



The Bunnet

Official newsletter of the
James Braid Golfing Society

President : Peter Thomson

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A Look from Under the Captain's Bunnet

"If the cap fits, wear it," they say. Well, I am not so sure that the Captain's Bunnet, containing the wisdom and wit of a lifetime's experience on the planet's links, is a comfortable fit for a humble Secretary. However, here I am, peering warily from "under the bunnet", deputising for our Captain, Malcolm Campbell. I am sure that you will all join with me in sending sincerest wishes of joy and happiness to Malcolm and his bride, Janie, who are relaxing in their first weeks of married life together.

Some years ago, I enjoyed the privilege of regularly spending time with Sir Henry Cotton during his residence at Penina. When my wife Annie and I told him of our engagement, he employed a brief but searching interrogation, "My dear," he asked Annie, "Do you eat biscuits in bed?"

"Certainly not Mr Cotton" came the reply. He shook my hand, patted me on the back and said, "Dear boy, you will enjoy a long and happy marriage."

So, Malcolm and Janie- save the chocolate digestives for breakfast!

By the time you read these notes, the Millennium Open will be part of history. However, I am scribbling them at home in St. Andrews, the week before The Open, looking forward with anticipation. It will be the greatest golfing event ever, and Society members from near and far will be travelling to the Home of Golf to meet and participate in the spectacle. Todd Ruppert is flying in for the week from Baltimore, Alec Beveridge will make the pilgrimage from Elie, Dr. John Reynolds III from Augusta, Robert and Dawn Powell are abandoning Brora for the week, President Peter Thomson is competing in the Tournament of Champions, founder member Ben Crenshaw is in town and George Payne and friends will be here.

Behind the scenes, Lachlan MacIntosh, as Members Secretary of the R&A, will be calmly in command and the

inimitable Peter Alliss will be commentating to an audience of millions. Best of all, just to remind you, the Claret Jug will be played for over a municipal track, annual tickets available to local residents from £98 per year and non-residents for £465 per year, no restrictions, save the ability to play to a handicap of 24 or below. (Closed on Sundays.)

Who did you tip for the Open? Whoever it was, he will not have had to deal with the difficulties experienced by the early champions not least of which was the fact that the Links remained open for public play during the championship. In 1876 Davie Strath tied with Bob Martin, but refused to participate in the play off. It is generally believed that his refusal was prompted by frustration following, in the first place, a bad lie after his ball had taken an unfortunate "kick" off the head of a local upholsterer playing on an adjacent fairway, then, after his final round ended, an official complaint which was made against him by another player whom he had also struck during play at the 17th!

The forefathers of John Paramour were not around to adjudicate and Mr Strath had had enough - he conceded.

Today, drop zones are plotted, relief is awarded from cables, and referees whizz around on buggies. But the Road Hole remains. Local controversy centres on the road behind the 17th or the "Tarmacadamed - Road Hole" as now is. Who ordered the road to be re-surfaced? No one knows. When? Why?

Players who give that extra little punch to their draw and find themselves through the green can no longer expect a fluffy lie among the puddles, grit and cobbles. They will now be on uniform 17/8 inch tarmac reading 18 on the stimp meter. Their ball may bounce off it and fly into the stand. It may strike a passing dog or, perhaps, a spectating haberdasher. Whatever, regardless of the collateral damage, today's spiritual descendants of Davie Strath will be conceding nothing. Of that I am sure!

Yours aye, but only temporarily 'under the bunnet'.

Stephen Toon

Secretary



There was a large representation of JBGS members, some from as far afield as Los Angeles and Mauritius, at the wedding of the Society's Captain, Malcolm Campbell, to Miss Jane McCandlish. The couple married in the garden of their home in Lower Largo in Fife, on June 28. Eighty guests attended the ceremony and the celebration ceilidh afterwards in the village hall.

The Captain has since revealed that he was not at all nervous prior to the wedding ceremony and had actually managed to play pretty well to par over nine holes in the morning in the company of his Best Man, JBGS member Norm Schmeltzer.

Several JBGS members have since reported, however, that his form deserted him the following day in the Post-Wedding Tournament at Lundin Golf Club where JBGS member Douglas Herbert emerged the winner with a very commendable gross score of 74 and was immediately accused of not drinking enough at the ceilidh!



Braid at Gleneagles

David Outerbridge a renowned golf author and Society member, has donated to the Society a series of prints of James Braid at Gleneagles.

These superb images are on display in the Braid Room at the Royal Marine Hotel, Brora, along with a growing collection of Braid memorabilia.

A sincere "thank you" to David – your gift will be enjoyed by many.



Secretary's Tie Award magna cum laude

Picture the scene: Alec Beveridge at home in Elie enjoying a quiet dram late in the evening, having made his preparations to journey south for the Spring Meeting.

All was calm and composed. Then the phone rang. Toon was on the line, delegating the complete administrative organisation of the Spring Meeting to the unsuspecting Mr. Beveridge on the basis that the Secretary was unavailable and the Captain was incapable.

In true Scot's spirit, Alec took the helm and navigated the Society ship through every hazard until it arrived at the 19th hole.

A grateful and sincere "thank you" to Alec for taking on this onerous task at the shortest possible notice – Never was membership of the Secretary's Tie Club more richly deserved.

Warm up at West Surrey

Our warm up game on Wednesday 24th May, prior to Walton Heath the following day, took place at West Surrey, a course looked upon fondly by Henry Longhurst.

In his 'Only on Sundays' he tells us:

"From time to time, with trousers supported by the new Woolworth braces, since they will no longer keep up by themselves, our morning walk takes us as far as the West Surrey golf club and I cast my mind nostalgically back to the days when I would cheerfully bicycle five miles each way from Charterhouse, perched on a huge machine more fit for a village constable carrying the clubs across my shoulder, and especially to that supreme triumph when the coal truck to which I had attached myself in Godalming not only turned off the Portsmouth road at Milford but actually delivered its coals to the clubhouse."

Conditions on the day were not ideal, but George Payne calmly popped the ball round in 73 strokes to win "The Longhurst Tandem" A creditable second was Uwe Kersken who flew in from Germany for the event.

STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS



Peter Thomson (right) on the Swilken bridge during the, pre Open, Tournament of Champions with playing partners Mark Calcavecchia, Sandy Lyle and Mark O'Meara.

TWO ON EVERY HOLE

James Braid made a two on every hole on both courses at Walton Heath. At the age of 67 he went round the Old Course at Walton Heath in 66. At the age of 68 he went round the New Course in 64.



BRAID'S SONS

James Braid had 2 sons, Harry, a scratch player who represented Scotland twice and was a +1 handicap player at Walton Heath. In 1950 he reduced the course record from 72 to 67, a record which had stood since 1935. James, the second son, was also a scratch player and won the Cheshire Championship in 1929.

Scotsraig

Venue for the President's Putter in September, the quality of Braid's Scotsraig is well renowned.

Sitting on the Tay estuary, it is an Open qualifying course and in this Millennium year, it will be at its best, having been prepared to test the hopefuls for the Open on the Old Course.

This year, the President's Putter will certainly need to be earned.

THE APPLE TREE GANG welcomes THE JAMES BRAID GOLFING SOCIETY

Itinerary:

New York Saturday 23rd to Saturday 30th September 2000

Accommodation has been provisionally reserved in the Tarrytown Hilton.

- Saturday 23rd** Arrive in New York
- Sunday 24th** Practice round at St. Andrews Club followed by cocktails in the clubhouse. Own arrangements for dinner, perhaps in the Bistro at the Hilton or a local restaurant.
- Monday 25th** 18 hole match v St. Andrews Club members followed by lunch. Afternoon: 18 hole continuation of match. Evening: cocktails and formal dinner in St. Andrews Club.
- Tuesday 26th** Free day to explore New York/Manhattan – own arrangements
- Wednesday 27th** 11.30 drinks and welcome reception at Sleepy Hollow. 12.30 Match v Sleepy Hollow members, over 18 holes. Evening: cocktails and formal dinner.
- Thursday 28th** 12 man match v Roundhill G.C. 12 man match v Tuxedo G.C. All meet for dinner either in one or other of the clubhouses or back at St. Andrews.
- Friday 29th** Free day or possible round at Baltusrol
- Saturday 30th** Return home or continue with own travel arrangements.

The above can be easily adjusted to arrive Sunday and depart Friday if required and everyone will be free to make their own arrival and departure timetable.

Full details can be obtained by contacting Robert Powell on fax or email:

Fax 01408 621181

email: braidatbrora@btinternet.com

The Society is greatly indebted to Mr. Mike Beckerich, president of the St. Andrews Club, who has put an enormous amount of work into organising this unique and exciting schedule for us.

Spring Meeting and fine fayre at Brora

Society members from near and far gathered at Brora for a few days of fine dining and the occasional venture on the Links.

The meeting commenced with an 18 hole individual stableford – The Curate's Egg – won with ecclesiastical panache by the reverend Toon. This outing was merely to work up an appetite for a truly excellent dinner prepared by the chef at The Royal Marine Hotel.

Awards were presented over dinner and Alec Beveridge, Norm Schmeltzer and Lorne Rubenstein were welcomed into the Secretary's Tie Club.

The long awaited "Alzheimer's Award" was finally presented to Jim Bannerman, who accepted a clean white knotted handkerchief in perpetuity, as he had won the award three years in succession.

Bannerman would be declared homeless under the Vagrancy Act of 1731 (subsection xvi) and the Bannerman Mansion and Estate would be requisitioned as a site for the Millennium Dome Annexe unless instant action was taken by the aforesaid Jim to return home, he having, only at dinner, been occasioned to remember that he was moving house the following day. The dear boy was last seen disappearing down the A9 in a cloud of dust, clutching his "aide memoire".



Vice-President, Robert Powell presents the 'Curates Egg' trophy to winner Stephen Toon



Superb playing conditions were enjoyed for the 36 Hole James Braid Open and John Hunter of Wick successfully defended the James Braid Scratch Trophy.

Well deserved winner of the handicap "Captain's Bunnet" was Alan Wilson, who maintained form on Sunday and was declared "Holder of the Captain's Pink Balls" for the year 2000.

The following Friday our annual match against The Shivas Irons Society from California reached a more clearly defined result and was declared "Inconclusive".

President Steve Cohen was pleased to be back in Brora and having witnessed Tiger Woods' 15 shot victory in the US Open at Pebble Beach, found a little of the Tiger magic had rubbed off on his game. It was great to see Steve and the S.I.S. members once again and we are already looking forward to next year.

Autumn Meeting

Match v Lundin G.C. at Lundin Links **Friday 1st September**
(Four ball, better ball)

President's Putter at Scotsraig **Saturday 2nd September**
(18 hole stroke play)

Match v Golf House Club at Elie **Sunday 3rd September**
(Foursomes)

Walton Heath

Once again, Bill Wood, supported by Ken MacPherson, provided a wonderful day of golf and hospitality at Walton Heath. The course was superb, the golf was dubious and the dinner festivities were voluble. George Payne was Acting Captain, in the absence of Malcolm Campbell, and led the Society to a friendly win.

Thanks are sent to George.

This Wonderful World of Golf

by Peter Thomson and Desmond Zwar

Published in Great Britain by Pelham Books Ltd. 1969

"The Half-Inch, \$20,000 Putt", "The Year of the Rhubarb-Coloured Slacks", "The Millionaires and the Chocolate Bars", "Lions and Birdies in Nairobi", "Here comes The Mex".....The chapter titles of this book give a taste of its originality, rare in books about golf.

In 1968, the journalist Desmond Zwar travels around the world with Peter Thomson, describing the life of the professional golfer on tour across all 5 continents. Interspersed with this narrative, printed in italics, are Peter Thomson's thoughts on competing and winning; travel; fellow pros; hats; course architecture; caddies; landscapes; family and philosophy. The comments are, at times, startlingly erudite.

Who, but P.W. Thomson, would explain the reaction of the gallery to Jack Nicklaus' drives by quoting Arthur Koestler on laughter? He also expresses emotions which are immediately recognisable by every weekend hacker: "Beside the uncertainty of lie and bounce that marks links golf, there hangs a spectre overhead that points to you and says "you are doomed". On putting: "In your mind's eye you can see it crashing in. And as you watch you see it slide by. Now, on your hands and knees

you beg the next one to please drop in...." On scoring: "I need 10 birdies and there are only 9 holes left."

Desmond Zwar keeps the narrative rattling along like an old steam train; Indianapolis; Oak Hill; Bukit; Royal Selangor; Hong Kong; Tokyo; New Delhi; Royal Nairobi; Carnoustie and, end of the line, Perth, Australia. En route, as we stop off at each location, we learn the answers to the questions we are too gracious ever to ask;

"What does Billy Casper eat for breakfast?"

"Who is Johnny-on-the Spot?"

"Why does J. Jacobs have to change his trousers on the 10th tee at Fan Ling?"

Near the end of the book there is a fascinating section on the 1968 Open at Carnoustie. Peter Thomson describes his own experience of the early rounds. He then follows Player and Nicklaus over the final holes of a classic, close fought finish, where we find Henry Cotton "dancing up and down with excitement" at Player's approach on The Spectacles. Finally, a damning critique of the modern course set-up for Open Championships.

This is a book with a defined time structure, yet is also anecdotal. So, it can be read cover to cover, or dipped into, now and then. Either way, it's a great read. Search out a copy.

The Scottish Golf Book

by Malcolm Campbell

Published in Great Britain by Lomond Books. Price £10

Society Captain, Malcolm Campbell, has published his seventh book on golf. This is what Allan Herron had to say about it in the Sunday People.

"While the pages take you through 600 years of golf in the country that invented the great game, Carnoustie, exiled from the championship golf for 24 years, grabs your attention.

Not only for the memories that recall Ben Hogan's winning 1953, Colin Montgomerie's course record 8-under par 64, or Walter Hagen describing it as "the greatest course in the British Isles" but for THOSE closing three holes. Not a lot of people know this, but when Tom Watson won the Open there in 1975 he failed to make par in his four attempts at the 250-yards par three 16th.

Author Malcolm Campbell revives the terrors of the famous Carnoustie finish, reminding us that only Jack Nicklaus had the power to put a drive on the green and up to the pin on this demanding hole in the final round of the 1968 Open, eventually won by a stroke by Gary Player. He writes "Into the breeze, only Nicklaus was able to smash a driver onto the green and past the pin at the back. Player finished short, and in a bunker to the right, but with his wonderful dexterity from sand, extricated himself well enough to hold on and win."

With the Barry Burn snaking its way around the 17th (457 yards) with water in front of the green, and now a par four, just maybe this finish formed the cliché: "It's never over, until it's over."

The book, which has a foreword by Sir Michael Bonallack, is an a la carte production which deserves better than the coffee table of your lounge."



The rare occasion when Braid lost his Head

In the 1901 Open Championship at Muirfield, James Braid launched his challenge by hooking his first drive over a stone wall and out of bounds. Undaunted, however he recovered well and came to the 72nd hole with a one stroke lead. Attempting to reach the final green in two shots with a second of 200 yards or more he slashed at the ball. On impact the shaft of the club splintered and the head of the club sailed on towards the clubhouse. Fortunately for Braid he had made a perfect contact and despite the broken shaft the ball flew straight as an arrow to the green where he holed out to beat his old adversary, Harry Vardon, by three strokes. It was the first of James Braid's five Open victories.