



(THIRTY SEVEN)

THE SPIRAL FIRE EXIT

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ALTHOUGH THE REPAYMENT OF DEBENTURES was the most important issue of the late 1920s, for the simple reason that it secured Stockport's future, there were other minor contributions to the welfare of the club. For instance, in September 1928 an agreement was sealed with the Central Electricity Board for the board to place lines of electric cables over land belonging to the club behind the 1st green and 2nd tee. It profited the club to the tune of 1/- annually. Surely coincidentally, but shortly after this, the Committee authorised the hire for three years of a ball cleaning machine at an annual rent of 1/-.

There was a feeling within the club that the course probably needed tightening up, so on September 20th 1928 a letter was sent to Harry Colt inviting him to give his expert opinion on the general layout of the course with any recommendations that could be made for the future guidance of the Committee, without incurring any great expense. Colt replied that his fee would be 20 guineas plus expenses, which was agreed to. By November, Colt's report and recommendations for the improvement of the course had been received and considered. The Greens Committee was empowered to carry out his suggestions *'as and when practicable, so far as this could be done without incurring any additional expense for labour.'* Unfortunately it is not recorded what these suggestions might have been, but they cannot have been very major for them to be able to be carried out without additional labour. Certainly by December 4th 1928, work was already in hand on Mr Colt's suggestions, and it was decided to close the 5th and 11th holes over the winter, to play the course as a 16-hole course, and that if an 18-hole course were required, play would start with the 17th and 18th followed by the rest of the course, finishing with the 17th and 18th again.

At the close of 1928, a letter was received from the Surveyor to Hazel Grove and Bramhall Urban District Council with a proposal to widen Offerton Road and some of the land required was owned by the golf club, apparently under an agreement made with Mr R Shepley Shepley in December 1911. The club was not aware of such an arrangement and it was certainly not mentioned in the conveyance of 1919, but it would be necessary to examine the Deeds. The club's solicitors replied to the Surveyor stating that no agreement with the council was disclosed on their purchasing the land, so it was now a matter between the council and

1929
COMPLAINT BY MEMBERS THAT
70 VISITORS ALLOWED ON COURSE
WITHOUT NOTICE AND
THE CONSEQUENT RESTRICTION
ON MEMBERS.
(A FREQUENT COMPLAINT
EVEN TO THIS DAY)

Mr Shepley Shepley. On January 18th 1929 the Honorary Treasurer met with the Surveyor before reporting to the full Committee. Although there are no further entries in the minutes concerning this particular road widening, roads, or proposed roads, have been on the club's agenda ever since.

Trespass has always been a concern, so in October 1928 the father of a boy caught pilfering a golf ball on the 5th hole was summoned before Committee and told that they would make an example of him. He pleaded not to be prosecuted and the Committee relented on the understanding that neither the father nor his son would ever again *'come within the precincts of the course, or loiter on the boundaries of it.'* It was then decided to try netting the pond at the 5th hole, as this may prevent boys loitering there to recover balls. The following month the decision was reversed.

Relations between the club and its staff were clearly no happier than previously, for in March 1929 a member complained of damage to his car done by *'some of the Club's staff playing football.'* The Captain and Secretary interviewed Jarman on the matter. He was told that he was in charge of the yard where the motors are parked. Then in April it was deemed that the present cook was unsatisfactory and was to be replaced by Mr and Mrs Keohli, he a Swiss-born, naturalised in 1911. His wife was to take over a position held by another of the kitchen staff. It was an uncomfortable time to be a servant of the club but, at a distance of more than seventy years, such incidents take on more the appearance of family squabbles. There was certainly no squabbling in the organising of the major event of 1929, one of the biggest in Stockport's history, the visit of the United States Ryder Cup team to play a match at Torkington.

The Manchester Guardian and Evening News had spotted a gap in the itinerary of the visiting Americans following that year's Ryder Cup match, which was to be played at Moortown in north Leeds towards the end of April. They appreciated what a worthwhile venture it would be to bring the team to Manchester, given the city's many business links with America. Only a few of the large number of golfers in the Manchester area would have an opportunity of seeing the Americans at Moortown. An additional attraction was the fact that the American Captain, Walter Hagen, was the reigning Open Champion from Royal St George's at Sandwich.

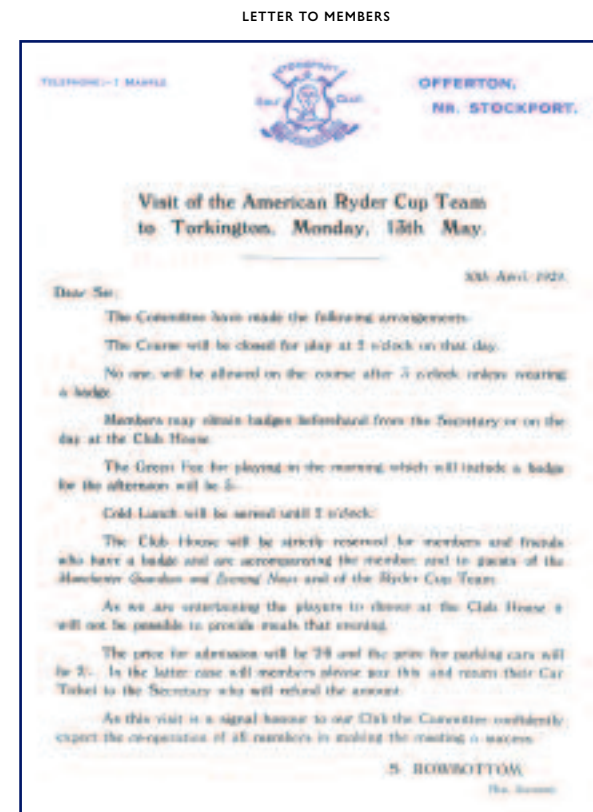
This was going to be a considerable undertaking and it required of the club a great deal of meticulous preparation with endless meetings to finalise every detail. The Ryder Cup team would receive the whole gate – there would be thousands of spectators. The club was to split parking fees 50/50 with the RAC who would organise that aspect. The Manchester Guardian and Evening News would repay the club all reasonable outlay. The clubhouse would be restricted to members and their friends, guests of the Manchester Guardian and Evening News, the Ryder Cup Team and their opponents. There were to be four marquees, one to the right of the 13th hole, another behind the clubhouse selling light refreshments, and two others selling what were charmingly described as *'intoxicants'*, between the 5th green and 6th tee, and near the 8th green.

Ten pairs of cufflinks were ordered to present to the Americans as a memento. The club acquired a pair of these cufflinks in the early 2000s and these are now displayed in the Kinsey Bar. Protocol was, of course, never forgotten and at a preliminary meeting it was decreed that *'Ladies should not be admitted to the balcony of the club house.'*

The format of the match was intriguing. The Americans were to play as singles against the better-ball of good local amateurs, nominally a team from Lancashire. In fact the home team included three Stockport players, Israel Sidebottom, SS Potter and C Ashbrook. The American team arrived in Manchester in the morning having travelled overnight on a sleeper train from Gleneagles. They were then entertained to lunch at the Midland Hotel where they were welcomed by the Lord Mayor, the Bishop and Dean of Manchester and the great and good of Manchester commerce and industry. They also *'passed part of the day in inspection of a cotton mill.'* In his welcome, the Lord Mayor said:



THE CUFFLINKS PRESENTED TO EACH MEMBER OF THE 1929 US RYDER CUP TEAM AND BILL KINSEY'S WINNERS MEDAL PRESENTED IN 1923 TO THE CHESHIRE TEAM CHAMPIONS



'No visitors to Manchester for some years had been regarded with such admiration, curiosity, and awe – at any rate not for ten years. It was then that they had with them a most distinguished American, President Wilson.'

'Not only had we affection for distinguished Americans, but we had a reason in Manchester for taking a peculiar interest in its champions. For The Lord Mayor could not help thinking that Mr Hagen and his friends must have known of Manchester's motto 'Concilio et Labore,' or 'By gathering in council together and by hard work.' The Lord Mayor was quite sure that the wonderful American success in sports of all kinds had been won by downright hard work, and if they wanted to see Americans in council they had only to look at the list of those clustered behind Mr Hagen at Muirfield to carry off the championship if by any eccentricity he should have lost the habit. The Lord Mayor felt that what was wanted at Muirfield was a big contingent of men from Manchester.'

'Games were taken seriously in Lancashire. That was why it held so many native championships: cricket, Association football, professional rugby football and lacrosse. The Lord Mayor believed that in none of these games had the United States, with all its skill, ever beaten Lancashire. It did seem a



THE US RYDER CUP TEAM
BACK ROW (L-R): ED DUDLEY, AL WATROUS, GENE SARAZEN, LEO DIEGIEL, AL ESPINOSA, JOHNNY FARRELL
FRONT ROW (L-R): HORTON SMITH, WALTER HAGEN, JO TURNESA, JOHNNY GOLDEN

HAGEN AT 1ST TEE



remarkable thing that the people of the United States should have adopted with such brilliant skill a game adopted nearly two thousand years ago when the Picts and Scots first drove over Hadrian's Wall.'

The Lord Mayor went on to laud the Americans' technical genius and their capacity for striving to make something which is good even better, and that sport could always be a road to friendship between peoples.

The Americans, so much stronger on paper, were given a good run for their money by the gifted amateurs, largely because the Americans had never seen the course before and the Stockport greens were much slower than those at Muirfield where they had last played. Of course, the Americans had also, slightly surprisingly, lost to the Great Britain and Ireland team in the Ryder Cup itself. Al Espinosa was unable to play and his place was taken by the gifted Argentine champion, José Jurado.

Jurado was given a hard game by Tweedale and Kay, a Wilmslow pair. Although Jurado won the 1st, he three-putted both the 4th and 5th and lost the 7th when he went out of bounds. He made amends at the 9th, being the only one down in five. After driving into a bunker at the 13th he played a superb mashie shot to bring the match back to all square, but Tweedale's run-up shot at the 15th was stone dead and Jurado again fell behind. A two at the 16th brought him back to all square again, and he was required to hole from six and eight feet at the last two holes to halve the match.

Henriques and Cooke proved too strong



HORTON SMITH



JOE TURNESA



LEO DIEGEL

for Johnny Farrell, the reigning American Open Champion. Farrell's only win came at the 7th, where his opponents both three-putted, but that was their only lapse, with Henriques birdying the 9th and 14th.

Gene Sarazen was up against the home pair of Sidebottom and Potter and they knew the course too well for him. They started from the 13th on which Sarazen immediately went one down when he bunkered his second shot. He squared at the next with a 9-foot putt, but lost the 16th by overclubbing. From the 17th to the 5th each hole was halved, but Sarazen lost the 6th. He immediately undid the damage with a 9-foot putt on the 7th, only to lose the 8th when he failed to find the green. Again he pulled one back at the 10th, but local knowledge prevailed and Sidebottom and Potter's better-ball 71 saw them home comfortably.

The American Leo Diegel had a unique putting stance, to the extent that the verb 'to Diegiel' came briefly into the vocabulary of golfing journalists. He was up against the Manchester and District champion, JR Abercrombie, partnered by J A Schofield. Having started at the 13th and losing the 14th and 16th the amateurs were soon two down. Diegel proved too strong throughout and, although the match finished on the 9th (*their 15th*), the round was completed with Diegel carding a 70.

Hagen drew the biggest gallery and started badly, driving into the deep hollow on the 1st and pulling shots on the 2nd and 3rd to go three down. Although he pulled one back at the 5th, on which his tee shot finished a yard from the pin, he went three down again at the 8th when he went through the back of the 8th green. He would have gone four down at the 10th if his opponent Smith had not missed a putt, and Hagen only won the 12th when his opponents three-putted. Then the real Hagen began to emerge and fine shots to the 13th and 14th brought him back to all square. Poor putting from the English players gave Hogan the lead for the first time on the 15th, a lead such a wily old campaigner was hardly likely to give up. Although the short 16th was halved, a four on the 17th was enough to give Hagen a comfortable win in the end.

There was a bizarre win for Shaw and Goodwin on the 8th hole in their match with Al Watrous. Goodwin hit his tee shot out of bounds. He played another which found the green (*without a stroke penalty in those days*), so when he sank his putt he was down for three and the win. He also won the 12th and Shaw the 13th. Watrous staged a slight recovery at the short 16th when he was the only player of the three to make par, but it was too little, too late, his opponents closing him out on the 17th for a victory by 2 & 1.

**Visit of American Ryder Cup Team
13th MAY, 1929**

No.	PLAYERS	Hole	Player's Number
1	L. DIEGEL v.		
2	J. R. ABERCROMBIE		
3	J. A. SCHOFIELD	1	
4	G. SARAZEN v.	2	
5	I. SIDEBOTTOM		
6	S. A. POTTER	3	
7	J. FARRELL v.	4	
8	G. L. Q. HENRIQUES		
9	HENRY COOKE	5	
10	W. HAGEN v.	6	
11	A. W. SMITH		
12	C. B. DARLINGTON	7	
13	J. TURNESA v.	8	
14	M. SCHUNCK		
15	H. L. HOLDEN	9	
16	A. ESPINOSA v.	10	
17	G. TWEEDALE		
18	H. A. KAY	11	
19	J. WATROUS v.	12	
20	H. SHAW		
21	A. M. GOODWIN	13	
22	H. SMITH v.	14	
23	A. MACBETH		
24	F. B. SCHOFIELD	15	
25	E. DUDLEY v.	16	
26	C. HAMMERSLEY		
27	J. BRAID, jnr.	17	
28	J. GOLDEN v.	18	
29	C. ASHBROOK		
30	H. L. WRIGHT		

Jo Turnesa produced some big hitting to keep up in his match with Schunck and Holden. At first he could not come to terms with the greens and he had a stroke of good fortune on the 7th when his approach shot, which appeared to be flying well past the green, hit the flag and dropped straight down. He then turned on the power, coming up almost onto the 9th green in two, hitting a majestic drive at the 10th, holing his putt from 30 feet, and holing another long putt on the 11th for a two.

Macbeth and Schofield beat the youngest member of the American side, Horton Smith, by knitting together in a complementary partnership, reaching the turn one up and holding off Smith's challenge with

exemplary approach work and putting.

Johnny Golden began brightly with a win at the 1st, but he lost the next two to Ashbrook and Wright and was four down with eight holes remaining. He was still two down as he stood on the 16th tee, but he played the last three holes impressively to sneak a one-hole victory.

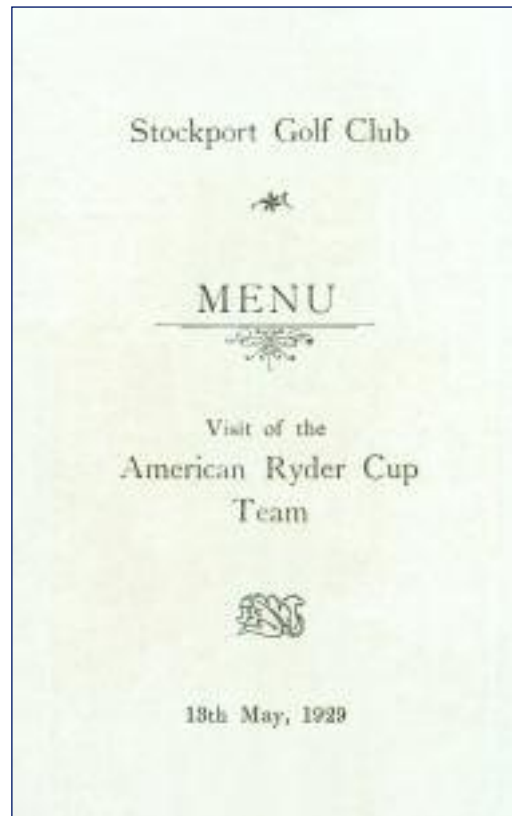
Hammersley and Braid held off Ed Dudley for nine holes, the match being all square at the turn. Then Dudley went four, two, four to win all three holes and take a three hole lead into which his demoralised opponents could make no inroads.

The final scoreboard read:

W Hagen beat AW Smith and CR Darlington	2 & 1
L Diegel beat JR Abercrombie and JA Schofield	4 & 3
E Sarazen lost to I Sidebottom and SS Potter	2 & 1
J Farrell lost to GLQ Henriques and H Cooke	6 & 4
J Turnesa beat M Schunck and HL Holden	2 & 1
J Jurado halved with G Tweedale and HA Kay	
J Watrous lost to H Shaw and AM Goodwin	2 & 1
Horton Smith lost to A Macbeth and FB Schofield	3 & 2
E Dudley beat C Hammersley and J Braid jnr	3 & 2
J Golden beat C Ashbrook and HL Wright	1 up

Americans won 5½ to 4½

Although the tees were roped off and some 150 stewards deployed (mostly members of Stockport, with a few from other local clubs), the crowds were so great (*six or seven thousand*) that play was often interrupted and even after stewards had moved spectators off the fairways 'some of the "lanes" seemed dangerously narrow' reported the Manchester Guardian. None the less the Guardian also noted, 'The stewards did all they could in a quiet fashion that contrasted strongly with the shouting that is done on some Scottish links.' However, the Manchester Evening News described them as exemplary crowds. 'Tribute should be paid, too, to the crowd. A steward who spent a long period in the "Fore" chorus, said to me: "Never did I see such a well-behaved crowd. Almost instantly they did everything they were told." And when you remember that there were six or seven thousand people present, pressing now round this celebrity, now round that, anxious to see every shot from the time it left the club face to the time it finished its career in safety or in trouble, that is a very high compliment.'



Afterwards the teams and invited guests were entertained to dinner in the club and the Captain, John Reekie, expressed the gratitude of the club to the Manchester Guardian and Manchester Evening News for giving the club *'the privilege of being the first club in the Manchester area to entertain our American golf superiors.'* The health of the American team was proposed by Alfred Simon, who laid down a challenge for Walter Hagen, *'If he will give me a stroke a hole for every year I am older than he is I will play him either here or in America and I am sure a good many of the members of this club would back me up thoroughly.'* (Mr Simon was then 76 and Hagen 57).

Hagen in reply said, *'In good sporting fellowship the Stockport club is about 100%. Two or three of the boys have had a real fight today; I myself had a real set up. I began to wonder when I was going to get a half. The only light I saw was when Mr Smith missed three or four putts. He was really very kind, and I was wondering whether he was helping me out. He knew I had started last and did not want me to finish first.'*

When the Captain of Stockport presented each American with a pair of cufflinks, with the Cheshire crest on the one link and the Stockport



Golf Club crest on the other, Hagen replied, *'It is something we can remember you by; something we could keep up our sleeves.'*

The team then left for Leeds to compete in the Yorkshire Evening News 1000 Guineas Professional Golf Tournament. However, when play began in Leeds two of the Americans, Sarazen and Farrell, were missing. It seems they had slipped out of their hotel at dead of night, taken the overnight mail train to London, apparently with the intention of visiting the Italian capital, Rome!

An early estimate showed that the club would benefit by £40 or £50. A letter of thanks was received from CR Darlington, thanking the club on behalf of the amateurs selected to play against the Americans. *'The whole arrangements were so well thought out and so practically fulfilled that the day was undoubtedly the most successful and enjoyable in the whole history of Manchester golf. The condition of the course could not have been better and great credit is due to the Greens Committee who got the course up to such a high standard in spite of the very trying weather conditions of the last six months.'*

This important event clearly brought Stockport to the attention of

many, golfers and non-golfers. But £40 or £50 profit was not going to make a significant contribution to the club's coffers. Indeed it was agreed as a matter of policy that, in seeking to increase revenue, the club would not be averse to advertising as a way of making money. The Committee supported the continued use of articles bearing advertisements, such as bridge scorers, ash trays and menus.

It was nothing unusual for a member of staff to resign in order to take a better position elsewhere. James P Taylor, for instance, left the club in order to become Head Greenkeeper at the Hurdsfield Golf Club in Macclesfield. His successor at Stockport, AD Cairncross, resigned in July 1929 to become Professional and Greenkeeper at Withington. His decision was accepted with regret. However, it precipitated a debate in Committee on the merits of again combining the two posts. As a consequence Fred Jarman was sent a letter terminating his contract as Professional, his contract to end on October 10th. A Committee was set up to fill the vacant position.

A number of members were dismayed at the harshness of Jarman's dismissal and the short period of notice. They sent a letter to the Committee expressing concern. There were feelings that Jarman had done nothing to warrant dismissal. The ladies were equally disappointed and set up a fund for Jarman, which soon stood at £10.11.6. But the Committee refused to reconsider and the Honorary Secretary was required to advertise in The Scotsman, Glasgow Herald, Golf Illustrated and The Greenkeeper:

'Stockport Golf Club (Torkington) are making fresh arrangements and are desirous of obtaining the services of a man who can combine the duties of Professional and Greenkeeper.'

Jarman's notice was extended on a weekly basis but it was not to last beyond December 31st 1929. In November 120 applicants had applied for the job of Professional, from which there emerged a shortlist of one. TC Renouf of the Manchester Golf Club was interviewed. His terms were a retaining fee of £4 per week and annual holidays of thirty nine days. Stockport wanted him for the lower fee of £3 and no more than thirty days' holiday, but the Captain was empowered to accept Renouf's terms in order not to lose him as these were his terms at Hopwood. He was to start on January 1st 1930 and to have full charge of all matters outside the clubhouse:

- *The Course, ie all in bounds and ground staff*
- *The Caddies: choosing, engaging, dismissing and paying*
- *The Professional's Shop*
- *The Outbuildings, except such as are used for clubhouse stores.*
- *The Car Park*
- *To have exclusive right to sell all golf accessories*
- *To provide necessary assistance for club making, repairing and teaching, if required, also for attendance in shop during the hours that golf is practicable.*
- *He is to be granted the sum of £10 for competing in the Open Championship, otherwise no expenses for competitions or matches will be allowed, and intended absence for such, or for any other purpose must be notified.*
- *Fees for coaching, caddies, looking after members' clubs etc to be submitted to the club.*
- *The club will provide dinner and tea each day he is in attendance.*



TG RENOUF

Renouf eventually accepted £3.10.0 per week and a holiday allowance of thirty days, so the Captain must have had persuasive powers. A clear line of management was established from the start, with the Chairman of the Greens Committee as the normal channel of contact between him and the club, and with the Captain or Honorary Secretary acting in his absence.

Thefts of wallets, suitcases and other property were minuted over this period, and golf balls stolen from a golf bag and a member's coat. Boys were again reported trespassing on the course. But the 1930s opened with three generous offers of money from members. William Whitworth (Committee member) proposed to lend the club the money, free of interest, to build the Professional a house on the premises. Archibald Edmeston (President elect for 1930) handed over his debenture stock of £420 for cancellation. Bill Kinsey (Committee member) offered to pay for the extension to the Professional's shop so that he could continue his club-making business and to have a telephone installed. The retiring captain (J A Reekie) presented framed photos of the past captains as a gift to the club.

'The Committee were somewhat overwhelmed by the very generous offers made.'