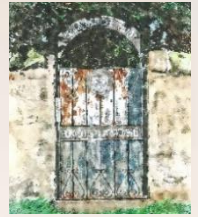


Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club



THE CRADLE OF GOLF



Newsletter – Issue 6 Autumn 2024

With the golf playing hours and the temperature falling we are rapidly approaching Christmas. As the Greenkeepers are cutting the winter greens it is a good time to reflect on events in the last few months within the club. Following a period that the Greenkeepers had been doing remedial work on our greens, we are now reaping the benefits of their hard work as the greens are playing well.

On the run into the winter the club have a series of team matches against local friends and these include some charity events. A few of years ago a relationship was founded



with a group of golfers that play at the course that is within the Dalmeny Estate, which has become a home and away annual event. The layout of the course is nine holes with the main Dalmeny House dominating a number

of the holes. The away match was earlier in the year and now it was the Old Course's turn to host. To be a member of the Dalmeny club, you are required to have a connection with the Earl of Rosebery who resides at the house. A number of our guests were members of Turnhouse Golf Club, which is on the Earl's land. Having suffered a defeat away, we were victorious on our patch.

Another match which was historically against The Ship Inn pub, has now also become a charity day in memory of Mark MacWhinnie's father. A great match, which the club triumphed over our friends, a great day for the charity and a great day within the club. The big winner was 'Cycling Without Age' apart from a donation from each player there were endless raffle prizes.



Importance of Musselburgh in the development of Golf



Musselburgh is known worldwide for its importance to golf. One of the reasons was that it was known for the production of golf clubs, especially during the later part of the 1800s and early 1900s. These were not steel shafts but 'Hickories' This was the golden era for our course and the clubhouses along Golf Place. Within the club we have a great selection of hickories on display and very proud to have some Willie Park clubs. We must thank Stephen Hill for the display we have. Willie Park Senior was the first winner of the Open in 1860 and founded a club making business, which his son Willie Park took over and expanded into course design. He invented the bulger driver in 1885, a patent lofter in 1889, a patent driving cleek in 1891, a patent compressed driver in 1893 and the patent bent-neck putter of 1894. He also contributed a

golf ball with 56 hexagonal side panels which he thought slowed its motion on the green. They opened a retail outlet in New York in 1896, run by Mungo. This was followed by course design businesses in the same city and in Toronto.

Other club makers we have include D McEwan and Son. Douglas inherited the club making business of his father Peter in Edinburgh in 1836 and moved to Musselburgh in 1847. The work of the firm spanned six generations, from James making clubs in Edinburgh in 1770 to a second Douglas who ran the business until 1920 while based in Musselburgh.

Robert Neilson was born in Musselburgh and learnt his club making by working for Willie Park. He was called up in 1916 and on demob in 1919 he returned to Musselburgh which is when the advertisement displayed here was used. Reputedly he was the last active clubmaker in Musselburgh he was still going strong in 1926.

ROBERT NEILSON,
GOLF CLUB MAKER,
THE LINKS, MUSSELBURGH
(Opposite First Tee).
A Fine Selection of CLUBS and BALLS kept
in Stock.
ALL REPAIRS PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO.
Specially Selected Material only used. Clubs
to Pattern a Specialty.

Within the display is a Davidson putter. Charles Davidson was an apprentice with his brother at McEwan and Son before setting up business in Millhill in 1897. Charles died in May 1934 at the age of 74. The local paper said of him that he 'employed hundreds of hands till the trade in golfing implements was killed by American tariffs'.

During these years there were over 50 registered club makers, making and repairing clubs in Musselburgh employing hundreds of people. Within the accounts of The Honourable Company and Royal Musselburgh are entries as they employed a number of 'wood turners', obviously their own club makers in house.

Royal Musselburgh Golf Club

250th Anniversary

We were honoured to receive an invitation to Royal Musselburgh Golf Club's 250th Anniversary celebrations. Royal Musselburgh who played at our course from 1774 until 1925 are recognised as the sixth oldest Golfing Societies in the world. Our Captain Billy Alexander, Vice-Captain Gordon Henderson and Secretary Alan Tweedie represented the club at this event which opened with a Welcome Evening on Wednesday 3rd July.

Mixed team golf competitions were played on the Thursday and Friday and on the Friday evening a formal Gala Dinner brought the celebrations to a close.



On display throughout the evening was The Old Club Cup, which is the oldest trophy in golf and now resides in the R&A Museum at St. Andrews. We have been gifted a picture of the cup which is in the lounge. It was first played for in 1774 and was won, obviously on our course, by a Royal Musselburgh member, who later became Club Captain. It is recognised as the 3rd oldest trophy in sport but is the only one that has constantly been played for. The R&A have stated that it is priceless

This year also marked the 100th Anniversary of Royal Musselburgh Ladies Section. Royal Musselburgh Golf Club was one of the original clubs to play on Musselburgh Links before moving a little further down the coast to Prestongrange, with their new course being officially opened in 1926. Their original clubhouse remains just a stone's throw away from our clubhouse, but that building, number 8, is now a private dwelling. Before moving down to Prestongrange they moved from number 8 a few doors down our street to the building that now houses the Nursery.

Junior Section



On Sunday 27th October, there was an end of season Super Sixes event at wee course at North Berwick West.

Our Juniors, Alex, Jackson, Jacob, Adam, Lewis and Aidan did exceptionally well and finished as joint winners of the event with both teams were tied on 58 points.

Many thanks to NBW for hosting this event.

2024 East Lothian Super Sixes Team Results

Teams	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Total
Muss Old	18	21	19	58
Gullane	19	21	18	58
West Links	19	19	19	57
Gifford GC	17	18	18	53
Muss GC	18	15	18	51
The Glen	14	13	24	51
Royal Muss	11	21	16	48
Longniddry	16	20	11	47
Haddington	20	20		40

Dementia Friendly East Lothian



Just over a year ago we opened the doors of our clubhouse to 'Dementia Friendly East Lothian'. DFEL are a group of local people who want to make communities in East Lothian great for people with dementia and carers to live, visit and work in.

Every Thursday morning, DFEL have hosted a Friendship Group meeting in our club lounge.

The Badge an article by Gordon Thomson

When the club was formed, one of the first tasks for the Committee was to design a club badge. It was 1982 BC (before computers), and we had neither google search nor any software program to assist us. We decided to keep it simple and just opted for the club's



name and the Musselburgh town coat of arms. After agreeing this we decided to purchase some stationery with our new badge on it and the club captain, Derek Temperley, assumed responsibility for going to the printers and discussing our requirements and arranging an order. As the main form of communication at the time was the written word we were looking to get a stock of headed paper, as well as fixture cards and score cards with our logo on them.

The following week the order was duly completed, and the stationery was presented to the Committee. It was only stationery, but it felt like a significant milestone in our quest to become a recognized golf

club. As we viewed the stationery one member of the Committee had reason to question the Musselburgh coat of arms that had been used as he felt something was amiss. When questioned, Derek informed the Committee it was the correct coat of arms as he had gone to the printers with one of his daughter's school jotters as a reference document and had asked the printer to incorporate that badge into our club badge. Alas, what he thought was the Musselburgh town coat of arms was actually that of Musselburgh Grammar School!

As a Committee, we did not want to go back to the membership and admit our mistake, neither did we want to go to the expense of getting the stationery reprinted with the correct badge. We therefore decided to go with the MGS badge in the anticipation that no one would ever notice and for the next forty two years nobody did notice and it remained a Committee secret! Or did it !!!

INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

International Membership for 2024 costs £250 and the proceeds from International Memberships enable us to maintain and upgrade our historic clubhouse. If anyone is interested in supporting the club by becoming an International Member or by buying one as a gift for someone else, please follow the following link ...

<https://musselburgholdcourse.com/international-members-form>

The 'Hut' an article by Gordon Thomson

When the club was first formed we had no place to call home, but within a few weeks we managed to get the use of a surplus building from the Racecourse Authority. It was ideal as it was designed for catering and was spacious with a ready-made bar and ample toilet facilities. It had all that we required at that time to accommodate our membership of approx. 50 members. The deal was that we paid a yearly nominal rental of £1 in return for maintaining the building. I don't think any money ever changed hands but in hindsight I think we all thought the Racing Authorities got the best of that arrangement! The building was located in an enclosure called the Silver Ring which was adjacent to the grandstandand so "The Silver Ring Clubhouse" came into being!

The building was in a poor state of repair, with wooden windows frames that were so badly rotted that it was a miracle the windows were still in place and the doors were equally as bad. After taking ownership the first rain shower also revealed the roof was in a worse state than the windows and doors! Fortunately with a membership that was primarily made up of tradesman all these problems were deemed incidental.

On entering the "clubhouse" during our first weekend of ownership the first thing that was instantly noticeable was the mountain of cases of beer and lager reaching from floor to ceiling! By week two someone's cast off black and white TV had taken pride of place, to the delight of those wanting to follow the weekend sport. It was not long after that we started negotiations with breweries to have draught beer on the premises and a generous grant from the chosen brewery also funded the cost of carpeting. Slowly but surely the empty shell was transformed week by week into our view of heaven!

Alas, it was not long before the local criminal fraternity became aware of our presence and before long we were getting "visited" several times a week in the early hours. The building's isolated location and insecure doors offered an open invitation. More often than not the cost of repairing the damage was in excess of what we actually lost. They focused on taking stock at the outset, but once we had made the stock room secure they turned their attention to golf equipment. Several members left their clubs in the premises and it was a simple matter of "help yourself" as far as the intruders were concerned. The first time clubs were stolen a passing patrol car spotted the culprit nearby at 3am with three sets of clubs on his person. He was duly charged and the clubs were retained as evidence. Those left without clubs soon had replacements in place after visiting the local professional at Monktonhall. Alas, the replacement clubs were left in situ and the following week a further theft of three sets of clubs took place with two of the same members losing theirs once more! The police did not hesitate in going to the house of the culprit they had apprehended the previous week and soon uncovered the missing sets in a garden shed. He was duly charged "once more" and again the clubs were taken to the local station and retained as evidence. Replacement clubs were sourced again and thereafter clubs were not left overnight in the clubhouse but the standing joke was that

we had members who had more clubs in the local nick than fellow members took to play a round!

The Committee did form a welcoming party that was suitable armed (for their own protection) that “camped out” for several evenings in the clubhouse but our visitors never appeared whilst they were in situ, although to everyone’s frustration they did visit the following evening!

Before long, we opted for the ultimate deterrent and had an alarm installed. Whilst it did not put an end to the “visits” it was an effective deterrent as many chose to run as soon as the alarm was activated. As a consequence of all the break-ins we formed great relationships with the local police force and were on first name terms with them all! It was a relationship that was to work in our favour in the years that followed.

Our hands were rarely out of our pocket trying to maintain the building and towards the latter end of our residence the roof was more or less condemned as it was deemed unsafe. Fortunately our present building came on the market at just the right time and after a great deal of negotiations it became ours. But whilst there were lots of “negative” aspects to the old clubhouse, any long standing member will regale you with stories of the many happy days and nights that we all enjoyed there. There were the “card schools” that started at lunch time and were still going strong some eight hours later with some hefty wagers taking place. The many social events, that started in the early evening and were still going strong well into the wee small hours. The games nights involving pool, darts and dominoes rarely ended before 3am! These evenings were often prolonged when two non-dart players were drawn together and it was questionable if they would lose the will to live before either managed to hit the winning double! This is where our “relationship” with the police worked in our favour as they were quite happy for the bar to be open till 3 or 4am as long as there were no complaints. I think they felt if there was a presence in the club it would be one less call out for them to attend! But for all its faults The Silver Ring clubhouse played a significant part in the history of our club and served as a foundation for all that we have today.

As a reminder to all we have a framed picture of the ‘hut’, as it was known, behind our bar with the dates when it was part of our history