

In this, the second edition of our newsletter in 2014, we bring everyone up to date with what has been happening since the last edition was published, developments with the Statue project and our 2014 events. The main article, though, is an interview with Archie Baird.

The newsletter is of course, for all our members and anyone else with an interest in our Aims, so please pass this on to anyone you think might be interested and also, of course, send in any information and/or articles for inclusion.

Events 2014



May 31 st	We lost 4½ -½ - see report
28 th June	The Musselburgh Challenge – see report
July 2 nd to 5 th	Annual hickory events at Leith Links
2 nd	- Challenge match with Musselburgh Old
3 rd	- Challenge match with Bruntsfield Short Hole
4 th	- Foulis Medal (for Leith-based teams)
5 th	- Hickory Open
July 12 th	Outing to Kingarrock Course at Hill of Tarvit, near Cupar
July 24 th	Annual challenge match (away) with Bruntsfield Short Hole
September 19 th	Outing to Liberton Golf Course

Statue of John Rattray sited on Leith Links



Since the previous edition of “The Tattle”, major progress has been made.

The Scottish Parliament approved our plans for the statue and the final stage of Royal Assent was achieved.

- **We require £250,000 to secure the project.**
- **Fund-raising has continued with great support from LRGS members and friends of the project.**
- **To date ~£60,000 has been raised, including pledges.**
- **Every little helps ... so please encourage friends to help with a donation of any size!**
- **As soon as funding is secured we will be ready to start work.**

Hickory events at Leith Links 2nd to 5th July

On Wednesday 2nd we welcome our long-standing friends from Musselburgh Old for our annual challenge match. The score in the series is currently 4-3 in favour of our guests, so without being too unwelcoming, we hope to even up the series!

The following evening we throw down the gauntlet to equally long-standing friends from Bruntsfield Short Hole. The score in this series is 4-2 to BSH, so maybe we can reduce the deficit this year?

The Foulis Medal for Leith-based organisations is held on Friday 4th. Always keenly-contested in the true spirit of golf.

Saturday 5th sees the 12th Hickory Open. The closing date for entries is Wednesday 2nd, though we will take late entries if space permits.

Match with Musselburgh Old

The weather clearly inspired our Society Secretary, Brian Graham, to think of the Master of rock 'n' roll – Buddy Holly – and he started his report thus -

“The sun was out, the sky was blue, there was only one cloud to spoil the view but it was raining – raining in our hearts”.

More pragmatically, he continues –

“this is what it felt like as we trudged off the course at the end of a drubbing from Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club.

The score was 4½ to ½ in favour of the home team. Credit to Robin Morris and Chester Kruk for getting our

half and Lionel Freedman and Pat Denzler for taking their match to the last green. So well done to them for their efforts.

Our other players were Jim Maguire and Robin Miller; David Maguire and Ken Gordon and Jim Scanlon and Eugene Bradley.

Back in the clubhouse an excellent lunch followed with discussion of what could and should have been, however this sadly did not affect the result, which stayed the same!

Well done to Musselburgh on a good overall team performance.

The Musselburgh Challenge

Musselburgh Old Open Championship, now in its 15th season, was played over the Old Course on Saturday 28th June. Superb sunshine, crisp turf, fast greens with teams from The Honourable Company, The R & A, British Golf Collectors' Society, Royal Musselburgh, Port Seton, the Thorntree Inn and naturally Old Musselburgh itself.

Leith Rules were represented by Chester Kruk, David Purdie, Richard Ellis and Lionel Freedman. We didn't win (BGCS did) and we didn't come second or third but it was most enjoyable for the company, the lunch in the splendid clubhouse and the chance to play hickory over

what is generally regarded as the World's oldest golf course.

(Ed – it's the taking part that counts, not the winning. However true that is, it is a view that you never hear said by the winning team!)

It seems very fitting that Leith Rules should continue to support this championship- anything to raise the profile of Musselburgh Old and its place in golf history should be welcomed.

Richard Ellis



Bonnie Prince Rattray?

Following on from the article in the last newsletter, Alastair Chalmers became a subscriber to the **Golf Quarterly** magazine. He wrote a "Letter to the editor", which was published in the most recent edition. Here is what he said –

The excellent article by Bryan Jenkins in issue 16 entitled "Bonnie Prince Rattray" brought your magazine to my attention and I have readily become a subscriber. Having now read this issue and the other 2 that I received along with it, I think this will turn out to be one of the best golfing decisions I make this year!

Since the early years of this century, the Leith Rules Golf Society (LRGS) has existed to ensure that the facts about these earliest rules are suitably commemorated. Each summer, Edinburgh Council grant us permission to set up

a 5-hole course on part of the current Leith Links and for four days we play matches with hickory clubs on this famous stretch of turf. Our local rules don't mention the "watterly filth" but they do cover what happens if lampposts and other permanent fixtures interfere with a shot, the ruling being – which we feel is in keeping with the spirit of 1744 – "play it as it lies"!

Our main project is to raise funds to build a statue to John Rattray as a permanent memorial to the momentous golfing events that took place here in Leith. The motto of Leith is "Persevere" and we have certainly had to do that to obtain approval from the City of Edinburgh, the Scottish Parliament and even Royal Assent. All we need to do now is to raise the funds. More information about the project and LRGS can be found at www.leith-rules-golf.co.uk.

Archie Baird, Golf historian, pre-eminent Collector, Life Member of LRGS



Brian Graham and Alastair Chalmers recently spent a fascinating hour chatting to Archie Baird, surrounded by a veritable "Aladdin's Cave" of memorabilia.

Some of our assumptions before the meeting proved to be wrong. The first was that Archie did not take up golf until he was 30, when he stopped playing rugby. Given his career as an eminent golf historian we assumed he had been playing since he wore nappies!

His marriage had automatically inducted him into golfing history. His wife Sheila's great grandfather was Willie Park Senior, the winner of the first Open Championship at Prestwick in 1860 and on three other occasions, her grandfather was Mungo Park, winner in 1874 and Mungo's brother was Willie Park Junior, winner of The Open in 1887 and 1889. So, a total of 7 winners in one family! Open Championship records may come and go, but we confidently predict that one will never be beaten!

Archie was the 4th generation in his family to be a vet. He fell heir to a basement flat in York Place, where he found clubs owned by Willie Park Senior. He also found and started to acquire golf books which he stored, along with the clubs, in the flat's wine cellar!

He joined Gullane in 1956, paying the annual subscription of 8 Guineas (no entrance fee) and he proudly showed us the receipt! At North Berwick, apparently it was too difficult to get a tee time, so their loss became Gullane's gain. He explained that back then he was also an "artisan" member at Kilspindie; you had to live in the village to be such a member, but they were definitely second-class citizens, as "real" members always had priority on the tee – if only they knew what the humble "artisan" would become!

He was invited to become a member at Muirfield and although he never held any official position there, he was their first club historian. He described being pipped for their Senior Championship, his 2 scores of 73, bring ruled lesser

than a 74 and a 72. So, with his lowest handicap at Gullane being 5, Archie isn't someone who just talks about the history of golf, he is someone who has also been a fine player in his day.

In the war he had been a fighter pilot and after demob, he and a friend, who had been his tail-gunner, set off for France to tour the art galleries on their motor bikes. His interest in art was complimented by his wife giving him golf paintings, so now he had a veritable treasure-trove of old clubs, books and paintings.

Alastair still recalls the day he and Archie formed a pairing in our annual match with Musselburgh at their course. He and his two opponents commented about the privilege of playing with Archie on the same stretch of turf where Willie Park Junior had won The Open in 1889, defeating Andrew Kirkcaldy in a play off after they had tied with a score of 155. That score may seem very "modest" compared to the present day, but we would love to see the current pros trying to compete using the same equipment on the courses as they were back then – we reckon the stimpmeter would have barely registered!

Golf Museum @ Gullane

LRGS were fortunate to make a visit to Archie's museum the focus of the 7th March celebrations in 2011. What a fascinating day that was! Archie explained to us during our chat together that Gullane had been very supportive in assisting the setting up of the venture, which was opened by Ben Crenshaw in 1980. If you have never visited the museum then we recommend you do so. More information, including a link to a wonderful video featuring Archie himself, can be found at www.gullanegolfclub.com/history/museum.

LRGS

We asked Archie about how he came to be involved with LRGS? He had long preached about the importance of Leith in the forming history of Golf and knew Philip Knowles as a clubmaker who he had gone to for repairs. In the Society's earliest days it was Tim Bell, Jim Forson, Philip Knowles, Cornelius Waugh, John Dixon and Pat Denzler, along with Archie, who got things moving. We suspect it was good contacts and "word of mouth" that brought them all together. As Tim Bell now says – "I certainly felt that when these guys turned up we were alright, we had recognition, and things would happen". How true that is!

The title of this article baldly described Archie, but it is only spending time in his company that brings his full story to life. A fascinating visit to hear from a man regarded by many as the world's pre-eminent living golf historian, but also someone who did not have a driving ambition to be that, but who perhaps could be regarded as having drifted into it through marriage, finding old clubs and his interest in art. And let's be honest here, someone who liked to buy and sell memorabilia – we suspect he would be as steely a barterer as he was on the course in his heyday!

Finally, during our chat Archie mentioned a few things "in the strictest confidence"; when you read this article yourself Archie, you will see that we have fully respected your secrets!



LRGS Committee 2014

President _____ Douglas Foulis
 Secretary _____ Brian Graham
 Treasurer _____ David Kay
 Membership Secretary & Webmaster _____ Alastair Chalmers
 Committee Members _____ Bill Cairns, Pat Denzler, Steven Doyle, Richard Ellis, Robin Miller

Contacting us

	lrginfo@blueyonder.co.uk		www.leith-rules-golf.co.uk
	14 Pirniefield Terrace Edinburgh, EH6 7PW <i>or</i> 5 Prospect Bank Crescent Edinburgh, EH6 7NW		0131 554 5600 <i>or</i> 0131 554 3302
	http://www.facebook.com/pages/Leith-Rules-Golf-Society/132315916801195		