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Golf

COLLECTIBLES

Links to History



Why would a person spend up to six figures on a golf club they will never hit, a stamp they will never mail, or a plate they will never eat from? Easy. These, along with countless other items, form the basis for the world of golf collectibles. It's an industry in its own right, with trade shows, auctions and numerous small gatherings all organized by and for people who treasure the artifacts that connect the modern game with the ancient game. The following section gives an inside look into why acquiring golf collectibles is almost as much a sport as the game itself.



Up For Bid

Golf memorabilia auctions draw an enthusiastic crowd of collectors who often pay top dollar for the game's most cherished items **BY ROBERT DURKIN**



I bought a new putter last week. This will not come as a surprise to anyone who has played with me, worked with me, given me a golf lesson, coached me, casually mentioned golf to me, or otherwise expressed even a passing interest in what's in my bag. Drivers and putters alone, I could open up a retail store in my basement. Or I could just wait and hope that if these implements never achieve the glory they once promised on the field of play, they might some day become what folks who value these sorts of things call "collectible."

Chances are they won't, and if they do, it's unlikely I'll be around long enough to see them regain their luster. The clubs that I buy, try, and sooner or later vilify, are more likely to rust in a darkened corner than to shimmer in a display case. Which brings us back to that putter I bought last week. It's different from all those other putters that I have bought over the years. You see, I don't expect or even hope that this one will have me "rolling 'em like Faxon." In fact, I don't ever plan on making a stroke with this one.

Last fall, I attended the auction of the Jeffrey B. Ellis Antique Golf Club Collection, held at Sotheby's in New York City. It was the first auction of this type to which I had ever been witness. And, judging by my surprising willingness to dangerously wave a numbered paddle in the air, I'm grateful it wasn't an offering of Impressionist masterpieces. But as much as this is the story of my penchant for purchasing putters, it is also the story of another man's obsession with clubs of every conceivable kind.

Jeffrey Ellis represents the combination of research, precision, and just plain guts that it takes to become a renowned golf collector. What began with a seventy-two dollar investment at a Goodwill store in West Allis, Wisconsin, in 1972, grew into one man's crusade to collect, document, analyze and preserve not only the golf clubs themselves, but the passion of the clubmaker as well. Along the way he also documented the history of the game and the stories of the men who, for over two and a half centuries, have combined science, craft, art and alchemy in the manufacture of golf clubs.

While assembling his unprecedented collection, Ellis began cataloging, photographing, and writing about every significant club and clubmaker known. The resulting book, *The Clubmaker's Art*, was first published as a single volume in 1997, and was named to a *Golf World* list of the top 10 golf books of the 20th century. *Travel and Leisure Golf* called it the "heavyweight champion — literally" and included it on a list of the top 25 golf

books ever written. It also won the Murdoch Medal, awarded in Great Britain for outstanding achievement in golf literature. Revised and expanded in 2007, *The Clubmaker's Art* is now a massive two-volume set featuring 1,250 illustrations, many in full color. And it's a fabulous way to enjoy the beauty of these clubs without spending two small fortunes and thirty-plus years as a collector.

Ellis is a pleasant fellow, and he shared his enthusiasm for both club making and history with me one Wednesday afternoon prior to the auction. We were introduced by Leila Dunbar, a Senior Vice President and Director of the Collectibles Department at Sotheby's. Ellis played the patient pedagogue, with me perfectly type-cast as a club-collecting novice. He inquired at the outset if there were any particular clubs I was interested in. I expressed my affection for a copy of the Bobby Jones "Calamity Jane" putter I had seen in the hefty catalogue Sotheby's had prepared for the upcoming auction. Ellis noted the collection held several Jones putters, and that they would be among the "newer" clubs in the collection. He added that they were beautiful clubs, and excellent examples of their kind, from which I inferred that they were not the stars of the collection.

I was not without motive in my inquiry, being as I am a great fan of the gentleman from Georgia. Jones's reputation as both player and person is without peer. He was a champion in every sense of the word; educated, articulate and above all honorable. Additionally, one of the Jones putters was among the handful of items I suspected I might be able to afford.

The putter has a Met Area connection. Jones was playing a round at Nassau Country Club prior to the 1923 U.S. Open at Inwood, and Nassau pro Jim Maiden lent him Calamity Jane, which Maiden had found and fitted with a new shaft. Jones never gave it back to Maiden.

After first ensuring that I got a good look at a group of 300-year-old clubs that were in



Opposite: Auction action heats up at Sotheby's.

Top: A Robert Wilson lofting iron from Scotland, circa 1880, sold for \$625.

COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S



Above: The concept of adjustable-weight clubheads is not new, as seen from this Ellingham putter from 1924.

the premier showcase, Ellis took me into another of the three rooms it required to display his collection. "Ah, here we are," he said, as we approached a locked glass showcase, which housed three different Calamity Jane Putters. "Now this one is a prototype, and it's different in that it doesn't have the Spalding company stamp, but instead, a unique flying crow cleat mark. And as you can see, the Jones signature doesn't include the 'Jr.' It would probably be a little easier to see if we could take the club out."

After a moment's pause Ellis seemed to remember something and said: "Wait, I have a key! Why don't I just take it out?" and after fishing around briefly in his jacket pocket, he proceeded to do exactly that, handing me the club. It was at this moment that I realized two things. One was that Ellis was a likeable, genuine enthusiast, and not immune to a bit of excitement surrounding the upcoming sale. (This was Sotheby's, after all, and the sum of 30 years of his efforts was about to be auctioned).

The second thing was that I would have to find a way to win one of these clubs. I emphasize win here

Someone with money to burn can buy virtually anything, and the existence of auctions is evidence of this fact. However, someone with a very limited budget needs planning and a bit of luck.

because someone with money to burn can buy virtually anything, and the existence of auctions is evidence of this fact. However, someone with a very limited amount of money needs planning and a little bit of luck to accomplish his aim.

The lasting lesson of the morning's tour was that *there is nothing new under the sun*. Virtually every "modern" innovation has as its antecedent an earlier attempt to incorporate similar theory and technique in clubmaking. Technological advances in the area of production have contributed far more to any notion of newness than have any of today's design elements. Metal woods? How about an 1894 aluminum metal wood sporting a gutta percha face plate? Oversize drivers? Try the 1908

"Jumbo Driver" by Scottish clubmaker Ben Sayers. And there has been a full century of puttering with, well, putters. The results have included adjustable putters, center shafted putters, T-Frame putters, cylindrical putters, overspin putters, and even putters that incorporated an umbrella in the shaft for those sudden spring showers.

The modern swing-aid club has a long history as well. That Medicus hinged-club you've been trying to keep from showing your multiple swing flaws? Try George Nicoll's hickory shafted version, first appearing some eighty years ago. And the Momenus weighted driver that promised ten extra yards, only to deliver a sprained back? None other than Walter Hagen produced a similar club in the early 1920s.

No innovation has been more highly touted and successfully marketed than the Taylor-Made r7 adjustable weight driver. But how about a little credit to a Mr. Edward Smith of Lossiemouth, Scotland, who patented a weight-adjustable wood in 1917?

All of this innovation and technology was accompanied by a concurrent development in the *art* of clubmaking. Ellis's collection put on display the beauty of these clubs, from the rudimentary power of the blacksmith's forge, seen in the early "track" irons of the 1850s, to the sheer elegance of the persimmon and ivory used to produce the Crawford McGregor & Canby's matched wood sets from the 1920s and '30s. A club's visual appeal has become inseparable from its functional success.

Prior to the morning of the first round of bidding I reviewed the advice I had received from both Ms. Dunbar and Mr. Graham Budd, a British auctioneer and sporting goods collectibles expert, who was acting as a consultant to Sotheby's on this special auction. Both had advised that a flexible plan and patience within a budget might be rewarded with a winning bid. I was sure I had a budget, my plan was simple if not flexible, and patience, well, that remained to be seen. Ms.



Jeffrey Ellis with part of his collection, which included multiple copies of Calamity Jane (below).

Dunbar was to act as auctioneer at the first of four sessions, and as the main hall on the second floor at Sotheby's began to fill with the hopeful, the foolish, and the merely curious, I took my seat, numbered paddle in hand.

Two giant screens behind the auctioneer displayed the current item that was up for auction, referred to as a "lot number," and each screen also displayed the bid price in euros,

pounds, yen, Swiss francs, and Hong Kong dollars. A bank of auction agents stood ready to take phone bids, and Internet bids were already in the hands of the auctioneer. Ms. Dunbar went over the ground rules and began the auction by offering the first item "for your competition."

There is a rhythm to an auction, and the auctioneer sets the tone. Early winning bids seemed to come mainly from phone bidders, and it wasn't until lot ten when Ms. Dunbar said "I have 7,000 in the room... going once, twice, fair warning... sold." The winning paddle number noted, the next lot was immediately opened for bidding and tens of thousands of dollars changed hands in a matter of moments.

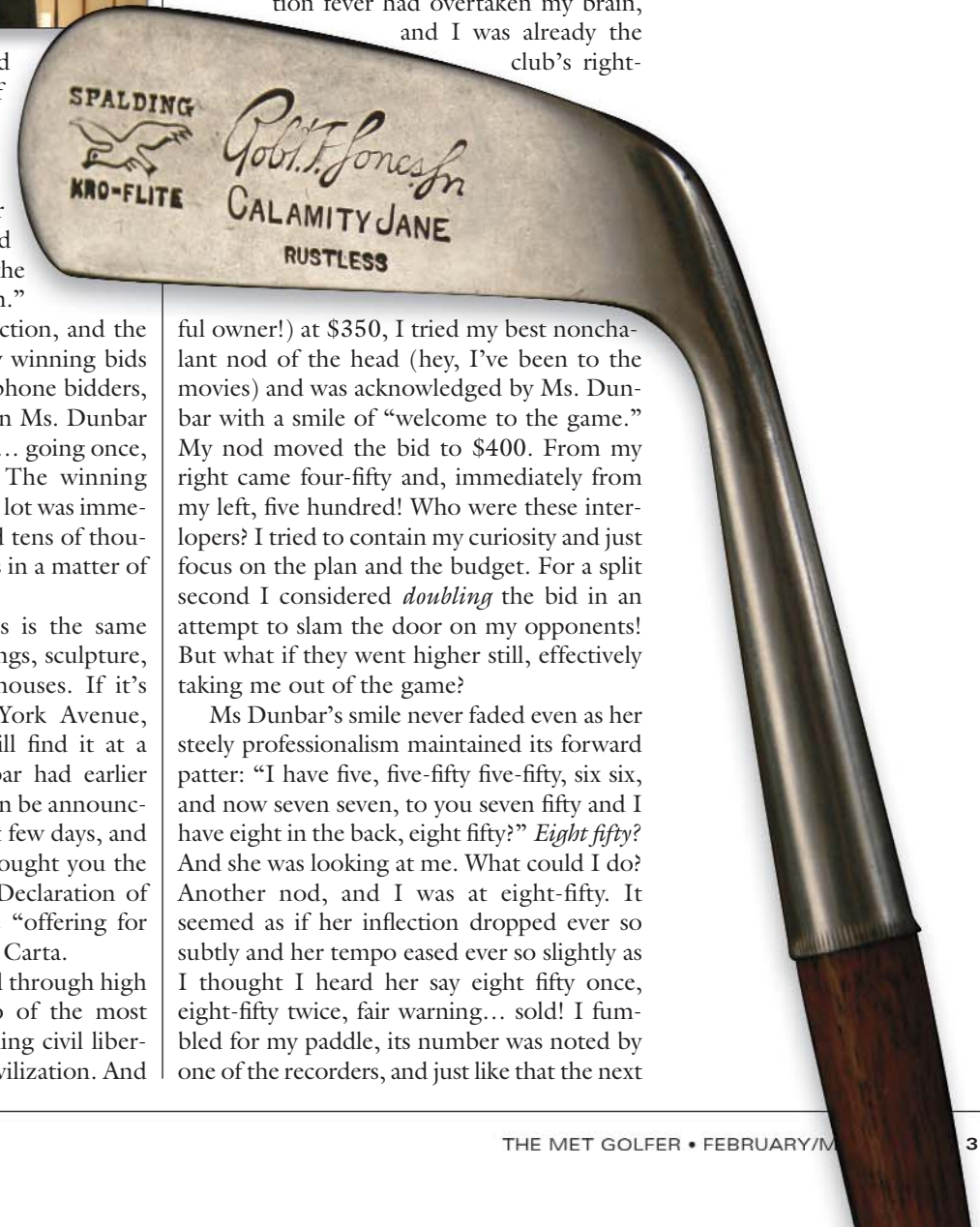
As I suggested earlier, this is the same process used to auction paintings, sculpture, photography, furniture and houses. If it's inanimate (no livestock on York Avenue, please) and has value, you will find it at a Sotheby's auction. Ms. Dunbar had earlier hinted that her boss would soon be announcing a major auction in the next few days, and sure enough, the man who brought you the opportunity to purchase the Declaration of Independence would soon be "offering for your competition" the Magna Carta.

For those of you who dozed through high school history, those are two of the most important documents concerning civil liberties in the history of western civilization. And

you can buy them. Ross Perot is selling his copy. Seriously. [The Magna Carta sold for \$21 million on December 18].

Fortunately for me, I was only looking to secure for myself a minor specimen from the history of American golf, and not the history of our nation. The Bobby Jones clubs came up fairly close to the end of the morning session in which Ms. Dunbar had solicited winning bids on some 140 lots in an hour's time, with most items selling at or above their anticipated prices. Form held true when the rare prototype Ellis had allowed me to hold sold for fifteen hundred dollars "in the room" to a buyer who had shown plenty of purchasing power on earlier items. Things became still more tense as a club billed as an "exact replica" of Jones's championship winning putter sold for four times its listed value. Apparently I was not alone in my interest.

With bidding opening on *my* putter (auction fever had overtaken my brain, and I was already the club's right-



ful owner!) at \$350, I tried my best nonchalant nod of the head (hey, I've been to the movies) and was acknowledged by Ms. Dunbar with a smile of "welcome to the game." My nod moved the bid to \$400. From my right came four-fifty and, immediately from my left, five hundred! Who were these interlopers? I tried to contain my curiosity and just focus on the plan and the budget. For a split second I considered *doubling* the bid in an attempt to slam the door on my opponents! But what if they went higher still, effectively taking me out of the game?

Ms Dunbar's smile never faded even as her steely professionalism maintained its forward pater: "I have five, five-fifty five-fifty, six six, and now seven seven, to you seven fifty and I have eight in the back, eight fifty?" *Eight fifty?* And she was looking at me. What could I do? Another nod, and I was at eight-fifty. It seemed as if her inflection dropped ever so subtly and her tempo eased ever so slightly as I thought I heard her say eight fifty once, eight-fifty twice, fair warning... sold! I fumbled for my paddle, its number was noted by one of the recorders, and just like that the next

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High Society

If you're interested in building an Ellis-like collection, you have to start somewhere. And for aspiring golf memorabilia collectors, the Golf Collectors Society is a mecca for one-stop shopping. The society, formed in 1970 and headquartered in Florence, Oregon, offers collectors the opportunity to buy what Executive Director Karen Bednarski says is "everything that's collectible," as long as it has a golf motif.

Want some examples? Hickory shafted golf clubs, books and art are the leading items among collectors, according to Bednarski. Society members also collect golf-themed ceramics, silver, glass, autographs, pencils, scorecards, postcards, programs, magazines, trophies, medals and even sheet music. Comic books with characters like Mickey Mouse, Elmer Fudd or Archie playing golf on the cover are also popular.

"Our annual trade show is the largest event of its kind," says Bednarski. "If you're a collector and you're interested in seeing other people's collections or buying, selling or trading, it's the best place in the world to do it."

This year's show, which will be November 4 through 6 in Southern Pines, N.C., is one of several opportunities for members to get together. The Society also publishes an annual membership directory that can be used to contact other collectors, as well as a quarterly newsletter.

Annual membership fees are \$50 for U.S. residents. In all, there are approximately 1,400 members from 16 different countries. For more information on the Golf Collectors Society, visit www.golfcollectors.com.

—Bob Seligman

lot was introduced. And there it was: a minor purchase in the grand scheme of things, at an auction that would yield 2.1 million dollars in sales, but a victory for me and the amateur in all of us. I like to think that the great amateur, Jones, would be pleased.

Why did Jeffrey B. Ellis sell off his prizes to collectors around the world, thereby effectively undoing thirty years work of gathering the clubs in the first place? It is highly unlikely that a collection this extensive will ever be brought together again. Perhaps he answered this question best when he said: "I did what I set out to do. And I wrote the book, literally. Now it is time to let them go."

Clubs of the type I had purchased are not particularly rare, and can be found on the Internet for a few dollars more and oft times a few dollars less. But this one will have a special place in my personal golf history, and I care little for its monetary value. It represents a number of things for me: a special day, a time in history that interests me, a player of enduring fame, and the memory of a man who continues to hang around in the clubhouse of my past.

With my prize in the back seat — I wonder if anyone ever walks out the front door of Sotheby's with a Degas rolled up under their arm? — I drove back out of the city past my childhood neighborhood in Queens, and

pulled into the parking lot at Clearview Golf Course. It was here, under the shadow of the Throgs Neck Bridge, that our family friend and neighbor Willie Ardiffe, by then retired from the NYPD, had brought me, first to feed the goldfish that once grew in the pond near the clubhouse, and later to dig small, irregular divots with a cut-down 7-iron.

I'm not sure exactly what I was looking for on this day, but I can tell you that the goldfish are no more. The starter's board is gone too, replaced by a computer reservation system, and the luncheonette, with its counter and booths that once had enough character to fill two Hoppers, has gone the way of modernization.

Only the shadow cast by the towering gray bridge seemed unchanged. The bridge and the old men, still there, still calling a crowded eighteen-hole muni "the club"; a shared illusion of possession in a game that defies possession. And if one of those men is very lucky, he will have come to understand, as Willie Ardiffe seems to have understood, that the greatest thing about the game is that it is never more truly yours than when you give a little boy a 7-iron, a bucket of scuffed-up range balls, and an afternoon or two of your time. ■

Robert Durkin writes about golf for the *Southampton Press*.

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It's in the Mail

Stamp collecting offers a chance to learn more about the game's history and acquire some valuable works of art in the process

BY DIANA ERBIO

The most famous postage stamp in golf is the par-three eighth hole at Royal Troon in Scotland, so named because of its small green and short distance. "A pitching surface skimmed down to the size of a postage stamp" is what Willie Park Jr., two-time British Open winner (1887 and '89) and designer of the Maidstone Club in East Hampton, N.Y., wrote about the 123-yard hole in a 1923 *Golf Illustrated* article.

The description stuck. It is fitting that the first hole compared to a postage stamp is located in Great Britain, where the first postage stamp, bearing the profile of Queen Victoria, was issued in 1840. Many other links to the

links can be found among the thousands of stamps issued by the postal services of countries around the world. As the market for golf collectibles continues to accelerate, there are many avid golfers who seek out these tiny works of art in order to add a new dimension to their enjoyment of the game. And from the sheer number and diversity of classic and modern golf stamps that are out there, those collectors have plenty of options to pursue.

Who's Who on the Stamps

In addition to appreciating stamps for their intricate design, many collectors enjoy making connections to stamps' themes and learning more about their subjects. The ties one

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can make between stamps within the same collection are plentiful, and in the realm of golf stamps, these ties extend to people and places outside the game.

Bobby Jones, co-founder of Augusta National Golf Club and The Masters, is featured on two United States postage stamps. Jones's Grand Slam in 1930 was his crowning achievement, and he remains the only player to win the four established majors in golf in the same year. Of course, two of the tournaments considered majors back then — the U.S. Amateur and British Amateur — are no longer thought of as Grand Slam events today. But that has done nothing to diminish Jones's accomplishment.

The first Bobby Jones stamp, issued in 1981, pictures Jones wearing knickers that were four inches longer than the knickers usually worn at the time. Jones contributed to making these knickers, commonly called plus-fours, the popular golf wear of the day. The other U.S. stamp honoring Jones is part of the "Celebrate the Century" series issued in 1998. Jones is commemorated in the 1930s pane of stamps along with other formidable symbols of that decade, including the Empire State Building and the Golden Gate Bridge.

In 1958, Bobby Jones received the Freedom of the Burgh in St. Andrews, Scotland. He was only the second American to be honored with the award, the first being Benjamin Franklin. Interestingly enough, Franklin was the first Postmaster General of the United States. This link illustrates the way that a stamp collection, even one that only deals with golf stamps, can provide historical connections to stamps of a variety of topics. Franklin has been portrayed on many United States stamps, and in fact Franklin and George Washington were on the first two United States stamps, issued in 1847.

After winning the Grand Slam, Bobby Jones became a national celebrity. Warner Brothers decided to take advantage of Jones's star power, and produce a series of instructional

golf films entitled *How I Play Golf*. These entertaining skits featured Jones with some of the biggest stars of the day, including W.C. Fields, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson and Douglas Fairbanks — all of whom have also been honored on United States postage stamps. This is yet another example of how a golf-themed stamp collection could branch out in other directions, as these subjects all have a link to the game through their appearances in the Jones films.

In 1913, when few public golf courses existed in America, 20-year-old amateur Francis Ouimet defeated two of England's best professionals, Ted Ray and Harry Vardon, at the U.S. Open in Brookline, Massachusetts. Ouimet went on to win the 1914 and 1931 U.S. Amateurs, and in 1951 he was named Captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, the first American to be elected to the position. In 1988, in honor of the Open's return to The Country Club in Brookline, a United States stamp was issued in honor of this once unknown golfer who rose from the caddie ranks to shock the world.

Ouimet was the inaugural recipient of the USGA's highest honor, the Bob Jones award, in 1955. Two years later, the Bob Jones award was won by one Mildred D. Zaharias, who is commemorated on a 1981 United States stamp. Born Mildred Didrikson in Texas in 1914, this daughter of Norwegian immigrants won numerous athletic competitions



Stamp Collecting Basics

Below are some basic tips to starting a stamp collection:

- Post offices (foreign and domestic), stamp shops, the Internet, specialized stamp publications, stamp shows and your own mailbox are great sources to help you start to gather stamps. Most stamps mentioned in this article are easy to find and can be purchased for less than \$10.
- Stamp collecting is a hobby in which you set the rules, but there are a few basics to follow so that your stamps will not be damaged and can be enjoyed for many years to come.
 - 1) You can collect *mint* or *used* stamps – or both. *Mint* means the stamp has not gone through the mail, and the gum on the back of the stamp is intact. *Used* means the stamp has gone through the mail.
 - 2) There are many different postal markings and cancellations. Some collectors choose to collect these markings, and they save the entire envelope with the stamp on it (on-cover).
 - 3) Stamps can be collected on-cover or off-cover. See "Soaking Stamps Off Envelopes" to learn how to remove stamps from their envelopes if you want to collect used stamps off-cover.
 - 4) Never use tape or glue to mount stamps. Use stamp hinges or special stamp mounts, which can be purchased at stamp shops or online. Also, use stamp tongs (special smooth-edged tweezers purchased at stamp shops), not your fingers, to handle stamps. The oils from your fingers can damage stamps.

A Glossary of Stamp-Collecting Terms

Cachet: pictorial image on cover

First Day Cover: a stamped cover postmarked with the stamp's first date of issue

Mint: stamp that has not been through the postal system

Philately: the collection and study of postage stamps and other postal materials

Postmark: marking of the date and location

Used: stamp that has been through the postal system



in everything from basketball to track and field, and even won two gold medals at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, setting new records in the javelin and 80-meter hurdles.

Following these accomplishments, Didrikson married professional wrestler George Zaharias, and would forever be known as "Babe" as she became a force in the world of amateur golf. There too, Babe Zaharias excelled, becoming the leading amateur golfer in the nation and winning 17 straight titles in 1946 and '47, including the British Women's Amateur. In 1954 she won the U.S. Women's Open and the All-American Open.

Courses and Tournaments

Other golf-related stamps cover some of the most revered courses in the game. Those include stamps issued in Ireland in 1975 to celebrate the new European Golf Championship course at Killarney. In 2005 and 2006, stamps from Ireland celebrated the Ryder Cup. The Australian Open Golf Centenary (1904-2004) was commemorated with an Australian-issued sheet of stamps in 2005 that portrayed several of the famous courses, including Royal Melbourne, which have captivated golfers over the years.

Closer to home, Canada Post issued a set of five stamps in 1995 to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of golf in Canada. Some of Canada's oldest and most prestigious golf courses were featured on the set, including Banff Springs, Glen Abbey, Royal Montreal

Stamp Publications and Web Sites

The American Philatelist Society (www.stamps.org) has stamps available for purchase and provides a wealth of general stamp collecting information. You will receive their monthly magazine, *American Philatelist*, with membership.

On March 7-9, 2008, the Spring Postage Stamp Mega-Event will be held at Madison Square Garden. Visit www.asdaonline.com for more information about the show.

The American Topical Association www.americantopicalassn.org offers information about a variety of topical collecting themes. The International Philatelic Golf Society, IPGS, focuses on golf and publishes a quarterly journal, *Tee Time*. Visit their website at www.ipgsonline.org for more information. Membership is \$12 per year.

StampWants.com, an online marketplace and community that connects stamp collectors and dealers around the world, offers auction, fixed price, and store inventory listings of stamps from countries around the world

Other websites of interest:

- Linn's Stamp News; www.linns.com.
- Scott Stamp Monthly; www.scottonline.com.
- United States Postal Service (USPS) www.usps.com.
- Visit www.zillionsofstamps.com to view and purchase a variety of stamps on almost any topic.

Be Stamp Savvy

Unfortunately, the Universal Postal Union has found abusive practices in the issuance of stamps, including the illegal issue of postage stamps without the authorization of the Posts concerned, counterfeit stamps, and over-production of stamps with the sole aim of turning a profit. You may want some of these stamps issued for your collection but if you purchase them beware of what they are. They are often seen as nothing more than labels in the stamp collecting world. Visit <http://www.upu.int/philately/en/index.shtml> for more on this.

and Victoria Golf Club.

In 1994 Great Britain issued a set of stamps featuring golf courses, including the Postage Stamp at Royal Troon. Also featured in the set are the Old Course at St. Andrews, the 18th hole at Muirfield, Lucky Slap at Carnoustie and the ninth hole at Turnberry's Ailsa Course.

Do Stamps Hold Value?

The vast majority of stamps collected hold value in their aesthetic quality, and in the knowledge they inspire collectors to acquire. That is very true of the golf stamps discussed. However, there are also stamps that have a high monetary value, which motivate some people to get involved in collecting. The most famous stamp in history is likely the "Inverted Jenny," four of which were sold at auction in 2005 for \$2,970,000. Recently a single "Inverted Jenny" sold for \$825,000.

Stamps picturing the Curtiss JN-4 biplane known as a "Jenny" were issued in 1918 in the United States. Due to a printing error, some of these stamps showed the image of the Jenny upside-down. Only one sheet of 100 inverted Jenny stamps is known to have been released to the public, making them extraordinarily valuable. William T. Robey purchased the sheet for \$24 at a post office in May 1918, and one week later he sold it for \$15,000. The stamps which still exist have changed hands many times since then.

Chances are pretty high that you will never stumble upon a stamp rarity like William T. Robey did, but the thought of finding a stamp gem does add excitement to an already enjoyable hobby. For golfers, the enjoyment is enhanced by the power of stamps to provide an artistic window on the history of the game. ■

Diana Erbio has collected stamps for over thirty years. She lives on Long Island.

Fab Five



A handful of local collectors are at the forefront of obtaining and preserving historic golf artifacts

BY BOB SELIGMAN

Lowell Schulman, one of the most noted gatherers of golf memorabilia in the Met Area, calls collectors "a special breed of people." When they want something, they can go to great lengths to obtain it. "There is no rhyme or reason for their effort, energy and acquisitiveness," says Schulman, a Purchase, N.Y., resident. "They make pilgrimages of many miles to acquire a certain item for their collection. The effort, and cost of that effort, is far more than the value of the item itself, but it doesn't matter. They've got to have it."

As Schulman says, golf memorabilia collectors are a fun breed. Here's a snapshot of five leading local collectors and insights on how, and why, they collect. ■

Bob Seligman writes from his home in Suffern, N.Y.

Lance Enholm

Home: Johnson, N.Y.

Profession: Owner and Head Pro, Green Ridge Golf Club

What he collects: You name it, Enholm's got it. His collection includes approximately 2,000 hickory-shafted clubs, early golf games going back to the 1890s, rare golf balls, silver trophies, early ceramics, postcards, photographs, art, and several golf tees on swivels.

Why he collects: It enables him to see the evolution of golf clubs and the ideas in golf equipment that people invent to make the game easier, and to see how those old ideas translate into modern clubs.

How he got started: In 1975 Enholm's father, a golf professional in Massachusetts, gave him two miniature clubs, including a 14-inch long wooden shafted club called "The Midget," which he claims is the smallest club ever made. His interest grew from there.

His most prized possession: A sterling silver trophy from the North & South Amateur in Pinehurst in 1906. "It's very rare and the tournament is historically important." Enholm also has a dozen Ocobo (the Titleist of its day) gutta-percha balls in their original 1890 packaging.

His most unusual possession: A hickory-shafted club with a clubhead that is hollowed-out in the middle and features a dual-material clubface of rubber and steel, for spring effect far beyond the norm at the turn of the century.

The most unusual way he attained something: Enholm once bought a Giant Niblick, a rare club with a huge six-inch face. It was on display at Green Ridge when someone saw it and said that his plumber, in Long Island, had bought a similar-looking club at a church sale. Eventually, Enholm purchased the club from the plumber.

What's missing from his collection: The winning medal given to 1897 U.S. Open champion Joe Lloyd. Enholm once had the chance to buy it at an auction, but didn't. "It's the one thing I regret the most."



ANDREW LEVINE

Michael Beckerich

Home: Piermont, N.Y.

Profession: Owner, Classics of Golf

What he collects: Beckerich is an eclectic collector. His golf memorabilia includes an assortment of trophies from golf clubs, mainly from Europe; hickory-shafted clubs; putters; rare original golf books; plaques; and a combination of scorecards, pencils and ball markers from the approximately 400 courses he has played, including all of the British Open golf courses.

What made him start collecting: In 1992, Beckerich got the bug on his first trip to Scotland. He was sitting in the locker room in Muirfield when he realized he "wanted to be part of this forever. It had to be part of me. I wanted to see it."

His most prized possession: The presentation piece that was given to Sam Parks Jr., the 1935 U.S. Open champion, when he played in the Ryder Cup that year at Ridgewood CC in Paramus, N.J. The artifact is made of bronze mounted on a wood plaque and notes that Parks was a member of the U.S. Ryder Cup team. Beckerich acquired the piece in an Internet auction when he made the winning bid at 3 a.m.

His most unusual possession: A putter from 1904 that was made by James Braid. The inside part of the shaft is completely flat, all the way down to the blade.

What's missing from his collection: A scorecard with his name on it from Augusta National Golf Club. He's never played the course.



Dr. Vic Figler

Home: Pawleys Island, S.C., originally from Ridgewood, N.J.

Profession: Retired Dentist

What he collects: Before retiring to Pawleys Island, just south of Myrtle Beach, Dr. Figler donated his collection of more than 200 golf-themed postcards to the MGA Foundation. Most of the postcards are of Met Area clubs, but some are from other historically important places like Pinehurst and Augusta National. The postcards include the courses and clubhouses, and the collection ranges from 1905 to the early 1930s.

Why he collects: Dr. Figler is a history buff who was a member of the Bergen County Historical Society. He says postcards bring back memories. "I was a fairly decent golfer. I liked playing other clubs so I decided to get postcards of as many Metropolitan clubs as I could. I think I'm a collector. I collected coins. I collect records. I collect a lot of things and postcards just seemed to be a good thing. It was a lot of fun."

How he got started: Dr. Figler began collecting Tuxedo Park, N.Y., postcards ("there were a lot of them and nobody else collected them"), which led him to find postcards from the first golf course at the Tuxedo Club, where he is a member. The collection also includes golf clubs that no longer exist, like New Brunswick Country Club in New Jersey.

His most prized possession: Because they are so rare, Dr. Figler cherishes the several postcards he has of the early Tuxedo Club.

How he built his collection: Dr. Figler often received postcards from his parents — who knew he was a collector — after they found the items while looking through their attics.

What's missing from his collection: Postcards from Winged Foot and Quaker Ridge, courses he has enjoyed playing many times.

Golf Club House, Montclair, N. J.



Jon Finger

Home: Scarborough, N.Y.

Profession: Sales Manager for Kars Nuts, a snack food company

What he collects: *Scorecards! Get your scorecards here!* Which is what Finger has been doing for years, assembling a collection of 30,000 golf scorecards from different courses all over the world, including more than 1,100 he has played. The collection includes scorecards from more than 19,000 U.S. courses. In total, Finger says his collection is more than 100,000 strong, including multiple cards from the same course if it has undergone significant layout modifications over the years.

Why he collects: Finger says it's inexpensive to collect scorecards, especially compared to other types of golf memorabilia collecting. He also likes the aspect of collecting cards from courses he may want to play. "It's like baseball cards. I trade with a group of 15 regular collectors and we exchange anywhere from five to 100 cards at a time." Finger trades with collectors in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, the U.K., Canada, as well as many across the U.S.

How he got started: In the early 1970s, Finger began collecting cards from courses he had played. The hobby blossomed from there.

His most prized possession: A Ben Hogan autographed scorecard from The Trophy Club. The course, outside Dallas, Texas, is the only one Hogan ever designed.

His most unusual possession: A scorecard from Havana Country Club in Cuba before Fidel Castro gained power. "It's unusual to have it from a course in Cuba that predated Castro."

The most unusual way he attained a scorecard: He picked it out of a garbage can.

The item missing from his collection he'd like to have: A scorecard from Sunnylands, the Walter Annenberg Estate in Rancho Mirage, Calif. The property has its own private golf course.



ANDREW LEVINE

Lowell Schulman

Home: Purchase, N.Y.

Profession: Retired Real Estate Developer

What he collects: Schulman focuses on golf-related items dating from the 1850s to the 1930s. His treasure trove includes plates, figurines, umbrella stands, beer steins, mugs, cigarette boxes and place card holders. The 80-piece assortment comes from the U.S., England, France and Germany, and Rand Jerris, director of the USGA Museum, calls it one of the best collections in the world. In 2001 Schulman donated the collection to the USGA, where it is on display at the front entrance to their headquarters in Far Hills, N.J.

Schulman currently collects silver spoons with golfers on the handles and English-made spoons with club logos, as well as original golf art from the 1880s to the 1930s, mostly by renowned British artists like Cecil Aldin, John Hassall, and others.

Why he collects: "It's an inherent addiction. You either are a collector or you're not. There is the historical aspect. I enjoy the beauty of the art and I relate to it."

How he started: In the early 1970s, while walking through an antiques store in Denver, Colo., Schulman found a ceramic object with a picture of an old golf club that immediately got his attention. "I had never seen anything like it and never knew there was such a thing as golf ceramics of old periods. It jumped out, caught my eye and started me on this passionate path."

His most prized possession: "As a group they meant something to me. They were all prized."

His most unusual possession: A famous piece of original art called "The Drive" by C.E. Brock, featuring a golfer in a red coat driving a golf ball. It has been reproduced on playing cards, matchbook covers and printed material.

What's missing from his collection: Schulman "lusts" for what he calls one of the world's great oil paintings. It is a group scene of recognizable participants in a British Open watching a player. He's negotiating to make the purchase, but says his odds of attaining the piece are less than 50 percent.