

# The Brassie

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## Captain's Corner with Peter Read

The Australian Hickory Shaft Championship has taken giant steps forward. At the last Societies Challenge held at Royal Sydney, the Golf Society of Australia agreed to hold the 2004 Australian Hickory Shaft Championship in Melbourne, possibly in November 2004. We have had a request to hold the 2008 Championship in Perth to coincide with Royal Perth GC's centenary and this aligns with our goal to take the championship Australia-wide.

Our last event was the 'Dan Cullen' Trophy played at Long Reef on Friday 13 February 2004 and once again, it was a great day for those participating. The winners of the day were John Fletcher and Des Fromeman with a nett score of 32¼, followed by Henry Paterson and Ray Drummond on 34¼. Vicki Cullen (young Dan's wife) took many wonderful photos with a sample shown below. Contact Vicki (9547 1196) if you would like to purchase copies. Les Browne, GCSA and Long Reef member, organised the 'Links Classic' event for non-members, won by Michael Snell and Jessica Sullivan (a winner in 2003) with a nett 37¼.

Neville Wilson, Past President to the PGA attended the dinner and presented Dan Cullen with a framed photo of Dan, Eric Cremin and Neville, taken some 40 years ago.

### *Reciprocal rights with the Golf Society of Australia*

It has been confirmed that members of the Golf Society of Australia and the Golf Collectors Society of Australia will have reciprocal rights to play in and attend the other's events and activities. The Societies will continue to share information including their calendars of coming events and activities.

## Hickory at Royal Avalon

Owen Denmeade's effort and enthusiasm paid off on Friday 23 April when 15 of Royal Avalon's regulars played 9 holes with hickories. The council course is 9 holes of hillside with lots of vegetation; the holes are not long, but challenging all the time. It was good for hickories. Vikki Jellis, the well-known former leading amateur is the manager at Avalon – her family have had that position for many years and her first set of clubs when a four year old are displayed in the shop. The origin of the king or queen who bestowed regal status on the course is lost in Northern Beaches antiquity.

Every one of the Royal Av regulars dressed up somehow for the occasion. The three ladies wore long skirts and long sleeved blouses, while most of the men had golf pants tucked into red socks. It was a good start and their hearts were in it. One of the ladies on an outrageous handicap returned 25 points and wanted to buy Tom's set on the spot for regular use. Most players wanted to go again for another 9 holes, having just warmed up with the first nine. There was some good shot making by players who had never held a hickory club before and a realisation of how modern clubs forgive what hickory will not.

The event had been long in development and quick in scheduling. Tom Moore, Peter Read and Barry Leithhead guided a group each, but the winner needed no guidance! Owen was event photographer and enthusiast. Over sandwiches and drink after the game, Tom gave a brief history of golf and regripped a fine Gem putter (see pic) that Owen brought along for one of the players who turned 70 the next day.

The Royal Av regulars are keen for more hickory golf. There is an idea that when the old heritage-

protected shop is restored, a great event on the opening day will feature the transition for old to new with hickories in the morning round and modern clubs in the afternoon. But we hope they don't wait that long for their next hickory outing, that we hope GCSA members can share with them.

## BOBBY LOCKE - AUSTRALIAN OPEN CHAMPION 1955

### Where did he come from?

By Des Froneman, a personal golfing friend of  
the 'Maestro'

Bobby Locke became involved in golf at the age of five, as reflected in the first paragraph of his book "Bobby Locke on Golf" published in 1953. "I played with a golf ball in my perambulator. When I was four, my father cut down one of his clubs and I used to totter around the garden hitting a ball with it. When I was five I was 'starred' in a film. These were the golf beginnings of Arthur D'Arcy ('Bobby') Locke, born on November 20, 1917, at Germiston, a small South African manufacturing town, nine miles from Johannesburg."

Some reports have indicated that Bobby was named after the great Bobby Jones, one of his idols when he was beginning the game. However, "The name 'Bobby' was given to me by my African nurse, Esther. Apparently in my pram I had the habit of bobbing up and down – I think every baby in a pram does the same – but it intrigued Esther. 'Bobby' has stuck to me ever since."

"My first club was an old-fashioned hickory-shafted jigger which my father cut down for me. It was while I was running about our garden swinging at balls with this club that two cameramen from England spotted me. They were in South Africa making a documentary film of the country for the 1923 Wembley Exhibition. They were intrigued to see such a tot 'playing' golf and asked me if they could take some shots. I bolted into the house, mother came out, and presently young Arthur D'Arcy Locke was being filmed."

There are many stories about Bobby's trusty old

putter and how he came by it. The true story is that the club was given to him by his father, Charles James Locke, when he was in his teens, and he used it throughout his career.

In 1932 at the age of 14, Bobby was invited to become a full member of the State Mines Golf Club at junior membership fees, and this was a landmark in his golfing career. "My first handicap as a 'full' member of the State Mines Golf Club was 14. I played in the monthly medal the following Sunday and scored 80 to give me a 66 net. The bogey for the course was 76. The committee promptly dropped my handicap to 10. One month later they had reduced me to 8, but shortly after that I played in a bogey thirty-six holes event and won easily against a field of 150 entries from golf clubs all over the East Rand. My handicap was reduced to 5. I had just turned 15."

In 1935, the year after he left full time school, Bobby played in the South African Amateur Championships and the South African Open, both of which he won as a 17 year old, weighing only 9 stone 9 lbs (135 lbs). In recognition, the State Mines Golf Club immediately made him a Life Honorary Member, and he went on to win the Natal Amateur, the Natal Open and the Transvaal Amateur Championships as well.

Bobby was always a stickler about the rules of golf and the etiquette of the game. The following account in his own words created the foundation of his extraordinary approach to the game at the age of 15.

"Obviously I was a local golfing sensation, and I remember at this time an incident which, but for my father, might have altered my future. We had a member of the club who had been seriously wounded in the first World War, and at times, when he played a bad shot, he would fly into a rage and fling away the offending club. Many of the members disliked playing with him, but I often partnered him, and presently was becoming quite a club-thrower myself. One day, playing with my father, I put my tee-shot four feet from the pin at a short hole and then missed the putt. With an exclamation I turned away and flung the putter into the trees. My father did not say a word. Without waiting to play his putt, he took up his ball, motioned to his caddy to pick up his clubs,



and walked back into the clubhouse. I felt about the size of a tee-peg as I watched him walking away. I retrieved my putter – incidentally it is the one I have used ever since, and still use – and without quite knowing what I was doing, finished the round by myself. When I got into the clubhouse, my father was gone, so I mounted my bicycle and rode home. He called me in and asked me to explain what had happened on the 13<sup>th</sup> green. I told him, "Dad, I lost my temper". Very quietly, he said, "My boy, if you want to continue playing golf I will give you one more chance. Don't think that it will not come back to me if you start throwing your clubs about when you are playing with other people. The very next club you throw will be the end of golf for you." Very near to tears, I told him how sorry I was and how much I wanted to go on playing. "All right, my boy. Now remember this: if you think you are going to lose your temper, start to count to three, and by the time you have counted one you will have control of yourself."

This piece of advice from his father became thoroughly ingrained in Bobby's approach to competitive golf, and his self-control and concentration on the golf courses of the world became legendary.

Next instalment: Bobby's impact on golf in the UK and USA

## Golf Club Historian's Seminar

GCSA's first seminar for golf club historians last October was a very successful trial of a very important idea. Different perspectives on history were discussed – the books written after 100 or 75 years, the records collected and archived, the development of club land, and more. So much history is made but not captured and so forgotten that we need to think **now** what will be history in the future.

The second seminar for club historians will be on Monday 31 May at Killara Golf Club, and we want to maximise the number of clubs represented. If your club has an historian (it might be you) or you know someone who is interested, they might like to attend the seminar, explain their activities, hear about other activities and chat with other

historians. Email ([barryleithhead@hotmail.net.au](mailto:barryleithhead@hotmail.net.au)) or telephone (9652 1430) for a copy of the invitation and program.

## What type of golf course do you prefer?

It is generally agreed these days that golf courses are divided into three broad categories.

First, is the PENAL, where the player is given no choice but to attempt the most difficult shots with great penalties if he fails. The U.S. Open seems to be played on these courses.

Second is the STRATEGIC, where the golfer is challenged to manoeuvre the ball around to make the next shot as easy as possible. St Andrews, Royal Melbourne and Peter Thomson-designed courses are in this category.

Third is the HEROIC, where the brave shot is rewarded but the safer alternative route is provided for the less capable or less intrepid player. The Nicklaus-designed Australian course is heroic.

Which category did Bobby Jones design for Augusta National? (see page 4)

Contributed by Tom Moore

## Vale Alistair Cooke/Bob Jones

There are interesting connections in this edition of the Brassie. One is to the two supreme golfers known to the world as 'Bobby' – Locke and Jones. GCSA Executive member, Des Froneman was privileged to know Locke for the last two years of his life and he writes about that and has other episodes for later editions. Watch Des putt and you are watching Bobby Locke. Jones is worth discussing for any reason at all, and the recent death of Alistair Cooke and the design of Augusta National – always good for a discussion at Masters time – are reasons enough.

Most people know Alistair Cooke as the Voice of the Letter from America, that most elegant of broadcasters. Who then should Cooke to consider the most elegant of men? None other than Robert



Dan Cullen Trophy winners Des Froneman (l) and John Fletcher (r) with Dan Cullen  
(Pics taken by Vicki Cullen – phone 9547 1196 for details)



The field for the Dan Cullen Trophy, 13 February 2004





Most of the 'Royal Avalon' group on 23 April 2004



Tom Moore demonstrating and explaining club repping to the Royal Avalon group

Tyre Jones; Bob Jones as he knew him well, not Bobby Jones as most knew of him.

Cooke's elegant voice is still, except on tape, and thank goodness that record remains. On St Patrick's Day in 2002, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bob Jones birth, Cooke broadcast a letter so moving that tears are almost impossible to avoid. It was of his friend's life that he spoke, a man who was, "I do believe, the singular most human character I have known."

It is easy to read about Bob Jones the golfer, the man who has done what no other has, win the Amateur and Open Championships of the United States and Britain in the same year. Who can imagine it happening ever again? Ever! It is possible to see Jones's swinging the club has few have – GCSA has a videotape of 18 lessons Jones gave, in which he explains that most elegant of golf swings. But it was left to Cooke in his book *'Alistair Cooke's America'*, first published in 1973, to explain the man:

"Robert Tyre Jones (was) a weekend golfer but the best golfer of his time, some people think of all time. But he had a grace on and off the course that, curiously, made him the idol of two continents in a very brash time, and that to people who didn't know a putter from a shovel. His universal appeal was not as a golfer. What then? The word that comes to mind is an extinct word: a gentleman, a combination of goodness and grace, an unwavering courtesy, self-deprecation, and consideration for other people. This fetching combination, allied to his world supremacy in one sport, was what made him a hero in Scotland and England as much as in the Midwest (of the USA) as in his native Georgia.

Once in a national championship, he drove his ball into the woods. He went after it alone, and, in standing to the ball, barely touched it. He came out of the woods, signalled his fault, penalised himself one stroke and by one stroke lost the championship. When he was praised for this and other acts of sportsmanship, he was genuinely disgusted. "You might as well praise me for not robbing a bank" he said.

In his middle forties, he was paralysed with a rare disease, and a friend asked him for the medical

outlook. "I will tell you privately," he said, "it's not going to get better, it's going to get worse all the time, but don't fret. Remember, we 'play the ball where it lies' and no let's not talk about this, ever again." And he never did. So what we are talking about is not the hero as a golfer but something that America hungered for and found: the best performer in the world who was also a hero as a human being, the gentle, chivalrous, wholly sufficient male."

It's said that the game of golf is the game of life – our play certainly reveals our character, no matter how hard we might try to conceal it. Jones said that some games are played according to the rules, but for Jones, golf was played according to its etiquette and if not, it was not worth playing. Bob Jones: supreme golfer, supreme man. Heroic, too, in every sense.

(Yes, Jones designed Augusta National as a Heroic course)

## The Museum

The Museum & Gallery Foundation's Andrew Gill visited the Museum in April to provide very helpful advice and guidance on collections management. Tom Moore, Peter Read and Barry Leithhead were there to hear the ideas and develop action plans .

Overall, there is great benefit from a co-ordinated national and regional approach to managing golf's collections and useful funding is available for national collections. With the potential for merging the golfing bodies, there is an opportunity to think nationally about the various golf memorabilia collections now in Melbourne, Sydney, Bothwell in Tasmania, Perth and somewhere in Queensland. As well, the AGU is interested in knowing what national treasures are held by the golf clubs, so the full story of golf's history can be told.

The physical pathway through the museum is important as it follows the stages and features of golf's history. The stand-out items have to be identified and highlighted and the whole museum and the major pieces must **tell a story** to capture the visitor's attention. We can provide information sheets on the Museum and featured items to encourage interest in the museum and the collection.



In this way, visiting the museum can become an established part of golfing activity, along with going to the driving range, getting a video and playing the game. The museum should remain a free-entry activity but with chance to donate at exit. We should promote the good support from Golf-Mart (rent-free space) and the golfing bodies.

As well as the extended discussion, Andrew left a series of reference materials and details of websites and books. We have much to learn and plan in developing the Museum's operations. If you would like to help, please call Tom Moore (9871 2798)

### GCSA Treasurer

After many years of accounting for The Golf Collectors funds, Barry Hall has asked for a rest, and well-earned it is. Barry has been a good guardian and reporter of the financial results.

The good news is that John Fletcher, who is an accountant, had offered to be more involved in helping with GCSA's development. So the Executive agreed that the Treasurer's role would be ideal for John and the hand-over is underway.

So a big **THANK YOU** to Barry Hall and welcome to the Executive for John Fletcher.

### PGA Developments

The PGA of Australia is developing a new base at the Sandhurst GC on the Mornington Peninsular, one of Australia's premier golfing destinations. Tom Moore has been asked to develop the display of memorabilia in the PGA HQ. The course itself has an historic flavour, with each of the holes being named after PGA legends.

The PGA Golf Show is on in Melbourne this year, over 22-25 July. Tom will be there as usual, representing GCSA.

### Classified Adverts

GCSA is the Australian distributor for the Heritage replica George Nicol clubs. Both right hand (seven clubs) and left hand (5 clubs) sets are available, as well as individual clubs and presentation putters. These clubs are beautifully made, authentic replicas and they play very well. About the same cost as good modern clubs, these replicas will let your genuine antiques have a deserved rest from the rigours of occasional play. There is an attractive display at the Museum (open Sundays 10am-4pm) and for details about clubs and prices, call Des Froneman (99088 466).

Tom Moore (98712798) is well known as a provider of antique golf anything. If you have a need, Tom is a reliable source of things and information.

Des Froneman and Barry Leithhead (9652 1430) have a number of genuine, old, matched Scottish sets available, fully restored and ready to start or add to your collection.

*The Brassie* is the publication of  
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