

become more “parkland” in style. This has altered its character over the years, so that it now looks more like an arboretum - a nice echo of the original nature of the site at Augusta.

The effect of the tree plantations, though, has been to cause some interesting inconsistencies in wind direction, resulting in eddies and swirls that sometimes make two or even three clubs’ difference. It is never still on this course. This makes for some eccentric club selections on all of the memorable par three’s⁴, sometimes confounding even to the members. Although the maturity of the trees at Augusta creates some very still conditions, how familiar this scenario is of the gusting winds confusing the club selection at a crucial moment.

So, yes the influence of MacKenzie’s entire body of work inevitably fed into the design of Augusta, but Cavendish particularly has a presence there, with its relatively wide and sloping fairways, very carefully and strategically placed bunkers, meandering water hazards and dangerously contoured greens.

The course at Augusta has been developed over the years with many changes and improvements made to accommodate the longer hitting golf professionals and to present the course in all its glory to millions on TV in April every year. However it remains the course by which all others are judged.

So much of what golfers love about Augusta can be rediscovered at Cavendish, almost untouched for 90 years - and still a challenge. As the younger, glossier, more camera-ready sibling of MacKenzie’s 1925 course at Cavendish, Augusta’s design ancestry is still clearly visible, affirming that despite all the changes, MacKenzie and his collaborators’ design intentions were good and strong.



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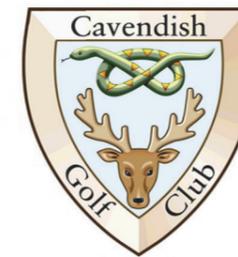
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⁴ holes #4, #9, #13, #15 and #17



'The course that inspired Augusta'

Cavendish Golf Club
Buxton

THE COURSE THAT INSPIRED AUGUSTA

If asked the question:

“Just how much influence did the design of the course at Cavendish Golf Club in Derbyshire have upon the Augusta National course in Georgia?”

I’d answer: “well, probably quite a bit”.

Why?

Well, firstly, and perhaps obviously, the same architect designed both courses. Alister MacKenzie, who designed the Cavendish course in 1924-25, was appointed to design the Augusta National course by Bobby Jones and Clifford Roberts in 1933, only 8 years later. It was MacKenzie’s knowledge of working on all terrains and landscapes that was recognised and valued by the greatest amateur golfer in the world.

Between the two commissions MacKenzie had travelled the world and designed a number of high profile courses, including Royal Melbourne and Cypress Point, both renowned and remarkable designs on vastly differing terrain.

When first considering the site at Augusta, which at the time was an arboretum, MacKenzie will have noted the significant elevation changes in the topography, very reminiscent of the site at Cavendish – compare holes #1 and #12 at Augusta with holes #11 and #16 at Cavendish (both approximately 50 metres (150’) difference in elevation).

The clever layout of the course at Cavendish plays over undulating moorland terrain, with deep ravines, valleys, deep hollows, raised plateaux, incised rivers and challenging side slopes. MacKenzie used the equally dramatic topography at Augusta to advantage, routing the holes to traverse the contours in a careful and incisive design, to offer a not-too-strenuous yet still challenging game; but he also took advantage of the raised platforms and side slopes on both courses as dramatic green positions.

The best examples of this at Augusta¹ are probably the 3rd, 9th and 14th greens. Of the number of raised greens at Cavendish², greens number 5 and 14 in particular have strong similarities with Augusta's 9th green with their "false fronts", designed to repel all but the most perfectly struck shot.

The elevated tee-shots on the 4th and 9th holes at Cavendish – both par-3's playing over deep valleys/ravines - are also reminiscent of holes number 4, 6 and 12 at Augusta.

But, it's not just the use of topography that illustrates the relationship – it is also the contouring, for which MacKenzie was renowned.

In fact, as they were considered so difficult to play, some of the greens at Augusta were modified by Perry Maxwell later in the 1930s, soon after they were originally constructed. Ultimately all of the greens at Augusta have been modified since they were first built, due to the demands of tournament golf, and to get an idea of MacKenzie's original contouring at Augusta, you really have to go to Cavendish.

The contoured greens at Cavendish are renowned for both their severity *and* their subtlety. In terms of severity, the slopes and undulations mean they can barely be allowed to read higher than 9 feet on the stimp-meter, especially on a hot summer's day – done mainly to avoid destroying the club golfer's game. However, this is the course's defence, playing relatively short in modern times at under 5,900 yards from the back tees (with only one par 5). Interestingly, Augusta was only 6,300 yards from the back tees when it first opened for play.

As for subtlety, the inventiveness of some of the contouring is particularly notable on greens number 3 and 12 at Cavendish, where both "fall-away" greens (from right to left) have some strong similarities with the brilliance that is the 14th green at Augusta. The green on hole number 2 at Cavendish is tiny in comparison, but has a double tier at an oblique angle to play, as does the 17th green at Augusta. These greens stand out for the excellence of their revolutionary design, created at a time when 'push-up' greens were generally the norm – greens formed by pushing up the soil and flattening off the top.

The Cavendish course is not long, but it is the shaping of the greens, along with the bunker positioning, that influences the approach shot.

The golfer has to be highly aware of the placement of the tee shot, and - on the longer holes - of the approach shot because of the limitations these elements place on their lines of approach. The fairways may be quite wide (the 18th is more than 60 yards wide) but it doesn't mean the golfer can be careless about where to place the ball. The player is frequently enticed into a wrong decision, discovering that some

¹ on holes #3, #4, #6, #7, #9, #14 and #18

² holes #2, #5, #13 and #14

greens just cannot be approached from certain angles. Elements of doubt prevail on every hole.

Then, how do you play the shot into the green, to avoid three or four-putting? The player cannot relax.

This has as much to do with the bunkers as anything else.

At Cavendish the bunkers are not large and sprawling, but small and deep (to keep the sand in them on windy days). There are 52 of them on the course - to Augusta's 22, which had even fewer when it opened - but each one has an important purpose - not one is placed purely for ornament.

Some bunkers obscure the front third or more of the green, making club selection difficult, and foreshortening views into the green — a trick that MacKenzie drew from his observations on the battlefields of the Boer and 1st World Wars.

This is the key thing that he picks up on again at Augusta. The relationship of a fairway bunker, or an approach bunker to the green, when seen from the tee or fairway, often confounds the judgement of distances, tricking the eye into misjudging the shot. For example the 10th hole has a mid-fairway bunker that looks as if it's at the front of the green, positioned as it is on the edge of a deep dip in the fairway. Though they are much broader than his original bunkers, they still perform the same strong strategic roles.

Water features come into play on 6 holes at Cavendish³, which is one more than at Augusta, but there are interesting similarities. The 10th and 11th holes at Cavendish, considered by Tom Doak to be two of the best par-4 holes in golf, play alongside the River Wye, which meanders as it flows enticingly across the approaches of both holes. At Augusta's 13th hole, the creek does the same thing.

The approaches to some of the greens at Augusta were considered to be "links" in style when first built. It was suggested this was down to the connections MacKenzie had with St Andrews - having been consulting architect to the R&A - together with Bobby Jones's own love of the Old course. The "run-up" or "bump and run" shot was encouraged on holes 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 14 and 17 at Augusta from the outset.

At Cavendish, on all holes except the forced carries over ravines and water features, the bump and run shot can still be played - with the requisite skill and judgement!

Cavendish was built on open moorland, which is usually quite windswept, playing much like a links course, with pure fescue fairways and slick bouncy approaches and greens surrounds. Today, following extensive planting of native deciduous trees through Forestry Commission grants in the 1990's, the setting of the course has

³ on holes #4, #5, #9, #10, #11 and #18