

March 7th 2022

The 2022 celebration to mark the signing of the original Rules of Golf by John Rattray on 7th March 1744 was again impacted by Covid and held on Zoom. LRGS President John Dixon welcomed some 35 members and guests to the event and introduced the guest speaker Harry Ward author of 'Forgotten Greens- the abandoned golf courses of Scotland'.

With over 560 golf courses in Scotland which have not survived, Harry had a wide subject matter to choose from but the talk was focused principally on Edinburgh and the Lothians. Harry illustrated his talk with a series of slides and started off with Leith Links and posed the challenge of where the two photographs were taken of the players in well-known 1867 tournament.



Despite clues from the buildings in the background and extensive research Harry has not been able to find out and would welcome any help from LRGS' members.

Harry then covered a number of other forgotten courses in the Edinburgh area including one in Holyrood Park, Mortonhall, Castlelaw, Balerno, Cammo – with the long abandoned clubhouse still there- Blackford Hill and Ingliston, now the site of the Royal Highland Show ground. Outside Edinburgh, Harry took us to forgotten courses and their history at Pathhead, Oxton, Port Seaton- now under a housing estate- and a ladies course at Fauldhouse (see picture below).



One slide of particular interest in relation to the original Rules was a 19th century photograph taken on Bruntsfield Links showing the players teeing off within two club lengths of the previous hole. This was in line with the first rules as there were no separate teeing areas. Also the players used the sand or earth from the hole to tee up their balls resulting in the hole getting bigger- today a bigger hole would be welcomed by many!

After a question and answer session, LRGS Secretary Robin Miller thanked Harry for his entertaining and informative talk. To conclude the evening a toast was proposed to the memory of John Rattray and Leith Rules Golf Society.

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