VISITING GOLFERS CLEAN UP ON AUSTRALIA'S DAY

Lakes Entrance Golf Club hosted its big Australia Day event once again last Thursday, and this year it was visiting golfers Brian James and Leo O'Keefe who cleaned up the locals.

James shot 40 points to win the day from Leo O'Keefe, but the locals did share in some of the glory when Mel Keating won his second consecutive Thursday grade competition, topping C Grade with 36 points.

The locals struck back hard again two days later, when Garry Jeal astounded his doctors and playing partners by scoring 75 off the beater to win Saturday's heat-baked event with a 68 nett. Garry heads back into hospital early next month, so he has obviously decided that his best medication is a good game of golf, and a touch of collegiality and refreshment to follow.

New course director and vice captain, Steve Smith, has also hit form at the right time of the season. Steve, a dual club champion a quarter of a century ago, would have certainly added to his tally had not the legendary Zappelli got going and won 21 championships between 1983 and 2008.

But Steve's' immense golfing acumen and experience is now being optimised at Board level. He has gathered an army of members onto his Greens Committee and that army has identified the projects and improvements it wants to make around the already top-rated course.

But for the present, he's also letting is golf do some talking, as he again shot under CCR with a fine 78 off the stick on Saturday.

Another local of many years experience, Ivan Hamilton, won B Grade, and is now obviously relishing the benefits of being fully retired from the teaching profession to which he gave so much of his time and passion. Justin Nicholas' 70 nett victory in C Grade was the visitors' only triumph for the day.

The ladies' competitions were once more dominated by "almost locals", or country members of the club. Readers are still gulping in awe at the achievements of Box Hill's Sue Cannon's stellar double last week.

Last Wednesday, her fellow Box Hillian Carmel Edwards continued to fly the flag for their home club. Edwards, like Cannon a long-standing country member, shot 40 points to yet again try to kick-start the ladies out of their self-induced summer scoring torpor.

No less than 44 ladies played on Wednesday, but do you think anybody other than the Box Hill Belter could beat CCR? Not on your sweet Nelly! South Pines pair Julie White and Tania Holmes came close, with Holmes winning on count back with a 36.

But former ladies' president, Jan Kennedy gave a strong indication that she was about to ignite her season when she, too, shot 36.

On Saturday, she blazed a brilliant 68 nett, and it is her fervent hope that this will at least get her ladies going again.

She didn't win the comp: that honour went to promising youngster, Lydia Lesiw. Lydia plays at Lakes on school holidays, and she obviously loves doing so. Last time she was down, she won. On Saturday,

she shot a scorching 65 to easily win yet again. Handicapper, Anita Bertram, was last seen sharpening her scissors.

This Wednesday, a huge field of ladies will play their round and assemble in the clubhouse to await the announcement of this year's Summer Cup winner. Pundits always have a tough time tipping this one: it goes to the golfer with the best 3 rounds of the five week season.

But pundits like a punter, and your scribe's informant has advised him that if you put your money on Shirley Walters, Jacinta Wilson, Jan Kennedy or Lou Skidmore, you might be a little richer by day's end.