



# Newsletter

**An official publication of the Golf Society of Australia**

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## Special November activities

Separate advice of details of two very special events should now have been received. On 12th November 1997, the Douglas Bachli trophy will be played at Commonwealth Golf Club over 18 holes. Members are encouraged to participate. The golf will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Golf Society. A cocktail party will follow the AGM.

On 26th November our final dinner for 1997 will be held at Commonwealth Golf Club. The guest speaker on this occasion will be Michael Bonallack, Secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews who will be visiting Melbourne again during the Australian Open Championship to be held at Metropolitan Golf Club. This should be a most interesting and enjoyable evening so please book early as a very large attendance is anticipated.

## Quotable Quotes

Joe Kirkwood, the famous Australian trick shot golfer used to hand out a card upon which was printed -

Tell your story of hard luck shots,  
Of each shot straight and true,  
But when you are done, remember, son,  
Nobody cares but you!

— 000 —

Raymond Floyd, during a media interview prior to the US Open at Olympic Club, San Francisco -

“I hope that I play well but I also hope that I play in a manner which reflects well on the sport I represent”

*(Thanks to Ian Holland for this quote)*

— 000 —

Bob Charles, NZ champion professional golfer -

“Being left handed is a big advantage: No one knows enough about your swing to mess you up with advice!”

— 000 —

“The hole will not come to you: Be up!”

Young Tom Morris (to his father Old Tom, who was notorious for leaving putts short).

## From the Editor

I would like to thank the many members who have contacted me with suggestions for the Newsletter; it is gratifying that there is such a level of interest. Members may be interested to know that the Golf Collectors Society of the US made mention of our humble beginnings in a recent edition of the “Bulletin” which resulted in contact being made with several of their subscribers here in Australia who are not presently involved in the Golf Society. Of course, their subscribers are primarily interested in collecting golf memorabilia but we share a common foundation for our interest in golf - past, present and future.

I have had the great pleasure of visiting the private museum of memorabilia assembled by Leon Rowbell who, apart from his collecting, plays from a 12 handicap at Kingswood Golf Club. Leon has assembled an incredible collection of what he calls the social history of golf. His collection includes clubs, balls, tees, newspapers, magazines, clothing, etc with the object of conserving for posterity the look and feel of golf over time rather than the records and souvenirs of the champion players. He has asked me to ask members of the Golf Society to be conscious of this when they are cleaning out their “rubbish”. He quotes the example of a former star player who has presented a collection of his medals to his Golf Club but was proposing to throw out magazines, programs, tickets, clippings etc which he saw as of little or no value. We have probably all done the same on numerous occasions.

Such items may indeed be of value as they are irreplaceable reminders of our golfing past. Please make sure that we keep these things for posterity rather than discarding them as unwanted rubbish. Leon, of course, has a collectors perspective on all of this - anyone wishing to contact Leon can ring him on (03) 9596 1283.

Leon hopes that one day his collection can find appropriate sponsorship and a permanent home where it can be displayed for all to see. It seems to me that we, and the AGU museum at South Melbourne, share this hope. Perhaps, in time, we can find a way to make this all happen.

Good golfing!

John Lindsay, Editor

## From the President

The introduction of this Newsletter has been good for our Society. Not only is it good reading for our members, it is also evidence of our existence to the outside world. Golf writers and golf magazine editors now receive copies.

We are very fortunate our Editor is the very capable John Lindsay. John has a very good background in golf, as indeed do most of our members. The total golf experience within the GSA is most impressive and it is through our newsletter that we can convey the benefits of our time-earned knowledge acquired over so many years. This was brought to mind the other day when I received my annual subscription notice.

We are all to some degree inured to fee increases and accept them with a resigned inevitability. Occasionally we do reflect upon the increases and sometimes we think about their effect upon others such as juniors and retirees. Clubs do whatever they can to soften the impact of entrance fees and full membership rates on juniors becoming of age, as they do with discount arrangements for long serving members who have reached later years.

Whilst the mitigation is no doubt helpful, one wonders if club committees really spend enough time examining where cost savings could be made within the club in order to keep subscriptions to a minimum. No doubt they do their best and must consider all aspects of how a club wants to represent itself within the bounds of current times.

So, prompted by an article by Peter Thomson in *Golf and Life*, I would like to suggest modern day committees could benefit from the experiences of golf clubs which continued play throughout the war years. Austerity was the name of the game in wartime. With the shortage of manpower and petrol rationing, clubs could mow only tees, fairways and greens. The rough was not cut, nor were bunkers raked. Courses were maintained with one or two staff. Austerity brought course maintenance costs to a minimum.

With this experience in mind and having some idea of the speed and effectiveness of modern greenkeeping equipment, I wonder how much our course maintenance costs could be reduced if clubs decided to mow only tees, fairways and greens and perhaps the rough outside the tree line once only in springtime. I suppose members would either perish or relish the thought depending upon the accuracy of their play.

Whilst not advocating austerity, it seems to me we have gone too far with our course grooming. In particular why do we cut so much of the rough inside the tree line. I know it is to make it easier for the player to find his ball and to keep play moving, but does that not impinge upon the advantage which should belong to the player who has kept his ball in play.

Should we not ensure the accurate one is rewarded for his straightness. Why should the wayward golfer be able to go into the trees and rough and find his ball sitting clearly. Is that fair? After all it does cost money to cut the rough, particularly inside the tree line where often a whipper-snipper is also used around the base of trees. Similarly with bunkers. Why must they be machine raked all over. The maintenance looks attractive and is evidence someone has been attentive. But could not a groundsman scoot around on a motor bike and just rake only those parts of a bunker which need attention.

Then there is the matter of the cost and effect of automatic watering. As one who played when the only watering that was done was by hand on the greens and surrounds, I can say the putting surfaces were much better then. The ball rolled truer because the greens were harder. And through the green one enjoyed the difference between summer and winter golf. Today with automatic watering, the course is the same throughout the year. Summer or winter the run on the ball is about the same. So one plays the same lofted shots to the same soft greens.

Thus, without automatic watering and less mowing, we could have better putting surfaces, the need for more skill to cope with differing playing conditions and be charged less for maintenance. Many members of the Golf Society have experienced both the "essentials only" course maintenance of yesteryear and that of the totally groomed, watered layouts of today. I wonder which conditions members of the Golf Society would prefer?

Daryl Cox, President

## The Golfers Dream

*(After Longfellow)*

Beneath the uncarried ridge he stood,  
His niblick in his hand;  
His throat was bare, his matted hair,  
Was thickly mixed with sand;  
And the words he spake made his caddie quake,  
Though he failed to understand.

As he cursed the pride that had made him strive,  
To reach that green in three,  
For the sun was high in the April sky,  
When he drave off from the tee:  
And now it was low, and he didn't know,  
Nor care, what his score might be.

But he dreamed a dream as he smote away,  
Churning the sand full sore,  
And his futile strokes, and the caddie's jokes,  
Could torture him no more;  
And he did not mind the couple behind,  
Who were idly shouting 'Fore !'  
He dreamed that he played on a phantom links,

Where nothing went ever wrong;  
 Where his putts were bold, but were always holed,  
 And his cleek shots wondrous strong ;  
 Where he stood hole-high with a perfect lie,  
 From a drive that was straight and strong.

For it was to a golfer's paradise,  
 That his bunkered soul had fled,  
 Where the slice was not, nor the fozzled shot,  
 Nor the driver's broken head ;  
 And oft he could feel his mashie of steel,  
 Laying his second dead.

Till a voice in his ear brought him back again,  
 To his toil and his grief, alas !  
 And he sadly woke as his caddie spoke,  
 From his couch on the dewy grass:  
 "There's a pair below, as have sent to know,  
 If you'd kindly let 'em pass !"

## Golf Trivia Quiz *(Answers on Page 6)*

1. Name the players who won consecutive Open Championships in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's ?
2. Who finished last in his first attempt to win the Open Championship in 1992 and declared: "I hate this place. I'm never coming back. Why should I have to learn all this bump-and-run junk ?"
3. Who hit his ball at the wrong flagstick while leading the field at the 1970 Open at St Andrews ?
4. Name the Irishwoman who has made the most appearances in the Curtis Cup ?
5. If a Curtis Cup Match ends in a tie, who holds the Cup ?
6. The eight competitors who contested the first Open Championship in 1860 played 36 holes but did not play 18 holes per round. How many holes did they play in each round ?
7. What legendary golfing figure was knighted in 1987 just days after his death ?
8. Name the only player to have won the Open Championship before and after World War II ?
9. Who shot four rounds in the 60's in the 1993 Open Championship at Royal St Georges but did not win ?

10.



"As you know your late uncle loved golf and anyone with a knowledge of the game. OK! For \$600,000 who won the 1931 Open and where was it played ?"

## Letter to the Editor

### Inspiration at St.Andrews.

Recently I had the very good fortune to play the Old Course at St.Andrews. This was due to the graciousness of four delightful Americans whom I had met at Royal Dornoch. The day we played was quite benign. So under the gaze of many onlookers we played away on this the most famous of all golf courses. My companions were low middle markers and experienced players, who like myself, were enjoying the unique playing conditions of linksland golf in Scotland.

In the ideal playing conditions one had time to absorb the characteristics of the Old Course and note the roll of the terrain which has had so much influence on golf course design throughout the world.

Our golf was very much as one might expect. Some good shots and many that were not. The hidden bunkers and sideways recoveries were part of our play as we progressed through the loop and headed for home. By the time we were playing the 16th a very slight breeze was drifting across the course and somebody remarked they could hear a piper.

So we came to the most famous hole in golf, the road hole and it was here that a most inspiring occasion began. One of my American playing companions could play with only his right arm having lost his left in a boating accident. He stood on the right hand side of the ball and with a lovely wide arc would drive the ball 220-230 metres. Whilst consistency was not his forte one always watched him play a shot in admiration of his one arm shot making ability. At the 17th he drove beautifully from a middle tee over the hotel wall to a perfect position down the fairway. The flag was on the right hand side of the green. The execution of his second shot was precision personified and long enough to reach this par five in two finishing on the green three to four metres below the hole. His putt for the eagle overhung the cup.

So we proceeded to the 18th. By now the pipes were being quite clearly heard as we drove into a vapour of a breeze. My one arm companion's drive finished just short of the road. His seven iron was one of those glorious shots which was ideally flighted dropping from right to left to find the flagstick which was back centre of the green. There were 50 or 60 spectators standing at the fence watching us play and they fell into respectful silence as it became the turn of our one armed friend to make his putt of four metres for his birdie. Only the sound of the pipes were in the air. His left handed putting stroke was all that one could ask, but the ball again sat overhanging the cup. The golfwise crowd of local people at the fence burst into applause. I felt quite humble and truly inspired at St.Andrews.

Daryl Cox

## Putting 1890

by Lord Wellwood

Putting is a serious, nay, at times an awful matter. You are playing a match of, say, eighteen holes, and have reached the putting-green of the last hole. The match is all even; your partner has laid you within three feet of the hole and one of your opponents playing the odds has laid his ball about a foot from the hole on the far side. This being the home hole, a large gallery is looking on; and you know that there is a good deal of money on the match.

'You've that for the match!'

Who can hear these words unmoved? The result of a round's driving and lofting and bunker practice and putting hangs upon that 30-inch putt, long enough to miss and short enough if missed to disgrace. How absurdly easy it looks! To all appearances a straight level putt. If you were not playing a match you would back yourself to hole it ten times running. But you are playing a match; and now that you look at it you see that the ground is not quite level. There is an awkward side slope between your ball and the hole, and you must either borrow or put a spin on the ball and run it straight at the hole. But if you adopt the latter course you may leave your partner a stymy or run out of holing. What are you to do? You can of course secure a half, but in order to win you must play boldly. Your partner, with transparent bravado which ill conceals his anxiety, has handed his putter to his caddy as if the match were over and has half turned away towards the club-house, and you hear one of your opponents whisper, 'He's not in yet.' Your confessor is beside you, exhorting and directing.

'Take the putter, sir; you can't miss it; over that; be up.'

Well, you cannot stand shivering over it much longer; so with tingling nerves you seize your putter and address the ball. The confessor retires and the silence deepens—at length the blow falls, the ball disappears, and the match is won. Your partner falls upon your neck, the party breaks up and vanishes like a vision in a magician's mirror.

## Slow Play 1890

by Lord Wellwood

Passed on the green! The golfer's cup of humiliation is now full. He knows that the party behind mock themselves of him, and regard him as a slow-coach and a fozler, on whom it is unnecessary to waste the courtesies of golfing life, and hold him up to public ridicule and contempt as a creature to be hustled off the green with impunity. Yet this calamity should seldom occur, because, on the one hand, no party should try to pass another on the green unless the latter are playing with unreasonable deliberation; and, on the other hand, a really slow party ought to have the good sense to allow

the quicker party to pass them with decency at one of the holes. A collision usually occurs in consequence of one man in the slow party being not only slow, but obstinate, and determined to take his time and stand upon his rights. Then the unseemly scrimmage begins; there is nothing like it except a bumping boat-race, in which the following boat perpetually overlaps, but cannot make its bump—save the mark! It often happens that in their burning anxiety to get past, one of the quick party misses his ball, or sends it into a bunker. Then the slow party rally, and there is a neck-and-neck race for the putting green. Even if the quick party succeed in reaching the putting green, they reach it breathless and in disorder; and the slow party pick up their balls and hurry on in hopes of having at least one parting shot from the tee at their conquerors, if one of the latter happens to make a bad tee shot. We gladly drop the curtain on this painful scene.

## Etiquette and Behaviour

by H. G. Hutchinson

Of all delinquents against the unwritten code, the grossest offender is perhaps he who stands over you, with triumph spiced with derision, as you labour in a bunker, and aggressively counts your score aloud. The act of ostentatiously coming out of his own path to look at you is, of itself, almost on the boundary line between good and bad form. Apart from the indecent gloating over your misfortunes which such conduct on his part would seem to imply, it also contains the infinitely more offensive suggestion of a suspicion of your possible unfair dealing when shielded by the bunker's cliff from his espionage. But when he goes the length of audibly counting up your unhappy efforts, with undisguised satisfaction as the sum increases, you can scarcely look upon it otherwise than as an impugment either of your arithmetic or of your honesty.

There are, indeed, certain circumstances which may almost, in a medal competition, justify such a proceeding; for in a medal competition, in the absence of markers, each player is responsible for the correctness of the score, as returned, of the other, and, setting the question of honesty—as it is to be hoped we may—on one side, there are medal-players whose arithmetic, as a matter of fact, is not above suspicion. It is, moreover, far more difficult than is generally recognised to keep exact account of the strokes at those unfortunate holes where the total approaches the two figures. It is scarcely possible for a man to be in honest doubt as to whether he has played four strokes or five; but it is a very different thing where question arises as to whether he has played eight or nine. One among so many is a small item easily forgotten. Nevertheless, unless the player for whom one is scoring is known to be what is called a 'bad counter'—which not a few perfectly honourable gentlemen and golfers unquestionably are—there is no justification for the audible enumeration, one by one, of his strokes.

# The Putter

## Something of Its Legend in the Days When Golf Was Much Younger

by Bernard Darwin

For any one who has a feeling for the old things of golf, a peculiar romance hangs round the name of Hugh Philp. He may, I take it (though I am not learned in music) be called the Stradivarius of club makers. At any rate, he was the first man, whose name is known to us, to turn clubmaking into a fine art. Before he came, clubs had been thick, clumsy and loutish. He made them elegant and tapering, and full of graceful curves. There are still a good many in existence in the possession of hereditary golfers or lucky collectors, but I never had one or dreamed of doing so, and now suddenly I have become the possessor of a Philp putter, and that in a fittingly romantic manner.

A gentleman whom I have never met, though I remember his name from old golfing days, has sent me a letter "out of the blue." He says that he is now too old to use his faithful Philp any more, and since he believes me to have a proper veneration for such things, he has generously offered to give it to me. Could a more delightful surprise befall any golfer? It may be imagined with what gratitude I wrote my acceptance, and with what eager footsteps I ran with it to the post office.

Not only was this putter made by Philp, but its pedigree has even this further interest: that the club was used by a famous old golfer, Bob Kirk. Bob Kirk used to play matches with Young Tommy Morris, and David Strath and the other great ones of the 60's and 70's, and it was a chance remark of mine about him in an article (he once won a big match by playing a lefthand shot) that put the notion into my benefactor's head of giving me the club. From Bob Kirk it passed to his son, and from that son my benefactor bought it some thirty years ago.

There is at the moment only one tiniest drop of sorrow in my cup of happiness. I am writing from Ireland where I landed three days ago, and where I am to stay for more than another fortnight. So I shall have a weary period of waiting before I can unwrap and gaze upon my treasure. Meanwhile there is nothing to do but imagine the lovely upward curl of the shaft, and the rich oily blackness of the long thin head (or will it, by chance, be yellow?), and the fine comfortable padding of the grip that has been held by illustrious hands. The hours will pass leaden-footed till I can stroke and cherish it.

A certain anxious responsibility goes with this new possession. The putter is not to be a mere museum piece. Its owner had thought of presenting it to a club, but he says he didn't like to fancy it suspended on a club house wall, when it was still full of golfing life. Therefore, he makes it not a positive condition, but an earnest request, that its new owner shall putt with it. Needless to say, I shall comply with the request, but shall I be worthy? That is the thought that keeps me awake at night, for I

can not deny that never in my life have I used a putter rightly so called. I do putt with an aluminum club, moulded in pious imitation of the real thing, but that is the most I can say for myself. Moreover, it is impossible to conceal the fact that I am far, very far from possessing the grand manner of putting, which ought to accompany this venerable relic. Those who use putters always stand up to nearly their full height, and wield the club with a certain airy grace, whereas I am conscious of a groveling nose and bent knees and a lamentable lack of that confident grace. Noblesse oblige and I must clearly try to stand up and acquire a manner worthy of my putter. But an old dog can not easily learn new tricks, and I am afraid I shall find myself stooping and groveling still. At the approach putt, I make a decent pretense of being a Scottish gentleman of the olden time, but the short ones will expose me.

The reader may have observed that I have been careful to speak of this treasure simply as a putter. I have not called it a wooden putter. The head is, of course, made of wood, but there is no need to say so, because a putter properly so termed can have a head made of nothing less. Clubs with heads made of iron or aluminum, or gun metal are not putters, but mere substitute things to putt with. I am afraid I have not hitherto lived up to these high principles. I have vulgarly called by the name of putter any implement with which I tried to get the ball into the hole. But now I have got to mend my ways, and adopt an attitude of almost intolerable superiority. I am at least old enough to remember the time when we always spoke of an "iron putter" or a "putting cleek", leaving the name of putter to the club which alone had the right to it. I admit to a falling away since. But as a boy I was frightened into orthodoxy by being told a terrible story. Two Scottish exiles in England had been down to Wimbledon or Blackheath for their Saturday afternoon game, and on their way back home in the train, they fell into an argument. One spoke of an "iron putter" and the other said that this was improper language, and that this bastard weapon should be termed a "putting iron". The first speaker disliked being corrected, and would not admit himself in the wrong, so they grew more and more fierce and ultimately came to fisticuffs in the railway carriage.

That story taught me to mind my p's and q's, and, by the way, a dreadful thought has just struck me. Will it be decent to set my putter to live in the same bag with new fangled steel shafts? Will Hugh Philp or Bob Kirk turn in their graves? I hope not, for I really can not afford to discard my beautiful new set of steel-shafted irons, crabbed age and youth will have to live together in some semblance of peace and harmony.

*The above article, which originally appeared in the November, 1931 issue of "The American Golfer," was submitted by Janet Seagle and appeared in The Bulletin No. 89 - Fall 1986 Edition.*

## Len Nettlefold

By Dr Ken Shepherd

Can I draw the attention of those parochial Victorians who can't see beyond Harry Williams as the best left hander to play golf in Australia. Let me introduce Len Nettlefold who was born in Hobart in 1905 and died in 1971.

Nettlefold won the Australian Amateur Championship in 1926 and 1928. He was Tasmanian Open Champion in 1930, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 47. He won the Tasmanian Amateur Championship in 1924, 26, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 39 and the Amateur Foursomes Championship with several partners in 1925, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 39, 47, 49, 50, and 54 (14 times in all). He was runner up in the Swiss Amateur in 1927 and was a quarter-finalist in the 1927 British Amateur Championship. Additional to the successes above he was the leading amateur in the 1928 Australian Open with a total of 303 when Fred Popplewell won with 295 at Royal Sydney. He won the Australian Amateur foursomes in 1932 partnered by Ivo Whitton. He won the Tasmanian mixed foursomes on nine occasions.

His standing in Australian Golf was acknowledged when he captained the Australian team to the UK in 1938 and the Tasmanian team on several occasions. In 1957, Louis T. Stanley, the noted British golf writer and author, asserted that the record book shows Len Nettlefold to be the finest left handed golfer in the world. What a busy golfer and hard working councillor and administrator he indeed was; and this was a fitting tribute to the left hander from down under. His skill went a long way to dispel the contention that it was impossible to play sound golf standing on the wrong side of the ball. In fact, it would appear that to be ambidextrous could be an advantage as Walter Hagen, Bobby Jones and Jesse Sweetser were naturally left handed but played right handed with some success. Ben Hogan and David Graham started playing golf left handed but switched. Further the question of left and right handedness, it was suspected that right handed golf architects always designed holes for right handed players. Len Nettlefold certainly disproved that theory by playing sound successful championship golf over international courses for over 50 years.

Louis T. Stanley, in his style study of Nettlefold, points out that the shoulder pivot was full and the impact position showed that the ball had been struck with full power. The grip was particularly firm throughout the swing and certainly at the finished follow through. His iron shots had the reputation of ruling the pin which accounted for over 3 holes in one during his playing career.

In the 1927 British Amateur there was plenty of ability in the field of just under 200 at Hoylake. In a non Walker Cup year there were few Americans and notables were Tolley, Wethered, Jamieson and Harris together with one formidable overseas player – Len Nettlefold, a left hander from Australia, who reached the

quarter finals. Bill Tweddell was responsible for beating the Australian – playing superbly in the morning he was one under for 15 holes and went on to win the Championship.

References – Australian and New Zealand Golfers Handbook, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, by Muir MacLaren.. Swing to Better Golf, by Louis T. Stanley. "The Amateur, 1885 - 1995" by John Behrend

## Mona MacLeod's Trophy

The Society is indeed grateful to record the donation of the Australian Ladies Championship trophy won by Miss Mona MacLeod in 1921 at Royal Melbourne. The cup is also engraved to record her 3 subsequent victories in 1926, 27 and 32. She was runner up in 1928 and 31. Miss MacLeod also won the Victorian Championship on 5 occasions. Miss MacLeod was for many years Vice President of the VLGU but only accepted the role of President after being petitioned by the single figure lady golfers to do so. She was President from 1948 until her death in 1953. She was a greatly loved figure in golf. Her illustrious career as golfer and administrator is fully detailed in Joseph Johnson's superb Centenary History of Royal Melbourne Golf Club.

The trophy was kindly donated by Elizabeth Serpell and was presented to the Society at the Royal Melbourne dinner by Janet Hibbins. It is now safely in the

## Acknowledgements

The Society is extremely grateful to the Golf Collectors' Society of USA, publishers of the "Bulletin", the Golf Collectors of Great Britain, publishers of "Through the Green" and the International Golf Research Institute, publishers of the Japan Golf Report for allowing material to be extracted and used in our Newsletter. Any material extracted from the above sources will be acknowledged. We hope, in time, that the arrangements will become reciprocal as our own Newsletter becomes better established.

The Golf Society is extremely grateful to our founding and honorary life member, Dr. Ken Shepherd, who subscribes to the above journals, for generously making the material available.

## Answers to Golf Trivia Quiz

1. Arnold Palmer, Lee Trevino and Tom Watson.
2. John Daly (who did, of course, return!)
3. Lee Trevino
4. Mary McKenna
5. It is held by each side for one year
6. They played three rounds of 12 holes per round
7. Henry Cotton
8. Henry Cotton
9. Ernie Els
10. Tommy Armour at Carnoustie (sorry, no cash!)