

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Bernard Darwin

We've been writing reviews of antiquarian and collectible golf books for almost five years and haven't written about Bernard Darwin yet. Oops!

Bernard Darwin was the grandson of the famous evolutionist Charles Darwin and the most prolific author in the history of the game. If you exclude club books, of which Darwin wrote more than 50, he contributed over thirty-five books to the golfer's library. Darwin wrote for both the *Times of London* and *Country Life*. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge and later in life would be named a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for his work, and served as Captain of the R & A in 1934. His writing is always enthusiastic and his longevity was impressive, having written about golf for over fifty years in a tireless fashion. We will repeat what is often said about Darwin, which is that he was simply a great writer who happened [luckily for us] to write about golf.

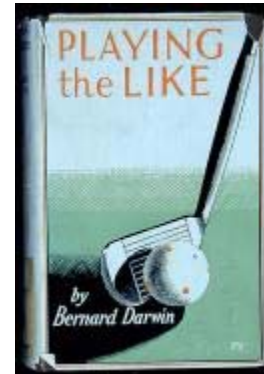
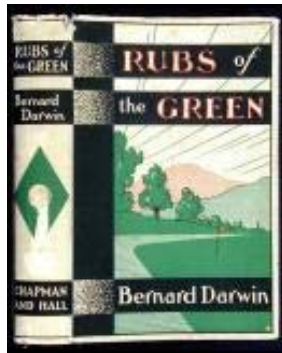
Darwin's oeuvre can seem daunting for the collector to tackle. Below we offer a summary of his vast work. We begin with his first book and one of the greatest pieces of golfing literature ever published: *The Golf Courses of the British Isles*, published in 1910. The book is a tour-de-force and one of the cornerstone books of any collection. His *The Golf Courses of Great Britain*, published in 1925, is essentially a second edition of the 1910 original.



Many of Darwin's books were compilations of his writings from newspapers and magazines. These are:

- *Tee Shots and Others* (1911) - a collection of articles from *Evening Standard*
- *Golf from the Times* (1912) - a collection of 10 essays from the *Times*
- *Bernard Darwin and Aberdovey* - a collection of 23 essays from the *Times* and *Country Life*
- *A Friendly Round* (1922) - a collection of 24 essays from the *Times*
- *The Game's Afoot!* (1926) - an anthology of sports, games and the open air

- *Second Shots* (1930) – a collection of 34 pieces from the *Times*
- *Out of the Rough* (1932) – a collection of 49 pieces from the *Times* and *Country Life*
- *Playing the Like* (1934) – a collection of articles from the *Times* and *Country Life*
- *Rubs of the Green* (1936) – a collection of 39 pieces from the *Times* and *Country Life*
- *Golfing by Paths* (1946) – a collection of 58 articles from *Country Life*
- *Golf: Pleasures of Life Series* (1954) – an anthology of Darwin's writings



Darwin's historical works are:

- *A Golfer's Gallery of Old Masters* (1920) which is a limited edition book of 500 copies and contains eighteen reproductions of golf related paintings from the 16th-19th centuries. Darwin wrote the introduction to the book.
- *Present Day Golf* (1921) was written with George Duncan and is an instructional book
- *A Round of Golf on the L&NER* (1924) is a promotional book written for the London & North Eastern Railway highlighting courses along the route
- *Six Golfing Shots by Six Famous Players* (1927) is a 46 page promotional brochure
- *Golf Between Two Wars* (1944) covers the period 1918-1938
- *British Golf* (1946) is a look at golf clubs in Great Britain
- *James Braid* (1952) is a biography of this Open Championship winner

Seinfeld was famous for being a television show about nothing. The same can be said about two of Darwin's non-golf books, which cover a variety of topics:

- *Pack Clouds Away* (1941) has some biographical elements
- *Every Idle Dream* (1948)

Darwin wrote three autobiographical works:

- *Green Memories* (1928)
- *Life is Sweet Brother* (1940)
- *The World That Fred Made* (1955)

Value and scarcity

As with other golf books, the elements that make Darwin's works collectible are no different: early first editions are sought after; as are copies with good copies of dust

jacket and those signed by the author. In roughly descending order, collectible Darwin books are listed below. A Darwin signature adds somewhere between \$200-\$300 dollars.

- *Golf Courses of the British Isles* is generally worth in the range of \$1,000 to \$2,000. The book was issued with an exceeding rare gray dust jacket. Copies with the jacket present are worth four or five times this amount.
- *A Golfer's Gallery of Old Masters* is worth at least \$1,000 with all eighteen prints present
- *Rubs of the Green, Green Memories, Tee Shots and Others* and *Playing the Like* are worth \$400-\$500 or up to \$1,500 with a dust jacket
- *Golf from the Times* - \$1,000
- *A Friendly Round* - \$500
- *A Round of Golf on the L&NER* – \$350-\$400

Recommended Books

How do you narrow down the daunting body of work Bernard Darwin produced? We have attempted to distill his works down to three gems. Certainly, not everyone will agree with us, although the good news is that it is hard to go wrong with any of Darwin's work. Many of his works were reprinted in later editions for those interested in simply reading his work, rather than collecting them.

Golf Courses of the British Isles – A cornerstone book for any golf collector. An added bonus with this book is the hand drawn illustrations by Harry Rowntree.

A Round of Golf on the L&NER – Don't be fooled by a book written to promote the railroad. This little gem contains some brilliant writing. It features a short review of twenty-courses, but distills Darwin down to his essence. Writing about the quirky holes at Cruden Bay he says "...at the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth holes the most elderly and phlegmatic persons will pant up to the top of the bank like two-year-olds to see what has befallen their ball on the far side."



Green Memories – the best of the auto-biographical books with nice insights into the man