

# **BURY TIMES**

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 1906**

### **THE WALMERSLEY GOLF CLUB**

#### **FORMATION OF A NEW COURSE**

##### **A BREEZY AND BRACING SITE**

A year ago a golfer taking his stand upon the height known as Birtle Edge, and looking over Nineveh or down towards Walmersley, across the little farms of Broad Carr and Gerards Close, would be filled with sad thoughts of what might have been. The hillside is a natural golf-course such as would be difficult to match. A military man cannot travel over the world without taking into consideration its military possibilities. His quick, trained eyes see at a glance a spot which a company can hold against a brigade and he is always on the lookout for camping grounds and rifle ranges, and for ground suitable for the exercise of military operations, whether in the form of parade movements or of mimic or actual warfare. A cricketer never sees a fine level field without selecting the best match pitch that it affords and apportioning the site for the pavilion.

It is with the golfer as it is with the military man and the cricketer. Let him have but a few moments for reflection and his enthusiasm will sway his thoughts. He begins to think in "tees," "putting greens," and "hazards." now the hillside of Birtle Edge is calculated to arouse the golfing instincts in a man. The land is too bare for agriculture, in some places it is too bare for even the poorest grazing. But heather and gorse and mountain tufts that can take root in a few inches of soil, abound. The ground is full of irregularities, of hazards blind and open. Its acclivities and descents are sufficiently sharp to give a man a pleasing sense that he is overcoming something. In a certain atmosphere they would be sufficient to tire him. But not in the atmosphere that one breathes on Birtle Edge. In this clear air no man or woman ought to feel tired. The wind that comes from the west is no land breeze. We stand higher at this point than any hill which comes between us and the Irish Sea. To this fact the hillside owes its hardy natural growth.

##### **THE SITUATION OF THE LINKS**

When Bury became a training ground for golfers, and those golfers began to look around, in the manner of their kind, for sites suitable for suitable golf links, it was inevitable that the possibilities of Birtle Edge should be discovered; and when the time came that the Bury links at Redvales could no longer fulfil all the requirements of the district, could no longer cope successfully with the demand they had done so much to create, it was inevitable that an attempt would be made to realise those possibilities. That time has come. The Walmersley Golf Club has been formed, and in a week or two the new links – already in use over a part of the course – will be formally opened.

A few days ago, on a lovely spring afternoon, we enjoyed the pleasure of a walk over the links. A great deal had been done in the way of preparation, but much still remained to be done. Seven of the “tees” and “putting-greens” were complete, leaving two of the nine-hole course yet to be constructed. The nine-hole course is only one half of the whole scheme. It consists of the holes on the Birtle Edge and Broad Carr sides, and covers an area of thirty-one acres. On the land is the fine substantial farmhouse of Gerard’s Close, which is being utilized as a clubhouse and residence for the groundsman and professional. It is admirably adapted for the purpose. Built of the hard rough stone of which the hill is composed, one feels that it might have been quarried –and perhaps as long ago as in the seventeenth century—from the deep hole which will bring to grief many a novice who tackles the short but trying eighth hole. This, however, is by the way, for we have not reached the eighth hole yet.

The nine-hole course which will be ready in a few day’s time, and forms one half of the scheme, is on the Gerard’s Close and Broad Carr Farms. The other half of the eighteen-hole course is on the Nineveh side and its construction is left for a future day. The plan for the course has been drawn by Mr. A. Gaudin, of Trafford Park, and it is being carried out under the direction of Mr. John Edmondson (formerly with the Bury Club and lately of the Wigan Club), who has been engaged as professional. The work done hitherto consists of the construction of the tees and putting greens, and the making of such gangways and openings for the approaches as are absolutely necessary. As time goes on improvements will doubtless be effected but enough has already been done to show that the Walmersley Club will have links that will bear comparison with any inland ground, and with most seaside links.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

The total length of the nine-hole course is about 2600 yards, rather more or less. Bogey would accomplish the round in forty or forty-one strokes. A good four hole is the first, situate 225 yards from the tee, and lying below the house, with a slight trend in the direction of Cobhouse lane. It is a blind hole --that is to say, is invisible to the striker from the tee-- and the course also includes a blind hazard in the shape of a deep pit lying slightly to the right. From the first hole the golfer strikes across the side of the hill towards Broad Carr. This is a five hole, being 385 yards from the tee, and is in the field behind Broad Carr. For the third hole distant 270 yards. Bogey would take four strokes. It is reached by a stiff ascent. Only an exceptionally good player, favoured by fortune in an unwonted degree, would reach the fourth hole in three strokes --more often four will be needed-- and in this course there is a ditch in front of the green which might lead to much disturbing of tufts in the event of a player meeting grief there. The fifth hole is a five hole 300 yards away from the Broad Carr tee. It lies back in the direction of Gerard's Close, and has a ditch in front of it. The sixth hole is situated near the top of Birtle Edge not far from Broom's Farm and the walk involves a bit of stiff collar work. It is 345 yards from the tee and includes a splendid hazard in the form of a water course. The hole should be reached in six strokes. The seventh hole is distant some 420 yards from the tee and will take at least six strokes. This is the longest course on the links. The hole is approached by a gradual descent across the face of the hill. The eighth hole course is the shortest of all -- 130 yards-- and may be reached in three strokes. The stone quarry to which we have

already alluded is a very fine hazard and presents the only difficulty in the course. If the golfer come to grief at this --which is not likely-- it would be hardly possible to estimate the number of strokes that he would have to make in reaching the hole. The ninth hole course crosses that of the seventh. It is 270 yards from the tee and is in a downhill direction. It should be reached in four strokes.