

# "A Change of Headgear"

**BY FRED HAWTREE**

***It may have escaped your notice, locked up as you are in your ecological struggle with Nature, machines and the members; that three months have elapsed since Cardinal Joseph Malula passed on to higher things from amongst his flock in Zaire.***

His chief legacy was an adaptation of the rites of the Mass to African circumstances. Certainly Pope John Paul II will not forget his 1980 visit to Kinshasha in a hurry, when twenty Zairian priests danced to the Gloria dressed in gold robes, rocking rhythmically from side to side in front of the Peoples Palace; nor the crescendo of tom-toms as they thundered across the square on the cue: "Let us pray!". Eight more years were nevertheless needed before the Vatican gave approval to the Cardinals localised liturgy, and then with a firm proviso — leopard skins will not be worn!

By contrast The Holy Diocese of St. Andrews has never laid down rules appropriate to the rig appropriate to golfing or its designers. Restrictions are unnecessary, for set apart as they

are from the profane world in sadness and loneliness, golf architects dress soberly, although when the American Society of Golf Course Architects adopted Dornoch's son, Donald Ross, builder of several hundred US courses, as their patron saint they uniformed themselves in blazers from the red and black Ross tartan woven in Scotland. A hundred of these at their annual banquet can be trying on unshaded eyes, though easily distinguishing members from visitors.

In this country, after 1900, a sartorial watershed also divided early professional golfer/designers from those amateurs quietly infiltrating the brotherhood. ALL wore caps upon the links and the professionals continued to do so while architecting golf courses. But the amateurs — turned — designers changed their style to match. They donned the felt Homburg hat of commerce. There was obviously money in it.

The 1913 photograph shown of their leader, Harry S. Colt, planning St. Cloud near Paris illustrates this change. Holding a plan unfurled (photographers still require this) his tall figure dominates the group still more

strongly through his heavenward extension by a Homburg of majestic proportions.

Across the Atlantic, A.W. Tillinghast, who designed most of the USA's favourite championship courses, often penetrated the jungle wearing just the same headgear.

Two photographs in my family album confirm the Distinction. The group at an exhibition match at Sundridge Park before 1914 shows J.H. Taylor (umbrella), James Braid, Alex Herd and Harry Vardon, ALL capped. The founder of **The Golf Greenkeepers Association** (on Taylors right) is also capped. But in 1920 in The Open Exhibition Tent at Deal, having embraced golf course architecture, he has also embraced the Homburg hat.

The Capped ones were not deterred. They counter attacked strongly, led by four Open Champions with one Sherwood Forester at the rear.

Willie Park Jnr., still on the active list, produced the first serious writing on golf architecture in **'The Game of Golf'** (1896). Between 1900 and 1919 he built 50 courses in Britain and 5 in France. Another 40 in the USA included the Grove Park Inn Course at Asheville N.C., recently pared down because the Inn seems to be getting bigger than the golf course.

After James Braid's first Open in 1901, he was designing as well as winning again in 1905/6/8/10. Henley, Northampton, Oswestry, St. Austell and West Hove belong to this period.

John Henry Taylor, five times Open Champion and six times runner-up, was not far behind with Clevedon, Eastbourne Downs, Heaton Park, Queens Park, Bournemouth & Seaford.

Harry Vardon won one U.S., and six Open titles. His earliest designs included Letchworth, Little Aston, Mendip, Sandy Lodge and Saffron Walden. He might have done much more, but his health slowed him down.

Lastly, in 1919, a circle within a 40 mile radius of Nottingham would contain only one course NOT designed by Tom Williamson, pro/greenkeeper at the Notts. Golf Club.

But the Homburgs were coming.



Harry S. Colt at St Cloud, France, circa 1913.

**"They donned the felt Homburg hat of commerce"**

They too put up a team of five, captained by Harry Colt, R. & A. Rules Committee, Cambridge Captain, Lawyer, Sunningdale Secretary, and finally No. 1 course architect of the amateurs. He scored 20 layouts in his first eight years, finally leaving Sunningdale in 1913 to go solo. His associates Dr. Alistair MacKenzie, the Leeds medical practitioner, and Hugh Alison, Secretary of Stoke Poges followed his lead.

J.F. Abercromby was not a prolific designer, but was highly respected. His new course at Addington was a gem, stolen now by housing needs, though the Old Course is fortunately still there. He checked out the opposition by working with Park earlier at Coombe Hill.

Herbert Fowler, who had designed Walton Heath, co-operated with Abercromby at Cowdray Park and West Kent (now moved to Downe). All three were involved in the early days of Worpleton. Fowler started playing golf at the late age of 35 and planned Walton Heath because of a family connection. He then completed five British courses and one in Los Angeles before the 1914 war.

On quantity, The Caps halved one game and won the rest, even giving a stroke a hole. But if we assess quality in the results, I should say it was honourably halved.

The flood of new courses did not

Caps well to the fore at Sundridge Park, circa 1913.



stop completely between 1914 and 1918; it slowed to a trickle. Only MacKenzie and Alison were young enough to join the Army. But in 1920, both sides returned to the offensive.

The amateurs struck first. Colt & Alison produced one book, 'Some Essays on Golf Course Architecture', and Alistair MacKenzie produced another. He included in his book a list of the 13 features essential in an ideal golf course, this catching the readers imagination, as simple summings-up often do, despite what they leave out. Historians have mistakenly quoted from this book ever since, but I can now reveal for the first time that MacKenzie first outlined his

13 points not in book form, but when lecturing to the Northern Section of the Golf Greenkeepers Association. **Greenkeepers First — The World Second!** He obviously got his priorities right.

In case you have forgotten what he said up there, we shall start in the next issue where we leave off — with those 13 points, and a few extra for good measure. Incidentally, his book, 'Golf Architecture', costs about £350 now, so you might as well wait and get his points for nothing.

**FRED HAWTREE**

*A Homburg behatted forebear of The Author.*

