

THE LONG GAME

NEWSLETTER OF THE
GOLF SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA



No 47, JANUARY 2014



The President presents David Hill with the Doug Bachli Trophy

Doug Bachli Trophy & Annual General Meeting

A fine spring morning, albeit with a strong breeze, greeted 32 Members at Victoria Golf Club for the annual competition for the Doug Bachli Trophy. It would take four good blows to get to the 17th green in three! The greens having been recently sanded, made putting a little more difficult than usual, but our four prize winners appeared not to notice.

Our worthy winner with 36 points was David Hill from Kingston Heath closely followed by Phil Francis from Kew with 35 points. The ladies were led home by Victoria Club member, Lorraine Clothier with 30 points, in a close tussle with Virginia Gorrell from Commonwealth with 29.

Members retired to the bar to celebrate/drown their sorrows, before being presented with their prizes by our President, prior the AGM getting underway.

Peter Gompertz

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FOR THE DIARY

10th February

Dinner
at Metropolitan Golf Club

3rd March

Golf Historians at
Box Hill Golf Club

6th April

Al Howard Trophy at
Kingston Heath Golf Club

President's Report - 2013



Geoff Vincent AM
President

It is my pleasure to present the President's Report for the past year.

At the last Annual General Meeting, we voted to change the Rules to provide for an additional class of membership. However we have increased our membership slightly and this should continue into next year. Members will recall that David Cheney joined us to provide an outline of Burrta Cheney, one of our founding members who died last year.

Also Ian Rennick was unanimously granted Life Membership and we were pleased to present Ian with his framed certificate at the dinner at Royal Melbourne.

The Golf Society had a successful year, with increased membership, two successful dinners and exciting competitions. Our social events were a highlight with Ranald McDonald AO, at Kingston Heath, and Stephen Pitt at Royal Melbourne. Ranald spoke of his life and times with such legendary figures as Tony Charlton, Peter Thomson, Seve Ballasteros, Ted Ball and many others, while Stephen outlined the activities of Golf Australia, the junior programmes and the excellent performance of our amateurs on the world stage. The only disappointment was the cancellation of our dinner at Woodlands in February, due to their centenary celebrations.

This year's events have been reported in *The Long Game*, but I would like to mention the Al Howard Hickory Challenge event held at the Yowani Golf Club in Canberra, against the Australian Golf Heritage Society.

This is an annual event played over several days. Our elite team from Melbourne were not successful in gaining the trophy – we obviously over trained for the event, and we had some scratchings from among our favourites. We missed Paul Burgess, Max Findlay, Ian Rennick and Tony McLean (gout).

Next year, we anticipate it will be played at Kingston Heath in April and it is hoped we might prevail.

Our annual Hickory Day championship was held, during April' at Kingston Heath and won by Martin Maguire and Jean Gilbert.

A number of donations to the museum collection, including clubs, memorabilia and books, were received including a special collection from the estate of Ken Shepherd carefully looked after by Moira, Max Findlay and Cliff George. Our thanks to the Shepherd family for their interest and generosity.

Our Archivist Moira Drew has had a busy year with the maintenance of the web site, cataloguing new items and preparing exhibits.

During July, we held the Presidents Trophy at Royal Melbourne and we saw David Hewitt prevail in the final.

Other events include the Don Lawrence trophy, held at Woodlands in June, and won by Graeme Ryan and Peter Gompertz.

Our meetings of golf historians are a great way to make contact with various Victorian Golf clubs and the meeting at Woodlands in October, during their centenary year, was a special event. Our thanks to the Convenor, Paul Burgess, a member at Woodlands, who handled the entire day so well.

Regrettably, earlier in November, we had to cancel the National Hickory Challenge as the Croydon Club felt there were insufficient numbers, which was disappointing.

This is my second year as President and I would like to pay tribute to members of your committee.

Firstly our Secretary Tony McLean, who took over the role this year from Paul Burgess and has done a magnificent job. Paul, who has served on your committee for another year will step aside at the next AGM with our sincere thanks.

Our Treasurer, Dick Kirby, is always keeping an eye on our finances and will also be standing down shortly as Treasurer; he will hand the reins to Peter Swan but Dick will remain on Committee.

Our archivist Moira Drew, an absolute treasure behind the scenes, looks after our website and the complete historical collection..... her work is greatly appreciated. Peter Gompertz, our editor and producer of *The Long Game* has had some stressful moments this year, and we appreciate his efforts. To Virginia Gorrell, my thanks to her for her work in arranging the detail for our dinners which has made the events a success; to Peter Swan who handles our merchandise and to Norie McLeod and Des Tobin my thanks for their wise counsel.

Paul Burgess looks after our Historians meetings, and thanks to Max Findlay and Cliff George for their interest and passion with the restoration of our Hickory clubs and demonstrations of club fitting as it was done in the past. My thanks to all members of our committee who are invaluable to me, and a pleasure to work with. I sincerely appreciate their help and friendship.

We are sorry to be saying farewell to Des Tobin who is stepping down from your committee; we wish him well.

Our finances are in good shape and a separate report from the Treasurer is available for your scrutiny.

As our constitution requires, Dick Kirby stands down after 6 years service and Peter Swann will take over. Dick will continue to serve on the committee. Norie McLeod and Peter Gompertz have been re-elected to your committee, and we welcome Kim Hastie as a new committee member.

I would like to mention that during the coming year we will explore the possibility of a closer relationship with both Golf Australia, and the Australian Golf Heritage Society who are based in Sydney. It is possible that there are benefits to be gained from a more formal connection, with an Australia wide base, and this could be a positive for Golf Society members in all our states. We discussed this some two years ago and next year we feel progress might be made.



Chris McLeod addresses historians

Golf Historians at Woodlands Golf Club

by Paul Burgess

Convenor Paul Burgess thanked the 33 historians attending, reminding them that the meetings are aimed at encouraging historians from all golf clubs to share their knowledge about recording club histories. He mentioned that Rushworth, Box Hill and Woodlands golf clubs are celebrating their centenaries this year.

Chris McLeod, President of Box Hill Golf Club, presented an interesting history of his club. Although Box Hill is celebrating their centenary this year it has links back to 1892 when the Surrey Hills Golf Club was started. Surrey Hills Golf Club was established in 1892 near the Mont Albert station but due to sub-division was forced to move in 1907.

The membership was split, a group of members went to East Camberwell, and Riversdale Golf Club was formed. Another group went to Doncaster and eventually formed Eastern and Huntingdale Golf Clubs. More went to Fisherman's Bend which was the start of Victoria Golf Club. In 1909 the remaining members formed the Middleborough Golf Club playing on land that is now the Box Hill Cemetery. They later leased 70 acres of land south of Canterbury Road but ceased play during World War 1, and from 1924 to 1933. The Myer Basement Social Club started playing on land near Gardiners Creek that was owned by the Roberts family. In 1935 Mr. Roberts son in law, Mr J C P Wellard, took over the land and developed a full course with grass greens, and maintained it through the 1940's.

In 1951 the Club approached Mr Wellard to buy the land which stretched to Eley Road. The Club issued debentures to fund the purchase but could only afford the 9 holes, with Station Street frontage. The remaining land was subdivided for housing. In 1964 a new clubhouse was built facing Station Street, and additional land was leased from the MMBW to establish an additional nine holes. In 1990 a new clubhouse was opened and in 1997 the land on which the northern nine holes are played was purchased.

An interesting and informative participant in the meeting was Mr Jim Wellard the son of J C P Wellard, and a member of Box Hill Golf Club. He remembers the early course and lives in Wellard Street which overlooks the present course.

Moira Drew, Golf Australia Archivist referred especially to the preservation of golfing documents and memorabilia which initiated considerable discussion on ways and means of preserving digital documents now becoming the preferred means of communication with club members. Earlier guides and other papers prepared by Moira relating to these matters were available for the audience to peruse or retain for their club's use.

Golf Society member Cliff George demonstrated various techniques on caring for, and restoring, hickory clubs. He also provided information on past and present sources of timber used in the manufacture of wooden golf sticks.

Cliff's address attracted much discussion which reflects the growing interest in old golf sticks.

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Golf Historians at Woodlands Golf Club

continued from page 3

Show and Tell

This segment of these meetings is becoming more and more a feature of the day. Hickory expert and Society member Max Finlay displayed a variety of old sticks many not previously shown. This attracted considerable discussion especially when new member Marty McGuire produced some samples of his collection for assessment by Max.

Tad Woznica presented a report and extract from a local paper on the opening of the Grampians Golf Course by the Governor of Victoria in the 1960's. Tad expanded on the occasion and presented the documents to Moira Drew for the Golf Society of Australia library collection. Moira being a member of the Grampians Golf Club, and present on the occasion, was particularly interested in seeing the document.

Dorothy Mortlock presented copies of "Out of the Rough" the story of Rosebud Country Club 1962-2013 to Woodlands, and The Golf Society of Australia, for their respective libraries.



Max Finlay describes a hickory club

Woodlands Golf Club Centenary

Paul Burgess delivered an illustrated presentation on the formation, development and highlights of the club's 100 years which are summarised below.

- Western District schoolteacher, and golfer, George Rogers was transferred to Chelsea in 1912, and became aware of a beautiful, undulating, tract of land called "Mayfield" at Mordialloc. He obtained 'permissive' occupancy' of a portion of Mayfield and the Mordialloc Golf Club was formed on 17 July 1913 with a limit of fifty members.
- Early Melbourne professional, Richard Banks, laid out nine holes for Opening Day on 6th September 1913. Cattle and sheep grazed over Mayfield so the club erected wire fences around greens & tees. Sand bunkers were prohibited so one metre wire-netting hurdles were erected across the fairways.

- In 1917, Club professional, Sam Bennett laid out nine new holes. In 1921, Mr. Plant, a bunker expert supplied recommendations based on an aerial survey photographed by a member Hunter Rogers, a WW1 aviator who was first in Australian to offer aerial surveys to aid golf course design.
- In 1924 a lease was obtained over 185 acres & electricity and water were connected. Mordialloc Golf Club became a company in 1925 and changed its name to "Woodlands", acknowledging its parkland setting.
- Any debate on whether rebuilding or alterations should be made to the clubhouse was settled after fire gutted the original clubhouse in February 1927. A new clubhouse was officially opened in 1928.
- Captain Gresson is forever revered for personally paying a 10% deposit of £20, to purchase for £200, the Swifts Creek Club (Gippsland) for its liquor license. That club was transferred to Mordialloc & until about the 1960's two annual meetings were held to satisfy the Licensing laws.
- In 1928 the club were admitted to senior pennant and a year later its fairways were ploughed up and sown with couch grass. The Club then purchased its leased area for £11,000, or nearly £70 per acre. In 1934 Woodlands hosted the Victorian Amateur Championship and has been the venue for the Vic Open on many occasions.
- WW2 years were a struggle when service personnel were made honorary members & monthly medals became war medals. One stalwart member was reputed to have acted as green-keeper, cleaner, barman etc. Bore water had been sought in the early days but samples proved unsuitable until the mid sixties when a new bore proved successful, and the whole course reticulated.
- The achievements of two members dwarf all others, namely, those of Margaret Masters who won the first of nine Women's championships at age nineteen (1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1960, 1962 and 1963). Five Victorian Amateur Championships and the Australian, New Zealand, South African and Canadian Championships. Margaret later turned professional and competed in America, where she enjoyed considerable success.
- Stephen Allan, Club Champion in 1991 and 1994 turned professional in 1996, qualified for the European Tour in 1997, and then won the German Open the following year. He headed the 2000 USPGA Tour School, Coined The Baby Face Assassin, Steve won the 2002 Australian Open at Victoria Golf Club.

A Brief History of the Sand Iron

By John Fawcett

(This article first appeared in RM, the house magazine for members of Royal Melbourne Golf Club – Ed.)

*In Gene Sarazen's book **Thirty Years of Championship Golf** he states that he only became a confident player of bunker shots after he invented the sand iron.*

This club, now called a sand wedge, the dynamiter, or the blaster as well as the sand iron, was born in a small machine shop in New Port Richey late in 1931. Sarazen was trying to make a club that would drive the ball up as he drove the clubhead down.

When a pilot wants to take off, he doesn't raise the tale of the plane, he lowers it. Accordingly Sarazen lowered the tail, or sole, of his niblick to produce a club whose face would come up from the sand as the sole made contact with the sand.

He experimented with soldering various globs of lead along the sole of his niblick until he arrived at a club that had an exceptionally heavy, abrupt, wide, curving flange. He tried out this club hitting thousands of shots a week, making adjustments in his machine shop, and testing the improvements until he had the club perfected.

The sand iron was quickly taken up by his fellow pros, and went on to become, in its variations, a standard club in all manufacturers' sets. However, upon further investigation, it seems that Gene Sarazen did not invent the sand wedge in 1932, which is the accepted legend. The sand wedge was actually invented, and patented, four years earlier, in 1928, by a man named Edwin Kerr MacClain, a member of the Houston Country Club in Texas.

You may well ask how MacClain came to invent it. The answer is that he practically lived in bunkers every time he played golf and kept wondering why there

wasn't something more useful than the niblick, or 9 iron as it would become to be known. To extricate his ball from the bunkers.

The wedge he designed had a weird concave face and resembled a large ice cream scoop on a stick, but it began to marketed under the Walter Hagen logo, and the pros of the day went for it.



Sarazen's first sand iron

Horton Smith was a staunch believer in the sand wedge immediately. Smith, or the 'Joplin ghost' as he was nicknamed by a sportswriter of the time, was known to have the weapon in his bag through out 1929, a year in which he won an astonishing eight tournaments.

Smith then started the 1930 season in February by scoring 278 to win the Savannah Open by one stroke from Bobby Jones in what would become Jones' Grand Slam season and it was in Savannah, after the tournament, that Smith gave Jones one of the new sand wedges, strongly suspecting that it might come in useful for him someday.

Four months later it did, three holes from the finish of the final round of The Open at Hoylake. Jones had won the British Amateur at St Andrews in May and was now trying to win the second leg of the 'slam'. As Jones played the par 5 16th, the 70th of the Championship, with Macdonald Smith and Leo Diegl closely chasing him and only two strokes behind, his wayward second shot left him with a nasty lie in a greenside bunker. The awkward lie forced him to stand with one foot in the sand and the other on a grassy slope. So out came the sand wedge for the one and only time in Jones' brilliant career. He blasted the ball out to within four inches of the cup for the birdie that saved the tournament, and the 'slam', for him.

In 1931 the USGA declared MacClains' club illegal because of its concave face; however Sarazen did design what is arguably the most popular sand iron ever made, the Wilson R-90, first sold by the Wilson Sporting Goods Company in 1933. In 1934, Gene Sarazen presented C H Fawcett, my father, with such a club following an exhibition match in Sydney. Sadly this club was stolen by a burglar some years ago.



Gene Sarazen

Rarities in the Library of Golf

compiled by H.R.J. Grant and D.M. Wilson III

By the end of the nineteenth century, the time of the great Triumvirate of Braid, Taylor and Vardon, little was written on the game of golf compared with the early twentieth century.

The selections made for this book have been garnered from rare books and pamphlets, some of which are virtually unknown, together with articles and extracts from magazines. The extensive selection paints a vivid picture of golf in late Victorian times. Many areas of golf are covered in the seven chapters.

The original illustrations, both in colour and monochrome, have been carefully reproduced and some additional illustrations have been included. The twenty-one selections from 1849 to 1899 include *Traditional Tales of Leith*, Hay Flemings's *Historical Notes and Extracts Concerning the Links at St Andrews*, George Aikman's *Pen and Pencil Sketches of the Game of Golf*, *The Duffers Golf Club Papers*, *Songs of the Innerleven Golf Club – An Auld Kirk Allegory*, *The Seeding and Preservation of Golf Links* and a short piece of fiction, *His Golf Madness*.

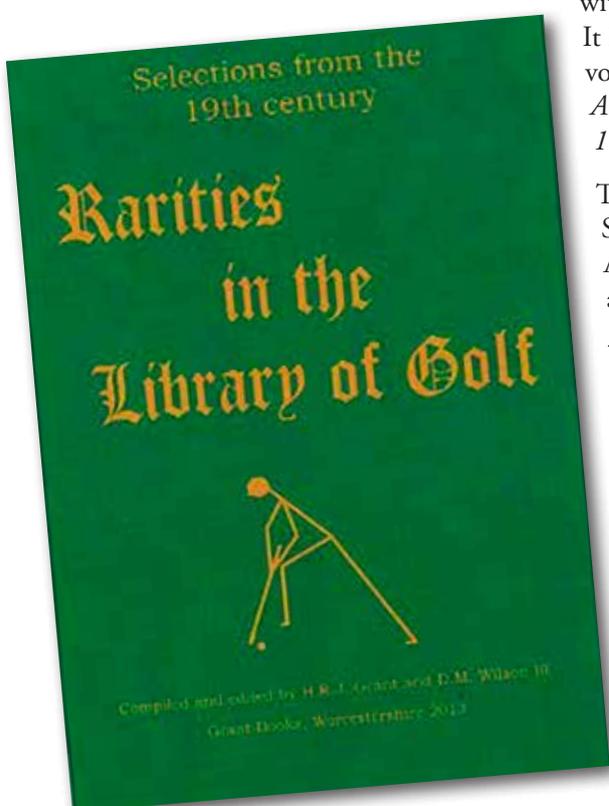
The book, produced throughout by colour process, is an important historical link with the early game of golf.

It is designed to be a companion volume to *A Journey through the Annals of the Golfing Annuals 1888-1910* (TLG #38).

The Foreword is by Peter Dawson, Secretary of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and the Afterword is by Rand Jerris, Senior Managing Director, Public Affairs, Unites States Golf Association.

The book is 560 pages and published in a limited slipcase edition of 325 copies, priced at £69 post-paid. Please go to www.grantbooks.co.uk to order and pay.

Rarities in the Library of Golf compiled by H.R.J. Grant and D.M. Wilson III



NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to
Nadene Gol
and Ross Haslam

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

Society Merchandise

Society ties, visors, ball markers and pins are available for purchase at all Society functions.

If you would like to obtain any of our logo items between functions please contact Peter Swan, whose number is in the members' handbook.



Bump and Run – at the feet of the masters

- by Andrew Crockett

Andrew Crockett who was inducted into the Surfers Hall of Fame for his publication of two award winning books of photographs and interviews of the leading world surfers, has now turned his attention to his second love, golf, and has been fortunate to have been given long periods of interview time by many of the leading golfers of the past 70 years. While the majority are Australian, with one notable exception, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Bob Charles have also been generous with their time, as has Australia's leading lady golfer, Jan Stephenson.

Andrew has posed a number of intelligent questions to his subjects and reported their answers, illustrating them with a wonderful array of photographs that he has been given access to.

There is also a chapter on Robert Wade from Melbourne, one of the worlds leading golf artists, another on Australia's involvement in the development of professional golf in Asia, one on golf course design and, very interestingly, a chapter on the resurgence of interest in playing with hickory clubs.



Two Australian legends, Peter Thomson and Kel Nagle get chapters to themselves and Adam Scott, Australia's first winner of The Masters, does the honours with his Foreword.

This unusual book is a treasure trove of insights for all golfers, regardless of their ability. It is priced at a very reasonable A\$50 and is available on line by emailing andrew@switchfoot.com who will advise you of the post and packing costs to where you live.

Peter Gompertz

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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