

Indian Golf and Europe

By

Donald Cameron

1820 Bangalore

According to

[www.golfeurope.com/almanac/history/history3.
htm](http://www.golfeurope.com/almanac/history/history3.htm)

The first golf club outside Britain was the Bangalore, India (1820).

However, no evidence is given to justify this claim.

1829 Calcutta

Oriental Sporting Magazine of December 23, 1830 published a list of subscribers to the Dum Dum Golfing Club. This list contained 30 names. Out of thirty the main bulk were Army officers with the only odd tax collector, doctor or businessman added. One name stands out as the most likely initiator of the club – Hugh Lyon Playfair.



Playfair

Hugh Lyon Playfair was born in Perthshire and educated at St Andrews. He gained a commission in the artillery branch of the Bengal army. Due to ill health he returned home in 1817 and visited St Andrews in 1820. he returned to India later that year. His brother George was also named on the list of golfers. He was a doctor.



1841 The Bombay Golf Club

- This club was originally projected in 1841.
- The following is a List of Office Bearers :
- H H Glass, Captain
- J Burnes, M.D. Senior Councillor
- J Smith Junior Councillor
- W W Cargill Treasurer
- Geo. Buist Secretary
- Rev. Geo. Cook Chaplain

At Bombay the membership was not so dominated by the Military officers as was the case in Calcutta. Here businessmen, merchants and lawyers mixed in with the military officers. The club formed an early connection with the Royal Blackheath Golf Club at Greenwich. The new club even sent a medal to Blackheath that is still played for today. Over fifty names were listed as members in in the early days, but the club seemed not to survive.

Trivandrum Golf Club

According to www.trivandrumgolfclub.com the 'golf course was laid out during the days of the late Maharajah Sreemoolam Tirunal is one of the oldest in the country.

The club still exists today in the middle of a large city that has grown up around the nine holes.

On visiting the club it is clear that they have no records that confirms the date of foundation. A report in *The New Indian Express* in November 2013 stated 'Founded in 1850 by the Maharajaha of Travancore as a private golf course . . . spread of 25 acres.'

The Hindu newspaper for April 19, 2003 repeats the claims that the Trivandrum course was 'laid out in the 1850s during the days of the late Maharajah Sreemoolam Tirunal, the golf course here is one of the oldest in the country and is more than 150 years old.

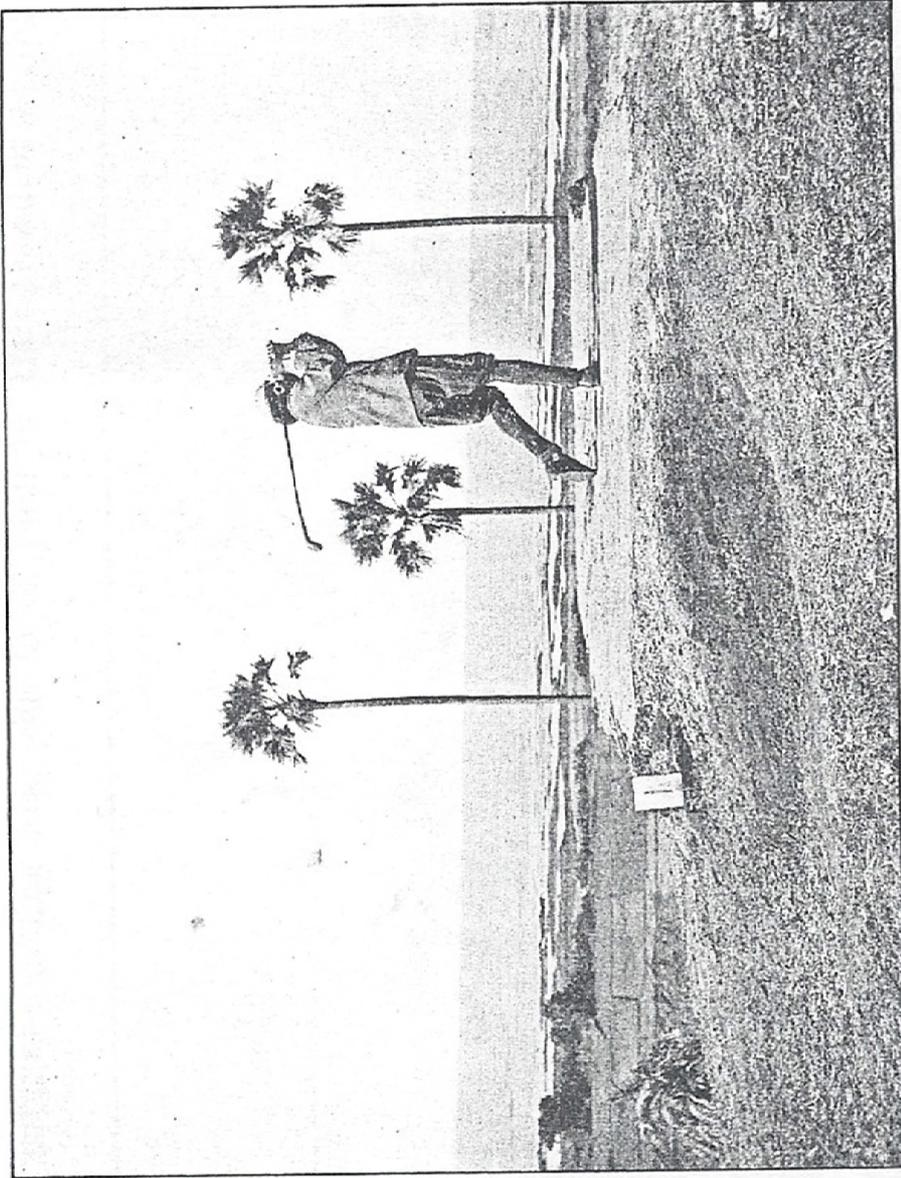
This claim needs to be confirmed.

According to local sources the golf club was taken over by the Government of Kerala in 2010.

Royal Bombay Gymkhana Golf Club

- *The Golfing Annual* for 1894/5 stated that this club was instituted January 9th, 1842.
- This club was proposed and formed . . . And continued for about five years, when the game became neglected and no attempt apparently was made to revive it until 1855. However, the restoration then only lasted two years, and for the following nine years no club existed, but on December 16th, 1869, it was reconstituted under the present name . . .

- A new course has been started at Pali Hill, which is on the sea coast, and only a few miles out of Bombay. The course is rough and there are some bad rocky bits of ground, which nothing can ever make playable; but it affords a great variety of play compared to the Bombay course. . . .
- In 1906 *The Badminton Magazine* published an illustrated report of golf at Pali Hill.



DRIVING FROM THE FIRST TEE

Nassic Golf Club

The Field magazine reported on a match between The Royal Bombay Golf Club and the Nassic Golf Club in October, 1871. It said:

The Bombay men were hospitably received and sumptuously entertained by J Hameck and other members of the Nassic Golf Club.

.....

Since this report it is gratifying to learn that Major Scott has established an excellent club . . .

Madras Golf Club

The Golfing Annual for 1890/1 stated that

Madras Golf Club, was instituted 1877

The Island Links are in Madras itself, near the Fort. These links are used largely Mondays to Fridays, but most of the players use the Guindy links on Saturday. The latter are . . . about seven miles from Madras



Mysore

The Golfing Annual, 1893/4, p336 stated

Mysore Golf Club, instituted 1880

‘The course, which is situated in the compound of the Residency, is probably the finest in India. It consists of eighteen holes, and the bunkers and hazards are numerous and of a very sporting nature. . .’

This was built mainly for the use of the Maharaja and a few selected British officers or visitors.

Secunderabad

The Golfing Annual, 1893-4 says that the Bolarum Golf Club was instituted in April 1888 at Secunderbad near Hyderabad.

The course of eighteen holes is just under three miles, and there is no crossing. The greens are not turf, but sand.

Toassai

Golf magazine carried a letter written from the Ruiaidie Estate at Munzerabad in early 1891 that stated

‘We have started a small links of from three to five holes, wherever we can get a piece of land big enough. This is a great difficulty, as we are hemmed in by jungle on every side . . .’

The letter was signed by R W Robertson. Today the club is described as a non-golfing club.

Golf in North West India

A letter in *Golf* magazine in July 1891 stated
'The golf epidemic is raging in India, as
elsewhere. It seems to be especially severe in
North-West India. . . . Here are some of the
stations which have started during the last few
months – Umballa, Jhelem Allahabad,
Rawalpindi, Mooltan . . .'

Few of these initiatives resulted in the
establishment of enduring golf clubs.

Indian golf and Europe

Now – the question remains what's all this got to do with the development of golf in Europe. The unstated assumption about the growth of golf in Europe is based on the premise that golfers based in Great Britain were the main figures involved with the start of golf in mainland Europe. I wish to suggest that some of the golf initiatives in Europe were taken by men who had come to the end of the serve in India, but wished to settle in Europe rather than return to the UK.

Cragg, Cecil Webb [Col]. [1838-98]

- born in Calcutta, India 5/11/1837, son of Joseph (merchant) and Ann [IOFHS], elder brother of Wallace W, educated at St Johns school, Wimbledon in 1846 [Miles 1/79], joined the Army in 1855, served at Sebastopol in 1855 and during the Indian Mutiny at Sekundra, the siege of and capture of Lucknow, the battle of Nawabganj, where he was wounded, and the capture of Fort Birwah, where he was one of the storming party, and was mentioned in dispatches, retired with rank of Lt. Col. in 1877 [Times], lived with his wife Edith (aged 33) and 2 servants at Grafton House, Hythe, Kent in 1871 [1871 census], Lt-Col. Cragg donated £100 to the Invalid Ladies Home proposed to be established at Cannes, lived at Villa Hollandia in 1881 [T 15/1, p13], on committee of Cannes GC in 01/1892 [Golf 29/01, 313], played at Cannes with hcp of 25 in 01/1893 [Field 14/01, p66], played at Cannes with hcp of 23 in 12/1894 [Golf 21/12, 267], Lt-Col. Cragg was Captain of Cannes GC in 1894 [GA 1893/4, p158], secretary of Cannes GC [Nolan 26], resigned as secretary of Cannes GC in 04/1897 [golfika], died at Wrotham, Kent on 21/02/1898 [Times 28/02, p6d]

•

Cragg, Wallace William [[Lt-Col.] [1840- 1917]

- born in Bengal, India on 12/10/1840, 2nd son of Joseph Webbe, of Calcutta, merchant, and Ann, baptised at Old Church, Calcutta on 14/12/1849 [IOFHS], younger brother of Cecil Webb Cragg, educated at Exeter College, Oxford, matric. 25 May 1858, aged 17, BA 1864, MA 1865, [Oxford Univ. Alumni 1500-1886], bar-at-law, Inner Temple, 26/1/1877, granted hon. title of Lt.-Col. in R Welsh Fusiliers [Times, 10/4/1886, p13], lived with his wife Elizabeth (34 and 3 servants at Beckenham Grove, Sevenoaks, Kent in 1891 [ancestry.co.uk], wrote to Golf magazine to inform readers of the new Golf Club started 'on the hill behind the Santa Catalina Hotel in the Canary Islands in 01/1892 [G 1/01, p251], on committee of Las Palmas GC in 01/1894 [Einarsson 19], died at Bournemouth in 04/1917 [ancestry.co.uk]

Daunt, John Hubert Edward [1865-1951]

- born 30/12/1865 at Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India, son of Col. John Charles Campbell Daunt VC [1833 - 86] and Alice, brother of Bertram Rochford Daunt [-], pupil at Royal Naval College, Deptford in 1881, aged 15 near R Blackheath GC [ancestry.co.uk], played golf for GB in Olympic games in Paris in 1900, placed 5th [Olympic Sports website] p281], 'H E Daunt' member of Societe de Golf de Paris in 1901 [GI 29/11, p169], played at Societe de Golf de Paris in hcp of 6 in 2/1891 [GI 2/12, p240], his mother Alice married Col. Rochford on 19/07/1889 at Hammersmith [britishmedals.us], 'Mr H E Daunt' won 'first competition ever held at La Boulie' in 10/1901 [GI 25/05, 1902, p68], won Coupe de Maison Lafitte at La Boulie in 01/1903 with plus 2 hcp [GI 23/01, p79], of Kobe, Japan, played in Amateur championship at Muirfield in 1909 [Ryde 157], lead a party of climbers in Japan, leading light of Mountain Goats of Kobe,' a group of Kansai-based foreign mountaineers edited journal under his club name of "Bell Goat" [onehundredmountains.blogspot.co.uk],

•

Dunbar-Brunton, James [Dr]

- born in Scotland in 1863?, son of John Stenhouse Brunton of Ladhope and Hiltonshill, Roxburgshire and Elizabeth L D [1843?-], lived with his parents and brothers Frederick J (3) and William A C (1) at Eastfield Hse, Bowden, Roxburghshire in 1871 [ancestry.co.uk], educated at Edin U, practiced in England, MB CM Edin 1889, late surgeon Anchor Line SS Co [MD 1898, p704], married Charlotte Riley Bennett at Woolwich in 1893 or Anne Sodden at Warwick in ? [ancestry.co.uk], 'The links were recently laid out by Mr J B Fuller, of the Bengal CS, with the aid of Dr Dunbar-Brunton, resident physician at Sorrento in 1895 [Golf 10/05, p151] married Charlotte Riley Barnett at Leamington in 11/1893 [ancestry.co.uk], aged 35, described as Physician & surgeon, lived at Church st, Leatherhead, Surrey with 3 servants in 1901 [1901 census], died at Paris on 24/09/1916 [Times]

Forbes, [Col] Henry Villiers [1836-]

- born in Cawnpore, India, 14/02/1836, son of Capt. I 5th NI, unmarried Lt., in R Marines (full pay) lived with his uncle Thomas G Forbes [1810-] and family at Old Hse, Gt Horkesley, near Colchester, Essex in 1861 [1861 census], married to Ethel Mary J , d. of ? Kendall at Warwick in 1864 [ancestry.co.uk], in ?, 1st Lt. in R Marine Light Infantry promoted to Captain in 6/1865 [the gazette], described as 'Ryl M L I (Royal Madras Light Infantry?) lived with his wife Ethel [1844?-], son Reginald [1866-] and d. ? at 1 Balmoral Pl, St Andrews, Plymouth in 1871 [1871 census], his wife Ethel lived at Ramsgate, Kent in 1891 [1891 census], one of founders of Dinard GC in 1890 [Arnaud Massy], on committee of Dinard GC in 1891 [GA 1890/1, p177], played at Dinard with hcp of 30 in 04/1892 [Golf 6/05, p123] and 11/1895 [Golf 1/11, p167], with hcp of 12 in 01/1896 [Golf 17/01, p407]

Fuller, Joseph Bampfylde [1854-1935]

- born on 20/03/1854 at Newton, Somerset, eld. son of Joseph Fuller and Anne Isabella, d. of Charles Bamfylde, educated at Marlborough College 2/1867 to 9/1872 [MR], secured first place in Indian Service examination in 1873, stationed at Cawnpore, transferred to Nagpur, first Lt. Gov. of the new province of eastern Bengal and Assam in ????, author of *Report on the Experimental Farm Operations at Allahabad*, 1882 [Copac], awarded Companion of the Indian Empire by Queen Victoria in 1/1892 [T 1/1, p7], of the Bengal Civil Service' laid out links in the hills above Sorrento in 05/1895 with the aid of Dr Dunbar-Brunton' [G 15/05, p151], awarded the Most Exalted Order of Star of India in 6/1902, [T 26/6, p5], first Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam 1905-6 [Wikipedia], made Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India in 1/1906, [T 1//01, p9], inventor of Anti-Gas devise used on the western Front in WW1 [Wikipedia], died 1935 [wikipedia], funeral took place at Marlborough on 3/12/1935 [Times 4/12, p17]

Hill, Alexander Daman [1849- 1923]

- born 06/1849 at Bendfield, Berks, son of Edward Hill [1824-], clergyman and Anne June [1825-], lived at Rectory hse, Little Woolstone, Berks in 1851 [1851 census], educated at Bradfield College 1859-68, in cricket XI 1866-7, New College, Ox 1868, Indian Govt. Telegraph 1871-92, lived with his widowed mother, an annuitant, described as Indian Gov. telegraph, unmarried, aged 31, at New Walk, Beverly, Yorks. in 1881 [1881 census], married in 1881 [Bradfield Reg 56], his wife gave birth to d. Margaret Robertson at Umballa, Punjab on 6/10/1882 [Times 11/10, p1], played golf at Richmond GC in 11/1896 [Times 17/11, p10b], played at Societe de Golf de Paris with hcp of +1 in 01/1899 [Golf 20/01, p383], played at Scarborough (Ganton) autumn meeting in 09/1899 [Times 12/09, p9f], described as 'an original member of Richmond GC, was captain of the club in 1896, and was a scratch player; also a member of Ganton GC, Scarborough; one of the pioneers of Golf in France, described as the scratch player of the club in 11/1901, but played off hcp of 6 and then 4 [G 8/11, p120 and 29/11, p179], and a member of Le Societe de Golf de Paris La Boulie,' lived at 212 Cromwell rd, SW London in 1909 [WW in Golf][London Dir p281], died 1923 [Bradfield Reg]

Marshall, George [1844 -]

- born London in 1844, son of George Marshall and Elizabeth , lived with his parents George (69 shipowner) and Elizabeth (58) and sister Katy M (21) at 109 Marina Con., St Leonards, Sussex in 1871 [ancestry], described as 'Shipowner and merchant', lived with his wife Sophie (34 born in Bengal, India sister of 8th Viscount Torrington), ds. Hettie (8) and Hilda (6) and son George (5) and 8 servants at Windlesham Hall, Surrey in 1881 [ancestry], - described as 'president-founder' of Dinard GC in club history by Albin Michel, [AM p21], on committee of Dinard GC in 1891 [GA 1890/1p177], played at Dinard GC with hcp of 16 in 04/1891 [Golf 24/04, p89], described as 'Living on own means', with his wife Sophie (54), son George Bynd (24), and 10 servants lived at Hardes Court, Kent in 1901 [ancestry.co.uk]

Patton, Frederick Joseph [1851 -1922]

Welham 9

-born in 1851 in Bombay, India, son of Joseph of Bombay, educated at Eton in 1865 [Eton Reg 311], entered Balliol College, Oxford in 1870, BA 1875, barrister in Inner Temple 1875, married Edith, 3rd d. of C J Furlonger, of Old House, Betchworth at Reigate in 3rd q. of 1876 [1837online], lived at The Links, Ascot, Berks. [Balliol Reg.], described as barrister, lived at 21 Cromwell rd, Chelsea, London with his wife Edith and d. Dorothy (aged 3) and Marjorie(aged?) and 4 servants [1881 census 0050/35/24], played at Royal Wimbledon in 11/882 with hcp of 12 [Field 11/11 p730], played at competition at R Wimbledon in 04/1883, no return [Field 28/04, p549], and in 05/1883 and 06/1883 with hcp of 12, 2nd in club competition [Field 05/05 p595 and 02/06 p733], played at R Wimbledon competition with hcp of 8 in 11/1883 [Field 10/11, p648], involved with establishing Royal Ascot GC in 1887, ‘on the initiative of a local lawyer, F J Patton, a golf club was proposed’ [Allen 73], played at Easter meeting of Ascot GC in 1887 with hcp of 7 [Field 23/04 p576], on committee of Hyeres GC in 09/1894 [Golf 28/09, p55], recommended Hyeres GC to visitors to France in 01/1894 and in 10/1894 [Golf 26/01, p313 + 26/10, p120], ‘The creation of Sunningdale GC in 1900 by Ascot members led again by F J Patton and Tommy Roberts . . .’ [Welham 9], lived in Kensington, London in 1901 [1901 census index], of The Links, Ascot, died in 1922, will published in *The Times*, estate valued at £2,148 [Times 31/05 p13e]

Potter, Thomas Owen [known as 'Tosper'] [1844-1909]

- born on 19/09/1844 in Calcutta, India, son of Owen and Eliza, d. of ? Starkartt? [BL India room index/ 1881 census], described as scholar, 16 with his brother W H Potter (13) at Great Budworth, Cheshire in 1861 [1861 census], described as merchant (26, unmarried), lived with his mother Elizabeth Potter (widow 54), and uncle Hugh Starkartt (53 unmarried annuitant) and cousins Amy M Belthune (13) and Gertrude (11) at 118 Bedford S South, Liverpool in 1871 [1871 census], played at R Liverpool in 04/ and 05/1876 [Field 22/04 p464 and 06/05 p502], played at Conway with handicap of 14 in 08/1876 [Field 05/08 p183], represented R Liv in unofficial match against RND at Hoylake in 12/1878 [Field 14/12 p760], played at autumn meeting of R Liv in 10/1879 [Field 11/10 p500], described as Annitant, unmarried, aged 36, lived with his uncle Hugh Starkartt and his mother Elizabeth p (63) at 5 Winchelsea crescent, Houghon, Kent in 1881 [1881 census 1006/45/15], hon. secretary of Royal Liverpool GC from 1882 to 1894, credited with suggesting the establishment of Amateur championship in 1885 [Behrend 95/2], in 13/12/1884 at meeting of R Liverpool GC proposed that a tournament open to all amateur golfers be held at Hoylake in 1885 'is the originator of that great annual event' [Farrar 137], helped editor of *Golfing Annual* Vol. III in 1889/90, involved with establishing Pau GC in 1856 (?too young, aged 12) [Stirk 154], lived at the Royal Hotel, regular partner of John Ball Sen., maintained large scrapbooks and notes about Hoylake and RLGC [Stirk 154], wrote *The Early History of Hoylake* in *Golf* magazine in 08/ and 11/1897 [*Golf*], described as Gentlemen, aged 56, lived at Hoylake, Cheshire in 1901 [1901 census index], died 2nd q. of 1909 at Wirrel, Cheshire [Golf /ancestry.co.uk]

Robertson, Henry Maxwell [1840-1921][Col]

- born London, married [1] Louisa Caroline Strong (Canadian) at Shepton Mallet, Somerset in 09/1865, wife died in 1882 in Lucknow, India [Times], married [2] to Mary Elizabeth Louisa Campbell at Sevenoaks, Kent in 06/1888, father of Edmund Digby Maxwell in 1887, Hector Murdoch Maxwell in 1888 and Annabella Mary Margaret in 1889 [ancestry.co.uk], placed on half pay in 06/1891 [Times 2/06, p10], lived with his wife Mary EL (41) and Edmund D M (4), Hector M M (2) and Annabella M M (1) at 3 Ellachie Road, Alverstoke, Hants in 1891[ancestry], President of Parame GC in 1896 [GA 1895/6, p441], described as Colonel Royal Artillery (Retired), aged 71, lived with his wife Mary Louisa Robertson (61) and d. Isabella Mary (21) and 3 servants at New Fishbourne and North Mundham, Sussex in 1911, died at Rannoch, Chichester, Sussex in 1921 [ancestry.co.uk]

Ross, Patrick Robertson [1865 -?-1902]

- born in Canada in 1865?-, 'scholar', aged 16, at Wellington College, Sandhurst in 1881 [ancestry.co.uk], resigned his commission in Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) in 3/1887 [T 23/3, p11], married to Sophia Anne Murray Honey at Kensington, London in 04/1887 [ancestry], Hon Sec. of St Moritz GC, address given as at Hotel Kulm, St M in local newspaper 1/08/1893 [Engadine GC hist 25], lived at 22 Sloane Gdns, London with his wife Sophia (36), sons Maitland R (13) and Jas E R (10) and d. Muriel R (10) at 24 Sloane Gdns, London in 1901 [ancestry], late of 24 Sloane gardens, formerly a Lt. in Black Watch and then partner in a firm of East India merchants, papers showed a 'large amount of indebtedness' [Times 4/06, 1902, p3d], died aged 37 at Guildford 07/1902 [ancestry]

•

Torrens, Henry D'Oyley [Lt-Gen][1833-89]

- born 24/02/1823 at Meerut, India, son of Henry Whitelocke Torrens [1806-52] of Bengal Civil Service and Eliza Mary Roberts, 'grandson of major general', brother of George [1838-1905], Major General', 'was from an old Londonderry family', educated at Rugby school 18?? [],?, commissioned into Royal Welsh Fusiliers on 8/09/1849, described as unmarried, 18, adjutant at Plymouth in 1851 [ancestry.co.uk], fought in Crimean war [], author of *Travels in Ladak, Tartary and Kashmir* in 1863 [], single, aged 38, described as Colonel, based at District barracks at Breconshire in 1871 [ancestry.co.uk], 'served with distinction in the Crimea and Indian Mutiny', appointed to command of the Belfast District [Times 17/01,/1880, p6a], married to Georgina Francis, d. of ? Butts at Kensington on 25/06/1876 [ancestry.co.uk], father of Mary Jane, appointed Officer Commanding the Belfast district on 10/11/1879, transferred to Cork district 01/10/1881 [Gibson 44], Governor of Cape Town 7/04/1886 to 7/07/1886 [], 'He is acknowledged as the founder of the R Cape GC, having called the first meeting to form the club on 14th Nov. 1885' [Gibson 44/5], presented medal to Cape Town GC and played first competition at Cape Town GC in 10/1886 [Field 02/10 p498], 'Gen Henry Torrens' credited by GHD with starting golf at S Africa in letter to *The Field* in 03/1888 [Field 17/03, p374], won hcp competition at R Malta GC in 04/1889 with hcp of 19 [F 06/04, p476], 'final post was Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Malta, which he held from Sept. 1888 to his death on 01/12/1889,' 'prime motivator there' [Gibson 44/5/ www.royalmaltagolfclub.com], died at St Georges Hanover Square, London in 1/12//1889 [ancestry.co.uk /wikipedia]

Thompson, Ross [Col] [1838-1919]

- born 7/08/1838, son of Ross and Margaret (nee Livingstone), of Greenwood Park, Co. Down, Ireland, at Addiscombe 1856 [Vibert 699], at Brompton Barracks, Chatham on course on fortifications 8/1858 [T 13/08, p9], arrived in India in 1/1861 [India List], married Fanny Angeline Crewe (she d. 31/10/1911), father of Ivan F Ross Thompson in 1858? [Times 2/2/1917, p10c], father of Margaret Caroline on 29/11/1865, wrote to W Edcome RE about 'some photographs I have taken in the Krista District' in 1863/4 [BL catalog], consultant architect to govt., 5/1875, commanded Queen's Own Sappers and miners throughout the Afghan war, 1879-80, acted as chief engr. and under sec. to govt., Oct 1881, and served sus first captain of Madras Gymkhana GC in 1877 and 1878/9 [MGC Golf Annexe, p11], promoted to Lt.Col in 10/1884 [T 4/10, p8], 'believed to have introduced golf to Ootacamund in 1889 [oocities.org], initiated match between Madras and Bangalore [Madras Gymkhana Club website], placed on supernumery list 20.07/1889 [T 20/07, p14], Lt.Col. Ross Thompson retired on retired pay 03/1892 [T 9/03, p8], 'Col. Ross Thompson and Mr F F Smith . . . cast about for a new course' at Trinchinopoly in 11/1892 [F 5/11, p712], RE, hon sec of Bangalore GC in 1895 [Bond 54], his son Major F R Thompson married Mary Emily, eld. d. of Mr and Mrs Tillard, of Godmanchester in 10/1913 [T16/10, p1], died 5/12/1919 and buried at Hosur Rd cem, Bangalore, aged 81 [oocities.org]