Women's Open Championship to be played at Commonwealth Golf Club. Ninety members and guests took advantage of the opportunity to view the magnificent changes to the Kingston Heath clubhouse.

Anne Lenagan, Chairman of Golf Australia and several members of the Board of GA were present, as was Miss Burtta Cheney who, over many years, has contributed such an enormous amount to women's golf in Victoria, particularly with the juniors.

The guest speaker was Sandra Mackenzie who regaled her audience with memories of her exploits as a junior, some of which really tried the patience of the officials of her day; however, her talent shone through enabling her to play the LPGA tour in America for several years before becoming an on course TV commentator, where her bright personality, and hands on experience gives insights to viewers of women's tournament golf, particularly in Asia.

We thank her for sharing her stories with us and helping make the evening such a great success.



Sandra Mackenzie with Elizabeth Hodgkins



Paul Burgess with Stephen Pitt, CEO of Golf Australia

The Society manned a museum display of memorabilia associated with women's golf in Australia during the Australian Women's Open. Committee members were on hand to answer questions from members of the public who attended. Many thanks to Max Findlay and Leon Rowbell who lent a small portion of their vast, and varied, collection of clubs and memorabilia.



Paul Burgess and Max Findlay with some of Max's old clubs



Bev Coutie Mary Allen and Moira Drew with Burtta Cheney MBE