

## Going for the Green

*Robert Thompson's comments, criticism and opinion on the world of golf.*

### Southwest England, Day Four: St. Enodoc Golf Club

By [Robert Thompson](#) | April 26, 2015 | [Leave a comment](#)



The fabled church at St. Enodoc spent decades buried under sand. Now it sits just off the 10th fairway.

#### **Southwest England, Day 3: St. Enodoc (Church course)**

The ocean. An ancient church that was once hidden under massive sand dunes. A giant bunker in the side of a hill.

Perhaps the most celebrated of the courses I saw in the week I spent in Southwest England, St. Enodoc captures your imagination and never lets go. Some argue it is in the Top 100 in the world. Golf Magazine doesn't have it there—but it should. In fact, you could make a good argument that St. Enodoc, probably the best work by James Braid, should hold a spot of the best links ever devised.



The massive bunker on the second hole at St. Enodoc.

A lot of links start and end with unremarkable holes. That's not the case with St. Enodoc, where the first and the final holes are unquestionably two of the best on a course filled with outstanding holes. The first presents you with a sense of the scale, with towering dunes down the entirety of the right side of the fairway, and a green perched in front of the looming sea. It is a terrific opener, one of the best I've seen. What follows is a front nine filled with ingenious holes, many of which are unlike any I've seen on a links. The second is uphill and tough as nails, with a green protected by a yawning bunker, and the third is partially blind, downhill with the approach over a wall that runs across the fairway.



The famous bunker on the sixth hole at St. Enodoc. You'll likely carry it with your second shot. The fourth really stands out for being a clever short four with out-of-bounds on the right. You have to pick your line, and a driver probably isn't it. Strategically it makes sense to play to the right to give yourself the best look at the green, which is difficult to hold for those taking a direct approach.

By the time you've played the 10<sup>th</sup>, the famous hole where the green sits near a historic church that spent part of its time buried under sand dunes, it is hard to imagine that St. Enodoc is anything but a great course.



The opener at St. Enodoc is a sign of things to come.

So what holds it back? Perhaps it is the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> holes, none of which are bad, but have an up-and-down quality that makes them feel less like the rest of the course. But the 14<sup>th</sup> is a devilish short four with a fairway that dips to the right, making it hard to hold with your tee shot.

The course emerges back in the dunes for the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> holes and all of them are crackers. The 18<sup>th</sup> is among the best closers I've seen in links. It is an exceptional end to an exceptional course.



The third hole, with the very cool short fourth in the background.

The only reason I can imagine for St. Enodoc not being on everyone's travels is its location. But the club is solid, filled with local and national members, unusual for any club these days. That's a testament to the quality of its links.

Of note, St. Enodoc has a strong practice facility, a fine location for those seeking to tour and eat great food (the Southwest of England is becoming a destination for those seeking great restaurants), a terrific clubhouse overlooking the first tee and 18<sup>th</sup> green, and some of the friendliest members and staff I've encountered.

I know I'll be back.

If you go:

Check out [www.atlantic-links.co.uk](http://www.atlantic-links.co.uk) for more on these great links, and investigate [www.st-enodoc.co.uk/](http://www.st-enodoc.co.uk/) for more on James Braid's best course.



The tee shot on the tough 10th hole.