



The approach to the green on the testing par-4 2nd

## COURSE OF THE MONTH: Crowborough Beacon

East Sussex is blessed with more than its fair share of golf clubs founded when Victoria was still on the throne, with some dozen such establishments in total. Among them is Crowborough Beacon, where the first tee shot on the then nine-hole course was struck in October 1895.

The course is a tremendous heathland test with a wonderful mix of holes, some significant changes in elevation, especially early on, and a clubhouse terrace view to die for looking out over the opening and closing holes then on to the Sussex Downs some 20 miles distant. Most

locals would rate it as one of the top three or four courses in the county and it is to all intents and purposes an archetypal traditional members' club.

But the archetypal traditional membership model has become less appealing for some and, with a typical four-figure south-east

subscription, the club has been finding it harder to maintain a full quota in recent years. This is not an uncommon problem as some golfers begin to question whether they can really justify such a substantial outlay for the amount of golf they know they'll be playing.

Words: Jeremy Ellwood | Photography: Kevin Murray

So, despite 116 years of heritage, the club is adapting to the times and testing the water with a more flexible scheme this year for those still hankering after membership, but unwilling to pay over the odds for the golf they're able to play. For £495, flexible members will get 450 credits to redeem at varying rates. Midweek afternoon rounds in winter will cost 15 credits, while peak summer weekend rates will

be 28, so a minimum of 16 full rounds. But with summer twilight rates from just 15 credits, most flexible members should average 20 to 25 rounds for their money.

The scheme will run alongside traditional full membership, plus a brave new take on country membership – 'County Membership' – at £599 for those living at least 15 miles away. The club is hoping these will prove

attractive alternatives for today's time-strapped, cost-sensitive golfer who wants to belong to a club but doesn't want to be £1,000+ poorer for the privilege. It will be interesting to see how successful this bold venture for a traditional club proves to be and whether other clubs of a similar stature follow suit as golf's membership dynamics continue to evolve.

### ESSENTIALS

**ADDRESS:** Crowborough Beacon Golf Club, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1UJ

**T:** 01892 661511 **W:** cbgc.co.uk  
**STATS:** par 71, sss 71, 6,319 yards  
**GF:** £40wd per round, £45we per round; £60 per day

**DID YOU KNOW:** Dr Alister MacKenzie was enlisted to re-design eight holes in the 1920s.