

The 'Seton Papers'

The Golfer's Magazine(Chicago,U.S.A.) of April 3rd 1914, page 75 contains the following note:

ARCHBISHOP SETON OF NEW JERSEY,IN REORGANISIING HIS FAMILY ARCHIVES,DISCOVERED THAT ONE OF HIS ANCESTORS INTRODUCED GOLF FROM HOLLAND INTO SCOTLAND AT THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.THE ARCHBISHOP HAS DETERMINED TO PURSUE HIS INVESTIGATIONS.

Robert Seton,D.D. titular Archbishop of Heliopolis, was born in Pisa,Italy on the 28th August 1839,he spent a considerable time of his life teaching at the American College of the Accademia in te Vatican in Rome and traveled intensively in Europe. Towards the end of his life he returned to New Jersey, where he had been ordained,and lived in the Convent of St.Elisabeth,Convent Station N.J.,where he died- 89 years old-on the 28th January 1928.According to his will his papers,chiefly consisting of notebooks, travel diaries and draft memoirs where divided into 4 parts which went to:

- 1.The Convent of St.Elisabeth,Convent Station,N.J.-07961
- 2.Seton Hall College,South Orange Avenue,South Orange,N.J.-07079
- 3.The New York Historical Society,170,Central Park West, New York,N.Y. - 10024
- 4.The Archives of The University of Notre Dame, 607,Memorial Library,Notre Dame,Ind.-46556

A search through these documents in the Spring of 1984 did not yield any references.However,in his diary for 1889 there is an entry reading:

"Mem.there are two little keys to the Box of Seton Papers." "
"One attached to a chainlet is kept in the small drawer " "
"of my writing desk in my bed-room. " "
"The,other in a marked envelope,is kept in the writing " "
"desk in my sitting room.(NYHS) " "
That box does not seem to be among the former documents.
Where did it go?

The Setons,who were direct descendants of the Scottish Setons,emigrated to the United States in the beginning of the 1800's and had large landholdings in Brooklyn N.Y. Robert Seton himself was not a golfer.

S.J.H.v.H.

Seton

The history of the Setons begins with Lambert Count of Lens (near Douaie), who married Adèle, the sister of William the Conqueror. Lambert (who died in the battle of Lille, 1055) had two sons Walter and Seier, who took part in the battle of Hastings in 1066. Walter and Seier de Lens were given the manor of Seton in England thereafter, which is where they changed their name to 'de Seton'. Seier however was captured at Dover in 1067 and moved to Scotland later in the same year. There he was granted lands in East Lothian along the Firth of Forth, around present-day Cockenzie, by king Malcolm Canmore and constructed the castle, which later came to be known as 'Seton Palace' (the only non-royal castle in Scotland to be called so). Not only was William the Conqueror his uncle, but his grandfather Count Eustace of Boulogne was married to Maud de Louvain, the granddaughter of the last male heir of Charlemagne. The Setons, like so many other Scottish families are of thus of Lemish extraction. Seier de Seton's niece (by his sister Judith de Lens whom William the Conqueror had betrothed to Waltheof, son and heir of the mighty Siward, Earl of Northumbria) Maud, took for her second husband David, Earl of Cumbria, son of king Malcolm Canmore, later to be king David I of Scotland. Walter de Seton 'The Fleming', son of Seier inherited the Scottish possessions and continued to Scottish Seton dynasty. His uncle Walter was the first of the English line of the Setons.

At the battle of Bannockburn on the 23rd June of 1314 Sir Alexander Seton played an informers role. His informations may well have led to the victory of Robert the Bruce.

The fifth Lord Seton married the daughter of the first Earl of Bothwell.

The seventh Lord Seton was appointed by the Scottish Parliament on the 17th December 1557 to be one of the commissioners to be present at the wedding of Mary Queen of Scots, in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris to the Dauphin of France (at the age of 15). His half-sister Mary Seton belonged to the court of Mary Queen of Scots.

When Queen Mary returned from France in 1561 the 7th lord Seton was worn in as Privy Councillor and appointed Master of her Household.

When David Riccio was murdered by Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley and other on the 9th of March 1566 in the evening, Lord Seton, with 200 horse attended the queen first to Seton palace and then to Dunbar, Darnley being compelled by threats to go with her.

Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley married Mary, Queen of Scots in the chapel of Holyrood on the 29th July 1565. He was murdered (by blowing up the Provost's House south of the Cowgate within the walls of Edinburgh) on the 10th February 1567.

After the murder the queen and James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell went to Seton Palace and remained there for several days and signed a marriage contract between them.

After this murder a 'Book of Articles' was drawn up in order to accuse the queen of having been an accomplice to the murder. It states that while she was at Seton Palace with Bothwell, they played: "one day richt oppinlie at the fieldis with the pal mall and goif."

(Robert Melville informs Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury on the 26th February 1567 that: Queen Mary has gone to Seton for repose and purgations; Drury asserts that the queen and Bothwell 'have been shooting at the butts against Huntly and Seton for a dinner at Tranent.')

On the 15th May 1567 Mary was married to Bothwell at Holyrood by protestant rites. On the 14th June 1567 they spent their last night together at Seton Palace. Bothwell was forced to flee to Norway.

In her happier days Mary would often come to Seton Palace to practice archery at the Seton Butts and golf (or pall mall?) on Seton Links.

It may have been that on one occasion she played with her friend Mary Seton for her necklace. She lost the game and her necklace went to Mary Seton. The necklace, together with a picture of Mary by Holbein, were brought into the Eglinton family by the marriage of a Montgomery with the heir of the Seton in or around 1611 and went to Eglinton Castle. There they were found by Lord Eglinton in the 19th century. The necklace was put up for auction at Christie, Manson & Woods in London in February 1894. The item was described as a necklace, earrings and a brooch, the necklace being composed of 14 enamelled gold clusters set with pearls, rubies and enamels and was knocked down to a Mr. Philips at £ 365.-. Experts whispered that it contained only a small portion of the original ornaments that were in it, and that the bulk of the jewels had been skilfully made to match those that were genuine. The necklace was then known as the 'Eglinton necklace'.

Mary Seton stayed with Queen Mary right until her execution at Fotheringay Castle in February 1587 at the age of 45.

The last Earl of Winton, representative of the Setons, joined the rebellion of 1715, for which his titles and estates were forfeited.

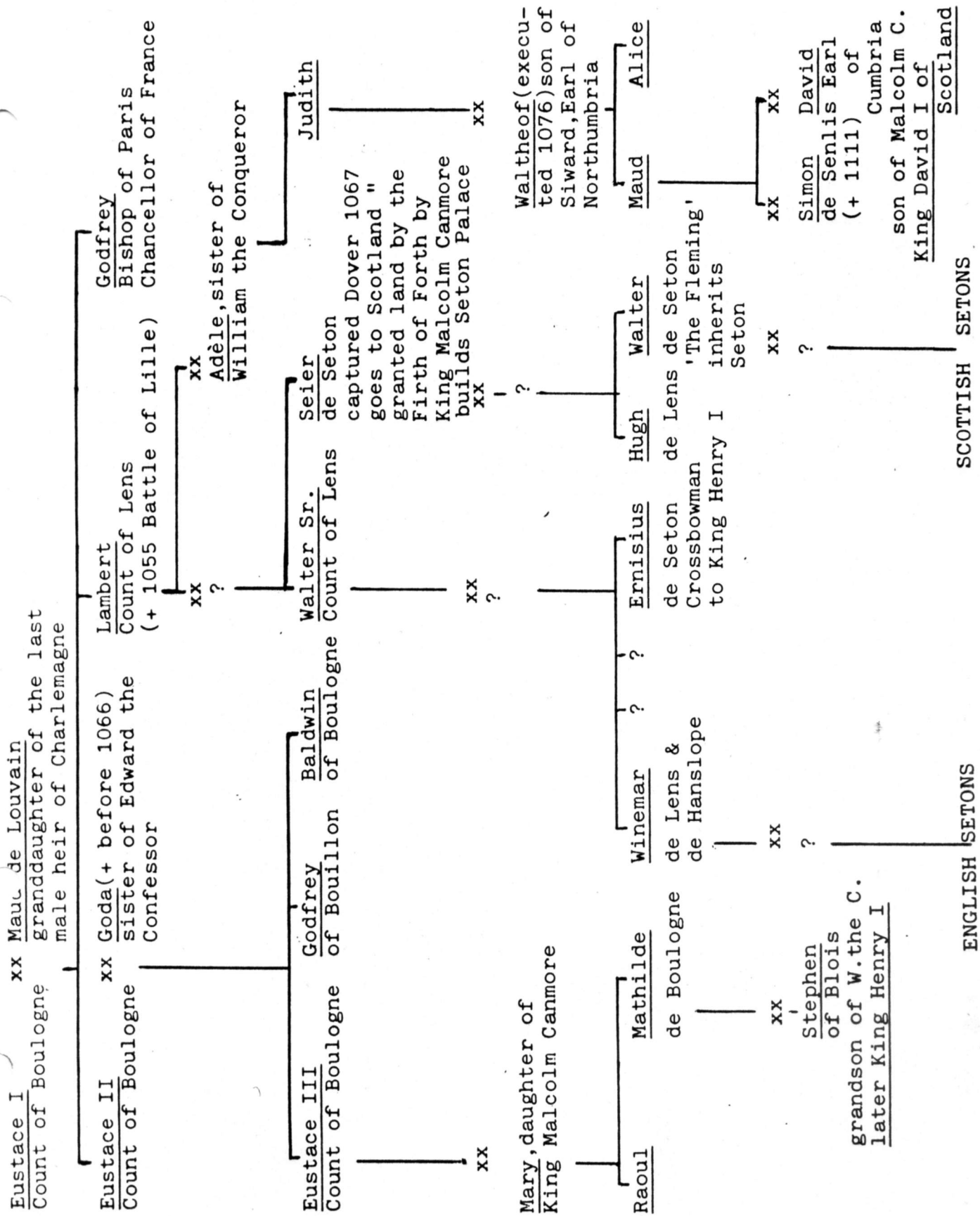
After that their chief seat, the Seton Palace, which even in royal charters had been recognised as the 'Palace of Seton', and for ages had been the scene of great magnificence, splendid hospitality and royal entertainment fell into decay.

Earls of Bothwell.

The daughter of the 1st Earl of Bothwell married the 5th Lord Seton. Her brother Patrick Hepburn, 2nd Earl of Bothwell played golf with King James IV on the 3rd February 1504 (on that day the Lords High Treasurers entered in their accounts:

Item to the King to play at the Golf with the Erle of Bothuile.....xliij s.) and commanded the reserve in the unfortunate battle at Flodden Hill where his royal opponent fell on the 8th September 1513.

James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell played golf (or pall mall?) with Mary Queen of Scots on Seton Links in 1567.



THE STUART KINGS, PALL MALL AND GOLF

JAMES I(1394-1437,reigned 1406-1437)

At his 1st Parliament in 1424 he forbids football(No mention is made of golf):

Item it is statute and the King forbiddis
that na man play at the fut ball under the
payne of iiij d.

JAMES II(1430-1460,reigned 1437-1460)

At his 14th Parliament on the 5th March 1457 he:

Decreetid and ordained,that the wapin-shawingis
be halden be the Lordis and Baronis,spirituale
and temporale foure times in the zeir.And that
fute-ball and golf be utterly cryit doune,and
nocht to be usit.And that the bowe merkis be maid
at ilk parochie kirk a part of buttis,and
schutting be usit ilk Sunday.

This is the first record of golf being mentioned in Scotland.

JAMES III(1451-1488,reigned 1460-1488)

At his 6th Parliament on the 6th May 1471 he declared it:
expedient that the fute-ball and golfe be abusit
in tyme cuming.

JAMES IV(1472-1513,reigned 1488-1513)

At his 3rd Parliament on the 16th May 1491 he ruled:

Item it is statute and ordainit that in na place
of the realme be there usit Fute-ball,Golfe
or uther sik unprofitabill sportis.

However,after the peace with England by the Treaty of
Glasgow in 1501 he must have started playing golf
himself.In the Accounts of the Lords High Treasurers
of Scotland there are the following entries:

1503-4 Feb. 3.Item to the King to play
at the Golf with the Erle of Bothuile(Bothwell)
.....xliij s.
Item to Golf Clubbis and Ballis
to the King that he playit with.....ix s.
1505-6 Feb.22.Item for xij Golf Ballis
to the King.....iiij s.
1506 July.18.Item the xviiij day of Julij
for ij Golf Clubbes to the King.....ij s.

In 1513,when the war had broken out again between
Scotland and England,Queen Catherine,wife of King Henry VIII
writes to Cardinal Wolsey:

Master Almoner from hence I have nothing to
write to you but that you be not so busy in this
war as we be here encumbered with it.I mean that
as touching my own concerns,for going further
when I shall not so often hear from the King,
and all his subjects be very glad,I thank God
to be busy with the golf,for they take it for
a pastime;my heart is very good to it and I am
horribly busy making standards,banners and bagets.

JAMES V(1512-1542, reigned 1513-1542)

No record of him having to do with golf. However during his reign the Registrum of Panmure records about 1527 of Sir Robert Maule(1497-1560):

ane man of comlièr behaviour, of his stature, sanguine in collure both of hyd and hair, colarique of nature and subject to suddane anger... He had gryt delyght in haukine and hountine..... Lykewakes he exercisit the gowf, and oft times past to Barry Links (near Carnoustie), quhan the wadsie (wager) was for drink.... This was the year of God 1527 or there about.

MARY, Queen of Scots(1542-1587, reigned 1542-1567)

When the 'Book of Articles' was composed which accused her of having been an accomplice to the murder of her husband Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley on the 10th February 1567 it stated that, while she stayed at Seton Palace shortly after the murder with James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell (the presumed murderer) they played:

One day richt oppinlie at the fieldis with the pal mall and golf.

Unsupported by records is the story that at an earlier time she played golf with Mary Seton on Seton Links for her necklace and lost it to Mary Seton.

During her reign, around 1550, the Town Council of St. Andrews appropriated 12 merks a year for the services of two rented matrons to tend to the injuries on the Links.

Injuries being mainly blindness and amnesia from blows on the head by carelessly wielded clubs.

On the 24th August 1554 there is an Act of the Deacon Convener of the four United Trades of the Canongate (Edinburgh):

Anent differences betwixt the Cordiners of the Canongate and the Cordiners and Gowf-ball makers of North Leith (i.e. John & Walter Paterson).

JAMES VI/I(1566-1625, reigned Scotland 1567-1603, England 1603-1625)

Upon coming to London in 1603 he commenced playing Pall Mall on St. James's Field.

In his instructions to his eldest son Henry Frederick he writes:

The exercises that I would have you to use are... palle-maillé and such like other-faire and pleasant field games.....

He also tried to promote the production of balls and clubs by appointing William Mayne royal clubmaker in 1603 and James Melvill and his associate exclusive ball makers and distributors in 1618.

During his reign there are to records from the Orkneys.

In 1585 James Dickson, servitor to the Master of the Orkneys, writes to Andrew Martin:

Ye will remember to bring with you one dozen commoun golf ballis to me and David Moncrieff.

In August 1614 the Earl of Caithness, while besieging Kirkwall, writes to James VI/I:

The walls were stronge, the cannon balls of the besiegers were broken like (wooden?) golf balls, and cloven in two halves.

HENRY FREDERICK, Prince of Wales (1593-1612)

When his father James VI/I came to London in 1603 Charlton House, Blackheath (still standing there today) was built for Prince Henry. He lived there, having two tutors, one of whom Mr. (later Sir) Adam Newton lived in nearby Charlton Lodge. After Prince Henry's death he moved to Charlton House.

According to his father's instructions he played golf or pall mall. An anonymous manuscript in the Harleian Library at Oxford (marked 6391) states:

At another time, playing at Goff, a game not unlike Pale-maille, whilst his schoolmaster stood talking with another and marked not his highness warning him to stand further off, the prince, thinking he had gone aside, lifted up his goff club to strike the ball; mean tyme one standing by said to him, beware that you hit not Master Newton, wherewith he, drawing back his hand, said, had I done so I had but paid my debts.

This incident must have occurred between 1603 and 1612.

On the 31st October 1606 the French Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Monsieur de Borderie, writes of Prince Henry in a letter to his friend Monsieur de Pusieux:

He plays willingly enough at tennis and at another Scots diversion very like Mail; but this always with persons older than himself, as if he despised those of his own age.

CHARLES I (1600-1649, reigned 1625-1649)

In 1629 he sent for a Frenchman by the name of John Bonnealle to construct a proper pall mall course in St. James's Field.

In 1635 he granted to Archibald Lumsden, who had spent £.425.14 sh. in the three preceding years "in bowls, malls and scopes" and in repairs to the mall, the sole right to furnish:

All the malls, bowls, scoops and other necessaries for the game of Pall Mall within the grounds of St. James's Field.

In 1639 Peter Mundy, in "Matters of Note", writes that he saw Charles I:

playing at Palle Malle by St. James's.

Commonwealth (1649-1660)

During this time the course fell into disuse and decay and a road was built over it, retaining the name Pall Mall.

A survey of 1650 states that 150 elm trees were:

standing in Pell Mell Walke in a very decent and regular manner on both sides of the Walke.

CHARLES II(1630-1685,reigned 1660-1685)

After the Restoration he had a new pall mall course constructed in St.James's Park parallel to the old course.

Although Charles II apparently played quite well,Edmund Waller may well have exaggerated in his verse about his play:

Here a well-polisht Mall gives us the joy
To see our Prince his matchless force employ,
No sooner has he touched the flying ball,
But 'tis already more than half the mall,
And such a fury from his arm has got
As from a smoaking Culverin 'twere shot.

In Samuel Pepys's Diary the following entries may be found:
2nd April 1661

To St.James' Park,where I saw the Duke of York
playing at Pele Mele,the first time that I ever
saw the sport.

15th May 1663

I walked in the Parke,discoursing with the keeper
of the Pell Mell,who was sweeping of it;who
told me of what the earth is mixed that do floor
the Mall,and that over all there is cockle
shell powdered and spread to keep it fast;
which however,in dry weather,turns to dust and
deads the ball.

13th July 1663

I met the Queene-Mother,walking in the Pell Mell,
led by my Lord St.Albans.

4th January 1664

Afterwards to St.James' Park,being unwilling to
go to spend money at the ordinary,and there
spent an hour or two,it being a pleasant day,
seeing people play at Pell Mell-it pleased me
mightily to hear a gallant,lately come from France,
swear at one of his companions for suffering
his man(a spruce blade)to be so saucy as to strike
a ball while his master was playing on the Mall.

3rd May 1669

Thence to St.James' Park,where the Duke of York
was playing in the Pell Mell,and so he called me
to him most part of the time that he played,
which was an hour,and talked alone to me.

JAMES VII/II(1633-1701,reigned 1685-1688)

When Duke of York we find him mentioned in the Diary of Samuel Pepys(see above).

When,as Duke of York,he resided in Holyrood House
in 1681/2 he is said to have staged a foursome,in which
he played with John Paterson,a cobbler,against two
English noblemen,a young boy Andrew Dickson acting
as fore-caddie.There are no records of this match and
historic research makes the event very unlikely.

WILLIAM(of Orange 1650-1702)and MARY(Stuart 1662-1694,reigned 1688-1702)

There are no records of the pall mall course being used any longer during their reign.

It is interesting to note that William III had a 'Klosbaan' constructed in the King's Garden of his palace Het Loo near Apeldoorn. This sport, which may have been one of the fore-runners of golf, had by then gone out of fashion for quite some time.

Holyrood House,
4th April 1603

Regisstrum Secreti Sigilli
Lib.LXXIIJ
fol.234

Ane Letter maid to William Mayne, bower burges of Edinburgh,
Makand and constituand the said Williame, during all the dayis
of his lyif-tyme, Mr. fledger, bower, club maker, and speir-maker
to his Hienes, alsweill for gayme as weir, and gevand to him
the offices thair of, with all feyis and casualities apperteining
and belanging thair to, and quhair of onie vtheris persounes
quhatsumeir that hes vsit and exercit, the saidis offices
of befoir hes beine in vse, with command thairin to his
Hienes thesaurer, present and to cum, to reddelie ansuer
and mak payment to the said Williame Mayne, of the zeirlie
fie and dewtie vsit, and wount to be payit for the dischargeing
of the saidis offices, to onie persoun of persounes in onie
tyme bigane, induring all the dayis of the said Williames
lyfetime, etc.

At. Halirudhous, the fourt day of Aprile, IM, sex hundrethe
thrie zeiris.

Per Signaturum

Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh

Salisbury
5 augustus 1618

Registrum Secreti Sigilli
Lib.LXXXVIJ
fol.169-170

Ane Letter maid makand mentioun that our Souerane Lord vnderstanding that thair is no small quantitie of gold and siluer transported zeirlye out of his Hienes kingdome of Scotland for bying of golf ballis, vsit in that kingdome for recreatioun of his Majesties subjectis, and his Hienes being earnestlie dealt with by James Melvill, in favors of Williame Bervick and his associate, who onlie makis, or can mak golf ballis within the said kingdome for the present, and were the inbringeris off the said trade thair: The said James Melvill vnderstanding by them and vther pur peopill (who now for laik of calling wantis maintenance), whome he sall adjoyne to the said Williame Bervick and his associate, to furnische the said kingdome with better golf ballis, and at ane moir easie rate then have beine sauld there these manie zeiris bypast: In consideratioun quhairof, his Majestie, bothe tendring the generall weill of his subjectis and increase of vertew within his said kingdome, geving and granting vnto the said James Melvill, with Williame Bervick and his associate, and sik vtheris as the said James Melvill sall adjoyne to them, onlie libertie to mak golf ballis within the said kingdome for the spaice of tuentie ane zeiris allanerlie, dischairging all vtheris alsweill of making as selling any golf ballis maid within the kingdome bot those that ar maid by the said James, his servantis, and William Bervick and his associate: Provyding allwayis, that the (said) merchandis sall not be restranit from importing and selling the said golfe ballis so brocht home or maid by the saidis patentis: Provyding lykwayis, that the saidis patentaris exceid not the pryce of four schillingis money of this realme for everie ane of the saidis golfe ballis as for the pryce thair of: And to the

effect the said James and his associates may have the benefits of his Majestie's grant, his Hienes by these presentis dothe expresslie prohibite and dischairge and forbid all and sindrie his Majesties subjectis, and vther persounes quhatsymever, that nane of them presume, nor tak vpone hand, to mak or sell anie golf ballis maid within the said kingdome, vtheris then the said James Melvill and his deputies, with the said Williame Bervick and his associate, for the spaice foirsaid, or to utter or sell the samyne to his Hienes subjectis vpone quhatsymever collour or pretence, vnder the paine of escheitting of all suche ballis so to be made or sauld; the ane half off the benefite aryssing thairby to come to our Souerane Lordis use, and the vther half to the use of the said James Melvill and his assignayis onlie: And that the said letter be extendit in the best form, with all clauses neidfull, with power in the samyn to the said James, by himself, his deputies, and servantis, in his name, to seirche, seik and apprehend all sik golf ballis as sall be maid or sauld within his Hienes said kingdome vtherways then according to the trew meaning of his Majesties grant, and to escheit the samyn in manner aboue specifeit. And for the better tryell heirof, his Majestie ordanes the said James Melvill to have ane particular stamp of his awin, and to cause mark and stamp all suche ballis maid be him and his foirsaidis thairwith; and that all ballis maid within the kingdome found to be vtherwayis stamped sall be escheated in maner foirsaid.

Gevin at our Court of Sallisbery the fyft day of August, the zeir of God IM.VIC. and auchteine zeiris.

William Bervick's associate.

When King James VI of Scotland issued a patent on the exclusive manufacture and sale of golf balls in Scotland to James Melvill, in favour of William Bervick and his associate, "who onlie makis, or can mak golf ballis within the said kingdome for the present, and were the inbringeris of the said trade thair;" at his Court at Salisbury on the 5th August 1618 the associate is mentioned 5 times throughout the patent, but never by name.

The mentionings of the associate cease when the patent comes to the prosecution of infringers of the monopoly.

Was this associate ~~a~~ man from Holland and is that why he is not mentioned by name in, what was to be, a Scottish monopoly against the import of golf balls from Holland? Clearly, it was the associate who knew how to make golfballs. Also, as emanates from the patent, James Meilvill was to provide the associate with Scottish apprentices to learn the trade and thus reduce to prevailing unemployment in Scotland.

Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh

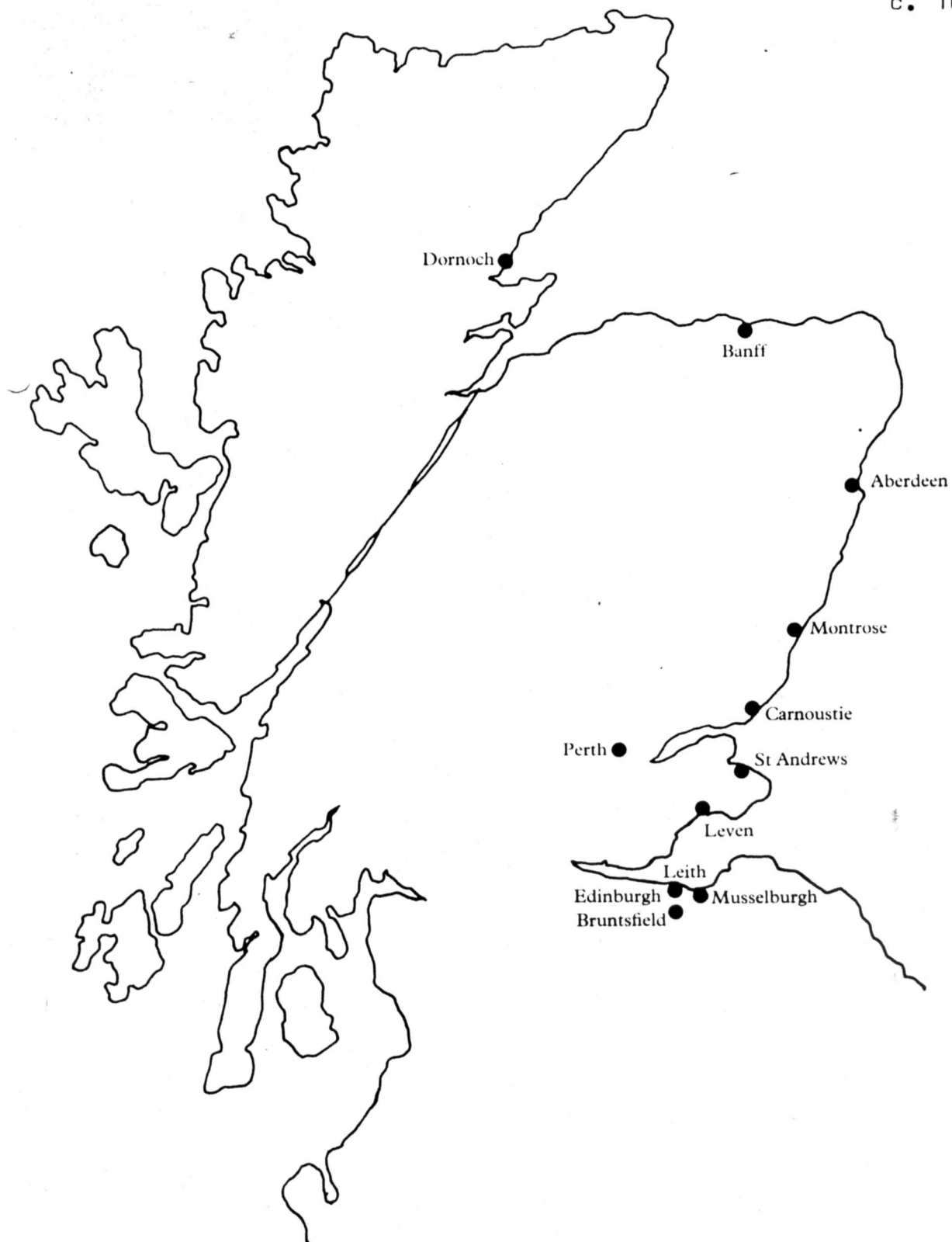
Inv.No.PSI/87

Registrum Secreti Sigilli, Lib.LXXXVIJ, fol.169/70

2. Was the associate perhaps a man from the Brabant ball making centre of Goirle and is that where the later Gourlays commence?

S.J.H.v.H.

Places in Scotland where golf is believed to have been played
c. 1650



Literature:

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