

CHAPTER NINE

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## THE PLAYERS WHO JOINED JAMES SHERLOCK

John Henry Taylor (1871–1963) was perhaps the first of a new breed of professional golfers who came to the fore in the last years of the 19th century. Born at Northam in north Devon, he was apprenticed to the master clubmaker from North Berwick, Charles Gibson, who had come to the local course, Westward Ho!. In 1891, when he was only twenty, Taylor was appointed professional at the new golf club at Burnham-on-Sea in Somerset. He soon transferred to Winchester and, after competing in the Open Championship in 1893 and coming tenth, in 1894 he won the Championship at Sandwich. He won it again in 1895, and in 1896, though he

tied for first place with the great Harry Vardon, he lost the play-off. He then came eleventh in 1897 and fourth in 1898 and 1899, before winning again in 1900. He won again in 1909 and 1913. He also won the French Open in 1908 and 1909 and the German Open in 1912.

Taylor, like Old Tom Morris in the late 19th century, eventually became the 'Grand Old Man of Golf'. He was non-playing captain of the British Ryder Cup team in 1933 when it achieved one of its rare (before the Europeans joined) victories over the United States at Southport and Ainsdale. He was made an honorary member of the R&A in 1947, the year he retired as professional at the Royal Mid-Surrey.

Pupils came from all over the country to try to unlock the secret of his accurate mashie play, where he hit the ball high or low according to the demands of the course and the weather. Taylor was also tireless in seeking to improve the status of professionals and becoming a leading light in their trade association.

Taylor was only 5'8" tall, shorter than his great contemporaries, Vardon and Braid, with whom he formed what became

known as 'the great triumvirate'. His swing was punchy with a short follow-through. No doubt because of his learning the game in the windy conditions of Westward Ho! and Burnham, he tended to hit the ball with a low trajectory.

That master of the game, Henry Cotton, would write of Taylor in his book, *This Game of Golf*:

J.H., as I was allowed to call him, ... was a sturdy person and his type of muscle, short and strong, lost its flexibility possibly sooner than his contemporaries, but right up to 59 years of age he was still the same, neat, thrustful player.

*James Braid (1870–1950)*

Braid was a Scot, from Elie in Fife, not far from St Andrews – though Elie itself has a splendid golf course. As with Taylor, Braid's father was not a golfer. But Braid's father was opposed to his son playing the game, thinking it had little future. Braid therefore began his working life apprenticed to a joiner. Nevertheless, he played golf on every occasion he could. He broke the Elie course record when he was still only sixteen. In 1893 he moved to London to work as a clubmaker at the Army and Navy Stores. He played at the West Drayton Golf Club, where the members, impressed by his game, arranged a match with Taylor. The match, over 36 holes, finished all square. In 1894 he played in the Open Championship and, in the year that Taylor first won, came tenth. In 1895 he did not play, in 1896 he came sixth, in 1897 runner-up, in 1898 eleventh, in 1899 fifth, and in 1900 third. He was apparently held back by his poor putting. An experienced amateur who followed him in his rounds in



Arnaud Massy, James Braid, J.H. Taylor and James Sherlock (from left to right) took part in the match to celebrate officially the opening of the Stoke Park Club.



1900 said that his putting would have made the angels weep and if he could have holed from two feet he would have won. However, the following year, at Muirfield, he finally won the Open Championship, largely thanks to his long hitting and in spite of his still indifferent putting and the over-exuberance of the Scottish crowds who kept slapping him on the back to encourage him.

In 1902 he came second, tied with Vardon. They were still using the gutty ball and were beaten by Sandy Herd who used the new rubbercore. In 1903 he was fifth, ten shots behind Vardon. In 1904 he was second, tied with Taylor. In this Championship he became the first person to break 70 in the Open. The following year, at St Andrews, he won by five shots, and in 1906, at Muirfield, he won again, coming from behind to win. (Clearly he had sorted out his putting problems.) After coming fifth in 1907, he won again at Prestwick in 1908.

Here is Henry Cotton again, writing of Braid: 'This tall, stooping, ruddy-complexioned old Scot is one of the wonders of the golfing world.'

*Arnaud Massy (1877-1958)*

Arnaud Massy was born in Biarritz (a very fashionable resort in the late 19th century), and learnt his golf there. He was the

James Braid, a Scot from Elie in Fife, was the first person to break 70 in the Open Championship in 1904 when he came second to J.H. Taylor. He won it by five shots at St Andrews in 1905 and won it again at Muirfield the following year. His last victory was at Prestwick in 1908.

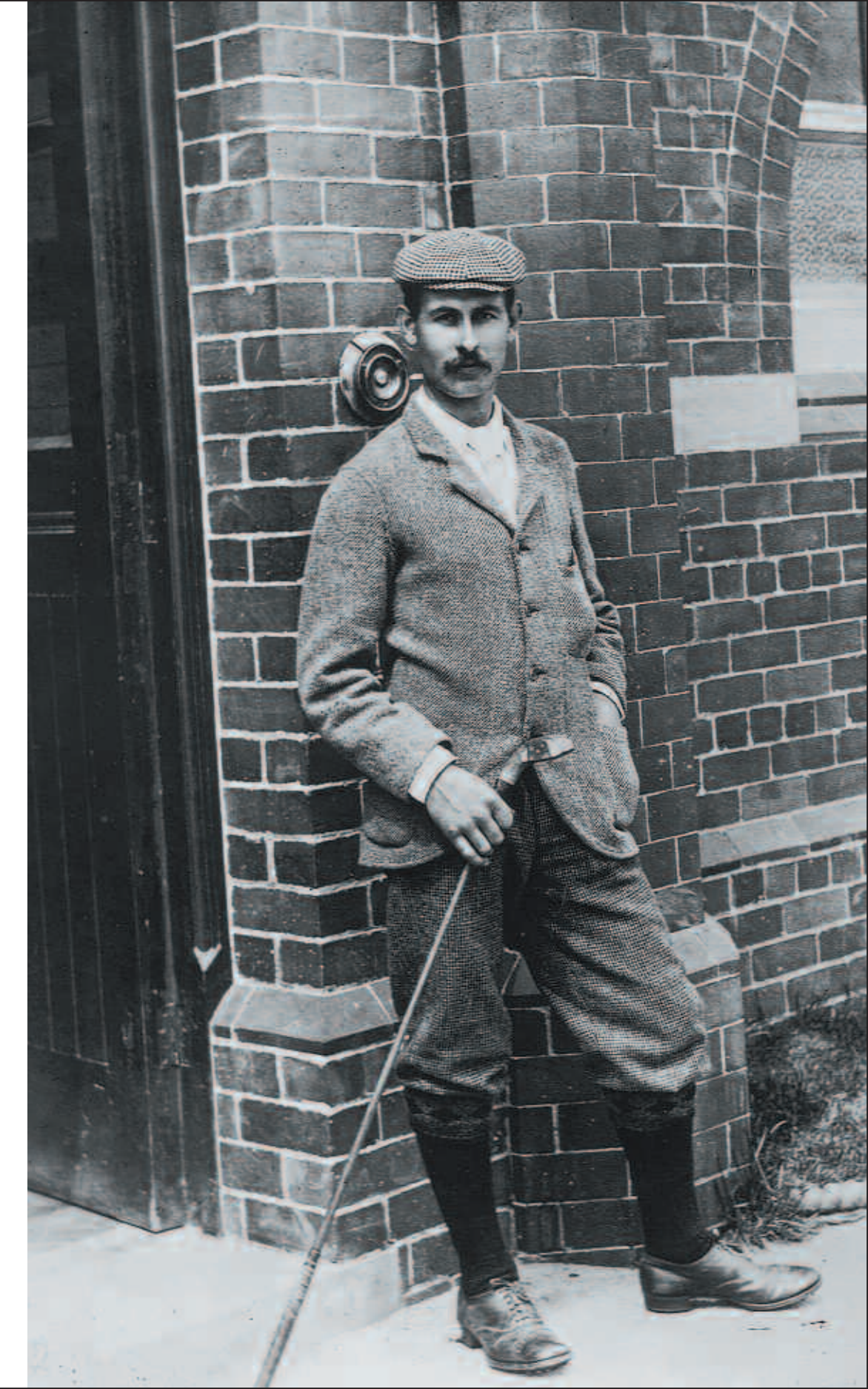
first golfer from outside the British Isles to win the Open Championship. After winning the French Open in 1906, he won both the French Open and the Open Championship in 1907. Bizarrely, he began playing left-handed, and the curious twirl at the top of his back-swing was said to be a relic from when he changed over from left- to right-handed. He spent a year apprenticed to the great Ben Sayers at North Berwick and while there married a Scottish girl.

## THE GREAT DAY

In his usual masterly way, Jackson organised plenty of publicity for the ceremonial inaugural match. In terms of spectators it was a sell-out, as is made clear in *Golf Illustrated* of 2 July 1909:

It is definitely arranged that J.H. Taylor (Champion), J. Braid and A. Massy (ex-Champions), and J. Sherlock, the club's professional, will start

Harry Vardon. One of the famous triumvirate with J.H. Taylor and James Braid, Vardon became golfing's first international superstar after he toured the USA in 1900. He played in more than 80 matches and won the US Open. He also won the Open Championship a record six times. His motto: 'Don't play too much golf. Twice a day is plenty.'



for the stroke competition at 11.00 and 11.15 on the morning of July 12th, when this club will be opened. So many applications from members of other clubs wishing to attend have been already received, that it has been decided to send tickets of admission to members of other golf clubs who apply to the secretary, Stoke Poges Golf Club, Slough, on or before July 10th. Should these applicants desire lunch at the club, they must send their applications not later than July 8th when a voucher enabling them to obtain a luncheon ticket will be sent to them. The Great Western Railway have arranged to run motor 'buses in connection with all the principal trains from Slough Station to the entrance to the golf course, at a fare of 6d each way. It is decided to impose an entrance fee of ten guineas for gentlemen and five guineas for ladies on, and after, July 12th. The last election without entrance fee takes place on July 10th.

And Jackson was able to secure favourable comment in other magazines besides *Golf Illustrated*. This is what *The Court Journal* had to say, alongside a photograph of the Mansion:

Stoke Poges, which is within twenty-one miles of London and easy of access of that old-world and yet up-to-date town of Slough, has now its golf club. Those who have had the opportunity and have never visited Stoke Poges, with its church and memorial which was erected to the memory of the author of the famous elegy, must tell it to their shame, but it would be difficult to find an American 'doing' England who has not paid one or more visits to the Buckinghamshire hamlet. On Monday last there was an inaugural meeting, and the Stoke Poges Golf Club arranged some interesting exhibition matches, in which J.H. Taylor, the Open champion, James Braid and Arnaud Massy (ex-champions), and J. Sherlock, the local professional, took part. The magnificent and stately club-house,

Arnaud Massy on the 16th at Stoke Park. Brought up in fashionable Biarritz, Massy was the first overseas player to win the Open Championship when he won in 1907.

July 24, 1909

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THE THRONE AND COUNTRY

## THE LUXURY OF UP-TO-DATE GOLF.

### Opening of the New Club at Stoke Poges.



Braid holing at the 9th.

Massy and Braid at the 16th Tee.

TWO VIEWS OF THE MAGNIFICENT CLUB-HOUSE.

A montage of the opening match.

which we fully described a little time back, needs no comment, as it is stateliness personified. The course, too, is in excellent condition, while those (if there are such people) who tire of golf can boat and fish on the fine stretch of water within the grounds or play tennis on the lawns. Mr Alison is undertaking the secretarial duties, and is backed by a powerful committee, so that the future of the club is assured; so those who have hesitated about joining should send in their names at once and so take advantage of the present rates of membership.

The day itself was a huge success and the press was ecstatic about it and the club itself. *The Ladies' Field* wrote:

A golfing event of much interest took place last week near Slough. This was the public and formal opening of the Stoke Poges Club. Preserving the same munificence which they had displayed in connection with the course and the club-house, the executive had engaged, for this inaugural occasion, the services of Taylor, Braid, Massy and Sherlock. And the course, about which glowing accounts had been spread about, and the attendance of spectators did honour to this bevy of champions. A stroke competition in the morning and a four-ball foursome in the afternoon formed the programme. And superlatively good golf was the outcome. Fittingly enough, a new record for the course was created. Braid achieved an almost flawless 74, Taylor was 77, while the other two tied with 79. In the foursome Taylor and Massy proved too strong a combination for Braid and Sherlock, and beat them by 4 and 3.

Sherlock, formerly the professional at Oxford, and now attached to Stoke Poges, had extraordinary ill-luck with his putts. He was giving the hole a chance every time, but the ball refused to go in. That was quite a feature of the foursome play, and another was the fine play of Taylor. At the seventh hole, for example, Taylor had an opportunity of exhibiting his rare skill in the manipulation of a most delicate stroke. This seventh hole is a one-shot hole, sporting and difficult. The green is a narrow plateau, flanked on the left by a belt of trees, while its right extremity overhangs a stream. Taylor's tee shot found in the water. Dropping his ball, he was faced by a bank some 10ft. high and only about 3yds in front



James Sherlock had 'extraordinary ill-luck with his putts' in the opening match.

of him, with the hole less than half-a-dozen yards further away. Here was the need for a delicately-played lofting shot with check spin. Hundreds of eyes watched the playing of this shot. So exactly was it played that Taylor holed his next stroke and secured a 4. Then Braid demonstrated very nicely the art of getting out of a sand-bunker guarding the green and laying the ball dead. Braid is an adept at this stroke, as at most others. In the execution of it he takes a good deal of sand and a full swing almost, hitting it very hard. The spectators of the remote side of the green have a sense of being under fire until the ball comes trickling along the green.

The play abounded in valuable lessons for the onlookers, and was a liberal education in golf as it should be played. One was glad to see so many ladies in the huge crowd which surged around the players, and so many ladies well known in the golf world. If the wonderful play of these masters had not the effect of discouraging such, then it could not fail to stimulate them to new efforts, resolves and hopes. Perhaps it would be the great length of the professional's shots which would be most likely to cause discouragement. But in the case of the ladies such discouragement is needless, because Nature has so emphatically declared against their rivalling men in feats of strength. In accuracy and delicacy of touch there is no difference between the sexes. Some indeed will have it that here the advantage is with the ladies. The *suaviter in modo* of the ladies as opposed to the robust manner of the men tends to encourage such an opinion. But one can hardly imagine a greater accuracy or greater refinement of touch than the professional players showed at Stoke Poges.

Then what resource did they display in circumstances of difficulty! Massy's ball, for example, lay in heavy grass under a thick, overhanging tree. How would he extricate himself from this impasse, and how play a shot which would get out of the grass and yet would not be caught by the tree? Taking a heavy iron club and standing rather in front of his ball he hit a long low shot, one of those beautiful shots which skim the ground for a while and rise by a gentle crescendo till they attain their zenith at the end of their flight. But all four players were playing so well that difficulties of their own making were few and far between. As evidence of this the best-ball score of Taylor and Massy was 69 (35 out and 34 home).

And there was another instructive feature about this exhibition golf. This was the demeanour of the players. Their equanimity was remarkable



Braid played brilliantly all day in the opening match.

and praiseworthy. Never, by word or look, did they show annoyance at bad luck or resentment at the occasional encroachment and restlessness of the spectators. Only once did Braid hold back his shot. This was when a motor-car ran right across the line of his shot a hundred yards ahead. And it was well that Braid did exercise this caution, because his ensuing shot was a low one, never more than 15ft. from the ground.

Although coils of rope were at hand, they were never requisitioned. Accordingly it was a point of honour with the spectators to observe the etiquette of such an occasion, and the result was far more satisfactory than if there had been coercion.

As to the course, Stoke Poges is one of the most beautiful in the king-



dom. So heavily timbered was the estate which it traverses that some 400 trees had to be cut down for the purposes of the links. As in the case of Walton Heath and Sunningdale, the laying out of the course was the work of an amateur, to wit, Mr H.S. Colt. His plan of procedure was original and thorough. He took first-class players round the intended course with him and took their shots as a practical guide for the placing of greens, bunkers etc. This, and the spirit of enterprise, have produced the most sporting of courses. The seventh hole, already referred to, and the sixteenth, both illustrated in these pages, are gems as short holes. The latter will prove the death-trap of many different golfers and the cause of countless drowned balls.

The club-house is a palace of glittering whiteness without, and within a beautifully appointed and capacious club-hotel, with a vestibule of Oriental luxury, where members sit among palms and under a glass roof. Happily it was a perfect summer day for the opening of the club, so that the club-house and grounds were seen under favourable conditions. And the grounds are in keeping with the house – lawns and trees and shaded walks in profusion. Several croquet courts and four tennis courts complete the picture.

Already the membership is over 500, which augurs well. The secretary is Mr C.H. Alison, the old Oxonian, who in the Inter-University match one year performed the unique feat of playing his ball from the roof of the club-house. As Stoke Poges is only about fifteen miles from Paddington, the nearest station being Slough, it should commend itself to the London golfer.

The *Throne and Country* followed up with another eulogistic piece:

It is highly probable that Allan Robertson, old Willie Park, and the other golfing heroes of a bygone age would throw up their hands in astonishment if they could be brought back to life and transported to the new club at Stoke Poges, near Slough, which was formally opened last week. Golf in their day was a rough and ready game, played without any attempt at luxurious surroundings – a very different affair indeed from the golf of

the ever-increasing array of fashionable clubs as we know them in the twentieth century. Then there were no palatial club-houses, and no swarming bands of salaried servants, while the courses were just natural links, relying for variety on the difficulties which Nature alone had provided – courses where the tee-box, the artificial bunker, the shaven fairway, and the billiard-table-like green were all unknown.

The march of progress and the modern tendency towards overdoing even our pleasures have changed all that, and the up-to-date golf club is, as compared with its early nineteenth-century prototype, a mansion and a park beside a cow-shed and a grazing meadow. Stoke Poges is a typical example of the mansion-cum-park course, and, in many respects, is 'the last word' in golfing elegance – veritable golf de luxe.

During a long experience of golf and golfers, we have come across nothing quite so luxurious and completely appointed as the Stoke Poges Club. Situated in Stoke Poges Park, about a mile and a half from Slough Station, the course is accessible from town in a very short space of time by means of the Great Western Railway and a service of motor-cars. The club-house is an historical mansion, which at various times in its lengthy career belonged to such famous people as Sir Edward Coke, the great lawyer of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the Penns, of Philadelphia celebrity, and other notabilities; while its last occupant, previous to its having been adapted to its present purpose, was the late Mr Wilberforce Bryant, of the big commercial firm of Bryant & May.

As a club-house it reaches some distance in the direction of the ideal, both as regards its striking exterior appearance and the completeness of its interior arrangements. Exigencies of space prevent a detailed description, but some idea of the accommodation provided will be gathered when it is mentioned that the mansion contains several large club rooms, billiard, card, dining, drawing and smoking rooms, lounge, winter garden, and a number of bedrooms for the use of members.

The course, like the club-house, is a wonderful example of modern energy and enterprise. Seven months ago the contract for its making was signed, and at that time its site was just a glorious stretch of park-land, artistic and picturesque, if you like, but conveying no hint of its golfing possibilities, excepting, perhaps, to the mind's eye of that famous amateur golfer and accomplished course contriver, Mr H.S. Colt, who was

entrusted with the all-important task of converting it into a thoroughly equipped eighteen-hole course.

The result of Mr Colt's skill was abundantly in evidence last week, when the course was officially opened with a tournament, in which J.H. Taylor, James Braid, Arnaud Massy, and the local professional J.G. Sherlock (late of Oxford), took part. Mr Colt's first action on getting to work sounds somewhat ruthless. He had no fewer than 20,000 trees cut down; but as the park still presents a thoroughly well-timbered appearance, this was probably rather an improvement than otherwise. The course, which measures over 600 yards in length, is laid out on undulating land, and although the golf is essentially of the park variety from end to end, there is so much diversity of slope and lie and hazard that it has about it nothing of monotony. Here a grove of trees has to be avoided, there a beautiful sheet of ornamental water must be carried from the tee, while such sporting chances have to be taken in various places as are provided by the presence of patches of bracken, running streams, paths, rough hill-sides, and slopes of considerable angle. So far artificial bunkers are conspicuous by their absence, but numbers of them have been marked out and will spring into existence with disconcerting frequency within the next few months.

The turf through the fairways is consistently good, as will be readily realised when it is said that the park has been the grazing-ground for herds of deer almost from time immemorial. The putting-greens are consequently wonderfully well-advanced, considering that they only came into being as such a few months ago, and their conformation gives the player plenty of opportunity for practising the art of 'borrow'. A subsoil gravel will ensure a dry surface, even in wet weather – an important consideration this, and one which should prove a valuable asset to the Stoke Poges Club, seeing that the majority of courses near London are often well-nigh unplayable at certain periods during the winter.

The future should have much in store for golf at Stoke Poges, but, be that as it may, Mr N.L. Jackson, who has been primarily responsible for the formation of the club, must be heartily congratulated on the successful start of what is undoubtedly a remarkable addition to the list of golfing resorts within easy access of the Metropolis.

Golfers of the old school will probably find something to grumble at in

the luxurious surroundings of Stoke Poges. They will tell us, no doubt, that golf played under such conditions ceases to be a game for men. Some such comment as this is inevitable, but we golfers need not be afraid that a visit to Stoke Poges will turn us into old women. One hears from time to time much the same criticism of cricket. Luxurious pavilions, shower baths and a liberal supply of hot water are now the common-places of every first-class cricket club. This is a big change from the early days of W.G. Grace, when players were thankful to get such a wash as they could from a small basin. Yet nobody would seriously argue that modern cricket is an effeminate pastime.

Speaking as a working journalist, my chief complaint is not that the 'up-to-date reporter' is seriously neglected. After all, golf does owe something to newspapers, editors and their staff. On a certain championship course the reporters had allotted to them as their quarters a so-called hut, which was really and truly nothing more than a cattle shed. Comparison between the lowly cow-house and the professional quarters at Stoke Poges – a comfortable cottage in the midst of a picturesque garden – is sufficiently striking. On certain links and cricket grounds the management is slowly learning that reporters are human beings. Even at Lord's grounds the impression conveyed is that journalists are at best a necessary nuisance.

The one thing all these commentaries agreed on was that Jackson had created something that was new, different and special in style. His determination to create clubs similar to the best of the country clubs in the USA had been successfully achieved. And of course, Jackson had achieved something that American clubs could not. He had secured the service of a top-flight royal as his President. As for the Great Day itself, Jackson loved it:

The players in the Stoke Poges opening match all spoke favourably of the course, which I think deserves more commendation than any other of Harry Colt's efforts, while its condition improved with such rapidity that



after two or three years it was generally considered to be the best inland course in the country. Doubtless the fine old turf, which had been over-run by deer for centuries, considerably assisted us to provide such excellent fairways and greens.

The interest shown by golfers generally in our new venture was so great that on this opening day we had to provide luncheon for nearly 250 people. By using our smoke-room as an additional dining-room we were able to seat about 250 persons, and my old steward at the Sports Club afforded me much valuable assistance. I sat next to Prince Albert at the luncheon, and he reminded me of a match played at Charterhouse between the school and a team which I had taken down. As an illustration of the extraordinarily good powers of memory possessed by the Royal Family I may mention that he was able to recollect the names of the whole of my eleven, and even mentioned that I myself had played half-back. Now I felt certain that I had never played at that position in my life, and I told him so; he insisted, however, that I *had* been half-back on that occasion, and sure enough when I looked the event up afterwards in *Pastime* I found he was perfectly right!

## PLENTY TO DO BESIDES GOLF

Bernard Darwin, who could lay claim to be the greatest writer on golf who ever lived, wrote in his book, *The Golf Courses of the British Isles*, published in 1910:

Stoke Park is a beautiful estate, and there is very good golf to be played there. There are plenty of things to do at Stoke besides playing golf. We may get very hot at lawn tennis or keep comparatively cool at bowls or croquet, or, coolest of all, we may sit on the terrace or in the garden and give ourselves wholly and solely to loafing. The clubhouse is a gorgeous palace, a dazzling vision of white stone, of steps and terraces and cupolas, with a lake in front and imposing trees in every direction.



And the writer Leslie Dobree agreed with Darwin, writing in his book, *The Inland Courses of England*, also in 1910:

I will content myself by writing a few appreciations of the finest inland course in the British Isles – Stoke Poges. There are few courses where a player must sum up his position for every shot, and it is mainly for this reason that I think Stoke Poges is the very essence of first-class golf. I wish there were fifty more courses like Stoke Poges in the country.

In the same year, Ernest Lehmann, writing in *The Bystander*, noted that:

A notable addition to the amenities of country clubdom was made when the Stoke Poges Club was started last year. In former years Hurlingham and Ranelagh were the only country clubs to which the jaded Londoner could repair for exercise and fresh air. The principal raison d'être of these clubs was polo, and although during a short period of ill-fortune prior to the advent of the present successful régime Ranelagh was kept alive by its golfers, yet to all intents and purposes polo reigns supreme in both these delightful resorts. Golfers have now taken a leaf out of the polo-players' book, and have proceeded to establish various clubs within easy reach of Town, where, besides golf, various other games are provided for. The most recent and the most beautiful of these clubs is Stoke Poges.

As most London golfers know, the architecture of the golf course was entrusted to the capable hands of Mr H.S. Colt, one of the foremost of the amateur architects. I was able the other day to see the results of his admirable handiwork. The course as laid out by him is a veritable triumph, and abounds in ingenious and sporting features. There is inevitably in all park courses, a certain sameness about their long holes, and it is extremely difficult to differentiate one hole from another. So far as is humanly possible this monotony has been avoided at Stoke Poges.

Golfers from any era will recognise the whingeing that some

professionals did after they failed to perform well in the qualifying for the *News of the World* Tournament, as reported in *The Bystander* later in the year:

It will be remembered that the Southern Section held their qualifying competition for this year's *News of the World* Tournament on the beautiful course of the Stoke Poges Golf Club. The result of that competition was that one or two noted players failed to qualify, while others had rather a scramble for inclusion in the thirteen places allotted to this section. Thereupon there arose considerable lamentation and complaint as to the position of the holes, which were considered by some of the competitors to have been placed in impossible situations. It was pointed out by the official organ that the fact that Tom Vardon returned a 71, Sherlock and Souter 73's, and that there were five 74's and five 75's proved sufficiently that the holes were not placed in impossible positions.

## 'HIS MAJESTY AND NO OTHER!'

Following the success of the inaugural golf match, Jackson organised the Club's inaugural ball. Needless to say, royalty was there:

The function was under the patronage of at least half a dozen members of the Royal Family, not to mention a large number of peerage and the neighbouring 'gentry'.

And Jackson was keen to record other visits from the royal family:

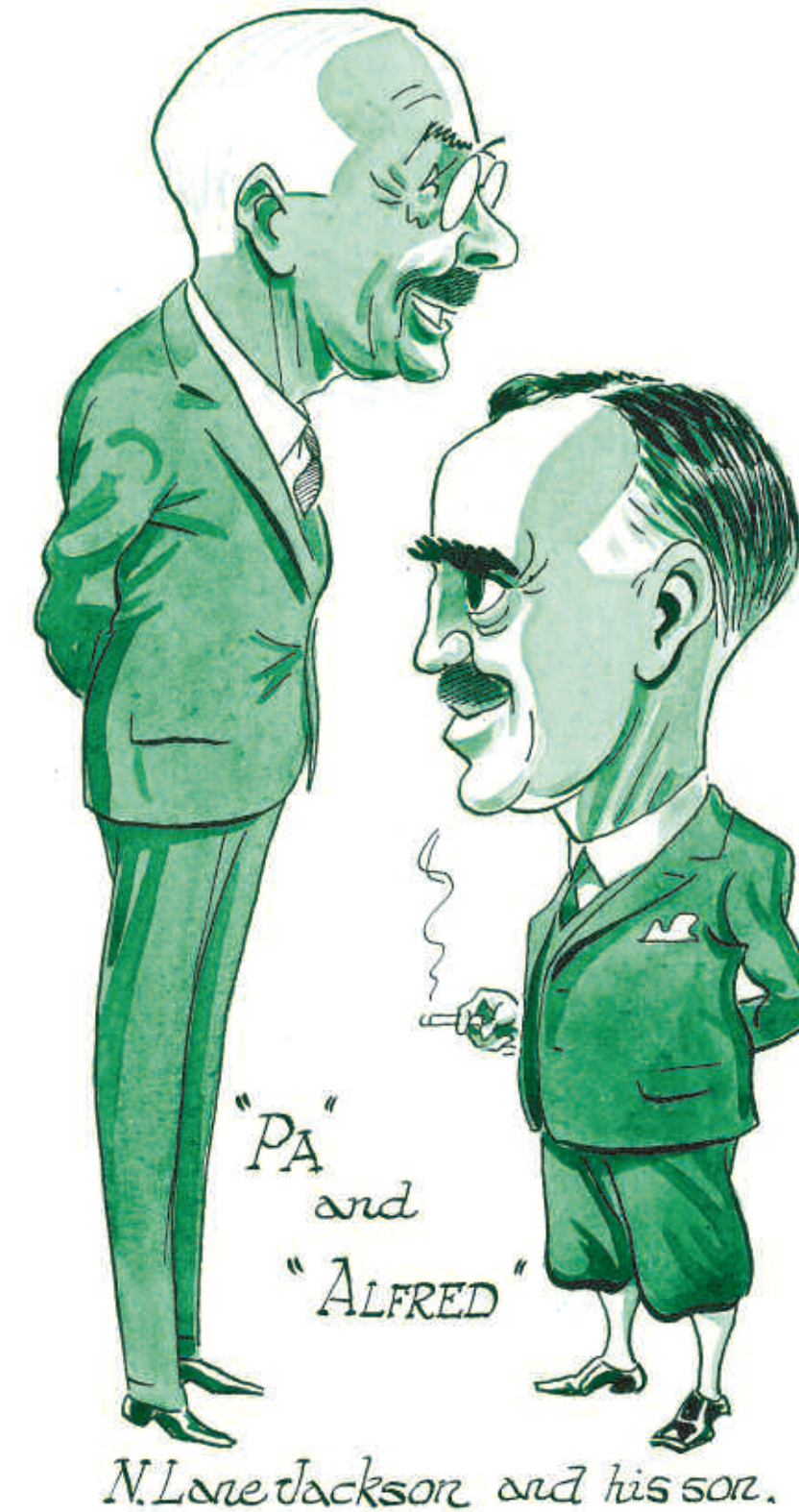
It was in 1910, I think, that one day I was informed that 'a gentleman who looked very much like the King' [Edward VII] was waiting in a car outside and asking to see me. On investigation I found that it actually was His Majesty and no other! He did not trouble to inspect the clubhouse, but as he was very keen to look round the grounds I got into his car with him and instructed the driver which way to go. During the drive I said to His Majesty, 'It's really astonishing, sir, that you should remember me.' 'Oh, I don't know,' was the reply. 'I've never forgotten the story you told me in your room at the Sports Club that night. I've repeated it scores of times, and I only wonder it's never appeared in *The Pink 'Un!*'

Another royal personage who used to pay occasional visits to Stoke Poges was Princess Christina, and I well remember her surprise and pleasure when I first showed her the gardens and the wonderful view of Windsor Castle one gets through a tunnel of trees. Like all the royal family, she possessed astonishing powers of memory, and she displayed a more detailed knowledge of the history of Stoke Park and its owners than I could boast myself.

And it was not only British royalty that came to the club:

An interesting experience I had at Stoke Poges in 1913 was the visit of the German Crown Prince and his Uncle, Prince Henry. Whether or no they really visited England merely to spy out the land, as was said afterwards to have been the case, I cannot say, but certainly we suspected nothing of the sort at the time. Prince Henry, who was an Admiral in the German Navy, spoke English perfectly and behaved just as an English sailor of the best sort would have done. The Crown Prince, too, was very pleasant and talkative, but one or two incidents occurred during the day which made me feel that he was not exactly what we in this country would call a gentleman.

After luncheon, as both our royal visitors wanted to play golf, I was asked to partner the Crown Prince, while Captain (now Admiral) Watson played with Prince Henry. I am afraid there was no good form shown on



either side, and to the best of my recollection whenever the Crown Prince putted he usually left the ball farther from the hole than it was when he started. However, on the last green he had a putt of about three yards for the hole, and he asked me, 'How do we stand now?', to which I replied, 'Well, sir, if you put that in we shall win the match.' 'Oh,' said he, 'then it must go in,' and go in it did! This was about the only good stroke on the whole way round.

By 1911 the Stoke Park Club was able to stage the *Golf Illustrated* Gold Vase tournament, and the magazine commented:

The Gold Vase Tournament has been played already over two of London's most famous courses – Mid-Surrey and Sunningdale. In Stoke Poges we have a course which is almost equally famous, though much younger, and which differs in character as widely from Mid-Surrey and Sunningdale as those two differ from one another. Stoke Poges may be described as the ideal Park Links, in which the essential characteristics of a fine old English park have been so skilfully employed as to produce a splendid test of golf – proof of which is found in the many important tournaments and matches which have recently been played there.

In 1911 a combined Oxford and Cambridge Universities team played a match against the Southern Professionals and by 1912, the Club was so well established that *Golf Illustrated* was full of praise not only for the golf courses but for the way the Club was run:

Some distance from the house – away beyond the golf-links – are large stabling and garage for the use of members, and just beyond these about 15 acres of kitchen gardens, one of which is the old walled garden of the mansion, containing very large fruit-houses, vineries, and greenhouses. These gardens supply fresh vegetables and fruit for the house, and for the members, who eagerly buy the fruit and flowers not required for the club.

Close to these gardens is the principal farm and dairy. Here are about

10 or 12 milch cows, some thousand head of poultry, pigs, sometimes to the number of 100, and ten to twelve horses. The farm comprises 20 acres of arable and about 150 acres of pasture, on which are about 100 sheep and 50 or 60 head of cattle. Some idea of the extent of the catering for the club may be formed when one learns that two sheep were killed each week to provide luncheons, which average from 400 to 500 a week.

The management believe in avoiding the middle-man as far as possible, and accordingly have their own staff of artisans, including carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, painters and engineers. They make their own electric light, pump their own supply of water, and even run a taxi-cab for the convenience of their members.

How large a staff is required to carry out this programme may be seen from the accompanying photograph of ninety of the regular employees of the club. This photograph was taken outside the winter garden in the winter; in the summer the number employed is often over one hundred.

The members of the Stoke Poges Club have many advantages over those of the ordinary golf clubs, for even if the weather be very bad there is always plenty of comfort and amusement in the clubhouse. As the courses – for there are two, one of 18 and one of 9 holes – are exceptionally dry, it follows that a wet morning does not deter the members from leaving Town, and it is seldom indeed that they visit Stoke Poges without being able to have an enjoyable game.

In 1912 the final of the *Ladies' Pictorial* Golfing Competition was played at the Club. By 1914 the Club had prospered so well that another nine holes had been added, and by July of that year the 900 limit for full membership had been reached, with 200 five-day members, most of whom were waiting to become full members. Jackson was rightly proud of what he had achieved but, as he admitted in his autobiography, this pride cost him dear:

Right: The Stoke Park Club staff in 1909.



**“GOLF ILLUSTRATED” GOLD VASE.**

*The Third Annual Competition for the*

**“Golf Illustrated” Gold Vase** ( VALUE  
250 GUINEAS )

(Holder Mr. A. Mitchell)

will be played by kind permission of the Stoke Poges Golf Club,  
**at Stoke Poges, on Friday, June 16th.**

The Competition is decided by 36 holes under the Rules for Stroke Play, and is limited to Amateurs who are rated at SCRATCH or BETTER in their own clubs.

**FURTHER PARTICULARS LATER.**

An advertisement for the *Golf Illustrated* Gold Vase at Stoke Park in 1911.

For in that month of July I received an offer for the shares of the club (all of which I then held) at a very handsome premium, but owing to my sentimental affection for the place I asked for a little time to consider the matter. Unfortunately the war began during this period of delay, and it need scarcely be added that the offer was immediately withdrawn. Even so, however, I was not so very perturbed, for, like many another, I believed the war would soon be over. I therefore decided to close the short course, but to keep the club and eighteen-hole course open. Had I been wise I should have closed the club altogether 'for the duration', and have merely kept the greens in order; but as it was I tried to run it as well as circumstances would allow and what with labour-shortage and one thing and another I experienced the greatest difficulty in doing so.

On the day before Prince Albert left England for the last time he was talking with my daughter in the lounge of the club and told her that next morning he would be going to Germany for six months. 'Are you pleased at the prospect?' she asked, and the answer was that he disliked the idea intensely, but that he had to go, as otherwise he would lose his income. I believe I am right in saying that at the actual moment of the declaration of war between England and Germany the Prince was on board the Kaiser's yacht, and that he begged so earnestly not to be put on active service against the British that he was appointed to some post or other in Berlin and remained in it throughout the war. I have been told, too, that whenever he heard of an Old Carthusian being taken prisoner he did everything in his power to assist him.

CHAPTER TEN

'THE FINEST GOLFER I HAVE EVER SEEN'

'THE LAMPS ARE GOING OUT ALL OVER EUROPE'

PEACE AGAIN

LADIES TOO

JOYCE WETHERED

GLENN COLLETT

ENID WILSON

THE VISIONARY RETIRES