



## Amitee History

Over the years, members from Muirfield, Amstel, Tea Tree Gully and Nudgee Golf Clubs have met on a rotational basis to challenge each other to the noble game of Golf. Along the way, many lasting friendships have been formed, many good times have been had and some tears have been shed. Some regular attendees, when moving interstate, have and joined the sister club in their new state, thus gaining an instant circle of friends to help them settle in their new home.

The name AMITEE is derived from the four fully reciprocal interstate golf clubs that participate in the event:

A - Amstel (Vic)

M – Muirfield (NSW)

I – Interstate

T – Tee Tree Gully (SA)

EE - Nudgee (Qld)

When we look into the origins of all this fun and excitement, we have to give credit to our friends from Muirfield who seem to be responsible for sowing the initial seeds of what was to become Amitee, by arranging tournaments between the clubs almost 50 years ago.

In 1962, Muirfield Golf Club's clubhouse was a converted house on a street corner, across the road from what is now the 18<sup>th</sup> tee. In those days, that

was the first tee. Wednesday golf was struggling and five groups of golfers turning up at Tom Moore's pro shop representing an average attendance. Hugh Tolhurst was the Muirfield Captain and regularly played in the Wednesday four ball with Wally Smith.

Muirfield Golf course was vastly different from the excellent standard in which it is maintained today, and there was always a desire to play on different courses, to 'see how the other half lived'. One afternoon, in the clubhouse, Hugh suggested to Wally, "Why don't we organise a weekend trip to one of those fancy interstate courses for a weekend of golf?." Wally thought that the idea was great, and a call to fellow members soon resulted in a dozen takers who wanted to join the expedition.

The next task was to find a suitable destination, and one of the 12, Stan Beaman, suggested Amstel, as he had previously played there with Bert Mansfield, another of the 12 whilst on holiday. At that time, Amstel golf course was still at Oakleigh, an inner Melbourne suburb and, when contacted, they were receptive to the idea. A few weeks later, the group flew down to Essendon airport, and were met by a bus which took them to the clubhouse, where they met their Amstel counterparts including Keith Alcock, Jack Ash, Ian McDonald, and Emmet Murphy.

The weekend was a huge success and, on Sunday, included a trip to the new Amstel course near Cranbourne. The old course had just been sold, but the new course was little more than rolling paddocks. That evening, Muirfield and Amstel became reciprocal clubs.

The following year, the Amstel golfers repaid the visit by travelling to Muirfield, where the Muirfield members turned on the hospitality and both sides enjoyed a great weekend of Golf. Sometime later, the Amstel officials advised that they were reciprocal members with Tea Tree Gully and suggested that Muirfield might like to also link up. It took some time for Tea Tree Gully club to accept the proposal because there were several other sporting groups from NSW at the time, who were less than desirable partners, but eventually, Tea Tree accepted.

The first visitors from Muirfield included only 8 members, possibly because it was a 'males only' arrangement in those days. Nevertheless, the Tea Tree members were surprised that the 8 has travelled so far for a game of golf.

The Tea Tree players included Ray Schwartz, Eve Siggs, Jim Hamilton, Merv Bowen, Rex Williams and Harold Gilbert.

Back in Sydney, Hugh and Wally were reminiscing over the trips and thought that their success called for a national approach, so why not have a reciprocal club in each state. They gave Nudgee a call and in 1964, Nudgee and Muirfield became reciprocal clubs. However, it was 2 years before the first visit to Nudgee could be arranged. On arrival at Nudgee, the Muirfield players were met by Doctor Laurie Parker, Reg Elliott, Norm Carby, Dudley Von Nida and Cyril Fogarty.

Nudgee returned the visit in 1967, and this visit included two ladies, who were entertained by the Muirfield Ladies. Also in that year, Amstel visited Nudgee for the first time.

1968 saw visits by Muirfield to Nudgee in June and by Amstel to Muirfield in August. Also in November 1968, Muirfield players visited Tea Tree Gully. In 1969, all clubs made similar reciprocal visits

In 1970, Hugh Tolhurst was returning from another successful trip to Nudgee, but realised that the current system of twice a year visits, was putting a strain on some peoples purse strings. The obvious solution was a four way visit on an annual basis, with the host club rotating. So Hugh contacted the other Presidents, and Club Secretaries.

The Presidents in that year were Dr. Laurie Parker (Nudgee), Keith Alcock (Amstel), Ray Schwartz (Tea Tree) and Hugh. All agreed, and since the suggestion had come from Muirfield, that club was chosen for the first 'All In' – the first Amitee. Ray Chisholm sought inclusion of the ladies for that event, and since then, Amitee has always been a social, as well as golfing occasion.

The first Amitee was held in July 1971 and was attended by 40 visitors. Years later, participant numbers gradually grew upwards of 300, now it is more conservative with approximately 100 guests each year. The 3 day event will comprise of excellent food, drink, entertainment and golf on our beautiful courses.

The rotation of clubs will see Amstel / Ranfurly host the event in 2020.