

## The Founding of the Australian Golf Union (AGU) 1898



In 1894, the Melbourne Golf Club had instigated the Victorian Golf Cup, inviting players from all states and New Zealand to compete and Victoria was the lead State.

In 1898 Foozler sharply criticised Royal Melbourne GC for delaying the start of the AGU. He wrote about *the delays in the organisation of golf* in March and August issues of the Sydney Mail. He supported Hugh

Macneil, the proxy for RSGC, who was primarily an AGC member but in reality represented all of Sydney. RMGC invited only three clubs to the founding meeting of the AGU, RMGC, RSGC and Adelaide. The AGC may well have been miffed to miss out but Macneil was soon to make a case for their inclusion and he moved that the championship (Victorian Cup) should rotate out of Melbourne to NSW and SA. Three members from RMGC were present at the inaugural AGU meeting.

**RAA Balfour-Melville**, an accountant from North Berwick of a famous sporting family had come out in 1877. He was RMGC secretary until July 1898, lived in Sandringham and won the Victorian (Australian) Amateur Golf Championship in 1895.



**Thomas Brentnall**, a Royal Musselburgh golfer and one of the founding members of the Royal Melbourne Golf Club who wrote *My Memories being the reminiscences of a nonagenarian* in 1938 in which he describes a very early 1880s match with Scottish soldiers on Moore Park. His collection of early clubs circa 1830 to 1890 is housed in the RMGC clubhouse.

Thomas Brentnall

**David Brown** was the first AGU secretary 1898-99, succeeded by Edward Milner Stephen of RSGC of the legal dynasty.

**Louis Australia Whyte** an all-rounder from Geelong, first winner of the Victorian (Australian) Amateur Championship 1894. A Victorian tennis champion Louis A. (Whyte committed suicide when depressed in 1911 aged 59 years, found with a bullet hole in the head, and a revolver clasped in his right hand).

**Dr H Swift**, the Adelaide champion.

**Hugh Macneil**, from Sydney as above, was elected the first President of the AGU as Captain elect of RSGC, host Club the following year (1899) for the first Australian Amateur Championship held under the AGU watch.

Hugh Macneil first AGU President

