

# THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 41, JUNE 2012



*GSA Hickory golfers ready for the fray*

## Successful Hickory Day

*by Paul Burgess*

*I can confidently report 18 members had an enjoyable day at Kingston Heath Golf Club recently to compete for the annual Frank Shepherd and Burtta Cheney Trophies for men and women using the hickories, but I'm inclined to suggest Eric Lucas, one of our 90 years plus members brought along by Peter Molloy, had the most enjoyable day of us all.*

Eric accompanied Ian Rennick in a buggy to watch Ian and me play our round of ten holes, we being the two odd players after a draw for the four groups of ladies and men had been made during lunch. Throughout the entire 10 holes Eric provided a running commentary of the game together with reminiscences of his own outstanding golfing days at Kingston Heath and elsewhere. It was great and a privilege to be with one of his kind.

Max Finlay was again the generous supplier of hickories for those without their own clubs. Thanks Max. First time entrant Phillip Ellis, using borrowed hickories, won the Men's nearest the pin and Bernice Davies won the Ladies'.

The Men's longest drive needed a GPS to adjudicate but recorded the same reading so Peter Gompertz and Cliff George shared that prize. The Ladies' long drive went to Pat Kruse playing her first hickory game for quite some time, resplendent in a hickory era ensemble.

However the winner of the Burtta Cheney Trophy was Bev Wait (H'cp 18) with a commendable 18 points over 10 holes, and Peter Gompertz (H'cp 26) won the Frank Shepherd Trophy with 22 points; both very commendable efforts with the old clubs.

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### FOR THE DIARY

#### 30th July

Presidents Trophy at Royal Melbourne Golf Club

#### 6th August

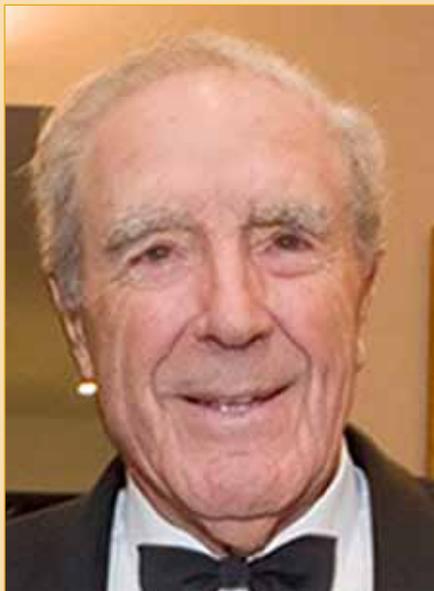
Dinner at Royal Melbourne Golf Club

#### 15th October

Golf Historians at Kew Golf Club

#### 1st November

Hickories at Croydon Golf Club



## GSA Member Voted Life Member at Kingston Heath

*Our Society's congratulations to GSA member Robert Layet who has been elected a Life member of Kingston Heath Golf Club after over 40 years of membership, twenty of which were as an office bearer from General Committee to President.*

Robert was founding Chairman of the Archive Committee in 2002, and has served in that capacity ever since. While his contributions on General Committee, and during his term as President, are well regarded, it is his work with the Archive Committee which is his legacy at Kingston Heath. Robert has methodically set about finding, identifying and cataloguing a lifetime of Club history and memorabilia. His tireless efforts, and steely resolve, have ensured that the history of the Club has not, and will not, be lost.



*Hickory Champions 2012*

## Successful Hickory Day

*continued from page 1*

At the presentation afternoon tea the President Geoff Vincent invited anyone to share high, or low, lights of the day with us. Some of the tales of the day included a remarkable birdie 3 for 5 points at the 6th by Peter Gompertz (no wonder he won), Geoff Vincent had 2 for 4 points at the par 3, 19th hole, and Bev Wait had 2 for 4 points at the par 3, 5th hole. Other incidents included the loudest clap of thunder heard over Kingston Heath for many a year, followed by a downpour equal to any experienced in tropical Queensland of late, which caused Brian Simpson to head straight home to avoid pneumonia.

Some ideas were also discussed about future hickory events, all of which were aimed at attracting more members to participate and making the day even more enjoyable. These will be considered for next year but even without any changes I am looking forward to playing again, and hope you will join us.

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to

Kay Briggs,  
Ross Davis,  
Brian O'Meara

## *Have you missed a dinner but would like to hear the speech?*

In most cases, when the speaker agrees, we record the after-dinner speeches at Golf Society functions.

If you have missed a dinner and would like to hear any of the presentations, they can be made available on cd for playing on computer or cd player.

**Contact:** The Secretary

# Early Development of Golf in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

by John Lovell

*The first mention of golf, and the first formally instituted club, was the New South Wales Golf Club on 1st June 1839 playing over a course at Grose Farm – now Victoria Park, Broadway. In 1849 a course was established inside the pony track at Petersham, next to Thomas Shaws Woolpack Inn on Parramatta Road. At Homebush David Robertson, younger brother of the noted St. Andrews golfer Allan Robertson, laid out a nine hole course for the Solicitor, John Dunsmure.*

When the University of Sydney commenced constructing their new campus in the mid 1850's, the course over which the New South Wales Golf Club played was abandoned and the club ceased.

David Robertson promoted the course he designed in 'Bell's Life' and suggested that a society named The Australian Golf Club, or similar, be formed. Alas another thirty-five years passed before this happened.

On 28th November 1857 a report appeared in 'Bell's Life' on a match 'played last Tuesday afternoon, 24th November at 4 o'clock, over a distance of two miles viz., from St. James' Church to Lyons Terrace and back twice, between Captain Kirk and David Robertson, for fifty pounds a side, the bet being who should do

the distance in the fewest number of strokes. Robertson won and another match was played on Wednesday afternoon, 25th November at 4 o'clock with Robertson again the victor'.

In the early 1860's, the English cricketer Charles Lawrence endeavoured to form a golf club while coaching the Albert Cricket Club and operating his Cricket Depot, George Street, Sydney where he sold cricket and golf equipment and offered golf tuition.

The site where he gave tuition was a basic course established on Sydney Common by the soldiers stationed at Victoria Barracks, Paddington which was established in 1841. According to the Department of Defence the six hole course was established near to the rifle range in the mid 1870's and was frequented by soldiers on leave from service in India.

On 24th February 1883, the Secretary of the Union Club, Sydney wrote to Sydney Council advising that a small group within that club had formed a golf club and they sought permission to play the game at Moore Park. This course was lost when Centennial Park was constructed and opened in 1888.

In Country New South Wales golf was played in Parkes in 1883, Goulburn and Gundagai in the mid 1880's and at Armidale in 1893.

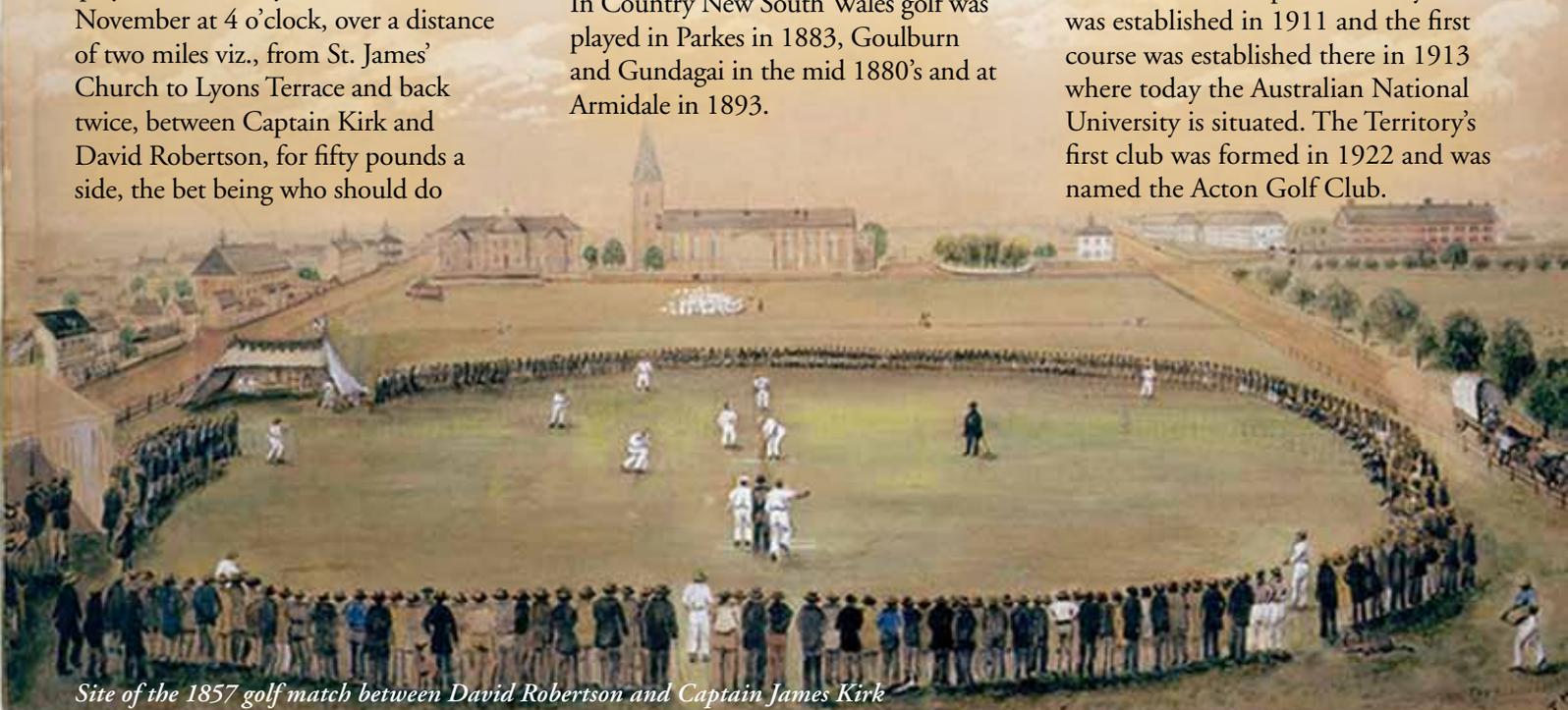
That year saw the establishment of the Sydney Golf Club which played over the 1849 course David Robertson laid out at Homebush. Whilst the opening holes were altered – the Sydney Golf Club commenced at the original courses fifth hole – the Club enjoyed the patronage of Miss Edith Walker (later Dame Edith Walker) – however they sought a linksland course and in 1894 established a nine hole course at Bondi.

During 1894 a golf club was formed at Bathurst and at Werrington, in the Southern Highlands, the Moss Vale and Bowral Recreation Club commenced playing over a six hole course.

From 1895 the establishment of courses and clubs took a major step forward – the Cootamundra Golf Club was formed on 27th February 1895, the Botany Golf Club on 26th April 1895, and the University of Sydney Golf Club on 2nd May 1895. Shortly afterwards the Wagga Wagga Golf Club opened on the 27th June 1895.

Meanwhile The Australian Golf Club reinvented itself in September 1895 at Queens Park, with six original members with the bank account from 1888 still active.

The Australian Capital Territory was established in 1911 and the first course was established there in 1913 where today the Australian National University is situated. The Territory's first club was formed in 1922 and was named the Acton Golf Club.



Site of the 1857 golf match between David Robertson and Captain James Kirk

# Golf Club Historians' Meeting at Ballarat

*Ian Rennick opened the meeting attended by 28 members, and thanked Ballarat Golf Club for allowing the Society to use their meeting room. He apologised for a number of people that were unable to attend, including Professor Weston Bate, Geoff Vincent the President of the Golf Society and Paul Burgess, Secretary of the Golf Society. Weston Bate was very sorry he could not attend as one his favourite subjects is the history of Ballarat.*

The Treasurer of the Golf Society, Dick Kirby, outlined the aims of the Society. The Society was started in 1982 with the aim to preserve the history of golf in Australia.

Meetings like the present one are conducted to help and encourage country golf clubs to collate their history as this is the basic story of Australian golf. These meetings enable historians to share their knowledge and meet others with similar interests.

Phil Roberts is a Ballarat historian who has written several historical books about Ballarat including "A Centenary History of the Ballarat Golf Club 1895 to 1995". Phil was a speaker at a Golf Historians meeting in December 2006 and related the Club's history up to that date. Since that date the course has been remade and a new clubhouse has been constructed.

When the new clubhouse was being designed Keith Wagner, the head of the Clubs Memorabilia Committee was determined to make the members aware of the Club's history.

The clubhouse has two entrance foyers, and in the main entrance foyer there is an impressive mural of the 11th April 1895 minutes when the Club was formed. Also there are maps of the first course and a plaque with a list of 53 staff and Club members who had an input into arrangements for the new course. In the Function Foyer there are honour boards from 1895, trophy cabinets and some early Club photographs. Phil stated that the new course is on part of the 1895 course and is the oldest Victorian golf club still playing on its original site.



*Cliff George fielding hickory questions*

In an era of State Government privatisation, members realised the Club maybe vulnerable on Crown Land so in the late 1990s the land where the 1924 Clubhouse stood was purchased from the government and then in 2002 the full course was purchased for about \$770,000. In the early 2000's a road building firm 'Roadcon' put forward a \$50 million development where Roadcon would build a new championship course in return for land from the eastern part of the old course which would be sold to a developer.

It took several years of negotiations to settle the water issue and highway access together with acquiring crown land from the Ballarat City Council. Thomson and Perrett planned the new course and turned a flat paddock into an undulating and interesting golf course. 140,000 trees, shrubs and ground cover were planted and since the official opening, other minor changes such as paths and a new bridge over the burn on the 10th have been added. On the 19th November 2009 the course was officially declared open by Peter Thomson at a gala dinner attended by the Premier John Brumby.

Ian Rennick outlined a project that the Society was undertaking determining a list of the early golf clubs that are still operating. The list consists of forty five clubs that were formed before 1900 and Ballarat is the 10th oldest Club in Australia. A list of the Clubs was handed to all present.

John Dillon, the club historian at Midlands Golf Club spoke about his Club which is one of the five clubs in Ballarat. In 1919 the Ballarat North Golf Club was formed and has stayed at the same location. The start of the Club happened when John Dearden was practicing in a paddock near his house and was he was asked what he was doing. He explained that he was a golfer, but his course was a long bike ride away. He was then asked why he did not start a course nearer his home.

*Phil Roberts & John Dillon >>*

The idea grew and he put a notice in the Ballarat Courier calling a meeting to form a golf club. At the meeting at the local Bowling Club it was agreed to form a club and 54 people signed up for membership. A committee was formed with John Dearden as President. Several land owners were contacted and they agreed that the Club could use their land free of charge and wanted to be members. A 9 hole course with sand scrapes was quickly laid out. Twelve months later a wooden structure was purchased and moved to the course as a Clubhouse.

In 1926 the Club rented some land from James Selkirk. He was a brick manufacturer and donated bricks and labour for the Club to build a new clubhouse. The building is still standing, and is now part of a care centre. In 1926 the sand scrapes were converted to grass greens. The 1930's were dark days for the Club. Firstly the old wooden clubhouse burnt down and caused damage to the new brick clubhouse. Twelve months later a fire on the course destroyed many of the course trees and two months later the clubhouse was broken into and a lot of equipment stolen.

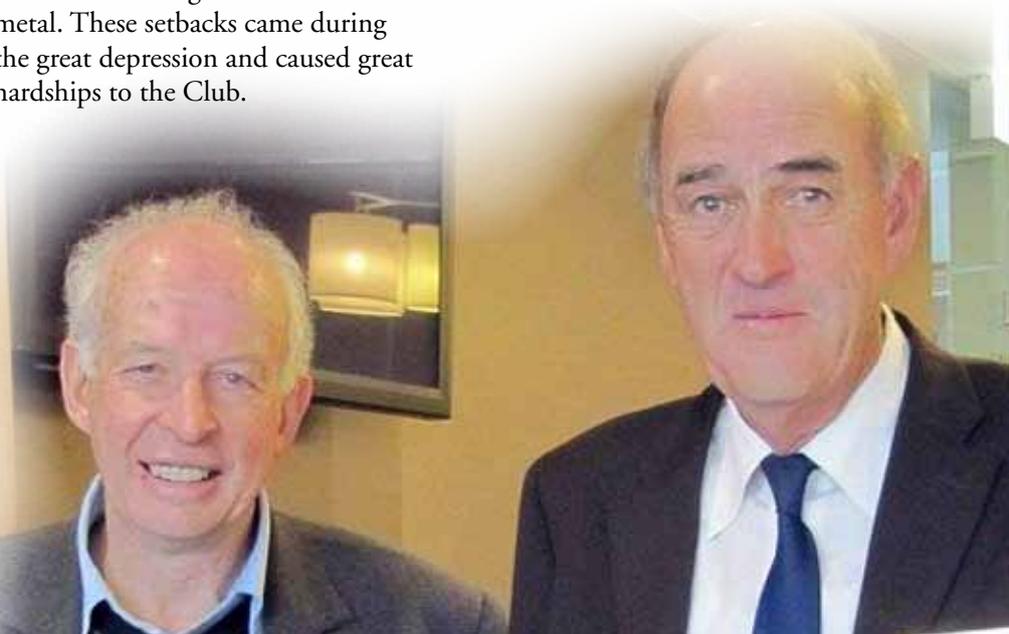
In March 1931 during a fierce storm lighting destroyed the clubhouse chimney and caused a 20 by 6 foot hole in the roof. This fused all the electrical wiring throughout the clubhouse turning it into molten metal. These setbacks came during the great depression and caused great hardships to the Club.

In 1936 the Club changed its name to Midlands Golf Club, purchased 32 acres of land on the North side of the course, and employed Morcom to redesign the course. In the 1960's a bowling club was formed, the club house was enlarged, and the bar and locker rooms were modernised.

In 1972 more land was purchased and new course was laid out by Peter Thomson and Mike Wolveridge. A new clubhouse was also built. The several alterations that had been made to the course were made due to the encroachment of the brick works digging for clay. When the Ballarat bypass road was built it required clay, so the Club agreed for them to dig on their land. The large hole that was dug is now used by the Club to store water which is collected as runoff from local houses, roads and the course. In more recent times a second bowling green has been constructed, a function room added to the clubhouse and the fairways changed to Santa Ana Couch.

Moira Drew, the Golf Society Archivist, spoke about the important role a golf club historian has. All golf clubs are different, from the large city clubs to very small country clubs but it is important that someone takes an interest in the club's history.

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## Golf Club Historians' Meeting at Ballarat

*continued from page 5*



*Main entrance mural at Ballarat Golf Club*



### THE BULL-DOG BREED.

*Sportsman (la difficulties).* "HOW MANY ARE YOU?"  
*Opponent.* "I'M A FOOT OFF THE PIN IN FOUR."  
*Sportsman.* "ALL LIGHT. THEN; THIS FOR A HALF."

In all clubs a historical profile should be kept in the club house whether it is a display of honour boards, photographs or club trophies, they all show part of the club's history. Moira mentioned the historical displays in Ballarat's clubhouse particularly the large mural of the Club's first meeting. The foyer of a clubhouse is important as it introduces members and visitors, and is an ideal place to display historical items. Members take an interest in newsletters and anything that is published in a local newspaper. With the ease of computers communication members can be informed of happenings at the Club and event news can be easily stored for future reference. Keeping the Club records up to date is essential either through separate records, or noted in Club minutes.

Moira also mentioned 'Trove', a National Library search facility. Gradually all newspaper will be included in its data base, including many country papers. A demonstration was made by entering Trove on the web and then typing a Club's name. Quickly a search is made, a list is produced and you are able to scroll through it for interesting articles. Those of interest can be printed.

Cliff George had a display of hickory clubs and spoke about the best way to keep them in good playing condition. He answered many questions and demonstrated how to remove the head from a shaft and replace it, the importance of binding the neck of a club, and how to replace a worn grip. He also gave interested members a handout covering the maintenance of hickory golf clubs if they are played with.

# Society Dinner at Kingston Heath Golf Course with an address by Mr Malcolm Speed

*Nearly 70 members and guests attended our recent dinner at Kingston Heath Golf Club. Mr Malcolm Speed was guest speaker and the title of his most interesting and entertaining address was "Governance in Sport".*

Malcolm is a director of Golf Australia and has held a number of other top sporting positions here and overseas, the most notable of which as head of Cricket Australia and the I.C.C.

Malcolm's opening words to his audience were to throw out a challenge as to whether anyone could better his proud list of more than 50 countries round the world where he has played golf. This brought a couple of offers from members into the thirties but none could match Malcolm when he rattled off his fifty courses in a rather rollicking rhyme everyone enjoyed hearing.

On a more serious and interesting theme Malcolm then expanded upon his subject emphasising "Great Governance Equals Great Sport" and quoted Geelong Football Club an example with its strong administration being mirrored by on field success.

The strength of the Australian Football League over any other sporting body in the country is another organisation providing great sport through great governance. His passion for football is focussed on the Richmond Football Club, where he is a board member, and he recalled the "Confederation of Enemies" that was the AFL culture of generations ago.

Similar comparisons were made to governance of cricket, soccer and golf, both in Australia and overseas. Whilst these sports have vastly different structures, their respective delivery of great sport can be viewed through changing levels of success over recent times.

Referring to golf specifically, Malcolm suggested its many tour organisations and players groups, amateur and professional, might prohibit delivery of great sport but somehow the worldwide scene of golf is reasonably well co-ordinated. He indicated how the power of TV rights gives influence in many countries over governance issues, that, in some cases, may not be in the best interests of the sport.



*Guest speaker Malcolm Speed*

Question time was entertaining with members participating in discussions relating to the ongoing merging of amateur and professionalism in many sports. Some suggested that golf is an exception where the amateur is still highly rated. This then led to discussion on the selection of future Olympic golf teams that, one of our guests Frances Crampton, explained, would be based on world rankings plus a spot(s) for others by each country's top golfing organisation.

President Geoff Vincent thanked Malcolm for a most interesting, and entertaining speech, presenting gifts to both Malcolm and Mrs Speed in appreciation of their attendance.



*Members and guests at Kingston Heath dinner*



*Don Lawrence winners with Muriel Lawrence*

## Don Lawrence Memorial Trophy 2012

### Cliff George and Peter Gompertz Repeat Win

*by Paul Burgess*

*Bringing the Don Lawrence Memorial Trophy forward from the longest day of the year last year proved a good idea as the 30 competitors in this year's event played in comfortable, if cool, conditions at Woodlands Golf Club recently.*

The winners with 46 points were Cliff George and Peter Gompertz on a count back from Max Findlay and Paul Burgess who have now been runners-up in this event on three occasions! They were however awarded the best back nine prize with 24 points.

The best front nine went to Grace and David Rew, with 25 points. Grace had a birdie four for 4 points on the par five 2nd and David's back-to-back birdies on the 7th and 8th were most rewarding. The secret nine was won by Graeme Ryan and Bill Young.

Mike Clayton's eagle three at the par five 15th was a highlight for his group to enjoy, a feat he almost repeated on the par 5 18th as his putt for a three sat on the lip.

Members were again pleased to welcome Mrs Muriel Lawrence and, after she had presented the silver salver to the winners, everyone enjoyed the buffet dinner in the warm clubhouse. Muriel also presented the Society with some very interesting memorabilia in the form of press cuttings, correspondence and photos from her late husband's papers.

*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.*