

## The AGHS Annual General Meeting:

A well attended meeting on 29 September heard reports of the year's activities of Events, Museum, Historians and Publications, with an increase in members and a solid backing of funds. President Bruce Nairn was re-elected as was Secretary John Lock and Treasurer Malcolm McIntosh. The three members' representatives elected were Tom Moore, Peter Read and Tony Doggett – Captain Michael Sheret was not re-elected. Stuart Cox, President of the NSW Golf Association is their new delegate replacing Jim Glenday while Nicky Bethwaite (WGNSW) and Kyle Francis (PGA-A) were reappointed. Denis Brosnan of Golf Mart, who provides the Museum site on very generous terms, was elected an Honorary Life Member.

## The Historians Seminar on 22 September 2009

Pennant Hills GC hosted the seminar and it was most informative to hear about their history group's operations and inspect their archive rooms. It is a very impressive model for all golf clubs and relies on the efforts of club members Ron Harper, Ann Crisp and Greg Waterson.

**Bob Ross (Pymble)** explained the importance of Board support for a club's history group activities. The need for the Board's interest, to ensure effective communication with members, a place to work and keep the archives, and funding, is critical to success. If you would like Bob to meet your club's Board, contact the Historians group (below). The new members and prospective members at the seminar (Muswellbrook, Oberon, Cromer, Liverpool and Leonay) had a wonderful introduction to the three 'Cs' – **C**ollecting, **C**onserving and **C**ollating golf club history and witness the enthusiasm of the people who do it.

**Peter Read (Muirfield)** spoke about the 'Patron's dinner' they held for former club members, which was very successful in igniting interest in the club's history and renewing friendships. A subsequent dinner was just as successful.

**Jan Williams (The Oaks, Cessnock)** researched her club's trophies after being curious about an unknown donor of one contested each year. The research trail took Jan and her husband Des through all the trophies and well beyond, to three self-published books and a DVD about the club's history. Jan located fourteen of the women champions and suggested the club put on a morning tea – almost 200 people attended and the result was a huge success. The families of the women's champions who had passed on were interested too and provided lots of memorabilia.

**Royal Canberra** has already published histories for its 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries and in 1996 the associates (as they were known then) published a volume titled "Recollections of women's Golf 1926-1993". The Club has a well-established archive. The club's history group (Julia Hoffman, Ainslie Hudson) is now working towards the Club's centenary in 2026 and future activities will include the digitisation of the club records. They also plan to arrange social functions with long term and former members with a view to acquiring anecdotal information. At this stage the emphasis is on collecting and archiving material and current activities include:

- Interviewing the Club's Life Members and archiving the records of these interviews efficiently. The scope of this activity is now being broadened to include other members who are significant in the history of the Club
- Conducting a series of occasional themed displays with a view to creating member interest and from this more material may be forthcoming.

## The Golf Club Historian's Software Toolkit

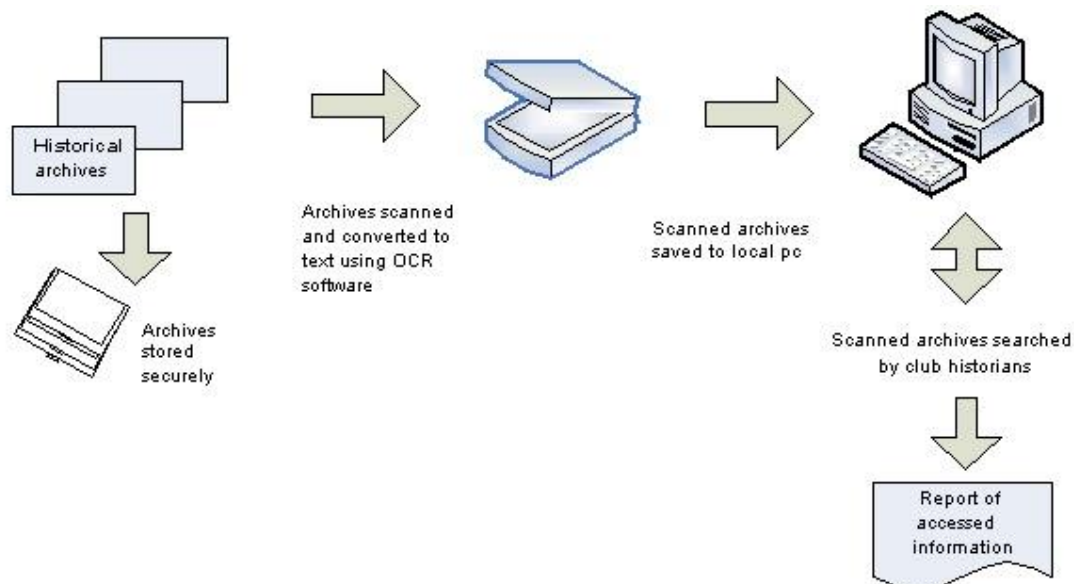
Computer systems play an important part in **collating** the information of a golf club's history and the important question is: What software works best for GCHs to make up a Toolkit?

**Ron Harper** traced the PHGC History group's progress from an early attempt to use *Archive Manager* database software but it was too complex. A simple database, *Image Albums* was bought from the Web (\$20) and Ann Crisp has found it very easy to use, entering information about events, dates, places and people in many hundreds of photographs. The database can be searched on any word, so Ann and Greg Waterson pool their knowledge to maximise the entries.

After getting the club's 80 years of Board Minutes together, Ron used the club's new photocopier to scan them and create a .pdf file. The 50 years of Newsletters posed a harder problem as the various fonts and images did not scan accurately. Ron read about a high quality scanning system *FineReader Professional* (\$300) and it does a superb job, also creating a .pdf file.

Having created digitised files, it is now quick and easy to search them for **any** information, using *Adobe Reader's* Edit/Find function. For example, when the Club President was planning a visit to a reciprocal club, he wanted information about previous competitions with them. Ron was able to search all the Minutes and Newsletters in half an hour and provide all the references.

Digitising documentary records is now the preferred method used by major libraries to provide access to the information in their Collections. Previously, the approach was to create an index and rely on the indexed key words to identify the information needed. Searching a .pdf file allows you to search on **any word or phrase** not just those key words that might be selected in an index. And the search is very quick and very easy. The combined process looks like this:

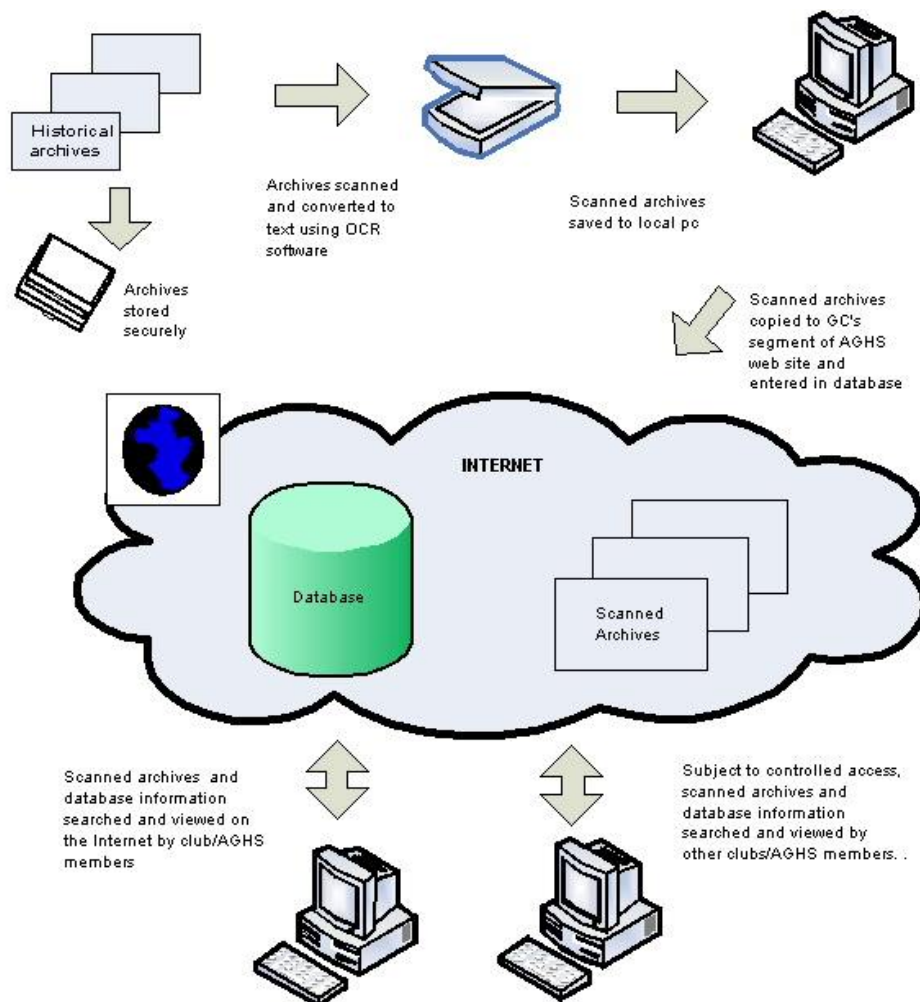


This process works very well at PHGC and is a model for others to follow. However, there is potential to go beyond this single club model to consider, for example, how information about AGHS's Museum, Library and Archives collections are stored and accessed. We can also consider how sharing information between AGHS members and their clubs might be possible.

## The Golf Club Historians Software Toolkit and the Web ...

We asked **Neil Maddock**, a software consultant (*Incheck Systems*) to comment on the PHGC model and suggest how other AGHS members/clubs might benefit from it. Neil has been involved with many multi-user database applications and he gave PHGC's approach the 'thumbs up' for affordable cost, simplicity and capability and suggested other clubs could adopt it.

However, as Neil explained at the seminar, to develop an application that would be common and consistent across AGHS members and for AGHS itself for its Collections, by far the best approach was to adopt a web-based model. If information from the AGHS Collections was to be made available to members at their home computer then a web-based model is the best (and only) option. In the same way, if AGHS members/clubs want to share information with each other, a web-based application is the way to do it, as represented by this diagram:



This concept has huge potential for AGHS in managing its Objects, Books and Archives collections and is also a benefit for AGHS members, individuals and clubs. How the concept will work and be affordable needs to be explained. **NOTE:** All Neil's work to date has been on a voluntary basis; a PowerPoint show of his presentation is available – contact details below.

## ***Writing and Publishing a Golf Club History***

AGHS members know about the booklet *Writing a Golf Club History* we co-produced with the British Golf Collectors Society – copies are still available, as is the .pdf version.

As well, and this time with the assistance of Longueville Media, we have now produced a companion booklet *Publishing a Golf Club History*. While publishing follows writing, it makes sense to consider some aspects of publishing before you get too far with the writing. A Tasmanian member wrote to the Historians, asking for advice on a draft of his club's history and we replied:

Hello Don,

The collection of writing and images on the history of your club, both the old and new courses, shows you are off to a very good start. You asked for some guidance on the writing – where to from here? Without looking at the *Writing* booklet for hints, my general comments are:

- Obviously the old course's history is brief and based mainly on newspaper reports, so the text is patchy except for some important details. You have some very good images including a plan of the course;
- The text for the new course is well written although twenty pages for twenty years of high activity needs a few headings or sections. You have plenty of excellent photos;
- To take the text to the next stage you need a structure for the story and my preferred approach is:
  - Starting from 1911 or it might be well before 1911, make brief notes of what happened in a year by year list, based on what you know now. There might be gaps;
  - Identify the key THEMES, like land, course, clubhouse, committee, staff including professional, competitions, members, etc. Where these occur in the list, colour-code a key word with a high-lighter pen;
  - Identify through the years where a logical break occurs so you segment the century into ERAS (or chapters). It might be when:
    - The club moves from old to new course;
    - An influential; or long-serving President, or Captain retires;
    - Depression, war or some local industrial or political event occurs;
    - Significant growth or decline in membership is a feature;
  - Make sure all your existing material is included somewhere in the list.
  - Number the photographs and insert the numbers where they fit in the list;
- By now you will start to see the gaps in the story that need to be filled by research and writing – send me the results or an early draft if you want to, and I'll comment on it.

There was more to this letter than we have space to include. If you have the responsibility to research, write and publish your club's history, the Collecting, Conserving and Collating experiences of Pennant Hills GC and the *Writing and Publishing* booklets will help you.

*Enjoy the journey!*

**REMINDER:** The AGHS Hickory championship is on Tuesday 10 November, at Georges River GC – contact Jim Glenday on 9543 1979.