

Dates to Remember

DECEMBER 12th Annapolis Naval Academy Election Meeting

JANUARY 7th-11th Turfgrass '79 Baltimore Hilton

JANUARY 23rd-24th Virginia Turfgrass Conference Williamsburg, Virginia

FEBRUARY 4th-9th GCSAA 50th International Turfgrass Conference and Show.

A Course in Golf History

by Dave Kohl

Although such modern-day terms as "fore," "handicap" and "sand trap" are widely used, few golfers can tell you where the words originated.

Dave Thomas of San Bernardino not only has one of the world's greatest private golf collections but is also one of the foremost golf historians. Thomas, who is also a PGA pro, explained the origin of the above terms during a golf match recently.

"The terms 'fore,' 'handicap' and 'sand trap' actually originated at St. Andrews in Scotland," explained Thomas.

"In the 1770s, all golfers were required to wear red and before each shot had to yell, 'thou are forewarned.' Over the years, the expression was shortened to 'fore.'

"Surprisingly enough, sand traps, a nightmare for even today's finest golfers, came about because of sheep. In the early days and even today, sheep were allowed to graze over the St. Andrews course. The herdsmen, however, discovered that a number of their flock were dying off because of the strong, cold north wind that swept across the course. To protect the sheep, the sheepherders dug giant ditches to shelter the animals from the wind.

"Most of today's golfers have handicaps when they play but few could tell you where the word originated. It seems that in the early days at the private golf clubs when a less skilled golfer played another he had to wear a cap with a colored ribbon around to signify that he had been given so many strokes by his playing partner. Different color ribbons meant different strokes. The caps were kept at the clubhouse and placed in a long row so that they would be handy for the golfers. They became known as 'handy caps.'

"Some strange orders have also been handed down over the period of centuries to golfers to stop playing the game and practice archery. It seems their skill as archers was more in demand than their skill as golfers. They were needed to defend the country."

Credit - Divots, Calif. 1977