

# chapter 7

# Scotland's game









# Scotland's game

The modern game of golf evolved from the version of the game played in Scotland in the seventeenth century. This coincided with the game of colf reaching its peak of popularity during the Golden Age in the Low Countries. Rather, to be more precise, the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, representing the seven provinces of the northern Low Countries, a new nation having overcome the Protestant rebellion against the Spanish Catholic oppression.



Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1804),  
by Robert Home

128

SERENDIPITY OF EARLY GOLF

During this Golden Age, the close ties between Scotland and the Netherlands were at their peak. This game of golf in Scotland survived through the nineteenth century and spread outside the borders of Scotland to England – Hoylake, Wimbledon and North Devon – in the second half of the nineteenth century. Earlier Scots had established their game of golf in Blackheath in London.

Special mention should be made of golf started by the British in Pau in the French Pyrenees and in India in Calcutta and Bombay. Scots communities abroad founded and ran all the clubs. In England, the game of golf managed to enthuse the new breed of players, who in turn introduced this game to friends and relatives. The expansion of the British Empire would allow the game of golf to cross new-frontiers and to spread worldwide.

In Scotland, the game of golf had become an integral part of social life and culture but their English neighbours still saw it as a typical and mysterious Scots pastime. At a certain point in time though, Scottish sports life and outdoor activities became more fashionable with the English, who had earlier viewed their Celtic northern neighbours as somewhat provincial. During the Victorian period, the British were the world's games-masters and the Scots in significant numbers were co-builders of this empire too.

In this way, the Scots were to form the first golf clubs outside Britain, in India in Calcutta in 1827 and in Bombay in 1842. The establishment of golf by the Scots in Pau in 1856 is more idiosyncratic. The Scots, who had fought in the Peninsular War in Iberia (1808-1814) with the Anglo-Portuguese army commanded by Wellington against Napoleon, returned to Pau having earlier discovered

the area as a fitting spa-resort for vacationing. Golf as a sport now became a fashionable pastime in England, as marked by the establishment of Royal North Devon Golf Club at Westwood Ho! in 1864, rather than an exclusive social activity of close-knit Scottish enclaves of golf in Blackheath and Manchester. The spread of the game in England increased rapidly in the 1890s after the foundation of Royal St George's Golf Club at Sandwich in 1887, recognised as the most influential golf club in Eng-

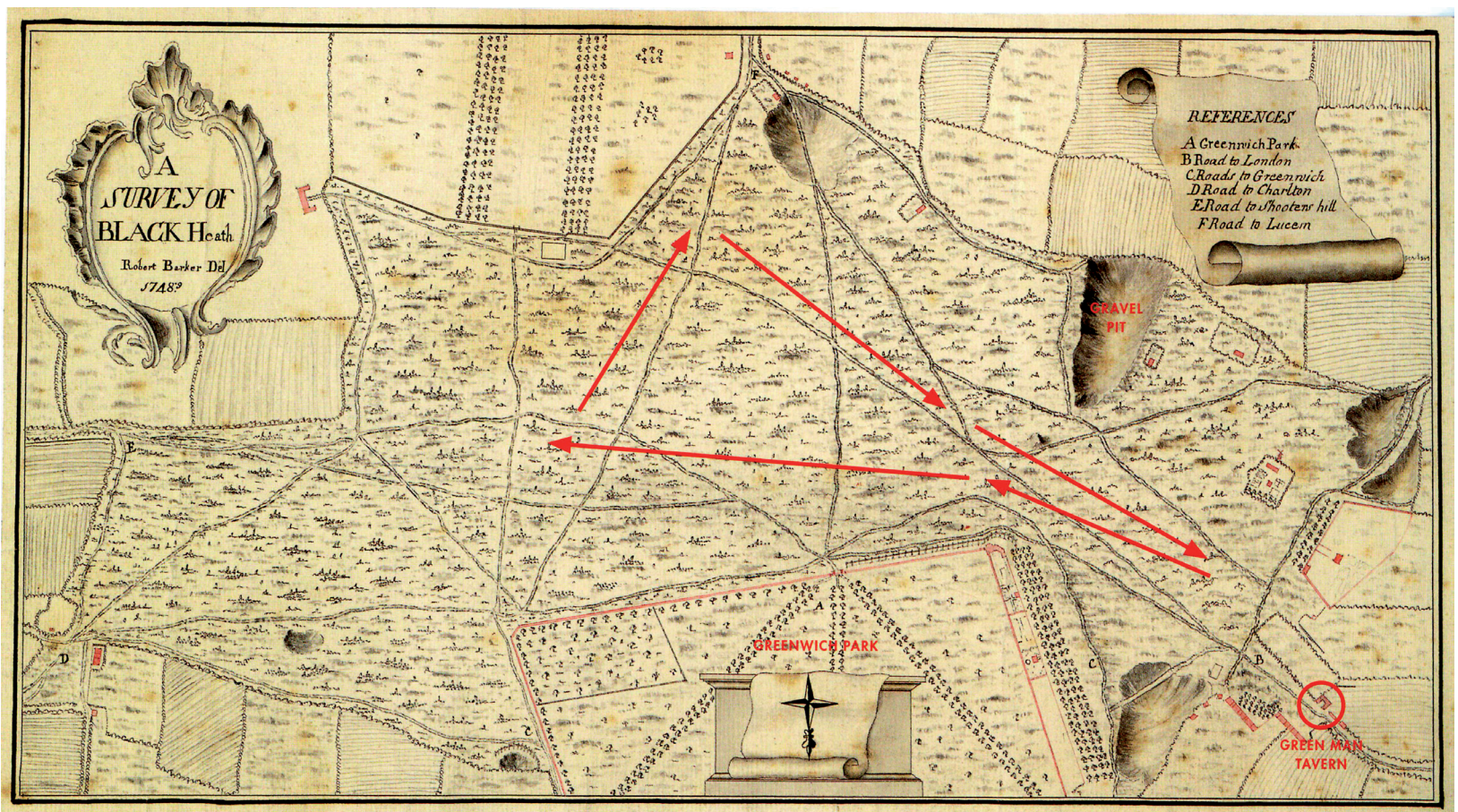
land then. This paralleled the earlier recognition of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews as the new home of golf in Scotland. The club histories of the earliest golf clubs of the second half of the nineteenth century are a rich source of information about the development of the game of golf.

Many golf history books have stated the institution of golf at Blackheath followed the arrival of King James VI in 1603 as newly crowned King James I of England.



Greenwich Palace (c1620), engraved by Newton





Survey map of Blackheath (1748), showing the 5-hole course layout

The new King took his Scottish court with him to his palace in Greenwich. Among the court were golf players who set up golf Links at Blackheath near the palace in 1608. Besides Whitehall Palace, there were three royal palaces near London: The Royal Palace of Placentia in Greenwich, Nonsuch Palace near Sutton, and Hampton Court Palace. Greenwich Palace was the favourite palace in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century of the royal court of England. Earlier in 1502, King Henry VII of England and King James IV of Scotland had ratified a truce between their warring nations. A truce cemented by the betrothal of Henry's daughter Margaret Tudor to James. In 1603, his grandson James VI would unify the crowns of England and Scotland after the death of the unmarried and childless Queen Elizabeth I of England. Following the truce, James IV lifted the earlier ban on the game of golf. A game not only popular with his Scottish subjects but also with the King himself, as can be determined from his treasury accounts stating payment of 'golf clubbis and ballis to the King that he playit with'. The decree stated 'that the Futeball and Golf be.....nocht down' giving preference to the practicing of archery. As football and golf were mentioned in the same sentence it could also well be that golf referred to here, included an early variance of the game similar to the old Gaelic game of shinty (or

'camanachd'). This game still played today is a derivation of an early Gaelic game with a wooden stick and stitched leather ball. There is no iconographic or other evidence showing how people played the game of golf in the fifteenth century or earlier in Scotland. The Scottish court arrived in London in large numbers. There is documentary evidence that more than fifty nobles accompanied James to England. Each had a large family retinue with household officers, servants and so on. Following the granting of free trade to the Scots many merchants, settled and prospered in the City of London. Courtiers in the entourage of James VI pursuing the game of golf found the space they needed in Blackheath on the heath at the top of the slope on the south side of the palace.

The Stuarts were golf players 'born and bred'. James VI's mother was Queen Mary of Scots, who was seemingly addicted to golf and who had been observed playing the game near Seton Palace just a few days after the murder of her husband Lord Darnley in 1567. Many took offence to her apparent disrespectful indifference about his unhappy fate. Another noteworthy Stuart golfer was James' son Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales. He was born in 1594 and died prematurely at the age of only 18 years in 1612 in London. He apparently died of typhoid fever suffered after taking a swim in the river Thames

following a heated contest at a game of tennis with his friends. At that time Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange-Nassau, the future Stadtholder of the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, was visiting the royal court. He was accompanying his nephew Frederik V, Elector Palatine, who was to marry James' eldest daughter Elizabeth, Henry Frederick's sister. Frederick and Elizabeth, later known as the Winter King and Queen, lived in exile in The Hague after being ousted from Bohemia in the Thirty-Year War. It is believed the princes Frederik Hendrik and Henry Frederick played tennis together and it is likely that they challenged each other at the game of golf at Blackheath too. Henry's death was an enormous tragedy for the nation and the House of Stuart. Not only was he a fine sportsman, he was a man of great intelligence and learning. "He plays willing enough at Tennis and at another Scots diversion very like Mall" the French ambassador De Borderie wrote, alluding to the game of golf yet unknown to him. That golf was a popular game in Scotland might be deduced from the fact that James VI appointed bow maker William Mayne to his personal clubmaker under the Privy Seal of Scotland. Others like James Melville were appointed to the office of ball makers. James VI and I ruled Scotland for a period of 58 years and England for 22 years before he died in 1625.

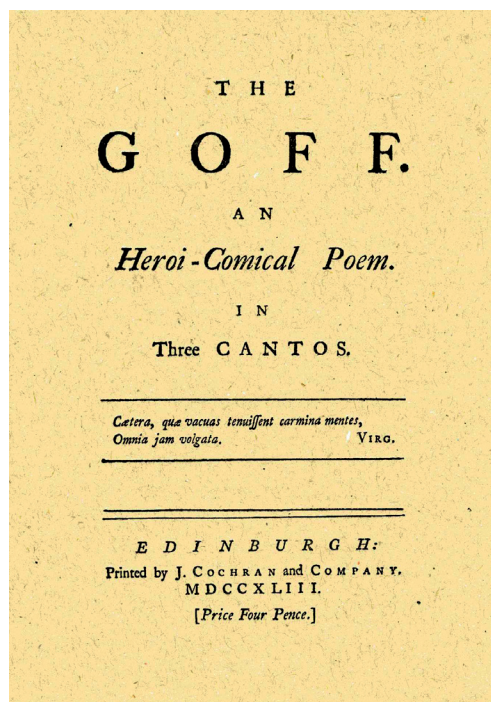




James Stuart II, King of England (1686),  
by Nicolas de Largillière

He was buried with his beloved son Henry Frederick in Westminster Abbey. Although James united both kingdoms there was no love lost between the old rivals England and Scotland.

The favoured game of the Scots golf did not pass over to the English and the royal court and nobility in London kept its preference for the fashionable games of tennis and pell-mell. Golf was brought to Blackheath but it remained a traditional and favoured pastime of the Scots clan, as the game of colf similarly would be of the Dutch



The GOFF (1743), an heroi-comical poem  
by Thomas Mathison



Charles Edward Stuart, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'

citizens in the United Provinces across the North Sea. In England, King James II of England was deposed in 1688 in the Glorious Revolution by his nephew and son-in-law Prince William III of Orange, Stadtholder of the United Provinces for his 'papist tendencies'. William himself was a descendent of the Stuart dynasty but remained a strong advocate of the Protestant cause. In Scotland, the Stuarts fell into oblivion after 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', the grandson of the deposed King James II, unsuccessfully led the Jacobite Rebellion and met humiliating defeat at Culloden in 1746.

However, the Scots love for their royal and ancient game of golf remained through all political trials and tribulations. This was the time that Thomas Mathison published his now famous heroi-comical poem *The GOFF* and the Company of Edinburgh Golfers took to Leith Links to contest the Silver Club. Royal Blackheath Golf Club has maintained its traditional date of institution of 1608. Although factual evidence remains absent, the club believes itself to be the 'Oldest Golfing Society in the Kingdom'.

It does, with The Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh (1735), The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers (1744), The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews (1754) and The Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society (1761) belong to the five oldest clubs in the United Kingdom. The historic institution date of 1608 is, among other circumstantial evidence, based on a note written in 1831 about the requested insertion of the golf club in the Edinburgh Almanac with this specific date of institution. The date may be related to the construction date of Charlton House in 1608, built specially for Prince Henry Frederick as his residence in Greenwich near Blackheath, where he often played his favourite game of golf with his Scottish courtiers.



The Procession of the Silver Club (1787),  
by David Allan (National Gallery of Scotland)

Clearly, Royal Blackheath has its roots going back to the days of King James VI, who assumed the English crown in 1603. The grounds of Blackheath indeed have a long tradition of golf being played going back to the first days of the Stuart dynasty in England. Royal Blackheath was officially founded as a club in the eighteenth century when the forming of societies became fashionable. A seal of the club dating from 1829 carries the year 1745 on the inscription. In 1766 the first Silver Club was presented "to The



Charlton House, Blackheath (c1840),  
by J. Holland, lithography by M&N Hanhart





Silver play club, presented to the Honorable Company of Goffers at Blackheath by Mr. Henry Foot on 16th August 1766



Silver play club (detail)

Honourable Company of Goffers of Blackheath” by Mr. Henry Foot, a well-known terminology for a golfing society used by the gentlemen golfers of Edinburgh. Silver balls with the names of past captains engraved are hung to the shaft of

the Silver Club. Two subsequent silver clubs were added later to the collection of Royal Blackheath. The names of captains of Blackheath show a close association with the early Scottish golf societies, The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers and the

Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. There is also a close connection to Freemasonry and the Masonic traditions. A cash book of the club “GOFF CLUB CASH BOOK” dated 1787 is probably the earliest written evidence of the existence of the society.



The Tercentenary Trophy of The Royal Blackheath Golf Club (1908)



Claret Jug of the Grand Foursomes Tournament of 1857 at St Andrews



Claret Jug – detail





Painted by L. F. Mott, 1790.

Engraved by V. Green, Mezzotinto Engraver to His Majesty and the Elector Palatine.

TO THE SOCIETY OF GOFFERS AT BLACKHEATH.

This Plate is with just respect dedicated by their most humble servant,

Samuel Francis Abbot.





*Henry Callender, appointed Captain General, by Lemuel Francis Abbott (Royal Blackheath Golf Club)*

Two past captains have gained immortal fame because of the most ubiquitous portraits in the history of golf, those of William Innes (1719-1795) and Henry Callender painted by Lemuel Francis Abbott, RA (c1760-1802). Abbott, best known for his several paintings of Lord Nelson, exhibited his work at the Royal Academy in London. Valentine Green (1739-1813), a well-known mezzotint engraver to his royal majesty King George III, Elector

*William Innes, The Society of Goffers at Blackheath, (1793), engraved by Valentine Green after Lemuel Francis Abbott*

Palatine, engraved many of Abbott's paintings. His full-length portrait of Henry Callender now hangs in the clubhouse of Royal Blackheath in Eltham. Unfortunately, the original painting of William Innes was lost in a fire during a native mutiny in Uttar Pradesh in the Indian Empire in 1857, when the house of Innes's grandson General Parker burnt down. Fortunately, Valentine Green had engraved the Abbott portraits of both Innes and Callender. They now belong to the most collectible published golf prints obtainable. Kennemer Golf Club received an original Valentine Green print of the William Innes portrait from one of



*Golf Match at Blackheath (1869), by F. Gilbert*

its members on the foundation of the club in 1910 and the portrait to this day adorns the club. The prints of Innes and Callender have been reproduced many times. They became symbols of golf history around the turn of the eighteenth century. Innes, who was born in Edinburgh, became one of the oldest and most respectable Merchants of London. Callender accepted his third captaincy of the club with an added epaulet and the title of 'Captain General'.

Players of Blackheath, also referred to as the 'London Scots Society' were a picturesque appearance in the eighteenth century on the heath, dressed in uniforms with scarlet jackets and white waistcoats. Their attendants would be dressed in blue. The course at Blackheath was a 5-hole course next to Greenwich Park. The terrain was probably rough, with the course winding its way through the many gravel pits still being excavated. Some holes were named after holes of Leith Links in Edinburgh, like 'Thorn Tree', proving again the close ties between the two societies. Bets of the club members were commonly recorded, as in the "BLACKHEATH GOFF CLUB BETTS 1791", which provides an interesting insight of how the game was played in those early days. A gallon of the favourite French claret valued at a guinea was the standard stake of a contest of golf between members.

The histories of early Scottish golfing societies all share similar characteristics relating to the Freemasonry. Members regularly engaged in formal ceremonies and traditional Masonic toasts were drunk during obligatory dinner after play. Turtle was considered a traditional delicacy of the club members, many of whom had close associations with British colonial trade.

The early Scottish golfing societies were very much Masonic in nature and were most probably not formed with the primary objective of playing golf. Golf was more a healthy exercise added to other social activities of the organised Freemasons, who were united in societies with restricted membership and secrecy. Following Freemasonry practice, as more and more non-masons were admitted to the societies, all early records and minutes were deliberately destroyed to secure the traditional Masonic secrecy. Although much evidence about the early game of golf in the eighteenth century was lost, golf prob-





The Knuckle Club Silver Medal (now the Spring Medal), first played in 1792 (Royal Blackheath Golf Club)

ably survived as a Scottish game and developed into the modern game, as we know it today, because of Freemasonry. One should remember that golf did not have a great appeal or attract a large following because there were still only a few grounds to play on and the costs were high. Besides, membership of the societies was restricted.

The wooden shafted clubs – a set would consist of about eight clubs – and the feathery balls were discouragingly expensive. The game and the organised golfing societies were reserved for the well-to-do and well-connected citizens. The game had certainly not

yet established itself as the national game of the Scottish people of the mid-nineteenth century. At the start of the nineteenth century, there were only seven golfing societies. During the first fifty years, only ten more societies formed. So iconographic imagery or written observation of golf in the eighteenth century is rare and almost absent.

The watercolour by Paul Sandby of Bruntsfield Links in Edinburgh of 1747 is a notable exception. The watercolour is a picture of a view of Edinburgh Castle from Bruntsfield Links, featuring a few golf players on the playground more as decoration than as a de-

liberate image of particular golf players belonging to a certain golfing society. While the presence of golfers is almost accidental, note that Bruntsfield Links in Edinburgh is the historic birthplace of organised golf in Scotland.

The poem *The GOFF* by Thomas Mathison is another such exception.

Special mention should be made here of the Knuckle Club, formed in 1789 as a separate and exclusive Winter Club for those wanting to continue practicing the Masonic craft. With the decline of Freemasons' activity, organised golf simultaneously declined. The Knuckle club was finally dissolved and the gold medal presented to the mother club, now the Blackheath Spring Medal, which is considered the oldest medal played for in golf competition dating back to 1789.

Many pensioners from the Royal Naval Hospital of Greenwich acted as caddies at Blackheath until the Hospital closed in 1869. The portrait of Alick Brotherson or 'Old Alick' was painted by R.S.E. Gallen of the Greenwich School and presented to the club in 1839. He is probably the best-known caddie and hole-cutter of Blackheath because of this interesting portrait. Alick, who was born in Scotland, went to sea at the age of 13, and served on many ships with the navy. He died at the mature age of 84 years in 1840. Focus on golf increased at Blackheath with the appointment of the well-known Willie Dunn Snr. as golf professional in 1851, followed by the appointment of his twin brother Jamie Dunn too. The arrival of the first gutta percha ball, supported by the enterprising Dunn twins, dramatically changed the popularity of golf from then on as well as the resulting craftsmanship of club making. The role of the



'Old Alick', portrait by R.S.E. Gallen of Alick Brotherson (Royal Blackheath Golf Club)



Willie Park Snr, by John A.T. Bonner (British Golf Museum, St Andrews)



Elltham Lodge (1827), by C. Burton



new breed of golf professionals in this change was eminent.

The year 1860, now 150 years ago, marked the inaugural date of the first Open Championship held at Prestwick Golf Club and won by Willie Park Snr. of Musselburgh. Blackheath was represented by its non-Scottish professional George Daniel Brown of Waltham Green, England, who finished fifth of only eight contestants then. He had been trained by the Dunn's as a ball and club maker and he set up the first known golf shop in St Andrews as an Englishman (sic).

Through its members, Blackheath was involved in the founding of many of the earliest English golf clubs. Blackheath is therefore considered the father of English golf and with it, of golf in the Far East. To name a few are Royal North Devon (known as Westwood Ho!), Royal Wimbledon, Royal Liverpool, Royal St George's. In India, the Royal Calcutta and the Royal Bombay are worth mentioning. Blackheath by now was a famous and prosperous club with many famous members.

The course at the heath had been made suitable and challenging enough for the most celebrated golf professionals to play fashionable exhibition matches. These included such venerable players as Harry Vardon, J.H. Taylor and later James Braid, collectively known as the Great Triumvirate. In 1901, the club was officially allowed to use the prefix 'Royal' by King Edward VII, although the club had commonly used it for many years before. This was a common Victorian tradition for societies as a sign of loyalty to the sovereign in the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1921, Royal Blackheath Golf Club merged with Eltham Golf Club and moved from the traditional



*The Great Triumvirate (1913), JH Taylor, James Braid and Harry Vardon, by Clement Flower*

course at Blackheath to its present premises at Eltham Lodge, which now serves as the clubhouse. The golf course is located in what was the Great Park of the Royal Palace in Eltham, where many monarchs had spent their time. Eltham Lodge is a fine example of mid-seventeenth century Renaissance architecture. The architect was Hugh May, a contemporary of Christopher Wren, who as an exile had studied architecture in the Republic of United Provinces of the Netherlands.

The Dutch influence can be clearly seen in the front design modelled on both the Sint Sebastiaansdoelen and the Mauritshuis in The Hague, designed by the famous Dutch architect Jacob van Campen. He was the designer of the Town Hall and now Royal Palace of Amsterdam, in its time the largest town hall ever built and a pompous symbol of the 'embarrassment of riches' of Amsterdam in the Golden Age. William Jordan, a distinguished writer and member of

Blackheath, recorded a fitting golfing song in 1817 dedicated the members' favourite game and sung at traditional club dinners:

*'Let us chaunt a famed pastime, debased by no scoff,  
Of life that grand emblem, our favourite goff;  
Though when all our hazards and best strokes are past,  
Death comes, the sure putter, and holes us at last.  
With his folderol etc.'*

The game of golf itself had surely escaped an untimely demise and now seems predestined for immortality. The story continues with further links to Freemasonry.

The Origins of Freemasonry are believed to be linked to the Knights Templar dating back to the thirteenth century. When the final of the three Crusades had failed in 1291, the Knights Templar had lost their final opportunity to establish Christianity in the



*The Mauritshuis in The Hague (1825),  
by Bartholomeus Johannes van Hove*





King Robert the Bruce (1306)

Middle East and protect the Holy Land. Knights from Flanders and Burgundy had played a great part in these Crusades. Many of these Knights subsequently settled in France and organised the Order of the Knights Templar. The disbandment of the Order followed when the Pope officially dissolved it in 1312 at the instigation of the French King. Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland and of Flanders descent himself, had sympathy for the many brave Knights of the Order and offered a safe haven in Scotland following his own Papal excommunication.

The 'Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and Temple of Solomon', when granted 'monastic rule' by the Council of Troyes, gained great power through their connection with the Order of Cistercians. They gained enormous wealth and large holdings of lands in various European countries, allowing them to set up many preceptories. In 1161, the Knights had built a Temple in London and flourished under the patronage of King Richard the Lionheart.

In Alba, or Scotland, the Templars were active near Edinburgh. The Templars exerted great power and influence by founding their own banking system and acted as financiers to the royal courts of France and England. However, their behaviour of secrecy created a sense of immorality and dissolution and this led King Philip of France in 1307 to declare the Order illegitimate and order the imprisonment of its members.

It is believed that a number of the Knights narrowly escaped with a fleet of eighteen galleys and a presumed vast quantity of treasure including innu-



King Richard Lionheart (12th century codex)

merable secret documents. The assumption is, the Knights fled to Alba with the help of related noble families of Flanders. There is no record of the fate of the fleet but it is most likely that it reached the western shores of Scotland and the treasure and documents were moved to the many safe Templar fortress holdings inland. These were secretly kept intact for centuries to come.

At this time, the sons of Flemish Templar families were recruited as members of a new institution, named the Scots Guard. This organisation had strong mythological elements relating to stonemasons and architecture. It is considered the beginnings of Freemasonry in Scotland, supported by the many old families of Flanders origin, such as Seton and St Clair. Members were recruited in France and Flanders. In the fifteenth century, the Scots Guard became a prestigious part of the French army, distinguishing itself at the battle of Vermeuil in 1445. By 1610, it had fallen into decline following religious and political disputes between the House of Valois and the House of Guise and Lorraine. Today the Scots Guard still exists as the Royal Company of Archers, also known as the Queen's Bodyguard in Scotland. It includes certain members of a private order, proud of their lineage and Flemish descent.

The name of the Templars has been associated with the Grail Romances, the Knights of Charlemagne and the Knights of the Round Table, propagated by fiction and mythology. This air of mystery and secrecy resulted in the idea of Freemasonry rising from the ashes of the Templars. The legends of the Grail

Romances, written in the twelfth century, form the base of the rituals.

A prominent member of the Freemasonry was William St Clair who started the building of the Chapel at Rosslyn, meant to be part of a large collegiate and church complex never completed. The Chapel has many decorations of Masonic character including the 'Green Man', a mythological God of vegetation and fertility. William St Clair was granted the hereditary title of 'Patron Protector of the Masons' by King James II of Scotland in 1441.

This title originally referred to the Guild of Stonemasons but gradually became the supreme Masonic title of 'Hereditary Grand Master Mason of Scotland'. It is safe to assume that all Scottish noble families of Flemish descent became involved in Freemasonry. This also included the Royal Stuart dynasty. With the marital interrelations between the House of Stuart of Scotland and the House of Orange-Nassau, the royals of the Low Countries and the Republic became insiders of the Masonic Lodge too.

Although golf was not the main reason for Freemasons to gather socially, golf was their favourite organised pastime before formally wining and dining. This Masonic tradition undoubtedly formed an essential element in the development of organised golf. Gradually non-Freemasons were invited to join the golfing societies in an effort to expand its membership and to overcome the increasingly marginal interest in golf during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh was historically the same type of social organisation as Blackheath and had its roots in the Masonic tradition too. Although the club did 'change with the times', it continued to behave in Masonic manners issuing diploma's and charters to new offshoot golf clubs elsewhere following the example of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons. The pronounced social life of the Burgess of old was known for its wining and dining, toasts, speechmaking, and singing of golf songs. Rules about the traditional uniforms were strict.

The Burgess claims its historic founding date to be 1735 making it older than any other organised golf society or club. This date is based on circumstantial but convincing evidence. It is noted here that none of the oldest golfing societies have exact records of their founding date because early associations of golfing companies had no need for formal or public recording. However, it is definitely a standing custom of the Freemason organisations to keep exact records of their ceremonial meetings and membership administration and these records have most probably been destroyed as the club opened up to non-Masonic members.

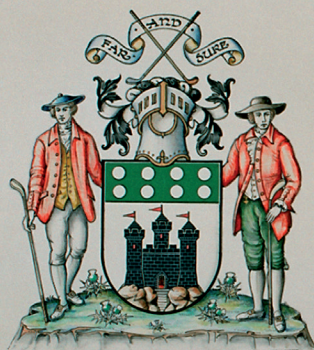
In this regard the earliest Minute of 1773 is relevant





View of Edinburgh Castle from Bruntsfield Links (1825)

as it states that three surviving senior members, ‘taking into [] consideration the present state of the Society and that most of the old members thereof are either dead or have neglected meetings...’, propose to admit new members to avoid probable extinction of the club. It is not surprising that the records before 1773 are missing because the newly proposed members most likely were not all Freemasons. Therefore, earlier records must have been destroyed to preserve the secrecy. That the earliest documents of Scottish golfing societies have been lost is much to the regret of the golf historian although a search in various archives for other related documentation continues and may unearth new surprising finds. In 1835, the ‘centenary’ year of Royal Burgess the *Edinburgh Almanac* supported and confirmed the official founding date as 1735 and this has not been contradicted or disputed since.



**T**O ALL AND SUNDRY whom these Presents Do or May Concern, We Francis James Grant, Esquire, Lord Lyon King of Arms, send Greeting, Whereas the Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh hath by Petition unto Us of date the twenty fourth day of January last, Represented that the Society was instituted in the year 1735 and was incorporated by Seal of Chace granted by the Right Honourable the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town Council of the City of Edinburgh on the second day of July 1800: And Whereas the said Petitioners have Prayed that We would Grant Our licence & Authority unto them to bear and use such Ensigns Armorial as might be found suitable and according to the Laws of Arms, know ye therefore that We have Devised & Do by these Presents Assign, Ratify, and Confirm unto the Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh the following Ensigns Armorial as depicted upon the March hereoff & masculised of even date with these Presents in Our Public Register of All Arms & Bearings in Scotland, viz: Argent, a castle triple towered and embattled sable masoned of the first and topped with three-voles Gules, windows and portullis shut of the last situated on a rock proper, on a chief Vert eight plates four and four: Above the shield is placed a helmet besetting their degree with a Mantling Sable doubled Argent & on a Wreath of their livery is set for Crest two golf clubs proper in saltire, and in an Escrol over the same this Motto *Fir and Sure*, & on a Compartment below the shield are set for Supporters two golfers of the early eighteenth century, habited proper, each holding in his exterior hand a golf club proper: In Testimony whereof these Presents are subscribed by Us & the Seal of Our Office is affixed hereunto at Edinburgh the fourteenth day of March in the twentieth year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord, George the Fifth by the Grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, &c. and in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and thirty.



*Francis James Grant*

Grant of Arms of The Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh

The playground of Bruntsfield Links has been the cradle of the earliest golfing societies as the predecessors of the Burgess Golfing Society members played golf there long before the claimed official foundation date. This playing field, cleared of the forest trees of Drumselch adjacent to Bruntsfield House, was most probably a regal gift by King David I to the city and inhabitants of Edinburgh. Golf has been played on Bruntsfield Links at least from the middle of the fifteenth century although the continuous digging of quarries ‘spoyled the gouffing’ from time to time.

In 1787, the full title of “Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society” appeared on a declaration signed by members subscribing to the regulations of the club. In 1929, the name was changed by royal prerogative to “Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh”. Before its departure to Musselburgh in 1877, the Burgess’ standard meeting place at Bruntsfield Links was in the ‘Golf Tavern’ beginning in 1792 but the club did maintain an extraordinary variety of other meeting places in the city. The earliest members of the Burgess were mostly tradesmen of the city with a



The Rhind Stone of the Clubhouse of The Royal Burgess Golfing Society, depicting two golfers and their caddies on Bruntsfield Links



Golf Tavern at Bruntsfield Links



great diversity of occupations although members were not necessarily, 'burghers' of Edinburgh referred to as Burgess and Freeman.

Early golfing society members universally had a uniform and they were not allowed to take part in competitions unless they appeared in full uniform. The Burgess uniform was the traditional scarlet jacket with black velvet cap and emblematical badge. It later evolved to a more elaborate costume described in 1837 and matched the Victorian tradition: "dress coat, colour dark claret, with black velvet collar, double breasted and lined in the skirts with white silk or satin, prominent buttons on cuffs of coat and also on the flaps, dress vest colour primrose with smaller buttons on cuffs to correspond with those on the coat". Although not the original intention, the wearing of distinctive red uniforms gave warning to pedestrians traversing the green. At present, the traditional 'scarlet and black' uniforms have a more ceremonial purpose at dinner events. The unfading social life of the prestigious Burgess Society is believed to have been a principal cause of its continued success and unalloyed harmony. Reminiscent of the Georgian period traditions, etiquette was of paramount importance at the Burgess social dinners and was held in great respect. The traditional toasts were drunk with three times three.



William St Clair of Roslin (1791), by Sir George Chalmers (Royal Company of Archers, Edinburgh)

In 1877, the Burgess left their old home at Bruntsfield Links, where they had spent nearly a century and a half as a golfing society since its founding in 1735. A transitory period existed when members of the old Society stayed in touch with the Bruntsfield Golf Tavern hostelry but after a few years, the migration to the new premises at Musselburgh was complete. It is most probable Bruntsfield Links was the oldest home of golf in Scotland for more than four hundred years. In 1717, James Brownhill built the first tavern house at the Links and named it 'Golfhall'. It was the first meeting place of the Burgess Society members who had always remained great defenders of the citizens' use of the Links as a golf playground. Town council records show the Burgess vigilantly protected the right to use Bruntsfield Links, the small non-alienated Burgh Muir heritage, for 'the exercise of the golf'.

There had been proposed projects for racecourses, quarries, traversing pathways as well as plans for mustering and drilling of troops and training horses for military campaigns. Nevertheless, the Links managed to survive as a proper playground for the ancient game of golf. Bruntsfield Links eventually did become obsolescent and unfit for the demands of modern golf, which in the meantime had changed to the gutta percha ball. Besides, the area had become congested with new buildings encroaching.

The Society made early efforts to join with Royal Musselburgh but they proved fruitless. In the end Burgess decided to amalgamate in 1873 with Musselburgh New Golf Club, which had been founded 1867, under the continued name of the older Burgess Society and build a new clubhouse. Even the Musselburgh public course became overcrowded due to the ever-growing popularity of the game at the end of the nineteenth century.

This forced The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, with which society Burgess shared the Musselburgh course, to migrate to Muirfield in 1891. Four golfing societies had their home and clubhouses at the old Musselburgh Links course: Royal Musselburgh, The Honourable Company, Royal Burgess and Bruntsfield Links. Between 1874 and 1889, the Open Championship was held at Musselburgh six times.

The Honourable Company had reformed in Musselburgh in 1836 after it had been dissolved before as a golfing society in Leith because of unsurmountable financial difficulties. The original clubhouse 'Golf House' built in 1768 was sold and many treasures changed ownership to clear the debts. The Royal Company of Archers in Edinburgh now holds the picture of the best-known captain of The Honourable Company, William St Clair of Roslin, First Grand Master Mason of Scotland, holding a golf club in address position.

There is a strong claim that his ancestor Sir William



Willie Park Jr



Old Tom Morris (1905)

Sinclair of Roslyn had links with Freemasonry in 1440 and that this link involved the Templars. Those interested in the history of Freemasonry are referred to 'Origins of Freemasonry'. This was a lecture given on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2000, at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Great Pories in The Albert Halls, Stirling, Scotland by Dr Robert Lomas of the University of Bradford.

'The Gentlemen Golfers' as the society was first officially known, began in 1744, when the City of Edinburgh town council presented the society with a Silver Club for annual competition and requiring 'proper regulations' to govern the conditions of play. The competition was open to all gentlemen golfers for the first 20 years.

In 1795, a charter was applied for and granted on March 26<sup>th</sup> 1800 with a Seal of Clause under the new



title of 'The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers'. After reforming in Musselburgh, The Honourable Company became involved in organising the Open Championship, with Prestwick Golf Club and the Royal and the Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. That was until this task was handed over to the Royal and Ancient alone in 1919. Earlier it had passed over all authority for future changes and decisions on the rules to the same body.

Burgess too finally decided to move to a new location of its own on the Barnton estate in 1894 having before looked at the Hills of Braid as a suitable locus. The ancient pastureland and excellent turf lent itself well to the design of a modern day golf course although not being a coastal 'links'. The new clubhouse was designed by R.M. Cameron and opened to the members in 1897.

Recent research by the society's archivist Philip Knowles has proven that Willie Park Jr designed the original course of 1894, which can be reconstructed from the 1905 architect-drawn plan prepared by W.H.A. Ross. This is because the minutes do not record any major changes to the original Dunn designed course. Some confusion had arisen because originally Tom Morris had been called on by invitation of the Society Council, represented by Thomas Aitkin and J.M. Williamson, for a one-day visit to tour the new ground. Tom Morris, aged 73 years at the time, provided a few sketches and on this basis, a course plan was reproduced by a journalist and published in *The Evening Dispatch*.

The formal assignment for the new course design and construction was awarded to young Willie Park, who later in his career distinguished himself in the new science of golf course architecture. His design of the Barnton course was indeed inspired by the first rough plans of Morris and Aitkin as can be inferred from the holes sequence and layout of a few holes.

The new and lengthy course designed by Park measured 5,968 yards, probably the longest at the time and substantially longer than the 5,208 yards of Muirfield and other courses in Scotland, where Open Champi-

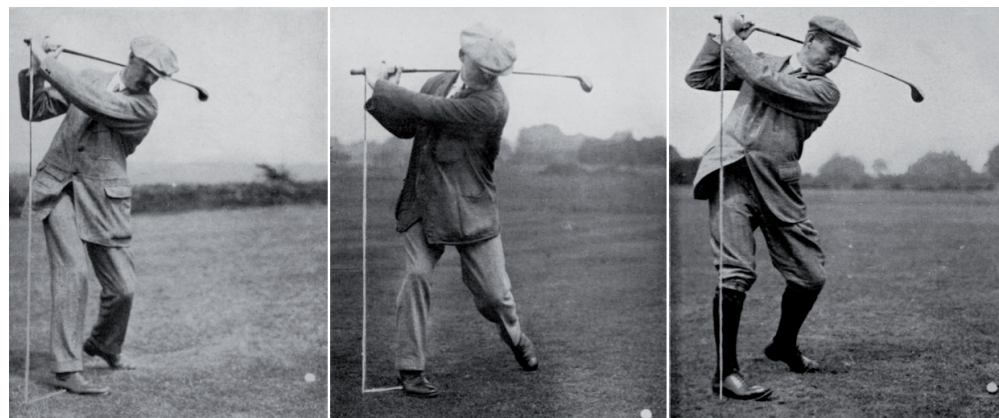


Harry Vardon

onships were held in that period. Noteworthy is that Harry Vardon came to visit the Burgess for an exhibition match in 1899 and went round in 70 strokes, a remarkable low score on a course, where the bogey for society members had been set at 82.

In 1921 an extra 7.5 acres were added to the course and the Scotsman James Braid, a fellow member of the 'Great Triumvirate' with Vardon and Taylor, was invited to review the course design and to present plans for change. Several holes were altered and lengthened, greens were changed and bunkers overhauled. Braid's redesign is in essence the course as played today.

Other contenders for the submission of plans for a redesign of Park's original course lay out were the venerable golf architects Alistair Mackenzie and Harry Colt. Their plan was unfortunately too extensive and costly. Scottish golf architecture heritage on the other hand has been better served with an original Willie Park Jr. course design and later changes by James Braid, two of the best Scottish golfers in their time.



James Braid, JH Taylor, Harry Vardon



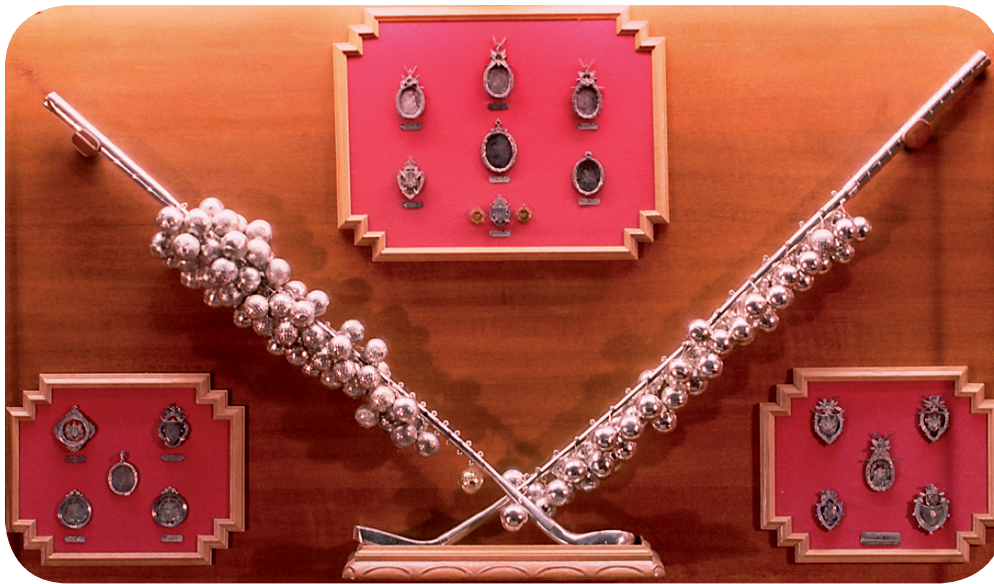
James Braid

The Barnton course of the Burgess is not officially a 'links' course but it should be kept in mind that the first golf playground at Bruntsfield Links in Edinburgh was an inland course too. The later 'links' grounds in Leith was not really a direct 'seaside course' either although the word 'links' later became synonym for a 'seaside course' and replaced the earlier connotation of a 'playground' as of Bruntsfield Links.

In 1839, the Bruntsfield Links Golf Society too moved to Musselburgh from its congested old location in Edinburgh. Bruntsfield was founded as a golfing society in 1761 and is claimed to be a split off from the Burgess Society of Edinburgh Golfers following political differences of opinion between members related to the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The history of Bruntsfield shows many parallels with that of Burgess, that it always considered as the older or senior club of the two.

The club moved to Barnton in 1897 to become neighbours of Burgess again. Willie Park Jr, who originated from Musselburgh, designed the layout of the new course. He is now also credited with the design of the Burgess course at Barnton. While in Musselburgh, the Bruntsfield Links Golf Club always kept its old clubhouse The Golf Tavern at Bruntsfield Links besides its newly bought Musselburgh clubhouse building of St Peters Episcopal Church. This was to preserve its traditional social ties with the City of Edinburgh and its roots at Bruntsfield Links.





*Silver Clubs of The Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh*

The only 'local' golfing society in Musselburgh sharing the old course was the Musselburgh Golf Club founded in 1774 or possibly earlier by the 'principal gentlemen of the town and vicinity'. Members met in the various hostelrys or taverns in and around Musselburgh. The club's manners and traditions were less formal than the three Edinburgh societies. It actually organised the first ladies competition in 1811. Musselburgh finally built its own clubhouse in 1873 next door to the clubhouse of The Honourable Company and in 1876, the club received an official grant to use the prefix 'Royal'. In 1925, Musselburgh moved away from the crowded old course to its new premises at Prestonpans, where James Braid designed a new 18-hole course.

### Pau

The history of Pau Golf Club, founded in 1856, is interesting in that it is the first golf club outside Britain, or Scotland for that matter, other than the two clubs in Calcutta and Bombay in the British Indian Empire. The latter two clubs have a direct link to the expansion of the British Empire. This mainly followed from victory of the British in the Napoleonic wars and the final defeat of the French army at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 at the hands of the Anglo-Allied and Prussian armies. The defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte, the self-crowned Emperor of France, had changed the global political landscape and balance of power. Indirectly the beginnings of Pau Golf Club had links with the Napoleonic wars too and specifically to the Peninsular War (1808-1814), when the Anglo-Portuguese military alliance battled and finally defeated the French army in Spain. The elder brother of Napoleon, Joseph Napoleon Bonaparte, nicknamed 'Pepe Botella' because of his rather obvious drinking habits, ruled as King of Spain. He fled Spain in 1813 after his defeat at Vitoria-Gasteiz fused by a furious Spanish uprising.

The French army, now under the direct command

of Napoleon, but weakened after his ill-fated military adventure into Russia, could not stop the tide. The army had to retreat to the French border behind the Pyrenees, chased by the ambitious British commander, Lieutenant General Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington. An interesting military detail is that the young Prince of Orange, the future King William II of the Netherlands, was the Aide-de-Camp of Wellington during the Peninsular War. This was the basis of their intense friendship and close collaboration in the Battle of Waterloo.

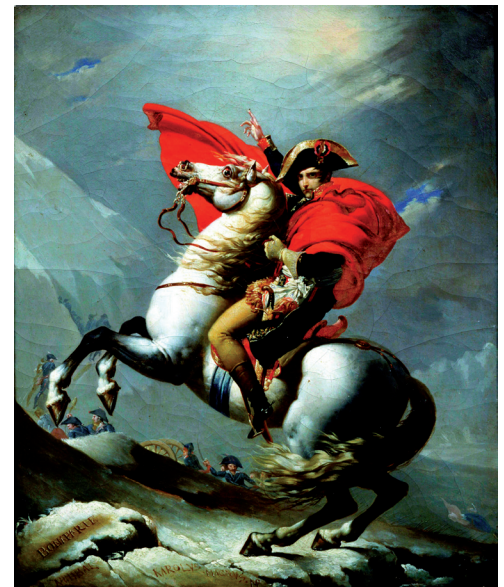
Wellington had defeated the French army before during the Peninsular War at Orthez and Toulouse in early 1814. Attempting to crush the French army, the British had crossed the Pyrenees and set up base in Pau, the strategically important crossroads of Paris to Madrid and of Toulon to Biarritz that connected the Atlantic and Mediterranean naval ports.

After his defeats in Leipzig and Toulouse, the European nations allied against France forced Napoleon to abdicate as Emperor of France and exiled him to the island of Elba. Following his escape from Elba and his glorious One Hundred Day March to Paris, Napoleon returned to the political European scene once more. Napoleon's moves against the allied headquarters in Brussels eventually lead to his final downfall at Waterloo. With Wellington, William of Orange played a heroic role as deputy commander in chief of the allied Anglo-Dutch army in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 that decisively beat Napoleon.

Pau was the capital of the Bearn region and a fortified city controlling the ford across the river Gave de Pau at the foot of the Pyrenees. After finally defeating the French army, Wellington left a garrison in Pau to control the area safely. This garrison consisted of several Scottish regiments and commanding officers from the higher echelons of Scottish society. Pau would leave a lasting memory with these gentlemen. Alphonse de Lamartine is quoted saying: "Pau has the world's most beautiful view of the earth, just

as Naples has the most beautiful view of the sea." The splendid view and most agreeable climate must have stuck in the minds of some of the British military aristocrats, who later would return to this wonderful resort and set up a vacationing enclave for the well-to-do in British society. Count Henry Russell wrote in 1871 that 'it is a perfect storm of unending pleasure of which no whirlwind or cyclone can give any idea ... so that rest is a thing absolutely unknown and impossible except to those whom sever illness, reason or misanthropy, condemn to live unseen or unknown'.

The Scottish nobility settled in Pau and introduced the game of golf to it. The game was organised in Pau



*Napoleon Bonaparte (1800), by Jacques-Louis David*



*General Arthur Wellesley, the later Duke of Wellington, and William Prince of Orange, the later King William II of the Netherlands, Peninsular War (1814)*





*First gold medal presented by the Duke of Hamilton and won by Colonel Hutchinson in 1857*

similar to the traditions of the old golfing societies of Edinburgh and Blackheath and by mostly the same individuals too. Soon other British games were introduced to Pau too: equestrian sports, football, rugby, cricket and real tennis. The venerable Pau Hunting Club was founded in 1837. Later in the nineteenth century, pioneering British introduced their audacious aeronautic activities to Pau. Overall, Pau had become the sub-tropical winter resort for the ancient Scottish game of golf. In France, Pau Golf Club became the inspirational hub for the establishment of new golf clubs in France. Although

this would not be until towards the end of the century: Dinard (1887), Biarritz (1888), Cannes-Mandelieu (1891), Saint-Jean-de-Luz (1893) and Saint Raphael (1895). Pau Golf Club is beautifully located on the grassy plain of Billère on the banks of the Gave de Pau. It faces the mountainous Pyrenees close to the City of Pau with its historic Chateau de Pau, the birthplace of Henri IV, King of France, and Église St Jacques de Pau. It is suitably placed near the regional vineyards of the wonderful Jurançon wine district and is readily blessed with a pleasant climate.

The physician A. Taylor published his treatise *On the curative influence of the climate of Pau* as an open invitation to all to enjoy this healthy getaway.

Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Lloyd Anstruther, Colonel Hutchinson, Major Pontifex and Archdeacon Sapte officially founded Pau Golf Club in 1856. Such other members as Major Stevenson and J. Stewart joined them. The 11<sup>th</sup> Duke of Hamilton and of Brandon, the premier peer of Scotland who was actively involved in the well-known Scottish golfing societies proudly sponsored the club's founding. He presented the first gold medal won by Colonel Hutchinson in 1857, the father of the celebrated and prolific golf writer Horace Hutchinson of a century ago. Three of the original founding members were pictured together in 1890.



*Colonel Hutchinson, Major Pontifex and Archdeacon Sapte (1890), three of the surviving founding members of Pau Golf Club*

The enjoyable British painter of popular sporting scenes Allen Culpeper Sealy (1850-1927) was invited by two well-known members, M. Prince and M. Ridgway, to picture golf scenes at Pau Golf Club. These wonderful paintings of golfing scenes



*Approach on hole 8 at Pau golf Club (1892), by Allan C. Sealy*





*Drive on hole 10 at Pau Golf Club (1893), by Allen C. Sealy*

have left a lasting impression of day-to-day life and dress of members at Pau Golf Club at the turn of the century. Maj. F.P. Hopkins (1830-1913), well known for his portrait of *Medal Day at Blackheath*, was also invited to portray members at the golf club in Pau. This was achieved in a similar fashion to his earlier assignment at Blackheath. All the names of the members represented in the painting have been kept for posterity. They serve as a source for further historical analysis of the personal interrelations between Pau and the old golfing societies in Britain in the nineteenth century. The many shields with the inscribed names of past captains, honorary secretaries and trophy winners provide similar sources of information. The well-known painting *The Golfer* by Charles Lee completed in 1847 of a foursome played at St Andrews shares several well-known Pau regulars. Among them is Willie Dunn Snr., professional of Musselburgh and Blackheath and the original course designer of Pau.

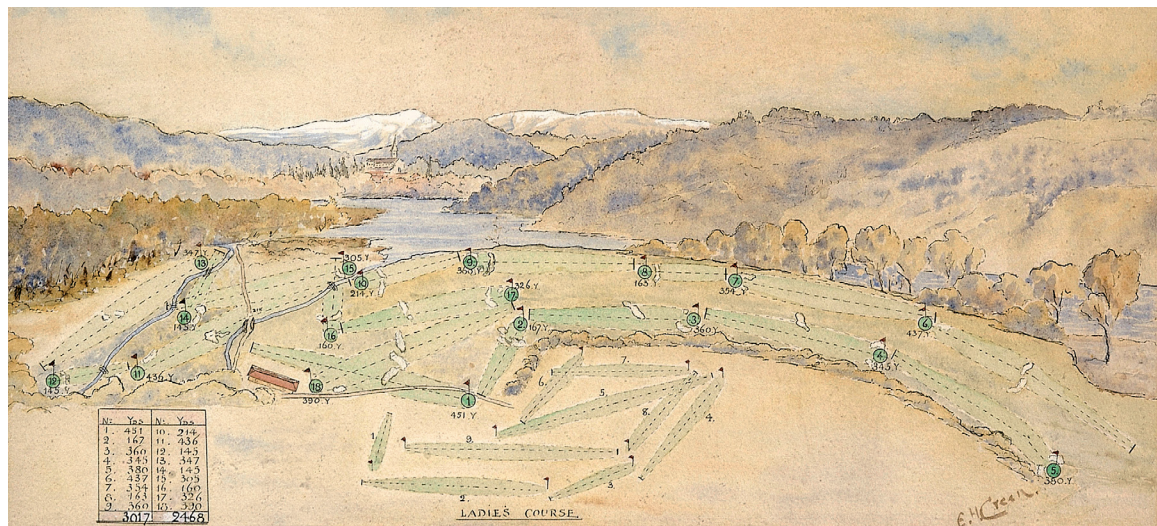
Regulations for the admission of new members were the same as at the old golfing societies back home, using the blackball to eliminate the member candidacy of an unwanted individual. The French language has curiously adopted the standard word 'blackboulder' with the same meaning from the golfing traditions in Pau.

The original course design by Willie Dunn Snr. (1821-1878) was inspired by the St Andrews lay out with shared tees and greens design. This was done to best use the limited space available. It was lengthened

from 9 to 18 holes in 1860. In 1875, the course was again expanded with three new holes reaching 5,485 yards in total length.

In 1877, a 9-hole ladies course was made available to the growing female membership. Showing the more leisurely nature of the club rather than the strict rules of the old golfing societies in Scotland, which to this day mostly remain irreversibly traditional male bastions of golf. The ladies course disappeared during the Second World War having survived its purpose as women had gradually fully integrated as club members.

The first club professional of Pau was Joe Lloyd, who Jack Morris had trained at Hoylake. Two members of Royal Liverpool, Cumming Macdonald and Victor Brooke, who both served as committee members at Pau, had persuaded Lloyd to take the position as professional at Pau Golf Club in 1884. He divided his time between Pau in winter and Essex Country Club in Manchester, Massachusetts in the USA in summer. In 1886 Joe Lloyd was host to many of the greatest golf professionals of his time for an exhibition match at Pau. Present were Harry Vardon, JH Taylor, Sandie Herd, Willie Auchterlonie and Archie Simpson. A year



*Pau Golf Club 18-hole course layout and 9 holes ladies course (1875)*





Joe Lloyd (right) together with Harry Vardon, JH Taylor, Sandie Herd, Willie Auchterlonie and Archie Simpson (1887)



Queen Victoria - Diamond Jubilee Cup (1897)

later in 1887 Joe Lloyd, needing a par 4 to equal the score of Willie Anderson, a North Berwick youth of 17, birdied the final hole of the Chicago Golf Club to win the US Open title outright. Being an unknown golfer of his day, now he is only remembered as 'The Forgotten Champion' of the US Open history. Joe Lloyd remained loyal to Pau Golf Club as professional for many years up to 1925.

On the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, Pau Golf Club was presented with a silver cup with the inscription 'Queen Victoria - Diamond Jubilee Cup - 1837-1897'. The cup was a token of appreciation for the continuous loyalty bestowed upon her by the members of Pau Golf Club.

At the centenary celebration of Pau Golf Club in 1956, the club and the City of Pau organised a special exhibition in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Pau. The cata-

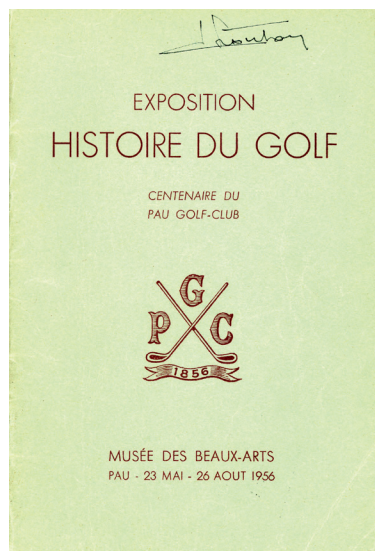
logue of the exhibition on page 1 as an introduction states a number of important dates in the history of golf. This catalogue unwittingly became the catalyst of a heated discussion about the historical accuracy of the first date of a golf contest recorded in the Low Countries, described by Steven van Hengel in his book *Early Golf* (1985):

'1296 - Apres l'assassinat du duc Floris V, la tradition rapporte qu'entre le chateau de Croonenburg et l'Hotel de Ville de Loenen, une partie de Kolf fut instituee chaque annee. Deaux equipes de quatre joueurs tantaient d'atteindre le but dans le plus petit nombre de de coups. On jouait avec divers clubs a tete metallique et une balle de cuir.'

[1296 - After the murder of count Floris V, tradition has it that between Croonenburg Castle and the

Town Hall of Loenen, a colf contest was held every year. Two teams of four players tried to reach the target in the least number of strokes. They played with various clubs with a metal head and with a leather ball]

It was thirty years later Steven van Hengel noticed the date and history and caused substantial controversy. Unfortunately, Steven van Hengel died in the same year the book was officially presented to the Royal and Ancient in 1985 and was therefore unable to participate in the discussions. It should be repeated that there is indeed no documentary evidence of this annual event-taking place at that date and that it is indeed only a folk anecdote. As the catalogue correctly states 'la tradition rapporte'. Van Hengel too reports the Loenen episode as having no documen-



Catalogue Exposition Histoire Du Golf - Centenaire du Pau Golf Club (1957)



Clubhouse of Pau Golf Club 1856 at Plaine de Billère (c1910)





*Kennemer Cup presented to Pau Golf Club 1856 on the occasion of its 150th anniversary in 2006 by Kennemer Golf & Country Club*



*View of New Amsterdam (c1665), by David Vingboons*

tary proof of the tradition having started in 1297, but points out the legend itself is historically relevant to the game of colf.

In 1860, the Pau Golf Club counted about 30 members only. With the growth of the popularity of the game of golf spearheaded in Britain, the number of members at Pau Golf Club increased to 340 members within 30 years. The club has always preserved its historic location and clubhouse at Billère on the banks of the Gave de Pau. It is a true monument of golfing history.

The British character of the club slowly declined

between world wars and it has now become almost solely francophone. It is a salute to the present day club that a keen eye is kept open to the historic roots of the club. At the occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006, the members of the Kennemer Golf & Country Club presented Pau Golf Club with the silver 'Kennemer Cup'. Since 2009, the two clubs have begun an official annual challenge between member teams of both clubs.

### New Amsterdam

The first documentary evidence of golf or colf in North America relates to a record dated 1659 of the justice bench of the Dutch settlement of Fort Orange and Beverwijck. Fort Orange is now named Albany in New York State, along the banks of the Hudson River. Another record of the manor court of the settlement of Rensselaerswyck has been found dating from 1650. These two documents relate to the early game of colf played in the Low Countries.

Fort Orange ordinance of 1659 banned playing colf within the compounds of the fort or along the streets of the settlement following regular complaints of the inhabitants about injuries and broken windows. 'The Honourable Governor and Magistrates of Fort Orange and the town of Beverwijck, having heard various complaints from the burghers of this place against the practice of playing colf along the streets, which causes great damage to the windows of the houses, and also exposes people to the danger of being injured and conflicts with the freedom of the public streets;

Therefore, their Honours, wishing to prevent the same, hereby forbid all persons to play colf in the streets, under the penalty of forfeiture of 25 florins for each person who shall be found doing so.

Thus done in Fort Orange, at the meeting of the Honourable Court of the said place, on the tenth of December, 1659.'

(Originally translated by Mr Arnold J. van Laer, archivist of the University of the State of New York, 1955).

*Proposed Coat of Arms for New Amsterdam (New York Historical Society)*





Not surprisingly, these laws are similar to those back home in the Low Countries, where these early settlers came from. It is not known whether a designated area outside the fortress or town was used for playing the game of colf. It is likely, that if the game was played in the smaller town settlements along the Hudson, it was also played in the main New Amsterdam settlement. No records have been found to that effect nor has a colf or a colfslof (the club head) been found or excavated by archaeologists in America.

The record of the court case in Rensselaerswyck in 1650 describes how a brawl was unlawfully settled by using a colf and striking this on the head of the terrified opponent. The brawl followed a heated argument between two couples of colf players over the volume of genever (Dutch gin) being played for as a wager in a game of colf. The fine was set by the court at twenty florins or two and a half beaver skins. Beaver skins formed the main barter product of the colony in those early days.

These events show the Dutch settlers in the first half



American beaver (c1640), drawing by Jan Velten (Koninklijke Bibliotheek Den Haag)



American eagle (c1640), drawing by Jan Velten (Koninklijke Bibliotheek Den Haag)



Map of Nova Belgica – detail, by Nicholaas Visscher

of the seventeenth century imported the game of colf, as played the Low Countries, into the colony of New Netherlands (Nova Belgica Terra).

Four hundred years ago, the Dutch United East Indies Company – the VOC founded in 1602 – commissioned the Englishman Henry Hudson in 1609 to find a northern passage to Asia. In 1595, the Dutch made the first scouting expeditions to Asia and these proved to be the beginning of a most fortuitous venture with sixty-five ships deployed in the next few years. This later led to the formation of the successful VOC monopoly.

Hudson set sail with his ship the *Half Moon* in westward direction and landed in America. The existence of America was of course known at the time. However, no one knew the size of the continent or if a shorter passage to Asia was possible. The adventurous journeys of the early explorers were risky undertakings. The weather, the sea, the climate, the crew, and of course the inhabitants of the

newly discovered territories were uncertain factors. The VOC was intent on discovering an alternative sea route to Asia to avoid the long and treacherous route via Cape Good Hope and the resulting expensive conflicts at sea with its rivals. The Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was at the time involved in the Eighty Year War (1568-1648) against Spain.

Thoughts of colonising the territories arose following the founding of the WIC – the West Indies Company – as an offshoot of the VOC in 1621 to concentrate on the profitable exploitation of the American continent. The commercial ambitions of the VOC and WIC unavoidably led to many military conflicts fought between the Republic and Spain. These resulted in great financial gains for the fortuitous Dutch and this again supported their struggle for independence against the Spanish.

Hudson discovered the mouth of a river and sailed upstream. He discovered a territory with relatively friendly inhabitants and potentially full of trading

Map of Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova (c1650), by Willem Blaeu







The Castello plan (1660), *Abeeldinge van de Stadt Amsterdā in Nieuw Nederlandt* (New York Public Library). Presumed playground encircled in red.

opportunities, mainly furs and skins. This was promising enough for the VOC to embark on further com-



Director-General of New Netherland (c1660), attributed to Hendrick Couturier (New York Historical Society)

mercial trading in the region and a trading post was set up on the island of Manhattan, fittingly named New Amsterdam.

A strategic decision was made to build a fort on the tip of Manhattan in 1625 to protect the interests of the New Netherlands territory. Therefore, the fort of New Amsterdam became the governing seat after Pieter Minuit on behalf of the WIC had bought the exclusive rights to the island of Manhattan from a group of local Indians. The price being goods worth a value of '60 Dutch florins', equivalent to about 30 beaver skins at that time (sic).

New Amsterdam gradually changed into a genuine town governing the New Netherland colony as a whole. The director-general Peter Stuyvesant described the constellation of its population as 'a hodgepodge of all kinds of backgrounds'. It was a town of settlers of great ethnical, cultural and religious diversity and matched its namesake in Holland as a non-typical Dutch city.

Beyond the city wall built in 1653 farming estates or 'bouweryen' were established for agricultural purposes to supply the islands population with the fruits of the land. There are no known records of any grounds chosen as a playground inside or outside the city walls for the playing the game of colf,



James Stuart II, Duke of York (1672), by Henri Gascar (National Maritime Museum, London). Romanesque costume representing Mars, the God of War.

caets, malie or any other popular pastime known in the Low Countries. Not unlike places they left behind, such as 'De Baen' in hometown Haarlem. Although it is expected to have existed taking the larger population into account as well as the prevailing ordinance of nearby Fort Orange banning playing the game of colf from the town streets. The New Netherlands colony had a population of roughly 5000 citizens of which fewer than 1000 lived in New Amsterdam. Many settlements were built along the Noort or Mauritius River (now named Hudson River) and many still bear names relating to their Dutch ancestry.

In the period 1623-1635, the Dutch alone captured or sank six hundred Spanish ships. After the peace treaty with Spain in 1648, the Dutch lacked the reserves to fund the costly operations of the WIC and therefore concentrated more on the profitable VOC operations in the East.

The invasion by the English in 1664 marked the end of this thriving Dutch colony. The peace treaty of Breda between England and the Republic in 1667 formalized the English ownership and New Amsterdam was renamed 'New York'. Following the restoration of the monarchy in England, the Duke of York,





Prince James, the future King James II and younger brother of King Charles II, had the task of capturing the Republic's colony New Netherland in America. Uncomfortably sandwiched between the traditional British territories New England and Virginia, Peter Stuyvesant ordered the surrender without firing a shot and New Amsterdam fell to the British. Beverwijk was renamed Albany, the region in Scotland from where the Duke of York, took his second title, the Duke of Albany.

There would be another interesting twist in history when the Republic's navy commander Cornelis Evertsen retook New York City in 1673. Anthony Colve – 'nomen est omen' – was appointed the new Governor-General. However, there had been no specific order by the States General of the Republic to recapture New York from the English.

The young, ambitious and newly appointed Stadtholder William III, Prince of Orange, wisely decided not to waste his scarce resources, or political goodwill, with his past English, French and Spanish rivals, vividly remembering the Republic's 'annus horribilis' in 1672. This was bad news for the Dutch colonists when New York was peacefully returned to the English under the terms of the Treaty of Westminster in 1674.

It remained that way, even after the same William III, Prince of Orange, kicked King James II of his throne. In England, he was commonly known as 'King Billy',

who with his wife Mary Stuart became King William III and Queen Mary II of England, Ireland and Scotland. He wisely decided to spare the potential cost of an expensive and unprofitable colony and to avoid further political upheaval with his allies and most probably with his wife the Queen of England. He left New York in the hands of the United Kingdom. The triumvirate of Spain, Portugal and England from then on shared the spoils in the West and the WIC ended operations in 1674

With this sequence of events, the early game of kolf, 'het spel metten colve' of the Low Countries, disappeared for good in the surrendered Dutch colony of New Netherland and from the American scene.

There are traces the early Scottish game of golf was introduced to the American colonies of the United Kingdom in the eighteenth century. It began in Carolina where the climate was benevolent for playing golf. Bills of lading for the shipment of an order of a large quantity of golf clubs and balls from Leith in Scotland to America in 1743 are documentary proof of golfing activity in the colony. David Deas, living in Charleston, had ordered the golf equipment, 69 clubs and 432 feathery balls, from his brother in Leith. The quantity of this shipment presupposes the equipment was not solely for personal use and that it was intended for a broader user base. It is likely that this was not the only shipment of golf balls and clubs to America although at present, little documentary evidence has been uncovered. In 1750, another shipping document shows that a large quantity of balls and clubs were sent from Glasgow to Virginia and again in 1765 from Glasgow to Maryland.

The number of golf players in Scotland and England (Blackheath) then were limited to a few known golfing societies organised by Freemasonry members. It is therefore most believable the game of golf was introduced to America and played in the southern colonies by the Scots familiar with the existing golf societies. Who else would have organised the game following the same Masonic traditions as in Scotland?

David Deas, who ordered clubs and balls from his brother in Scotland, is known to have been an early Provincial Grand Master Mason in America. This supports the idea that early golf development in America followed a similar pattern to organised golf in Scotland. For the same reason, at present no records have been unearthed of the earliest golfing societies in America. However, the American Inde-



The New Game of Kolf (1792), engraving by D. Schuurman after J.C. Schults. An allegory of the allied Dutch-French support of the American Revolution against the English.

pendence movement and resulting wars against the United Kingdom (1775-1783) may not have created suitable conditions for this traditional Scottish game to flourish in hostile anti-British environment.

It is safe to assume that plans for any further growth or development of the game of golf were abandoned and that no early British or Scottish golfing societies have survived the eighteenth century in America. One or two may have continued as 'social clubs' without ostensible golfing activity going on such as in Charleston and Savannah.

In the Rivington's Royal Gazette in 1799 the sale of 'excellent clubs and veritable Caledonian balls' was advertised. Riverton was the King's printer in New York and a known importer of golf equipment too. These were delivered to Scottish officers in the British army during the Revolutionary War in America. After all, a real Scot would certainly not travel without his golfing equipment.

New Amsterdam Peter Stuyvesant Panorama



William and Mary





Interestingly there is also a record of *The Charleston City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* of 18<sup>th</sup> September 1788 containing the announcement that:

*‘There is lately erected that pleasing and genteel amusement, the KOLF BAAN. Any person wishing to treat for the same at private sale, will please apply to Mr David Denoon, in Charleston, or to the subscribed on the spot.*

*Henry Welsh’*

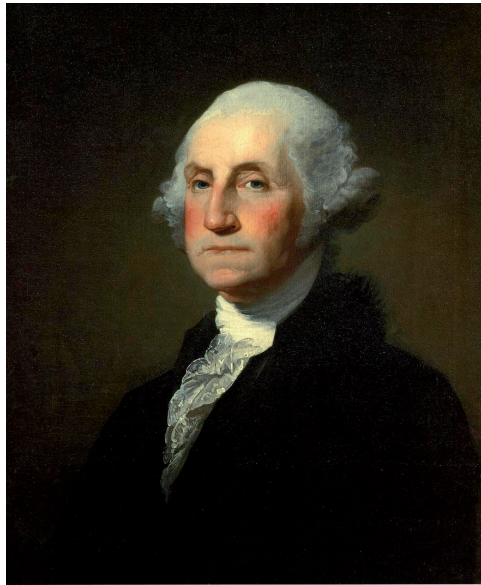
This advertisement suggests that a ‘kolfbaan’ was offered for sale by a Mr David Denoon – possibly a name of Dutch origin De Nuun (compare Van Nunen) – and is described as a game of ‘pleasing and genteel amusement’. This most probably relates to the newer short game of kolf developed in the late seventeenth century Dutch Republic played inside an enclosed panelled court named ‘kolfbaan’ and successor to the earlier game of colf.

This game was an offshoot of the longer game of colf played in the Low Countries. This is the first record of the game of kolf being played outside the Republic or later Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is evidence that kolf had been introduced as a game to America in Carolina, most probably by Dutch immigrants from the Republic trying to commercialize this popular game. For this, it would be necessary to offer the equipment for a kolf baan, a wooden floor and sideboards, two poles, sajet balls and klieks. This was apparently offered ‘at private sale’ in the advertisement.

The American Revolution and the effects of following American War of Independence (1775-1783) that followed split the American society. This war, which began as a conflict between the United Kingdom of



*King George III in Coronation Robes, by Allan Ramsay*



*George Washington (1796), by Gilbert Stuart*

Great Britain and the combined forces of the thirteen British colonies in North America, ended in warfare between several European nations.

The war was the outcome of the political revolution, in which many of the British colonists in America rejected the legitimacy of the Parliament of Great Britain to govern them without representation, claiming this violated the ‘Rights of Englishmen’. The First Continental Congress meeting in 1774 petitioned King George III for intervention with Parliament. Their pleas were ignored and with the Second Continental Congress, a Continental Army was approved.

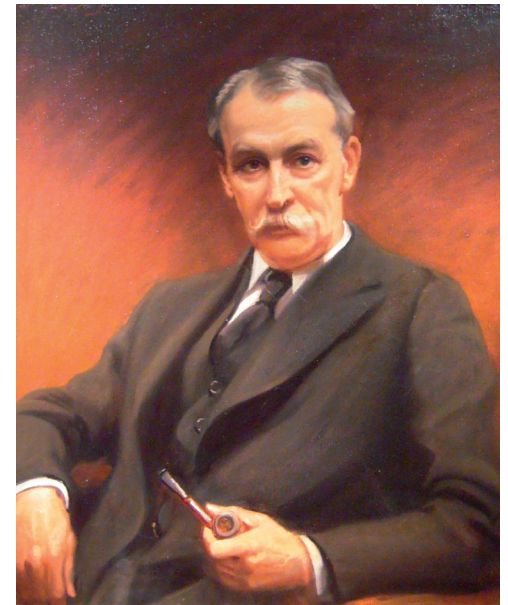
The following year the British Crown declared the Congress of States were traitors and found them to be in rebellion. The American colonists led by George Washington responded in 1776 by formally declaring their independence as one new nation – the United States of America – claiming their own sovereignty and rejecting any loyalty to the British monarchy. France secretly provided military support to the rebels from 1776 and openly declared war against Britain in 1778. Spain and the Dutch Republic – French allies – also went to war with Britain and tested its military strength with escalating campaigns on the European mainland and at sea. Throughout the war, the British were able to use their naval superiority to capture and occupy American coastal cities, but they could not control the countryside because of the relatively small size of their land army.

The French involvement proved decisive with a naval victory in the Chesapeake Bay finally leading to the British surrender at Yorktown in 1783. The Treaty of Paris ended the war and recognised the sovereignty of the United States. The American society split between loyalists, rebels and neutrals.

Estimates showed that around 40–45 % of the colonists actively supported the rebellion, while 15–20%

of the thirteen colonies population remained loyal to the British Crown. The remaining 35–45 % tried to remain neutral. It is not surprising that in these circumstances, growth of traditional British golfing societies had fallen into desuetude in eighteenth century America.

With the later expansion of the British Empire and the tremendous growth in popularity in Britain of the modern game of golf in the late nineteenth century, golf made a comeback in the USA at Yonkers, New York, in 1888. This was only after the nation had healed its wounds from the devastating American Civil War (1861-1865) and recovered as a unified country after a drab and uncertain period qualified as the ‘dark ages’ of America.



*Sam Ryder (PGA The Belfry)*

After the first introduction of golf to the USA, the popularity of the game skyrocketed and greatly contributed to the further growth of the game worldwide in the twentieth century. America and Britain would become the fiercest rivals in golf competition and propelled golf to its unprecedented popularity today. Sam Ryder’s intention of organising a ‘small friendly lunch party’ has proved to be visionary.

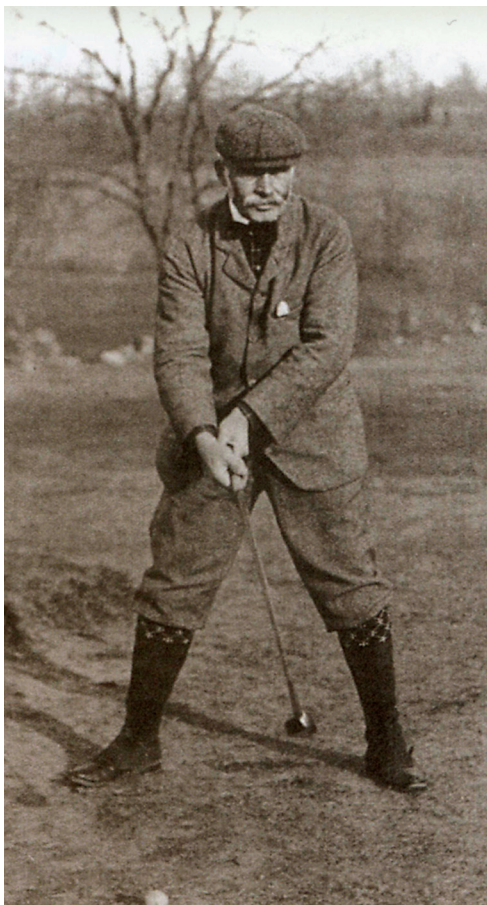
The club now recognised as having first introduced and promoted golf in the United States is St Andrew’s Golf Club in Yonkers, New York in 1888. The apostrophe in its name distinguishes it from its namesake in Scotland. There has also been mention of an earlier activity of Oakhurst Golf Club in West Virginia in 1884 until the formation of the Greenbrier Golf Club took over its place.

In New York, two befriended Scotsmen are credited with the serious introduction of modern golf to America. John Reid and Robert Lockhart, originally from Dunfermline above Scotland’s Firth of Forth, where



they spent school together, and now settled in New York as businessmen. As a linen merchant, Lockhart regularly visited his home country, where he had learnt to play golf at Musselburgh. During a tour to St Andrews, he ordered a quantity of clubs and gutta percha balls at Old Tom Morris' golf shop to take back with him to New York for his friend John Reid. Reid invited a group of friends for an introductory game on the pasture across the road from where he lived in Yonkers. He converted his friends to the game's religion and thus became the first missionary of golf in the USA. Together they decided to start a golfing venture on a meadow that was not too large around the corner off Broadway in Yonkers. This band of golf players persevered and observers looked bemused at this new Scots game never seen before. The golf chronicler Horace Hutchinson commented: "It grew common to regard golf as a harmless form of imbecility, holding towards it much the same attitude the general mind has towards a grown man with a butterfly net and a taste for entomology".

The fun of this new pastime with ball and club had taken a firm, almost religious, hold on this first gang of men to play organised golf in America. Reid had invited his friends to join him in forming an official club to perpetuate their comradeship as golfers and to secure funds for the maintenance



John Reid



John Reid (St Andrew's Golf Club, New York)

of a golf course. Minutes of this first meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1888 have been kept and constitute the official beginning of golf in America. Reid was elected president and Lockhart as its first member in recognition of his role in introducing golf to the newly formed club. After St Andrew's Golf Club, golf in America started spreading like an uncontrollable disease and by the turn of the century, the number of clubs playing golf was close to an incredible one thousand.

From a primitive game, it gradually developed into a sophisticated sport attracting more and more converts. The St Andrew's Golf Club itself was forced to move to new premises on the Weston estate with a panoramic view of the Hudson River and the Palisades. The property was an apple orchard sloping towards the riverbanks of the Hudson River.

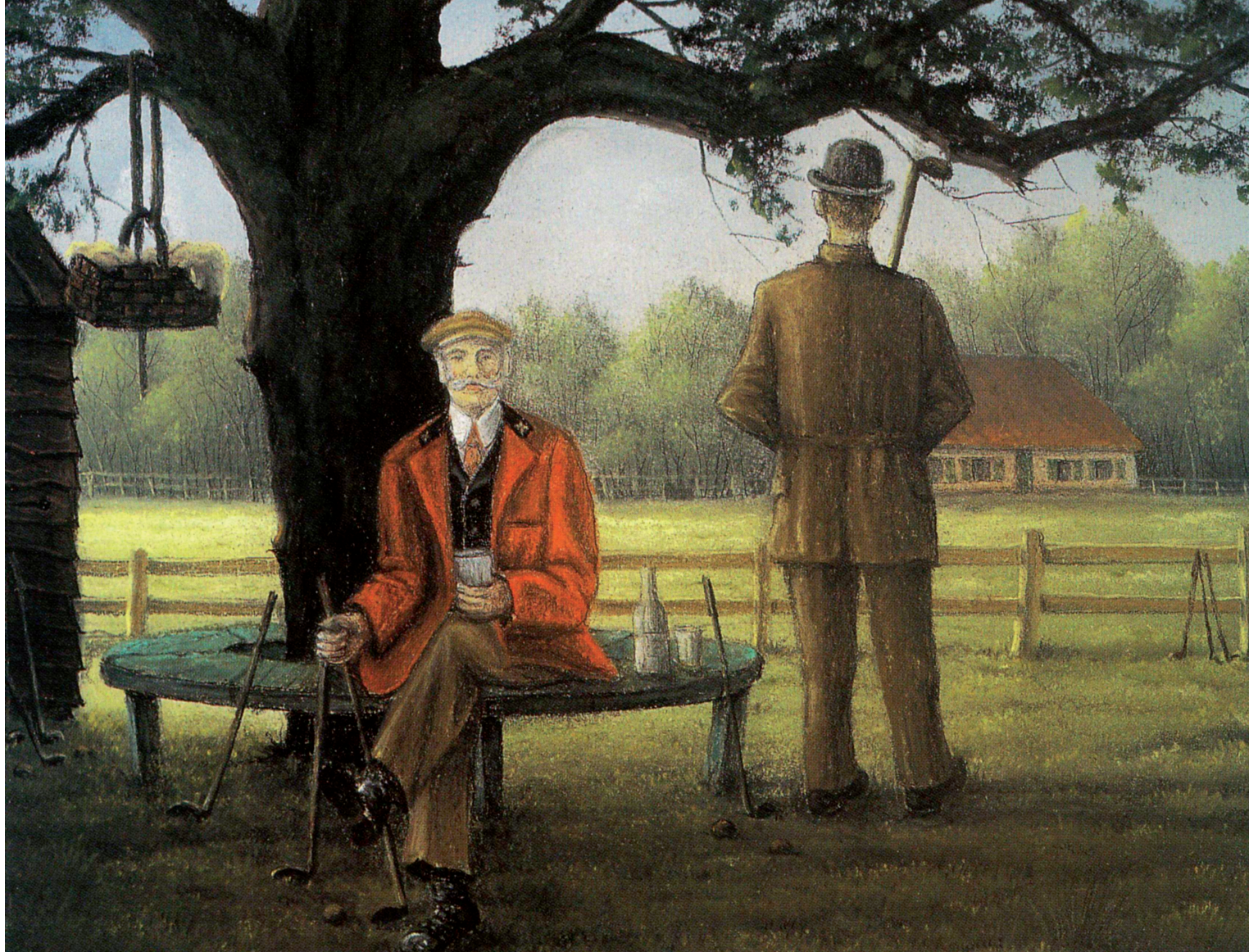
On this terrain a simple course was designed and laid

out, threading its way through the arbour over six holes, studded with apple trees as natural obstructions or hazards. The club understandably was nicknamed the 'Apple Tree Gang' having chosen one large characteristic specimen as a shady resting place and watering hole for its member golfers after a testing round of golf.

Although the Americans still relied on the import of clubs and balls from Britain, the influx of many professionals from Scotland and England to this bountiful new country inspired the Americans to do their own. They used their ingenuity to develop much better ways to fix new durable wooden heads to the shaft and to produce revolutionary new golf balls. The new breed of American golf professionals was quickly inspired by their Scottish preceptors to become masters of their own destiny and develop their own hero's.







John Reid of the Apple Tree Gang in Yonkers, New York

The great Harry Vardon, who had travelled the USA in 1900 for many exhibition matches in order to promote this new game of golf in America, set the example. The game of golf, having taken off in America would never look back.



Harry Vardon at St Andrews, Scotland

### North American Indians

A special mention has to be made here of the elaborate paper *Games of the North American Indians* by Stewart Cullin of 1907. This directed attention to the remarkable analogies existing between the oriental and modern European games in the collection and those of the American Indians. Especially looked at were games of American Indians with implements, divided in to two classes: games of chance and games of dexterity.

The games of dexterity were subsequently grouped in several sub-groups: archery, javelins or darts, shooting at a moving target, and ball games in several or related forms. Some games also have a miniature of solitaire form, similar to the European cup and ball games. There is no evidence that Europeans imported any of these games into America at any time either before or after colonisation.

They do appear to be a direct or natural outgrowth of aboriginal institutions in America, although variations because of decay and influence of white institutions and the spread of certain games through a wider intercourse with pioneering immigrants are clear. Many implements of Indian games are most

probably related to the twin symbol of the throwing-club and the bow and arrow and are linked to divinatory ceremonies of the American Indians.

Leaving the traditional Indian games of chance aside, one can review the various games of dexterity and more in particular the various ball games. The games of archery, hoop and pole, and ring and pin do have many interesting aspects too.

All ball games have in common that it is forbidden to touch the ball with the hand. The two main categories of ball games are 'racket', in which a ball is tossed with a racket, and secondly 'shinni', in which a ball is struck with a club or bat. Both games are widespread and universal among the many Indian tribes. The most common form of balls are covered with buckskin, but other balls are made of wood, cordage, bone and stone, or made of bladder netted with sinew.

The game of 'racket', as it is collectively called, is distinctly a man's game of two opposing tribal or intertribal teams wagering stakes for their diversion. A single racket is used per player but two is also possible. The origin of the racket is not clear but seems to be a combination of a curved stick, bent with bark strings to the required crook, and the spider-web



shield. The ball was made of buckskin filled with hair or formerly of wood. Two sets of poles serve as goals on both ends of the field.

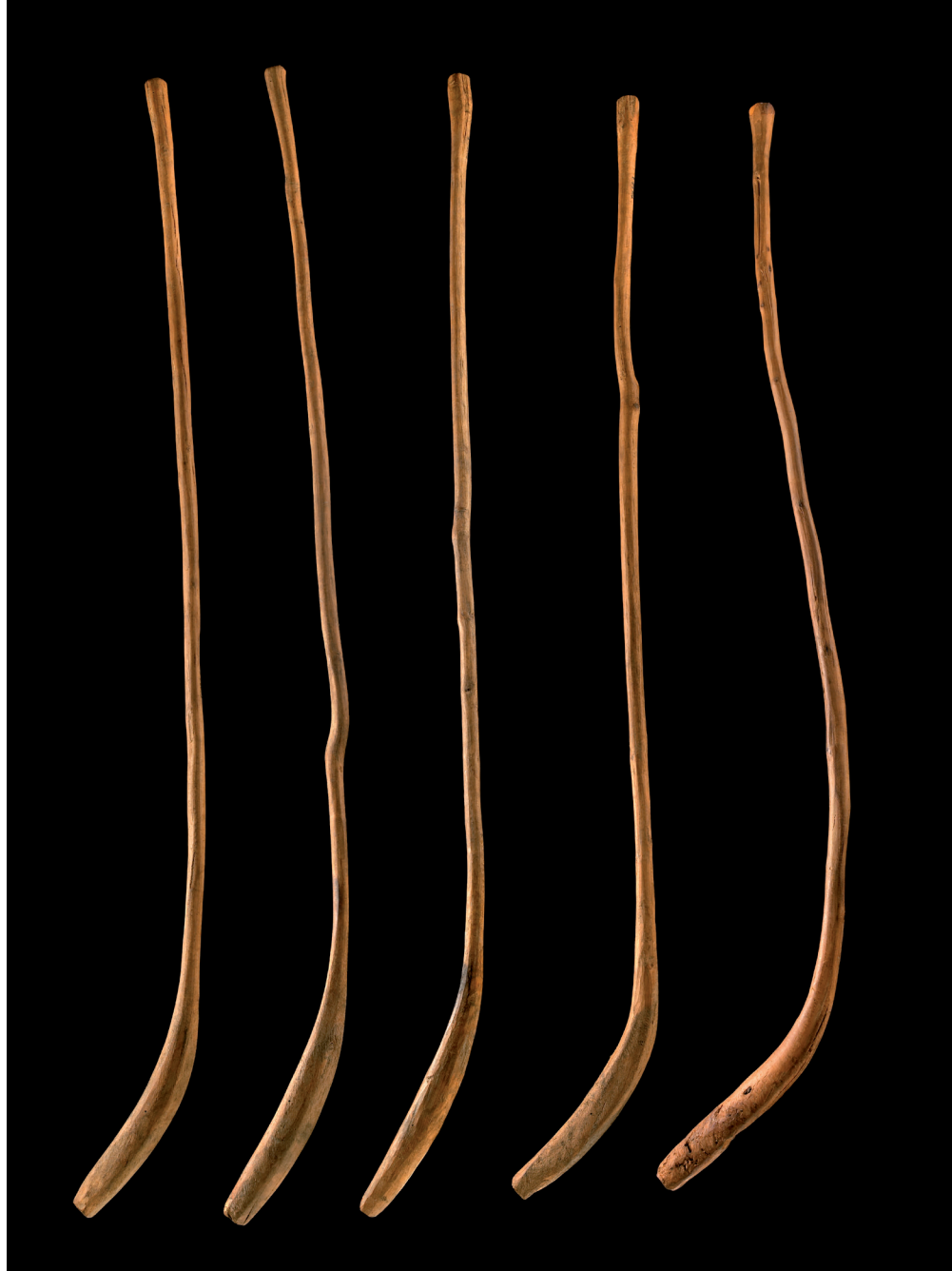
This game of racket clearly has been adapted through time because of the influence of interrelations with European immigrants but still seems to have aboriginal roots with its many tribal rituals. French-Canadian dictionaries stated the game relates to 'crosse' or 'jeu de crosse' as it was played in Flanders in the southern Low Countries and still is for that matter in southern regions of Belgium or northern France.

However, the 'jeu de crosse' has never been played with a netted stick and it may be safely inferred the French-speaking immigrants in North America (now Canada) imported the word 'crosse' meaning club or stick. Therefore, the national game of Canada, 'lacrosse' must have its roots in the aboriginal game of racket played by the many Indian tribes in America. Each tribe had its own esoteric name for their popular game but 'lacrosse' is definitely an imported French name for the game that is otherwise not historically played in Europe. In reverse of the normal, the Canadian game of lacrosse was introduced in Britain where it is mainly played in girls independent schools.

The game of 'shinni', a game of ball and stick as it is collectively called, on the other hand was mostly a woman's game, although both sexes could play the game. It was universally played among the Indian tribes in North America using their own tribal names for it. Two opposing teams play the game where the ball may be kicked or batted with the stick. The sticks are invariably curved and expanding at the striking end. Balls are made of buckskin or wood. Again, goals consist of two pairs of poles at both ends of the field.

The game was played without any particular form of ceremony. The game shows similarities to the old Gaelic games of hurling as it is still played today as a national game of Ireland and shinty as it is known as a Highlands game in Scotland. There is no evidence that this game was imported to America. The shinni game of the Indians traces its name from Scottish immigrants to America, who labelled the Indian game as 'shinni' as it resembled their own national game of shinty in Scotland.

It can therefore be considered an aboriginal Indian game of ball and stick, mostly played between two teams of players with one ball. However, there are records of the shinni game being played towards a target with each team or player using his own ball: 'Each opponent starts his mahogany-wood ball, usually 1¾ inches in diameter, forward at a signal. Their opponents at the next station forward their respective balls to the next relay station, and so on. Interference with an opponent's ball, even by accident, is protested by loud 'Hip! he!' which is at once apolo-



American Indian shinni clubs (Columbia Field Museum)

gized for by 'He-he-hel!' If a player should forward an opponent's ball, this protesting cry recalls him to seek his own ball, while the fouled party keeps the distance made by the fouled stroke. Every player has one or more substitute balls in his belt, so that when a ball is lost another is allowed in play. The balls must turn a goal stake, 'a-na-na kwi-no hi-na', meaning man's circling stake, often a tree, about 400 yards from the starting line, and return to a hole. 'top' at the starting line. The game may also be played to a goal straight on, several miles. Once a game was played between the Hooker Cove people and Whisky Creeks, in which they started at Hooker Cove, and the goal was in a field beside the road at Whisky Creek, 7½ miles distant.'

This account was given by Dr J.W. Hudson of the game under the name 'nakwatakoina' of the Mono Indians tribe, Hooker Cove, Madera County, California - Cat. No. 71435, 71436, Field Columbian Museum.

A mahogany club is described of the Yokuts type, with flat end slightly curved, 54 inches in length, and small mountain mahogany ball. Five other clubs in the same collection - Cat. No. 71434 - are similar, but the striking part is narrow. Four of these are oak and one is mountain mahogany.

From this account, it may be concluded there was an early form of a ball and stick game in America played by the native Indians. The account was recorded in the late nineteenth century but there are no records tracing the history of the 'nakwatakoina' shinni game back in time. Two popular ball games of the American Indians, known as racket and shinni, were so widely spread over so many isolated tribes in North America that it is safe to say that these primitive games have an aboriginal Indian character. They are considered genuine Indian American games with no relationship to the early games of colf or golf played in the Low Countries or Scotland.

