



LIVE THE DREAM AT SHIRLEY PARK

Boasting an historic and enjoyable parkland course and a charming clubhouse, **Shirley Park Golf Club** in Croydon is the epitome of relaxing, suburban golf, with a warm welcome guaranteed to all-comers

Although located just a mile from East Croydon train station, Shirley Park Golf Club provides a 130-acre oasis of green tranquility set amid one of Surrey's most populated and built-up areas.

The club boasts a rich history that stretches back more than a century. Legendary golf course architects Tom Simpson and Herbert Fowler – whose other courses include Walton Heath, The Berkshire and, most famously, Pebble Beach – laid out the 18-hole course in 1913, just before the outbreak of World War I, with the official opening carried out by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Vansittart Bowater, in July 1914, after which two former Open Champions J H Taylor and Sandy Herd took part in a match, which Taylor won by four shots after shooting 73.

Although measuring just under 6,200 yards, the par of 71, and the challenging nature of the design, ensure that all elements of your game are tested and birdies are well earned. There are three teachable par fives – the 4th, 9th and 18th – to tempt the longest straight hitters,

while a variety of dogleg par fours, including the 297-yard second, provide opportunities for red figures. The quartet of par threes are particularly strong, varying from 150 yards to 210, while there are a couple of potential card-wreckers for good measure, all of which add up to a varied and hugely enjoyable round.

The club's skilled team of green staff constantly strives to improve the year-round quality of the course, and in addition to the regular maintenance, special projects are undertaken every year to ensure standards are always on the up. Recent examples include the refurbishment of pathways, installation of new practice nets by the first tee, and the construction of a permanent storage room for members' electric trolleys.

Maintaining and upgrading the superb clubhouse is another ongoing commitment, and in the last year alone the dining room and kitchen have been refurbished, which will be much appreciated by everyone attending club events and functions of all kinds.

The club boasts a wide membership across



■ SHIRLEY PARK'S STUNNING PARKLAND COURSE WAS DESIGNED BY TOM SIMPSON AND HERBERT FOWLER

all ages, genders, handicaps and backgrounds. There is an academy for assisting non-golfers to learn the game, while also introducing them to the rules, etiquette and, of course, the social side of the club. Many academy members go on to become full members, while every week there is an array of roll-ups to ensure that there is almost always a group to join in with at a time that fits in with individual work or family commitments.

Members can also participate in a wide range of competitions, both midweek and at weekends. There are many individual stroke play events, four ball and foursomes match play competitions for men and ladies, plus numerous mixed events.

The club also offers an indoor tuition centre, where the club's team of dedicated PGA professionals, led by head pro Mick Taylor, can offer coaching and club fitting using the latest Trackman technology. There is an outside practice area and a

practice putting and chipping green.

Shirley Park boasts an active and well supported social scene, with an event calendar featuring regular music evenings, quizzes, horse racing nights, as well as formal club occasions. Even when there is not a function in the diary, there is invariably a buzz in the clubhouse, with members and visitors enjoying the excellent range of food and drinks on offer, while an 80-inch TV ensures there's always a lively atmosphere whenever there is sport to be watched.

For non-golfers, social membership is available, which qualifies for all the above except golf, and includes use of the club's popular snooker tables.

The recently re-designed website provides a wealth of information on the course and club, with hole by hole flyovers, booking forms for visitors/societies, and a special hospitality section highlighting the facilities available for groups, parties and conferences, which includes a spacious dining room that can comfortably accommodate up to 120 guests. **CN**



■ THE MANICURED PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN IS ADJACENT TO THE RECENTLY-REFURBISHED CLUBHOUSE



■ THE PAR 71 LAYOUT IS PRESENTED IN EXCELLENT CONDITION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

For more information on how to join Shirley Park, or for society bookings and visitor green fees, visit www.shirleyparkgolfclub.co.uk, or contact the general manager, Steve Murphy, via email at steve.murphy@shirleyparkgolfclub.co.uk, or head professional Mick Taylor at professional@shirleyparkgolfclub.co.uk.