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RESTORATION OF PEACE DID NOT FIND THE CLUB INSTANTLY RETURNED TO ITS FORMER STATE. The Bourmes remained as caretakers in the clubhouse until March 1919 and it was agreed that the land must be ploughed *‘as last year’* and sown with oats. Sheep grazing was to carry on, although cattle grazing was discontinued. It was expected, of course, that the highest standards of decorum were to be exhibited by all members, as a minute of December 1918 emphasises, *‘That there be no card playing in the Ladies’ room after 6 o’clock pm during week days and on no account on Sundays and in communicating this resolution to the Lady Secretary the Committee wish to express their regret to learn that the privileges of the Club have been abused.’*

The absence on war service of many members had left the club with a degree of debt, yet when the opportunity presented itself to purchase the land on which the clubhouse and course stood, the Committee moved quickly. Early in January 1919, as soon as it was ascertained that the landlord, Mr Shepley Shepley, was prepared to sell for the sum of £6,150, a land purchase Sub-Committee was formed. This was some £4,000



(TWENTY FOUR)

below the original asking price. At the Annual General Meeting on February 22nd it was unanimously agreed to empower the Committee to purchase the whole of the links and buildings at that price and to raise the purchase money and the amount of debentures already existing by the issuing of 5½% debentures in multiples of £10 redeemable in 10 years and also to redeem those existing debentures. Four days later the entrance fee, which had stood at one guinea with an annual subscription of four guineas, was raised immediately to ten guineas. It was decided to issue debentures to the value of £8,000 to make it possible to redeem existing debentures, purchase the land and buildings and to fund the interest on the debentures which would be paid annually on January 1st. Progress was swift with a Sub-Committee set up to process the necessary trust deed, which received approval to secure £8,000 of debenture stock on January 3rd 1920, the Common Seal of the company being placed in the custody of the Honorary Secretary.

Although the Torkington course has remained more or less unaltered for its entire life, the order of playing the holes has occasionally been changed. This happened in February 1919 and new cards had to be printed. Such alterations have never been long lasting, more of an experiment, and this one was no exception, being rescinded in June. Another frequently recurring issue throughout the club’s existence has been that of playing times, especially for the ladies. It would be tedious to list every single amendment to these but clearly the course was busy again after the war for it was decided that no four-balls would be allowed to start on Saturdays between 1.30 and 3.30 in the afternoon. This restriction on play did not last long, either, for by August 1919 it was agreed that three- and four-ball matches would now be allowed to start at any time on Saturdays except on competition days. Monthly medal competitions had been cancelled for the duration of the war and they were reinstated in April 1919.

A number of attempts were made to fill the vacancy for Steward and Stewardess following Bourne’s return to his *‘proper’* job as Professional. Mr and Mrs Tom Dickinson were engaged as Steward and Stewardess on the same salary of £2 per week, but they were also ensured *‘a guaranteed average profit of 30/- per week.’* Shortly after their appointment, lunches were increased to 3/- each *‘for a trial.’*

Having substantially raised the entrance fee to ten guineas in

February 1919 it was further doubled to twenty guineas on June 3rd with the ladies’ entrance fee raised at the same time to three guineas. Greenage fees (*as they were then rather charmingly called*) were now 10/- a day Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays, 5/- other days, with members’ guests introduced at half price, but only one visitor was allowed per member. Lady visitors could be introduced at 2/6 per day. Also *‘anyone enjoying the privileges of the clubhouse must pay the usual greenage fee.’* Presumably, then, not many guests will have been invited to the club just for a casual drink.

The course had suffered from agricultural use and restricted maintenance during the war, so it was decided to send once again for Harry Colt to inspect the course and to make suggestions for its restoration and improvement, for a fee *‘not exceeding £15.15.0.’* He visited almost immediately, for little over a month after sending for him the club adopted Colt’s report and arranged for the work to be carried out during the coming winter. Most of the work involved improving the quality of the grass and creating new bunkers. It was suggested that Colt or his assistant should be asked to supervise the work periodically. Colt’s total bill eventually amounted to £100, but it was money well spent for, apart from an alteration to the 3rd hole in the 1930s and amendments to the 10th green and many bunkers, it is essentially Colt’s course of 1919/1920 which is still played by today’s members of Stockport Golf Club. A member, Robbie Beaty, presented a plan of the course as it then was to the club, which was framed and hung up in the clubhouse. Unfortunately this



VICTORY CELEBRATIONS AT THE CLUB IN 1919

(TWENTY FIVE)

does not appear to have survived. It was also decided to have photographs of each past captain of the club framed and hung, a tradition maintained ever since.

On the whole, the end of the war was marked nationally with relief rather than overt celebration or triumphalism, but by the summer of 1919 the mood had turned to optimism and Stockport Golf Club held a special Peace Day on July 19th 1919 with a full day of events arranged by catering and entertainment committees for both lady and gentleman members. A mixed foursome competition was played, with the proceeds being donated to the King’s Fund for Disabled Soldiers. The clubhouse was brightly decorated for the occasion. It was also decided in 1919 to rename the Arundel Cup the Victory Trophy and a competition for this trophy is still played today.

Few members owned motor cars in the years following the First World War and many had to rely on public transport, which did not provide an adequate service to the Torkington course. Once again the subject of the club’s providing some form of transport from the Bull’s Head public house and also from Marple was discussed and in December 1919 it was agreed to purchase a Ford chassis for the *‘conveyance.’* Delivery was slow. It had not arrived by March 1920 and then it had to have a suitable body built for it. By June sufficient progress had been made for a discussion to take place on the fares to be charged. 1/- per person with a minimum of 3/- per journey was suggested. Eventually the service commenced, running at a loss from the outset, and it was dogged with

difficulties. As early as November 1920 a new chauffeur was sought 'as the present man is unsatisfactory.' By May of the following year the bus was running at a deficit of £20 a month and there were complaints about its lack of comfort, with weak springs, although the Committee continued to urge members to use it. It was, by now, running to a timetable, but its days were numbered. In June 1921 a Sub-Committee was set up to sell the vehicle 'to the best advantage.'

Stockport has always been a busy club, with a full schedule of club competitions for both men and women, matches with other clubs, outside tournaments and plentiful visitors, so it has long been necessary to regulate play. As early as the Annual General Meeting of 1920 it was suggested that starting sheets might be introduced on a Saturday. Shortly after that the rules were amended so that 'The use of the clubhouse and course should be reserved for gentlemen members after 1pm on Wednesdays.' This restriction was soon lifted - in October, in fact. Additionally it was decided 'Prohibit practising, approaching or putting on the 16th green as well as the 18th green.' Provision was made also for a Ladies' Day to be held in July and, in the generous tradition of the club, £155.12.6 was raised for Stockport Infirmary, a major beneficiary of fund raising at the club.

In November 1920 Stockport agreed to become a founder member of the new Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs, and the following month the Club Captain, George Mackenzie, was elected to the Executive Committee of the Union. It was the start of an excellent and lasting relationship between the club and the union. Stockport won the inaugural Cheshire Team Championship in 1921 held at Delamere Forest.

While certain issues, such as managing the club's debt or regulating play at busy times, recur frequently throughout the club's minutes a few items seem to dominate proceedings for a short time, only to disappear for good soon after. In 1920 one of the main topics for discussion was whisky. The House Committee was initially requested to consider purchasing whisky in bond. They soon came up with a scheme based on a consumption of two dozen bottles a week. Today, average consumption of whisky is 2 bottles a week. On January 5th 1921 the House Committee reported that they had purchased what they estimated to be a year's supply of whisky in bond to be matured for drinking in 1924 and that it

was intended to lay down a similar quantity each year so that a year's supply of matured whisky would always be available for the club's use. In September 1921 it was decided to offer whisky in stock for sale at 94/3 a gallon unbroken or 64/3 a gallon broken. However, by 1923 the House Committee, for some reason not now apparent, sent a sample of the whisky in bond to Messrs Macdonald and Muir requesting a report on it. In due course it was decided to ask upon what terms they would take over the stock. However, the club must still have retained some stocks for in March 1924 it was decided to let the whisky in bond mature for another year (after deliberation in committee over a period of several months).

The workload of administrating a club of the size of Stockport put a considerable burden on the shoulders of its principal officers, the Captain, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. It was, nevertheless, a forward-looking development for those days to consider the appointment of a paid secretary. The necessity for such a post had been recognised in October 1920, and the following month Mr E Hamilton Powell of Trentham was offered the position for a trial period of six months at a remuneration of £250 a year with lunch and afternoon tea provided. He was also allowed free use of the motor bus from the Bull's Head. It was initially agreed that the (paid) Secretary would receive his instructions from the Committee through the Captain but as there was still an Honorary Secretary it was subsequently resolved to communicate through him. There was no need for the Secretary to attend Committee meetings unless specifically requested. Unfortunately Powell did not live locally and by March 1922 it was felt that the organisation and management of the club were not working as well as had been hoped. An attempt was made to persuade Powell to relocate, which he was unwilling to do, and so in early 1923 Powell was given notice and GD Carruthers appointed to the differently titled post of Manager. He set about his business with vigour, proposing an entire change to the structure of the catering operation, engaging the principal members of his staff, giving notice to the incumbent Steward and Stewardess, then promptly resigning, a mere three months after taking up office. Carruthers' reasons for leaving are not recorded but they were accepted by the club, which recorded its appreciation of his services to the club. He was replaced by PD Ellis.



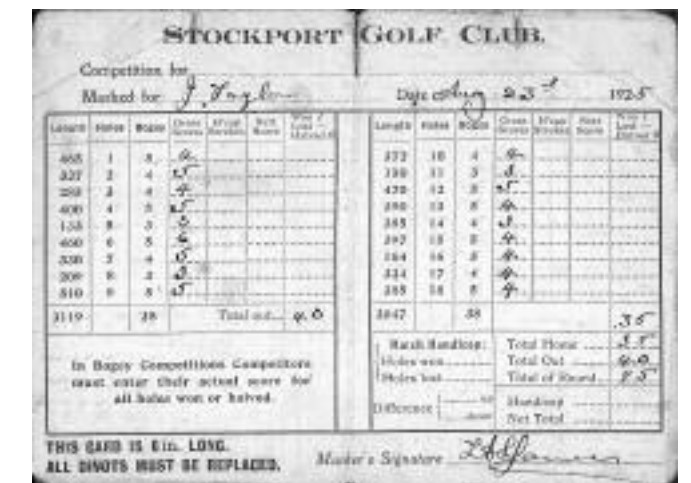
Over the next few years Ellis appears to have worked effectively for the club to the extent that it was proposed to build him a house within the grounds. Estimates were obtained and it was only a matter of time before Ellis would be able to move in. But it was not to be. On July 14th 1925 the Manager was granted 18 days' leave from July 24th. Hardly had he erected his deck chair when a Special Committee meeting (on July 28th) was given a dire financial statement, and the following morning a letter was sent to the Manager terminating his employment, 'a preliminary step towards the reduction of expenses.'

Generally speaking, play was governed by the Rules of Golf, but clubs, as has already been noted, had a fairly free hand in the application of local rules. For instance in December 1919, the ladies brought in their own rule relating to play on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 11th holes, namely, 'A ball lying near the boundary fences, if unplayable, may be lifted and dropped a club's length distance from such fence, with the loss of a stroke.' The following December, the Committee changed the local rules to allow the cleaning of balls, not then allowed in the Rules of Golf: 'Balls may be lifted, on the green, for the purpose of cleaning, but must be replaced in the exact position from which they are lifted.' The condition of the course in winter made it almost an annual event to bring in a similar local rule such as, 'Resolved that from this date until March 31st players be allowed to clean their ball on the green and in case of a ball being buried in the fairway or on the green it may be lifted without penalty.' On another occasion, 'It was decided to keep to the old rule, loss of distance only for a ball out of bounds, and in case of lost ball in match play to observe the new rule i.e. the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the ball was played, incurring a penalty stroke.' The rules changed frequently.

In April 1921 the local rule allowing cleaning of balls on the green was rescinded, and ground to the right of the fairway (over the cut grips) on the 2nd and 3rd holes was deemed no longer to be out of bounds. Again in 1921 it was resolved to have the holes measured by the Greens Committee and their lengths recorded in the year book and on tee boxes. In August 1921 a letter was received from the R&A on the matter of arriving at some uniform basis for handicapping, and the Secretary was instructed to reply that the Scratch Score at Stockport was 79. However, in November of that year the Scratch Score for the course was fixed at 73 with all handicaps raised by 3, and a handicap limit for competitions of

20. There is no record of why such a drastic reduction in Scratch Score should have been effected in a matter of just a few months. Subsequently, in May 1922, the R&A ruled that the Scratch Score should be 76, another substantial alteration.

In the hierarchy of golf clubs in the 1920s, caddies were undoubtedly considered to be in the lowest rank of society. It was suggested at Committee that a shelter might be provided for them, but it was turned down on grounds of cost. The financial situation also deterred the club from buying a couple of horses no longer required by the fire service, and so an insurance policy was taken out to protect against the death of the club's own horse, for as yet Stockport did not have a motor tractor. Subsequently a member, John Heaton, offered a horse to the club, and it was gratefully accepted with the reassurance 'that the horse will be well looked after and used for light work.'



A SCORECARD OF JAMES P. TAYLOR, WHO LATER BECAME PROFESSIONAL AT HURDSFIELD. NOTE THAT THE CARD IS PRECISELY 6 INCHES LONG. SCORE CARDS WERE TRADITIONALLY USED TO MEASURE THE DISTANCE APART OF TWO GOLF BALLS IN THE DAYS WHEN THE STYMIE RULE WAS PLAYED AND AN INSTANT RULING WAS REQUIRED.



SILVER KEY PRESENTED IN 1923 TO GEORGE ORME
BY THE ARCHITECT MR FAIRHURST



Perhaps because of the financial difficulties the club was facing in the early 1920s, discussions took place with a neighbouring farmer, Mr Marriott, to explore the possibility of his purchasing land adjacent to his farm. It was also suggested by one of the Committee that land fronting Offerton Road might be sold for building purposes, but the rest of the Committee felt that any further building on that land would detract from the appearance of the course, a decision of importance and lasting value to the club ever since. At that time the club did not have access to mains electricity, lighting being provided by oil lamps, six of which were presented by one of the members. It was in October 1921 that the possibility of acquiring electric lighting was first considered and early estimates of around £450 were made for a full, self-powered lighting system. Ultimately the lighting scheme came in at £554 with the work completed in March 1922, the generator being located in the basement. Meanwhile the idea was put forward by George Orme that the clubhouse might now be extended:

After the war was over and things had settled down a bit I set to work to design some alterations to the Club House, having two objects in mind – one to provide more accommodation and another to hide the very ugly locker rooms. I drew up a plan of the present vestibule, entrance hall, office, ladies’ club room, staircase, committee room (now a bar-room) and men’s club room and bar. As I have no knowledge of drawing, I got a friend to make a sketch of what the place would look like when altered, from particulars and dimensions I supplied. I submitted my plans and the sketch to the committee and they passed them and told me the architect to consult. I saw the architect and submitted my plans and the sketch and asked him if there was any ‘snag’ in them. After consideration, the architect said my plans were O.K. and I asked him to get out the necessary plans for the builders and to obtain tenders. I think the barrel ceiling in the club room was the architect’s suggestion instead of a flat ceiling.

Messrs. Robert Carlyle & Co. of Old Trafford secured the job and the late Major Carlyle, who was a member of the club, gave the matter his unremitting personal attention and the club owes him a debt of gratitude.

The lofty ceiling in the club room necessitated raising the roof of the old club room to make the outside appearance of the building symmetrical.

Whilst the building was progressing, numerous lady members came to me

from time to time to complain of various faults, as they considered them in the design of the ladies’ room. I told them to come and see me when everything was completed and I would then consider their complaints, if they still had any to make. After the building was completed, I never heard any more of the complaints.

A ladies committee co-operated with the club committee in the furnishing of the ladies’ room. I selected a variety of chairs, tables, etc. at Goodalls (I think it was) and they were sent to my house in Davenport Park and it was from these that a men’s sub-committee made a selection.

My mind is rather fogged on the following matter, but I think that prior to the additions to the club house being built, the dining room was extended towards the front with a flat roof over the extension and windows opening out on to it from the clubroom. I am under the impression that Mr Sam Kay who was President at one time, met the cost of the extension. It is interesting to note that Mr Kay had turned 70 years of age before he ever played golf. He continued to play for some time until he met with an accident which prevented him from playing.

The altered club house was opened on the 12th May 1923 and I was elected President for that year and performed the opening ceremony. The Architect, Mr Fairhurst, presented me with a very beautiful silver key to the front door, but unfortunately the lock refused to act and someone had to open the door from the inside. This did not detract from the pleasures of the occasion, but, I think, rather added to them.’

Orme makes no mention of the cost of this venture, but it was discussed in detail at an Extraordinary General Meeting held on March 14th 1922. At this meeting the plans were approved and it was unanimously resolved that the Directors be authorised to borrow a sum not exceeding £6,000, in addition to the £8,000 already borrowed on debenture stock, and to issue further debenture stock not exceeding £6,000 bearing interest at 5½% per annum. At another EGM, held on the March 25th the new debenture stock issue was raised to ‘not exceeding £7,000.’

In May 1922 various tenders for this clubhouse extension were received, ranging from £4,875 to £6,000. Robert Carlyle’s lowest tender was accepted, and it was possible to reduce this to £4,705 by using

different materials. Later, plans were sought for better accommodation for the professional and caddies. Carlyle’s estimate of £875 for this was thought too expensive, however.

It was in September 1922 that the architect was requested to draw up plans to raise the roof of the existing clubhouse to be the same height as the extension. The cost of altering the old roof, and also the card room ceiling, was a mere £298. *(The pictures show, for ease of comparison, the old clubhouse and the outcome of the building work carried out.)* The new work provided a new entrance at the front and extensions to the east side with a full length balcony.

Unfortunately the building work prevented the club hosting the 1922 Cheshire Championships. They should have been held at Hoylake that year, but a severe drought rendered the links course unfit for play. In the end the event took place at Prenton, but Stockport sent the Union a cordial invitation to hold their championships at Torkington the following year.

Meanwhile, at a Debenture Holders’ meeting on October 4th 1922 it was decided to give up a little club land in return for a modest sum: *Resolved that two plots of land containing FIVE HUNDRED square yards and ONE THOUSAND AND FOUR square yards adjoining respectively on the northerly and southerly side of the plot of land now belonging to George Alfred Marriott situated in Offerton Road, Torkington be released from the security created by the Debenture Trust Deed of the 4th February 1920 and that the Debenture Stock Trustees be authorised to concur in the conveyance thereof by the Stockport Golf Club Ltd. To the said George Alfred Marriott and to receive the sum of ONE HUNDRED AND THREE POUNDS ELEVEN SHILLINGS AND ONE PENNY the consideration therefore.’*

Orme’s account mentioned the role of the ladies in choosing furnishings for their own rooms, but it was about the only concession the (male) Committee made to the ladies. When the ladies wrote asking if

In the summer of 1922

THE CLUB ITSELF
DECIDED TO TAKE OUT 3RD PARTY
INSURANCE ON ALL MEMBERS
AT 3D PER MEMBER.

it would be possible to arrange for them to use part of the balcony, the Honorary Secretary was instructed to reply explaining ‘*the impracticality of such an arrangement.*’ The

ladies also requested the use of the Committee Room for their meetings. It is hardly necessary to add that the idea was rejected, although the Committee promised to ‘*endeavour to make provision downstairs.*’

The extension raised the question of extending the new lighting system. Would the existing engine be powerful enough? Inspection showed the power unit to be inadequate and it was estimated that a further £304 would need to be spent to provide greater power and to enlarge the engine room by 12 feet. This additional expenditure caused concern, but there was no alternative to it and it was accepted. Late in the development of the clubhouse, in February 1923, it was decided to erect an ornamental turret on the centre of the roof at an approximate cost of £10 to £15, a trifle compared with the rest of the work. Outside the club house one hundred and fifty Golden Privets were planted around the front lawn and six ‘*lime or other trees*’ on the line of the front drive. All was ready for the opening which was fixed, as Orme relates, for May 12th 1923. A mixed foursomes competition for members of the club only was arranged to be held that day and off-course activities included music, dancing and a running buffet. In conjunction, a dress dinner for (gentlemen) members and a guest was arranged for May 10th. Its menu makes appetising reading.

A young Eric Burd joined the clubhouse staff – a name that will crop up frequently in future years. As he either worked for the Club or was a member over a period of 80 years. He also was a golfer of considerable skill as will be seen.

So the club entered a new phase of its existence, proud owners of a much improved clubhouse and with a significantly greater financial burden to carry forward.



BEFORE THE ALTERATIONS



AND THE NEWLY EXTENDED CLUBHOUSE IN 1923