

## THE ROMANTIC FIGURES OF HOYLAKE

Two Golfers Win Sixteen Championships

By A ROVING PLAYER



A GOLFING TOUR DE LUXE. Gene Sarazen and Joe Kirkwood in the living room of their trailer in the course of their 20,000-mile tour. A palatial car, costing 12,000 dollars, was borrowed from Col. H. L. Doherty, the president of the Florida Year-Round Clubs at Miami.

IT is singularly appropriate that on the eve of another championship at Hoylake a history of this famous course, the nursery of many illustrious golfers, should make its appearance. Its author is Guy B. Farrar, a member of the Royal Liverpool Club, and he traces the history of the course from its birth in 1869 down to the present day. A fascinating and a romantic story it makes.

A few scattered holes dug with a pocket-knife were made on ground inhabited by countless thousands of rabbits, a room at the Royal Hotel was rented for the purposes of a clubhouse, and a loose-box in the stables engaged for the professional, Jack Morris, whose association with the club lasted for over half a century. Of those wonderful pioneer days the only remaining living link is Mr. R. F. Miln, known as "The Admiral," who is still a member of the club. As an illustration of the appalling difficulties the players encountered, it is interesting to note that in one of the first competitions Mr. Miln took 117 strokes for the double round of nine holes, a notorious score considering that one heroic member handed in a card of 205 and another one of 189.

From these small beginnings sprung a course and a club which have exercised a profound influence on the game all over the world. It was at Hoylake that the first Amateur championship was played, that the international matches between England and Scot-

land began, and that America started her long series of victories over British amateurs. Hoylake also produced two golfers of lasting fame—John Ball and Harold Hilton, who, between them, won sixteen national championships, besides a host of score and match-play events of major importance.

The chief hero, or, as Farrar says, the greatest Roman of them all, is John Ball, who was born on the edge of the links and as a boy of eight won a silver scratch medal. The winning of that prize has now become a milestone in golfing history, and in spite of all his innumerable successes in after years it is to be expected that Ball still experiences a thrill when recalling the first moment of triumph in 1872. His record of eight victories in the amateur championship is never likely to be approached, much less equalled.

In his young days at Hoylake he won everything, and in the year 1887 he accomplished the remarkable feat of winning all six medals for the best scratch scores. The name of John Ball is engraved on them ninety-four times in all. In handicap events he carried the absurd penalty of plus eleven, but he still went on winning. This champion of champions was one of the most reserved men I

ever met; he dreaded publicity and hated fuss about his achievements.

THERE is the story that on one occasion, after winning the championship, all Hoylake gathered at the railway station to welcome him home. Fog signals were placed on the line and fishermen were waiting at the station to pull him to his home in a cab from which the horse had been removed. The train steamed in, the fog signals went off, the crowd cheered—but there was no champion. Ball had left the train at the previous station and walked home alone along the seashore.

### SPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS

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His last triumph at Westward Ho! in 1912 was, as Farrar says, the most marvellous of all. He was opposing Abe Mitchell (then playing as an amateur), a man half his age and whose great length was astonishing. Ball was fifty years of age, and the autumn of his golf had set in. Yet the old war-horse stuck to his young opponent, and after being down most of the way and performing conjuring tricks with a stymie when all seemed lost, he finally won at the 38th hole, where Mitchell drove into a ditch. None has ever inspired greater hero-worship than John Ball,

and none ever courted it less. At the age of seventy-one, he now lives on his Welsh farm in a remote district away from the stampeding crowds of modern championships.

Next in Hoylake's gallery of heroes is Harold Hilton, probably the greatest amateur score player Britain ever produced. He won the open championship twice, the amateur four times and the American title once. Hilton, unlike John Ball, loved the dust of the arena; the turmoil of a championship was his natural setting.

While Hilton's swing was rather on the flamboyant side, none had more control or greater delicacy of touch. Not for an instant during that whirlwind swing did he ever lose command or allow the club to do anything except to fulfil the desires of his master mind.

"The Royal Liverpool Golf Club, a History, 1869-1932," by Guy B. Farrar. (Willmer Bros. & Co. Birkenhead, 20s. 6d. net.)



A GOLFING TOUR DE LUXE. The crowd gathered at Madison Avenue, New York, to admire the car and trailer used by Gene Sarazen and Joe Kirkwood on their 20,000-mile tour. A kitchen and many of the comforts of the ideal home are embodied in this elaborate outfit, which shows there is still a modicum of luxury available in "impooverished" America.

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