

Perhaps best described as an 'upland links' course, it provides a true test for golfers of all abilities. Lush up-land turf on which the ball sits up invitingly, turf banks and natural hazards, with well protected true greens, rated amongst the best in Wales, it offers the chance to play links type golf amongst the rolling hills of Mid- Wales. By the standards of today, the course is not long, but do not be lulled into thinking that this is a push over.

To single out one hole is almost impossible, but there has always been a certain notoriety attached to the 18th hole! Not for nothing did Harry Vardon name the finishing hole 'Death or Glory'! Stand on the tee and make your decision, take an iron and play safe, leaving you a difficult uphill pitch to a sloping green, or take the Driver and attack the carry of some 250 yards over a deep valley and the road beyond?!

HARRY VARDON

Few golf courses have had a champion such as Harry Vardon as their architect. Indeed, Llandrindod Wells golf course was designed not by a winner but by a legend. Open champion for an unmatched six times and of the US Open once, between 1896 and 1914 he was the leading member of the magical 'Triumvirate' of Vardon, Braid and Taylor who dominated golf in its first age of widening public appeal. Today he is widely remembered as the greatest advocate (though not inventor) of the Vardon grip and of the Vardon prize awarded by both the European and US professional tours to those with the lowest stroke average over a season.

Llandrindod Wells particularly remembers him as the architect of a delightful upland course that with the rail- way and the spa made the town a complete late- Victorian and Edwardian polite resort.

In the history of golf Vardon's achievements are best compared to those of Bobby Jones and Jack Nicklaus. Llandrindod Wells may not be Augusta or Muirfield Village, but like them it is a course and a club that matches the peerless character of its creator: elevated, winning and full of charm.



JAMES BRAID

Arguably the finest golfer to hail from Scotland, James Braid achieved greatness in two separate golfing careers. Firstly as a golfer he was one of the famed Great Triumvirate along with Vardon and Taylor, who dominated the game between 1890 and 1914. Braid captured The Open Championship five times between 1901 and 1910.

As a golfing champion he was asked to consult on many of the new courses being built in England and Scotland and after retiring from golf competition in 1912, he turned to his second career as a golf course architect.

The legacy of his wonderful imagination are many fine courses that have become classics and will be enjoyed for generations to come. His well-known designs include Carnoustie, Gleneagles, Hoylake and St Enedoc but he also had a large hand in the re-designing and renovation of many more, a list that includes celebrated courses such as Royal Troon and Royal Blackheath.



The famous Great Triumvirate of Taylor, Braid & Vardon



Llandrindod Wells
GOLF CLUB 1905

Golf with the Wow factor...

The fabulous

Harry Vardon and James Braid
designed Llandrindod Wells Golf Course



In the footsteps of legends.....

A HISTORY

In 1889 the owners of the Pump House Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, appointed Alexander Patrick of the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club to lay out a nine-hole golf course over the common near the lake for the entertainment of visitors to the Hotel and for the use of such local people as might be interested in the game of golf.

This course was advertised in the Golfing Annual Vol IV, 1890, as being of 9 holes with no crossing over moor-land and with plenty of 'whins and sporting hazards'.

In 1905 the Town Council took over the common and as more and more visitors were using the common the playing of golf there became increasingly dangerous and the Pump House had to close their golf course. One of the leading golfers and a prominent business man in the town at that time was Mr Tom Norton, a car and cycle dealer, and a man who was to be to the forefront in the subsequent development of golf in Mid-Wales. He had been an early member of St Giles Golf Club of Newtown, where he had business interests. He was perhaps the first man in Llandrindod Wells to recognise what an enormous attraction a first class 18 hole golf course would be for the town; he enlisted the support of a few other like minds and looked out for a suitable site for a brand new course and clubhouse convenient to the town. They decided on a beautiful stretch of land to the east overlooking the lake and town with magnificent views in all directions. Negotiations to obtain this land, either by purchase or lease, were started and this is really where the history of the Llandrindod Wells Golf Club begins.



A very early postcard of Vardon's famous 'Death or Glory' - 18th hole

A start was made by clearing large areas of bracken on the hill with the assistance of the tenant of the Hall Farm, who had the grazing rights for sheep only. The Open Golf Champion, Harry Vardon, a prominent course designer, was called in to design the layout of the new course. The course gradually took shape, using a horse and cart and wheelbarrows to construct the new greens and tees. Four men were employed to maintain the course using hand mowers to mow the fairways and greens, sometimes assisted by a horse-drawn mower, the horse having leather boots put on over the hooves so as not to damage the grass.

By early 1906, as the course and clubhouse were now in use, the directors of the company decided that the Llandrindod Wells Golf Club should be formed.



The great Harry Vardon in action

A meeting was called on 7th March 1906 and this minute was recorded: "That the persons present at the meeting of golfers whose names the secretary has read form themselves into a Golf Club to be called the Llandrindod Wells Golf Club and that the rules and regulations dated 6th day of November 1905 shall be accepted as the Rules and Regulations of the Club."

Thus the Llandrindod Wells Golf Club and the Llandrindod Wells Golf Club Company Ltd were formed and a famous Golf Course was created for the future benefit of visiting golfers to the Spa as well as the local people. The Official Opening was to take place on Saturday, 18th May, 1907.

The 18th May, 1907 was a glorious sunny day. The occasion was marked first by two singles matches, the first played by the local Professional, George Humble, against the then current Open Champion, James Braid of Walton Heath who was Open Champion in 1901, 1905 and 1906, (and was to be so again in 1908 and 1910), and the second between Harry Vardon of Totteridge, Open Champion 1896, 1898, 1899 and 1903, (and again in 1911 and 1914), and J H Taylor of Royal Mid-Surrey, Open Champion in 1894, 1895 and 1900, (and again in 1909 and 1913), the winners being James Braid and Harry Vardon. In the afternoon two foursomes matches were played by the distinguished professional golfers and a very happy and successful day was concluded.

Exhibition matches were held on the course attracting visitors and golf enthusiasts from far afield. The most notable of these exhibition matches took place in 1911 when no less than four Open Champions played before a large crowd. These were the Triumvirate of Harry Vardon, James Braid, and J H Taylor joined by Alex (Sandy) Herd of Huddersfield, Open Champion 1902. A unique occasion indeed.

In circa 1937 it was decided to upgrade the course and James Braid was invited to visit the club and submit plans for improvement. James Braid visited the course and submitted his report and his account of £11 and 11 shillings. Braid lengthened the course considerably, more than likely to match the improvements in technology, and, alongside Vardon, is responsible for the course we play today.



James Braid