

HIGHLIGHTS Of Tom Bendelow's golf career

- 1868 September 2, 1868, Thomas "Tom" Bendelow, the eldest son of John & Mary Ann (Edward) Bendelow, is born in Aberdeen, Scotland. Young Tom learns to play golf from his father becoming a very proficient player, traveling to play various links in Scotland and England. His vocational training is that of a typesetter for *the Aberdeen Evening Express*.
- 1892 Tom Bendelow immigrates to New York City to work for the *New York Herald* newspaper.
1893-4 His first attempt at golf course design occurs while staying at a resort located at the head of Barnegat Bay, NJ.
His first paid golf job is as an instructor for the Charles Pratt Family at their Glen Cove, Long Island estate, where he lays out a six-hole course. [that layout would eventually become part of the Queens County Country Club.]
- 1894-9 Over the next several years, Tom would layout scores of golf courses in the NY & NJ area. He also participates in "professional" golf competitions in the NYC area.
- 1895-6 In association with A.G. Spalding & Bros, Tom opens and manages America's 1st indoor golf school in the Berkeley Gymnasium of the Carnegie Hall Building, NYC.
- 1897 Bendelow loses a two game match to Walter Travis on the last hole. That same day, he and Travis design a 9-hole course for the Flushing Athletic Club, LI, NY.
- 1899 "Tom Bendelow has laid out 150 golf courses in the past eighteen months." (*The Fort Wayne (IN) News*). The volume of Bendelow's work spreading the game now begins to be reported. Bendelow is hired by the NYC Park Dept to redesign, expand and operate the Van Cortlandt Park Golf Course in the Bronx, the country's first 18-hole municipal golf course.
Bendelow thus becomes the country's 1st Golf Course Superintendent and is the first to:
- Introduce reserve play times (tee times)
 - Install eight-minute play start time intervals
 - Make use of Marshals on the golf course
 - Require instruction for caddies and regulations for their employment
 - Offer public instruction at the course, open to men and women, and
 - Promote the creation of open player associations to improve play and provide opportunities for open competitions.
- [The success of NYC's Van Cortlandt Park Golf Course establishes the worth of public golf and sets a standard that would be followed by cities and parks agencies across the US and Canada] .
- 1900 Tom Bendelow organizes The Eastern Professional Golfers Assn. with Tom Bendelow as President, George Low as VP and James Laign as Secretary/Treasurer.
- 1900-1 Bendelow accompanies Harry Vardon on his 1900 American tour and plays with Vardon in several exhibitions. He also caddies for Vardon in the 1900 U.S. Open at Wheaton, IL. A.G.Spalding hires Bendelow as Manager of its Golf Department, to promote golf and assist localities and clubs in establishing new golf courses all across the United States and Canada. Bendelow moves to Spalding's Headquarters offices in Chicago, IL.
- 1901 Tom opens an indoor golf school in the basement of Spalding's Chicago offices, offering lessons and golf games for Chicago golfers during the winter months.
The May 1901 issue of the *American Golfer* notes that Tom Bendelow has laid out more golf courses than anyone else.
- 1904 Bendelow serves as a golf competition official at the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis, MO. He also serves as the manager of the 1904 Western Golf Open at Exmoor links, NJ.. Tom is elected VP of the Jackson Park Golf Club, Chicago (an early public players' assn.)

- 1905 With Robert White and William Yeoman, Tom Bendelow organizes and incorporates the Western Professional Golfers Assn. Serves as Secretary & Treasurer.
- 1907 Tom is made Editor of the annual *Spalding's Official Golf Guide* and remains so until 1917. Bendelow advocates the lengthening of golf courses to accommodate the new rubber golf ball. He continues to manage many of WGA's golf tournaments.
- 1908 While visiting St. Andrews in Scotland, Bendelow and Jimmy Herd defeat the St. Andrews professionals, Gourlay and Greig, by 4 and 2.
- 1909 Officiates at the Western Amateur Golf Championship. Bendelow now estimates his course layouts number over five hundred.
- 1912-17 Conducts annual lectures at the University of Illinois on golf course design and construction, the first introduction of golf design into the university classroom.
 "Tom Bendelow, The father of public golf courses, has laid out 350 public golf courses to date."
 (*The St. Petersburg Evening Independent*).
- 1915 Tom opens his own office in Chicago to handle renovations and design consulting work.
- 1916 He is now estimated to have laid out over 600 golf courses in the US and Canada. Bendelow leaves A.G.Spalding to become the Manager of the Golf Department for Ashland Sporting Goods, Chicago, IL. Ashland will subsequently be acquired by Thos. E. Wilson & Company and Bendelow is Wilson's first Golf Department Manager.
- 1917 Tom acquires a US patent for the design for a new, more resistant golf ball. Thos. E. Wilson & Co. promotes a line of "*Tom Bendelow*" signature golf clubs.
- 1918 GOLF Magazine ad cites Bendelow as "Oldest Golf Course Architect in America".
- 1920 Bendelow joins the American Park Builders firm as Chief Golf Architect, replacing Wm. Langford.
- 1926 Tom promotes the opening of a public golf school for boys with Chick Evans as Principal.
- 1936 March 24, 1936, Tom Bendelow dies at his daughter's home in River Forest, IL
- 2005 Tom Bendelow is inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame at the Glen Club, Glenview, IL

Over the four decades that Thomas Bendelow worked, he has been credited with the creation of over six hundred golf courses (That number is very likely low since it was made some three decades before he retired from the business). More than half of these were municipal or public courses affording the opportunity for thousands of people, men and women, young and old, wealthy and working class, to experience the game of golf for the first time. From these roots, legions of players have evolved. It can truly be said that "more people have learned to play golf on a Bendelow designed course than that of any other golf course designer".

Moreover, the sheer extent and geographic spread of his work drew vast numbers into the game, creating the demand for even more courses, clubs, balls, equipment and related business opportunities. The demand for more challenging course layouts also emerged as players acquired greater skills and the permanence of the game was assured. Financial resources for bigger, longer, more difficult courses and higher construction and architect fees then became available, a trend that Tom had written about in the 1890s. The Golden Age of Golf Design and the architects that made their reputations there owe much to those that established golf's foundation in America.