

The first time I visited St Andrews, in late August of 1988, was my first trip to Scotland. I had attended my first PGA Merchandise Show in January of that year and, through connections there, had met Bob Pringle from Troon, Scotland, who was a world-renowned golf-antiques dealer. Bob was looking for an artist to do golf paintings for commissions and I was looking for someone to help me, so I agreed to come to Scotland to gather some reference material for my paintings. Up until that time I had done golf-landscape paintings only for Augusta National Golf Club (my first golf-landscape painting was of the 13th Hole in 1984), The Country Club, in Brookline, Massachusetts, and Lake Nona Golf Club, near Orlando, Florida. Bob introduced me to the whole new world of Scotland and the deep historical traditions of golf.

Flying into Prestwick, I immersed myself in the beauty of links golf, and Bob made sure I saw the very best – Royal Troon, Prestwick and Turnberry; all the while I was learning the history of those great courses. Royal Troon was hosting the Open Championship the next year, so most of my time there was spent getting reference for my upcoming paintings of the famous “Postage Stamp” and the 17th and 18th Holes. Then we embarked on a tour of Scotland, including salmon fishing on the River Dee. Bob and his friend Brian Anderson, the pro at Royal Troon, were avid salmon fisherman as well as golfers. From there we went to St Andrews, where Bob left me for a week by myself in a B&B on Murray Place, just behind The Scores Hotel. It turned out to be a gratifying week for me.

I spent the time getting to know The Old Course but also the town of St Andrews, including all its nooks and crannies. I loved walking around, looking at shops, exploring the abbey and castle ruins, and following the small walks like Lade Braes, which led to the unexpected and beautiful botanic garden. The course was in bloom with heather so intense in color that I have never forgotten it, and to this day have never seen it that way again, despite many trips to St Andrews over the years. I still use reference photos from that and every trip to The Old Course for the paintings I have done and will do in the future. That first time on the course also made me aware of some intangible timelessness and a sense of things past I will never forget. A couple of years later, I read the book *Golf in the Kingdom* and realized I had been experiencing the metaphysics of golf. It was an epiphany for me in that it changed the way I perceived golf landscape from then on, not just as a landscape on which people play the game of golf, but as a landscape that allows one to experience transcendent feelings. My first painting of The Old Course was the famous “Road Hole,” which was the first painting of the Open Championship Series commissioned by the R&A Open Championship Committee, in 1990. I believe the painting reflects what was my newfound understanding.

When Bob returned to St Andrews a week later, he wanted me to have the full St Andrews experience – a tour inside the R&A Clubhouse! Since I am female, that, of course, was theoretically impossible. But Bob, as an R&A member, knew the night

watchman and arranged with him for me to have a midnight tour of the clubhouse. With Bob as my historical guide, I got the complete tour and was most impressed with the grand room with all its huge paintings. Since then I have been in the R&A Clubhouse two more times – during the 2005 Open and, most recently, on my last trip in 2013, when after an R&A luncheon, we had tea in the great room.

Through the years, I always have looked forward to staying in St Andrews and revisiting all those places; it feels like returning home. I have stayed in a number of B&Bs but also have been privileged to stay in some private homes and flats of friends and clients. On my last trip, I stayed in the house on The Links, "The Swilcan," the little white house with the round turret that overlooks the Swilcan Bridge. Because of its round shape, the windows allow you to look all the way up and down The Links. It was endlessly entertaining just to sit in the window and watch golfers and bystanders walk over the bridge, realize the significance of its history and memorialize the occasion with a photo. While waiting for the right light or bad weather, I continuously watched people scamper out among golf groups playing the 18th Hole and snap their pictures on the bridge. I even saw a kilted wedding party run out to the bridge to have their wedding pictures taken. What a backdrop.

The Open Championship at St Andrews is one of the greatest experiences in golf. The combination of the tournament and the town makes it something so unique as to be unparalleled in major tournament golf. I attended the 1990 and the 2005 Opens, and my memories still keep that timeless feeling of the past infused in the event, despite its enormity and scope. I have just finished my new 2015 rendition of "The Road Hole" painting in honor of the 2015 Open, capturing the magic anew.