

# A History of Padeswood and Buckley Golf Club



The club would not be in existence today had it not been for the enterprise of Arthur Joseph.

The first record we have of a golf club at Padeswood is on the 1912 OS map which shows Mold Golf Club occupying the land on the right of Station Lane. The course remained until 1922 when the members moved to Pantymwyn. Some documentation, however, suggests that the Mold club was at Padeswood as early as 1909 although no actual records have been found.

The Padeswood course was left derelict until 1932 when Arthur Joseph, holidaying in the area, spotted an ideal prospect and decided that he could make the land into a good golf course.

At the time he was the professional at Mellor and Townscliffe Golf Club, Derbyshire, and already had to his credit the design and construction of the 18 hole Great Ormes Head Golf course at Llandudno in 1903 and the Mellor Golf Course in 1919.

It is also believed that he was the professional at Bury Golf Club in 1913.

Arthur set up as a tenant at the Bridge Inn, Padeswood (now demolished), in 1932. Having obtained a lease from the Fairbairn-Eyton estate and a licence for playing golf from Mold Golf Club, he began to reconstruct the course.

He drained water from the ground into a stream that meandered through the course. All the groundwork was carried out single-handedly with just a spade and wheelbarrow! Gradually the course took shape and the newly constructed 9 hole course at Padeswood came into being.

Arthur Joseph was at this time the proprietor of the club, the professional and the greenkeeper. He had declared in a circular to prospective members in March 1933 that the course would be open for play as from April 1st. He had, however, little response possibly because he had set the annual fees too high (1 Guinea for Ladies, 2 Guineas for Gentlemen and 15 shillings for Juveniles).

When the 20 prospective members met in the inaugural A.G.M., the club officials were appointed and members were elected to serve on a general committee, which was to consist of twelve with four seats allocated to Lady Members.

The annual subscription was set at half a crown with a request for a voluntary donation to defray the cost of a new clubhouse.

The first main officials of the club were: President – Mr Fairbairn-Eyton, Captain – Mr. T C Jones, Lady Captain – Miss Mostyn, Joint Secretaries – Dr Dobson and Mr. W Owen, Ladies' Secretary – Miss D Cropper.

The minutes of subsequent meetings up to 1939 show a steady increase of players up to a total of 67 by the outbreak of war. The minutes themselves make fascinating reading and show how these pioneer members established their local rules, competitions, organised social functions and fundraising activities.



The picture shows the original clubhouse circa 1935. Arthur Joseph, the Owner/Professional, lived in the white cottage on the left of the picture.

The recorded minutes of the meetings from 1939 – 1949 are unfortunately misplaced. It would appear that the official name of the club became Padeswood and Buckley at some time during this period.

The war years saw membership fall and it was recorded at the AGM of 1949 that only 23 members had enrolled at a fee of 5 shillings. No mention is made of any Lady members, but at the monthly meeting of 9th May 1950 it was decided to approach the Ladies with the intention of re-forming the Ladies' section. A special meeting on 19th May 1950 saw the re-formation of the Ladies' section with its own committee. The first Lady Captain was Mrs. Lewis and the first Lady Secretary Mrs. O Wood.

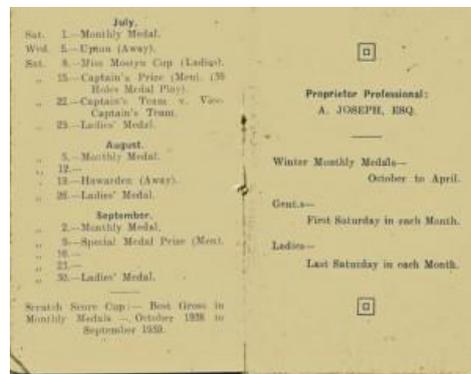
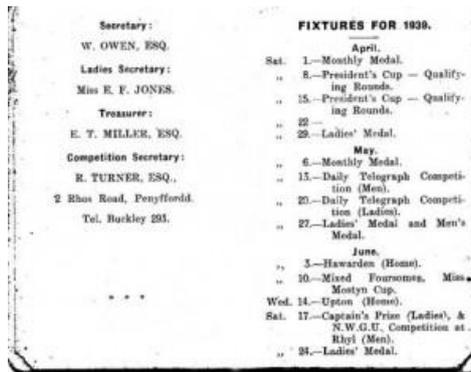
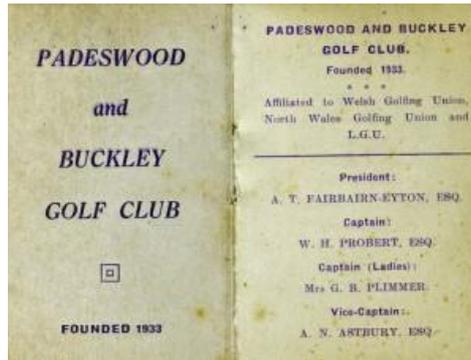
In 1954 the club acquired a new clubhouse. Although the facilities were far from palatial, this was an immense improvement on what had gone before.

The new clubhouse was a wooden building that had been used as a contractor's office in the building of the Woodhead railway tunnel. It was bought for £100 and transported by lorry to the club.

Pictured below is Arthur Joseph teeing off outside the new clubhouse.



A £100 overdraft from the bank was necessary to offset the accessories (furniture painting etc.)



Above is a copy of a fixture book from 1933.

Minutes of Council Meetings

Meeting held at "Cosy Cafe", Buckley, December 12th 1933

"It was agreed to put a notice in the clubhouse reminding members that the subscription of 2/6 was due on October 1st 1933"

Meeting held at "Bridge Inn", Padeswood, June 13th, 1934

"Agreed to purchase scorecards from Mr. Cropper – 500 for 11/6"

Meeting held "Cosy Cafe", May 3rd 1937

"Out of minutes the question arose as to how a 'cup ball' should be placed and the following was agreed. 'Cup ball' on the fairway to be released from cup, position on to lip of mark."

Meeting held at the Clubhouse, August 12th 1939

" Mr Joseph, the proprietor, was invited into the meeting and the Competition Secretary explained the procedure required in order to obtain a licence. This was not possible as certain regulations regarding the premises and sanitary arrangements did not fulfil the requirements of the Justices' Clerk."

## The Fifties

In 1954 the club acquired a new clubhouse. Formerly used as a contractor's office during the building of the Woodhead Railway Tunnel it was a significant improvement on what had gone before.

Minutes from Council Meetings

Annual General Meeting for 1950 held at the "Bridge Inn"

"Captain's Prize – The Competition for the Captain's Prize was abandoned. The competition sheet was inadvertently destroyed by H. Newbury!"

Annual General Meeting held at the "Bridge Inn" November 24th 1953

"It was proposed by Mrs. R Sims and seconded by Miss E Stanton that with the purchase of a larger Clubhouse more funds would be needed and that the Club Annual Subscription be raised to 10/- per annum. An amendment that the subscription be left at 5/- was proposed by Mr. Ken Williams and seconded by Mr. H V James. Upon a vote being taken the amendment was carried"

## The Seventies

With the rapidly increasing popularity of golf, at the end of the 1960's, the club decided to purchase more land and extend the course to 18 holes.

In 1970, negotiations were completed for the purchase of Caia Farm, which adjoined the existing 9-hole course, at a cost of £20,250.



Caia Farm

An 18-hole course was planned although it was intended, at first, to confine the work to nine holes and use the existing nine holes to make the 18. The farm buildings and yard were to be converted into a clubhouse and car park.

By this time, the membership consisted of 250 men, 75 ladies and 15 juniors.



Aerial View Caia farm



Aerial View of Course-late Eighties (Photo-Keith Ratcliffe)

## Before the Course was Constructed

### The Ffrith Line

The Ffrith line ran from its junction with the Chester – Mold line along what is now the 2nd fairway. The trackway and bridge from the junction are behind the 3rd tee. The line continued across the 4th fairway and then followed the river Alyn towards Pontblyddyn. To the left side of the 4th green the remains of the trackway can be seen as a public footpath through the trees.



View of 2nd Hole from the bridge – the bank of the cutting is clearly visible on the right hand side.



View of bridge and trackway behind 3rd tee

(Photos Dave Tapp)

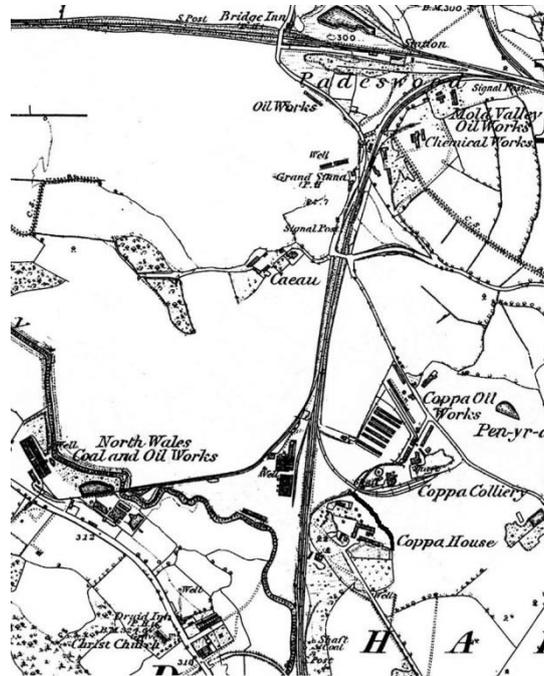
Construction of the branch line began in 1847. The original intention was to build the line up to the Ffrith Limeworks at Llanfynydd but following financial difficulties the line ceased when it reached Coed Talon and it was to be some years before it reached the limeworks.

The first mile of line to Coppa was opened to traffic in 1849. Coal was already being worked nearby and the collieries that developed here would become one of the main sources of traffic for the Ffrith branch.

In the mid-1930s there was a derailment of wagons near Pontblyddyn and the line closed shortly afterwards.

## Coppa Colliery Sidings

The colliery was opened in 1854. In the 1860s the colliery was greatly extended to work the rich deposits of cannel (oil bearing coal) and ordinary coal. Two oil works were built and several shafts were sunk.



In 1872 Coppa Colliery was closed. Some limited working did take place when the lease was taken over by the neighbouring Padeswood colliery. Mining finished entirely in 1888

## Coppa Oil Works

This was situated in the area between the 4th fairway and 9th green/11th tee. Opened in the 1860s, it was one of the largest in the area. The site beside the Coppa Colliery was not connected to the Ffrith Branch line but the distilled oil was transported by a tramway through a tunnel beneath the Ffrith Branch to the second works to be either loaded onto rail wagons or refined into such products as paraffin, grease and lamp oil which was then carried by rail to customers throughout Great Britain

The tramway is shown on the centre left of the map.

This tramway crossed the 4th fairway near the 150yd marker. The large dip in the rough on the right hand side (much visited by those of us who fade the ball) is the site of the old tunnel under the railway line.

The refinery closed after 1874 and the second works were thought to have been demolished by 1883.

Bibliography- Industrial Railways and Tramways of Flintshire – J.R. Thomas & M Griffiths

## The Industries

Coal mining was a major industry, along with pottery and brickmaking, of this part of Flintshire. The nearby town of Buckley had many coal mines and mining took place in most of the surrounding area.

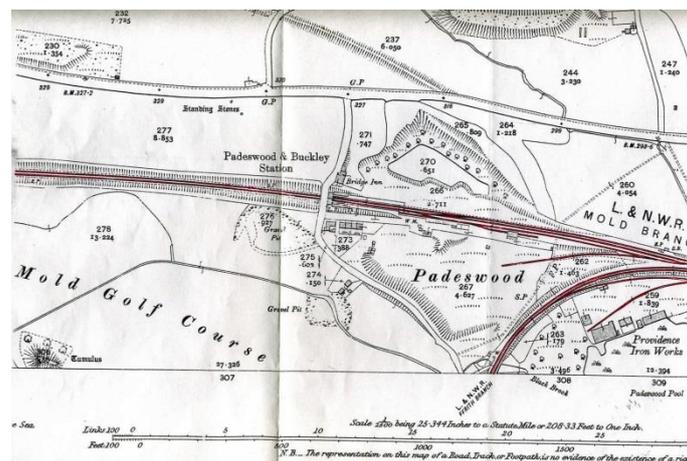
At Padeswood it was cannel coal that was mined. Crude oil can be distilled from cannel coal and shale.

In 1868 there were 22 Oil companies in the Mold Area. Some of them were operating on what are now Padeswood & Buckley and Old Padeswood golf courses. Flintshire oil began to illuminate much of Great Britain. Sadly this prosperity was short-lived as the opening of large oil fields in the USA meant that this local oil industry went into decline after 1870.

The Ffrith Junction line was built to link these Collieries and Oil Works with those at Pontblyddyn, Leeswood and Coed Talon and it is this line that ran through what is now the golf course. The Junction can be seen at the bottom right of this 1912 map.

Note Mold Golf Course on the bottom left of the map.

Mold Golf Club moved here from Plas Hafod around 1912 because of the improved access the railway gave. After the First World War they again relocated, this time to Pantymwyn.



The buildings just below the Ffrith Junction are the Providence Iron Works c1910.

In the 1860s, this area was the site of the Mold Valley Oil Works and a Chemical Works.

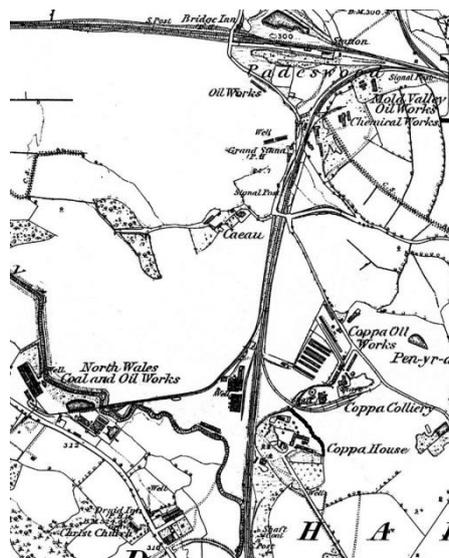
It has also been the site of Ratcliffe's Wagon Works. c1900 (see below)



Photograph (Chris Dawson Collection).

### The Oil Works & Collieries

The map below is based on an OS map from the 1870s. Much of the boundary and other details have been removed to show the Oil Works, Collieries and trackways more clearly.



The tramway running from the Coppa Oil Works passed over the 9th fairway and crossed the river to the North Wales Coal and Oil Works continuing on to the Alyn Bank Collieries on the Pontblyddyn side.

The detail above and to the left of 'Coppa Colliery' are the tramway/sidings and above those are the retorts where the oil was distilled.

The area next to 'Coppa House' had a tramway running alongside it, next to the railway line, and there is evidence that some form of loading platform and buildings had been constructed there.

The present Clubhouse (centre) is shown as Caeau rather than Caia as we know it today.

The tramways were narrow gauge and little remains. However, a pair of wheels has been recovered from the site.



## The Railway



The railway line from Chester to Mold opened in the mid-1800s and the station at Padeswood opened in 1850. The line was extended in 1869 to Denbigh.

The station was renamed Padeswood and Buckley in 1894. Although this line could never be described as a main line it did host regular passenger services between Corwen, Ruthin, Denbigh, Mold and Chester. Freight facilities were withdrawn in August 1956 and the station closed in January 1958. All passenger services on the line ceased in 1962 but the line continued in use to serve a chemical factory near Mold until 1983. The track was lifted in 1985.

On the left of the picture are the railway workers cottages and at the right hand end is the larger Station Master's house. The railway cutting has long been filled in but the houses survive.

Photographs (Chris Dawson collection)

On Saturday 8th November 1952 the Chronicle newspaper carried a report with the headline.

### *Out-of-this-world – Padeswood*

The article highlighted a campaign by the residents of the village, at that time around 80 in number, to improve the services provided. There was no electricity. The only telephone was at the station which was not available at night; the nearest public telephone was at either Buckley or Pontblyddyn some two miles away. They did not have a drinking water supply. All water was brought in cans, four times a day from Mold station but only on weekdays.

The licensee of the Bridge Inn got his supplies from a farm pump, fetching it by car.

One of the villagers was quoted as saying" Every time we have an election we are promised light, water and telephones. But once our vote has been recorded the village slips back to its old self again" (some things never change!)



A resident of Railway Terrace collects her cans of drinking water.

(Photograph Chris Dawson collection)

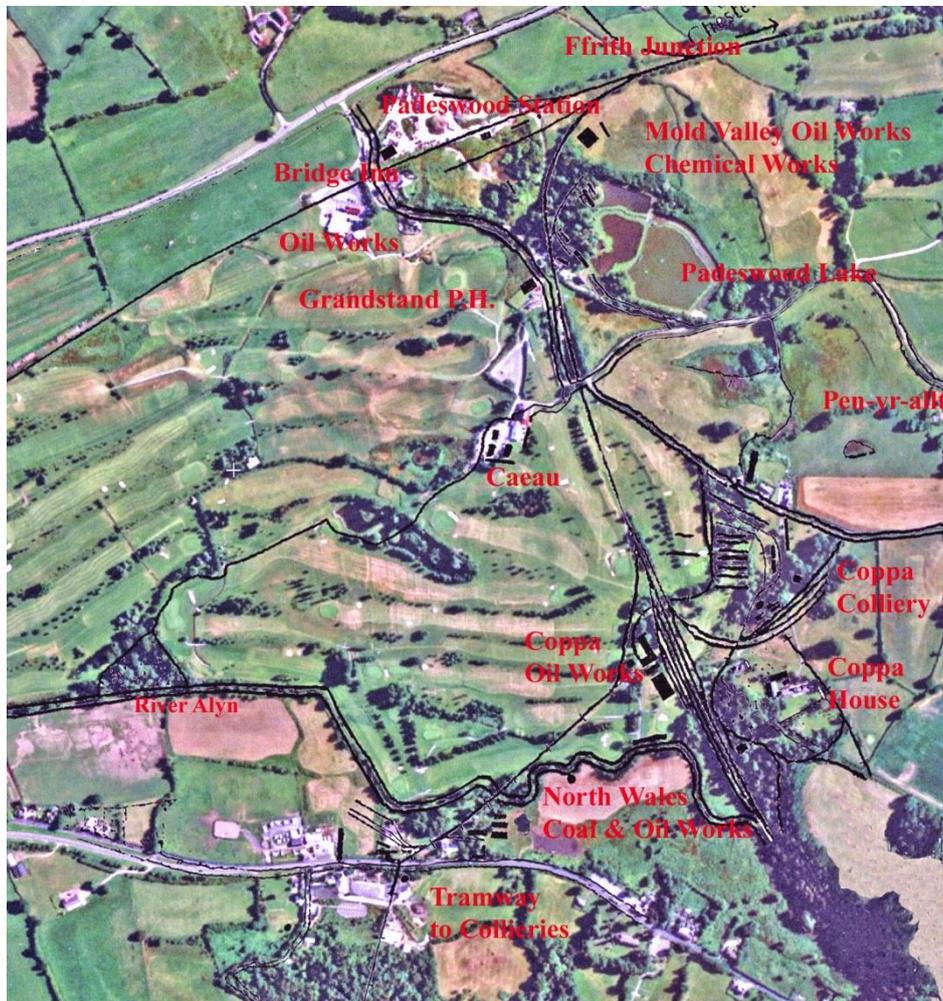
## Present and Past

On the satellite photograph below, towards the bottom right hand corner, there is a pale line crossing diagonally from the 11th tee to the 9th fairway. This is the outline of the tramway linking the Ffrith line to the North Wales Coal and Oil Works and the Alyn Bank collieries on the other side of the river. The old rubble/stone track bed means that the ground dries out more quickly than the surrounding area so in dry weather the grass dies back leaving a ghost outline of the tramway. There was an embankment crossing the 9th fairway. Initially a gap was created in the embankment to provide a way through to the green. Some years later the embankment was removed completely.



Scroll down for a composite view

Below is the satellite photograph with the railway and tramways shown on the OS map overlaid. It can be seen that the 4th fairway was crossed by several lines as well as the sidings to Coppa Colliery. The tramway line across the 9th lines up perfectly with the ghost line on the fairway.



Compiled by Dave Tapp