

THE
CARNEGIE
LINKS



— at —
SKIBO CASTLE

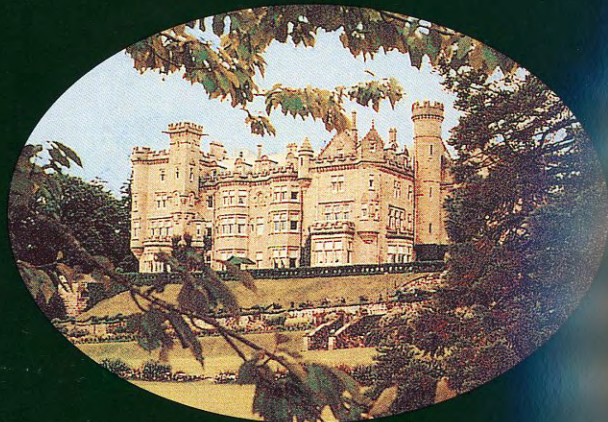
THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The Carnegie Links represents all that is great about Scottish golf, from the friendly, intimate and warm Golf House to its fine traditional links course.

Great care has been taken to ensure that the experience of playing the Carnegie Links (*within four miles of the world famous Royal Dornoch Golf Club*) is authentic to the era of Andrew Carnegie. The course, designed by renowned links specialists, Donald Steel and Tom Mackenzie, offers the golfer a rare opportunity to play a links course which remains firm and fast. It requires a broad repertoire of shots, not simply the modern style of aerial bombardment golf, and demands that any golfer, regardless of standard, is rewarded for thoughtful and skillful play rather than for power.

At 6,671 yards from the back tees, the course is not long by modern standards, but in a wind, it will test even the mightiest. Its varied layout takes the golfer past exceptionally rare wildlife habitats which have been carefully retained and protected and are now managed to ensure their future. Birdlife abounds and with the sea on three sides and the hills of Sutherland and Ross-shire all around, this course must have one of the finest settings in the world of golf.

The Golf House modelled on the old farm steading which once stood on its site, with low thick walls and traditional materials, nestles comfortably into the landscape. Its architect, James Maxwell of Inverness, sited it to make the most of the magnificent setting, with its lounge and library looking due west, the 18th hole sweeping past it and the Dornoch Firth beyond. The open fires, old bar, club dining area and personal Highland service create an atmosphere unlike any other.

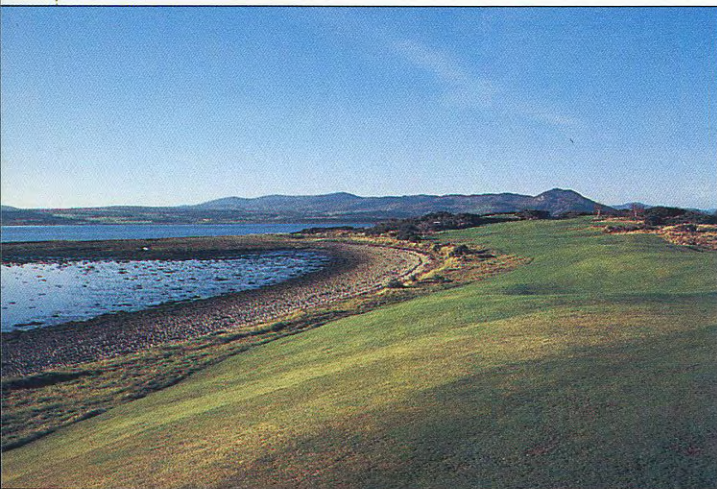


photograph by Mrs. Andrew Carnegie

*Skibo Castle is now the
Members Residential Clubhouse*



The tee shot at the 17th



Looking back from the 5th green

THE HISTORY OF THE CARNEGIE LINKS

Originally established 1898

In April 1995, The Carnegie Links at Skibo re-opened officially after a total reconstruction.

An original course was built by Andrew Carnegie in 1898, following an invitation to play at Royal Dornoch. Being a man none too fond of losing, he deferred acceptance of the offer until he had learned to play. Thus, the Carnegie Links was born. John Sutherland, a famous figure in the history of Royal Dornoch, was asked to lay out the course which occupied the area of the 2nd, 9th, 10th and 12th holes on the present links.

Sutherland was secretary at Royal Dornoch for more than 40 years and was responsible, not only for some of the design on the world-renowned Royal Dornoch, but also for inspiring Donald Ross, a native of Dornoch, to go to America. He made the most of what Sutherland had taught him by going on to design more than 280 courses, including classics such as Pinehurst Number 2 and Seminole.



Andrew Carnegie

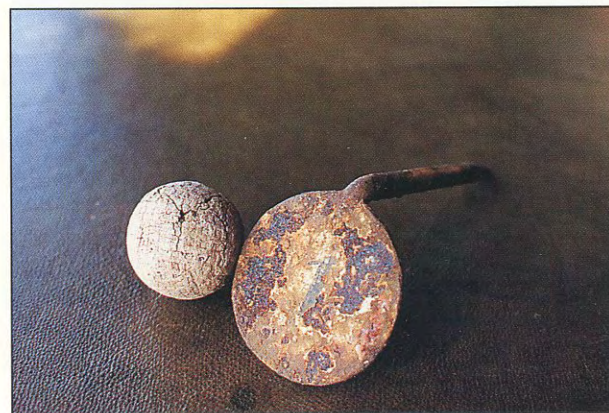


The Carnegie Shield is 3 feet high

The links completed, Carnegie invited the celebrated J.H. Taylor, five times Open Champion, to stay at the castle and teach him and his wife, Louise, to play. His invitation to Royal Dornoch was finally accepted and he went on to become Vice-President of the Club, presenting it with the magnificent Carnegie Shield. It is still played for each year in an open competition during the first week in August.

The old course was a straightforward affair, with a rustic log pavilion for a clubhouse and horse-drawn mowers to cut fairways. In the summertime, the greenkeeper's children were enrolled to assist with the grooming of the course.

The death of Andrew Carnegie in 1919 saw the estate enter a new phase with less emphasis on golf and following a fire in the clubhouse and the outbreak of World War Two, the course was abandoned.



The original tee marker and gutty ball found during construction

In 1990, Peter de Savary, founder of the St. James' Clubs and Americas Cup Challenger, bought the entire Skibo Estate and embarked upon an ambitious renovation programme which included the creation of the Carnegie Club, a private residential sporting club.

Golf was seen as a vital element of the Club and the restoration of the original course was undertaken. The original nine hole course on its thirty acres was designed in the era of the feathery ball and hickory shafts, so the modern Carnegie Links, with its 200 acres is essentially a new course, designed in the spirit of golf during the Carnegie era.

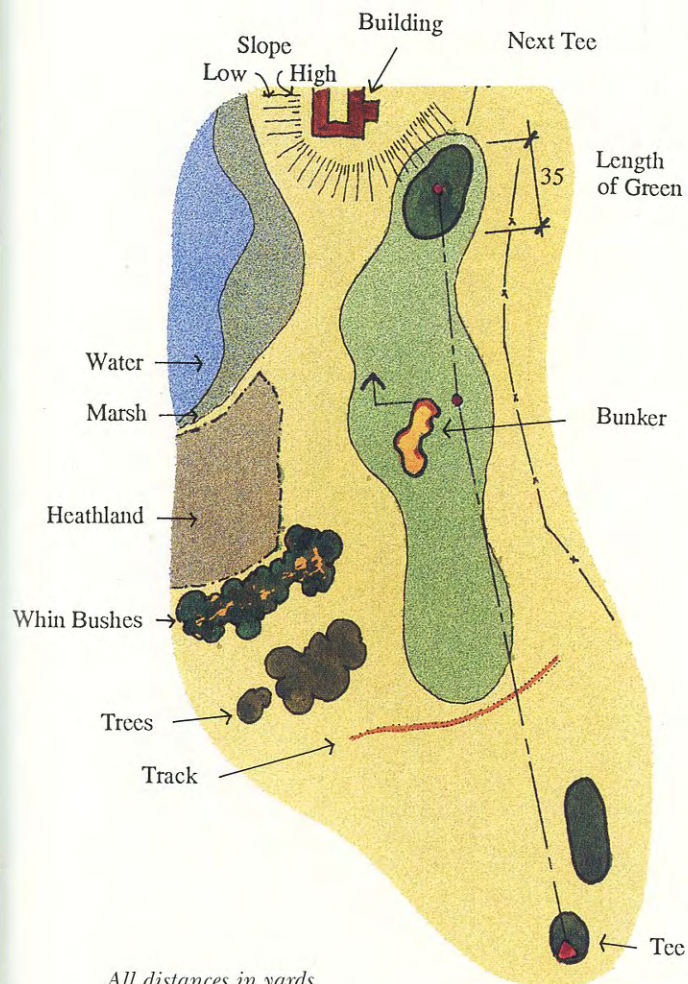


The 18th sweeps around a tidal bay, Poll na Caorach



The 3rd green, with the whin bushes in full bloom in June

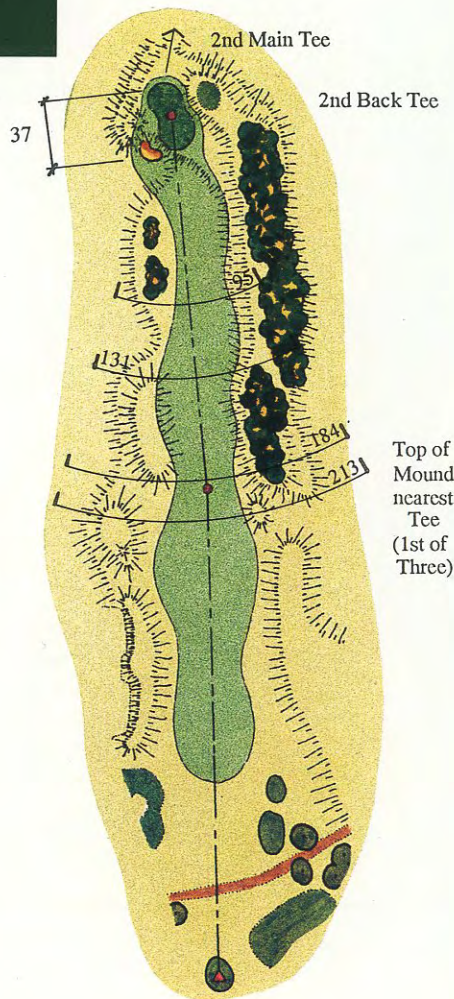
KEY TO COURSE GUIDE



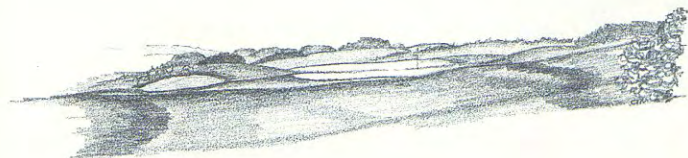
*All distances in yards
to the centre of the
green unless otherwise
stated.*

THE CARNEGIE LINKS

1ST HOLE
449 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I.6

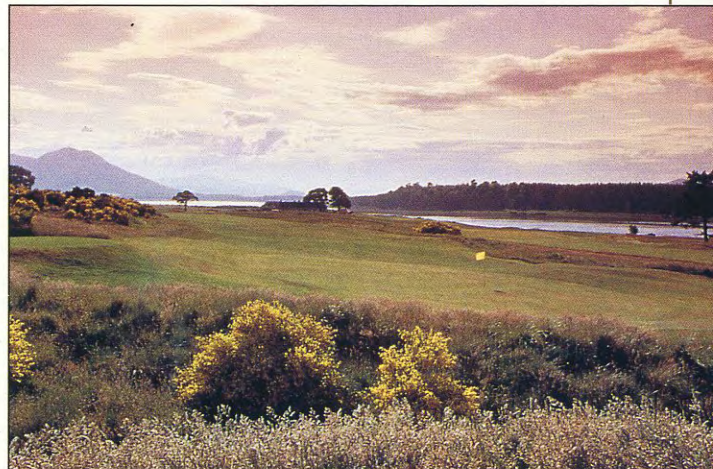


THE CARNEGIE LINKS



Sketch of first green from the fairway.

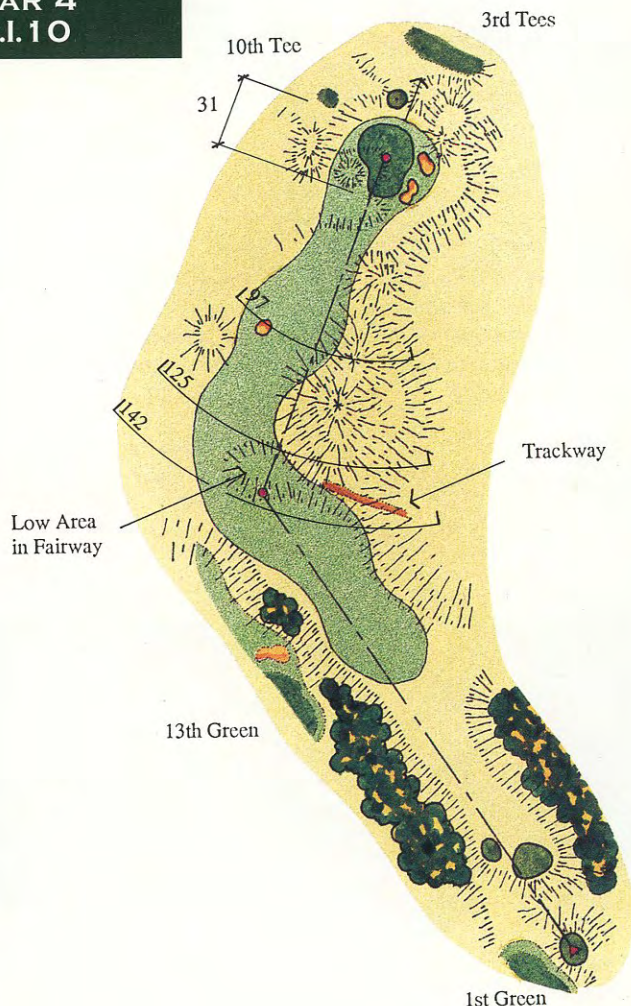
Normally played downwind, the first will seem shorter than its card length. The broad landing area for the drive becomes increasingly valleyed with the second shot played between two ridges. The approach to the green is angled with balls gathering sharply towards the bunker so aim on the right hand edge of the green.



The view back down the first from the second tee.

Until 1880, there was an old inn on top of the bank, behind and to the right of the main tee. It served the ferry across the Firth, which left from the pier.

2ND HOLE
412 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I. 10



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The second is a dogleg to the right around a large sand dune and deep grassy hollow. The more cautious line is down the left, although this makes the hole longer. The bold player can choose to flirt with the dune on the right and, under certain conditions, may attempt to cut off the corner. The second shot is better left than right as two bunkers are nestled in on the right, close to the edge of the green. The pine tree located behind the green acts as a useful marker for the approach shot.



*The second teeshot, with the deep hollow and steep dune on the right.
 The green is marked with an arrow*

The pot bunker in the fairway is an original bunker from the 1898 course. It was almost certainly on the old first fairway.

Trolleys to 4th Tee

The tee shot at the 3rd

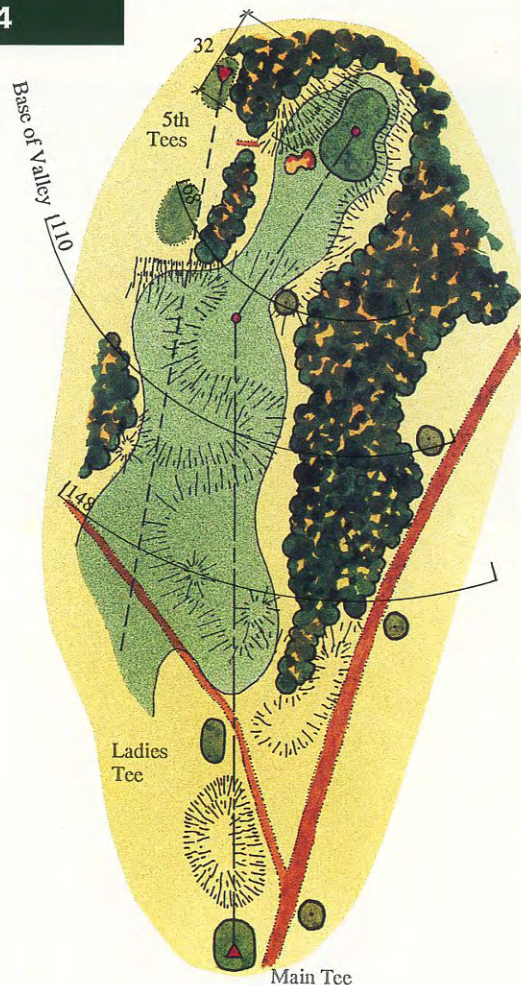


The creation of this hole was typical of so many on the Carnegie Links, where nature had done all of the hard work and the green simply had to be slotted in. The picture opposite shows the original site for the green.



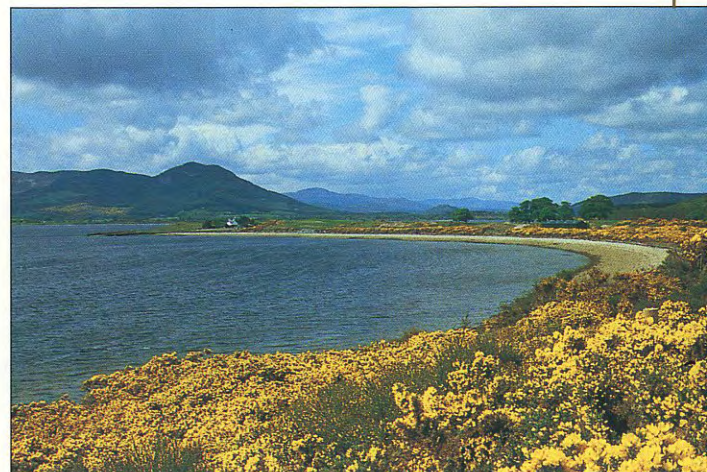
The 3rd in 1991

4TH HOLE
311 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I. 14



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The view to the west from the green



The bold line on this short par four is as tight to the right of the fairway as possible. This will leave a pitch down the length of an angled green. There is plenty of room on the left from the tee but this will leave a much more delicate approach with a cavernous hollow and pot bunker lurking on the left.

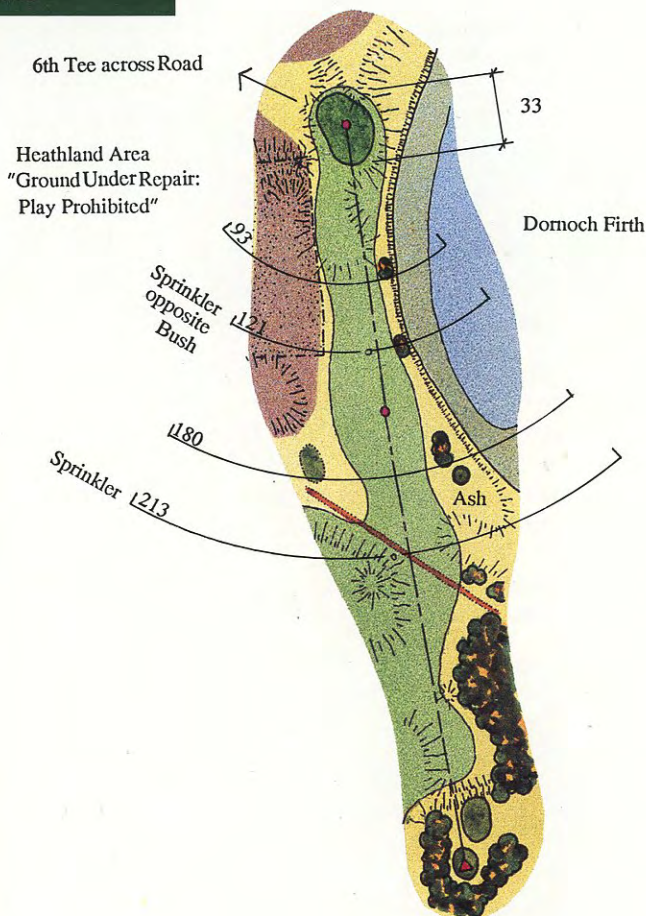
This fairway is shared with the 5th hole. Please do not play until the area is clear.



The area behind the tee is part of an important lichen heathland habitat. It has been carefully protected during construction and is now designated "GROUND UNDER REPAIR: PLAY PROHIBITED". Golfers may retrieve balls but a free drop out is compulsory.

The lichen heath

5TH HOLE
359 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I.8



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

This fairway narrows increasingly the further you go from the tee. A long iron or fairway wood is therefore advisable if the beach or the heathland is to be avoided. The green, with its undulating surface, is a small target which will be easier to hit after a long, bold tee shot. Too much caution may not be wise.

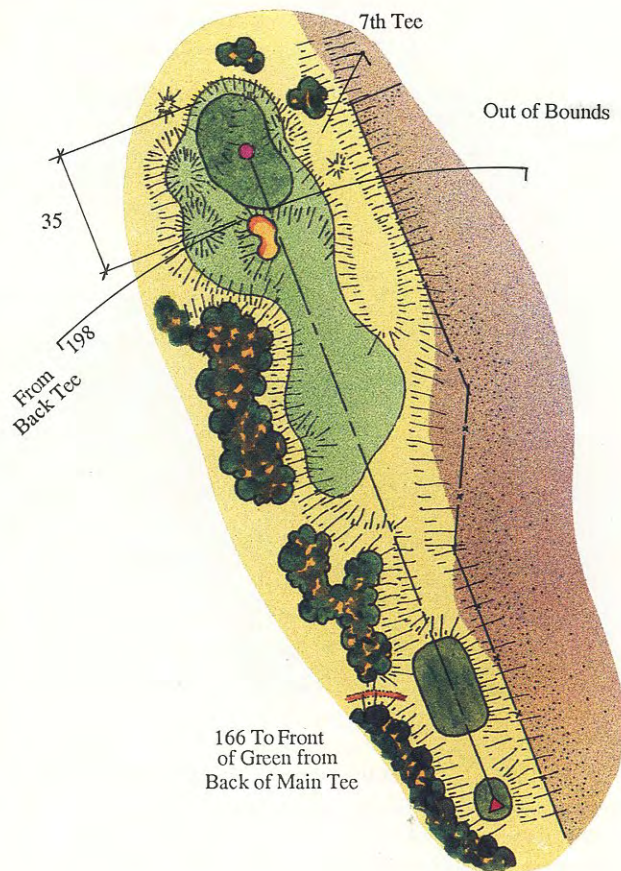
The first 150 yards of the fairway is shared with the fourth. Please do not play unless the fairway is clear.



The tee shot landing area narrows progressively

The whin bushes on the left of the hole have invaded much of the lichen heathland over the past fifty years. The course was built only on those areas which had been lost to them and a management programme agreed to ensure that the valuable habitat was not eroded. Without the course, much of it might have eventually disappeared for good.

6TH HOLE
215 YARDS
PAR 3
S.I. 16



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

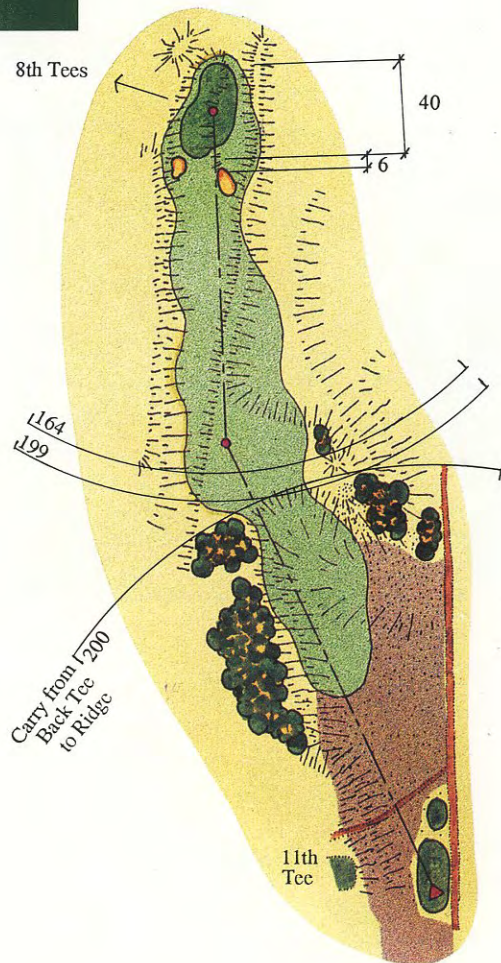


The tee shot on the sixth

The green sits in a natural bowl with a bunker guarding the front left half of the green and more grassy hollows all along the left. The running approach shot must be played up the right as the angled front edge will deflect balls towards the bunker. The green tumbles down from high left, so the cautious line will be down the right.

The lichens in the heathland on the right are exceptionally sensitive to air pollution and their presence here shows just how pure the air at Skibo is. In fact, 130 species of lichens are present on the heath.

7TH HOLE
398 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I.4



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The line from the tee is on the tower through the saddle in the dune. Once over the dune, the fairway widens out generously leaving a second to a long narrow green. The hole will generally be directly downwind, in which case, the approach bunker will feature strongly if the green is to be held. The left hand bunker narrows the entrance considerably if the teeshot is played too far left.

The long narrow green.

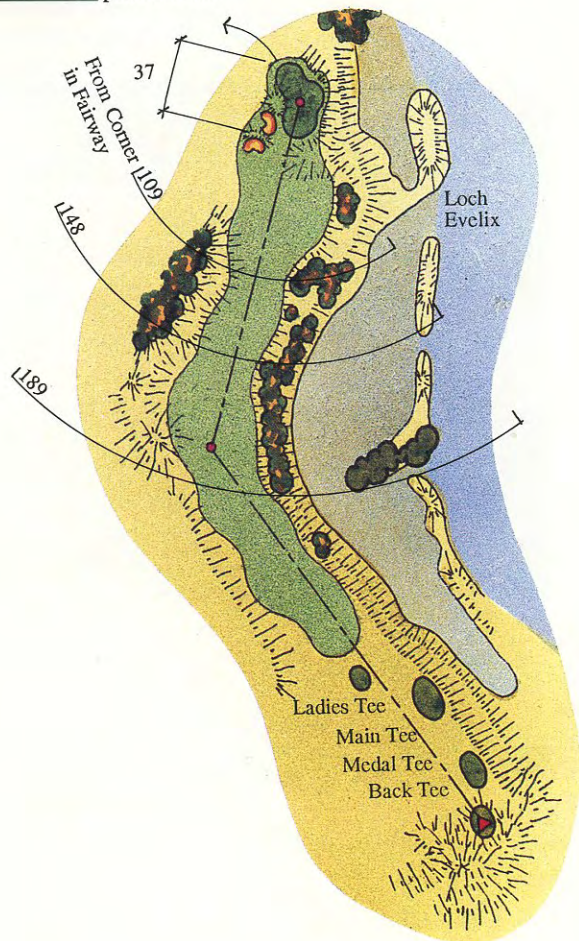


The view of the green from the fairway

The diagonal ridge through the fairway is the old coaching road which led to the Meikle ferry at the far end of the course. This was once the main route to the North and the Northern Isles during the 18th Century.

8TH HOLE
448 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I.2

To 9th Tee
 past 12th Tee



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

In summer, watch out for the ospreys feeding on the fish in Loch Evelix

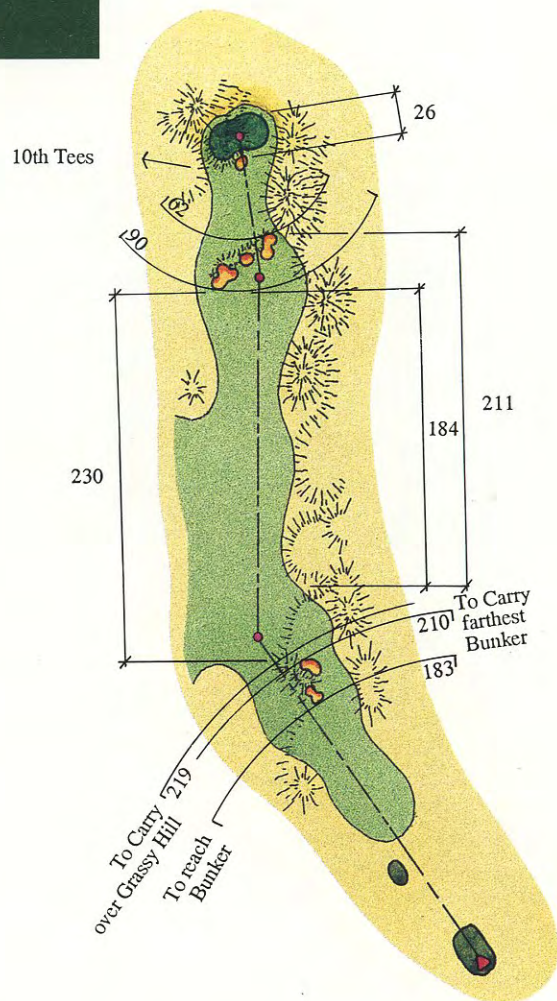


The green is perched above Loch Evelix

A superb natural hole, the dogleg eighth tempts players to carry the ball across the corner of Loch Evelix. The correct choice of line is therefore essential if the fairway is to be found. The reward for the bold drive is considerable, as it leaves a shorter second which is played down the length of the green. Those who are long and left from the tee will have to negotiate the two left hand bunkers and a narrow green dropping off towards the waters of Loch Evelix. The lowered approach may make the green seem a little nearer than it actually is.

Andrew Carnegie dammed the River Evelix to form Loch Evelix. Before that, the tide came up as far as the eighth tee.

9TH HOLE
549 YARDS
PAR 5
S.I. 12



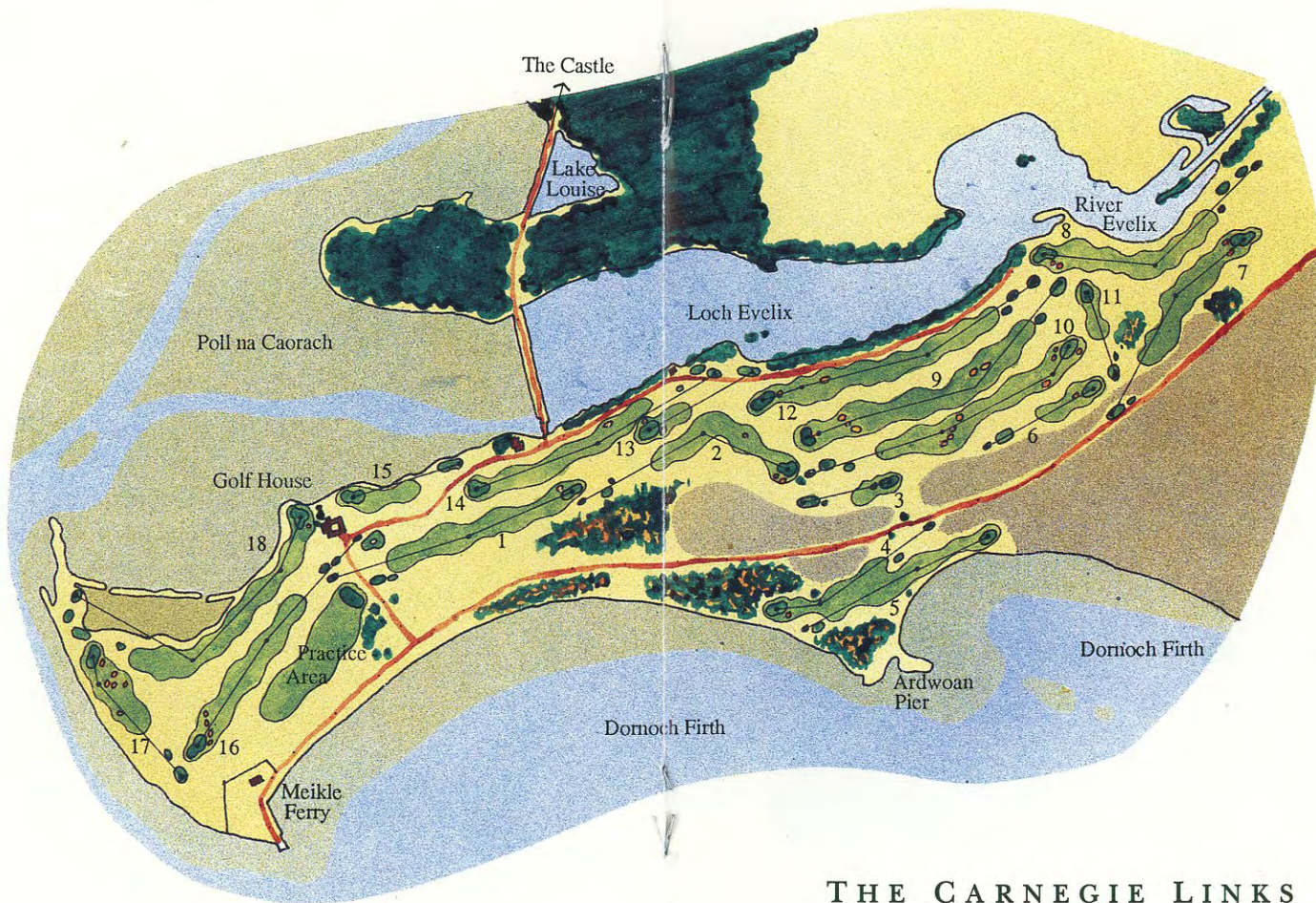
THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The two central fairway bunkers, one of which is hidden beyond the first, are the key to the tee shot. A bold drive to the right through a 20 yard gap is the shortest route and gives the longer player an opportunity to carry the diagonal line of bunkers on their second shot. The less adventurous line up the left leaves a much longer third shot to a green which is on three levels, the highest being on the left. Avoid the grassy mounds on the right at all costs.



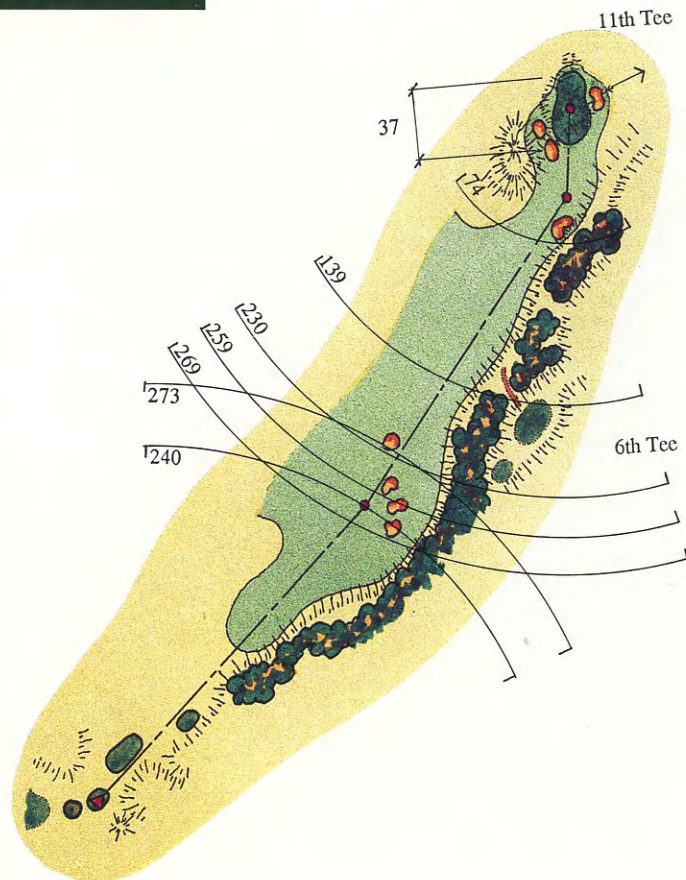
View towards green from the right of the fairway

The upper plateau on the right hand side of the drive landing area is an original green from the old course.



THE CARNEGIE LINKS
Plan of the Course

10TH HOLE
509 YARDS
PAR 5
S.I.9



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

Playing downwind under most conditions, this par five should be reachable in two shots for some. The hole has been bunkered so that two exceptionally well placed shots will reach the green in less than the regulation number.

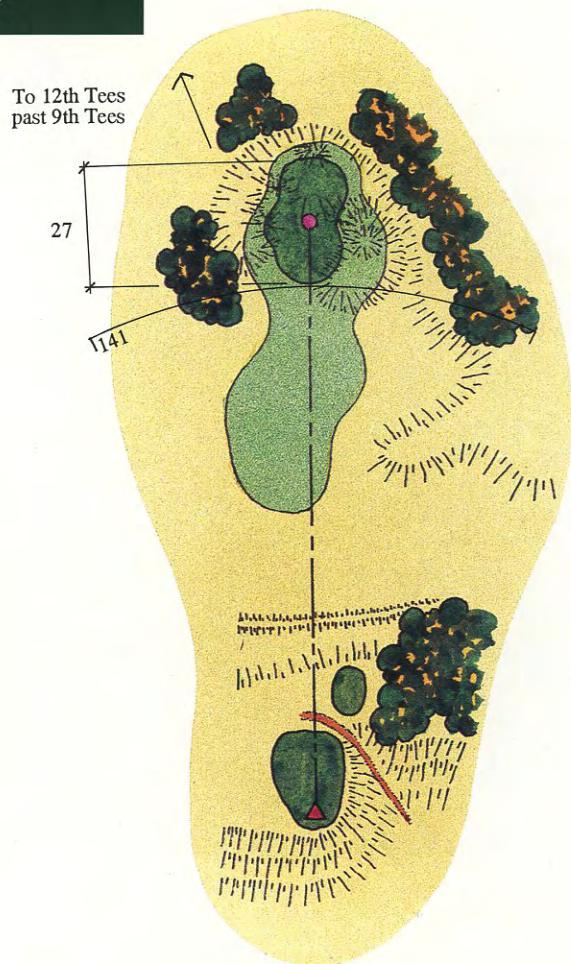
The cluster of bunkers which are visible from the tee must first be negotiated. The long, bold drive must go right of them, whilst the left hand bunker will rarely be reachable. The second shot is best placed close to the dominant fairway bunker on the right. Anything to the left will leave a nervy pitch across two bunkers onto a green which runs away towards another bunker.



The tee shot with the boldest and riskiest line tight to the bushes on the right

The coaching road which crosses the 7th continues across this fairway, close to the green and runs down alongside the 9th Fairway.

11TH HOLE
155 YARDS
PAR 3
S.I. 17



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

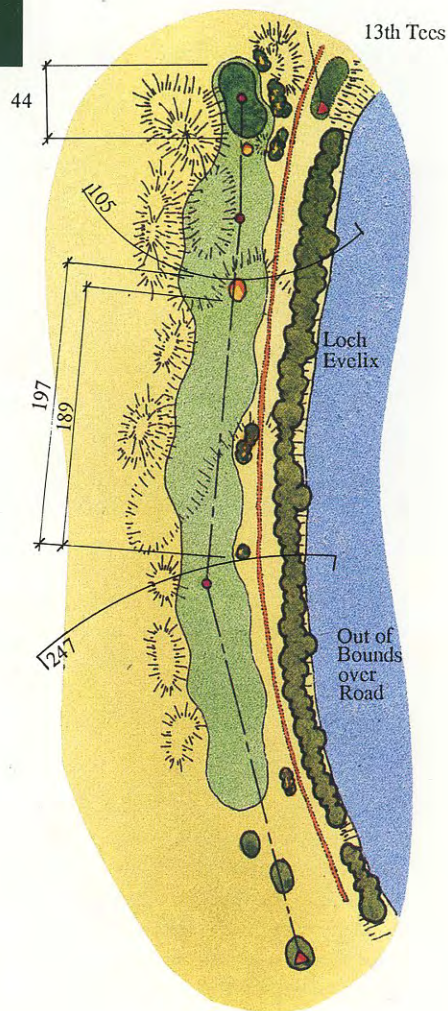


The tee shot will have to be landed short under most conditions

This hole will almost always be played with a cross wind to complicate matters. The green slopes away from a high front with shoulders running into the surface. The ideal shot will often involve landing the ball short and running it on, as anything pitched long is likely to overshoot.

Andrew Carnegie had grand plans to build a bridge across the Firth in 1901. Models were built and he was all set to fund the construction himself, when the project foundered over rivalry between the counties on either side. Ross-shire on the south side felt that Sutherland would be the sole beneficiaries and that they should foot the full cost of the maintenance. This was unacceptable to Sutherland and no compromise could be found. Both counties had to wait another 90 years for the bridge.

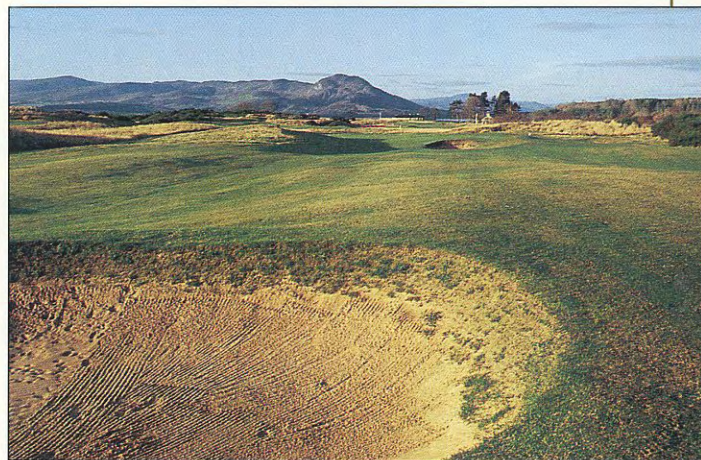
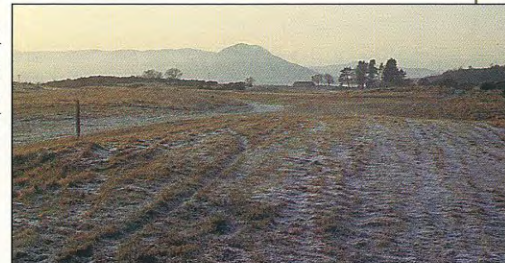
12TH HOLE
555 YARDS
PAR 5
S.I.5



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The first of a series of five holes which runs directly into the prevailing south-westerly wind, the 12th is flanked on the left by thick grassy hummocks. The fairway becomes increasingly turbulent after the generous drive landing area, with hollows opening up towards the green on the left. The central bunker set into a ridge is best carried to open up the vast rolling green for the approach shot. The approach shot becomes obscured from the left side of the fairway.

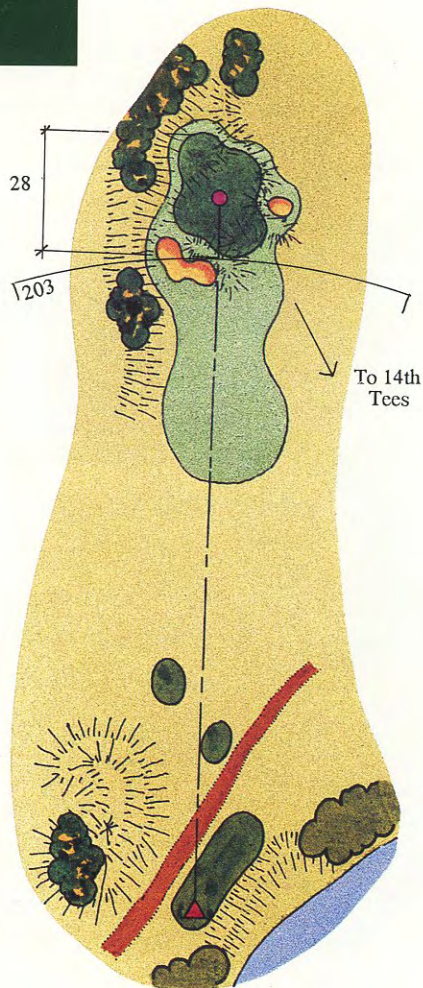
In 1990, the area was rough pasture, full of no more than cattle and the potential to create an outstanding golf course.



The finished hole, contours unaltered

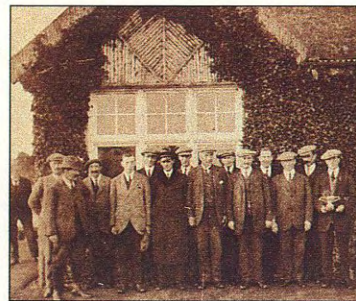
The deep grassy hollow on the right was an original Carnegie bunker, probably guarding the 9th green.

13TH HOLE
217 YARDS
PAR 3
S.I.15



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The tee sits on the site of the clubhouse for the original Carnegie course. It was little more than a small rustic pavilion and was mainly used for changing shoes and the taking of refreshments.

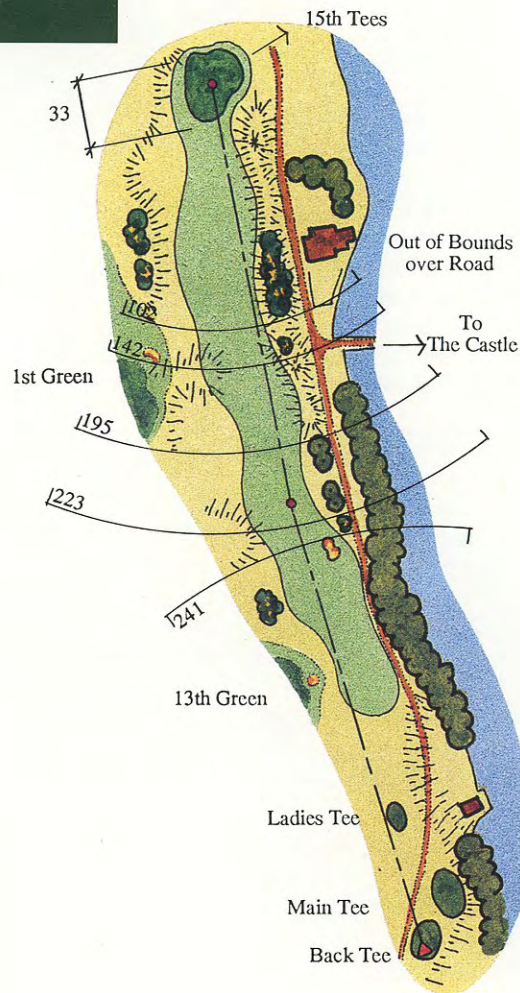


The longest par three on the course, this hole is a real test into a stiff breeze, particularly if the flag is on the narrow shelf on the back left. Few people will be able to fly the ball onto the green, so the ideal shot will therefore have to come in from the right and chase up the green. The left hand bunker is small and recoveries are far from easy.



The green is nestled into the foot of the central dune

14TH HOLE
461 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I 3



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

This long par four is one of the hardest on the course. Its green is on a slight plateau which slopes from high left to low right, so any shot missing the green is better to be right, leaving a pitch into the slope. Any shot to the left will probably have to be run up the bank deftly, if a shot is to be saved. On a windy day, a par four will feel like a birdie.

The tee shot to a generous fairway.

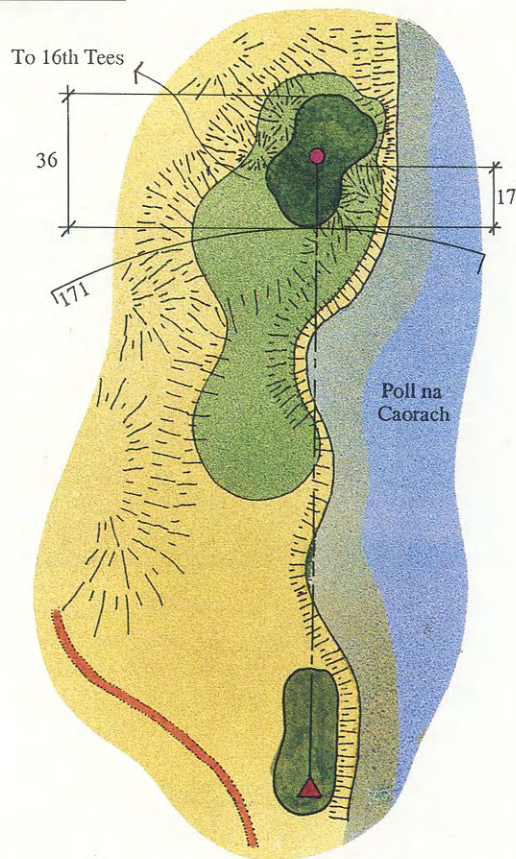


The Evelix Cottage on the right of the fairway was the home of the greenkeeper in Carnegie's day. His children enjoyed a staple diet of salmon plucked from the salmon ladder behind. Today, it is a guest lodge for members.

The Atlantic Salmon



15TH HOLE
189 YARDS
PAR 3
S.I.13



THE CARNEGIE LINKS

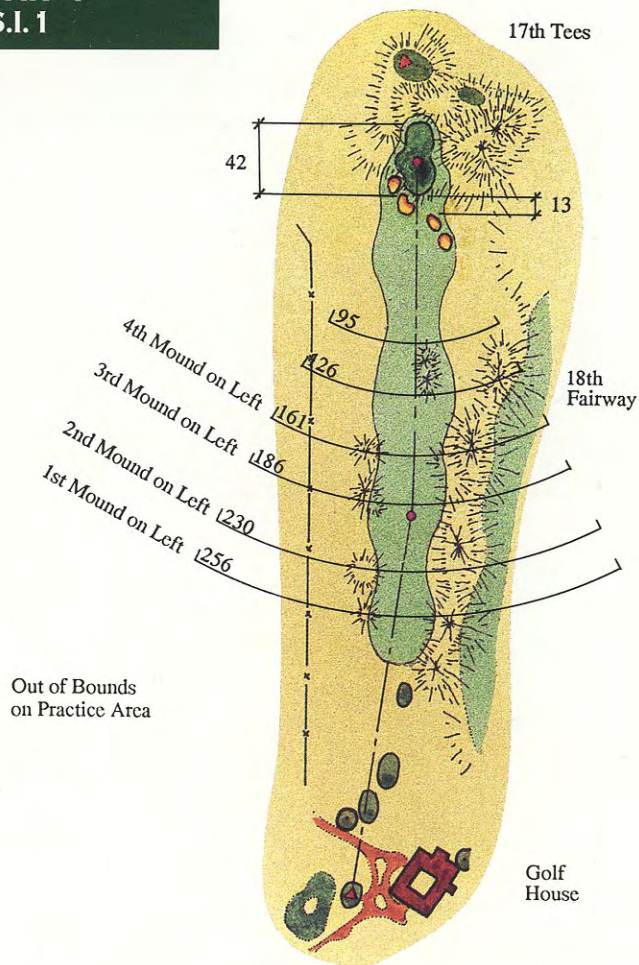


The golf house dining room overlooks the green

The tidal waters of Poll na Caorach provide the menace on the last of the short holes. The green is angled so that the right hand side of the green sits no more than a yard from the steep drop down into the water. Only the boldest shot will be rewarded when the flag is placed on the right, just beyond a deep grassy hollow. The cautious line is on the left half of the green although this may leave a long putt. A cleverly designed hole, it does not rely on bunkers to penalise the wayward shot.

When Carnegie dammed the river, he also created the salmon ladder, visible behind the tee, to allow the salmon to continue their way up stream to the spawning grounds. The source of the River Evelix is some seven miles to the North, actually on the estate, although much of its route takes it onto neighbouring land.

16TH HOLE
468 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I. 1



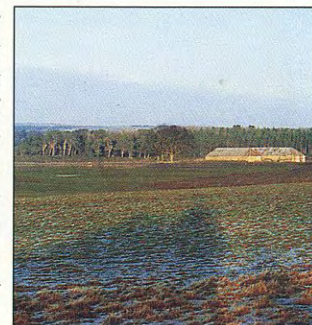
THE CARNEGIE LINKS

Another stern test on a windy day, the 16th is best tackled by driving up the right of the fairway, leaving the shortest carry over the diagonal line of bunkers which cross the approach. Err too far to the left from the tee and the two bunkers on the left of the green must be negotiated. A lay up shot is complicated by the bunkering in the approach. Set in the dunes, the green is slightly raised in a saddle with gentle rolls in on either side. Another hole where a par on a windy day will feel like a birdie.



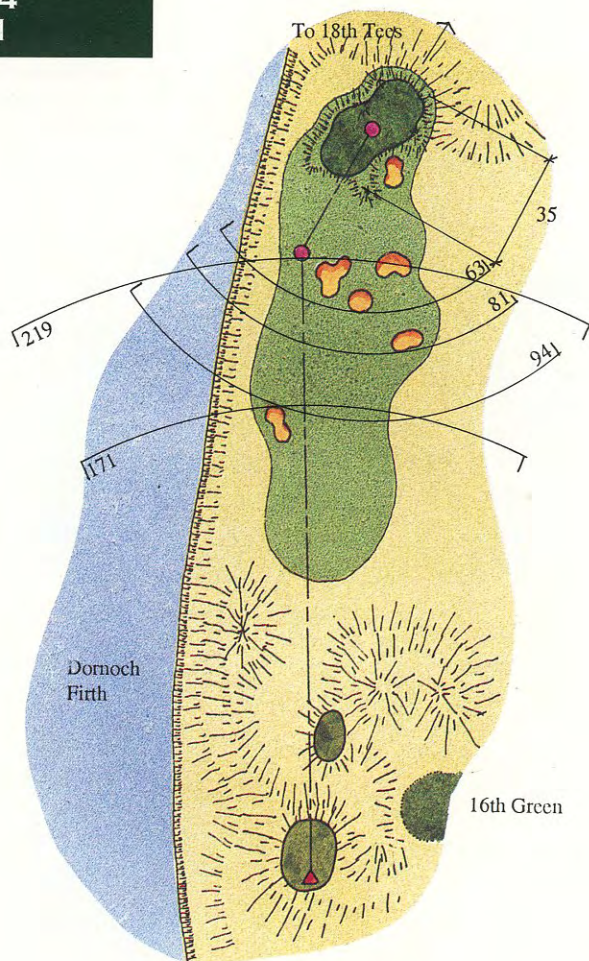
The 16th hole with its green set in the dunes

The distant view to the castle from this end of the course is extremely unusual. The fact that the castle was so well concealed from outside the estate was a major attraction to Carnegie. Indeed, the closest view into the castle from outside the estate is from the hilltops on the far side of the Firth.



This 1990 photograph shows the old steading which was the inspiration for the design of the new golf house.

17TH HOLE
267 YARDS
PAR 4
S.I.11



THE CARNEGIE LINKS



The cluster of bunkers is crucial in the strategy of the hole

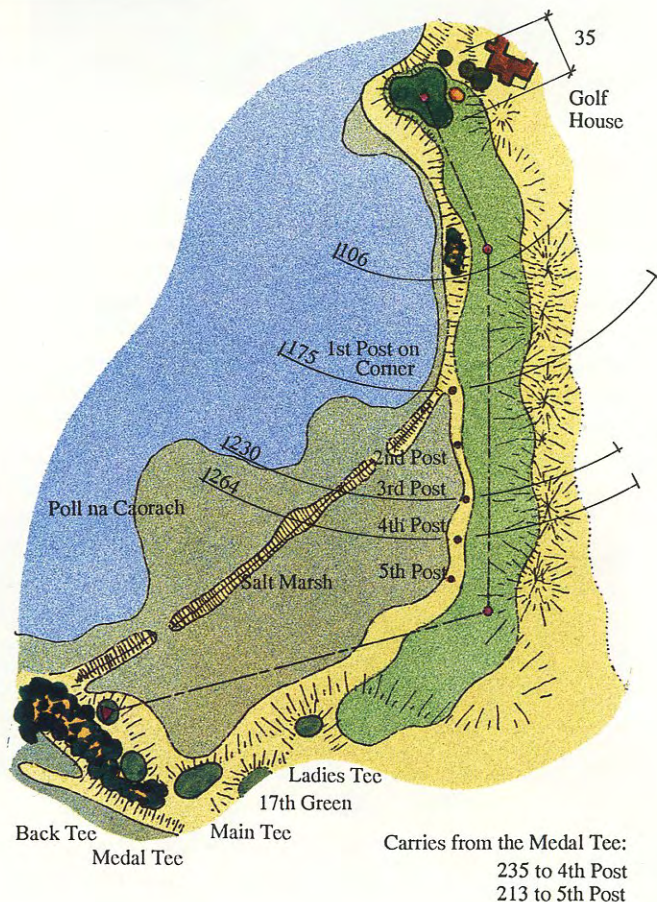
It only takes a 250 yard drive to reach the front of the green, so this short par four is in range for most players on a good day. The big decision has to be whether or not to take the driver. The angled green rewards anyone who plays tight to the beach on the left, whilst anyone who strays to the right is likely to find a punishment which matches the crime of not risking a trip to the beach. Birdies should always be possible although dropped shots will be more plentiful.



The bold line is down the left from the tee, close to the beach

The early riser may be lucky enough to see Otter feeding in the narrows and the occasional Salmon. Otters are attracted by shellfish which live amongst the seaweed at the mouth of the inlet. They are very shy so any sightings are for the privileged few. Seals are much more common in this area.

18TH HOLE
557 YARDS
PAR 5
S.I.7



THE CARNEGIE LINKS



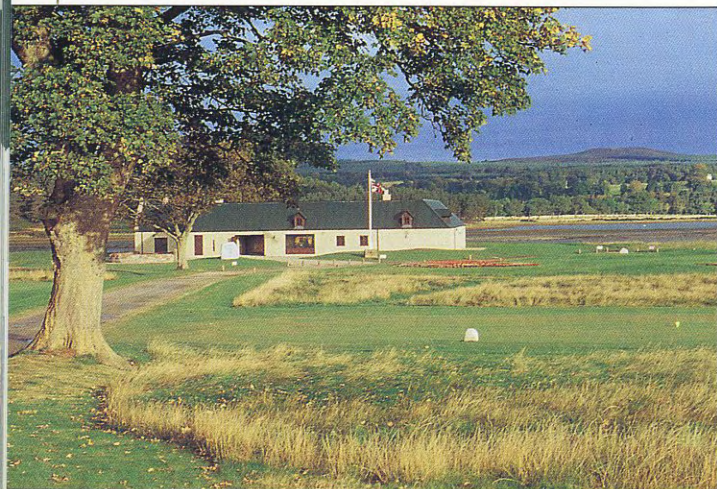
The 18th sweeps around the bay and alongside the golf house

This long sweeping dogleg par five requires a series of tricky tactical decisions if a par or better is to be achieved. The tee shot, angled across the edge of the salt marsh, forces a choice of how much to bite off, with the flat ground making distances appear deceptively short. With the second shot, the bold line is as tight to the sea as possible to open up the best line into the green. The more cautious the second, the harder the next becomes with a fiendish little pot bunker tucked in on the right of the green at the base of the bank.

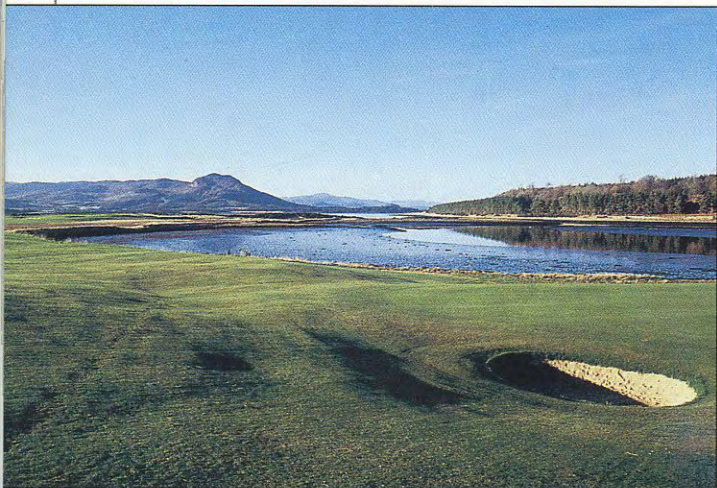


The pitch to the green, for the bolder player

In winter, the tidal bay, Poll na Caorach, is a vital feeding ground for the 16,000 Widgeon and Greylag Geese which migrate to the Firth from Iceland annually. In summer, it is an important site for the wildfowl to raise their broods.



The traditionally styled golf house



The view from the lounge is as good as any in the world of golf

THE GOLF HOUSE

The Golf House is an integral part of the Carnegie Links experience. Modelled closely on the old farm steading which once stood in its place, the Golf House has an intimacy rarely found elsewhere. The size of the rooms, the period furnishings, simple rustic materials and open fires all combine to give it a homely atmosphere, with quiet corners enjoying spectacular views at every turn.

After a round, golfers can sit and watch play on the 18th unfold as the entire hole can be seen from the comfort of the bar and the lounge. There is also a well stocked library for enthusiasts to catch up on their golfing history.

The interior of the golf house



CARD OF THE COURSE

HOLE	YARDS					PAR	STROKE
	Blue Tees	White Tees	Yellow Tees	Black Tees	Red Tees		

1	449	404	398	390	365	4	6
2	412	367	367	362	341	4	10
3	152	150	142	136	118	3	18
4	311	311	309	300	221	4	14
5	359	354	333	328	324	4	8
6	215	183	178	170	165	3	16
7	398	394	390	382	346	4	4
8	448	417	371	361	336	4	2
9	549	545	537	481	478	5	12
OUT	3293	3125	3025	2910	2694	35	
10	509	484	484	475	432	5	9
11	155	153	147	140	125	3	17
12	555	552	513	501	482	5	5
13	217	214	208	198	151	3	15
14	461	456	446	437	397	4	3
15	189	186	179	165	153	3	13
16	468	421	407	395	345	4	1
17	267	267	260	251	215	4	11
18	557	545	515	502	442	5	7
HOME	3378	3278	3159	3064	2742	36	
OUT	3293	3125	3025	2910	2694	35	
TOTAL	6671	6403	6184	5974	5436	71	

THE CARNEGIE LINKS

NATURE CONSERVATION AT THE CARNEGIE LINKS

The Carnegie Links at Skibo is an important refuge for wildlife, containing features of great nature conservation value. Such is the value of the area that it is designated by the government's environmental agency both as a National Scenic Area and part of it, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The course has been carefully designed and constructed and is now maintained so that it blends harmoniously with important wildlife habitats. Indeed, a management programme has been agreed which will ensure that the important areas are properly managed in perpetuity.



Loch Evelix in November, when the migrating birds arrive from the Arctic

The most outstanding feature within the golf course is the rare 'lichen heath' on the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th. Lichens are grey, green moss-like plants, usually brittle, fragile and extremely slow growing. They



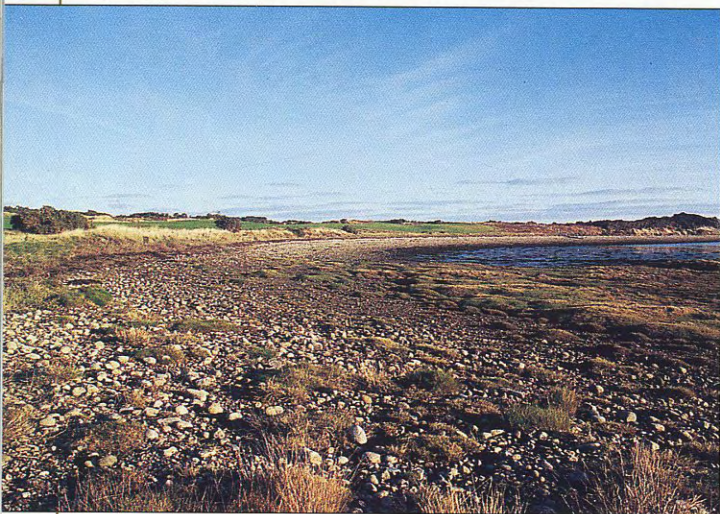
have no conventional root system and attach themselves to the surface of stones, bark or other plants from which they gain their meagre nutrient needs. They grow on the loose sand and gravel deposits where there is very little soil and water available and where, as a consequence, other higher plants cannot thrive, creating ideal conditions for the lichens to compete.

In all, 130 species of lichen grow at Skibo, some of which are extremely rare. The unusual groupings of these species form communities which are equally uncommon, being found only in Scandinavia and on exposed mountain tops in Scotland.

When walking the course, take the opportunity to examine the intricate structure of these fascinating plants but please do not pick them and respect fenced off areas which contain the most fragile specimens.

It is not just the lichens which are of interest. To the right of the 5th and the left of the 18th, areas of salt marsh provide the link between the inter-tidal areas and the land. Regularly covered by the tides, the plants here are specially adapted to withstand the salt. They are colourful in late summer when the Sea Spurrey and Sea Aster are in bloom.

Earlier in the year, Sea Campion with its bell-like flowers form a white carpet on the right of the 5th.



The salt marsh with its unusual species

The rich and varied botany is not all that is of interest on the Carnegie Links. The shallow tidal water of Poll na Caorach, right of the 15th and left of the 18th, provides ideal ground for wildfowl to raise their broods in summer, whilst Heron and Osprey gorge on the fish.

The timid Otter



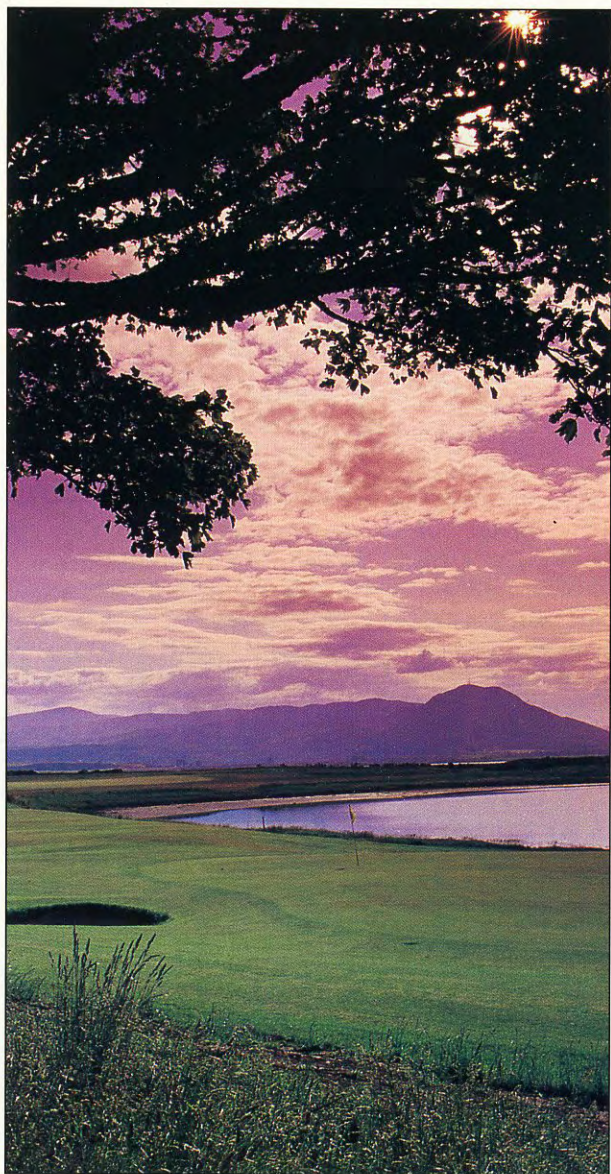
Otters and Seal are also attracted to the narrows by the fish and the shellfish which live amongst the seaweed, thriving in the Firth. As winter arrives, so do tens of thousands of migrating wildfowl from Iceland and the Arctic. In November, 16,000 Widgeon from Iceland congregate on the Dornoch Firth and many feed and shelter in the bay. Greylag Geese are also a common visitor. The early riser to the course may catch a glimpse of the timid Otters feeding in the bay or some of the other residents of the course which include Roe Deer, Pine Marten and Fox which are known to prey on the rabbit population.



The Pine Marten is a resident

The wildlife at Skibo is very special. Please enjoy it but please also respect it so that it can continue to thrive.

Fraser Symonds
Scottish Natural Heritage.



Looking west up the Dornoch Firth from the 18th

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