

**News from the Golf Club Historians Group - Erwin Huber reports:**

## AMALGAMATION

The amalgamation of the Golf Collectors Society of Australia and the Australian Golf History Trust is progressing. Steps have been or are being taken for the Trust to assign the Museum's Collection to GCSA; the Trustees, some representing the golfing bodies, will be appointed to GCSA's Committee of Management; and subject to a General meeting of its members, GCSA will change its name, most likely to the 'Australian Golf Heritage Society' and adopt new Objects, to align with a broader perspective on golf history. The Golf Club Historians Group will be one of the specialist sub-committees that provide activities and services for members.

## HISTORY BOOKLET

In conjunction with John Pearson, the editor of the British Golf Collectors' magazine *Through the Green*, we have been working on producing a booklet titled, *Writing a Golf Club History*. This will be a guide for those embarking on that most difficult task and it features valuable input from a number of experienced writers/editors/publishers. The booklet will be launched at the seminar in November (see below) and will be FREE to clubs planning a history book.

## GCH ACTIVITIES FOR 2007

Reports from the Historians who spoke at the Pennant Hills seminar in May are attached in the following pages. If you have any questions or comments about document preservation practices, the subject of Kay Soderlund's presentation, please let me know and I will try to assist you.

The next activity for the Golf Club Historians is scheduled for Monday 26 November at Manly Golf Club when Jim Webster will talk on his book *The PGA in Australia - THE FIRST 100 YEARS*. As well, the new booklet, *Writing a Golf Club History*, produced jointly by the Australian and British Golf Collectors Societies, will be launched at the seminar. A provisional notice is shown on page 8.

Unfortunately, Neil Crafter, the well known Golf Course architect is not available in December and that proposed activity has been cancelled.

## THE GOLF LIBRARY

The Golf Museum's Library has been catalogued and over 700 volumes are now stored in subject categories in steel cabinets. About 200 volumes have been identified as duplicates and subject to approval of the Book Acquisition Policy, will be offered for sale to GCSA members. The plan is to have a book sale at the November seminar featuring Jim Webster and details will be provided with the announcement of that activity.

## Preserving and Storing Photographs & Documents

The Seminar at Pennant Hills Golf Club on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007

**KAY SODERLUND was the Keynote Speaker** and those attending were provided with a copy of her PowerPoint presentation. A brief summary of her career:

Kay has worked as a professional conservator for over 25 years. She has worked at several of the major museums in Sydney, including the Australian Museum, Powerhouse Museum and the State Library of NSW, where she headed the project to preserve the journals of the First Fleet for the 1988 Bicentennial celebrations.

In 1997 Kay took on the role of Director of Museums Australia, collaborating with regional museums and galleries. Following a change of funding for the organization in 1999, she returned to the private sector as a museum management and conservation consultant and assisting community museums and historical societies.

A highlight in Kay's career is her authorship of '*Be Prepared: Guidelines for small museums for writing a Disaster Preparedness Plan*', which she wrote for the Heritage Collections Council. In 2004 Kay established Preservation Australia, a conservation consulting, training and archival supply business to provide a single point of contact for all preservation and conservation requirements, managed by a professional conservator.

If your club needs guidance on preservation practices, ask Preservation Australia if they can help.

\*\*\*\*\*

Four Historians spoke on activities at their club:

### *Avondale Golf Club, Pymble.*

Erwin has asked me to say a few things about the past and present efforts of our club to establish an archive or what is better described as a collection of historical material.

Prior to 1988 there was no collection at all other than the complete set of Committee minutes dating back to 1926. My friend Pam Marr and I were asked to write for the Kuring-gai council, some notes on "Avondale Golf Club and its Place in the Community" -this was to commemorate the bi-centennial celebrations. When we had completed this, and then presented a talk to the Kur-ing-gai Historical Society, the Club Committee became aware that quite a body of interesting facts had been collected and that it could be the basis for a book about the Club.

They asked us to do it, which we did, and five years later the book was published.

We had explored the State Archives, the State Library, the Lands and Titles Office and read extensively and by then we had collected quite an astonishing amount of letters, photographs, maps, plans, books, oral history and so on, which needed a home. In the below-ground basement of the Golf Club building were a few strange little storerooms some damp and some dry. We were first offered a nasty little room, which even had bags of silica gel

hanging around to soak up the moisture. By this time we knew that precious records needed to be kept in a dry, fire-safe, carpeted, dust free room of even temperature and low humidity. So we refused the offer and obtained another one which suited all these requirements but was really tiny. We had plan cabinets, filing cabinet, bookshelves, a table and two chairs and room for one person to stand and move around. This room is now behind a fire rated safety door, contains steel plan cabinets and a fireproof filing cabinet, which contains minute books and oral history tapes. In the past few years the Club has become totally cooperative and supportive of the Archives group (now with four workers), we have a new room with ample worktables, display cabinet, air conditioning, computer equipment and library collection.

We have benefited greatly from the advice and expertise of The History Company. We store our precious items in archival boxes; use 500 year paper for copying, and archival quality tissue in caring for old and awkward photographs. Our quite extensive newspaper collection has been copied and the copies put into an archivally safe display book, in chronological order so that cuttings may be examined while the delicate originals are filed safely away. Photographs of present day activities are all labelled and dated and kept in History Company Albums.

Although we are referred to in general as the Archives Group, it is rather a loose use of the expression. We like to think of what we do as being more in the line of collectors of historical material, which we hope to have available for future and present researchers, in an accessible and manageable manner.

We are very conscious of the value of oral history and have an on going program of interviewing members. When this started in about 1990, there were still a number of original Club members alive. Sadly they have since died but it is a reminder that it does not pay to put pay to put these things off.

We are asked to supply a column in the Club Newsletter every time it is published, and we remind members that the proper place for memorabilia is with us, in the collection. We are finding more hickory shafted golf sticks turning up in attics than we would have anticipated.

I think that the community in general and also the managers of clubs and institutions have in recent years become far more aware of the interest in historical origins and I think that all of us here present have the right to feel pleased to be doing what we can to help, and grateful to the Golf Collectors Society for the interest they have shown in encouraging the collection of material and the writing of club histories.

*Jill McCreery*

## Concord Golf Club

Initially, the Sydney Golf Club played on the Concord course from 1893 and it wasn't until July 1899 that the then RSGC decided to vacate the premises and a nucleus of Concord and Strathfield members formed the Concord Golf Club.

Back in the 1970's I discovered under the club house at Concord a lot of old records and I made a mental note to deal with them later.

And so it was in February 1994, with our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary coming up on July 10, 1999, that we formed a special committee to take on the job of publishing our history and two of us were appointed as the official working group.

We appointed a publisher who estimated that it would cost, including a reputable author, about \$100,000 to publish and print 1500 hardcover A4 books of 100,000 words with photos. One author offered to write the book for nothing but receive membership of the club for five years. The author was paid 20% down with three progressive payments of 20% and the final 20% on completion. The printing and publishing charges were made progressively towards the end.

It was then that we remembered the old archives under the clubhouse. We contacted Dr Peter Orlovich, a Senior Lecturer, (Archives) at the University of NSW and along with the author, Phil Derriman, we recovered some 24 archive boxes of history in very poor condition. Dr Orlovich encouraged two of his students to spend some weeks sorting and summarising them in partial fulfilment of the requirements for their award of the Master of Information UNSW. Unfortunately, only 50% of the material in the boxes was recoverable. Dr Orlovich and a student had made a comprehensive study of the State Library files including the "Referee" 1890 – 1930 and other golf magazines. We provided him with a list of some 50 older members with addresses and phone numbers and from all reports they were used more than once.

By February 1996 the author had 15,000 words in his computer covering club minutes from 1938 to 1980 and he wished to interview older members of the club. He already had the benefit of our earlier history which was written to cover the period 1899 to 1939. Our Associates helped in summarising their Minutes. Then we collected all of the appropriate photos and had a long session with the publisher and author deciding which would go where.

As we had decided to send a copy to each member with an invoice for \$65, we thought it imperative to print each of our current member's names at the back of the book. [It was interesting to note that we only received a small quantity back] Two other redeeming features were the preparation of an INDEX of every name mentioned in the text and the laborious task of preparing all names of the Officers of the club followed by all of the Trophy Winners.

We decided on a print run 1500 with 100 more leather bound and numbered, at a special price of \$130. Consideration was then given to whom we would send copies such as reciprocal clubs, Mitchell and local libraries and other interested parties. We considered obtaining a sponsor but they wanted exclusive rights for their product for up to five years.

The finished books were delivered to the warehouse of a club member and half a dozen of us packed and sealed books in a suitable mailing folder, address labelled and prepared the 750 gm package – Australia Post collected them. An independent mailing house quoted us \$10,400 for the packaging task, including postage.

The next consideration was for club functions for the year and for memorabilia to be sold to defray some of the costs such as key chains at \$10; bag tags at \$40; playing cards at \$20; poly ties at \$30 and silk ties at \$50. We purchased special wine labels for both red and white (a photo of the clubhouse on one and Dame Eadith Walker on the other) and we drew lots for the special tasting. We prepared a Social Calendar to include our Bowlers.

The book was finished on August 29, 1998, taking some three and a half years, and it was launched at a social function on January 30, 1999.

Finally, there were a great number of printing errors made by the printers after our careful screening and they agreed to print out a lengthy addendum and erratum.

*Tom Breadon*

## THE AUSTRALIAN Golf Club

This is the story of the discovery and return of the First Australian Open Golf Championship Trophy:

The inaugural Australian Open was played on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1904, under the auspices of the Australian Golf Union.

The Australian Golf Club hosted the event at its then Botany links, and Michael Scott, the outstanding amateur of the day, won with a score of 315.

In 2004 the National Open returned to The Australian at Kensington for its centenary staging. It was through the international coverage of the championship that a retired English couple, Donald and Hilary Bowser, recognised, for the first time, the full significance of the cup they had purchased in Guernsey (Channel Islands), where they lived for a time during the 1970s. Mrs. Bowser had spotted the attractively shaped piece, heavily tarnished, in a shop in the town. Upon cleaning the cup they were pleasantly surprised to discover, through the inscription, its origin.

What the Bowser's had not realised was that the cup they had been admiring at home for thirty years was the **first** Australian Open trophy. When that became apparent they decided that its importance should be recognized and, rather than put it on the open market, they considerately arranged, through a relative living in Sydney, to give The Australian Golf Club first option to purchase it. They wanted it returned to "its rightful home". As the inscription told them, it was presented by the host club:

**A.G.C.**  
**Open Championship of Australia**  
**1904**  
**Won by**  
**M. Scott**

A small group of members, which eventually became a syndicate of over sixty, made an acceptable offer, and the trophy was secured as part of Australian golfing history.

-----

The Hon. Michael Scott, the youngest son of the Earl of Eldon, lived in Australia in the first decade of the twentieth century. He won the Open for a second time in 1907 and won four National Amateur Championships in 1905, 1907, 1909 and 1910. Scott

was runner-up in the Amateur of 1904 and won six Victorian and two NSW Amateur Championships. He was made a Life Member of Royal Melbourne in 1911 and when he returned to Australia as captain of the first British team to visit our shores in 1934 he was granted Life Membership of The Australian. Scott also held membership at Victoria, Drouin and Warragul Golf Clubs and shared with John Lindsay the rare feat of holding simultaneous Club Championships at Victoria and Royal Melbourne.

On his return to England in 1910 his golfing successes continued. Scott was the leading amateur in The Open Championships of 1912 and 1922 and won the French Amateur in the same years. He finished second in the 1911 Irish Open and played in two Walker Cup matches, captaining the British team in 1934. In his first appearance in 1924 he defeated Jess Sweetser (US Amateur Champion 1922 and British Amateur Champion 1926) by 7/6 in singles, and in foursomes, he and his partner defeated W.C. Fownes (US Amateur Champion 1910) and R.T. (Bobby) Jones by one hole. Scott also represented England on six occasions.

His most famous achievement was to become, at age 55, the oldest winner of the British Amateur Championship in 1933, defeating T.A. Bourn at Hoylake by 4/3. In later life Scott retired to Jersey in the Channel Islands, where he continued to play golf until his death in 1959.

\*\*\*\*\*

For its first 26 years the Australian Open lacked a perpetual trophy. It was not until 1930 that the Governor General, Lord Stonehaven, presented a permanent cup for competition and, indeed, Australian golf had been unaware of the existence of the first champion's cup until its recent emergence. Today these two trophies are unique in linking the birth and life of our National Open, the third oldest in golf history, equal with the Canadian Open and preceded only by The Open Championship (1860) and the US Open Championship (1894), and regarded, for a time, as the "fifth Major". The Australian Open has had an outstanding honour roll of champions which include many of the greats of the game: Whitton, Sarazen, Ferrier, Pickworth, von Nida, Thomson, Locke, Crampton, Player, Nagle, Devlin, Nicklaus, Palmer, Graham, Norman, Watson, Calcavecchia and Elkington.

Following its remarkable recovery, a century after it was presented to Michael Scott, the first trophy has been exhibited at subsequent Australian Opens, in 2005 at Moonah Links and in 2006 at Royal Sydney. For a time it was also on display in the clubhouse at Royal Melbourne. This year it will again be on show at The Australian during the Open in December.

A replica of the cup was commissioned which is now in the custody of Golf Australia and, through them, the GSA and the GCSA, it is available for exhibition around the country at functions and tournaments. The original cup will eventually reside permanently, as Mrs. Bowser has suggested, in "its rightful home", the clubhouse of The Australian Golf Club in Sydney.

The FIRST OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP OF AUSTRALIA TROPHY is a unique item of memorabilia, irreplaceable and priceless.

*Peter Larkin*

## Progress of Pymble Golf Club History

I spoke at the seminar at Moore Park in November 2005 on the progress of my History of Pymble Golf Club and on the way in which I had set about it. I can now say that the work is complete. The main text was finished just before Christmas 2006 and it remained to add the appendices and write a preface. The appendices took a little while to do because I decided that it was the most appropriate time to try to ascertain the first names of all the Associates in my lists, as in the earlier years they went by their husbands' initials. For the most part their husbands were members, whose first names were often on record. I went to the Births, Deaths and Marriages at the local library and looked up the details of the men's marriages and was able to derive their brides' first names. In only three cases was I unsuccessful, where they must have been married overseas or where there were several men with the same initials.

I then spent another month or so sorting through photographs and selecting. I have now made my final choices, numbered and captioned the photos, typed up a flat list and put the numbers in the margins of the hard copy of the text to indicate where best they should be placed.

I had already read or at least skimmed through all the local golf club histories and noted how different writers had approached their task. Some seemed to follow a purely chronological approach, others separated their material into topics, e.g. course, clubhouse, staff, etc. I chose a middle path: separate chapters concentrate on single topics, which are linked by intervening chapters to provide a chronology, e.g. the development of the course is spread through three chapters at different points.

I have tried to show some originality by involving the reader in the history. For example, there had been no plan of the original course layout. This I had had to reconstruct from three disparate and contradictory sources. I have explained what these were and shown the reasoning behind my final determination. With both course and clubhouse works I have tried to show how the successive Boards arrived at their decisions and how they have responded to the inevitable setbacks. I have also used the first person a good deal, especially where I have put my own interpretation on events.

Initially, financial constraints led the current Board to defer publication of the book indefinitely, but I pointed out rather strongly that even if they had no contractual obligation to publish it at once, they were under a strong moral obligation to do so, as I had undertaken the task at the Board's request. The President has accepted this argument and we are now talking to publishers to see how we can publish the work at least cost without compromising in any way the quality of the book. However, it is unlikely that the book will be published until early next year (2008), when subscription income has been received. Each household will receive a copy with a small charge to their account; this may or may not be so itemised.

*Bob Ross*

The Golf Collectors Society of Australia  
Golf Club Historians' Group

***A special focus Golf History Books***

Keynote presentation by **Jim Webster** on his recent book  
***The PGA in Australia - THE FIRST 100 YEARS***

Monday 26 November, 2007  
Manly Golf Club, 38-40 Balgowlah Road, Manly

**PROGRAM:**

- 9.00 Golf Book Fair – Bargain prices on duplicates from the Golf Museum's Library
- 9.30 Registration and refreshments
- 10.00 Welcome from Erwin Huber, GCH Group Convenor;
- 10.15 Researching, planning and writing *The PGA in Australia - THE FIRST 100 YEARS* with **Jim Webster**
- 11.00 Q&A; *Plus* "Senior professionals remember ..."
- 11.30 Book Launch: *Writing a Golf Club History* with comments by Richard Hattersley (TBC); and his personal view on ***Harry Hattersley: The Life and Journey of an Australian Golfing Legend*** by Brendan Moloney
- 12.00 GC History Groups Update: What's happening around the traps?  
(Come prepared to speak for 5 -10 minutes on your club's History Group activities.)
- 12.30 Sandwich lunch
- 1.00 Book Fair continues
- 2.00 Conclusion

Golf history books are great to read – they inform us about events, themes, people and changes. More than this, golf history books provide a standard for what is yet to be written. Writing fills gaps in knowledge and recognition; celebrates achievements both quiet and bold. As well, GCHs share their news and views to develop ideas and foster our enthusiasm for the essential role we fulfil.

**The seminar fee is \$25 for GCSA members and \$30 for non-members**  
payable on the day

**RSVP by Wednesday 21 November 2007 by post, phone or email to  
Barry Leithhead GCH Secretary, PO Box 23, Glenorie NSW 2157 (02 9652 1430)**

[barry.leithhead@bigpond.com](mailto:barry.leithhead@bigpond.com)