



The Beginnings

The Inaugural Day

paid up members and the Committee formed to plan the great event reads like a Who's Who of the early membership — Bert Evans, Stan Kirkham, Gil and Prest Bruce, Bob Irvine, Jimmy Longbourne, C.W.Bird, Cedric King, Dave Matthew, Clayton Wright, Norman Martin, Jack Stothers, Pete Prest, Bob Robinson, Jim Robertson, Art Irvine, Alec Johnstone, Joe Garner, George Syrotuck, Wilf Christmas and Tom Gillespie. To these names may be added those of a social Committee run by Miss Carr Hilton, Mrs.Christmas and Mrs. Irvine. Mr. Lomax looked after the funds and ran a membership booth.

Sunday, August 21, was, unfortunately, a showery day but hundreds of people still turned out for the event. Bert Evans was selling tickets at a table at the entrance when the official car of former B.C. Premier, Mr. John Hart¹, arrived with

flags flying. Instead of driving through the gates the popular onetime Premier insisted on stopping and buying a ticket even though he was the official opener! He was later introduced by Wally Seymour² and officially opened the course with a well received speech and an inaugural shot described by one reporter as “a smack that showed every sign of having come from a man who derives pleasure rather than profit from the game!”³ This opening salvo was followed by an 18 hole match played between Ben Colk and David Crane, both products of the old Cowichan Club, and Phil Taylor and Ronnie McLeod, pros from Victoria. Colk and Crane paid their own expenses and made a donation to the new club. They defeated the Victoria pros 4 & 3 Colk finishing with a 70, Crane and Taylor with 74 and McLeod had a nervous 83.

When tickets were sold for this inaugural event lottery tickets were also sold. The prize was a six and a half acre property bought as part of the original parcel of land but not used in the final plan of the course. A highlight of the day was the drawing of the winning ticket which was held by Mrs. S. K. Thorneycroft of Vancouver.⁴



On the 1st tee: John Hart speaking into the microphone with Ben Colk (left) and David Crane (centre)

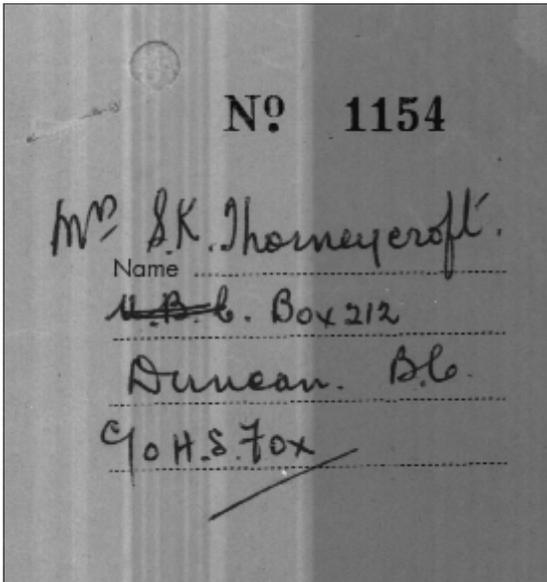
1. John Hart was the Premier of B.C. from December 1941 to December 1947.

2. Standing in for the President, John Lawrence, who was away on holiday.

3. *The Victoria Daily Times*, August 25, 1949.

4. Daughter of Mr.& Mrs.H.S.Fox who were both members of the Club.

Large Gallery Attends Golf Course Opening



The lucky winning ticket.

Colk, Crane, Taylor and McLeod putting out.

COWICHAN GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

P.O.Box 266,
Duncan, B.C.

24th August, 1949

Dear Mrs. Thorneycroft,

The Directors have asked me to confirm that yours was the winning ticket in connection with the drawing for the parcel of land last Sunday.

To complete the transaction it is now necessary for you to make a legal bid for the property. After this bid has been made and accepted, the necessary transfer of title will be effected.

In order to save time and unnecessary running around, I would suggest that you make your bid to Mr. W. W. Seymour and, at the same time, give him the necessary details as to the manner in which you wish the property registered. As the property is now in his name, he will then be able to complete all arrangements.

The Directors were delighted that yours was the winning ticket and wish to congratulate you on your good fortune.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary
(W. G. Chappell)

Mrs. S. K. Thorneycroft,
Box 212,
Duncan, B.C.

Duncan, B. C.

August 25th 1949

The President and Directors
Cowichan Golf & Country Club,
Duncan, B.C.

Gentlemen,

I hereby tender the sum of one dollar, (1.00) for the purchase of Part of Section 9, Range 1, Cowichan District, shown outlined in red on Plan 1041-R and covered by Certificate of Title 177440-I.

Signed.

C/T to be made in favour of

Doris Thorneycroft
Grace Doris Thorneycroft
and Sam Kemp Thorneycroft

The letters exchanged in arranging for Doris Thorneycroft to acquire the land she had won⁵

5. Club Archives #25.39.

Company on a basis of 4 shares at \$30 each (\$120) for each \$100 debenture. Thus the Cowichan Golf Holdings was incorporated in December 1955³ and in exchange for 1,665 shares at \$30 each (\$49,950) it acquired the assets of Cowichan Golf and Country Club valued that year at \$49,950. Over the next 12 years money set aside out of revenue by the Club was used to buy Cowichan Golf Holding shares from those shareholders whose names were 'drawn' each year at the Meeting of the Holding Company held prior to the AGM of the Club. The shareholder then received money on surrendering his share thus in effect receiving a \$20 profit on his original debenture. This continued until 1966 when the Directors of the Club had enough money, \$11,160, to buy out the last 372 shares. The Certificate of Title was then returned to the Club, but the Cowichan Golf Holdings was not finally dissolved until October 1972.⁴

Money difficulties would have been even more of a problem had it not been for the donkey work put in by volunteers and for the numerous donations made in the form of money or loan of machinery. Unfortunately the paucity of club records has meant that many of these people remain unacknowledged by this history. We can only hope that they were sufficiently appreciated at the time. In the scanty records there are some acknowledgements and some others come from old timer's memories. In the Club Archive #25.8, dated August 1947, there is a letter to Mr. Ferries thanking him and the Finning Tractor and Equipment Company for the offer of loan of machinery. Joe Garner and Reg Haskins lent machinery and charged only for fuel costs, Clarence Evans lent the equipment to dredge the pond on #3, and Bobby Evans, who had an Auto Wrecking business, lent his wrecker to pull stumps. The cedar logged from the site was sold to the Evans' Mill and the money received offset the wages of the machine operators. The logs were cut into lumber which was then returned for use on the course. And we must

not forget Vernon Macan who worked for a reduced fee. In 1947 he wrote "When you asked me what I would charge I told you \$1,000. Thinking it over I would like to reduce that to \$750 for several reasons...I will not be able to devote my time to the work except on weekends" He was certainly a man of honour.

Even after play had started George Naylor remembers that on Wednesday Men's Night golf was not always the order of the day, instead men turned up armed with shovels and rakes and improved the conditions on the course. Holes number nine and five needed the most work because errant shots here were buried in great 6-8 foot piles of trees and tree roots. Bert Evans remembers many 'burning bees' and as late as April 1950 the golf report in the Cowichan Leader contained a plea for work parties to pick up stones on the new fairways. This same spirit of active member involvement in the development of the course was again in evidence when, thirty five years later, it expanded to eighteen holes. During construction of the new nine there were many 'work bee' evenings when members, old and young, walked in line down the roughly laid out fairway areas clearing them of all foreign matter.

3. The first officers of the Company were:-
W.W.Seymour, President, R.B.Evans, Sec/Treas.
4. Information about the financial dealings come for Club Archives #3, 11, 15, 25, 31, 33 & 36.