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### **Royal & Ancient Golf Club History**

The historic Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews has had much written about it since its founding in 1754. Yet, it took more than 200 years for a complete history to be produced. The definitive history of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews was written as a three-volume set and published in 1998, 2001 and 2004. The set was commissioned by the R & A to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the club in 2004.

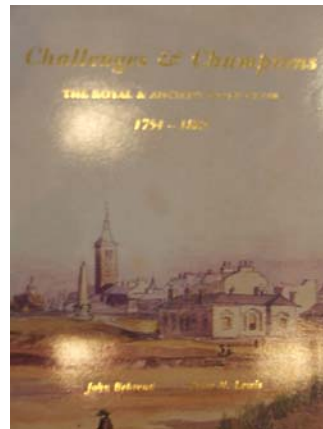
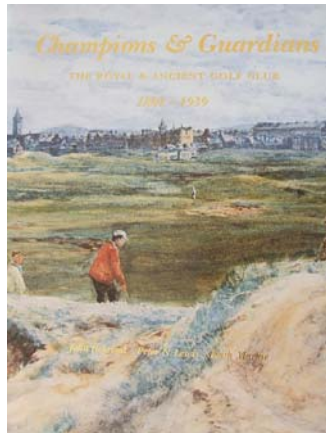
Volume I covers the period 1754-1883, was titled *Challenges & Champions: The Royal & Ancient Golf Club* and was written by John Behrend and Peter N. Lewis. The book runs 266 pages and was published in two limited editions. The smaller edition was limited to 275 copies and was produced with a slipcase. No expense was spared in the production of this volume. All edges are done in gilt, the binding is polished blue morocco with the R & A club logo embossed in silver. This edition was produced at the Cedric Chivers bindery. Chivers was an old English bespoke book binder that was in business for over 100 years and was known for their fine craftsmanship. This is one of their last books produced, as they went out of business in 2003. This edition of the club history is signed by J.C. Beharrell, Captain of the R & A and by both authors.



This special version of the book also has tipped in a letter from 1860 about the first tournament for the Belt, a picture of the Golfers of 1851 and a Thomas Hodge water color of St. Andrews used on the dust jacket. The book was also published simultaneously in a limited edition of 1,750 copies. This version of the book does not

have a slipcase and was not done in leather, but was instead done in a decorative cloth and a dust jacket, seen below.

Volume II of the history, which covers the period from 1884-1939 was published in 2001 and was titled *Champions and Guardians: The Royal and Ancient Golf Club 1884-1939*. It was written by the same original authors, plus an additional author Keith Mackie. This book is 286 pages and was also done in two versions. The smaller, limited version of 275, again with a slipcase and signed. The larger version was done in slightly larger production run, this time in an edition of 1,775 copies.



*Traditions and Change: The Royal and Ancient Golf Club 1939-2004* is the last of the three volume set. This volume of 328 pages was authored by Peter Lewis and Donald Steel and was done in two editions. The smaller, limited version of 275 and a larger edition of 1754 and were produced by the Period Bookbinders.

The three-volume set is a club history befitting the R & A. It is meticulously researched and detailed. The quality of the books and their black and white and color illustrations is impressive. Particularly striking is the double page color illustration in Volume II of the famous painting by Alexander Wardlow showing all the competitors from Medal day in 1894. There are also spectacular full-page color pictures of Old Tom Morris, Freddie Tait and Horace Hutchinson. The books are organized in multiple chapters focusing on specific periods.

The authors have fabulous credentials: John Behrend was a past captain of the R & A and Royal Liverpool and Peter Lewis was a director of the British Golf Museum and historian to the R & A.

The smaller limited editions (of 275) are known as The Society of St. Andrews Golfers edition. If you were ever marooned on a desert island and could only have one golf club history with you, this three-volume set would be the one to have. Granted, my first priorities if ever on a shipwreck would be for scotch, fine cigars and companionship from the opposite sex before a club history, but you get the idea. Man cannot live on vices alone, even on an island. Reading all eight hundred and eighty pages of this rich history will complete my golfing education.