

Colchester Golf Club - The Chronicles of Dick Porter

Past Secretary and Captain Richard (Dick) Porter's memories of Colchester Golf Club, recorded in writing in 1991 at the prompting of his son Jim, cover a large part of the Club's first 100 years. They are reproduced here with permission of Jim's widow Lizanne, with only minor corrections where details appear incorrect, for the interest of local people.

CHAPTER 1 - A New Member: Arrival in Colchester; Appointment as Club Secretary; The Club Professional and Stewardess

I joined the Colchester Golf Club in 1920, aged 18 years. I had arrived in Colchester by train from Ipswich, accompanied by my grandfather and father to enter into articles with Messrs Howard Ellison & Morton. My grandfather had been a friend of Sir Joshua Rowley of Stoke-by-Nayland and it was on his recommendation that I had become articled to Mr Ellison at Headgate Court on 19th May, 1919.

I came from a games-playing family, mainly on my mother's side, she having four brothers and no sister. She in fact was a good cricketer, as were her brothers, the eldest of whom, Gilbert, was of county standard, playing for Kent during the early 1900s. For a living he ran a coaching establishment for potential University entrants to Cambridge. The other brothers were Rex, a schoolmaster at Worcester, Wilfred, a parson who retired to South Africa for health reasons, and Cuthbert, who was a curate in Ipswich before taking a living in Hampshire.

It was my grandfather who took an interest in my future career and not only did he find a firm for me to learn my profession, but was also particular concerning my lodgings. He found me lodgings in St Johns Street, Colchester and in fact entrusted to my landlady, Mrs Salmon, a number of cards with the request that if I should offend or give displeasure in any way he was to be informed immediately. My grandfather had been a solicitor and had practised in Suffolk for about 50 years before retiring when the requirement to effect completions with gold sovereigns was revoked by the Law Society.

I remember well the early days at Braiswick. On my arrival it was a nine-hole course. The secretary was Mr G.C. Bensusan Butt, a local accountant and the members that I initially came to know included Mr J.A.W. Fryer, Mr B.H. Kent, Mr J. McBride, Mr G.A. McDonald and Mr A. Tooley, the manager at Barclays Bank at that time.

As an articled clerk I found I had considerable free time and used to make my way to Braiswick by bicycle, heartened on my arrival at the Golf Club by a charming member of the Stamford family, who lived opposite. I was made most welcome and soon developed a circle of friends which included Mr B.H. Kent of Kent Blaxill and several bank employees of my own age.

At that time the course was owned by Mr A.G. Mumford, who lived in an adjoining property known as Achnacone. A tenancy agreement existed in favour of the Club but I am bound to say that Mr Mumford did not in fact take much interest in our proceedings, save to be certain that he received his rent regularly. Nevertheless I became friendly with him, not only because of my membership of the Golf Club, but I also found myself in his company at the St Runwald's Club, a gentlemen's club in Head Street immediately opposite my office.

My enthusiasm for the Club continued and in 1924 Mr P.J. Diboll, who was at that time assistant manager of Barclays Bank and also honorary secretary of the Club, was promoted away from Colchester to take a position at the Head Office of Barclays in London as Secretary.

I had become friendly with Mr Diboll, who eventually said he would like to put my name forward to the committee for selection as the next Honorary Secretary. I was only 22 years old at that time, although I had recently qualified as a solicitor, and my experience outside the office was limited. I knew that considerable responsibility would be involved. However, I agreed that if he wanted to put my name forward I would accept if I proved suitable to the committee. Within a few days my appointment was confirmed and at the same time I was elected to the committee. Thus it was that my days of service to the Club began.

Mr G.C. Bensusan Butt had by this time been elected captain and I found myself working jointly with him on matters relating to the upkeep of the course, organising the competitions and administering the work of the professional, Mr S.C. Parmenter, who had been with the Club since 1919.

He knew every blade of grass and the layout of drains to various ditches. He was practical and versatile. I well remember one autumn evening when a violent thunderstorm descended on Braiswick and a few members decided to wait in the Clubhouse until the storm ended. The lights failed and Mrs Parmenter left because she was worried as her two young daughters were alone in the house. Presently, Parmenter appeared with candles and opened up the bar. Whisky was in demand, but these were the days before optics and it was difficult to measure out the drink in the dark. A measure (10p a tot) was held by Parmenter over a glass with a slightly

shaky hand and in the candlelight the measure became a generous one. My recollection of this incident is still clear because I was due to meet my wife off the London train at Marks Tey, and I found it essential to drive carefully. The good old steam train arrived eventually and she emerged happily laden with parcels, having had an enjoyable day's shopping and an excellent tea in the First Class restaurant car.

Much later in 1962 I accepted with great pleasure the request by the Captain, Bob Young, to make a presentation to Parmenter on his retirement, he having been made an honorary life member in 1942.

In those days the number of cups to be played for annually was limited. There were the Cooper Bland Cup, the Moy Cup, the Cant Cup and monthly competitions. All had to be organised, but this was of course part of the duties of the secretary. In addition to the cups that I have mentioned there was also the Elmstead Cup, the history of which is interesting.

A number of members at Colchester had formerly belonged to a club at Elmstead. They were Mr B.H. Kent, Mr J. McBride, Mr J.A.W. Fryer and Mr W. Hunt. They felt that in memory of their days together at Elmstead, a cup should be presented and played for annually, and so the tradition of the Elmstead Cup, played for at Easter, was started. In 1946 Mr G.S. Bensusan Butt presented a cup, to be known as the the Braiswick Cup, as a knock-out competition open to men and ladies.

The condition of the course, its improvements and its future engaged a very considerable amount of my time and I particularly remember the construction of the tractor shed adjacent to what was at that time the 9th tee. No permission had been sought from the landlord prior to putting up the shed and I found myself summoned into the presence of Mr A.G. Mumford at St Runwald's Club.

He reprimanded me for constructing a tractor shed that was visible from his bedroom window and informed me that it should be taken away immediately. I said I would consider the matter, and being young and junior, did not feel inclined to make a protest or argue in any way whatsoever. The topic was in due course debated by the committee with the result that we requested that the tractor shed should be allowed to remain upon the basis that it should be painted green and thus was no longer an eyesore. This was accepted by Mr Mumford.

Lest it be thought that the Golf Club was engaging all of my time to the exclusion of all else, may I say that I became engaged in 1929 to my future wife Joyce, the eldest daughter of the late Mr James Pawsey, who was himself the eldest of 12 brothers, many of whom were well known in the Colchester area. He was a retired man and had spent his working life as a director of Owen Parry Ltd, oil and cake merchants on the Hythe in Colchester and had recently taken up golf. The engagement, the marriage and my responsibilities nevertheless did not stop me accepting the captaincy of the club in 1929. If it had not been for the whole-hearted co-operation and support of my wife, my various golf activities would not have taken place.

It was in May 1929 that Mrs Parmenter was appointed Stewardess of the Club. Her pay was to be £2.5s. per week and not only was she expected to be at the Club at all times during the morning, the afternoon and the evening, but she was also busy bringing up her young family, namely Ben (who subsequently became a shoemaker in the town), Douglas (who was later to follow his father into the professional's job), Mabel, Mary (a keen player now married to George Baxter, a well known member of the club) and Gwen.

At the time of Mrs Parmenter's appointment, they were probably all under the age of 12. She was to prove invaluable at the Clubhouse. She ruled it with a rod of iron; the main room was always tidy and welcoming, the locker room was kept neatly and the internal affairs of the Clubhouse wanted for nothing.

The professional's shop at that time was at the rear of the Clubhouse in a separate wooden building. There Parmenter would sell and repair clubs. He was an excellent professional and not only interested himself in giving lessons to the members but also attended to the green keeping side of the Club. In those days there were two groundsmen but effectively they were very much under the supervision of Parmenter, and if and when improvements were considered to the course, it was Parmenter's advice that was sought.

Among the problems at the time were dogs. At a committee meeting on 10th October 1930, there is a note that the Secretary read a letter from Mrs Marshall, Ladies Honorary Secretary, complaining of dogs on the course. On the proposition of Mr J.A.W. Fryer, seconded by Mr J.B. Baker, it was resolved that a rule be made to the effect that as from 1st November 1930, no dogs should be allowed on the course or on the Club premises. The Secretary was instructed to publish the new rule accordingly.

CHAPTER 2 - The 1930s: Location of the Club; Its community; A new owner; The course extension; Drilling for water

As yet in these chronicles there has been no reference to the whereabouts of the Club, or indeed reference to the nature of the community that might be expected to spend its time on the fairways and the greens. First then, the situation of the course.

To the north of Colchester lies its station, known as North Station, and leading north-westward lies the Bergholt Road, giving access to Sudbury in Suffolk, Bury St. Edmunds, and beyond. About one mile from the station lying at the head of a gentle uphill slope is the course on the northern side of the road. The Clubhouse and the fairways are sheltered from the road by pine trees under which, in those days, the cars of the members were parked.

The Clubhouse is and was of wooden construction, built on stilts approximately 4 ft above the ground. The ready circulation of air under the Clubhouse has always meant that the wood would remain sound, thus giving the building potentially a life of many years. Whilst this may appear to be desirable, it has on numerous occasions given rise to heart-searching decisions when the committee has from time to time felt inclined to discuss whether the Club and its members would benefit from the construction of a brick Clubhouse with the amenities enjoyed by the surrounding clubs at Purdis Heath, Chelmsford, Thorndon Park and elsewhere. Successive committees have always felt that the Clubhouse was too well preserved and of such a character that it would be without real purpose to pull it down, and in consequence it has been extended and improved over the years.

At the time of which I speak in the late 1920s and the early 1930s it enjoyed an open veranda overlooking the 18th green where it was customary for the members to take their tea. In the main general clubroom was the bar, as it still is today, and on the walls were boards bearing the names of the winners of the cups and the names of the Captains past and present. There was a Secretary's office, a gentlemen's and ladies' locker room and all the facilities one would expect to find in such a Clubhouse.

What then about the community of Colchester from among whom the members were derived? It was probably a typical mixture that would be found in any country market town of its time, save that the presence of the Army added perhaps a particular and interesting dimension. The Club always welcomed its Army members and special rates and facilities were afforded to them. Regiments in those days came and went as they do today, but particularly during this period well-known honoured cavalry regiments would be stationed at or within the Cavalry Barracks.

The townspeople moved within many circles and in particular it seems to me that the shopkeepers and traders were dominated by what I came to know as the Lion Walk Councillors (who attended Lion Walk Church). Numbered among them were Aldermen Blaxill, Mr B.H. Kent to whom I have already referred, Mr Piper, a former Mayor of the town, Mr Owen Ward, also a former Mayor of the town, and Alderman Watts, also a former Mayor and who in fact had worked with my father-in-law at Owen Parry's mills. They were a hard-working crowd and their influence in the town was everywhere to be felt.

In 1934 the committee and members organised a dinner in my honour at the Red Lion Hotel in appreciation of my secretarial services. I remember the occasion well; it was a pleasurable function but when invited to respond to the toast that was proposed to my benefit, I had the opportunity to regret the apparent disinterest in the Club of the civic dignitaries. At that time the Mayor and Corporation of the town tended to be devoting their acclaim and interest to the furtherance of the West End Bowling Club. It seemed to me that the leading Colcestrians including the Mayor, many members of the Council and many members of the Lion Walk leadership devoted their time and attention to the Bowling Club, to the possible neglect of the Golf Club at Braiswick. I felt that this was a situation that should be remedied and that our presence and potential use for recreational purposes by the people of the town should not go unrecognised - their subscriptions and green fees were in those days very welcome.

It was at this time that uncertainty began to cloud the future of the Club. Our landlord since before I arrived at the Club had been Mr A.G. Mumford, living in the adjacent property known as Achnacone. On his death in 1934 the whole Achnacone estate including the course was purchased by Mr H.E. Austin, who thus became our landlord. He was a keen businessman. I came to know him well and ascertained that he was determined to have and own an 18-hole Golf Course, as his two brothers each owned golf courses. Contrary therefore to my initial misgivings concerning the change of ownership, I found that I had someone in Mr Austin with whom I could plan the future development of the Course in a constructive manner.

Though friendly, Mr Austin was strictly commercial and not at all hospitable. He spent much of his time in London and as there were no invitations to his home our meeting place for discussions on the future of the Club was Liverpool Street Station. I had to travel to Liverpool Street Station on many occasions to discuss with him the possibility of a formal lease of the Club in favour of the committee, but he would not commit himself. I was usually commanded to meet Mr Austin under the clock at Liverpool Street and I was on no occasion graced with an invitation to enter the bar of the Great Eastern Hotel with him, or indeed any other place of comfort. Despite

a series of meetings at this unlikely venue, no conclusions were reached about a lease. However to a limited extent, as a result of our meetings, Mr Austin made cash injections into the course for the benefit of the Club.

The possibility of a lease was not the only subject of our discussions, the course extension always being a topic for consideration. Parmenter was invited to prepare a sketch plan showing how the additional holes might be added. I was able to study this plan with my friend Harry Burleigh, who had formerly been with the Borough Engineer of Colchester and had been promoted to be Borough Surveyor to Royal Kensington. Harry Burleigh's custom was to play golf every Sunday at Walton Heath with the well-known golfer and architect of golf courses James Braid, the local professional.

Thus it was that the Colchester Club, in due course, had the benefit of James Braid's guidance. On two occasions he attended Braiswick and there studied the provisional sketch that had been prepared by Parmenter. I walked the land with him on each occasion. In fact to a large extent he accepted and based his plan upon the sketches that had been prepared by Parmenter. Those visits of James Braid were the complete basis upon which the course was thereafter extended. Committee meetings of course took place, but no voice was raised against the scheme and Parmenter and I were simply left to our own devices to arrange for the necessary work to be done.

In October 1936, Mr A.C. Girling, who was then the Captain of the Club, submitted a scheme for laying water on to the greens and this scheme was submitted to Mr H.E. Austin, as the cost would be taken into consideration with the general cost of the course extension, which was proceeding well. Mr Austin wished a water diviner to be employed and any likely site tested. Mr B. Tompkins of Thetford, a water diviner, visited the course complete with his testing apparatus, a hazel twig, which at first directed him to the 7th green, which the committee members attending considered an unsatisfactory site. They diverted Mr Tompkins' attention to the damp area of the 2nd green, whereupon the twig reacted violently and Mr Tompkins estimated 7-10,000 gallons of water at 30 ft. A well was subsequently sunk through boulder clay to a depth of 30ft. However, it was considered that insufficient water was coming into the well to ensure an adequate supply for watering the greens.

Further tests carried out by Warners Ltd, Ipswich, proved unsatisfactory as even if the well was sunk to a lower depth there was no guarantee that the supply of water would be increased. It was decided, therefore, to purchase a mobile pumping plant with hose to obtain water from the well, as well as from the ponds adjacent to the 2nd and 10th greens.

CHAPTER 3- Darkening Outlook: War looms; Family and friends; Committee and characters

The Golf Club photograph of 12th May 1937 shows my brothers John Lowry, Reginald William and Cuthbert. It was a time of darkening outlook across Europe and the lives of the brothers in the photograph were soon to change dramatically. With my brothers in the picture, at the eastern end of the main Clubroom, are my wife Joyce, her sister Rosemary, my son Jim, my good friends Bart Gadsdon, Whippet Sansom, Jack Collinge, and Arthur Girling.

It is right and proper here that I should allude to the events in Europe that were taking place. I must confess that I was not an avid reader of the utterances of Adolf Hitler or indeed the responses of Mr Chamberlain. I fear that my attention in those days was more taken with the success or otherwise of the Test Matches against Australia, the visits of the county cricket sides to the Castle Park at Colchester, and the daily routine of my professional life and attention to the matters of the Golf Club. Nevertheless, I was of course conscious of the rumblings overseas.

In 1938 I remember that my sister-in-law, Rosemary, in company with Ted Paxman, John Wheeler and a number of their friends, voyaged up the Rhine in a motor cruiser and there came face to face with German Army uniforms, the State Police and the militarism and racism that in due course led to the Second World War. Lack of respect for the German Chancellor, if noticed by the police, could result in a prison sentence, even for foreigners. Everywhere there was evidence of nationalism with flags, bunting and songs, and young people in uniform. To those unused to such an atmosphere, the experiences of the Rhine trip left a lasting memory.

My younger brothers were bachelors. Two of them made their careers at sea and a third had departed for Ceylon in his early 20s to be trained by Anglo Ceylon and General Estates as a tea planter. It was the habit of them all to spend their leave in my home and particularly in the case of Bill, this would mean a visit every three years that would last for up to six months at a time. Those months would inevitably be spent playing golf and a perusal of the Club Visitors Book shows regular entries of the names J. L. Porter, R.W. Porter and C.E. Porter.

We had spent our schooldays together at Kings School, Worcester, under the watchful eye of my late uncle Rex Castley, who was our housemaster at the Hostel House. To a considerable extent games occupied our time with the result that on the golf course we were able to acquit ourselves without disgrace and also to take on all-

comers on the snooker table at St Runwald's Club. The keenest eye belonged to my youngest brother, whose natural ability showed to the fullest in his cricket and tennis.

Meanwhile Club matters, including the development of the new holes, continued to unfold. Minutes of a committee meeting held on 21st September 1937 show the following entry:

Present:- D.J. McP. Burton, F.J. Collinge, S.L. Daniel, J.A.W. Fryer, L.B. Gadsdon, W.S.V. Sansom, Dr. R.C. Turnbull and myself.

"The Secretary was instructed to receive with great regret the decision of Messrs. J.A.W. Fryer and B.H. Kent not to offer themselves for re-election to the Committee at the agm."

"The Captain reported that an offer had been made by a member to present a cup to commemorate Coronation year and the opening of the new course. It was resolved to accept this cup as the Coronation Cup with play over 36 holes in May, but to start it this year by playing 18 holes in October".

This entry reminds me of the way in which the first contest for the Cup was played, when it was in fact won by one of my friends, Harold Crowther, who distinguished himself by taking nine shots to complete the first hole.

At the same meeting, Captain Mr A.C. Girling stated that as the new course would shortly be ready for playing it was now necessary to consider the advisability of increasing the subscription for 1937/38. It was decided to defer any increase in the subscription for one year as it was agreed that more new members were likely to be attracted to the new 18-hole course if the entrance fee and subscription were maintained at 2 guineas and 3 guineas respectively.

At the annual meeting of the Club on 30th September 1937, the Captain proposed a vote of thanks to Mr P.W. Daniell for preparing a plan of the new course and congratulated him on it. Both Peter Daniell and his father were friends of mine, and my belief is that the preparation by Peter of the course plan as a generous gesture was one of his first professional tasks after qualifying as a Chartered Surveyor, very well up the list of successful candidates. His course plan was exhibited at the Clubhouse for the ensuing 40 years or so and may well be on display at the present time.

It will be appreciated that I have had the advantage of refreshing my memory in certain areas by referring to the minutes that I took as secretary during the years I have described. In particular, events leading to the opening of the new course could be expected to include some detail and some reference to those who were particularly concerned, apart from Parmenter and myself.

In fact the minutes are relatively silent and I know why. No useful purpose would be served at the present time by setting forth my views on the lack of activity by certain of the allegedly leading personnel involved, and so I will leave the situation with thoughts best left unexpressed. Suffice it to say that at the annual meeting on 29th September, 1938, F.J. Collinge as Captain made a presentation to me on behalf of the members of the committee of a handsome cigarette box suitably inscribed for the work I had put in as Honorary Secretary, particularly in connection with the 18-hole course. May I emphasise that I had enjoyed my part in the furtherance of the new course.

My duties as Secretary required the keeping of careful balance among members whose business interests could be affected by the patronage of the Club. In describing the position of the course I should have alluded to its proximity to Daniell's Brewery at West Bergholt. From many of the fairways the brewery chimney could be plainly seen where it had stood in West Bergholt for over 100 years. Its progress had been as a result of the initiative of members of the Daniell family. Not only did they brew beer but one of their number - an offspring of a Daniell daughter - gave rise to the light ale known as Little Dan. The "Little Dan" who was born in 1924 later became one of my partners in my practice on North Hill in Colchester. Others interested in the provision of alcoholic beverages at the Club were Messrs Walton and Attwood through Mr Douglas Smith, one of their Directors, and Lay & Wheeler Ltd, through John Wheeler, one of their Directors who was one of my good and closest friends. Any of these gentlemen would glance at the bar to check as to whether or not their supplies were displayed equitably and in a manner to catch the eye.

CHAPTER 4 - War: Victims of the conflict; The Victory Cup

The war started in September 1939 and within nine months, I had lost my youngest brother Cuthbert, and within a year my brother Jack was incarcerated at Stalag 4, Hamburg. Cuthbert had been aboard the Lancastria whilst it was evacuating troops from Brest and was among the 5,000 deaths that ensued when the ship received a direct hit from a German bomb. Jack had been on his way back from Australia in the Port Hobart when his ship was sunk in the South Atlantic by the German pocket battleship Von Scheer and thereafter, having been picked up by the battleship, he was transferred to the Nordmark, which deposited him in Bordeaux.

Club members found themselves in service in all parts of the world. Bart Gadsdon, a former club Captain, joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and saw service in Africa before landing in Normandy in 1944, where he was Mentioned in Dispatches. Peter Benham, who was awarded an MBE, and Peter Daniell, both Territorials and sons of former club captains, gave of their services. The Turner family, to whom I have so far not alluded, were conspicuous in their services to their country.

Ernest Turner, the Borough Organist and former Mayor of the town, lived in The Avenue and was the father of five sons and two daughters. He was a keen golfer, married to Gerald Benham's sister, and all his sons spent many hours on the course. Their names were Eric, Cecil, Hugh, John and Tony. Eric was the Parson and is still alive, but Cecil, Hugh and John all lost their lives. Cecil and John were both killed in the North Africa Campaign and Hugh, who had become one of the country's leading submarine commanders, lost his life after the end of the European War whilst serving in the Far East. As can be imagined, life at the Club was subdued.

During the course of the War the post of Captain was held by Brigger Potter for the extended period of five years. In 1941 Brigger Potter informed me that he had purchased a Cup to celebrate the winning of the war to be known as The Victory Cup. That remark was made to me privately in his house in Trinity Street over a glass or two of whisky when the fortunes of the country were at their very lowest ebb. The whole of Europe had fallen, America was not in the war, Hitler had attacked Russia and yet, here was our Captain thinking of the future completely confident of the success that ultimately was to lie ahead.

CHAPTER 5 - Friends and Fairways: The Americans; Lady members; Top players; Social events

They were with us, we were glad to have them and we wanted to do everything for them. North Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk became a platform for the construction of bases within closely-knit areas. In the immediate Colchester neighbourhood we had at Langham initially a Squadron of Thunderbolts, followed by Marauders; at Birch a group of Mustangs; at Earls Colne and Braintree Fortresses, and so the list goes on .

It is not my intention, however, to compete with the local farmer from Langham, Mr Roger Freeman, the author of *The Mighty Eighth*, only to say that the personnel from those bases enjoyed their golf and we enjoyed having them. They were friendly, they were courteous and they were smart; the habit of changing to play golf was at that time not de rigueur and the Americans on our course could be picked out by their light fawn trousers and dark olive green shirts.

Mrs Parmenter was often kept busy preparing her special tomato sandwiches for the Americans and it was a pleasure for all our members to chat to those fellows over the bar. They came and went of course, but one in particular stayed to marry a local girl and after the war became a hairdresser in Maldon Road. His name was Mike Morada and he was a familiar figure at our Club during the latter part of the war until he retired from the Club in 1959.

To approach the end of this narrative without reference to the ladies would of course be unforgivable. However, it must be recollected that the period I have covered so far was an era when the involvement of the ladies was limited. They had their own room at the Clubhouse and were not admitted into the general Clubroom, which was indeed in essence a men's room. There used to be a tortoise stove in one corner, chairs were in evidence, golf magazines lay on the tables and save for the presence of Mrs Parmenter, the appearance of the Clubhouse at all times showed a singular lack of feminine influence. This did not appear to bother the members. For me it was neither a plus nor a minus situation, and it was simply accepted by all those concerned that decisions to be made lay within the provenance of the gentlemen members. That is not to say that the congenial company offered by the ladies was by any degree unacceptable. Many of the cups involved participation by both sexes and indeed the Cant Cup, which was played for in 1935, bears the name of my sister-in-law Mrs Betty Pawsey and Col Hodgson, and was in fact won outright by Miss Gadsdon and myself in 1936.

Then as now, there were of course the joint functions, which included on occasions a dance. It could not be called an annual dance since it occurred only occasionally. I have not had to refer to the minutes to recollect the events prior to the dance which was due to be held at the George Hotel in 1938. The Captain at that time was Jack Collinge and representations had been made to me as Secretary by the Lady Captain as well as to Jack Collinge as to the way in which the dance should be undertaken. Jack had his own ideas and so had I, but they did not meet with full approval. Negotiations to resolve the differences were unsuccessful and the dance was cancelled.

The war came to its end in 1945 and a new generation began to appear. The old retainers kept their places, but the need for Frank Gosling to mount the tractor and undertake the cutting of the fairways with the petrol he had saved from his garage was no longer required. The time and trouble he had taken to keep the course in good trim during the war years was much appreciated, and to show that appreciation he was elected a life member.

Towards the conclusion of the war several well known professional golfers supported exhibition matches and auctions at the club in aid of the Red Cross and various service charities. Among them were Archie Compston, Dai Rees, Peter Alliss and Bernard Hunt.

In 1946 the Essex County Amateur Golf Union had its first post-war meeting in London which I attended with our Captain Eric Bunting, and I was elected a member of the committee by the Union. This was a great help in getting Colchester known to, and engaged in, the Union's competitions, which pre-war had been rather restricted to clubs in Essex on the London border. We were fortunate at this time in having C.M. Bell, a former Cambridge Blue, as an enthusiastic member who quickly formed teams to enter for the Thornton Cup, Junior Team and other competitions in the county, to say nothing of the winning on two occasions of the prestige Foursomes Competition, first with Noel Gray, who was stationed at the Military Hospital doing his medical military service and who won the Essex Championship that year, as a partner, and secondly with J.B. Baker. It so happened that I was President of the Union on the first occasion and it gave me great pleasure to present the trophies at Thorndon Park Golf Club to the winner from my own Club. The regular members of the Club's Thornton Cup side were C.M. Bell, the inseparable J.B. Baker and P.C. Benham, Stanley Johnson, Bill Lawes and the loquacious Ross Poyser, who if his putter was not working won his matches with his tongue.

Winning the Essex Foursomes with Corrin Bell was the crowning performance of Jack Baker's golf "life" at Colchester. Son of former Captain H.E. Baker, Jack devoted all his spare time from boyhood to the development of his golf. He modelled his game on that of the famous professional Henry Cotton, and in fact in later years carried a mascot on the radiator of his car. His achievements in spite of good opposition were legion, including winning all the Club Cup competitions in 1930, six medal competitions in 1931 and shooting an albatross by holing out in one at the 4th hole on the old 9-hole course. The sensational effort is well remembered by the writer, who was playing with Jack on the occasion, and lost the hole having himself obtained a birdie 3.

Corrin Bell had a very distinguished career at Thorpe Hall Golf Club under the tuition of the well-known professional, Cecil Jenny, having obtained a Blue at Cambridge and winning many cups. It has been a surprise that neither of these two first class golfers succeeded in winning the Essex Singles County Championship. Corrin guided the Club successfully as Honorary Secretary for seven years when an emergency arose.

After the war, by way of a get-together, a men's supper (sausages, mash and plenty of beer) was held during the winter, originally at Wright's Restaurant in the High Street and latterly at the Club, when about 100 members attended and were well entertained by our own very talented members - Don Harrison (always with a pipe), Jack Sutton, the versatile George Gordon and Nibs Neal at the piano, sometimes willingly accompanying the persevering Philip Jackson with his violin. It was always a most enjoyable evening.

Meanwhile, on a fine Sunday evening the portly figure of Leonard Daniell could be seen walking across from the Brewery intent on a game initiated by him of "putting for clods" on the last green. The rules were simple - about 12 of his cronies putted from marks chosen by him and those who did not hole out in two paid one penny to those who did. Quite often a breach of the rule of silence when putting occurred. After an hour, adjournment was made to the bar where copious quantities of Daniell's beer were consumed. Anyone spotted drinking any other beverage was not invited to join in the next game.

As the years passed juniors began to appear. Ben Kent's grandson John could be seen with my son and a gang of friends on the first tee. Young Grahame Page, the son of P.G. Page of Page's Garage in Crouch Street, took to the game with his friend Mike Heasman, both of them from Felsted School.

I found myself becoming involved in the administration of golf at County level and in 1949 I was elected President of the Essex County Amateur Golf Union.

The membership of the Club began to increase sharply and it was felt that the secretarial demands were more than could be accepted by an Honorary Secretary and accordingly I resigned my post, to be replaced by the Club's first professional secretary, Jimmy Bolton, the grandfather of Charles, who at that time was at school with my son in North Wales.

Whilst I feel I could make some attempt to set forth the progress of the Club during the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, I feel probably that those years should be covered by an author better acquainted with events than myself. I would not wish it to be inferred nevertheless that my interest in the Club has diminished over the years; quite the contrary.

One of my chief pleasures has been to attend the annual dinner for past Captains, and this is an occasion that I would miss only with the greatest distress. Our past Captains' Association is greatly indebted to the enthusiasm and work put in on our behalf by "Goldie" Goldsmith and it is without doubt due to his efforts that the dinner holds an honoured place within the Club's calendar.

I must refer before closing to the input of the late Nibs Neal into the affairs of the club. Nibs was known to one and all; he was an enthusiastic golfer, Captain of the Club in 1956, the correspondent for the Club in the Essex County Standard for approximately 20 years and an expert piano player. Not only did he devote his time and energies to our Club, but he also found time to become Captain of the Port Madoc Club in North Wales where he habitually spent his summer holidays. No social event at the Colchester Golf Club would have been complete had it not ended with a piano recital given by Nibs or his friends Jack Sutton and Don Harrison.

I could go on; the names are all there, the memories are there, the faces of Dad's Army are before me and though not in the least bit tired, I am now in my 89th year and the draw of a gin and french, watching our players in Australia, coupled with reading the account of Desert Orchid's latest victory are beginning to distract me. However, I cannot end without expressing my thanks to those who attended the Past Captains' Dinner in September 1989. It marked the anniversary of my own captaincy of the Club 60 years previously and the speeches that were made that alluded to those earlier years gave me the greatest possible pleasure. It is my hope to keep and maintain my interest in the Club for many years to come and for those that may post the question "Was it all worth it?", I can only answer very definitely, "Yes".