



(EIGHTY FOUR)

VIEW FROM THE CLUBHOUSE

The big freeze of 1963 may have been a nuisance to the membership but it was potentially ruinous to the Professional, so, after a lengthy discussion, it was resolved to make a special bonus payment to him in view of the exceptionally severe winter. What he and most consistent players could have predicted was that the 5th hole was shorter than the 156 yards it was then said to be. 'Length of 5th hole: In accordance with the resolution of a previous meeting, the 5th hole was remeasured and found to measure 145 yards instead of 156 yards as previously thought.' This was in preparation for the 1963 Cheshire Championship.

That spring, the entrance fee was raised to 16 guineas for men and 8 guineas for ladies and it was decided that the entrance fee in future should be the same as the annual subscription, and altered as and when the subscription was altered. Whatever mutterings there may have been about that, greater concern was expressed at rumours *'that a new road was planned to by-pass Hazel Grove and to cut off part of the 1st fairway.'* In May the local authorities assured the club that the road would not use any of the golf club's land. Then, in October, it was reported that the local authority had plans for straightening the road at the back of the 12th green and widening it as far as the entrance to the drive. It was found that the land adjacent to the 12th hole belonged to a lady living in Poynton. The Captain pointed out the advantages as a long term policy of purchasing any land adjacent to the course, both as a provision for expansion and as a protection against building or other future development.

Although most of the men's club competitions were played on Saturdays, it was not until July 1963 that the Greens Committee agreed to having the greens cut on a Saturday morning instead of the traditional Friday. It was also suggested that special back tees might be built at certain holes, not for use in competitions but for those members who might prefer sometimes to play a lengthened course. Thus it was agreed to prepare *'tiger'* tees at the 6th, 9th and 12th holes, and also to make a practice green just between the 12th and 13th fairways. In fact this decision was overturned and those tees were never built. As played from the existing medal tees the course clearly suited the club's better players for in the Cheshire Championships, Stockport won the team prize.

April 1963

'THE POSSIBILITIES OF FITTING AN AIR PURIFIER TO THE GENTLEMEN'S URINAL WAS CONSIDERED, BUT IT WAS FIRST THOUGHT ADVISABLE TO PUT THE CISTERN IN PROPER WORKING ORDER.'

Even as recently as 1963, protocol was not to be forgotten. Concern was expressed that a member of the Steward's staff had been playing golf with members. *'Whilst the Committee had no objection to him making occasional use of the course, it was considered undesirable that he should play with members.'* The unfortunate Lady Captain was also given short shrift: *'After a majority decision, a suggestion to allot a special parking space for the Lady Captain was declined as inadvisable.'* The decision was reversed in the following year when it was unanimously agreed to allot a reserved parking space under cover for the President, and behind the ladies' trolley hut for the Lady Captain.

As noted earlier, from time to time throughout the club's history experiments have been made, playing the holes in a different order. In December 1963 a new routing was tried in an effort to help speed up play as it was said that the holes followed the natural layout of the course more closely: 1-10, 15, 14, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18. Although no date had been set, the possible widening of Offerton Road could have had some impact on the course, so Hawtrees were consulted on the possible resiting of the 13th tee. Such threats as perhaps losing a part of the course have usually prompted the Committee to re-examine the options beyond the club's boundaries, and these were again considered in November 1964.

A plan of the vicinity of the course indicated that the course was bordered on three sides by green belt and the fourth side by Offerton Road. But any plans for purchasing neighbouring land would have to be deferred for six months or so to await an indication of future Government or Local Authority policy. The following month notice of a compulsory purchase order was received from the local authority and passed on to the club's solicitors. There was now a danger of council property being built immediately opposite the entrance to the club. Urgent enquiries were made.

Despite the resolution not to build *'tiger'* tees at certain holes, new tees in January 1965 on the 6th and 12th provided lengths of 490 and 498 yards respectively. Suttons analysed a sample of Hazel Grove sewage outfall and advised against its use on the course. A sample was also sent to the Hazel Grove Council Chemist who agreed with them.

A happy concession was granted in March 1965: *'That boys from the*

1964

**NEWSPAPER HEADLINE:
'GOLF CLUB ADDS DIGNITY TO THE TOWN.'
REPORT ON ANNUAL DINNER**

(EIGHTY FIVE)

Stockport Grammar School be permitted to play on the course at certain times to be decided at a special green fee of 2/6 each per round, providing they play in fours, one member of each four being an adult golfer.' Also that year, in response to a letter from the Lady Captain, it was decided to grant courtesy of the course to the Lady Cheshire County Champion, the Lady County Captain and the Lady Veteran Champion.

The clubhouse returned to the agenda in July 1965. Following discussions about the cost of future improvements to and maintenance of the clubhouse, it was decided to ask members for interest-free loans in multiples of £25 up to a maximum of £500 (£250 for ladies) for 20 years. In return, the club offered to waive some or all of the annual subscription in proportion to the amount loaned. At the same time, the club would create a sinking fund over a period of 20 years to cover repayment of the loans. A letter was sent out in September, after the Annual General Meeting. The appeal was so successful that £10,450 was offered, but as only £5,000 was required no member was called upon to lend more than £100 and no lady member more than £50.

Peter Campbell, the Head Greenkeeper, who first joined the greens staff in 1908 was getting old and the suggestion was made that his son, Frank Campbell, should be prepared as his successor. Also provision would need to be made for a pension for Peter Campbell of just over a third of his weekly wage. At the same time, preliminary meetings were held with Bramhall and Bramall Park Golf Clubs about sharing greens equipment, and it was agreed that the Greens Chairmen should meet to discuss this and other matters of mutual interest on a regular basis. Hazel Grove also expressed a readiness to co-operate in the lending and sharing of equipment. A new source of trees for the course was found, Smith's of Matlock, who were asked to supply 1,000 Scots Pine at £25. Unfortunately there was a high mortality rate among newly planted trees, in spite of the fact that they had all been planted in the same way and at the same time, with an estimate of:

- 60% between 1st and 2nd holes
- 30% between 6th and 7th holes



THE COPSE AT THE 14TH BEFORE THINNING



AFTER THINNING

3% between 12th and 14th holes
It is not now apparent why there was such disparity between these figures.

Trees are an emotive issue as far as golf courses are concerned. They often add to the beauty of a course. They contribute to safety by preventing stray shots hitting players on other parts of the course. Importantly, trees act as a haven for wildlife. But they can also choke a course, causing maintenance problems because of shade or poor air circulation. And they can constrict the design of a course, preventing the playing of certain shots envisaged by the course architect.

In the United States, where golf course restoration is a significant and growing industry, trees are being removed from many historic courses. At Oakmont in Pennsylvania, host to six past US Open Championships and the 2007 event, hundreds of thousands of trees have been felled to open up the course, to restore many of the designed shot values, make the wind a greater factor in play and improve the condition of the course.

Thousands of trees and bushes were removed from Royal Birkdale, which was in danger of losing its links qualities. They were also affecting course condition and crowding out indigenous species. Comparison of photographs taken when the Old Course at Sunningdale was first opened and today reveals that the course has changed out of all recognition. Originally it was a wide open heath. Now it is almost totally enclosed by trees, although the club has managed to preserve much of the course's heather.

But golf courses are not to be preserved in aspic. They are organic, they change subtly whatever their nature, and if changes have to be made, either to meet the demands of members or to ensure their safety, then so be it. This is the situation at Stockport. Unfortunately, much of the tree planting was carried out at the same time and the trees have reached maturity together giving similar problems to those experienced elsewhere. Consequently, using expert advice, much thinning out of the trees is currently underway improving growing conditions for the trees remaining and the appearance of the copses. Replacement trees are

being planted selectively to provide varying shades of colour and adding to course appearance.

By April 1966 the road widening had become inevitable and the club would be obliged to part with a small piece of land. It was agreed to do



January 22nd 1968
AN UPPER WINDOW IN THE MEN'S LOUNGE WAS BROKEN BY A RADIO-CONTROLLED MODEL AEROPLANE, FLOWN BY SOMEONE ON THE COURSE. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO FLY THE PLANE BY ONE OF THE GREEN STAFF.

this voluntarily, leaving the Solicitor to strike as good a deal as he could.

Over the years there had been many discussions on fruit machines, which were providing a valuable source of extra income at some clubs. But in July 1966 it was decided not to proceed and Stockport Golf Club was beginning to be envied by other clubs for not having fruit machines. Then in September the suggestion was made that the course might be played in reverse using tees for greens to prevent excessive wear during the winter months, and this was referred to the Greens and Handicap Committees for consideration, although nothing seems to have been forthcoming from it.

On October 30th 1966 members were shocked to learn of the death, from a heart attack on the course, of Bill Hancock, the club's much loved Professional. Hancock had, in many ways, been Stockport's most competitive professional, regularly appearing in important professional tournaments in the British Isles, representing the club with honour. He played in ten Open Championships between 1946 and 1966, although he only made the cut on one occasion, in 1951 at Royal Portrush, when he finished tied for 35th place with a score of 304. Advertisements for his successor were placed in Golf Illustrated, Golf Monthly, Golf World, and PGA Bulletin. Following the death, Mrs Hancock was allowed to stay on in the bungalow for several months, and in due course was given country membership of the club. At her request, a collection was made among members, friends and neighbouring golf clubs which raised £90.10.0 for the PGA Benevolent Fund. In the following May a four-ball, better-ball medal competition was played at Torkington, promoted by the Manchester and District Golf Alliance with proceeds going to the Bill Hancock testimonial, to the benefit of his widow. Many well-known Professionals gave their services, including Dave Thomas, Eric Brown,

Peter Butler, Bernard Hunt, Neil Coles, Dai Rees, David Snell, Headley Muscroft, Fred Boobyer, Bill Large, Tommy Horton, Harry Weetman and a young Mike Peel, then Assistant Professional at Hazel Grove. A great many of the finest amateurs in the greater Manchester area also took part, with four-balls teeing off every eight minutes from 8 am to 4 pm.

Hancock proved a difficult man to follow and over the next few years, there was a succession of short-lived appointments as Professional. Terry Spanner arrived in February 1967, to be succeeded by Brian Allen from Denton in November 1968. Spanner actually departed on August

Manchester and District Golf Alliance

The late Bill Hancock
TESTIMONIAL FUND COMPETITION
FOUR-BALL **Better-ball MEDAL**
at STOCKPORT GOLF CLUB on SUNDAY 7th MAY
DRAW and STARTING TIMES

* All Competitors playing this day to collect in Stockport

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31st and the Assistant Professional also left at the same time, having been appointed Professional at Werneth. It had been hoped that the Assistant would have run the shop until Allen arrived, but there was no alternative to closing the shop and advising members to remove their belongings immediately. Bob Lanyon followed Allen in August 1972 and it was only with the appointment of John Goodwin in September 1974 that a longer period in office began. Consideration was given to extending the professional's bungalow as it only had two bedrooms.

AS FAR AS IS KNOWN, THE EARLIEST STOCKPORT PROFESSIONAL TO REPRESENT THE CLUB IN THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP WAS WALTER BOURNE, WHO PLAYED IN THE 1921 AND 1922 OPENS, FINISHING TIED FOR 26TH AND 77TH, RESPECTIVELY, WITH SCORES OF 309 AND 342. JACK JARMAN SEEMS TO HAVE ENTERED FROM STOCKPORT FOR THE 1924 OPEN, FINISHING TIED 41ST WITH A TOTAL OF 323. FRED JARMAN PLAYED IN TWO OPENS CARRYING STOCKPORT'S NAME, WITHDRAWING IN 1927 AFTER A SINGLE ROUND OF 82 AND FINISHING TIED FOR 39TH POSITION IN 1929 WITH A SCORE OF 316. TED JARMAN DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE PLAYED IN THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP WHILE HE WAS AN ASSISTANT AT STOCKPORT. HANCOCK'S RECORD IS MENTIONED ABOVE. IN 1969 AND 1970 BRIAN ALLEN PLAYED IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP PROPER, BUT DID NOT MAKE THE CUT ON EITHER OCCASION.

The club had also experienced a period of short-lived appointments in the clubhouse. However, by March 1969 the Steward, Randle, and his wife, were being complimented for the way in which they had devoted themselves to the interests of members. In April Randle's wage was increased in recognition of his being 'a most loyal and efficient servant.' That year Randle was picked to play for the team of English Golf Stewards against their Scottish counterparts.

Over the winter of 1966/7 another thousand trees were ordered and planted. An undertaking was given to replace any that did not survive for a year. Although the course was growing ever more handsome, it could be a little busy at times: 'The Hon. Secretary was asked to prepare a notice pointing out that players practising must not obstruct other players in any way and must take special care to avoid littering the fairway with golf balls.'

An unfortunate incident marred the 1967 AGM, held on September 1st. The vote of thanks to the retiring Captain was to be made by John Hickson, a past President and member of nearly 40 years' standing. He rose to his feet, but after making his opening remarks, and to the distress of all present, he collapsed. He never regained consciousness and passed away in the presence of his friends and in surroundings which had meant so much to him, but it was a shock to all present.

In May 1967, the committee extended the courtesy of the course to Miss Elizabeth Chadwick of Bramall Park in recognition of her successful defence of her British Ladies' Amateur Open Title. In July, Rodney Gorton set a new amateur record of 65 at Stockport and was presented with a silver salver memento. For some time, Stockport had insisted that visitors playing in Alliance events should pay the full visitor's green fee. The Alliance were unhappy with this and asked for the club's resignation from it. However individual club members were able to continue to take part in Alliance events, if they wished to, by applying for individual membership at a fee of £1 per year. The Captain, Alistair Fraser-Thomson, was at that time on the Executive Committee of the Cheshire Union. He pointed out to the club that the county trials would soon be held, and recommended that the club's best players should be given practice at match-play. Arrangements were duly made.

In June 1969, with widening of Offerton Road in progress, thought was given to the waste ground at the rear of the club premises. Taking advantage of the road widening equipment, this area could be made into additional car parking or the practice ground might be extended. The latter was cheaper, and that option taken. The district valuer suggested compensation for the lost ground area of £425 plus £26 as a contribution to the club's legal costs. The offer was accepted, but it was decided to retain ownership of the land which lies on the road behind the 13th tee.



EARLY AERIAL VIEW SHOWING LAND BEHIND CLUBHOUSE

October 1969
 'THE HON SECRETARY REPORTED THAT THE COMMITTEE OF THE RGA HAD RECENTLY BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS AS HAVING RELAXED DRESS STANDARDS FOR MEMBERS USING THE ROYAL & ANCIENT CLUB HOUSE. DETAILS OF THE RELAXATION IN STANDARDS WERE GIVEN BY THE HON. SECRETARY, WHO SUGGESTED TO THE COMMITTEE THAT THEY MIGHT WISH TO RECONSIDER THIS CLUB'S STANDARDS.
 AFTER DISCUSSION A VOTE WAS TAKEN AND THIS SUGGESTION WAS WELL DEFEATED.'



1977
 THE PEST CONTROL OFFICER HAD BEEN ASKED TO ATTEND THE PROFESSIONAL'S QUARTERS TO DEAL WITH RATS ABOUT WHICH A COMPLAINT HAD BEEN RECEIVED.

Plans were available in Stockport Town Hall of a proposed development on the far side of Offerton Road. The club sent a letter of objection. Peter Campbell was still working with zeal and loyalty as the 1960s closed, but his health was deteriorating. In 1971 it was recorded, 'Peter Campbell passed away in February after giving this club a very long period of service, most of which was in his position as head greenkeeper. He first came into the service of the club as a young man in the early part of the present century. Some time after the First World War he left to take an appointment with a nearby club but returned in the early 1930s and remained in our service until his death. The reputation that the club has earned of having a very well kept course was undoubtedly in a large measure due to his untiring efforts, his considerable interest in and loyalty to the club.' It was decided to have a full-grown tree planted professionally as a tangible tribute to him. Subsequently, this tree had to be felled because of disease and its replacement felled to accommodate a re-alignment on the 13th fairway. A new tree has been planted in 2006 to provide a lasting tribute to a first class servant of the club.

As long ago as March 1971 a meeting was called by Bramall Park Golf Club with the Captains and Secretaries of Bramhall and Stockport, specifically to discuss attitudes to race and religion as far as applications for membership were concerned. 'It was agreed that none of the three clubs had any rule or regulation which precludes consideration of a membership application of a person of non-European origin or of any particular religion. It was generally agreed that any such application would receive the same sort of attention so far as discriminating factors were concerned as would be applied in other cases. It was particularly stressed that the three clubs should maintain a liaison on matters of general interest and particular reference was made to the Green Fee position in that the amount charged to the public should, if possible, be a standard amount, i.e. in order to avoid any one Club being inundated with Visitors because they happen to be the cheapest. It was also agreed that we would exchange Diaries and Balance Sheets from year to year.'

By October 1971 the Steward had become very dissatisfied with conditions at the club, particularly the standard of decoration and

ventilation in the dining room. Kitchen ventilation was poor and conditions often unbearable. He considered that the club should provide a till capable of registering all sales. Help was needed with cleaning the clubhouse. Cleaners were simply not available. He threatened to resign.

Additionally, the Steward's accommodation in the clubhouse was in great need of modernisation, so subscriptions rose from £34 plus VAT to £40 plus VAT to pay for it.

In July 1972 the greens had suddenly deteriorated following chemical burning caused by incorrect treatment. Nothing could be done until the autumn when three greens had to be re-seeded. The secretary then had to write to visiting parties offering a reduced green fee of £1 a head. But the treatment was effective and when Suttons' advisor visited the course in the following spring, he was pleasantly surprised by how well the newly-laid greens had grown in. Once again Yorkshire Fog was becoming a nuisance and had to be eradicated. Hawtrees were invited to survey the course in December 1973 and the course was re-measured at 6,291 yards. In the spring of 1974 the internal out-of-bounds on the 3rd was removed, the ball to be played as it lies.

There had been some dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by the club's professionals during the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly with regard to the cleaning of members' clubs and shoes. When John Goodwin was appointed in 1974, it was agreed to delay his arrival for a month in order to decorate his accommodation and the shop.

Another issue recurring in the Committee's deliberations during these years was that of appropriate club dress and the Committee's unwillingness to relax the rules as a matter of principle. However for the county match between Cheshire and Yorkshire in September 1974, 'It was agreed that we would relax our rules concerning dress in the dining-



STOCKPORT LADIES IN 1976

room. *Players will be asked to wear a jacket and at least a closed shirt at the neck.* On the course the EGU advised that there should be different summer and winter courses, the winter course known as the Yellow Course played at 6,072 yards to a par of 70 and sss of 69. Soon after this was brought in, some holes were altered reducing the total length to 6,036 yards, while par had risen to 71 with sss remaining at 69. Ladies were, at last, permitted to play golf on Sundays from 12.30 pm.

Matters with the Steward, Randle, came to a head on October 1974 when he resigned, apparently because of the unsatisfactory (*in his view*) alterations to his accommodation. A month later Randle had second thoughts and wished to meet the Committee with a view to re-applying for the post. That meeting lead to his re-appointment, with the air cleared on both sides. But it was short-lived and in March 1975, Randle resigned for good. He was succeeded by JL Hernangomez, affectionately known as Pepe. Pepe joined Stockport Golf Club from Middlesborough Golf Club. For the first time a proper contract of employment was drawn up.

These were inflationary times and it was difficult to raise the finance for major projects. None the less, in February 1975 a meeting was called to discuss the possibility of relaying the water system and installing pop-up sprinklers for the greens. The existing pipe-work was by now badly corroded and there were many leaks. There were problems, too, with the septic tank which was still in use, the clubhouse not yet being connected to the town main. Happily, bureaucratic obfuscations were overcome and in July the club was at last connected to the town's waste drains.

For some years Stockport had taken regular advice on course upkeep from a representative of Suttons Seeds. Mr Palin made one of these visits in November 1975, noting how difficult the year had been for greenkeeping in general. In his report he paid a particular compliment to the Greenkeeper, Frank Campbell, stating that *'if ever the Club had required proof of a first class Green Keeper the state of the course at the present time indicated his clear ability.'*

Attention switched to the clubhouse in 1976. First, the ladies requested having their lounge relocated in the dining room. Then, in September, *'After a full discussion it was agreed that for an unspecified trial period casual dress will be allowed in the*

**Ladies' minutes
January 1975**
'THE LADY CAPTAIN TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRINGLE FASHION HOW WERE WELL IN HAND. FOUR MEMBERS WOULD MODEL THE CLOTHES. MR AND MRS GOODWIN TO HAVE THE APPROPRIATE SIZES AVAILABLE.'

Ladies' minutes July 1976
'THE LADY CAPTAIN SUGGESTED - THE COMMITTEE AGREED - THAT ONE OR TWO SHOWERS IN THE LOCKER ROOM WOULD BE A GREAT ADVANTAGE TO THE LADY MEMBERS.'

men's lounge, each day until 2 pm.' But the big issue was the roof. Problems with leaking roofs had been recorded for several years. In October an architect's inspection revealed that, although the main clubhouse roof was in reasonable condition, the rest were in a poor state and had been maintained to low standards. The main roof dated from the 1920s, but the rest, which had been part of the old farmhouse, had been there since the early 1900s. An estimate of £3,270 was submitted for renewal of the rear of the clubhouse roof and repair to other inadequate roofing. Following this, an offer of assistance with providing fire escapes was taken up and the whole business of fire and evacuation procedures explored. The Fire Brigade was consulted and several thousand pounds' worth of equipment purchased, including emergency lighting.

It is all too easy to assume that, because there was no British winner of the Open Championship between Max Faulkner in 1951 and Tony Jacklin in 1969, British professionals as a whole were uncompetitive on the world stage at that time. That is to overlook the achievements of Dave Thomas who twice came second in the Open, at Lytham in 1958 when he lost out to Peter Thomson in a play-off, and in 1966 when he finished just one stroke behind the great Jack Nicklaus at Muirfield. Thomas had long harboured an interest in golf course design and actually founded his own company in 1958, the same year he finished second to Thomson. By 1977 Thomas's reputation was growing and it was in that year that a course he designed in association with Peter Alliss opened near Birmingham, The Belfry. That course, carved out of very unpromising material, potato fields, is now known as The Brabazon at The Belfry and can claim the unique record of having hosted no fewer than four Ryder Cup Matches. Thomas was well-known in Cheshire golfing circles, being attached to Dunham Forest for some years, and in 1977 he visited Stockport in his capacity as a course architect, with particular reference to moving the 10th green and 11th tee. A determined effort was then made to try to secure vacant land surrounding the golf course.

In a sense, 1977 was a landmark year in the club's history, for reference to caddies was deleted from club diaries for the first time, reflecting the ending of a 70-year club tradition, even if the caddies were at times a trial for both members and the poor professional, who was expected to supply them and to keep

them in order. Now a fee for trolley boys was established at 75p plus 10p commission for the professional. And in 1977 contracts of employment for members of the greens staff were drawn up – their first contracts.

It has been some time since the Hazel Grove by-pass, or, as it is now known, the Stockport North-South By-Pass, has made an appearance. Early in 1978 an alternative (*blue*) route was suggested by Offerton Community Council, entering the course by the 12th tee, following a line running along the 11th fairway and on across the course from there. *'It was felt that a watchful eye should be kept on developments.'* Objections were, indeed, lodged. But, as was now customary, a few months later a letter was sent from the Ministry of Transport suggesting a completely different route. The Blue Route By-Pass would now only affect the field by the 1st green and 2nd tee.

In May 1978 an argument was sparked in Committee about new members and the waiting list. One member of the Committee, who was proposing a new member, felt that his applicant should receive preferential treatment given his position within the club. After discussion it was agreed that the Honorary Secretary would handle the matter. *'It was understood that a) no officer ie President, Captain, Vice Captain, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary or Assistant Hon Secretary shall in future propose or second an application for membership, except when acting for the committee where applicants have no sponsors, and b) that whilst the committee shall decide who goes on the waiting list it will be left to the Hon Secretary to control the list and at his sole discretion will interviews be arranged and applicants' names be submitted to the committee for acceptance for membership or otherwise. The Hon Secretary to deal with the matter as fairly as possible taking into account all relevant factors and without fear or favour.'*

Frank Campbell retired on his 65th birthday, September 4th 1978, but it was mutually agreed to retain his services two days a week in addition to his pension provision. Tom Allen, who had been his able Deputy, took over as Head Greenkeeper. Unfortunately, the Professional, John Goodwin, had been ill for some time during the playing season. In the circumstances it was felt that the club should make him a goodwill grant to help recompense him for his loss of income but *'not to be taken as a precedent.'*

In October 1978 Joe Montague joined the Steward's staff and began his almost 30 year link to the club as Bar Steward and latterly, popular member.

Dave Thomas's first visit had been concerned particularly with the 10th and 11th holes. In October 1978 approval was given to his suggestion of extending the dog-leg on the 3rd hole by adding trees and eliminating a bunker. He also suggested lengthening the 5th hole by taking the tee back 16 yards. At the 12th his suggestion was to extend the dog-leg effect by adding trees and rough, and reducing the width of the sand bunker. However, all was not as it should have been backstage in the greenkeeping department: *'The Greens Chairman drew attention to the unhealthy condition of the greens staff's toilet and washroom.'* At last work could begin on renewing the sprinkler system on the course. In January 1979, after a long wait, the pop-up sprinkler pipes were installed. Planning application had to be sought for the erection of an 18'x7'6" circular water tank sited behind the auxiliary car park. By May 1979 the new sprinkler system was complete, with water supplied through the ladies' locker room! Meanwhile, the ladies again requested repairs to the on-course toilet at the 8th – apparently one side had been blown down. An office was constructed for the Head Greenkeeper. Then, with the new season due, the issue of wide wheels on trolleys was raised. It was felt that the condition of the course would benefit from these. However, it was decided that it was not necessary to make them compulsory just yet, but to encourage members who were contemplating changing trolleys to consider wide wheels. After one of the regular advisory inspections by Suttons, their representative, Mr Pyne, suggested the establishment of a Technical Sub-Committee, convened for a three-year trial period with a view to advising on, and bringing continuity to, the greens programme. At the 1979 Annual General Meeting a member reported that he had been appalled to see members of the greens staff working without shirts on. *'It was felt that little harm was done by this and some embarrassment could be caused if staff, which are difficult to obtain, were instructed to wear shirts in the hottest conditions.'* In October the suggestion was made in Committee that the Professional should be appointed Course Manager, in addition to his duties as club professional. It was a matter for further discussion and no action was taken at the time. Remarkably, it was only as recently as July 1980 that instructions were given that greenstaff should begin Saturday morning mowing of greens at the 1st hole and proceed in sequence to avoid interference with competitors.