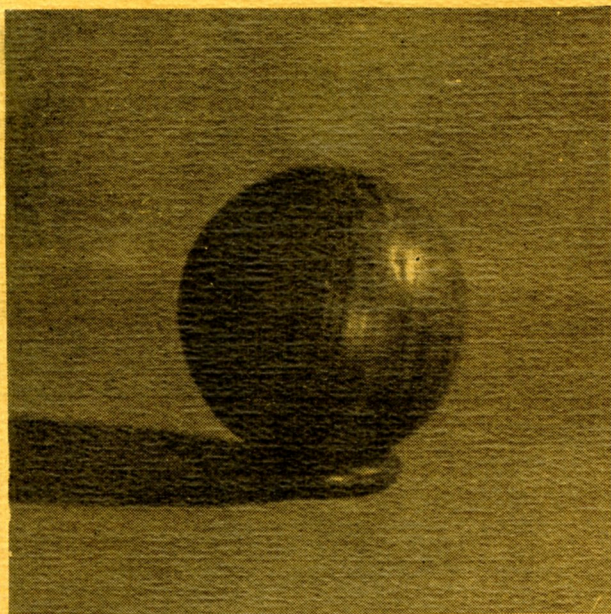


1589



EARLY GOLF

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1612



Early Golf
History and Development

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Introduction.

The purpose of these lines is not to prove whether golf originated in Holland or in Scotland. Although discussions on this subject are often lively there is little to base them on. Many times one has to fall back on rather romantic - but quite unfounded - Victorian stories about shepherds who might have struck at pebbles with their crooks, perhaps into rabbit-holes etc. Hardly any serious research has in actual fact been done.

The main obstacle in its way may have been the Dutch language. British authors lacked an adequate command of it and even if they had been proficient there would have been the problem of mastering medieval Dutch, so different in spelling from the present-day language. Some of the documents are hard to read even for Dutchmen themselves.

So when the author, quite a few years ago, set out to find what facts could still be unearthed he had virgin land before him. The research has covered national and local archives, picture galleries, old maps and prints and private collections. It would be bold to pretend that all the relevant material has been found. Tiles have been left out of the research although there are many of them and most of them are rather attractive. In contrast to painters in oil and engravers of maps and prints who were naturalists of amazing precision, the painters of the tiles used quite a bit of phantasy.

The reader will find few mentionings of golf played on ice. Chiefly because this was simply a continuation of the field and road game during the winter months.

It is left to the reader to draw his own conclusions. The similarity of the game in both countries in the early days is striking. The use of ramparts and churchyards for courses is but one of them.

If the game went from Holland to Scotland at all, the author himself would think that it is most likely that this would have happened between 1424 and 1457 on the line Dordrecht-Brielle-Edinburgh-St. Andrews and that it would have been brought across by the crews of the Scottish merchantmen.

The picture which we can compose from what could be found is rather like a jig-saw puzzle with some pieces missing. One cannot discern all the details, but the main lines are pretty well there.

This introduction would not be complete without a vote of thanks to the many patient and enthusiastic directors of archives, masters of scrolls, keepers of pictures without whose support these lines could never have been written.

Mail-golf-kolf.

In British books on golf-history one finds rather interesting but far-fetched explanations of the term "golf". There is a simple one if one assumes that the word came originally from Dutch: the earliest references are all to "the game played with the club" ("spel metten colve").

This word now spelled "kolf" stood (and stands) for a wooden club which is thicker at one end than at the other. In the 17th century the spelling slowly changed from colf to kolf. A kolf to this day is also, fitting the said definition, a rifle butt.

Early riflemen (16th century) who possessed rifles with butts were called colveniers or culveniers. Although I did not find specific evidence to support this, it is rather probable that the same spelling and pronunciation was used for the name of the club, thus also: culf.

This may perhaps explain why golf in the earliest times in Scotland is sometimes mentioned as "guff".

The name for the game gradually changed from " spel metten colve" to "colven" to "kolven" to "kolf spelen" as the indoor version is called today. Modern golf in Holland is simply called golf and thus received its modified name for the club back from Scotland. Spelling in ancient documents was all but uniform. For clarity's sake the term golf shall from here on be used as long as there is question of predecessors of present-day golf, regardless of the spelling in the original document.

The term kolf shall only be used for the short-distance and indoor version of the game which developed in Holland between 1710 and 1730.

The first game of golf on record was played around 1300 over 4 holes covering about 5000 yards. We shall revert to it later. It seems unlikely that it will be possible to retrace earlier golf than that but we must assume that golf was then already a popular game. Looking around for earlier games from which it may have developed, we must conclude that it was a Dutch combination of 2 French games which already existed: "mail à la chicane" and "chole".

(We should only accept as predecessors of golf such earlier games as envisaged playing a ball for a minimum of strokes from one point to another point striking it with a club and standing beside the line of play (standing astride would already cover croquet.) If the definition is widened it is possible to go back to Roman and Persian ball games. On closer examination these games are forerunners of present-day games like field-hockey and polo).

Let us first look at "mail".

Mail was a game in which a wooden ball was struck at with a club consisting of a metal mallet-head affixed to a flexible shaft as the name mail indicates (from the latin malleolus = small hammer.) There were 4 forms of mail:

1. "au grand coups", whereby 2 or more players played for the greatest length for a fixed number of strokes. This version knew handicaps (in length);
2. "au rouet" being singles on a specially designed mail-course, a long lane with a post at either end and a small iron gate half-way;
3. "en partie" being foursomes, four-balls and games with even more players. and balls to each side on the same course;
4. "à la chicane" whereby one played along roads and across the open field to an agreed point, often a stone or a tree.

"Chole" on the other hand was played with clubs with rigid shafts and iron- sometimes spoon-shaped heads. Contrary to mail, chole was played with one ball made of beechwood used by both sides. Players were divided into two parties and the target to which one would play was agreed (a stone, a tree, the door of a house, the pillar of a church-door etc.) Sometimes at a distance up to 12 miles away and over. Then the bidding started. Each side had to declare the number of strokes needed for the game. The side with the lowest bid would strike off but after each three strokes of their side the opponents were allowed one stroke in whatever direction they chose, be it backward, sideways, into a pit, a ditch or a bush. (This stroke was called the "déchole"). So against every three strokes of the side with the lowest "bid" there was an untoward stroke of the opponents.

Play was popular in autumn when the crops on fields had been harvested. The ball was sometimes egg-shaped.

Both games contain elements of early golf, which was probably combined out of them, the clubheads of the one club being affixed to the shafts of the other (most of the playing material was home-made in those days).

There are finally some comments to be made on the French game of mail also named palle-maille as practiced in the 16th and 17th century. This clearly covers the types 2. and 3. as mentioned earlier on. The courses constructed for it became longer and longer (Pall Mall in London constructed by James II was the longest course ever) towards the end of the 17th century. Those mail-courses that were constructed in Holland (named malie-banen) were never used for mail. The golfers simply took their gear there and used them as golf courses. An early ordinance for a Dutch maliebaan expressly forbids the teeing-up of balls. This was a bad habit of golfers, not mail-players !

The essential attraction of a "malie" course was that it was the better organized type of course, permanent posts, smooth and with low boards at the sides. To pay for this luxury, wherever a "maliebaan" existed, a "greenfee" was levied from the players. All other golf was played wherever there was room for it or was not.

One of the most interesting examples of the intermingling of the term golf and malie could be found in The Hague. Here were, in the 17th century a "malie"-course along the French pattern and a "malie"-field (still existant) side by side.

The maliefield had nothing to do with malie but was clearly intended for golf. It was a sizeable rectangle neatly lined by lanes of trees and with two trees conveniently planted in the field off one of the longer sides, which could be used as holes.

The golfers who had succesfully been banned from the city street enjoyed a certain measure of protection on their courses. The decree on the use of the "maliebaan" at The Hague states that " walkers who walk on the course when players wish to practice or play and thus hold up balls and create situations of serious danger shall leave the course as soon as players start their exercises".

If they failed to do so they were liable to the penalty or forfeiting their coat. No mention is made as to who did the stripping. It may well have been the players.

It is worth noting that early pictures show more left-handed clubs than today. The theoreticians about golf may find here some support for their axiom that it would be logic for right handed people (the majority of humanity) to play with left handed clubs. Early golfers did.

Medieval street were popular enough but the players had not heard of etiquette yet. Windows of houses and churches were smashed, passers-by hit and nuisance to the traffic created. The cities therefore started to ban the game from within the city-walls from the earliest days, directing the players to the ramparts and the open fields around these fortifications. The open highway was also popular as we shall see. The agreed hole, which in early days should have been some form of post was hard to find in the cities. Streets were narrow and traffic dense and therefore no trees, which could have served for the purpose, were present in the streets. For the same reason street-lamps, if available at all, were hung to the walls. One had to shop around for other objects which might serve the purpose. Sometimes the players planted stakes in the middle of the street which then again were run down by the traffic. Sometimes doors of houses were used but they were too easy being too large. It is there that the hole in the ground must be looked for a a help-out. Most probably the grown-ups learnt something from the children who were used to play balls into holes because they did so when shooting marbles. All this also explains why church-yards were popular with players if not with the authorities.

So golfers made a nuisance of themselves and in order to meet the demand of the citizens, the city authorities provided space in the open, allowing play without the gates and, if well to do, creating courses or fields.

Summing up we should picture these early golfers as playing a wooden ball for a minimum of strokes from an agreed starting point to an agreed target. Their clubs, first entirely made of wood had metal heads in a relatively early stage; Their targets first doors, were trees and poles in a later stage. In the 16th century we find the first holes and pegs for teeing up. Their courses were city streets and squares by preference. It should be born in mind that streets were unpaved in those days and churchyards did not carry tombstones yet; They were also used for markets and the like and much more the centre of public life in the towns than they are today.

Players did not mind about etiquette at all and as passers-by were hurt, window-panes broken and traffic held up, public authorities did what they could to move the players with their troublesome game out of the towns. The earliest references to golf are thus mainly decrees of magistrates banning golf (mostly unsuccessfully) from the town streets. We do not find decrees of this type in Haarlem. There a well organized public golf course existed since 1390 just outside the city-walls obviating play in the streets.

In the early development of golf one spectacular innovation is to be noted. Around 1580 the "sajet" ball was introduced. Sajet was uncombed wool. The compressed wool was covered with white or brown leather and was a tremendous improvement over the old beechwood ball.

It is most probably this type of ball which James VI refers to in 1618 as being imported into Scotland. The encouragement which he gave to ball-manufacturing in Scotland must have lead to the "feathery".

The History.

13th Century.

In the fateful year of 1296 Count Florence V of Holland was murdered near Muyden castle, on the 27th June. We need not go into the background of this event. The noble murderers, the leaders of which were Gerard van Velsen and Herman van Woerden, were pursued by the countryfolk of the area and reached castle Kronenburg in nearby Loenen on the Vecht. They barricaded themselves in this fortress and were besieged by their pursuers. On Boxing Day of that year the castle was surrendered. Gerard van Velsen was killed by the besiegers at the castle's gate.

To commemorate the surrender of Kronenburg Castle and the revenge for the murder of the count (Florence V had been very popular with countryfolk), the villagers of Loenen thereafter each year played a game of golf on Boxing Day.

The two sides were made up of four players each, an 8-ball in modern words. The game was played with wooden clubs and balls. The first hole ran from the courthouse in Loenen along well defined roads to Kronenburg Castle. The "hole" there was the kitchen door. The winning side was treated to beer by the lord of the castle. The losers and spectators were showered with apples from the upper floors. The lord of Kronenburg incidentally also met the cost of the damage done to private property in the course of the game. The second hole ran from the castle's courtyard to the windmill near Loenen where again the door served as hole. The third hole ran from there to the front door of "te Velde" Castle where there were beer and apples again and the last hole ran thence to the door of the courthouse of Loenen.

It is worth noting that Gerard van Velsen had taken refuge in one of the castles of his brother-in-law Gijsbrecht van Amstel (lord of Amsterdam) who, although he was not involved in the actual murder, was involved in the plot. The four "holes" were played on the four properties of Gijsbrecht in Loenen-village of which he was also lord. The game went around the whole village.

The game was played until 1830, thereafter Kronenburg was no longer inhabited, in 1837 the castle was pulled down.

The length of the course was:

1st hole (courthouse to Kronenburg Castle)	660 yds
2nd hole (Kronenburg Castle to mill)	1870 yds
3rd hole (mill to "te Velde" castle)	1980 yds
4th hole ("te Velde" castle to courthouse)	<u>440 yds</u>
	4950 yds

No other game of golf in history can yet look back on its 430th anniversary.

14th Century.

It has to be borne in mind that few documents were made up in the Middle Ages.

Therefore the finding of mentionings of anything in the scrolls indicates that it must have been a matter of importance.

When Aelbrecht of Bavaria was count of Holland we suddenly find some traces of golf. On the 4th December 1387 the said count Aelbrecht confirms an ordinance of the city of Brielle (now Den Briel) and affixes his seal to it. This ordinance was an antibetting decree forbidding all betting on whatever type of game except shooting dice (by day and not by night !), and - if played without the city walls - golf ("den bal mitter colven te slaen"), "kaatsen" (an early form of hand-tennis still popular in Friesland province today) and archery. It is interesting to note that the 4 exceptions were the four games which were played at the court in The Hague.

Whether the city fathers inserted them to induce the count to approve it or whether the count himself put them in can not be traced.

Thus the golfers in Brielle were directed to the ramparts and beyond. The still existing "Kolf-slop" (Golf-alley) may have been their usual course before 1387.

Here I may refer to the first chapter of H.S.C. Everard's History of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (1907) which chapter was written by James Cunningham.

In his quest for the point from which in his opinion golf could have crossed the North Sea to Scotland Mr. Cunningham went to Veere in Zeeland, mainly because there on the port stand the "Scottish Houses". Silent witnesses of medieval trade between Veere and Scotland. He did not find anything there. Let us return to Brielle. This port lay on the direct route between the ancient city of Dordrecht and Scotland. Dordrecht was the town where the Scottish wool staple for the continental trade was located and had a regular traffic of ships on Scottish ports. Was it en route between their home ports and Dordrecht that Scottish sailors first saw the game played on the ramparts of Brielle or perhaps even took part in it when weathering a storm or waiting for a favourable wind in Brielle port before taking to the sea, or did they play in Dordrecht, outside the town, while their cargo was unloaded?

(One of the oldest pictures of golf at St. Andrews, Oliphants drawing in the clubhouse of the Royal and Ancient, shows golfers playing on the ramparts of St. Andrews and beyond. This seems a little more than coincidental, particularly if one remembers that St. Andrew was one of the wool ports in the days when we find the first mention of the game in Dordrecht and Brielle. We do not ^{only} have evidence of golf in Brielle at that time, we have it of Dordrecht as well. On the 28th of September 1401 the magistrates of Dordrecht renewed and codified several older ordinances. Here too play of golf was banned and that "in the great streets, inside as well as outside the gates, neither in churchyards, nor in churches, nor in the cloisters. Penalty: 1 Pound to be paid on the spot wherever anybody was found playing and here too the game went to the ramparts).

Three years later on the 20th February 1390 count Aelbrecht affixed his seal to another scroll. This deed certified his donation to his beloved and faithful City of Haarlem of the course which they were already using (illegally) " without the Forest Gate toward the Forest". There was a dedication with it: " for services rendered and yet to be rendered". There was a destination as well: " the field as large and as small as it was lying there at the time" was "to remain there to be lying as a playing field for eternal days without doing anything else thereon".

So while there were lots of other important privileges passionately sought after, here was the Sovereign Count of Holland, indebted to his citizens of Haarlem and giving them in return a course. It just goes to show what importance was to be attributed to the game at the time.

The course was neatly grown with grass as is clear from a resolution of the city fathers of Haarlem of the 12th December 1483 in which the mowing of hay from it, was given to the churchwardens of the parischurch as long as this did not interfere with its character as a playing field. The course "retained its character" until about 1800 when it was presented by the city of Haarlem to Louis Napoleon, the brother of Napoleon who was governor of the Netherlands during the Napoleonic occupation. He resided in what is now the provincial governments residence right beside the course. The name remains to this day.

A map of around 1450 shows us the form of the course at Haarlem. It was a strange sort of quadrangle with a strip of land added on the south side.

Looking at it one realizes why count Aelbrecht described it simply as " as large and as small as it was lying there".

This century also provides us with the first picture. Oddly enough in England. In the Crecy window (1350) in the Cathedral of Gloucester a roundel may be found showing us a golfer in the course of striking at a rather large ball. Did the victors of Crecy and Calais see him play "chole" in France ? There is no evidence of golf in England at that time.

15th Century.

Most Scottish golfers know that James II, King of Scots, banned golf in 1457. This happened at his 14th parliament at Edinburgh on the 6th March of that year. There it was:

"decreetid and ordained, that the wapin-schawingis be halden by the Lordis and Baronis spirituale and temporale four times in the zeir. And that the Fute-ball and Golf be utterly cryit doune, and nocht to be usit. And that the bow merkis be maid at ilk paroche Kirk a part of buttis, and schutting to be usit...."

His son and grandson showed no greater sympathy. James III at his 4th Parliament at Edinburgh on the 6th May 1471: "thought it expedient that the Fute-ball and Golfe be abusit in tyme cuming".

James IV at his 3rd Parliament at Edinburgh on the 16th May 1491 stated: "Item it is statute and ordinit that in na place of the realme be there usit Fute-ball, Golfe or uther sik unprofitabill sportis".

However, when James I made a decree of this nature in 1424 "Futball" only was mentioned. Seeing the consequence with which the same decrees were issued, there are reasons to believe that golf was omitted in 1424 because there was none. One might even go one step further and feel that golf was imported between 1424 and 1457, because of the ban on football.

Something similar happened in the 18th century in America where the "nine-pins" bowling was put on the black list by early magistrates of the settlers and the Americans started playing "ten-pins" (as they still do today) to circumvent the prohibition.

The foregoing seems to offer some more logic explanation for the origin of the game in Scotland than the Victorian and rather romantic, but quite unfounded stories of "shepherds striking at pebbles with their crooks, and shooting them into rabbit-holes", etc. Wherever we find early golf it is a manifestly townsmen's game. The only exception is the Loenen-village game.

In Scotland as well as in Holland the cradle stood near the cities: Edinburgh and St. Andrews. At St. Andrews the oldest pictures show golf being played on the rampart of the city and beyond, like it was already ordained at Brielle in 1387.

In Amsterdam around that time, golfers also started making a nuisance of themselves. They would keep doing so for two centuries. A decree of the Magistrates of Amsterdam issued on the 30 December 1480 forbids play in the "Nes" (This was a nice long and more or less straight street. There were many convents lining it, and no canals in the vicinity into which balls could easily disappear elsewhere in the city).

Play was forbidden at the forfeit of whatever clothes the players had on.

In the city of Naarden golf (in 1456) was simply described as mischief and expressly forbidden on the churchyard and inside the church. Naarden's church was (and is) very large and apparently the players converted it into a sports hall on rainy days. The ordinance was probably made to prevent damage. Profane doings went on in churches quite regularly. Experts on golf history who maintain that there was a difference between Dutch and Scottish golf because the Dutch golf was obviously " a churchyard game" will be interested to read about the death of Thomas Chatto on the churchyard of Kelso while watching a game of golf on that churchyard as late as the 1st February 1632 ! (See: 17th century).

16th Century.

Around the turn of the century, between 1500 and 1510 an anonymous Flemish illustrator of a Book of Hours provides us with a picture of golfers in action. It is a miniature but some points can be made. The players used clubs with metal heads, they play towards a hole on a course with low fences around it and with small dark balls which might be made either of wood or of leather (probably wood). The house in the background looks like an inn.

Around these same years an anonymous painter in the church of Naarden paints some demons with a crude golf club and three balls into a frieze in the vaults of the church there.

On the 22nd February 1502, James IV, King of Scots swore to everlasting peace with England on the altar of Glasgow cathedral. While peace did not last very long it provided an opportunity for change from practice in arms to more peaceful pastimes. The sovereign did not lose time. On the 21st September of that year the Lords High Treasurers of Scotland enter a payment of 15 shillings in their accounts for clubs delivered to the king by the bow-maker of Perth. (The latter apparently also adapted his production rapidly to the changed circumstances !) He remained an enthusiastic golfer as may be seen from the following:

Accounts of the Lords High Treasurers of Scotland.

1502-4 Feb. 3.	Item to the King to play at the Golf with the Erle of Bothuile..... xliij s.
	Item to Golf Clubbis and Ballis to the King that he playitt with..... ix s.
1505-6 Feb. 22.	Item for xij Golf Ballis to the King..... ix s.
1506 July 18.	Item the xviiij day of Julij for ij Golf Clubbes to the King..... ij s.

In 1515 the magistrates of Loenen aan de Vecht forbade golf on the churchyard (was this the driving range for the game on Boxing Day ?).

In 1530 there is another Book of Hours, said to have belonged to Charles V and now in private hands. On two opposing pages the illuminations show us on the left page children playing on a "klosbaan" (a form of bowling green very popular in the Netherlands in the Middle Ages and after) and on the right page two children putting into a hole in the foreground and two players making long approaches to the same hole in the background.

In March 1545 the magistrates in Amsterdam forbade golf in the target-ranges of the city's archers. They were damaged by the golfers.

On the 25 May of that same year they forbade the playing of golf in the entire city of Amsterdam. Unsuccessfully, as we shall see.

Towards the end of the 16th century a major change in the playing material may be noted. The wooden (mainly beechwood) ball which had been popular for more than 300 years is gradually replaced by a brown or white leather ball stuffed with "sajet" (uncombed wool). The author possesses a beech wood golfball from around 1590. It weighs 85 grammes (about $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) and has a diameter of 2 inches. Sajet-balls will have been lighter but had the same diameter.

The first picture of a sajet-ball may be found on a painting made in 1587 of young Hugo Grotius (the famous lawyer) then 4 years old. We may also note that the lighter ball gave cause to the make of lighter clubs. Right from the first appearance of the sajet-balls flexible shafts and lighter clubheads become noticeable.

Around 1590 we also find a very interesting "action picture". This is one made by Pieter van der Borcht around 1590 depicting monkeys playing various popular games of the period. Two monkeys play golf, one is at the upper end of his (left-handed) upswing, striking at a ball clearly teed up on a peg. The stroke is going to carry the ball over quite some distance right into the players playing other games. This did not worry players much, as we know.

The players' attitude to non-players was a continuous source of worry to the authorities in Holland.

Let us terminate our travels through the 16th century at Holdenby Hall in England. Here may be found a most interesting portrait painted in 1595 and almost certainly representing Henry Frederick eldest son of James VI/I at the age of 2. The young man carries, by the looks of it, a sajet-ball and a Dutch golf club. The painting itself is clearly in the Dutch style and made by a painter from the Dutch school. Going further into the background of this painting we find that at the baptism of Henry Frederick on Stirling Castle on the 30th August 1595 a number of ambassadors from Holland en Zeeland were present. The relations between these countries and Scotland were then very cordial for various reasons, historic, religious and political. As presents at this occasion they brought him a considerable annual endowment in money as well as some valuable (but undescribed) presents.

The painting was, in all probability, made at that time by a Dutch painter whom they had brought along for that purpose. Did the ambassadors bring the playing materials of their own children along for the young man assuming that at his age they would give him more pleasure than the sums of money and the more precious pieces. Or did the club and the ball belong to the unspecified presents ? The picture leaves us with another riddle. If all this is true, how did it then come from Scotland to England.

Did James VI/I have it sent for after his eldest son died in 1612 as a memento ? Or was it brought to England as ransom in a later Anglo-Scottish war ?

17th Century.

Some Scottish golf historians have it that featheries existed around 1600. This seems somewhat doubtful. There is no evidence to that effect. In connection with the development of the golf ball, 3 factual items must be considered.

The sajat-balls in Holland then existed for some time. A life-size painting of a young man in the Reformed Orphanage at Enkhuizen in 1612 gives us another very, precise picture of one of these 2-inch balls. In August 1614 the Earl of Caithness writing on the siege of Kirkwall stated: "The walls were strong, the cannon balls of the besiegers were broken like golf balls and cloven in two halves!"

It sounds very much as if he was referring to wooden golfballs.

James VI King of Scots, shortly afterwards in 1618 appoints golfball manufacturers in Scotland, because "no small quantity of gold and silver is transported out of this country for bying golf balls". (Registrum Secreti Sigili Lib. L xxxvij 169 5th August 1618): Ane letter made makand mentioun that our Souerane Lord understanding that thair is no small quantitie of gold and siluer transported zeirlie out of his Hienes Kingdome for bying of golf ballis usit in that kingdome for recreatioun of his Majesties subjectis appoints James Melville, William Bervick and associates Golf-ball makers (Price ceiling: 4 shillings). The import he wanted to stop must have been of the sajat-balls. Here we must in all probability look for the inventors of the featheries - to outdo the imported sajat-balls. Looking at the paintings in the first half of this century one may wonder why there are so many children golfers painted ^{in Holland} and so few grown-ups. There was a war on with the Spaniards and men preferred to be painted with more martial attributes as so many fine group paintings of the period witness.

The new ball necessitated more length for playing. We must assume that more window-panes went in the city streets because more and more ordinance forbade play there. On the other hand maliebanen (mail-courses) were constructed which had the name in common with the French game but were used for golf.

They were constructed in:

1609 The Hague	a "mail-course", length 1073 meters
and	a "mail-field" of 350 by 760 meters.
1637 Amsterdam	a "mail-course", length 650 meters.
1637 Leyden	a "mail-course", length 696 meters.
1637 Utrecht	a "mail-course", length 752 meters.

The Utrecht course was constructed primarily for the use of students. The "master of the mail" (malie-meester) was responsible for its upkeep, sold clubs and balls

with a monopoly in this trade for an area around the course, took charge of coats during play, and ran the mail-house with a liquor licence. Here we have the first professional club steward and greenkeeper all in one. In the Hague the course was leased for 3 years at a time to tenants, mainly keepers of the Hague's Forest.

The Utrecht course was a particularly fine one. When during the 1672 war Louis XIV of France visited Utrecht and saw the course with the surrounding lanes of trees he regretted that it could not be transported lock, stock and barrel to Versailles.

Some of the malie-courses had protective measures favouring the game, like in The Hague and Leyden:

"Seeing that walkers crossing the course create considerable inconvenience to those who want to practice and play on it, that they are wont to stop balls and that very serious accidents might result, now therefore the walkers shall be on their guard to leave the course as soon as players wish to play on it, at the forfeit of their coat". Undressing those who contravened the rules was still popular.

In Amsterdam the presence of a course did not prevent play in the streets at all. Desperate magistrates forbade golf in the entire city on the 12th January 1617 and repeated the ordinance in 1618, 1621, 1623, 1639, 1645, 1662, 1677, 1686. Never say die !

In some cases the popularity of the city for a playground may well be understood. An ordinance of the city of Naarden of the 19th February 1623 forbids golf in the streets and on the ramparts. If, however, one reads in the same ordinance that "dead animals shall be buried on the golf course behind the land of Gerrit Corneliszoon Moy" one can easily understand the preference of the golfers.

Children misbehaved as much as parents. Most ordinances of the period expressly state that parents will be held responsible for children.

The 17th century produced a host of pictures with golfers on it; Some of them misleading. In the Institute of Arts of Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A. a painting of the Dutch painter, Paul Bril, may be found, painted in Rome in 1624. Mr Robert Browning defines the game on it as chole. This however is not the case. This is clearly "jeu de mail à la chicane", if only for the mallets.

An etching of Rembrandt dated 1634 is known as the kolf-player. The man depicted on it, however, is playing "at the hoop" as may be deducted from his stance as well as his shovel-type club.

A lot of misunderstandings originate from paintings of golfers on the ice. Aert van der Neer, Hendrick Avercamp and others produced very attractive paintings of this nature. Players on it are often defined as players of the later game of kolf. This definition is based on the presence of a wooden post on the ice. The later game of kolf had courses of a length varying from 18-25 meters, a range which is covered in the paintings. The second post is not visible however because it stood much further away, being part of a golf game, and is invisible on the painting for that reason.

In Scotland we find the first known casualty from the game of golf:

In Justiciary Cases 1624 to 1650 one may find the following, dated 2nd March 1632:

"Intran: Willame Hangetsyde indweller in Kelso, Robert Hangetsyde his sone. Dilaitit of airt and pairt of the slauchter and death of umquhile Thomas Chatto zounger sone to Thomas Chatto merchand indweller in Kelso committit within the kirkzaird of Kelso upoun the first day of Februar last be geving him ane deidlie straik with ane golf ball struckin out with ane golf club under his left lug upoun the vene organe thairof be ane or uther of tham quha than war playing ane bonspill at the golf within the said kirk zaird with certane utheris thair compagniones and associatis, the said umquhile Thomas than being within the said kirkzaird luiking thairupoun off the quilk straik he shortlie thaireftir deceissit".

Clearly golf in churchyards was known in Scotland as well.

It would be very tempting to give a summary of all the paintings and engravings made in the course of this century. There are scores of them and all of them of some interest. An exception should be made for an etching of Jan Luyken from the second half of the century. It comes out of a series titled "Man's beginning, middle and end". Here we see a man in action in the snow in the middle of a swing towards a ball neatly teed up on a tee of snow.

Towards the end of the century we also find private mail-courses of the princes of Orange near their palace. These were based on the French pattern and here "Maille" was played in the French manner and with mallets.

18th Century.

At the beginning of the 18th century we meet the very sudden and inexplicable end of the first period of Dutch golf. Within 10 years all the courses went out of use and all evidence of play disappears. The only game which is then left is the Boxing Day game in Loenen aan de Vecht. The decline runs parallel with the end of pallemaille in France. Curiously the end comes when golf in Scotland reaches heights of popularity and when the first clubs are founded there.

Within a short period however a new version develops. On an engraving of Adolf van der Laan dating back to about 1730 we discover a sort of "shrunken" mail-course, about 28 yards long, in the open air behind an inn near Amsterdam. This is where we must look for the beginning of kolf. The innkeepers constructed the shortened kolf-courses and the players of the old game came to them in masses. So much so that a survey of 1769 mentions 82 kolf ccourses in Amsterdam of which 14 were covered and 102 outside the city of which 17 were covered. The same (anonymous) treatise gives rules for the game which remind us much of the old French "jeu de mail". The clubs and balls of the old golf game were of course quite unsuited for the new kolf game. Gradually we see the appearance of a much heavier club with a rigid shaft (first developed for golf on the ice in winter in the 17th century where the lighter clubs would easily break on the hard surface of the ice).

A larger sajat-ball also comes into use. May be the first balls of this size were borrowed from players playing "at the hoop". a game also played near inns.

Balls for both games are of the same size and make.

A second edition of the anonymous "Treatise on kolf" appeared by 1792. It specifies no less than 350 kolf-courses of which 149 were covered !

19th and 20th Century.

Around 1830 when the "gutty" was introduced in British golf a rubber ball was brought into use alongside the old sajat-ball on the kolf-courses.

In spite of this innovation, however, the popularity of kolf declined as rapidly in the second half of the 19th century as it had risen 100 years earlier.

On the 13th of May 1885 Dr. C. van Balen Blanken, a physician in Alkmaar, founded the Netherlands Kolf Union to preserve what was then left of the old kolf-game, not without success. To this day there are some 20 kolf-clubs still in existence mostly in the Northern half of the old county of Holland. Play goes on in two "divisions": rubber and sajat.

The first golf club along the modernized Scottish version of the game and playing under the Rules of the R. & A. was founded in The Hague in 1890. Other clubs follow suit shortly afterwards:

Doorn (now Utrecht) in 1892

Arnhem in 1896,

Santpoort (now Zandvoort near Haarlem) and Hilversum in 1910 to be followed by many others.

And so in these days of the 1970's the two games exist side by side. Kolf developed in the first half of the 18th century out of the old Dutch game of golf and modern golf re-imported or imported from Scotland since 1890.

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