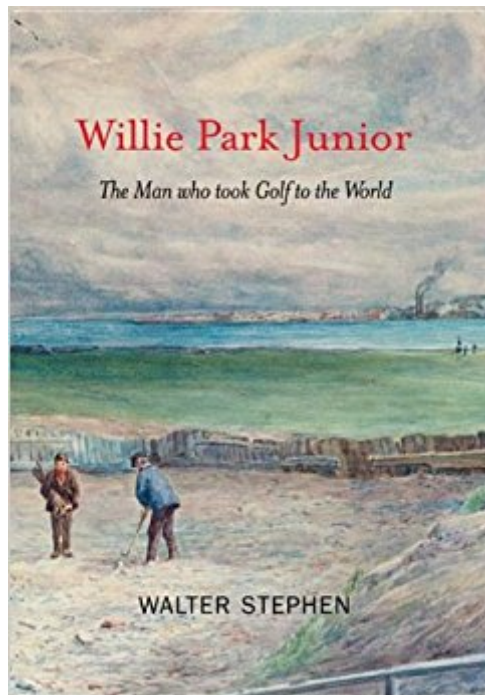




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Willie Park Junior: The Man Who Took Golf To The World



Synopsis

In the 19th century, Musselburgh was a hotbed of golfing genius and the local links produced five Open Champions. One of these was Willie Park Junior. More than a good golfer, he redefined the image of the golf professional and took the game from being an esoteric pastime to its present status as a world game. As well as winning the Open in 1887 and 1889, Willie played challenge and demonstration matches at home, in Europe and in North America. His workshops turned out golf balls and clubs to his own design and he had retail outlets in Edinburgh, Manchester, London, New York and Montreal. He designed and laid out over 100 golf courses in the British Isles and Western Europe. When he published *The Game of Golf* in 1896 it was the first book on the game written by a professional. World War I killed off Willie's activities at home, so he moved across the Atlantic. Concentrating on course design he engineered over 40 courses in the US and 20 in Canada. Willie Park was the epitome of Scottish Victorian enterprise. Though not alone, he was the most active of missionaries, taking the skills and equipment of a local game to what were then the two major continents.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Stephen is excellent at recreating the world in which the great Scotsman lived... There are weird but entertaining wanders along the lanes of golf in literature, the horrors of slow play, and the philosophy of the game." THE HERALD

Walter Stephen could not proceed beyond Geology I at Edinburgh University due to colour

blindness – the analysis of crystals and subtle maps were hidden worlds for him. Degrees in Geography, Economic History and Education qualified him as an academic jack-of-all-trades with a lifelong devotion to environmental awareness and understanding. One of his achievements was the establishment and operation for twenty years of Castlehill Urban Studies Centre, the first successful Urban Studies Centre in Britain. A former Chairman of the Sir Patrick Geddes Memorial Trust, he has been responsible for *Learning from the Lasses*, *A Vigorous Institution* and *Think Global, Act Local*, collections of essays on Patrick Geddes. In his introduction to the new edition of *A Herd of Red Deer* he brought out the importance of Frank Fraser Darling as the founder of ecology and forerunner of David Attenborough. In *The Evolution of Evolution* Walter Stephen sets Darwin at the centre of a circle of Interesting Victorians. All six books, plus his biography of Willie Park Junior: *The Man who took Golf to the World* and *Walter's Wiggles* were published by Luath Press.

This book is divided into two parts: "The Life" and "The Legacy". The first part is supposed to deal with the life of Willie Park Jr.. Even though there was some decent first-hand research, the organization of this first half of the book was chaotic. The first 50 pages deal with the history of the game of golf and the history of Willie Park Jr.'s hometown of Musselburgh, Scotland. Even though I am an avid reader of golf history, I thought this information was very esoteric. Many of the chapters have more to do with the general game than with Willie Park himself. For example, there is a chapter entitled "How Willie Spoke", which describes how golfers of his era used various golfing terms as well as the derivations of words such as bogey, stymie, dormie, feathery etc.. The second half of the book describes Willie Park junior's golf architectural career. The second half is much more organized than the first half. Each short chapter in this second-half describes a golf course designed by Willie Park Jr.. Not having played these golf courses, I had a difficult time enjoying these chapters. However, for someone who is interested in the history of Scottish golf courses, these chapters appear to be fairly well researched and organized. If you are expecting a biography of Willie Park Jr. to be the core of this book, like I was, then you will probably be disappointed. If you want to read a book that meanders through the history of the game and discusses Willie Park Jr.'s golf architecture, then this book might be for you.

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