



Newsletter, Autumn 2021

'COVID normal' a whole lot better than 2020

From the President

While the shadow of the pandemic continues to hang over us, there is a sense of normality finally returning to our golf. This was particularly apparent with our third Symes Motors BMW Pro-Am. It's fair to say the Club took a punt in booking the event: At the time COVID was still very much in the headlights, but buoyed by the enthusiastic response from our sponsors and volunteers we made our preparations and crossed our fingers. As it turned out, we needn't have worried, with the event proving an enormous success ... again. I am very mindful, though, that a lot of Club people - and PGA officials - put a lot of work into ensuring the event ran smoothly and safely. A special thanks to our hard-working Treasurer Andrea Minnis, who despite her hectic schedule did not hesitate to take on the additional role of COVID Officer. Andrea did a great job of ensuring we are compliant with the law.

There is also a different feel out on the golf course, with players much more relaxed whilst still ensuring they are socially distancing (not hard when you drive like some of us!). The Committee recently authorised the use of bunker rakes and removing pins when putting if desired. Interestingly, most players currently seem to be leaving the pin

in, having grown accustomed to it during COVID restrictions.

I must commend Course Chair Lex Johnstone, Superintendent Dylan Knight and staffer Chris Atkinson, Course Committee and our Tuesday volunteers on the presentation of the course for the Festival of Golf. I don't think I've ever seen it better and Lex and Dylan are focused on further improvements. See Lex's report below.

It was wonderful to welcome Fosterville Gold Mine's Environment & Community Superintendent Will Wettenhall to golf last week to present the plaque commemorating the mine's sponsorship of the new Captain's Office. Will gave us some warm words about Fosterville's community program and its high regard for the golf Club.

Another presentation of note was the award of Life Membership medallions to Loretta Prowse and Tony Lindrea. They join seven other LMs as part of a select group of people who have contributed a huge amount to the Club over the past five decades.

Committee is currently considering how best to proceed on the following projects:

- > Viewing deck beside the 18th. Engineering drawings are completed and lodged with Council and work will commence soon.

- > Cart storage. We have 10 Members on a waiting list for on-course cart storage, so we are mindful of finding a timely solution ... but one which fits our broader vision for our facilities.

- > Clubhouse extension. We intend to form a dedicated project team to manage this, reporting directly to Committee. Early days yet.

- > Tennis courts redevelopment. City Council proposes to fund a major redevelopment of this community facility. Obviously our Club is taking a keen interest in the plans given the proximity to 'our' clubhouse and practice green. The Axedale Recreation Reserve Committee manages the whole Reserve - including golf course, tennis courts

and clubhouse - and in this instance the Axedale Tennis Club is clearly the 'leading player' in working with Council. Those bodies have ensured our Club is engaged in discussions and we thank them for that.

Otherwise it's pretty well business-as-usual and Committee is focused on providing Members with good golf and good value for money.

ALLAN ANDREWS



ABOVE: (l-r) Women's Captain Jan Walklate, Fosterville's Will Wettenhall, President Allan Andrews and Men's Captain Rod Threlfall.

BELOW: Many years of Axedale experience (l-r) Annette Purdy and Helen Martin nominated Loretta Prowse; President Allan Andrews; and Tony Lindrea with his backers Life Members Garry Harrop and David Lubke.



'Fred's future stars' shining brightly



Tim Doye's beautiful photo of Fred's junior clinic on a Tuesday afternoon in February. Good attendances continue with 11 very keen beginners ranging from 7 years to 17 benefitting from Fred's valuable fundamentals. The majority are aged 8 - 10. It's great to see the junior club growing - we have more than doubled our numbers in six months, with 34 youngsters

registered. It's great to see them really enjoying themselves in such a wonderful environment.

Course 'best and getting better'

FROM COURSE CHAIRMAN LEX JOHNSTONE

I'd like to acknowledge the work of the course staff in preparing our course in great condition for the Pro-Am, March Festival of Golf and the ongoing Club Championships. I believe the tees, fairways, bunkers and especially greens were in excellent condition and continue our upward trajectory. Effective planning, building staff capacity, continually improving our equipment and machinery and of course the weather, will guide continuous improvement.

Our greens are in great putting condition and are in a healthy state heading into the cooler seasons. Couch encroachment is both a short-term and long-term issue. We are trialling a slow-release chemical to gradually remove Poa from the greens. Greens renovation is planned for October.

The new 12th, 14th & 17th tees are now in play. 12th & 14th have been top-dressed and will be fertilised again for the Winter break..

Whilst our thousands of trees create the beauty that is 'Royal Axedale', it is important they not impede good golf shots and we constantly monitor encroachment into fairways. We are looking to engage our Arborist to prune a few encroaching branches to ensure all holes play fairly for all golfers. He will also be removing a lot of the stumps around the course.

The 8th and 17th fairways have been vertidraind (thousands of 250mm deep holes punched into them) this week after the rains to assist with soil health and promote

optimum Tif Tuf growth. Top dressing and fertilising will continue prior to Winter.

After further discussion, Course Committee have recommend the 4th/5th fairways are the next to be resurfaced following the successful trials on 8 and 17. This will be completed in November. Over the next 12 months, we will be planning major works for the 3rd fairway (re-levelling, irrigation etc) to make the hole a fairer one to play without losing any of its character and difficulty. Subject to Committee ratification, the 2nd and 3rd fairways will then be resurfaced in November 2022.

LEX JOHNSTONE



ABOVE: Our Sunday volunteers roll up couch grass sods for transplanting to the 19th green. The test beds of turf on the practice fairway will eventually be totally sown down to our chosen fairway grass Tif-Tuf and will become a permanent turf nursery, ensuring we always have turf ready for any projects. The Club wishes to acknowledge the Axedale Reserve Committee of

***Management representatives for approving development of our turf nurseries.
BELOW: Another 'sod' of a project! The huge area between the old men's and women's 17th tees was transformed into one 50-metre-long teeing ground, which will enable us to spread the wear whilst occasionally moving the men's tee so far forward that even your estimable newsletter editor can drive a ball over the hill!***



Gardens readied for Autumn planting



Thanks to the incredible late-March rainfall, our garden beds and 'non-golf' areas are suddenly ready for Autumn planting. Pictured above is the bed alongside the practice green - in which space is limited given the good growth of current shrubs - and below is one half of the '15th tee bed' which has scope for more plants. We also plan further planting on the 1st and 9th tees and in the bed between the 1st and men's 2nd tee, which is suited to bog-loving plants. Keen gardeners should watch for details of garden working bees which will be called as required.



FROM THE CAPTAINS

Festival proves a hit ... mainly

The month of March saw the Festival of Golf (FOG) program, where events from the 2020 Annual Tournament have been shifted to coincide with the Autumn Tournament schedule. Playing numbers were quite acceptable in most events, however numbers particularly in the JG Mill Cup and the Ladies Perpetual Trophy event were less than we anticipated. The new Junior Stableford Championship attracted a reasonable field from across central Victoria and we will look to build on this.

We also received feedback from some Members who believed there was too much golf crammed in at the expense of availability for social golf. Match Committee will conduct a review, bearing in mind the Festival was in response to the unique situation foisted on us by the COVID pandemic.

Lesley Elvey has been a wonderful addition to the event program. Her work with entries and the management of the events has made our jobs very easy. The FOG should produce a handy profit for the Club.

The Pro-Am was incorporated into the March schedule and it was another great day for the Club.

On advice from the PGA we have made a local rule to allow for the removal of flagsticks and the use of bunker rakes. This will allow golf to return to some form of normality.

Training of the computer scoring system will ramp up soon as we need more of the regular volunteers who usually work in the office to become proficient with the system so the work can be shared. A roster can then be prepared which will allow better planning for competition days.

The new computer makes the process quicker as well; thanks to Jan for arranging the purchase of this item.

We are working on a event schedule for month by month events so Members can be aware of upcoming events and therefore plan their golf schedules.

Men's Pennant was off to a sloshy start, with Women's matches starting on 12 April. Women have three teams – two Div 1 and one in Div 2. Twenty women Members registered for a PGA clinic at Neangar to start Pennant.

Men seemed reluctant to enter on traditional 'women's days' during the Festival, prompting us to cancel a couple of men's events. Match Committee will develop guidelines about minimum field sizes for viable events.

ROD THRELFALL & JAN WALKLATE

Some of our Festival winners



ABOVE: The Women's 4BBB was taken out by Janelle Wilson and Marianne Dunn, pictured with Camden Way sponsors Sheryl and Brian Retallick.

BELOW: They might have dressed like Galahs, but they swooped like eagles - Ambrose victors Emma O'Connor, Stephen Jeffrey, Stu McGibbon and Annette Holmes.

BOTTOM: Josh Britten from Maryborough was our inaugural Junior Stableford Champion and Captain Rod Threlfall presented his trophy plus a 'free ticket' into the Pro-Am. What a great experience for the young man.





Stu wins Ian Martin Trophy



Stu McGibbon is presented with the Ian Martin Trophy by the man himself, Life Member Ian. The trophy is run across the 12-month calendar, with a Qualifier once a month on Thursday. The Qualifiers then play off for the cup, which Stu won with 36 points on a low-scoring day. Stu told the Thursday men's gathering he was honoured to win an award named after a Life Member.



Yummy finds temporary course tasty

Evergreen David Yum found the temporary course to his taste when he shot three under his age - a round of 78 against an age(less) of 81. Forget the eight par threes for a moment, though, and consider a bloke in his ninth decade shooting 12 over par - great effort, Dave.



Thanks to Edwards Providore for their continuing sponsorship of the Club. 2020 was tough for small businesses such as this, so please support Edwards and all our sponsors.