

The Very Beginning!

The formation of a Golf Club in the last century seems to follow a pattern. A group of men interested in golf would agree to meet, a committee would be formed, a few fields rentedand so on. Warkworth Golf Club came into being in a different way

Following a letter published in The Alnwick Mercury by visitors to the area encouraging local people to make Warkworth a Centre of Golf in England, a public meeting chaired by The Reverend Rogerson was held in the village hall and a Golf Committee was formed.

By August 1891 a large area of land had been acquired by the golf club committee through the good will of the tenant farmers and The Duke of Northumberland's Commissioner and £70 had been raised to make a start on the course.

These are the names and details of the original 1891 Warkworth Golf Club Committee Members

Name	Position	Age in 1891	Local address	Occupation	Marital status	Born in
Rev William Rogerson	Hon Secretary,	48	22 The Butts Warkworth	Minister of Religion URC	Widower	Scotland
Mr Dickenson Taylor		53	Pinegarth Station Rd Warkworth	Licensed victualler	Married	Burnley, Lancashire
Mr Edward Thew		36	Birling Manor Warkworth	Tobacco Manufacturer, grocer etc	Married	Warkworth
Dr John Somers Forrest		33	23 The Butts Warkworth	Medical & Surgical practitioner	Married	Scotland
Mr John Gray		43	29 Henderson Street, Amble	General Labourer	Single	Warkworth
Mr Malcolm Whiteford		28	Sun Inn Warkworth	Retired Cavalry Major	Single	Scotland
Mr George Sanderson	Treasurer	46	Fairfield House Warkworth	Living on own means	Married	Newcastle upon Tyne

Other characters involved with the club

Mr George F Charlton	Played with Old Tom Morris	36	Causey House Ponteland	Living on own means	single	Newcastle upon Tyne
Mr G Reavell Jnr	Drew plans for 1 st clubhouse	26	55 Baillifgate, Alnwick	Architect	single	Ramsey, Huntingdonshire
Mr William Bryson	Built first Clubhouse	41	63 Main Street Warkworth	Joiner and painter	Married	Warkworth

The club engaged 'Old Tom Morris' Green Keeper at The Royal and Ancient Golf Club and 4 times winner of 'The Open Championship' to set out the course and give his professional advice.

The club committee wanted an 18 hole course, however Old Tom advised a twelve hole course would be better when considering the cost and the delay in getting the course operational.

The committee agreed an entrance fee of One Guinea would constitute membership of the club.

The First Tee on the course was next to 'The Scribes' (Allotment strips for the villagers of Warkworth and near the current 'gate entrance' to the golf club). The first green was approximately where the current practice putting area is now.



Old Tom Morris

The fairways carried on from there along the east side of the current course, up and down the cut towards the links which are now the site of the caravan site at the north end of the course. The fairways then wound their way back over the link lane (footpath to the beach) and down over a few fences through Northfield and towards the 12th green.

At some point in time the three extra holes marked out by Old Tom ceased to be used as part of the course as they became unmanageable with the club's small resources thus reducing the course to nine holes.

It was Old Tom Morris who gave the name 'Wee Killiekrankie' to our 4th hole as the cut was formerly known locally as 'The Birling Chine'.

The first three holes that are now in use – "The Old Harbour", 'Aad Waters' and 'Bracken Rise' were not part of the course in the early days.

Plans for a clubhouse were drawn by George Reavell and the photograph below gives us a glimpse of some of the golfers sitting outside the completed wooden building perhaps waiting to play. A room for lady golfers was added to the clubhouse building in 1914.



The Club Championship Medal was awarded to the player with the best score and results from those early days were:-

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL

Scoring over 2 rounds of 12 holes each

YEAR	NAME	SCORE
1892	W D Pape	83+85-51=117
1893	W M Pybus	59+57-30=86

NEW COURSE

1894	J S Forrest	68+61-13=116
1895	G F C Charlton	52*52*5 =109

*(It is not known why the 1895 inscription only uses * and not the usual +/- . The implication was that Mr Charlton was a +5 handicap. {Of course he had played with Old Tom Morris at one time!!})*

1896	M Whiteford	58+52-13=97
1897	W E Thew	58+55-18=95
1898	A P Scott	58+64-18=104

NB. 'Old Tom Morris' was 70 years of age when he 'marked out' Warkworth Golf Course. He won his first Open Championship in 1861 at the age of 40. He successfully defended his title the next year at Prestwick with a margin of 13 strokes – a record that still stands. He won again in 1864 and a fourth time in 1867. *By this time he had returned to St. Andrews to become the green keeper at The Royal and Ancient Golf Club. He held the position of 'Professional to the R & A until 1903 and played in The Open Championship until 1906. He died in 1908.*

Alnwick County Gazette

Saturday 5th September 1891

A SUITABLE ENDING

From The Alnwick Mercury 4th June 1892

"Last Saturday some golfers drove from Alnmouth to have a round over Warkworth's Golf Course.

They put up at 'The Sun' and talked 'golf'. One gentleman said he could drive the ball over the castle from the hotel door and proceeded to show he made no empty boast. Selecting a club and carefully placing the ball on a 'tee' he struck it fair and it flew clear over the top battlement.

The keeper found the ball in the castle and I am told he remarked "that he had heard the balls could be knocked a good distance, but he never thought it was possible to send it from Sordy's links to the castle"

At the same time he was observed to wink "the other eye"

John Gray

Chairman February 2018