



# A WEE NIP

TM

Journal of the Society of Hickory Golfers • Spring 2017 • [www.hickorygolfers.com](http://www.hickorygolfers.com)





The National Hickory Championship celebrates its 20th year in 2017. Above, repeat NHC champion Mike Stevens (white cap) waits his turn on the No. 3 tee at Oakhurst Links. See the story on page 10 about the 20th anniversary of this remarkable tournament.



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**ONION CREEK GREEN CARD.** All square with ICE, Pete League solved the problem of too few Canadian players this year to hold the Swift Matches, a Ryder Cup-style event between Canada and the U.S. that is part of the Onion Creek Classic. A few of the U.S. lads were volunteered to become Canadian citizens for the day. Hal Coward, who is a proud Texan, was one of the newly-made citizens. "Despite subsequent grouching that the Canadians had captured the cream of the U.S. talent, I have it on good authority that the loaning actually lowered the average handicaps of both teams," Coward said. Perhaps so, but Team Canada, wherever its players called home, took it to the U.S. side 17½ to 6½. The card said something about "rights and privileges" of Canadian citizens, "specifically, the ability to keep warm in sub-zero temperatures and to consume outrageous amounts of Coors Lite beer."



**SPECIAL WIN.** With his 10-year-old daughter, Rylee, on the bag, Matt Stovall of Buckeye, Ariz., won the 2017 Arizona Desert Hickory Classic with a two-day 151. Well done, Rylee!

## A WEE NIP

Spring 2017

Editor – James Davis

### Contributors

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**Special thanks to:** Neil Allen and the Del Monte GC; Michael Beckerich and Classics of Golf; W. Dunlop White III, Jay Allred and Triad Golf Magazine; Ran Morrisett of golfclubatlas.com; Audrey Moriarty and the Tufts Archives; and Dr. Leon White

The Wee Nip is the bi-annual journal of the Society of Hickory Golfers.

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## ON THE COVER

Donald Ross as he appeared in Pinehurst about 1905. He had been in the U.S. for about six years and had completed his first course, the Oakley CC in Watertown, Mass., in 1899. Ross began Pinehurst No. 2 in 1901. In January 1905, Ross and his new wife, Janet, arrived in Pinehurst. He played a lot of golf in 1905, winning the North-South Open and playing exhibition matches in April. He won the inaugural Massachusetts Open that year, using a gutty ball. The large golf course image in the background is Ross's drawing of Seminole GC (image courtesy of the Tufts Archives.)

The Life & Times of Donald Ross, by Chris Buie, is reviewed on page 16.



## Down the Fairway... from the President

As the incoming president, I want to thank Dave Brown for his tireless efforts during his tenure as the leader of the Society of Hickory Golfers, despite the tragic loss of his wonderful wife, Nancy. In addition, thank you to all who served on the Board last year for your many contributions to our Society. Most of all, thanks to Executive Secretary Jim Davis, who is the pivot point for the detail work of the SoHG operations, including writing and editing *The Wee Nip* and managing our website. I look forward to working with you, the members of the SoHG, the committee chairs, and the 2017 SoHG Board of Directors. We have an aggressive agenda this year and a lot to look forward to.

The strength of our hickory community is supported by the dedicated SoHG members who give their time and effort to promote hickory golf. I want to thank people like Pete League, who runs the Onion Creek Hickory Classic, which I had the pleasure of playing in last week; Bill Reed, who runs the Hickory Golf Association and the Heart of America Hickory Championship, which is the longest continuously-played modern hickory tournament in North America; Chris McIntyre, who reminds us of the traditional style of hickory golf as it was originally played; Pete Georgiady, who has tirelessly run the National Hickory Championship for 20 years and this year is being played once again at the Philadelphia Cricket Club; and of course we remember the late Lionel Freedman, who was founder and chairman of the very successful World Hickory Open.

Finally, congratulations are owed to the local playing groups far and wide that have successfully expanded this great game over the past years, nurturing the growth of hickory

golf as was envisioned by the founding members of the SoHG. My cap's off to you.

The new SoHG website was launched last year and is constantly being improved thanks to members' suggestions. I want to thank our website team – Eric Johnson, Rich Grula, Rob Birman, and Jim Davis – for their diligent work on the architecture, fine tuning, and management of the site. Their work will save the SoHG thousands of dollars in the future.

Many of us are evaluating possible equipment changes for the new season. I'm sure that Tad Moore, Jeremy Wright at Louisville Golf, Russ Fisher, and The Hickory Golf Workshop, along with other wonderful craftsmen featured on our "Resources" web page, would love to help you with a new acquisition or a whole new set of clubs. Perhaps a new pair of "plus-fours," period shoes, or a classic golf bag is in order. Visit the "Accessories and Apparel" page of the website for great information there. As I have always said, "Look good, play good" – well, maybe not always.

The SoHG annual tournament, the United States Hickory Open, will be on the west coast for the first time at the Del Monte Golf Course in Monterey, Calif., on July 10-12. The 2017 USHO organizing committee is led by Rob Ahlschwede. This tournament, in such a fantastic location, looks to be one of our finest events yet. Please sign up early, as the field will probably fill up fast.

The 2017 Mid Pines Hickory Open will be held in Southern Pines, N.C., on Nov. 10-12. The Golf Collectors Society will also be in town for their annual meeting and trade show. Please make this tournament a top priority for your 2017 tournament schedule.

2017 will most likely see more tournaments around the country that qualify for Championship Series points. Please support your local playing group's major tournaments that have a field that offers the opportunity to earn CS points. Good luck and good playing to all.

Cheers!

**Bill Geisler**

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# USHO Raffle, membership updates

Just as the hickory golf community was coming to terms with the loss of Mike Just, we learned of Lionel Freedman's passing in early January 2017. Mr. Freedman had been a top British amateur golfer and was the founder and organizer of the World Hickory Open. As well, he was a tireless promoter of hickory golf through magazine interviews, articles, and videos. A true gentleman, Mr. Freedman made countless friends throughout the world and he will be very much missed. We wish Ewan Glenn (St. Andrews Golf Co.) and associates the very best as they step in to manage the World Hickory Open.

2017 USHO chairman Rob Ahlschwede reports that the USHO raffle will be drawn at the tournament dinner on July 11. Tickets will go "live" April 25 and can be purchased prior to the event as well as at the tournament. No need to be present to win. Prizes include two woods from Louisville Golf, one full set of Victor irons from Tad Moore Golf, two woods from Tad Moore Golf, two sets of knickers and stockings from KnickerDog, a set of 10 first edition golf books including a Thomas Stewart Jr. book by Ralph Livingston III, and approximately 14 additional prizes. We'll put info on the website when the raffle goes live.

The SoHG Board voted to remove the score-only category from the website. Members viewed the free service as outdated, especially as most state golf associations and private clubs offer a handicap index service for a fee. As the number of those in the score-only category had dwindled to only about a dozen, it was thought the time was right to ask them to join the Society to

continue to receive a hickory golf handicap.

Your Board is currently studying the implementation of new membership categories. This is something that has been pondered for some time. A "Lifetime" category of membership, for example, has met with positive feedback as it would eliminate the need to renew every year. Along with this may come the possibility of 5- or 10-year memberships as well as a junior membership category. Let your Board know what you think of these categories or ideas you may have for their structure and implementation.

The SoHG is also looking into the creation of a merchandise shop where SoHG members can purchase items or apparel with the SoHG logo. Several ideas are under consideration, including the possibility of an online "catalog" with a specific vendor with specific items that can be ordered.

Look for an updated financial report to be posted to the members-only section of the website within a few weeks.

Send your nominations for the 2017 Mike Brown Award to Bill Geisler. Look on the SoHG website, under "About Us" to find information on the award and how to submit a nomination.

Finally, the Board is exploring ways of working with charitable groups whose activities or purpose aligns with our own. The First Tee, for example, is a group we are looking at for a win-win partnership. Should you have any ideas or recommendations, please pass them along to the Board. ☺

## FROM THE EDITOR

It's been 13 years since the first Wee Nip made a tentative appearance on the hickory golf scene. How heartening it is to see that more young people are becoming exposed to hickory golf thanks to the efforts of people like Bern Bernacki and Frank Rosenzweig and their work with the First Tee of Pittsburgh, and the Wyandotte Hickory Organization with the high school golf teams in their area. Even the USHO committees are beginning to explore ways to encourage more youth to participate in this signature event; perhaps a junior division with loaned clubs and reduced or comped entry fees. Maybe there's a way to work with kids in your area.

You have but to see the joy on the face of young Rylee Stovall of Arizona on page two of this issue to see how much fun she had caddying for her dad. Our Autumn 2014 issue spoke about the youth who are exploring hickory golf. If you know these youngsters, please share their stories with us so we can apply copious amounts of encouragement.

Speaking of encouragement, it is a beautiful thing to hear of more country clubs inviting SoHG members to celebrate their heritage with special hickory golf outings. In line with this development, it has been suggested that we partner with the Speakers Bureau of the Golf Collectors Society to create presentations for such clubs, as well as other groups in our communities, about golf history, hickory golf, and golf collecting. Contact me or look on the GCS website for the Speakers Bureau information.

*Tommy's Honour* premiered this month in the U.S. Check the SoHG website for information and find a city near you where the film is being shown. It is, of course, based on the book of the same name by Kevin Cook, about Young Tom Morris and his father.

I'm always happy to share your stories and news. You know where to find me. Enjoy!

Jim

## Welcome new members!

(As of April 2017)

We're pleased to welcome you to the hickory golf community. (If your name was overlooked, please let us know and we'll correct the oversight in the next newsletter.)

Ross Baker  
Alex Beasley  
Sandy Bucher  
Joseph Cerre  
James Chambasian  
James Christian  
Chester Conant Jr  
Otey Crisman III  
Enrico Degiacomi  
Phillip Farr  
James Fisher  
Dale Fulcher  
Michael Garrison  
Zachary Glass

David Hall  
Deal Hudson  
David Ivey  
Bruce Johnson  
Garylee Johnson  
David Kelly  
Chris Kennedy  
Robert King-Scott  
Jeff Lefferts  
Brian Malison  
Scott McAllister  
Joseph Mikan  
Douglas Montgomery  
Larry Noel  
Jeffery Olsen  
Mark Parris  
Ron Perlman  
Jeremy Rahn  
Robert Reheard  
Nicholas Sapnar  
Michael Scott  
Matt Stovall  
Sue Robertson Truxal  
Jim VanSlambrouck  
Jeff Weber  
Grant Westthorp



# Why we play hickory golf

BY MIKE NEEDLEMAN

*"Playing and learning about hickory golf has opened a whole new world to me, one filled with tremendous challenge, imagination, wonderful camaraderie and a renewed spirit in the game of golf, having now experienced golf as it was meant to be played."*

The summer of 2015 was a difficult time for me having been diagnosed with a rare lung disease and spending a considerable amount of hospital time. It was however, during this time in which I became more than interested in hickory golf.

Having a great deal of "free" time and my laptop at hand, I immersed myself in the world of hickory golf, watching hundreds of videos and reading volumes of literature regarding the history of the sport, club making and the results of recent hickory golf events - player scores and golf course distances. I must say that although I would still consider myself a neophyte, I became somewhat of a "mini" expert regarding the game; certainly I was weighing the "ins and outs" for me in becoming a part of this new venture.

Interestingly enough and all credits to the "golf gods," I was taking a lap around the hospital courtyard one day and noticed a golf trophy sitting inside an office window. The inscription read "Hickory Golf Champion," a sign I could not ignore. The decision was made and I was now on my way. I never did find out who that trophy belonged to, but it was at Overland Park Regional Hospital where I saw it; if anyone knows who this is I would sure like to meet him.

Now it is the fall of 2015. I had been out of the hospital for a while, my health had improved and I had a thousand questions about all aspects of hickory golf, which led me to meeting some really great folks, many with some notoriety in the world of hickory golf.

Of course, hickory golf doesn't work without hickory shafted clubs. Via website I decided on replica clubs from Louisville Golf and their holiday sale was exactly what I was hoping for. Unsure exactly what to purchase, I called for assistance and in short order a nice gentleman with a warm and welcoming tone was on the phone. I asked, "is this Mike Just?" and it was. Having done extensive self-education, I knew who he was and I have to admit I was maybe a bit trembling. Certainly it was an honor to be speaking with Mike and I told him so. For the next several minutes he spoke to me about my new interest in hickory golf and assured me that I would be meeting and playing with the most wonderful and welcoming people in the world. Most importantly, Mike provided me great insight regarding his club making and decisions as to why he chose specific clubs to replicate. As a result, I chose the E. Just Starter Set and a Brown Vardon putter to ensure a good start.

I was hitting my new hickories as often as possible throughout the winter and spring of 2016 and continuing my hickory stick education along the way. I set a goal to participate in the 39th Heart Of America in Des Moines in July 2016, yet I still had several questions. Mike Stevens, in Florida, gave me great information regarding playing groups, societies and how to choose a ball. Mike and I are both members of The United States Golf Teachers



MIKE NEEDLEMAN, left, is shown with new hickory golf friends at the 2016 Heart of America in Des Moines, Iowa. From right are Dennis Olson, Ed Ronco, and Mike Pishlo.

Federation so I felt it easy to reach out to him. I joined The Society of Hickory Golfers immediately upon his suggestion to do so.

Another great help was Rob Ahlschwede, who was helpful in many aspects of the game regarding "legal" equipment and the need to establish a hickory handicap. He was so upbeat and positive; and I believed him when he told me "you are in for some fun!"

It came to be that the 39th Heart Of America in Des Moines was my first hickory tournament. My wife and I tremendously enjoyed a practice round with tournament chairman Bill Reed. Bill was more than a gentleman, warm and gracious, and made us feel right at home. I remember leaning over to my wife in the cart and stating "I can't believe that I'm about to play my first hickory round ever with this guy- this guy is like - really big in the hickory world and this is a tremendous honor to be with him." It was!

I was further honored to play my first day tournament round with a great group of somebodies that included Ed Ronco, Mike Pishlo, and Dennis Olson, all great guys, willing to share all they know, and especially fun to play with.

I went on to also play in the Iowa Hickory Classic later in September, which was no less than another wonderful experience.

Thank you to The Society of Hickory Golfers and the many great folks I have met thus far. I am looking forward toward 2017 to be back out amongst friends and my new golf family.

*Special note:* I was greatly looking forward to the day I would meet Mike Just. I know many of you were much closer to him than I was, but my experience in just one phone call with Mike has created an everlasting memory and one I mention to others. I think of him often, mostly each time I pick up one of my (his) Louisville hickory clubs and, in doing so, shake his hand. 🏌️

# California Dreamin'

*USHO comes to Monterey  
and the Del Monte GC*



“With an average temperature in July in the high 60s and less than a half-inch of rain, the Monterey Peninsula is, quite understandably, a Mecca for tourists and outdoors enthusiasts,” says West Coast golfer Robert Birman. The area has seen its share of celebrities, stars, and politicians who come to the Monterey area for the golf, for the scenery and to relax.

“Golfers gravitate to the area for the abundance of top-rated courses ‘that you can play,’ ” Birman says. These include Del Monte’s pricy and famous cousins such as Pebble Beach Golf Links, Spyglass Hill, Pasatiempo Golf Club, The Links at Spanish Bay, Bayonet Black Horse Bayonet Course, and Poppy Hills (home of the NCGA). Others in the more moderate range include Pacific Grove Golf Links, Carmel Valley Ranch Golf Club, Quail Lodge & Golf Club, and Del Monte.

“Spouses love the trip as well for the culture, sight-seeing, shopping, food and wine that abounds at every turn,” he says.

Often, trips to Monterey for golf are part of a bucket list trip, and the inconvenience of eating and sleeping are an after-thought. But aside from the usual tourist haunts such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, 17-Mile Drive, Cannery Row, Monterey Museum of Art, and River Road Wine Trail (a self-guided tour designation in Carmel for serious wine lovers), the picturesque village of Carmel has world-class shopping, B&Bs, all-price-points for eating, and (Birman’s favorite style shop),

the flagship store for Robert Talbott (“the most luxurious ties on the planet,” he says).

There are 11 wineries on the River Road Trail, dotting the landscape from Salinas south to the little town of Greenfield. The views are memorable and most of the tasting rooms are open only on weekends or by appointment, so plan ahead and get to the area before your practice round!

“Trips to Monterey are not for the faint at heart,” warns Birman. “Supply and demand yield fairly steep admissions to the courses or the finer restaurants, but after a long winter indoors, we all owe ourselves a treat and – in honor of the 10th U.S. Hickory Open and inaugural debut on the West Coast – we may as well make this trip-of-a-lifetime count!”

Del Monte’s head pro Neil Allen says Del Monte has no warm-up or practice range though there is a practice green and a small chipping area.

“Our golfers are welcome to use Spyglass Hill’s driving range free of charge to warm up before any Del Monte round,” he says. “It is a bit of a drive over there (about 15 minutes each way), but the balls are free. There is also a small course close to our property (Monterey Pines) which is only a couple minutes’ drive from us and they have a range.”

Here you would purchase range balls and there are only 13 hitting stations, so it sometimes gets crowded.



HOLE NO. 17 AT DEL MONTE GC

PHOTO/COURTESY PEBBLE BEACH RESORTS

Published reports describe Del Monte as well-conditioned, with beautifully kept poa annua greens, some with steep slopes that are difficult to read. The course, from those who have played it, is said to be very walkable and enjoyable for the fairway views.

SoHG member Erik Beer, who lives about two hours from Del Monte, recently played it with fellow SoHGer Mike Kostich. Here is his report:

“Del Monte might not come to mind first when you think of golf in Monterey. However, it has a rich history and a long-standing tradition of tournament play. The scorecard shows 6,085 yards from the white tee markers, a distance that will likely be close to this year’s Open division distance.

“Del Monte does not have a single water feature; in fact, the only water you’ll find comes from orange Igloo coolers. Fairways are reasonably wide, but be cautious in taking advantage of this generosity. The rough is thick and lush at the time of this writing, and July weather in Monterey is notorious for foggy damp mornings that promise to produce thick, wet conditions for wayward tee shots.

“Greens are well guarded by many bunkers, however most greens have an alley way for ground approach and running shots. Green complexes contain no buried elephants, but all are generously sloped, resulting in many breaking putts with downhill attempts that are sure to run quickly away.

“There is one forced carry from the tee and one par 3 that will demand over 200 yards even from the shortest tee. For scoring opportunities there are five par 4s under 325 yards. Players will find Del Monte an easy walking course with no great distances from green to tee, and no large changes in elevation.

“Del Monte staff are kind, courteous, and truly excited to be involved with hickory golf. The Hyatt Regency hotel could not be more conveniently located with rooms just off the 18th tee box, and a restaurant patio close enough to the 17th green to read putts from your table.” 🌳

*Robert Birman, Erik Beer, and Jim Davis contributed to this article.*

DEL MONTE GOLF COURSE PEBBLE BEACH RESORTS				HOLE				DEL MONTE BAR & GRILL PEBBLE BEACH RESORTS			
MEN'S COURSE RATING/SLOPE Blue 71.5/127 White 70.1/124								WOMEN'S COURSE RATING/SLOPE Red 70.8/115			
Blue Tees	White Tees	Par	Hcp					Hcp	Par	Red Tees	
505	489	5	9		1			1	5	421	
328	314	4	13		2			13	4	296	
376	361	4	5		3			5	4	351	
178	162	3	15		4			17	3	141	
327	306	4	17		5			15	4	287	
196	189	3	3		6			7	3	181	
379	365	4	1		7			9	4	298	
384	364	4	7		8			11	4	313	
524	512	5	11		9			3	5	423	
3197	3062	36			Out			36		2711	
Initial								Initial			
293	278	4	16		10			16	4	265	
331	325	4	14		11			14	4	313	
171	147	3	12		12			18	3	126	
512	496	5	10		13			10	5	407	
218	209	3	4		14			2	3	200	
330	313	4	8		15			12	4	294	
421	415	4	2		16			8	4	352	
500	475	5	18		17			4	5	443	
392	332	4	6		18			6	4	318	
3168	2990	36			In			36		2718	
6365	6052	72			Tot					5429	
Handicap								Handicap			
Net Score								Net Score			
Adjust								Adjust			
Scorer				Attested				Date			



HOLE NO. 11 AT DEL MONTE GC

PHOTO/COURTESY PEBBLE BEACH RESORTS

# Del Monte has championship pedigree

BY MARTIN POOL

Only a few visitors to Hotel Del Monte in 1897 would have heard about, much less played, the newest craze in sports sweeping America: the game of golf. Golf was introduced to California a few years earlier in 1892 when a recent English immigrant, Charles E. Maud, laid out the Pedley Farms Golf Course (later to become known as Victoria Golf Club) in Riverside, some 60 miles east of Los Angeles. Interest in golf grew rapidly and the 1890s saw many new golf courses being built. By 1900 there were nearly a hundred golf courses in California.

In the Bay area, the Burlingame Golf Club, still in existence today, was the first to organize in 1893. It was followed by the Presidio Golf Course in 1895. The Hotel Del Monte Golf Links came soon after in 1897. The nine-hole course measured 2,219 yards. At the time, Hotel Del Monte was a popular destination resort for the "smart set" and included a polo field and a race track.

In spring of 1901, former U.S. Open champions gave an exhibition at Del Monte. They included Horace Rawlins (1895 champion), Willie Smith (1899 champion) as well as David Bell who finished third behind Harry Vardon and J. H. Taylor in the 1900 Open. Later that year, Del Monte hosted the inaugural amateur and open championships of the newly formed Pacific Coast Golf Association, comprising clubs from California, Oregon, and Washington. Some regard this open championship as the first California State Open, won by Scotsman Robert Johnstone, club professional at Presidio, with a score of 148 for 36 holes.

The course was expanded in 1903, becoming the first golf course in California to boast 18 holes.

In 1920 the course underwent a major renovation under the direction of William Herbert Fowler, a British golf architect. Fowler's redesign is substantially what we see today.



CHARLES E. MAUD

Charles E. Maud was an accomplished golfer as well as an excellent polo player, and would often make trips to Del Monte to participate in polo matches. It is not difficult to imagine, then, that Maud had a strong influence on Hotel Del Monte's decision to build a golf course.

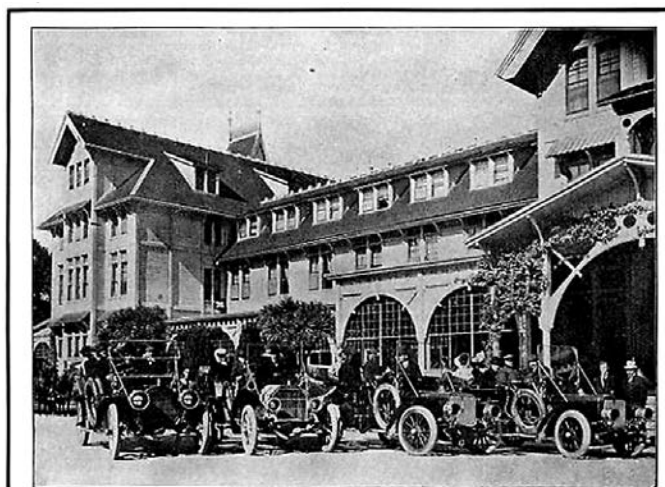
While there is no definitive record that Maud designed the course, he is generally acknowledged as its architect. The original nine hole course, like so many of the early California courses, started out with sand greens, but was soon



*THE HOTEL DEL MONTE was a happening place in 1883, the date of this postcard. Burned to the ground in 1887 and 1924, the Del Monte became more luxurious with each incarnation, at one time incorporating a glass-roofed swimming pavilion, racetrack, lake, tennis courts, and Del Monte Golf Course, now the oldest continuously operating golf course in the West. The third hotel became the Naval Postgraduate School in 1952. It is said to be haunted by Charles Crocker, one of its early financial supporters.*

replaced by grass.

The Del Monte links, in its early years, was the venue of choice for major tournaments in California. In addition to the annual Del Monte Cup, started in 1899 (and won by Maud), the first North/South tournament between Northern and Southern California was contested that same year. Led by Maud, the South won the inaugural event 14-4. 🏌️



## HOTEL DEL MONTE

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SUMMER RESORT IN THE WORLD

*Three and one-half hours ride from San Francisco*

Where the mellow tonic climate and superb surroundings invite to life in the open every day in the year. At Hotel Del Monte every facility for the enjoyment of outdoor sports is provided.

**MOTORING OVER THE MOST MAGNIFICENT SCENIC BOULEVARD IN AMERICA—THE WORLD FAMOUS 17-MILE DRIVE**

This is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque roadways in the world, a perfect motor speedway, winding through pine forests and along the seashore, beginning and ending at Hotel Del Monte. In addition to this there are miles of new macadam boulevards just completed which, extending over the hills at a minimum grade of less than three per cent, afford some of the most wonderful scenery in California.

*The new PEBBLE BEACH LODGE is also a great attraction, being without counterpart anywhere*

**A PERFECT EIGHTEEN-HOLE GOLF COURSE, WHERE CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENTS WILL BE HELD IN SEPTEMBER, WITHIN FIVE MINUTES WALK OF THE HOTEL**

The golf course at Hotel Del Monte has been under continuous care for years, and is conceded by experts to be one of the grandest in the world. Its putting greens of velvet grass, and rolling fair greens studded with great live oak, bring out the strong point of each player's game.

*The 1909 annual golf tournaments will be held here Aug. 28th to Sept. 4th*

**Free stopover privileges at Hotel Del Monte allowed on all through railroad tickets**

Full information regarding rates and reservations and literature on request, of

**H. R. WARNER, MANAGER, DEL MONTE, CALIFORNIA**

Peck-Judah Co., 511 S. Spring St., Los Angeles

S. P. Information Bureau, Sixth and Spring Sts., Los Angeles

# Today's Del Monte GC

Along with the Burlingame GC, the Del Monte Golf Course is one of the earliest to still remain in operation. Others include the course at the Presidio in San Francisco, built in 1895, the Mare Island GC (1898), and the Catalina Island GC, said to have opened in 1892. There may be others.

In the early part of the 20th century, Del Monte hosted many events, including the Del Monte Cup, the Pacific Coast Open, and the 1916 Western Amateur Championship, the first time that event was ever played west of the Continental Divide. A results card is shown below.

Del Monte continues to annually host championship golf, including the Monterey Open and the Monterey City Amateur, the latter of which began at Del Monte in 1972. The course has regularly tested PGA, LPGA and Champions Tour players as a previous host of the Pebble Beach Invitational and First Tee Open.

[www.pebblebeach.com/golf/del-monte-golf-course/](http://www.pebblebeach.com/golf/del-monte-golf-course/)



HOLE NO. 1 AT DEL MONTE GC  
PHOTO/COURTESY PEBBLE BEACH RESORTS

## THE WESTERN AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP (1916)

The Western Golf Association was founded in 1899, and its headquarters have always been in Chicago, Illinois—then considered the West. It came to California with its championships more quickly than the USGA, bringing the Western Amateur to Del Monte in 1916. Free rail transportation from Chicago to Del Monte was offered to competitors, making it easier to attract a strong field. The USGA ruled any golfer accepting the free transportation would be stripped of their amateur status. The dispute over this aspect of control, and the WGA's board's acquiescence to the authority of the USGA, ended the battle for control of golf in America in favor of the USGA. The WGA never returned to the Monterey Peninsula.

### 19TH WESTERN AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP DEL MONTE GOLF COURSE, JULY 17-22, 1916

Medalist: Heinrich Schmidt, 71-72—145

#### FINAL SCORE

71-72—145  
75-74—149  
79-78—157  
80-74—154  
75-72—148  
74-80—154  
70-76—146  
78-81—159

#### QUARTERFINALISTS (16 HOLES)

Heinrich Schmidt, Claremont, CA  
F. Hoover Bartlett, Jr., Chicago, IL  
Roger Lapham, San Francisco, CA  
Harold Lamb  
Douglas Grant, Burlingame, CA  
E. "Sewey" Armstrong, Los Angeles, CA  
Clarence Mangham, San Antonio, TX  
Walter Salisbury, Salt Lake City, UT

#### SEMIFINALISTS

Heinrich Schmidt 5 & 4  
Roger Lapham 4 & 3  
Douglas Grant 6 & 5  
Clarence Mangham 2 & 1

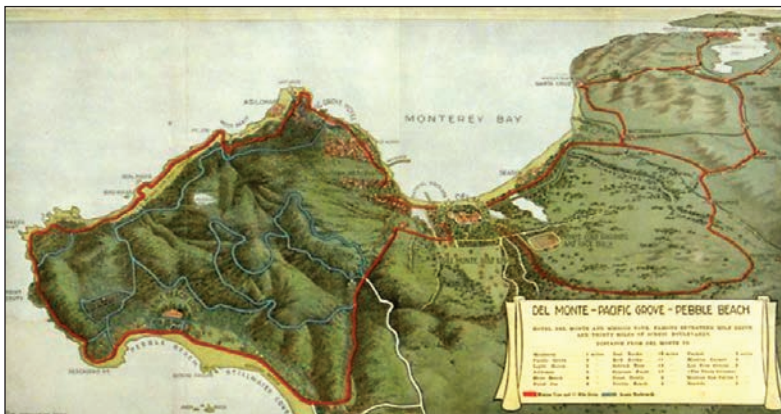
#### FINALISTS

Heinrich Schmidt 13 & 12  
Douglas Grant 5 & 4

#### WINNER

Heinrich Schmidt Claremont, CA 7 & 6

MAP FROM EARLY TRAVEL BROCHURE shows the booming Monterey Peninsula. Draw a line straight down from the "R" in Monterey Bay and you will come across the Hotel Del Monte and the Del Monte GC.



**CALIFORNIA 1917 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP HOPEFULS.** Del Monte players mentioned in the note above right from a Spalding Golf Guide include, from left: Robert Cash, George Turnbull, Douglas Grant, and Harold Sampson. SoHG member Erik Beer, who supplied the photo, believes that "Harold Simpson" is a typo. Harold Sampson was pro at the time as identified in the article. "It would

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SPALDING'S OFFICIAL GOLF GUIDE.

## Golf on the Pacific Coast

### CALIFORNIA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP.

The officials of the California State Association are: J. O. Tobin, San Francisco, president; J. W. Long, Los Angeles, vice-president; Harry Roberts, secretary-treasurer.

Year.	Winner.	Year.	Winner.
1908—	Douglas Grant, San Francisco.	1913—	J. F. Neville, Claremont.
1909—	Campbell Whyte, San Francisco.	1914—	H. K. B. Davis, San Francisco.
1910—	Frank Newton, Claremont.	1915—	E. S. Armstrong, Midwick.
1911—	E. S. Armstrong, Midwick.	1916—	Lawrence Cowing, Los Angeles.
1912—	J. F. Neville, Claremont.		

The leading event in California golf—the State title—the twentieth annual competition for which was held on the Hotel Del Monte course, was won by Dr. C. H. Walter of San Jose. Dr. Walter, who was one stroke behind Douglas Grant in the qualifying round, 144 being the score of the latter, fought it out with Grant in the match competition, and although at one time 4 down, pulled out to victory. The semi-finals furnished exciting golf when Grant and Jack Neville clashed, the former winning, 6 and 4.

The open championship was won by Grant with 283. Harold Simpson, the Del Monte pro, had 296; Dr. Walter, the State champion, did 299, and Mr. Neville tied with John Black at 301.

The women's play for the Del Monte title was won by Miss Kathleen Wright of Pasadena, who defeated Mrs. Guy Cochrane, 7 and 6.

appear that in 1917 Del Monte hosted three large tournaments: The California State Amateur, The California Open, and the Women's Tournament," Beer says. "There was a two-day qualifier for the amateur tournament, of which the lead score was 144. How do think that two-day 144 would hold up exactly 100 years later for our own USHO?"

# 20 years for NHC

2017 NHC – June 8-10  
St Martins Course  
Philadelphia Cricket Club  
Philadelphia, Pa.

**LEE TREVINO**, left, was a visitor in 2016, holding court with Mike Just, right. Immediately behind them, from left, are Kris, Andy, and Patrick Just, sons of the late Elmore Just.



BY JIM DAVIS

*It was twenty years ago one day  
Czar Peter taught the lads to play  
Gutty clubs were coming back in style  
They were guaranteed to raise a smile  
So may we introduce to you  
The name you've known for all these years  
The National Hickory Championship!*

*(With apologies to Lennon/McCartney and The Beatles)*

**2017** marks the 20th anniversary of one of the world's most unique hickory golf tournaments. The tournament has many stories to tell, well beyond the scope of what can be covered here, but here we hope to provide a flavor of this historic tournament and note its importance on the world of modern hickory golf.

It was with the help of Lewis Keller, and a few other key players, that Pete Georgiady determined, somehow, a curious crimp of landscape nestled in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia, once used as a private 9-hole course for four men and their friends, could become a place where old hickory golf clubs might be played in a close approximation of 1880s golf. Several ingredients went into this strong and addicting brew.

The Oakhurst Links were built in 1884 by Russell Montague as a casual course to entertain friends Alexander McLeod, Roderick McLeod, and George Grant. It was on 35 acres or so and the foursome entertained friends for a private tournament for several years before moving on to other things. The course fell into disuse, then Lewis Keller bought the land in 1960. He had a plan.

Keller later teamed up with Bob Cupp, a golf course architect and history buff, and with Phil Patton, then a member of the LPGA board of directors, to revitalize the old links. In 1994 everything came together and the newly restored 1884 Oakhurst Links was opened to the public. Keller even provided replicas of longnosed wood clubs for players, to enhance the 1880s feel of the game.

Ralph Livingston III and Roger Hill, both of Grand Rapids, Mich., were commercial photographers at the time (mid-90s) who were regularly attending home furnishing shows in High Point, N.C. Livingston, who passed away in August 2012, had

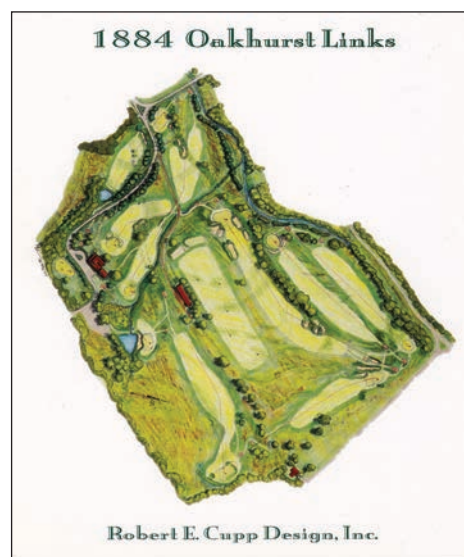
an insatiable curiosity for things that captured his interest. Hickory golf struck deep. Livingston read and experienced all he could about the hickory game, most often with Hill and often through their mutual interests in the Golf Collectors Society.

Livingston learned about a revitalization of what was called the 1884 Oakhurst Links by its owner Lewis Keller. In 1994, he and Hill

decided to stop by and play it one day on a return trip to Grand Rapids, just a week or so before the newly restored course's public opening. They were both captivated and unnerved by playing replica 1880s clubs and a gutty ball over this unusual twist of land that wound through a valley, over frog and turtle ponds and up a steep slope.

**Georgiady**, who knew of Hill and Livingston through the GCS, says it was their accounts, added to that of Charles "Bud" Dufner's account of a visit to Oakhurst for *Golfiana* magazine that intrigued him; that and the use of those old clubs, something already dear to his heart. An accomplished and published writer, Georgiady sold the idea of a visit to the throw-back course to Al Barkow of *Golf Illustrated* who put our man on the assignment.

So in 1996 Georgiady and his son, Bryan, played the course with Keller. The environment worked its magic on Georgiady who returned in 1997 on assignment from the USGA's *Golf Journal* to play the course again with Keller. The day was beautiful, filled with sunshine, blue skies, and birds singing in harmonies and French rondelays. Mesmerized, it appears, on No. 8, the long hole, our hero turned to Keller and asked "Why can't we have a



**BOB CUPP'S** map of the restored Oakhurst Links.

tournament here?"

Many players for the next 20 years would phrase a different form of that question – "Why are we having a tournament here?" Rigours of the Oakhurst Links became so famous over time that a history of the NHC, published in April 2012, was aptly titled, *Survival*; its cover featuring a vicious swipe from Steve Busic in hopes of extricating his ball from knee-deep grass.

But it was more than the stern test the rugged and often waterlogged and shaggy course would provide. It was the methods – decrees, really – employed by the tournament's host that helped forge the legend.

The National Hickory Championship, begun in 1998, was the nation's first gutty ball, or pre-1900 competition, but that was not the original intent, according to Georgiady.

"The NHC began as a way for GCS members to play competitively with long nose clubs, something they couldn't do with their collectables," he says. "The fact that Oakhurst was using limited distance balls was only part of the package. From day one the NHC wasn't known as a gutty ball event but as other events were started, using Titleists, we became known as a gutty ball competition."

The first Oakhurst balls were a fishnet pattern from Penfold and they were never passed off as authentic. Over the years the ball evolved as suppliers came and went. Today's NHC approves synthetic gutta percha balls from the McIntyre Golf Ball Co..

Georgiady invited Trey Holland, who had 10 years of experience as chair of the USGA's Rules Committee, to validate a set of historically authentic rules.

He would also implement a dress code, another first, and equipment standards, which he manages with a keen eye as only someone with his deep knowledge of old clubs can do.

The NHC was also the first two-day, 36-hole hickory competition. The Heart of America (Des Moines, Iowa) begun by former GCS president



HUGH CAMERON off the No. 3 tee in 2009.

Warren "Ole" Olson pre-dates the NHC, but had always been a one-day event. Georgiady wanted a 36-hole event so that a golfer in the Open division couldn't have one good round and "snatch" a victory.

After each year's NHC, Georgiady would canvas the players and tournament assistants in an effort to improve. They introduced a program book, trading cards, photos taken on the first tee and a composite group photo.

Another innovation involved the inclusion of a foursomes competition which in turn led to different divisions/competitions. There is now a junior intern program that Georgiady particularly enjoys.

"The kids who participated had no qualms about not playing with the most modern equipment," he says. "The fact that we have

had some of them back multiple times and that they have built their own hickory sets is gratifying."

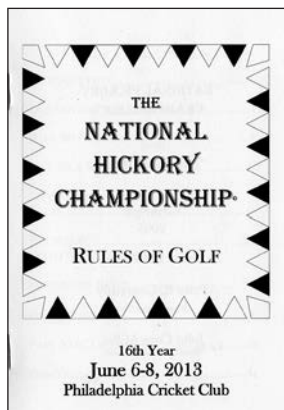
Other hickory golf innovations include the awards recognizing hickory spirit, not just excellent scoring. The NHC goes eight deep into medals.

For all this, and for his meticulous one-page instructions on dress and equipment, Georgiady has become known as the "Czar" of the NHC, one who rules with a strict, but benevolent hand. It's his way of trying to keep it authentic.

"I have an appreciation for 1920s hickory golf, but gutty at the NHC is the real history classroom," he says. "In the case of the NHC it means playing as close to 1890s as feasible. We can't perfectly re-enact golf of the 1890s but we try to be reasonable in blending small bits of the 21st century with the 1890s."

Though it is not the only hickory golf event to have its long-time patrons, NHC loyalists are particularly fierce. Three players – Mike Stevens, Ross Snellings, and Russ Ravert – have come for all 20 years. Three others, Rob Ahlschwede, John Crow

see NHC, 12



ROGER HILL'S first shot with a longnose club and gutty ball on the Oakhurst Links. Ralph Livingston III took this photo in 1994, just before the course's public opening. "With nerves of steel he made it over the pond," Livingston wrote on the photo. Center, a photo of Livingston on the first tee of the first NHC in 1998. At right, Pete Georgiady, left, with Winn Padgett at the Philadelphia Cricket Club in 2013.



# NHC

CONTINUED FROM 11

Miller, and Tom Johnson, missed the first year but have been to the next 19 straight. All have entered for 2017.

"I tell people we love the golf and the competition but the NHC has almost evolved into a family reunion of sorts," Georgiady says. "I also tell every entrant that once they tee off in the NHC they are members of the NHC family for life."

The NHC is the story of an old course, perhaps the oldest in the U.S., of an attempt at 1880s golf, of friends and family, of loss and of strength found. It is the story of high, oh god, very high scores, and of champions who play the grand game so well, relishing the competition, loss or victory. There are stories of laughter, of rain-outs, of curious on-course tragedies and puzzling rulings, of meeting the famous, and of dinners and good times.

While the NHC hasn't always been at Oakhurst – it was played at Pinehurst in 2006, and at the Philadelphia Cricket Club in 2013 – it has always been a compelling tale that changes with each player, but is always the same:

*"...wonderful conversations, gentle friendliness..."*

*"...smiles, smiles, smiles..."*

*"I can't believe I have to wait a whole year to come back."*

*"...the most joy now when thinking about Oakhurst today is playing with my dad and sharing that with him."*

*"...the NHC is a living museum."*

*"It really felt like I was back in time, playing history."*

*"...it is golf as it was but also as it can be... instructive of fundamentals both of shotmaking and of self."*

- The first year all but three players used Oakhurst's replica clubs – Ralph Livingston III, Randy Jensen, and Don Gibbon brought real antique clubs. The next year, 25 players came with their own authentic antiques.

- Steve Spring brought his crew from Louisiana and made 30

gallons of authentic Cajun gumbo, treating everyone at the 2011 Thursday reception.

- In 2001 it rained all through the two day's play. After the first day everyone went to WalMart in Lewisburg and wiped out their nylon poncho supply. The minute we called the competition after 27 holes the sun came out.

- In 2013 at the Cricket Club on Friday we played through tropical storm Andrea. There were torrents on every green and we spent more time chipping over the water instead of putting through it.

- Accomplished U.S. amateur golfer and former USGA president Billy Campbell came many times to hang with us and hosted us for cocktails at his house in 2002. Sam Snead in 1999 and Lee Trevino, 2015-16 visited the event to meet and pose for photos.

- Three gentlemen from Sweden played in 2015.

- JW McMath's hole-in-one, 2014

- The NHC has been on national TV twice on CBS and the Golf Channel. ESPN filmed once, but this has never been aired.

Inevitably, there is a question about the future of the NHC, especially as the ownership of the Oakhurst Links has changed over the past few years and that former close relationship with the course's owner is just not there. Georgiady is philosophic about it and the change that will come to the NHC.

"We'll keep playing as long as people will enter," he says.

"Sooner or later I'll have to train my replacement. Remember, Mr. Keller was with us into his 90s so hopefully I also have a bunch of good years left. Every year we use the template from past years, but we try to add improvements every year. It's evolutionary. The goal is to keep it competitive but make it inclusive, fair and fun for everyone.

"My goodness...20 years? Who would have thunk it?" ☺



**A GOLF CHANNEL** film crew takes footage of Randy Jensen driving from the first tee in 2009. Hugh Cameron waits his turn on the tee.



**JUNIOR NHC-ERS** at the Philadelphia Cricket Club in 2013. From left, Drew White of Virginia and Marsalis Davis of North Carolina who was participating in his third NHC.



**IT'S NOT A CLOTHING CONTEST**, but NHC participants and guests enjoy the challenge of assembling a period-correct costume. At left, David and Jeannette Reh of Pennsylvania. At right, Greg and Ann Smith of Wisconsin.



# BOOK REVIEW

## The Life & Times of Donald Ross

By Chris Buie

2016, Classics of Golf, 293 pages, \$75

ISBN 978-0-940889-74-3 www.classicsofgolf.com

### REVIEW BY JIM DAVIS

*“Donald Ross... came here to lay out the eighteen hole course... Ross has been going over the course, mapping out the places where the holes will be put.”*

Such was a portion of the report in the Topeka State Journal on Sept. 3, 1915, about the inchoate Shawnee G.C. Those few lines were repeated in similar fashion many hundreds of times in newspapers and journals as Donald J. Ross worked his magic across the landscape of American golf in the early 20th century.

From mighty clubs to the “everyman” public courses for communities across the country, Ross was the epitome of reliability, expertise, and artistry. Author Chris Buie has teamed with the Classics of Golf group to create what may be the last word on this quietly efficient, hard working architect.

Much has been written about Ross and his association with James Tufts and the Pinehurst Resorts. Discerning golfers everywhere have at least a glimmer of what it means to be playing a “Ross course.” Indeed, the anticipation of any round is enhanced with this knowledge. But few actually know much about the man, his background, or the nature of his long career in the U.S.

Buie, the literary architect, has supplied golf historians and Ross fans with an absorbing “round of Ross” that encompasses for its golfing landscape no less than *The Life and Times* of the man many consider the best golf course architect. Period.

From the first tee, if you will, and Ross’s beginnings in Dornoch and training with Old Tom Morris and Robert Simpson of Carnoustie, Buie skillfully routes us through Ross’s subsequent journey to America for a tentative bit of work at the Oakley CC in Watertown, Mass. and on through his gentleman’s agreement with James Tufts to begin his legendary Pinehurst career.

Buie has enlivened the text with many dozens of images from important and private archives that range from early and rare photographs to post cards, architectural drawings, aerial photos, even advertisements. As well, he has researched early inter-

views with Ross, private letters, and published accounts to fully portray his man in all his facets. And there were many.

As a golfer who knew his game, Ross was no slouch and might have chosen the professional tournament route had that offered itself as a promising career for himself and his young wife, Janet. At age 62, for example, Ross turned in a 66 on Pinehurst No. 3.

Ross the architect is presented not only in light of the extraordinary body of his work (at its height, several hundred Ross-designed courses were opening every year), but in the particular care he brought to each course and the confidence he inspired in each client. His importance in the “Pinehurst School” of golf architecture is of interest for the collaborations with such as A.W. Tillinghast, Henry Fownes, George Crump, and Hugh Wilson.

As a businessman, Ross recognized talent and rewarded expertise, hiring assistants who were extraordinarily loyal to the man who expected both a high standard of performance and personal conduct. His assistants, some of whom would go on to long careers as architects or club professionals, would often make course visits when Ross could not, to complete routings that Ross had done from detailed topographical maps.

A man who was at ease in all levels of society, Ross knew the importance of balance as a consummate professional, and a private individual who cherished his private life. Buie’s thorough research shares innumerable stories of his relationships with everyone from presidents to professional golfers to golf architects, associates and family – even the eager citizens of smaller communities who were anxious to have Ross construct a course for their town, especially in an age when to have a golf course was considered an “arrival” of sorts on the cultural scene of the day.

Through the many fairways and doglegs of Ross’s life, we come to gain a better insight into a man of immense talent and “a natural nobility” of mind and temperament.

The main body of his book completed, Buie realized he had compiled dozens of stories and background information on important courses and other topics that “...exceeded what was needed for a biographical narrative.” Rather than filing them away, he decided to supplement the larger book with these vignettes. We are fortunate that he did so.

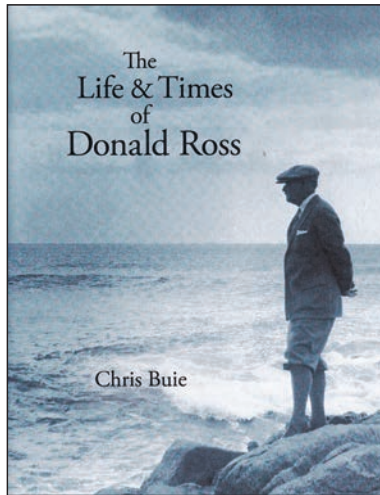
The latter half of *Life & Times* contains a masterly appendix that begins with “Stories of Note,” – the “vignettes” – with headings from Seminole and Augusta National through Pitch and Putt Courses, and Canada., which serve to further our understanding of these important accomplishments of Ross.

Having negotiated this colorful section, we come upon the headings of Major Courses and Uncredited Works, for a closer examination of Ross masterpieces and unheralded, but nonetheless characteristically well-crafted, courses.

Two other important appendices include a welcome and de-

tailed Timeline of Ross’s life and works and a current list of his courses.

*The Life and Times of Donald Ross* has been hailed by important authors and reviewers from the Wall Street Journal, to James Dodson, and Ran Morrisett of Golf Club Atlas. Such back-cover superlatives are often quite effusive in their praise. In this case, you may believe them. 🌟



# Play Roaring Gap? No need to ask twice

Virginia's Jim Clawson had a ball at ultra-private Ross course in North Carolina

COURTESY OF RAN MORRISSETT

**SCENIC ROARING GAP**, A Donald Ross original, was recently restored by architect Kris Spence of Winston-Salem, N.C.



BY JIM CLAWSON

A 'rookie' at Roaring Gap.

In 1926, Leonard Tufts, president of Pinehurst Inc., and his course architect, Donald Ross, opened a golf course for the overheated Carolina summer folks in Roaring Gap, 3,000 feet above sea level and overlooking the Piedmont below. Ninety years later, the club hosted the Fifth Annual Jay Harris Open Invitational Hickory Sticks Fourball tournament. Yours truly was somehow openly invited and eagerly signed up.

The first thing one notices is that the dry 72 degree temperature is a huge relief from the 95 degree muggy weather eastward in my home state of Virginia. The Roaring Gap staff are friendly, happy to see you – until they noticed the New England Patriots sticker on my trunk. After much good natured ribbing about the Carolina Panthers and Patriots, I went to the lovely practice range to hit a few balls toward the general direction of Winston-Salem.

The first tee reminded me of No. 1 at Pine Needles – an uphill, dogleg right par five. No. 2 is an interesting par 3 with a typical Ross feature, a short bunker that looks like it will swallow you up. At the end of the 4th, the distinctive Graystone Inn appears, a period inn patterned after Mount Vernon. It was here, later in the evening, that we enjoyed a lovely dinner and lots of conviviality due in no small part to J.J. Jackson's kind provision of the imbibement.

But, back to the course. No. 5 takes us back downhill. Although

Roaring Gap is clearly a mountain course, it didn't have the steep mountainside feel of similar courses I've played in Virginia, Japan, and elsewhere – except for 10 and 11, perhaps.

All of the holes on the front are isolated and unique. On the back, several holes are side-by-side, which reminded me of the front nine at Merion – which hosted an SOHG outing just weeks earlier. The back nine winds

down a valley, over a creek, up a hill, around a ridge, then over one of two blind tee shots and up toward the two finishing holes – both of which overlook the Piedmont range for some 50 or more miles. What a spectacular view! Beware, though. An overlong approach on 17 will take you down a steep mountainside toward Elkin and Winston! The Club has even built a tee box behind the green for those who wish to see how close to Winston they can hit a ball.

The par 3 18th reminded me a little of 18 at Troon in that you don't want to blade your approach lest you land it in a window or someone's 19th-hole drink.

But the greens! OMG. Smooth, clean, like billiard tables, and soooo true. Putting those two days was a pristine, scary, exhilarating, giggly, and titillating experience. Ross' greens here were not so over-the-top as Pinehurst No. 2 (not my favorite greens), but ever so subtle. An errant or misread putt would easily leave the green. I LOVED the greens. The combination of Ross's designs and the meticulous maintenance was spectacular.

The fairways are a mixture of native rye grass, Kentucky bluegrass, and Poa annua, so lies were constantly very tight. Some people don't like tight lies, but I found them an interesting challenge that forced me to pay close attention to contact. I had a couple of skulled shots, but mostly was able to fit the face between the lower hemisphere and the ground.

The fourball format ensured meeting new people, getting better acquainted with others, lots of good ribbing, some high fives and gentlemanly fist-bumps, (never bump too hard), and silent commiseration with the mis-hits.

And to boot, I found two perfect leather head covers in the pro shop that just fit my hickory putter and my hickory cleek. The cleek head cover even had an "H" on it. In some other world, it probably meant "hybrid" but to me it was "hickory hybrid," that is, a cleek.

To top off the great weather, the gorgeous course, the very hospitable staff, the good food, the stimulating camaraderie, the magnificent greens, and the perfect souvenirs, I had one of my best hickory rounds ever the second day and a better net than ever in any tournament I'd ever played in. On the way home, I eagerly called my wife to tell her of this good news. She waited patiently and then asked, "Uh huh, how much was the entry fee?" Killjoy. ☹



**ROARING GAP FOURSOME** — from left: Tom Ochs, Jim Clawson, Jim Rohr, and Rusty Wells.

# A Pinehurst Pedigree

## Roaring Gap recaptures Ross identity

BY W. DUNLOP WHITE III

Reprinted with permission from *Triad Golf Magazine*, Fall 2006

*(Note: Roaring Gap Club recently completed its comprehensive Ross restoration in 2014 to great acclaim. Indeed, Tufts, Ross and the Pinehurst visionaries would be proud today, because Roaring Gap once again — nine decades later — boasts a museum collection of some of the most authentic sets of Ross greens and design features in golf.)*

The club dates back to 1925, when Leonard Tufts, president of Pinehurst Inc., and a group of affluent North Carolina businessmen, proposed the development of a private mountain community to reside during the summer months. Pinehurst had already become a popular winter enclave in the Sandhills, and Tufts envisioned a companion golf retreat with the perfect climate for his Yankee clientele, who were tiring of their long trip back north every summer.

In 1926, Roaring Gap Club was formed, and Tufts served as the first president. In fact, brochures and press releases referred to Roaring Gap as “the Pinehurst of the Mountains”.

Because Roaring Gap started as a joint venture with Pinehurst Inc., Tufts made sure that Donald Ross, his golf director in Pinehurst, was the hands-on architect from start to finish. After all, Ross already had made quite a name for himself outside Pinehurst by designing courses during the summers throughout the northeast. Until 1938, even Ross’ assistants at Pinehurst, including Palmer Maples, interned as head professionals at Roaring Gap every summer.

For Roaring Gap, retrieving Ross’ original routing plan was the coup d’état. It provided the sizes, shapes, and positions of original design features and allowed the club to make “then versus now” comparisons that revealed exactly how these items have changed and deteriorated over the decades.

As living landscapes, golf courses naturally evolve. While trees grow, fairways contract. It’s difficult to notice in any one season, but over the course of eighty years, Roaring Gap’s fairways have lost nearly half of their original widths, resulting in razor-thin corridors flanked by lush walls of vegetation.

Architect Kris Spence, a restoration specialist from nearby Greensboro, recommended a judicious tree management program with the emphasis on peeling back the overgrowth.

Roaring Gap’s greens also lost nearly half of their original putting surfaces. The advent of riding triplex mowers had gradually rounded-off all of Ross’ intricately shaped green corners reducing them to little more than basic ovals. Matters were made worse by decades of topdressing applications that have gradually elevated their surfaces more than 13 inches above grade.

Bunkers too fall prey to wind and erosion. Add the wear and tear of golf traffic and maintenance, and it’s no surprise that Roaring Gap’s bunkers appeared ragged and dilapidated. In turn, Spence re-established the sand/grass lines to their proper depths and dimensions by scraping away the sand build-up and spray that accumulated over time.



DO DROP, the 6th hole at Roaring Gap.

At 6,100 yards, the course was undersized by anyone’s standards. Nowadays, golf balls are traveling greater distances than Ross ever envisioned. Therefore, Spence lengthened ten holes — where room was available — to bring their intended landing areas back into play from the tee.

In addition, Spence squared-off the new tee boxes and planted fine fescue grasses in the peripheral areas, that seed-out and turn wispy-brown, to promote the classical look and feel of an early-American landscape.

Ross also had a penchant for cross-bunkers — patterned in diagonal alignments — to direct golfers in conjunction with the prevailing movement of the terrain. Sometimes cross-bunkers guided golfers down a slope or over a ridge to a landing area not readily discernible from the tee, as was the case on Holes 5 and Hole 14. But Ross never intended for cross-bunkers to be unduly penal. He simply used them to provide golfers with a visual determination of the land required for thoughtful shotmaking.

Through the years, especially during the Depression, heavy-handed green committees abandoned cross-bunkers in a whole-sale effort to alleviate labor costs. In recent years, however, a dedicated group of restoration specialists, including Spence, have faithfully devoted their talents to recapturing Ross’ design features, none of which are more distinctive than his cross-bunkers.

To date, not every cross-bunker has been reinstated. But should a debate ever arise over Ross’ intentions, members need only to consult the wall of the golf grill, where a full-blown copy of the architect’s 1925 rendering hangs.

“We never run short of opinions up here,” says Bill Glenn, in jest. “But once the club made the commitment to Ross, most everyone defers to his drawings,” says Roaring Gap’s long-time golf professional.

Glenn even replicated an antique scorecard from the late-1940’s to stay in keeping with a traditional golf course aesthetic.

Superintendent Len Fawcett integrated some old-fashioned accessories to enhance the on-course presentation. Molded plastics and other glossy commercial items have slowly been replaced with vintage, handcrafted reproductions, such as wooden flagsticks and cast iron cups, which evoke a time-honored sensibility to the golfing grounds.

Even today, Fawcett works tirelessly to coordinate modern maintenance practices with old-school design standards, an ongoing exercise that continues long after the spadework.

It’s all part of a long range master plan to recover Donald Ross’ distinct design character of yesteryear. 🏌️

# “...the serene impartiality of a mongrel.”

T.H. Huxley, 1890



BY JIM DAVIS

Huxley was commenting on his own physical characteristics, something of this feature and something of that. As a result of which, being neither completely one or the other, he felt unobliged to conform to expectations accorded to one or the other.

Mongrel clubs from our favorite golfing eras appear to have something in common with this line of thought in that, sharing the characteristics of two or three clubs, the mongrel club was a “freak” created for a specific player or purpose with no obligation to perform in the narrowest sense of either, or more, of its parents.

*“Mongrel” appears to have been used interchangeably with the term “freak” to describe newly designed specialty clubs that differed from the ordinary. The known mongrel club examples indicate that their design was as “betweenner” clubs.*

That was Ralph Livingston III from his now-famous book on the clubs of Tom Stewart – *Thomas Stewart Jr., Golf Cleek and Iron Maker* (2010).

Livingston was describing a mongrel mashie, pictured below right, that he thought, given its 29 degree loft, a predecessor to a three-iron in, possibly, a named set. He conjectured this particular club was ordered to fill a gap between a mashie and mid iron. Its head shape, he reasoned, was more similar to an iron than the shorter and deeper shape of the common mashie. A mongrel.

In general, mongrel clubs appear to be “one-off” clubs designed for a specific purpose. Livingston speculated that a mongrel iron ordered by A.L. Johnson & Company (shown at right) was designed to cash in on American interest of Harry Vardon’s use of the club, especially after the 1913 U.S. Open at Brookline. Apparently, unusual utility irons were a common order from the A.L. Johnson company and its mongrel-loving clientele.

Other Stewart examples of mongrels, according to Livingston, include Maxwell hosels, backspin/deep groove clubs, push irons, the Freddy (again from A.L. Johnson), the Sammy, Sammy iron, and a Tweenie, produced for Ben Sayers.

All of these irons, described in Livingston’s Stewart book in the section on Mongrel Irons, are examples of clubs so unique that they were never produced in quantity, rather to fulfill special orders. In truth, some of them never became popular and so quickly faded to scarce. An example is the Fairlie Pattern Iron, which never caught on in America. Perhaps mongrels were a uniquely British phenomenon?

Antique club expert Pete Georgiady consulted his 1922 Burke catalog and found both Harry Vardon and Ted Ray series featured mongrels – “both Brits, you may notice,” said Pete.

These included:

Burke/Vardon: V-3 Mongrel iron, V-6 Mongrel mashie

Burke/Ray: R-3 Mongrel iron, R-5 Mongrel mashie

The catalog proudly proclaimed that, “Every model shown was designed by the famous British player and is used by him.”

Georgiady noted the clubs referenced above did not appear in

Burke’s 1917 catalog.

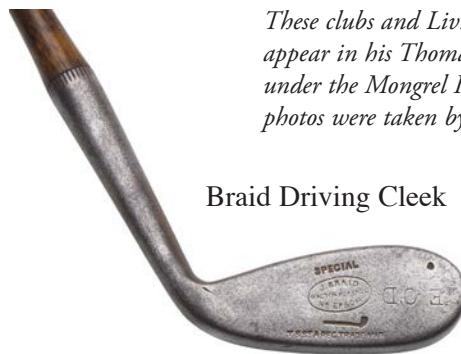
Have you a mongrel club? Are you as enamored of the club as Mike Brown was of his? Did it possess that famous club’s “Power Dots” for greater accuracy and distance? It is worth re-visiting Mike’s “Favorite Club” article from the Spring 2010 issue of the *Wee Nip* as it is about his relationship with this unusual Stewart mongrel mashie. (You can find this in the *Wee Nip* archive on the SoHG website.)

Shown here are examples from Livingston’s Stewart book.

As well, the article on the adjacent page is Henry Leach’s take on the mongrel club phenomenon as it was happening in the second decade of the 20th century.

Leach was an editor of Britain’s *Golf Illustrated* magazine around the turn of the 20th century. He was the author of three original works including *Great Golfers in the Making* (1907). 🌐

*These clubs and Livingston’s descriptions appear in his Thomas Stewart Jr. book under the Mongrel Irons heading. The photos were taken by Livingston.*



Braid Driving Cleek



Mongrel Iron



Mongrel Mashie



# The New Glory of the Mongrel Club

*The American Golfer*, October 1914

BY HENRY LEACH

The interesting fact that Harry Vardon won his sixth Open championship not merely with fewer clubs in his bag than this great event has ever been won with in modern times, but with a more peculiarly constituted bag than is customary, two mongrels being among the collection, has raised some interesting points and may provoke some new tendencies.

I remember that upon a wet and unhappy afternoon James Braid and I were considering the set of clubs of a most distinguished player which by a chance were stacked with fifty other idle bags, and after admiring the points of the driver, passing a compliment upon the cleek, and uttering a faint doubt upon the mashie we came to a strange club that immediately set up a aversion in our minds. It belonged to no definite class; it could not possibly be named, and it had some most courageous originalities. It seemed to be an open and palpable defiance to all the conventions and proprieties in clubs, and with something in the way of derision and imprecation we tumbled it back into the bag again, wiped our hands, and took out one of the two excellent putters that this champion possessed.

"It is a mongrel!" said Braid, referring to the article we had put away, and I quietly murmured that I knew it was – murmured it in the manner of a man who suggests that the conversation on such a subject ought not to be encouraged. But what hypocrites are all of us! I have known Braid himself to play with a mongrel and rejoice in doing so, and for some years past the most priceless club in my own set, that is so much more potential to its owner's capacity, is a mongrel, too, one that I purchased many long years ago. It was supposed at the time to be a mid-iron, but shortly after it had been taken into my service an inquiry was held at which various associated assisted and it was declared indubitably to be a mongrel, a club that was almost unclean and from which no good could result.

At that time golfers in general were narrower in their ideas than they are today. It was not admitted that a man's own personality and ideas counted for anything and that from his own inner self and his consciousness he was to evolve a game which might defy all the minor laws of golf but which should be his very own, and the best for him. There were distances and there were shots and there were clubs for those shots, and that was the sum of it all. My poor mongrel, though I had begun to like it for it seemed a reliable club, appeared to have no special place in this narrow little world and so in a mean shame I put it away, and it lay in idleness and darkness for seven or eight years. Then one day by a chance I came to handle it again; something about it pleased me, I took it out and tried it, and from that day to this it has been as the captain of the bag, and often have I spoken and written about it. More than that it has been admired by multitudes, and several times has it been copied. Yes, it is a mongrel, and a mongrel still, for there are certain mongrels that, after being much played with by distinguished players, and keeping up what might be called some high society, seem to acquire a status; they are copied extensively, they are given special names of their own, and at that it is discreetly agreed to forget their doubtful parentage. It has a little of the mid-iron, a little



VARDON MONGRELS? This photo taken by Ralph Livingston III appears in his book – Thomas Stewart, Jr., *Golf Cleek and Iron Maker* (2010). Livingston thought these two clubs were likely candidates for Vardon clubs referred to by Henry Leach in the accompanying article.

of a cleek and a little of a jigger in its composition, its balance is exquisite, and for a full variety of iron shots it is a glorious club. So they tell me who have admired it.

Think how many of the accepted clubs of the period were nothing but mongrels, though their doubtful origin, their impure breeding is long since forgotten. What of the mashie niblick? It is one of the most useful, the most dependable of all the clubs that are employed in the short game and one of the very easiest to use, but, of course it is nothing but a blend between the mashie and niblick, though latterly with its sharp nose and its long face it is developing points of its own. There is the jigger, which is obviously a hybrid, with something of the cleek, the iron, and the mashie in it, and there is the mashie iron also. And what is the "Sammy" but a cross between a cleek and jigger, and an excellent club too is this Sammy which would be more used if it were better known. One of Vardon's mongrels is a cross between a cleek and a mid-iron, and the other is a cross between a mid-iron and jigger. It took him a long time to make use of one of them, for he had it in his bag in America last year but rarely employed it. An American gave it to him. Then suddenly he took a fancy to it, and that club played its part in the great victory at Prestwick. The iron-jigger blended article, so the story goes, was first used by Ben Sayers who woke the champion up one night when they were traveling together between Scotland and England to ask him something about his grip and handed him this club for demonstration purposes. Sleepy Vardon, always a very human golfer, became much awake as he fingered it for he liked the feel and the balance and the look of the thing, and he told Sayers to send him one like it with all possible haste. So that club also did its duty at Prestwick, and Vardon and his mongrels are exalted above all others. ☺





## EQUIPMENT CARE & MAINTENANCE

# Spring tune-up time

*Ron Luster is a master woodworker and retired engineer who lives in Bellevue, Neb. He has produced beautiful hickory shafts in coordination with golf champion Randy Jensen and was instrumental in saving a local 9-hole course, Fontenelle Hills Golf Course, from development. He is a member of both the GCS and the SoHG. An article in the GCS Bulletin about Ron's shaft-making skills appeared in the March 2014 (No. 198) issue. — Editor*

BY RON LUSTER

At the time of this writing spring is just weeks away and it's time to get the hickories ready for another golf season.

The iron and wooden heads, shafts, grips, and finishes all need a light cleaning, a careful inspection, and repairs done as needed. The light cleaning can be done with a simple household cleaner, a medium soft nylon brush, and some paper towels. Don't overdo the cleaner; a little wiping with a damp paper towel on anything wood and a light spray and brushing on the irons grooves should be enough.

When inspecting the heads there are different things to look for in the irons and the woods. The iron heads need to be checked to determine if they are loose on the shaft. This can happen because the tip of the shaft shrinks in the dry winter and gets loose in the hosel. To check for a loose head hold the club by the grip, about a foot from a rug covered hard floor, and bounce the club. A loose head will make an obvious rattling sound. Other things that make the rattling sound are a loose pin, a loose grip, or a cracked shaft, however these are not common. An additional test is gripping the club with the head in one hand and the shaft in the other while flexing the joint. This can also detect looseness but is less sensitive. Of course, if the head is loose it will need epoxy and a repinning.

Light surface rust on the irons can be removed in many ways. A brass brush, brass wheel, or 0000 steel wool will remove the rust easily. To maintain the patina, care should be used to remove just the surface rust. Another way to remove the light rust is to use acetone on a paper towel; a little rubbing removes the light surface rust but not the patina.

Spring is also a good time to check and adjust the loft and lie of the irons. Balls hit very low or very high on the club face can bend the soft iron and change the loft or lie of the club. It is also a good time to file off any dings on the sole of the iron; the patina will return quickly during play. Finish with a light application of household oil, gun oil, or sewing machine oil.

When woods are bounced on the floor and a rattle is heard, it is usually a loose sole plate, a back weight, or the weights under the sole plate. These are easy to repair. Tighten the sole plate screws.



A FEW ODDS AND ENDS that might help with your spring club tune-up.

Lay a screw driver along the length of the back weight and hit the screwdriver with a small hammer to swell the lead and fix the rattle. Tighten the weights under the sole plate with hits from a ballpeen hammer to swell the weights.

The previous season has probably left dings and scratches on the finish of the wooden head. There may also be ball marks on the top of the head and bag wear on the finish. A little solvent and 0000 steel wool will prepare the head for a simple refinishing. A light coat of stain followed by a finish coat will have the head ready for another year of play.

Look along the shaft to see if it is warped, if so straighten it. Visually inspect the shaft for cracks. If the shaft is cracked the head should be removed and the shaft repaired or replaced. If the shaft needs refinishing, the method above can be used.

Grip type, size, and installation methods are very personal. Inspect the grips for dryness looking at surface hardness and gaps between the wraps. Refurbish or replace grips in bad shape. Leather conditioner can be applied to smooth grips. Nap-side out grips can be roughened with a wire brush. Re-whip any loose whipping.

Finishes provide heads and shafts with water proofing, abrasion resistance and aesthetics. When it is necessary to refinish either a wooden head or a shaft, drying oils and varnishes are the most commonly used and readily available options. Drying oils such as Linseed oil and Tung oil provide some level of water resistance, minimal abrasion resistance, and leave a soft sheen. They are easy to apply but may take several days to dry.

Finish varnishes consist of various types and combinations of drying oils, resins, thinners, and solvents. They have been made for several thousand years all over the world. Finish varnishes used on heads and shafts are varnish, shellac, lacquer, and polyurethane. They come in brush-on, wipe-on and spray-on in either oil/solvent or water base.

A sub-group of the finishing varnishes is simply called "varnish" and is the type found in hardware stores. This varnish is often made of some type of resin, a drying oil such as boiled

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## MODERN HICKORY PLAYING TIPS

# Iron shots

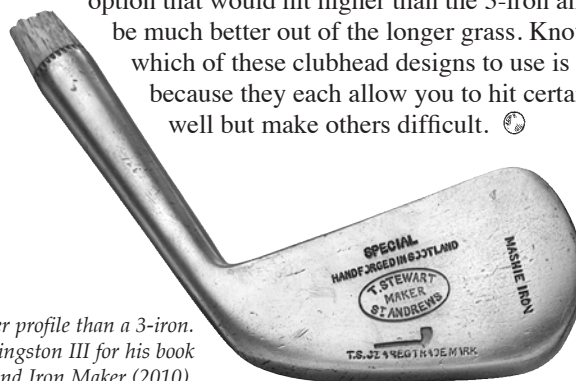
BY RANDY JENSEN

With permission from: *Playing Hickory Golf* (2008)

There is an incredibly wide range of hickory iron head shapes that have been produced. Different head shapes are more ideally suited to different kinds of shots. The lower profile “cleek” head shape will get the ball airborne easily. The shorter, deeper “mashie” profiles are much more effective out of longer grasses. It is nice to have a variety of iron head shapes in your golf bag to match the different situations you may find yourself facing on the golf course. For example, I have two long irons: a driving iron and a driving mashie. The driving iron with its long, low profile is excellent off the tee or from the fairway but its long heel-to-toe length makes it a poor choice out of long grass.

The driving mashie with its shorter, deeper design is exceptional out of the rough, but not as “forgiving” from a perfect lie as the driving iron. So they each are excellent for a particular shot. In the Tom Stewart line of golf clubs, you will find that a number of clubs have a 30-degree loft but their head shapes will produce different trajectories so you choose the club depending on the shot you are looking for. The 3-iron and mashie iron, for instance, differ substantially in shape. The shorter, deeper faced mashie iron will produce a low shot and is excellent from the rough while the 3-iron with its longer and lower head shape will hit higher, but have more trouble from the rough.

The “jigger,” generally also at 30 degrees, would be another option that would hit higher than the 3-iron and yet be much better out of the longer grass. Knowing which of these clubhead designs to use is important because they each allow you to hit certain shots well but make others difficult. Ⓜ



IRONS from Tom Stewart. The driving iron, bottom, has a lower profile than the driving mashie and a smooth face. The driving mashie has a dot face. Both are about 20 degrees of loft.

MASHIE IRON, right, has a higher profile than a 3-iron. The photo was taken by Ralph Livingston III for his book *Thomas Stewart Jr. Golf Cleek and Iron Maker* (2010).

## TUNE-UP

FROM PAGE 18

linseed oil, and a thinner such as turpentine. It dries in a day and provides a hard finish which is moderately abrasion-resistant. Shellac is made of dried resin from the lac insect dissolved in alcohol. It provides a hard, but brittle waterproof finish that is only moderately resistant to scratches and abrasions.

Wear marks can easily be rubbed out using a cloth dampened with alcohol. It dries quickly and provides an attractive shiny amber finish.

Today's lacquers are made from various polymers dissolved in lacquer thinner. They dry fast and provide a hard abrasion-resistant clear shiny finish. Polyurethane varnishes are made from urethane, synthetic oils, and solvents. They dry in hours to a hard, abrasion-resistant and durable finish.

Any of the varnishes provide a quick drying, more durable, and longer lasting finish than the drying oils. Amber shellac on shafts and clear lacquer over oil based stains on wood heads are very popular. Polyurethanes are the latest and best in the long evolution of varnishes and are the best for frequently played clubs.

### Author's Note:

I have established a blog and hope to have notated pictures in support of this article by the time it is published. I intend to include: checking for loose heads, repinning heads, replacing shafts, refinishing wooden heads and shafts, tightening loose weights, straightening warped shafts, repairing minor shaft cracks, and refurbishing dried grips. Please check [hickoryworkshop.blogspot.com](http://hickoryworkshop.blogspot.com) for these and future posts. Address comments and questions to [rluster1@cox.net](mailto:rluster1@cox.net). Include “golf” in the subject line so my wife won't put you in the spam folder! Ⓜ

# Auld Luffer

## Tale of a caddy

BY MACDUFF

It was during one of my rare visits to the old town that I was told the following story by HMD, secretary of the town's oldest and most revered links course. A World War II veteran and printer by trade, he had stepped in as secretary in 1950 and had held the post since. Now in his late 80s, the old vet knows everyone in town and is a beloved, if cantankerous, character, always ready to share a story for a pint.

I had just finished a late afternoon round and was enjoying a pint of best in The Silkie, a warm and inviting local pub, when HMD walked in and, after voluble greetings to nearly all the two dozen or so patrons, seated himself at my table. An average sized man with a mop of brown hair and a reddish face, he always dressed in a suit with a vest and tie. He looked at me with a twinkle in the eye.

"Thought I'd find ye here," he said, with a wink. "How did it go?"

"A decent enough round," I said. "A tussle of an 82, with trouble on the Scopes bunkers and a lost ball in the whins on 13. Still, all good fun."

He smiled and took a healthy pull of the dark ale that the barmaid, Ginny, set before him.

"Aye, 82," he said, shaking a finger. "I'd have thought better of ye, but noo ye're playin those damned hickories. I thought we put those away after Bobby quit the game. Now, it seems they're creepin back in. Still, I suppose, it's guid to see some of the auld traditions retoorn."

"I do like the old clubs," I said. "By the way, an odd thing on 18 green... It was getting a bit dark as I came on to putt out. I thought I saw an older man waiting by the flag. When I approached, he was gone. Funny, that. Dressed in heavy wool, I thought, like the old-time caddies. Do you have ghosts out there?"

"Gods!," said HMD, slapping the table. "Ye've seen Auld Luffer, ye have. He doesn't hold the flag for just anyone. Must have taen a liking to ye."

"Auld Luffer?"

"The same," said the secretary....

It's not a long story, he said, but good for you to know since ye've seen the man and he's held the flag for ye. Auld Luffer was a caddy here back in the early days of the 1900s. The only son of a local fisherman and his wife, the lad took to carrying bags for golfers when he was but 12 or so. He was a good lad and loyal and the gentlemen golfers appreciated it. Preston was his name, but he somehow got the nickname "Luffer." I don't know how that came about, but it stuck with him.

Luffer was always at the course early. If someone needed a hand with the course, he was there to help. If the professional needed help mending clubs in the shop, he was there to help. Luffer was no bad of a golfer, either, playing to about a 4 or 5, though, in those days, we just said he kept Colonel Bogey honest.

When the great war started, Luffer served in the infantry and was shocked terrible during artillery shellings in Belgium. Seemed to be in a daze for months. Drifted from hospital to hospital until he was sent back here where his auld ma looked after him. His pa had already gone to his reward a few years before. Died o the drink, I think.

Nothing seemed to help the lad, until a friend took him for a walk to the links and the light came to his eyes. Something came back to him. He applied for and was awarded a caddy badge which he kept polished and wore proudly on the grey wool coat that was his trademark suit.

He never was "right," if ye take my meaning, after that war, but when he was on those links and caddying and mending clubs, he was close to his former ways.

Auld Luffer, as he came to be known, was a right fixture on the links as much as the gorse, the grass, the sand, or the wind itself. An easy-going man he was, shy, but well-spoken and friendly. The old loyalty was there and as time went on, he became the favorite caddy for three or four of the club's fine old members. One in particular was Colonel Major R.J.B. Sheffield. the two became damned near inseparable. The Colonel would have none but Luffer on his bag. Caddy and golfer got to know each other well. The one knew his man's game so well that before the old warhorse could even consider a club, it was out of the bag and in his hands. They won many a match with the Colonel's good friend, the Rev. R.D. Endicott and his caddy, Roger the Bone. (Ah, the Bone! But, that's another tale.)

The Colonel looked after Luffer, too, in his way. There was always food in Luffer's small apartment home and the occasional fiver would be discovered in his pocket. You and I would wonder how money came to be there, but to Luffer it was just the way of things. He had no idea how it came to be there, it just was and that was that. Later, after that gentle soul passed on, we discovered a bureau in his place stuffed with the bills. That all went to the Caddies Benefit Fund.

Now age began to take its toll on the Colonel and his eyes began to weaken and his joints to complain more and more thanks to the wet and chilly weather we enjoy here off the sea. Ach, the miseries of age that come to us all. He came less and less to the course. Auld Luffer, though, never failed to appear daily at the caddies' house, ready to take up the clubs for his Colonel. Why, he must have been approaching 80 himself at that time.

The younger caddies implored him to take up a new bag, as it was now a rare day for the Colonel to come out, even for a bit of putting. Auld Luffer would smile that shy smile of his, "Nae," he'd say, "The Colonel may be along and I must be ready for him." He'd have the clubs shined and the bag spotless.

Well, the Colonel died around 1968. The town held a great funeral for their war hero, but Auld Luffer was not there. He was at

the caddy house, waiting. He did not understand the death of his Colonel. Each day he would arrive early and have that bag ready. He was helpful around the professional's shop and all that, sure he was, but a would not leave sight of that bag. Oh, he'd pass the time of day wi' ye, sharing a story or two, and eating a small lunch that he had prepared before he left his little apartment, the one he had shared with his ma. Still lived there. And right at 4:35 p.m., he'd pick up and go home, declaring that the Colonel would never arrive after that time.

He did this for two years to the very day of the Colonel's death. The very day, mark you. On that day, he did not leave at 4:35, but said he felt the Colonel might be late. The evening came on and the professional was closing his shop and the last go'fers were puttin oot on 18 green, but Auld Luffer said the Colonel was due. He sat on his bench with that bag at the ready as the golfers and the professional bid him a good night. The professional said he'd come to check on him later that evening, but the good man forgot.

The professional was the first one to the course the next morning and as he was opening the shop, he remembered Auld Luffer. He hurried back to the caddy house, but he saw no one. The bench was empty and the bag was gone. Thinking Auld Luffer had gone home, he was making his way back to his shop when he saw him. The poor man's body was lying just off the 18th green, the Colonel's bag in his hands. It was as if he had just lain doon to take a nap.

Funny thing is, the clubs were all dirty as if they had been played. And there were two distinct sets of footsteps on the green in the dew as if two men had walked it. Ye could make out a ball track, too, as if someone had putted. I saw it myself as the professional called me first thing and I made my way to the course afore anyone else.

While the pro called the constabulary to come for the body, I walked back down 18 to 17 green. All the way back down that fairway, there were footprints in the morning dew. The 17 green looked the same as 18, as if two men had walked it, but only one ball track on the green.

I did not go further than that but returned to my office. Now, I am not a particularly religious man and I do like a pint as much as the next fellow, but I was certain that it was the Colonel who had called upon Auld Luffer for a last round. Mind you, I was not about to make my thinkings on the matter known. I did bring this up with our professional who confessed he had similar thoughts. The authorities and the doctors could find nothing. The poor man's body had nary a mark.

I will tell ye, lad, that this story has now become a town legend and Auld Luffer is occasionally seen on 18 green, just at the gloaming and only for a lone golfer. And not just any lone golfer, but one of his choosing. Why he might choose you and not another is known only to him. I have seen him myself but once and on that night, he pulled the flag, and indicated the line of my putt, which I made. I swear I saw Luffer nod in approval as he removed the ball and replaced the flagstick. I stepped forward and was about to say his name when he simply vanished and the ball in his hand fell to the ground. It's that very ball that rests upon my desk to this day.

Auld Luffer. When ye can find a caddy as loyal as that one, well, who can blame the Colonel for wanting to have him at his side for his heavenly matches?

Now then, how's about another pint? Perhaps ye'll want to hear aboot Roger the Bone and the Rev. Endicott? ☺

# MacGregor Popular Series Model A mashie

## FEATURED CLUB



BY BEN HOLLERBACH  
BROOKHAVEN, GEORGIA

My first foray into hickory golf was a small five-club set I bought from an eBay seller for \$100. It was a calculated lark. I figured if I didn't like them, the clubs would look good hanging on the wall.

I played them and fell in love with the game all over again. As I started to expand and develop my set, four of the original five were replaced, but there was one gem that became the backbone of every set I would since build.

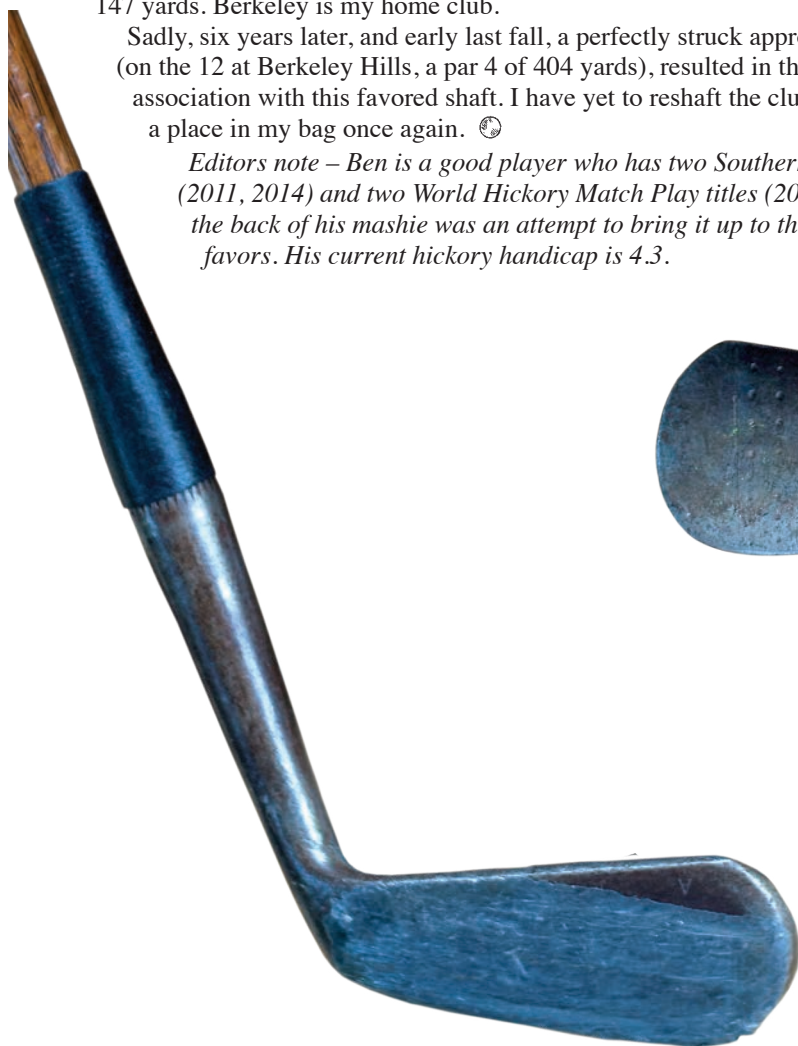
From the first strike, I felt like my MacGregor Popular Series, Model A mashie was made specifically for me.

While the Popular line was one of the lowest cost clubs MacGregor made, the company's early hand-punched forgings have a wonderful look and feel. Surrounded by Stewart, Forgan, and Nicoll collectors, I may be the only one chasing these less-than-desirable irons, thanks to this one singular club.

It is my go-to approach club and it was with this mashie that I recorded my first hickory birdie, after a well struck tee shot to 4 feet on the 11th hole at Berkeley Hills CC in Duluth, Ga., a par 3 of about 147 yards. Berkeley is my home club.

Sadly, six years later, and early last fall, a perfectly struck approach, that led to another birdie (on the 12 at Berkeley Hills, a par 4 of 404 yards), resulted in the head breaking from its long association with this favored shaft. I have yet to reshaft the club, but look forward to it taking a place in my bag once again. 🍷

*Editors note – Ben is a good player who has two Southern Hickory Fourball titles (2011, 2014) and two World Hickory Match Play titles (2015, 2106). The lead tape on the back of his mashie was an attempt to bring it up to the D9 swingweight that he favors. His current hickory handicap is 4.3.*



MacGegor, the powerhouse of domestic clubmakers from Dayton, Ohio, had been a maker of shoe-lasts, the wooden forms on which shoes are built, for 60-some years prior to getting into golf clubs. The company was officially called the Crawford, McGregor & Canby Co. Then, about 1896-97, Willie Dunn was hired to assist with the golf club venture. The company's background with wood-working served them well. It would sell only wooden clubs for a time, then got into producing entire lines of clubs. Its primary cleek mark was a rose, intended to imitate the mark of Scottish maker Robert Condie. Three- and four-leaf clover marks were also used. More than 40 club trademarks are listed in Kennedy's Golf Club trademark book. The MacGregor Popular Series, c. 1900, featured an extensive line of clubs with a wide variety of faces, styles, and models.

Wood Shafted Golf Club Value Guide (2013)

by Peter Georgiady

and American 1898-1930 Golf Club Trademarks (1984)

by Patrick Kennedy



# MacGregor was one of the first great domestic clubmakers

Excerpted from: *The History of MacGregor, 1829-1979* (1979)

BY ROBERT D. RICKEY

MacGregor's first exposure to golf according to hearsay was when a wealthy English sportsman stopped in Dayton to visit his friend, Edward Canby. He had brought his golf clubs with him and because there was not yet a golf course in Dayton kept his game sharp by hitting balls on Canby's vast estate and in doing so broke the head on one of his woods. Canby insisted on taking it to his shoe last plant the next morning to have the head replaced and a persimmon block was used to shape a new head. It is said that when the Englishman returned home, he soon found that his new persimmon head was superior to any wood being made in the old country and being prominent, he spread the word wherever he traveled; thus creating a demand for MacGregor's persimmon heads. Included in the collection of Robert Kuntz of Dayton, reputed to be one of the largest collectors of golf antiques in the world, is a 1900 magazine in which an un-named MacGregor executive is quoted as saying that they were importing to England and Scotland over 100,000 heads just three years after they had entered into the golf business, thanks to someone using, probably by chance, the first persimmon to replace the Englishman's broken wood head.

MacGregor's expertise about wood and their skills in working with it gave them a tremendous advantage and they soon claimed to be the biggest US manufacturer of persimmon heads and hickory shafts.

Of course, the secret to their success was that wood was their business and always had been, so they bought better than their competition. Also, it is said that they believed that both persimmon and hickory should be air-dried for at least 3 years before being used and, of course, was the reason they had the two tremendous sheds behind their Dayton plant.

It is interesting to note that because MacGregor had become the largest supplier of hickory shafts, they had some reluctance to push the new steel shaft – and also explains why they had a 3-year supply of hickory on hand when the market switched to



steel almost over-night. It also explains why they were the last major manufacturer to begin using laminated heads instead of persimmon, even though being wood experts, they recognized that good persimmon was no longer available even before World War II, which was the reason that they had developed their famous "oil hardening" process, which now has made MacGregor woods of the 40s and 50s the most valuable of the Classic clubs and for which as much as \$1-2,000 are being paid today. 🕒

From: *The Encyclopedia of Golf Collectibles* (1985)  
by John and Morton Olman

According to the Olman's – John and Morton, it is thought that MacGregor's mechanized woodworking processes of making shoe lasts was first applied to making wooden club heads by Robert White, the St. Andrews clubmaking professional. The company's first catalog, in 1898, was produced when Willie Dunn was associated with the company. As Rickey noted above, MacGregor soon was sending many thousands of wooden golf heads to Scotland.

By 1910, MacGregor was making golf bags, golf course supplies and other golfing items.

So, why MacGregor and not McGregor as the company first spelled its name? The Olman's believed it was no more than a marketing gimmick and that clubs stamped with "J. MacGregor" furthered this idea.

Georgiady's value guide lists dozens of MacGregor lines, including the Willie Dunn-marked clubs, Bakspin clubs (some 20 models), Edgemont, Par, Peerless, Pilot, Popular, Em-and-Em, and many others.

Tommy Armour and Toney Penna were famously associated with MacGregor clubs. Tommy Armour oil-hardened persimmon woods and the Silver Scot irons are among the most well known.

MacGregor's Chieftain woods with their ivory backweight and ivory inlays on the top of the heads are highly prized by collectors, even in their steel or coated steel-shafted iteration. A spoon from this model is shown at left and above. 🕒





# The ‘Hickory Doc’ of Omaha

Kevin Cawley was born in Phoenix, Ariz. on Christmas day in 1952. The family later moved to Carroll, Iowa, where Kevin grew up.

Though his father loved tennis, Kevin excelled in such sports as football, basketball, and track. He became captain of his high school football and track teams, and was guard on an all-state basketball team.

“I grew up watching Arnold Palmer who was just awesome, a great role model. I play golf because of his inspiration,” Kevin says.

Kevin attended Creighton University in Omaha, Neb. where he studied for a medical career. He is now a practicing radiologist at Methodist Hospital in Omaha.

“While at CU I met a cute cheerleader named Cindy and I never left Nebraska,” Kevin says. “I played golf whenever I could and would sub for the golf team whenever they needed a player. During this time, I often played with a pretty good underclassman whose name was Randy Jensen. I would learn more about this great player later on. Over the years my handicap has bounced around between 6 and 16. It’s currently 7.9.”

Kevin says that he and Dr. David Brown, former president of the SoHG and an orthopaedic surgeon, have been good friends for 30 years. The two met at Methodist Hospital and often take golf trips together.

“I joined the Happy Hollow GC in 1981 and told Dave he should join, too,” Kevin says. “He had more friends there. One day he told me that he might join Happy Hollow but that I would have to play hickory golf with him. I had no idea what he was talking about, but agreed to it. One October day in 2008 he called me up and said he had just joined Happy Hollow and he had hickories for me to try. And so it began!”

Kevin started to play more with hickories that winter and at first was disillusioned. “I thought it a waste of time, but the more I played them, the more interested I became, not only in vintage clubs but in the history of the game. My club pro, Mike Antonio, started calling me the ‘Hickory Dickory Doc.’ Like Maverick in the movie *Top Gun*, this has become my call sign.”

He began to read more about the great names of the earlier golfing world – Jones, Sarazen, Hagen, Ouimet, Vardon, Taylor, and Braid – and was inspired by their stories.

“My personal favorite is Walter Hagen,” he says. “I own several of his prototype wedges and they are magic!”

As a new hickory golfer in Nebraska, it was inevitable that Kevin would meet Randy Jensen. “I remember going to his store where he would help me pick out clubs,” Kevin recalls. “We got to talking about CU and realized that we had already met as players on the golf team those several years ago.”

Their first hickory outing together was at Fontenelle Forest.

*FORMER CREIGHTON UNIV. ALUMS, Dr. Kevin Cawley, right, with Randy Jensen during a hickory outing at Elmwood GC in 2016.*



PHOTO/JOHNSON PORTRAIT STUDIO

*THE TRADITIONALIST.* In a nod to golf photography of yore, Dr. Kevin Cawley poses with clubs in a studio portrait reminiscent of the days of Old Tom.

“I was impressed with how well the players did with the clubs,” Kevin says. “I saw Randy hole his second shot on a par 4 and I thought that the stories of him as the ‘Tiger Woods of hickory golf’ must be the real deal.”

By this time Kevin wanted his own set of hickories, not loaners, so with the help of Randy, Connor Lewis, Kody Kirchoff, and Dave Brown, he assembled a couple of fine play sets, including a set of Tom Stewart irons once owned by Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago (see below).

With Randy, Kevin visited the 2013 Mid Pines Hickory Open and the two placed second in the two-man scramble. “I love Donald Ross and found the tournament in the North Carolina sand hills very special,” he says.

Kevin won the Omaha City Championship in 2014 and in 2015 helped found the Nebraska Hickory Golf Association (NEHGA).

“In 2016 we inaugurated the Nebraska Hickory State Championship in the sand hills of Nebraska at Dismal River GC,” he says. “It was a great tournament with Dave Brown edging Randy – courtesy of a 30-foot putt for birdie on the last hole – for the first title. We now have more than 30 members and it is growing as more players are looking for a different experience from the humdrum of modern steel golf.”

The NEHGA also created a Nebraska Hickory Golf Hall that year, installing as its first inductees Johnny Goodman, A.H. Findlay, and Randy Jensen. The celebration is held in conjunction with the Omaha City Championship.

Kevin plays with both original and authentic replica clubs, believing that the way to get new players interested in hickory golf is to





**THE TOAST.** Dave Brown, left, Durel Billy, and Kevin share a toast at the first Johnny Goodman River City Hickory Championship, 2016.

start them with replicas.

"I have found that once new players get comfortable with the replicas, they start to look for original clubs," he says. "It is a journey, not a place. I want to add a special thank-you to Tad Moore and Louisville Golf for their support of hickory golf."

Kevin and Cindy, now married for 40 years, have four children who all play golf and like to go out with dad for an occasional nine holes and catch up on goings on.

"Cindy is the best putter I have ever seen," Kevin says. "I can't wait to get my grandchildren – identical twin boys, so far – started in this great game."

### How often do you play hickories?

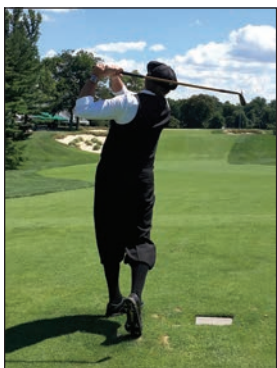
*Originally only in the fall of the year, but now about 90 percent of the time.*

### What's in your play set?

*I have been fortunate to acquire the Stewart irons once owned by Cardinal Mundelein, who was Bishop of Chicago in 1915 and elevated to Cardinal in 1924. He took up golf when his doctors*

*prescribed exercise and built a 9-hole course on the grounds of the seminary now known as Pine Meadow. I got the clubs from Connor Lewis who in turn got them from Kay and Pat Esler who had them directly from the Cardinal Mundelein estate. Other clubs I enjoy include:*

Robert Condie – cleek  
Louisville Golf irons  
Tad Moore – driver  
Tad Moore – bulldog  
Walter Hagen – wedge  
Chicopee putter



### Favorite club?

*That's the Sarazen-inspired Walter Hagen convex wedge. It is one of seven prototype wedges made by the Gibson golf company of Scotland. The shaft is danga wood made from the African baobab tree. This club is magical. I can feel Walter's spirit channeling through his own club!*

### What ball do you play?

*I love the soft feel of the Wilson 50s. In tournament play I use the McIntyre RTJ. It might be the best for use with hickory clubs.*

### Favorite course for hickories?

*I love to play the Tom Bendelow-designed Hyperion Field Club in the Des Moines area. Bill Reed holds his annual Iowa Hickory Classic at this course. Overseas, there is nothing like Old Head in Ireland.*

### Favorite hickory tournament?

*I love the Donald Ross course at Mid Pines, however the Nebraska Hickory State Tournament in the famous Sand Hills is very special. I also want to note a very special tournament victory for me, personally. It was the Senior Open title at the Chambers Bay Hickory Open in 2015, the one held just weeks before the U.S. Open itself. Thanks to Durel Billy for a great tournament!*

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

*Through the efforts of Walter Hagen private clubs opened their doors and finally welcomed professional golfers to use their locker rooms. To remember the occasion, Walter's fellow pros gave him a grandfather clock which he left at Inverness with the following inscription:*

*"God measures men by what they are, not by what they possess. This vibrant message chimes afar the voice of Inverness. Thank you, Walter Hagen"*

### Best thing about hickory golf?

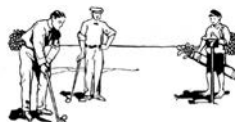
*I play hickory golf to enjoy the fellowship it generates among like-minded golfers. It allows one to focus on the game rather than the scorecard. In the end, this makes you a better golfer with a greater appreciation for the rich golfing history that we enjoy.*

### Ideas to promote hickory golf?

- *To get new players involved, your organization or club needs several play sets (I suggest replicas) for them to try. Put clubs out at the driving range for all players to try.*
- *Once the new player is hooked, then his or her journey into original clubs begins.*
- *A strong local state organization is needed with dedicated players to provide a schedule that makes sense for your particular area.*
- *A champion who will help you promote hickory golf. We in Nebraska are fortunate to have Randy Jensen who acts as our ambassador of hickory golf to promote the sport.*

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

*I love all the classics. My favorite is a modern book, the King of Swings, by Michael Blaine. It's about the great amateur Johnny Goodman who was all but overlooked in the hickory era due to the country's great love affair with Bobby Jones. Many overlook Goodman's resounding victory over Jones at the 1929 Amateur Championship at Pebble Beach. This is a book that every hickory golfer should have in the library!*



# Why no golf, Holmes?

BY JIM DAVIS

The golfing poem by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on the adjacent page is not so surprising from such a talented writer as well as from one who was a lifelong athlete. As a young man, Doyle played football (soccer) and cricket, but his love for golf stayed with him throughout his life.

Doyle's golfing life was never a secret, but not especially publicized. After all, golf was exploding in Victorian Great Britain and many of the great names and celebrities of the day were regularly seen on the links.

In 1897, Doyle moved to a small Surrey village (southeast of London) called Hindhead, principally to remove his ailing wife, Louisa, from the foul vapors of smoggy London. Unfortunately, the nearest golf course was some five miles away, a long distance in the time of the horse and buggy.

Undeterred, Doyle teamed up with local friends, including Edward Turle, who owned Hindhead School, to create a course that wound through the area's steep ice-age valleys. Such was the cool and clear air that the area earned the nickname of "Little Switzerland."

Open Champion J.H. Taylor was instrumental in laying out the course, receiving £4 10s for his work. The "Devil's Punchbowl" was the picturesque moniker of the land on which the course wound. Eight of the holes move through those steep-sided valleys. The Club dates its founding to 1904 and was opened with a match by Taylor and James Braid, which Braid won.

Doyle (shown teeing off in 1907) was the Club's first president, 1905-07.

While he loved Hindhead and even encouraged former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George to join the Club, Doyle eventually joined the Crowborough Beacon GC in Sussex where he played most of his golf. (Peter Allis, by the way, is a Hindhead member and the bar in the clubhouse is named for him.) Doyle became Club Captain of Crowborough in 1910.



**The Sherlock Holmes literature** Doyle created (56 short stories and four novels) spawned in later years a devoted following that has manifested in hundreds of cult-like clubs throughout the world, with names cleverly drawn from story titles or features from the stories – The Greek Interpreters, The Napoleons of Crime, The Persian Slipper Club, and so on. The most famous of these is the Baker Street Irregulars, founded by Christopher Morely in 1934.

The clubs meet in a quasi-scholarly fashion, submitting papers on minutiae from the "Conan," or the canon of Holmes literature. Members and writers for years have had great fun trying their hands at an original Holmes mystery. Such pastiches often take their cue from an off-hand remark in the stories regarding a tantalizing case not written up by Watson, or only briefly alluded to by Holmes.

For such a golfing enthusiast, why would Doyle not include some golf-themed mystery for Holmes to solve? The possibilities are delicious for the Holmes enthusiasts. In 1986, Bob Jones (a member of the Golf Collectors Society) penned a little volume

titled, *How Sherlock Holmes Saved Golf*.

Perhaps Doyle wished to keep his private life separate from the clamour that swirled around his larger-than-life hero. At one point, in 1893, during the height of Holmes' popularity, Doyle grew weary of the detective and tried to kill him off (*The Final Problem*). That did not sit well with the legion of Holmes fans, which included Doyle's own mother who implored him not to give Holmes up. Fans roamed the streets wearing black mourning ribbons.

So be it. Doyle had other things on his mind, including that move to Hindhead. He would spend the seven years after *The Final Problem* on several other works and novels, including the Professor Challenger series, which included the signature *The Lost World* (1912).

Holmes, however, would be recalled from oblivion and a round of golf would facilitate the resurrection.

In 1901, Doyle spent a golfing weekend with a good friend, Fletcher Robinson, at the Royal Links Hotel in Cromer, along the Norfolk coast. Robinson, a *Daily Times* reporter who loved collecting stories and strange tales, told Doyle the ghostly legend of a demonic beast said to haunt the moors of Dartmoor. That piqued Doyle's interest and the two men, verbally, sketched an outline of a tale in which Holmes might figure.

*The Hound of the Baskervilles* appeared as a novel in 1901, serialized in the Strand Magazine from August 1901 to April 1902. Doyle insisted it was a story that pre-dated Holmes' death, but the public didn't care. They were happy to have Holmes back. In 1903, Doyle resurrected both Holmes and a new series of stories with *The Adventure of the Empty House*.

It was a round of golf, the easy conversation of two friends, and the siren call of a favorite literary character that helped restore the celebrated detective to the world's magazine pages.

But why, the question nags, why not more golf for Holmes? Surely, with its alluring vagaries and mysteries it would have appealed to his singular penchant for solitary musings. In only one of the short stories, *The Greek Interpreter*, does even a modest allusion to golf appear:

*It was after tea on a summer evening, and the conversation, which had roamed in a desultory, spasmodic fashion from golf clubs to the causes of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic...*

Well, that gets our attention, not the obliquity part, but the golf clubs. Men who talk about golf clubs know something of the game. We can imagine Holmes and Watson in a subsequent conversation in the hallowed confines of that Baker Street suite discoursing about the end game of a just-completed case...

*"But how did you know, Holmes, that it was the golf club?"*

*"It appears, Watson, that you have not studied my monograph on the 39 ways on which early golf clubs may be faked. In this instance, the Philp clubhead on which the fate of the Farrell man hung in the balance, was clearly a latter-day forgery. A chemical analysis of the finish showed it could not have been made during the time of Philp, nor could the crisp stamping of the name on the clubhead been anything other than recent. A true Philp stamp would have been softened by use and time. Shall I go on? There are 14 other reasons..."*

*"Oh, for heaven's sake, do give it a rest, Holmes. I wonder that you had not taken up golf rather than the violin."* ☺

More reading:

<https://jimmyapfel.wordpress.com/category/sherlock-holmes/>  
[www.the-line-up.com/sherlock-holmes-story-bertram-atkey/](http://www.the-line-up.com/sherlock-holmes-story-bertram-atkey/)  
[www.nationalclubgolfer.com/2016/09/20/hindhead-doyle-sherlock-holmes/](http://www.nationalclubgolfer.com/2016/09/20/hindhead-doyle-sherlock-holmes/)

# A Golfing Song

It's up and away from our work today,  
For the breeze sweeps over the down;  
And it's hey for a game where the gorse blossoms flame  
And the bracken is bronzing to brown.  
With the turf 'neath our tread, and the blue overhead,  
And the song of the lark in our ears,  
We throw them behind us, the fetters that bind us,  
The wear and tear of the years;  
Ah, yes,  
The strain and the stress of the years,  
The palm and the leather come rarely together,  
Gripping the driver's haft,  
And it's fine to feel the jar of the steel  
And the spring of the hickory shaft.  
We're outward bound on a long, long round,  
And it's time to up and away.  
With the wind in our teeth, and our feet on the heath,  
We feel we are freemen today,  
Ah, yes,  
We know we are living today.

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** (1859-1930) was more familiar as the creator of the beloved fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. The above piece appeared in 1893, seven years after Holmes made his debut in *Study in Scarlet* and in the same year Doyle tried to kill off Holmes in *The Final Problem*. In that light, the above poem reveals an author who is feeling newly liberated from the burden of the Holmes character and enjoying life afresh on his beloved links.

LNER British railways poster, 1933,  
by Arthur C. Michael

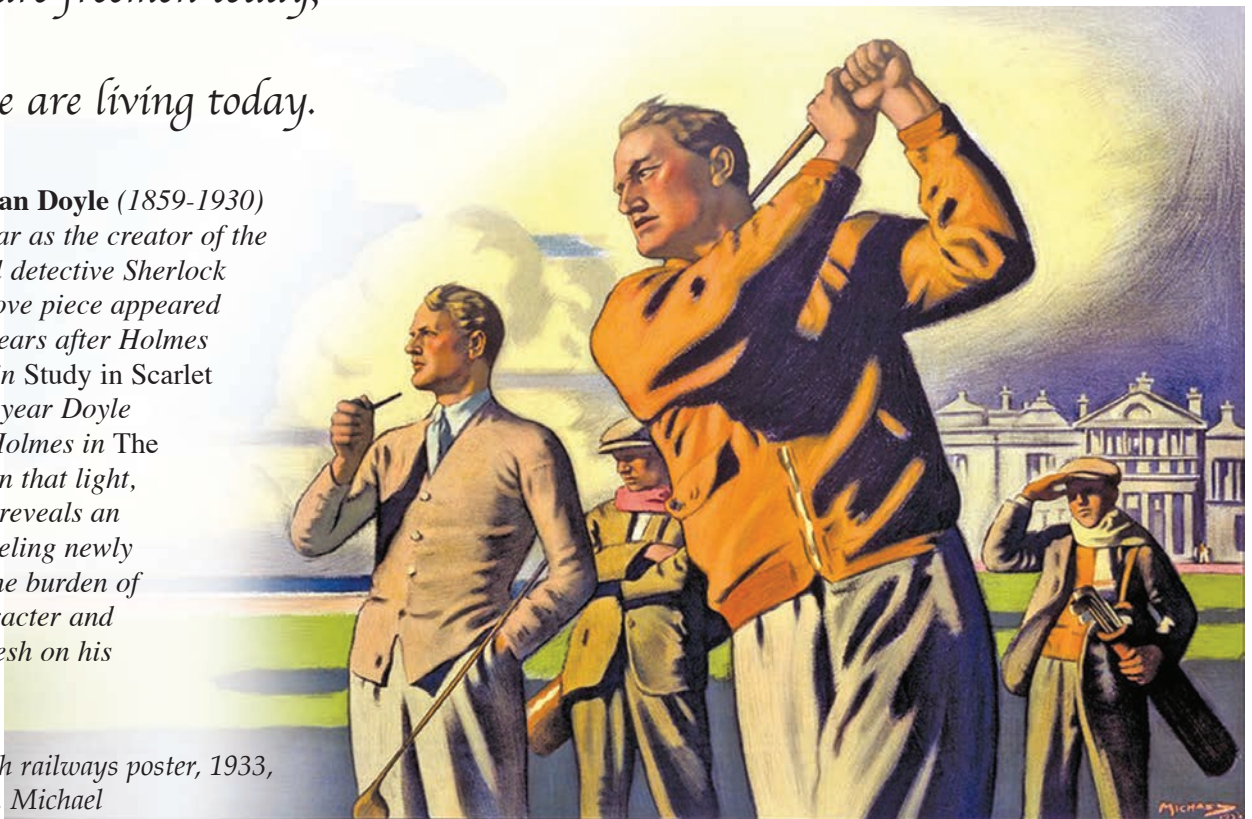


ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, 1893  
A studio portrait by Herbert Rose Barraud.

The poem at left appeared in the November 1914 issue of *Golf Illustrated* with Doyle's name and a note that said it was written in 1893, but no source. A similar, but longer, version titled, *A Lay of the Links*, appears in other anthologies. Why the two versions? Your editor called upon Dr. Leon White, an expert on golf poetry, to shed light on the matter.

"The second poem, *A Lay of the Links* first appears in an 1898 book of Doyle poems called *Songs of Action*. It also appears in the October 1909 issue of *The American Golfer*," White wrote. "I reprinted it in my book *Golf Course of Rhymes*. Given the dates 1893 and 1898, I would guess that the earlier poem became a draft for the later poem. For some reason, Doyle decided to expand on what he wrote in 1893. To me that would make the most sense as an explanation."

Works for me. This version, I think, is the better one.





## FINAL SHOTS

**ST. ANDREWS** was his home, the place of his birth, the scene of great victories, and the setting of a heart-breaking tragedy. Thomas Mitchell Morris Jr., "Tommy," the son of Tom Morris, became one of the greatest golfers of his day, retiring the Open Championship belt that he wears in this photo taken in 1870, having won the title three years in succession. He was 19 years old. The organizers had no trophy to replace it, so the Open was not played in 1871. A claret jug was offered and the tournament was on for 1872. Young Tom promptly won it again, the first name on the legendary trophy, perhaps the greatest trophy in all of sport.

Tommy married in 1874. In 1875, during a challenge match in North Berwick with the Park brothers, Willie and Mungo, against he and his father, word came that the young bride of only a year was deathly ill and in childbirth. Too long by road and the last train having left, a yacht was found for the journey home across the Firth of Forth. After eight torturous hours, Young Tom rushed home to find his wife and child had died. He himself died four months later, on Christmas Day. He was only 24.

The photo below right is of Young Tom's memorial in the graveyard of the great St. Andrews Cathedral, erected with funds raised from 60 different golfing societies. In front of his memorial and grave is the grave of his father, who passed away in 1908.

In April 2017 a film based on the book by Kevin Cook, *Tommy's Honour*, about the relationship, the life and times of the two Morris men, was released in the U.S.



The Auld Grey Toon, taken from about the sixth hole of the Old Course.

PHOTO / BARBARA DAVIS

