

## *The Brassie*

Volume 1, Issue 4

July 2003

### Captain's Corner with Peter Read

#### *Special points of interest:*

- The 2003 Events Program
- Australian Historic Golf Trust and Museum
- Membership subscriptions renewal for 2003-4

A Nine 'n Dine has been confirmed for Woollooware on 25 September at 2pm so note the date in your diary. We will play 9 holes with hickory clubs – Tom has sets to hire if you need them – followed by drinks and dinner. We hope Bill McWilliam will be our entertaining after-dinner speaker.



Muirfield has been confirmed for a Nine 'n Dine on Thursday 23 October. The dinner speaker is to be confirmed.

Then on Thursday 13 November we will be hosting the annual event against the Golf

Society of Australia. As holders of the 'trophy' won last November at Royal Melbourne, we Collectors want to put on a good showing against the visitors. This year we will be competing for the 'Al Howard Trophy', initially won by Al in 1922 and donated by Al to GCSA for this event.

To plan a Nine 'n Dine at Avondale, Geoff Martin spoke with the Club Manager and later I spoke to the Captain and both agreed. However, the 'House Committee' deferred the idea.

Owen Denmeade contacted Avalon and their women members appear very keen to hold an event. I am in contact with Vicki Jellis, the Course Manager – she advises that the members are still keen, but will wait until the weather warms up.

Another date to note in your diary is the Australian Hickory Championships at Rosnay on Thursday, 16 October. This very serious event over 18 holes is contested for scratch and handicap players. Serious club buyers, Des Froneman and Barry Leithhead will be very determined defending champions.

I was recently in Canada and in Jasper found a golf shop that had the most amazing display of golf art and memorabilia. The proprietor, Gary Hardingham, has access to almost any item of golf accessories you could wish for. Gary is an Australian from Perth and a member of the Canadian and Australian PGA. If you are looking for a specific item of memorabilia, I suggest you email Gary at [golf@incentre.net](mailto:golf@incentre.net)

Finally, look out!! The 'lefties' are coming. Weir in the Master, Flesch in another USA tour event and the same week an American 'leftie'

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# Australian Historic Golf Trust and Museum

The Trust meeting on July 15, appointed two new Trustees in Max Garske, CEO of the PGA and David Allen, Executive Director of the NSW Golf Association. This move is significant as it provides the opportunity for the golfing bodies to influence the collection of clubs and memorabilia and develop respect for golf's history.

Donations just keep coming every week to the Museum and Tom Moore is delighted with the interest shown from all types of people in the golfing fraternity. Tom has written to all PGA members in NSW to invite them to provide old clubs and other items to develop the collection.

We have recently received some clubs that were owned and used by Joe Cohen, a Golf Pro in the late 1920's and early 30's. One is a Dynamiter, a forerunner of the sand iron. From all accounts, Joe was a brilliant player who looked set for a great career, but his life was cut short when he died from complications following an appendix operation.

A wood with an inlay of white perspex has surfaced from the late 1940s. These were the early days of inlays and the perspex proved too hard and brittle. Very few have survived. Kel Nagle won the Australian P.G.A. title in 1949 in Perth. He was a very long hitter in those days and he

was using a driver fitted with a perspex inlay. He told me some time later that he didn't think a ball could be hit that far. "I was making the par 5's with a drive and four iron," he said. Sadly, whilst the inlay held, the wood shattered. Although Kel had many replacement heads made, he never found another to drive the ball so far.

The Museum has been presented with a copy of Fred Popplewell's life story - "Pop" as he was universally known. (See the story on page 3) Researched and written by Fred's granddaughter Mrs. Diana Smithers, now of Cundletown NSW, it is a great insight into golf in the early part of the 20th century in Sydney.

## Famous Unknown golfers who played with hickories

Sidney Myer, founder of the Melbourne department store, loved his golf, but club membership was a problem, none would have him and you can guess why.

A regular visitor to the Myer's Sorrento beach house at weekends was English professional Ernest Le Fevre. The two hit golf balls until it got dark.



Myer eventually hired Le Fevre for the Sports Department on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Bourke Street store.

It was not unusual when a department head arrived at Myer's office for his secretary to make a funny face and point upwards. 'The boss' was up on 5, 'hitting niblicks into a net'!

SOURCE: Sidney Myer's biography by Ambrose Pratt

Frank Clune was the Bryce Courtney of his time, with 59 best sellers but never accepted by the literary establishment. Clune was a founder of the New South Wales golf club, where he had a barefoot caddy, Joey Dixon.

Clune never mastered the driver and played most of his golf with a Charlie Campbell mid-iron - he became famous as one-club Clune! Clune won the A.I.F. cup twice.

From The Australian Golfers handbook

## Club Restoration and Collecting

Good hickory-shafted clubs are becoming scarce and more expensive, just when playing with these clubs is becoming more popular and possible.

The answer could be in the quality replica clubs becoming available, both in Australia and from Scotland. Tom Moore recently

bought two beautiful play clubs, a long nose driver and putter made from Australian timbers by Ross Baker, of Daylesford.

GCSA is investigating the replica clubs made by Heritage Golf, of St Andrews and may soon have clubs and sets available for sale.

**WATCH THIS SPACE!!**

## LATE NEWS!! AGAIN!!

The Collectors have first option on an outstanding private collection of hickory clubs and memorabilia. This is a very high quality offering and a great opportunity for investment, with 10% discount for GCSA members.

Contact Tom Moore (9871 2798) if you would like an inspection.

## Fred Popplewell, a golfing trailblazer

At this time of the year, with the British Open just days away, our mind is on the bunch of Australian golfers trying to get a place in the field. Some of them deserve it and it will be theirs, while for others it will be struggle and well, maybe better luck next year. When we watch the likes of O'Malley, Lonard and Price doing well in the Scottish Open we need to consider the Australians, like Fred Popplewell, who blazed the trail for today's golfers.

*Fred Popplewell was the only Australian to qualify for the Daily Mail's championship at St Andrews—he set the golfing world talking as a result of several fine practice*

Fred Popplewell was Australian Open Champion in 1925 at the Australian GC, where he was Professional from 1909-1930. He also won the Championship in 1928, at Royal Sydney, where he was the Professional, again for 21 years.

It was in March 1926 that Fred Popplewell, Tommy Howard, Carnegie Clark and Harry Sinclair sailed on the SS Naldera to play in the British Open at Royal Lytham. They travelled via Colombo, Bombay, Eden, Port Said, Italy, and Sicily and eventually arrived in Marseille in mid April. From there, they caught the Channel steamer 'Victoria' for Dover. Within a few days, Fred played at Coombe Hill GC, Marylebone and qualified for the Daily Mail tournament with a 76. He arrived in Dundee on May 10, just in time to play 18 holes on a course over 6,900 yards long. In his first round at St. Andrews two days later, he had 76 and the next day, Carnegie and Fred defeated local Professionals Tom Walker and Tom Walker, 2 and 1. In the Leeds tournament, Fred had a 'not so good' first round but then had a 65.

Fred played two Open qualifying rounds at the Old Sunningdale course, scoring 73, 71. 'Popplewell's long game was excellent and if he had not spoiled a few chip shots and putts, he would have had one of the most brilliant rounds of the day' noted the SMH, 18 June 1926.

Popplewell, Clark and Joe Kirkwood qualified for the Open, but none made it past the second round. In the first round Fred had 81, one better than James Braid, one worse than Harry

Vardon and JH Taylor had 75. Americans scored the five best rounds led by Walter Hagen at 68, Bobby Jones (the eventual winner) at 72 and Tommy Armour on 74. What a rollcall of golfing legends, some at the end of their careers and others at the start.

Winning the Australian Open twice was a great thrill for Fred Popplewell. But close behind that came his victory in 1930 with Don Spence over Walter Hagen and Joe Kirkwood, 4 and 3, at the Kensington Club. It might have been an offset of that day at Royal Lytham when Hagen had done so well in Popplewell's first and only British Open.

These days, many Australians play in the US and European tours and in the majors and they do well. Think of them and remember the likes of Fred Popplewell, a golfing trailblazer.

## THE GOLF COLLECTORS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

**THE GOLF COLLECTORS SOCIETY  
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RESPECTING AND CONSERVING**

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If you have some special interest in golf history or golf collecting let us know. If you want to promote an aspect of golf history as a GCSA activity, we are interested. If your golfing colleagues or your club would value GCSA activities, we can help you share the news.

Email Peter Read on [read1pet@presto.net.au](mailto:read1pet@presto.net.au) or  
Barry Leithhead on [bsleith@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bsleith@ozemail.com.au)



## The PGA Golf and Trade Show

Look for news of the PGA Golf and Trade Show in the current edition of 'The Golfer'. And catch the article on the inside back cover about the Golf Collectors display and Auction at the Sydney Showground, Homebush Bay, July 31 - August 3.

Once again, we have been asked to display our collectibles and activities at the PGA Golf Show. This is a great opportunity to show the golfing public that golf history is alive and well and in very capable hands—OURS!!

It is always enjoyable to chat with golfers about the aspects of golf history that we find appealing. And

people are interested in what the Collectors are doing.

Volunteers will be needed to help Tom host our exhibit and explain the collectibles and activities of the Golf Collectors to visitors. Let Tom know (9871 2798) if you can help.

Golf memorabilia will be auctioned at this year's Golf Show for the first time. We are keen to make this auction a success and an annual feature of the Golf Show. Members with items for sale are asked to deliver them to the Museum on Sunday July 26 between 10am and 4pm so that they can be displayed at the show. The Golf Collectors will re-

ceive 20% of the sale price.

A reserve price may be put on any item, however if it does not reach reserve a donation of \$10 to GCSA will be required. The auction is proposed for 3pm on Saturday August 2, and about 50 lots are expected. Contact Tom, Peter (9871 3728) or Barry (9652 1430) if you would like to help at the auction, taking bids or recording sales - there is lots of work for everyone. And it will be fun.

The Collectors message is starting to be heard around the clubs—this is a big chance to attract new members.

## I met a Professional one day ....

.. at the Tain GC, north of Inverness in Scotland, within a mile of the Glenmorangie distillery, just south of Loch Dornoch, home of the famous Royal Dornoch GC. My plan was to play the minor courses rather than the majors, and what a wonderful minor course Tain turned out to be. Designed by Old Tom Morris, it has the tradition of each hole facing a different aspect of the wind to the one before it. Makes you think and adapt. It rained the first time I played Tain and for good measure, it hailed as well, soft, fine, damned cold hail. But a shed was positioned at the right place and after ten minutes. play resumed, except that for the next two holes the ball disappeared against the white background. One player was

wearing a kilt – enough said.

Tain's professional is Fergus Munro, in his mid thirties and I was urged to look out for him by our B&B host at Edzell, near Dundee. Fergus had played a lot of golf all over Scotland in all sorts of weather with the son of our B&B host. Rain and hail were never a barrier to competent play. But he had never hit a hickory-shafted club in his life. Of course, I had my favourite Spalding Sammy (CRESCENT brand, hammer trademark) in my bag and suggested he might like to try it. Now I am a leftie and so was he.

The Sammy is a nothing-looking club, an almost smooth face with a diagonal pattern and centred dots, a

slight convex shape to the back of the club head, but lightweight and no special feeling in the hands. The metal is dulled dark with the scale of age but the ball comes off the face so sweetly and so straight.

Fergus waggled and announced, "It feels weird" and I knew what he meant. "Try it," I urged and he did. The ball flew straight and true 170m and he could hardly believe it. He hit another and the same result. "I can't believe it," he said and I could.

I felt something else; that I had taken an old club to a Tom Morris course and introduced a Scottish pro to a part of the history he had never experienced. A good feeling.

## GCSA Renewal or Membership for a Golfing Friend

Use this form to renew your membership or use a copy to invite new members to share the fun of hickory golf.

Complete the details and send a cheque for \$30 to:  
GCSA  
PO Box 23, Glenorie NSW 2157

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....P/code.....

Phone: ..... Email: .....

Club ..... H'cap .....