

Stanley Thompson

# DORMIE



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**The Stanley Thompson Society**

Suite 104  
89 King St W  
Dundas, ON L9H 1V1

Email: [Heather Fraser <membership@stanleythompson.com>](mailto:membership@stanleythompson.com)  
[www.stanleythompson.com](http://www.stanleythompson.com)

## *Highlands Links follow up*

Hello all:

In a recent Dormie, we reported about the unveiling of the Thompson statue at Highlands Links.

Attached is a follow up item. Prepared by two noted Canadian golf journalists – Garry McKay and Rick Young – the story reflects on their recent trip to Cape Breton. At Highlands Links, they discovered two things: the first being the miraculous recovery and restoration program of one of Thompson's great golf courses; and Stanley himself, immortalized as a bronze statue.

Garry is a Director of the Society and a member of the STS Membership Committee. He is also the current President of the Canadian Golf Journalists Association of Canada. Rick is a well-known golf journalist whose work appears in many magazines.

It is CGJAC with whom we have introduced the *Thompson Annual Media Award*. This will be presented for the first time next year with a cash prize for the best story of either a broadcast or printed piece. The prize, put up by the Society, will include a presentation to the winner at next year's *Thompson Classic*.

The next Dormie will be published Wednesday, December 12.

As a reminder: if you have not renewed your Friend or Member Club membership, please consider doing so. Reminder renewal notices have now been sent.

Best regards,

Larry Smithers  
*Chair, Member Services*

## Stanley Thompson would be proud

INGONISH, NS

REPORT by GARRY MCKAY / RICK YOUNG

That's the conclusion that both Rick Young and I came to after playing Highlands Links this past September as part of a media trip to Cape Breton.

The trip was to introduce us to the new and highly-acclaimed *Cabot Links* and also included stops at Graham Cooke's fine design *The Lakes at Ben Eion*, as well as the scenic *Le Portage* at Cheticamp.

For both Rick and I, however, one of the highlights of the trip was to reacquaint ourselves with Thompson's magnificent mountains and oceans course, Highlands Links.

The last time either of us had seen it the course had fallen on some hard times. Parks Canada, which owns and operates it, had let it become overgrown and neglected.

A major restoration project led by architect Ian Andrew and Highlands General Manager Graham Hudson has removed hundreds and hundreds of trees,

and restored and rebuilt bunkers and tees. The result is stunning.

"I was most impressed with the quality of the turf and not just in select spots but over the entire width and breadth of that golf course," said Young.

"The turf quality has

come up noticeably overall. You can't miss it, it just looks that good. And that's a direct result of the tree program."

Hudson said that when Thompson built the golf course back in 1940 there were views of the ocean on

12 of the 18 holes. Over time, trees had grown and there had been no plan to keep them in check. As a result, by 2008, when Andrew first created a master plan for the course the trees and bushes had grown in so much that you could only see the ocean on five holes. That overgrowth had also resulted in lack of air movement and shade on many greens and tees.

"We removed trees on, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and so on," said Hudson. "We have grass on those greens now. On 9, 10 and 12 we had no grass."

"The focus now is on the corridors. If the course is back the way it supposed to be you should see water on 12 or 13 holes. We're at about 10 now. This is supposed to be an ocean's course but there was no ocean."

As part of the restoration all the bunkers were put back the way Thompson designed them. In looking at old photographs they even found and rebuilt a tee that hadn't been used in 40 years.

The new Stanley Thompson statue located just off the first tee was also most impressive.

"It was one of the coolest parts of being there, to see the realism and the lifelike appearance of it," said Young.

"I have the picture we took, as a wallpaper on my computer."



(above) What would a Stanley Thompson course be without wildlife - think Jasper and elk; at Highlands Links it's moose.

(right) Two of Canada's best golf journalists embrace Stanley after making their pilgrimage to the famous course. Left, Rick Young and right Garry McKay.

The statue was a project undertaken by a handful of original Cape Bretoners who under the name of *Friends of Stanley Thompson*, raised considerable funds to complete this historic project. The bronze likeness was fashioned after a portrait commissioned by *The Stanley Thompson Society*.

PHOTOS: Courtesy Rick Young

