



HISTORY OF THE GOLF CLUB

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The Golf Course

The Wortley family has an important connection with the Golf Club. Golf was played originally by the family and friends and a course developed initially perhaps of nine holes on the former Lane Royd's deer Park.

The Park appears to have been laid out c 1800 when James Archibald Stuart Wortley II, first Baron Wharnccliffe, married and settled at Wortley.

In line with the increased popularity of golf amongst landed families and professional people during the latter part of the 19th Century, a Club was formed in 1894 and in 1911, a Clubhouse was built adjacent to the course. The course was extended to a testing 18 holes with a high reputation for fast and undulating greens.

Golfers at Wortley Golf Club are justifiably proud of their classic course set in a totally pastoral environment. First time visitors to the course find it to be an oasis of peace in a busy world. As they cross the road from the Clubhouse and walk down to the first tee through bluebells in April and flowering rhododendrons in May, they move into a world where time may seem for a while to be standing still.

They could well imagine coming across Francis John the second Earl of Wharnccliffe and founder president of the Club teeing off with a party of friends up from London or Archibald Ralph his successor striding with his spaniel at heel, out of the glorious mature woodland around the fringes of the course with a shooting party on a crisp Saturday morning.

Traditions and sporting pursuits are maintained. Portraits of the first three Earl Presidents hang in the Clubhouse and pheasant and wild game shooting still goes on in season through a local syndicate.

The Golf Course Card

2017			1912		
HOLE	WHITE YARDS	PAR	HOLE	YARDS	BOGEY
1	344	4	1	361	5
2	420	4	2	378	5
3	183	3	3	119	3
4	407	4	4	407	5
5	151	3	5	128	3
6	327	4	6	333	5
7	430	4	7	425	5
8	415	4	8	376	5
9	125	3	9	358	4
OUT	2802	33	OUT	2885	40
10	511	5	10	363	5
11	357	4	11	171	3
12	177	3	12	361	5
13	368	4	13	461	5
14	434	4	14	117	3
15	400	4	15	214	4
16	177	3	16	355	5
17	365	4	17	222	4
18	434	4	18	417	5
OUT	3223	35	OUT	2681	39
IN	2802	33	IN	2885	40
TOTAL	6025	68	TOTAL	5566	79

Note 1– the 1912 card is taken from :-

The Golf Courses of Yorkshire by J H Stainton

Note 2– the term bogey was in common use until the 1960's when the term par became internationally recognised.

Note 3– look at hole 6, at only 333 yards it is a bogey 5 !

The Golf Course of 1911

Ref: The Golf Courses of Yorkshire by J H Stainton

The course has been admirably planned. Nowhere in the district is the turf so good: it has been described as like playing on a Turkey carpet, and the greens are not surpassed for excellence in the district.

It is a lovely course, and a common sight is that of pheasants and partridges adding to the scene by their brilliant plumage. For sheer picturesqueness it is quite the most notable of all the local courses.

The sight from the 1st tee close to the gateway leading through a pleasant avenue of shady trees from the Clubhouse gives one a very correct impression of the character of the whole course. One can slice at will at Wortley, but one must not pull.

Note text in *italics* is by the editor

The **1st hole** {361 yards bogey 5 / *now 344 par 4*} is downhill with a delightful wood to the left (*was known as Coal Pit Plantation and also Jubilee Plantation*) and bunkers fronting the second shot, and also to the right, the latter of these being excellently placed. Continuing on the same line, [*refers to the* **2nd hole**]{378 yards bogey 5 / *now 420 par 4*} a very long tee shot may just reach the top of the slight hill, but otherwise the green is blind to the second shot. The green is a very good one, with finely placed bunkers to the right. Here the player enters new land, the **3rd** {119 yards bogey 3 / *now 183 par 3*} being a mashie *shot* {*a 5 iron today*} over a belt of land out of bounds

and with a deep cut brook just short of the boundary rails. The green will be found one of the fastest of many fast ones on the course. On the same bit of land lies the 6th green, the two flags causing some confusion to strangers, though that for the 3rd hole is to the left hand.

The line to the 4th {407 yards bogey 5 / *now 407 par 4*} runs rather close to a hedge but there is plenty of room to the right on to the 6th course if the intervening rough can be cleared. Still there are no difficulties ahead of the straight path save that attendant on a pull. The approach is not very good and is to be straightened out, the green lying between two tall trees with a grip to the right, and what is nowadays termed a 'Mackenzie' bunker just beyond the green being rightly adjudged a very fine one and situated in a particularly pretty corner of the links.

The 5th {128 yards bogey 3 / *now 151 par 3*} is a poor hole though what has been possible has been done to give character to it, bunkers right and left having been sunk. The green slopes down very rapidly and in summer weather needs a lot of knowing.

The 6th {333 yards bogey 5 / *now 327 par 4*} is parallel to the 4th with bunkers right and left, the green being particularly well guarded on the right.

Retracing one's steps to the older part of the course, the 7th {425 yards bogey 5 / *now 430 par 4*} is a delightful hole to play well. About 60 yards from the tee is a broad patch of gorse ringed round so as to place any intruding ball out of bounds, and giving a carry to the farther limit of this patch something like 130 yards. The line is dead over its centre and beyond it the land drops away fairly quickly through a second

gorse patch and in a series of semi-terraces to the edge of a very fast green, which is never easy to judge. The complex undulations below the second gorse make the approach very difficult to estimate, and with the green beautifully guarded right and left and at the back, the pitch calls for the nicest judgement. It is possible to make a dog leg of this hole by driving straight down the wood side and so avoid the gorse, but the carry is the thing, and in summer time a trickling approach often gives a four.

The 8th {376 yards bogey 5 / *now 415 par 4*} has a lower gorse patch as hazard to the drive and looks more difficult than it really is, though care has to be taken with the wind coming down the slope. The green lies on the slope of the hill with an awkward ridge across it, and in a wind this is not an easy five.

The 9th {358 yards bogey 4 / *now 125 par 3*} is down to the farthest corner of the park, the cut out green being rather difficult to find with a full second shot, for just beyond and to the right of the green there is a considerable drop.

There is much to like about the 10th {363 yards bogey 5 / *now 511 par 5*} The wood full of singing birds during the summer months runs all along the line to the left, and to the right are two or three tall trees, no trouble to anything like a straight ball, but a menace to a slice. A cross bunker which needed attention when I was there last, fronts the second shot, with one of these trees just at it's right extremity and the approach on to the green is difficult through the necessary allowance for the fall in the land. The green is one of the best on the course, big and flat, but it is very easy for a stranger to be short with his approach.

The 11th {171 yards bogey 3 / *now 357 par 4*} is a pure one shot hole up the hill with no great character about it.

The 12th {361 yards bogey 5 / *now 177 par 3*} is not a difficult 5, granted a good tee shot. Here again the undulations at the foot of the hill make the approach difficult to estimate, but the green is large and easy. The difficulties for this hole are discovered when the south-west wind blows, for a road runs to the left of the drive and is then easily found.

The 13th {461 yards bogey 5 / *now 368 par 4*} is the long hole on the course and affords a rather fascinating tee shot. Just to the right are a heap of pimples, which also guard the 16th, standing up some four feet high, admirably grassed and well arranged. It is in this kind of hazard that very much excellent work has been done at Wortley, and many holes strengthened considerably. Immediately beyond this hazard a line of high trees each with straggling surface roots and difficulties runs straight out, an intentional pull being the ideal drive. The second shot is over land which slopes away to the right and the pitch is supremely difficult to judge for the green is not easy and excellently guarded.

The 14th {117 yards bogey 3 / *now 434 par 4*} is the second genuine short hole on the course, a mere 117 yards up hill on to the only real undulating green which Wortley knows. It is one of the finest greens in the district and this is followed by a very pretty hole:-

The 15th: {214 yards bogey 4 / *now 400 par 4*} here the drive is over a ravine where used to run a brook, but this has been hidden away in a tunnel and emerges further down, whilst a bridge has been built over the ravine provided, so I understand, in the year when Colonel Hughes was Captain of the Club. (1896) The green has hummock bunkers to the right , a sunk pot on the same hand, further hazards to the left and immediately beyond is a wire fence on the other side of which are the game preserves. The green itself is perfect and cries aloud for the holing of long putts.

The 16th {355 yards bogey 5 / *now 177 par 3*} is often played in the teeth of the wind and then becomes quite a trying hole. The hummocks which had been previously encountered at the 13th , catch a a sliced tee shot and to the right of the green are further examples of this kind of hazard.

The 17th {222 yards bogey 4 / *now 365 par 4*} is a full drive in summer weather and a bit more when the land lies heavy, yet it is often an easier hole in the winter than in summer as the green slopes clean away from the ball and it is contemplated to carry [*move*]this green some twenty yards further on.

The 18th {417 yards bogey 5 / *now 434 par 4*} is frequently the salvation of the conceder of odds for it is a testing five, especially against the wind. A finely formed cross bunker has been built halfway from the tee, but the slope of the green is the chief trouble here. A road runs across the line finishing with a nasty grip to the right, whilst the plantations and a distinctly difficult rough run close up to the line on the left. The green, on top of the hill, close to the wicket gate, is the only poor one on the course and here putting is not easy.

During the Second World War, Wortley golf course was acquisitioned and subject to Open Cast Mining of coal.

Although we have been unable to find maps to identify the exact areas, we know that it definitely took place on our 14th and 15th holes.

This is a part explanation for the differences between the course of 1912 and today, 2017.

- More details of Wortley Golf Club, mainly during the Second World War years are to be found in:-

HISTORY 1937-1948

Designer of Wortley Golf Course

Wortley is listed as one of the Colt - designed courses by the Harry Colt Association.

At this time we are checking the validity of this claim, although we have no reason to doubt the integrity of it's inclusion. If this can be verified, it will bestow an enormous amount of prestige upon Wortley Golf Club.



Harry Colt - 1869 - 1951

Note that Colt re-designed Hallamshire Golf Course in 1912 (previously known as Sandygate)

Also Colt designed Woodsome in 1922

Wortley Clubhouse – 1911



Opened in November 1911, the Members spent approximately £1500 in a spacious and well arranged Clubhouse.

(equivalent to £125,000 in 2017 and likely used to convert the building previously used as a Hunting Lodge)

It contains eight bedrooms, four of these being double rooms, and it is certain that this accommodation will be in great demand during the summer. (ref : The Golf Courses of Yorkshire – J H Stainton)

Wortley Clubhouse – 2017



The 12th HOLE BRIDGE :-

This steel bridge was fabricated at Samuel Fox & Co., Stocksbridge under the direction of Mr E. Hampshire, General works manager and Club member. It was erected in **1964** by Messrs John & Harry Wroe – builders of the foundations who were Club members and residents of Wortley village.

The managing director of Samuel Fox, Mr H.P.Forder initiated the project to commemorate the captaincy of his sales manager, Mr Joe Goodlad in 1965.

A stainless steel plate, engraved with a few of these details was attached to the bridge prior to the opening ceremony.

However, the management committee ordered it's removal on the basis that advertising could not be permitted !



Officially 'opening the bridge' Mr H P Forder leads the party to a Land Rover where Mr Meggitt dispensed champagne, courtesy of Samuel Fox & Co.

Mr J Goodlad drove from tee to green for the bridge opening.
(The absence of trees and shrubs is very noticeable in comparison today)

Sheringham / Wortley Relationship:-

The special relationship that Wortley has with Sheringham Golf Club, Norfolk, began in 1949 by Wortley's Colonel Hemmings (captain in 1951).

The colonel commanded anti-aircraft defences in East Anglia in the Second World War. One day following a round of golf, his chums suggested that they leave Wortley for a weekend away. The colonel said he knew a perfect place and the annual fixture began ; refreshment and bon homie taking a higher priority than negotiating the tough links !

Wortley visitors to Sheringham played together until 1978, under the captaincy of Harry Broadbent, when matches with Sheringham members began.

The party is made up of members invited by the Club captain. There are two annual fixtures : at Sheringham on May day bank holiday with the return match at Wortley in September.