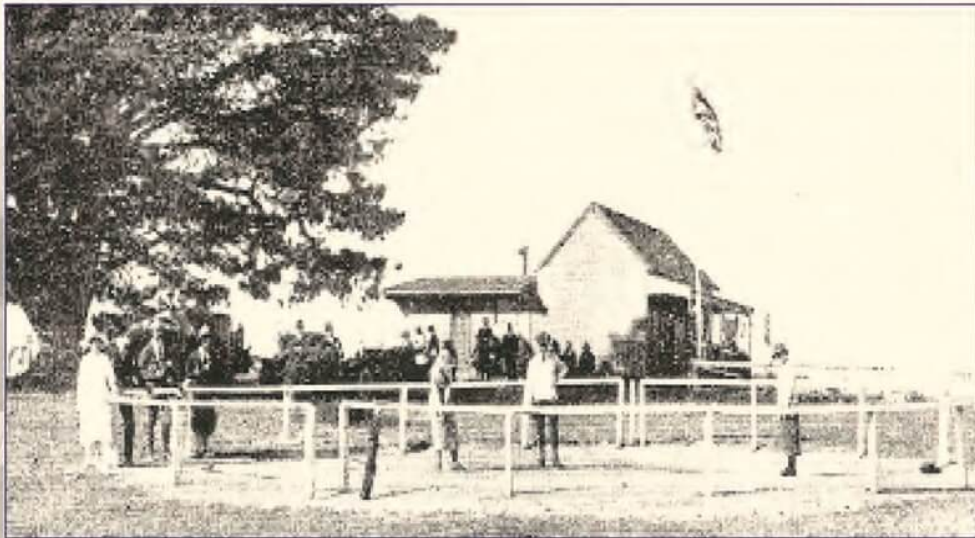


FROM SMALL ACORNS

100 YEAR HISTORY OF THE MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB

1919 - 2019





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INTRODUCTION

From small acorns, great oak trees grow, so says the proverb and from an "acorn" planted 100 years ago has grown a sturdy, still-growing "oak tree," the Midlands Golf Club.

This proverb was used by Edgar "Keg" Dunbar to begin the story of Midlands in the Golden Jubilee booklet dated April 1969. Much of that early story is reproduced here, as well as being added to by articles and commentary from the newspapers of the time, information from the Ballarat Library, and a number of committee minutes still available.

The Ballarat North Golf Club, later Midlands Golf Club, was formed in 1919 at the end of the First World War. The fact that it evolved from its most humble of beginnings as a rough, nine hole sand scrape course to the magnificent layout that golfers enjoy today is a tribute to the pioneers of the club and those who followed in their footsteps.

The extraordinary growth in the first few years confirmed the need for a golf club in the northern area of Ballarat. It took one man, John C. Dearden, to take the first step and others readily followed. It was his foresight and determination to set the club on a solid foundation that has seen it endure economic

depression, world wars, fire and drought, decline in membership, financial difficulties and meet other significant challenges that have arisen in almost every decade of its 100 year existence.

From the very beginning it was decided that it was to be a club for all people and a spirit of co-operation and fellowship was developed that has become the hallmark of the club. Research of its history shows just how much this club has meant to so many people. Members in every era have readily given their time, money, knowledge and expertise. Much of the work done is not recognised but is performed in a spirit of goodwill and for this the club is indebted.

Chapter 1

EARLY BALLARAT NORTH

TRADITIONAL INHABITANTS

In the time before white settlement, native tribes occupied all of Australia and developed a way of life that both cared for the land and provided for their needs in a harsh and varied climate and terrain. The Aboriginal culture is most likely to be the oldest surviving culture in the world, a tribute to their ability to adapt to the environment. The Aborigines who inhabited the Ballarat district were of the Wathaurung tribe (pronounced Wadawurrung) and although the exact length of time they lived in the area is unknown it would in all probability been thousands of years.

The site of the old and new Midlands golf courses would have been frequently traversed by the tribe as it lay on grassland near the edge of the forested land overlooking the plains towards Mount Rowan and where Wendouree exists today. This section of forest was important to them as it provided shelter during winter months from the cold winds and a source of food as emus and kangaroos also sought protection from the elements. From its elevated position they could observe the movements of animals and also any intruders. The nearby Burrumbeet Creek was a vital water supply and provided fish, eels, brolgas and ducks as part of their diet. Possums were plentiful in the area and by stitching thirty or more skins together a wrap or blanket could be made that was surprisingly warm. During summer

months they would move onto the grasslands and would relocate to Lake Burrumbeet for a month or more when food was plentiful. When the clan knew that they would be likely to return to an area they left behind heavy items such as grinding stones and mixing bowls. Some members travelled long distances trekking as far as Lake Bolac when an eel harvest was held. Other long distance excursions took them to Mount Langi Ghiran and to Bacchus Marsh where five or six tribes would meet for a corroboree.

As they had no written language accounts of their culture has been handed down in folklore, rock art, songs and dances. Without the formal calendar that we know today the Aborigines were very adept at following the movements of stars and connecting the time of blossom on trees with the availability of certain fish in the creeks and lakes. They did not plant crops, domesticate animals or construct large buildings but rather they lived with what nature provided and developed a deep connection to the land on which they lived. Most of the burials took place close to water where the soil was softer as metallic implements were not part of their knowledge.

Less than 200 years ago this tribe was living the happy peaceful existence in harmony with nature that it had for thousands of years. Sadly it took a few short years for the white population to overwhelm their way

of life as they were unable to cope with the diseases and vices of European settlement. It is probable that some of the early settlers were not of a high moral standard and were most likely to have little compassion or understanding of the aboriginal culture. This forced much of the indigenous population into an existence on the periphery of the city and an alteration to their traditional way of life. The massive wealth created by the discovery of gold did not flow onto the native inhabitants and their numbers dwindled rapidly. Fortunately an Aboriginal presence still exists in Ballarat today as it is essential that a history and comprehension of their culture is not lost to future generations.

THE FOUNDATION OF BALLARAT

The origin of Ballarat traces back to 1837 when the first white men in the area were a party that set out from Geelong in search of new pastures. Their demanding journey through bushland took them towards a distant mountain, Mount Buninyong. After climbing to the summit they were rewarded with a magnificent outlook consisting of a peaceful broad valley, undulating hills, well grassed plains, majestic eucalypt trees and a crystal clear stream, the Yarrowee Creek. In the following year they had settled their flocks, and sheep runs were scattered throughout the district, but the tranquillity of the area was short lived when news of the discovery of gold in 1851 spread throughout the world.

The fabulous yields started a period of overseas migration to Australia and Ballarat's population rapidly

increased to 20,000. The extraordinary finds from surface diggings quickly exhausted the shallow alluvial deposits but the arrival of skilled Cornish and Welsh miners brought a second wave of activity. The deep lead mines that followed the courses of ancient stream beds in Ballarat East, Golden Point and the Sebastopol plateau produced staggering amounts of gold. These mines also provided stability for those able to provide goods and services to the miners and many migrants with trade skills were rewarded with the result that the population then varied between 40,000 and 50,000.

With the creation of wealth came a confidence in the future and Ballarat made a successful transition from a ramshackle mining town with an itinerant population to an industrial-age city. Ballarat was proclaimed a city in 1871 and it flourished until 1900 with the construction of magnificent buildings that are still in use today and many of which are of national heritage significance. Sturt Street was developed into an impressive thoroughfare, the infrastructure expanded and numerous fine residences made the city a desirable location for many people to live. A deep sense of civic pride saw magnificent gardens created, schools, hospitals and churches being constructed and the formation of many and varied sporting clubs.

Significant milestones for the city included the foundation of the Ballarat Base Hospital in the mid 1850s, the opening of the Ballarat-Geelong railway line in 1862, the Gong Gong reservoir in 1877 and the Ballarat-Melbourne railway in 1889. Electricity was first connected in 1901. The two major industries, the Phoenix Foundry and the Sunshine Harvester



Sturt St Ballarat c1920
Photo from City of Ballarat Libraries Australiana Collection

businesses strengthened the economy and produced employees highly skilled in metal work.

The Phoenix Foundry had been formed in 1856 and by 1883 employed 430 men. It was badly effected by the depression of the 1890s and the loss of the government contract to the Newport Works forcing its closure in 1906. The state of affairs changed however from the turn of the century until 1920. In this period the city lost 20 per cent of its population, mainly due to the loss of life during World War 1, the downturn of the mining industry and the closure of the two main

industries. Early in the 1920s the decline was reversed as the diminishing significance of the mining industry was offset by emergence of many and varied businesses supported by the natural resources, population increases and the social institutions in place.

BEGINNING OF BALLARAT NORTH

Originally residential development was based around the major mining areas of Ballarat East, Golden Point, Canadian and Sebastopol. The last goldmine at Black Hill ceased operations in 1918, and by then occupation had extended north through Soldiers Hill to Ballarat North, sustained by important industries operating or being developed in this locality. Significant among these were Selkirks (1900), Railway Workshops (1917), Myers Woollen Mill (1877), Morleys Woollen Mill (1928), Martins Stoneware (1926), Garden City Flour Mill (1923) and Ronaldson & Tippet (1903).

The first residential land sales took part in the late 1850s and Soldiers Hill took its name with reference to the Colonial forces stationed there before the Eureka Rebellion. Soldiers Hill was one of the first planned suburbs of Ballarat and was a premier address for the upper and middle classes. The suburb was popular as its elevated location was close to the CBD yet far enough away from gold mining and industrial activities. Attractive streets with wide road reserves allowed for bluestone gutters and lines of elm and plane trees.

The majority of early members of the Ballarat North Golf Club came from this area. Two schools, Macarthur Street Primary (1878) and St Columba's (1911)

provided the early education for children. The Ballarat North Bowling Club established in 1896 was important in the recreational life of residents as was the Ballarat North Football Club which had its beginnings in 1882 and Soldiers Hill Wanderers Football Club which lapsed in the early 1900s. The Soldiers Hill Bowling Club joined the V.B.A. in 1915 but in 1920 dropped out of existence. Many tennis courts existed throughout these two suburbs and the number of neighbourhood hotels adequately provided for the needs of residents.

The population of Ballarat North was a relatively stable one and at this time life was generally less complicated than that of today. Many one income households survived comfortably without monthly payments for the internet, pay TV, mobile phones, central heating, air conditioning or two cars. An overseas trip was uncommon for most people with a holiday being a visit to Melbourne, Geelong, the beach, the Murray River or the Grampians.

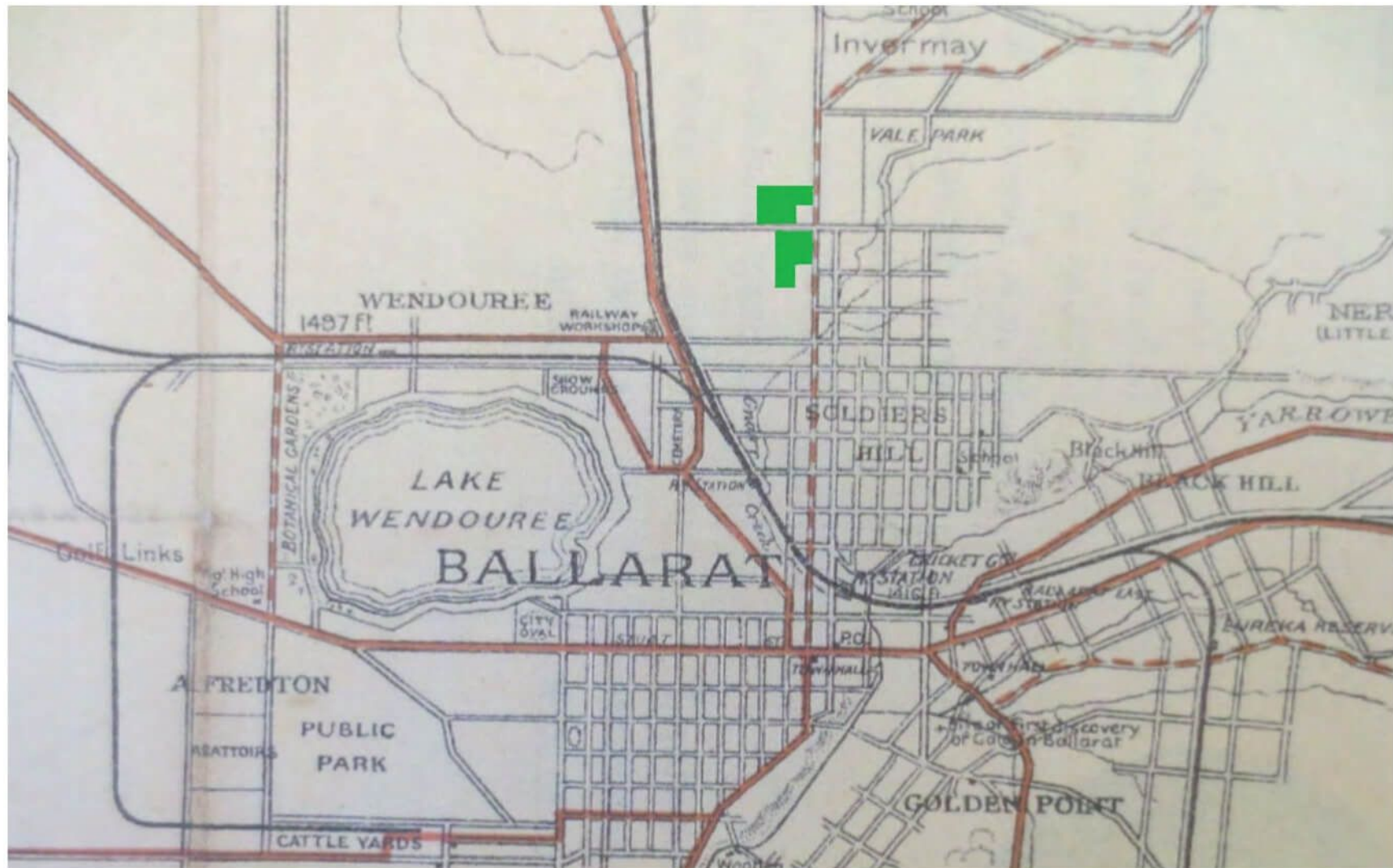
Local identities Michael Daly (hairdressing) a Midlands club member for over 50 years and Bill Gove (cycle sales and repairs) remained in the one occupation from their early teenage years until well after the usual retiring age. Milk bars and corner grocery stores were in abundance throughout the suburb. The demise of these stores began in the early 1960s when the first supermarkets were opened in Australia.

The characteristics of Ballarat North have changed in recent years with many of the large housing blocks being subdivided and developed into units. In contrast,

the area south of Macarthur Street in Soldiers Hill has remained largely unchanged as a heritage overlay protects the many magnificent Federation and Victorian era buildings with their fine iron lacework and wooden fretwork. The precinct is architecturally and historically significant and is highly valued by the local community.

At the time of the formation of the Ballarat North Golf Club, Australia's population had reached 5.2 million and the Treaty of Versailles had brought to a close Australia's involvement in WW1. Also in this year, a Spanish influenza epidemic caused the death of thousands of people throughout Australia and in Ballarat an emergency medical centre was set up at the showgrounds to cope with the crisis. The showgrounds at this time were located at the corner of Wendouree Parade and Haddon Street. All schools were closed for three months and people were not allowed to assemble. Wendouree and Black Hill were in early stages of development and were sparsely populated.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / EARLY BALLARAT NORTH



Map of Ballarat-1917

The location of the Ballarat North Golf Club formed two years later is shown in green on both sides of Norman Street which at this time was a narrow un-made track. The New Cemetery is recorded as Vale Park.

Chapter 2

THE FORMATION OF A CLUB

The game of golf rapidly increased in popularity in Australia at the end of the 19th century. The Victorian Golf Association was formed in 1902 as the governing body of the many clubs that were being formed around this time in Victoria. Some of the iconic Melbourne sand belt clubs had different names or had not begun their existence on their present sites. Royal Melbourne and Metropolitan began at Caulfield, Kingston Heath at Elsternwick, Woodlands was the Mordialloc Golf Club, Victoria had its origin in Fishermans Bend and Yarra Yarra at Eaglemont. Commonwealth which began as the Murrumbeena Golf Club first played on its present site in 1920 just after the Ballarat North Golf Club was formed.

Many of the leading American clubs were also founded in this era. Oakland Hills (1918), Inverness (1919), Pine Valley (1919), Pebble Beach (1919), Baltusrol (1922), Cherry Hills (1923) and Winged Foot (1923) were developed in the period generally regarded as the "golden age" of American course architecture. Whereas the Ballarat North Golf Club came into being as the result of a need for a golf course for all classes of people, many of the American clubs were founded by people and for people of wealth and influence.

The development of the game was hastened in these years by the introduction of the rubber core golf ball. The first balls made were "featheries," a ball made by

filling a leather sack, while still wet, with goose feathers. As they dried the leather shrank and the goose feathers expanded. They were not very durable and being time consuming to make put the price out of reach of most people. These became obsolete when the gutta percha ball was created in 1848 and was in use for around fifty years. They were made by heating the sap of the Malaysian sapodilla tree and moulding it in to shape while still hot. The game was revolutionised in 1898 when an American, Coburn Haskell, created the "Haskell" rubber core golf ball by tightly winding rubber thread around a solid rubber core increasing the distance that golfers were able to achieve.

The boom in the game was interrupted in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War. Prior to this most Australians were living relatively comfortable lives without much notion of what was to transpire. A terrible price was paid by a young developing nation with over 60,000 dying in battle and more than twice that number wounded. The ramifications of this did not end with the termination of warfare. Many returned soldiers could never again lead normal lives due either to injury or the psychological scars caused by the atrocities of war. To assist them and their families, who were also severely effected, the RSL was formed. Hostilities ceased on 11 November 1918 when the Armistice was signed bringing to a close one of the darkest chapters in Australia's history.

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However, just as new growth emerges after a bush fire, a new spirit materialized in the population determined to move forward to a brighter future. Sport played an important role raising funds for the war effort and for the population at home providing a much needed distraction from the daily newspaper reports of the war. Ballarat Golf Club had been founded in 1895 and other district clubs Beaufort, Avoca, Bacchus Marsh, Chalambar, Maryborough, and Wendouree followed in the first decade of the 20th century. In 1919 with peoples lives beginning to return to normal and with the game again expanding rapidly it was a good time for the establishment of another golf course. John Dearden made the fortunate decision to pursue the idea of forming a golf club in Ballarat North. The following account of the formation of the club is recorded in the 50 year Golden Jubilee Booklet.

The driving force behind the events which led to the formation of the club undoubtedly was John C Dearden. Associated with him in the formative years of Midlands were other residents of Ballarat North, Harold Owen, a noted sportsman in fields other than golf, Walter Irwin, Norman La Gerche and Jim Davey, all of whom became foundation members of the new club. During the season 1912-13 they had become members of the Ballarat Golf Club.

In those days the motor car had not come into general use and owner of a motor car before the First World War was, comparatively, a rarity. Almost all the golfers pedalled their way to the links on bicycles, often through rain, hail or snow. Those from Ballarat North many times were wet through before they arrived at

Alfredton, and wetter still when they arrived home after an eight mile journey. Ballarat's winters gave them no encouragement to go to their club for practice and they looked around for suitable practice areas nearer to home.

John Dearden and some of his colleagues practised in Hepburn's paddock, the area of 45 acres on which were later situated the eighth to fifteenth holes, but which has now been resumed by Selkirks. Mr Dearden was practising one day when he aroused the curiosity of a Ballarat North Bowling Club colleague, Herman Gordon, who crossed the paddock to ask the former what he was doing. Mr Dearden explained that he was having some golf practice there because it was too far



The Ballarat North Bowling Club - site of the foundation meeting

to go Alfredton for that purpose only. Mr Gordon, although not a golfer, then sowed the acorn from which a big oak tree grew. "Well, why not form a club in Ballarat North instead of going all that way," he said. "Establishing a golf club needs a great deal of money and about 100 acres of land," his friend informed him. But Herman Gordon a keen business man could see no difficulty in the way of raising capital. The public apparently was ready for another golf course in Ballarat he said. As for the land needed he thought the owners of nearby properties Dave Ronaldson and Randell Ralph would readily grant the use of sufficient ground to a new club.

After further discussion the pair decided to approach the Ballarat North Bowling Club, of which both were committee members, believing they had a good chance of enlisting the clubs' support in forming a new club. The committee however turned down the proposal believing it had enough work on its hands in running the bowling club without undertaking further responsibilities. But the committee was sympathetic and offered the use of its clubhouse for a meeting should the golf club venture be persisted with. At this stage Herman Gordon, having sown his acorn, apparently decided it would not germinate and retired from the scene.

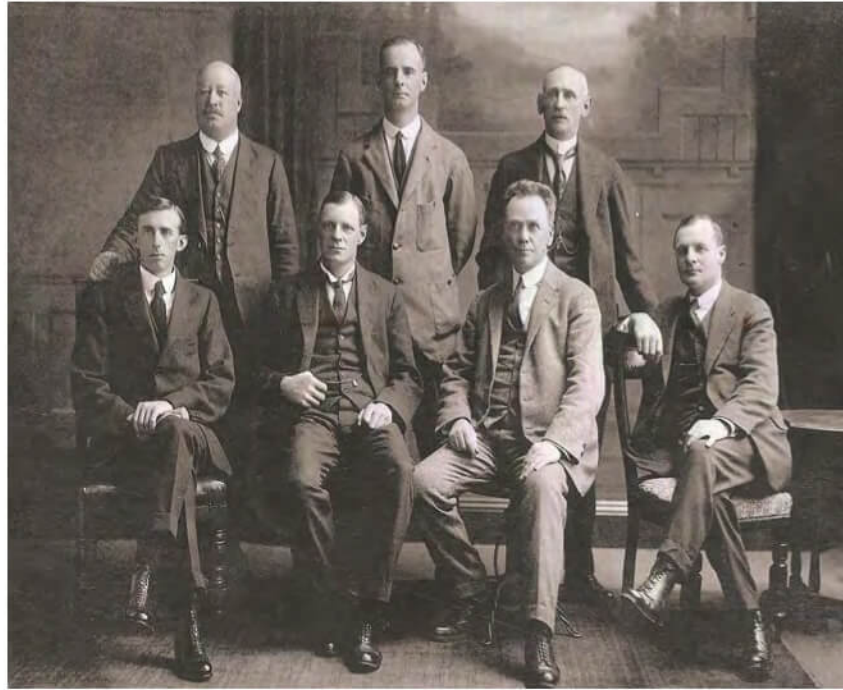
John Dearden however was not so easily discouraged. He decided to see what land was available. He first broached the matter with Dave Ronaldson who became enthusiastic and urged him to go ahead with the idea of forming a club. He said he would join the club and offered his land for use rent

free. Mr Dearden then interviewed Doepel and Chandler, agents for the owner of Hepburn's paddock, who offered to sell the land for \$2000. He declined the offer, but was told the club, if formed, could use the land rent free, until the property was sold. An approach was also made to Mr Ralph, who owned the land on which the Ballarat North Technical School was later built and to Ernest Lemin who held a lease over Greenfield's paddock on which holes 3 to 7 were later built. Both these properties were promised for use rent free to a new club. Like Mr Ronaldson Mr Lemin became a keen supporter of the scheme. Years later, his son Bill and daughter Beth, had the distinction of being club and associate champions at the one time for a number of years.

During this time the search for suitable and available land in close proximity to the city was going on, a number of young men had laid down a few rough holes on Ballarat Orphanage land, while the Ballarat North group - Dearden, Owen, La Gerche, Irwin, E Dunn and a few "casuals" had set down a series of holes, also rough and rather crude, on some interesting golfing country at the junction of the Dean-Invermay roads near the New Cemetery. They had been playing there a short time when the Ballarat East contingent left the Orphanage layout and joined Dearden and Co. at Invermay. The combined group obtained the use of four additional paddocks and laid down an 18 hole course with jam tins as cups in sand greens.

The 5000 yard course, although rough and only playable in winter, was full of interest and gave the pioneers good sport. Still on the look-out for more

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*Foundation officers of the Ballarat North Golf Club.
Back row: Walter Irwin, Harold Owen, Fritz Wilson,
Front row: Norman La Gerche, Jim Davey, John Dearden, Ernest Lemin.
Absent: A W Long, Walter Heinz, I Morgan.*

suitable land, Messrs Dearden and Owen inspected a section of land owned by the Government at Canadian. They found it an ideal site, but most of it was well timbered, so they decided that it would be too costly to prepare a golf course. The ceasefire which ended the World War, brought relief to the many who were involved in war work and who had relatives in the fighting services. Fathers, sons and brothers would soon return home. The time appeared appropriate to

Mr Dearden to launch the golf club scheme into which he had put so much work.

By this time he had enlisted the support of several other residents of the North, including Jim Davey, Fritz Wilson, A W Long and Walter Heinz, and after consulting with those playing on the Invermay course, he decided to take a major step in forming a Ballarat North golf club. Through an advertisement placed in both *The Courier* and *The Ballarat Star*, he called a meeting of persons interested in forming a golf club, to be held in the Ballarat North Bowling Club pavilion at 8 o'clock, Monday April 7, 1919. To the surprise of many the pavilion was packed and the meeting was a huge success. The following account of the meeting was given in both newspapers the next day.

"A largely attended meeting was held in the Ballarat North Bowling Club pavilion last night for the purpose of forming a golf club in the north. Mr J C Dearden, was voted to the chair. The Chairman said that now the war was over, and they could return to sport again, it had been thought it would be a good thing if they started a golf club at Ballarat North. Paddocks most suitable for links had been placed at free use of the club by Messrs D Ronaldson and Coghlan, Boase and Co. per E Lemin. Of course they could not go in for extensive improvements because they had no security of tenure. Mr Ronaldson, while willing to let the club have the use of his paddock, might wish to sell it at some time, but if he did so, he would give the club the first option.

There was plenty of room for another golf club in Ballarat. The Ballarat Golf Club was pleased to hear that

there was a chance of a club being started in the north. Probably they would look on the north club as a sort of nursery. Already nine holes had been put down and stiles for getting over fences would be ready in a few days. Mr W Morgan, has laid out the course. On the motion of Mr Wilson it was decided to form a golf club, to be called the Ballarat North Golf Club. The chairman announced that already 32 gentlemen and 22 ladies had handed in their names for membership.

It was decided to run under the same rules as the Ballarat Golf Club. The club would be conducted on broad democratic lines and every member would have an equal say in its affairs. It was resolved that the subscription would be one guinea for men and half a guinea for ladies. The election of officers resulted in John Dearden being elected as president. Messrs A W Long and E Lemin were elected vice-presidents, N La Gerche, captain, W Irwin, treasurer, J H Davey, secretary, with H Owen, F Wilson, W Heinz and W Morgan, committee. The matter of forming a ladies committee was left in abeyance until the general committee has formed a set of rules. The links will be officially opened on Monday 5 May-eight hours day - when a mixed doubles handicap will be played over the nine holes laid down."

The Courier in its report on the historic occasion of the opening of the course, was lengthy and when read 100 years later, amusing in many respects. "The boom in sport, which has set in since the Armistice was signed, has led to the formation of a second golf club in Ballarat, known as the Ballarat North Golf Club, with links situated in Doveton Street in paddocks owned by

Mr D. Ronaldson and Messrs Coghlan and Boase, on opposite sides of the road near the New Cemetery, and they were formally opened yesterday.

The new club will bring the game within reach of many who found the Alfredton links too far from the city or the fees too high for their purse, and they will afford an excellent opportunity for indulging in one of healthiest and most skilful outdoor games. The locality would be hard to beat. It commands one of the best views that can be obtained of Ballarat and surrounding district, whilst golfers declare the territory is natural golfing country. A course of nine holes has been laid out, and the total length of it is 100 yards short of the second nine holes at Alfredton.

Unlike Alfredton, however, the natural difficulties are greater. Both of the paddocks are hilly, they are divided by a road and there are trees and bushes dotted about that will tend to make any deviation from the straight line between holes very expensive and disconcerting to the players. But it is the science of golf to avoid the difficulties, and because of that the golfer who can bring his score for the links within the limits of bogey, which has been fixed at 36, will have reason to pride himself on his skill."

The club had made an excellent start in every respect. Ninety members have been enrolled and a modest clubhouse has been erected, whilst a garden plot has been laid out at the front. The lone pine tree close to the clubhouse will make excellent shade in warm weather and shelter in winter. The official opening yesterday was made the occasion of a social



1919 The president, Mr John Dearden, makes the first drive from the first tee at the official opening of the club on May 5 The tree at the right was at the corner of Doveton and Norman Streets

function, and there was a large gathering of golfers and friends, including many members of the Ballarat Golf Club. The President of the new club, Mr J C Dearden, welcomed the visitors and said that the club had not

been started with a view of rivalling the Alfredton club, and they hoped to work in a co-operative spirit. The older club welcomed the new club and would do all it could to help it along. There was ample scope for the new club and there was also room for one in Ballarat East. The club had been able to pay for all that had been done so far.

Mr Dearden declared the links open for play and made the first official drive. The president is not a novice, as he has been a member of the Ballarat club for some time and after that 22 couples were started in a mixed doubles handicap by the captain of the club Mr N La Gerche. The new players were very nervous facing the gallery and did not acquit themselves well, but they got some ideas of the possibilities of the drive after witnessing the efforts of Messrs W Morgan, many times champion of the Ballarat club, H Owen, J R Paterson, Town Clerk of Ballarat East who excels in most things he undertakes, and E Windsor. All players, however, enjoyed the

afternoon even if they did not break records for small scoring and visitors and players were the guests of Mr and Mrs Dearden for afternoon tea.



The difficulty of playing golf in the golf attire of the time

score of 51, less handicap of 15, net 36, equalling bogey. The next best net score was 43, with the worst score returned by the 22 couples who took part being 94 less 20, net 74. Looking back now, the "sensational" score by the winners, equalling bogey 36 on a 2300 yards course may seem less than ordinary, but who knows what were the natural hazards on a course newly laid down, dotted with bushes and trees, to be negotiated with cleek, mid-iron, mashie, niblick, brassie, baffy and other hickory shafted clubs of the era.

The lengths of the holes were; No.1 235 yards, bogey 4. No. 2 170 yards, 3, No. 3 360 yards, 5, No. 4 430 yards, 6, No. 5, 335 yards 5, No. 6 166 yards, 3, No. 7 110 yards, 3 No. 8 325 yards, 4, No. 9 169 yards 3. Total 2300 yards, bogey 36. In the mixed doubles handicap a sensational score was recorded by Miss Dearden and J R Paterson over the nine holes.

They recorded a

The course was laid out on Ronaldson's, Greenfield's, and Ralph's paddocks, with one hole on Davis' land adjacent to the present second hole. There was no machinery to cut the fairways, the tees were small mounds and the sand greens were small and circular and from them the wind constantly blew the sand so that putting was usually on hard ground. Later oil was sprinkled on the sand and made an improvement, but was far from satisfactory. No sketch, if one was ever done, has been found of the layout of the holes.

Three weeks after the official opening, no play was held on the Saturday as most members took part in a working bee. The interest in the club exceeded all expectations, so much so that when started it was thought doubtful that the membership would be more than 50, but already 120 members had been enrolled.

On Monday 2 June, *The Ballarat Star*, reported on the appeal of golf in Ballarat North. "Golf is booming up north. On every vacant bit of land, and even along the roads, lads of knickerbocker age are to be seen with all kinds of sticks with a crook on the end, hitting balls and posing at the finish of the stroke as they have noted players on the links do. On Saturday the new holes were in play for the first time. They have been remodelled to meet the requirements of the increased membership and now provide a 12 hole course".

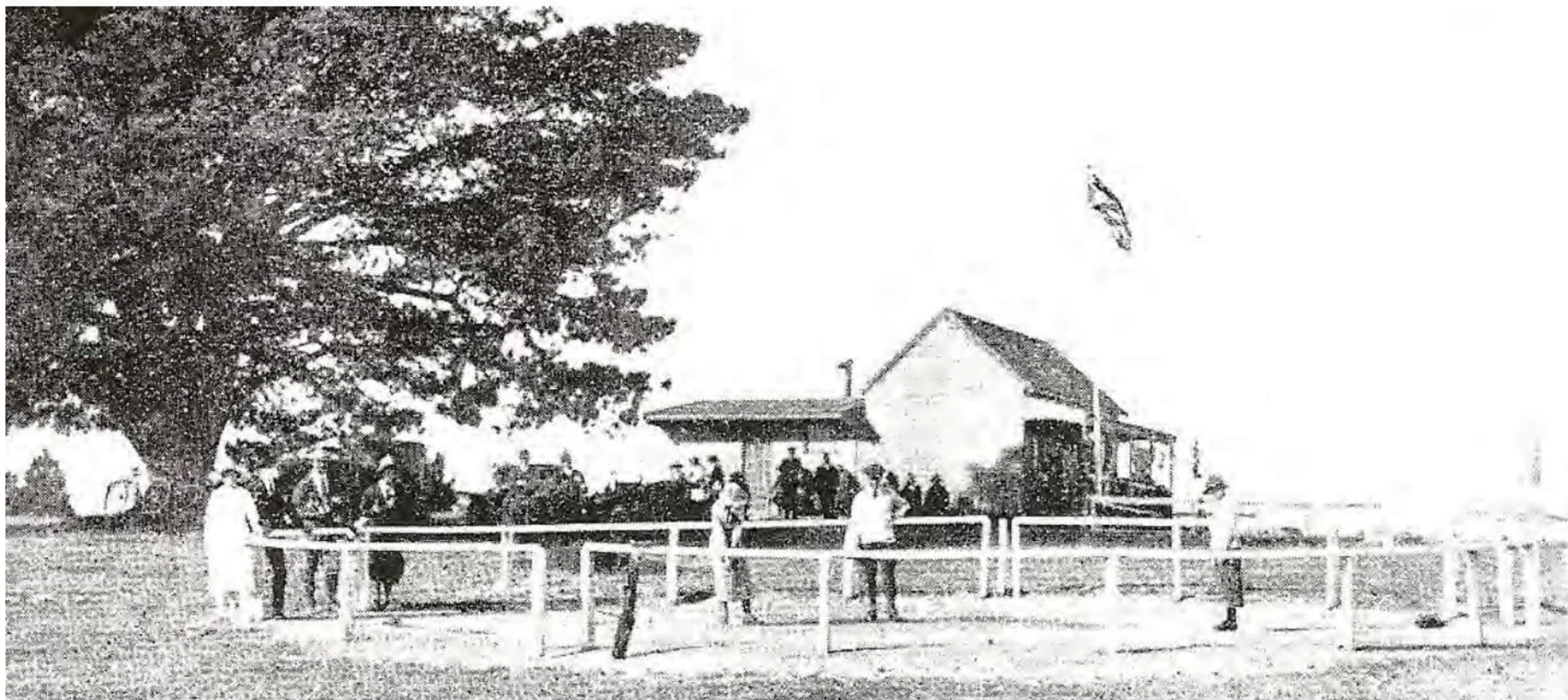
On Saturday 13 September the course was first used for an inter-club match, with members of the Beaufort club visiting. Unfortunately the weather was

FROM SMALL ACORNS / THE FORMATION OF A CLUB

less than desirable with rain falling all day. The course formally closed for the season on Saturday 1 November after an impressive first year. The season of 1920 opened on 17 April. *The Courier* reported the occasion as follows. "On the beautifully situated links at Ballarat North, the club held its official opening for the season on Saturday. There was a large gathering of members and visitors, and a mixed foursome was played for

trophies donated by the president Mr J H Davey.

The new course of 18 holes was used for the first time and many compliments were paid to officials on the splendid playing ground. The weather was all that could be asked for and the president and Mrs Davey did all in their power to make the afternoon a memorable and pleasant one for players and spectators. Afternoon



The first clubhouse in 1920. In the first year the only shelter was corrugated iron sheeting under the large tree on the left.

tea was served in a beautifully decorated marquee and was enjoyed by all. The laying out of the new course involved the reconstruction of some of the holes on the old course."

The first major purchase made by the club was in July 1920 when it acquired a small wooden structure, originally situated at Mount Buninyong, but moved to the golf course following inspection by Messrs Dearden, Davey and Lemin and bought on their recommendation. It served as the clubhouse, replacing a galvanised iron shed which had been a rather cramped shelter for the first year. The new clubhouse was sited a few feet north of where the brick clubhouse would be built some seven years later. Upon its relocation it was renovated by members, and being on the highest point of the course offered fine views over the city and countryside.

A set of rules was drawn up for the new club. Some of the main features and purposes were that the club was to be called the "Ballarat North Golf Club." The club is formed to provide for the members a golf course and club house, to supply them with refreshments and all things incidental to the playing of golf. The club shall be managed by a committee called the "General Committee" consisting of a president, ex president, 2 vice presidents, a captain, a vice captain, an honorary secretary, an honorary treasurer and four other members of the club. The members of the General Committee (with the exception of the last retiring president who shall be a member of the General Committee ex officio) shall be elected by the members at an annual general meeting and they shall hold office until the next annual general meeting when they shall

retire, but shall be eligible for re-election from year to year. Handicappers shall be elected by the General Committee.

The authority of the General Committee shall be paramount until over borne by a general meeting of the club and shall have control of the finances of the club, and power to engage, control and dismiss the club servants and all administrative powers. There shall be a Ladies club and such club shall be governed by the General Committee and shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the club. Ladies shall have no voice in the management of the club, nor shall they be eligible for any position on the General Committee. The duties of the ladies' secretary shall be to attend to all matters associated with the work of the ladies' committee and to collect all ladies' subscriptions and hand the same to the honorary treasurer.

Years later, upon reflection of some of the rules, and even though women had been given a vote in the Commonwealth of Australia since its foundation and all states and territories, it may appear that the female members were not appreciated as they should have been. In some golf histories, associate members are written about in a separate chapter, but in this club, their contribution has been significant and cannot be over-stated and they deserve to be mentioned throughout the history as would any male member.

Founding associates of the club were just as eager to contribute as the men and played a major role in fund raising and the enhancement of the clubhouse, despite the unforgiving conditions that they played



*Early 1920s - ladies climbing over stiles
on the original course*

under. The first course was laid out in paddocks that were divided by fences and to assist the women in crossing them in their restrictive clothing and long skirts, stiles had to be erected over them. In the early days of the club, women generally made up a third of the field on a Saturday. A mixed foursome was played on one Saturday each month and was one of the most popular competitions. This gradually changed over the years and

Saturday became exclusively for men and the associates competition was held on Wednesdays.

At a committee meeting in July 1958, it was resolved that women would not be allowed in the bar on Saturdays until a senior official decided that the number of members in the bar warranted the admission of associates. The February 1970 edition of the Midlander reported that the committee have decided to extend the allowable period during which ladies may use the bar facilities. This experiment will be given a months trial. At the weekend ladies can now use the bar, however, there is one restriction, they must use the tables at the

southern end, and will only be served at the short end of the bar. At a committee meeting in Nov 1977, Laurie Valpied moved a motion that associates be admitted to the bar at all times unless otherwise specified by the chairman.

In 1984, the Equal Opportunity legislation meant that clubs had to abide by the requirements or risk the loss of their liquor licence. From this time the ladies ceased being referred to as associates. Many more women were then engaged in full time employment with the result that the only time available for golf was at the weekend. Women were again welcome to compete in a competition on a Saturday and the club is fortunate that the ladies endured the inequity imposed upon them as women's golf is as equally important as men's golf.

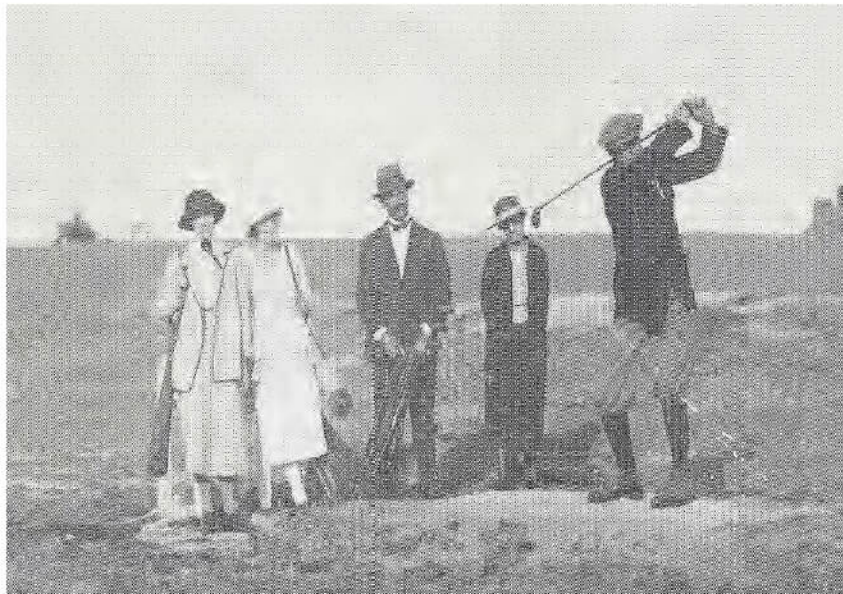
While the restrictions on female members at Midlands and most other clubs were harsh in many ways, they fell well short of the approach taken by two of the major and most influential clubs in world golf. In September 2014, The Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St Andrews changed a policy lasting 260 years that had barred women from joining. This followed a shift in thinking two years earlier by members at Augusta National, home of the US Masters, when women were admitted to the club for the first time in its 80 year history.

The first ever club championship commenced on 4 September 1920, being played on three successive weeks over 54 holes. The winner was A A Burgess and his sister Miss Vera Burgess won the ladies event which was conducted over three rounds of 12 holes each

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round. The annual meetings of the club for the first few years were very well attended and were held in such places as the Mechanics Institute, the Town Hall and the Provincial and George Hotels. The very first committee meeting was held at the home of John Dearden.

The members at meeting of April 1921 were given a glowing report on the situation of the club which showed that it was in a very sound financial position, considering that it had only been in existence for two years. The success of the inaugural year was more than maintained and the total membership was 184. As well as paying their annual subscription, members also



1921: Club captain Jim Davey driving from one of the small tees. In the picture from left are Miss S Simpson, Miss D Treloar, E J Pascoe and an unidentified onlooker.

donated an amount, equal to about 70% of the subscriptions, paid to the clubhouse purchase fund. It was decided that because of the fact that the club was growing so quickly, the burden on the captain was too onerous, and a vice-captain should be appointed. The decision on what the clubs' colours were to be had been left to the ladies and a flag of blue and white flew from the clubhouse on the opening day. Interclub matches were played during the year against Ballarat and Beaufort Golf Clubs.

As can be seen from the photo *left* the conditions which the golfers played under were primitive. From the earliest days, they would hit their tee shots from small piles of sand or soil that they had mounded. In 1920, William Lowell, coincidentally an American dentist as was Coburn Haskell, inventor of the "Haskell" golf ball, had a simple idea of a wooden peg with a concave top that would support a golf ball.

The 1922 season opened on 22 April. The first open tournament of the club was held over four days in August. The tournament began with a ladies scratch event won by Miss Vera Burgess. Other events were a men's 18 hole handicap, a ladies foursome, a men's foursome, a mixed foursome and concluded on the Sunday with a men's 36 hole scratch event. This was won by J P McCarthy with scores of 73, 78 - 151 from D Clarke (Ballarat G C) 80, 87 - 167.

J P McCarthy was the lowest marker in the district at that time playing off a handicap of 2. He was a member

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of Ballarat as well as Ballarat North and three weeks earlier had won the club championship with a course record score of 73 in the final round. Miss Vera Burgess won her third title, defeating her sister, Miss L Burgess. In the early years players were required to enter for the following weekend's event on a timesheet which was held at Abrahams Sports Depot in Mair Street.



Early views of the course - The Courier December 19, 1922

Chapter 3

GREENS AND A NEW CLUBHOUSE

The club had made a promising beginning surpassing all expectations and by the start of the 1923 season had 145 men and 124 ladies enrolled as members. It appeared that the club had come into being at the right time. *The Ballarat Star* reported in March 1923 that "golf is now played all over the world and is fast showing that ultimately it will be the most popular game played. Ballarat boasts three clubs (Ballarat, Wendouree and Ballarat North) whose members total over 700 as many as the three links can accommodate. Ballarat East and Sebastopol do not possess links, but at no distant date it is hoped that they will be started. It only requires a dozen enthusiasts to take the proposal seriously and make a start, when hundreds will follow and success is a certainty."

The Star also commenting on the popularity of the game published an article regarding the use of children as caddies at Bendigo. This newspaper, established in 1855 was in circulation until its incorporation into the *Ballarat Courier* in 1924. "The Education Department has decided that children who have been in the habit of acting as caddies at golf meetings must go to school in future. This intimation was made by the truant inspector to the Bendigo City Court bench when he asked for convictions in 18 cases in which parents were charged with having failed to send their children to school as required by the Education Act. The bench was told that the majority of boys had served as caddies

at the recent annual golf tournament in Bendigo. For several years past the Education Department has been inclined to take a lenient view of such breaches of the regulations, but it had now decided that it was time for something to be done to ensure that the delinquents received their education. A fine of 2/6 was imposed in each case."

James Selkirk who was a member of the club had purchased Hepburn's paddock and offered to rent it to the club, as well as some more land surrounding the brickworks clay-hole, known as the kiln paddock. The Hepburn paddock area was rough, furrowed and tussocky. Mr Selkirk obtained the use of a traction engine and with the aid of some of his employees, and using chains and crowbars, pulled out the roots of all the gorse hedges which had divided the area into smaller paddocks.

The poor weather conditions in May 1923 led to this report in the *Ballarat Star*. "On the north links for the third successive Saturday the elements were uninviting. The heavy gale of Friday night had swept the scrapes clean, and there was not sufficient time before play commenced to properly re-sand them, and even those that were re-sanded were again quickly denuded by the high wind.

The weather features very largely in the conditions of play on the north course and the committee

recognise that the time has come when consideration will have to be given to the laying down of grassed greens. It is possible that a re-modelling of the whole course may be undertaken in the near future. The holes in Selkirk's paddock 3,6,8 9, and 10 total over 1800 yards, and although not bunkered, the less vigorous hitter generally find them costly. These holes afford vigorous hitters a splendid opportunity for brassie play and this should be brought into more frequent use when playing them. The course was first measured with a tape in March and found to be 250 yards longer than the original measured by stepping."

On a number of Saturdays, almost as many women as men played in the competition. *The Star* reported further that "on 26 May 1923 sixty men and the same number of women took out cards for a stroke competition. Good scores were in strongly in evidence with eleven players getting home ahead of bogey. Many promising scores were spoiled by a few bad holes. The double bunkered fourth seems to be still the source of much trouble. A fault in the layout of the course then, was that there were only two ladies tees, but this was promised to be remedied when the new course was laid out. The women at that time lodged a complaint to the committee that men were practising in front or between them. The committee decided that it was out of ignorance or just bad manners and it would be banned."

"The official season of 1923 closed on the last Saturday in October with a mixed foursome being played. The grass had grown so long in the house paddock that Selkirk's paddock had to be played twice

and the north paddock once. Now that the active work for the year had finished, attention turned to getting a new course in order for the next year." The year had been a successful one with the clubs' second annual tournament attracting over 900 entries.

Messrs J Davey, A A Burgess and Fritz Wilson were each asked to submit plans for a new 18 hole course. The one prepared by Mr Burgess was accepted. The construction of the new layout was supervised by Mr Burgess, a capable golfer who had won the clubs' first two club championships. He put a great amount of time and work on the course, and personally planted most of the original pine trees. This layout was little changed until the 1940s.

The annual meeting of 1924 was held at the Town Hall. The report noted the rapid expansion of the club and the vast improvements made to the course. The second annual open meeting was held from 15th to 18th of August under ideal weather conditions with about 1000 entries being received for the various events. Profit from the annual tournament was invested in a Commonwealth War Bond to form the nucleus of a land purchase fund. There was a considerable increase in the membership, with the total number just on 300.

The course was now 5012 yards and thoroughly up to date. Subscriptions for men increased from 30/- to 50/- and ladies 15/- to 30/-. A nomination fee 10/- was introduced. In moving the adoption of the recommendation, Mr J Davey said that the matter of fees had been carefully considered. The expenditure was very heavy last year and would be heavy again this

year. Two men would be constantly employed for the season on the upkeep of the greens. Up to now the club has not had an entrance fee, but every other club had one. The report concluded there was a long way to go, the work is not nearly finished. Due to a very wet season, golfing conditions at times were unpleasant, but owing to the natural drainage and the good drying qualities of the turf play was never impossible.

The Courier account on the season opening reported that "members and guests of the Ballarat North Golf Club played a mixed foursomes. Though the club has only been in existence for about four years, the rapid strides it has made, due to the enthusiasm of the members is remarkable. It was declared from the outset that the club was in possession of one of the prettiest of areas. Admired by all at north links is the wide view obtained from all parts of the course. Right over the countryside for miles can be seen hedge rows and hills, hamlets and farms, a stunning panorama. From the comfort of the little clubhouse most of the players can be watched and beside the veranda is a neat putting lawn.

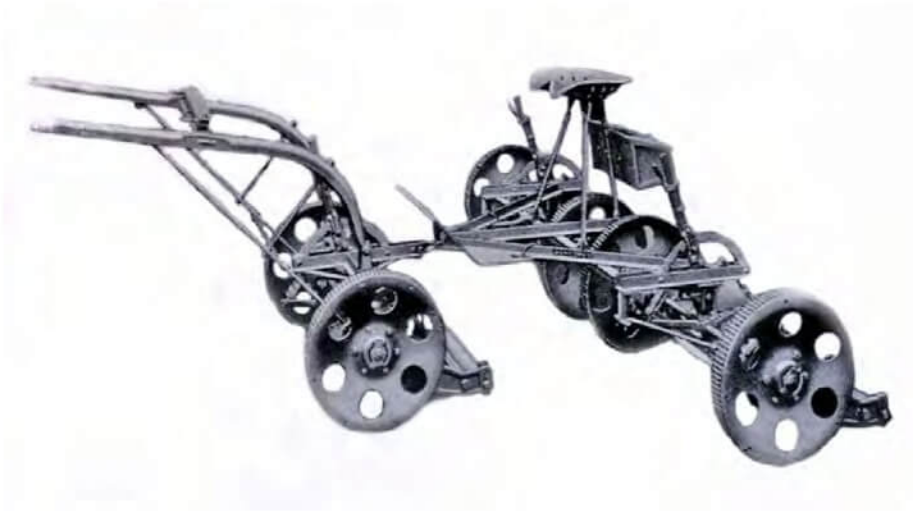
Recently a new green was put down in Selkirk's field and pot holes were cunningly and judiciously introduced. A platform green and two horseshoe bunkers are new features. Turf tees are now provided throughout and greens predominate in place of sand scrapes. The president and his wife entertained members and guests in the clubhouse that had been decked out in the clubs' colours of blue and white."

"The new putting greens were put into commission for the first time in July 1924. Also during this month was the foundation meeting of the Ballarat District Golf Association. The founding clubs were Ballarat, Wendouree, Ballarat North, Learmonth, Beaufort, Skipton and Creswick. The draft constitution approved by the Victorian Golf Association was adopted. Among the objects of the association, are to assist the VGA to establish a uniform handicapping system, to arrange inter-club matches and district championships, and to select a team of six players to represent the association in competitions held in Melbourne during country week. The first country week title (the Leader Shield), held in August at Yarra Yarra Golf Club, was won by Ballarat defeating Wangaratta in the final."

The 1925 clubs' annual report stated that again great improvements had been made to the course. The old sand scrapes have been replaced with fine large grass greens and an up to date water service has been supplied to each green. The committee negotiated with Mr D Ronaldson and Mr J Selkirk for a tenure of their properties and the club has obtained very liberal and important concessions.

During the year the club made its first major purchase of machinery when it imported a new fairway mower, a Ransomes Triplex Seven Feet Cutter. This could be operated by using either a motor tractor or a horse. The club found it to be more practical and cost effective to use the horse and all the fairways and rough could be cut in little more than a day. They also used a roller, supplied by Dave Ronaldson, which was attached behind the triplex cutter. He had also supplied

a motor tractor for use on the course. The cutter was a great success and served the club well for many years. Ballarat Golf Club, perhaps seeing the results at the North Club, purchased one in October the following year.



*Ransomes Triplex Seven Feet Cutter
Photo kindly supplied by Ransomes of Suffolk, England*

James Selkirk, a great benefactor to the club and productive president and committee member, was also so enthusiastic about the game that he had an 18 holes miniature golf course set out in the grounds of his Howitt Street home. The installation of lights made night golf possible and the only sticks to be used were the mashie and putter. It was named the Bournedale Miniature Links and was extremely popular during the

summer months. When the north grass tennis courts, opposite the Selkirk home, were opened in November 1926, a golf gymkana was held at the links to celebrate the occasion.

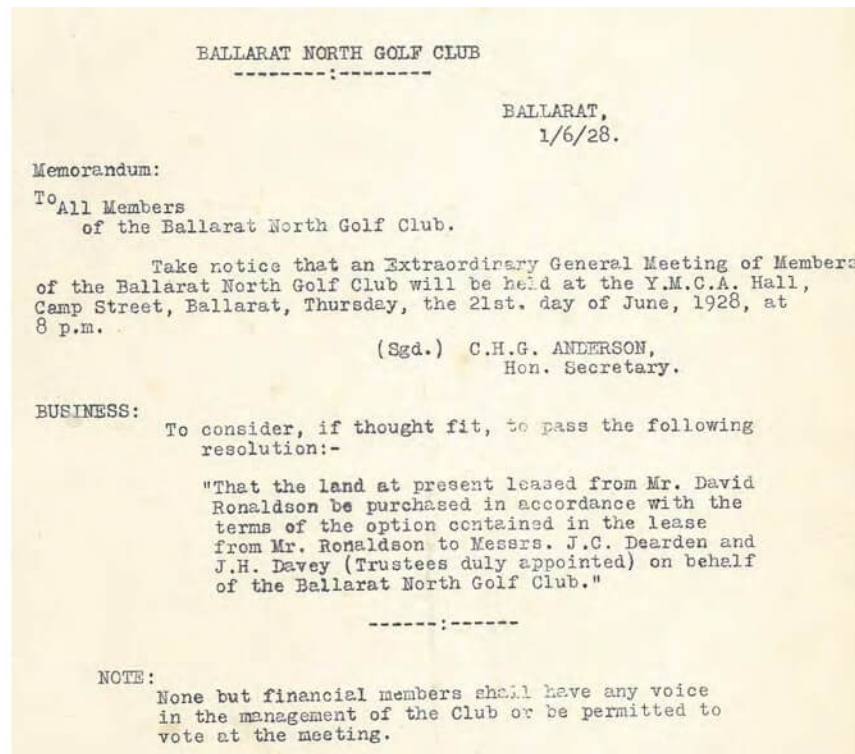
The Queen Carnival was undoubtedly the greatest co-operative effort undertaken by the club and was one of 149 organised on a voluntary basis by Jim Davey over a period of some 50 years. So competent and thorough an organiser was he, that with the full support of the members, a net amount of \$2015 - a very big sum in those days - was raised. The carnival involved four queens, named after golfing terms, competing in the fund raising effort.

The four queens were Mrs J Selkirk, the Mashie Queen, Mrs Bob Taylor Jnr, the Baffy Queen, Mrs J Bonar Wallace, the Bogey Queen, and Miss Stella Simpson, the Queen of Putters. Money was raised through golf events, afternoon teas, dinners, dances, raffles and donations. The crowning ceremony was performed by the Mayor, Cr. A E Nicholson, father of ex-Mayor Sir Arthur Nicholson, Mr Davey was the Lord High Chancellor, (or master of ceremonies) and the crown-bearer was Master Ronald Selkirk.

The foundation stone for the new clubhouse was laid on June 19, 1926 by the president Mr James Selkirk who had donated all the bricks for the structure. The whole of the plans and specifications were prepared free of charge by architects who were members of the club, in conjunction with Messrs Selkirk and Ronaldson. Brooks Bros. were the builders. It was a building of two storeys with spacious dressing rooms for ladies and

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gentlemen. Hot and cold showers were installed along with a secretary's office situated near the front door. The upstairs housed a modern ballroom with kitchenette attached. The estimated cost was \$2500, but the final cost was \$3200. This building served the clubs' needs until the early 1970's when the course was relocated.



Memorandum to members 1st June 1928 re purchase of Dave Ronaldson's land

The Buninyong Golf course was opened on Saturday 8 May 1926, and the annual meeting of the North Club of the same year was told that there was more to the club than the golf course. The club was becoming known for its social side and this was attracting new members. For the progress made in those formative years too much emphasis cannot be placed on the work of such officers as Messrs Dearden, Davey, Burgess, Ronaldson, Lemin, Wilson, Anderson, Selkirk and Irwin during the first decade. Also the co-operation of the members who worked in support of the committee, in clearing the site for the links, donating and planting approximately 2300 trees and shrubs, and, under Mr Ronaldson's supervision, laying the water service to the tees and greens. The change from sand to grass greens was made in the middle 1920s and the course showed its greatest improvement following the engagement of Ted Kay, as greenkeeper in 1929.

The new clubhouse opened on 23 April 1927. The building was very up to date with gentlemen's and ladies rooms, kitchen, assembly room with fire place and machine room. The building was sewered, having its own septic tank system and had a superb view across the course to the distant hills from the balcony. In these early years, the associates were very active in raising funds and purchased tables and chairs, cutlery, crockery, cushions, tablecloths and blinds for all windows in the clubhouse.

In the following year the club exercised its option on Dave Ronaldson's land and gained possession. A practice putting green, 60 feet by 63 feet, was laid down and all tees remodelled and the fairways had

super phosphate applied. 89 new members, 45 men and 44 ladies joined the club. During the year a social club was formed with the object of providing members with entertainment during the winter months and augmenting the clubs' funds. The result was beyond all expectations.

The club championships had always been decided over 54 holes of stroke play, but in 1928 it was decided to alter the format to 36 holes qualifying and then the top eight to compete in match play for the title. Later that year a new summer program was introduced as the course was to stay open all year around. A committee was formed to investigate why people were not playing when the course was at its best. At this time the club had two handicappers, and because sometimes antagonism was shown towards them, the committee decided that their names be with-held from the members.

Although the club had made remarkable progress by 1930, it was still basic in some aspects. Sheep used to graze on the course and horses were used in some of the course maintenance tasks. This was in line with the many country courses where fairways were kept short by sheep and a wire fence was erected around the greens or scrapes. A local rule would allow any golfer hitting the wire to replay the shot without penalty. A committee meeting in 1929 reported that a club member, Mr Kelly, had given the greenkeeper a horse for use in the mower and also the dray. After great difficulty he managed to get the horse in the dray, but he stated that it took off, only touching the ground once in the first hundred yards. The horse was returned to

Mr Kelly.

A major change to the game took place in 1929 when the use of steel shafts was approved by the R&A for use in competition play. Prior to this hickory was the foremost material used in club making. Its characteristics of strength and hardness made it the wood of choice, although it was inconsistent in performance. It was around this time that the first mass produced tees were introduced.

Messrs, Dearden and Davey were the first trustees of the club, and when the agreement between the club and James Selkirk for the lease of the Hepburn property was drawn up, a clause was inserted in the lease, through their instigation, giving the club the option of purchasing the land at a stated price of \$5600, at the termination of the lease.

Midlands Golf Club, Ballarat
30/1/38
GRAEME LATES

PLAYER		HOLE		SCORE		HOLE		SCORE		TOTAL	
NO.	NAME	NO.	NAME	NO.	NAME	NO.	NAME	NO.	NAME	NO.	NAME
1	4	368	5	4	10	4	274	12	3	36	2951
2	4	350	6	4	11	3	215	2	2	34	2951
3	5	592	3	4	12	3	120	18	3	34	2951
4	3	137	17	4	13	5	495	4	5	34	2951
5	4	293	14	3	14	4	308	13	3	34	2951
6	5	428	10	4	15	4	315	7	4	34	2951
7	3	220	1	5	16	4	224	16	3	34	2951
8	4	318	9	3	17	4	237	15	3	34	2951
9	4	320	8	3	18	3	171	11	3	34	2951
Out 36		2951	34		In 34		2359	29		34	
MARKER'S SIGNATURE		R. J. J. J.		Replace Divots		Deduct 11 cap		NET TOTAL		63	

Please pass through players who have lost their place on the green.

DOVETON ST
WALSH ST
LILLEY ST
NORMAN ST

CLAY PIT

29

Chapter 4

FIRE, LIGHTNING & A NEW NAME

After a period of rapid expansion and progress, the new decade began badly. A fire at the clubhouse in 1930, was followed by a robbery and a severe lightning strike in 1931, and these came during the time of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The start of the depression came with the collapse of the stock market on Wall Street in October 1929. Australia suffered along with the rest of the world with demand for its key exports of wheat and wool decreasing significantly. The labour government led by James Scullin had come into power during the week of the fall, replacing Stanley Bruce who was one of only two sitting Prime Ministers to lose their seats, and remained in government until December 1931, when United Australia Party leader Joseph Lyons took office.

With businesses and factories closing their doors, many people found themselves living in poverty. Unemployment rose sharply, peaking at over 30%. In 1931, one third of Ballarat's male workforce was on the dole. Selkirk's and Ronaldson & Tippet closed for a time and the Railway Workshop cut worker's hours and reduced staff by 50%. During this time the golf club president commenting on the report for the 1931 season, stated that the Ballarat North Golf Club had suffered by the prevailing depression in common with all other sporting organisations in Ballarat. Membership had decreased in 1931 as financial hardship had begun to take hold. Profit from the annual tournament was

only half that of previous years. Recovery in Australia began late in 1933 with increased activity in the manufacturing sector and the unemployment rate began to fall. A period of stability and growth began, through to the outbreak of World War 2. The progress of the golf club mirrored that of the nation. Membership steadily increased and the club continued to improve its financial position. A legacy of the depression, was that the hardship caused by it was not readily forgotten, and the club tended to be more frugal in its spending. The fire in the clubhouse broke out in the early morning of Friday 3rd January 1930. The following is *The Courier* report of the incident.

"Casting a reflection that could be seen all over Ballarat and the surrounding district, a fire which broke out on the property of the Ballarat North Golf Club early this morning, completely destroyed a weatherboard clubhouse and did considerable damage to the brick clubhouse. The Ballarat City Fire Brigade received the call at ten minutes to one o'clock, and a strong detachment of firemen under Lieutenant C. Daw was quickly on the scene with the red motor pump.

Eight hundred feet of hose was run out from the hydrant at the corner of Doveton and Norman streets. As this plug is at the end of the water main, the pressure was not sufficient to push the water the required distance. The motor pump was put into action and this was found to be satisfactory. The

weatherboard building, at the north-eastern end of the links, was burning fiercely when the firemen commenced to attack the flames. The building had been used by Mr T Frayne, the club professional and Mr E Kay, the greenkeeper, and it contained a large quantity of equipment and implements used in the care of the greens. It is not definitely known what was in Mr Frayne's rooms, but it is believed that there were numbers of clubs that were to be repaired.

Separating the weatherboard building, which had also been used during tournaments as a refreshment booth, from the main brick clubhouse is a four feet right of way. Across this the flames quickly jumped and caught the window sills on the top and ground floors. The windows cracked with the intense heat and the flames had taken hold of the curtains and had penetrated the top floor when a party including the greenkeeper, police and a *Courier* reporter broke open the door leading to the top floor and concentrated on the flames there. A number of lounge chairs had caught fire whilst the matting was burning fiercely. The piano in the corner, nearest to the burning building was dragged to safety, and with buckets and dishes from the kitchen the volunteers managed to beat out the flames.

A hose which was connected to a tap on the putting green was also used in this work. The pressure of the water from the hoses was not of sufficient strength to allow water to be thrown onto the roof where the fire had attacked the ceiling, but fortunately the band of volunteers who had been on the top floor, succeeded in extinguishing it. The firemen were still working on the

weatherboard building and the volunteers took charge of the ground floor where the fire had also broken through on numerous occasions. The office of the secretary (Mr C H Anderson) caught alight and the effects of the office were removed for safety. By this time the fire had attracted hundreds of people and the police and others had a busy time keeping them back from the buildings. Mr J H Davey, captain of the club, and officials were present and they helped the police in this work

At 1.30am the fire was under control although still burning. Excellent work was done by the firemen as soon as they arrived and much valuable equipment in the form of mowers was removed from the small building. Fears were entertained for the motor tractor but fortunately it had been housed in the other clubhouse. All clubs and lockers in the main clubhouse were intact. It was fortunate that a strong southerly wind was blowing at the time otherwise the main clubhouse would have been gutted. How the fire started is not known at present. The two buildings were insured. The weatherboard building was completely destroyed and at 3.00am the firemen were still at the golf links."

Despite the fire, the mood in the club was still positive and the annual report of March reported that due to the insurance cover, the financial cost to the club was small. During the previous year the membership had increased by 32 members and 22 associates. In these formative years it seemed as though the club had built a good association with the Commonwealth Golf Club in Melbourne and received good advice from people such as John Young, Bill Edgar, Bill Fowler and Ted Kay. The

committee had secured the services of Mr John "Jock" Young, the well known Commonwealth professional, in an advisory capacity and acting on his advice, a comprehensive scheme for course improvement and reconstruction was formulated. He was born at St Andrews in Scotland and when he migrated to Australia, he worked as a professional and a greenkeeper in a number of clubs including Geelong, Yarra Yarra, and Riversdale. The club also announced that it had appointed Mr Bill Fowler as professional for the coming season. He had been champion of the Commonwealth Club, state champion in 1928 and holder of the Victorian and Australian foursomes championships.

Under Ted Kay's supervision seven greens were remodelled according to modern ideas of course architecture and water had been laid to all tees. An experiment was made in lightly ploughing seed of gum and acacia species in prepared ground. It is estimated that by this method 6000 young trees had grown. The season opened on April 12 with the whole of the course now being in City of Ballarat territory.

As was the case in the previous year, 1931 began with more problems for the club. Early in the year the clubhouse was broken into and valuable property was stolen. Then in March, during a spell of hot weather, a grass fire broke out on one of the fairways, and spreading rapidly destroyed a large area of young trees which had been growing well and helping to add to the attractiveness of the course. Following quickly on these setbacks came a lightning strike, adding to the distress of the club. The strike of Friday 20 March 1931 was reported in *The Courier* as follows.

"Vivid flashes of lightning which accompanied the thunder and rain on Friday afternoon, appears to have been more acutely felt at Ballarat North than in the city. For a time they caused a suspension of work at I & R Morley mills where the electrical equipment was disorganised, but the severity of the situation was more pronounced at the Ballarat North Golf clubhouse.

There a blinding shaft of lightning struck a tall chimney on the southern end of the building, completely shattering it, penetrated the building and forced an outlet at two windows and six ventilators, which met with the same destructive fate as the chimney. A visit to the pavilion revealed a chaotic condition of affairs. It was apparent that the lightning, after razing the chimney, had passed into the interior of the building tearing asunder and destroying everything in its course.

It simply swept through the fibro plaster ceiling, tearing away huge panels and leaving a hole of about 20 feet (7m) by 6 feet (2m), besides twisting and distorting other fixtures into an indescribable mess. It also ripped off the tiled eaves for a distance of about 15 feet (5m) and caused the fusion of the electric wires in a way that alarmed the members who happened to be in there at the time. Running along the electric wires, the lightning struck the switchboard with such effect that some of the brass fittings were hurled some distance. Other portions, particularly the brass work, were reduced to molten metal and the board wrenched from its position was thrown to the other side of the room.

In the passage from one end of the building to the other the lightning caused three outbreaks of fire amongst the debris. Fortunately several members were about at the time and the fires were extinguished before severe damage was wrought. Probably, but for their presence, the whole building would have been destroyed. The ventilators through which the lightning chiefly escaped were also ruined. Their framework was charred and blackened, and not a vestige of the metal of which they were composed was left in position, the major portion of it being melted into unrecognisable masses.

Apart from the chimney, the eaves and a portion of the ceiling, the main structure remained intact. An inspection of the damage was made on Saturday by the club's architect (Mr W G Morrow). Three members of the club Messrs R Bickett, R Wenning and O J Martin who happened to be nearby at the time, passed through a decidedly unpleasant and nerve testing experience. Sheltering from the wind and rain, Mr Bickett was on the west side of the building overlooking the fairways. There were several claps of thunder accompanied by fork and chain lightning prior to that which struck the building. Suddenly a flash of particular vividness occurred. There was a tremendous crash and simultaneously Mr Bickett experienced the extraordinary sensation of being apparently struck a heavy blow on the shoulder. He was thrown from his seat a distance of several yards and for the moment dazed. He also felt a strange cramping of his right arm and on investigating the cause he discovered a deep blue bruise which had obviously been caused by the lightning.

At the time of the devastating flash, Messrs R Wenning and O J Martin were engaged in a game of golf. Apparently they were in the course of the lightning, from which both of them felt a sudden twitch which caused them momentarily to lose their equilibrium and to stagger. They however happily escaped the full force of the lightning, beyond that feeling that something heavy from above was forcing them to the ground. It was a most uncanny experience they stated, and each declared that for the moment, he felt a heavy weight had fallen upon him. Mr Martin who still suffers from injuries, during the weekend suffered severely from shock."

Due to the good support of members and the fairways being cut during the summer months the club was able to extend the season. A new Atco greens mower was purchased and proved to be a great success with the greens being cut twice a week. Mr Ted Kay took a working holiday in January where he visited many courses as far away as Warrnambool looking for ideas that might be useful at Ballarat North.

The annual report of 1933 stated that by a substantial increase in receipts, particularly in regard to subscriptions, nominations and green fees, the year ended with a credit balance. The principle course improvements made during the year were the remodelling of bunkers on holes 7,8,9, and 15. The club was presented with 18 metal direction discs, with metal figures attached showing the number of each tee, yardage and golf value of each hole. Also during this year the associates donated two handsome blackwood boards, shield shaped and inscribed with the names of

both the associates and gentlemen champions since the inception of the club. The boards are present in the clubhouse today. At the Norman Street entrance, a cattle grid was constructed using round pipes that the club had been given, to prevent wandering stock from entering the clubs' property.

1934 was again another successful year with increased membership, a satisfactory financial result and further course improvements. An important addition to the course was the construction of a practice putting green at the front of the clubhouse. The clay pit



Practice putting green at the front of the clubhouse - The Courier photo

on the south side of the 13th, "the canyon hole" had been steadily creeping northwards and due to safety concerns, the pit was fenced and declared out of bounds, adding 40 yards to the hole. It was around this time that many visiting golfers declared that the course was one of the finest, if not the finest in Victoria outside the metropolitan area.

The Ballarat Courier reported that "a centenary commemoration of the State of Victoria took place in August when an avenue of trees was planted from the main gate to the clubhouse to celebrate the occasion. As the club boundary was wholly in the City of Ballarat it was thought that the mayor and mayoress of the city (Cr A T Darling and Mrs Darling) should plant the first trees. The species planted were of the spruce and cedar type and the president (Mr E C Cleaver) in asking the mayoress to plant the first tree, mentioned that the committee had a two-fold purpose in view when planting this avenue. Firstly, it was a fitting way for a golf club to celebrate the centenary of the state, and as the mayor was the first member of the club to occupy the position of chief magistrate of the city, he was honouring his club by planting a tree to mark the completion of a most successful term of office. The mayoress, in planting the first tree, expressed the wish that the trees would grow as rapidly as the club had grown, and congratulated the club on the progress which it had made in the first few years of its existence."

In the middle 1930s there was discussion about changing the name of the club to one less localised than Ballarat North. At this time some of the highways in

central parts of Victoria were being given names and Creswick Road became part of the Midland Highway. "Midlands" was one of the names suggested as the new one for the club and in 1936 the committee approved the name and the Ballarat North Golf Club became the Midlands Golf Club at the annual meeting of March 23 1936 when Mr Clive Cleaver was president.

A benefit for members occurred in the following year when the tramline in Lydiard Street from the city which had previously terminated at Gregory Street was extended to the cemetery gates offering an additional mode of transport for golfers particularly those from the Soldiers Hill area.

Another robbery took place at the clubhouse in September and *The Courier* reported that "two men who had been charged with breaking and entering at the Midlands Golf Club appeared in court. They broke a window to gain access and stole liquor, tobacco and other items. They had prior convictions for housebreaking and stealing."

Six monthly medals were played for during the year. At the annual meeting, the members were told that substantial expenditure had been made during the year on a new fairway mower and new greens mower. These were now being housed in a machinery shed built by a number of volunteers. The enormous effort involved in building greens in these times can be appreciated by the fact that more than 2000 barrow loads of topsoil were used in the reconstruction of the 1st and 13th greens.

In May of 1938, the Saturday competition was played in three grades for the first time, when 80 men and 40 ladies entered. The annual meeting held at the clubhouse in 1939 brought a record member attendance. The meeting was told of the good progress that the club had made and this had attracted an unusual number of visitors, many of whom expressed admiration at the quality of golf that was provided. Mr H Dawe was elected as president and one of the things he said was that he hoped a shop could be built for the professional during the year. A suggestion put forward at the meeting that the 10th green be bunkered promptly brought a protest lodged from the ranks of the ladies.

The Courier reported in August 1939 that "in front of over 100 members a new clubhouse was opened at the Wendouree Golf Club. Previously it was a nine hole golf course but is now 18 holes-4309 yards-SSS 65." The course closed shortly afterwards due to WW2.

Chapter 5

TIME OF CONSOLIDATION

The early 1940s, with the dark shadow of World War 2 hanging over it, was a time of anxiety and uncertainty. It was in this situation that the club had important decisions to make, ones that were fundamental to its survival. The annual report of 1940 stated that the club was in a very sound financial position. Forty nine new members had been elected during the previous year. The course had been kept in excellent order and alterations to the existing 17th and 18th holes were under consideration. During the season material improvements were carried out, notably, the installation of a hot water system to the showers and kitchen, whilst a new agricultural mower, practice net, mowers and hoses had also been purchased.

However, the effect of the war continuing was becoming obvious, as that which had started as a conflict in far-away Europe suddenly became an undeniable threat to homeland Australia when Japan entered the war in 1941. Singapore fell, Darwin was bombed in February 1942 and midget submarines were discovered in Sydney Harbour. The significant naval battle of the Coral Sea was waged in May 1942 slowing the expansion of the Japanese military into Papua-New Guinea. During the Battle of the Kokoda Track their forces had moved to within sight of Port Moresby sparking fears that they could soon invade Australia. With many club members now serving in the armed forces the president made a special plea to all members

to retain their membership and if possible induce others to join. *The Ballarat Courier* was reduced to four pages daily and beer production was cut by one third. Selkirks ceased operations for two years. The fields in club competitions declined. There were problems with transport and with petrol rationing the number of visitors dropped substantially. Due to a world wide shortage of rubber, a vital war material, golf balls ceased being manufactured and became in short supply. The VGA made a special request to all clubs not to hold major championships or open amateur events for the duration of the war. The district pennant competition was suspended and the Midlands club championships were not held 1942-1945. For a time, the committee, to save on expenses and labour altered the sequence of play on a number of holes reducing the number of greens played on to ten.

It was in this environment that the determination and resilience of the members shone through. While limiting the impact on the club through much volunteer work they acknowledged the necessity of providing support for the troops overseas and gave substantial monetary donations to the Red Cross, the Comforts Fund and the London bombing victims. The associates as well as being well to the fore in all fundraising activities and patriotic causes knitted socks for the troops. The ladies committee adopted two families in England who had suffered from the effects of the war and promised to see that they were kept supplied with

food parcels. Midlands, in conjunction with the Legacy Club conducted gymkanas in aid of legacy funds. The club was deeply saddened when the 1940 club

Ballaist
1st October 40

Mr Alf White
Dear Sir

With reference to
my paddock in Norman St
I am prepared to put in the
definite offer of it for one
month - the price being £800
free clear of all costs to me -
there is a lease current &
I doubt if I could give possession
under six months if you decide
to purchase

Yours faithfully,
Angus Greenfield

£30

Letter from Angus Greenfield offering his land for purchase

champion Frank Ifould lost his life shortly after joining active service.

The tenure of the land became a major consideration for the committee when the lease on Selkirk's land was due to expire. The annual report of 1940 said that after a conference with the trustees of the late James Selkirk, a very satisfactory mutual agreement had been arrived at. A lease has been executed by which the club leased the land for a period of 54 years, with the right of first refusal should the trustees decide to sell. The club had had an option to acquire the land but apparently remembering the experiences of the depression years could not see its way clear to exercise that opportunity to purchase. This decision, while being well received at the time, was not popular with some members in the late 1960s. They believed that had the club purchased the land, then much of the burden on the club would have been avoided. However in 1940, worried by the encroachment of the claypit on the 13th fairway, the committee decided that the time had arrived for this emergency to be met. The club had an offer of purchase of the Greenfield property north of Norman Street and took the rather bold but fortunate step of buying the land. This is the land now occupied by the current 2nd and 3rd holes and Club Crescent. To the president's mind this was a distinctly progressive step and the most advanced that the club had made since its inception.

The committee followed this up by engaging the well-known golf architect, Vern Morcom, to lay out five holes on the area. He was a long serving superintendent at

Kingston Heath and was responsible for the original design or redesign of many courses including Glenelg, Royal Hobart and Spring Valley. Three holes were brought into use as that was the number lost in the kiln section of the old course through the expansion of the clay pit. In April 1941 the new green at the 17th was used for the first time, as were new tees for the 2nd, 17th and 18th holes. Subsequently, in the late forties, the layout of the whole Selkirk section was redesigned by a committee consisting of Messrs "Keg" Dunbar, Bryan Hyland and O J "Mart" Martin, and the five Morcom holes were also brought into the plan. The committee agreed with a proposal to allow members of abandoned clubs - namely Wendouree - to have use of the course provided that they paid the current membership fees only.

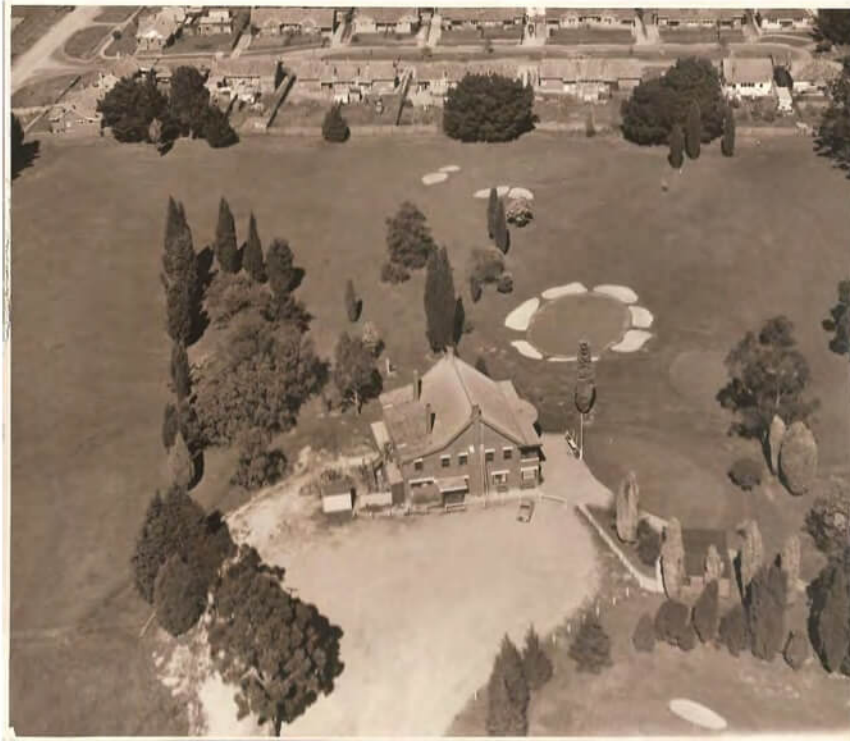
In June 1945 the reconstructed course of 18 holes was played for the first time with three holes in the new paddock. The layout was a par 70 of 5535 yards. The revival of the game after the war was reported in the following article of May 1946 by *The Courier*. "The worldwide increase in popularity of the game of golf, exemplified by attendances of 40,000 spectators at some of the big American tournaments, is reflected in Ballarat by the number of new members being enrolled at local clubs. Former players who retired from the game during the war are also making a comeback. Difficulties in securing golf balls which are in very limited supply at present, and golf clubs, no doubt are deterring others from taking up the Royal and Ancient game. The tendency on the part of some enthusiasts, who are not affiliated with a club, to regard local links as public courses where a game may be had on the

payment of green fees is causing crowding on week-ends.

The Midlands club has found it necessary to enforce the Victorian Golf Association's ruling regarding the eligibility of visitors to play on a registered course. This consists of membership of a recognised golf club and introduction by a club member. Payment of green fees alone does not entitle a person to play on a registered course. Prospective members, whose nomination fees have been paid will be eligible to play pending election to membership. All clubs expect further applications for membership as the season progresses and accommodation on the links, particularly on week-ends, may yet present a difficult problem."

The supply of balls and clubs at this time was presenting a problem to the game as most manufacturers had turned their attention to war related works. With the advent of steel shafts in the 1930s, sporting goods manufacturers had sprung up, taking away a task that was once the domain of the club professional. Shortly after the war, in an effort to further increase their share of the business, they refused to supply any heads or shafts to the professionals. In response to this the PGA formed a company, PGA Mutual, of which every member had to purchase shares. It was able to source supplies from overseas mainly from England.

A working bee was organised in 1947 to plant pine trees on the Greenfield land to define future fairways and when the new holes were ready for play, the trees were already well established. A few trees are still to



Aerial photograph showing the 17th and 18th holes with the bunker at the 16th green in the foreground - The Courier photo

be seen on the 2nd and 3rd fairways. The five new holes in Greenfield's paddock took some years to complete. In June 1948, when the 4th green was built, the 5th became a temporary 475 yard par five around the hill to the existing 7th green eliminating the sand scrape.

Confidence that the successful season experienced last year, was but the forerunner of future prosperous years was expressed by the retiring president, Mr S J

Weir, at the annual meeting at Craig's Hotel on 24 March 1947. The club was sound financially, he said, but the value of its material assets was outweighed by the intangible assets of good fellowship, good sportsmanship and a spirit of co-operation essential to the life of a progressive organisation. The annual report showed a marked increase in membership and in the number of visitors making use of the course. The open tournament was an outstanding success and the club has adopted a plan for the permanent layout of the course which it intends to implement as soon as possible. The associates continued their great support to the club and in 1946 decided to form a floral committee.

A letter to the newspaper editor in March 1947 stated - "that favourite rendezvous of dancers, the Midlands Golf Clubhouse, was the scene last Saturday night of an enjoyable dance organised by the clubs' social committee. Functions such as these are held monthly and are a very active means of raising funds for club improvements. To one who, as a playing member, spent many happy times there before the war, these improvements are a great revelation. The porch is glassed in for greater comfort and attraction, and upstairs, the clubroom is modernised with a new bridge annex, up to date kitchen and stand for the orchestra, with an artistic setting of mirrors, lights and flowers."

At the annual meeting of that year, Mr J Dearden, a foundation member of the club, affirmed that no club in his knowledge had made such progress as had Midlands over the past year. The work of the social committee

was praised for the conduct of the monthly dances, an exacting duty, splendidly carried out. Mr E Bryan, acknowledged the members thanks saying that the committee had certain obligations connected with the remodelling of the clubhouse, and would continue at least until those commitments had been honoured. At this meeting members voted for an increase in nomination fees as club membership was almost at its limit, and future members should contribute on a larger scale for the right of participation in the club's assets.

Prior to 1947, golfers in Ballarat and probably most in Victoria would carry their clubs in bags slung over their shoulders. *The Courier* reported on the first use of a golf buggy. "The introduction of the trolley "caddie" to Ballarat golf through the agency of Harold Owen at Alfredton on Saturday, draws attention to the various methods that have been adopted by golfers to rid the burden of a bag of clubs. In America, a variety of animals, including donkeys and large dogs, has been brought into commission at various times.

The trolley idea is of comparatively recent times. It has wide possibilities for the transport of a mere bag of clubs. An inventive mind could have an improved model in the process of designing, and could produce a vehicle with balloon tyres and every modern attachment from bottle opener to range finder. Having in mind the fact that the rules of the game of golf not long since limited the number of clubs a player may carry to 14, it is reasonable to suppose that the mechanical caddy may yet engage their attention and its shape, design, weight and general purpose may be defined in an additional rule of the Royal and Ancient game".



The 17th green with houses fronting Walsh Avenue in the background

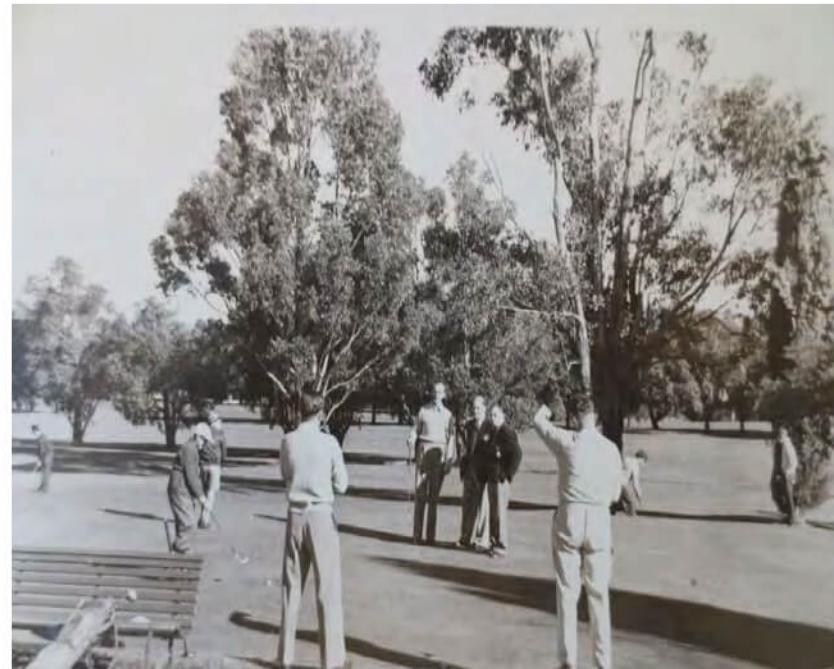
It was in the following year that Bob Ritchie was elected as president of the club. An article appeared in *The Courier* concerning him and his brother. "Two brothers playing golf do not arouse any great interest, but when those brothers happen to be presidents of rival golf clubs in the same year - unique in the history of golf in Ballarat - then a blood match between the two arouses the interest of all golfers, particularly the members of the two clubs concerned. They both have a number of things in common. Both are wine and spirit merchants and both play off a handicap of 15, but

president Bob has a slight advantage. This is his second consecutive year as president and he is the holder of several open championship trophies. Undaunted by such opposition Ballarat's president Bill is ready to do battle and is even ready to allow his brother a handicap on account of his great age. Bob is 46, while younger brother Bill is 41. They both started to play at Midlands about 15 years ago, but have never actually played golf together or against one another. Unfortunately the result of the match, if it was ever played, is unrecorded. Bob Ritchie was a former president of the BDGA".

Mr Ritchie at the annual meeting, spoke of a year beyond expectations. Entries for the annual tournament were in excess of 1900 players, and green fee players had numbered 1300. A motion to alter the constitution to permit the award of life-membership for conspicuous services to the club was carried unanimously. Messrs J C Dearden, J H Davey and C H G Anderson became the first life-members of the club. The first guest day held by associates was played in 1949 and in 1950 they purchased a silver tray as a trophy in recognition of work done for the club by Mrs Mae Page who had been president in 1941-42, 1944 and 1949.

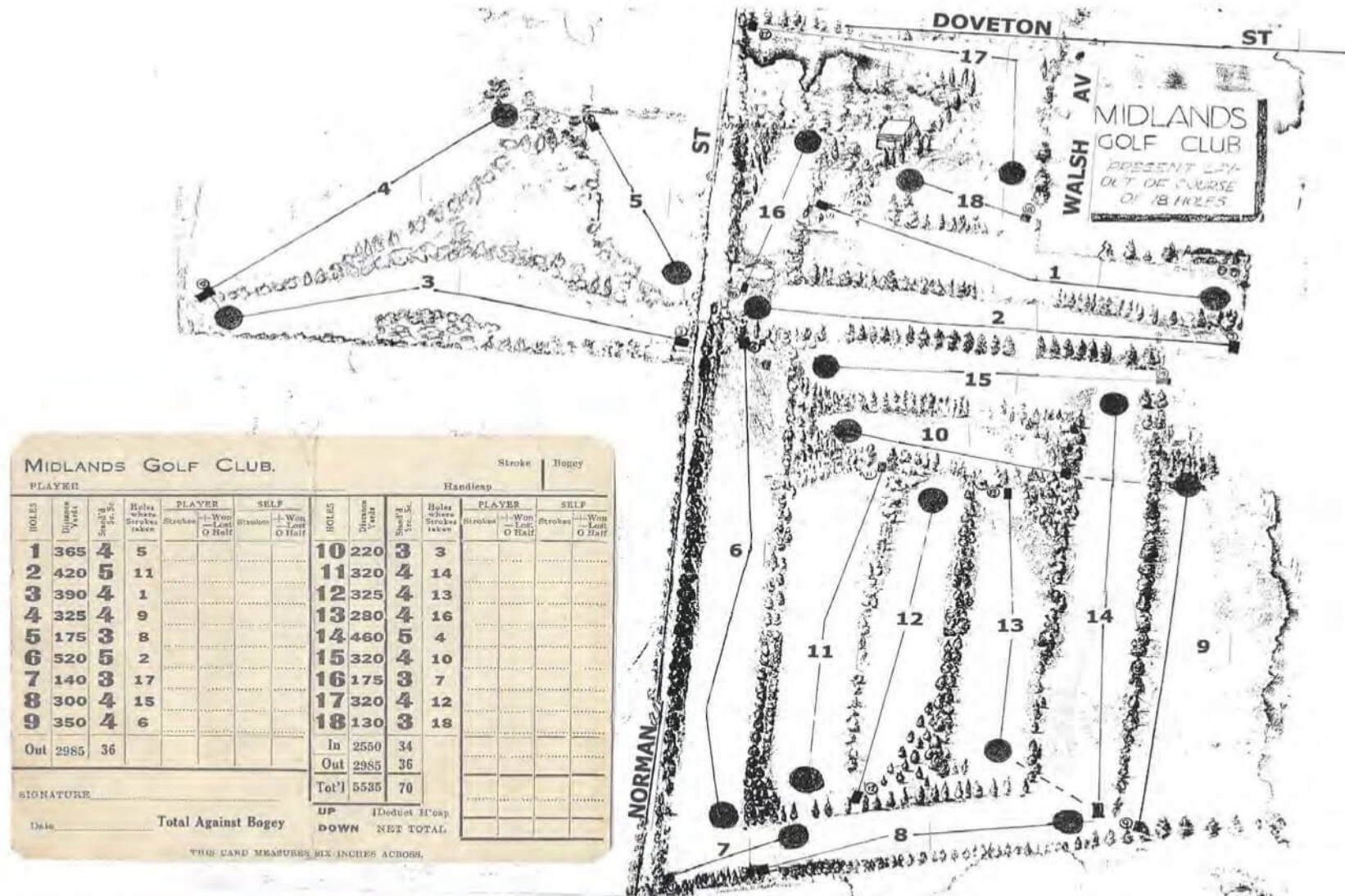
In the late 1940s a junior golf school was held at Midlands on Saturday mornings. The juniors, mainly boys, received tuition from club professional Graeme Cates, with help from "Keg" Dunbar, Hal Gear (Buninyong) and Bob Campbell. The forming of the colts golf club in December 1949, brought into existence a club that was probably unique in Australia. The boys were assisted for a time by an advisory committee of experienced golfers before being handed

the control of their affairs, subject to conditions regarding times of play and matters of that kind. The club was in existence for around 20 years and in the 1960s had a team that played in the senior A Grade district pennant competition for a number of years.



View of the course taken from the front of the clubhouse with the practice putting green in the foreground - the first fairway is in the background.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / TIME OF CONSOLIDATION



Layout of the Course in 1945 with three holes in Greenfields Paddock. The fourth hole was played to a temporary sand scrape

Chapter 6

THE PROSPEROUS YEARS

After a turbulent period of some thirty years with the Great Depression preceded by WW1 and followed by WW2 the world was ready for peace and stability. In Australia, post war reconstruction, an influx of migrants and improvements in welfare, health and education put the country in a prolonged period of economic prosperity. The massive Snowy Mountains Scheme began and the iconic FJ Holdens first rolled off the assembly line in 1953. This was in contrast to Britain and parts of Europe where the infrastructure and economy was severely damaged. Houses, factories, major industrial areas and power grids had been reduced to rubble due to the constant bombing and a labour shortage was caused by many people being killed or displaced. Having to import most raw materials put a strain on an economy already struggling under a huge war debt.

The period 1950 - 1970 could be regarded as the most prosperous in the clubs' history. In most years during this time, the club returned a solid profit, had near capacity membership, purchased major equipment and more land, upgraded the clubhouse, became licensed and formed a bowling club. It also embarked on a new layout, staged major championships and entertained high profile visitors. The largest industry in Ballarat at this time was the Ballarat North Railway Workshops, employing 500 people. It would

probably be fair to say that a good number of Midlands members may have been employed in this industry and with this security of local employment and steady increases in the basic wage would have been members for many years.

At the annual meeting of March 1950, Mr Fred Prest proposed that the ex-servicemen of the club organise a special effort to erect a memorial to service personnel of both World Wars, and that it take the form of a concrete seat along the border of the practice putting green, Mr Kevin Curtain suggested that memorial gates be erected at the Norman Street entrance to the club. The President, Mr S J Weir, stated that on either side of the entrance was a row of fine cedar trees, but the approaches were not in keeping with the remainder of the club. The gates were designed and constructed and by invitation through the president, the Governor of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brooks, officially opened the memorial on August 8, 1950. The scheme was financed by many donations from members and special efforts arranged for the purpose. Much of the work was done by working bees.

In June 1951 golfers began playing their new layout. There had been so many changes in the method of playing the course in the last dozen or so years that sceptics were asking "what will be next. " This one, it

was said, should be permanent, the master plan having been adopted by a general meeting called specifically for this purpose several years ago. There was, however, a good deal of work to be done to put the layout on the basis originally planned. It required new greens at the 2nd, 4th and 18th holes, and remodelling others, with the purpose of doing away with too much slope. The distance of the course measured 5858 yards. 1951 was an extremely cold and wet winter with both Midlands and Ballarat being closed for a time. The summer of this year was in contrast and the number of entries in the summer competitions increased to the extent where the general committee decided to make the handling of these events its job all year.

On Friday 1 February 1952, *The Courier* reported that "fanned by a fresh north-westerly wind, a grass fire that could have developed into a serious threat to the Midlands Golf Club, broke out shortly before 10 o'clock on Thursday morning. It is believed that the fire started on the roadside in Norman Street and spread rapidly in a direct line towards the clubhouse. The fire was noticed by the club greenkeeper, Mr Ted Kay, who attempted to check it. He was joined by members of the staff of L A Smith, produce merchants, who were building a haystack in the vicinity. Using bags they managed to check the fire until the arrival of the city Fire Brigade, who worked for an hour to make the area safe from further outbreaks. Assistance was also given by the Invermay Rural Fire Brigade. Damage to the course was not significant".

The mood in the club this year was particularly buoyant with much expenditure on new greens and

improved drainage. Projects on which all the money owing on them had been cleared during the year, were the erection of the honour gates and the carpeting of the clubhouse. The matter of the clubs' colours was raised at its annual meeting and referred to the committee for decision. In 1921 the choice of club colours had been left to the ladies and they had decided on blue and white. It was pointed out at the meeting that both Ballarat and Midlands had similar colours and a decision was made to make the change to blue and gold.

The committee then decided to make the colours more distinctive by adding another blue, and if a flag is flown, it will be a tricolour of dark blue, light blue and gold. Following the adoption of these colours the committee went a stage further the following year and approved a design for a flag. This is to have a dark blue background with a gold monogram between two narrow parallel stripes of light blue. As soon as this was approved the committee members offered to donate a club flag, an Australian national flag and a pole on which to fly them.

As was the case the previous year, 1952 was an extremely severe winter. 609 points of rain fell during the month of June, making it the second wettest June in history. Ballarat's weather figures date back to 1857. In early July snow fell and on 9 September play in the annual tournament came to a halt when the course was covered inches deep in snow. It was during this year that the club decided to change its financial year to coincide with the calendar year. Satisfactory profits were being returned, even while there was much

expenditure on assets such as a new tractor and machinery shed.

The committee of 1955 went to the annual meeting seeking approval to purchase 45 acres of land behind what was to become the Ballarat North Technical School. In a fortunate decision, members were unanimous in giving authority to negotiate the purchase. This decision was crucial to the long term goal of having an 18 holes layout on the clubs' own property. It was stated that the club may not use the land for several years, but in the meantime, it could be prepared for the changeover. At the annual meeting in the following year the President Mr H W Irvine said that in making the purchase the club was looking to the future. Part of the present course was on property held on lease and the committee felt it was fortunate to be able to secure suitable land which not only adjoined the club's property but was in a rapidly expanding area.

The purchase price was \$300 per acre, and subsequently some two years later, a further 18 acres abutting this land was bought, bringing the total owned to about 120 acres. The annual report referred to the successful efforts of the greens committee in consolidating the work of former years. It was said that with the excellent co-operation of the greens staff under Mr J Parke, it had been possible to maintain the course in such good condition. A considerable rise in the amount of green fees showed the course popularity.

In May 1956 "Keg" Dunbar reported that the associates had received the first of their new monthly medal trophies. The attractively designed brooches to

be of sterling silver with gold finish, were circular in shape and the size of a shilling, with the Midlands "M" cut out of the centre. The initiative that the associates play for a monthly medal was first suggested by the then captain Mrs E O'Halloran at a meeting in 1950. Midlands is believed to be one of the first, if not the first, among country associate committees to strike their own medal. It certainly had players on their toes to win one. Mrs R A Williams was the first winner, scoring a net 67, with Mrs K Allan one stroke behind her.

During 1956, preparations were made by the committee for application to the Licensing Court to become a registered club under the court's jurisdiction and alterations to the clubhouse were made to meet the requirements of the court. When the licence was granted, 4oz glasses were sold at a cost six pence and 6oz ten pence. One year later 7oz glasses were introduced. 1956 was the year of the Olympic Games in Melbourne and as a gesture of friendliness, the club granted the use of the course, clubhouse and golf equipment free of charge to all Olympic rowers and canoeists competing in Ballarat.

It soon became apparent that the growth of the club was making an increased demand for more clubhouse space. During this decade a scheme was formulated for the building of a new clubhouse north of Norman Street, to be financed along with new course construction, through the subdivision of the original Ronaldson property into some 110 building blocks. However there were many obstacles to overcome and these, together with the urgency for more lounge and



Glassed in clubhouse balcony

locker room accommodation for members and associates, caused the shelving of the plans.

By August of 1957, the balcony of the clubhouse was glassed in, as part of the first stage to provide more floor space for club functions. As well as greatly improving the appearance of the clubhouse, it gave a good view over the home holes in any weather. This was financed through the efforts of a very active social committee which had set itself an objective for that purpose. Also in this year, Midlands offered the use of its clubhouse to Mount Xavier for fundraising following a fire at that club. A sad day for the club occurred in 1960 when two former presidents Bob Ritchie and Tom Haslem both died on the same day, 26 July. At the annual meeting of 1958 the President Mr J Allan stated

that despite increasing costs the club reported another increase in profits over the previous year. He acknowledged the amount of voluntary work by the general committee and sub-committees and said that the popularity of the club was shown by the large growth in match entries and green fees.

The initiative to form a district golf association for ladies came from the associates committee of the Midlands Golf Club in November 1961. However after discussion with representatives from other clubs, it was agreed that most problems could be dealt with without the difficulties of organising an association. Two years later, the need for such an association was recognised and in October 1963 at a meeting of district clubs it was agreed that an association be formed to combine the clubs in the Ballarat district. The minutes of the meeting held in October 1964, record the desire to form an association for the development of women's golf in the district and encourage a closer co-operation between clubs.

Present at the meeting were delegates from Ballan, Ballarat, Beaufort, Buninyong, Chalambar, Creswick, Elmhurst, Hepburn Springs, Maryborough, Midlands and Mount Xavier. Apologies were received from Bacchus Marsh and Melton Valley. After the election of a president, Mrs O H Coltman, the main business of the meeting - the consideration of the constitution which had been submitted to all district clubs by the temporary committee was read and discussed. After the constitution was accepted by all present, an election of office-bearers and committee took place. The name adopted was the BDLGA (Ballarat District Ladies Golf

Association) and this remained until 1998 when altered to Womens Golf Ballarat District.

Midlands entered into discussions in July 1961 with Horsham Golf Club officials regarding exchange of reciprocal rights and both clubs agreed with the proposal. The club also had similar rights with Glenelg in Adelaide. At the annual meeting earlier that year, members had agreed to a levy with the monies raised to be placed in a capital course improvements fund. The meeting was told that the position could arise of having to move earlier than expected and it is necessary to be prepared for that. A plan was on display of a proposed new layout on the club's land north of Norman Street. It had an approximate length of 6270 yards with a possible SSS rating of 72. The first and tenth holes were to be close to a new clubhouse on the highest ground, just south of the present 3rd hole. The annual report showed an increase in membership to a total of 584 in all categories.

The Midlands privilege cup was played for the first time on 28 April 1962, when it was won by Bob Irwin with a net score of 62. The trophy was donated by former treasurer Geoff Findlay and the privilege that goes with the cup, is that the holder may once during the month, invite any of his fellow competitors to fill it with any kind of beverage so that he may drink to their health. Over the years it has become a much sought after prize, but it has brought some winners who did not use it in moderation, undone.

Theft and vandalism is a problem faced by all golf clubs. A minor theft, but also annoying, was reported

by *The Courier* on Saturday 22 December 1962. "Thieves cut down and stole a pine tree about eight to ten feet high from the Midlands Golf Course on Thursday night. The tree, not visible from the roadway, had been growing on the course to the north of Norman Street. The tree was observed by golf course staff at 4 o'clock on Thursday afternoon. The greenkeeper discovered that the tree had been cut down and removed when he visited the area at about 8 o'clock the following morning. Club officials said that it was not the first occasion on which pine trees had been removed from the course at Christmas time. They were annoyed at the theft, not because of any monetary loss, but because it had taken six or seven years to grow the tree." A positive aspect for the club was that it achieved its best ever financial result in this year. During the year it had been proposed that the club would engage a full-time bar steward, but the committee decided that they would do the work voluntarily on a roster system, so that funds could be made available for new course extensions.

Following on from the success of the privilege cup, instituted two years earlier, the committee decided to establish another major event on the golfing calendar. The family of the late Kevin Curtain, who was a former secretary and served on other committees, offered a perpetual trophy, to be played for as the club saw fit, in recognition of his association with Midlands. The event decided upon was a Medallist of the Year competition, where each year the winners of each month's monthly medal would play off in a stroke event, to decide the name to be entered on the honour board.



Testing a "Rainmobile" on the 3rd fairway. The hedge in the background was at the rear of the 3rd tee on the north side of Norman Street.

In 1964 the club had made investigation into the problem of adequately watering the fairways during the drier months. A Bendigo company which specialised in golf course irrigation was engaged to provide a solution. It was determined that the "Rainmobile" was best suited to the task. This involved a self-propelled sprinkler, which would throw a spray 30 metres wide at normal pressure, and as it turned it would draw itself along a wire cable for a distance of approximately 100 metres before shutting off. This remained the main method of fairway watering until the underground

watering system was installed thirty years later. A bore was put down near the mine dump on the club's property north of Ronaldson's foundry and water was found in an old mine drive at about 125 feet. A test for salinity however showed a salt content which made the water unfit for general use. Finance - the usual bug bear - did not permit the further exploiting of the bore.

The very dry summer of 1967/68 and the water restrictions that came with it emphasised the need for golf clubs to construct an emergency water supply. The protracted drought conditions caused unprecedented problems to golf clubs throughout Victoria, with Ballarat, once regarded as a city of plenty as far as water supply was concerned, as hard hit as any area. The president Mr Gordon said that it was apparent that until the proposed new reservoir at Bungul came into use the club could expect restrictions similar to those now in operation.

It was only because of the support of members, who on a roster system, watered greens for one hour a day each evening that the greens managed to survive. The associates were also willing helpers in this important task. Ballarat Golf Club kindly offered to supply water from the bore at their course and tankers were used to transport the water to Midlands. In January, 2000 gallons a day from the bore were pumped onto the greens to augment the hour-a-day watering.

At the time it was envisaged that a reservoir, holding about 600,000 gallons, would be established on a site just south of the present men's third tee to

supplement requirements. The committee called for advice from people successful in water divining and a bore was sunk adjacent to the proposed reservoir. Water was expected to be found at a depth of between 160 and 180 feet. As well as quality of water, rate of flow was important and there had to be a recovery rate adequate to withstand pumping at about 3000 gallons an hour. A drill head was lost at about 140 feet and ultimately the project was unsuccessful and consequently put on hold.

A special meeting was called in September 1965 to discuss plans for extensions to the clubhouse. This involved converting the members and associates locker rooms into a bar lounge, building a new locker room for associates, using the present bar as a members locker room and adding a multi-purpose lounge adjoining the south side of the building, giving an extra 1400 square feet of accommodation. To undertake these alterations, the club would have to shelve for several years, plans to construct a new clubhouse on the property north of Norman Street. At the annual meeting of March 1966, the president Mr J Gordon, told members that work would be completed in July. The plan proposed last year for a new clubhouse had been found to be impracticable at present, and the plan adopted had been undertaken to meet the needs of the club for many years ahead.

It was announced that the club had plans for constructing a bowling green when circumstances permitted and preliminary work on this could begin this year. This section would also require extra accommodation and the club was looking to the future in making additional lounge space available at this

stage. In December 1965, thieves broke into the clubhouse by breaking a window, and using oxy-acetylene equipment cut open a safe containing a significant amount of cash.

The first edition of the Midlander was brought out in May of 1967 as a monthly publication with the purpose of keeping members in touch with club affairs and giving a record of events. Initially it was four pages in total but with club activities extending to bowling and already taking in indoor bowls it soon had a demand for an enlargement. In that year the Midlander made mention of an oddly worded resolution that stated - at the last meeting of the club the committee agreed that associates would be permitted to wear trousers when playing on the course but these however must be removed before entering the clubhouse.

A special extra-ordinary general meeting was held in the clubhouse in November 1968 when sufficient members attended to form a quorum and approved of the necessary alterations to the Liquor Control Act being written into the Midlands constitution. The main features were the age limit for admittance to the members bar being lowered to 18 years, and members being permitted to have guests in the club. A committee meeting followed to control the alterations by passing by-laws which allowed members to entertain three guests Monday to Saturday during the hours that the bar is open. On Sundays, one guest only is permitted with a limit of 12 visits in any one year. A visitors book was made available in the bar and had to be signed on all occasions. In regard to the reduction in the age limit which allows junior members to avail themselves of the

bar facilities, the committee advises that this will be very strictly supervised, and if found necessary will be reviewed at any time.

Dress rules for the bar and dining room stipulated that a coat with collar and tie had to be worn from 4.30pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Associates were not permitted in the member's bar before 7pm on Saturdays or between 5pm and 7pm Monday to Friday.

At a well attended annual meeting in April 1969 it was decided that a levy would be imposed on members and associates. The levy amounted to 25% of the membership fee. The secretary Mr Gordon said that interest on loans to improve the course and clubhouse facilities were a major item of expense and the club had been forced to work on an overdraft which it had not been able to reduce. The president reported that the club had conducted a successful season despite setbacks caused by the drought and later by an unusually wet winter.

Mr Bill Atkinson was president in 1969 when Midlands reached its Golden Jubilee year. In the special edition of the Midlander he paid tribute to the pioneers of the club who worked to see that the foundations of the club on which it was established were enduring. He said that "they played under conditions and difficulties which the golfer of today would find it hard to believe, yet they found great pleasure in their enjoyment of their sport. During our first 50 years we have had our good times, and others perhaps not so good, but we have always moved forward. It is from the wealth of club spirit that we must meet the future, and if we can

do this in the same manner as our pioneers faced up to their problems, we can look forward to our part in the next 50 years with confidence." He made particular reference to Mr Jim Davey, the foundation secretary of the club and the only surviving member of the first committee. Mr Davey was still a member of the club, an honour he shared with Mrs W Wheeler and Miss Stella Simpson who were foundation associate members.

The Golden Jubilee celebrations were held a fortnight later than the 50th anniversary date due to Easter falling during this time and many members would be away. The associates opened proceedings on the Thursday with a golf gymkhana. This was followed on Friday with the main social function, a cabaret ball held in the Civic Hall. On Saturday there was a golf tournament restricted to members, former members and associates, as well as a bowls programme. The celebrations concluded on Sunday with a mixed foursome over 13 holes and again bowls. This was then followed by an afternoon tea at which visitors were welcomed. Mr Davey presented an honor board for use by the associates.

As part of its plan of laying down of new holes on its undeveloped land, the committee approved the planting of trees along its boundary fences. This included a 600 yards stretch along the northern boundary (south side of Heinz Lane), 300 yards along the railway line and the left hand side of the current first fairway. A working bee organised about 30 members on a Sunday morning in July 1969 to plant about 450 pine trees around three sides of the perimeter of the new section of the course. The ground had been ploughed and rotary-hoed to give

the trees the best chance of survival. In the following year the associates gave money to the committee for the purchase of a new mower, slasher and an electric stove.

In April 1970 the Victorian Golf Association introduced a new standard scratch score and handicapping System to bring it in to line with one that had been operating in Great Britain. The original SSS system had been prepared for the R&A and was adopted by the VGA in 1958 with the hope that it would be adopted worldwide and bring about greater uniformity in handicapping. Considerable changes were made to the original scheme, but the need to take into account the great improvement in clubs, balls, playing techniques and course conditions meant a complete revision was necessary. The effect at Midlands was that players received an extension of one or two strokes on their handicaps. Under the new system, Midlands, while having a par of 70, had an allotted SSS of 67 and this became the basis on which handicaps were assessed.

The popularity of golf in these years was evident with Victoria's golfing population growing at the amazing rate of 10% per year, raising concern that it would not be long before the thousands of weekend players find that there are not enough courses to accommodate them. Most of the clubs in the metropolitan area had already closed their membership lists, with very few still accepting long-range applications for provisional membership. In this year Midlands had reciprocal rights only with Horsham, Glenelg in SA and Bagara in QLD. Today, 35 clubs offer this privilege. Mr Lex Davie of the Horsham Golf Club

who was the main instigator of the reciprocal arrangement with Midlands died in 1970. In 1973, Glenelg Golf Club offered Midlands a silver salver to be used as the club wished.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / THE PROSPEROUS YEARS



Aerial photograph of the old course - 1960. The cemetery is in the top right corner and the Ballarat North Technical School is to the left of the third hole.

Chapter 7

SELKIRK'S LAND

Midlands was faced with an eventful phase of its history in 1970 when Selkirk's advised of its intention to resume occupancy of the 46 acres of land on lease, on which holes 8 to 15 were situated. It, along with others, objected to a permit being issued to Selkirk's to extend its clay pit northwards on land occupied by the golf club.

The principal grounds of objection were devaluation of property, detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the area by changing the present appearance of the land which is of parkland, the detrimental effect on the general amenity of the area by increasing noise, dust and fumes, increased traffic with constant danger to children and the hardship to the golf club by being deprived of the use of the subject land.

The Courier reported the ensuing court case which made headlines for a number of days. "Six Lilley Street residents yesterday told a Town Planning Appeals Tribunal that noise and dust from a Wendouree industry made living in the area almost unbearable. One woman said that, when the noise was at its peak, her three children could not study at home and were forced to study "in a nearby park" (Midlands Golf course). The residents were among 36 objectors appealing against a permit being granted to James Selkirk Pty Ltd to carry on an extractive industry on land that it had leased to Midlands Golf Club.

The appeals were made by the golf club, Ballarat North Technical School, M B John Hattersley Ltd, and residents of the area.

The main concern in the area was the problem of noise and dust which seemed to be getting worse all the time. In the past few years, Selkirk's had built a new kiln, enlarged its dumping area and built a high bank of clay at the rear of the houses. Midlands Golf Club president, Mr E McCoy, said he had noticed a gradual deterioration of many trees on the golf course in recent years. Many trees had died in the past five years, especially on the southern portion and western boundary of the course - the areas closest to Selkirk's clay pits. Dust from the pits also seriously affected the course and the 11th green and surrounding area - the green and area nearest to the pits - was covered in clay dust during the summer.

In answer to a question from Mr P O'Callaghan, for Selkirk's, Mr McCoy said that the 11th green was definitely not up to the standard of other greens on the course. He added that the club had a lease on the course until 1993 and the reason it objected to the permit was to protect the members facilities. The club was formed in 1919 and he said under cross examination that one of the prime movers in the foundation of the club was James Selkirk. He also said that Selkirk's had leased the 46 acres of land at low rental.

The authorised officer of the Ballarat and District Joint Town Planning Committee, Mr R J Sharp, outlined the history of the issues leading up to the appeal. He said that Selkirk's had lodged an application to extend its extractive industry operations north of the existing clay hole on July 31 last year. The application was limited to the northern section of the land owned by the company, and the stated nature of the application was a continuation of existing extractive industry. During the next 14 days, 36 objections were lodged to the application.

An extractive industries advisory committee was established in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act and the Extractive Industries Act. The advisory committee made a recommendation to the Ballarat and District Town Planning Committee that a permit be issued, subject to such special conditions as may be required and serve notice to the objectors.

On the second day of the hearing, James Selkirk Pty Ltd claimed that the firm had an historical and legal right to resume the land leased to Midlands Golf Club to extend their brick making industry. Mr P O'Callaghan, counsel for Selkirk's, said that the firm would take steps to exercise their own rights under the lease. Because of the "unconscionable attitude" of Midlands they were forced to rely on their legal rights.

Selkirk's formal submission gave a history of the company since Robert Selkirk, the founder, began brick making operations at Allendale in 1883. He had bought 35 acres of land at Ballarat North - the site of the present factory and clay pit - with excellent brick

making clays and proximity to the market area. In 1912, he bought 46 acres of adjoining land to provide further clay deposits and room for factory expansion. The plant continued to develop on the original 35 acres. In 1919, the golf club was formed, a prime mover being James Selkirk. Until 1939, the 46 acre lot and a sizeable portion of the 35 acres, was used by Midlands free of charge. In 1925 the clubhouse was built with bricks donated by James Selkirk, who was a great benefactor of the club until his death in 1935.

In 1939 the land was leased to Midlands for 54 years at a yearly rental of \$100. The lease stated that the "lessees shall not be entitled to any compensation or reduction of rent, if at any time the use of the said land is curtailed by reason of extension of the clay pit." The lease reserved to the lessors the use of such parts of the land as might be required in connection with their brick making, including the extension of excavations. For two years during the war production was suspended because of restrictions, but from 1945 to 1951 three fairways, tees and greens were resumed by Selkirk's in the terms of the lease. This land, part of the original 35 acres, permitted expansion of the clay pit and erection of the present plant.

From 1952 onwards, Selkirk's continued to expand, taking the initiative in many developments new to Australia, including the use of petroleum gas as a fuel for firing bricks. The firm was now the leader in the brick industry in Australia with high quality plant, product and productivity equal to the best world standards. The present plant and installations had now reached peak output which necessitated the extension

of the clay winning and the erection of another factory and associated buildings.

Midlands had been notified in 1958 of the intended resumption of the land and discussions had been held since 1964 to enable the club to plan and construct substitute grounds. Mr O'Callaghan alleged that by making objections, Midlands were in breach of contract. If the objection succeeded, Selkirk's might be obliged to receive only \$100 a year for 46 acres of valuable land until 1993. He suggested that \$100 a year would be minimal. "It is surely fair to say that Midlands is not merely biting the hand that fed it - it is swallowing it whole" he stated.

The submission claimed that despite greatly increased production, the company's operations had not affected the neighbourhood adversely. Because of modern equipment and methods, clay winning was only done on a few days each year, 23 during 1969-70. The factory was modern and attractive, and a prestige industry of which Ballarat was proud. Concrete clay storage bunkers had lessened the dust, and a sprinkler system was being installed to damp down the stockpiles in long dry spells, and future dust problems would be eliminated. Selkirk's were concerned at any damage to trees, but believes that the dying trees at Midlands near the clay pit could have been affected by lack of water.

Selkirk's had always planted trees in and around the factory area and would provide a buffer zone of at least twenty metres around the clay pit. The statement added that last month some unknown persons had cut off 17 small gum trees at ground level and then pushed

them back into the ground. Had this not been discovered, the small trees would have conveyed the appearance of having withered away. The trees had been planted by Selkirk's along the Lilley Street boundary.

Refusal to grant the permit would result in an increased price of bricks, because clay would have to be found and carted from other sources, and perhaps the ultimate loss to Ballarat of a valuable secondary industry. The area was zoned industrial B which included extractive industry. He alleged that the complaints of the objectors had been "grossly exaggerated." He submitted company record of hours worked by heavy machinery which were less than those alleged. After 15 years, two-thirds of the proposed area would be used. The area would be then treated for reclamation."

The attitude of the Mines Department was clear and consistent with its standard policy that where a deposit of minerals, sand, stone, clay etc., is found and proved to be valuable it should be extracted if possible. In this case the deposit of clay under the 46 acres has been confirmed by drilling to be very extensive. Of the total deposit which has been proved more than two million cubic yards is suitable for brick making.

"Mr Ian McCoy, Managing Director of Selkirk's, and brother of Midlands president Ted McCoy, said that there had been a big increase in employment at the factory over the past 10 years. Because of automation, fewer unskilled workers, but more highly qualified technicians and laboratory workers were now engaged.

The new plant would cost about one and half million dollars and would increase employment again. The company had held the land for this purpose since 1912.

Mr A Nicholson, counsel for the appellants, said that from an aesthetic point of view, it was an "outrageous proposal" to take away a public recreation ground and a beautiful area. The only evidence called by the appellants yesterday was by the principal of the Ballarat North Technical School who objected to the issuing of a permit on the grounds that dust and fumes would be carried over the school. At the conclusion of lengthy submissions, arguments and cross-questioning by both parties, the hearing concluded. The decision has been deferred. Mr A Nicholson, instructed by Ramsay, Gaunt and Fraser, appeared for the objectors; and Mr D O'Callaghan, instructed by Byrne, Jones and Torney for James Selkirk Pty Ltd".

Six weeks later, the Town Planning and Appeals Tribunal handed down its decision, deciding in favour of James Selkirk Pty Ltd in its proposal to extend its extractive industry over a 46 acre area now occupied by the Midlands Golf Club. The tribunals decision, received by the Ballarat and District Joint Town Planning Committee, disallowed appeals lodged by 36 objectors and heard in Ballarat on October 27 and 28.

In ordering that a permit be issued to the company, the tribunal imposed a number of conditions, including those applied by the Planning Committee when it agreed to the application. These were that the operation of extraction of materials should be restricted to Monday to Saturday inclusive, and additional

conditions imposed by the tribunal, are the provision of a buffer strip 100 feet wide along the whole of the Norman Street frontage, and the retention of as many as possible of the existing trees.

The tribunal's finding states that "After an inspection of the 35 acres, the subject land and general area, and a full consideration of all the evidence, we are of the opinion, that in the community interest this valuable deposit of clay should not be left unused. The extension of the applicant company's operations into the 46 acres is a logical progression, and we regard it important that the application for an extractive industry licence covers both the 46 acres and the 35 acres, bringing both areas within the controls in the legislation which are specifically designed to reduce the detrimental aspects of this type of industry."

Chapter 8

NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE

Following the decision by the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal to reject the appeal the club was placed in a precarious position. The annual meeting in late March 1971 brought a record member attendance along with an unprecedented number of nominations for office. Four ballots were required during the meeting as there were two nominations for Vice-President, two for Vice-Captain, and three for Treasurer. 138 members took part in the ballots. Mr Ted McCoy was re-elected President.

In the ballot for Vice-President, Mr Jack Weir, a former president was elected. Mr George Bromley was unopposed as Captain and Mr Jack Allan was successful in the ballot for Vice-Captain. Mr Albert Stephens was elected Treasurer. Also elected was the replacement Honorary Auditor, Mr J A Mayne, who would prove invaluable as an honorary financial advisor to the Finance Sub-committee which would be extensively involved in the envisaged future development. *The Courier* and the souvenir edition of the 75th anniversary booklet provided valuable insight into this period of the clubs' history.

In moving the adoption of the annual report, Mr McCoy, said that membership had increased in all categories and the year's activities had resulted in a net profit of \$5899. The bar account had made a substantial contribution to this, although there had been no increase in the price of liquor. He said that the club was about to go through a period of change and this would continue for some time.

The clubs' accounting system needed to be improved and this would be one of the first undertakings of the new committee. A new Land Development Committee was formed with members being selected by Mr Weir for their proven business development and management skills. With his background of directing a long established and substantial building company Mr Weir was well qualified to present himself and his team to members at a meeting of April 1971.

The first task of that committee was to study the redevelopment of the clubs' property, produce an overall master plan, ascertain the period required for such development and the method of financing the complete project. Other requirements were that members should have an 18 hole golf course on which to play during construction and be kept advised by regular reports on progress once they had accepted the plan. When Selkirk's advised of their intention to resume the 12th, 13th and 14th holes, the club initially had to replace the holes lost with three new ones on an area of land north of the Ballarat North Technical School. As the members had stressed at the annual meeting their desire to obtain the best possible course design, the firm of South Pacific Golf Design Ltd, through their principals Peter Thomson and Mike Wolveridge were engaged to make a feasibility study for a course development plan. They were required at first to inspect, advise and design three new holes which would eventually become part of a new 18 hole course.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE



Land development committee 1972-76, responsible for the construction of the New Course and Clubhouse. Back row: E McCoy, M S Marshall, I C Curtis, L G Valpied, Front row: W Gribble J Weir I Farren A Stephens

In August 1972, the club president Mr E McCoy, announced a plan for the reconstruction of the course to representatives of the Ballarat City Council, Bungaree Shire and other guests. The following press release was issued on 24th August. "Due to a decentralised industry resuming part of golf club land which is at present on lease, plans have been drawn up for a world class championship golf course for Midlands Golf Club, on existing land and land to be acquired. The designing has

been placed in the hands of the top firm of golf course architects - Harris, Thomson and Wolveridge, of which world famous golfer Peter Thomson is a vital partner.

The master plan and details will be submitted by the committee for approval of club members at an extraordinary general meeting on September 7th. The proposed plans are anticipated to be in three stages, stage one of which will be commenced as soon as the approval of members has been received. No call on members is contemplated through increased fees to complete the total project. The idea of the club on its own land has been the goal of Midlands' members for many years. More recently, members sought a master plan for the redevelopment of the club at the 1971 general meeting, following which a development committee was formed.

The club already owns some freehold acreage, and plans the acquisition of a further adjacent 73 acres to make the proposed plans practical, and eventually give it a freehold area of about 170 acres. This move will place Midlands in the unique position in Ballarat of owning the freehold of their own land. The plans will be on view in the clubhouse for perusal by members and the general public from tomorrow, 25th August 1972."

Mr McCoy said that "to help finance the project, residential blocks of land would be sold, but if in the latter stages of the three stage program, bridging finance was required, it would be available. He said that it was a question of exchanging assets for assets". Peter Thomson said that "his firm's concept envisaged a golf course of a very high standard. It will be an outstanding golf course and will include some things unknown in this area in both

design and construction. In 10 years time there will be a beautiful green parkland, with nice trees carefully planned, that will add to the beauty of Ballarat." "And it will be a really great golf course," he added.

A large and representative gathering of members attended an extraordinary general meeting of members to discuss and vote on the plan proposed by the committee. Opening the meeting, the president, pointed out that the motion to be put to the meeting was in conjunction with the master plan only, and not variations. He said "although the diagrams, submitted for the members to inspect, included sectional plans, they were meant only to show members how the plan would be brought to fruition." He said that the committee could not consider any discussions based on separate sections of the plan. In reply to a

question, Mr McCoy said that "with any land to be sold as blocks, preference would be given to club members. The first action concerning finance was to "clear the decks" by transferring an interest burdened debt owed to the T&G Company from 1966 for modernisation of the existing clubhouse, together with construction of a bowling green, to Ballarat Securities who paid out the loan".

Mr Alex Foyster, speaking on the notice of motion stated that "the club constitution provided for the committee to buy, sell or otherwise dispose of assets of the club subject to a two-thirds majority of financial members at the meeting. From time to time the committee in past eras had found it necessary to vary holes in the terms of a resolution in June 1939 passed by the members requesting the committee to obtain a course on its own land.

It gradually purchased about 90 acres of land on which part of the present course had been built. The balance of the course is at present on leased land. This far-sightedness of the 1939 decision has now borne fruit as portion of the leased land has now been resumed by the owners and further resumptions would be necessary as early as October. All leased land would have to be returned to its owners by 1981 at the latest". The eventual vote gave the committee far more than the two-thirds majority needed for approval of the project.

Following the member's approval the committee faced numerous matters which had to be dealt with before construction began. Peter Thomson advised the committee that to present the club with a championship golf course, thus enhancing and maintaining the well established



*The President, Mr. J. Weir, Committee and Members
Invite*

to the

*Opening of the
1st Hole on the New Course*

Friday, 7th December, 1973 at 3.30 p.m.

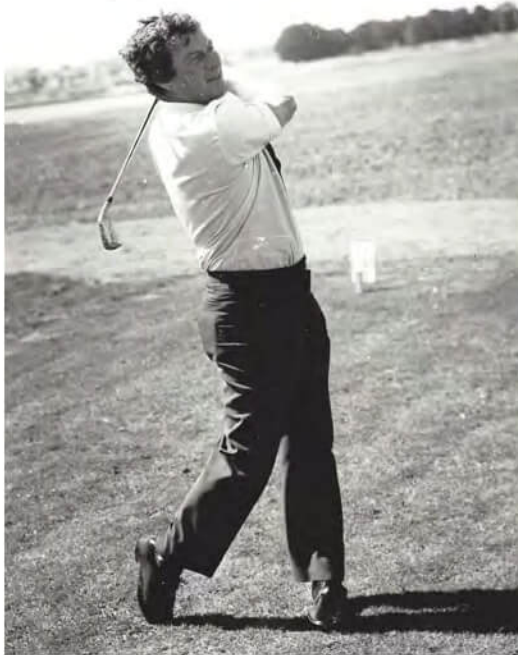
R.S.V.P.: 4th December

I. Curtis, Sec./Manager

reputation of his company and our club, he needed extra land to effectively give the best layout for what would be our 5th and part of our 6th hole. Fortunately, Vice-President and New Course Development Committeeman, Ian Farren, was able to allocate land behind his Coronet Caravan factory at book value, so solving the problem.

Work on the first stage of the re-development plan, involving the construction of seven holes, at an estimated cost of \$140,000 began on Monday 8 January 1973 with the pegging out of the holes. The earthmoving firm of

P.Kennedy Pty Ltd was awarded the contract for the work. A sod turning ceremony was held on 19 January with the Mayor of Ballarat, Cr McKay and Cr C H Rumler of the Bungaree Shire turning the first sod. The ceremony was attended by club members and a large number of official guests, among them being life members, Messrs J H Davey, E J Dunbar, J E Gordon and A C White. When the transition process began the old fifteenth hole was



Peter Thomson playing the first shot on the new course - The Courier photo



Official opening of the eleventh hole - The Courier photo

broken into two holes for a brief period. The first two greens built were those which eventually became the first and twelfth. A temporary green was constructed alongside the fourth fairway.

Later that year, problems caused by the construction of the new course and exceptionally wet conditions led to a decision to cancel the clubs' annual tournament planned for October 4 - 10, and after two aborted attempts the club championships were played. 1973 was one of Ballarat's wettest ever years. The clubs' Secretary-Manager, Ian Curtis, said that work on the new course was affecting several holes on the old course.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE

On December 7 1973, the 11th hole was opened with a special ceremony, complete with a marquee and food and refreshments provided by the associates and the social club. The Bungaree Shire President Cr C Rumler officially declared the hole open and Peter Thomson, Guy Wolstenholme and club champion Alan Cox hit the first balls from the tee. Mr Jack Weir, club President and Chairman of the New Course Development Committee, welcomed Cr Rumler, Mr Tom Evans MLA, Cr J McKay, representing the Ballarat City Council and Sir Arthur Nicholson representing the Ballarat Water Commission.

Mr Weir said that it was a great day for Midlands, one that had been dreamed about. "It is a big step forward. We hope to have a first class course here, fit for championship play. Wet weather has held work up, but now with heavy equipment able to work, it is hoped that the 18 holes will be open in twelve months. The club purchased 82 acres and the land it already had has helped development. We hope to have the housing area developed in the first quarter of 1974". Mr Weir said.

Cr Rumler said that "he could remember the area as a dustbowl about seven months ago and congratulated the club on its work. The Bungaree Shire is pleased to have the club in its area and we look forward to the development of the housing area as it will bring 80-100 people to live in our shire. I declare this 11th hole open and I will always remember it as a highlight of my term as president". The course at this time was entirely within the boundary of the Shire and remained until the enforced council amalgamations of 1994. Top Australian golfer and designer of the course, Peter Thomson, congratulated the club on its move to bring the course up to championship

standard. "We admire the club for the vision it has had and it is assured of success." Thomson played the first shot, a five iron, landing about 8 metres short of the pin. Wolstenholme was about 3 metres shorter.

The first land for sale came at an auction on Saturday 30 March 1974. *The Courier* reported in a prelude to the auction - "Some golfers are accused by their families of living on the golf course, but members of the Midlands Golf Club are to be given the opportunity of almost literally doing so. Thirty-one building blocks, each of which backs directly on to the new Midlands course, are to be offered for sale at a special "members only" auction on Saturday.



Part of the crowd attending the first land auction - The Courier

FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE



The old clubhouse with the eighteenth green in the foreground

The 31 blocks are part of the total of 84 created by the first stage subdivision of the former golf course area. This area includes 15 blocks fronting Doveton Street (overlooking the current 2nd and 3rd holes) and another 16 in the area now known as Club Crescent. The remaining blocks in Club Crescent will be offered for sale to the general public at a later date. The decision to offer the blocks specifically to club members was a unique concept and an indication of the strong spirit of unity within the club".



The clubhouse today as part of the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre

The auction brought a strong response from members with more than 250 people attending. The first block auctioned sold at the highest figure for a sum of \$8,150, and the lowest price paid for an allotment being \$4,850. In total 25 of the blocks offered were sold and 6 were passed in to be sold at a later date. The second stage of the subdivision was conducted by auction in a marquee on the course on Saturday 4 May 1974 where the highest price brought \$11,000. About 200 people were in attendance. From the two auctions the club grossed nearly \$500,000.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE

The 49th annual tournament of the club, held from 1 October 1974, was significant in that it marked a further step forward when seven of the new holes were available for play. The club president, Mr Jack Weir, at the annual meeting commended the members for their tolerance in a difficult period of change. "We are sure that all members appreciate the importance of the new course development scheme," he said. "It is the most important project the club has embarked on since its foundation and will eventually give us a first class golf course and a senior position in Victorian country golf." In the twilight of 1974, the initial twelve holes of the new layout were completed.



Competitors teeing off on the first hole of the new course

In February of the following year, a contract for almost \$100,000 was signed for the completion of the remaining six holes on the north side of Heinz Lane. *The Courier* reported that "architects Harris, Thomson and Wolveridge, who designed the first stage of the course will carry out the work. The contract required the construction of six holes and practice fairway, together with irrigation system and sowing down to be completed by May 31. International golfer, Guy Wolstenholme, who was connected with the firm said that 'machinery would be moved in and work would begin at once. He said that the firm was essentially course planners and architects and this was one of the few times that it had undertaken to do the construction work as well."

The original layout of the final six holes was altered when the Bungaree Shire approved the subdivision by the Country Fire Authority of three lots from its property in



FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE

Heinz Lane and the remaining land of about four hectares was acquired by the club. Mr Wolveridge said that "the ground for the course was not as ideal as sandy undulating land, the first 12 holes were rather terrifying. It was flat, devoid of features and appeared impossible to drain effectively, "but we overcame the problems and do not expect them to occur again." A creek would be constructed to carry water into a large lake and would also form a hazard. Pine trees along two boundaries and others in the future clubhouse area would give some character. "It is a test of architectural and engineering skill. This is needed in featureless flat land where our task is to recreate an entire landscape and fit a golf course within it that is beautiful and interesting."

In September 1975, the President of the Committee of Management of the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, when welcoming the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Crean, announced that "the centre had purchased the golf clubhouse and four acres of adjacent land including the bowling green". The 17th and 18th fairways had previously been sold to development company Knowles Bros. that planned to build homes on the cluster principle. The club president, Mr Ian Farren, said that "the only land that the club owned now was the first and second fairways and negotiations would begin soon for the subdivision of that area (now Midlands Drive) into 41 building blocks. The money received from these would be used to offset the cost of a new clubhouse of 132 squares to be completed in late 1976. In the meantime the club was allowed to use the existing clubhouse and bowling green. The remaining 41 blocks on the old course were sold by public auction held in the clubhouse on 17 July 1976". They brought



The newly constructed 15th green - pine trees at the rear later removed to make way for housing - The Courier photo

between \$8,000- \$9,200, with one block commanding a view selling for \$10,000.

Work began on the new clubhouse by builders John Nolan & sons in April of 1976, an indication to members that years of change, disruption and work was coming to fruition. The club secretary Mr Ian Curtis said that "most Ballarat golfers would have been aware of developments taking place at Midlands but few of them would understand the magnitude of the operation. The redevelopment of

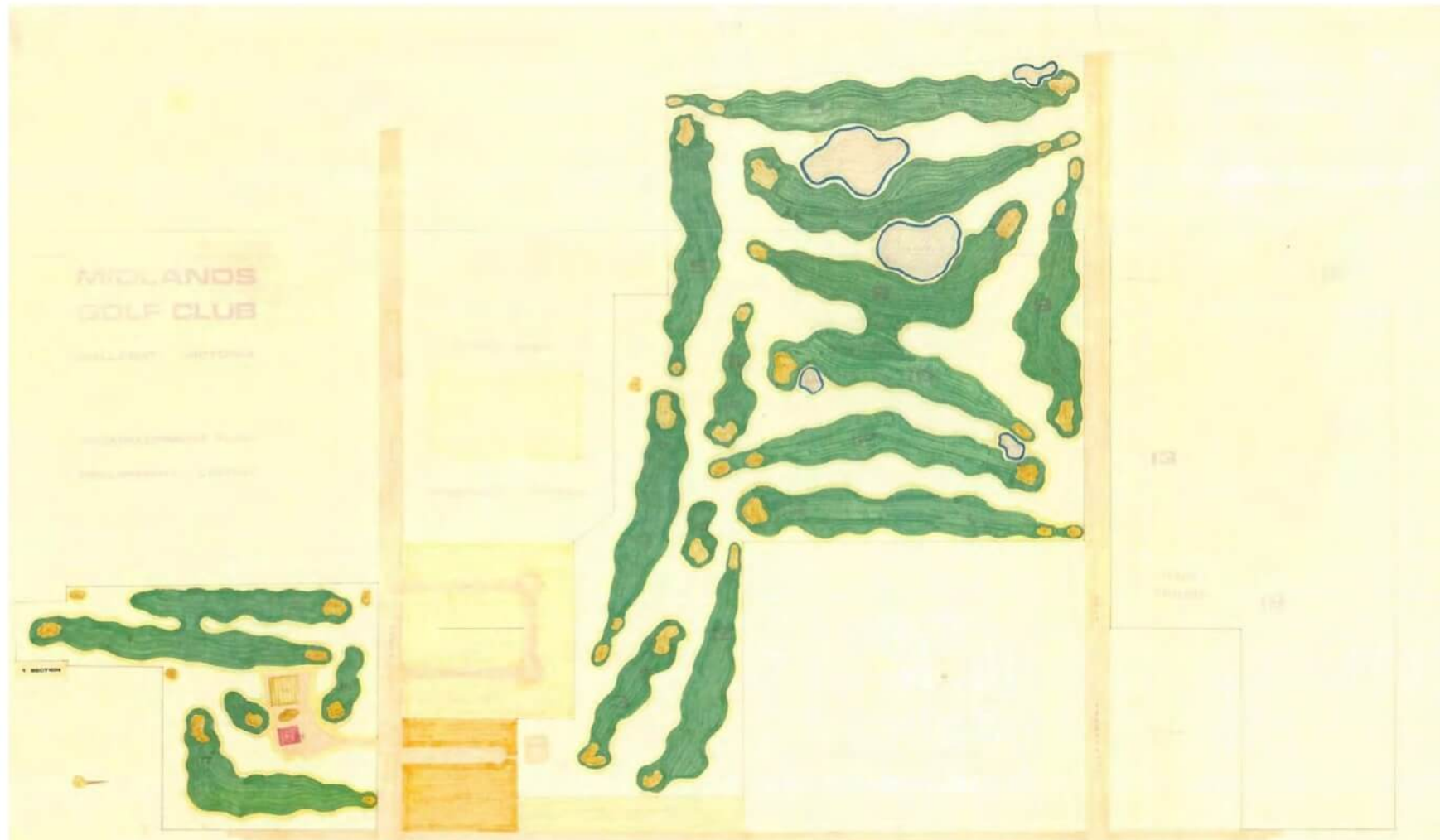
Midlands had been one of the major golf course projects to take place in Australia in recent years and few golf clubs had achieved such a transformation in such a relatively short time. In 1970, the club was facing the prospect of accepting a club on a third rate course on a constricted site or acting audaciously to create a course in a new location. To do this the club had spent a lot of time, energy and money."

During the period before the new clubhouse was occupied, an old weatherboard house (called the White House) on the Heinz property was used as a makeshift clubhouse. The club, in a letter to the Bungaree Shire in June 1976, made a request to have Heinz Lane closed to traffic, due to cars travelling at excessive speeds on the gravel road and spraying stones on golfer's parked cars. It proposed that the shire open Bogong Avenue, that was then a fenced off green lane, to be the main thoroughfare for traffic going to or from Creswick Road. The shire made an inspection of the roads and decided that Heinz Lane could not be closed because of the volume of traffic using it. They instead agreed that the road was narrow and that the condition would have to be improved. The shire would extend the parking area along the road by grading.

December 12, 1976 was a historic day for the club when the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Winneke, officially opened the new course and clubhouse. The Midlands committee had shown initiative, foresight and courage in taking on the project of building a new golf course and clubhouse, Sir Henry said when unveiling a plaque to mark the opening of the new complex.

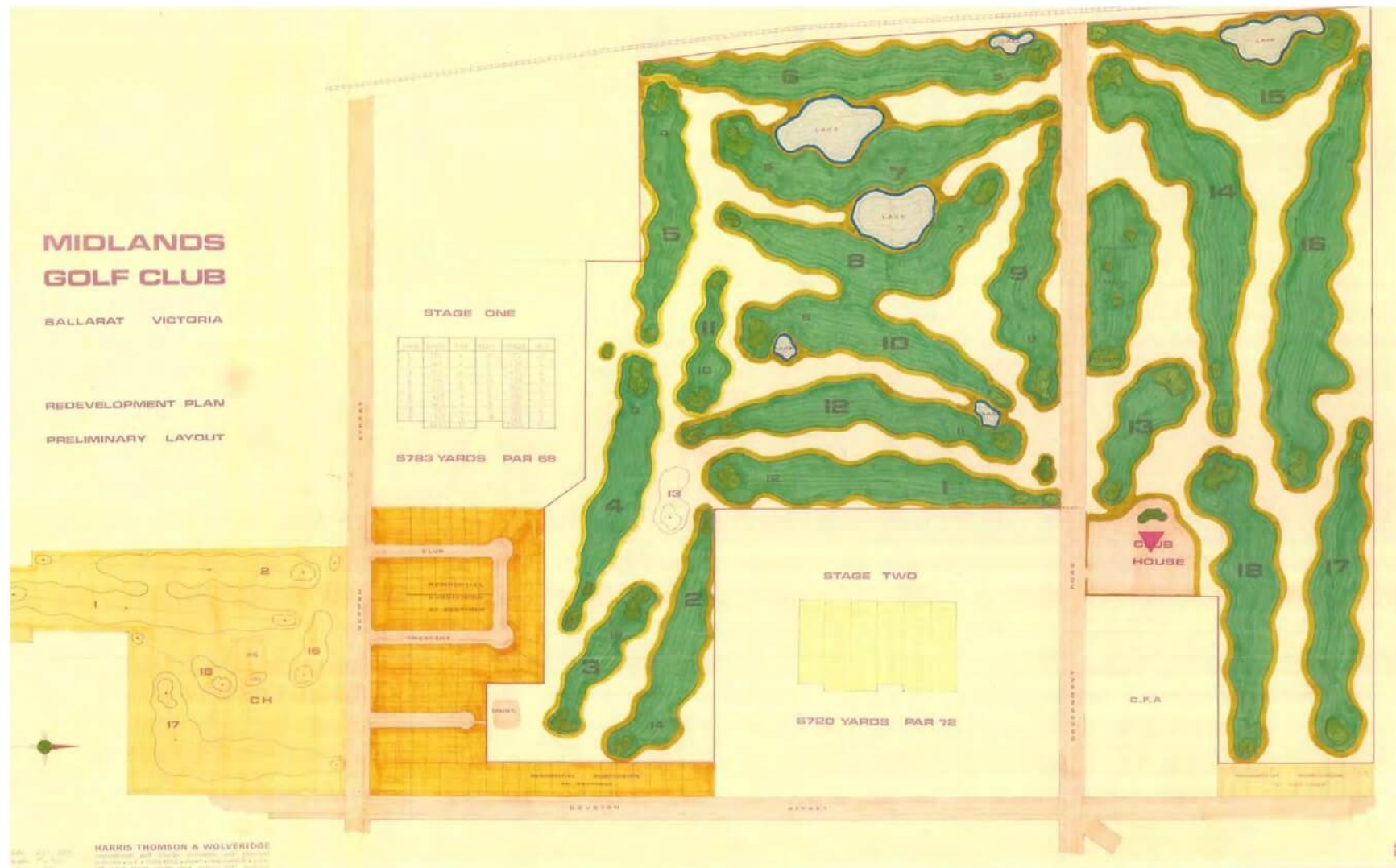


FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE



Temporary layout during construction of the new course. The order of play was 1st and 2nd on the old course, followed by 13 holes on the new course (including a temporary par 3 - adjacent to the 4th fairway) then the final three holes of the old course.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / NEW COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE



The proposed final layout of the new course - the final six holes however were altered when the club was able to purchase the major part of the CFA land on the corner of Slatey Creek Road and Heinz Lane.

Chapter 9

A NEW BEGINNING

Time consistently brings change. Although a new course and clubhouse had been constructed this did not mean the end of the essential projects that arise every year. At the time of construction of the clubhouse the Sewerage Authority reticulation was not available and this necessitated treatment plants that were situated in front of the clubhouse and near the 16th green. These unsightly units were able to be removed in 1988-89 and an on-course toilet was constructed at the seventh tee. An additional practice feature, a chipping green was then constructed adjacent to the 13th tee. Also at this time the burn which ran between the 13th and 18th fairways proved to be an un-necessary hazard and difficult to maintain. It was piped underground, back filled and re-sown.

A major issue was being able to water the course in the drier weather. It had been thought that a bore might provide a part solution. Contact was made with the Minerals and Energy Department in Melbourne and they advised that inspection of maps of the area indicated very poor prospects. The water flow could be expected to be inadequate with a light salt content.

The following account is taken from the 75th anniversary edition of the Midlander which reported that concern in the early 1980s about the availability of supply and cost of water to adequately irrigate the golf course prompted the club to form a sub-committee to



View of the 18th green before the removal of trees in 1986 and construction of Fairways Function Room - The Courier photo

look into this very important aspect of Midlands future. In 1980, 17% of the total subscription income was being spent on course watering. Throughout Victoria other golf clubs had successfully used treated waste water for course irrigation; hence enquiries were made as to the viability of acquiring waste water from the

Wendouree Treatment Works, some five kilometres away from the course, piping the water to the course roughly following the new bypass route and storing the water on or near the golf course. There were a number of problems. The capital cost of piping the water was outside the clubs' resources along with feasibility problems associated with the pipeline installation. The club had no area to adequately store the water nor the capital resource to provide the storage and there was uncertainty as to the full utilisation on the course due to several boundary lines undergoing residential development.

Initially it was thought that the Cemetery Trust were also interested in using reclaimed water, however after discussions with the Trust, the same problems emerged and eventually the project was abandoned. Investigations then began into the viability of installing automatic underground reticulation on the course with the question of a long term water source still to be determined. Over several months types of watering systems were investigated with no conclusions drawn as to the system that best suited the needs of the golf course. Again these investigations were curtailed due to the problem of an adequate water source. The mains supply at the time was both costly and significantly affected by reduction in pressure; these two aspects of the mains supply counteracted the benefits of the installation of an automatic underground system.

With all avenues being exhausted the club was resigned to the fact that it would have to accept that fairways would be of a lesser standard during the

summer months. However in late 1988 an unexpected and potentially massive bonus came when an enquiry was made by Vic Roads, constructors of the nearby Ballarat Bypass Freeway as to the possible acquisition of approximately 60,000m³ of heavy clay that was common to the area of the golf course. Several sub-surface tests were undertaken by Vic Roads as to the suitability of the clay. The results revealed that the clay tested in the areas adjacent to the 9th fairway and to the north of the 14th green was most suitable for the needs of Vic Roads to build a noise attenuation barrier along the Wendouree boundary of the freeway.

Following the annual tournament in 1990 the dam excavation began on the site adjacent to the 9th fairway. The dam with a capacity of 63 mega litres and a depth of eight metres was completed in June 1990 with an inlet channel and overflow installed as part of the project. There was uncertainty in the club as to how long the dam would take to fill. However this uncertainty was short lived as the dam overflowed in early September, about two and a half months after completion. At last Midlands had a permanent water supply.

Meanwhile a special sub-committee had been formed to raise enough capital to utilise the water and hopefully install an automatic underground reticulation system on the course. The sub-committee developed a "prospectus" which offered members of the club a twelve year membership for an up-front discounted rate. The "prospectus" was only moderately successful, and although only a small capital float was raised, it



Excavation of the dam adjacent to the ninth fairway

was enough to install a pumping facility at the dam and separate the existing reticulation system from the mains supply, with the end result that the cost of water supply was eliminated from the clubs' expenses the following summer. The additional benefit of constant and adequate water pressure was also obtained. Now that the water supply was established, further investigation was undertaken by two separate sub-committees, one with regard to the type of underground watering system that was best suited to Midlands conditions and one to investigate a means of funding the project.

In order to fully fund the project approximately \$250,000 was required, hence a proposal to sell off eight blocks of land on the north east boundary of the course was pursued. During 1993 the sub-division was prepared and November 20, 1993 was set down for the auction date. Six of the eight blocks were sold at or above the reserve price, the other two blocks were sold privately in the following weeks.

Two companies, Rainbird Australia and Toro, specialising in irrigation equipment, were asked to submit designs and quotes for the watering system. Throughout the latter part of 1993 the type of system was decided upon, a contractor appointed and a date set down for commencement - mid March 1994. The Toro, single row system, was considered to be the most suitable and a local contractor, Outdoor Trends, a accredited Toro supplier and installer, began the work. Over 8 kilometres of pipes and many kilometres of wiring were installed as part of the project. Installation was completed by June 1994 and run off to the manufacturer's specification. This installation closed the loop on over ten years of work by the club and provided Midlands with a self sufficient, cost effective method of watering the golf course.

The club president at the time, Arnold Masters, reported that "probably the biggest recent asset the club has gained is the dam. The ability to water all areas of the course using water collected at little or no cost will be one of the greatest advantages we could ever wish for. When you realise that water authorities are now charging on a usage basis and that in the event of any shortages, sporting facilities would

probably be the first to suffer restrictions, you appreciate the value of that "little" dam and what it will be saving the club in foreseeable years."

A major fundraising effort made by members began with the introduction of Thursday night meals. These were initiated by the social committee, under the guidance of Ritchie Bissett, and with the assistance of Laurie Dixon, Elizabeth Morvell and teams of willing members provided excellent low cost meals to other members and visitors. Money raised from this undertaking was necessary in providing funds for the essential projects, including the second bowling green, that were being undertaken at this time.

In January 1992 thousands of scouts turned Victoria Park into a tented city for the 16th Australian Scout Jamboree. This event is held every three years and traditionally runs for ten nights. The social committee bravely took on the task of providing evening meals for the large numbers of scouts who were transported by bus to the golf club each night. This was another example of the exceptional commitment that has been made by many members of the club.

Another key decision that faced the club came with the introduction of poker machines. After gaming machines were legalised in Victoria in 1991, the State Government created a duopoly between Tabcorp Holdings Ltd and Tatts Group Ltd by issuing them with licences to own and operate poker machines. The club registered its interest with both providers and arranged information nights prior to members voting whether to proceed with a formal application.

In July 1992, after numerous discussions with Tatts Group Ltd, the then Midlands Golf Club Committee of Management decided to enter into an agreement to install 35 machines based on the belief that the presence of "pokies" in the club would enhance potential membership and that Midlands would become better known to the wider public. This was subject to Midlands gaining a gaming licence from the Victorian Gaming Commission. The lengthy application papers of some 38 pages were lodged and approved and Midlands became one of the first five venues in Ballarat to install the machines. The other venues were the North Ballarat Sports Club, George Hotel, Red Lion Hotel and the Buninyong Golf Club. The return to patrons was set at 87% by law with the remaining 13% profit being split 1/3 to Tatts, 1/3 to the government and 1/3 to the club. This decision by the committee meant acceptable returns to the club during the lease period up to 2012.

To facilitate the installation, the billiards room (now the Rinks Room) was extended into part of the members lounge to provide the necessary floor space. A ruling at this time was that the machines were not to be visible from the outside and accordingly all windows were covered. The opening day was Friday 4 September 1992. After a period of operation it became evident that the original location of the machines was not ideal and in 1994/1995 renovations were undertaken and the machines were moved to their present location along with a bistro and refurbished entrances and foyer. A decision to make the clubhouse a smoke-free venue was soon reversed when gaming returns decreased. However around 2005 and in compliance with government regulations the club became smoke-free.

To minimise the impact and consistent with most gaming and hospitality venues an outside smoking area was constructed.

In 2012, the State Government ended the duopoly by offering clubs and gaming venues the opportunity to own and operate their own gaming machines under 10 year licences after 2012 when the permits held by Tabcorp and Tatts expired. The club took up this option and purchased the 32 machines. (In 1995 Tatts had decided to withdraw 3 gaming machines due to what they considered a lack of revenue generated by them.) Although the 10 year licence (entitlement) fee was sizeable the club received increased income each year. Midlands entered into an agreement in 2013 with the "Mercury Group Victoria Inc." (Mercury) which also included the club being approved as a foundation member of Mercury; a not-for-profit service provider and member association, aimed at assisting its members to achieve the best possible financial outcome from their gaming operation. They provide advice on the right mix of machines and games, a return to profit strategy, expert advice on gaming data strategy, promotional signage and in-house prizes (ClubMix rewards) and equipment repairs and refurbishments. The club has commenced a prepayment program for a future licence to continue operating our machines for a further 10 years commencing 2022.

With the continuing increase in activities throughout the club and the proposed extension to the premises which would further increase the volume and complexity of such activities, it was considered necessary and prudent to make the change to an

incorporated body. Consequently, a motion was put to the general body of members at the annual meeting of March 1993 that the club convert from a Company Limited By Guarantee, as it had been since July 1976, to an Incorporated Association, under the terms of section 10 of The Associations Incorporation Act 1981. This move created the opportunity to change the method of election of committee members to a selection method whereby people with business/company experience could be sought. The motion was carried and the club became the Midlands Golf Club Incorporated.

When the golf course was relocated to present site, two greens from the old course, the 3rd and 4th which were constructed in 1950 and 1965 respectively were incorporated in the new design with a view to updating them at some later stage. That time came for the 3rd green in 1993 due to its poor condition and through Bob Shearer of Thomson, Wolveridge & Co a new design was prepared, moving both the green and tee further eastwards. The green was opened for play late in 1994 by the local member of parliament Mr Michael Ronaldson.

An opportunity arose in 1994 for the club to purchase "Drew's Paddock" (approx. 11 hectares adjoining the 14th hole). The land was originally transferred from the Crown in 1854 and changed owners on a number of occasions until being purchased by Harry & Marjorie Drew in February 1951. Harry Drew died on 8th October 1987 and the land transferred through his will to Stephen Drew.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / A NEW BEGINNING



The redesigned third hole

The decision to purchase was a judicious one as it has been vital to the long term viability of the club. It has provided a section of the land as a practice fairway, has been useful as a loan mortgage and offers the capability of future development. The club held the land for 23 years before being sold in late 2017 at a remarkably increased price providing great security and optimism for the future.

The installation of poker machines brought with it some unforeseen difficulties. Although the income from gaming was good, the heavy cost of its installation and building alterations and ongoing costs of long opening hours, plus professional kitchen staff were originally



Plan of subdivision of Drew's Paddock

underestimated. Some costs were later reduced by consolidating the two bars and gaming service desk, but by 1995, the increasing challenges of running the multi-function enterprise which had developed from a



Drew's Paddock - purchased 1994 - sold 2017

golf club, were becoming apparent, and it was noted that Tocumwal Golf Club had established a professional board of directors to guide their business. Tocumwals' example lead to Midlands members adopting a similar board structure at a Special General Meeting on November 8, 1995. This General Meeting elected a board of 6 directors, who, at their first meeting assigned individual roles as Chairman, and directors of Finance & Development, Greens, Social & Marketing, Bowls and Golf. On the golf course an alteration to the first hole was made due to residential development on the left hand side of the fairway. The bunker at the green was removed and mounds and were placed and trees planted at driving distance.

To increase patronage was seen as fundamental to the profitability of the club and in the late 1990s it was



Fairways Function Room

decided to explore the opportunity of adding a function room to the clubhouse. Architect Kevyn Joy was engaged to design the room which was to be sited at the northern end of the existing building and be suitable for wedding receptions, birthday parties, conferences, meetings and as well as being capable of accommodating bias bowls. The building was opened in May 2000 and later named The Fairways Function Room.

Chapter 10

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

While the dawn of a new century is greeted with hope and optimism the year 2000 began amid fears that the Y2K bug or millennium bug was going to create chaos in computer systems around the world. Although a problem did exist it was not as widespread as expected and had little impact on most people. In this year the Olympic Games returned to Australia and at Midlands steady progress continued to be made building on developments of previous years.

Early in 2002, the function co-ordinator suggested that the club needed a gazebo of sorts to compliment the new Fairways Room to encourage couples to be married at the club, followed by the reception without the inconvenience of the need to travel. After several enquiries a similar gazebo was located at the Windmill Restaurant at Plumpton and after inspection, Jim Fairhurst designed the gazebo which was manufactured and installed in late 2002.

The work was carried out with voluntary labour, with the only costs to the club being computations, council permit and materials. The manufacture of the complete structure was carried out at the machinery shed and transported in sections and erected on-site, including the connection of electricity. Graeme "Boots" Stevens did the majority of the steel construction, roofing and installation over several months. He had also constructed the stiles over the fence at the 14th hole.



The Gazebo on the north side of the function room

Also in this year it was decided at a committee meeting to remove the sleepers in front of the 16th green. Their condition had deteriorated to the point of replacement, and subsequently it was considered practical to remove them, batter back the slope and construct additional bunkers.

Undoubtedly the foremost single improvement in course condition has come as a result of the decision in 2006 to change the fairway grass to Santa Ana couch. This task, completed over a three year period, has meant that Midlands now has fairways that are the equal of any. Some inconvenience was caused to members, with holes having to be played as par threes, but when the excellent outcome of the first five holes to be completed was seen, there was a ready acceptance of the project.

Another major undertaking came in 2006-2007 when concern for the condition of the car park meant a complete reconstruction was necessary. The old car park, built on two levels, was only partly sealed and was a detriment to the appearance of the club. With



Stonewall at the 11th green

large numbers of members, visitors for golf, bowls, functions and staff using it, there was a worry of litigation caused by its state. The new car park, complete with updated lighting and line marking has enhanced the area noticeably. Around this time a stone retaining wall was built at the first tee with bluestone grey bricks donated by Selkirks and a new bridge constructed across the burn on the 18th hole.

Realising a good opportunity and then having the resolve and capability to take advantage of it, has been the dynamic of a number of projects completed at Midlands. Such was the case in 2007 when the opportunity arose to have the lake adjacent to the 14th fairway deepened at a figure well below the market rate. This had the two fold effect of providing extra water storage capacity and the clay that was acquired was used to create additional mounding to add interest to four holes. Among other projects completed have been the perimeter fencing. The old fence along both sides of Heinz lane and the left hand side of the 14th fairway was removed and replaced by volunteer labour with materials donated. In 2012 it was decided to construct a stone retaining wall in the pond at the 11th green using rocks that had been obtained previously. To achieve the final result the pond had to be drained, a foundation dug and poured, and the rocks placed in position, all by volunteer labour over a period of two weeks.

The largest project undertaken by a team of volunteers at Midlands has been the construction of the greenkeepers shed. The shed measuring 26 metres by 16 metres had to be dismantled on its site in central



Early stage in the construction of the greenkeeper's shed

Ballarat, transported and stored at the club until council permits were approved. The old chemical storage shed was removed and the contents, along with the fuel tanks were relocated to the secondary shed. Part of the existing shed was incorporated into the new building and was revamped to include a new work bench, toilet,

shower, change room, lunch room and curators office. The new structure has provided much needed floor space for all the machinery that could not be efficiently housed previously. A large rainwater tank was placed at the rear to supply a new machinery wash-down bay and some landscaping works were completed as part of

the undertaking. All of these works were carried out over a period of a number of months and were co-ordinated by Ross Wiltshire, who has been involved in most of the major volunteer efforts as part of the great contribution that he has made to the club.

Other significant projects undertaken by volunteers have included the piping of stormwater from Club Crescent across to the 11th pond, the wood storage room near the BBQ, the smokers area on the western side of the clubhouse, the 2nd tee and the sand and soil storage bays at the rear the greenkeepers shed donated by David Di Cesare. He also provided stack-stone panels for volunteers to construct a retaining wall for a new 11th tee that was financed by the Monday Club group of golfers. A valuable addition to the clubhouse was made in 2013 when a decking and roofing, accessed through doors off the members lounge was donated and constructed by Ballarat Outdoor Solutions.

The greatest regret and disappointment in writing a club history is that all members who have given so much to the club cannot have their deeds recorded. This of course is not possible. Suffice to say that their work has been invaluable and very much appreciated. Golf clubs, by their nature, have always relied heavily on the efforts of people willing to give of their services for the advancement of their club. In early days all trophies were donated and minutes of committee meetings showed that members of these committees would often finance projects from their own resources. In 1939 the president Mr H Dawe, in moving a motion to have subscriptions raised, made reference to the

magnificent work that had been done by the early members. He said that they did much that had been forgotten or had never been known by present members. "Unfortunately," he said "the days of the working bee appear to be over and it is therefore advisable that fees should be increased." This statement proved to be untrue, as this period of inactivity, maybe brought about by the beginning of the Second World War, lasted for a very short time.

For this golf club to achieve its existing situation has required an immense collective effort from members for a period of 100 years. It is beneficial to reflect on the number of hours spent on club affairs by the chairmen, presidents, captains, treasurers, secretaries, members of the board and the various committees. To undertake any of these roles requires a significant commitment. Others give of their time performing tasks such as setting up tables, cooking BBQ's, selling drinks etc. Often this is just taken for granted by members or without realisation of the amount of work involved, in many cases performed by members raising young families and in full time employment. It has been this solid core of generous individuals that has underpinned the daily routine and the general progression of the club. In the formative years the positions of treasurer and secretary were fulfilled without the benefit of calculators and computers and all financial records, accounts, membership lists, minutes, handicap records etc were hand written in ledgers and volumes of books.

The associates cleaned the clubhouse, attended to all catering needs, laundered table cloths and towels, in addition to creating magnificent floral arrangements.

The course was maintained and developed by voluntary labour until a full-time greenkeeper was appointed some ten years later. A social committee was responsible for the highly successful, fund raising queen carnival and the monthly dances. Over a long period, the associates raised vital funds through coffee parties, antiques and treasure days, cooking demonstrations, op shops, card parties and gymkanas.

One task that has remained consistent through the history of both courses has been the necessity of tree planting and the related maintenance. All this work has been done voluntarily, with most of the plants being donated. Today the benefit of that work is evident, as the trees and shrubs have added to the beauty of the course, offered shelter, defined the playability of holes and attracted birdlife. An added bonus now, is that any fallen or dead trees and branches provide wood for the fireplace which is a feature of the members lounge. Previously, much of the firewood was obtained by working bees collecting it from members bush blocks.

As the club developed, the nature of support required from the members changed. One such occurrence came in 1956, when much preparation was required in the events which led to Midlands becoming registered under the Licensing Act. After this was granted, the committee decided that to curb expenditure it would instigate a roster system for the committee members to serve behind the bar and appointed a purchasing officer, to carry out a duty that required considerable attention. It was proposed at the annual meeting in 1962 to engage a full-time steward, but the committee decided to continue with the

arrangements in place at the time. The first full-time steward was Jack Foley, appointed in April 1977. More recently, the time consuming counting of poker machine money and the organisation of the Friday night "happy hour" are just two of the tasks that have to be performed regularly.

Many other events have required enormous research and groundwork. The huge task of relocating the golf course and associated buildings was one requiring numerous meetings, negotiation, time and expertise by the New Course Development Committee. Among the parties involved were the council, the shire, bankers, estate agents, solicitors, golf course architects, earthmovers and builders. To co-ordinate and bring the plan to fruition required initiative and foresight and led Peter Thomson to comment "if ever there is a success story, this is one." Other major projects which have required countless hours of effort included the watering system and the introduction of the poker machines.

Many members have made substantial cash offerings. One such donation came in 1967 from a member of long standing, Mr Jack Westwood, who donated \$2000 to the club and requested that the money be spent improving and beautifying the surrounds of the bowling green. (\$2000 in this year would have purchased a superior block of land in Wendouree). Here, however, lies the danger in attempting to acknowledge all the contributions made, whether in cash, time, labour or equipment as invariably some will be missed. Much of the work that is performed weekly, and goes unrecognised, may appear

to be minor, but in total makes for a discernible and essential support to the organisation and welfare of the club.

Significant additions to the clubs' inventory occurred when the former CFA shed in Slatey Creek Road owned by David Speechley was donated to the club by him. This has proven to be invaluable as a place to store paint, chemicals, fertilizers, fuel and pesticides. Another came in 1991 when the club captain Gary Deloas found a hydraulic tilt trailer advertised for sale in the Weekly Times at a property near Daylesford. After gaining approval from the committee, the trailer was purchased and towed by him back to Midlands. Over the years this has been one of the cheapest and most used and useful pieces of equipment that the club owns.

Two metal shelters relocated from the old course are positioned at the rear of the men's third tee and behind the fifth green. These have historical significance as they had been used as tram shelters in Geelong until the tramway network was abandoned in that city in the mid 1950s. They were part of three originally purchased by Max Marshall, who at that time conducted a scrap metal business - hence the name "Steptoes Hut" on the one at the fifth green. The plaque on the shelter at the third tee - O J "Mart" Martin - acknowledges the contribution by him to the club, as well as being Captain in 1940 and 1941 and President in 1942. A third shelter "Tic Tocs Tavern" paid for by Jack Allan, part owner of Allan Bros Jewellers, deteriorated over the years and became unusable. The treated pine shelters at the 6th, 11th, 13th and 16th were constructed by Danny Forde.

A significant change to the structure of the club occurred in 2015 with the amalgamation of the men's and ladies golf committees. The Victorian Golf Association (VGA), under President John Hobday, began a five year amalgamation process which saw the VGA and Women's Golf Victoria (WGV) merge to establish Golf Victoria in 2010. This process followed from the amalgamation of both Australian entities to become Golf Australia.

Golf Victoria from this point has encouraged and made a recommendation to all affiliated groups and committees to follow their lead and amalgamate male and female committees into one entity. When clubs or entities apply to Golf Victoria for any grants, funding or other help, amalgamated committees will be one of the requirements to receive funding.

After a process taking about 18 months, the Ballarat and District Golf Association and Women's Golf Ballarat merged in July 2014 to become Ballarat and District Golf Incorporated. The men and women at district level work in unison to create the best golfing environment for district players and all resources are used to help foster better golf throughout the district.

Following these moves from Golf Australia, Golf Victoria and Ballarat and District Golf Incorporated, a motion was passed in March-April 2015 at both Midlands Golf Men's committee (President Rob Wallace) and Ladies Golf Committee (President Helen Leech) meetings to dissolve current committees and form a single golf committee, Midlands Golf. Both of these motions were passed unanimously and the new



Golfers / Bowlers night - Laurie Valpied, Bruce Trevena, Peter Llewellyn, Ted McCoy, Bill Allan, Keg Dunbar.

committee Midlands Golf held its inaugural Annual General Meeting in June 2015. The Board of Directors of the club fully supported this move to create less committees, pool resources and make better use of volunteer work time.

The Midlands Golf Committee is made up of five male and five female members with a yearly rotating Chair person, male and female President, Vice President, Captain and Vice Captain plus two other members male and female. The position secretary is

held by an outside club member and a treasurer's report is compiled from monthly figures supplied from the club. The monthly meetings are attended by the course Superintendent, Club Professional, Club Manager and a Club Director, with these people able to have input proceedings and deliver ongoing reports. The committee sets up smaller member based meetings to conduct special events such as the Eileen Ryan, Pro-Am and the tournament.

Saturday remains the major competition day for men and Wednesdays for women. On weekdays, Thursday is well patronised, and an event started in the mid 2000s, the Monday Club, draws a good field each week. This is a 12 hole stableford competition, played off forward tees and is popular with older members. As the club reaches its 100th year, the make-up of the golfing calendar has changed. Popular events such as the Midland Amateur Championship, the John Valves Trade day, Parent and Child, Left Handers v Right Handers and City V Shire have lost favour and have been discontinued. Annual bus trips to reciprocal clubs, Horsham (Jim Gordon Plate), Rosedale (McGowan Bros. Trophy), Hamilton (Marlboro Shield) and Eaglehawk no longer take place. One event that has remained popular is the Allan Bros. golfers / bowlers night. The annual tournament is always well patronised but now comprises more team orientated competitions. After being played in various months throughout the years, it has been held in March since 1979. Guest days which had previously only been held on Sundays were played on Saturdays for the first time in 1971.

Men's Major Events

Club Championships
Summer Cup
Veterans
Medallist of the Year
Jim Rapkins Trophy
Midlands Plate
Singles Knockout
Doubles Knockout
Alf White Trophy
Captains Trophy
Presidents Trophy
Slab Ambrose
Legends Tour Pro-Am

Ladies Major Events

Club Championships
Dorrie Wheeler
Grace Dynan 4BBB
Senior Ladies
Timmy Cates Medallist
of the year
Peaches Gymkana
Christmas Party
Presidents Trophy
Scratch Foursomes
Doris Chambers
Bev Bennett Trophy
Eileen Ryan Bowl

At the end of October 2016, the Power Industry Association held a highly successful three day golf programme that enhanced the clubs reputation of being able to conduct larger scale events.

An announcement was made in *The Courier* of October 2016 that the Ballarat sub-branch of the Returned and Services League would be in a short time calling the Midlands Golf Club home. Negotiations were taking place in what was described as an exciting opportunity for both clubs and a "win, win" situation. Midlands chairman Peter Considine said that there was potential for joint business ventures in the future and both clubs see benefit in both clubs coming together. As both organisations do different things there is unlikely to be conflicts of interest.

The formation of the RSL took place in 1916 when it became evident that many of the early returning servicemen from the 1914-1918 war were facing significant problems, monetary, mentally and physically, settling back into society. In Ballarat, the first residence of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Institute was in Lester's Hotel buildings situated in Sturt Street, between Armstrong and Doveton Streets. In 1920 a offer was received to purchase a two storey property at 2 Lyons St South and this remained the home of the Ballarat branch for more than ninety years.



January 2017 - Display of military vehicles and equipment in Midlands car park



In December 2011 it transferred to the George Hotel in Lydiard Street but because of an aging membership and lack of parking a move to the golf club was proposed.

To accommodate the relocation, the clubhouse required alteration to provide rooms and offices for the RSL and upon completion of these the branch formally took up

residence at Midlands in June 2017. From this time onwards the Ode has been recited in the clubhouse at 6pm each day. Three flag poles were erected near the entrance to the car park to provide for the flags of Australia, New Zealand and the RSL. A restored German Howitzer sFH02 No.68 was also installed in this location. The allied forces captured the gun during the Battle of Amiens in France in 1918. This battle was the first decisive and massive allied victory of World War 1. After the war, captured German artillery pieces, machine guns and vehicles were shipped to Australia for allocation to towns across the country based on population size. The RSL celebrated its centenary year with a dinner at Midlands and a display of military equipment in January 2017.

During 2017 concern had been growing that the club was experiencing significant cash flow problems and the board decided that the problem had to be addressed. The burden of carrying a large debt which could not be decreased and the associated interest payment meant

that the sale of Drew's Paddock was essential to the long term future of the club. To achieve the best outcome for the club the board in conjunction with local estate agents in July 2017 invited expressions of interest from interested parties. Fifteen were received.

Villawood Properties, one of the largest developers in Australia, committed to a joint venture using a profit share arrangement. The board's decision on a joint venture approach provided the club with the best opportunity to maximise the full value of the land and minimise risk. Independent advice was received from solicitors, accountants, engineers, the Bendigo Bank, two estate agents and the professional property developers to assist throughout the decision making process. The process required over five months of intense enquiry and investigation by board members. Two information nights were held to inform members of the intended outcomes prior to a vote being taken at a Special General Meeting on 29 November 2017. The vote was overwhelming in favour of the sale. A core focus of the Villawood philosophy was their desire to develop the property as family orientated and the golf club to be a vital part of that community.

In the following year the club modernized its watering approach by installing a Toro-Lynx Control System to provide a fast, accurate method to put water exactly where needed. The system, which can be operated remotely, gives the capability of creating a fully integrated map using a digital image of the course displayed on a monitor in the green-keepers shed. Another monitor auto-generates reports after each night's watering quickly highlighting any stations that

did not operate as intended and confirming all sprinkler runtimes at a glance. Irrigation can be controlled by setting runtime minutes or application inches and pre-setting days of the week that sprinklers are to operate.

Midlands has reciprocal rights with the clubs listed. A round of golf may be had there upon contact with the club and payment of 50% of the green fees.

Victoria

Bright Country Club	Goonawarra Golf Club
Hamilton Golf Club	Horsham Golf Club
Kaniva Golf Club	Korumburra Golf Club
Mansfield Golf Club	Mildura Golf Club
Mooroopna Golf Club	Mt. Beauty Golf Club
Neangar Park Golf Club	Nhill Golf Club
Portarlinton Golf Club	Portland Golf Club
Robinvale Golf Club	Rosedale Golf Club
Toolondo Golf Club	Warracknabeal Golf Club
Warragul Golf Club	Yallourn Golf Club

South Australia

Murray Bridge Golf Club	South Lakes Golf Club
Vines Golf Club	

New South Wales

Barham Golf & Country Club	Howlong Golf Club
Kogarah Golf Club	Muree Golf Club
Murray Downs Golf Club	Springwood Country Club
Wauchope Country Club	

Queensland

Rockhampton Golf Club	Yeppoon Golf Club
Keperra Golf Club	

Northern Territory

Darwin Golf Club

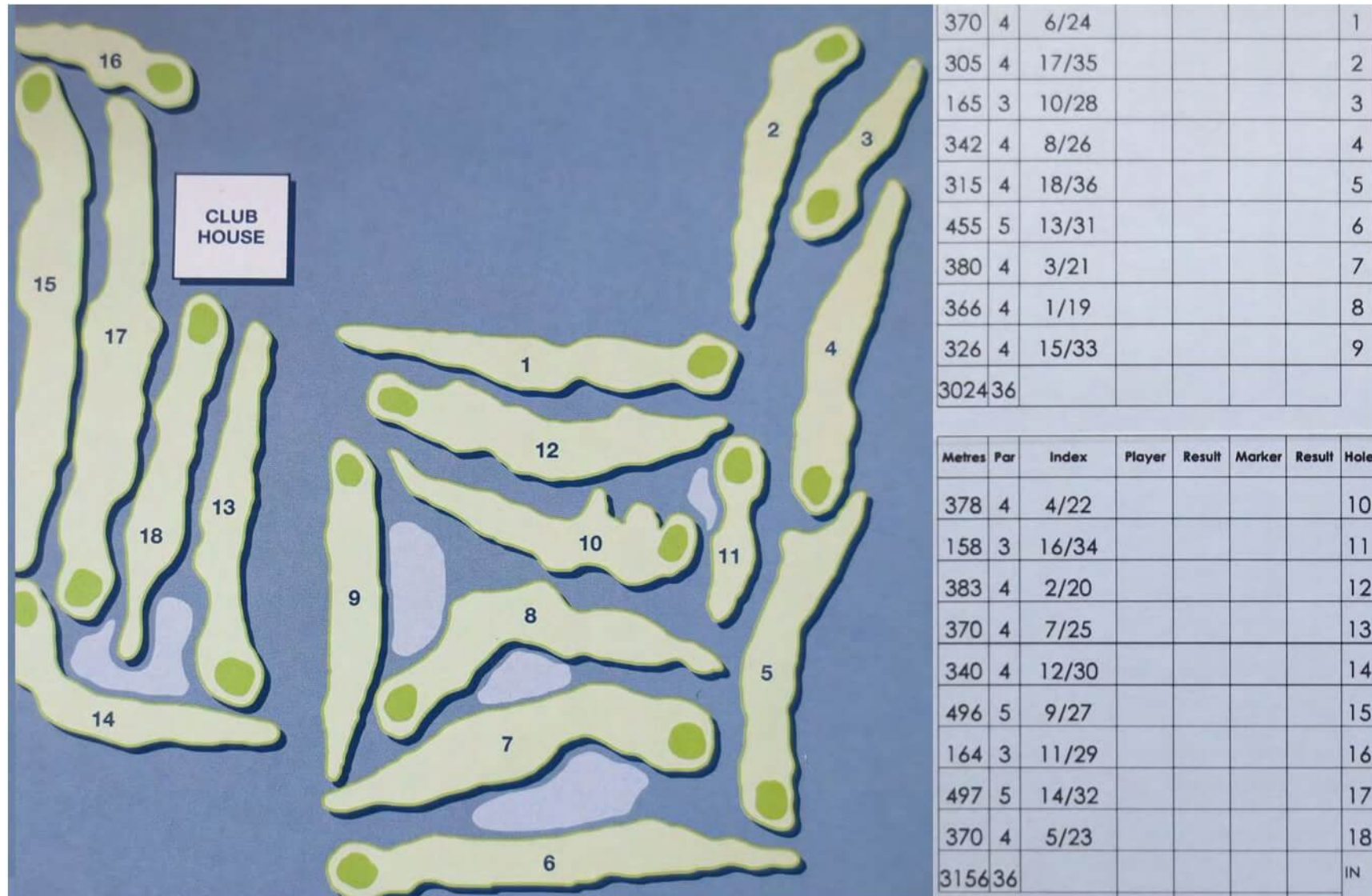
Western Australia

Rockingham Golf Club

The General Body of Members of the Club are as follows:

LIFE	Life - Men	U21M	Under 21 - M
LIF1	Life - Ladies	U18M	Jun. Under 18 - B
FMEN	Full - Men	U18L	Jun. Under 18 - G
FL	Full - Ladies	CB	Cadet 8-12years- B
M65	Full - Ov 65 M	BM	Bowls - Men
L65	Full - Ov 65 L	BL	Bowls - Ladies
IM	Inter - Men	JBB	Junior Bowls - Boys
IL	Inter - Ladies	SOCM	Social - Men
IM65	Inter - Ov65 M	SOCL	Social - Ladies
IL	Inter - Ov65 L	LOC	Local
CM	Country - M	HON	Honorary
CL	Country - L	SGOL	Sponsor - Golf
ISM	I/State - M	STAF	Hon Staff Member
ISL	I/State - L	ST3M	Short Term 3 Mth
OM	Overseas	RSLM	RSL - Men
SS	Restricted	FM1	New Mem Year 1M
SM	Student Un. 25	FL1	New Mem Year 1L

FROM SMALL ACORNS / THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY



Course Layout & Card

Chapter 11

CELEBRATED GUESTS AND MAJOR EVENTS

Throughout its history Midlands has entertained celebrated guests, staged important championships and produced fine golfers. The guests include three Governors of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brooks, Sir Henry Winneke and Brian Murray, West Indian cricketer Sir Garfield Sobers, trick golfer Joe Kirkwood, four times British Open champion Bobby Locke, golfing legend Norman Von Nida, Stuart Appleby and American country and western singer Charlie Pride.



Sir Garfield Sobers with club captain Ted Boak (2nd from left) and president Ted McCoy (right)

Sir Dallas Brooks was invited to Midlands for the opening of the honour gates in August 1953. His decision that day to play a few holes of golf set the seal on a memorable day to which the personality of the governor contributed greatly. He showed not only did he enjoy his game but he was a talented player. His handicap of four showed his ability and he played up to it by scoring 38 for the nine holes that he played. Midland's president, Mr Syd Weir, said during the entertainment of the governor at afternoon tea, that His Excellency played the course as a member of the club, for he had accepted the club's offer of honorary membership.

Sir Garfield Sobers was knighted in 1975 after retiring from cricket the previous year. He was widely regarded as the greatest all-rounder of all time. He played golf at Midlands in 1980 with the captain of the club Ted Boak. His versatility at cricket also shone through at golf, as he played of a handicap of one right-handed and held a scratch handicap left-handed. When playing the par five 15th hole he used a four wood from the tee and was through the green in two using a four iron for his second shot.

Joe Kirkwood visited Midlands in November 1954. He was not only one of the best golfers of his era, but he was golf's greatest entertainer. In his time on tour he captured the Canadian Open on two occasions, the New

Zealand and Australian Open (when he only needed seven clubs to win the title) and finished third in the British Open. At the time of these victories prize money



Bobby Locke at Midlands in 1950

was small and he supplemented his income by developing an amazing array of trick shots in a show that could go for three hours without repeating himself. Among this repertoire was hitting two balls at the one time, giving one a hook and the other a slice, shooting out the middle ball of a three tier tee up, and hitting a 250 yard shot with a snake club. In his career he had 29 holes-in-one. The trophy for the Australian PGA championship, the Joe Kirkwood Cup, is named in his honour.

Bobby Locke made the first of his two visits to Midlands in October 1950. *The Courier* reported that "at the time he was hailed as a greater shotmaker than Gene Sarazen and Walter Hagen. As well as his British Open victories, he had two third place and two fourth place finishes in the US Open and he won the Australian Open in 1955. He thrilled the large crowd with a round of 69. His was the best ever round from the back tees and while not making any long putts he narrowly missed several short ones. Complimenting the Midlands club on the excellent condition of the course Locke said that the greens were the equal of any that he had played on during his visit to Australia. He added that the fairways were a credit to the greens staff."

"Locke showed a lively interest when told of the Ballarat Colts Golf Club, members of which are boys aged 11 to 17 who play regularly at Midlands on Saturday mornings. 'Keep them at it' he said. 'That is the right time to get them started'. Locke had a fine personality. He served in the war in the air force under the late Flight Lieut. Ron Horwood, a Ballarat boy, and

FROM SMALL ACORNS / CELEBRATED GUESTS AND MAJOR EVENTS

despite the short time at his disposal, paid a visit to his former commander's mother".

The second visit to Midlands by Bobby Locke came in 1955, when he competed in an exhibition match with Norman Von Nida. Three times Australian Open champion, Von Nida has always been a true personality of the game. In the match Locke was around in 68, one under the standard scratch score, to equal the course record set previously by Kevin Hughes of Midlands. Von Nida's score was 69 and on the 18th tee it was he who seemed likely to equal the record. Locke was a stroke behind after the 17th but played a beautiful shot to the last green, leaving himself a seven foot putt for a birdie

PRESENTED 1992
G. W. McLean
PLEASE
REPLACE DIVOTS.
PLEASE REPLACE DIVOTS
and Smooth-out Heel Marks
in Bunkers

Holes	Distance	SSS	Strokes	Player	Player
1	365	4	6	4	4
2	349	4	11	3	4
3	385	4	4	4	4
4	345	4	12	3	4
5	170	3	10	3	4
6	347	4	14	4	4
7	400	4	3	4	4
8	490	5	8	6	5
9	351	4	13	5	4
O't	3202	36		36	37
10	495	5	7	4	4
11	153	3	16	3	3
12	450	4	1	4	4
13	147	3	17	3	3
14	424	4	2	5	4
15	379	4	5	3	4
16	173	3	9	3	2
17	310	4	15	4	5
18	125	3	18	4	2
In	2656	33		33	31
O't	3202	36		36	37
T'l	5858	69		69	68

Player: *Norman Von Nida*
Signature: *Bobby Locke*
Marker: *Bobby Locke*
Date: *18/5/55*

HANDICAP
NET TOTAL

Scorecard of Bobby Locke and Norman Von Nida

which he holed. Throughout the game the tee shots of both players were almost faultless. Von Nida usually out driving Locke, but the latter was seldom off line.

Upwards of 350 people, one of the best galleries to see a golf match in Ballarat, followed the play. Both players had some things to say after their round, pleasing to the Midlands green's committee and complimentary to the green keeping staff. Von Nida said that the greens were the truest that he had played on in the last five years. Those to whom he spoke appreciated his opinion, for he has played on many fine courses in that time. "The Von" said he felt that if he hit his putts correctly they would have gone in the hole. Locke backed him up on this, adding that the greens were far truer than the Melbourne course on which they had played on Sunday.

The annual tournament held by the club in August 1922 was the first of many important events conducted by the club and patronised by many of the leading golfers in Australia. The first ever open tournament began on a Thursday and ran for three days. The ladies scratch event was won by Miss Vera Burgess with other events being a mens 18 holes handicap, a ladies foursome, a men's foursome, and a mixed foursome. The tournament concluded on Saturday with the men's 36 holes scratch event being won by five times club champion J P McCarthy with rounds of 73, 78 = 151.

In the early days the annual tournament was both an amateur and professional event. At the eleventh open meeting in September 1932, the event was won by W J (Bill) Fowler, formerly the Ballarat North Club

professional. Other professionals included Ted and George Naismith, Colin Campbell, W Smith and Graeme Cates. George Naismith, an Australian Open winner, was professional at Riversdale when Peter Thomson began his apprenticeship there and he convinced another of his pupils, two time major winner David Graham, to change from being a left-handed to a right-handed golfer. The three top scores in the tournament were W J Fowler 71, 70 = 141 E Naismith 73, 74 = 147 and G Naismith 73, 75 = 148.

The tournament steadily increased in popularity to a point where in 1947 over 1900 entries were received for the week. The quality of the players who entered the men's 36 holes event each year was remarkable. These included three time Victorian Amateur champion, Bill Edgar, who played in the event most years for more than thirty years. Other players in this period, all of whom had won the Victorian Amateur Championship at least once, included Harry Williams, Bill Higgins, Eric Wishart, Mick Ryan, Eric Routley and Doug Bachli. Along with his Victorian win, Mick Ryan had won both the Australian Open and Amateur Championships, Doug Bachli won the British Amateur Championship, Eric Routley had won six Victorian Amateurs and Harry Williams five times. The tournament week was a busy time for the club because as well as the competitors large galleries followed the play in the main event.

The boom in golf in the 1950s was without doubt aided by the introduction of television to Australia in 1956. The Pelaco Tournament in Sydney in that year was televised live introducing a new audience to the game. This was followed three years later by the

staging of the Canada Cup (now the World Cup) at Royal Melbourne. The Australian team of Peter Thomson and Kel Nagle triumphed over a field that included the powerful American twosome of Sam Snead and Cary Middlecoff. The magnitude of that week was confirmed by the record crowd attendance of 60,000 spectators. The composite course was used for the first time and received world wide acclaim and coverage by the media exceeded even that of the Olympic Games.

In 1955 the club conducted an invitational scratch event which was a forerunner to a new event, the Victorian Midland Amateur Championship, which became the premier event at Midlands for the next thirty-five years. *The Courier* reported the introduction of the event as follows. "A new amateur title event, the Victorian Midland 72 holes Championship, will be promoted by the Midlands club on its course on December 8 and 9 this year. The championship has the approval of the Victorian Golf Association, to which application was made through the Ballarat and District Golf Association, and will provide a further 72 holes title event for the states leading amateurs.

Its promotion followed discussions with the captain of the Victorian team, Bill Edgar, when he visited Ballarat a few months earlier. Edgar was of the opinion that the best way to improve the standard of amateur golf was by championship events, especially over 72 holes, and the success that has attended the Sale and Mornington championships, prompted the suggestion that one be instituted in midland Victoria. The Midlands club took up the proposal and after sounding out low markers who played at its recent tournament, decided

to conduct the title immediately after the Olympic Games. It was hoped that the championship would become an annual event and will be open to amateurs having handicaps of six or less. It is proposed to limit the size of the field to about 60. Although no major event had been conducted here so late in the season, it was thought that the championship could be the means of stimulating interest in summer golf. Ballarat clubs have come to recognise that the best golfing conditions occur from October to January."

The first Victorian Midland Amateur Championship was conducted on 8 and 9 December 1956. 36 holes were played each day. In a close finish, Tom Crow (Kingston Heath) 73, 72, 71, 72 won by two strokes from Bill Edgar (Commonwealth) 72, 71, 75, 75 and Bill Gluth (Metropolitan) 71, 74, 77, 68. Crow was the current holder of the state title and won the national title in 1961. He was an expert club designer and later moved to the USA where he established a club manufacturing business, Cobra. Also in the field that year were Eric Routley and Eric Wishart. It was said that a problem likely to face Midlands when it conducts the event next year is how to cope with the entries. Almost every member of the field said he would return. It is obvious that the field limit of 60 must be retained. Hence the problem, but as a tournament, staged with the object of encouraging amateur golf, particularly young players, it could not have been a greater success.

The following year was another memorable contest with one of Australia's best ever amateurs, Kevin Hartley, winning in a playoff from Tom Crow. Hartley

trailed Crow by 10 strokes after 36 holes, but had a brilliant 30 on back nine on Sunday afternoon to make the sudden death playoff. Crow had set a new course record in the second round with a 64 on the Saturday afternoon. The leading scores were:- Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 72, 74, 72, 66, Tom Crow (Kingston Heath) 72, 64, 74, 74, and Bill Edgar (Commonwealth) 72, 71, 72, 73.

The biggest event ever conducted at Midlands was undoubtedly the Close Championship of Victoria. Regarded as a prestigious event by the VGA it is called a "close" championship because it was limited to professionals and amateurs who were residents of Victoria. It was conducted between 1948 and 1977 and had been won by Ossie Pickworth four times, Peter Thomson twice and Bruce Devlin. The championship was originally scheduled to be held on 1 and 2 October 1960. Eighteen holes were to be played on the Saturday after which the field of 100 would be cut to 50 and ties, qualifying to play the final 36 holes on the Sunday.

The following is *The Courier* report on the event - "when the Close Championship of Victoria is played at Midlands Golf Club, it will be the first time that the event has been staged on an inland course. Prize money for professionals will be \$600 including the club's contribution of \$200. First prize will be \$200, second \$100 with ten other prizes. The leading amateur will get a trophy and the club will give one for the best score by a junior under 21.

The VGA had decided a few years ago to offer country clubs a chance to stage the championship, but



Peter Thomson and Neil Titheridge before the start of the final round

those clubs seemed reluctant to undertake the responsibility of making a success of it. Geelong offered to put on the event in 1958, and in that year Midlands, believing that golf in this district was strong enough to warrant good support for the championship, made an unsuccessful application for permission to stage it. Geelong conducted the event again the following year when it gave evidence of becoming well established as

a major tournament in country golf. Bruce Devlin, then a resident of the state, won it."

Wet weather then intervened causing the championship to be postponed until November 26 - 27. The decision was made by the match committee of the VGA after an approach by the club. Continuous rain during the week and the possibility of little fine weather caused the officials some concern about being able to have the course in suitable condition for the championship. A suggestion was made to VGA that the championship be postponed to take the place of the 72 holes Midland Amateur Championship, usually conducted late in November. The VGA match committee agreed to this.

The wet weather eventually proved to be a bonus for the club. The original field consisted of 87 players, but when the entries were re-opened, 16 additional players entered. These included Peter Thomson who at this time had won four of his five British Opens, Victorian Open champion Jack Harris and British Amateur champion Doug Bachli. The field was the best ever to have taken part in a golf contest in a country centre in Victoria. In the previous week Peter Thomson won the New Zealand Open. A gallery fee was charged on both days. It was estimated that over 1000 people witnessed the final day's play in which Ballarat champion Neil Titheridge continued his great season when he won the championship. In previous weeks he had recorded a nine under par course record 65 in the second round of the Victorian Open at Metropolitan. At Midlands, with rounds of 68, 67, 65, he defeated Jack

FROM SMALL ACORNS / CELEBRATED GUESTS AND MAJOR EVENTS

Harris 67, 68, 68, by three strokes, with Peter Thomson 66, 70, 68, a stroke behind Harris.

Titheridge, drawn with Thomson in the final round putted brilliantly over the first nine holes getting birdies at the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 7th to be out in 32, and increased his lead over Thomson (34) and gained three strokes on Harris (35). Thomson and Titheridge had birdies at the long 10th where Harris took five, and the Ballarat player got a break when Thomson went through the short 11th and failing to recover took five to Titheridge's three.

At the presentation of trophies, the president Mr J Weir, said that the club was honoured that the Victorian Golf Association had given it the conduct of the

Victorian Close Championship. Mr Weir was introducing the president of the VGA Mr D S Martin, who presented the trophies. "This is only the second time a major championship has come to a country club" said Mr Weir, "and it indicates that Ballarat is growing up in a golf sense, and will give the game a big boost in this district." Mr Weir thanked all who had assisted to make the tournament a success; the army for its radio unit and the volunteer members of the committee who manned the course in an efficient manner.

Mr Martin said that "it was the VGA which should thank Midlands, for the tournament had been presented in an outstanding manner, on a course that was unrivalled in the country area. We are so satisfied with the course, and the conduct of the championship, that we have already decided in conjunction with the Midlands officials to stage the tournament here next year," Mr Martin said. He said that "Ballarat golfing enthusiasts had patronised the game; it had been favoured with ideal weather and the Midlands club had provided some magnificent trophies including the \$200 for the professional prize. Everything turned out well and the success of Neil Titheridge must be a great thrill for all of Ballarat." Mr Martin said.

A prominent golf journalist wrote in a Melbourne paper that "the course of the Midlands Golf Club was in the richest of turf; its magnificent parklands and treed country surprised and delighted those who formerly had not seen the place. I haven't seen a more pleasant tournament played under better weather and turf conditions in the country. A gallery more discerning or better behaved than the thousand of the Sunday

PLAYER <i>N. Titheridge</i>										STROKE		BOGEY		
HANDICAP														
Holes.	Yds.	SSS	M'ch.	Bogey						Holes.	Yds.	SSS	M'ch.	Bogey
1	375	4	8	6	4					10	515	5	1	7
2	356	4	10	11	3					11	166	3	14	16
3	385	4	6	4	3					12	455	4	3	1
4	352	4	12	12	3					13	147	3	17	17
5	174	3	13	10	3					14	434	4	5	2
6	350	4	15	14	4					15	379	4	7	5
7	400	4	4	3	3					16	190	3	11	9
8	491	5	2	8	5					17	303	4	16	15
9	352	4	9	13	4					18	125	3	18	18
Out	3235	36			32					In	2714	33		
Player <i>N. Titheridge</i>										Out	3235	36		
Marker <i>H. Howells</i>										Total	5949	69		
Date <i>27/11/60</i>										Handicap				
										Net TOTAL				

Neil Titheridge's final round card

afternoon is rarely seen. Organising and conduct of all details were most efficiently done."

Titheridge, who played in front of his biggest gallery, said "he had not anticipated winning; sufficient thrill was to have been drawn to play with Peter Thomson. It was only at the 11th when Thomson had an unaccountable five, that he thought he had a chance to win. He paid a compliment to Midlands which, he said, had staged the tournament in a most creditable manner on a splendid course." After his win he received a congratulatory telegram from the Governor, Sir Dallas Brooks.

Writing in his golf column the following week, Peter Thomson wrote that "amateur golfers are not expected to beat professionals, but at Ballarat last weekend 23-year-old Neil Titheridge showed that it is always possible. Winning golf championships is much more a question of temperament than technique and Titheridge has few equals in this regard. He continued that there is a lot to like about his golf, but most attractive of all is his fresh uncomplicated approach. His calm thinking will eventually place him head and shoulders above his amateur contemporaries in his state." This was a prophetic statement as he won the Victorian Amateur Championship in 1961 and 1962 and captained the state team on three occasions as well as being the non-playing captain of the Australian team in the Eisenhower Cup. He was a supporter of the annual tournament and the Midland Amateur Championship for many years.

When the championship returned the following year, Keysborough professional Jack Harris, set a new course record of 62 in the second round to win by six shots. During the event, the new VGA scoreboard was used as well as the club's own board and was updated by field radio units. The leading scores were Jack Harris 67, 62, 70 = 199, Dick O'Shea (Long Island) 65, 69, 71 = 205, Peter Thomson (Victoria) 65, 70, 71 = 206 Kevin Hartley had a hole-in-one on the fifth. Midlands gained widespread publicity for the way in which the championship was organised. The Midland Amateur Championship also benefited not only from this, but the VGA's decision to institute the Ivo Whitton trophy and to approve of the championship as one of the events from which competitors scores would be taken into account. The Ivo Whitton Trophy was named in honour of one of Victoria's greatest amateur golfers, whose achievements included winning the state title five times in six years from 1919 to 1924.

The associates were also involved in running an important event conducting a successful tournament on behalf of the Victorian Ladies Golf Union. This event, a 36 holes championship, was one of two held in country centres in 1961. It developed into a contest between two teenagers, Miss Barbara Coulson (Woodlands) and Miss Lorraine Thomas (Victoria) with the title going to the latter. Nineteen year old Miss Coulson was five strokes behind after the first round, but set a course record of 76, one stroke better than the previous best done by Mrs G Cates. Miss Thomas, an eighteen year old, with scores of 83, 78 = 161, held on to win by two strokes from Miss Coulson 87, 76 = 163. In third place was Mrs Joan Fisher (Barwon Heads) 82, 83 = 165.

Miss Coulson, in the previous few days had played in Melbourne and a championship in Tasmania and with the Midlands event managed to play 13 rounds of golf in 8 days.

Another highlight for the club came some ten years later in July 1971 when the Victorian women's golf interstate team paid a visit to Midlands to give a clinic and play exhibition matches. Despite a cold wind blowing, about 250 spectators were absorbed by the demonstration of skill of the players. Among them were team captain Bettine Burgess, junior State champion, Sandra Williams, country champion Lee Stanley, and outstanding juniors Penny Pulz and Barbara Jones. The club officials went on record to state the pleasure it had given to the associates to be the host club on the



Part of the large crowd watching the exhibition. Bettine Burgess is demonstrating a shot - Lee Stanley is holding the loud hailer.

occasion and to express the appreciation of having the opportunity to make its course available for such an outstanding event. The associates president later received a letter from Miss Burgess, thanking her for the warm welcome and hospitality and expressed appreciation for the part that Midlands had played in making the visit a success.

MIDLANDS AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1956** 288 Tom Crow (Kingston Heath) 73, 72, 71,72
290 Bill Edgar (Commonwealth) 72, 71, 75, 72
Fred Gluth (Metropolitan) 71, 74, 77, 68
- 1957** 284 Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 72,74, 72, 66
Tom Crow (Kingston Health) 72, 64 ,74,74
- 1958** 282 Ken Harrison (Keysborough) 68, 72, 72, 70
285 Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 74, 69, 74, 68
- 1959** 285 Bill Edgar (Commonwealth) 71, 70, 74, 70
287 Alan Toe (Southern) 66, 70, 72, 79
- 1962** 278 Kevin Hartley (Medway) 75, 69, 66, 68
286 Alan Toe (Southern) 73, 73, 69, 71
- 1963** 281 Alan Toe (Southern) 71, 69, 69, 72
282 Les O'Shea (Southern) 68, 72, 72, 70
- 1964** 283 Roger Cowan (Benalla) 72, 71, 73, 67
284 Bill Britten (Long Island) 69, 73, 70, 72
Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 69, 71, 73, 71

FROM SMALL ACORNS / CELEBRATED GUESTS AND MAJOR EVENTS

1965 277 John Yelland (Victoria) 72, 68,70, 67
280 Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 68, 69, 71,72

1966 278 Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 70, 68, 71, 69
282 Kevin Donahue (Metro.) 73, 74, 68, 67

1967 279 Randall Hicks (Kingswood) 69, 69, 68, 73
281 Bill Britten (Long Island) 69, 70, 69, 73

1968 282 Neil Titheridge (Ballarat) 71, 71, 70, 70
288 Ian Stanley (Huntingdale) 70, 74, 76, 68
Rick Wines (Commonwealth)75,71, 72, 70

1969 203 Bill Britten (Long Island) 70, 65, 68
210 Bob Shearer (Southern) 68, 70, 72

1970 210 Rick Wines (Commonwealth) 70, 69, 71
212 Neil Titheridge (Ballarat) 73, 66, 73
Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 69, 71, 72

1971 208 Rick Wines (Commonwealth) 71, 73, 64
211 Kevin Hartley (Yarra Yarra) 71, 69, 71

1972 212 Mike Roe (Midlands)
212 Ray Jenner (Victoria)

1973 Not played

1974 141 John Lindsay (Victoria) 68, 73
143 Ray Jenner (Victoria) 72, 71

1975 222 Chris Tatt (Castlemaine) 74, 74, 74
Doug Perry (Rosebud) 75, 75, 72

1976 148 Ken Kilburn (Kingswood) 70, 78
149 Peter Fitzgerald (Kingswood) 77, 72
Ray Gribusts (Woodlands) 73, 76

1978 223 Ray Jenner (Victoria) 78, 69, 76
224 Greg Alexander (King. Heath)79, 74, 71

1979 143 Michael Clayton (Metropolitan) 74, 69
144 Ray Jenner (Victoria) 75, 69

1980 146 Ray Gribusts (Woodlands) 74, 72
147 Clyde Boyer (Metropolitan) 74,73

1981 147 Clyde Boyer (Metropolitan) 73, 74
150 Richard Rayment (Metropolitan) 74, 76

1982 143 Neil Titheridge (Ballarat) 70, 73
145 Lex Johnson (Bendigo) 73, 75

1983 145 Clyde Boyer (Metropolitan) 74, 71
148 Lex Johnson (Bendigo) 73, 75

1984 147 Bob Castles (Commonwealth) 77, 70
David Briggs (Latrobe) 77, 70

1985 142 Tim Jones (Midlands) 72, 71
144 Steve Friebe (Goonawarra) 72, 72

1986

1987 150 David Briggs (Latrobe) 74,76
151 Vin Nivarovich (East Geelong) 77,74

- 1988** 138 Tony Collier (Ballarat) 71, 67
143 James Lavender (Northern) 74, 69
- 1989** 147 Jim Kirby
148 Rob Wallace (Midlands)
- 1990** 146 Chris Tatt (Buninyong) 75, 71
Craig Haase (Creswick) 77, 69
- 1991** 147 Vin Nivarovich (East Geelong) 71, 76
148 Travis Davidson (Midlands)

The reasons for the demise of the tournament are unclear. In the beginning it was a 72 hole tournament that was reduced to 54 holes and finally became a 36 hole event. Perhaps changes in peoples lifestyles led to this, and it has become a common occurrence in amateur events. Even in the professional ranks, highly popular tournaments of the 1950's and 1960's, such as the Ampol Tournament, the Wills Masters, the Dunlop International and the Chrysler Classic eventually lost their appeal and were abandoned.

Stuart Appleby played in an exhibition match at Midlands with Steve Bann, David Iwasaki-Smith and Glen Joyner. He recorded 73 with Steve Bann having a four under par round of 68. Steve Bann was the founding coach at the Victorian Institute of Sport and is one of the best known coaches in world golf. He has presented on the golf channel in the USA and has been coach of the men's and ladies Victorian teams.

MIDLAND SENIOR LADIES

The Midlands Senior Ladies, a sub-committee of Midlands Ladies Golf, was formed in August 1979. From a small beginning, the "senior ladies" has continued to grow. In 1986 the family of the late Lou Sumner offered \$500 to buy trophies for a golf day in memory of her and it was decided to hold a 4 BBB stableford teams event for ladies 55 years and over. After a few years the family could no longer donate money for trophies and decided to buy one silver cup, with the ladies committee supplying all individual trophies. The Lou Sumner event was held each year from 1986 until 2002. In 2002 the family did not wish to continue and the name changed back to the original, the Midlands Senior Ladies Event. All monies raised by the committee in earlier days were used to purchase items required by the club, but in more recent times all profits are handed over to be used at the discretion of the directors. In 1993, Kath McSwain and the Senior Ladies provided funds for the installation of practice nets and also for the construction of a practice bunker.

A major event on the ladies golfing calender each year is the Eileen Ryan Bowl. Mrs Eileen Ryan was a well known identity throughout the Ballarat area, having been involved in the hotel business for many years. Apart from a short time when she was away from Ballarat, she was a member of the club from 1934 until her death in 1992. In 1969, a rose bowl was donated by Graeme Cates in memory of his wife for the winner of the Medallist of the Year and this was won by Eileen Ryan. At a meeting at the old clubhouse held in 1976, she offered to donate a perpetual bowl to be

played for annually, open to all amateur women golfers. From a small beginning it has now grown into a prestigious event, being the biggest team event for ladies outside the metropolitan area. The first bowl was played for, on the new course, in 1977. Mount Xavier and Gisborne have been the most successful clubs winning the bowl on four occasions.



Eileen Ryan (centre) with ladies captain Ada Jelbart and ladies president Aileen Evers with the Eileen Ryan Bowl.

EILEEN RYAN BOWL WINNERS

1977	Mornington	1998	Curlewis
1978	Avoca	1999	Horsham
1979	Mornington	2000	Ballarat
1980	Ballarat	2001	Mount Xavier
1981	Clunes	2002	Mount Xavier
1982	Geelong	2003	Anglesea
1983	Hepburn Springs	2004	Mount Xavier
1984	Timboon	2005	Gisborne
1985	Tocumwal	2006	Meredith
1986	Heywood	2007	Gisborne
1987	Cobden	2008	Gisborne
1988	Victoria	2009	Mount Xavier
1989	Learmonth	2010	Victoria
1990	Learmonth	2011	Hepburn Springs
1991	Geelong	2012	Yarra Valley
1992	Anglesea	2013	Ballarat
1993	Victoria	2014	Gisborne
1994	Box Hill	2015	Buninyong
1995	Victoria	2016	Timboon
1996	Clifton Springs	2017	Keysborough
1997	Tullamarine	2018	Warracknabeal

PRO-AM

The first Pro-Am was held in 1997 in conjunction with Creswick Golf Club. In 1998, Midlands went alone in staging the event. The event lapsed for eight years before being re-established in 2013 when New Zealander Matthew Perry won. The inaugural Victorian Senior Masters was played in 2017, being established by Mark Petrie with the assistance of Michael Cooke. The first Australian PGA Seniors Championship was held in 1986 and seniors golf is now a big part of the professional golf tours throughout the world. A welcome by-product of the senior pro-ams is that most players show a great willingness to give back to the game that has been good to them.

Legendary players who competed in the event included Peter Senior, Rodger Davis, Peter O'Malley, Mike Harwood, Ossie Moore and Terry Price. The 36 hole event, carrying prize- money of \$30,000, was won in a playoff by 50-year-old Steve Conran of Orange NSW. Conran, a former Australian Amateur Champion had completed almost twenty years playing on the Japanese tour.

Leading Scores

Steve Conran (NSW)	70 66 (136)
Craig Warren (QLD)	67 69 (136)
Grant Kenny (NSW)	69 69 (138)
David Merriman (NSW)	71 67 (138)
Peter O'Malley (NSW)	69 69 (138)
Mike Harwood (VIC)	70 70 (140)
Peter Senior (QLD)	67 73 (140)



*PGA Legends at Midlands - Rodger Davis, Ossie Moore, Mark Petrie
(Organiser & Major Sponsor) Peter O'Malley, Peter Senior.*

In 2018 the event was again conducted with most players from the previous year returning. They were added to by players of the calibre of David McKenzie and Peter Fowler. A torrential downpour accompanied by lightning mid-afternoon on the first day caused a delay of two hours. Brad Burns and Mike Harwood returned three under par rounds of 69 to lead after the opening round. John Onions from Victoria recorded an exceptional second round of 64 to capture the title by three strokes from Mike Harwood. Terry Price improved



Peter Fowler and Terry Price before beginning the second round

nine strokes on the second day with a brilliant 66. This tournament has been an outstanding success due to the efforts of the golf committee, volunteers, Michael Cooke and Mark Petrie who has taken on the unenviable task of raising finance to stage the event.

Leading Scores

John Onions (VIC)	70	64	(134)
Mike Harwood (VIC)	69	68	(137)
David Hill (VIC)	71	67	(138)
David McKenzie (VIC)	71	68	(139)
David Diaz (NSW)	71	68	(139)
Guy Wall (NSW)	71	69	(140)
Grant Kenny (NSW)	70	70	(140)
Brad Burns (QLD)	69	71	(140)
Terry Price (QLD)	75	66	(141)
Peter Fowler (NSW)	72	69	(141)
Steve Conran (NSW)	72	69	(141)

Chapter 12

THE EARLY PIONEERS

The decision by John Dearden to pursue the idea of forming a golf club in Ballarat North has effected the lives of thousands of people. Many members would never have met, some would not have met and married their same partner, and a large number would not be living where they do today.

Every golf club needs to appreciate their pioneers and be aware of the foundations on which the club was established. Often it just takes a person of a particular personality, who has the vision and enthusiasm to realise an opportunity and the character that inspires trust from others to support him. John Dearden was that person. It is evident that the early pioneers at Ballarat North were not short of dedication, nor daunted by task ahead of them under the most difficult of conditions. For this we must all be grateful.

John C Dearden

The founder, first president and life member of Midlands Golf Club was John C Dearden. Part of this account of his life was taken from a book - Biographies, Ballarat And District. He was born in 1865 at Taradale between Castlemaine and Kyneton to Jesse and Margaret Dearden as the second oldest of nine children. His middle name of Cross was his mother's maiden name. He moved to Ballarat at an early age and attended school there until aged fifteen.



He had developed a keen interest in photography and it was this interest that led him to become apprenticed to George Richards, the owner of Richards & Co photographers. After completing his five years apprenticeship he moved to Adelaide to

work and learn from other leading photographers. In 1886 he was contacted by George Richards and was offered a partnership in the firm which he accepted and he returned to Ballarat. George Richards died in 1889 leaving John Dearden to become the sole proprietor of the business retaining the name Richards & Co. In 1890 he decided to travel to Europe to further his knowledge in the latest equipment and ideas working in in a number of leading studios in London and Paris. He was overseas for fifteen months and the experience gained enabled him to become one of the leading photographers of his time.

He was a member of the Ballarat Golf Club, a president and committee member of the Ballarat North Bowling Club and president of the Ballarat Mechanics Institute in 1913, 1930 and 1942, a person who liked to be involved and make a contribution to the community.



John Dearden's home at in Lydiard St. Photo taken in 1917.
Photo from City of Ballarat Libraries Australiana Collection.

Yet his was not a forceful personality, but rather, he was a quietly spoken gentleman of the old school, polite to all people, but persistent in the pursuit of an objective.

He lived with his wife Marion at their home, which still stands today, on the south-east corner of Lydiard and Howitt Streets raising two daughters. From its formation he retained a keen interest in the clubs' affairs, serving as an officer, until resigning from the committee in 1938. During the greater part of this time he was chairman of the greens committee supervising the work of the greens staff. The following report on his death was taken from *The Ballarat Courier* in May 1961.

"John Cross Dearden who died on Monday at his Ballarat North home was a true pioneer in golf. It was due to his persistence that the Midlands Golf Club was founded and was steered through its initial stages to become one of the largest in Victoria outside the metropolitan area. It is probable that without his initiative, the club would have never been established, certainly not on its present site. So a pioneer in Ballarat golf has passed on, remembered by many as one of the true gentlemen of the sport. His death at the age of 95 will cause great regret among the many who felt the better for having been associated with him."

Jim Davey OBE

Jim Davey became the first secretary when the club was formed in 1919 and remained a member for over 50 years. The following year he was elected as president and then for the next nine years he served a record term as captain. In 1931 he stood down from the committee, but became president again in 1943 and 1951. A well-known entertainer in his younger days, he was the head of the social committee, and it was in this role that his immense capacity for organisation saw large amounts of money raised for essential developments. He was a trustee of the club for a number of years and in recognition of his services, he was awarded a life membership. The club is greatly indebted to him for being prominent in steering it through many of the difficulties that beset a new club. He was vice-president in June 1950 when he was awarded by the King the honour of the Order of the British Empire.

Charles Anderson

Charles Anderson was a hard working secretary of the club from 1920 until ill-health forced him to step down from the position in 1936. For this, he was awarded a life membership, at the same time as John Dearden and Jim Davey. The office of secretary was a demanding one in the formative years, but he was meticulous in his work and prepared to give of his time to complete the multitude of tasks that it involved. He was a popular member of the club and was renowned for his sense of humour. Mr Anderson became president in 1938 and finally retired from the committee in 1941 after more than 20 years as an officer of the club.

Dave Ronaldson

Dave Ronaldson was important to the establishment of a golf club in Ballarat North. He owned the land on which the original clubhouse was built and on which some of the holes were situated. He became a foundation member and offered the use of this land rent free until selling it to the club at a later stage for a very reasonable sum. After growing up on a farm at Smeaton he moved to Ballarat and studied engineering at Ballarat School of Mines. In the early 1900s he established his own business and shortly after was joined by John Tippet to become Ronaldson & Tippet.

Among the enormous range of agricultural equipment produced were chaff cutters, corn crushers, shearing machines, pumps, wool presses, saw benches, sheaf elevators, spray units, milking machines and

treadmills. During the war, the firm equipped the military with gun-cradles, diesel engines and generators. In 1927 Ronaldson Bros and Tippet were the largest engine manufacturers in the Southern Hemisphere producing the famous Austral engine and tractors. As well as the land in Ballarat North, he owned a property and a mine at Invermay (previously called Dead Horse Gully).

It was his engineering expertise that helped to develop the course in the early years. A very generous man, often donating trophies, he gave the club a motor tractor that he had designed and built and a roller, as well as a trailer and water tanker and undoubtedly much other equipment as well. He was a trustee of the club and also president in 1923. Before his time at Ballarat North Golf Club he was a member of the Ballarat Golf Club, the Ballarat Rifle Club and the "Forward Ballarat" Movement.

James Selkirk

The beginning of the Selkirk business came in 1883 when Robert Selkirk began making clay bricks at Allandale near Creswick. The business grew as the gold rush had led to a building boom and a considerable demand for his product. In 1900 it was relocated to its present location in Howitt Street on a site with highly suitable clay and proximity to consumers. When he died in 1921 the company was taken over by his son James and prospered until his sudden death in 1935. Joining the club not long after it was formed, James Selkirk became a very important member, one who had much to do with its achievements in the 1920s. He owned

land on which golf was played for fifty years and leased it to the club at an extremely reasonable rate.

While he was president in 1926 he donated the bricks and provided much labour to build a modern clubhouse. Appropriately he laid the foundation stone for the building. He donated seed for planting trees, and offered to supply bricks for a pro shop and shelter near the first tee. The water service to the 13th and 14th greens came from his house and he often provided tools for the greenkeeper. Many club functions were held at his home in Howitt Street. The club is grateful for the contribution that he made and this has been ongoing through the business with sponsorship and the donation of bricks used at the practice putting green and the first tee.

With his wife Ada they had three children, two sons Ronald and William and a daughter Sylvia who was a three time club champion in the early 1930s. She was also the first Ballarat North member to play in an Australian championship, playing at Victoria Golf Club in September 1933. Ada was the associates president in 1940, a member for almost 50 years and was made an honorary associate in recognition of her service to the club. She died in 1971.

Ernest Lemin

Ernest Lemin was manager of Coghlan, Boase and Co. stock agents when he joined the club as a foundation member in 1919. His children later became significant members of the club - son Bill winning eight club championships and daughter Beth (Campbell) four

time champion, club captain and life member. He was the clubs' first vice-president became president in 1922 and a trustee of the club. He was also a committee member and rink captain at the Ballarat North Bowls Club and a member of the Wendouree Rowing Club.

While those named above were most likely to have been persons of drive, influence and foresight the club could not have developed by their efforts alone. Assisting them were dedicated foundation officers Harold Owen, Norman La Gerche (captain for the first two years), Fritz Wilson (3rd president), Walter Irwin (four years as president), A W Long, Walter Heinz and Wally Morgan (Ballarat Golf Club champion who laid out the original nine hole course). A A Burgess who won the first two club championships laid out the first 18 hole course and planted the majority of the trees at this time.

With the removal of the pine trees along the Norman Street boundary in 2017 it is easy to visualize the landscape on which the course was built. What is more difficult is comprehending the magnitude of the task that confronted the pioneers with limited finance, unsuitable tools and no water. While some would have been acquaintances before the formation of the club, they obviously forged a friendship, were compatible and committed to their objective.

Chapter 13

PROFESSIONALS, PENNANT AND CLUB CHAMPIONS

Midlands has been well served by capable professionals since 1926. At this time very few clubs, particularly those outside the metropolitan area had the necessity of employing a professional. The first professional at Ballarat North was **Bert Cates**, son of the former Ballarat Golf Club professional Ted Cates and brother of Graeme, who took on the task at Midlands in 1936. Professionals in the early days did not enjoy the same status as those of today. At some clubs they were not even welcome in the clubhouse. Their perceived shabby treatment at the Australian Open at Royal Sydney in 1911 led to them banding together to form the PGA of Australia. Ted Cates was one of the fifteen members at that founding meeting. The professionals of that era were persons who had to be adept at many tasks. Many of them had migrated from the UK, particularly from Scotland and were skilled in teaching, club making and repair. Some also had other duties which included cleaning of the clubhouse and green keeping. Others were involved in golf course design. Mr **E J Allison**, the second professional at the club, was responsible for the maintenance of the golf course, as well as his other duties. He did not endure very long, nor did his successor Mr **T Frayne**.

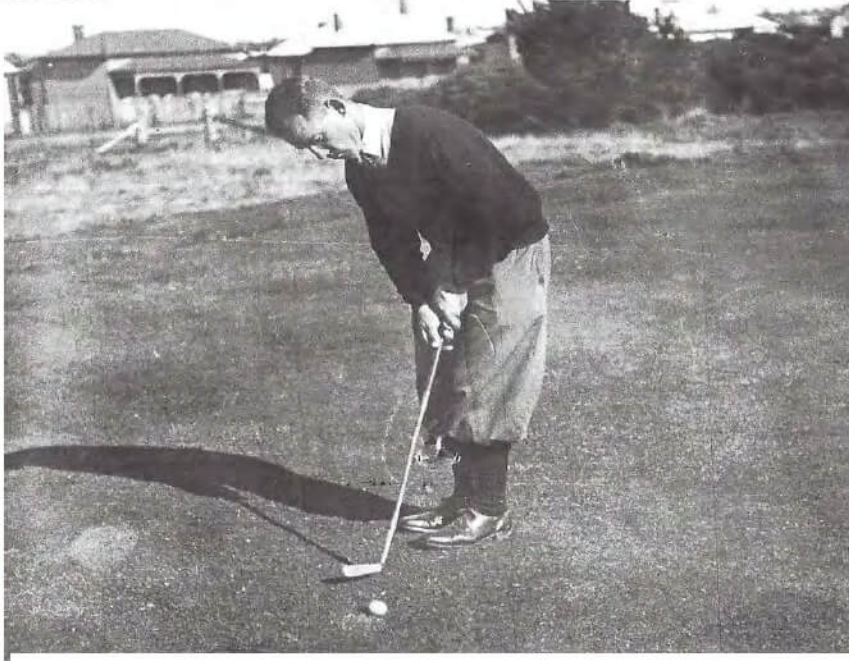
In April 1930 the club appointed **W J (Bill) Fowler** as its professional. He had been champion of the Commonwealth Golf Club, State champion in 1928 and



Club Championship Trophy

had held the Victorian and Australian foursomes championships. While he was employed at the Ballarat North club, he won a tournament in Melbourne by six shots, defeating players of the calibre of M J Ryan and Ivo Whitton. He was only engaged for two seasons but his was a popular appointment and from this time forward the professional became an integral part of club life. The trophy which the winner of Midlands club championship receives today is notable as it is the one that was awarded to Bill Fowler when he won the Victorian Amateur Championship in 1928. After he turned professional he donated the cup to Midlands to be held each year by its champion. On bands around the base of the cup are inscribed the names of title winners since the club was formed in 1919.

Colin Campbell was a highly regarded professional of the club and spent a lifetime devoted to the game of golf. He began his golf career as a casual groundsman at Cheltenham Golf Club before becoming greenkeeper



Colin Campbell practising putting

and later professional at Dandenong Golf Club in 1927. He was appointed to the position at Ballarat North in 1932 with his brother Bob as his assistant. Bob Campbell at the end of the war reverted to amateur status and became club secretary for some time. He married Beth Lemin mother of current member Robin Nicholls who has an unbroken family association with the club since its foundation. Beth's father was Ernest Lemin, a foundation member, president and committee man. In 1936 Colin Campbell transferred to Patterson River and then in 1938 to the Long Island Country Club as professional before later becoming the club manager. Ten years later

he purchased a property near Hastings, and spent some years designing and constructing courses on the Mornington Peninsula as well as designing the new course at Kaniva. In another venture he would teach onboard cruise ships and take groups on international tours to play golf courses throughout the world. He was also involved in radio and television golf commentary for the ABC and from 1958 was the golf compere on the popular Channel 7 Sunday programme "World of Sport."

Graeme Cates began a long association of 36 years with Midlands in 1936. As a very capable young golfer he commenced his career as the assistant professional at Ballarat Golf Club. In his early years he played a number of exhibition matches with leading overseas players, the most notable being a match where he partnered Colin Campbell at Ballarat in a match against Gene Sarazen and Joe Kirkwood. He had a city business with a shop in the Tunbridge building and later leased a shop at 7 Sturt St, along with his premises at Midlands. *The Courier* reported that on a visit his brother Bert made in 1955, he saw marked changes from the days when the clubhouse was an old wooden structure. Of particular interest was that he had designed and patented an all metal clubhead made of special tough, but light metal. It had a bright aluminium appearance, and had been praised by no less a player than Bobby Locke.

A feature of the new type of clubs, which Cates had named "Power Clubs," is that from the driver upwards through the irons, they all had a head shaped like a normal wood. Cates said that he had spent hundreds of pounds and uncounted hours developing the clubs, and is now prospecting the market for them. They were

possibly the forerunner of clubs that came on the market years later.

After Graeme Cates retired he was succeeded by **Lindsay Gitsham** who returned to New Zealand after a brief term as professional. He in turn was replaced by 21 year old **Neil Prout** in April 1973. Neil had served his apprenticeship at Heidelberg Golf Club where he had been for 3 years. For the previous year he had been the senior assistant at the Elsternwick Public course. A "birdie ball" competition was instituted and run by the professional and seldom did it happen that there was no payout. Entry was voluntary and an entrant who scored a birdie two at the 125 yards last hole won a ball. Neil Prout remained at the club for only a year, before **Peter McGrath** became the professional on 18 March 1974. He came with a good playing record, having been in a tie for first at the Yarrowonga Open, a win in the Rothmans Pro-Am at Yarra Yarra and a tie in the Keysborough Pro-Am.

In December 1976, Midlands, unique to golf clubs in Australia, employed two professionals **Gayle Flynn** and **Jillian Smith**. The *Courier* gave an account of the appointment as follows - "a few years ago the role of a teaching golf professional in Australia was almost exclusive to men, but two young women have challenged custom and succeeded. In the middle of the last decade Gayle Flynn and Jillian Smith, then successful amateur golfers changed over to professionalism and set out to make golf a career. After short terms as individual professionals, they teamed together and were accepted as joint club pros by the Midlands Golf Club and established themselves in



Jillian Smith and Gayle Flynn

particularly Gayle Flynn. She came from Collie and as an amateur played for Western Australia eight times after her 15th birthday. She has represented Australia four times in international matches and was unbeaten in interstate teams events. She won several 72 hole events and rated a handicap of plus one. Jillian Smith had less scope than her partner to take part in tournaments. As an amateur she won the Victorian Junior Championship, played pennant for Woodlands and was a member of the state squad. She was the only professional at Sandringham Golf Club in 1972. Gayle was president and Jillian secretary of the Australian Ladies Professional Golf Association, which was formed in 1972."

The two professionals toured overseas in June 1981, playing in a series of tournaments in Europe. They were away for 12 weeks and were based in England. Young professional Wayne Rogers was engaged to take over their duties in their absence. After almost 12 years

business at the club's new clubhouse.

Not every good golfer makes a success of being a teaching professional, but a good track record is helpful. The girls have such a record,

serving the needs of the club, Gayle and Jillian moved on to pursue other opportunities.

Ray Drummond, in 1988, was appointed to manage the pro-shop duties. The previously cramped pro-shop was immediately enlarged and updated. While overseeing various sections of his business he engaged others to service the member's needs, including Chris Tatt until 1992, Brian Antonio, Mark Gooding commencing in 1993 before transferring to Kew Golf Club and Leith Wastle who began in 1995. Throughout his time at Midlands he sponsored many tournaments and events at the club.

David Armstrong combined a career of competing successfully on the Australian Tour with operating a pro shop at both Midlands and Ballarat Golf Clubs. At Midlands he was assisted in the day-to-day running of the business by Jock Hayes and by professional Craig Haase. He vacated the pro-shop on 16 Dec 1999.

Michael Cooke commenced professional duties at Midlands on 1 January 2000 and has remained a popular and vital member of the club since that day. Growing up in Canberra he completed his traineeship at Royal Canberra Golf Club before becoming the assistant professional at that club. In his playing career he competed in many pro-ams and on the Sunshine and Australasian Tours.

He can be rightly regarded as the ultimate club professional, being a AAA rated teacher who excels in starting fields and conducting presentations as well as being a generous sponsor. He has played a significant



role in organising the Victorian Senior Masters Pro-Am and the Slab Ambrose. During his time at Midlands he has guided Ben Roberts, Simon Barry and Angela Tatt through traineeships.

CURATORS

A new golf course of today is brought into being with the use of sophisticated surveying knowledge, large earthmoving machinery, precision manufactured mowing equipment and advanced turf growing technology and is usually of an exemplary standard from the beginning. Those of yesteryear evolved as time passed with the labours and enthusiasm of club members generally on a voluntary basis. Many of the links courses of the UK were formed by nature without the need for earthmoving. Fairways were not defined and the game was simply played from point A to point B with holes routed between the natural features of inlets, creeks, dunes and gorse. The courses required little ongoing maintenance as the grass was kept short by goats, sheep and rabbits.

At Ballarat North, the site on which the course was first played was interesting terrain, but very uneven, tussocky and dotted with gorse bushes. With only basic tools, no water supply and no machinery to cut fairways, the course was only playable in winter. The first green-

keepers **George Beecham**, and **Harold Whatmore** were employed part-time. The meeting of March 1928 reported that by the amalgamation of the positions of professional and green-keeper, the services of Mr E J ALLISON had been secured all year around. In a change of direction, however, in January 1929, the club decided to appoint a full-time green-keeper and placed advertisements in the *Herald*, *Argus* and *Courier* and received 23 applications for the position. **Ted Kay** from the staff of the Commonwealth Golf Club was appointed and he remained with the club until resigning in 1952. He was the father of later three time club champion Ken Kay.

An inventory of the clubs' equipment was undertaken on March 14th 1930. It makes interesting comparison to that which is held by the club today.

1 Atco motor mower (greens) - 3 Hand mowers -
1 Ransomes triplex seven feet cutter (fairways) -
1 Fordson tractor - 1 Dray - 1 Hole cutter - 1
Rake - 2 Spades - 1 Pick - 1 Mattock - 1
Barrow - 1 Saw - 2 Set of chains - 2 Rollers -
6 Hoses - 5 Sprinklers - 2 Sod cutters - 1
Harrow - 1 Vice - 1 Tape measure - 1 Emery
wheel - 2 Horses - 1 Hay fork - 2 Collars - 2
Sets of harness - 2 Pair of winkers - 2 Horse rugs -
1 Pair of clippers

On Saturday 28 June 1952 *The Courier* reported on the retirement of Ted Kay - "The recent purchase of a business has caused Ted Kay to retire from the job of head greenkeeper at Midlands Golf Club after having held that position for over a quarter of a century. Kay

took charge at Midlands after being on the ground staff of the Commonwealth Golf Club, and has seen a great change in the course during his employment there. In the early days the course was little more than wide open spaces, but as members planted trees, and fairways became more enclosed, greens were improved and bunkering done, so that today the course rates high among those of country golf clubs. When new ground was bought during the war years, a master plan was adopted for a new layout. After the war, there was a major change in design. The work of changing over to the new layout was Kay's responsibility, and with his retirement, that is almost complete. His aptitude for that kind of work has been confirmed by the favourable comments made on what has been achieved. Kay was a foundation member of the Victorian Green-keepers Association and was a capable golfer. He will continue his interest in the club as a member".

Following on the work of Ted Kay was **Jack Parke** who kept the course in excellent condition until 1958. The club was fortunate around this time that it had dedicated and exceptional curators who helped the club maintain a high profile in country Victoria.

After joining green staff in 1955, **Hugh Whiting** became head green-keeper in 1958 and quickly impressed people with his ability to produce fine greens. He remained at the club until he accepted a position as head of the green keeping staff at Royal Canberra Golf Club in August 1966. This appointment, overseeing a staff of seven, meant a substantial increase in salary and status for him. He was an excellent golfer, being runner-up in the district championship, winning the club

championship in 1963 and was a member of three winning A grade pennant teams.

It was his interest in the propagation of new varieties of grasses that led him to the United States in 1973. He was a member of the U.S. Golf Course Superintendents' Association while he was at Midlands, and at that time was one of only half a dozen members resident outside of America. He maintained in close touch with the organisation and through it was kept well-informed on the latest trends in turf culture and golf course upkeep. While regularly visiting Australia resides in California today.

Bill Allen commenced as the head green-keeper in September 1966. Although only in his mid-twenties he had considerable experience on golf courses. He received his diploma in greenkeeping at the Ryde school in NSW, when he was assistant at the Killara Golf Club, before taking up a similar position at Huntingdale. He resigned in September 1969, only one week before the annual tournament, placing a heavy burden on the staff and the greens committee under the supervision of Jim Gordon.

The next head green-keepers **Ricky James** and **Jack Hodge** remained in the position for short periods until **Tom Sculley** was appointed in 1977. He completed over twelve years in the position, after joining from Servicemen's Memorial Bowling Club. Without an automatic watering system and maintenance equipment that is available today, he took on the onerous task of developing the course from its infancy. He left in 1989 to take up a position at Central Bowling Club before spending two years at Chemturf and finished his working career with 17 years at the Ballarat East Bowling Club.

Mark Firman, a knowledgeable greenkeeper started work at Midlands in November 1989. Before this he had been the curator at Kew Bowling Club after having been at Geelong Golf Club. With his experience gained in green keeping he left to accept a position selling irrigation equipment, fertilizers and chemicals.

Stuart Baker took on the role Sept 2006, staying for short period before accepting a position Ballarat G. C.

After 10 years working on with the ground staff at Bacchus Marsh Golf Club, **Cameron Gordon** was appointed Course Superintendent there before taking up that position at Midlands.

Rob Gervasoni who was exceptional at maintaining and repairing machinery fulfilled the role for a short time until the appointment of **Mark Finlay** in August 2012. He had considerable experience with eight years at Sunshine Golf Club, and before that had been at Metropolitan and Werribee Park. He won club championships at Werribee Park and Gisborne. In March 2018 he accepted the position of course superintendent at Sanctuary Lakes Golf Club.

Geoff Head filled the position in a caretaker role for four months until the current curator **Tony Liston** was appointed in July 2018. After 18 years at Beaufort Golf Club he accepted a position in charge of grounds and buildings at St Patrick's College where he was engaged for 15 years. Affable and hard-working he immediately set about a programme of course improvement.

MANAGERS

Throughout Australia the high rate of turnover illustrates that the role of a club manager is a demanding one and because of the diversity of the position requires a person of special aptitude. The manager must be able to communicate effectively with members and the board, be skilled in financial matters, experienced in hospitality, be aware of the clubs' legal responsibilities, have organizational abilities in dealing with staff and be able to comply with the statutory requirements of gaming. Preferably that person would also have knowledge of records management, payroll, OH&S, marketing, risk management, and information technology.

From the early days, this task was largely performed by the secretary. **John Ward** was the first to accept the task when he became the manager in an honorary capacity in 1947. He had joined Riversdale Golf Club in 1911 and moved to Ballarat in his position as the District Engineer in the Railways Department, and became a member of the club in 1927. From 1931 he was connected with the administration as committeeman, handicapper, captain, president and sec-manager and in his golfing career, he had held a handicap as low as 3.

In February 1957 Frank Quinn, became the first full time paid manager at a local club, when he was appointed at the Ballarat Golf Club. Midlands fulfilled this role voluntarily until 1970 when **Ian Curtis** was chosen to control the affairs of the club in a paid position. He was educated in Ballarat and in the mid-thirties he moved to Melbourne to work at General Motors. After

five years, he joined the R.A.A.F. and his outstanding service saw him rise to the rank of Squadron Leader. When the war ended he returned to General Motors spending some years in their finance department until eventually taking up land in Western Victoria. His role at Midlands was a vital one as it coincided with the the relocation of the golf course and clubhouse. He stayed at the club until 1977. As recorded in this book in the chapter on life members, **Laurie Valpied** took on the role of manager, unpaid, following the resignation of Ian Curtis. The club is deeply indebted to him, and the contribution that he made cannot be overstated.

Alan Benson began his time as manager just prior to the annual meeting in 1984. As a well known sportsman in the district, he had represented Ballarat at cricket, played football with Ballarat East and was a sporting commentator with 3BA for 15 years. For 17 years he had worked for P L Kennedy P/L as an accountant. His time at the club was short as he left in early 1985.

Loyal club member, **Fred Dockerill**, who had over twenty years experience in the hospitality industry, managing hotels in western Victoria in such places as Great Western and Warrnambool, accepted the role in February 1985 and through hard work and long hours helped to guide the club through a difficult period in the mid-nineties. Many of the major projects associated with the new course were completed during his time in the position.

David McFie was appointed manager at Midlands after being in that role at the Maryborough Golf Club. He left in November 2001.

Popular member, **Bernie Walker**, worked for many years as a manager of hotels and brought much of this understanding to the club during his ten year tenure as manager. He was a keen advocate of the Santa Ana couch programme which has proven to be a outstanding success. Leaving Midlands in 2010 he took up a position as manager of the Whittlesea Bowling Club.

Mark Dalmau was manager at Midlands from Jan 2010 until March 2014. Previously he had worked as Secretary/Manager at Sunbury Bowling Club, Koorinal Golf Club, Swan Hill Club, and Frankston RSL. From 1996-2002 he lectured at the Chisholm Institute of TAFE in Gaming, Food & Beverage, and Business Administration.

He was followed by **Kerry Bond** who had a Degree in Education and was a Midlands member while working for NAB. She left that organisation to pursue a career in club management working at Port Fairy, The Sands - Torquay, in the USA at Daytona Beach and Portarlington Golf Club. She had to leave Midlands after two years due to family circumstances.

Colin Pearce who had previously been CEO at Robinvale Golf Club was manager for a short time from July to December 2016. He had come to Midlands with a background in hospitality and large NSW leagues clubs management experience.

Claude Urquhart who had a varied range of skills and experience was appointed in 2017 to the position and remained until early 2018.

In an outstanding gesture, board member **Robert Moore** generously offered his time and knowledge to fill the role voluntarily in March 2018 for a period of three months until a new manager was appointed.

Jason Wallace came to the club in May 2018 with an impressive record of 18 years in roles with large regional community clubs. In this time he won four "Manager of the Year" awards from Clubs Victoria and Club Managers Association. After being a trainer in Hospitality and Gaming he was General Manager at North Ballarat Sports Club, 2000-2005, Lakes Entrance Bowls Club, 2005-2011 and then Chief Executive Officer at the Bendigo Stadium. He left in January 2019 for a significant role at Greyhound Racing Victoria.

PENNANT

The Ballarat district pennant competition is a keenly contested and a much sought after honour. As well as giving selectors a formline for players with country week ambitions, it offers the foremost opportunity for members to represent their individual clubs. In the top division of the men's competition Midlands has been the most successful club.

1934/35 Ballarat North

A.Ward, L.Cameron, R.Haslem, J.Martin, W.Wheeler, C.Puzey, A.White, R.Thewlis.

1935/36 Midlands

R.Haslem, A.White, J.Martin, L.Cameron, W.Wheeler, R.Thewlis, A.Ward C. Puzey.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / PROFESSIONALS, PENNANT AND CLUB CHAMPIONS

1936/37 Midlands
J.Martin, L.Cameron, A.Ward, W.Wheeler,
R. James, A. White, R. Haslem, R.Thewlis
R. Wenning, J. Mowbray.

1937/38 Midlands
J. Martin, L.Cameron, A. Ward, W. Wheeler,
W.Carr, D. Begg, A. White, D.Ferguson,
J.Mowbray, A. Besemeres.

1938/39 Midlands
A. Ward, W. Humphreys, A. Besemeres,
D.Begg, W. Pryor, W. Wheeler, W.Carr,
N.Vea, D. Ferguson.

1939/40 Ballan-Hepburn

1941/45 No play due to World War 2

1946 Midlands
J.Gallagher, K.Curtain, T.McPherson W.Carr
A.Ward, W. Humphreys, R.James, J.Martin,
A.Dixon

1947 Midlands
J. Gallagher, T. Dawkins, J. McCarthy,
T.McPherson, W. Carr, A. Dixon, M.Collins,
W.Humphreys, K. Curtain.

1948 Buninyong / Meredith

1949 Buninyong / Meredith

1950 Ballarat

1951 Beaufort / Skipton

1952 Beaufort / Skipton

1953 Midlands
A. Dixon, W.Atkinson, W.Humphreys, J.
Weir, J.Gordon, M.Morvell, R.Campbell
A. Richards, A. Sandwith, L. Chibnall,

1954 Mount Xavier

1955 Ballarat

1956 ?

1957 Ballarat

1958 Midlands
G.Wellard, A.Sandwith, K.Brooks, K.Kay,
K.Hughes, R.Reynolds.

1959 Ballarat

1960 Ballarat

1961 Midlands
G. Wellard, K. Eckersley, K. Kay, R. Jelbart,
R. Reynolds, K. Hughes.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / PROFESSIONALS, PENNANT AND CLUB CHAMPIONS

1962	Midlands G. Wellard K. Eckersley K.Kay M.Roe, K.Hughes, R. Jelbart.
1963	Ballarat
1964	Midlands K. Kay, T.Amos, K. Hughes, W. Gribble, G. Wellard, H.Whiting.
1965	Midlands K. Kay, K. Eckersley, W.Gribble, T. Amos, K. Hughes, G. Wellard, H. Whiting.
1966	Midlands K. Hughes, T. Amos, J. Dillon, W.Gribble, K.Kay, G. Wellard, H.Whiting.
1967	Midlands W. Gribble, T. Amos, J. Dillon, K .Eckersley, K.Kay. M. Morvell, R.Jelbart.
1968	Ballarat
1969	Midlands K.Eckersley, W.Gribble, K.Kay, M.Roe, G. Wellard.
1970	Midlands G. Wellard, K. Eckersley, A. Cox, M. Roe, D. Redman.
1971	Ballarat

1972	Midlands M. Roe, A. Cox, K. Eckersley, J. Flynn, G.Wellard, D. Redman.
1973	Midlands G.Wellard, A.Cox, K.Eckersley, J.Flynn, L.Fimmel, W.Gribble, K.Hughes, B.Kerry
1974	Mount Xavier
1975	Buninyong
1976	Midlands B.A Kerry, M.Roe, J.Flynn, N.Perry, J.Dillon, D.Stewart, W.Allan, G Wellard.
1977	Midlands M.Roe, B.A Kerry, W.Allan, D.Stewart, J.Flynn, J.Dillon, N.Perry.
1978	Ballarat
1979	Midlands J.Dillon, R.Britnell, J.Flynn, B.A Kerry, N.Perry, D.Stewart, G.Wellard.
1980	Midlands D.Stewart, J.Dillon, B.A Kerry, N.Perry, G.Wellard, W.Williams.
1981	Midlands G.Wellard, D.Stewart, R.Britnell, W.Williams, T.Porker, B.Kerry, N.Perry, D.Tighe, W.Allan, J.Dillon.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / PROFESSIONALS, PENNANT AND CLUB CHAMPIONS

1982	Buninyong	1995	Creswick
1983	Midlands B.A Kerry, R.Britnell, T.Jones, J.Dillon, D.Tighe, W.Williams, R.Wallace, G.Wellard.	1996	Buninyong
1984	Creswick	1997	Melton Valley
1985	Ballarat	1998	Midlands B.Squire, B.R Kerry, B.Roberts, R.Wallace, T.Davidson, P.Prowse, A.Gibbs, R.Smith, J.Montgomery, G.Kerr, D.Sparkman.
1986	Ballarat	1999	Ballarat
1987	Ballarat	2000	Ballarat
1988	Creswick	2001	Buninyong
1989	Ballarat	2002	Ballarat
1990	Buninyong	2003	Ballarat
1991	Midlands R.Britnell, T.Davidson, D.Ross, P.Prowse, D.Beattie, R.Wallace, R.McMeekin.	2004	Ballarat
1992	Midlands R.Wallace, G.Kerr, P.Prowse, R.Britnell, I. Lee, D.Beattie, D. Ross, D. Sparkman.	2005	Ballarat
1993	Midlands R.Wallace, D.Ross, R.Matthews, D.Beattie, T.Davidson, D.Sparkman, D.Britnell, I.Lee.	2006	Ballarat
1994	Creswick	2007	Buninyong
		2008	Midlands S.Brehaut, G.Cooper, B.R Kerry, C.Boucher, R.Wallace, S.Coulter, A.Matthews, J. Montgomery.

FROM SMALL ACORNS / PROFESSIONALS, PENNANT AND CLUB CHAMPIONS

2009	Mount Xavier
2010	Midlands - Buninyong (Joint winners) C.Vanderhorst, B.R Kerry, C.Boucher, J.Montgomery, N.Haase, R.Wallace, N. Haase, S. Brehaut, S. Coulter, J. Chandler
2011	Midlands C.Boucher B.R Kerry K.Haase J.Chandler C.Vanderhorst R.Wallace J.Montgomery S.Coulter, G. Cooper.
2012	Midlands C. Boucher, J. Chandler, G.Cooper, K.Haase S.Coulter, B. Kerry, K. Lyle, C. Vanderhorst, R. Wallace, R. Wiltshire.
2013	Mount Xavier
2014	Midlands C. Boucher, J. Chandler, K. Haase, S.Henry, C. Haase, B. Kerry, R. Wallace, C.Mackay, C. Vanderhorst.
2015	Mount Xavier
2016	Midlands C. Boucher, R.Wallace, K.Haase, B.Kerry, C.Vanderhorst, C. Mackay, S. Royden, S. S.Henry, M.Taylor.
2017	Buninyong

2018 Buninyong

SUMMARY - DIVISION ONE PENNANT WINNERS

Midlands*	35
Ballarat	20
Buninyong*	9
Buninyong / Meredith	2
Mount Xavier	5
Creswick	4
Beaufort / Skipton	2
Melton Valley	1
Ballan / Hepburn	1
? 1956	1

*Includes joint win in 2010

Unlike the men's division one pennant competition which has a shield recording the winners dating back to 1934 the women's records are incomplete. Their association was formed in 1964 and a shield was only introduced in recent years. Ballarat was the dominant club in early times, but of late Midlands has been particularly successful with three premierships in the last four years.

2005	H. Davidson, J. Burgess, P. Bandy, G. Skinner, D. Moore, G.Mytyk
2006	J. Burgess, P. Bandy, G. Skinner, D. Moore F. Edward.
2008	S. Curnow, J. Magee, D. Moore, G. Skinner, H. Davidson.

2011	R. Cator, D. Moore, H. Leech, G. Skinner, P. Bandy, K. Hughes.
2015	J. Marshall, H. Leech, G. Skinner, J. Morrison, P. Bandy.
2016	P. Bandy, R. Cator, D. Moore, H. Leech, G. Skinner, J. Morrison, J. Marshall.
2018	G. Skinner, P. Bandy, D. Moore, L. Day, H. Leech, J. Marshall, D. Robinson, F. Davison.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Midlands Club Championships are a feature of every golfing year. Throughout history they have produced memorable matches, exciting finishes, marathon matches and great recoveries. The first championship was played in September 1920 four months after the full 18 holes course was opened for play. It was played over 54 holes and only four players were under 100 in the first round with the eventual winner A A Burgess recording 90. The ladies played three rounds of 12 holes and Vera Burgess, sister of the men's winner, won the first of her four consecutive championships.

Over the years the format has changed from stroke play, then to stroke play of either 36 or 54 holes, with at times the top eight or top four to play match play, until the present format of 72 holes stroke play was settled upon in 1998. The championships were generally played

during the winter months for the first fifty or so years before being moved to the autumn. With the introduction of santa-ana couch in 2006 a decision was made to hold the event in February.

The semi-final and final match play format created a number of noteworthy finishes. In 1950, Alec Leitch, who had finished second in the District Championship that year, led the qualifiers by nine strokes and in the final was eight up on Kevin Hughes after 20 holes, only to be beaten. He won the championship the following year. A lengthy semi-final occurred in 1983 when Brian Kerry took 44 holes to defeat Bill Allan, but this was comparatively short when compared to the 59 holes played before Alan Sandwith defeated Alf White in the semi-final in 1954. A condition of play that led to this marathon match was it had to be won by a margin of two holes. The match play finals were good for spectator interest as during the 1950s and 1960s crowds of over 100 people would watch the play.

The associates championships tended to be won in blocks of four or five years by the winners with the exception being **Mrs G Cates**, who won 10 titles in a row from 1951 as part of her 17 victories. "Timmy" Cates who died suddenly in February 1969 was one of the best known and popular personalities in district golf. For many years she represented Ballarat in country week events, often as the No.1 player. Her first championship came in 1940 as Miss Lyle Philip, and then when play for the title resumed after being suspended during the war, she won her second title as Mrs Graeme Cates. Her record of 17 wins will keep her name among the great players of Midlands, but it is not for her golfing

prowess alone that she will be remembered. Although the champion, she did not pick or choose those with whom she played, and was always helpful to those less gifted than she. As well as her playing career she was the club captain in 1953 and 1965-67.

Vera Burgess, a foundation associate of the club, won the first four championships played. Two others, Miss **R. Davis** and **Beth Lemin**, also won four times.

Betty Jones joined the club in 1957. She won the first of her nine titles in 1965 and remained a prominent player in the district and at Midlands for three decades. A winner of the district championship in 1970 and 1972 she produced an outstanding performance in the Victorian Country Championship in 1970, losing the semi final to Australian champion Joan Fisher.

Kath Kight, a regular member of Ballarat District teams, won her six consecutive championships from 1978-1983. She was also an eight time champion at Bacchus Marsh Golf Club as well as being a runner-up in the Victorian Champion of Champions and the Australian Veterans Championship.

Sue Jones an eight time winner of the club championship was an excellent player. As her parents Elizabeth and Max "Bing" Morvell were capable golfers and were actively involved in the club for many years it was almost inevitable that she would start golf at a early age. She played for Victoria in a representative state competition as well as pennant for Midlands and for Ballarat in country teams events.

Rebecca Dillon, a member of the Victorian Schoolgirls team on three occasions, won six Midlands championships in seven years from 1996. Her first win made her the youngest female to win the title. She was a member of a winning Ballarat District Country team. As a member of the Commonwealth Golf Club, she won both the club championship and the foursomes championship in her first year and was a member of the winning division one pennant team for that club.

Joining Midlands in 2000 from Bankstown Golf Club where she had won 13 club championships, **Di Moore**, quickly established herself as a top player in the Ballarat district. In her time in Sydney she also won 15 club championships at Camden Valley Golf resort, the NSW Country Championship twice, the Sydney Metropolitan Senior Ladies Championship and represented NSW in the interstate series. She recorded a significant win by defeating Jane Crafter in the first round of the NSW Ladies Amateur Championship. In Ballarat she has won the Ballarat District Championship on two occasions and the Midlands Club Championship 13 times.

Five golfers have been able to win the men's club title on five or more occasions. **Jim McCarthy** won the first of his five championships in 1922. He was the best golfer in Ballarat at that time and one of the best in country golf in the 1920's and 1930's. When he won the title in 1922 he held a two handicap and set a course record of 73 in the final round. He was a winner of the Victorian Country Championship in 1932 and won seven championships at Ballarat Golf Club where he began his golfing career. In his latter years he won a championship at Mt Xavier. As a member of Ballarat teams at country

week for more than 25 years, he was a member of the winning team which won the first Leader Shield in 1924. He had twin sons, both of whom played at Midlands, Joe a left hander like his father and Jim who played right handed. He died in 1964 at the age of 69.

Bill Lemin, the son of foundation member Ernest Lemin, began playing golf in the early 1930s. The earliest hint of his ability came in April 1933 when he handed in a remarkable card of 79 - 27 = 52. He became the dominant player in the club from 1936 when he won the first of his eight championships. This total could probably have been exceeded, as no championships were played for four years during the war, a period in which he was in his prime. In 1939 his handicap had been reduced to one, the lowest in the district. It was reported that he practiced most days with his pony often seen asleep tied to a tree. With his sister Beth they had an unusual record as dual club champions. They won the respective men's and associates championships from 1936 to 1939. He moved to Queensland in 1952 as branch manager of a pastoral company. Lemin was an important figure in both club and district golf as he played in many country week teams and captained Midlands a number of times in the pennant competition. He died in October 1993.

Graham (Bill) Wellard is the club championship record holder with ten wins. *The Courier* reported in an article in September 1980 that "the golden years of Ballarat district golf were in the late 1950s and early 1960s. One of the greatest players as a competitor and a sportsman in the true sense of the word was Bill Wellard. There have been few golfers more persistently

competitive, few as successful in major club and district championships, and none who has accepted success or defeat with greater sportsmanship than the man whom a Melbourne sports writer at country week referred to as the "gum-chewing giant from Midlands."

He started in the early 1930s as an eight year old, hitting golf balls in a Opie's paddock in Lydiard Street with woods that he had made himself. As he could not afford golf clubs, he would cut down black wattle branches from the trees at the cemetery and whittle them down to form a club. To earn money, he would caddy on a Saturday as clubs used to have caddy masters who would hire boys to caddy for the players. The rate of pay was two shillings per round, less the caddy masters fees.

Wellard began playing club golf at the former Wendouree Golf Club which went out of existence in 1939 when at the start of the second world war its course at the former Lakeside Hospital was taken over for an army camp. The young Wellard when he joined Midlands at the end of the war was already a capable golfer. He claimed that he had never had a lesson from a



professional but learned much from Byron Nelson's book on golf. He appeared on the championship scene a couple of years after joining Midlands by losing the 1949 championship final at the 37th hole to veteran Jim McCarthy. Later that year he was chosen in the Ballarat team at country week, a place

he held for 24 years and was twice runner-up in the country championship. His first Midlands title came in 1953 and between 1953 and 1961 he was a finalist every year. When he won in 1969 he achieved his ambition of becoming the record holder and reached double figures with his win in 1975. Wellard had a remarkable run of success in the Ballarat District Championship in the 1950s when he won five of his six titles in 1953-54-55-56 and 1958.

Michael Roe, a six time winner, joined the club in 1957 and was a talented golfer from an early age. He was a winner of the Ballarat District Junior Championship on three occasions and the senior title four times. His first win in the senior title came while he was still a junior. In 1961 at age 16 he became the youngest player to represent Ballarat at Country Week. In September of this year he reached the semi final of the Victorian Junior Championship in a field that included future state players Alan & Don Reiter and Australian Amateur Champion Bill Britten. In his early years he was a competitive player in senior pennant for Long Island.

His time at Midlands was an interrupted one, as he was called up for National Service in 1965 and was in the army for two years and played little golf. In 1973 he was transferred to Sydney for a time with his employment and after his return to Ballarat some years later health issues curtailed his career. He was a six time member of a winning Midlands division one pennant team and in 1972 won the Midland Amateur Championship in a playoff with Ray Jenner. As a prominent district player he was aware of the need to support the smaller country clubs. This support was appreciated by them and he was

a regular winner of 36 hole scratch events on both greens and sand scrapes.

Current member **Craig Boucher** has been the star golfer of the club. In addition to winning numerous tournaments and championships he has always possessed the rare ability to shoot exceptionally low scores. Documenting all his wins and achievements would require a chapter in itself. To date he has won club championships at Midlands (8) Ballarat (9) Geelong (1) Huntingdale (1) Maryborough (5). A highlight of his career was a win in the Victorian Country Championship in 2011 as well as wins in the Ballarat District Championship (5) and Geelong (1). He has been a prolific winner of 36 hole scratch events winning a remarkable total of in excess of 150. His first win in one of these events came as a fifteen year old. Among these wins have been Ballarat (11) Beaufort (10) Mt. Xavier (9) and Ivo Whitton events (8) plus a record 14 victories in the district 54 hole event.

In pennant teams he has always been prominent representing Midlands in (6) winning teams, Ballarat (6) and played VGA pennant for nine years for Geelong and Huntingdale. Selection in the country week team for Ballarat has been automatic with 24 appearances, leading to being named in the Victorian Country State team ten times with five as captain. Among the best rounds that he has recorded are 61 on the old Ballarat course, 63 in a Midlands club event, 64 at Buninyong while competing in the 54 hole event, a course record 65 at Horsham, 66 during the Midlands pro-am and a Midlands amateur course record of 66.



During his career he has played golf in elite company by competing in the Victorian PGA at Creswick on two occasions, qualifying for the 2008 Victorian Open with 66 at Northern Golf Club. A major achievement came in the Victorian Amateur Championship when he reached the last four, losing the semi-final

to dual Australian Open winner and US Tour player Aaron Baddeley. He purchased a house adjacent to the 16th fairway at Midlands and regularly participates in club competitions playing with members of all handicaps. In his career he has held a handicap of +4 but surprisingly has never had a hole-in-one in competition.

MEN'S CHAMPIONS

- 1920** - A. A. Burgess
1921 - A. A. Burgess
1922 - J. P. McCarthy
1923 - W. J. Buckland
1924 - W. C. Johnson
1925 - E. J. Pascoe
1926 - J. P. McCarthy
1927 - J. P. McCarthy
1928 - J. P. McCarthy
1929 - W. B. Wheeler
1930 - H. W. Dawe
1931 - H. W. Dawe
1932 - R. G. Thompson
1933 - R. G. Thompson

LADIES CHAMPIONS

- Miss V. Burgess
Miss V. Burgess
Miss V. Burgess
Miss V. Burgess
Miss D. Williams*
Miss L. Johnson
Miss M. Humffray
Miss R. Davis
Miss R. Davis
Miss R. Davis
Miss R. Davis
Miss S. Selkirk
Miss S. Selkirk
Miss S. Selkirk

- 1934** - L. Lancaster
1935 - R. G. Thompson
1936 - W. E. Lemin
1937 - W. E. Lemin
1938 - W. E. Lemin
1939 - W. E. Lemin
1940 - F. H. Ifould
1941 - W. E. Lemin
1942 - 45 No Play
1946 - W. E. Lemin
1947 - W. E. Lemin
1948 - W. E. Lemin
1949 - J. P. McCarthy
1950 - K. R. Hughes
1951 - A. Leitch
1952 - K. R. Hughes
1953 - G. C. Wellard
1954 - G. C. Wellard
1955 - G. C. Wellard
1956 - G. C. Wellard
1957 - A. Sandwith
1958 - G. C. Wellard
1959 - I. F. Huntley
1960 - G. C. Wellard
1961 - G. C. Wellard
1962 - K. L. Eckersley
1963 - H. F. Whiting
1964 - K. J. Kay
1965 - G. C. Wellard
1966 - K. J. Kay
1967 - K. J. Kay
1968 - M. J. Roe
1969 - G. C. Wellard
1970 - R. Reynolds

- Mrs R. Thompson
Mrs E. V. Richards
Miss B. Lemin#
Miss B. Lemin#
Miss B Lemin#
Miss B. Lemin#
Miss L. Philip+

- Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Miss G. Dynan
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs J. L. Spence
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs C. McIver
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Cates
Mrs G. Jones
Miss K. Park
Mrs G. Jones
Mrs G. Jones
Mrs G. Jones
Mrs G. Jones

FROM SMALL ACORNS / PROFESSIONALS, PENNANT AND CLUB CHAMPIONS

1971 - M. J. Roe
1972 - M. J. Roe
1973 - A. Cox
1974 - M. J. Roe
1975 - G. C. Wellard
1976 - M. J. Roe
1977 - M. J. Roe
1978 - J. Dillon
1979 - D. Tighe
1980 - B. A. Kerry
1981 - B. A. Kerry
1982 - J. Dillon
1983 - W. Williams
1984 - D. Tighe
1985 - D. Tighe
1986 - R. Wallace
1987 - B. A. Kerry
1988 - R. Huntley
1989 - I. Lee
1990 - T. Davidson
1991 - R. McMeekin
1992 - T. Davidson
1993 - R. Matthews
1994 - C. Boucher
1995 - D. Sparkman
1996 - R. Wallace
1997 - B. R. Kerry
1998 - B. Squire
1999 - R. Wallace
2000 - A. Cartledge
2001 - A. Cartledge
2002 - T. Davidson
2003 - S. Klain
2004 - S. Klain

Mrs G. Jones
 Miss S. Morvell
 Mrs G. Jones
 B. Jones
 C. Grose
 S. Jones
 S. Jones
 K. Kight
 K. Kight
 K. Kight
 K. Kight
 K. Kight
 K. Kight
 M. Baird
 Y. Clark
 Y. Clark
 Y. Clark
 A. Pollock
 H. Davidson
 S. Jones
 B. Jones
 S. Jones
 S. Jones
 S. Jones
 R. Dillon
 R. Dillon
 R. Dillon
 R. Dillon
 D. Moore
 R. Dillon
 R. Dillon
 D. Moore
 D. Moore

2005 - S. Klain
2006 - C. Boucher
2007 - C. Boucher
2008 - C. Vanderhorst
2009 - C. Vanderhorst
2010 - C. Boucher
2011 - C. Boucher
2012 - K. Lyle
2013 - C. Boucher
2014 - K. Lyle
2015 - C. Boucher
2016 - C. Boucher
2017 - K. Haase
2018 - K. Haase

D. Moore
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 G. Skinner
 D. Moore
 G. Skinner
 G. Skinner
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 D. Moore
 G. Skinner

+ Mrs G. Cates

* Mrs W. Wheeler
 # Mrs R. Campbell

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP (KEG DUNBAR MEMORIAL)

Outstanding juniors have competed for the "Keg Dunbar" Memorial Trophy. Among these are Kelly Lyle, winning the title six times along with his two club championships, Craig Boucher with four wins, and Tim Jones and Steve Anderson three time winners. Ben Roberts and Peter Nolan turned professional and Corey Haase spent time in the USA.

1972 - W. O'Sullivan	1996 - C. Boucher
1973 - Sue Morvell	1997 - A. Sharp
1974 - P. Flynn	1998 - B. Roberts
1975 - G. Kerr	1999 - J. Templar
1976 - C. Benson	2000 - P. Nolan
1977 - G. Kerr	2001 - M. Rodoni
1978 - C. Benson	2002 - S. Anderson
1979 -	2003 - S. Anderson
1980 - P. Prowse	2004 - S. Anderson
1981 - T. Jones	2005 - B. Powell
1982 - T. Jones	2006 - K. Haase
1983 - D. DiCesare	2007 - B. Fitzpatrick
1984 - T. Jones	2008 - K. Haase
1985 - R. Huntley	2009 - N. Haintz
1986 - D. Ross	2010 - K. Lyle
1987 - D Sparkman	2011 - K. Lyle
1988 - D. Sparkman	2012 - K. Lyle
1989 - R. Matthews	2013 - K. Lyle
1990 - R. Matthews	2014 - K. Lyle
1991 - D. Beattie	2015 - K. Lyle
1992 - C. Boucher	2016 - C. Haase
1993 - C. Boucher	2017 - C. Haase
1994 - C. Boucher	2018 - J. Partington
1995 - S. Klain	

COURSE RECORDS - MEN

Course records on the old course are not complete, possibly due to the layout being altered on a number of occasions. The first known record was 73 by J P McCarthy in 1922. In 1937, Pat Gleeson who was a dominant player in the district at that time and club champion at Ballarat and Kew Golf Clubs recorded a four

under par 66. The course then underwent a number of alterations before a Tom Crow round of 64 in 1957. This record was then lowered to 62 by Victorian professional Jack Harris during the Victorian Close Championship in 1961.

1965 The third hole on the old course was changed to a par five bringing the par of the course to 70. The course records then became:-

1966	66	Randall Hicks (Kingswood)
1966	66	Bill Britten (Long Island)
1970	66	Neil Titheridge (Ballarat)
1970	65	Norm Kirkham (Keysborough)

Course records for the current course

1975	72	Doug Perry (Rosebud)
1976	70	Ken Kilburn (Kingswood)
1978	69	Ray Jenner (Victoria)
1979	69	Michael Clayton (Metropolitan)
1979	69	John Dillon (Midlands)
1979	69	Ray Jenner (Victoria)
1988	67	Tony Collier (Ballarat)
1999	66	Cameron Howell (Professional)
2000	63	Cameron Percy (Professional)

The professional course record on the current course of 63 was set at the Pro-Am in January 2000 by Cameron Percy. He played his amateur golf at Southern Golf Club and won the Victorian Amateur Championship in 1996 defeating Geoff Ogilvy 5/4 in the final as well as winning an Ivo Whitton Trophy. After turning professional in 1998, he has competed on the USPGA

Tour for many years. The amateur record of 66 is held by Craig Boucher.

COURSE RECORDS - LADIES

Ladies course record scores on the old course have been lost. The best known scores were 77 by Mrs G. Cates and 76 by Barbara Coulson (Woodlands) in 1971. The most notable early score on the new course came in 1978 when Jill Chapman of Bacchus Marsh returned a card of 76. In the following year Sandra McKenzie (International golf commentator and member of the ALPGA & USLPGA) along with Barbara Dillon (Victorian state player) lowered the record to 73. During the Eileen Ryan Bowl in 2017 Helen Pascoe (Buninyong) recorded 43pts off a handicap of three, the equivalent of 69, four under par. In 2004 the 5th hole was altered for the ladies and a scratch score of 75 by Di Moore in March 2014 became the new course record.

NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS

Midlands winners of the District Championship

Men

Jim.McCarthy (1) 1946
 Bill Wellard (5) 1953-56,1958
 Michael Roe (4) 1964, 1972, 1976, 1978
 Don Redman (1) 1969
 Brian Kerry (1) 1980
 Rick McMeekin (1) 1991
 Bernie Squire (1) 1997
 Craig Boucher (5) 1998, 2006, 2009, 2013, 2014
 Kyle Haase (1) 2017
 Brett Kerry (1) 2018

MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB

HOME CLUB:

PLAYER: CAMERON PERCY

C.C.R.

A.C.R. 72.2

HANDICAP

RESULT 63

MEMBERS					MEMBERS								
HOLE	METRES	PAR	PAR STROKE	PLAYER	MARKER	SPONSORS	HOLE	METRES	PAR	PAR STROKE	PLAYER	MARKER	SPONSORS
1	370	4	5/23	4	5/2	HEART HEALTH	10	378	4	6/24	3	5/2	PRIME T.V.
2	305	4	16	3	5/2	COMCATER	11	158	3	17	2	3/3	GANNON TRANSPORT SERVICES
3	165	3	11	3	5/1	TOP FLITE XL - 2000	12	383	4	4/22	4	-	TREVENA & SONS
4	342	4	8/26	3	5/2	GAVIN DOYLE CAR SALES	13	370	4	7/25	4	6/1	SUNDOWNER MOTOR INNS
5	315	4	15	4	5/2	SELKIRK BRICKS	14	340	4	10	6	1/3	BALLARAT COURIER
6	445	5	13	4	6/2	COMMONWEALTH BANK	15	496	5	14	4	6/2	BIRD CAMERON
7	380	4	3/21	4	5/2	COSTAS	16	164	3	9/27	2	3/3	HARWOOD ENGINEERING
8	366	4	1/19	4	-	COLTMAN MITRE 10	17	497	5	12	3	6/2	BALLARAT JOINERY SUPPLIES
9	326	4	18	2	6/1	NATURES CARGO	18	370	4	2/20	4	5/3	AUSTRALIA POST
OUT	3014	36		31	14	C.U.B	IN	3156	36		32	19	TATTERSALLS
Signatures:						TTL 6170 72						31 14	
MARKER:						DATE:						63 33	
PLAYER:						15-100							

• BORAL • BALLARAT ASSOCIATED FIBROUS PLASTER
 • SCHWEPPES • SUNICRUST (HELGAS) • CLUB CAR

PLAYER: C. Boucher

PARTNER: R. KERRY

Home Club:

Members No.

DATE: 3-MAR-200

STROKE STABLEFORD 4BBB PAR AMBROSE

MEN					LADIES					
METRES	INDEX	PAR	PLAYER	RESULT	HOLE	MARKER	RESULT	PAR	INDEX	METRES
370	6/24	4	3		1			4	6/24/42	346
305	17	4	4		2			4	12/30	289
165	10/28	3	4		3			3	18/36	110
342	8/26	4	4		4			4	13/31	296
315	18	4	4		5			4	11/29	257
445	13/31	5	4		6			5	5/23/41	382
380	3/21	4	4		7			5	7/25/43	365
366	1/19	4	4		8			4	4/22/40	306
326	15	4	4		9			4	17/35	261
3014	36		33		OUT			37		2612

USE SAND BUCKETS - RAKE BUNKERS - REPLACE DIVOTS - REPAIR PITCH MARKS			
378	4/22	4	10
158	16	3	11
383	2/20	4	12
370	7/25	4	13
340	12/30	4	14
496	9/27	5	15
164	11/29	3	16
497	14/32	5	17
370	5/23	4	18
3156	36	33	19
3014	36	33	20
6170	72	66	21
ACR 72.2		1	22
Start time:		65	23
AVOID SLOW PLAY - MAXIMUM TIME OF 2 1/2 HOURS PER NINE HOLES		NETT	24
MARKER:		72	25
PLAYER:		73	26
		74	27
		75	28
		76	29
		77	30
		78	31
		79	32
		80	33
		81	34
		82	35
		83	36
		84	37
		85	38
		86	39
		87	40
		88	41
		89	42
		90	43
		91	44
		92	45
		93	46
		94	47
		95	48
		96	49
		97	50
		98	51
		99	52
		100	53

Finish time:

AWCR 73

Ladies

Betty Jones (2) 1970, 1972

Di Moore (2) 2005, 2008

Gai Skinner (1) 2015

One of the most significant successes by Midlands members came in 1972 when **Alan Cox** and **Don Redman** won the Victorian Foursomes title at Peninsula Golf Club. Alan Cox was the Midlands club champion in 1973 and Don Redman won the Ballarat District championship in 1969, as well as the district junior title in 1968. The degree of this success can be seen by the fact that the foursomes, first played under the auspices of VGA in 1903, has been won by players of the calibre of Ivo Whitton, Harry Williams, Doug Bachli, Tom Crow, Bob Shearer and Kevin Hartley. They were honoured with a twelve month honorary membership for their achievement.

1950 - Geelong Victory Cup - Mesdames A.Blomeley, A.Newton, S.Weir, E.Cannon, E.Dunbar. This event was in its fourth year and had been won twice by Woodlands and once by Huntingdale.

1969 - Isabel Elston & Elizabeth Morvell won the VLGU Doris Chambers Cup at Northern Golf Club. They were presented to the members on the following Saturday night and each was given a bottle of champagne to celebrate - and celebrate they did. This was the first time that a team from inland Victoria had won the trophy which is one of the major awards on the VLGU programme. It was given by Miss Doris Chambers the former president of the Ladies Golf Union and captain of British International teams in gratitude for food parcels



Betty Jones, Sandra McKenzie, Mrs W Kirby (hole in one 16th) & Barbara Dillon at Midlands 1979

MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB									
Singles Stroke									
DATE: 5/3/2014									
CCR									
Player: <u>D. MOORE</u> Member Number: <u>34151421</u> H'Cap: <u>5</u> (49) Partner: _____ Home Club: <u>Midlands Golf Club Inc</u>									
METRES	INDEX	PAR	PLAYER	RESULT	HOLE	MARKER	RESULT		
346	6/24/42	4	5		1				
289	12/30	4	4		2				
110	18/36	3	2		3				
296	13/31	4	3		4				
257	11/28	4	4		5				
382	9/23/41	5	5		6				
365	7/25/43	5	5		7				
306	4/22/40	4	3		8				
261	17/35	4	4		9				
2612		37	35		OUT				
COURSE: WOMENS									
PLAYER: <u>D. Moore</u>									
MARKER: _____									
START TIME: _____ FINISH TIME: _____									

METRES	INDEX	PAR	PLAYER	RESULT	HOLE	MARKER	RESULT
276	14/32	4	4		10		
120	15/33	3	4		11		
325	10/28	4	4		12		
328	8/26/44	4	5		13		
290	9/27/45	4	5		14		
451	2/20/38	5	5		15		
124	16/34	3	2		16		
474	1/19/37	5	5		17		
312	3/21/39	4	6		18		
2700		36	40		IN		
2612		37	35		OUT		
5312		73	75		TOTAL		
		73	73		H'CAP		
			70		NETT		

sent to her by the VLGU during the 1939-1945 War.

1977 - Barwon Cup winners - Ian Farren, Graeme Clifford, Ken Eckersley and Noel Jarrett.

Shirley McDonald and Fran Skewes were in a team representing Victoria in 1993 which won the ALGU Spalding Teams event held at Royal Canberra.

In 1992 the club championships became a family affair with two families of three making the semi-finals. Peter, Heather and son Travis Davidson along with Max and Elizabeth Morvell and daughter Susan Jones competed in various finals. Travis and Susan were successful in winning the club championship.

2017 Judi Guest won the District Medallist of the Year.



*Winners of the 1975 Metropolitan Plate
Michael Roe, Bill Gribble and Ken Eckersley*

Chapter 14

LIFE MEMBERS AND HONOR BOARDS

In recognition of their services, Messrs Dearden, Davey and Anderson were elected as the clubs' first life members. The story of their involvement and contribution to the club is recorded in chapter 11 - The Early Pioneers.

Some insight into work of the Midlands life members is found in the anniversary editions of the *Midlander* and *The Ballarat Courier*. One who had an enormous impact on the development of the club and other sports in the Ballarat district was the fourth life member **Edgar John "Keg" Dunbar**. He joined the club in 1930 and was secretary for two years in 1937 and 1939 when his temporary transfer from Ballarat caused his resignation.

He rejoined the committee in 1946 and was captain for three years, 1953-54-55 and became president for two years in 1958-59. He again became secretary immediately on completing his term as president and held that office for six years. He was a member of the greens committee until he resigned from office in 1966. For more than 20 years he was the clubs' press correspondent and was chairman of the entertainment committee for several years.

In 1971 he received an award from the Ballarat Sportsmen's Club for his work in local sport for a period



of 40 years. Mr Dunbar, an ex-Melbourne footballer moved to Ballarat in 1927 and made his first impact when he revived the Ballarat Swimming Club that had been recess for several years. In 1931 he took on the combined job of secretary and treasurer of the Ballarat Football League and was the first district councillor of the Victorian Country Football League. The award was presented by the governor Sir Rohan Delacombe.

As secretary of the Ballarat District Golf Association for 20 years, he was also a delegate to the Victorian Golf Association. Dedicated to helping junior players, he instituted the Ballarat District Junior Championship. He was primarily responsible for bringing the Victorian Close Championship to Midlands and he inaugurated the Victorian Midland Amateur Championship. He, along with Leo Gronn introduced *The Midlander* in 1967.

Later in life he took on bowls and at age 80 was awarded the super veterans badge of the RVBA. A very keen bowler, he was one of the initiators of forming the Midlands Golf Bowling Club. His home in Norman Street was opposite the entrance to the golf club. In his working life he was Chief of Staff and Chief Sub-Editor

at the *Ballarat Courier*. For many years he wrote a weekly golf column - the 20th hole. He died in 1985 at the age of 83 after a long illness. His wife Belle was a capable golfer and served two years as president and two as captain of the associates.



Jim Gordon's services in a number of capacities were recognised with the award of a life membership in 1968. He became treasurer soon after his election as a member of the club in 1950 and then succeeded Kevin Curtain as secretary in 1953. He returned as treasurer two years later and then became secretary again in 1967.

Mr Gordon was captain in 1961 and president in 1965-66, so that during the whole period of his 20 years membership he had held the office of president, captain, secretary or treasurer.

A man of unbounded energy, he had been active in other facets of the clubs' management including catering, bar, social and greens committee. He was responsible for the important task of organising the various phases of the emergency watering scheme that the club had to introduce because of rationed hours. The Jim Gordon plate was played for in the interclub match between Midlands and the reciprocal club Horsham.

Alf Dixon joined the club in 1932. He was elected to the committee in 1942 and remained in this capacity until stepping down in 1969. He became captain in



1943 for a two year term and served a further three years as captain in 1949-50-51. Mr Dixon established a long record as handicapper. He shared the handicapping responsibilities with Alf White in the first couple of years of his appointment to that job in 1942 when vice-captain and remained for a period of 27 years. As treasurer for a year and press correspondent for several, he capped his long association with the club with two years as president. His service in these offices over a period of 28 years continuously, fully merited his election as a life member at the 1969 annual meeting. The trophy won by the associates champion each year is named in his honor.

It was a great regret that he passed away two months after this honour was conferred upon him. He was not only a sound golf administrator, but served the community in a wide field. When he undertook the presidency, he said that he would have to give up some of his other voluntary jobs. When counted up, there were 15 of them.



Alf White made a major contribution to the club over a period of many years and a trophy named in his honour is still played for today. He served as a trustee of the club, was handicapper and then president in 1940. In this year he played an important role in

the purchase of the Greenfield property. His daughter Mrs Glenys McIver was the ladies president in 1971/72.



Recovery from the effects of the second world war was led by **Syd Weir** who gave outstanding leadership when he took office as president in 1945-46. He had the backing of a number of committeemen who had carried the burden of the difficult war years, as well as non-committee members who acted on sub-committees. He served another two years as president in 1949-50.



Jack Allan was a member since 1934 and joined the committee first in 1947 for a period of four years and then accepted the vice-presidency in 1954. He was president in 1956-57 and became captain in 1960. It was during his captaincy that the Close Championship of Victoria was held at Midlands for the first time in a provincial centre. Mr Allan served the club generously in many ways and always enjoyed great popularity.

Three terms as captain in 1962-63-64, and three as president in 1968-69-70 were a major feature of the contribution made by dedicated Midlander, **Bill Atkinson**. He had the privilege of being president of



the club in its Golden Jubilee year in 1969. An enthusiastic golfer, he had a hole-in-one in 1960 and was granted life membership in 1977.

Laurie Valpied joined Midlands in the 1950s and was asked in 1973 to take on the role of treasurer of the new course development committee. In 1975 he was the club treasurer and in 1977 when the then Secretary/ Manager resigned with 2 hours notice he volunteered to carry out this duty for a period of 12 months. This 12 months lasted for over 7 years. An extraordinary commitment. During this time Midlands was very heavily committed for funds due to relocating to the present site and his excellent money management steered the club through this difficult period. He served two years as president in 1987 and 1988 and was honoured with a well deserved life membership in 1989.



Doug Anderson is another who in the late 1950s and early sixties gave a great amount of time and energy to the club. He captained it in 1956 and 1957 but it was as a member of the greens committee that he served the longest and in this he was always progressive. Countless hours were spent by him doing jobs that were not always attractive and for many years

was almost a one man band cleaning the clubhouse, resulting in significant savings for the club. He was a keen advocate of fairway irrigation and did much in planning to have that system installed. He also looked ahead in providing against the possible loss of holes through extensions of the brickworks clay hole and helped in the planning of new holes laid down to meet this emergency. He undertook the planting and care of trees on the new area of the course and was also an active member of the bar committee.



After serving one term as captain in 1965, **Ted McCoy** became president at a difficult time for the club in 1971-72. He, along with his committee was able to guide the club through the relocation of the course and the building of a new clubhouse. A vast amount of time was spent in meetings and planning to achieve the outstanding outcome that

was reached. Three more terms as president in 1977-78-79 led to him being granted a well deserved life membership in 1983. An intelligent and entertaining man he enjoying socialising with members and visitors. He was a capable single figure golfer and reached the final of the club championship in 1951.

George Dinan joined the club as a golfer but his greatest involvement was with the formation of the bowling club. He was a foundation committee member and was a member of the inaugural pennant team which won the C grade premiership in the 1969-70



season. As the second president, he served two terms in 1971-72 as well as a total of 11 years on committee. Much of his effort was spent fund raising, and he was able to finance the restructuring of the car park and install a toilet on the old course. With his wife Elsie, he created and maintained gardens beautifying the clubhouse area. She was the associates golf president in 1970-71, bowling president in 1975-76 and bowling club champion in 1971-73, and 1979. Life membership was awarded to George in 1988. He died in 2009.



Dan Coutts, who joined the club in 1958 has almost been a "fixture" ever since. His terms in office comprising four years as president 1980/81, 1986 and 1996 and four years as captain 1977/78 and 1994/95 as well as serving on various committees speak of his enthusiasm and attachment to Midlands. His establishment and organisation of the course beautification sub-committee has been a long lasting and much appreciated benefit to the club. Rarely missing a competition event, his golfing career is highlighted by numerous scratch scores beating his age and being the only person to hole in one three times on the present course.

The golfing expertise of **Graeme "Bill" Wellard** is recorded in an earlier chapter of this book. The record 10 times club champion was a proud member who took great satisfaction from representing the club. Throughout his career he was always willing to assist members and particularly juniors to improve their games. He served terms as club captain in 1989 and 1990 and was elected a life member in 1998.



Once described by an outgoing president as the "worlds" best bowls secretary, **Brian Gallagher** was awarded life membership in September 2006. He joined as a bowls member in 1975 and after assisting Graham Fithall with Friday night happy hour and members draw until 1996 he took

over the organising ever since. He has spent 29 years on the bowls committee, 21 of these being secretary.

Over many years, he has been involved in the clearance of the gaming machines, selling tickets in the three years that bingo was held at the club, and in organising and attending working bees around the bowling greens. While playing over 700 pennant games he was in five winning teams and won the "Bob Campbell Pairs" on three occasions.

Another member who has spent countless hours on the affairs of the club is **Ken Sedgley**. A member for over fifty years he first joined the committee in 1977 and served two years as president in 1982 and 1984.



After four years as a director, he commenced a record seven year term as Chairman of the Board and was made a life member in 2007. He was a regular competitor in competition golf and his playing career was highlighted by a hole in one on the third.

Don Skewes in his working life operated a business involving pipe laying, earthmoving and plumbing and this knowledge he readily applied to many projects at Midlands. He was always generous with his time and providing the use of his equipment to the club saving many thousands of dollars. In 2007 he was granted a well deserved life membership. His wife Fran completed four years as ladies president and two as captain.



The contribution made to the club by **Ross Wiltshire** cannot be overstated. His knowledge, experience and contacts in the construction industry coupled with his hands-on approach has led to the completion of numerous major projects that no others would attempt. Other tasks where funding was not available were



financed in full or in part by him confirming his dedication to the advancement of the club. He has been a talented single figure golfer for many years and his name appears on a number of honour boards and is the youngest person to be awarded a life membership. His parents John and Val and wife Judy have been long time members of the club.

Ann Newton spent twenty one years as treasurer of the associates' committee. She was a close guardian of the associates' funds and was thorough in her accounting for the amounts large and small that she had to handle. She was awarded life membership in 1970.



Dorrie Wheeler joined the club in 1921 and was a member for over 50 years along with her husband Bill. The Dorrie Wheeler Veterans Trophy was named in her honour. For her contribution to the club she was made a life member in 1970

Jess Smith had a similar profile at Midlands to Dorrie Wheeler being a well respected member for more than fifty years. She also had an event played for in her honour, the Jessie Smith Trophy, and was granted life membership in 1972.



Joining the club in 1958, **Jean Caddy** became vice-captain in March 1961. Later that year she was appointed captain, in which

position she served for two years. Other positions that she held were - 10 years as handicapper from 1963 - vice-captain 1973-74 - captain 1975-76-77 and 1990 - press correspondent 10 years - committee and match committee 25 years - organised the senior ladies matches for 4 years. Life membership was awarded to her in 1987.

As she worked during the week **Grace Dynan** played most of her golf on Saturdays. She was a fine player, winning the club championship in 1948 and a good club representative at other clubs events and pennant. She served as a committee member, was captain in 1952, and received a life membership in 1973. A perpetual trophy in her honour is still played for today.



Ev. Blomeley, a member of Midlands for over 50 years, served the club as captain for 7 terms, as president in 1964-65 and 1976-77, and as handicap manageress for many years. She was also a foundation member of the BDLGA and secretary of that organisation for 9 years. She was twice president and for her contribution she was made a life member of the BDLGA.

Beth Campbell was the daughter of foundation member Ernest Lemin. As a young girl, she would accompany her mother to help decorate the clubrooms for social functions and in her teenage years played golf with her parents, joining the club as a full member in 1932. With her brother, Bill Lemin, they shared a



remarkable record as duel club champions, winning in 1936, 37, 38, and 1939. Beth represented Midlands in pennant for many years and Ballarat at Country Week. She was runner-up in the Victorian Country Championship and has won almost every club

trophy at some stage, the last major one being the Ladies "A" Grade Championship at the age of 75. In 1939 she was club captain and served on committee for several years before family commitments prevented her from acting in an official capacity. From this time onwards she continued working unobtrusively in the background. For her long time involvement, service and representation of the club she was awarded life membership in 1999 - a true legend of Midlands.



Marie Jones was awarded her 50 years continuous service certificate at the AGM in 2012. She had joined during the 1961/62 season and during her time had won two A grade championships as well as representing the club at bowls. Her main contribution came in

administration, where she had been on the ladies committee for 21 years, with 13 years on the match committee and two years each as vice-president and president. She had a major involvement with the district association being a committee member for 12 years and president in 1991/92.



Carmel Bourke was awarded life membership at the annual meeting in November 2016. She held office as vice president in 2001/02 and president in 2003/04. Serving on the ladies committee for 12 years she was catering co-ordinator for ladies golf events and floral co-ordinator as well as fulfilling the role as Midlands carer

for many years.

Long time member **Jim Fairhurst** was made a life member in November 2018. After joining the club in 1970 he took on the role of vice-captain in 1994 but resigned this position in 1996 to lead the restructuring of the clubs' management committee and to become founding Chairman of the Board for two years in the new organisation. After retiring from the board he continued to work on all areas of maintenance in the clubhouse and on the golf course improving water collection and pumping systems.



The latest member to be granted life membership is **Graeme "Boots" Stevens**. Working for much of his life in steel fabrication he was an expert welder and applied this skill constructing a gazebo, building



stiles and repairing out of order machinery saving the club the cost of replacing many items.

Midlands has had so many members who have given outstanding service, and no history of the club would be complete without mention of some of them. One hesitates to single out a few, as there are others whose part in the growth of the club merits recording, but for them their deeds speak for themselves, and they must know that what they have done is fully appreciated.

The Golden Jubilee edition of the Midlander noted the outstanding contribution made by members who had not been nominated for life membership. The lists of presidents and captains show who have been the clubs' chief executive officers. To hold office as such in itself is an honour and none could be successful without much hard work and personal sacrifice. There are however are some who have undertaken a number of offices and have been involved over long periods of time and they perhaps stand out from others.

BERT DAWE was club champion in 1930 and 1931 and captain in 1932 and 1933. He became president in 1939 and began a difficult period as secretary the following year. His seven-year term carried him through the war years and he became treasurer in 1947.

Another to give excellent service was O J (MART) MARTIN, who played golf with great courage under the handicap of severe leg injuries received in the 1914-18 War. He joined the club in the late 1920s and maintained a keen interest in administration after being

elected to the committee in 1936. He began a five-year term as captain in 1937 and was president in 1942. Despite his physical handicap he was chairman of the greens committee for many years.

BILL WHEELER was the member at the time of the golden jubilee who had the longest club membership. He had joined the club in 1924 and won the club championship in 1929. He became president in 1941 and captain in 1942 as well serving a lengthy time on committee.

Notable during the first 25 years were the four-year term of WALTER IRWIN as president, and CLIVE CLEAVER'S three years in office, covering the seven years from 1930 to 1936.

JACK WEIR followed in his father's footsteps with two years as president in 1952-53 confirming a lifetime of interest and enthusiastic support for the club. This could be called the Weir era with father or son as president in six of nine years. Jack Weir undertook a further term in 1960-61, and demonstrated the Weir capacity for getting things done. He was president when the Victorian Close Championship came to Midlands and he played a major role on the New Course Development Committee.

Reference must be made to FRANK ORR who served on the committee for eighteen years and had been vice-captain, secretary and treasurer. He had a major role in the club's application for registration as a licensed club and for years was mainly responsible for supervision of the bar. Elected as a member of the

executive committee of the Victorian Licenced Clubs' Association, he was involved in the Royal Commission inquiry into liquor licensing reform. With his financial knowledge, he audited the accounts of the bowling committees.

One who gave great support to the club was KEVIN CURTAIN who was not only an accomplished golfer, but a keen and able administrator. As a qualified accountant his advice in financial matters was most valuable and it was natural that he should become treasurer. He was secretary from 1951 until ill-health caused his resignation late in 1953. He succeeded Bob Campbell as secretary, and was also auditor for part of his time on committee. The Medallist of the Year trophy was donated in his honour.

Miss JEAN TUCKER who died at the age of 94 was a member for almost 70 years. She joined five years after the formation of the club and throughout her life she had been an active golfer. Miss STELLA SIMPSON, another long time member, was the only foundation associate member still connected with the club at the time of the Golden Jubilee. For many years she was a leader in promoting social activities.

In more recent times, members are aware of significant contributions made by fellow members. However, the longevity of their commitment requires that there are a few whose involvement should be recorded. AILEEN EYERS joined Midlands in 1976 and served two years as president, four years as captain and 12 years on committee. She was chair person of the Senior Ladies for 17 years and for 16 years a

committee member of the BDLGA with two years as president as well as serving two years as the bowls president. For six years she was manager of the country week team and in 2000 was awarded the Australian Sports Medal for services to golf.

ROB WALLACE who joined the club from Colac in 1982 has made a great commitment to the administration of Midlands and represented the club with distinction. He first took on the role as handicapper, a time consuming task before the use of computers, and then served two years as captain and four years as president. In most years he has been involved as a treasurer or on either the match or greens committees. His playing career is highlighted by three club championships and a runner-up finish in the 1989 Midland Amateur Championship. He represented the club in pennant for 33 years and has been in the premiership winning Division One team on eleven occasions. On Friday nights he compered the "happy hour" and for his dedication to the club he was honoured with the inaugural Midlander of the Year Award in 2013.

A long time member, who given much of his time to the development the club is NOEL PERRY. In his earlier days he was a accomplished golfer, being runner-up in the club championship twice, runner-up in the district championship in 1973, winning the foursomes championship four times and was the winner of the Ballarat District junior title. He represented the club in pennant for many years and was a five time member of the winning team in the top division. It was in administration that he made a significant contribution,

being on or chairing various committees and sub-committees, as a treasurer and as a captain in 1983-84. During his time as president in 1992-93 many of the major projects, among which were the introduction of gaming machines, the automatic watering system, the sale of blocks in Bogong Avenue and the planning for the new third hole, were either commenced or completed during his time in office. ARNOLD MASTERS who followed as president took over the task of completing some of these projects, as well as others, in this busy period in the history of the club.

GAI SKINNER has been a most valuable member of Midlands and the BDLGA. She is a four time club champion, but her most significant achievement came in 2015 when she became only the third Midlands lady to win the Ballarat District Championship. Prior to joining Midlands she won 14 club championships at Hepburn Springs Golf Club. With her sound knowledge of the game, the rules and administration, she was club captain for two years, president in 2017 and had a major involvement with the BDLGA, being president for four years and was awarded BDLGA life membership.

Highly respected member of many years George Rimmington died at age 99 years and 10 months.

The volunteer groups in recent times have played an important role in the progression of the club. In recent years - the course beautification group or aka Dad's Army - led by Dan Coutts and ably assisted by Alan Burton, Don Stevens, Ossie Bowd, Ken Smith, Arnold Masters and Ted Boak did much in the early days of the new course to beautify areas that were



Rock wall builders - Rob Beseler, Rob Ryan, Eddie Harwood, Leigh Mitchell, Geoff Jenkins, Ross Wiltshire, Mark Malone, John Dillon, Rob Jenkins, Bob Miles

Absent: Richard Castles, Daryl Sparkman

bare and windswept. The results of their work is seen today. The perimeter of the practice fairway was planted with blue gums by Kevin Slade and the main dam with grevilleas donated and planted by Ken Smith.

They have been followed by the Monday volunteers, with Ross Wiltshire and Noel Perry, mentioned previously, plus the longest serving member of this group and machinery expert, Mr Fixit Bob Miles, also a generous sponsor when in business. Others were the construction consultant - Robert Jenkins, machinery operator - Daryl Sparkman, Richard Castles - jack of all trades and master of all and Rob Beseler - Director

of Golf board member and invaluable part of the team. Besides the major construction projects this group is regularly involved in tree planting, rubbish removal, spraying around trees for appearance and ease of rough cutting, removing dead trees and fallen branches, restocking of the wood storage, repairing paths, watering trees, painting, renewing turf in areas where needed, maintaining gardens and repairing, replacing and restoring items as required and assisting the greens staff when requested. They have been aided on some projects requiring special equipment or specific expertise by Rob "Molly" Ryan, Leigh Mitchell and Mark Malone.

HONOR BOARDS

PRESIDENT

1919 - J.C.Dearden
1920 - J. H. Davey
1921 - F. B. Wilson
1922 - E. W. Lemin
1923 - D. Ronaldson
1924 - T. G. Faull
1925 - J. B. Wallace
1926 - J. Selkirk
1927 - S. Abraham
1928 - T. A. Kerr
1929 - T. R. Haslem
1930 - W. J. Irwin
1931 - W. J. Irwin
1932 - W. J. Irwin
1933 - W. J. Irwin

CAPTAIN

N. La Gerche
 N. La Gerche
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 J. H. Davey
 T. R. Haslem
 T. R. Haslem
 H. W. Dawe
 H. W. Dawe

1934 - E. C. Cleaver
1935 - E. C. Cleaver
1936 - E. C. Cleaver
1937 - A. J. Ward
1938 - C. H. G. Anderson
1939 - H. W. Dawe
1940 - A. C. White
1941 - W. B. Wheeler
1942 - O. J. Martin
1943 - J. H. Davey
1944 - H. E. Smith
1945 - S. J. Weir
1946 - S. J. Weir
1947 - R. Ritchie
1948 - R. Ritchie
1949 - S. J. Weir
1950 - S. J. Weir
1951 - J. H. Davey
1952 - J. Weir
1953 - J. Weir
1954 - H. W. Irvine
1955 - H. W. Irvine
1956 - J. A. Allan
1957 - J. A. Allan
1958 - E. J. Dunbar
1959 - E. J. Dunbar
1960 - J. Weir
1961 - J. Weir
1962 - H. W. Sarah
1963 - H. W. Sarah
1964 - J. A. Dixon
1965 - J. A. Dixon
1966 - J. E. Gordon
1967 - J. E. Gordon

A. J. Ward
 A. J. Ward
 A. J. Ward
 O. J. Martin
 O. J. Martin
 O. J. Martin
 O. J. Martin
 O. J. Martin
 W. B. Wheeler
 J. A. Dixon
 J. A. Dixon
 F. P. Gallagher
 F. P. Gallagher
 F. P. Gallagher
 F. P. Gallagher
 J. A. Dixon
 J. A. Dixon
 J. A. Dixon
 S. R. Horsfall
 E. J. Dunbar
 E. J. Dunbar
 E. J. Dunbar
 D. F. Anderson
 D. F. Anderson
 R. A. Williams
 R. A. Williams
 J. Allan
 J. E. Gordon
 W. E. Atkinson
 W. E. Atkinson
 W. E. Atkinson
 E. McCoy
 R. J. Buchanan
 R. J. Buchanan

FROM SMALL ACORNS / LIFE MEMBERS AND HONOR BOARDS

1968 - W. E. Atkinson
1969 - W. E. Atkinson
1970 - W. E. Atkinson
1971 - E. McCoy
1972 - E. McCoy
1973 - J. Weir
1974 - J. Weir
1975 - I. Farren
1976 - I. Farren
1977 - E. McCoy
1978 - E. McCoy
1979 - E. McCoy
1980 - D. Coutts
1981 - D. Coutts
1982 - K. Sedgley
1983 - M. McPherson
1984 - K. Sedgley
1985 - G. Barnett
1986 - D. Coutts
1987 - L. Valpied
1988 - L. Valpied
1989 - R. Bissett
1990 - R. Bissett
1991 - N. Fitzgerald
1992 - N. Perry
1993 - N. Perry
1994 - A. Masters
1995 - A. Masters
1996 - D. Coutts
1997 - N. McMahon
1998 - N. McMahon
1999 - K. Sharp
2000 - K. Sharp
2001 - K. Lynch

L. C. Gronn
 L. C. Gronn
 L. C. Gronn
 G. Bromley
 G. Bromley
 W. Gribble
 W. Gribble
 R. Lockett
 R. Lockett
 D. Coutts
 D. Coutts
 E. Boak
 E. Boak
 G. Barnett
 G. Barnett
 N. Perry
 N. Perry
 N. McMahon
 N. McMahon
 D. Toulmin
 D. Toulmin
 G. Wellard
 G. Wellard
 G. Deloas
 R. McDonald
 R. McDonald
 D. Coutts
 D. Coutts
 I. Cato
 I. Cato
 R. Wallace
 R. Wallace
 I. Cato
 G. Andrew

2002 - K. Lynch
2003 - M. Gannon
2004 - R. Wallace
2005 - R. Wallace
2006 - R. Trevena
2007 - R. Trevena
2008 - R. Whatman
2009 - R. Whatman
2010 - C. Lysaght
2011 - C. Lysaght
2012 - T. Grummett
2013 - T. Grummett
2014 - R. Wallace
2015 - R. Wallace
2016 - G. Morrison
2017 -
2018 - D. Both

G. Andrew
 B. Wardley
 G. Cook
 G. Cook
 J. Montgomery
 J. Montgomery
 B. Maher
 B. Maher
 R. Beseler
 R. Beseler
 J. Grzinic
 J. Grzinic
 R. Adams
 R. Adams
 D. Both
 D. Both
 S. Britnell

LADIES

PRESIDENT

1934 - Mrs W. Warburton
1935 - Mrs W. Warburton
1936 - Mrs W. Warburton
1937 - Mrs R. Bickett
1938 - Mrs W. Warburton
1939 - Mrs W. Warburton
1940 - Mrs J. Selkirk
1941 - Mrs Mae Page
1942 - Mrs Mae Page
1943 - Miss S. Simpson
1944 - Mrs Mae Page

CAPTAIN

FROM SMALL ACORNS / LIFE MEMBERS AND HONOR BOARDS

1945 - Mrs E. Dunbar
1946 - Mrs H. Maddern
1947 - Mrs H. Maddern
1948 - Mrs W. Rodda
1949 - Mrs Mae Page
1950 - Mrs J. Jelbart
1951 - Mrs J. Jelbart
1952 - Mrs E. Cannon
1953 - Mrs E. Cannon
1954 - Mrs J. Weir
1955 - Mrs E. Menzies
1956 - Mrs E. Menzies
1957 - Mrs E. Dunbar
1958 - Mrs K. Allan
1959 - Mrs J. Allan
1960 - Mrs N. McGregor
1961 - Mrs N. McGregor
1962 - Mrs J. Murray
1963 - Mrs F. Prest
1964 - Mrs A. Blomeley
1965 - Mrs A. Blomeley
1966 - Mrs R. Williams
1967 - Mrs R. Williams
1968 - Mrs J. Ford
1969 - Mrs J. Ford
1970 - Mrs G. Dinan
1971 - Mrs G. Dinan
1972 - Mrs C. McIver
1973 - Mrs C. McIver
1974 - Mrs J. Johnson
1975 - Mrs J. Johnson
1976 - Mrs A. Blomeley
1977 - Mrs A. Blomeley
1978 - Mrs N. Carruthers

Mrs N. Spence
 Mrs N. Spence
 Mrs E. O'Halloran
 Mrs E. O'Halloran
 Mrs E. O'Halloran
 Mrs E. O'Halloran
 Miss G. Dynan
 Mrs G. Cates
 Mrs E. Dunbar
 Mrs E. Dunbar
 Mrs A. Blomeley
 Mrs A. Blomeley
 Mrs A. Blomeley
 Mrs A. Blomeley
 Mrs A. Blomeley
 Mrs R. Williams
 Mrs J. Caddy
 Mrs J. Caddy
 Mrs M. Henderson
 Mrs G. Cates
 Mrs G. Cates
 Mrs G. Cates
 Mrs E. McCoy
 Mrs E. McCoy
 Mrs E. McCoy
 Mrs G. Bromley
 Mrs G. Bromley
 Mrs W. Page
 Mrs W. Page
 Mrs J. Caddy
 Mrs J. Caddy
 Mrs J. Caddy
 Mrs L. Condon

1979 - Mrs N. Carruthers
1980 - Mrs J. Callinan
1981 - Mrs J. Callinan
1982 - Mrs G. Nunn
1983 - Mrs G. Nunn
1984 - Mrs D. Skewes
1985 - Mrs D. Skewes
1986 - Mrs K. Evers
1987 - Mrs K. Evers
1988 - Mrs A. Jones
1989 - Mrs A. Jones
1990 - Mrs B. Fitzgerald
1991 - Mrs B. Fitzgerald
1992 - Mrs M. Hayes
1993 - Mrs M. Hayes
1994 - Mrs M. Pretty
1995 - Mrs D. Sheehan
1996 - Mrs F. Skewes
1997 - Mrs F. Skewes
1998 - Mrs E. Richards
1999 - Mrs E. Richards
2000 - Mrs V. Hirt
2001 - Mrs V. Hirt
2002 - Mrs R. Nicholls
2003 - Mrs R. Nicholls
2004 - Mrs C. Bourke
2005 - Mrs C. Bourke
2006 - Mrs H. Davidson
2007 - Mrs H. Davidson
2008 - Mrs M. Gercovich
2009 - Mrs M. Gercovich
2010 - Mrs S. Watson
2011 - Mrs S. Watson
2012 - Mrs I. McIntosh

Mrs D. Stevens
 Mrs D. Stevens
 Mrs N. Newey
 Mrs N. Newey
 Mrs R. Winnell
 Mrs R. Winnell
 Mrs D. Stevens
 Mrs R. Jelbart
 Mrs R. Jelbart
 Mrs R. Jelbart
 Mrs R. Warren
 Mrs J. Caddy
 Mrs A. Evers
 Mrs A. Evers
 Mrs S. McDonald
 Mrs A. Evers
 Mrs A. Evers
 Mrs R. Nicholls
 Mrs R. Nicholls
 Mrs M. Hayes
 Mrs M. Jones
 Mrs M. Jones
 Mrs F. Skewes
 Mrs F. Skewes
 Mrs C. Moloney
 Mrs C. Moloney
 Mrs M. Gercovich
 Mrs M. Gercovich
 Mrs G. Skinner
 Mrs G. Skinner
 Mrs B. Harwood
 Mrs B. Harwood
 Mrs J. Bradbury
 Mrs J. Bradbury

2013 - Mrs I. McIntosh
2014 - Mrs H. Leech
2015 - Mrs H. Leech
2016 - Mrs G. Skinner
2017 - Mrs G. Skinner
2018 - Mrs P. Bandy

Mrs C. Stephens
 Mrs C. Stephens
 Mrs R. Nicholls
 Mrs R. Nicholls
 Mrs J. Morrison
 Mrs J. Morrison

CHAIRPERSONS of the BOARD

1996 Jim Fairhurst
1997 Jim Fairhurst
1998 Terry Rodoni
1999 Terry Rodoni
2000 John Hackett
2001 John Hackett
2002 Wendy McKay
 Graeme Wakefield
2003 Ken Sedgley
2004 Ken Sedgley
2005 Ken Sedgley
2006 Ken Sedgley
2007 Ken Sedgley
2008 Ken Sedgley
2009 Ken Sedgley
2010 Caius Ryan
2011 Caius Ryan
2012 Lance Midgley
2013 Lance Midgley
2014 Peter Considine
2015 Peter Considine
2016 Peter Considine
2017 Peter Considine
2018 Darren Bandy

CHAIRPERSONS of the GOLF COMMITTEE

2015/16 Gary Morrison
2016/17 Gary Morrison
2017/18 Gai Skinner
2018/19 David Both

MEDALLIST of the YEAR

One ambition of most golfers is to win a monthly medal at their home club. To be able to add to this by winning the Medallist of the Year is a significant achievement. Even more remarkable is being able to win on more than one occasion as did Fred Richardson in 1981-82 and Ross Wiltshire in 1995, 2004, 2005. Two fathers and sons have won the title, Albert "Tigger" and Daryl Williams and John and Ross Wiltshire. Although not winning the Medallist of the Year, Ted Boak, in a magnificent run of form won a monthly medal in January, February and April 1975.

Eight women have been able to win twice with Mrs N Jones (Sue Morvell) winning three times.

1964 K. Kenyon
1965 K. Fox
1966 M. Morvell
1967 J. A. Dixon
1968 K. Agnew
1969 E. Boak
1970 A. Singleton
1971 G. Van Harten
1972 D. Hudson
1973 G. Kerr

Mrs E. Ryan
 Mrs G. Bowe
 Mrs M. Francis
 Mrs R. Mark
 Mrs W. Tallent

FROM SMALL ACORNS / LIFE MEMBERS AND HONOR BOARDS

1974 A. G. Williams
1975 J. Pal
1976 D. R. Stevens
1977 I. Bishop
1978 K. McSwain
1979 D. Williams
1980 W. Bowd
1981 F. Richardson
1982 F. Richardson
1983 P. Cole
1984 N. Compston
1985 J. Wiltshire
1986 R. Bissett
1987 S. Coutts
1988 R. Cunningham
1989 A. Hughes
1990 D. Irvine
1991 E. Adams
1992 I. Mason
1993 B. Robinson
1994 G. Beames
1995 R. Wiltshire
1996 L. Fitzpatrick
1997 M. Vorbach
1998 T. Ellard
1999 T. Davidson
2000 T. Dreher
2001 B. Muceniaks
2002 M. Petrie
2003 S. Lyle
2004 R. Wiltshire
2005 R. Wiltshire
2006 T. Stevens

Mrs G. Nunn
 Mrs N. Jones
 Mrs J. Elston
 Mrs N. Newey
 Mrs R. Warren
 Mrs K. Smith
 Mrs G. Nunn
 Mrs K. Smith
 Mrs W. Prowse
 Mrs J. Fraser
 Mrs M. Odgers
 Mrs B. Rogers
 Mrs G. Bromley
 Mrs B. Rogers
 Mrs R. Trezise
 Mrs N. Jones
 Mrs D. Bent
 Mrs J. Saulsbrey
 Mrs D. Newey
 Mrs J. Masters
 Mrs P. Bandy
 Mrs N. Jones
 Miss R. Dillon
 Mrs D. Johnson
 Mrs N. Stevens
 Mrs H. Bushby
 Mrs D. Moore
 Mrs E. Kennedy
 Mrs D. Johnson
 Mrs V. Duggan
 Mrs F. Skewes
 Mrs G. Barnes
 Mrs M. Geyer

2007 M. Torpy
2008 G. Palmer
2009 S. Dawkins
2010 R. Orr
2011 N. Parry
2012 D. Foy
2013 K. Haase
2014 M. Loveless
2015 R. Beseler
2016 D. Robinson
2017 G. Cooper

Mrs J. Wiltshire
 Mrs G. Skinner
 Mrs G. Skinner
 M/S R. Cator
 M/S R. Cator
 Joan Miller
 Joan Miller
 Sheryn Mitchell
 Joan Bradbury
 Judi Guest
 Donna Robinson

HOLES in ONE - MEN

88 holes in one have achieved by men and 23 by women on the new course. Unfortunately all records of holes in one on the old course have been lost.

<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
3 rd hole	35	3 rd hole	9
11 th "	30	11 th "	5
16 th "	22	16 th "	9

One hole in one was made on the 9th hole when played as a par three during construction of the new dam. Eight men and three women have holed out twice. One player, Dan Coutts, has holed out three times.

G. Clifford	11 th	N. Compston	3 rd
L. Dinan	11 th	R. Sculley	11 th
D. Luksch	11 th	F. Williams	11 th
R. Britnell	16 th	H. Tonkin	11 th
N. Perry	16 th	R. Wallace	16 th
G. Fiusco	3 rd	P. Dean	11 th

FROM SMALL ACORNS / LIFE MEMBERS AND HONOR BOARDS

R. Pretty	11 th
L. Fimmel	16 th
L. Fimmel	3 rd
R. Britnell	3 rd
B. Maher	11 th
G. O'Keefe	3 rd
M. Allen	11 th
K. Burge	16 th
J. Watson	3 rd
J. Fraser	16 th
P. Coffield	11 th
A. Gladman	11 th
M. Jones	16 th
P. Coffield	11 th
O. Bowd	9 th
I. Vincent	16 th
L. Page	11 th
K. Sedgley	3 rd
G. Wellard	3 rd
P. Cole	3 rd
B. Matthews	3 rd
D. Coutts	11 th
D. King	16 th
M. White	11 th
J. Kennedy	11 th
D. Jenkin	16 th
J. Parry	11 th
W. Fishwick	3 rd
P. Bond	3 rd
J. Cody	11 th
K. Sharp	3 rd
M. Lenkic	11 th
W. Grainger	11 th
R. Jenkins	16 th

J. Parry	16 th
R. Winnell	3 rd
R. Hogan	3 rd
G. Williams	16 th
T. Britt	11 th
P. Hayward	3 rd
R. Wiltshire	3 rd
C. McCahon	11 th
B. Antonio	3 rd
W. Wilkie	3 rd
B. Antonio	3 rd
A. Nykoluk	11 th
P. Rogers	3 rd
D. Coutts	16 th
K. O'Brien	11 th
G. Papworth	11 th
L. Hyatt	3 rd
B. Walker	3 rd
S. Taggart	16 th
P. Davidson	3 rd
A. Gibbs	11 th
D. Sparkman	3 rd
B. Taylor	16 th
G. Cooper	11 th
M. Woodman	11 th
H. Cuthbert	3 rd
K. Sharp	16 th
P. Rogers	16 th
G. Inglis	3 rd
G. Barnett	3 rd
R. Beseler	16 th
J. Boersma	16 th
G. Carter	3 rd
M. Roche	16 th

W. Koopmans	3 rd
J. McGuiness	3 rd
D. Coutts	16 th
N. Quinlan	11 th

P. Murnane	3 rd
T. Britt	3 rd
A. Masters	3 rd
A. Brennan	3 rd

HOLES IN ONE - WOMEN

Mrs G. Dinan	1977	11 th
Mrs L. Britton	1978	16 th
Mrs W. Kirby	1979	16 th
Mrs K. Agnew	1980	3 rd
Miss W. McKay	1981	3 rd
Mrs L. Jones	1984	16 th
Mrs M. McLean	1984	3 rd
Mrs V. Wiltshire	1995	16 th
Mrs G. Fenwick	1996	3 rd
Mrs J. Dillon	1998	16 th
Mrs M. McLean	1999	11 th
Mrs E. Montgomery	2001	16 th
Mrs B. Beseler	2002	11 th
Mrs E. Kirby	2003	16 th
Mrs M. Ratcliffe	2005	3 rd
Mrs J. Vincent	2006	11 th
Mrs F. Skewes	2007	3 rd
Mrs R. Powell	2008	16 th
Mrs J. Wilson	2009	16 th
Mrs J. Dillon	2011	11 th
Mrs D. Philp	2012	3 rd
Mrs R. Nicholls	2013	3 rd
Mrs D. Moore	2014	3 rd

WORTHY OF NOTE

Midlands Lady Presidents of BDLGA

1966-67	Ev. Blomeley (BDLGA life member)
1990-91	Marie Jones
1997-98	Aileen Evers
2000-02	Gai Skinner (BDGLA life member)
2005-07	" "

CHARITABLE EFFORTS

Throughout almost all of its history the club has made a major contribution to charity and worthwhile causes. As documented earlier in this history, the time of World War 2 was one of distress as many members were involved in the action, while those at home had relatives and friends enlisted in the war effort. In these circumstances their thoughts would have been continually dominated by their absence and those willing to raise funds were well supported. Following the end of the war the club decided to hold on Anzac Day each year an event where all proceeds from the day would be donated to the Distressed Diggers Fund. It rapidly grew into one of the most important and best patronised days on the golfing calendar. Funds were raised through the match entries, spinning wheels and raffles.

In December 1960 *The Courier* reported on charitable event staged by the club - It was a red letter day for 161 children from the Ballarat Orphanage yesterday. They took part in the fourth annual

Christmas treat at the Midlands Golf Club - one of the highlights of the year for the children. The children travelled to the golf club in three buses, and had a police motor cycle escort. Three pine trees in the grounds had been decorated for the occasion and the children received ice-cream, sweets and drinks. Toys were handed out by Father and Mary Christmas. Then there were rides on the fire engine and on the mini bus provided by Villiers.

Mr Herb Rinaldi of Warrenheip treated the children to pony rides, and local police to rides in the motor cycle outfits. A barbeque tea was provided. The party was organised by Mr J Elston, together with the president of the golf club Mr J Weir, the committee and members. The associates under Mrs N McGregor had charge of the catering. The president of the orphanage board of management Dr C E Richardson thanked the club for providing the treat. "It is one of the most practical and enjoyable things that I have seen and is something that the children really appreciate." For his tireless work John Elston became an Honorary Life Governor of the orphanage.

To list all charities assisted by the club would be impracticable as not all have been documented. Donations have been made from the earliest days of the club. In 1928, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, the Chairman of the War Memorial of Victoria, appealed for contributions for the Shrine of Remembrance. The club responded generously. A few of the other organisations that have been supported are many and varied and include - Sporting Globe 3DB Appeal - Vic Society for Crippled Children - YMCA Blue Orca Appeal - Hospice -

Anti Cancer Council - Ewing House - Mary Helen Auxiliary - Midlands Pre School - Red Cross - Ex Prisoners of War Memorial - Fiona Elsey Cancer Appeal - Motor Neuron Appeal.

Charities have been aided by proceeds from "The Tin". On Saturday nights, before the trophy presentation, it is produced and filled with fines for any " misdemeanours" including tee shots that did not pass the ladies markers, two shots in a bunker, four putts, balls in the water, out of bounds etc. This entertaining segment was performed by Noel McMahon until his departure from Ballarat, and then continued by Denis "Moose" Ludbrook and is an important part of the custom of the club.

The majority of golf clubs today rely heavily on the generosity of sponsors. Sponsorship comes in many forms, from providing birdie balls, nearest to the pin trophies, pennant shirts, advertising on score cards and tee markers and trophies for the annual tournament. General donations by members, whether in cash or interest free loans, use of equipment, gifts of trees and shrubs have all been important to the advancement of the club.

CHAPTER 15

BOWLS

The decision to construct a bowling green meant an additional and welcome facility was provided for all members to enjoy. To bring this aspiration to fruition has required many thousands of hours of volunteer work. It is timely and fitting that the Golden Jubilee of the Midlands Golf Bowls Club should coincide with the centenary of the golf club. The bowling club began with a good "parent" having land available on which to build a green, an excellent clubhouse and a ready supply of members. However, in less than twenty years, three greens, with all the associated works would have to be constructed. Members are aware of the extraordinary effort that this entails. Demands on time attending meetings, production of plans, raising of finance, building of shelters, beautification of surrounds.

The long established Ballarat District Bowling Association was founded in 1883, and after a number of name changes became the Ballarat Regional Bowls Association in 1970. In 1948 the Ballarat and District Ladies Bowling Association was formed at a meeting at the Ballarat North Bowling Club. The formation of a bowling club had been in the minds of a number of members for many years, possibly being encouraged by an article in *The Courier* in November of 1955.

The report stated that "a move is being made by the Ballarat Bowling Association to interest the main Ballarat golf clubs in laying down greens for the benefit

of members, and to assist in solving the need for additional bowling facilities in this centre. At the recent meeting of the association, discussions centred around the need for extra greens in Ballarat. The cost of creating new clubs is almost prohibitive, but it was pointed out that golf clubs had everything necessary to include bowling for its members during the summer, including pavilions, grounds, greenkeepers, amenities and members. The scheme would commend itself to golf committees as it would keep members in close contact with the club during the summer months.

One objection advanced by a delegate was that many members of present clubs were members of golf clubs and might play with the new clubs if they were formed. The secretary answered by stating that this was exactly what it hoped would happen, as it would leave gaps in the existing clubs for new members. In many instances present clubs have had to refuse members. The question is a big one, but one with considerable merit. The association agreed to contact the golf clubs to ascertain their opinions and to further discuss the matter at the next meeting."

At the annual meeting of March 1958 the golf club committee was asked if the club intended putting in a bowling green, but it advised that they were only talking about it at this stage and it was not being seriously considered. It took a further eight years



First players for Midlands Golf Bowling Club 1969-70. Back row: Bob Price, Keg Dunbar, Alex Foyster, Ross Jones, Centre row: Jim Gordon Secretary, Golf and Bowls, George Dinan, Keith Dodgshun, Alan McIver, Bill Atkinson, (Golf President) Front Row: Chris Miller, Harry Forrest, Bill Prowse, (Bowls President), Jack Barrett, Clarrie Kenyon. Absent, Neil Palmer

before a group of willing members decided to pursue the issue further, and in a period when the golf club was thriving, were able to convince the committee of the benefits that such a move would have. Construction of a green began in 1966-67 at the old golf course in Norman Street but was not used until December 1968 due to abnormally dry conditions.

At the annual meeting of the golf club in April 1969, the president said that negotiations had been opened with the RVBA and BRBA so that the bowling section of the club could join these two bodies. "This will require a special meeting of our club to alter its present constitution and bring it into line with the requirements of the RVBA and BRBA," he said. This meeting should also discuss whether teams should be entered for pennant, he added.

In 1969 a memo was circulated - *Green Bowls Meeting* - all members and associates interested in the formation of a sub section of the club to control the formation and running of green bowls for the season of green bowls which will commence in October are invited to a meeting to be held in the clubhouse Monday July 28, 1969 at 7.30pm. Those elected at the meeting were President: Bill Prowse, Secretary; Jim Gordon, Committee: George Dinan, Jack Barrett, Keg Dunbar, Chris Miller, Alan McIver, Clarrie Kenyon and Max Morvell. Correspondence was received from the RVBA advising of acceptance of affiliation for season 1969-70. In his opening address the bowling club president stated that there was much to be done to the green, ditches and surrounds before inspection and use by September 18, 1969. A team of eight players was entered in the "C" Section of pennant and hat bands carrying the name "Midlands Golf Bowling Club" were purchased.

Despite the cold, wet weather a large number of representatives of sister clubs attended the opening of the green for the 1969-70 season at the Midlands Ladies Bowling Club on 9 November 1969. Mrs M.

McGregor, the president, said that "it was a special day for the club as it was its first official opening. Midlands has a long history as a golf club, but this is the first year that it has been a combined golf and bowling club, she said". The green was officially opened for the season by the Mayoress.

The men's bowling club made an outstanding entry into the pennant competition when they won the flags in their first two years. In the 1969-70 competition the club which had entered a team in the C1 Division won by six shots, defeating Creswick. The team was George Dinan, Keg Dunbar, Chris Miller, Ross Jones, Keith Dodgshun, Alex Foyster, Alan McIver and Bill Prowse. In the following year, after being promoted to Division B4, the club was again successful. It was a remarkable achievement as fewer than half a dozen had played bowls before they competed in C grade 1969-70 and for several 1970-71 was their first season.

Considerable effort was made improving the greens and surrounds aided by a most generous donation from Jack Westwood. A number of members donated seats. A working bee was held on many Sunday mornings and the greenkeeper, Sam Stephens, had developed the green condition to a stage where the association used the greens for a semi-final in 1971-72. The team which had been elevated to Division B3 headed the list after the minor rounds before losing the semi-final to the eventual premier Ballarat East. Much work was done in early years by George Dinan, Neil Palmer and Keith Dodgshun. The first annual meeting of the Midlands Golf Ladies Bowling Club was held 27/4/70 and was chaired by the president Mrs McGregor. The trophy for the ladies



*1st Ladies Pennant Team
Dulcie Haymes, Vera Allan, Mavis Jeffs, Alwyn Quick*

club championship is named the Betty Morvell Perpetual Trophy due to her involvement as vice-president and president of ladies bowling as well as being president of the BDLBA.

After all the success in pennant and all the work put into the development of the green the bowling club was advised that they could be having their last season on the present green in 1975/76. At a meeting with the golf club in July 1974 the bowling club was presented with two options. They could release themselves from the golf club and lease the present bowling green and clubhouse at a small yearly rental or remain with the golf club who would lay down a new ten rink green at



The first bowling green in one of the most attractive locations in Ballarat

the new clubhouse surrounds. If this was the case it would be expected that the bowling club would accept responsibility for production of plans and specifications for the new green.

The Courier reported that the golf club president Mr Ian Farren, said that "the golf club hoped to begin work on a new clubhouse on its recently completed course as soon as plans were adopted and a bowling green would be sold as part of the clubhouse sale. The committee would be coming to the bowling section for help and advice in planning and laying out the green".

The bowling club president, Mr Col Rowe, said "Mr Farren and his committee had been generous in their support of the bowling club. Their offer to provide a new green showed that they recognised the bowling section as an integral part of the club. Golf members should keep in mind that the bowling green was an amenity for all members, although bowlers paid an additional fee as a means towards self support, they would like to have golfers playing in club events".

At the executive meeting of the bowling club in July of 1975, it was moved that they write to the golf club asking for a piece of ground 63 metres x 45 metres to be used in construction of the new ten rink green. A reply was received requesting the bowling club to proceed with plans and to obtain prices. Advertisements were placed in local and Melbourne papers and the Weekly Times along with letters to all known builders of bowling greens in Victoria. No answer was received from the newspaper advertising, two letters were returned unopened from builders no longer in business, and two only mildly interested. A further complication arose due to the marking out for the new clubhouse taking longer than expected.

The club was informed that the old bowling green would be maintained by the golf club for the 1976-77 season and over winter in 1977 in case of emergency. The old clubhouse was to be vacated by October 1976 but some tables were left for bowlers to use for the remainder of the season. By 1976 the lady bowlers had spent \$15,000 in the previous three years on improvements to the club. Their first flag came in 1977 when they won the A4 premiership.



Bowling club committee inspecting the proposed site for the bowling green at the new golf course

Members of the new course development committee and executives of the bowling club met in December 1976, and after discussion, it was agreed that a regulation eight rink green would be built by the golf club ground staff under the supervision of the secretary manager. Construction was planned for early in the following year assuring that the new green would be available for use in the 1977-78 season. In February 1978 however it was deemed that the surface was not suitable and a decision was made that it should be



*Photo above before function room added to the clubhouse
Photos left and above taken from approximately the same position*

poisoned, gassed, top dressed, levelled and re-sown, necessitating considerable work for all concerned. The green was officially opened by the shire president Cr J V Toohey on Sunday 17th September 1978.

The tenth annual meeting of the bowling club in June 1979 was told by the retiring president Mr Keith Dodgshun that the opening of the new green had been the highlight of the season. A considerable financial contribution had been made by the associates and

voluntary work by members had assured that the green and surrounds were in excellent order for the opening day.

Mr Dodgshun congratulated the A3 pennant team for winning the premiership in that division and the B2 team for reaching the semi-finals. He said that the club had achieved promotion from C division to the A2 division of the BRBA in the 10 years since it was formed.

In July 1978, it was advised that it was the wish of the golf club, that the Jack Westwood memorial plaque from the old green be placed on one of the new shelters in a prominent place. Also in this year the RVBA approved in principle the wearing of white shorts for pennant. By this time the club had won six pennant flags in various divisions and the mood was positive, emphasized by an anonymous donation of \$500 to be used towards the installation of a watering system. In 1981, discussions began with the golf club committee seeking approval to proceed with a four rink extension to the west of the existing green, with all construction costs to be borne by the bowling club.

The reply however regarding the position of the proposed extension was negative due to - the area being set aside for a clubhouse extension - being too close to the existing clubhouse - too close to the 18th green - water mains requiring relocation - removal of trees and loss of shade. The suggestion was made that the bowling club pursue the option of constructing an eight rink green to the east of the present one. This was adopted. A development committee comprising six



Construction of the new green in progress

members was formed, the purposes and function of which were to arrange for the construction of the green, to appoint suitable contractors to carry out the various stages of the work and supervise the entire operation, with the benefit of advice from suitably qualified experts to produce a first class bowling green for the benefit of the club.

When construction was well advanced, attention turned to selecting the best grass for the green. A number of clubs were visited and recommendations were sought from clubs near and far. Donald Bowling Club had sown Tiftdwarf, Beaufort, Ballarat City and

Maryborough used Wagga couch, and Wendouree and Queenscliff, Santa Ana. The curator, Tom Sculley, addressed a meeting regarding the various grasses and outlined problems associated with them. In this season three clubs in Ballarat were sowing couch greens making a total of four in the association, all of different species. His suggestion was that it would be best to sow a bent and in time see which couch adapts itself best to local conditions. By February 1985, the Green Development Fund, through Thursday night meals, donations from the Ladies Bowling Club, the Men's Bowling Club, various special efforts and bank interest had raised \$31,998 of which \$28,570 was spent on the construction of the new green.

At the official opening of the green the guests included Tom Evans MLA and Cr C V Toohey the Shire President. They were told that club members had contributed both physically and financially. Mr Dick Powell on behalf of the BRBA "congratulated Midlands on introducing another green to the association. He commented on the 'village green' appearance of adjacent trees and lawns which gave a peaceful atmosphere not found at many bowling clubs."

At this time the issue of badges on shirt pockets was voted out by the RVBA. It took until a meeting in February 2002 that pocket emblems were sent to all members with a request that they place on the pocket of the bowls shirt that they wear to pennant. The subject of a coloured uniform was first discussed at this meeting, but was left in abeyance for a number of years. In August 2005, with sponsorship obtained, it was moved that the club proceed with coloured shirts.

In 2002 with concern relating to the condition of the greens, an inquiry was made regarding the possibility of installing a synthetic green, but on receipt of estimates no further action was taken.

Other matters requiring the attention of the committee early in the decade were the permitting of lady bowlers to play in men's pennant teams, the heat rule and the possible amalgamation of Ballarat North Bowling Club and or SMBC with Midlands. The amalgamation issue did not proceed. In an endeavour to increase participation and club membership, initiatives such as "Get on the Green" and "Barefoot Bowls" were introduced.

In September 2015, the club was greatly encouraged by a statement that funding would be provided by the City Council to various clubs in the district. *The Courier* of the day reported that "Ballarat's biggest boost to lawn bowls is clear to roll out. Ballarat City Council unanimously approved an infrastructure and club support plan to strengthen and grow the sport in the next five years.

The move comes amid a predicted 50 per cent increase in Ballarat-based retirees within the decade and City of Ballarat research has determined lawn bowls is one of the most popular organised sports for the over-50s". Midlands Golf Bowls Club men's division secretary Daryl Traynor endorsed the council plan as "the biggest thing for bowls ever in Ballarat." Mr Traynor, who attended the council meeting with president Geoff Jenkins and Eddie Harwood, said "all supporting documents made it plain to see this was not

FROM SMALL ACORNS / BOWLS

a one-off council program. It is an investment in community facilities, it is an investment in community participation and it is an investment in community well-being. This is a really exiting move by council."

Council worked closely with 14 clubs within its boundaries, the BRBA, Bowls Victoria and Bowls Australia in drafting its proposal. Funding will be dispersed across the five years. Midlands plans to inject money into its facility development, including plans for new shelters, club house upgrades and facilities to offer bowls for people with disabilities. Mr Traynor said "this council plan would, most importantly, ensure his club's long-term viability so that it continues to offer sport for all ages, abilities and backgrounds." Currently more than 2100 members play on Ballarat greens. Since making the announcement the council has experienced some problems with the scheme and the plan has been put on hold.

MEN'S PRESIDENTS

1969/70 W. Prowse
1970/71 W. Prowse
1971/72 G. Dinan
1972/73 G. Dinan
1973/74 M. Morvell
1974/75 J. C. Rowe
1975/76 J. C. Rowe
1976/77 W. McGowan
1977/78 W. McGowan
1978/79 K. Dodgshun
1979/80 N. Palmer
1980/81 H. Tyson

CHAMPIONS

K. Dodgshun
 C. Donaldson
 R. Thurling
 K. Flynn
 W. McGowan
 W. McGowan
 R. Campbell
 H. Tyson
 W. Pike
 W. McGowan
 R. Rimmington
 F. Balmain

1981/82 F. Balmain
1982/83 F. Vendy
1983/84 R. Thurling
1984/85 R. Thurling
1985/86 R. Crosthwaite
1986/87 R. Crosthwaite
1987/88 R. Newnham
1988/89 R. Newnham
1989/90 R. Johns
1990/91 R. Button
1991/92 R. Button
1992/93 G. Roach
1993/94 K. Dixon
1994/95 K. Dixon
1995/96 G. Roach
1996/97 W. McGowan
1997/98 N. Doyle
1998/99 N. Doyle
1999/00 L. Denning
2000/01 L. Denning
2001/02 R. Warren
2002/03 R. Warren
2003/04 L. Vincent
2004/05 L. Vincent
2005/06 B. Phelan
2006/07 B. Phelan
2007/08 R. Bissett
2008/09 R. Bissett
2009/10 A. Dennis
2010/11 A. Dennis
2010/11 P. Considine
2011/12 R. Lock
2012/13 R. Lock
2013/14 D. Speechley

R. Thurling
 G. Pike
 W. McGowan
 F. Balmain
 R. Rimmington
 R. Rimmington
 G. Pike
 R. Button
 G. Pike
 C. Johnson
 C. Johnson
 V. Ryan
 V. Ryan
 R. Newnham
 R. O'Dell
 R. Newnham
 L. Vincent
 R. Newnham
 L. Vincent
 R. Newnham
 J. Ross
 N. Doyle
 R. Newnham
 L. Vincent
 J. Ross
 G. Roach
 L. Vincent
 R. Lock
 D. Speechley
 L. Vincent
 "
 D. Speechley
 D. Denham
 D. Speechley

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2014/15 D. Speechley
2015/16 G. Jenkins
2016/17 G. Jenkins
2017/18 R. Slee

LADIES PRESIDENTS

1969/70 Mrs N. McGregor
1970/71 Mrs N. McGregor
1971/72 Mrs M. Morvell
1972/73 Mrs M. Morvell
1973/74 Mrs M. Cox
1974/75 Mrs M. Cox
1975/76 Mrs G. Dinan
1976/77 Mrs G. Dinan
1977/78 Mrs J. Elston
1978/79 Mrs J. Elston
1979/80 Mrs H. Robertson
1980/81 Mrs H. Robertson
1981/82 Mrs H. Robertson
1982/83 Mrs M. Cox
1983/84 Mrs I. Foster
1884/85 Mrs I. Foster
1985/86 Mrs N. Palmer
1986/87 Mrs N. Palmer
1987/88 Mrs N. Palmer
1988/89 Mrs G. Pike
1989/90 Mrs G. Pike
1990/91 Mrs V. Page
1991/92 Mrs V Page
1992/93 Mrs V Page
1993/94 Mrs W. Prowse
1994/95 Mrs W.Prowse
1995/96 Mrs R. Newnham

D. Speechley
P. Considine
R. Lock
B. Croft

CHAMPIONS

Mrs A. Blomeley
Mrs J. Barrett
Mrs G. Dinan
Mrs G. Dinan
Mrs G. Dinan
Mrs J. Barrett
Mrs J. Barrett
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs M. Cox
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs G. Dinan
Mrs J. Elston
G. Rimmington
Mrs R. Lockett
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs J. Elston
R. Crosthwaite
Mrs G. Pike
Mrs W. Prowse
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs R. Roberts
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs R. Roberts
Mrs J. Elston
Mrs P. Pike
Mrs J. Elston

1996/97 Mrs R. Newnham
1997/98 Mrs W. McGowan
1998/99 Mrs W. McGowan
1999/00 Mrs M.Foy
2000/01 Mrs M. Foy
2001/02 Mrs T. Sandlant
2002/03 Mrs T. Sandlant
2003/04 Mrs A. Slee
2004/05 Mrs A. Slee
2005/06 Mrs L. Redpath
2006/07 Mrs L. Redpath
2007/08 Mrs M. Roach
2008/09 Mrs M. Roach
2009/10 Aileen Evers
2010/11 Aileen Evers
2011/12 Sandra Grano
2012/13 Maureen Roach
2013/14 Jan Vincent
2014/15 Jan Vincent
2015/16 Marion Green
2016/17 Marion Green
2017/18 Marion Green
2018/19 Judy Winnell

MEN'S SECRETARIES

1969/70 J. Gordon
1970/71 J. Gordon
1971/72 W. Prowse
1972/73 W. Prowse
1973/74 F. Findlay
1974/75 F. Findlay
1975/76 F. Findlay
1976/77 F. Findlay

Mrs P. Pike
Mrs B. Bennett
Mrs V. Hulcome
Mrs V. Page
Mrs P. Pike
Mrs V. Hulcome
Mrs A. Slee
Mrs J. Fradd
Miss B. Nickeas
Mrs D. Robinson
Mrs J. Vincent
Mrs M. Phelan
Mrs D. Denning
Jan Vincent
Sandra Grano
Jan Vincent
Sandra Grano
Sandra Grano
Maree Phelan
Dorothy Newey
Sandra Grano
Jan Vincent

LADIES SECRETARIES

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1977/78	F. Findlay	
1978/79	F. Findlay	
1979/80	F. Findlay	
1980/81	F. Findlay	
1981/82	J. Ford	
1982/83	J. Ford	
1983/84	J. Ford	
1984/85	W. McGowan	
1985/86	W. McGowan	Elsie Robertson
1986/87	W. McGowan	Barbara Rock
1987/88	B. Gallagher	Barbara Rock
1988/89	B. Gallagher	Barbara Rock
1989/90	R. Jones	Ann Newnham
1990/91	R. Bice	Val Trezise
1991/92	V. Ryan	Val Trezise
1992/93	B. Gallagher	Pam Pike
1993/94	B. Gallagher	Pam Pike
1994/95	B. Gallagher	Pam Pike
1995/96	B. Gallagher	Pam Pike
1996/97	B. Gallagher	Pam Pike
1997/98	B. Gallagher	Pam Pike
1998/99	B. Gallagher	Elsie Robertson
1999/00	B. Gallagher	Elsie Robertson
2000/01	B. Gallagher	Elsie Robertson
2001/02	B. Gallagher	Margaret Etheridge
2002/03	B. Gallagher	Margaret Etheridge
2003/04	B. Gallagher	Maureen Roach
2004/05	B. Gallagher	Maureen Roach
2005/06	B. Gallagher	Maureen Roach
2006/07	B. Gallagher	Maree Phelan
2007/08	B. Gallagher	Maree Phelan
2008/09	B. Gallagher	Lorraine Redpath
2009/10	B. Gallagher	Jan Vincent
2010/11	B. Gallagher	Marg Doyle

2010/11	R. Bissett	Marg Doyle
2011/12	R. Bissett	Judy Winnell
2012/13	D. Traynor	Joan Adams
2013/14	D. Traynor	Lorraine Mason
2014/15	D. Traynor	Joan Adams
2016/17	D. Traynor	Marg Doyle
2017/18	D. Traynor	Marg Doyle
2018/19	D. Traynor	Marg Doyle

Beryl King completed 15 consecutive years as treasurer.

Midlands Golf Bowls Club Pennants and Players

1969/70	C Div defeated Creswick 55 to 49 G. Dinan, K. Dodgshun, A. Foyster, R. Jones, A. McIver, C. Miller, N. Palmer, W. Prowse.
1970/71	B4 Div defeated L. Wend 93 to 83 J. Barrett, G. Dinan, K. Dodgshun, E. Dunbar, C. Donaldson, J. Elston, H. Forrest, W. Neil, A. Foyster, R. Jones, A. McIver, C. Miller, M. Morvell, W. Prowse, C. Rowe, R. Thurling. C2 Div finished 8 th
1971/72	B3 No Premiership Flag. Finished top of ladder and promoted to B2 C1 Div finished 7 th B3 Div lost Semi Final to E Ball 90 to 101
1972/73	B2 Div defeated Victoria 110 to 80 J. Barrett, G. Dinan, K. Dodgshun, R. Thurling, C. Donaldson, J. Elston, K. Flynn, A. Foyster, R. Jones, A. McIver, W. McGowan, C. Miller, M. Morvell, W. Neil, W. Prowse, H. Tyson, B4 Div lost Semi Final to Victoria 49 to 141

1973/74 A4 Div defeated City Oval 98 to 79

J.Barrett, G.Dinan, K.Dodgshun, J.Elston,
J. Ford, A.Foyster, R.Jones, W.McGowan,
A.McIver, M.Morvell, W.Neil, N.Palmer,
W.Prowse, F.Rout, R.Thurling, H.Tyson.

B3 Div finished 8th

R.Jones, W.McGowan, A.McIver, M.Morvell,
N.Palmer, G.Pike, W.Prowse, R.Thurling,
R.Rimmington, J.Ross, P.Sheahan,
H.Tyson.

B2 Div lost Semi Final to East Ball 71 to 121
C Div finished 6th

1974/75 A3 Div lost Semi Final to Mt Xavier 74 to 101

B3 Div finished 6th
C Div finished 6th

1979/80

A2 Div finished 9th
B1 Div finished 10th
C Div finished 8th

1975/76 A3 Div finished 5th
B3 Div lost Semi Final to Mt Xavier 77 to 105
C Div finished 9th

1980/81

A2 Div finished 9th
B2 Div lost Semi Final to SMBC 90 to 101
C Div finished 12th

1976/77 A3 Div lost Semi Final to Webb 100 to 105
B3 Div lost Grand Final to Learm 84 to 119
C Div finished 10th

1981/82

Div 2 lost Semi Final to City 85 to 111
B2 Div finished 7th
C Div finished 5th

1977/78 B3 Div defeated Victoria 114 to 81

A.Armstrong, W.Atkinson, G.Cates,
R.Dickson, K.Dodgshun, K.Dunbar,
J.Elston, F.Findlay, J.Hamilton,
A.Matherson, C.Miller, G.Pike,
G.Rimmington, C.Stevenson, F.Vendy.

A3 Div finished 6th
C Div finished 10th

1982/83

Div 6 defeated Learmonth 99 to 75

G.Cates, G.Dinan, K.Dodgshun, J.Ford,
A.Foyster, J.Fraser, R.Goodfellow, H.Jones,
A.McIver, N.Palmer, N.Parrot, W.Prowse,
G.Richards, G.Rimmington, P.Sheehan,
F.Vendy

Div 2 lost Semi Final to Victoria 71 to 104
Div 9 finished 5th

1978/79 A3 Div defeated Clunes 117 to 71
F.Balmain, R.Campbell, G.Dinan, A.Foyster,

W.McGowan elected President of BRBA

1983/84 Div 5 defeated Buninyong 118 to 83

R. Batty, G.Cates, G.Dinan, K.Dodgshun,
J.Douglas, J.Elston, A.Foyster, H.Jones,
R.Jones, A.McIver, L.Ottini, N.Palmer,
W.Prowse, J.Ross, P.Sheehan, J.Smith.

Div 2 finished 6th

Div 9 defeated City Oval 90 to 89

J.Copeman, B.Gallagher, W.Love,
A.Matherson, R.Newham, R.Page N.Parrott
D.Paull, R.Quick, G.Rimmington, C.Rowe,
N.Sedgley, T.Smith, C.Stevenson,
L.Valpied, F.Vendy.

1984/85 Div 2 lost Grand Final to Beaufort 88 to 93
Div 4 lost Grand Final to Lake Wend. 69 to 106
Div 8 finished 7th

1985/86 Div 8 defeated Waubra 101 to 96

R.Bice, J.Copeman, W.Durand, B.Gallagher,
M.Johnson, H.Jones, M.Jones, W.Lemin,
W.Love, R.Newnham, R.Page, R.Roberts,
T.Smith, C.Stevenson, A.Stott, F.Vendy.

Div 2 lost Semi Final to Sebas 79 to 99
Div 4 finished 7th
Div 10 finished 7th

1986/87 Div 7 defeated Central 97 to 70

G. Etheridge, J.Ford, B.Gallagher, H.Jones,
M.Jones, W.Love, R.Newnham, R.Page,
N.Palmer, D.Paull, G.Rimmington, A.Stott
B.Sargent, T.Smith, C.Stevenson, F.Vendy.

Div 2 lost Grand Final to Avenue 93 to 101
Div 4 lost Semi Final to City 80 to 99
Div 9 finished 7th

1987/88 Div 2 defeated Mt Xavier 105 to 74

G Etheridge, J Ford, B.Gallagher, H.Jones,
M.Jones, W Love, R.Newnham, R.Page,
N.Palmer, D.Paull G.Rimmington, A.Stott
B.Sargent T.Smith, C.Stevenson, F.Vendy.

Div 4 finished 6th
Div 6 finished 8th
Div finished 8th

1988/89

Div 1 finished 8th
Div 4 finished 6th
Div 6 finished 5th
Div 9 finished 5th
Div 10 finished 6th

Harry Tyson, Greg Brown, Max Morvell,
Robert Button won the BRBA Champion
Fours.

1989/90

Div 1 lost Grand Final to Webb 65 to 102
Div 4 lost Grand Final to L Wend. 79 to 92
Div 6 lost Grand Final to E Ball 86 to 90
Div 9 lost Grand Final to Bun 92 to 99

1990/91 Div 1 defeated Webbcona 86 to 80

R.Bice, R.Button, W.Durand, G.Fithall,
C.Johnston, P.McGregor, J.Nunn, G.Pike,
R.Rimmington, G.Roach, T.Rouhan, V.Ryan,
T.Sculley, R.Thurling, F.Towning, H.Tyson.

Div 4 defeated Webbcona 113 to 88

F.Balmain, R.Batty, G.Dinan, K.Dixon,
J.Elston, R.Johns, M.Johnston, R.Jones,
W.McGowan, R.Newnham, P.Nunn, R.Quick
J.Ross, J.Symons, H.Wignall, N.Doyle

Div 9 defeated Daylesford 100 to 95

G.J.Barnett, D.DiCesare, J.Hartnell, W.Hyde,
M.Henderson, L.Jackson, R.King, R.Lock,
K.Pear, B.Phelan, K.Richards, A.Stott,
T.Tarranto, H.Tonkin, D.Toulmin, F.Vendy.

Div 6 lost Grand Final to Ballarat 82 to 115
Div 10 finished 8th

1991/92

Div 1 lost Prelim Final to Creswick 88 to 94
Div 3 lost Grand Fin. to Dayles 63 to 106
Div 6 finished 5th
Div 8 lost Grand Final to Ballarat 68 to 100
Div 9 finished 7th

Graeme Fithall elected Chairman of BRBA
Match Committee

Col Johnson won the Champion of
Champions and was runner-up in Vic
Country Final

George Dinan was runner-up in BRBA Vet.
Singles

1992/93

Div 6 defeated Sebas. 103 to 91

C.Bainbridge, J.Copeman, G.Dinan,
K.Dixon, K.Dodgshun, J.Elston,

B.Gallagher, R.Jones, R.Lock, W.Neil,
R.Newnham, R.Page, J.Sawyer, T.Toulmin,
P.Valentine, R.Warren.

Div 1 finished 5th

Div 3 finished 5th

Div 8 lost G. Final to Learmonth 89 to 109

Div 9 finished 7th

Bill McGowan won BRBA Vet Singles
Vin Ryan, Rob Thurling, Robert Button, Col
Johnson won BRBA Champion Fours and
Group 4 Championship and were runners-
up in Vic. Country Championships.

1993/94

Div 1 lost Prelim Final to Cen-Wend 86 to 93
Div 3 lost Prelim Final to Smeaton 79 to 101
Div 7 lost Prelim Final Buninyong 87 to 106
Div 9 finished 9th

1994/95

Div 1 finished 5th
Div 3 finished 9th
Div 5 finished 9th
Div 7 finished 5th
Div 9 finished 9th

Bill McGowan was runner-up in BRBA Vet
Singles

1995/96

Div 1 finished 10th
Div 4 finished 8th
Div 5 finished 7th
Div 7 finished 8th

George Dinan won BRBA Vet Singles

FROM SMALL ACORNS / BOWLS

1996/97 Div 2 finished 10th
Div 4 finished 6th
Div 5 finished 10th
Div 7 finished 9th

1997/98 Div 3 defeated Sebastopol 107 to 80
L.Denning, N.Doyle, R.Lock, W.McGowan
R.Newnham, R.O'Dell, B.Phelan, G.Roach,
J.Ross, J.Sawyer, J.Symons, A.Tangey,
F.Townsing, H.Tyson, L.Vincent, R.Warren.

Div 4 finished 8th
Div 6 finished 8th
Div 7 finished 6th
Harry Tyson won BRBA Vet Singles

1998/99 Div 2 lost Prelim Final to Waubra 89 to 100
Div 4 finished 10th & relegated to Div 5
Div 6 lost Prelim Final to Sebastopol 86 to 103
Div 7 finished 7th
Bill McGowan won BRBA Vet Singles

1999/00 Div 2 defeated Beaufort 96 to 86
J.Ross, L.Denning, D.Draffin, N.Doyle,
N.Peoples, L.Vincent, J.Hackett, G.Roach,
R.Warren, B.Phelan, R.Newnham,
J.Symons, K.Hambly, N.Stevens, J.Sawyer
F.Townsing.

Div 5 lost Grand Final to Sebas 93 to 107
Div 6 lost Semi Final to Inverm 72 to 102
Div 7 were placed into Div 8 due to
shortage of players

2000/01 Div 5 defeated Cent.I Wend 115 to 85
G.Barnett, R.Bissett, O.Bowd, J.Brown,
K.Dixon, G.Etheridge, B.Gallagher, J.Ross,
B.Kennedy, R.Lock, W.McGowan, K.Peart,
J.Hackett, K.Sedgley, N.Stevens, B.Wilson

Div 1 finished 9th
Div 6 lost Semi Final to Ball City 90 to 93
Div 8 finished 6th

2001/02 Div 1 finished last and relegated to Div 2
Div 4 finished ?
Div 6 lost Grand Final to Ballan 83 to 92
Div 8 lost Grand Final to Dayles 69 to 74

2002/03 Div 2 lost 1st Semi Final to Waub 89 to 123
Div 4 lost 1st Semi Final to Webb 92 to 97
Div 6 finished 6th
Div 8 lost Grand Final to Victoria 55 to 83

2003/04 Div 2 finished 7th
Div 4 finished 5th
Div 6 lost Prelim Final to Victoria 76 to 130
Div 8 finished 6th

2004/05 Div 2 finished last and relegated to Div 3
Div 4 lost Prelim Final to Victoria 66 to 108
Div 5 finished last and relegated to Div 6
Div 8 finished 3rd (top two teams in each
div played off)

2005/06 Div 2 lost Grand Final to Sebasl 95 to 105
Div 4 finished 8th
Div 6 finished 9th
Div 8 finished 4th in Section 1

2006/07 Div 3 lost Prelim Final to Webb 72 to 108
Div 4 finished 5th
Div 6 finished 6th
Div 8 finished 6th

2007/08 Div 3 defeated Beaufort Golf 109 to 76
G.Barnett, R.Bissett, S.Bromilow,
J.Brudenall, P.Considine, A.Dennis, G.Ellis,
R.Lock, G.McQueen, S.McQueen,
N.Peoples, G.Roach, R.Slee, D.Speechley,
N.Stevens, L.Vincent

Div 5 lost Prelim Final to Sebas 85 to 89
Div 6 finished 6th
Div 8 finished 7th in section B

2008/09 Div 2 lost Prelim Final to Bunin 75 to 98
Div 4 lost Prelim Final to Clunes 91 to 100
Div 6 finished 5th
Div 8 finished 6th

2009/10 Div 8 defeated Beaufort Golf 66 to 64
A. Duggan, D.Liversidge, K.Clayworth,
D.Foy W. McCubbin, T. Nagle, N.Newey,
J.Caird E. Arendshorst, T.Launer,
W.Humphries, D.Edwards.

Div 2 finished 2nd lost prelim Final to
Ballarat 94 to 90
Div 4 finished 6th
Div 6 finished 8th

2010/11 Div 2 finished 4th lost first Semi Final to
City 106 to 94
Div 4 finished 3rd lost Prelim Final to Linton
99 to 80
Div 6 finished 4th lost Prelim Final to
Sebastopol 102 to 76
Div 8 finished 3rd lost Prelim Final to Ballan
100 to 86

2011/12 Div 6 defeated Clunes 102 to 78
T.Grano, D.Lacy, B.Gallagher, D.McKenna,
S.Grano, W.Jenkins, A.Duggan, G.Smith,
J.Symons, J.Ross, G.Roach, R.Edwards,
P.Kelly, B.Kinnersley, B.Kennedy,
R.Newnham

Div 9 defeated Ballarat East 76 to 51
W.Humphrey, P.Bond, D.Curtis
B.Goldsmith, J.Caird, H.Peoples, A.Ilsley,
W.McCubbin, K.Simpson, I.Campbell,
T.Speechley, K.Papke.

Div 2 finished 5th
Div 4 finished 2nd lost Grand Final to
Clunes 83 to 104
Div 8 finished 4th lost Semi Final to Ballarat
North 88 to 92

2012/13 Div 8 defeated Linton 106 to 89
J.Caird, P.Niblett, B.Jenkins, D.Lacy,
N.Newey, P.Steenhuis, A.Peacock,
J.Franks, N.Donohue, B.Humphreys,
D.Curtis, B.Goldsmith, S. Wiltshire,
H.Peoples, A.Ilsley, K.Papke.

	Div 9 defeated Learmonth 67 to 52 W.Humphrey, T.Launer, R.Edwards, S.Croft, A. Carmichael, T. Smith, S.Grano, K.Simpson, W.McCubbin, I.Lock, T.Speechley, R.Hutchinson. Div 2 finished 3rd lost Prelim Final to Sebastopol 127 to 79 Div 4 finished 6th Div 5 finished 1st lost Grand Final to Smeaton 101 to 79
2013/14	Div 2 finished 3rd lost Prelim Final to City Oval 98 to 89 Div 4 finished 5th Div 5 finished 3rd lost Prelim Final to Avenue 108 to 65 Div 7 finished 1st lost Prelim Final to Buninyong 100 to 101 Div 8 finished 6th
2014/15	Div 2 defeated Victoria 110 to 80 P.Carlyle, B.Croft, P.Considine, R.Lock, B.Phelan, R.Bissett, D.Denham, D.Speechley, M.Phillipson, G.Jenkins, J.Croft, E.Kosloff, R.Hutchinson, S.McQueen, E.Harwood, N.Peoples. Div 4 finished 4th lost Grand Final to Buninyong 99 to 75 Div 5 finished 7th Div 7 finished 1st lost Prelim Final to Creswick 82 to 94 Div 8 finished 7th

2015/16	Div 1 finished 8th Div 4 finished 3rd lost Semi Final to Ballarat 91 to 95 Div 5 finished 7th Div 7 finished 2nd lost Prelim Final to Smeaton 83 to 96 Div 8 finished 9th
2016/17	Div 1 finished 9th Div 4 finished 6th Div 5 finished 7th Div 8 finished 10th
2017/18	Div 2 finished 6th Div 4 finished 5th Div 5 finished 10th Div 6 finished 8th

Ladies Pennant - Grand Final Results

1990	Division 4 won the Grand Final
1998	Division 6 won the Grand Final
2004	Division 4 won the Grand Final
2007	Division 3 won the Grand Final defeating Smeaton.
2008	Division 2 won the Grand Final defeating Victoria
2011	Division 4 lost the Grand Final to Beau.

- 2012** Division 2 and 4 won the Grand Final
- 2013** Division 3 were beaten in the Grand Final
- 2017** Division 4 won the Grand Final

Players of Long Service (As at 26/11/18)

<u>700 Games Plus</u>	<u>Games</u>	<u>1st Game</u>	<u>Last Game</u>
Ross Jim	733	03/10/74	
Gallagher Brian	703	27/09/75	
<u>600 Games Plus</u>			
Dinan George	651	04/10/69	23/01/08
Dodgshun Keith	620	04/10/69	27/10/07
Newnham Bob	608	07/11/81	
<u>500 Games Plus</u>			
Tyson Harry	588	09/10/71	10/11/07
Stevens Neil	559	14/10/86	
McGowan Bill	549	16/12/72	21/10/06
Smith Trevor	545	02/10/82	
Etheridge Gavan	524	12/10/85	
Roach Graham	518	11/10/86	
Rimmington George	512	07/11/74	03/03/07
Palmer Neil	508	04/10/69	30/10/04
McIver Alan	507	04/10/69	24/03/02

Along with pennant and the club championships other significant events are the Allan Bros. Golfers/Bowlers night, J B Cameron Fours (now the MGBC Invitation) and the Nan and Neil Palmer Fours.



Tuesday afternoon practice - top and bottom bowling greens in picture.

BIAS BOWLS

The Ballarat Indoor Bias Bowls Association was formed at a meeting held on May 2, 1957 with seven clubs being represented. Among the rules laid down were that pennant night would be a Tuesday, there would be eight men in a team, pennant games would be 16 ends and women should not be permitted to compete in Association events.

Midlands began in Division 3 bias bowls in 1958 and had the use of the Returned Services Club until a new mat was obtained. At a committee meeting in June 1958 the club decided to purchase a bias bowls mat and two sets of bowls. In January 1971, it was moved and carried that the running of the bias bowls be taken over by the bowling section. In the mid 1970s Midlands would enter the year with six teams comprising 48 players, the largest representation of any club in the competition.

INDOOR BIAS BOWLS CHAMPIONS

	<u>Ladies</u>	<u>Men</u>
1975	Mrs V. Allan	
1976	Mrs J. Negri	G. Pike
1977	Mrs E. Dinan	G. Barnett
1978	Mrs P. Whittaker	Doug Barnett
1979	Mrs I. Foster	D. Marshall
1980	Mrs M. Dickson	F. Balmain*
1981	Mrs E. Dinan	W. McGowan

1982	Mrs E. Lockett	J. Fraser
1983	Mrs F. Middleton	J. Fraser
1984	Mrs R. Rexton	J. Smith
1985	Mrs R. Rexton	R. Rimmington
1986	Mrs H. Tyson	J. Smith
1987	Mrs I. Foster	R. Rimmington
1988	Mrs F. Middleton	D. Speechley*
1989	Mrs V. Page	D. Speechley*
1990	Mrs P. Pike	D. Speechley
1991	Mrs R. Quick	Doug Stevens
1992	Mrs R. Sargent	D. Speechley*
1993	Mrs M. Foy	R. Rimmington
1994	T. Sandlant	D. Speechley
1995	M. Johnson	P. McGregor
1996	T. Sandlant	D. Speechley
1997	P. Pike	L. Pinner
1998	D. Sargent	D. Speechley
1999	M. Tonkin	D. Speechley
2000	M. Foy	D. Speechley
2001	M. Tonkin	D. Speechley*
2002	L. Barnett	D. Speechley
2003	J. Silvey	M. Kors
2004	B. King	R. Bond
2005	M. Foy	R. Bond
2006	J. Silvey	D. Speechley*
2007	L. Simpson	D. Speechley
2008	N. Coad	D. Speechley#
2009	V. Hulcombe	D. Speechley#
2010	L. Mason	D. Speechley
2011	S. Grano	J. Brudenhall
2012	D. Denning	I. Cunningham
2013	V. Lacy	D. Speechley
2014	L. Franks	D. Speechley
2015	M. Roach	P. Speechley

2016	S. Grano	D. Speechley
2017	T. Speechley	P. Speechley
2018	T. Speechley	P. Carlyle

- * Denotes Champion of Champions
- # Denotes State Champion of Champions



Undoubtedly the most prominent indoor bowler of the club has been David Speechley winning 19 club championships, along with District and State Champion of Champion titles. He is the only male to win the Australian Singles, Pairs, Triples, Fours, Mixed Pairs and Mixed Fours. His wife Trish and son Paul have also

won club championships.

In July 2018 a Midlands team of Peter Considine, Bill Hawkin and Paul Carlyle won the Victorian State Mens Indoor Triples.

CHAPTER 16

BIRDLIFE AND CLUB IN THE COMMUNITY

Golf is a special sport, a game for life, a sport like no other. It is played throughout the world by males and females, young and old, larger and thin, short and tall and those in between. Whereas many other sports are confined to a court, oval, pool, track, or rink of dimensions that remain largely unchanged, no two golf courses are the same. Golf is played on terrain that is flat, undulating or mountainous. Courses are set amongst rolling sand dunes, carved through mountain forests, played along stunning seaside cliff tops, constructed on reclaimed land, in deserts and parkland. A single hole will not always play the same, weather conditions will see to that. Residents of Ballarat are well aware that the city experiences four distinct seasons,

and this adds to the variety of conditions under which the game is played. Heat, rain, hail, or wind at times tests the mettle of players, but at others, a game on a perfect spring day or balmy summer evening in superb surroundings is a great enjoyment in life. At Midlands the changing seasons have influenced the diversity of birdlife, flora and fauna. Some species of birds are permanent residents, while others are nomadic or migratory, returning in a particular month each year, as dictated by the food and water supply. The availability of worms, grubs, nectar from the banksias and grevilleas, pollen on the flowering gums, pine cones, seeds, and insects at various times throughout the year guarantees their presence.



Lorikeet



New Holland Honeyeater



Ibis



Black Cockatoo

Ken Smith, has over a period of years, photographed the course in the different seasons and much of the birdlife. Some books on his work are held in the clubhouse. Although most of the bird species are named here, the following list would probably not represent the complete record of birds that this course supports.

Common Blackbird	Hawk	Egret
Magpie	Heron	Crested Pigeon
Red Wattlebird	Goldfinch	Fairy Wren
Magpie Lark	Lorikeet	Black Cockatoo
Little Cormorant	Kookaburra	Goose
Crow	Silver Gull	Corella
Darter	Wood Duck	Butcher Bird
Common Starling	Ibis	House Sparrow
Swallow	Coot	Bronze Wing
Crested Pigeon	Black Swan	Reed Warbler
Currawong	Galah	Crimson Rosella
New Holland Honeyeater		Hooded Plover

At the time of the relocation of the golf course, the area on which it is now located had very few trees. Most of the perimeter pine trees on the 15th and 16th fairways have been removed to allow for housing. Gazing down the fairways today, a person would not fail to appreciate the effort that has been made by members to beautify and enhance the course. With most of the trees and shrubs donated and planted voluntarily, the list of species is long and varied. The most common varieties are; Eucalypts, Grevilleas, Acacias, Cypress, Banksias, Pines and Willows.



Flowering Gums on the south side of the fifth fairway



Red Bottlebrush (Callistemon Harkness) and Willow at the 2nd tee

FROM SMALL ACORNS / BIRDLIFE AND CLUB IN THE COMMUNITY



Midlands in snow - looking east from the fairway bunker on the eighteenth fairway



Midlands in flood - eighteenth tee becomes an island after a downpour



Midlands in drought - looking west from the seventeenth tee



Midlands at its best - looking towards the seventh green

The "Midlander" of July 1967 contained this statement. [We at Midlands have a fine club and are joined together for the common purpose of enjoying one of the greatest of all sports. We have a building and a course which enable us to give full effect to that enjoyment. But people, green acres and brick walls and other appointments do not in themselves make a club. A club must have life if it is to progress and Midlands has been fortunate that it has always been well endowed with members who have been conscious of the value of clubmanship and the need of the extra personal effort essential to progress and vitality.]

Throughout each year our club has many projects, social and otherwise, all aimed at providing directly and indirectly greater enjoyment of golf for members. These projects members should support to the utmost of their capacity, because it should not be left to the few to provide for the many. Equally important in the life of a club is the attitude of one member to another. Fortunately we are not all of the one personality, or life would be monotonous in the extreme. So we should tolerate the other fellow's faults, recognise that he has rights equal with ours, receive him with friendship or at least harbour no animosity, and at all times endeavour to make the word "club" in our title not secondary to the word "golf," and Midlands synonymous with all that is best in both.]

Now that 100 years have passed since the first sand scrapes were laid down in open paddocks, the club, while looking back with pride on that which has been achieved must turn its attention to the future. It can

rightfully look forward with optimism, but at the same time keep abreast of the rapidly changing society in which we live and the game which continues to evolve so constantly.

In the first half of the 20th century the core concern of most clubs was strictly golf related, but from the mid 1950s many clubs became licensed, then later added bistros, reception and entertainment amenities, and installed poker machines requiring paid employees. Computers are now an integral part of a club, managing accounting systems, storing records, and in more recent times operating the handicapping system. The old handicapping method required many hours of work each week by a designated member. This element, essential to the game of golf has experienced numerous alterations over the years. Gone are the handicap tables on the back of score cards where seven-eighths handicap was allowed for stableford and three quarters for par. Full handicaps for these competitions were allowed from the late 1970s. The stableford scoring system was first introduced in 1932 by Dr Frank Stableford and has enjoyed great popularity. The handicap limit has increased for women from 36 to 45, and for the men, where the limit was once 24, is now 36 with a limit of 27 for open events and monthly medals. The new slope handicapping system would be unworkable without the aid of a computer, which can also incorporate an electronic tee booking system.

Perhaps the greatest advancement has been in the development of golf equipment. The large number of club manufacturers competing for a significant share of

the lucrative market has pushed club making technology to an ever increasing higher level. In the earliest days clubs were made of wood. Ash was most popular in these years for use in shafts and heads. In the 1880s and 1890s, hickory, which grew well on the east coast of the USA was sent to the UK to make mainly axe handles. It was then discovered that its properties of being light, durable and shock resistant made it ideal to make golf club shafts.

In 1939, the R&A ruled that the maximum number of clubs that a golfer could carry was 14. Steel shafts were first introduced in 1927 and were made legal in 1929. Around this time Spalding produced the first set of matched clubs. These clubs were numbered rendering obsolete the old world names given to those of a bygone era. Persimmon, with its very dense wood was an excellent material for club heads and remained in vogue until steel headed clubs were developed in the early 1990s. Club pro-shops and retailers now stock numerous brands of clubs that offer larger club heads and sweet spots. In the late 1990's Eli Callaway introduced a large metal head club "the Great Big Bertha" with a head of 460cc, the largest size allowed, made possible by the use of titanium making the clubface thinner and lighter.

Golfers buying new clubs today can be fitted with steel or graphite shafts that are matched with the correct lie angle, shaft stiffness and kick point, grips of a high quality and irons that are perimeter weighted. A more recent innovation came with the introduction of adjustable heads and the rescue or hybrid clubs which have taken the place of longer irons. Club professionals

method of teaching has become more proficient with aids such as video analysis and launch monitors enabling novices through to skilled players to understand better their swings.

As told in a previous chapter golf buggies were not used in Ballarat until 1947. From this time until the introduction of the third wheel in the 1970s golfers used to pull their buggies. Battery assisted and remote controlled buggies are now common as well as the rapid increase in the use of golf carts. While their popularity has presented some challenges for clubs they enable many of the older generation to prolong their participation in the sport. Another modernism is the use of GPS and laser measuring devices. Golfers of yesteryear had to judge their shots unaided. The only assistance they received was from the tee markers on the par threes. From the 1980s most courses had distances marked at 150 metres or on discs in the fairway and on sprinkler heads. The size and weight of golf balls was set at 1.62 inches in diameter and a weight of 1.62 ounces by the R&A in 1920. The USGA in 1932 specified a larger ball of 1.68 inches with a weight of 1.62 ounces. This became the standard world wide and in January 1990 the 1.62 ball was discontinued. Long putters were introduced but eventually lost their popularity when a ban on anchoring came into being on 1 January 2016. A welcome advancement has been the improvement in footwear with lightweight shoes and soft spikes.

Just as golf courses and clubs have changed through the years, so have dress codes and golf fashions. When the club was formed, clothing was very

restrictive, with most men players dressed in suits and ties. This changed to a more relaxed attire, and in the 1940s many players wore pullovers or cardigans and plus fours. In the 1960s and 1970s, due to the influence of the professional tours, clothing was more colourful and this trend is in vogue today. One tradition that continues on the professional tour is that strict dress standards are demanded and firmly enforced and players are responsible for their caddies adhering to the standard.

At Midlands a coat, collar and tie had to be worn in the clubhouse after 4.30pm on Saturdays and Sundays. This requirement was relaxed after a committee meeting in July 1970. A contentious issue was resolved in 1987 when the dress regulations on the course were altered to allow sports socks to be worn. This did not mean that they would be permitted in the members lounge at this time. Likewise the ladies clothing progressed from the long skirts and high-buttoned blouses to today's attire of tailored slacks, shorts and on the professional circuit, mini skirts. Nationally, females account for around 20% of golf clubs' membership with the average age of females being 62 compared to 53 for males. A change occurred in the 1970s when the ladies were no longer referred to by their husband's initials.

An irritation of many captains was removed when a decision was made to award vouchers instead of trophies for weekly golf competitions. Previously it involved the captain having to select and purchase trophies and have a reserve stored in a dedicated room. Trophies won did not always suit the recipient and

many were returned and exchanged. Early in 2017 the USGA & R&A announced extensive changes to the Rules of Golf to be initiated globally from 1 January 2019. The changes were introduced as proposals and offered a six-month response phase. They were deemed necessary to reduce the number of rules, improve their clarity and to increase the speed of play.

The century of this clubs' existence is significant and should be celebrated as an achievement in perseverance, generosity, perception, and sometimes good fortune. From its foundation until the present time difficult problems have arisen but a solution has always been found. In the most worrying time in the early 1970s when the appeal was lost it appeared that the club could be one without a future. With hindsight this proved to be a piece of good fortune as this forced the clubs' hand to make the decision to build a new course. It was opportune that the capable and experienced people who were in office in this period had the vision and commitment to turn a concept into reality. The old course had served the club well, was highly regarded and a pleasure to play, but the passing of time and the advent of new technology in balls and clubs meant that it had outlived its era. A further stroke of good fortune came when a prime concern for the club turned into an lasting benefit with the acquisition of the big dam.

A positive feature of Midlands at this time is that the basic infrastructure of the club is in place. The layout of the golf course has been changed little in the last 45 years, and the clubhouse, while needing regular attention is a significant asset. Freehold ownership of the land, two bowling greens, a restructured car park, a

large dam and watering system and a greenkeepers shed are all items of considerable worth. Other assets include the drainage, perimeter fencing, furniture, tools and equipment. The golf course, with its sand fairways, along with trees and shrubs that have matured, and paths and roads puts the club in an advantageous position. To replace these assets, or to start from scratch would take an immense effort and cost. The challenge now is essentially in the day to day operating of the business.

While the club today is unrecognisable from its modest beginnings, problems will undoubtedly arise in the future to test the resolve of members and committees. The club's location has both advantages and disadvantages. Perimeter housing has meant that many members are within walking distance, and the drink-driving laws may not have had the same impact on socialising as at other clubs. The negative is that the area to the north of the freeway is mainly farmland, with small acreage allotments in Invermay, thus limiting the number of possible members. It has become obvious that with the approval of the Ballarat West Growth Area Plan Ballarat will continue to grow to the west and south-west of the city.

The present Midlands course is an easy walking layout with minimal distance between greens to tees. With only average terrain to work with, the designers have produced a plan that is well conceived and the excellent routing of holes has resulted in a course that is both attractive and full of interest. Five holes are played in a easterly direction, five westerly, four northerly and four southerly and dogleg holes turn both

left and right. There are no blind holes and the man-made lakes assist with drainage, attract bird life, add to the beauty of the course and at times test the golfer's nerve. Any wind blowing offers a stern examination of a golfer's game. The course suffers from the sand fairways going dormant during winter, but field sizes are smaller in this period, because of cold and often wet weather conditions and people holidaying in warmer climates.

In recent times golf clubs have struggled to make profits and maintain memberships. Midlands has been no different. Roles in society have changed and the traditional Saturday game of golf for many men is no longer the norm. These changes in society have caused a change in the demographic of most clubs in Australia. Approximately 60 per cent of club members are aged 55 years and over. Junior membership and the 25-35 age group, the future of golf clubs, has fallen in comparison. More sports and activities have become available and generally people have become time poor. Some clubs throughout Victoria have had to merge or are considering such a move. Others particularly those in the metropolitan area have relocated to the outer fringes. Regrettably this has caused much angst and unhappiness amongst members who may have put much of their life into the development of their club.

The growth of social golf clubs and non-club members being able to obtain a handicap has been a detriment to many clubs. Online discounters and social golf organisations offer large discounts for play on top class golf courses. While this pay as you play has attracted an increasing number of players it has not resulted in any marked increase in club membership.

This is regrettable as these players fail to see or have not been made aware of the benefits that a club membership offers. They forego the opportunity to maybe win a club championship, represent the club in pennant, play in tournaments, improve their golf by competing in regular competitions, gain the satisfaction of helping the club progress, or take advantage of reciprocal rights.

Golf clubs are the heart and soul of the game. For many members they are a way of life, a place that offers the benefits of belonging and socialising, a place where life long friendships are formed. While the club must have the members interests as its primary purpose, it should not ignore others, who, for whatever reason choose to play only social golf. If they enjoy the experience of playing on a first class golf course, are made to feel welcome, and made aware of the advantages of membership, then it is most likely that most new members will come from this group.

Every golf club has a history; its history is that which defines it and throughout its history Midlands has always been conscious of its position in the community of Ballarat North. Accordingly, governments and councils are now becoming aware of the contribution that it has made. As well as being a club for all people, it is a great benefit to the environment and has provided a green belt area not far from the city centre, it is a sanctuary for birdlife, it has over the years afforded employment in various occupations for many people, has made significant contributions to charities and provided a venue for functions and entertainment.

The lives of junior members have been shaped by their association with the club and many have stayed a lifetime. It is through them that the club continues to grow for as each generation passes the next becomes the beneficiary of what has been achieved in the past. Achievement in the future will come from ensuring that the history of the club is not forgotten or diminished and that the foundation laid by our pioneers and those who followed is respected and treasured. It is in this way that the club will move forward, as it always has, to be the sturdy, still-growing "oak tree," that is the Midlands Golf Club.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The recording of a golf club history is not possible without suitable and accurate information which is only uncovered by extensive research. Many people have aided by volunteering information, photographs and advice and for this I am especially grateful.

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THE AUTHOR

Membership of Midlands Golf Club for 56 years has given the author John Dillon an appreciation of the very essence of the club, its deep-seated importance in the lives of members, its role in the community and its necessity to strengthen and remain relevant in the future. While having no claim to any great writing skills or experience the book is written in the hope that readers will find new and interesting information and provide a record of the commitment, labours and successes of past generations.



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