

THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 72, August 2021



'Women to the fore'

by John Trevorrow

Golf Australia says one of its key challenges is how to inspire more women to discover and enjoy our great game.

Perhaps we need to turn back the clock to the enthusiasm of the late 19th century, an era when women players in Victoria were well-organised and world pioneers in golf.

The picture (below) shows the women who competed for the first Ladies Amateur Championship of Australia, staged at Geelong Golf Club in August, 1894.

Golf in Australia was then in its infancy. Melbourne (not yet Royal) Golf Club was founded in 1891 and Geelong in 1892. These women would not have known they were creating history, yet consider this list of milestones:

- The event is the oldest open championship in Australia — for men or women.

- It is the second-oldest women's title in the world. The first, the Ladies British Amateur Championship, had begun just one year earlier.
- The Australian Amateur Championship for men began three months later, on 9th November, 1894, at Melbourne Golf Club's Caulfield links.
- In America it was a year later, in 1895, that the USGA founded the US Open, the US Women's Amateur Championship, and the US Amateur Championship for men.
- The Australian Open championship was still 10 years away, first played in 1904.

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Making history: the first Ladies Amateur Champion of Australia was Miss E.B. Mackenzie, seen here in the middle of the competitors, looking straight at the camera and wearing a white shirt and boater hat.

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The women's event at Geelong Golf Club in 1894 was announced modestly with the following paragraph in The Argus of Monday, 6th August:

"LADIES' GOLF CLUB. On the 29th and 30th inst. there will be played at Geelong, a ladies' open competition, two rounds, against Mrs. Bogey. It is open to all members and honorary members of any recognised ladies' golf club, and the winner holds the cup for one year, and receives a trophy. Any lady wishing to enter send her name as soon as possible to Mrs. Lillies, hon. secretary, Ladies' Golf Club, Armadale."

And what a cup it was, as the picture shows. It was worth £25 — a huge sum at the time.

These 14 women — pictured here with a variety of long-nosed clubs, irons and gutta-percha balls — were among the 17 who gathered at Geelong for this historic event.

Newspaper reports in 1894, which were brief, called the event the "first annual Ladies' Championship of Victoria". But the official records of the ALGU have since elevated the event's importance and call it the Ladies Amateur Championship of Australia from its inception.

Garry Mansfield, in the VGA's History of Golf in Victoria, describes playing conditions in 1894 as rugged.

The Geelong links were only two years old, and players had to negotiate ditches and gullies. Putting greens were fenced off to protect them from grazing cattle.

With popularity of golf among women rising, Geelong Golf Club had planned to erect stiles over some of the fences just three months earlier "for the convenience of the ladies".

Due to Victorian-era social strictures, most women played wearing tight bodices and large padded shoulders. It was unseemly to show an ankle, so dresses were long and flowing.

Many early women players wore a "Miss Higgins" — a piece of elastic outside the dress below the knees to prevent it becoming entangled with their club, particularly in the short game.

Rubber-cored Haskell balls were yet to be invented, and the hard guttie ball did not fly very far. The championship was played over two rounds of scratch bogey, and the course rating was:

7, 7, 7, 8, 6, 9, 6, 5, 7 - 62

6, 8, 8, 6, 6, 6, 6, 8, 6 - 60

Even though 'Mrs Bogey' allowed the players 122 strokes, The Argus reported that "owing to the difficulty of the greens none of the players succeeded in getting on terms with her".

Miss Mackenzie of Geelong won by two strokes, with a score of 9 down against bogey, and Miss Jean Davie was second with 11 down. Miss Mackenzie went on to win the championship in the next two years, and again in 1898.

The women's championship alternated between Geelong and Melbourne Golf Club at Caulfield each year until 1900.

These hardy women golfers were truly pioneers, and they created history.



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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.



President's Report

By Graeme Ryan

This year is proving to be remarkably similar to 2020 with frequent cancellation and postponement of events together with the uncertainty of planning for the future. All we can do is endure the frustration, continue re-scheduling and hope that we are favoured by good fortune. Who knows when it will end?

In this issue of The Long Game there is a broad variety of well-written articles by experts in their particular fields which I'm sure you will enjoy. Also, there are reports which I commend to you on the March dinner at Metropolitan GC, the President's Trophy at Royal Melbourne GC, and the Historians Forum at Commonwealth GC.

Although still modestly called the 'Newsletter of the Golf Society of Australia', it has grown well beyond that description and continues to improve in terms of editorial quality and general presentation. This is largely due to the professionalism of those committed to the task.

If you believe there are people, courses, or golf related subjects we should include, let us know. Also, if you wish to contribute any article(s) which you consider will be of interest to our readers, please do so. Your input will be appreciated. Similarly, contributions to our website and Facebook pages are always being sought. Communication to, and between, our members is a vital activity and a most important part of the Golf Society's operations.

Several activities are planned for the remainder of 2021, and you will be kept informed by the usual means. I look forward to seeing you and welcoming your guests.

A sport for all

By John Trevorrow

"Where have all the female golfers gone?" That was one of the challenging questions posed recently by James Sutherland, the new CEO of Golf Australia.

Mr Sutherland, in a speech at a Golf Society of Australia dinner at The Metropolitan GC, identified two crucial challenges facing all golfers and clubs: how to inspire more women, and the next generation of young people, to discover and enjoy the game.

He said 20% of all golf club members across Australia today are female. In 1970, this figure was 34% and the zenith for women club membership was 1993 when 114,000 women across Australia were paid-up members. By 2019, this figure had fallen to 77,000 - a drop of more than 33%

"It is part of our 'social licence' as custodians of this great game to do better," he said.

Mr Sutherland, who spent 17 successful years as CEO of Cricket Australia, was reflecting in late March on his five key observations after six months in charge of Golf Australia. As well as the challenge of falling female participation, he identified:

Golf is thriving. But is this real and sustained, or a fool's paradise?

Club competition rounds played are up 20% and membership is up by 42,000 golfers after the Covid-19-affected year just past.

"We have to wait and see if these newcomers are here to stay beyond Covid-19," he said.

Golf is a fragmented sport, but what is its potential?

Mr Sutherland believes exciting times are ahead with a national alignment and strategy. Golf Australia plans to run a survey of key people involved in the game. And the imminent move into the new Australian Golf Centre under construction at Sandringham, which will house Golf Australia, the PGA of Australia, and Golf Victoria, offers better collaborations.

The centre, funded by a \$15.3million investment from the Victorian Government, includes a revamped Sandringham course plus practice and tuition facilities, and is due to open by late July.

We golfers are getting older.

The average age of female club members in Australia is 63.9 years. The average male is 54.7 years old.

"Our number one KPI should be to attract new kids to play golf. All Golf Australia and PGA people, and all members of clubs, need to be doing more to attract and inspire the next generation of golfers."



James Sutherland with GSA's Morag North and Graeme Ryan

Tournaments are important, but are they good or bad for business?

He said that having to cancel important tournaments, including the 2020 Australian Open and 2021 Women's Australian Open, were among the major decisions forced on Golf Australia because of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Sutherland said such calls were met with a range of reactions.

"When you're faced with the obvious health concerns, but also the commercial realities of putting on a tournament that might not meet some of our stakeholders' expectations, it becomes a very delicate balancing act.

"Tournaments have traditionally been the shop window of golf to many, so it becomes imperative to think outside the box to keep golf front of mind."

He left the audience pondering the challenges by asking: what was the biggest single television audience for golf in Australia? The answer was the first episode of "Holey Moley" - the reality TV show which features sudden-death matches on a super-sized mini-golf set whose resident pro is Greg Norman. Its first Australian episode attracted one million viewers.

"Many of these people were new eyeballs for golf. We have to ask ourselves what can we all do to make golf more appealing to younger players and to a wider participation," he said.

Now THAT is food for thought.

All the Tee in China

Wednesday March 6, 1985

Every golfer in China – all 20 of them – turned up to see Herald golf writer Don Lawrence and three fellow writers play a round at Chung Shan this week. The golf writers were there to see a revolutionary move – the introduction of golf to China. The breakthrough in East-West relations is happening at an \$18 million complex just opened and 10 boys and 10 girls from Sanxian high school are the first to be introduced to the game. Complex manager Aylwin Tai (right) was on hand to show Lawrence (centre) and his caddie Fung around the layout.

Teeing off at the first can be nerve-wracking at the best of times. It's worse if every golfer in China is likely to turn up at any minute and watch curiously.

And they did – all 20 of them (pictured)!

Ten boys and girls from Sanxian High School are part of a fascinating exercise aimed at bringing golf to the heart of one of the world's oldest civilisations.

This week, I was one of four international golf writers invited to play an historic round at China's only golf club, the \$18 million Chung Shan hot springs golf club, an hour's trip from Macau.

The twenty students are the club's only players – and they were all given the day off school to watch us play.

For what most golf fans around the world would consider a rather dubious privilege, they had to pedal their bicycles 30 kilometres.

But they were happy to do it, because golf is becoming a way of life that would bemuse most of their many millions of countrymen.

The Chung Shan club is an oasis of Western capitalism in the heart of communist China.

Before the Revolution in 1949, China had golf courses but they were all ploughed under. It is a fresh start that Chairman Mao would never have approved.

Rice paddy fields stretch for kilometres to the west of the Arnold Palmer-designed course and the elevated luxury of the clubhouse.

The general manager of the complex, Aylwin Tai, is a Hong Kong Chinese, who also oversees the training programme that brought our party face to face with golf in the People's Republic.

Driving in from Macau, I suggested to Mr Tai that we would like to see the best boy and girl golfer in the training squad. He telephoned the headmaster of Hanxian Hih, who gave the whole squad the day off.

On the first tee – in China



Every golfer in China – all 20 of them – turned up to see Herald golf writer Don Lawrence and three fellow writers play a round at Chung Shan this week.

The golf writers were there to see a revolutionary move – the introduction of golf to China. The breakthrough in East-West relations is happening at an \$18 million complex

just opened and 10 boys and 10 girls from Sanxian high school are the first to be introduced to the game. Complex manager Aylwin Tai (right) was on hand to show the layout.

All the tee in China: a picture special in Sports Extra – Page 38.

"The squad was only formed two months ago" Mr Tai said.

"The rules are strict. They must come here every day after school and hit balls from 4pm to 7pm. If they miss the practice sessions then they are dropped from the squad for lack of interest."

While we were talking the boys were pounding balls down the practice fairway while the girls stood back.

They were under the supervision of little Chinese pro SS Yau who had come back to China after watching the Cathay Pacific Open last Sunday.

Wu Jin Guang, 19, told us that one day he wanted to be professional "like the Englishman Tom Watson". I explained that Tom Watson was American, and Wu nodded vigorously. "Yes, yes American Tom Watson."

"I want to travel the world," said Wu. Hitting golf balls could be his only way.

They are close enough to Hong Kong to pick up that country's television programmes, and all had watched the last day of the Hong Kong Open.

"They have so much to learn", sighed Mr Tai.

Mr Tai controls the 70 staff members who are fighting a desperate battle to make grass grow on the hungry fairways at Chung Shan.

The greens and tees are perfect and from the back tees it is a spectacular layout.

There were plenty of hiccups in the early construction days when misreading of the plans resulted in two holes being built off the site.

When the local staff discovered the error, they just redesigned the complex's nine holes and produced some of the most unusual golf holes anywhere. It had to start again.

The Chung Shan complex is more than just a golf course and a clubhouse. It is China's first golf resort.

Two weeks ago, Mr Tai had a day's notice that Prime Minister Chao wanted to see it.

He arrived with a group of 50 Party officials and bodyguards and admired the "smooth grass" and left. The Chairman, Deng Xiaoping was a surprise visitor who also admired the "smooth grass" and left. None of them play golf or attempted to. This strange new development in the middle of their country fired their curiosity.

Before we talked with the young training squad my colleague from the Sydney Sun, Terry Smith, and I played the first ever amateur international match on Chinese soil.

And behind the bamboo curtain, we won.

Our victims were England, represented by Lawrence Levy, one of the world's great golf photographers, and a deputy editor of Britain's premier golf magazine Neil Elsey.

Levy, godfather to Greg Norman's daughter Morgan Leigh, was the long marker on 9.

England had the honour on the first tee and Elsey took it and spanked a high fade on to the fairway across the corner of the lake. He was the first English golf writer to strike off in China and said "the sense of occasion was enormous. I was nervous."

He promptly four-putted the first green and we were one-up.

Smith and I wrestled verbally about who should be the first Australian golf writer to tee off in China. The only way to settle the course history was to toss a coin. He tossed. I called "heads" and had the honour. I would not have changed it for all the tea in China.

After gaining an early break over England it was Smith who made a miraculous "up-and-down" from sword-like grass behind the 16th green to halve with Levy and give us an historic 3-2 victory.

We had won \$HK40, not enough from a round of drinks. We thought of Australia's sad cricketers and congratulated ourselves for salvaging some of the country's sporting honour.

Our round was played in eerie, still conditions. Several times a volley of machine-gun fire from the eastern hills echoed across the course.

From miles across the paddy fields Chinese piped music blared intermittently.

Our caddies had been taken out of the work force for the day and dressed in grey uniforms.

Fung was the young man who caddied for me. I was not allowed to pay him and the only way I could recognise his services was to give him the ball I used.

As we left Chung Shan and headed back to the border through a maze of immigration and customs checkpoints, a small bus drove to the front door of the clubhouse.

Out of it spilled a dozen middle-aged Chinese, all in traditional grey suits.

"They are local businessmen and Communist Party officials. They want to see what this 'golf' thing is all about" said Mr Tai.

I will probably never see Mr Tai or Fung again, but I would love them to know they contributed to one of my great experiences in golf.

From DON LAWRENCE who took part in the first amateur international golf match on Chinese soil.

Thanks to GSA Life Member Dick Kirby and the Herald Sun for access to this story.



The Banks Brothers

Dick and Rowley Banks were born in Melbourne when the city was less than 50 years old and did not have a single golf course or club. But in their relatively short lives, these 19th century brothers contributed much to the development of golf in its early days in Australia.

Research by GSA members Paul Burgess, Justin Ryan, Peter Swan and John Trevor has unearthed several notable milestones involving these largely-forgotten pioneers:

- We can re-write the record books to say that Dick Banks helped to lay out the original 9 holes at Woodlands GC as well as the 9-hole gem Frankston GC – not Rowley as currently credited for both.
- Dick Banks was a prolific course designer and adviser. He designed or improved at least 30 courses across all parts of Victoria between 1907 and 1927.
- Rowley Banks is the first Australian-born professional to compete in the British Open.
- Both brothers were foundation members of the Australian PGA in 1911. Dick Banks chaired, and Rowley was also there, at a meeting of 16 pro golfers in Carnegie Clark's workshop at Royal Sydney during the 1911 Australian Open which unanimously voted to form the Professional Golfers' Association of Australia. The new body had a Victorian section with Dick Banks as honorary secretary, and J. Victor East heading the NSW section.
- Both brothers competed several times in the Australian Open and Australian PGA. Rowley was the better golfer and won the PGA championship in 1924. Golf records in Australia often appear to confuse the two brothers thanks to the similarity of their names – R.S. Banks and R.A. Banks.

Richard Shaw Banks, known as Dick, was born in Carlton in 1876 and became a noted teacher, club professional and course designer. He was involved in Victorian golf from its earliest days, and caddied at Melbourne Golf Club's Caulfield course (before it attained its Royal charter) in the 1890s. From 1899 to 1903 he worked at Kew GC in various roles as greenkeeper, teacher and professional.

He served extensively on the executive of the PGA at Victorian and national level until the late 1920s. He was club professional at Albert Park for more than 25 years, up until his death in 1930 aged 53.

Golf boomed in popularity after 1900, particularly in country districts of Victoria, and there were 126 clubs affiliated with the VPGA when war broke out in 1914. Only 67 of these survived the dark days of World War I, yet the game surged again in what historian A.D. Ellis called "the Golden Age of golf". By the late 1920s the VPGA listed more than 200 clubs. And Dick Banks was involved with many of them.

He was a sought-after course designer from 1907 onwards, but his finest work was done in 1913.

Mordialloc Golf Club was formed in 1913 by two founder members who laid out a basic 9-hole course on a sandy, undulating estate at Mordialloc known as "Mayfield". They proceeded to play their first round that same afternoon. In July of that year, the fledgling club commissioned Dick Banks to give them professional advice and help re-design and lay out some new holes. In later years this grew to 18 holes and became the esteemed Woodlands Golf Club.

In 1912/13, Dick Banks laid out the excellent 9-hole course for Frankston Golf Club. Golf.com recently rated the 50 best 9-hole courses in the world. Frankston was on the list at number 43, but the listing repeated the error that it was designed by Rowley Banks, rather than Dick.

Contemporary newspaper reports show that Dick Banks was busily criss-crossing Victoria for two decades running tournaments and designing or improving courses, many still played today.



He laid out Swan Island for Queenscliff GC in 1907, Kyneton in 1908, and Bacchus Marsh and Clifton Springs in 1909. In 1910 he remodelled parts of Royal Park and laid out a 9-hole course at the Mt Buffalo Chalet for the Victorian Government.

In 1911 he remodelled Mornington Golf Club and Berrigan (NSW), and designed the 7-hole 'little course' at W.L. Baillieu's Mt Macedon estate.

In 1912 he laid out new courses at Yarra Glen and Gisborne; built 6 new holes on Rigby Island for Lakes Entrance GC; and laid out a 9-hole course on 'Nerrin Nerrin' station in the Western District.

From 1913 to 1926 Dick Banks laid out or remodelled courses including Castlemaine, Beaufort, Benalla, Numurkah, Surf Beach (Phillip Island), Portland, Altona, Malmsbury, City Town and Country GC at Coburg, Upwey, Colac, Chalambar at Ararat, Warracknabeal, and Lockwood/Belgrave.

Younger brother Roland 'Rowley' Ambrose Banks was born in St Kilda in 1884. At 22 he was appointed 'greenkeeper and coach' at Essendon GC, and also gave lessons at Albert Park, Elsternwick and Yarra Yarra's Eglemont course.

In April 1913 he left Melbourne for England and was farewelled at a dinner hosted by the Victorian PGA at the Mitre Tavern in the city. He unsuccessfully tried to qualify for The Open at Hoylake in June, 1913. He took a job as pro at Cardiff Golf Club then qualified and competed in the 1914 Open at Prestwick, where Harry Vardon won his sixth championship, a record never bettered.

Rowley Banks enlisted in the British Army when war broke out and was gassed while serving in the transport section in France. He recovered, returned to Australia and became an energetic and popular club professional at Yarra Yarra from 1919-1928. The club had moved to Rosanna by this time, and in 1920 a November thunderstorm swept away 8 of the course's 10 bridges, and Rowley's cow was killed by lightning.

In 1927 The Age reported that Rowley had laid out a new 9-hole course at Wonthaggi. But this was almost certainly another example of confusion between the brothers, and the course was likely the work of Dick Banks.

There was another confusion in January 1928 when Prime Minister Stanley Bruce drove the first ball to open Cowes golf club. The Herald reported that the course was laid out by Rowley, but it was in fact the work of Dick Banks. In reporting the opening ceremony, The Herald wryly reported that Mr Bruce, an indifferent golfer, performed these ceremonial openings regularly: "One admirable custom the Phillip Island people had was that they provided the ball with which he was to drive. Other clubs made him lose his own ball".

By early 1928 Rowley developed tuberculosis, and with his lungs already weakened by wartime gassing, his health deteriorated sharply. Rowley was exceedingly popular at Yarra Yarra, and the members collected 300 pounds, which the club topped up with a £50 honorarium, to send him to Queensland to try to recover in a warmer climate.

Nothing worked, and he died in Newcastle NSW just a week short of his 44th birthday.

He was buried at Brighton Cemetery with a headstone supplied by Yarra Yarra.

Fellow golfers rallied around his widow and 5-year-old son. Joe Kirkwood donated three clubs to be auctioned, which raised 150 pounds for the family, and Yarra Yarra GC reportedly offered Mrs Banks a job as housekeeper at the clubhouse on its new course at Bentleigh.

The Banks brothers were unanimously popular figures in golf. There was an outpouring of emotion when Rowley Banks died in 1928, and again in 1930 when Dick Banks died. Both of their funerals attracted large numbers of their fellow golfers.

The Sporting Globe called Rowley "the most loved of all Australian professionals". The Argus said news of Rowley's death "will be received in golfing circles in this State, and in many places beyond it, with the very deepest feeling of regret, for the deceased professional was a great favourite wherever he went".

When Dick Banks died in 1930, The Argus mourned the loss of the "best known and most popular of all our professional golfers". The Herald golf writer once called him "the daddy of professional golf in Victoria".



Rowley Banks

ONE OF THE GREATS - and a mystery to match

by Mike Clayton

David Strath was one of golf's greatest pioneer players.

In the 1874 Open Championship, he tied for 18th. But in the other eight Opens in which he played, Strath was second twice, third twice, fifth twice and sixth once.

So good was he, the fearsome bunker guarding the front of the Eden Hole (the 11th) at St Andrews is forever known as Strath Bunker.

Maybe the Scotsman is the best man never to win a major championship?

Little more than a year after his fifth place in 1877, Strath would find himself in Melbourne, fleeing the spectre of a dreadful disease.

Strath, Davie to his mates, was a Scottish professional who was born in 1849 in St Andrews and lived in the extraordinary golfing town of North Berwick.

There he helped design one of the world's great links and was the rival and friend of "Young" Tom Morris, the greatest player of their time.

Young Tom won the Open Championship four years in a row from 1868 to 1872 (there was no Championship in 1871) and the pair toured Scotland and as far south as Liverpool in England playing exhibition matches, sometimes in front of 10,000 people.

They were the golf's first superstar players and are largely credited with popularising the game.

Strath was the runner-up to Morris in 1870 and 1872 Opens and, in 1876 he tied at St Andrews but refused to play off because of a rules dispute.

By all accounts, the 1876 Open was a shambles.

The course hadn't been reserved for the elite field and they competed among the regular public players. Strath's long approach to the 17th green hit a spectator on the green and there were protests he had somehow gained an advantage.

The dispute could not be settled, he was asked to take part in a playoff and the question would be decided when an official was available to adjudicate.

Strath refused, reasoning there was little point if he was going to have the crown taken away in the following days.

"Settle it now or I won't be here in the morning," was his not unreasonable request.

The Strath family of five brothers all succumbed to "consumption" – now known as tuberculosis – in the prime of their lives.

Andrew, the second eldest, was Open champion in 1865, although David was the family's best golfer.

By the northern autumn of 1878, Davie was a sick man and his North Berwick doctors suggested he take the 84-day boat trip to Melbourne, a city recognised in Britain as the ideal place to recover from the disease.

Until late in 2011, the fate of Strath had been a mystery.

The Scots had never been able to determine what happened to their champion, just 29 when he left their shores.

Many assumed he had perished on the boat. Certainly, he never returned to Scotland despite buying a first-class return ticket on the Eurynome, the fastest vessel of its time.

Enter Noel Terry, a fine Melbourne golfer and the acknowledged expert in this country on ancient golf clubs.



Davie Strath playing at North Berwick

A member at Royal Melbourne, he was investigating a club made by one of the great early clubmakers. David Conacher had migrated to Melbourne in 1854 – a time when there was no golf to play – and became a cabinetmaker.

Conacher was later assigned the task of working with T.J. Finlay in laying out the Melbourne Golf Club (later Royal Melbourne) in Caulfield, which opened in July, 1891. He died four months later, but not before becoming one of the first people to play the game in this country.

The link is that Conacher's nephew, James, had been a great friend of Strath. They had gone to school together and James was the best man at his friend's wedding before he emigrated to Australia.

Terry was fascinated by the history of the golf club he had found and the thought Conacher might have been the first professional golfer to come to Australia.

He contacted eminent Scottish golf historian David Malcolm, who told Terry of Strath and the Australian connection.

Essentially all Malcolm knew was that Strath had boarded a boat to Melbourne and was never again heard of in his homeland.

Terry started digging into the mystery of Strath and uncovered the astounding outcome.

Strath had made it to Melbourne, but in a terribly weakened state and only 20 days later he died in a house next to the residence of Professor Halford, the founder of the medical school at Melbourne University on Royal Terrace in Carlton.

Halford had studied at university in St Andrews, as had the Australian doctor, Samuel Dougan Bird, who had been respected for his writings, including "On Australasian Climates and Their Influence in the Prevention and Arrest of Pulmonary Consumption".

A Dr Makin was a North Berwick member who was an expert on consumption and likely it was Makin who organised for Strath to visit Melbourne, the climate of which Bird had described as perfect for the treatment of the disease.

Malcolm went to the London National Library to research every Scot who had come to Melbourne in 1878. For several weeks he trawled through newspapers of the time looking for a reference to Strath.

Eventually he found a report indicating Strath had died among friends. Terry's previous assumption was that he must have died alone, far from home and his young family. So, there is at least some comfort there.

What seems extraordinary is that the London press report never reached Scotland.

When his ship landed at Port Melbourne, Strath was taken to Royal Terrace and Terry was able to determine that he had died in a house opposite what is now the Exhibition Building.

He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Presbyterian section of the Melbourne General Cemetery and the wonderful quality of the local records meant Terry was able to accurately locate the grave of one of golf's early champions.

"It was a strange and very humbling feeling to be standing there," Terry said of his extraordinary discovery.



David Strath tombstone at Melbourne General Cemetery in the inner north

A headstone, funded by the golf clubs of St Andrews and the Golf Society of Australia, now marks the grave.

Malcolm visited Melbourne to speak at Royal Melbourne on the significance of Strath and the belated discovery of his fate.

"For the Scots, this is very big news," Terry said. "Finally, they have an answer to a mystery that has been left unanswered for well over a century."

Sadly, David Strath's wife died just four years after her husband and their only son later became one of the first men killed in World War I.

Originally written for the Golf Australia website by Mike Clayton

THE COLLECTORS – Justin Ryan

By John Trevorrow with Justin Ryan

Justin Ryan is a GSA member, keen golfer, history enthusiast and a hickory player for the past 7 years. He is an avid collector of hickory clubs with Australian origins and connections. Justin talks to GSA's John Trevorrow about his collection from his home town of Bendigo.



Does your collection concentrate on clubs with markings/names of Victorian golf clubs and professionals?

Mostly, though I do like anything with an Australian connection. Anything made by Himmerman and Kirk, the makers in Mordialloc in the 1920s, or possibly related to them, I will always grab if I see it. They were in a lot of ways the genesis of the Australian golf club manufacturing industry, and there remains a lot of dots to connect.

Is there any other theme that you look for when collecting?

Not really, though I am a bit of a sucker for the golf/tennis cricket crossover clubs eg Pat O'Hara Wood was an Australian Open tennis champion in the early 1920s with a sports store in Melbourne. One of my favourite clubs is a Victor Trumper & Dodge mashie niblick, from about 1914, Trumper of course being the legendary Australian batsman. I'm also a sucker for an elaborate or fancy stamping or face, such as the Launceston professional E (Ted) Smith St Andrews X iron with his name within a map of Tasmania.

Do you also collect any other golf paraphernalia or items?

Not really. Balls in particular are difficult to find.

Your collection concentrates on hickories, but do you also collect any steel-shafted clubs?

If I do grab steel clubs it will be because they are Australian and interesting, particularly in the hickory/steel crossover period. I also have a full set of 'vintage' Cobra irons, with matching persimmon 1,3 and 4 wood, for 'retro' days.

How many clubs in your collection?

Probably 250, of which maybe 70 I would not let go of. Like many collectors, I've often bought 10 clubs to get one I want.

How did you first get into collecting? Where/how did you find your first collectible?

In the early days of eBay, I would occasionally buy vintage golf paraphernalia.



GSA member Leon 'MrOldgolf' Rowbell was actively selling at that time, and I got into the habit of buying stuff from him just so I could go and pick it up and have a look at his collection and be generally entertained. I even bought some garden tools at one point! I was a member at Woodlands GC at the time and he sold me a special niblick stamped for Horace Boorer of Woodlands Golf Club, which I thought was just great and kindled the interest. I later started playing hickories, initially with a set borrowed from Matthew Mollica, probably around 2014, and decided to complement my Woodlands iron by building a playset with other locally stamped clubs.

What are your favourite clubs in your collection?

I have a soft spot for my Swan Hill Co-op Store Mashie, the sort of hyper-local obscurity I love, which I obtained in the early days from Max Findlay. It's in my playset.

My play driver is a deep face 1-wood by Ernie Wood from Kingston Heath which was beautifully restored by Ross Baker, and which has been coveted by more than one KH member. Unfortunately for them it plays too well, so it's staying in my bag. One of my more recent acquisitions is a Tylers Sports Store Ballarat mashie. I haven't been able to find out much about them, yet!



What are the most unusual clubs/ implements you have found?

Not quite found, but a very old smooth-faced iron I bought with markings sadly reduced to just beyond legible also had a Forgan shaft full of a nasty wood eating mite. The only part of the shaft which was able to be salvaged was the section stamped 'R Forgan & Sons St Andrews'. I'm not sure where he got the idea for it, but our resident clubmaking genius Ross Baker turned it into a pen which now sits on my desk!

What is the rarest?

Not sure about the rarest but being based in Bendigo pride of place in the collection is a Hartley Brothers Auchterlonie wood stamped Bendigo and Melbourne which came via the shed of Bendigo District Sport Hall of Fame member Len Prior. I was also very pleased to find a McLean Brothers and Rigg smoothface in my travels. They were of course the employer of Walter Travis, in whose honour we play a hickory event at Maldon, his birthplace, each year.

What is the most memorable/ satisfying moment of collecting that sticks in your mind?

I commonly take the 'lucky dip' approach of buying rusty clubs sight unseen cheaply. I bought 9 clubs on the internet during the long Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 in Albury and couldn't collect them for several months. They were covered in paint, and once stripped back included a who's who of Australian golf, including a wood by Jock Robertson – Kew, a Joe Kirkwood, and the aforementioned Trumper club.

My 17-year-old son luckily for me collects musical instruments, CDs, and vintage Transformers, so loves a road trip visiting the vintage and antique stores. He was terribly excited at the recent Maldon Swap Meet to find a circa 1922 soprano saxophone. The musical instrument equivalent of a hickory golf club perhaps – he was thrilled!



Any tips for the best way to store old clubs?

Get a good shed. It is on the agenda.

Any advice for would-be collectors?

Get to know other collectors and their interests/specialities. It is very satisfying to find clubs you know will appeal to other members and swap/ share/give them away. Particularly given they are mostly acquired really cheaply.

What is the Holy Grail for you?

The earliest clubs made in Australia were likely made by David Conacher ahead of the opening of the Melbourne Golf Club in 1891. Sadly David died after contracting a cold whilst playing for the silver cleek at the club not long after it opened, and his business was carried on after that for a period by his son James. I would love one of their clubs - I have heard of only one in existence. Next on the list is a club by the first pro at MGC, Richard Taylor.



Australasian 12 Hole Hickory Cup 2021

By Peter Stickley

The fourth consecutive year of the 'Cup' was played in April. Usually comprising three rounds of 12 holes, this year's event was modified to a single round of 18 holes.

With Covid-19 restrictions looming and travel unlikely, to keep the event alive, a decision was made to run a 'Remote Cup' by inviting International golfers to play their rounds at their own courses on a day as close as possible to the same day as the Australian players.

There were teams and individual players representing Australia from Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland and they competed against internationals from three US states and New Zealand.

For this year's event, a section for women was introduced with a team from Melbourne and Arizona USA competing. It is anticipated the numbers will grow in future events.

Around the remote locations as players got under way and results started to come in several posts and photos appeared on Facebook pages showing players enjoying their rounds and embracing the 2021 modified event.

The Americans performed well, yet it was Australia's Professional Tim Sayers playing at Bankstown GC Sydney who won the scratch event for the fourth year in a row.

In the team events the USA were convincing winners.

Locally here in Victoria the host club was The Valley on the Mornington Peninsula and on a superb Autumn afternoon 27 players enjoyed their 18 holes.

Thanks to The Valley Golf Club, especially Brenda Rogers, whose hard work ensured this innovative way to run the 2021 event was successful and contributed to the growing interest in hickory golf.

Results

PROFESSIONALS

- 1st | Tim Sayers - 36pts - Australia
- 2nd | Jim von Lossow - 34pts - USA
- 3rd | Corey Cruikshank - 30pts - Australia
- 4th | Lee Hunt - 29pts - Australia

Hickory Cup (Scratch)

- Winner | Tim Sayers - 36pts - Australia
- Runner up | Jim von Lossow - 34pts - USA

TEAMS EVENTS

Winners Men: 94 points

- Jim von Lossow - USA
- Andrew von Lossow - USA
- Paul Murphy - USA
- Tom Carstens - USA

Runners up Men: 90 points

- Tyler Barron - USA
- Mark Taylor - USA
- Ryan Camp - USA
- Ron Sebold - USA

Winners Women: 58 points

- Rylee Stovall - USA
- Playa Schultz - USA
- Abbey Shutte - USA
- Raylee Bowers - USA

Runners Up : 49 points

- Brenda Rogers - Australia
- Kim Hastie - Australia
- Shelley Turek - Australia



GSA Sec. Kim Hastie with Peter Stickley



Peter Stickley and Trophies



Brenda, Shelley and Kim Aust team



Players at The Valley GC in Victoria

Richard Fellner wins the 2021 Presidents Trophy...

By Kim Hastie

On a fine day at Royal Melbourne, our popular Presidents Trophy returned to its regular venue and players enjoyed the course in great winter dormant conditions.

Secretary Kim Hastie welcomed the field, acknowledging the regulars, several past winners and the new members attending.

With a condition of 7 clubs only, nine holes of stroke was played in the morning with the top 4 nett scores progressing to the matchplay in the afternoon.

With the help of the Pro Shop, the top four scores were determined and announced at lunch.

The sudden death matchplay was on the East Course and results came quickly.

Top qualifier with a score of Nett 37 was Guenter Oechsle, playing fourth qualifier Geoff Knight (38 c/b) with Geoff winning on their first hole.

In the other match, second qualifier John Trevorow (38 c/b) played third qualifier and 2017 Runner up Richard Fellner (38 c/b) and despite playing from two bunkers Richard prevailed on their first hole.

So, finalists Geoff and Richard progressed to their first hole the 3rd East, due to the 2nd being out of play. Richard set himself up with a great drive while Geoff found himself short right.

Richard followed up with great iron into the green and a favourable bounce saw him sit comfortably for two and a certain par. Geoff could not match the shots and Richard won his first Presidents Trophy.

After golf drinks, were enjoyed as President Graeme Ryan presented the trophy to Richard.

We expect to see Richard participating in many more events as he informed us that after 15 years as Editor of the Inside Golf Magazine he has retired from the role.

Our congratulations to Richard for the many years heading up and producing the widely circulated publication.

The Society thanks all staff involved for a successful and enjoyable day at Royal Melbourne.



Winner Richard Fellner with President Graeme Ryan



Top qualifiers Guenter Oechsle and Geoff Knight



Qualifiers John Trevorow and Richard Fellner

Historians Forum

Commonwealth Golf Club

Monday 3 May 2021

By Tony Rule

The first Forum for the year was held at The Commonwealth Golf Club which, unfortunately for them, celebrated their Centenary in 2020. In recognition of this achievement the Club released a history titled 'The First 100 Years'. The author, Charles Happell, was our guest speaker and provided 30 members and guests with an engrossing presentation of what he describes as the 'colourful and vibrant' history of the Club.

Aided by an unpublished document, written by noted historian Joseph Johnson, Happell delved into the characters and circumstances that make Commonwealth a unique club. This uniqueness is perhaps best illustrated by the rejection of the overtures of one of the great 'Golden Age' architects Dr Alister MacKenzie. The succinct note (page 15) from the club to MacKenzie declining his services is one for the ages.

That Commonwealth could reject such overtures, yet still boast a golf course of undoubted quality, is without question due to the efforts of one man, Charles Lane.

He was the dominant force in the club and in 1926 went on a self-funded six-month study tour where he spent time in the US with Walter Travis, and in the UK with Harry Colt. No doubt he returned brimming with ideas and it is no surprise that the club rejected the services of MacKenzie.

This was one of the engrossing stories in the book that Charles spoke about. Further chapters dealt with other important figures such as Bill Edgar, Harry Williams, Eric Routley, Sloan Morpeth, Louise Briers, Rick Wines, Jarrod Lyle, Marc Leishman and many others.



Charles Happell's book is a worthy addition to the annals of Australian golfing histories and Commonwealth should be justifiably proud of it. Thank you to both Charles and the Heritage Committee of The Commonwealth Golf Club, led by its Chair Ian Pearce, for making their contribution to the first forum of the year such an interesting and insightful event.

Charles gave some insight into how such a book is produced, particularly in researching and verifying a club's history, collating the photos, member stories and the importance of proof reading. He complimented his talk with a power point slide show.

Charles willingly took questions from the floor and his responses were assisted by members Virginia Gorrell, Ian Pearce, and Stephen Spargo.

The second speaker on the program was Paul Burgess, Woodlands GC member, long time GSA member and a regular contributor to forums. Paul gave an interesting talk about a misplaced trophy and how it found its way back to Woodlands Golf Club.

The following extracts are from Paul's talk ...

A couple of years ago a stranger arrived at the club to donate a baseless trophy in the form of an elegant silver cup inscribed:

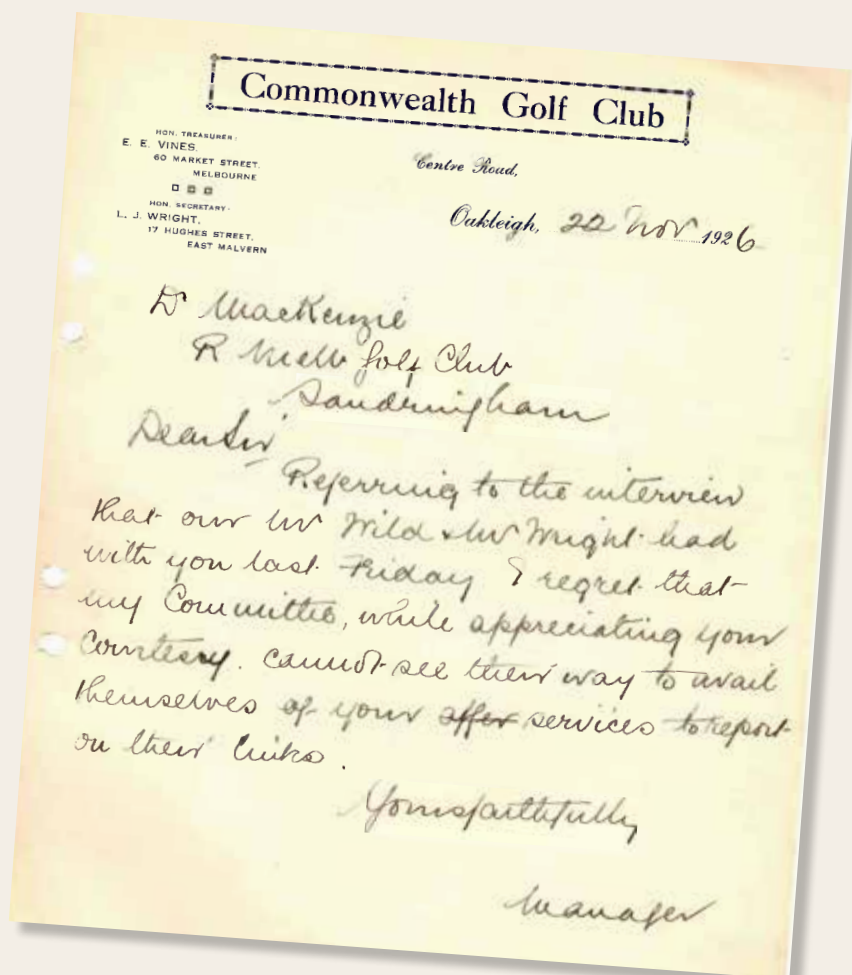
**Woodlands Golf Club
City of Mordialloc**

**Coronation Cup
Won by S.L-Anderson 12-5-1937
Presented by Cr Edwards Mayor**

Exactly how he acquired it is unknown and regrettably his name and details were not recorded at the time.

It was decided to have a new base fitted and a local trophy maker was given the order to fit a new one so it could be displayed at the club.

... continued page 16



Tony Rule with Charles Happell



Heritage committee Chair Ian Pearce and Paul Burgess with the Coronation Cup

Somehow the order was overlooked and forgotten about until recently when the cup was again returned to the club, but still without a base or stand.

The trophy has now been remounted courtesy of Mike Smith, a member with wood making skills who crafted a new base.

The earliest mention of the Coronation found to date in Victorian golfing circles was when Royal Melbourne Golf Club applied on the 8th of October 1936, to the Victorian Golf Association for two Coronation Medals.

Then in February 1937 the VGA asked its affiliated clubs to celebrate the coronation of King George VI suggesting they conduct special events on 8th May which was the Saturday preceding the Coronation scheduled for Wednesday, 12th May in London, England.

It is worth noting no mention of medals has been found in newspaper golfing results reports.

Apparently not all clubs agreed to go along with the V.G.A. suggestion, though from the results in a Melbourne newspaper "The Herald" many metropolitan and country clubs did hold special Coronation Day competitions.

Commonwealth Golf Club responded positively to the V.G.A. declaring Coronation Day would be there opening day for the season and hosted a mid-week Open Scratch Event on Wednesday 12 May 1937.

Woodlands Golf Club responded even more patriotically by conducting a bogey handicap event for members with the prize being the "Coronation Cup". It was the only trophy so named like that and records show Mr S. L. Anderson, off a handicap of 2, won it with a score of 3 up.

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Peter Paccagnan
Richard Garvey
Ian Monks
Geoff Cullen
Roslyn Nicol

VALE

Valerie Mitchell

COMING EVENTS

As restrictions have played havoc with our events, these have been postponed but we are working hard to secure new dates:

Kingston Heath GC Dinner,
featuring Director of Courses at
The Royal Melbourne Golf Club,
Richard Forsyth

**Historians Forum at
Metropolitan GC,** featuring course
architects Paul Mogford and
Michael Clayton

**Annual Hickory Day
at Kingston Heath**

Keep an eye on the website!



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readers about Australian golf history?

Join now through this link:
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golfsocietyofaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/groups/golfsocietyofaustralia)

Mr Anderson joined the club as a junior two years previously and was obviously a handy golfer as he won the club championship in the same year. Paul brought the trophy along for us to see and in a nice gesture, to acknowledge the reference made to Commonwealth GC and their Coronation event, he presented Ian Pearce with a framed account of the early beginnings of the Coronation Cup.

Historians Convenor, Tony Rule

Honorary Secretary, Kim Hastie