



1955 to 1969

'The Big Flood & Other Challenges'



In 1955 the associates paid to have the verandah closed in and a large wire screen was erected on the old 18th tee to protect people from wayward drives from the 17th tee. It wasn't until the early 1980's that the 18th tee was moved further over and the wire screen removed. It was at this time that Olive tree cuttings were taken and given to members to care for with the view to planting them on the course to reap financial gain. The House Committee reported a record profit of 50 pounds [\$100.00] following a mixed event. Mr. Ern Seabrook lined the verandah, which had just recently being closed in and thanks were extended to him for cutting large amounts of firewood for the clubhouse.

The year that many older residents of the district refer to as the year of the big flood, 1956 saw an invitation extended to the members of the Riverside Golf Club to avail themselves of the club's facilities. The men's club championships were played as a one day 36 hole event and subscriptions had risen to 4 pounds 4 shillings [\$8.40] with an entrance fee of 7 pounds 7 shillings [\$14.70]. Mr. Litchfield suggested that green fees be set at 5 shillings [\$0.50]. Once again, working bees were a feature of the club when the sand scrapes and tees were all resurfaced. A concrete mixer was used to mix sand, oil and saw dust to carry out the resurfacing project.

Nineteen fifty-seven was a big year for the club and will go down in history as one of the club's most important years. On the 18th October a public auction of the land on which the course was located was held. After many attempts to purchase the land it was sold to the 'Trustees' for 850 pounds [\$1700.00] to be paid in 10 yearly instalments at 4.5% interest.

[Editor's note - there is no indication who these 'trustees' were]

One can only imagine the elation in the club after finally realising a long-held goal to own the land on which the course was established. It is fair to say that land ownership is one of the greatest strengths of the RCGC today and something that sets it apart from some other golf clubs in the district. It was in this year also that the 'members' [the men] expressed their gratitude to the associates for their untiring efforts by organising a golf day when the men did all the catering with a social evening following the day's golf.

In the late 1950's it was decided to grass the back nine holes and lay pipes down. During this time the club's minute books make constant mention of the many working bees attended by members and associates. The finances of the club had improved and the President, Mr. Gill was congratulated for his drive and inspiration both financially and club wise. The House Committee, headed by Ern Seabrook also reported some good gains, so the club was 'on a bit of a roll'. Mr. Bob Langford was asked to 'look into' the matter of

misconduct on the AIF Cup day. A sub-committee was formed to run the event, but they declined to accept responsibility for the conduct displayed on the day.

By 1960 the course had been fully pipelined at a total cost of 908 pounds [\$1816.00]. At this time Red Cliffs was trying to be included in the Mildura Golf Week program and the Match Committee were seeking an extra 105 yards [approx. 96mt] to enable the standard scratch to be increased to 69. This was the first year the Blair Seeley Cup was played at Red Cliffs and Perc Ferguson and Aub Ransome rotary hoed the tees and arranged to run water to the 3rd & 4th fairways. Grassing of the tees was progressing and 13 had been completed by this time.

In 1963 three ladies – Mrs Gill, Knott & Bridley were invited to a ‘member’s’ meeting to discuss alterations to the course to enable the standard scratch to be raised. Two months later VLGU representatives visited the course and suggested various holes be lengthened and more trees be planted. Joe Litchfield carded a remarkable 67 during the 1963 club championships, which he went on to win, one of several times he achieved this feat during his time at the club.

In 1964 the club was granted a liquor licence, mainly as a result of the untiring efforts of Mr. J. Duck. The annual fee for this first licence was 75 pounds [\$150.00]. Green fees increased to 7 shillings and sixpence [\$1.45] and we paid 4 shillings and sixpence [\$0.45] for a bottle of beer and one shilling [\$0.10] for a glass. Mr. Rouse suggested that it was time for the club to purchase a cash register for the club with dollars and cents on it.

[Editor’s note: Australia converted to decimal currency on the 14th February 1966]

Throughout the late 60’s any member lucky enough to get a hole-in-one were given a free beer in a special pewter mug purchased by Mr. Fred Weatherburn to be used on each occasion a hole-in-one was recorded. In 1969 the committee gave its approval for the ladies to wear slacks on the course. It was also at this time that the Victorian Agriculture Department were asked to do a soil survey on part of the course land with the view to the club going into the production of wine grapes, but nothing came of the project.