

Mass Golf Member Clubs Celebrate 125 Years of History

In 2024, MassGolf continued its recognition of Mass Golf member clubs who celebrated their 125 years of operation, debuting before the turn of the century in 1899. Other clubs founded in 1899 are Bellevue Golf Club, Franklin Country Club, Siasconset Golf Course, Wenham Country Club, and Woods Hole Golf Club. To recognize this feat, Mass Golf has produced a profile on each club and chronicled how their historic grounds have made an impact on the golf community, both in the past and present.

HATHERLY COUNTRY CLUB (published 2/16/2024)

The gravel cliffs of coastal Scituate have long appealed to those who have explored and sought to inhabit the land. Instrumental in the town's establishment in the Colonial era was Mr. Timothy Hatherly, who arrived in Plymouth in February 1632 with a specific task in mind: "to set up a fishing community in Scituate," according to notes of John Winthrop, one of the founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Hatherly has been referred to as "The Father of Scituate", and it's his namesake that graces the historic northern section of the town with its lush beaches and posh homes dotting the coastline. Tucked within this seaside village is Hatherly Country Club, founded in 1899 as the home of the Hatherly Play Ground Association, which was established to promote the athletic pursuits of its residents, largely families who adopted the area as their summer retreat. To this day, Hatherly's membership is stocked with families, thanks in part to tradition but also the club's emphasis on developing young golfers. (More on that later).



The holes along the clubhouse side of Hatherly Country Club are routed through natural areas along Scituate's coastline. (Mass Golf)

Founded on 11 acres of purchased land, the club was cleared of its shrubbery to provide unobstructed views of the windswept waterfront. These oceanside views remain visible among much of the course, but especially so on the clubhouse side. While the original 18-hole course was replaced in the mid-20th century, the layout has always consisted of some of the state's toughest, yet most scenic holes.

"It's an amazing celebration for Hatherly to be in existence going back to around the birth of golf in Massachusetts," said Francis L. Colpoys, Jr., current president of Hatherly Country Club. "It is a great membership of true friends and family, and it's reflected in the longevity of employees who love working with membership and club."

Early Days

The first layout at Hatherly featured a 6-hole golf course, tennis courts, and a baseball field, as well as a cozy 90×35 foot wooden clubhouse, referred to as the casino (the Italian word for small villa, summerhouse, or social club). Located on the present 1st green and 2nd tee, the casino had two granite pillars at its entrance where cars would drive right up directly toward the staircase leading to the upper story of the building.

The club was very much a playground in its early days, spawning the tradition of the "Hatherly Field Day" that attracted hundreds of people. The activities featured everything from a 100-meter dash and obstacle course to races involving wheelbarrows and potato sacks. In the afternoon, there was a baseball game and golf events, including a long-drive contest (203 yards was the winning score in 1903).

In 1913, the club was admitted to the Massachusetts Golf Association and by 1921 had debuted its first 18-hole course. According to a June 1921 article in the Boston Post, Arthur Lockwood, who won the inaugural Mass Amateur Championship in 1903, reportedly drew up the plans and teamed with W.H. Emerson to complete the work.

The Hatherly Play Ground Association also reorganized, and the club's name officially became recognized as Hatherly Country Club. Francis Ouimet, famous for his 1913 U.S. Open victory, played Hatherly a number of times, including with Fred Mahony, a Mass Amateur quarterfinalist in 1940 who went on to become club president.

"He was a delightful fellow to play with," Fred Manne told Peter Mehegan, a former WCVB Chronicle anchor and Hatherly member, in his video *Hatherly At 100*, produced for the club's centennial celebration. "It was always a fun game with him. He was serious enough about his golf game, but he made it such a social event that you relax with him." His score? "He played under 75."

In addition to its facilities, Hatherly became known for its social scene as dances and galas were held with live music during peak season at the club. However, one night in July 1947, loose cigarette disposal and a heavily waxed floor caused a 3 a.m. fire that led to the destruction of the original clubhouse/casino. Head golf professional Jack Igoe and his entire family — wife Mary, three daughters, and his parents — lived upstairs in the clubhouse, and fortunately, all escaped unscathed.

HATHERLY COUNTRY CLUB										REPLACE DIVOTS									
HOLE	Distances	STROKES	BOGEY	POINTS	SELF	PARTNER	OPP.	OPP.	Won + Lost - Halvd.O	HOLE	Distances	STROKES	BOGEY	POINTS	SELF	PARTNER	OPP.	OPP.	Won + Lost - Halvd.O
1	280	9	4		6	5	6	4		10	365	6	4		5	5	5	X	
2	285	11	4		4	5	3	4		11	332	14	4		5	4	4	X	
3	186	17	3		4	3	3	4		12	262	18	4		4	4	4	4	
4	175	15	3		3	3	5	4		13	415	4	5		5	4	6	5	
5	425	3	5		5	4	5	X		14	220	8	4		4	4	4	3	
6	296	13	4		5	5	5	4		15	269	12	4		4	4	4	4	
7	370	7	4		5	6	5	X		16	180	16	3		4	4	4	3	
8	133	5	3		4	2	4	5		17	312	10	4		5	4	3	4	
9	400	1	5		5	5	5	4		18	532	2	5		6	6	5	5	
OUT	2550		35		41	38	41			IN	2887		37		42	39	39		
PLAYER										OUT	2550		35		41	38	41		
ATTESTED										Total	5437		72		83	77	80		
										VS BOGEY		Holes Up		Handicap					
												Holes Down		NET					

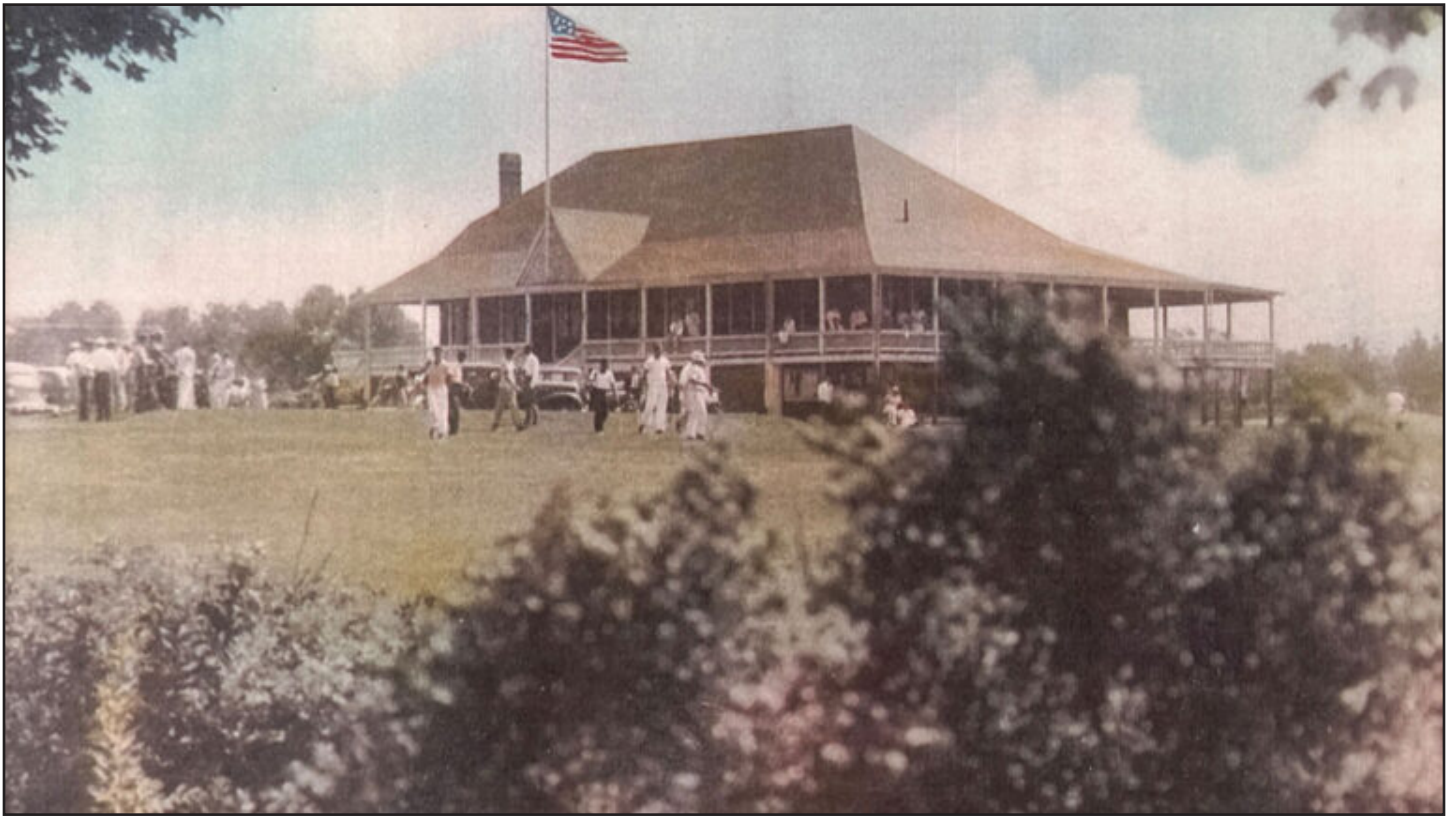
Here's how the original 18-hole course was set up in the 1920s. (Mass Golf)

The club still hosted its MGA Open Handicap tournament a week later with players using a so-called “circus tent” for a locker room that doubled as a pro shop. Soon after plans were put in place to rebuild the clubhouse.

The club saw a significant transition in the 1960s when many homes were adapted for full-time use as residents began living in the town year-round. It was around then that much of the course was renovated for improved playability. Sam Mitchell, whose portfolio also includes Brookmeadow Country Club and Easton Country Club, was the architect behind the new design that added nearly 500 yards and repositioned many of the holes to make it a par-70.

In addition to the removal of consecutive par 3s on holes 3 and 4, the course now featured a new par-3 8th and a dogleg left 9th, that looped around the pond, the lone water hazard located inside the 18-hole course. It also shifted the final challenging par-3 to the 15th, which plays from an elevated tee that overlooks the remaining holes. The closing hole, which used to be a par-5 with a green in the present-day first fairway, is now a par-3 playing uphill back toward the clubhouse.

“The views are incredible, and there are plenty of challenges,” said Mehegan, who described the course as “sneaky tough”. “It’s a lovely place, and it’s been well-kept over the years.”



A view of the original clubhouse/casino at Hatherly Country Club prior to its destruction in 1947. (Contributed)

Growing The Game

Following the Great Depression, many of Scituate's wealthiest residents lost fortunes and the homes that went with it. But soon the town established a large Irish presence spearheaded by former Boston Mayor James Michael Curley, who moved to Scituate and led an influx of Celtic brethren to Hatherly.

Among them was Igoe, a transformative figure in developing Hatherly's celebrated youth program. Igoe devoted himself to teaching junior golfers how to swing the golf club and was ahead of his time by filming the swings of his students. On an average day, Igoe taught in front of the old clubhouse from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. After lunch, they would play a practice round and in the evening were shown films of golf greats at the time.

Hatherly has hosted the Mass Girls' Junior Amateur eight times, double that of any other club, and often Hatherly's golfers would occupy close to half the field. Among those star pupils was Theodora "Pippy" Rooney, one of the best players to come out of the South Shore. The 1947 Mass Girls' Junior Amateur and 1955 Mass Women's Amateur winner told Mehegan that she would go to church in the morning and then play a round with fellow young women. After going to the beach, she returned to the practice range with Igoe before going out to play with the men in the afternoon. During her teenage years, she was able to shoot 3-over 37.

"She was a delightful and charming person, who went on to play at Charles River Country Club," Mehegan said of O'Connor, also a seven-time women's club champion, who qualified for three U.S. Women's Opens and was a quarterfinalist in the 1953 U.S. Women's Amateur Championship. "She said she always remembers her childhood when she learned to play the game. Like all of Igoe's students, she was taught the strong grip."



Pippy Rooney, center, receives the Mass Women's Amateur trophy after winning the 1955 final against Florence McClusky, left. (Leslie Jones Collection)

Young golfers continue to thrive at Hatherly today. In fact, the club is one of the few that exclusively reserves Monday mornings for its summer junior golf program. Chip Johnson, the head golf professional at Hatherly since 1997, leads those efforts along with his assistant pros Greg Hay and Tim Kerrigan. Johnson, who finished 40th overall in the 1988 U.S. Open at The Country Club in Brookline, also works alongside his wife, former LPGA pro Pamela Kerrigan Johnson, who is particularly helpful in growing the youth and women's side of the game.

"It results in great young men and women who become golfers," Colpoys said.

In recent years, Mary Mulcahy has been among the club's most accomplished members. A fourth-generation member, Mulcahy won the ladies' club championship before she was a high schooler. While at Scituate High, she won the 2010 MIAA Girls' Individual title as a sophomore, helping her earn a scholarship to the University of Central Florida. Since returning to Massachusetts, she's been a regular competitor in the Mass Women's Amateur Championship and has won the Mass Father Daughter Tournament with her father John Jr., six times. John has caddied for Mary going back to her junior golf days.



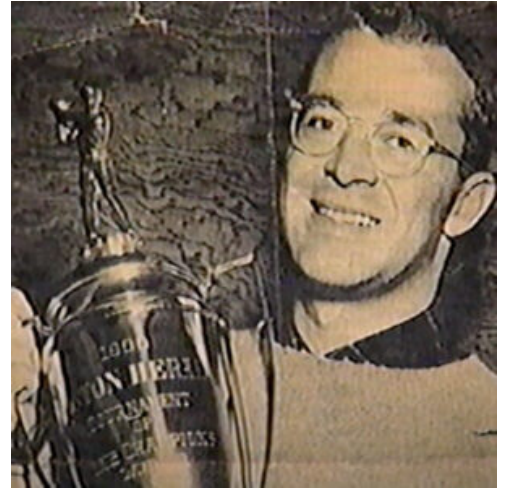
Mary Mulcahy and her father John Mulcahy, Jr., pictured in 2014, have won multiple Father Daughter titles together. (David Colt, file)

Notable Names & Events

Over 125 years, Hatherly has played host to a mix of pro athletes, celebrities, and political figures, in addition to its notable membership, many of whom are memorialized through club championships and events.

For years, Boston Bruins players Milt Schmidt and Derek Sanderson frequented Hatherly, including in 1990 for a charity tournament to support the Scituate High School hockey program. Comedian Bob Hope and his wife Dolores also visited Hatherly on occasion, as did presidential press secretary and U.S. Senator Pierre Salinger.

Among its homegrown members was Ted Cooney, whose family owned a summer house in Scituate. As a junior golfer, he was medalist in the 1951 Mass Junior Amateur and made the final against John Tosca Jr. He went on to captain the Harvard University golf team, winning the 1954 New England Intercollegiate title at Oakley Country Club. A year later he set the course record of 62 on the previous 18-hole course, which will stand forever. Sadly, his life was cut short at age 25 when he was struck by an automobile in Plymouth, N.H., “a great loss to Massachusetts golf”, Boston Globe writer Tom Fitzgerald wrote when reporting on his untimely death in 1959.



Ted Cooney is among the most successful male golfers to come out of Hatherly Country Club. (Contributed)

Jane Faxon Welch, whose nephew is 8-time PGA Tour winner Brad Faxon, won the junior division of the Mass Girls' Junior Amateur at Hatherly in 1957, and in 1960, won the championship division. She joined Hatherly in the 1960s and led the club to a long-awaited victory in the 1968 Ann Cosgrove Boros Memorial Tournament, named after the wife of Julius Boros, who won the 1963 U.S. Open at The Country Club. Prior to 1968, Hatherly hasn't won the team title since the inaugural 1952 tournament. Faxon also competed twice in the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur (2000, 2006). In that span, she has seen her daughter Tracy and granddaughters Victoria and Amanda go on to have success as well.

In the tradition of longstanding pros, Woody Kay served the club for two decades. After serving as a naval officer during the Korean War, Kay returned home to join the family business of golf pros. His father was Vice President of the PGA, and all three brothers were golf pros. He joined the Hatherly staff in 1972 and was a friend to many.

Every year, the club awards the Woody Kay Hatherly Cup for its Member-Member Tournament on Memorial Day Weekend. The extremely popular summer Member-Guest is named after former Massachusetts governor Maurice Tobin, who was a Hatherly member. Tobin, whose namesake is on the Route 1 bridge connecting Charlestown and Chelsea, became the youngest state representative at age 25 and went on to have a successful political career. He also died suddenly in 1953, leading to the creation of this tournament. In this 5-day format, only one true champion emerges from the Championship Flight.

In addition to its eight Girls' Junior Championships, Mass Golf has hosted the Mass Senior Amateur and Mass Women's Senior Amateur twice, the latter most recently taking place in 2023. Mass Golf Hall of Famer Joanne Goodwin won her fifth straight Mass Women's Stroke Play (Baker Trophy) title at Hatherly in 1959, and 2023 Mass Women's Amateur champion Rebecca Skoler won the 2020 Mass Girls' Junior Amateur at Hatherly.

In May 2022, the club hosted U.S. Senior Open Qualifying on an unusually still day, with Weymouth's Brian Spitz and Rhode Island's Ed Kirby (Wakefield, RI) being the only players under-par at 69, each earning a spot in the Championship Proper.

Modern Times

While the rise of golf was interrupted during the Vietnam War, the demand for membership at Hatherly has steadily risen since the 1980s and through several booms in the game.

It's not just family members who are carrying on the legacy of the club decade after decade, it's the senior staff as well. In addition to the pro shop's lengthy collective tenure, superintendent Rich Caughey has 39 years on the job, head chef Jeff Heyl is in year 11, and clubhouse manager Joe Ferrari has been with Hatherly for eight years.

"We're blessed at Hatherly to have longtime employees who love the club and the membership," Colpoys said.

Bruce Hepner and Brian Silva have also overseen restoration work at Hatherly, removing trees to open up the course and restoring greens to their original shapes and sizes. Caughey has kept the club ahead of the game as well. He implemented a state-of-the-art desalination plant at the club to offset the effects of saltwater intrusion by purifying the water in the pond between 8 and 9 that gets distributed throughout the course. It's a similar system The Kittansett Club in Marion has implemented.

As the club enters the new golf season, a 125 celebration committee has been formed to plan events unique to the ceremonial year. A summer tournament using hickory clubs is in the works for June, and the hope is to incorporate some of the old course elements, such as abandoned tees & greens.

And while many individuals certainly deserve recognition for the club to reach this exclusive milestone, it's been recognized as a team effort since Day 1.

"Here at the club, nobody takes personal recognition," Colpoys said. "Everybody is into it to help, and I think that's why we've had great volunteer efforts for a long time."

