A very rare, wood shafted golf iron has come to light that has sparked considerable curiosity from golf collectors around the world. The club, at first glance, appears to be much older than any known examples of golf irons. The design is quite crude. The hosel is extra long (nine inches) and very thick with heavy oxidation to the metal of the clubhead. The clubhead is a separate piece of metal from the hosel. And yet the wood shaft appears to be the original (from the look of the two original shaft/hosel pins). And the shaft looks to be in virtually playable condition.

The fact that the shaft is so relatively good and the clubhead patina shows so much age, adds credence to the possibility that this club is one of the earliest known examples of an existing golf club. However it is puzzling that the

BY RANDY JENSEN

Rare club offers glimpse of early golf

THE OCEAN GREEN, No. 7, on the Old Macdonald course at Bandon Dunes is seen from the tee of the following hole, Blamitz. SoHG member Kevin Mendik played the course shortly after its opening in June.

Bandon’s Old Macdonald honors legacy of American golf legend

BY KEVIN MENDIK

The land was shaped primarily by the greatest golf architect of all: Mother Nature. Over thousands of years, the winds and rain along the southern Oregon coast sculpted links land atop the bluffs. After she did her work, it was only a matter of time until someone with golf on the brain came along to reveal the golf holes. The first human contribution to the wonderful look and feel of the golf resort known as Bandon Dunes occurred in the mid 1850’s when a homesick Irish farmer transplanted a few gorse plants which subsequently spread for miles up and down the coast near the town of Bandon.

In the mid-1990’s the land caught the eye of a few golf minded folks looking for much the same kind of land that Charles Blair Macdonald was seeking when he came upon the area that is now National Golf Links of America (NGLA) on eastern Long Island. Initially opened in 1999, first one (Bandon Dunes) then two (Pacific Dunes in 2001), then three (Bandon Trails in 2005) golf courses were laid out and built and each quickly found its way to the very top of the various lists of the great modern American courses.

Bandon and Pacific Dunes play largely along rolling dunes overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Trails begins and ends within site of the sea, but takes golfers

see CLUB, 18

see MACDONALD, 16
Society News
Planning for the future

There are many items on the agenda for the SoHG board. New tournaments are on the horizon, equipment and handicapping matters to discuss and, as always, how to bring in new members and improve the value of the organization for everyone. Long range planning continues with the underlying theme of playability – how to hold competitive tournaments that challenge the best players and yet provide a agreeable level of enjoyment for the higher handicaps.

Your Board exists to serve and to promote hickory play, so please contact anyone on the Board with your questions, issues or other concerns. The more feedback we receive, the better we can plan.

The Wee Nip is one of the strongest tools we have to communicate and strengthen our shared interest in hickory play. So, for those of you who contribute your time and articles, your letters and photos – Thank You. The newsletter is our print equivalent of the 19th Hole, where a wee nip goes hand-in-hand with golf news, stories and anecdotes.

FROM THE EDITOR

One of the very best benefits of working on a newsletter such as this is the caliber of the contributors. Into my inbox come stories and letters from very intelligent and talented individuals, all who love hickory golf and golf history. It is a happy thing to learn from their enthusiasm and to share their work with the membership at large.

In this issue, Kevin Mendik writes about a hickory round on the Old Macdonald at Bandon Dunes, a place that would seem heaven-made for hickory golf. Golf historian and man of letters Johnny Fischer III shares a story that his father, the great historian and man of letters Johnny Fischer II, wrote back in the 1950’s. The idea is to get to know one another. There are several members of the SoHG who, though they may not frequent tournaments with the regularity of many of our more devoted competitors, still love hickory play as much as anyone. So, a toss of a dart at the member list turned up Mitch Laurance, who begins our profile series on page 19.

As for the tournament summaries, more information can be found through the SoHG website and Facebook page.

Jim Davis

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

Note: Todd Moore suffered a minor stroke about a month ago and is reportedly coming along well. We all send our wishes for a speedy recovery.

SoHG Board of Directors 2010 - 2011 Term

President – Ken Holtz
Memorial Secretary – Roger Hill
Treasurer – Mark Weening
Secretary – Barry Mackowiak

Board Members
Chris Deinlein
Matt Dodds
Bill Englon
Jay Harris
Adam Medwick
Brick Speed

SoHG Executive Committee – Day to Day Operations
Chair – Ken Holtz
Long Range Planning – Brick Speed
Events and Equipment – Chris Deinlein
Marketing and Membership – Matt Dodds
Resource and Support – Barry Mackowiak

Please feel welcome to contact your Board and EC Committee with questions, ideas and concerns.

Tad Hickory Challenge Four-Ball
March 22-24, Selma, Ala. Country Club

Once again Carol and I enjoyed having everyone in Selma. We had great hospitality thanks to Carol and some good golf played as well on the Selma Country Club course. One of the best hickory courses we play all year. Glorious weather up until Saturday, but we did get to play nine holes thanks to Tommy Burns getting the course in order for us.

We look forward to having you back with us next year. Our tentative date is the first weekend in May 2011. If you have any thoughts on timing please send me your comments. All the best, Tad & Carol Moore

Low Gross
1st – Roger Andrews and Tom Johnson with 109
2nd – Ted Kopeck and Jay Harris with 110
3rd – Otey Crisman and David Schultz with 113

Low Net
1st – Bar Kopeck and Simone MacLellan with 92
2nd – Terry Howarth and Rich Grula with 93
3rd – Mike just and Josh Fischer with 94

Gross
Andrews-Johnson 109
Kopeck-Harris 110
Crimson-Schultz 113
Searcy-Boyd 116
Flynn- Ellis 115
Just-Fischer 117
Sewilt-Floyd 118
Mcguire-Jones 118
Howarth-Grula 118
Farrar-Wagner 123
Moore-Hill 123
MacLellan-Case 123
Dentel-Mursey 124
Aaron-Seibert 127
B.Kopec-S.MacLellan 131
Speed-Williams DNP – Weather departure

Society of Hickory Golfers
Down the Fairway … from the President

Well, I hope everyone is enjoying a great hickory golfing season! 2010 has been full of activity, along with continued growth and interest in playing hickory golf. I personally made a commitment this year to give up modern clubs. I have not regretted this decision for one moment. I have found that my hickory play has improved and my appreciation and satisfaction with golf overall has been a much more worthwhile experience. I do get some strange looks and questions like “Why would I ever do something like that – doesn’t it cost you more strokes?” My response is simply – “It is just more fun!”

I would be interested in hearing from others who have given modern golf the heave-ho! Please write to me and let me know your thoughts, feelings and experiences. It would make for an interesting article for a future Wee Nip. Maybe the title will be: Those Who Swing Lumber … Forgo Modern Methods!

This issue of the Wee Nip is once again loaded with useful hickory information. Events, interviews, domestic and international happenings, club information, playing tips, and lots more. As we still have a strong full golf schedule ahead, don’t pack away those hickory clubs just yet.

And stay tuned! The Society of Hickory Golfers has some exciting things planned for the 2011 season. More information and details will be coming, so until then spread those hickory clubs just yet.

Spring 2010
Editor – Jason Davis
Contributors
Roger Brokenshire, Chris Deinlein, Paul Deitz, Matt Dodds, Johnny Fischer III, Lionel Freedman, Pete Georgiady, Rich Grula, Jim Harris, Roger Hill, Ken Holtz, Kathy Jensen, Tom Johnson, Marty Joy, Doug Marshall, Christopher Morgan, Moos, Ted Moon, Bill Moon, Brick Speed, Peter Thomson

The Wee Nip is the printed newsletter of the Society of Hickory Golfers. It is published twice yearly. Articles, comments, correspondence are generally accepted, though publication is not guaranteed. Address all correspondence to: Editor, The Wee Nip, 338 Gladstone Ave. SE, 1st Floor, Grand Rapids, MI  49506   USA or via e-mail to: jason2364@gmail.com

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

A Wee Nip

2010 was a busy season for hickory golfers. Let’s get right to it with tournament summaries and photos.

2010 National Hickory Championship June 10-12, 2010, Oakhurst Links

Mike Stevens, right with trophy, nipped Randy Jensen by a single stroke to claim the 2010 National Hickory Championship June 10-12 at Oakhurst Links in West Virginia. Both players shot 78 on the second day but Stevens’s 80 on Friday, to Jensen’s 81 was the difference. Jensen is eight-time champion; Stevens has now won twice and is the possessor of the Kameika Cup for the next year.

Winston-Salem, N.C. dentist Dave Cermark won the Reserve Division (net) and first-timer Sherry Smeltzer from Cumdemton, Mo. was the Women’s Champion. In the Sporting Division (9 holes each day), Eric Wolke and Theresa “Terry” Thompson, both from New York City, were the winners.

Perhaps equally important were the coveted non-competitive awards. Mike Stevens received the Lynch Shirrell Award and Ross Snellings of Augusta, Ga., was accorded the Dundee Prize. The Society of Hickory Golfers “Bo-gey” Award was won by Jack Busic of Clemmons, N.C. Bern Bernacki of Pittsburgh, Pa. and Sherry Smeltzer were judged the Best Dressed.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE
Prizes were also awarded to winners in the four divisions of the Elmore Just Foursomes Competition.

- **Match Eight Foursomes**: Randy Jensen and Hugh Cameron def Mike Stevens and Bill Engelson 2 & 1
- **Clan Match Championship**: Mike Stevens and Andy Just def Jack and Stephen Busic, 21 holes
- **Bob Martin Flite**: 1st - Ross Snelings and Pete Georgiady; 2nd - Fred and Sherry Smeltzer
- **Mungo Park Flite**: 1st - Terry Pitts and Jim Clawson; 2nd - Terry Howarth and Bob White

The Vermont Hickory Open again treated its participants to wonderful golf and press coverage as well. Two local papers featured photos and a story about the event. After play on Saturday, there was a golf collectibles trade show on the veranda of the Copley club house.

**Open Division**
- 1st - Brad Gregory, 169
- 2nd - Matt Doods, 178
- 3rd - Robert Titterton, 182
- Net Winner - Allen Johnson, 140
- Net Runner-Up - Chris Gilgun, 142

**Senior Division**
- 1st - Bob Dyer, 174
- 2nd - Paul Gaynor, 180
- 3rd - Allen Johnson, 192

**Super Senior Division (70+)**
- 1st - Pat Kennedy, 188
- 2nd - Norm Burnett, 202
- 3rd - David Sellers, 204

**Net Division**
- **Bronze**: Perry Somers (Australia), +7
- **Silver**: Markus Kuermerle (Germany)
- **Gold**: Markus Kuermerle (Germany)

There was one tie for the Bronze medal. Perry Somers and two behind Jensen. It was played at the Chantilly Golf Club with 74, one under par. Somers plans to participate in the French Hickory Open at Chantilly, France with 74, one under par. Somers plans to participate in the French Hickory Open at Chantilly, France.

The Reserves Hickory Open was contested at the beautiful and historic Chantilly Golf Club, celebrating its centennial this year. www.chantillygolfclub.com

Bob Dyer, right, receives an award from tournament host Matt Doods. 2010 Vermont Hickory Open

2010 Hickory Open Champions Dave Cheremak and Women’s Champion Sherry Smeltzer. The date for the 2011 NHC is set for June 9-11 at Oakhurst.

The Belvedere Hickory Open June 24-25, Belvedere Golf Club

Host professional of the Belvedere Golf Club Dennis “Marty” Joy reports that a great time was had by all, including “three nights of lavish parties.” The course was in excellent shape and the northern Michigan weather in Charlevoix was absolutely perfect.

**Open Division**
- Champion - Mike Teter
- Runner-Up Dr. Jay Harris

**Senior Division**
- 60+ Gross Champion Fred Muller
- Runner-Up Rick Frank

**Horton Smith 60+**
- Net Champion Roger Hill
- Runner-Up Bill Engelstein

**Gene Sarazen 70+**
- Gross Champion Bill Lawson
- Runner-Up Max Hill

**Ladies Scramble**
- Kate Tomkinson & Kathleen Alexander

NHC FROM PAGE 3

French Hickory players continue their tradition of hosting a fine event at the beautiful Chantilly Golf Club.

**Scratch Division**
- Champion - Iain Forrester (Scotland), +6
- Sudden Victory Playoff
  - Silver – Darve van Mulken (The Netherlands), +6
  - Bronze – Perry Somers (Australia), +7

**Net Division**
- Gold – Markus Kuermerle (Germany)
- Silver – John Still (Scotland)
- Bronze – Carol Gibbs (England)

The U.S. Hickory Open July 12-14, Mimosa Hills Country Club

A record 59 competitors from 19 states and Canada contested for the 2010 U.S. Hickory Open over the challenging Donald Ross-designed Mimosa Hills Country Club course in Morganton, N.C.

The Monday practice round provided the opportunity for players to reacquaint themselves with the hot and humid conditions as well as the devilish Ross greens. A cocktail party followed, announced to the distant sounds of Scottish bagpipes. While libations and hors d’oeuvres were enjoyed by all, a club swap/sale was underway in the banquet hall. At the end of two days play, Rick Woecenscher of Fredericksburg, Va., closed with a low round of one over par 73 for a twoday total 143 to win the Open Division. Scott McAllister of Wil- liston, Vt. and Matt Bumprey of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, were tied at 154. A card “playoff” gave McAllister the silver and Bump- brey the bronze.

In the Reserve Division, Rusty Wells of Pinehurst, N.C., posted net rounds of one under par 143 to claim the gold medal. There was a tie between Jay Harris of Pinehurst, N.C. and Breck Speed, from Little Rock, Ark. at 145. Harris was awarded second place following a card playoff.

The Senior Open Division gold medal winner was Glenn Davis of Pinehurst, N.C. with a fine score of 161. Second place was won by John Hopper of Fishkill, N.Y., with Hamp Munsey of Greensboro, N.C. taking third place. In the Senior Reserve Division, first place was won by Mike Just of Louisville, Ky. Thomas Ochs of Bloomington, Ill placed second followed by Paul Dietz of Sarnia, Ontario, Canada in third place.

Mountain Valley Spring Water again sponsored the U.S. Hickory Open and the tournament committee thanks them for their continued support. Thanks to all of our contributing spon- sors along with the Mimosa Hills members and staff for all of their efforts.

The 2011 U.S. Hickory Open will be hosted by the French Lick Resort in French Lick, Ind. on July 11-13. The tournament will be contested on the Donald Ross Golf Course at French Lick, origin- ally constructed in 1917. We look forward to seeing all of this year’s constants as well as many new faces in French Lick in 2011.
HEART OF AMERICA

**July 17, Otter Creek Golf Course**

**HICKORYGOLFERS.COM**

Members of the Golf Collector’s Society, the Society of Hickory Golfers, and the Hickory Golf Association joined forces to conduct the GCS Region 7 event known as the “Heart of America” over the Otter Creek Golf Course, Ankeny, Iowa.

The field of 38 players teed it up in temperatures that were high in the 90’s with a heat index that reached 107. It made some traditionalist “walkers” say hello to a golf cart for the first time since you could buy Po-Do at Walgreen’s.

The Senior Medal winner, Dr. Gary Wiren, proved that he has lost very little game since winning the forerunner to this tournament in 1976. The 1997 winner, this PGA Hall of Fame member comes back home to Iowa and reclaims a title.

The Senior Net winner Dr. Gary Wiren, right, pose with new additions to their trophy shelves.

**OPEN DIVISION**

1st – Dr. Gary Wiren, 75
2nd – Dr. Dave Brown, 77

**LOW NET**

1st – Gary Swenson, 63
2nd – Bryan Doughman, 67

**SOCIETY OF HICKORY GOLFERS**

**July 24-26, Stockholms Golfklubb**

http://golfhistoriska.golf.se

This year’s winner was Per G Nyman, Visjö GK. The 2011 Swedish Hickory Championship will be played over the Kronholmen course of Visby Golfklubb on the island of Gotland in the Baltic; exact date, (near the end of the summer) has yet to be determined.

**Senior Medal**

1st – Dr. Gary Wiren, 75
2nd – Mark Weilman, 80

**Senior Net**

1st – Mike Enich, 64
2nd – Bill Reed, 66

**Ladies Medal**

1st – Jeanne Swenson, 84
2nd – Chris Shanahan, 86
3rd – Debra Herrington

**Heart of America Open**

The 2011 Swedish Hickory Championship will be played at Bad Wildungen Golf Course in Central Germany.

There were three local players out of the field of 36. The number of hickory players in Germany is growing slowly but steadily with more players now owning an original pre-1935 hickory set. The tournament was played according to SoHG equipment rules and was a walking-only event.

Iain Forrester, the 2009 German Hickory Champion, gave a golf clinic on Friday afternoon followed by a three-hole exhibition match with Forrester, Dutch professional Davey van Mulken and two German based professionals, Perry Somers (Australia) and Andrew Gauld. Somers won by one stroke over Gauld.

Saturday was bright and sunny with agreeable temperatures. The 1930 Charles MacKenzie & Karl Hoffmann-designed course remains virtually unchanged except for two added fairway bunkers on the 9th hole.

Somers won the championship with a solid 74. Forrester was second with a 78. North German Boris Lietzow was the leading amateur in the clubhouse with 83, followed by Michael Edin from Stockholm, Sweden, and Hans Lichtenberg from Krefeld, Germany, both with 84.

**Defending Ladies Champion**

Brittia Nord from Sweden, right, and Michaela Tillström, left, were the defending champions. Brittia Nord is the current Swedish Ladies’ Champion and Michaela Tillström was the overall Ladies’ Runner-up in 2010. Brittia Nord won the Swedish Ladies’ Championship in 2011.

**Arkansas Hickory Challenge Cup**

On Aug. 11 and 12, the hickory golfers of the Country Club of Jackson, Miss., captained by Keith Cleveland, hosted the Arkansas Hickory Golf Association, captained by Breck Speed, in the first annual Ark-Miss Hickory Challenge Cup at the Ole Miss Golf Club in Oxford, Ms.

The event was contested in Ryder Cup format, consisting of four matches of four-ball, four matches of foursomes, and seven singles matches. On the first day, Mississippi used its home field advantage to take a 3-1 lead in the four ball matches over the hilly Ole Miss course.

On Aug. 11 and 12, the hickory golfers of the Country Club of Jackson, Miss., captained by Keith Cleveland, hosted the Arkansas Hickory Golf Association, captained by Breck Speed, in the first annual Ark-Miss Hickory Challenge Cup at the Ole Miss Golf Club in Oxford, Ms.

The event was contested in Ryder Cup format, consisting of four matches of four-ball, four matches of foursomes, and seven singles matches. On the first day, Mississippi used its home field advantage to take a 3-1 lead in the four ball matches over the hilly Ole Miss course.

That evening, the Mississippi squad hosted its Arkansas neighbors to dinner at Prime Steakhouse in Oxford. The Arkansas team returned the favor by presenting engraved hickory shafted putters made by Tad Moore to the Mississippi squad. Captain Cleveland thanked all players for participating and spoke about why he embraces hickory golf over the modern game. Captain Speed regaled the group with several poems on the joys and pitfalls of the ancient game.

On the 12th, Mississippi again prevailed over the familiar course in the foursomes, 3-1. In singles, the final outcome failed to reflect the closeness of the competition, as most matches were tight till the end, but Mississippi prevailed to win the inaugural Cup, 11½-3½.

In spite of record heat in Oxford, the event was enjoyed by all, and all participants agreed to compete again next year, as long as the event is moved to the fall. It was HOT – over 100 and high humidity.
Foxburg Hickory Championship
Aug. 13-14, Foxburg Country Club
hickorygolfers.com

First round competition included 28 golfers, with the ranks swelling to 34 for the second round. Additional golfers included several Foxburg members (Ted Marron, Don Smith, Mike Gardner) and two youngsters sponsored by the Pittsburgh First Tee Program. The championship presented an excellent opportunity to expose the younger generation to hickory golf, as well as the history and museum that is the Foxburg experience. The young guns (Mike Kinney, and Mercedes Epondulan) acquitted themselves admirably, their respectful demeanor fit nicely with the formality of a legitimate hickory golf championship.

The competition in day one was spirited in both the Fox Division (pre-1900) and the Fowenes Division (post-1900).

The second day opened with the splendid sounds of a ceremonial bagpiper. The challenge of the gutty ball and the Foxburg course layout proved too much for most of the contestants, and sent scores soaring, with only a handful of contestants able to better their first day scores.

When the dust settled, the competitive Dr. Jay Harris (North Carolina) completed a strong comeback to capture a one shot victory for the Open medal in the Fox Division, and Dr. “Dog” Ellis (Ohio) held on for victory in the Open Senior competition of the same division. (For reference, Harris shot 175; Willie Park shot 174 for the 36 holes of the first Open Championship at Prestwick 150 years ago).

Barry Markowitz continued his solid play and became the championship’s first two-time champion, winning the Fowenes Division in both 2009 and this year.

On the first day, with a stiff breeze out of the West, it looked like Roger Andrews (Jenks, Okla.) was going to run away with it after shooting an even par round of 72 on day-one of the competition. And run away he did, following with a 78 on day-two, delivering a two-day total of 150, with our next best finisher at 155.

David Guerard (Wauwatosa, Wis.), using authentic pre-1935 clubs, recorded an 81 on day-one, and roared back with a 74 on day-two. Congrats to these two fine players and the rest of our medal winners. (Please see SoHG website for a list of scores and winners)

Plenty of celebration was also consumed by our group, including a sunset cocktail cruise on beautiful Green Lake, participation at the Princeton “Burn Down The Fox” BBQ competition, a Kummel liquor tasting, flea market search, shopping, antiques and plenty to eat and drink. A good old time was had by all. Dates for the 2011 Cup are Aug. 26-28.

The Kummel Cup
Aug. 27-29, Lawsonia Links
hickorygolfers.com

Nineteen hickory contestants from eight different states gathered Aug. 27-29 in Green Lake, Wis. to test their playing skills on the famous William Langford design, Lawsonia Links, set up at just under 6,100 yards.

End of August hickory players from Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, England, Germany, The Netherlands, Scotland, Slovakia, Sweden and, of course, the Czech Republic gathered to play the second Czech Hickory Champions at Prague’s Hostivar GC over 18-holes. This event was preceded by the traditional 9-hole Hostivar Golf Match.

The Hostivar Golf match gross trophy was won by Perry Somers (Australia). Czech golf historian Prokop Sedlak from Lusnice GK finished second and Czech Golf Federations rule official Dalibor Prochaska from Karlovy Vary (Karlovy) finished third. The net competition was won by Jiri Skaba from Prague. Britta Nord from Stockholm took home the women’s prize – all enjoyed a lovely evening with barbecue, Czech beer and live music. Hostivar GC president Jiri Martinka made us all feel very welcome and quite at home.

Thirty-two hickory golfers – four professionals and 28 amateurs – all enjoyed a lovely day. Perry Somers won the championship with 74 strokes. He was followed by Robert Schovanek with 80 and Michael Edin (best amateur) with 87.

Britta Nord from Sweden was the best lady with a winning score of 89 followed by Annie Altmann from the Netherlands and last year’s winner Jean Hamilton from Scotland.

Theresa Rolfs from Germany had the best net score of 67 followed by Jan Zoulik (Prague) with net 70 and Jiri Skaba (also Prague) with net 71.

Thank you to Jiri Martinka for the perfect organization and hospitality at Hostivar. Next year the Czech Hickory Championship moves to the Prague Golf Club at Motol, which is celebrating its 85th anniversary.
The Iowa Hickory Classic
Sept. 10-11, Hyperion Field Club

The course at Hyperion is a 100-year-old Tom Bendelow design celebrating its centennial this season. The hickory competition played at 5,770 yards from tees that were historically designed. The course was set up at 4,600 yards, a good length for the limited flight gutty ball. There were several good scores, including a 37 by Bill Reed (London, Ontario) and a 38 by David Ellis (Zanesville, Ohio). The day ended with Canada leading by a narrow margin, 10.5 to 9.5 points.

The World Hickory Open
Sept. 20-22, Gullane 2 and 3, Scotland

The championship was played over two days at Gullane No. 2 in wet and windy conditions. Competitors played off the back tees after the first day. Perry Somers (Australia) was leading Alastair Good (Gullane Professional) by one shot – 78 to 79.

The second day’s play was over Gullane 3 in slightly better conditions – dryer but still windy. Gullane 3 is 100 years old this year. Willie Park was paid the sum of 10 guineas for designing it, a sum that the committee of the time thought excessive!

Perry Somers’ 76 for a two-round total of 154 was enough to top Alastair Good by two shots.

The results are as follows:

Open Division
1st – Perry Somers, 154
2nd – Alastair Good, 156
3rd – Rick Valentine (Master of Golf at Loretto Golf Academy), 166

Handicap Division
1st – Ewan Glen (New Club St. Andrews), 156
2nd – Timor Stille (Loretto Golf Academy), 157
3rd – Colin Sinclair (Gullane), 162

The team competition was won by Rick Valentine, Timor Stille and Andrew Minto of Loretto Golf Academy with a net score of 67.

WORLD HICKORY CHAMPION Perry Somers, far right, is shown with runner-up Alastair Good.

Mountain Valley Hickory Open
Oct. 2-3, War Memorial Golf Course

Thirty-six players contested Open, Senior and 4-Ball divisions at this year’s Mountain Valley Hickory Open in Little Rock, Ark.

Open winner for the third time was Jeremy Moore of Fort Smith, Ark. Second place and Low Amateur Medal was awarded to Bob Baker of Little Rock, Ark. with Roger Andrews of Jenks, Okla. in third.

The Senior Division was won by John Berggren of Kingwood, Texas. Ray Riggs of Little Rock came in second place followed by Ralph Williams of Little Rock in third.

Bob Baker and Jeff Francis won the 4-Ball competition with a 129 total on the par 65 layout, making Francis the only two-time winner of the 4-Ball division. Second place was secured by Jeremy Mo and Brecq Speed. Arkansas Golf Hall of Famers Jay Fox and Ralph Williams came in third.

For complete results, pictures and video go to Facebook and “Like” the Society of Hickory Golfers!

Please make plans to join us next year!

The Charles Blair Macdonald Challenge and Eastern Canadian Hickory Open
Sept. 10-12, Niagara Golf Course

Despite the threat of a rainy weekend, the 8th annual Charles Blair Macdonald Challenge and the Eastern Canadian Hickory Championship were contested and enjoyed by 40 players at the Niagara Golf Course – the oldest golf course in North America still located on its original site.

On Saturday, using pre-1900 equipment, and the McIntyre gutty ball, the contestants played nine holes of foursomes and nine holes of better ball golf. The course was set up at 4,600 yards, a good length for the limited flight gutty ball. There were several good scores, including a 37 by Bill Truppe (London, Ontario) and a 38 by David Ellis (Zanesville, Ohio). The day ended with Canada leading by a narrow margin, 10.5 to 9.5 points.

On Sunday, 20 singles matches played with 1920’s equipment and the McIntyre bramble ball as a medal match play event.

Canada scored 11 points to the United States’ nine points. There were several good scores, including a 78 by Senator Vern Perry (Bradford, Ontario), and 79 by Jason Miller (Clarksburg, Ontario), Rusty Wells (Pinehurst, N.C.), Jim Wilhelm (Paris, Ontario), and Terry Howarth (Washington, Pa.). The course played at 5,300 yards.

The final score was Team Canada 21.5 points – Team USA 18.5 points, giving Canada six wins in eight playings of this event.

Contestants came from nine states and many parts of Ontario.

In the Eastern Canadian Hickory Championship, after 27 holes of golf, Jim Wilhelm and Paul Dietz (Sarnia, Ontario) tied at 119 strokes. Wilhelm was crowned Open Division Champion and Dietz took the Senior Division title.

A new division was introduced to the tournament this year. Bill Turville (Toronto, Ontario) won the Super Senior Division (age 70 and over).

Runners-up were Rusty Wells (Open Division), Vern Perry (Senior Division) and Doug Marshall (London, Ontario, Super Senior Division).

Many thanks to those participating in the C.B. Macdonald Challenge, and making it such a success.

Please join us next year, Sept. 9-11.

Paul Dietz; hickorygolfers.com/macdonald/
Practicing with hickories

This article was compiled by John Fischer III from a talk given by his father, Johnny Fischer, to the Greater Cincinnati Golf Association and from correspondence by his father to Joseph C. Day for Golf Journal and to Herbert Warren Wind as background for an article. Johnny Fischer was the last person to win a major tournament using hickory shafted clubs, the 1936 National Amateur played at Garden City GC on Long Island.

BY JOHNNY FISCHER

National Amateur Champion 1936
Intercollegiate (NCAA) Champion 1932
Western (Big Ten) Conference Champion 1932, 1931 and 1935
Walker Cup Team, 1934, 1936, 1938 and 1965 (non-playing captain)

I was introduced to golf in 1921 when I started to caddy at Western Hills C.C. in Cincinnati. Caddies were forbidden to swing clubs or hit balls, but it wasn’t long before we started to do both outside the view of the clubhouse or the caddie master.

I began to watch the better players and imitate their swings. On Monday afternoon when the course was closed, caddies were allowed to play. There was no practice tee at the club, just a small area that paralleled the 18th fairway where the pro gave lessons, and, even if there had been, we wouldn’t have given up the few golfing moments we had to hit balls. We wanted to play. Most clubs in Cincinnati had no practice tees at that time. Hickory shafts were prone to cracking or wearing out with age, and when the clubs were re-sharpened the faces were often changed in an effort to improve their performance. Caddie masters in large clubs used to keep a record of the shafts used by each caddie so that they could be replaced when necessary.

I also like to practice putting on the course. When I was playing in tournaments on a strange course, I would always take as many putsts on each green as time would allow during practice rounds, and from as many positions on the green as possible. I seldom practiced on the putting green at a new course. I find that the practice green is usually more dry than the course the green on the course because it is open to the most breeze and often is not indicative of how the greens will putt.

I found my hickories to be better for me on each hole or play cross country, that is, hitting to a green from a different fairway or hitting to a target such as a tree to learn how to judge distance.

If you stop to think about the practice tee, it is usually level and well maintained. It is good for practicing with a driver, but otherwise doesn’t reflect the golf course. I believe I became a good iron player, especially on the long to mid irons, by practicing on the course. The course presents all sorts of lies—uphill, downhill, sidehill, tight, bare and rough. Hitting from the great number of lies a player is likely to encounter is not learned on the practice tee; it is learned from playing.

In Cincinnati, the prevailing breeze is from the southwest, and if you limit yourself to the practice tee, all your shots will be hit with the same wind pattern. By practicing on the course, I learned to play under any wind condition.

I was long off the tee and a good iron player, but my strongest suit was putting. Par is based on two puts on every green. You will hit more shots with the putter than any other club in the bag, so it is the one you practice the most. I’ve always said that the hardest shot in golf is the short putt of between five and 10 feet in length. If you can make those, you’ll win a lot of matches and reduce your median score. Most golfers would rather go to the practice tee and hit drives. It might satisfy you to “crack” a few drives on the “sweet spot,” but, if you can’t putt, you can’t score.

I also like to practice putting on the course. When I was playing in tournaments on a strange course, I would always take as many puts on each green as time would allow during practice rounds, and from as many positions on the green as possible. I seldom practiced on the putting green at a new course. I find that the practice green is usually more dry than the course the green on the course because it is open to the most breeze and often is not indicative of how the greens will putt.

I found my hickories to be better for me from the Navy, Paul Runyon, taught this method, and he was one of the best short game players and putters who ever lived, but just don’t understand it. You don’t have any feel in your shoulders. Feel is in your hands. A Hickory shafted putter allows me to “tap” or “stroke” the ball. I continue to use a Tom Stewart hickory blade, and have filed the back of the toe down to get proper feel. My putter has a little loft which is helpful in getting the ball rolling. On slow greens, the loft actually gets the ball up on the top of the grass and allows it to roll. A putter with little or no loft requires the ball to “pushed” through the lower part of the grass blade until it can get on the top and roll.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
Mark Kummerle – Germany
Mark Poffett – Tampa, Fla.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
Mark Kummerle – Germany
Mark Poffett – Tampa, Fla.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
Mark Kummerle – Germany
Mark Poffett – Tampa, Fla.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
Mark Kummerle – Germany
Mark Poffett – Tampa, Fla.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
Mark Kummerle – Germany
Mark Poffett – Tampa, Fla.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
Mark Kummerle – Germany
Mark Poffett – Tampa, Fla.

Welcome, new SoHG members

Dave Seibert – Atlanta, Ga.
Stephen Sutherland – Davidson, N.C.
Phillip Bunch – Duluth, Ga.
Ralph Williams – Little Rock, Ark.
Rick Woceker – Fredericksburg, Va.

Robert Hewson Jr. – Orlando Park, Ill.
Christopher Emmett Eaton – Madison, Wis.
John Green Sr. – Morganton, N.C.
Fred Frison – Savannah, Ga.
FEATURED CLUB

BY DR. JAY HARRIS
PINEHURST, N.C., U.S.A.

I acquired it about seven or eight years ago from Bobby Hansen, a friend and noted collector. It is very heavy, thick and tall – a simple blade putter. He loathed it to me try. I liked it for several reasons.

First, at 26 ounces, it was very heavy. (Who says that the “heavy putter” is a new idea?) I have a tendency for what I call “happy fingers.” The putter’s heavy weight calms my hands and reduces the furt beginnings of any yips.

Secondly, the putter qualifies for pre-1900 tournament play as well as regular hickory play. Ultimately, it became my putter for “dark-side” play with modern clubs.

Third, the putter is unique, one-of-a-kind. It is very old. Hansen said it dates to the early blacksmith era of the 1850s. Thus, the putter suits and matches my personality.

Lastly, and most important, I could putt with it. It seemed to fit my eye. It was in my hands when I won the inaugural U.S. Hickory Open at Morganton, N.C. I have used it to win the Mid Pines Open and the tournament at Belvedere, Mich. The putter gets attention wherever I play.

I was using it during a Carolina Hickory Golf Association outing at Pine Crest in Lumberton, N.C. When I was paired with a local player who was a local newspaper writer. On my game that day, I hit a lot of good iron shots to the small greens and made a few nice putts. I shot 75ish. He and I immediately put on a tease in the hosel. Slab was mortally wounded. Two weeks later, as I was putting with her, Slab expired in two pieces. It was a heavy blow.

Fortunately, in Pinehurst, there is a great blacksmith shop, and I came to know a master problem solver with metal – Eric Hall. (Here is a man who, in his previous life, was that of an organ harvester, working very closely with doctors.)

I took Slab to him just recently and we came to a careful diagnosis of how to mend and heal her. We wanted her to be straight and strong and still be pretty. A weld joint was out of the question as a necklace of bright metal around part of the hosel would not favor Slab’s intrinsic dark nature. Internal medicine was called for. A dowel was shaped to fit into both the head end and the shaft end of the hosel. Then J.B. Weld (a powerful epoxy) would tie the two ends together. Slab is stronger than before, and just as beautiful.

Hallelujah.

(Just you wait, Steve.)

When the man’s article was published, I learned a new word. He wrote that I putted like mad with a crude putter word. He wrote that I putted published, I learned a new

b y d r. j a y h a r r i s

COURSES WE LOVE – Mid Pines Golf Club, Southern Pines, N.C.

SoHG member Rich Grula writes about his favorite hole, No. 12, on the Mid Pines Course – a popular stop on the autumn hickory tour.

BY RICH GRULA

F or some, “favorite golf hole” means an easy birde – a par 3 with a punch bowl green that feeds to the pin. Being a masochist (hey, I play hickories!), my tastes run opposite – a hole that seems simple but in fact murs my card with a bogey or higher almost every time I walk off the green.

From the Ross tee, the 12th hole at Mid Pines looks straightforward – a 360 yard dogleg left with a fairway that slopes downhill and feeds right to left. A bunker guards the left edge of the dogleg as it turns. At the green, there’s a massive bunker to the right and a smaller one to the left.

Simple, right? Not so quick.

From the tee, if you push a drive right, there’s a decent chance it will fly through the dogleg, ending up in scrub grass or even OB (the right edge of this fairway is one of the few at Mid Pines with an easy-to-reach OB). Pull it left and you’re in the pine or trapped in the fairway bunker 200 yards from the green. Hit a good drive with a bit of a draw and you’re sitting pretty with a smile on your face, until you walk up to the ball and survey your next shot.

AS WITH MANY Donald Ross designs, the real defense is the green complex. Number 12’s is particularly devilish and brings us to the second challenge. The green runs 37 yards front to back and elevates upward the entire way. It’s also thin. Scary thin. At its narrowest point – where the pin is often located – it’s a mere eight steps wide. On either side of those eight steps are sloped fringe and then bunkers or steep drops to collection areas. Not much to shoot for.

Best of all, the entire green is positioned somewhat diagonally to the fairway, opening more to the left side and moving right as it goes back and upward. The result is ridiculous good protection from the center and right of the fairway, to which it shows its narrowest width. Approaches must be deadly accurate and hold a slick, sloped putting surface. If a player opts to play low, he must factor the fairway, just in front of the green, which has subtle banking that deflects rollers, feeding them left or to the right bunker.

A good drive likely leaves 120-180 yards to the hole, making a missed second shot the one that starts the downward spiral – missed approach, sand shot over the green, chip back, three puts on a trademark Ross surface. That’s seven... and it looked so simple from the tee, right?

I WATCHED MY SON Stride this hole when he was nine. It can be done, but each shot has to be just right. Teeing off far beyond the forward tees, he dropped a drive on the left edge of the fairway, 60-70 yards from the pin. From the left, the green transforms and opens, looking long and receptive rather than thin and miserly. On this route, it is fair drive, pitch and putt, followed by high-fives all around. Youth has it easy, me thinks.

Chris Deinlein, my playing partner at a recent Mid Pines Hickory Open, suggest the left rough as an excellent place to land a drive for a usuable approach angle. He’s right, if one’s comfortable flying the fairway bunker and hugging the pines. For those a bit short off the tee, another option is to drop a second shot in front of the green. Sure, nobody

likes to lay up on a par four, but an up and down from there is more likely than a recovery chip from the rear collection area, where you often see less than half the pin and the green slopes away at a frightening angle.

Regardless of such options, I inevitably find myself laying four off the green, hopping my chip somehow rolls close enough for a bogie. And that’s what makes No. 12 my favorite. Though nearly a century old, it can still seduce players into doing something stupid.
MACDONALD

through the upland meadows and coastal forest. They are all wonderfully well suited to hickory play (almost constant multidirectional wind and rain), but it is the newest course, The Old MacDonald, that is in a league of its own.

TOM SITS ALONG

the northern edge of the property, abutting much of the inland side of Pacific Dunes. A natural fire a few years back cleared out much of the gorse in that area and revealed in more detail, many of the landforms. The Redan green was the first feature to pop out. However, given the profusion of yellow blooms when I visited in late April, gorse is clearly among the most resilient flora.

When the idea to develop a tribute course to Charles Blair MacDonald crystallizes a few years ago, Mike Keiser, Bandon Dunes’ owner and chief visionary, knew this would not be the effort of a singular golf architect. He brought in not only such talented golf architects as Pacific Dunes’ architect Tom Doak along with Jim Urbina, but for added depth of knowledge and perspective regarding MacDonald, consulted extensively with MacDonald’s biographer, George Bhato and GolfWeek’s Brad Klein.

One can just picture them all spending many days at NGLA, looking out on that great course and Ballyhearn. MacDonald’s residence which overlooks it, thinking about how they could bring forth new versions of holes with such familiar names as Redan, Leven, Sahara and Biarritz. The final product features 16 holes having precedents at other MacDonald courses (NGLA, Yale, Chicago, the Creek, Piping Rock and Mid Ocean) or such wonderful British venues as St. Andrews Old Course, Royal West Norfolk, Sunningdale (Old), North Berwick, Royal St. George, Lundin Links, Prestwick and Littlestone. One is an entirely new hole called Ocean, which is followed by a striking Biarritz.

A DOMINATING FEATURE is the sand ridge that runs north-south along the east edge and sets up, in my humble opinion, one of the finest reveals in American golf. After playing the first two holes that run north on the inland side of the ridge, the third hole, Sahara, requires a drive over the top. As with most holes on the course, the tee shot presents options: play a 150-yard shot to the right across the ridge or play the shot more to the left and challenge the imposing, standing deadwood atop the ridge. That tree may well become as iconic as the windmill as National, provided it doesn’t soon succumb to the winds. Brad Klein suggested that a model be made. Regardless of where your drive ends up, as you gain the ridge top, an extraordinary golf vista is revealed with the red flags marking the distant greens of the next 14 holes. Also visible are several holes of Pacific Dunes and even Bandon Dunes with the Pacific in the background. The approach to Ocean, a short dogleg par 4, plays much longer than it looks. The shot (usually into the wind) plays to a green perched on top of a high coastal dune. The reward, once you’ve gained the western most green on the course, is a stunning view out over the Pacific. The following hole, Biarritz, plays downhill off the top of the dune. It can play as short as a niblick or require a full driving iron, depending upon the wind, which usually plays diagonally from 8 to 4 o’clock, adding to the challenge. After 16, the eastern sand ridge is again crossed with the last two holes playing south back to the clubhouse.

THERE ARE SO MANY naturally occurring golf holes that it is often difficult to determine which way one should hit off many of the tees. The only clues are embedded markers with the hole names; there are no yardage markers, no ball washers or benches, and no soft green grass for padded fairway lies. Fairways, greens and tees simply blend into each other. The holes play in all directions as does the wind, which can make the same tee or approach shot play two or three clubs different from round to round, or even just a few groups apart. During our late afternoon round, we experienced sun, clouds, wind, no wind, rain, no rain and mist. The light was striking, and the only other soul on the course was the resort’s photographer.

There are options off every tee, including the par 3s. There was a successful effort to make the course fully playable for those whose longest carries are not so long. Although TOM plays 6,944 from the tips, the forward Royal Blue tees are at 4,258, still offering all the challenges and opportunities of each hole.

The greens are expansive; there can be several avenues of approach to the hole both into and even on them. One could spend a rather pleasant day just playing around with putting and approach clerks. Jim Urbina told me he thinks the golf course “is more fun than any of us expected it to be.” Brad Klein, despite being immersed in the course’s development, referred to TOM as having “intriguing detail.”

On many of Charles Blair MacDonald’s greens, the putts can easily top 100 feet. No exception at TOM where the aggregate green size comes in at over or roughly 6.1 acres. To give some perspective, the Old Course at St. Andrews offers 242,000 square feet of greens or a total of 5.6 acres. The course at Yale comes in just over 5 acres, with NGLA’s a bit under 5. Merton East has 3.1 acres, Winged Foot West roughly 2.5 and my home course of Pine Brook in Massachusetts has 2.3.

BANDON DUNES has been called “Dream Golf” with good reason. There is something special about a golf-only resort with no carts and no structures visible until almost 2 miles from the entrance off route 101. The resort was also done with environmental sensitivity in mind from its inception. The main clubhouse was moved well back from the ocean; all greywater is reused for irrigation and the satellite lodging complexes blend into the low shrub scrub forest. A full spa is in the weeks ahead, and, according to Keiser, the omnipresent winds will soon be tapped for power, thus reducing the resort’s carbon footprint.

Several moments will always stay pleasantly in my mind: Coming over the ridge on Sahara and seeing the course laid out before me; my tee shot on Redan that came to rest 15 feet from the pin (prelude to a tap in par); the rainbow over the sand ridge as we played up Maidens; ringing the bell after exiting the 16th green even when I knew there was no one to hear it; and TOM Head Professional Jeff Brinegar showing up with persimmon woods. It was he who coined the term the “Catcher’s Mitt” in reference to the green at Maiden, which includes several feet of elevation changes. Being the first hickory player on the course was special, although my mark has since been shattered.

It is a place where one can bring just a driving iron or brassie, a strong jigger, a putting clee and, of course, a sand iron. However, one would be wise to employ the no-club-limit, provided they all pre-date 1936. Caddies and push carts are always available, and the carts can not only be wheeled across the greens, they can be set down on them.

The collective hope of those who brought us this marvelous golf experience is that upon finishing the round, players will have a better understanding of who Charles Blair MacDonald was and seek to learn more about his contributions to the game.

When the course opened officially on June 1 (with gale force wind and rain) it looked as if it had been there 100 years. The date was intended to mark the first plays 100 years earlier at NGLA.

Kevin Mendlik was quite pleased not to have come in last in the 2010 U.S. Hickory Open and his youngest son has the initials CBM. He hasn’t used modern clubs in many years.
The wood is dried too much longer than this, the moisture content is said to act as a guide to correct grip placement for the left-handed player. If the wood contains a 50 percent moisture content when a tree is first cut down and must be dried to a 10 percent moisture content for maximum wood strength. This process takes one to two years. If wood is dried quickly once a tree has been cut down. Radiocarbon dating measures organic lifespans from the moment that organic material starts to decay (when the tree is first cut down), so the Rafter Radiocarbon dating should reveal an accurate estimation date for the club's original manufacture. A 1720-1800 timeframe of production really only makes sense outside of a Scottish origin as the 18th century examples of club making that are seen in the R & A, the British Golf Museum and Gary Wren's collection, etc. all seem much more sophisticated.

We know golf was played in the Americas in the 1700s in both South Carolina and New York. Shipping records from the Scottish port of Leith show that a shipment of balls and clubs reached Charleston, S.C. in the 1740s and there is a British military journal article and an ad from a New York newspaper that documents play on Long Island, N.Y. later in the 1700s. In fact, William Burnett, Governor of New England, who died in 1729, had an inventory from his estate sale that showed that there were 10 golf clubs and seven dozen golf balls that were sold. We now know golf was played to some extent, perhaps more than we realize, in Colonial America. And this particular club with its more crude design than the surviving examples of early Scottish golf clubs was most likely an early attempt to provide an uncommon left-handed club to an early colonial player.

As such, this club could be a very historically significant golf club; perhaps the earliest known example of an American-made club with its more crude design than the surviving examples of early Scottish golf clubs. Early irons are highly sought after. Two pre-1800 irons sold at a September 2007 Sotheby's auction in New York for $151,000 and $181,000 respectively, and both were of the more commonly known Scottish manufacture. Can dip well below 10 percent, it is sealed with shellac to maintain its moisture content and, hence, its maximum strength (this is usually done just after it has been fashioned into its final form). So wood has always been used relatively quickly once a tree has been cut down.

Yest this type of club is quite different, with a toe and an extra-long, thick sporting a very heavy, sturdy club itself is 35½ inches long 24 ounces. The heel to the clubhead is 45½ inches of the blade is 3½ inches wide. The hosel long with a circumference of 3½” two positions, one high and one a separate piece of metal from has a lie angle of 62 degrees of grip. The club has a lie angle of 62 degrees of grip above the left on the how this works with the grip was used at the time.

Some thought has been given to the possibility that the club is really quite a bit newer, but the world’s best radiocarbon-dating lab, the Rafter Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory in New Zealand, analyzed a wood fragment from the shaft and concluded that the wood dated to 1760 ± 40 years. This dating of the wood in the shaft is very significant. Wood contains a 50 percent moisture content when a tree is first cut down and must be dried to a 10 percent moisture content for maximum wood strength. This process takes one to two years. If the wood is dried too much longer than this, the moisture content can dip well below 10 percent, it is sealed with shellac to maintain its moisture content and, hence, its maximum strength (this is usually done just after it has been fashioned into its final form). So wood has always been used relatively quickly once a tree has been cut down.

To the possibility that the club is really quite a bit newer, but the world’s best radiocarbon-dating lab, the Rafter Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory in New Zealand, analyzed a wood fragment from the shaft and concluded that the wood dated to 1760 ± 40 years. This dating of the wood in the shaft is very significant. Wood contains a 50 percent moisture content when a tree is first cut down and must be dried to a 10 percent moisture content for maximum wood strength. This process takes one to two years. If the wood is dried too much longer than this, the moisture content
All American Hickory Open

Connor Lewis, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is putting the finishing touches on a newly announced event. His All American Hickory Open (AAHO) is a pre-1900 event planned for July 22-23, 2011 at Downers Grove, the site of the original Chicago Golf Club. He will have a information booth at the upcoming GCS meeting, Nov. 7-9, at Southern Pines.

Lewis says he selected this date so that golfers who enjoy pre-1900 play might have a shot at the “Cutty Slam,” starting with the National Hickory Championship in June, the All American in July, Foxburg in August and the CB MacDonald in September.

Tournament fee is expected to cost $200, but Lewis notes this may be reduced for participants who are willing to share a room, Illinois residents who do not need accommodations may also benefit from reduced fees. Lewis asks that you e-mail him (connor2@aol.com) for details, or e-mail him in Southern Pines.

Four tournament divisions are planned, each with its own equipment guidelines:

OPEN – Similar to the “NHC” as in no golf bags, pre-1900 clubs, no Stewarts with registration marks, etc.

RESERVE – Smooth face clubs required and spilice-neck woods. Players will be able to use golf bags and golf cars if they require.

SENIOR – Identical to the Reserve Division regarding equipment guidelines and amenities, but with an age cutoff.

FOUR MAN BEST-BALL – This division was added for the benefit of those who have never played pre-1900 golf or just want to enjoy the experience with their friends. Lewis also hopes this division will encourage local players to have a go at pre-1900’s play.

Downers Grove members have shared photos of early golf on the course as well as an original scorecard. Course setup will be as close as possible to 1892 as can be arranged, according to Lewis.

Lewis has gone to some lengths to create an unusual trophy for the championship. He had a Colorado silversmith create a full-sized replica of an 1870 Willie Park Sr. long nose putter. Silver copies of golf balls used to win the championship will be attached to the trophy.

The winner of the championship will also be asked to donate his winning golf ball. From that ball the tournament will make a cast and a silver copy will be made and attached to the championship trophy... either physically or attached to the mount from which it will hang.

Lewis also plans to follow the tradition of early golfing societies by having the previous year’s champion serve as the Honorary Captain for the succeeding year. Lewis is taking steps to promote the event through local newspaper and magazine coverage, state golf associations and, as of this writing, NRF television, according to Lewis, has committed to some coverage.

Downers Grove was built for the Chicago Golf Club by Charles Blair MacDonald in 1892. In 1895 it became the first 18 hole golf course in the United States. Members of the Chicago Golf Club became charter members of the USGA. By 1895 the Chicago Golf Club decided that they needed more room and relocated to its current site in Wheaton, Ill. There is some speculation as to why, but apparently some land to the east of Downers Grove (their original site) was leased and the landowner refused to renew it for 1895. In 1896, the Belmont Club claimed the course and reverted it back to the present-day nine holes. “Seven of the nine greens are original,” Lewis says. “The course is fantastic for pre-1900 golf as nearly all of the original bankers are intact and completely within play of a pre-1900 golf shot. On top of that, I would say seven to eight of the nine holes are absolutely beautiful.

“I promise it will be a blast from the past,” he says. ☺

Knockers at Kohler

I just spent a week as a volunteer at the PGA Championship at Whistling Straits in Kohler, Wis. I was the only person on the grounds wearing knickers and had many comments on them and that gave me the opportunity to talk to a lot of people about playing hickory clubs including a couple from Michigan’s U.P. I told them she wants me to send some hickory clubs she can play with. I also told her about Louisville Golf and their reproductions.

Greg Smith
De Forest, Wisc.

SoHg and research on golf pros

During my research on the history of the golf professional I have been very pleased to find several SoHg articles that have been very beneficial. I am a PGA Master Professional who wrote my thesis on the history of the golf professional position over 20 years ago. Recently, I am working on expanding that thesis into a book that will trace the history of golf and how the golf professional evolution over the past two centuries. I am very interested in learning about golf professionals who have made major or unique contributions to the development of the game and the profession. The threat of the Society of the Hickory Golfers in the early game both oversees and here in the U.S. is very commendable. If any members would like to offer thoughts or articles that can assist my research I would be very appreciative.

Sincerely,
Billy Detlaff, PGA Master Professional
billydetlaff@comcast.net
904-543-0050

One more reason to love hickory golf

Recently I played in a modern club member/guest in Maryland with a friend of mine. Two rounds at different courses, better ball format. The second day course is fully five shots harder than the first. We shot 73-75 and trailed by only one shot after the first day of competition. Then the results of the second day came in. The team in our flight that shot the worst score (76) on the first day shot 67 on the harder course. In the second flight the team that shot the worst score in the flight (78) returned a score of 70. Both teams won their respective flights. Now the funny coincidence. Those two teams were paired together. That would never happen in a hickory event!!!

PS. After leaving for the trip home my partner called to say the pro at the courses was lively as to the events.

Bill Sewell
Huntsville, Ala.

Friendly round of hickories

Recently I ran into a gentleman with a fondness for hickory golf since my mother bought me a set of hickory clubs at a church rummage sale in the 1960’s. Unfortunately, I have never been blessed with an ability to actually play golf, so although I go out and flail away with my hickory clubs on a regular basis, I have never progressed to the point where I could even consider competitive golf, no matter what clubs I was permitted to use. I do, however, enjoy my hickory clubs and I also enjoy your website. I particularly enjoy the historic golf writings you present, such as the articles by Bernard Darwin. Lately I have not been able to find the index to your online articles. Sometimes you link to a specific article on your home page, but I don’t see a link to the index. Do you still index the articles?

Steve Tom
Acworth, Ga.
(The website is evolving and changing.
Steve. We’ll pass your thoughts along to the webmaster.)

Steve also offered a link to a story about hickory golf that he published a few years ago. The entire story can be found at:


For now, though, here’s an excerpt from A Friendly Little Round of Golf:

“Walter Hagen?!!” The words escaped Bob’s lips before he realized how foolish he sounded.

“I’m impressed,” the man replied. “You’d be surprised at how many people don’t recognize me any more.”

But what are you doing here?” Bob asked incredulously.

“You called upon the gods of golf,” Walter replied. “Who’d you expect?”


“Those guys are still alive,” Walter said as he stood up. “You can’t be a god while you’re alive.”

“Harry Vardon?” asked Bob.

“Harry’s got a weak stomach.” Walter said casually. “One look at your swing and he’d be off puking in the weeds. Besides, he’s busy with Tiger.” He dropped his cigarette on the ground and crushed it with his shoe. His face turned serious as he looked at Bob. “Look, these hickory golfers are the hitmen, but you don’t play the fairways. You need someone who knows how to recover from a shot that takes you off where God lost his overshoes. You need me. Now are you going to let me teach you how to play golf or are you going to stand around arguing that you want someone else?”

“I’m not arguing,” Bob stammered. “I just meant anyone who was...” his voice trailed off.

“Deal!” asked Walter. “You need to get over that or we’ll never get anywhere. Look here, kid, you got yourself in a jam. You’ve got less than a week to learn how to play this game without looking like an idiot in front of your boss, can’t work miracles, but maybe I can help. Let’s forget this hole and go on to the next. I’ll give you a deal.”

Diced, Bob followed Walter to the next tee. When they got there, he patted his pocket and then turned back toward the previous green.

“Now just where are you going?” Walter asked.

“I left my ball in the bunker,” Bob replied. “Forget it,” Walter told him. He reached in his pocket and tossed a ball to Bob. It was an autographed, Walter Hagen special. “I get endorsements.”

“Of course,” Bob said casually. “What can I say? I had a good agent. Now let me see you swing.”...

Websites to check out:

worldhickorygolfers.com

This is a new, online magazine edited by Lionel Freedman. Well-written articles about hickory play, history, and modern events.

thehickorygolfer.com

This blog by avid hickory golfer Roger Brickley offers stories, commentary, course information and some restoration tips among other categories.
Hickory golf has been in the news here and there around the country. Coverage is evolving and will continue to do so as the media recognizes the honest approach, the lengthy research and knowledgeable background most hickory players bring to their sport. Above, three headlines/articles from the St. Petersburg Times on an event this past spring at River Hills Country Club that featured top hickory player and Tampa-based pro, Mike Stevens. Far left, Handsake, a new magazine that takes up trendy topics, spoke with Matt Dodds and Ralph Livingston III about the lure of hickory golf. At left a Burlington Times-Argus photo of Matt Dodds at the Vermont Hickory Open; and near left, an article from the Burlington Free Press on the same event.

Strong attraction to Stewart mashie-niblick leads to watery rescue

BY ROGER BRINKLEY

I had just made the switch to playing Stewarts and was starting to build a set, but I was having a problem finding a suitable mashie-niblick. One night, going through an assortment of clubs, I found the perfect club hidden among a group of undesirables. I popped the pin, buffed, reglued, re-pinned and re-gripped the shaft before adding it to my bag.

On its first outing in early spring, the club had been used only once by the time I approached No. 7, a par 3 with a little pond skirting the fairway and green. Preparing to hit, I realized the yardage was just outside the mashie niblick’s range. Oh well, just lean on it a little and it will still get there.

Dumb idea. I leaned too much, took a huge divot, snapped the shaft and watched helplessly as my prized possession tumbled wildly into the lake. The club even righted itself, shaft up, before sinking to the bottom. Bye Bye! This might work!

After a few practice throws around the house (nothing bro-ken), I headed to the pond on No. 7, I threw the magnet out four times, dragging it slowly along the bottom with no luck. Only then did it dawn on me that I was tossing in the wrong place. I changed direction and cast again. Slowly pulling in the line I felt a sudden stiffness and a definite clicking. I’m excited, but also worried that the clubhead, if it is also magnetic, won’t stay connected to the magnet. I’ll say it slowly. The head is still perfect.

GASTING OPEN THE STILL WATER. Roger Brinkley demonstrates his technique for finding lost clubs heads.

An online search hooked a magnet 3½ inches in diameter with a ½-inch hole in the middle and 110 pounds of pull.

After it arrived, I put the magnet in my coat pocket and went to buy some rope. As I got out of the car the magnet stuck to the side of the car, nearly rip-ping my coat off. Strong stuff. This might work!

After a few practice throws around the house (nothing broken), I headed to the pond on No. 7. I threw the magnet out four times, dragging it slowly along the bottom with no luck. Only then did it dawn on me that I was tossing in the wrong place. I changed direction and cast again. Slowly pulling in the line I felt a sudden stiffness and a definite clicking. I’m excited, but also worried that the clubhead, if it is also magnetic, won’t stay connected to the magnet. I’ll say it slowly. The head is still perfect.

Both the club, newly shafted, and the magnet are now permanent fixtures in my golf bag.

WEET NIP CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

Hickory rental sets available as well hickory play sets. Will travel. Jay Harris, jaharris1330@aol.com, 910 295-5063

Playable and collectible hickory clubs available. Go to http://www.hickorygolf.com/stixstuffs/category/100001. Bob Geographe, stixstuffs@earthlink.net, 919 368-0685

Grandfather’s collection of hickory and 1900’s clubs. Spalding, Stewart, MacGregor, Forgan, H&B and more. Would like to sell entire collection. Please call Pete at 503-238-2322. List available for review.

The Hickory Golfer
Course reviews and stories around the world

Replacement hickory shafts and grips. MOI matching of Clubs.

http://www.hickorygolf.com

WANTED

In search of unusual Tom Stewart clubs and early clubs by Park, Gray and Carnick. Phil Gibbs, philc.gibb@comcast.net, 480 661-4064

Wee Nip ads
Ad price is $7, payable to SoHG for 1 column, 2-inch ad. Ads may be sent, along with a check payable to the SoHG, to: Wee Nip Classifieds 338 Gladstone Ave. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49506 or e-mail the ad to: jdavis2364@gmail.com

WEET NIP CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

Replacement hickory shafts and grips. MOI matching of Clubs

http://www.hickorygolf.com

WANTED

In search of unusual Tom Stewart clubs and early clubs by Park, Gray and Carnick. Phil Gibbs, philc.gibb@comcast.net, 480 661-4064

Wee Nip ads
Ad price is $7, payable to SoHG for 1 column, 2-inch ad. Ads may be sent, along with a check payable to the SoHG, to: Wee Nip Classifieds 338 Gladstone Ave. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49506 or e-mail the ad to: jdavis2364@gmail.com

Strong attraction to Stewart mashie-niblick leads to watery rescue

BY ROGER BRINKLEY

I had just made the switch to playing Stewarts and was starting to build a set, but I was having a problem finding a suitable mashie-niblick. One night, going through an assortment of clubs, I found the perfect club hidden among a group of undesirables. I popped the pin, buffed, reglued, re-pinned and re-gripped the shaft before adding it to my bag.

On its first outing in early spring, the club had been used only once by the time I approached No. 7, a par 3 with a little pond skirting the fairway and green. Preparing to hit, I realized the yardage was just outside the mashie niblick’s range. Oh well, just lean on it a little and it will still get there.

Dumb idea. I leaned too much, took a huge divot, snapped the shaft and watched helplessly as my prized possession tumbled wildly into the lake. The club even righted itself, shaft up, before sinking to the bottom. Bye Bye! This might work!

After a few practice throws around the house (nothing broken), I headed to the pond on No. 7. I threw the magnet out four times, dragging it slowly along the bottom with no luck. Only then did it dawn on me that I was tossing in the wrong place. I changed direction and cast again. Slowly pulling in the line I felt a sudden stiffness and a definite clicking. I’m excited, but also worried that the clubhead, if it is also magnetic, won’t stay connected to the magnet. I’ll say it slowly. The head is still perfect.

Both the club, newly shafted, and the magnet are now permanent fixtures in my golf bag.
“Futures” Hickory Tour.
Ville Nyman, 1½, practiced his short game before going out on the course to watch his father, Per, win the 2010 Swedish Hickory Championship.

PHOTO/PEHR THERMAENIUS