

GOLF AFTER RATTRAY

In previous newsletters there has been much focus on the life of John Rattray, but what about golf after Rattray? How did golf evolve into the game that is recognised worldwide today? And how did Leith Links leave the public eye?

The world's oldest golf club, the Company of Gentleman Golfers formed in 1744 was a well established club, perhaps thanks in part to the publicity of events such as the competition for the silver club. At first, any golfer was able to take part in the silver club competition, however only club members were able to participate from 1764. Admission certificates were only presented to those accepted by the balloting system. During balloting if any club members put a black ball into the box rather than a white ball, the prospective member would be refused entry into the club. Obviously this system no longer remains in golf clubs, but it highlights just how elite clubs were then, and the membership of clubs continues to this day.

In 1768, arguably the first purpose built golf house was constructed by the Gentleman Golfers on Leith Links, something that is viewed as vital in modern day clubs.

1790 saw the commission of Edinburgh cloth merchant John Paterson to make the uniform for the Company of Gentleman Golfers. The uniform, as many of you will know, consisted of a scarlet coat with a blue velvet collar and buttons. Although the uniform has changed (unless you're a member of the LRGS of course), there still remains a dress code in golf clubs today.

The Company of Gentleman Golfers became the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers in 1795 as a legality, and due to the economic decline of the early 19th Century golf membership became less popular, and the club fell into major debt. This resulted in them having to sell their clubhouse, which was later knocked down, and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St Andrews took the floor as the dominant golf club. St Andrews remains to this day one of the most famous courses in the world.

Although they are no longer at Leith Links, the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers is still going strong, moving to Musselburgh in 1836, and now based at Muirfield. Many aspects of golf have changed since 1744, how



Silver Club Procession accompanied by 'tuck and drum' in 18th Century

ever the foundations built by the Company of Gentleman Golfers at Leith Links are still recognisable to this day.

Bibliography:
The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, *The Original Rules of Golf* Bodleian Library, 2009
Scottish Golf History, *The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers*, http://www.scottishgolffhistory.nethonouable_company_edinburgh_golfers.htm, 2007

Emily Jones

2011 EVENTS



Hill of Tarvit, one of our star events

Mon 7 March	Visit to Archie Baird's museum followed by lunch at Gullane GC (tbc)
Weds & Thurs 6 -7 July	Matches v MOGC and BSH
Fri 8 July	Foulis Medal
Sat 9 July	Hickory Open
Mon 22 Nov	The History of Golf on Bruntsfield Links- The Gillis Centre, 7.30pm

CONTACT

Web: www.leith-rules-golf.co.uk
Email: lrginfo@blueyonder.co.uk

General enquiries:
Leith Rules Golf Society
c/o 14 Pirniefield Terrace
Edinburgh
EH6 7PW

Home Address:
Leith Rules Golf Society
c/o Leith Franklin Academicals
Cricket Pavilion
Leith Links
Leith
Edinburgh
EH6 7QR

Edited on behalf of LRGS by W.J. Cairns with E.V. Jones

www.leith-rules-golf.co.uk

The Gowffer's Tattle

LEITH RULES GOLF SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Guest Speaker
- Letter from Secretary
- Can John Rattray find a home on Leith Links?
- Highlights of 2010
- Golf after Rattray
- 2011 Events



OLIVE GEDDES

We are delighted to welcome Mrs Olive Geddes as our speaker at the 2011 AGM. She is a Senior Curator in the National Library of Scotland and the author of a well-known and notable golf book "A Swing Through Time" about golf in Scotland 1457 - 1744, and full of history! This autumn she has been responsible for a splendid exhibition

in the National Library about the history of Golf in Scotland which is proving very successful. She will talk to us about how the exhibition was conceived, planned and presented. This is a talk to be treasured. Do not delay in visiting the exhibition if you can.

Douglas Foulis, President



Well worth a read: Mrs Geddes' historical golf book

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY

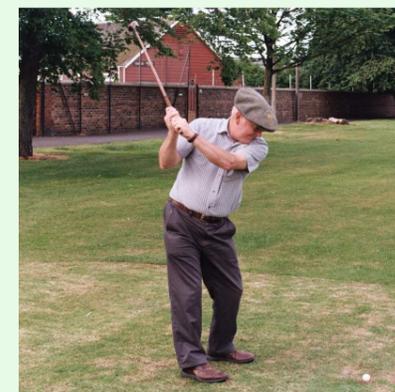
As always 2010 has been a busy year for LRGS, the main area being worked on this year has been our plans for a statue on Leith Links. The idea has won a lot of support locally and there is general goodwill for our efforts. We now need to make formal planning permission in the hope that those who can influence planning matters will give their support.

At the same time our normal activities continue. We held our 7th March event in Leith Lynx restaurant where our speaker was the excellent David Purdie, all who attended thoroughly enjoyed the event and the number of notes and e mails I received clearly backed this up.

We played our normal matches against Musselburgh Old and Bruntsfield Short Hole with the same mixed results. Although the results are of interest and competition is keen the main element has always been the friendship that these matches generate.

We held two outings this year at Merchant's Golf Club thanks to Robin Miller and his team, and at Hill of Tarvit where we received our usual warm welcome from David Anderson. Great weather on both occasions made them even more enjoyable.

The main golfing events are the two competitions played over Leith Links, The Foulis Medal and the Hickory Open. The Foulis is only open to Leith organisations



LRGS Secretary Brian Graham at the top of his swing!

and this year was won by Mowat, Hall & Dick at the first attempt. The Hickory Open was played in variable weather with strong winds and very heavy rain as well as sunshine; what we call typical Scottish weather for the summer. The Open competition was won by Gifford Golf Club and the Handicap event was won by the Odd Couple for the second year. Well done to all who entered.

We have also had the opportunity this year to speak at a variety of events this year from Round Table to school visits all of which were well received. If you have any chance to help to promote the society please let me know.

Now we start to plan for next year and hope to put in place matches and events which will interest our members. If you enjoy being a member of LRGS don't keep it to yourself feel free to share your thoughts with others.

Brian Graham, Secretary

CAN JOHN RATTRAY FIND A HOME ON LEITH LINKS?



Sketch Perspective for the Rattray Statue and Landscape Improvements of the Northern Gateway at Salamander Place
Credit to Stuart Campbell, RIAS

Since gaining the go-ahead at the LRGS AGM in January 2010, an enthusiastic and dedicated committee has been focusing on this conundrum. Members bring a range of skills to push the project forward and much has been achieved. We have found unanimous support from both local Leith residents and local Councillors Thomas, Munro and Munn. This is not yet enough however. Alternative sites to Leith Links have been assessed but found wanting and we continue to focus on our preferred location - on Leith Links opposite Salamander Place. The site was selected according to clear criteria of: Visibility; Accessibility; Security; Rootedness; Significance (compared e.g. to nearby buildings); Aspect; and Utility (will it be attractive to people?).

Shown above is the outline design to incorporate the statue of John Rattray in a suitable setting appropriate to the worldwide significance of Leith in the history of golf – a game now played by over 50

million people worldwide and a \$60 billion industry.

An attractive draft brochure has been drawn up, an informative brief on John Rattray commissioned and research undertaken on how best to use the charitable umbrella. All we now need is clear permission that our Statue can be sited on Leith Links as we are ready to apply for Planning Permission - the inhibitor is the **Confirmation Act of 1991** listing the *permanent* buildings permitted on Leith Links - a Statue regrettably is not among them.

Members of the Statue Committee have met with Martin Macaulay of North Edinburgh Neighbourhood team; with Paul Devaney of the City Planning department and with a number of local groups including the Leith Links Regeneration Project Group. All are very supportive of our plans and Local Councillor, Rob Munn has challenged the City to find a solution. He arranged for us to meet with Nick Smith, Principal Solicitor at

City of Edinburgh Corporate Services and we are currently awaiting his legal opinion on whether our Statue could be considered a *temporary* structure. This would reassure the City authorities that a recommendation to allow the Statue would not lead to a challenge at a later date. Crucially it would enable us to move forward on fund-raising with assurance to pursue our aim of raising the Statue to coincide with the Open at Muirfield in 2013.

Watch this space!

Pat Denzler

Statue Committee Members:

- Pat Denzler (Chair)
- Douglas Foulis
- William Cairns
- Lionel Freedman
- Mike Towers
- Charles Fraser
- David Kay

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2010

7th March:

This year to celebrate the anniversary of the competition for the silver club in 1744 we enjoyed an excellent lunch at Leith Lynx Restaurant. We are very grateful to Professor David Purdie for speaking at the event.

Matches:

We commenced our summer events with matches against Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club and Bruntsfield Short Hole, and are proud to announce that LRGS defeated MOCGC 4-0. Unfortunately we were unable to keep up the good work for the following match, and lost to BSH 2½ - 1½. Luckily LRGS had another chance against BSH in our return match and achieved a 4-1 win, Hurrah!

Hickory Open:

Although there were fewer teams involved in the Hickory Open in 2010 than in 2009, a tremendous day was had by all. Gifford Golf Club managed to defeat Foot of Leith Walk Golfing Society in the final and won the main trophy (see below), while the Odd Couple beat Mother and Son to win the handicap trophy.



ABOVE: Gifford GC receive the main Hickory trophy from LRGS President Douglas Foulis
RIGHT (from top): Merchants of Edinburgh clubhouse; Hill of Tarvit



Outings to Merchants and Hill of Tarvit:

These visits (see above) were a huge success and players were made to feel very welcome by the clubs. Expect other such trips in 2011.



ABOVE (From left to right): LRGS players Ian Hislop, David Maguire, Czeslaw Kruk, Jim Maguire, Brian Graham, Robin Morris, Douglas Foulis, Steven Doyle. and MOCGC players Robin Rae, Scott McFarlane, Jim Green, Billy Finnegan, David Barraclough, Grant Campbell and Rob Little prior to The Hickory Open match at Leith Links