

30 SAXENRODEWEG
BENTVELD, 2116 VA
023-240169

10th April 1979

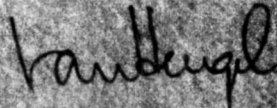
Mr. Peter Davies
Box 345
Crescent, Georgia 31304
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Davies,

Mr. Ian T. Henderson, whom I happened to meet in England last week, told me of your wish to possess a copy of 'Early Golf', so here it comes. Please do not spread the word around that you obtained one, since it is about the last copy I have!

Kindly let me have your cheque for 12 dollars to cover costs and mail.
With kind regards I am

sincerely yours



Steven J.H. van Hengel

Box 345
Crescent
Georgia 31304.

(1)

P. Davies

April 18 1979.

Dear Mr. van Hengel:

Profound thanks for sending me your excellent work Early Golf, for which I enclose my cheque. I have perused it minutely and with fascination. The account of the complex sequences and relationships of spel metten colve, the various types of mail and palle-maille, the Dutch adaptation of malie-banen, and the modern game of Kolven, is of very great value, and explains much that was previously impenetrable to the non-Netherlandish student. An amazing story it is too.

Of your numerous fascinating detailed points, the two most striking for me are: (1) the deduction from the royal Scottish decrees of 1424 and 1457 that not only was golf probably

introduced into Scotland between these dates but that also the introduction might well have been prompted by the ban on football; and (2) the suggestion that the feathery ball was a Scottish invention stimulated by the problem of excessive importation of sajet balls. Two related questions: Were feathery balls ever used in the Netherlands? and, Would I be right in guessing that the feathery would be both lighter and harder (because of the bolting of the feathers) than the sajet? If so it would fly higher and doubtless further thus playing a key role in the distinctive nature of Scottish golf.

Another subject which your work tantalizingly illuminates is that of the tee. I note that the van der Borch monkey etching of 1590 unmistakably shows a peg tee, used in a form of colven played

without a ⁽²⁾malie-baan or any other
lane, wall or rampart; whereas
(your page 3) teeing-up was forbidden,
at least at some early period, in
malie-baan. This suggests to me
a distinction between play in the
malie-baan, which one would expect
to be along the ground or anyway
with low, bouncing shots, and
against high, essentially golf-like,
drives in a cross-country version
— for which a tee would be
entirely suitable.

I also note the van Lyken
cizhing of 1680 showing the use
of a tee of snow.

Some questions:

- (1) Do you know of any Dutch
tees made of sand or mud?
- (2) What were the Dutch terms

for tee, whether in the form of
peg or snow?

(3) (Reiterating my question in
my last letter to you) — can you
suggest any possible Dutch etymology
for the unaccountable Scottish word
tee? To enlarge on the Scottish
history of this word, it has several
mysterious aspects:

The first occurrence of the noun is
in the unique form teaz, in
Wedderburn's Vocabulary of 1673,
translating Latin statumen = "a stand
or perch." The earliest (apparent)
occurrence of the verb to tee is in
the (also unique) form tie, in
Thomas Kincaid's Diary entry for
Jan. 20, 1687: "The way to learn
this is to tie your ball at first
pretty high from the ground."

⁽⁵⁾
The next occurrences, all in the form tee, are in the 18th century. As I mentioned in my previous letter, several of these, which I quoted, seem to mean simply "mud" or possibly "wet sand".

And the final mystery, which has been baffling golf historians at least since H.S. Everard, is, why do all the early rules specify that "your tee must be upon the ground"? I have some partial (possible) solutions to some of these problems, but strongly suspect that only Dutch evidence will solve the generality. Any help you can give will be of very great interest.

Have you done any further work since your 1872/74 edition? If so

I should love to see it.

Meanwhile I am awaiting
the advance copy of Henderson/Stirk,
with bated breath.

Deepest thanks again for
your work, and your kindness
in sending it so promptly.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Davies.

S. J. H. van Hengel
Saxenrodeweg 30
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Tel. 023-240169

28th April 1979

Dear Mr. Davies,

This is to thank you for your letter of 18th April and the enclosed check. I appreciate your kind remarks on Early Golf. It was but an essay. I am in the process of writing a book, which will contain more facts and-if that can be managed-more pictures. Some of the illustrations are very attractive. I have pictures of some 300 paintings, prints etc. dating back to before 1700 and depicting in all well over 1000 golfers. You can imagine what a difficult choice it is. Coming to your questions: Feathery balls were used in the Netherlands. Curiously they are still being made today, be it not for golf but for hand-tennis, a game still popular in the North of this country and dating back to the same time as early golf. I am inclined to suppose that their balls, which are older than featheries in golf, were adopted by the golfers in a later stage. The manufacture of featheries in Holland differed from the Scottish technique in that the feathers were tightly wound with string and subsequently covered with leather, sewn together with brass thread (against rot). I could not tell you whether a sajete-ball was softer or heavier than a featherie but I do not think that there can have been much difference. The sajete-ball was also wound tightly, rather like the core of our present Haakell core. All of them eventually lost shape and were then hammered round again, as may be seen on the Brill painting in Early golf.

As I wrote in the essay, I do not think that up to 1700 there is a different development in golf in Scotland and Holland. There is plenty of evidence that both sides of the North Sea benefited from what the other side had been experimenting with.

2. Tee. Some not too well documented earlier works on golf-history maintain that the word was derived from the Dutch: tuijtje. So far I have not found any substantial evidence to that effect, so I must leave this question open. It may have been that way but it can not be proven. The ordinances on malie-banen say that it is prohibited 'de bal op een hoopjen te setten' (to put your ball on a little heap) rather in the manner which you can see on the Jan Luyken print. I do not think that you can derive much from the malie-banen. They were but one shape of course. The only thing that you can see from them is that it was a long game. If you can tell me what game thegoff, gowf or guff was that was played in Scotland prior to 1700 I would be grateful. The only hint at a course was in the Law case in Edinburgh in 1632. Now that contested game was played in a durtheryard!

We should be very careful not to draw conclusions on mere suppositions as has so often be done in the Victorian days.

The tees on the maliebanen must certainly have been mounds of sand and mud since one played on them in summer.

I would not go along with your explanation of the word tee. Don't forget that spelling in English and in Dutch was not a very uniform matter.

I do not find any specific reason for Everards story as to 'your tee must be upon the ground'. That it appears in a great many books since then, is just another proof of how much was copied from one book into the next one without ever going into the background of the first writers' theories.

Henderson and Stirks book, and my own, I think it is fair to say, are the only two works based on actual research since 1900!

Conscientious historians are fairly careful before they commit things to paper. So you had better wait until my book is ready!

Hoping that I have given a reply to all your questions

Yours very truly
Steven van Hengel

Box 58
Plymouth
Montserrat.

February 27, 1984.

Dear Mr. Van Hengel:

You may recall that we corresponded briefly five years ago, and I was lucky enough to get from you one of the last copies of Early Golf. I wonder if you have since seen my Dictionary of Golfing Terms (on historical principles), which was published in 1980 by Simon & Schuster? If not, I will gladly send you a copy. I am now beginning to work on a second edition, with full revision, and would welcome any comments you might make, whether critical or favourable.

What I really want to know is, have you completed the book you mentioned in your last letter to me (April 28, 1979)? If so, where could I get a copy?

Regards,

Peter Davies

Peter Davies.

14th March 1984

30, Saxenrodeweg
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Holland

Mr. Peter Davies
Box 58
Plymouth
Montserrat

Dear Mr. Davies,

This is to thank you for your letter of 27th February.
I do indeed recall the correspondence we had in 1979.
In the meantime the book Early Golf appeared in 1982
and there is now even an german translation on the
market. I am sending you a copy by separate mail and
would in return be grateful for a copy of your
Dictionary of Golfing Terms. I this give cause for
comments I shall let you have them.
With kind regards I am,

*yours very sincerely,
Steven van Hengel*

Steven J.H. van Hengel