



The Australian Golf Heritage Society

www.australiangolfheritage.org.au

The Australian Golf Heritage Society, through its aims continues to:

1. Encourage the collection, recording and preservation of information that is connected to the history of golf in Australia;
2. Verify the authenticity of physical items associated with the history of golf in Australia, and provide a means of storing, restoring and displaying these physical items;
3. Inform golfers, golf clubs and the wider community of this information and display these physical items in a manner which tells their story, and;
4. Promote hickory events as a celebration of the origins of the game.

Of particular interest to Clubs and their members are the resources for Clubs and other historians which offer access to publications, information and specialists intended to make your research project both thorough and easy to commence and complete.

Two initiatives which are now reaping fruits for the Society and the golfing public generally are the AGHS Oral History Program and Facebook.

The Oral Histories currently available on the website are Tom Moore, Dan Cullen, Edgar Oakman, Alex and Dave Mercer, Frank Phillips, Margery McWilliam, Edwina Kennedy and Marea Hickey.



The introduction of Facebook to the Society's activities has opened up a mutually worldwide audience for the Society and it is recommended that when visiting the AGHS website that you review the Facebook postings – you will be pleasantly surprised.

In relation to golf and its history the following two items are reproduced below for your edification

ADDRESS TO NSW PGA ANNUAL MEETING - PYMBLE GOLF CLUB MONDAY 9TH MAY 2016.

Mr. Chairman, fellow professionals,

Having reached the ripe old age of 85 it never occurred to me that one day I might be the oldest member to attend a PGA meeting – but it has occurred to me every year that it might be my last.

Could I begin by congratulating all those members who give up their time freely to serve on the various committees. It is sometimes a thankless task, but our Association wouldn't work without it.

The PGA I was proudly elected to join 63 years ago was a very different organization than it is to-day. It was a very blokey group of tight knit Club Professionals who employed young assistants and trained them in all aspects of their career. It was a 2 year traineeship, at the end of which basic tests were set such as club making, playing, rules and controlling shop activities. Women and girls in the game were at most tolerated.

Today things have progressed to the point where the training is virtually at a university level. It has been suggested to me by several people that, under today's training regimen, applicants in my era would not qualify for membership. Well I've got news for them. We would have swum through a river full of crocodiles to get into the PGA.

Golf was a very different affair in those days. The season began on March 1st and ended on November 30th. Very little golf was played in the summer. All this changed with the introduction of television in 1956. Golf took off and became a year round sport.

My first club job was at the newly created Muirfield Golf Club in 1954, where the President told me they had 100 members and were ready to take off. 100 members yes, but only 17 were financial. In 1956 Muirfield was technically bankrupt but by 1966 we opened a new clubhouse debt free. In those days the clubhouse was on one side of Barclay Road and the course on the other side. It wasn't the best arrangement, so I built and paid for the first pro shop to be situated on the course. Hardly thinkable today. On the credit side, I saw a Club grow from the very beginning, something that stood me in great stead in later years.

The position of club professional was vastly different then. The pro was regarded as a low ranked servant of the club. Dan Cullen applied for the position at a leading north shore club after WW II still wearing his RAAF uniform with the ribbon of the DFC displayed on his tunic, only to be told that he could have the job but would not be welcome in the clubhouse.

Recently we have lost three of our senior PGA members, Kel Nagle, Dan Cullen and Al Howard. These men were giants of the game and promoted the PGA to the position it enjoys today. To me the story of the PGA is the story of Australia, where a group of men proud of their chosen profession who were treated generally as glorified caddies, refused to be put down and by the force of their personality and their feeling of worth and commitment to golf over many years have produced a PGA that is respected worldwide. We should all celebrate that.

Today I'm proud to say that I am still heavily involved with the history of the game through the Australian Golf Heritage Society, of which PGA is a major sponsor. We have established a Museum at Granville, where we have a wonderful collection. I invite everyone here to visit, and bring their friends and members of their Club, particularly younger members. The Museum is growing and I'm appealing for your help as we get bigger and need more hands on deck.

The history of golf is immense if you consider the various facets of the game, from equipment to players, to club histories and course design. Recently we instituted a series of "Oral Histories" where we interview and record histories of past and present players and administrators of the game. This is not just a tape recording but a precisely taped interview costing about \$800 each. It is recorded, on special recording tape, by a trained Oral Historian whose first job is to obtain a release form giving permission for the tape to be used in the future for research purposes. A copy of each interview is housed at the NSW State Library, where there are thousands of hours of valuable historic interviews.

Visitors to the Museum are important and numbers visiting our displays at Major Tournaments are huge. In an endeavour to gain more exposure we have built a travelling display, which is available to Clubs to stand in their foyers or pro shops for periods of a month or so. Several clubs have already taken up the offer. If you think your Club might assist please get in touch with the Society.

Tom Moore.
Member of the PGA

Vale Dan Cullen

The Australian Golf Heritage Society has lost a great friend and supporter with the passing on 26 January 2016 after a short illness of long time member and Patron of AGHS, Dan Cullen, at the age of 101.

Born in Bunbury, Western Australia on 15 November 1914, Dan's career in golf began almost by accident when he and his younger brother were caught pinching figs from a tree on the Mt. Yokine (now Western Australian Golf Club) course. By way of penance, they were set to weeding greens which - in turn - led to caddying. This then progressed to a traineeship for Dan at Mt. Yokine under the guidance of professional Eric Alberts and, after joining the PGA in 1932, moving to the Cottesloe Club with Alberts and then to the Nedlands Club by himself. This was the start of a career in which he developed a well-earned reputation as a respected Club Professional and capable golfer.

In 1937 Dan won the West Australian Open, and in 1938 successfully defended his title. In 1939 he defeated South African Bobby Locke in an exhibition match at Royal Perth Golf Club. Dan credited Locke, one of South Africa's most successful professional golfers, with developing his career as a professional.

After moving to Sydney, Dan enlisted in the RAAF in 1941 and was ultimately posted to Europe piloting Lancaster bombers with 460 Squadron - a job that held less than a one in four chance of surviving the 30 sorties necessary to complete an 'operational tour'. He flew 32 operational flights over Europe. On one of these operations - to Friedrichshafen in April 1944 - Dan and his crew had a narrow escape for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

According to the citation:

Flying Officer Cullen's work has always been of a very high standard. His courage and skill as a pilot have ensured success of many operational sorties.

In April, 1944, he took part in an attack on Fredrickshafen. While on the outward flight, the aircraft was damaged by heavy anti-aircraft fire and one engine rendered unserviceable. The mid-upper turret was put out of action and the petrol tanks holed. Despite these serious handicaps and although still 100 miles short of the target, he pressed on in most adverse circumstances and completed the mission successfully.

In July 2015 Dan received the Legion d'Honneur Medal, the highest decoration in France, for his active service during World War II.

Upon returning home to Australia in 1945, he was appointed Club Professional at Roseville Golf Club before moving to St Michael's Golf Club. He taught the game of golf to thousands through Cullen's Driving Range, which he operated in the late 1960s and managed today by the St Michael's Golf Club in Little Bay. Between 1948 and 1960, he served as Director and Chairman of the NSW PGA, prior to his appointment as President of the PGA, which he held from 1951 - 1955.

In 1977 at the age of 64 Dan qualified for The Open, the oldest qualifier in the history of the tournament, and teed off in a field alongside Jack Nicklaus, Seve Ballesteros, Bob Shearer, Graham Marsh and Gary Player.

Dan's long and loyal service to the golf industry and the dedication he showed in promoting the game will continue to be remembered. (Reproduced from AGHS website www.australiangolfheritage.org.au)

Gerry Bush - Golf NSW Delegate to AGHS