

121 rue de Treves
Gents
Luxembourg.

8.8.81.

Dear Mr. van Hengel,

I read with great interest your recent articles in the GCS Bulletin. I particularly admired your detective work as described in the May. The poem, translated in the January issue, is full of interest, too. As a sometime teacher of Economic History I was aware of the links between Scotland and Holland (via, eg. The Scottish Staple at Veere.)

I never used golf as an example, however. How myopic!

I notice in the introduction to Henderson + Shrie that they refer to Early Golf, by you. I wonder if it would be possible to obtain a copy of this. I am, of course, perfectly willing to pay for this.

My own collection is really just beginning and I am trying to put together some clubs from Continental Europe. Top of the list of desiderata is the work of AJ Ize who made wooden clubs

and irons in The Hague. I wonder if you could suggest any likely source for examples of his work? David Stark suggests that I'd be more likely to find this in or around the Hague than in the UK. I'm certain that he is right.

I am trying to write a piece on how the modern golf grip (i.e. positions of the hands) has evolved and this is likely to start with the kind of illustrations shown in H+S pp. 8-11. It is really fun!

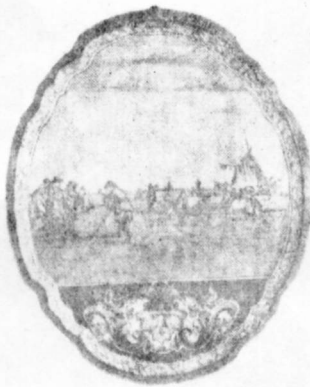
I hope to hear from you in due course.

Thank you for your forbearance.

Yours sincerely

David Christie

P.S. You live in Bentveld. Does the Bent mean the same as that word in Scots — coarse grass? (often near the sea.)



14th August 1981

30, Saxenrodeweg
2116 VA Bentveld
Holland

Mr. David Christie
121, rue de Treves
Cents
Luxemburg

Tel. 023 - 24 01 69

Dear Mr. Christie,

This is to thank you for your letter of the 8th August and your kind remarks on my modest writing efforts in the G.C.S. Bulletin. Coming to your other remarks and questions: Scotland and the Low Countries. There were far more connections than one expects. Somehow Veere is the point that always comes up because of the wool-staple and the Scottish 'agent' (consul-general) there. In my opinion a far more busy trading point for Scotsmen in the Netherlands was the city of Bergen op Zoom on the Scheldt due East of Veere. There were two annual Fairs at Bergen op Zoom: the 'Easter Market' and the 'Cold (autumn) Market'. Both existed since about 1400. Scotsmen went there to sell and buy all sorts of things quite regularly both in the spring and in the autumn. It is not too difficult to find out what they bought and sold since coming to Bergen op Zoom, and departing from there, toll was levied on all goods coming up-or going down-the Scheldt. Quite a few of the toll registers have survived. They may be found in a book by Dr. W.S. Unger 'De Tol van Iersekeroord' published at The Hague in 1939. In Bergen op Zoom there was the market for the balls which were used for both early golf and hand-tennis. White leather balls stuffed with cow's hair. As early as 1461 the magistrates of Bergen op Zoom ordained where the sellers of balls had to stand on the weekly market in that city. Some transactions involved as many as 40.000 balls in a single deal. These balls were made in Bergen op Zoom itself, in Middelburg, in Steenberg (near B.o.Z.) and in Goirle further East. In 1486 Ritsaert Clays (probably Richard Clay) was entered in the toll-register for having paid 6 groats for the export of a barrel of balls (in a ship full of Scotsmen) when sailing home after the 'Cold Market'. After the following 'Easter Market' in 1487 Jan Berke (probably John Berwick) 'Thomas Wynants man' sailed away taking with him '2 pipes (large barrels, think of a pipe of Port) of balls'. Further exports, sadly without the names of the exporters, were registered in 1494 (6 barrels), 1495 (2 barrels) and 1496 (5 barrels). These must have been the balls that James VI referred to. There were contacts in other fields too. From 1574 to 1826 there were Scottish mercenary regiments in the Netherlands. The surviving marriage registers show some 4800 marriages of Scotsmen in the Netherlands between 1574 and 1665. An average of one a week!

I have a feeling that a lot of the soldiers, who came mostly from the town on the East Coast of Scotland must have acted as private importers and exporters; soldiers always have throughout history. That way the first 'Scottish cleeks', wooden clubs rather like the early play clubs of Hugh Philp, must have come to Holland around 1640.

Early Golf. I am sorry to disappoint you. The little book is not available any more. You will have to wait until next year and then try to get hold of a catalogue of the exhibition 'Golf-Kolf-Golf' which opens in Bergen op Zoom on the 15th March. That catalogue will contain an extensive, ^{up to date,} history, references and all. (In English!) In fact not being too far away you should not miss going to the exhibition. It will be quite unique. If you can not wait that long order a copy of 'The best of the Bulletin' from Joe Murdoch. It has the story of Early Golf in it, without the pictures though.

A.J. Ife - clubs. You will be lucky if you find one. Even the Haagsche Golf & Country Club, where he worked from 1904 until his death (of cancer) in 1927 has not a single club of Andrew Ife. Our retiring professional at my home club (Kennemer's at Zandvoort) owns an Ife putter which he still uses. This is a club shafted by Ife. It would be more fun if one could find one of which he had also forged the clubhead. The chances are slight. The Hague golf club was evicted from their premises by the Hitler Army in 1942 and never returned to the shambles of their old clubhouse and course after the war. Such clubs as were there must have disappeared during the war.

Try to get a Gassiat putter instead. Jean Gassiat was a very good French professional in the beginning of this century (winner of the French Open of 1912 at La Boullie with a score of 289). He was professional at the Chantilly course and made very attractive all-wooden putters with a flat square head. Some of them have olive-wood heads. They were quite popular on the Continent at that time and with luck you may get one. If I am not mistaken two of them will come up at the next auction of Christie's. Bentveld. You are right, translated it means Bent-field and that is exactly what it is. The village is adjoining Kennemer's golf course, which lies in the downs by the North Sea near Zandvoort. Its character is that of a links course and it can compete with the best of its kind in England and Scotland. There is only one difference - it has much greater differences of height than any of the courses in the U.K. This always comes as a bit of a surprise to visiting golfers from the U.K.! If you have nothing better to do come and play it! It would be nice to see you here.

With kind regards

Sincerely yours

Steven van Dergel

Dear Mr. van Hengel,

I have delayed replying to your letter of 14 August so that, in addition to thanking you for the long and detailed reply to my questions, I could say something about Kennemer's golf course. However, for the happiest of reasons — a new daughter — I have been unable to get away to play golf. 1981 was a bad year for planned trips to the Netherlands — I had hoped to play in the Dutch Amateur at Noordwijk but, again, was thwarted. Next year, perhaps.

Following your suggestion, I wrote to Tee Muecoch for a copy of the 'Best of The Bulletin'. I found your article most interesting and found myself speculating on the sociological side of golf — who played "it" in the earlier days? I feel that there is a great deal of work to be done in this area. One other effect of your article is to whet my appetite to try kolf.

I will certainly make the trip to Bergen op Zoom
in March to see 'Cof-Kof-Gof'. Luxembourg's
golfing history is very limited indeed, or so it seems.

Thank you again for all the trouble
you took to reply my letter.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Daria Christie

1.2.82

Dear Mr. van Hengel,

I am in the process of planning some trips during the first part of this year and it would be most helpful to have the precise dates of the 'Cof - Kof - Gof' exhibition which you mentioned in your letter of 14 August.

Although it is highly likely that you know about the 'corking connection', I am taking the liberty of sending you these two pages in case they contain something interesting for you.

Yours sincerely,

David Christie.

beautyp.
10-2-82