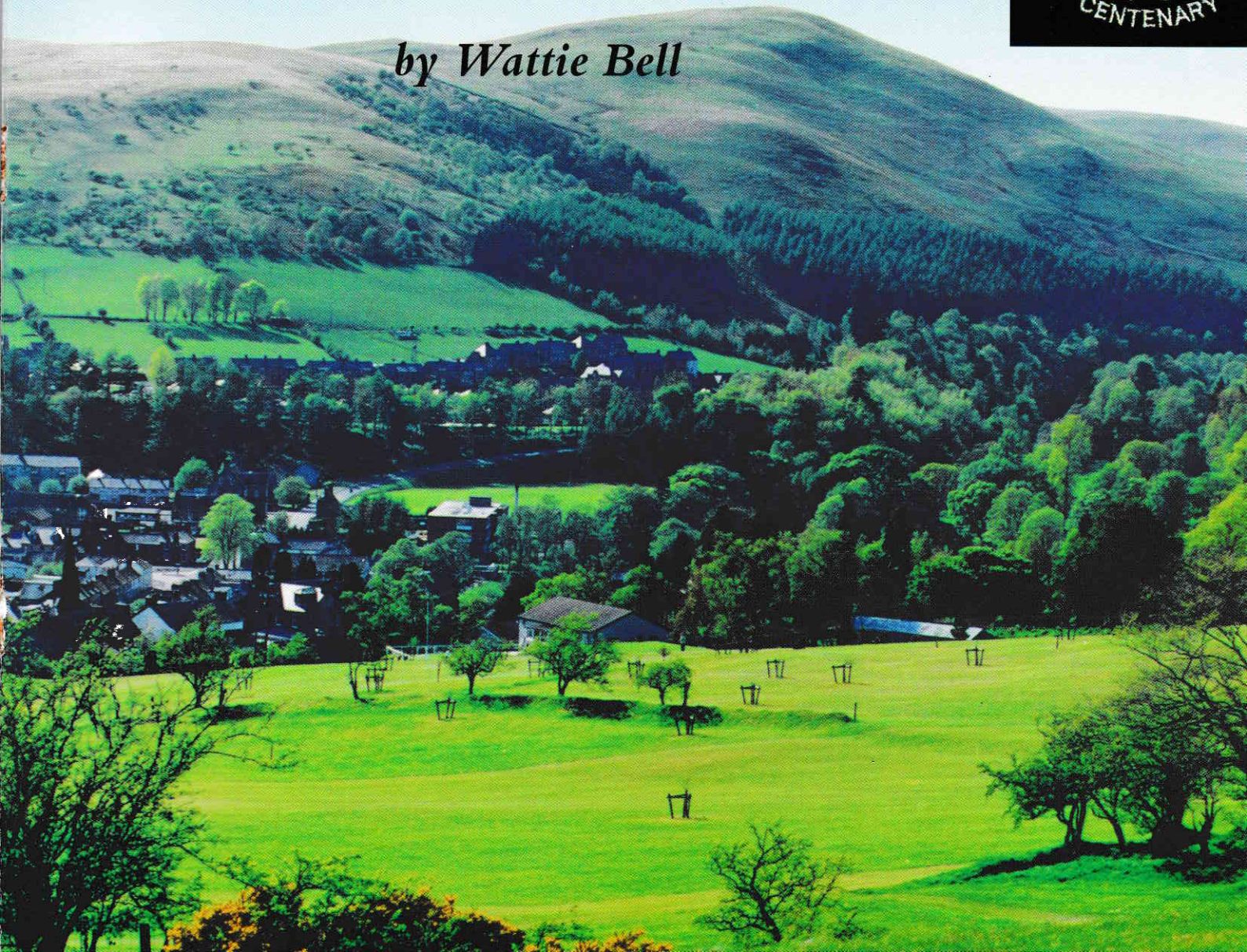


A ROUND OF A HUNDRED

by Wattie Bell





Acknowledgements

Langholm Golf Club would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous support, without which, this book would probably never have been printed.

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President's Message

In 1989, with our Centenary Season beginning to loom large on the horizon, I undertook the task of ensuring that a history of Langholm Golf Club would be written, printed and published in 1992.

I had no doubt when asking Walter (Wattie) Bell to research the history and write the booklet, that he would produce a humorous and concise chronicle of our first hundred years. Having himself written the centenary booklet of Langholm Rugby Football Club – “The First Hundred Years” – Wattie was no stranger to the objectives of the task.

The results of his endeavours are enclosed between the covers of this booklet and I hope you enjoy his story of “A Round of a Hundred”.

I am delighted to acknowledge the debt of Langholm Golf Club to Wattie (himself a former Captain in 1956–57), for the countless hours which he spent in compiling, writing and editing this tale.

I must also sincerely thank all our sponsors for their generous support, without which, this booklet may never have been printed.



J. N. STEVENSON
President



Office-Bearers and Committee Members of Langholm Golf Club in the Centenary Season

BACK ROW (left to right): W. E. A. Bell, *Green Ranger*; J. Murray; N. Bell; S. Ellwood; J. J. Elliot; A. Irving, *Clubhouse Convenor*; W. J. Brown.
 FRONT ROW (left to right): A. Edgar, *Secretary*; T. A. Borthwick, *Vice-Captain*; I. Davidson, *Captain*; J. N. Stevenson, *President*;
 D. M. Latimer, *Vice-President*; N. Gass, *Treasurer*.
 (ABSENT: J. Borthwick, D. Little)

A Round of a Hundred

by Wattie Bell

“In the Beginning . . .”

Moses was the first captain of Langholm Golf Club, but although associated with the reeds, it was the Reid's of Reid & Taylor, as Thomas Moses was a director of the Boatford Mill (Ford Mill) and resided in St Annes House. He was elected captain at a public meeting in the Eskdale Temperance Hotel on 13th October, 1892.

However, the instigator and founder of the Club was Mr Alex Scott, a member of the powerful Scotts of Erkinholme family.

Mr James Scott, a licensed grocer in the hamlet of Claygate, was a purveyor of the famous Tarras whisky greatly appreciated by the Canonbie coal miners –

“oh gie me the Clayyet where the clear
whisky flows and Tarras sae covered wi'
heather –”.

In 1866 James Scott founded Waverley Mills, (now occupied by The Edinburgh Woollen Mill), and had his family educated at public schools where they developed their great love of sport.

As with Mr William Scott in 1871 who was the driving force behind the founding of Langholm Rugby Club, so was it Mr Alex Scott in the summer of 1892 who, at his own expense and initiative, brought a professional golfer by the name of McEwan down from Musselburgh to survey the Eskdale valley for the most suitable site for a golf course.

As reported, at a public meeting in the Eskdale Temperance Hotel on 13th October, 1892, under the chairmanship of Mr Alex Scott, it was decided to form a golf club and Mr Scott reported the findings of the golf professional which was that the Crawsknowe fields would make the most suitable golf course. The graziers of the fields, Arthur Irving, Matthew Murray and William Urquhart had already been approached and were prepared to waive their claim for any amount the Club and the landowners, the Maxwells of Broomholm, should agree. The plan of the course drawn up by Mr James Scott of Kilncleuch House and Mill (now Glenesk Mill) was produced and accepted.

The following committee was elected, Alex Scott, Thomas Moses, John Howie (headmaster Langholm

Academy), Arthur Bell (Buccleuch Mills), Henry Graham (Reid & Taylor), James Scott (Kilncleuch), W. A. Connel (Milntown – Dukes Underfactor) and Dr Gill with Rev. J. Wallace-Mann, Secretary.

The following were appointed to office:

Patron: Rt. Hon. The Earl of Dalkeith
President: Mr Alex Scott, Erkinholme
 and Waverley Mills
Vice-Presidents: Mr Henry Graham,
 Holmwood and Reid & Taylor
 Mr W. A. Connel, Milntown
 House where sawmill is now
 situated.

Honorary members were:

Mr George Maxwell of Broomholm (Landowner)
 Mr W. E. Malcolm of Burnfoot (4 knights of
 Eskdale family)
 Mr Joseph Taylor of Potholm (Reid & Taylor)
 Mr John Scott of Ashley Bank (Scotts of
 Waverley), and
 Dr Carlyle, Langholm.

General Sir John Ewart, K.C.B. (of Craigcleuch, and great-grandfather of Sir Hector Monro, M.P.) declined on the grounds that he was getting old and had lost an arm at the Battle of Cawnpore in 1857 with the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders.

Subscriptions were: male 10/6d, female 2/6d.

The Constitution of the Club and Revised St Andrews Rules of Golf were given to each member and paid for by Mr Alex Scott, President of the Club.

On Saturday, 15th October, 1892, Langholm Golf Club was officially opened by Mrs Alex Scott by driving

the first ball from the 1st tee. Mr Alex Scott, President of the Club, then made a speech. This was followed by Mr Thomas Moses, who then teed off and led the members on the first round of the course. The members were then entertained at Erkinholme, where the President intimated that Mrs Scott wished to present a medal to the Club for an annual competition to mark the occasion.

At a committee meeting in Erkinholme on 11th November, 1892, Mr Henry Graham of Holmwood and Reid & Taylor, intimated his wish to present a medal to the Club for monthly competitions under handicap to begin in the first available month of 1892. This was agreed and accepted with the promise that Mrs Scott's medal be the principal prize in the Club.

At the same meeting it was unanimously agreed to pay the greenkeeper £1 19s 6d for his excellent work in getting the course into playable condition (and this with a hook and scythe).

The following By-Laws were passed:

- 1 Ladies not allowed to play on the course after 2 pm on Saturdays.
- 2 Members to make a distinctive mark upon their balls and show them to the greenkeeper.

It was agreed that the Standard Scratch Score for the 2 x 9 holes = 18 be 100 and that Mr J. McNeill (Jnr.) and Mr James Scott, Kilncleuch, play off scratch with the limit being 50. Other handicaps included Mr Howie (headmaster) 16, Mr McKnight (dyer) 30, Mr Milroy (hardware) 30 and Messrs Graham, Scott and Cairns, later Provost Cairns, all off 50.

Playing in the Monthly Medal during June 1893, James Scott of Kilncluech set up a course record of 93 (playing off scratch). James Scott also won the October Monthly Medal with another 93 to win the Monthly and Scratch Medal for 1893.

Early Club Matches

Members of Langholm Golf Club were invited to the opening of Jedburgh Golf Club by the Marquis of Lothian on 21st October, 1893.

By a strange coincidence Mr J. M. Archibald of Jedburgh Grammar School joined Langholm Golf Club earlier in the year.

Langholm Rugby Club's first match between Langholm and Carlisle was played on the Castleholm on 23rd March, 1873, and resulted in a win for Langholm by 2 goals (scored by William Bell) to nil when the match ended with the ball lost in the darkness.

Langholm Golf Club's first-ever game was played against Carlisle at Langholm in brilliant sunshine on 27th April, 1893, and resulted in a win for Langholm by 26 holes to 0. Winners for Langholm were, James Scott beat J. K. Parker 6-0, John Howie beat C. Todd 3-0, William Milroy beat G. A. Stoney 5-0, A. J. Craig beat C. Tweddy 3-0, and A. J. McKnight beat C. C. Hodgson 9-0.

In these early days, the results were determined by totalling up the number of holes won in each match.

The tables were turned in the return match on the Carlisle course on 10th June, 1893, when Carlisle won 28-6.

When Langholm played Hawick for the first time at Langholm on 28th July, 1893, Hawick won 47-0.

Langholm stormed into the return on "The Vertish" at Hawick on 1st September, 1893, only to be slaughtered 66-0.

However, Langholm took it out on Selkirk on the Langholm course on 15th October, 1893, when they won 35-4.

1893-1899

The first A.G.M. was held in the Eskdale Temperance Hotel on 23rd October, 1893, with the President, Alex Scott, in the chair.

It was announced that the expenditure for laying out the course was £15 15s 5½d. Membership was seventy-nine with the income £35 10s 6d and expenditure £35 10s 2½d giving a credit balance of 3½d (old pence).

The President announced that they had received an estimate of £38 4s 5d for the building of a clubhouse with twenty-one lockers from Mr Archibald Wilson, a local joiner, with an extra £3 for a shelter out on the course. It was decided to accept and proceed with the building, with the proviso that a further ten lockers be included for an extra cost of £4 15s 0d.

The official opening of the clubhouse in May 1894, with a cake and candy sale, afternoon teas and raffles was slightly marred when a letter was received from a Mr Johnstone, factor of the Maxwells of Broomholm Estates (second only to the Duke of Buccleuch as local landowner) informing Langholm Golf Club that they had erected a construction without permission on the lands of Mr George Maxwell of Broomholm. However in his magnanimity, Mr George Maxwell was not prepared to confiscate the building providing the structure was removed within 24 hours and the ground restored to its original grassland.

The next historical occasion was in October 1894 when Captain Moses, seconded by William Milroy (hardware shop where "Spar" is now, sold golf balls stuffed with feathers and gutta-percha for 4d and 6d) proposed and carried that artisans be admitted to the Club.

Although there appears to be an element of snobbery in this situation it must be remembered that at the time very few artisans could afford to play golf. It could be argued that artisans in Langholm had been playing rugby since 1871, but the equipment for rugby was much cheaper. Improvisation was the order of the day and it is reported on page 2 "The First Hundred", which is the centenary record of Langholm Rugby, where a bridegroom clumped down the aisle on his wedding day with strips of leather nailed to his only pair of boots (in lieu of studs). In rugby circles this is claimed as the origin of the expression "married to the game".

The first Ladies Medal was played in June 1895.

On 21st June, 1895, Newcastleton (Copshaw) beat Langholm 41-6 at Newcastleton. On 20th July, 1895, Ruthwell beat Langholm 29-1 at Ruthwell.

In June 1897 it was decided to employ John Elliot for 3 days a week as greenkeeper.

In 1898 it was decided to close the course for 10 weeks in summer as the tenants wanted it for hay, with the Club allowed resumption at the beginning of September when they could begin cutting. A Mr Storey of Crawsknowe was offered £3 p.a. to allow the Club to play over the three remaining holes on his land.

In the season of 1899, James Scott of Kilncleuch won the Melbourne Cup for the second time and was entitled to keep it.

The Melbourne Cup was presented to Langholm Golf Club by Mr John Hotson a member of the famous Langholm family of masons and builders who in 1775, with Thomas Telford, the now world-renowned bridge builder as their apprentice, built the Langholm Bridge over the Esk and in 1835 built the Monument on Whita Hill.

When Mr John Hotson returned to Langholm on holiday from Australia (where he had made his fortune) on 17th April, 1900, he offered to present another Melbourne Cup to the Club but when he saw the state of the course he withdrew his offer.

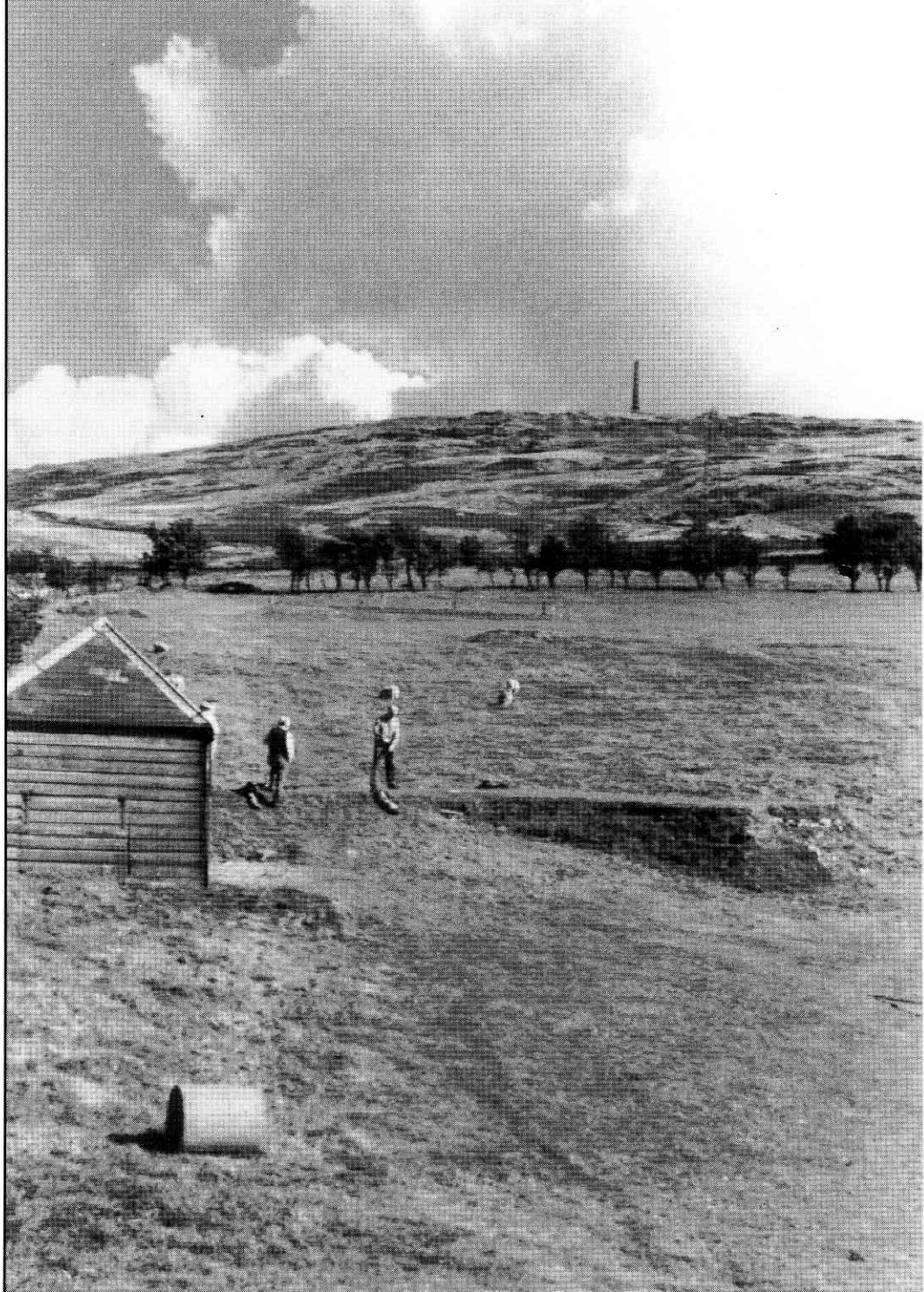
On 9th December, 1899, Langholm played at Silloth for the first time.

In 1899 the famous "Hill Hole" was established on Whita Hill. This was a postage stamp green set in deep heather over the dry stane dyke. Mr Paterson of Terrona Farm agreed to the let at 1 shilling per year.

Lost and Found

On 11th April, 1902, another problem confronted the Club when a most indignant letter was received from Mr Arthur Bell (founder of Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd.) who had by then bought the farm and land of Crawsknowe and was complaining bitterly of the practice of certain members of the Club who set fire to the whins during searches for their balls and had endangered the outhouses and farm buildings.

This, in most cases, was caused by the artisans, who, with golf balls at 4d and 6d each, set fire to everything, whins, heather and grass in a desperate search for their balls, with the result that a pall of smoke hung over Langholm.



Looking up the hill to the monument, through the old 3rd tee and 8th green. In view on the left is the shell of the original clubhouse, built in 1894.

This resulted in the By-law which read "Anyone burning grass, whins or heather during a search for balls shall be instantly expelled from the Club".

Due to the mass of "rough", the search for lost balls became a problem which was greatly alleviated by a lame boy known as "The Padda". This was an unfortunate choice of nickname for the lad as the "padda" is the local name for the toad. "The Padda" lived with his mother in Drove Road, had slightly protruding eyes but phenomenal eyesight. His mother would assist him to the side of Whita just below Whita Well and such was his eyesight that he could spot and memorise the position of every lost ball. They would sell the balls at half price to their owners to supplement their meagre income.

As a matter of interest there was a large stagnant pond some 200 yards to the right of the Monument on top of Whita Hill which was infested with toads and was known as "The Padda Pool", up until the Second World War at least. Naughty Langholm boys would go up there and pluck the hollow reeds from around the pond and inflate the toads (paddas) to the size of small balloons. The unfortunate creatures were unable to submerge but could swim at phenomenal speed on the surface (wind-assisted, of course).

1900-1904

On 12th September, 1900, the Mossypaul Golf Course was reopened.

In the Minutes of 28th May, 1903, the death of the Club's first president, Mr Alex Scott, was recorded and a tribute paid to his endeavours for the Club.

It was also decided to raise the Standard Scratch Score from 38 to 41 for nine holes and cut the course more than

once a year, with the result that W. Redpath won the Scratch Medal with a score of 85.

On 22nd August, 1903, Langholm beat Lockerbie 37-0 at Langholm, but in the return at Lockerbie on September 12th, Lockerbie won 23-4.

In 1904, Jimmy Ross, the tailor, joined the Club and was a member for over 50 years, winning the Club Championship in 1910. Wattie Glendinning (grocer - Balfours) also joined that year, as did J. C. Bell, also a member for well over 50 years.

A Fishy Story

J. C. Bell won some prominence as a scratch and low handicap golfer and along with his wife, Langholm Ladies Champion, and his daughter, Madge (Mrs Stevenson), several times Champion, the trio could hold their own with the best from either side of the Borders.

But it was not for his prowess as a golfer that J. C. Bell was a local hero among the boys of Langholm. It was because he was the local fishmonger and his cry of "fine fresh herring", echoed around the streets of Langholm for many a year as he wheeled his cart around the town.

His great attraction for the boys was because he sold fresh herring at 1/2d each, and if their mothers bought one he would cut off the head and tail, gut it, and give the guts to the boy. Now herring guts is the favourite food of the eel and they can smell them for miles around (downstream), the boys would catch them on a large bait hook and 10 yards of line for a 1d at Drummond Andersons, the watchmaker on the High Street. There was a retired English exciseman called Williams who lived at the Stubholm House above the park who ate eels and

would pay 1d each for them. Unfortunately, they had to be the large black sea eels which could grow to over 2 feet in length (he wouldn't touch the local pale green eels), and they had to be alive when one arrived at the house. However, it was discovered that if one held it by the head (to avoid it banging on the ground) and ran all the way, the creature would still be alive on arrival. One had to be careful that it did not entwine the legs on the steep climb behind the park, or a nasty fall could entail (if you'll excuse the pun).

1907–1912

On 22nd June, 1907, Langholm played Powfoot at Powfoot for the first time and were beaten 9–0, also during 1907, John Fletcher set a new course record of 83.

On 25th July, 1908, Langholm were beaten 7–5 by Thornhill. The game was played at Powfoot.

On 27th November, 1908, the Club brought Ben Sayers (Snr.) to survey and replan the course for a fee of £2 10/- and expenses.

His findings and recommendation was that the course should be lengthened from its present 1,991 yards to 2,242, and the course played the other way round in reverse order. Furthermore, a ball landing in the droppings of cattle within 20 yards of the hole could be lifted and placed not nearer the hole without penalty, otherwise it be played from the lie (the mind boggles at the thought).

At a special meeting in the Eskdale Temperance Hotel, on Monday, 25th February, 1909, Ben Sayers' (Snr.) proposals were rejected.

In 1909, John Tudhope set a new course record of 79.

During March 1910, Richard Coulthard (pro-nounced cow-turd in the local dialect) was engaged as the first full-time greenkeeper, and on 25th April of that year a horse-drawn mower was purchased from William Milroy (hardware) for £19 and a horse for the season was hired from Geordie McVittie the butcher, Charles Street (New) (now Thomas Telford Road) for £3.

In May 1911, the Club instructed William Milroy to approach Mr Thomas Gaskell (Murtholm Farm and Gaskell's Walk) with a view to the let of the fields across the road from the clubhouse for an extension of the course, but Gaskell refused.

A Thriving Club

It was decided to build a new clubhouse in 1912 at an estimated cost of £150. Shares for the loan were to be issued at 10/- each on a no-interest basis and returned by ballot, £140 was subscribed by this method.

The clubhouse to have the roof treated with terra-cotta and the outside walls roughcast grey, windows painted white and green with the veranda white. The interior to be varnished and stained as light as possible.

The old clubhouse at the old 3rd tee was still in use, and bogey for 9 was 39 = 4, 5, 6, 4, 4, 3, 5, 4, 4.

On Saturday, 14th September, 1912, in glorious sunshine, the new clubhouse and extended course was opened by Mrs Scott of Erkinholme, who again, as she did 20 years previously, made the formal opening by driving from the 1st tee.

The captain, Mr Hamilton, headmaster of Langholm Academy, thanked Mrs Scott and presented her with an engraved silver-headed ebony cleek. In his remarks,



Official opening of old clubhouse, September 1912.

Mr Hamilton said that they had been forced to lengthen the course due to the advent of the rubber-cored ball and the enlarged clubhouse due to the membership peaking at 130.

The course was lengthened to 2,398 yards for the 9 holes, and the contractors for the building were: Mr William Hyslop, mason and concrete work; Ms J. Telford & Sons, joiners; Mr T. Goodfellow, plumber; Mr J. Goodfellow, painting and glazing.

Miss Wilson, headmistress of the Infant School (now the Youth Club and Library) at the Suspension Bridge, was presented with a writing case for her work as secretary of the Ladies Committee.

Various competitions followed with Provost Easton (grocer where B.F.A. shop is now) winning the Long Drive Competition. The Ladies was won by Miss Cairns (sister of the later Provost Cairns).

W. F. Scott

An interesting winner in the Approach and Putt Competition was W. F. Scott, another of the amazing Scott family. W. F. Scott (who had his initials reversed, metaphorically, behind his back), and was known as “Fat Wat”, was also a great sportsman. In his youth he played rugby for Langholm and could kick goals from well inside his own half. He later became known as a prominent rugby referee on both sides of the Border. But his great love was cricket, for years he captained the 2nd XI and would transport them in a grey-coloured open tourer car (with a “dicky” seat) which opened at the back. In a dreadful crush it would take all of the eleven players plus the bats and pads. Unfortunately, all four wheels were out of alignment by 45 degrees and he was the only one who

could drive it. At a maximum speed of 20 m.p.h. little boys would look on in wonder as we glided sideways through Carlisle to play Carrs Biscuit Works.

1913–1920

1913 was an interesting year, with Langholm Town Council allowing the Club to tap the main water supply with an underground pipe with stop cock for annual fee of 10/–.

Mr Moses applied for, and was granted, permission to hold the first-ever Masonic Golf Tournament over the Langholm course.

A light-hearted moment occurred at the A.G.M. of 1913 when Lawson Cairns, director of the Ford Mill, complained about the direction posts on the new extended course. He claimed, and it was recorded in the Minutes, that he objected to the direction posts on the fairways as his drives kept hitting them. The ensuing and embarrassing silence was broken by a “wag” at the back of the crowded hall who suggested he have a twist put in the shaft of his driver.

1915 – It was recorded that twenty-one members were on active service with the armed forces.

1916 – It was recorded that forty members were on active service with the armed forces with three killed and three decorated for bravery on the field of battle.

1917 – It was recorded that a further three members had been killed, Captain Sydney McGowan, M.C. (son of the minister), T. Martin and C. Roddick.

1918 – No matches or competitions played.

On the resumption after the War, Mr George Younger of Ashley Bank, won the Rose Bowl for 1919.

On 19th June, 1920, Langholm were beaten 6½ to 5½ by Lockerbie at Lockerbie. In the return, during September, Langholm won 3½ to 1½ with six Lockerbie players stranded on the way over.

During 1920, Jock Roddick (bus driver) won the Rose Bowl and it was decided to abolish the term and category of “artisan”.

A Bat in the Belfry

On 25th February, 1921, another great character emerged when George F. Stuart was appointed greenkeeper. In the twilight of his years, and with back bent with a lifetime's toil, it was decided to ease the burden by purchasing another stone roller and thereby save him dragging the solitary stone roller all over the course. He had a bicycle which he mounted from a bar protruding from the rear axle. When mounted his head was over the handlebars and people would accuse him of speeding, which he didn't, as the position was due to his bent back.

Geordie supplemented his income by acting as beadle at the Parish Church, the Rev. William Lindsay was minister and Mr Mallinson was organist. There was a bat that lived in the rafters of the church. It slept by day, but on Sundays when the organ began, it would wake up and fly up and down the church for the remainder of the service. During the sermon the congregation would get their eyes on it and the place would finish up like Wimbledon. The minister could stand it no longer and ordered Geordie to get rid of the thing.

This was a remarkable achievement for an old man well into his 70s. Geordie carried a huge extending ladder into the church and clambered into the vaulted rafters. But

each time he reached out to grasp the bat it flew to the next rafter. Finally, Geordie caught it and being a kindly man laid it on the grass outside the church door. Mr Mallinson, an even kinder man, was going into the church to practice on the organ when he spied the bat on the ground. Thinking it was freezing to death he took it into the church and released it to warm it up.

1922–1923

At a meeting in February 1922, the Ladies Section of the Club suggested to the all-male committee that they were entitled to half of the proceeds from the proposed Whist Drive and Dance, to be held in Milligan's Hall with an orchestra led by Joseph Allison, composer of the music for “A Wee Bit Toon”.

The committee replied that all monies had to be handed to the Treasurer of the Club.

The Ladies told them to organise the Whist Drive and Dance themselves.

The Whist Drive and Dance was cancelled.

At a meeting in the Eskdale Temperance Hotel on 20th December, 1922, Mr James Pryde was appointed secretary of the Club. Mr Pryde and Jimmy Fairfull, another member of the Club, came to Langholm after the 1914–1918 war, both having served under Major (later Provost) Bell of Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd. Both were employed in the mill.

At the same meeting a vote of thanks was recorded to Mr J. W. Goodfellow (painter) and Mr David Grant (manager of the S.C.W.S. bakery) for their assistance to the Ladies in organising the most successful Whist Drive and Dance.

Par for the 9 holes was fixed at 3, 4, 5, 4, 4, 3, 4, 4, 4 = 35.

The Masonic Tournament was played on Saturday, 7th July, 1923.

During the 1923 season, Langholm lost away 11–5 to Carlisle but won 10–6 at home. They lost 9–0 home and away to Hawick.

Membership for 1923 was 196, but it was decided that it was too expensive to treat the greens with charcoal.

At a meeting in the Eskdale Temperance Hotel on Thursday, 1st March, 1923, Dr Calwell, Captain of the Club (whose son Noel was Cornet in 1938, played stand-off for Langholm Rugby Club, and was killed whilst serving as a pilot in the Fleet Air Army during the 1939–1945 War), proposed that “Lady members of Langholm Golf Club, on payment of an initial subscription of 12s 6d should be granted the privileges of the course and clubhouse apart from any day set aside by the Committee”. This was seconded by Mr Hamilton, headmaster of Langholm Academy, and carried unanimously.

The following week the Men’s Committee wrote to the Ladies Committee requesting them not to wear high-heeled shoes whilst on the putting surfaces.

At a meeting on Thursday, 12th April, 1923, the Secretary intimated that he had received the offer of a “cup for annual competition” from Mr Arthur Bell of Hillside, founder of Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd., to be known as the “Hillside Cup”.

At the same meeting the “Ladies Club” was granted permission for the use of the notice board at the foot of the Kirk Wynd “for such communications as they might desire”.

In March 1923, the Standard Scratch Score for Langholm Golf Course had been set by the R&A of St. Andrews as 4, 4, 5, 4, 4, 3, 4, 4, 4 = 36, and Langholm joined the Border Golfers Association.

1924–1925

On 25th February, 1924, Robert “Bosh” Beattie was appointed greenkeeper at 35/– per 48 hour week. “Bosh”, a wonderful character, ultimately graduated to be head greenkeeper of Powfoot Golf Club, but he never lost his love of Langholm, and even when his 6-foot son qualified as a professional golfer in the South of England, he still tried to encourage him to go over and try and qualify for the Langholm rugby team. “Bosh” played as a forward for Langholm in the pre 1914–1918 era, and in the “charabanc” in the first-ever game of rugby by Langholm against Silloth, when the whole vista of the Solway Firth was exposed, and most of the team viewed the sea for the first time, “Bosh” was heard to remark “My God! What a size of a pitch”.

In May 1924, old Jock Boyd, a lonely old man who was not in the least bit interested in the game of golf but specialised in digging drains and catching moles, was offered 1 year’s free membership of the Club if he would drain the course. When he refused he was offered a cigarette case with his initials on it which he accepted.

During 1924, “Bosh” Beattie was granted permission to sell golf balls to supplement his income. But the ladies were given a final warning about wearing high-heeled shoes on the putting surface, with future culprits banned from the Club and their names to be publicly exposed on the notice board at the foot of the Kirk Wynd.



In 1930, the magazine "Britannia and Eve", sponsored a national ladies' golf competition which recognised the ladies' section of the golf club which played the most winter rounds of golf. The Langholm Ladies gained this distinction, whereupon the silverware shown on the photograph was supplied by Mappin & Webb to be played for within the ladies' section of the club.

BACK ROW (*left to right*): Major E. J. Bell; Mrs R. Irving; Mrs J. C. Bell; Miss L. Thomson; Miss Stewart; Miss Wilson; Miss J. Graham; Miss M. Burnett, Miss B. Millar, Mr J. Pryde, *Secretary*.

FRONT ROW (*left to right*): Miss J. Bell; Miss N. Younger; Miss M. Pithy, *Secretary*; Miss E. Cairns; Miss M. Bell; Miss J. Wilson.

Mr John Goodfellow, father of rugby international (1928) and Club Champion (1938–39) J. V. Goodfellow, offered to paint the clubhouse outside and inside, the floor, veranda, railings and gates along with the flagpole (presented with flag by Mrs Scott) and the toolhouse with two coats of oil paint for £13 19s 5¹/₂d.

In 1925, Mrs Scott of Erkinholme requested the Club to carry out the last wish of her son, James A. Scott, founder member, official and President from 1909 until his death, that “they level the downward slope on that ‘bloody’ last green”.

Mrs Scott offered to bear the cost and the work was carried out in the ensuing months.

The membership for 1925 was 221, comprising eighty-eight gents, one hundred and two ladies, and thirty-one juveniles. A decrease on the previous year of five gents and nine ladies.

Langholm played Hawick, Carlisle and Powfoot home and away during 1925 but could only beat Carlisle at home. Carlisle beat Langholm 12¹/₂–2¹/₂ away but Langholm won 6¹/₂–1¹/₂ at home. Carlisle complained about the hilly course.

To defray expenses in 1925 the Club procured the loan of a horse from Tom Elliot of Midknock. To further defray expenses the committee met in Dr Calwell’s surgery immediately after the last patient left. Unfortunately this caused some confusion among the patients as they didn’t know whose turn it was (could this have been the first golf clinic?).

It was also during 1925 that the “R&A” asked Langholm Golf Club to make a contribution to “the Scientific Advisory Greens Committee”. Langholm declined the offer. However the committee accepted an

offer from Mr Tom Goodfellow, a plumber and member, to install a 45/- wash-hand basin in the ladies changing room for 35/-.

Runaway Roller

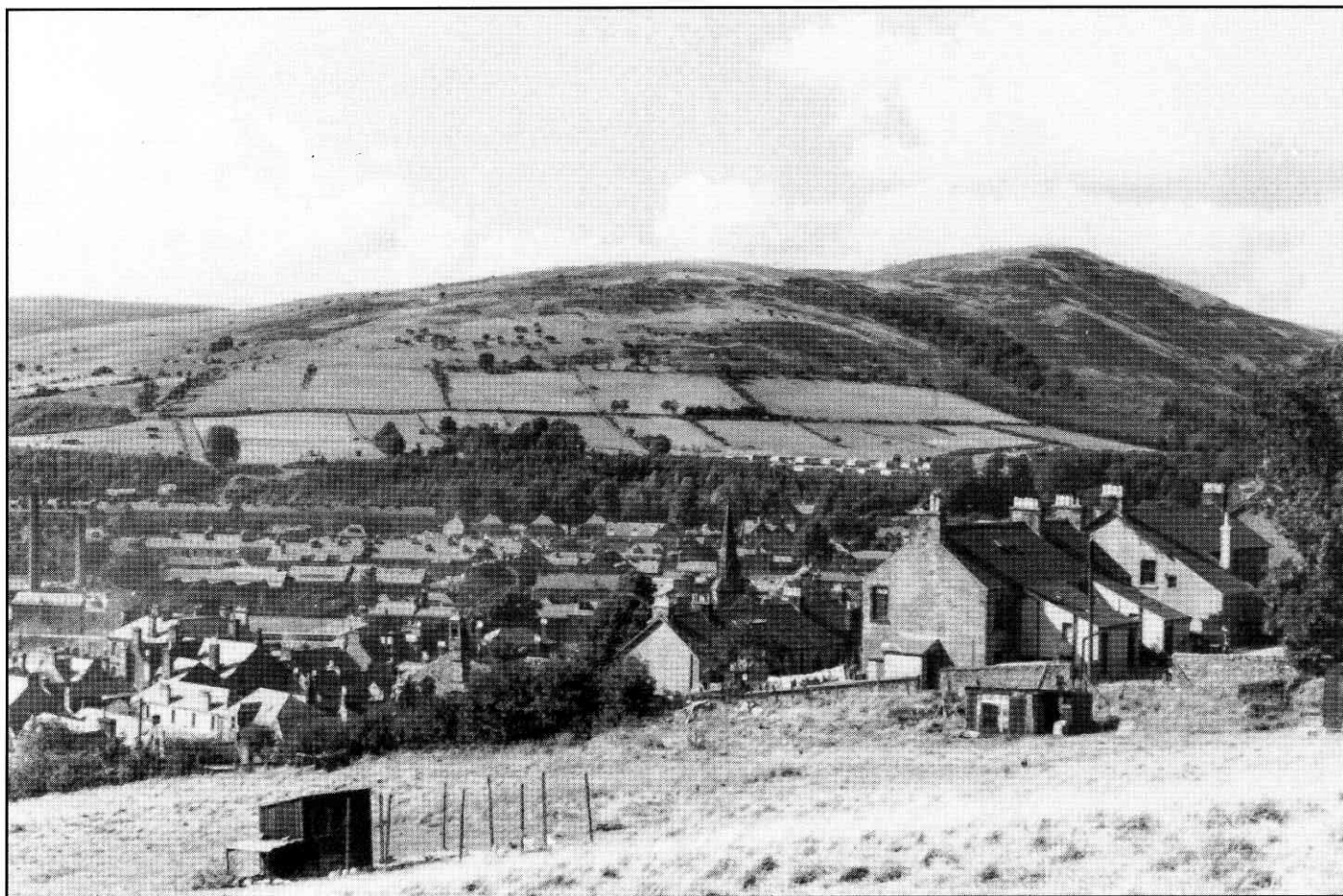
A serious incident occurred on a pleasant Sunday afternoon in 1926 when the tenants on the Crawsknowe Farm on gazing out of their living-room window were aghast to see the giant stone roller from the “Hill Hole” on Whita leaping and plunging towards them. The roller missed the house but crashed into the outhouses causing damage. Following compensation it was decided to drive giant steel stakes into the ground of the 3rd and “Hill Hole” and chain and padlock the stone rollers to them. There was a strong suspicion in the town that little boys returning from an afternoon’s “sport” at the “Padda Pool” on top of Whita had “inadvertently” launched this missile in the direction of Crawsknowe.

1926–1936

In the 1926 Borders Golf Association Competition, Mr J. C. Bell (fishmonger) won the scratch and handicap title.

In 1927 it was reported that the space for names on the Monthly Medal was full. It was decided that a board with future winner’s names be erected in the clubhouse.

At the A.G.M. in the Masonic Buildings on 2nd March, 1927, Mr John Neill, of R. G. Neill & Co. Ltd. enquired about the afternoon teas in the clubhouse and it was recorded that “Bosh” was giving the matter considerable thought.



A view of Meikleholm from the 1st tee in 1947, some twenty years before the field became Whitaside.

It was decided to purchase two wheels at a cost of 15/- to attach to the mower and thereby allow "Bosh" to cut the rough.

During 1929 Langholm played home and away fixtures against Hawick, Selkirk, Jedburgh, Melrose and Kirkcudbright. Langholm won only one against Jedburgh (home) with a draw against Selkirk (away). The Carlisle game had been discontinued since 1926 when Carlisle cancelled the fixture due to the General Strike.

On 3rd February, 1930, Bill Bell of Erkinholm Terrace, was appointed greenkeeper out of twenty-eight applicants at a wage of 40/- per week.

A letter of great appreciation was given to R. "Bosh" Beattie on his appointment as greenkeeper to Powfoot Golf Club.

In 1932, for reasons best known to itself, the defunct Langholm Motor Cycle Club handed over all its funds, amounting to £3 19s 7d to Langholm Golf Club.

In season 1933 Langholm could hold their own in Border Golf when out of nine matches played, they won five, lost three with one draw. Prominent in the team at that time were: Ian Hamilton (banker and son of the Headmaster), Charlie Paisley (skinyards), J. C. Bell (fishmonger), Kenneth Neill (R. G. Neill & Sons Ltd.), J. V. Goodfellow (banker and 1928 Scottish Rugby international), Ate Irving (moulder at Jeffrey Engineering), Jimmy Ross (tailor), and Jock Roddick (bus driver).

By 1933 the total membership had declined to 135 comprising sixty-seven gents, fifty-eight ladies and ten juveniles as compared with 196 in 1923.

At the A.G.M. on 24th April, 1936, a proposal for Sunday golf was defeated. Club Champions were to be recorded on a board in the clubhouse.

W. A. G. Clark

In 1936 W. A. G. Clark (Walter) set a new course record of 69. Walter (Wag) was another great character, 6-foot tall, pale ginger hair, pipe-smoking, always smiling and a great sense of humour. He had three hobbies: golf, rugby and drinking pints of beer with his friend "Happy" Turnbull (pronounced "Trummul" in the local dialect) in the public bar of the Eskdale Hotel. "Happy" delivered coal with Blakies horse-drawn coal cart and was always (like Walter) happy.

Walter was employed as a bank official in the British Linen Bank alongside J. V. Goodfellow. The manager was a Mr Spence, a tall, stern, angular bald man. Walter was reprimanded on several occasions for this drinking in the public bar when he could "at least" have been encouraging potential bank customers in the lounge bar.

When War broke out, Walter went down to Carlisle and volunteered for the Army. They rejected him when he failed the physical examination so he went next door and volunteered for the R.A.F. who accepted him as a potential Observer and Navigator (Air Crew) on his mental examination.

Whilst on leave towards the end of the War, Walter promised his old friend "Happy" in the public bar of the Eskdale Hotel that on his next mission over Berlin he would chalk "to Hitler from Happy" on one of his 500 lb bombs. Walter was killed on his next mission, but until the end of his days "Happy" boasted of the time he dropped a bomb on Hitler.



Looking up the Wauchope Valley, again in 1947.

1939–1946

At the 1939 A.G.M. it was announced that the membership was 111 comprising fifty-four gents, forty-five ladies, seven apprentices and five juveniles.

Out of the nine matches arranged, one against Hawick was cancelled due to an outbreak of typhoid fever in Hawick. Of the remaining eight, six were won and two lost. Again prominent in the team were: J. V. Goodfellow (banker, club champion and former rugby internationalist), Ate Irving (moulder), J. C. Bell (fishmonger), Kenneth Neill (tweed manufacturer), Charlie Paisley (tanner), Willie Duncan (wool sorter), W. A. G. (Walter) Clark (banker), D. C. Law (banker), John Roddick (bus driver), Bob Bell (former engineer, now labourer to Gordon Morrison, plumber), Jimmy Murray (slater), and John Park (millworker).

At the A.G.M. in March, 1943 it was reported that Langholm Golf Course had been requisitioned as an Army Training Area but the Club could continue, subject to Army requirements.

A Struggle for Survival

In the spring of 1946 an emergency arose when it was discovered that there was only thirty-nine male and twenty-nine female supporters of the post-war Club.

It was decided to approach the Langholm Town Council and the Scottish Golf Union to prevent the Club from going into liquidation.

With no great help ensuing it was decided to make a final appeal through the columns of the "E&L" for financial support from the people of Langholm.

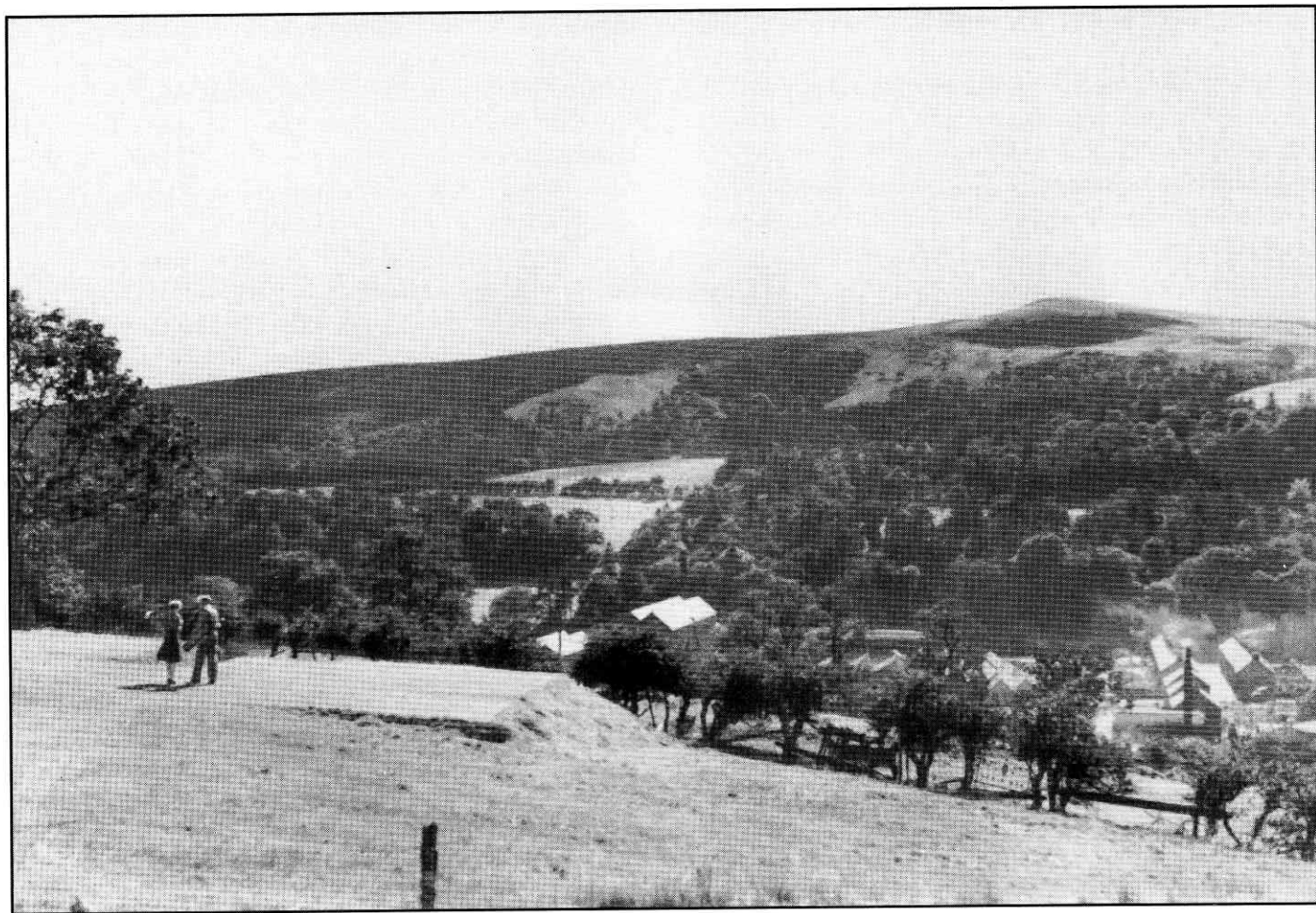
This resulted in a total of £416 5/-: with the top donations amounting to £50 and the bottom from a disabled O.A.P. and former golfer of 1 shilling.

Among the major donations was £50 each from Messrs Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd. and Reid & Taylor Ltd. and £20 from C. Paisley & Sons (Tanners). Individual donations came from many people, including £10 from Miss Wilson, retired headmistress (and golfer) of the infant school at the "Boatford Brig," also £10 from J. W. Hyslop who had spent his adult life as a banker in the Far East and was later elected Provost of Langholm.

But perhaps the best individual donation came from another great character, Jock "J.B." Corrie of the Eskdale Hotel with £20. "J.B." had two claims to local fame. Firstly when he brought the great Benny Lynch (former fly-weight boxing champion of the world) to Langholm in the pre-war era, complete with his manager and trainer Johnnie Macmillan (former British and Empire champion) completely free of charge, to stay and train in Langholm in an effort to regain the world title.

J.B.'s second claim to fame was when he three-putted the last green on a sun-drenched Saturday afternoon to lose his only chance of winning the Monthly Medal. Not a man noted for his silence, especially in expletives, he stood in silence for a moment, then threw his putter into Davie Edgar's field. This seemed to give him some comfort, so he then proceeded to throw the remainder of the matched set of clubs in every direction. He then threw away his empty bag lit his pipe and went home.

"J.B." Corrie also arranged to borrow a triple gang-mower from Dumfries & Galloway Golf Club to cut the fairways and with a promise of some ninety members it was decided to continue with the Club.



A view of Warbla long before Whitaside was built, or the mast was erected on the hilltop.

Local Worthies

It was decided to hire Mac Hope to cut the rough with his horse-drawn reaper, with the condition that he could keep the resultant hay which was incorporated in the payment. With Langholm situated in a valley, hay and grazing was of considerable importance during the horse-drawn era of transport and Mac Hope was one of the last horse-drawn carters in Langholm. In fact, as a special treat for his old cart horse, he had the cart fitted with pneumatic tyres and ball-bearing wheels, and had procured a contract to cart dross (fire-coal) between the station and Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd.'s new boiler which was level going all the way.

The hard-drinking carters of the pre and post 1914–18 War who vied for the hay were the cowboy-like heroes who were held in awe by the boys of Langholm. These hard men and hard-working horses would drag slabs of sandstone from The Whita quarries and cart it all over the valley. They would retire to the High Street pubs with their horses and carts standing outside. Then homewards, singing and shouting followed by wide-eyed children.

First would come Bill Young, an angular man, over 6-foot tall with banana-like fingers, with “Maggie” a beautiful chesnut cart horse dragging the heavy cart with the two iron-rimmed wheels. He stabled on the banks of the Wauchope River and would proceed up “Wauchope Ra” (now Caroline Street) shouting “Bill Young’s Maggie comes o’er the Shaw Rig ‘Eskdaillmuir’ in a’ kinds o’ wuther – A kin crack a woop (whip)”. And he would crack his giant carter’s whip with the sound of a rifle bullet.

Next would come the wildest carter of them all, Wullie Mackay, a giant of a man standing over 6-feet tall and almost as broad with a jet-black beard and black staring eyes, who lived with his crippled brother “Syd” (who dragged himself about on two sticks and claimed that he had invented a burglar alarm). It was an upturned basin behind the door of their house at the end of Eskdaill Street, at the junction of Wauchope Ra’. Wild Bill would unshackle his jet-black carthorse, the gentle “Prince” and drag the heavy cart up Wauchope Ra’ himself, shouting and swearing at poor “Prince” that “this is the ‘so and so’ way you do it”. Once stabled and fed he would then proceed to sell hundredweight bags of potatoes in Wauchope Ra’ to get more money for drink. His method was successful. He would start at the top of the street with a hundredweight bag of potatoes swinging in his left hand and knock on the door with a shovel in his right hand. Everyone bought them, whether they required potatoes or not, just to save their doors being smashed in.

As a matter of interest, even although it has nothing to do with golf, in the dead of winter a boy called “Pinder” clambered on to their roof with a 56 lb weight (with a ring on the top) and a rope that he had “borrowed” from their stable and lowered the weight down their chimney into a huge pan of broth they were cooking on the open fire.

The Low Point

However, despite promises, the Club was down to nineteen playing members at the A.G.M. in the Eskdale Hotel on 13th March, 1947.

Officials present were Major E. J. Bell (Arthur Bell (Scotch Tweeds) Ltd.) – President; Jimmy McGeorge



1947. A fourball approaches the 9th green, with the old clubhouse (opened in 1912) in the background. Note also the fence around the green, erected to prevent the grazing sheep from straying onto the green.

(solicitor) – Vice-President; Alex Scott (nephew of the founder’s of rugby and golf in Langholm) – Captain; Dr George Watt – Vice-Captain; J. V. Goodfellow (banker) – Treasurer; Ate Irving (moulder) – Green Ranger; and J. C. Bell (fishmonger) – Handicapper; and Jimmy Pryde – Secretary.

Amongst the major decisions made that night was that instead of there being a ladies and gentlemen’s committee there be one General Management Committee incorporating both men and women with Miss Jean Hyslop (daughter of the postmaster), and Miss Jean White (watchmaker), being the first ladies to serve on the General Committee.

Back from the Brink

From this point in time and with the servicemen and women flooding back from the 1939–45 conflict, the Club went from strength to strength.

Even so, in the summer of 1947, only five holes were available for play and Ian McKinnon (chemist) and war-time bomber pilot, who had crash-landed on the sands at Sillloth and ultimately married Jean Ralley (daughter of Ralley the Chemist at the foot of the Kirk Wynd) and was now Treasurer of Langholm Golf Club, announced that the Club could not afford a Fordson tractor but he had procured a second-hand Morris Major car for £35 and had negotiated the hire of a reaper from Johnnie Henderson of the Murtholm Farm for 10/- per day. He had also “procured” a “Nisson Hut” from the army which had been ensconced on the Castleholm.

The purchase of this equipment was greatly enhanced by the auctioning of the complete matched set of steel-

shafted clubs, bag, tees, golf balls and sponge of the late Flt. Lt. Walter (W.A.G.) Clark, R.A.F., which had been gifted to the Club by his widow.

The old Morris Major car was the salvation of the Club. For a year it dragged the reaper and borrowed triple gang-mower all over the course.

On Sundays most of the members would turn out. The “engineers” led by Ate Irving, would “strip it down” up to the elbows in black oil, whilst the remainder would stand around nodding and clucking. Everyone would take a turn at driving it, whether they could drive or not. It mostly travelled in first gear and its only concession was on very hot days it was allowed to travel with the bonnet open. It was finally sold to an enthusiastic motorist for £8 10/- and its passing was like a death in the family.

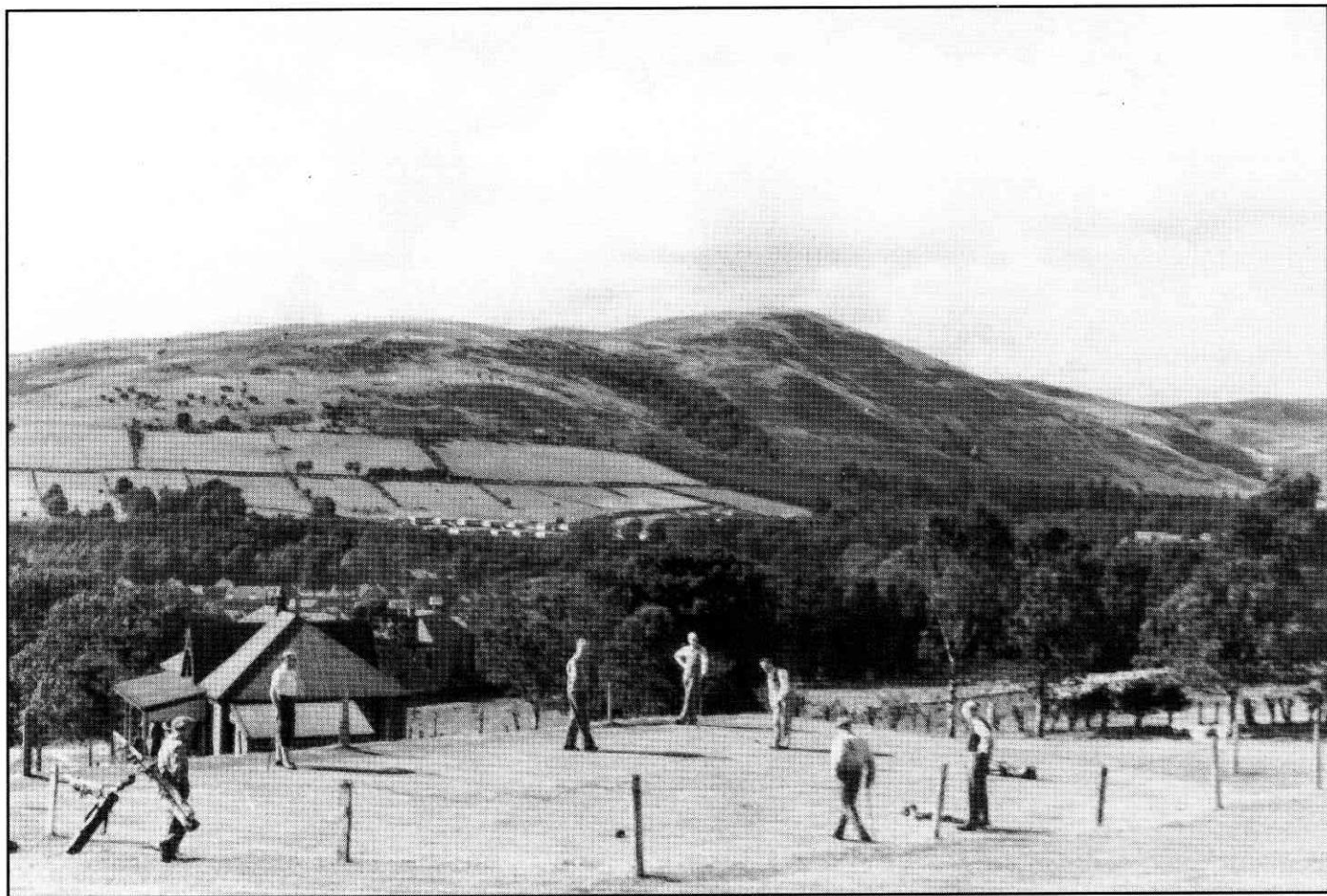
In season 1948, due to a big fund-raising effort, a triple gang-mower was purchased for £210 and a second-hand Fordson tractor for £175 which resulted in all nine holes being brought into play.

There was still concern at the financial aspect of the Club as there were but fifty-three male and twenty-nine female members along with four junior and two juvenile.

Club competitions were resumed but matches were not to be resumed until petrol rationing was relaxed.

During 1949, Langholm Golf Club rejoined the Borders Golfers Association and the Scottish Golf Union which, for an annual subscription of £3 11s 6d to the S.G.U. for clubs with less than 100 male members, entitled them to advice and research on all aspects of course maintenance leaving £1 11s 6d payable to the B.G.A.

Also in 1949 club matches were resumed with the opening game of the season between teams representing



1947. An unusual sight – seven golfers on the 9th green.
For the record they were, James Ross, Kenneth Neill, Jim Aitken, George McLInnes, John Park, Ate Irving and Alex Scott.

the Captain v. Vice-Captain instituted. Langholm played three matches, home and away to Brampton and away to Powfoot. All were lost.

The Club gave a donation of £10 to the Public Hall Fund which was ultimately built at Buccleuch Square.

A cup and medal won by Mr F. F. Stewart during his stay in the Far East (he retired to a bungalow near the tennis courts), was left to the Club with “The Stewart Cup” for ladies competition and “The Stewart Medal” for the men.

Again in 1949, a 12-handicap player, James H. Aitken (manager of the local branch of the Bank of Scotland), was appointed Green Ranger. As a boy of 16, James Aitken falsified his age and volunteered for active service in the 1914–18 War. At 10.30 am on 11th November, 1918, half an hour before the end of the First World War, James Aitken had his right arm blown off.

At the A.G.M. of 4th April, 1950, Mr James Pryde, Secretary of the Club for 27 years, retired. The Club decided to present him with a commemorative gift in appreciation of his service.

George McInnes

Another great golfing character took over as Secretary in the shape of George McInnes, who was a banker with the British Linen Bank and had been transferred from the Glasgow area. George was a perfectionist in everything he did. Playing off a 12 handicap, he had the largest collection of golfing books in Langholm and abstracted instructions from each. Keen to get down to single figures he had several silk handkerchiefs and dried grass for testing wind direction on windless days. On preparing to

drive he had irons laid out at special angles for his feet and it took the combined knowledge of fellow members, the Dr’s Clark and Watt, to convince him that it was impossible to get the human frame into that position.

His book-keeping was meticulous and every detail was recorded in his Minutes. During a discussion about selling bottles of lemonade in the Clubhouse he paid a great tribute to the honesty of the people of Langholm saying that an open dish could be safely left unattended for the money. With scarce a dry eye in the house, he ruined this moving tribute by adding that the bottle opener would have to be chained to the wall.

The letting of grazing on the course to supplement the income had always been a bone of contention in the Club until George made an impassioned appeal for its abolition, ending with the dramatic statement to a hushed and incredulous audience of mixed sexes at the A.G.M. “. . . it is ridiculous in this day and age that I cannot go round that golf course without soiling my trousers”. The world is a lesser place without George.

Sunday Golf

The Special General Meeting of Langholm Golf Club held in the Eskdale Hotel on Tuesday, 16th May, 1950, under the chairmanship of Dr George Watt, Captain of the Club, was of special significance in the history of the Club.

It was proposed, seconded and carried unanimously that Sunday golf should be instituted in Langholm.

Uproar resulted in the town. The older generation, brought up in the narrow confines and reflections of the “Wee Frees” and the basic principals of “Hell and



*1947. Six notable members on the 3rd tee.
A. M. Scott; J. Ross; George McInnes; Ate Irving; R. K. Neill, Jim Aitken.*

Damnation,” were aghast and greatly opposed to the decision – whereas the younger generation, fresh from a World War could see no harm in it. After all some of them had killed other human beings on a Sunday.

A joint letter of protest was received from the Rev. Jimmy Cotter of the Langholm Parish Church and pre-war rugby internationalist for Hillhead, who had kept rugby alive in Langholm during the war years, and the Rev. Burnside of the Erskine Parish Church (“Toon Head” at the end of the Langholm Bridge and now a furniture storage place).

This letter, addressed to the Langholm Golf Club, deprecated the decision of the Club and hoped that they would rescind and confine their activities to week-days only.

The Rev. Burnside, a devout man who lived by the Ten Commandments and could only see black and white, was the leader of the opposition in the town. On Sundays he would deliver long prayers on the subject.

Unfortunately, J. C. Bell (fishmonger, golfer and committee member at the time), along with Dr T. M. S. (“Manson”) Clark, were both active members of the Club along with being “Elders” of the Erskine Parish Church and had to endure long prayers, with bowed heads, on the subject.

1951–1952

By season 1951, things were improving, with Langholm winning three of their eight matches with wins against Brampton (home), Minto (home) and the “auld enemy” at either golf, cricket or rugby – namely Hawick at home. The five losses were all away against Brampton, Lockerbie, Minto, Selkirk and Powfoot.

The Ladies were again coming into the picture having played three matches, losing to Brampton (away) but having an excellent drawn game against Hawick (away) on The Vertish with Hawick mustering a full strength side to narrowly win the return at Langholm.

Golf in Langholm during the summer of 1952 was greatly restricted due to an outbreak of “Foot and Mouth” disease among cloven-footed animals in the district. All matches at home, and open competitions including the Masonic Tournament were cancelled. Even the Langholm Common Riding was restricted to three horses. Restrictions were eased in August and the Club entertained a party of boys from Knightswood Secondary School, Glasgow, who were on a two-week golfing holiday and were accommodated in Langholm Academy.

Manson’s Dream

It was at the meeting of Langholm Golf Club in the Eskdale Hotel on the night of Wednesday, 13th January, 1954, that Dr T. M. S. (“Manson”) Clark, Captain and presiding Chairman and later President of the Club, shook the members out of their complacency by proposing “Manson’s Dream” as it came to be known.

With the Club in a less-than-healthy condition financially, he claimed that this was because the course was on the side of a hill, was expensive and difficult to maintain, and disadvantaged older players who on retiring at 65 had less golf years left than those on flat courses. He therefore proposed that they approach the Duke of Buccleuch with a view to moving to the Castleholm to

establish a 9-hole golf course. Manson's ultimate dream was for a racecourse inside, along with rugby, soccer and cricket pitches with the Central Lodge buildings connected to accommodate squash and badminton courts along with a gym, indoor swimming pool, restaurant, bar and dance hall along with outdoor lawn tennis courts and a Duchess' Brig type structure across from the Buccleuch Square.

Manson's dream was discussed at some length, but the final conclusion was, and we quote the minutes:

"... It was carefully considered by the Committee. All agreed with Dr Clark's views but were dubious about the financial aspect of the project. It was finally decided that the matter be left on the table for one year when it could be further discussed."

Manson's dream was never again discussed.

Course Purchase

But, at the Extraordinary General Meeting in the Eskdale Hotel under the Chairmanship of Bert Weatherstone on Monday, 27th September, 1954, it was decided to purchase the land comprising Langholm Golf Club for £500 with the exception of the field at Crawsknowe over which the Club had the playing rights.

A loan of £300 was to be obtained from the Hawick Heritable Investment Bank Ltd. The proposer was Dr T. M. S. Clark, President of the Club, seconded by Matthew Borthwick and carried unanimously.

The Ladies Fund-Raising Committee contributed £100 and the Deeds of Title were to be placed in the names of the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Club.

Golfers Tales

By 1957, Britain, along with Langholm Golf Club, was booming. Although the golf was scarcely Ryder Cup vintage, great friendships were struck up with games against Minto, Hawick, Jedburgh, Selkirk, Powfoot, Dumfries Crichton Royal and Brampton.

The highlight of the year was the match against the Crichton Royal Hospital for Nervous and Mental Illness in Dumfries.

This was and probably still is, a most remarkable place. Contained in the most beautiful setting of immaculate gardens of colourful flowers, lush lawns and shaded trees, the treatment is based on friendship, laughter and games. They have a 9-hole golf course within the grounds (or at least had in 1957), tennis courts, cricket pitch, squash and badminton courts, gym, table tennis, snooker, theatre, swimming pools, etc. Patients are encouraged to talk freely and teams consist of patients, doctors and nurses, and Langholm played them at squash, cricket and golf. After one golf match a prominent Langholm businessman was heard to remark on the return journey "six weeks in there would do me a world of good".

Some of the patients, both men and women, who had been tortured by the Gestapo, were no longer able to communicate; whilst others, like Paddy, a fee-paying Irishman, who played with a doctor against the Captain Wattie Bell and Ronnie Park appeared full of laughter.

At the 200-yard 1st which was uphill with the green obscured, Wattie played a spoon (a lofted wooden club). On arrival at the green the ball was in the hole. At the end of the round as is the custom, Wattie offered to buy whisky's all round. There was a heavy silence as

the doctor glanced at Paddy who laughed and said “B’Jesus it’s costing me £100 a week to get rid of the stuff”.

The sequel to the story was the return at Langholm, when Paddy rushed up to Wattie, despite the pleas of the doctor, to announce that although the ball had landed on the green, it had lipped the hole and ran a foot past and an old lady patient sitting knitting in the sunshine on a nearby seat had “Tut Tutted”, laid down her knitting, waddled over to the green and popped the ball into the hole. Paddy then announced that he was going home to Dublin where he owned “Paddy’s Bar”, the longest bar in Ireland, and promised Wattie that he could drink draught Guinness free until it was coming out of his ears. (Unfortunately to date, Wattie has never had occasion to go to Dublin.) A gentle old patient whom Ronnie Park had befriended, came forward and grasped Ronnie by the shoulders and with tears running down his cheeks, the old man cried “Where have you been? I have searched all over for you. I didn’t see you in the bus coming over”.

During one of the early encounters against Powfoot (away), J. C. Bell (fishmonger and low-handicap golfer) and his brother Bob, were in the Langholm team. Bob, playing off 18 handicap and just learning the game had developed a dreadful slice. As there was no licence in the clubhouse then, a large crowd would gather at the 1st tee. To the right was a cornfield with the farmer and two barking dogs leaning over the fence to dissuade people from retrieving their ball. Although Bob had won the Military Medal in the First World War when he single-handedly destroyed a German machine-gun nest, on this occasion he lost his nerve. Three times he swung at the ball and three times it remained teed up. Amid an

embarrassing silence he returned his driver to the bag, walked to the back of the green, glared at the ball still on the tee, stopped, rolled up his trouser legs, took a runner and kicked the ball off the tee.

The crowd erupted in cheers, and retired colonels rushed to shake him by the hand as he marched in triumph down the 1st fairway.

In the Fifties

In 1957 Brampton Golf Club celebrated their Semi-Jubilee. Among the functions was a doubles tournament which included celebrities and guests including the captain and secretary of every club they played against. Wattie Bell and Bert Weatherstone, Captain and Secretary of Langholm, were runners-up to Ryder Cup player Syd Scott and his son.

Another legendary incident from around the same time involved a challenge which was issued by Bert Weatherstone to Douglas Barbour (of Barbour’s of Dumfries), after they had both been playing in a competition at Dumfries & Galloway Golf Club. Bert, in fact, issued a challenge from Langholm Golf Club to take on the South of Scotland, the only stipulation being that the South had to choose their team from a list of good socialisers.

The match did take place, and sixteen couples from Langholm went to Southernness to honour Bert’s challenge. Sadly, the good socialisers from whom Douglas Barbour had chosen his team, were also very good golfers. Langholm lost by an undisclosed margin, but nonetheless celebrated the only known occasion of a club playing a match against the county team.



BACK ROW (*left to right*): J. Paterson; Miss I. Barnfather;
J. Webster; T. Irving.
MIDDLE ROW (*left to right*): Mrs J. Erskine; Miss E. Wylie;
J. Ross; M. Borthwick.
FRONT ROW (*left to right*): Mrs B. Borthwick; Miss J. White;
Mrs G. Paisley; G. McInnes.



BACK ROW (*left to right*): J. Barnfather; A. Aitchison;
H. E. D. Erskine; W. Duncan.
FRONT ROW (*left to right*): Miss J. Graham; Mrs M. Stevenson;
Miss J. Wilson; Miss J. Hyslop.

“The Ham Foursomes” 1951

This competition was so-called because the first prize was in fact a large tin of ham, sent from Canada by exiled Langholmite, Miss Jean McVittie.

With such luxuries still in short supply so soon after the war, it was indeed a keenly contested competition.

Whilst in the early years of the Club, the ladies section had thrived and on occasions had totalled around half of the club membership, the 1950s saw its slow demise. The last of our stalwarts were notably Madge Stevenson (the daughter of Mr and Mrs J. C. Bell, mother of Centenary President – Neil Stevenson), Jean Goodfellow (wife of J. Goodfellow, rugby international, 1928, and Club Champion, 1938–39), Jean White, “Gusta” Paisley, Ella Irving and finally, Jean Erskine, who was one of the very few lady members of the Club from the mid-1960s onwards.

By the end of the 1950s, the male membership of the Club was also at a low ebb – sometimes only ten or twelve players would turn up to play in competitions, and it was difficult to fill the teams to play in the traditional club matches.

Three Club Champions

Amongst the male stalwarts of the Club in the 1950s and early 1960s were Club Champions – Arthur (Ate) Irving, Bert Weatherstone and Alfred Chapman.

Arthur (Ate) Irving became a legend at Langholm Golf Club in his own lifetime, winning the Club Championship on six occasions. He is, however, remembered most for his solo efforts in keeping holes, 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 cut and open during the war years of 1939–45, and it is widely acknowledged that golf in Langholm would not have restarted so soon after the war but for Ate’s efforts.

Ate died suddenly in June 1967, near the top of the Kirk Wynd, on the way to his beloved golf course, and at the A.G.M. on 12th March, 1968, the Club recorded the

death of its only life member. A memorial cup for annual competition was presented to the Club by Mrs Irving, and it is keenly contested by a very high entry of players every year.

Bert Weatherstone was without doubt, the dominant figure in the Club from 1951, when he won his first of six consecutive Club Championships. Then in 1960 he won the title for a record seventh time (a record which stood until 1986 when David Latimer won his eighth title). During this time, Bert played regularly with distinction for the B.G.A.

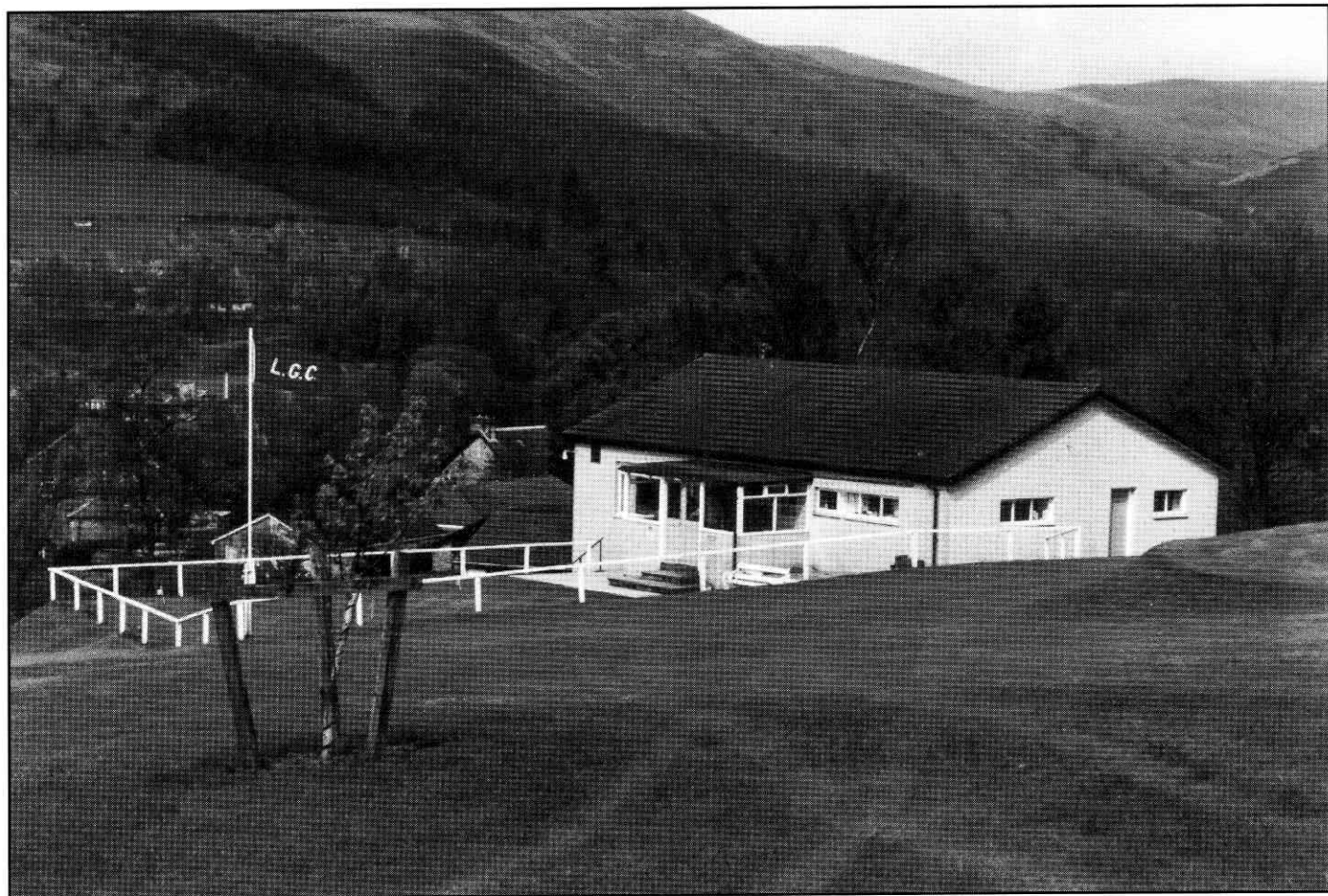
Bert, however, was more than just a player, spending many years on the committee in various roles, including Secretary, Treasurer, Captain (1954–55), and President (1969–79), before returning to the rank of club member.

Alfred Chapman was not a Langholm man, but he came to the area after his retirement from his career in the Army, during which he served for a spell in India where he won a “major” golf championship. He was Club Champion of Langholm in 1958 and 1959.

The Continuing Struggle

Generally, throughout the 1960s the Club struggled for survival. The membership was low in numbers, and so the resultant revenue from subscriptions and green fees was also perilously low.

Extra income was realised by letting the course in the winter months for sheep grazing, whilst expenses were cut in the spring by each of the nine greens being “adopted” by two club members, whose responsibility it was to get each green into prime condition for the start of the season.



The new clubhouse, officially opened on 19th June, 1982.

The Hill Hole

Then in 1964, came a hammer blow to the Club. The right to cut a fairway through the Crawsknowe field, as an approach to the legendary “Hill Hole”, was withdrawn by the owner, and it soon became apparent that the hole would have to be taken out of play and the course redesigned. The changes in the course were designed by Arthur (Ate) Irving and the altered nine holes came into play two years later.

Anyone who played golf at Langholm until 1966 will have a memory or two about the “Hill Hole”, which was famous throughout the Borders as a potential score-wrecker. Not only was the outward hole going to the hill hazardous, but the return hole from the hill was equally so, and of course in a round of 18 holes, each hole had to be safely negotiated twice. Not everyone succeeded.

In one particular three-ball involving D. B. Pool, D. I. Beverley and George McInnes, George sliced his drive from the tee whilst driving, on his return from the hill, the ball disappearing into gorse bushes near the boundary dyke. The trio looked for the ball for the customary 5 minutes whereupon George told his playing partners to play on and he would catch them up. He never did catch them up – rather the reverse happened, as Messrs Pool and Beverley found George, still looking for his ball, when they came round on their second nine!

Driving, it transpired, was not one of George’s strong points, whether it was a golf ball or a car. The legend has it that he once drove his car from the golf club to Holmwood in first gear, a distance of around a mile, claiming that it wasn’t worth changing gears for such a short distance!

A New Era

If the 1950s were dominated by Bert Weatherstone, it is safe to say the late 1960s belonged to David Latimer, who won the first four of his eight club championships to date, in the consecutive years of 1967–70.

By 1970, the Club membership was beginning to grow again and a new crop of young players began to emerge.

In 1975, J. N. Stevenson became Captain and at the end of his first committee meeting called for “any other business”? A new committee member, John Glendinning from Annan, but working in the Bank of Scotland, Langholm, said he had two matters to raise – firstly, could anything be done about the clubhouse which was almost semi-derelict, and secondly, could anything be done about the course, it wasn’t very good either!

A New Clubhouse

John Glendinning was not to know what he had started, as the committee, under Neil Stevenson’s leadership, decided to investigate both projects. It became apparent very soon that without acquiring more land, the course could not be satisfactorily altered, but a new clubhouse was a dream worth pursuing.

A fund-raising venture, jointly organised with the Langholm Cricket Club, was given the grandiose title “Castleholm Capers” and held in September 1975 on the Castleholm. Scotland’s crack Army parachute team “The Golden Lions” literally dropped in and were the star attraction in a day which raised £1,500 in total.

At a committee meeting in the Buck Hotel on the evening of Monday, 22nd March, 1976, following



*Official opening of clubhouse, 19th June, 1982.
Players in Captain's Prize.*

months of research by Captain, Neil Stevenson, and Vice-Captain (and technical adviser) David McVittie – the committee unanimously decided to proceed with the plan to construct a new clubhouse on the present site at a projected cost of £7,000.

At a subsequent committee meeting in the Buck Hotel on 23rd September, 1976, it was announced that the clubhouse target had been reached thanks to the initial injection of £3,000 from club funds, an interest-free loan from the Scottish Sports Council of £1,800, and £2,106 having been recently raised by the Captain's sub-committee in organising another extravaganza, this time entitled the Waverley Field Frolics, and held in the field which then existed at Waverley Mills.

It was realised that the Club had to continue to raise funds to repay the £1,800 loan, and to meet the costs of fitting-out and furnishing the new clubhouse, and during the next few years, several sales of work, raffles, remnant sales and dances were organised by Neil Stevenson and his enthusiastic helpers. A Clubhouse Fund Competition was initiated (and is still played annually), and once, in its early years, it offered a new car for a hole-in-one, this being sponsored by Ian Maxwell (Captain, 1979–90). Needless to say, nobody won the car, but it did cause some excitement.

The completion and opening of the new clubhouse was delayed year on year because of a shortage of funds, but in 1981 a debenture scheme instantly raised enough money to finance the finishing touches. On 19th June, 1982, the new clubhouse completely finished and furnished, and insured for £50,000 was formally opened by the President, Neil Stevenson.

Michael Osciak

On 1st April, 1984, the Club was shocked by the sudden death of Michael Osciak, aged 58, who had been the mainstay of the part-time greenkeeping staff for over 20 years. Michael was another character in the history of Langholm Golf Club whose memory is treasured and about whom many a tale is still recalled.

A Thriving Club Again

During the years of the clubhouse project, a new enthusiasm spread in the Club and in the town for the game of golf, and the membership grew steadily. However, a change of emphasis occurred, with the list of inter-club matches slowly diminishing to only two per year (now played against Hawick and Minto), and the list of competitions expanding to fill the season's fixture list.

One such fixture played against Hawick in 1985 is almost legendary for its foul weather. This match is always played in the early spring, and has over the years, been played in some atrocious conditions, but 1985 was definitely the worst.

None of the four-balls reached the 10th tee due to the cold and the rain, and by 3 o'clock all the players were nicely ensconced in the bar. By 4 o'clock the rain had turned to snow, and by 5 o'clock some of the local children were sledging down the 9th fairway.

By the mid-1980s, the Club was on a very sound footing, with the total number of members around 200, and a fairly healthy balance sheet showing some cash in hand.

Also during this time, it was decided to develop a "Junior Section" of the Club and to invite the pupils of



22nd March, 1992. The opening day of the Centenary Season. Forty players took part in the Captain versus President match.

Langholm Academy to participate. The success of this policy was to be seen in later years.

Meanwhile, since 1967, when David Latimer was the first of a new crop of good young golfers, the Club Championship has been dominated by five players. To date, Ian Borthwick, Stewart Paisley, Brian Porteous and Ronnie Turnbull have all won four championships each, whilst David Latimer himself has taken the title on a record eight occasions.

A Re-designed Course

In February 1985, Neil Stevenson, President of the Club, announced at a meeting of the committee that he had purchased some of the land at Crawsknowe, and he offered playing rights to the Club on an indefinite lease, with the promise that the Club would have first right of purchase in the event of sale.

A sub-committee of volunteers was set up to investigate the re-designing of the course, and this was led by David Latimer (who was to be Captain in 1987–88). Others on this sub-committee, who walked the course in all kinds of weather in the winter and spring of 1985, were past captain's D. I. Beverley, Ian Maxwell and the President, Neil Stevenson.

The design of the new course with a par of 70 for 18 holes was approved at an E.G.M. held on 20th August, 1985, and the construction of the new lay-out was completed during the next 12 months at a cost of around £8,000.

On Saturday and Sunday, 1st and 2nd October, 1988, two competitions were held to inaugurate the new layout of the course, which had a S.S.S. of 68, and another chapter in the history of the Club was complete.

On the playing side of the Club, the men's competitions were regularly attracting over fifty players, whilst the ladies section was still patronised, but only by a handful of members.

Keswick in the Rain

An innovation of the 1980s was the "Club Trip" when as many as thirty golfers would visit another club for a day's golf, and an element of socialising. In recent years these golfing nomads have travelled to Moffat, Penrith, Hexham, Kirkcudbright, Minto, Peebles and most memorably, for all the wrong reasons, Keswick.

Three days before embarking on the Keswick trip in 1986, the match secretary and organiser, Irving Davidson, was informed of a special local rule which was in force. This rule stated that where a player lost a ball, plugged in the fairway, the player could drop another ball in the approximate area without penalty. Strangely, this special rule raised nobody's suspicions, but it should have, because the course was absolutely waterlogged and virtually unplayable.

At the end of a very rainy day's golf, the party had collectively lost 128 golf balls, and a 5-iron which had slipped out of the grip of a member in his follow through, and had flown out of bounds into a pond!

Langholm in the Rain

In 1987, the inaugural Langholm Golf Club Open Tournament was played, there being over ninety entrants, many of whom came from other clubs on both sides of the Border. The occasion will be long remembered for

the foul weather which prevailed on that Sunday in the middle of August, play having to be suspended for nearly two hours because of flooding of the greens.

Amazingly, history repeated itself the following year, and in 1989 the weather was even worse, with the tournament having to be abandoned and played again one week later. The law of averages should have given the Club a fine day for the replayed tournament, but, incredibly it was another very wet day and the tournament was only just completed before the greens were under water again!

D. I. Beverley

On 15th September, 1988, the Club was saddened by the death, after a long illness, of past Captain and Secretary, Innes Beverley, who had been one of the stalwarts of the Club for many years. Innes was particularly enthusiastic about the course changes of 1985–86, and one of the last jobs he was involved in was to build the bridge over the syke to the 5th tee. His services to the Club were recognised by the inauguration in 1989 of the D. I. Beverley Memorial Trophy for annual competition.

International Success Stories

In 1989, Langholm Golf Club came into its own, with a total membership of 219, all debts cleared, and a thriving social club and bar with a panoramic view of the Eskdale Valley. But perhaps best of all, was the Club's policy of encouraging and instructing the pupils of Langholm Academy and the youth of Langholm in the game of golf.

During 1989 Langholm's Craig Hislop played for

Scotland boys against England, Ireland and Wales at Nairn. 16-year-old Craig was then reigning South of Scotland Junior and Youth Champion and won the Dumfriesshire "Champion of Champions" Competition at the age of 18.

In April, 1991, Craig went on to further success with a sensational win the Scottish Boys' Golf Championship at West Kilbride when he defeated Russell Thornton of Cardross by 11 and 9 in atrocious conditions of wind and rain. Craig had previously set up a new record round of 66 for the Langholm course (since reduced to 65).

Not to be outdone, young Graham Davidson, son of centenary Captain Irving Davidson, has since 1989 won the Border Boys Matchplay Championship three times, the South of Scotland Schools Championship (previously held by Craig), in 1990, and the Border Boys Strokeplay Championship in 1991. In addition to these successes, Graham also qualified in 1989 and 1991 to play in the final stages of the "Daily Telegraph" Junior Golfer of the Year Competition at Penina in Portugal, winning the title in 1991 in a sudden death play-off. Graham also won the Club Championship at Powfoot in 1990, and was selected to play in the Scotland Boys team in 1991 and 1992.

Three Life Members

The Centenary Season was inaugurated on Monday, 2nd March, 1992, when the A.G.M. was held in the clubhouse and was attended by thirty-six members.

On a proposal by past Treasurer, John Elliot, which had lain on the table for a year, it was unanimously approved by the meeting to confer Life Membership on President Neil Stevenson and Vice-President David

Latimer, in recognition of their exceptional services to the Club over very many years.

It was further proposed that Life Membership be conferred on Bert Weatherstone, in belated recognition of his services to the Club between the years of 1951 and 1979. Although this proposal could not receive the seal of approval until 1993, it was unanimously agreed that Bert thoroughly deserved this recognition.

The First Hundred Years

On Sunday, 22nd March, 1992, in a match between the Captain's team versus the President's team, Centenary Captain Irving Davidson officially opened the playing season by driving a ball from the 1st tee at Langholm Golf Club.

It has been a long haul since Mrs Alex Scott drove the very first ball on the afternoon of Saturday, 15th October, 1892.

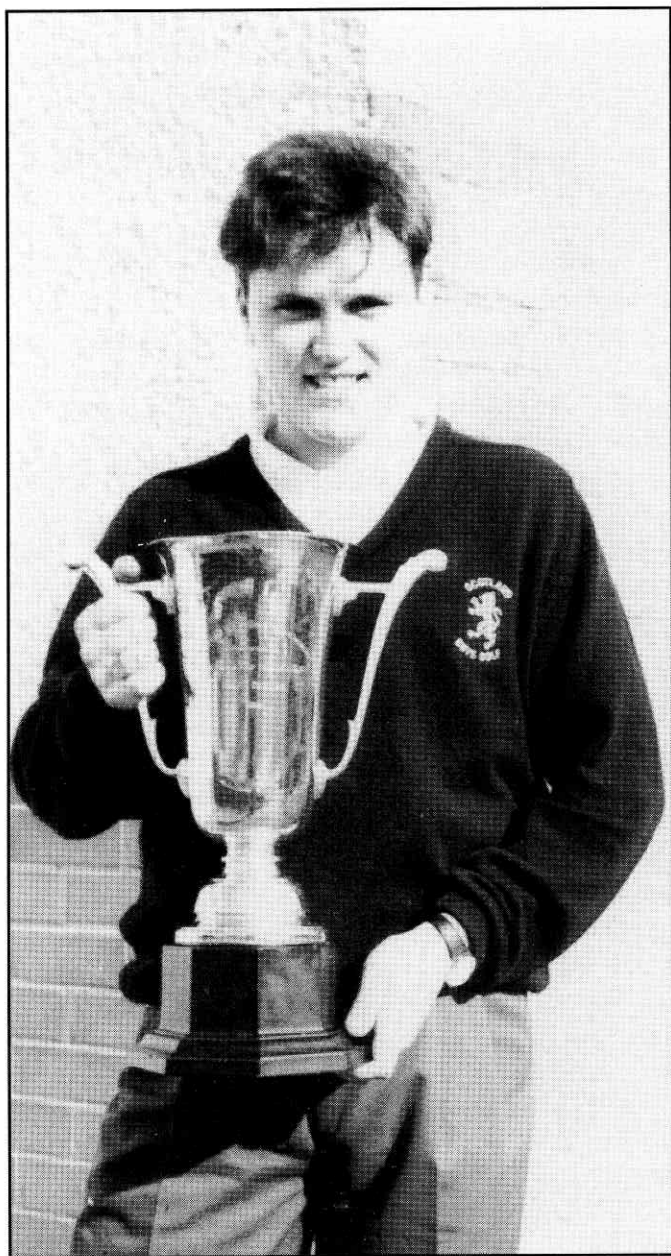
It has been said that

“To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive and the true success is to labour.”

R. L. Stevenson

Langholm Golf Club has indeed travelled hopefully, and now arrives at its hundredth birthday, but its history has not been one of easy progress and golfing success stories. The story is rather one of a constant struggle to survive, and the Club's persistent desire to establish itself.

In a town the size of Langholm with its population of around 2,200, the true success of Langholm Golf Club is its very existence – a club in which the members offer the finest grip in golf – “The Hand of Friendship”.



Competition ... <i>M.S.T.</i>											Date ... <i>27.9.</i>			
Player ... <i>C. Hislop</i>											Handicap ... <i>+1</i>			
MRKS SCORE	HOLE	LTH YARDS	PAR	STK INDEX	SCORE	STB PTS	MRKS SCORE	HOLE	LTH YARDS	PAR	STK INDEX	SCORE	STB PTS	
	1	295	4	13	3			10	295	4	14	3		
	2	344	4	5	5			11	344	4	6	4		
	3	180	3	15	4			12	180	3	16	3		
	4	510	5	3	4			13	510	5	4	6		
	5	175	3	9	3			14	175	3	10	2		
	6	300	4	11	2			15	300	4	12	3		
	7	415	4	1	4			16	415	4	2	5		
	8	291	4	17	3			17	291	4	18	4		
	9	362	4	7	4			18	362	4	8	3		
OUT 2872 35						IN 2872 35						IN 33		
						TOTAL 5744 70						OUT 32		
COURSE RECORD											STANDARD SCRATCH SCORE 68		TOTAL 65	
											H'CAP +1			
Competitor ... <i>C. Hislop</i>											Marker <i>Little</i>		NET 66	

Craig Hislop, Scottish Boys' Internationalist 1989-1991, holding the Scottish Boys' Matchplay Championship Trophy, which he won in 1991.



Graham Davidson, Scottish Boys' Internationalist 1991, holding the Daily Telegraph Junior Golfer of the Year Trophy which he won at Penina, Portugal, also in 1991.

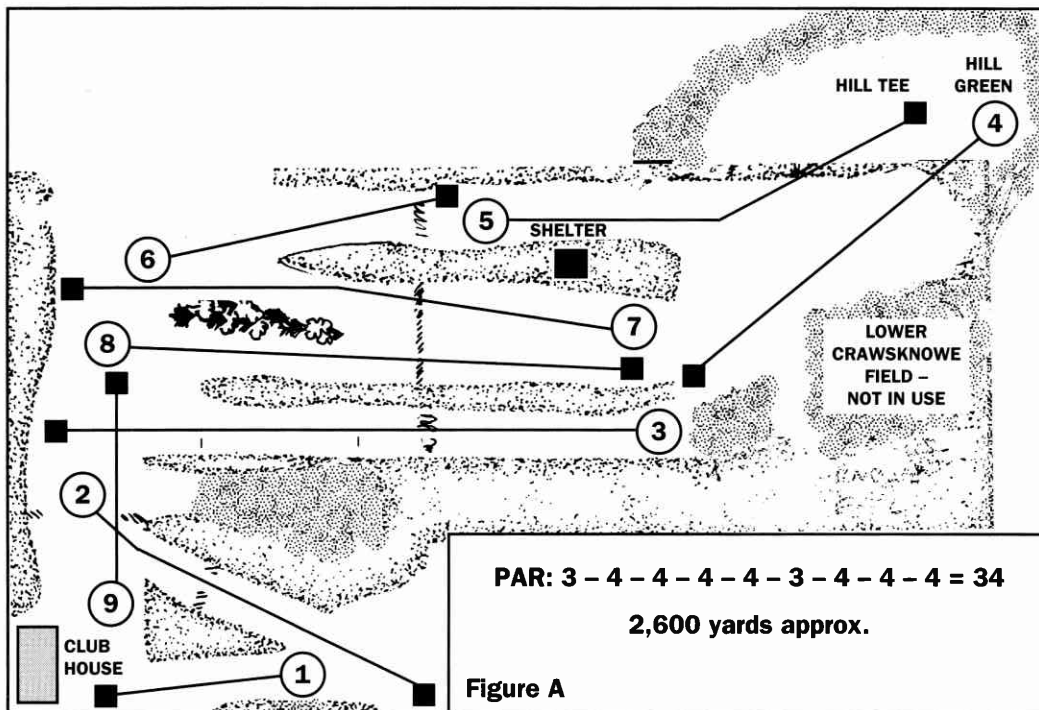


FIGURE A

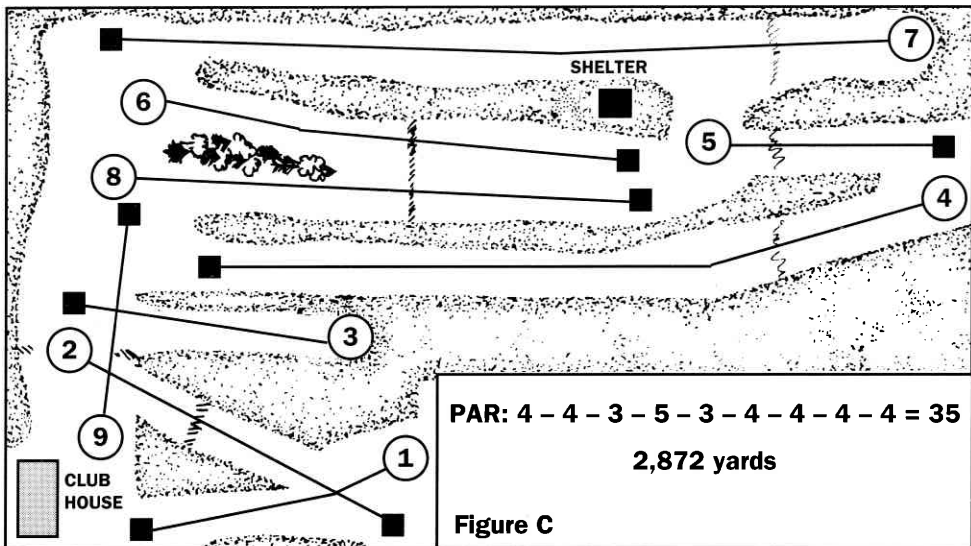
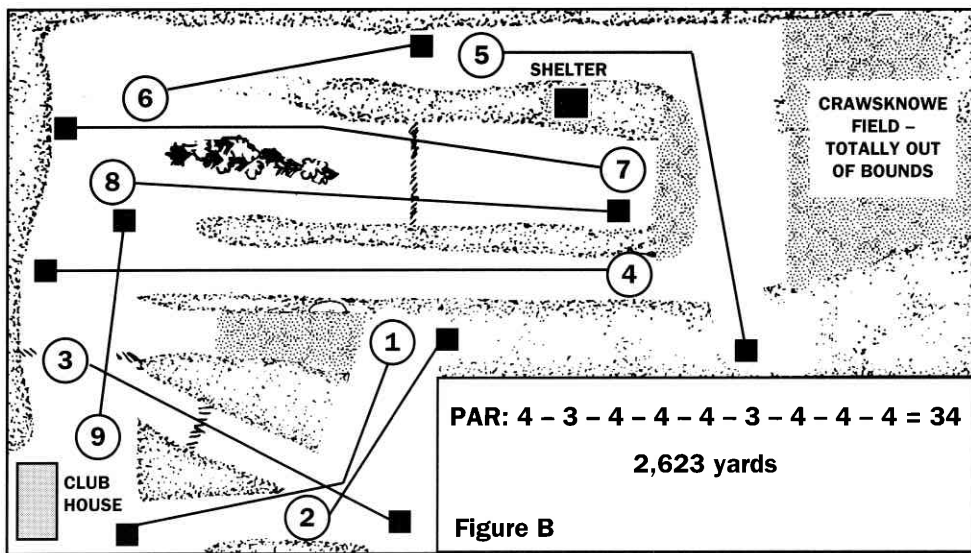
This diagram shows the course as it was until 1966, including holes 4 and 5, which went to and from the area outwith the fenced boundary of the course, and onto Whita Hill. Hole 4 was called "The Hill Hole".

FIGURE B

Shows the course as it was from 1966 until 1988, with the hill holes removed from play and the Crawsknowe Field now totally out of bounds.

FIGURE C

Shows the "new course" opened in 1988 with the Crawsknowe Field featuring in holes 4, 5 and 7. This redeveloped course used only four of the existing nine greens (2, 6, 8, and 9), and only holes 2, 8 and 9 remained unaltered.





The opening day of the Centenary Season was also attended by all but four of the surviving past captains.

STANDING (left to right): H. E. D. Erskine; F. Fitzpatrick; J. M. Maxwell; W. R. Jamieson; H. G. Irving; J. M. Ritchie; W. J. Brown; R. N. B. Noble; D. P. McVittie; D. B. Pool; W. E. A. Bell; J. N. Stevenson; R. M. Weatherstone; D. M. Latimer.

SEATED (left to right): R. K. Neill, *Captain 1951*; I. Davidson, *Centenary Captain*; Dr G. Watt, *Captain 1949–50*.

PRESIDENTS

1892–1903	A. Scott	1925–1944	A. M. Scott	1955–1969	Dr T. M. S. Clark
1903–1909	H. Graham	1944–1953	Major E. J. Bell	1969–1979	R. M. Weatherstone
1909–1925	J. A. Scott	1953–1955	Major J. McGeorge	1979–	J. N. Stevenson

CAPTAINS

1892–1899	T. Moses	1941–1948	A. Scott	1969–1970	J. S. Hyslop
1900–1902	D. Lightbody	1949–1950	Dr G. Watt	1971–1972	W. Jamieson
1903–1907	A. M. Scott	1951	R. K. Neill	1973–1974	J. M. Ritchie
1908–1909	J. Cairns	1952–1953	Dr T. M. S. Clark	1975–1976	J. N. Stevenson
1910–1921	R. Hamilton	1954–1955	R. M. Weatherstone	1977–1978	D. P. McVittie
1922–1923	Dr A. F. Calwell	1956–1957	W. Bell	1979–1980	I. Maxwell
1924–1925	J. McGeorge	1958–1959	R. N. B. Noble	1981–1982	W. J. Brown
1926–1935	E. J. Bell	1960–1961	R. Park	1983–1984	W. E. A. Bell
1936	J. Ross	1962–1963	D. B. Pool	1985–1986	F. F. Fitzpatrick
1937	C. Paisley	1964	D. I. Beverley	1987–1988	D. M. Latimer
1938	J. Goodfellow	1965–1966	H. E. D. Erskine	1989–1990	H. G. Irving
1939–1940	W. C. Duncan	1967–1968	J. M. Maxwell	1991–1992	I. Davidson

CLUB CHAMPIONS

1893	J. Scott	1929	A. Irving	1964	W. D. Borthwick
1894	J. Howie	1930	A. Irving	1965	J. M. Maxwell
1895	A. J. Craig	1931	A. Irving	1966	H. E. D. Erskine
1896	A. J. Craig	1932	A. Irving	1967	D. M. Latimer
1897	A. L. Scott	1933	I. Hamilton	1968	D. M. Latimer
1898	W. Ross	1934	J. C. Bell	1969	D. M. Latimer
1899	Rev. G. McKendrick	1935	G. Badenoch	1970	D. M. Latimer
1900	A. M. Scott	1936	J. Lawrence	1971	J. A. Hyslop
1901	Rev. W. W. White	1937	J. Lawrence	1972	B. L. Porteous
1902	<i>No Scratch Medal</i>	1938	J. Goodfellow	1973	D. M. Latimer
1903	W. Redpath	1939	J. Goodfellow	1974	J. Borthwick
1904	Jas. Fletcher	1940	Dr T. M. S. Clark	1975	J. Borthwick
1905	Jas. Fletcher	1941–45	<i>Second Word War</i>	1976	S. Paisley
1906	Jas. Fletcher	1946–47	<i>No Scratch Medal</i>	1977	S. Paisley
1907	John Fletcher	1948	R. K. Neill	1978	S. Paisley
1908	Jas. Fletcher	1949	C. Paisley	1979	J. Borthwick
1909	J. Tudhope	1950	A. Irving	1980	J. Borthwick
1910	J. Ross	1951	R. M. Weatherstone	1981	R. Turnbull
1911	R. Hamilton	1952	R. M. Weatherstone	1982	R. Turnbull
1912	Jas. Fletcher	1953	R. M. Weatherstone	1983	R. Turnbull
1913	John Fletcher	1954	R. M. Weatherstone	1984	D. M. Latimer
1914	S. Hyslop	1955	R. M. Weatherstone	1985	D. M. Latimer
1915–18	<i>First Word War</i>	1956	R. M. Weatherstone	1986	D. M. Latimer
1919–22	<i>No Scratch Medal</i>	1957	A. Irving	1987	B. L. Porteous
1923	J. Roddick	1958	A. Chapman	1988	S. Paisley
1924	D. Grant	1959	A. Chapman	1989	R. Turnbull
1925	<i>No Scratch Medal</i>	1960	R. M. Weatherstone	1990	B. L. Porteous
1926	D. Grant	1961	T. Little	1991	B. L. Porteous
1927	D. Grant	1962	N. Wilson	1992	S. Ellwood
1928	<i>No Scratch Medal</i>	1963	N. Wilson		



