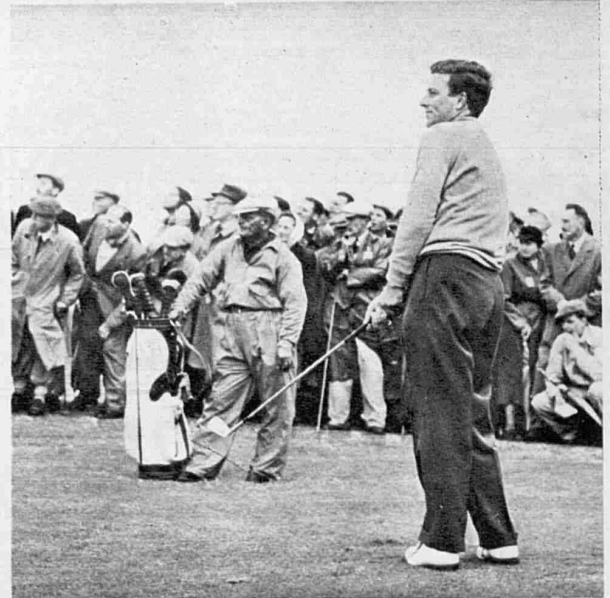




### Henry Cotton's Golf Notes

THE WINNER FOR THE THIRD TIME: Peter Thomson (Australia) is congratulated by G. de Wit as they leave the last green. Walter Gillespie comes across to join in. In the other photograph Thomson is playing a chip shot during the second round of the championship proper.



## Open Championship 1956

### My Day-by-Day Record of Events

**S**TRAIT from the U.S. Open, a park course and the big ball, to "our Open," one of the greatest seaside links, and our own little ball, all in about two weeks, was a new experience for me, for it was the first time I had completed 72 holes in the U.S. Open—only my second try, I admit, but it was quite a thrill.

At Hoylake, the home of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, I found the worthy secretary, Mr. Guy Farrar, very worried about his beloved links. Only assiduous watering had kept the greens and tees alive, but the fairways were below par and looking very unlike the usual green carpets we have grown to expect. The same continued drought had nearly "fixed" poor Wallasey, a great seaside links, too. Here the tees and greens had been saved, but the fairways were really unplayable—the lies were abominable and this lovely course, a fine test, was very sick.

The qualifying rounds on these two courses can be just a formality if you get a good first round in; but for those who get off the mark badly, the second round can be a real trial. It is the disgrace, as it were; only very temporary because by Wednesday night all is forgotten as the "Open" proper, as it is called, gets under way, and all the excitement then follows the usual pattern. Who can win? What score to qualify for the last day?

This Open is very open, because there is a real "League of Nations" side to it, with Peter Thomson the holder, and the only outstanding figure; the other fine golfers have all assumed a sort of "attack the champion" rôle.

The weather, as usual on this stretch of golfing coast, plays a big rôle—it began with a nice long shower to gladden the local hearts on Thursday, then a little more rain fell and it blew a little on Saturday, just to show what it can do. This gave the visitors an inkling of our golfing climate. Mike Souchak and Frank Stranahan crossed over together from the U.S.A., and Frank, on his umpteenth trip over but his first visit as a pro, was enjoying telling burly Mike all about the course and our golfing ways.

Mike learned some new expressions. The first amused him no end when a courteous Britisher informed him his "turn-up was

down"; he did not know where to look or what to do. His dress-conscious "cousin" pointed out where the correction should be made, and Mike then thanked him and informed him he knew this part of his apparel as a "pant cuff."

With all the Canada Cup pairs competing, except the winners, the list of players was really interesting, and the starter had fun wrestling with their names.

Who would win? A tough, seasoned golfer is really all I dared to say, at that stage, with Peter Thomson as favourite—the odds were 4 to 1 on him; Souchak began at 25 to 1, but when his golf game became known, his price quickly fell to 7 to 1.

**Monday:** There was little wind at 9 a.m., it was strongish at 1 p.m., and it died down a lot at 4 p.m. This gave the early starters an easier time, and Gary Player and Chas. Ward put in course records at Hoylake and Wallasey respectively, 68 and 69. But the scoring went very high in general, and many big names were in danger. Six out of the first nine names at Hoylake were of overseas players, and four of the first ten at Wallasey came also from overseas. I hoped this was not the writing on the wall.

One heard of extraordinary happenings. A. Cerda, from the Argentine, hit two successive drives out of bounds into the orchard at the sixth and took a 9—but finished bravely in 77. Mike Souchak had a 78 with two 7's on the outward nine and Frank Stranahan was also 78. Bousfield and Von Nida were 78 and 77 respectively: they would not be at ease this evening. At Wallasey, with a 32 home, I got into a second place tie with 71 with Peter Thomson and George Howard, in the rough weather, too. This pleased me, but Van Donck's 69 in the same weather represented better golf. The fairways at both courses came in for criticism and the grass on the Hoylake greens was found to be long.

Already speculation on the qualifying score was taking place. Last year at St. Andrews 149 got in.

**Tuesday:** A perfect golfing day, no wind at all, and low scores came in by the dozen. John Jacobs did a 65 at Wallasey after Syd Scott had broken Mike Souchak's early

morning new record of 68. This round, of course, put Souchak well in. At the end of the day Peter Thomson, with a slick 69 at Hoylake, got into the qualifying lead with young Gary Player, who distinguished himself again, on the 140 mark. I was again delighted with my score of 70 at Hoylake for 141, and shared third spot with George Howard, Van Donck and A. Miguel. The 153's were in, but M. Faulkner, A. Lees, Eric Brown, John Fallon, Von Nida, the Amateur Champion John Beharrell, F. Jowle, and Peter Mills were all out.

Again it was sad reading, only four home players in the first ten. I hoped for better things later, but there were very many good overseas players in the 96 qualifiers. Some 260 players sadly packed their bags.

**Wednesday:** The weather forecast was correct—changeable. From 9 a.m., when D. Smalldon and John Burton drove off, till exactly midday, a lighted match would not



THE LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP was won by Miss Margaret Smith (U.S.A.), who defeated Miss M. P. Janssen (right) in the final. "Wiffi" Smith, at the age of nineteen, is the youngest player ever to bring off this great win.