



A James Braid original: Neath's 3rd tee

FOCUS
ON

NEATH GOLF CLUB

We head to Neath in South Wales where a long-lost tee from James Braid's original design has recently been brought back to life



ESSENTIALS

YEAR FOUNDED: 1934
COUNTY UNION: Glamorgan
ADDRESS: Cwmbach Road, Cadoxton, Neath, SA10 8AH
T: Secretary - 01639 632759; Pro - 01639 633693
W: neathgolfclub.co.uk

HISTORY

The club was formed when pioneering founder MH Daniel saw the need for a golf club in Neath. On May 14 and 15, 1934, James Braid planned the course and expressed the greatest satisfaction at the site selected: "It's a first-class course, ideally situated. I consider that the condition is excellent and the course is nicely undulating without being too severe." A public meeting was held, and although funds did not permit the expenditure, the enthusiasm of the 200 or so members overcame that difficulty. Through various fundraising schemes and the generosity of the members



sufficient money was obtained for the club's plans to be realised. **CLUB CREST:** The crest depicts the Neath Bell, believed to be from the ship-breaking yard in Briton Ferry, which resided on the 2nd hole to tell players on the tee when the green was clear. The castle refers to Neath Castle (Neath in Welsh is Castell-Nedd). The bell is now proudly on display in the clubhouse.

CLUB LEGENDS: Brian Huggett MBE started playing at Neath and was president of the club from 1965-1982. Huggett turned pro in 1951 and won 16 events on the European circuit, topping the Order of Merit in 1968 before going on to captain the 1977 GB&I Ryder Cup team after six appearances as a player. **Henry Cotton** played an exhibition match against Alf Padgham in 1945, later proclaiming (entry ticket above), "I've travelled the entire golfing world but never before seen such golfing beauty as at Neath."

COURSE

Today's course has hardly changed from the original James Braid layout, with Braid design traits on every hole. Part of the original course has been reopened recently after Braid's original 3rd tee was found and rebuilt. It's one of the toughest tee shots on the course, but offers one of the best views of the area.

STATS – white tees
YARDAGE: 6,490 (+80 yards from Braid 3rd tee)
PAR: 72 **SSS:** 72
GREEN FEES: £25wd per round; £30wd per round
COURSE RECORDS: Pro: 66, Frank Hill. Amateur (Mens): 66, Andrew Cooper in 1993. Amateur (Ladies): 69, Vicki Thomas in 1987

MAJOR COMPETITIONS

CURRENT CLUB CHAMPIONS: Daniel Davies is the

men's champion, winning by five shots from Matthew Arbourne following a 68, the only sub-par score in the second round. Ladies' champion is Christine Watkins, now a six-time winner. **ALSO:** The Huggett Putter, Heath-Davies Scratch Salver, Morris Cup
BIGGEST OPEN EVENTS: The Neath Bell is a 36-hole Glamorgan County Golf Union Order of Merit event played annually in May attracting a high-calibre field.

MEMBERSHIP

TOTAL NUMBER: 682
MEN: 573
LADIES: 48
JUNIORS: 61
FULL ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: £550
JOINING FEE: None
VACANCIES/WAITING LIST: Vacancies in all categories, including 'Country' at £255.

MEMBERS CHOICE

Jude's homemade steak pie with chips, peas and homemade gravy, washed down with Brains SA Smooth or Dark.

