



Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club

The History from 1978



FOREWORD

This history of our Club has been compiled using data and some of the thousands of photographs from the 26 years spent on the Board as President or Secretary and I hope it provides an insight into how this Club progressed from a vision of what could be, to what is now a reality.

None of this could have been accomplished without the input, over all those years, of a huge number of volunteers, from those responsible for forming the original steering committee through to our present Board of Directors. These volunteers have donated not only uncountable hours of their time but also, in many cases, their own machinery and expertise representing what would probably amount to several million dollars, which the Club was not in a financial position to afford through the earlier years.

I have outlined our constant battles with various bureaucratic government and non-government bodies who were determined that the project be made as difficult as possible. However, with dogged determination and never taking NO for an answer we managed to prevail against all those who said, "*it will never happen*".

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Robert Percival for his computer expertise in putting all this together in publishable form as well as input from Blanche Voysey and Noel Schneider.

David Lamb.

27/01/2019

THE COURSE

In 1978, during a meeting of the Town Planning Committee of the then Shoalhaven Shire Council, plans were presented for a Crown Land sub-division of 312 residential housing blocks in Shoalhaven Heads in the area of forest extending from Scott Street, Bass Road and Lovegrove Street to the boundary of Seven Mile Beach State Recreation Area (later to be reclassified as National Park), this left a large area of undeveloped land between this sub-division, the beach and the Recreation Area

The question of what to do with this land was raised and Chris Neal of the Nowra Crown Lands Office suggested that it could be made into a golf course that could accommodate storm water drainage from the proposed subdivision and other areas of the town.



RESIDENTS OF SHOALHAVEN HEADS — DO YOU WANT ?

High Rise Development

OR A

SCENIC GOLF COURSE

ON YOUR BEACHFRONT

NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE YOUR CHOICE

ALL INTERESTED RESIDENTS & INTENDING MEMBERS
ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE
INAUGURAL MEETING
of the

SHOALHAVEN HEADS GOLF CLUB

In the

COMMUNITY HALL, CELIA STREET

8.00 P.M THIS THURSDAY, 22ND OCTOBER

WHETHER YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PLAYING GOLF OR NOT, THIS PUBLIC MEETING IS PERHAPS THE LAST OPPORTUNITY WE WILL HAVE TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE USE OF THE PRIME REAL ESTATE ALONG OUR BEACHFRONT IN SHOALHAVEN HEADS. Do YOU WANT A MINI GOLD COAST OR (ASTMETIC) PUBLIC RECREATIONAL GROUNDS FOR COMMUNITY USE, WITH OPEN ACCESS TO OUR SURF BEACH. COME ALONG AND HAVE YOUR SAY AT THIS VITAL PUBLIC MEETING THAT CAN PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT & DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE LIFE-STYLE.

ALL WELCOME —

GOLF CLUB STEERING COMMITTEE.

Phone: 48-7217 or 48-7239.

PRINTING DONATED BY SHOALHAVEN HEADS TOURIST COMMITTEE

BERRY PRINTERS — BERRY

In March 1979 this concept was taken up by the Shoalhaven Heads Tourism Committee's secretary, Colin Gumley, via correspondence with local State Member Bill Knott, who pursued the matter with the Minister for Lands, Mr. W.F. Crabtree. The succeeding secretary, Robyn Flack, continued negotiations with further correspondence beginning April 3rd, 1980 with Mr. Bill Knott, Member for Kiama, the Lands Board Office, the Minister for Lands Mr. A.R.L. Gordon and Shoalhaven City Council as it had then become.

It was not until 1981 that a serious effort was made to bring the concept into a reality when a public meeting was held in Shoalhaven Heads at the Community Hall in Celia Street on September 16th. This was followed by a further meeting on October 22nd when the first Golf Club Committee was formed. This meeting was advertised by a poster being circulated asking the residents if they wanted a 'High Rise Development' or a 'Scenic Golf Course' on the beachfront. 104 residents attended.

The elected members of the first committee were :-

President - Mrs. Marion Gray, Secretary – Mrs. Jill Gumley, Treasurer – Mr. Brian Kinlyside and a Committee of Ian Whiteoak, Jean Whiteoak, Colin Gumley, D. Boucher, Bev Smith, J. Sandiford, Fred Leach and B. Cronin.

The meeting also agreed that the Golf Club should become part of the Bowling and Recreation Club and from then, until the time golf began to be played on our first three holes, the members traveled to other courses, such as St. Georges Basin and Nowra, to play.

Another committee meeting was held a week later and the minutes show that 124 people had joined as members – raising \$124.00 from joining fees! A week later the membership had increased to 192.

By December 1981 a membership drive had resulted in 400 members joining at \$1.00 per annum, growing to 560 in March 1982 and correspondence with various organizations such as Kingsgrove RSL, the Postal Institute and others established a need for this facility to be established in this area.

Subsequent dealings with various Local and State Government parties led to a further meeting on 3rd December 1981 in the Community Hall in Celia Street with Fred Leach as Chairman, to which representatives of State and Local Government, as well as local organizations, had been invited. Also present were David Lamb and Colin Bice from Nowra Golf Club, who had both been appointed by the Nowra Club Board of Directors to investigate possible sites for a second golf course in the general area. Nowra and St. Georges Basin then being the only golf courses between Kiama and Mollymook.

Despite several inspections of likely sites for this new course nothing was forthcoming until they met with Russ Evans, Council's Town Planner, who suggested that it may be worthwhile taking an interest in the newly formed group from Shoalhaven Heads who were negotiating for a golf course to be built beside Seven Mile Beach. Hence their attendance at the meeting where the main point of concern was how to proceed from concept to reality. Fred Leach pointedly questioned Shoalhaven Shire Councillor Trevor Kilner asking, "What's Council going to do about it?" to which Trevor replied "Nothing", meaning the ball is in your court and future progress depends on efforts by the Club to achieve their aims.

After many committee meetings and discussions three golf course design groups were invited to inspect the site, McKay and Sons of Wollongong, David Inglis and Frank Williams from Melbourne, who had just constructed the National and Cape Schank courses on the Mornington Peninsula *** (note that David Inglis was the creator of the Australian Masters Tournament and Frank Williams was to become manager of Greg Norman's enterprises)* and Terry O'Donoghue, Professional at the Federal Golf Club in Canberra.

All three groups were greatly impressed with the land and its potential for building a golf course, however when the cost of financing the design and construction was discussed only McKay and Sons could see their way clear to help the Club. Thus Ken McKay began an official association with the project which he has maintained for 32 years, during which time whenever we asked "How much do we owe you?" his reply was always "Pay me when you can, I would prefer to see any funds go into the course". With the exception of a couple of token payments a final, very Club favourable arrangement to reimburse Ken did not come about until 2013!

Negotiations with the then Crown Lands Department of New South Wales proceeded for the granting of a Permissive Occupancy allowing the Club to plan and build a nine hole course on the land.

At this time David Lamb was co-opted to the Board as Course Co-ordinator thus beginning an involvement with Board positions as President, Vice President and Secretary until 2014. A grand Commencement of Construction ceremony occurred on October 27th 1984, organised by the Board, assisted by Bob Wilson, with Local, State and Federal Government dignitaries invited as well as representatives from the Illawarra District Golf Association and NSW Golf Association. The late Mayor, Harry Sawkins, drove through the ribbon on Trevor Kilner's tractor, after it had been anointed with the contents of the "Champagne bottle" by Mrs. Knott, wife of Mr. Bill Knott, the then State Member. This bottle, with signatures, was eventually mounted in the display case in the Clubhouse courtesy of the Rotary Club of Berry



Where to begin?



Bushfire damage beside path – whole golf course site was burnt out



From path looking south towards the Surf Club



1984 – starting work.

Ross McKay, David Lamb, Robert Lamb & Ken McKay



It's in there somewhere! Part of the initial survey.

Ross McKay & Robert Lamb



1984 Surveying the first three holes

Christine Lamb, Robert Lamb, David Lamb



Ross & Ken McKay



Preparing site for opening ceremony 1984 – Cleary Bros bulldozer ready to go





Commencement Day 1984 – Mayor Harry Sawkins on Trevor Kilners tractor, Mrs Knott with 'Champagne Bottle'



Opening Ceremony 1984



A great time was being had by all as Cleary Brothers' bulldozer commenced ripping through the bush on what was to become the original 1st and 2nd fairways, when the local Lands Department manager, Kevin Hopkins, asked "Do you have an approval for this work to be done?"

You guessed it - in our naive enthusiasm we had not even considered that a D. A. was needed, particularly as Bob Wilson had been a previous President of the Shoalhaven Shire Council and should have been fully aware of the processes to be followed. So everything eventually came to a halt until development approval was obtained from Council but not before several more days work was undertaken thanks to the generous loan of the bulldozer by John Cleary, after a request by Ken McKay had been met with the reply "If you've got someone to drive the f.....g thing OK". Ken's brother Ross who was course superintendent at Wollongong golf course then became the approved operator.

During this period some threatening correspondence was received by the Club and Cleary Brothers, from the previously mentioned Lands Department official regarding unauthorized clearing of native vegetation.



1984 Start of Survey. Cutting the lines



13th & 18th fairways





Site of the 12th green



1985 - the 12th and 18th fairways.



10th fairway looking south – note size of storm water pipe



Survey and clearing along National Park boundary





Site for the 15th fairway and green



The 17th fairway



1985 Clearing the 17th fairway



Creating the 12th green - Ken McKay with Council dozer



1985- the 1st fairway (now the 10th)



1985 – clearing the 13th & 18th fairways



Ollie Jenkins hard at work



Coal wash road 14th fairway



Early survey and clearing near Lovegrove Street



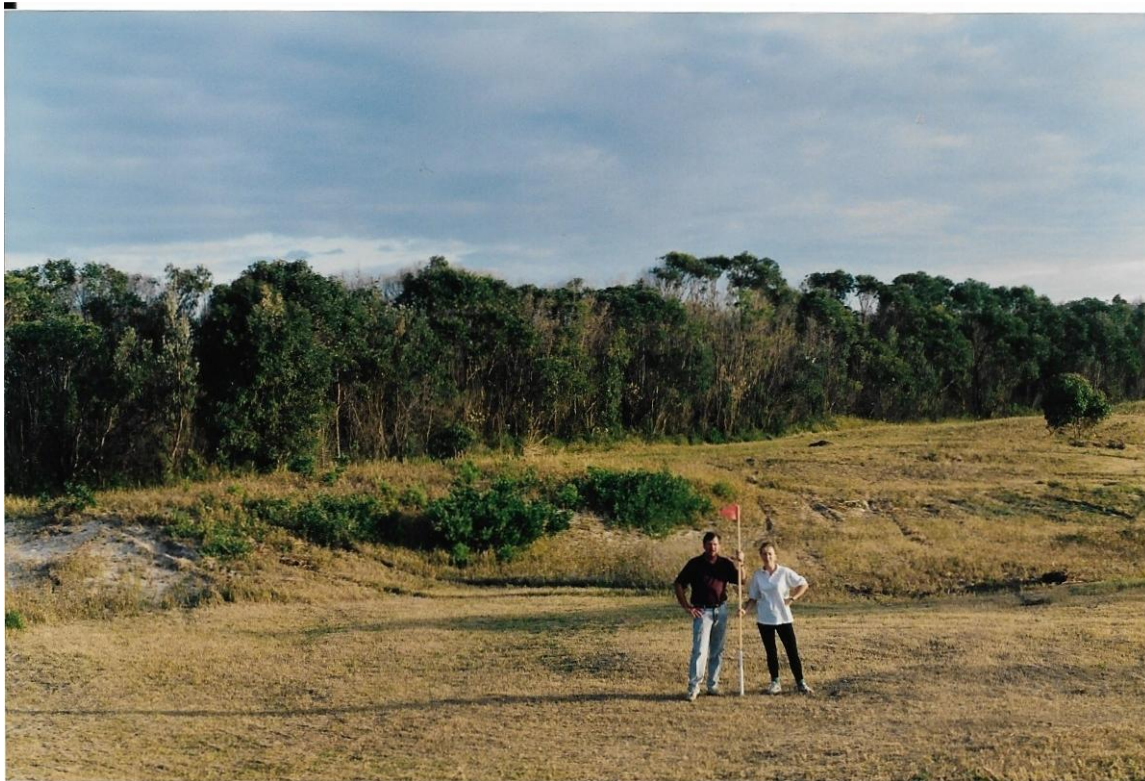
After approval was finally granted by Council on May 20th 1985, surveying and clearing of the area for the 9 holes began in earnest, initially with a bulldozer and driver provided by Council at nominal cost and then with Ollie Jenkins on his bulldozer, both being directed by Ken McKay. Ollie did a fantastic job and soon great piles of felled trees were put to the torch. The many hours of his time and use of his machine that Ollie donated in those early days set the scene for the tradition of voluntary work that has become the trademark of this Club.

Many meetings and much correspondence later the Club became incorporated in December 1985, Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club Limited becoming an organization in its own right, leaving the original Club structure to continue as the Social Golf Club section of the Bowling and Recreation Club.

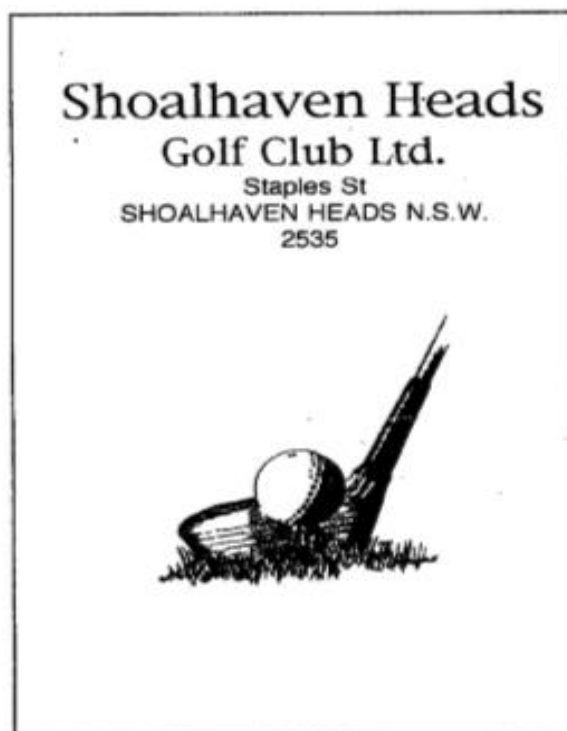
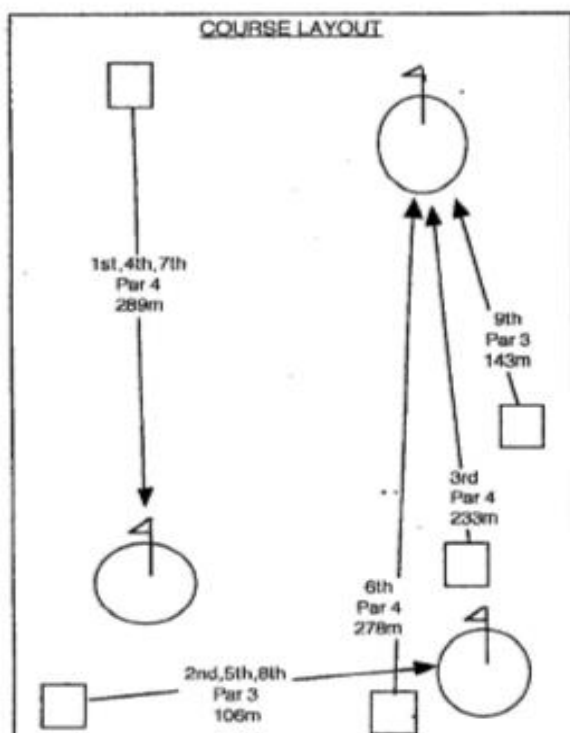
Subscribers to the original Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Club were members of the Board, at that time Fred Leach, Roma Watts, Marj. Bradd, David Lamb, Trevor Kilner, Jean Whiteoak, Colin Gumley, Clive Medley and Alfred Newnham. In the meantime development of the nine hole course was put on hold, except for the first three holes, which were played for the first time in a nine hole competition (three times around) on October 22nd 1994.



Setting the standard ! 1994 1st competition. Keith & Lillian Hodges, Ray Hitchin



1992 the 3rd green – now 12th





1991 – 10th hole looking north



Irrigation pipe installing on 16th



John Corr on 17th



17th stump removal -Biffa Beveridge with his backhoe



Starting the machinery shed

This was made possible by a small band of dedicated workers headed by the late Arthur Simmons and David Lamb who actually mowed the first fairways and rough areas with Victa lawn mowers!!!! Great assistance was also provided by the Bowling and Recreation Club who had donated funding for the original pump which made the installation of a computer driven irrigation system possible for these holes.

On completion of clearing for the nine-hole course in 1988, it had become obvious that if additional land could be acquired an eighteen-hole course could be accommodated on the site and negotiations were commenced with the Lands Department and Council to achieve this extension utilizing an extra parcel of adjoining land around the sewage effluent ponds located between Lovegrove Street and the National Park boundary.

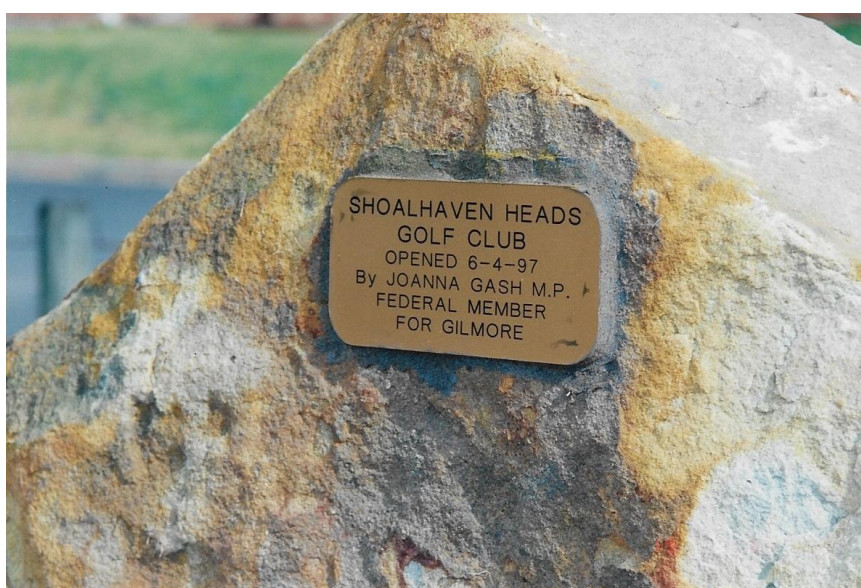
On 31st August 1989 a meeting was arranged between the Director General of the Department of Conservation and Land Management Mr. Stan Day, representatives of the Club and a Nowra solicitor/property developer, Mr. Bill Goodman (who had prepared our Memorandum and Articles of Association) to discuss a proposal for the site. Mr. Day's response of "let's run with it" resulted in the Department preparing a tender document for a combined residential, hotel and golf course development on what is now the golf course and all the adjoining bush land between Scott Street and the National Park boundary. Six developers submitted plans, the most impressive coming from Cleary Brothers via Ken McKay and Bill Goodman's

company Caravon which had commenced negotiations with the Club for a joint venture agreement for this project.

However, a change of Director of the Department occurred with Stan Day being replaced by Michael Ockwell (*who, we were warned by Tom Phillips, Tourism Promotions Officer with Shoalhaven City Council, was a “greenie plant”*). Consequently, this development was initially rejected by the Department. However, a delegation to the Minister, Garry West, saw the granting of extra time for further developer comment despite which the project was then scrapped with the reason being given as “insufficient financial return to the Government” and a great opportunity for Shoalhaven Heads was lost.

In January 1990 an approach had been made to the Bowling Club regarding an amalgamation between the Clubs and, after a lot of legal advice as to procedure, a meeting was arranged at the Bowling Club on Saturday 27th to put the proposal to members of that Club. Due to a hostile reception by several members where they accused the Golf Club of having ulterior motives and attempting a takeover of the Bowling Club, the vote for amalgamation was lost by seven votes. The Golf Club then wrote that in response to this antagonistic attitude the offer of amalgamation was withdrawn. Looking back on how the Golf Club has finally developed, it is probably fortunate that this amalgamation did not proceed

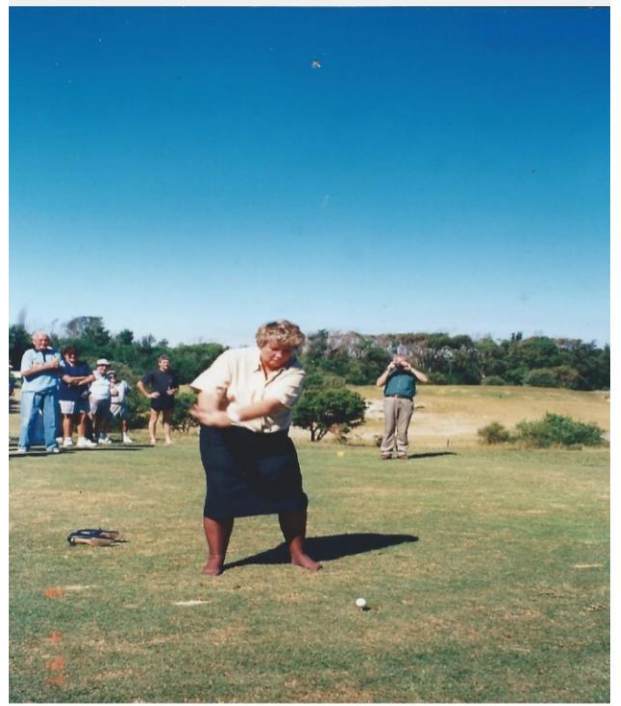
The next progression was to a six-hole course and it was not until 1997 that we eventually reached the point where the nine-hole course became playable. An opening ceremony was held on April 6th with Joanna Gash, Federal Member for Gilmore, playing a magnificent drive down the first hole in her bare feet using a 3-wood borrowed from Ken Smith (he still has the club and ball)



1997 – Opening Day

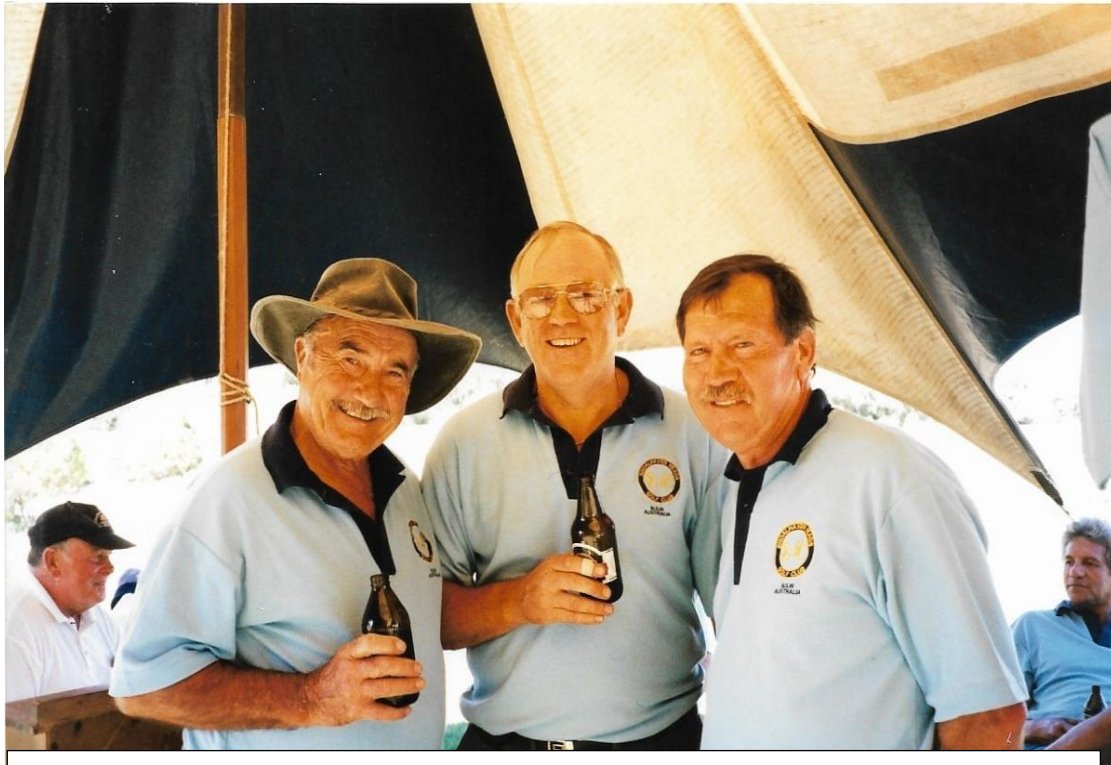


President David Lamb



Jo Gash hitting opening drive.





Darkie, Cec and David



1994 – Opening Day members gathering

Keith Hodges, John Greenaway, John Corr, Cec Montgomery, Merv Jones, Ken Smith, Jeff Symonds



Opening Day in the newest clubhouse

At the same time the introduction of the Native Title Act in 1993 created further problems with two claims coming forward from the local Jerrinja tribe and the Wadi Wadi group. It took ten years for the High Court of Australia to dismiss these claims and in 2003 our Development Application for the course extension to 15 holes was approved by Council. Concurrent permission for clearances for a re-alignment of the 4th fairway and the subsequent creation of the "Super 9" was also obtained and work commenced. As Cleary Brothers bulldozer was on site a decision was made to begin clearing for the extension – regrettably.

Certain conditions of the D. A. were overlooked and following complaints a stop work order was placed on the Club. A Council investigation brought forth letters of objection from various green organizations and individuals (some even suggesting that the project be terminated) followed by a fine of \$600.00 for unauthorized clearing. There followed more negotiations and the imposition of much more demanding and expensive conditions involving flora and fauna studies, mulching of felled timber, bird boxes to replace any hollows in trees felled (never used) - the most damaging new condition was the creation of a "wildlife corridor" between the National Park and the bush land behind Scott Street, resulting in a greatly reduced area for the new holes. The list of conditions attached to the D.A. had now grown from six pages to sixteen!

However work was allowed to proceed and the Club had now, after 28 years of determination and hard work, against what had seemed insurmountable odds, extended the course from three to fifteen holes. The progression from nine holes to fifteen holes was achieved with substantial financial assistance by way of Federal Government funding from the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTAR) for \$83,880.00, Local Government funding from Shoalhaven City Council, a ClubBIZ grant of \$20,000.00 and the donation and planting of couch and zoysia grasses by Turfco.



Above & Below – Starting the 15 holes





15 hole course – the 12th (now 7th tee)



15 hole course – the 10th (now 4th fairway)

This would not have been possible without the huge contributions of labour and machinery by John Greenaway, Sam McMullen and our dedicated team of volunteers. Again, Joanna Gash was on hand to perform the opening of this course extension on February 5th 2006.

Negotiations now proceeded for the approval for the last holes, unfortunately involving the Club in more expenditure in unnecessary flora and fauna surveys and consultant's fees to prove the non - existence of things that we as locals knew did not exist, such as the leafless tongue orchid, long nosed potteroo, powerful owl, gang-gang cockatoo etc. etc! - cost to date around \$70,000.00. Finally, on December 21st 2010, our DA was approved by Council, we now had to meet the conditions attached to that Development Consent, the most important being a comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan which cost in the region of \$10,000.00, a detailed landscape plan and surveying and marking the area to be cleared.

At last, our operational consent was approved by Council on 1st June 2011 and we all hoped that the progression to 18 holes would be achieved by early 2012. With initial clearance of the land commencing August 22nd 2011, contouring and irrigation was completed ready for grass to be planted beginning November 15th. It had only taken 33 years to reach this point!!!! February 2nd 2012 - the planting of tees, greens, fairways and rough had been very successful with excellent growth due to the ideal growing weather experienced. The problem now was to keep up with the extra mowing workload to prepare for the grand opening day. Our thanks to Turfco for their continued support in the supply, planting and advice for the establishment of the fairway and rough grasses.

April 2012 - we received a grant from The State Government, under the Community Building Programme, for \$40,000.00 and this had been matched by Shoalhaven City Council with an additional \$40,000.00, thanks to the efforts of Gareth Ward M.P. (Member for Kiama and Shoalhaven City Councilor) in representing our case. These funds helped us to complete all tasks needed to bring our course to completion, at last.

May 25th, 2012 – volunteers who had worked so hard over the years to make this all possible became the first golfers onto the course playing the first nine holes of the new layout. After this much speech making took place and then the opening ceremony was performed on the 1st tee with Gareth Ward, Matt Brown (former Member for Kiama), Greg Watson (Shoalhaven City Council) and President Terry Lillie as ribbon cutters (Joanna Gash was an unfortunate apology). Also present for the celebrations were representatives from Shoalhaven City Council, the Lands Department and the Jerrinja people in the person of Tribal Elder Gordon Wellington. All in all, a great day was had by all.



Above & below – 2011 starting the 9th





Above & below – 2011 starting the 9th





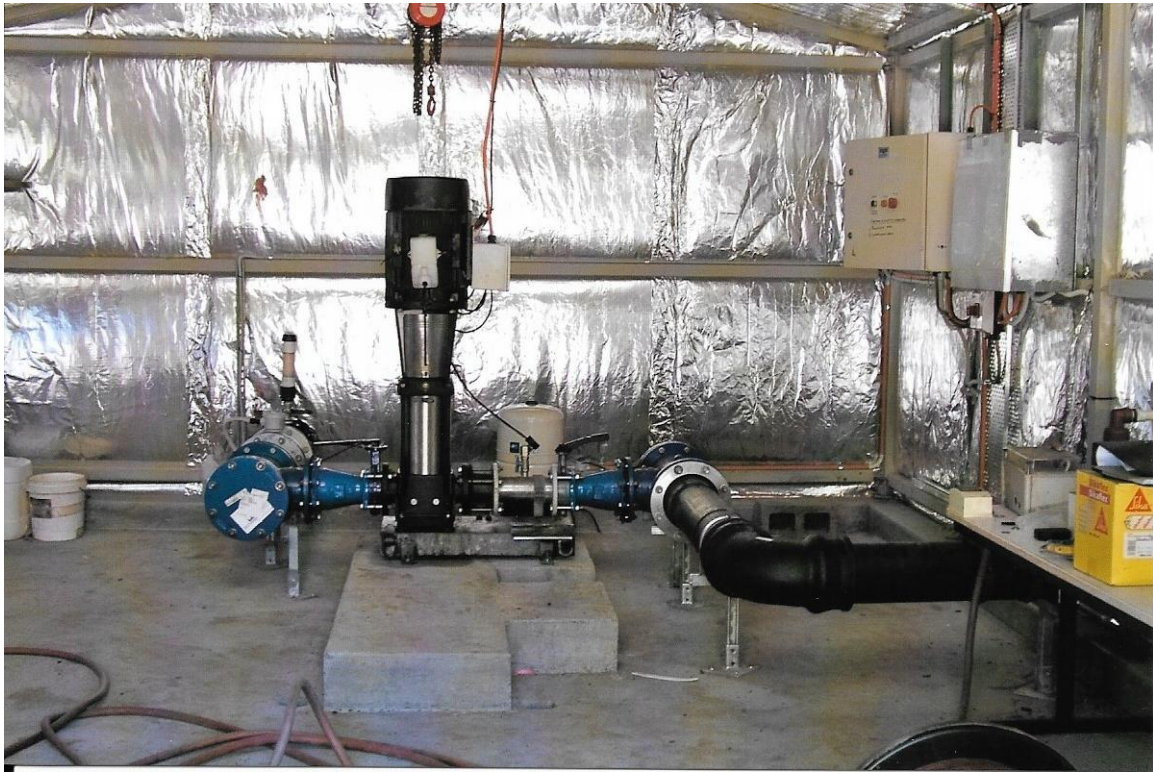
2011 turf for the 1st tee





Above & below – 2011 Water! The 9th fairway





The pump shed



2012 John Greenaway - extending the car park



Above & below – 2012 laying the path to the 1st tee





Maggie & Pat in the garden



Pat Herrick installing tee signs



Opening Day – Dave Lamb, Jeff Symonds, Cec Montgomery, Terry Lillie



Opening Day - John & Carol Greenaway on the 1st green



Opening Day cutting the ribbon – Gareth Ward, Matt Brown, Greg Watson, Terry Lillie



Ken McKay, John Greenaway & Terry Lillie



15 Hole Opening Day winners



15 Hole Opening Day serving crew – Greg & Lorraine Montgomery, Maureen Monty and Ted Herring



18 Hole Opening Day



Greg Watson Gareth Ward



18 Hole Opening Day



Matt Brown Terry Lillie Michael Watt

January 2013 – with the new holes in operation, playing membership had increased by over 100 since last January, with a corresponding increase of around 30% in participation in competitions and general social play. Modifications to the course have occurred with a new 6th hole constructed to accommodate demands for an increased width of wildlife corridor at the Northwest end of the course, as well as a new green and lengthened fairway for the 3rd hole, and extended tee for the 4th. Changes to the 16th hole (Women's' forward tee to reduce to Par 4) and 17th hole (lengthened plus new tees to increase to Par 5) were completed and the final layout of our course was now a reality.

However, there will always be an ongoing commitment to maintenance and improvements. Our next major task will be the completion of replacement and upgrading of the irrigation grid, some early sections of which were showing the effects of over 30 years of constant use and have already been replaced thanks to further Government funds obtained through an application supported by Gareth Ward and again with great work by Paul Davies, Bruce Warfe, Jim Kovacs and team of workers to follow up Parrish Plumbing and Lee Maddinson after excavation and installation of the new main lines. An extension to the golf cart storage shed is under way and modifications to the Clubhouse are also envisaged. Never a dull moment!!!!

CLUBS within the CLUB

Women's Golf Club.

Women members have played a very important role in the formation and progress of this Club, notably our first and second Club Presidents, Marian Gray (1981/82) followed by Jean Crannage (1982/83). Jill Gumley served two terms as Hon.Secretary, the first from 1981 to 1983 and the second from 1987 to 1998.

The Women's Golf Club was formed at a meeting of 12 women on September 5th 1997 following a request from a group of Gerringong social golfers, Jill Gumley being elected as the first President.

Pennant teams commenced on April 20th 1999, followed by participation in the Round Robin competition some three months later, after the closure of Albatross golf club resulted in some 60 players joining the Club, 15 of these women having been in their Round Robin team.

Over the following years, as the mother club developed, the Women's club members have contributed in a huge way to the social side of Club activities, with their Melbourne Cup Day function being a classic example. They have also been great supporters of many charities involved in women's health, such as cancer research, as well as regularly contributing to the finances of the main Club.

Veteran's Golf Club.

The Veteran's Club was formed in 1997 with Tony Elliott serving as President from 1997 to 1999 followed by Lindsay Wellard from 2000 to 2005 and then 2007 to 20011. Lindsay had been the prime mover in the formation of the Vets and in appreciation has been elected as Patron.

Members are very much involved in the inter-club competitions run by the Mid-South Coast Veteran's Golf Association, in particular providing the course and running a day in the annual week of golf.

Vets have always been heavily involved in volunteer activities, in fact making up the majority of members in activities such as bush care, cart path construction, general club and course maintenance, Board of Directors as well as making regular contributions to the finances of the main Club for purchase of machinery, chemicals, sand and fertilizer whenever requested.

THE CLUBHOUSES

Our original Clubhouse was a converted shipping container (which is still in use for storage of members' golf carts) with a slot and honesty box for green fees. It also served as our machinery shed and Board Room, meetings being conducted while seated on various mowers. This was replaced by the donation of a large garage moved from John Greenaway's new property in River Road, which, with the addition of a new amenities block, kitchen and store room by Neil Lord (Lord & Gleeson) for \$44,400.00 served us well until some low life set fire to it in September 2000, with complete destruction of the building and everything in it. Unfortunately, although insured, the Club's broker, Macey's, had for some unknown reason, failed to include cover for loss due to fire in the policy. This oversight finally led to changes in the Board with Terry Lillie being elected as President, taking over the position from David Lamb.

Also donated around this time was a very large shed from the Hose family at Coastal Palms which became our existing machinery shed and work shop. After the fire debris was cleared our Clubhouse was the Cafe de Wheels (a converted bus) loaned by Tall Timbers Caravan Park and members recall happy times under the attached awnings.

Around that time Albatross Golf Club had been forced to close due to operational problems with the airstrip at HMAS Albatross and their Clubhouse was listed for demolition. We were fortunate to have members who had come over from that Club who were able to negotiate with the Navy for the removal of that Clubhouse to our course. It was cut and moved in three sections (at a cost of \$37,589.00) and re-erected with the great assistance of Neil Lord, Bob Hansen, Merv. Jones, John Yabsley, Kevin Huckel, Ken Smith and a team of very amateur carpenters and bricklayers. Reproduction of the previous amenities block involved another \$48,840.00. Many additions and modifications have taken place since then and will continue to be undertaken.

Catering began with the opening of the first holes, on a BYO basis, for barbecues after the games and what convivial times they were! Our first official caterer was Lisa Logan, wife of then Captain of the Club, Evan Logan. She was followed by Club member Robert Anderson, later succeeded by Stuart Priest with his Hooks and Slices Bistro. Next came Heidi Gulliver who changed the name to Bunkers Bistro, followed by Rob Shilton in the Good Slice Bistro.

Many changes have occurred in the kitchen over the years with equipment upgrades and extensions. The bar has advanced with installation of a new cool room/keg room to replace a motley collection of refrigerators as well as an up to date beer delivery system (all associated work again carried out by volunteers).



The first club house & dining room



Above & below - The second clubhouse



The second clubhouse being constructed



1996 - The third clubhouse being built next to Merv Jone's caravan (Below)





Clubhouse 3 and 1st (10th) tee



The third clubhouse

Third Clubhouse, before the fire — Sept. 2000



After the fire.



The Café de Wheels from Tall Timbers Caravan Park



Club House No.4 brought from MHAS Albatross and assembled by our volunteers





Adding veranda and re-roofing



Kevin Huckel, Garry Hoare, Gary Salway, John Yabsley lining second veranda

GOLF SHOP/PRO. SHOP

The completion of additions to the garage-based Clubhouse saw the first Golf Shop, run by Ron McFarlane, come into existence until the 2000 fire. Ron then continued to operate out of a rented demountable until the relocation and additions to the Albatross building. He provided golfers with a limited range of golfing gear, food and drinks as well as collecting competition and green fees. When Ron retired from this position in 2003 the Board engaged the Club's first professional, Shane Cochrane, to take over but this arrangement did not work out well and he quit the scene in 2004.

The Club was then very fortunate to engage Cec. and Maureen Montgomery in July 2004. They had been members since 1996, Cec. having served on the Board as Captain for many of those years. Before joining the Club Cec. had been a manager with the State Bank and Maureen was employed as an assistant at a Pharmacy in Dapto, where she continued for several years after Cec. took over the Shop, until she retired to help with the rapidly expanding business.

As the demands of running the Shop increased, Jim Butt, a PGA professional who was conducting coaching clinics at Jamberoo and Gerringong approached Cec. and Maureen regarding joining them and so a partnership was formed with Jim and his wife Leonie in July 2007 which continued until 2011 when ill health forced Jim to call it a day.

Enquiries for a replacement for Jim and Leonie brought to the Club a young PGA professional from Narrandera, Greg Collins, who, with his wife Joanne, blended seamlessly into the life of the Club and have now taken on complete ownership of the business following Cec. and Maureens' retirement in 2013 (Cec. still continues to assist in the Shop as well as now taking on the role of vice President of the Club).

VOLUNTEERS and GREEN STAFF

The principle of volunteering was established right from the very beginning when Cleary Bros. donated their bulldozer at the Commencement Ceremony. In the years prior to the introduction of play on the first three holes the area was maintained by Arthur Simmons and David Lamb with Victa lawn mowers (most times a phone call to Arthur at his home was answered by his wife Jean with the reply “he’s up at the paddock!” and both he and David were told often “why don’t you take your beds up there!” Arthur passed away in 2003 and is remembered by way of the Balkwill-Simmons Shield, the annual interclub competition between the Heads and Callala golf clubs. The Victa company donated a shield with a Victa emblem to be used by the Club but unfortunately this was lost in the 2000 fire.

These two were responsible for the creation of what is now our 11th (original 2nd) hole as Ken McKay’s plans showed only two holes in this section of the course and thus was born the idea of playing 3X3 to achieve the nine-hole competitions that began play on the course in 1994.

Trevor Kilner also assisted greatly by donating the use of his tractor and slasher to keep the remaining cleared areas under control, a task later taken on by John Greenaway who, over the many years, has contributed an inestimable amount of time and machinery use to course maintenance and development.

A veritable army of members have been involved in volunteer work over the years since commencement covering projects ranging from installing our irrigation systems (totally voluntary until the recent upgrades when Parrish Plumbing were contracted, and even then Club member Lee Maddinson headed up their team. Parishes’, through member Colin Parrish, have also been responsible for metal fabrications such as sheds for pumping stations, golf carts and machinery and frames for hole information displays.

Through all this time Clubhouse activities have been totally voluntary and the number of hours members have put in on bar duties via a roster system are impossible to calculate. Maintenance of the Clubhouse surrounds and gardens has been undertaken, for many years, by Gordon Howes working mostly on his own every Tuesday.

Our irrigation system has been overseen for many years by Paul Davies due both to his computer skills in operating the complex programme and virtual seven days a week attention to how the whole system functions and fixing any breakdowns that occur.

Another recently formed group, under the vocal direction of Pat Herrick has been responsible for the construction of cart paths through the course to replace the rough tracks worn by constant cart use. This task has been greatly assisted by the donation of the use of a Bobcat by the Strongbuild group of Berry and operated by Club Captain Geoff Collins

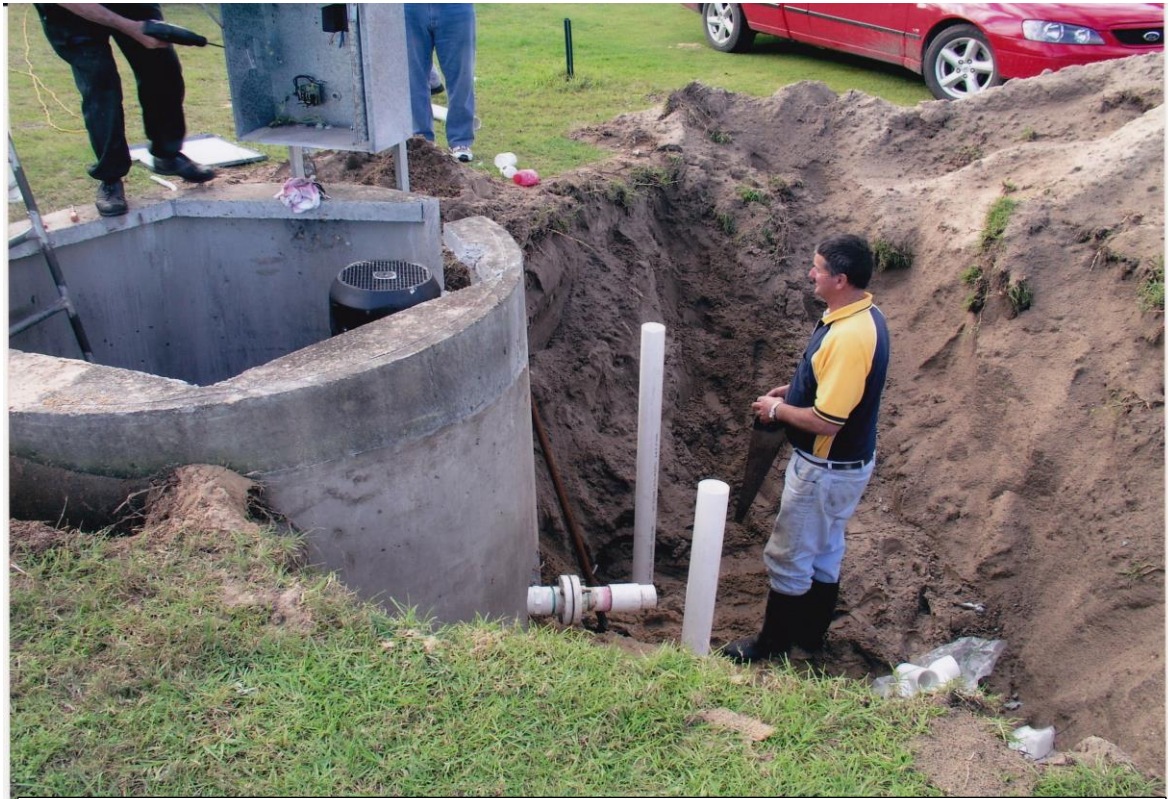
Our first official green keeper, Merv. Jones joined us in 1994. He was a retired policeman living in John Greenaway's Mountain View Caravan Park spending most of his time annoying John so much that John, in desperation, suggested he offer his services to the Club. This he did and so "Old Grumpy" became part of the team and worked tirelessly for many years for wages consisting only of his daily beers (which were many).

Also coming on board at that time was Alan (Biffa) Beveridge who contributed invaluable via time and use of his back hoe in the installation of our first pump stations, spear points, main lines and power cables for the irrigation system of subsequent holes, with the assistance of a band of workers led by Ken (Smurf) Smith, a semi-retired electrician who continued in the role of Club "sparky" until his retirement to Queensland in 2014, that role now being assumed by Bruce Warfe and Jim Kovacs

Tony Orford, a Club member since 1985, succeeded Merv. Jones as green keeper and has supervised all aspects associated with conditioning and maintaining the course in top condition since taking over, his official title has now been upgraded to Course Superintendent. Tony's previous employment had been as a palliative care nurse at Karinya in Berry, however his prior farming experience around Berry and Shoalhaven Heads served him well in the transition. His dedication to the job is reflected in the fact that the only comments on the condition and presentation of the course, especially the greens, received from visitors are always complimentary and that he has to be ordered by the Treasurer to "take his holidays". He is also a regular golfer, which is certainly a great asset for a green keeper

Tony retired in May 2018 and the position of Course Superintendent has been taken up by Keenan Hobbs who had been at Wollongong Golf Course for eight years, Superintendent for the last three. Keenan and wife Karyn now reside in Berry.

Many apprentices have been employed under the State Apprenticeship Scheme which provides attractive financial allowance packages to the Club for taking them on and seeing them through their four-year courses.



John Greenaway in another hole!!

The Bush care group has a long and proud history and was started to reduce impact on the unique environment of the Bangalay Sand Forest and the dunes and to protect the biodiversity of the surrounding area. As proven in 2000, when a massive bushfire raged through the adjoining National Park, the golf course provided a cleared and maintained buffer zone on the northern edge of the town. Beach access tracks adjacent to the Park and the bridle/walking track near the Clubhouse are also regularly maintained.

After the initial 9 holes were developed plans were prepared for a further 6 holes. Consultation with Shoalhaven City Council and the Department of Land and Water Conservation resulted in the development of a management plan for D.A. 99/2247 (Deighton & McGregor 2002) which required numerous environmental impact studies, one result being the requirement for the Club to build 116 nesting boxes to replace tree hollows lost during clearance for the additional holes. These boxes were made from marine ply by volunteers in Keith Borland's shed, at a cost of \$2000.00, and placed in situ 5 metres high in adjacent trees by A&D Tree Services. There they remained unused, for many years, eventually falling to ground.

Over 9,000 native trees, shrubs and grasses were also required to be propagated and planted. A nursery was established and Ross Lamond shared his vast horticultural knowledge with Terry Lillie, Maggie Paton and many volunteers. Seeds with provenance were collected from

around the course, propagated, raised and planted, today providing shelter and food for the local fauna. The nursery has been relocated and improved with more bench space and an automated watering system and has produced thousands of native plants, not only for the golf course but also for planting projects around the town. In addition Nowra High School made available their facilities, as a student project, to carry out propagation of seedlings and cuttings for the golf course.

The first lot of seeds collected on April 1st 2003 included *Angophora floribunda*, *Banksia integrifolia*, *Banksia serrata*, *Eucalyptus botroides* (Bangalay gums), *Glochidion ferdinandi* (Cheese tree), *Leptospermum laevigatum* (Coastal ti tree), *Lomandra integrifolia* and *Pittosporum undulatum*. To get an idea of the success of this venture a nursery stock take on January 19th 2005 records 4,270 plants plus 24 trays of seedlings with 400 mixed varieties planted out that morning, before the count. Volunteers planted on both sides of the 10th fairway, between the 13th and 18th fairways, on the dunes side of the 12th and 16th fairways and a central wildlife corridor was established adjacent to the 17th tee. Keith Muller, Don O'Driscoll and volunteers started the arduous task of manually reducing the impenetrable *lantana* thickets that surrounded the course using the cut and paint process.

The Heads Golfers Bush care Group was officially formed in November 2006 following a request by Club President Terry Lille. Shoalhaven City Council Bush care manager, Alisdair Stratton instructed the group on plant identification, control methods and safe working habits, with the original group comprising volunteers from Vets and Women's golfers, including Lindsey and Gloria Wellard, Gordon and Fay Howes, Maggie Paton, Terry Lillie, Keith Muller, Don O'Driscoll and Cliff Chambers with Co-Ordinator Noel Schneider.

Meeting weekly the group has contributed, up to 2018, over 9,000 volunteer hours to the control of invasive species and regeneration of native bushland. The *lantana* thickets were the original focus as these were limiting access and preventing natural regrowth of native plants. Small to medium sized *lantana* were cut back, pulled out of the ground and rafted, larger specimens were cut and painted. On the dunes the treated stumps were left in situ to prevent erosion before regeneration could take place.

More volunteers joined our ranks, including Pat Pearson, Ian and Denise Wenborn, Kit Tanner, David Patton, David and Gail Wilson, Keith Pepper, Harry Delany, Ed Szczepanowski, Nick Skinner, Warren Higham, Cheryl Grinlinton, Jim and Sandra Turner.

Others joined on an irregular basis for special projects such as National Tree Day and Clean Up Australia Day. These enthusiastic workers enabled a lot of clearing of invasive species to

be done faster than originally envisaged, then the plans for the final holes were submitted and it was a whole new ball game.

A further 6 hectares were required and many environmental impact studies were carried out and a vegetation management plan was needed for approximately 9 hectares to the eastern side of the course and 22 hectares to the west and vegetation between the new fairways. Connectivity was required from these 22 hectares to Seven Mile Beach National Park for wildlife corridors. The central corridor from the Park up to the Clubhouse was established, but another corridor was required at the end of Lovegrove Street which cause the 6th hole had to be changed from east to west to north to south, and the area revegetated.

In 2011 a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) was prepared by Peter Dalmazzo as a requirement of deferred commencement consent for DA08/2312 for extension of the golf course from 15 to 18 holes. Annual reporting of progress in implementing the VMP was also required, as a condition of the consent. The plan established measurable performance criteria and described specific and indicative requirements for monitoring and reporting, including 14 specified photo monitoring points, time frames for eradication/reduction of invasive weeds, seed collection and propagation for regeneration requirements and the establishment of the wildlife corridors. Fortunately, with the original management plan we had already completed work in certain areas.

The whole area was divided into 9 sections with East 1, 2, 3 and 4 stretching from the Surf Club to the National Park, Northern Boundary along the 5th fairway, Northwest at the end of Lovegrove Street, Central Habitat Corridor from National Park to 18th tee, West 1 on both sides of the 1st, 2nd and 8th fairways and West 2 adjacent to the 9th fairway. Before work commenced we collected native plants for future use and designated which trees should remain as remnant bush land between fairways. Once again lantana was our main target with removal, cut and paint and splatter gun canopy spray on larger infestations along with regular regrowth checks of previously cleared areas. Lantana, tobacco and bitou bush are now under control with asparagus fern, fleabane, bidens pilosa, cape ivy, cape daisy, Rhodes grass, African love grass and turkey rhubarb targeted and reduced.

A stipulation of the VMP was to dense plant the course perimeter to form a barrier against escape of golf course turf species into the bush. We have been doing this as an ongoing project and have been assisted since 2010 by Kiama High School students participating in our National Tree Day plantings. Over the past 9 years we have planted approximately 6,000 native shrubs, grasses, trees and ground cover around the course for Tree Day and established a good working relationship with the School.

The result of this tradition of volunteering has meant that our Club funds have not been called on to pay untold thousands if not millions of dollars to outside contractors for most of these very expensive works. Hence the Board has been able to maintain annual membership fees at an affordable level while maintaining and progressing our top class golf course and Club.



Dwayne Hose, Ken Smith Cec Montgomery



Jeff Symonds & Ken Smith with their juniors around 2003.



Turfing and bunkering the old 2nd (now 11th)



Tree planting between 10st fairway and Staples Street.



Regeneration between the 1st & 3rd – now 10th & 12th holes



The bunkers on the 10th – now filled in.



David Lamb, Merv Jones & Ron Thomas



David Lamb and helpers



How many Klm's of this have we installed ?



Merv. Jones giving 15th green it's first haircut



*Bar equipment acquired from Shoalhaven Ex-Sevices Club -
stored on Fred Leach's property.*





Thirsty work - fitting out the bar in Clubhouse 3. John Greenaway, Ron McFarlane, Ken Smith, Fred Leach & Alan Beveridge





Above & below – the new 2nd (11th) in 1998





*Terry Lillie, Cec. Montgomery & Alan Beveridge sinking spear points
- Cec's first job after joining the Club.*





Laying power cable to pump shed 13th green.





4th fairway



Jill Gumley, Lillian Hodges, Jacqui Yahsley, Linda Leach



Above & Below – Terry Lillie on the 9th fairway (now 18th)



ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

The passing of the Native Title Act by Federal Parliament in 1993 created a big problem for the Club as the Lands Department used the Act as an excuse to put on hold negotiations for the expansion of the course to 18 holes, although work still proceeded to go from three to six, six to nine and then to fifteen holes on the area of land originally allocated.

The local Jerrinja aboriginal tribe, as well as the Wadi Wadi people lodged claims on the land following an advertisement by the National Native Title Tribunal in July 1996 of a Notice of Claimant Native Title Determination Application for expressions of interest by interested parties. The Wadi Wadi withdrew but the claim by the Jerrinja eventually reached the Federal Court where it was dismissed on June 23rd 2000.

However, in 2007 the Club was again involved in another claim, lodged in May 2002, by the NSW Aboriginal Land Council under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 which involved all of the golf course and surrounding Crown land. The Minister for Crown Lands, Tony Kelly, had concluded that the land was not claimable within the meaning of the Act so the Land Council then referred the claim to the Land and Environment Court.

In November 2007 the Land Council withdrew that part of their claim involving the existing golf course land but maintained their claim on the land being an extension of Staples Street that the Club had used for access to our car park from the very beginning as well as it is providing public parking for access to the beach, also an area of land around the Council sewage effluent ponds to the North of Lovegrove Street. The judgement, by Judge Jagot, in January 2008 to allow the claim on these two parcels of land has had a profound effect on the Club in that other options for the course extension had to be pursued instead of the previously envisaged sewage pond area and prolonged negotiation with the Jerrinja group for a long term lease of the Staples Street extension for access to our car park and course.