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## Club History

Founded 1903 by Sir Henry Cosmo Bonsor. Following Bonsor's ownership, a group of three members headed up by George Riddell (later Sir George, later Lord Riddell of Walton Heath) took over the Club.

Riddell owned the News of the World. When this newspaper group was taken over by Rupert Murdoch in 1969, he wasn't interested in the golf club which allowed the members to buy it in 1971.

Alick Renshaw, who took the leading part in this acquisition, became the first Club Captain in the new member-owned Club.

Total cost £261k including 400 acres of Heathland, Clubhouse and Dormy Huse, subsequently sold

- Old Course, 18-holes 1904
- New Course, 9-holes 1907
- New Course, 18 holes 1913

## Course Design

- Herbert Fowler

## Club Professionals

- 1903 – 1951 James Braid
- 1951 – 1977 Harry Busson
- 1977 - 2009 Ken MacPherson
- 2009 – 2022 Simon Peaford
- 2022 – Pres Simon Race 2022

## Links with the Past

- James Braid rests in St Peter's church yard, in Walton-on-the-Hill, alongside his wife. On his tombstone there is no mention of his golf.
- Withing a very short putt from his grave, rests Sir Ernest Holderness. There is unlikely to be another graveyard in England that has a five times winner of the Open and a twice winner of the Amateur in such proximity.
- James Braid's grave is looked after by Ken Macpherson, WHGC's third professional and he keeps a bowl of fresh heather on the grave.
- Herbert Fowler rests in St Andrew's churchyard, Kingswood. He is alongside his brother-in-law, Sir Cosmo Bonsor's very fine monument.



## Championship Course Features

- 6,800yds
- Par 72
- Utilising all 5 tee platforms (Purple, White, Green, Red, Blue)
- The Championship course at Walton Heath is made up of 16 holes from the Old Course and 2 holes from the New Course.
- The Old Course holes 2, 4-13 serve as holes 1-11 on the Championship Course, before players move to the 12-13 of the New Course which play as 12-13 on the Championship Course and then the final 5 holes are taken as the final 5 from the Old Course.
- The Championship Course at Walton Heath was tweaked slightly in 2011 for the Senior Open Championship, with hole 18 of the Old Course becoming the 18th of the Championship Course. Prior to this, the Championship Course utilised the 18th of the New Course as the closing-hole.

## Significant Professional & Amateur Tournament Tournaments

### News of the World Match Play

- First played in 1903 at Sunningdale.
- 1905 – played at Walton Heath GC for the first time, James Braid defeated Tom Vardon 4 & 3 and won £100, (£15,000 today).
- Hosted at Walton Heath GC on twenty-two occasions, last in 1969, Maurice Bembridge defeated Dai Rees 6 & 5.

### 1978 - 1991 European Open

- Hosted on 5 occasions. Winners:
  - 1978 Bonny Wadkins
  - 1980 Tom Kite
  - 1987 Paul Way
  - 1989 Andrew Murray
  - 1991 Mike Harwood



## 1981 Ryder Cup

- The 24<sup>th</sup> Ryder Cup Matches were held between 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> September 1981.
- The United States team won the competition by a score of 18 ½ - 9 ½ points.

Teams:

| <b>Europe</b>                     | <b>USA</b>                      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| John Jacobs – Non-playing captain | Dave Marr – Non-playing captain |
| Bernhard Langer                   | Tom Watson                      |
| Nick Faldo (now Sir Nick Faldo)   | Bruce Lietzke                   |
| Sandy Lyle                        | Tom Kite                        |
| Jose Maria Canizares              | Hale Irwin                      |
| Sam Torrance                      | Lee Trevino                     |
| Manuel Pinero                     | Jerry Pate                      |
| Eamonn Darcy                      | Ben Crenshaw                    |
| Des Smith                         | Johnny Miller                   |
| Howard Clare                      | Bill Rogers                     |
| Bernard Gallacher                 | Jack Nicklaus                   |
| Mark James                        | Larry Nelson                    |
| Peter Oosterhuis                  | Raymond Floyd                   |

## 2011 Senior Open Championship

- July 21<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> 2011.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Senior Open Championship played as a senior major championship.
- Russ Cochran won by two strokes from Mark Calcavecchia.
- Defending champion, Bernhard Langer finished tied 12<sup>th</sup>, 8-shots behind the winner.
- Composite course; 7,394 par 72.

## 2014 Palmer Cup

- June 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2014
- Europe won 18 ½ - 11 ½

Notable Players:

- Europe:
  - Coach: Andrew Coltart
  - Thomas Detry
  - Paul Dunne
  - Jon Rahm



- USA:
  - Wyndham Clarke
  - Bryson DeChambeau
  - Brandon Hagy
  - Ollie Schniederjans

#### 2018 British Masters

- Hosted by Justin Rose.
- Sponsored by Sky Sports.
- Eddie Pepperell won by two strokes from Alexander Bjork.
- Composite course.



## Ladies Golf at Walton Heath

### Constitution:

The Club has encouraged ladies golf from the outset.

- A Gold Medal has been played for since 1906.
- Mrs Herbert Fowler was Walton Heath Ladies Golf Club's first secretary and later became its first, and only, President.
- Ladies were able to become Full Members of the Club pre-WWII.

### Top quality Ladies' golf played at Walton Heath:

- 1910 Man (Harold Hilton) v Woman (Cecil Leitch)
- British Ladies Championship: (now The Women's Amateur Championship)
  - o 1968 – Brigitte Varangot
  - o 1981 - Katrina Douglas
  - o 2000 – Rebecca Hudson
- English Ladies Championship:
  - o 1914 – Cecil Leitch
  - o 1928 – Enid Wilson
- The Spalding Tournament:
  - o 1954 – Jean Donald
  - o 1955 – Elizabeth Price
- The Hovis Tournament:
  - o 1964 Margaret Nichol
  - o 1965 Marley Spearman
- The Newark International (72-hole strokeplay) formally The Hovis
  - o 1974 – Jill Thornhill (301)

First-ever Ladies Varsity Match - 1998

### Famous Past Lady Members:

- Cecil Leitch
- Edith Leitch
- Joyce Wethered



- Pru Riddiford
- Pam Barton
- Vyvienne Faulkner

Current famous Lady Members:

- Diane Bailey and Jill Thornhill – Both Curtis Cup players / Curtis Cup Captains.
- Jill Thornhill is the current President of Walton Heath Golf



## The Courses.

- Walton Heath GC is renowned for firm, fast running fairways, with the grass coverage slowing going dormant and turning brown in the summer months. However, these conditions are dependent on Mother Nature providing the necessary weather conditions, specifically, dry and sunny weeks.
- This week, the fairways will be lush than is typical, and this can be entirely attributed to the exceptional wet July, where the Heath soaked up over 140% of average monthly rainfall.
- Our courses are dominated by browntop bent; it can be found on all playing surfaces. Smaller quantities of desirable fescue are also found in our fine turf mosaic of grass species. Brown top bent dominates the site. It's the dominant grass species on all fine turf and long rough. The rough is predominantly bent but also a decent percentage of fescue
- We overseed fairways with a bespoke mix of hard fescue and browntop bent to keep populations strong.
- The greens are overseeded with browntop bent through the growing season to improve visual blending, improve drought tolerance and disease resistance.
- We are actively managing our turf to reduce inputs of fertiliser, irrigation, and fungicides. Along with regular aeration & top dressing, overseeding with more drought/disease tolerant cultivars is a key element of the process.
- The stands of heather are predominantly Ling (*Calluna Vulgaris*) which flowers in August/September a pale purple/pink colour. We also have a smaller quantity of Bell heather (*Erica Cinerea*) which purple flowers can be seen from June/July. There is also a very small quantity of Cross-leaved heather (*Erica Tetralix*).
- Managing the heathland areas of the courses requires a lot of dedication and patience. There are many areas we maintain at a height suitable for playing golf, mown once a year at around 6 inches. Other out of play areas are allowed to grow taller to create habitat/conservation areas.

## Heather

Heather has a life cycle of around 30 to 40 years with 4 distinct stages: pioneer, building, mature and degenerate. Through careful mowing management, heather can be manipulated to stay in a juvenile state at a height suitable for golf. However, nature can rarely be fooled forever, and the natural life cycle will eventually play out. When areas of heather become degenerate, when plants become leggy and susceptible to attacks of the dreaded heather beetle larvae, drastic action will be taken and the stand will be mown down to ground level, exposing a seed bank from which new plants will grow. Seeds are harvested from other areas of heather on the site and spread on the bare ground to improve the chances of new plants forming.

It can take anywhere between 1 and 5 years for an area to reach full cover again, because of this the heather is manged in rotation to ensure there are areas of as many different ages as possible around the site.



Lowland heath is a rare habitat that exists through man intervention. Constant management is required to keep heather as the dominant species on the common. The focus is to remove faster growing competition including grass, bramble, gorse, and tree saplings which can quickly dominate. It would only take a few short years for the heath to be replaced by the beginnings of an oak/birch forest.

Heathland is ideal for golf. The fast-running fairways framed by heather requires a careful strategy to help keep your ball out. Heather is usually a better alternative to thick long grass as you can generally find your ball. Once you find your ball, advice is to take your medicine and play out sideways. Getting greedy often means playing your next shot from the heather again!

It is not only golfers that inhabit this rare landscape. It is a biodiverse eco system that support many types of animals, insects, reptiles, and birds.

Frequent sightings of skylark and meadow pipit are evidence as well as common lizard , sand lizards or even an adder!

### Ornithology

Walton Heath supports a variety of wildlife species with regular sightings of Adders, Sand Lizards, Stonechats and Skylarks.

### Topology

- Highest point on course – 6<sup>th</sup> Green (Old Course 8<sup>th</sup>) 206 metres (677 feet) above sea level.
- 1<sup>st</sup> tee (2<sup>nd</sup> Old) 169 metres (554 feet) above sea level

### History on the Heath

- There was a Roman villa on Walton Heath, situated about 50 yards to the right of the Championship Course 11th green.
- Several ancient field boundaries can still be seen, notably one running across the 14th fairway.
- On the eastern boundary of the course several painted cast iron Coal Posts can be found, one very close to the 4th tee. Coal Tax Posts were markers defining the area within which the Corporation of London could charge duty on coal entering the area. This area had been expanded in 1851 but then reduced in 1861 to coincide with the Metropolitan Police District of the day, the limits of which were between about 15 miles 20 miles from Charing Cross.



## Notable Members

### Royalty

- 1921 Sir George Riddell arranged for Edward, Prince of Wales and his brother the Duke of York, later to become King George VI to become honorary members.
- 1935 Sir Emsley Carr announced that the Edward, Prince of Wales agreed to be the Club's first Captain. In January 1936, following the death of his father George V, he became King Edward VIII.
- Walton Heath is the only UK Club to have a reigning monarch as Captain.

### Politicians

#### Prime Ministers

- Sir Winston Churchill
  - Member 1910 – 1965
  - Prime Minister 1940 – 1945; 1951 - 1955
- Lloyd George
  - Member 1907 – 1945
  - Prime Minister 1916 – 1922
- Arthur James Balfour
  - Member 1907 – 1915
  - Prime Minister 1902 – 1905
- Andrew Bonar Law
  - Member 1911 – 1920
  - Prime Minister 1922 - 1923