

John Rattray and the original Rules of Golf Leith Rules Golf Society

Leith Rules Golf Society is a voluntary organisation established in 2002 with the aim “of increasing the recognition of Leith Links as the home of the earliest recorded rules of golf and one of the game’s prominent early locations”. The Society is currently working to raise the profile further of Leith’s significant contribution to the world-wide game of golf by siting a larger than life-size bronze statue of John Rattray by renowned Fife sculptor David Annand (www.davidannand.co.uk) in a landscaped setting on the original first hole on Leith Links. The statue has been cast and plans are well advanced for its erection on Leith Links. A visualisation of the erected statue is shown below:



A short film has been made on the original Rules, the Rattray story and the statue project. This can be seen on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nDmea7UNms>. Further funding is still sought and donations can be made to www.justgiving.com/jrsf. The John Rattray Statue Fund is a constituted fund of Foundation Scotland Charity No SC022910

John Rattray was a surgeon and a member of the Company of Edinburgh golfers, playing on Leith Links - it was 1744. He and his fellow golfers appealed to the Town Council to provide a Silver Club to be awarded annually to the winner of an “Open Golf Competition”. Edinburgh magistrates agreed to provide such a club on condition written rules were drawn up – these 13 first written rules of golf were signed on 7th March 1744 by John Rattray and recorded in the City archives. Rattray won the competition becoming “Captain of the Golf”. The idea of an “Open golf competition” was born and these original rules signed for play in Leith form the basis of the modern game.

Rattray won again in 1745 but that year he was called to serve as Surgeon-General to Bonnie Prince Charlie’s forces and was captured at Culloden. Golf came to his rescue when his golfing partner, Lord Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord President of the Court of Session gained his release.

Leith Rules Golf Society
www.leith-rules-golf.co.uk
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