

Mr. Bengt Thermaenius  
c/o Orebro Golf Club  
Vreta  
Lannabruk  
701 02 OREBRO

Dear Mr. Thermaenius,

Recently I read in Golf World about your 'Featheries' and since I am in correspondence with my old friend Ian Henderson I also learnt that it takes you about 4 hours to make a ball of about 1 ounce.

The first leather golf-balls were probable made in this country around 1400. They were not only used for golf-balls (and exported to Scotland) but they also served another sport: hand-tennis. This sport is still played today in the Province of Friesland, and they still use the same balls as more than 500 years ago. There are some two or three ball-makers in this country still making those balls and it may well be of use if I give you some of the details and the tricks.

In the course of history various models have been tried. On the enclosed photograph you can see 5 sets of templates that have been used over the times. Obviously you need 4 sections of the template at the top right, 2 sections of the one but lowest one and two round sections of the bottom one to make a ball. What with all the experimenting that has gone on over the centuries the second set of templates from the top has proved to produce the best round ball. It was in use at the end of the 16th century and it is still in use today. It takes a ball-maker about 1 hour to make a ball of 22 grams (more the Royal Hand Tennis Union does not require) but they could easily be increased to further weight. The balls are absolutely round. the manufacturing process is as follows:

**Cover:** use calfs-leather and cut out the templates.

Then stich the ball together with an industrial sewing-machine, placing the stitches at 1 mm from the edges and leaving a small section open in one of the sides.

Soak the cover thoroughly in warm water and then turn the whole cover inside out (using the back end of a pencil or something similar).

If you want to improve the water-resistancy of the cover use two layers of thin calfs-leather and paste a thin asphalt-paper between them.

**Stuffing:** use washed calfs-hair. Feathers have been tried over and again but the hair gives better satisfaction (as it did long ago!). For comparison think of a cushion stuffed with feathers and one with horse-hair. The latter keeps its shape the longest. Stuff the hair through the hole using a narrow scre-driver with a groove filed into its blade and an ale for the last bit. (the first part of the stuffing can be done by placing a small funnel in the opening and forcing the hair through the funnel.

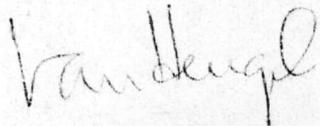
Stuff the cover when it is wet. Since leather expands a bit when it is wet you can get in more material that way, and

when the ball dries it contracts and firms up quite remarkably. Since the seams are on the inside and the stitching is very regular you get a marvellous ball that way. When the ball is stuffed and the hole sewn shut, still while the ball is wet, roll it between two boards or better still have two half-hollow beams between which the ball can be rolled back and forth until it is perfectly round. I am enclosing a photograph of the finished product so you can see it for your self. The size of these balls is exactly the size of a modern golf-ball. Finally I am enclosing a cardboard model of the actual-size templates, still in use, as well as a sample of the leather used for making the covers.

I hope some of the above may come in handy. I would be obliged if you could send me one of your balls to see what it has come out like. If you want one of the balls as made here, let me know. They are not too easy to come by, the production hardly meets the demand, but I shall make an effort for you.

With kind regards I am,

sincerely yours



Steven J.H. van Hengel

Enclosures

# Featheries are back in business

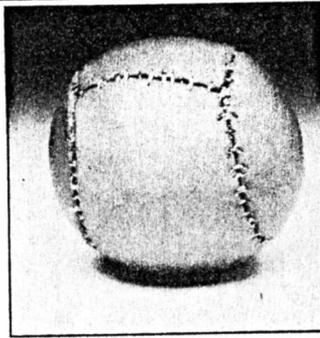
Golf ball manufacturing has come a long way as modern technology has progressed. In recent times we've had the Pinnacle, the DDH and then optic orange or yellow balls, so its something of a surprise that a man from Sweden is about to launch new "Featherie" balls on to the market.

Featherie balls are back in business! A good example of the old kind will fetch anything up to £1,200 at public auction but, in a corner of Sweden where golf addicts will have a go\* at almost anything, a new Featherie ball is being produced — for sale at less than £1.

The man behind the new project is Bengt Thermaenius, a single figure handicapper at the Orebro Golf Club. Last winter, when most of the golf courses in Sweden became ski slopes, he worked at his bench, stitching, stuffing and experimenting until he had a fair range of specimens.

Re-introducing the featherie is no idle caprice with him. He is seeking a less lethal golf ball for short courses and one that can easily be adapted to the many pitch and putt courses which are springing up in Britain.

So far, he has had difficulty with the weight. Four shapes of rounded leather encase enough feathers to fill a top hat but the ball still only weighs 20 Pennyweight, just one ounce. How to increase the feather content is the main problem. The more feathers, the harder the ball and with firmness, the soggiess in wet weather is reduced. Skilled craftsmen, once



employed in the shoe industry have been brought in to help him and in the next few months, Mr Thermaenius hopes to have sufficient new featherie balls, similar to the ones produced 150 or so years ago by the likes of Douglas Gourlay, Allan Robertson and others, available for sale. He reckons they will sell for under £1 each but for the connoisseur, there will be presentation packs of three special featheries selling at approximately £10.

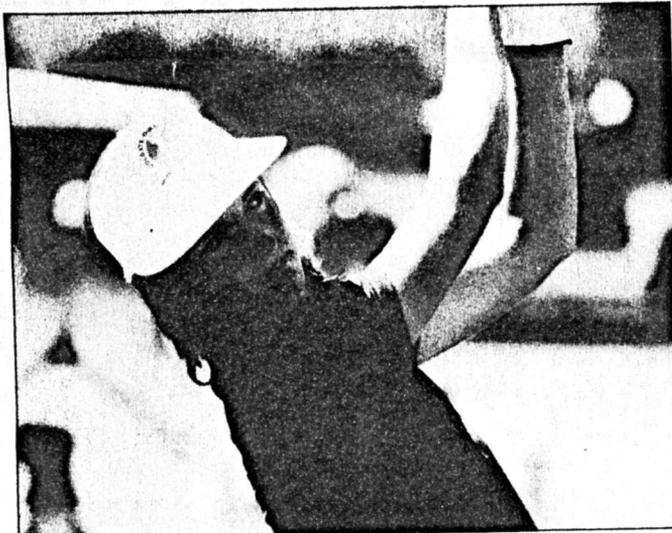
Plans are also in hand for holding a special tournament using the new, old balls. So far, they have been driven some 80 metres. When they can be driven 100 metres, he will go into full production.

# Having a Society Ball

What do Peter Oosterhuis, Michael King and Peter Townsend have in common? Besides being well-known professional golfers, in the past, they were all members of the South Eastern Junior Golfing Society, that active body of young golfers which encourages mixed golf in the South East for those under 26 years old.

This year is the society's 25th Anniversary and to celebrate they are holding a special ball, open to all past and present members, at the Hurlingham Club, London SW6 on Saturday, 6th November 1982 with entertainment from the Dark Blues band. Anyone interested in tickets or further information on the Society should contact the Secretary, Pip Eyles, on 01-353 6000 Ext. 1137 (day time)

# Thirst comes first



Thirst almost got the better of USLPGA player Carolyn Hill (pictured above) during the first round of the 1982 Women's Open at Del Paso Country Club in Sacramento, California.

The third year pro, from Placentia, California, finished the eighth hole and paused at the ninth tee water cooler for a quick drink. When she reached the ninth green her caddie reached for her putter

only to find it wasn't in the bag. Unfortunately, Hill had inadvertently left her putter leaning against the water cooler. As her caddie raced back to the tee to retrieve her trusty blade, Hill realised that the resulting delay would probably cost her a two-stroke penalty. So, out came her driver and into the hole went her five foot putt — Hill's only birdie of the round! Sadly, her efforts were not enough and she missed the cut.

# Lefts get it right

The British Left-Handed Golfers Society recently held their Open Championship meeting for the 'Bob Charles' Cup and the Malcolmson Cup at Hill Valley with the two trophies going to Haydn Illesley and John Aspley, respectively.

Also on hand were Sol Golf

Holidays who donated four prizes and released details of their inaugural Golf Week for left-handed golfers in Portugal in January, with Peter Dawson as attending pro giving a clinic and lessons.

The Society Secretary, Roger Wood (Tel. 06632 5572) would be pleased to give details to any left-handed golfers who may be interested and would welcome new members to the Society which arranges meetings in various parts of the country.

# Lee backs 'V'

Lee Trevino is doing what he can to assist a Houston singer who goes by the name of Roger V. The "V" is for Vazquez, and, like Trevino, he's of Hispanic extraction.

Trevino heard Roger V's performance in 1981 and was so impressed he's helped the singer get dates at various US PGA Tour events. At Trevino's insistence, Roger V also made a four-song "demo" record in Nashville that is being used to help convince a recording company to sign the singer to a contract. "Roger has a big voice, like Tom Jones," says

Albert Salinas, vice president of Lee Trevino Enterprises.

Trevino himself, by the way, does not have the recurrent back problems as has been reported.

"Lee's doctor told him to cut out jogging and stretching exercises," says Salinas, "because they irritate his back. They can cause spasms but not permanent injury. Lee likes to do these things to help keep down his weight, but now he's going to have to do that through diet. That's tough for him — he's what you might call a junk food addict."

Steven J H van Hengel  
Bentveld

Örebro 14th Dec 1982

Dear Mr van Hengel:

Do not think that I am ungrateful. The contrary is the very fact. Even when soon two months have passed by since I got your letter of No 5th I have been busy with the balls.

As a sample I enclose three of them. The red one - real lizard - is a funny experiment to start with. It is not the right weight but I think it is OK for a peculiar present.

The brown one is - or perhaps I must say was as I have not put it on a scale for a long time; it could have lost some weight - according to your letter 22 grams. It is stuffed with cowhair and have a reasonable rebound. For golfing purpose even in ancient days I do not think it is of much use. It also feels too soft in my hands.

As a summary it is however very interesting with the stuffing material.

When I was down to a slaughter-house I turned up just in right time for catching sight of a hide from an elk and a fairly young one. I become interested by the rough hair and decided to make a sample.

The nature of the hair was quite different from the cowhair. It was longer and stiffer. I enclose a sample calculated for one ball up to 22 grams. You will probably find the same as I did. There is no possibility to get the lot inside the ball of the right size.

After some experiments I think I have got right size in the white one. The weight is only 15 grams total which means roughly 12 grams hair. Test the rebound and you will be surprised.

As I however have no idea of what "hand tennis" is I do not know if it is usable.

The manufacturing time is no roughly 1 hour totally so it is quite a good improvement from the featheries where one each took 4 hours.

Your cardboard model has been very useful. I have gone a bit further in order to have a better closure of the hole for the stuffing.

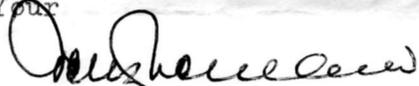
Please look at the drawing and you will understand the idea, I am sure. The outstanding pieces are on one side only preliminary and must be cut to the right sizes before it is turned inside out.

Thank you again for your very big interest and have a good luck with the balls.

Best X-mas and a fine New Year.

We finished the golf season probably to-day. The snow is coming now and the fairways cannot be used for their real purpose.

Your

  
Bengt Thermaenius  
Norensbergsg. 44  
702 15 Örebro  
Sweden.



Tel. 023 - 24 01 69

16th December 1982

30, Saxonrodeweg  
2116 VA Bentveld  
Holland

Mr. Bengt Thermaenius  
Norensbergsgatan 44  
702 15 Örebro

Dear Mr. Thermaenius,

This is to thank you for your letter and the balls, hair and template which you sent me. Rather than thinking you ungrateful I had just started to worry whether my letter had reached you at all, since postal services are not always reliable these days.

Your sample of elks' hair is quite interesting. I think that the fact that it is stiffer than cows' hair makes it difficult to stuff sufficient volume of it into your ball to get it up to the required weight. In fact the ball-makers here always tell me that they prefer calves' hair to cows' hair since the former is softer and therefore more malleable while the flexibility and elasticity is the same.

I was in the North of our country since last writing to you and managed to get you a ball made by Isaac de Haan which I am sending you enclosed. You will note that this one is just about the size of a normal golf ball with a weight of 22 grams. He tells me that if he really kept on stuffing he might bring it up to about 26 grams but no further.

However, he suggested that if you would wish to bring the weight up further you could try using an injection needle inserting it into the exact centre of the finished ball an injecting some liquid that will coagulate when it has been injected. Years ago he has experimented successfully in this manner. He also mentioned that in that case it is essential that the ball be stuffed as hard as possible so as to make sure that the liquid distributes itself evenly throughout the centre of the ball. If not, the centre of gravity will not be in the centre of the ball with all the consequences thereof.

Also, and this is a matter of experiment, the volume of injected material should be restricted since it reduces the bounce of the ball to a certain extent. This is also why a coagulating fluid should be used rather than a solidifying one. The coagulated material retains a certain measure of flexibility. Liquid Latex might be something suitable.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas (is it 'God Jul'?) and a Happy New Year with success in your experiments I am,  
Yours very faithfully

Steven J.H. van Hengel

Mr Steven J H van Hengel  
2116 VA Bentveld.

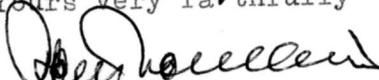
Dear Mr van Hengel.

Your letter of Dec 16th is in front of me.  
My word for calves' hair i.e. cow hair was taken  
from a dictionary. I have used "calves' hair" and I  
found it much easy to use compared with the feather.  
As I told you there is no possibility of reaching  
the 37-40 PW with hair and I therefore think that  
the Scottish featheries in fact was feathers and  
not hair.

My thoughts have gone to other material but I  
think it is not fair to substitute the feathers  
against other material. A ball of other material  
than feathers is not anymore "a featheries" even  
if it is said to be a ~~substitute~~ substitute.  
The ball you sent me is a real wonder. I if anyone  
can admire this hard stuffing. I keep it for my  
very personal golf memories.

This autumn we plan to go to Scotland - Royal  
Dornoch - and we have suggested to pass your friend  
in England, Mr Henderson, and why not passing you  
on our way home.  
If so you will hear from me in due time and well  
in advance.

Yours very faithfully

  
Bengt Thermanius.

Örebro Jan 7th 1983.

P.S. A golf course in Leeds want  
six featheries for their Diamond Jubilee  
Competition.



origin  
David Lister  
of South Africa

---