

Women's Inter School Golf Challenge Cup

The Commonwealth Golf Club Connection

This document mentions among others both Kitty McEwan and Nell Goff. Kitty was Honorary Secretary/Treasurer of WISGCC from 1929 to 1940. Nell held the positions from 1955 to 1977.

Kitty was a member of Commonwealth Golf Club (CGC) and the inaugural CGC Women's club champion in 1925/26 at the age of 31 years. She was also the Women's Captain in 1926. Kitty won the Waverley Cup in 1925/26 as club champion and this trophy is presented for the best aggregate net score over the two days of qualifying rounds of the A Grade Women's Club Championship at Commonwealth Golf Club.

Kitty was also a member of Riversdale Golf Club and played in their 1927 Pennant team. She was Riversdale club champion in 1933.

Kitty attended the oldest girls' school in Australia – Ormiston Ladies College. She was the driving force in creating the Women's Inter School Golf Challenge Cup (WISGCC) in 1929. Kitty was a freelance journalist who wrote on women's golf and tennis. It is stated in the Riversdale Golf Club 125 History Book that she was "too modest to report her own golfing wins". She was also the author of "Golf Courses of Victoria" in 1935. Golf historians often refer to this book.

There is a really interesting article written by Kitty in 1936 in the publication "Golf and Tennis" entitled **Associates and Course Rights**. In this article she outlined with "neutrality" some of the problems: for instance, associates not calling men through and the opposite case of a pair of good women players being held up by a slow all-male four-ball game. She concluded with the following common sense homily:

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As will be seen, both members and associates have a grievance in the method of management of a game where the traditions of courtesy should be the first consideration. Therefore, just as oil will remove the squeak from machinery, so observance of all rules of etiquette by everyone playing the game should make the club run on oiled wheels.

Kitty was really active during World War II especially in fund raising. She was appointed Women's Land Army Superintendent. Her wise and tolerant leadership and her knowledge of rural problems supported the welfare of the "Land Girls".

Barwon Heads Golf Club recognised the outstanding work done by Kitty during the war and instituted the Kitty McEwan Trophy. This trophy is no longer played for at the club. Kitty was not a member of Barwon Heads.

When the original sponsor of the WISGCC, Table Talk, closed in 1939 Kitty organised the Sun News Pictorial to sponsor the event in 1940. She was then the women's sport journalist with the Sun News Pictorial and specialised in women's golf and tennis from 1938 to 1966. Kitty was small in stature (five foot four and a half inches) but "packed a powerful punch".

Kitty fought long and hard for women's sports results to be included in the daily press. The two decades covering the 70's and 80's produced the best Victorian newspaper reporting of women's golf results and related articles seen so far. During this period Peg McMahon (The Age), Di Gatehouse (The Sun) and Don Lawrence (The Herald) carried on the vision of Kitty McEwan.

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In 1969, Kitty at age 75, collapsed from a heart attack while playing golf at Commonwealth. She passed away about two months later.

Kitty is commemorated by the prestigious Victorian Sport (now Vicsport) Kitty McEwan Sportswoman of the Year award. This was established in 1974. CGC member Judy Forbes (Bull) was nominated by Tennis Victoria for one of the categories associated with this award.

Kitty held the Honorary Secretary/Treasurer position for the WISGCC from its inception in 1929 until 1940 when World War II started. Her wonderful contribution is remembered in the Kitty McEwan Memorial Trophy presented to the A Division winner.

Another well respected and visible Commonwealth Golf Club member was Nell Goff. She was the longest serving Women's Captain at Commonwealth Golf Club (1939 – 1945). Heather Arnold was the Women's club secretary and greatly assisted Nell. Heather was also a supporter of the WISGCC. Nell was one of the real characters associated with early women's golf and in particular the WISGCC. She was the Commonwealth Golf Club delegate to the V.L.G.U. In 1965 she donated the Bronze Cup to Commonwealth Golf Club.

Nell organised the first WISGCC to be held at Commonwealth in 1957. CGC has held the event once in each decade since 1957. The club is delighted to support the history of the WISGCC by committing to stage the event in 2021 and 2022. Nell held the Honorary Secretary/Treasurer position within WISGCC from 1955 until 1977 and her long and excellent contribution is remembered in the Nell Goff Memorial Trophy presented to the B Division winner.

In 1976 CGC member Judy Forbes (Bull) playing for Clarendon Presbyterian Ladies College in the WISGCC won the Best Gross with a

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score of 76. This score equalled the CGC Course Record of 76 held by Jane Lock. Jane played in the event and had a score of 79 while playing for Tintern. Equalling a course record seems to be a one-off!! Judy still has a copy of the letter sent to her by Nell Goff. Judy can remember Nell and her sister, Dorrie, being really proud of another CGC member doing well in the WISGCC. They both encouraged Judy to participate in and also get more involved with this great event. Judy is now a life member of WISGCC. Dorrie celebrated her 101st birthday in April 2003 and was still interested to hear all of the news of both Commonwealth Women's golf and the WISGCC.

Commonwealth Women have been leaders in the continuing success of the event which is now approaching 100 years in existence.

Data collated and presented by Judy Bull