

Club History

The first clubhouse erected in 1927

The Years 1928 to 1978

from "A History of Scraftoft Golf Club" by Robert E Lee

Scraftoft Golf Club was founded by four men, A V Johnson, Captain R J Green TD, A J Gisborne and C Huntley. A limited company was formed on 4th July 1927 and named "The Scraftoft Golf Club Limited."

At first it was the intention to open a 9 hole course but such was the response for membership that extra land was acquired and the full 18 holes were prepared early in the following year. A small parcel of land was purchased to erect a clubhouse and the land of the course was taken on lease.

The course was constructed by James Coles and Sons, the nurserymen and foreman in charge was John Riddlestone. With the time and finances available to the company, there was a great deal to be desired in the quality of the course and due to the restricted area available, the initial length was only 4871 yards with a bogey 70.

Captain R J Green was the first honorary secretary and the first professional, Alfred Goodridge, was appointed. A young assistant by the name of Frank Liddiard was engaged. An early member of the greens staff was W E Colver who was to serve the club for many years.

The opening ceremony on 28th January 1928 was performed by Mr W Lindsay MP in strong biting wind and rain. An exhibition match followed between Alfred Goodridge and three other local professionals, J Seager (Rothley Park), E Manton (Kirby Muxloe) and P F Weston (Birstall). The weather was so bad the match was called off after 7 holes. The golf, however, was very good with one professional being one under fours at the time and the others not far behind.

Despite its deficiencies, the course had advantages over others and was described in the local newspaper of the day as "standing 500ft above sea level, commanding delightful views of the famous hunting country and Billesdon Coplow." It was said that the "air was so pure and exhilarating that the average golfer could play 36 holes and feel almost as fresh at the end as he did when starting out." The article also made reference to the fact that Billesdon Coplow was the scene of the 'Great Run' by the local hunt in 1800, when the hounds covered 28 miles in 2½ hours.

The lady members were, however, finding that even 18 holes of golf were a little exhausting and at their first General Meeting on 18th June 1928 it was proposed that a one hour rest should be taken after 9 holes during competitions. The club was very popular with the ladies who could play with few restrictions on times.

The clubhouse was situated on the same site as the present building and was a timber single-storey pavilion type construction with a typical slatted veranda facing the course. The very small car park was behind the clubhouse and not on the Beeby side as it is now. The accommodation principally offered changing facilities for both ladies and gentlemen.

The professional's shop was a small garden shed. Mr Goodridge was under contract to play Harlequin balls and he was presented with a small trophy from that company when he broke the course record with a ten under fours 62. This remains the best recorded score for the first course.

The first committees were formed in 1928 and details of the members are shown here. It would appear that a captain had not been elected at outset but this soon followed. The rules of the day were such that a committee member absent for three meetings was "ipso facto" no longer a committee member. It was to be the practice for a number of years that an Honorary Captain and a Playing Captain be elected. Mr W Lindsay Everard, later to be knighted, as the first Honorary Captain, a position he retained for many years. There was also for some years a Thursday Captain.

In 1929, additional land was acquired beyond the farm on the right hand side of the 10th fairway and a well-known professional from the Hollingwell Golf Club, Tom Williamson, was engaged to re-design the course.

The new course was opened on Saturday 12th April 1930 by Mr W Lindsay Everard MP. It was reported that Mr Everard was no the most competent of golfers and he was undoubtedly aware of the large crowd which had assembled and of the presence of four well-known professionals. The result was an air shot – you can imagine his relief when he connected at his second attempt.

There followed an exhibition match between Tom Williamson, who had designed the course, Arthur Havers of Sandy Lodge, an ex-British Open Champion, Abe Mitchell of St Albans and C A Whitcombe of Combe Hill; four excellent golfers of their day. This time the match did last the 18 holes and the result was all square.

One young man who was a member at that time was unable to attend the opening ceremony but he has certainly made up for his absence ever since. Within 6 weeks of his joining the club in those very early days, he was invited to serve on a committee and from that day he served on every committee in the club. He was Club President from 1951 to 1968, the Honorary Captain for several years and served on the Board of Directors of the limited company for many years. He was made the only life member in 1950 and became the Patron of the Club. His name was Archibald Wesley Swann.

The course was no 6080 yards long with a bogey of 75, but the additional area was causing problems due to poor drainage. Many tones of fine cinders were spread on the fairways to improve this with partial success. Unfortunately balls did not last very long when played over this area and many complaints were received. With the new design came the first sand bunkers.

The most hole was so called because the tee was in the centre of a most situated at the opposite side of Keyham Lane West to the tee. Carp swam in the water and golfers approached the tee via a wooden plank. This tee was to remain until immediately post war when the land was sold to the City for part of the Netherhall Development.

It is interesting to note that during this time the green fee to play the course was 12?p and at the weekends 17?p. Caddies could be engaged for 6p.

Licensing laws seem to have been a little more restricting in those days, with the bar closing at 9pm during the week and at 8pm on Sundays. A gentleman's subscription was £4.20 and a lady's £2.62.

These were the days when sand was used to tee up a ball and when hand-made clubs were known as mashies, niblicks and brassies and cost 75p. Common golf balls of the day were the Dunlop 29 and 31.

Transport was a problem and many members travelled by Toone's bus service to the village and then walked to the course. How keen they must have been.

Whilst there were no bacon sandwiches and coffee on Sunday mornings, as is the custom now, the proprietor of the village shop in the summer did provide minerals and ice cream at Long Tom Green, which was then at the top of the field near to Nether Hall.

In the early '30s the course was let for grazing sheep and the greens were fenced. Fred Burn was at that time probably the most accurate golfer playing of a 24 handicap. Playing of the then 17th tee, he struck a sheep 40 yards away on the head with his first drive. Thinking that lightning would not strike twice he struck a second ball and once again hit the unfortunate animal.

As with many sports golfers do enjoy competition even more so when there is an attractive trophy to be won and the thought of their name on an Honours Board in the clubhouse. Throughout the life of Scraftoft Golf Club there has always been a strong response to competition and the rewards have only been made possible by the generosity of many members and their families who have contributed to one of the finest collections of trophies in the County.

Trophies

Several of the trophies still being won today have been in existence for 75 years:

Scraftoft Cup - presented by the Founders

Brown Cup - presented by C A Brown

Coles Bowl - presented by J Coles

Potts Foursomes - presented by G David Potts

Bowerman Cup - presented by H Bowerman

Scratch Cup - presented by P R Wykes

Thomson Cup - presented by W B Thomson

For the Ladies:

Sharp Challenge Cup - presented by Aubrey T Sharp

Young Challenge Bowl - presented by Mrs E C Young

P L Baker Cup - presented by Mrs P L Baker

Although members were attracted to the club in goodly numbers, financially the club was not very sound. It had been formed with the minimum of capital and increasing overheads, with the acquisition of the extra land, had presented difficulties.

Despite these problems, the golfing activities of Scraftoft were very rarely out of the news and both members and our professionals featured regularly among the winners of the local Alliance Competitions. 1932 was a vintage Alliance year at Scraftoft with Len Browning winning the Alliance Championship with Alfred Goodridge. The professional and

Frank Liddiard the Assistant Professional also taking prizes. A supper was given in their honour at the clubhouse.

Frank Liddiard was at that time the youngest professional golfer in the Midlands and took over from Alfred Goodridge in 1932 to become club professional until 1936.

Due to continuing financial pressures, a General Meeting was finally called at the Grand Hotel in Leicester in 1933. Francis "Frank" W Doleman, a relatively new member and a well-known Chartered Accountant in the City, offered his assistance in arranging a moratorium with the creditors. Money to pay the first 50p in the EI was raised at the meeting through an offer from the directors to members to purchase additional non-voting 'B' shares.

Together with Mr Arthur Stanilands an insurance inspector, Mr Doleman then saw all creditors and was successful in concluding an arrangement to pay 50p in the EI with the remainder on a promissory note. The promissory note stated that the remaining 50% of the debt would be discharged at the end of a ten year period but in fact due to changing financial fortunes, all debts were paid well within the ten year period. Frank Doleman well remembers his visits to the creditors with.

Mr Stanilands who would explain the sorry state of affairs and at the point of putting their proposition forward would cause a tear to fall down his cheek which always seemed to carry the day.

After this setback, the club tried desperately to regain its dignity.

Efforts were made to increase membership and improve the social life of the members. The annual dinner dances of the period were exceptionally well attended and seemed very grand affairs. Vivid descriptions of the ladies' finery were well reported in the local press. 16 1936 it was decided for the first time to run the annual event as a dance at the Palais de Dance. 400 people attended and it was the first time that the Palais de Dance had been booked by a single golf club. The local newspaper reported that the highlight of the evening was a "Pardon Me" dance where the only illumination was from Japanese lanterns held by the dancers.

Such was the social status of the club during this period that a local news-paper once said that the policy of the club was to look after the 19th hole and the other 18 would look after themselves. There were of course those then, as there are now, who would not subscribe to that maxim but it certainly gained a social popularity not enjoyed by any other local club.

Sunday lunch times were described as second Ascot with members' wives dressed in their finery with drinks being served by morning suited waiters.

Saturdays, however, were a different story with members drinking their beer and spirits out of cups and saucers in an attempt to fool the police who rigorously imposed the licensing laws of the day. Needless to say, nobody was fooled and the friendships which were made between visiting police and members were possibly the start of the very close association which the club has had with the local police force to this day.

In 1935, Mr Donald Ward, who had been the Secretary since 1931, took a holiday for 2 weeks and in his departing instructions to the greens staff, he omitted to ask them to cut the rough which was already a fair length. During the fortnight, the club had a 20 a side match with the Wellingborough Golf Club and such was the state of the rough that the 40 players lost 118 balls between them. Obviously the 18 could not, and still cannot, look after themselves.

By this time, additions had been made to the clubhouse accommodation and small functions were being held in the main room. The professional had a much larger shop and the course was improving with maturity.

Whilst the clubhouse of the day was described as offering very good accommodation, it was still very Spartan in comparison with modern standards and in fact in those early years, whilst there was water laid on, the club had no mains electricity. Lighting was maintained by an old motor cycle engine powering a generator. Unfortunately if too many lights were switched on, the engine failed and the clubhouse was plunged into darkness; part of life in the "Good Old Days".

The comfort which was enjoyed in the clubhouse was in no small measure due to the efforts of the ladies who were constantly arranging competitions and functions to raise money for the purchase of extra furnishings. In fact the ladies of the club have continued to support the club in this way ever since and mainly unnoticed by the majority of members.

A young lady, Mrs Hilda Meadows, was elected Lady Secretary in 1934, a position she was to hold until 1951, except for her year of Captaincy in 1950. What a superb record of service to the club.

Interest in competition in both the gentlemen's and ladies' sections of the club was kept alive by the generosity of members providing a prize to be played for and arranging a spontaneous competition for those members present. With the pressure on playing time on the course today and the number of recognized-trophies to be won, this would now undoubtedly cause problems.

By the late thirties, additional trophies for major competitions had been presented to the club by Major A E & Mrs Burnaby. The Punch Bowl had been given in 1932, and the Open Cup had been presented by the President Aubrey T Sharp in 1933. For the ladies, the Thomas Beedle Trophy was presented by Mrs L Beedle in memory of her son. The Hilda Smith Novices Cup was purchased by the Ladies Section in memory of their late Captain and Mr and Mrs I Fullerton had presented an Open Cup in 1936.

Major A E & Mrs Burnaby were prominent members of the club during this period and they resided at Baggrave Hall. Mrs Burnaby was related to a wealthy American family and counted among her many friends several members of the Royal Family. On their visits to Leicester, they invariably included a game of golf at Scraftoft. Names which are remembered are the Prince of Wales, who later became Edward VIII and then Duke of Windsor, Princess Helena Victoria and Princess Ingrid, who later became the Queen of

Sweden. Major Burnaby, President from 1935 to 1938, was one of the lower handicap golfers in the club and took a very active interest in club affairs. At the trophy presentation in 1936 he said "Golf is a marvellous game, giving health, life and association with some charming people and an occasional birdie. With the aid of strokes, it enables us to play with our superiors with our equals and if we are very lucky, with our inferiors". When the Major was not playing golf, it was a common sight to see him riding across the course with the local hunt, stopping golfers in mid-swing and spoiling many a good card, Mrs Burnaby was often reported in the local press as playing an improved game of golf and this was in no small measure due to the prowess of Frank Liddiard who provided regular lessons. Frank vividly recalls being collected regularly in a large American Lincoln car carrying a footman and a chauffeur and being driven back to Baggrave Hall to be met by another footman who delivered him to the door where he was met by the butler who escorted him to Mrs Burnaby.

Another prominent member of the period was H V Chapman, a local director of the Ross Fishing Group. He joined the club and soon became a golf fanatic and in fact reduced his handicap from 24 to single figures in 12 months. Such was his enthusiasm for the game that he had golf shoes cemented into the floor of his garage and a carpet put down to practice putting. He made weighted clips for his nose to prove that he did move his head when swinging the club but he became disappointed that he could not get down to scratch after some 2 or 3 years and gave up the game.

In 1936, Scraftoff boasted the youngest golf captain in the U K. He was George Richardson aged 19. He was later to be summoned for service in the armed forces and joined the R A F. He was a navigator and on one of few leaves, one of the members joked "Are you home again" to which he replied "Yes, I am looking for a pilot who does not want to win the bloody war in one day". Possibly he did not find the right man as unfortunately he met his death in the sky in the early years of the war.

The club throughout its life has known many excellent amateur golfers, Bob Greaves related the story of a visit to the club pre-war when he met a very upright gentleman standing at the side of the clubhouse dressed in a bowler hat, blue pin stripe suit and black shoes. They exchanged a greeting and Bob asked if the gentleman was waiting for a game to which he replied that he was and on Bob emerging from the clubhouse, having changed, the gentleman was standing on the first tee, still dressed in the same attire and with his bag of light clubs. Without remarking on this unusual dress, they played the first 4 holes at which time Bob was 3 down. He enquired the handicap of the stranger and was told that it was scratch. He was in fact Ernest Hudson a gentleman's gentleman to Mr Claude Bennion of Billlesdon Coplow and at one time he and another gentleman's gentleman by the name of Steel were numbers 1 and 2 in the County 1st Team. He also held the amateur course record of the club for a time.

In 1936, Frank Liddiard decided that his future may lie in the Civil Service and resigned as professional. A new professional was appointed, Tom Richards who was to stay with the club until 1944. Tom Richards came to the club from the Leicestershire Golf Club where he had been the assistant to George Smith since 1927. He was said to be an excellent iron player and in 1929, had won the Leicestershire and Rutland Title and had also tied for the Midland Championship in the same year.

Improvements continued to be made to the clubhouse furnishings. Luxuries like coconut matting in the lounge and even hot water pipes were purchased. Possibly because of this

expense, by 1939 the fees for a gentleman had increased to £5.25 and to £2.15 for the ladies which figures were to remain until after the war years.

The finances of the club were showing a slight improvement but there were constant references in the annual Chairman's statement of the need for members to recruit new members to provide extra revenue for the club.

The Secretary, Mr Donald Ward, decided to move to Birstall Golf Club and was succeeded by Mr C 'Bert' Huntley who was to remain in that office until his death in November 1952.

Within the first ten years of the life of the club, three brothers had been elected to the office of Playing Captain and this must surely be worthy of the Guinness Book of Records. They were Thomas, Leonard and Cyril Browning and at over 80 years of age, Len Browning was still enjoying a game of golf 48 years after joining the club.

The earliest recorded county successes for the club were the County Men's Foursomes in 1936 and the County Mixed Foursomes in 1939.

Even those who are too young to remember can probably appreciate the difficulties which the outbreak of the Second World War brought to the Club. Immediately war was declared, the Chairman of the club, Mr Wilfred Muddimer circularized all members explaining the difficulties and stating that the Committee would do all in their power to continue to offer the facilities of the club during the difficult times ahead. A further call for new members was made to replace those being called for service in the forces.

The club was ordered by the Government of the day to return 9 holes to farm land to contribute to the war effort. The extra land on the right of the 10th fairway and the area now occupied by Long Tom, Long Drag and the Cemetery hole were turned under the plough. At that time the course extended beyond the present green of Long Tom, up the hill to the corner of Scruptoft Village adjacent to Nether Hall and this was also ploughed. The area was farmed by Mr Archie Swann and Mr Bert Huntley, the club secretary. The physical work on the land was carried out by the War Agricultural Executive Committee, affectionately known as the War Ag.

Such was the prowess of Mr Swann and Mr Huntley and the War Ag. that the profits to the club from their farming activities during the war exceeded the profits from the golfing activities and the question might be asked if we have had our priorities wrong ever since.

Immediately war was declared, men who could not for one reason or another join the active forces, formed the L D V, the Local Defence Volunteers but shortly after their formation, they joined forces with the Home Guard. The club acted as headquarters for the Scruptoft Contingent who were part of 'C' Company of the 6th Quorn Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment. Sir Harold Nutting, who at that time was the Club President, was Colonel in charge of the Battalion and Mr Aubrey Sharp was the Captain in charge of the Scruptoft Contingent.

Mr Sharp was soon replaced by Mr Archie Swann and Mr Leslie Marlow became the Quartermaster.

Many members of the club were also members of the Home Guard and despite the modern image portrayed on television of 'Dads Army', these men did valuable work on the home front, especially during the blitz on Leicester. Many friendships were made and despite the

very hard times, many enjoyable and amusing incidents occurred. Several of these are unprintable except perhaps the time when Mr 'Jimmy' Pincus was a member of a field firing party who were firing blanks but who somehow or other fired a live shell and nearly, killed a cow.

The ladies found it most difficult to support competitions because of their reduced numbers. Many of their major competitions were suspended during the war years and the trophies were removed to the bank for safe keeping.

During the war, members who were called into the forces were not forgotten and collections were made at home to send parcels and money orders to the serving members and these were greatly appreciated, not only for what they contained but for the thoughts behind them.

Members have vivid memories of playing on self-made courses in the Far East and elsewhere during their active service where the greens were fenced to keep camels and wild boars from spoiling them and where the only spectators were elephants, water buffalo's and mongoose.

Back at Scraftoff where only sheep used to graze on the fairways, these were now being kept tended by two old gentlemen and a young boy and members of the day will remember the sterling work done by a retired bank manager, a member of the club, John Bramley who since the formation of the club had spent many hours when not playing golf weeding the greens and fairways with his friend Herbert Smith.

The greens were mown twice every week with hand mowers and due to the age of the tractor and equipment and the problems in obtaining parts, life for the Greens Committee and staff must have been very difficult.

The club was mentioned several times in the local press during the war period as contributing significantly to the financial support of the Red Cross and other efforts such as the Forces Comfort Fund. It appears that Mr Leslie Marlow was particularly successful during his year of Captaincy in 1944. Ladies too were responsible for many fund raising activities during this period despite their numbers.

Whilst front line generals were making important decisions of war, the ladies of Scraftoff also had decisions to make. Their minutes record that a proposal was seconded and unanimously agreed that a new nail brush be purchased for the ladies washroom.

Of the lady members questioned, no-one could explain the recorded minute when it was agreed that bedding would be removed from the ladies locker room. Was this something to do with the Forces Comfort Fund?

Ground on the Leicester side of the first fairway and practice area, now partly converted to a playing field for Scraftoff College, was taken over during the war by the Ministry of Defence and became an American camp for a parachute regiment. Several of the American officers resident at the camp used the facilities of the clubhouse and course and became very friendly with the members. There are vivid memories of a parachute drop by approximately 500 men on the area of the course and land on the Beeby side which took place some time before D Day and there are several stories of parachutists being caught in trees on the course and in particular the spinney at the right hand side of the 13th green. The parachutists went on to spearhead the landings in Normandy on D Day.

During the bombing of Leicester, several bombs fell adjacent to the clubhouse possibly due to the fact that there was a dummy airfield nearby which was illuminated at night to divert the bombers away from the city.

Financially the club was deteriorating once again, mainly due to the depletion in membership because of the war and the very severe restrictions on transport. Some members did overcome this problem by arriving at the clubhouse for their weekend game of golf in a horse drawn landau and because of rationing; it was the practice in those days to bring one's own food to the kitchen to be cooked for the meal after the game.

Besides the reduction in income from membership fees, the situation had serious effects on green fees and bar takings. The wartime restrictions were also being felt in industry where holidays and leisure spending were kept to a minimum.

In 1941, a few engineers employed by Mellor Bromley Limited and F Pollard & Company Limited decided to take a day of their holiday at Scraftoft Golf Club and challenged members of the club to a competition. This was the beginning of what was soon known as Engineers Day and which from 1945 became established as one of the major competitions in the club's golfing calendar.

There are vivid memories of an Engineers' day when the activities were temporarily halted whilst an American general presented medals to his men at a ceremony on the course.

It was a feature of this competition that everyone who took part donated a prize and in the early years, prizes were very modest. In the first year, the first prize was six re-painted golf balls and a silver cup was presented by Mr Wilfred Muddimer.

The annual competition was organized for many years by Mr Arthur 'Jacko' Jackson and Mr Ernest 'Ernie' Winterton.

To commemorate the event in the inaugural year, medals for the competitors were designed and made in the shape of the German Iron Cross, approximately 3 inches square. Mr Archie Swann was made the first President of Engineers' Day.

In the following years, the competition gained rapidly in popularity and it still is a feature of this competition that the majority of participants donate a prize so that very few go away empty handed. In the early days, anyone in that unfortunate position was awarded a "Certificate Of De Merit". This certificate stated that the Management of Engineers' Day congratulated the golfer on his effort but commiserated with him that his score was neither good enough nor bad enough to obtain a prize and the certificate acted as a voucher for either "A Pint of Wallop" or a "Basin Full of Kali"; whatever that was, so that the unfortunate man could drown his sorrows.

Over the years, the competition has changed and although it is still called by the same name, it is now only open to members of the club and such is the popularity of the event that time sheets are full long before the day. Between 80 and 90 prizes are now regularly given by members and are on a much grander scale than could have been envisaged by those pioneers of the event.

By this time, the clubhouse building had been further improved with the veranda being covered in to provide additional accommodation.

As the war progressed, the Americans left the camp and were replaced by Italian prisoners of war and later by German prisoners of war.

The Home Guard finally celebrated Stand Down on the 3rd December 1944 and this was followed by the Stand Down Dinner on the 15th December 1944 in the Memorial Hall at Thurnby. There is a record of a reunion which took place the following year.

The war was now drawing to a close and the club were faced with the problem of improving the clubhouse and course facilities in readiness for the additional members who would be returning from active service. In January 1946, the directors decided to increase subscriptions which had stood at £5.25 for some years to £6.30. Unfortunately their decision was left very late and many members objected to the increase. They complained that the reasons given were too vague and that insufficient detail had been given of the intentions of the directors for the future of the club.

Many said that they had paid £5.25 in the years before the war when the course was a full 18 holes and with no immediate prospect of re-gaining the 9 holes lost in the war, they thought it completely unjust to be paying a higher fee for the remaining 9 holes.

Sufficient members signed a petition calling for an Extra-ordinary General Meeting and it appears to have been a very stormy meeting with the resignation of the Chairman of the Board, Mr Wilfred Muddimer.

In addition to the complaint over the increase in fees, members were concerned at the future of the club and wanted more details as to what steps were being taken to return the course to 18 holes. The lease on the land occupied by the club had only two years to run and members wanted to know what prospects the club had of renewing it after that date. They also complained that the professional, Tom Richards, who had resigned in 1944, had not been replaced and since that time, the club had existed without a professional.

Complaints were also voiced of increasing numbers of members causing congestion on the 9 hole course. Apparently the price of golf balls was too expensive and the bar was closing too early.

From the records of that Extra-Ordinary Meeting, it appears that many of the problems could possibly have been resolved by the management of the day taking members more into their confidence. This is certainly a lesson which has been put to rights in later years.

It was pointed out, however, by the Board that it was imperative that an increase in subscriptions be obtained to ensure the survival of the club and the increase was carried. Mr Archie Swann replaced Mr Muddimer as Chairman and was to continue in that office until 1959. Later on in the year, a new professional, Mr F Greasley was appointed.

It seems that there were further troubles in 1946 which appears to have been a very trying year for the management of the club and there is a record of the resignation of the complete House Committee in October. Mr Archie Swann recalls that during this period he was very despondent and doubtful about the future of the club and towards the end of the year, he was considering his resignation.

In November of 1946, Mr Bertram Coles offered to the club through Mr Swann 134 acres of land situated on the right hand side of the Beeby Road approaching the club from Leicester where the farmhouse and buildings now stand and reaching down into the valley and up

towards Keyham. The asking price was £80 per acre which was to include a wooden bungalow on the land, a small barn near the Keyham Boundary and a brick and slated cattle shed.

The Board of Directors did not Support Mr Swann in his proposition that the land be purchased and whilst it is very easy to talk with hindsight, perhaps the future of the club would have been a very different story had that purchase gone ahead.

Despite the low morale of the club, strong efforts were being made to regenerate the social life enjoyed before the war and on the 1 St November 1946, the club held the first post-war Dinner Dance at the Bell Hotel in Leicester. Mr Arthur Peake who was then Chairman of the Social Commit- tee, lived in the house known as "Oak Lodge" on the dog leg of the pre- sent first fairway.

He had not long returned home from the Dinner Dance when he heard a loud crackling and repeated explosions. On looking out of his window, he saw that the clubhouse was on fire and because the building was largely constructed of timber, the blaze had obtained a good hold. Despite the efforts of the National Fire Service and also guards from the prisoner of war camp, the building was completely gutted and even the club watchdog perished in the flames.

Clubs and equipment in almost 300 lockers were totally destroyed and with golf equipment very hard to get and clothing requiring coupons, many members were not able to play golf for some time whilst others were forced to share clubs.

The club records and honours boards were a great loss, and were all thought to be irreplaceable. Fortunately one prominent member of the club had the foresight to copy down, before the fire, the details from the boards which he has kept in his possession all these years. Tom Whitby now of Birstall Golf Club kindly produced this information to the writer thought to have been lost for over thirty years. Perhaps one day the club will decide to re write new boards but for the meantime the de- tails are given elsewhere in the booklet.

During the following weekend, a local farm Tabourer discovered a competition card box at Beeby which had been broken open. With this and other evidence discovered by the police, it became obvious that the fire had been caused by a burglar.

Years to insurance cover and as a result, the insurance monies obtained from insurers in no way reflected the total loss to the club. The situation was now desperate with very little money and a completely destroyed clubhouse. Urgent action was required.

Despite his earlier feelings, Archie Swann has been described by the members of the day as the Phoenix of the club following the fire, raising it from the ashes by sheer hard work and his generosity. The club was to see repeated evidence of these qualities in later years.

There were two immediate problems, the first major one was to find some accommodation and the prisoners of war from the adjacent camp assisted members in clearing the site and erecting a marquee on the car park which was used as a temporary clubhouse. To this was added a large shed from another part of the course.

The second problem, a minor one but important to those who were to take part, was the dinner which had been ranged to take place in the clubhouse to welcome the returning

serving members of the forces. This was promptly transferred to the Bell Hotel in Leicester and members and friends enjoyed a full Christmas Fare menu for 371/2p.

Government restrictions on building and the extreme difficulty in obtaining materials imposed untold problems on the Board of Directors. Fortunately Mr Archie Swann and Mr Bert Huntley located some Nissen Huts at Braunstone and these were brought to site and erected in a U formation. The large timber shed was converted into a bungalow to house the first steward who was to live in at the club. The ladies section provided invaluable help in raising money and providing furnishings for the new buildings.

Many members have said that despite the more splendid clubhouse surroundings which we have today, it will be difficult to recapture the atmosphere and the fellowship that those buildings engendered over the next few years.

1946 was the year of the "Futility Cup". The trophy was presented by a member who wished to remain anonymous and it was to be won outright in a competition open only to those members of ten years standing or more who had never won a major club competition.

The competition was an 18 hole medal and the Marlow family once again hit the newspaper headlines with Leslie Marlow capturing the trophy and his brother Harold taking second place. The winner was then to offer another trophy for another contest the next year. The competition carried on for about another four years until a winner failed to present a trophy for the next competition and it was not carried on.

This was also the year of the first caddy cart in the county, Arthur Gundle, a popular member of the day, made his own. With his friend Roy Gibbons many others soon followed attracted by the idea of pulling their clubs rather than carrying them.

During the immediate post-war period, the club never made a great deal of profit and 1947 was a particularly bad year when a loss was made.

This was mainly due to the clubhouse being burgled and a large stock of tobacco and cigarettes were stolen. Burglaries seem to have taken place throughout the life of the club due to its isolated situation but the results in the balance sheet have never been quite so drastic as in that year.

During the remainder of the 1940s little could be done to improve the facilities offered to members due to the severe financial restrictions and the fact that rationing and the need for food production meant that the land under plough had to remain so for a number of years.

Bert Huntley was the club secretary at the time and his full time occupation was with the City Corporation. Many members will remember when the tramlines were lifted in the city and through the good offices of Mr Huntley; the wooden blocks which came up with the tramlines were conveniently deposited at the club and provided fuel for the open fires in the clubhouse. The resultant improvement in the roads in the city meant that a considerable amount of tarmac Adam waste had to be removed

and this also, through the good offices of Mr Huntley found its way to the club. Because of the availability of the material, the small car park at the rear of the club was extended to the Beeby side, where it is now.

Golf is a game which can give enjoyment to a great age but there comes a time when competition with the younger and stronger members of the club becomes a little more difficult. This does not, of course, lessen the competitive spirit and to stimulate this amongst the older members of the club, Mr Leslie Marlow donated the Veterans' Cup in 1948.

With the advent of the Caddy Cart, special provisions had to be made on the course, especially at the exit and entrance to the field now containing the 14th and 15th holes. Special concrete posts were purchased and they are still there today. Unfortunately the greens staff, anxious to do a good job in concreting the posts in dug their holes a little too deeply and severed the main electricity cable to Hamilton and, Barkby Thorpe without knowing it and carried on and filled the holes with cement. As the cement had dried before the electricity board had located the fault, we were not exactly popular with the Authority.

The Nissan huts which now formed the clubhouse provided quite spacious accommodation and the general room was fitted out with wicker furniture. It was decided that there should be a Captain's chair where only the Captain would be allowed to sit and this was decorated in the red and black colours of the club. Such was the accommodation that Mr Huntley decided to build himself a small office and such was his power in the club in those days that he took a liking to the Captain's chair and re- moved it to his office for his own comfort.

The 50s started well with Scraftoff winning the County Foursomes competition in 1950, a feat which they were next to repeat in 1962. A committee called the reconstruction and social committee was formed in an effort to raise funds to improve the clubhouse facilities. Minor works were carried out during 1951 and thoughts were in hand for extensive kitchen alterations and the construction of a new lounge area.

In 1951, the President of the club, Sir Harold Nutting was made Patron and Mr Archie Swann became President. In his inaugural year, Mr Swann donated the President's putter. The Professional, F Greasley, was dismissed in September 1951 together with the Steward and Stewardess. A Mr and Mrs Emrie from Kinross in Scotland, were appointed. Mr Emrie was employed as green keeper, professional and steward with Mrs Emrie as Stewardess.

During this time, efforts were being made to obtain the land back which had been handed over for the war effort. The area which contained the 9 holes throughout the war was re-designed to give 12 holes. Prominent lady golfers of the day were Gladys Cayless, Olga Sturton and Hilda Meadows. They were all county golfers and Mrs Sturton was particularly outstanding, a single figure golfer who was to win be county coach in 1957 and made history as the first Scraftoff lady to do so.

1952 seems to have been a particularly eventful year. Rationing was coming to an end and we were throwing away identity cards. The British Comet flew the first jet passenger trip to South Africa, Queen Elizabeth 11 came to the throne and a new professional came to Scraftoft. His name was Jim Whyte and he was appointed as green keeper, professional and steward with his wife Mary as stewardess. Jim was to stay with the club for many years until his retirement in 1973.

In November of the same year, Bert Huntley died. He had been the Honorary Secretary of the Club since 1939 and was regarded as one of the stalwarts of the club, especially during the war and immediate post war period. He was succeeded by Mr E E Roberts.

No history of Scraftoft Golf Club would be complete without a mention of the Rabbits Section and no history of the Rabbits Section would be complete without mention of Mr C T 'Chris' Billetop. It was during a county foursomes match in 1952 that Chris, who was then the Vice-Captain of the Club, discussed with the Vice-Captain of Birstall Golf Club the lack of opportunity for higher handicap golfers to represent their clubs and play matches on other courses. In those days, the club merely had first and second teams picked from the lower handicap players. A match with Birstall was arranged for the following year and such was the response from members that they fielded 24 a side. The Captain and Vice-Captain of each club were invited to play although their score was only to count in the event of a tie.

Some years previously, Chris had won a blue china rabbit and with the assistance of the staff of Mellor Bromley & Co Ltd a mould was cast and the metal rabbit trophy which stands in the club lounge from time to time was made. Whilst Chris was always said to be "in charge" until his retirement some five years ago, various captains of the section have come and gone. Their title was "King Rabbit".

The first King Rabbit was Mr John Flowers. He celebrated the first encounter with Birstall by producing two Rabbit fur hats with long ears to be worn by the King Rabbit of each team at the meal after the match.

Many stories are told of the story telling after the meal until the small hours which became a feature of these encounters. Very soon after the inaugural match, other clubs became interested and the long handicap golfers of the club responded enthusiastically. So much so that when once asked by a club how many he could provide for a match, Chris replied eighty or ninety.

With these numbers available, competition for a place was intense and eliminating competitions were often held at the beginning of the season to select players. Many past and present long handicap golfers have much to thank Chris Billetop and his King Rabbits for in providing many hours of enjoyment over the last 25 years.

The Association with the Police continued from the very early days of the club and in 1951, when Dennis Mawer was Captain, he asked Arthur Jackson to design and make a special trophy to be played for between the Police and the club. Members

will have seen that trophy on the table in the lounge during the subsequent years when the club have defeated the police in their annual match.

The Leicester City Football team were also regular visitors to the club in those days. Their manager, Norman Bullock was a very fine golfer himself and continued to play at Scraptoft long after his retirement. It was not unusual for him to play a round of golf in as many shots as his age when he had turned 70.

About this time, the field containing the present Long Tom, Cemetery and Long Drag holes was returned to the club but the City Council who then owned the land decided to retain the field at the back of the present Long Tom green and our boundary was to be the stream at the bottom of the field. In the plans laid in 1946 for the development of the Netherhall Estate, it had been envisaged that at some time in the future, the small strip of land which presently includes Long Tom green, through to the Cemetery tee would be required by the City to extend the roadway to an area to the right of the Cemetery hole on which they had plans to develop the largest lawned Cemetery in the City. That development has not yet come to pass but that is why that strip of land is only on licence from the City Council and not on a long term lease.

The land to the right of the present 10th fairway behind the farmhouse was never returned to the club. Bert Huntley, the club secretary, obtained compensation of £805 from the Government for the work entailed in returning the land to a golf course and with this money reconstruction commenced.

By March 1953, the land which had been under plough was opened as an extension to the course which had a total of 15 holes. Unfortunately very little money had been spent on grass seed on the reclaimed area and many complaints were made by members on the quality of the grass which was growing. The matter came to a head in September 1953 when it was decided to close the field and return to the 12 holes so that further work could be carried out. Negotiations were concluded with Billesdon RDC who were having problems at the time with the disposal of septic tank waste and it was agreed that the Council would deposit two thousand loads of this waste on to the greens and fairways. The exercise worked extremely well during the winter of 1953/54 but with the coming spring and sunshine, odours began to drift across the neighbouring areas and following complaints by local residents the operation was stopped.

Lush grasses started to grow but unfortunately so did thousands and thousands of tomato plants. It can be said that the war time slogan of "Waste Not Want Not" certainly applied to the community of Billesdon R D C.

So successful was this treatment that the 3 holes were re-opened in March 1954 and this must have been a very busy time for John Bramley and his friend Herbert Smith. John Bramley is said to have played golf with a single club. The club had an adjustable head which he altered to suit the shot he had to play. It was kept secure by a wing nut at the heel of the club.

The rough state of the additional course and the extra wear and tear on the machinery made 1953 a very expensive year for equipment but despite this expenditure, it was agreed by the committee to retain the 1952 level of subscription at £8.40. The playing membership in that year was 260. Perhaps members were pleased with the extended course and the work put in by the ground staff or it may have been the quality of service in the clubhouse and the friendliness of the new professional but whatever it was, they showed their gratitude in their donation of Christmas Gratuities which were far larger in 1W than they were 20 years later in 1973.

Mr R W Garside succeeded Mr Roberts as Secretary in 1955 and in the same year the ladies celebrated the first Lady President's day when Mrs Nutting, the past Lady President was made Lady Patron of the club.

Messrs Bramley and Smith were finding things very hard going in their efforts to keep the course weed free and in the August of 1955, Mr Bramley offered to pay the cost of spraying the fairways which the greens staff did with enthusiasm, so much so that many plants in the neighbouring gardens to the course were also destroyed.

Meantime, the bar area in the clubhouse was having a face lift and it is recorded that this was largely due to the generosity of Mr Archie Swann and Mr Sidney Curry. Mr Curry was a relatively new member at the time but this was to be the first of many acts of extreme generosity to the club over the next 20 years.

In 1956, it was decided to give the 15 holes on the course a name as well as a number and the holes were named.

1 Orchard

2 The Elms

3 Spinney

4 Meadow

5 Moat

6 Barn

7 Road

8 Long Tom

9 Cemetery

10 Long Drag

11 The Gap

12 The Ponds

13 Home

14 Orchard

15 Short

16 Lucky Strike

17 The Ponds

18 Horne Again

As can be seen, three holes were played twice in a full round and many names were retained when the full 18 were opened some years later.

Despite the restrictions of the short course and his work on it, the professional Jim Whyte must have found time for some practice. At the opening meeting of the Alliance in that year, he completed the treble with Mrs R Henderson of Birstall by taking the best nett and gross scores and also the professional's prize.

Earlier in the same year, Mr Denis Mawer reported to the committee on his interview with the City Surveyor and the possibility of the club taking a lease on the land at the side of the present Cemetery and Long Drag holes. Mr Mawer was also having negotiations with Mr Bert Cole, the farmer who owned what is now called "The Field", the present holes 1, 2 3 8 and 9. Negotiations were to continue for some time on this area and in fact Mr Mawer and Mr Frank Doleman spent twenty-six consecutive Sundays persuading Mr Cole to sell his land. He eventually succumbed to the pressure at a price of £180 per acre plus £150 in cash. A considerable increase compared to the offer of the land on the other side of the road some years previously.

The first priority was now to obtain the money for purchase and it was agreed that the nominal share capital of the club be increased by 3,500 £1 shares to a total of 7,000. At the same time it was agreed that the A and B shares that were then in force be consolidated into a single class of share. It was made a condition of membership that full playing gentlemen members must be the holders of at least five £1 shares in the company and that these shares must be acquired before the 1st January 1957. Unfortunately members were not as forthcoming as the directors would have liked and by 1959, there were still some members of the club who had not purchased their shares. On the other hand, many members purchased more than the minimum and it was largely through the generosity of these members that the vast majority of the shares were taken up.

In July 1956, the club handed over responsibility and the profit from catering to Mr and Mrs Whyte. Catering in the club has been carried on that basis to the present day.

The ladies seem to have been having their problems at this time as can be seen from the Honours Board in the clubhouse. No-one was willing to come forward in either 1956 or 1957 to be Lady Captain.

In April 1957, it was decided that the directors would proceed with the purchase of the land from Mr Coles. Mr Archie Swann offered the directors a loan of whatever was required of the purchase money at 5% interest and this most generous gesture was accepted by the board. Firstly permission had to be obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture to use the land as a golf course and this was obtained in the July of that year. By August 1957, Mr Mawer and Mr Doleman had concluded the contract for the purchase of the land from Mr Coles and the director's grate fully accepted a mortgage from Mr Swann of £5,000. At the same time, agreement had been reached regarding the renewal of leases with both the City Corporation and Mr Aubrey T Sharp the owners of the remainder of the course. The land which the club now had at its disposal, either by ownership or tenancy, was the area on which the course and clubhouse stands today.

In the same year, the House Committee had decided to appoint a new Steward and Jim Whyte became the Green keeper/Professional. Improvements were being carried out to the clubhouse in the form of a new lounge. This lounge was to fill in the area within the U shape of the Nissan huts and Mr Sidney Curry who was in charge of the project was very anxious that this should be completed before the 31st December 1957 in readiness for his year of Captaincy in 1958. Under his control, workmen slaved day and night, sometimes under arc lamps, to have the building ready and Mr Curry donated very generously towards the cost of the construction.

To commemorate his fiftieth birthday and to encourage competitive golf throughout the winter months Mr Jimmie Pincus presented the Autumn Trophies for long and short handicap golfers.

Mr D David Henderson, the immediate past Captain presented two salvers to the club in 1957 to be known as the Carnoustie Foursomes trophies and which are still keenly contested. In the same year Scraptoft won for the first time the County Union Amateur/Professional foursomes.

The playing membership had by this time dropped to 150 and it was essential that new members to ensure the survival of the club. To help correct the immediate financial problems, subscriptions were raised in January 1958 to £12.60.

After the tenant farmer of the new land had cleared his crops, consideration was given to the layout of the field and Jack Seager the well, known local professional at Rothley Park Golf Club was engaged to design the five holes which are still played today as he designed them. Mr George, Cooper, the local drainage contractor was also brought in to discuss the problem and cost of drainage. It was found that large areas of the field had very little drainage but due to financial problems, the matter of expensive drainage was deferred. This decision, although probably very

necessary at the time, was to cause untold problems in the field until very recent years when major drainage was undertaken.

Due to the time at his disposal and the increasing activities within the club, the Secretary, Mr Garside was finding his task particularly onerous. In January 1958, Mr Edward Swann became joint Secretary with Mr Garside.

Members who take an interest in the activities of the County Golf Union will know that the Executive Committee consists of a representative from each member club and this came about as a result of a resolution to the golf union by the directors of Scraftoft Golf Club.

With the development of the new field, the remainder of the course was also re-designed to give the layout as it still remains at present and the full course was opened in 1958. Mr Dennis Mawer who had been Chairman of the Greens Committee for some time was thanked for the excellent state of the course. His hard work had its rewards later in the year when he and his wife returned a net 67 1/2 to take the first prize in a competition from his son and daughter who returned a net 68 and as a result of that family victory; he donated two silver salvers which are known as the Family Plate.

Rabbits started to invade the new course in considerable numbers at this time and discussions took place on how to have them removed. It is recorded that Archie Swann offered to organize a shoot. Whether or not it was his intention to involve some of his old Home Guard platoon is not clear but as membership was failing at the time, it was decided to engage the services of the local pest officer to be on the safe side.

By 1958, Sir Harold and Lady Nutting had ceased to support the club and the office of Patron was discontinued. In the same year, the first Junior Committee was formed, officers were selected and a programme formulated. Although called the Junior section of the club, it was open to all members under the age of 30. Matches were arranged with Junior sections of other clubs and a series of social events were well supported. Many members will remember dances with titles such as "The Lost Ball" and the "Bogey Man's Ball", where the ticket mentioned that Birdies and Rabbits were welcome.

In 1959, it was decided that the men's locker room and toilet facilities needed replacing and Mr Sidney Curry was again asked to take charge of the operation. During negotiations with architects, it was discovered that a small part of the clubhouse was standing on land belonging to Mr Aubrey Sharp and hurried negotiations were attempted to purchase the strip of land. Mr Sharp, unfortunately, would not sell but he did promise the club the opportunity of buying the land upon his death.

Eventually in 1960, the reconstruction of the gent's locker room and toilets got under way and it was a period of intense activity in the club to improve facilities both

within the clubhouse and on the course and later in 1960, the Greens Committee opened discussions on the possibility of laying water to various points on the course. Because of the heavy demands of the training college and houses in the area, the local Water Department suggested that the club should erect a tank but due to the probable cost of this, an alternative suggestion of boring for underground water was considered and a geologist's report was called for. Unfortunately there was no prospect of artesian water and it was decided to accept the City water supply through the storage tank. The scheme was eventually completed in March 1962.

The family name of Marlow is synonymous with Scruptoft Golf Club and members of the family have belonged to the golf club since the very early days. Mr Walter Marlow was a very popular member of long standing and like others of his family was very generous in many ways to the club. He is perhaps best remembered by his presentation of the gates which lead to the rear of the clubhouse and to the car park. These gates bear a plaque noting the presentation.

Many members of the club were delighted with the enthusiasm of the younger members of the club who were leading the county in their activities to stimulate Junior Golf. In order to encourage this enthusiasm, Leslie A Kilworth presented the Kilworth Trophy to the club to be played for as a Junior Open.

The juniors had already donated £75 to the club to assist with mole draining on the course and in 1961, they paid for the enclosing of the veranda, an area of the clubhouse which is extremely well used today, especially on Sunday mornings.

1962 was a significant year in the life of the club. Due to legislation within the Licensing Act of 1961, it became necessary to form a members' club to run the day to day affairs. In June 1962, assets were transferred from the limited company to the club with the exception of land and buildings which were retained in company ownership. It was decided at the time that a formal lease would not be made between the company and club immediately until the latter had become established. The first lease was eventually granted in 1966. New club rules were drafted to suit the new constitution and committees were formed. A new secretary was required by the club and Mr D Stanley Marlow offered his services for a limited period of 12 months. He was to serve the club for over five years.

The limited company took on the role of property owner and landlord and the title was changed to Scruptoft Golf (Holdings) Ltd. There was, and still is, a very close relationship between the club and on the board of directors. This was a tremendous help during the transitional period.

W E Colver who had joined the greens staff in 1928 retired on the 26th April 1962 aged 69 years with a total of 34 years' service to the club.

Records are for taking and the making of history and the club and its members have had their share of golfing history from time to time.

1963 was a year many members will remember and the sequence of events started after Engineers' Day in that year. Brian Braint was in the clubhouse after playing 36 holes in the Engineers' meeting when he took on a bet he could complete the course in an hour and in less than 100 strokes. He won his bet with 86 strokes and 10 minutes to spare.

In September of that year, 16 golfers from the Under 30 section took the world record for a round of golf which they played in 18 minutes 35 seconds with a total of 99 shots.

Record breaking was not over for 1963. In October of that year, a young member of the junior section, Robert Taylor, armed with a 5 iron and putter completed a round of golf in 41 minutes with the remarkable score of 94. This took the county record which had stood since Christmas Eve 1928 when William Pickford a Leicester hosiery manufacturer completed a round of golf at Birstall in 42 minutes. The world record of the day was 31 minutes 22 seconds completed in South Africa by an Olympic athlete. Robert Taylor had a great deal of his earlier coaching from Jim Whyte, the club professional, and developed into the lowest handicapped golfer in the club in the post war years representing the club and his county on many occasions.

Whilst these remarkable feats can be regarded by some as gimmickry they do, nevertheless, draw attention to the fact that most golf can be played at a faster speed than we are all used to. Many attempts by successive committees have been made to speed up play but none can have been as effective as the method used by Torn Jarrom's dog. Tom, a regular player during this period, would leave his dog in the car in the club car park. When the dog thought that Tom had had long enough to complete a round, he would stand on the horn. Apparently his timing was amazingly accurate.

In 1963, it was decided to build a new bungalow for the steward including a new kitchen. To that time, the steward had lived in the timber building erected after the 1946 fire. That building, prior to the fire, had been an implement shed on the course and it was to be dismantled and used to build shelters on the course when the new bungalow was completed. The club certainly saw value for money from that building.

Developments have been a continuous programme for the club and in 1964 further plans were being discussed to build a new dining room, ladies' rooms and bar. Unfortunately the problem of finance, which seems to have dogged the club from its inception, caused these plans to be shelved, but not forgotten.

There was considerable unrest in the club during this period regarding the position of the Holdings Company and the club and many members were of the opinion that the club should aim to control the Holdings Company by the purchase of shares. Unfortunately there was no way the club could both embark on the capital expenditure of clubhouse extensions and at the same time find the finance to purchase sufficient shares to gain control. It was pointed out by Mr Frank Doleman,

the chairman of the Holdings Company; that the purchase of shares by members as opposed to the club would not solve the problem and the matter was dropped in favour of concentration on the proposed extensions. In order to improve the financial state of the club, the purchase of shares by members in the limited company as a condition of membership was ceased and an entrance fee re-introduced. Meantime, the Holdings Company persuaded Aubrey Sharp to convey to them the small strip-of land beneath the clubhouse before the extensions could be contemplated and this was concluded for the sum of £162.50.

Following the death of Miss Gladys Cayless, a lady member for many years and a past Lady Captain, the Gladys Cayless Memorial Bowl was purchased by the Ladies Section in her memory.

The parents of John Fisher, a young member of the club who died, presented the John Fisher Challenge Cup in 1964 to be played for by members of the Junior Section.

In 1965 Mrs R Greaves presented the Twelve Cup to the ladies section and as the name would suggest the organiser of the event secretly selects twelve holes out of eighteen played and the winner is decided on her performance on the holes selected. This type of competition has a history in the men's section of the club dating from the thirties. It was found on medal rounds that competitors who were playing below their handicap would spoil their card on the last few holes knowing that a better card had already been returned. To discourage this practice a competition was arranged with twelve hidden holes and continued for some years with the previous winner providing the prize for the subsequent year. Unfortunately the competition was discontinued with the out- break of war.

Scraptoft golfers were once again hitting the headlines and John Jeffrey, another protégée of the professional Jim Whyte, won the Leicestershire and Rutland Golf Union Match-play Championship in 1966. Miss Susan Walker won the County Girls Junior Championship for the second time in the following year. In order to promote winter golf in the ladies section, Mrs Gladys Marlow presented a winter league trophy in 1966.

This was the year that the club were hosts to the County Union Sports Mercury competition. Robert Taylor took the scratch prize on his home course.

The 60s were a period of intense social activity at the club. In addition to the junior section, vigorous social committees were providing a very full programme of entertainment and the size of the club house facilities was the only limitation on the members' response. This was the time when a ticket to a Scraptoft Golf Club dance was as much in demand as a Cup Final Ticket and the plans for the extension of the clubhouse, which had remained dormant for some time, reappeared on the Management Committee agenda. Efforts were made to raise the finance for the extensive alterations, by interest free loans from members. Unfortunately, whilst the members were prepared to pay a premium on their dance tickets, the request for

interest free loans did not have the same success and the exercise failed. This was a bitter disappointment to the Management Committee and to the Holdings Company and it became necessary to impose a building levy as an addition to the annual subscription and which was continued for a number of years.

Stanley Marlow resigned as Secretary in November 1966 and so popular was this office that a successor could not be found until the following June when C W 'Dick' Adcock was persuaded to accept the post.

Other clubs in the county were finding difficulties in raising teams for matches with the Junior section which was very strong during this period and it was agreed with several other clubs in the county to increase the age limit and to re-name the Juniors as the Under 35 section. A league was formed in 1967 and it is a credit to the younger members of the club that the representatives of Scraptoft Golf Club appear as the league leaders on the league shield more times than any other club which participates. Not all competitions in that year were serious ones as there was a match between the club and the County Archers and it is perhaps sad to relate that the Archers won.

The County Union F A Jackson trophies were contested at Scraptoft in 1967 for the first time with Miss Marjorie Kay and Frank Doleman collecting first prize.

With the co-operation of the Holdings Company, a bank loan, monies from the building levy and a brewery loan, the building project for the extension of the clubhouse finally got under way in October 1967. The present professional's shop was purchased for use as a temporary bar and due to the building operations and temporary accommodation, the bar takings were seriously depleted during the winter of that year although part of the blame could be said to be the introduction of the breathalyser test on drivers.

Much has been written in recent years about the Sex Discrimination Act but in 1968, the Senior Citizen members of the ladies section needed no such powerful backing when in the face of the serious problems of the club, they requested a reduction in fees as enjoyed by their male counterparts. True to the long found belief that this was a gentlemen's club, unanimous and immediate capitulation was agreed by the Management Committee. Some still say that it was this early victory of female equality which was to spur on Germaine Greer to much greater things.

Social functions became a thing of the past during the winter of 1967 but this was all put to rights on the 17th May 1963 when the grand re-opening of the clubhouse took place. Over 400 members' friends and guests attended. A marquee was erected on the car park to accommodate the numbers and many present and past members can recall this memorable evening with a wonderful atmosphere which seemed to launch a new era in the life of the club.

Whilst members were delighted with the new facilities, there were many who were soon to say that the cosy atmosphere of the old clubhouse had been lost and it is a

fact that about this time, the social life of the club started to decline with functions being less well supported. It is a tribute to the successive social committees of this period that they continued to provide valuable income to the club from their untiring and some- times unrewarded efforts. It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for this social decline, but most members who can remember the club life of the early 60s would agree that the new clubhouse was a major factor. Happily these times go in circles and with the increased membership of the recent years an improving support of the club is now being seen which in these inflationary times are the lifeblood of survival.

History was still being made in that year when in June the club was host to the County Championship and Wykes Bowl Competitions. This was the first time that this major golf union competition had been played on the course and it was an ideal opportunity to show off the improved facilities.

For several years the club, mainly through the efforts of Dennis Mawer, had been negotiating with the City Council to lease an area of land from Beeby Lane adjacent to the present first hole and practice area to the Long Drag hedge. The idea was to replace the two holes over the Hamilton Road and the Cemetery Hole. As reported earlier, Long Tom Green and part of the Cemetery Hole were on licence only from the City being on land to be used for a possible entry to a future cemetery. These negotiations started in 1964 and lasted for six whole years during which time golf architects Cotton, Harris and Penick were appointed. They confirmed the feasibility and Dennis Mawer, with others, prepared a report on the cost of development. After all this work, the City finally decided in 1970 that whilst they would not require this particular area of land for a crematorium as originally envisaged there was a demand for additional playing fields for Scruptoft College and the lease was refused. Present members will have observed that this development is now under way.

Robert Taylor was continuing to feature well in local golf and in 1969 he took the County Amateur Championship with a fine aggregate score of 137 on the Leicestershire Course. This included a second round of 67, the best ever recorded to that date in the event.

This must have been a time of particularly wet weather as the problem of poor drainage in the field was once again the major topic in the club records. Unfortunately once again the problem of finance ruled the day and many members expressed criticism that money spent on the clubhouse premises should have been spent in this direction. This issue was to be raised on many more occasions before the work was completed some years later.

Many ladies take up the game of golf later in life and derive considerable enjoyment from it whilst in many cases not attaining a high standard of competitive golf. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm amongst the lady veterans at Scruptoft is well known and to encourage this, Mrs Gladys Marlow presented a trophy in 1969 to the

ladies section to be played for by the Senior Ladies and known as the Veterans Cup. This is now keenly contested annually.

The ladies section has probably one of the largest memberships in the County and whilst they are not officially members of the club with voting powers, they have by various other pressures succeeded in saving their lounge being taken over as a snooker room by the male members of the club at successive annual general meetings. Quite what these pressures are is a little obscure but it could have something to do with the fact that a number of regular attendees at the A G M have wives in the ladies section and fear for their future freedom to play the game.

Since the major reconstruction completed in 1968 the most documented and discussed item in Management and at Annual General Meetings has been the mode of dress to be worn in the lounge. Pressure has been put on successive committees to both relax and restrict the rules on this point and it has proved impossible to suit all shades of opinion. It is really a question of standards and the age old problem that one member's idea of reasonable attire in the lounge is not another's. For the image of the club, it would seem essential that a standard be set and adhered to by successive committees so that it no longer becomes an A G M football.

Scraptoft once again took the County Union Men's Foursomes title in 1970 at Kirby Muxloe Golf Club. By 1970, the subscription had increased to £32.00 for a full playing member and an instalment system of payment was introduced to save wastage of members unable to meet the whole fee. This facility, although now in a different form, is still available.

1971 saw the introduction of decimalisation but apart from a new cash register and problems for the steward at peak times, the conversion caused few other problems for the club.

Young Martin Goode put Scraptoft in the news again by winning the County Boys' Championship and his success was repeated by David Cannon in 1972. They were two very good golfers in a very strong Junior Section within the club during this period. Robert Taylor was awarded the Donald Cameron trophy for the 'County Golfer of the Year' in 1971.

In November of that year, the Secretary Dick Adcock suffered a heart attack and Robert E 'Bob' Lee agreed to act in a temporary capacity until his recovery.

It was decided by the committee that the receipt for the 1972 subscription from members would be in the form of a disc which would be displayed on their golf bag as evidence of membership and payment of subscription.

The theory was obvious but in practice, the scheme did not succeed. It appears that the main reason was that some of the older members of the club felt that they were well enough known by sight to be a member and by reputation to have paid their

subscription and did not bother to display their discs. Others of course were lost and members did not bother to have them replaced and the scheme was not repeated.

The club were winners of the County Golf League in 1972, a feat we have not repeated since.

1972 saw another first for the club. At his own expense, Sidney Curry arranged the cladding of the trolley shed and alteration of the door to accommodate the first electric caddy cart at the club. Apart from its obvious use to Mr Curry, it was also used to bring Father Christmas to the club for successive children's Christmas parties. A duty carried out for several years by the genial Ted Henfrey and his chauffeur, until his retirement was Jim Whyte, a task which they enjoyed more than the children.

Bob Yates and Stan Miles presented a shield to be played for in a Winter League competition in 1972. Due to difficulties with Organisation it was decided that the shield be presented at the club Skegness weekend.

Dick Adcock decided on recovery from his illness that he would not seek re-election as Honorary Secretary in 1972 and Bob Lee continued in the office.

In 1972 Bert Gamble and Bennie Dean presented a cup which was affectionately called the Bert/Ben trophy. The cup is now played for in the Captain versus Vice-Captain competition.

It was decided by the House Committee to improve the front of the clubhouse to be more in keeping with the improved buildings and the present area of tarmac Adam was laid to replace the existing rose bed and paved area. It was unfortunate that two mature trees had to be removed but the new layout was generally accepted as a distinct improvement. No doubt those members who contributed to a wall fund to edge the tarmac Adam area from the course, gazed in some wonderment at the row of fir trees which suddenly appeared in its place but which now have matured into what many members feel is a more 'natural break'.

Despite the improved appearance of the clubhouse, members were still not using the facilities and the Chairman of the day circularized members about the effect of this and loss of revenue to the club. The Committee had held the subscription in 1972 but by 1973 a sizeable increase was required to correct the deteriorating financial situation.

Jim Whyte, professional to the club since 1952, retired in April 1973. He was a character who had served the club well, not only as professional but also for some time as head green keeper and steward. He had been responsible for coaching many young players from complete rabbits to single figure handicap golfers. At a dinner given by the Leicestershire and Rutland Golf Alliance, Jim was the guest of honour and he was presented with a cheque.

Experienced head green keepers are increasingly difficult to find and it is not unusual for enquiries to extend nationwide to find the right man. As a result, the

question of accommodation becomes a problem and the club certainly found this in 1974 following a change of head green keeper. It was resolved that to attract the right man a house would have to be provided. A new property not far from the course was found.

The drainage of the field once again appeared on the Management Agenda following successive wet winters and that part of the course being regularly out of bounds.

130th of these major projects were well beyond the financial capability of the club and it was decided to approach members for loans of £500 in exchange for free subscription until the loan was repaid, sufficient members responded and the house was purchased, The drainage project got under way with the preparation of drawings to decide on density.

From the very early days of the club, the relationship with the local police had been sustained and in 1974 the members of the Police Golf Society were made official five day members of the club. Competitions and social events between the club and the police are now an established feature of the club calendar and include a competition in memory of Jim Strong, a local police officer and well respected member of the club.

Robert Taylor again hit the headlines of the national press in June 1974. Playing for the county at Hunstanton, he achieved three holes in one in consecutive rounds at the same hole. His achievement is recorded in the Guinness Book of Records and Hunstanton golf club erected a plaque on the hole. The feat is also recorded on a plaque in the clubhouse at Scruptoft.

Amongst several other holes in one which Robert had achieved previously was one on the 9th hole at Scruptoft, a par 4 almost 360yds in length.

A most popular competition which started in 1974 is the mixed knockout. A pair of silver candelabra was presented by Mr and Mrs William Bissett and the competition always attracts a good entry. Despite the fact that many married partners take part, the records make no mention of any serious disagreements on the course or divorce proceedings arising out of this competition.

Financially things continued to look very bleak in 1975 and resignations of members resulted in a deficiency of 56 below the agreed maximum. An unprecedented step was taken by the committee in advertising for members in the local press. The decision was taken on purely financial grounds but received considerable adverse comment from members.

The exercise proved a success for the reason taken but the repercussions of the immediate influx of an additional 43 accepted members are still being felt and at peak playing times, the course regularly reaches saturation point. It also means that competition sheets are quickly completed and rarely is a competition played

without a full field. Socially, in the full tradition of Scraptoft, the new members have merged very well and give valuable support to the club.

The County Union Alex Baxter trophies were held at Scraptoft for the first time in 1975.

Drainage of the field, made possible by the loans from members, was completed in 1975 and has made a marked improvement to this part of the course. A mild winter and a very dry summer followed in 1976 and it was some time before it was required to prove itself. Derek P Marlow, the then Chairman of the Greens Committee must be accorded great credit for his energies in seeing this project through and the time and effort which he has expended generally on the course since his appointment in 1974.

Aubrey T Sharp was a member and a landlord of the club for many years and following his death in a motor accident, his son Lieutenant General Sir John Sharp offered to sell the land now owned by him to the Holdings Company who were the official tenant. This land comprised the present 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th part 16th, 17th and 18th holes.

Many discussions had taken place from time to time during the preceding years with the Holdings Company with a view to the club acquiring the shareholding. As reported earlier, the necessary finance was always a stumbling block. In order not to aggravate the future possibility of this exercise, the holdings company waived their option to purchase the land in favour of the club and this was duly completed in 1976 at a price of £20,000. The purchase was financed mainly by a bank loan and a single levy on members of £15 with £10 for lady members.

The young man who had joined the club staff in 1928 as assistant professional but who had long since regained his amateur status was elected Captain of the club in January 1976 and this must be a unique achievement.

Frank Liddiard celebrated his election by "Driving In" with a hickory shafted driver 112 years old. The club was made by Willie Park, the winner of the first British Open in 1860. He was to take the title on three future occasions. The age of the club was authenticated by Robert Forgan & Son, the famous Scottish club makers.

During wartime service with the R A F at Cranwell, Frank advertised for second hand clubs to be used on an improvised station course and many clubs were given, including the driver. After his "Drive In" ceremony, Frank donated the driver to the club to be exhibited in the clubhouse where it can now be seen.

Golf is a sport being enjoyed by increasing numbers, especially the young. Applications for junior membership were far exceeding the availability and many had been on the waiting list for 2 years or more in 1976. The only organization representing the younger members of the club was the Under 35 Section committee but such was the enthusiasm of the junior members under 18 years of age that an unofficial committee of volunteers was formed to look after their interests.

A system of unofficial junior handicaps was introduced to promote interest and with the assistance of similar committees in other clubs, an interesting programme of matches and competitions is now being enjoyed. The committee made it quite clear from the outset that their object was not only to encourage potential in the junior section but to see that the members were schooled in etiquette and general behaviour, both on the course and in the clubhouse. The Management Committee were duly impressed with this effort and agreed to re-look at their commitment to Junior Golf.

The maximum number of junior members was increased by 50% to 75 and the waiting list was accommodated. Whilst Scraptoft cannot possibly field the strongest handicapped team in the county, there is no other club which can match their enthusiasm. Evidence of this can be seen on the 'Junior Team trophy' with Scraptoft taking the title in 1975 and 1976.

The organizing committee of the 'Tally Ho' club had expressed the wish that the money from their efforts should be spent on trees for the course and the Greens Committee respected this wish. Many trees were purchased during 1976 but as week followed week of drought, fears were expressed as to their future. Fortunately the rains came and there were very few losses. This was only part of a continuing programme of tree planting on the course which will have its reward in future years when Scraptoft will prove an increasing test of golf to the average player.

Due to increasing business commitments, Bob Lee did not seek re-election as Honorary Secretary in 1976 and was succeeded by J Leslie Bates. Leslie Bates had been a member of the club for many years and for several years had served on the Management Committee and as a director of the Holdings Company. He was to combine his duties of Honorary Secretary with those of President of the Club from January 1977.

The increase in membership and the superb summer of 1976 had a marked effect on the club income and successive reports of cash flow from the Treasurer throughout that year were encouraging. Nevertheless, the commitments of the club were substantial and forward planning vital. It was therefore agreed to increase subscriptions to £75 for full playing members and to reduce the starting age of this category from 25 to 21.

Early in 1977, the need for constant improvement of the club facilities centred round the gentlemen's locker room area as it was felt that this detracted from the otherwise attractive clubhouse.

Old wooden lockers which had seen many years' service were deteriorating and the floor covering of carpet tiles had not stood the test of wear from spiked shoes. New Steel lockers were purchased and a tiled floor was laid.

On the 26th July 1977, Scraptoft staged what was probably its first "Spectacular". Ray Illingworth, county and past England cricket captain, was celebrating his testimonial

year. Trevor Bennett, a member of the club and the Testimonial Committee arranged with the club to stage a Celebrity Golf Tournament to be followed by a Grand Ball in the evening for Ray's benefit. The event was a huge success with many stars of sport, radio, television and theatre supporting Ray Illingworth in a memorable day which resulted in his being presented with a cheque for £10,000.

As 1977 draws to a close, the history of the first 50 years of Scraftoft Golf Club is almost written. Arrangements for a dinner to celebrate the event on the 28th January 1978 are already under way and it is hoped that it will prove a fitting climax to what could well be regarded in the future as the most difficult but most exciting period in the history of the club.

Dare we speculate, as the founders probably did, on what the future will hold for the club. In the short term, there are plans already in the pipeline for further improvement to the clubhouse amenities which will make it second to none in the county. Improvements continue to be made to the course, including the possible increase in the standard scratch score to 70. Negotiations for the purchase of the shares in the Holdings Company by the club are well under way and when these are complete, the clubhouse and the majority of the course will be owned by the members.

In the longer term, the club will no doubt be considering the purchase of the Corporation land to complete the freehold and who knows, there may be squash courts, swimming pool, sauna baths, sprinklers on the greens, electric caddy carts It could be said that this is all a dream but wasn't that how it all started 50 years ago.