



1939 to 1954 'World War 2 & Beyond'



[Editor's comment - I've grouped all of the years of World War 2 into one section as the records are a little mixed up given the tension of the times. It is clear that during this period the associates kept the club going whilst many of the men were away at the war.]

One of the most important events of the RCGC took place during this period, that being the amalgamation of the Red Cliffs & Westcliffs Golf Clubs.

- At the February 1939 of the General Committee the first moves to merge with the West Cliffs Golf Club took place with the appointment of a committee of three to investigate the proposal.
- This year also saw a number of vacancies on the committee as members resigned and joined the armed forces.
- In August 1940 the merger with West Cliffs Golf Club took place at a meeting chaired by Dr. Zimmer, where it was obvious that most were in favour of the amalgamation.
- In 1941 several members of the West Cliffs Golf Club took up positions on the Committee. These included Mr. Young, Mr. J. Duck, Mr. A. Jenkins, Mr. Tonzing and Mr. Considine.

The 'Golf Club Ball' was not held in 1939 and the associates decided to play the full 18 holes before stopping for afternoon tea as they usually did after 9 holes. Mrs V. Keogh won the 1939 Associates Championships, the first of her 11 times she would win the title.

The AGM of 1941 saw the start of a new era for the club with the long desired union of the two golf clubs. Annual subscriptions for the men were now one pound 15 shillings [\$3.50] and the ladies paid one pound one shilling [\$2.10]. There was the general view that it would be preferable for the Mildura Shire Council to take control of both the property and golf in the district.

The war continued to take its toll on the club and the district and in 1941 Sr. Tourney was the first nurse to leave the district for overseas duty during the war. It was decided that golf should continue however, even though times were difficult members and associates still needed some relaxation and all funds from games went to patriotic purposes only. There were a number of occasions when the club was saddened by the loss of past members in action, but the club went on, mainly through the efforts of the associates.

The 1942 and 1943 annual reports were presented at the same time owing to the fact that the committee hadn't changed due to the wartime conditions.

- Mrs. Hammet ran a garden party and raised twenty pounds [\$40.00] for the POW Fund. It was these types of activities that kept the club together.
- No club championships were played in 1942 or 1943.
- The Riverside Golf Club offered their course to our members and associates, but for many getting there was a problem.
- In 1943 nine holes were prepared and the AIF Cup was played in Mildura.

In her 1944 President's report Mrs. Wright said: "...victory and the end of the war was in sight and we must have our club flourishing for when the boys return home."

By 1945 the situation was improving and a bus was given a trial run from the Red Cliffs township to the course. The club was still paying 13 pounds [\$26.00] annually for the lease and the insurance costs were 3 pounds 3 shillings [\$6.30] per annum. During 1945 there were further attempts to buy the land. Mr Fred Weatherburn found that the Lands Department had ruled that it could only be bought at public auction and the club was advised to secure an extension on the existing lease. Food parcels for Britain were discussed, kitchen alterations were made and the club's first septic tank was installed.

Many working bees were conducted throughout 1946 both on the course and around the clubhouse area. As well as a general updating of the clubhouse a lock-up shed that cost approximately 75 pounds [\$150.00] was erected. There was another change to the clubhouse with the erection of a 16 foot X 12 foot [approx 5mts X 3mts] extension to the rear of the members room. Once again in true RCGC spirit this was all done by voluntary labour.

In August of 1946 the club celebrated its 21st birthday and the associates were allocated 5 pounds [\$10.00] for catering purposes and nobody went hungry. Shrubs were planted around the clubhouse to mark the occasion. Quite a few 'Foundation Members' were invited as guests of the club and the ladies were presented with posies of flowers. A tea and dance followed and the day was most successful for the club. Golf tuition was re-introduced at a cost of 10 shillings [\$1.00] per half hour and the associates decided to discontinue the tradition that the winner of the ladies knock out provided a cocktail party. Although not recorded officially, it's likely that this decision reflected to tough economic conditions of the times.

The men's Club Championships in 1947 were played as a 36 hole stroke event on a Sunday. The following weekend the four best scores in each grade played a match play semi-final in the morning and the two winners played the final in the afternoon.

In 1948 Mildura and Riverside Golf Clubs started golf week, which is still going today. Some 'modified' grassing was carried out on our fairways and the Belar tree on the 6th fairway was under threat of removal. After much discussion, it was decided to leave it there, a decision many golfers since have no doubt regretted! Mr. Cramp and Mr. Bob Langford brought up the idea that teams of men be assigned to each fairway in an attempt to speed up the improvement process. This worked well for a while, but faded away over time. At about the same time there was quite a lot of discussion in the club about how much work was required to maintain the bunkers on the course. It was decided to replace the bunkers with mounds and the Greens Committee was given the task of working out where the mounds should be placed.

In 1951 the dam on the 10th fairway was completed, which allowed the irrigation of the 2nd, 4th, 10th and 12th fairways to proceed. It was also in this year that the club decided to 'strike a blow' against the 'demon drink' with the decision that 'lights out' time was 6.15pm sharp to end the process of 'late hours' at the club. There was also a major problem with bees in the chimney and the author of these notes indicated that they must have been very persistent bees because the problem still existed in 1980.

In Mr. Bob Langford's 1952 President's Report he indicated that the club had had a very successful year and reported that the first stages of grassing the course had cost 547 pounds 0 shillings and 11 pence [approx. \$1095.00], which included the cost of a mower, pipes and a pump. Club membership had increased significantly with 104 male members and 71 associates. Competition fees were set at 2 shillings [\$0.20] and annual subscriptions were 4 pounds 4 shillings [\$8.40] for men and 2 pounds 2 shillings [\$4.20] for women with an entrance fee of 2 pounds 10 shillings [\$5.00].

During the 1950's repeated working bees were held on the 1st, 7th, 8th and 9th fairways in an attempt to get grass growing. During these years the club was very concerned about the financial position of the club, which was not good. However, the club would not be deterred from their aim to buy the land on which the course was located. Another bid to the Lands Department was made under the direction of Mr John Duck, which again proved to be unsuccessful.

In 1952 the members asked the associates if they could raise 300 pounds [\$600.00] during the year to assist with the cost of laying electricity to the course. Working bees were well attended and early in the year the clubhouse walls were sprayed with kalsomine and a lot of furniture was painted. In traditional RCGC spirit, many of these working bees were held before golf even started for the year. A stainless steel sink costing 23 pounds [\$46.00] and a 5 jet heater for hot water costing 18 pounds 11 shillings and 3 pence [approx. \$37.50] were installed in the kitchen, furthering improving facilities at the club.