PORTRUSH - PIONEER WOMEN PLAYERS



From left: Mrs. Ryder Richardson, Lady Margaret Scott (winner), Miss Lythgoe, Mrs Willock and their caddies. Courtesy of Royal Portrush Golf Club

A Ladies' and Juveniles' branch of the County Golf Club was instituted in would achieve great Amateur Championship came to Royal Portrush. This event would have far

reaching consequences for women's golf. Lady Margaret Scott won the championship and demonstrated the skill in which a woman could play golf. This had a profound effect on the home players.

HELICIS. A Family Affair

Mrs Hezlet was an excellent golfer; she was runner up in the Magill Cup, 1896. Mrs Hezle was instrumental in encouraging her children to pick up a golf club. May, Florence, Violet and Emily all became leading figures in women's golf in Ireland. Lieutenant Colonel C. O. Hezlet, brother of the Hezlet sisters was also a successful golfer. Lt. Colonel Hezlet would sit on the Championship Committee that brought the Open from across the water in 1951.



Front row: Miss Magill, Miss Adair, Miss May Hezlet, Miss Violet Hezlet and Miss Stuart. Back row: Miss Florence Hezlet is pictured standing on the right at the end of the row. Courtesy of Royal Portrush Golf Club



The Magil Cup was won by May Hezlet when she was just twelve years old. It was later won by her mother Mrs Hezlet, a talented golfer in her own right. Courtesy of Coleraine Museum

The Magill Cup

May Hezlet began playing golf competitively from a very young age which helped to enhance her sporting talent and turn her into a world class golfer. In 1984 aged just twelve she won her first ladies competition, the Magill Cup. May went on to win the Ladies Amateur Championship in 1899, 1902 and 1907, and the Irish Ladies Amateur Championship in 1899, 1904, 1905, 1906 and 1908.



In 1904 May Hezlet published her book "Ladies' Golf". It was the definitive guide



Courtesy of Royal Portrush Golf Club

Rhona Adair began playing at the age of eight. In July 1899, aged 17, she became a talking point when she visited St Andrews in Scotland to play a 36-hole challenge with Old Tom Morris. Prior to the match Morris said: "I'll no' be licked by a lassie." However, Morris had to withstand a spirited match and won by only a narrow margin.

Adair was winner of the Ladies Amateur Championship in 1900 and in 1903 when it was played at Royal Portrush. In 1903 she travelled to the USA and Canada where she experienced great success in exhibition matches.



Golf balls used by Rhona Adair. Courtesy of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews



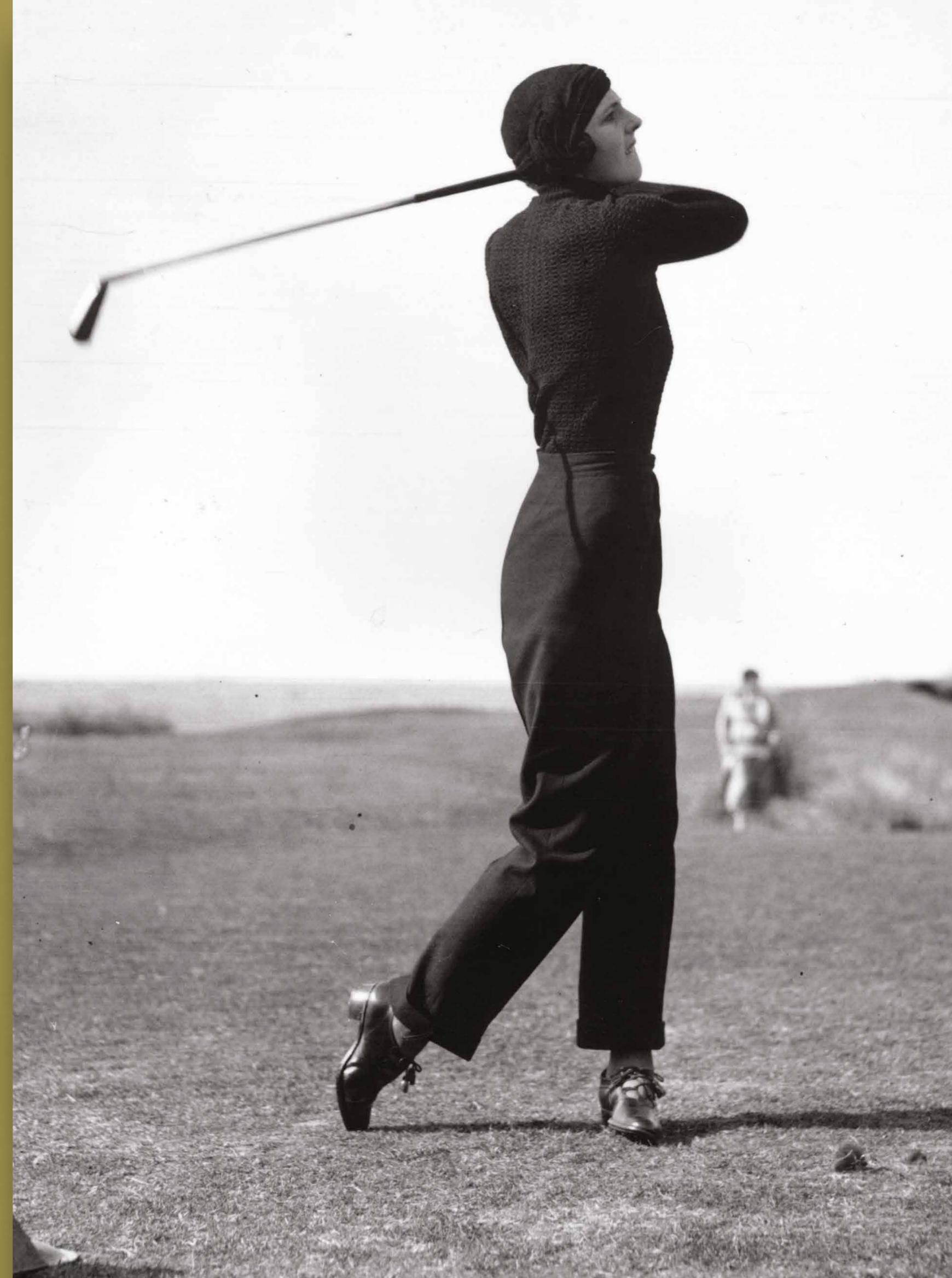
Rhona Adair along with the Hezlet sisters dominated women's golf competitions to the extent that in 1907 T. H. Millar, then vice-president of the Ladies Golf Union sent a team of four men to Portrush to

'16 Down' having lost when playing against May Hezlet in 1907. The men were beaten comfortably in all matches. Rhona Adair is pictured seated on the left with May Hezlet seated on the right. Violet Hezlet sits cross armed at the front of the picture

Woman Wears Trousers!

On October 3rd, 1933, at the Women's Golf Union Championship at Westward Ho! Devon Gloria Minoprio caused a sensation and changed women's golf forever by wearing trousers. Minoprio cut a striking figure at the 1939 Ladies Amateur Championship at Royal Portrush. Tall and slim in her perfectly cut trousers she continued to flout convention by playing the match with only one iron called a cleek, today's equivalent of a 1 or 2

However, Minoprio wasn't the first woman to wear trousers at Royal Portrush. In 1937 during the Irish Ladies Championship Mrs H. V. Glendinning wore beating the favourite Mrs E. L. Kidd. Mrs H. V. Glendinning was later instrumental in the development of girls' golf.



Golfer and magician Gloria Minoprio who caused a stir in 1933 by competing in a golf ournament wearing trousers. In 1939 she stayed in Portrush to practice for the Women's Open Championship at Royal Portrush. She entertained guests at her house with

Royal Portrush

A tight contest between Pamela Barton and Mrs Marks provided excellent golf, tightly fought to the last hole with Barton claiming the Challenge Cup. Barton's uncle was Sir Dunbar Plunkett Barton who had been president of Royal Portrush. She won the Ladies Amateur Championship at Southport in May 1936 and that same year won the American Women's Golf Champion. Sadly Barton died at age 26 in 1943 in a flying accident as a member of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

Brilliance

The 1939 Ladies Amateur Championship brought to Portrush a talented young woman Davis. We know her better as Zara Bolton who captained the winning Curtis Cup Team in 1956. The team visited Portrush early in

