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# GIFT IN MEMORY

## HAROLD AND SYBEL WHITTLE

*I was keen for my first donation to the Future Fund to be a "Gift in Memory" of my parents Harold and Sybel Whittle. I am most grateful to Headland Member and author Tish Lees for researching and writing the story.*

### **Simon Whittle**

The acoustical sounds of a xylophone emanated from the 'Tin Shed' as Harold Whittle ran a golf club along the corrugations accompanied by a loud rendition of whatever song came to his mind at the time. And so the 1956 New Year was heralded in at the Headland Golf Club! One can only second guess the celebration led by Harold's renowned prowess as a raconteur and natural speaker.



*Harold (left) outside the first clubhouse*

Having been constructed mid year to house a newly acquired tractor, by December the 'Tin Shed' not only boasted a concrete floor but also a bar and importantly – a liquor licence.

The routine was the first players to complete their round were seconded to drive the short distance to Weakley's butcher in Burnett Street where they collected an already chilled 5 gallon keg. Harold's natural

ability to put newcomers and members at ease meant no encouragement was needed to lower the keg – a compulsory exercise as no alternate refrigeration existed.

Notes from Club minutes of October 1956 stated “You will be interested there are now 5 holes in playable condition.....” and “...the committee have made arrangements whereby they can purchase any new clubs, bags, balls etc” How we take such luxuries for granted today!

The minutes continued..... “The Club had now been in existence for 15 months during which period good progress has been made in the construction program. This has only been accomplished by the great efforts of a very small core of voluntary working members and the employment of outside labour. Insufficient working capital has curtailed the efforts of the Committee who had to exercise the greatest discretion with the employment of the funds available.”

One year later the total membership was 146.

As with fellow members, Harold was a cog in the Club’s wheel of development with his ability to turn his talents to almost any task with enthusiasm and humour. Including the pleasure of having his young son Simon help on Saturday mornings as they collectively mowed the greens and changed the holes.



*Harold, Sybel and Simon off to golf*

The highlight of 1959 was the official opening of the ‘new’ Club House by the Premier Mr Nicklin.

Followed under Harold’s Presidency in October 1965 the opening of the 18 hole 6,288 yard course officially opened by Sir Emmanuel Hornibrook President of the Queensland Golf Union. Although happy memories of the Tin Shed lingered longer for many!

Recording in the Club Minute Books during Harold’s stewardship constantly refer to the diligence expended with respect to every detail and aspect of development – even to the triumph of the Bar’s cash balance discrepancy being only one penny! The premises were not immune from petty thieves who broke into the clubhouse stealing cigars, cigarettes and cash before later being apprehended.

The Headland Club Honour Board reflects that it was indeed fitting that Harold and Sybel Whittle were bestowed the honour of Life Members in 1969 and 1973 respectively.

The following summary shows not only their extraordinary golfing ability but also unselfish contribution of time towards the Club’s development.

Harold was President for 6 years: 1960/61/64/65/73/74.

He carried out the arduous task of Captain for 6 years: 1956/57/59/63/66/67.

Stories of his golfing prowess are reflected in being Club Champion 3 times: 1958/60/67.

***An extraordinary – and may we suggest – ‘unique’ accomplishment was Sybel and Harold being Club Champion in the same year of 1960!***

His golfing talent wasn't confined to only Headland as the Nambour Chronicle reported in October 1960 that in the final of a competition Harold had beaten (carved up?!) his opposition 7 and 6!

While in 1975 he was struck down by a cruel and untimely stroke his presence was acknowledged as a regular on his favourite bar stool.

It is said “He was the face of welcome to the Club”.

The Club members lost a remarkable member in 1991.

Sybel was Associates President for 3 years: 1963/64/71.

Authentic stories endorse Sybel's competent Captaincy for 3 years: 1958/59/60.

The inaugural Associates Committee was established on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1955 – with Sybel's sister, Mrs G. Traill elected as President. It was at the second AGM of associates in 1958 that Sybel was nominated Captain.

The immaculately hand written notes record the hours of time unselfishly given by the enthusiastic committee and supporting members covering a multitude of tasks from endless and varied fund raising events and weeding the greens while watching the much loved and now sadly missed kangaroos languishing on the course. Along with providing endless meals for hard working spouses to raffling “three dressed chooks” and “a sand pit under the fig tree”. The latter becoming a popular and well used improvement when parents gathered in the Tin Shed under kero lights being entertained by Harold with his inimitable humour and antics as the keg was lowered to its compulsory termination.



As the apt saying goes “behind every great man is a greater women!” Sybel’s praises cannot be sung loudly enough as we’ve learned not only of her golfing prowess but unselfish and untiring work towards the establishment of our great club.

An immense void was felt among members when Sybel died in 2007.

How ecstatic would Harold and Sybel be to think that the enormous effort and contribution they expended with such pride to the facilities we enjoy today could be rewarded in the practical formation of The Future Fund.