

Golf Club Oil Lamps had to be filled Daily

Edward Otway was born in 1910 and interviewed in 1992

In 1918 my father came back from the Army and we moved to the Golf Club. My mother was the Stewardess. She was born in Witherslack and worked at Witherslack Hall for Lord Derby for a while, where the MP for Kendal, Oliver Stanley, stayed.

When it snowed in winter we used to have two tracks for our toboggans. The first started on Greenside where the quarry is. We went straight down Gillingate, straight across Highgate and into Abbot Hall. The other one we used between 1918 and 1930-ish we used to straight down Allhallows Lane straight across the road at the bottom, down Lowther Street and on to the New Road. Fortunately there were very few cars on the roads then

In those days the Golf Club had no gas, no electric, no water. Very down-to- earth it was. We had oil lamps which had to be trimmed, filled and lit each day. The first job for Mr Dixon, who lived in Gillingate and worked on the course, was to bring two buckets of water on a yoke from the bottom of the hill for drinking. The water for washing etc was caught off the roof of the house. In the kitchen there was a large table which lifted up and underneath was a bath. As the years got on everybody suddenly took up Golf. I liked the game. I found it very good. I was in the Army and one day they put up a notice in the mess – “If you play a game, put your name down.” I used to play rugby as well so I put them both down. Then the sent for me. “Handicap?” “Three sir” Oh my goodness! They sent home for my clubs and I played in the team. We used to play down on the South Coast with afternoon tea after. I was only a squaddie and there was the captain, the colonel and the adjutant all played but you see I was a Three Handicap. So that’s how I got in.

In those days you weren’t allowed in the Club unless a member invited you in. There were a few ladies in the membership in the early days. They had a hut outside the Club House. They had some very good players - Dolly Jordan whose father had the Jordan’s Granary in Allhallows Lane (*now pulled down*); Cecil Leach who was a very good player nationally and now the ladies have the ‘Cecil Leach Competition.’

I went to the Council School in Castle Street. Three of us won scholarships to the Grammar School. My reward was a membership of the Golf Club, the youngest member at the time and now I am very near the eldest. There’s only one man that’s older than me.

All the people in my age used to go to Morecambe a lot. A shilling it was in old money on the train down to Morecambe and the ticket got you in to either the tower, which is pulled down now or the Winter Gardens. It was a good night for half a crown (*beer was only four pence a pint.*) There were good dances there. I remember once four of us missed the last train home. So we got the Barrow train and walked from Arnside. It’s a long way.

I remember the fashions. For golf I had grey plus-fours, light blue socks and black and white Varden shoes. For nights out in Morecambe I had a black trilby hat, and a long black coat that nearly came down to my ankles and the others used to call me “Doctor Otway.”

We got on the train one day at Kendal and we got to Oxenholme. The trains in those days had no corridors and as we changed trains a chap came and asked “Is there a doctor here?” and of course my mates said “There’s a Dr Otway here.” He said, “There’s a man in the next carriage and he’s looking a bit funny.” So we went and had a look. He wasn’t funny, he was dead. He’d died between Windermere and Oxenholme. They just got him out, put him on one of those big railway trolleys while they sent for someone and we went on to Morecambe.

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