



Sporting history reclaimed



THE RESTITUTION OF AN ABANDONED TROPHY



WJ SANDERS WAS PRESENTED WITH A FORMIDABLE TASK: THE REBUILDING OF WHAT WAS ONCE A PRIZED GOLFING TROPHY THAT HAD COME TO BE DUMPED IN A GOLF CLUB'S BASEMENT

DENNIS DE MUTH

The Lakes Cup, once a prized and valued silver trophy, was in a sorry state when rescued. Only the large silver base complete with inscriptions survived, its large cup/bowl and wooden plinth were missing.

Nothing else pertaining to the trophy was found so it is conjecture that the bowl would also originally

have been made in sterling silver.

HISTORY OF THE LAKES CUP

In 1934, the Lakes International Cup was first played between a team of Australian professional golfers and a team of American professional golfers. Organisers of this prestigious event guaranteed the cost of bringing out a top American team and donated the Lakes Cup for this new golf competition. It would become a silverware symbol of Australia's emergence as a golfing nation.

Thousands of spectators paid five shillings a day at the inaugural 1934 match to watch their Australian golfing heroes playing world-renowned American stars.

It was same format of rounds of 36-hole foursomes followed by 36-hole singles to decide the winning team as for the Ryder Cup, the first competition between a home PGA and American professional golfers, commencing in Britain in 1927.

The Lakes Cup was next played in 1936 in America (America won both 1934 and 1936), revived in 1952 when again the Americans won in Australia, and although Australia won the 1954 rematch, the competition lapsed.

THE LAKES CUP

FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
BY TEAMS PLAYING THE ROYAL AND
ANCIENT

GAME OF GOLF

Presented by

THE LAKES GOLF CLUB
Sydney Australia

RESTORING THE LAKES CUP

Only grainy archival photographs exist to imagine the original. From these the team at WJ Sanders began the process of rebuilding the bowl and recreating the wooden plinth that the trophy had stood on.

This level of artisanship looks to techniques and materials developed over millennia – modern day technology has no place in

artisanship at such a high level. Their plan involved three stages: restoring the base, recreating the bowl and wooden plinth.

THE BASE

The base, made in sterling silver was in a sorry state. It was badly dented, the applied decoration damaged and in need of a good polish. The first step was to hammer out the dents, done using various dollys.

The base was decorated with a map of the Pacific rim and miniature golf clubs. The original designer had created these four clubs, possibly representing the winning team of four. One was so badly damaged that a new club had to be made. So working from the surviving forms, the silversmith recreated in sterling silver a replica of the original fourth.

After the repairs, the base was silver electroplated. This part of the exercise required two experienced silversmiths working over a total of 16 hours.

THE BOWL

Recreating the bowl was far more challenging as the only photograph provided little detail. Before considering the design and the decorative features, the correct dimensions had to be established. This was achieved by working backwards.

Step 1. Silversmiths measured the protruding ring on the hexagonal base, then referred back to the photograph and calculated the dimensions to determine the proportions of the bowl. Candela Riveros, designer and silversmith, worked on this part of the project to design drawings replicating as close as possible the archival photograph.

Step 2. Creating the bowl to be made of copper and later silver plated, WJ Sanders crafted a wooden chuck to spin the metal into the correct shape and size.



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- 1 The Lakes International Cup base, the only photograph that was used to calculate proportions for restoration
- 2 Poster advertising the inaugural 1934 match for the Lakes Cup
- 3 Only photograph of the Lakes Cup in original condition
- 4 Melted wax and tar filled the spun copper bowl creating a firm stable surface on which to apply decorative features
- 5 Designs hand-chased to the bowl's body
- 6 Candela Riveros working on the bowl



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The two teams at the 1954 event

- 7 Completed cup with electro silver-plated bowl and interior electroplated with a 22-carat gold wash, on plinth matching the original base
- 8 The final golfing competition teams, 1954
- 9 Lakes Golf Club members responsible for this important restoration project, David Hunt, Steve Bonner and Michael Sheret



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Step 3. Before applying decorative features as seen on the original bowl, Candela needed to create a firm, stable surface on which to work. She achieved this by filling the bowl with a mixture of melted tar and wax.

Step 4. Candela hand-chased the decorations using time honoured techniques and tools onto the bowl's body.

Step 5. Creating the design to the rim was done using the technique of sword piercing, to recreate the fluted shape.

Step 6. As with the original, a border that mirrors the rim's form needed to be recreated and then attached. A mould was created from which the border pieces were cast in copper.

Step 7. The copper border pieces were then soldered to the bowl's rim.

Step 8. Creating the foot of the bowl was achieved by matching the design to the details gleaned

from the archive photograph. A mould was created from which the foot was cast in copper.

Step 9. The copper foot was soldered to the bowl and the whole bowl completed.

Step 10. The next stage was to machine polish the bowl and the foot to a high mirror finish. To do so without compromising the decorative raised features required bypassing the standard three-phase polishing technique. Cutting compounds range from high abrasive to fine, but for this cup only the fine blue compound, customarily reserved for a final polish, was used for the entire polishing process. It took eight hours to complete, a long time for a piece small enough to hold easily between one's hands.

Step 11. Next, the interior and exterior were electro silver-plated.

Step 12. The finishing touch was electroplating the interior of the bowl with a 22-carat gold wash.

WOODEN PLINTH

Fortunately, WJ Sanders has an in-house woodworker who was given the task of recreating the hexagonal wooden plinth. As often happens with hand-made pieces, the sterling silver base had not been made perfectly symmetrical. This complication required careful calculations to ensure that the plinth matched the base.

Once completed, the wooden plinth was finished in the manner of the original 1930s piece – the timber was painted a black gloss and then lacquered. The plinth alone took another 40 hours to create.

Although the upper part of the trophy is a 21st century creation, it is an echo of the traditions and skills passed to successive generations of talented men and women who create and are able to restore precious pieces.

The heritage value had been restored and the trophy once again takes pride of place, a celebration of an international sporting competition between Australia and America, and a shining example of the collaborative skills of contemporary artisans.