

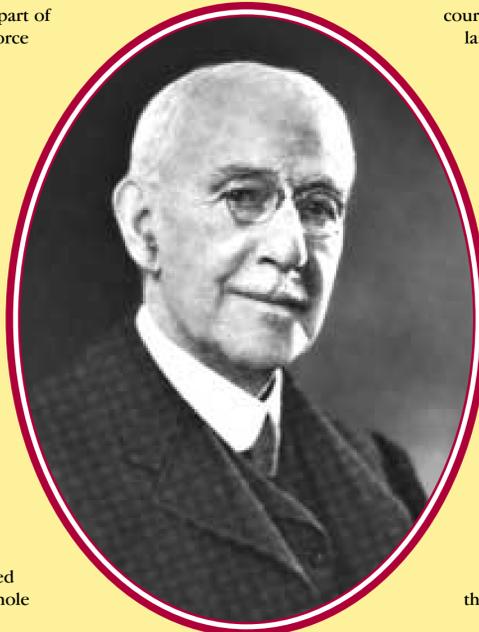
Nick Lane 'Pa' Jackson

Owner of Stoke Park from 1908 to 1928

Nick Lane Jackson (1849 - 1933) universally known as "Pa" acquired part of the Mansion and grounds from Mrs. Bryant, widow of Wilberforce Bryant in 1908 in order to create the finest country club in Britain.

A journalist by profession 'Pa' Jackson was one of the last great sporting gentlemen. He was a founder member of the Football Association and the Lawn-Tennis Association. He also founded the greatest amateur football club of its era - The Corinthian Football Club - in 1882. The 'Corinthian' spirit is still synonymous with all that is best in sport. He once defined a sportsman as "one who has not merely braced his muscles and developed his endurance by the exercise of some great sport, but has, in the pursuit of that exercise, learnt to control his anger, to be considerate to his fellow men, to take no mean advantage, to resent as a dishonour the very suspicion of trickery, to bear aloft cheerful countenance under disappointment and never to own himself defeated until the last breath is out of his body". In 1892 in the ultimate amateur challenge the Barbarians played the Corinthians at football, rugby, cricket and athletics to decide who had the better all-round sportsmen. The Corinthians defeated the Barbarians at football, athletics and even the rugby (14 - 12) but lost the cricket.

Having taken the Corinthians on a football tour of the U.S.A. in 1903 "Pa" decided he should form a country club along the lines he had seen in America for the Corinthians. After a long search he secured a lease at Stoke Park. "Pa" formed the Stoke Land Co. Ltd. and the Stoke Park Club was formed in 1908. The main sports at the club were tennis, cricket and golf, with a 27 hole

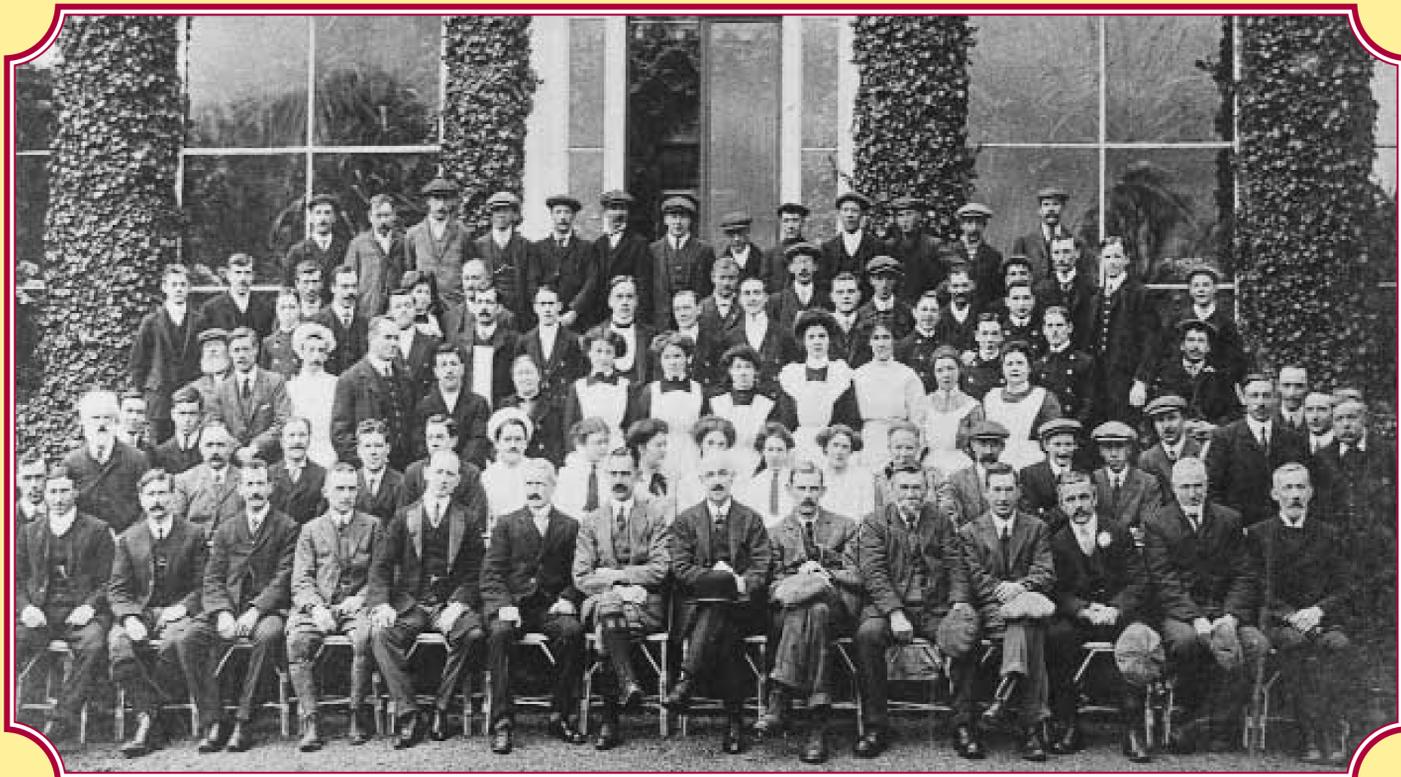


Nick Lane Jackson in 1928.

course. The course was designed and constructed by Harry Shapland Colt who landscaped many of the world's finest golf courses. In his book "Sporting Days and Sporting Ways" (1932) Jackson describes the course as follows:- "Without delay I got H.S. Colt, the best living authority either then or now on golf architecture, to inspect the ground and advise me. 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 overrun by deer for centuries, considerably assisted us to provide such excellent fairways and greens".

Many of "Pa's" influential sporting friends helped in the creation of the Golf Club. The first President of the Club was H.R.H. Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein and during his Presidency many of the English Royal family played at the Club. King Edward VII and Caruso also visited the Club in 1910. By 1912 the limit of golf membership was reached at 900 with a waiting list of a further 200. In 1913, just prior to the start of the First World War, the German Crown Prince and Prince Henry (his uncle) visited and played golf at Stoke Park during what some said was a "spying" mission. The Club's president, Prince Albert, was on the Kaiser's yacht when war broke out and he never returned to England.

During and following the War it was difficult to continue running the Club and when Sir Noel Mobbs made an offer for the estate in 1928 it was with regret that "Pa" (then aged 79) and his fellow-directors accepted. His legacy has remained, however, to the benefit of everyone who visits the estate today.



The ninety-six Stoke Park Club staff photographed in 1912. The original club logo is shown below.



President:
H.H. PRINCE ALBERT OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

Vice-President:
THE EARL HOWE, G.C.V.O.

Committee:
THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

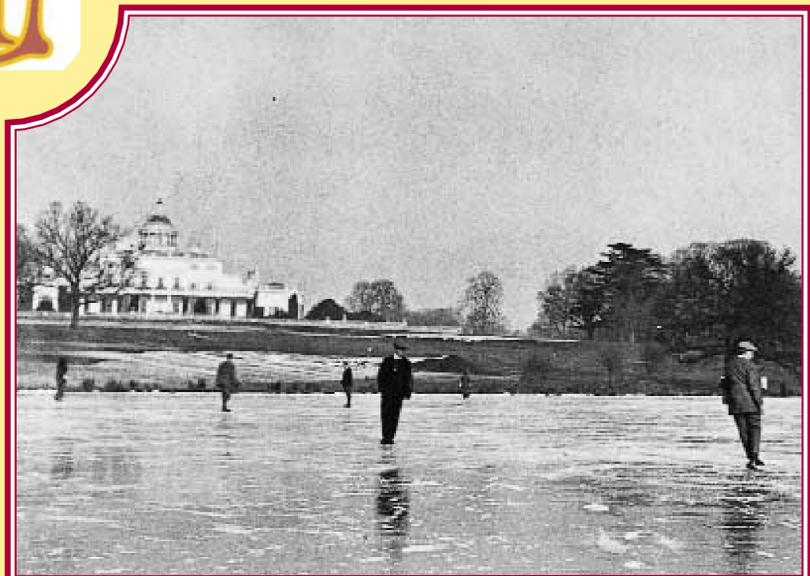
THE EARL OF KINNOULL.	R. H. DE MONTMORENCY, Esq.
THE LORD DECIES.	P. J. DE PARAVICINI, Esq.
H. E. ALLHUSEN, Esq.	E. H. PARRY, Esq.
P. V. BROKE, Esq.	H. HOWARD VYSE, Esq.
R. E. CAMPBELL, Esq.	C. M. WOODBRIDGE, Esq.

The above have kindly consented to form the Committee of the Club when it is formed.

Secretary:
C. H. ALISON, Esq. (Oxford University).

Solicitors:
Messrs. COX & LAFONE,
Tower Royal, Cannon Street, E.C.

The first committee taken from the launch brochure for the Club in 1908.



Club members skating on the South lake in 1922.

Harry Shapland Colt

Designer of the Golf Course at Stoke Park in 1908



Harry Shapland Colt.

H. S. Colt (1869 - 1951) is arguably the greatest golf course architect in history. He and his partners have certainly had more influence on the game around the world than any other firm of architects.

Colt was the Captain of Cambridge University Golf Club in 1890. He had a distinguished amateur career which included winning the Royal and Ancient Jubilee Vase in 1891 and 1893. He helped to design his first course at Rye in 1894 while still a partner in his own law firm in Hastings. As a founder member of the Royal and Ancient Rules of Golf Committee in 1897 golf started to dominate Colt's life.

In 1908 he was commissioned to create his first unassisted design at Stoke Poges recommending his friend and future partner, C.H. Alison, to become its first Secretary. By 1913 he had already designed or redesigned more than twenty courses and Sunningdale (where he was club secretary) could no longer hold him.

With his great love of the game and artist's outlook, Harry Colt and his partners went on to work on over three hundred golf courses around the world from St.Andrews, in Scotland, Royal Portrush in Ireland and Wentworth in England, to Pine Valley and Augusta, in the U.S.A. The list is too long to write here but it is enough to say that from 1910 to 1990 the Open Championship was played forty seven times at clubs where the course was either designed or redesigned by Colt.

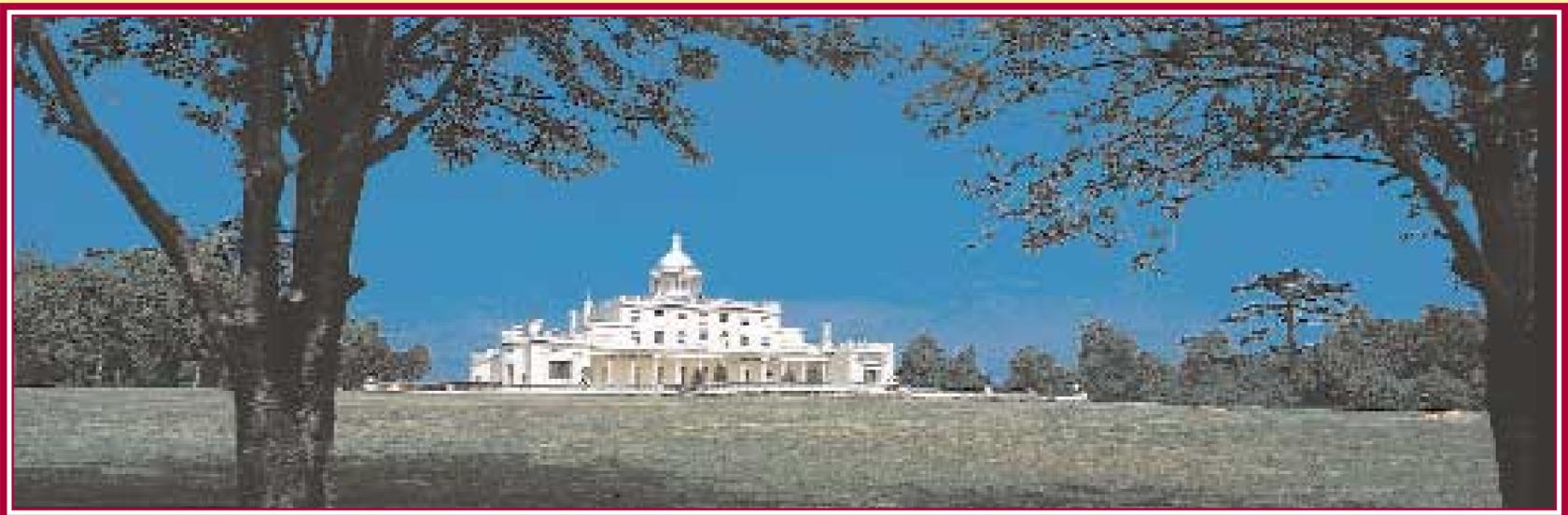
Bernard Darwin wrote in the Times after covering the 1951 Open at Royal Portrush that: "it is truly magnificent and Mr. H.S. Colt, who designed it in its present form, has thereby built himself a monument more enduring than brass."

In the 1952 History of Golf in Great Britain, Sir Guy Campbell wrote: "The Eden course at St.Andrews is a monument to the

genius of H.S. Colt. True, there was good golfing ground, but there was also much that, at a cursory glance, appeared highly unsuitable - flat, featureless, sodden and at one end arbitrarily constricted. Yet out of this he contrived a links of character, great interest and wide variety, that not only provides an annual test of searching severity, but maintains year by year an undisputed popularity among golfers of both sexes and all ages and handicaps."

Nowhere had this influence been more profound than on his partners, Hugh Alison and Dr. Alister MacKenzie (1879 - 1934). Alison started to work with Colt in 1906, MacKenzie in 1907 at Alwoodley. After the First World War they collaborated on their book "Golf Architecture", published in 1920. Both Alison and MacKenzie went on to do their best work abroad, Alison as part of the Colt partnership, while MacKenzie went his own way, although he still used Colt's ideas. For example he copied the seventh hole at Stoke Park when designing the thirteenth at Augusta, the centre of "Amen Corner" and the hole that Jack Nicklaus regards as the toughest on the course.

Colt was a modest and unobtrusive figure who in a comparatively short time probably made a greater contribution to the game than any other single individual, and in doing so altered the landscape of Britain and other countries around the world to an extent which has not been fully realised.



View of the 18th Hole at Stoke Poges Golf Club 1996.

Colt and Stoke Poges

The Stoke Poges golf course is the finest parkland course in England, created on the centuries old turf of the original deer park, created by "Capability" Brown (1750) and Humphry Repton (1797).

The following is an extract from Colt's report in 1908:- "The soil is a light sandy loam and gravel, which should dry very quickly after heavy rain, thus assuring good Golf during the winter months. I should hesitate to make even deep bunkers, as the soil is so porous that there ought to be no difficulty as to drainage. With little exception deer have grazed over the Park for years past. The turf is very fine, and could hardly be better."

The course was opened in July 1909 and received immediate acclaim:- "If there were no palatial club house and no beautiful gardens and grounds, the course itself would take a great deal of beating anywhere within thirty miles of London. Mr. H.S. Colt, to whom belongs the credit of designing it, has scored a great success and his reputation as a green architect, already high, will be greatly enhanced by this the latest of his works." (Golf Illustrated, page 95, 16th July 1909).

The course has also stood the test of time: "Longevity and history do not necessarily make for a great golf course but in the case of Stoke Poges it becomes immediately apparent why this layout has withstood the considerable test of time. It got off to a good start when the original landlord called on Harry Colt to offer his services as a designer..... it does have Colt's finest single hole (the seventh at Stoke Park), a short par three upon which the notorious thirteenth at Augusta was modelled." (Today's Golfer, page 71, April 1992).



View of the 7th green in 1910. Note the lobster pot instead of the flag.