

# THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 57, JUNE 2016



## Al Howard Trophy Match

By Max Findlay

*The annual match for Al Howard bragging rights against our NSW friends, at The Australian Golf Heritage Society, took place at Sandhurst Golf Course under a sunny sky with quite a strong wind.*

The wind slowly abated but the sun kept shining, especially on the GSA team. I am pleased to report that the Golf Society of Australia defeated The Australian Golf Heritage Society 10 holes up thanks to Charles Wilkins having one of those days.

### GSA

Mango Maguire – 1 up  
Cliff George – 1 up  
Peter Gompertz – 2 down  
Charles Wilkins – 10 up  
Paul Burgess – square  
Max Findlay – square  
Richard Kirby – 2 up

### AGHS

Justin Ryan  
Henry Patterson  
Ross Howard  
Andrew Wilson  
Tom Moore  
Geoff Vincent  
Neil Walker



*Al Howard Trophy*

Because the AGHS were two players short the GSA lent them two Victorian gentlemen – Geoff Vincent and Neil Walker. No real damage was done – the players we lent being square and 2 down.

Presentations were held in the Clubhouse with results favouring GSA. The contest was very even in most matches.

It was a great day's golf and we hope that we have a bigger turn up next year in NSW.

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## FOR THE DIARY

### 8th August

Presidents' Trophy at  
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

### 12th September

Dinner at  
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

### 10th October

Historians Forum at  
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

### 16th October

Hickory Championships at  
Kingston Heath Golf Club

# A History of Early Golf in Britain

by Ian Rennick

*At the Historians meeting at Kingston Heath in June I mentioned that it was very important to check facts before writing about them. This was highlighted due to differences in opinion of the location of where golf was first played in Melbourne. In “The Australian Golfer”, written in 1906, it was stated that golf was first played in Melbourne in the 1850’s “near the Flagstaff”. References to this have been quoted in many golf histories written in the past one hundred years. The difference is that the term ‘near the Flagstaff’ has been replaced by ‘at Flagstaff Gardens’. The original reference, written so long ago referred to an area north of the Melbourne township which consisted of open paddocks which is now called West Melbourne or Docklands.*

In 1850, all sport in Melbourne was played to the west of Spencer Street extending north over an area which could be called ‘near the Flagstaff’. To describe this area in today’s terms as being part of the Flagstaff Gardens is not correct because Flagstaff Gardens is just a small area, away to the east.

I mention this only to show how facts, dates and locations can be altered over a period of time. I first became interested in golf history when I read about early golf in Scotland and England. Over the years, details of these two events have never been queried so it was thought that they must have been correct.

Golf was first mentioned in 1424 when the Scottish Parliament forbade the playing of football and golf because it interfered with the practice of archery. I think that must be correct as it was an Act of Parliament.

The second date was 1567 and it was stated that Mary, Queen of Scots played golf at Seton Palace near Edinburgh. A recent article written by English golf historians now claims that there is great doubt that Mary ever played golf, and certainly did not in 1567.

In the 15th and 16th centuries Scotland, England and France were continually at war. France usually sided with Scotland against England, because they were Catholic and England was Protestant. There was continual bickering between Scotland and England on who should be the monarch. Scotland also had other troubles as there was frequent fighting between the clans.

The story about Mary playing golf was sourced from a hand written document which stated she played golf two days after her husband Lord Darnley was murdered. The murder of Mary’s husband, and the events surrounding the murder, had brought golf to the attention to golf historians

At Mary’s trial a document was prepared by Mary’s enemies to demonstrate her complicity in the murder of her husband Lord Darnley.





Mary, Queen of Scots is one of the most fascinating, and controversial, monarchs of the 16th century. At one time she claimed the crowns of four nations – Scotland, France, England and Ireland. Mary was born in 1543 the daughter of the Scottish King James V and Mary of Guise who was born in France. The King died 5 days after Mary's birth and she became heir to the English throne as her two older brothers had died. At that time the Queen of England was Elizabeth 1 ( Mary's cousin) who did not have any children. Because of the continual threat of Mary being killed it was decided in 1548 to send her to France, her mother's homeland. She was then aged 5. In France she was educated, and treated, like a Queen. In 1558 at the age of 15 she was married to The Dauphin, the son and heir of the King of France. He was 14 and in poor health. The French King died in 1559 and Mary, aged 16, became Queen of France. In 1560 Mary's mother died and a year later The Dauphin, (her husband died). She was a widow at the age of 17.

In 1561 she returned to Scotland and was advised to marry. She married Lord Darnley, her cousin, described as weak, vain and unstable; he was not a popular choice for many Scots. Five years later in June 1566, she gave birth to a son who eventually became King James 1 of England, and King James VI of Scotland.

In 1567 Lord Darnley was strangled. Mary was accused of having arranged his death and was held in Lochleven Castle where she became ill; she was forced to sign a document abdicating the Scottish crown in favour of her infant son. She married again, but a year later she fled to England to seek help from Queen Elizabeth who then held her captive for 19 years. She was eventually tried for the death of her husband, Lord Darnley, part of the evidence at the trial being a document, to discredit her, stating that she played 'Pall-Mall and golf' at Seton Palace two days after Darnley's murder. This document has been used ever since to link her to golf. She was executed a year later. (1587) aged 44. In 1599 Elizabeth died and Mary's son, James became the King of England.

What is the likelihood of Mary playing golf? It has been established that golf was being played in Scotland when Mary was born. It is recorded that her father had purchased golf balls and clubs. When she went to live in France she may have played 'Pall-Mall' which is a 'golf like' sport. On her return to Scotland in 1561 it was recorded that she spent time playing archery, billiards, cards, dice, reading, music and dancing. There is no mention of golf.

Over the past two hundred year's comments about her golfing have grown and been exaggerated. Her father has been mentioned as teaching her golf, but that is extremely unlikely as she was only 5 days old when he died! It has been suggested that the St Andrews course was constructed because she wished to play golf when she visited.

There are twenty golf courses in Scotland that now state that she played there! She has been described as an 'avid golfer', a 'talented golfer' and 'a golf fanatic' and 'the first women to have played golf regularly'. There is also a claim that she taught her son to play but this is cannot be true as the last time she saw him he was ten months old.

Mary's opportunities to play golf in Scotland were extremely limited. Other than the first five years of her life, Mary lived in Scotland for only 7 years (1561- 1568) and a brief period between her return from France and her exile in England. Despite the many contemporary references to her playing golf and the many references to her playing other sports the only reference to her playing golf was a document aimed at discrediting her.

The words 'Pall Mall' I have used a number of times. Pall-Mall is French game with mallet and ball, the name of a sport played in France in the 16th century, similar to croquet and golf. The original Pall-Mall court in London was near St James Palace and is now the road from Trafalgar Square to Buckingham Palace, which most of us have probably walked down.

Mary has been named playing Pall-Mall when she was living in France; this could have been mistaken for her playing golf. Also she has been given the credit for the word caddie because while in France she would have had a 'cadet' (in France a younger son of a noble family) carrying her Pall-Mall stick while playing, and the term 'Caddie was introduced by her when she returned to England, which she did not do.

When did golf come to England? The answer is no one knows. Mary's father and son played golf, and when her son became King of England he came to London with the Scottish members of court which included their servants and household officers totalling several thousand. In 1604 William Mayne was appointed Royal Club maker and featheries were imported from Holland. It is assumed that golf was played near London but the first real evidence was in 1766 when the Goff Club Assembly House in Blackheath was opened. This was the start of Royal Blackheath Golf Club but that is another story.

## Welcome to New members

Michael Church, Valma Hamilton,  
Jon Hickman and Leanne Vasallo



## An evening with Richard Macafee

by Peter Coddington

*Some sixty plus members, and guests, attended Commonwealth Golf Club for dinner in early April, after which we were entertained by Richard Macafee. Richard is a very successful investment banker and low handicap golfer, an enviable combination.*

He is also a member at Kingston Heath Golf Club and in 2004 he, and fellow member Adam Porker who has since turned pro, represented Kingston Heath, and Australia, in the World Club Championship at the Nine Bridges Golf Club in Korea; the second running of this prestigious event. They finished ahead of Los Angeles Golf Club and Sunningdale Golf Club from the UK. Richard has also represented Victoria several times in inter state matches.

We were entertained with a witty, erudite and very personal, run down of what Richard likes, and dislikes, about some of the top courses that he has played during which he probably upset a few listeners but delighted many; he let us know that he does not care for 'option strategies' and doesn't like 'signature' holes, with probably similar reactions. Some holes that featured in this part of his talk included the 3rd at Oakmont, the 16th at The Australian, the 6th on the Nationals Ocean course, and the 18th at Moonah links, but he did admit to enjoying the risk reward challenges of the 3rd at Kingston Heath, the 6th on Royal Melbourne's West Course, the 3rd at Barnbougle, Commonwealths 16th and the 2nd at Lost Farm. He described some of the above as either 'ugly' good holes or 'pretty' crap holes. He challenged his audience with his opinion that the 'sandbelt' is overrated and stated that rating golf courses from 50th to 100th is dangerous. Richard also questioned if Ellerston, the Packer private in NSW course should be rated by *GolfWorld* (I raised the same question with *Golf Magazine* in 2005 when they rated Loch Lomond Golf Course 66th in the World top 100; what is the point of rating a golf course that is not available, for a fee, to ordinary golfers?).

After answering several questions from a stirred up audience Richard concluded his address by offering a shortlist of courses that everyone should play, at least once; North Berwick (West), Woking, Sunningdale, West Sussex, The New Zealand (in Surrey, UK), and RACV Healesville. Oh well, three done, three to go.

## Royal Park Golf Club

by 'LH' Coburg Leader 5 November 1904

*A 1904 article from the Coburg Leader newspaper some 'cheeky' observations of golfers on the links. Some might still be true 112 years later.*

*NB: A number of Royal Park members joined with Essendon and Moreland to form Northern in 1912.*

This club, although very young, already has more than 200 members the number is steadily increasing. The game has evidently caught on. A clubhouse is to be built and tennis courts and croquet lawns are to be added. The royal and ancient game of golf rapidly gains a hold on one.

It is played in the open, and anyone can join; young men and maidens, old men and children. The youthful enthusiast can do a burst against time for the whole round of eighteen holes with his caddie kept going ahead like a pilot engine before a fast special. If youth has been left behind and years have added to your tonnage, you can do half the distance and enjoy yourself as much, or more.

You can play a lone hand and practice your shots. You can join a "foursome" and practice patience when your partner plays the deuce with your chances. You can do a deal of flirting with a pretty partner in a "twosome." There is ample room for competition; the splendid "drive" which sends the little ball skimming through the air like a swallow, does not always win the hole; the less showy opponent may be better at the approach and the putting. To clear a hazard with success needs judgment, and execution.

The measured round of the links is four and a half miles. Even the best of players will make some erratic strokes, so that the round will be nearer six miles; in all, not a bad afternoon's walk. The necessary equipment is not expensive.

On Saturday afternoons you will find quite a crowd out on these bright breezy uplands, and watching the players affords amusement. All the little expeditions most appropriately start on their trips 'across Australia' from the cairn marking the starting place of the Burke and Wills expedition. This club, although very young, already has more than 200 members the number is steadily increasing.

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*Burke and Wills party set off from Royal Park golf Club*

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On Saturday afternoons you will find quite a crowd out on these bright breezy uplands, and watching the players affords amusement. All the little expeditions most appropriately start on their trips across Australia from the cairn marking the starting place of the Burke and Wills expedition.

There are lots of ladies about, some armed and ready for the game while others are friends, or visitors. Here comes a little lady whose curls are grey but glossy yet. Time has more than rounded the once trim and still jaunty figure. Yet, with that strange lack of tact sometimes found among women, she wears the short tight fitting frock which looks so shapely on slim seventeen.

Then comes a stalwart June, on whose face one sees that a sense of duty, and not anticipation of pleasure, is responsible for her being among the players on the green. Her play, like her walk, is very deliberate, and she never hits very far at a time but she wanders "many a weary-foot", and how gratefully she must yield to a comfortable and easy armchair, when she gets home.

Then comes pretty Hebe, with an escort of admiring youths. Her hat is studied simplicity and as becoming as she well knows it is. The pretty girl is rarely unaware of her charms. Her style of play is "you press the button, we do the rest." She never dreams of looking to see where her ball goes; the escort will do all the scouting while she chatters and enjoys herself.

Hebe's hits are sometimes erratic evidently, for when she is on the strike, the escort falls to the rear in support.

Then there is the golf lunatic who fails to call out the warning ball; but hits as hard as he can, and sometimes narrowly misses killing some unoffending, and unwarned player, or looker-on. These thoughtless players are a terror. Of course, there is the army of steady players who never improve, and never seem even to try by watching those who can play well. They generally play with a ball innocent of paint; but as they rarely do more than trundle the ball a few yards, it is not of much consequence whether the ball be black or white.

The hazard, popularly known as Hades, is often full of unhappy mortals searching for the lost. A clever American has, it is said, invented a ball that squeaks when lost. However that may be, only the players are vocal at present.

But the greatest trial of all is that imperishable nuisance, the small boy. They hop about like birds of prey at all the spots where a ball may be lost, and very frequently is. If the ground is soft they quite accidentally walk on the ball and press it into the ground, pending a convenient opportunity for removal.

When the ground is hard and you are just starting after your ball from the teeing place, some young urchin will drop a handkerchief on it, and innocently pick up both as he moves on. He will even come up, and pretend to aid you in your search, rendering it necessary to keep one eye steadily on him.

He will play leap frog on the green you are playing up to; and when you call out 'fore' will spread himself about just sufficiently for you to feel sure that you will most probably hit him. But it is a public park, after all, and no one really wants to seriously hurt the young nuisance. As summer develops, the increasing heat and lengthening grass will probably stop the game for a time, and perhaps next year we may have some decent putting greens, for at present a successful putt of more than six feet is more of a fluke than anything else.

## Donation of books, magazines and research papers

*by John Lovell*

*Golf Historian John Lovell has donated 96 golf books, including several club histories, significant golf magazines, and various research papers, to the GSA.*

To thank John, our President, Geoff Vincent hosted a lunch at Kingston Heath Golf Club for John, and your Committee. When the GSA has space in Golf Australia's permanent premises it is anticipated that the books will be shelved and available to members, and other interested parties, for research purposes. On our way out a couple of committee members took advantage of the World Cup of Golf (aka Canada Cup) being on display to take a selfie.



*The Committee with John Lovell*

# Golf Historians at Heidelberg Golf Club

by Kim Hastie

*A good group of GSA members, and club locals, attended the year's first Historians Forum at Heidelberg Golf Club.*

GSA President Geoff Vincent welcomed everyone and gave a brief talk on the role of the Golf Society, outlining its primary objectives such as collating, and recording, the history of golf in Australia, bringing society members together to enjoy social golf days and dinners, conducting Historian's Forums and maintaining a memorabilia display at the MCG.

The first three presenters were members of Heidelberg's Heritage Committee.

Neil Walker, GSA member, was the first to speak giving a brief outline of Heidelberg's origins. In 1926 when Yarra Yarra GC moved to the Sandbelt, a small group of members voted against this move deciding to remain north of the river and establish a new golf course, buying land at Lower Plenty.

The main part of his presentation was a short heritage film; it didn't have any audio, so Neil supplied some notes along with informative commentary; despite the age of the film it was in very good condition.

The film gave us a real insight into the lifestyle of the original members; the stylish clothing worn by the men and women, and the substantial cars they drove seem to indicate they were a group with significant wealth and influence.

The Club was officially opened on 23rd June 1928 by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Mr Stanley Bruce. This part of the film showed Bruce arriving to open the first 12 holes of the course.

It was really quite special to see this truly wonderful footage, it was thoroughly enjoyed, and recognised by all, as a significant historical piece.

The second speaker was long-time Club member, Norm Shearer.

In his "Welcome to the Hills of Heidelberg" Norm gave a personal account of the changes down the years, his affection was obvious but he was quick to point out that he appreciates the tricks and toughness that remain to this day.

The course opened in 1928 at Lower Plenty, half way between Heidelberg and Eltham, and was set out in a neighbourhood of rural properties with unmade roads, a majority of the site being unused bushland.

The 18 holes known as the Old Course came into play in 1931 with the first 9 holes a loose figure of eight formation running mainly up and down hill, with the second 9 running out to the highest point of the property and returning to the clubhouse. The course saw little change for 30 years up to 1966; it was scenic golf but also a feat of physical endurance.

The Board commissioned changes to reduce the number of direct uphill holes and allowed the conversion of the surrounding bush for golf.

The new layout required levelling of fairways to reduce uneven stances, and the result was basically the current course experiencing little change over 40 years; but there were still 4 or 5 holes with significant uphill aspects.

Other changes included the implementation of a water management plan; large dams were built and Santa Ana Couch grass was introduced.

The Clubhouse was refurbished in 1997 with a plan to have the current 4th as the final hole but the long Par 5 uphill was deemed too severe as a final hole, although it would have been wonderful viewing from the clubhouse.

Recent improvements have included the replacement of Pines and Cypresses with indigenous trees.

Jan Balgowan, our third presenter spoke of Don Walker, a promising young professional golfer in Victoria in the 1930's and his connection to Heidelberg.

There is an honour board in the clubhouse for the Don Walker Memorial Purse presented to the Heidelberg Golf club Board by the PGA in 1949.

Don was born in Wonthaggi and moved to Cheltenham with his family in 1919.

His father died young, and to earn money Don caddied at Kingston Heath. Leaving school at 14 he started studying to become a draftsman.





George Naismith was the Pro at Kingston Heath and when George accepted the position at Riversdale he persuaded Don to follow, as his trainee.

When in 1935 Ted Naismith resigned as Heidelberg professional, George Naismith had no hesitation in recommending Don Walker for that position; Don had been a trainee for 3 years by this time.

Don Walker remained at Heidelberg for 6 years competing in many major competitions such as the Victorian and Australian Opens. He also played numerous exhibition matches against well-known players such as Norman Von Nida, Joe Kirkwood and Will Hagen.

Don enlisted in the RAAF on July the 20th 1941, undergoing training in Victoria, NSW, and South Australia, becoming a flight sergeant. He was seconded to 235 squadron but while flying a Beaufighter on a reconnaissance mission over Norway coast contact with his plane was lost after it left Scottish air space.

Many Australian pro golfers enlisted in WW2 but Don Walker was the only one to lose his life.

Gary Player visited Australia in 1971 and was a target of vigorous anti-apartheid protests. To avoid publicity he came to Heidelberg to practice with Von Nida.

Having previously played there in March 1939 Gary with partner Eric Cremin won an exhibition match against Naismith and Walker.

In Jan's notes for her speech there were many newspaper extracts from the Sporting Globe, the Australasian and the Argus; all giving high praise to this fine young man. The extracts cover all aspects of his golf life from his early trainee days through to his professional playing days and on to his successful teaching career.

On display were some of Don Clubs, a part of Heidelberg's collection. Murray Cropley from Latrobe GC was the meetings final speaker.

Murray's talk was an insight into Latrobe's newly formed Heritage Committee. Latrobe will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2023 and one of the projects will be to update the clubs history "The Dream Comes True", written by Gary Mansfield for the clubs 50th anniversary.

The Latrobe Board approved the establishment of a Heritage sub-Committee to undertake all associated activities, gathering, preserving, maintaining and displaying club historical artefacts, and approved planning for the update of the club history.

Approval was also given to allocate a room for the proposed committee to conduct their work

Murray went on to outline what they want to achieve and the many tasks ahead of them such as obtaining physical storage and working facilities, classification of all material, what will the Subcommittee consider, determine a budget with the possible use of professional services, physically storing documents and objects etc., acquire good computer facilities. The mostly likely database application will be Mosaic.

Murray acknowledged the significant assistance he has received from GSA members Moira Drew (RM) and Ian Rennick (Kew).

Club members have been kept well informed with e-newsletter articles.

GSA Curator Cliff George presented two hickory clubs. The first had a stainless steel head, hand forged in Australia by the Stirling Golf Co. Little is known about the maker.

The second club was an A.G Spalding "Crescent" series smooth faced niblick made in Britain c 1900. An interesting feature of this club is the weight of the head at 335gms.



Paul Burgess, GSA member, produced a lovely book about golf memorabilia entitled *Miller's Golf Memorabilia* by Sarah Fabian Baddiel. As it is quite comprehensive he suggested that it is worth having a look at.

Paul also gave us an update on his research into club makers Himmerman and Kirk.

Ian Rennick promoted the recent reproduction, and publication, of *The Australian Golfer* by Dan Soutar, advising of its importance as an historical reference, and how to purchase it.

Convenor Kim Hastie thanked the speakers for their time and interesting presentations, all attendees, and Heidelberg GC for hosting the day.



*Muriel Lawrence is presenting the Don Lawrence Trophy to Richard Kirby and Max Findlay*

## Don Lawrence Trophy at Woodlands Golf Club

*by Max Findley*

*It was a wonderful day - 27 players, 26 degrees, fairways and greens in excellent condition and the winners were:*

Winners of the Don Lawrence Trophy were Richard Kirby and Max Findlay - 47 points

2nd Heather Scales and Virginia Gorrell - 44 points

3th Geoff Vincent and Max Findlay - 43 points  
(Max had two partners because of uneven numbers)

Front nine winners - Bill Young and Colin White - 23 points

Back nine winners - Heather Scales and Virginia Gorrell - 23 points

Secret nine - Val and Cliff Mitchell - 22 points

Nearest the pin - 11th hole - Bill Young

Nearest the pin - 17th hole - Max Findlay.



## Vale Rosemary Wakeham

*Our Society has lost a long serving Life Member.*

Rosemary played 31 consecutive seasons of Pennant for the Victoria Golf Club, was a member of 10 winning senior teams and then moved into an administrative role as Associates Captain for three years from 1978; at the same time she became a committee member of Women's Golf Victoria with a strong interest in bringing on the younger players. Rosemary was elected President of Women's Golf Victoria in 1990 and served on the national body, being non-playing Captain and a Selector of Australian teams.

In 1993, in recognition of her contribution, on and off the course, Rosemary was elected to Life membership of the Victoria Golf Club and then Life membership of the GSA. She will be sadly missed by friends and opponents alike.

*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.*