

A nine-hole course was established at "The Lodge" in about 1897 and social golf was played for a few years before the first matches against other towns commenced in 1901. The club was one of nine foundation members of the South Australian Golf Association in 1904. Good local courses were also established by Mr. G. Meikle and Mr. C. Griffin. The ladies were playing by 1905 or earlier, and formed their own club in 1907.

Two Strathalbyn players achieved early fame: Guy Stirling, whose father owned "The Lodge" course, was the South Australian Amateur Champion in 1908, and Ben Castle was the South Australian Country Champion from 1910 to 1920. Until 1941, the Strathalbyn Golf Club was a private club.

The public Angas Golf Club (formed in 1929) overlooked the town from the west, and by 1938 had an 18-hole scrapes course. The combined membership of these two clubs hovered around 125 for the whole of the 1930s - about 10% of Strathalbyn's population of 1,200.

In 1941 all of the above clubs went into recess for the duration of World War II, and none of them reopened after the war. "The Lodge", was requisitioned by the Army in 1942 to establish a Convalescent Depot for recuperating soldiers, and tents and other more substantial buildings were erected all over the golf course.

In 1946, a new club and 9-hole scrapes course were established on Burnside Estate on property kindly loaned by Mr Harry Meyer.

In 1937, 1948 and 1953, the men's club won the SA Country Teams Championship at Country Week in Adelaide, and all of these teams contained Max Semple and Rob Meyer. Max Semple was a legendary player who won a host of championships, and was Strathalbyn's No. 1 player for a span of 36 years, from 1934 (when he was 17 years old) to 1969 (his last season). He is the only member of the club to have played off a "scratch" (zero) handicap. When Max won the Strathalbyn Open Championship in 1937, he compiled two magnificent rounds of 70 which included an amazing two 2s and thirteen 3s.

The Southern Argus (2 July, 1936) reported that Max Semple beat the Kooyonga Simpson Cup player WS Shephard, in the Angas Open, with the match attracting a large gallery of spectators who were thrilled by the spectacular shots provided by these players. (WS Shepherd became the SA Amateur Champion in 1950 and 1956, and played for the Australian team in 1954). Max was twice SA Country Champion (1937, 1947) and twice runner-up (1939, 1956). Incidentally, Max was not Strathalbyn's first Country Champion. Between 1910 and 1920. Ben Castle won five Country Championships. Even earlier, Guy Stirling won the SA Amateur Championship in 1908 (Strathalbyn's only State Champion).

In the 1950s and early 1960s Strathalbyn had the best team on the Fleurieu Peninsula, winning the coveted von Doussa Shield on 12 of the first 22 years of the competition, up until 1962. This competition included teams from Mt. Barker, Murray Bridge and Victor Harbor.

The Strathalbyn women won five SA Country Teams Championships between 1937 and 1963, with Miss Esme Adams being a member of all of them. Esme won at least three straight Club Championships immediately before the war, and another eight straight, immediately after the war. She was also SA Country Champion in 1948 (and runner-up in 1947 and 1949). Even more spectacular was Miss Robynn Meyer, who burst onto the scene in 1959. "The Advertiser" (22 September, 1961) reported *SA's most promising golf find for years, 20-year-old Miss Robynn Meyer played brilliantly at Grange yesterday to complete the senior- junior Country championships double for the second successive year.* She was a member of the State team from 1959-1962 inclusive, SA Country Champion in 1960 and 1961, and State Junior Champion (1960 and 1961).

From 1952 to 1974 the Strathalbyn women's team dominated competitions on the Fleurieu Peninsula, winning the Southern Shield 10 times, but no honours have been won since that time

In about 1961, the club had the opportunity to buy a patch of well-drained land on the plains near Milang. This would have been more inclusive of the Langhorne Creek and Milang communities whose golf clubs had closed down permanently in about 1940 at the onset of WWII, and also had the advantage of ready access to water from Milang and an underground aquifer in the Angas and Bremer Basin. Some members were disappointed when the decision was made to purchase the scenic higher-rainfall property in the hills, halfway between Strathalbyn and Ashbourne. The decision was influenced by the declared intentions of the E & WS department to build a mains water spur line from Sandergrove straight past the latter site. Unfortunately, the spur line was cancelled, and the course was left without adequate water.

In 1962, the club established an 18 hole scrapes course on the newly-acquired freehold land several kilometres out of town on the Ashbourne Road. When it became apparent that this would not become a greens course (due to lack of water) several top players left, and the fortunes of the club have never again reached earlier levels. In the early 1990s up to 75 men participated in Saturday competitions each week when the "StrathGolf" proposal surfaced - the intention was to put in a new greens course at "The Lodge" on the edge of town, in association with a large housing subdivision. The housing subdivision was finally approved in 2005 ("Hampden Park") but without the golf course.

In a bold attempt to resurrect the fortunes of the club, a decision was made in 2002 to revert to a 9-hole greens course, but membership (about 50-60) has remained at only half of the level of the early 1990s.

Dam water was used to irrigate the greens and tees, enabling play even in summer, but there was never enough water to irrigate the fairways. A bore was sunk in 2003 to supplement the existing supply, and was first used to feed water into the main dam in 2005.

Our club continues to thrive thanks to many hours of voluntary work put in by some of our members.

Our ladies competition continues to grow with fresh enthusiasm boosting numbers and interest.

Our Mens competition, both on a Wednesday afternoon or Saturday attracts an enthusiastic and social group of blokes.

**Thanks to Brian Simpson for giving his permission to include our history from his book:
Strathalbyn 1839 - 2006**