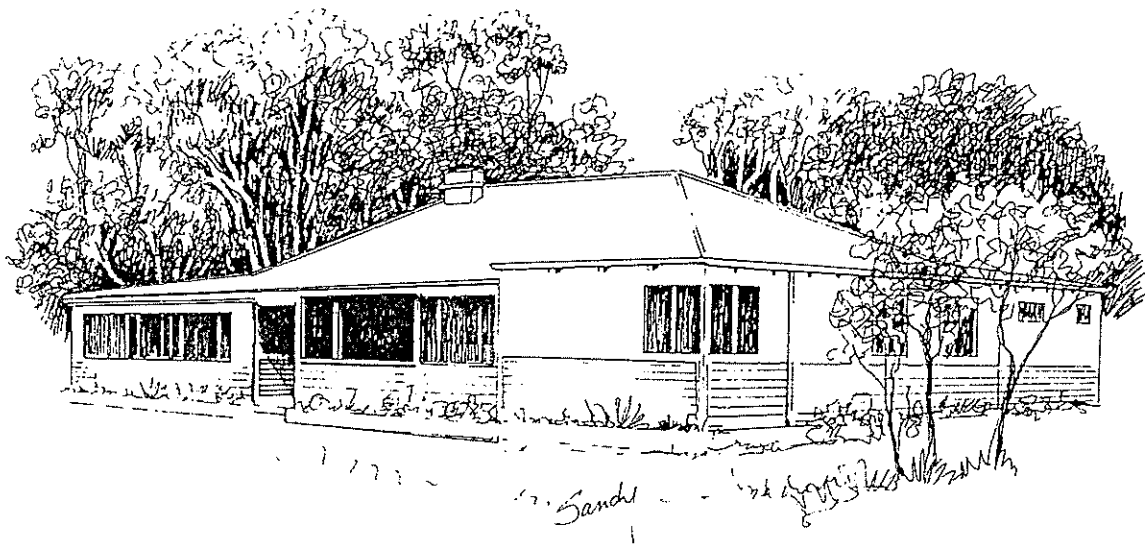


HISTORY OF THE
UPPER BLACKWOOD
GOLF CLUB



BY
JANET E. PURSE

GOLF
IN THE
UPPER BLACKWOOD DISTRICT

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1972

BRANCASTER

The early history of Golf in this district is closely associated with the Whistler family. Early in this century they left England and went to South Australia. In about 1905 the two sons Robert and John came to Western Australia and took up land in the Boyup Brook district. They named the property "Brancaster", after the village in Norfolk from which they came. Robert married Fanny Smith of Boyanup and they had a son, Harold.

In 1912 Robert took his wife and son for a trip home to England and one of the highlights of their holiday was a game of golf at St. Andrew's, the "home of Golf" in Scotland. They grew so interested in the game that when they returned to their farm in W.A. they brought with them sets of clubs, golf bags and balls. They then decided to lay out a nine-hole course of their own.

The course was constructed on the paddocks adjacent to the homestead and had some interesting features such as a creek to cross and a dog-leg around a dam. One short hole had thick bracken fern from tee to green and another hole, near the sheep yards, had a solid jarrah slab fence across the fairway. The greens were small by present standards and made of sand, naturally. Wherever a fence had to be crossed, a stile was built for climbing over. Of course, in those days golf buggies were unheard of and the writer well remembers, when the first buggies appeared at Brancaster after the second World War, wondering whether they were worth the business of lifting them over the fences!

When the course was established the Whistlers invited some of their friends and neighbours to come and join them for a game of golf at weekends..., mainly the Lovells from "Condinup" who also had a nine-hole practice course laid out on their property and the Swinneys from "Dinninup Vale". Gradually, other neighbours joined in and golf at Brancaster developed into a regular and very pleasant family outing. The visitors brought their own lunch and ate it on the verandah of the homestead and Mrs Whistler presided as hostess and made cups of tea for everyone.

Others who joined in included Mr M.S. Hack and his sons Bill, Doug and Ron, Doug's wife Fan, Jim Lee Steere, Bob and Mrs Johnson, Percy and Lou Chidzey, Frank Money, the Blechynden family, Myra, Ellen, Charles, Hubert and his wife Trixie. A few years later, Patrick Glynn came to the district and then his brother Gerard and the Purse brothers Jack and Bill, John Broadhurst, Scot McKie and his wife Olga, Alan McKie and they all played golf at Brancaster.

Eventually it was decided to form a committee and register "Brancaster" as an official golf club. Thus grew the first Golf Club in the Boyup Brook district and Mrs Robert Whistler became known as the "Mother of Golf" in this area. In 1954 she was made a Life Member of the new Upper Blackwood Golf Club in recognition of "the keen interest and untiring efforts towards golf which resulted in the spread of the game throughout the district". She was asked to drive the first ball at the official opening of the new club and at the age of 88 was still playing golf. Even into her 90's she still drove the ball for the official opening of each season....cleanly and truly, "straight down the middle".



Mrs Whistler Snr.,
driving the Opening ball of the Season,
(some time during her eighties)

Brancaster had a strong pennant team and in 1937 and 1938 won the Sandover Shield, the trophy donated by the firm of Sandover for match play between the clubs in the Blackwood Districts Golf Association. The Association at that time comprised of Boyup Brook, Brancaster and Dinninup in the Upper Blackwood zone and Balingup, Bridgetown and Manjimup in the other zone, so the winning of the shield was no small victory.

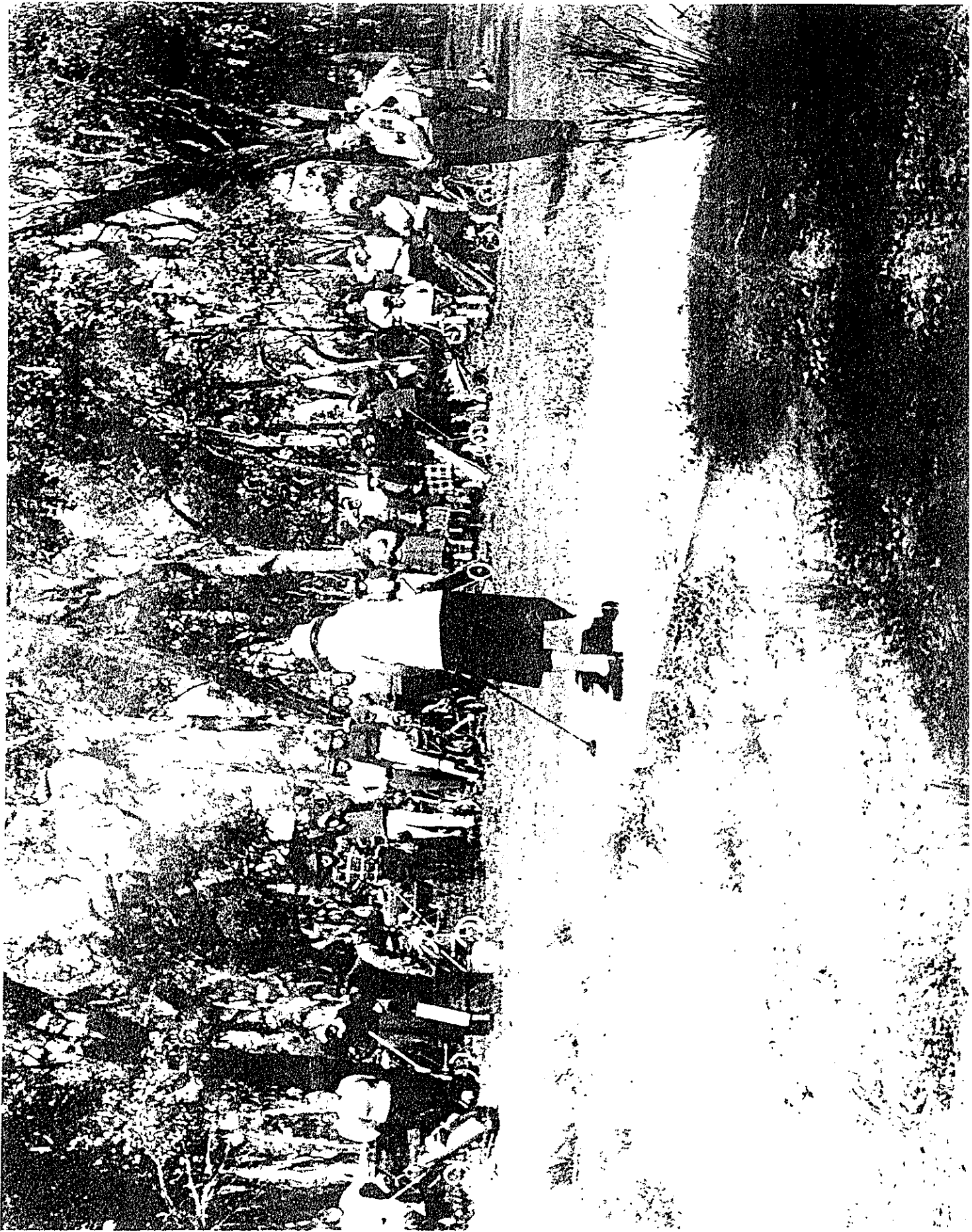
When golf was resumed at Brancaster after the war, the membership was reinforced with some of the players from the old Dinninup Club and the wool shed was now used for a meeting place instead of the house. This did not deter the "stayers" in any way and they carried on by the light of an Aladdin Lamp, having a drink and holding post mortems on their game, after the way of golfers the world over, regardless of the cold draught around the catching pens. When it was Brancaster's turn to host an Association event or a Pennant match, the lady members served up a very good cold luncheon and afternoon teas in the shed, using an outdoor copper for hot water.

Occasionally, of course, some incident would remind a player that he was in unusual surroundings....such as the time that a Manjimup man walked over to the loading door, forgot that he was not on level ground and stepped off into space!

The shed was about 400 metres from the homestead, and Mrs Whistler Snr. usually walked across the paddock to join the competition and walked home again afterwards. One evening, some time after she had departed for home, a player happened to go outside and heard cries for help. When he investigated, he found Mrs Whistler bailed up by the bull. She had taken refuge between a fence and a tree, and was dodging from side to side, fending off the bull with her golf umbrella.

Even at the shed, the children must have sometimes caused some annoyance to the Whistler family by leaving a mess behind. They were left to amuse themselves around the yards and the shed while the parents were out playing and we all remember the time when Willie Forrest found a bottle of kerosene and drank some of it and had to be rushed off to hospital.

Sad to say, Mr Robert Whistler was now totally blind and unable to play golf, but his brother John although very deaf, was still a keen player. Robert's son Harold had married and his wife Elsie had joined the ranks of Brancaster golfers.



DINNINUP

Soon after the establishing of golf at "Brancaster", another 9-hole course was laid out at "Bayndup", the property of the Beatty brothers. The late George Tichener of Kulikup played a large part in the planning and formation of this as a golf club.

Other players at Bayndup in those early days included Howard, Walter, Jack and Youle Beatty and their families, Eric Norton, Tommie Walker and Jill Glasson. Earl Smith and his wife Eveline also played there and later on Steve and Mrs Gibbs, Isobel and Bob McKenzie, Dinah and Cronje Drummond, Pauline and Rupert (later Lord) Byron and Beulah and Alan Brown.

After some years Bayndup closed down as a golf club, and the members formed a new one on public reserve land west of the old Dinninup School. This was then known as the Dinninup Club and with Boyup and Brancaster, formed the Upper Blackwood Zone of the Blackwood Districts Golf Association.

Play was suspended during the War and was not resumed afterwards at the Dinninup Club. Most of the players from there joined Brancaster.

"BAYNDUP".....1931



Geo Tichener, Mrs Walter Beatty ?, Eileen Beatty, Cyril Beatty, Jill Glasson, Youle Beatty Jnr., ? ?
Kath Beatty.

Mrs Walter Beatty, Geo. Tichener, Jill Glasson, Cyril Beatty, Youle Beatty Snr, Eric Norton, Eileen Beatty, Youle Beatty Jnr
(Front Doreen, Bonnie, Ken and Kath Beatty)





George Tichener



Geo Tichener Eileen Beatty



Jill Glasson

BOYUP BROOK

The first golf course at Boyup Brook was a 9-hole one, laid down in about 1929 or 1930 on Mr E.A. Proctor's farm adjoining the western boundary of the town. It is now part of Mr P. Waite's property. Mr H.C. Smith who at that time was managing the Boyup Brook Hotel for Mrs Balharry, seems to have been the person mainly responsible for getting this club started and he was helped by Mervyn Butterly, Harry Bostock, Ern Proctor, Jack Cuneo, Reg Blechynden and Arthur Lee Steere.

Other players who joined there included Mrs Paddy Dent, Miss Connie Balharry, Walter Cowley, Fred Proctor, Mrs Bostock, Avon Smith-Ryan, Nigel Haines, Dr Hiram Raises, Marjorie Hodgson, Duance and Thora Meagher, Janet and Frank Ritson, Bob Duncan the headmaster, Geoff Jones the Commercial Bank manager, M.C. (Peter) Hawkins, Jim Lee Steere and H.C. (Chris) Ball who was Dalgety's staff officer then. (Janet Ritson could hardly be counted as she was then the child nuisance who used to arrive on horseback, tie her pony to the fence and play her round and then gallop home again with her three sticks in a little old bag across her shoulder).

The "club house" was a three-sided open weather-board and iron shed along-side Banks Road as it is now called, just opposite the site of the timber mill.

The first match played in the district was between Boyup Brook and Brancaster clubs and the results were as follows:

- P. McM. Glynn v H.C. Smith - All square
- F. Money defeated G. Jones 5/4
- H. Whistler defeated H. Bostock 4/3
- J. Lee Steere defeated M.C. Hawkins 6/5
- D. Hack defeated H.C. Ball 5/4
- J. Whistler defeated N. Haines - 1 up

It seems to have been a crushing defeat for Boyup Brook, but as the match was played at Brancaster that may have given the home team an advantage. Anyway, it was apparently a very happy day for all with afternoon tea served on the verandah by Mrs Whistler, Snr.

The first club championship was played in 1930 and the eight qualifiers were Haines, A. Lee Steere, Hawkins, Duncan, Bostock, Cuneo, Jones and Maloney. Bostock defeated Hawkins in the final, 3/1. (His trophy is now in the glass case at the Boyup Brook Golf Club)

The older golfers here now, who played at Boyup in those early days, will remember a man named Alf Denton. He was a wheelwright in Boyup Brook in the 1920's, but he was no ordinary blacksmith. He was a scholar and a gentleman and there was some mystery about his background. All we know about his past is that he had been a surgical instrument maker in England. We do not know why he came to Australia, but he was working at a timber mill at Muradup when Walter Cowley persuaded him to come and set up shop as a blacksmith in Boyup Brook. Walter was manager of the Muradup Co-operative Company when they took over the old Westralian Farmers Co-op in Boyup and opened it as a branch of Muradup. So there was Alf with his smithy where the Co-op drapery department now stands. Apart from all the usual jobs, he made hand-forged golf

clubs, one of which, made for Fred Proctor, is now hanging on the wall of the present club house. You need to look at it closely to see the markings on the face of the club, a "mashie".

The clubs used in those days had names, such as:

Driver,	the equivalent of a No 1 wood,
Baffey "	" 2 wood,
Spoon "	" 3 wood,
Driving Iron	" 1 iron,
Mid-Iron	" 2 iron,
Mashie "	" 5 iron,
Mashie-Niblick	" 7 iron,
Niblick "	" 8-9 iron.

A Cleeck was a lighter, smaller type of mid-iron and a Loffer was a light, very lofted club with a small head and a long shaft. They all had hickory shafts.

The first metal-shafted clubs known to have been used in the district were owned by "Doc" Raises, about 1933. One wonders whether he had a special reason for getting metal shafts; he was well known for his hasty temper at golf, although the gentlest of men at other times and much loved by his patients. He could not sound an 'r' and perhaps this also frustrated him. At any rate, he broke more than one hickory shaft across his knee.

About 1934 the Club moved onto the recreation reserve just across the brook from the town..... the land now partly occupied by the hot-rod track. A new 9-hole course was laid out here, with the help of Tommy Howard the professional at Royal Perth Golf Club and one-time Professional Champion of Australia. He planned the bunkers etc. for the course, for a fee of five pounds a day and transport to Bridgetown. The building of the greens and bunkers was done mostly under contract by Harry Bostock and Mervyn Butterly, with the help of busy bees by members.

The Club grew in numbers and the membership now included Reg Wass the policeman, Walter Fewings manager of the Hotel, Len Moore, Alec and George Affleck, Jack Smethurst the Roads Board Secretary, Graham Wright, Phyllis and Jack Young and Ron Young. Golf continued at this Club, with the exception of the war years, until the amalgamation with Brancaster.

So, by the early 1930's there were three registered golf clubs in the district and these formed the Upper Blackwood zone of the Blackwood Districts Golf Association. Manjimup, Bridgetown and Balingup made up the other zone. There had been, for a short while, another club at Mayanup, on the "Red Hill" property of Mr Jim Day, but this was apparently never a registered club. Mr Day's own family played there and also the Forrests from "Dwalganup", Whip Moulton and Frank and Eric Hales. Social matches were played against the Boyup Brook Club.

It is unfortunate that no records of any of the Upper Blackwood clubs have been kept.....no Minute Books, and no records of any Championships, except the odd bits of information collected from older members. It is known that Harry Bostock and Reg Blechynden won the B.D.G.A. Foursomes in 1936.

In 1965 it was suggested that the names of the champions of all previous clubs in the district should be placed on a special board, and Jack Purse undertook to collect the names. However, this proved to be impossible and no board was ever set up. There are still some blanks in the following table of champions:

	<u>Brancaster</u>	<u>Dinninup</u>	<u>Boyup Brook</u>
1930			H. Bostock
1931			N. Haines
1932	P. McM. Glynn	J.M. Drummond	R. Duncan
1933	" "	G Tichener	R. Blechynden
1934	" "	J.M. Drummond	F.H. Proctor
1935		" "	R. Blechynden
1936	H. Whistler	" "	A.W. Lee Steere
1937	Jas. Lee Steere	" "	R. Blechynden
1938	H. Whistler	" "	M. Butterly
1939	J.R. Purse	" "	R. Blechynden

1940-47.....No Competition

	<u>Brancaster</u>	<u>Boyup Brook</u>
1948		
1949	J.R. Purse	
1950	D.S. Hack	J.M. Young
1951	J.R. Purse	" "
1952	" "	W. Drown
1953	H. Whistler	J.M. Young