



# **FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE GOLF CLUB**

## **THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OLDEST RECORDED CLUB IN THE WORLD**



- THE FIRST DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF GOLF BEING PLAYED OVER CHANONRY (NOW FORTROSE) WAS DURING THE YEAR 1702. FORTROSE GOLF SOCIETY WAS FORMED ON WEDNESDAY, 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 1793. GOLF WAS PLAYED DOWN FROM THE CARAVAN SITE AT FORTROSE TOWARDS THE POINT AREA AND THEN BACK UP AGAIN TO WHERE THE CURRENT LOG CABIN IS SITUATED AT THE TOP OF THE SITE.
- BY THE LATTER HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE EMERGED AS A FAVOURITE PLACE OF SUMMER RETIREMENT FOR MEN OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. IN AROUND 1876 THE KENNEDY FAMILY CAME TO LIVE IN FORTROSE AND IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE MR KENNEDY, ALREADY A MEMBER OF 5 GOLF CLUBS, HAD CUT AND CLIPPED TWO HOLES ON THE LINKS, ONE CLOSE TO WHERE THE CLUBHOUSE NOW STANDS AND ONE BY THE WITCHES STONE ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> FAIRWAY. OFFICER FRIENDS OF MY KENNEDY WOULD BE INVITED FROM FORT GEORGE (BY ROWING ACROSS) TO PLAY ON THE COURSE ALONG WITH LOCALS AT THIS TIME.
- BY THE END OF 1888 THE CLUB HAD A MEMBERSHIP OF AROUND 50 MEMBERS. AT THIS TIME THE MOTOR CAR WAS YET BUT A DREAM OF THE INVENTOR AND THE HIGHLAND RAILWAY WAS STILL A DECADE AWAY FROM PENETRATING THE HINTERLAND KNOWN AS THE BLACK ISLE. THE FIRST CLUBHOUSE WAS BUILT AND OPENED IN 1895. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP COST 5/- PER YEAR WHICH WAS THE EQUIVALENT TO TWO DAYS WAGES FOR A LABOURER AT THAT TIME.
- DURING THE ABSENCE OF A CLUBHOUSE PRIOR TO 1895 ARRANGMENTS WERE MADE FOR MEMBERS TO LEAVE THEIR CLUBS IN THE CARE OF THE GOVENER OF THE NEARBY BLACK ISLE POOR HOUSE. THERE WERE ALSO PROBLEMS WITH CARTS BEING DRIVEN AT RANDOM OVER THE COURSE TO COLLECT SAND AND SHINGLE FROM THE SHORE OR TO CARRY ICE TO THE FISHING STATION AT THE POINT. THE TOWN COUNCIL EVENTUALLY SORTED THIS PROBLEM BY LAYING OUT DESIGNATED ROUTES.
- DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR THE MEMBERSHIP WAS SOMEWHAT REDUCED AND COMPETITIONS WERE SUSPENDED WITH CLUB ACTIVITY VIRTUALLY CEASING UNTIL 1919 BY WHICH TIME CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE TO THE CLUBHOUSE BY MEN OF THE HIGHLAND CYCLIST BATTALION WHO HAD USED THE PREMISES AS A GUARDHOUSE.
- IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1922 ONCE INTEREST IN GOLF WAS REVIVED THAT THE COURSE WAS ONCE AGAIN BROUGHT TO A SUFFICIENT STANDARD TO ALLOW FOR COMPETITIONS TO TAKE PLACE.
- ON A CLEAR DAY THE CHANONRY LIGHTHOUSE STANDS OUT AGAINST THE SOMBRE BACKGROUND OF FORT GEORGE. THE FORT WAS INITIALLY A CHAIN OF GARRISON BARRACKS CONSTRUCTED ALONG A LINE OF THE GREAT GLEN (FORT AUGUSTUS & FORT WILLIAM THE OTHERS) TO HOUSE GOVERNMENT TROOPS WHO WERE GIVEN THE TASK OF BRINGING THE HIGHLAND CLANS INTO LINE FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN IN 1746. THE FORT REMAINS AS A BASE FOR SCOTTISH REGIMENTS TO THIS DAY.
- IN 1932, JAMES BRAID WAS INVITED TO ADVISE ON A NEW COURSE LAYOUT. WITH NEW LAND BEING ACQUIRED AT CHANONRY POINT THIS WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND THE COURSE. ON SATURDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1935 A NEWSPAPER REPORT NOTED THAT 'THE NEW 18 HOLE GOLF COURSE, LAID OUT BY MR JAMES BRAID, IS OF GREAT VARIETY AND NECESSITATES MUCH SKILL. ITS SPORTING CHARACTER WILL NO DOUBT, ATTRACT MANY VISITORS TO THE DISTRICT'.
- OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS AS MORE LAND BECAME AVAILABLE TO LENGTHEN SOME HOLES MR JAMES BRAID WAS INVITED BACK TO MAKE A FRESH SURVEY. HIS FEE WAS £12.10/-. UNDER MR BRAID'S RECOMMENDATIONS THE COURSE WAS REDESIGNED AND A COURSE WAS LAID OUT FORMING THE BASIS OF THE ONE IN USE TO THE PRESENT DAY.
- IN 1940 THE COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE WAS REQUISITIONED BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES AS A TRAINING GROUND, WHERE SEA LANDING TACTICS WERE PRACTISED IN PREPARATION FOR THE D-DAY LANDINGS. THE ONLY REMAINING SIGNS OF WARTIME ACTIVITY NOW ARE THE CONCRETE BOLLARDS TO THE LEFT OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 4<sup>TH</sup> FAIRWAYS. WITH THE DAMAGE DONE TO THE COURSE DURING THE TRAINING THE CLUB WERE AWARDED £4,000 IN COMPENSATION BY THE WAR DEPARTMENT IN 1945 AND BY 1946, 9 HOLES HAD BEEN RESTORED. BY THE FOLLOWING YEAR ALL 18 HOLES WERE RETURNED TO AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD.

- BY THE MID 1950'S THE MEMBERSHIP HAD OUTGROWN THE FACILITIES OF THE CLUBHOUSE AND IN 1958 MISS ISA ROSS (ONE OF THE CLUBS BENEFACTORS), OFFERED TO LEND MONEY FOR A NEW CLUBHOUSE AT A NOMINAL RATE OF INTEREST. PLANS WERE THEN DRAWN UP AFTER WHICH MISS ROSS ASTOUNDED MEMBERS BY REVEALING THAT SHE WOULD MEET THE ENTIRE COST HERSELF AND THE NEW CLUBHOUSE OPENED IN 1959 BUT WITH ONE CONDITION. THIS WAS THAT NO ALCOHOL WOULD BE SOLD ON THE PREMISES – THE CLUB ACCEPTED THIS ALTHOUGH LEGAL OBSTACLES WERE OVERCOME AND IN 1977 A LIQUOR LICENCE WAS OBTAINED AND A BAR WAS OPENED FOR MEMBERS TO PURCHASE ALCOHOL. DAI REES OPENED THE BAR ON 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1977.
- 16<sup>TH</sup> HOLE – NAMED AFTER THE BRAHAN SEER WHO WAS ALLEGEDLY BURNT IN A SPIKED TAR BARREL THEREABOUTS BECAUSE OF THE DOOM AND DESPAIR HE FORETOLD ABOUT THE HOUSE OF SEAFORTH. A MEMORIAL CAIRN IS LOCATED AT CHANONRY POINT. HE IS THOUGHT TO HAVE USED A STONE WITH A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE TO SEE HIS VISIONS.
- 17<sup>TH</sup> HOLE – NAMED AS 'CLAY POTS' – WHICH IS PROBABLY THE FINEST DRIVING HOLE ON THE COURSE WHERE YOU HOPE TO LAND NEAR THE STONE WHERE THE LAST WITCH IN SCOTLAND IS REPUTED TO HAVE BEEN BURNED – IN A CLAY POT MAYBE?
- 18<sup>TH</sup> HOLE – FIERY HILLOCK – A FINE FINISHING HOLE WHERE THE WHINS LINING THE FAIRWAY DESTROY MANY A FINE ROUND. THE CENTRE BUNKER SHORT OF THE GREEN WAS ONCE A MOUND WHERE FIRES WERE LIT IN THE OLDEN DAYS TO SEND NEWS OF A DISASTER ALONG THE COAST.
- **FAMOUS VISITORS TO THE LINKS – 1920's – PRIME MINISTER HERBERT ASQUITH WHO OFTEN VENTURED ONTO A GOLF COURSE IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND WITH BODYGUARDS TO WARD OFF THE ATTENTIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT DURING HIS TIME IN OFFICE.**
- KING HAAKON OF NORWAY VISITED THE COURSE DURING THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WORLD WAR CONFLICT AND SURVEYED THE SCENE AS HIS TROOPS TRAINED ALONGSIDE OTHER ALLIED FORCES IN PREPARATION FOR THE D-DAY LANDINGS AT NORMANDY.
- **FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE G.C. PLAYED AN INSPIRATIONAL PART IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE FAMOUS 'COLONEL BOGEY' MARCH SHORTLY BEFORE THE 1<sup>ST</sup> WORLD WAR. OFFICERS STATIONED ACROSS THE WATER AT FORT GEORGE WERE HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE CLUB & FREQUENTLY MADE THE BOAT CROSSING TO PLAY ON THE COURSE. BANDMASTER RICKETTS OFTEN PARTNERED HIS COLONEL TO THE LINKS AT A TIME WHEN 'BOGEY' WAS REGARDED AS PAR FOR EACH HOLE. WHILST PLAYING ONE DAY THEIR ATTENTION WAS DRAWN BY ANOTHER GOLFER WHO WHISTLED FROM A DISTANCE AWAY TO ATTRACT THEIR ATTENTION. THE TWO NOTES WHISTLED BECAME IMPRINTED IN THE BANDMASTERS MIND & CAME TO FORM THE OPENING BAR OF THE FAMOUS TUNE HE WAS INSPIRED TO WRITE & WHICH HE ENTITLED 'COLONEL BOGEY'.**

## **THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OLDEST RECORDED CLUB IN THE WORLD (1793)**

- 2010 - The Scottish Senior Ladies (Close) Amateur Championship (Scottish Ladies Golf Association)
- 2010 - The Scottish Club Championship Final (Scottish Golf Union)
- 2013 - The Scottish Boys & Girls Under-14s Open Stroke Play Championship (Scottish Golf Union)
- 2013 - The Commonwealth Spoons (Scottish Ladies Golf Association)
- 2014 - The RBS Junior Golf Club of the Year (The Scottish Golf Awards - Glasgow)
- 2015 - The Scottish Club Championship Final (Scottish Golf Union)
- 2016 - The Scottish Senior Ladies Amateur Championship (Scottish Golf)
- 2016 - The Scottish Junior Open (Scottish Golf)
- 2017 – The Scottish Club Handicap Championship (Scottish Golf)
- 2017 – Voted Scotland's Best Golfing Experience at the Scottish Golf Tourism Awards (Turnberry)
- 2018 - The Scottish Boys Under-16s Open Championship (Scottish Golf)
- 2018 – Luxury Travel Guide Lifestyle Awards – Voted Scotland's Golf Club of the Year
- 2018 – Voted Scotland's Best Golfing Experience at the Scottish Golf Tourism Awards (St. Andrews)
- 2018 – Voted as No. 34 in the Top 100 Fun Courses to play in GB & I (Over 2,000 courses in GB & I)
- 2019 - Luxury Travel Guide Lifestyle Awards – Voted Scotland's Golf Club of the Year
- 2021 – Outstanding Customer Service Award – The International Golf Tour Operators Association
- 2022 – The World Hickory Open Championship Team Event
- 2024 – Host Club of the World Hickory Open Championship (October)