

# THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 69, JULY 2020



## Mallacoota Golf Club - Victoria's Golf Community steps up

March 2020

*By Adam Lamb (Course Superintendent, Barwon Heads Golf Club)*

*Reading an article recently, **The Recovery from Black Saturday** by Marysville Golf Club Superintendent Kellan Fiske, I was reminded about the heartbreaking event that tore the Marysville Golf Club apart during the Black Saturday fires in early 2009. The impact it had on their community was profound, and the slow rebuild they endured to where they are now, arduous. It was a reminder of how willing the members of the Victorian Golf Club Superintendents Association (VGCSA) were to jump in and support their own, as they did on that occasion.*

This was again the case at Mallacoota Golf and Country Club (MGCC) last summer. A course with no paid course staff, and no-one with an official title; just volunteers and a 'head volunteer' to run the show.

To see their course devastated by an inferno in a few hours, would have been the same feeling experienced by Fiske in Marysville back in 2009. How difficult it must be to return to their beloved course without feeling a sense of loss and despair.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

(subject to change due to Covid restrictions)

**Sunday 16 August PM event**

**Annual Hickory Day  
- Frank Shepherd and Burtta Cheney  
Trophies**

Kingston Heath Golf Club

**Tuesday 8 September PM event**

**Don Lawrence Trophy**  
Woodlands Golf Club

## HICKORY HEROES

Dates For Your Diary

Hickory clubs available for hire  
from the GSA

**Sunday 19 July**

Frankston - 1pm Tee off

**Monday 24 August**

Sandhurst - 1pm Tee off

**Sunday 6 September**

Sorrento

**Monday 7 September**

Royal Melbourne

**Tuesday 20 October**

Metropolitan

**November**

Date to be advised

**Wednesday 16 December**

Woodlands

*Details for the days later in the program  
will be released when finalised.*

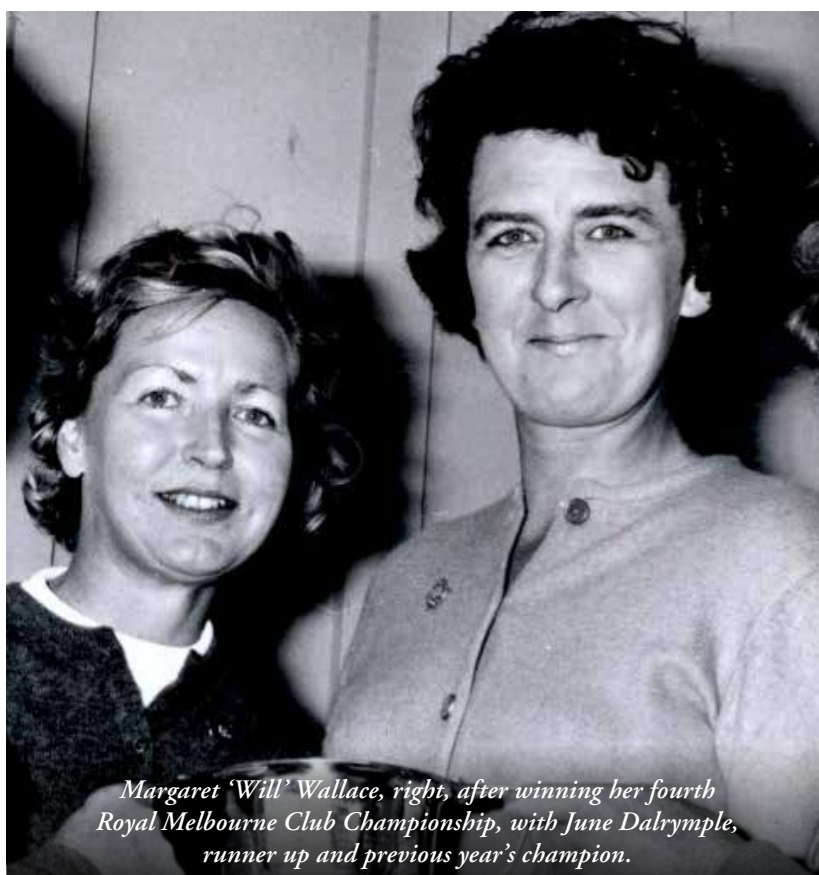
*In an uncertain year for events,  
keep an eye on our Website and Facebook  
for details and updates:*

*[www.golfsocietyaust.com](http://www.golfsocietyaust.com)*

*Facebook group:*

***Golf Society of Australia***

*[Facebook.com/groups/golfsocietyofaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/groups/golfsocietyofaustralia)*



*Margaret 'Will' Wallace, right, after winning her fourth  
Royal Melbourne Club Championship, with June Dalrymple,  
runner up and previous year's champion.*

## Vale: Remembering Golf Society Member Margaret Reid, née Wallace

*Long standing GSA Member Margaret Reid passed away on  
11 May 2020.*

Margaret had a long career as a champion golfer, including as a member of the Victorian State team and winning the South Australian Ladies Amateur Championship in 1967. A year earlier, she had set a course record of 71 on the West Course of Royal Melbourne and earned a Laurel Wreath Brooch awarded by the Victorian Ladies Golf Union when a player first equals or betters the scratch score of an ALGU course. She won nine Club Championships at Royal Melbourne, and two at Barwon Heads.

## Vale

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

*Margaret Reid*

*Kevin Castwood*

*Robert Rowe*

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



# President's Report

By Graeme Ryan



*We are living in strange times during a pandemic when face masks, hand sanitisers, social distancing and travel restrictions impact us daily. These are things we have never encountered before, yet hopefully, when this crisis passes, never will again.*

Yet sanity still prevails and some activities, such as golf, are possible on a limited basis. At the time of writing, there is much uncertainty about our future and when these extraordinary circumstances will come to an end. Who knows?

One thing is certain, the big decisions will be made for us by others. So, we can only conform to the rules laid down, do as we are told, and meet our needs and wishes when permitted by those entrusted with judgment, authority and hopefully, wisdom.

For the Society, your committee has worked diligently to cope with the uncertainties and been forced to cancel, re-schedule and indefinitely postpone several functions and events. We can only hope for a return to normality soon. If that happens within the next few months, you can expect a busy time late this year.

With the construction of the Australian Golf Centre at Sandringham going ahead, we are well advanced with our planning to move the collection to a museum and library there from the warehouse in South Melbourne. This move will be a most significant advance for the role of the Society and highlight its responsibility to Golf Australia for the management and curation of that collection and library.

It will also bring into sharp focus our relationship with Golf Australia and its ongoing affiliation with us. In my view, changes will be necessary to ensure proper and cost-effective management of the rapidly growing collection. In recent years, we have made giant strides in organising and cataloguing the thousands of items in the collection and library. These have been made at considerable costs financially and in time and effort by committed volunteers from our membership.

In this issue of The Long Game a wide selection of topics is covered. These range from places, people and other matters which I'm sure will be of interest to members. Editor Greg Bain has again done an outstanding job in assembling pieces from many sources and contributors to produce another fine newsletter. Enjoy.

## Welcome to New members

*We warmly welcome the following new members to the Golf Society*

Dale Lynch  
Grant Nicholson  
Andrea Watson  
Christian Tanner  
Harrison Gilbert  
Harry Goakes  
Llewellyn Ryan

## GET INVOLVED!

*As Golf Society members, there are many ways to get involved.*

While there may not be many opportunities for us all to get together on course, at our forums or dinners; we are still working for you behind the scenes.

Volunteers from our membership are always welcome.

*Here's how you can get involved:*

**Learn about golf history and help build our collection**

We currently need helpers to sort and catalogue our expanding collection of golf memorabilia.

Email: [golfsocietyaust@gmail.com](mailto:golfsocietyaust@gmail.com)

**Join the conversation**

We also encourage you to join our Facebook group, and be a part of the daily conversation about Australian golf history. Add your own stories and experiences for others to share.

Go to: [www.facebook.com/groups/golfsocietyofaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/groups/golfsocietyofaustralia)

**Free golf books offer for all members**

Duplicate copies of donated golf books available free of charge.

Over 300 books on offer to pick up from our collections store.  
(We can also post to you at your expense).

Contact us for a list:  
[golfsocietyaust@gmail.com](mailto:golfsocietyaust@gmail.com)

**Keep in touch via our website**  
[www.golfsocietyaust.com](http://www.golfsocietyaust.com)

# A donation with a difference... *a private scorecard collection*

By Kim Hastie, Secretary

*The Golf Society was delighted to receive by donation a significant collection of Australian golf course scorecards.*

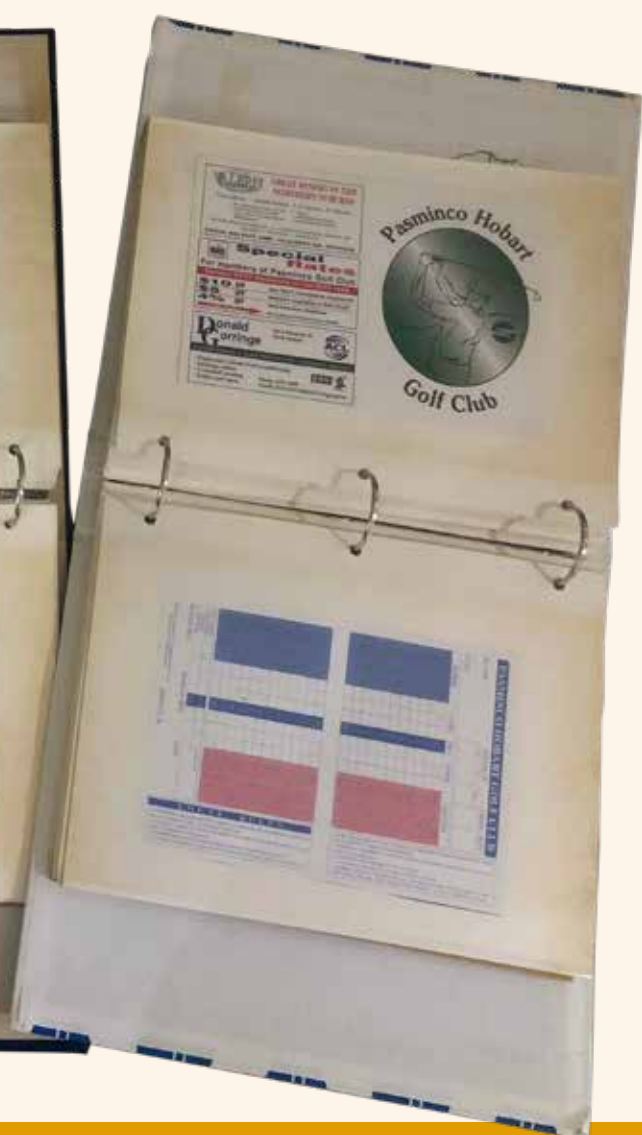
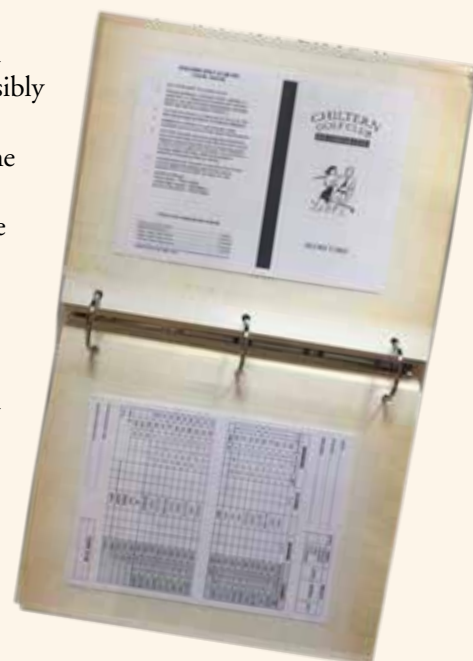
This meticulously preserved private collection was donated by Philip Sawyer and his family. The score cards are unmarked and well preserved in approximately twenty photo albums. All States are represented except for the Northern Territory and some of the albums are even sorted into regions.

Philip grew up in the Warrnambool area. He was a teacher by profession and spent most of his life in the education system. Later in his life he lived in the Sunbury area with his family. He was one of the first members of the Goonawarra Golf Club, Sunbury. Philip was an avid golfer and with his wife travelled a lot and has played most of the courses represented.

With the release and increased use of the mobile phone scoring systems due Covid-19 it makes these cards even more special.

They are a wonderful record to have as possibly the 'traditional card' becomes a thing of the past. It is planned to have a selection of the albums on display at various events for attendees to enjoy. They are certainly worth a look and will no doubt bring back memories and raise discussion for many.

*The Golf Society sincerely thanks the Sawyer family for this donation.*



# Ride the boom, we deserve it

by Mike Clayton, courtesy of Golf Australia

***Who'd have thought it would take a confounded virus to do what no one since Greg Norman has been able to do?***

The golf prophets of doom – and there have been far too many of them – are, along with everyone else, seeing golf boom like never before.

It's outdoors, seemingly safe and social distancing isn't a problem if the tee shots of the people I play with are any measure.

Courses are full as so many find there isn't much else to do in this weird world – not outdoors anyway.

There are anecdotes aplenty evidencing a boom, not just here but in the United States and Britain as well.

Woking, one of my favourite English courses, has had more than 80 membership applications since April. "That's two years' worth," beamed club pro Carl Bianco.

Fraserburgh, (extra points for anyone getting the Australian connection) the seventh oldest club in the world and the oldest north of St Andrews, has, the local paper reports, "seen a boom of 50 new members".

For anyone heading to Scotland – when next we can, of course – it's one of those brilliant "second-tier" links you shouldn't miss. You'll probably get five games for the price of one at one of the more famous courses and have more fun doing it.

St Andrews Beach, one of the many brilliant courses on the Mornington Peninsula, had more players in June than they did in January at the height of the season and half a dozen extra hours of daylight.

Just as for every other public course reliant on players, the lockdown hurt. But the unprecedented volume of winter play has helped the bottom line immeasurably.

"No local football to play and no crowds allowed at the AFL has really helped us," manager Adam Hayes said.

If nothing else, it proves golf's old truism that "every shot makes

someone happy". Football's loss is golf's gain and we shouldn't feel bad about it given football has driven every other game out of the sports pages with nary a care.

In another life, Matt Sullivan caddied for me in Europe but came home in search of more reliable employment and finished up as national sales manager for Callaway.

"It's crazy out there in every category and for every brand. It's not just clubs, but balls, hats, shoes and bags. Footballers are taking it up because it's the only sport they can play," Sullivan said.

One anecdote he recounted was of two blokes in Colac who walked into a golf shop and announced: "We hate golf, but can we have a set of clubs please?!"

The key, of course, is for golf to provide an environment where they grow to not hate it and eventually graduate to at least liking it ... then being addicted enough to keep playing and not have the clubs rust in the back of the garage.

Said Sullivan: "Normally our custom club sets take five days to assemble and ship. Now it's taking 15 and it's the same at Titleist and across most other brands, too."

Both have big testing centres in Carlsbad (California) and Sullivan tells of a local public course booking four-balls from seven in the morning until five in the afternoon every day for a month and not having a spare slot.

Nick Arnold is Sullivan's counterpart at Titleist.

"The first month when we were all locked down was obviously tough for everyone, but since it's opened up there are lots of people playing and the game has to embrace them and put out the welcome sign," Arnold said.

"It needs to adapt to people who are time-poor, but lots of people have come to realise what a great game it is."

Lukas Michel, the US Mid-Am champion, was scheduled to play the Masters in April and last month's US Open, but instead the 25-year-old

Masters of Mechanical Engineering is whiling away his time waiting for Winged Foot in September and Augusta in November by working at MGA, the driving range not far from the heart of Melbourne's Sandbelt.

"People are walking in and asking to hire clubs, which we can't do for obvious reasons. They walk out, buy a few clubs from the golf shop near Moorabbin Airport, come back and wait until they can get a bay to hit. We've never seen anything like it," Michel said.

A friend of mine is a member at Sorrento, Victoria and The National. A couple of weekends ago he wanted to play on Saturday and he couldn't get a game at any of the six golf courses.

His is a first-world problem and don't feel sorry for him, but it's a measure of how members have embraced their clubs and made up for the couple of months when the gates of Victorian clubs were closed.

In the United States, a country with a golf culture of driving around courses in little carts, one benefit has been more golf played on foot. Image, such a quaint way to play the game.

Companies making carry bags and selling what we know as "buggies" (push-carts in the US) are seeing unprecedented demand with sales 4-8 times what they were a year ago, one source revealed.

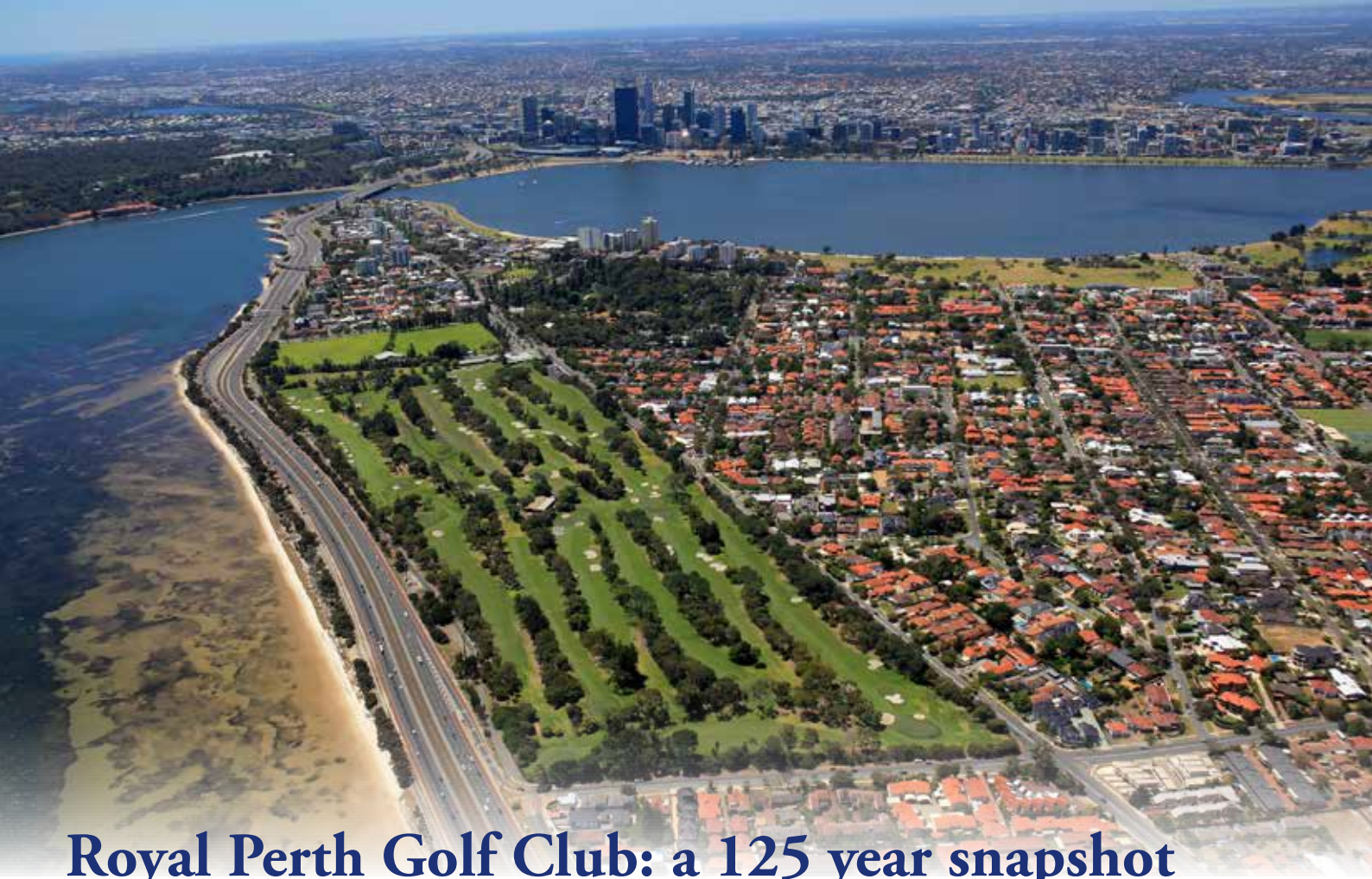
At a time when we all crave to get back to some normality, golf is a game able to create that new normality.

Instead of talking it down, arguing it's "too slow", "too hard", "too expensive", "too stuffy", "boring" and a "game for old men", we can hope people see it's none of these things.

Rather, it is a game for life, one played for fun, never mastered but where there is always someone worse than you and always someone better.

*Mike Clayton is a regular writer for Golf Australia.*





## Royal Perth Golf Club: a 125 year snapshot

*By Paul Genoni, Chair, Archives Committee, Royal Perth Golf Club*

*The 1890s witnessed the first sustained flourishing of golf in Australia. Many of the clubs that progressed to be 'Royal' clubs were either the first, or among the first, to be established in their various cities. Royal Melbourne traces its beginnings to 1891, Royal Sydney to 1893, Royal Hobart and Royal Queensland both to 1896. In Western Australia the decade produced the Perth Golf Club, founded in 1895, which eventually became Royal Perth Golf Club (RPGC) in 1937.*

The club and the current course, however, have their origins in different decades, and indeed different centuries. The first course was established on Burswood Island, an islet created by a meander in the Swan River close to the site of the colonial city. Playing golf at the time was preceded by a short boat ride. Sport lovers attending events at Perth's recently completed Optus Stadium are almost on the site of this original course.

The low lying and swampy conditions made play difficult however, and in 1901 the Club moved to a nine-hole course at nearby Ascot. Once again member dissatisfaction with the unsatisfactory terrain prevailed, and a final move was made to the current site on the South Perth peninsula, with the new course opening in August 1908. The result was another course built on flat riverside land and close to the city. It is a feature of current-day Royal Perth that it lies in closer proximity to the CBD than any other major Australian course.

The South Perth course was also originally nine holes and being built on an extensive tract of Western Australian sand it initially relied upon 'natural' bunkering for hazards. It was extended to eighteen holes, bogey 82, in 1913, but changes were almost immediately undertaken in 1914 to produce a par 77 course.

This situation was also short-lived, as the Great War led to a reduction in the manpower that supplemented a flock of 500 sheep in keeping the course in peak condition, and by 1917 was reduced to fifteen holes.

Further changes post-war led to a gradually reducing par, from 78 in 1925, to 74 in 1927, and after some major reconstruction in 1934, to par 73. No sooner had the course seemingly settled into its final state when war again intervened, with some of the land being resumed for military use. This included the creation of a rifle range, and the building of slit trenches on several holes to provide community protection in case of air attacks. The remnants of the latter can still be detected. Golf, however, went on, with members who joined the services given honorary membership, and the course was thrown open to Australian and Allied servicemen and women.

The numerous changes, coupled with the small plot of land on which the course is built (30 hectares, or 74 acres), produced a final layout with several small peculiarities. One of these is that the modern par 72 course is played from the clubhouse as eight holes and ten holes, rather than two nines. >>



## Royal Perth Golf Club: a 125 year snapshot

*Continued from page 6...*

The par is also unevenly arranged, with an opening nine of par 37, with three par 5s and a second nine of par 35 with the only par 5 being the closing hole.

Despite Royal Perth's modest length by current standards (6038 metres), it is defended by dense kikuyu fairways, and presents many challenges due to its narrow fairways and small, well protected greens. Being exposed to the river also provides another challenge, as the course bears the brunt of Perth's strong prevailing south-west breeze, the famed 'Fremantle Doctor', particularly through the spring and summer months. The wind, the riverside location, and the sand-based construction utilising mounding and hollows for variations, are features that have led to Royal Perth being described as a 'links'. While the heavy planting of trees in recent decades has gradually produced a more park-like effect, it is possible to see that the original course designers and their successors worked to a template provided by classic Scottish seaside courses. One of those who has advised on recent course developments is life-member Terry Gale, arguably the finest golfer the club has produced.

Post-war improvements in air travel finally allowed Royal Perth a place on the national stage as a site for major tournaments. Professional tournaments notably include the 1949 Australian PGA Championship, which gave Kel Nagle his first career title; the WA Open on numerous occasions (winners include Nagle, Ian Baker-Finch, Ian Stanley, and RPGC member Stephen Leaney); and the Handa Australian Senior Open between 2009 and 2012. For amateur golf the women led the way with RPGC hosting their national championships in 1953, 1959 and 1965. The men soon followed, with the course being the site for the Australian Amateur Championship in 1967, 1979, and 1985.

*Kel Nagle, 1949 Australian PGA Championship*



*Women golfers c1915*

The club also hosted the men's Interstate Teams event four times between 1967 and 1995, and the women returned for the Australian Women's Stroke Play Championship in 2002.

Unsurprisingly Royal Perth has received numerous high-profile visitors over the decades. The course was for many years a favourite of visiting national sporting teams including cricketers. This was something made public when all-rounder Greg Matthews was dismissed from the first tee for failing to meet dress requirements. Other visitors who are often recalled include South African Bobby Locke in 1938, in a rare pre-war visit by a major international golfer (he was defeated in an exhibition match by the legendary Dan Cullen, then a local professional), and Douglas Bader, who played the course in 1950, when his international fame was at its peak. Bader was undertaking a tour of the Eastern States and responded to a plea to come to Perth to support several children who had lost limbs in a recent bus crash.

In 2020 RPGC is celebrating its 125th anniversary, and the Club was to have hosted national and international visitors at events in April and October. Unfortunately, these plans have been derailed (or deferred) by COVID-19, and as I write Royal Perth is still returning to normal, after a period with a closed clubhouse and social play for members only.





# Mallacoota Golf Club - Victoria's Golf Community

*Continued from page 1...*

While some aspiring greenkeepers have gained wonderful experience by working at major tournaments at big venues around the world, nothing compares to the experience of helping those who have effectively had their homes torn apart, and in some cases, the life of someone they love. To witness a community in crisis provides an opportunity to support their recovery and be part of a powerful, collective strength.

In early-February I received a phone call from one of our golf club members, who wanted to help MGCC, but didn't know where to start. The VGCSA was asked if someone could make a phone call to MGCC and gain a sense of where they may require some assistance to get back on track.

After a discussion on the phone with John Bell, 'head volunteer' it was obvious they were putting their hand out to seek assistance. Their golf course was in bad shape following the bushfires and they needed some direction, at least a starting point. They did, however, know their patch of turf intimately. These guys are the ultimate turf maintenance "Google warriors", who have learnt most of what they know by trial and error, via the internet.

The call out to VGCSA members went via Facebook, and it didn't take long for the interest to roll in, companies were willing to donate whatever they could to help and clubs who normally attract volunteers for tournaments were willing to deploy some staff to help out on the ground at MGCC.

A trip to Mallacoota and a course inspection in mid-February to put together a priority list of where the VGCSA could help, highlighted that the bulk of the work to clean up the course following the fires required removal of massive areas of burnt Melaleucas and fallen Eucalypt trees and limbs. MGCC was already liaising with a local tree contractor to work on the clean-up. The VGCSA and club members could best help with turf re-establishment particularly on greens, advice on their non-operational pump system, replacement of damaged and burnt sprinkler heads and valve boxes.

The work we completed included turfing 130m<sup>2</sup> of bare areas on five greens, and overseeded and topdressed seven couch grass greens with bent grass. John Inglis, the Kingston Heath mechanic, spent the day with several regular Mallacoota (bush mechanic) volunteers and gave them a master class in machinery maintenance. The gear they had was in pretty good shape, just requiring a bit of TLC and fine tuning. John's guidance was invaluable.

MGCC is investigating details and quotes for a new pump station and an irrigation control unit, hopefully installed before next summer. They will also look into an irrigation system upgrade in the near future, potentially through a government grant to assist in funding the project. Only greens and tees are currently irrigated on the automatic system, with no fairway irrigation. They currently receive a 'steady' flow of recycled water, at no cost to them.

The Mallacoota Golf and Country Club appreciated the work we did. It will help fast-track the recovery of their greens and will see the greens surfaces improve when the bent grass thickens up over the next few months.

Mallacoota asked us to pass on their thanks to the golf clubs and companies for the donations, assistance and guidance.



*Mallacoota GCC Clubhouse and humble golf shop were both very lucky to escape the fire.*





## Volunteers and their clubs:

- Adam Lamb, Barwon Heads
- Shane Greenhill, Sorrento
- John Angliss, Kingston Heath Mechanic
- Ryland Tewes, Kingston Heath
- Ben Williams, Commonwealth
- Caleb Johnson, Commonwealth

## The companies who made product donations were:

- Greg Sinclair, from Rural and Turf (valve boxes, irrigation expertise)
- Oasis Turf – Matt Steven (seed)
- K&B Adams – Mark Eardley (fungicide)
- GTS – Andrew Boyle (fertiliser and wetting agent)
- NuTurf – Chris Newman (seed and fertiliser)
- Bayer – Craig Burleigh (fungicide)

Support from golf communities throughout Victoria, and some as far away as Mackay in Queensland have run charity events and raised funds for Mallacoota GC.

The MGCC Committee of Management would like to acknowledge the many clubs and individuals who organised fundraisers, and donated money to assist Mallacoota Golf Club in the recovery process.

A total of \$64,000 has been received and we are very grateful to the following clubs:

- Anglesea Golf Club
- Bannockburn Golf Club
- Barwon Heads Golf Club
- Hamilton Golf Club
- Hervey Bay Golf Club
- Horsham Golf Club
- Ivanhoe Ladies Golf Club
- Keysborough Golf Club
- Kyneton Golf Club
- Pambula Merimbula Golf Club
- Rich River Golf Club
- Queenscliff Golf Club
- South East Qld District Golf Assn.
- Spring Valley Golf Club
- Strathallan Golf Club
- Veterans Golf Club

### Information for Members and Guests 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Our heartfelt sympathy and thoughts go out to members and friends who have lost their homes and lifelong belongings, and those people that have been impacted in some way, due to the recent bush fire that hit Mallacoota and district communities on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019. Homes, property and infrastructure were lost and, whilst power has just been restored to the central business district, others in the community are still without power.

Fortunately, the Club House incurred no damage and is operational. The kitchen is operating and serving meals, and the Bar is open. However, the golf course has suffered significant damage to fairways, greens, equipment and watering system.

**Risk Assessment**  
A Risk Assessment has been undertaken of the course and surrounds, and a decision has been made to close the Golf Course until further notice. The Australian Army personnel haven taken over using the first fairway to land aircraft, in order to service the town generators. These aircraft create a powerful amount of down draft, spraying stones, dust and rubble. As a result, vehicles, boats and caravans parked on the 7<sup>th</sup> fairway may be at risk of damage.

People who have vehicles, boats and caravans parked on the 7<sup>th</sup> fairway, are strongly advised to move them to the old soccer oval at the Golf Club, to avoid any damage. Alternatively, if more convenient, people may relocate their vehicles to the corner of Bastion Point Road and Genoa Road.

The committee anticipates that the front nine holes may be playable in the near future. However, the back nine holes are considered unsafe, due to many large trees which have fallen, and other trees severely damaged.

**Golf Club Insurance**  
Malcolm Hills from Ausbrokers Countrywide Insurance has been very supportive and proactive in getting the Club up and running. Assessors will be attending MGCC to undertake an impact assessment of damages to course and surrounds in the next few weeks. More information will be provided to members in due course.

**Wildlife**  
There have been many injured animals, and a veterinary crew have been actively removing and/or tending to them.

**Hervey Bay Golf Club**  
Our friends at Hervey Bay Golf Club contacted the committee and will be running a fund raiser for Mallacoota Golf Club on Australia Day. We are extremely grateful for their support (see attached flyer). Further, Hervey Bay and MGCC have entered into a reciprocal rights agreement.

**Membership**  
As you would be aware, the Golf Club relies heavily on memberships, green fees and trade to function. Though Membership Fees are due this month, the Committee would like to invite any member who is experiencing hardship due to loss, please contact committee member Celia Wallace on 0438 580 633 to discuss alternative arrangements. Take Care everyone.

Bruce Gaudin  
President (on Behalf of the Committee of Management)

*Thanks also to Celia Wallace, Committee of Management at MGCC for access to images which help tell the story.*



*Volunteers and club members*



*4th: An area through the middle to of the green 50m<sup>2</sup> of turf*



*8th: Some fairly weak and patchy areas, 40m<sup>2</sup> of turf required, no areas on green have been oversown.*



# Covid-19: a golf club snapshot

By Greg Bain GSA Editor

**Victoria, March 2020. Things were looking grim.**

*"All golf clubs and facilities should close as soon as practicable until April 13, 2020," Golf Australia Chairman Andrew Newbold wrote, citing the Victorian Government's prohibition of all sports gatherings, including golf clubs.*

The Covid-19 pandemic had now begun to disrupt the golfing community around Australia. The emergency called on our community spirit, to look after each other, and adhere to public health orders. Anthems of "...all in this together" hammered the airwaves. A monumental effort to hibernate and save clubs, the hub of many communities, was in full swing.

We contacted a range of clubs in Victoria and beyond to gauge their response to the golf club closures through autumn. Here are some of their responses from club CEOs.

**What have been the most critical challenges you have faced, and how have you met them?**

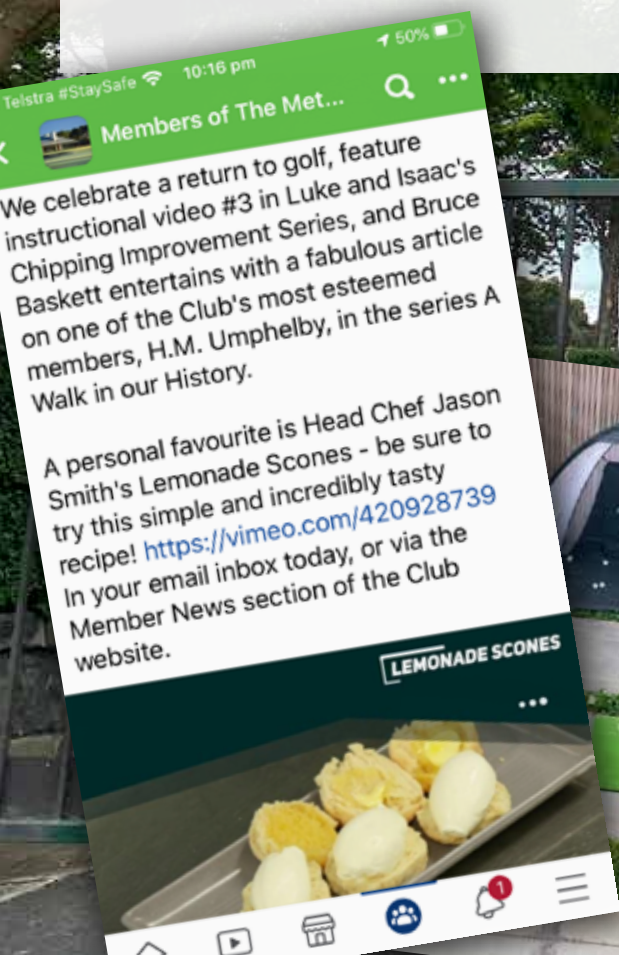
## *Royal Melbourne Golf Club*

The key challenge we faced was uncertainty. The information and directives were changing rapidly and there were mixed messages from the Federal and State Governments that made decision making difficult.

The hardest situation to manage was the communication with staff. Like everyone they wanted answers and reassurance around their livelihood and the introduction of the JobKeeper scheme eventually provided that relief. It was obvious the we would need to recalibrate the business with the loss of our external revenue (international green fees, corporate golf days and member's guest fees). By developing our four financial scenarios around closure we were able to forecast the effects of the Club being closed over time and plan for our response to each situation. In times of crisis I believe it is important to make decisions (to take action and move forward) and then continue to re-adjust to what is often an unfolding situation (keeping up with legislation).

With a changing world it is important to select the right focus areas. Our first priority was the safety and well-being of our members and employees. Secondly, to provide an operating framework based on stages so that we could break down what we needed to do into smaller steps and prioritise them by how urgent they were. This was done in a climate of information overload where it seemed like every minute, we were inundated with a relentless flood of information about COVID-19. While having access to the latest news is undoubtedly a blessing, in order to make sense of all the conflicting information out there, we needed to take a moment to step back and evaluate whether the information we were reading was fact-checked and from a reliable source. For example, information on the JobKeeper program we soon realised needed to be from the ATO only.

>>







### Metropolitan Golf Club

It's fair to say we've had a few! The biggest ongoing challenge has been managing our valued staff, particularly early days before JobKeeper was announced and we were still in close to full operation with large numbers of new cases being recorded. We then had a member who unfortunately contracted the virus and then visited the Club the day after (unaware that he had the virus and had no symptoms). That prompted an action plan that was new to us and the commitment of significant time and energy to comfort staff, members, and particularly the impacted member and their family. We were particularly conscious of the fact that the infected member contracted it by no fault of his own, so it was important to support them.

Communication in dealing with the COVID-19 impact was key. Initially, it was about getting around and seeing staff in all departments (with social distancing), and then moving to group zoom calls. We also had to establish plans, and just as importantly, make quick decisions.

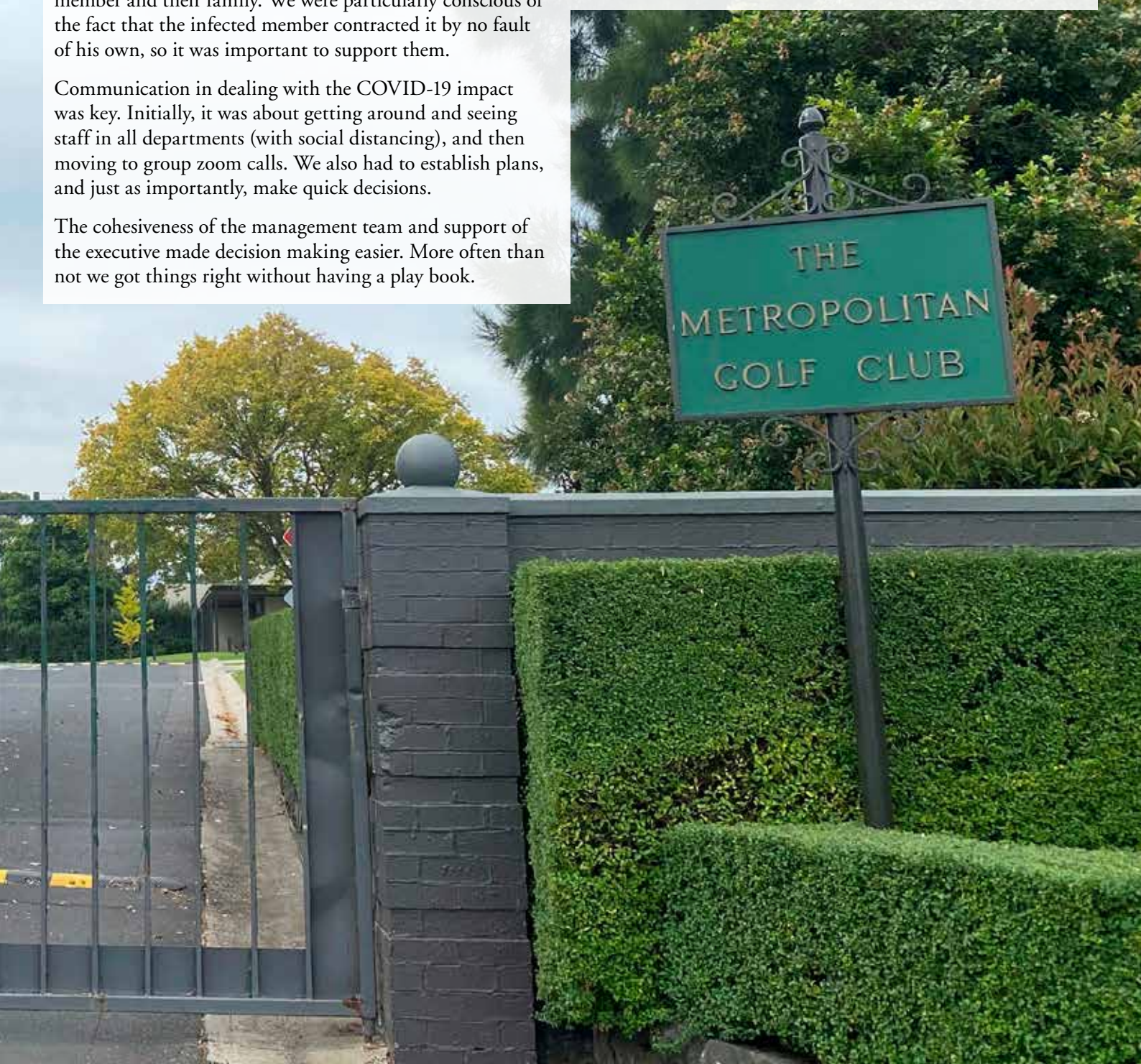
The cohesiveness of the management team and support of the executive made decision making easier. More often than not we got things right without having a play book.

### Sandhurst Club

Staying connected to members and staff has been a challenge for the Sandhurst Club. Communication tools such as the website, emails and social media have allowed us to stay connected with stakeholders of the business.

The Government JobKeeper assistance program allowed the club to remain in touch with staff and redeploy them in other areas of the business, providing benefits to members and purpose for the staff.

*continued on page 12 >>*





# Covid-19: a golf club snapshot

*Continued from page 11...*

## How have you maintained connection with your members?

### *Royal Melbourne Golf Club*

We purposefully upweighted the communication to members via our digital newsletter and social media so that we could regularly update the membership on what the Club was doing in response to the pandemic. We also started a 'heat & eat' meal service and had our staff deliver comfort food and a social connection to members. Jigsaw puzzles soon became the next great fad and we produced three versions using photography from the courses to keep members thinking about their golf!

Early on we also had selected staff ringing our elderly members who were alone, so we could connect with them and check on their well-being. This was the single most important act of engagement we achieved during the early stages of the outbreak.

### *Metropolitan Golf Club*

As soon as we realised that access to the golf course was to be taken away, we knew we needed to look at ways to keep members engaged. Before going into closure we filmed a series of videos with our chefs and golf professionals. We then periodically released them during the lockdown. We also engaged the services of Oliver Yourn from Fit Golf to run online Pilates classes free of charge for members to help keep them active. Then came jigsaw puzzles and finally we introduced the take-home meal service. This was something we had planned to launch going into our closure, but at the early stages we could see the great pain that the hospitality sector was feeling so we elected not to compete with them. As JobKeeper was presented, and those industries had some respite, we started up the service to keep our valued staff busy and it has been welcomed by the members.

### *Sandhurst Club*

Our Health Club provided online fitness classes and challenges. Likewise, the Golf Services team provided video tutorials that members could use to practice at home. The Hospitality Department offered a takeaway café menu, home delivery service, pantry staple items and online ordering systems. Judging by the feedback, these services have been appreciated by the members and are likely to remain features of the Club's Hospitality.

... and from a range of other clubs:

- Trivia quizzes about the course and club
- Online fitness classes
- Takeaway meals for members
- Recipe videos by club chefs, with prizes for the best YouTube clip of the dish cooked by a member
- Jigsaws of many Australian golf courses
- Video tips from golf pros
- Online bridge classes
- Club Facebook pages launched, encouraging members to post comments about their 'Iso golf' activities, and updates on course work
- History committees rolled out stories from the archives

## What impacts do you see on your club over the longer term?

### *Royal Melbourne Golf Club*

Undoubtedly the financial model will change with the international player's (green fees) unlikely to return until 2021. We are foremostly a member's club and so our subscription revenue will be adequate to sustain the Club, if we are prudent with our expenditure over the next few years. We immediately put a freeze on all capital expenditure and projects and have focused on preserving cash in our operations.

### *Metropolitan Golf Club*

It's a unique situation. A typical financial crisis would see a moderate impact on all clubs. I'm no economist, but this could be bigger and longer than anything we've experienced. The uniqueness of this situation is that although there are economic challenges, our game is perfectly suited as an activity during this pandemic. And we are seeing this with the great demand from members who would normally be overseas at this time of year. Whatever happens, just like the last eight weeks, we'll be nimble and evolve however we need to so that Metropolitan remains strong, viable, and a destination Club.

*continued on page 13 >>*







### *Sandhurst Club*

On a positive note, the golf industry seems to be going through a boom period for both membership sales and green fee-paying guests. The Sandhurst Club has experienced significant growth in both areas since the lifting of golf restrictions. The Club's challenge will be to accommodate all new members and provide a premier Golf Club experience. On a downside, the Government restrictions on events mean the Club's function business is suffering. It is anticipated the restrictions on gatherings will remain for some time, which will impact the Club's ability to generate revenue. As an alternative, the Club's event space has been repurposed to accommodate more members.

### **An uplifting / inspiring story that has come out of this experience from your club?**

#### *Sandhurst Club*

The Sandhurst Club is in unique position providing services for both golf and residential members. The sense of resilience, community and understanding from all members and staff has been inspiring.

#### *Royal Melbourne Golf Club*

Part of the reason for starting the delivery service of the 'Heat & Eat' meals was so that we could continue to employ eight international students who were employed by us on a casual basis. There was no support for them from the government during the lock down and most of them could not return home and so they soon found themselves in quite a dire situation. We fed them and gave them meaningful work, so they didn't need to queue at the food banks. Throughout this time, we learnt of the many thousands of international students studying through Holmesglen that were in similar situations. We started providing Holmesglen every week with 100 meals so they could distribute these food packs

to those most in need. We continue to do this work today and we know we have made a tangible difference to those students who were struggling.



### *...and one from our Northern cousins: Yeppoon Golf Club in Queensland:*

The most pleasing thing to come out of this pandemic for me is the support from the staff and members. During this period, we have had members donate not only their time to do odd jobs but money donations, some small, some large.

With these donations we have, with help from volunteers, painted the clubhouse inside and out keeping the staff busy and in good spirits. More volunteer work is currently underway putting an extension on our undercover rear patio.

During the 'lockdown' the club gates may have been closed, but there was plenty going on behind the scenes. With no players for many weeks, course improvements had been completed and scheduled projects brought forward. The courses were pristine and golf-ready.

A general theme so far has been how to successfully operate in such a fluid environment, and to prioritise the people that need the most attention – members and staff. Communication and flexibility have remained central to all actions.

### **When golf recommenced in May in Victoria, the response was euphoric.**

Golfers were greeted by immaculate fairways, greens, and many happy faces. Barwon Heads golfers were even seen off the first tee by a piper. The club later reported 4,072 member rounds in June, 1834 more than June 2019.

They weren't alone. All clubs have seen a surge of bookings. With no community sport, young families were heading to golf. With limited travel, the traditional winter exit never happened. Timesheets are filling fast and waiting lists common.

While members across Victoria have relished the chance to reconnect with their fellow members, social distancing and other restrictions will continue to impede full freedom for some time yet.

Nothing like a shared experience to unite. Volunteers, committees and staff all devoted extraordinary efforts to ensure their club would get to the 'other side'.

The Covid pandemic and fire emergencies of last summer have reset our thinking towards a new normal, and commanded adaption on a scale unseen in decades.

As we go to print, infections are on the rise in Victoria, and clubhouses will close again for six weeks. The golf community has met these sudden changes with ingenuity and compassion earlier this year and will do so again. We've all learned a great deal and can tackle these oncoming challenges with learned experience and renewed confidence.

*Thanks to those clubs who provided responses for this article.*



# The Day 'Babe' came to Town

By Tony Rule GSA Committee Member

*Australian golf has played host to many of the most famous international names in golf. Sarazen, Snead, Palmer, Trevino, Nicklaus, Watson, Ballesteros, Faldo and Woods are just some of the great names that have made the pilgrimage to play the country's finest courses.*

In this list it would be remiss to leave out the name Mildred Ella ('Babe') Didrikson-Zaharias; arguably one of the greatest athletes of all time, male or female. Who else has won two Olympic Gold Medals, achieved All-American status in basketball and won three US Open Golf Championships? Babe was Associated Press Female Athlete of The Year on no less than six occasions.

In July 1939 Babe travelled to Australia and spent time in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne playing exhibition matches accompanied by her husband, professional wrestler, George Zaharias. In Melbourne she played an exhibition match at Yarra Yarra. Babe was 28 years old at the time and had only been playing golf for four years.

Her opponent in the match was State PGA Champion Charlie Conners. Both players played off the Men's Championship tees and Zaharias knocked it around in even 4s. Press reports of the match highlight the strength of her play. 'In her 72 at Yarra she had to play no fewer than five bunker shots. She three-putted twice, but she one putted, from about four feet, five times. She had three threes in a row, an eagle 3 at the 461 yard 9th (sinking a four-footer) a birdie 3 at the 353-yard 10th, and a par at the 192-yard 11th.'

Babe ended up losing to Conners by one shot after missing 'a 5-footer for a 4 at the 456-yard 18th'. Playing against men was not a novelty for Babe. She remains the only woman to have ever made the 36 hole cut on the PGA Tour, a feat she achieved on three separate occasions.



Her most famous win was the 1954 US Women's Open. Babe won the tournament by twelve strokes, a tournament record that still stands. Remarkably this was whilst still recovering from surgery for colon cancer. It was the last of her ten major championships and her final US Women's Open as a competitor.

Babe died in 1956 at the age of forty-five after her colon cancer recurred.

*This is not the original scorecard but the card reflects the course as it was at the time of the match and the score on each hole has been verified.*



| YARRA YARRA GOLF CLUB        |       |                        |                |                            |       |                        |                |
|------------------------------|-------|------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------|------------------------|----------------|
| Player BABE DIDRIKSON        |       |                        |                | Standard Scratch Score: 74 |       |                        |                |
| HOLE                         | YARDS | STANDARD SCRATCH SCORE | PLAYER'S SCORE | HOLE                       | YARDS | STANDARD SCRATCH SCORE | PLAYER'S SCORE |
| 1                            | 217   | 3                      | 3              | 10                         | 353   | 4                      | 3              |
| 2                            | 380   | 4                      | 5              | 11                         | 192   | 3                      | 3              |
| 3                            | 325   | 4                      | 5              | 12                         | 399   | 4                      | 5              |
| 4                            | 138   | 3                      | 3              | 13                         | 437   | 5                      | 5              |
| 5                            | 427   | 5                      | 4              | 14                         | 381   | 4                      | 4              |
| 6                            | 367   | 4                      | 4              | 15                         | 163   | 3                      | 4              |
| 7                            | 424   | 4                      | 4              | 16                         | 461   | 5                      | 4              |
| 8                            | 528   | 5                      | 5              | 17                         | 397   | 4                      | 3              |
| 9                            | 473   | 5                      | 3              | 18                         | 456   | 5                      | 5              |
| Out                          | 3279  | 37                     | 36             | In                         | 3239  | 37                     | 36             |
| MARKER'S SIGNATURE C Conners |       |                        |                | Out                        | 3279  | 37                     | 36             |
| DATE 2/7/39                  |       |                        |                | Total                      | 6518  | 74                     | 72             |



# Behind MatchTracker: the database of Melbourne pennant results

*By Murray Copley, GSA Committee Member*

## Genesis: MatchTracker for Clubs

In late May, the Golf Society released its refurbished website, including hosting of MatchTracker, a database of Melbourne pennant results from 1899–2020.

In 1999, the Victorian Golf Association (VGA) decided to recognise 100 years of Pennant golf in Victoria with a celebratory dinner and presentation of medallions to Pennant players who had played at least 50 games. The VGA asked clubs for the names of such players. Most clubs confessed they had no records to provide that information. Consequently, I decided to write a database for Latrobe Golf Club that would store results for any of its pennant teams. This, the first version of MatchTracker, was deployed around 2004, however, for various reasons it was only suitable for individual clubs, not associations.

## MatchTracker for Associations

In 2006, after joining the VGA Council, I had access to the VGA's pennant records, so I decided to expand the application. This resulted in MatchTracker for Associations. I then undertook the task of transferring results from the hardcopy faxes in which VGA Pennant results were stored to the database. These records were only from 1989 as no earlier ones had been kept. This task took several years, and meant entering manually about 35,000 individual match results. (There are now over 70,000.) At the same time, I was entering contemporary results, and both the VGA and later Golf Victoria (GV) used pdf results and ladders output from MatchTracker to put on their websites following each round.

## Sports Vault and GolfBox records

Soon after GV commenced in late 2010 it was decided to use a better web-based system for reporting pennant results. MatchTracker at that time had no such capacity, so Sports Vault was used to provide these. But, although they promised to create a database that allowed for historical collation of player results, this did not eventuate. However, I considered there was no further need for me to spend late Sunday afternoons after pennant entering results into MatchTracker at GV's offices, so no entries were made into MatchTracker post-2012. In 2018, Sports Vault was superseded by GolfBox as the repository for GV's Pennant results, but it also provides no cumulative records.

## Joint GSA–GV project

In late 2017, GSA and GV agreed to combine in a joint project to enter as many historical men's Melbourne pennant results as could be located into MatchTracker. The two main contributors to the project were (and still are) Ian Rowell (President, Riversdale Golf Club) and me. Ian became involved because of his substantial work in gathering early pennant results for Riversdale Golf Club, which he subsequently expanded to collating results for all clubs. He has spent countless hours extracting these results from old newspapers, principally at the State Library, and entering them into Excel workbooks. My recent contribution has been modifying the database to enable easier bulk entry of the Sports Vault, GolfBox and Ian's data, and providing for web-based access and output.

## Current situation

In early 2020, GSA Committee decided, because of its commitment to preserving and making available golf heritage material, that it would host the database. That came to fruition on 1 June this year. The response has been gratifying. Clubs and individual golfers have been most complimentary, and also helpful in clearing up anomalous entries. There is still substantial work as men's results for 1967–1988 are yet to be entered, and it is intended to add women's results after that. Initially these will be GV records, but previous WGV and possibly VLGU records may be added, if they can be located.

Considerable thanks are extended to David Greenhill and Therese Magdulski from Golf Australia. David for his vision in maintaining the VGA records and supporting the initial development and use of MatchTracker, and, incidentally, collating data from old newspaper files to enable presentation of the afore-mentioned medallions in 1999. Therese for her support in publicising the database and enabling links from the GA website. Finally to Ian Rowell, for his extraordinary effort in gathering the historical results from 1899–1988.



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# The Australasian 12 Hole Hickory Cup

*By Peter Stickley*

*The Australasian 12 Hole Hickory Cup was held over 3 days, 29 February to 2 March at the Dunes, Portsea and Eagle Ridge. The last day was incorporated in the Peter Stickley Vendor Advocacy Pro Am.*

A passionate group of 21 hickory players including two New Zealanders, two club captains and three professionals battled in Melbourne's windy, four seasons in one day of weather for the now coveted trophy.

The two NZ players had never experienced the likes of it and vowed to bring further players to the event next year.

To add colour to the day a beautifully restored vintage car was on display with an antique set of golf clubs on the running board and strapped to the mudguard.

## Final Results:

Scratch Winner for the third time - Tim Sayers (pro) 69 pts. 4 over

Scratch Runner Up - Simon Sheedy Captain Maldon GC 68 pts. 5 over

Teams Winner – Tim Sayers, Corey Cruikshank, Rick Baldwin 200 pts.

Teams Runner Up – Simon Sheedy, Jason Paige, Andrew Davis 187 pts.

Pro Purse. Last Day 12 holes:- 1st Tim Sayers 20pts \$440, 2nd David Good 17pts \$330, 3rd Corey Cruickshank 15 pts \$220.



*Scratch winner Tim Sayers*



*Peter beside an AC Cobra*



*Shane and Angelique Eagar from New Zealand*



*Competitors with spontaneous arrival of vintage cars*

*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.*

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