

Henry Cotton, MBE.

The public schoolboy who changed the face of professional golf.

Barred from a clubhouse, he picknicked from the boot of his Rolls Royce out of a hamper from Fortnum & Masons.

Married to an Argentinian heiress Sir Henry Cotton lived life as he loved it - luxuriously and to the full.

Friend of Kings, partner to Princes, no one has done more to bring the game within reach of all levels of society.

The year ended sadly with the death of one of golf's greatest characters, Thomas Henry Cotton, a month short of his 81st birthday.

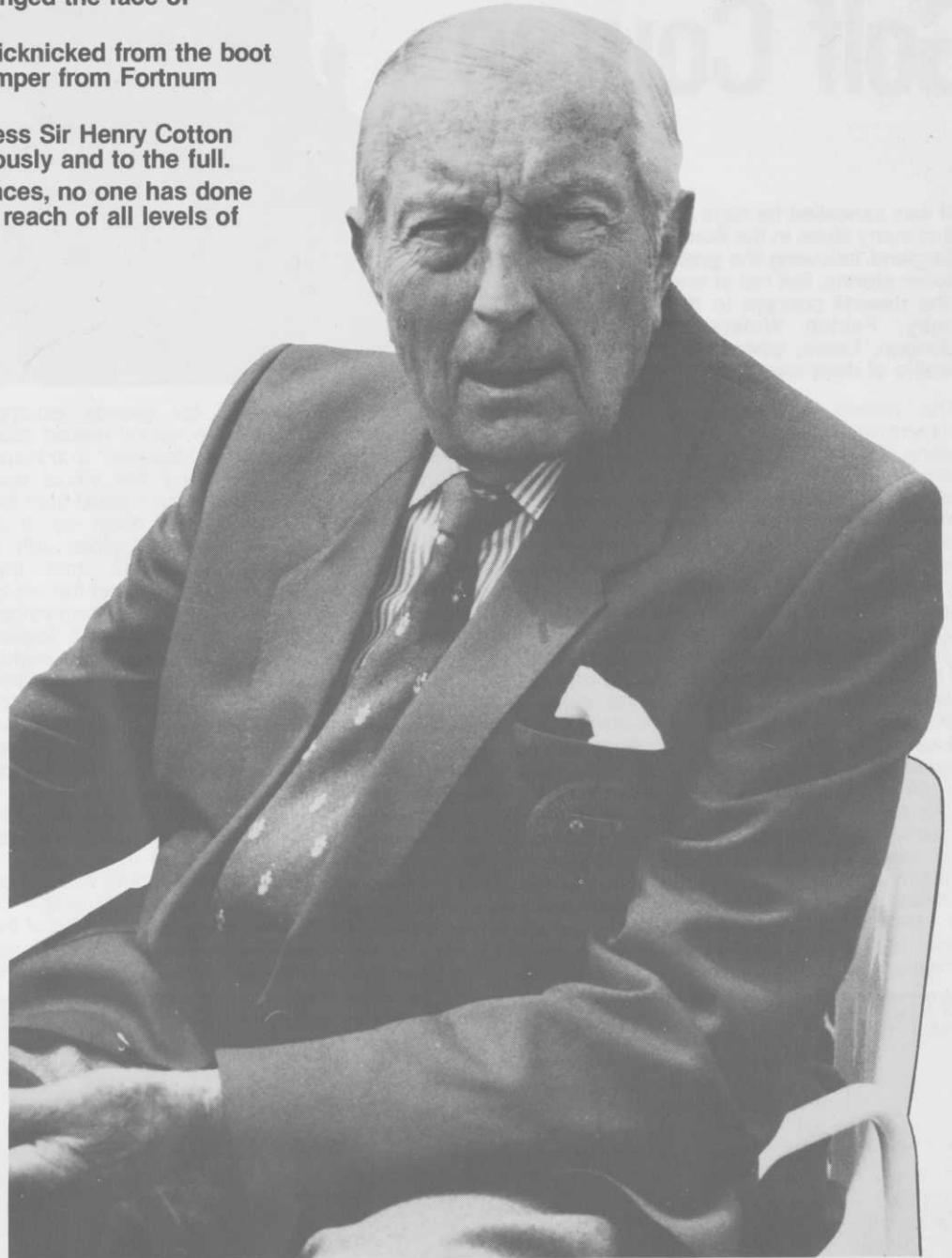
Controversial to the very end, Henry will no doubt revel in his last poser to officialdom, whether he will in future be referred to as "the late Sir Henry Cotton" or just plain Henry Cotton MBE. At least the long awaited recognition was given to him and he knew a month before he died.

No man gave more or fought harder for the professional game and this applies not only to golfers but greenkeepers as well. Latterly, his playing days over, he took an increasing interest in course design and maintenance and was a regular visitor to new constructions and irrigation schemes all over the country, discussing with a considerable depth of knowledge the needs of the greenkeeper. Although spending winters at his beloved Penina, Henry made England his home for the summer to attend the Open Championship and Test Matches at the Oval and Lords. In between he squeezed in his personal appearances, usually for a fat fee - and who can blame him!

The stories of Cotton are legendary and no doubt someone is already compiling a best seller of his life interspersed with a host of anecdotes. A conversation with Cotton was invariably one way - he spoke and you listened, but it was never boring, always informative.

Henry was a regular reader of this publication and only shortly before his untimely death wrote a short note to say how much he enjoyed receiving his copy asking for it to be redirected to his London address.

If one may be permitted a personal recollection it will be the advice he offered when discussing how to play a hole at the Berkshire. "Don't try anything fancy, my boy. Keep the ball on the cut grass - you are less likely to get into trouble". Such philosophy could be regarded as sound advice in many fields other than golf.



Thomas Henry Cotton
Born at Holmes Chapel,
Cheshire
26th January, 1907

- 1934 Open Champion:
Royal St. Georges,
Sandwich
- 1937 Carnoustie
- 1948 Muirfield

- Winner:
- Belgian Open 1930-34-38
- Italian Open 1936
- German Open 1936-37-38-39
- French Open 1946-47
- Argentine Open 1930

- Ryder Cup:
Three appearances
1929 - Moortown
1937 - Southport
1947 - Portland, Oregon
- Non-playing Captain:
1953 Wentworth

- Hon Member of the
Royal & Ancient
Captain of P.G.A.
1934-48
- Founder Member of the
Golf Foundation
- Awarded:
Harry Vardon Trophy 1938
Walter Hagen Award 1979

Seventeen holes in one
during his competitive
playing career

Had the Dunlop 65 golf ball
named in honour of his round
of 65 in the Open at
Royal St. Georges in 1934
