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Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Golf Mysteries by Herbert Adams

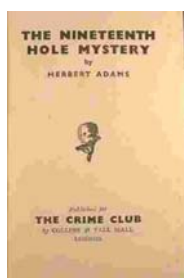
In this issue we explore the golf mysteries of Herbert Adams.

Herbert Adams, the pseudonym for Jonathan Gray, lived from 1874 to 1958. He wrote numerous golf mysteries over his lifetime. Adams often times created arguments among players where they debate the finer points of match play and the game.¹ His golf titles are listed below:

1. *The Secret of Bogey House* (1924)
2. *The Perfect Round* (1927)
3. *The Golf House Murder* published in the U.K. with the title *John Brand's Will* (1933)
4. *The Body in the Bunker* (1935)
5. *Death Off the Fairway* (1936)
6. *The Nineteenth Hole Mystery* (1939)
7. *One to Play* (1949)
8. *Death on the First Tee* (1957)

Adams first fictional character was Jimmie Haswell, a lawyer in London. Haswell is featured in *The Secret of Bogey House*, published in 1924 by Methuen & Co. Simon Ross is featured as the sleuth in *The Body in the Bunker*. Adams then introduced the character of Roger Bennion in his 1936 novel *Death Off the Fairway*, Bennion is an amateur sleuth and a golfer. This character proved quite popular. In total, Adams published twenty seven titles with Roger Bennion's character, although most of them did not have a golf plot.

Several of Adams' books were published as part of the Collins Crime Club (CCC). The CCC was a series of mysteries produced by the publishing house of Collins between 1930 and 1994. The series included works by such popular authors as Agatha Christie. The Collins Crime Club was not a book club, simply a (very effective) marketing technique used by the publishing house. The books published as part of the Collins Crime Club series were issued in the first edition in an orange cloth as illustrated below:



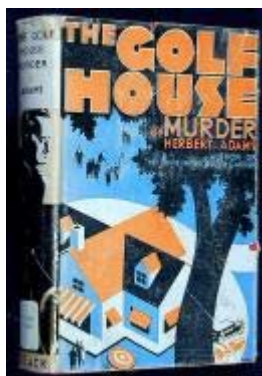
Books associated with The Crime Club will state this plainly on the cover and spine. The books were issued with dust jackets, which are often times not present. The presence of a dust jacket increases the value of the book considerably. The dust jackets should show the value of 7/6 or more. “7” standing for the British currency unit of shillings and “6” representing pence. A price of less than “7/6” probably indicates a later edition. There were also editions of the book produced for distribution throughout various English speaking countries. These were printed without the price in the dust jacket. These are generally known as “Colonial Editions” since they went to various countries in the British empire such as Australia and India. Reprint editions of the Crime Club books are done in either blue or black cloth, not in the original orange. The books were first published in the United Kingdom and then in the United States.

Adams writing style has been described as pedestrian and we’d have to agree, although it is difficult to tell looking back from a modern perspective whether they were so when issued. The real value in these books is finding and collecting those with dust jackets since the jackets are in many cases more interesting than the books themselves.

The table below summarizes Adams’s golf related books in their various editions:

Title	Year	Publisher	Notes
<i>The Secret of Bogey House</i>	1924	Methuen & Co.	Orange cloth, black lettering, jacket price of 2s 6d
	1925	Methuen & Co.	Blue cloth, black lettering, 2 nd edition
	1925	J.B. Lippincott, Philadelphia	Brown cloth, silver lettering
	1930	George Newnes, London	
	1937	Library des Champs-Elysses, Paris	246 pages, marbled cover, floral endpapers
<i>The Perfect Round: Tales of the Links</i>	1927	Methuen & Co.	Blue cloth, black lettering, dust jacket price of 3s 6d net
	1929	Methuen & Co.	2 nd edition
<i>John Brand’s Will</i>	1933 ⁱⁱ	Methuen & Co.	
<i>Golf House Murder</i> (U.S. title of John Brand’s Will)	1933	J.B. Lippincott Philadelphia	1 st American edition, orange cloth with green lettering, with dust jacket (illustrated on next page) price of \$2
	1933	Walter J. Black New York	Blue cloth with orange lettering and red cloth with black lettering
<i>The Body in the Bunker</i>	1935	The Crime Club, Collins	Orange cloth, black lettering. 7/6 on dust jacket.

Title	Year	Publisher	Notes
	1935	J.B. Lippincott Philadelphia ⁱⁱⁱ	1 st American edition, Green cloth with black lettering. Dust jacket has a windmill and a #16 golf flag and a price of \$2
<i>Death Off the Fairway</i>	1936	The Crime Club, Collins	Orange cloth, black lettering. 7/6 on dust jacket
	1945	Mellifont Press, London	
<i>The 19th Hole Mystery</i>	1939	The Crime Club, Collins	Orange cloth, black lettering. 7/6 on dust jacket. ^{iv} Dust jacket is two men standing in front of a dead golfer near the bar
	1944	Collins White Circle	Paperback, the cover replicates the original dust jacket
<i>One to Play</i>	1949	Macdonald & Co.	Red cloth, brown lettering on the spine only
<i>Death on the First Tee</i>	1957	Macdonald & Co.	Black cloth, yellow lettering on the spine only. Green/black dust jacket with a price of 10/6 net.



Thomas Taylor, in his review of Herbert Adams books notes that there is a “resurgence of collector interest in Adams’ work, especially in Britain and Japan, where the cozy style mystery is preferred.” Taylor feels that the 1949 *One to Play* is the best of the Adams golf stories.

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ⁱ Thomas F. Taylor, *The Golf Murders*.

ⁱⁱ Thomas F. Taylor’s bibliographic reference in *The Golf Murders* states the first edition as 1935, which we believe is an error. Both the British Library and *Donovan & Murdoch* show the first edition as 1933.

ⁱⁱⁱ Thomas F. Taylor’s bibliographic reference in *The Golf Murders* lists the 1935 American Publisher as Taylor, New York. Our copy and the U.S.G.A. copy are Philadelphia, Lippincott.

^{iv} The copy in the U.S.G.A. Library has a dust jacket with the price of 3’ net and is a 1939 edition.