

The formation of Wells (Somerset) Golf Club Ltd., took place in October 1913. Articles of Association were drawn up and the Company was registered on the 15th October with 150 members. Money to buy the 30 acres on which the course was sited, was raised mainly by the issue of Debentures at £ 5 each. The Company intended to redeem two Debentures annually after the 31st December 1916.

The first Committee, whose members became the first Board of Directors of the Company were:-

ROBERT ALEXANDER GRANT  
EDWARD ALGERNON CROSSE  
GEORGE STEVEN POPE  
HERBERT WILLIAM ALLAN  
ARTHUR CECIL HINCKS  
WALTER EDWARD HODGSON  
CHARLES ELLICOTT  
THOMAS TALBOT HAYWARD  
WILLIAM HENRY DERRICK  
THOMAS ISAAC WICKS

Vicars Choral of Wells Cathedral  
Wine Merchant  
Medical Superintendent  
Surgeon  
Surgeon  
Clerk in Holy Orders  
Principal Clerk: Probate Registry  
Bank Manager  
Mining Engineer  
Auctioneer

As Captain, Jock received loyal support from one of the fellow founders, Edward Crosse, who was both Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. Members were asked to pay a joining fee of £ 1.1s.0d. (men) and £ 2.2s.0d. annual subscription; ladies paying half this amount. Junior members who were under 18 years paid 12/6d. Students of the Wells Theological College were admitted as temporary members on payment of £ 2.2s.0d., for a period not exceeding 15 months. Green fees were fixed at 1/6d. per day.

An immediate concern was the provision of a Club House for the newly constituted Golf Club. The Committee had been empowered to attend a local auction and spend up to £ 700 on the purchase of a suitable building; Lot 67. Thomas Wicks, Auctioneer and Director of the Club, secured the building for £ 500, with the addition of £ 15 for timbers and £ 12 fees. Hippisley and Son, responsible for the valuation of Lot 67 declined to charge for their services.

No. 131,626.



(COPY)

### Certificate of Incorporation

I Hereby Certify, That WELLS (SOMERSET) GOLF CLUB, LIMITED, is this day Incorporated under the Companies Acts, 1908 and 1913, and that the Company is Limited.

Given under my hand at London this Fifteenth day of October One Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirteen.

GEO. J. SARGENT,

*Assistant Registrar of Joint Stock Companies.*

Fees and Deed Stamps £7..10..0.

*Registration Certificate*

The first A.G.M. of the Wells Golf Club was held at the Swan Hotel on 22nd January 1914. Deeds of the land owned by the Club were deposited with the Club's bankers, The Wilts. and Dorset Banking Company Ltd., of Wells. The rumour that Mr. Tudway would be disposing of land vital to the Club proved to be incorrect, and a ten year lease was negotiated for the sum of £ 10 per annum.

The outbreak of war in 1914 was to have a significant effect on the development of Wells Golf Club, with many members enlisting in His Majesty's Forces. The second A.G.M. of the Club, due to take place on the 27th January 1915, was adjourned until the following March. We can find no record to explain why this happened, although it was in all probability due to the call-up of many of the members.

When the A.G.M. eventually took place on 6th. March, Edward Crosse tendered his resignation as Secretary, his place being taken by Mr. O. Russ on a temporary basis. Grant's reign as Captain ended with the election of Mr. B. Dyer. In response to a proposal, the Directors agreed that any of the Officers serving in the Forces should be made Honorary members for the duration of their active service.

Some of the effects and changes arising from the war became clear to members when the Directors presented their annual report in early 1916. Revenue had fallen for a variety of reasons: resignations, a reduction in the number of Theological students and the waiving of subscriptions for certain members. The loss for the year was substantial - over £ 56. The loss would have been greater, but some of the course was let to Mr. Collings of Tor Hill on payment of £ 36 per annum. Three fields were involved and used for the grazing of young cattle and the cropping of hay. During periods when the fields were let, play was restricted to the old course.

On the formation of the Company, no provision had been made for the setting up of a reserve fund, which would have eased the difficulties arising from The Great War. The Directors had made themselves responsible for any overdraft up to £ 50, but felt that members should be asked to share the burden. Accordingly, they recommended that members should pay a voluntary levy, and asked that those on Active Service should agree to waive their subscription concessions. They further recommended that no gratuitous privileges be extended to military visitors.

Few members were now able to play on a regular basis, and with a view to keeping some interest alive, competitions were arranged to take place on the second Wednesday of each month. The Ladies' Section remained active and appointed Miss. Douglas as Hon. Secretary to a small committee, and planned to re-start competitions in the Spring. The struggle for survival was highlighted in the statement issued by the Directors at the March 1916 A.G.M:

"The Directors feel that if members will only take a keener interest in the Club, as suggested, and their considerations are carried out, there is no reason why the Club should not regain its prosperity after the war; the present position being brought about solely by the war."

The troubles the Club had been experiencing were to continue for some time to come. The Annual General Meeting of 1917 would have given little comfort to members. Whilst the majority of members loyally paid their subscriptions, few were able to play golf on a regular basis. The loss of Ham, the Professional and Groundsman, who was called to the Colours, had been anticipated, but nevertheless, was a further blow to the struggling Club. By good fortune they managed to obtain the services of Brown, who, in spite of the many difficulties confronting him, carried out his duties in a "creditable manner".

The finances of the Club had improved during the year; voluntary subscriptions from members totalling £ 27.5s.6d. To this was added the proceeds from the sale of the mare and putt. (Horse and small cart). The Directors were thus able to present a balance of £ 7, as opposed to the loss sustained in the previous year. Whilst they anticipated that the year ahead would be a difficult one, the Directors were confident that the Club would be able to survive.

Revenue from visitors' fees had fallen from a pre-war average of over £ 30 to around £ 6. Eleven of the Club members were serving in the Forces, but two of them continued to pay subscriptions, following the plea by the Directors the previous year. Land by the pavilion was again let for grazing, the Directors feeling that in this way they could assist with the nation's food supplies without unduly interfering with the rights of members on the Links.

Once again the Chairman referred to the generosity of the members who had responded to his special appeal for funds, an appeal he did not intend to close. A number of stalwarts ensured that competitions were provided for the few regular members, and the groundsman had maintained the greens to a reasonable standard. However, many problems lay ahead, clearly indicated in the Directors' report at the 1918 A.G.M.

"In submitting their annual report, the Directors beg to thank the majority of members for loyally continuing their subscriptions, although many are prevented through stress of business and other causes from playing on the Links. Acting on his own suggestion, the groundsman has only been employed for four days each week since last Spring, as he was anxious to devote more time to producing food on his holding. The course, however, has under the circumstances been admirably kept by him, although difficulties occurred during the Summer in keeping down the grass. The Directors have therefore reluctantly come to the decision to fence the greens and to allow young stock over the links, in addition to the sheep, so it is hoped that further trouble with the grass will not arise. They have also decided to let off for two years the fields behind the pavilion and approach field, 22 acres in all, on a farming tenancy at an enhanced rent, so that the members will see that the Directors are doing the best possible in helping with the food supply, without unduly interfering with the playing of golf. As will be seen from the accounts, a loss of over £ 25, as estimated, was made last year and the Committee have decided to make a further appeal to members to wipe off this deficit, and they are confident that this will be done. Although it is difficult to say at present, the Directors hope this will be the last time they will have to appeal for help, and it will be only through the loyalty and financial support of members generally that they will be able to report after the war that the Club, which is and will be a valuable asset to Wells and the locality, has survived the difficult times caused by the war."

The last sentence shows the vision of the early Directors, for the course at Wells has certainly proved to be an important and integral part of the community.

The end of the war came later on in the year of 1918, and with it, renewed determination for the golfers to restore the Wells Links to the standards which they had previously enjoyed. Matches and lapsed competitions were soon re-introduced, and Ham, although wounded in France, was fit and able to resume his position as Club Professional.

The first post-war Annual General Meeting was held in the Wells Small Hall ( now part of the Post Office). The Directors paid tribute to those members who had given such wonderful support during difficult times; many clubs being forced to close. They were able to report that the bank overdraft had remained much the same as the previous year, and but for an old account of £ 12 for a mower (not submitted for four years) , the Club would have been able to pay its way. With the re-opening of the College and new members joining, the Directors anticipated a re-vitalised Club. Greens which were fenced in during the previous Spring had not greatly inconvenienced members, and with the return of Ham, there was a general improvement on the course. Once again an appeal was made to members for financial help in order to clear the outstanding overdraft.

In 1920, H.A. Sheldon was appointed Club Captain when the A.G.M. took place in the Wells Small Hall once again. In their report, the Directors again congratulated the members on their support during five "most trying and anxious years." With the support of the Theological College, new members were joining and visitors were on the increase. The Committee was confident that sufficient improvement had taken place for play on the long course to take place from Lady Day of 1921.

The Annual Dinner had been revived, and had taken place in the previous November when the opportunity had been taken to say farewell to Dr. Pope, who had for many years acted in an excellent manner as Chairman of the Club and Company. Indeed, Dr. Pope had used the occasion to raise the sum of £ 50 at the gathering, donating the first ten guineas himself. It was largely due to this effort that an adverse balance of £ 41.13s.7d. at December 1918 was turned into a credit balance of £ 27.2s.2d. at 31st. December 1919. As a result, the Committee felt justified in having the pavilion painted and renovated. Thanks were extended to Messrs. H.A. Sheldon and O.W. Berry who, with other members, made the ornamental fence outside of the Clubhouse. The Committee had also been able to arrange for the supplying of teas on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons.

The barbed wire which had been causing inconvenience to members had been removed. Other improvements were continually taking place, with much benefit arising from the generous gift of a horse by Messrs. A. Sheldon and Son.

Towards the end of 1920, Club members were saddened by the death of their Captain, H. Sheldon. At a special E.G.M. held in December, Jock Grant, the Chairman, requested all members to stand in silence as a mark of respect. Condolences of all members were extended to Mr. Sheldon's family. Further tributes were paid to Mr. Sheldon at the Annual Dinner. At the same gathering, reference was made to the excellence of the work done for the Club by the Secretary, Mr. F. Holloway throughout the war.

In their annual report at the 1921 A.G.M., the Directors were in a position to record with confidence the emergence of the Club from the dark days of The Great War. The financial position had improved considerably, and important work had been carried out on the course. The Clubhouse had been repainted in the Spring at a cost of £ 45, and in the Autumn, a new green had been constructed and several tees re-made under the direction of Ham at a cost of £ 20.

The intention to re-open the full course was again considered by the Committee, but because of the additional costs involved, it was decided to remain on the existing short course until Lady Day of 1922. There was strong opposition to the proposal to significantly increase the level of subscriptions, and, after a prolonged debate, an increase of 5s. per member was agreed.

Entrance fees were increased to £ 1.11s.6d. for gentlemen and £ 1.1s.0d. for ladies.

The very dry Summer of 1921 had resulted in near drought conditions, and allied to financial problems arising from increased labour costs, necessitated the postponement of the re-opening of the full course on Lady Day 1922. The Committee had been forced to spend money on essential repairs to the barn roof and a new stove had to be provided for the Clubhouse. The course had recovered well from the effects of the prolonged drought, but the Committee felt that improvement was necessary to a number of the greens.

The Secretary stated that there had been a number of complaints concerning golfers whose balls had strayed into King Castle Woods. Access to the woods was only permitted where proper stiles had been provided, and these were few and far between. In future, those who transgressed the Club ruling would be reported to the Committee and "severely dealt with."

Throughout 1922, many discussions had been taking place on ways in which the course could be improved or extended. Under the captaincy of Mr. T.T. Hayward, the Club's reputation was enhanced and many friendly fixtures arranged.

The Directors of the Club, aware that the lease of the land owned by Lord Bath was due to expire in the September of 1923, needed to take urgent action to secure the future of the Golf Club.

An effort to raise capital by the issuing of debentures was destined to fail, only eleven members supporting the proposition.

The land owned by Lord Bath, that on which the first seven holes were sited, was to be purchased for £ 350 (reduced from £ 400). However, in order to raise sufficient funds, it was necessary to sell part of the lands already owned by the Company, thus deferring for some time the ambition to extend the course. Accordingly, land, together with the barn buildings, was sold to Mr. Galloway for £ 300 and a guarantee of a free supply of water to the Links.

In spite of the many expenditures during the year, the Club showed a working profit of £ 11.9s.6d., and, in the words of the Directors, "we hope to maintain and improve the Company's present financial position, and members generally can do much towards increasing the Club's membership."

The Captain for the 1923/4 season was to be Mr. O.H. Ross.

The year 1924 was one of consolidation. Improvements were made to several of the greens, and, over the Winter, a new seventh green had been constructed under the guidance of Ham, a green which the Directors considered would be one of the best on the course. The excellence of the Greenkeeper's work was noted at the Annual General Meeting. Dr. Hincks had been elected Captain, and did much to enhance the prestige of the Club.

## Wells (Somt.) Golf Club, Limited.

Registered Office—

24, CHAMBERLAIN STREET,

WELLS,

9th March, 1923.

Dear Sir or Madam,

A MEETING of the Debenture Holders of the above Company will be held at the **Small Hall, Market Place, Wells**, on **Friday, 23rd March, 1923, at 7.45 p.m.**, for the purpose of confirming the proposed action of the Directors in transferring the Security of the Debenture Holders from certain lands about to be sold, to other lands about to be purchased.

For some time past the Directors have been in negotiation with Lord Bath for the sale to the Company of the lands rented by the Club from him, the particulars of which are as follows:—

No. on Tithe Map.	No. on Ordnance Map.	Description.	Quality.	Quantity.
Pt. 2491	585	Great Snooks	Pasture	a. r. p.
2493				23 1 18
2495				
2492				

and a contract for the purchase of these lands for £350 has been recently signed.

To enable the Company to purchase the above, it has been agreed to sell the following lands to Mr. J. Galloway for £300:—

No. on Tithe Map.	No. on Ordnance Map.	Description.	Quality.	Quantity.
2568	2935	Six Acres	Arable (now pasture)	5 3 22
2567	2934	Tor Hill	Pasture	4 2 31
2566	Pt. 2937A	Three Acres	do.	2 1 20
2598	2933	Old Quarry	Quarry	1 0 37
2522		Roadway		3 17
2524	2932	Buildings		1 4
				<u>A. 15 1 11</u>

and part of the consideration in the contract for such sale is a free supply of water to the Links to be granted by the purchaser.

The Debenture holders will therefore be asked to free the lands to be sold to Mr. Galloway, and to transfer the security under the Debentures to the property to be purchased from Lord Bath, 23a. 1r. 18p., and the remainder of

the land at present owned by the Company, 13a. 3r. 9p., Total 37a. 0r. 27p., which is an increase of 8a. 0r. 7p. in the acreage of the lands originally secured under the Debentures, and a Resolution to this effect will be submitted to the Debenture holders for approval.

The amount originally raised by way of Debentures was £810, of which £60 has been paid off.

If you agree but are unable to be present, kindly sign and return the enclosed Form of Assent and oblige.

Yours truly,

F. H. HOLLOWAY,

Hon. Secretary.

### Wells (Somerset) Golf Club, Ltd.

Registered Office:—

24, CHAMBERLAIN STREET,  
WELLS,

21st December, 1922.

Dear Sir (or Madam),

AN EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the above Club will be held at the **Small Hall, Market Place, Wells**, on **Friday the 5th day of January, 1923, at 8 p.m.**

#### BUSINESS:

- To approve and confirm the action of the Directors in agreeing to purchase for £350 the land comprising 23a. 1r. 18p. at present rented from Lord Bath.
- To authorize the Directors to obtain by way of Debentures (or otherwise) sufficient money to enable the Company to complete such purchase.
- To consider an Alternative Scheme which has been placed before the Directors, and
- To pass such resolution or resolutions with regard to the above matters as may be necessary.

Yours truly,

F. H. HOLLOWAY,

Hon. Secretary.

P.S.—It is hoped that all members will attend, but if you are unable to do so, kindly notify the Secretary not later than the 4th prox., what amount (in sums of £5) you are prepared to advance to the Company.

#### Proposal for land purchase - 1922

*Meeting of Debenture holders to review proposed land purchases - March 1923*

With regard to the 1<sup>st</sup> item on the Agenda it was resolved that the action of the Directors in agreeing to purchase for £350. the land comprising 23.1.18. at present rented from Lord Bath be approved and confirmed. It was further resolved that the Barn and buildings together with the 3 fields behind the Pavilion be not sold at present provided that the purchase money of £350. be found.

As to the 2<sup>nd</sup> item on the Agenda it was resolved that £140. worth of Debentures at the same rate of interest be issued. The Chairman then asked for offers of amounts in sums of £5. with the following result.

Mr. P. Williams	10.0.0
Mr. Hincks	5.0.0
Mr. Allan	10.0.0
Mr. O. J. Russ	5.0.0
Mr. Russ	5.0.0
Mr. R. K. Anderson	20.0.0
Mr. C. Elliott	5.0.0
Mr. King-Smith	5.0.0
Mr. E. E. Sheldon	5.0.0
Mr. R. J. Bead	10.0.0
Miss Philpott	5.0.0
	<hr/>
	£ 85.0.0

As no further offers were forthcoming this resolution was rescinded.

It was then suggested that Lord Bath's land be purchased in the names

of nominees of the Club & that a mortgage of £250. be obtained, but as there appeared to be some difficulty in raising the balance of £100. without touching the funds of the Club it was resolved that Messrs Haywood, Derrick & Sarah be appointed to go into the whole question & advise the Directors and that this meeting be adjourned for a fortnight.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> item on the Agenda was dropped

F. A. Grant  
Hon. Secy. Allan. Chairman.