

## THE NEW POLLOK COURSE.

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The new golf course in connection with the Pollok Golf Club will be formally opened by Lord Provost Bell this afternoon. His Lordship will be presented with a silver-mounted cleek, with which he will strike off the first ball, and the course will thereafter be declared open. A competition then takes place among the members. The new ground is an important addition to golfing greens from the fact that it is one of the largest in the country. Both in size and general characteristics it may be compared to the Tooting Bec Club's new course at Furzedown. They are both considerably over three miles in length, and in natural advantages stand about equal. It has been said that nature has divided golf links into two great classes - those that have sand bunkers and those that have them not; and against the latter the sarcasm has been flung that they have no hazards but " apple-woman and sheep."

Mr Horace Hutchinson has remarked that " without sand-holes or bunkers what is called golf is merely a substitute for golf." But science has come to the help of golfers in inland courses, and many of these "substitutes for golf " bid fair to rival sea links for incident and variety. By skilful laying out, neat trimming of the green, and taking advantage of its natural ruggedness, the Pollok course will take a high place among golfing links. The course is situated in the beautiful policies of Sir John Stirling-Maxwell in Pollok estate. Sir John was approached by several Pollokshields gentlemen with the view of obtaining ground for a golf course, and this requisition being backed up by the members of the Giffnock Golf Club, who have to evacuate their ground at Giffnock, he placed at their disposal as much ground on the Pollok estate as was necessary.

The preliminary arrangements were speedily gone on with, and a new club was formed containing the members of the Giffnock Club and the Pollokshields contingent of new members. The new club wisely retained the services of James Douglas, the Giffnock greenkeeper, and under his direction the course at Pollok has been prepared. His work has been by no means of a light character; but the natural advantages of the green have made the labour pleasant, and he may soon look forward to having under his charge a set of putting greens spacious and of fine quality of turf. It is an indication of the nature of the turf that no new greens required to be laid. Of course, there was considerable labour in re-turfing bad spots, and rolling and cutting to get them into the excellent order members will find them in to-day. He has also had the foresight to build up several reserve teeing grounds for each hole, which will obviate that golfer's terror, a hanging ball on the teeing ground.

A considerable amount of draining was also found necessary at parts, and the cuttings have been turfed so as not to spoil lies. Throughout the green the turf is good. In some places, where it has remained undisturbed for about a couple of centuries, it is beautifully soft and velvety, and excellent lies are obtained; and the parts that have been disturbed at later dates are old enough to make playing always enjoyable. The hazards are numerous. A burn runs through the ground, and as it is backed by a wall and fence the unfortunate golfer who fozzles his ball will find it - or more probably lose it - in the burn or ditch. Several hedges, fences, and game preserves, into which it is a "lost ball," rabbit holes, and frequent portions of undulating country lend additional variety. Where the ground is particularly uninteresting a rather novel use has been made of trees as hazards. They are either put in the direct line of play or guard a putting green, sometimes necessitating high lofting. At any rate the most has been made of the green and no hole is without its interest. A curious feature of the course is the amount of ground it covers. Except in the first field the players are hardly within sight of each other again, and half-a-dozen smaller courses could be formed inside the area. Another noteworthy feature is that twelve of the holes are over 250 yards in length, which ensures brassy play on these, the absence of which is frequently a complaint in inland courses. A rough sketch of the nature of the holes may be interesting.

The first tee is situated on the face of the hill opposite East Cowglen Road, and the line of play to the first green, which is called "Ashtree" extends parallel with the road for a distance of 380 yards. Rough ground and trees to the left will give an uncertain lie for pulled bails, but everything is clear to the right, and two long drives and an iron shot should reach the green. The iron, however, must be skilfully played, as a ridge, rising to a height of about two feet, bounding the green, will prevent all running-up. The putting greens commence well, and, like the remainder, the first is over 20 yards square. The hole will be well played in five.

The second hole, "Lodge," is similar in character to the preceding one, with the difference that, besides the rough ground to the left, a game preserve prevents wild playing being indulged in to the right. At the putting green the first tree which is directly menacing is experienced. It stands sentinel over the green, and will often cost the player a stroke or two. The distance is 280 yards, and it is a four hole.

The third hole, "Clump," still keeps parallel with the road, and retains exactly the same features as the second, with the addition of a wire fence right in front of the teeing ground, and all golfers know how often a harmless wire fence will stop a ball. A deep ditch at the far side of the putting green will punish strong approaches. The distance is 330, and another five will be recorded by a good golfer.

The teeing ground for the fourth hole, "Table", is behind the ditch, and a fozzled drive means certain grief. Well over that, however, the course is clear till the approach has to be played. The green derives its name from being situated at an elevation, and the hollow around it provides sport. The 310 yards from that hole probably require another five.

The fifth hole, or "Hippenstones", is 350 yards long, and has no prominent characteristics except rabbit holes to the right of the green which necessitate care being taken in using the iron.

Going to "Cowglen", the sixth hole, one meets the first great difficulty. A few yards from the teeing ground a meandering burn has to be crossed. But a hedge on one side and a wire fence on the other side of the burn add to the width of the dangerous ground; and a well raised long drive is required to reach safe ground. The approach to the hole is narrow, and is between a garden and a game preserve, which necessitates care with the second shot, which will be probably taken with the brassey. The putting-green, which is raised, is circular, and about 270 yards from the tee. At the side are rabbit scrapes.

The seventh hole, called "Damshot," is a short hole, only being about 180 yards in length. When the tee is well forward the green may be reached in the drive, but punishment waits the player who over-carries it, as there are a series of traps made by rabbits and much uncertain ground there. The average drive will leave a nice wrist shot for the green.

The eighth hole, "Crookston," is very sporting. At the distance of a short drive is a ridge of rabbit holes extending right across the course, which will catch short heeled, toed, or straight balls. The long driver, however, will find a good lie, and a long brassey shot will give him a good approach. But there is little hope for anyone else, as the ground is composed of a series of traps which should lend excitement to the game. The distance is 320, and, of course, a five will be lucky here.

The ninth, the last hole out, "Halfway," takes the player to the White Cart, and he again experiences a tree guarding the green. As the distance is 210 yards a four may be expected.

The tenth hole is also short. It runs parallel with the river. A straight and long driver has a chance of reaching the green from the tee, with a back wind, but the 220 yards to be covered will be well done in three or four.

The eleventh hole, "Rhannan," is 250 yards long. The line to the hole shaves the river, which takes a quick turn. Timid players will drive for safety to the right, and, of course, will be penalised by a longer approach. The green is furrowed, and nicety of judgment will be brought to bear in the putting.

The twelfth hole, "Sunkfence," presents another formidable difficulty. The long drive will have all the excitement of clearing a deep ditch, containing water, and backed up by a high stone wall, at a distance of 80 feet from the tee. The distance to the green is only 180 yards, and a drive will reach it. But duffers will probably play the iron from the tee, and go over the ditch with another iron shot. A fozzled ball means endless trouble. The hole may be done in three or twenty.

The thirteenth, " Bridge," does not leave the Cart. A view of Sir John Stirling-Maxwell's house, with its beautiful grounds, is here obtained. But probably the golfer will be more intent in keeping his ball out of the river. The distance is 220 yards, and another four will be run up.

The fourteenth hole, " Warren," strikes off at right angles from the river, and derives its name from the putting green being placed in a rabbit-warren, which will give some variety to the approach game. It may be taken in five.

The next hole is "Lawbush," so called on account of its being in the vicinity of a mound on which are trees on which tradition says witches were hung. The golfers have formed this into a hazard. and it requires to be driven over or played round about. There is nothing else in the hole, and five will be a good score for the 390 yards.

The sixteenth hole, " Dowgate," is 250 yards long, and contains no more incident than a wire fence in front of the teeing ground and a road. It is also a five hole.

The seventeenth, "Avenue," requires straight driving to prevent the ball going on to the road to the left or the game preserve to the right. All is clear after that, and a four will be a good score.

The eighteenth, or " Home " hole, is 360 yards in length, and is a good test of long driving. The putting-green is excellent, and 24 yards square. The golfer who is able to take this hole in an average of five will probably go round the course in a, little over eighty.