

Allan Robertson's Putter in "Golf House"

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If you were to ask ten men to select the greatest golfer who had ever lived, the names of Bob Jones, Harry Vardon and Ben Hogan undoubtedly would be nominated. It is unlikely, however, that anyone would mention Allan Robertson.

Yet, according to tradition, Robertson never was beaten in a stake match on level terms, and he and Tom Morris, Sr., who learned his golfing lore in Robertson's shop, never lost a foursome in which they were partners. Robertson's name is now a dim memory because he was born at St. Andrews, Scotland, in 1815. During most of his career he played the feather ball, and he died in 1858, two years before the first British Open was held. Robertson's swing has been compared to that of Vardon in grace and elegance, and if he had a weakness, it was that he lacked the power of his rivals. Willie Dunn, Willie Park and Tom Morris, Sr., all younger, had an advantage over him in length, but never when the final score was written down.

J. C. Earle, of Los Angeles, Cal., a member of the USGA Museum Committee, has given to the USGA Museum in "Golf House" a wooden putter, which, in view of evidence, is believed to have been Allan Robertson's, made by the famous club-maker, Hugh Philp.

In 1950, Mr. Earle, while searching Scotland for valuable old clubs and books, bought from the Tom Morris shop, in St. Andrews, a lot of twenty-one clubs. One of these bore a Scottish Exhibition sticker No. 192.

Patient research developed the fact that in the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry, instituted in 1911 in Glasgow, there had appeared in the south gallery of the Palace of History, which housed the exhibition, the following item:

"192—ALLAN ROBERTSON'S PUTTER,
LENT BY T. MORRIS."

A copy of the catalog is in our library, thanks to Mr. Earle.

The putter has the pear-shaped head usually associated with Hugh Philp and bears the name of its reputed maker on that part of the head where Philp habitually stamped his clubs.

On the other side of the ledger, contributions to the "Golf House" Fund have surpassed the \$100,000 mark and reached a total of \$100,125. The number of individuals, clubs, associations and other organizations who have enrolled as Founders is now 5,473. The goal remains \$110,000.

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