



# A WEE NIP

Newsletter of the Society of Hickory Golfers • Spring 2010 • [www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com)

## An invitation from France

*The following comes from Jean-Louis Panigel, who welcomes visitors and players to the 2010 French Hickory Open.*

BY JEAN-LOUIS PANIGEL

The Open de France Hickory 2010 is scheduled for July 2 (practice round) and July 3 (championship) on the historic Chantilly course during the time of our conventional Open de France (July 1-4) on our National Golf course.

This is a great opportunity to witness one championship and participate in another.

The inaugural event in 2009 was universally hailed as a one-of-a-kind classic among hickory golf championships.

The 2009 event was made unique partly because it was held during Chantilly's centennial and in the spirit of its founders Arnaud Massy and Jean Gassiat. We also thank Perry Sommers of Australia, Randy Jensen of the USA and others from six other countries, the British Golf Collectors Society and its Captain David Hamilton. We also are grateful for the kind patronage of Mr. Jean-Louis Dupont, the man whose life is one with the history of the club.

Chantilly, the host club, is one of the best historic French clubs, host of numerous Opens de France. It was one of the best courses of the 2009 season.

The 150th Open Championship at St. Andrews (July 15-18) follows shortly thereafter and would make a wonderful combined trip to Europe. My recommendation would be to also enjoy the Scottish Golf Heritage Festival in Old Musselburgh (July 9-12), which is just before the Open.



### DOUBLE CROWN WINNERS.

Robert T. Jones Jr. (Bobby Jones, left) and Chick Evans (Charles Evans Jr., right) are the only two men ever to have won both the U.S. Open and the U.S. Amateur in the same year. In the photo at right, Jones and Evans are congratulating one another following the 1927 U.S. Amateur Championship held at the Minikahda Club, Minneapolis, Minn. Jones won. Evans was the runner-up. Stories on the clubs used by both men are featured in this edition of the Wee Nip.

PHOTO/COURTESY USGA

## Bobby Jones – Acquiring the tools

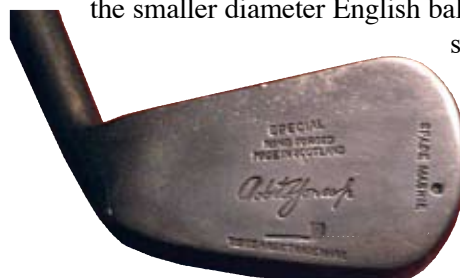
BY DOUG MARSHALL

In the wood shaft era prior to 1930, putting together a great set of player clubs was a major challenge. The difficulty in finding clubs that behaved well in competitive conditions ranked up there with the acquisition of decent playing skills.

Bobby Jones played his entire competitive career with hickory shafts and the smaller diameter English ball – 1.62 ounce, 1.62 inch. Unlike steel shafts, the shafts of these clubs were vulnerable to changes in temperature and precipitation, constantly adjusting to atmospheric conditions.

Young Bobby's first set, made for him by Stewart Maiden, consisted of

see **JONES**, page 6





## Down the Fairway... from the President

We are off and running in the new year! By the time you receive your Wee Nip, the 2010 hickory season will be well underway. Once again the calendar is filling up with great opportunities for hickory events and wonderful places to both play and travel. Be sure to figure out your hickory-playing calendar for 2010 and enjoy!

This issue of the Wee Nip is packed full of fun and useful, hickory information! Events, interviews, domestic and international happenings, club information, playing tips, and lots more. So get comfy in your favorite chair, grab a cup of coffee or spirits of choice and explore the world of hickory golf with the Society of Hickory Golfers and the Wee Nip!

And what is the state of hickory golf? Well, if membership and scheduled events are good indicators, hickory golf is doing just great! The membership is now well over 200 and growing; we are expecting a huge turnout for this year's U.S. Hickory Open (don't miss it); and more exciting plans are underway to help our members enjoy and share the hickory golf experience.

So how can you help? Share the hickory experience with a friend. That's right, invite someone to play and introduce them to our hickory world. It works. Last year I asked friends at our golf club to try hickory golf and it resulted in seven new SOHG members. Give it try and get out and play!

Ken Holtz  
President, Society of Hickory Golfers

P.S. Look for a new tournament this coming August at Lawsonia Links in beautiful Wisconsin!

### A WEE NIP

Spring 2010

Editor - James Davis

Contributors

Rob Ahlschwede, Mike Brown, John Fischer III, Randy Jensen, Mike Just, Connor Lewis, Chris McIntyre, Doug Marshall, Tad Moore, Audrey Moriarty, Jean-Louis Panigel

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Address all correspondence to:

Editor, Wee Nip  
338 Gladstone Ave. SE  
E. Grand Rapids, MI 49506 USA  
or via e-mail to: jdavis2364@gmail.com

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

# SOCIETY NEWS

## Classifieds come to the Wee Nip

The SoHG Board has approved the addition of classified advertising for the Wee Nip. Ours is not a large circulation, yet, and, as of now, the Wee Nip is produced but twice a year. Still, a well-placed ad for the sale of a club or other item, or a similar appeal seeking such club or item, may find a happy answer through these classified ads.

Such success, of course, depends in large measure on the keen interest SoHG members take in their hobby/pastime. Advertisements thus posted through the Wee Nip will find an audience whose like-minded interests may result in a brisk, satisfactory trade in clubs, balls and the like.

Of course, as with any such service, the buyer must be on his toes. The advertising guidelines, outlined below, were developed with an eye to protecting both your Society as well as buyers and sellers. Those who use the pages should exercise the proper precautions to ensure transactions are safe and payments received.

Good luck with buying, selling and trading. That one club you are looking for to fill out the play set may be just a classified ad away.

### FROM THE EDITOR

Very happy to have March finally here. The winter in the upper Midwest has not been brutal, but it has lasted long enough and we are all eager to return to the golf courses.

Thinking about golf led Doug Marshall to thoughts of what Bobby Jones carried in his bag. Up to 16 clubs or so during his Grand Slam year. Connor Lewis, a Jones fan, weighed in with some photos and comments for this issue. Thinking, too, about what makes a good, solid hickory club, we asked some of our seasoned vets just what makes a good hickory shaft. Their insights may help you appraise clubs with greater precision. Check out the story on the Tufts Archives; a must-visit when you are in the Pinehurst area.

As you receive this issue, the Golf Collector Society Region 4 event in Austin, Texas, has, as usual, launched the season

#### Policy for SoHG Wee Nip Classified Ads

- 1) Ad price is \$7, payable to SoHG for 1 column, 2-inch ad. Larger ads are available by arrangement with the editor.
- 2) Advertisers must be members of the Society of Hickory Golfers.
- 3) Advertisers agree to this return policy: if buyer is unsatisfied with item purchased, buyer may return the item unused, within 30 days of original receipt. Buyer pays return shipping.
- 4) If item is for play, Advertiser agrees that the item must meet SoHG equipment standards.
- 5) The SoHG assumes no responsibility for Classified Ad transactions, including satisfaction of the buyer or seller, transfer of funds, etc. All transactions are strictly between the buyer and seller.
- 6) Wee Nip Classified Ads are available to sellers and buyers to promote the communication and availability of quality, SoHG compliant equipment and other items of interest.

Also remember that the Wee Nip is not responsible for any errors in your ads. They will be printed as they are received.

Ads may be sent, along with a check payable to the SoHG, to:  
Wee Nip Classifieds  
338 Gladstone Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

or e-mail the ad to:  
jdavis2364@gmail.com

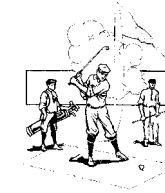
with high energy, club trading and renewed friendships. Other events are waiting their turn, including the U.S. Hickory Open in Morganton, N.C., scheduled for July 12-14. Put this one on your calendar.

**On a sad note,** the SoHG, indeed all of hickory golf, lost a good friend in late February, as Mike Brown of Indianapolis, Ind., has passed away. His loss, his company both on the course and off, will be keenly felt. Some remembrances of Mike are offered inside, as is a story he wrote for this edition of the Wee Nip. His poignant words remind us of his great sense of humor and the forthright nature of his gregarious commentary.

As always, we invite your participation with letters, stories, photographs and illustrations.

Jim Davis

# Tournament Fixtures



Note: Some of the following fixtures have recently been contested or are about to be. As always, look to the Web site at [www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com) for the most current fixtures calendar.

### MARCH

**19 - Carolina Hickory Golf Association event** at Pine Needles GC in Southern Pines, N.C.  
Bill Engelson 910-295-2857  
or [carolinahickory@gmail.com](mailto:carolinahickory@gmail.com)

**21 - BGCS Welsh Hickory Championship.** The first hickory major on the BGCS fixtures card will be contested at Aberdovey GC in Mid-Wales.

**26-27 - GCS Region 4 Hickory Tournament.** A 36-hole medal event at Onion Creek Club in Austin, Texas.  
Rives McBee at [rives.mcbee@verizon.net](mailto:rives.mcbee@verizon.net)  
Max Hill at [max@hickorysticks.net](mailto:max@hickorysticks.net)  
or Pete League at [league1967@austin.rr.com](mailto:league1967@austin.rr.com)

**27-28 - Willie Park 150th Anniversary Golf Competition.** Musselburgh's Old Links, Scotland.  
Lionel Freedman, 117 Mayfield Crescent, Musselburgh, EH21 6EU  
Tel: 0131 665 4861

### APRIL

**16 - Carolina Hickory Golf Assoc. event** at Southern Pines GC.  
Bill Engelson 910-295-2857  
or [carolinahickory@gmail.com](mailto:carolinahickory@gmail.com)

**22-24 - Tad Moore Hickory Challenge 4-Ball** at Selma CC in Selma, AL.  
Tad Moore 706-333-9626  
or [tad@tadmmore.com](mailto:tad@tadmmore.com)

### MAY

**13-15 - GCS Region 6 Chicago Hickory Tour,** Naperville, Ill. Optional hickory practice round on May 12. 2-Man team competition on May 13; individual and scramble tournament on May 14. Trade Faire on Sat., May 15, from 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m at the Hilton of Lisle/Naperville.  
Bryant Murphy 847-516-2077  
or [turfurf17@sbcglobal.net](mailto:turfurf17@sbcglobal.net)

**17 - Carolina Hickory Golf Association event** at Segefield CC in Greensboro, N.C.  
Bill Engelson 910-295-2857  
or [carolinahickory@gmail.com](mailto:carolinahickory@gmail.com)

**24 - BGCS Central England Hickory Championship.** The second hickory major on the BGCS fixtures card will be contested over the challenging heathlands of Coxmoor GC in Nottinghamshire.

**28 - BGCS Scottish Hickory Championship.** The third hickory major on the BGCS fixtures card will be contested over the cunning links of Gullane GC #3 in East Lothian.  
Ron Beatt is the organiser.

### JUNE

**10-12 - National Hickory Championship (NHC)** over Oakhurst Links. The NHC is the premier 19th-century equipment and rules event. Entry packets are now available.  
Pete Georgiady 336-996-7836,  
336-707-8376 or [nhc-golf@earthlink.net](mailto:nhc-golf@earthlink.net)

**18 - Indiana Boom Town 1892 Hickory Tournament.** Second annual Boom Town Hickory Tournament at Gas City, Ind. Low gross and scramble events.  
Walnut Creek Golf Courses at [www.walnutcreekgolf.com](http://www.walnutcreekgolf.com), 765-998-7651, Box 276 Upland In. 46989; or Gas City Chamber at [www.gascity.com](http://www.gascity.com) or 765-674-7545

**18-20 - Vermont Hickory Open.** Third annual Vermont Hickory Open returns to Copley CC, near Stowe. Playsets are limited to seven (7) clubs.  
Matt Dodds at [matt@brandthropology.com](mailto:matt@brandthropology.com), [www.vthickoryopen.org](http://www.vthickoryopen.org)  
or Pat Kennedy at 802-658-1063

**18 - Carolina Hickory Golf Association event** at Alamance CC in Burlington.  
Bill Engelson 910-295-2857  
or [carolinahickory@gmail.com](mailto:carolinahickory@gmail.com)

**24-26 - Belvedere Hickory.** The 5th annual Belvedere Hickory at the historic Belvedere GC in Charlevoix, Mich. This venue has hosted approximately 40 Michigan Amateur Championships.  
Marty Joy 231-547-2611, 239-248-1878  
or [golddenny@yahoo.com](mailto:golddenny@yahoo.com);  
or Chuck McMullin at [cwmcmullin@yahoo.com](mailto:cwmcmullin@yahoo.com)

### JULY

**12-14 - U.S. Hickory Open.** Third annual U.S. Hickory Open at Mimosa Hills Golf and CC in Morganton, N.C.  
Barry Markowitz 919-353-1950  
or [mimandbarry@gmail.com](mailto:mimandbarry@gmail.com)

**16-17 - Finnish Hickory Championship.** At Helsinki GC. Open to any hickory golfer. Open Divisions for Men and Women. Also Net Division for all participants for Finnish Hickory Open trophy.  
Antti Paatola +358 400 458 520  
or [antti.paatola@golfantiikki.fi](mailto:antti.paatola@golfantiikki.fi)

### AUGUST

**13-14 - Foxburg, Penn., Hickory Event.** A 1900's-equipment hickory event at Foxburg CC in Western Penn., and the oldest

golf course in continuous use in the United States.

Foxburg CC at 724-659-3196  
or Tom Johnson at 330-677-8997

**27-29 - 2010 Kummel Cup** The inaugural hickory Kummel Cup will be contested this summer at Lawsonia Links in Green Lake, Wisc.  
Ken Holtz 920-850-0109

### SEPTEMBER

**10-12 - C.B. Macdonald Challenge.** The Golf Historical Society of Canada will host the eighth annual C.B. Macdonald Tournament and the Eastern Canadian Hickory Championship.  
Paul Dietz at 509 Hedden Court Sarnia, Ontario, Canada, N7S 6L8; 519-331-6585, [clubdoc@ebtech.net](mailto:clubdoc@ebtech.net)  
or Doug Marshall at [dougmarsh7@aol.com](mailto:dougmarsh7@aol.com)

### OCTOBER

**1-3 - Mountain Valley Hickory Open.** In Little Rock at War Memorial GC and Rebsamen GC.  
Breck Speed at 150 Central Central Ave., Hot Springs, AR 71901; 501-993-3344, 501-624-1635 or [bspeed@mountainvalleyspring.com](mailto:bspeed@mountainvalleyspring.com)

**8 - BGCS English Hickory Championship.** The final major on the BGCS fixtures card for 2010 will be contested over the links of Rye GC southeast of London.  
Tim Smartt is the organiser.

**23-24 - Carolina Hickory Golf Association match play championship** over two days on the Donald J. Ross course at Southern Pines CC. The champion will win the coveted Hickory Haggis Cup. CHGA members only.  
Bill Engelson 910-295-2857  
or [carolinahickory@gmail.com](mailto:carolinahickory@gmail.com)

### NOVEMBER

**5-7 - Mid Pines Hickory Open.** 7th annual Mid Pines Hickory Open at Mid Pines Inn & Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C.  
Graham Gilmore, Director of Golf, Mid Pines and Pine Needles GCs, 1010 Midland Road, Southern Pines, NC 28387,  
910-692-7111  
or [Graham.Gilmore@ROSSRESORTS.com](mailto:Graham.Gilmore@ROSSRESORTS.com)

**7-10 - 40th GCS Annual Meeting and Trade Show.** Pine Needles and Mid Pines Resorts in Southern Pines, N.C. near the Pinehurst area.  
Karen Bednarski 541-991-7313  
or [kbednarski@golfcollectors.com](mailto:kbednarski@golfcollectors.com)

I have only known Mike for two years, but from the very beginning he helped me find items I was searching for. What really struck me about Mike was that he always went the extra mile. For instance, he knew that I collected items from Musselburgh. I had just purchased a Wm Park Iron from him when, completely out of nowhere, he sent me a limited edition print of Willie Park, Sr. as a thank you.

Just recently, he sold me a club and, as a special thanks, he sent me a 1930 postcard of the municipal golf course in my town. Sometimes it's the little things that make a difference.

While I have only been collecting and playing hickories for a little over two years, it was guys like Mike Brown who make this all worthwhile. I didn't know Mike as long, or as well, as most of you, but what I do know about Mike, is that he made this a better organization to be involved in.

**Connor T. Lewis**

I have met few men who were more of a gentleman and a devotee to hickory golf and golf history. I got an e-mail from him a few weeks ago about a bit of a rough time I had during the Selma event last year. It was my first hickory event. But Mike, who was playing with us, made it a point to tell me "You are a true gentleman." I swelled up reading the e-mail. We have lost a friend. But I am glad I went to that hickory event. If I hadn't, I would not have met Mike or several other people who have now become good friends.

**Bill Sewell**

He was a true friend and will be sadly missed. I'm only glad that I had a chance to meet him. I think most of us at one time or another shared a room, his sense of humour and his advice.

**John Mullock**

I will miss Mike. He was our soul. Whenever I wanted to know something, or air something out, I would call him. I treasured his remarks.

**Jay Harris**

What a good friend we have lost. But that is the nature of life. I'm glad I got to meet him and play a round with him in Selma last year. What fun he was to golf with! And no one had a wit like that. As was said of Dr. Johnson, we shall have to go the next best; there can be no one who puts you in mind of Mike Brown.

**Jim Davis**

Mike, was great to me. He will be missed! God bless him and his family.

**Phil Gibbs**

He was always so positive about things. Just shaking my head. I will miss him.

**Rob Ahlschwede**

Loved seeing Mike at hickory tournaments. He was very generous to me and Belvedere Golf Club. Mike was a big teddy bear with a love for hickory golf. I'll miss you Mike.

**Dennis "Marty" Joy II  
... Belvedere Golf Club**

Many of Mike Brown's numerous friends were fortunate recipients of small keepsakes Mike would find on the Internet or elsewhere. He would send the items on with a kind note and a thank you for being his friend, for supporting hickory golf, or simply because he wanted to do something nice for you.

For me, he seemed to focus on finding Mountain Valley items like sales brochures from the 1940's or postcards from Arkansas with golf themes. The postcards in particular were much appreciated by me for their beauty and for the scenes of golf courses in Arkansas long altered or simply no longer in existence. Last year, at the Mountain Valley Hickory Open, we presented a framed montage of these cards to the Arkansas State Golf Association to be included in their collection. The Director of the ASGA, Jay Fox, was highly moved and placed them in the ASGA museum with a note stating the postcards were collected and donated by Michael Brown of Indianapolis, Ind.

We'll miss you Mike!

**Breck Speed**

To me, Mike was the biggest cheerleader of hickory golf and the GCS that I knew. He was at every show and event. Even when he couldn't play, he was there rooting for everyone else.

He seemed to have an endlessly deep memory for what the people he knew were looking for and would notify you if he came across something that might be of interest.

Endlessly upbeat and supportive of everyone else's interests.

Mike was the ultimate friend to the playing and collecting communities. He will be missed.

Rest in peace Mike.

**Ralph Livingston**

I will sorely miss this soft-spoken gentle giant of a man. He was a dear friend who constantly gave of himself without any expectation of reciprocation. I don't know how many times he purchased something on eBay and then sent to me because he thought I should have it. Let's hope he is now in a better place and fully restored to show-room condition.

Fairways and Greens,  
Mikey.

**Lang Willie  
Bill Engelson**

What a beautiful person; I am pleased to have known him, if only for a few years.

**Jim Stevens**

I found Mike to be an absolute gentleman, so helpful, generous, and would do anything for you – yes, a great loss to both societies.

**David Kirkwood**

As I worked with the SoHG to get hickory golf going here in the USA, I could always count on Mike to help with anything. I will miss his thoughts and insights. He was a great friend to Carol and me and to my hickory event. If he could not play, he was here to help me out. We all will miss Mike.

**Tad and Carol Moore**



## Mike Brown

1949-2010

A Message for Mike,  
My good friend and helper of all ... you will be missed. Your selfless approach, of putting others first, is truly an example for us all. Thank you for some many things ...

Your voice of reason  
Your passion for Hogan  
Your caring and sharing, consult to all who asked  
Your expertise and knowledge of so many things  
Your constant barrage of e-mail jokes  
Your ever-watching eBay oversight  
Your work and passion for collecting and playing hickories  
Your personal friendship  
For keeping it fun and worthwhile  
We love you Mike,

**Ken Holtz**

## FEATURED CLUB



BY MIKE BROWN  
INDIANAPOLIS, IND. USA

### DEFINITION OF THE MONGREL IRON:

"Mongrel along with freak was used to describe newly invented clubs that were not of the ordinary. It appears to have been used mostly during the teens and apparently some of the club makers used it for the initial naming of their clubs. If the club became popular they would gain a real name."

Looking back over the many years that I have been playing golf with wooden shafted clubs, I can still remember specific shots from more than 17 years ago. My first round ever was played with crappy rented clubs at the Golf Collectors Society annual meeting in Atlanta and we played East Lake Country Club. Back then East Lake was in a state of disrepair and in need of some loving attention that has happened in the last few years. There is a par 3 there that was No. 9 but is now No. 18. The image is still so vivid in my mind as I hit a great shot up the hill to a tough green and sailed right over it. Of course, I failed to notice the foursome in front of us off to the right hand side of the dance floor who were still playing the hole. How utterly embarrassing.

I mention this because in the years since then I have had a couple hundred different clubs in my hickory bag. In fact, if I had all the clubs I have passed along to my buddies, I would have one great collection of solid players, but part of the camaraderie of this game is to share as much as possible with friends or friends of friends and help them improve their play set. All this is leading me to share with you the concept of "My Favorite Club."

I sometimes will look in my bag during a round and realize that I have about 30 clubs crammed in there. After the round is over I realize that I used about five or six of the 30. Among all the clubs I have ever owned one stands out above all others – my Tom Stewart mongrel mashie. With a C-9 swing weight and 38½-inch length this baby doesn't stand out in a crowd nor does it draw interest from those fellow players known as "Bag Shoppers."

## Tom Stewart mongrel mashie



"POWER DOTS" on the back of Mike Brown's mongrel mashie are said by the author to improve both distance and accuracy, if not the imagination.

You know, the ones who look into everyone's bag at a hickory event then ask if they can buy your best clubs.

The only unique thing about it is that on the back of the club head there are a bunch of hand-applied dot punches sort of resembling a measles vaccination. They seem to have been placed there to obliterate a name or a poor stamping or the like. Perhaps some scofflaw trying to get over on Tom Stewart. I am, of course, the only one who knows the true intention of these punches – Power Dots! They are there to add power to my swing and make the ball go straighter and farther. I bet none of you guys have Power Dots on your clubs!

This mongrel is simply the club I love to hit and the one I will always carry in my play set. I still recall the two sweet shots on that first, back nine, par 3 at the St. Johns County course in St. Augustine; the giant swing hook on that impossible to hit back nine par 3 at the Kingsley Club; the shot on No. 17 at the Belvedere Club in Charlevoix; that sweet drawing, low flying mongrel up to the 18th green at the Fields club in LaGrange, Ga. as onlookers gasped in awe; and, of course, the high flying, soft landing shot at No. 3 at Crystal Downs in Frankfort, Mich. (If it had gone another inch towards that big hill above the hole I would have been closer than Chuck and Fred.)



This is my go-to club. The one I always have a lot of confidence in hitting and the one I come back to time after time after time. I feel good about hitting this club. I can fix a bad day with one good swing of this club. There are so many memories in this mongrel that I always smile when I seek it out amongst the other sad sacks stuck inside my golf bag. My mongrel is my good and trusted friend; the type of friend that you know will support you in your time of need and never ask, "How in the world could you have just hit such a poor excuse of a shot."

The truth is that I love this club and would marry it if only the law allowed. I would buy it a nice meal followed by a good movie then move on to some 18-year-old Springbank. My mongrel will support me and stay with me through sickness and health, through thick and thin, for better or worse...forever. So please do not ask me if it is for sale. But, then again – what is your offer? ☺

Thanks Mike.

We will miss you.

During his career, Jones had accumulated more than 200 clubs, of which 18 were considered to be on “the active list.”

## JONES

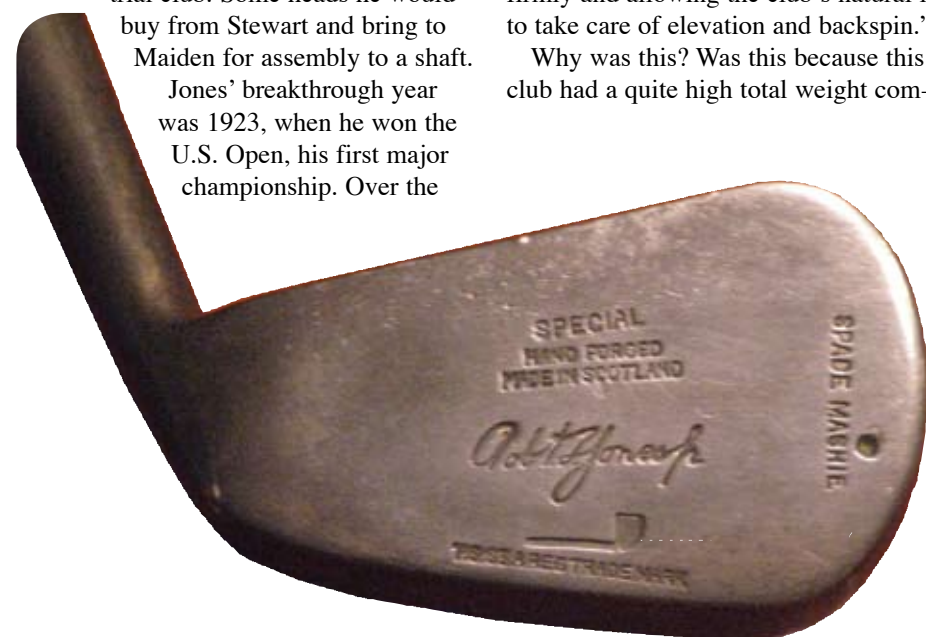
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driver, brassie, mid-iron, mashie, niblick and putter. As he grew older he began the search for clubs better suited to his developing game. He admitted that during his career he had accumulated more than 200 clubs, of which 18 were considered to be on “the active list.” In his quest, several very talented club makers aided him. First was Stewart Maiden, the pro at East Lake and the man whose swing he copied. Then came Tom Stewart whose shop he often visited when he was in St. Andrews. Finally, he established a close relationship with J. Victor East, chief club designer at Spalding Golf Co.



**J. VICTOR EAST** was a club designer with Spalding and later with Wilson.

In his travels to Scotland, Jones would find clubs and heads he fancied and would visit Tom Stewart’s shop where he would closely supervise the making of a trial club. Some heads he would buy from Stewart and bring to Maiden for assembly to a shaft. Jones’ breakthrough year was 1923, when he won the U.S. Open, his first major championship. Over the



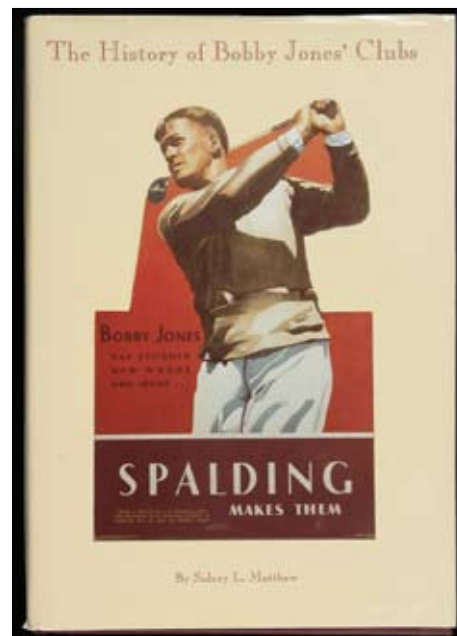
next seven years he won 12 more national championships. During this time he was constantly refining his basic playing set, meticulously assembling a set by feel that were proven later to be remarkably matched, all except one club – his mashie niblick!

East, who began working with Jones in the early '20s, discovered that the original Calamity Jane blade putter had lost its flat leading edge due to constant buffing with the emery paper widely used to clean clubs at the time. A number of copies were made.

As for the mashie niblick, East found it to be the only club in Jones bag that had interesting variances from the rest. Although its overall weight was similar at 15 3/8 ounces, the swing weight was the lightest in the bag at B-8 1/2. Jones described it as a “maverick club” that had always been a struggle to use.

He said “As nearly as I could figure it out, the main trouble is an inability to use my body in making the stroke... I seem to take the club back too straight in a word, and employ my arms in a sort of pseudo scooping motion in the actual stroke, just like a duffer, instead of smashing the ball firmly and allowing the club’s natural loft to take care of elevation and backspin.”

Why was this? Was this because this club had a quite high total weight com-



**SIDNEY L. MATTHEW'S** book on Jones’ clubs – *The History of Bobby Jones’ Clubs* (Impregnable Quadrilateral Press, 1992) – is considered a valuable and authoritative source of information on the subject.

bined with a very light swing weight and thus had poor head weight when swung? Or was the problem in the flex of the shaft? Presumably, only Victor East knows as he remedied the situation.

At the same time, Jones had East re-shaft his Jack White driver, which he had named “Jeanie Deans.” This was to be important later, as in 1929, just before the season was to begin, Bob’s clubs went missing. They turned up shortly thereafter but Jones was so concerned that he had East later that year begin the job of replicating the complete set.

In East’s words: “To give you some idea of the exacting detail required for this order I shall confine my description of the

**THIS TOM STEWART** “Robert T. Jones, Jr.” signature spade mashie is owned by Connor Lewis. He writes: “The club is interesting on a couple of levels. We know for certain that Jones specifically asked Tom Stewart to forge him, at the very least, two sets. The first was in 1926 when Jones visited St. Andrews for the Walker Cup. The second was in 1929 when Jones’ clubs were stolen in New York City. Following that incident, Jones sent an urgent wire to Stewart to have a duplicate set made. Many people are under the assumption that it was this 1929 set that spawned the RTJ clubs. I have spoken at length with Ralph Livingston and he has informed me that the RTJ’s were first forged after Jones’ initial 1926 set. This would make sense because, even in 1926, Jones was already being considered as the best golfer in the world, much to the dislike of Walter Hagen. Regardless, this club in my collection is quite rare and a treasured asset, be it from 1926 or 1929.”



work to the duplication of Jones driver. {This driver, the Jack White model, now resides in the R&A museum in St. Andrews, Scotland.} Although the exact reproduction of all parts of the driver was important, perhaps of more concern was the duplication of the “feel” Jones had for the club.”

He goes on to say he had to inspect 5,000 pieces of first-grade hickory to find four shafts. The four shafts were fitted to duplicate heads, and then worked down to exact micrometer measurements of the original, weighed for duplication and tested for torsion, deflection and recovery.

Two of these met the requirements, were made into finished clubs and tested for various atmospheric conditions. One proved to be an exact duplicate and became part of Jones’ 1930 set. The other East kept “as a memento of a pleasant task.”

J. Victor East had done this sort of work often in the past. He was an expert at making matched hickory sets on an individual basis. After Jones retired in 1930, the two men collaborated on iron clubs bearing Jones name. The first clubs were marketed in 1932. By that time, steel shafts were becoming common and only a limited number of iron sets were produced with hickory shafts. As we collectors know, these are a scarce and expensive

### The Bobby Jones “Grand Slam” set

*The set in the above picture has been assembled by SoHG member Connor Lewis. It’s as close as he could get to Jones’ actual Grand Slam set.*

Jack White Driver  
George Duncan Brassie  
J. Victor East Spoon

#### Irons, from left:

Auchterlonie-stamped,  
Stewart-forged 1 iron (Jones carried a 1 1/2 iron)  
Stewart 2 iron  
Stewart 3 iron  
Spalding Prototype  
Jones signature mashie iron  
James A. Donaldson-stamped  
Stewart 4 iron  
Spalding Prototype  
Jones signature mashie  
Stewart spade mashie  
George Nicoll mashie niblick  
Hendry and Bishop niblick  
J. Morris Cleek as a chipper  
Hagen Concave wedge  
and the Calamity Jane putter

collectable. No wood-shafted, wooden-headed clubs were ever built inscribed with the “Robt. T. Jones” name.

However, steel shaft woods and irons clad in pyratone-like material were made in large numbers and helped Spalding to survive through the depression years of the '30s. The brand sold more than 2 million sets of clubs before being officially retired in 1973. Some consider the clubs to be the first truly matched sets ever constructed. Perhaps. Perhaps not. East continued to design clubs for Spalding and later the Wilson Golf Company where he pioneered many other design firsts.

Jones sometimes got credit for being associated with the first “matched” set of golf clubs, something he dismissed in a letter to Charles Price: “I did not participate in the production of the first matched set of golf clubs. These had been produced some years before by Spalding. I only claim to have aided in the production of the best clubs that had heretofore been made in this country, clubs that helped influence club design ever since.”

I have several sets of these J. Victor East/Bob Jones clubs and I totally agree. For the time, they were the best. If you ever have the opportunity to play these clubs, by all means take them out and try them. You will agree. 🍷

# Pinehurst's Tufts Archives a trove of history for Ross fans

BY AUDREY MORIARTY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
THE TUFTS ARCHIVES

James Walker Tufts, of Charlestown, Mass., one of the founders of the American Soda Fountain Company, purchased a barren patch of land in the Sandhills of North Carolina in 1895, and turned it into one of America's foremost resorts. The history of this growth is preserved in the Tufts Archives with documents, artifacts, and photographic images.

In the summer of 1895, Tufts purchased approximately 6,000 acres of the Carolina Desert to create a health spa. Many people from New England suffered from consumption, and the proscribed cure was prolonged rest. Tufts hoped to get Northerners who were in the habit of going south to Florida, to stop at his "mid-south" resort. He built rental cottages, rooming houses, a piggery, dairy, greenhouses and supplied electricity and water, all in six months. A trolley brought visitors to Pinehurst from the nearby Southern Pines railroad station. By the second season, Tufts learned that consumption was contagious (it was actually tuberculosis) and his dream health spa was transformed into a recreational resort.

The village of Pinehurst rapidly grew into a playground for the rich and famous – people who had leisure time. Political figures such as General George Marshall, Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, and Secretary of State Cordell Hull frequented Pinehurst. Annie Oakley, Will Rogers, Glenn Miller and Amelia Earhart also were part of the early Pinehurst scene. Amateur and professional golfers were always welcomed at Pinehurst and routinely played in the North & South tournament. Ben Hogan's first professional win was his victory in the 1940 North & South. Pinehurst has also been the site of the 1936 PGA Championship, the 1951 Ryder Cup Matches, and the 1999 and 2005 US Opens, and will be the site of the 2014 Men and Women's Opens. This history is documented in more than 125,000 photographic images depicting community life, early construction, the first cottages, golf courses, the

rich golf tournament history and the horse community.

The Tufts Archives displays photographic images, documents and artifacts from the Tufts family, the owners of Pinehurst for more than 70 years, the Arctic Soda Fountain and the Tufts Silverplate Company. Also on exhibit are the history of the Tin Whistles, one of America's oldest golf fraternities and the Silver Foils, their female counterpart, complete sets of the Pinehurst Outlook newspaper, and many of Donald Ross' personal papers and golf course sketches and layouts from his design business. These are of particular interest to students of the game and hickory golfers. We also have a sand green and tee on our property, complete with hickory clubs and balls for our guests to use.

The history of Pinehurst is, in part, the history of Donald Ross. He was hired by James Walker Tufts in 1900, and until his death in 1948, Ross lived and worked in Pinehurst part of every year. Ross designed, added to or revised more than 400 golf courses throughout the United States, Canada and Cuba. Original field sketches and course layouts for more than 300 courses are housed at the Tufts Archives and available for viewing. 📷



**DISPLAY CASES** at the Tufts Archives preserve much of the history of Donald Ross, Pinehurst and the Tufts family. If you visit Pinehurst, you must stop by for a visit. If you are a Ross scholar, the archives are rich with resources.

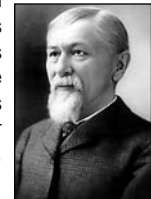


**DONALD ROSS** is shown during his early days at Pinehurst, N.C.

PHOTOS/TUFTS ARCHIVES

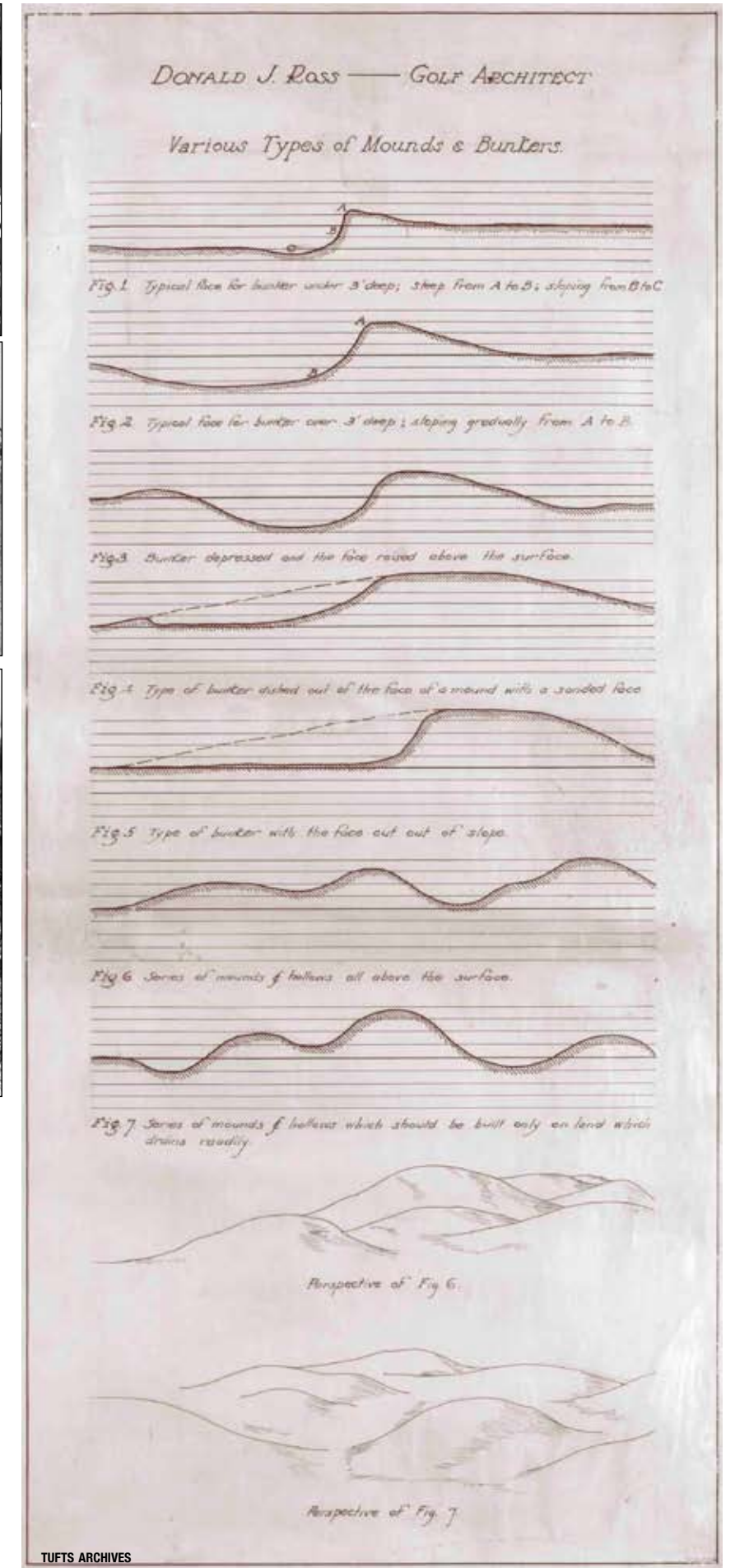


**DONALD ROSS** is shown with Richard Tufts, top photo. Tufts, who inherited the management of Pinehurst from his father, Leonard, was a lifelong friend of Ross. As a caretaker of the game, he served several years with the USGA, two of them as its president. In the photo just above, a young Ross is shown at the far right either ready for a round of golf or to provide a lesson. At right, an older Donald Ross. At far right, a Ross drawing outlines and depicts his thoughts regarding bunkers and mounds. The small photo here is of Pinehurst founder James W. Tufts.



**The Tufts Archives  
Given Memorial Library  
150 Cherokee Road, PO Box 159  
Pinehurst, NC, 28370  
910-295-3642  
Toll free: 866-307-0665  
www.tuftsarchives.org**

Free and open to the public Monday through Friday, from 9:30 a.m. until 5 pm, and on Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Visitors may browse the exhibit areas or research the thousands of historic documents. The Tufts Archives is privately funded through donations and is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.



TUFTS ARCHIVES



# Straight talk on shafts

BY JIM DAVIS

So much interest is devoted by hickory players to club heads that it seems the rest of the item in a player's hands gets the shaft, so to speak. But the shaft is at least equally important when looking to buy a club as the head itself, says hickory veteran Randy Jensen.

"You need to figure that half the value is in the head and half the shaft," he says. "So when you're appraising a new club to buy, realize that, if you need a new shaft, you may have another \$60 or so into the finished club."

That includes costs and time for resetting the clubhead as well as a new grip and the new shaft itself.

So, just how do you appraise a shaft? If you are a new player to the game, or even a long time player, it might help to revisit a few basics courtesy of a few gentlemen who never give shafts short shrift.

Following is a bit of a primer, though hardly an exhaustive one, on the subject of the shaft. A few helpful hints on how to look at a shaft, what to think about when looking over that interesting item on a trade show table.

Along with Randy, our sources were Mike Just of Louisville Golf, and Tad Moore of Tom Morris Hickory Classics. Both gentlemen know their way around a hickory shaft.

"I have been involved with hickory golf for less than 10 years, but in that short period of time I have consumed a lot of information and have evaluated thousands of shafts," Mike says.

Tad adds that he's been buying hickory clubs since the '70s and starting playing them in the late '80s. "I quickly learned what I wanted," he says.

We find our clubs in many ways –

from trade shows, in antique stores, from friends and, often, from such sources as eBay or other online auctions.

First, always examine a club in person, if you can. You can then examine it for four key elements... cracks, warping, grain and flex.

"Old shafts are very tough to tell much about at the shows," Tad says, "but you can often base the quality on the shaft stamp, if there is one. Most companies that stamped their shafts made a point to use good wood. I think MacGregor shafts were excellent for play. The best club assemblers in Chicago and other cities also stamped their shafts."

Randy noted that Auchterlonie and Forgan were "premium makers who used a higher quality of wood.

Their shafts are generally exceptionally good."

## Cracks or defects

Wm. Park Jr.  
Patent concave  
face lofter

"If the shaft is that of

a club you are looking to play, first check for cracks or other defects," Mike says.

"Crack- or defect-free is the goal, but cracks running with the grain could be repaired. Cracks running across the grain cannot. Whipping around the shaft could be sign of a repair."

Check every square inch. Lines of grain in a shaft that has become dried out may be mistaken for cracks.

"A shaft that has become too dried out may be unplayable, its longevity compromised," Randy says. "Always look to see signs of some kind of sealant."

Sealant will make the grain look smooth and closed along its entire length. Look for original shellac to be intact or mostly so along the shaft.

Check around the hosel joint for any

hairline cracks that could be an indication of the start of shaft failure.

Often, players will wrap the shaft, starting at the hosel, with whipping as an added reinforcement.

"Ralph (Livingston III) started doing that," Randy says. "And, if you look at the movie, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, you'll see whipping above the hosel. They did not do that in those days."

"Twist the shaft and head a little to see how the shaft feels for torque and cracks," Tad says. "This is what I call the 'Ralph Test' (after the aforementioned Mr. Livingston III). He likes to do this and I am sure he has had to buy a couple clubs when a shaft could not stand his test."

## Warping

Ideally, of course, look for a straight or reasonably straight shaft. Unless the warp/bow in a shaft is severe (as in the example at left), it can be straightened. Modest warp/bow doesn't seem to affect the performance of the shaft, according to Mike.

However, if desired, a modest amount of bow can be straightened by working back and forth on a notch on the work bench. Some recommend heating the shaft to facilitate this effort.

"I think it is safe to say that a single bend in the shaft is usually able to be straightened," Tad says. "Double bends are tougher and, to me, indicate a bad shaft."

## Grain

"The grain in the shaft should run relatively straight at least 20 inches from the hosel end," Mike says.

Look at the top of the grip to see how tight the grain pattern is. It should run parallel to line of flight. Hold the club in your hands as you would in preparing for



a shot. Look at the end of the shaft. The lines of grain should run horizontally – line of flight – as you look at them.

Count the rings. Seven is about average and the more the better. That translates to a tighter grain and stronger shaft.

Hold the shaft and look along it sideways. Follow the grain from end to end along the entire length. Note whether the grain runs straight or whether it exits the shaft in the form of "V" shapes.

"The more the Vs, the more the grain is running at an angle," Randy says. "This is not a good sign as such a shaft will tend to break along these lines."

## Flex

The amount of play or bend in a shaft is its flex. A good shaft is not too flexible or whippy or you won't be able to stiffen it, Mike says. "If the shaft is too stiff, you will be able to 'soften' it by removing material (sanding, for example) to reduce the diameter of the shaft. Material should be removed along the entire length of the shaft and not in just one area."

If a shaft has survived nearly 100 years without warping or cracking, there is a good chance it is a very good shaft.

"After I get a club home, I like to use a Kenneth Smith deflection board to grade the shaft for stiffness," Tad says.

Each of the gentlemen recommended resetting heads before playing newly acquired original clubs. In fact, Tad says he *always* resets his club heads before playing them. All noted that it is a particularly bad idea to play clubs with a head that is a bit loose as this stresses the shaft

tip inside the hosel and can lead to an untimely club demise.

One further note from Randy on the subject of the shaft's length.

"A shaft can be extended if it's no more than 2 inches too long, otherwise the clubhead will require a new shaft," he says.

"Remember, in the days of Tom Stewart, players were generally shorter than today's men and women."

His recommendations for length in general:

Niblick – 36 inches  
Mashie niblick – 36.5 inches  
Mashie – 37.5 inches  
Mid iron – 38.5 inches

Brassie or driver – about 43 inches is ideal, 42 is acceptable

## Newly turned hickory shafts

Both Mike and Tad are in the business of creating modern hickory clubs with newly turned shafts. As such, they have developed a keen eye for what makes a good piece of hickory.

In general, their new hickory shafts are created from square dowels that are checked and sorted based on such categories as weight, color, grain, strength, stiffness, wood density and freedom from defects such as small knots or cracks.

Mike says only about 50 percent of hickory dowels make it through an initial sort and 50 percent of these are discarded as, after lathing, subsurface defects may turn up or the grain may not run straight the entire length.

Dowels are turned on special lathes and checked again for weight, grain, color and the like. Shaft ends are turned to fit hosels

for the new irons. Tad also prepares new shafts for older club heads sent by customers.

Tad works with one primary vendor from the heart of the good hickory country who sorts the wood for him. He says that the longer 44-inch dowels that may flunk selection as driver shafts may yet prove just right for irons or putters. Still, as he says, "Some become kindling."

Both men create their modern shafts partly based upon specifications set forth in a 1929 pamphlet published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Standards on Hickory Golf Shafts (Commercial Standard CS18-29).

"I use the information in the booklet to determine our specifications for shape/size of the shaft, range of flex and straightness of grain," Mike says.

For his turning patterns, Tad also points to the writings of J. Victor East and William Gibson, and from Otey Crisman III, whose family has made hickory shafted putters since the early '40s.

**Mike Just** is a principle with Louisville Golf Club Co. in Louisville, Ky.  
www.louisvillegolf.com

**Tad Moore** is president of Tom Morris Hickory Classics in Selma, Ala.  
www.tomorrisclubs.com

**Randy Jensen** is owner of Classic Golf in Omaha, Neb. and author of *Playing Hickory Golf* (Airlie Hall Press, 2008)  
e-mail – classicgolf@hotmail.com



# As it was...

## Understanding the 19th-century game in the modern hickory era

BY CHRIS MCINTYRE

In the case of trying to evolve the 19th century style of golf into a more realistic experience, I am trying to distribute information to those who are interested in including this type of golf in their repertoire of events.

Some hickory players, though enthusiastic and excited about playing, do not always take the time to understand the history behind what we are all doing. As we are interested in achieving realism by playing long nose clubs and heavy irons (why else would we want to play them?), we will need to work hard to set the stage for such basic things as using the correct ball and understanding why we are using it.

In a modern golf world where distance and power are so important, it seems odd to make the game harder by using 19th century golf clubs and gutta percha golf balls that combine for shots that may equal half the distance obtained by modern equipment. Yet, to appreciate the nature of early golf, this notion of distance at all costs is one of the first that must be abandoned.

The player who could manage a short course with ease would work much harder on a long course and, inevitably, the scores would be higher. But that is OK. In one sense, a long home course was a prestigious footnote, as it provided a great challenge for its players. It is the challenge that interests golfers around the world even today. Although some courses in terms of length may be better fit for gutta golf, the joy of hitting the old clubs with gutta percha far outweighs the neces-

sity of finding a short 100-year-old, or older, course. Play anywhere!

I have researched club tournament data published in USGA Bulletins in 1898 and 1899. This is still the gutta percha era and the courses represented both long and short layouts.

Length varied from 4,740 to about 6,000 yards. Players did not agonize over whether they could shoot "par" or not. They simply tried their best. The professional records were 75 and 84!!!!

This and all kinds of information found about scores usually only includes the best scores of the day. We can only imagine what the scores of countless other players were. Personally, I get such enjoyment out of playing the old style clubs and the feel and sound of the gutta percha upon contact that it doesn't matter the score, though it is always good to finish and say "I played well today."

So, the next notion to abandon is that of shooting a low score at all costs. Another thing to appreciate about the gutta era is that scores were just higher.

In the references that I researched, there was not one mention of "PAR." I believe this is the most important thing to appreciate about the gutta era.

### Gutta tournaments today

It isn't necessary to have the perfect course layout so that the players can have a crack at "par." In the older days of golf, as players worked their way up in the caliber of play and in the technology of the equipment, they just played

"Golf will never be an easy game, nor will it ever again be quite the game that it was before the rubber-core made its appearance."

**Harry Vardon**

their game on the course as it presented itself. Obviously, in setting up a 19th century tournament today, we would cherish the opportunity to play the old courses that are still in existence. Usually, these courses are still on the shorter side, but it shouldn't matter a bit if it is on the long side. Scores in the 80s and higher were prevalent, the norm of the day. Once you get past the modern importance placed on "par," I guarantee you will be amazed at the feel, sound and historical accomplishment of the old-style clubs striking the gutta percha from a good smooth hit.

If you have a course that is 2,300

yards and can be managed by most players using a gutta percha golf ball that might only be hit 150 yards, that is great. Foxburg GC (Pennsylvania) is an example of this, and while Old Bandon Golf Links (Oregon) is only 2,000 yards it can be very tricky.

A modern course may have front tees of about 2,800 yards, but keep in mind that gutta era players were often faced with longer courses. This is the important shift in thought that we need to make in hickory golf as we discover our way into a more realistic gutta percha era. It wasn't all about driver/wedge. We must appreciate that it could often be two very long shots or more and the scores will no doubt be higher than what we are used to.

If the players will take the time to learn the history and appreciate the opportunity, I think they will learn to enjoy the rare chances that they have to play this way. The scores will take care of themselves.

I shot a 38 at Old Bandon at 2,000 yards, but would hardly expect to shoot that low at Niagara on the Lake (Canada) at 2,600 yards from the shortest tees.

In 1899, the professional, Jamie Anderson, shot 75 on the Onwentsia course at almost 6,000 yards. I believe it must have been much like a modern pro shooting a 65 on a modern course today. There are just days when things go your way, where every shot seems to be on target. His approach shots must have been like good lag putts, enabling one putt greens when he didn't hit the greens "in par." But, the good player's score on average (the Bogey) was 82. (Bogey, then, was defined as "The number of strokes that a good player is likely to need to finish a golf hole or course.")

### A personal comment

Golf is a game of skill, practice, patience and luck.

Most of us think we are better than we are. Until you study the real difference between the top pros and the amateur ranks you really might think you are a pretty good player. But I remember seeing my first pro tournament and my jaw dropping at how far they hit the ball, and how good they were around the greens. I have to think that there was some of that going on back in the gutta era. How could Young Tom and Harry Vardon be so much longer than the rest of the pros?

Well, I've read that Harry was quite



GUTTA PERCHA golf balls made from authentic 1880s line cut cast iron mold.

the sporting man. He played soccer skillfully and was said to be so graceful when swinging the club. The other thing is that all of the low scores of the old era were by golfers in their prime – 20 or 30 years old, maybe older, but not 50 or 60. Most of us as hickory golfers are in the second group, and many of us have played all our lives.

And some of us may say that this ball or that ball doesn't go far enough, not as far as the Pro-V1 that can be played. But I've seen a guy hit the same ball that I was using with a mashie that equaled the distance I was hitting with a spoon!

When it comes to 19th-century golf, I believe we must all get on track and hit and use the gutta percha ball for what it is worth. Some will hit it short and some will hit it far, but all will be able to enjoy the realism and the scores that went along with the era.



OLD TOM MORRIS as played by Chris McIntyre. Chris adopt's Old Tom's persona to teach the methods of 19th-century golf with gutta percha balls.

### Golf balls

Unfortunately, there are many golf balls that have been marketed as gutta percha. Most of these have been made from a rubber and injection molded in poorly made or improper, modern era molds. People like the ring of "Gutta Percha" and it gives a historical sound to the product.

Today, we have gutta percha golf balls that fit the bill. Golf balls made by hand, one at a time, by heating the material in warm water, forming an egg-shaped putty ball and pressing the material in a cool golf ball mold that slowly draws the heat away from the newly formed golf ball.

Until you hit one for the first time, you only know what you've heard or read about them. You know they were played for 50 years – by Old Tom and Young Tom Morris, by Willie Park, by young Harry Vardon, JH Taylor and James Braid. Of historical significance is the fact that Harry Vardon mourned over the introduction of the rubber band wound golf ball in 1898 and how "the game of golf as we know it will never be the same" once it took hold. He continued to play gutta percha for as long as he could until the one-time longest hitter was being beaten down by the "Bounding Billy," as the rubber core ball was nicknamed.

There is a unique click to a well struck

see GUTTA, 14

# GUTTA

CONTINUED FROM 13

gutta, a kind of energetic pop off the face of the club. It flies straight and true, yet it will only go about as far as a 5-iron in the hands of a PGA pro. The Niagara on the Lake Web site states that, in 1896, on opening day, CB Macdonald hit the longest drive of 179 yards, 6 inches.

Conditions obviously have something to do with every shot. The “Vardon Invasion” states that Harry was the longest hitter around and could whack it 200-225 yards! We have recently learned that there were different kinds of gutta that had varying weight. So, a player who could handle a heavy ball might have been able to hit it farther in favorable conditions.

The 2010 model by McIntyre White Authentic Golf is the size of a popular 27 1/2 pennyweight line cut ball. This is a more favorable size and weight for today’s gutta player over the smaller ball from last year. The ball has a wonderful sound and feel and, I contend, is “unbreakable,” though it is subject to cuts and bruises as would have been the case in the 1880s.



AN 1890 SEMI-LONG NOSE Forgan playclub and a look down on a small 1893 niblick.

## Clubs

Both of the clubs above are authentic 19th-century clubs that I use in play. My other irons are large heavy irons from the 1880’s to early 1890’s. They measure 4-inches long with 3 1/2-inch hosels. Though smaller, later model clubs have been used, playing with these larger clubs is really more in the spirit of the experience, as is sticking to the longer heel-to-toe designs of play clubs. If I were to pick a date for the best clubs to assemble I would choose 1880-1890. The 1890s were tremendously experimental and the closer you get to the turn of the century, the more modern the clubs become, thus whitewashing the “19th century” norm.

Authentic clubs previous to 1880 are

much more rare and valuable and not many owners would usually play with them. I would, though I much more prefer to be sure and proud of my older clubs than to be arguing or testing the authenticity of a club made close to or even after 1900.

As for putters, using a long nose wooden putter is a most unique and fun experience, though there are some great old crude iron or gun metal brass blade putters.

There are choices to be made for authentic and reproduction golf clubs and in some cases reproductions are the way to go. Of course, the player with a consistently playable set of authentic clubs will always have the pride of ownership that a true enthusiast deserves. I do not think that in this modern era there would be a great advantage to reproductions other than durability and affordability.

Reproductions are usually modeled after clubs or made with a taller face on the wooden play clubs, as in the later models I have seen (not necessarily like the low profile long nose woods of earlier years). Also, modern shafts are made to spec, whereas the authentic clubs you find may not be a good match for you. Unless you are a good craftsman and can fit a shaft to your liking, you may have trouble hitting them.

## Closing thoughts

I am discovering many things about play with the old clubs as I continue to read and gain play experience with the gutta. I believe that after we have agreed to play the gutta ball as the standard for 19th-century events, an additional importance will be placed on the composition of the clubs.

I’m finding that the flex and weight of the head can make a huge difference on the playability and feel of hitting a good tee shot and experiencing the sensation of the gutta.

I’m not giving advice yet, just pointing out it will make a difference to the competitive player.

The fact may be that, given the premise everyone would be playing the same authentic-play gutta ball, this alone will lead to compromises in one’s play. We could essentially leave the club selection fairly wide open (with basic guidelines) as that is the one area that the club makers and players had control.

Example:

- Wooden clubs (authentic or replica), splice neck, longer heel to toe than face to rear (generally a 2 to 1 ratio), varied lofts of all kinds.
- Irons, smooth faced, my personal feeling is that the hosel diameter and length tells more about the age of the clubs than anything, with many gutta era irons in the 3/4” diameter and 3 1/2” length.
- Putters, splice neck wooden (authentic or replica) (generally a 2 to 1.25 ratio) Putters, yes they had iron blades but I think this is an area where we should stick to wooden heads for the fun of it.
- Any combination of clubs, wooden or iron, carried without a bag.

## References and Resources:

USGA Museum digital archives  
[www.usgamuseum.com](http://www.usgamuseum.com)

Society of Hickory Golfers  
[www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com)

Golf Collectors Society  
[www.golfcollectors.com](http://www.golfcollectors.com)

McIntyre White Authentic Golf  
[www.mwauthenticgolf.com](http://www.mwauthenticgolf.com)  
Gutta percha golf balls

Old Bandon Golf Links  
[www.oldbandongolfinks.com](http://www.oldbandongolfinks.com)

## Tips for setting up a 19th century golf tournament

Make custom score cards without the mention of “par.” Just: Hole #1 – 287 yards – with a box for score.

Gutta golf is better in cool weather, 45 to 65 degrees F. This encourages more appropriate clothing, especially jackets and it is better for the gutta percha golf balls. Gutta percha softens for molding at 160 degrees F. so it only makes sense that playing at 90 degrees will begin to affect the golf ball.

Play match play for added fun and realism. Sixteen players can play four matches in two days. All the other players can continue in consolation matches or a low round play for the second day.

# The author who played with hickory - JOHN COYNE

BY JIM DAVIS

The author of more than 25 books, fiction and non-fiction, SoHG member John Coyne turned his attention to hickory golf when researching material for his novel, “The Caddie Who Played With Hickory” (Thomas Dunne Books, 2008). He’s also writing a new book called “The Caddie Who Won The Masters.”

“It’s a ‘field of dreams’ sort of thing in that, for one reason or another, old players come out of the woods to help him win,” he says.

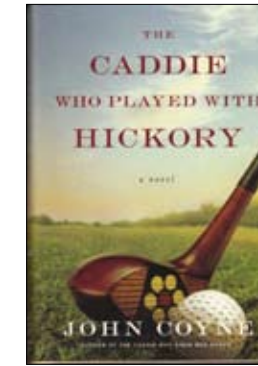
Coyne has a masters in English from Western Michigan University, served in the Air Force, and in the Peace Corps from 1962 to 1964, teaching English at the Commercial School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He published his first book in 1972, an instructional volume titled “Better Golf” (Follett).

“That was done at the PGA school at a time when Lanny Wadkins and David Graham were coming through,” he says. “It was considered one of the best classes

ever. I interviewed those guys and worked with a Sports Illustrated photographer for the book. Tom Watson was in that class, too.”

That was followed by another instructional book, “New Golf For Women” (NY: Doubleday, 1973), and guides to instructional and technical schools. Coyne then turned his attention to horror stories, becoming a solid contributor to that genre with the publication of his first novel, “The Piercing” (NY: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1979). Succeeding novels, “The Legacy” (NY: Berkley, 1979) and “Hobgoblin” (NY: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1981) became best sellers. Several of his horror short stories have been collected in such “best of” anthologies, as “Modern Masters of Horror” and “The Year’s Best Fantasy and Horror.”

Despite his success with horror, Coyne began to tire of the genre. “I just got tired of thinking of plots about the same time publishers got tired of publishing ‘horror’ novels. They are still published but in a limited way. Mostly, they are movies. In fact, one of my novels has been bought by a Canadian film maker and perhaps he’ll



make a movie of it.”

He cut back on genre writing in the mid-80s and published his third golf instruction book, which he considers better than the first two – “Playing with the Pros: Golf Instruction from the Senior Tour” (NY: Dutton, 1990).

“I liked the Senior book because I had actually grown up following these players,” he says. “I published the book in 1990, and spent several weeks following their tour and interviewing them. I did it with photos by Jules Alexander who is from Westchester, N.Y., and a great golf photographer. And a good golfer. Jules and I had a good time together. Also, the old pros were full of stories and they love to talk and tell stories of the tour and their lives as players. So, I got to talk golf all day long!”

Coyne took time off to work for a college and the Peace Corps before getting back into writing. He says the Hogan book got him started. “I never saw Hogan play, but I followed his career through film and reading about him.”

“The Caddie Who Knew Ben Hogan” and “The Caddie Who Played With Hickory,” are entertaining reads with engaging story lines and larger-than-life historical characters in Hogan and Walter Hagen. It’s the latter story, of course, that gets our attention as hickory players. Midlothian Country Club, near Chicago, is the setting. Coyne himself began caddying there when he was 10 years old.

“Hagen was always hanging over the atmosphere in Midlothian,” he says. “He was a large figure there. I had read about hickory golf and thought about what it would be like if somebody came back from history and played hickory again. For this book, I needed to get a feel for what it was like to play with hickories. There is a scene in the book where a caddy lectures kids about the St. Andrews swing and its development from there.”

Facts are important things to get right when dealing with golf history, he says. “One of the things I try to do in these golf books is to add a lot of history. They are novels of information, so you learn a lot

see COYNE, 19

**FOLLOW THROUGH.** Author John Coyne learned about hickories and played them while doing research for his recent golf books. He is now a member of the Society of Hickory Golfers.

PHOTO/COURTESY JOHN COYNE



# THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

## Seven clubs was all Chick Evans needed to win the U.S. Open and Amateur in 1916

BY JOHN FISCHER III

In 1916, using only hickory shafted clubs, Charles (“Chick”) Evans accomplished the astounding feat of winning the National Open and the National Amateur, the “Double Crown.”

Only one other player would win the Amateur and the Open in the same year, another hickory player, Bobby Jones, on his way to the Grand Slam in 1930.

Evans’ Open score of 286 stood for 20 years until it was broken by Tony Manero in the Open at Baltusrol with 282.

Evans selected his clubs separately over a period of years. He mainly used irons forged by Tom Stewart of St. Andrews, working on them by changing hickory shafts and filing the forged-iron heads of the irons to get a “matched” set.

He also played a ball slightly larger than the one in use today. No uniform ball size was established under the Rules of Golf of the time, plus ball weight was inconsistent, so it was pretty much a lottery as to what compression ball you got. In Evans’ era, it was not unusual to keep playing as many holes as possible with the ball if you found a good, lively, well-balanced one. (Today’s Tour players change balls every hole or two; they know each is identical to the others and will give a uniform response).

Today, the Rules of Golf allow no more than 14 clubs, but in 1916 there was no limit, so players frequently carried many more than 14, including specialty chipping clubs and left-handed clubs for playing away from walls or trees. Evans, who got his start as a caddie at the Edgewater Club near Chicago, maintained seven clubs were enough. He believed a skilled player needed no more and, perhaps, he remembered as a caddie how heavy an overstuffed bag could be.

Indeed, other notable players of his day needed only a few clubs. For example, Harry Vardon, the great English player, never carried more than seven or eight, and he was one of the best shotmakers of the era.

In 1914, Evans wrote an article for *The Golfers Magazine* in which he described his clubs. Included in that set were a driver, brassie, cleek (similar to a 1-iron), midiron, jigger, mashie, niblick and putter, for a total of eight clubs. Soon, Evans dropped the driver. The spoon was a new club he had specially made that year to replace his cleek, which he described as “a bit too thin-based for the grass shot.” The mashie was replaced with a loftier, giving a total of seven.

A brassie got its name from the brass plate on the bottom of the sole, “necessary,” Evans said, “because the brassie has much rougher work on the fairway than the driver has on the tee.” Fairways in 1916 were unwatered, hard and scruffy at best. The brass plate protected the sole of the clubhead, and the extra bottom weight helped get the ball airborne.

Evans was a long hitter. Using his brassie off the tee and again for his second shot, Chick reached a 540 yard par 5 in two shots on his way to winning the 1916 Open – and the second shot was all carry.

A jigger might be thought of today as a specialty club used to chip to a green, but Evans’ jigger had a medium loft (like a 4-iron) and a very shallow face. It was a trouble club; because it had a wide sole, it got the ball up in the air.

Chick Evans was open to new ideas in equipment. By 1920, when he’d won the



PHOTO/COURTESY USGA ARCHIVES

**DOUBLE CROWN.** Charles Evans Jr. (Chick Evans Jr.) was the winner of the 1916 U.S. Open Championship held at Minikahda Country Club, Minneapolis, Minn. He is the only player, other than Bobby Jones, to win both the U.S. Amateur and the U.S. Open in the same year.

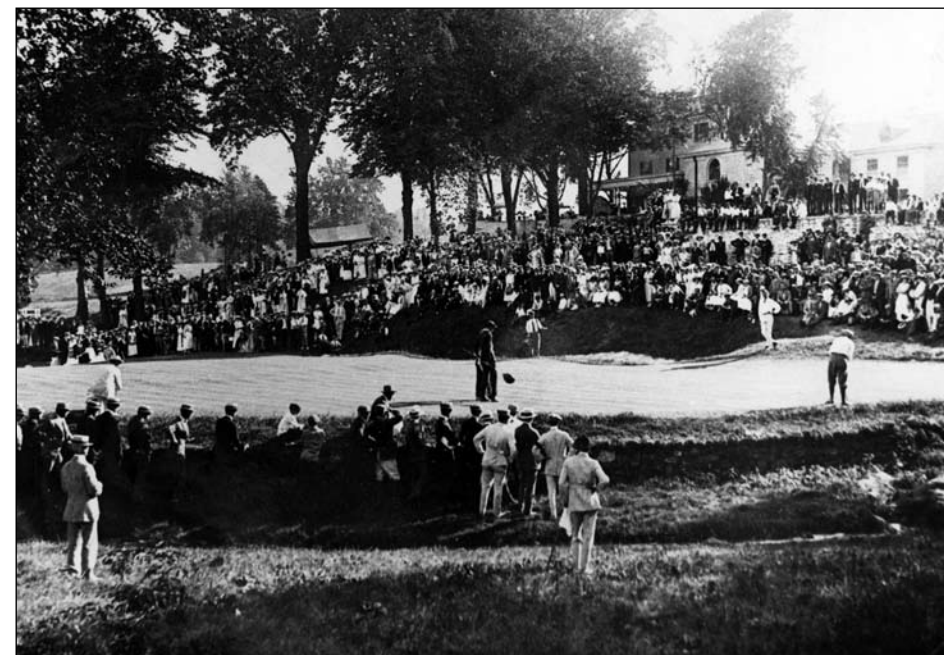
Amateur for a second time, he felt the manufacturers were making “faster” balls (sound familiar?). Balls were made smaller, and he had trouble getting backspin, so he began using a “stopum” club – a club with deep grooves (sound familiar?).

“I experimented with corrugated-faced clubs,” he stated, “and I was convinced they did the work. Skilled players can produce backspin with any kind of club, but the corrugated face makes it easier and more dependable.”

Evans had a “stopum” made up with the approximate loft of a 7-iron and used it for shots between 50 and 150 yards. However, this club’s development paralleled that of the smaller, livelier ball, so it was not in his bag in 1916.

The niblick, or 9-iron, was a problem club. He tried to hit cut shots with it, but found it difficult. He did use the niblick from bunkers, but otherwise was using his loftier (basically a 6-iron) for all his approach shots.

With unwatered fairways and unwatered greens for the most part, a high shot to a green was likely to take a huge bounce



PHOTO/COURTESY USGA

**CHICK EVANS** putts on the old 13th green at the 31st hole during the 1916 U.S. Amateur Championship, held at Merion Cricket Club, Haverford, Pa. Evans was the winner of the event.

and to go over. Control came from a “bump and run” shot, or a low cut shot, over which Evans said he had great control. In the cut shot, the ball would land to the left of the target and spin to the right. The cut shot was one of Chick’s favorites.

**Chick was considered** one of the best players from tee to green, but on the green he had trouble, agonizing trouble. It was said that if he could putt, all amateur tournaments would have been useless, for he would have won them all. He described the last club in his bag as “the abominable putter,” and carried two putters at one point, but dropped the practice because “there is always an annoying selection to be made, and if you miss an important putt, you are sure to wish you had used the other club.”

Several commentators, however, report Evans carrying three or four putters at various points. He finally settled on carrying one, although he held several in reserve.

During World War I, Evans toured the country attending rallies to sell Victory Bonds in support of the war effort. The highlight came at the end of the rally when Evans auctioned off the putter he used in winning the Double Crown in 1916. Because of poor communications, no one raised the question how he could sell the same putter so many times. The “putter” raised considerable excitement



PHOTO BY GEORGE S. PIETZCKER/COURTESY USGA ARCHIVES

**ROBERT T. JONES JR.** (Bobby Jones), left, and Charles Evans Jr. (Chick Evans) before the semifinals in the 1920 Western Amateur at Memphis.

and money.

Evans related a story of himself indicative of his putting problems (and to which every golfer can relate): “After a poor putting streak in the National Amateur Championship at Apawamis, I, too hastily, decided to give [my putter] up. One night, while a party of golfers was speeding from New York to the National Golf

“I stole out of bed, in the dead of night, with only the stars and moon to see, and dropped the poor little putter head downward in Long Island Sound. I can hear the little gurgle now as it sank...”

Links on Mr. Ledyard Blair’s beautiful yacht, I stole out of bed, in the dead of night, with only the stars and moon to see, and dropped the poor little putter head downward in Long Island Sound. I can hear the little gurgle now as it sank, and even at this moment I can feel the mournful quiet that enshrouded everything after the deed was done.”

Of course, after the putter was drowned, Evans wanted it back; after all, he had used it for nine years. The putter had a lofted face and a very short shaft, requiring him to bend over sharply at the waist to putt. It took 50 years before he found another like it.

What would Chick Evans think about today’s players and modern clubs? Well, actually, he was also one of today’s players, and while he had given up his wooden-shafted clubs by the time he played in his 50th consecutive Amateur, in 1962, he still believed 14 clubs were too many. Seven were all that were necessary, he continued to insist.

Why? “The trouble with most golfers,” Evans wrote in 1921, “is that they try too many different blades, or lofts, and there is too much consequent strain in calculating the effects of shots.”



## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR HICKORY PLAY

### Equipment

#### Hickory shaft maintenance

BY ROB AHLSCHEDE

You've searched and put together a good play set of wood shafted clubs. The question, then, is how to keep a still healthy 100-year-old wood shaft healthy for another 100 years. There are, of course, differences in the maintenance for display clubs and what you would do for a player.

If the club is for display only, the current thinking, as with all wooden antiques, is to leave it as it is. Original appearance is very important with highly collectible clubs. Determine the cause of any problem and attack that only. Stop active deterioration with as little intrusion as possible. As for clubs for play, there are other considerations.

Many club restorers believe that whipping applied to the shaft just above the hosel (inch of whipping, more or less) gives the clubhead/shaft joint extra support. Not any real proof, but it does not hurt the playability. Using a pitched linen

or waxed linen whipping cord – 3 to 5 strands in black – serves the purpose. The wax/pitch aids in adhesion and water-proofs the cord, at least for a time. Use the same cord on the top and bottom of the grip so they match.

Then there is the finish of the shaft. There is general agreement among club restorers that oiling a shaft is not a good thing. Historically, linseed oil was used on the head and the shaft, but that was with "new" wood. We are dealing with 100 year old wood and, as Ralph Livingston says, oil will not keep the wood from further deterioration and may, in fact, hurry that process. More important is to keep moisture from the wood. Shellac is a good product to use for this.

To properly seal a shaft against moisture first clean the shaft. Using 2- or 3-zero steel wool, scrub the shaft completely. This should remove most of the old finish, unless someone used poly on it. To remove the poly, which should not be used on a shaft, a more coarse steel wool, or even sandpaper may be required. A paint scraper may be used but only as a last resort. If you being to remove

actual wood fibers, you may alter the flex, weight and playability of the club. Worse, shaft integrity may be compromised.

After removing the finish, wipe the shaft clean of any dust and apply two coats of shellac. Zinsser Bullseye Shellac, in either clear or amber, is a great product. Amber will darken the shaft color a bit. Zinsser also makes a quick drying spray that is very useful to treat shafts between rounds, especially after a wet round. Make sure the coats of shellac are dry before applying another coat. Applying shellac over a wet coat may cause the finish to fail quickly. Applying the shellac over the whipping on the club will help seal it and prolong its life. Of course keep shellac away from the grip.

The shellac finish should hold up easily for 6-8 rounds (you will easily determine the need for renewal by visual inspection). If any round is played in wet conditions, the finish will usually fail and need to be restored. After the shafts have dried, use the steel wool to remove the old finish and re-apply the coats of shellac and you are ready to enjoy another round with your wood shafted clubs. ☺

### Playing Techniques

#### The pitch shot

BY RANDY JENSEN

ADAPTED FROM *PLAYING HICKORY GOLF*

The pitch shot is distinguished by the wrist action. There is also more body turn and generally a longer arm swing. I like to break the wrist action down into three kinds: the 1/4 hinge, the 1/2 hinge and the full wrist hinge. All three have their applications. On very short shots or for a lower flying shot, the 1/4 hinge shot works well. When a little higher trajectory or more spin is desired, the 1/2 hinge shot is the one to call on. When maximum height and minimum spin are desired, use the full hinge shot.

I gauge my distances by the length of my backswing. I visualize my left arm as a dial on clock and swing it back to different positions for different distances. For example, using my 54-degree Stewart

niblick, if I want to hit the ball 30 yards on the fly, I swing my left arm back 45 degrees and use a 1/4 wrist hinge. For 60 yards, I swing my left back 90 degrees, again with a 1/4 wrist hinge. A half hinge will add an additional 10 yards and a full wrist hinge will add 20 extra yards. I have a specific swing each for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 yards (these are all chips with my 56-degree Hagen niblick). And then there are pitch swings with the 54-degree niblick for 30 through 80 yards.

My full swing with this club is 95 yards. I control my arm swing on my pitch shots by limiting my shoulder turn so that my arms can't swing beyond the point that they should and I feel that I have a little "rebound" in the transition move that aids in starting this short swing on the correct downward plane. I strive for no weight shift on the backswing or on the downswing with both hip joints remaining level throughout the swing. I

use these mechanics as the blueprint from which I try to play these shots totally with "feel." Feel is really a strong sense of body awareness and target awareness during the shot process. ☺



PREPARING THE SHOT. Randy Jensen prepares to chip with his Walter Hagen convex niblick.

## WEE NIP CLASSIFIEDS



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### WANTED

**Spaulding Spring**, Tom Morris Pat with shaft stamp Niblick, J H Hutchinson semi nose putter, [philc.gibbs@comcast.net](mailto:philc.gibbs@comcast.net)

**Deadline for the fall Wee Nip is Sept. 10.** Ads are \$7. The advertising policy is printed on page 2 of this issue.

### Member Correspondence



#### SPIRITUAL HOME FINDS HICKORY GOLF

I visited the autumnal golf show at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre at the end of November; nothing interesting there you might say. You may well have been right for the major club manufacturers weren't there exhibiting their usual range of new models; in fact, you would be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that golf was in something of a slump.

Then something caught my eye. The Macallan, that most famous of whisky distillers, had a stand distributing samples of their most luscious single malt. On their stand was a gentleman dressed in a smart Savile Row suit, a putting green, a Bussey bag stand of early hickory putters, and balls including featheries, gutties and rubber cores plus a handful of rut niblicks c. 1890. He was happily taking visitors through the mysteries of hickory golf from 1850 to the 1930s, getting them to putt with his clubs and practice stymie escapes with the niblicks. He even got the trick shot guru, David Edwards, to try his hand at 'keepy-uppy' with rut niblick and gutty, surely a first anywhere. While I was there, a teenager came to the stand with a newly purchased putter who was appalled when he holed everything he put his hand to with the hickories and wandered off shaking his head believing his hard earned cash had just been wasted.

I asked about this alliance with The Macallan and was told that their whisky removes only 16 percent of the spirit from the final distillation process, making it the purest of all. Their view was that hickory golf was the purest form of golf and that such an association was, in marketing terms, a perfect "fit."

Autolycaan

## COYNE

CONTINUED FROM 15

about it. [The Caddy who Played With Hickory] has lot of history on the Masters and the thing about this book is that I have to be really accurate. You know, people get very proprietary about any particular pro they may have caddied for or followed.

"I caddied for Chick Evans at Midlothian. He was a nice man, so I put him into the plot and added a love story so the book would be more than just about a golf match."

Bobby Locke also plays a role in the story. Locke, says Coyne, was "a great putter who learned from Hagen through reading about him while in South Africa."

Locke used a blade putter, as Coyne well remembers. He saw the great golfer win the Victory National Open with it at Midlothian in 1948. "He was a hell of a putter," says Coyne who also used a blade putter that he found in a pro shop.

He stopped playing golf altogether following a stint in the Air Force, but picked it up again "when I started reading about you guys (hickory golfers). You know, I just love these wacko groups who find a passion for the old way of doing things."

He recalls a few members at Midlothian who continued to play hickories well into the 1950s. "We thought they were oddballs, but they weren't bad players."

Coyne, who plays to a 10, lives in Westchester and has a summer weekend home in upstate New York on the New York side of the Berkshires where he enjoys golf at a "couple good public courses," a little bit at Westchester and occasionally at Pelham Country Club where, in 1923, Sarazen beat Hagen to win a PGA championship.

The hickories in his bag include a driver, spoon, two niblicks, a 4-iron and "another kind of 9-iron."

"It's not much. I really need to go out and spend some money and get a good set," he says.

Thinking about where golf has come, Coyne quoted the poet ee cummings, "progress is a comfortable disease."

"Golf was a more interesting game with hickory because you had to be more inventive, much more imaginative," he says.

"Clubs were built for each player and the pros at the clubs still worked on them and fixed them. At that time, the club pro was more of a craftsman than a salesman. It isn't that you lose something from the past when you play modern golf, what you lose is the relationship with an individual club that was made for you and your game."

The swing, too, had to change to accommodate steel shafts, he notes.

"A shift in the swing sort of began with Nelson who shifted from the rhythmical, sweeping swing characteristic of hickories to a more upright swing with his favorite steel clubs. Bobby Jones, for example, had a swing that was like watching Fred Astaire dance. It was just beautiful."

Another thing that's beautiful is a well-turned phrase and there are plenty in Coyne's two golf novels. If you haven't yet, pick up a copy of "The Caddy Who Played With Hickory" and settle into your favorite chair for a great read. ☺

John Coyne publishes a blog at <http://peacecorpswriters.blogs.com/johncoynebabbles/> where you can follow his thoughts and opinions on a variety of subjects.



338 Gladstone Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

[www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com)



## FINAL SHOT



**ON ITS WAY.** Bill Sewell takes a nice bit of sod as he nicks a ball off the carpet on a shot to the 18th green at Mid Pines Golf Course during a hickory golf event in November 2009.

PHOTO/MICHAEL JONES