

## MIRBOO NORTH GOLF CLUB

*by Rover*

Mirboo North Golf Club was formed on 18 July 1921 following a meeting of approximately 30 people in the Mechanic's Hall.

Mr R N McKay was elected as the club's inaugural president.

George St Ellen gave permission for a links to be established on part of his farm adjoining the township.

The land was offered rent free under the condition that no excavation work be undertaken.

The nine-hole layout was designed by Mr M Evans.

Annual membership fees were 15/- (\$1.50) for men and 10/6 (\$1.05) for ladies.

The fairways were cleared of dead timber and stumps by enthusiastic members at working bees.

Greens comprised mowed paddock grass and a small clubhouse was constructed near the first tee.

Opening day took place on 6 August 1921 when a mixed handicap foursomes was held.

Winners were Miss Huffer and Ben Boon.

The first Annual General meeting was held on 11 March 1922. Elected office bearers were president, George St Ellen, vice president Mr B Boon, captain, Mr H Hipwell, and secretary, Mr M Evans. The committee was A Kennan, H Shields, H Stuart, B Boon and D Northcott.

The club would remain at George St Ellen's property for eight years before relocating to the Mirboo North Recreation Reserve in 1930, where a lease was established and a nine-hole course was built.

In 1930, Mirboo North also affiliated with the Victorian Golf Association and entered a men's team of 12 in the South Gippsland district pennant competition.

In 1932, Mirboo North became a member of West Gippsland Golf Association, before transferring to South Gippsland in 1933, where it remained until returning to West Gippsland in 1975.

A new clubhouse was purchased from Gunyah in 1935 at a cost of \$60.00.

In 1946, the club purchased 19 acres of land adjoining the recreation reserve from Mr J Love for \$220.00.

Sand scrapes made way for grass greens between 1956 and 1960.

Mirboo North ladies won their first pennant in 1962 and were followed by the men winning their initial pennant the following year.

In 1962, Mr H V Morcom, was commissioned to extend the course to 18 holes, using land adjacent to the recreation reserve.

Following the death of Mr Morcom, 1937 Australian Golf Open winner, George Naismith, designed the final layout. On his first visit in July 1967, he pegged out the fairways, tees and greens.

200 trees were purchased and planted and 400 metres of topsoil was carted and spread to establish greens and tees on the new course.

Clearing of the new fairways using hired bulldozers was completed in 1969.

All work on the course had been voluntary and carried out by members until the full-time appointment of Bert Bright as greens keeper in 1971.

When Mirboo North's Ridgway was widened, the fill was used on the bottom side of the sloping 17<sup>th</sup> fairway to help prevent wayward tee shots bouncing into the creek.

The current clubhouse was built in 1971 with the official opening of the new 18-hole course and clubhouse being held on 22 April 1972 by Mr J R Lovett president of the Victorian Golf Association.

The club was granted a full liquor licence in 1973 by the Liquor Control Commission.

Over the years, many members have been honored with life memberships for their outstanding contributions to the club.

The clubhouse was extended in 1984 when a front foyer, dining section and larger kitchen were established.

In 1998 the Mirboo North Golf Club (MNGC) and the Victorian Golf League (VGL) decided to build a motel on the course.

The VGL would exclusively fund the construction of the motel and manage the Motel. The MNGC would provide the land, adjacent to the clubhouse and 1<sup>st</sup> hole, on a 25 year x 25 year lease arrangement, at heavily reduced rates.

The MNGC would benefit from the traffic thru the motel. The VGL have a place to run their junior camps and have a facility for all of the many golf clubs of the VGL, to stay and play at Mirboo North.