



20

Barbados Golf Club

72 / SPORTING BARBADOS 2016 / 20 YEARS



GOLF & BARBADOS

YOU'VE COME
A LONG WAY

by Roddy Carr

The 5th fairway at Rockley Golf Course is famous for being the landing runway for the first flight from Europe across the Atlantic Ocean on March 29th 1929.



Rockley Golf Course circa 1937

This nine-hole golf course was the first real golf course in Barbados. It is however rumoured that British army officers of the British Empire's largest Garrison in Barbados played a 6 hole makeshift course inside the horseracing track in the 1800's. This would be consistent with what happened in many other British colonies in those days. Rockley continues to operate as a thriving 9 hole course, very suitable for all levels of golf and the 19th hole is the best part in this extremely social club!

Sandy Lane - the grande dame of hotels & resorts in the Caribbean was built in 1933 and included the original Sandy Lane golf course with two nines, the upper and lower nines. The golf course meandered through the sugarcane landscape and gullies of Barbados and what was left of the magnificent bearded fig trees that were the origin of the name Barbados. The open plan setting in the Sandy Lane villa estate on the platinum West Coast of Barbados was unique and years ahead of its time.

It was its iconic status in 1967 that attracted Charles Forte to buy the hotel and further enhance its world-renowned status and reputation as part of the Trusthouse Forte dynasty.

There has always been a fond affinity for the Irish with Barbados. The soft lilt in the Bajan accent sits easily on the Irish ear and is not unlike the brogue found in Cork or Kerry. I have never heard the word

'shite' used ('shite weather today') as an adjective anywhere in the world except in Ireland and Barbados. The Irish influence goes back to the Cromwellian days in 1650 when 1800 Irish were shipped out of Ireland by Cromwell to Barbados as indentured slaves. They became known as the red-legs and migrated to St. Andrews on the East Coast as their fair freckled skin fried toiling in the sugarcane fields for their seven year tenure. The book 'To Hell or Barbados' records this ethnic cleansing of Ireland.

In 1998 Sandy Lane was purchased by three of Ireland's best known business men and their horseracing English friends who had been coming to the Island for decades and had fallen in love with Barbados and its friendly and fun people.

The new owners wanted two of the best golf courses in the world and to achieve this goal brought in Tom Fazio of world acclaim to design the Sandy Lane Country Club and the now famous Green Monkey; who's centre piece is a 22 acre old quarry with 200 foot coral walls. The two new courses cannibalised the 'upper nine' and left what is now known by locals as the old nine, which maintains the nostalgic link to the original Sandy Lane course.

The Country Club hosted the 2006 World Cup of Golf one of golf's Majors which was won by Germany - captained by Bernhard Langer. The Green Monkey is a



Apes Hill



Rockley



Royal Westmoreland



Barbados Golf Club

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Sandy Lane

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Apes Hill

'Trophy' course and one that people travel from all over the world to play. It is a true bucket list golf course.

Over on the South Coast in the mid 70's near the airport the entrepreneurial vision of developing an integrated housing development around the Southern Golf & Country Club on Durants Plantation fell a foul on two occasions leaving an 18 hole windswept golf course designed by Col. Harris to be quickly engulfed by the tropical bush and disappear for almost 25 years. In 1999 a group of locals led by well-known sailor Ralph Johnson and Peter Chesham joined forces with this Irishman and along with Government support and 382 local shareholders embarked on a mission to rebuild the Barbados Golf Club. The course with its tag line "Golf for All" and "The Home of Golf in Barbados" was opened in 2000 and provides a links style test to 200 plus Bajan members and thousands of visitors each year at affordable prices.

The Royal Westmoreland 5 star residential golf development on the West Coast was the brainchild of local developer Mike Pemberton in 1993. He brought in Robert Trent Jones Jnr. who designed

arguably his best golf course that features 4 stunning par 3 holes. It is now fully mature and an idealist lifestyle resort that has hosted several European Seniors Tour.

Last but by no means least on what could be considered one of the great golf sites in the world comes Apes Hill. This opened in 2009 and lies on 600 acres of indigenous Barbados land at the top of the Island with breath-taking views over both the West Coast & Caribbean sea and the 'Wild' East Coast with its Atlantic Ocean backdrop. Thanks to the vision of local pioneer Sir Charles Williams it is one of the most visually spectacular courses in the world and a full championship test. It is the only place on the Island that encompassed Golf, Tennis and Polo in its lifestyle setting.

Celebrities like Sir Gary Sobers, Brian Lara, Ian Woosnam, Ian Botham, Gary Lineker, Pádraig Harrington to mention but a few are regular sights on the fairways in Barbados. The guests come to Barbados most years with their families to relax and enjoy what is now regarded as the finest golf destination in the Caribbean.

Why do they come – They just like it and the local people of Barbados who have embraced golf and to have fun in a

safe environment. What better reason could there be?

Barbados is now about to launch its Barbados Golf Card which will be available for 2017 offering the opportunity to play Sandy Lane Country Club, Apes Hill and Barbados Golf Club at very favourable rates. This will allow visitors to experience golf at its very best in the Caribbean.

For details go to: www.visitbarbados.com

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Rockley



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Royal Westmoreland

THE SANDY LANE CHARITABLE TRUST GOLF TOURNAMENT

The celebrated Golf Day, Dinner and Charity Auction took place at the Sandy Lane Country Club for the Sandy Lane Charitable Trust in January 2016 and was another resounding success.

Once again it was all about raising funds for the challenged children of Barbados, some of whom are desperate souls searching for better health, a better body and a fair chance in life.

Every year the Event sets new benchmarks in raising much-needed aid for it's Sunshine Village and the vulnerable children of Barbados. The Trust is very appreciative of the kindness and generosity of many local business people, friends and guests who attend this popular event. The County Club is always crowded with a who's who of Barbadian society and sporting celebrities on what has now been established as one of the highlighted events of the Winter Season. The well-known British comedian Russ Abbott does his usual splendid job of a lively, witty and productive auction, in addition to the popular Silent Auction. Sandy Lane Hotel puts on a sumptuous buffet in the beautiful setting of the Country Club Clubhouse and dancing usually follows into the wee hours.

Tremendous work has been achieved in the past year by this small charity with a big heart! With their educational initiatives and outreach programmes, the Trust makes a huge difference in the lives of thousands.

A short video is always presented at the Gala Dinner prior to the Charity Auction and it is heart-rendering to watch and share the stories and experiences but satisfying to see the Trust making inroads. There is hardly a dry eye in the house after it's shown. The hardest workers throughout the year are Derrick Smith and his fellow Trustees, Pip Challis, John Lodge and Julian Sacher. The work of the Trust is truly amazing, especially as it continues to run efficiently with no expenses, thanks to the commitment of the Trustees, Patrons and friends. They are always hard at work joining forces with other trusts, doing sponsorships and partnering with new projects like the World Pediatric Project. The Trust takes great pride that every dollar raised goes directly to providing a better life for the needy children of Barbados.



Trustees – (from left to right) Derrick Smith, Phillipa Challis, John Lodge, Julian Sacher



Girls just got to have fun !! A great party atmosphere for a great cause.



The large numbers in attendance.



The Barbados Youth Orchestra welcoming the guests to the gala event.



The winning team for 2016 - Sir Garfield Sobers, Sue Magnier, Derrick Smith & Yvonne Brewer



Second team - Joan and John Hargreaves William Alexander, Luke Crowson



Third team – Andrew and Bernard Heffernan, Penny Rattle and Nick Barham.



Sir Cliff Richard, Vivien Day (daughter of Grand Patron Derrick Smith) and stars of US TV and Stage, Becky and Chris Lythgoe



The comedian Russ Abbott acting as auctioneer.....



Sir Martyn Arbib and sir Garfield Sobers standing in front of the portrait donated Jeena Chatrani and purchased by Sir Martyn in the live auction, which he later donated to the Legend Cricket museum in Bridgetown.



Sir Kyffin Simpson (centre), Sir Mark and Lady Thatcher.