The Grange-over-Sands Golf Club has recently celebrated its centenary since it opened in 1919. If you read the newspaper archives of the early years in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, the course is referred to as the ‘Grange New Golf Club’. This begs the question where was the old Golf Club? Clearly this has no association with the other course in Grange, the Grange Fell Golf Club, which was constructed in 1950 [1].

The 1910 OS maps reveals the answer! The first course in Grange-over-Sands was located at Fellgate on Cartmel Road and to the north of Wart Barrow (Fig. 1) and is mostly in the District of Grange-over-Sands, except for the north-western corner in Lower Allithwaite. There is also short incomplete entry on the website Golf Missing Links [2]. A search of the digitised newspapers on FindmyPast reveals 39 articles between 1894 and 1899, with 12 in the next decade, and none in the following decade.

The 9-hole course was known as Grange Golf Club or sometimes the Grange Golf Links [3]. In March 1894 the reports states: ‘The Links are now completed and play has commenced. Already an unusual amount of interest has been shown in the game, both by residents and visitors.’ [4]. Grange Golf Club was formerly opened on Tuesday 3rd April 1894 [5]. In the early days, the club was supported by a donation of £1 1s from Mr R Cavendish MP [6].
The 1910 map (Fig 1) shows the location of a Club House. In front of the Club House (Fig 2) members and visitors enjoyed the facility of a practice putting green. Frederick William Hill (a former mason’s labourer from Jeremy Hill in Allithwaite (1891 census)) was the Greenkeeper living at Middle Fell Gate (1901 & 1911 census) until around 1920 when his son Mr James Leonard Hill (born 1900) succeeded him [7]. Mr Hazlehurst was engaged as the Professional [8] who played a match against Hoylake professional on the Links [9]. Later, it is noted that James Hill the Greenkeeper was the Professional [7]. Amongst the early captains were Major G H Michaelson of Yewbarrow [10] and Rev G Vickars Gaskell [11] also a keen cricketer and captain of Grange [12] and later to become Vicar of Grange [13].
Fig 2. Club House with putting green at Grange Golf Links (CPLHS Photographic Archive).
The course

Below (Fig 3) is a wonderful description of the Grange Golf Links difficulties and features. The article highlights the challenges of the hilly course, with stone walls and blind shots. In 1927, three new holes were constructed and quickly abandoned after less than a year’s trial [14].

Fig 3. Description of the 3rd and 4th holes [15].

The entry in Nisbit’s Golf Yearbook of 1905 describes the course as ‘very sporting but rather hilly, and are 2500 yards in length’ [2].
Features of the course may still be seen on a walk between Middle and High Fell Gate and along the top of Wart Barrow Lane. (Fig 4). The flat plateau below the disused quarry (Fig 4.1) looks like a tee, and the areas engineered with supporting dry-stone walls appear to be Greens (Fig 4.2 & 4.3). The lovely surviving dry-stone wall just above the disused quarry is the boundary between the districts of Grange and Lower Allithwaite (Fig 4.4 & Fig 1.1).

Fig 4. Features of the Course still visible (1: Tee, 2 & 3: Greens, 4: Dry-stone wall).
Grange Golf Club 1894-1946

Membership cost One Guinea, with relatively high visitor fees of 2s. in 1905!

There are regular reports of Annual meetings in the Press. The Annual Meeting became a great social event with a dinner, toasts, a talk and songs (Fig 6). Around that time and in spite of a rival new Golf Club in Grange, the Club had a thriving membership of 74 full members, 71 Lady Members 12 Country members and 16 juniors [16].

Fig 5. Extract from Golf Missing Links Website [2].

Fig 6. Annual Meeting Report from 1907 [17].
In the early days, there were matches played against other local Golf Clubs, for example: Kendal and Seascale when Grange were the victors (Fig 7) [2].

Fig 7. Results of matches against other local clubs [2].

Tournaments at that time attracted competitors from as far as Todmorden (Fig 8).

Fig 8. Report of a Tournament in 1898 [18].
Play continued throughout the years of the 2nd World War under the leadership of captain Mr J. Wilkinson despite losing 25 members who joined H.M. Forces [19]. In 1944 the Club celebrated its 50th year (Fig 9) and shortly after issued a warning of its’ continuing struggle to survive and finally a short announcement of the closure in 1946 (Fig 10).

"GRANGE GOLF CLUB
Is Fifty Years Old

It was announced at the annual meeting of the Grange Golf Club, by the Secretary, Mr. J. Cottam, that this was the 50th year of its existence. The meeting commenced in a sorry state, but fortunately ended in a happier one. The treasurer, Mr. J. D. Addison, submitted the Balance-sheet which showed a loss on the year’s working of £48, due to so many members being in the Forces. A unanimous vote to continue the Club was passed and donations of £21 were made to start a subscription list.

Mr. J. Wilkinson, who presided, was re-elected captain for the fifth year in succession. Mr. J. D. Addison, hon. treasurer and Mr. J. Cottam, hon. secretary, and a strong representative Council was formed.

Fig 9. Annual Meeting reports from 1944 [20].
Fig 10, Warning of continuing low membership [21] and the announcement of the closure [22].

Postscript

The Golf Links proved to be an attraction for Grange as it featured in the adverts for holiday accommodation in the town. For example: the advert for Kents Bank Hotel mentions it is within walking distance (Fig 11).

Fig 11. One of many adverts mentioning the golf [23].

The Course also gained national press coverage as the it was location of a nasty accident when the brakes of a coach failed and it careered down the hill (Fig 12)
Fig 12. Accident [24].

Fig 13. 6-inch OS map, revised 1938, published 1947.

The 1947 OS maps (Fig 13) features the Golf Course which became defunct in 1946.
References


[17] Soulsby’s Ulverston Advertiser, 24 Jan 1907.


[22] Lancashire Evening Post, 6 Feb 1946.
