

Trentham Golf Club



Original wooden pavilion 1895 - [Trentham Golf Club]

Beginnings

One of the founder members of the club was the Rev Edmund Pigott who was club president from 1895. He had six daughters and at least one of these played golf meaning that Trentham was unusual as it had lady members from the very beginning and this is thought to have been due to a close connection with Lady Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland. At a time when ladies were declared to be “constitutionally and physically unfitted for golf” by 1906 there were thirty-five lady members listed at Trentham and two of these had single figure handicaps.

The first course had nine holes and the land was leased from one of the Duke’s tenant farmers for less than £40 a year. At this time a year’s subscription was two guineas and by 1903 income was sufficiently boosted to start thinking of expanding to eighteen holes.

Trentham was very attractive to Potteries industrialists and professional people. Golfers could come to Trentham, enjoy the links laid out on Trentham Ley while at the same time gaining social prestige by association with the nearby Sutherland estate. By 1897 the 4th Duke was intent on developing Hem Heath as a new housing area for the professional elite, so having a golf club on the doorstep would have enhanced the local facilities.



The Golf House about 1910 - [Trentham Golf Club]

Early Twentieth Century

Having managed for ten years with a modest wooden pavilion, in 1903 a mortgage was taken for £1250 to build a substantial club house facing Barlaston Old Road. It was to have a dining room, bar, locker room, and quarters for resident staff but was designed so it could be easily turned into a home should the club fall on hard times.

At the same time more land was leased from another of the Duke’s tenant farmers allowing the course to expand to nineteen holes. This put the club on a par with others in the county and Trentham was firmly established as a leading Staffordshire club. The club professional, W Utton, did not stay long however, he was tempted away to Rudyard club in 1906 when they offered him twenty-five shillings a week, five shillings more than he was getting at Trentham!

1912 – 1922

By 1905 the Sutherlands had abandoned Trentham Hall and in 1911 it was demolished. In June 1913 the 4th Duke died causing more uncertainty and then by the summer of 1914 the country was at war. In August 1914 an immediate donation of ten guineas was sent from Trentham Golf Club to the Prince of Wales War Fund.

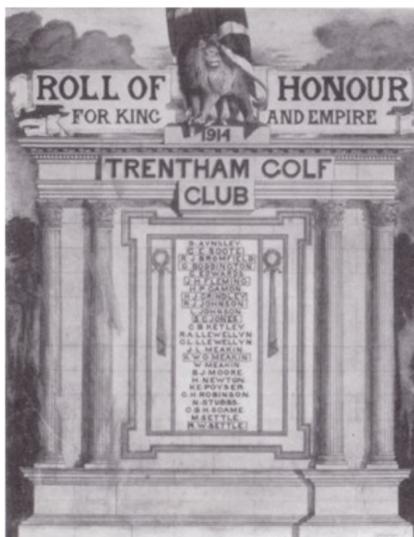
In April 1915 two Belgian refugees were made temporary members, and later gifts were made to Red Cross funds and Army Medical Officers seconded to North Staffordshire were admitted on special terms.

Economies were made, salaries were cut and part of the course was handed back to help with the war effort.

Ralph Hughes - the club professional since summer 1914 on £1 a week - was encouraged by the club committee to “volunteer” for the army before the time of conscription. He was told his job would be kept open with the promise of £2 a week when he came back.

A roll of honour, designed by a member, lists twenty-five names of men who were members or sons of members, nine of whom appear to have been killed in action including Sydney Jones of Hem Heath.

By the 1920s the club boasted around 280 members and the club eventually made an agreement with the trustees of Trentham estate in July 1921 to lease the ground directly for 21 years at a rate of £500 per annum. In 1922 it was decided by a vote that play should be allowed on Sundays but only after 1.30p.m.



On the Honours boards in 1916

President – Mr R Alcock
Men’s Captain – Mr H M Robinson
Lady’s Captain – Miss Madge Llewellyn – Seabridge Hall.
Hon. Secretary – Mr E H Powell
Hon. Treasurer – Mr Walter Webb – “Dragor”, Hem Heath. (house no longer there, site of Guardian Care. On 1911 census Mr Webb listed as “bank manager”.)

Another golf related fact – on the 1911 census there is a Percy Ketley living at Bridge House, Hem Heath, (now 241 Longton Rd). His job is “traveller in golf balls”.

Roll of Honour

Of the twenty-three names listed on the roll of honour there are two recognisable pottery names – Aynsley and Meakin. The only one that can definitely be identified as a Hem Heath resident is Mr C. B. Ketley of Bridge House.



Children’s event at the Golf Club 1920 [private collection]