

**The Senior Golfer's Union of South Africa Tour of Tasmania,
Australian Capital Territories, New South Wales and Queensland**

2-24 March 2013



TOUR REPORT



The Full SA touring Party

Tour participants

John and Cheryl Brownrigg	Captain	Royal Johannesburg & Kensington GC
Kerr and Kathy Cruickshanks		Mowbray GC
Ron and Barbara* de Villiers		Durban CC
Neill and Jenny Edwards		Zimbali GC
Alastair and Marilyn Forbes		Princes' Grant GC
Ross and Lynda* Grainger	Scribe	Royal Johannesburg & Kensington GC
Ian and Annie* Hancock		The River Club
Brian and Carole Holmes		Royal Johannesburg & Kensington GC
Richard and Robyn* Jelley		Royal Johannesburg & Kensington GC
Eric and Carmen Logan		Steenberg GC
David and Barbie* MacGillivray		Royal Johannesburg & Kensington GC
John and Louise* McCullum		Knysna GC
Mike Ryan	Photographer	Royal Johannesburg & Kensington GC
Ian and Moira Stadler		Hermanus GC
Peter and Jannett* Viljoen		Bryanston CC

Non Golfers *

REPORT

The tour was made possible by the efforts of many. The Seniors' movement of Australia led by their President Angus McIntosh and in South Africa led by Robin Beek and then by Rob Wassenaar, the tour portfolio holders, worked tirelessly to ensure that the planning for the tour was a perfect. Ensuring that everything went to plan was tasked to Dave Stuart in Australia and John Brownrigg in South Africa. Many others in both countries contributed significantly to the tour and our sincere thanks goes to them all.

The tour started with a slow gathering of excitement and numbers as some of the South African Senior golfers contingent gathered at Oliver Tambo international airport for the 2013 Australia tour long in the making. Some group members made their own long haul travel arrangements but most of the party got together in Hobart. The quick transfer at Sydney for Hobart meant a hasty check-in and it was curious to see all the old guys make a bee-line for the best looking attendant to help them with their electronic ticket issue.

Tasmania

A number of Tasmanian seniors provided a warm welcome at the airport on the Saturday afternoon followed by the bus transfer into town with our host Gerard McShane, President of the Senior Golfers' Society of Tasmania apologising for not taking us to the top of Mt. Wellington by cable car because: i) the mountain was covered in cloud and ii) there was no cable car! (apparently this has been a local topic of some debate). This was followed by the bus driver noting that golfers must always carry two pairs of socks because you may get a hole in one.

The tour party was accommodated at “Somerset on the Pier” located as the name implies on a pier in the heart of the Hobart dining and restaurant area. The apartments were fitted with washing machines and tumble dryers -the first notice that this was Australia and labour is not cheap.



Gerard McShane (right) President Senior Society Tasmania.

Sunday the seniors found their feet by taking a sea cruise organised by our hosts to Peppermint bay with lunch at the destination and short welcoming and thank-you speeches by Gerard and John Brownrigg respectively. The 75 km cruise of sheltered waterways gave a real connection to the Tasmanian lifestyle and wildlife and glimpses of renowned native Huon pine with enthusiastic guides in attendance.



Monday golf was an early tee off at Royal Hobart. Instead of playing on cored greens the tee times were moved forward and the coring delayed to follow after the golfers. Royal Hobart is relatively flat

as it is on the fringes of the Derwent river floodplain with typical Australian trees (lots of eucalypts) and vegetation. Greens are a bent/poa mix with bent/poa/fescue fairways. Lots of birds were spotted many with loud raucous calls. A wonderful days' golf in good weather was followed by lunch and toasts by Barry Roberts (Captain of the Tasmania Seniors) and John Brownrigg.



The SA team in their number 1 shirts.

Unfortunately the scores were not so wonderful. The overall result was 5-3 to Tasmania men and 2-2 for the ladies. Best SA betterball: Eric Logan and Dave Macgillivray 41 points, and 42 points for Marilyn Forbes and Jenny Edwards. The pairings were adjusted on the day to allow Ross Grainger to play with Stewart Wardlaw a past captain of Royal Hobart. Ross and Stewart had played together in 2007 during Royal Port Alfred's centenary celebrations. The non- golfing ladies in the meanwhile were taken on a visit to MONA (Museum of old and new art), described by David Walsh the creator of the museum as a subversive adult "Disneyworld". We gather it also contained a fair amount of erotica. Whatever it was it remained a talking point for the rest of the tour.



Tas Devil!!!

The highlight of Tuesday was a sit down barbeque lunch for 79 people at “Lovely Banks” a grazing property owned by Gerard McShane and home to 60 000 sheep, followed by a tour of the very impressive shearing sheds. Speeches from Gerard who again welcomed the South Africans and made a presentation of Huon pine paperweight to each SA Senior which was followed by a reply from John Brownrigg. Seniors were graciously and individually ferried to and from the farm by their hosts.



LOVELY BANKS SHEEP FARM



The Ladies enjoying the BBQ at Lovely Banks Farm



Marilyn Forbes, the famous Australian Golfer Peter Toogood and Alastair Forbes

Wednesday saw the team bid farewell to our Tasmanian hosts and fly via Sydney to Canberra.

Canberra, ACT leg

The brief flight to Sydney was a bit late so there was a scramble to catch the short connecting flight to Canberra. David Macgillivray was heard to comment that it wasn't an economy flight, but rather a diet flight. Once he had worked out how to break the wrapper on his minute snack pack the stewardess wanted to collect all uneaten food. Once again our hosts were waiting to welcome us at the airport with a bus and then a short trip to the Commonwealth Club. We were now getting used to the BBQ, which that evening was a sumptuous sit down meal with food cooked BBQ style. Angus McIntosh (President of the ACT Seniors), made us feel most welcome and we were able to test this by keeping the barmen up long, long after the wedding party at the Club had finished.



The Commonwealth Club Canberra

Golf on Thursday was at the Federal Golf Club. This was a morning game played in beautiful sunny weather. The bus route from our accommodation to the club passed right in front of South Africa House which raised a spontaneous cheer. The course consisted of bent/poa greens with wonderful couch grass fairways, many native trees and fair changes in elevation. The non-golfing ladies were taken on a tour of the gardens at the Governors' residence.



Brian and Carole Holmes, Cheryl Brownrigg and Angus McIntosh

An official dinner was held that night at Royal Canberra Golf Club. The scores for the Federal course competition were announced by Peter Morrison, Captain of ACT Seniors as 5½: 3½ but after queries and double checking were corrected to 4:4 the next day.



Peter Viljoen, Ian Stadler, Neill Edwards, Ross Grainger and Kerr Cruickshanks



Mike Ryan and Angus McIntosh

Friday was an early start on Royal Canberra with the first tee off at 7:15. Once again the weather was beautiful, hot and sunny. Royal Canberra is a 27 hole facility, (we played the traditional first 18), with poa/bent greens and cool season grasses (poa/bent/fescue) on the fairways. Effusive apologies were made by the members for the condition of the fairways that had just come through a drought and the Australian Ladies Open, but they were in fact in reasonable condition. The course has wide sweeping fairways, is well bunkered (deep and steep faces), but being part of the arboretum project has many, many lovely exotic trees that were planted at the time of the establishment of Canberra to see what would thrive. Another amazing sight was about a 75m long bridge built at one end of the course over a lake inlet specifically for cyclists and walkers (part of the extensive cycle track around Lake Griffen). The ladies, enjoying pre-dinner drinks on the patio of Royal Canberra, were entertained by the local kangaroo population grazing around the 18th green. Presentation of prizes was made at the official dinner at Royal Canberra. Australia won 5-3 with Kerr Cruickshank and Richard Jelley as well as John Brownrigg and stand-in Nye Hughes both with 41 points shining. Cheryl Brownrigg and Carmen Logan were the best of the ladies. "Boomslang" Hancock replied on behalf of the touring party. On the Friday evening a member of ACT Seniors each hosted one other Australian couple and two South African couples in their homes. This was a wonderful way to make friends and was greatly appreciated.



Kangaroo on the 18th Royal Canberra





The Ladies enjoying the view over the 18th



Ross Tharle, Dennis Bayada, Mike Ryan and Eric Logan



The Royal Canberra Club House



The beautiful 9th hole at Royal Canberra

The Sydney swing

A leisurely coach trip was made on Saturday from Canberra to Sydney with a stopover for lunch at the picturesque town of Barrimar.



By now the team was starting to show its spots as it broke into 3 groups for shopping, eating and drinking respectively. Once again there was a welcoming party headed by John Higson waiting at the hotel. This was followed by welcoming cocktails at the hotel. The Manley Pacific hotel is situated right on the Manly beachfront separated from the ocean only by a road, pedestrians, a cycle track a jogging path and the beach. The continuous activities up and down were a sight to behold. A sunny still Sunday morning was spent in a variety of ways until individual couples were hosted in the afternoon by their Australian counterparts, generally with a tour of north Sydney's scenic spots. The day ended with a traditional Australian barbeque at the spectacularly situated Long Reef golf clubhouse from where we were bussed back to the hotel.



Dave Stewart and John Brownrigg



Kathy Cruickshanks, Cheryl Brownrigg and Jenny Edwards



Manly beach area



Manly Pacific Hotel

Another sunny still day was laid on for Monday's golf at Royal Sydney. The clubhouse is spectacular and includes grass tennis courts, fitness centre as well as beautifully maintained gardens and course layout. After a "light" lunch we attempted to play golf. The bent grass greens complexes with their swales, mounds, bunkers and huge putting surfaces were a real challenge. Unfortunately, both men and ladies were trounced; 4½:3½ and 3:1 respectively. Best SA pairs were John Brownrigg & Alaister Forbes 42 pts, and Neill Edwards & Ian Stadler 38 pts. Marilyn Forbes & Carole Holmes were the best of the ladies on 33pts. Ivan Haege the Captain of Royal Sydney acted as MC. Sandy Dawson the President of the NSW Senior Golfers Society started with a humorous anecdote involving Peter Senior the golfer, Prince Albert of Monaco and the King of Spain. Peter Hogarty recited a Golfer's Grace and then Ivan welcomed all, as well as each SA club represented, and continued with an entertaining address. After dissecting the touring team "bios" he came to the conclusion that we had all been to school, were all of an advanced age and were not shy breeders. John responded with thanks for the course facilities and the wonderful hospitality and an open invitation to visit South Africa.



Royal Sydney Golf Club



Dave MacGillivray, Kerr Cruickshanks, Eric Logan



Robyn Jelley and Jenny Edwards



Our Friendly hosts at Royal Sydney



Carole Holmes, Jannett Viljoen and Peter Viljoen



Ian and Moira Stadler



Carmen Logan with the Opera House in the background



Mike Ryan and Richard Jelley



Barbara de Villiers, Louise McCallum, John McCallum and Ron de Villiers

A second days' golf in a row saw both men and ladies travelling to Elanora Country Club situated on the escarpment above the Northern Beaches of the city. This was a very different course with sweeping fairways up and down and some remarkable views of the ocean in the distance. A wonderfully maintained course with 6 yr old bent grass greens and no poa at all. A lunch was followed by golf in almost perfect weather. A competitive spirit meant that many games were only decided on the 18th but once again it was the locals who triumphed 5-3 and 2-2. Peter Viljoen and Robbie Neill! had 43 pts followed by Ian Hancock and Richard Jelley on 42. Cathy Cruickshanks and Moira Stadler were the best of the ladies on 39. Giles Coles a past President of the NSW Seniors commented on how the Seniors movement brings together those of like mind and similar interests and outlook on life. James Graham, the president of Elanora warmly welcomed the South Africans on behalf of the club, gave an interesting background to the formation of the 85yr old club and the 2002/04 reconstruction and noted that a regret of his was that he had not been able to play the #1 course in Knysna during his visit there. John thanked our hosts and in particular David, Gil and Ian, the engine room of the tour, and emphasised how indebted we were to them for putting such a wonderful tour together.



The beautiful Elanora Country Club



John Brownrigg, Neill Edwards Wal MacDonald



The First Hole at Elanora



Dave and Barbara MacGillivray

Wednesday was a day off golf. The perfect morning was spent energetically by some, and less so by others. The group gathered together with some of our Australian hosts for a late afternoon/evening and truly awe inspiring cruise around Sydney harbour. Imagine slipping under Sydney harbour bridge with the sun dipping behind you, delectable eats in your left hand and something else in your other hand.



Sydney harbour Bridge from our boat.

Thursday meant Manly Golf Club. The day dawned overcast with occasional light drizzle. This persisted until just after the lunch and shotgun start. At lunch, David Stuart the President welcomed David Cleary, Glenn Coyne and John Mater the President, Vice President and Captain of Manly respectively, as well as the tourists. The South Africans joined the NSW Seniors in one of their golf days with a total field of 67 players. As a result the format was a bit different with an individual stableford played in 4 balls. Manly had recently undergone extensive renovations and rerouting to the extent of dredging waterways and using this material to lift fairways out of a floodplain. The attention to detail with the planting was impressive. It is a relatively short course in very good condition and was played in a one club breeze. Prizes were announced by Adrian Byrne the Captain. The winning score of 38 pts was posted by Stan Marks followed by Ken Munro with Neill Edwards the best of the tourists on 37 pts. Other SA scores were Ross Grainger on 35 and Alastair Forbes on 32.



Manly Golf Course

Friday was an optional golf day at Pymble Golf Club. When the bus left the hotel with 11 on board at 8:30 it was raining quite heavily. However after a short wait at Pymble it cleared and a very pleasant round of golf was enjoyed by all on a hilly course.



The Team at Pymble

Friday was also the farewell dinner hosted by the NSW Seniors at the Manly Pacific hotel. David Stuart the President of the NSW Seniors welcomed all present and in particular Stan Davis and John Higson, both life members, as well as the ladies and men from South Africa. The ladies were each made a gift of 12 handmade greeting cards of various orchids painted by Fiona McGlynn, an Australian botanical artist. He then paid tribute to the sub-committee responsible for the tour; Alan Random – Transport, Ian McClennan – Finance and of course John Higson and last but not least his wife Lindy. He also thanked those clubs that had made their courses available. John Brownrigg in reply thanked Lindy for the ladies gifts. He thanked Gil, Ian and Dave for all the work done putting the tour together and noted that the NSW leg had been a highlight, the personal attention had been fantastic and the balance between golf social events and free time had been just right, our bus driver Michael had been a wonderful ambassador for Australia. John then made a formal presentation of “Senior Moments” to David Stuart and presented gifts to John and Trish Higson, Gil and Sue Coles and David and Lindy Stuart. The camaraderie and fellowship engendered was celebrated by the South African drinking a toast to the NSW seniors.



The Final Dinner at Sydney.



John Higson (right) our “guardian angel”

The Queensland quest

The tour party flew to Brisbane, which was noticeably warmer and more humid than Sydney, on the Saturday morning to be welcomed by Craig Estwick President of SQSG, Gary Clifford the Vice President, Ian King the Captain and Bill Buckle, first at the airport and later at the hotel with very welcome drinks. The plush Stamford hotel was centrally situated on the edge of the CBD and right on the river. Sunday a rest day was a stinker with the party splitting to do their own thing.

Brisbane Golf Club founded in 1896 is the oldest club in Brisbane and is laid out next to the river and was severely damaged by the 2011 floods. The course is undulating parkland, 5830m long with a fair amount of water that comes into play. Tees, fairways and greens are all couch grass although the club is busy redoing all the greens with a couch/champion variety. There are apparently 21 holes on the property so that some holes can be taken out of play. We started on the 10th followed by 12,13,21,14 and then the 15th to the 18th. Golf was played in warm overcast conditions with about a 1 club breeze. Mixed fourballs were the order of the day and the after golf drinks, dinner and prize-giving was very relaxed with no requirement for jacket and ties.



Craig Estwick welcomed us and congratulated Barbara de Villiers and Ian Hancock on their birthdays. Craig announced that Ted's nametag had been found by Joan although he was a bit mystified as Ted had been told to look for it in his underpants. He also thanked Gary as well as the Kings and Buckles. Prizes were presented by Gary Clifford who thanked Graham Hill and his wife Pip for their early planning role, as well as new recruit Alf Haddock. Gary remarked that the Queensland Seniors had a unique countback method based on age but with today's field of 53 with many ladies in the field, the

system had been suspended as it would either be rude to enquire of a ladies age or if not asked one could be accused of making dangerous assumptions. Best South Africans were Alastair and Marilyn Forbes and Eric and Carmen Logan both with 41 and Neill and Jenny Edwards on 42.



The non Golfing Ladies



Jenny Edwards with her prizes

Neil thanked our hosts for the hospitality and generous prizes and in so doing described Jenny's regulation par of drive into water, drop, topped shot that bounced on and then out of the water followed by a full 6 iron into the hole! Best overall score was 44 by Margot and Don McNee. Don had been on the 2008 seniors' tour to SA, had had a marvellous trip and hoped that we had a similar experience although he couldn't understand why we had gone to Canberra instead of spending more time in Queensland. Our hosts were thanked by John Brownrigg whose riposte to Don was that the main reason we went to Canberra was to enjoy the personal touch of our hosts and to try and get the Brumbies coach back to SA.

An intermittently overcast and sunny "freeday" on Tuesday was followed by an overcast Wednesday at Indooroopilly Golf Club with a brisk breeze. Indooroopilly is different in that it has four "nines" that are combined in different ways to produce two 18 hole layouts. The ladies played the Green/blue course whilst the men tackled the Red/gold. The courses are beautiful rolling parkland layouts adjacent to the Brisbane river. The January 2011 floodline is recorded at a point substantially higher than most of the course. The club has done a superb job in removing the silt and returning it to a pristine condition. Once again all grass including greens is couch. A light lunch preceded the golf on a beautiful layout. The rain came down for 2 or 3 holes on the front nine, cleared then later resumed with a light drizzle.



Garry as host at the after golf dinner, recognised both Craig Estwick for his role with the preliminary arrangements and Ian King's role with the final arrangements. Rose Spalding the Ladies Captain welcomed the SA ladies but strangely commented that they had been difficult to get off the 1st tee (herding kittens?). The winning score was 45 (Trudy and Sally) and the best SA score returned was 42 from Cheryl Brownrigg & Moira Stadler. The men participated in the Queensland Seniors individual stableford. Ian King before making the presentations reminisced about the various sporting contacts between the two countries over the years. He finished by commenting that the current top 10 standings for the Presidents Cup has 6 South Africans and 4 Australians. When he went on to comment on the Royal Queensland origins of many players he got spirited replies from Indooroopilly members. For the record the aggregate score was Australia 405 : SA 368. The best score was Laurie Muller on 37 and Ian Read the runnerup on 34. The best that SA could manage was Neill Edwards 30, Ian Stadler 29 and Ross Grainger 28. Anzies Hancock thought that Ian had mistakenly left his jacket and tie behind and so brought it to the clubhouse. Ian was as a result unanimously designated captain for the evening and graciously thanked out hosts for all their efforts, arrangements, dinner and the spirit in which the golf had been played.



Garry Clifford and Craig Estwick

The bus ride back to the hotel was a noisy affair. First Dave Macgillivray was persuaded to sing Old Man River over the intercom from his usual position in front of the bus – a rather appropriate piece for those who know the words. And then the piece de resistance – Kerr Cruickshanks’ production and rendering of the tour song set to the music of Music of the Night from the Phantom of the Opera. The entire bus joined in with the rousing chorus. The full text is printed elsewhere.

Thursday was ostensibly a rest day and we bussed out to the Sirromet Winery and award winning restaurant Lurleen’s which are about 30 minutes out of town – superb food, wine and comaradie; back to the hotel for a drink and final tour supper all together at a local restaurant opposite the hotel.





Enjoying the Wonderful Cuisine at Lurleens

And so to the final game of golf played at Royal Queensland Golf Club. Tee off was a shotgun 8:30 start. The day started overcast and still, but was very humid. The cloud cover cleared a bit as a slight breeze came up. The course is set on the banks of the Brisbane river near the estuary and is relatively flat with wide fairways. It does however have many fair but strategic bunkers on the fairways and around the greens, demanding forethought and accuracy. Again the grass is blue couch throughout and in good condition and well maintained. The greens complexes were large and one or two seem to have been built over distorted whales. The chilled water provided at 3 watering points was much appreciated in the humid conditions. Marilyn Forbes had a vocal celebration of her birthday on the bus, a reminder to some!





Getting the putting Skills up to scratch!!!



The beautiful Royal Queensland Club House

The evening proceedings started with a dinner followed by prize giving for the Queensland –SA challenge and presented by Garry Clifford. Gary after calling for a round of applause for the SA visitors noted that he had been delighted to spend a week in our company enjoying the golf,

comradie and bonding and earnestly hoped that we would remain in contact. Best SA score was Neill Edwards and Richard Jelley on 41 followed by Ian Stadler and Ross Grainger on 40. The winning Queensland score was 47 points from Tim and John. Both Richard and John made short but witty thank you's. For the ladies, best were Cheryl Brownrigg and Kathy Cruickshank with Kathy thanking our hosts for their hospitality. No mention was made of the challenge result. There seemed to be a few ex South Africans in Queensland which elicited comments such as "saved the best for last", "beautiful one day and perfect the next" and "next to SA, Australia is the best place to live". The total field of seniors was 76 with further prizes being awarded by Ian King for this competition. The evenings' proceedings were brought to a close by President Craig Estwick who noted that golf was a catalyst and the seniors movement built on this to form strong bonds of brotherhood and friendship. He also thanked his Vice president, Garry Clifford for his efforts over an extended period and Captain Ian King for his contribution to the weeks invigorating golf.



John Brownrigg presents "Senior Moments" to Craig Estwick

John Brownrigg replied on behalf of the South Africans. He thanked Garry for all his efforts as well as our hosts not just for the availability of the golf courses but also for Brisbane and Queensland. He reminisced about the tour from Tasmania through Canberra to Sydney, about the people; some of our non- playing ladies who were unplayable, the lengths to which golfers go to continue playing such as the 2 knee replacements of Ian, and finally confirmed that we had had fun, had raised the GDP of Australia and were looking forward to meeting again as many as possible of the Australian seniors. He then made a presentation of Senior Moments, a history of the Seniors Golf Union of SA, to Craig.

Some general observations

The tour party was bussed virtually everywhere particularly as far as trips to airports, hotels and golf clubs were concerned. This helped engender a wonderful tour party spirit and ethos.

Most courses that had couch grass greens and even some of those with bent grass greens encouraged one to pull trolleys over the green, the rationale being that trolleys would not always use the same narrow strip between fairway and green. Not a single caddie was seen during the entire trip. Pull trolleys were made freely available and carts were always available for hire.

Australian etiquette on the greens is to putt out. Most golf in Australia is an individual format. The handicapping system is very similar. Even with their weather and the fact that most courses are two loops of nine, they do not stop for a "halfway house". Australian clubs also struggle to get their members to rake bunkers.

Be sure to ask for a schooner of your favourite tap beer.

The quality of Australian food is superb and the dishes varied. The serving arrangements at virtually all the dinners did however cause some surprise. Inevitably two different starters and two different main courses were offered. However you had no choice in the matter. If you did not fancy what was put in front of you, you had to negotiate with your neighbours.

All in all a wonderful tour.

Tour Song

© Kerr Cruickshank 2013 (sung to "Music of the night" from Phantom of the Opera)

Senior Golfers touring in Australia
SA seniors we tried not to fail ya
We started in Tasmania
jet lagged, a bit insane ya
But soon we found the Tassies were alright
Just playing golf and drinking through the night.

Next stop Canberra then went on to Sydney
where we found we exercised our kidney
First game was Royal
with members very loyal
Their bunkers gave us such a big fright
Still playing golf and drinking through the night

Then we played at lovely Elanora
Lots of fauna and some pretty flora
but they had lots of hills
so we needed plenty pills
to keep our bods from feeling not quite right
Still playing golf and drinking through the night

On to Brisbane capital of Queensland
Much much warmer than in Greenland
We played at Indooroopilly
Some thought the name was silly
but the course was great if slightly tight
Still playing golf and drinking through the night

Royal Queensland brought to conclusion
We all had fun and almost no confusion
We got on so well
it was not the tour from hell
and we didn't have a single serious fight
Still playing golf and drinking through the night