



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

NO MATTER HOW we may try to resist the anticipation of the Masters Tournament (the second weekend of next month) to varying degrees it always pulls us in with the most basic and pleasant childhood memories of the arrival of spring and eagerness for the coming golf season.

Those memories, however assaulted by today's strident times, are unassailable. They come from the places you know so well and, for that reason, can be revisited and recaptured almost instantly.

The memories come from where you learned the game, where lifelong friends-to-be joined you in good humor, athletic adventure, victory and disappointment, social structure, and respectful behavior. These all remain in full array.

Such memories may also come from new places where your old experiences are extended often with the same friends, humor, adventure, and respect.

Two of many such places where this can happen lie on each side of the English Channel — La Manche, *the sleeve*, as the French refer to it — at two clubs, separated by just 90 miles as the raven flies. For all these reasons, reflecting on the two overseas courses that follow serves to recall the memories we hold for spring golf and Augusta.

Le Touquet Pas-de-Calais, France

LE TOUQUET [say: *two-kay*] is welcome anchorage from disparately confused and ignorant times.

A Harry S. Colt design, La Mer at Le Touquet is one of the few linksland courses on mainland Europe. It is ranked thirteenth in France; seventh in northeastern France. It is sometimes described as the best linksland course in Europe because it winds between coastal dunes, there is strategic bunkering, scruffy grasses, and long views of the English Channel from elevated tees.

Located 45 miles south-southwest, down la Manche, from Calais, it is a short trip via ferry from Dover or Chunnel from Folkestone then not quite an hour's drive down the French coast. Indeed, *Pas-de-Calais* translates as Strait of Calais, as opposed to Strait of Dover.

Six years ago, La Mer course underwent a restoration of four of its original holes (13th, 14th, 15th, 16th) that were abandoned due to damage caused during the Second World War.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two Englishmen bought and syndicated much of the land in this area with the goal of establishing a relaxed, convenient and stylish golf and gambling retreat easily accessed from southern England.

During much of the First World War, wounded British soldiers were treated in Le Touquet at the Duchess of Westminster's Hospital. The Communal Cemetery there contains more than 100 British war graves.

Please be reminded that this month and next you will receive THE GOLF LETTER from two sources. First, just as you have for years; and the second via the Substack subscription we have funded at your same e-mail address. They look different, but the words are the same. In May, we will move to Substack only. Thanks for your patience.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Remnants of Golf's Civility:
Le Touquet
Royal St. George's



Following the war, some of the so-called smart set were drawn to the French village including Noël Coward, H.G. Wells and P.G. Wodehouse. Mr. Wodehouse moved to Le Touquet in 1934 after settling income tax issues with both the United States and Great Britain. He wrote prolifically in Le Touquet for six years prior to the German invasion and occupation. "I play nothing but golf," Mr. Wodehouse wrote to a friend. "Greatest game on earth. You must take it up. It beats everything else."

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the British blew up Le Touquet's golf clubhouse — which they had built — because it was on a hill and would have become a command position for the Boche.

"A real shame," those who knew it have said, "because it was a beautiful place to have a clubhouse." The Germans launched V-2 rockets at London from a mobile launchpad in La Mer's 12/13th fairway. "If you look towards the sea you can still see the rampart that the rockets went up." While several British and European cities were targeted with the V-2, London survived 1,358 strikes alone that left an estimated 2,754 killed and 6,523 wounded.

As the German army moved toward Le Touquet, Mr. and Mrs. Wodehouse decided to evacuate, make their way to neutral Portugal, and from there to America. Two miles from home their car broke down and they were forced to return to Le Touquet. They had waited too long. The following day, May 22, 1940, the German army occupied the town. Two months later the Germans interned all enemy males aged less than 60 years.

Mr. Wodehouse, 58 at the time, was moved from prison to prison, under harsh circumstances, during the following year. In June of 1941, he was released to Berlin's Hotel Aldon (at his own expense) and was tricked by the Germans into making five broadcasts. He titled them *How to be an Internee Without Previous Training*. Like most of his writing, the broadcasts were filled with funny observations, only this time the tales was about his ordeal as a prisoner of war. They were not found to be funny by his British audience. After the war ended, he was ostracized as an enemy collaborator.

Hurt and disillusioned, the Wodehouses moved to Long Island, New York, never to return to England or Le Touquet again. All was eventually forgiven, and he was knighted in 1975. [See P.G. WODEHOUSE - A LIFE IN LETTERS edited by Sophie Ratcliffe, 2013.]

The 2017 restoration of the La Mer holes that were abandoned during and after the war was accomplished by Patrice Boissonnas and Frank Pont using aerial photographs taken during the 1930s.



TAG GALYEAN, ROYAL ST. GEORGE'S, THE STARTER'S HUT



Mr. Colt is considered by the cognoscenti to be among the three best golf course architects to have ever practiced that discipline. Another eccentric English architect who would certainly fall in the first tier, Tom Simpson, described Le Touquet's par-5 15th as one of the best he had ever seen. Mr. Simpson designed some of the most highly regarded European courses including Morfontaine, Fontainebleau, and Royal Antwerp; he is also given credit for perfecting Pebble Beach's 18th hole.

We must add that a subscriber who is accomplished in both golf and tennis writes, "Tennis [at Le Touquet] is wonderful."

Royal St. George's Sandwich, Kent

It is first and foremost of the true metal, links golf at its best, great sandhills, narrow valleys, greens in dells or on plateaux, severe carries, flat, uncompromising areas and solitude of the most enjoyable kind; you can only see the hole you are playing - and not always all of that.

Sir Peter Allen

THE SUNLEY BOOK OF ROYAL GOLF

GOLF BECAME SO POPULAR during the 1880s in England generally and near London in particular that the courses available were often crowded, resulting in less apotheosis of the spirit and more consternation in maneuvering around the crowds of players.

Such congestion was present during golf on Wimbledon Common, which was shared by the military members of the London Scottish Rifle Volunteers Golf Club

and its 250 civilian members. The two groups ultimately divided themselves with the military members playing from their shooting pavilion at one end of the common while the civilians played from the opposite end.

In an effort to better serve the civilian members, Dr. Laidlaw Purves, a committeeman of the civilian group, suggested the military men play from their regular point and the civilian members play in the opposite direction from their new found quarters. However, the military men insisted everyone should play in the same direction. Local overseers of the Common also sanctioned that golf could be played only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays "to safeguard the interests of the general public".

Consequently, Dr. Purves resigned and, out of necessity, began to consider the building of a new course and establishment of a new club within easy reach of London, offering uncrowded seaside conditions, and allowing play on Sundays.

Dr. Purves was educated, well-traveled and a leading London surgeon who, having taken the time to find an ideal site among the sand dunes east of Sandwich, apparently had little difficulty in obtaining the support of 50 London gentlemen for the purpose of establishing the new club. By May of 1887, 320 acres had been leased and the Club was formed.

Construction began immediately under the direction of Ramsay Hunter, a Scotch professional. To finance the work, 200 new members were found within 60 days.

In their history of Royal St. George's, B.J.W. and Peter Hill quote H.G. Hutchinson as observing that one arrangement which made the Club popular was that "play is permitted on Sundays, but no caddie is allowed because carrying one's own clubs fulfils some of the conditions of a religious observance".

It is not known who designed the course although more than likely Dr. Purves played a major role. He planned the course at Littlestone the following year, and later wrote an analysis of the hazards on the six Open Championship courses. What began at 6,012 yards became 6,903+ yards a century later.

The outstanding geographical feature is the sand-hill named "the Maiden", rising approximately 40 feet in height, as well as the general undulation of the land which makes for the most remarkably enjoyable golf.

Chosen as an Amateur Championship site just five years after its creation, and an Open venue two years after its first Amateur, Royal St. George's ability for identifying champions is evidenced by the 29 times [14 Amateurs; 15 Opens] the club has been chosen to do so

during the past 136 years. The Club is also knowingly and fondly referred to as Sandwich or simply George's.

THE AMATEUR at Sandwich

1892	John Ball, ENG.	3 & 1	Harold Hilton, ENG.
1896	Freddie Tait, SCOT.	8 & 7	Harold Hilton, ENG.
1900	Harold Hilton, ENG.	8 & 7	James Robb, SCOT.
1904	Walter Travis, AUS.	4 & 3	Edward Blackwell, SCOT.
1908	Edward Lassen, ENG.	7 & 6	Herbert Taylor, ENG.
1914	James Jenkins, SCOT.	3 & 2	Charles Hezlet, IRE.
1929	Cyril Tolley, ENG.	4 & 3	J. Nelson Smith, SCOT.
1937	Robert Sweeny Jr., U.S.	3 & 2	Lionel Munn, ENG.
1948	Frank Stranahan, U.S.	5 & 4	Charles Stowe, ENG.
1959	Deane Beman, U.S.	3 & 2	Bill Hyndman, U.S.
1972	Trevor Homer, ENG.	4 & 3	Alan Thirlwell, ENG.
1997	Craig Watson, SCOT.	3 & 2	T. Immelman, S.AFR.
2006	Julien Guerrier, FRANCE	4 & 3	Adam Gee, ENG.
2017	Harry Ellis, ENG.	38 holes	Dylan Perry, AUS.

Mr. Travis' 1904 Amateur victory was the first by a foreign player. Although Australian-born, he resided in America and is often incorrectly attributed to be the first U.S. winner of the Amateur Championship. That honor belongs to Jess Sweetser who defeated Scotsman A.F. Simpson 6 & 5 in 1926 at Muirfield.

So unpopular was Mr. Travis' treatment of officials and his caddie that his bad shots drew applause from normally respectful spectators. He deftly applied his center-shafted Schenectady putter which began the first major equipment dispute between the Royal & Ancient and the U.S.G.A.. This disagreement, which ultimately centered on mallet-headed putters rather than center-shafted putters, was not resolved until 1951.

THE OPEN at Sandwich

1894	J.H. Taylor, ENG.	326
1899	Harry Vardon, JERSEY	310
1904	Jack White, SCOT.	296
1911	Harry Vardon, JERSEY	303
1922	Walter Hagen, U.S.	300
1928	Walter Hagen, U.S.	292
1934	Henry Cotton, ENG.	283
1938	Reg Whitcombe, ENG.	295
1949	Bobby Locke, S. AFR.	283
1981	Bill Rogers, U.S.	276
1985	Sandy Lyle, SCOT.	282
1993	Greg Norman, AUS.	267
2003	Ben Curtis, U.S.	283
2011	Darren Clarke, IRE.	275
2021	Colin Morikawa	265

Mr. Taylor's 1894 Open victory was the first by an English professional. It was also the first time the championship had been held outside of Scotland. The second round of the 1949 Open saw the rueful occurrence of Harry Bradshaw playing his ball, rather than taking relief, that was lying inside a broken bottle at the 5th hole. He made six and eventually lost the championship in a playoff when he probably would have won by at least one shot had he taken the relief to which he was entitled. Just as it was at Sandwich where an Englishman first won, it was also here, in 1985, that a Scotsman, Sandy Lyle, won for the first time in more than 90 years.

Ian Fleming set James Bond's match against Goldfinger at Royal St. George's, although Stoke Park in Buckinghamshire was the course used in the film *Goldfinger*.

It is difficult to say why a golf course attracts or loses favor among site selectors. However, such was the case for Royal St. George's with regard to the Open for the 32 years following 1949. Attendance in that year was light. This, coupled with difficult automobile access and its distance from London were referred to as contributing to Sandwich being dropped from the championship rota.

Perhaps more importantly, the professional players had begun to express dissatisfaction with the number of blind shots at Sandwich and the fact that three of the four short holes were on the out nine; and three of the same four played due south.

The redesign of several holes, installation of an irrigation system, construction of better roads and a general feeling that the Open should again be played in the south of England all led to Royal St. George's reinstatement to Open status in 1981. Most agreed that St. George's was generally improved.

During the 1993 Open, Sandwich produced some of the most extraordinary golf ever played under championship conditions. Matthew Engel writing for *THE GUARDIAN* tied it into a neat bundle: "The tournament came down to Faldo [ultimately finishing 2nd at 269] against Norman [1st at 267]," Mr. Engel wrote. "Science against art, pragmatism against flair, the man who had forgotten how to lose against the man who had been through every way of losing, the golfing miser against the man who has always played like a millionaire."

It is both historically and statistically stunning that Mr. Faldo's and Mr. Norman's finest individual, lifetime performances—from hundreds of appearances—both came at Sandwich and were separated by just two days!

Driving is the greater percentage of the game, Ben Hogan once commented. Mr. Norman proved that point during Sunday's final round. "Every drive was perfectly struck," he commented after, "not just to the fairway but to the part of the fairway I wanted for the angle to the flag. Every iron was perfect to the yardage my caddie gave me. I screwed up on just one little putt."

With the exception of a sloppy putt from off the green at the 7th

which failed to make it up the shoulder and onto the green and his one short missed putt on the 17th, Mr. Norman played a day of golf so invincible that even he found it difficult not to look upon it with almost objective admiration.

"I was just in awe of myself the way I hit the ball. It was ... perfect. I have never gone round a golf course and not missed a single full shot."

It was also apparent to Bernhard Langer, who played with Mr. Norman that day. "That was the greatest golf

1993 OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP
Nick Faldo's second round scorecard and club selection –
setting a course record for Royal St. George's
and tying the Open record.

	Yards	Par	Score	
1	441	4	3	driver, 5 iron, 4' putt
2	376	4	4	driver, pitch 60 yards, 20', 2 putts
3	210	3	3	2 iron, 15', 2 putts
4	468	4	4	driver, 2 iron, 6 iron chip, 4' putt
5	421	4	3	3 iron, 7 iron, 10' putt
6	155	3	2	6 iron, 20' putt
7	530	5	4	driver, 6 iron, 40', 2 putts
8	418	4	4	driver, 3 iron, 25', 2 putts
9	389	4	4	2 iron, 9 iron, 20', 2 putts
10	399	4	4	driver, 9 iron, 12', 2 putts
11	216	3	3	5 iron, 20', 2 putts
12	365	4	4	driver, pitch 60 yards, 2 putts
13	443	4	3	3 wood, 9 iron, 4' putt
14	507	5	4	2 iron (rough), 5 iron (rough), 7 iron, wedge 50 yards holed
15	466	4	4	driver, 5 iron, 18', 2 putts
16	163	3	3	5 iron, 15', 2 putts
17	425	4	4	driver, 4 iron, 25', 2 putts
18	468	4	3	driver, 2 iron, 15' putt
	6,860	70	63	

I've ever seen in my life," Mr. Langer told Mr. Norman as they walked down the 18th and into the enormous horseshoe-shaped harbor formed by the grandstands alive with applause, whistling and flag waving.

Mr. Norman's 13-under 267 was the lowest score in Open history. It was 15 strokes lower than Sandy Lyle's 1985 winning total at Sandwich. Mr. Norman's 64 on Sunday was the lowest final round by an Open champion; and he was the first Open champion to record four sub-70 rounds [66, 68, 69, 64]. Mr. Faldo's second round 63 tied the Open Championship single round scoring record [see inset].

Royal St. George's rare appeal comes through its being one of the most challenging and enjoyable courses in the world and a truly fine club in one of God's most fulfilling settings.

Further evidence of the Club's legacy in the game comes at the 5th hole. For the 149th Open (2021), the 5th ranked sixth most difficult (4.14). It was Bobby Jones' favorite hole at Sandwich, and he included it in his world's best 18 holes. A notable competitive moment took place here in 1967:

WILLIAM C. CAMPBELL, Amateur Championship Runner-up (1954), U.S. Amateur Champion (1964), future President of the U.S.G.A., and future Captain of the

Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, swept both his Walker Cup foursomes matches and both his singles matches in this year at Sandwich with accomplished driving accuracy at the 5th.

In each match, Mr. Campbell drove his ball, or his foursome team's ball, to a plateau that hugs the left side of the fairway and dangerously close to the Sahara bunker.

"From the plateau," Gordon G. Simmonds, the Walker Cup history author and leading authority, told us, "it is possible to see the green, which makes the second shot a lot easier to judge. Certainly, it was a hole he played well each time (he hit the tee shot for both of his foursomes in the company of young Jack Lewis) and, in his final

singles against Ronnie Shade, he birdied it, the first of five consecutive 3s on his way to a 3&2 win."

For his bold and accomplished play that small plateau at the 5th is, to this day, referred to at the Club as *Campbell's Table*.

Bernard Darwin described Royal St. George's in this way:

A fine spring day, with the larks singing as they seem to sing nowhere else; the sun shining on the waters of Pegwell Bay and lighting up the white cliffs in the distance, this is as nearly my idea of heaven as is to be attained on any earthly links.



TAG GALYEAN, *CAMPBELL'S TABLE AT ROYAL ST. GEORGE'S 5TH*



For C.C.:

"I guess it was as good (sic) as I have ever played."

Sir Nick Faldo MBE

Following his second round at Sandwich
in the 1993 Open Championship

Yours vy truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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