

the Brassie

Brassie n.

'In place of the many spoons of a nearly bygone age, there has come into use a club named 'the brassie'. This weapon, lofted somewhat more than a driver and less than a spoon, is shod or soled, with brass, whereby its wielder is enabled to play off roads and hard lies without injury to the head.'

In Horace Hutchinson's Badminton Golf (1890).

Captain's Corner

The Golf Collectors Society of Australia

Introduction to Hickory

The **Hickory Shaft Invitation** at the Auburn Links has been rescheduled from May to Thursday 7 July. This event is an opportunity to all GCSA members to invite at least one friend to enjoy the delight and challenge of the old game. Period clothes are encouraged, but Harry Vardon's preference for braces over a belt is optional. To add interest for the invited friends, bring along one or two items from your collection e.g. clubs, china, etc. to discuss after the game.

The event will be a two-person Am-brose over 18 holes – the cost is \$20 which includes green fees, club hire, snacks and trophies.

The **Interstate Challenge** between The Golf Collectors Society based in NSW and the Golf Society of Australia based in Victoria will be played at Woodlands in Melbourne this year on Tuesday 11 October. There is a possibility we will be playing at the new Sandhurst course – the first Captain of the club, Matt van Rensburg recently played hickory golf at the Musselburgh course near Edinburgh and is hooked!

Another date to note in your diary is Thursday 10 November, for the **Australian Hickory Shaft Championship**, provisionally arranged for the Auburn links.

Peter Read Captain

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Special points of interest:

*In this issue we focus on the special interests and activities of **Golf Club Historians—the GCHs.***

We cover advanced practices, thoughts from an experienced historian, the needs of a newly appointed GCH.

The NSWGA is keen for clubs to respect and conserve their histories and looks to GCSA to support the club historians.

GCH Archiving Seminar

Forty people enjoyed the warm hospitality of Elanora Country Club, Jo Birkel's advice and Mary Barry's attention to detail. A special feature was the presence of four people who were the *living history* for the seminar: Edmund Playfair, son of 'The Brigadier' who founded Elanora, Jim Boots who was a caddy there in 1930, Al Howard who played at the Club in Australia's first Pro-Am in 1931 and member Bill Lewis, a golfer since 1928. Three of the four made brief presentations.

Archiving is one of the processes in compiling a golf club history, along with research, referencing, oral histo-

ry and writing. Old and precious records need to be located and conserved to be available for future reference, and so do today's records with the potential to be valuable in the future.

Jeannie Walker explained Women's Golf NSW's project to classify and reference their extensive records of 102 years of history. Within a year these archives will be available to golf club historians as a useful reference facility. Jeannie commented: *"If I had known when I was writing the history of the Manly Club, the valuable material and photographs Women's Golf had in their files my job would have been a lot easier."*

Erwin Huber

Coordinator, Golf Club Historian's Group

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Archiving for Golf Club Historians

Joanne Birkl of The History Company was the main speaker at the Archiving seminar and described how most golf clubs have a cupboard that contains 'old stuff'. These precious remnants must be preserved in order to know of the club's history now and in the future.

How can we create an archive that makes the best use of old information? To do so, needs more than a better cupboard – it needs Club Committee support, a budget, one or more people who care and a secure, dry separate work area and store. Golf Club Historians may already be collectors, researchers, historians, librarians and writers; now could be the time to think about creating an archive for future generations.

Archives are about **context** and **continuity** and are forever. Create two policies: one that gives **authority** to the position and task of archives, the other to describe what will go in the **collection** and why. Write a 3-5 year plan, not elaborate but stating what the club wants to achieve and how the archive might be used. List all the jobs to be

done and give ownership to an interested person. Decide on a manual or computer system. These processes create the continuity that lasts beyond the first archivist to others who take on the role.

Context describes the reference points for an item in the archives: What subject does it cover? Who is relevant to the item? When did it occur? Described in these terms, a document or photo starts to take on a useful meaning for research and history.

Many of you will not wish to take on such advanced practices and a strict regime as this entails. But you should take steps that can easily be followed by those who come after you and ensure that your collection is documented and well stored.

If you are facing the archiving challenge for the first time, you will likely want some help. A number of Sydney Clubs have made enthusiastic starts and have expressed their willingness to help other Clubs make a start. Erwin Huber and the Golf Club Historians Group will also help you find the right source and type of assistance.



The Elanora Archiving Practices seminar
Lunch at the Long Table

Thoughts on compiling a golf club history

Over the past decade or two many golf clubs have produced their histories. Most of these have been prompted by an anniversary of some kind – 50th, 75th or even centenary. The case at Pymble is different.

The Club celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1999. An elegant booklet was produced covering the Club's history with many photographs, several lists and a very brief text, decade by decade. At the conclusion of the festivities, the Anniversary Committee found itself with documents, photographs and other materials it had no idea what to do with.

I agreed, reluctantly at first, to try to put together the Club's archives from all this and other materials scattered about the place. A task which I thought might take two years has stretched into five and is still not complete. As I discovered gaps in the Club's records and unanswered questions in its history, I found myself undertaking some serious historical research. I have

also provided a 'From the Archives' column in each Club newsletter with items of a kind that would not fit comfortably into a formal history.

By mid-2004 it had occurred to me that I had a better knowledge of the Club's history than anyone before me and that it would be a great pity if someone else had to do all the work again to bring out a centenary history in 2025. A History did not need to be tied to some great event. I accepted an invitation to write the history of Pymble GC and started work on it in late 2004.

Meanwhile conversations with other Golf Club historians made me realise how lucky Pymble was to have all its minute books intact and to provide at least a skeleton of a history. It would be awful to lose them, as some clubs have done. If they cannot be preserved in fire-proof safes, they should at least be copied. But minute books are difficult to photocopy and contain so much unimportant detail (accounts, membership applications, etc.), so I decided to summarise all the books, which gives the Club a computer record and me convenient access to the contents in A4 format.

Women's Golf NSW a major Donor to the Museum

The last meeting of the Australian Historic Golf Trust was held at WG-NSW's office at Homebush – CEO Frances Crampton AO is a Trustee. The Trust can be regarded as the 'Board of Directors' of the Museum. At the meeting, Frances and Tom Moore signed an agreement in which WG-NSW undertook to provide \$5,000 to support the Museum, matching the earlier commitment by NSWGA. It is possible, depending on the success and prospects of the Museum Development Program, that both grants will be repeated in 2006.

To anyone setting out to write a history, I recommend this as a useful exercise. I had already, when commencing my archival work, indexed all the books, which has enabled me to reach any topic quickly. Composing the summaries, I have now found, calls for the most careful reading to identify the important points and précis the information. In the process, themes emerge more clearly – for example, the development of the course, property acquisition, stages in development of the clubhouse, finance, irrigation, membership policies, recipro-



Old photographs, hickory shaft clubs of James Herd Scott, Elanora's first professional & Elanora's fine collection of scrap books

Two types of golf club Two types of historian

The Golf Collectors Society of Australia was formed to encourage collectors to share experiences about golf's history—how it was played and the implements used. Recently GCSA has encourage another group of golf historians to compare experiences about *where* golf was played and golfers socialised. Enter GCSA's Golf Club Historians Group!

Many collectors of playing clubs and other memorabilia are also interested in the history of their golf club so there is a nice cross-over in GCSA's membership. More than that, we see how the doubled perspective on golf's rich heritage enables all of us to have more to talk about and think about in enjoying this great game.

To the historians, I urge you to keep the implements of play in mind, particularly when a part of the club's collection of memorabilia. GCSA has a policy of returning playing clubs and trophies with significant links to a golf club, to that club. The Moore Park trophy won by Harry Sinclair in 1923-4 was one example and there are others where GCSA and its collecting members have donated playing clubs with the name of the club and its professional, back to the club. Owen Denmeade donated the James Herd Scott clubs (pic on page 3) to Elanora Country Club.

To the collectors, my message is to make sure your club has an historian and that the Committee provides active support. GCSA through the GCH group will provide golf club historians with encouragement, information and a group of colleagues to help them. Erwin Huber's letter to Isabelle Hooper of the Bowraville Sports and Recreation club is an example.

Yours in golf

Tom Moore

GCSA President

An Historian in every Golf Club

This year, the Golf Club Historians Group plans to work with the NSWGA and WGNSW to encourage all golf clubs to appoint a club historian. So Erwin Huber took a request from Isabelle Hooper, historian at the Bowraville Sports & Recreational Club – a council-funded composite sports venue – very seriously. Golf has been played in Bowraville since about 1924. Here is Erwin's letter:

14 February 2005

Isabelle Hooper
Bowraville Sports & Recreation Club
BOWRAVILLE

Dear Isabelle,

*As the recently appointed convenor of the GCH group, I am responding to your letter to GCSA. It is sadly obvious from your remarks that you have struck a number of dead ends in your research of the Bowraville GC. Rest assured there is nothing unusual in this, because that is the fate of a researcher. You might dig for ten days and find nothing but then on day 11 you find **gold!** It's happened to me many times when researching for my book on the Moore Park GC, "For the Common Good". It can be quite an emotional roller-coaster, but persistence is an invaluable attribute when doing research.*

The GCH Group is committed to providing as much assistance as possible to people such as you. Let me suggest potential information sources:

- *Local Council records for land title, transfers, etc.;*
- *Local Historical Society and groups;*
- *The relevant District Golf Association (Northern Rivers?);*
- *Records and archives from neighbouring golf clubs; Macksville, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey;*
- *Evidence of inter-club matches – either at your club or at any other club in the district – this usually throws up pre-eminent players in a club, another lead to champions;*
- *The sports pages of your local newspaper covering the period in question – this can be quite tedious and you might have to 'rope' in some friends to help;*
- *NSWGA records – they have copies of the "Golf in NSW" magazine in their archives, starting in 1925. District Association news items are a regular feature;*
- *Place an advert in your local newspaper asking for help with your specific research – you might be surprised what you dredge up.*

This is only a start, but I think it will help you along the road to discovery. A word of warning: Whenever you have to rely on verbal evidence say from interviews, make sure this information is corroborated by a second source. I have done some interviews with the oldest members in our club and you would be amazed how their accounts varied – proof that memory needs to be regarded as a variable factor.

I hope the above helps. If you need further assistance, advice, suggestions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Erwin Huber
GCH Convenor

News from the Golfers' Museum

The Museum Layout

The layout, after leaving the old pro shop passes by several displays, 1st being clubs by the old masters showing their proud cleek marks. The history of the golf ball is next, from the featheries to modern balls. On then to the honour board of Australian open champions together with several of the clubs they used. The green keeper's equipment is at the far end of the course before the turn to home. Next is the beginning of the Hall of Fame featuring the great "von", Norman von Nida, who single handedly put Australia on the world golfing map in the years following the WWII. A book

case containing the 'Ron Elliott' collection of rare books brings us back to the pro shop.

Heading into the 2nd nine and display cases are full of golfing items from tees, balls, head covers and training devices. Other displays contain trophies proudly won by golfers including the ball used by Frank (Happy) Eyre who won our open in 1930. We take a dog leg then to the case showing the stages of manufacturing golf clubs from the 1930's to the present day. Photos and prints adorn the wall showing St Andrews in the 1700's. Hole 17 shows our "Gem"; a replica of the legendary Bobby Locke's putter.

Bobby was voted the best putter over the last 100 years. It was presented to us by Des Froneman, prominent member of the GCSA who holds the original. We finish our round by viewing the tool box of Dan Soutar, who came to Australia in 1905 as a carpenter and soon found himself winning golf tournaments. He turned pro and joined Carnegie Clark in a club making venture and together they formed the Australian PGA in 1911. This tool box represents the earliest surviving relic of the PGA in Australia.

Tom Moore

Museum Director

Support like this deserves **your** support, to help the Museum Development Taskforce to make a difference at Granville. Call Tom Moore (9871 2798) on how you might be able to help on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays and any Sunday.

To cap off a good Trust meeting, Frances presented Tom with a photograph of the winners at the first Ladies Championship held at Royal Lythum & St Annes in 1893. It is now hanging in the Museum alongside the honour roll of Australian women Champions.

Golf Association treasures now at the Golfers' Museum

The NSWGA has provided two significant 'treasures' to the Museum, adding considerably to the substance of the collection. An old box bulging with golf clubs, the dream of every collector, was deep in the store-room at the Association's office, and David Allen considered the Museum was a better place for them. Tom Moore took them and a count then careful assessment revealed 67 hickory shaft clubs including a rare water iron and a number of scarred head woods. Other clubs had belonged to famous golfers and there is a special display space for them at Granville.

The second treasure was also a bundled item – two book cases full of old books on golf and books on old golf! What a wonderful boost for the Reference Centre we are developing for golf club historians. We already have a useful collection of books and magazines and this addition material will provide the incentive to get the reference Library established. One more piece of good news is that we have interested a GCH who is an authority on golf books to lend a hand. If you have an interest in golf books and have some time, then Thursday 21 July will be a 'book working bee' day at the Museum.

Tony Rafty, GCSA's quiet cartoonist

BARRY ROSS recently wrote an excellent column on GCSA's 'resident' cartoonist, Tony Rafty:

Not all our national treasures are found in museums and art galleries. A 90 year-old wonder can be found living comfortably in the south-eastern suburbs of Sydney.

Internationally acclaimed caricaturist Tony Rafty still draws wherever he can and always finds time to play his beloved golf. As a young man he had a scratch handicap and played in the 1935 Australian Open and the 1946 Australian Amateur Championship using four hickory shaft clubs.

From the outside his home of forty years looks like a typical Australian bungalow but it's certainly not typical inside. As soon as you step inside you are overwhelmed by thousands of cartoons hanging on walls, lying in trays or on several work areas waiting for finishing touches.

Famous names from all walks of life are featured and practically everyone of them is autographed by the subject. American Presidents, seven Australian Prime Ministers, England's Harold McMillan and India's Indira Ghandi are there.

Most if not all of the world's best golfers of the past 50 years or so and countless other sports people are featured. Carnegie Clark is drawn as Tony remembered him back in 1933 at the Royal Sydney Golf Club.

Tony had a good chance to observe the famous pro at close quarters, as he started to caddy at the Club in 1924 at the age of nine. A few years later in 1932 he was caddying for Billy Albert of the Bulletin newspaper. Also in the group was Arthur Mailey, Test cricketer and a well-known cartoonist, and Jimmy Barnes, creator of the Ginger Meggs comic strip.

"I knew I could draw a little," Tony laughed, "and I couldn't let such an op-



portunity go to waste. I must have driven Billy mad telling him what a good cartoonist I was and so he said 'bring some of your work down and I will introduce you to the editor.'

So began a career as an artist in newspapers with a strong focus on sport. In the late 1930s, Tony was employed by The Sun newspaper as a creative artist. This saw him drawing cartoons and caricatures as well as having a regular segment, 'Tony Rafty's Sports Views'. The new job allowed him to get close to his subjects. One such moment led to one of the greatest thrills of his life.

American wrestler George Zaharias was in Sydney on a working holiday with his bride Babe Didrickson, regarded as the world's best female athlete. "I went to the old Sydney Stadium to see him beat Chief Sitting Bull and afterwards I was working on my drawings in the change room. Both George and I have some Greek heritage so I said a few words to him in Greek. He asked me to recommend a Greek restaurant and I told him my mother was one of the best cooks in the country and would the two of them like to come home for dinner. Two days later they arrived and we had a great meal and conversation."

During WWII Tony saw overseas service as a war artist in New Guinea and Borneo before malaria caused him some health problems that led to his discharge. But after being home for a month, The Sun newspaper sent him back to the front as both a war artist and correspondent.

For the past 10 years, Tony has been president of the Australian War Correspondents Society and proudly marches each Anzac Day. In 1990 his many achievements were recognised with the awarding of an OAM.

If you were at the wind swept Australian Hickory Championship at The Coast GC last October, there was an old blokes table. Dan Cullen, Bill McWilliam and Tony Rafty. GCSA members tend to know Dan and Bill well and hopefully this story helps us to know Tony much better.

As Greg Norman said: "Tony will always be recognised as one of the all-time great artists. To be great you have to know your subject. Tony has a true understanding of sporting professionals and this is reflected in his work."

And so say all of us!
Three cheers for our quiet cartoonist!

From the Book Shelf

Golf Antiques & other treasures

John M & Morton W Olman

For the last 100 years, club makers have toyed with the weighting of putters. Some place extra weight behind the centre of the putter blade, while others concentrate on weight around the perimeter.

John Greenan, GCSA's resident club maker comments: "More than any other club, the putter needs to fit the personal swing characteristics of the individual golfer. So there are more varieties of putters than any other club."



Bernard Darwin on the Triumvirate in *The Golfers Companion* Ed. Peter Lawless

Harry Vardon raised the conception of how golf could be played, and he raised the standard of his contemporaries' play through sheer hard necessity; they had to do things of which they had not believed themselves capable, in order to hang on to his skirts. (*Shades of Tiger Woods!* Ed) JH Taylor was first to stop a mashie close to the pin with backspin and had shown what could be done in the way of hitting wooden club shots right up to the pin: Vardon was every bit as accurate and longer into the bargain; he could get home in two shots when almost all the others were needing two full shots and a pitch. Taylor was helped by the coming of the Haskell ball which gave him more length, but James Braid never lacked length; he seemed the ideal player to hammer the comparatively irresponsive 'guttie'. Although an uncertain short putter, he holed in his best years more long and middle-length putts than any of his rivals. No player of his day wore so calm a mask as Braid and this complete tranquillity made a notable contrast to the 'divine fury' of his hitting, lashing at the ball as if he would kill it.

Great Golf Matches from *The Golfers Handbook* (1960 edition)

It would be impossible to give a detailed list of all the great matches decided over the time that Allan Robertson, the Morrisises, the Dunns and the Parks were at their zenith, but the following give an indication of the wagers and results:

In 1843: Allan Robertson, St Andrews beat Willie Dunn, Musselburgh in a match of 20 rounds, 360 holes, by 2 rounds and 1 to play.

In 1849: Allan Robertson and Tom Morris of St Andrews beat the brothers Dunn of Musselburgh over Musselburg, St Andrews and North Berwick for a stake of £400. The Dunns won at Musselburgh by 13 and 12; but Robertson and Morris got even at St Andrews; The match therefore reverted to North Berwick. The Dunns were 4 up with 8 to play. Odds of 20 to 1 were laid on the Dunns at this point; but Robertson and Morris won by 1 hole

In 1852: Tom Morris and Allan Robertson defeated Sir Robert Hay and Willie Dunn by 6 and 5 over two rounds at St Andrews, staking £100 to £50 on the issue.

In 1853: Willie park Sen, twice defeated Tom Morris Sen in £100 matches. Allan Robertson was repeatedly challenged by Park but refused to play.

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*Respecting, conserving and
celebrating the history of golf
in Australia*

**Invite a golfing friend in becoming
a Golf Collector**

*The Golf Collectors Society of Australia is the ideal forum
for people:*

- *Interested in golf's rich and relevant history;*
- *Collecting old clubs and other memorabilia;*
- *Wanting to play with hickory shafted clubs;*
- *Researching and writing the history of their club.*

*These like-minded people with varying interests across the
spectrum of golf's history find much in common. The help-
fulness of members is a feature of GCSA and new members
extend their knowledge and enjoyment of golf.*

Playing with hickories is good for your game with mod-
ern clubs. With hickories, you go back to basics - an easy
swing, head still, feeling the shaft and the club in your
hands. These are good lessons to relearn.

GCSA's Golf Club Historians have formed a Special
Interest Group that assists and develops your role to
research, record, archive and write the history of your club.
Meet the other historians and share experiences,
approaches and achievements through the SIG.

Join GCSA and extend your enjoyment of golf!

Join GCSA today!! Subscription to June 2006

**Good news!! The annual subscriptions for the year ending 30 June 2006
remains at \$30 plus \$20 joining fee.**

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Forward your cheque for \$50 (\$20 joining, \$30 Subscription) to:
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