

19th October 1982

30, Saxenrodeweg

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Holland

Dr.A.Grant
Department of History
University of Lancaster
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Dear Dr.Grant,

I received your name from Dr.E.V.K.Brill of St Andrews. Since many years I have been engaged in the study of the earliest history of the game of golf both in Scotland and in the Low Countries. My interest is not so much where it all began. I am fairly convinced that that issue will remain unsolved forever since the mere fact that no written evidence can be produced of a certain period can not infer that it was not played at that time. I have however delved in a field that has been left untouched in the thousands of books on golf; the interchange between Scotland and the Low Countries. I have found evidence of balls being exported to Scotland in great numbers towards the end of the 15th century and clubs being brought from Scotland to Holland in the 17th century. All of this in the lively trade between Scotland and Holland in the Middle Ages and later. What I have found so far is all at the Eastern shore of the North Sea and I am trying to find the ports of import and export in Scotland.

Since the earliest golf in Scotland distinctly centers around Edinburgh and Leith, and further North around St Andrews it seems logical that shipments to and from Scotland would have gone through the ports of Leith and St Andrews. The Senzie Fairs at St Andrews would have been a logical market. Maybe, although I do not know of it, there was something comparable to that Fair at Edinburgh.

The question is: are there any records of imports into these ports and the markets there and do they evidence shipments or sales of balls and clubs?

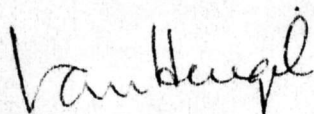
As from 1574 it may well be that the Scottish mercenary soldiers in the service of the States General of the United Provinces had a hand in the trade.

Both Dr.Brill and Mr.R.Smart at St Andrews speak highly of your knowledge of mediaeval Scottish trade and the paper which you gave at Dundee on that matter.

I would be grateful for any information which you could give me, knowing that it is not an easy issue.

Thanking you in advance for such help as you may provide I am,

sincerely yours



Steven J.H. van Hengel