



Heritage

COMMONWEALTH GOLF CLUB Inc.

June 2005

COMMONWEALTH'S LEGENDARY 16TH HOLE

The Introduction to the first in the series of articles in *The Sporting Globe* on Wednesday, June 18, 1930 reads:

In a series of articles beginning in this issue, John Young takes two players, one on a handicap of 6 and another on 20, round 18 holes of the Commonwealth links.

He points out the mistakes they make in play, prescribes cures for their golfing ills, instructs them in points of the rules, and reminds them here and there of the dictates of the etiquette of golf.

Young is one of Australia's best known golf tutors. He learnt the game and his trade at the home of golf, St. Andrews, Scotland, and since he left his native land he has travelled, played and taught in many parts of the world, including U.S.A. and three Australian states. He is at present attached to the Commonwealth G.C., Oakleigh, Melbourne.

The Commonwealth links, designed and trapped by Mr. Charles Lane, mostly on lines inspired by H. Colt, the famous British course architect, is one of the finest examples of modern links work in Australia. As these articles proceed, the golfing point of each hole of this course will be pointed out. Plans of each hole, showing the bunkering and other details will be reproduced.

(Note: the complete set of articles from the *Sporting Globe*, a twice-weekly paper which used to be published by what is now the *Herald-Sun*, and the photographs from the magazine "Golf" are held in the State Library. These were brought to our attention by Hedley Ham, a member of Yarra Yarra Golf Club's History Committee).

From *The Sporting Globe*, Wednesday, November 12, 1930 on the Golf Page by J.M. Dillon, this article is the 16th in a series by Jock Young, Commonwealth professional.

EXCEPTIONAL GOLF HOLE

From numerous and wide apart places in Australia, I have had letters and requests which have proved the unusual popularity of the regular publication of the details of the holes designed at Commonwealth by Charles Lane, and the helpful instructions given on the golf game by John Young. The plans and the hints have been closely followed by enthusiasts.

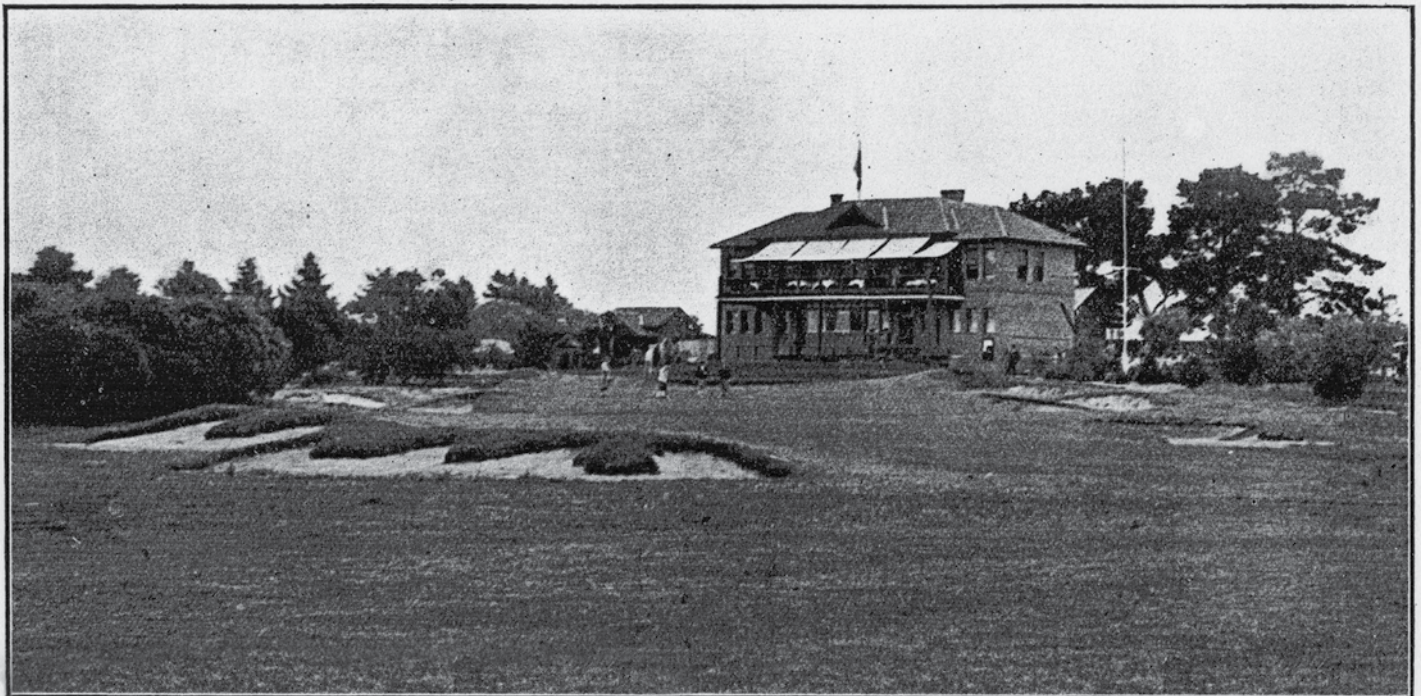
From the point of view of links architecture, the hole dealt with this week is perhaps the best and most interesting of all those handled to date. Its instructional points and general value to those studying course architecture are great. So many fundamental features are included, that the plan given herewith is worth the close study of all golfers.

It is strange, but true, that there are more good golfers than there are linksmen, who have a sound knowledge of golf course architecture. And the best golfers are not nearly always the best authorities on this important subject.

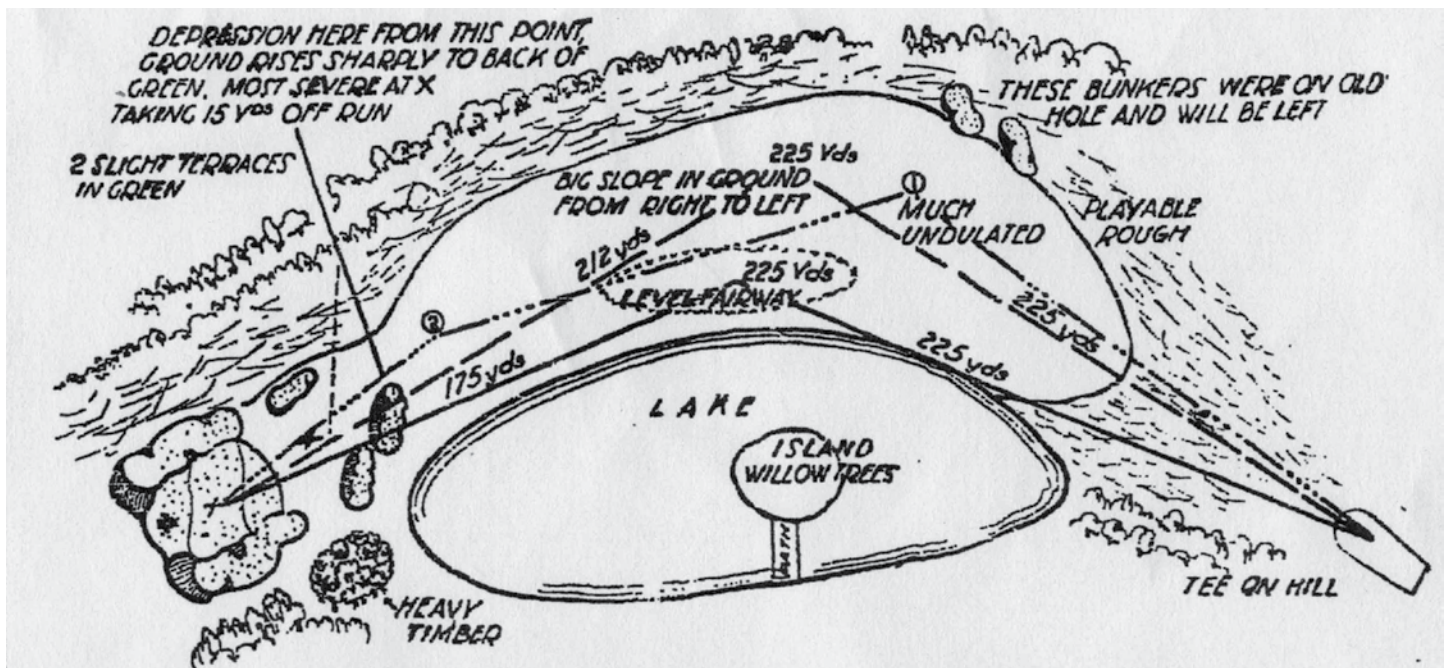
The hole (see diagram on next page) is the one into which the present 16th (18th of the layout before the new clubhouse opened in late 1929) is to be remodelled. It is by the par player's route, about 408 yards, and by reason of the placing of the tee, a dogleg proposition.



COMMONWEALTH CLUB HOUSE.



December 1927, behind the then 18th green (16th from late 1929)



This is one of the most instructive diagrams of a golf hole yet given in Australia. It is the new 16th of the Commonwealth lay out, and was designed by Charles Lane. On many courses there is a water hazard similar to the lake shown here. A study of this hole will reveal how such a feature can be made use of for the making of a great golf hole.

The tee is on fairly high ground, and the perfectly placed drive will be sent as close as is safe to the edge of the lake. There the par player's ball will find the only part of the fairways off the drive that gives a stance which is easy and level.

A shot in the ideal direction, from 225 to 260 yards,

will find this spot of even turf. From the end of the 225 yards perfectly steered hit, the green is wide open, and a shot of about 175 to 180 yards is necessary to get home.

But the man whose steering of a golf ball is not accurate need have no fears of the lake. There is plenty of country cleared for fairway off

to the right. But the further up to the right one goes, and the more one seeks safety, the longer will be the shot home, and the more difficult will be the stance and lie by reason of the manner in which the perfectly turfed fairway has been undulated.

SAFETY PLAY PENALISED

A man who hits a 225 yard drive, but sends it out to safety, will have a second of 225 yards, that will be extra difficult, by reason of the undulations, and will call for a carry over bunkers that is not easy. The short hitter has no grievance, for his first is to open country, and his second has no terrors in the way. But it will take him three to get home. Short of the green, the fairway has been treated to make a depression that almost amounts to a grassy hollow. As the green is on a rise, the shot home must be one with carry to the green, or else it will be pulled up by the depression, even if the bunkers are carried. The greenside pits are picturesque, but deep and difficult. Hooking must be avoided at all costs at this hole, for first the lake, and then the thick woods, must be avoided.

YOUNG'S ADVICE

"Than this hole," said John Young to his pupils on the tee, "you have not met a better one on the course, and I do not think you will find its equal in the links of Australia. Because the tee is elevated, do not imagine that the carry across the edge of the lake is easy. It is further than it looks, and it is only for those who can play golf.

"Of course, anyone is entitled to have a shot at the par man's route, but I warn you that such a practice will materially assist my golf ball sales. Being more ambitious than one's skill entitles one to be in this golf game is mere foolishness.

"If the shot comes off, it certainly gives a thrill, but rightly considered the big element of fluke must be admitted. The wise mid-mark, or long mark man, does not, if he is after a decent score, go for the extra-exacting shots."

(The rest of the article describes how a 6 marker and a 20 marker played the hole, with John Young commenting on how they swung and the consequences).

Mark Wade,
Heritage Sub-Committee