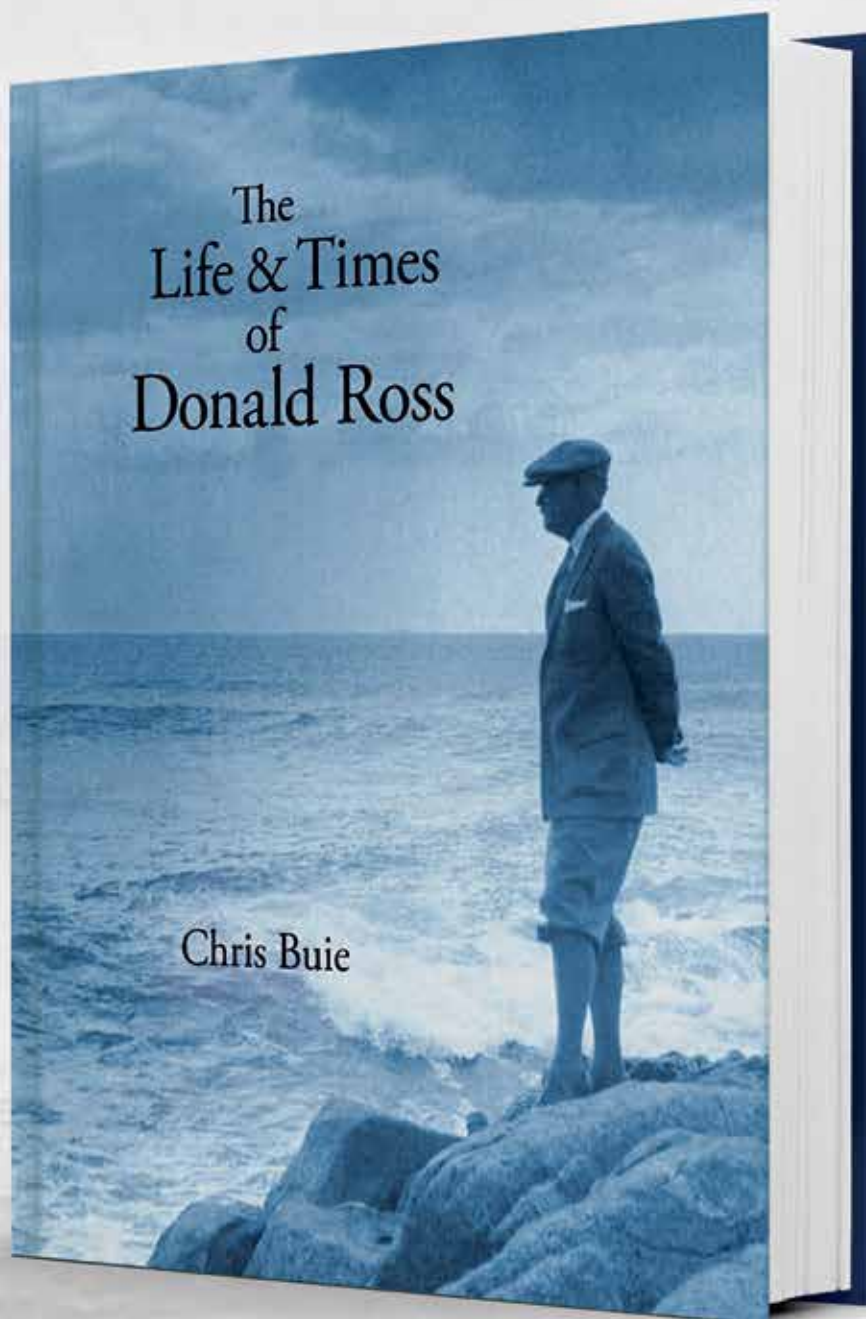


The Life & Times of Donald Ross

Chris Buie



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During the early years of the 20th Century, golf became a fundamental part of the American Dream. Perhaps more than any other individual, Donald Ross helped to establish the sport in his new country. His place in history has essentially been that of a prolific architect who created some of the finest examples of the form. However, the true extent of his achievements go well beyond the consensus view. With surpassing style and insight, *The Life & Times of Donald Ross* reconfigures his place in history and establishes the man as a notable figure in the broader field of American culture.



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The Life & Times of Donald Ross

Chris Buie



One of Ross's most well-known sayings concerned the role of trees in golf design:

"As beautiful as trees are, and as fine as you or I are of them, we still must not lose sight of the fact that there is a limited place for them in golf. We must use let our sentiments crowd out the real intent of a golf course that of providing fair playing conditions. If it is in any way interfered with a properly played stroke, I think the tree is an unfair hazard and should not be allowed to stand."

Chapter
Sixteen

The Man

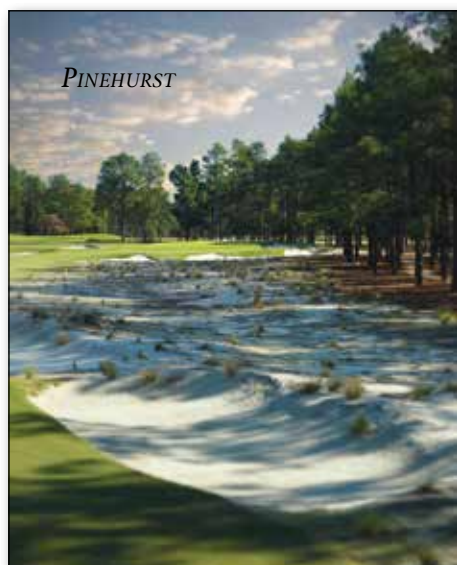
In recent times, there have been a number of tree management programs. Since decades of growth have seriously narrowed the original playing corridors, those clubs were well advised to truncate a proper width.

Ross's quote has been used by advocates to promote those much needed programs. In the future, a rising golf architect may interpret the point as *carre blanche* to eliminate an entire forest while building his first masterpiece. From the quote, Ross's view on the topic would seem to be entirely clear. However, his perspective was more nuanced than one would suppose.

"With the deforestation of the country proceeding at a rate that threatens to make the United States resemble if the tendency is not checked, thanks are due to Donald Ross, the golf course architect, for having shown how trees may be removed to make way for a golf course without being destroyed. In laying out the new course near Pinehurst, called Mid Pines, the last few months, Ross dug up the first trees from the fairway sites and transported them bodily to

Facing page: Ross' Scottish roots remained with him throughout his life. Courtesy of the Historylands Museum Denmark, Scotland, Above: USGA Archives

143



Major Courses

Although this book is a biography, Ross's work is integral to his personal story. Further, history has rendered its verdict on the portfolio with several emerging as something quite similar to national historic sites. These facts make a special look at his upper-tier efforts mandatory. While having so many timeless courses is a great boon for the golfing world, the sheer number of them make deciding which ones to single out an elusive proposition. This list of major courses has been debated for years, and these deliberations will go on as long as the game is played.

The courses chosen for portrayal are a cross-section rather than a definitive selection of his masterworks. Special emphasis was, however, given to those which have hosted multiple major tournaments.

- Pinehurst No. 2
- Pine Needles
- Oak Hill
- Inverness
- Aronimink
- Brae Burn
- Oakland Hills
- Scioto
- Worcester

Facing page: Pinehurst #2, 12th hole - Courtesy of Pinehurst Resort; Above: The 1st hole at French Lick, site of the 1904 PGA - Courtesy of Ron Morrisett

177


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"As a historian and student of golf history, I consider the publication of Chris Buie's new "Life & Times of Donald Ross" a reason to rejoice. Before now, I thought I knew most of what there is to know about the somewhat enigmatic Patron Saint of American Golf course design but Chris has uncovered fantastic new archival material, wonderful photos, key documents and related details that bring Ross to life as never before. Most compelling of all, Buie brilliantly captures the "Times" as well as the "Life" of American golf's most celebrated architect, a beautiful rendering that presents the first and last word on Donald Ross. This is a book to savor!"

— JIM DODSON (AUTHOR OF "HOGAN" AND DONALD ROSS AWARD WINNER)

"Chris Buie has ransacked golf's archives to produce a lovely, energetic and engaging biography of Donald Ross, America's most influential course architect. With a plenitude of photos and drawings and ample samples from old letters and journals, Buie leads readers on a time trip back to an era of grace and civility when Ross and his colorful peers were inventing the American game."

— JOHN PAUL NEWPORT (WALL STREET JOURNAL)

"Chris Buie has done that which no author has achieved to date: humanize the quietly impressive Scottish immigrant. The highly principled Donald Ross comes to life on these pages to the point where even non-golf course architecture fans will become engrossed in this all-American success story. A masterpiece."

— RAN MORRISSETT (GOLF CLUB ATLAS)

"I have been a huge fan of Donald Ross, so much so, that I founded the Donald Ross Society 27 years ago with a couple of friends. Chris Buie has painstakingly researched his subject with great result. This book flows well and is a tremendous insight into Donald Ross, his journey through life and his golf courses. Chris's chapters capture the man in a manner not often read."

— MICHAEL J. FAY (CAPTAIN, THE DONALD ROSS SOCIETY, INC.)

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