



BOLTON  
OLD  
LINKS  
*Golf Club*



1891 - 2016

## ***BOLTON OLD LINKS HISTORY***

In 1891 a meeting of Bolton gentlemen took place at the Swan Hotel in the town centre to discuss the forming of a golf club for Bolton. The feeling was unanimous that this would be desirable for Bolton and subscription was set at one guinea per annum. A committee of five was formed with subs to be paid to Mr Herbert Broadbent at the Bank of Bolton. A course had been obtained on Green Lane ( adjacent to Bolton cricket ground) and over viewed by George Lowe of Lytham & St Anne's golf club who declared it ready to play and very adaptable. The club proved successful and was quickly inundated with applications, membership was restricted to 190.

In 1896 the golf club moved to a nine hole course at Smithills, part of the land still forms the present course at the far end. "Nisbetts Golf Year Book for 1911" records the conversion of Lightbounds farm house, now part of Moss Bank Park, into a comfortable



clubhouse. Even though the course was extended to 2841 yards in 1908, which was quite a long course in those days, some of the members were not overly impressed. By 1910 annual subs were two guineas for gentlemen and one guinea for ladies.

In 1912 some members decided to move to the new 18 hole course being laid out at Lostock Park, off Chorley New road. The secession recalled by both clubs was amicable, but for some reason of which no one seems to know, the course at Lostock Park took the name Bolton Golf Club, the original club name, our course becoming "Old Links". Of which no one really knows why the name "Links" was chosen other than it being a popular name in its day for course!

The existing members also required and wanted to play an eighteen holes course. However as membership had fallen to 100 this looked unlikely. Luckily in 1921 approximately 173 acres of land at Montserrat was acquired for £6000 by Edward Blackburn on behalf of the club from Baroness Beaumont and other known land owners. This enabled Old Links to extend to eighteen holes. A mortgage debenture was required of £15000 (it was finally paid off in 1968) .The new course and clubhouse were officially opened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1924 with Edward Blackburn being given the honour of hitting the first ball.

The course was totally reconstructed by the now legendary architect Dr Alister Mackenzie of Leeds assisted by his brother Major C A Mackenzie. He decided to emphasise the natural features of the boldly undulating terrain by astute bunkering. He produced a series of colourful and testing holes, laying out the course in two loops of nine thus permitting starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> tee to avoid congestion. He cleverly used the four points of the compass in his layout of the holes, so that no two holes would play the same, the wind would be a factor to contend with its ever changing direction. During the Second World War the German Luftwaffe added a few contours to his design!

The course maintained its current layout until 1966 when renowned Hawtry & Sons golf architects were asked to survey the course to possibly reduce the physical tiring aspects of the playing of holes 6 and 15 and the practicalities of using any of the land around the boundary of the course which the club owned. Following the inspection they commented thus " the balance of advantage seems to us to rest with the present arrangement, though it would be desirable to consider lengthening the 12<sup>th</sup> hole to some 290 yards, and the course should be much confined to its layout as It is a well balanced course to its contours"

The 12<sup>th</sup>, which sits 830 feet above sea level, was thereafter extended from 241 yards to 369 yards. The new green proved unsatisfactory and was reconstructed and elevated in 1972. Stone was used from the demolition of Langshaw Fold farmhouse adjacent to the 16<sup>th</sup> green. This was the former home of the club professional Keith Holland.

The course has matured over the years into a picturesque, tree lined, moorland course with panoramic views of the Lancashire countryside and beyond. Old Links has been very successful throughout its 125 year history winning numerous county and town championships at team and individual levels by both gents and ladies. It has also provided the world of professional golf with European tour winners, National champions and renowned golf teachers. It today boasts a state of the art swing technology teaching studio with our well respected professional Sean Owen.