

THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 63, MAY 2018



Brian Simpson, Brian Twite and Bruce Green at Metropolitan Golf Club Dinner

Record attendance at February Dinner

by Renny Cunnack

The first dinner of the year on 19 February at Metropolitan GC was attended by a record 140 guests. They were attracted no doubt by the unique opportunity to hear three legends of Victorian, indeed Australian golf; Head Professionals: Bruce Green (Royal Melbourne), Brian Simpson (Victoria) and Brian Twite OAM (Metropolitan).

Hosting the session, Tony Rule was able to elicit many interesting and very entertaining observations from each of the distinguished panel, even going back to the very first jobs in their collective 147 years of service. Brian Simpson was a club-maker and Brian Twite's journey to Metropolitan started at Sunningdale in England. He recalled being rebuked as a junior professional by Henry Cotton for having the temerity to speak to him at Wentworth. Cotton added insult to injury by telling Brian, "If you can't improve on that last round, you'll never make it." Brian then had the last laugh by outscoring Cotton by five shots and beating him in the event.

Bruce Green caddied for six shillings (caddies now command \$140 plus tips!) and hunted for lost golf balls. Then as Assistant Professional at Peninsula, Bruce applied for the Head Professional position at Victoria, where manager Jack Merrick told him that the job involved being starter on the tee for 30 hours a week.

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Leongatha Golf Club Celebrates

Vern Morcom

FOR THE DIARY

May 15 Tuesday

Don Lawrence Trophy
at Woodlands Golf Club

June 4 Monday

Dinner at
Kingston Heath Golf Club

July 22 Sunday

Walter J Travis Cup
at Maldon Golf Club

July 30 Monday

President's Trophy at
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

Editor's Column

By *Mango Maguire*

Welcome to Edition No. 63, especially to the 19 new members of the GSA! Whilst it has been some time since the last edition, there is now enough information from the society's events to give reports. After Kim Hastie sent out a request from me asking for more material for this issue, I am pleased to say that the response has been very gratifying. It is these articles which give our magazine depth and colour, and I thank all contributors for their kind and prompt responses. I welcome further and ongoing material.

As you will notice, I have broadened the content of this edition to include a more international scope. Whilst I have been quite specific in my requests for Australian content, on reflection I believe that this approach has slightly narrowed the vision. An Australia-wide outlook will still have priority, yet with the GSA forming links with British and American societies, I am broadening our view of editorial selections.

On this note, Yarra Yarra GC Manager Peter Vlahandreas has offered a wonderful account of his venture from his recent holiday to Britain, Europe and Dubai. He opens his travelogue with a warming account of his visit to St Georges Hill in Surrey; his dealings with British Rail bureaucracy en-route, and his humble yet genuine welcoming at this fine club. He promises more adventures to follow from his Accidental Golf Tour.

Walter J. Travis, Australian born (in Maldon, Victoria) US citizen, features in Graeme Ryan's article. Furthermore, Maldon GC is hosting its annual Walter J. Travis Cup on 22 July for golfing enthusiasts playing with traditional hickory shafted clubs. On offer for the winner is a 12-month membership to the Walter J. Travis Society, bag-tag, a replica of the 1904 medal, and some of Walter's writings. All this, as well as the trophy, a Schenectady mallet putter made by GSA member Ross Baker, made to the style used by Walter J. Travis when he won the 1904 British Amateur Championship.



Walter J Travis

Tony Rule has submitted an article about the Vern Morcom designed course at Leongatha in Victoria. He notes that 35 clubs were invited to participate in the recent inaugural H. V. (Vern) Morcom Tribute Plate, with all the clubs invited having courses designed by him. Tony notes that some of the features of the course are typical of the design quality which characterises his career.

Grant McKay recounts an interesting quest when he sought signatures from Greg Norman and caddy Steve Williams. No, not on his 'Shark' cap, but on his all leather red and white Spalding Tour Edition golf bag, complete with matching persimmon woods and iron set from 1-iron to SW. His humorous tale shows great determination over the years to build his collection and obtain autographs.

In March, Peter Stickley sponsored a pro-am on the PGA Legends Tour, and offered an unusual trophy, that being a replica of the original Open Championship at Prestwick in 1860. Contestants had to play over a 12-hole course but did not need to go around 3 times as occurred at Prestwick. Peter has sent in his report.

*Royal Sydney Golf Club 18th hole, home club of Professional Carnegie Clark
- Painting courtesy of Robert Wade*

Editor's Column

Continued from page 2

From the society's recent events this year we a Historians Forum report from Victoria GC by Tony Rule, a dinner report by Renny Cunnack where the three guests starred, and a Hickory Heroes report by new coordinator Claire Walker.

I have the privilege to inform you that the Australian Hickory Shaft Championships will be hosted outside NSW for the first time at Royal Melbourne GC on 11 September. Previously hosted by the AGHS, it will be hosted this year by the GSA. With Tony Rule's support we are honoured to be able to organise this event.



Carnegie Clark Follow Through

Recently a GSA committee member found a rare Carnegie Clark iron in an Echuca Op Shop. On further investigation he realised that this represented a small part of the endeavours of the prominent Royal Sydney GC professional club maker, tournament golfer and golf course architect. He then sent a comprehensive article to John Scarth & Neil Crafter's 'Golf Architecture' on Carnegie 'Negs' Clark. Later, Neil kindly offered the GSA permission to re-print this article here in this edition. However, on account of its size, over 4,500 words, this is not practical. I have instead included a wonderful photo from Neil of Carnegie

Clark, and Bob Wade has included an image of his painting at Clark's home club, Royal Sydney. A link will be available on the GSA website shortly to Neil's article. Thanks Neil and Bob.

For the events scheduled, consider not only booking in, but offering to write a report. The committee is working at an increased tempo, so if you can support our society in this way, it would be warmly welcomed. Also please send any new articles or photos directly to me for future editions. Good reading.

President's Report

By Graeme Ryan

My report in the previous issue of The Long Game outlined our plans to establish reciprocal arrangements with the British Golf Collectors Society and the (US) Golf Collectors Society. These are now in place and allow GSA members to participate in their functions and events. Naturally, their members can participate in ours.

The (US) GCS intends to offer GSA members a reduced rate membership of their society to provide us with access to the 'Members Section' of their website and electronic delivery of their quarterly bulletin. This will be a valuable resource for many of us and help forge strong ties between the two societies.

Our strategy to expand the GSA throughout Australia is steadily progressing with the creation of state chapters in SA, WA and Tasmania. Importantly, our discussions with the Australian Golf Heritage Society to include NSW and Queensland are well advanced and we are working towards the creation of a 'National Golf Heritage' body within Golf Australia's OneGolf policy initiative.

GSA membership continues to increase, and we are now approaching 240 members. In the 18 months since being elected, my committee and I have effectively embarked on a recruitment campaign to increase net membership by 10% per annum. That target is being achieved and, this year, will probably be exceeded. As a matter of principle, we are guided by GSA's purpose to maintain a membership of like-minded people who 'preserve, share and celebrate the history of golf in Australia' and further enhance our enjoyment and experience.

Functions and events, including dinners, historian forums and golf days have been much enjoyed and well attended. There are many more in the diary this year and I look forward to seeing my fellow GSA members at these in the coming months.

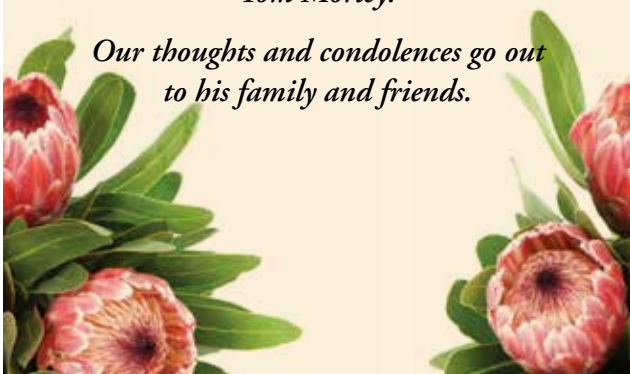
Welcome to New Members

Ian Broadhead
Paul O'Donnell
Richard Forsyth
John Geary
Tony Mountstephens
Greg Ramsay
Edward Mitchell
John Cunnack
Stephen Ellis
Michael Pickering
Jeff Egan
Glen Van Dyk
Des Arnolda
Garry Bos
Damian Quirk
Mark Peters
Sally Morris
John Taylor
Andrew Baker

Vale Tom Morley

*The President, Committee and Members
of the Golf Society of Australia
are saddened to learn of the
recent passing of member
Tom Morley.*

*Our thoughts and condolences go out
to his family and friends.*



Record attendance at February Dinner

Continued from page 1

Bruce balked at that, and went to Royal Melbourne, where he has been ever since - "you find a job you like, and you never have to work!" The Victoria job went to Brian Simpson, who later told Bruce, "The first thing I did was hire a starter!"

Asked who was the best golfer they ever saw, Brian Simpson named Peter Thomson and Tom Watson, who "could play in the States, here, anywhere". Brian Twite said Sam Snead was the best swinger he ever saw. Bruce Green cited Bob Stanton and Lee Trevino, who "had the ball on a string all day" - except on a famous occasion when he stormed off 6W at Royal Melbourne, never to return, saying "No wonder you b*st*rds don't have any hair, putting on these greens! I'm outta here!"

6W is Bruce's favourite hole: "a challenge to drive, a challenge to get it on the green and keep it on, and a challenge to get it in the hole." Brian Twite likes 9 at Metropolitan: "a thinking hole - Lee Trevino birdied it four times out of six, because he could work the ball." Brian Simpson's favourites are 11 and 15 at Victoria.

Asked about the most memorable lesson, Brian Twite had a new pupil who was having great difficulty making contact with the ball, which led Brian in some desperation to suggest left-handed clubs. Brian got great credit for the resultant progress; later it transpired that the person was blind in the right eye. Brian added that he himself shanked a ball onto the next fairway at Rosanna and was asked by an indignant player what club he belonged to. When he said, "Metropolitan", he was told, "Well, you should get a lesson from Brian Twite!"

Bruce Green also had a blind pupil, one Eric Hales, who despite his disability shot 47 for nine holes at Peninsula. Eric challenged Bruce (Victorian PGA champion at the time) to a match for \$100, giving Bruce 7 strokes - on just one condition: the match to be played at 3 a.m.

Brian Simpson recalled Gary Player, plagued by a persistent low fade in a tournament at Victoria, turning to him for advice. Brian gently offered, "I think you might be hitting it a tiny bit late, Gary?" Good results followed.

Finally, asked "How do you get into, and get back, into the zone?", Brian Simpson's answer was, "Play the course a thousand times in your mind". Doing this before a round, about which he was rather nervous, he shot 63. He also believes in balance and rhythm, and the need to hit the ball in the centre of the club, which small club-heads made you do.

Bruce believes there is too much "paralysis by analysis", but how to get back into the zone: "impossible!" Brian Twite reflected that the modern preoccupation with gym work gives players such as Tiger Woods, and potentially Jason Day, big, wide shoulders with muscles that actually don't relate to the golf swing. Muscles must be relaxed, he said.

The Society is very grateful to Bruce Green, Brian Simpson and Brian Twite for being so generous with their time and making possible a memorable evening which the audience acknowledged with enthusiasm.

Historians Forum

By Tony Rule

The first forum of the year was held at Victoria Golf Club. A total of 35 members and their guests attended and heard an insightful group of presentations about the course, members and the role of women at the club.

First up Mike Clayton, Victoria's consulting architect, spoke about changes that have occurred to the course over the years since it was initially constructed by the Morcoms in the early 1930s. Using an early 1930s aerial photograph, Mike illustrated how some of the design features and strategies had been lost by the mid 1970s. The replacement of bunkers with trees and the loss of some remarkable bunkering, diminished the strategy of the original design intent. Much of the work Mike and his team have done since has reintroduced these features.

Next up was VGC Board Member Stephen Ager. Stephen has done a significant amount of research into the life of The Hon. Michael Scott. Scott was the winner of the first Australian Open Championship played in 1904 at The Australian Golf Club in Sydney. An Englishman by birth, Scott was a member of Victoria Golf Club from 1903 until returning to the UK in 1911.



Speakers Mike Clayton & Brian Simpson at Victoria GC

He won a second Australian Open in 1907, and in that same year he was club champion both at Royal Melbourne and Victoria golf clubs. Scott also won four Australian Amateur Championships and the 1933 British Amateur at the age of 54. Scott is one of the most significant figures in the pioneering days of Australian golf and will be the subject of a more detailed article in a future edition of *The Long Game*.

Stephen ought to be congratulated for the time and effort he dedicated to researching the life of The Hon. Michael Scott.

The third speaker was the inimitable Brian Simpson. Brian has been the professional at VGC since 1973 and offered some fascinating insights into VGC's greatest ever player, Peter Thomson. Peter's warm up, ball striking, set up routine and preference for leather grips were just some of the topics discussed.

On one occasion Peter came to Brian requesting that the swing weight be adjusted on a set of clubs, however there was a condition that he could not grind or attach weight to the blade of the club. After much consideration Brian came up with a solution to put some lead in the grip. With these clubs Peter went on to record nine victories in a single year on the Senior PGA Tour.

The final speaker was Ruth Summerfield. Ruth has contributed much to golf, not only at her home club but also to the wider golfing community. Ruth spoke about the early days at Victoria and the sometimes-fraught relationship between the women and the men at the club. Fortunately, those days are long gone and VGC now enjoys one of the highest female membership levels of any golf club in Melbourne.

The GSA is very appreciative of the time and effort of the staff and members of Victoria Golf Club.

<< Victoria GC Aerial Photo 1936



Walter J Travis plays from his famous bunker beside the 18th green at Garden City Golf Club, New York.

Australian born Architect – Walter J Travis

By Graeme Ryan

The State of Victoria has produced many fine golf course architects in addition to Alex Russell, and the names Thomson, Wolveridge, Perret, Clayton, Mogford and Cashmore spring to mind.

Another, sadly less well known in Australia, is Walter J Travis who was born at Maldon in the heart of the Victorian gold fields on 10 January 1862. He later became famous in the United States, and infamous in the UK, as a champion golf player, writer, publisher and course architect.

Located 140km north west of Melbourne, Maldon is now a heritage town which attracts tourists for its notable 19th century appearance maintained since the gold rush days of the 1850s.

Walter was a bright, energetic child and teenager who, on completion of his schooling, showed no interest in joining his father and older brother mining gold underground. Instead, he took a clerical position with the local hardware and produce store, Dabb & Co and was noted for his work ethic and general abilities. His father and older brother were killed in mining accidents, so at the age of 18, he became head of the family.

Later he moved to Melbourne to join a larger hardware firm, McLeay Bros & Rigg who sent him, at the age of 23, to manage their newly established agency in New York City. This was very successful for him, as well as his employer.

Walter was paid well, lived well and enjoyed hunting, fishing, cycling, tennis, billiards, poker, smoking Cuban cigars and drinking American whiskey.

He returned to Melbourne for a few months in 1888 to manage his employer's booth at the Centennial Exhibition then, on returning to New York met his future wife, Anne Bent, the daughter of a wealthy Connecticut businessman. He pursued Anne relentlessly and wrote over 100 letters to her over a period of a few months. These letters were later donated to the USGA where they are held in the library.

Walter and Anne married in January 1890, took a honeymoon tour of Great Britain, lived briefly in a NY boarding house then purchased a home in Flushing. By 1894, their two children (Adelaide and Bartlett) had been born and in 1900 the family moved to Garden City.

For 18 months during 1895/6, Walter travelled to and from McLeay's London office. He often saw golfers on green spaces since the game was expanding in England (as well as the US and Australia) so he bought a set of clubs and took them back to NY.

He began to play golf in late 1896 and developed a swing by trial and error which suited his wiry build and was repeatable. This, combined with his mental strength and competitive nature took him to the semi-finals of the US Amateur Championships in 1898 and 1899.

Australian born Architect – Walter J Travis

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Then in 1900, he won it at his home club, Garden City GC, again in 1901 and 1903. In 1902, he was joint runner-up in the US Open, yet the most dramatic victory was to follow at Royal St Georges where he won the British Amateur Championship in 1904 using the controversial 'Schenectady' putter.

Walter's first experience in golf course design was in 1899 laying out the Ekwanok GC in New Hampshire. He departed from the usual practices of cross bunkering, straight fairways and unimaginative greens to introduce more challenging, yet fairer design features.

He sought other design opportunities and spent a month in the summer of 1901 playing many of the great links courses in Britain, even playing with old Tom Morris on the Old Course at St Andrews. Walter especially noted the undulating terrain of British links, the numerous and strategically located bunkers, and the greens defined by natural contours of the land.

In 1906, Walter wrote an article about his home course at Garden City, designed by his friend Devereaux Emmet, and claimed it to be one of the best courses in the US. He went on to suggest improvements to nearly every hole and convinced the club to carry them out. This resulted in a falling out with Emmet and the two men hardly conversed for the rest of their lives.

Walter continued writing, initially about grasses for golf courses, and was published in various magazines. In 1908, he founded *The American Golfer*, served as its editor and wrote extensively about rules, handicapping, course rating, standardisation of the golf ball, agronomy and the training of qualified personnel. He had considerable influence on the development of the many facets of golf during those early decades of the 20th century.

Walter's career as golf course designer and re-designer spanned 28 years and over 50 courses, his work is highly regarded although, in many cases, radically departed from the accepted norms. He was a pioneer and now celebrated by The Walter J Travis Society.

Hickory Heroes Report

By Claire Walker

The first event for the Hickory Heroes in 2018 was held on 28 February at Frankston Golf Club.

The weather was perfect, although on the warm side in the low 30s. Some 15 golfers attended with nine clubs represented. The event was a 9-hole individual Stableford and a team event with best two scores counting. Peter Stickley won with a commendable 20 points, and the Team event was won with 40 points by Sandhurst players Max Findlay, David McDonald, Chris Thorn and Claire Walker (Heidelberg). Following the game, the group was joined by David Kelso for a BBQ. All agreed a great day was had.

Below: Hickory Heroes at Yarra Yarra GC Library

The Hickory Heroes played at Yarra Yarra Golf Club on 28 March. This event was a 9-hole Stableford with nine players attending. The weather was pleasant as was the company of all the members. Edward Mitchell won with 14 points (he had a home ground advantage). Gary Boss came 2nd (12) and David Worley (13) came 3rd. Comments from all were that the event was very enjoyable.

Hickory Heroes third event for 2018 was held at Kew Golf Club on 26 April. A small group of five played 9 holes in good golf conditions. Congratulations to Bob Harper, Peter Stickley, and Charles Wilkins who looked the part dressed in their heritage attire. Charles Wilkins had best score on the day with 16 points. Kew Golf Club made us very welcome with delicious refreshments and a complimentary drink after the match.



The Accidental Golf Tour – Part 1

By Peter Vlahandreas

It was supposed to be a European vacation to see the sights, old friends and places we hadn't seen before. Then, I worked out that some of the most famed and finest links in the world were a stone's throw away. So, the clubs were coming with my wife and me to Europe in the middle of winter.

With a 20kg limit on my bag I was forced to downsize to a half set of clubs. The cull was painful. Do I pack my 6-iron or not, what if I need to hit a 165m approach to a green that favours a draw? Or, do I take my 54, 58 or 60-degree wedge. The one certainty was the removal of my 3-wood, not even Jason Day can hit one of those. I was left with a small selection of clubs; driver, 5-rescue, 5, 7, & 8 irons, PW, 54 & 60-degree wedges (yes both of them) and my Scotty all shoved into a lightweight bag. We were set to go.

First stop, London, where Surrey is home to over 100 golf courses including Wentworth, Sunningdale and Walton Heath. The Harry Colt masterpiece that is St Georges Hill caught my eye, so off to Surrey we went.

St Georges Hill and Yarra Yarra have a very interesting history whereby in 1931 and 1932 one of the St Georges Hill members, W L (Willie) Hope won the Silver Medal in the 1931 Open Championship played at Princes in Kent. He left St Georges Hill under a cloud in 1932 owing the Club £10 in unpaid drinks bills, which was the same amount as an annual subscription then. He migrated to Melbourne and joined Yarra Yarra, winning the Australian Amateur in 1933. He also played in a charity match with Walter Hagen at Yarra Yarra. One the St Georges Hill Captains invited the Yarra Yarra President to play in the St Georges Hill Invitation Day in 1991 and the Yarra Yarra President paid the £10 back to Richard Norris, the St Georges Hill Historian.

With a top of 5° expected, I rugged up. With no access to a car, the train system would have to do. The problem was that I had an 11am tee time, which meant that I was required to push, shove, elbow my way through the thousands of commuters with my clubs slung across my shoulder. I could sense the feelings of the commuters, wondering *what on earth are you doing on this train, at this hour with bloody golf clubs?* The efficiency of the rail system in London is amazing, so much so that when a train is delayed, even by a few minutes, commuters begin to lose their marbles. The train to Weybridge was 7 minutes late and people were not impressed.

Bubbling along the line with all the space in the world (or as it seemed compared to the underground) I was nearing Weybridge when I heard, 'ticket sir'... so I handed over my Oyster Card to the gentleman for scanning.

Turns out that you can't use your Oyster Card on this particular train, so I was asked if I would like to pay a fine. That's right, asked to pay a fine. I said what are my options. He said, you should probably just pay the fine. I paid the 20 quid fine.

Next stop, Weybridge.

The manager of the Club said to call him upon my arrival and he'll have someone from the club collect me, so I called Gary. In the most polite English tone Gary said, "he's on his way, you won't miss him", as he laughed in the background. So I waited a few minutes.

And then, you'll never believe it, stepping out of a 4x4 Ute is a 6'4" man, wearing a mustard yellow leather jacket. Gary was right, you couldn't miss this guy in a football field! And then, I heard, "Peter V welcome to Weybridge my name is David and I'll be escorting you to St Georges Hill today". David was an American who hailed from Cincinnati. Who would've thought that? A Yank all the way out in Surrey.

The five-minute journey with David was an incredible introduction to the Club. Turns out David is the starter for the Club, lives on the estate, is a horticulturist and a scratch golfer. He is living the dream.

We get to the front gate, 'Welcome to St Georges Hill Estate'. We are greeted by a security gatehouse, a guard or two. David's leather jacket gets us in with no problems.

As we drove down the meandering road through the estate, there was an overwhelming sense that we were in a very special place. The 5-minute drive seemed like an eternity as Dave and I chatted about the estate, the club and the course. We drove through the 6th hole, turn left and there it was, the Clubhouse with the Colt masterpiece in the background.

After a short walk through with Gary (GM) we head to the first tee. We're playing the Championship Blue Course, off the Whites.

As we stand on the elevated first tee looking towards the first hole I ask Gary if he's keen for small wager; "bottle of red" – he's says "OK". Gary asks me my handicap, I say 15, he says, "bandit". I ask Gary what his handicap is, he says "5", I tell him that he's not working hard enough. We have a laugh, toss the ball marker and Gary leads us off.

Gary pipes one down the middle with Gary Playeresque ease. I fly his ball and land 20 metres past him, and we're off. (I'm pretty sure Gary said that's hogwash for a 15 marker under his breath, but I can't be sure).

We sling our half sets across our shoulders and walk towards our balls chatting like we have known each other for years. In fact, we have just met. Just one of the wonderful moments of our industry.

The Accidental Golf Tour – Part 1

Continued from page 8

Over the last few years, the Colt classic has been lovingly restored by Australian architect Tim Lobb and I can only describe it as a course which is strategically wide with complex green structures. It has superb bunkering, meanders through the landscape, is a very scenic walk through the woods, heather and gorse.

Notable holes include the driveable par four 4th, the 9th leading back into the clubhouse, the 11th (their version of a Postage Stamp Hole) and the 17th which has a huge ridge in the middle of the fairway followed by an amazing green complex lying flush with the land.

As we head up the 18th I am struck once again by the beauty of the site and the foresight of the club's founders to create such an amazing property. It's breathtaking.

After golf we enjoyed a bite to eat, washing it down with bottle of 2002 Pauillac from the reserve list, which Gary insisted that only members can purchase. A nice way to say you lost 6&5, the least I could do.

Next stop, St Andrews.

Pictured in background is St Georges Hill Golf Club

Hickory Golf on the PGA Legends Tour

By Peter Stickley and Tony Rule

On Monday 5 March, the PGA Ladbrokes Legends Tour ventured to Eagle Ridge Golf Club on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula for the annual Peter Stickley Vendor Advocacy Legends Pro Am.

Peter, a keen hickory player, put together a field of six hickory players for the inaugural Australasian 12-hole Hickory Cup. Not surprisingly few of the professionals entered the event - why should they with money on the line?

However, one pro who did get the antiques out was the Australian Golf Heritage Society's Tim Sayers who flew down from Sydney specifically for the event. Tim is devoted to the hickory game and plays at least once a week with equipment that is now over 90 years old.



Played over 12 holes to replicate the original Open Championship at Prestwick in 1860, Tim won convincingly with a scratch score of 19 stableford points (pro-am format) defeating his closest rival, GSA member Tony Rule on 14 points. The event attracted a field of 6 at the top end of the tournament, only 2 less than the number who played in the 1860 Open Championship.

Rodger Davis, one of the true legends of Australian golf, who played with Tim, was amazed at the distance Tim was getting off the tee with some drives finishing within metres of his own. Rodger shot a fine 71 so it wasn't as if he was having an off day!

You may well ask, "Why would you play with hickories? Why would you make a conscious decision to make a difficult game even more so? Where is the logic in that?" The other question is, "Why wouldn't you?"

Why wouldn't you test your skills using the same equipment that was used by some of the greats of the game? Imagine standing on the first tee of the Old Course with brassie in hand knowing that, before you, immortals of the game such as Old Tom Morris, Young Tom Morris, the great triumvirate of Baird, Taylor and Vardon and the Emperor himself, Bobby Jones, had all teed off on that very spot with similar clubs in hand. What a thrill to try and match them!

Let us not forget that when many of the great courses in Australia were laid out, the equipment was hickories. It wasn't until 1930 that the R&A declared steel shafts legal. To play these courses with hickories truly reveals the strategies the architects originally intended.

The "Cup" will soon embark on a series of regional events comprising teams of 3 leading to another Legends Pro Am. Interested players should contact Peter on 0409 210 274 or Tim Sayers on 0404 877 697. Anyone with a GA handicap is welcome to play in the events.

<< Tim Sayers with Australasian 12-hole Hickory Cup

Spalding Tour Editions

By Grant McKay



Grant McKay's Spalding Tour Edition set

Greg Norman, the name, rings a bell doesn't it? In my opinion one of THE best drivers of the ball using the true 'woods'. This Aussie blazed a trail for all aspiring Australian golfers to follow and was the winner of two Open Championships and many more professional events world-wide.

When the Australian Masters existed, and particularly in the early-to-mid-eighties, I was developing my addiction to the game and would go to Huntingdale to watch Greg and other world-famous golfers who came to Australia to play.

After transferring from Melbourne to Brisbane with work in 1986, I took the opportunity to receive lessons from Charlie Earp at Royal Brisbane Golf Club. Charlie had a very simple philosophy and approach to teaching. The lessons he gave, allowed me to develop a swing that many have commented on in terms of how easy I appear to swing the club. We won't go into the scoring aspects.

It was also in that year that Greg won the first of his two Open Championships. His red and white Spalding Tour Edition bag, clubs and Tour Edition ball became icons of golfing equipment around the world. I wanted some.

Quite a few years ago, a 4-PW set came on the market. These clubs had never been hit. The irons are a work of art and I was able over time to obtain the 1,2,3, SW and matching Persimmon woods. In relatively recent times I obtained a matching travel bag. Has anyone ever before seen a pair of Spalding Tour Edition golf shoes? Yep, got them too. Oh, and a dozen Tour Edition balls, brand spanking new.

Obtaining Greg's signature on the bag was going to be a problem until the Presidents Cup happened at Royal Melbourne in 2011. I owe a great debt of thanks to the late Paul Rak, former CEO of RMGC, who kindly allowed me to store the bag and clubs in his office during the week leading up to the Cup.

I arrived at the course on the practice day and was unable to locate the clubs! Panic set in so I spoke to Paul and he suggested they may have been placed in the locker room. Off I trotted to the locker room. I walked in and found myself among the players!

Apologising for the intrusion I explained that I was looking for a set of Spalding Tour Editions and they just looked quizzically at me. Most of them had probably never heard of, let alone seen, any.

Spalding Tour Editions

Continued from page 10

Luckily after much searching I found the bag and clubs and set off for the 1st green on the West Course where Greg was explaining some of the ways to play the hole to some team members. There must have been a hundred or more spectators watching what was going on and here I was holding a rather conspicuous package. I saw Greg glance over in my direction before returning his attention to the group.

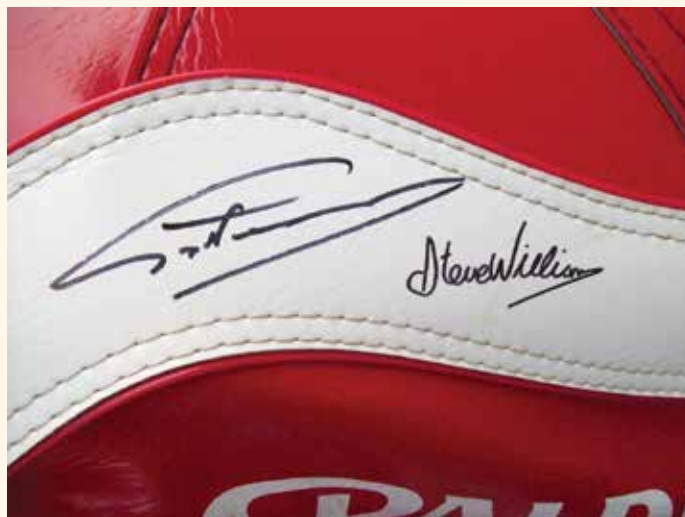
When he'd finished speaking I watched him get into the buggy and begin driving off. I was disappointed because I was hoping to get close enough to ask him to sign the bag. Suddenly the buggy changed direction and he drove over to where I was standing amongst the crowd.

Upon arrival he alighted from the buggy and said the words I will remember forever, 'Sorry but I don't have time to sign autographs.' I was so disappointed before he looked directly at me and went on to say, 'But I'll sign your bag mate.' Wow, what a moment!

Upon signing the bag, he got back into his buggy and as he left I called out, 'If you decide to play in the Cup you can use these!' He looked back over his shoulder, grinned and said, 'You got it!'

So, I finally had Greg's signature, but I wasn't satisfied. Steve Williams had caddied for Greg and was caddying for Adam Scott at the Cup. Upon approaching him at the 7th hole Steve asked me to meet him after the game and he would gladly sign the bag. Unfortunately, immediately following the game there was a team meeting and he wasn't available.

However, if nothing else, I am determined. So, when Steve caddied for Adam at Kingston Heath in 2012, I was there on practice day. Adam started on the 10th, so I waited patiently until he arrived at the 1st for his second nine. Standing beside the Tour Edition bag I looked over at Steve and reminded him of his promise to sign it, which he gladly did. I showed him the clubs and he called Adam over. 'Hey Scotty, have a look at these!' Adam walked over and pulled the driver out of the bag.



Greg Norman and Steve Williams signatures on Spalding Tour Edition bag

He was wagging it and I said; 'Would you like to have a crack?' 'Yep' was his definitive reply.

Adam was addressing the ball as a great number of spectators watched on. He made his swing. Anyone who knows anything about golf knows Adam Scott's swing is a thing of beauty and this was no exception. I believe it was the first time he had used a persimmon wood, yet the ball flew straight, true and so long! The crowd as one uttered a very subdued 'Aaaaw' and they obviously were in awe. Adam later signed the driver for me.

Replacing the driver in the bag I pulled out the 1-iron and asked Adam if he'd like to hit it. He looked down at the head and almost imperceptibly shook his head. I don't know to this day if he was afraid of the club or just didn't want to damage it. I recall someone saying, 'You could shave with that thing!'

I possess much golfing memorabilia, yet the ones pictured are the most interesting in terms of how they came to be signed.



Invitation

Walter J Travis Cup

The Maldon Golf Club is a friendly club with a short, challenging course featuring sand greens. It conducts the annual Walter J Travis Cup, which this year will be held on Sunday 22 July.

First prize will include a year's membership of The Walter J Travis Society (US) which has been kindly donated by them.

All traditional hickory club golfers are invited to play and can register their interest by email to Maldon Golf Club, Secretary Bob Briggs: 0412 272181, maldongolf4u@gmail.com

2017 Walter J Travis Cup Winner, Richard Macafee (left) with Brian Walsch



Leongatha Golf Club 13th hole

Leongatha Golf Club Celebrates Vern Morcom

By Tony Rule

The name Morcom is synonymous with golf course design and construction in Australia. Mick Morcom was the greenkeeper at Royal Melbourne GC from 1905 to 1935. His son Vernon was the greenkeeper at Kingston Heath GC from 1928 to 1967. At the same time, they designed, constructed or modified over 80 golf courses. Their body of work is truly astounding.

In 1956, Leongatha Golf Club appointed Vern Morcom to design an 18-hole course on some 134 acres of native bushland that the club intended to acquire south of the township. Formed in 1909 the club up until this time had been only 9 holes and they were desirous of an 18-hole course. By 1958 the land had been acquired, although strangely, construction had already begun.

By 1961 the course was ready for play.

What Vern Morcom has left, not only for the members, but future generations of golf enthusiasts is a unique test. The course features sweeping dog legs, significant elevation changes and testing greens guarded by severe slopes and typical Morcom bunkering. The course presents a great challenge for all golfers.

The Leongatha GC should be congratulated for embracing their Morcom heritage. Five years ago, they employed experienced golf course shaper Barry Hudson to renovate the bunkering and the work he has done has helped restore the 'Morcom Look' of the course. With its Santa Ana fairways and bent grass greens combined with the natural vegetation the course is a delight.

The Club has further embraced their heritage by organising the H.V. (Vern) Morcom Tribute Plate. An initiative of Club Captain Andy Bassett, the Plate is an invitation to all clubs around Australia who have a connection with Vern Morcom. Of the 35 clubs invited to this inaugural event, 8 were represented on the day, with a further 10 supportive of the event but unable to attend. The home club, Leongatha, took out the event.

It is expected that as further clubs are identified, the field will only expand with next year's host club yet to be decided.

It is wonderful to see the history of golf in Australia being embraced by Leongatha GC. We are looking to organise a day for GSA members later in the year to enjoy this great little course and club.

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.