

The aim of AGHS is to encourage the collection, research, recording and preservation of information and objects connected with the history of golf in Australia, to inform golfers, golf clubs and the community in general.

November 2015

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President's Report



As our year is drawing to a close and we approach our Annual General Meeting, I am pleased to report it has been a productive year.

The Museum in particular has been significantly improved. Needless to say it was time to remove many unwanted items and to carry out a general refurbishment. Additional shelving was purchased and erected in the storage area which has given us the opportunity to reorganise our many books, magazines and papers. Once this library

process is completed it will enable the Society to offer a premium research centre for those interested in golf heritage.

The Golf and War Exhibition proved to be a success and in addition we provided the Gallipoli Club, Sydney, with a small display which is ongoing. A travelling version of the Exhibition was completed during the year and Bonnie Doon Golf Club was the first club to gain access to it and the feedback has been positive.

During the year we lost our great friend, golfer and Society Patron, Kel Nagle. An Exhibition has been prepared in honour of Kel and will be available for Society members and others going forward.

Membership numbers of the Society is still an ongoing concern. Total numbers have remained virtually stagnant over the last few years but it must be stressed that we all have to play a part in encouraging our golfing friends and clubs to join our Society. Going forward our aim will be to increase our profile to ensure that our activities and displays reach and involve a greater number of golfers, historians and the public generally.

My thanks to Golf Mart, Golf NSW and the PGA for their ongoing support to the Society and its objectives. It is indeed appreciated. Thanks also to the AGHS Management Committee and Volunteers for their dedicated efforts during the year and to our Museum Curator and Collection Manager, Vicki Stanton, for the expertise she brings to the Society.

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Society is to be held at North Ryde Golf Club on Tuesday, 1st December 2015 commencing at 6 pm. I look forward to seeing you there.

John Buckley
President.

Captain's Report

"To the Fore"

As we approach the 2015 Christmas season, the NSW Open at Stonecutters Ridge, the Australian Open at the Australian Golf Club and notable tournaments in other parts of Australia over the next two months, it is appropriate to reflect on the past 12 months.

Our Patron, Dan Cullen, God willing will celebrate his 101st birthday during this month, Darron Watt achieved his dream of winning the Australian Hickory Shaft Championship and the AGHS has achieved many notable firsts, significantly with its Golf & War Exhibition. We grieve the recent loss of Rex McKay, who was a winner of numerous AGHS events over a number of years, after suffering a stroke earlier in the year. The Queensland Chapter of the AGHS held its inaugural Hickory Shaft Championship in October 2015 with Alan Grieve being crowned the Champion. Congratulations to all of our 2015 winners and players and thank you to all who have assisted in the organisation of the tournaments throughout the year.

As indicated at the Hickory Shaft Championship dinner, we are developing "the AGHS Hickory Experience" into a day of celebration, a bit of history and playing with the clubs of yesteryear, with plans to start in 2016 with our first venture. Again I would invite members and readers of *The Brassie* to submit their ideas to me regardless of how fanciful you may think they are, as we can all do with a little assistance to develop the hickory scene.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 1st December at North Ryde GC commencing at 6pm.

I hope to see many of you in attendance.

As a side note, I had the opportunity to enjoy a game at Narooma Golf Club recently after a gap of over 60 years and I can definitely recommend the course with its great variety of original seaside holes and the back nine.

Wishing you all good golfing over the Summer.

Cheers for now, see you at North Ryde on 1st December.

Ross Howard *Captain*

•••• Coming Hickory Events ••••

2016 Fixtures

(details to be confirmed)

MARCH

Dan Cullen Trophy
Long Reef GC

MAY

South Coast Hickory Championship
Kiama GC

MAY

T J Paine Trophy
Windsor CGC

JULY

Show and Tell
Rosnay GC

AUGUST

Bobby Locke Trophy Qualifying
Cabramatta GC

SEPTEMBER

Craigieburn Cup
Peppers, Bowral

SEPTEMBER

Australian Hickory Shaft Championship
Carnarvon GC

OCTOBER

Reg Marchant Nine
Liverpool GC

NOVEMBER

Al Howard Memorial Trophy
Victoria

The Australian Hickory Shaft Championship

The 21st staging of the Australian Hickory Shaft Championship was held on Friday, 25th September 2015 at Carnarvon Golf Club. The Society's wish to move away from the November heat of previous years was rewarded with a day of 18°C, but showers and a good zephyr at times made for an interesting afternoon's golf. We welcomed to the Championship five new players – Warren Smith, Nigel Black, Mark Pullen, Steve Byrnes and Tony Kelly – competing for the first time with the "hickories". We hope to see you all at future events.

The Scratch event leaders after 9 holes were closely bunched with scores of 37, 38, 40 and 41, being – respectively – Darron Watt, Phil Baird, Lachie Wilson and Brian Keane. Over the back 9, a couple of players reversed their front nine form and produced scores of 39 and 41 respectively, being Warren Smith and Luke Kavanagh. But when the cards were in our 2015 winner was Darron Watt from Wagga City GC who, after being a runner up on a number of previous occasions, recorded a 77 to win by 4 shots. Phil Baird finished 2nd with 81, followed by Mark Pullen on 85. Darron in a short speech expressed his great joy at winning, and having his name on the trophy alongside many notable former victors. Interestingly it has been reported that Darron uses his hickory clubs on a fulltime basis, including Club competition, so enamoured is he with the charm of the hickory experience.

In the handicap event after 9 holes, the leaders had net scores of 32, 34 and pair of 35s, being Brian Keane, Lachie Wilson, Steve Doorey and Darron Watt. The 2nd nine changed the final result with Steve Doorey winning with a net of 68, closely followed by Brian Keane on 69, and Andrew Wilson on 73.

A toast was proposed to Tom Moore to recognise his commitment to the Championship since the initial event in 1995. The gathering was also able to "sing" Happy Birthday to Julian Pickrell to celebrate his 81st birthday. Also on display was a set of "sheathed" irons once used by my grandfather, Tom, that have finally found their way "home" after a journey of over 80 years. My thanks to Phil Wood, Henry Paterson, and particularly to Tom Moore who has restored the clubs to be amazing examples of the early post hickory irons.

Ross Howard *Captain*



Phil Baird (left) congratulates Darron Watt on his win



Warren Smith, Des Froneman, Tom Moore, Alan Grieve

AGHS Museum Report

Kel Nagle Exhibition Opens

The AGHS Museum is proud to announce the opening of an exhibition celebrating the golfing life of Kel Nagle, the Centenary Open winner. Exhibits include photographs, letters of congratulations for Kel's 90th birthday, clubs, balls, an autograph book, golfing footage and interviews with Kel. Everyone is invited to visit the Museum to view this exhibition about one of Australia's great golf professionals known as the 'Gentleman of Golf'.



'President of Pymble Golf Club Stan James congratulating Kel Nagle on winning the 1960 Open' AGHS Collection.

Museum News

The Museum recently acquired a number of unique objects donated by Mr Bob Ball. Mr Ball worked for many years at Slazengers at a time when golf manufacture in Australia was at its peak, and when Australian golfing equipment was exported to many parts of the world. The donation includes:

- the first set of 'Gary Player' offset irons, considered outstanding equipment at the time of manufacture;
- three volumes of technical manuals detailing the specifications of hundreds of iron and wood models manufactured by Slazengers;
- a copy of 1919 NSW Government publication *The Hardwoods of Australia and Their Economics* by R.T. Baker. This book is significant in that it was presented by the author to Carnegie Clark, who is said to have tested all the timbers available in an attempt to find a local resource that could be used in the production of wooden clubs,

- additional historical volumes from the early twentieth century including two PGA Year books from 1920s.

The collection is currently being assessed for significance, and individual preservation needs.



Vicki Stanton receiving the Arts NSW Cultural Grants cheque from the Hon. David Clarke MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, at the Royal Australian Historical Society Conference. AGHS Collection (Photo: Chris Maxworthy).

The 2015 Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) conference was held on 24th and 25th October at Bankstown Sports Club. Every session was interesting and pertinent to the work of the Society and topics ranged from Collection Significance to using oral histories as a base for new projects. Meeting and exchanging information with professionals and volunteers committed to history and with the same challenges as our Society was invaluable. At the conference I collected, on behalf of AGHS, an Arts NSW Cultural Grants Award of \$2100 to contribute towards our NSW Women's Golf Oral History Project. This will enable the Museum to engage oral historian, Carol McKirdy, to interview three women golfers of note. Interviews with Marea Parsons and Edwina Kennedy have already been arranged and will be conducted early in the New Year and uploaded to the AGHS website.

The next RAHS conference will be held in October 2016 in the Illawarra and everyone interested in history is encouraged to attend.

Vicki Stanton, Museum Curator and Collection Manager

An Analysis of Two Articles on Golf History (Part II)

Dr Michael Sheret writes about two articles on Australian golf history, one with and one without a reference list.

Golf in Sydney Town before the 1850s by David J Innes, *Golf News*, November 1992, pp 30-31.

Alexander Brodie Spark 1792-1856 by Michael Sheret and Norman Richardson,

Through the Green, March 2014, pp 40-49.

The two articles above are analysed here. They illustrate the difference between primary and secondary sources of historical evidence, as discussed in *Myths and Legends in Golf History* in the previous issue of *The Brassie*. Both articles deal with the same topic, namely golf played in 1839 at Grose Farm in Sydney. Copies can be obtained by contacting the AGHS History Sub-Committee at www.australiangolfheritage.org.au/aboutuscontacts.html

The D J Innes article is important because it was the first to bring the attention of golfers to the Spark diaries. These diaries contain the first reliable evidence of golf played in Australia, on 25th May 1839. The Sheret and Richardson article builds on the work of Innes and carries the research much further. Innes published in a popular golf magazine and, typical of popular golf magazines, there is no list of references to sources of evidence. Messrs Sheret & Richardson published in a magazine specialising in articles on golf history and collecting golf artefacts, and consequently, their article is more detailed and has long reference list of primary sources of evidence.

Innes quoted five entries in the Spark diaries related to golf spanning Saturdays from 25th May to 27th July 1839. He stated, "These entries are the only ones to mention that golf was in fact played." On something of a whim, Norman and I thought it would be interesting to have a look at the original diaries, the primary source of evidence, held in the Special Collections section of the Mitchell Library. We quickly found ten entries on golf spanning the period from 25th May to 17th August 1839. It was clear that Innes had used transcripts from the diaries as published in 1976, *The Respectable Sydney Merchant: A. B. Spark of Tempe* by Graham Abbott and Geoffrey Little. Abbott and Little omitted or truncated many of the original entries. Importantly, the entry for 1st June was truncated and therefore omitted to name many of the players. Innes suggested that the 1839 New South Wales Golf Club was an offshoot of the Australian Club (city club) formed in 1838. Armed with the knowledge of all the golfers named in original diaries, I was able to check these against the 1839 membership list for the Australian Club. Only Spark was a member. The short lived 1839 New South Wales Golf Club therefore had little or no connection to the Australian Club. The Sheret & Richardson article is a good example of getting more accurate data from a primary source, namely the

original Spark diaries, rather than a secondary source, namely Abbott and Little.

British golf historians supplied Innes with an extract from the archived minutes of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club in London. It showed that on 2nd October 1841, through the Club Secretary, Spark was made an honorary member of Royal Blackheath. Innes had no means of explaining how Spark and the 1839 Sydney golfers were connected to Royal Blackheath. After British golf historians supplied Innes with an extract from the archived minutes of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club in London. It showed that on 2nd October 1841, through the Club Secretary, Spark was made an honorary member of Royal Blackheath. Innes had no means of explaining how Spark and the 1839 Sydney golfers were connected to Royal Blackheath. After reading the entire original Spark diaries it was clear that the 1839 Grose Farm golfer, Captain James Ferrier, Master of the *Lady Fitzherbert*, was close to Spark. It was also clear that John Masson, Spark's shipping agent in London, was also a close friend. The next important primary source studied was the Royal Blackheath archives, which go back to 1787. From these archives I learned that Ferrier lived in Blackheath and was an enthusiastic golfer and a prominent member of Royal Blackheath. He was most likely the driving force to get golf started in Sydney in 1839 during an unusually long stay in Sydney while he got together a crew for the return voyage to London. The archives also revealed that John Masson was the Secretary of Royal Blackheath and present at the meeting when Spark was made an honorary member. The connection of the 1839 Sydney golfers to Royal Blackheath is part of that great era in golf history when golf began to spread outwards from Britain to become the international game that it is today. In 19th century Royal Blackheath, close as it was to the busy shipping port of London, played a prominent part in taking golf to the rest of the world.

I hope this short article explains the importance of primary sources of evidence in publishing accurate golf history.

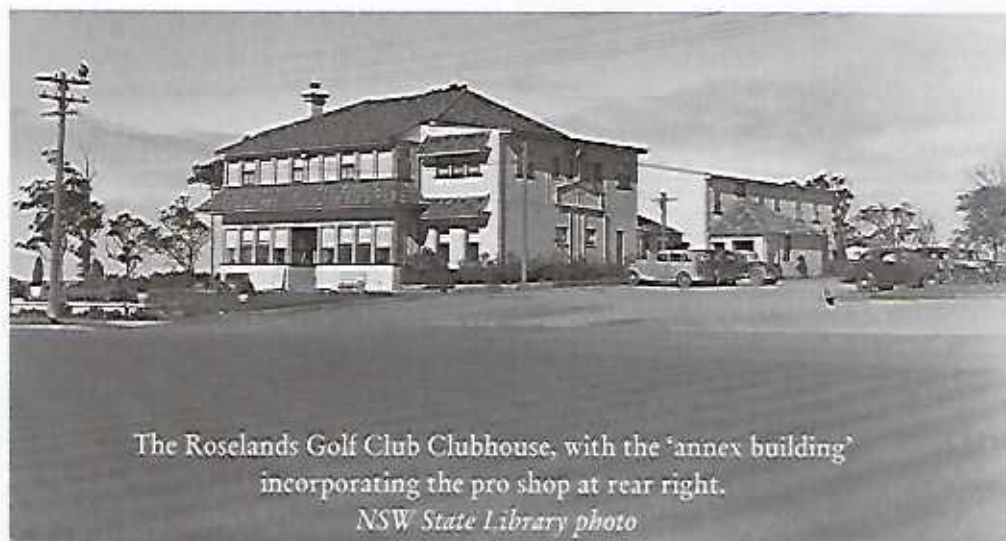


"In the 1860s part of Grose Farm became Sydney University. In 1870 Victoria Park was created. The image shows a festive day in 1871 with sporting activities but, alas, no golf."

Golf Club History

The AGHS Museum holds many unique collections. One of these is that of Colin De Groot, NSW professional and – later – the historian of the NSW Golf Association. Included in Colin's collection is a document he put together in 1986 regarding the long defunct Roselands Golf Club. As the professional for the lifetime of the Club, he had an intimate view of what was occurring

ROSELANDS GOLF CLUB



The Roselands Golf Club Clubhouse, with the 'annex building' incorporating the pro shop at rear right.
NSW State Library photo

The birth and demise of Roselands Golf Club, situated at Wiley Park in Sydney, was the subject of a number of rather bizarre events. In the first place it was a farm estate owned by the Fenwick family (of Sydney tug boat fame).

On the death of the owner the estate was passed to a number of members of his family. With rising rates and no productive income from the property and the disrepair of the old two storey home the family finally decided to find a buyer. At that time World War II was at its height and land sales were frozen and subject to severe restrictions. The Mayor of Canterbury, Stanley E. Parry, made an offer to buy the property to be used to cultivate a Victory Garden. With permission obtained for this patriotic venture the property changed hands for £10,000. Water pipes were laid and some cultivation took place and vegetables planted.

With the cessation of WWII hostilities Parry decided to build an 18 hole golf course. Fred Popplewell claimed that his services were obtained to lay out the course. He submitted rough sketches of a layout but heard no more. He claimed that he had been bypassed and received no payment, the construction going ahead under the supervision of Parry. In 1946 the course was completed and a membership formed. In the same year Colin De Groot was appointed professional (where he remained until the Club was disbanded in 1956).

The old homestead, part of which had been condemned as dangerous, had for a time during the war been occupied by 1st Australian Infantry Battalion A.I.F, the homestead being Battalion Headquarters at the time the Japanese subs entered Sydney Harbour. The homestead was

repaired and renovated and became the clubhouse. As there was no locker room facilities available Parry proceeded to build an annex building at the rear incorporating the locker rooms and professional shop.

Apparently this building was built without appropriate permissions being obtained. Inspectors swooped on the building and ordered cessation of operations, and Parry was given 14 days to explain why he had commenced construction without permission. During this 14 day period truckloads of prefabricated building materials arrived and the second storey completed. This incurred the wrath of the building authority and again inspectors descended on the property. Parry's excuse was that he was providing accommodation for returned soldier workers and hurriedly moved a couple of families into the building. After a short time he moved them out again, but - as a result of another raid - had to move them back in again. This cat and mouse game continued for some time with fuel added to the fire by the Communist newspaper, "Tribune", writing derogatory articles about the developer. On one occasion a photographer appeared on the property accompanied by a couple of heavies. Alerted, Parry in his old black Buick chased them across the fairways in a manner which suggested he was trying to run them down.

Although the maintenance of the course and finances were controlled by Parry, the course soon was in very good condition and after all the early hiccups ran smoothly. Don R. King was Secretary until 1952.

In due course - as the members sorted themselves into some semblance of order and appointed a Committee to run the

Golf Club History (cont)

golf - it was inevitable that they would wish to become affiliated with the NSW Golf Association.

Some difficulty was experienced as it was apparent that although the Club was run efficiently, the finances of the Club were not under the control of the members. This was overcome by Parry leasing the course and facilities to the Club for £100 per year, a set of books were set up which satisfied the Golf Association, and they were subsequently granted affiliation. Despite this, the staff were still employed and controlled by Parry who handled all cash and poker machine transactions.

The President of the Club was George McKerihan and the Captain Ted Spedding. The Club operated smoothly and efficiently and very little worry or maintenance was shouldered by the Committee. All Committee resolutions or other decisions regarding the running of the Club had to be ratified by an executive Committee consisting of Parry, his son in law Ted McCormac and his accountant Bill Stewart.

However, although the Club ran smoothly with very little worry from the members' point of view, it was not long before dissatisfaction began to be expressed, as members felt that perhaps all income from the operations of the Club was not being channelled back for their benefit.

This undercurrent grew and - from time to time - appeared to irk Parry who eventually offered to sell the course to the members for £150,000, repayable to Parry at 1% interest.

This offer was refused, however he sold the bowling green - which had been built as a Club amenity - to the bowlers for £50,000. As discontent continued Parry started to sell some of the land adjoining the course for housing. As the area shrunk the rumour existed (which was denied by Parry) that it would eventually become a nine hole course.

At about this time Parry was involved in a Royal Commission into his part in land sales. Whilst not found guilty of the main charge, he was considered to be in default under a local government ordinance. He resigned as Mayor of Canterbury.

As subdivision continued in the area of the course, the members at a General Meeting decided to dissolve the Club. This occurred in 1956. Parry was asked what equity in the Club was held by the members. He told them he was happy to share with them a £5,000 overdraft which existed.

The course then continued for a time as a public course eventually being reduced to nine holes. Later the whole of the area was sold and, in June 1964, construction commenced on a shopping complex which is now known as Roselands was built on the site of the Course and Clubhouse and officially opened in October 1965. The Bowling Club is still in existence.

In hindsight it would appear that it might have been in the members' interest to have accepted Parry's offer to sell the course.

Written in hindsight - 1986

Rebuilt and Repainted Golf Balls

During WWII all manufacturing of non-essential products made from rubber, including golf balls, ceased. In that era most golf balls were made with a tightly wound rubber core and a thin balata cover. The covers were easily damaged and the balls were either discarded or consigned to the practice bag.

The shortage of usable golf balls was critical and it looked as though playing golf would cease for the duration. However it was discovered that while the covers were damaged, many cores were intact. The small firm of Eather and Elliott set about a process of fitting a new cover. They would remove the old cover or skin and, using new materials, would fit a new cover. The deal was that golfers would send in two balls and receive 2d (2 cents) each, and then pay 1/- (10 cents) for each newly covered ball. This was the only way in which playing golf could continue.

After the War Eather and Elliott continued the business for several years, buying thousands of used balls from golf professionals and clubs, calling their recovered balls "CLUBMAN". A.G. Spalding, at their ball manufacturing plant in Sunshine, Victoria, also got into the act calling their recovered balls "SUNSHINE REBUILDS".

Subsequent to this time, but in the days before polyurethane paint was discovered, golf balls quickly lost their sheen. This created a virtual industry of repainting golf balls.

Two methods were used. One was to dip the balls in paint and almost every golf professional would have a series of pins attached to a string stretched from one side of the shop to the other. The balls had to be soaked in a solution of caustic soda and water and then scrubbed to prepare the balls for the new paint. The balls were then hung on pins. New paint was applied from a series of tins containing "HY-LO" white lacquer. The balls were dipped in the tins and excess paint was allowed to drip back into the tins. The trick was to wipe away the last drip so as not to leave a blob on the bottom of the ball.

When dry, some of the better balls had their name and numbers replaced with black paint or, on others, a simple couple of dots were applied. With new balls at 3/6d each (35 cents) a repainted ball at 1/- (10 cents) was a cheap option.

A second method was to use a thicker type of paint. A small blob of paint was placed in the palm of the hand and the ball rotated until it was evenly coated. It was then placed on racks of wire netting or a series of three pins until dry.

Literally thousands of balls were recycled in this way giving a new lease of life to old balls. Several examples of repainted balls are on display in the AGHS Museum.

Tom Moore - May 2015

Hickory Results

2015 Queensland Hickory Shaft Championship

On Friday 23rd October 2015 eighteen Australian Golf Heritage Society members and guests assembled on the links at Royal Queensland Golf Club to contest the inaugural Queensland Hickory Shaft Championship. AGHS (Queensland Chapter) was pleased to welcome interstate AGHS members Rob Downie and Michael Sheret who made special efforts to attend. We were also delighted to welcome non-AGHS members Joe Janison (Brisbane Golf Club), Chris Webster, Chris Dower and Geoff Fairweather (all from Wynnum Golf Club), who helped make up a healthy field for the inaugural event.

The Queensland Championship

The Championship, an eighteen hole stroke event, was won by Alan Grieve with a score of 79 strokes. Considering the windy conditions, difficult bunkers, and speedy greens and surrounds, this was a marvellous round of golf. Being a previous winner of the US Hickory Open Championship and double winner of the Australian Hickory Shaft Championship, it was a rock solid performance by the firm favourite. In second place, with an equally impressive round of 83 strokes, was former Royal Queensland Golf Club Captain, Ralph Heading. In third place, with a fine round of 85 strokes, was PGA member and Director of Golf at Brisbane Golf Club, Joe Janison.

The Captain's Trophy, an eighteen hole handicap stroke event held in conjunction with the Championship, was also won by Alan Grieve with a nett score of 71 (8). Alan was five strokes clear of his nearest rival, Ross Haslam, who had a nett score of 76 (11). Third place was shared by Ross Bishop (10) and Chris Webster (13) with a nett score of 80.

The Queensland Championship (cont)

A very enjoyable day was had by all and we were extremely pleased to be joined at dinner by the Chapter's Patron, Charlie Earp. After presentations, Michael Sheret gave a brief description of the historical displays installed for the day around the clubhouse and the 'special' putters he had supplied for the enjoyment of all.

Drinks, a nourishing dinner and stories of the day's events were then shared.

Andrew Baker AGHS (Queensland)



Alan Grieve - Winner



Ralph Heading - Runner-up

The Golf Museum at Granville is proudly sponsored by Golf Mart and supported by
Golf NSW, PGA of Australia and
Museums & Galleries New South Wales

The Golf Museum (located above Golf Mart), 4 Parramatta Rd, Granville

Telephone 9637 4720 • www.australiangolfheritage.org.au

Open on Sundays from 10am to 4pm. Admission FREE.

The Museum can give advice on collecting, restoring and preserving old or antique golf clubs and other golfing artefacts.