

# The Brassie

~ Encourage the collection, recording and preservation of information that is connected to the history of golf in Australia,  
 ~ 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,  
 ~ Inform golfers, golf clubs, and the wider community of this information and display these items in a manner which tells their story, and  
 ~ Promote hickory events as a celebration of the origins of the game.

April 2017

## President's Report

- John Buckley



It seems almost incredible that we are now in April 2017.

We have made steady progress since our Annual General Meeting in December, with the highlight being a wonderful presentation on Dr. Ewen Frazer by Colin Strachan at The Australian Golf Club,

reported in detail later in the newsletter.

Also, an active hickory program is underway thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of Ross Howard. Weather has not been on his side, but it has not detracted from a wonderful number of events going forward.

Discussions have continued about the prospect of a National Golf Museum. Golf Australia and the Golf Society of Australia are most enthusiastic about a Melbourne venue – possibly at the Sandringham Golf Club. We the committee support the idea but it is fair to say it is early days.

We have almost concluded our strategic plan and when completed will be presented to our members and benefactors, particularly Golf NSW and the PGA.

Visitation to the museum is still lacking. As good as the museum is, it is still not appreciated by the golfing community at large. Perhaps as we move forward an alternative venue closer to the city might and should be considered.

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## 2016-17 Membership

Annual membership renewal subscriptions are due as at 1 July each year. Any Society member who has not yet renewed their membership is still most welcome to do so. Membership remains at \$30-00 per annum, and payment options are:

**By cheque:**

The Treasurer  
 Australian Golf Heritage Society Inc.  
 299A Epsom Rd  
 CHIPPING NORTON NSW 2170

OR

**By EFT:**

Commonwealth Bank  
 BSB: **062-692**  
 Account Number: **25203687**  
 (Please include remitter name with your payment)



# The 1904 Golf Championships of Australia

Held at Botany.

BY FOOZLER.

The Australian Golf Championship Meeting began on the course of the Australian G.C. at Botany on Wednesday, when the Stroke Handicap was played, and the first section practically concluded with the completion of the open championship rounds on Saturday.

The second section, comprising the amateur championship, professional match, bogey handicap, foursomes championship, and mixed foursomes, occupies this week.

There was a break in the delightful weather golfers had been experiencing, when Wednesday morning broke with high, cold, wind and rain. The large entry of 86 had to be handled, and so a start at noon was necessary and the early men were handicapped by the weather conditions, which moderated considerably later in the afternoon.

Men who had been doing from 74 up in practice returned cards well in the 80's or even more, and the two best rounds were those of Mr. Soutar, who stood alone on scratch, and Mr. J. D. Howden, who received one from him. Both took 81. The winner proved to be Mr. S. G. Clift of Maitland, who was altogether too leniently treated by the handicappers.

With a limit handicap he returned 74. On the day the scratch and short handicap men were set too hard a task, but otherwise the results were close, the best cards being:

S. G. Clift . . . . . 92 — 18=74

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| H. B. Gritton . . . . .   | 84 — 8=76  |
| J. B. Halligan . . . . .  | 89 — 12=77 |
| W. B. Fairfax . . . . .   | 89 — 12=77 |
| Parke Pope . . . . .      | 96 — 18=78 |
| F. J. Smith . . . . .     | 96 — 18=78 |
| C. L. Mackenzie . . . . . | 85 — 6=79  |
| W. H. Padfield . . . . .  | 88 — 9=79  |
| L. Berckelman . . . . .   | 94 — 15=79 |
| J. Sandes . . . . .       | 91 — 11=80 |
| G. W. Holdship . . . . .  | 87 — 7=80  |
| Clyde Pearce . . . . .    | 86 — 6=80  |
| R. J. Pope . . . . .      | 91 — 11=80 |
| J. D. Howden . . . . .    | 81 — 1=80  |
| R. Worrall . . . . .      | 94 — 14=80 |
| O. H. O'Brien . . . . .   | 86 — 6=80  |
| D. G. Soutar . . . . .    | 81 — sc=81 |
| J. C. D. Jones . . . . .  | 97 — 16=81 |
| F. Hargreaves . . . . .   | 84 — 3=81  |

*The Golf Championships (cont.)*

Thursday proved a delightful day, and as the inter-state matches — which it is hoped will be an annual feature— were inaugurated that day there was a large attendance of spectators. Mr. F. M. Douglass, for the Victorian Golf Association, selected the Victorian team from the material available, and the match committee of the meeting, consisting of Messrs. E. J. B. Macarthur and Dr. Frazer (of the A.G.C.), E. P. Simpson (captain of the Royal Sydney), and J. Kidd (president of the S. and C. Association), chose the New South Wales team on immediate form, some good men being left out because they had not been out of practice.

The interest of the crowd chiefly centred in the meeting of the amateur champion with Mr. J. D. Howden, who was his runner-up at Adelaide last year, and the Victorians were keenly desirous that their man should win back his laurels. As the match progressed it became so dramatic and exciting that it practically absorbed the whole "gallery." In other respects it was interesting in the contrast, between the phlegmatic temperament of the champion, who had learned his golf at Carnoustie, and his nervy rival, whose golfing alma mater was at North Berwick. The physical contrast of the lean and wiry Howden and the burly Soutar was equally striking.

From the first tee Soutar sliced a long ball, which landed under the bank of one of the bunkers to the second green in long couch. He got it away and a few yards over, but Howden's beautiful straight drive and long, straight second left no room for mistakes, and when Soutar's approach ran across the green and over the bank on the other side he required 7 to hole against Howden's 5.

A couple of fives at the second and of fours at the third left the position unaltered. Both playing beautifully had puts for 3 at the third. At the fourth iron shots left both on the green within 6ft of the hole. Howden missed his put, and took 3. Soutar, with a 2, brought the match square. Two fine drives and good approaches at the fifth left the contestants on the green - Soutar close to its edge, Howden with a practicable 3. Soutar's long put for 3 stopped on the edge of the hole, and stymied Howden, but they had agreed on no stymie, and both took 4.

From the sixth tee Soutar sent a long ball to the bunker at the left of the green. Howden struck a thin slab on the Chinaman's wire fence, and bounced back into the gorse in almost an unplayable position. Curiously enough he had not read the local rule on his card, permitting him to lift and drop, and as it took him two to get out he picked up. Soutar, with a short shot out of the bunker and a wonderful long put notched 3, and was 1 up.

Both were well on the seventh green from their drives, Soutar the farthest, away— perhaps 40ft. Favoured by the slope he rimmed the hole, and Howden also took 3. Both were well over by the green at the eighth in two, Soutar again having the worst of position. He just missed the hole in a long-put alter his approach; so did Howden, and 5 each was recorded.

Off the ninth tee the balls were close together in the long grass to the left. So alike was the driving throughout that some one suggested that it was not worth walking back to the tees, and they might as well drop their balls together. Their seconds were short of the hill top and in the rough to the left, Howden's ball being also in gorse. Soutar fozzled an approach put, only going a few feet, and Howden missed a short put, taking 7 to Soutar's 6. Thus they turned with the Sydney man 2 up.

At the tenth Soutar overran his second, and also missed a short put, taking 5 against Howden's 4. The eleventh resulted in two 3's. At the twelfth Soutar sliced into the rough, and had to avoid trees with his second, while Howden was beautifully straight. Soutar also missed a short put, and 4 to Howden against 5 brought them square.

By this time the excitement was intense. Each good stroke was applauded, and there was a gasp from either party as a contestant missed a short put. At the 13th Howden got into the rough at the left from a pull, while Soutar was quite straight and lying short of the bunker guarding the green after a very long tee shot, but his approach landed in a soft spot and did not run up. Two 5's were scored.

At the fourteenth Soutar just missed a 2, and won 3 to 5, his opponent being applauded for his dexterity in getting out of a nasty' clump of furze after his drive overran the green to the left. This put the N.S.W. man again 1 up.

At the fifteenth Soutar had to play the odd, and landed his second for safety short of the ditch. Howden thereupon took all risks, and applause was general as a splendidly daring ball stopped on the green. The 4 against 5 might have been 3, but it brought the match square again.

At the sixteenth two 4's, at the seventeenth two 5's (Soutar missing a short put), and two fine drives and seconds left the opponents on the last green with the game depending on their puts.

The Golf Championships (cont.)

Soutar had to put from the further edge, about 30ft, and made a splendid effort, just missing the hole. Howden, apparently nervous, after deliberation, missed a put of about 6ft, and so both holing in 4. One of the most exciting matches seen in Sydney finished square, the contestants shaking hands amid cheers. The scores were approximate 78's.

Behind was Mr. Macneil, having a homeric battle with the Hon. M. Scott. The Victorian was 3 up at the thirteenth, but the veteran was not to be denied, and by brilliant play took the next four holes, and was 1 up. A very long put on the last green enabled Scott to halve that hole, but the ex-Australian champion had won the match.

Other of the contests were very keen, and excellent golf was shown. E. P. Simpson did 78, and was 2 up on N. E. Brookes, H. L. Hyland was 4 up on E. J. B. Macarthur (who was trying to manage the meeting and keep up his game as well, to the detriment of his nerves), G. W. Holdship was 4 up on F. Hargreaves, C. A. White 1 up on F. M. Douglass, H. G. Callaway 2 up on Dr. Gordon Craig after being square at the sixteenth, R. Whytt 3 up on R. Robson. The net result was that New South Wales took the first interstate teams' premiership with 5 games to 2 (11 holes to 6), the score reading:

**VICTORIA.**

**NEW SOUTH WALES.**

J. D. Howden . . . . . sq. v D. G. Soutar . . . . . sq.  
 Hon. M. Scott . . . . . 0 v H. Macneil . . . . . 1  
 N. E. Brookes . . . . . 0 v E. P. Simpson . . . . . 1  
 H. L. Hyland . . . . . 1 v E. J. B. Macarthur . . . . . 0  
 R. Robson . . . . . 0 v R. Whytt . . . . . 1  
 H. G. Callaway . . . . . 1 v Dr. G. Craig . . . . . 0  
 F. Hargreaves . . . . . 0 v G. W. Holdship . . . . . 1  
 F. M. Douglass . . . . . 0 v C. A. White . . . . . 1

Friday and Saturday were devoted to the chief event of the meeting, the first Open Championship of Australia, which was also to serve as qualifying rounds for the amateur championship and for a professional match. Some very fine golf was anticipated, but though the weather was excellent except for wind on part of Saturday, the results generally were disappointing. On Friday there were only six cards under 80.

Soutar and Howden particularly seemed to feel the strain of their previous day's contest, and Soutar had a very unlucky day, his puts continually stopping at the rim. On the two rounds Mr. Scott lead with 77 and 74 — 151, Carnegie Clark coming next with 78-77—155, H. L. Hyland 80-78—158, E. P. Simpson 77-83 — 160, F. G. Hood 80-80 — 160, and O. H. O'Brien 80-81 — 161 coming next.

Thus the professionals, who had been putting up such good scores in practice, and last year in the open scratch event at Botany distanced all the amateurs but Soutar, only contributed two men to the first six— Clark, of Sydney, and Hood, of Auckland.

A cold westerly wind blew on Saturday. The 'gallery' devoted its attention to Mr. Scott, who had a large crowd following him, and this judgment proved correct, as, though he did not equal his record of the preceding day, he won by 8 strokes from the next man, Mr. H. L. Hyland, also a Victorian.

A 76 in the morning showed in re of Mr. Soutar's form than he had exhibited on the preceding day, and brought him up to third, a stroke better than Carnegie Clark, who, with a splendid chance for the Australasian blue ribbon, lost it through sheer nervousness, which seriously affected his putting and approaching. J. L. Hutchison tied with him, and F. G. Hood, who had been looked on as one of the favourites, finished next.

The results of the four rounds were: —

|                      | 1st Rd. | 2nd Rd. | 3rd Rd. | 4th Rd. | Tot. |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| Hon. M. Scott (Vic.) | 77      | 74      | 89      | 84      | 315  |
| H. L. Hyland (Vic.)  | 80      | 78      | 84      | 81      | 323  |
| D. G. Soutar (NSW)   | 83      | 82      | 76      | 83      | 324  |
| C. Clark (NSW)       | 78      | 77      | 88      | 82      | 325  |
| J. Hutchison (NSW)   | 83      | 79      | 79      | 84      | 325  |
| F. G. Hood (N.Z.)    | 80      | 80      | 80      | 87      | 327  |
| E. P. Simpson (NSW)  | 77      | 83      | 90      | 80      | 330  |
| F. Popplewell (NSW)  | 84      | 82      | 76      | 88      | 330  |
| O. H. O'Brien (NSW)  | 80      | 81      | 88      | 82      | 331  |
| N. E. Brookes (Vic.) | 82      | 81      | 84      | 87      | 334  |

## The Golf Championships (cont.)

|                          | 1st<br>Rd. | 2nd<br>Rd. | 3rd<br>Rd. | 4th<br>Rd. | Tot. |                     | 1st<br>Rd. | 2nd<br>Rd. | 3rd<br>Rd. | 4th<br>Rd. | Tot. |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|
| H. Macneil (NSW)         | 85         | 86         | 81         | 82         | 334  | F. O'Brien (NSW)    | 87         | 96         | 99         | Ret'd.     |      |
| G. L. Martin (NSW)       | 80         | 85         | 81         | 89         | 335  | H. G. Haines (Tas)  | 98         | 90         | 98         | Ret'd.     |      |
| L. H. Harper (Vic.)      | 82         | 82         | 86         | 87         | 337  | E. Frazer (NSW)     | 96         | 95         | 89         | Ret'd.     |      |
| J. D. Howden (Vic.)      | 83         | 86         | 88         | 81         | 338  | H. Swift (S.A.)     | 92         | 92         | Ret'd.     |            |      |
| E. J. B. Macarthur (NSW) | 82         | 82         | 92         | 85         | 341  | C. M. Garrard (NSW) | 92         | 98         | Ret'd.     |            |      |
| V. East (NSW)            | 86         | 81         | 90         | 87         | 344  | C. E. Varley (Vic)  | 102        | Ret'd.     |            |            |      |
| J. Russell (Scotland)    | 84         | 87         | 84         | 90         | 345  | F. A. Thorpe (NSW)  | 106        | Ret'd.     |            |            |      |
| F. Hargreaves (Vic.)     | 93         | 84         | 82         | 86         | 345  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| Clyde Pearce (Tas.)      | 84         | 92         | 83         | 87         | 346  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| A. Maclaren (Vic.)       | 85         | 92         | 84         | 87         | 348  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| H. G. Callaway (Vic.)    | 82         | 90         | 91         | 87         | 350  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| J. Hunter (NSW)          | 86         | 86         | 84         | 95         | 351  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| R. S. Banks (Vic.)       | 91         | 81         | 92         | 87         | 351  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| R. Whytt (NSW)           | 89         | 88         | 89         | 87         | 353  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| F. G. Braithwaite (NSW)  | 100        | 86         | 82         | 87         | 355  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| Gordon Craig (NSW)       | 91         | 93         | 84         | 88         | 356  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| J. Sands (NSW)           | 93         | 84         | 87         | 92         | 356  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| H. B. Gritton (NSW)      | 85         | 91         | 87         | 94         | 357  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| F. M. Douglass (Vic.)    | 91         | 90         | 89         | 89         | 359  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| G. W. Holdship (NSW)     | 90         | 93         | 86         | 90         | 359  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| R. Colquhoun (NSW)       | 89         | 87         | 94         | 91         | 361  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| R. Robson (Vic.)         | 87         | 93         | 90         | 91         | 361  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| R. J. Pope (NSW)         | 87         | 90         | 91         | 98         | 366  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| J. Scott (NSW)           | 93         | 87         | 94         | 92         | 366  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| N. J. Holmes (NSW)       | 89         | 96         | 87         | 95         | 367  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| C. L. Mackenzie (NSW)    | 89         | 89         | 96         | 94         | 368  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| G. Wilder (Eng.)         | 91         | 94         | 90         | 100        | 375  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| A. W. H. Padfield (NSW)  | 92         | 90         | 93         | 101        | 376  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |
| F. A. A. Russell (NSW)   | 101        | 95         | 90         | 92         | 378  |                     |            |            |            |            |      |

*The names indented are professionals.*

Thus the 16 amateurs qualified for the amateur championship rounds included all to Dr. Gordon Craig, who secured the last place by tossing Mr Sandes, of Gunning, for it. The eight professionals were down to and including Maclaren. The champion's four rounds were: —

5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 5, 6 (40); 5, 2, 4, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4 (37)= 77.

5, 5, 4, 2, 6, 4, 3, 6, 5 (42); 4, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3, 4 (33)= 74.

6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 5 (42); 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 5, 3, 6, 4, (38)=80.

5, 5, 6, 3, 4, 3, 3, 6, 7 (42); 4, 4, 5, 5, 4, 5, 5, 6, 4 (42)=84.

Mr. Scott belongs to the Royal Melbourne, Victoria, and Drouin clubs. The lastnamed is a Gippsland club, of which the new champion is captain, and he entered from it. He comes of an athletic family.

His sister retired unbeaten after thrice winning the world's ladies' championship, in which she was regarded as invincible. Her portraits, showing a remarkably supple swing, are familiar to all readers of golf literature. His brother is a leading amateur.

The Hon. M. Scott himself is a medium-sized Hercules, possessed of remarkable muscular development and great strength. He has been four years in Victoria, but until lately had few opportunities of working up his game on the Melbourne courses. His golf was learned originally on the Westward Ho course.

*This article covering the inaugural Australian Open—contested at the Australian Golf Club—appeared in The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser in September 1904,*

# Captain's Report

"To the Fore" - Ross Howard

Hi to all AGHS members and readers of The Brassie.

Since we "spoke" late last year, several events have been played in 2017. In keeping with our plan to play each month, two 18 hole events have been played at Randwick in January and at Beverley Park in February. All the results and reports are on the website and—thankfully— those days have been blessed with delightful Sydney weather.

As I write this report, again the inclement weather has forced the second postponement of the 2017 Dan Cullen Trophy event. A third booking has been made at Long Reef for Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. for this well supported event., so please mark it down in your diaries.

Now with a busy April, do not forget the Kiama Hickory Challenge event on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m., and then the J. J. Paine event at Windsor Country Golf Club on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 8:30 a.m., by coincidence my late Dad Al's birthday 104 years ago.

The J. J. Paine event celebrates the playing of golf at Gosper's Paddock in 1905, the first in the Windsor area. While it has not been definitively proven, current research suggests that the practice fairway at the adjacent Rum Corps Barracks Golf Course is built on or about Gosper's Paddock.



The field at the 2016 J. J. Paine

This event is jointly coordinated by the Windsor Country Golf Club, the Hawkesbury Historical Society and the Australian Golf Heritage Society, and forms part of the [2017 Australian Heritage Festival](#) .

This joint venture is the first such exercise we have undertaken and your support on the day will be greatly appreciated, also my thanks to Vicki, Steve and Barry Leithhead for their assistance in registering the event.



Barry Leithhead drives up the ninth fairway—  
2016 J. J. Paine Trophy

I encourage members and guests to attend both the above events plus the "Show & Tell" days, they are great fun and the items always produce amazing information and generate interesting discussion.

Also, I again urge you to consider putting in your diary a trip to the Southern Highlands to play in the Craigieburn Cup event, currently scheduled for Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September. We hit off at 12 noon, play 18 holes with a scratch & handicap event. It is a great little course with the original 100-year-old layout intact and the nine greens "attacked" from 18 tees. Also on the following Friday (22<sup>nd</sup>) the Australian Hickory Shaft Championship will be scheduled.

Later in the year the AGHS will host the Al Howard Trophy event and plans are afoot to utilise ACT courses as the venue of an expanded series of competitions (a la Ryder Cup).

A colleague mentioned that some footage was on Youtube showing Jordan Spieth using hickories, please see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXy6LgSvfO0> too short but interesting, also an additional clip [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssQBL3\\_X4CY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssQBL3_X4CY) set in Europe.

Hope to see you all soon on the course.

Ross Howard

Captain



# 2017 U.S. HICKORY OPEN™

## AT THE DEL MONTE GOLF COURSE

The U.S. Hickory Open, hosted by the Society of Hickory Golfers, makes its West Coast debut at the historic Del Monte Golf Club in Monterey, California, July 10-12, 2017.

Operated by Pebble Beach Resorts, Del Monte is a landmark course that has played an instrumental role in popularizing golf in the West since its inception in 1897.

The U.S. Hickory Open is a fixture of the Society of Hickory Golfers and represents their premier hickory golf tournament of the year. Over 100 Hickory Players from throughout the United States, Canada and Europe will participate in this event using wood shafted clubs conforming to the era from before 1935. The winning score last year was just 7-over par.

The 2017 USHO is the fourth and final of the major “championship series” events of the SoHG in the 2016-17 season. Players compete, year round, for total points, akin to the famed FedEx Cup and the PGA Tour.

### About Del Monte

Only a few visitors to the Hotel Del Monte in 1897 would have heard about, much less played, the newest craze in sports sweeping America: the game of golf. Golf was introduced to California in 1892 when a recent English immigrant, Charles E. Maud, laid out the Pedley Farms Golf Course (later to become known as Victoria Golf Club) in Riverside, some 60 miles east of Los Angeles. Interest in golf grew rapidly and the 1890s saw many new golf courses being built. By 1900 there were nearly 100 golf courses in California.

In the Bay area, the Burlingame Golf Club, still in existence today, was the first to organise in 1893. It was followed by the Presidio Golf Course in 1895. The Hotel Del Monte Golf Links came soon after in 1897, with Maud as its architect. The nine-hole course measured 2219 yards. At the time, the Hotel Del Monte was a popular destination resort for the “smart set” and included a polo field and a race track.

In spring of 1901, the former U.S. Open champions gave an exhibition at Del Monte. Del Monte hosted the inaugural amateur and open championships of the newly formed Pacific Coast Golf Association, comprising clubs from California, Oregon and Washington. Some regard thos open championship as the first California State Open, won by Scotsman Robert Johnstone, club professional at Presidio, with a score of 148 for 36 holes. The course was expanded in 1903, becoming the first golf course in California to boast 18 holes.

Today, only two of California’s earliest golf courses remain in operation: Del Monte Golf Course and at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Members of the AGHS have had success at the U.S. Hickory Open in the past, and the Society of Hickory Golfers would be pleased for the opportunity to welcome Australian participants to the 2017 event.

Players may get further information and register their entry by following the link in the box below, or download information direct from the AGHS website by following [this link](#).

## U.S. Hickory Open Schedule

### Monday July 10

**7:30 a.m.—6:00 p.m.**

Practice Rounds. Schedule your practice round with the Pro Shop at Del Monte Golf Course — 831-373-2700.

**5:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.**

Welcome reception and Club Swap/Trade Show.  
Hors d'oeuvres served.

### Tuesday, July 11

**9:30 a.m.**

First round 2017 U.S. Hickory Open.

**6:00 p.m.**

Tournament dinner and raffle drawing.

### Wednesday, July 12

**9:30 a.m.**

Second round 2017 U.S. Hickory Open.

**2:00 p.m.**

Results and prize presentations.

### Details and registration:

[www.hickorygolfers.com/us-hickory-open/](http://www.hickorygolfers.com/us-hickory-open/)

# Golf Course Architecture

***Unpaid junior apprentice course designer and part-time commando Ross Howard resumes his always entertaining recollections of the experiences of youth under the tutelage of his father, the renowned Australian course designer Al Howard.***

The year is 1957 (I was 12) and the site is Mona Vale Golf Club on Sydney's northern beaches. A bit of history to set the scene:

*"When World War II broke out many club members enlisted and the Commonwealth exercised its right to establish a camp on part of the course. To prevent or stall a feared invasion by Japanese forces a tank trap was built across the course from Turrimetta to Mona Vale heads and barbed wire entanglements erected next to the beach.*

*Although the influx of defence forces to the area briefly lifted the club's bar sales, the clubhouse was later commandeered for use as administration offices and officers' mess for the nearby army camp.*

*With the end of the war and the filling in of the tank trap and removal of the barbed wire entanglements the club resumed its place in local life, but the course had been damaged and downgraded by the military activities and it was not until 1947 that the course was reopened."<sup>1</sup>*

So again, with full bush bashing gear on (as described in previous editions) we ventured forth from Mona Vale Road heading east for the allocated site. The area was very overgrown with vines, lantana, blackberries and tree shrubs associated with coastal areas. After instructions from the old man, I headed off for the appointed tree and was soon to stop and explain that my progress seemed to be halted by vines and bushes.

After investigation, it was determined that the Army's efforts in the "removal of the barbed wire entanglements" had in fact been less than effective, and I was actually in said entanglements.



The Mona Vale layout in the years immediately prior to World War II. The scrub centre-right is where Lance-Corporal Howard found himself hanging on the old barbed wire.<sup>3</sup>



The post-war Mona Vale clubhouse back in the hands of the members.<sup>2</sup>

Step forward to 1956 and the local council agrees to leasing further land to the course to construct a further 9 holes.

Dad was duly engaged to design and supervise the construction of the additional holes. This area was effectively adjacent to Pittwater Road and to the east of same in the vicinity of what is—today—the Mona Vale Hospital.

A lengthy extraction process was required and a subsequent visit to the doctors to ensure my tetanus shots were up to date. Needless to say, my clothing & protective gear were very second hand after that engagement, not to mention the numerous cuts to my legs and arms.



Course construction at Mona Vale.<sup>4</sup>



*Golf Course Architecture (cont.)*

Patched up with new gear and determined to achieve our objective, we returned to the site the following week, and with the aid of suitable cutting gear we finally reached our target.

The year is now 1967 and Dad had received a commission to add a further nine holes to the existing nine of the Ballina Golf Course (north coast NSW), the club bought adjoining land with the intention of expanding to 18 holes.

However, in the period between the commission and commencement the Education Department advised that it was resuming part of the course, which meant the loss of three of the original nine holes. Thus, the commission charged to building 12 holes in the new area, retaining six holes in the old area. The area was ideal golf country, being sand based with dunes and plenty of gentle slopes.

Apart from our usual methods of measuring the site, checking sun angles and related important aspects, Dad was determined that my golf swing also needed changing, from quite “flat” which suited the playing conditions of my then home club of Long Reef to a more upright “inside / out”.

So, after doing a morning work each day on the new site, Dad would head off to review the changes that may be required to the old 6 holes, and I would head off to the allocated hole to try my new swing with 100 plus balls.

Using the latest gear then available of aluminium shafts (lighter than steel, marginally thicker), a target of approximately 170 yards, using a 5 iron as the standard I proceeded over the course of the next days to hit a few good ones, but many very ordinary ones and a lot went into the creek some 130 yards in front. However, I did eventually succeed and achieve the required swing pattern.



The 5th at Ballina, showing the creek into which Ross hit many balls. One suspects that they are still there.<sup>5</sup>

During the course of our stay at Ballina, a Japanese fishing vessel was towed into the river with a cargo of rotten fish, having been refloated after going down off Middleton Reef some 300 miles east. To say the aroma was unpleasant was a very large understatement.

We were very happy to leave Ballina and head back home and leave the rotten fish cargo at the wharf for the locals to deal with.

Trust you enjoyed my fond memories of working with Dad, and I hope to bring you other stories in the future.

**Acknowledgements**

<sup>1, 2, 4</sup> — Photos from Mona Vale Golf Club website ([www.mvgc.com.au/](http://www.mvgc.com.au/))

<sup>3</sup> — State Library of NSW

<sup>5</sup> — Photo from Ballina Golf & Sport Club website ([www.ballinagolfclub.com.au/](http://www.ballinagolfclub.com.au/))

**Dates for the Hickory Diary (NSW)**

|                                                                       |                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup></b>                                   | Kiama Hickory Challenge<br>Kiama Golf Club      |
| <b>Monday May 8<sup>th</sup></b>                                      | J. J. Paine Trophy<br>Windsor Country G.C.      |
| <b>Friday May 26<sup>th</sup></b>                                     | Show & Tell<br>Turramurra Golf Club             |
| <b>Friday June 23<sup>rd</sup></b>                                    | Show & Tell<br>Rosnay Golf Club                 |
| <b>July (TBA)</b>                                                     | Bobby Locke Qualifying<br>North Ryde Golf Club  |
| <b>Friday August 25<sup>th</sup></b>                                  | Show & Tell<br>Canterbury Golf Club             |
| <b>Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup></b>                               | Craigieburn Cup<br>Peppers Craigieburn          |
| <b>Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup></b>                               | Australian Hickory Shaft<br>Championship<br>TBA |
| <b>Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> -<br/>Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October</b> | Al Howard Trophy<br>TBA                         |
| <b>Friday November 17<sup>th</sup></b>                                | Show & Tell<br>Randwick Golf Club               |

More complete details of events—as they come to hand—can be found at

[www.australiangolfheritage.org.au/hickorynews.html](http://www.australiangolfheritage.org.au/hickorynews.html)

# Dr Ewan Frazer—Pioneer in Australian Golf

Michael Sheret

This talk by British golf historian, Dr Colin Strachan, was organised jointly by AGHS and The Australian Golf Club. It took place on the evening of Monday 27 February 2017 at the Australian Golf Club. Seventy one people attended.



AGHS golf historian Michael Sheret introduces Colin.

Colin held the attention of his audience admirably with a well-researched interesting topic and an excellent PowerPoint presentation. The Frazer family is an interesting one, from rags to riches in Australia in the 19th century. Ewan Frazer was the Honorary Secretary of The Australian Golf Club. Over the period 1903 to 1905 he was the driving force in securing the land at Kensington for the Club's present course, often putting his own money on the line for the land and the construction of the course and clubhouse.



Colin Strachan and some of his audience.

He was also the driving force in getting the first Australian Open up and running in 1904 and holding it at The Australian Golf Club at their Botany links (see the transcription of a contemporary newspaper report from *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* on Page 2 of this issue).

On his return to England both he and other members of the Frazer family were prominent in the development of Royal Ashdown Forest, Colin's home golf club. A man of many parts, Ewan Frazer was also a pathologist and played a significant part in the development of the Department of Pathology at Oxford University.

The whole evening was a great success. Champagne on arrival, a riveting talk, a rapt audience, a gourmet dinner with unlimited wine, excellent service and a convivial atmosphere. All this in the beautiful setting of one of Australia's most prestigious golf clubs. AGHS members interested in golf heritage and having an enjoyable evening at a bargain price, and didn't attend, missed out badly.



AGHS president John Buckley giving the vote of thanks.

A special thanks goes to Don Dunne, a member of both The Australian Golf Club and the Australian Golf Heritage Society, for his tireless work in publicising this event and making it a success.

## New Members

Welcome to new Society members:

Mr Hugh Jolly (Royal Sydney Golf Club)

Mr Bob Koppman (Pacific Dunes Golf Club)

Individual and club membership is available at any time throughout the year. Applications for membership may be downloaded from the [AGHS website](#).

# Museum Report

- Vicki Stanton

## Museum Collection Inventory, Documentation and Storage Project

The Museum has started its Collection Inventory, Documentation and Storage Project, one of the key recommendations of the [National Standards Program](#), which was supported through a City of Parramatta Community Grant.

The inventory will enable us to get a better understanding of our collection and to provide improved care for the objects. In turn, objects deserving further research will be able to be identified.

Shelving and work stations have been set up back-of-house for the purposes of assessment, cleaning, updating records and photographing objects.

While this necessitated a reduction in the exhibition area, Golf & War remains on display in full. If you haven't seen it yet, drop on by.

A grant application has been submitted to purchase further archival materials and an additional Mosaic licence for cataloguing objects. The Collection Manager and volunteers are currently working on the golf bag collection.

## Volunteers Needed!

The museum has put feelers out for more volunteers through [The Centre for Volunteering](#) and the [Royal Australian Historical Society](#).

In particular, we are looking for volunteers to transcribe the oral histories and to assist us in all aspects of the Collection Inventory. This includes cleaning, auditing, cataloguing and photographing the collection. All training will be provided and times are flexible. Contact the [museum](#) or call Vicki on 0433 990 982.

## Travelling Exhibition

Our travelling exhibition has been on the move again and is now on display at Canterbury Golf Course. Clubs interested in hosting the display are invited to contact the [museum](#).

The museum transports, installs and packs down the exhibition at no cost to the club, although donations are always welcome! The museum thanks its transport sponsor [M3 Logistics](#) for providing ongoing and invaluable support for this program.



The work area at the rear of the Museum.

Museum Report (Cont.)

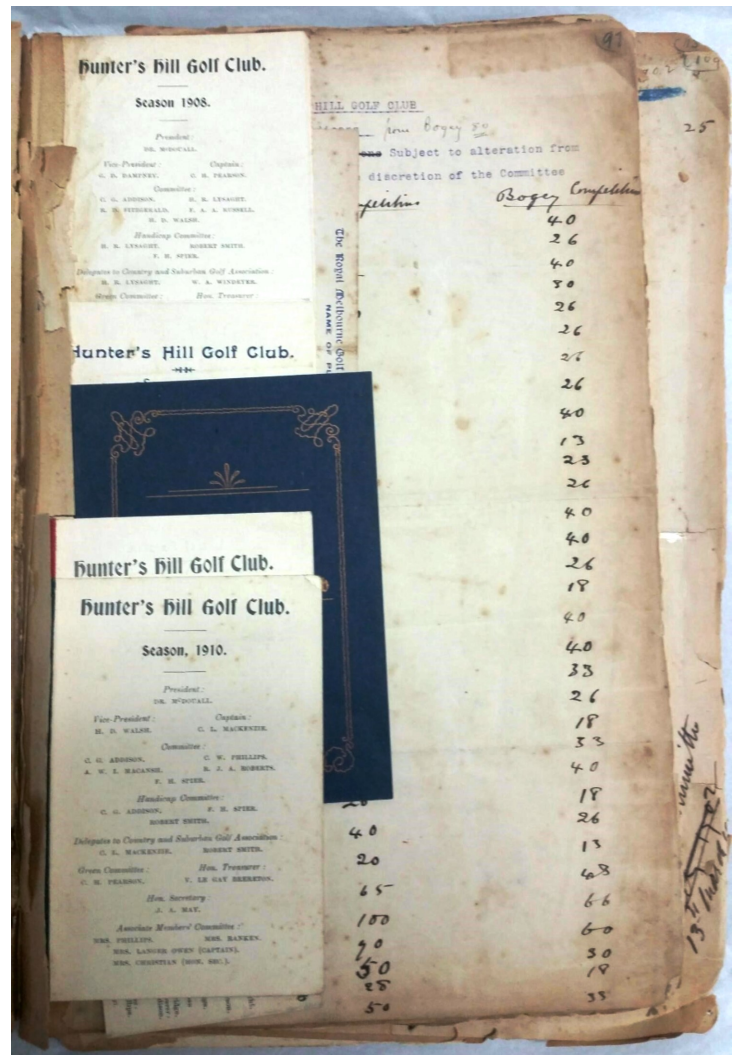
Object of the Month

The museum's object of the month for April is the Hunter's Hill Golf Club's Record Book. The book provides insights into the sporting and social history of the Hunter's Hill area in the early twentieth century. It is the only surviving handicap records of the club, recording the earliest results of club and interclub matches up until 1907. Newspaper clippings contribute further information.

Adding to the historical significance of the book is the inclusion within it of associated ephemera such as the Rules of the Hunter's Hill Golf Club 1903 and season fixture books for 1901, 1902, 1910, 1911 (including events and committee holders). Membership of the club was limited to residents of Hunter's Hill, Woolwich and Gladesville and listed within the records are prominent members of Sydney society, most notably William Archibald Windeyer, solicitor and community stalwart.

Hunter's Hill Golf Club was formed in 1900 and was located in the grounds of Gladesville Hospital overlooking Parramatta River. It was one of the original members of the Suburban and Country Golf Association (which evolved into Golf NSW). The club was forced to amalgamate with Pymble Golf Club in October 1932, following the resumption of the Hunter's Hill course for expansion of the hospital.

The Record Book is currently undergoing extensive conservation work by Preservation Australia. On its return, the book will be sent for digitisation and then uploaded to the AGHS website. This will enable increased public access to the book and reduce the risk of damage by further handling. A win-win.



Hunter's Hill Record Book—Results and Season Schedules.

This project is supported by Arts NSW's Volunteer Museum Grant Program, a devolved funding program administered by Museums & Galleries of NSW on behalf of the NSW Government.

Hunter's Hill Record Book with contemporary newspaper articles.



# Play Vintage Golf

## At the *Kiama Hickory Challenge*

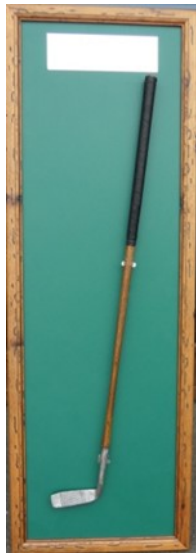
**Sunday 30 April 2017**

Tee off 9.00am – 9.45am

Kiama Golf Club

Dress: Traditional golf attire (optional)

This is a unique opportunity to experience the golf of yesteryear, playing with genuine 1920s hickory shafted clubs, supplied by the Australian Golf Heritage Society.



The Al Howard Putter

18 hole individual stableford

Cost: \$30 per player, includes club hire and light meal (\$20 if you use your own clubs, but they must be authentic pre-1940 hickories)

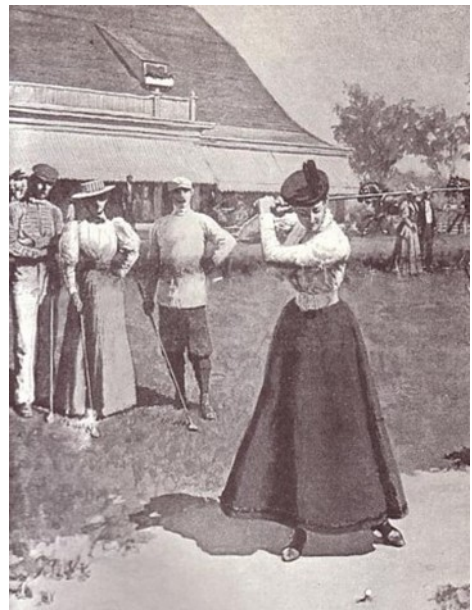
**WIN:**

The Al Howard putter, a perpetual trophy

Prizes for overall and men's and ladies' novice winners

Bookings can be made at the pro shop on:

(02) 42377339



# Vale Margery McWilliam

It is with sadness that we report the death of one of our Patrons, Margery McWilliam, who passed away on January 21 at the age of 90.



She was born Margery Grace Powell in Bathurst in 1926. Her father was with the Department of Agriculture, and because of this, the family were quite mobile. Bathurst was followed by Wyong — where Marge received most of her schooling — and then Goulburn. Generally, her upbringing was rural in nature.

She also had the good fortune to be born into a sporting family. Her brother and father were both more than proficient golfers, her brother being club champion at Goulburn Golf Club, and her father helping design the course at Wyong. Her mother played golf at the Tully Park Golf Club in Goulburn.

Margery initially played hockey, and her organisational and administrative skills were recognised by her appointment to the position of Secretary of the Goulburn Hockey Association. She was also good enough at the game to be selected to represent NSW in the interstate hockey matches against Queensland in 1945.

After being injured in a hockey match — the result was a black eye — her father encouraged Margery to take up golf instead of hockey, and this she did in 1947. The *Goulburn Evening Post* of Monday, 17th March 1947 reported that:

*“Despite a small field on Saturday, play was keen, and newcomer, Miss Margery Powell, commenced the season in a superb manner by reducing her L.G.U. handicap by three strokes. She won her first competition with 40 stableford points, and earned the congratulations of every one. May she continue to reduce her handicap.”*

In 1946, Goulburn Golf Club had secured the services of ex-A.I.F. man Bill McWilliam as professional. He must have made an impression during his year at Goulburn, as he and Margery were married in February 1948.

Margery joined Bonnie Doon G.C. in 1950 and became involved in almost every aspect of Ladies Golf in NSW. *The Sydney Morning Herald* of May 4, 1975 provides a summary of her career to that point:

*“State selector Marge McWilliam, a top golfer and administrator for 20 years, has started the season on a high note by winning four trophies in a month.*

*Marge and her husband, Beverley Park professional Billy McWilliam, have devoted many years in developing schoolgirl, schoolboy and junior golfers.*

*Winner of the opening day four-ball with Pat Weber, Marge also won the first monthly medal and the president's cup last Tuesday.*

*Mrs McWilliam was Bonnie Doon president for three years and captain for nine years leading the club to win three top grade pennant premierships.*

*Winner of 10 club foursomes titles - eight in a row with Gloria Bruce, Marge also won mixed foursomes championships with Bob Ryan and Jack King.*

*She has played grade golf for Bonnie Doon for 25 years, and is in the top pennant side this season.*

*Mrs McWilliam has been a LGU official for 13 years and is a keen student of junior and senior golfers.*

*Jan Stephenson is one of many top golfers who has been guided on her way by Mrs McWilliam.”*

In 1979, Bill McWilliam took the position of professional at Malaysia's Royal Selangor Golf Club, and naturally Marge went with him. She played in Malaysia and did well in competitions, winning the Foursomes, and receiving many trophies over the seven years that they lived there. Margery also did the books for the club office; she was very busy with club life and business.

Bill McWilliam taught golf to the King of Malaysia. He was picked up by the king's plane and flown to the palace for lessons. The king's daughter also played golf and had lessons with Bill. Both Margery and Bill were invited to a family wedding.

On their return to Australia, Margery resumed her close association with Bonnie Doon Golf Club and the NSW Ladies Golf Union, and it was inevitable that Margery's long and distinguished service would be recognised.

In 1997, the Margery McWilliam Bowl was inaugurated. This event was effectively Division 2 of the State Championship, and was for players on handicaps of 13 to 25. It was presented by WGNSW (Women's Golf NSW) in recognition of Margery's contribution to WGNSW, to provide a significant event for golfers on handicaps greater than 12.

She was rewarded with a Medal of the Order of Australia on 26 January 2008 for her many years of devoted service to women's golf in New South Wales as a referee and administrator (Bill McWilliam was also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2004 for "For service to golf as a coach and by encouraging young people and women to enter the sport." They are a very unusual - if not unique - couple to have both received the prestigious honour).

**Vale Margery McWilliam (cont.)**

The Margery McWilliam Bowl.

Bill and Margery McWilliam were early members of the Golf Collector's Society — the precursor of the Australian Golf Heritage Society — and made significant contributions to the Society, both in the form of material contributions to the Museum collection and as volunteers contributing to the running of various Society activities. In addition Margery won the Australian Ladies Hickory Shaft Championship in 1999 and 2000.

We were delighted when Marge accepted the position of Patron of the Society in 2012, as were we when she agreed in 2015 to be interviewed as part of our ongoing 'Oral Histories' project.

Interviewer Carol McKirdy said at the time "Margery was a delightful and kind narrator. The interview content offered by Margery demonstrates that she is a very humble woman." The full interview may be [heard here](#).

When summarized, Margery's career in golf and golf administration is nothing short of inspiring. As far as we are aware:

- Member of Bonnie Doon Golf Club since 15th February, 1950
- Life Member Bonnie Doon Golf Club 2000
- Life Member of WGNSW 2004
- Life Member of Golf NSW
- Lady President of Bonnie Doon GC: 1963–1965 and 2001–2004
- Lady Captain of Bonnie Doon GC: 1960–1962 and 1971–1975
- NSWLGU Council member 1963-1979, 1987-1991, 1993-1996
- NSWLGU Match Committee member 1968-1979, 1987-1996 (Chair – from Jan 1975-Aug 1979, 1989-1996)
- NSWLGU Junior Golf Committee member 1965-1967

- NSWLGU Finance Committee member 1976-1977, 1990-1991
- NSWLGU Scratch Score (Course Rating) Committee member 1965-1967-1974, 1993-1994
- NSWLGU Vice President 1973, 1975-1977, 1980, 1990-1991
- NSW Delegate to ALGU 1974-1978
- Elected NSWLGU Counsellor in 1996
- Distinguished Service Award NSW Sports Federation 2006
- Ladies Australian Hickory Shaft Champion 1999 & 2000.
- Patron Australian Golf Heritage Society 2012

We deeply mourn her passing, and would like to extend our sincere sympathies to her son, daughters, and extended family.

**GOULBURN GOLF CLUB**

**ASSOCIATES**

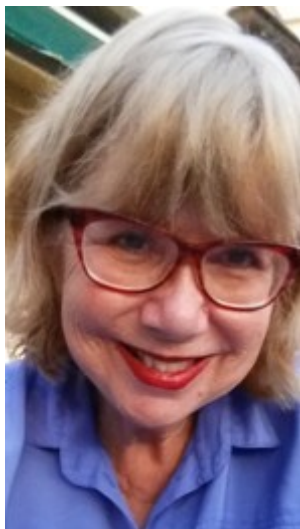
On Friday afternoon the associates played the first round of the "Norman Baxter" eclectic, and some excellent scores were returned. Both Miss Mitchell and Mrs. Flanagan returned a nett 69 to reduce their L.G.U. handicaps to 20 and 35 respectively, while Miss Emery played to her handicap with an 82 off the stick. The minimum 9 holes was won by Miss Mitchell, and best scores were: Miss Mitchell, 36-6 2-3-29 1-3; Mrs. Flanagan, 42-12-30; Miss Emery 36-4-31; Mrs. Baxter, 40-8-32; Miss Harris, 39-6-33; Mrs. Malone, 43-10 2-3-33 1-3; Mrs. Mason, 42-6 2-3-35 1-3.

On Saturday the week-end associates played the first round of this season's eclectic competition for a trophy donated by Mr. J. E. Knowlman. Congratulations go to Miss Margery Powell who, with a score of 99 off the stick, reduced her L.G.U. handicap from 33 to 29. Miss Powell also won the day's minimum score. Results were: Miss Powell 39-11-28; Miss Scott 42-10-32; Mrs. McCallum 42-9 1-3-32 2-3; Mrs. Cooper 42-9-33; Miss Oehm 43-9 1-3-33 2-3; Miss Byrno 44-9 1-3-34 2-3.

Goulburn Evening Post—Tuesday, 1 April 1947.

# AGHS Oral History Project

- Carol McKirdy



Since 2013 I have had the great privilege and pleasure of recording oral histories for the Australian Golf Heritage Society Museum. Although I come from a family of golfers with the ensuing garage full of golf equipment and amusing familial boasts of golf expertise and ability, my handicap is closer to snow-capped than scratch but I love the sport and the people involved in it.

As an oral historian working with the Australian Golf Heritage Society Museum, my aim is to work with

them to record 'the untold history' of the game by interviewing prominent people in Australia's golfing world. We aim to record the personal stories behind great golf and as well we try to uncover the stories behind golf artefacts housed in the museum.

The world of golf is superbly documented in Australia. Excellent records have been kept of facts and figures. The museum uses oral history to learn even more about the game including charming vignettes into times gone by. Who would have thought that in the past golfers had to be wary of a train interrupting play as it passed through the course (Margery McWilliam) or that house bricks served as putting holes on a major city golf course or that lessons were taught by a golf pro with his rifle beside him that he sometimes fired to warn off ball thieves (Dan Cullen)?

## What is oral history?

Oral history is a collaborative creation between a narrator, often referred to as an interviewee, and an interviewer. A knowledgeable narrator shares memories with an interviewer who has carefully researched and planned the interview.

Oral history is a highly effective method for gathering historical information that gives a personal perspective of what happened in the past and which also adds to and supports what we know from mainstream, traditional history compiled from primary, secondary and tertiary sources such as the dates of tournaments and where they were played, who participated, video footage, pictures and so on.

Oral history is sometimes described as a means to fill in the gaps and it does so by adding individual recollections that are interesting, informative, enlightening and sometimes

extraordinary to listen to. Often the best way to find out about the past is to ask someone who was there and experienced it or who knows about it because of knowledge passed down.

Oral history records unique life memories. The history is told, recorded and kept for future generations. A carefully prepared interviewer supports a narrator to retell recollections, memories and subjective perspectives of what happened in the past as they know it, and this leads to their version of what happened being recorded for posterity. Interviews typically follow a question and answer format responsive and sensitive to the narrator's dialogue so that a comprehensive narrative record is created. The process of collecting oral history results in lasting first-person records.

The entire oral history process is carried out following nationally and internationally endorsed ethical guidelines which protect participants. The Australian Golf Heritage Society Museum follows the Oral History Australia guidelines.

The focus of an oral history project can vary enormously. Interview content is dependent on the context and purpose of the overall project or single interview, the narrator, and their knowledge and experiences. In an individual life story the narrative may centre on family or community groups. Is the purpose to create a record of cultural traditions?

A narrator may have first-hand knowledge of historical events. Places and their history can be narrated. There are numerous possibilities. Every oral history creates a new record and this might be an entirely new aspect of the period. Oral history complements existing historical records and gives a sense of the subjectivity of historical experience. It helps our desire and need for finding consistent historical truth; for finding out what happened in the past as clearly and honestly as possible.

Oral history narratives can be mapped by fact finding to support known and established historical truths such as dates, names and locations. The Australian Golf Heritage Museum, for example, uses oral history narrative to check the provenance of artefacts at the museum. An oral historian is always mindful to confirm the narrative according to established factual, historical background such as dates, facts, documents and figures.

Oral histories may be analysed but this is not mandatory; sometimes the recording is done purely and simply to create a record so that memories are not forgotten; this is often the case for family oral histories.



**AGHS Oral History Project (cont.)**

The Australian Golf Heritage Museum interviews are digitally recorded, in preference to analogue methods which can of course be used, but have largely been superseded, have limited longevity and are difficult to process and archive.

Ultimately, the most important factor in oral history is the narrative but the Australian Golf Heritage Museum audio interviews are supported with a very comprehensive and detailed written summary. The museum follows recognised secure storage practices so that the valuable memories and records are kept safe and archived because of their historical value and for accessibility for research purposes.

Oral history is a powerful method of recording history, especially individual life stories and recollections. History is much more than dates, facts, documents and figures. Oral history narrative helps fill in historical detail by adding interest about everyday life, personal viewpoints, and remembers history that would otherwise not be recorded and retained. People speak for themselves and talk about what it was like to be there, why they behaved as they did and also their feelings and responses to their life in the past.

Recalling the past helps narrators and in turn, their listeners, to make sense and meaning out of what happened. The interviews with golfing champions have been especially illuminating because they provide fascinating insights into the mindsets of some of Australia's and the world's most celebrated players. What does a champion think about as he or she approaches the 18th? Listen to his or her oral history to find out and as you listen, experience the pleasure of hearing the champion's own voice.

Oral history is a relatively easy way for a narrator to record memories as it is far less daunting and time consuming than the creation of a written account. It may be the sole way a particular aspect of history is recorded. Limitations of oral history can apply to traditional history; for example, a narrator's version of events has individual bias and may have errors. The same applies to traditional historical records.

Recording history using the spoken memories of people has been an enduring pursuit of humanity. History has been recorded orally since ancient times. The practice of telling a story has been around for thousands of years. Oral evidence has been the main way people have passed down history. Printed written history is relatively new and its use varies according to when a culture acquired writing. Oral history is important; memories recorded are lives and experiences continued and remembered.

As with history in general, oral history can be entertaining as well as historically illuminating but the difference with an oral recount is that the history is personalised and is designed to be listened to. Listening to a golfer retell a life in golf with the accompanying vocal tone, accent, pronunciation, inflections and nuances of speech is wonderful; the appeal of listening to and learning from a significant and real story is generally appreciated and valued. Most people love listening to stories, especially those that are true, unique and personal. Like a knowledgeable caddy advises his player, oral history speaks to us. The oral histories can be listened to at:

<http://www.australiangolfheritage.org.au/oralhistories.html>

*Carol McKirdy has worked as an oral historian for ten years. As well as interviewing for the Australian Golf Heritage Society Museum she interviews for the Australian Golf Club, family histories, library collections, organisations and for a series of interviews with immigrants from the different people who have made the Sutherland Shire their home. For more information visit the [History Herstory](#) website.*



## The Australian Golf Heritage Society

### Patrons

Frank Phillips  
Charles Earp OAM (Queensland Chapter)

### Management Committee

John Buckley — President  
Ross Howard — Captain  
Steve Doorey — Secretary-Treasurer  
Tony Doggett  
Tom Moore  
Phil Baird

### Editors of The Brassie

Vicki Stanton     Steve Doorey

# Early Golf in India

Michael Sheret

In the last issue of *The Brassie* I wrote of research into early golf in Australia. This research followed on from some new evidence presented by Bill Gibson during his lecture at the AGHS Museum last April. The research has been carried out by the History Sub-Committee (Norm Richardson and myself) of the Australian Golf Heritage Society. The research has taken us to many sources of possible additional evidence and we have probably gone as far as we can. Unfortunately, we have been unable to build upon the Bill's evidence that golf might have been played in Australia as early as 1833/34.

Consequently, while speculation is possible, we cannot say whether this possible early golf was actually played let alone where, when and by whom. There will be a report on our research journey in the June 2017 issue of *Through the Green*. For copies of this report contact the History Sub-Committee through the AGHS website.

The research involved, amongst other things, looking into golf in India from June 1829 to March 1833. The sources used were the *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, the *Calcutta Magazine & Monthly Register* and the *Bengal Hurkaru*.

The first two have been digitised and can be searched online. The *Bengal Hurkaru* involved my visiting the British Library and four long days going through microfilm. The *Bengal Hurkaru* yielded the most information on golf on India, partly because it was a daily publication.

As so happens in research, when looking for one thing, in this case a particular officer in the Bengal Artillery and his connection to golf, one uncovers a whole lot of unrelated but very interesting material.

This material is important because, in most accounts of golf history, Royal Calcutta Golf Club is considered to be the first and oldest golf club outside of Britain. It is said to be descended from the Dum Dum Golfing Club founded in 1829. The research reported here throws some doubt on that descent.

## The Findings

There were reports on five different Indian golf clubs: Dum Dum GC<sup>1</sup>, Calcutta GC<sup>2</sup>, Mirzapore GC<sup>3</sup>, Benares GC<sup>4</sup>, and Meerutt GC<sup>5</sup>. It is probably surprising to many golf historians that so much golf was being played in India at that time – and that is only what was reported in the *Bengal Hurkaru*.

The next important finding was a detailed account<sup>6</sup> of play in 1830 for the Combermere Medal by members of Dum Dum Golfing Club. I have read<sup>7</sup> that this trophy is still played for by

members of the present day Royal Calcutta Golf Club. I have asked Royal Calcutta, so far without reply, to confirm this and also to know whether it is the original trophy from 1830.

Then there is the existence of not one but two golf clubs, Dum Dum GC and Calcutta GC, in the vicinity of Calcutta. Dum Dum, the site of the present airport, is about 10 kilometres from Calcutta city centre. The *Bengal Hurkaru* reports refer to two separate golf courses: the Dum Dum links and the Calcutta links. Both clubs had a mixture of military and civilian personnel as members<sup>8</sup>.

There was some commonality of membership between the two clubs, notably Dr George Playfair, a member of Dum Dum and the Secretary of Calcutta. The newspaper image illustrates, by way of primary source evidence, the existence of the two golf clubs. The first entry in the *Bengal Hurkaru*

**CALCUTTA GOLF CLUB.**—The Members of the Calcutta Golf Club are reminded, that the "Dalhousie Medal" will be played for on the 15th January, 1831, and that the Silver Cup will be contested for on the same day.

It is proposed that the Lovers of the Game shall meet together and dine at the Town Hall on the 4th Proximo, and those who agree to this proposal, are requested to send their names, with the number of guests they may wish to accompany them, to the Secretary, on or before the 31st Instant.

By Order of the Captain,  
Calcutta, October 25, 1830. G. P. Secretary.

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**DUM-DUM GOLF CLUB.**—A Meeting of the Members of the Dum-Dum Golf Club will take place on the 2d November 1830, at 11 o'clock a. m., at the house of the Captain, for the purpose of electing a Captain for the ensuing Season; fixing the value of Prizes, &c. &c. and other matters connected with Club affairs.

Gentlemen wishing to become Members are requested to signify the same to the Secretary, that their names may be laid before the meeting.

J. H. JARVIS, Sec.  
Dum-Dum, October 26, 1830.

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**NOTICE.**—Mr. LINTON respectfully begs leave to inform the Subscribers to his Concert, that he is under the necessity of postponing its performance to Friday the 5th proximo.

October 25, 1830. (905)

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**BENGAL HURKARU.**  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1830.

(22 December 1829) on the Dum Dum Golfing Club makes a clear claim by the Club that it is the first club of its kind in India and that it will be the first to play golf in India.

**Early Golf in India (cont.)**

*A Club has been established at Dum-Dum ... for the purpose of introducing the ancient and honourable Game of Golf into the Eastern Empire of the King of England.*

The claim is repeated, with different phrasing, the next day in the *Bengal Hurkaru*.

*We have much pleasure in publishing the following List of Subscribers to the Dum-Dum Golfing Club, and congratulate them on the prospect of seeing that Noble and Gentlemanlike Game established in Bengal.*

The *Bengal Hurkaru* first mentions the Calcutta Golf Club in March 1830 (see Endnote #2), reporting a Committee meeting on Thursday 25 March.

The wording of the report seems to imply that the Committee was already in existence. Whatever the exact date of the formation of the Calcutta Golf Club, it was clearly formed very shortly after the Dum Dum Golfing Club.

## **Current Claims Regarding the Origins of the Royal Calcutta GC**

The conventional wisdom, which can be found in many different sources, is that the Dum Dum Golfing Club, founded in 1829, at some stage changed its name to the Calcutta Golf Club and became the Royal Calcutta Golf Club in 1911. To get the official history, two sources were used: Royal Calcutta's [Website](#) and the Club's published History<sup>9</sup>.

Both the Website and the RCGC History point out that, while the RCGC early records have not survived, there is good primary source material in the archives from 1874 (Website) or from 1876 (History). The Website sheds no light on the early days. While the RCGC History has something to say on the early days, it concentrates on the period from 1876, using evidence found in the RCGC archives.

On page 7 of the RCGC History the claim is made:

*It has been established that the Royal Calcutta Golf Club was founded in the year 1829 and that it had its beginnings in Dum Dum, then a small suburb to the north-east of Calcutta. In support of this claim the RCGC History quotes the Oriental Sporting Magazine.*

This quotation<sup>10</sup> does not refer in any way to the Calcutta Golf Club; it refers to the *Dum Dum Golfing Club* and the *Dum Dum Links*. The claim made in the RCGC History is therefore consistent with the "conventional wisdom" referred to above, i.e. that Royal Calcutta Golf Club is descended from the original Dum Dum Golfing Club.

Throughout the RCGC History, there is no awareness that the Dum Dum Golf Club<sup>11</sup> and the Calcutta Golf Club both existed in 1830 with separate memberships, separate Secretaries and separate golf courses. The image taken from the *Bengal Hurkaru* of 27 October 1830, and used in this article, shows very clearly the side by side existence of two separate clubs. The overall impression from the RCGC History is that any reference to the Calcutta Golf Club can be taken as a reference to the Dum Dum Golf Club, and vice versa.

On page 15 the RCGC History makes a claim that 24 March 1829 was the "date of birth" of the Royal Calcutta Golf Club. The claim appears to be made on the basis of an entry in the Club's records for 1883. It is difficult to understand the reasoning for this claim. The date 24 March and the reference to Lord Ramsay make it very likely that the primary source is the *Bengal Hurkaru* Saturday 27 March 1830, p2. This source describes a meeting of the Committee of the Calcutta Golf Club at the Town Hall on Thursday 25 March 1830 (not 1829). At this meeting Lord Ramsay was elected Captain.

It is also worth noting that the RCGC History does not mention the Combermere Medal, the first trophy played for by the Dum Dum Golfing Club<sup>12</sup>. Neither does the RCGC History mention the Dalhousie Medal, the oldest trophy played for by the Calcutta Golf Club<sup>13</sup>.

## **Further Research**

Given the existence of two separate golf clubs, the Dum Dum Golfing Club and the Calcutta Golf Club, in or near Calcutta in 1830, the research question to be asked is: What is the accurate lineage of the present Royal Calcutta Golf Club?

There are other golf historians working in this area<sup>14</sup>. A comprehensive account of early golf in India is expected to be published soon in book form. When it is published it is likely to have an answer to the research question posed above. The key will be good primary source evidence on golf in India for the period from about 1833 to about 1876.

I feel it likely that at some stage the Dum Dum Golf Club and the Calcutta Golf Club merged and ultimately became the Royal Calcutta Golf Club. Many other scenarios are, however, possible. For example:

- Dum Dum faded away and Calcutta continued to exist?
- Calcutta faded away and Dum Dum continued to exist?
- Both Dum Dum and Calcutta faded away<sup>15</sup>?

**Early Golf in India (cont.)****End Notes**

1. Dum Dum first mentioned: *Bengal Hurkaru* 22 December 1829, p2.
2. Calcutta first mentioned: *Bengal Hurkaru* 27 March 1830, p2.
3. Mirzapore first mentioned: *Bengal Hurkaru* 30 March 1831.
4. Benares first mentioned: *Bengal Hurkaru* 1 February 1832.
5. Meerutt first mentioned: *Bengal Hurkaru* 7 February 1833.
6. *Bengal Hurkaru* 19 February 1830, p2.
7. <https://www.facebook.com/winterlineGOLF/>
8. *Bengal Hurkaru* 23 December 1829, 30 March 1830, 28 May 1830, 5 January 1831.
9. *The Royal Calcutta Golf Club, 150th Anniversary 1829 – 1979* by Pearson Surita. Published by RCGC, publication date not stated.
10. In the RCGC History the detail for the citation for the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* is inaccurate. It should refer to p407 of the May 1830 issue, which published a letter to the editor dated 23 December 1829.
11. The terms Dum Dum Golf Club and Dum Dum Golfing Club become used interchangeably at about this stage.
12. *Bengal Hurkaru* 19 February 1830, p2.
13. *Bengal Hurkaru* 27 October 1830 (see image).
14. *India's First Golf Clubs* by Edward H L Playfair and

Colonel William H Gibson (Retd), *Through the Green* March 2017, pp 44-47, magazine of the British Golf Collectors Society.

15. This third example is quite possible. Many golf clubs started in the 19th century had short lives or start-stop-start-stop existences. For the research conducted at the British Library the last report in the *Bengal Hurkaru* for the Dum Dum Golf Club was 29 January 1831 and for the Calcutta Golf Club 8 February 1832. Norman Richardson continued searching the *Bengal Hurkaru* to 1837 using the resources of the National Library of Australia. There was no further news of either golf club.

**Acknowledgements**

Norman Richardson and I bounce ideas off each other during the course of our joint or individual research. Norm's help and encouragement, during the course of this current research, is greatly appreciated. Bill Gibson of course set me off on the research journey which eventually took me to the British Library.



The Royal Calcutta Golf Club today.

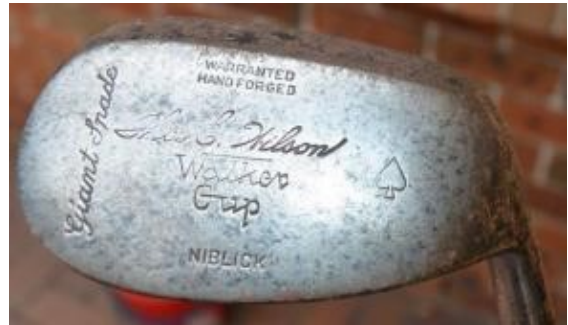
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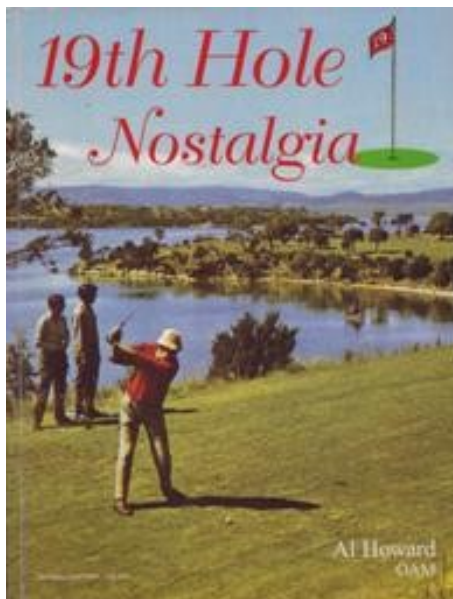
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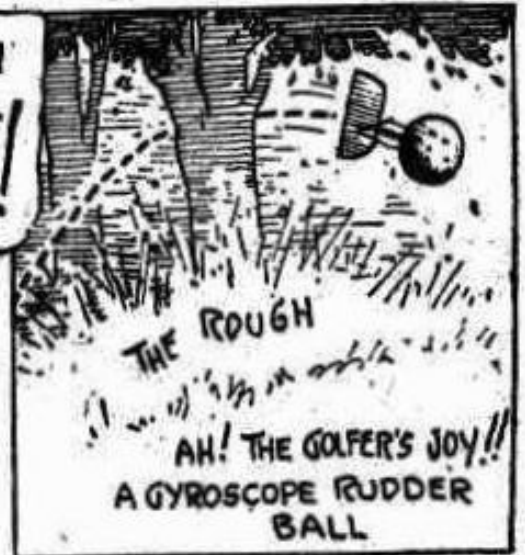
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The Rockhampton Evening News, Friday 17 May 1929.

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