

THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



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Peter Thomson Obituary

By Brendan Moloney

Courtesy of 'Golf Australia' magazine

Australia lost its finest golfer and the world an elder statesman with the death of Peter Thomson at his home in Melbourne on 20 June aged 88.

The winner of five British Opens was the last link with a golden era of Australian sport, following the loss of his great mates Kel Nagle and Richie Benaud early in 2015.

Thomson, who first came to notice by winning his club championship on the Royal Park public course in 1946 when he was 16, achieved the seemingly impossible early in his professional career. At the time it was not known if the sound barrier or the four-minute mile could be broken or Mount Everest conquered.

Add to this aspirational list, in the minds of golfers at least, the notion of an Australian winning the Open Championship. We hoped for the best but the general feeling was that a non-British player had as much chance as the Socceroos winning the World Cup. Like Chuck Yeager, Roger Bannister and Edmund Hillary, he showed in 1954 that with ability and persistence it could be done.

At Royal Birkdale he became the first Australian to have his name engraved on the old claret jug in the championship's 94-year history. This breakthrough paved the way for fellow Australians Nagle, Greg Norman (twice) and Ian Baker-Finch to achieve their greatest victories. He went on to win again in 1955, 56, 58 and 65 and notch up another 100 or so titles around the world, including 10 different national Opens and a stunning nine victories on the American senior tour in 1985.

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FOR THE DIARY

November 7 Wednesday

Al Howard Memorial Challenge
Trophy GSA v AGHS
at Yarra Yarra Golf Club

November 19 Monday

Doug Bachli Trophy & AGM
at Riversdale Golf Club

December 19 Wednesday

Hickory Day and Christmas
Break-Up Dinner
at Woodlands Golf Club



PETER
THOMSON

Editor's Column

By Mango Maguire

Dear Members,

I have dedicated this edition of The Long Game to the life of Peter Thomson, previously the Society's patron. We have been blessed by our rich golfing community with contributions honouring the many aspects of his multi-faceted life.

His playing career as we all know was exemplary. Five times Open Champion, with numerous victories around the globe. His roles included golf correspondent, TV commentator, golf architect, PGA Chairman, and book publisher. Can you imagine one of today's players winning The Open, giving their speech, and then rushing back to their hotel to type out some copy to be sent back home for imminent publication? Hardly, yet he did it. One can only imagine why, yet we could imagine him working with precision and elegance, as if he was hitting a low crisp 5-iron into a stiff breeze on the links. Nevertheless, he continued to contribute throughout his long career as a professional golfer in many capacities.

Other writers refer to some of his personal qualities, his dry wit, succinctness, and matter-of-fact approach.

His son Andrew has very kindly written a piece about some simple techniques he has gleaned from his father's genius and simplicity. An opportunity for readers to impart some well tested and trusted strategies to strengthen and develop your own game. Pearls of wisdom indeed. Of interest here is Andrew's success over the last few years, as readers will have noted in the results of our events.

For those who like me were unable to attend his celebration of life at the MCC, a YouTube clip is available for viewing online. I can highly recommend watching it, but only after reading Brendan Moloney's recount of this memorable event.

I would like to note how many Forewords Peter Thomson wrote for various authors, and many an Australian author at that. Many a book I have in my collection has been read by him, and then recommended with his insightful interpretation of the text in his Foreword.

Finally, I give notice that this is my final edition as editor. Owing to circumstances, my work commitments and living arrangements have changed this year, which have curtailed my devotion to TLG. I was honoured to have been asked in the first place, and I now seek a worthy replacement. Should you have the urge to take the reins, I can highly recommend it. Please feel free to contact me directly, or otherwise our esteemed Secretary, Kim Hastie.

As Peter Thomson said, play it as it lies. In golf and life. Many thanks for reading, and I look forward to sharing a round with many of you on our beloved links and tracks.



Richard Allen and Christopher Leach at Kingston Heath Dinner

GSA Dinner KHGC

By Tony Rule

The second dinner of the year was held at Kingston Heath Golf Club and attracted 98 members and guests. The speakers on the night were Golf Australia Board Member Richard Allen and his good friend Christopher Leach. Their topic, 'The Intertwined Lives of Hogan and Snead'.

Enhanced by slides sourced from the USGA, the presentation was a fascinating insight into their individual makeups and the dynamic that existed, or didn't, between them. One was the ultimate natural athlete with a silky swing, the other was the quintessential grinder who swung at the ball with brutal mechanical efficiency; one was a laid-back boy from rural Virginia, the other the son of a blacksmith and wound tight as a clock.

Hogan won four US Opens whilst Snead had numerous chances but failed to win golf's most testing challenge. They both won an Open Championship; Snead from five attempts and Hogan from one attempt in that magical year 1953.

Between them they dominated golf in the 40s and 50s winning a total of 16 major championships. The mystique surrounding them is as palpable today as it has ever been.

Richard and Christopher brought them to life in what was a wonderful presentation that was enjoyed by all who attended. We thank them for the considerable amount of effort they put in to develop the story.

Vale

The President, Committee and Members of the Golf Society of Australia are saddened to learn of the recent passing of members:

Peter Thomson AO

Frank Haward

Our thoughts and condolences go out to their family and friends.

Historians Forum at 'Little' Frankston Golf Club

By Kim Hastie



Millicent Gould with Historians at Frankston Golf Club

Our second forum of the year was held at Frankston Golf Club on Sunday 19 August. In a first for the Society, it was decided to hold the forum on a Sunday rather than a Monday and to include golf.

Our host for the day was Millicent Gould who is both Chairman and President of the Club. Millicent spoke about the history of the course, the clubhouse and membership. Also, on display were old photos of some of the early influential members of the Club.

Frankston is unique in many ways. It was the first golf club in Australia to have motor mowers. These were brought from England to the club by member Mr A. H. Sargood in 1921. This was at a time when other golf courses were cutting their fairways and greens with horse drawn 'slashers'.

It is also unique in that it doesn't hold a club championship. Nor does it adhere to the Golf Australia Handicapping system. It still retains its own handicapper to determine a 'Little' Frankston handicap. This quaintness extends to the clubhouse which was built in 1905. An entrance hall, lounge, kitchen and change rooms are all maintained by members with no house staff required. A substantial verandah looks down the first fairway and on a clear day the city of Melbourne provides a backdrop.

The course itself is built on rolling and at times hilly topography. The soil is sandy and the native vegetation a delight. We were fortunate to play at a time when much of the it was starting to flower. The course is relatively short, but the greens are small and sloping as they rely largely on surface draining. The green structures are its protection and of the fifteen hardy souls who ventured out on a cold wet and windy winter afternoon only one player managed to better his handicap. Nonetheless an enjoyable time was had by all highlighted by an enjoyable post-round glass of red in front of the lounge room fire.

We are indebted to the generosity of Millicent Gould, the committee of Frankston Golf Club and look forward to returning next year as part of the Hickory Heroes' rotation.

President's Report

By Graeme Ryan

It was my pleasure to announce at the GSA dinner held at Royal Melbourne Golf Club on 17 September that Mrs Anne Court had accepted the committee's request to become our Patron.

The news was greeted with unanimous approval and acclaim. As Mrs Court was unable to attend, I conveyed her apology and was later approached by many people who expressed pleasure about the appointment.

Our guest speaker at the dinner was Chyloe Kurdas, recently assigned by Golf Australia to the position of national female participation manager as a key component of GA's Vision 2025: The future of women and girls in golf.

A brilliant, inspiring speaker, she attracted over 70 attendees of which about 80% were women. Her presentation stimulated many questions and debate which clearly indicated the level of interest and enthusiasm for addressing the challenges ahead.

That was our third and final dinner for the year. Again, it was well attended, most entertaining and informative.

All our activities during 2018 have been strongly supported by members and guests. Levels of participation have set new records, membership has grown significantly, and our future is bright.

The Doug Bachli Trophy, AGM and cocktail party this year will be held at Riversdale Golf Club on Monday 19 November.

The committee and I look forward to seeing you there.



Don Lawrence Trophy Winners Tony Rule & Andrew Thomson with Muriel Lawrence and Graeme Ryan

Don Lawrence Trophy at Woodlands Golf Club

By Kim Hastie

The annual Don Lawrence Trophy, our popular 4BBB event was played at its regular venue, Woodlands Golf Club.

The bureau got it right, the predicted wet morning eventuated with heavy showers greeting the players as they arrived.

The small field was made up of regular faces, some new members and past winning combinations.

Steady rain fell as players enjoyed the light lunch provided and the odd glass of wine, as we discussed whether play would commence. Many were keen, but some 'fair-weather' were not.

There was much radar watching and as tee time came around, clear sky appeared even blue in some parts, so the full field got under way and the 18 holes were played in surprisingly fine conditions.

After play Muriel, Don Lawrence's widow, along with Brendan Moloney attended the dinner.

Muriel has moved to South Australia to be closer to her family. So, it was lovely to see her back in Melbourne and taking the time to make the presentation to the winners.

Results

Winners of the Don Lawrence Trophy - Andrew Thomson and Committee member Tony Rule - 45 pts

Andrew and Tony successfully defended their 2017 title.

Best score by non-member/guests
- Tim Maguire and Greg Bain - 46 pts

Best 9 out Neil and Claire Walker - 25 pts

Best 9 in Andrew Thomson and Tony Rule - 24 pts

NTP	11th Women	Kim Hastie
	11th Men	Anthony Lang
	17th Men	Brian McPhail

President Graeme Ryan thanked Woodlands Golf Club for their wonderful hospitality and another successful and thoroughly enjoyable day.

Welcome to New Members

Peter Bellion	Bernard Whimpress	Jeffrey Anderson	Fiona Love
Stephen Ager	Andrew Newbold	Robert King-Scott	Meagan Love
David Rew	Gavin Kirkman	Ross Haslam	
Paul Mogford	James Wells	Paul Goad	
Andrew Bassett	Matthew Delahunty	Chris Baker	

The Walter Travis Trophy

By Justin Ryan



Luke Eipper receiving the winner's trophy from Graeme Ryan and Captain Simon Sheedy.

An eager contingent of hickory golfers returned to the Maldon Golf Club in central Victoria at the end of July to once again compete for the Walter Travis Trophy. Warmly embraced by the club, this year was the third in which hickory golfers played for the trophy named in honour of Maldon's famous son. Participants were vying to join Pete Shaw (Royal Hobart) and Richard Macafee (Kingston Heath) on the trophy.

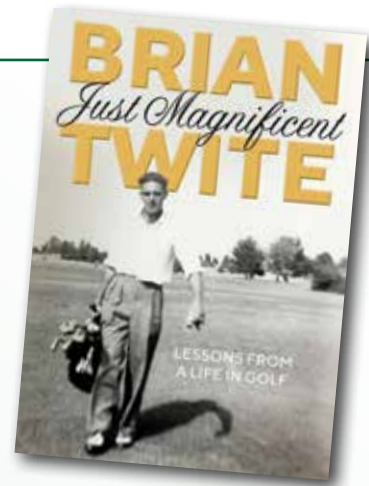
Played over 18 holes, golfers were greeted by sausages in bread and thankfully dry, but cool, conditions. With defending champion Macafee out due to injury, early favouritism was enjoyed by current Victorian Senior Champion Doug Francis. Unfortunately Doug got off to a slow start and struggled to an 83. Inaugural champion Pete Shaw threatened, driving accurately with a Jim Linquist driver, beautifully restored by Ross Baker, but was unable to capitalise around the scrapes, finishing on 81. After coming close in 2016 and 2017, Luke Eipper finished strongly to emerge victorious with a 79, highlighted by some exceptional iron play. With the generous sponsorship of the US based Walter J. Travis Society, for the first time, his name will be engraved on the trophy. Luke also received a 12-month membership of the Society, bag tag, and a replica of the 1904 British Amateur Championship medal won by Travis.

In the nett event, Tim Maxwell of the Belvoir Park Golf Club, appropriately playing with a set of Maxwells, was a comfortable winner with a net 69 off his 11 mark.

Shot of the day was by Bruce Hardie, delivering a mashie to two feet on the downhill par three 10th (his 17th). Unfortunately for Bruce, he was the only player in the field not entered in the superpin. Providing some consolation, he was however able to go on and prove his nay-sayers wrong and break 90 in his first game with hickories. Well done Bruce.

Highlighting the enthusiastic support of the club was the participation of the Club Captain, Simon Sheedy, playing with a set of clubs that were variously cracked, bent or without grips. Scoring everything from 2 to 8, Simon finished with a creditable 83. He will certainly be one to beat in 2018 once we have kitted him out with a set of restored clubs.

Post round golfers were treated to home-made soup, sandwiches and cakes and slices in the finest small-town club tradition. With a winning combination of country hospitality, camaraderie, a sporty fun course and the energetic support of the club, the Walter Travis Trophy has become a must play event for hickory golfers.



Brian Just Magnificent Twite

By Gillian Ednie

Fellow GSA member Gillian Ednie has recently written the life story of Brian Twite OAM, acclaimed teacher and professional golfer, life member of The Metropolitan Golf Club, and inductee into the Victorian Golf Industry Hall of Fame, who at 92 years old is still teaching. Brian is a well-known and prolific story teller which is a key part of his teaching style.

Here, for the first time, he tells of his inner world, how he grew up, became a golfer, club professional and a great teacher. As a living legend, he now shares the values and wisdom which inspired him and many others over his lifetime in golf.

This book also traces over 80 years of golfing history from playing as a four-year-old at Kings Lynn in Norfolk in 1923, to assistant professional at Sunningdale, then his last sixty plus years at Metropolitan.

As GSA members, we all share part of this long history, his all-embracing love of golf and his quest to make us the best we can.

Order this book at the pro shop at Metropolitan Golf Club, My Bookshop at 513 Malvern Road, Hawksburn, mybookshop.com.au or from the author at yourbiography.com.au/BrianTwite



Hickory Heroes Bill Atherton and Claire Walker at Metropolitan Golf Club

Hickory Heroes

By Claire Walker

Kingston Heath Golf Club made us most welcome to their great course for the Hickory Heroes event on 24 May. Six players attended who all enjoyed the well-manicured course, the excellent weather, and the affable company from a variety of home clubs. The bunkers as always were a test for the Hickory Blades (ask Garry Bos!).

Individual stableford was played with Tony Rule 1st (14 pts), Claire Walker 2nd (c/b 14 pts), and Bob Harper coming in 3rd (11 pts). Refreshments and camaraderie were enjoyed by all afterwards.

Four Hickory Heroes on Friday 29 June ventured forth to Latrobe Golf Club. Bob Harper with 12 points was the best in the field, but our scores did not reflect the challenge of playing with the hickory clubs.

It was a welcome return for Cliff George after his recent eye surgery. The weather was kind and Latrobe made us most welcome in their recently renovated club house with excellent refreshments afterwards.

On Tuesday 14 August, fourteen Hickory Heroes turned up for a game of golf at Metropolitan Golf Club. An enjoyable game was had by all playing an individual stableford game. 1st was David Worley (18), 2nd Tony Rule and 3rd Andrew Thomson. The weather was kind and the refreshments afterwards excellent.

A group of nine Hickory Heroes played individual stableford on Sunday 23 September at Sandhurst Golf Club. The course was in good condition considering there hadn't been much rain. The weather was fine, but the wind a little chilly.

Max Findlay came first (15), Paul Burgess came second (c/b 15), Tony Cronk 3rd who has signed up to become a member. Players enjoyed the refreshments and social get together afterwards along with the presentation of golf balls to the winners.

2018 Presidents Trophy

By Kim Hastie

The Presidents Trophy was played at its regular venue Royal Melbourne Golf Club on Monday 13 July.

This quirky 9 hole, yet fun, event allows the players only 7 clubs and the four best nett scores qualify for sudden death matchplay after lunch.

This year's event had good entries with 30 players enjoying their qualifying 9 holes on the West course in very cool but dry conditions. The sunshine broke through at times, enabling Secretary Kim to move through the groups to take many photos.

As the cards rolled in, the four top four scores emerged and after countbacks, the final players were determined.

At lunch, President Graeme Ryan welcomed new members to the society who were participating. It was interesting and fun to see some playing with hickories which made it even more challenging.

Rod Hiscox the top qualifier (34.5) was to play Jean Gilbert (38.5) and Max Findlay 2nd qualifier (36) was to play David Worley (38). Both Max and Jean are past winners of the event

After lunch, a good gallery assembled to watch the sudden death playoffs on the East course with David Worley winning the first hole over Max Findlay.

In the other match, the result didn't come as quickly, with Rod and Jean fighting it out over four tense holes with both players having their chances to win. Finally, at the par 3 4th Jean sank a putt to win the match.

It was decided that rather than cross the road, the final pair should continue at the par 3 16th

The first playoff hole was halved with David Worley skying his front bunker shot to the back and taking an unplayable while Jean with her own troubles, couldn't close out.

Play went down the par 5 17th. Both drove well, but Jean struggled to keep her ball in play and with David comfortably on the green in 3, Jean conceded the hole and David was declared the 2018 winner.

So, after an entertaining afternoon the players and gallery returned to the clubhouse for refreshments and presentations.

The Golf Society thanks Royal Melbourne for their hospitality after another thoroughly enjoyable day.

Presidents Trophy winner David Worley with President Graeme Ryan



Clayton's Corner - Peter Thomson

By Mike Clayton

Perhaps Peter Thomson's great legacy was his presence. It was his presence that gave The Open in the 1950s its legitimacy when he, along with the other great golfer from the Commonwealth, Bobby Locke, dominated the game's oldest championship with their great play over the links.

As the fledgling tour in Australia and New Zealand was growing it was Thomson and his greatest friend, Kel Nagle, who played almost all of the circuit and whilst Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player were huge stars supporting the biggest events including the Australian Open, PGA, Masters and the Dunlop International it was Thomson's presence at the State Opens and the big New Zealand events which made them important and gave them legitimacy. As the late, great John Clarke once said, 'You knew it was summer in New Zealand when there were mandarins on the ground and Peter Thomson was in the newspaper.'

Understanding the world of professional golf needed more than the few jobs on offer on the American Tour. Peter set about forming and boosting the professional game in Asia and Japan. Having the support of the best non-American player was critical to the growth of the game in the region.

His columns in The Age were always more than worth reading and him putting pen to paper made The Age the newspaper of golf in this country. It wasn't about whether you agreed with what he was saying. Rather, it was about making the reader think.

He used the paper to rail against the payment of appearance money and whilst it was a fight he was doomed to lose we have arrived at the place where one of our best players commanded an almost a seven-figure sum to play The Australian Open in 2017.

Appalling is one view for it. Sad is another and you don't have to wonder too hard what he would make of it all.

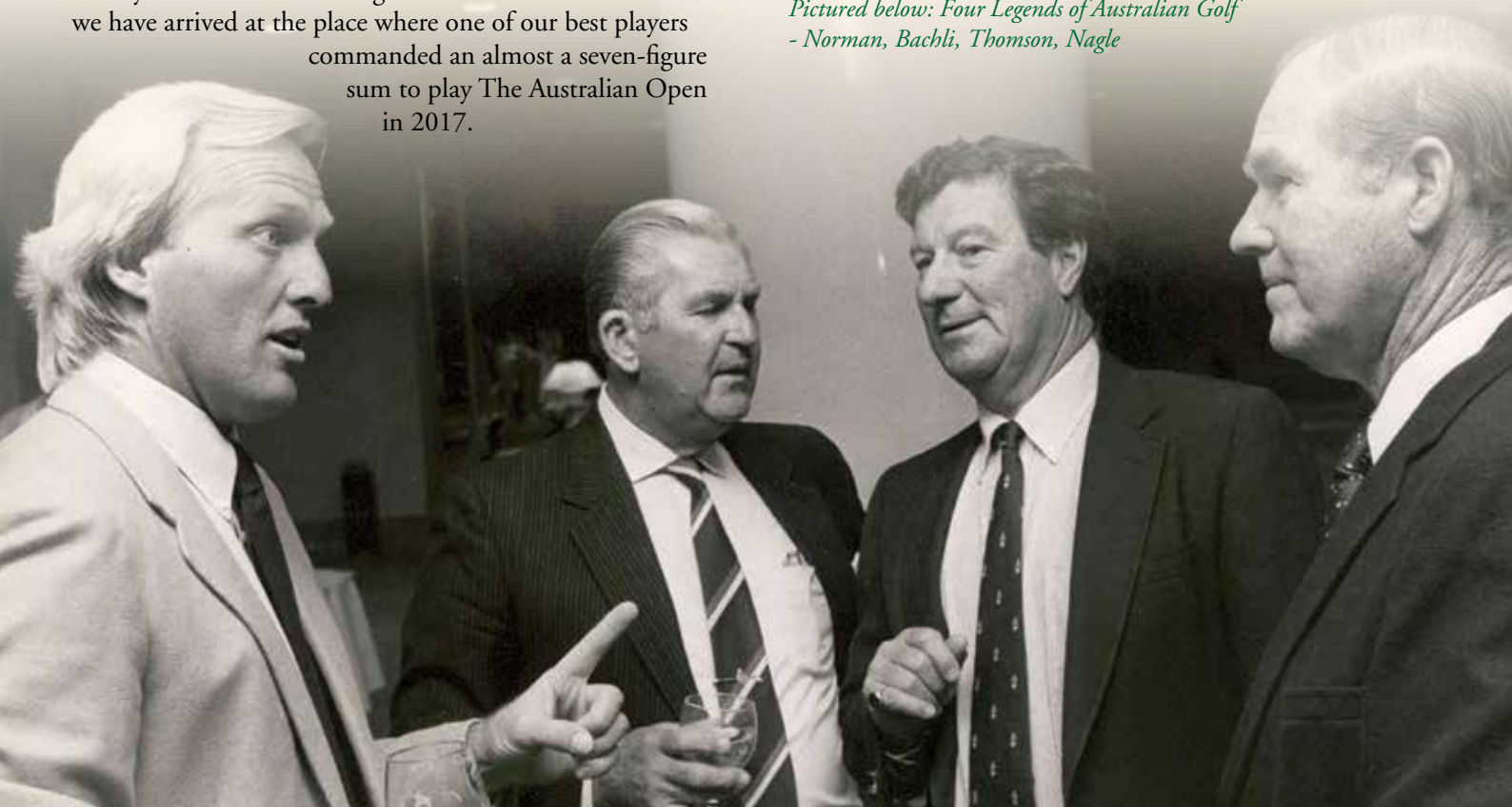
He long argued the world shouldn't have been forced to adopt the 1.68 inch American ball. It was a fight he would also inevitably lose, and I think he was wrong to maintain his support for the small ball. Within five years of the bigger ball being made compulsory for the 1974 The Open at Lytham, Severiano Ballesteros had won The Open and his contemporaries including Nick Faldo, Greg Norman, Bernhard Langer, Ian Woosnam, Sandy Lyle and Nick Price became the brilliant players they were in part because they were forced to adapt their play to the bigger ball.

But, where Thomson was right was in his argument: 'Why are we just blindly following the Americans?' Of course, there wasn't a chance the Americans would have countenanced adopting the ball the world outside the American continent was using.

Once he had finished playing the main tour he stepped into the commentary booth and whilst not all appreciated his style it was so Peter. If you thought about what he was saying there was always a message. Once he observed a young player, pacing off a yardage, peering into the yardage book, writing a note of the yardage in the book and then hitting a pitching wedge thirty feet past the hole. 'Hmm' said Peter, 'and with all that information too.'

Then Peter would turn up at golf dinners to speak, state team practices to offer playing advice and countless meetings as the long-time chairman of the PGA of Australia. He did it all selflessly and it is an irreplaceable legacy.

Pictured below: Four Legends of Australian Golf - Norman, Bachli, Thomson, Nagle



Peter Thomson Obituary, By Brendan Moloney

Continued from page 1...

Off the course he was an outstanding contributor to the game, serving as president of the Australian PGA for 32 years, designing and building courses in Australia and around the world, helping establish the Asian Tour and working behind the scenes for the Odyssey House drug rehabilitation organisation where he was chairman for five years. He also wrote for newspapers and magazines over six decades and was patron of the Australian Golf Writers Association.

In 1979 he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his service to golf and in 2001 became an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his contributions as a player and administrator and for community service. He remains the only winning captain of the International Team in the Presidents Cup.

When he died at home after a brave, four-year battle with Parkinson's disease, a state funeral was offered by Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews.

In keeping with the Thomson ethos of playing down his considerable achievements, this was politely declined. The world, however, was not prepared to let the occasion pass without a fitting tribute.

The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews sent the most famous trophy in sport out with CEO Martin Slumbers for the memorial service at the Melbourne Cricket Club and former captain Sandy Dawson (after Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, only the second Australian in the role) was among the speakers.

Through Dawson the spirit of Peter Thomson shone on the sombre occasion. Apart from his effortless swing, he was noted for his incredible intellect, quick wit and dry sense of humour. Dawson brought the memories flooding back with a story about the five-times Open champion playing for the R&A against a team of university students.

One polite young opponent remarked that he looked as if he'd been a really good player in his prime. Thomson agreed that he did have his moments. Asked if he'd ever won a tournament, he said, a few. What was your biggest win? When told the Open, the kid said: "Wow, when did you win that?" The young man's face grew even redder as he reeled off the five years.

The sense of humour was a family trait that came to the fore in the hours after his death. They sent out a statement to the media which was immediately picked up and went around the world. Son Andrew revealed: "Dad received a number of electronic newsletters. A couple began: 'Dear Peter, we are saddened to learn of the passing of one of the icons of Australian golf...' We got a great laugh out of that." He also told the story of taking the Open trophy to school for show and tell in 1965 and returning home in tears because one of the other boys claimed his father had a dozen like it.



The Lakes Cup 1952, Between teams from USA and Australia, from left to right: Jimmy Demaret, Jimmy Turnesa, Ed "Porky" Oliver, Lloyd Mangrum, "Spec" Hammond (manager), Kel Nagle, Ossie Pickworth, Norman Von Nida and Peter Thomson.

When the R&A officials heard this story from Thomson himself many years later, they did not know whether to laugh or cry.

Premier Andrews, a keen golfer with a sense of the game's history, described Thomson as a tactician and strategist. "He could not only see the line of change in a golf hole, he could find it with precision and elegance," he said. "His remarkable playing record makes him our best ever male golfer and a true great of the game... He is no less a figure as a prolific writer, leader among professionals and course architects. His body of work is unparalleled. Despite the simplicity of his accurate, precise play, Peter Thomson was a man of complex and diverse interests. Golfer yet, but much more than that. Extremely well read, a critical thinker, a lover of the arts, a person for whom family was central and an opera of opinion, informed and insightful opinion. In fact, wisdom is the only way to put it."

Quoting the great American golf writer Herbert Warren Wind, Andrews continued: "An intelligent, thoughtful, well-read man with a mind of his own and the stubbornness that usually accompanies this trait... quite a different person from the ordinary American professional.' Herb was right. When Peter spoke he actually said something, a quality which seems to elude many in the modern game."

After learning at Royal Park beside the Melbourne Zoo, Thomson was recruited by Victoria Golf Club and was part of the great 1948 pennant team that included Doug Bachli who brought more glory home in 1954 by becoming the first Australian to win the British Amateur Championship. At the time of his death Thomson was a member of 19 golf clubs including Sorrento on the Mornington Peninsula where he played most. In his 70s he put in five cards for handicap so he could play in the competitions with wife Mary and family.



Peter Thomson, Matt Komieski (Executive Director of the 9th Presidents Cup), Ian Rennick attending a dinner at Woodlands Golf Club, 2011

The club's centenary history, published in 2008, contains a chapter on him and the caption under his portrait reads: 'P. W. Thomson, B Grade mixed foursomes champion'. In the clubhouse is a room named in his honour and the centrepiece is a picture with Nagle after he beat Arnold Palmer to win the Centenary British Open in 1960. The caption written by Thomson says: "My happiest moment in golf."

Down the road a bit from Sorrento is Moonah Links, two of the 250 or so courses he'd designed or altered with partners Mike Wolveridge and Ross Perrett since 1965. The championship layout, which hosted the Australian Open in 2003 and 05, is perhaps his favourite, although it was not without its critics, especially among the players. It also caused concern to the project developers who waited in vain for several months for Thomson to produce plans of his vision. Then one day he told them he wanted to see the manager of the farm – as it then was – with his tractor and slasher at 10am the following Sunday.

Thomson briefed the manager to follow his vehicle in the long pasture grass with the grass cutter while he outlined the 18 fairways.

The job was finished by lunchtime. When the course opened there was still no map – he'd surveyed the entire site with his eyes and feet – and a map was eventually drawn from aerial photographs of the finished product. Another happy memory from that time was pulling out a small vineyard to make way for the eighth hole. When questioned if this was vandalism, he replied: "I checked with my local bottle shop and was assured that there is no imminent shortage of Australian wine."

His association with Englishman Wolveridge began in November 1962 at Royal Adelaide where they both played in the Australian Open won by Gary Player. At the mention of this, Wolveridge did a passing impersonation of Player's South African accent, saying: "Man, I played the best golf of my life". He said he did a pretty good impersonation of Thomson as well, but it was not the time or place.

In a eulogy which could have been straight out of P. G. Wodehouse, only better, he said they met at the home of the great South Australian amateur and administrator Bill Ackland-Horman, "the president of everything.

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Peter Thomson Obituary

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I was already an admirer of Peter. In Britain his arrival each year was referred to as the annual slaying of the lambs. I was helping myself to a rissole, which I had known as a war-time treat, when Thomson, Kel Nagle and Ackland-Horman came over. Thus, began over a humble rissole my lifelong friendship with these three mighty Australians."

Thomson's writing career began in the early 1950s for the old 'Argus' newspaper and he was filing his stories while winning his British Opens, after the presentation and before being interviewed by his opposition. Ranald Macdonald, appointed managing director of the 'Age' in 1964 and Thomson's nominal boss, said of friend and fellow Sorrento and Royal Melbourne member:

"In a world calling out for leadership, integrity, a little humility, generosity of spirit, a sense of proportion and a commitment to public service, Peter Thomson was the exemplar of all those qualities."

He also revealed Thomson was offered a token five pounds a year by Victoria Golf Club to be its touring professional and was never paid. It was not a bad deal for the club because its name appeared on every entry form he filled out. With compound interest and allowing for inflation, Macdonald estimates, the club owes the family a few thousand dollars.

In the great cross section of his admirers was the late Kiwi satirist John Clark, aka Fred Dagg, an enthusiastic and moderately gifted golfer. "When I was growing up in New Zealand," he wrote on the occasion of Thomson's 80th birthday, "you knew it was summer when there were nectarines on the ground and pictures of Peter Thomson in the paper. He looked elegant, compact, determined and ironical. I've played a bit of golf with Peter over the years and have had the opportunity to study him at close hand. He was elegant, compact, determined, and ironical, and he won the New Zealand Open nine times."

Tom Watson, the only other man to win the Open five times in the past century, expressed what many were thinking with the words:

"The golf world has lost arguably the greatest links player in history." Next best in the modern era are Bobby Locke with four Opens and Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods with three apiece.

Mary Thomson concluded the public farewell with reference to a photograph of her husband of 60 years taken when he was two in 1931. She remembered her mother-in-law, Grace, talking about visiting a friend who claimed to predict the future by reading tea leaves. She looked into the baby's stroller and said: "I see this child as a young man on a great field of green and his name will be known all over the world."

The last words belong to the man himself. They come from a book he wrote with journalist Desmond Zwar in the 1960s: "You'll learn a lot about life and human frailty and wickedness and cunning and craft. If you're lucky, you'll learn about honour and trust and other high levels of behaviour. Most of all, you'll learn about yourself. At the end you may have something to show for it, something to pass on, something to share. If you succeed, you will have above and beyond all that a warm and healthy respect for life and love for your family."

Another thing worth remembering is his view on the golf swing. It is from another book, done with Steve Perkin, son of Graham, legendary editor of the 'Age': "Draw the club straight back. Never mind about what the books din into you about turns and pivots. Just draw it straight back as far as is comfortable and let nature take its course. Don't turn away. Just draw it back, but keep your weight squarely on both feet and don't sway."

Cut this out and put it on the fridge.

Peter Thomson, 23 August 1929 – 20 June 2018, is survived by his wife Mary, son Andrew, daughters Deirdre Baker, Pan Prendergast and Fiona Stanway, their spouses, 11 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.



'Placid Pete' - Memories of the golfer and the man

By Des Tobin

As a young man my uncle, Kevin Tobin was a single figure golfer. He played at Northern Golf Club every Wednesday and Saturday for decades. The rules at Northern were simple. If you booked a game, you turned up and you played. Rain, hail or shine.

Kevin had a friend who was a Royal Park Golf Club member where Peter Thomson learned the game. 'We have a lad at our club' he told Kevin 'who'll be a world champion one day'. When Kevin expressed his doubts, his mate refused to let up. 'You mark my word; this boy will even win the Open Championship... his name is Peter Thomson... don't forget it'.

I first met Peter Thomson around 1949 when my dad brought him home after he and Peter played together in a golf 'trade' day. I was about 11 and the 19 or 20-year-old Thomson was on the cusp of his glittering golfing career. He was shy and reserved but extremely polite and respectful of my mother.

Years later I watched him in a tournament at Royal Melbourne. I was standing next to a cavernous green side bunker beside a Par 3 hole and was surprised when 'Placid Pete' - as he was widely known - put his tee shot into the bunker. 'He'll have trouble getting up and down from there' said the bloke next to me. But he did. In one shot. He picked his ball out of the hole, acknowledged the cheering crowd and walked jauntily off the green. The man was a magician.

Later in life I met him at various golf related events and functions. I could never claim to have known him well, but I was flattered that he always remembered my name. That is, until our final encounter in 2017. I was in Cabrini Hospital pharmacy when a frail looking but impeccably dressed Thomson came in. By then his memory for both faces and names had deserted him. He accepted my outstretched hand but gave no hint of recognition. I felt sad - not because he didn't know me - but that he was afflicted thus. He died about nine months later.

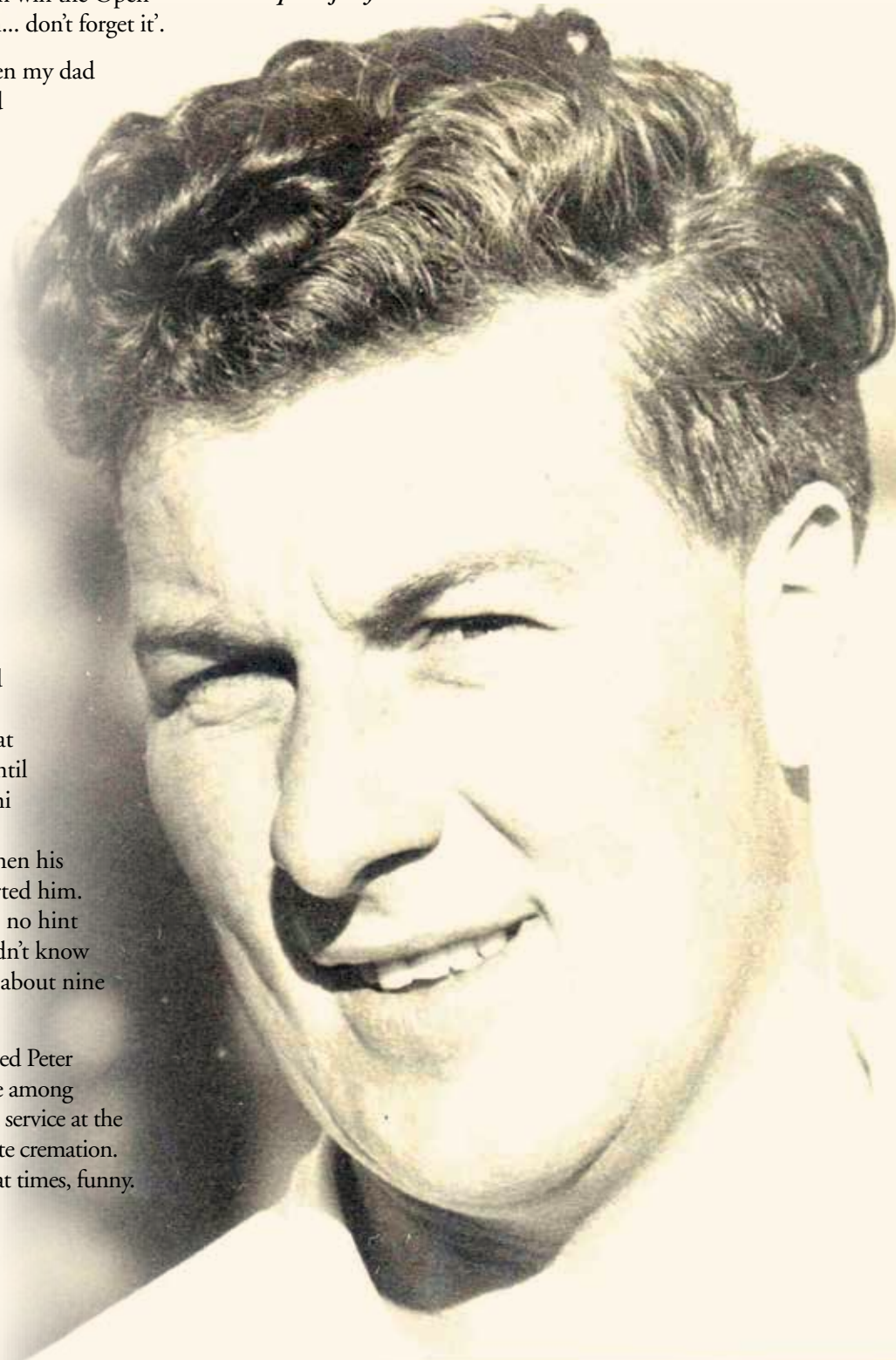
Champion golfer Michael Clayton has described Peter Thomson as a 'god among golfers and a prince among men'. Hundreds attended his public memorial service at the Melbourne Cricket Club that followed a private cremation. The many tributes were sincere, heartfelt and at times, funny.

Between 1947 and 1988 Peter William Thomson, OA, CBE, won over 100 tournaments worldwide. Included in his victories were five Open Championships.

Kevin Tobin's mate would have felt vindicated. Here was a true world champion.

Thomson was indeed a golfing magician and he was a gifted writer. Yet he never regarded golf playing as 'an art at which one can demonstrate one's gifts'. 'Golf', he wrote 'is a craft, a trade, a profession and prizefight all in one. The total picture when we are all set loose is a circus of performers at each other's throats... it is a lesson in human relationships, human idiosyncrasies and failings. It is a broad picture of life itself.'

Rest peacefully Placid Pete.



Playing like Dad

By Andrew Thomson

Growing up as Peter Thomson's son was not a long series of golf lessons. To the contrary, advice from my father on how to play better was a rare event. He gently encouraged me to play the game because he thought it was one of the best things a child, a teenager, and an adult can do in one's spare time. But he was always conscious – at least when I was a child yet to reach the age of ten – that I would never match up to his own golf, and that could have dangerous consequences. If he had sought to create in me another professional player, inevitably a sense of failure within me would have developed, and he didn't want that to happen.

Though The Long Game is generally dedicated to historical matters of golf, I will not delve into the history of my father's golf. Others have done that better than I can. Rather, let me put down for you some of what my father did say to me about how to play well because that's likely what everyone wants to know.

First of all, you need to know one basic thing – as a young teenager alone out on the local Royal Park links he taught himself how to hit a golf ball. Nobody gave him advice or instruction until after he had learned to hit a ball with unusual precision. This is probably why he declined to elaborate on anything beyond the very fundamentals of

hitting a ball, stubbornly maintaining that 'It's too simple an act for further comment.'

I do know that when he first went to play in America he observed the great players very carefully, interested in their different techniques and whether he could learn something from them. The key champions he watched were Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, and Byron Nelson. Why would he look at other players? Why not just concentrate on his own technique? Because, for him, golf was a constant series of experiments, with clubs, balls, and in how you hit the ball on different surfaces.

Remember, in the 1950s and into the 1960s the state of the fairways and greens on the tournament courses in every country was nothing like as perfect as they are today. At a crucial moment in a tournament you could find your ball in the most ghastly lie, and you had to figure out how to survive.

Over my teenage years my father said a few things to me about golf that remain with me to this day. Are these the Thomson Secrets? Maybe so. Let me describe a couple of them.

First, he was fascinated by the grip and its effect on the result of a shot. His basic approach was to hit the ball as gently as possible in order to avoid a mishit from too much force. In order to generate enough power, though, he would grip the club very much in the fingers of his left hand, with no palm touching the shaft. He told me to hold the club perpendicular and first grip it thus, wrapping the right hand on the grip while still perpendicular. Then lower the club and address the ball.

If you do this, you'll find the forearm muscle of your left hand unbearably tight. Make a small adjustment to ease this tightness and you're ready to hit. What does this strange technique achieve? It seems to add speed to the club head at the last moment, giving you that extra boost in power you need if you're hitting the ball gently.

Second, he once admonished me for addressing the ball without the left shoulder held high. This is no great revelation, but he felt it was the most important part of the set up. It was also necessary if you are to keep your head behind the ball on impact. I've watched videos of him swinging a golf club, and it strikes me that this high left shoulder was the key element in the rotation of his upper body during the downswing that gave him sufficient power while still hitting the ball gently.

Over the years my father didn't write a lot about golf technique, but from what Henry Longhurst recorded him saying for a newspaper interview in the 1950s – plus a couple of chapters he wrote for a later book – we do have some of his thoughts on technique that are worth pondering. Let me list a few of these below.

1. First, get set up right.

Your set up consists of how you stand and where you're aiming. The nearer you are, before you start, to the position which you will be in when you hit the ball, the fewer adjustments you will have to make in the course of the shot.

Measure off from the ball when taking your stance. Stand relaxed, leaning slightly forward, with your knees slightly bent and the whole body in balance. Extend the left arm and the club in a straight line, not ramrod stiff, and you are now measured off.



<< Andrew Thomson putting at Metropolitan Golf Club

2. **Grip the club with a light touch, barely enough to hold it off the ground** – so that it feels heavy. As you bring it down, your grip tightens without your thinking about it and reaches the tightest at the moment of impact.
There is another likeness with golf. Using an axe, you do not *hit* with it; you *accelerate* it. That is exactly what you should do with a golf club.
3. **Just draw the club straight back. Never mind about turns and pivots.** Don't turn away; just draw it back – *but* – keep your weight squarely on both feet and make sure you don't sway back with yourself.
4. **Be behind the ball when you strike it. Not all of you, but certainly your head.** "A plumb line from your nose as you strike the ball should hit the ground several inches behind it."
5. **For the short game always look for the simplest way.** The more you can picture an approach shot as a kind of extended putt the better.
6. **In bunkers stand well behind the ball and measure off to where you want to hit the sand, not the ball.** So far as you're concerned you're playing a shot at the sand rather than the ball. The key is to swing very slowly.
7. **In putting almost any grip will do.** My grip involves rotating the left hand to the left about 45 degrees, then do the same with the right. Put the right thumb on the shaft. This locks your arms in for the putt.
Putting must involve some sort of determined tap. What ruins putting is the old stroking method. "You can't stroke a putt like you stroke a cat." And hold the club with a very light, sensitive grip. Play the same stroke every time, but lengthen the putt by lengthening the backswing rather than by hitting it harder.

The Mental Approach

8. **Golf is at least fifty percent a mental game.** Recognise that it is the mind that prompts us physically.
9. **The mental effort needed for winning golf events can be summed up in one word – concentration.** Proper concentration wins matches. Poor concentration loses.
10. **You will think best when you are happiest.** You have to like and enjoy what you are doing and where you are doing it. Go about things with a smile on your face. Realise that there is only one person you have to beat – you.
11. **It is amazing how easily the mind will tackle an unlimited number of problems as they arise when it is in a happy state.** Bobby Locke struggled with his temper and fears like everyone. He told me that a fellow who is out on a golf course playing golf is a very lucky fellow. He resolved never to think himself unlucky because he missed a putt. He was grateful to be playing.

12. **The young player imagines that absolute perfection is needed to win.** But you only have to be one stroke better than everyone else to be the winner. Many a big tournament is won with some pretty rough golf.
13. **A golfer who thinks simply and straightforwardly about the swing in golf will have a simple, uncomplicated swing.** Twisted, unbalanced thinking creates a similar screwy unbalanced swing.
14. **Most great rounds of golf are built on a solid start.** Be content to set about building confidence on that first hole. Don't hit an extra-long drive. Take a club for the second shot that will get you to the green with three-quarters of your power. Make sure you hit that first putt up to the hole.
15. **It is absolutely necessary to plan your round before you tee off.** Make a plan of each hole and stick to it. If you are going badly don't gamble on succeeding holes with an all-or-nothing attitude. Don't be tempted by rash adventures. Birdies come when you are not straining.

On Judgement in Golf

16. **A game of golf is a constant succession of judgements of all sorts of factors including your very own self.** Foremost is the judgement of distance.
17. **It is the approach to the green that calls for the ultimate in distance judgement.**
18. **It is a good idea to take a few steps forward from your ball when gauging the distance.** Ten paces forward is sufficient. The old idea of first look is best is poor logic. When in the rough use one club higher than the distance suggests to get out better.
19. **The short approach to the green calls for same old decision – whether to pitch or to run.** Adopt the easiest way first. If the green is soft use a very lofted wedge. If the green is hard no amount of lofting or spinning will prevent the ball from skipping and bouncing.
20. **One more factor is how does the ball lie?** This has a bearing on the trajectory of the shot. From a tight lie the ball will fly with a low trajectory. Don't try to fight this with a lofted club. Let it run. If the ball sits up high it will likely loft more than you expect. Don't attempt to pitch high.
21. **A bunker shot also requires judgement.** In soft sand use a soft stroke. In hard sand, use a firm stroke. If the ball lies clean on the sand you might try to chip the ball from the sand as you would from the fairway.
22. **In putting, look and you will see.** Judgement of grass is no easy matter.

Society of Australian Golf Course Architects mourns the loss of its Patron – Peter Thomson AO CBE

By Harley Kruse

With the recent passing of Peter Thomson, the Society of Australian Golf Course Architects (SAGCA) lost a man and a true legend who had given so much to golf and in our case the profession of golf course architecture.

Perhaps no man has influenced the game of golf so much in Australia. As legendary golfer, golf administrator, golf writer, commentator, golf course designer, and dear friend of many, Peter would open so many eyes and ears to the world of golf. He would touch so many lives in the golfing industry both directly and indirectly, and all for the better.

For the SAGCA Peter has played an important role. When formed some 26 years ago there was simply only one person who could so aptly fit the mantle of Patron. Peter would graciously accept this role when approached by the then President of the SAGCA and his business partner Mike Wolveridge. Frankly Peter was the closest thing to golfing royalty in this country and indeed all the way back to the very home of golf at St Andrews where his locker would sit pride of place in the foyer of the R&A, not far from the Claret Jug, the piece of silverware with which he had such great familiarity.

Most fittingly Peter at the peak of his golfing career became principal of his own golf course design firm.

He would be able to take his astute knowledge and passion of both the game and golf courses world-wide into a new venture. Originally called South Pacific Golf Pty Ltd, it was founded in Melbourne in 1965 with Michael Wolveridge (a SAGCA Founding Member and Past President) and British course designer Commander John Harris.

This partnership was on the back of Peter's fifth Open win and the high profile of many other tournament wins around the world including the Asia Pacific region where he helped pioneer the game with his best mate Kel Nagle.

The company quickly gained commissions across the globe and would soon become known as Harris Thomson & Wolveridge. On the passing of Harris in 1977 the firm became known as Thomson, Wolveridge and Associates. As the firm grew and the SE Asian economies burgeoned the company became known as Thomson, Wolveridge and Perrett when Ross Perrett (a SAGCA Past President) was invited to join the firm. Peter would be Principal of the design firm bearing his name for some fifty years.

Many careers in golf course design, golf course landscape, green keeping, and golf course construction would be forged on the projects created far and wide by Peter's design company. In the heady days of the 1990s in SE Asia, Peter's firm had numerous projects not only in Australia but places such as Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Chinese commissions would start to flow by 1995 and India had been a source of work since the 1960s. Servicing these projects from the Melbourne office meant the design staff were on flights almost every other week to monitor progress in far and wide locations where in most cases the construction superintendent and course shapers would be Aussies as well.

Thomson, Wolveridge and Perrett was a company which also helped establish the reputation of Australian golf course architects being skilled and practical leaders in the field of course design in the Asian Pacific region. Peter would pave the way for other professional players to move into golf design, and many SAGCA members today owe their design careers to the wonderful opportunities availed by this great man.



Moonah Links 1st hole

As I write, the SAGCA is also mourning the passing of another former member and true character of the game Ian Stanley. He and his golfing mate Bob Shearer considered Peter as golfing god, and both forayed into golf course design with considerable amount of time working at Peter's golf course design business.

When the Canada Cup came to Melbourne in 1959 the idea of Royal Melbourne Golf Club combining East and West holes of the main paddock to form the Composite Course was employed for the first time. It was done to keep the constabulary happy whereby both competitors and spectators needn't face any busy road crossings. The event was a great success, a famous win for the Australian team of Kel Nagle and Peter Thomson. With relatively short notice green keeper of the day Claude (Crocky) Crockford was able to present the course brilliantly for the tournament, complete with the firm and slippery greens with which both he and the course had become famous. Peter got to know Crocky, the humble gentleman green keeper, quite well over the many years playing at Royal Melbourne Golf Club. He developed the utmost respect for this man whose fine skills would present the East and West courses superbly for some 40 plus years.

In retirement Crocky wrote a book about turf. It sat there unpublished and not quite complete. It would be Peter and partner Michael Wolveridge who offered to publish the limited-print book. A book they felt had to be published. Not only so Claude's wonderful knowledge could be shared, but I think as a kind gesture of appreciation, a thank you to Crocky for his life work on the grand dame of Australian golf.

Of his own golf course design work, I spoke with Peter soon after announcing his retirement from golf course design which had spanned some 50 years and over 150 projects. He was most proud of his 'Leviathan Course' at Moonah Links. In Peter's terms the windswept sandy dunes-land towards the back beaches of the Mornington Peninsula lent itself to the type of golf which he knew and understood like no other Australian golfer – Links Golf.

Peter would refer to the Leviathan as his 'Magnum Opus' of course design. It was designed as the brief required it to be, a tough test of golf and as a future tournament course that would host the Australian Open. In the interview with him it was clear Peter was aware that the Leviathan course wasn't overwhelmingly popular amongst Melbourne golfers. Many who were spoilt for choice and perhaps more conditioned to a different style of game played on the world-famous layouts of the Sandbelt. I believe Peter felt many were yet to properly understand links golf and the test that Moonah Links would ask of a golfer. Of course, very few could ever claim to understand the links game as well as Peter. He was the master, and the man most proud of Moonah Links. He was most content to know that golfers in the years to come would learn to appreciate and enjoy the subtleties of links golf and the test he had given them.

I can share a personal story about Peter, a moment I will never forget. Away from all the big development layouts across Asia and Scotland that TWP was doing at the time, Peter was asked in the mid-90s to consult on the very humble course where all those decades ago as a young schoolboy he would teach himself to play golf, the holes of Royal Park Golf Course. I had the good fortune to go to Royal Park with him to make a site inspection.

After looking at the proposed area of works Peter started to head away from the project at hand, and I thought to take in another view of it all. Not so. We got to the edge of a deep railway cutting and he looked up and down the tracks as if looking for something. "I used to find golf balls down there" he said, "and then try to play a few holes". For that very fleeting and precious moment I saw the young boy in the older man. The man who would master playing the little white ball like no other Australian. The man who would spend the rest of his life giving so much to the game which he fell in love with as that Brunswick schoolboy.

Peter Thomson true legend of Australian golf will be greatly missed.



Peter Thomson playing at The Grampians Golf Club Official Opening

The Grampians Golf Club Opening – Dunkeld

By Kerren Collins

Peter Thomson was a feature player at the Opening of the club in 1967. A prestigious affair opened by Sir Rohan Delacombe, Governor of Victoria, and followed by Peter Thomson, Guy Wolstenholme, Alan Murray and Peter Townsend playing in an event called the 'Invitational 400' with 500 spectators following. Peter Thomson won the day and set the course record of 71. At the time the district was suffering drought and the risk of fires ever-present so a major event in the district was very attractive.

In 1992, 27 years after his first visit, Peter graciously returned to the club to launch a new watering system which had been longed-planned for and much needed. He spent a lot of his time reacquainting himself with the layout of the course.

He last visited the club in 2014 to help launch the book by Iris Field "Fifty Years of Grampians Golf" and planted a spotted gum to commemorate the event.

He was willing to give advice when asked, encouraged club members to seek the best options in course development and management. It was a joy to have a contact with someone with worldly sporting prowess, who was willing to give input into a sandscrape course so far from the big smoke and made us all feel proud as a result of being connected to our humble club. Vale Peter Thomson.

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.