

GOLF COURSES AS DESIGNED LANDSCAPES OF HISTORIC INTEREST

A report by



E I G C A
EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF
GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTS

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from the fully illustrated report submitted by EIGCA

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Foreword

English Heritage commissioned the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA) to advise on the historic interest of golf course designs to inform the development of its new position statement and guidance on golf course development in historic parks, gardens and wider landscapes.

The EIGCA represents Europe's golf course architects. The objectives of the institute are:

- To advance the study of golf course architecture, planning and development
- To promote the technical and artistic development of golf courses and to encourage the highest standards of design and construction
- To define and demand ethical and responsible professional conduct among its members and to qualify those members through education, examination and practical experience
- To teach any subjects relating to golf course architecture, to educate students through its own diploma course and to provide continuing professional training for its members
- To initiate, watch over and petition authorities and governments in relation to measures affecting, or likely to affect, golf course developments.

The EIGCA publishes articles through its website www.eigca.org.uk and the series includes topics such as the history of golf course architecture, renovation and restoration of golf courses, the future of golf course design, and the impact of new developments in golf equipment.

EIGCA provided English Heritage with a detailed and fully illustrated report. In publishing its new guidance in 2007, English Heritage thought planners, historic environment advisers and golfers would also be interested in the EIGCA research and produced this abridged version. For copyright reasons we have not been able to reproduce the illustrations in the report but we have added some websites where course designs and maps can be studied.

English Heritage

Introduction

Purpose of the report

This report has been prepared by the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA) in response to a brief issued by English Heritage in October 2004. English Heritage is seeking advice from the golf architectural profession with specific regard to the provision of a statement of significance, to inform its forthcoming policy statement and guidance on golf and related development in historic parks and landscapes. The scope of the study is confined to golf courses within England built before 1975.

Background

Recording historic landscapes

English Heritage is responsible for the *Register of Parks and Gardens*, and as designed landscapes some historic sports facilities may be of merit to be considered for future registration. Some sports facilities because they are set within historically important parks and gardens, for example tennis courts or football pitches in public parks, horse trial or point-to-point courses in landscaped parks are already registered.

Policy guidance on golf in historic landscapes

Golf courses have often been sited in historic parks. Many of these parks have been designated as landscapes of historic interest and included on the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England* in order to protect them from inappropriate development. English Heritage issued a statement in 1991 to raise awareness that golf course development could potentially damage and degrade these important landscapes. Land Use Consultants were commissioned in 2004 to review this statement.

Golf courses of historic interest

It is evident that golf courses are designed landscapes in their own right and many of the older courses of England are of substantial historic interest, given the important role that they have played in the expansion of golf beyond its Scottish origins. The move away from coastal links golf courses to a diverse range of sites inland, which many of these golf courses of England represent, coincided with, and indeed was a catalyst for, the birth of the golf course architecture profession. It led to an evolution in design philosophies and did much to spread the game's popularity as a social and recreational pastime which communities and individuals alike could enjoy.

There is great diversity both in the typology of golf courses themselves and the landscapes in which they are sited. Golf courses come in many shapes and forms – from venerable Championship layouts, to private members' courses, resort or hotel courses, public municipal courses and shorter 9-hole and par-3 or pitch-and-putt venues. Similarly the sites of these golf courses represent a wide range of landscape character types – from coastal duneland to heathland, moorland, parkland and woodland. The original golf course design has often been significantly influenced by the environment through which it plays.

The care of these unique designed landscapes, however, is predominantly under the control of private golf clubs and their members, and subject to their individual ambitions and taste. Often one or two strong-willed members (normally Chairman of Greens or Captain) can have a disproportionate influence in affecting alterations to a golf course. While this may be well intentioned, it is often without a proper appreciation of the historic context of the

original design within which amendments need to be considered. Lack of action by golf clubs can have an equally damaging impact and can result in the loss or degradation of important elements of the design such as bunker shape; or unchecked landscape change, such as the gradual ingress of trees, which can spoil the original landscape character and strategy of the original layout.

Authorship

EIGCA represents Europe's most qualified and experienced golf course architects. It was formed by the merger of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects, the European Society of Golf Course Architects and the Association Française des Architectes de Golf in July 2000. The Institute's principal aims include the advancement of the study of golf course architecture and involvement in this study therefore is consistent with its core remit. The report was prepared by a sub-committee chaired by Ken Moodie. The primary research and drafting tasks were undertaken by Brian Noble, with additional editing by Mike Wood. Inputs were also received from other members. Additionally the EIGCA has sought the views of other golfing bodies with an interest in the subject of England's golf courses, including both the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews (R&A) and the English Golf Union.

Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

Part 1: Provides a general review of the history and evolution of golf course design in England, drawing extensively on the existing body of literature, to which interested readers are referred for further detail.

Part 2: Contains examples of golf courses which meet a number of historic criteria identified in the study, drawn from a database containing a comprehensive listing of golf courses in England where the Club had a founding date prior to 1975.¹

Part 3: Provides a proposed methodology for the assessment of the historic significance of courses. It also includes three detailed case studies as a 'pilot' for this methodology, and concludes by stating the case for designation.

Part 4: The appendix provides further detail to support the main body of the report.

Note

¹ Although EIGCA were originally asked in the brief to provide 'a gazetteer of golf courses in England where the landscape design is of a sufficient level of historic interest to make it worthy of future consideration for designation' this has proved to be a monumental task, given the large number of existing golf courses.

Part I: Golf Course Design in England

History of Golf Course Development in England

Beginnings

Golf is a landscape game: its essence involves a journey through the landscape and a contest with the elements of nature. The first golf courses were not designed by man but by the natural processes inherent in coastal linksland sites. The result was distinctive and ideal for the game – a rolling topography of sand dunes and dune slacks with a ground cover of fine-leaved grasses, exposed to the wind and sea.

Most importantly, where the history of golf is concerned, these early courses were characterised by a democratic use of the land – golfers played on common land, shared with other land users, and came from all sections of the local community, irrespective of their social standing. It was truly the people's game, and this is perpetuated in the golf organisations' '2020'² vision for the sport and its development.

Gradually the game became more sophisticated, and prepared areas of shorter grass were created around a hole in the ground, to become the greens; later, formal teeing grounds were added. The intermediate land, between hole and tee, consisted of less kempt areas of turf, managed accidentally by the grazing of animals and the movement of people and beasts alike. The number of holes was eventually standardised at 18 by the lead of the Old Course in St Andrews in 1764, and the acceptance of the R&A as the arbiter of the rules and governing body of the game.

For many years the game was played almost exclusively on this coastal linksland, and is the reason the game remains spiritually and culturally rooted in Scotland.

The game spreads south

It is thought that Mary Queen of Scots may have been the first lady golfer in 1565. It is therefore very appropriate that golf spread to England following the ascension of her son King James VI to the English throne in 1603, who along with his royal followers took golf with him when holding court at Greenwich. The earliest candidate for the recorded playing of golf in England was at Blackheath in 1608, but its claim to be the first golf club cannot be substantiated, given that no club record was written until 1766.

Golf in England throughout the 18th century was a game played predominantly by expatriate Scottish professionals and businessmen in the industrial cities of England, and who sought sites for playing golf on land that mirrored the characteristics of the earliest Scottish links. The first courses were laid out on common land such as at Molsley Hurst, where 'London' Scots are known to have played from 1758, and the Old Manchester Golf Club at Kersal Edge, which was established in 1818. Sadly, however, both these venues are no longer in play.

Golf in 19th-century England was akin to that played in Scotland in the mid-18th century, where use was made of common land, shared with non-golfers: for example at Blackheath and Wimbledon in London. Sites were chosen inland, or on the coast, not only for their similarities to those of Scottish links, such as at Westward Ho! in Devon, but also because the land was generally open and accessible, requiring the minimum of maintenance and upkeep costs.

Golfers on these rudimentary courses often vied with other users of the land – both people and animals. At Blackheath, for example, a 7-hole course made use of the features on the common – a pond, disused gravel pits and various paths and roadways – to form its sequence of holes.

Crossing holes were a common occurrence in this period. Caddies played a crucial role in guiding players around the course, providing sand for golfers to tee their ball on – there were no tee boxes – and acting as the hole location indicator, for no flagsticks were used – the caddy simply stood by the hole and the golfer aimed at him!

The oldest golf club in England, still using its original ground, is generally accepted to be the Royal North Devon Golf Club at Westward Ho! The original course was laid out in 1860 by Tom Morris (with holes initially cut in the turf around jumpots) and the Club was officially founded in 1864. General Moncrieff's words in 1853 that 'providence evidently intended this for a golf links' proved prophetic since the course exhibited many of the characteristics evident in the Scottish courses. Since the course was laid out over common land, the pot-wallopers (voters) of Northam and Appledore retain access to this day for grazing their animals.

London's first golf clubs were inaugurated in 1865. The London Scottish Golf Club and Royal Wimbledon Golf Club both evolved from the original founding association of 16 army golfers of the London Scottish Rifle Volunteers who had enjoyed playing golf on Wimbledon Common. Golf was also played regularly at Clapham Common. By 1875, both Oxford and Cambridge University had also formed their own golf clubs, with the first match played between them three years later.

The traditions of links golf as a seaside game continued to be upheld by the founding of a series of links courses and clubs on the Lancashire and Merseyside coastline around Liverpool, many within a few years of each other – notably Formby GC (1884), Southport & Ainsdale GC (1885), Royal Lytham & St Annes GC (1886) and Royal Birkdale GC (1889). Founded in 1869, Royal Liverpool (Hoylake) holds a crucial position within English golf history (*see also* detailed case study on page 50).

The coasts of southern England mirrored the development of golf on the north-west coast of England with clubs established at Great Yarmouth GC (1882), Royal St Georges (1887), Littlestone GC (1888) and Royal Cinque Ports, Deal (1892) all of which provided venues with ideal playing conditions accessible from London. By 1888 there were already 57 courses established in England.

The number of sandy coastal sites was limited, and the growth in popularity of the game was such that demand was growing amongst golfers in locations where soil conditions were not ideal. Inevitably golf courses were to be developed inland, and most of those on inland sites suffered from heavy soils which created drainage and maintenance problems not experienced on the links.

Moving inland

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution came the expansion of the railways, which created cheap, rapid transport and access to land further from major population centres, leading to further urban growth and development in the countryside. As familiarity with the game spread, golf became popular with those sections of society previously outwith the more conventional, pioneering golfers of the upper class. The desire of the middle class to play golf was strong, yet they were often limited in their access to the existing golf clubs. Demand was therefore high in the rapidly growing suburbs for the creation of new 'inland'

golf courses and clubs. Naturally, associations between those within the same geographic area formed and led to the establishment of new golf clubs.

A further social development of this period was the growing of the popularity of the Victorian seaside holiday resulting in the earliest holiday-resort courses on more traditional coastal links sites.

Membership of a golf club was, to the Victorian middle class of professionals and businessmen, also a means of gaining higher social status by emulating the pastimes of the rich gentry previously denied them.

Significantly, the creation of golf courses on parkland estates in this period introduced a distinctive English element to what had been previously an exclusively Scottish-derived aesthetic.

Where the suburban golf course was concerned the choice of land was dictated by its accessibility, affordability and availability rather than golfing suitability. Often this meant choosing less interesting sites on poorer soils.

Courses of the late 19th century tended to be laid out following a rough routing of 18 stakes, located at each of the planned green positions, rather than being specifically designed. This task was carried out in the main by professional players or those charged with greenkeeping duties. Sites for each hole were selected and a route to each established and thus a course route would emerge.

However, there were shortcomings in the majority of these early courses. The inland sites were poorly served in terms of landscape characteristics when compared to the links. Commonly they lacked the rolling terrain and were often simply flat meadowland or parkland with few natural hazards or features. Instead they had to make do with the hedges, ditches and trees available.

Golf course features which were constructed, such as greens and bunkers, tended to be functional in design and often geometric in shape. This was the age of rectangular 'gun-platform' greens, with steep cut-and-fill batters, and rectilinear bunkers with sharp uniform ridges.

Drainage was problematic as the heavy clay soils were often unsuited to sustaining good turf and playing conditions throughout the year, given the variation in the seasonal English climate, and suffered from being hard and dry in summer or wet and boggy in winter.

The late 19th century also saw developments in the field of greenkeeping practice. Until the 1870s, grass on golf courses was kept short for play by sheep and animals allowed to graze the land. This practice was superseded by the technological advancements of the industrialised age with the invention and increased use of the mechanical lawn mower – with hand mowers were used for greens and horse-drawn mowers used for fairways. Hand mowers were also used to mow the teeing areas, when the practice of taking sand from the previous hole was replaced by the advent of the teeing box. Greenkeeping also became more sophisticated as the greenkeepers developed their knowledge and gained a better understanding of soil and turf grass sciences, and improving maintenance techniques. The Greenkeepers Association was formed in 1912.

The Golden Age

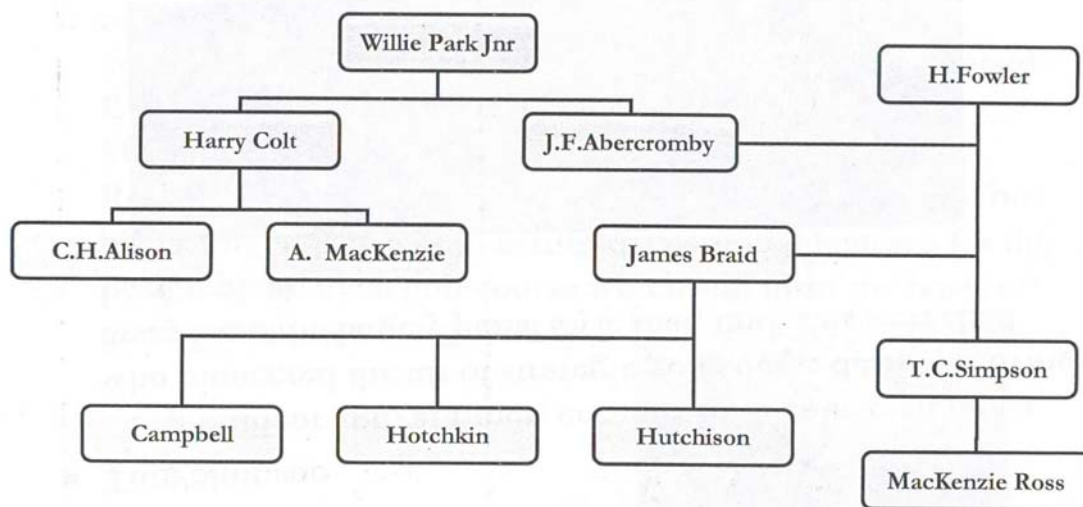
The period from the last decade of the 19th century up to the late 1920s was the turning point in the development of the golf course: a shift away from primitive, geometric design towards a more reflective analysis of the game which resulted in the birth of a new

profession – that of the artistic and technical craft of golf course architecture. As the game of golf became more popular and the demand for courses grew, those tasked with developing new courses recognised that it required the input of a competent designer to create a course from seemingly unfavourable sites. A further opportunity for those skilled in course design came with the introduction of the rubber cored Haskell ball in 1902, which meant that existing golf courses also had to be lengthened, and bunkers relocated, in order to maintain their challenge.

Capitalising on the economic prosperity and advantages of the period, golf courses began to be designed following a coherent process that involved a pre-build study of the existing site terrain, design of the course on the drawing board, and onsite inspection by the architect during construction.

This period is considered the ‘golden age’ of golf course design, witnessing the development of strategic golf course architecture – the strategic principles of hazard positioning relative to each individual hole.

A group of outstanding architects/designers practised at this time, most notably Willie Park Jnr, Harry Colt, Herbert Fowler, J.F. Abercromby, Tom Simpson, Dr Alister MacKenzie and James Braid. With a few exceptions, such as Braid and Park, this group of architects differed from the previous course designers because they were not professional players or greenkeepers but amateur gentlemen golfers with an outstanding talent for course design allied to a keen understanding of the strategic principles of the game.



Keynote architects and their working relationships and associations (for further detail refer to the biographical summaries on page 57).

These architects discovered the natural advantages which the heathland terrain had to offer, and the heathlands of Surrey and Berkshire, in particular, became a hotbed for new course development and the display and exchange of ideas on golf course architecture in the early 20th century. The natural sandy conditions they afforded allowed architects to express their design ideas to the full since bunkers were easy and inexpensive to create and hollows could be formed that would generally remain dry.

Course layouts of the ‘golden age’ were ‘designed’ and masterplanned as part of an overall creative process, with course designers making best use of the industrial and technological advancements for construction and maintenance purposes. Although the architects favoured layouts incorporating natural green sites and contours, the land often had to be remodelled by moving earth to create more level areas for tees and greens. They were also not averse to clearing areas of unsuitable vegetation and woodland where required.

Architects utilised the natural features of the site, and incorporated them wherever possible into the strategy of each golf hole design. The architects concentrated on considered and careful green and bunker placement that would offer varied routes of play and examine the player according to his abilities – hence the birth of ‘strategic’ golf architecture on a wider scale. Taking inspiration from the original strategic course – the Old Course at St Andrews – holes were designed to provide options for playing the hole to golfers of all levels of ability. No longer was the player compelled to hit the ball over hazards in a penal fashion, as the design presented alternative longer yet safer routes from tee to green.

Many of the pre-eminent practitioners wrote treatises outlining their key design principles, thus making the subject of good golf course design available to a wider audience and setting new standards for design and maintenance.

The earliest heathland course was at Woking, designed by Tom Dunn in 1893, and many other fine courses followed in the Surrey and Berkshire heathlands including Sunningdale (1900), Walton Heath (1903), Burhill (1907), Worplesdon (1908), West Hill (1909), St Georges Hill (1912) and Wentworth (1924).

However, whilst excellence existed in the design profession, many of the courses built in order to satisfy the boom in demand for golf courses were poorly constructed and lacked the strategic design and understanding of those designed by more knowledgeable architects.

The wealthiest golfing clubs and societies continued to seek out the best land where available, whilst the continued expansion of the towns kept demand for community courses amongst the middle classes high. One development of this resulted in ‘real estate’ golf course design, where large private residential estates utilised the presence of the golf course to sell luxury housing.

As the game increased in popularity, the number of clubs rose. By 1914, there were 1850 courses in Britain, spawning a new golf industry with positions available for greenkeepers, club professionals, secretaries and stewards, and not to mention those in the golf club maintenance and manufacturing industries.

The economic depression of the late 1920s/early 1930s reduced the number of new courses being developed, with remodelling of existing courses being more common, as poor design and construction of the boom years was rectified by the more accomplished architects. The new courses that were built in this period were generally sited on good golfing land, and continued to be built within a community or suburban situation. In architectural terms the courses were designed and constructed in a similar vein to those of the golden era.

The effect of the Second World War and the Depression put many clubs under great financial pressure and saw many golf clubs struggling to survive as income and manpower were greatly restricted. Many courses were reduced to 9 holes or closed entirely. Courses which survived were often altered by the impact of the war – for instance, it was common for bunkers to be filled in to lessen maintenance – and for fairways to be ploughed up for agricultural production. In some cases the land was re-quisitioned to serve the military war effort directly and used as sites for training grounds, shooting ranges or military headquarters and barracks. After the war a great deal of work was required to repair the damage which the war had inflicted, and in some cases the courses never re-opened.

Post-war – golf since 1945

1945–1959 was a relatively quiet period given the scarcity of material resources, post-war inflation and high land costs. None-the-less, there were a limited number of golf course architects were still practising. The main work for architects of this time consisted of

reviving and remodelling the established golf courses and in creating new courses from land previously used for golf. Most notable at this time in the United Kingdom was the work of MacKenzie Ross, responsible for resurrecting the links courses at Turnberry, in Scotland, following their wartime disappearance under the concrete of RAF runways. However, this mid-century period also represented the passing of the golden age, as most of the renowned pioneer architects of the early 20th century died within ten years of the war ending.

The period immediately following the war also marked a sea-change in the construction of golf courses as the industry modernised, and the use of mechanised earth-moving equipment became the norm.

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 had placed the control of land use in the hands of Local Authorities, and this key piece of legislation further impacted upon golf development and the architectural profession. Permission to build new courses became subject to the official planning process and meant that development was prone to a longer gestation period. It also eventually led to golf courses being built on derelict land or as part of urban renewal schemes.

By the 1960s the development of public golf courses and the growing access to televised international golf heralded a new era of golf development. Continued scientific and technical advances in turfgrass science and greenkeeping techniques and equipment greatly aided course maintenance and presentation. Automatic irrigation systems were developed, and the advent of the USGA putting-green construction method by the mid-1960s meant the potential for achieving consistent playing conditions was available, regardless of the prevailing climatic conditions.

The growing affordability of the motor car, along with the introduction of international televised professional golf tournaments, led to a demand for accessible golf across all income groups. In 1965, the creation of the Golf Development Council, whose raison d'être was to co-ordinate with National and Regional Sports Councils and Local Authorities to provide playing facilities, gave this cause further impetus. This resulted in many functional public municipal courses being built in a manner that encouraged new golfers to learn the game and kept maintenance easy.

Many of the courses of this period were functional rather than inspired as the previous lull in the profession had diminished the number of experienced practitioners in the design profession and course-construction industry. A few, such as F.W. Hawtree, Hamilton Stutt and MacKenzie Ross had learned directly from some of the great architects of the Golden Age and were forging their own reputations, but other courses were planned by landscape architects, planners, golf professionals and others with little or no golf course design experience.

The aesthetics of English golf courses were also now heavily influenced by American course design. The coverage of American golf courses on colour televisions, dominance of American golfers in major competitions, adoption of American construction methods and the choice of inland sites were all contributing factors to the emergence of American-style golf course aesthetics in England. This style was characterised by broad fairways, large undulating greens, long runway tees, water hazards and large free-form bunkers.

The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a renewed interest in golf course development due in part to the increased impact of televised golf, the success of Europe in the Ryder Cup competition and the easy availability of set-aside farmland brought about by surplus agricultural production. Increasing personal affluence and a trend towards early retirement increased the percentage of the population with the time and money to play golf. Global communication and affordable worldwide air travel to holiday golf destinations further

assisted the new rise in popularity of golf within the United Kingdom. The R&A, the game's governing body, produced a document entitled *The Demand for Golf* in 1989, which argued a case for up to 700 new golf courses, most of which were built during the following decade.

The late 1990s brought a gradual slow-down in new golf course development and a rise in the number of golf clubs making improvements to their courses, which has continued into the early 21st century. As in the 1890s, 1920's and 1970s golf experienced a new boom period of course construction, rising rapidly in the 1980s and early 90s. The demand, however, again outstripped the availability of specialist golf course architects, and this period was marked by many poorly conceived and designed projects carried out by amateur designers lacking specialist knowledge.

Presently the golf market in the UK is well served with golf courses in relation to demand, although a change in the current socio-economic climate may alter this. As can be seen by some recent projects, there is still room for the occasional well-placed and targeted development. It is unlikely, however, that golf in Britain will ever undergo another boom comparable to those of the past.

The current situation

The late 20th-century boom in golf course construction and golf related developments saw in the region of 370 new courses completed in the UK between 1991 and 1994. In 2000, there were 1,890 courses and some 400 driving ranges and the number of courses in England is around the industry's own estimate of commercially viable provision per head of population. The construction of new courses has slowed to a handful each year. Golf is one of England's top ten sports, and it contributes an estimated £3billion to the UK economy and generates 53,000 jobs. In October 2004, the England Golf Partnership (the EGU, ELGA and PGA, with the support of The Golf Foundation and Sport England) published a vision for the sport and its development over the next 15 years and for golf's role in an active, healthy and prosperous nation. The sport's aim is for the UK to become the 'leading golf nation in the world' by 2020. The Partnership has identified that the growth of the sport may well hinge of a new breed of facilities such as 3-, 6- or 9-hole games and casual, family and leisure golf, as well as on maximizing existing facilities.²

Some of the 1980s and 1990s golf courses were poorly designed or inappropriately influenced by American design. The work of today's golf course architect mirrors that of earlier generations, being concerned with remodelling the newer courses to repair their design flaws, whilst updating older, historical courses to take account of the technological advances in playing equipment and course maintenance (for example the need to maximise facilities, and innovations such as the one-hour/6-hole course).

In the many existing courses within historic landscapes the modification or extension of courses could affect the remaining historic significance of the sites but also gives the opportunity to conserve the landscape, rectify or compensate poor designs of the past, repair historic features and to put in place appropriate long-term management.

The growing appreciation of the heritage value of golf courses as designed landscapes is indicated by the inclusion of Gleneagles on the Historic Scotland/Scottish Natural Heritage Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of Special Interest (see www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/gardens/gardens_inventory_intro.htm).

Golf in registered parks and gardens

In the order of 1 in 12 registered parks and gardens include golf courses; of these 11% are grade I sites, and 29% are grade II*. The majority of these sites with golf courses also contain listed buildings (77%).

Registered landscapes from the 12th to the 20th century include golf courses and developments. The largest number of these sites were created between the late 17th century and the late 18th century. This is the key period for two types of historic park: the formal park and the landscape park. It is also notable that 9% of the sites with golf are associated with Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and around 13% with Humphry Repton.

The origin of the courses varies widely: from modest courses constructed by estate owners for their own use, to courses built by clubs – typically on the sale of estates in the early 20th century – to courses laid out as amenities in public parks, to the hotel courses of the early 1990s. A steady stream of golf courses was constructed in historic parks during the late Victorian and the Edwardian periods, carrying on until the outbreak of World War II. Many courses have had more than one phase of development so that they may have increased from 9 to 18 holes, perhaps to two or more courses, with more buildings and facilities gradually added.

Facilities for sports and games have always been included in public parks and provision of pitch-and-putt or 9-hole courses on these sites began to grow in England in the early 20th century. Golf was added to Heaton Park in Manchester in 1908–09, and Thomas Mawson included a putting green and a 9-hole course in his 1926 design for Stanley Park, Blackpool. Parade Gardens, Lytham St Anne's, had a miniature golf course added in 1916. A golf course was added to Royal Victoria Park, Bath on a 1920s extension to the early Victorian park, and Alexandra Palace, London (opened 1863) had a miniature golf course added in the 1920s.

Golf in the wider historic landscape

With nearly 2,000 courses in England, these landscapes are familiar features of both urban and rural areas. England is described as a highly developed golf nation with the equivalent of one course for the average population of a small town (www.eigca.org.uk). The natural characteristics of the early links and heathland courses – fine turf, intricate ground undulations and good drainage – proved highly suited to the game with little need for substantial alteration, demonstrating that certain landscapes can absorb golf without losing their unique character. The presence of these early courses also did much to protect these sites from being built on and, to varying degrees, conserved their ecology.

During the late 19th and early 20th century club courses proliferated on both urban and rural common land; research suggests that some 50% of urban commons contain golf. Many of these courses are reasonably well integrated into their settings and again have contributed to the survival of valuable open space.

Expanding demand in the mid-20th century channelled course construction into countryside of different character such as downland. Ground variation and new features, perceived as necessary to challenge players in this smooth open landscapes, proved difficult to assimilate without loss of character.

The later 20th century saw a revival of demand for courses close to towns. A reduction in the economic viability of farming and the development of earth-moving techniques meant that former agricultural landscapes were subject to wholesale regrading to create the bunkers and water features of modern proprietary courses. New golf development was seen as an opportunity to create wildlife habitats and to conserve ecological interest in a changing

rural landscape. In turn, the creation of some courses must have also involved the loss of features such as hedgerows, trees, field patterns and characteristic topography.

A few courses have been laid out within special classes of designated landscape; two sit within registered historic battlefields (Battle of Barnet, 1417 and Battle of Northampton, 1460) and a handful of courses are located within World Heritage Sites or their buffer zones. A substantial number of courses lie within conservation areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks.

England now has a legacy of golf courses in a wide variety of historic urban and rural landscapes. The fundamental issue for the modification and management of existing courses and for the construction of new ones is how – and in some instances whether – they can be integrated into these landscapes without loss of character.

The Development of Golf Course Aesthetics and Playing Strategy

Introduction

Golf is the game that evolved over humps, hollows, sand craters, ridges, dykes and clumps of heather and gorse. These features made up a game that is a trial of luck and ingenuity.³

Through study of the way in which the golf course architect utilises the available landscape elements, and creates new golfing features an architectural philosophy may be detected. Barely a century old, the relatively short history of golf course design has seen the evolution of several schools of design. Each has, in turn, influenced golf course architecture in England. Three are usually recognised: in their correct chronological order these are the penal, strategic and heroic, each new school arising from a philosophical evolution of its predecessor. Golf courses can rarely be classed as belonging purely to one school of design and many courses are composed of a blend of all three. However, an overview will normally show a gradual design trend from one to the other. Courses today consist generally of a combination of strategic and heroic golf holes with the occasional penal hole included either by necessity or intent.

The penal school of golf course design

The earliest golf course designers were the best players of their day – the golf professionals – and thus the courses were designed with the best golfers in mind. Golf up to the mid-19th century had normally been played by using the feathery ball (a feather filled, leather ball) and wooden clubs. Given the rather primitive playing equipment available, golf was in the main played as a ground game; only the most skilled players were able to consistently send the feathery ball through the air. Thus the poorly hit shot that scuttled along the ground defined the lack of ability of the majority of those playing the game. Regarding themselves as bastions of the game of golf, the golf professionals detested this low-running topped shot, and they set out to punish such poor shotmaking in the golf holes they helped create. In order to achieve this, the early designers placed the hazards directly across the line of play of the hole. Often rudimentary and crude in shape, scale and steepness of slope, these obstacles became barriers to the weaker players since they were placed at such a distance from the tee, or between the landing area for the tee shot and the green, that they would often fail to ‘carry’ the ball over them.

The later manufacturing developments in the golf ball that resulted in the Gutta Percha (‘Guttie’) ball (1848) and the *Haskell/Wound* ball of 1902 did not immediately alter the penal philosophy for the designers. They merely altered the distance of the hazards to account for

the advancement in golf-ball technology. Since the newer balls were easier to get airborne, new wing bunkers were also positioned to each side of the fairway or green to catch a sliced or hooked shot, which then became the mark of the poorer golfer.

The positioning of hazards merely to catch the poorer golfer and increase the advantage of the top players defines the nature of the penal school of design. However, with the passage of time – as golf became more popular and played by ever more players – the unfairness of penal-designed holes in terms of playability became a more important issue. A course featuring a large number of penal holes could be almost unplayable for the majority of golfers. Penal course design is therefore less appealing to the weaker golfer and is, in landscape terms, unsubtle since it is based on a rather formulaic approach to bunker deployment.

The strategic school of golf course design

As the game of golf spread and the demand for golf courses grew in the period around the turn of the 20th century, a golf course architecture profession emerged that produced an intellectualised advancement in the art of course design. Notwithstanding the input of eminent professional golfers such as Willie Park Junior and James Braid, the majority of the new designers were not professional players or greenkeepers but university-educated amateur golfers who possessed both aesthetic sensibilities with regards to the landscape and an understanding of the needs and abilities of the average golfer.

This era heralded a new development in golf-hole design that modified the harsh set-up of penal courses.

Taking inspiration from the original example of a strategic course – the Old Course at St Andrews in its widened form – architects began to realise the advantages of offering alternative routes to the green which allowed the thinking golfer to avoid the need to ‘carry’ vast hazards and thereby play the course within his own level of ability. Alister MacKenzie recognised in particular the strategic qualities of the par-5 14th hole on the Old Course. During a week playing the course with some friends, he noted the four different routes that each took to get to the green.

The enlightened architects of the Golden Age concentrated on considered green and bunker placement that offered varied routes of play and strengthened the strategic nature of the game. Though the number of hazards had not been reduced, repositioning the hazards in thought-provoking positions no longer penalised only the poor topped shot of the weaker player. Hazards were located in places to catch the sliced or hooked shot, and to cover the shorter route to the green.. Players of all abilities were now faced with a stiff, yet fair, challenge dependent upon how much they were willing to gamble from the tee:

The essence of strategic design is that nearly every hole offers alternative routes to the green, with hazards of differing severity requiring golfers consciously to decide at the tee a route to the target that best suits their game. At St Andrews, golfers were and are required to think strategically, to execute shots that best balance risk and reward, and to play a match against an opponent who is doing the same ...

... Hazards were placed so that players who chose a landing area that flirts boldly with hazards were rewarded with an easier shot on the next stroke over the player who chose not to risk the hazard... Thus strategic design in its best form rewards the good shot maker without penalising the less accomplished, and allows each to maximise the best while minimising the importance of his weaknesses.⁴

This school of design was not without its drawbacks. Strategically designed golf holes and courses require a larger physical site area when compared to the earlier penal courses. Evidence of this can be traced back to when St Andrews was first widened in 1848 by Allan

Robertson to create alternate routes of play; the differing combination of routes to the green offered to the golfer with strategically designed golf holes obviously carried with it space and safety implications and constraints.

However, the strategic school of design philosophy quickly gained acceptance as it made the golf fun and enjoyable for a much greater number of players, regardless of their ability. No longer was the player compelled to carry hazards, as the strategic-designed holes presented alternative, longer yet safer routes from tee to green.

The fact that many of the foremost architects of this Golden Era of golf course design wrote extensively on the matter of strategy in the playing of the game further strengthened the case for strategic design in replacing or superseding the penal school of design thinking:

The strategy of the golf course is the soul of the game. The spirit of golf is to dare a hazard, and by negotiating it, reap a reward, while he who fears or declines the issue of a carry, has a longer or harder shot for his second, or his second and third on longer holes; yet the player who avoids the unwise effort gains advantage over one who tries for more than in him lies, or who fails under the test.⁵

The heroic school of golf course design

Further evolution in design thinking by the mid-20th century produced a third design philosophy – heroic design – that embodied the best principles of both the penal and strategic design schools. It had already existed to some extent on earlier golf courses where golf course architects utilised natural features such as ravines, ponds or natural coastline, but the advent of large-scale earth-movement machinery (and, later, man-made pond liners) allowed large lakes to be constructed to provide the ultimate man-made hazard for the creation of a heroic hole.

The basic tenet of heroic design is to challenge the golfer with penal hazards set on a diagonal to the normal line of play which allows the golfer to play according to his/her abilities – the more of the hazard risked, the greater the reward. As in strategic design, the weaker player can often avoid the hazard completely, although he/she is normally penalised on the next shot by a longer or more difficult angle of approach to the green. The stronger, more accomplished player who takes more risk from the tee is often rewarded with a much easier or shorter approach than the golfer who risked nothing. It can be argued that heroic design mirrors penal design in providing a disproportionate advantage to the best players.

Heroic-designed holes grew in popularity with the advent of water hazards – the ultimate in penal hazards – which were more commonly introduced into golf course design after the Second World War.

Hazard style

Each golf design philosophy has had an influence on the detailed design of the golfing features. The features created in the penal era tended to be geometric and obviously manmade impositions upon the landscape. This was mirrored in the positioning of the features, which also tended to be formal with bunkers located symmetrically on either side of a fairway or green, and others centrally across the fairway creating forced carries. As penal design became more sophisticated, bunkers were no longer located immediately opposite each other but were offset slightly to catch both the sliced shot, which tended to be shorter in distance, and the hooked shot which travelled further. Carry bunkers were also formed on a diagonal for similar reasons, and gradually golf courses started to have a more natural appearance as hazards were placed in less symmetrical and formulaic patterns.

When the strategic philosophy emerged, more natural and aesthetically pleasing features were created to mimic the forms found on the traditional links courses through the gradual erosion of sand. A ragged sand line was often created with grass tongues or noses interrupting the faces of larger bunkers in order to soften them visually. The positioning of the hazards was also generally asymmetrical, in relation to the direction of play, not only to give them a more natural appearance, but also to provide optional landing zones for different abilities of player.

The main impact of heroic design was the increased use, and sometimes overuse, of the water hazard, and particularly manmade lakes and ponds. In terms of bunker style it had little discernable impact, and bunker shapes appeared to have been more influenced by the demand for bunker banks to be cut by ride-on mowers, leading to broader mounds and more gentle banks. Sand lines generally lost their ragged appearance and were smoothed to create more gentle, flowing lines, which were easier to maintain and which better defined the bunker edge.

Summary

Most golf courses feature a combination of architectural philosophies, providing variety and vitality. There are very few, if any, courses that could be classified as purely penal, strategic or heroic, but there will undoubtedly be examples of golf courses that feature several particularly good examples of a single design philosophy and are therefore worthy of study. More likely, however, it will be individual golf holes that will be separately identified. Those worthy of listing will include holes which have influenced the development of design thinking, such as the strategic 4th hole at Woking, which encouraged Tom Simpson to become a golf course architect; or the 18th hole on the Brabazon Course, at the Belfry, which has featured heavily in the climax of many Ryder Cup matches and is known to millions through television coverage around the world.

Notes

- 2 England Golf Partnership (The Professional Golfers' Association, The English Ladies Golf Association, The English Golf Union, with the support of Sport England and the Golf Foundation) 2004 *A Vision for English Golf to the Year 2020*. England Golf Partnership www.golf-foundation.org
- 3 Foreword by Peter Thomson in Aleck Bauer, *Hazards* (Grant Books 1993), p. 1.
- 4 M Hurdzan, *Golf Course Architecture: Design Construction & Restoration* (Sleeping Bear Press 1996) p. 12.
- 5 George C Thomas *Golf Architecture in America: Its Strategy and Construction* (Sleeping Bear Press [1997]).

Part 2: Identifying Golf Courses of Historic Interest

The English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* defines criteria for assessing sites for inclusion on the Register. These criteria look at the survival of designed landscapes from each period, their intactness, how they represent design ideas and their influence on design, and associations with people or events of historic interest. Reviewing the history of golf course design, the EIGCA has developed a similar set of criteria for identifying golf courses of historic interest:

- A. Golf courses whose main phase of development is representative of a key era in the history of golf course design.
- B. Golf courses influential in the development of golf course aesthetics and playing strategy.
- C. Golf courses that are early or representative examples of a style of layout.

- D. Golf courses that are early or representative examples of a type of site.
- E. Golf courses that are early or representative examples of the work of a designer or architect of national importance.
- F. Golf courses having an association with significant persons or historical events.
- G. Golf courses with a strong group value.

The first of these is obviously the main criterion in the selection of a golf course for listing, while the other criteria will contribute to the assessment of the value of the course within the context of the historic period in which its main phase of development falls.

The assessment of a golf course's historic value, in relation to its design qualities, is a difficult business. Most golf courses have undergone a number of phases of development and many have remained unchanged for relatively short periods in their history. Although it is relatively easy to identify the founding date for a golf club from generally available literary sources, such as golf course directories, the date from which the current course originates will normally require significant further research. However, the research cannot end there since the design qualities that are worth protecting may not stem from the first phase of development. In fact, in many cases, it was the substantial alteration of the course in the second (or subsequent) phase which makes it worthy of listing. This means that the layout development of the course needs to be carefully mapped from old plans, aerial photographs, documentary evidence and site investigations to accurately conclude the historic origins of the various components of the course. Although the current attributes of the course may be the result of work by several golf course architects, this should not be of undue concern since it is the work of art that should be assessed, not the architect, when making a judgement. However, the involvement of a recognised architect will give a clue to the likely historic value of the course and is therefore one of the criteria that have been included in the assessment procedure.

A) Golf Courses Representing a Key Era in the History of Golf Course Design

This section should be read in conjunction with the table on pages 20–21 which identifies five main eras of development related to the history of golf development in England up to 1975. The date of 1975 is based on the 30-year rule that English Heritage applies to other designed landscapes as the time it is considered needs to elapse before an era can be viewed properly within its historic context.

The earliest courses which fall within the period identified as Era 1 (pre-1820) and Era 2 (1820–80) had few or no constructed features, which makes it very difficult to measure the quality of the designed landscape or to identify features that need to be protected. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any remnants of the courses laid out in Era 1 still exist, and this will be a subject requiring further investigation. The lack of constructed features also means that it can be extremely difficult to identify the precise layout of the original course if it has been abandoned or significantly altered unless plans can be found. The key aspects of interest are in the way the course was integrated into the landscape and how it brought the game of golf into the local community.

Later, the golfing features of courses in Era 3 (1880–96) were purely functional and, although there were often many constructed elements, there was little creative input from the designer regarding the form they took. In most cases the original 'architect' did not get

involved in overseeing the construction of the greens, tees or bunkers and often just left generic instructions for their construction based more on building techniques than form. It was therefore the evolution of layout design and experimentation with hazard positioning that left the most significant legacies to the golf course architecture profession and the game of golf. The geometric course features that were constructed during Era 3 are obviously of interest as relatively rare curiosities in our golfing landscape, but it would be difficult to make a case for whole-scale preservation. The conservation of some particularly good examples would, however, serve as a valuable contribution to our understanding of the period.

It was only as golf course architecture became more of an art-form, and a recognised profession, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that more attention was given to the stylistic shaping of greens and bunkers in particular. In some ways it was almost inevitable that the evolution of golf course architecture had to go through the period of functional, artificial design of Development Era 3 in order to spark the backlash of the renaissance period that followed. The next era, identified in this document as Development Era 4 (1896–1945), witnessed a rapid evolution in design thinking and a fertile period of writing on the subject of golf course architecture that continues to influence design practice today. The true qualities of the early links courses, and ultimately the influence of the Old Course at St Andrews, were recognised, and architects began to create strategically designed golf courses with naturalistic features. Most of the key principles of golf course architecture were established during this time. It is therefore of great importance that the period is well represented by courses that trace the evolution in design thinking, which was rapidly developing over a relatively short time-frame, and to represent the many fine architects who were practising during this era.

The interruption of the Second World War provided a natural break in the eras of development, and the main design influences in Era 5 (1945–75) were based around increased mechanisation for the construction and maintenance of new golf courses that became prevalent from the 1950s onwards. This led to larger, broader and more rounded mounds appearing adjacent to greens, bunkers and fairways. The influence of golf course design in the United States of America had a major bearing as golf coverage on the television increased. The photogenic water hazard, in particular, became an almost ubiquitous feature of the golf courses that followed.

The design styles prevalent in Era 6 (1975–) have continued pretty much to the present day. However, with the increased globalisation of the sport and the greater ease of international travel, many American architects have been involved in high-profile golf developments in the UK. These tend to have a similar style which can be characterised as having large-scale earthworks, fairway mounding, large fairway bunkers, several water features, and highly managed, lush green grass in the rough areas as well as the key playing areas of the course. The British architects who have designed the vast majority of the other golf courses tend to generally fall into two camps: those who follow the American style and those who work more in the traditional British approach using smaller bunkers and less water. During the boom period of the 1980s and early 90s, many courses were ‘designed’ by the landowner, the local golf professional, and other complete amateurs to golf course design which led to a proliferation of poor-quality courses, echoing some of the mistakes made in the 1890s. Many of these courses have now been remodelled to some extent.

Summary of historic eras of golf course design and development

ERA	DATES	PRINCIPAL FEATURES	KEY COURSES/CLUBS
1	Pre-1820	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laid out on land conveniently located for mainly ex-patriot Scottish golfers living in England Use of sites where the grass was kept short either by the natural soil conditions or by the grazing of animals Democratic use of the land – golf and golfers played on common land shared with other land users Few constructed features – layout of the holes used existing natural features as hazards Greens only areas likely to be maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Blackheath Golf Club Molsley Hurst Old Manchester Golf Club, Kersal Edge
2	1820–80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rudimentary courses in terms of playability and maintenance Sites chosen generally had links-like characteristics Golfers vied with other users of the land – both people and animals Utilised natural features to fashion hole sequences. In order to maximise use of the features that existed, crossing holes were a common occurrence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal North Devon (Westward Ho!) 1864 Royal Wimbledon Golf Club 1865 Royal Liverpool Golf Club 1869 Alnmouth Golf Club 1869
3	1880–96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some traditional links courses built on the ideal land of the coasts and dunelands such as in Kent, Merseyside and Lancashire; otherwise, inland sites predominated Choice of land dictated by accessibility, affordability and availability rather than golfing suitability Courses laid out, rather than designed, by professional players or greenkeepers Courses often developed on flat meadowland or parkland with few natural hazards – hedges, ditches and trees utilised in situ Heavy clay soil sites frequently used, with associated drainage problems Courses generally poor in aesthetic quality – basic geometric shapes for greens, bunkers and other hazards. Little earth shaping done Holes on inland sites lacked naturally occurring detail and features of links courses 	<p>Links courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club 1886 Royal St Georges Golf Club 1887 Royal Birkdale Golf Club 1889 St Enodoc Golf Club 1890 Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club 1892 <p>Inland courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ganton Golf Club 1891
4	1896–1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course layouts designed in a more methodical way, generally adhering to basic design norms in relation to safety, balance of hole lengths and par/bogey Designers made best use of industrial and technological advancements for construction and maintenance purposes. Although architects favoured natural features where possible, the land often had to be remodelled – earth-moving to create tees and greens; clearance of areas of unsuitable vegetation. Heathland vegetation – trees, heather and so on – lent itself for use as alternative hazards and as aesthetic backdrops. Free-draining heathland soils proved advantageous and it was on the heathlands that ideas on detailed design reached a new level. Architects utilised the natural features of the site, and incorporated them, where possible, into the strategy of each golf-hole design. They concentrated on a considered and careful green and bunker placement that offered varied routes of play and design to strengthen the strategic nature of the game Concept of planning mixed golf and residential development emerges at courses such as Wentworth and St Georges Hill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hankley Common Golf Club 1896 Sunningdale Golf Club 1900 Walton Heath Golf Club 1903 Moortown Golf Club 1909 Swinley Forest Golf Club 1909 St George's Hill Golf Club 1912 The Addington Golf Club 1913 Wentworth Golf & Country Club 1924 West Sussex Golf Club 1931 Truro Golf Club 1937
5	1945–75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional golf courses – broad fairways, large 'runway' tees, shallow-faced bunkers Emergence of 'Modern' golf course architecture by adoption of technological advances – mechanised earth-moving, scientific soil analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest of Arden 1970

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Americanised aesthetics in some courses – use of constructed water hazards, free-form bunkers, large greens and tees • Scale of hazards larger, yet often fewer in number 	
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B) Golf Courses Influential in the Development of Aesthetics and Playing Strategy

Golf course aesthetics and playing strategy are intertwined and encompass a number of elements, including:

- the manner in which the individual golf holes are integrated into the landscape
- the positioning of the golfing features and hazards in relation to each other
- the design of the golfing features such as greens, tees, bunkers, mounds, hollows and ponds
- the planting of vegetation to create enclosure and to control views within the landscape.

The first of these overlaps to a great extent with another criterion, style of layout, since the layout of the course will largely dictate the location of the holes within the landscape. However, the detailed shaping of the fairway and the positioning of the hazards in relation to it (both existing and planned) will have a major impact on the aesthetics and playing qualities of the finished golf hole. For instance, bunkers can be utilised to frame a drive or add drama to a tee shot by accentuating natural features such as banks or ridges. Bunkers can also be used to disguise the distance to a green by creating an area of hidden ground between the rear of the bunker and the green front. Mounding or hollows can be used to accentuate the natural changes in elevation and to deflect a golf shot that is poorly played. Mounds can also be used to frame a green or to hide the putting surface from one side of the fairway in order to dictate a better angle of approach.

The playing characteristics of the hole and its aesthetic characteristics go hand-in-hand – as noted in Part I, where three philosophies were identified in relation to the placement of hazards on a golf hole; namely:

- Penal
- Strategic
- Heroic.

Key courses or golf holes that fall predominantly into one of the categories include:

Penal golf courses

- Westward Ho! Royal North Devon
- Royal Lytham & St Annes
- Royal St Georges
- Ganton

Strategic golf courses/holes

- Sunningdale Old Course
- Walton Heath
- Woking Hole No.4
- Moortown (Gibraltar Hole)

Heroic golf hole

- Brabazon Course at The Belfry, 1977 (holes 10 and 18 in particular)

In relation to the design of individual golf course features, the following order of importance will normally apply:

1) Greens and surrounds

The greens and their surrounding features such as bunkers, swales, grass hollows, banks, mounds, and so on, tend to receive the most detailed design input from the golf course architect and therefore serve to tell us most about his design style. The configuration of the green and its surrounding hazards also acts as the start-point for the strategy of a golf hole since it dictates whether there is a preferred angle of approach. This will, in turn, determine where hazards need to be formed on the fairway, and in the rough, in order to provide options of 'risk and reward' for the golfer.

2) Constructed fairway features

The creation of manmade features such as bunkers, mounds, grass hollows, ponds and streams and so on, were given varying degrees of attention by different architects. Some architects would have very limited input, other than the location of these features (and perhaps a brief description to the site foreman), while others would provide sketches, detailed plans, and even plasticine models for their execution.

3) Existing site features

The use of naturally occurring site features such as ravines, plateaux, streams, ponds, ridges and trees, and even manmade stone walls, ditches and cops, can all tell us something about the original architect and his design style. Some, such as Harry Colt, utilised diagonal carries over ravines and ditches, natural plateaux for drive landing areas (often enhancing the drama by placing a bunker off-centre in the face of the plateau) and sloping ridges on fairways near the drive zone to either disadvantage or reward a shot depending where the ball lands. Although the presence of these features will depend on the choice of site and will appear to have less relevance, in design terms, than the constructed features, they will have great influence on the quality of the golf course in playing terms and can therefore be considered as integral parts of the design. Natural features may have been modified by the architect during the construction of the course and we can learn a great deal from the way this was done.

4) Tees

The design of tees tended to get very little attention from the early architects, other than the positioning the teeing ground, since they were seen as purely functional features of the golf hole. Initially, when they started to appear, teeing grounds were very small and located conveniently close to the preceding green. Later as tees needed to be enlarged to

accommodate wear from increased play, and multiple tees provided for different abilities of golfer, greater design input was required in relation to their size, siting and shape. However, it is generally the positioning which is most significant since it determines the level of challenge presented to the golfer and the viewing point for the aesthetic composition of the hole. In addition, the tees are the most likely features to have been moved or modified in the past. Movement of the tee backwards to extend the hole on the same line of play may not significantly alter the visual qualities of the hole but can often reinstate the strategic intent of the original architect where it has been lost due to technological advances.

Tree planting

In the early days there were no golf course architects who produced tree planting plans, and Harry Colt was the first to have been noted for introducing trees on a golf course during his time as Secretary at Sunningdale (1901–13). Most of the tree planting instigated by golf course architects prior to, and immediately after, the Second World War would have been staked out on site, rather than identified in plan form, and plantations would have been minimal in extent since trees were still considered to be a rather obnoxious form of hazard in areas close to play. The only time when trees were utilised in a more creative way was when a course was cut through woodland. Tom Simpson had a particularly artistic view on how this could be accomplished successfully without giving an unnatural appearance, and this is recorded in the book he co-authored with Herbert Wethered in 1929, entitled *The Architectural Side of Golf*.

C) Early or Representative Examples of a Style of Layout

The essence of a truly 'great' golf course lies in the way golf holes are integrated with the landscape both individually and in combination. Identifying the layout or 'routing' of the 18 holes that makes best use of the land requires considerable skill and understanding on the part of the golf course architect. Although there is almost an infinite variety of layout options we have given four identifiable examples, which are outlined below.

Linear layout

A traditional 'out and back' layout of holes, in the manner of the Old Course at St Andrews, whereby the front nine holes play to the furthest point from the clubhouse and then return in the opposing direction, normally parallel to the holes on the front nine. This is particularly common on links courses where the holes follow the narrow band of coastal soils but also on early inland courses, which followed the traditional approach.

Layout with cross-over holes

These courses contain holes whose line of play crosses over another; these tended to appear where there was a lack of suitable land for the golf course so that holes were squeezed into a site which was really too small. However, there are other examples where the land area was not a limiting factor and crossing holes were created either due to the lack of skill of the architect, in finding an alternative solution, or because he chose to ignore the inherent dangers such holes posed in favour of making the best use of the natural site features. Crossing holes largely disappeared as golf became more popular and courses grew busier. Strangely, even some great architects, such as Alister MacKenzie, persisted in including crossing holes in some of their layouts where they felt the need. This was, perhaps,

due to the strong influence of the Old Course at St Andrews on design thinking, which contains crossing holes 7 and 11 and a number of shared 'double' greens.

Layout with two loops of 9 holes

An efficient routing whereby both sets of 9 holes begin and finish in the vicinity of the clubhouse.

There are many variations on this theme with courses that contain unbalanced loops of 10 and 8 holes returning to the clubhouse: for instance, where the shape of the land made it difficult to split the course evenly between each loop. Where the number of holes in each loop is fairly close the courses still have some of the flexibility for play afforded by returning loops of 9 holes.

Even within two loops of 9 holes there are additional nuances to consider, such as whether the loops of holes are completely separate, intertwined, or whether one lies inside the other. Muirfield, in Scotland, is famed for having holes playing in a great variety of direction and this is largely due to the fact that the course contains an inner and outer loop of 9 holes each, which play clockwise on the front 9 and anticlockwise on the back 9.

Residential estate layout

This is a layout whereby the golf course is part of a planned residential complex and routed in a manner that allows for access to private housing. The golf course provides a landscape equivalent to the traditional parkland landscape of a large country house for the residents who live on the estate.

There are many variations on these forms of layout, and, while some particularly good historic examples may be found to represent the first instances in England of the types listed, it is the quality of the integration of the course into the landscape that should normally be judged to assess its value as a historic designed landscape. The top architects were masters of getting the maximum benefit from the natural terrain and making best use of the existing site features. In this way they minimised the need for costly earth-modelling of the landscape.

D) Early or Representative Examples of a Type of Site

Seven site types have been identified and can be summarised as follows:

- Links
- Parkland
- Heathland
- Moorland
- Woodland
- Commons
- Downland.

The site types have been derived from existing literature sources such as course directories, which categorise the courses in this way. However, there is bound to be some inaccuracy since the information will normally be derived from the Secretary at the golf club in question and will be a subjective judgement. 'Commons' is perhaps a rather odd category since it describes a land use rather than a landscape type. However, most common land would have

originally have been relatively open areas of grassland on generally poor quality soils and so it does often relate to a landscape type. There is obviously a considerable overlap between each category since a single course, for instance, could be described as heathland, moorland, woodland and commons, and one course could have many different landscape types. This is where site investigation by an experienced evaluator will be required, although even that cannot be definitive. However, it will only be those courses that are particularly good examples of a site type, and which predominantly fall within a single category, that will be chosen for the register on the basis of the type of site.

The following pages provide a brief description of the minimum characteristics of each site type and some representative examples of courses for each.

Links

Location: Uncultivated land found in coastal, seashore locations or along river estuaries.

Terrain: Varies from gently rolling to strongly undulating, but never entirely flat. Allied to the fine turf that thrives in the unique coastal conditions it creates ideal golfing conditions of firm and fast-running, rolling ground.

Soil type: Links courses are characterised by sandy soils that have excellent drainage properties. The source of the sand is from adjoining beaches, transported by coastal winds.

Vegetation: Given the often-exposed aspect to seaside winds, there is an absence of tall vegetation and trees in particular. Generally low scrub vegetation such as gorse and broom, along with a variety of hardy grass species such as marram and sea lime grass, can be found on the dunes, and bents and fescue-grasses in the dune slacks and within the playing areas of the golf course.

Golf course character: Links course layouts feature a combination of holes that simply follow a naturalised route either along the shoreline and return, or that play atop, behind or within a sand dune landscape. Exposure to the elements adds to playing challenge.

Key examples of links courses:

- Royal North Devon Golf Club (Westward Ho!)
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club (Hoylake)
- Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club
- Royal St Georges Golf Club.

Parkland



Moor Park golf course

Location: Mainly inland. Traditionally planned as the landscape setting for large country residences and as hunting grounds. However, purpose-made parkland landscapes have also been created around golf courses since the two often fit very well.

Terrain: Generally relatively flat or gently undulating topography, often with streams, ponds and occasionally larger lakes.

Vegetation: Land in which scattered individual trees and groupings are situated within large areas of grassland. Specimen trees are often broadleaved deciduous species. Shelter or screen plantings may be a combination of deciduous, coniferous or mixed woodland.

Soil type: Various, but clay soils are most common.

Golf course character: Generally open aspect, with holes routed around individual trees or tree groupings, which themselves provide playing backdrop and hazards. Sheltered from severest winds so easier playing conditions.

Key examples of parkland courses:

- Edgbaston Golf Club
- Little Aston Golf Club
- Moor Park Golf Club
- Richmond Park Golf Club.

Heathland



Sunningdale Golf Club

Location: Generally inland, but some links courses also contain areas of heathland. There are two types of heathland: upland moorland heath generally found on peaty soils and lowland heath found on sandy soils.

Terrain: Relatively flat or gently undulating topography.

Vegetation: Low ground cover of shrub and scrub trees, such as heather, gorse, pine and birch woodland. Oak woodland tends to invade as fertility levels rise, due to the build-up of leaf litter from the pioneer trees, which causes the landscape to gradually turn to woodland if left unmanaged. Many heathland courses have been affected in this way, leading to a loss of their original historic character, but this can be restored and there are some good examples where this has been achieved.

Soil type: The lowland heath generally has poor, acidic soil, normally rich in sand with good drainage properties. Upland heath tends to be found on acidic peaty soils, which can be wetter.

Golf course character: Generally open aspect, the native vegetation cover provides the majority of the ground cover in out-of-play areas and distinctive visual impact. Further, it also provides additional use as playing hazard and backdrop. Sheltered from severest winds so easier playing conditions.

Key examples of heathland courses:

- The Berkshire Golf Club
- Liphook Golf Club
- Sunningdale Golf Club
- Swinley Forest Golf Club
- Walton Heath Golf Club
- Wentworth
- Woking Golf Club
- Woodhall Spa.

Moorland



Saddleworth Golf Club

Location: Inland. Open, uncultivated, non-mountainous land at a high elevation relative to sea level or remote country known variously as upland, moor, bog or fell.

Terrain: Generally relatively undulating.

Vegetation: Low ground cover of moorland grasses, heather, bracken, mosses and scattered, sparse tree cover.

Soil type: Peaty soil with variable drainage properties.

Golf course character: Similar landscape characteristics to those of heathland courses with low ground-cover vegetation, though with less tall shrub or natural tree cover due to greater wind exposure.

Key examples of moorland courses:

- Appleby Golf Club
- Huddersfield Golf Club
- The Manchester Golf Club
- Pannal Golf Club
- Saddleworth Golf Club.

Woodland



Coombe Hill golf course

Location: Inland. Either as naturally occurring woodland or as manmade plantation.

Terrain: Varies.

Vegetation: Deciduous, coniferous or mixed woodlands. Dependent upon species mix and management of woodland, other understorey shrubs and flora may be evident.

Soil type: Varies.

Golf course character: Enclosed. Extensive tree cover affords protection from worst of weather as well as providing visual screening and aesthetic backdrop. Dependent upon fairway width, trees may constitute playing hazards.

Key examples of woodland courses:

- Ferndown Golf Club.

Commons

Location: Inland.

Terrain: Undulating topography with naturally occurring features and manmade features, often as the result of quarrying for stone, sand, gravel or brick clay for early building construction.

Vegetation: Grassland and low scrub ground cover. Trees were originally cleared or pollarded for firewood, or to make space for grazing animals.

Soil type: Various, but generally low in nutrients, which made it unsuitable for agricultural production.

Golf course character: Generally open aspect that makes use of the topography and easily maintainable ground cover. Similar in this respect to the characteristics of the early links courses.

Key examples of commons courses:

- Beccles Golf Club
- Beverley & East Riding Golf Club
- Mitcham Golf Club
- Painswick Golf Club
- Old Minchinhampton Golf Course
- Wimbledon Common Golf Club.

Downland

Location: Inland. Sites associated with chalk or limestone parent material.

Terrain: Undulating topography of gently rolling hills and rounded crests, providing excellent topography for golf.

Vegetation: Such calcareous grassland able to sustain an exceptional diversity of flora. Often subject to hawthorn scrub invasion and gradual transition to beech woodland.

Soil type: Shallow, lime rich soil though more alkaline. Good natural drainage.

Golf course character: Generally open landscapes with good playing characteristics.

Key examples of downland courses:

- The Dyke Golf Club
- Ogbourne Downs Golf Club
- Seaford Golf Club
- Tavistock Golf Club
- The West Wilts Golf Club.

E) Early or Representative Examples of the Work of a Designer/ Architect of National Importance

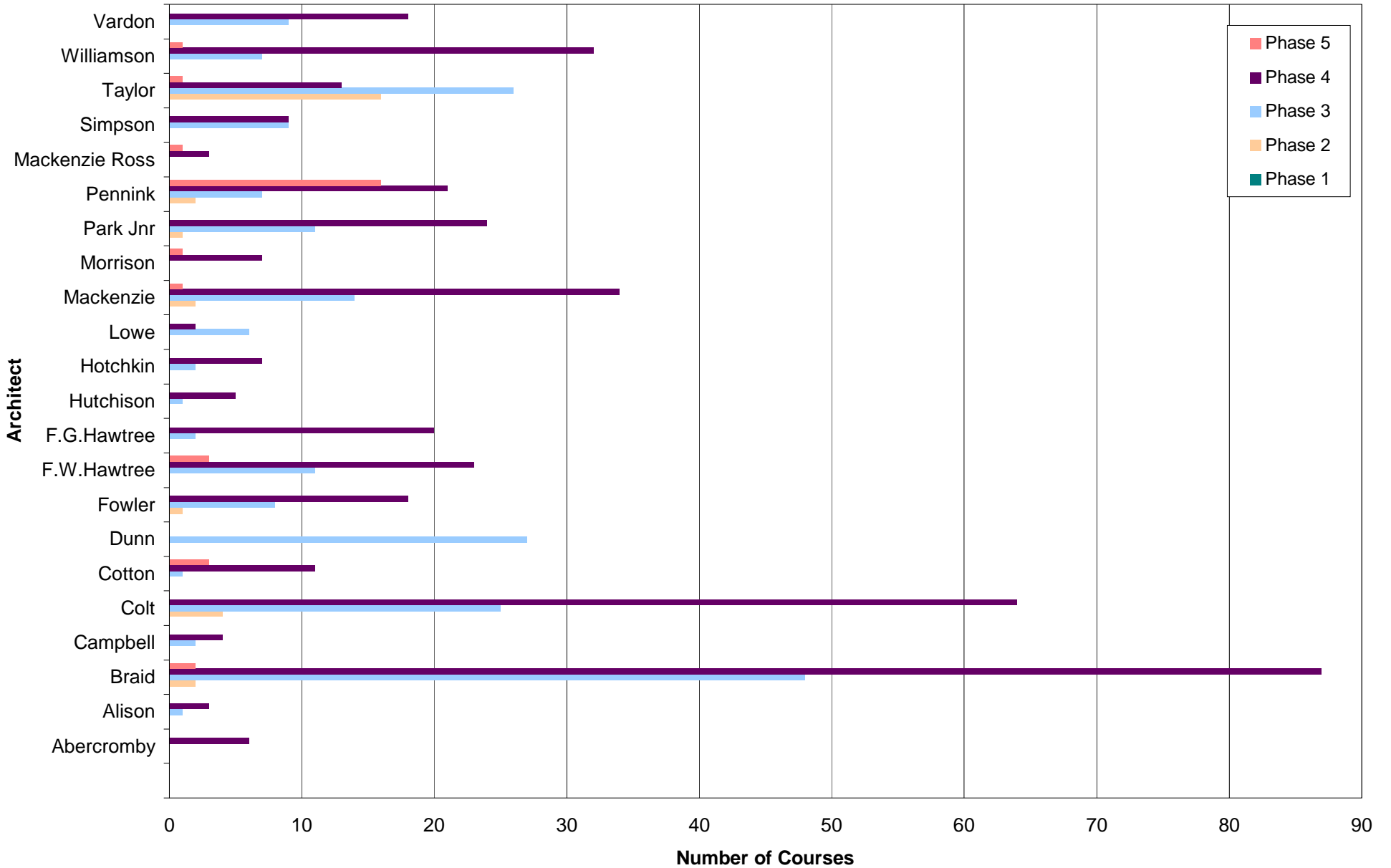
A number of key architects have been identified in Section I and a more definitive listing is given in the Appendix with information on their background and examples of key courses for each. The chart on page 32 gives an idea of the number of courses which each architect is credited with designing and the various eras of development that these courses fall under. However, it should be noted that this information has been derived from a desktop study only and a more detailed assessment of the golf courses will be required in order to determine:

- a. whether the architect is correctly credited with the original design (or substantial redesign) of the course in question, and
- b. that the course has not been substantially altered since the architect was involved and there is still a significant proportion of the original design remaining.

It is interesting to note that some architects, such as James Braid and Harry Colt, were incredibly prolific, while others such as Philip MacKenzie Ross, Hugh Alison or John Abercrombie are credited with only a handful of courses in England. The lack of courses by Hugh Alison is partly due to the fact that he worked in partnership with Harry Colt and so some courses that he designed may be credited to Colt instead (the same is true for John Morrison). In addition, Alison travelled a lot and did the bulk of his design work overseas. The number of golf courses designed should not be confused with the quality, and James Braid was not in the same league as the likes of Harry Colt when it came to either layout or detailed design. Conversely, Abercrombie, who is only credited with six golf courses in his career, was well respected by his peers for creating natural looking hazards and golf holes.

We have not attempted to provide a ranking of the architects by order of their design abilities since this is a very subjective business. In addition, since the level of input each had in a project varied from course to course it is difficult to know, without further extensive research, which courses are representative of the true abilities of the architect in question. The quality of a golf course will also owe much to the quality of the original site, and those architects who were fortunate to work on sites that lent themselves naturally to the creation of a golf course might have obtained undue prominence in relation to their abilities. However, there is sufficient knowledge of a number of principle architects such as Colt, MacKenzie, Morrison, Fowler, Simpson, Abercrombie and others to know that they were very important protagonists during the Golden Age to warrant key examples of their courses being listed on a register for protection.

Number of courses credited to some key architects



F) Golf Courses having an Association with Significant People or Historical Events

Given the timescale limitations placed upon the research for this report it has not been possible to assess each golf course within England on an individual basis and determine its historical significance with regards to persons or events of national historical importance. Instead, we have identified the venues within England where international golf tournaments of note have been held. Most of the courses that come under this criterion would deserve listing for other reasons, since they are all courses that are recognised for the golfing challenge they provide and therefore the design qualities that they possess. However, all are likely to have been altered in some way over the years to retain their challenge and to combat the effects of club and ball technology, so many original historic features from the first phase of the courses development may have been lost as a result.

The following tournaments and golf courses have been identified:

The Open Championship

Six English courses have hosted this Championship:

- Princes Golf Club – once – 1932.
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club – 8 times – 1954, 1961, 1965, 1971, 1976, 1983, 1991 & 1998.
- Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club (Deal) – twice – 1909 & 1920.
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club (Hoylake) – 10 times – 1897, 1902, 1907, 1913, 1924, 1930, 1936, 1947, 1956 & 1967.
- Royal Lytham Golf Club – 10 times – 1926, 1952, 1958, 1963, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1988, 1996 & 2001.
- Royal St Georges Golf Club – 13 times – 1894, 1899, 1904, 1911, 1922, 1928, 1934, 1938, 1949, 1981, 1985, 1993 & 2003.

The Amateur Championship

Eight English courses have hosted this Championship:

- Formby Golf Club – 3 times – 1957, 1967 & 1984.
- Ganton Golf Club – 3 times – 1964, 1977 & 1991.
- Hillside Golf Club – once – 1979.
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club – twice – 1946 & 1989.
- Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club – 3 times – 1923, 1982 & 1997.
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club (Hoylake) – 18 times – 1885, 1887, 1890, 1894, 1898, 1902, 1906, 1910, 1921, 1927, 1933, 1939, 1953, 1962, 1969, 1975, 1995 & 2000.

- Royal North Devon Golf Club – 3 times – 1912, 1925 & 1931.
- Royal St Georges Golf Club – 12 times – 1892, 1896, 1900, 1904, 1908, 1914, 1929, 1937, 1948, 1959, 1972 & 1997.

The Ryder Cup

Of the courses that fall within the scope of this study, eight English courses have hosted this tournament (the Belfry is omitted from this listing as it was designed in 1977):

- Ganton Golf Club – once – 1949.
- Lindrick Golf Club – once – 1957.
- Moortown Golf Club – once – 1929.
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club – twice – 1963 & 1969.
- Royal Lytham Golf Club – twice – 1961 & 1977.
- Southport & Ainsdale Golf Club – twice – 1933 & 1937.
- Walton Heath Golf Club – once – 1981.
- Wentworth – once – 1953.

Wentworth was also the inaugural venue for the first professional match between the professional golfers of Great Britain and the United States of America, in 1926.

The Walker Cup

Six English courses have hosted this tournament played between teams of amateur golfers from Great Britain & Ireland and the United States of America:

- Ganton Golf Club – once – 2003.
- Hillside Golf Club – once – 1971.
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club – once – 1951.
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club – twice – 1921 & 1983.
- Royal St Georges Golf Club – twice – 1930 & 1967.
- Sunningdale Golf Club – once – 1987.

Ladies British Amateur Championship

Twenty-seven English courses have hosted this championship:

- Alwoodley Golf Club – once – 1971.
- Broadstone Golf Club – once – 1951.
- Burnham & Berrow Golf Club – 3 times – 1906, 1923 & 1938.
- Formby Golf Club – once – 1930.
- Ganton Golf Club – 3 times – 1954, 1966 & 1985.

- Hunstanton Golf Club – 5 times – 1914, 1928, 1946, 1958 & 1972.
- Lindrick Golf Club – once – 2003.
- Little Aston Golf Club – once – 1998.
- Littlestone Golf Club – once – 1894.
- Notts Golf Club – once – 1978.
- Pannal Golf Club – once – 1991.
- Princes Golf Club – twice – 1922 & 1964.
- Royal Ascot Golf Club – once – 1959.
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club – 4 times – 1909, 1962, 1999 & 2000.
- Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club – twice – 1902 & 1988.
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club – 3 times – 1896, 1988 & 1996.
- Royal Lytham Golf Club – twice – 1948 & 1993.
- Royal North Devon Golf Club – twice – 1900 & 1910.
- Royal St Georges Golf Club – twice – 1922 & 1964.
- Saunton Golf Club – twice – 1932 & 1992.
- Silloth-on-Solway Golf Club – twice – 1976 & 1983.
- Southport & Ainsdale Golf Club – once – 1936.
- St Annes Old Links – once – 1893.
- Sunningdale Golf Club – once – 1956.
- Walton Heath Golf Club – twice – 1968 & 1982.
- West Sussex Golf Club – once – 1986.
- Woodhall Spa Golf Club – once – 1980.

The Curtis Cup

Eight English courses have hosted this tournament played between teams of lady amateur golfers from Great Britain & Ireland and the United States of America:

- Ganton Golf Club – once – 2000.
- Lindrick Golf Club – once – 1960.
- Princes Golf Club – once – 1956.
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club – once – 1948.
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club – once – 1992.
- Royal Lytham Golf Club – once – 1976.

- Royal St Georges Golf Club – once – 1988.
- Wentworth – once – 1932.

G) Golf Courses having a Strong Group Value

Whilst a golf course may not be of sufficient individual merit to be entered on a register it may have a greater historic value when considered as part of a group. Some factors by which golf courses may be grouped are as follows:

- By age, where a cluster of key courses appeared within a relatively short period of time.
- By architect or designer, to show how their design style developed in their formative years.
- By location or type of site.

Some golf courses exhibit and share similar characteristics with others to the extent that the individual golf course forms part of a more significant wider group or collection of golf courses. Some examples follow.

Example 1

A group of premier Surrey heathland courses within the same geographical locale and site type known as ‘the three Ws’:

- West Hill Golf Club 1909
- Woking Golf Club 1893 (remodelled strategically by John Low within the period 1900–10)
- Worplesdon Golf Club 1908.

Example 2

An important group of links courses along the same stretch of Lancashire coastline:

- Formby Golf Club
- Hillside Golf Club
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club
- Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club
- Southport & Ainsdale Golf Club
- St Annes Old Links.

Example 3

An important group of courses that share both the input of an important, noteworthy architect (Alister MacKenzie) and a geographical locale (Leeds):

- Alwoodley Golf Club
- Moortown Golf Club
- Sand Moor Golf Club.

Part 3: Case Studies

Case studies of three golf courses known to have significant historical architectural merit were undertaken.

The courses chosen for study exemplify a range of ages, locations, and site types as follows:

Golf course/club	Year of foundation	Location	Site type
Royal Liverpool Golf Club	1869	Merseyside	Links
Edgbaston Golf Club	1896	Birmingham	Parkland
Moortown Golf Club	1923	Leeds	Heathland

Case Study of a Parkland Golf Course – Edgbaston Golf Club, Birmingham

Site Name: Edgbaston Golf Club

Parish: Edgbaston – Birmingham

National Grid Reference: OS GR 056847 (Clubhouse) Sheet 220 (Explorer)

Ownership: Private members' golf club (course subject to 50-year lease)

A designed landscape of special historic interest

Set within a historic designed parkland and one of the last golf courses designed by Harry Colt, Edgbaston golf course has several strong reasons for designation as a designed landscape of special historic interest:

- The course utilises a wonderful parkland setting – attributed to Capability Brown – and a gently undulating topography, a mere mile and a half from the centre of one of England's largest cities. This locale alone sets Edgbaston apart from most other courses within the country.
- Designed in 1936, the golf course's layout and detail design reflect all the lessons learned by Colt throughout his long career. At just over 6100 yards, the course

with its cleverly integrated layout, small contoured greens and strategically placed bunkers perfectly encapsulates his design philosophies.

- Although some additional tree planting between fairways has occurred, and some architectural features have either been removed or revised slightly, the course itself is largely unchanged from the one that Colt originally laid out. With its period clubhouse (dating from 1750) set on a terrace that overlooks much of the course, Edgbaston retains a tranquil atmosphere that is immediately evocative of the Golden Age of golf course architecture and design.

Type of site

Edgbaston: a place steeped in history and an enclave of sylvan beauty.⁶

The above phrase is actually the title of a book on the larger geographical area of Edgbaston by a local historian, Douglas Jones, but it is the perfect summarising description for the setting of the golf course itself. Although the course dates from the mid-20th century, the landscape that serves as the backcloth to it is far older, dating from the 18th century. Located within Edgbaston Park, which forms part of the conservation area of Edgbaston, the setting is one of parkland, meadow and marsh, and boasts a lake and sumptuous woodland. It is served by Edgbaston Hall (the clubhouse) with a long history that has borne witness to events and personalities of both national and local importance.

From a landscape perspective little is known of the site's history prior to the 18th century. It was not until Sir Richard Gough bought the estate in 1717 that Edgbaston Park, as a more formal designed landscape, came into being. Taking advantage of the rolling topography and the natural vantage point of the northern end of the site, it was also not long before construction of the classically designed Edgbaston Hall began:

The spot he had chosen was one of great beauty, not only commanding extensive and charming views of the hills and slopes of Frankley and the Lickey, but within the park boundary there was undulating and grandly-timbered scenery, heightened by the charm of the placid lake, and surrounded by woodland extending to the vale below.⁷

The land around the hall was enclosed two years after the purchase with palisade fencing, and deer parks were formed. Closer to the house, formal gardens and level terraces linked the house to the landscape.

The other notable feature within the landscape, and which dominates the western half of the Edgbaston Park, is the body of water known as the Great Pool. This man-made feature was built in 1701 to improve the water supply of the industrial mills, newly converted in the 16th century. Approximately 500 metres long by 250 metres wide, this lake is fed by the Chad Brook and retained at its southern end by a brick-walled dam – a feature that Colt originally intended to utilise for a tee in his initial sketch design for the 12th hole.

Prior to the golf course the fact which is of most historic interest, where the landscape design at Edgbaston is concerned, was the involvement of the famed English landscape garden designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who was commissioned by Sir Henry Gough in 1776 to provide general designs for altering the park. However, an element of

doubt remains over the exact nature of the design proposals and, indeed, if Brown even visited Edgbaston Hall and Park. What can be ascertained is that, by 1789, certain landscape features characteristic of Capability Brown were evident – these being the deep shelter belt plantations around the Great Pool, and along Priory Road, as well as the ha-ha (replacing the previous embankment and fencing surrounding the house). It is likely that Capability Brown suggested further improvements to the dam and Great Pool, as well as advising on tree planting and felling to improve the visual attraction of the parkland.

Due to its inherent landscape characteristics, Edgbaston Park was an excellent site for the creation of a golf course with very favourable topography, vegetation and views. The open aspect of the grassland expanses of the parkland provided the ideal playing turf and routing for the fairways, whilst the natural fall in topography in an east–west direction towards the Great Pool ensured that changes in elevation would provide golfing challenge and playing variety for holes. A further advantage was that the soils of the Park offered good drainage properties. The Chad Brook and, more notably, the Great Pool were further outstanding natural features that could be used to good visual and strategic design effect – at a time when large bodies of water on inland golf courses were a rare aesthetic and design commodity. Further, landform features and ridges occurring naturally within the parkland would be maximised by Colt to create ideal green sites or locations for strategic hazards.

As its parkland nature would suggest, the park has many wonderful individual specimen trees and natural groupings of species including oak, beech and sweet chestnut. The golf course makes best use of these both as strategic hazards and as visual backdrops to define the golf holes. The specimen trees are supplemented by dense, mature shrub and tree plantations along most of the boundary edges. Together they successfully screen out much of the buildings and traffic that adjoin the course; indeed, it is only the high-rise buildings of Birmingham appearing over the tree lines that betray the proximity of the course to the city centre.

Despite some artificial avenues of silver birch barring views at the start and end of the course layout, which has led to a loss in the openness across the course which Colt's design would have intended to retain, internal views across the golf course are generally good in most directions. From the elevated position of the clubhouse terrace fine panoramic views can be enjoyed.

Main phase of golf course development

Early 20th century (Golf Development Era 4)

Location and setting

Edgbaston golf course is located within Edgbaston Park, approximately two miles south of Birmingham City Centre. Edgbaston Hall (utilised as the clubhouse) stands on a terrace at the highest, northern end of the site. At its southern edge, the course is bounded by the A38 and along its northern and western boundaries by Edgbaston Park Road. The University of Birmingham campus lies to the immediate south-west of the

course. Priory Road (B4217) runs along the eastern edge of the course and provides access to the clubhouse. The site occupies 144 acres in all.

Extent of the designed landscape

Edgbaston Hall and Park remains under the ownership of the Calthorpe Estate. In 1936, following negotiations with agents of the Calthorpe Estate, the tenancy of the Hall and the park was obtained by Edgbaston Golf Club on the premise that the park remain largely as an area of open space and that any development did not interfere with the Great Pool. Edgbaston Park became the third home of the club, which had previously been established as a tenant on sites at Moseley and Harborne. Initially, the area of land covered by the Park was found to be too small for the creation of a golf course. It was not until the club acquired an additional parcel of land at 'Park Mount' (an early 19th-century villa) immediately south-east of the Park that there was sufficient space for a course to be successfully planned. The existing course therefore consists of 14 holes on the site of the original Park, with holes 3, 4, 5 and 6 constructed on the additionally purchased land. In 1936 Harry Shapland Colt – of the golf architecture firm Colt, Alison & Morrison – laid out his design for the course, along with additional landscape intervention works that included the planting of trees and shrubs along the Bristol Road boundary and the introduction of silver birch tree plantings:

In 1936–7 the park was laid out by H.S. Colt of Colt, Alison and Morrison. Besides the planting of a large number of silver birch trees, and the felling of nearly 400 other trees, the design required the lake to be lowered so as to make room for the 13th fairway, thereby making the brick dam more visible ... Other areas of the course required building up and earth was acquired from the site of the King Edwards School swimming pool and from the Five Ways underpass.⁸

Thus Colt designed the course in a manner that made best use of the land available while preserving both the natural beauty and original character of the site. He also arranged the layout in two loops of nine holes to provide the Club with the flexibility afforded by having alternate starting points for a round of golf. Fortunately any constraints that would have impinged on the course design were all evident at the time that Colt laid out the course. Thus, the nature of the neighbouring external boundaries was already known, and significant or problematic issues were thereby avoided, leading to a design that successfully avoided any conflicts with adjacent properties in relation to stray golf balls. The extent and nature of these properties is such that they have not, and do not, exert any external pressure upon the golf holes themselves which would, in other circumstances, have dictated alterations to the layout.

Historical influences on golf course development

Evidence from ordnance survey maps shows that Edgbaston Park, and hence the golf course, has maintained a largely unaltered relationship to its immediate surroundings despite the urban growth and expansion of Birmingham city centre.

Components of the designed landscape – golfing features recorded

The clubhouse

Edgbaston Hall, which acts as the golf clubhouse, dates from 1715 and is a sizeable brick two- and three-storey building with stone detailing built in the classical architectural style of the 18th century and characteristic of the country houses of that period. Although its exteriors are original, interior spaces have been remodelled in order to facilitate clubhouse operational needs. Such is its fine appearance, detailing and condition, however, that it is of special architectural and historical interest and as such a Grade II listed building. Attached ancillary buildings are of a later period.

The golf course

As stated previously, it was not until the additional land to the south of ‘Park Mount’ was purchased that enough land was available for the construction of an 18-hole golf course (an earlier scheme by J.H. Taylor for a course within the original confines of Edgbaston Park had been rejected as too dangerous and constricted a layout). The course at Edgbaston has been little altered over the years and has retained much of the original design features intended by Harry Colt. Moreover, given the tight site area of the Park and the lack of spare land, the golf course has not fallen victim to pressures to extend the golf course to combat new technology. The downside of this, for the Club, has been the lack of space to create a dedicated practice-range facility.

In fact, from viewing the original architect’s drawings and correspondence, the course layout is as it was intended. Evidence exists that the original proposal was actually designed to play almost 350 yards longer, by way of back tees stretched to the external boundaries. This, however, appears to have been rejected by the architect in favour of a shorter, safer routing that retained the same lines of play and allowed for a more efficient and flexible golf course. In designing Edgbaston, Colt placed emphasis not on length but on accurate play and shot-making, as a *Country Life* article explained in 1936:

In these days of long hitters and far flying balls the architect has had in mind the provision of a course of acceptable length to both short and double figure handicap players, and a feature of nearly every hole will be the necessity for the accurate playing of drives or second shots, if the subsequent approach shot is to land anywhere near the pin.⁹

Edgbaston – Comparison between longer and current course scorecards

1936 Hole	Yards	Par	Par	Yards	Current hole
1	350	4	4	360	1
2	500	5	4	429	2
3	200	3	3	171	3
4	420	4	4	398	4
5	180	3	3	184	5
6	450	4	4	430	6

7	170	3	3	143	7
8	480	5	4	410	8
9	400	4	4	395	9
10	430	4	4	457	10
11	360	4	4	294	11
12	430	4	4	371	12
13	455	4	4	387	13
14	160	3	3	167	14
15	400	4	4	318	15
16	360	4	4	283	16
17	460	5	5	503	17
18	350	4	4	406	18
	6485	71	69	6106	

The most notable feature of the disregarded longer 1936 layout was that Colt intended for the back tees on the 12th hole to be constructed on the brick dam on the southern end of the Great Pool. This would have created a hole that would have required a brave, dramatic tee shot that carried over the south-east corner of the Pool. Sadly, what would have been a rare hole in England at that time – that of heroic golf architecture utilising a large water hazard – didn't materialise, for the tee on the dam was never built.

Minor alterations carried out in 1975 and 1976 saw the creation of alternate tees to provide different lines of play on the 12th and 16th holes, though these did not alter the length of either hole dramatically.

However, no substantial changes appear to have been made to the layout following the decision to create a shorter routing, or the playing strategy as regards hazard placement, and the design and contouring of the green complexes have been maintained as originally intended. So little has been altered since 1936 that even where fairway bunkers have been removed, evidence remains of the shape and scale of these landforms such that they could be returned into play with the minimum of effort. Indeed, the only real alterations to the course have been superficial, cosmetic ones, primarily aimed at simplifying the playability of some of the bunkers on the course.

One negative aspect from which the course has suffered from over the years has been the introduction of artificial tree plantings of non-native species. The most glaring of these are the groupings of Leyland cypress which are grossly out of scale, dwarfing the greens at holes 10, 12 and 17. Not only do they obscure views across the course, but so great is their visual impact that they detract from the playing challenge presented by these holes, making the judgement of distance of approach shots significantly easier.

The current layout

The current course provides a very good test of golf for the amateur club golfer. Edgbaston was never designed by Colt to be a course of very long yardage – a type of course described by Dr Alister MacKenzie as *sloggers' golf* – for pure length was a concept much avoided by the gentlemen amateur designers of whom Colt was pre-eminent. Writing in *Some Essays on Golf Course Architecture* in 1920, Colt set out his thoughts on the yardage of a golf course:

It will probably be agreed that most of the interesting courses are not much longer than 6300 yards in total length, or much shorter than 5800 yards, and, it may generally be held that a course which measures about 6000 yards is well off in regard to length ... there is no reason why a course restricted in length through lack of space should not provide golf which reaches in quality, though not quantity, the standard set by a first class course.¹⁰

Indeed, as Colt wrote in correspondence to the club in 1936, he was keen to champion skill over strength when producing his golfing layouts with club golfers in mind:

I personally, infinitely prefer to play now over a comparatively short course with a number of exciting, amusing and interesting shots. A very long course is extremely trying for the older members of a club.¹¹

Notwithstanding its length, the course remains a stiff challenge for the average club golfer, playing to a yardage of just over 6100 yards from the back tees with a par of 69. It also provides a stern golfing test for the low handicap player, as evidenced by the current course record which stands at just 5 under par.

Current scorecard

Hole	Medal yards	Men's yards	Par	Ladies' yards	Par
1	360	350	4	342	4
2	429	417	4	386	4
3	171	159	3	143	3
4	398	386	4	339	4
5	184	174	3	153	3
6	430	420	4	371	5
7	143	132	3	119	3
8	410	400	4	392	4
9	395	383	4	364	4
Out	2920	2821	33	2609	34
10	457	442	4	435	5
11	294	284	4	273	4
12	371	357	4	345	4
13	387	368	4	325	4
14	167	155	3	142	3

15	318	308	4	275	4
16	283	271	4	252	4
17	503	476	5	397	5
18	406	384	4	347	4
In	3186	3045	36	2791	37
Total	6106	5866	69	5400	71

Case Study of a Heathland Golf Course – Moortown, West Yorkshire

Site Name: Moortown Golf Club

Parish: Moortown/Alwoodley – Leeds, West Yorkshire

National Grid Reference: OSGR 306403

Ownership: Private members' golf club

A designed landscape of special historic interest

Founded in 1909, Moortown is a keynote inland golf course which has played an important part in both amateur and professional golfing history, most notably in 1929 as the first course in Britain to host the Ryder Cup. Designed by Dr Alister MacKenzie, the renowned golf course architect, Moortown's layout and detailed design embodies MacKenzie's thirteen points of design theory as outlined in his treatise *Golf Architecture* of 1920 – golf course design 'commandments' that greatly contributed to the evolution of the golf course architecture profession. Further, one of the individual holes, the par-3 Gibraltar hole, was instrumental to the very founding of the golf club itself: a revered and influential design that encapsulated the essence of what MacKenzie strove for in good golf design – a hole being challenging to the scratch player yet fair to the handicap golfer, such that all golfers, regardless of their actual playing ability, were able to maximise their enjoyment from the game.

Despite some recent alterations brought about by the construction of housing along course boundary edges, much of the inherent spirit and character of the course remains today.

In short Moortown is a classic example of MacKenzie's golf course architecture and from its inception had a great influence on the populations of Northern England, playing a key role in the growth of golf's popularity within this region.

Type of site

The site on which the golf course stands lies at an average height of approximately 140m above sea level. As the name suggests the land chosen for the original 9-hole course was characteristic of heathland, being an area of extensively open, uncultivated land, with a

topography that was relatively flat yet that featured distinct, gently rolling terrain. As the demand for a larger course grew, farmland east of the Black Moor was acquired.

Initially, the vegetation cover of the site was that of true heathland, and consisted in the main of low ground cover of heather and gorse, and some retained hedgerows. Some sentinel specimen trees and spinney woodland gave vertical relief in what was a very open site with otherwise uninterrupted internal views across the golf course and external views outwith the site to the agricultural fields and land beyond. The additional land chosen at Black Moor – the western end of the site – was described in Moortown Golf Club's Ryder Cup book as:

a heathery, boggy hill-side, full of stagnant pools. The Moor ran northwards to a stream, and north of the stream was farmland known as Alwoodley Moss. The founders considered this to be an ideal site for developing the high class golf course they had visualised.¹²

From an ecological perspective, the basin peat deposit at Alwoodley Moss is the only example of its kind in West Yorkshire, although it is apparent that this was not an obstructive issue with regards to the formation of the course. Whilst the abundant natural features, terrain and landscape character were first rate for golf, the site chosen was not, in the beginning, without its construction difficulties as MacKenzie hinted in his treatise *The Spirit of St Andrews*:

The natural difficulties also were much greater than on most golf courses. There were no natural grasses, it was covered completely with heather, bushes, rocks or agricultural crops, and every bit of it had to be drained.¹³

Such was the wetness of the Black Moor in the beginning that workmen during construction had to be roped together! Overcoming the drainage difficulties and the peaty soil allowed MacKenzie to maximise the advantages of the site and to route a testing golf course that made best use of the topography and natural vegetation as playing hazard and backdrop to create a golf course that was not only rich in aesthetics and texture but that would give Moortown instant visual identity.

With the advent of self-seeded birch woodland copses, supplemented by planted stands of pine trees, and the invasion of shrub vegetation and rhododendron, a more wooded, treelined golf course has developed. Although the benefits are to be felt by the screening of the external boundary edges, where these are now lined with houses, linear tree plantings between the fairways of Holes 1 and 18, 2 and 3, 2 and 16, 8 and 9, 9 and 15 have had a negative impact on the former, more open, heathland character of the course. The natural heather and gorse vegetation of the Black Moor area of the course, especially, has allowed Moortown to retain its strong heath landscape character and the golf club has plans to restore this to other parts of the course.

Main phases of golf course development

Early 20th century (Golf Development Era 4); late 20th century (redevelopment).

Location and setting

Moortown is located 5½ miles north of Leeds City Centre, in the suburbs of Alwoodley/Moor Allerton, and is accessed from the A61 Leeds–Harrogate Road. The

golf course is almost entirely bounded by suburban residential housing along its boundary, save for mixed woodland at the southern edge of Hole 7, to the rear of Hole 10, and along the western edge of Hole 14. Given the predominance of housing overlooking the course, external views are somewhat limited, as screen shrub and tree planting has occurred along most of the boundary edges. Despite the tree-lined avenues barring views at the start and end of the course layout, internal views across the golf course are generally good in most directions.

Extent of the designed landscape

The original golf course consisted of nine holes fashioned on the Black Moor. As demand grew and farmland was acquired to the east of the Moor, the course was extended and holes were reshaped so that, by the mid-1920s, the basic framework of the current golf course layout had been established. The boundaries required for the golf course were thus set, with little change occurring until the 1980s.

By the late 20th century, the encircling of the golf course by residential housing led to safety issues relating to play alongside external boundaries, which necessitated new construction and the redevelopment of parts of the golf course leading to a slight alteration to MacKenzie's course routing and the creation of two new holes in the spinney woodland.

Historical influences on golf course development

Evidence from Ordnance Survey maps from the last 150 years shows how the golf course and its relationship to its immediate surroundings has altered as the open agricultural field pattern and countryside around Moortown and Alwoodley gradually became suburbanised as Leeds expanded.

Components of the designed landscape – golfing features recorded

The clubhouse

Moortown golf clubhouse dates from 1915 and is a two- and three-storey building in the local vernacular architectural style of large domestic villa-style housing of the period.

The golf course

Although the course at Moortown has been altered over the years (initially by MacKenzie himself) it still bears many of its original design features, as well as the stark evidence of former green and tee sites which had unfortunately become redundant with the advent of advances in playing technology and because of some genuine safety concerns.

The layout of the golf course at Moortown has seen three phases of development. Although, initially, the course underwent expansion from 9 to 12, and then 18 holes between November 1908 and Whitsuntide 1910, it appears to have been part of a planned sequence of development as finances, and agreement with local landowners,

allowed. Unfortunately no plan of the original short course exists with which to illustrate the layout.

The first significant change to the layout came in 1915, when the location of the clubhouse was moved from its former position at the rear of the 11th green to its current location. An acre of land was purchased for the new clubhouse and 15 acres of land were leased in order to provide new link holes with the existing golf course. There is mention, in the Ryder Cup book, of the land being used to expand the course and it is evident, when comparing the 1910 and 1929 scorecards, that holes in the vicinity of the current 1st and 18th holes were lengthened considerable at this time. Based on the field boundary patterns, and the recorded length of the old holes, it would seem logical to surmise that the old green and tee, for what were then the 9th and 10th holes, were originally sited at the bottom corner of the current practice ground. The ditch that runs in front of the current 18th fairway, and which has been culverted across the 1st fairway, probably constituted the old course boundary prior to the construction of the new clubhouse.

Moortown – scorecard for 1910 course

1910 hole	Yards	Bogey	Current hole	1929 hole	Name
1	176	4	(gone)	12 (170)	Moor Top
2	420	5	(gone)	13 (425)	Dykeside/Long Wall
3	146	3	14th green	14 (146)	Corner
4	440	5	13	11 (445)	The Heather
5	445	5	12	10 (586)	The Long
6	396	5	15	15 (390)	Paddock
7	415	5	16	16 (425)	Kings Bridge/Holly Bush
8	346	5	(gone)	17 (345)	Barkers Field/Tall Pines
9	343	5	short 18	18 (410)	(Home)
10	299	4	short 1	1 (499)	(Windy Ridge)
11	186	3	4	4 (183)	Spinney
12	362	5	5	5 (380)	Dog Leg
13	455	5	3	3 (450)	Lone Pine
14	390	5	short 2	2 (415)	Punch Bowl
15	152	3	8	6 (221)	The Major/Gorse
16	415	5	9	7 (412)	King's Bridge/The Brook
17	150	3	10	8 (150)	Gibraltar
18	330	5	11	9 (350)	Old Club House
	5866	80		(6402)	

Another notable feature of the 1929 scorecard, in comparison with that of 1910, is the lengthening of the current 8th and 12th holes. The 8th was extended, with the construction of new tees, some 70 yards further back. This would have been made

possible by the fact that the course was renumbered some time between 1910 and 1929 (probably around 1915) so that the current 8th hole was played after the existing 5th hole, rather than after the 2nd as it was in 1910, which meant that there was no increase in the walk between green and tee. The shifting of tee position on the 8th hole facilitated the later extension of the 2nd hole in the 1950s. The extension of the current 12th hole is a little more difficult to fathom since it grew from 445 yards to 586 yards in length. Some of this length may have been gained at the tee when the clubhouse was relocated, but, given the large nature of the increase, it is likely that the green was moved back at the same time. In any case, we can be confident that MacKenzie was involved with the alterations to the course that created the layout evident in 1929. Minutes of a Green Committee meeting confirm that Major MacKenzie held the post of Honorary Course Construction Advisor until 1933 and other records state that he had an input until the late 1920s in refining the course. So what had been created thus far had MacKenzie's involvement and presumable agreement. It is also recorded that two other great masters of golf course architecture, Harry Colt and Herbert Fowler, visited Moortown in its earlier stages of development and gave it their approval. Few courses can have such a high pedigree.

We understand that some changes were made in the 1930s to the bunker placement and shaping on some holes, but MacKenzie was consulted on any more major changes until 1933. The most significant layout change prior to the 1980s, although it only affected the layout of the course in a relatively minor way, was the reconstruction of the 2nd green some 30–40 yards further back onto the plateau and away from its original punch-bowl location. It appears that MacKenzie must have resisted this change since the original proposal appears to have been made while he was still retained as an advisor. It was not until the 1950s that the plan was actioned, this time under the guidance of J.S.F. Morrison, who worked in partnership with H.S. Colt (as indeed MacKenzie did for a time). Other changes were made to the course in the 1950s, including the filling-in or reshaping of bunkers, narrowing of greens, and the levelling of ridges or hollows on greens to reduce their severity. The last item would have been necessitated by an increase in green speeds brought about by the lower heights of cut obtained through advances in mowing machinery. Some key changes in addition to the new 2nd green are listed below:

- Green 1 raised 6 feet, moved 3 yards left and reduced in width.
- Mounds on the 4th removed and bunkers extended inwards.
- Old 17th green relayed and moved left.

No substantial changes appear to have been made to the layout following the alterations related to the relocation of the club house in 1915. However, the appearance of boundary housing in the mid-1930s, and more significantly in the 1960s, culminated in major changes to the golf course in the late 1980s for safety reasons, since the continued existence of the course was under threat. These are summarised below:

- The old 12th and 13th holes (Moor Top) were eliminated.
- A new par-4 was created (the current 14th hole) from a new tee at the start of the old 13th fairway playing to the old 14th green. We understand that the old

14th green was enlarged, and a bunker at the front of the green removed, to make it more receptive for a longer approach shot.

- The 17th hole was shortened to a par 3. A completely new hole was built with tees further forward and green well short and right of the original to take play away from the boundary. The 18th hole was lengthened in the process.
- Two new holes, 6 and 7, were constructed on additional land to replace those lost.

The 1980s alterations were obviously necessary in order to protect the long-term future of the club but do not fit comfortably within the context of the MacKenzie layout.

The current layout

The current course provides a very good test of golf. Setting aside the negative impact of the alterations in the 1980s, it did allow a long par 4 and a par 5 to be created to replace a short par 4 and a par 3, which has lengthened the course to almost 7000 yards and allowed Moortown to remain a challenging test for the top golfers. The par has also increased from 69 to 72 but this was, in part, due to the re-designation of the 2nd hole as a par 5 in the recent past.

Current scorecard

Hole	Champ. yards	Medal yards	Men's yards	Par	Ladies' yards	Par
1	486	486	480	5	454	5
2	453	440	440	5	382	5
3	445	434	421	4	381	4
4	173	168	144	3	130	3
5	393	356	321	4	284	4
6	446	446	402	4	321	4
7	518	518	469	5	456	5
8	220	195	170	3	176	3
9	469	449	435	4	417	5
Out	3603	3492	3282	37	3001	38
10	174	171	157	3	145	3
11	366	366	361	4	325	4
12	552	552	540	5	505	5
13	438	428	420	4	388	5
14	430	368	357	4	361	4
15	393	378	367	4	323	4
16	418	418	402	4	362	4
17	188	159	151	3	129	3

18	433	425	416	4	374	5
In	3392	3265	3171	35	2912	37
Total	6995	6757	6453	72	5913	75

Case Study of a Links Golf Course – Royal Liverpool Golf Club, Hoylake, Merseyside

Site Name: Royal Liverpool Golf Club (Hoylake)

Parish: Hoylake, Merseyside

OS Grid Reference: SJ 215885 (Clubhouse)

Ownership: Private members' golf club

Summary

Within the context of the history of English golf and of golf course design in England, Hoylake lies at the very heart. Built in 1869, the golf course at Royal Liverpool is the oldest of all the English links courses with the exception of Westward Ho! (Royal North Devon). Hoylake has also played host to some of the most important events in the history of British golf, including the inaugural Amateur Championship (1885), the first international match between England and Scotland (1902, later evolving into the Home Internationals), and the first international match between the amateur golfers of Great Britain and the United States of America (1921) – a match that later became the Walker Cup.

Hoylake is also where the rules relating to a player's amateur status with regards to participation in the Open Championship were defined, and, in 1902, where the rubber-core golf ball was first used in the Open Championship – an event that revolutionised the technical advancement of the game.

In terms of both the amateur and professional game in England, the status of the course as a championship venue is unequalled, having played host to the Amateur championship 18 times and to the Open Championship on 10 occasions. A testament to its enduring quality is that in 2006 the Open Championship – the premier event in international golf – will return (now past).

In relation to its architecture, Hoylake is a prime example of a golf course as a constantly evolving entity. Throughout its history the course has gone through alterations in both the routing of the holes and the detailed layout in response to land availability and golfing aesthetic, safety and technological concerns, without losing either its architectural vitality or diminishing its status as one of Britain's finest and sternest championship golfing tests.

Location and setting

Royal Liverpool golf course is located within the seaside town of Hoylake, on the Wirral peninsula, approximately 20 miles south-west of Liverpool city centre. The course stands on relatively flat linksland formed by the river terrace of the eastern shore of the River Dee estuary. Its coastal location allows the holes along the shoreline to enjoy extensive panoramic views to the west, across the river to the hills of North Wales. In common with many historic Scottish courses, the course at Hoylake maintains a strong and connected relationship with the town that bears its name, and the majority of the course is played against this backdrop.

The site at Hoylake has traditional natural attributes including the combination of a firm, crisp turf, freely draining soil, and an open aspect lacking in tree cover. Whilst it lacks the dramatic tumbling terrain of some Scottish or Irish links, the relatively flat topography is enclosed on the southern and western edges by sand dunes. Crucially, as the golf course routing evolved, much greater use was made of these natural site features, creating golf holes distinctive to Hoylake.

A landscape feature unique to Hoylake is the presence of a number of ‘cops’ within the site around which the golf course has (throughout its evolution) played over, around or alongside. The ‘cops’ marked and delineated the old field boundary lines and can be best described as raised, turf-covered dykes (walls) forming low, linear ridges. Over time such has been their significance to the site that they have been incorporated into many of the holes, informing both hole design and strategy.

Historical development

Fortunately, the history of Royal Liverpool as both club and course has been well documented in local history books and writings, such that the key developments concerned with the creation of the course are easily identified. Guy Farrar’s book on the club history, entitled ‘Royal Liverpool Golf Club’ gives the best description and detail of the various course routings played over by golfers through the history of Hoylake’s development as a championship golf venue. The following short summary of the main developments draws predominantly on this source.

Era I: 1869–96

The first golf course at Hoylake comprised just 9 holes (with a yardage of 2944) and was laid out in 1869 by George Morris, elder brother of the famous Old Tom Morris of St Andrews, over the same ground used by the racecourse. As with the historic links courses in Scotland, the original course was rather rudimentary in design, construction and maintenance.

As the club headquarters was The Royal Hotel on Stanley Road, the course both started and finished in front of this building. As is evident from the above drawing, no formal teeing areas existed and the tee and green occupied essentially the same piece of ground.

Despite the conditions and obstacles, what is also clear from reading other accounts of golf on the course at Hoylake is just how popular the game was and would become.

With demand for play growing, it eventually signalled the demise of the ground's use for horseracing and the move towards its exclusive use for golf over a longer course.

Era 2: 1896–1914

By 1896 the Club had moved to a new clubhouse, located across the links from the Royal Hotel, on Meols Drive. This relocation began a period of constant alteration as additional land was secured at the expense of some land lost to facilitate building as the town expanded – thus land allowed for the creation of the Briars and Telegraph holes but the later loss of the Stanley hole. Most importantly, the course routing had to change to provide a start and finish adjoining the new clubhouse. This resulted in a brief flirtation with a hole in the location of the Royal hole (the present 17th) as the opening hole, before the arrangement – still prevalent today – was deemed to be the most satisfactory solution.

The three decades since the foundation of the club saw the construction of a formal 18-hole layout, 5811 yards in length, complete with separate tees and greens making use of magnificent natural green sites, meaning that the traces of the original racecourse layout had all but vanished. Hazards continued to be those naturally occurring features on the site – the cops, rushes, open ditches, sandhills and the many rabbit holes, scrapes and warrens. The course bunkering was of the penal variety – large ‘regular’ cross bunkers straddled the fairways in front of both tees and greens. Of further note, as the course's popularity increased and Hoylake began staging Championships the Club spent more money on its greenkeeping operations with the aim of improving the condition and maintenance of the course.

Era 3: 1914–32

This Era also encompasses the birth of ‘modern’ Hoylake. Following the First World War, the course had fallen into a state of disrepair and was in a very poor condition. Most of the key changes to the layout were carried out in the 1920s under the guidance of the eminent golf course architect Harry Colt, and provided dramatic and significant holes for which Hoylake would become famous.

Colt's key changes to the course were:

- A new raised, plateau green at the 8th hole, replacing the old green, which lay in a hollow.
- An entirely new 11th hole – the Alps. Colt chose a new and exposed green location (making use of a natural sand bank as backdrop) and changed the line of play, creating a formidable par-3 hole of nearly 200 yards to replace the old entirely blind hole.
- An entirely new 12th hole – Hilbre. A new dogleg-left hole played to a raised green, part protected by a sand dune, short-left of the green.
- An entirely new 13th hole – Rushes. The redesign of the Hilbre hole necessitated the creation of a new 13th hole. Colt retained the green but altered the line of play by almost 90 degrees, via new raised tees within the dunes.

- New Royal 17th hole. This hole summed up modern strategic architecture and the mantra of ‘risk and reward’, so favoured by Colt. The long, narrow green was located adjacent to Stanley Road in a manner akin to the Road Hole at St Andrews, whereby the road protected the right-hand side of the hole, and deep bunkering guarded the left. Thus players had to make the decision whether to risk everything for their approach shot or to play conservatively. Bernard Darwin described it thus:

Today with its narrow green between the devil of the road on one side and the deep sea of a horrid bunker on the other it is as fine and frightening a seventeenth as anyone can desire...¹⁴

By 1932, various other minor additions to the course had been made, mainly in extending the course by way of new tees and the tightening-up with some strategic bunkering. The 7th and 16th greens were reduced in size and remodelled. Moreover, given the scientific and technological advances in both greenkeeping and maintenance, the condition of the course was improved greatly and the putting greens described at the time as ‘wonderfully true’.

Trying not to be blimpish and die-hard and to look at the course with eyes unblurred by sentiment, I solemnly and sincerely declare that Mr Colt made a great job of it. When I last watched a Championship there I might sorrow a little that the course and the greens in particular had taken on something of an inlandish perfection and lacked the old hard and ruthless quality that fought ever against the player, but in point of design Hoylake seemed to me as fine a test of the best modern golfers as was to be seen anywhere in the world.¹⁵

Widely regarded as the creation of ‘modern Hoylake’, the course layout of 1932 provided the skeleton framework which has remained little altered since.

Royal Liverpool – Scorecard comparisons for 1896, 1932 and current courses

1896 hole	Yards	Par	Current hole	1932 hole	Name
1	380	4	1 (427)	1 (415)	Course
2	243	4	2 (371) 3rd green	2 (369) 3rd green	Stanley/Road
3	257	4	3 (528) par 5 4th & 5th green	3 (480) par 5	Road/Long
4	468	5	4 (200) par 3 5th green	4 (158) par 3	Long/Cop
5	163	3	5 (451) par 4 gone	5 (424) par 4	Cop/Telegraph
6	252	4	6 (421) gone	6 (398) gone	Briars
7	194	3	7 (196)	7 (200)	Dowie
8	412	4	8 (533) par 5	8 (482) par 5	Far
9	328	4	9 (390)	9 (393)	Punch Bowl

10	528	5	10 (446) par 4 gone	10 (410) par 4	Alps/Dee
11	186	3	11 (193) gone	11 (193) gone	Short Alps/Alps
12	300	4	12 (454) gone	12 (463) gone	Hilbre
13	118	3	13 (158) gone	13 (179)	Rushes
14	470	5	14 (552)	14 (511)	Field
15	402	4	15 (457)	15 (453)	Lake
16	385	4	16 (558) par 5	16 (532) par 5	Dun
17	344	4	17 (449)	17 (394)	Royal
18	381	4	18 (434)	18 (408)	Stand
	5811	71	(7228) par 72	(6862)	

Era 4: 1932–present

Several changes to holes have been carried out at Hoylake during the latter half of the 20th century.

In 1967 alterations were made to holes 3, 4 and 5 prior to the Open Championship of the same year. Carried out by J.J.F. Pennink, the design changes were aimed at strengthening the front nine and improving the spectator circulation:

- Hole 3 (Long) became a longer dogleg par-5 of 491 yards by altering its line of play to make use of the old 4th green (Cop).
- A new par-3, 4th, of 196 yards was formed – with a raised, heavily bunkered and tiered green cut into a sand dune.
- Hole 5 (Telegraph), 450-yard par-4 was played from a new tee, creating more of a dogleg and featuring a 200-yard carry to the fairway.

In 1993, Hole 7 (Cop) was altered by architect Cameron Sinclair. The old hole was a par-3 of 200 yards played to a green that was defended along its length by a cop which marked the out of bounds for the whole left-hand side of the hole. The green complex was remodelled and three bunkers added, augmented by mounding. Further, the cop was raised in height and a ball no longer declared out of bounds if traversed. Some 'new' dune landforms were added to the right of the hole and, most unusually, a pond to the front left of the tee.

Safety concerns relating to the proximity of residential housing on the following hole, the 8th (Far), resulted in the creation of more new dune landforms on the left-hand side

of the tee complexes and the realignment of the fairway, producing a slightly altered line of play in order to lessen the conflict with the boundary housing.

New championship tees have also been added to the 14th and 16th holes, along with the remodelling of the fairway bunkering on the 14th hole. The most radical alterations, however, have been the recent work carried out on holes 17 and 18 in preparation for the Open Championship in 2006. Designed by Donald Steel in 2000, the changes have been necessary for pragmatic and safety reasons but have led to the loss of Colt's Royal green and its strong inherent strategy:

- For safety reasons a new 17th green was created, moved 40 yards further back, and away from the heel of the road. A heavily rebunkered and raised green full of movement has produced a longer hole with an altered playing strategy for the approach shot relative to Colt's classic hole.
- New 18th green – raised putting surface with alternate tiers.

The current layout

At 7228 yards, when played from the very back tees, the current course provides one of the toughest of championship golfing tests in Britain, featuring only one par-4 hole under 400 yards. Furthermore the open nature of the links leaves the golfer exposed to the elements, and the course becomes even more formidable when played against the prevailing wind or offshore breezes. The variety of tee locations on each hole allows for great flexibility in the layout, with the course able to play to a much more manageable yardage of 6237 for the male, and 5853 for the female, amateur club golfer. However, it is not just power and strength which is needed to be successful at Royal Liverpool. With its numerous, deep, steep-faced pot bunkers placed strategically, allied to hazards of thick rough, gorse and out-of-bounds lines featuring on 9 of the holes, Hoylake requires the golfer to exercise both skill and courage to conquer its many challenges.

Current scorecard

Hole	Champ. Yards	Medal Yards	Men's Yards	Par	Ladies' Yards	Par
1	427	427	405	4	395	5
2	371	371	357	4	334	4
3	528	528	494	5	455	5
4	200	190	136	3	124	3
5	451	424	362	4	352	4
6	421	382	348	4	338	4
7	196	196	159	3	152	3
8	533	493	481	5	447	5
9	390	390	318	4	310	4

Out	3517	3401	3060	36	2907	37
10	446	411	376	4	310	4
11	193	193	151	3	142	3
12	454	412	363	4	327	4
13	158	158	148	3	131	3
14	552	519	496	5	462	5
15	457	457	417	4	410	5
16	558	540	476	5	460	5
17	449	429	388	4	359	4
18	434	401	362	4	345	4
In	3711	3520	3177	36	2946	37
Total	7228	6921	6237	72	5853	74

Notes

- 6 D Jones, *Edgbaston as it Was: A Place Steeped in History and an Enclave of Sylvan Beauty* (Westwood Press 1986).
- 7 *Edgbastonia*, vol. 3–4 (January 1883–December 1884), p. 84.
- 8 T Slater, *Edgbaston: A History* (Phillimore 2002), p. 120.
- 9 *Country Life* (March–May 1936).
- 10 C H Alison and H S Colt, *Some Essays on Golf Course Architecture* (Grant Books 1920), p. 15.
- 11 Architect correspondence to Edgbaston Golf Club 1936.
- 12 *The Ryder Cup Memories Golf Festival – Moortown Golf Club* (WM Publishing 2000), p. 29.
- 13 MacKenzie, Dr Alister, *The Spirit of St Andrews* (Sleeping Bear Press 1995), pp. 35–6.
- 14 John Behrend, *Golf at Hoylake: A Royal Liverpool Golf Club Anthology* (Grant Books 1990), p. 14.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Part 4: Appendix

Biographical Notes on some Key Architects Active in England

John Frederick Abercromby (1861–1935)

Background

- Born Felixstowe, the son of a doctor.
- A scratch amateur golfer.
- In 1900, when working as a private secretary to a wealthy London financier, he was asked to design a course for his employer. Having consulted with Willie Park Jnr, he took on the commission himself.
- Worked with practice of Fowler & Simpson in the 1920s.
- Secretary of The Addington Golf Club.

Design background

During the 1920s, Abercromby worked with Herbert Fowler and Tom Simpson in their architectural practice. He favoured laying out golf holes on site and supervising their construction, and is notable for this method of ‘in the field design’ as he made best use of his eye for scale creating natural-looking hazards and holes.

Key courses – England

- The Addington Golf Club
- Coombe Hill Golf Club
- Worplesdon Golf Club.

Charles Hugh Alison (1882–1952)

Background

- Educated at Malvern & New College, Oxford.
- The youngest member of the Oxford & Cambridge Golf Society tour of the USA in 1903.
- Played county cricket for Somerset, and worked as a journalist following university.
- Secretary of the newly formed Stoke Poges Golf Club in 1908, at the Stoke Park golf course being constructed by H.S. Colt.

- Having met and impressed Colt, Alison assisted in the construction of Stoke Poges and other London courses, most notably St Georges Hill, Sunningdale and Wentworth.
- Served as a Major in the British Army during WWI.
- Architectural firm of Colt & Alison practised for about 20 years, following WWI.

Design background

Whilst in partnership with H.S. Colt, Alison undertook the majority of the overseas commissions in the United States and the Far East, with Colt doing the majority of the work in the UK and Continental Europe. It is largely for his work in America that Alison is best remembered.

Amongst the notable designers who worked for the practice during this time were J.S.F. Morrison and Alister MacKenzie.

Key course – England

- Kingsthorpe.

Key writings

Some Essays on Golf Course Architecture 1920 (co-author H.S. Colt)

James Braid (1870–1950)

Background

- Born Earlsferry, Fife, the son of a ploughman.
- Worked as apprentice joiner before becoming a clubmaker.
- Moved to London in 1893 to work in the Army & Navy store.
- A gifted amateur golfer, he played a challenge match in 1895 against the then Open Champion, J.H. Taylor, earning him his first club professional job at Romford.
- Won the Open Championship five times: 1901, 1905, 1906, 1908 and 1910.
- One of the 'Great Triumvirate', along with his contemporaries Harry Vardon and J.H. Taylor, by means of the fact that they swapped the Open Championship title between them for over a decade and won it an incredible 16 times between them.
- From 1910 onwards, he was Walton Heath Club professional.
- Founding member of Professional Golfers' Association.
- Made Honorary Member of the R&A in 1950.

Design background

Did some initial design work whilst at Romford; however, it was not until he had retired from competitive golf that he embarked upon course design as a means of employment at a time when the profession of golf course architecture was still in its embryonic stages. He designed, or was consulted on, several hundred golf courses, primarily in the British Isles.

Key courses – England

- St Enodoc Golf Club
- Hawkstone
- Ipswich Golf Club
- Hankley Common Golf Club
- Southport & Ainsdale Golf Club.

Key writings

Golf Greens and Greenkeeping 1906

Advanced Golf 1908

Sir Guy Campbell (1885–1960)

Background

- Schooled at Eton, studied at St Andrews University.
- Fine amateur golfer, reaching the semi-final of the Amateur Championship in 1907.
- Respected writer and journalist. He was the great-grandson of Robert Chambers, the early British golf historian and co-designer of the original 9-hole course at Royal Liverpool.
- Worked as both correspondent and subeditor for *The Times* in 1920, under Bernard Darwin.
- Joined the practice of C.K. Hutchison and S.V. Hotchkin, and as a trio they designed and remodelled a number of courses within the UK.

Key courses – England

- Princes, Sandwich
- West Sussex Golf Club
- Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club (Deal) – remodelled in collaboration with John Morrison.

Harry Shapland Colt (1869–1951)

Background

- Studied law at Cambridge, where he captained the golf team.
- Played regularly at St Andrews.
- Whilst working as a solicitor in Hastings, Colt undertook design work at Rye.
- In 1900 he was the inaugural secretary at Sunningdale.
- Applying a methodical design process to his architectural work, Colt cemented his reputation as the leading golf course architect of his time.

Design background

The first course designer not to be a proven professional golfer, by utilising a drawing-board design process Colt set the standards by which all future golf courses would be designed. In this way he can perhaps be described as the founding father of the golf course architecture profession. He worked on a truly international scale, undertaking hundreds of commissions in the UK, on the Continent and further afield.

Key courses – England

- Swinley Forest Golf Club
- Sunningdale (New)
- Wentworth Club (East).

Key writings

The Book of the Links 1912

Some Essays on Golf Course Architecture 1920 (co-author C.H. Alison)

Charles Kenneth Cotton (1887–1974)

Background

- Graduate of Cambridge University.
- Scratch amateur golfer.
- Secretary at Hendon GCC, Parkstone GC, Stoke Poges & Oxhey GC.
- Following WW2 turned to a career in course architecture as he saw potential opportunities in reclaiming the golf courses that had been ravaged by war and lost, or that had fallen into disrepair during that time.
- Founded the firm Cotton (C.K.), Pennink, Lawrie & Partners, and was active both at home and abroad.

- A founding member, Chairman and President of the British Association of Golf Course Architects.

Key courses – England

- Frilford Heath (Green)
- Wentworth (Short course).

Tom Dunn (1856–1941)

Background

- Born in Blackheath into a famous Scottish family dynasty of golfers & course designers hailing from Musselburgh.
- He was the pro at Wimbledon (London Scottish) in 1870 – a course laid out by his father, Willie Dunn. He was to revise and extend the course from 7 to 18 holes.
- Dunn worked later as professional at North Berwick & Tooting Beck.
- Married to Isabel Gourlay – then described as the greatest woman golfer of her day.
- Travelled to the USA regularly to visit his father and family, all of whom embarked upon golf careers there.

Design background

Arguably, via his work at Wimbledon, Dunn was the first inland course designer, setting the scene for the expansion of the game away from the traditional links of the coasts. He created many inexpensive and manageable course layouts that offered the opportunity of accessible golf to a greater number of players.

Key courses – England

- Broadstone Golf Club
- Woking Golf Club.

William Herbert Fowler (1856–1941)

Background

- A professional banker and fine Amateur golfer, Fowler took up playing golf at the age of 35.
- Member of both the R&A and The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers.
- Contemporary of Colt, Simpson and Abercromby.
- His design opportunity arose when the financiers behind the construction of the proposed golf course at Walton Heath, headed by his brother-in-law, asked Fowler to design the course.

Design background

Following on from the critical success of Walton Heath, Fowler went into partnership with Tom Simpson. Fowler carried out the majority of the work in the UK and Simpson handled the overseas design projects. In the 1920s they expanded their practice to include J.F. Abercromby and Arthur Croombe.

Key courses – England

- The Berkshire (Red & Blue)
- Saunton Golf Club
- Walton Heath Golf Club
- Beau Desert Golf Club.

Frederick George Hawtree (1883–1955)

Background

- Founded golf course construction firm with professional golfer and five-times Open winner J.H. Taylor in 1922.
- He designed or remodelled some 50-plus courses, including the complete reworking of Royal Birkdale in 1932.
- Founded the British Golf Greenkeepers Association.
- Co-founded, with J.H. Taylor, the Artisan Golfer's Association and the National Association of Public Golf Courses.
- Member of the Board of Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) and served on the committee of the EGU.
- Designed the first privately owned, daily fee, public course at Addington Court in 1932.

Key course – England

- Royal Birkdale (remodelling).

Frederick W Hawtree (1916–2000)

Background

- Trained as a golf course architect under his father and took on work of his father's practice, designing or remodelling several hundred courses at home and abroad.
- Served on Golf Development Council and wrote treatise for them entitled *Elements of Golf Course Layout & Design*.

Key courses – England

- Hillside Golf Club
- Foxhills Golf & Country Club
- Kings Norton Golf Club

Key writings

The Golf Course; Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance 1983

Aspects of Golf Course Architecture 1889-1824 (assembled and annotated 1998) Colt & Co 1991

Stafford Vere Hotchkin (1878–1953)

Background

- Served in WWI gaining rank of Colonel.
- Served as Tory MP 1922–23.
- His first design opportunity came at his home course of Woodhall Spa, which he purchased in 1920.
- Formed his golf design and construction firm Ferigna Ltd in the mid-1920s.
- Toured South Africa – designing and remodelling a number of courses there.
- In the 1930s, he formed a practice with C.K. Hutchison, and later with Sir Guy Campbell, and as a trio they designed and remodelled a number of courses within the UK.
- Retired from practice and took up the Secretary's position at Woodhall Spa.

Key courses – England

- The Links (Newmarket) Golf Club
- Woodhall Spa.

Cecil Kay Hutchison (1877–1941)

Background

- Educated at Eton College, Windsor.
- Learned early golf at Muirfield and soon rose to be one of top amateur players in the country, finishing runner up in the 1909 British Amateur Championship.
- Served with the Royal Scots in WWI. Caught, he was imprisoned in a German concentration camp.

- Following the war he turned to golf course design, assisting James Braid with the new courses at Gleneagles and Carnoustie in Scotland in the 1920s.
- He formed a practice with S.V. Hotchkin, and assisted in the remodelling of Woodhall Spa.
- Joined in practice by Sir Guy Campbell, and as a trio they designed and remodelled a number of courses within the UK.

Key course – England

- Tadmarton Heath.

George Lowe (1856–1934)

Background

- Born in Carnoustie.
- Greenkeeper at St Annes in late 1800s.
- Credited with the original design layout of Royal Birkdale and Royal Lytham & St Annes.

Key courses – England

- Royal Birkdale Golf Club (layout substantially altered by F.G. Hawtree)
- Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club
- Seascale Golf Club
- Windermere Golf Club.

Dr Alister MacKenzie (1870–1934)

Background

- Born in Yorkshire, the son of Highland parents.
- Graduating from Cambridge University, MacKenzie served as a surgeon during the Boer War, observing the use of camouflage tactics. Further observations were made during WWI.
- In 1907, as then secretary at Alwoodley GC, he collaborated with H.S. Colt on the course design, which led to his giving up medicine to pursue golf course architecture.
- Collaborative work with other architects including Colt & Alison.
- His seminal written work, *Golf Architecture* in 1920, is arguably his lasting legacy in golf course design, listing 13 key points required to create the ideal golf course.

Design background

MacKenzie was the premier international golf architect of his time, working prolifically in every continent. It is for his work done overseas that he is best known, most notably as the architect of Augusta National and Cypress Point in the USA, and Royal Melbourne in Australia. His brother Charles was employed as the site supervisor on many of his projects and also designed courses of his own, which are sometimes confused with those of Alister MacKenzie.

Key courses – England

- Alwoodley Golf Club
- Moortown (and the Gibraltar hole)
- Fulford Golf Club.

Key writings

Golf Architecture 1920

The Spirit of St Andrews

Philip MacKenzie Ross (1890–1974)

Background

- Born in Edinburgh, MacKenzie Ross played his golf at Royal Musselburgh as a youngster.
- His father was a fine amateur golfer, reaching the last eight of the Amateur Championship.
- Served for the duration of WWI in the British Army.
- Met Tom Simpson after winning an amateur golf event at Cruden Bay.
- By the mid-1920s MacKenzie Ross was in partnership with Simpson, designing most of the firm's course layouts.
- By the 1930s MacKenzie Ross was a sole practitioner, and was developing a reputation as a designer both in the UK and continental Europe.
- Most noted for his restoration of golf courses at Turnberry, Scotland, following WW2.
- Elected as the first president of the British Association of Golf Course Architects in 1972.

Key courses – England

- Carlisle Golf Club
- Castletown Golf Club (Isle of Man)

- Hythe Imperial Golf Club.

John Stanton Fleming Morrison (1892–1961)

Background

- Born in Deal, Morrison attended Trinity College, Cambridge, winning Blues in cricket, football and golf.
- An accomplished amateur golfer, winning the Belgian Amateur in 1929.
- Served in WWI with the Royal Flying Corps.
- Joined Colt & Alison's architectural firm in the 1920s, and by the 1930s became partner in the firm Colt, Alison & Morrison, working closely with Colt on many European and UK courses.
- Later collaborative work with Sir Guy Campbell, remodelling the Prince's Course, Sandwich.
- By the 1950s he was working with J.H. Stutt.

Key courses – England

- Fulwell Golf Club
- Princes Golf Club (remodelling collaboration with Sir Guy Campbell).

Willie Park Jnr (1864–1925)

Background

- Born in Musselburgh, son of the first Open Champion, Willie Park Snr.
- Park lived and breathed the game of golf – a multi-talented golfer, clubmaker and inventor, course designer and writer.
- Won the Open Championship twice, in 1887 and 1889.
- Pioneer of modern profession of golf course architecture in his course-design work, on site construction supervision and writing, and set the standard for those who followed.
- Codified the attributes of good golf course design in terms of course layout, hole length and hazards placement in 1896 in his book *The Game of Golf*.

Design background

A successful businessman and entrepreneur, Park designed many courses both in the UK and overseas, primarily in the USA. He rivals Colt for the title of the father of the golf course architecture profession, although he had many other outlets for his creative talent, including club and golf-ball design. He undoubtedly influenced Colt's design thinking since he designed the world-famous Sunningdale Old Course, where Colt took the post of Secretary from its opening in 1901.

Key courses – England

- Sunningdale Golf Club (Old)
- Huntercombe Golf Club
- West Hill Golf Club (with others)
- Notts Golf Club.

Key writings

The Game of Golf 1896

John Jacob Frank Pennink (1913–?)

Background

- Gifted amateur golfer, winning the Amateur championship in 1937 and 1938. Played in the Walker Cup in 1938.
- Retired from playing and turned to assisting in administering the game of golf both with the R&A and the English Golf Union (serving time as EGU president).
- Spent time also as golf correspondent and writer for the *Sunday Express* and the *Daily Mail*.
- Established the firm Cotton (C.K.), Pennink, Lawrie & Partners in 1954.

Key course – England

- Saunton (East Course).

Tom Simpson (1877–1964)

- Son of a wealthy family, Simpson studied law at Cambridge and was admitted to the bar in 1905.
- A scratch golfer, he was a member of both the Oxford & Cambridge Golf Society and the R&A.
- He regularly played at Woking GC, where he witnessed alterations to the course which sparked his interest in golf course architecture.
- Eccentric both in dress and behaviour but was a talented writer and artist.
- Believed strongly that the principles of golf course design lay in studying the Old Course at St Andrews.
- A strong proponent of strategic golf architecture and minimalism in the number of bunkers utilised for the purpose.
- Retired from golf course design after WW2.

Design background

In a successful design partnership with Herbert Fowler, he undertook the majority of designs on the continent, the best of which were in France. When this firm began to wane he took on Philip MacKenzie Ross as his understudy.

Key course – England

New Zealand Golf Club.

Key writings

The Architectural Side of Golf 1929 (with H.N. Wethered)

John Henry Taylor (1871–1963)

Background

- Born Northam, Devon, close to the golf course at Westward Ho!
- By the age of 17, Taylor was greenkeeper at Westward Ho!
- Career as greenkeeper and professional began at Burnham & Berrow, then onto Winchester, Wimbledon, and Royal Mid Surrey.
- Won the Open Championship five times: 1894, 1895, 1900, 1909 and 1913.
- One of the ‘Great Triumvirate’, by means of his multiple Open victories, along with his contemporaries Harry Vardon and James Braid.
- A self-educated man, he was to become the founding father of the Professional Golfers’ Association.
- Used his public profile to promote golf and golf courses for public play.
- Made Honorary Member of the R&A in 1950.

Design background

Though he undertook design commissions prior to the First World War, it was through his inter-war partnership with Fred G. Hawtree that Taylor involved himself in a greater number of design commissions. Although Hawtree did the bulk of the design work, they both were involved in the layout and detailed design work. At Hartsborne Golf Club, for instance, they shared the detailed design responsibilities by taking nine holes each.

Key courses – England

- Frilford Heath Golf Club
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club
- Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club
- Royal Winchester Golf Club.

Key writings

Taylor on Golf 1902

Harry Vardon (1870–1937)

Background

- Born in Grouville, Jersey.
- A caddy by the age of 7, Vardon's love for the game saw him follow his brother to England to earn money as a professional, taking his first job at Ripon in 1890, followed by Bury St Edmunds and Ganton by 1896.
- Won the Open Championship a record six times: 1896, 1898, 1899, 1903, 1911 and 1914.
- Won the US Open in 1900.
- Toured the USA in 1900, playing various challenge and exhibition matches.
- A smooth, graceful and rhythmic swinger of the golf club, he employed an overlapping grip to hold the club. This technique became the accepted norm, and as such bears his name – 'the Vardon grip'.
- By way of the style and extent of his play, he did much to popularise golf amongst the masses, and forced his fellow professional players to raise their playing standards.
- Club professional at the South Herts Club from 1903 until 1937.

Design background

As he suffered from poor health and tuberculosis, Vardon's design output was rather limited.

Key courses – England

- Little Aston Golf Club
- Ganton Golf Club (1899)
- Woodhall Spa (1905) (with Hotchkin).

Tom Williamson (1880–1950)

Background

- Over 50 years as a professional golfer.
- Greenkeeper and as clubmaker at Notts Golf Club.
- Undertook golf course design as part-time occupation.
- Work concentrated around Nottingham and the locale.
- Worked on over 60 courses, assisted by his brother Hugh.

Design background

Designed or remodelled over 60 courses and claimed to have worked on every course within a 50-mile radius of Nottingham by 1919. Williamson was also an innovator, believing in making use of plasticine models of greens, prior to construction.

Key course – England

- Worksop Golf Club.