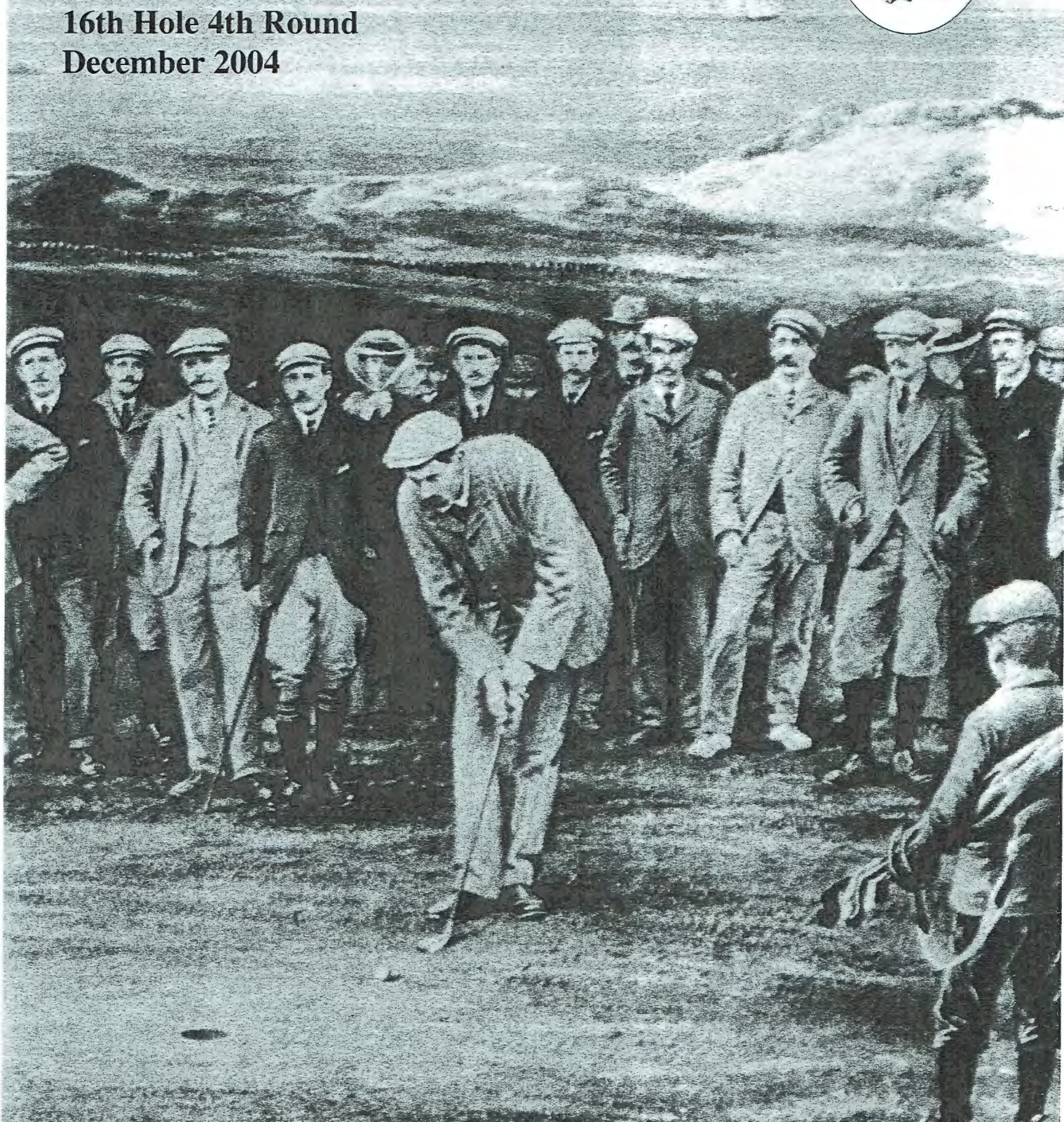


# *through the green*



16th Hole 4th Round  
December 2004



# International Match at Pollock

*An international match played at Pollock described by Palm Tree (aka Jake Davidson)*

**I**N JUNE 1901 Britain's greatest golfers played an international exhibition match at Pollok Golf Club, recently opened in 1893. James Braid, the Open Champion, and Sandy Herd representing Scotland, challenged the famous English pair of Harry Vardon and JH Taylor. A great occasion for Pollok, many members and their guests were attracted to watch brilliant golf played over two rounds in the afternoon and early evening of Monday 17th June 1901.

They were indeed famous golfers, the Triumvirate of Braid, Taylor and Vardon between them having won the Open Championship sixteen times from 1894 to 1914. Playing many exhibition matches throughout Britain, they earned purses of around £50, far removed from the enormous sums of to-day's top professionals.

Having just won his first Open at Muirfield in 1901, James Braid joined JH Taylor, Harry Vardon and Willie Fernie to play an exhibition match over the Machrie course on Islay. This popular three-day event, from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, attracted a large crowd, among them several enterprising Pollok members, who saw the opportunity of inviting these players to Pollok. Along with Past Captain Andrew Dunlop a telegram was sent to the Club. The minutes of Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> of June read:

Have arranged exhibition match two rounds Pollok Monday afternoon and evening. Vardon, Taylor Braid and Herd. Consideration 25 pounds that Pollok members here will meantime guarantee. Call Committee meeting, suggest advise members, newspapers and postcard members etc.

The Committee agreed that the Exhibition match would further the interests of the Club and that all expenses should form a charge against the revenue account. The Secretary issued postcards to the members and such was the efficiency of the postal services in 1901, that they received them promptly on Monday morning, even without a first class stamp or post-code!!

On the day, a high wind prevailed, causing some problems. Despite this, all four players gave an excellent display of golf, playing with hickories

and the guttie ball; the rubber-cored Haskell ball was not introduced to the UK until later that year. With attendance restricted only to members and their guests, everyone could watch comfortably and repeatedly applauded the golfers. Over the course of 5,400 yards, Braid equalled the record of 73 strokes, held at that time by James Douglas, the Club Professional. Members closely studied Vardon's famous grip, and his ball the 'Vardon Flyer'. Much as Pollock members do to-day, all the professionals occasionally found the woods. But the eighteenth *Home* hole at 360 yards, was successfully birdied in three by both Herd and Taylor, no mean achievement with their contemporary equipment.

Playing four ball 'better ball' Scotland led by four holes in the first round increasing by five holes in the second, and eventually won the match by nine holes with seven to play. The individual scores were Vardon 76/74; Taylor 80/80; Herd 78/74; Braid 73/81. On the following day the *Glasgow Herald*, *Daily Record*, *Daily Mail* and the *Glasgow Evening News* all carried full reports of a memorable day – now in our archives.



*Back: Herd & Taylor; Front: Braid & Vardon*