



# A WEE NIP

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Newsletter of the Society of Hickory Golfers • Autumn 2011 • [www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com)





## Down the Fairway... from the President

What a year 2011 has been for the Society of Hickory Golfers! We've established a new website which is considerably more user friendly. Our membership continues to increase, not only in the U.S. but throughout Europe and Australia. In fact, a member from Brisbane, Australia, Alan Grieve, traveled to French Lick and left with the U.S. Hickory Open trophy in hand.

With the conclusion of the Mid Pines Hickory Open, the 2011 SoHG season of sanctioned tournaments has come to an end. This was the inaugural year for the Mountain Valley Spring Water-sponsored Championship Series and from the comments we received, it was most successful. Congratulations to Rick Woeckener for winning the MVSW Championship Trophy and to Max Hollon who won the Senior Division.

The SoHG board initiated the Championship Series to increase participation in the various tournaments around the country. We're happy to report that well over 150 players participated in at least one of the four events. A survey that was conducted after the USHO revealed that the overwhelming reason for participating in the tournament was to renew old friendships and establish new ones with like minded hickory players. This is what it's all about!

We want to thank all of the sponsors who helped us promote and conduct the competitions - Tad Moore Golf, Louisville Golf, Woodford Reserve Distillery and, of course, Mountain Valley Spring Water. Your support is greatly appreciated.

We are very pleased with this year's Mike Brown Award honorees - Roger Hill and Ralph Livingston III.

## A WEE NIP

Autumn 2011

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Contributors

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For information about the Society of Hickory Golfers, visit the website at: www.hickorygolfers.com

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## Note to Members!!

In order for the SoHG to communicate effectively with members both via email and snail mail, correct database records are necessary. Please visit your member dashboard on the website and check to see that your information is correct and up to date. Also, be aware that when checking privacy settings, you may inadvertently hide your data from not only other members, but yourself as well. Use the privacy settings judiciously.

DOWN THE FAIRWAY...CONT.

Livingston III. They are deserving recipients of the Society of Hickory Golfers' highest honor. The contributions they have made to the promotion and enjoyment of hickory golf are incalculable. Well done and thanks for all of your help.

I want to thank all of those who have worked on and participated in the activities of the 2011 SoHG schedule. Hearty congratulations to all of the winners. Next year you'll have to prove yourself again with even stiffer competition.

To all members, have a Joyous Holiday Season and Happy New Year.

Chris Deinlein, President  
Society of Hickory Golfers

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2011-2012

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## FROM THE EDITOR

The growth of modern hickory golf means higher numbers of event participants who are playing with both replica hickory clubs as well as pre-1935 originals. This has led to a hearty dialogue about what equipment should be considered "appropriate" for tournament play.

The topic has been with the SoHG since its founding in 2000. Its founding members struggled with it then as they do now. It was, of course, inevitable, that as the sport grew, modern club makers who love hickory golf would apply their skills to the creation of clubs that evoke the older weapons. They have at their disposal modern methods of creating club heads and shafts that result in sturdy, very consistently weighted clubs.

That these are beautiful clubs are not in dispute. Proponents of original clubs often feel that the "instant playability" of modern clubs diminishes the "romance" of their earlier cousins. Plus, they say, such modern clubs could be an advantage in tournament play.

The latter point has not been proven conclusively, nor has it been studied enough to enlighten us on the point; the first, however, cannot be lightly dismissed.

Our article on equipment in this issue

of the Wee Nip attempts an historical perspective. Rather than laying the matter to rest, the article, we hope, will encourage a healthy rather than divisive dialogue.

We invite you to post comments about equipment, balls, anything that's on your mind to the Society's Facebook page as well as to the website under the article heading "Equipment Discussion - Thoughts and Comments."

(The Carolina Hickory Golf Association comment board has an ongoing discussion of the matter and is worth perusing.)

The SoHG's equipment chairman and other board directors welcome your comments and ideas. All are helpful as we chart a course to a productive and enjoyable future.

After digesting the more weighty meal on the program, we hope you'll enjoy the features on the Park family, exhibition matches and an interesting treatise on the making of gutta percha balls by Chris McIntyre.

See you on the course.

Jim Davis

## ON THE COVER

Golf illustrator A.B. Frost inked this image of an early match for Harper's Weekly, December 1897. The magazine's slogan was "A Journal of Civilization."

# Mike Brown Award honors Roger Hill, Ralph Livingston

Roger Hill and Ralph Livingston III, both of Grand Rapids, Mich., were honored with the Society of Hickory Golfers' annual Mike Brown award following the Mid Pines Hickory Open in Southern Pines, N.C.

The award was announced following the closing luncheon of the event. Neither man was present, though Hill was en route to Southern Pines in order to participate in the Hickory Grail, a British Golf Collectors Society fixture that followed the Mid Pines tournament.

Hill, who arrived moments after the luncheon concluded, said he was genuinely honored to receive the award. "I just want to say that, had Mike been here, he would have loved this trophy and would have tried to win it himself! For him, and for many of us, it is all about playing hickory golf with our friends and trying to get more people in on the fun. I'm really honored to have my name in association with his."

Though Livingston's health prevented him from traveling to receive the award, he expressed great excitement about the honor.

Hill and Livingston have long been associated with hickory golf, having started early as both professional colleagues and partners in golf collecting. They played in early Golf Collector Society tournaments and have both, in their ways, contributed a great deal to the growth and evolution of modern hickory golf.

Livingston has long been a proponent of collecting and playing authentic early clubs and was a founder of the Hickory Grail along with Dr. David Hamilton. He has brought many people into the game and is renowned for his knowledge of golf architecture and the playing characteristics of early hickory clubs, especially his beloved Tom Stewarts. He is also the author of an authoritative guide to the club

making expertise of Stewart.

Hill is a George Nicoll expert and the author of a book on the club maker from Leven, Scotland. He has long been a fixture himself at hickory golf events and is a past president of the Golf Collectors Society. His insights, genial nature and willingness to share his expertise have made him a valued friend for many on both sides of the Atlantic. He is regularly consulted for advice and guidance regarding the playing of hickory golf, club collecting and golf lore.

Both men are welcome additions to the Mike Brown "club" and well deserving of the honor. 🍷



FRANK BOUMPHREY, left, and Tad Moore, right, 2010 winners of the Mike Brown Award, present the award to 2011 co-winner Roger Hill. Ralph Livingston III is shown at left.



## Woeckener, Hollon are 2011 Championship Series victors



It was an exciting year for hickory golf's most competitive players as the inaugural Championship Series sponsored by Mountain Valley Spring Water unfolded during the year.

After the conclusion of the fourth event at Mid Pines, Rick Woeckener emerged to hoist the Open Division's champion's trophy, nipping Roger Andrews who was runner-up and Ben Hollerback who finished third. In the Open Reserve, Josh Fisher took first, followed by David Brown and Doug Floyd.

In the Senior Open Division, Max Hollon took champion honors followed by Eric Wagner at second and Bill Engelson in third. Mike Just was Senior Reserve champ, followed by Paul Dietz in second and John Green in third.

Woeckener and Fisher were aided by the fact that both men were able to attend all four CS events, which included the Southern 4-Ball Championship, the U.S. Hickory Open and the Heart of America. In the Senior competition, Wagner, Hollon and Engelson attended all four.

"It was evident throughout the season the building excitement about the Championship Series," said event sponsor Breck Speed. "There was a record turnout for the U.S. Hickory



2012 CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES WINNERS. SoHG President Chris Deinlein presents the Open and Senior Open trophies to Rick Woeckener, left and Max Hollon, right, following the banquet at the Mid Pines Hickory Open.

Open, a sold out Heart of America tournament, and a full capacity field at Mid Pines. Expansion to six tournaments in 2012 will add further geographic diversity and even more excitement."

### The expanded 2012 CS roster includes:

- The Southern 4-Ball Championship, April 19-21
- The Belvedere Hickory Open, June 21-23
- The Heart of America, July 13-15
- The U.S. Hickory Open, July 23-25
- The Mountain Valley Hickory Open, TBD (early October)
- The Mid Pines Hickory Open, Nov. 2-4

Tee it...



# Forward!

## Guidelines for selecting tees

Driver Distance	Recommended 18 Hole Yardages
275	6,700 - 6,900
250	6,200 - 6,400
225	5,800 - 6,000
200	5,200 - 5,400
175	4,400 - 4,600
150	3,500 - 3,700
125	2,800 - 3,000
100	2,100 - 2,300

golfers will experience an exciting, new approach to the game that will produce more enjoyment and elevate their desire to come back and play even more golf.

### The table above presents the PGA/USGA recommended guidelines for course length based upon driving distance

Just a glance at this table should make the point that most of us are probably playing from tees that are too far back. We at the Carolina Hickory Golf Association have been aware of this for quite some time and have been moving up to the forward tees to enhance the enjoyment of hickory golf. On the other hand, we still have a few relatively long hitters who wish to play courses at 6,000 yards or more.

It is a simple matter to properly adjust strokes when players are competing from different tees using the USGA Rules of Golf. Both the men's leagues at Pinehurst CC and Pine Needles/Mid Pines let players opt to play any tees they wish, so the Tee It Forward movement is gaining some traction, at least in the Pinehurst area.

If you agree with this concept, I urge you to make your views known to SoHG directors. It would be nice to see the SoHG align itself with the PGA and the USGA to promote the Tee It Forward program in sanctioned tournaments as well as in everyday play.

Let's all have more fun playing hickory golf. ☺

BY LANG WILLIE ENGELSON  
MEMBER, SOHG BOARD  
CAPTAIN, CAROLINA HICKORY GOLF ASSOCIATION

“Life is tough. It's tougher if you're stupid.”

Golf is tough. Hickory golf is tougher. Players of modern equipment are amused, bemused and bewildered by us and some might even think we are stupid. The most often heard question from them is, “Why?”

So, why do we play hickories? Simply put, hickory golf is more fun than modern golf. The endorphin rush resulting from a well-struck hickory shot is without peer. But, that pleasure is substantially diminished when one has to use a brassie off the tee, a long spoon shot from the fairway and a mashie niblick to reach the green on two-shot holes.

Although par is actually meaningless, the concept is so embedded in our golf culture that it becomes a critical benchmark. If we are to retain those excited new hickory devotees, we need to maintain that initial enjoyment at a high enough level to keep them coming back again and again.

Earlier this year, Barney Adams, founder of Adams Golf, introduced what has become the PGA's “Tee it Forward” program. The central concept is to encourage players to play courses at an overall length aligned with their average driving distances so that

# Traditional course set-up well suited to hickory play

BY MIKE DEVRIES

(Editors' note: Mike DeVries is a golf architect whose designs include the Kingsley Club and Greywalls in Michigan.)

Certainly, the Tee It Forward concept has movement, as the USGA and others are backing it, but how many golfers will really adhere to it is another thing. We see so many players wanting to play “all of the golf course” just like they do on the PGA Tour, even if they shoot 115! That is also one of the interesting things about golf; everyone plays the same equipment and can measure themselves against the best, since it is an individual sport where you compete against the course without someone trying to knock you down, interfere, etc. Because of this, golf also has the best handicapping system to compare golfers or equal out the competition.

In hickory golf, I think the players are more about the entire experience, not just playing their best and beating their opponent. Sure, we are competitive, but hickory golf goes beyond that into an experiential element that separates it from modern golf and sports.

When you look at the equipment we are using, discarded generations ago in favor of better “tools ill-suited to the object of advancing the ball,” you begin to understand that it is more than just the battle against the ball, course, and competitors. We are looking for that one “true” strike where we visualize a specific shot and then execute it. Hickory is not about a picture perfect plane, takeaway, turn, and contact with the ball for a Tiger-esque trajectory – those shots are nice, but not what I seek with hickory golf.

Instead, it is seeing a difficult lie, given a thin blade that will only allow for a running shot, but seeing an opening between the hazards in front of you that will provide space to get the ball going and hopefully reach it target and, then, executing what you visualized. It is that ethereal “Golf in the Kingdom moment” where you are one with the essence of the game. Doesn't every hickory golfer have a “Billy Baroo” club like Judge Smails (Ted Knight) does in Caddyshack?

Hickory goes back to the origins of the game when there was only one tee per hole. It was rare to have more than one set of tees and men, women, and children all played from the same spot. I like the

simplicity of that and think it goes along with hickory golf.

As more people become involved with hickory golf, we will see more big hitters capable of distancing themselves from other regular players. That is fine and that is a good reason for having gross and net divisions at events while everyone still plays the same tee at events. For regular play, I think it is quite valid to move up to a tee that allows you more diversity in shot length – that is certainly more fun and helps to mix it up a bit.

Older courses were always more open, with wider corridors that emphasized placement and angle of play for the typical running shot on firm turf and that is why hickory players seem to enjoy older courses that were originally designed and built for such a game.

My design philosophy, as well as some other modern architects, is based in the traditional style of the game that rewards executing a more difficult shot or challenging a hazard in order to have an easier shot for the next. The 12th at the Mines (a DeVries course in Grand Rapids, Mich.) does favor the left side and a shot just over the left hand approach bunker that bounces in to the green for those that cannot loft a short iron into the flag – although there is little danger on the drive, the further to the right one goes on the drive, the narrower one's margin of error to run the ball through the gauntlet and safely onto the putting green. ☺

## Welcome, new SoHG members

There have been 65 new members since April 15. Welcome one and all!

Claudia Aaron, San Antonio, Texas  
Tim Alpaugh, Randolph, N.J.  
John Andree, Livonia, Mich.  
Mike Antonio, Omaha, Neb.  
Gordon J. Beggs, Cleveland Hts, Ohio  
Paul Bessler, West Harrison, Ind.  
Walter Bills, Royal Oak, Mich.  
Robert Birman, Prospect, Ky.  
Robert Britt, St. Louis, Mo.  
Richard Bullock, Clearwater, Fla.  
Lisa Carr, Alberta, Canada / Cajon, Calif.

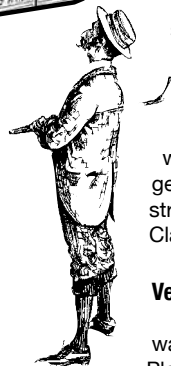
Ray Caterino, South Dennis, Mass.  
Hal Coward, Sugar Land, Texas  
Michael W. Curran, Syracuse, Utah  
Darris Doughman, Council Bluffs, Iowa  
David Dunigan, Lincoln, Neb.  
Michael J. Fay, West Hartford, Conn.  
Brad Friberg, Hot Springs, Ark.  
Wes Feudner, Warner Robins, Ga.  
Dave Gamet, St. Joseph, Mo.  
Paul Gaynor, Seymour, Conn.  
Rob Goodfellow, Fort Smith, Ark.  
Matthias Habisohn, Lower Austria, Austria  
J. David Hart, Wichita, Kan.  
Mike Heil, Gnadenhutten, Ohio  
Ben Hollerbach, Chamblee, Ga.  
Joe Hollerbach, Southlake, Texas  
Dan Hurwitz, Ada, Mich.  
Jorgen Isberg, Ostergotland, Sweden

Bob Jackson, Hampton, Ga.  
Ken Jackson, Keller, Texas  
Tomas Johansson, Vasta Gotaland, Sweden  
Kody A. Kirchoff, Lithia, Fla.  
Michael Langrehr, Williamsburg, Va.  
John Lentz, Shepherdsville, Ky.  
Andrew Lewis, Chicago, Ill.  
Warren Lutz, Piedmont, S.C.  
Paul Manning, Troy, Va.  
Paul Mattocks, El Dorado, Ark.  
Gary R. McNutt, Presto, Pa.  
Tom Mehigan, McLean, Va.  
Robert A. Metz, Lawrenceburg, Ind.  
Jason Miller, Clarksburg, Ont., Canada  
Paul Milner, Jackson, Miss.  
Jeremy Moe, Lavaca, Ark.  
Myron Morkis, Meshoppen, Pa.  
Ken Ogden, Alexandria, Va.

Jean-Louis Panigel, Versailles, France  
George Phinney, Jr, Ripton, Vt.  
Hap Pocras, Omaha, Neb.  
Jeffrey Porter, Charlevoix, Mich.  
Rick Rechter II, Hopkinsville, Ky.  
William Scheben, Crestview Hills, Ky.  
John C. Simons, Scarborough, N.Y.  
S. Stephen Spring, Baton Rouge, La.  
Kenneth Stavisky, Burlington, Vt.  
Tim Strohshine, Monclova, Ohio  
Art Techner, Chattanooga, Tenn.  
Greg Whitmer, Charlottesville, Va.  
Chris Wiemers, Omaha, Neb.  
David R. Wilson, Providence, R.I.  
Doug Wilson, Batesville, Ind.  
Randall Winslow, Sacramento, Calif.  
James Yarbrough, Greenville, S.C.  
Peter Young, Rockville, Md.

Coron	64 73 157	Ron Beatt	65 75 140	James Eise	66 76 142	David Ellis	67 77 144	Jonas Fack	68 78 146	Clayton	69 79 148	Bob Miller	70 80 150	Chris Searcy	71 81 152	Greg Vogelsang	72 82 154	Tom Morris	73 83 156	John Hutton	74 84 158	Steve Somers	75 85 160	John Hutton	76 86 162	John Hutton	77 87 164	John Hutton	78 88 166	John Hutton	79 89 168	John Hutton	80 90 170
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# 2011 tournament results



Here's a concise wrap-up of several of this year's prominent hickory events. For more details and photos on many of the tournaments, visit [www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com) and click on "Tournament Results" under "Tournaments."

## BGCS Welsh Hickory Championship

The first BGCS major of the year was played on April 10 at Aberdovey Golf Club in mid-Wales. Claes Kvist from Sweden won the title with 39 points. Robin Shuker, Captain of Aberdovey, won the Silver Medal with 37 points. Swedes Jonas Fack and Erik Brandstrom tied for the Scratch Medal on 80 gross, with Fack coming out ahead on a tiebreaker.

## Southern 4-Ball Hickory Championship

April 28-30 brought in the Southern Four-Ball Hickory Championship on the Highland Park Golf Course in Birmingham, Ala. Twenty-four teams participated. Overall winners were Pat Boyd and Ben Hollerbach with 136, an event record. Mike Just and Josh Fischer won the low net with 120. Second place was taken by Bill Sewell and Doug Floyd. Second place net went to Greg Vogelsang and Chris Searcy.

## Central England Hickory Championship

The second BGCS major, the Central England Hickory Championship, was held May 23 at Coxmoor Golf Club in the Nottingham area. Warren Latham won the Tony Thorpe Trophy with 30 points. Keith Bilbie won the BGCS Seniors Hickory Trophy with 28 points. Society Captain Richard Atherton won the John Hanna Trophy with 27 points.

## Scottish Hickory Championship

The third BGCS major, the Scottish Hickory Championship was played at Gullane No. 3 on May 27. Ron Beatt won with a net 63, beating Willie Tanner's 64 and Bill Engelson's 67. Lang Willie and partner Jorgen Isberg won the morning's nine-hole foursomes at Musselburgh Old Links with a net 33.

## Berlin Hickory Championship

On June 2, 52 players came together at Germany's oldest still existing golf club, the

Golf- und Landclub Berlin-Wannsee (founded 1895 as Berlin Golf Club) to play an 18-hole greensome. Boris Lietzow and Christoph Meister finished as the best net-amateur score winning the Miller-trophy with 33 stableford points. Scottish-born professional Iain Forrester and Klaus Sasse won the gross prize with 27 Stableford points.

On June 3, golfers played an 18-hole stroke play event for the Berlin Hickory Open Championship (BHOC) (gross) and the Percy Alliss Trophy (net). The BHOC title for professionals went to Iain Forrester with 77. Ladies amateur went to Jessica Jensen with 91 and the gentlemen's title to Warayu Melzer with 82 strokes. The Percy Alliss trophy was won by Claudia Splieth with 70.

## Vermont Hickory Open

On June 3-5, the Vermont Hickory Open was played on the Copley Country Club. Play sets limited to seven clubs. A local reporter, Eva Sollberger, joined the golfers and filed a video report that can be seen at the following website:

[http://www.hickorygolfers.com/vermont-hickory-open-media-attention\\_172\\_a.aspx](http://www.hickorygolfers.com/vermont-hickory-open-media-attention_172_a.aspx)

Greg Vogelsang took the Open Division with a two-day 157 over Brad Gregory's 160. Bob Titterton won the Reserve Division with 141, nipping Matt Dodds' 143. Senior Division was won by Chris Gilgun with 135 over runner-up Paul Gaynor with 151. The Super-Senior Division was won by Patrick Kennedy with 179 over Dave Sellers who turned in 187. Sharon Wawrzaniak won the Ladies title with 272.

## National Hickory Championship

The 14th National Hickory Championship, June 8-9, at the Oakhurst Links in West Virginia was played under warm and dry conditions. Bobby Sly of Kingston, Ont., took the Kameika Cup for a second time with a two-day total of 159, two shots clear of perennial challenger and eight-time NHC champ Randy Jensen (Omaha, Neb.) and Jack Busic (Clemmens, N.C.); and three shots clear of Tampa, Fla. pro and two-time NHC winner Mike Stevens.

In the Reserve Division, Fred Smeltzer (Camdenton, Mo.) took the trophy with a net 140, six shots ahead of runner-up Hamp Munsey of Greensboro, N.C. Caty Goidel (Signal Mountain, Tenn.) was women's champ for the eighth time with 141. Chuck Cole (Centerville, Ohio) was Sporting Division champion with 78.

## Austrian Hickory Championship

The first international Austrian Hickory Championship was played June 11 on Austria's historic Golf-Club Salzkammergut, Bad Ischl. Amateur players from Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands and of course Austria came together at Golf-Club Salzkammergut. Markus Kummerle of Germany won the first Austrian Hickory Championship with 86 beating local players Gottlieb Peer and Andreas Wieder by one stroke each.

The net prize, the Heimo Hrovat Trophy, remembering our fellow Austrian hickory golfer who died much too early, was won by local player Günter Gaderbauer with a net 66 strokes over Christoph Meister and Robert Kaubek.

## Belvedere Hickory Open

The 6th annual Belvedere Hickory Open, June 23-25, was nearly washed away by heavy rains. Fred Muller, head pro at Crystal Downs in Frankfort, Mich., took championship honors. Rick Frank was runner up. In the Sam Snead Flight (59 and under, gross), Dennis Joy prevailed followed by Scott Staudacher. In the Tommy Armour Flight (59 and under, net), the winner was Robert Caston, runner up was Todd Collins. In the Walter Hagen Flight (60 and over, gross), the winner was Chuck McMullin, runner up was Dr. Jim Gels. In the Horton Smith Flight (60 and over, net) the winner was Roger Hill, runner up was Jim Davis. In the Gene Sarazen Flight (70 and over), the gross winner was Bob Sippell, with Bill Lawson taking the net trophy.

## Finnish Hickory Championships

On July 2, the Finnish Hickory Championships were held at Pickala Golf Club, about 35 km west of Helsinki. A small but strong Swedish team swept almost all the honors. Jörgen Isberg won with a 77, eight shots clear of second place. As Jörgen also had the best net results, he also won the Finnish Hickory Open trophy, the oldest hickory trophy in Finland. The ladies champion was Swedish golfer Britta Nord who returned to Finland to defend her 2010 title.

## U.S. Hickory Open

Played July 11-13 on the Donald Ross Course at French Lick Resorts in French Lick, Ind. Alan Grieve of Queensland, Aus. shot rounds of 75 – 75 for a 36-hole total of 150 and a 5-shot victory over Rick Woeckener from Fredericksburg, Va. A record field of 81 players from 27 states, as well as Canada and Australia, braved record heat to compete in the fourth U.S. Hickory Open. Mike Just placed first in the Senior Division with 167 followed by Max Hollon with 169. Dr. David Brown scored an ace on No. 16, a 133-yard par three. It was the first ace scored in USHO competition.

## All American Hickory Open

The All American Hickory Open, July 22-23, was played under record heat at the Downers Grove Golf Club in Chicago. It was a first-time event organized by SoHG member Connor Lewis. The Open Division was won by Jim Wilhelm in a one-hole playoff over Randy Jensen. The pair each shot a two-day total of 158. In the Senior Division, Terry Howarth prevailed with 173, one shot clear of runner-up Greg Smith at 174. In the Reserve Division, Connor Lewis took honors with a net 146. Runner-up was Mike Henderson with 147. In team play, the Hickory Golf Association's Bill Reed, Russ Fisher, Gary Gunderson and Joe Trefilek turned in 147. Second place went to the Downer Grove team of Marius Kucinas, Paul DiTomo, Ramesh Gupta, Dominic Palazzolo and Dick Pinto who shot 157.

## Heart of America Hickory Championship

The Heart of America was played at the Happy Hollow Club in Omaha, Neb. on July 29-30. Chris Wiemers of Omaha, Neb. took the Open Division trophy with a sterling 74, followed by Mike Antonio, also of Omaha, with a 79. Rick Woeckener turned in an 80. Senior Division winner was John Hutton of Lakewood, Colo. with a 79. Second was James Max Hollon with 82. Jim

Killips of Omaha, and David Dunigan of Lincoln, Neb., tied for third with 84.

## German Hickory Championship

The German Hickory Championship 2011 was played on Sunday, July 31 at Bad Wildungen Golf-Club in Central Germany. The 18-hole stroke play championship was open to amateurs and professional golfers. Britta Nord (93) from Stockholm won the Ladies title for the third consecutive time while last year's Professional champion Perry Somers (79) repeated his victory, beating Iain Forrester and Andrew Gauld. Boris Lietzow won the Amateur title.

The Ladies net trophy for the Dr.-Jürgen-Kienle trophy was won by Polish player Sofia Lelakowska from Warszawa with 65 followed by Petra Dudzus from Berlin-Wannsee (71). In the gentlemen section, Boris Lietzow won with 74.

## Foxburg Hickory Championship

The event was played Aug. 11-12 at the Foxburg Country Club, built in 1887. The 2011 Open Champion is Jim Wilhelm (Canada) with a score of 172, runner-up in the Open Division was JW McMath (Ohio) at 175, third was Tim Flynn (Kentucky) at 177. Senior Open Champion is Terry Howarth (Pennsylvania) with 178, runner-up was David "Dog" Ellis (Ohio) at 180, third was Bob Reheard (Wisconsin) coming in with 184. In the Reserve Division, Mike Just finished first followed by Paul Dietz (Canada), and Ron Taylor (Pennsylvania). In the Fownes Division (post-1900) the champion was Gary McNutt (Pennsylvania), runner-up was defending two-time champion Barry Markowitz (North Carolina), third was local favorite and Foxburg CC member, Don Smith (Pennsylvania). Three youngsters from the local First Tee program participated as well.

## Hickory Kummel Cup

The 2nd annual Kummel Cup was contested Aug. 26-28 over the Links course at The Golf Courses of Lawsonia, Green Lake, Wisc. Jeff Guerard won the Championship division with a gross score 160. Chuck McMullin captured the Senior division championship with a gross score of 169. In the Reserve category, the winners were Rich Schmidt with 136 (Champion division), and Bill (Lang Willie) Engelson at 157 (Senior division). Second place finishers were Bill Ernst and Greg Smith in the Gross category, and Ray DeRoche and Tom Clements in the Reserve category. Jeff Guerard was also awarded the Champions medal in the Authentic/Pre-1930 low gross category.

## Scottish Hickory Open

The weather won this contest. Flash flooding cancelled this year's Scottish Hickory Open at the Royal Musselburgh GC in Prestonpans, East Lothian. Keep those hickories dry for next year.

## Iowa Hickory Classic

Held at the Hyperion Field Club in Des Moines, Iowa on Sept. 10, this event featured over 40 players and a total attendance of 60.

First place in the Ladies Division went to Cindy Austin of Omaha, Neb. followed by Chris Shanahan of Shelby, Neb. In the Scramble Division the Walter Hagen Flite Winners were Rives McBee, John Aussen, David Hart and Bob Miller; the Bobby Jones Flite Winners were Clayton

Copple, Peter Herrington and Ron Luster; the Francis Ouimet Flite Winners were Bob Jackson, John Jackson and Bill Reed.

First place in Open Medal Play went to Jeff Wendel with an 85 followed by Jordan Angell with 89. The Open Reserve winner was Chuck Howington with 78 followed by Dave Gamet also with 78. Senior Medal Play winner was John Hutton with 78, second place was Jim Carrothers with 82. Senior Reserve winner was Steve Krantz with 68, runner-up was David Dunigan with 71.

## C.B. Macdonald Challenge

The 8th annual C.B. Macdonald Tournament and the Eastern Canadian Hickory Championship at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. took place Sept. 10-11. The tournament field included eight ladies, eight super-seniors, 20 seniors and 20 "youngsters" in the open division for a record field of 56 players. In the U.S. vs. Canada team play, the U.S. (with the help of several players "loaned" from the Canadian side) won 17 of the 28 matches. Team USA won the CB Macdonald Challenge with a score of 32 points to 24.

In the Eastern Canadian Hickory Championship, each player played nine holes of pre-1900 golf. Alison Spouge lead the ladies with a 48. Bill Turville lead the super senior division with a 41. Low score of the day was 39 for Bobby Sly.

This was followed on the second day by 18 holes of medal play using post-1900 equipment. Brian Schuman had the low round of the day – a 74! Sly was close behind with a 76. Both finished regulation play with 115. Sly won in a one-hole playoff.

Ladies' Division Champion was Alison Spouge. The Super Senior Division winner was William Turville. The Senior Division Champion was Gary McNutt. The Open Division Champion was Bob Sly in a playoff with Brian Schuman.

## Dutch Int'l Hickory Championship

The second edition of the Dutch Open was again played on the historic, private, family owned golf course "the Ullerberg" on Sept. 24. The competitors played in three divisions for the Waller trophy.

Hickory players came from all over the world – Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Croatia, France, Scotland and Australia.

Swede Michael Eden won the Handicap section. From Germany, Sabine Oelmann won the ladies section with a gross 90. Perry Somers from Australia defended his men's title successfully with 77.

## Mountain Valley Hickory Open

Hardscrabble Country Club in Fort Smith, Ark. was the venue Oct. 1-2 for the Mountain Valley Hickory Open. Jeremy Moe won for a record fourth time over a quality field of amateurs and pros. His total was an even par 140 over a testing 6,400-yard Perry Maxwell course. Low Amateur was Arkansas Golf Hall of Fame member Bobby Baker. Baker, playing in his third hickory tournament, shot a respectable 7 over par for two days. The Senior Championship was won by professional Darrell Shelton playing out of the Country Club of Little Rock. Shelton, shooting two rounds in the mid 70's, edged out first day leader and multiple title winner John Berggren of Houston, Texas.

## World Hickory Open

The 2011 WHO, played at Craigiellaw in Scotland, was won by Lloyd Saltman of Archerfield with a 156 total. Second was Shaun McAllister of Craigiellaw with 162. Net champion was Mike Redferne of North Downs with 150 followed by Jörgen Isberg of Sweden with 161. In the team competition, J. Still, R. Morris and G. Wilson took honors with 68; followed by D. Kirkwood, W. Tanner and C. Sinclair with 69 (playoff).

## CHGA Hickory Haggis Cup

The Haggis Cup, a match play championship for the Carolina Hickory Golf Association, was played Oct. 22-23 on the Ross course at Southern Pines CC. Jay Mickle is the 2011 champ with a two-day total of 27.5 points. He wins the gold medal and the cup until next October. Hugh Menzies took runner-up in a chip-off with Mike Henderson.

## Interstate Championship

The fourth annual Interstate competition was played Nov. 4-6 on the Old Kinderhook course in Camdenton, Mo. Seven states were represented in the 17 Teams in the men's competition, and two in the three teams in the ladies division.

Men's' State Winners were: Overton/Piffer, 83 points, for Iowa; Baird/Murphy, 79 points, for Illinois; and D & J Gamet, 78 points for Missouri.

Ladies' State Winners were: Lurlene and Cindy, 175, for Missouri; Debs and Sherry, 205; and Joyce and Chris, 217.

## Mid Pines Hickory Open

Played Nov. 5-6 on the Mid Pines course in Southern Pines, N.C. Winner in the Donald Ross Division was Fred Muller with 157, followed by Kelly Miller and Roger Andrews with 158. In the Julius Boros Division (net) the winner was Richard Schmidt with 146, followed by Jonathan Broga with 147. In the Skip Alexander Division (60 and over), Rusty Wells won with 161 followed by Ken Holtz with 167. In the Old Tom Morris Division (net), William Stewart won with 135 followed by Max Hollon and Jim Davis with 137. Bill Engelson and Jonathan Broga won the Bobby Jones (father/son) Division. In the Ladies competition, Barbara Kopec finished first followed by Tien Panigel.

## 7th Hickory Grail

A fixture of the BGCS, the Grail was contested Nov. 8-9 this year in the U.S. at the Dormie Club in Pinehurst, N.C. Captains William Farmer of the U.S. and David Kirkwood of the U.K. led teams of 16 players each to contest for the Grail trophy over a very challenging Crenshaw-Coore course and +12 stimpmeter greens. It was the homefield advantage of the U.S. and some stellar play that saw the U.S. side prevail 14-10 to recapture the trophy. The 8th Hickory Grail is scheduled to be played on the Walton Heath GC of Surrey, Enland in 2013.



# When it comes to Equipment it's all in the bag

## Originals, replicas... the question of what's best for modern hickory golf has been with the SoHG since its beginning

*Editor's note: The following discussion about original and replica equipment is followed by additional articles from modern hickory club makers and commentary from SoHG members.*

BY JIM DAVIS

The discussion about original equipment and reproductions dates back to the early days of the Society of Hickory Golfers. It rises and falls with the times, surfacing, as it did in late summer with a question posted on Facebook – “What’s the deal with replica clubs? Are these OK for play in SoHG events?” At its heart, the question involves two different, but not entirely opposing, perspectives.

One arises from the world of golf collecting. In its early days in the 1970s, the Golf Collectors Society was an energetic and growing group of men and women who would meet to trade items across the golfing spectrum, from tees and books to clubs and ceramics. Occasionally, the members would get out those old clubs they traded and hit ‘em around a neighboring course. These “hickory hackers” were all in fun. No one ever thought anything serious would come of it. Well, not everyone.

There were a handful of serious players who did not like to think that they were “hacking,” but rather playing for the best results possible. The more enthusiastic among them began playing their hickories more often, at their home clubs and on other occasions. These players, most notably Ralph Livingston III, were the real beginnings of modern hickory golf.

Very naturally, players began to grow fond of one club or another and began an earnest search for additional clubs with similar playing characteristics. One man went after Stewarts, another for Gibsons, still another for Nicolls...some after local pros or specific companies.... and so was born the playing collector. It was a natural progression for many players to put away the modern clubs and play hickory exclusively. With this, modern hickory play began to really gather momentum.

**Bernard Darwin wrote**, on more than one occasion, that it was the work of years to assemble a good, playable set of hickories.



**ORIGINAL CLUBS** in a variety of styles from several makers. These are all from the post-1900 era of hickory golf.

Just as today, you bought, sold, traded... until you got the set you wanted. You knew them. You knew the capabilities of each club and you built a relationship with it, much as Mike Brown did with that infamous mongrel mashie of his or Rob Ahlschwede’s Frankenstein driver, or Randy Jensen’s Wilsonian driving Brassie. In fact, so well did you know your clubs that, as Darwin said, if you lost or broke one, “you felt the loss of its society.”

As more players got into playing with hickories, the late ‘80s and throughout the ‘90s saw an explosion of club trading. Prices rose, more hickory golf events were added. Champions such as Jensen, Livingston and Jay Harris came to the fore as “experts” on the matter of golf with hickory clubs. John Sherwood, the noted player/dealer/collector from the U.K., began to visit North American trade shows with hundreds of clubs in tow.

Around 1999-2000 a rules snafu at a GCS event led to the birth of the Society of Hickory Golfers, whose organizers wished to codify rules for modern hickory play. “We wished to level the playing field,” as cofounder Roger Hill put it. The newly formed body put into place standards for equipment, and tournament play. They took steps to promote the sport and to assist new entrants to the sport “in discovering the playing characteristics of wood shaft golf clubs,” according to its mission statement. One of the fundamental questions at that first meeting of the SoHG’s founders was the issue of reproduction clubs for tournament play.

Livingston, who was on that equipment committee, is a purist at heart who favors playing with original clubs. Still, he voted in favor of allowing replicas.

“I thought that replicas would serve as a stepping stone to guys getting original clubs,” he says. “What the game is all about is recreating the golf of that era and learning what it can teach you.

I’ve learned a lot about golf and architecture from trying many different clubs. I don’t know what the replica players are getting out of it.”

Intended or not, the SoHG’s decision to allow modern reproductions sent a message that it welcomed all players of hickory golf, that the clubs were of secondary consideration as long as they met certain agreed upon standards with regard to age and authenticity of originals and, in the case of reproductions, that these faithfully adhered to the playing characteristics and appearance of the originals upon which they were based.

In fact, Livingston was adamant upon this point. “I wanted replica makers to submit their clubs so that we could see they were exact, down to the thousands of an inch,” he says.

That is why the Society formed its Equipment Committee, to oversee and rule as to whether clubs meet the guidelines that are in place. That committee has the responsibility of keeping the modern hickory game true to the intentions of its founders. Members of the committee are selected based on their knowledge of hickory era clubs and club makers, their familiarity with hickory play and competition, their sense of fairness and their ability to make decisions in an unbiased fashion. The committee is expected to gather information from many sources, carefully consider that information and recommend a decision for the “good of the modern hickory game.”

**As hickory golf expanded**, more tournaments arose, their directors looking to the SoHG for guidance. Regional groups gained more members. Now, in 2011, we have a vigorous Society, a calendar full of events and more people joining the hickory ranks every day, many of them playing reproduction clubs. They may have been introduced to the sport by a friend or at a tournament. They ask how to find a set of hickories. Without years of collecting experience to back them up, they are unsure about how to find old equipment, more importantly, how to evaluate what they do find.

For such golfers, reproductions offer a readily available point of entry. Lacking the experience of the collector, or the time and desire to search for original clubs, the hickory newbie can go to the best hickory club makers of this era and come away with a set of weapons that meet SoHG



**MODERN SET** of George Nicoll clubs made by St. Andrews Golf Co.

standards. In support of this view, it is often argued that a new golfer in 1920 would not look for clubs from 100 years ago, let alone 20. He would go to the sporting goods store and be fitted with the best possible set he could afford to start enjoying the game, the same way the modern golfer playing modern hickory clubs does today.

Tad Moore, Louisville Golf and, in the U.K., St. Andrews Golf Co. are in the business of handcrafting reproduction clubs. Most of these clubs are created to exactly resemble clubs of the earlier day. They are painstakingly assembled and given, as much as is possible, the same characteristics of those earlier



**REPLICA OF A TOM MORRIS LONG NOSE PUTTER** made by Tad Moore Hickory Classics.

clubs. No one would argue that these are fine clubs, and make handsome, beautiful and strong play clubs.

Do reproduction clubs provide an unfair advantage over those who play with originals? This has yet to be proven. Most hickory golfers agree that, while the heads are important, it’s the shaft that makes the big difference. Finding really good shafts today is more difficult than it was 100 years ago, but not impossible.

Jensen, who has made a thorough study of shafts and writes about them in his book “Playing Hickory Golf” (Airlie Hall Press, 2008) explains that a hickory tree today can be as good as a hickory tree was in 1920, although there was more first growth wood available then. “The real difference,” he says, “is in the processing of the wood.

“The premium wood was split down the grain line by hand with an axe, not sectioned with a mill saw at a random angle to the grain, which makes the shaft liable to warping. The Auchterlonie and Forgan shafts were virtually always exceptional.

“Today, as club makers, we need to take the same care in producing our shafts that Forgan and Auchterlonie did back then. If we do this, our reproduction shafts can be great. I know. I have a number of great hickory shafts produced in the last two years.”

Still, Jensen says, reproduction club makers “have not (to my knowledge) made the extra effort at this point to achieve the quality of finished hickory shaft that was routinely available from the select premium club makers of the era.”

It would be interesting to persuade the USGA to hit a few balls on Iron Byron (its famous club testing machine) with original hickory clubs and a few with replica hickories – a “mashie on mashie” test to settle the question of shaft quality. But then, because wood is a living substance

with differences in every piece, how could we ever know? Only a few hickory players in the modern era have the ability to select shafts with the skill of a Bobby Jones, so it is difficult for most of us to find the differences in quality between new and original shafts.

**The original club** player/collector comes to the sport with a keen appreciation of the nuances of club and shaft from years of finding, testing, examining and playing hundreds of clubs to find that magical niblick, driving mashie or mid iron. Jensen and Livingston alone have handled thousands upon thousands of clubs. Livingston's book on Tom Stewart contains years of research into hundreds of clubs and their unique playing characteristics that shed light upon how the game was played.

Like Darwin before him, Livingston knows that it takes some years of search and discovery to assemble a true play set. He counsels players to find and examine clubs with the idea of securing at least one original club that fits your eye and game. "Then, build a set around that club," he says. "As you explore more clubs, you'll get to know more about the game."

The reproduction player has taken a more expedient route to find his hickory game with the help of the modern hickory club maker. We cannot fault this type of player for wanting to join his peers in the excitement and satisfaction of a most challenging, yet rewarding, sport. We should not fault the original equipment player who must feel at times that his experience is dismissed as the governing body attempts to grow the sport by welcoming all players, reproductions or originals.

Nor can we overlook the incredible con-



**STARTER SET** of modern hickory clubs made by Louisville Golf.

tributions to hickory golf that have been made by Tad Moore and Mike Just. Their skills as club craftsmen are without peer. Their devotion and support of tournaments is unquestioned. The St. Andrews Golf Company ranks right there with Tad and Mike, as they painstakingly build replica and original clubs the same way that clubs have been made for more than a hundred years, keeping that early club making tradition alive.

A sensible attitude in this era of hickory golf may be a reasoned laissez-faire with continued guidance from the SoHG as to equipment standards. Tournament directors are always free to set their own guidelines with regard to equipment and may enforce stricter policies should they choose.

The players of reproduction clubs would do well to pay attention to the "voices of the past" and learn more about original clubs and their use, a study that provides

food for the hickory golfer's soul, as such research brings one face-to-face with classic players and books. It also hones one's appreciation for the game and its many nuances.

Those who have evolved from the "collecting" school may be wise to consider a more lenient attitude toward their reproduction-playing brethren, as all our efforts are toward growing the sport of hickory golf for the enjoyment of all players. Indeed, they may acknowledge the craftsmanship of the modern club maker all the while encouraging the new player to become acquainted with the original weapons of the Golden Age of golf.

There is room for all of us on the tee. ☺

*Rob Ahlschwede, chair of the SoHG Equipment Committee, contributed to this article.*



**THE PLAY SET OF RALPH LIVINGSTON III.** These Tom Stewart clubs were carefully assembled over several years by Livingston.

the original, why do they buy replicas? It is because originals are hard to find, and in some cases, unavailable. Replicas are an option for people who cannot find good original clubs.

**2. Accurate replicas are not an advantage and actually level the playing field.**

I was playing in one of my first hickory events, and noticed that some of the good players

see **JUST**, page 12

## COMMENTARY

# Modern hickory golf in the USA

BY TAD MOORE  
PRESIDENT  
TAD MOORE HICKORY CLASSICS

This article examines some of the important developments of hickory golf in the USA, beginning with 1990.

I had already been in the golf business for several years, starting full time in 1988. I was a "typical" club collector who enjoyed owning both "classic" and some hickory shafted clubs. I enjoyed buying from dealers and going to golf shows and pawn shops to find the clubs. Ebay and such social media as Facebook did not yet exist and the finding of any collectible was a fun challenge.

There were fewer than 20 people whom I would describe as serious hickory players in the USA at that time, scattered from coast to coast. These few were serious enough that finding good playable hickory clubs and creating solid play sets was a very real focus.

Hickory golf became more interesting in the mid '90s when more people started playing hickories and those who could rework and repair them started making club sets to sell at the trade shows of the Golf Collectors Society.

The hickory golf we now enjoy was not even a dream. The only hickory golf being played was at the national meeting and other regional events of the GCS. Referred to as "hickory hackers," most were scrambles, although there were a few scratch play events.

By the late '90s a small group of dedicated hickory players began to coalesce and the search began in earnest for good playable clubs. The GCS trading events began to shift in tone as more people attended who wanted to play their hickories in individual golf tournaments. Noted U.K. collector and dealer John Sherwood was among the first to realize this shift toward hickory golf and would attend the larger GCS meetings with several hundred clubs in tow. His display tables were usually centers of activity, crowded with people eager to purchase the good playable clubs he offered. Soon, players were making trips to Scotland to test their hickories on the old links courses, often in the company of like-minded players from the U.K. Hickory golf was on the rise.

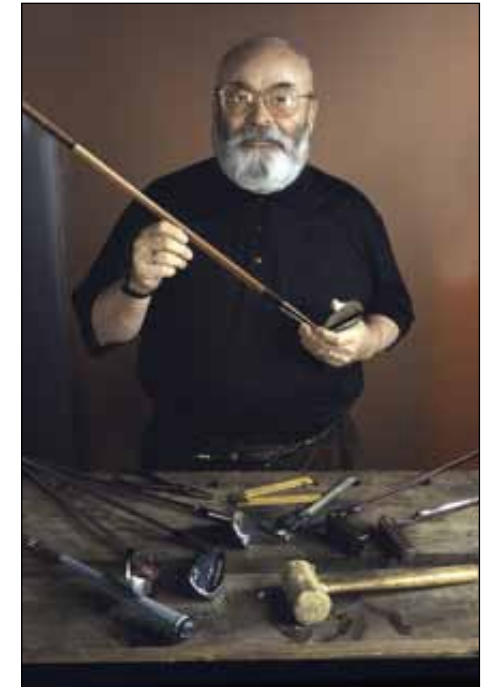
Still, for those of us who were avid players, finding good playable clubs was yet problematic. Granted, there were millions of hickories produced back in the Golden Age of golf, and there were still relatively few hickory players in the U.S. However, if you were truly trying to find the best Stewart, MacGregor, Gibson, Nicoll or other makers, your search was challenging. It took me fully 10 years to find a good matching set of Gibsons and MacGregors that I liked.

By 2003, my own club making business fully established, I was asked by some friends whether I could make a good reproduction niblick. Niblicks are touchy "high-feel" clubs and to find a good one is very fortunate. I had found one such on a trip to Scotland, a Gibson that felt very good in my hands. Soon, I owned several good Gibson niblicks. I always felt very lucky to have one of these and felt it a true advantage to own one. I knew that such early modern hickory illuminaries as Randy Jensen and Ralph Livingston had good niblicks of their own. These men had examined hundreds and hundreds of hickory clubs, so it was no surprise that they had developed an eye for a good playable niblick.

With the Gibson in mind, I began to research those qualities that make up a good hickory shaft. I found that Otey Crisman, of the famous Otey Crisman Putter company, could create such a shaft to my requirements. After working with Otey for about a year, I finally had a method for producing a good playable shaft. I now own the wood lathe that makes the best hickory shafts in the game. It was not cheap, but I know the importance of the hickory shaft.

With the shaft problem behind me, I turned to my favorite Gibson flanged niblick as the first club to tool for reproduction. Next, I chose my sets of OA/B series and the Gibson Star that I was playing. These heads are very similar in shape and I always liked them. As I mentioned earlier, it was a 10-year search to assemble this set.

Persimmon woods were the next step. Good antique woods were, and still are, difficult to obtain. Over the years, I had gathered a number of good Gibson woods and counted myself very fortunate. In another stroke of luck, I found a source of the old



**TAD MOORE** in his workshop.

master turning patterns that made persimmon heads in the '20s and '30s. I sent these to Mike Just, owner of Louisville Golf.

Mike had never made a hickory shafted set of wood heads and it took a long time to get the hickory shaft turning pattern figured out. I had been studying the writings of J. Victor East, the legendary club maker who made Bobby Jones' clubs. From that information and with Mike's help, we developed a very playable shaft – stiff, but not too stiff, and with a bend curve that produced power. (Since then, I have supplied the majority of the hickory shafts for new clubs and for repair in the USA.)

I now had a good club head based on original Gibsons and MacGregors, and a fine shaft to complement them. As always, a prime consideration was to create an affordable hickory club and yet maintain the highest quality possible. I believe we have found the correct balance of all factors. Some of the first sets of my reproduction clubs went to golfers who had never played hickory, but wanted to try the sport. A few of these sets are still in play.

In essence, the story of the early modern hickory reproductions grew out of a need to make good playable reproductions of some of the best playable clubs from the Golden Age of golf. Based on favorable reviews of those early reproduction clubs, Tad Moore Hickory Classics was formed. Later, with a license to make Tom Morris clubs, we were in business filling the

see **MOORE**, page 12



**MIKE JUST** of Louisville Golf.

## COMMENTARY

# Thoughts from a modern hickory clubmaker

*Mike Just, owner of Louisville Golf and maker of modern hickory replicas, offers his thoughts regarding commonly held questions and beliefs regarding original and replica equipment.*

**1. If there were enough "good" original clubs available, there would be no need for**

**replica clubs.**

If someone offered you your choice of an original MacGregor OA flanged niblick or an exact replica, which one would you choose? I think most people would take the original club. There is a perception that originals are upper echelon. So, if people would rather have

had original flanged niblicks that were much easier to hit out of sand traps than the thin soled niblicks that many of the players carried. Players who were not able to find an original flanged niblick were at a disadvantage. They had an inferior club because of the scarcity of that particular style club. I bought an original flanged niblick and had it accurately duplicated. I offered this club to people who were unable to find an original flanged niblick. My intention was to make the same club available to all golfers (level the playing field) and not give the advantage to players who were fortunate enough to have found an original flanged niblick.

I continued this concept through the entire set, taking a lot of time and effort to find good original irons and woods that we could accurately duplicate. These accurate replicas allow ALL players access to the same good quality hickory shafted clubs.

### 3. There is no difference in the playability of an accurate replica and an original club.

If you were to make a replica/duplicate of an original club that played poorly, the replica club would play poorly as well. On the opposite side if you make a replica of an original club that is a good player, the replica will play as well as the original.

If you looked in the bags of the better hickory players who play original clubs, you would find that their clubs are second to none. The clubs all have good weight and balance. The shafts and grips are in great shape. They could not improve on their equipment if they introduced replicas into their set. These players have spent a lot of time (possibly years) and money assembling their sets. Many new players to the sport of hickory golf don't have the time, money, or knowledge necessary to assemble a set of original clubs.

I play Louisville Golf replicas, which are accurate replicas. However I do carry one original mashie in my set. It is my favorite club. It has the original shaft and a replacement grip. Every time someone tells me that replicas are better than originals I think of this mashie. There is no replica that is as good as this original.

### 4. What is an original club?

You could ask five different people "what is an original hickory golf club"

and you may get five different answers. I have reshafted, regripped, changed lofts and lies, reweighed, installed inserts, and refinished many woods and irons for guys who only play original clubs. Based on the work I have done on original golf clubs, I would think that most people are referring to the HEAD. If a shaft breaks on an original iron, a new shaft is installed and it is put back into play. If a face wears out on an original wood, a new insert is installed. This is done today as it was 100 years ago. This makes me believe that when most people refer to an original hickory shafted club, they are primarily talking about the head. I am sure that if you were to play in a hickory event that required "all original" clubs, you could use a club that has had the grip and/or shaft replaced. You can also use an original club that has had the loft and lie altered. You can add lead tape or increase the weight by some other method. When is an original club no longer original?

If I were to take an original H&B Flanged Mashie and an accurate replica of that club, and install new shafts and grips in each one, is one any different than the other? Is one original and accepted in any event, and the other a replica which should be banned? I think they are the same club.

### 5. Regulations

I do think there should be some regulations on replica clubs. Any replica that is allowed in a hickory tournament should be an accurate replica of a club that was in common use during the hickory era. The only alterations that should be allowed to replicas are the same alterations allowed on original clubs. This would include adding weight and altering lofts and lies.

### Summary

Replica clubs have allowed more people to get involved with hickory golf. They do not offer an advantage or disadvantage over original equipment. I believe there is a tendency with people who have original equipment to forget about what an arduous task it was to assemble that set. And it is more difficult to find good original clubs today than it was even one year ago. It will be increasingly difficult to assemble playable sets in the future. If replica clubs are not allowed, participation in hickory golf will dwindle. I don't see where that is good for anyone involved in hickory golf. ☺

needs of the growing world of hickory golf. About a year later, Mike Just decided to make his own Louisville hickory clubs.

Today, there are only three companies {*Louisville Golf and St. Andrews Golf Co. – ed.*} doing any volume of hickory golf clubs in the world. I feel we are helping to grow the hickory game. We all try to make the very best clubs we can that represent the old clubs made in the past. We put face inserts on woods to protect the persimmon just as companies did from the early 1900s. As with our illustrious predecessors, we find and use the best metals and leather grips. The hickory wood available today is very good as there is far less demand and therefore far less pressure on supply than there was in 1930.

The clubs we make are good faithful reproductions and make a great value for the hickory player, whether he or she is just getting started or already has playing experience and is looking for that one special club to fill out a play set. We make available new hickory shafts and good leather grips so players can repair their clubs – modern reproductions or original. Without Tad Moore and Louisville Golf, replacement grips and shafts might not be as readily available.

Tad Moore Hickory Classics (Tad Moore) and Louisville Golf fill a need for the continued growth of the hickory game. Today, it is not uncommon to see players with either oldies, reproductions or a mixture of both in their bags. At this year's U.S. Hickory Open at French Lick, Ind., it was apparent to me that to attract new players to hickory golf it is important for reproductions to be in the market.

The Society of Hickory Golfers has rules for equipment that are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure these represent what is best for the game of hickory golf. I feel that they do an excellent job. Anyone with a question about a particular club can contact the SoHG with confidence they will receive a complete and considered answer.

I hope this brief overview helps those of you who are new to modern hickory golf better understand how reproduction clubs came to be in the U.S. I feel they play an important role in the growth of the great game of hickory golf. ☺



### View from the UK

I've read with interest the various posts (the SoHG Facebook page) that I think started with Robert Metz on 20th July re old and reproduction clubs. The problem is much the same over here. The British Golf Collectors Society (BGCS) do not approve clubs made after 1935. I understand Robert's stance but believe that he was far too strident in his views, though he did temper it in later posts.

When I founded the World Hickory Open in 2005, I subscribed, as a member of the BGCS, to their rules. In 2006/7/8 I kept to these rules but during this time felt that it was wrong for us to be unable to support the last manufacturer of hickory clubs in Scotland. In 2009, after some investigation into the Swedish and SOHG rules, I took Archie Baird and Philip Knowles (the Royal Burgess archivist) to the St. Andrews Golf Company. We all felt, after our visit, that the clubs were made in the same way as 100 years previously.

I therefore felt that it was our duty to support the Company by allowing their clubs to be used. I do feel that we have a duty to keep the skilled craftsmen in action as I would feel the same for Tad Moore and Mike Just.

Hope this clarifies how I feel.

*Lionel Freedman  
(Lionel, who lives in Musselburgh, Scotland, is a member of the SoHG board, editor of World Hickory Golfer and chief organizer of the World Hickory Championship)*

### Enjoyment of hickory play is the same

If I were playing golf in 1925 I would do what I do today, namely purchase new clubs on a fairly regular basis, and I don't really see how playing with replicas rather than vintage clubs would change my enjoyment of hickory play. A replica club is a true copy of an older club down to materials. It's not as though I'm sticking a Ping-Eye 2 head on a hickory shaft. GCSers Mike Just and Tad Moore give us the clubs we would have played 90 years ago.

For my play set, I selected individual clubs from Louisville Golf and had them made up with inch-longer stiff shafts, something I could have done in 1925. And I didn't come up with some computer generated clubs as can be gleaned from the swing weights: driver, D-8; spoon, C-9; mid iron, D-6; mashie, D-6; jigger, D-9; Benny, D-5, mashie niblick, D-0; niblick, D-4. I also carry a vintage brassie, swing weight, B-6. Hardly some scientifically matched set.

I would also note we wear replica clothes and shoes and play replica balls, and no one objects. We can't pick and choose on hickory purity.

*John Fischer III*

### Regripped & Rewhipped

By all accounts, hickory golf is growing faster than the bent grass at Royal Dornoch. With this in mind, it may be worthy to consider a relative newcomer's perspective on the debate.

I had the opportunity to experience "hickory golf" for the first time in a charity tournament at Valhalla. The good folks at Louisville Golf were on hand, and "replicas" were the order of the day. That led to my formal interest in the game, and I acquired my first playset (all "originals") over a few weeks this past August via eBay after following a group of friendly SoHG members at French Lick this past July as a spectator. I've posted 14 rounds to date and look forward to Mid Pines.

I'm in love with my originals and I don't care that they are unmatched or, in the case of my Vulcan niblic (thanks, Arlie!), the ugly stepchild of the litter! With the guidance of Bob Kuntz and Mike Just, I've reset the heads, replaced some shafts, regripped, rewhipped and I'm a convert now for three months. I even eagled a par four with them already!

Here's the rub... I bought and sold three "authentic" drivers to date. This one's too long, this one's too skinny, this one's loft is too low. Perhaps I wasn't "ready" for them, but in the interest of my new passion, I picked up a Louisville Golf Bulldog (25 degrees) and began to find my way. That led to an LG Driving Brassie, a Gassiat replica putter and a 56 degree Niblic for sand play. All my other clubs are antiques. I carry 14 in all, including an original wood cleek and my Frank Johnston smooth faced niblick for which I wouldn't trade an entire matched set!

The more the game grows, the better the societies and their boards will become. And the stronger the market for rare and highly coveted clubs will be. Before one looks too far down one's nose at the players with some replicas in their bag, consider the beginners! While it can be much cheaper to use the auld clubs, a blended set might just be the ticket that keeps the newcomer on board for the long journey.

*Robert Birman*

### Encourage hickory play – period

I have played both original and replica equipment and believe that replicas should be allowed anywhere, anytime. Yes, it is cool to play an original club and they provide a great sense of satisfaction. Problem is, most have to be reworked to make them worthy for play, especially the woods. So if I take an old club, add weight, maybe a new shaft and grip, in essence haven't I done what the replica makers do? Some believe that replicas are better and put those with original clubs at a disadvantage. But if original clubs are reworked by those who know how and they play against someone

without such ability who is trying to play with clubs found on eBay or a garage sale, then who is at a disadvantage? At least this person would be on equal footing when using replicas.

I have a replica Tad Moore OA set. I also have an original OA mashie in my 1920 set that I weighted to match Tad's mashie. I hit both the same. I hit my Mike Just woods no better or worse than my Forgan woods. Of course I refurbished the Forgan clubs. Lastly, if hickory shafts were still how we played today, I am pretty sure that no one would be playing 1920 Stewart irons. We would all have the newest clubs on the market. Let's just encourage hickory play – original or replica.

*Mike Stevens*

### Standardization levels playing field

This topic seems to arise every time I get together with other hickory players. I have heard comments to the effect that "When Bobby Jones played his Stewart irons they were new, why do ours have to be one hundred years old?"

I have both historical clubs and reproductions. I have played only one round with my reproductions while I was restoring my Stewart irons and assorted woods. There's something to be said about removing grips from a golf club and knowing that when it was put on the Statue of Liberty was just starting to turn green. I picture the flannel listing as having been someone's night shirt back when there were more golfers in the world than automobiles.

While the quality of modern reproductions are of the highest standard, it feels as if you're the only one with the new fishing pole while everyone else has a string tied to their finger. One valid reason for owning reproduction clubs is the travel defense. Trusting century old hickories to the airlines is both daring and foolhearted. If the airlines make your reproductions disappear, they can simply be reordered. I would drive to a golf tournament before I would trust my clubs to the capable hands of any carrier.

If everyone had the same "period" clubs the playing field would be level and the better player would surface. There are a number of sports where the equipment is standardized and the best performance on any given day reveals the better player. (i.e. crew, baseball, field events in track and, dare I say, NASCAR)

Until the reproduction clubs provide a marked advantage – and I would argue that reproduction woods do – the inclusion of them in tournament play, for determining handicaps, and for general use will continue.

*Tim Alpaugh*

**Promote diversity, preserve art of hickory clubmaking**

I play three sets of clubs – an Oakhurst qualifying antique set with replica woods and original irons, a vintage set with replica woods and Stewart irons, and another vintage set for bad weather and air travel of Spalding and derivatives that match really well and are less expensive to replace.

My intent had been to play all original Oakhurst antique clubs. I was delighted to get a play club with a maker name alluding to the Wodehouse story *The Clicking of Cuthbert*. The club almost made it through two 18-hole rounds before I cracked the shaft and bought a transitional spoon from Louisville Golf which has served me well. I think that original woods from this era are pretty hard to come and one would have to be far wealthier than I to play them regularly. After a couple of years I supplemented it with a custom order transitional baffing spoon that Mike Just crafted based on some Ideas I got from the Ellis text. He made one for himself as well and based on this test, it now appears in the catalog. I do not think this club would have been readily available as an original.

I originally played a Josh Taylor and the Spalding woods with both vintage sets, but later added the replicas – driver brassie, spoon, and baffle – after a couple of the woods imploded in play. Both sets have excellent play qualities; all errors are attributable to the user!

I cannot imagine a general ban on replicas. They provide options for clubs that are not otherwise reasonably available or too expensive for most to use in antique play. Both antique and vintage play offer some options that facilitate access to the hickory game for more players, which I believe we all want to promote. I also think it desirable to support the preservation of the art of hickory club making. At this same time I think there is a place for quite specific limits for individual events, e.g. Vermont's (which I hope to try next year) seven original clubs dating from 1935 or earlier, which promote diversity in play while not impeding access to the game.

Gordon Beggs

**Best we can do to approximate old-time golf**

This is not an easy subject to handle as there are a number of paradoxes involved in the story. Among them: that St. Andrews is

considered a reproduction company when they claim to have produced hickories continuously for 100 years; that reproductions can be considered accurate even when they are not hand forged, but cast; that people claim that proper hickory shafts should be split rather than sawn when abundant evidence says that most of the mass manufacturers (even in that day and age) couldn't afford to split hickory and sawed it as we do now. There is hardly any firm ground to stand on!

My point is that any attempt at answering the questions of original and replica clubs is likely to be only a partial solution. I think the SoHG's "attempting to discover the playing characteristics" of hickory shafted clubs idea is the best we can hope for, whether using old weapons or new. As much as some of us would like it, we are not living 100 years ago, but in *this* day and taking a step back to playing with hickory shafted clubs, wood heads and playing in period clothes is, all in all, the best we can do to try to fulfill this goal.

Roger Hill

## Heading down the slippery hickory slope

BY HUGH MENZIES

I think I am in danger of becoming a hickory nut.

Yesterday, our club pro at Pinehurst No. 7 approached me to play in the upcoming club championship. I fully believe in supporting competitive club events, especially now as golf's allure is fading for many players and participation is dropping. But I declined because of a prior commitment to play in the Hickory Haggis. Of course, I could have withdrawn from the hickory event but as I said to the pro: "To be honest, Todd, hickories are just more fun."

Think I'm doomed?

Jay Harris introduced me to hickories a couple of years ago. It sounded a bit of a hoot, I like Jay and his friends, so I bought some sticks from him – the good doc is not entirely altruistic, though his lending policies are most generous – and gave it a whirl. I'm a semi-competent golfer with contemporary clubs – handicap of about 13 – and a marginally-competent hickory golfer with an index of 21.6. So you can see that my decision between contemporary and hickory mentioned above had nothing to do with the likely result – I don't have a

hope in hell of winning either of them.

The hickory game has taken me to some lovely golf courses, introduced me to a bunch of characters – you have to be slightly off-center to try making an already difficult game even more so – and made me dress up in some crowd-pleasing outfits.

Somewhere in our family archives there is a photo of my father on a cow paddock that is now the Royal Canberra Golf Course posing with a golf club. Given that the year was about 1935, I suspect the shaft was wooden. He'd be laughing his head off at my doings.

But now I've arrived at a major hickory crossroads. Jay outfitted me with a set of originals. You all know what a traditionalist "The Bearded One" is. Then I won a Tad Moore mashie niblick in a raffle. Easier to hit than my original. So it gets a lot of use. Now I am talking to Mike Just of Louisville Golf about four or five of his replica irons and perhaps a wood. I'm an irons man myself. Persimmon heads and I have never really hit it off, even when equipped with steel shafts. But Brian Schuman did a little tinkering with my swing up at the recent Long Island hickory event and the

MacGregor spoon Jay sold me is beginning to behave itself.

**You see where this is going.** Originals or replicas. I can see Jay now, shaking his head dolefully and proclaiming: "You're going over to the dark side, laddie."

The doc is correct of course. It's like going to a long-handled putter. Not exactly cheating but is it in the spirit of the game? Having taken to hickories, I'm now trying to improve my score by adopting clubs that handle more like forgiving contemporary weapons. On the other hand, the replicas are approved for use in the U.S. and many players employ them in tournaments. Since I'm unlikely to compete in the U.K., where they frown on such shenanigans, the issue of having to revert to my originals is not likely to emerge. Not that I would care if the destination charming enough.

Speaking of charming destinations, I'm off to Ireland next year to golf with my son and a couple of buddies. And I'm not taking hickories to Ballybunion, LaHinch, Waterville and the like. For one thing, I'm not sure how they would survive the tender ministrations of airline baggage handlers. For another, I need to be a lot better golfer

see **SLOPE**, page 27

## Artist's talents bring SoHG member's visions to life

"A FORFEIT AT MRS. FORMAN'S", right, illustrates a famous and most raucous 1882 match at Musselburgh between Willie Park Sr. and Old Tom Morris. The crowd, rooting for Park, repeatedly moved Morris's ball into a worse lie and the referee stopped play. When Morris and the referee retired to Forman's public house, Park sent a message saying if Morris did not finish the match he would play the remaining holes alone and claim the stake – which he did. The figure of Morris can be seen in the doorway beyond Park's left shoulder.

BY JIM DAVIS

Fine golf illustration, other than paintings of golf holes, seems to keep a low profile. You either see beautifully rendered golf scenery or cartoonish graphics for high-distribution golf magazines. Still, there are artists here and there who combine their talent with an interest in bringing notable aspects of golf's rich history to life. Betty Plymale is such an artist.

Plymale operates a large studio in Lexington, Ky., where she regularly teaches as many as 40 students who come twice a week for instruction. She also restores antique paintings and does commissioned portraits. While at the Golf Collectors Society annual meeting in Lexington in 2008, she met Connor Lewis an SoHG member and originator of the All American Hickory Open gutta ball tournament.

Lewis, vice president for a 29-hospital health system based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is anything if not passionate about his interests. Once he saw Plymale's work, he was immediately interested in a possible collaboration. The two talked with the result that Lewis commissioned Plymale to produce a painting of Walter Hagen's 72nd tee shot for the 1929 Open Championship.

"Her work on this portrait is a staple in my Walter Hagen 1929 Ryder Cup/ Open Championship Collection," Lewis says. But it was her second piece, completed earlier this year, titled – "A Forfeit at Mrs. Forman's" – that really excited Lewis.



WALTER HAGEN at the 1929 Open Championship was the first collaboration between Connor Lewis and artist Betty Plymale.

This may be her Mona Lisa, in my opinion," he says. "It is a defining painting that she conjured up from one year's worth of my research."

Lewis is researching a third piece that he describes as "a portrait of a young Charles Blair Macdonald, before he won the 1895 U.S. Amateur, standing on the 'lost hole' of the Chicago Golf Club and Macdonald's only tribute to Hell Bunker."

Though he has most of the details for Plymale to begin, Lewis is not sure whether he wants Macdonald positioned on the tee box or mid-fairway, or just where. Sweating the details are what helps set these works apart.

Lewis says that his projects with Plymale have actually encouraged other golf art-

ists to contact him and, while he says they all possess great talent, "it would be near impossible for me to have a better working relationship than I have with Betty.

"Betty is half artist and half mind reader. We talk all the way through the portrait and discuss the necessary story the portrait needs to tell. In the case of 'Forfeit', Betty and I went back and forth over positioning and the symbolism we wanted to convey. In the end, I honestly think that it's a masterpiece of golf art; in my mind comparable to the works of other greats like Charles Lees, John Smart and John AT Bonnar, all of whom painted golfing scenes or illustrious golfing personalities prior to 1900."

Lewis has arranged to have 11 giclee prints made of "A Forfeit at Mrs. Forman's" that he plans to donate to various golf clubs and museums in Scotland and the U.S. Five giclees are planned for the Macdonald print.

"I can go on and on about Betty Plymale as I have the highest respect for her talent, work ethic and personality," Lewis says. "She is one of the few people I have ever met who could steal a vision from my mind's eye and bring it to life on canvas."

The busy artist does not consider herself an illustrator, but clearly enjoys the collaboration. "It has been a lot of fun working with him (Connor)," she says modestly.

Here's hoping the Plymale/Lewis collaboration continues for years to come as the early results are a fine contribution to the rich history of golf art. 🎨

# The Parks of Musselburgh in North America

BY DOUG MARSHALL

Everyone interested in the early history of golf has heard of Willie Park and his son, Willie Jr. In Scotland they are as revered as their birthplace of Musselburgh in East Lothian. In North America they are lesser known than the Morris family of St. Andrews, due to Old Tom's lifelong work and promotion of his special place, the St. Andrews links. Also there is the heartbreaking legend of Young Tom who won four Opens in a row and then died at 24, when he was the dominant player of his time.

Musselburgh Links was originally seven holes, with another added in 1832 and the last in 1870. The racetrack came into existence in the early 1800s. The first three holes stretched eastwards from the grandstand at the racecourse, the site of the former clubhouse of the Honourable Company. It exists today much in its original form, dating to 1672, the oldest course in the world still on the same site. The scene of many historic matches, Musselburgh would host six Opens after 1870 in a rotation with St. Andrews and Prestwick, the last being in 1889. It has produced five Open champions.

Many of the best players of the time lived there and honed their skills against each other. The best of these players were the Parks who won seven Opens between 1860 and 1889. Willie Sr. won four times – 1860, 1863, 1866, 1875 – and his brother, Mungo, won in 1874. Willie Jr. would take the title in 1887 and 1889.

To make a living in golf at that time meant making balls and clubs that produced a modest income often supplemented by money matches backed by wealthy sponsors. Such matches were very popular and helped make the reputations of the best players of the time. Here Willie Park excelled, and many battles on the links were held in those early years with the Morris's being frequent opponents. One of the most famous was in 1870 between Willie Sr. and Old Tom that ended in chaos at Musselburgh. Kevin Cook in his wonderful book *Tommy's Honour*



**WILLIE PARK JR.** was the most prolific of golf's illustrious Park family. His work in North America includes Maidstone and Olympia Fields N.

describes this match in detail (p. 179).

Willie Sr. was a tall man, a long hitter and an excellent putter. At the time of the match in 1870 he was 37 and in his prime. Old Tom meanwhile was 49 and had seen his best days. Tom had won his last of four Opens in 1867 while Willie would go on to win again in 1875.

Younger brother, Mungo, had come home from a number of years at sea and joined Willie in the family equipment business. The two of them teamed to compete and win many matches for the next few years.

Of Willie's four sons, three – Willie Jr., Mungo II and John – would continue the family golf business into the next generation. At 16, Willie Jr. began working with his Uncle Mungo at a course in Ryton. He soon was dabbling in course design and produced several layouts, many with his father or with Uncle Mungo. By 1899 he was well established in this career.

In 1900 he was commissioned to create the first course at Sunningdale. His brilliant design proved that great golf courses could be built on the heathland near London. It was the beginning of parkland golf courses and created high demand for

## Notable courses in North America by Willie Park Jr.

### Canada

Ontario – Weston CC, Toronto Hunt, Ottawa Hunt  
 Montreal – Royal Montreal, Mt. Bruno, Beaconsfield, Summerlea, Whitlock, Laval le Sur de Lac  
 Quebec City – Royal Quebec  
 Calgary Golf Club

### USA

New York – Maidstone  
 Illinois – Olympia Fields N  
 Michigan – Red Run (Detroit), Battle Creek CC, Grand Rapids Golf Club, Flint, Royal Oak, Meadowbrook, Pine Lake, Orchard Lake  
 Pennsylvania – Penn State Univ. Course  
 Arkansas – Hot Springs CC  
 Rhode Island – Agawan CC  
 N.C. – Grove Park Inn (Ashville)  
 Ohio – Toledo CC

Willie Jr.'s design skills. He did numerous courses in Britain and at the same time used his club making skills to develop several golf club patents. One of the most significant, and controversial, club designs was the bulger wood, developed apparently about the same time as a bulger wood by an amateur, Henry Lamb. (After a lengthy dispute, Lamb would be credited with the invention, but neither man would patent it.)

In 1895 Willie Jr. immigrated to America and established offices in New York and Montreal. Here his course design business flourished. Of the 170 courses attributed to him many are in Canada and the U.S. His brothers, John and Mungo II, joined him and were instrumental in some of Willie Jr.'s finest work.

Most consider Maidstone on the Gardiner Peninsula in New York as his greatest achievement. First laid out by Willie Jr. in 1901 and built by his brother, John, Willie Jr. revisited the site in 1921 and completed the masterpiece now in existence. By googling "Willie Park Junior Maidstone Club NY" the reader can access great pictures and narrative on the course.

Willie Jr. returned home in 1900 and after his success at Sunningdale set out to do the same in Scotland. At Huntercombe he established a development company called



**MUNGO PARK II**, Willie Jr.'s brother, would join him in several of his North American ventures. He also is considered one of the founding fathers of golf in Argentina.

and is considered one of Willie Jr.'s foremost creations, but it nearly bankrupted him personally, and he spent the rest of his life scrambling to rebuild his fortune. What followed was a return to America and an exhausting period of work during which he designed some 60 courses in North America, many of them his greatest efforts. Some 20 were done in Canada and 40 in the United States.

Brothers John and Mungo II came to join him and business flourished. Among the more noteworthy designs are Royal Quebec, Laval sur le Lac, Mount Bruno and Weston in Toronto (site of Arnie's first win the 1955 Canadian Open). Others include Calgary Golf Club and Ottawa Hunt Club.

In the U.S. he did the North Course at Olympia Fields near Chicago, finished Maidstone, did Red Run in Detroit and the Battle Creek Club in Michigan, the Berkshire CC in Reading, Pa. and numerous courses in the central part of the country.

In 1886 at the height of his playing career he wrote "The Game of Golf." Years later, in 1919, he would follow that with "The Art of Putting" (1920), a short treatise written mainly to raise some cash. Nonetheless, it is well worth reading as Willie Jr. was one of the greatest putters of his time.

Mungo II during this time had done some work in Galveston, Texas and moved from there to Argentina where he worked at the Buenos Aires GC while also managing the construction of the new San Andres Golf Club. He won that country's championship in 1905 and 1912 and is considered one of the founding fathers of golf in Argentina. His brother, John, joined

Chiltern Estates that he hoped would become a housing development and golf community as at Sunningdale. Started in 1901, lack of railroad access would doom the project and by 1906 it was in the hands of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Co.

The golf course was highly praised

him for a time and they did several more courses over the next few years.

Meanwhile, the frenetic pace of work in America was taking a toll on Willie Jr.'s health. He was diagnosed with Graves Disease, a thyroid condition that causes organ failure in its later stages. At the time there was no cure or effective treatment. Willie Jr. knew his time was near. In 1924 Mungo II returned to New York to escort Willie Jr. back to Musselburgh where he died on May 22, 1925 at the age of 61.

The Park family's legacy in the history of golf can never be equaled. The case can be made that, in the 1890s, Willie Jr. brought real golf architecture to the New World. His designs, especially greens, were revolutionary.

Willie Jr. was the first "great player" who truly became a "great golf course architect." 🌐

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### For further reading –

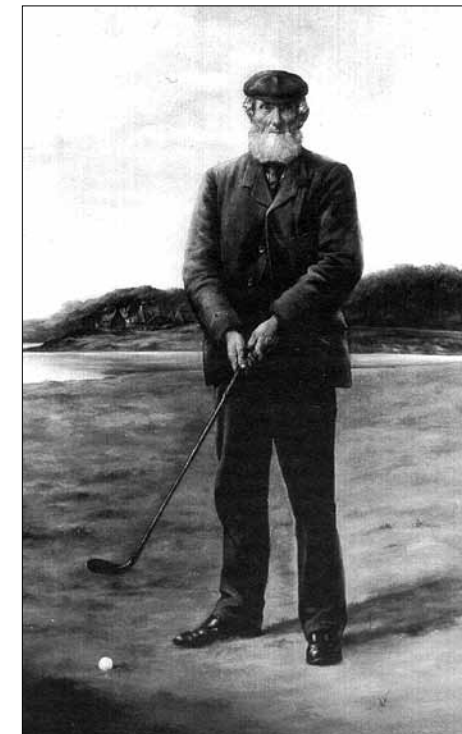
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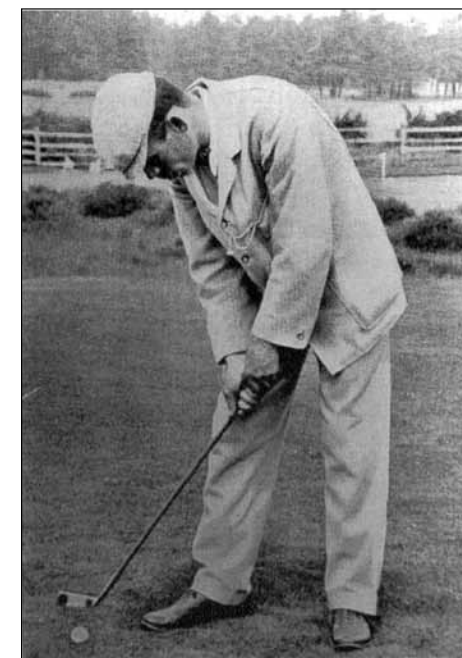
"The man who can putt is a match for anyone."

**Willie Park Jr.**



**WILLIE PARK SR.** as painted by Edinburgh-based John AT Bonnar. The work hangs in the clubhouse of the R&A in St. Andrews. He was the founder of the Park golf dynasty and winner of four Open Championships.

**WILLIE JR.'S PUTTING STYLE.** Considered one of the best putters of his or any generation, Willie Park Jr.'s putting was highly praised by his contemporaries, though the wide and open stance is rarely seen today. He would demonstrate hook and slice putts to amuse friends and family.





**BOBBY JONES** putting during the famous 1926 exhibition match with Walter Hagen, who can be seen in the white sweater near the gallery on the right.

PHOTO/COURTESY JOHN FISCHER III

# Exhibition Matches Golf's first 'majors'

BY JOHN FISCHER III

What a great idea: get the two top golfers in the world for a head-to-head match in a made-for-the-media event, offer a big cash prize to the winner and capture the imagination of the sporting world. The "Wonderful World of Golf"? The "Show-down at Sherwood" between Tiger Woods and David Duval? No, the great 72-hole match between Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones, held in the winter of 1926 labeled the "World Championship."

Hagen had won three PGA Championships at match play, two in a row, plus two British Opens and two U.S. Opens and Jones had won two U.S. Amateur Championships in a row and a U.S. Open Championship. The newspapers of the day loved the event, although Hagen swept the match, 12 up with 11 to play. Jones, who was beginning to dominate golf – "Jones against the field" – was the cry, played poorly. A sports writer commented on one leg of the match with the quip, "[Hagen] went around the course in 71 strokes and [Jones] in 75 cigarettes." It would have been a television producer's nightmare.

But as Jones noted exhibition "matches were one thing. The open championship

was another." Later that year Jones would win both the U.S. Open Championship and the British Open, the first person to hold both titles in the same year.

Matches outside the confines of organized tournament golf are not new. In fact, challenge matches were conducted before there were organized tournaments to determine the best golfer or golfers. The British Open, known officially as "The Open Championship," was not started until 1860 and came about, in part, as a way of settling just who was "the champion golfer of the year."

In the early years of British golf many matches were arranged by wealthy backers or patrons. Most of these were "challenge" matches and the winning backer took all, £50 or £100, large sums in the 1800s. The players were chosen by the backers and had financial arrangements on a much smaller scale with their backers. Later exhibition matches were commercial ventures and both winner and loser were paid.

Willie Park Sr. ran a magazine advertisement in the latter part of the 19th century offering to take on anyone for a "home and away" match for £100 of his own money, one match to be played on his home course of Musselburgh and the other

at the opponent's home course. Imagine today's Tour player putting up \$750,000 of his own money, winner take all, with no backing from organizers or television, basing everything on his confidence in beating the other fellow. Now that would be a match.

Several foursomes matches brought together the best professional golfers in Great Britain. The Great Challenge Match of 1849 for £400 pitted Allan Robertson and Old Tom Morris against twin brothers, Willie and Jamie Dunn. The match was played over three courses, or "greens," Musselburgh, St. Andrews and North Berwick. Thirty-six holes were played at each course, and the matches were determined at the end of play at each course like sets in tennis.

The Dunn Brothers won at Musselburgh and the Robertson-Morris team won at St. Andrews, so the match was tied at one "green" each when they went to North Berwick. At the end of the 34th hole the North Berwick match was even. At the 35th, the Robertson-Morris team was having problems, but the Dunns' ball was lodged against a curbstone. A plea to the referee for relief from the rock was to no avail (Take note, no moving of large

stones in those days), and the Dunns slashed away trying to get their ball back in play, were unsuccessful, lost the 35th and were so demoralized they lost the 36th and the match.

Old Tom Morris and Willie Park Sr. played a famous challenge match in 1870 over four courses, St. Andrews, Prestwick, North Berwick and Musselburgh, pitting two of the best known players of the day against each other. The two fought it out until the 12th hole at Musselburgh when Morris walked off the course complaining of an unruly gallery of 6,000 that made playing difficult.

In the spring of 2011, the match was recreated with Randy Jensen, the holder of eight major hickory titles, playing Perry Somers who has six European titles to his credit. Our "modern" players used 1920's

equipment and wore period golf gear, but played a modern ball, Srixon for Jensen and Titleist for Perry. The match was hard fought and well played with Perry as the eventual winner, 3 & 2 over 70 holes in four days.

In 1905, what many golf historians consider to be the greatest foursome match was played. The contestants were Harry Vardon and J.H. Taylor of England against James Braid and Sandy Herd of Scotland. This match received more press coverage than the British Open or Amateur. Vardon, Taylor and Braid were known as the Great Triumvirate, because they dominated British golf and among them won 16 Open Championships from 1894 to 1914. Herd was the winner of the 1902 British Open. These four professionals were

probably the best four golfers in the world at the time. This match took on added importance because it was England versus Scotland, and was played at 36 holes over each of four courses, two in Scotland (St. Andrews and Troon) and two in England (St. Anne's and Deal).

In this match, instead of counting matches on a course by course basis, a running total was kept.

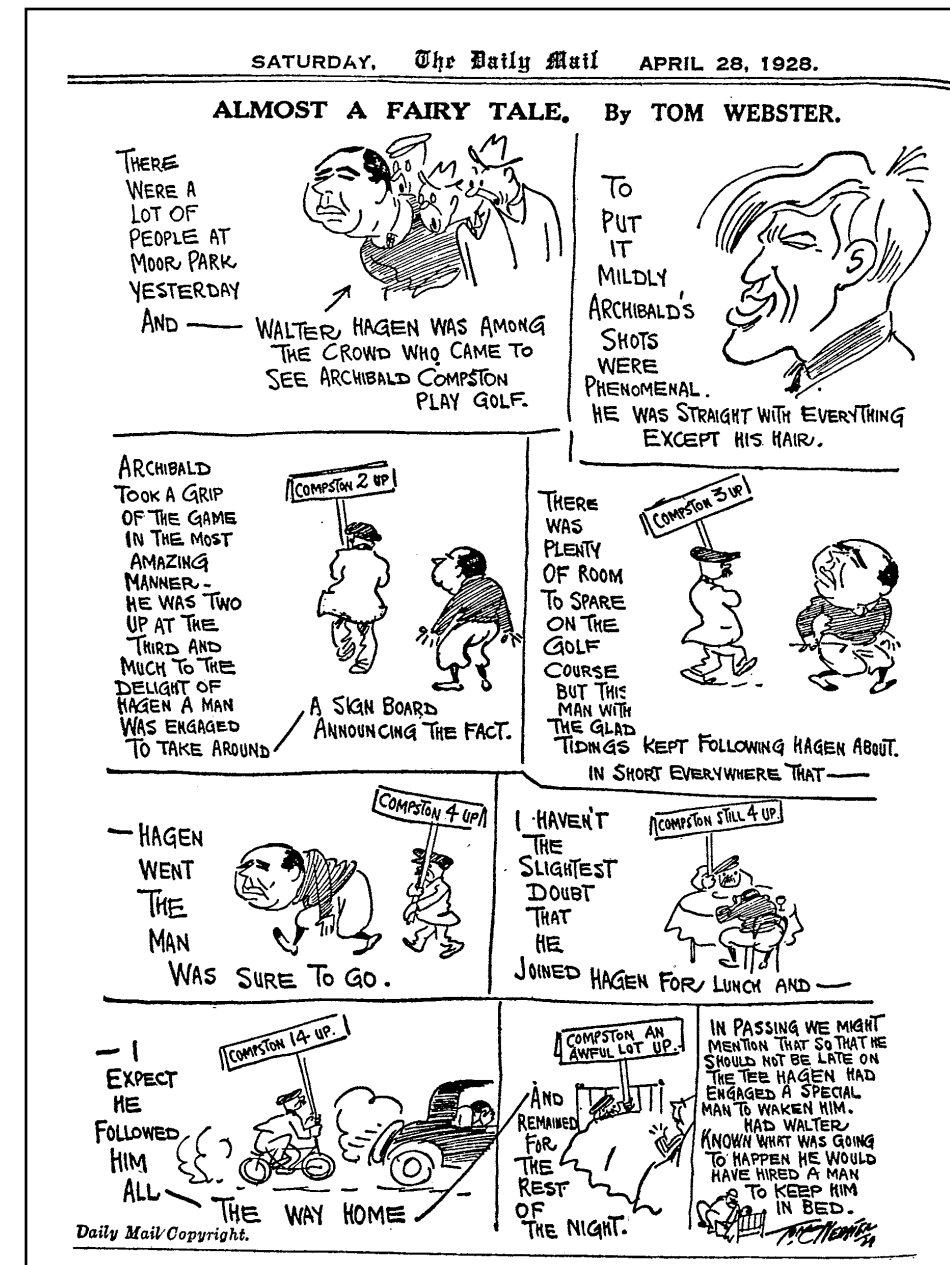
At St. Andrews, the crowd was estimated at 12,000, and stewards had to hold up flags so spectators would know which side won a hole, a blue flag for England, yellow for Scotland, and both flags for a half. Vardon thought the crowds so unruly, he almost refused to play in the afternoon. The Scots were 2 up after 36, but by the end of the second 36 at Troon, the English trounced their opponents and were 14 up on the day and 12 up on the match. By the time the teams got to St. Anne's, the Scots, Braid and Herd, tried to rally and were "only" seven down at the end of the day. However, in a match played in a violent wind and blinding rain at Deal, Vardon and Taylor ended up winning 13 and 12. It is estimated that 26,000 spectators attended the matches.

The Scots took the loss pretty hard. After all, golf originated in Scotland, not England, and Scotland had been disgraced. One woman was so upset that she beat fellow Scot Sandy Herd with her umbrella for what she thought was poor play.

This match may have marked the end of the great challenges because of the greater number of medal play tournaments for sizeable purses.

However, exhibition matches were still popular, some with unusual results. Consider poor Archie Compston, a top British player. In 1928, Archie defeated Walter Hagen 18 and 17 in a 72-hole exhibition (see Daily Mail cartoon at left). A few weeks later Hagen won the British Open and Compston finished third. Then in 1932, Gene Sarazen played Compston in a 36-hole match before the British Open, and was embarrassed to lose 13 and 12. But Sarazen redeemed himself, winning the British Open while Compston finished 12th.

It is easy to debate whether an exhibition means anything other than money or bragging rights, but there is always excitement with twists and turns that only match play can produce, and there will be a winner. The philosophical Bobby Jones had a quote for the loser, "The fierce joy of conflict is the prize the vanquished gain." ☺



# FEATURED CLUB



BY BOB GEORGIADÉ  
DURHAM, N.C. USA

## Donald Ross Dornoch Niblick

Being a native North Carolinian and having played a Donald Ross-designed course for 50+ years, I became acutely aware of the nuances associated with his courses at a young age. Most people consider Ross to be just a golf course architect and aren't aware of his beginnings in golf.

After I became interested in golf's history and began collecting vintage clubs more than 25 years ago I learned that Ross began his career in golf as an apprentice in St. Andrews under the tutelage of Old Tom Morris, the consummate Scottish professional. Having successfully completed his apprenticeship under Morris in the early 1890s, Ross returned to his native Dornoch to become head professional at Royal Dornoch.

Golf was growing exponentially during this period across the pond in America. Ross saw the opportunity and left Royal Dornoch in 1899 to become the head professional at Oakley CC in Watertown, Mass. In 1900, he was offered the position of head professional at Richard Tufts' new Pinehurst resort in N.C. Initially, Ross was the winter season professional at Pinehurst and returned to Oakley (and later Essex CC) for the summers.

His interest in course design was nurtured in Pinehurst and he designed several now famous courses for the resort. In the early 1900s, word began to spread about Ross' architectural prowess and by 1910 he was so busy with golf design that he terminated his professional relationship with all but the Pinehurst golf courses.

As my interest in vintage club collecting grew I became more discerning about the pro's names found on the back of various clubs. A professional during the hickory era was a jack-of-all-trades and clubmaking was one of them. The pro didn't actually make the head, rather, he purchased heads from the major U.S. and U.K. cleek makers and shafted the heads in his shop for members/customers. He had the choice of purchasing blank heads that he would then stamp with his name/mark, or buy-

ing heads already factory-stamped with his name/mark.

With Ross already in my blood, so to speak, a logical extension of my collecting interest became finding clubs with his name on them. I soon found a Ross club with "Oakley" on the back as well as numerous clubs with Pinehurst and some with no club affiliation. I had heard of the rarely seen Ross-marked "Dornoch" clubs but was not able to acquire one until fairly recently. (On a side note, I have never seen or heard of a Ross-marked Essex club. Essex County Club was one of his earlier designs. Ross lived on this course in Essex Country, Mass. from 1909-1913).

**Thus, my favorite club** (at least for the time being) is the pictured D. J. Ross Dornoch iron. It is a small head, smooth face niblick made by Robert Condie of St. Andrews and no doubt shafted by Ross while at Dornoch in the 1890s.

It is 36 inches long, has a loft of approximately 50 degrees and a swing weight in the C range. Like so many other Condie-made hickory irons, it even has some bounce on the sole. While I have never hit the club, I suspect it would be well suited for play (in the hands of a golfer more accomplished than myself) in one of the many gutty era events that are becoming so popular. 🌐



## Member Profile Lionel Freedman Musselburgh, East Lothian Scotland

Lionel was born in Chiswick, London in 1934. He attended boarding school from 1940-51 and did his National Service basic training in an infantry regiment – the Suffolks. He then spent 1952-54 with the Royal Artillery, with the rank of Sergeant. He entered the floor of the London Stock Exchange in 1954 becoming a member in 1961. He retired in 1970 but could not sit still and by 1974 ran several different companies. "I could possibly be considered an entrepreneur," he says.

Lionel was a member of clubs in London, Surrey and Berkshire-Wimbledon Park, Roehampton, Henley, Coombe Hill, and St Georges Hilland Wentworth where is home was on the 15th on the West course.

He retired to Scotland in 1995, was divorced 1997. He remarried 1998 to Beth. "An article in the Scotsman described me as marrying a 'Musselburgh Lass'. We have between us two sons, two daughters and seven grandchildren."

Beth was Lady Captain of both the Musselburgh Club and Musselburgh Old Course Club. Lionel was Musselburgh Old Course Secretary and Treasurer in 1999-2005 and is considered to be "the man who revived the Old Links."

Lionel is a member of the British Golf Collectors Society and, recently, "a proud board member of the SoHG."

Lionel founded the World Hickory Open in 2005 and is currently a member of Craigiellaw Golf Club in Aberlady, East Lothian. He was Captain of the club in 2007-09.

He is editor of World Hickory Golfer ([www.worldhickorygolfer.com](http://www.worldhickorygolfer.com)), which began in September 2010 as a monthly online magazine.

### How often do you play hickories?

*Not, I'm afraid, that much. Usually the Scottish at Musselburgh Links and Gullane 3. I toured Sweden when the Grail was held. Played only once in the WHO. I find it difficult to play when running an event. I also try the annual match between England and Scotland and have played for both sides.*

### What's in your play set?

*1925 Nicolls matched set, Ernest Bradbeer. 1930 Cochranes – Edinburgh. Sadly both sets were recently stolen. I still have a set of Tom Stewart replicas by St Andrews Golf Co.*

### Favorite course for hickories?

*Kilspindie and Gullane 3.*

### Favorite club?

*The Baffy.*

### Favorite hickory tournament?

*The World Hickory Open.*



**Lionel Freedman is a proud family man, excellent golfer, editor/writer and current senior champion of Craigiellaw Golf Club.**

### Any particular player or aspect of golf history you especially enjoy?

*Henry Cotton, who I lost to in the 1961 Gleneagles-Saxone at the last in a scratch foursomes knock out. And a singles match against Bobby Locke where I was beaten 3/2. I also took lessons from Richard Burton, the last winner of The Open before the war (1939). I have great memories of games with Ken Bousfield, a six-time Ryder Cup player, as well as Syd Scott who was runner up to Peter Thomson in the 1954 Open and the 1955 Ryder Cup.*

### Best thing about hickory golf?

*The people you meet and the playing of hickories that brings back our many traditional courses built in the late 19th century and through to the Second World War. Hickories allow us to play these courses in the way they were set up and meant to be played.*

### Ideas to promote SoHG, hickory golf?

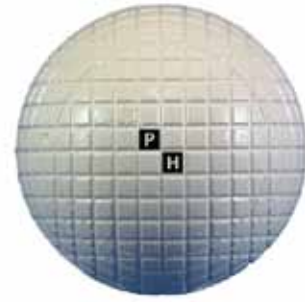
*I hope to promote hickory golf through my membership on the board of the SoHG, by promoting and expanding my tournaments – the Musselburgh Challenge, the World Hickory Open – and by continuing my work on [worldhickorygolfer.com](http://worldhickorygolfer.com).*

### Most recent book on golf that you read?

*I have very large selection of golfing books and to choose is very difficult. Instructional books are a struggle; however, Harvey Penick's "Little Red Book" is outstanding. Anything by Darwin, Longhurst, and Warren Wind. Modern authors Dodson and Sampson as well as fiction by Mark Frost. With sincere apologies for not mentioning plenty of others.*

# Gutty dreams

## The making of a modern gutta percha ball



The McIntyre grooved Gutta Percha golf ball process...with a comparison to very-hard-to-come-by (and expensive) organic gutta percha.

*Editor's note – Californian Chris McIntyre has long worked to create a ball that would be acceptable for those who enjoy pre-1900, or even pre-1890, golf. The process outlined here also compares organic gutta percha to its synthetic, man-made counterpart. McIntyre's original document, with color photos, can be found on his website at [http://www.playhickory.com/Gutta\\_Ball\\_Process.html](http://www.playhickory.com/Gutta_Ball_Process.html)*

BY CHRIS MCINTYRE

Here is the McIntyre mold. Our molds are modern reproductions of the old style press molds used in the 1800's.



The warmed glob of gutta percha is soft and pliable and is formed into the shape desired to place into the mold.



The fact is that pure gutta percha has a specific gravity of less than water, therefore gutta percha floats. Here is a ball of organic and McIntyre gutta floating side by side in water.



Here the glob is placed into the mold cavity.



Here is a glob of organic gutta percha ready to go into the press. It weighs 41.4 grams before processing.



The lid is placed on top.



The mold is placed in a hydraulic press and then given time to cool the gutta percha.



And the lid is placed on top.



The glob takes on the shape and detail of the grooved mold cavity.



Again, it is compressed in the hydraulic press and allowed to cool.



There is a distinct "ring" of excess material that is necessary to assure that there is enough material to completely fill the cavity and form a full ball.

Here is a glob of the McIntyre gutta. It weighs 42.2 grams.



The ball is formed and the excess "ring" is similar to that of the organic ball.



It is now placed into the mold.



The organic ball with its ring weighs 41.4 grams just as its glob did.



The McIntyre ball with its ring weighs 42.2 grams as its glob did.



Historically, at this stage the organic golf balls were stored for up to six months to allow oxidation of the outer portion of the ball. This image shows what takes place after this process has taken place.



We also store the raw McIntyre ball, and our experiments produce a slightly yellowish surface color over time. The remaining ring excess is removed and the molded gutta percha golf balls are positioned on nail boards for painting.



The organic ball with its ring removed weighs 39.4 grams.



The first of three very thin coats of paint is applied by rolling the ball around in a gloved hand.



The McIntyre ball weighs 38.1 grams, 97% comparable weight to the organic sample. It is assumed that the organic gutta percha is slightly more dense, molecularly, to produce this result.



Gutta golf balls take quite a beating. Below right are some images of old gutta percha golf balls found to have been cut by iron blades and beaten quite out of shape...it was all part of the game in 1885!



The McIntyre ball shows similar marks and characteristics after harsh play. If they didn't, they wouldn't be true to form.

A brand new McIntyre gutta percha golf ball is a piece of art, made by hand, with processes just as they were 130 years ago. The ball must be appreciated for what it is, the closest thing possible to play in honor of the old game of the gutta era.



The old clubs are meant for play and now there is the ball to complement them perfectly.

Both balls as they look in the condition after molding and removing the ring.



The McIntyre mold is producing what was described as a 27 pennyweight golf ball in the 1800's.

## COMMENTARY

### The McIntyre Gutta Ball – Its legitimacy

BY CHRIS MCINTYRE

It is here that I would like to discuss the legitimacy of the McIntyre Gutta Golf Ball.

When I first started, I used an authentic mold that produced a smaller 1.635-inch diameter ball. This ball weighed 35 grams with the McIntyre gutta (this would have produced 36 grams with comparable organic gutta according to the above experiments).

The following chart will give you the observed and calculated weights of different sized gutta golf balls (MG = McIntyre gutta, OG = organic gutta):

**Size No. 25**  
1.635-inch diameter  
35 grams MG  
36 grams OG

**Size No. 27**  
1.680-inch diameter  
38.1 grams MG  
39.4 grams OG  
(current golf ball)

**Size No. 27½**  
1.710-inch diameter  
40.5 grams MG  
41.7 grams OG  
(calculated from experiments)

(No measurements for sizes 26, 28, 29)

Calculations show that if I were to have made (or to make) a 27½-size golf ball with McIntyre gutta it would weigh 40.5 grams (97 percent of 41.7).

It has been discussed how authentic the McIntyre gutta ball is and how accurate its play and distance are to historical records. I contend they are quite authentic.

**First**, I have been able to make and play organic gutta balls and observe their distance and tendencies. I have been able to hit side by side the OG and the MG and there was no noticeable difference.

**Second**, I have compared data from Alfie Ward, Scotland who, with his brother and the help of Dr. David Hamilton (gutta historian and author "Precious Gum"), rebuilt an 1892 golf course and made gutta percha golf balls for play. Here are his observations:

Distance – excluding draft conditions – a good player could attain 150 to 170 yards with a good drive, with occasional "boomers."

Durability – Our guttas were highly durable and never broke up. But they did hack up and go out of shape.

One of the most famous properties of gutta percha balls was its painted surface. Paint never did adhere well to gutta percha and throughout the entire history of the gutta ball, that problem was never fully solved!

(Interestingly, these comments could easily have been written about the McIntyre gutta today! I feel very good about

matching their results.)

**Third**, there are numerous written references to gutta percha. In reference to the comments of those who have played the McIntyre ball, "distance" is mentioned more than anything else, usually in the context of how much shorter the current ball seems to be by comparison to earlier written references. There are many references to long drives, 200-225 yards, even further.

Such prodigious lengths cannot be taken as the norm. By themselves, these long drives seem to indicate that something is wrong with the McIntyre ball. But there are many other records of long drive contests being won at 170-190 yards. My contention is that prevailing conditions must be taken into account when playing gutta golf and that it is not always clear what it was like at the time of the earlier writings.

I am able to experience today variances in conditions that produce different results. I have hit drives from 140 to 185 yards with the McIntyre gutta ball. These results depended on temperature, pressure, plushness, wet or dry air, and course firmness. I am not a weak hitter, but there are definitely others who can out drive me. I do believe that a larger, heavier ball would travel further off the tee if the player could produce the swing speed and pure contact.

**Fourth**, durability (cost of authenticity) has been discussed. This is a topic that just needs to be a subject of consequence...it happened then and it will happen now.

see GUTTA, page 26

#### Gutty notes

Willie Park Jr. stated that most players used between 26- and 28-sized golf balls, with 27 or 27½ being the favorites. He stated that a player should use the heaviest golf ball that he could handle, as it became more difficult to play as the balls got larger and heavier.

My investigations and written references point to the 27½ ball at 42 grams being the historical standard.

So why is the McIntyre gutta a 27-sized ball? Well, it takes much investigation, design, experience and investment. Had I known a little more, it probably would have turned out at 27½. But I still think we are at a great size and playable golf ball, and there is no guarantee that a bigger ball would be better for everyone.



There really wasn't anything wrong with the original No. 25 ball. But, after the bigger ball was made, the small ball seemed too light to me.

Early references to hitting distances, most of the time refer to the "winner" of the contest...what about the others?

In 1892 in St. Andrews, a contest was held. Laurie Auchterlonie won at 225 yards, next was 210, then positions 3 thru 13 were from 195 down to 170 yards.

No one in our playing over the last year has come close to hitting 225 yards. But we are not playing St Andrews, and there was no reference to conditions.

In the same year, 1892, members of Ardeer club held a long drive competition. The winner's length was 170 yards. Second place was 165 yards.

In 1895 at Niagara-on-the-Lakes, a long drive on the first hole was won at 179 yards 6 inches. 🏌️

– Chris McIntyre



## LETTERS FROM ABROAD...

### The Soul of golf

Golf writer Geoff Shackelford recently discovered hickory golf when he had a game at the country-house course at Kingarrock, close to Cupar and near St Andrews. Playing with Geoff Ogilvy, former U.S./ Open Champion, and four other scribes, he described the match on [geoffshackelford.com](http://geoffshackelford.com) as “something entirely fresh and wonderful.” The website gives a report on the match, together with access to a montage of views including YouTube videos. He says he would rather play with hickories over the 2022-yard nine-hole layout, than 99 percent of other courses with modern equipment.

This was entirely consistent with Geoff’s view on the development of the game in his 2005 book, *The Future of Golf* where he takes both the USGA and R&A to task for their timid response over the years to new equipment technologies that have rendered obsolete for tournament play, many grand old championship courses. He had already seen, that previous week, the undignified extension of tees outside the traditional boundaries of the Old Course, for the 2010

Open Championship.

The charm of shorter traditional village or township courses is one of the recurrent themes in comment from the Scottish historian David Hamilton. It is there to see in the recent edition of one of his earliest books, *The Good Golf Guide to Scotland*, which was expanded and republished



**BOAT OF GARTEN** in the Scottish Highlands is one of several, shorter, village-type courses that have been enjoyed by members of the BGCS in their seasonal outings.

by Birlinn in 2009 as *The Scottish Golf Guide*. He introduces some of the new resort developments, where millions of pounds (and sometimes dollars) have been spent shifting thousands of tons of dirt to meet prestigious plans of international designers. But his most affectionate accounts are those of shorter, distinctive, welcoming village or township courses like Dornoch and Boat of Garten, in the Scottish Highlands, or Elie on the southern shores of Fife.

well, and interestingly! Historical records all reference pure gutta percha golf balls having the best playing characteristics... putting, pitching, ability to stop the ball by lightly cutting the shot and dropping it dead (on thick, slower greens of the times). The McIntyre gutta rates 100 percent in my eye for producing these qualities. The grooved line pattern was the standard for the day and, though the best, it still produces occasional irregular ball flight. This, I believe, just had to be the case in the earlier days as well. The golf ball kept developing and improving, bringing on brambles, dimples of all sorts, and had a long way to go from 1890.

Finally, one must ask himself “what are we accomplishing by playing with the gutta ball?” McIntyre Golf Company & Play Hickory Events has been dedicated to sharing the hickory experience and developing hickory ball products for seven

The village route is one that is being successfully explored by Hamish Ewan, in his fixture organisation for the North Scotland (i.e. Highland) region of the British Golf Collectors Society. In recent years he has organised delightful golf at Fraserburgh, Kirriemuir, Edzell, Montrose, Dornoch, Boat of Garten and others, preceded by soup and bacon rolls and followed by a good old-fashioned Scottish high tea. This year, members and guests enjoyed the municipal links at Arbroath for the spring outing – a 6200-yard layout originally by Old Tom Morris and updated by James Braid in the 1930s. The autumn excursion was to an old favourite, Newtonmore, one of the prettiest courses in the country, on Speyside in the heart of the Cairngorms. Next year, as part of the Society’s Jubilee celebrations, he plans extravagance at Royal Aberdeen.

At all of these venues, play can be with either steel or hickory, but Geoff Shackelford may perhaps be reassured that hickories predominate; modern kit is rare. Attendance at some of the more remote venues is modest but is distinguished always by informality, genuine friendship and fine Highland spirit, in both senses of the word. ☺

Jigger

## GUTTA

CONTINUED FROM 25

Reference the images above and you will see that poor striking will produce ball damage. The pounding of ball with clubs will produce imperfections, potential irregularities. Interestingly, modern golfers freak out at this concept because modern balls are practically indestructible, high performance pills that are played on perfectly tailored golf courses, turf, and greens. Coupled with the player’s lack of education on this subject, it is easy for him to wonder “what is wrong with this ball?” One bad strike with a relatively expensive gutta ball might cause a modern, uneducated player to comment “I hate this ball!” The ball is what it is, and what it was.

Fifth, playability has been discussed. For the most part, players have discovered that the gutta golf ball actually plays very

years. I have been engulfed in hickory golf for 12 years. There have been changes, but most interesting has been the growth and expansion of the game. The gutta ball has added value to the experience... authentic value. The common experience is 1920’s golf with hickory clubs and ball of choice (usually modern high-end golf balls). There are many players who have embraced the modern golf ball converted to the square mesh style ball (the Flash and Ace), but it is still an essentially modern ball in durability and performance. The gutta ball is the best opportunity for the hickory enthusiast to experience the authentic way the game was played in that earlier era – an experience that I treasure every time the opportunity arises.

I hope this document helps in the education and understanding of the McIntyre Gutta Ball. ☺

## PERSONALLY SPEAKING...

When not being humiliated on the Course, your Correspondent takes great delight in passing the bottle, and listening to his Betters on the various topics which excite Hickory Players (I do not include Collectors, unless they are also Players).

The latest SOHG Newsletter raised one of the perennial favourites, the use of reproductions. As a hickory player of some years standing, I would like to add a sober contribution.

Regarding myself as something of a purist, my initial foray into hickory clubs was exclusively of the period – I even went to Oakhurst armed with expensive woods bought from Scotland which I was assured were pre-1890. When the Czar announced them to be too bulger in shape to be acceptable, my first compromise was made, by getting replica long noses from Mike Just on the spot!

Oakhurst apart, I have no difficulty in maintaining my “originals only” stance, and limit my play clubs to originals, but sometimes with new replacement shafts. Technically, these new shafts ought to be shunned; but we all know that favou-

rite playable heads take a lot of finding (particularly woods) and new shafts can be shaved to replicate the flex of the old.

However, this remains a personal preference, and reflects a lack of skill and patience in doing only the most basic repairs and fettling of clubs.

The scantiest reflection on the history of equipment shows clearly that adaptation and innovation were the order of the day for the original clubmakers, whose livelihood depended on producing something new to sell to their Patrons. The modern day clubmaker, whether Mike Just in commercial production; Russ Fisher in his version of the “Pro’s Shop” or the increasing number of those who make clubs strictly for their own use, are only following a long and estimable tradition.

We can choose now between originals; retrospectives (heads which were available with hickory or steel shafts, and steel shafts replaced with new hickory), or modern reproductions. For the average Player, I do not believe any version gives an advantage, and have no difficulty in tournament play leaving it to personal choice. If Randy and his Peers know better, it is for them to press for rulings which reflect their flight and status, leaving the rest of us to enjoy what’s in hand!

An immediate and important concern is

the disincentive to try hickory golf when being handed a 100-year-old club. In my experience, most would-be newcomers to the game, and to tournament play, are as much deterred by the thought of breaking a club as by the potential humiliation or frustration at not being able to replicate their modern game. If only for this reason, reproductions are a godsend.

I am sure there are limits to this philosophy, although whether a head the size of a baseball gives an unfair advantage, I am not fortunate enough to know! Certainly, I look forward to the day when Otey’s banishment is annulled, as good putting is engendered between the ears!

From a practical future perspective, the argument will soon be academic (where it belongs) as the original equipment becomes scarcer and more expensive. My clubs still break despite an Oldster’s swing speed, and rarely survive the attention of the young Pro or the inexperienced friend. Future generations must be encouraged by availability, not exclusivity – will someone now pass the bottle my way? ☺

4 Degrees

Send your “Personally Speaking” commentary to the Editor. [jdavis2364@gmail.com](mailto:jdavis2364@gmail.com)

## SLOPE

CONTINUED FROM 14

to handle those courses first up with hickories and not make a complete fool of myself.

Hey, a man has his image to think of. (On the other hand, years ago my wife, a male friend and I were driving past Turnberry during a visit to Scotland. The course was empty. “Why don’t we see if we can get a game,” I suggested. “Are you nuts,” they replied with one voice, “that’s a championship course.” So what, I replied, only God would see you and he could care less).

So I guess I will remain with one foot in the past and the other in the present. But, hey, at the age of almost 71 what else can I expect? Call me a pseudo-traditionalist or a pragmatist, as you will. I’m happy to have my cake and eat it, too.

Still it is a worry. Because while I am not quite ready to follow those true believers who have switched to hickories only for

the rest of their golfing lives, I clearly have put a tentative toe upon that slippery slope. The fact that I roll up with my hickories for Saturday pick-up games here at No. 7 suggests that the traditionalist voice may be gaining the upper hand. Of course, it may reflect nothing more than a reaction to the teasing jibe from more than one of that Saturday group to the effect that: “You play a lot better with those things than your regular clubs.” ☺

(Editor’s note: Soon after he penned this piece for the *Wee Nip*, Hugh finished second in the Carolina Hickory Golf Association’s Hickory Haggis. He writes:

“I used four demo clubs from Mike Just in the just-completed Hickory Haggis. Finished in a tie for second and won second in a putt-off. In doing so I had to go head-to-head for nine holes in one nine-hole match with a 7 handicapper (who admittedly had to give me six shots). He and I tied 5-5. I doubt that would have been the result with my purely pre-1935 bag.”

# Society of Hickory Golfers

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## FINAL SHOT

C.B. Macdonald Ladies

Noi Moreau, left, and Rita Dietz were two of eight women who attended the C.B Macdonald matches at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, Canada this past September. Mrs. Moreau played in the event while Mrs. Dietz arranged social outings for non-playing guests. Her husband, Paul Dietz, is an organizer of the annual pre-1900 tournament.

PHOTO/JANE REHEARD

