

THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

NO 36, DECEMBER 2010

Doug Bachli Trophy, AGM and Cocktail Party

Victoria Golf Club 29 November 2010

Thirty six members graced the recently vacated (by the professionals) fairways of Victoria Golf Club to contest the Doug Bachli Trophy in a stableford competition on a fine day, albeit with winds gusting to 40 kmh from the north east turning the 9th and the 17th into par 6s. Taking advantage of the forward tees Murray Cropley amassed 37 points to pip Lorraine Clothier on a count back. Men's runner up, again on a count back, was Des Tobin with 36 points from Dick Curtis and Peter Gompertz. Lady runner up was Ruth Summerfield with 34 points.

After welcome refreshments 40 members assembled in the meeting room where the AGM was convened and addressed by President Ian Rennick and Treasurer Dick Kirby. Three new members were elected to the committee. Geoff Vincent and Peter Swan replacing Elizabeth Hodgkins and Keith Wood who have retired and Virginia Gorrell, who had been co-opted on the passing of Janet Hibbins, being confirmed in office. Some erudite debate on the issue of electing 'Special Members' nominated by Golf Clubs affiliated to Golf Australia, enabled the required 75% majority vote to be achieved.

(I am assured that after the meeting the remaining members had an enjoyable cocktail party to Victoria Golf Clubs' usual standards. I, unfortunately, had to leave early in the company of three ladies (my wife Paula and two lovely ambos!) but I am now fully recovered and played golf badly on the following Saturday. Thank you for your good wishes. Ed)



2010 Doug Bachli winner
Murray Cropley



2010 Doug Bachli runner-up
Lorraine Clothier

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Jeu de crosse - Part 2

FOR THE DIARY

8th March

Next Dinner venue to be advised

14 April

Al Howard Trophy
at Eden GC, NSW

Golf Course Locations

- project update by Moira Drew

The collection of information on golf course locations in Victoria began in 2004. At that time there was extensive debate about the 'true' history of golf in Australia and attempts were being made to expose some of the often repeated incorrect and misquoted 'facts'.

The collection of data about locations where golf was played was seen as a worthwhile addition to the resources available for research.

The majority of the older clubs in the Melbourne area have moved since their formation and in some instances this has involved a split or a change of name. Consequently two clubs can cite another as their foundation. This aspect, and the myriad of inter-relationships between golfers, golf clubs, club members, courses designers, course superintendents, and golfers generally, has raised interest, especially amongst the Golf Society's golf club historians group.

Process:

It is intentionally a simple process - using a one page form to capture the information, which is then compiled and made available on the Golf Society's website.

Information sought includes:

- Name of club,
- GolfLink id number
- Address
- Date golf first played
- Club foundation date if different
- Course architect / Professional
- Number of holes, types of greens, etc
- Location changes and details – including map references
- Source of information
- Person completing form and position in Club

Gathering the information:

The form was distributed initially to Melbourne golf clubs and then to each club in Victoria through the Victorian Golf Association. A concentrated effort was made to obtain data for all Melbourne metropolitan clubs. Data from country clubs is proving more difficult to obtain.

Contributions have also been collected through individuals with knowledge of the history of certain golf clubs. Other references used include a range of golf publications and golf club and local histories, etc.

A call for information from local historical societies has been made through the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. It is hoped that this will elicit information regarding courses in areas where golf clubs no longer exist.



Presentation of data:

The results for Victoria have been compiled in four sections - and a separate listing made for each:

- Melbourne metropolitan clubs
- Melbourne clubs no longer in existence
- Country clubs - in District sections
- Country clubs no longer in existence

The data is presented in a simple table under the following headings:

- Golf Link Number
- Name of club
- Number of change – original / first / second
- Location details
- Reference

Clubs are listed alphabetically, and in the case of country clubs, in district sections.

The listings are available on the Club Locations page of the Golf Society of Australia webpage - www.golfsocietyaust.com - which provides:

- an overview of the project,
- links to the data already collected, and a
- link to the data collection form for download.

Printed lists can be provided on request.

Courses in the Melbourne area: The data for Melbourne has also been presented using a wall-map marked to show the locations of the Melbourne clubs. The red markers indicating courses no longer in existence show clearly the early concentration of courses - and their gradual movement away from the city. Preparations are being made for this map to be made available in digital form via the website.

Contribution of information: CAN YOU ASSIST?

If you have information about the location of a golf course, especially one that is no longer in existence, or has changed name, please make it available. Forms are available from the project coordinator, or via GSA website.

Convenor: Norie Macleod

Phone: 03 9527 6371

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Web: www.golfsocietyaust.com/clublocations.shtml

(Short articles on this project have appeared in The Long Game No 25 (Feb 2007) page 3 and No 26 (July 2007) pages 5-6.

President's Annual Report

It is my pleasure to present the President's report for the past year.

The year has again been a busy one. The social functions were very well attended, with ninety plus attending the dinners. A special dinner at Royal Melbourne was held to celebrate the wonderful win by Jin Jeong in the British Amateur Championship. Unfortunately he was a last minute apology. His absence was well covered by Waverley's Captain, Ken Parry who spoke on what effect Jin's win has had on Waverley Golf Club.

In October an article appeared in the "Golf Australia" magazine concerning a lack of a proper golf museum in Australia. The Golf Society is the keeper of Australia's golf memorabilia. We have two small displays, one at the MCG Sports Museum, and the other at Moonah Links. We are well aware that this is not ideal, and we are constantly looking at ways to improve it. In the future Golf Australia are planning new head quarters, and hope to include a large foyer area for a golf display which could allow a library area to enable golfers to research the many books and documents we have.

For the past six years the Society has held meetings for golf historians. This has enabled members of Golf Clubs to attend and exchange ideas on how to record and save their history. Many of the people attending are keen historians, and have shown great interest in the Society. For this reason we wish to change the Rules, so that we can approach all golf clubs, and give them the opportunity to nominate a club member, as a Special Member of the Society. This will bring to the notice of all golf clubs the Society's name, and in that way help to further our aim of making all golfers aware of golf history.

The golf events held during the year were well attended. I would like to congratulate all the winners. The Hickory day at Kingston Heath was held on the windiest day of the year which was reflected in the low scores. Other events were held at Royal Melbourne, Victoria and Woodlands. I would like to thank all the golf clubs for allowing us to play on their courses. We are always made to feel welcome, and it is a privilege to play at these clubs.

Three golf club historians meetings were held this year; the final one, held during Victoria's History Week, at Albert Park Golf Course. Speakers from Royal Melbourne and Keysborough Golf Clubs, together with three others associated with the Albert Park course spoke on the early history of the club. Details were presented showing that golf has been played at Albert Park since 1891, which establishes it as the Melbourne's oldest continuing golf venue.

In April a team of Society members travelled to Canberra for the annual hickory game against the Australian Golf Heritage Society from Sydney. We were victorious for the first time partly due to the loan of some players from the opposition. It was an interesting and enjoyable trip, and a return match is planned for next year.

The Society, manned a marquee at the Australian Women's Open at Commonwealth, where we were able to display some of our golf memorabilia. The Society will again be at the Women's Open this summer and we would like all members attending to call in, say hello, and see the display.

We are sorry to say good bye to two of the longest serving committee members. Elizabeth Hodgkins has been on the committee for seven years, and Keith Wood for nine.

Keith has served Victorian Golf for 43 years. He was President of the Society for 5 years and is a Life Member. Both have contributed to the success of the Society over the years, and their experience will be greatly missed.

I must thank the committee for their work during the year, Paul Burgess our Secretary, has been invaluable to me and also Dick Kirby the Treasurer. During the year Janet Hibbins lost her battle with cancer. We all miss her golf knowledge and advice. Virginia Gorrell was co-opted on to the committee to fill the vacancy. Moira Drew has once again maintained the Society's Web Page and attended to many Historical queries that have been passed through from Golf Australia. Thanks also to Peter Gompertz for producing The Long Game, and putting up with the many frustrations the job has entailed.

As President I have enjoyed the year and look forward to another year of interesting Society events.

Ian Rennick

Early Development of Golf in Queensland

- by Bruce S. Richter

It is generally accepted the first games of golf in the State were played by the Ivory brothers on their Eidsvold cattle station in central Queensland during the 1880s. However, there is a reference to golf at Stanthorpe, possibly in the mid-1870s. Other evidence indicates it was not uncommon for early enthusiasts to lay out a few holes on their acreage properties, e.g. Frank Ramsay at Eton Vale on the Darling Downs and W.H. Apperly at Indooroopilly.

The first formally instituted club was the North Queensland (renamed Townsville in 1924) Golf Club on 4th January 1893. This was less than two years after the formation of the Royal Melbourne club on 2nd May 1891 and possibly places the Townsville club among the first half dozen in Australia with a continuous playing history.

The next was the Toowoomba Golf Club in August 1893.

It was not until November 1893 that the city golfers formed The Brisbane Golf Club under the presidency of the Colonial Governor, Lord Lamington.

It was to remain the only metropolitan club for the next twenty four years until the (later Royal) Queensland Golf Club opened in 1920.

Golf expanded in the country areas with clubs formed at Ipswich, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Charters Towers and Gladstone by the turn of the century. The settlers in these areas would have brought their clubs and balls with them from Britain as the implements would not have been procurable locally.

By the beginning of the First World War, clubs had also been formed at Cairns, Chillagoe, Maryborough, Cordalba, Esk, Isis, Stanthorpe and Warwick. Many of these locations had only small populations and not all the clubs survived for long. There were



Lamington Cup

only five country clubs known to be still in existence by the end of the war in 1918.

The steps to form a State association of golfers and affiliate with the national body had a long drawn out history. The Australian Golf Union had been formed in 1898 and, in January 1899, The Brisbane Golf Club resolved not to seek affiliation but only to register for the time being. Thereafter, the club made various enquiries until, in November 1913, the club committee took the initiative to seek the co-operation of the country clubs in forming a Queensland Golf Association for the purpose of obtaining representation on the Golf Union. The Association came into force on 8th May 1914 with nine country clubs represented by delegates appointed from The Brisbane Golf Club. The distances involved made it impracticable for the country clubs to send their own delegates.

With the intervention of the First World War, it was 22nd April 1920 before the Queensland association was admitted as a member of the national Union, the last of the State bodies to do so. This was twenty two years after the Golf Union was formed and ten years after its founding clubs opened membership to the State associations.

The Queensland Ladies Golf Union was formed at a meeting at The Brisbane Golf Club in October 1922 and then conducted its' first Championship on that clubs' course in July 1924.

The Brisbane Golf Club inaugurated the Queensland Men and Ladies' Amateur Championships in August 1900 and continued to conduct the event until after the First World War. The club was also the scene for the first Queensland Open in June 1925 and first Queensland P.G.A. Championship in November 1926.

The period between the two World Wars saw the popularity of golf expand with eleven new clubs formed in the metropolitan area and a similar number in the country. This growth resulted in the formation of District Associations in 1929. By 1934, there were eight Districts representing 101 clubs.

The next major development was the construction of private resort style courses commencing in the 1970/1980s, initially on the Gold Coast and then along the eastern seaboard.

Today there are 248 clubs affiliated with Golf Queensland comprising 60,309 men and 15,065 ladies. The 250% increase in clubs since 1934 has largely been outside the metropolitan area where there have been only four new clubs formed since the end of the Second World War.

Club memberships peaked in 2001 at 81,685 and, as elsewhere in Australia, have been in steady decline since although the trend has slowed since 2004.

Works by the Author:

The Fairway is Mine, 100 Years of The Brisbane Golf Club

Links with the Past, History of the Queensland Golf Union 1914-1998

Fifty Years and More, History of The Brisbane District Golf Association 1929-2000

Golf Historians at Albert Park

The Chairman, Ian Rennick opened proceedings advising that this meeting was being held during the Victorian History Week, and to celebrate the occasion it was decided to hold the meeting at Albert Park, the oldest course in Melbourne. Golf started at Albert Park in 1891. Golf was played in Melbourne earlier than that on several sites such as Batman Hill/ Docklands, the Bluff at Elwood, parkland near the MCG and at Emerald Hill, but play at each site had not continued for any length of time. The speakers at the meeting will give details of research they have conducted establishing the start of golf in Victoria.

The first speaker, Ben Corfee from Parks Victoria, who is the Manager of the Grand Prix and Majors Events at Albert Park. Ben stated that Albert Park was 225 hectares in size, and was proclaimed a park in 1864. It originally was swamp land, and was first used to graze cattle, then as a tip, and is now Melbourne's main recreational area attracting 47 different sporting clubs. All the clubs are growing and want to expand, but with finite space, they all have to be contained. Managing the Park is difficult as it has six million visitors a year, and holds sixty major events annually. The one constant area through all of this is the golf course that has been here since 1891. When the Grand Prix started in 1996, the roads were realigned causing many changes, particularly to the golf course. Maintaining the lake has always been difficult with the variation of the water level, and the control of the weeds. This has changed as the water level is now constant, and fresh water is captured from the roads from the eastern side. The water is filtered before it goes into the lake. The capacity of the lake is now 780 mega-litres and it the largest water tank in Melbourne. It is now possible to use the water from the lake to irrigate the entire park, except the golf course, but steps are now being taken to include the course.

Peter Flockart is the Manager of Albert Park Management Pty. Ltd., who lease the golf course area from Parks Victoria. When they took over the lease in 1995 they agreed to renovate and maintain the course, as well as build a driving range on the eastern side of the lake. Their income is the green fees, and they pay a yearly lease fee to Parks Victoria, and all outgoing expenses associated with the course. Peter stated that they have to endure a five week period during the Grand Prix when the course is closed, and this happens in the best golfing time of the year. When the Grand Prix started in 1996 the alteration to Aughtie Drive resulted in a redesign of the course. Due to the ground lost on the east side, they were allowed to extend on to land at the northern end, where the Harry Trott oval was. This allowed three extra holes to be built. Unlike most golf courses, there is no security fencing. Albert Park is open on three sides and there is nothing to stop people wandering on to the course, to walk their dogs or ride bicycles. Another problem is that balls can be hit on to the roads, but there have been few complaints. Peter related that as the course is built on top of an old tip, people come onto the course digging holes looking for old bottles. This usually happens at night, and causes a mess that has to be cleaned up the following day.

In 1998 The Victorian PGA Championship was held at Albert Park, and the initial reservation was that the course would be too easy for the long hitting golf professionals. Because of the tightness of the course the scores were reasonable, and the players and officials were delighted with the event. The tournament continued for another two years. The condition of the course was excellent, and due to the good press and the publicity, many corporate events have been held.



Leon Rowbell with 1954 Albert Park Club Championship Cup

The course caters for fifty thousand rounds of golf a year, despite it being closed for five weeks in the best golfing weather.

Dr John Green is a member of Royal Melbourne Golf Club's History and Archive committee, and has taken a keen interest in how his club started, and the relationship between it and Albert Park. John quoted from the minutes of the Melbourne Golf Club (Royal Melbourne) dated 10th June 1891 which stated:- *"Mr Bruce reported that he and Mr Playfair had called on the Trustees of Albert Park and had gained permission to play on that ground"*.

This is the first mention of golf and Albert Park in the Club Minutes.

The minutes on the 29th June 1891 stated:-

"The Chairman called upon Mr Bruce who made a report as to what had been done by the Committee appointed to draft rules and select ground. He referred to the ground secured at Albert Park and at Gascoigne Estate near Caulfield Railway Station, and intimated that a Club House had been rented in Caulfield."

The Caulfield course was open for play on 4th July 1891. This was on rented land which was gradually being developed for housing and by 1898 the decision was made to move. When considering the location both Albert Park and Sandringham were mentioned as possible future sites, but freehold land was obtained at Sandringham and it was chosen.

The tie between the two clubs can be measured by the people who were members of both Clubs. Messrs. J. M. Bruce, J. M. Gillespie, Stewart, Catto and Dr. O'Hara. All of these were leading business people in Melbourne, and a number lived close to Albert Park.

All of this proves that golf was played at Albert Park in 1891, and further evidence assumes that the course has been kept open ever since.

Colin White has studied the history of Keysborough Golf Club, and traces his club back to Albert Park in 1899. Mr. J. M. Gillespie is mentioned as the Club founder, and in the history of Keysborough it is stated:-

"The Founder of our Club, Mr J M Gillespie, together with a small band of enthusiastic golfers, met frequently during the years 1895 to 1897, to play over a few improvised holes at Albert Park, on the part of that area known as the 'Old Albert Park Golf Links'."

Golf Historians at Albert Park (continued)

“Mr Gillespie called a meeting to discuss the feasibility of establishing a golf club at Albert Park. The exact date or venue of the meeting is not known, but information points to 1899 as being the year.” In the Social page on the Sydney Morning Herald dated 5th December 1896 the following article appeared:-

“A new golf club was opened in the Albert Park Melbourne, by Lord Brassey last Tuesday in the presence of a large and fashionable gathering including the Hon. Mrs Freeman Thomas, Lord Richard Neville, Lady Clarke and Mr and Mrs J M Bruce and many others”

This confirms that golf continued at Albert Park after Royal Melbourne left in 1891. Albert Park Golf Club continued at Albert Park until 1946/7, when the Victorian Government decided that a Private Club should not have exclusive rights over public land. A decision was made to buy land and after a search land at Keysborough was selected. The Club retained its Albert Park name until 1957, when the members voted to change it to Keysborough. The land at Keysborough was described as 220 acres of swamp, but extensive work of mounding, and the creation of lakes, has created a first class course. The lakes hold 110 mega-litres of water, enough for six months watering in the summer. Many of the old Albert Park traditions have been retained, and competitions with their former public course rivals like Brighton Golf Club (now Southern Golf Club) continue. It is interesting to note that that before the Victorian PGA Championship came to Albert Park, it was held at Keysborough for eight years.

Don Read the Captain of Albert Park Golf Club said, that when the course went public in 1948, only 20 players remained at Albert Park. A new Club was started, but struggled to survive as competitions were hard to organise. This was because the members could not book times, but had to enter through a ball race. Club championships were held, and are displayed with other event winners in the Lago Restaurant. This continued for 35 years, and it was only in 1995 when Peter Flockart and his company took over managing the course, that group bookings were arranged and regular competitions were held.

The course has had many changes over the years, and they have not all been recorded. By studying maps, it is thought that the present 8th and the 11th holes are the only ones that have remained the same. The course in 1891 was on 50 acres, and was 6 holes with greens 12 yards square. When the South Melbourne Council filled in the tip it was extended to 9 holes. In 1931 the club acquired a further 30 acres and the course was extended to 18 holes. Prior to 1936, play on Saturdays had to finish by 2.30pm, as part of the course was used for hockey, lacrosse and cricket. Another worry to the golfers was that in mushroom season people would flock to the course and dig for them, leaving holes, and disrupting play. The largest alteration was in 1996, when the Grand Prix forced changes, and three new holes were added at the northern end of the course. After the new managers started in 1995 the condition of the course has greatly improved, thanks to the greenkeeper Geoff Keast. The Club is hoping that the irrigation system can be connected to the lake, which will improve the course through summer. The fairways have not been watered for eight years.

The Club does suffer during the Grand Prix because members have to play at other courses. There is also a lot of rubbish to be collected including many rubber car pieces.

Viv Daniels spoke about the Lakeside Ladies Golf Club. She explained that the club started in 1947 with 20 ladies choosing not to go to Keysborough. The club initially known as Lakeside Golf Club Associates formally commenced in 1953 when the course became a public course. The Club was affiliated with the VGLA as a Tuesday club, and it wasn't until 1977 that Saturday members were recognised, allowing for two competition days. There was always a little friction between the weekday and the weekend players. They both coined names for each other- these being the “Tuesday Cheats” and the “Saturday Sneaks”, but when they played matches against other clubs they called themselves the “Lakeside Luvlies”.

In November 1977 the Club decided to make the main day of play Saturday due to the increase number of players that chose the weekend to play. The Tuesday and the Saturday groups seldom mixed except at social functions and the annual meeting.

In 1987 the clubs' name was formally changed to Lakeside Ladies Golf Club.

Over the years there have been attempts to amalgamate the two Albert Park Clubs, but all to no avail; the women state that there is no advantage for them and they are happy as they are.

Before 1995 all golfers, including the members, had to use the ball race to obtain a starting time. There was a certain amount of cheating with balls changing place, so a brick was removed from the starting shed and the race was put inside, out of reach of temptation.

A display of memorabilia relating the Albert Park Golf Club was provided by Golf Society members, Leon Rowbell, Max Findlay and Moira Drew. The display included of golf clubs by a former Albert Park professional Dick Banks, a Club Championship cup won by John Dooley in 1954, war medals of H L Newland who was a club professional in the 1930's, old score cards, newspaper articles and cuttings from 1891 to 1965.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking all the speakers, and Peter Flockart who helped organise the venue. He said that a lot of research has been collected about golf at Albert Park. He asked for extra help in further research particularly concerning Emerald Hill, to establish if it is in any way connected with the start of golf at Albert Park.

The Last Word

During the recent Dunhill Trophy at St Andrews, ex-Springbok Schalk Berger Snr provided the day's comedy moment. Playing in the same group as Ryder Cup hero Graham McDowell, he topped his opening drive, advancing the ball no more than 20 yards.

With silence crowding in on his embarrassment, big Schalk let out the immortal line: “You beauty.” Cue uproar. I know how he felt.

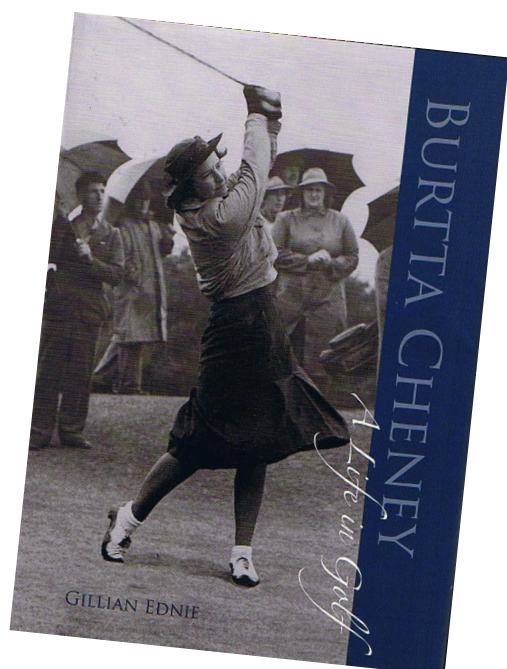
Book Review – A Life in Golf by Gillian Ednie

This well constructed biography of leading Australian amateur golfer, Burtta Cheney MBE, is enhanced by the lively oral memories of its subject, who won her first State title at the age of 18 and was representing Australia two years later. There are also several, significant, contributions from friends, opponents, fellow competitors and golf administrators, colleagues in the Australian Red Cross (when the war intervened, and golf took a back seat), and some of the hundreds of junior female golfers who benefitted from her training camps at Anglesea. Having been taken to see the 1930 Australian Ladies Championship, Burtta's philosophy became, watch and replicate, practice and learn.

The result is a fascinating social history of an awkwardly shy young girl whose parental wealth denied her the opportunity to work for a living; it did, however, give ladies golf in Victoria, and Australia, the unstinting efforts of a talented, enthusiastic and tireless promoter of all that is best in womens' amateur golf.

Profusely illustrated with a lifetimes worth of photographic memories, *A Life in Golf* is available from The GSA at all our social functions, or from the Secretary on 03 9589 1421 for \$39.90

Peter Gompertz



Dinner at Royal Melbourne Golf Club

A special dinner was held at the beginning of Masters Week attracting 65 Members and guests.

They were entertained by two Guest Speakers – Therese Ritter from Golf Australia, and Ken Parry, Captain of Waverley Golf Club.

The dinner was arranged to celebrate the win by Jin Jeong of the British Amateur Championship. Unfortunately Jin could not attend, but in his place Ken Parry delivered a very interesting profile on Jin, and told the story of his rise to prominence in world golf including his high finish in The Open at St Andrews where he won the Silver Medal for being leading amateur. He also related Jins' importance to the Waverly Golf Club, that includes helping the club win Division One Pennant earlier this year.

The British Amateur trophy brought to the dinner by Ken was a great success, with many of the guests having their photo taken with it. It is a most impressive trophy and was admired by all.

Therese Ritter who is 'Manager Championships' at Golf Australia, related her experiences in obtaining her referee accreditation, which included a course with the R & A. Therese referees at all major Amateur tournaments in Australia, and in the last few years at Professional tournaments, which include the Australian Open Championships and Australian Masters.

Therese told various stories of the difficulties being accepted, by virtue of being an unknown, and a female. It is important for the players to know the referees, and to accept their knowledge and their rulings.



Therese Ritter

Therese said that the worst part of refereeing is disqualifying a player because of their lack of knowledge of the Local Rules.



Ken Parry & British Amateur Championship Trophy

Jeu de Crosse (part 2)

- by Michael Sheret

Altogether a group of nine visitors took part over the two days at Baudour. These included David Hamilton (Captain of the British Golf Collectors Society), Christoph Meister (President of the European Association of Golf Historians and Collectors), Geert and Sara Nijs (golf historians and authors of *Choules: the Non-Royal but most Ancient Game of Crosse*) and me (a member of the Golf Society of Australia and, at the time, Captain of the Australian Golf Heritage Society).

A remarkable thing about jeu de crosse is that, unlike other supposed precursors of golf, it has survived to the present day. But what is the future for jeu de crosse as television exposure for golf increases? The jeu de crosse club and balls are radically different from those of golf. Why they take the form they do can only be understood by considering the very rough terrain over which the game is played. In the Belgian game a crosseur carries one multipurpose club or crosse, with effectively three faces, and a bag full of wooden balls of various sizes.

The photograph below shows three balls, beside a golf ball for comparison.



Traditionally the balls are made of wood, as they were in golf in the pre-featherie days. The balls are not spherical; they are shaped rather like a rugby ball and placed on the ground with the longer axis more or less vertical. Before each shot players choose which size of ball is best for the lie and the shot. Players are allowed to substitute the chosen ball for the original ball, placing it on the exact same spot. Being allowed to substitute balls of different sizes is important because of the very rough terrain over which the game is played.



Les Amis du Pic et Plat proved to be an extremely hospitable club. The members of the club were very generous in lending their equipment to our visiting party, gifting some equipment to us, patiently instructing us in the game and providing us with excellent lunches and much excellent Belgian beer. As golf spreads throughout Europe and becomes less expensive, will the crosseurs turn to golf? Already there are signs that the game is being corrupted by golf. In informal games, crosseurs often add a wedge or a reinforced metal wood to their armoury. Occasionally a crosse is cleverly adapted to take a steel golf shaft. Hard moulded plastic crosse balls are becoming more popular and replacing wood as the material of choice. Golf balls and golf tees make the occasional appearance in the game. If the steady march of golf continues and jeu de crosse fades and eventually dies, there are those, myself included, who will be very, very sad.

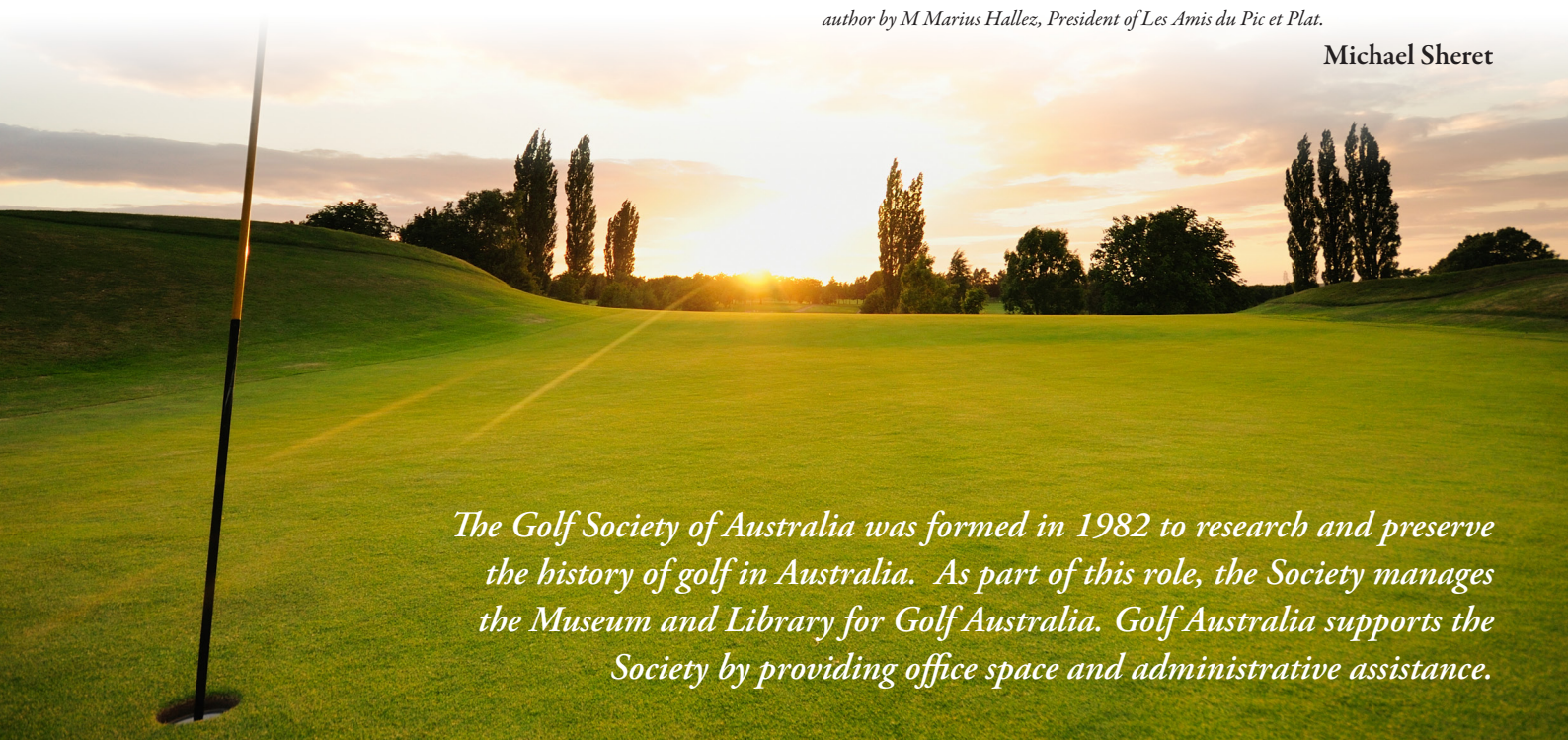
Note 1. To find out more about the non-royal (it was never the preserve of the gentry) and ancient game of jeu de crosse visit www.ancientgolf@dse.nl.

Note 2. Three of the illustrations are reproduced from the above website with kind permission from Geert and Sara Nijs: the 1939 engraving of a crosseur in action; the ancient relief statue of St Anthony the Great; student crosseurs from various golf historical societies delighted at finally hitting the planchette.



Note 3. The crosse used in the illustrations was gifted to the author by M Marius Hallez, President of Les Amis du Pic et Plat.

Michael Sheret



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.