



Senior Golfers' Society of Australia



United States Tour

September 10 - October 1 2022

Tour Planning

In the beginning:

Sam Carroll wrote the following piece for the September 2015, issue of the USSGA Quarterly Newsletter.

"I had the pleasure of playing a round of golf at Hudson National Golf Club, Croton-On-Hudson, NY, July 6, 2015 with members of the Senior Golfers' Society of New South Wales, Australia. I learned from these gentlemen, who would fit in very nicely at any USSGA Invitational, that it is common practice for Senior Golfers' Societies members in Australia to take at least one two-to-four week golf trip a year to other countries that have Senior Golfers' Societies and Associations. As you might expect, the keys to making these trips successful are thoughtful planning, efficient organisation and agreeable reciprocity.

I wonder what interest United States Seniors and their spouses would have participating in international golf trips, where they would play and socialise with Seniors and their spouses from other countries — and in turn host newly-made international friends in the United States. In addition to the Australian Seniors, I know the British and Canadian Seniors go on such trips annually. Also, I know the USSGA and the British Seniors participated in a "home and home" series in the early 2000's. Has the time come for the USSGA to again reach out to international Senior Golfers' Societies and Associations?"

By May 2018 letters had been exchanged between the Secretary of the Senior Golfers' Association of Australia, John Marcard and the Chairman of the USSGA Special Events Committee, Jeb Stuart and on May 20th an invitation was extended to the USSGA inviting them to tour Australia in March-April 2021. The invitation proposed two touring parties of 12 to 16 couples each, one to undertake Eastern Australian tour and the other a Southern tour. This was reduced to a single party tour of the Eastern States and the ACT and the invitation was accepted by the USSGA. At this time Sam Carroll was appointed Tour Liaison officer and so began our long association with Sam, first with John Marcard and then, on his retirement from the Hon Secretary role in 2019, with his replacement, Gary Lee. The invitation for the SGSA to send a team to the USA in September 2022 was received in late 2019 and this marked the beginning of our planning for 2022 SGSA tour to the USA. Unfortunately Covid forced the cancellation of the USSGA 2021 tour which will now take place in March 2023.

So began the near three year process to put the tour together. It must be said that at this stage, and indeed throughout the process, most of the work was done by Sam Carroll and his team at the USSGA. Sam engaged with Gary and he with the SGSA board to decide some itinerary and accommodation options and there were numerous email and Zoom exchanges during this process. The final itinerary and costings were provided by March of 2022. John and Prue Webb accepted invitations to be the Mens' and Ladies' Tour Captains and took on the task of organising the tour from the Australian end. From trophies and gifts to tour shirts and tour roles, internal flights and Chicago accommodation, nothing was overlooked by our diligent Captains and a stream of emails kept everyone abreast of the planning. Working out deposits sought by our U.S. hotels proved challenging and required some interesting financial gymnastics involving the personal credit cards of the organisers. All of the team responded promptly to the many calls for information and funding which was a great help to the organisers. By the end of July everything was settled, Sam supplied the magnificent tour brochure and we were all ready for our great adventure.

In the end:

The team enjoyed three wonderful weeks of golf as guests of the USSGA. It is testament to the superb planning of Sam and his team that, apart from a lost bus driver on the night we were home hosted in Chicago, every element of the trip went without a hitch. When one considers all of the golf games, dinners, bus transfers and accommodation involved in the tour, this was an outstanding result. Even the weather was well organised; in 13 rounds of golf over 3 weeks we only experienced light rain for 2 holes in Chicago. From all of us. THANK YOU SAM



The Journey

26 Days

Four Cities - 13 Golf games - 4 Hotel venues



Shoreacres



Gulph Mills



Sebonack



Shinnecock Hills



Maidstone

Captains' Report

John and Prue Webb



A team of 12 members, with 11 accompanying partners, represented the Senior Golfers' Society of Australia (SGSA), on an inaugural tour to the USA hosted by the United States Seniors' Golfer Association (USSGA), visiting and playing golf in Chicago, Philadelphia & East Long Island.

This Tour was many years in the making with huge input from the late Secretary of the SGSA John Marcard and current Secretary Gary Lee, working together with Sam Carroll, Special Events Committee Member and US Tour Chairman for the USSGA. We are all enormously grateful for this work which culminated in this tour which provided such a special and unforgettable experience for all of us.

The USSGA's standing and Sam's contacts produced an exceptional itinerary in which all the courses played were exceptional and steeped in history and tradition; all were in the US Top 100 courses and several in the Top 10. Every course was a Members' course and few of us would ever get to play any of these courses let alone play as Members' guests at 13 of them.

We were very lucky with the weather throughout the Tour; starting in Chicago with several hot days, milder conditions in the Philadelphia area and a noticeable cooling off when we arrived, at the start of Fall, in Southampton.

A special feature of our Tour was the participation of the Ladies playing golf at all venues. Prue, our Ladies' Captain wrote:

"We women were so fortunate in joining our Husbands/Partners in participating in this inaugural tour. Congratulations to all our girls who played on 12 courses over 18 days. No one dropped out along the way and all significantly contributed to the overall success of the golfing and social events. I personally would like to thank all of the ladies on the tour who blended in so well, making the Tour enjoyable and fun for everyone."

Another key feature of Sam Carroll and his team's planning was having only 3 main hotel stopovers of 5 nights for the duration of the tour making travelling all that much easier, particularly for the Ladies.

As has been the custom on previous overseas Tours, volunteers were sought from within the team for various roles and I certainly would like to acknowledge them.

Gary Lee, as Treasurer, was very re-assuring in his duties and reminded us on several occasions that retrospective bills from our travels will be forthcoming.

David Field, as Golfing Co-ordinator, showed tenacity and perseverance in ensuring all matches played were competitively paired and worked tirelessly to arrange the various match formats despite the occasional interpretation issues!

Prue & Fiona Field as our Ladies golf Co-ordinators were equally diligent in their roles.

Our Luggage Masters, Cathy Clarke & Peter Marshall plus Lindy Fraser were all challenged at various times, but kept cool heads ensuring a smooth delivery of everyone's luggage (22 sets of golf clubs plus 23, growing daily in size, suitcases.)

Sue and Mike Grose, Fred and Helen Hess, Steve Whelan and Ann Bennett and Jack and Muriel McKean did an absolute superb job in photographing and capturing every special moment of the tour. The creation by them of the WhatsApp and Dropbox files would have made our grandchildren feel proud. Our Flag Master, Don Fraser, found it challenging at times, trying to stretch our SGSA flag so we could physically view it on the enormous flagpoles it was regularly hoisted on, below the massive American national flags, most flying at half-mast as a mark of respect for Queen Elizabeth.

Our Scribes for Chicago, David & Joanne Elmslie, plus for Philadelphia, Murray & Rosey Williams and for Southampton, John & Cecile Foulsham have comprehensively captured the events throughout each of these regions.

A question asked of me on Tour was were there any suggestions for improvement for future Tours. My answer was simple - None.

In conclusion, it has been an honour to lead this touring party and the success of the tour really belongs to the delightful members of our team and to Sam Carroll for organising the event in the USA.

One feels most privileged in belonging to The Senior Golfers' Society which has enabled us to participate on this unbelievable Tour.

The Australian Team



David and Jo Elmslie
Victoria



David and Fiona Field
Victoria



John and Cecile Foulsham
NSW



Don and Lindy Fraser
Queensland



Mike and Sue Grose
NSW



Fred and Helen Hess
Queensland



Gary Lee
Victoria



Peter and Cathy Marshall
Queensland



Jack and Muriel McKean
South Australia



Prue and John Webb
Victoria



Steve Whelan and Ann Bennett
NSW



Murray and Rosie Williams
Western Australia

Conway Farms Golf Club Monday September 12

Captain's Report: John Webb

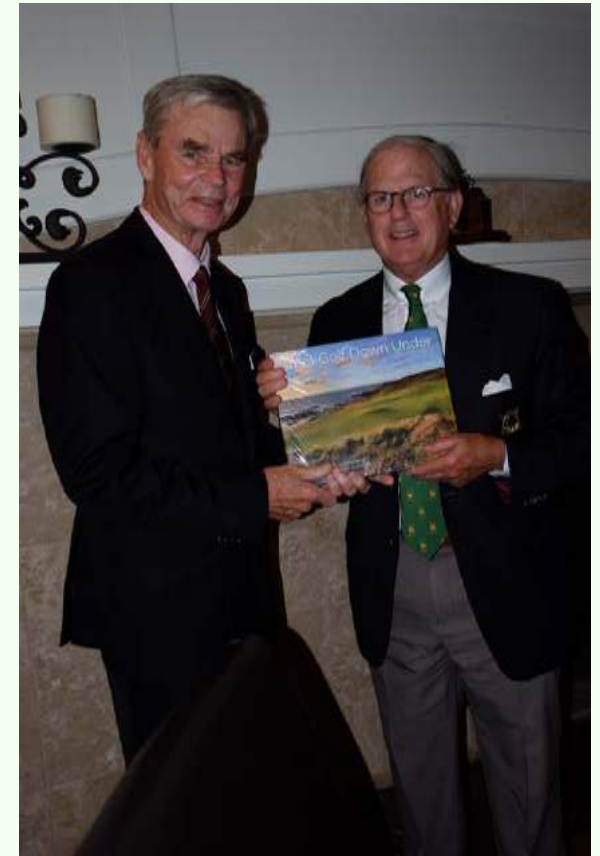


The team enjoyed a leisurely day, catching up on much needed sleep, doing some local shopping and enjoying various walks. Much enjoyed by some of the group was the easy downhill walk to Lake Michigan through quiet streets and lovely big houses, set amongst beautifully tended gardens. Steve Whelan had an anxious day as he was still waiting for his luggage and Gary and I were attending to last minute administrative work.

Whilst waiting for our transport to Conway Farms Golf Club, Sam Carroll introduced himself to our group, after arriving from Heathrow, only an hour or two earlier. This evening was the first official function of the tour and what a magnificent venue to start our tour.

After a brief drive from the Deer Path Inn, we were greeted by the host Club Captain and his wife, Rob and Kitty Lansing. Drinks were had on the terrace on a coolish but fine evening prior to moving in for dinner. Rob Lansing (a former mayor of Lake Forest) made an introductory speech warmly welcoming our team and explaining that some of our fellow countrymen, Aaron Baddeley, Jason Day and Mark Leishman, had experienced golfing success when playing here. The golf course looked amazing as the early evening sun disappeared and shadows highlighted the mounds and undulations of the fairways. Jim Furyk retains the course record of 59 and this club, of around 200 members, was beautifully presented for our brief stay.

A delicious meal was had by all and I responded on behalf of the team thanking Rob Lansing, Roger Christoph and Sam Carroll for setting up the tour. I presented to the Club a gift from our team and displayed the trophy, designed and facilitated by Gary, which will be competed for over the next 3 weeks. We then were transported back to the Deer Path Inn for some rest for the start of the golfing program.



John presents the first of our gift books, "Great Golf Down Under", to Rob Lansing

Conway Farms Golf Club Monday September 12

Welcome Dinner



Onwentsia Golf Club Tuesday September 13

Captain's Report: David Elmslie



The touring team was split between Chicago and Onwentsia Golf clubs for the first and second days of golf.

The Onwentsia party of 11 were collected from the Deer Path Inn by a very large black bus at a civilised 8am to make the 900m journey to the Club through the magnificent heritage listed residences of Lake Forest. The Chicago party of 12 had already left at 7.15am for the one hour drive to Chicago Golf Club.

Onwentsia has 200 members, was established in 1895 and is famous for having hosted the 1906 US Open. It is beautifully presented in the US country club style with extensive facilities including racquet club, swimming pool, tennis, and the golf course which while originally designed by the great CB McDonald, more recently underwent a restoration by Tom Doak which involved extensive tree removal. This has resulted in a delightful golf panorama of occasional stands of trees amidst wide fairways bordered by tall waving grasses and lighting fast, steeply graded greens. Amongst its many facilities the Onwentsia Club boasted grass tennis courts of a standard suitable to host an early round of the 1914 International Lawn Tennis Challenge, which became known as the Davis Cup. Australasia defeated Canada in this round and went on to defeat the USA in New York in the following month. 1914 was the last year that Australia and New Zealand played as Australasia. It is of note that the Australian player Norman Brookes would, in 1936, initiate the formation of the Senior Golfers' Society of Victoria and later as Sir Norman Brookes be a founding Director of the Senior Golfers' Society of Australia.

Of interest was a lone white 'Tepee' standing tall in the middle of the course paying homage to the Indian origins of the land with 'Onwentsia' meaning a meeting place of 'braves' and 'squaws'. Our hosts informed us that, as is the trend of late in the US, there is substantial pressure (from well-meaning non Indians) for the removal of the said tepee and also the Club's name 'Onwentsia' as this is said to be 'cultural misappropriation'. The club appears to be standing firm in its resistance to this movement.

In any event the visiting squaws and braves were comprehensively beaten 4 to 1 in the better ball aggregate stableford matches by the Onwentsia natives. We gave a good account of ourselves in managing to lose by only one or two points in all our losing matches with our sole winners, also by one point, being Lindy Fraser and Joanne Elmslie.

An excellent buffet lunch was had in the atmospheric Grille Room of the beautiful red brick Onwentsia clubhouse. David Field expressed appreciation to our hosts and presented the club with a copy of 'Great Golf Down Under'.



Home Hosting Chicago

Tuesday September 13

It was our great privilege to be hosted for dinner in the homes of three local couples. Picked up from the Deer Path Inn we were taken on a, somewhat rambling, ride around the Lake Forest area as we were dropped off at the homes of our designated hosts. Rambling, because two of our destination homes were at the end of private roads or long drives which appeared not to be on the driver's GPS. Nevertheless, we all arrived in daylight and started our evening outside with drinks and canapés as the sun set. Each of the homes was set on acreage which showcased the natural beauty of the Lake Forest area.

A wonderful evening was had by all, lots of conversation and a splendid opportunity for us to learn more about our hosts and their families. Conversations obviously varied and we know that, at one home, because of the hosts' extensive collection, a long discussion on art ensued. Fred Hess was clearly taken by the, sleeping bag ensconced, naked couple portrayed in one piece. Apparently sport and politics didn't get a mention at this table! A further highlight here was the late arrival of Steve Whelan, in his pink jacket of course, bearing his luggage which he had eventually retrieved after many persistent enquiries and many hours at the Chicago Airport.

Two of the groups were successfully collected and returned safely but one, hosted at the hardest to find home, waited vainly for a bus that never arrived. Ever gracious the hosts refused to allow their guests to Uber it home insisting that they drive them back to the Deer Path Inn.

Thank you to our hosts:

Skip and Lynn Heizer

Roger and Marion Christoph and

Fayre and Bill Mynatt

We would all like to think that, one day, we could return their hospitality DownUnder in our own homes.





At home with Marion and Roger Christof

Chicago Golf Club Wednesday September 14

Captain's Report: David Field



Our two golfing groups from yesterday exchanged courses for today, returning to play at Onwentsia Club and Chicago Golf Club respectively. Sam Carroll, the USSGA Tour Captain, extended his stay in Chicago for a further day, and played at Onwentsia again before returning to Southampton.

It's possible that Chicago acquired its "Windy City" nickname thanks to the cooling summer lake breezes which funnel their way through the city's streets, and it's also feasible that the great World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893 was the catalyst for the formation of the Chicago Golf Club. After all, the city needed a golf club for the visiting VIPs. Founded in 1892, Chicago Golf Club moved to its present location at Wheaton in 1894 and it became the first 18-hole course in America, designed by the daddy of American golf course architecture, Charles Blair Macdonald. Chicago Golf Club has a number of firsts to write home about. In 1897 it was the first club outside the Northeast to host the US Open. Chicago was also one of the five founder members of the American Golf Association subsequently renamed the USGA.

In perfect golfing conditions, the group playing at Chicago were superbly hosted by Club Hosts Jon Ward and Jim Moriarty and Club President Herb Getz. It was a real privilege to play on the celebrated Chicago course, which is ranked at Number 19 in the world. The matches for both men and women were between blended pairings (US and Australian), so no match results were to be recorded for the progressive tour results. Some fine golf was nevertheless reported, with the standout being the two birdies in Jo Elmslie's round. As anticipated, the traditional Nassau wagering was in play in the men's matches, with \$US2 payments being handed over at lunch, amidst considerable ceremony!

We were joined at lunch after our golf by Jon Ward and those members who had played with us: Vicki Heise (a former Lady President), Peggy Gleason, Herb Getz and Jim Moriarty. It was a further privilege to enjoy the facilities within Chicago's hallowed clubhouse, and Herb addressed the gathering with a very impressive verbal summary of the Club's history - including the past usage of a dedicated railway station and rail carriage by Club members! This was followed by a short tour of historical artefacts within the clubhouse.

Jon Ward extended a warm welcome to our SGSA group, both to the Chicago area and to the Chicago Golf Club. In response, David Elmslie expressed our deep thanks for the hospitality extended to us by the Members and staff at the Club, and presented Herb with a copy of 'Great Golf Down Under', which was duly inscribed by the Australian visitors.

On return to Deer Path Inn, our tour group relaxed and rested, then headed in a few different directions for their evening meals, with the majority dining at the nearby Italian restaurant, Francesca's Intimo.





Shoreacres Thursday September 15

Captain's Report: John Foulsham



The day began with some Lake Forest leisure time and then a short bus trip to Shoreacres Golf Club. The Club was founded in 1916 and is featured in '100 Greatest Courses'. It is positioned on the shore of Lake Michigan which provides an excellent back drop for the Club House.

The friendly and gracious welcome by our host, Peter Hamilton, and the Shoreacres members was in keeping with what we had been experiencing since our arrival in Lake Forest, Chicago.

On a delightful day for golf, with the sun out and little wind we were treated to a sumptuous pre-golf BBQ lunch on the Pro Shop Terrace. The Society Flag Master arranged for the the SGSA flag to be flown together with the Shoreacres flag and, of course, the American Flag. Our hosts again set the scene for what was to be another memorable day of golf and socialising.

The groups with caddies in tow moved out for a shot gun start to the first of the three matches for the USA Tour Trophy. The Shoreacres layout was designed by Seth Raynor and features a number of deep ravines that meander through the course catching the wayward shot. The tourists were introduced to the Leven and the Biarritz on a magnificently manicured course. Both sides fought hard, but the making of friendships and the camaraderie was the winner. Shoreacres has the US Naval Academy on its boundary and the tourists were treated to the distant sounds of the cadets 'sounding off' in unison.

After golf there was time for a quick beverage with our playing partners before a short turnaround at the Deer Path Inn and back to the club for dinner. We were greeted by our hosts as we made our way to the lawn terrace over looking the lake. We indulged in pre- dinner drinks while mixing with the Shoreacres' members and witnessing the sun set slowly over the Lakes Bluff. Of interest was a nearby hut overlooking the lake which is apparently a skeet shooting pavilion. A popular activity among the members, particularly in winter.

The dining room was presented magnificently with trophy cabinets and artworks topped off by the lake setting. The banter in the room was indicative of the enjoyment experienced throughout the evening.

The Club professional Ryan Carroll announced the results of the matches which went to the USA team 4/2. Peter Hamilton on behalf of Shoreacres Golf Club welcomed us and expressed how happy they were to host the Australian Seniors. Peter also gave some interesting history of the Club, which included a fire (a common golf club occurrence) and the rebuilding, which was designed by a local architect who is a member. The use of the vista that the lake offers is very much a feature of the new club house. As the assigned Captain for the day I responded, displaying the inaugural Trophy and provided a vote of thanks to the Club for the hospitality we received. The 'Golf Down Under' book was presented to the Shoreacres President Kevin Connolly in appreciation of our fantastic day at Shoreacres. The day finished on a high note as we boarded the bus for some well earned rest at the Deer Path Inn.

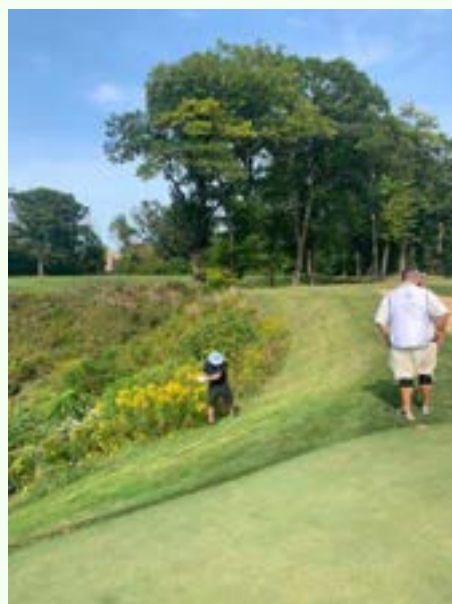
Shoreacres Thursday September 15



Shoreacres



Shoreacres "The Ravines"



Shoreacres possesses perhaps the most fascinating topography upon which Seth Raynor ever created a golf course, with his usual collection of suspects, including No. 3 (Leven), No. 6 (Biarritz), No. 7 (Double Plateau), No. 8 (Eden), No. 10 (Road) and No. 14 (Redan) all playing along plateaus and over ravines that feed into Lake Michigan. The stretch of 11, 12 and 13, playing across a ravine, down into it and back out of it, are as unique a stretch of holes as can be found anywhere on a 100 Greatest courses.

Shoreacres-Lunch and Lakeside Dinner



Shoreacres



Glen View Golf Club Friday September 16

Captain's Report: Don Fraser



On Friday 16 September we visited Glen View Golf Club, a private members course of around 350 full members with 150 in other categories. The club is one of the oldest in the US and hosted the 10th US Open in 1904. Willie Anderson from Scotland made the first successful defence of the title with the then lowest score ever of 72 in the final round. He had another win the next year for a 3-peat which has never been equalled.

This event was the last golf game of the Chicago leg of the tour. It required an early check out and start from Deer Path Inn. The baggage masters, Cathy Clarke and Lindy Fraser, were on the job and the large exercise of loading 23 bags and 22 golf bags went smoothly.

Jay Henderson of the US Seniors our host was present on our arrival to guide our day. Hank Deaver, Vice President of the club, joined in welcoming the group to Glen View Golf Club. The clubhouse and surrounds made for a beautiful setting. Our hosts had thoughtfully arranged for the Australian flag to be flying on the very large flagpole located in the middle of the practice putting green and were only too happy to add the Australian Seniors flag to the display. The weather was perfect and the course looked a picture.

The attention to detail to make our stay an enjoyable one was comprehensive. Lockers were provided and staff were on hand to provide answers to all enquiries. Billie Knutson in the pro shop did a great job organising the players and after ample time for practice and the first group photo shot of the tour, we were taken on carts with a caddy on board to our tees for a shotgun start.

Our opponents were US seniors supplemented by local club members and a more delightful welcoming group would be hard to find. The competition was best ball match play and the result was extremely tight. The men's pairs split their matches at 3 points each and the ladies lost 3 points to 2 in the closest result so far on the tour.

The course was a perfect members' course with fairly open fairways and heavily bunkered greens. It was presented in superb condition. A creek provided challenges on a number of holes. The pace of the greens was a little slower than at the previous venues to the relief of some.

At the lunch held on a very pleasant terrace, where the tourists and our hosts made up tables comprised of the playing groups, Jay Henderson welcomed us and Hank Deaver presented our lady tourists with medallions celebrating 125 years of the history of the club. Don Fraser, captain for the day, reciprocated with a gift of a copy of 'Great Golf Down Under' which our tour group was invited to sign.

This was a fabulous day of golf and camaraderie at a very attractive venue and a wonderful finish to the first week of golfing of the inaugural Australian Seniors' US Tour. We then boarded the bus which the driver skilfully negotiated through busy rush hour traffic to the centrally located historic Chicago Racquet Club for a weekend stay.



Chicago Friday -Monday September 17/19

Captain's Report: Gary Lee

Thanks to playing Real (Royal) Tennis for many years and being a member of the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club, I was able to arrange weekend accommodation at the Racquet Club of Chicago, a private social and athletic club located within the Gold Coast Historic District. The club proved to be a perfect venue to relax, unwind and explore Chicago City. Being a weekend, we had the club to ourselves and were able to use the facilities including the pool and its attendant steam and sauna facilities. A few (unnamed) males even took advantage of the after 4 p.m. naked bathing for men club tradition. On Saturday evening a formal dinner in the Club's main dining room was enjoyed. The clubs' sommelier produced several delicious wines from the cellar for our delectation. Before dinner, and with cocktails in hand, some of the party joined in a demonstration of Royal Tennis.

Baseball, a Cubs' game, LIV golf, Museums and Art Galleries, parks and Lake Michigan walks were pursued by some and the majority of the party took one of the river cruises hosted by the Chicago Historic Architecture Centre. A wonderful way to see and understand the architectural development of the city.

There being no catering at the club on Sunday we all ventured out to one of the many local restaurants. Who could forget our feast of that traditional American fare, "Ribs"?

On Monday morning our bus arrived, this time on our side of the street. Our baggage team did their work again and we departed in a timely fashion to catch our flight to Philadelphia. The Group booking process worked seamlessly and some of us were able to exercise our Qantas partner airline status and enjoy the American Airlines First Class lounge. Champagne at 11 a.m. was a great start for the next week of our tour.









Gulph Mills Golf Club Tuesday September 20

Captain's Report: Mike Grose



What a day! With an early morning scramble, we had breakfast and were on the bus by 7:15 am for a 9:30 am shotgun start at Gulph Mills Golf Club. On arrival we were warmly greeted by our host Fred Haack and ushered onto the patio to find breakfast waiting for us. If only we had known!

Gulph Mills was founded by some members of Merion Golf Club, designed by renowned architect, Donald Ross, and opened in 1916. It is a beautifully manicured rolling course, set on 300 acres featuring a diverse range of mature trees and characterised by typical Donald Ross sloping greens, many with false fronts.

We again fared poorly at the hands of the locals whose knowledge of the bumps and rolls of the greens proved too much for us. The men lost their matches 5 to 1. The girls enjoyed the company of their playing partners but were unable to secure a win, losing all 4 matches.

Following the golf we had a short siesta back at Union League Liberty Hill and headed back to Gulph Mills for a delightful evening meal with our hosts. As has been our experience, the hosts were gracious and hospitable.

On the bus trip home, after singing Happy Birthday to John Foulsham, Steve Whelan entertained us with his cover version of Paul Robeson's "Ol' Man River". Although a little off key, it had the desired result of sedating us after a long and enjoyable day. Jack, our reliable bus driver, delivered us safely back to the Liberty Hill for a good night's rest, readying for our game at PCC on Wednesday.



Ladies Day!



Philadelphia Country Club Wednesday September 21

Captain's Report: Fred Hess



Yet to record a victory (well for the men), the daily optimists turned their thoughts towards a breakthrough win at the Philadelphia Country Club. For a country club it truly is, with almost every sport on offer for members, sadly excluding cricket. For cricketer-golfers, you need to also be a member of the Philadelphia Cricket Club which split from the country club many years earlier.

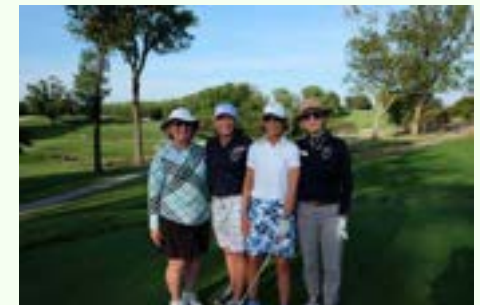
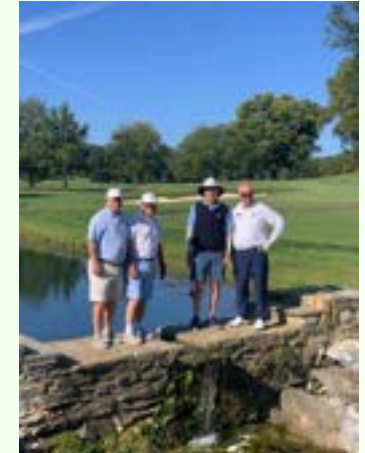
The day was bathed in glorious sunshine and we made the most of it by dining on the outdoor terrace (yes - the one overlooking the swimming and diving pool beside the tennis courts, paddle courts and the bowling alley which is just down from the shooting range) where we were treated to a carnivore's delight and panoramic views of the course. It was curious to note however the presence of a world class gym that none of the tourists put to the test, perhaps another missed opportunity?

Now if prizes were awarded for presentation, then surely our touring party would be strong contenders with everyone now consistently contesting in the golf shoes that had been cleaned and polished to standards unknown in Australia. A quick warm up on the practice range was greeted by restrictions on shots to 180 carry yards in the air. This seemed strange given that the teeing area was set forward by some 30 yards from the signs, so we duly bombed our balls over the fence while of course ensuring that we rigorously complied with the demands of the signage. Swing tuned, immaculately attired in uniform and with shoes shining, we advanced to our respective starting holes for the battle to begin.

The course is set amongst rolling hills with fairways occasionally cut by waterways that are mysteriously populated by small, rounded, white rocks. The par 3 holes all presented challenges – either water, sand, rough, elevation change or length, and sadly (gladly?), often multiple combinations of each. The standout hole is the 16th – a par four that doglegs hard right. From the tee, the hole presents a lateral creek in a valley with trees and bunkers guarding the corner of the dogleg and a steeply inclined and sloping fairway on the other side. The big hitters are invited to carry the traps and get on the downhill roller coaster on the other side. The shorter hitters just like to carry the creek and are then kept amused by watching many of the (not so) big hitters lining up their fairway bunker shots. This is also an iconic hole - Byron Nelson holed out from the fairway on his way to winning the 1939 U.S. Open, a feat emulated by many of the touring party later that evening, in their dreams.

In our group we experienced the advice of the best caddie yet on tour - he described the direction of grain in the greens, degree of slope, could see double breaking putts, and, was still able to smile after every three putt (by my partner of course!). Golf was followed by the usual locker room tales of joy and woe by the could have been champions. Following a quick change of attire and some makeup (not sure what ladies did in their locker room) we returned to the 18th hole for a group photograph (no one would believe you played there unless you had evidence). Mike Barton complimented the party on their golf shoes (strangely he did not mention the quality of our play). We quaffed down food and wine and partied in a manner to be expected from a team enjoying their first taste of (partial) success. Dinner and speeches on the terrace were topped off by a thoughtful gesture when the touring party were presented with a commemorative book of Philadelphia Country Club. I feel confident that future editions will contain a record of the touring Australian senior golfers' history making inaugural visit.

Veni vidi vici – well almost!





Merion Golf Club Thursday September 22

Captain's Report: Gary Lee



Today was a special day on our tour. To play at what is considered to be the epitome of traditional golf in the USA was amazing and something enjoyed by very few golfers. To do so as guests of the USSGA and their Merion members, whose hospitality made sure we almost felt like like locals, turned special into exceptional. This was a day none of us will ever forget.

Starting with lunch on the verandah, we enjoyed the view of the first tee as we watched our fellow players tee off and start their Merion experience. It was easy to imagine what it would be like to sit there for a US Open and to watch the world's greatest golfers start their rounds.

The course was truly magnificent and presented us with a great golf challenge. Our hosts helped our enjoyment by playing the composite layout giving us a selected range of forward and mid tees to reflect our Senior status. Provided we followed David Graham's advice to stay on the fairways it was a very playable course, allowing us to marvel at its exceptional features. If one did stray it didn't take long to put away the woods and hybrids and take a 7 iron into the rough. Speaking of straying, who could forget the daunting cliff like faces of the bunkers with their grassy overhangs?

Merion was the second leg of our trophy matches and we went into it one down, 2 matches to us and 4 to the USA. Clearly we weren't too daunted as the men emerged victorious 4 matches to 2 and we now move on to our Sunday game at the National Golf Links of America all tied up. Our ladies weren't quite as successful losing 4 matches with one draw but the Stableford results showed that all of the matches were very close. Our thanks must go to all of the Seniors' partners who turned out to play us especially to Kerry Ruttan who played her 3rd match in a row and delighted all who played with her with her amazing skills.

After golf we were treated to a tour of Merion's archives, an important repository of Merion's and America's golfing history. It was especially wonderful to see the impressive display of our fellow countryman, David Graham's clubs. Drinks and dinner in the Pavilion were again highlights. Harry Hill welcomed and toasted our team and Gary Lee responded on our behalf. Gary noted that Harry had left a meeting of the R and A and flown back to join us. Harry's contribution to the club was clearly enormous including having been President at the time of their last hosting of the US Open in 2013.

We will leave Philadelphia with great memories, with Merion an absolute highlight.





Stonewall Friday September 23

Captain's Report: Peter Marshall



We set off for a leisurely 45 minute drive through the Pennsylvania country side to the spacious grounds of what used to be a dairy. This has been transformed into Stonewall, a stunning, friendly golfing estate in a peaceful, pristine, country setting. To quote from the club's website. "The place is simply called Stonewall. Where passion for golf is the only requirement. Just Stonewall, inspired by our handsome and sturdy Pennsylvania fieldstone walls, where several of them, along with restored stone farm buildings, frame holes across the property and at the memorable finishing holes." Stonewall was designed and built by Tom Doak when he was just starting out. As we entered we passed through an entrance of the extensive stone walls, arriving at the original stone barn and out-buildings now transformed into a magnificent country clubhouse and pro shop. We were warmly greeted by Mike Moran and his family.

Shortly thereafter the pro shop was inundated with our travelling party seeking distinctive items marked with the clubs logo of a cow's head with a golf club in its mouth. They obviously have a wry sense of humour at Stonewall. The logo for the recently added North Course is the back end of a cow with the inscription, Udder Course. We were then invited to a beautifully presented light lunch attended by club members and other US Seniors.

Following lunch we enjoyed a shotgun start with golfers walking the rolling, beautifully presented course. We played four ball handicap match play against our US opposition culminating in an exceptional day in beautiful conditions. The final results were outstanding with the women winning 3 and halving 2 of 5 matches and the men winning 3 and halving 2 of 7 matches resulting in our best day yet.

Players then gathered on the verandah for some very tasty hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. Thank you's were exchanged with our book presented prior to departure.





Philadelphia to Southampton

Scribe: Rosey Williams

After a fantastic weekend in Chicago, the troupe headed to Pennsylvania on a long and slow voyage. A delay in the flight and some heavy traffic, finally saw us reaching our destination at the Union Club at Liberty Hill.

We were lucky to have our fabulous driver, Jack, who not only drove us to all the courses in the area, but offered to detour into Philadelphia, en route to Southampton. This offer was accepted with glee, and the group quickly packed away suitcases and golf gear, in preparation for an earlier start to see Philly.

The bus had almost left the hotel grounds, when I realised with horror, that I had left my computer behind! Leaping from the bus, I corralled a golf cart and headed back up the hill, ran to my room, retrieved the computer, sprinted back to the cart and triumphantly returned with my wayward belongings. Apologising profusely (and enduring some light-hearted abuse), I collapsed in the bus next to a long-suffering Murray.

About to re-start the journey, a shout from John Foulsham, alerted the bus that he hadn't retrieved priceless possessions from his room safe. I felt for him as he headed off for the drive of shame, yet felt strangely happy that I was not alone in my forgetfulness – I was not the only idiot on the bus.

We all enjoyed the drive through historic Philadelphia and a visit to the Liberty Bell. It was then onwards and upwards for the long drive to Southampton.





National Golf Links of America Sunday September 25

Captain's Report: Jack McKean



Our tour group played the National Golf Links of America on Sunday 25th September.

Following a loss at Shoreacres in Chicago and a win at Merion in Philadelphia this was the third formal match against the US seniors. The bad news is that we were well beaten on a course where our lack of local knowledge was quite a handicap. The good news is that we were privileged to play an extraordinary course that is rated as one of the top 10 courses in the world.

Charles Blair MacDonald and Seth Raynor were responsible for designing quite a few of the courses we played and most of the touring party were thoroughly indoctrinated about their achievements. As a 16 year old CB MacDonald attended the University of St Andrews. He played golf with the champions of the day and studied course design. He then sought to incorporate features from famous championship courses into his USA projects.

My scepticism about mimicking holes from other environments proved unfounded and I really enjoyed playing the Road Hole and the Eden from St. Andrews, the Alps from Prestwick as well as the Redan par 3 from North Berwick. Predictably the run off from the front of the Road Hole green is closely mowed and rolled to ensure that players end up in an outrageous bunker.

The clubhouse is imposing and dates from the early 20th century. Yet the atmosphere at the National is comfortable and relaxing. It's a tranquil place with a real sense of history. David Field and I played with Ed Shaw the Captain for the day who made all of the touring Australians feel most welcome.

The reception and trophy presentation was held in a room that displayed a sculpture as well as an oil painting of CB MacDonald. The room also displayed the Walker Cup. Admire but don't touch!

The preferred cocktail at the National is the Southside and white coated waiters circulated the reception. "Can I offer you another Southside sir?" Well, when in Rome do as the Romans! What a day!



Captain, John Webb presents the Tour Trophy to the USSGA Tour Coordinator, Sam Carroll. Played over 3 rounds the USA won 10 matches to Australia's 8





Montauk Lighthouse visit Monday September 26

Captain's Report: John and Cecile Foulsham

After a leisurely breakfast, Chris, our bus driver took us on a tour through some of the Long Island real estate on our way to Montauk Point Light House and Museum. Hedges guarded many of the properties which would be some of the most expensive in the country.

The 137 step climb to the top of the historic light house was well worth the effort with spectacular views of the coastline and the site of surfers getting a wonderful point break ride far below.

After the excursion around the light house, we travelled back to Montauk Village for lunch on the terrace of Gosman's Dock Side Seafood restaurant overlooking the waterway. Fishing trawlers constantly passed as we enjoyed a beautiful sunny day. After lunch the local ice cream vendor was popular.

Having enjoyed a long leisurely lunch with appropriate libations, the group decided that the planned local winery visit would be too much for our overworked livers. Again Sam Carroll was on hand, Captain John called him and they were able to cancel our visit. Chris took the fast route back to our historic abode with many on the bus taking the opportunity for forty winks.



Around Southampton



Westhampton Country Club Tuesday September 27

Captain's Report: Peter Marshall



Westhampton Country Club is the first course designed exclusively by Seth Raynor, who had spent many years with C B McDonald.

The course is on reasonably flat land and has been designed in a T shape with the holes, after leaving the clubhouse in a westerly direction, heading in a north to south route. Playability is at the fore because this course caters for members who wish to play a round in good time. However bunkers at strategic locations, including behind the greens, demand caution from the average golfer. And, although the greens look benign, they provide golfers of all levels with a degree of treachery to be overcome.

Being a members' club, clubhouse and course hospitality are fabulous. Jim Clark, Westhampton Captain of the day, led from the front by greeting everyone as we stepped from the bus. The hospitality was enhanced by the weather conditions, sunny skies, 75F and a gentle breeze.

Competition with the local members was intense with –

Westhampton Men prevailing by 4 matches to 2

Westhampton Ladies coming second by 1 match to 4.

Overall, thanks to the great Ladies contribution, a win to Australia 6 to 5.

Fiona Field was gracious in thanking the local Ladies and Steve Whelan presented the '*Great Golf Down Under*' book for the future pleasure of the members of Westhampton who will live in our hearts for their hospitality.





Sebonack Wednesday September 28

Captain's Report: Murray Williams



As we headed to the pointy end of our tour we were looking forward to our day at the very private and exclusive Sebonack Golf Club. The Sebonack clubhouse and holes 1 and 18 are adjacent to the National Golf Links of America. The clubhouse and golf course were magnificent with views over the Great Peconic Bay and Cold Spring Pond. The visual impact of the water vistas competes for the golfer's eye with rolling fairways, expansive bunkers and waste dunes. The golf course was designed in partnership by Jack Nicklaus and Tom Doak. Their different design styles combined to produce a natural and unique golf course where we were challenged by changes in elevation, wind direction and greens with tricky swales and borrows, where a two putt green felt special.

Sebonack members Carlos and Rosemary Ferrer and John and Maree Townshend hosted the day in what was a different playing format for the touring party a best 2 ball four ball. i.e the best two stableford scores per hole per group. The winning score of 92 points came from the ladies group of Cecile Foulsham, Lindy Fraser, Ann Bennet and Rosey Williams. Best of the men with 87 points were John Townsend (Sebonack), John Foulsham, David Field and Steve Whelan on a count back from Sam Carrol (USSGS), David Elmslie, Don Fraser and Murray Williams.

Murray and Rosey made a joint presentation thanking our hosts and presenting the book 'Great Golf Down Under'. We were also happy to acknowledge Sam Carrol's 75th birthday to be celebrated on the next day.

One of the best days of golf the group has enjoyed.





Shinnecock Hills Thursday September 29

Captain's Report: Steve Whelan



Shinnecock Hills Golf Club is renowned as always being in the Top 10 of World Golf.

As eight intrepid travelling members left our accommodation on the way to the course our Director of Golf, David Field, instilled in us the need to play speedily so as not to hold up the following field.

The weather was “almost” kind, sunny skies, 50F temperature and a 20 knot hindering wind provided the initial challenge.

2 groups of 4 being, Foulsham, Webb, Williams and Whelan and Hess, Grose, Marshall and Field took to the course playing a 4BBB Par event.

The golfing journey on our trip has been spectacular and the quality of the courses frequently increasing as we travel

Shinnecock is like being at the top of a Beethoven crescendo. The view over the golf course, from the Clubhouse verandah, is inspiring, breathtaking and intimidating when one then contemplates a round of golf.

The course condition was never less than pristine and the greens ran fast and true (if you could pick the line).

Every now and then a golfer has to take a deep breath, admire the surroundings and pinch himself, today was the occasion to do that about 5 or 6 times.

John Webb was the star after a slow start but finishing with a 40 foot par putt on 17 followed by a birdie on 18 to win the match with partner John Foulsham.

Lunch in the very tasteful and well-proportioned Clubhouse, with our hosting member, Bob Alexander, was magnificent.



Maidstone Club Friday September 30

Captain's Report: John Webb



With great excitement and enthusiasm, our Team departed from 1708 for its final golfing destination on the Tour, The Maidstone Club. Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed by our host Jim Lamb and his wife Brigid. We were immediately invited to take a brief walk from the Clubhouse down towards the beach where we sighted a number of formerly privately owned beach cabanas, now rented annually by members for the Summer season. Appropriately, for a beach club, lunch was taken by the beach where the Club provides full catering facilities for its members. With the Season over it was quiet for our visit but it was easy to imagine how popular it would be at the height of Summer. Following lunch it was off to the practice range for a brief warm up prior to making our way to our prescribed tees for a 1.30pm shotgun start.

The course was challenging indeed, albeit it had a layout which suited many of our players. The golf scores reflected a very good performance from the Australians, particularly the ladies, resulting in a 5 ½ to 5 ½ draw.

Following golf we changed into formal attire for our Farewell Dinner. The dinner was beautiful and Jim Lamb gave an address to the room welcoming us. Our Captain then responded. The lady Captain thanked all our ladies for their resilience and success over the past 3 weeks.

The Captain then acknowledged and thanked Jim and the Maidstone Club and presented a book as a gift to the Club. He then thanked Gary Lee as the SGSA organiser and invited Gary to address the floor prior to presenting Sam with a book also. Following Gary's address of thanks and appreciation, the Captain asked the Australians to be upstanding up for a rousing toast to the USSGA.

Finally, Sam Carroll addressed the floor. He complimented all of us for our engagement with the US hosts and for bringing a particular touch of Aussie spirit with us. He noted that all of the host clubs had thoroughly enjoyed their participation and that this inaugural tour had been up to all of his expectations. Maidstone was indeed a fitting culmination of a wonderful tour.





Maidstone Club - Farewell Dinner



1708 House - A week in the Hamptons

After departing Philadelphia our trusty driver, Jack, took us on a five-hour bus tour arriving at “1708 House” (B&B) mid-afternoon.

1708 House was described by the New York Times as “a cross between a luxury get-away and a museum”. It certainly lived up to this expectation with its history and quaint cellar rooms. Our tour brochure provides a great overview.

After settling in we were treated to a selection of red and white wines for the evening and for every evening get together. The free evening saw the tourists take in the sites of Southampton and dine at various smart restaurants which the village had on offer. With the Aust v USA match square it was early to bed to prepare for the final game for the trophy at National Golf Links of America.

Wednesday, September 28

An early start to Sebonack Golf Club and after another wonderful day's golf and lunch we returned to 1708 House for an afternoon rest.

On return Ann Bennet and Steve Whelan left the bus and sourced a variety of pastas and salads for an eat in evening. After a few vinos the tour party let their hair down coming to life with an exhibition of talent that included singing, poetry and the jokes flowed. A very enjoyable evening with lots of laughter enjoying each other's company.

Thursday, September 29

Eight golfers left early for Shinnecock Hills Golf Club while the remaining tourists had a leisurely start. For those resting up the agenda for the day included more investigation of Southampton and its many boutique shops and eateries. Also taking in the beach and for some a ride to Sag Harbour.

The free evening saw the tourists investigate more Southampton restaurants and hotels. The Bamboo Restaurant was a popular choice, Fellingham's Irish Pub another and reports came in that some seniors were kicking up their heels on the dance floor.





The Baggage Team



Baggage Management

From day 1, with games at two courses, through the madcap arrival at the Racquet Club on the wrong side of the street to the final departure from 1708 House to New York, Cathy and her team managed our baggage without a hiccup.

Thanks also go to husband Peter and to Lindy Fraser with a special mention for Fred Hess in his "Nowhere North of Here" jacket, for his work on our only wet day, the day we left for New York. The New York section was a real triumph of calm management with all of the disparate stops from JFK to the streets of Manhattan arranged in perfect sequence. Thank you Cathy and all your team.



Sunset - The Mill - and a Rainbow

National Golf Links of America -Sunday September 25



Water Mill Beach Club - The Clam Bake

A casual evening but a special treat, was the Lobster Bake at the Water Mill Beach Club. The Club has direct access to the beach on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Substantial beach homes surrounded this unassuming but idyllic club. Although quiet on the night, being the end of the season, one could see how popular it would be in high season. On arrival we walked past the team preparing the BBQ for the upcoming feast and our hosts Jim Deasy & Jon Ward greeted us with cocktails followed by a spread which included local lobster, clams, prawns, mussels, chicken and salads.



Miscellany



The Trophy



The trophy, designed by Gary Lee and built by George Chirnside will be placed in the USSGA museum at the Apawamis Club in Rye, NY, the home club of the US Seniors