

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

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## **James Braid**

James Braid won the Open Championship five times, all on Scottish soil: at St. Andrews twice (1905 and 1910), at Prestwick once (1908) and at Muirfield twice (1901 and 1906). Over the seventeen year period beginning in 1896 he never finished out of the top ten in the Open Championship. World rankings were not yet devised in this era, but it is a pretty safe bet that if they were, Braid would have been the #1 golfer during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Braid was one of the golfers forming the ‘Great Triumvirate’ along with Harry Vardon and J.H. Taylor.



Braid was also the professional at one of my favorite courses, Walton Heath, from its opening in 1904 until he died in 1950. In his lifetime eclectic score at Walton Heath Braid scored a ‘2’ on every hole of both courses! He also designed both the Kings and Queens courses at Gleneagles and made revisions to Carnoustie. Other gems he designed include St. Enodoc and Brora.

Braid contributed several books to the library of golf literature, all geared toward instruction. His first book *Golf Guide and How to Play It* was published in 1906 by British Sports Publishing (D&J B22330). His standout publishing success was *Advanced Golf, or, Hints and Instructions for Progressive Players* (D&J B22240 1<sup>st</sup> edition) which was published in at least 11 printings in Great Britain and 10 in the United States.<sup>1</sup> However, like many of the books written by today’s golf celebrities, it was not written in his own hand.<sup>2</sup>

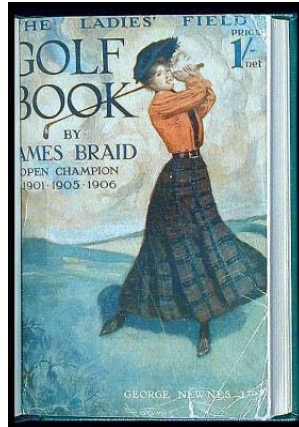
Braid also was the first male to publish a golf book targeted toward women. His *Ladies’ Field Golf Book* was published in 1908 by George Newnes (D&J B22600) and features

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<sup>1</sup> Donovan & Jerris, *The Game of Golf and the Printed Word 1566-2005*

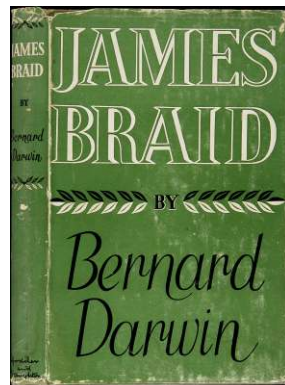
<sup>2</sup> Although Braid is listed as the sole author, Darwin notes in his biography that Braid was assisted.

an outstanding cover of a woman wearing a long skirt, a tie and a big hat, hitting a golf ball.



Braid also published a book with Harry Vardon in 1907 titled *How to Play Golf*, like the others, also an instructional book.

Bernard Darwin's biography of *James Braid* was published in 1952 by Hodder & Stoughton (D&J D5680) and is the defining portrait of the tall Scotsman. Darwin knew Braid for over fifty years and offers some keen insights into the man who is described as having "wisdom and a deep and essential kindness." Regarding Braid's ability to focus, Darwin describes him, "studying his putts as if the fate of empires depended on them," even in casual rounds. When one of games greatest writers takes on one of its greatest players, the results are not disappointing. Darwin's prose is lyrical in describing James's might, "the thickest heather departed before his stupendous blow."



Bob MacAlindin wrote *James Braid Champion Golfer* in 2003 in three limited editions. The first is a limited edition of 75 with a slipcase (D&J M1120). The second is a limited edition of 100 known as the James Braid Golfing Society Edition and has a special introduction by Peter Thomson CBE. The third limited edition of 550 issued with a dustjacket (D&J M1150).

*The Golf Courses of James Braid* was published by Grant Books in 1996 and written by John Moreton. There were three separate versions published, all of which are signed by the author, and if we are doing our math correctly, that makes 775 copies in total:

- A limited edition of 75 in full Morocco binding with a slipcase. These are known as “The Author’s Edition” (D & J M34000)
- An exclusive edition of 100 with dustjacket. These are known as the “The James Braid Golfing Society Edition” (D & J M34030) and also contain a special introduction by Peter Thomson CBE.
- The Walton Heath Edition published in a limited edition of 75 copies in dustjacket (This edition has an additional colored plate showing the illuminated address given by the members of Walton Heath following Braid’s record breaking score at Prestwick in 1908)
- A limited edition of 525 issued with a dustjacket (D & J M34060)

As a follow-on to the above set of books there was also a ‘sequel’ published in 2007 by Black Bear Press which enhances the listing of the courses that Braid build or remodeled. It is 16 pages, card covered and measures 8.25 inches x 5.75 inches.

One of the earliest produced golf flicker books featured James Braid. The 'Industrial & Educational' Film Corporation Limited, Charing Cross London, produced a rather large (for flicker books) 60 page softcover book. We have only seen this offered for sale once and it was dated circa 1905, which would have been 15 years earlier than the Bobby Jones flicker books, although we have not verified this date. Some detective work on the part of Philip Truett has pointed out that based on the structure in the background of the picture and Braid’s age probably date the book closer to 1910.



What makes these flickers especially unique is the fact that they were made with real photographs and contain gilt edges.

Special thanks to Philip Truett, the archivist for Walton Heath Golf Club for his helpful insights and suggestions in the preparation of this month’s newsletter.