



Liew Yon Heong

IT IS A SAFE ASSUMPTION that there is no one in existence today who has any recollection as to what Kuala Lumpur or Malaya was like in the 1890's, let alone the events leading to the founding of the Club and the people involved at the very beginning. The origins cannot therefore be gleaned from human recollections but only from whatever records are available, if any. Sadly, all the Club's records were destroyed during the War.

However, we are indeed fortunate that our British predecessors to whom we owe so much, did painstakingly produce a commemorative book, after exhaustive research evidently, to mark the celebration of the Club's Diamond Jubilee on 21st August 1953, which year was made more memorable by two momentous world events that preceded it, both on 2nd June - the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the conquest for the first time in history of Mount Everest! That book records the origins of the Selangor Golf Club and its metamorphosis from "a little nine-hole golf club into the magnificent institution that it is today".

The author C.H.W. Goult must have, in the course of his research, interviewed dozens of senior Members and many others who were connected in some way or other to the Club and sifted through

stacks of whatever documents or magazines that were available, probably from memorabilia that survived the War, that were carefully preserved by some sentimental souls. And he assiduously compiled all that to produce "Twelve Under Fours", a book complete with detailed recollections wherever possible, intelligent conjecture where no evidence could be adduced and priceless photographs of the days of yore – in the form of a story that is highly absorbing, with the witty anecdotes and subtle nuances that is so typically British - and cryptic even, as with the title of the book itself. "Twelve Under Fours" is generally believed to mean "sixty" – if one were to stretch one's imagination of a round of golf played over 18 holes, all par 4's or equivalent thereto, with a "Tiger Woods" score of 12-under. Correct? Perhaps someone else might have a more exciting interpretation.

My first attempt to write this informal history of the Club depended solely on that book as there was no better, indeed no other, document or chronicle available covering the Club's history during that period. Enthralled by the artistry of Goult, the raconteur par excellence, that attempt unconsciously ended up at best an awkward plagiarism. It was then that the decision to have two episodes to this book was made.

The first is a full reproduction of “Twelve Under Fours” to cover the early history up to the Diamond Jubilee year in 1953 – so that Members would not be deprived of a work of art – this wonderful story as told by C.H.W. Goult. The second episode, “And It Isn’t Over!” is my humble contribution and it covers the post-War transition period from the early fifties, through Merdeka, followed by the Centenary and into the new millennium.

The format of this second episode is different from the first in that it is divided into parts, each part dealing with a particular facet of the Club and its development or change to date. With growth over the years, came diversification and if not for this change in format, it would have been a monumental task to address the many varied aspects concurrently, year by year or even decade by decade and more perturbingly, it would have been more of a chore for the reader to plough through.

And the cryptic element in **this** book as a whole, if the reader so chooses to mull upon it, lies in its shape, colour and dimension – a manifestation, as it were, of the various facets of our Club.

APOLOGIES

One of the most difficult decisions that had to be made in writing this book is the omission of titles and the lengthy salutations that precede them, for the many eminent Dato’s, Datuks, Dato’ Seris, Datuk Seris, Tan Sris and the few Tuns whose names are mentioned herein, not forgetting the professional designations like Dr., Ir. and Ar. as well. Other individuals who are by no means any less eminent, are also not referred to as Mr. or Encik.

The reasons for doing so are many. The Club does not have a dependable up-date on the bestowment of such titles, on the individuals mentioned. As such there are bound to be many errors in being “behind time” that might incur the ire of the aggrieved parties. Even if the true status of an individual is known without a doubt, we would then be faced with a situation like “Yang Berbahagia, Datuk Seri Dato’ . . . (as he then was, now Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri)” – which by itself is not too alarming, but if this appears ever so often in the book, as it no doubt would, the readership may then wonder whether we are digressing somewhat from the Club’s history!

This scenario would be even more of a challenge on the distaff side. Not only do we need to monitor the lady’s bestowment but her husband’s as well. And then of course there are sensitivities involving the usage of Mrs, Miss, Mdm. or Ms. to contend with!

Being a “family” Club, it is hoped that no one would take umbrage, for none was ever intended, at the decision made for the sake of expedience in compiling this book. Moving on, in a book such as this, where official records are few and some important documents have gone missing, parts of this “story” have to be based on the memory of a number of individuals, collaborated where possible by articles in The Circular or in the Club’s Annual Report – and in the process, there are bound to be errors and omissions for which the blame is entirely mine.

