

The Club - during World War II and its immediate aftermath - 1939 to 1948

The Club had been going for only 18 years when war broke out and needless to say that event drastically altered the Club's development. At that time the land was not owned outright but leased from Ewan Davies who owned the farm on which the course had been laid out.

There was a Committee of 15 members plus a Captain and a Club Secretary who had a salary of £200.00 a year, equivalent now to about £7,500.00 per annum.

There was a General Committee, a House & Finance Committee and a Greens Committee.

A Ladies Section was in existence and it received an annual grant of 6 guineas and an entertainment allowance of £12.00.

The Minute Books confine themselves to the running of the Club and there is very little mention of anything that went on as a result of the war either on the course or in Cardiff. It is assumed that this was done from a security point of view.

The Club Secretary was Vivian Jones, our Nigel Jones' late uncle.

A summary of events in each year is set out later on but a couple of matters stand out.

Many members were called up for active service, the highest number serving in HM Forces being 73 in 1943. All serving members were granted Honorary Membership whilst away on duty and Officers of HM Forces were granted Honorary Membership whilst in the district.

The Club greatly relied on older members who were not eligible for military service looking after the Club's affairs and these were Walter Cawthorn who served as Captain for 3 years and Gerald Tudor who was Honorary Solicitor and who was Captain for 2 years.

Mr & Mrs. W. Smalldon – William (Bill) was the Club Professional – took over the running of the bar and looking after the Clubhouse.

All formal Club competitions were cancelled and there were no entertainment functions such as dances.

There were however a number of exhibition matches, the purpose of which was to raise money and the principal beneficiaries of these functions were The Cardiff Royal Infirmary and The Cardiff Institute for the Blind. In addition specific funds were benefited e.g. The Red Cross and St Dunstons which was a charity for servicemen who had lost their sight in the course of their duties.

There was a War Agricultural Executive Committee in existence, designed to promote self sufficiency in food, and initially holes 12 and 13 were taken over followed by 6 and 7 and then 16 and 17. The Club received a share of the profit from the sale of what was grown which principally was corn. Sheep were grazed on the course under the control of a local farmer although this gave rise to some disputes, the sheep were meant to be taken off at night but were quite often left out and got onto the Greens causing damage.

As a result of a shortened course, handicaps were reduced by a third and the stroke index was changed.

The Club prizes were stored in packing cases and taken to Barclays Bank in Newport Road for safe keeping.

Beer was in short supply as were other essentials, the Secretary, of his own volition in April 1940, ordered one gross Harpic toilet rolls which step was duly confirmed by the Committee.

Bunkers were filled in or covered over so as not to be visible from the air.

An air raid shelter was built on the Club land for the benefit of the Smallldons, Club Staff and the residents of Sherborne Avenue.

The Home Guard used the Clubhouse, this occasionally gave raise to disputes as they availed themselves of the Club facilities, presumably the bar!

The Honorary Membership granted to Officers in the district was extended to NCO's and enlisted men who were golf club members.

Exhibition Matches involved Henry Cotton, Dai Rees, John Woolam and Jack Mclean, both of whom were Amateur Champions, together Roy Glossop who was a member and Bill Smallldon the professional.

These matches raised sums which were quite large even by modern day standards, £202 for the Lord Mayor's Red Cross Fund is the equivalent of £7,600.00, also £200 for each of The Cardiff Royal Infirmary and The Cardiff Institute for the Blind.

The Club eventually raised over £2,000.00 (£75,166.) for The Infirmary and had two beds dedicated as a result of its generosity.

An exhibition match in 1942 with Henry Howell, Dick de Lloyd (David's father), W.J. Branch (another Amateur Champion) and Jack McClean raised £55 (just over £2,000.00) for The RAF Benevolent Fund.

There was a Wings for Victory Week in May 1943 to which the Club contributed £500 and contributions raised by members totalled £11,509 .against a target of £5,000. This was the equivalent of £432,546. This was an enormous sum and the Club received a Certificate of Honour, one can only assume that the Club must have been used as a channel for collecting the monies from various sources

As the tide of war changed, things gradually returned to some semblance of normality.

The air raid shelter for Sherborne Avenue was dismantled, craters on the course were filled in and gun sites removed. Holes under cultivation were returned to the Club after harvesting.

Some members received awards for civilian service during the War, W.H. Evans, D.W. Richard and Sidney H. Lewis were all awarded MBE's.

Oddly there is little mention of casualties, possibly because the Club had lost touch with people, and the only member mentioned in minutes, and this was at the AGM in 1942, was 2nd Lieutenant Clement Steer who was lost at sea in 1941. His ship SS Britannia was torpedoed and although he survived the sinking he died a fortnight later whilst awaiting rescue on a life raft. He was 36 and is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey.

Gerald Tudor's son, Leslie, was lost while serving with the RAF, the Captain's Chair was presented in his memory. He was 21 when his aircraft was shot down over Schleswig near The Baltic. A Pilot Officer he is buried in Kiel War Cemetery.

Ewan Davies' second son Charles, a Major with the 4th Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers was killed in action near Weeze on the Dutch German border on the 1st March 1945. He is buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, he was 26 years old.

On the 15th of September 1942 a Spitfire piloted by Sergeant Stewart Davison crashed on the course by the 12th green on its way back to Rhoose on a training flight. Sgt Davison had lost control and blacked out and the aeroplane lost a wing. The accident was witnessed from a distance by Gwyn Stone who was at school in Lisvane and Arthur Ashworth's son Richard who was walking down Ty Draw Road. Sgt Davison was 19, he is buried in Consett, County Durham.

More mundane matters mentioned in the minutes were Local Rules to cover having to move the ball due to posts on the course – possibly to prevent planes landing, no penalty incurred. The purchase of a loud speaker for the bar cost 30 shillings. No temporary House Members to be introduced due to the shortage of beer, the ration for beer being cut from 7 kilderkins down to 5, half of which was consumed at the weekend (about 400 pints). Two members were asked to resign because of their conduct (not specified) but deliberately spilling drink in a table tennis match just got a reprimand.

The Club obtained compensation for war damage which looks mainly to have been caused to the building itself and a new roof was put on, the Club received £1,674.00 war damage compensation (£63,000.00).

16 holes were in play by 1947 and the Club had by then taken up an offer from Ewan Davies to acquire the freehold the purchase of which it completed on the 19th June 1947 for £19,000.00. (£714,083) £3,500.00 was put in by way of cash, Mr. Davies allowed £12,000.00 to remain outstanding on loan at 2½% and there was a bank facility for the rest. There were two EGMs to deal with all this and subscriptions went up across the board by 1 guinea (£39.50). The Club had renewed the lease which it had on what is the lower section of the 14th (then the 13th) and there was an option to purchase granted which was subsequently exercised.

In August 1948 an extra 9 gallons of best bitter was allowed per week and in September that year holes 6 and 7 were restored to play.

In November 1948 Viv Jones officially retired due to ill health, he had been unwell for sometime, and his position was filled by Lt. Col. T.H. Reed.