

THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 45, JULY 2013



Don Lawrence Trophy at Woodlands

An enthusiastic group of 24 players teed off in the 2013 Don Lawrence Memorial Trophy event at Woodlands Golf Club. The autumn weather was perfect for golf and the course presented in excellent condition.

Once again, we were privileged to have Muriel Lawrence as our guest to present the engraved silver tray to the winners.

Following an extremely close 4BBB contest, the winners were Graeme Ryan and Peter Gompertz with 43 points. As a result, Graeme and Peter share the honour (6 months each) of displaying the smaller silver tray in their living rooms. This victory followed Peter's win last year with Cliff George. The winners claimed the trophy on a countback from John Surridge and Glenys Durrant. In all, 6 of the 12 pairs produced scores of 40, or better, to make for a most exciting finish.

Other prize winners on the day were Graeme Harrison and Peter Swan (24 pts, best outward nine), Paul Burgess and Max Findlay (23 pts, best inward nine), Sandra McCaw (Nearest the Pin) and Jim Black (Straightest Drive).

Prior to the buffet dinner, Paul Burgess, GSA Club Historians Chairman, showed the group an historic painting, now purchased by Woodlands GC, of a view of the course, circa 1932, which came to light through a chance sighting by a Woodlands staff member on Ebay. It was fortuitous indeed for the Club, given its centenary year commences 1 July 2013.

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FOR THE DIARY

29th July

Presidents Trophy at
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

26th August

Dinner at
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

14th October

Golf Historians at
Woodlands Golf Club

22nd November

AGHS Hickories at
Carnarvon Golf Club NSW



Ranald MacDonald, Geoff Vincent, John Snell and Peter Thomson

Dinner at Kingston Heath

by Tony McLean

Some 87 members and guests attended Kingston Heath Golf Club for a dinner on April 29 to enjoy the delights of a Chef Warwick Hili menu, together with a most entertaining address from Ranald MacDonald AO.

Also present was the Patron of the Golf Society, Peter Thomson AO, CBE and his wife Mary, one of our founding fathers, John Snell, with his wife Donna, and Muriel Lawrence, widow of Don Lawrence.

Our guest speaker, Ranald, as well as having a wide background of business and media contacts, is also an accomplished golfer having been Club Champion at Royal Melbourne Golf Club and playing for several years in the club's Pennant team.

He still plays off a single figure handicap, and is now a member of The National, Flinders and Little Frankston.

Ranald spoke of his life and times with such legendary figures as Tony Charlton, Peter Thomson, Seve Ballasteros, Ted Ball and many others.

He related how he introduced Tony Charlton, his guest last year at the GSA Woodlands Golf Club dinner, simply as 'a great Australian' and that Tony's granddaughter, Jo, a former Club Champion at Metropolitan Golf Club, was currently captaining the Victorian Womens' team in Hobart.

He also made mention of Don Lawrence, a former president of the Golf Society, and a great golf, and tennis, writer for The Age, recalling

the story of how Don was the person who first named Jack Nicklaus the 'Golden Bear' and how, on Don's death, Nicklaus phoned Don's widow, Muriel, to pass on condolences from the 'Olden Bear'.

But, most interestingly, our guest speaker spoke very fondly of his personal travels and experiences with Peter Thomson and his wife, Mary. The dinner guests were fascinated to know that Peter, at 21, played his first Open and came 6th. He then came 2nd, 2nd (to Ben Hogan), 1st, 1st, 1st, 2nd (to Bobby Locke), then 1st again. He went on to win 19 different national open championships.

We thank Ranald for a very special, and entertaining, address.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to

**Doug Francis, Mark Brasher, Elizabeth Day, Leon Daphne,
David Hewitt and John Dillon**

Profound apologies for an error in
The Long Game issue # 44
where Vale Mark Wade
was headlined as 'Mark Ward'.

No excuses – we got it wrong. Ed.

Letter to the Editor

by Michael Sheret

In January 2010 The Long Game published an article by John Scarth (Lovell) under the heading Australia's Oldest Golf Course. The article claimed that comprehensive research showed that, during the time that Alexander Maconochie was Superintendent of the penal settlement on Norfolk Island, convicts laid out a golf course at Point Hunter between 1840 and 1843. Currently the Norfolk Island Golf Club plays at Point Hunter, and the article claims that they play on the same layout as the convicts laid out.

Unfortunately, for such a new and important discovery, the article was published without describing the research process or citing references to sources of evidence for the claims made. When I decided to check the references, the author sent me the seven references given to the editor of *The Long Game* on 18 April 2010. I have checked these references carefully and had my work independently checked. Unfortunately, while the references provide general background on Norfolk Island, they provide no evidence that there was a golf course at Point Hunter mid-nineteenth century. The reference most likely to be useful was the name of the Site Manager of the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (which encompasses Point Hunter). When I contacted the then current Site Manager in February 2012, he made it clear that KAVHA was unable to provide me with any evidence to support the claims made in *The Long Game*.

In addition to checking the seven references submitted to the editor, I have consulted numerous other likely sources, and none of these has been able to provide any evidence. These include prisoner narratives, notably those of Aaron Price and James (Stout) Porter, held in manuscript form in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Two other important sources consulted are: *Elizabeth Robertson's Diary: Norfolk Island 1845*, edited by Merval Hoare (1989); *Twelve Months on Norfolk Island* by an Officer of the Line, published in the 1847 edition of the *United Service Magazine*, pp 169-199. I have also contacted the Norfolk Island Museum and the Norfolk Island Golf Club, and they have no evidence. An established academic in the United Kingdom has been consulted as an expert on the penal settlements on Norfolk Island. His research has given him extensive knowledge of prison records and convict narratives. He has seen no evidence of a mid-nineteenth century golf course on Norfolk Island. The above are only some of the possible sources I have examined.

Research is said to be continuing by the author of the January 2010 article and that evidence for a mid-nineteenth century golf course at Point Hunter may be published sometime in the future. As time marches on and three and half years after the original claim was published, the status of the claim for Point Hunter remains that of a **claim unsupported by any published evidence**, and it seems increasingly unlikely that its status will ever change.

If evidence is ever published it will be an important chapter in Australian golf history, especially given the involvement of Alexander Maconochie, a man of many parts and a towering figure in nineteenth century penal reform. I shall be delighted to have my deep scepticism proved unjustified.

Readers may ask why I have asked to have this letter published in *The Long Game*. There are two reasons. Firstly, as an amateur golf historian it is my belief that what is reported as historical fact should indeed be historical fact. Secondly, since the article in *The Long Game* was published the claim for the Point Hunter golf course has been widely distributed and a great many people must now think it is fact. I know that the claim appears prominently on the home page of the Norfolk Island Golf Club and was reported in *Australian Golf Digest* (October 2011) and *Inside Golf* (October 2012). In all three of the aforesaid publications the Golf Society of Australia's name is used, presumably to add gravitas to the claim. In the light of all this I believe that the Golf Society of Australia made a mistake in publishing the January 2010 article **without references** and needs to think seriously about its reputation in relation to one of its primary objectives, as it appears in *The Long Game*, namely "to research and preserve the history of golf in Australia".

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 have missed a dinner 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



Ian Rennick to be GSA Life Member

At the last Annual General Meeting it was resolved to elect Ian Rennick, immediate Past President, as a Life Member of our Society.

Having started playing golf at Kyneton where his grandfather was Secretary for 39 years, Ian has been a member of Kew Golf Club for over 50 years. During this time he was on the Committee for 11 years and held the posts of Treasurer, Secretary and Captain for 3 years in each instance.

In 1996 Ian was elected a Life Member and a couple of years later became Chairman of the Kew Golf Club Heritage Committee. Having been invited to join the Golf Society in 1984 Ian served on the Committee for 3 years in the late 1980s.

In 2004 Ian became Co-ordinator of the Golf Club Historian sub-committee and then rejoined the Committee in 2005. He was then Treasurer for 2 years and President for 4. His nomination for life membership was approved nem con.

Woodlands Golf Club Painting Found on ebay

By Paul Burgess, Convener of the Woodlands G. C. Heritage Group



As a result of the observant eye of staff member, Louise Cooper, the Club has acquired a 1932 landscape oil painting of Woodlands Golf Club.

Painted by Nellie Govett (1882-1965), a Victorian artist, it depicts a scene of either a green, or tee, protected by fences, overshadowed by two huge trees with the Dandenong Ranges in the far background and a glimpse of what is apparently a building within the Mayfield homestead, on which the course was established in 1913.

More research needs to be done but first thoughts are it could be from the vicinity of the 14th Green, or 7th tee, as a glimpse of the Dandenongs can still be seen from that area today. Looking in that direction, the former homestead would have been situated to the left, or towards the northeast, although no large trees are extant in that area now.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the painting is the post and wire fences, or remnants of such, which are so clearly identifiable.

Before the Club purchased the land and only leased a portion of the Mayfield estate, a condition of occupancy was that cattle could roam over the whole property. It was necessary therefore, for the Committee to erect fences around tees and greens. We have sketches by Hunter Rogers, son of founding member George Rogers, showing these protective fences which helps to confirm the authenticity of the painting. It was a unique aspect of the Club's early days, and one not known to have happened very often with most new courses located on their own freehold land.

Immediately the Heritage Group became aware of this exciting find a recommendation was made to Captain Lindsay Brown to acquire the painting which was quickly endorsed. Woodlands now has a most interesting item of a scene reflecting how part of its course appeared eighty years ago in 1932.

The Committee is to be complimented on its swift action to purchase this valuable piece of golfing memorabilia for the Club to display in its clubhouse for the enjoyment of members.

The Golf Ball, Its Size and Weight – A Brief History

by Peter Saverman

In 1920 the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews proposed that golf balls should be of a standard weight, 1.62 ounces, and 1.62 inches in diameter. At that time a full sized 'Floater' weighed 1.39 ounces and was 1.70 inches in diameter, while a small 29 dwt weighed 1.56 ounces, was 1.62 inches in diameter, and a small 31 dwt weighed 1.67 ounces, with the same diameter. A real compromise would have been 1.53 ounces and 1.66 inches in diameter.

From the 1st May 1921 the USGA and the R&A specified that the ball should be 'not greater than 1.62 ounces (29.5 dwt in the 'old world') and not less than 1.62 inches in diameter. The actual size was not standardised but the 1.62/1.62 specification remained in force with the R&A until 1990.

The 'Floater' was doomed, being outside these guidelines, but some players suggested that a lighter ball, perhaps 1.52 ounces, might be desirable. The response was that all accurate hitters played with a ball 1.68 inches in diameter.

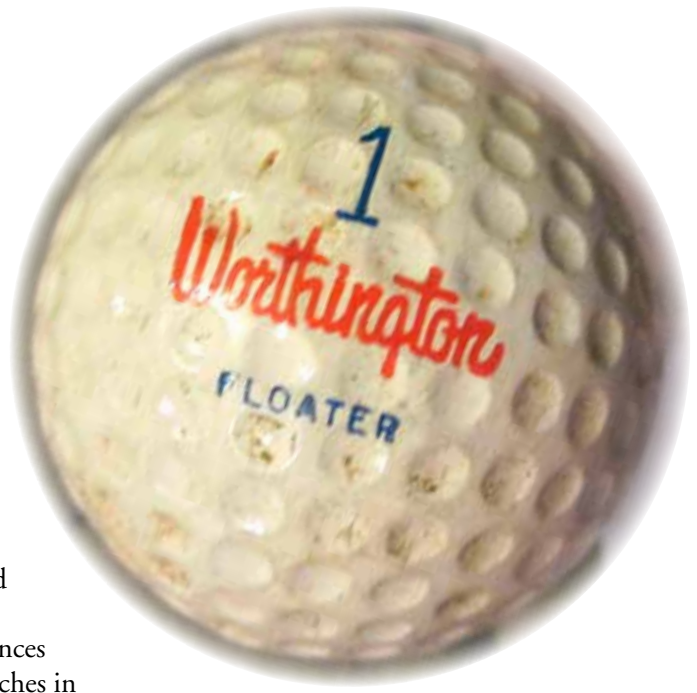
From the 1st June 1925 the USGA specified that the ball be no heavier than 1.55 ounces and no greater diameter than 1.66 inches on the grounds that "the object is to reduce the power of the ball in driving".

From the 1st of January 1931 the USGA specified a 'larger and lighter ball' not heavier than 1.55 ounces and not less than 1.68 inches in diameter, but then in 1932 they specified the same size ball but heavier at 1.62 ounces (29.5 dwt).

In 1961 the R&A had requested various Golf Unions around the world, including South Africa and Australia, to try out the 1.68 diameter ball and in February 1962 the South African Golf Union responded that they favoured the smaller 1.62 diameter ball.

In May 1962 the R&A pronounced that there would be no change to the 1.62/1.62 specification but in 1968 they then agreed that the 1.68/1.62 ball could be used in all PGA events except The Open.

On 1st January 1990 the R&A fell into line with the USGA and the 1.68/1.62 ball became the standard world wide that pertains to this day.



Errant Golfers Be Very, Very, Aware

On a recent trip to America to attend The Masters, and play a little golf, Dick Kirby, Hon. Treasurer, ventured on to the Turtle Point golf course.

He had just put a Pro V 1 ball off the tee, and into the water, when his 'mulligan', another Pro V 1, fetched up alongside a resident alligator. Play it as it lies? Don't think so. Quite spoilt his day!



True Links - by George Peper and Malcolm Campbell

by Peter Gompertz

I first played golf while at College in Portsmouth, England, and a mere 3 weeks later I was posted to work in Scotland for 6 months where I took to the game like a fish to water.

It was another 23 years before I set foot on a true links course when I joined Royal North Devon, Westward Ho! birthplace of 5 times Open Champion J H Taylor. Perhaps because I am a slow learner it was another 8 years before I had my 'road to Damascus' moment which was actually on the 14th tee at Hillside on England's 'Golf Coast', next door to Royal Birkdale. As I drove the ball up the fairway I let out such an audible grunt of recognition that my playing partner, Dick Donovan, assumed that I had hurt my back. From that day to this I have actively sought out the opportunity to play on links courses and now George Peper (former editor of *Golf Magazine*) and Malcolm Campbell (former editor of *Golf Monthly*) have joined forces to produce *True Links*, 'an illustrated guide to the glories of the world's 246 links courses'; a sort of bucket list for golfers like me who enjoy playing golf in force 8 gales.

Actually it is much more than a bucket list. Starting with the Old Course at St Andrews, which they describe as 'the Crucible', our former editors put together a history of links golf, its creators and supporters, and they describe how the earliest courses were not designed – they simply evolved, often over marginal land, close to the sea, with little agricultural use.

In order to define what is, and what isn't, a links course, we are treated to descriptions of inland golf courses, some of them heathland, which were laid out in the early 20th century to cater for the upsurge in interest by golfers, who had to work for a living close to centres of population, well away from the seaside. They are even prepared to take a shot at property developers who, having control of a large tract of land and the necessary planning permits, build a series of ugly houses around a golf course which they then refer to as 'links'; and they are not backward in opining that Augusta's greens are shorn to within a millimetre of death during four rounds of The Masters leading to many golfers wanting to play on the colour of the grass rather than its traditional suitability.

Yes, George and Malcolm are a little controversial but as they are claiming that less than 1% of the world's over 30,000 golf courses are 'true links' they have to marshal a strong array of reasons for why one course is a links and others are not. This they do with intelligence, insights and humour. From the 'Crucible' they move, alphabetically, to a group of 25 courses they call the 'Icons', followed by 20 'Exotics' and 19 'Moderns'. Presumably the remaining 181 courses could be referred to as the 'Also Rans' but they resist that. All 246 are however, listed by country at the back of the book together with their founding date and known designer/ re-designer, and website if they have one.

Have I played them all? No, not yet, but I have played enough of them to understand the concept of links golf. No doubt where two, or more, golfers are gathered together in a golf clubhouse, heated discussions will take place and probably remain unresolved until all golfers have at least tried to play a links course in what was referred to in 1881 at Westward Ho! as a 'gale of wind', by way of explaining a higher than usual winning score.

True Links is a masterpiece of a book, wonderfully illustrated with photographs principally taken by Iain Lowe, and with a Foreword by Tom Watson which starts with "I love links golf – but it wasn't love at first sight", which is sort of where this piece started. It is 300 pages of sheer joy, and I commend it to you.

True Links retails for US\$40 plus p&p.
To obtain a copy please email
June Gibbons on june@workman.com





Al Howard with his 100th birthday cake, in the shape of the 3rd green on the Tasmania golf course. The course was designed by Al Howard. On the screen is the 3rd tee of the signature hole.

Al Howard – still going strong

On your behalf, the Committee sent a birthday card to Al Howard to celebrate his 100th birthday on the 8th of May last.

Al is in a Nursing Home in Sydney having a rest after a full working life of competitive golf and course design. It is in his honour, and for his Trophy, that the GSA and The Australian Golf Heritage Society compete annually with hickory sticks. Al was visited by PGA Chairman Mark Gibson, and CEO Brian Thorburn, who presented him with a 100 year old bottle of scotch.

HELP WANTED

Mungo Park, a descendant of Willie Park, one of Scotland's early and famous golfers, is seeking information on the son of club and ball maker, Walter Dunn Day of Musselburgh.

His son's name was Christopher Smith Day, also a club and ball maker, who allegedly arrived in Adelaide in 1901 and died on 6th November 1913. He had married Elspeth (Elsie) Laing and there was a daughter, Chrissie.

Anyone who can help please contact Mungo on mail@mungo-park.co.uk

Society Merchandise

Society ties, visors, ball markers and pins are available for purchase at all Society functions.

If you would like to obtain any of our logo items between functions please contact Peter Swan, whose number is in the members' handbook.





Annual Hickory Championships at Kingston Heath

by Tony McLean

Contestants ready to do battle

The well-presented Kingston Heath golf course was once again the meeting place for our group of dedicated hickory golfers on Sunday 22 April 2013.

Twelve in number faced the starter for a 10-hole event, following a 12 noon lunchtime snack.

Among the starters, we were pleased to welcome two very keen golf historians, and writers, in Michael Sheret from Sydney and Brendan Moloney.

The eventual winner of the Men's event was one of our newest members, Martin Maguire, from Commonwealth GC. Martin had an extremely creditable 22 points for the 10 holes and was duly presented with the Frank Shepherd Trophy. Martin owns a collection of hickories and we trust he maintains a keen interest in future GSA hickory days. The Ladies winner was Jean Gilbert, who expressed her thanks on being presented with the Burtta Cheney Trophy by President Geoff Vincent.

To round out the day, the longest drive was won by Max Findlay (mens) and Paula Gompertz (ladies) and Nearest the Pin by Tony McLean



2013 Hickory Winners

(mens) and Paula Gompertz (ladies). Well done to Paula.

Many thanks to Max Findlay for, once again, supplying sets of hickories to those players who required them.

Thanks also go to Cliff George for his kind offer to undertake any repairs required to the hickories, which constitute an integral part of the above trophies.

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.