Executive Director’s report

I hope you enjoy this issue of Dormie. It has some great articles.

The feature article commemorates the 120th anniversary of the Chedoke Golf Courses in Hamilton, Ontario. John Smith and Jamie Harris help us understand the history of the courses and the great influence that Stanley and Nicol had over the years.

Three years ago, Christine Fraser became the first winner of the Thompson Scholarship. Christine has come a long way since then. Garry McKay brings us up to date. Please join us in congratulating Garry on Golf Canada’s decision to appoint him as a member of the Selection Committee for the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame. It is another example of the Canadian golfing community’s appreciation of Garry’s support and expertise.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the off-season came from Stanley himself. He joined Twitter! In just a few months, Stanley has attracted almost 600 followers. We tweeted him to see if he would contribute a few words to this issue and he has. (pg. 5) Great reading.

I hope you already have the Thomp-son Classic in your calendar for September 15th. It will be held at the Galt Golf Club in Cambridge Ontario. We are delighted to welcome Michael Fay has agreed to be our guest speaker. Michael co-founded The Donald Ross Society in 1989 and currently serves as its President. He is extremely knowledgeable and is a wonderful speaker. Don’t miss this great day at a wonderful golf course. Registration information is available in this issue of Dormie and on our website.

The Society has launched a new line of Stanley Thompson Society logo golf apparel. Members of the Society can purchase high quality apparel at prices that are approximately 50% below comparable products at major retailers. We are able to offer these prices because we don’t have a physical store and don’t carry inventory. All items are made to order so our delivery times are longer than those of ‘for profit’ retailers. You will receive your order within four weeks. Non members may also purchase, but at prices much closer to those offered by major retailers.

The initial assortment includes golf hats, shirts, fleeces, jackets and wind shirts for men and women. Many sizes and colours are available. Since we are an online store we do need to charge for delivery to recover our costs. The first item is the most expensive to ship, so consider ordering multiple items to maximize your savings.

The apparel became available to order late April when the Society launched its new website. The new website is on a more robust platform and will allow much easier credit card payment for merchandise, membership dues, tournament fees and payment for items won at the silent auction. Overall, the new website should improve your membership experience.

The list of clubs participating in the 2016 Thompson Passport Program has increased this year to 26. We are delighted to welcome Ashburn Golf Club, Beaconsfield Golf and Country Club, Galt Golf and Country Club and the Oshawa Golf and Country Club to the program this year. You can find the complete list on our website. Using your Passport is a great way to enhance your golf season. You should have received your Passports by now. Please enjoy them with a friend.

The Society has also decided to offer new members of the Society a discount of 50% on their dues for the first year. Once people join the Society they tend to remain members for a long time. We are hoping to encourage more people to give membership a try with this promotion. If you know someone who might be interested in membership, please contact Heather or me for the promotion code that will enable them to take advantage of this offer or you can visit our website.

To a great golf season.

Grant Forrest
The Scottish Legacy—Chedoke Civic Martin Course 1896 to 2014

By John Smith and Jamie Harris

**Author's note:** The City of Hamilton will be celebrating 120 years of golf being played on what is now the municipally owned and operated Martin course at Chedoke Golf Club in 2016.

Ironically, and some would say sadly, the city is also investigating closing part of the course and turning it into a driving range.

Stanley Thompson Society historians John Smith and Jamie Harris have written the following story on golf at the Chedoke site and the influences that both Stanley and his brother Nicol had on how the course changed over the years.

Please note that since this story was written in 2014 the city has redesigned and combined the third and 13th greens into a double-green complex and moved the fourth tee so that the hole no longer crosses the fourth fairway.

Virtually all early golf clubs in Canada were started by Scots. Such was the case in Hamilton where a goodly population of them decided as early as 1894 that something was missing from their lives and decided to fill the void. An unincorporated club (Hamilton Golf Club) was formed and play started on 12 holes laid out on borrowed/rented land near the intersection of Barton and Ottawa Streets on Oct. 24, 1894. This course was most likely laid out by some of the founding members but for reasons of restrictions on play and poor maintenance, soon proved to be inadequate. A search for a new venue must have begun in 1895 because history tells us that the club moved to a new 9 hole course in the spring of 1896, laid out on leased property called Paradise Farm, the site of the current Martin course. It is considered most likely that founding members Peter Crerar and J.J. Morrison oversaw the work. A clubhouse was built the following year for the sum of $1,100. Another Scot, John Sutherland was hired in 1901 as their first green keeper and it was he who gradually expanded the course to 18 holes by about 1904. It must have been lacking in visual impact initially, because the owner did not allow bunkers to be built until 1903. A scorecard, dated July 9th, 1913, presented in The Hamilton Golf & Country Club, 1894-2004, An Illustrated History, shows a par 71, 5,326 yd. course.

In 1906, the Hamilton Golf and Country Club Limited was incorporated and after purchasing the property in 1907 for $12,000, leased it back to Hamilton Golf Club until 1912, when the two clubs amalgamated. The new club had just completed improvements to the course and clubhouse earlier in 1912 when a developer submitted an offer for the property and the threat of higher taxes increased. This coupled with persistent complaints of the membership about the course led to the quest for another site which began in the fall of 1912 by the directors, aided by Nicol Thompson, John Sutherland and George Cumming. This search culminated in the $40,000 purchase of 200 acres in Ancaster in early 1914, the subsequent hiring of H.S. Colt, and the formal opening of their new course on June 1, 1916.

The club now owned two golf courses which was highly unusual at the time. One senses the input of a lawyer member and longer term plans. Did the canny Scots retain ownership of the Paradise Rd. property in anticipation of profit later from a sale for development? They continued to own the property until 1924 when they agreed to sell it to the City for $90,000, a 750 % gain in 17 years.

**Enter The Thompsons**

One explanation for the previously noted dissatisfaction with the golf course could be its compactness and related injury risk to players. The Paradise Farm property was bounded to the East by a survey line running from the escarpment to Aberdeen Ave, which dead-ended at Glenside and Hillcrest Ave. S; to the North by a short distance along Aberdeen Ave. and to the NW by the T. H. & B. railway lands. The western boundary ran along Paradise Rd. from the railway lands to the escarpment with the southern boundary formed by the base of the escarpment which was approximately parallel to the Brantford & Hamilton Electric Railway line.

It is thought that some time before early 1928, about 27 acres of land situated on the SW side of the course was acquired in an effort to relieve the congestion. The Canadian Golfer in their Feb. 1930 edition states. “During 1929, a contract was made with the Trans-Canada Golf Course Construction Co. to do the work, and five new fairways were constructed, one along the base of the mountain and four in the new property.” This must have required some changes to the original holes. The first non-Scot enters the picture as Stanley Thompson was at least a part owner of this company. He was almost certainly brought in by his Scottish born brother Nicol, whose April 30, 1928 layout is shown on page 3. It would have been unusual if the two brothers did not "refresh" the existing holes as they went along. James Barclay in his book, Canada's Professional Golfers, notes that Nicol was the pro at Hamilton Golf Club in 1903 and again in 1912 when it was amalgamated with Hamilton Golf and Country Club. He was involved in the search for a new property and stayed with the club as the pro in Ancaster until 1945.

**Card of 1928 layout of the course**

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Of interest is the fact that even though the City of Hamilton owned this property from 1924, they did not commission the new layout. The drawing title was Chedoke Golf Club and the design was by Nicol Thompson. It was surveyed and drawn by Wilson, Bunnell & Borgstrom, Ltd., surveyors, engineers, and landscape architects for Nicol Thompson, Esq. This is the company that did much work for Stanley and it would have been natural for Nicol to avail himself of their services. It would have been an expense for him but who did he bill for his services and expenses? It must have been the City. Did this unusual arrangement have anything to do with his employment in Ancaster?

Was the Nicol design ever built? It is unlikely that the frugal Scots would have rebuilt some holes within the same year, so did The Canadian Golfer reporter get it wrong?

This question is academic because by 1937, the course routing underwent significant change. A layout shown on a July 12, 1937 scorecard bears little resemblance to Nicol's layout which is apparent when the two layouts are compared.

The 6th and 8th holes remain intact and the 2nd, 5th, 14th, 15th and 16th green sites were used. The tee and part of the fairway of the 11th and 15th holes previously existed. Were these extensive changes insisted upon by the membership or were they suggested by the Thompson brothers? Whatever the reason, it must have been a traumatic time for the club when money was short due to the war effort.

It is not known how long this layout lasted but we do know that it was changed somewhat when Stanley was hired to design the adjoining Beddoe course in 1949-1950. Since Nicol lived a few blocks away, it is possible that he was involved in the changes that were made between 1929 and the time of his death in 1955. Stanley died in 1953. Usually, such changes are minor in nature such as relocating tees, changing angles of play, etc., but not things like routing.

**Aerial photos proof of change**

The Society has stereo-pair air photographs dated 1954 that, in conjunction with a layout from a circa 1960 scorecard, show some minor changes to routing. The new clubhouse located at the SW corner of the course necessitated a change in hole sequence. The scorecard routing has been overlain on the 1954 photo in the layout on the right.

Nicol's layout was 5,955 yds. with a par of 71. This was reduced by 1937 to 5,589 yds. with a corresponding par of 67. Garry's 60's card shows 5,902 yds. and a par of 70. Currently, the numbers are 5,745 yds. and par 70. Most golf courses get longer as they mature, but this one went the other way. This is one course that does not need more length as it has many holes that are uphill which play longer than the card.

Garry McKay, who was a teenage member between 1960-1965, grew up playing this course and still considered it his home course for many years after as a green fee player, reports that some changes have occurred since 1954, mostly due to problems with errant balls and neighbours. The non-Thompson 4th hole green was moved about 20 yds. to the south for this reason. The new 5th hole tee was also moved to the east to reduce issues with the 4th green. Minor changes were made to the 7th hole over the years but a completely new green was built for reasons unknown on the 8th hole about 20 yds. behind the old Thompson green. This green has not been well received. Fortunately, the original green and bunker complex are still in the landscape and could be restored. An old Thompson green has been lost on the 12th hole, again due to erratic behaviour of some golf balls and neighbour reaction. An old-fashioned penal cross bunker once stretched across the 15th fairway, but is no more. Allandale still has two cross bunkers on their 1st fairway so Thompson’s sense of humour might have been applied here as well, in spite of his reputation as a leader in the movement away from penal design. The 16th green has

(Continued on page 4)
been slightly modified but another Thompson green, on the 17th, has been completely rebuilt. Whether this was a restoration is unclear. All Thompson bunkers have been removed from the 18th hole for reasons unknown.

The writer had the pleasure of playing this course last summer and can report that little change has occurred between 1960 and the present. The significant changes made to the routing occurred between 1929 and 1937.

**Restoration and Preservation**

Since the Thompson brothers were always close to hand, it is considered most likely that any alteration to the original design would have been done by them. The reasons for change relate to neighbours’ complaints and possibly members bad experiences with some holes. Some things never change.

There are at least two municipally owned golf courses in Ontario that have been designated as heritage landscapes, Roseland in Windsor and Lakeview in Mississauga. Information available to date suggests that the Martin course could be another. The history of this club on this ground goes back to 1896 and its proven relationship with the Thompson brothers and their illustrious careers should be added incentive for designation. A strong case can be put together to promote any effort in this regard and the Stanley Thompson Society is ready, willing and able to help the City of Hamilton in achieving this goal.

In the meantime, a study should be undertaken to record and confirm any changes to the holes between 1960 and the present, restoration of known Thompson features should be undertaken, and planning put in place to encourage preservation until designation has been obtained.

It would be fortuitous if some long-time members could provide information and photos to support designation, as they could have an important part in preserving what began over 120 years ago.

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**How The Newton-Thompson graduate scholarship helped Christine Fraser’s success**

By Garry McKay

It has been a whirlwind couple of years for Christine Fraser but she’s in no hurry for things to slow down.

In 2013 the 28-year-old Kingston native won the very first Newton-Thompson Graduate Scholarship presented by the Stanley Thompson Society and honouring Thompson and his great-nephew Bill Newton who co-founded the Society.

This story is how that scholarship helped in a small way to help propel Fraser to her dream job as a golf course architect.

Sitting in a lounge at the historic Toronto Golf and Country Club this past fall Fraser has just putting the finishing touches on the redesign of the club’s nine-hole Watson course for her employer acclaimed British golf course architect Martin Hawtree.

She talks about how she got to this point.

“I did my undergrad at Stetson University in Florida and my masters at the University of Guelph in Landscape architecture,” Fraser explains.

“My thesis was on different philosophies of golf design and particular strategic design which is very relevant now just as it was back in the 1800s when golf took off in Scotland. When I won the scholarship I decided the best way to use that money was to do some travelling overseas to study golf courses and I thought Scotland would be a good place to start.”

Fraser made a number of stops including Royal Dornoch, the old course at St. Andrews and Trump Aberdeen because she’d heard so many polarizing views on the work of Martin Hawtree.

She was interviewing the superintendent at Trump Aberdeen when, by coincidence, Hawtree called him. She didn’t get to talk to him then but an interview was arranged for a later time.

“I spoke to him for about 45 minutes on whether strategic design was even relevant these days with the amount of technological advances, and how do you strategic-design for the modern player,” said Fraser. At the end of the conversation Hawtree explained that he was going to be in Toronto. He’s a disciple of the great golf course architect Harry Colt and he’d been hired to do a historic rework of Colt’s Toronto Golf Club.

“We met at the Toronto club in December of 2013 and we kept in touch over the next year or so,” said Fraser. “Whenever I would have enquiries or questions or needed some extra input into where I was headed or I what I was doing to keep on the right track I would get in touch with him. He was a really great resource for me throughout my entire thesis.”

And when Fraser graduated in the summer of 2014 Hawtree offered her a job as an associate architect.

Through the rest of 2014 and part of 2015 she work in Ireland on Hawtree’s Trump Doonbeg and on the west course of Ireland at Lahinch where they doing a new short course.

After Hawtree had finished the rework of the Toronto Golf Club to critical acclaim the club asked him to redesign their nine-hole Watson course as well as the practice facility.

Hawtree assigned Fraser to be the onsite architect through the entire construction phase.

“The Toronto Golf Club has been most of my work for the last eight months,” she said last fall.

“It was a major nine-hole renovation, everything from tee to green. They had a number of health and safety issues to address so it’s a little bit of rerouting. It’s also an older course whose lifetime was expiring and we were creating some inter-

(Continued on page 5)
Fraser laughs when asked exactly what does “Hawtrifying the grounds” mean?

“It means giving it an interesting character, adding interest aesthetically and in the playability department,” she explains.

“But we’ve taken great care to differentiate from the Colt course in every way possible. It will be a learning opportunity and a way to work up to the Colt course. And it will have subliminal messaging of Colt flashes to get you interested and excited about graduating to the Colt course.”

Although Hawtree visited the project a number of times during construction it was Fraser who was in charge day to day. She laughs again when asked if she’s tried at all to slip in an extra mound here or there or build something that wasn’t in the plans.

“Oh, he would notice, absolutely, so I haven’t tried it,” says Fraser. “If I tried to shift a green six inches he would notice. From the smallest thing to the entire routing of the golf course everything is so thought out. In Martin’s case with the family history of both his father and grandfather in golf course architecture, it’s just so ingrained.”

With the Watson course now finished Fraser has had time to reflect on how much Hawtree has given her to do so quickly.

“I’m surprised, nervous, excited, all of those things,” she says. “It’s very encouraging. It’s such a great learning experience.”

Fraser says her ultimate goal is to design a course and see it through to fruition but with so few courses being built these days she doesn’t know when that will happen.

Although she played a major role in the rework of the Watson course at the Toronto Golf Club, Fraser says she’s still hesitant to call herself a golf course architect.

“I usually tell people that I work for a golf course architect. But ask me that again in 10 years.”

(Continued from page 4)

Stanley Thompson is on Twitter

By Jeff Mingay

“My inherent instinct toward modesty attempts to trump ego but, frankly, I’ve been remarkably successful at promotion throughout my career in golf. It’s a unique talent that’s led to design projects across Canada and the United States, in Jamaica and also in South America. Imagine, if I’d had access to Twitter before recently, there’s no telling where else you’d likely find more Stanley Thompson-designed courses throughout the world. Twitter is a remarkable promotional tool that I’m now using to great effect to showcase my design work and document my history in the game of golf on the internet. Find me on Twitter @stsociety1, where you’re bound to learn plenty about the art and science of golf architecture, and more.”

Stanley Thompson

Easy On-Line Registration for The Annual Thompson Classic

With our new and improved website it’s super easy to register for the Annual Thompson Classic being held on September 15, 2016 at The Galt Golf Club in Cambridge, Ontario. Simply click on our website link at: www.stanleythompsonsociety.com and you’ll be taken directly to all the details about the tournament such as itinerary, pricing, early bird prize, registration form, and on-line payment. Come and enjoy a wonderful day on a Thompson course with friends.