

# THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

No 38, AUGUST 2011



*Graeme Ryan and Paula Gompertz on 3rd green*

## Presidents' Trophy at Royal Melbourne

*By Ian Rennick*

31 players attended Royal Melbourne Golf Club and played the West course for the Presidents' Trophy. The scoring was very good with five players missing out on qualifying by only two shots.

The four qualifiers for the matchplay were Paula Gompertz, Graeme Ryan, Bernie Ryan and John Johnston. Paula beat John on the second hole when John had trouble in a deep bunker and took three to recover. Graeme beat Bernie when Bernie drove into the bunker on the second and Graeme got a good par.

Paula and Graeme drove well on the third hole. Paula played a magnificent 5 wood to 15 feet from the pin. Graeme's second was unlucky, missing the green on the right with a near impossible lie in front of a tussock. His third was on the green but his putt for par just missed. Paula 2 putted for the win. This is her second win for the Presidents' trophy.

### NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to:

**Morag North, Bernard Ryan, Martine Seccull, Murray Carr, Joanna Mason,  
Tony Mclean, Diana Lowe, Lindsay Brown and Dan Payne.**

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#### 13th September

Dinner at  
Royal Melbourne Golf Club

#### 8th November

Dinner at  
Commonwealth Golf Club

#### 28th November

Doug Bachli Trophy and  
AGM at Victoria Golf Club

# Early Golf Development in South Australia

by John Maddern

Adelaide was built seven miles from the coast. It is surrounded by a defined area of park lands. The shoreline of Holdfast Bay from Marino to Port Adelaide was lined by sand-hills and small seaside communities. The rain from the Mt Lofty ranges ran towards the sea along the Sturt and Torrens Rivers. The seaside sand-hills prevented the water reaching the sea and so formed extensive muddy swamps. Interspersed across these were irregular sand dunes.

This swampland area, some three miles deep, separated the farming land from the sea and was true links-land.

It was in this ideal golfing country, coupled with abundant bore water, that the major golf courses of Adelaide were developed.

The South Australian Golf association was established in 1904; it had three Associated Clubs, Adelaide and North Adelaide on the park lands and Glenelg on the swampland. In addition there were ten registered Clubs. Eight clubs were in country districts.

South Australia had a widespread rural community. Golf was played on areas near the country towns. These towns were small. The facilities were primitive and transient. Play was usually on leased rural land with little other than defined teeing areas and putting areas which were oiled sand or sandy scrapes, but rarely grassed. As a contrast, in 1915 the Port Lincoln Club produced a six hole course on the harbour edge by removing mallee trees, prickly acacia, broombush and limestone rocks.

With the cooler weather and easier access to water, country courses in the Adelaide hills were particularly popular. With the first to be formed at Mount Barker in 1879, The Hahndorf and Oakbank Clubs were both established in 1892 and the Strathalbyn Club a little later in 1901. With the exception of Oakbank these clubs played on leased rural land.

The Oakbank Club was unusual in that it was situated at the Oakbank Race Course better known for the Great Eastern Steeplechase. Golf was played along the running track. Although there were no bunkers, the guard rails and deviations around the steeplechase hurdles presented significant hazards. The club used the race club facilities for its members. This arrangement lasted a hundred years.

In Adelaide golf had its origins on the park lands. The initial Adelaide Golf Club was founded in June 1870. Sir James Fergusson arrived as Governor of the Colony in 1869 and being a Scotsman, and keen golfer, he induced others to help establish his favourite pastime. He provided the clubs and balls initially used. A site was chosen on the east park lands. Greens and tees were built up, bunkers dug and fairways marked.

The greens were tiny being some 20 feet square, all grass and cutting was done by scythe. The fairways were no more than 50 feet wide and the longest hole 120 yards.

The twenty or so members, all Scots, wearing traditional red coats, played their competitions in front of large crowds of Adelaide residents.

Unfortunately a number of difficulties began to arise. Play was restricted to a few weeks due to the short winter season. The wooden clubs often broke and replacements took several months to be imported. Also, young boys delighted in stealing the leather wrapped 'feathery' balls.

The park lands were an unfenced common area and many cows grazed there, a hindrance to the players and the greens. Sir James Fergusson's term concluded in 1873 and the Club ceased to exist in 1875.

After a hiatus The Adelaide Golf Club was reconstituted on August 11th 1892. Prior permission had been sought of the Adelaide City Council to use the north eastern park lands.

The Melbourne Golf Club provided a hole cutter and a few hole tins while the Melbourne Club's professional provided a collection of clubs and balls.

The first competition was on the 8th October 1893. Although the Club membership progressed steadily, conditions for golf in this parkland setting mirrored that experienced earlier.

The North Adelaide Golf Club, formed in 1905, played on the north western park lands. The Club leased the area for a nine hole course from the Adelaide City Council. Initially, it experienced the same problems as the other parkland courses. However in 1906 it was able to negotiate access to water from the adjacent city council water mains. In 1921 the Club entered into negotiations with the Adelaide City Council to form a Municipal links. As further land became available the course was expanded to 18 holes. The course was to be available to Club members and members of the public, and the plans for the new course were prepared and constructed under the supervision by Rufus Stewart, the future professional at Kooyonga, and winner of the Australian Open in 1927. In 1950 a second 18 holes were added on the western parkland.

The Glenelg Club was formed in March 1894. The course was laid out on leased land north of the railway line connecting Glenelg with Adelaide Railway Station. The land was a mixture of mud swamps, rushes and sandy areas, some of which were sparsely grassed. It was traversed by the Sturt River.



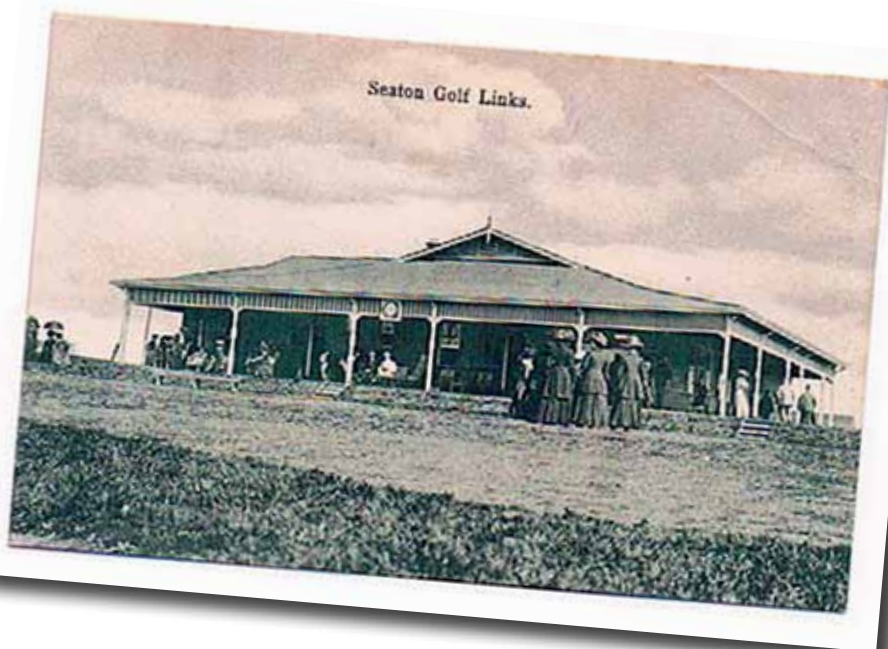
In December 1895 at a special general meeting it was resolved that the Adelaide Golf Club should amalgamate with the Glenelg Golf Club. The amalgamation was more of a takeover by the Adelaide Golf Club and was so named. Its first members were the existing members of both clubs. During the eight years at Glenelg there was a considerable improvement in playing conditions, amenities and membership, but tensions with the owners of the land continued. At a special general meeting on 7th September 1904 it was resolved that the committee should purchase land near Grange.

The Adelaide Golf Club moved to its current property named Seaton and the course was opened on June 30th 1906.

The original Glenelg Golf Club continued after the Adelaide Club departed to Seaton. However it finally ceased to exist in 1920.

In 1898 the Adelaide Golf Club joined the Australian Golf Union and staged, at Glenelg, the national championships in 1900 and 1903. These included the Australian Amateur and Ladies Championships.

In 1903 the Australian Amateur was won by D.G.Soutar. The 1910 national championships were played at Seaton. The Amateur Championship was won by the Hon. Michael Scott, while the Open Championship was won by Carnegie Clark.



The 1923 Open Championship also at Seaton was won by Tom Howard. The Amateur was won by Ivo Whitton who won two further Open Championships in Adelaide in 1926 and 1929.

1923 was a red letter year for South Australian Ladies golf when Miss Lil Gordon won the Australian Ladies Championship.

In 1893 a move was made to have lady members admitted to the Adelaide Golf Club, an initiative which was approved, with some playing restrictions, in 1894. Despite the rough playing conditions of the courses and the limitations of the conventional dress of the time, golf was popular with the ladies of Adelaide.

*continued on page 4 >>*



*Tall grass and pines frame the 11th, Royal Adelaide Golf Club*



*John Green*

### **Book Review:**

## **The Courses of Royal Melbourne**

*by John Green*

As a result of a chance conversation with a fellow golfer with aerial mapping experience, Dr John Green, a 60 year playing member at The Royal Melbourne Golf Club and amateur student of golf course design, was moved to investigate the various different courses over which Royal Melbourne Golf Club members have played in the past 100 years or so.

His diligent research has resulted in a history book with a difference. Whereas most golf club histories are about the formation of the club and the members who have played a part in its development, John's book is about the two courses, East and West, their design and the three men who had the most influence, M A 'Mick' Morcom, Alex Russell and Dr Alister MacKenzie.

What started out as a potentially dry research paper, to add to the archives of Royal Melbourne's history, has turned out to be a profusely illustrated journey around both courses with a very strong theme of the philosophy of golf course design which results in the best courses being those that provide the greatest enjoyment for the greatest number.

The Foreword is by Peter Thomson, with over 70 photographs of both courses taken by renowned golf course photographer, David Scaletti and is available direct from John Green, [jgre7934@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jgre7934@bigpond.net.au), for \$200 plus \$15 postage within Australia.

*Peter Gompertz*

## **Early Golf Development in South Australia**

*(continued from page 3)*

An outstanding influence on South Australian Golf from the early 1900s was H.L.(Cargie) Rymill. He first became a member of the Adelaide Golf Club in 1903 and rapidly became a member of the committee. He was elected Secretary in 1905.

The land at Seaton was mainly swampland with a range of sand hills running obliquely across it from the north western corner to the south east. Separating the swamps from the sand were relatively limited grassed areas on which Dr. Harry Swift and Rymill planned the course which was opened in 1908. The Rymill/Swift course remained, with minor changes, until the visit, and a subsequent plan, submitted by Dr Alister MacKenzie in 1926.

For the 1910 Championships, Rymill increased the degree of difficulty of the course digging many new bunkers including some 90 pot bunkers. In large part these changes had not been approved by the committee.

Soon after the 1910 championship Rymill was made a life member of the Club and then left the committee.

The "Royal" title already awarded to Royal Sydney and Royal Melbourne had been sought by the Adelaide Golf Club for many years and was finally granted in March 1923.

In 1922 Rymill identified a parcel of land for sale on the edge of the swampland called the "Reedbeds" at Lockleys. He immediately recognised the land as a wonderful site for a golf course. This was to become what is now known as Kooyonga.

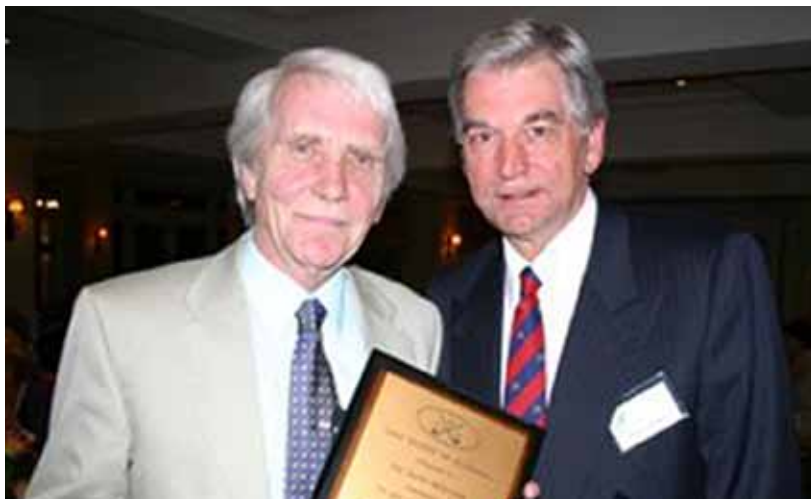
The purchase of the land and establishment of the course was approved in June 1922. At that meeting Rymill made it clear that he wanted control of the design and development of the course. Nine holes were brought into play by July 1923. In July 1924 the full 18 holes were in play.

"Cargie" was also involved in the design of two other clubs in the swampland area; the new Glenelg course north of the original site of the Adelaide Golf Club and now its current site, and Grange Golf Club West Course, north of the Seaton links.

Rymill's autocratic approach was not always appreciated. At Glenelg in 1926 he made a survey of the property and submitted a favourable report. He also submitted a course layout. This plan was not faithfully followed. Subsequently the association with Rymill was terminated by the Directors alleging a "lack of attention and supervision".

The failure to consult the Committee finally taxed the patience of the Kooyonga Committee as well, and his influence ceased in 1933.





*David Malcolm and Noel Terry*

## Vale Dr David Malcolm

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Among the ranks of golf historians, David Malcolm, who has died aged 71, was outstanding. He combined the rigour and discipline of a scholar in his meticulous research, carried out mainly in the archives of St Andrews University library and New York public library, which he then transformed into an eminently readable and stylish prose in the many articles he wrote for the Guardian, the New York Times, Golf Monthly and the Scots Magazine. It was an exacting approach which culminated, after 15 years of painstaking work, in his definitive *Tom Morris of St Andrews: The Colossus of Golf, 1821-1908* (2008), co-authored with Peter Crabtree.

A dogged and persistent detective, David also followed up the case of the St Andrews golf champion David Strath, who had emigrated to Australia in 1879 but died shortly after arrival. With the help of a co-author, Noel Terry, he located the place of burial and helped raise funds for a headstone. A handsome, posthumous, publication on the Strath family of eminent golfers is now under way.

David's sharp eye for detail was instrumental in drawing the attention of the Links Club in New York to the importance of one of its paintings, *The First Meeting of the North Berwick Golf Club* by Sir Francis Grant RA, which was, as he pointed out, the first action painting of golfers, as opposed to figures standing with clubs in hand.

He was born in Coaltown of Balgonie, Fife, and educated at Waid Academy in Anstruther, the East of Scotland Agricultural College in Edinburgh, and Edinburgh University. He joined the department of zoology at St Andrews University in 1972 before becoming a science teacher for 20 years at Madras College in St Andrews.

He was a superb raconteur, a maverick teacher, generous-spirited, great fun and great company. Doc Malc, as he was affectionately known, was involved in the re-establishment of the Kingsbarns' Golf Club in Fife and the development of its links. A keen golfer, a life member and former captain of St Andrews' New Club, he also had wide-ranging interests and enthusiasms beyond the Old Course, from poetry, literature, jazz and gardening to supporting Arsenal Football Club.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth, two sons, a stepdaughter and two grandchildren.



*Keith Wood AM*

## Vale Keith Wood AM

*By Ian Rennie*

Keith passed away on the 17th August in the Austin Hospital. He is survived by his wife Margaret. Keith was immediate past President of the Golf Society, and was awarded Life Membership in 2009.

Keith was, by profession, a Civil Engineer but spent over forty years in golf administration. He joined Green Acres in 1959 and was elected a Director of the Club from 1967 to 1979. In 1987 he became a VGA councillor, and as a delegate to the AGU, became their representative to the Golf Society of Australia. He was President of the Society for four years before retiring in 2007.

Keith's enthusiasm showed in everything he did, and was rewarded in many ways. He received the Order of Australia in 1989 for services to Local Government Engineering, the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 for Services to Golf, and Life Membership at Green Acres Golf Club and the Golf Society of Australia. He was an enthusiastic supporter of all Golf Society activities. Keith was a gentleman and a gentle man who will be missed by all who knew him.

## The Last Word

Most golf shots are approximations of some kind. Ever tried? Ever failed? No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better!

*Samuel Beckett*

*- Nobel Laureate, playwright and poet*

# Vale Seve

By Peter Gompertz

May the 7th 2011 was the saddest day for those in the golfing community who value imagination and flair over technical prowess. At 2.10 in the morning, at his home in Spain, Seve Ballasteros lost the battle of his life, 'my 6th major'; succumbing to an incurable brain tumour.

There are four or five golfers, at the most, who will forever be referred to by a single name and Seve was up there with them. My wife Paula, and I, were privileged to watch him play in the US Open at Shinnecock Hills in 1995. He didn't play nearly enough in Australia but thanks to television, who can forget that teenage golfer giving the grown ups a run for their money at his first Open Championship at Royal Birkdale in 1976, and that immortal picture of a fist pumping Seve as he won the first of his major championships ( from the car park! ), at Royal Lytham three years later.

Born into a poor family who managed to become professional golfers by starting off as caddies, Seve was given his first club, a 3 iron, when he was 8 years old. Not allowed on to his local course, at Pedrena, Seve taught himself to play by hitting pebbles off the wet sands of the nearby beach, or playing the course by moonlight, at a time when golf was a distant third behind bullfighting and football as favoured sports in Spain.



*Seve Ballasteros Champion on the golf course, gentleman off it*

His funeral procession was led by a Scots green keeper from the Pedrena Golf Club playing the bagpipes, and attended by six Ryder Cup captains. As his coffin was carried into the small local church applause rang out almost as if he had walked on to the 18th green of a major championship. Apart from the traditional flowers the altar was decorated with crossed 3 irons. Nobody was surprised when Spain was hit by two small earthquakes on the same day.

## Dinner at Woodlands Golf Club

by Ian Rennick

A dinner meeting was held at Woodlands Golf Club on the 30th May, attended by 95 members and friends including Peter and Mary Thomson. Matt Komienksi, Executive Director of the 9th Presidents Cup, was the guest speaker and spoke on the history of the competition and the importance of the event in world golf. The teams are always selected by the players' world ranking, with the team Captains having two picks from outside the rankings. The players do not get paid, but profits from the event are distributed equally to them for their chosen charity. In the eight years of the competition \$27 million has been distributed. Matt has been organising such events for several years and has been living in Melbourne, with his family, for the



*Peter Thomson, Matt Komienksi, Ian Rennick, Lindsay Brown, Murray Copley*

past two years preparing for this event. He also spoke about some of the famous golfers that had played in the past and showed a short video on highlights.

The gold trophy was on display and most people had their photograph taken with it. Woodlands provided an excellent dinner and the night was a most enjoyable one.





## Don Lawrence Memorial

The 2011 Don Lawrence Day was held at Woodlands Golf Club on Tuesday 21st June which is of course the shortest day of the year. The day was also the coldest day of the year (so far) and the lazy wind only let up when a misty rain started at 4pm reminiscent of the 'blasted heath' where Macbeth stumbled upon the three witches foretelling his future. Players showed great reluctance to leave the club house after sandwiches and a hot drink, but once out on the course it was quite enjoyable with some wonderful scores recorded.

39 players played in a four ball best ball stableford competition with three new Society members and a number of visitors.

Muriel Lawrence (Don's widow) attended and found a warm place by the fire. This was a good spot because as the players came in from the cold they went straight to the fire to warm up, and she was able to chat with them.

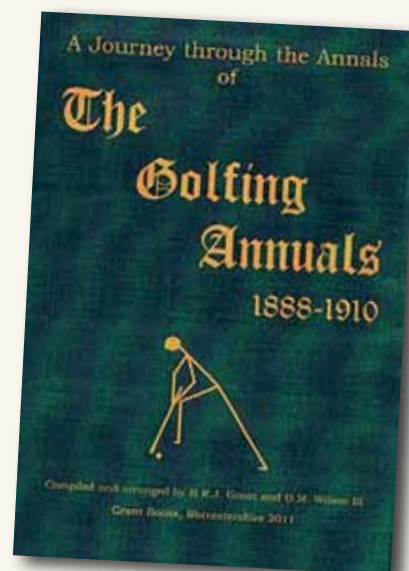
Past President, Daryl Cox spoke about Don Lawrence stating that amateur golf in Don's day received a lot of press mainly due to his influence with the editors of the daily papers. The recent win in the British Amateur Championship, by Victorian Bryden McPherson, received little coverage in the papers but in Don's day it would have been front page news.

The Don Lawrence Memorial Salver was won by Ian Rennick and Frank Davis with 48 points. Second were Roger Westwood and Jim Black on 46 points, and in third place Peter Swan and Morag North with 45 points

Nearest the pin on the 11th was Havel Rowe and at the 17th, Tony Lang.

The longest, straightest, drive on the 10th was won by Brendan Moloney.

## Book Review:



## A Journey through the Annals of The Golfing Annals 1888-1910

*Edited and compiled by  
H R J Grant and D M Wilson III*

In the pantheon of golfing memorabilia The Golfing Annals rate up there with a Philp long nosed club, or an original painting of Tom Morris. Published every year from 1888 to 1910, a library with the whole set of 23 became the Holy Grail of golf collecting. Friendships foundered when a rare copy went to the highest bidder, the odd love affair was broken up by careless pillow talk and there are still collectors today looking for the one missing copy. Today, those of us who could never consider daring to start collecting them can, for a modest sum, spend our winter evenings dipping into this volume and read about how, and where, new courses were laid out (with illustrated course maps) and how to play them. We can read some of the great writers on the game and enjoy the verses and songs which were such an integral part of an evening after a match on the links 120 years ago. There are chapters on the Amateurs, the Professionals and the club makers, as well as essays on Golf Architecture by Horace Hutchinson and John Anderson.

The authors write with knowledge, passion and wit on the era and the verses capture the age of hickory shafts, unraked bunkers, and the very soul of golf on the links.

Published in a limited, hard copy, edition of 450 copies, on high quality paper this essential item for every golf book lover is available from [www.grantbooks.co.uk](http://www.grantbooks.co.uk) for £45 plus postage of £8.

*Peter Gompertz*



*Graham Taylor*

## Historians at Rosebud Country Club

*Report of Club Historians Meeting 25th July 2011.*

The July meeting was held at Rosebud Country Club to encourage all the Mornington Peninsula clubs to attend.

Dick Kirby spoke on the aims of the Golf Society and listed the many projects that were being undertaken.

The Captain of Rosebud Country Club, Graham Taylor, was the first speaker and he related the history of the Club.

It was formed 50 years ago when land was purchased on Boneo Road by a group of golfers who were playing at Rosebud Park Golf Club. They wanted to build a better course on private land. Graham spoke of the changes and challenges that have occurred over the years where they now have two wonderful courses with 1200 members.

For the 50th anniversary, a Club history is being written by Bill Hitchings and he is keen to talk to anyone with an interesting story.

Moirá Drew spoke about displays in a clubhouse and the care that must be taken to avoid the problems of sunlight, heat, steam and ventilation in cabinets.

In the "show and tell" segment Ian Rennick showed five hickory golf clubs that had been donated to the Golf Society by John Snell. The clubs are of particular interest as they are stamped R S (Dick) Banks. Dick Banks was a Victorian professional from 1894 to 1930. He started as a professional/ green keeper at Royal Melbourne in 1894; went to Kew Golf Club for a number of years, and then Yarra Yarra, before working at Albert Park Golf Club until his death in 1930.

The book on the history of Green Acres Golf Club was shown, and the author Brendan Moloney commented on its production. He congratulated Rosebud Country Club on the professional way they are approaching their project.

Cliff George showed two interesting publications. The first was a catalogue of old golf clubs and memorabilia with an estimated price for each item; the second booklet detailed the collection of balls and clubs of Royal Sydney Golf Club.

The next meeting is scheduled for October.

*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.*