

THE NEW MILLS GOLF CLUB – A HISTORY 1907 – 2007

Compiled and edited by Hugh Jones

“A good course in the midst of a healthy and beautiful district.”
(Ashton under Lyne Reporter, 15 June 1907)

Introduction

This history of New Mills Golf Club is written to mark the centenary of the club in 2007. It is based largely on three sources. Firstly a short history of the first 50 years printed in the programme and menu of the 50 year Jubilee Dinner held on 8 June 1957. It is initialled “H.H.”, most probably Harold Hibbert, the then President. Secondly, a set of handwritten notes made by Sidney J. Warburton covering 1907 to 1979. Thirdly, minute books of the club from 1907-1986 and later. The earliest surviving accounts book starts December 1948. The following visitors books survive: 1927-61, 1961-72, 1972-81, 1981-89 and 1993-4. Events since 1979 have largely been recalled from memory of several people, though recent detailed accounts and minutes are exact.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed information, photographs or other help. I would like to thank them all, particularly the following and apologise if anyone feels left out – it is not deliberate. Nora Nelstrop, Millie Wilson, Ken Medlock, Harold Froggatt, Frank Bullough, Reg Dorsett, Bernard Gee, The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. Eddie Kelsey has kindly part sponsored the publication.

Hugh Jones, December 2006

The New Mills Golf Club History 1907 – 1957

Text in italics is reproduced without alteration from a short history printed in the menu of the 50 year Jubilee dinner held at the Ram’s Head, Disley, on Saturday June 8th 1957, written by H.H (almost certainly Harold Hibbert, then President). The rest of the text is from Sidney Warburton’s notes and the original minute books, mostly without change or comment, fitted chronologically. Most dates are of Committee meetings. Many repetitive details are omitted, for example bar prices and membership numbers are obsessively recorded in the original books.

It was in the latter part of 1906 that a number of residents of New Mills decided to form a golf club. Mr S. Hancock, the tenant of Shaw Marsh Farm, was approached with a view to arranging a tenancy of part of his land for use as a golf course.

On November 26th 1906 an agreement was signed by Mr Hancock and by Messrs J.A. Nicholls, C. Hudson, and T. Pauley, representing the members of the New Mills Golf Club, whereby the golf club obtained the right to use the land for the purpose of laying out a golf course and playing golf. The agreement restricted the space to be rolled and mowed between the tees and the greens to not more than 40 yards wide,

and Mr Hancock retained the right to use the land for grazing horses, cattle and sheep. The agreement also granted to the club the use of a room over the wash-house of the farm-house, to be used as a club room, and for lockers, &c. It also provided for Mr Hancock to be a member of the golf club free of entrance fee and subscriptions.

[See pages 22-24 for the "License to use Land for playing Golf"](#)

The 1901 census gives the following information about the signatories: Charles Hudson was 41 in 1901, lived in Low Leighton, wife Sara Ann, one son and two daughters (all teenage). Described as a building contractor and "employee" suggesting that he owned his own business or was in partnership. Born in Derbyshire, John A. Nichols was 45 in 1901 living at Stanley Mount (bottom house on St Mary's Road). Occupation "schoolmaster (Board School, Headmaster)". The Board School is Spring Bank School. Wife aged 41, two daughters and a son. Born Cheltenham, Gloucester. Tom Pauley is not shown in the 1901 census for New Mills & Hayfield. In the 1907 Minute Book he is noted as "School Sec."

The first general meeting of members was held on April 25th 1907, when it was resolved that the club be formally constituted, and the name and title to be "The New Mills Golf Club". The officials elected for the first year were: Captain, J.A. Nicholls, Esq.: Honorary Secretary, T.M. Bevan, Esq.: and Honorary Treasurer, W.Rigby, Esq.

This meeting was held in the Social Reform Institute (no one knows what or where this was). Present: Mr J.A. Nichols in the chair, Miss Eccles, Miss Arnfield, Miss Nichols, Mr C. Hudson, Mr W. Hadfield, Mr J.S. Pollit, MR T.B. Hallowell, Mr F. Cochrane, Mr T.B. Bevan, Mr N. Porritt, Mr W. Rigby, Mr S. Hancock, Mr C.H. Hill, Mr A. Walker (Lawyer), Mr T. Pauley (Secretary). A committee consisting of all the above gentlemen was appointed "for the ensuing year and that they be requested to proceed with the preparation of suggested rules for the consideration of the Members". The rules were adopted on May 30. It was agreed that the "course be formally opened on the 8th of June next".

The golf course was formally opened by the captain J.A. Nichols, Esq. on June 8th 1907. Several matches were played during the afternoon, followed by a dinner in the evening, at which the club entertained Mr J. Hambleton, a member (professional) of Romiley Golf Club, who had laid out the tees and greens.

Opening Day, June 8 1907. This appears to have been a particularly happy event. At 2.45 the Captain, Mr J.A Nicholls declared the course open. **[\(See the previous page for a newspaper report of the opening day\)](#)**. Minutes of 3 June: "That the salad be prepared by the Secretary (who will not be responsible for the after effects)". Note added June 10: "The Secretary was delighted that none of the Members & their friends felt any after effects from the salad". The toast to the Host and Hostess, Mr & Mrs Hancock, was one of the few occasions when peace reigned between the farmer and the club, and it wasn't very long before relations became rather strained – but more about this later.

Fairways began 40 yards from the tee and were mown 40 feet wide. Mr Hancock to remove goose droppings and cow manure from greens and tees.

The club was registered for the sale of intoxicating liquor on 30 June 1907 – from 6am to 11pm! Mr Hancock – farmer steward to be paid $\frac{2}{3}$ of the profit on intoxicating liquor. No smoking in the tea room before 7pm.

Greens committee, 26 June 1907: Local Rules adopted 4 July:

- A. That the road along the course from No 1 Tee to No 1 Green also No 2 Green to be out of bounds penalty loss of distance or allowed to drop the ball over the wall into course but not nearer the green or lose 2 strokes.
- B. That the cornfield to the left of No 3 Green & Tee to be out of bounds (members are not allowed to fetch their balls) penalty Rule A.
- C. That the field to the left of No 6 Tee (No 1 Green & 2 Tee) be out of bounds members fetch their balls at their own risk penalty as before see Rule A.
- D. That the Quarry to the right of Tee No 5 also to the left of Tee No 8 & Green No 8 be Hazards, a ball may be dropped with a penalty of two strokes.
- E. That if a ball lodge in a wall or fence or unplayable it may be taken out and dropped a club length from where it lay (but not nearer the hole) the player standing facing the wall or fence, the penalty being loss of a stroke.

1907, 3 July: Ministers of all denominations be elected on subscription only without entrance fee and having no interest in the workings of the Club. Carried unanimously!

1907 2 August: That the question re new roller being purchased be left over to next meeting. At the next meeting the matter was left over “indifferently” (sic). 14 August: Members attention to be drawn to the etiquette of golf. (Nothing changes!). Handicaps: Gents max 30, min 5; Ladies max 40, min 15. 30 August: price of whiskey be 3d per $\frac{1}{4}$ gill. The minimum amount of whiskey sold by Mr Hancock be 250 quarter gills out of each 2 gallons of whiskey purchased in bulk. (1 gill = $\frac{1}{4}$ pint, 2 gallons = 256 $\frac{1}{4}$ gills).

The number of members during the first year was 38 gentlemen (fee £1.2s) and ladies (fee 10s.6d).

In the early years of the club there were many disagreements between the two parties, and on several occasions notice to terminate the tenancy was given and later withdrawn and a revised agreement was signed.

12th September 1907: Trouble. Amounts struck off Mr Hancock’s bill for work done, use of scythe 3/6, carting beer 8/6, removing goose droppings 2/6. Next meeting 26th September: these items were paid under protest and the Secretary wrote to Mr Hancock saying the Committee were dissatisfied with him. The Captain presented the meeting with a note from Mr Hancock terminating the agreement. The Secretary to write and ask on what grounds he gives NMGC notice. There must have been a reply (11 October) as it was moved “that a letter be written to Hancock

stating that the Committee do not consider that there is sufficient reason for terminating Licence under Clause 10". This brought the purchase of fertilisers and moving of greens to a halt. On 27th November, Mr Hancock, "came before the Committee regarding making new terms re rent". The Committee asked him to state his terms. Mr J. Sumner Pollitt (Solicitor) was asked to see other farmers to get terms in case NMGC gave notice. Mr Hancock's rent was held back until money due from him for beer and golf balls was paid. Arrangements were made to remove all property from the club house and out of store. 12th December: The terms were submitted to a General Meeting and it was decided "that the NMGC do not agree to Mr Hancock's proposal as to increased rent and revised terms of License, and therefore accept his notice terminating such License on 12st December. Meeting at the Crown Hotel on 23rd December – A report of a change of heart by Mr Hancock who had approached the Captain and another member intimating that he was anxious to make arrangements for the continuation of the Club. A sub-committee was elected to find out "bed rock" terms for the renewal of the License. January 9 1908 saw the start of a long tussle between the Club and Mr Hancock regarding the new terms. Various suggestions were made by both parties, and amended terms were bandied from one side to the other until the beginning of February when a copy of the agreement was sent to Mr Smith who was the agent of Lord Egerton – the owner of the land. Mr Smith didn't approve and in turn submitted an agreement which was acceptable to all parties. AGM 2 April 1908: A signed and stamped agreement of terms was presented and approved (£20 a year rent for 10 years for up to 70 members, 5/- and 2/6 for each extra man and woman, £1.5.0 per half year to be returned for prizes), and so the Club began once again to place golf on the New Mills Map.

A "Smoking Concert" was held in the Crown Hotel on 14 November 1907.

1908 AGM: "Mr Rigby gave his name to the depression in the rough on the left hand side of the 9th fairway before one reaches the bunkers. It became known as Rigby's hollow as he always seemed to put his ball into the water which used to lie in the hollow". (The now 18th hole is still called Rigby's. It has been the 9th/18th from the start of the Club).

And so the club began to make headway. The Committee decided to have a formal opening of the season on 25 April 1908. The course was mown, the drinks were ordered and prizes given by the Captain. Values £2.10s, £1.10s £1 for men and women to be played for during the season. A gold medal was to be provided.

11 April 1908: After an examination of the course it was resolved: 1, That the position of the fifth tee be moved back thirty **of/or** forty yards; 2, That the Ladies play matches &c over a Shortened Course consisting of Holes 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9. The following were ordered for opening day: 2 Dozen glasses, 4 corkscrews (4!), 6 glass cloths, 12 Dozen Worthington's beer, 2 Dozen "Stym", 2 Dozen October cider, 2 Gallons Black & White Whisky from Buchanans (the bill for the whiskey was £1.13s.8d).

The 1908 visitors fees were: Sons and daughters of members playing in holidays 5/-, Gentlemen visiting the district for periods of 3 months or more, £1.1s. Ladies visiting the district for periods of 3 months or more, 10/6.

Matches with Whaley Bridge were arranged (Whaley Bridge GC folded in 1959, its members were permitted to join nearby clubs without paying a joining fee). 17 June 1908: "the Secretary obtain 100 of the necessary forms for claiming reduced railway fares for Members of the Club travelling for the purposes of playing golf". (Would that Virgin Trains et al gave golfers a reduction today!). The running of the club during the second half of the year appears to have been free from outside interference (presumably a comment about Mr Hancock). However, Mr Hancock was "requested to make secure the doors of the liquor cupboard". Juniors were elected as temporary members but prohibited from using the club room, playing on competition days, match days and Saturdays. Fees: boys entry 10/6, subs 10/6; girls entry 7/6, subs 7/6.

In June 1909, one of the two cottages situated on Eaves Knoll Road became vacant, and as it was impossible to obtain any increase in the club-house accommodation at Shaw Marsh Farm, it was decided to take over the tenancy of the cottage (near the 2nd Green!) for use as a club house.

Rent was £11 a year, including the attached field, now the car park. There was no steward and each member bought a key to the front door, price 1/-. The layout of the course had to be changed so as to start from the club house. There are no details except a pencil sketch (*right – need to scan!!!*) on the back of Sidney Warburton's notes. The 2nd green is shown in front of the cottages, where the 10th tee now is.

In the spring of 1910 the second of the two cottages became available. The club obtained the tenancy and made structural alterations to make it convenient for occupation by a greenkeeper and caretaker who had been engaged. A communicating door was made between the cottages & the Ladies used the side entrance, the front door leading into the Men's room, the Ladies room being upstairs.

A Mr Dailey and his wife were appointed 23 March 1910 to start 11 April as "greenkeeper and caddie-master, hours of work 7am to 4pm, ½ hour for breakfast and 1 hour for lunch". Caddies pay: 9 holes, 4d; 18 holes, 8d plus 1d for Dailey. Lessons 1/- per hour, 2/- per round of 18 holes. Caddies were insured for £100. The committee on recommendation of Mr Dailey made the first purchase of machinery for the course – a roller. He was also asked to prepare plans to lengthen the course. May 1910: Mr Dailey was "spoken to very strongly about unsatisfactory work". He was interviewed again in July and given one month's notice on 21 September 1910, so lasted less than 6 months! On 23 March 1910, "Mr Pauley gave notice of motion that the words "Golfers always do" be deleted from the Notice in the Club House referring to the replacing of divots". They obviously always didn't! Nothing changes!

24 May 1910: Mr Hancock criticised for “shouting and generally making himself obnoxious to members on the course”. In November he was “accorded an interview”!

A great deal of reorganisation of the course was done during the summer (1910) so as to make the start from the clubhouse. New tees were built making the course longer.

October 1910: Mr Blackwell was appointed greenkeeper/caretaker, wage £1 a week. In November and December 1911, schemes for a new layout of the course were considered, and after trying various alternatives it was decided to try the new layout suggested by Mr Blackwell a month’s trial. This was adopted on 17 January 1912. (What this was is not stated).

By 1911 the number of members had increased to 105, and remained about this figure until 1914.

15 May 1912: the holes were named: 1. The Corner; 2. The Well; 3. The Quarry; 4. Hill Top; 5. The Gorse; 6. The Gully; 7. The Farm; 8. The Mound; 9. Home.

14 August 1912: the Caretaker (Blackwell) asked for a holiday! It was agreed to grant leave of absence from 25 Aug – 3 Sept and that he should provide a caretaker during that period and arrange for a man to attend to the greens etc.

In January 1913, it was decided to give Mr Hancock notice that the club would quit the course due to his refusal to keep horses off the course and also as he had not maintained the course as laid down in the agreement. In May 1913 it was decided to advertise in local papers for land for a new course. Blackwell resigned. A scale of duties for the incoming caretaker/greenkeeper was agreed, namely: 1. Course work, summer 7am to 5pm, winter 8pm to 4pm. Wed & Sat afternoons free. To serve liquid refreshment on wet days. 2. To submit weekly time sheets for himself and borrowed labour. 3. To have perquisites viz profit on the sale of balls, clubs etc, repairs, teas, dinners, caddy fees (house coal and light to be free). E. Seaman was appointed at £1 a week. It was arranged to make pot bunkers at the 9th green and that the professional have a man to help him for 1 month – paid 5 ½d an hour.

At the start of 1914, the bank balance was £3.10s.0d. E. Seaman given a rise of 1/6 per week. In October 1914 the bank must have asked for Guarantors and all members of the committee signed.

25 November 1914: Price of bottled beer, stout and lager be 3 ½ d. (Lager in 1914!). On 3 March 1915: entrance fee was suspended for one year. Soda water 2d a glass, 1d a half glass. Gin & soda 4d, ginger beer and ginger ale 3d. Around this period the back of the 3rd green and the 7th winter greens were raised. In November they gave Mr Hancock one year’s notice to terminate the tenancy of the course. (In 1916 the club relented and allowed him to graze 3 horses).

24 November 1915: The greenkeeper (Seaman) had applied to join the army. 15 December: Seaman rejected by the army. He was given 2 weeks notice due to lack of finances but he would be found work in New Mills and live in the club house provided he worked on the course in his spare time and his wife looking after the premises and making teas etc. The Home Guard could use the course if convenient.

26 January 1916: the Ladies offered to pay the LGU sub. 7 March 1916: Whisky 5d, Stout beer and lager 4d (an order of 8 galls of whisky was placed). Secretary to request Mr Hancock to reduce rent of the course. 29 March 1916: Mr Walker and his wife were appointed caretakers of the clubhouse. Refreshment charges: Bread, butter & jam 8d (eggs 2d each), cup of tea 2d. Lunch-joint, veg & sweek 2/-, joint veg & cheese 1/9. Mr Hancock proposed rent at £30 per year for 1 year after the war. The club should put 2 tons of basic slag on the course & that he be allowed to graze 3 horses. This was accepted on 20 January 1917 and Hancock told the committee that at the end of any year they could give up the course without notice.

17 October 1917: all drinks 6d.

At the beginning of 1917 the club overdraft was £68. In 1918 it was £72 and an appeal was made for donations to reduce the debt.

After the first world war the number of members increased and improvements to the course were made. The improvements being limited by the terms of the tenancy and the fact that horses and cattle were grazed on the course.

18 December 1918: a bill from Ollerset colliery paid.

1 May 1919: Mr Alston, the new tenant of the farm (no more Mr Hancock!) agreed to accept £30 rent instead of £40 until the financial position improved. £40 was paid in September.

In 1919 it was decided to elect a president of the club, the first member elected to this office being Dr J. E. Anderton. On 30 October 1919 Dr Anderton presented the Anderton Bowl. (In 1922 it was decided "that when the Anderton Bowl has been won three times by any member it shall become his property").

Mr Pollitt now owned the cottages, rent £14.7.6 per annum.

The first Golf Club dance was held on 27 November 1919, profit £10.3s.

3 February 1920: List of guarantors to let L & Y bank be withdrawn as the club was now solvent. 30 new members during the past year. 30 September 1920: Plain teas 10d, with jam 1/2d, with 1 egg 1/4d, with 2 eggs 1/10d. Secretary to take legal option to remove the Walkers from the club house. In October the Walkers were given one months notice as the Committee intended engaging a professional. Neild, a porter at the station, to take up temporary duties as groundsman.

1921 AGM raised the men's subs from £2.2s.0d to £3.3s.0d. (They stayed at that until 1946!). 28 July 1921: Walkers granted a week's holiday at the wakes.

1922 AGM records the membership as 56 Gents, 49 Ladies, 9 Hon members, 3 country members, total 117. 26 January 1922: they must have appointed a pro named Gannon for he was allowed to give lessons on the course. Mr Neild was engaged on full time employment at 1/6 ½d an hour for 48 hours with a retaining fee of 15/- a week if he was prevented from working due to adverse weather conditions. Notice to Walkers withdrawn, they be off duty Thursdays noon to 6pm, Sundays 2.30 to 6pm. Club cleaning 2/6 a quarter, Club cleaning with boots 3/6 a quarter. (A hint of the problem with the Walkers: In July it was resolved that the differences between the stock and the takings resolved). In November and December 1922, a solicitor, Mr Arthur Walker, was instructed to take action against Mr Walker (caretaker) at the next court and that Mrs Walker be told that all property belonging to the club be placed in the Ladies room by 12 noon on Saturday 9 December 1922. They resigned in January 1923. Mr & Mrs Neale to act as caretaker pro tem. Peter and Amy Hudson appointed caretakers of the house and course, joint salary £2 per week. To live at the cottage adjoining the club house rent & rates free with coal and lamp oil & to be off duty Thursdays. Mr Bintcliffe (or Bentcliffe) appointed to assist Hudson, wage 15/- a week, raised to 17/6 a week in July. 3 August 1922: the secretary purchase two bamboo poles suitable for switching worm casts off the green. 28 September: the secretary make enquiries from Mr Cochrane as to the loan of the pumping engine from Watford Bridge so that the farm green could be properly treated with worm killer. October 1922, the following rule was added: A ball may be lifted and cleaned when lying on the mown part of the putting green. (When was the rule 16-1.b – that you can mark, lift and clean a ball introduced? The 1952 Rules of Golf do not allow it).

8 May 1923: the land north of the road (containing the 6th and 7th greens) be given up and the land and the field south of the 9th green taken in its place and the course altered (this field contains the present 13th fairway and green and the 14th tee and fairway to the wall on the right and bank on the left which mark the original field boundary). Bottled Bass 7 ½d, stout 7 ½d, draught Bass 4 ½d.

26 July 1923: Mr Sayers presented panels for Honours Boards.

30 January 1924, AGM: a proposal carried "that the committee always keep in mind the possibility of purchasing the farm".

25 February 1926: Caddies to be properly registered and that they be insured. Fee 1/- for 18 holes (10d for caddie, 2d for professional). During the early part of 1926, the wall in front of the then 2nd green and at the 3rd hole were removed and the one in front of the 7th tee and the wall of the 9th be lowered. Bar takings for August were £10 less than they should have been, in October they were down by £38. Hudson, the caretaker, was interviewed! He must pay £20 before the end of the year and a list of rules and regulations regarding the serving and accounting for drinks was

drawn up. The Hudsons were discharged on 11 June 1927 for misappropriation of bar takings (given 7 days notice to leave the premises).

28 June 1927: Mr & Mrs Jones appointed Pro Groundsman Caretaker. £2 per week.

25 January 1928: Franklin Cochrane made a Life Member. (This was rescinded on 20 December 1928, but to have free use of the course).

29 March 1928: Complaint to the UDC re state of road. 2 burst tyres and 2 broken springs.

25 April 1929: That the club pay expenses of F. Jones (professional) to see the Ryder Cup at Leeds. (This was the second Ryder Cup, played at Moortown. Result GB7 US 5).

15 March 1930: Mr Platt (Rating Officer) reported that a meeting of the Council would have to issue a summons (there was a dispute over the rating assessment). It was decided to leave the matter with Mr D. Bennett – Town Clerk and member of the Club – who was to communicate with the Secretary before a summons was issued. 27 March: Secretary had received 7 days notice from the Council to pay the rates or a summons would be issued. The sum had been paid “without prejudice” and under protest.

17 April 1930: Special General Meeting to consider the provision of additional accommodation by the erection of a wooden building (this was the culmination of months of persuasion & requests from the Ladies section). The meeting was adjourned until Lord Egerton’s agent had been seen again (about buying the course – see below), and then the matter be brought up again.

29 May 1930: due to disagreement with the farmer at Shaw Farm, Mr Alston (not the end of the trouble then!), regarding discrepancies in the hire of his horse for mowing, the Committee discussed the purchase of a tractor. The price of hiring a horse was 1/9d per hour, but the committee thought that 1/6d was ample given that 16/- was the price of hire of horse and man for a day. On 7 August a subcommittee was empowered to inspect motor tractors and buy a suitable one.

In the late 1920s the owner of the land (Lord Egerton) was approached with a view to our purchasing it , but he would never agree to disturbing the present tenant of the farm. In the latter part of 1930 the farm became vacant and the club became owners of the land in early 1931. The land purchased by the club was the fields occupied by them, except the two small fields situated between Shaw Marsh Farm House and the road, together with an additional field, which now contains the fourth green and fifth tee (now 13th and 14th tee), and a small field in which the seventh (now 16th) green is situated. This necessitated the reconstruction of a considerable part of the course to its present layout.

The asking price for the land was £35 per acre, about £1550 for 44½ acres. The potato field near “Tommy’s Grave” (called that even then, now the 16th green, “Tater Field”) would be 1 acre extra. The committee negotiated from a starting figure of £1000 up to £30 per acre. The final agreed figure was £1300 not including the potato field, just over £29 per acre. The potato field was £30. The total area purchased was 45 acres, 1 rood and 18 perches for £1330.

The minutes of 1 October 1930 define: 1, quarrying rights for repair of the road (bridle path from the clubhouse to Shaw Farm) and fences. These repairs to be confined to the parishes of Mellor and Whitle. 2, New Mills UDC are liable for the repair of the road from the clubhouse to approximately the first wall. An overdraft of £400 was raised.

7 May 1930: the professional was instructed to begin the necessary preparation for the construction of a green in the potato field. The land became under the control of the club on 1 February 1932. Even then there was dispute with the farmer! Minutes record on January 25 1933 that “A claim from Mr Alston (farmer at Shaw Farm) for £84 as compensation for disturbance during the transfer of the land was settled for £50”.

As we have seen, the original course included some holes around Shaw Farm where of course the original clubroom was, and the course was modified several times over the years. Harold Froggatt (see “Caddie to Captain to Veteran”) recalls a hole played from near Tommy’s Grave to a green in the field across the bridle track. This was probably the 6th, The Gully. Evidence of this hole is still visible. Between the bottom of the zig-zag gravel path from the 16th tee and Tommy’s Grave (incidentally, who was Tommy?), there are 3 square tees that point across the bridle path (no trees along the wall in those days), and in the far side of the field opposite there is a levelled area that was probably the green. The tee for the next hole (7th, The Farm) was adjacent to that green and the green was near where the bell now is on the 17th. There was a green near the entrance to Shaw Farm, where plastic wrapped bales are now stored, that could have been the 7th green. Just for fun, they used to drive across the wooded valley into what was Cheshire, now Stockport MBC. The present clubhouse cottages were “near the 2nd green”, presumably in front of the present 10th tee ([see the sketch on page 8](#)).

The assessment of the golf links was finally agreed in 1932 as £40 gross, £38 net Rateable value for Local rates, and £40 gross, £38 net for Schedule A income tax. Rates were the same in 1933, but added are: Garage and store room £5 gross, £3 net, Clubhouse £20 gross, £12 net.

The course was redesigned by Fred Jones, the club’s professional, with advice from the Captain of Cavendish Golf Club. Ladies opening day on the new course was 26 April 1933.

New Mills UDC offered to install electricity in April 1935 for £150 plus £15 per year for 5 years. The offer was refused.

10 June 1936: New 2nd green to be made between the hut and the 9th tee.

In 1936 and 1937 the club was instructed by New Mills UDC to repair the road from Shaw Marsh to Brookbottom. Mr Swindells would "put a man on the road to make it as far as possible & reasonable to meet the wishes of the UDC".

1 August 1937: The Derbyshire Union allocated a S.S.S of 70 due to alteration in length of holes 2, 8 and 9.

Unitl 1938 the club house had none of the usual amenities. Water for general use was obtained from a well nearby (a well is marked on old maps a few yards on the right along Castle Edge Road, to the left of the present 6th tee) but drinking water had to be carried from a well at Whitle. Lighting was by paraffin lamps. In this year the local council extended their water supply along Eaves Knoll Road, and it was installed in the club house. Also at this time a wooden extension was added to the club house for use as a locker room for gentleman (cost £70).

17 August 1938: wire netting to be placed on 8th tee.

Mr Warburton records in his notes that he was balloted for membership on 1 February 1939. His handicap was 22 in June, 18 in August.

In March 1939 an assistant greenkeeper was employed for a 44 hour week, any time lost due to bad weather to be made up!

At the outbreak of World War II, an emergency committee was formed to run the club. Competitions were held in October 1939 to raise funds for the Red Cross. At the 1940 AGM, membership was 57 men, 43 ladies, 15 country and 3 honorary. In May 1940 the Secretary was instructed to negotiate with John Woolley (Shaw Farm) re grazing on the course. In August 1940, agricultural officers visited the club with a view to cultivating parts of the course. Advised to apply 10 cwt lime per acre and basic slag 5 cwt per acre and to graze sheep. In 1941 allotments were offered on the course at nominal rent. Whether there were any is not clear.

Competitions arranged to support the New Mills War Relief Committee. Evacuees were admitted to the club as country members, £1.10s for men, £1.1s for ladies. Members serving with the forces could retain their membership without payment of subscription.

The war years were problematic for beer supplies! In 1940 it is recorded that "increases in the price of beer due to the 1d duty were not well received, but there was no increase to customers". But there was an increase of 1d in January 1941 to offset loss. In May beer prices were reduced (by how much is not stated) as they could not obtain the usual grade. In July beer ration per year was 52 barrels of 9 gallons. As consumption was greatly in excess of this, they ordered 2 barrels a week until further notice (it is not clear whether they got two!). The bar price of whisky,

gin and rum was 1/-, sherry and port 9d, beer prices not stated. In May 1946 it was recorded that only one 9 gallon barrel of beer was being received each week. The Captain to decide when it is to be opened! In August 1946 it is recorded that the "problem of supplying beer to be left to the Captain". And modern Captains think they have problems!

On 14 July 1944 the following local rules were introduced (what took them so long?):
A ball in dung or hoofmark on fairway or rough may be dropped.
A ball lying in dung or hoofmark on a green may be placed.

In September 1944, the minutes record that the bank account was now in credit. Letter of thanks sent to Messrs Swindells for their help. What help is not stated, but obviously financial.

The 1945 AGM rejected a proposal to raise the gent's subscription from £3.3s to £4.4s. They were increased in 1946. 18 April 1945: price of gin 1/6d. Cairns on the 2nd, 5th and 9th fairways to be removed. These had been placed to stop German planes landing! Note that the price of gin was discussed before removal of the anti-invasion devices.

9 May 1945 (the day after VE Day): the Derbyshire War Agricultural Committee (DWAC) wrote asking what arrangement had been made for grazing on the course. The reply was that "in view of the great amount of damage already caused during the war years to the course, drains and fences for which there cannot be any adequate compensation, we do not think that any further contribution in this direction should be necessary". DWAC replied that the Food Production Campaign was not yet at an end and that consideration must be given to plough up one hole in nine. A reply was sent in July that the season was far too advanced to do any ploughing (one hopes they meant the growing season, not the golfing season), but we would endeavour to graze sheep on the course. DWAC agreed. DWAC asked the Captain and Honorary Secretary to meet them at the Roebuck Hotel on 17 January 1946 regarding grazing on the course. They could not attend due to prior engagements! In March 1946, DWAC wrote to say that they would send two representatives to check that grazing was being carried out. In May they asked when grazing would start. The reply was that "in spite of advertisements over 2 weeks offering free grazing, and inviting local farmers, no offers have been received". In June 1946 DWAC directed the club to carry out extensive fencing and graze 50 adult sheep from 1 June to 31 October. The club replied stating that they had difficulty getting sheep but Mr Woolley (really!) had been approached to graze 24 head of cattle. Mr Woolley was to be asked to make a reasonable contribution for the privilege! DWAC agreed to this in August. In March 1947 a letter was sent to DWAC suggesting that the 4th (now 13th) fairway and part of the 5th (now 14th) up to the footpath be given up to produce a hay crop. In April 1948 DWAC instructed that we have dairy cattle on the course, June and July only. That is the last recorded communication with DWAC, one suspects much to the relief of the club!

GRAPH SHOWING VISITOR NUMBERS 1927-1980 INSERTED HERE (p16 of booklet)

One H. Froggatt visited on 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 & 19 January 1946, no green fee because he was on leave from the Merchant Navy – and also later in the year, fee 3/6. A keen golfer even then, he still plays twice a week.

10 October 1945: a Mr Grant Sidebottom was allowed to play the course free of cost for the purpose of suggesting improvements. What they were, if any, is not recorded.

7 November 1945: Mr F. W. Broadhurst be asked to provide a board on which to record the names of the winners of the V.E. Competition & the Victory Trophy together with the names of the donors of these prizes. The Board hangs in the Club House to this day, though where the Trophy is is unknown.

In May 1946 it was agreed to buy ARP shelters for shelters on the course. These were placed behind the 2nd (11th) green, behind the winter green of the 6th (15th) and on the right of the 8th (17th) fairway. They remained, rusting until the 1970s, when they were removed and buried in the quarry. 30 October 1946: it was agreed that “spirits be sold on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday only, limit 2 per session”.

25 June 1947: The following were balloted for as members of the Club and duly elected. Miss B. Gadd, Rowena, Hague Bar, NM; Miss Kathleen Edwards, Townscliffe Ave, Mellor; Mr A.C. Elliott, “Kuwalaya”, Strines; Miss N. Collins, 75 Mellor Rd, New Mills. **Miss N. Collins is still a member! – see page 18.**

30 July 1947: an order was placed for a new Fordson tractor “Land Utility model with starting equipment”. £296 + £16.26. 26 November 1947: bar prices: Tetley’s draught 1/3 pint; bottle 1/11; Robinson’s LDA 11d pint; Worthington 1/3; MacEwans Export 1/2; MacEwans Pale Ale 1/-; whisky 1/9; gin 1/9; rum 2/-; port 1/9; sherry 1/10.

After the second world war the club offered to purchase the club house, but the owner would not sell. In the spring of 1949, when the owner died, the property, including the field adjoining the premises, was offered for sale and was purchased by the club. (Cost £475). The year 1949 was a most important year in the history of the club, as by that year the club had completed the purchase of all the land and property it occupied.

24 April 1949: That we accept with thanks Mr H. and Mr C.W Swindells offer to place an amount of money in Martins Bank to cover any overdraft entailed in the purchase of the said premises.

During the next few years considerable repairs and improvements were made to the property to add to the comfort and convenience of the members, and also the greenkeeper and caretaker. In 1952 the electricity supply was extended to the area and was installed in the club house (installed by J. Higginbottom & Sons, cost £113.2s.10d; supply cost £40 per annum for 5 years). In 1955 a car park was made in the field adjoining the club house.

15 and 16 September 1956: the course was closed for tree planting (1000 trees given by Mr Basil Dent).

The New Mills Golf Club, which was formally constituted at the general meeting held in April 1907, and had 38 gentlemen, and 19 lady members in its first year, has now (1957) a membership of 93 gentlemen, 55 lady, 13 social (non-playing), seven country, and seven junior members.

A Jubilee Dinner was held at the Ram's Head, Disley on June 8th 1957 (photograph on page 21). The Guest of Honour was Mr W. Rigby, only surviving founder member and first treasurer who offered a cup to be played for each year (The Rigby Trophy). The accounts book lists the following expenditure for the Jubilee Dinner: Ram's Head Hotel, £33.2s.6d; Len Martell, entertainer, £7.7s; A. Allen, singer, £3.3s; J. Miller photograph £1.

The Captain in 1957, Mr G.K. Medlock, O.B.E., is Guest of Honour at the Centenary Dinner in 2007.

4 pages of photographs (pages 18 – 21).

26 November 1906
Mr Samuel Hancock to Mr Charles Hudson and Others
License to use Land for playing Golf.

Memorandum of Agreement made this twenty-sixth day of November One thousand nine hundred and six BETWEEN SAMUEL HANCOCK of Shaw Farm, Shaw Marsh, New Mills in the County of Derby, Farmer, (hereinafter call "the Licensor") of the one part and CHARLES HUDSON, JOHN ALLEN NICHOLS and TOM PAULEY all of New Mills aforesaid (on behalf of themselves and all other persons who shall during the continuance of the License be Members for the time being of the New Mills Golf Club, all of whom are hereinafter included in the term "Licensees") of the other part WITNESSETH that the Licensor hereby gives his leave, license and permission to the Licensees and the friends and guests of the Licensees to use the land of which he is the tenant at Shaw Marsh and known as Shaw Farm, New Mills aforesaid, for the purpose of playing thereon the game of golf upon the following conditions:-

1. THE Licensees are to be at liberty to at once lay out a Nine Hole Golf Course upon the said land, and if the Licensees shall in their discretion determine to immediately proceed with and lay out an Eighteen Hole Course, then they are to be at liberty to do so or they may proceed to lay out and enlarge such Nine Hole Course into an Eighteen Hole Course by making such further holes as and when they may think proper.
2. THIS License shall not give to the Licensees or to the said Club or any friends or guests right to kill or take any game or rabbits thereon and such License shall not in any way interfere with the full right of the Licensor to use the land and to have

thereon at all times as many horses, cattle and sheep as he thinks fit and to shoot or otherwise destroy or take all game or rabbits thereon.

3. THE Licensees are to pay to the Licensor for the first year of this permission or grant the sum of Ten pounds; for the second year the sum of Fifteen pounds; for the third year the sum of Fifteen pounds and for the fourth and subsequent years of this permission or grant the sum of Twenty pounds for a Nine Hole Course, such payments to be made half-yearly on the day of and the day of , the first half yearly payment to be made at the expiration of seven months from the completion of the last Green of a Nine Hole Course.
4. IF the Licensees shall proceed to enlarge such Nine Hole Course into an Eighteen Hole Course then the Licensees shall pay to the Licensor an increased rent at a rate thereafter to be agreed upon in respect of such extra Nine Holes. PROVIDED ALWAYS that such increased rent shall not exceed Fifteen pounds per annum, making together with the rent to be paid in the fourth and subsequent years of this License a maximum rent of Thirty five pounds per year, and such increased rent shall be paid at the times and in the manner provided by Clause 3 hereof.
5. THE Licensees are to be at liberty to rail or fence off the Greens in such a manner as to prevent the Licensor's horses and cattle from grazing thereon.
6. THE Licensees shall indemnify the Licensor against all loss damage or expense caused though or by reason of any of his horses or cattle being struck with a Golf Ball or Balls.
7. THE Licensees are not nor is any Member of the Club to use or authorise any other person or persons to use the land or any part thereof for any purpose other than that of playing Golf nor to shoot or otherwise destroy or take any game or rabbits.
8. THE Licensees are not nor is any Member of the Club to disturb or otherwise injure or allow to be disturbed or otherwise injured the land or any part thereof as pasture land to any greater extent than may be necessary for using the same for playing Golf.
9. BEFORE the determination of the License the Licensee shall make good and to the satisfaction of the Licensor, all damage caused to the land or any part thereof by the construction of any mounds or bunkers.
10. THIS License is to remain in force for so long as the Licensor remains tenant of the said Shaw Farm. PROVIDED ALWAYS that it may be determined by the Licensor upon the happening of any one of the under-mentioned events, by the Licensor giving three calendar months notice in writing to the Licensees, or to any Official of the said Club, or fixing notice in writing to that effect on the principal door of the Farmhouse upon the land. The event upon the happening of which the licensor may determine this agreement are:

(a) If any sum hereinbefore made payable is wholly or in part in arrear for a space of 3 calendar months.

(b) If the Licensor shall receive from his Landlord notice to quit or his tenancy of the land shall otherwise determine, or

(c) If and whenever there shall be a breach of any condition on which the License is given and which ought to be performed and observed by the Licensees.

11. THE Licensor will allow the Licensees or any friend or guest of a Member of the Club the free use of a room over the Wash-house of the Farmhouse situate at Shaw Marsh and occupied by him, and will permit the Licensees to put in Lockers or Boxes for the purpose of storing the Clubs and other Golf materials. PROVIDED ALWAYS that if the Licensees shall at any time hereafter during the continuance of this License erect a Club House upon any portion of the said Shaw Farm, than as the said Club House shall be completed and fit for use and occupation, the Licensor shall be at liberty to determine the tenancy of the aforesaid room at any time upon giving the Licensees three calendar months notice of his intention to do so.
12. THE Licensor will upon any day except Sundays, find and provide tea and other light refreshments for any member of the Club at a sum to be subsequently agreed upon.
13. THE Licensor hereby agrees that the Licensees may as and when they think proper roll and mow a space or course of forty yard wide between the Greens and further that he the Licensor will do any labour the Licensees may from time to time require in keeping the Golf course and Greens in order, at a remuneration to be mutually agreed upon. PROVIDED ALWAYS that the Licensees shall be at liberty as and when they think fit to do so, to employ any other person or persons to roll mow and keep the said course and Greens in good order.
14. THE Licensor will not, during the continuance of this License, plough or otherwise break up any of the land over which the Golf course is laid nor will he use the same as Meadow land or allow the grass to grow thereon in order that it may be cut for hay, but will permit the same to remain as pasture land only.
15. SUBJECT as hereinafter in this clause is mentioned the Licensor shall during the continuance of this License be entitled to be a free Member of the said Club and as such he shall be entitled to all the benefits of Membership without paying any entrance fee or yearly subscription thereto but he shall nevertheless in all other respects comply with and be subject to all the bye-laws or other rules or regulations for the time being in force for the management or conduct of the Club.

16. NEITHER the said Charles Hudson, John Allen Nichols, Tom Pauley nor any other individual member of the said Golf Club who shall be a Licensee within the meaning of this Agreement shall be personally responsible to the licensor for the payment of the rent or other sums hereby contracted to be paid nor for the performance and observation of the conditions hereby imposed and on the part of the Licensees as a Club or Corporation to be performed and observed.

AS WITNESS the hands of the parties the day and year first before written.

SIGNED by the said Samuel Hancock in the presence of Lucy Woolrick, (unclear), New Mills.

SIGNED by the said Charles Hudson, John Allen Nichols and Tom Pauley in the presence of Thomas Slater, Clerk with Mr A Walker, Solicitor, New Mills

HISTORY 1957 – 2007

There were few major changes to the course itself between 1957 and 2001. Most holes (all except what is now the 10th), were lengthened with new tees further back. The Gents card ([see illustration](#)) shows a course of length 2794 yards in the 1950s, compared with 2902 yards of the back nine in 2006. The Ladies card ([see illustration](#)) has changed little, except for what is now the 16th which was 158 yards and is now 195 yards (where was the tee?). Perhaps the most obvious but gradual change over the years was due to the growth of the trees planted in 1956 as part of the 50 jubilee and later. Trees were planted in the area to the left of the 11th fairway in about 1990, and in other places at other times. Photographs taken in the 1960s show a course almost entirely devoid of mature trees.

1958 AGM: H. Hibbert and Fred Jones (Professional) made Life Members. In 1958 the clubhouse was extended providing a “locker room, caddy car hut and equipment shed”, £1100 for buildings, £200 for lighting etc. Formally opened 21 June 1959. 26 August 1959: agreed to “proceed with erection of a bar in middle room”. Total cost £1332.7s.9d less 10% = £1208.2s.7d. Prior to that, barrels were placed on wooden benches. Payment was completed by 14 September 1960.

1961: Limit on membership, Gents 120, Ladies 70. 8 June 1961: a tractor (presumably the Fordson) was sold for £50, and a Jeep bought for £100 ([see comments and photographs by Harold Froggatt!](#)).

April 1962: Mr & Mrs Fred Jones retired (after 35 years!).

27 June 1963: the wages of the greenkeeper (Nuttall) increased by 3d per hour to 4/6 per hour.

2 June 1964: Decided to purchase a new tractor, cost not to exceed £800.

4 April 1965: Greenkeeper (Nuttall) wages increased to 5/- per hour. Steward (Clarke) wage increase by 10/6 per week.

10 August 1965: Proposal for a winter league.

In March 1966 a committee was “formed to develop club facilities, inside loo and toilet facilities, central heating, increased dining and social facilities, increased locker accommodation, re-housing machinery and equipment, re-housing caddie cars, ground level locker accommodation for the ladies etc”. Prior to this, the Ladies’ room was upstairs in the cottages.

10 May 1966: greenkeeper’s wages increased to 5/6 per hour.

23 August 1966: oil fired central heating to be installed, cost approx £763, payment over 10 years. (The original boiler was still there in 2006).

14 March 1967: tenders invited for new toilet block. Accepted the tender from J.W. Swindells for £1298 in June 1967. In December 1969 plans for further extensions were approved. Contract placed on 9 June 1970 with C.N. Riddick, cost £3589.13s.9d. In November 1970 there was a proposal to build a gents locker room.

11 April 1972: Phase 3 (bar alterations) to be carried out. 12 September 1972, the club agrees to pay £50 to have the maximum electricity demand upgraded from 25 to 50 kW. Tenders received for Phase 3 of club extension and one from Froggatt Bros for £3261 was accepted. A pro’s shop be erected within the confines of caddy car room. 12 December 1972: It was decided to erect a stone shelter near the 6th (now 15th) green in memory of F. Moseley (who had died in February).

9 January 1973: proposed that “members reaching occupational retirement age be allowed to continue membership privileges for a reduced fee which would be 50% of the current annual subscription”. On 9 October 1973 the Captain reported completion of the clubhouse extensions. Decoration was complete by 13 November.

13 January 1976: Nick Ryan was appointed club professional, salary £250 per annum. Nick is now the professional at Ringway Golf Club. On 13 July 1976 the pro’s salary was increased to £280. The (un-named) greenkeeper’s salary was £2812 per annum, plus sick benefits and pension scheme, 3 weeks holiday. Ladies proposed concessionary subs of 50% for members over 65 and with 10 years membership for all members. Secretary and Treasurer granted free membership for term of office.

9 August 1977: Greens committee proposed enlarging 1st, 2nd, 4th and 8th tee. Consideration to be given.

In 1978 the pro’s fee was increased to £750, £500 to be shown as fees, £250 to be included in house wages for bar duties on steward’s day off. Notices were put on footpaths on 5th and 8th (now 14th & 17th) warning walkers of golf balls. In July quotes were received for a wood block floor (£310 + VAT), and surrounding carpet (£660 incl VAT). 14 November 1978: R. Dorsett appointed steward. 9 December: the gent’s OAP subs were raised to ⅔ of full fee. Lime purchased for fairways (5 tons).

At the 1979 AGM the following were reported or approved. Members, 185 male, 3 male life, 53 ladies, 4 lady life, 30 juniors, 56 social. Subs male £60, OAP £40, lady £40, OAP £17.50, juniors £10, social £2. Lockers £2. Entrance fees, male £60, lady £40, junior £10.

(Sidney Warburton's notes end here)

Much maintenance and improvement work, some of it routine, was carried out on the course over the years, improved drainage, tree planting and work to improve the greens. Water was laid to the greens and tees in early 1980s. Obviously much of this was carried out by our team of greenkeepers, but some also by volunteer club members. A separate, metal greens shed was built in 1995. The dining and bar areas of the clubhouse itself were redesigned and re-furbished in 1988 and remained unchanged until 2006.

In 1986, the limit on Gentlemen members was raised from 190 to 200.

In the 1990s the club had a particularly strong junior section with some outstanding players who won several individual and team trophies. Inter-club trophies were also picked up by some Gentlemen teams (see photos, pages 37 & 38).

The most significant change in the last 50 years was the acquisition of extra land and construction of the new 9 holes (now the front 9 of the 18 hole course). There were many fundraising initiatives for this development, though much of the cost was financed by a commercial loan from Lloyds TSB Bank. Applications for Lottery funding were rejected! However, the club rules were revised making Ladies and 5-day members full voting members of the club, a step long overdue. Interestingly, the AGM, held on 17 February 1910 records the presence of "36 men and women members and proceeded to elect Dr Anderton as Captain". So when did Lady members cease to be full members?

The necessary land was purchased for £240,000. The new 9 holes were designed by David Williams Golf Design of Colwyn Bay. Course construction was by Abbotts, commenced in April 2000, completed in September 2000 and cost £280,000.

The new holes were first played in April 2002. The delay was due to a dispute over VAT, but did give the new holes time to mature and what was another year when we had waited 95?

The formal opening was on June 9th by Tom Levitt MP and the Mayor of High Peak, Lance Dowson. It poured with rain all day! There was a demonstration (indoors) by Ricky Adams, an ex-junior member, of various golf tricks. He would have demonstrated long drives were it not for the weather. The new 9 holes have matured well and successive greens committees, greens chairmen and particularly the greens staff and head greenkeeper, Nigel Ardern, are to be congratulated and thanked. It should be noted that in 2007, one of our greenkeepers, Michael Friel, will have been at the club for 25 years. Thanks to Mike. The other greens staff are

Chris Neff and James Land. Yet more tree-planting, largely by volunteer members, has taken place on the new nine, and on the old nine.

We now have a course to be proud of and it is a good test of golf. The course is in excellent condition, particularly considering its location. Greens staff have to work in all weather conditions, and what weather gets thrown at them, and players at the New Mills Golf Club! After all the course is on the western foothills of the Pennines and open to the west. The club house is 841 feet above sea level, the 8th tee over 900 feet.

The course record is held by Chris Wood with a gross 62, net 63 (see marked score card on page 35).

One can do no better than to repeat the words of the Ashton under Lyne Reporter of June 1907: New Mills is “**a good course in the midst of a healthy and beautiful district**”.

****The next bit doesn't add up but I've checked what is printed in the booklet – I GET IT TO 567!!****

2006 membership was 577: 336 Gentlemen (15 Life or Honorary), 50 Ladies (6 Life or Honorary), 45 Social, 50 5-day, 82 Junior, 2 Intermediate and 2 Staff members.

The clubhouse and car park have been in need of refurbishment for many years and, after some diversions and much hard and voluntary work by many members of the club, work commenced in September 2006. Much of the single-storey extension to the clubhouse is being refurbished externally and internally to provide a larger social area and Gents locker room. A separate linked new block is being built for the Ladies locker room, a larger professional's shop and office space for the club, something long overdue. It is being funded largely by a long-term loan from Lloyds TSB Bank, though contributions have come from fund raising by members. All who have contributed in any way, however small, are to be thanked and congratulated.

Caddie to Captain to Veteran

by Harold Froggatt

August 1st 1996

(Reproduced with his kind permission)

I was born in Back Chapel Street on March 20th 1926. My father worked at Mellor Bleach and Dyeing Company in Mill Brow, Mellor. He worked a full six-day week – as most workers did in those days – and he walked there and back each day. My mother was the eldest of five children and had a very hard life as a girl, bringing up and caring for her three brothers and one sister as her mother was not the most energetic of people!

When I was about eight years old we moved from Mellor Road to High Lea where we lived in one of my grandfather's houses on Knoll Street. On moving to the High Lea

area I found new friends, and in particular I met a group of boys: - Frank Barber, Jim Coulthard, Roy Platt and Ronnie Arnfield, amongst others. These boys had one thing in common – they were all caddies at the New Mills Golf Club.

I joined them when I was about ten years old and got my first caddie job with Mr Lionel Alexander who was the manager of Daltons Glass and Emery Works in Newtown. (This is now Mini Gears). The firm made emery and sand paper and would help us lads by paying us one half penny for each empty jam jar we took to the works. This gave us a good income.

I caddied for Lionel Alexander for about three years on a regular basis. The pay was one shilling and four pence per 18 holes, less three pence for Mr Jones (the Pro's fee) and also less insurance, so we came away with ten pennies. Lionel had a pig skin bag with all wood-shafted clubs. These were not a full set but consisted of a brassie (number 2 wood), a spoon (number 3 wood), a mashie (number 5 iron), a mashie niblick (number 7 iron) and two lead headed putters. He was not a good player, certainly not as good as his brother Ernest (Ernie Alex to us), who made his living selling balm (yeast as we call it now) to all the local bakeries, of which there were many.

I also used to go free-lance caddying and had jobs with many of the following who were members of the club in the thirties.

- Jim Bradbury – a local tobacconist.
- Arthur Heap – from Church Road.
- Bill Broadhurst – a one-handed golfer who was an antique dealer with a business in Market Street (on premises later occupied by the Gas Board and more recently by a saddle shop, now a computer shop).
- Stanley Hyde, Eric Kitchen and Ted Burdett – all in textiles in Manchester.
- Doctor O’Ryan – who had his surgery in the garden of his house at the bottom of Longlands Road. He was a very good golfer with a handicap in single figures and had pride of place in the Club with a full set of steel shafts.
- Doctor Tongue – my best paying employer who had a back problem and paid me one shilling and ten pence for the extra work of teeing up his ball (using sand contained in a wooden box on every tee) and recovering it from the hole.
- The Swindells Family – Hubert and Charles, who were contractors in the building and heavy haulage industries.
- Basil Dent – secretary to the Swindells, a nice chap who donated hundreds of the trees now standing on the course. At that time there were only six trees, one down the second fairway, two up the fifth and two down the gorse, plus an old one (which is still there) near the ninth (now 18th) tee.
- Henry Brownhill – an optician and the best putter in the club.
- Mr Bates – who had a music shop in Union Road.
- Mr Appleton – the dentist.
- Roland Atkinson – paper merchant.
- Ross Fenton – a tailor, of Union Road.
- Mr Bowden – a teacher, of Longlands Road who was at one time Treasurer of the club.

- Harold Hibbert – also Treasurer.
- Fred Brocklehurst – the manager of the District Bank, then on High Street.
- Reg Lowe – a very good golfer.
- Fred Moseley – another good golfer with about a 2 handicap and a Club Secretary (he could get blood out of a stone).
- Ken Medlock – of the CWS.
- Bill Leeming – the butcher and many others including Alf Clapham, Sidney Warburton (a Life Member who still plays today), Bob Derry and Reg Wellbury.

As can be seen from the list, all the members at that time were business people or professionals and many of them became Captain, President or other official.

We also had a very good Ladies' Section. Some of our best lady players were: Jean Alexander, Mary Storer (now a Life Member), Ada Jackson, Enid Flemming, Mrs O'Ryan, Mrs Brownhill, Mrs H and Mrs C Swindells, Mrs F Brocklehurst, Mrs Atkinson and Mrs Lockwood.

It puzzles me that the game did not seem to attract the girls even though we had a few juniors in the men's section. Even today it is seldom that we attract young ladies to golf, but in the early days it was a very rare event. The ladies always gave us such good support for our Derbyshire Foursome matches and travelled to the other end of the country with us. Nellie Moseley could always be relied on to keep us well informed about how the others on our side were doing.

In those days money was always tight and Fred Moseley always greeted you at the clubhouse door with a book of raffle tickets and the question "How Many?" He had pressurised the more affluent members into giving golf balls as prizes. Fred was Mr Golf. He was always open to offers of a pint (the beer was served out of barrels with a jug) and if he could not get a lift down to High Lea he would walk down late at night tapping his stick on the kerb. I even had a local gent in High Lea ask if Fred's eyes were failing! He never knew the real reason for the kerb tapping! Fred's eyes were excellent and many times he would forecast how much of a reduction you were going to have in your handicap!

The caddies came to the golf club at about 8am and at 1pm for the afternoon session. We assembled in the garage which housed the tractor and mowers. This was where the big water tank is now and the motor which pulled the gang mowers was an old Model T Ford with the back cut off and tow-bar fitted. There was also a trailer which carried the hand mower, used to cut the greens. Later on we got a modern Ransomes mower which was powered by an air cooled engine. The greenkeeper could walk beside this whilst going from green to green. Also in the garage were scythes of various sizes to cut the rough. The greensman was also the professional and the steward. In fact, Fred Jones, the "Pro" did every job in the club and out of it too.

The caddies' job on arrival in the morning was to go to the back door and take galvanised buckets to the well and fill them up with water for drinking and also for

washing the clubhouse as there was no water on tap. The caddies also had to bring in many buckets of coal to fuel the one fire which was in the Gent's Room (now the Ladies' Room). This had a very good fireplace and the chimney had such a pull that a bucket of coal was soon gone. The coal went even quicker because Fred Moseley kept poking the fire and standing in front of it!

The back kitchen of the Jones' apartment housed all the clubs and full barrels of ale and was also the club repair room as well as the kitchen. Mrs Jones' front room had a big sideboard which housed new balls, tee pegs, etc. and she had a big black leaded grate with an oven, all coal fired, on which she made all kinds of cakes (including wonderful flapjack) and teas to order. So you can see the only private place in that club house was the bedroom. Poor Fred Jones was on his feet all day and ran the bar at night and if ever a man deserved praise it was him (plus his wife of course).

Cars – which were few – were parked along the wall side. Alf Chapman and Ted Burditt had motor bikes. Alf's being a lovely BSA 250 for which I had a yearning. At that time Hubert Swindells had one of the first Jaguars and Basil Dent, having had a drive in it, said he felt ill for a few days as a result of the high speed. Roland Atkinson caused a stir with his air-cooled twin Jowett.

Later, perhaps, 1940, Fred got an assistant, Mr Albert Oldfield. At that time a few sand bunkers were made near the 9th and 4th greens, whereas before that all were grass bunkers. Some of these can still be seen on the left hand side of the second fairway and on the left and right hand sides of the seventh fairway.

The quarry had a stone wall all the way round it and it had a rough interior too with lots of deep ruts where the horse drawn carts had taken stone out. It was near that part of the course that we caddies had our practice ground. We used to play gold on "Woolies Field" – that was where the old course was. Over on the left from the eighth fairway there were two holes and tees. We used to drive from the old tees near "Tommy's Grave" over to the green by the side of "Austin's Glen". After holing out we drove over the glen to the green on the other side, a very long drive with lots of trouble.

It was about this time, 1940 that I gave up being a caddie. I was employed in the Mill of W S Lowe and Co, firstly as a weaver, then as a twister (special job joining cotton threads together), then as a drawerin (setting up the loom with a new towel design).

At this time I was also a member of the New Mills Squadron ATC and, under the wing of a Mr Ashworth, the local Rating Officer and an ex WWI telegraphist, I learned the Morse Code. Happy Days! We went to RAF Fairfields to camp and did a lot of flying. After work every night I attended the Marconi Radio College on Mosely Street, Manchester and early in 1943 I passed the exam and joined my first ship in Liverpool. I was away at sea until the end of the war thus making a break in my connection with the New Mills Golf Club.

However, when I came back on leave in war time, I found that a wall with gaps had been built across the fifth fairway, almost in line with the wall behind the third green. This was in order to prevent any enemy planes landing on the course.

When the war was over I came home in late 1946, after a ten month trip, and returned to my former employer. Our last port of call had been Argentina and while we were there I had played golf for a whole week with some Scottish people who lived there. This brought back many memories.

In 1951, I rejoined the golf club, this time as a player. By this time the wall across the fifth had been dismantled. I enjoyed lots of games on the course meeting up with many of my former caddie friends who were, by now, also playing members. Allowing the "working man" to play had required a complete change of attitude by the Committee.

The fee was three guineas and some of my fellow caddies now playing were; Dennis Higginbottom, Roy Platt, Jim Coulthard, Ellis Oldfield, Fred Pegley and many others, so we felt very much at home and some of us even got down to single figure handicaps. Lots of Sunday games were played and I recall very keenly fought matches with the Big Guns – John Holmes (the garage owner), Stanley Hadfield (the optician), Bill Clapham (the builder), Bert Bainbridge (pipe fitter), Dennis Higginbottom, Bert Swindells and a few more. There was always a penny on the longest drive up the fifth fairway.

In 1961 I was appointed Captain. It was a great honour and a wonderful year for me.

Some of us played for New Mills Golf Club in the Derbyshire Foursomes and had great days out at away games. We got into the final only to be beaten by the big quarry men from the Buxton Artisan Club. What a fight that was, with the Artisans supported by dozens of boy spotters who all came by coach! I still have a lovely silver ashtray marked "DUGC Cartwright Cup 1963 – Runners Up".

It was after the Cartwright cup match that a sad incident occurred. We were always well supported by members of New Mills Golf Club and Fred Brocklehurst had taken Basil Dent and Wilfred Haslam by car. On the way home the car was involved in a collision and Wilfred died as a result. We were all waiting at the club for their return and were shocked to be told the sad news.

In those days we used to have working parties on the course to plant trees, clear drains etc. and we also used to service the tractor and mowing machines. One of our big headaches was a bad buy from day one, a Willies Jeep, ex US army. We had many problems with it and it finally ended up in the scrap yard.

In 1966 came a change. I left my job at WS Lowe and joined the Post Office as a postman. I found that walking many miles during the day – plus some awkward shifts – plus the fact that I had bought a rundown bungalow which I wanted to

renovate – meant that I could not find the time or the strength to play golf. So I made a difficult choice, and resigned from the golf club. It was a sad day for me.

Who would believe it? In 1971 I was back with the club as a greenkeeper. The Post Office had a Nationwide strike lasting seven weeks and at the same time the greenkeeper left the club in a hurry. I was approached about this work by Eric Kitchen and a workmate of mine George Jackson. I accepted the post and carried on for a long time. George was on one shift when I was on the other so it worked well for both parties. Mr Lewis was the Pro and we all got on very well. A little ‘niggle’ crept in at first when a Committee member suggested that the golf clubs were financing the Post Office strike!

I retired after twenty five years as a postman in March 1991 and rejoined the golf club after a break of 25 years. I am now having some of the most enjoyable days of my life. I feel sad sometime to think of some of my old friends who died early. Dennis Higginbottom and Stanley Hadfield both died before the official retirement age. I think I am lucky to belong to the club again and to have such happy memories of times gone by and friends I made through golf.

I am now a member of the Veterans Section, or perhaps I should say Seniors, and I enjoy a wonderful programme of games with other clubs. I have some of the very best friends one could have in my “dotage years” (as one of my friends calls this age) and we get a good many laughs on the course.

I suppose the sad part of it all is that our time is limited, but when the Master Golfer calls me onto the first tee up there it will be nice to chat with old friends about what we did wrong and why! I have made arrangements to scatter my ashes in a certain part of the course so I hope that some of the older members will take care where they relieve themselves! I shall be watching – and hoping that the wind is in the right direction.

Harold Froggatt

NEW MILLS GOLF CLUB

List of caretakers/greenkeepers/professional/club stewards & stewardesses

1910-10	Mr Dailey and his wife appointed 23 March 1910 to start 11 April as “greenkeeper and caddie-master”. He was given one month’s notice on 21 September 1910. He lasted 6 months!
1910-13	Mr Blackwell appointed 19 October 1910. Wage 1/week. Resigned 7 October 1913.
1913-15	Mr Seaman appointed 24 October 1913. Wage £1/week. Given

rise of 1/6d a week in May 1914. In 1915 he applied to join the army but was rejected. He was promptly give 2 weeks notice due to lack of finances but was allowed to stay in the cottage and do work on the course and his wife looking after the premises and making teas etc.

1916-23 Mr & Mrs Walker appointed 29 March 1916 as caretakers of the clubhouse. According to the records, there were several legal attempts to remove the Walkers from the club, quite why is not clear.

1923-27 Mr & Mrs Hudson appointed 22 February 1923. Joint wage £2/week. Discharged 11 June 1927 for misappropriating bar takings.

1927-62 Mr & Mrs Fred Jones appointed 28 June 1927 as professional, groundsman and caretaker. £2/week. Retired 1962. (He first applied on 24 November 1921). A remarkable tenure of 35 years. The 11th hole is named in his honour. On 30 April 1952, minutes report that members be asked to contribute towards a gift marking their 25 years service. Presentation took place June 1st. The golf clubs stamped with his name were sold, not made, by him.

PICTURE ON PAGE 49 SHOW GOLF CLUBS MENTIONED ABOVE

1962-64 Jim Swann appointed steward, resigned 7 July 1964

1964-67 Mr R Clarke appointed steward in September 1964. In October 1965 dissatisfaction about him was expressed and he refused to sign a service agreement. He was given notice of termination on 1 January 1966 but offered re-employment subject to service agreement. Given notice to quit on 28 February 1967.

1967-68 Mr & Mrs Mellor appointed steward and stewardess, 14 March 1967. Left 30 January 1968.

1969-72 Mr & Mrs Lewis pro/steward and stewardess, 29 January 1969. Resigned 18 June 1972 due to ill health.

1972-73 Mr & Mrs Claridge, pro/steward and stewardess, 11 July, resigned 30 March 1973. A meeting of members was called to inform members of the reasons for their resignation. The Captain reported that the Steward had been asked:

1. To pay more attention to the weekly cleaning of the Gentlemen's toilets.
2. To clean out the beer pipes regularly every week.
3. To restrain his dog from fouling the club rooms and to keep it off the course as much as possible.
4. To ensure that the bar was opened at the correct time. The steward then suddenly announced that he was not prepared to listen to any more criticisms, tendering his resignation and left the meeting.

1973-75 Mr & Mrs Mellor, 9 October 1973.

1975-76 Mr K Millus appointed 11 November 1975, resigned 3 February 1976.

1976-78	Mr Hartley appointed 9 March, resigned 16 October 1978.
1978-95	Reg & Margaret Dorsett appointed 14 November 1978, retired 1995. Reg went on to be Captain and President of the club and is now an Honorary Member.
1995-2001	David & Jean Windebank. Resigned 2001.
2001-present	Peter & Pat Chadwick.

**The Ashton under Lyne Reporter 15 June 1907
New Mills Golf Club – OPENING OF THE LINKS**

About 18 months ago a movement was set on foot for the establishment of a golf club in New Mills. It was taken up enthusiastically by Mr J.A. Nichols and others interested in the popular game, who to enjoy the pastime had to go to links outside the town. A splendid course of nine holes was secured at Shaw Marsh on the breezy heights between New Mills and Mellor. More picturesque or healthy surrounding is scarcely possible to imagine. There is a magnificent stretch of landscape, and along the course one of the finest views of Kinder Scout as can be had anywhere. Those who are not enthusiastic in the game, and love nature more than clubs and balls, may easily forget there's such a game as golf in such a paradise of natural beauty.

The club has some forty members, with Mr J.A. Nichols as president and captain, Mr W. Rigby, treasurer, and Mr T. Morgan Bevan as secretary. The links were opened by the captain on Saturday afternoon. The weather, for once in a way, was gloriously fine, and the links and the surroundings were seen at their best. There was a fairly large company present, including the officials mentioned, Mr and Mrs T. Pauley, Mr W. Lancaster (Romiley), Mr and Mrs Arthur Walker, Mr A.W. Lowe, Mr Hallowell, Mr Baird (deputy captain, Marple Golf Club), Dr. Anderton, Mr J.A. Reekie (Hayfield), Mr W. Bowden (Hayfield).

Mr J.A. Nichols said he had great pleasure in making the first drive from the New Mills golf links. He could not claim that honour as an expert golfer, but he certainly could in regard to the interest which he took in that game and the establishment of the club. He realised some two years ago that if he wanted to become an expert player there would have to have a course nearer home than the one in which he was accustomed to playing. He believed that he was one of the first to initiate that club. They commenced some eighteen months ago. They had been hard at work ever since, and today they saw the realisation of their hopes – (Applause).

Mr Nichols then made the first stroke, and subsequently played a game with Mr Lancaster of Romiley. Other players followed, and with fine weather they had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. Subsequently a foursome was played by Messrs. J. Taylor and Sidebottom, of the Disley club, and Mr Baird (Marple) and Mr J.A. Reekie (Hayfield).

A dinner was held in the evening in the Club Room at Shaw Marsh Farm. A goodly number sat down to a capital repast, and the subsequent proceedings were presided over by Mr J.A. Nichols. The Royal toast was proposed by the chairman, and that of the New Mills Golf Club by Mr J.A. Reekie, supported by Mr J.R. Bowen. The health of the visitors was proposed by Mr Anderton, supported by Mr Rigby, and responded to by Mr W. Lancaster of Romiley. The captain and officers were toasted on the call of Mr J.S. Pollitt, and Mr W.C. Sheard.

Mr Nichols responded on behalf of himself and the club, and in doing so reviewed the history of the club. He referred to the great assistance he had received from the secretary and committee and especially to the services of the Solicitors which had been enlisted in making arrangements with the landlord and kindred work. He thought they had a good course in the midst of a healthy and beautiful district. When it was complete and the greens in better condition, it might attract a good many members from the immediate district. He thought the club had a bright future before it. Mr Rigby and Mr Bevan also responded.

The toast list ended with that of the host and hostess, Mr & Mrs Hancock. A very pretty and witty menu card, with humorous "golfy" pictures, also serves as a memento of the occasion. It was the work of Mr W. Barrett, of Strines.

The course, we may add, was made by Mr Hambleton, the professional of the Romiley Club, under supervision in the earlier stages of Mr T. Pauley, and later under the supervision of Mr T. Morgan Bevan, the indefatigable secretary.