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**THE OLDEST SURVIVING RECORDS WE HAVE OF THE FUTURE STOCKPORT GOLF CLUB ARE THE MINUTE BOOKS OF THE LADIES' SECTION, AND LADIES HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF DAVENPORT AND STOCKPORT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.** True, only the Gentlemen's Committee was empowered to take executive decisions, but the ladies clearly flourished from the earliest days. Most were the wives of gentleman members and it seems that in the early days it was difficult to assemble teams for matches and the turn-out for competitions was low. Interestingly, in later years by far the majority of the contents of the ladies' minutes concern competitive play, with a very impressive list of tournaments and competitions arranged annually. But the move to Torkington brought new interest to ladies' golf and it was reported that at the 1910 Annual General Meeting there were 117 lady members. Unfortunately there were as yet no separate ladies' tees, which restricted play somewhat, although *'every comfort'* was provided for the ladies in the new clubhouse. Bogey was fixed at 89:

1st 6	2nd 5	3rd 5	4th 4	5th 4	6th 6	7th 6	8th 3	9th 5	= 44
10th 5	11th 6	12th 5	13th 4	14th 5	15th 5	16th 4	17th 6	18th 5	= 45

In September 1911 a representative of the LGU visited the club to fix par for the ladies' course. It was set at 77, but still there were no ladies' tees. The first to be constructed (*at the 1st and 17th holes*) were not built until after Barrie's death, opening in December 1911. A request was made for ladies' tees at the 6th, 9th and 12th holes in September 1912, but little further progress was made and it was decided to adopt the men's bogey of 80 for winter competitions in the absence of proper tees. Following alterations to the course, ladies' par was raised to 80 by the LGU in March 1913.

The first Gentlemen's Committee meeting of which records survive is that of April 26th 1911. It makes unhappy reading:

*'The Stockport Golf Club hereby places on record its sense of the great loss*



JAMES TAYLOR ON RIGHT  
TEMPORARY HEAD GREENKEEPER 1911

*the Club and its Members have sustained by the death of Peter Barrie, who for a period of four years, first with the Davenport Golf Club, and afterwards with its successor, the Stockport Golf Club, in the capacity of Professional*

*and Greenkeeper, rendered most faithful and valuable service. He was universally held in the highest esteem for his manly and sterling qualities.'*

He died, aged 44, on April 23rd and was buried in Norbury Parish Church, Hazel Grove on the 26th. From the outset, Stockport Golf Club

had been established as a compassionate and benevolent club and immediately following Barrie's death a subscription list was opened to assist his widow, giving her a pension in an age when pensions were uncommon. As we have seen, Barrie had been both Professional and Greenkeeper. This was not an unusual situation at this time, and it was also quite common at some clubs for the professional to be expected to help out behind the bar at busy times. Although the professional was required to be expert in all these matters he was, none the less, a servant and as such would not have been allowed to mix with members socially, or even to enter the clubhouse except, perhaps, to serve behind the bar. Course maintenance was not then as labour intensive as it is today. Members did not expect the bunkers to be raked every day, or that new holes would be cut for each day's play, and mowing, even of greens, was only an occasional activity. For that matter, sheep were allowed to graze the Torkington course until the First World War. Where the members expected to find their professional was not out on the course but in his shop, which was rarely more than a primitive hut. In fact, Ted Jarman records that when he and his brother Fred came to Stockport in April 1923, the professional's facility was *'a small square building which functioned as workshop, showroom, office and clubstore.'* There he would make new clubs and, perhaps, golf balls; he would carry out repairs to members' clubs; he was expected to clean members' clubs and shoes immediately after play and to store them in his shop when they were not in use. This building is today's Junior Clubroom. Additionally, he was required to provide an adequate supply of caddies, to train them and to manage them and their behaviour when they were not carrying a member's clubs on the course. Club professionals, although expected to be good players and teachers of the game, were not granted much time off to practise or to play in tournaments, not that there were very many

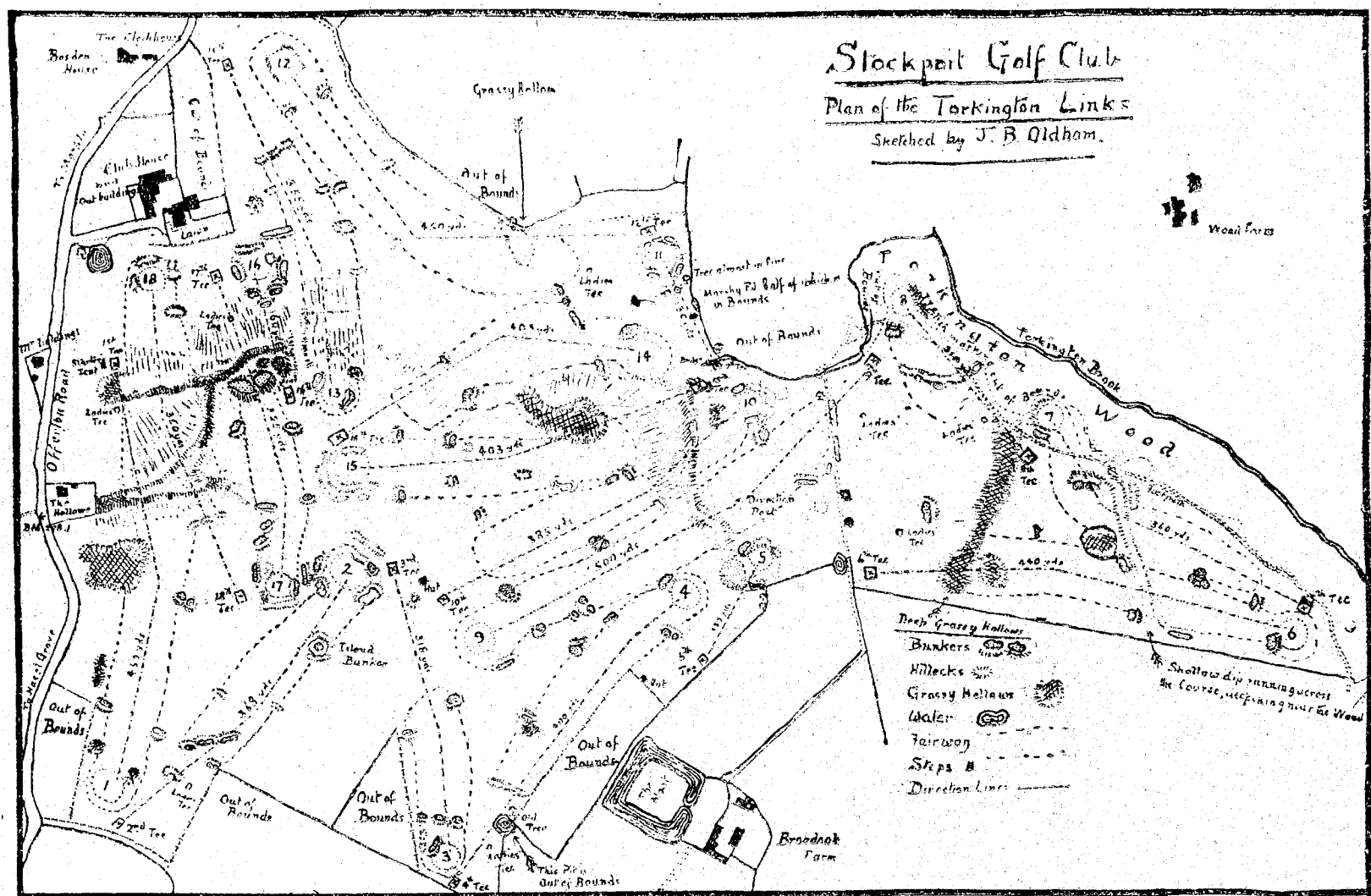


**September 1911**  
A LETTER WAS RECEIVED FROM MISS H BANCROFT COMPLAINING OF THE VERY BAD APPEARANCE OF THE SHEEP ON THE COURSE. IT WAS ARRANGED THAT THE ATTENTION OF THE FARMER BE DRAWN TO THE COMPLAINT.

tournaments for them to enter. They would certainly have been required to submit a list of tournaments in which they wished to play before the season began and the Committee would vet the list and dictate to the professional which tournaments he would be permitted to enter. Very often he would not be granted leave of absence at a weekend, and it would be made very clear to the professional in granting such permission that it was given only on the condition that the normal service expected in the professional's shop would not be curtailed in any way because of his absence. Occasionally it is minuted that Stockport made a modest grant to its professional to cover his expenses to play in the Open Championship,

but it was always emphasised that there was no precedence set in so doing and that the professional could not automatically expect such assistance in the future.

So, in the culture of the time, it was almost unusual that Stockport decided, after Barrie's death, to separate the positions of professional and greenkeeper, both of which would be under the control of the Green Committee. James Taylor was appointed temporary Head Greenkeeper and Peter Campbell temporary Professional – Campbell's name will continue to crop up in the history of the club, as he served in several capacities over a period of sixty years. No time was wasted in advertising



SKETCH OF COURSE BY JB OLDHAM – MEMBER

**March 1912**  
**Suggestion book:**  
 'WHY NOT START AT THE 17TH TEE AND MAKE THIS THE 1ST HOLE? A MAN WHO HAS PLAYED 16 HOLES, IF HE BE A MAN, HAS A THIRST, AND AS HE CANNOT GET A DRINK AT THE 17TH GREEN HE MAKES USUALLY FOR THE CLUBHOUSE. WITH SOME THE TEMPTATION TO HAVE A DRINK PREVAILS OVER THAT OF TAKING HALF A CROWN OR WINNING A MATCH; AT LEAST IT GENERALLY DOES WITH ME.'

for a new Professional: *'Wanted – Stockport Golf Club. Professional, good player and coach. Will have sale of clubs, balls and caddie money.'*

By May 19th sufficient applications for the post had been received for a shortlist to be drawn up of golfers named Chevalier, Simpson, Ramford, Saunders and Souter.

Chevalier, Simpson and Saunders were interviewed and Albert Saunders appointed at 15/- per week with teaching and playing fees fixed soon after at 2/- per hour for coaching and 2/6 'per round of the links.' Barrie's stock was subsequently sold to Saunders for £6.15.0.

Charles le Chevalier, for the record, came from Jersey and was recommended by Harry Vardon to Romiley Golf Club when they were looking for a new professional in 1908. His two sons, Charles and Albert, went on to have associations with several clubs in the Stockport area and Charles Junior held a world record for the number of holes-in-one he achieved, 31 of them between 1918 and 1970, many at Heaton Moor and Mirrlees.

With the Steward engaging 'Sally' as an extra permanent assistant, a sum of 5 shillings per week was added to the Steward's wage – that to be withdrawn should Sally leave. The club paid to have the telephone (*Marple 1*) extended to the Steward's room but he (*Challinor*) had to pay the £2 annual rental cost. In the autumn of 1911 it was decided that *'the opinion of an expert be obtained with regard to improving the bunkering of the course and he be asked to submit a report. And that Mr Colt of*



THE CLUB STAFF CIRCA 1912. JAMES TAYLOR IS CENTRE BACK ROW AND SAUNDERS THE PROFESSIONAL IS ON THE EXTREME LEFT.

*Sunningdale Golf Club be approached in this respect.'* The club agreed to Colt's terms of eight guineas per day plus expenses to examine the course and to submit a report. At the Annual General Meeting on January 27th 1912:

*'The Captain gave a detailed description of the proposed alterations and after some discussion it was decided that the addition of new bunkers and reconstruction of some of the present holes as contained in the report of Mr HS Colt and recommended by the committee be proceeded with as quickly as possible.'* A subscription list was opened in February to raise money towards the cost of these alterations.



One of the professional's most important duties at this time was returning lost balls to the members. So important was it, in fact, that the club purchased a ball-marking machine in 1912. Caddies supplemented their modest wages by searching in the rough and undergrowth for members' balls. They were paid 2d for each ball returned, and the professional earned a 1d commission per ball after he had checked it off against a register of members he had been given.

Unfortunately Saunders' tenure of office as Professional was brief, less than two years in fact, for on January 4th 1913 he tendered his resignation. The club recorded his departure in rather more censorious tones, *'Resolved that A.W. Saunders service in the club terminate forthwith for neglect of duty.'* Indeed, at the end of the month, *'Resolved that club sell the clubs distrained on from Saunders for moneys due to the club at the usual rate.'* Peter Campbell was once again appointed Professional for the time being while a Sub-Committee was set up to select a new professional.

This time the short list selected from fifty-seven applicants consisted



**1911**  
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 MR H NEWTON REQUESTED COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER IF THE BUNKERS FOR THE SECOND SHOT AT THE 11TH HOLE COULD BE CONSIDERED FAIR. THE COMMITTEE REPLIED THAT IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE CLUB USED ON THE TEE AS NORMALLY ONLY A PUTTER IS REQUIRED FOR THE SECOND SHOT!

of Chevalier (*Romiley*), Riseborough (*Halifax*), Bourne (*West Drayton*), Copland (*Aberdeen*), Brown (*Seaham Harbour*), of whom Bourne and Riseborough were interviewed. The outcome was that on April 9th 1913, WR Bourne was appointed Professional at 15/- per week with fees of 2/- for half a lesson, 2/6 per round.

Although it had little direct effect on golf at Stockport, countryside unease set in in February 1912 when a national coal strike began at Alfreton in Derbyshire and quickly spread to other mining areas. A civilian volunteer force was formed, the police in coal mining districts were reinforced and at the end of March the army was brought in. Rail services were badly disrupted and the club offered free use of the links to Army officers stationed in Stockport attempting to keep the trains running during the strike. Also in 1912 a plan of the course was made and accurate measurements made of the length of each hole. In those days there were no course planner guides or 150-yard markers. Distance judgement was done by eye.

By now it was felt that the time had come when the little clubhouse which had been assembled out of the original farmhouse might be improved, and on June 26th 1912 it was resolved *'that the extension of the Club House, to provide extra locker accommodation, as shown on plan prepared by Mr Stott, be proceeded with.'* In July 1912, Hazel Grove and Bramhall Urban District Council carried out a canvass of the district to establish the probable demand for electric current. The club was asked if its name could be placed on the list of would be consumers. The club replied that it could not promise to take any supply of current as the club premises were mostly used during daylight. Oil lamps were used to light the various rooms in the clubhouse. A year later it was proposed to extend the lunch and ladies' room in the form of a 9'6" veranda with a balcony over and steps leading up, the President offering to have the work done at his own

**May 1912 Suggestion book:**  
 'I BEG MOST SUBMISSIVELY TO SUGGEST TO THE COMMITTEE THAT ON COMPETITION DAYS THE SHEEP BE KEPT OFF THE COURSE, OR THAT A COMPETITOR BE ALLOWED TO PICK HIS BALL OUT OF A SHEEP MARK IN A SAND BUNKER WITHOUT PENALTY.'  
 'MUST BE CONSIDERED A RUB OF THE GREEN.'

expense. Naturally, it was unanimously approved. George Orme refers to these alterations in his (*much later*) account of the early years:

*'The club room was the present card room and the ceiling was lower than at present. When meetings were held and many members present, the atmosphere was anything but pleasant.*

*As one faced the buildings from the present front, the locker rooms stood back from the rest of the building (the present dining room) and looked like a row of lavatories. It was ugly, but we had had so much to spend on the course etc. that we could not spend any more money on the club house for the time being.*

*There used to be a photograph of the club house taken prior to the alterations being made, and it used to hang up on a wall somewhere in the clubhouse. I wish it could be found.*

*I was hoping that this sad state of affairs might soon be remedied, but then the war came along and nothing could be done.'*

The Great War had indeed come along.

