

Arthur Packer had done much to steer the Club through the difficulties of 1969, and was re-elected as President in May 1970. The new Captain was Joe Snuggs, who persuaded Leslie Hill to take over the role of Secretary following his return from a World Tour. Langley agreed to continue as Treasurer.

The introduction of decimalisation heralded the disappearance of guineas and full subscriptions were rounded up to the nearest pound. Even so, the Club's financial position was far from sound, and concern was expressed at the inability of the Club to repay £ 1,000 plus interest to the bank.

The Committee's attention had been drawn to the poor standard of dress displayed on the course by certain members. There were reported cases of golfers playing bare-chested and bare-footed. The culprits were duly warned that future violations of dress standards would not be tolerated.

Clarke's temporary contract was terminated, and the upkeep of the greens was taken over by Bill Richards. The purchase of turf enabled the new 4th. and 5th. greens to be completed.

Efforts had once again been made to improve the Club membership; hopefully to a total of 300, but in fact only 204 paying members were recorded by the end of the year. However, in spite of the financial gloom, the Club met with some success. Captain Joe Snuggs led his team to the final of the Somerset Bowl.

A group of rising Wells stars was emerging; the Coate brothers, Robert and Chris, Dave Holland, Hywel Jenkins and Nigel Pring. The Coate brothers became interested in golf whilst at school in Street, at first being content to hit the balls around using hockey sticks. A shrewd purchase of a second-hand set of left-handed clubs further stimulated their interest. The fact that they were both right-handed failed to dampen their enthusiasm. Subsequently, as members of the Wells Club, their golfing skills soon became apparent. Chris now recalls how they would catch a bus to Wells and walk to the course pulling their trollies and play 36 holes before making their return journey. On one occasion after playing 18 holes at Wells, they pulled their trollies to the Mendip course to play another round.

Together with Nigel Pring, Robert and Chris dominated the major Club competitions and were to play for the County teams for many years. Their talents were recognised throughout the South West for almost 2 decades, and are still to be feared in any competitive event.

In May 1971, the re-elected President Arthur Packer also accepted the responsibility of Club Secretary; there being no-one willing to take over. Joe Snuggs was again elected Club Captain.

Work on the course had still been carried out by Bill Richards with the assistance of Cyril Blackburn. In recognition of their service, they were awarded honorary membership. The Greenkeeper that had been engaged was not to stay long as "things didn't work out." Some things however, did show signs of improvement. Members under the supervision of Harold Green, redecorated the Clubhouse at a cost of £ 26. Membership increased to 245, but Stewardesses came and went.

Bridge and Whist evenings became part of the social scene, and a new electrically operated fruit machine produced profits of £ 64 in a 4 week period. Film Shows and other events were once again generating members' interest.

Subscriptions continued to rise; the full membership for men being £ 16 and for the ladies, £ 13. Similar increases were made for all levels. The slight improvement in Club finances facilitated the purchase of new equipment.

Arthur Packer who with his wife had celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, an occasion marked by the Club, was continually involved in Club activities. In addition to organising the Seniors' Section, he managed the Club team which won Division 4 of the Western Daily Press Golf League.

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The position will become available on MARCH 10, 1972, and applications should be made in writing, in the first instance, to  
**HON. SECRETARY, East Horrington Road, WELLS, Som.**

The search for a suitable Club Steward continued, and once again the post was advertised.

Ray Crees became Captain in May 1972; Harold Green continuing as Secretary and Langley as Treasurer. Membership had increased to 228 and the finances continued to show steady improvement.

Remodelling and improvements to the course continued, the Standard Scratch being 69. The length of the course was 5,888 yards, and for the ladies 5,410 yards.

Dances and Film Shows were proving to be popular attractions and made an acceptable financial contribution to the Club. Unfortunately, the increase in membership led to concern over course etiquette. To combat this, all new members were required to have an hour's tuition with the Club Professional; the cost to be incorporated in the joining fee. Dress within the Clubhouse was also a matter of concern, and the Committee introduced the following rule:- "Members must be reasonably dressed at all times when using the Lounge."

The course was being well tended by Richards and Blackburn, and between 40 and 50 Somerset Captains played the course for the first time. Unfortunately they both retired before the end of the year, and a new full-time Groundsman was appointed early in 1973.

Improvements to the bar were planned, and Whitbreads offered to loan the Club £ 300, repayable over 6 years at £ 50 per annum. Plans were also being made to purchase some scrub land to the South West end of King Castle Wood. This land had no timber value and would enable the Club to extend the 4th, 5th., and 6th. holes, possibly extending the course by almost 500 yards.

Three Club members, Rob and Chris Coate with Dave Holland were selected to play for the Somerset Colts. Rob Coate was particularly successful in winning the County's Junior Championship and filling the runner-up spot in the County Colts' Championship.

The combination of Crees, Langley and Green retained their positions at the 1973 A.G.M. Bill Richards had been re-established as full-time Groundsman and was aided later in the year by the appointment of an assistant. Between them they succeeded in improving the course; the Committee noting that it was in the best condition for many years. There was, however, one problem that they could not overcome - that of the moles. In the end it was decided to call upon the services of the Ministry of Agriculture in order to solve the problem.

Plans to purchase the land at King Castle Wood had fallen through, and the Committee spent much time and energy in searching for appropriate areas for extension, but none were available. The Club Open Meeting attracted over 140 entrants, and the Championship was won by Dave Holland. Dave, together with the Coate brothers, Nigel Pring and Hywel Jenkins were all selected to play for the County Colts. Rob's reputation was further enhanced when he won the South Western Counties Golf Amateur Championship at Minehead.

The Club Steward resigned although his wife remained as Stewardess. To overcome this difficulty, members of the Committee, together with a barmaid, continued to manage the bar.

Subscriptions had been increased to £ 20 (£ 17 for ladies) and membership fees for Juniors (under 15) were increased to £ 4. The joining fee was raised to £ 12.

Sadly, in April 1974, Bill Richards tendered his resignation. In recognition of his excellent work, he was awarded Life Membership.

George Davis became Captain in 1974; a year when membership had shown a marked improvement. With the exception of Ladies and Juniors, applicants were put on a waiting list. By the September of 1974, the total number of members was 330.

Substantial damage was done to the course and to the Club's tractor when vandals pushed it down the 7th. tee and into a tree. When a replacement was purchased, the Committee decided to erect a Tractor Shed measuring 50 ft. x 80 ft. This shed still stands today.

The Committee was still keen to purchase additional land for extension. They were offered the opportunity to buy 2.8 acres of land at King Castle Wood for £ 1,000. Planning permission was eventually obtained and negotiations were completed. Meanwhile other work was continuing on the course, in particular on the new low-lying 8th. hole, an expensive operation as earth moving equipment was costing the Club £ 3 an hour.

Club finances were steadily improving, all loans being repaid and the overdraft cleared. Open Week was particularly successful and the Club Championship was won by Robert Coate. The Embassy Medal Competition was very well supported, attracting 155 entries.

Yet again, the rising young players of the Club were successful. Rob Coate won the South Western Counties Colts' Championship and progressed to the County Team. His brother Chris, with Nigel Pring and Dave Holland were selected for the Somerset Colts'. Nigel Pring, always described as a "natural golfer" won the Somerset Boys' Championship, and was runner-up in the Colts' Championship. The Club team also enjoyed success, being runners-up in the Western Daily Press League.

Again the problem of dress within the Clubhouse was brought into question when 2 members were spotted in the dining area without shoes. The Secretary was instructed to deal with the matter, but no record exists of retribution!

1975 was to be the last year of Packer's Presidency. Davis, Langley and Green were re-elected and were to face a year of difficulty resulting from a prolonged drought. It became necessary to transfer thousands of gallons of water from the Palace Moat, a slurry tanker being used for the purpose. Greens were cracking and fairways were bare. The untiring efforts of staff and members ensured that the greens were maintained, and the course generally kept in good condition despite the difficulties. Parts of the course had suffered through a proliferation of stones, and an inspiration of one of the Committee led to a local Scout Troop being invited to collect the stones in return for a donation to their funds.

Membership experienced a slight fall during the year but there was now a good spirit developing within the Club, and social activities were thriving and envied by many other Clubs. The support allowed a reduction to be made in beer and spirit prices; resulting in even greater support for Club events.

The talents of Rob Coate again came to the fore when he won the Club Championship. The teams performed well in matches, although not always successfully.





Recommendations for subscriptions to be placed before the 1979 A.G.M. :-

Full Membership (Ladies and Gents)	£43.20
Joint	£75.60
5 Day	£39.96
Joint 5 Day	£54.00
Country (Over 25 miles)	£38.88
Joint Country	£61.56
Juniors up to 15 years	£ 9.18
Juniors 16 - 17 years	£17.28
Entrance Fee	£48.60

The sub-committee also recommended that subscriptions for members over 70 years of age should be frozen, provided they had been members for at least five years.

In May 1979, Schoolmaster Mike Febrey was elected Club Captain. Ron Knott continued as President and Phil Tweedale was consolidated as Secretary.

The Club was at last able to appoint a new Steward and Stewardess, and the engagement of an additional Greenkeeper eased the work load of the hard-pressed staff. Roy Clifton, a young Professional from Sherborne, had been engaged the previous year, and was proving to be an asset to the Club. The introduction of modern teaching methods and his enthusiasm in coaching young players did much to strengthen the Junior Section. He was to continue successfully for many years to come, and a lot of present Club members have reason to be grateful to him.

A modern watering system was introduced to the course, intended to service every green. The cost was almost £ 2,000. However, the system proved to be an inadequate one as it relied on a mains feed to an old storage tank (removed from a lorry), sited at the highest point of the course. The tank took a considerable time to fill, and as the greens were to be watered by gravity feed, only one green could be watered at a time, and that with the merest trickle. A pump was installed at the tank outlet and this improved the supply. The theft of the pump led to the abandonment of the system, and the old system of Bowser distribution was re-introduced. Cumbersome to operate, the Greenkeepers were nevertheless able to flood a green in a very short time.



*Old Bowser*



*Water storage tank*