

Today's Clubs Reflect Ideas of Early Masters

By **WILLIAM HARDY**
Professional, Chevy Chase (Md.) Club

We have honored our champion golfers and rightfully so, by naming them to the Hall of Fame and giving them other awards.

We have overlooked however, the master clubmakers and designers of some 70 or 80 years ago.

Golf clubs have been modernized and brought up-to-date to meet the demands of present day golf. However, modern golf clubs embody many features created by the bench artists of nearly three quarters of a century ago.

Horace G. Hutchinson's* book on golf, printed in London in 1891, brings to light some of the construction features developed by the early club makers that are still in evidence in modern clubs. Here is what he said:

"When the first edition of this book was published there was only one man in the kingdom who played with a club whose face was not intended to be a plane. This was the late Henry Lamb. He played with a 'bulger'. He went on playing with this new queer thing in the face of much derision but with such success that at least half (and the upper half) of the golfing world now plays with bulgers.

"Their merit is that they are easier to drive straight with. A ball hit on the heel of a bulger will not go swerving off to the right. A ball hit on the toe won't go to the left, or at least, to the same degree as with a plane-faced club.

Effect of Rotation

"Speaking in a general way, we may say that we slice off the heel and that we pull off the toe. It is all an effect of rotation. The face of the bulger is convex. The apex of convexity makes contact with the ball. When we strike a ball on the heel of the bulger we strike it on a face

which looks toward the right of that line. The inclination of the face tends to counteract the rotatory motion which is imparted to the ball owing to the hit of the face. Thus, it is far easier to drive straight with a bulger than a plane-faced club."

Have Bulger Faces

All present day wood clubs have bulger faces consisting of a roll from heel to toe of about 9 degrees.

Hutchinson also had this to say:

"A while back the great trouble was to get a cleek head thick enough in the blade. They were apt to bend in one place from hard hitting. But now we have cleeks and irons that have more weight at the back of the blade. The 'Carruthers' cleeks and irons have the principal of massing the weight a little farther behind the point of impact. This is because their shafts run down through the hosel. This dispenses with some two inches of the length of the hosel and the weight thus saved is added to the blade. Simpson of Carnoustie achieves a like result by making the shaft screw into the hosel."

In recent years the hosel on all iron clubs has been gradually reduced in length and the metal added to the sole and back of the blade. (Spalding iron heads have been screwed onto the shafts for many years.) (Wilson and Hagen drill the shaft hole through the entire length of the hosel on their iron heads.)

Here is another quote from Hutchinson:

"A patent for 'square-nose' wooden clubs was ventured in 1893. It was believed a square nose, effected by cutting the club head short and straight at the toe, gives a valuable guide to the eye for the direction in which the head should be travelling when it meets the ball. It also makes it virtually impossible for the player to lay down the club otherwise than square to the ball."

(This feature has been advertised in golf magazine by Golfcraft for the past year.)

We quote Hutchinson once more:

"A very good invention was submitted which consisted in nothing more than a narrow strip of leather laid longitudinally along the shaft beneath the leather grip. This strip told the golfer, by the sense of touch, where his club was, so to speak. He could tell, blindfolded, whether or not he was bringing the club down with its

face meeting the ball fairly. We have heard nothing of this lately. Probably its very simplicity has prevented its attracting notice."

(This has been used by Spalding on all clubs as far back as the hickory shaft. It is also a feature of Golf Pride grips.)

Some golfers will recognize these designs and ideas developed by master craftsmen and passed on to us so that we may enjoy the game a little more.

Only two club makers are mentioned by name in Hutchison's book. He says: "The wooden clubs in use by our ancestors would seem to have been of a stubborn, stout and inflexible nature. Then arose a great master clubmaker, one Hugh Philip, who wondrously refined golf club nature. Slim and elegant are the specimens of his art which have descended to us."

* Hutchison was the British amateur champion in 1886 and 1887.

PGA Championship Minimum Purse Set at \$50,000

Minimum purse for the 1964 PGA Championship had been raised from \$33,000 to \$50,000. Total prize money will depend on the gate and will be determined while the tourney is in progress. The 1963 purse was raised from a minimum of \$30,000 to \$80,900, making it the fifth richest of the year's events.

The PGA Championship will be played July 16-19 at Columbus (O). CC. The deadline for entries is 5 p.m. (EST), May 1 at the PGA National Headquarters in Dunedin, Fla. Sectional qualifying rounds of 36 holes are to be played June 1 and players on the tour will qualify at Westchester CC in Rye, N.Y., on June 2.

Exempt from qualifying are all former PGA champions, the 1964 Seniors' Teacher trophy champion, all members of the PGA's 1963 Ryder Cup team, Don Shock, head pro at Columbus CC, current sectional champions, the 1964 USGA Open champion and winners of all major PGA tournaments played between the 1963 and 1964 PGA championship. Also exempt are the 24 low scorers in the 1963 PGA Championship, the 20 leading official money winners of 1963 and the 10 leading money winners of 1964 at the time of the tournament.

The nine national competitions of the USGA during 1963 drew a combined total of 9,666 entries, the second largest figure in USGA history.

Carolinas Bustling with Tourist Resort Golf

Correspondent Jim Anderson in the Greenville, S.C. News sums it up as "the biggest change since Captain William Hilton came sailing along in 1663 on an exploration trip."

Golf in the Carolinas is attracting more and more players every year. During the last 30 years, South Carolina courses have increased from 38 to 101. North Carolina has had a similar growth from 83 to 201. And the course construction boom shows no signs of slackening.

Peak months in coastal golf are March and April, according to Jimmy D'Angelo, pro at the Dunes club at Myrtle Beach. Pro Wallace Palmer at Sea Pines notes that vacationing golfers play every day, often going 36 holes.

Part of the secret in golf activity in this area is its proximity to the populous northeast. Golfers who formerly drove to Florida for winter play now find that they can get up to two days more time on the fairways in the Carolinas.

Carolina weather averages in the 50's during the winter months. The climate is not the equal of Miami but a less than hardy golfer can withstand it. One hotel, the William Hilton Inn on Hilton Head Island, offers a free week the following year if snow falls on the island during a vacationer's holiday.

600 Clubs in Canadian GA

Membership in the Royal Canadian GA passed the 600 mark in 1963. There are now 603 clubs in the organization, an increase of 46 over the previous year.

RCGA sponsored four major tournaments last year. Its Canadian Open was won for the second time by Doug Ford. The Canadian Amateur went to Nick Westlock of Toronto. William Martin, 61, won the RCGA Seniors and Wayne Vollmer of Vancouver claimed the Junior title. Canadian Teams competed in the Americas Cup in Des Moines, Ia., and in the Commonwealth team matches in Sidney Australia.

Canadian teams competed in the Americas Cup in Des Moines, Ia., and in the Commonwealth team matches in Sidney Australia.

**Tell Them You Saw
The Ad In GOLFDOM**
