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GOLF CLUB**

(TALKIN TARN)

by

ROBERT H. K. BROWNING

TELEPHONE : BRAMPTON 255

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THE GOLF CLUBS ASSOCIATION

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BRAMPTON GOLF CLUB

(TALKIN TARN)

THE COURSE OF THE BRAMPTON GOLF CLUB IS LAID OUT in one of the beauty spots of Cumberland, at the western side of the navigable lake called Talkin Tarn. The Club House stands a mile to the south of Brampton on the Castle Carrock road, and just over ten miles from Carlisle. Brampton, itself with its Norman church built out of stones taken from the Roman Wall, and its romantic house in which Bonnie Prince Charlie resided for a week in the '45, awaiting the capitulation of Carlisle, is a town of considerable historical interest. Talkin Tarn, which extends to over sixty acres, is a famous boating and bathing lake and a great centre for skating and curling in hard winters. I am not going to pretend that it vies with the wild natural beauty of Coniston or Derwentwater, but it is a very pleasant spot and adds immensely to the beauty of the prospect from the holes around the turn on the golf course.

An inquisition in the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth describes Talkin manor 'a great common of heath and pasture ground called Talkin Fell' and that name gives a clue to the character of the course. My first impression of the course was that it was of the moorland type; but it is not moorland, it is fell—broken up by steep slopes and unexpected hollows that reproduce in miniature the contours of the Pennine ridge rising to the east of it. There is a good deal of heather and a good deal of gorse, and stretches of rushes and patches of sand, with a watercourse making its way down from the hills. It reminds me of some of the famous courses of the Scottish highlands, and yet I am conscious of a subtle difference that gives Brampton a character of its own.

When the Brampton Club was formed in 1909, its course consisted only of the nine holes on the Tarn side of the road, the fourth to the twelfth of the present round. It was later extended to the full eighteen by taking in the ground on the western side of the road on which the Club House now stands. It is of good length—over 5,900 yards with one or two uphill holes that are more than value for their distance as recorded on the score card. It includes three really long holes of 537, 501 and 495 yards and another of 453 yards that will be beyond two-stroke distance for most of us. But the longest of the two-shotters—one of 400 yards and three of between 360 and 370 yards—are quite feasible 4's even for the handicap man. The round presents a fascinating mixture of adventurous holes at which the bold contours of the ground make the greens practically self-guarding, and simpler looking holes at which well-spaced sand bunkers provide a colourful contrast to the natural difficulties of heather and gorse. And the whole thing provides a fair and pleasantly varied test for any class of golfer.

The round starts off with a series of holes zig-zagging into the teeth of the prevailing wind. The **FIRST** hole is a medium-length two-shooter of 360 yards fiercely dog-legged to the left. The tee has been ingeniously placed so that a clump of trees close to it on the left front shut out all temptation to try and 'cut the corner.' We must place our drive past the end of another line of trees that will be along our left for the second shot, which takes us slightly uphill to a green simply but adequately guarded by a bunker at the right corner.

The **SECOND**, a short hole of 156 yards, brings us back downhill again, giving us a slightly dropping shop that will normally have to be played through a cross-wind from the left, to a green guarded by a bunker outside either corner.

The **THIRD** I would describe as a typical fell-country hole. It is much the same length as the first—364 yards to be exact—but it is a long way more difficult. From a tee in the bottom of a rushy valley the fairway climbs up between a gorse-clad knoll on the right and a wooded rise on the left. A good drive should take us up on to more level ground and leave us with a second over another ridge to a green set right-handed into the reverse slope, with the drop guarding it on the left—by no means an easy target for a blind shot!



THE CLUB HOUSE FROM FIRST TEE

(Photo by Tassell (Carlisle) Ltd.)

At this point we cross over to the eastern side of the main road to tackle another 'Grampians' hole for the 269 yard **FOURTH**. Here again a blind drive up the slope will reach reasonably level ground, from which to pitch up to a green on the crest of a ridge, with a rim of banking and a bunker at the back to prevent an overstrong shot from running down the slope beyond.

We reap our reward for the climb to the last two holes in an exhilarating drive at the **FIFTH** (298 yards) which takes us down at one fell swoop from a tee on top of the ridge into the valley below. Short of the green a clump of trees masks the boundary fence on the right and a whale-back roll and a hollow beyond cover the front of the green, making the distance difficult to judge with our approach shot.

The **SIXTH** (218 yards) is the second of the par 3's, a fine hole of the 'long one-shooter' type. We strike off from a built up tee over a dip to a green on top of a slight rise, guarded by a bunker at either corner. But on the right of the green the ground falls away in a slope of gorse and trees so that blank disaster awaits a pushed out shot.

Thus far none of the holes has been exceptionally testing from the point of view of length, but we complete the outward journey with three holes that will give the big hitters their chance. The SEVENTH, 400 yards long and slightly uphill all the way, is the stiffest par 4 of the round. It brings us on to the rising ground overlooking the picturesque Talkin Tarn, which lies beyond the boundary on our right. A slightly saucery green, with a slope of gorse at the back of it, makes an encouraging target for a bold second shot.

We have the slope of the ground in our favour—and shall need all the help it can give us—at the EIGHTH, which measures 537 yards and is the longest hole on the course. It is a hole of the 'deferred dog-leg' type, finishing up with a dropping approach past or over the end of the wood on our right, to a green in a natural hollow.

The NINTH (453 yards) brings us up the other side of the wood dividing this hole from the eighth. We have a blind second over the crest of a ridge, but beyond that the ground slopes gently down to a green on the falling slope, with the drop on the right. The hole figures on the card as a par 5, and I think that even the tigers will usually be content to play for the par figure.

This brings us to the turn and also to a nodal point where the fourth, tenth and thirteenth tees lie close together. We commence the second half of the round with a series of holes that give us a chance to get back to level 4's again. At the TENTH, a shortish two-shotter of 326 yards, we drive downhill from a pulpit tee on the face of a slope and should keep well out to the right to open up our pitch to a double-terraced green, with the end of a line of wall covering the entry from the left.

The ELEVENTH is a striking short hole, giving us a shot of 140 yards slightly uphill to a green lying in a sort of a saddle between a wooded rise on the right and the boundary wall on the left and guarded by a bunker at the left corner. From this point again we enjoy a pleasing view of the Tarn and the surrounding country.

We strike off to the TWELFTH (307 yards) from a tee set high up on the shoulder of the slope beside the boundary wall, and have a tricky pitch to a green in a little hollow, with the road on our right and a bunker guarding either side of the entry.



SECOND HOLE, WITH GELT WOODS IN DISTANCE

(Photo by Tassell (Carlisle) Ltd.)

The twelfth hole brings us back close to the main road again and we recross it to play the last six holes on the ground between the road and the railway. The THIRTEENTH (289 yards) takes us slightly downhill with the road along our left. A good drive should leave us with only the simplest of pitches for our second, but the built-up green is well guarded, with a bunker short of it on the left and more bunkers along either side of the entry and of the green itself.

The FOURTEENTH is the long hole of the second half—501 yards. We drive up a rising switchback valley, and hit our second shot over the crest of the rise, but beyond that the ground falls gently, and two well-hit shots should leave us with a simple pitch for our third to a green on a left hand rise.

The ground slopes up again in a double rise at the FIFTEENTH, which is 241 yards long and with the slope and the prevailing wind both against us, must be regarded as just out of distance for a par 3. But it should be the easiest of 4's and we can always nurse the hope of 'snicking a 3' with a well-hit drive and a chip.

The 3 should be reasonably easy of attainment at the SIXTEENTH, which is the last of the short holes. It calls for a dropping shot of 180 yards over a stretch of rolling ground to a green in a natural hollow, with bunkers on either side and another rather awkward one short of it on the right.

We finish off the round with two fine holes on the lower ground alongside the railway. The SEVENTEENTH (368 yards) should be within two-shot distance for anybody, but it is easy to go wrong. The hole is dog-legged to the right, with a bunker marking the corner, and a water-course covers the front of the green, which is further guarded by a bunker at the right corner.

The EIGHTEENTH is the last of the 500 yarders—actually 495 yards. On the right the ground rises fairly steeply to the plateau along which we started off, and the hole is dog-legged to the right round the curve of this rise. With the wind behind them the big hitters will no doubt at times be able to get up in two, but it will need a well-judged second to find a green of the armchair type, set into the rise behind the Club House and ringed round at the sides and back by a horse shoe of bunkers.

The standard scratch score is 71, but it will take good golf to keep our net score down to an equivalent of level 4's on the days when a stiff breeze is blowing up from the Irish Sea.

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2	156	3	11	140	3
3	364	4	12	307	4
4	269	4	13	289	4
5	298	4	14	501	5
6	218	3	15	241	4
7	400	4	16	180	3
8	537	5	17	368	4
9	453	5	18	495	5
	3,055	36		2,847	36

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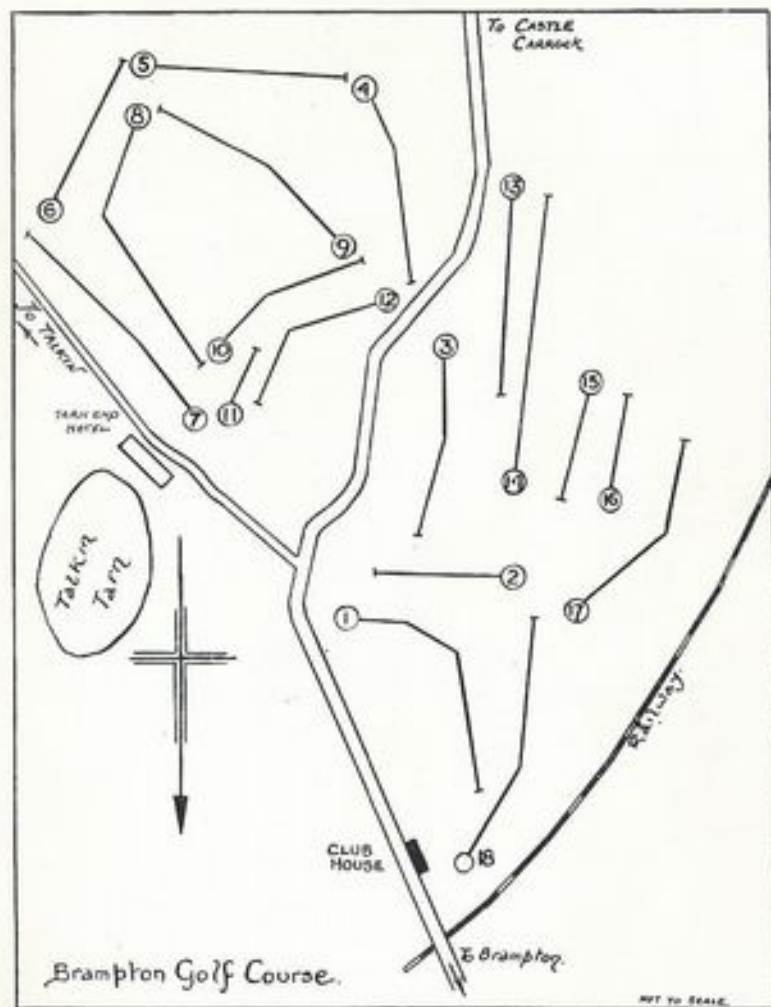
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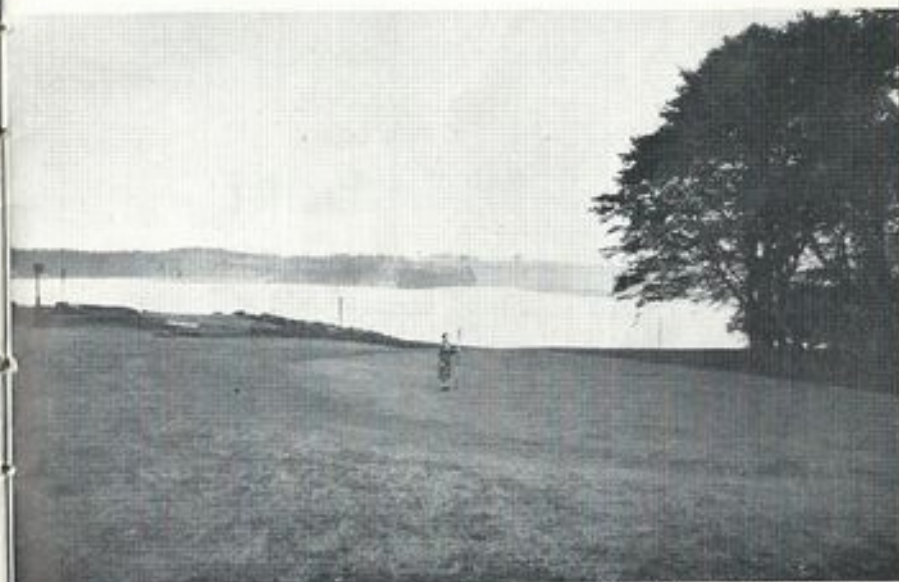
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THE ELEVENTH GREEN OVERLOOKING TALKEN TARN *(Photo by Tassell (Carlisle) Ltd.)*

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2. The player who has the honour should be allowed to play before his opponent or fellow-competitor tees his ball.
3. No player should play until the players in front are out of range.
4. In the interests of all, players should play without delay.
5. Players searching for a ball should allow other players coming up to pass them; they should signal to the players following them to pass, and should not continue their play until those players have passed and are out of range.
6. Before leaving a bunker, a player should carefully fill up any holes made by him therein.
7. Through a green a player should ensure that any turf cut or displaced by him is replaced at once and pressed down, and that, after the players have holed out, any damage to the putting

green made by the ball or the players is carefully repaired.

8. Players should ensure that, when dropping bags or the flagstick, no damage is done to the putting green, and that neither they nor their caddies damage the hole by standing close to the hole or in handling the flagstick. The flagstick should be properly replaced in the hole before the players leave the putting green.

9. When the result of a hole has been determined, players should immediately leave the putting green.

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In the absence of special rules, singles, threesomes or foursomes should have precedence of and be entitled to pass any other kind of match. A single player has no standing, and should give way to a match of any kind.

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