

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

Henry Longhurst

In our opinion Henry Longhurst, along with Herbert Warren Wind and Bernard Darwin, is one of the three greatest golf writers of all time.

Longhurst was the golf writer for *The Sunday Times* of London for 45 years and a contributor to *Golf Illustrated* from 1954 to 1969. He also announced for CBS from the Masters tournament for eight years, covering the 16th hole.



Henry was a respectable golfer in his own right and captained the Cambridge golf team where he attended university. His rich life included service in the army and as a member of parliament. In our view, an even greater achievement than his service at Westminster, he was a member of Pine Valley.

Reading Henry Longhurst is a treat to the senses. Rarely will you read Longhurst and not come away in a better mood. He has a great dry sense of humor and a unique gift in his ability to connect life experiences you thought had little to do with golf, to the game. He also brings an old-fashioned perspective to the game that we still appreciate – he was adamantly against golf carts and scolds us for not playing faster.

Although none of Henry's books are really valuable and collectable in the sense of long term dollar value, they should be treasured for their contents as they are a special breed. Longhurst set a very high standard for all future golf writers to aspire to. You should have no trouble finding any of the titles referenced here.

Our Favorite Longhurst Lines and Truisms

On Slicing

“With a hook you feel at least that you put it there. With a slice it went there because you could not stop it.”

On Shanking

“...the result being that the ball shoots off at right angles to the intended line. It is the most demeaning shot in golf, perhaps in any game.”

On Pine Valley

“It is not that there is anything freakish about it. There is plenty of room on the fairways and you always get a good lie...the simple point about Pine Valley is that it is ‘all or nothing’ There is no semi-rough, so you are either on the fairway or in the forest. The traps are vast and unraked and full of bushes.”

Some of his most passionate writing comes in an article published in 1966 ‘You Can’t Let Them Do It, Barbara’ where he pleads with the then Minister of Transport not to close the railway station in St. Andrews. Unfortunately, the battle was lost, but it is still a great bit of history to remember that the tee shot on the Road Hole that is now played over the Old Course Hotel used to play over the railway sheds.

Golf Books by Henry Longhurst

Most of the golf books by Henry Longhurst are actually compilations of his golf columns from generally either *The Times* or magazines. They consist of no more than two or three pages each and each book usually contains less than a hundred such stories. Many of the book titles are a play on words and thus most people don't realize they are even about golf. They are listed below in order of publication:

Golf, published in 1937 is an instructional book and Henry's earliest work.

Go Golfing written with Archie Compston

Unwritten Contract published in 1952 is Henry's rarest work. The unwritten contract is that which exists between a golf professional and the members of their club. 12 pages, soft cover.

Golf Mixture, published in 1952 is an anthology of Henry's regularly scheduled column in *The Times*.

Only on Sundays, published in 1964 is a compendium of his stories from *The Sunday Times* and thus the title. It contains about 80 small articles, each a gem.

Talking About Golf, published in 1966 are from Henry's writings from *Golf Illustrated*.

How to Get Started in Golf, 1968

Never on Weekdays, published in 1971 is a 'sequel' to *Only on Sundays* and also contains reprinted stories from *The Times*.

The Best of Henry Longhurst, published in 1978 contains over 85 stories.

The Essential Henry Longhurst, published in 1988 contains 130 articles from *The Times* and *Golf Illustrated*.

Non-Golf Books by Henry Longhurst

While technically the subject of these particular books is not golf, since it was such an important part of Henry's life, it inevitably comes up.

It Was Good While it Lasted, published in 1941 was a needed diversion for the British people during the early stages of the Second World War. It is a light-hearted book describing what Henry himself calls the 'good old days'.

I Wouldn't Have Missed It, published in 1945 describes his years in service to his country in the Army. His description of trying to operate a Bofors gun is comical in the extreme.

You Never Know Till You Get There published in 1949 describes Henry's travels around the world. He has a keen sense of observation.

Round in Sixty-Eight, published in 1953 describes an around the world trip Henry took and completed in sixty eight days. His descriptions of flying in the pre-jet age alone are worth the price of the book. As usually, he manages to sprinkle in enough golf stories to make it an interesting read for the golf fan.

Spice of Life published in 1963. A collection of writings written with 'the wit and enthusiasm of the bon viveur, with chuckling humour, and on a diversity of subjects that will surprise and delight readers'.

My Life and Soft Times is his autobiography and was published in 1971. The man was blessed with a charmed life!

Other Longhurst Writings

Henry also wrote text for two golf pamphlets: He wrote 10 pages of text in the 20 page brochure *Golf in Ireland*, published by the Irish Tourist board in 1953. An interesting tid-bit from the brochure: Henry was one of the founding members of the Killarney Golf and Fishing Club in Ireland.

A 16 page softcover piece written by Longhurst (date of publication not present but c. 1950s) is *Turnberry Hotel and its golf courses*. The booklet contains a foldout map of the Ailsa and now-defunct Arran courses in the rear. Another variation on this title is the 13 page *Turnberry Hotel and the Ailsa Course* which has only 13 pages and predates the 16 pages booklet.

The Old Course at St. Andrews. Henry Longhurst tells you how to play it. Published in 1961 by Spalding, this 40 page softcover booklet is co-authored by Geoffrey Cousins who offers facts and figures. Even in a softcover booklet Henry's wisdom is hard to beat. "...it is more like a jig-saw puzzle than a golf course".

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