

GREENKEEPERS LIBRARY

Grown men are not supposed to hero-worship and upon reaching middle age there are few this reviewer holds in God-like awe. One can genuinely admire many men, golf writers like Longhurst and Darwin for example, or players like Harry Vardon, Bobby Jones, and Jack Nicklaus; though hero-worship is not something I reserve specially for them.

My hero – yes, I have one – is Harry Shapland Colt, the golf course architect who left an indelible mark on every course he ever touched. A golfer will find this man's genius in so many places that it is difficult to single out a single example, though Pine Valley springs to mind and is one Colt course I have played and would happily play to the exclusion of all others for the rest of my days.

Colt helped to change the face of some half million acres of this planet and his lasting legacy include such championship courses as Muirfield, Lytham St Annes, Wentworth, Hoylake, Sunningdale and Sandwich, together with lesser publicised gems the like of Swinley Forest, Tandridge and Worplesdon. If you are not impressed you must be a golfer from a different planet!

Views such as mine are shared by every golf course architect that ever drew breath, none more than Fred Hawtree, himself an architect of great note and the author of *Colt & Co, Golf Course Architects*, which is undoubtedly the best book to come across my threshold in a long, long time. The British Association (now 'Institute') of Golf Course Architects says that golf's classic attitudes should still inspire modern design, and this first publication under Fred's own publishing imprint – Cambuc Archive – accepts that belief. On it, Colt virtually founding a profession. Fred Hawtree describes Colt's career from schooldays to old age; fits in a wedge of letters which he and partners Alison and Morrison exchanged between 1939 and 1951 and then sums up his legacies and adds three contemporary articles by him and about him, plus a 300 plus list of their courses. Greenkeepers are essentially thinking men and have a great empathy with design excellence. As such they will appreciate more than any the thinking behind this great architect's unrivalled quest for perfection. I urge every reader to buy the book, – there will be no disappointment.

Colt & Co, Golf Course Architects, by Fred Hawtree, is published in hardback by Cambuc Archive at £28.50.

The making of a golf course is still shrouded in an element of mystery for most people and this may be understood more clearly when one considers just how complex the whole business can be and how few witness its nativity. An unusual, indeed unique, approach to lifting the veil is presented in the form of a novel – *Driving The Green*

– by John Strawn, a writer who has drawn on practical experience in the US golf construction business and who takes us from the developers eyes through to evolution of the architect's imagination.

We meet the clearing crew – bulldozers crashing through the undergrowth – and see lakes dug and dirt taken to form the course's characteristic outlines, rolls and plateaus. The shaper, the artist whose brush is a giant earthmover, is here too, painting the architects desires with the earth as his medium. Of course, the greenkeeper plays a vital part and it all adds up to an (earth) moving story which will fascinate and amuse both golfers and those connected with the vast golf industry.

Driving The Green – The Making of a Golf Course, by John Strawn, is published in hardback by Harper Collins at £16.99.

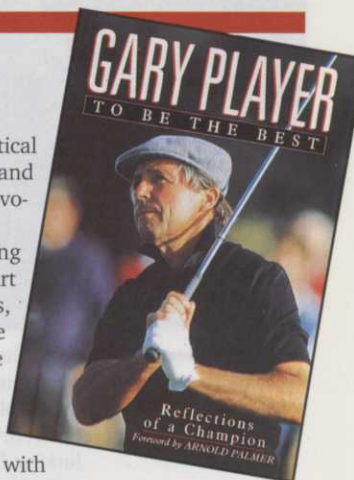
When the 'Big Three' really meant something, Gary Player was one of the famous trio and proved beyond doubt that a good little 'un was equal to any of the big guys in the world. He has gone on proving it through 40 or more years of top competitive golf and is still a force to be reckoned with, both in Regular and Senior Tour events. He has carved a whole new career that has his contemporaries reeling.

It is well known that Gary was and is a fitness fanatic and his daily regime still lasts an hour... though now fellow professionals who used to smile at his antics 20 years ago and dismissed him as some kind of crank follow him into the fitness caravan on the USA Seniors Tour.

The book, *Gary Player – To Be The Best: Reflections of a Champion*, is his autobiography, in which one of golf's immortals analyses his own success and that of other great players, to reveal what makes a champion both on and off the golf course.

This is an intensely private story and covers both the elation of victory and the downside of a career where he made a few enemies and was the subject of death threats. For my money, he remains a figure of admiration and a truly great golfer. If I had to rely on just one person to play to the pin from a bunker – and my life depended upon the outcome – I'd choose Gary Player. Written with Michael McDonnell, a delightful and astutely observant golf correspondent for over 25 years, the book is sheer joy and a worthy addition to any golfer's library.

Gary Player – To Be The Best: Reflections of a Champion, is published in hardback by Sidgwick and Jackson at £15.99.

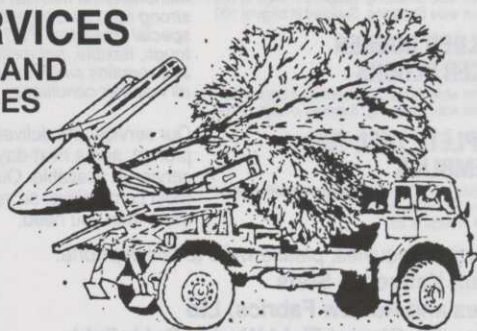


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