

# The Brassie

Volume I, Issue 5

October 2003

## Special points of interest:

- The GCSA Championship decided, with worthy winners
- The annual challenge with the Golf Society of Australia at Royal Sydney GC
- Replica Clubs: what is your view?
- Appointments to the Australian Golf Historic Trust

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## Captain's Corner with Peter Read

On Thursday 16 October, we held the 13th Australian Hickory Shaft Golf Championship at the Auburn Links. A good field was in attendance and enjoyed excellent golfing weather. The winner was Peter Read (pic) with a respectable score of 73 from Dan Cullen (Jnr) on 76. The



Net winner was the ever-effervescent John Fletcher with a net 65 followed by Ross Howard with net 70.

The Captain is under enormous pressure from members to review Mr. Fletcher's handicap. However, that review will occur after the interstate challenge, as Mr. Fletcher may be required to reproduce that form against our Golf Society visitors. A rumour doing the rounds suggests that John is seeking a mature age entry to the professional ranks.

Unfortunately, the Nine 'n Dine planned for Muirfield has been cancelled as the dining room is unavailable.

The Annual Challenge against the Golf Society of Australia, now for the Al Howard Trophy, will be held at Royal Sydney on Thursday 13 November. An entry form is printed below – please telephone Tom by Wednesday 5 November

to secure your place in the field and send your cheque to reach Tom by Monday 10 November. The team for the challenge event is limited to seven members and other members will contest an individual Stableford event. We expect a number of Royal Sydney members to join us for the day and we have been promised an outstanding dinner in the evening. The 'Conditions of Play' for the Societies Challenge include stymies, play from bunkers and the use of clubs made before 1940.

An interesting and serious issue has arisen – using replica hickory clubs made in recent years. Consideration of this matter in other competitions is open for your comments and the GCSA Executive will discuss the options at its next meeting.

## From the Keeper of the Green and the Sand

The Old Course at St. Andrews evolved over a long period of years. Hell Bunker, a wide and deep depression about 80 yards short of the 14<sup>th</sup> green began as a much smaller obstacle. In 1882, Old Tom Morris was professional to the R&A and greenkeeper of the Old Course. One day, an indignant golfer fumed to Morris that the con-

dition of the course was so bad he had only one decent lie all day, and that was at the bottom of Hell Bunker. His ball lay so well that he was able to play a wooden club from it. Morris's features, usually dark in their normal state, turned black. Immediately he sent a work crew armed with picks and hoes to the site and had

them hack away so that no golfer could ever again play from Hell Bunker with a wood.

Years later, Gene Sarazen found himself in that bunker during the British Open. Rather than try to advance his ball toward the green, Sarazen had to play backwards, toward the tee. He made 8 and lost by one stroke.

## Woollooware Nine 'n Dine

On a beautiful spring day, thirteen players, including one lady, Judy O'Brien, in her first hickory event, took to the Woollooware course. The winner for the ten holes of stableford, with a creditable 20 points was Bill Hermann from Cronulla, off 24 with five players on 16 points. The second place on a count-back went to Bill McWilliam, who scored 9 points on the last three holes. Bill, the oldest player in the field was giving the game away after the first three holes, declaring, "That's it, I'm finished. No more hickory golf for me." And as soon as he rejected the magic lady, she won him back. Never give up!!

After a lovely dinner, Bill as our guest speaker, regaled us with stories of his

early days in golf: beating Norman von Nida in the 1940 NSW PGA title at Kogarah; his time as pro at Goulbourn



where he first met Bruce Devlin; his duty in the Army and his outstanding score of 65 in the 1946 Open at Royal Queensland. This equalled the then world record score in an Open championship, set by the great English player, Henry Cotton in 1937. A wonderful night capped off just about as perfect a day's golf as you could imagine.

Congratulations to John Fletcher for his outstanding organisation skills and to the Woollooware GC. Which GCSA member will host the next Nine 'n Dine?

The pic shows (from L) Des Froneman, host John Fletcher, Tom Moore and Dan Cullen Jr.

## Book Review

*The Greatest Game Ever Played'*  
by Mark Frost (Little & Brown 2002)

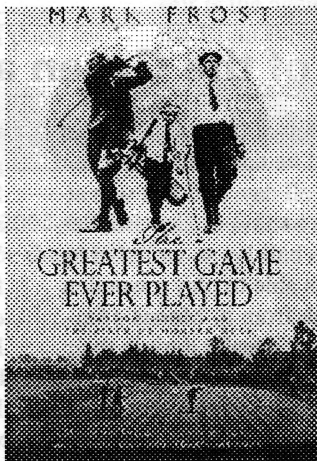
Tom has discovered the most wonderful golf book!! On the cover is one of the most famous photographs in golf ... the 20 year-old Francis Ouimet with his 10 year-old caddie, Eddie Lowery in the process of beating Harry Vardon to win the 1913 US Open, in Boston.

This unthinkable victory of the 20 year old amateur and the then five-times British Open winner made the front page of the New York Times and turned America on to the game of golf.

Like Bryce Courtney and Frank Clune, Frost uses dialogue. You get to hear what Vardon and Ouimet said and what they were thinking! .. and boy, does this work. You are there! Read this book even if you have

to buy it for yourself for Christmas.

Mark Frost's magnificent account is sports writing at its finest: part biography, part social history, part dramatic confrontation, his description is wonderfully rich in detail and characterisation. You hear the characters talking and share their thinking.



Eddie 'hooked' school to caddy for Francis in the play-off. The U.S. Golf Association secretary "would like to apologise to our visitors in a slight way, for any enthusiastic cheering." The final gallery was 10,000 people.

One of Eddie's caddie mates, Eugenio Saraceni, (who later changed his name to Gene Sarazen) changed Francis' grip.

Francis got a letter from the Mayor of Boston, John F Kennedy, Jack's grandfather.

*Francis Ouimet's showdown with Harry Vardon was a watershed moment that changed the face of golf. At last this remarkable story has been given the epic treatment it deserves.*

Butch Harmon

And finally, .... "He breathed life into an obscure Sottish pastime and created a legacy of purpose, humility, courtesy, self-reliance and pride in genuine achievement that has grown to proportions none of us could have imagined."

We owe Francis an enduring debt of gratitude. Wow!



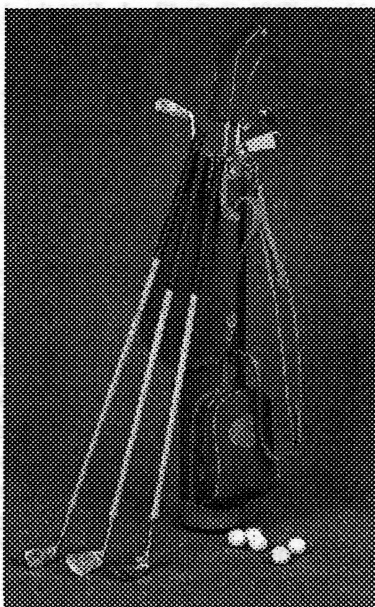
# Replica Clubs—Dilemma or Delight?

Replica clubs has been on the Executive's agenda for some time and at last some action has resulted. Replicas provide a new club in the old style – it will never age (if just displayed) and it shows what the clubs were really like. On the other hand, if you want to display your old clubs and not play with them – protect them from damage or further damage – then replicas are a good option. You still have the feel of an old club but in a more reliable version. The clubs in a set are matched, as old clubs were usually not. The shaft and head have not become brittle with 80 years of exposure to the air.

The question that comes up immediately (see the Captain's Corner) is whether new hickory clubs play better than old hickory clubs. But the same question arises between one old hickory club you love and another old club that's not better than an old wooden stick! Or are Callaways better than Ping or the latest Callaway better than the version before? All good questions, but what are the answers?

If you want to complicate the issue, consider what happens when you snap

the shaft of an old hickory club. You can replace the old shaft with a new one, and the benefit of that new strong shaft, perhaps not whittled down to high flexibility, might be a great advantage. Does that make the club unusable in competition? Should we consider the grip material? Should gloves be banned and jackets and ties become compulsory?



Take the GCSA Championship held at Auburn on October 16. The defending scratch and handicap champions won in 2002 with old clubs. Both played this year with some replica clubs and finished down the order. The scratch winner this year played with old clubs. He played with same old clubs last year and lost. Is it the clubs or the player?

The annual Challenge match between the Golf Society of Australia (based in Melbourne) and the Golf Collectors Society of Australia is subject to specific rules of play. One of the rules specifies that clubs must be made before 1940. One assumes that

this means that pre-1940 clubs should not be modified after 1940, with new shafts relacing old, weight added to heads and so on.

Golf, golf rules and golfers have always placed a premium on the fairness of play, along with the rub of the green, the luck of a good or bad bounce or lie. The R&A has allowed and banned clubs and balls on this basis. This is the issue we face: What is *fair play* when it comes to replica clubs? This constantly debated question in modern golf is our question too.

The Golf Collectors Society has set up an arrangement with Heritage Golf of St. Andrews to market the Heritage range of replica clubs throughout Australia. At this stage, we don't know the extent and viability of that market. To set up the arrangement, Heritage Golf has provided two sets of clubs, right and left handed, for demonstration purposes. Two GCSA members funded the supply of these clubs.

GCSA's Executive welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions on any aspect of collecting and using replica hickory shafted clubs.

## Golf Society and Golf Collectors Society Annual Challenge

For the *Al Howard Trophy*

Royal Sydney Golf Club on Thursday 13 November 2003

NAME: ..... DINNER PARTNER: .....

CLUB: .....

Handicap: .....

Golf: Assemble at 2 pm for 11 Holes at 3 pm

\$40

Dinner - 3-course meal and beverages – per person

\$75

TOTAL for Golf and Dinner

\$115

Telephone your booking to Tom Moore 9871 2798 by Wednesday 5 November and send entry form and cheque to Tom Moore, 52 Becky Ave, North Rocks 2151, by Monday 10 November 2003.

# Australian Historic Golf Trust & Museum

The Trust *holds* the collection that is displayed in the Museum, while the Collectors Society display and manage the collection.

The next meeting of the Trust on October 30 is an important one—Max Garske, CEO of PGA Australia and David Allen, Executive Director of the NSW Golf Association are expected to be appointed as Trustees. This will enable the amateur and professional golfing bodies to contribute to the conservation of golf's history in Australia. At the same time, the Trust can develop its

operations in a way that has the support of the golfing bodies.

The present Trustees are Geoff Scott, Tom Moore, Ken Shepherd (Vic) and Malcolm Purcell (WA). Geoff is the Professional at Massey Park and was recently elected as President of the Australian PGA for a three-year term. Geoff is a keen collector and extremely interested in the history of golf and the preservation of the collection displayed at the Museum. Wayne Grady, as President of the Australian PGA Tour, also supports

the respect and conservation of golf's history. So the opportunities for the Trust are developing strongly.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

GCSA member from Victoria, Alan Heil has presented the Museum with a scrapbook detailing the playing record of Bert Ferguson. Bert and his brother Des were leading professionals in Victoria, prior to WWII. Bert's record was indeed impressive. He won many events in Victoria including the 1933 Vic P.G.A.

## Golf Collecting & Collectibles

Where is the market for old hickories and other memorabilia? Wherever you can find it and he who searches most finds most, ask Owen Denmeade.

There are one or two sports memorabilia shops, perhaps in the South Dowling Street Antique Market that have occasional good stuff. There are the auctions, like Cromwells in Pyrmont. The antique stores around Windsor and the Southern Highlands always seem to have a few clubs but they are all expensive regardless of the quality. Some are over-priced and some might be under-priced. Garage sales might throw up a collectable club but usually do not. There are pockets of riches here and there but usually hidden and known only to a few.

GCSA of course, is the focal point for

buying and selling. Ron Hyland has an extensive collection that any buyer should consider as a good source of good stuff. Tom Moore is an active buyer and seller and if you need advice as well, or a special club for a special purpose, Tom can't be beaten for quality. Tom knows more (no pun!) about what's going on because he is the person at the focal point of golf collecting in Australia. People ask him and tell him, more than the rest of us put together. Des Froneman has very special interests in golf and he collects actively to develop them. Des and Barry Leithhead have restored some of the Brian Baynham collection brought from Scotland, now offered in sets of five 'matched' clubs in a bag or on a rack, with odd clubs as well. The GCSA itself is the agent for the remainder of the Brian Baynham collection – Tom

Moore handles that.

But what we all value is a surprise and a bargain, and these two come together less often than previously. You find a club in the corner of a bits and pieces shop and it has a special brand or one you have never seen before. Its condition belies its value and your hands tremble while you fumble for the few dollars. You try to keep a straight face when you do the deal. You get it into the daylight and you can't believe your luck. Except there's no such thing as luck, in golf or in golf collecting. You make your own luck, like Gary Player who said, "Some people say that I'm lucky in golf. And you know what, the harder I practice, the luckier I get."

Ask Owen Denmeade about being a lucky collector.

## GCSA Renewal or Membership for a golfing friend

Use this form to renew your 2003-4 Subscription (\$30 now **OVERDUE** if not paid) or take out a subscription (a Christmas present?) for a friend. Add \$20 for the Joining Fee.

NAME: ..... CLUB: ..... H'CAP: .....

ADDRESS: ..... PHONE: ..... EMAIL: .....

..... Post Code:

Send Form and cheque to: GCSA, PO Box 23, Glenorie NSW 2157