

Tom Bendelow – Now Remembered

By Art
McCafferty

A few years ago, when I was researching a series of articles on the history of Michigan golf courses, the name of Tom Bendelow emerged repeatedly. While I noted the name, it was my work on Donald Ross's Michigan courses that really piqued my interest.

In Ross' book, "Golf Has Never Failed Me," he mentioned that he had designed the Muskegon Country Club in 1911. When I called upon Muskegon during the research for my article, they produced a drawing and a letter that Donald Ross wrote in 1920. It was a fact that nearly a decade before Ross visited Muskegon, Tom Bendelow had been to Muskegon and had designed the Muskegon Country Club course.

Why had Donald Ross claimed

this golf course to be his own, when clearly another person had done the original design? This question led to others as I continued my research into the history of this forgotten golf architect. I was so moved by Bendelow's story that I wrote an article about him for the *Michigan Golfer*: "Tom Bendelow;

Golf's Johnny Appleseed". Since the article appeared online, I have been contacted by others interested in Bendelow and others who wanted to help set the record straight. One of those individuals was Stuart Bendelow, Tom's grandson.

I am glad that Stuart Bendelow has taken the time to correct the historical record and enlighten the golfing community. For example, 52 Michigan golf courses were designed by Bendelow. I think this would be astounding news to any golf writer or reporter in Michigan.

His book, "Thomas "Tom" Bendelow The Johnny Appleseed of American Golf," has a deafening and most clarifying ring to it. Now, with Stuart Bendelow's book, this important golf architect will be forgotten no more. **MG**

