

Robert Fenwick Walker

1864 – 1954

Robert was the eldest of the three Walker Brothers (golfers rather than crooners!) George (q.v.) born in 1870 and John Notman (q.v.). Robert was born 21st May 1864 and we think the family home was the last or second last house on the north side of Earlsferry High Street.

		1864	at	William Walker	Jane Fenwick	White
				Leamington	Sunt	Lyona 3 rd
35	Robert	Edward		Robert Walker		at Nibley Park
	Fenwick Walker	Twenty first		de J. Fenwick		Peter Bond
		6 th B. Rd.				Lyona
		Earlsferry		1852 November		
		Nibley Park		Nibley Park		

We know nothing about his early days in Earlsferry and the first reference we can find for him is in 1895 when he seems to be at Northampton Golf Club and the fact that he went to his “workshop” suggest that he might have been a golf club maker as well. He seems to have been in charge of that club but we cannot find any other references to him. It seems an unusual middle name such as to suggest that this is one and same person but again we know that his eldest daughter was born in Lyndhurst which is the home area of his wife.

1895

Charge of Theft from the Golf House.—John Cannon and William Jones, both of no fixed residence, were charged with stealing a golf scorer, a pair of soles, a metal clock, a dozen bottles of beer, and other articles of the value of 25s., at Kingsthorpe, on July 28th, the property of **Robert Fenwick Walker** of Kingsley Park, the keeper of the Golf House at Kingsthorpe, of the Northampton Golf Club. They were also charged with stealing two pairs of boots, two jackets, two shirts, a table cover, and some keys, valued at 50s., the property of the Golf Club, at the same time.—R. F. **Walker** deposed that on going to his workshop he found it in disorder, an entrance having been effected through a trap-door in the roof. A number of articles were missing.—Joseph Watts, shoemaker, Vernon-street, said that he saw the two prisoners

In the census in England in 1901 we do, however, find him in Kent. It is significant that three of his children appear to have been born in Lyndhurst in Hampshire. This is county from which his wife came originally and noticeably his brother-in-law also. It is possible therefore that between 1896 and say 1899 he was working in that area. There is likely to be only one golf club that could use his services at that time and that is what is now known as The Forest course as part of Bramshaw Golf Club. Inquiries continue.

Administrative County		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the										Page 11						
Civil Parish		Ecclesiastical Parish		County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District		Electoral District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Town or Village or Hamlet						
Higham Heath		St. Mary's Heath								Higham Heath								
1	2	3			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	Uninhabited	Hours	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb	(2) Blind	(3) Lame	(4) Imbecile, feeble-minded					
65	5	1	Charles La Barber	Son	15	Cooper Lab. Committee	Worker		Higham Heath									
			William C Barber	Son	11				Higham Heath									
			Robert Barber	Son	7.8	Exp. Prof. Barber	Worker		Higham Heath									
			Merriam Barber	Wife	3.5	Exp. Prof. Barber	Worker		Higham Heath									
			James Barber	Son	2.5				Higham Heath									
			James Barber	Son	1.8				Higham Heath									
			John Barber	Son	1.2				Higham Heath									
			John Barber	Son	0.8				Higham Heath									
			John Barber	Son	0.5				Higham Heath									
			John Barber	Son	0.2				Higham Heath									
66	6	1	Frank Purkiss	Head	22	Golf Green Keeper	Worker		Higham Heath									
			Alfred Purkiss	Head	52	Black Smith	Worker		Higham Heath									
			Merriam Purkiss	Wife	40				Higham Heath									
			Norman Purkiss	Son	2.0	Blacksmith	Worker		Higham Heath									
			Edmund Purkiss	Son	1.5	Blacksmith	Worker		Higham Heath									
			Katharine Purkiss	Son	1.3				Higham Heath									
			Robert F. Purkiss	Son	0.8				Higham Heath									
			John Purkiss	Son	0.1				Higham Heath									

By that time he had married Merriam (spelling varies) Purkess and has had four children. We know that they were married in 1892 in New Forest so we can say by that time he was firmly established in England. Interestingly, Frank Purkess is listed as golf greenkeeper and living with them – we hazard a guess that he was his brother-in-law.

He was appointed professional at Rochester Golf club in 1896 where he remained according to this report until 1912. In the 1911 census he is shown as living at The Bungalow at Lower Higham and that his son Robert was an assistant golf professional presumably to his father.

No one else must be included.		Age		Married		Children		Profession		Employment		Where Born		Remarks	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Robert F Walker	Head	47	Married	14	5	5	Self Professional	Professional	Worker	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	
2	Merriam Walker	Wife	36	Married	14	5	5				Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	
3	Robert Walker	Son	15	Single				Assistant	Assistant	Worker	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	
4	Ethel Walker	Daughter	11	Single							Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	
5	Ronald Walker	Son	1	Single							Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	Higham Heath	

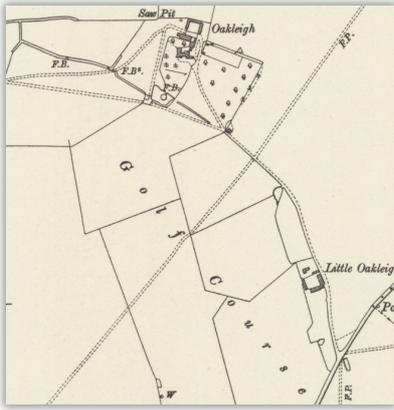
Rochester Golf Club (Oakleigh Course), Higham. (1891 - 1924)

The club was founded in 1891. Originally a 16-hole course at Oakleigh Farm, Higham. The course was extended to 18-holes in late 1892, it was reduced to nine-holes by its closure in the early 1920s. The club was occasionally referred to as the Oakleigh Golf Club. The Rochester Club at Higham was listed in the 1924 Golfer's Handbook but it's probable that the course was closed by this time.

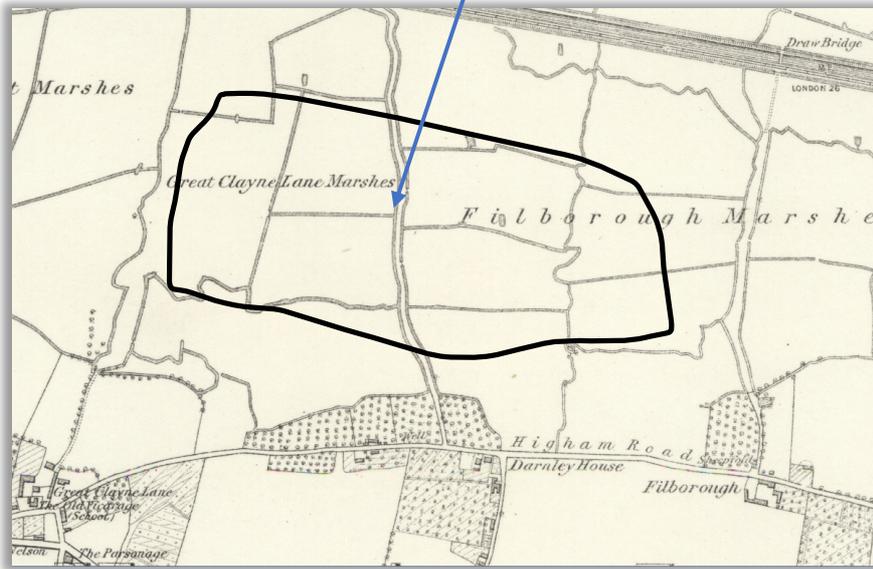
There was doubt about the lease renewal in 1919 and the club needed to find a new home. This resulted in the formation of the Rochester & Cobham Park Golf Club in 1920. This course is situated on the Deer Park at Cobham Hall.

The professionals were; C Crawford 1891/2, G Pearson* 1892 - 96, R F Walker 1896 – 1912, E N Kettley 1913 and A R Andrews 1914.

*Again here it seems that he succeeded G Pearson as professional. If we are correct about his brother George being in the neighbouring golf course of Gravesend it is highly likely that they kept very much in touch.



Gravesend G.C.



Robert was attached to Rochester golf club until 1912 but we do not know where he went then. The outbreak of the first world war was likely to reduce the employment prospects. He would have been 48 at this point but he seems to have stayed in the Bungalow until his wife died in 1951 in Chatham and Robert himself died on 6th January 1954 at what appears to be the home of his daughter Janet Fenwick Taylor at 66 Parrock Street in Gravesend.

WALKER Robert Finnick of 66 Parrock-street Gravesend **Kent** died 6 January 1954 Probate **London** 6 March to Janet Finnick Taylor married woman. Effects £228 9s. 4d.