

FROM THE ARCHIVES

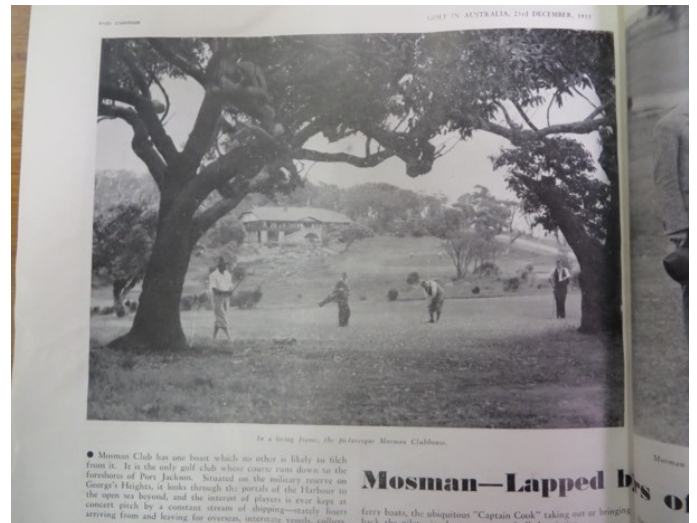
AN INTRODUCTION – CHAMPIONS OF THE 20'S, 30'S, 40'S

Following the story of the Frank Eyre's win in the 1930 Australian Championship and the prospect of the club's own Championship going ahead soon in 2021, for the next few weeks we are looking at the special golfers and Champions of the past 100 years. There are names missing at the start of the women's honour boards over this period but some Champions have been discovered in other ways.

In 1921 the Club may have been new and young, but it certainly didn't lack golfing talent. Many golfers had learnt the game elsewhere and in lots of cases were members of more than one Club. For the first ten years the Club was only a nine-hole course but this certainly didn't prevent a full typical programme of golf being created and teams entered in pennant matches. The men's championship commenced in 1922 and we know the name of the 1924 Associates Champion but the event may have started earlier. The men won the first pennant competition for the Club in 1927, the C-Grade Pennant and there was a win for the Associates in the B-Grade Shield in 1929. The Club applied to enter the men's A-Grade team matches in 1929 which was approved but they played only away matches until the course became 18-holes.

There are many examples of players being a member of other Clubs and there seems to be an entwined network. After all the first President of Long Reef, Henry Mann, was a Vice President of Bonnie Doon at the same time. The first rules were based on those of Moore Park and a 20's Club Captain William Whytock

was also President of Balgowlah for a time and helped design Cromer Golf Club that opened in 1929. In the archives there is a Hole-in-one certificate awarded to Miss M. Lawler for her achievements at Long Reef and Mosman Golf Clubs.



Mosman Golf Club | Photographed by the Archive Committee in 2016 from Golf in Australia magazine, kept at the Offices of GNSW.

Few current players at Long Reef are aware that there was ever a golf course at Mosman. It opened in 1922, just a year after Long Reef. A lease was acquired to use Commonwealth, Defence department land which overlooked and went down to the foreshores of the harbour. 60 acres were used for the course, the Club had around 300 Members and Associates and 8 staff when the Club was given four days' notice to vacate at the beginning of the war in 1940. The land was never returned to them. The old Clubhouse is now the Burnt Orange café and old photos of the course can be seen on the walls of the café.

FROM THE ARCHIVES | AN INTRODUCTION – CHAMPIONS OF THE 20'S, 30'S, 40'S.

We also know that one of the 20's very gifted woman golfers, Enid Yeldham was also a Member of Cammeray and the Australian. Cammeray had opened with 6-holes in 1906 and is the 3rd oldest Club in NSW.

Following the opening of the Long Reef's 18-hole course in 1931-32, the Great Depression that followed in the early part of the decade limited progress, and was followed by the damaging war years. Championships did not resume until 1946 and in 1950 the Club had of one of its more damaging floods.

The Soutar family link the first three decades of the Club together and as a family credit has not been given fully to the role, they played in creating good golfers at Long Reef. Dan had first trained as a carpenter in Scotland but he gained experience at Carnoustie as a player and teacher before arriving in Australia as a young hopeful golf professional in 1903. He won the Australian Open in 1905 and the PGA Championships in 1905, 1906, 1907 and 1910. As the Professional at Manly Golf Club from 1911-1921 Dan inspired local youth, the likes of Frank Eyre, Gordon Thomson and Wally Smith who acted as caddies under his direction. He was also fully occupied designing courses around Australia and New Zealand and competing in competitions. While in his next position as the Club Professional at Moore Park, where he remained for the next ten years, Dan worked with Wally Smith again when he was a Member there playing in their major grade team. Wally was to move to Long Reef in 1926 and become one of the Club's greatest players in competition with Gordon Thomson for that title.

From 1927 Dan Soutar collaborated with Frank Eyre to design the 18-hole course at Long Reef.

Meanwhile his wife Annis became a founding Member of the new Balgowlah Golf Club in 1925 and was the Associate's President from 1927-1931. In 1932 she joined Long Reef bringing a group of ladies with her and later three golf playing adult children. Annis became the Associate's President in 1939. She held the position of Associates President throughout the war years helping to hold the ailing Club together and, in the end, completed 16 years as President. She became the Club's first female Life Member in 1956. Dan too had had some golfing success at Long Reef winning the 1935 Pro-Am by one stroke from Frank Eyre. Son Gordon was a Member of the Grade team and won a Foursomes title. Sadly, Dan died in 1937 from the complications from an appendicitis. He was only 55 years old. Annis remained a Member of Long Reef until her death in 1966.

Dan and Annis's daughter, Heather Soutar (to become Harman) earned her title of super champion in the 40's. We do not know just what she had achieved in the 30's as records are missing. She held the scratch score in 1946 and 1947. She won the Championships on three consecutive occasions 1946, 1947 and 1948. Heather left Long Reef to join Manly in 1950. She was Club Champion there in 1959 and 1964 and Associate's President from 1978 -1980. At Manly she was to partner Enid Clements (née Yeldham) to win the NSW Foursomes, thought to be in 1957. Enid was another Long Reef star that got away.

More of Enid next time. We will also look at the golfing achievements of Gordon Thomson and Wally Smith who both joined the Club in 1926 and dominated the honour boards from the late 20's to the 50's.

FROM THE ARCHIVES | AN INTRODUCTION – CHAMPIONS OF THE 20'S, 30'S, 40'S.



Dan Soutar



Heather Harman (née Soutar)

Sources:

- Golf in Australia
- Wikipedia
- The First 100 Years LRGCE-Book
- Soutar Family - Photos

SANDRA MELLOWES | ARCHIVES COMMITTEE