

INTROUCTION

A history of any Golf Club is certainly about the physical layout and the development over the years. In our case it has been the story of initially converting farming paddocks into something resembling a course. In the early days the Club was constantly on the move as farmers reclaimed their land or war intervened. Even our first Club House – the one with the hinged wall which, when lowered, formed a table from which afternoon tea was served – was mobile. It followed where the course went. When we did find a permanent home it was basically on a swamp in the middle of a race course with a hostile Race Club as co-tenants. Sand scrape greens, yabby holes and ti-tree stumps were the order of the day.

Contrast that with what we have today: the only 27 hole Golf Course in Gippsland with a multi-million dollar Club House and a membership of over 500 drawn from far beyond the Drouin boundaries. Progress indeed.

However, a history that focused on just that would be a poor history indeed. A Club is really about its people. The game just gives them the excuse to gather together. Just imagine an occasion when the Scott boys got together. Of course that's the Honourable Michael Scott who was our first Club Captain and became the very first Australian Golf Champion in 1904 and Doug Scott the only player to twice score a hole-in-one on the second. Doug certainly would be comfortable in Michael's presence; if Michael was not he would be the one who would be the poorer.

Why? Because over the years the Club has been able to accommodate people from all walks of life united in a common love of a fiendishly difficult if not stupid game.

This was evident from the start. The first president was a doctor and the first secretary was a Colonel. No surprise there you might say but by 1908 the Committee also included a Mrs and two Misses. Augusta, the home of the Masters didn't even accept lady members until this century.

This same mix was seen in the 1955 Committee. It comprised an engineer, postal official, dental surgeon, newsagent, plasterer, concreter, farmer, bank manager, earthworks contractor and baker. Not a bad cross section of the community at the time.

Of course another reason not to forget the people is because they got things done. At a public meeting called in 1955 the motion: "That investigations be made into the possibility of forming a Golf Club in Drouin" was rejected in favour of: "That a Golf Club be formed in Drouin." By 1963 what began as a nine hole course with sand scrape greens had become a full 18 hole course with grass greens. By 1967 a proper Club House had been constructed. By 1989 a further 190 acres sufficient for another eighteen holes had been purchased. In 2002 another nine holes had been added. By 2010 a refurbished Club House costing more than a million dollars had been completed. Drouin golfers haven't mucked around.

And of course they should be remembered because they provide us with our treasured memories. One example will suffice. Shane Dwyer, who has seen more than most of us, had no trouble remembering John Blake, a Club Champion, in the sixties. For his golf? Yes but also because he was a real character. He loved a drink and a good time. There was the time when Jack Stroud finally got him out of the Clubhouse after a long session only for him to drive his car straight into a culvert. He managed to persuade a grumpy Jack to use the tractor to tow him out. While Jack was doing this he returned to Club House to slake his thirst. Jack finally got the car out. And John's response? He promptly drove the car into the culvert a second time.

These stories are simply memoirs. They are not based upon meticulous records but simply the recollections of individuals about things that often occurred a long time ago. They have usually undergone a further filtering process in that I have then taken their ideas and fashioned them in my own way. They are a version of the truth but by no means the whole truth. Don't be surprised if you remember things differently. This is particularly so of The Course, The Race Club and The Club House. Why, you might even object to their inclusion given that inanimate object can't have memories. Well, yes, but imagine if they could? In any case they certainly are characters...

It will be left to a future historian to make more sense of this but in the meantime have a chuckle, reminisce with your mates and consider what you would contribute if asked to share your story. It is an ongoing process you know.

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