

BOOK REVIEW

THOSE so called "fortunates" who witnessed live the final stages of the 1989 Ryder Cup match between GB/Europe and the USA, at the much hyped and horribly overcrowded Belfry, or indeed the countless millions who, in the greater comfort of their own homes, watched the excellent camera coverage on television, will recall again and again 'The Tie of '89'.

As a series the matches were really quite spectacular and Ryder Cup fever certainly took hold of the British public as never before. It therefore came as no great surprise to this reviewer that an "official" version of the match history, bearing the approval of such a revered body as the P.G.A., was available on the bookshelves a mere eight weeks after the cheering had died.

Entitled **The Official History of the Ryder Cup 1927-1989** by Michael Williams, (200 pages; Stanley Paul £14.95) this particular work is both definitive and immediately respectable, though it is by no means the first history written about seed merchant Sam Ryder's dream, a dream which took years to mature, which at one time looked in danger of dying, and which is now transformed into a twentieth century promotional dream ticket.

I've often wondered about these "official" book tags though, and confess to a sneaky admiration for many 'unofficial' tomes - especially those purporting to tell the "real truth", the unexpurgated editions so to speak, as in the "unofficial" Frank Sinatra Story which spelled out things Sinatra would have preferred kept secret.

But this journal is about golf and I must address the subject at hand. So... let us examine how this "official" version is different from, say, Michael Hobbs' quite recently published excellent Ryder Cup history?

I can find very little contained within the PGA approved version, historically, that is not in Hobbs' interpretation, save the inclusion of the resulting most recent tie at The Belfry. What is different - and **vive la difference** - is the presentation and writing style.

Reading Michael Williams is an enjoyment I share with countless others, for he is a skilful newspaperman who

might best be described as 'the thinking golfer's journalist.' This book is a bonny slice of the man, each chapter about the length of a proper newspaper article, each expertly researched and each presented in Williams' own highly individual and instantly recognisable style.

This excellent book, covering as it does the true, unforgettable facts of those twenty one wins by The United States, the mere five wins by the Great Britain & Northern Ireland cum European teams and the two tied matches - perhaps more memorable to our side than the opposition - is as complete as one might hope.

It is interspersed throughout with the almost obligatory team photographs and, using first person accounts, gives fresh insights from such worthies as Sam Torrance, Lee Trevino and Henry Cotton, (interviewed shortly before his death) who lay before us their own interpretations of the triumphs and tragedies that sixty years of sporting Ryder Cup warfare have brought.

The book can be said to encapsulate the spirit of what is a unique golfing contest and for that reason alone - and the aforementioned euphoria still sweeping through the burgeoning golfing population, it will fully entertain a ready and appreciative audience.

The Official History of the Ryder Cup 1927-1989 by Michael Williams is published by Stanley Paul at £14.95.

In the past two decades the European golf tour has changed dramatically - for the better. Prize money is higher, competition is keener, crowds are bigger, interest more intense, playing facilities and standards greatly improved.

This development has been traced in a number of excellent books and the literature of the game has charted the progress that has been made.

But the story of the journeyman professional, the middle-of-the-table golfer, so to speak, has never been told before. Now Ian Mosey, one of that happy band of pilgrims who roamed the courses of Europe in the seventies - and is still on the circuit as a full time competitor - describes a life which can be a mixture of wild optimism and deep despair,

though at all times his story is mixed with a tremendous sense of camaraderie and of fun.

His earliest experiences on the tour make amusing reading and involve professionals who have reached the very top as well as those who have faded quietly out of tournament golf. All are remembered with equal affection.

'On the Golf Tour' has been written in collaboration with Ian's father Don Mosey, "The Alderman" of BBC Radio's Test Match Special commentary team, who has thrown in for good measure his own experiences of golfing with cricketers around the world and of commentating on major golf occasions.

Above all, this is a story of a young man who only ever wanted to do one thing with his life - to play golf - and who has done it with immense delight for more than twenty years.

On The Golf Tour - A Journeyman Professional's Story - by Ian and Don Mosey is published by Methuen at £12.99.

That Ian Woosnam is popular with the Press and with his fellow professionals can almost go without saying. His lively character, his sheer determination and his quite incredible power (despite being only 5'4" tall) earn him favour and respect wherever he might be. In 'Ian Woosnam's Golf Masterpieces', he reveals a declared source of his inspiration...

"In this anthology I have tried to express some of my love for the game and just how much I owe it. The more you play and think about golf, the more you marvel at the demands it makes, not just on your physical skill but also on your temperament. The moment you think you have golf licked it comes behind you and bites you in the rear... the game can be agony and ecstasy... and that is as true for the professional as it is for the 28 handicapper."

Apart from selecting some of the immortal writings from the likes of Bernard Darwin, Pat Ward-Thomas, Herbert Warren Wind, Peter Dobereiner, Henry Longhurst, Henry Cotton, Bobby Jones and many others, Ian - or perhaps more correctly his

co-writer/editor Peter Grosvenor - intersperses each chosen piece with a short essay, a personal observation, and although this approach is commonplace in such anthologies it is done here with a thoughtfulness which is admirable.

In addition, and it is here that the book really scores, Ian unveils his own story, his playing "secrets", his early struggles and the days spent flogging round the minor circuits with a dodgy caravette and a diet of baked beans and dreams... all good stuff, it is a fine introduction to a worthwhile airing of some of the excellent literature of golf.

Ian Woosnam's Golf Masterpiece Classic Tales from the Clubhouse - is published by Sidgwick Softbacks at £9.99.

'Golf - The Golden Years' compiled by Sarah Baddiel, is a pictorial anthology celebrating the golden age, an age of amateurism and near innocence, one that lovers of the game think of with affection and a touch of nostalgia.

Although offered as an anthology, I would be happier in describing it as a picture book, illustrating as it does those one hundred and one things which go to make up a golfing collection; from the treasured, enormously expensive, and well-nigh unattainable, through to the ephemeral and somewhat doddier items (one collector we know hoards golfing score card pencils, each of the many thousands held identical save for the title of the club imprinted thereupon!) which might leave a question mark on the sanity of the collector.

The abundant coloured pictures are excellent, the chosen writers above criticism and the whole well presented. At £7.95 it is without doubt a bargain. The real pity is that much of the text is peppered with spelling and grammatical errors which appear either to have escaped or been ignored by the compiler, the proof reader and the publishers. An untidy, scruffy approach to an important subject which mars an otherwise fine publication.

Golf - The Golden Years. Compiled by Sarah Baddiel, is published by Bracken Books at £7.95.

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