

# THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

No 37, APRIL 2011

## Annual Hickory Day

*By Paul Burgess*

Max Findley won the Frank Shepherd Trophy at Kingston Heath again this year by a comfortable margin of 3 points giving him back to back wins for 2010 and 2011. The Burtta Cheney Trophy was won by Paula Gompertz by an even bigger margin of 4 points.

Whilst invitations to participate in the event were sent to all of our 200 members, only 13 participated on the day. One must ask the question why so many ignored the event?

This day had everything. Bernice Davies was especially resplendent in her 1920's era costume as were the other ladies, and a number of men also sported the plus fours etc. to look the part. The Kingston Heath course was at its best; the pre-luncheon gathering in the dining room involved everyone in discussions about hickories and every imaginable matter relating to old style golf. A long table overlooking the course was the setting for sandwiches and savouries prior to enthusiastic practice on the putting green, where 90 year old non-playing member Eric Lucas provided some valuable tuition.

Eric accompanied the ladies group during which he offered some meaningful comments. Later, during presentations, Eric expressed his delight at coming along for the day. Indeed his reminiscences of earlier pennant days, and golf generally, were worth coming for the day, alone.



*Hickory winners Max Findley and Paula Gompertz*



*All dressed up and ready for gowf*

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## FOR THE DIARY

### 30th May

Dinners at Woodlands Golf GC

### 21st June

Don Lawrence Trophy at Woodlands GC

### 16th August

Presidents Trophy  
Royal Melbourne GC

### 13th September

Dinner at Royal Melbourne GC

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to:

**Tony Lang, Peter Molloy, Brian Simpson**

# The Stymie

by Peter Gompertz

Members who take part in the Presidents Trophy in August and qualify for the sudden death matchplay semi-finals may, if their match lasts long enough, be faced with a stymie. 150 years ago when competitive golf was emerging there was not the obsession with four rounds of stroke play that our best golfers are subject to now. Most golf was played as a match between two gentlemen and, before setting foot on the first tee, considerable discussion took place, usually at an Inn, as to the size of the wager in guineas or pints of claret. Followers of both parties to the match would then bet considerable sums on the outcome.

Integral to such matches was the possible, nay probable until 1952, 'arrival' of a stymie on the green. A stymie exists in singles match play when one player's ball blocks the path to the hole, of his opponent's ball. In the good old days players were not permitted to 'lift and clean' their ball on the green. If the balls were more than six inches apart then the blocking ball could not be lifted and the player further



*Stymie or not stymie?*

*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 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



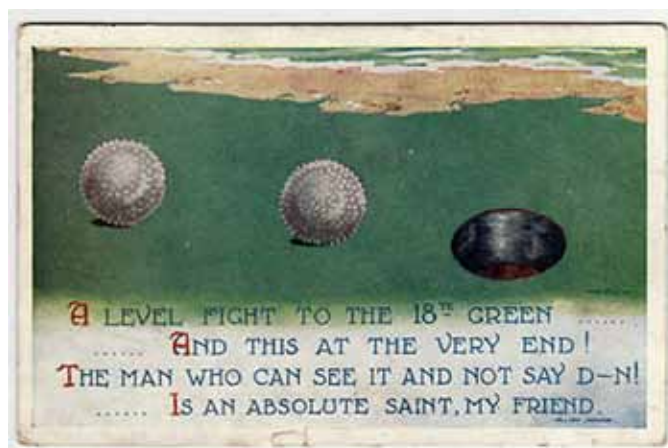
*Stymie at North Berwick*

away had to try and finagle a slice, cut, draw or chip to get to the hole without hitting his opponent's ball. Scorecards of the day, if they existed at all, would be six inches across, sometimes with a red line, to enable quick, and accurate, measurement as illustrated by the mint condition scorecard of the now extinct and concreted over Randwick Municipal Golf Course. If a player does hit his opponent's ball he must play his next putt from where his ball finishes. His opponent can choose whether to play his ball as it lies or take advantage of being closer to the hole as a result of the impact. If the player stymied hits his opponent's ball into the cup the opponent is deemed to have holed out with his last shot.



*Scorecard with stymie measure*

Between 1920 and the late 1940s the USGA tried several times, unsuccessfully, to persuade the R & A to abandon the stymie but in 1952 they agreed to establish a joint set of rules of golf, and the stymie was no more. It was a casualty of this international agreement, to the chagrin of match play purists and traditionalists.



*Stymie postcard*



# Early Golf Development of in Western Australia

by Alex Cleave

Like most of the world outside the UK, the history of golf in Western Australia starts in the 1890s. A meeting to form Perth Golf Club was held in the ballroom of Government House in Perth in 1895 and in 1896, 9 holes were laid out on Burswood Island on the Swan River. Later that year the Captains' Prize was first played for over 36 holes and this competition, still played, is the oldest in West Australian golf. The club, Royal Perth, is in possession of one of the oldest pieces of golf memorabilia in Western Australia, a scorecard from Montrose Golf Club in Scotland with the name 'Montrose' crossed out and 'Burswood' substituted, recording the scores of Mr Ainslie and Mr Barlee in 1897.

This course served the club until 1901 when members, disenchanted with the access to Burswood, found a more pleasing site, Grove Farm, further upstream, at Belmont where another 9 hole course was built. For the convenience of members, a 20 seat, horse drawn carriage transported them to the course from outside the Perth G.P.O. on Sunday mornings. While golf at Grove Farm was an improvement on Burswood it was not ideal and steps were taken to obtain acreage in Kings Park, the iconic native reserve overlooking Perth. The application, initially supported by the Kings Park Board, was eventually rejected by the State government and the club continued on the Grove Farm site until 1908 when the move to the present site in South Perth was made.

In the country, golf started in the latter part of the 1890s at Katanning, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. In December 1898 a meeting of Albany Town Council discussed a possible golf course at Middleton Beach and in August 1899 a provisional committee for the Albany Golf Club was appointed.

The club was formed a month later at a meeting in the Freemasons' Hotel. The land at Middleton Beach was typically ideal links land and to this day sets a stringent test, especially in the wind. Albany G C is the oldest club in Western Australia still in its original location.

In 1901 a six hole course, Northam Golf Club, was laid out at F Rewells' Island Farm. When this was flooded in 1908 the club played over a private 9 hole course, 25 kilometres away at Dempster's Muresk Farm. A Dr Dunlop also had a private 9 hole course at Woodside Farm.

In 1902 Bunbury Golf Club was formed playing over a 14 hole course in 1903 but ceased to exist in 1904 when floods washed the course away. The club reformed later in the decade with a 9 hole course near the Preston River but moved to a seaside location in 1927. Busselton Golf Club held its first event in 1904, Beverly Club formed in 1905, Narrogin in 1906, York, Norseman and Wagin by 1907 along with many other country courses over the next few years as the game gained popularity and became part of the country social scene.

In the early 1900s Government House in Perth had its own 9 hole course in the central city gardens. This little known fact was revealed in 1870 by Ivie Temperley who recalled playing there when Sir Frank Bedford was Governor and where he and his family "had a 9 hole course which started just outside the front door and stretched down into the gardens which were much bigger in those days.... we would often have all day tournaments." Ivie was the inaugural Secretary of the Perth Ladies Golf Club (Perth Golf Club Associates) in 1909 and had an important influence on women's golf in WA.



2nd hole at Royal Perth

## Early Golf Development of in Western Australia (continued)

In 1902 Freshwater Bay Golf Club was formed and played over a very basic 6 hole course on the site of the present Peppermint Grove Tennis Club in what is now Perth's most exclusive suburb. The club, which has also been referred to as the Peppermint Grove Golf Club was the basis of a move to Cottesloe Beach and the formation of Cottesloe Golf Club in 1908. The 6 hole course which they left was played over for the next 10 years by the Peppermint Grove Ladies Golf Club.

Sometime early in the 1900s, a picturesque 9 hole was built along a winding creek in the Perth hills at Darlington and was still in play in 1925 when member Noelle Kennedy won the Women's State Amateur Championship. The club closed in 1940.

Fremantle Golf Club was established in 1905 and a 9 hole course on its present site, laid out by Peter Anderson and Arthur Oliphant, was opened in 1906. Originally from Scotland, Anderson had won the British Amateur in 1893, and came to Perth from Geelong to take on the position of headmaster at Scotch College (While at Geelong College he had some influence on the choosing of the wonderful Barwon Heads Golf Club site). Not only was Anderson a fine golfer and involved in course architecture, he was interested in golf administration and pushed the case for the creation of the Western Australian Golf Association in 1911. *(An article on the creation of the WAGA will follow in a later edition – Ed.)*

Construction of the Fremantle course was difficult due to the prevalence of limestone cap rock which had to be removed with explosives. The cap was so extensive that landing areas were made instead of complete fairways. Players would play from tee to landing areas strategically placed between tee and

green. In 1907 a meeting of interested ladies agreed to form the Fremantle Ladies Golf Club under the umbrella of the Fremantle Golf Club, annual fees to be two guineas for men and one guinea for ladies.

The second 9 holes were opened for play in 1909, making the club the first in Western Australia to have an 18 hole course. 1911 saw the inaugural West Australian Amateur Championship played at Fremantle and won by former home club Captain, John Learmonth. For the next 17 years, Fremantle GC was host to the State Amateur, Open, Junior and Ladies Championships whenever held. The Club was granted 'Royal' status in 1930, as was Perth Golf Club in 1937.

Peter Anderson, with the help of N C Fowlie, also designed the 9 hole course for Cottesloe Golf Club in 1908 giving Perth its first seaside course. This layout, sitting on two A Class reserves, divided by a road over which play was conducted, was its home until the need for an 18 hole course and better facilities initiated a move a few kilometres north to the present site at Swanbourne in 1931. The 9 hole course then became the Sea View Golf Club which still exists today. The new course at Swanbourne was laid out by another Anderson, club professional David, and then in 1933 Alex Russell upgraded the design with changes being made in 1938.

1928 saw Mt Lawley GC (also designed by David Anderson), The West Australian Golf Club at Mt Yokine and Lake Karrinyup Country Club (designed by Alex Russell) formed, and in 1931 the number of metropolitan clubs in Perth increased to 8 with the formation of Nedlands Golf Club. The 1930s depression ensured that no further golf course development took place until after World War II.



*Seaview Golf Course, Cottesloe*



# Claytons' Corner

with Michael Clayton

Pete Dye, the famous American golf course architect, once said he was heavily influenced by the prolific, and equally famous, post-war architect Robert Trent-Jones. 'I saw what he was doing and headed off in exactly the opposite direction.'

Architects are always influenced by those who have come before and the courses they left and invariably those who grow up in Melbourne are heavily influenced by the best holes of the sandbelt.

For me there are a few holes that best exemplify design principles that are timeless and those holes are always in the back of your mind when it comes to doing new ones.

The 12th hole West at Royal Melbourne is a perfect example of how to use a ground hazard across the line of play to force a player into making a decision about the play of the second shot. The proper use of a ground hazard, as opposed to an aerial hazard, was the lesson we employed to improve the formerly poor short par fours at the 6th North and 7th South at Peninsula.

The 3rd hole at Kingston Heath is a brilliant use of an almost dead flat piece of uninspiring land. The architect arranged the fairway hazards, the green, and its surrounding hazards to ask players strategically interesting questions year after year and the right answer to those questions varies from day to day.

Victoria's 15th hole is an equally good hole where the player is confronted with a number of choices of club and line from the tee.



*16th at Commonwealth*

The medium length, par four 16th hole at Commonwealth is the ideal water hole. Rather than continue the torture of the water all the way to the green the wetland turns left well short of the green and the orientation of the green and the fearsome greenside bunker take over the defence of the hole and both determine that the ideal place to drive is a metre right of the water. No one is that accurate but every metre to the right makes the second marginally more difficult until one gets to the far right of the fairway and the second shot is ridiculously difficult.

The incongruity of the famous televised water holes in America and at Coolumb in Queensland is that the water goes all the way to the green and the green, following the line curved lake, is best approached from the opposite side of the fairway. Driving close to the water gives you the poorest line into the flag and that hardly seems logical.

The 11th green at Yarra Yarra is the perfect example of a wild green that really works – and it makes for a brilliant hole. The fantastic 9th green at Metropolitan is another severely undulating green that works really well and it is one that demands a running shot to get the ball back onto the back level.

The 15th at Woodlands, like the 3rd at Kingston Heath, is an ideal strategic hole on flat ground. The cross bunkers influence those who have driven to a certain place and the bunkers down the right of the second shot are a constant threat to the longer hitters who stray. And, then there is that devilish swale right at the front of the green to further confuse the unsure.

The Old Course at St Andrews is another influence for the reason that there is never one way to play any hole. So much of American and European tour golf is played over holes where the exact opposite applies. Long rough lines narrow fairways and there is only one question and a single answer. Hit straight or else.

Not many courses can look like The Old Course but any course can ask some of the questions it asks and the primary one and the one that is the key to making a course enduringly popular is the 'what do I do here today?' question.

Alister MacKenzie drew the brilliant 14th hole on the Old Course and showed five legitimate, but sharply contrasting, lines of play including flying the long second shot down the adjoining 5th fairway. Here is the game's most fascinating par five and any long hole managing to ask even some of its questions is sure to be a beauty.

Whilst the great holes are an influence another significant influence is the number of ageless architecture books that, like so many of the best holes, have proved to be timeless.

The Links is Robert Hunter's (one of MacKenzie's American partners) offering on the subject of golf architecture and whilst not quite as famous as MacKenzie's two books, *Golf Architecture* and *The Spirit of St Andrews*, it is equally worthwhile and proof that the principles of fine golf holes does not change with time. Tom Doak's *Anatomy of a Golf Course* and Geoff Shackelford's *Grounds for Golf* are two of the best modern books on the subject and it is a pity they are not as widely read as the latest instruction books that offer so little – and that have never cured a slice.

# Presidents Report

April, 2011



*Max Findley with visitors to the GSA display at the 2011 Womens Open*

The year started with a display at the Handa Australian Women's Open. Due to the very heavy rain on the Saturday the attendance was less than last year, but the people we talked to were very interested in what was displayed. Max Findley set up a work bench and showed how he cleans and repairs hickory clubs. This encouraged several people to watch, which attracted others. Children were particularly interested in the old clubs and were fascinated with the feel of them.

If you enjoy reading the "Long Game" the editor, Peter Gompertz, would like to hear from you. You might have read an interesting golfing article or have a story that you would like to share with other members. Original articles are always appreciated. I believe Society members have a wealth of knowledge about Australian golf. Please share it for the benefit of us all.



*Karrie Webb autographs Open memorabilia*

In February a letter was sent to all members reminding them about nominating suitable golfers as members. We all know of past officials and keen golfers at our golf clubs but regrettably some are not aware of the Society nor its activities. Unless they are informed about the Golf Society we have little chance to include these people into our membership to share their experience and knowledge of our wonderful game.

There are two golfing events and two dinners scheduled for the next few months and we would like as many members as possible attend at least one if not all. The golf events are at Woodlands and Royal Melbourne, both wonderful venues and courses. Do not miss out on the fellowship at these events which makes them such very enjoyable days.

*Ian Rennick*

## The Last Word

Writing in 1890 Horace Hutchinson, regretted 'that few golfers in the North of England make a practice of wearing the red coat – the old golfing uniform'.

On some Southern greens it is held necessary as a kind of danger signal to the non golfing public. In the North it is deemed that the non golfing public merits little consideration.

Lord John Scott was once riding past the Musselburgh links in Scotland with an English friend. The Southerner on observing the, to him, novel antics of the golfers, asked what the place was, and who were the people. Lord John replied that the grounds were those of a lunatic asylum, and the players were its inmates.

'But why do some of them wear a red coat?' asked the other, to which Lord John replied, 'Oh they have to wear this because they are the very violent cases of mania'.



# Meeting of Golf Club Historians

on 29th March 2011, at Yarra Yarra Golf Club

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 displayed golf memorabilia including old golf clubs and Max Findley demonstrated how to look after and restore wooden clubs.

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 can often be 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 Harrison of Yarra Yarra*

*continued on page 8>>*

## Book Review:

### Taylor's Gold – The life and times of a golfing superstar.

*A Royal North Devon publication with words by Jim Hopkins and pictures by Patrick Noonan*

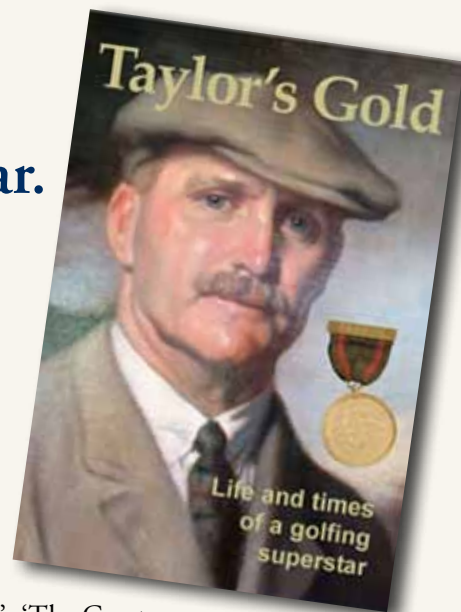
John Henry Taylor (1871-1963) known as 'Wig' as a boy on account of the colour of his hair but today, always referred to as 'JH', was born into a very poor family ('once you've felt the cold chill of poverty it is something you never forget') thirty six years into the reign of Queen Victoria. His father was a labourer who took what work he could get in an era when no work meant no pay. His mother took in washing and occasionally, as a last resort, accepted "parish pay", a donation from her local church. Before he died in his early 90s, JH became the Champion Golfer five times, designed golf courses and clubs, travelled to Europe and America, played golf and dined with Kings, Prime Ministers and assorted aristocracy but always stayed true to himself, his family and his reputation as 'the peoples' champion'; somehow finding the time to help establish The Artisans Golfing Association, The Professional Golfers Association and encourage local councils to open up public golf courses for the working man. He also captained a winning Ryder Cup team!

Taylor's Gold is a well assembled book of short but fascinating chapters, wonderfully illustrated with a lot of, previously unseen by many, photographs of JH and some

of the interesting people that he associated with on his journey from 'odd boy', 'boot boy' and 'caddie' to becoming one of Clement Flower's 'The Great Triumvirate' and, in his retirement, President of Royal North Devon Golf Club, into whose clubhouse he would not have been invited as a young man. Many of the words are his own as he was an accomplished writer, but there are major contributions from his daughter Phyllis and his four grandchildren, as well as his golf colleagues. Bernard Darwin wrote of JH 'he was a natural speaker, a natural fighter and a natural leader. He would have made his mark in any walk of life'. He chose golf, or did it choose him? Either way his life was an awe inspiring journey of the best kind, and well worth reading.

*Peter Gompertz*

Available from [www.royalnorthdevongolfclub.co.uk](http://www.royalnorthdevongolfclub.co.uk) for £35 post paid.



## Meeting of Golf Club Historians (continued)

Graeme acknowledged that standards such as dress regulations may change, but the historical group should be the clubs' watchdog for maintaining club traditions.

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 a 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 be interesting to 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 biography requires skill, enthusiasm, and the diligence of the author, the professional skills and creativity of the book designer, and the meticulous attention to detail of the editor.

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 the Morphett had the foresight to keep them.

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 one 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 in 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, which she did for 40 years; many of those girls became successful senior golfers and willingly contributed stories to the book.

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 its 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.

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

*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.*