

The Dunluce Course At Royal Portrush



The Dunluce Course - True Links



Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to present the adjustments which have been made to the famed Dunluce Course at Royal Portrush. The reason for the adjustments is twofold - To increase the quality of the links for regular member and visitor play and to provide a course which is suitable for Royal Portrush to host the 148th Open. However, the overriding principle has been to ensure that the members and visitors enjoy the Dunluce Course even more than before.

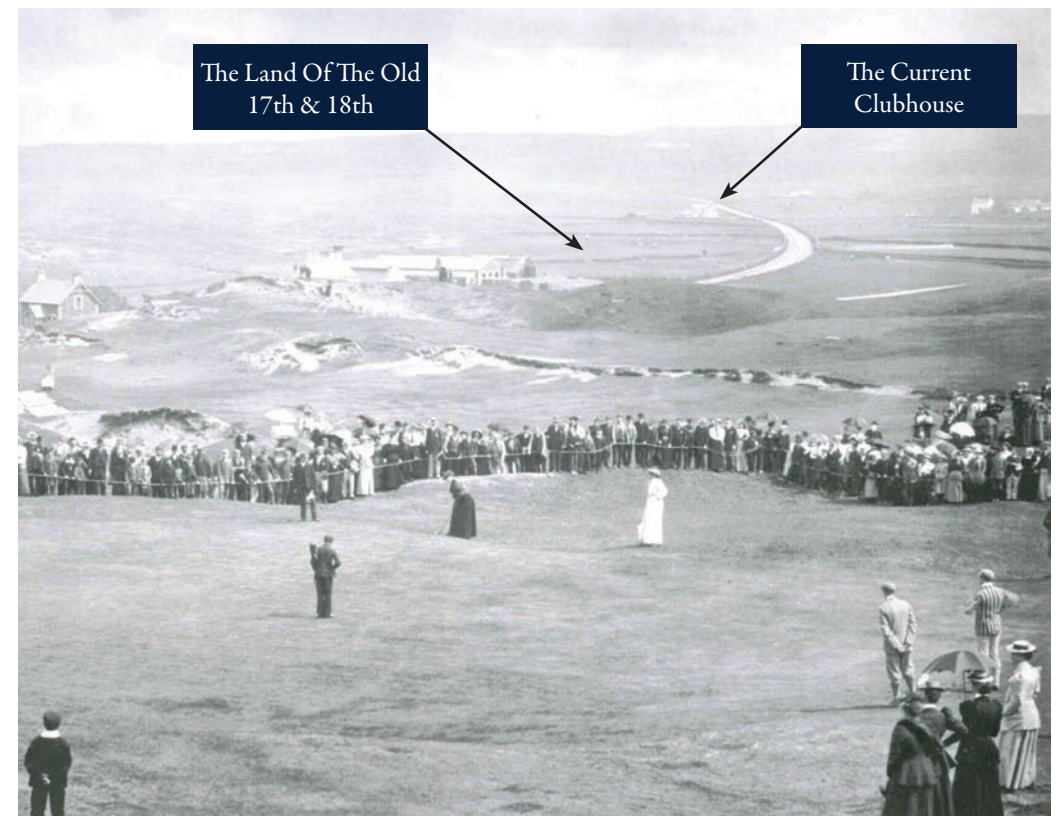
As part of the overall course review exercise, investigation of the evolution of golf at Portrush was undertaken to assess how the layout has changed over the years and especially since Harry Colt laid out his final design for the Dunluce Course in 1932. That has highlighted a fundamental issue. When Harry Colt designed the Dunluce in 1932, the clubhouse was over 1,200 yards away from the present clubhouse in the town of Portrush. Two of his original holes - the key 1st & 18th holes - are now lost. They provided a link from the old clubhouse to the old 17th and 18th holes. The 8th and 9th in the previous layout (now the 10th and 11th) did not exist. Although Harry Colt was consulted over the addition of the replacement 8th and 9th holes and approved of them, they were the conception of the Club's professional, P.G. Stevenson, and Colt was not involved with the detail of the holes. This shows that Harry Colt was open to adjustments to the course required by changing circumstances.

The Club is now at another juncture of its evolution with the changes made to the course to make it possible for the 148th Open to return to Royal Portrush. The Championship has grown in scale tremendously since Max Faulkner lifted the Claret Jug when the event was held over the links in 1951. The R&A was clear from the outset of the negotiations for the return of The Open that sufficient room had to be available in the right areas to allow all of the usual infrastructure to be put in place to support the Championship. Following an intensive study of all options, the inescapable conclusion was drawn that the old 17th and 18th holes of the Dunluce Course would have to be made available for the majority of the spectator village area.

Following a detailed study of the opportunities to replace the old 17th and 18th holes, the conclusion was that two replacement holes for the Dunluce could be forged from the area previously occupied by the 5th and 6th holes of the Valley Course. This is a tremendous arena for two dramatic and iconic holes which should quickly achieve world fame. That led to two questions.

Would Harry Colt advocate such a change if he were alive today? We believe that he certainly would. Not just because the prize of The Open awaited but also due to the fact that the adjustments strengthen the layout. He would always look for the best land for his designs and the new holes have occupied arguably the strongest land which Portrush has to offer.

Have the changes led to more enjoyment for the members and visitors through an increase in quality of the course? There is little doubt that the two new holes are far superior in natural character compared with the old 17th and 18th holes. That, on its own, has led to the course receiving even greater plaudits than it did before and will hopefully continue to generate more enjoyment in the play of the course for all golfers.



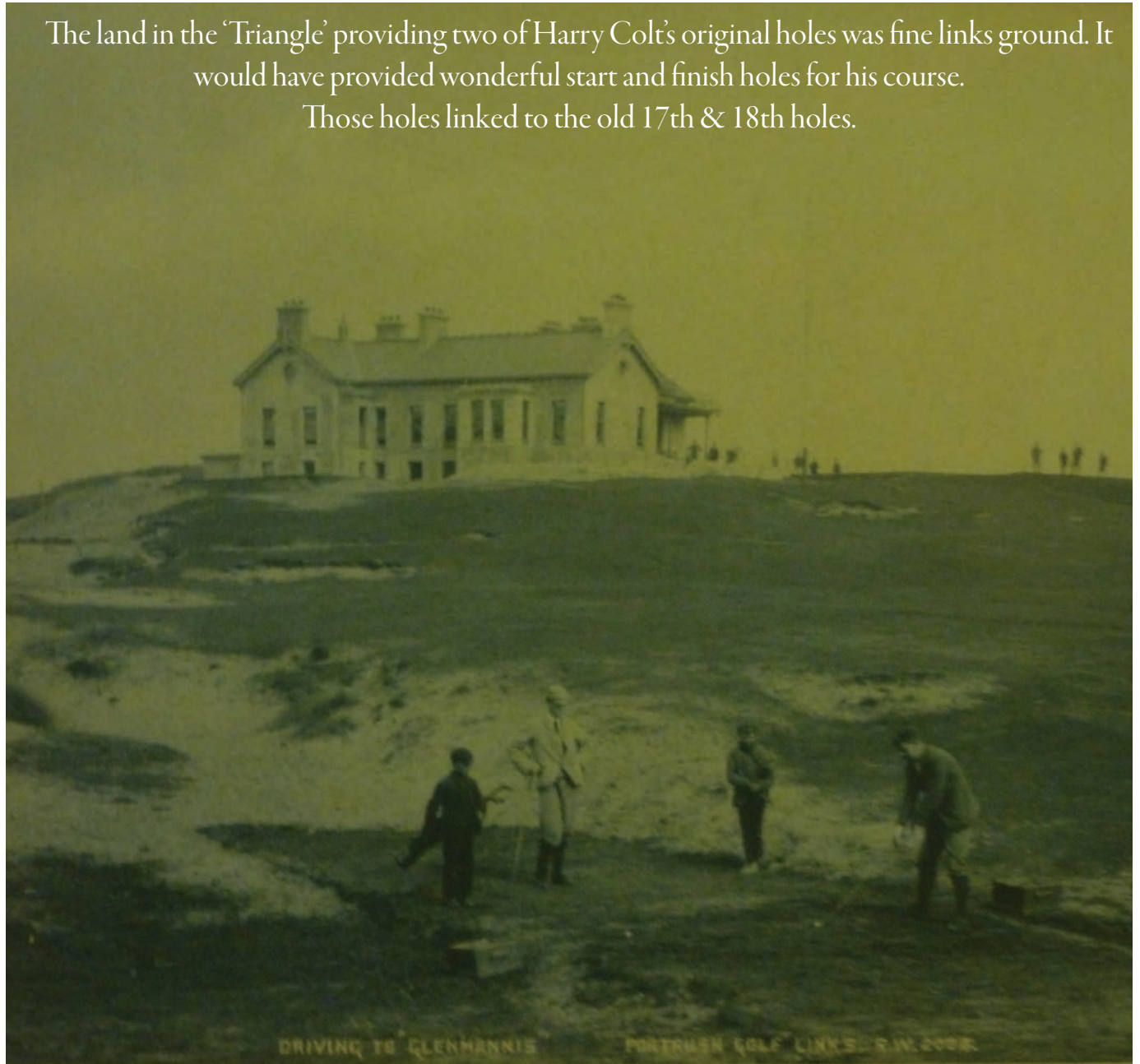
Lady Margaret Scott on the old 18th green at the original clubhouse during the Ladies' British Open Amateur Championship in 1895.

Heritage

Mackenzie & Ebert have the utmost respect for the work of the great architects of the past and especially that of Harry Colt. Any changes to Royal Portrush have been made in the spirit and style of his original design.



The land in the 'Triangle' providing two of Harry Colt's original holes was fine links ground. It would have provided wonderful start and finish holes for his course. Those holes linked to the old 17th & 18th holes.



The old clubhouse sat high on the hill right in the heart of the town of Portrush.

Heritage Timeline

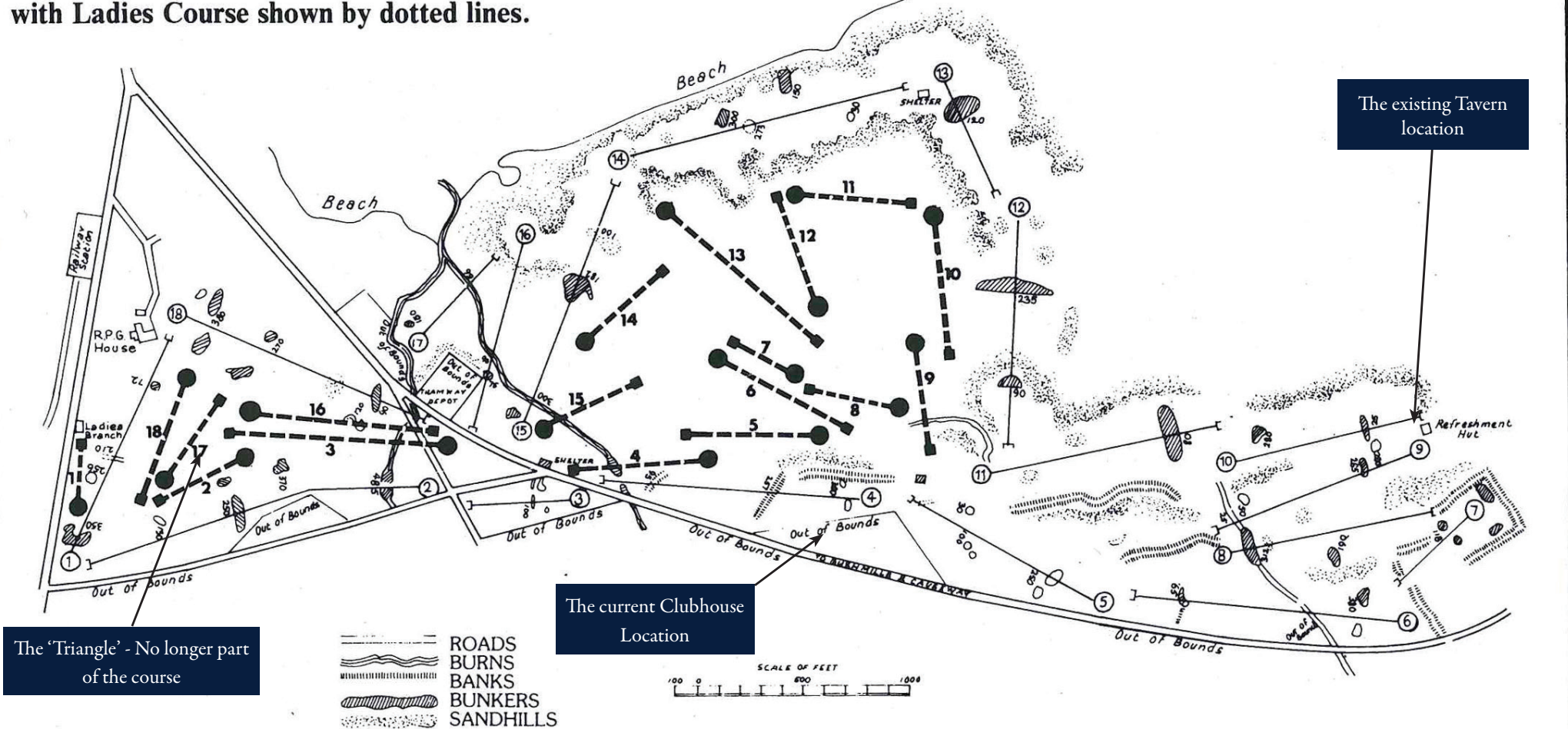
1888	Royal Portrush Golf Club formed with two 18 hole courses - Men's and Ladies' - Golf did not extend beyond the current 10th tee
1922	Harry Colt prepares a plan for a redesigned layout but not all of the land was available
1923	Harry Colt prepares a revised plan allowing for the extension into the new land
1928	Lease signed for land for a new main clubhouse & Ladies' clubhouse (at the site of the existing Ladies' clubhouse) - Ladies' clubhouse built & future main clubhouse planned
1930	Lease acquired for the far end of the course allowing course to be extended
1930	J S F Morrison, Harry Colt's partner, produces an amended plan but it is criticised
1932	Harry Colt returns to produce the final plan which included two holes in the Triangle at the old clubhouse rather than the current 8th and 9th holes
1932	Work starts on the course
1933	Course played at Easter - Formally opened in July
1936	5th and 6th holes on the Valley Course are built
1937	Suggestions that the Triangle be surrendered and a new clubhouse built but War breaks out before the plan can be implemented
1937	The professional, P.G. Stevenson describes his concept for the current 8th and 9th holes and Colt agrees - He had planned a different layout but preferred Stevenson's
1939	Current 8th and 9th holes built and two holes in the Triangle released
1945	It becomes clear that the old clubhouse had to be vacated
1946	Clubhouse moved to the old Holyrood Hotel (The current site) but building in poor condition
1950	With The Open awarded to Royal Portrush, clubhouse improvements are carried out
1951	The Open is staged at Royal Portrush
2016	The new 7th and 8th holes are opened
2019	The Open is staged at Royal Portrush

Heritage - Layout Before Harry Colt Redesigned The Course

The Long Course used to be a completely different configuration and occupied land now taken up by the Valley & Skerries Courses.

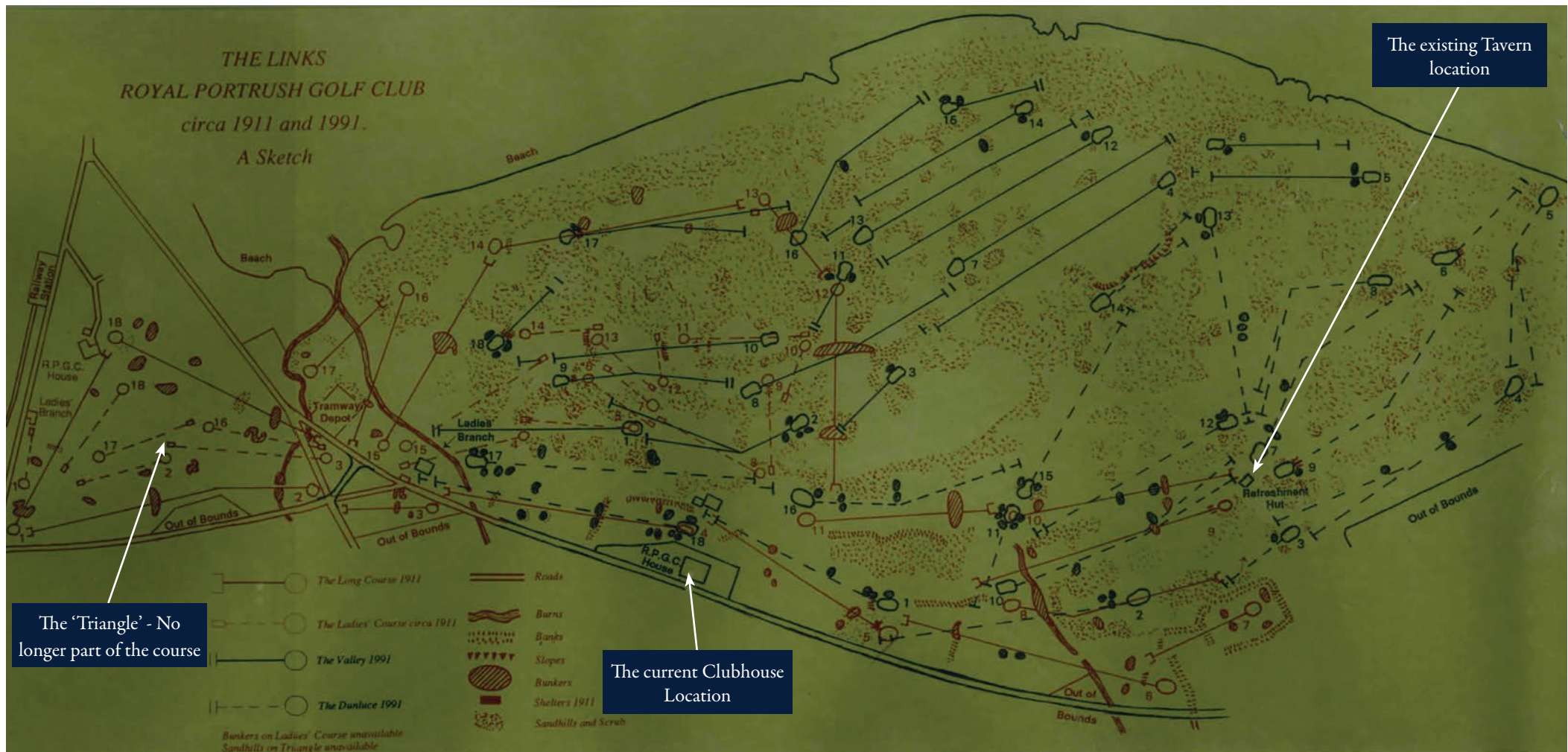
OLD DUNLUCE LINKS 1909 — 1932

with Ladies Course shown by dotted lines.

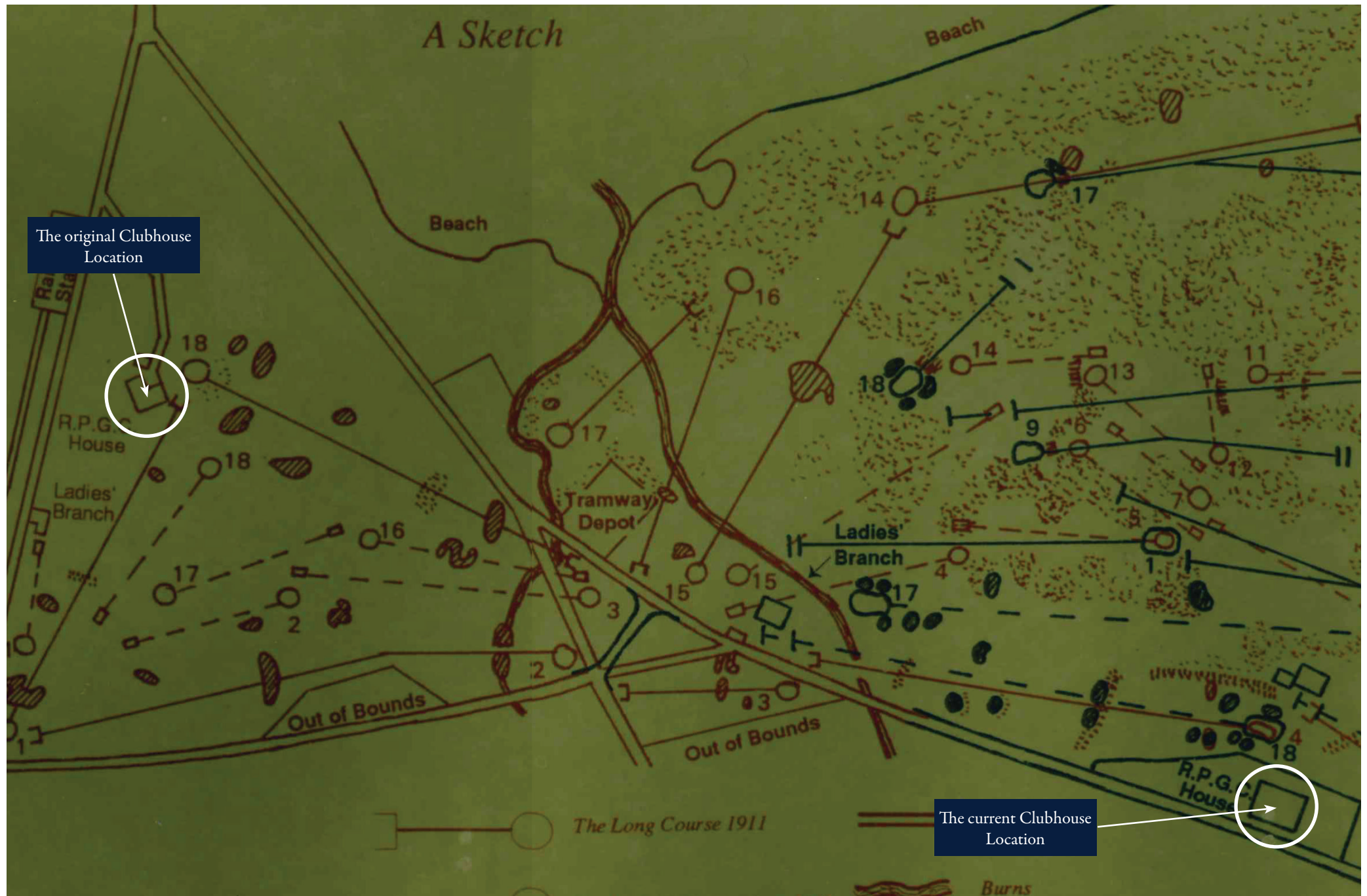


Heritage - Plan Showing the 1911 & 1991 (Current Day) Layouts

The extra land to the north (right hand side of the plan) which became available to Colt was substantial allowing a complete change of layout for both courses but his focus was on the original clubhouse location.



Heritage - Plan Showing the Original & Current Day Clubhouse Locations



Heritage - Aerial Photo Showing the Original & Current Day Clubhouse Locations



The original Clubhouse
Location

Old 17th

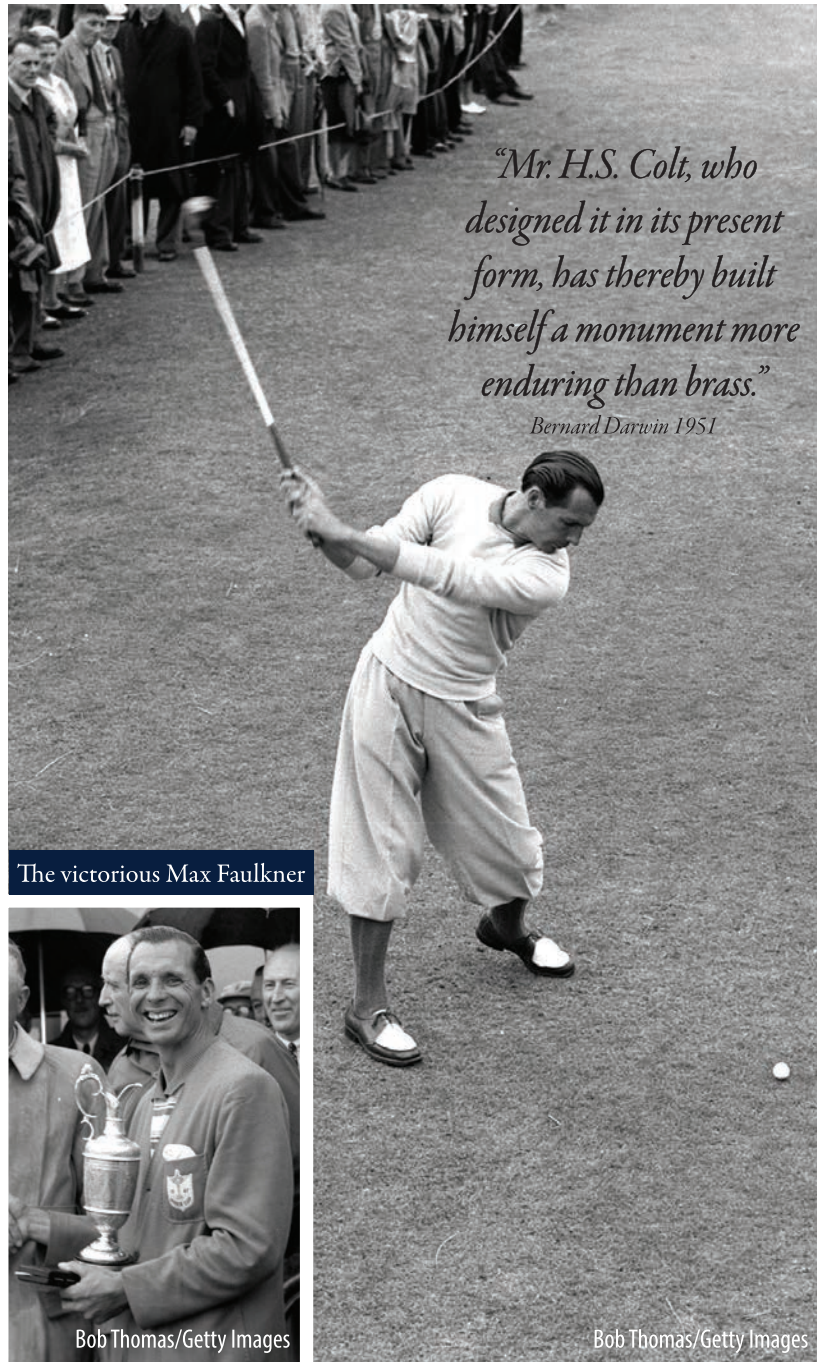
Old 18th

The current Clubhouse
Location

Heritage - Original Course Character



Heritage - The 1951 Open



The victorious Max Faulkner



Bob Thomas/Getty Images

Bob Thomas/Getty Images

Sporting News

GOLF

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

FROM OUR GOLF CORRESPONDENT

The first Open Championship ever to be held in Ireland was begun at Portrush yesterday, and I must to my shame confess that I have never before seen this grand course. Let me at once pay it my respectful compliments.

It is truly magnificent and Mr. H. S. Colt, who designed it in its present form, has thereby built himself a monument more enduring than brass. The course does not disdain the spectacular, such as the one-shot hole called Calamity Corner, with its terrifying sandy cliffs and its gadarene descent into unknown depths to the right of the green; for the most part the course does not depend on any such dramatic quality, but rather on the combined soundness and subtlety of the architecture. There is a constant demand for accuracy of driving, the more so at present as the rough is really worthy of its name and the approaches are full of varied interest. In particular there are one or two holes of the despised length called "a drive and a pitch" which are entirely fascinating, such as the fifth, with its green almost on the brink of the sea, and the 15th. The greens are full of interesting undulations and altogether I find it hard to imagine a more admirable test of golf.

As far as it ever can be it was almost easy yesterday, with a grey sky, a light south-westerly wind, and the ground comparatively slow and wet after some heavy rain in the night, a direct answer to the greenkeeper's prayer, but "easy" applied to Portrush is emphatically a relative term. The field was not very large and was reduced by scratchings. Of the formidable American contingent only the faithful Stranahan was there. Demaret, Bulla, Coc, and McHale had been expected up to the last minute by the more sanguine but had softly and silently vanished away. There were also some well-known absentees among our own players, such as Horn, Ayton, and Branch who had duly given notice. Assuredly Locke could not have hoped for a better field in which to achieve his hat-trick of three championships running, last accomplished by Bob Ferguson and Jamie Anderson long ago in the eighties.

Bob Thomas/Getty Images

Bobby Locke finished in 6th position

AN ATTRACTIVE COURSE

Locke and most of the binger guns were yesterday at Portstewart, an attractive seaside course a few miles away, not quite of the stature of Portrush but providing an excellent supplementary battlefield. However, I acted on the principle that sooner or later they must all come to me so I stayed at Portrush and let the Portstewart scores speak for themselves. The great attraction at Portrush was F. Daly, who was once a caddy there and learned his golf on the course. Clearly he must have a great chance and he is hitting the ball up to the green admirably and, in particular, driving a very long way, but his putting does not wholly inspire confidence and he is very fidgety in his addresses to the ball on or near the green. He and Cremin, the Australian, took away a large crowd of spectators, among whom was one most exacting lady. She appeared inexpressibly shocked when at the first hole Cremin went from the rough into the big bunker below the green. That, she thought, was a barely decent thing to do, and then she had a cheering thought—"After all perhaps he is an amateur," she said, and took heart again.

Daly started beautifully. The second hole, which measures 520 yards or so and is ironically supposed to be a three-shot hole, he reached with a driver and a mashie and missed a not very long putt for 3. He was out in 37. Homewards he made a slip or two but never one that cost more than a single stroke, and he finished with two splendid 4's for 75. As I said before, it is only near the hole that he gives cause for anxiety. How few there are that do not!

Not far behind Daly came A. Lees, who to some extent wasted his sweetness on the desert air of qualifying. His 32 out was really a shocking dispersal of riches, but if the ball is determined to go into the hole it will go in and it is vain to try to stop it. Moreover, Lees was holing no outrageous putts. Three yards was the longest he holed all day. Still, 37 home was more consonant with the modest ambition of qualifying. Here are the figures of a wonderfully good round:—Out, 4, 4, 3, 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 4; Home, 5, 3, 3, 5, 3, 5, 4, 5, 4. Nagle, from Australia, had a capital 73, three strokes better than his fellow Australian, Cremin. A neat, steady, unobtrusive golfer who will probably do better.



A DISAPPOINTING ROUND

Hassanein, from Egypt, a very fine striker of the ball, had a disappointing round of 80 in which he took 42 to come home. He will have to pull himself together, but the situation is very far from desperate, for with so small a field two out of every three must, roughly speaking, qualify, and there is always a certain number of entrants in front whose ambition has altogether outrun their discretion so that they may be written off from the start. A truly remarkable score was 71 by Jacobs, beginning with two 5's and ending 5, 6, 5.

Another 71 by Ward mildly enlivened a rather dull day's golf—so did an exciting rumour from Portstewart that Rees had taken 9 to one hole. In fact this was more nearly true than most rumours, for he had taken 8. He got into a horrid place behind the 12th green, and after two efforts, which left the ball worse off than when it had started, holed 9 to one hole. After this tragedy he deemed it unplayable. After this tragedy he finished in 72, a really great feat, especially by one who as a rule does not suffer an 8 gladly. It will probably do him more good than a more orthodox 69 would have done. Generally speaking the scores at Portstewart (where Von Nida and Halliburton led with 68 and Locke, like Rees, took 72) were lower than those at Portrush, as was only right and proper considering the almost perfect scoring weather. I think Portrush had rather the better of the argument with the players.

If the wind blows as it often does then the thick rough verging on hay will come into its own and up will go the figures. But Portrush seems to me so good that no number of 68's or 69's could in the slightest degree discredit it. They would simply rebound to the great glory of the golfers.

Fred Daly finished in 4th position



Bob Thomas/Getty Images

Bernard Darwin's account of the 1951 Open Championship
- The Times 3rd July 1951

The Two New Holes

If there had been a criticism of the Dunluce Course over the years, it was that the old 17th and 18th holes were slightly weak after such an amazing tour of the dunes over the first 16 holes. That has been addressed by creating two new holes that continue to improve Colt's finest links. The dunescape which they occupy is second to none, giving rise to two holes which are more in-keeping with the other 16 holes on the course.

Firstly, a new par 5 hole plays down into the valley, over the route of the old 6th hole of the Valley Course and rises gently up to a new green, hugging the enormous dunes to its right. 'Big Nellie', a huge bunker on the old 17th hole, has been recreated to the right of this new hole. This fits very well into the huge dune bank.

Secondly, a new par 4 hole has the potential to become one of the most dramatic in championship golf and one of the main feature holes of the Dunluce Course. From a tee position close to the old 5th tee on the Valley, the golfer faces a demanding drive played across the chasm of the valley between tee and fairway to a green close to the existing 8th green.

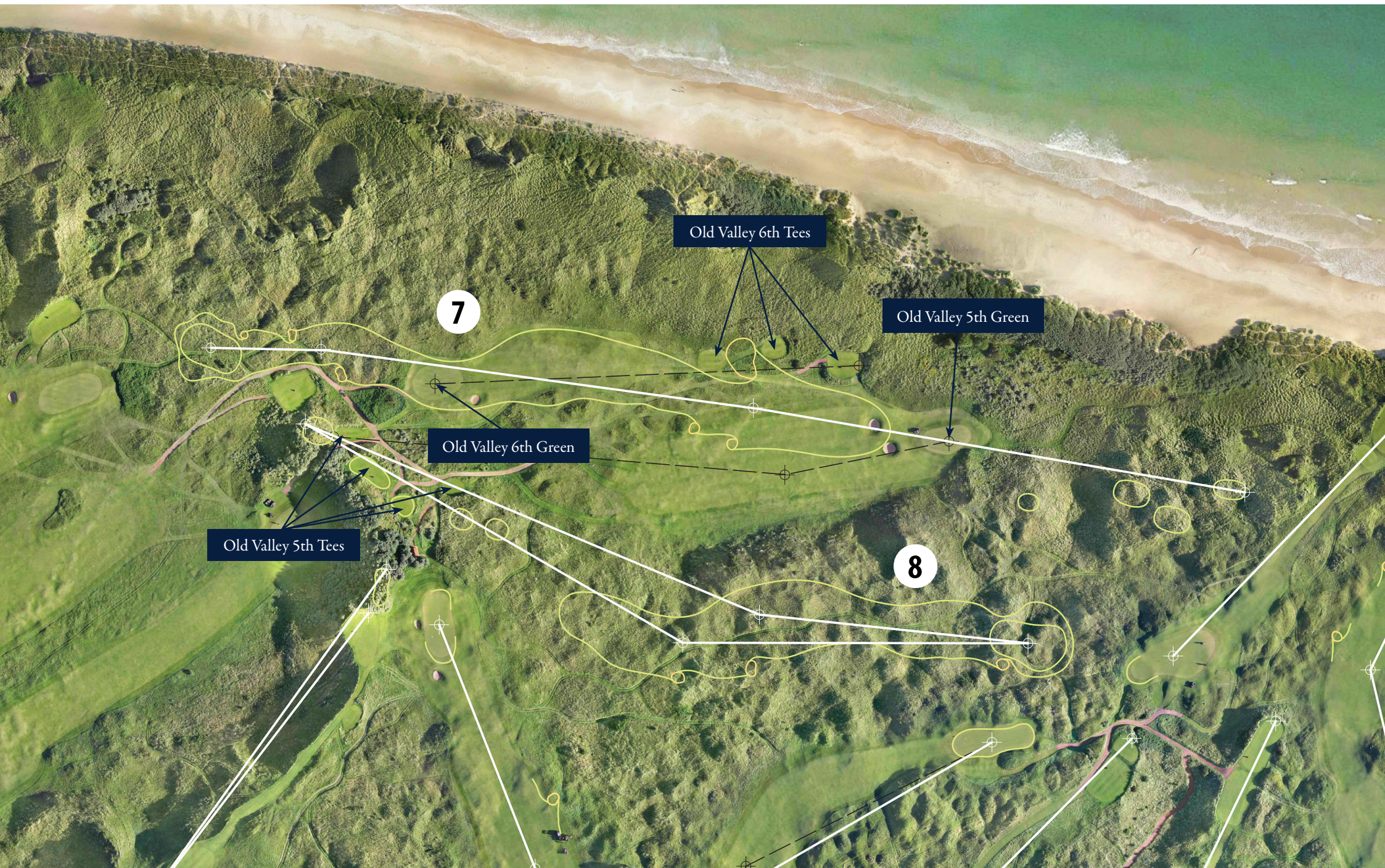
The two holes fit in perfectly between the 6th and the old 7th hole and make up for the considerable loss of length from the removal of the old 17th and 18th holes.

These two new holes have the potential to become not only famous but iconic throughout the world of golf.



Computer Generated Visualisation

The Two New Holes







The Dunluce Links Course Overview





The Changes To The Original Dunluce Holes

Along with the two new holes which have been created, the other sixteen holes of the course were reviewed to assess where appropriate adjustment would be merited. This was carried out in conjunction with officers of the Club and The R&A.

However, any improvements implemented have borne in mind the fact that the course is used as a private members' facility for the vast majority of its life. Hence any changes have been implemented so that they do not compromise the enjoyment of the members. A few back tees have been added which will not be used by the members and the addition of bunkers or adjustment of the landform carried out affects, on the whole, the landing areas of the elite players rather than the handicap golfers.

It is interesting to note that there have been no major changes to any of the par 3 holes on the course other than adding a back tee at the famous Calamity. Without exception they have all withstood the test of time. However, adjustments have been made to every other hole although a number of them are relatively minor in nature.

As with the design concept for the two new holes, any adjustments to the existing holes have paid respect to the original design philosophy of Harry Colt. He made very sparing use of bunkers at Portrush. The nature of terrain and the penalty of the rough would have rendered over reliance on bunkers unnecessary. There is little doubt that the standard of play has increased over the years but the revised course still only relies on 59 with the number of new ones balancing the number of bunkers removed. That is far lower than any other Open venue. Turnberry is the closest having 87 bunkers with the majority of the venues having around 100, Muirfield more than 150 and Royal Lytham & St Annes relied on as many as 203 the last time The Open was held there!

Par 5 holes generally require attention to ensure that they still ask the right questions of the best players. That has proved to be the case at Royal Portrush. The most dramatic of the changes to the par 5s was to lengthen the 2nd hole by pushing the green further back. That seemed to be a natural opportunity to implement although the hole is still reachable with two well struck shots. The 11th hole (old 9th) has been played as a par 5 in the past but, at less than 480 yards, it will be played as a par 4 for The Open. The 12th hole (the old 10th) has been lengthened just for the elite players with tees to the left of the preceding green. The old 17th has been replaced with the new 7th hole and this includes the recreation of the fearsome 'Big Nellie' bunker.

In terms of lengthening the holes and the course, there was no target set for the overall length of the layout. Instead each hole has been considered on an individual basis and to ensure an even balance of lengths of holes throughout the course. That has led to an overall length of 7,317 yards - An increase of 174 yards from the previous 7,143 yards.

The quality of the contouring of the greens and surrounds on the course is the element which fundamentally defines the skills of Harry Colt and his construction team. There are some wonderful shapes to admire. There was further evidence of this by a comparison of the true 'Colt' greens with the surfaces of the old 8th and 9th which did not benefit from his attention to detail as these holes were added later. There was a marked difference in their shapes and the way they blend into their surroundings although the old 9th (new 11th) sits better in the landscape than the old 8th (new 10th) did. Hence the 10th green was reshaped during the works to provide it with a surface which we think Mr Colt would approve of.



David Cannon

The Valley Course Overview



The Valley Course

The first thing to say is that the Valley is a tremendous links course in its own right. The use of the land containing the old 5th and 6th holes on the Valley Course for the two new holes on the Dunluce Course clearly meant that a reconfiguration of the Valley was required unless the members were to choose to return to the existing 17th and 18th holes for the Dunluce Course between Opens. If not, the possibility of adding the 17th and 18th holes of the Dunluce to the Valley Course was assessed but discarded for two main reasons. The character of the holes would not fit in with the rest of the Valley Course and the use of this area during an Open would lead to these two holes, along with the 2nd hole, being taken out of play for a long period. Hence the Valley would be left as a 15 hole course during the year of an Open. As a result, a solution was provided which caters for all scenarios. The changes have strengthened the Valley Course with the creation or restoration of four holes in the layout.

The Valley Course changes have involved:-

1. *playing a dramatic new par 3 15th after the old 16th hole.*
2. *extending the 16th (the old 17th) to a dogleg par 5.*
3. *restoring one of the historic Portrush holes from tees which had fallen obsolete to the left of the old 17th green to one of the Skerries Course greens to produce the new 17th hole. This was an original green at Portrush.*
4. *playing a new short par 4 18th hole from a stunning tee location on the dunes with views of the beach, sea and town to a green close to the 1st tee on the Valley Course.*

The old 18th hole on the Valley, a strong par 3, has been retained for possible use during build and restitution periods for The Open.

All four new or adjusted holes for the Valley will be extremely high in quality of scenic views and golfing character. This major change to the course has been well received and has arguably strengthened the quality of the Valley overall.

The new 17th hole on the Valley Course restores one of the original Portrush greens



Mackenzie & Ebert

Tom Mackenzie & Martin Ebert have been designing and redesigning golf courses since 1989, first with Donald Steel & Company and then, from 2005, as Mackenzie & Ebert Ltd. The company has provided golf course architectural advice to Royal Portrush Golf Club on both the Dunluce and Valley Courses since Mackenzie & Ebert was formed. Martin Ebert has been the partner in charge of the work and this followed the input which he made with Donald Steel from 2001 until 2005.

In that time the projects which have been undertaken at the Club have included the improvement of the practice ground, the creation of the short game practice area, the installation of back tees on a number of holes as well as general advice regarding both the Dunluce and Valley Courses. Over the past five years, this major project at Royal Portrush has been one of the most prominent handled by the company to ensure that the Dunluce Course is as good as it can be for the return of The Open to Royal Portrush.

Mackenzie & Ebert currently advise 7 of the 10 current Open Championship venues, the feted Royal Dornoch in Scotland, Royal Porthcawl in Wales, Royal County Down in Northern Ireland and Portmarnock in Ireland amongst a long portfolio of links courses. The Championship links of Turnberry, Royal St. George's, Royal Lytham & St Annes, Royal Troon, Carnoustie and Royal Liverpool have to present an enjoyable experience for members and visitors as well as the supreme test of the world's best players. Striking the right balance is the key as well as paying due respect to the wonderful heritage of these courses.

Those same skills learned from working on so many classic championship courses have been brought to bear on the planning and implementation of the adjustments to the Dunluce Course which has enabled it to once again host The Open. This has involved a close working relationship with the Club and The R&A.



Carnoustie

Royal St. George's



Royal Troon



Royal Lytham & St. Annes



Turnberry

1st Hole - Hughies

416 YARDS 382 YARDS 371 YARDS 329 YARDS PAR 4



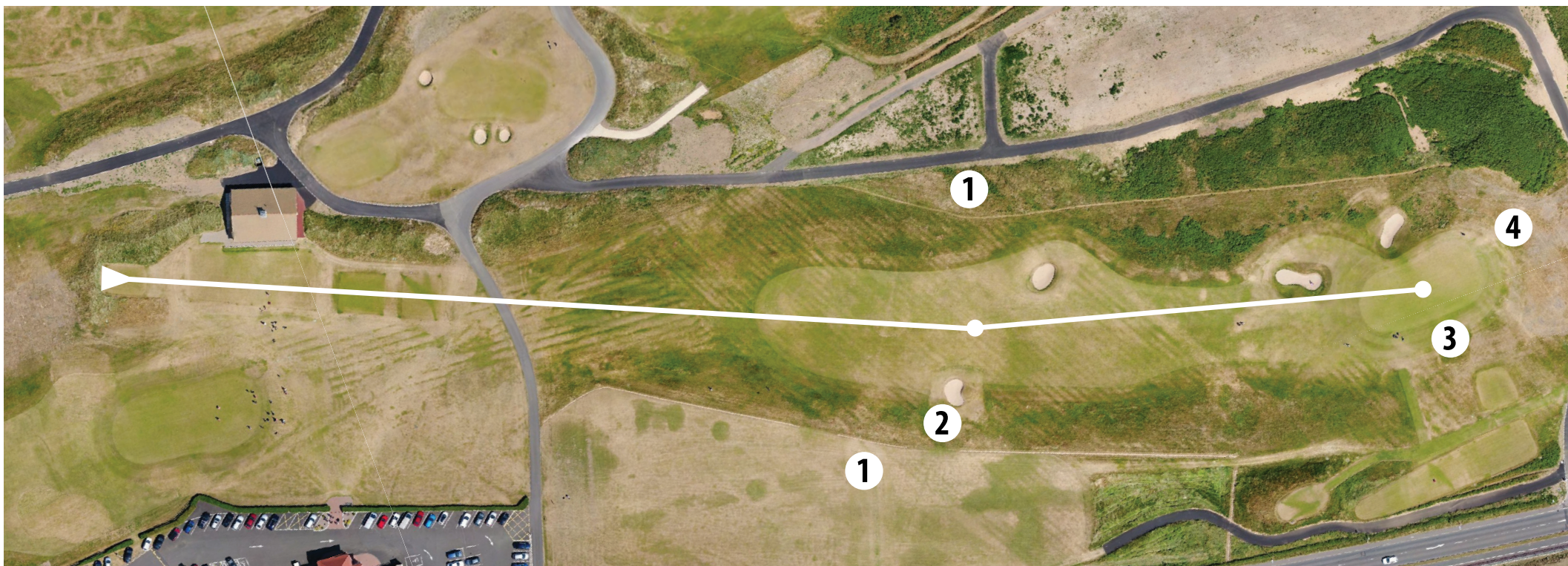
David Cannon

Hole Description

In general uphill holes are not amongst the finest on a course but the opening hole at Royal Portrush, which rises some 20 feet from tee to green, is an exception. First of all, the tee shot must avoid out of bounds to the right and left! That should not trouble the world's best players so a bunker has been added to tighten the hole on the fairway's right hand side at a distance which will tighten the landing area for tee shots played with an iron or rescue club in still or downwind conditions which is the normal strategy for the best players. The reason that the hole is such a good one lies almost entirely with the character of the green which Harry Colt designed. The shapes are wonderful, dividing the surface into quadrants for flag positions. The front two spots are the most testing as any shot which is underhit will fall back off the front and run well back down the approach or even into the cavernous bunker at the front left.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Out of Bounds right and left.
2. One bunker added to tighten the lay up landing area.
3. Wonderful green surface with four great flag positions.
4. Green surface mown out to the rear.





2nd Hole - Giant's Grave

● 572 YARDS ● 536 YARDS ● 520 YARDS ● 515 YARDS PAR 5

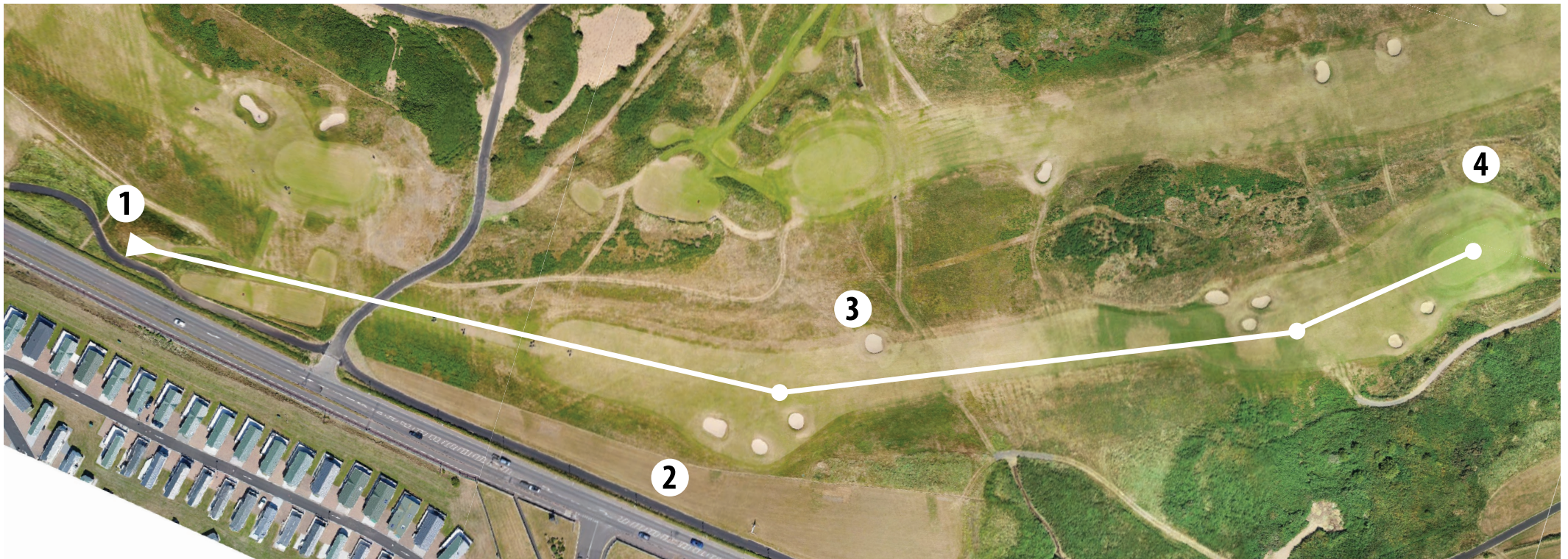


Hole Description

The relatively new back tee has added some steel to the drive of the par 5 2nd hole but the longer hitters still enjoy the benefit of plenty of run on tee shots played in still or downwind conditions. Par 5s are generally the holes which need to be bolstered on classic courses. While they should remain birdie and eagle chances, there should also be the capacity for larger scores if the risk is taken and the shot is not pulled off. A fairway bunker to the left at just beyond 300 yards from the tee has been added but the more far reaching change was to move the green back by almost 40 yards. This has long been considered. The hole is still reachable but the longer club required will bring the dangers of the approach more into play. The new green has taken the contours of the existing green as inspiration as it was another great example of Harry Colt's work.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Back tee added relatively recently.
2. Out of Bounds right.
3. New bunker added to tighten the landing area for the long tee shots.
4. A new green located behind the old green.





3rd Hole - Islay

● 174 YARDS ● 145 YARDS ● 140 YARDS ● 129 YARDS PAR 3



Hole Description

The first of the par 3s sits up high and gives the golfers their first wondrous sight of the majority of the links. Just as the par 5s generally need the most adjustment to produce the appropriate test, par 3s rarely need much, if any, adjustment. That was the case with the 3rd hole although the green was the most poorly draining on the course. Hence the opportunity was taken to reconstruct it and, during that process, minor reshaping of the surface was carried out to enable it to surface drain and to create a tough back left flag position. The green is well guarded by the bunker at the front left and the significant mound at the front right. Missing the green beyond these on the left or right also leaves an awkward recovery. The area behind the green will be tightly mown to allow balls to slip further away from the surface but this will also permit different recovery shots to be played.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Green reconstructed and reshaped.





4th Hole - Fred Daly's

● 479 YARDS ● 455 YARDS ● 442 YARDS ● 412 YARDS PAR 4/5



Hole Description

The 4th hole has, since its conception, been regarded as one of the toughest long par 4 tests at Royal Portush. The out of bounds lurks menacingly along the right hand side of the entire length of the hole and the fairway bunker to the left middle of the fairway provides an uncompromising challenge. In order to maintain the hole's stiff examination, a fairway bunker set just beyond the existing bunker has been added. That will ensure that the brave and bold will have to fire a drive between the hazards and the out of bounds to gain their advantage. The green is tucked just beyond two guarding dunes right and left of the approach.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Fairway bunker added to make the longer hitters think a little more on the tee.
2. Out of Bounds right.





5th Hole - White Rocks

● 382 YARDS ● 379 YARDS ● 369 YARDS ● 335 YARDS PAR 4



Hole Description

The 5th enjoys such a stunning backdrop and its green teeters on the edge of the cliffs which has a large part to play in its great popularity. Some of the longest hitters can look to drive or get close to the green on this downhill par 4 despite it measuring just over 380 yards. In fact, the old back tee, which made the hole just over 400 yards, was removed so that the hole is driveable in the right conditions. Great short par 4s need some bite as well as opportunity but the landing area for long drives widens and previously not one bunker defended the hole although old photographs do show a greenside bunker. Two bunkers have been added to the landing area although these have relatively little impact upon the club golfers' tee shots. The better golfers should have some doubt in their mind when they are standing on the tee. If any of the bunkers are found, a bogey could result. Another wonderfully shaped green at the end of the hole with a great variety of flag positions available. There is a belief that the green used to extend further back so it has been mown out further to add greater depth to those flag positions.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. The old back tee has been removed.
2. Two fairway bunkers added to demand more accuracy.
3. The wonderful green perched on the edge of the cliffs has been mown further to the rear.









6th Hole - Harry Colt's

● 189 YARDS ● 185 YARDS ● 177 YARDS ● 157 YARDS PAR 3



Hole Description

The par 3 holes are a real strength of the Dunluce and the 6th, named 'Harry Colt's', is one of the strongest. No changes have been made to this classic hole apart from mowing out the green surface at the rear. No bunker is necessary so well defended is the green by the natural undulations of its surrounds. The obliquely angled, pear shaped green has the ridge of low dunes to its right and the fall away at its front left. The green is large, meaning that just finding the green from the tee is not sufficient to guarantee a par figure.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Green mown out to the rear.





7th Hole - Curran Point

● 590 YARDS ● 552 YARDS ● 538 YARDS ● 466 YARDS PAR 5



Hole Description

A short walk to the right of the 6th green leads to some wonderfully naturally elevated tee locations for the first of the new holes. No one could fail to be impressed by the view down into the fairway. The huge 'Big Nellie' bunker guarding the drive on the old 17th hole has been recreated to the right of the drive on the new 7th. One smaller bunker has been included to the left of the hole and the area to the left of those has been converted into marram grass rough and an ecologically valuable dune slack. The rough vegetation has been carefully lifted from areas of construction of the two new holes to preserve this valuable, natural resource. The fairway has been extended well beyond the existing 6th green on the Valley Course to produce a great par 5. The green has been shaped to provide four quadrants, in some ways like the 1st green, to promote an aggressive strategy for the tee shot and second shot to leave the shortest and easiest approach to the right part of the green.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Tees sit on three high points in the dunes.
2. 'Big Nellie' bunker recreated to the right of the fairway.
3. Area to the left of the fairway converted to rough and a dune slack.
4. Fairway snakes its way up the valley between the dunes.









8th Hole - Dunluce

● 430 YARDS ● 410 YARDS ● 376 YARDS ● 314 YARDS PAR 4

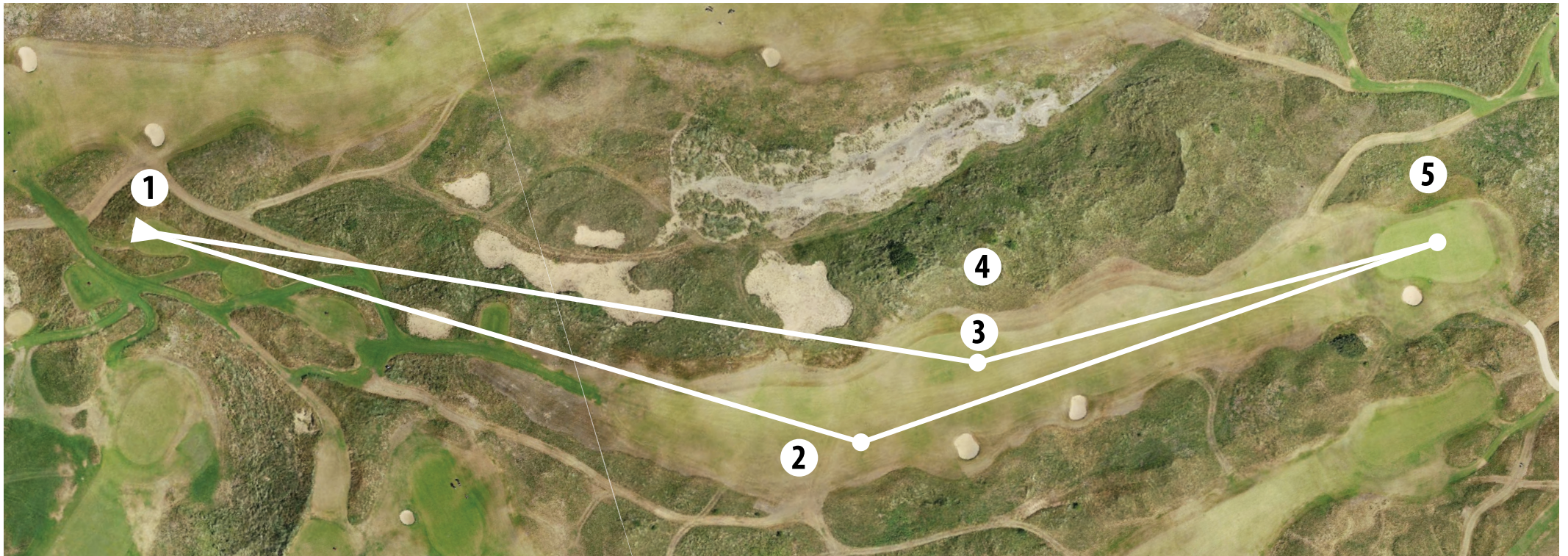


Hole Description

The sight from the tees of the new 8th hole presents one of the ultimate challenges in golf. The steep dune bank running all of the way down the left side of the hole tempts the best players to bite off as much as they can to leave the shortest and simplest approach to the green. Plenty of fairway is available to the right but the hole is far more demanding if a less aggressive line is taken. The dune land of the fairway has been softened in contour but the natural shapes have been used for inspiration. After the 8th hole, the Open competitors will walk through the Players' Tunnel to the 9th tee. This has been specially built for The Open and will also take the players from the 10th green to the 11th tee.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. A new back tee added and old Valley tees raised and reshaped.
2. Landing area for shorter tee shots.
3. Landing area for aggressive tee shots.
4. The dune bank is severe to the left of the fairway.
5. Green perched up at a naturally higher elevation.









9th Hole - Tavern

431 YARDS 418 YARDS 415 YARDS 409 YARDS PAR 4/5



Hole Description

The 9th hole has great shape with its right to left dogleg. Most elite players choose not to take the driver on this hole in still or downwind conditions so, to encourage more players to attempt to take the bold line, a new bunker has been formed to the right of the fairway in the lay up area. The cross bunkers in the approach frame the view to the green. The green itself is a superb example of a surface defended by a beautifully shaped links bank to the right rather than sand.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Bunker added to the right to tighten the lay up area.
2. Low dunes formed to block off the view of the 14th green from the tee.
3. Another beautiful green surface which has a wonderful bank to its right.





10th Hole - Himalayas

456 YARDS 363 YARDS 358 YARDS 328 YARDS PAR 4



Hole Description

The old 8th and 9th holes were added to the layout in 1939 when Harry Colt's original 1st and 18th holes in the 'Triangle' were lost. Sir Anthony Babington's history of the course tells of how the Club's professional, P.G. Stevenson, came up with the concept for the two holes leading Harry Colt to wonder why he had not thought of it! The corner of the sharp dogleg must be reached at the 10th to give an unobstructed view towards the green. It is at the green where it was possible to detect that Harry Colt was not involved with the detail of the hole's design. The flatness of the surface and the lack of harmony with its surrounding dunes was in contrast to the other greens on the course. Hence minor adjustments to the green surface contours have been made to improve its definition and character.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. New back tee added.
2. Green surface reshaped to make it more 'Colt' in character.





11th Hole - P.G. Stevenson's

● 475 YARDS ● 472 YARDS ● 456 YARDS ● 428 YARDS PAR 5



Hole Description

The second of the holes added in 1939 is a significant test as a par 4 rather than a par 5 and it will be played as a two shot hole for The Open. The drive is fearsome through the dunes with only a perfectly struck shot having a chance of finding the fairway. The approach shot has to be carried all of the way to the green defended, as it is, by a steep slope in the approach.

No Changes Made





12th Hole - Dhu Varren

● 530 YARDS ● 499 YARDS ● 475 YARDS ● 451 YARDS PAR 5



Hole Description

The 12th hole has benefited from a major change of tee location to the left of the preceding green. Previously the hole was played from a tee well to the right, at a much lower level. The Open tee extends the hole by over 50 yards and the tees enjoy a wonderfully high elevation leading to an exhilarating tee shot. Up at the green, the stream line to the right of the approach has been extended towards the centre line of the hole to come into play for pushed shots which do not have enough momentum to reach the green.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. New tees added to the left of the 11th green.
2. Carry lowered to provide a view from the new tees.
3. Fairway extended back towards the new tees.
4. The stream line has been extended slightly towards the approach.





13th Hole - Feather Bed

191 YARDS 165 YARDS 160 YARDS 141 YARDS PAR 3



David Cannon

Hole Description

This distinctive and photogenic par 3 is another short hole which needed little adjustment. The green is ringed by bunkers and the slight away slope of its surface will lead to the toughest flag positions being located at the front of the green. The green has been mown out at the front left to accommodate a really tough flag position in this area and the rear left hollow has been reshaped and mown tightly to allow all types of recovery shots to be played.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Green mown out to the left.
2. Rear green surrounds reshaped.





14th Hole - Causeway

470 YARDS 386 YARDS 367 YARDS 366 YARDS PAR 4



Hole Description

Although the 14th hole had been lengthened previously, there was an opportunity for another extension with a new back tee to put some steel into the start of the finishing stretch of the course. This new tee will bring the first right hand fairway bunker back into play and this is bolstered by a new bunker further up to the left of the fairway. The green has always been one of the toughest to find, perched up on its elevated location. A minor mowing out of the green at the back left has restored its full size. Another example of Harry Colt exhibiting his finest skills.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. New back tee added.
2. Fairway bunker added to the left of the hole.
3. Cavernous greenside bunker to be avoided at all costs.
4. A wonderful green which has been mown out further at the rear left.





15th Hole - Skerries

418 YARDS 370 YARDS 358 YARDS 362 YARDS PAR 4

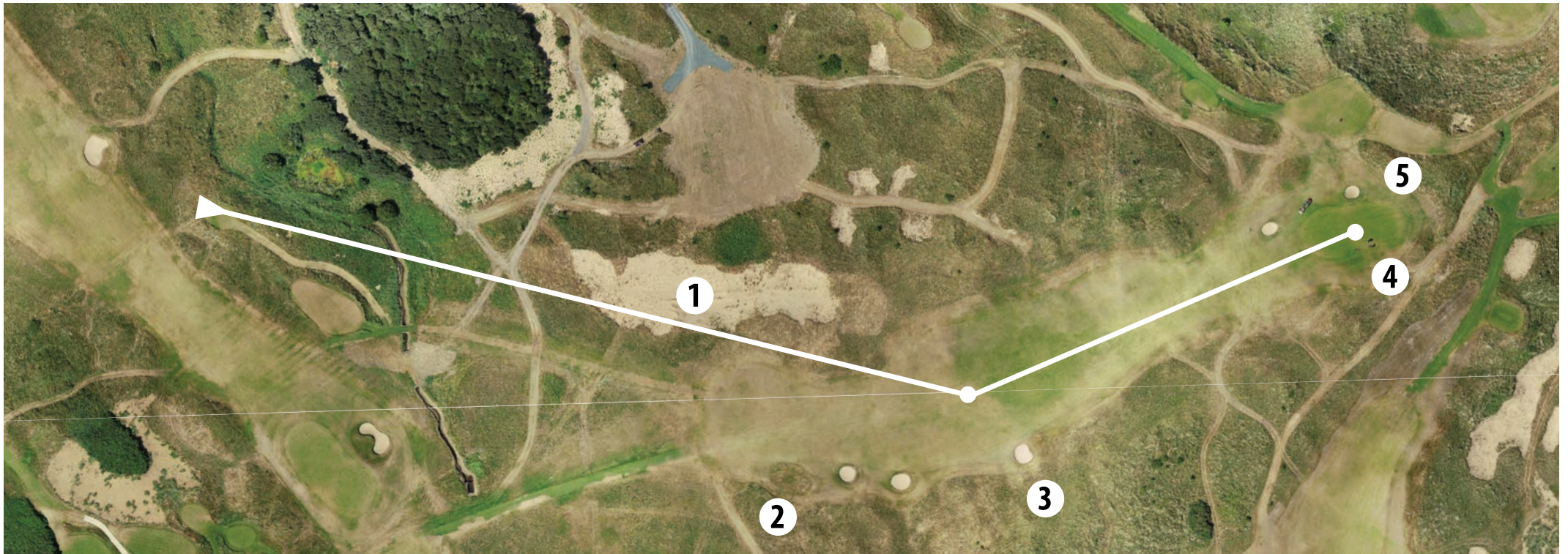


Hole Description

The back tee location located to the left of the 14th hole has added character to the Skerries, requiring a decision on line as well as length for the drive. The question of whether the driver is the best option will be more doubtful with the addition of a fairway bunker to the right although the longest hitters could get quite close to the green in firm and downwind conditions. The area to the left of the fairway has been lowered and is now a huge bare sand area. This allows a view through to the fairway from the tee. The vista awaiting the golfer of the approach to the green is arguably the most photogenic on the course. This has been improved with the removal of the invasive sea buckthorn behind the green which has been replaced with a new dune adding to the naturalness of the setting. The green has been mown further out at the rear right. The green is another enjoying excellent contouring of surface and surrounds.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Area lowered and a bare sand area created to the left of the fairway to open up views of the landing area.
2. The first of the fairway bunkers filled.
3. Fairway bunker added to the right.
4. The green has been mown further to the rear.
5. New dune constructed to the rear of the green in place of sea buckthorn.









16th Hole - Calamity Corner

236 YARDS 202 YARDS 195 YARDS 167 YARDS PAR 3



Hole Description

'Calamity' explains it all! The opportunity to make use of some of the most exciting terrain at Royal Portrush was not missed with this testing par 3. There is a feeling that the fearsome test of the hole, with its carry across the expanse of rough, had become diluted slightly over the years as a result of increased hitting distances. Hence a new back tee has been added to reinstate the former challenge of the hole. No bunkers required and a large green but the opportunity to mow it out slightly further to the rear has been taken. The beautifully crafted 'Bobby Locke's Hollow' to the left provides protection on this side.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Back tee added.
2. Green mown out to the rear.





17th Hole - Purgatory

405 YARDS 360 YARDS 355 YARDS 353 YARDS PAR 4

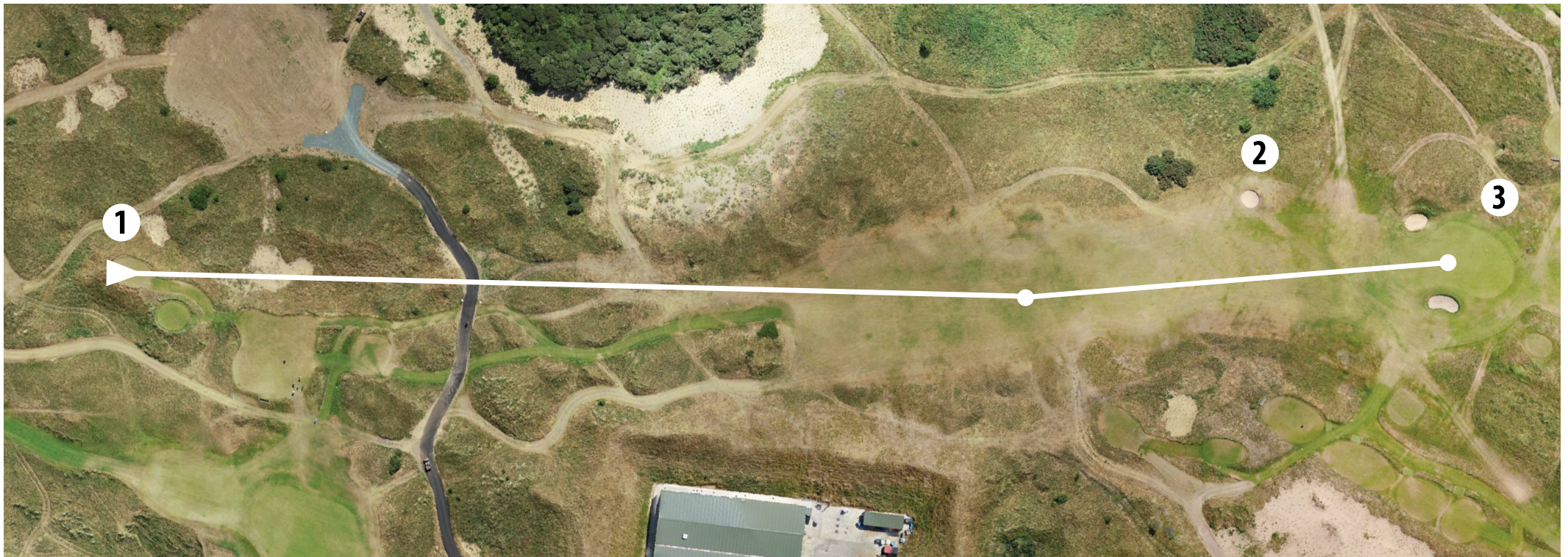


Hole Description

A back tee has been added to make it a little tougher to get the drives running down the steep slope towards the green. The hole has become a little easier to play over the years given the distance that the modern players are able to hit the ball. This has led to the addition of a bunker to the left of the fairway at the bottom of the steep slope. That will put a little doubt regarding the strategy to be adopted but care has been taken to ensure that only drives pulled slightly left of the ideal line will suffer the fate of ending up in the bunker. Another great green with some excellent opportunities for flag positions which will test the accuracy and nerve on even the shortest pitch shot.

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Back tee added.
2. New fairway bunker to the left to question the merit of the long drive down the slope.
3. Another wonderful green surface.





18th Hole - Babington's

● 473 YARDS ● 426 YARDS ● 404 YARDS ● 377 YARDS PAR 4



Hole Description

The old 16th hole makes a fine finishing hole for the course and The Open. A new back tee will put some doubt into the minds of the best players about whether to lay up or not. The historic out of bounds to the left of the hole will be a threat if the driver is taken but, if the golfer chooses to lay up, a long and possible blind second will result. The fairway has been narrowed on the right to make the bale out option a less attractive one. The hole is another with a bold dogleg shape formed from the natural dunes, to the right in this case. The green is well protected by the deep bunker at the front right and the beautiful links bank to the left. It will be a fantastic scene with the green surrounded by grandstands when The Open returns to Portrush!

Hole Changes & Comments

1. Back tee added.
2. Area in the carry lowered to improve the view from the new back tee, creating a bare sand area.
3. Fairway narrowed on the right.
4. Out of Bounds to the left of the hole.





Card of the Dunluce Course

Hole No.	Blue Tee Yards	White Tee Yards	Green Tee Yards	Par	Red Tee Yards	Ladies' Par	Comments
1	416	382	371	4	329	4	Fairway Bunker Added Right & Green Mown Out At Rear
2	572	536	520	5	515	5	Fairway & Approach Bunkers Added & Hole Extended With New Green
3	174	145	140	3	129	3	Green Reshaped
4	479	455	442	4	412	5	Fairway Bunker Added Left
5	382	379	369	4	335	4	Back Tee Removed, Fairway Bunkers Added & Green Mown Out At Rear
6	189	185	177	3	157	3	Green Mown Out At Rear
7	590	552	538	5	466	5	New Hole
8	430	410	376	4	314	4	New Hole
9	431	418	415	4	409	5	Fairway Bunker Added Right
Out	3663	3462	3348	36	3066	38	
10	456	363	358	4	328	4	Back Tee Added & Green Reshaped
11	475	472	456	5	428	5	No changes
12	530	499	475	5	451	5	New Tees Added Changing Alignment Of Tee Shot & Stream Extended
13	191	165	160	3	141	3	Green Mown Out Front Left & Hollow At Rear Left Reshaped
14	470	386	367	4	366	4	Back Tee Added, Fairway Bunker Added Left & Green Mown Out At Rear
15	418	370	358	4	362	4	Bare Sand Area Created, Fairway Bunker Added & Green Mown Out At Rear
16	236	202	195	3	167	3	Back Tee Added & Green Mown Out At Rear
17	405	360	355	4	353	4	Back Tee Added & New Fairway Bunker Left
18	473	426	404	4	377	4	Back Tee Added & Fairway Narrowed Right
In	3654	3243	3128	36	2973	36	
Out	3663	3462	3348	36	3066	38	
Total	7317	6705	6476	72	6039	74	



Conclusion

The two new holes and other adjustments to the Dunluce Course will provide a fitting test for the finest players for the 148th Open. However, they have also strengthened the character and quality of this renowned links for all golfers. The Valley Course proposals have also led to significant improvement to this tremendous foil for the Dunluce and should result in an increase in its popularity. Golf at Portrush should now be an even more enjoyable experience for the members and visitors as well as providing one of the greatest stages for The Open Championship.







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