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Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Frederick Guthrie (F.G.) Tait

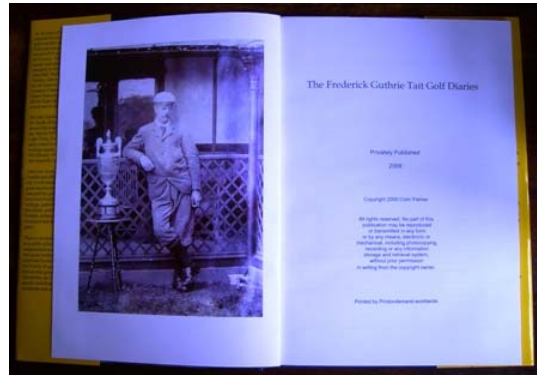
Freddie Tait was one of the greatest golfers of his era, winning the British Amateur Championship in 1896 and 1898. He was a fierce rival to the other great amateur champions John Ball and Harold Hilton, as well as a competitive player in The Open Championship with the great professionals Harry Vardon, James Braid and J.H. Taylor. Tait was the high amateur finisher in The Open three times and finished in the top ten six times. In 1897 he shot a 69 at The Old Course, a substantial feat for that period.

He graduated from Sandhurst and was a member of the Royal Highland Brigade (the famed Black Watch). Tait was tragically killed at the age of 30 during the Boer War in 1900. Lieutenant Tait was adored and admired by all that knew of him; he became a hero in both his homeland of Scotland and the golfing world.

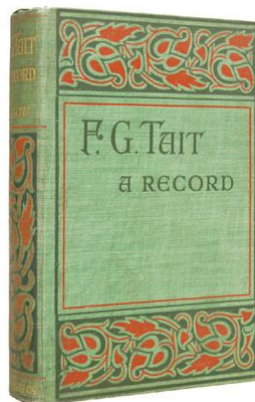
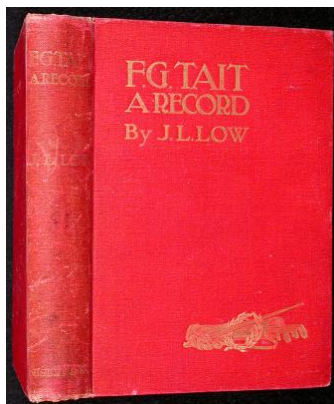
A newly published book *The Frederick Guthrie Tait Golf Diaries*, compiled by Colin Palmer was privately printed in 2009 in a limited subscribers' edition of 125. Palmer, a golf historian, has every extract from Freddie's four golfing diaries and many extracts from his personal diaries. The diaries were all hand written by Freddie and start from 1886 when he was a 16 year old youth, looking to make an impression in the game and end with a diary entry on the very day that he was fatally shot, on 7th February 1900. Freddie makes reference to his Open Championship appearances, his Amateur Championship triumphs, record breaking rounds at St. Andrews and Carnoustie, matches against Tom Morris, Willie Park, Hilton, Ball etc. All in all a fascinating journey through the golfing life of a man who holds an important place in the history of the game. Interspersed with the diary entries are historical pictures of Tait.



The book is 155 pages, was printed on 130gsm artice paper in two signed and numbered Subscribers' Limited Edition formats, either: loose leaf, in a special folder, ready for personal custom binding or bound with cloth covered boards and dust jacket. Very early high end golf books published more than a century ago also sometimes came loose leaf and the purchaser could have them bound themselves.



The first biography of Freddie, *F. G. Tait: A Record, Being his Life, Letters and Golfing Diary*, was written posthumously in 1900 by John Low, published by J. Nisbet. Low's book gives a far more comprehensive picture of Freddie's golfing life and is a vital source of information for the golf historian. It was the first biography of a golfer ever written. All profits from original sales of this book were donated to the Black Watch Widows' and Orphans' Fund.



The book was published in three bindings: in both red and green decorative cloth (D&J L17680), in red decorative vellum (D&J L17710) and a reprint edition in 1900 (D&J L17740). Ailsa Press published a reprint edition in 1988 (D&J L17770). Several paperback copies are also available on-line as "print-on-demand" books, which we don't recognize as real books and think the whole concept is rubbish!

In any event, let's not let our anger about this last point ruin our enthusiasm for this great historical golfer.