



ADVENTURES IN GOLF

Autumn 2007

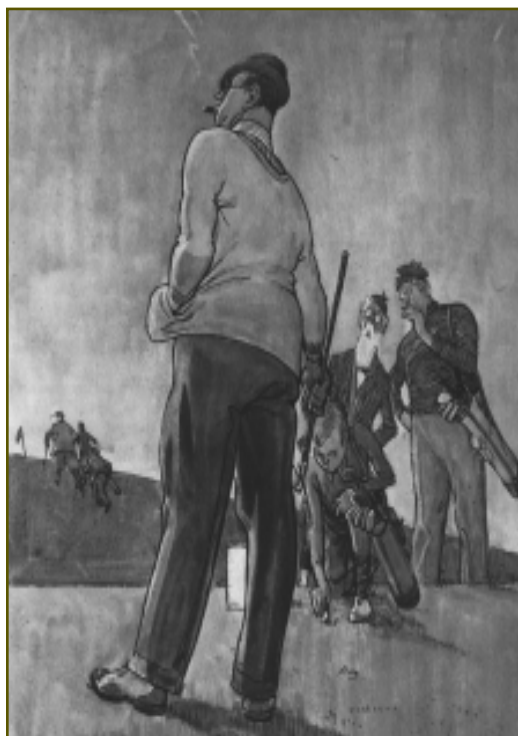
The Year In Review

Iowa native **Zach Johnson** won the **Masters**, **Angel Cabrera** was the surprise winner and first Argentinean to take the **US Open**, but the **Open Championship** at **Carnoustie** provided the greatest drama in years.

After the controversy of the 1999 event, when the rough was so penal many of the players felt the course was unfair, the **Carnoustie Links Committee** and the **R & A** ensured that course conditions were beyond reproach for the 2007 event. Indeed, the R & A's Peter Dawson contended that **Carnoustie** had raised the bar this year for course presentation in **Open Championships** – and few would disagree.

After several wet weeks, the links were green and lush with fairways and greens immaculate, yet the famous rough still playable. **Tiger** was out of sorts for some of the time, but still competed heroically to stay in contention. Many of the world's big guns were also there in the mix including **Ernie**, **Vijay**, **Retief**, and **DiMarco**. **Jim Furyk** had chances and so did a number of Europeans including **Paul McGinley** and **Justin Rose**. **Ben Curtis** sprinted up the final day leader board with a

record-equaling closing round of 64, but it was **Andres Romero** who catapulted out of the pack with an amazing final round containing ten birdies. Sadly, he faltered over the



closing holes to leave Ireland's **Padraig Harrington** and long-time leader **Sergio Garcia** to contest the finish.

With shades of **Jean Van de Velde**, **Harrington** went into the **Barry Burn** off the 18th tee, then mis-hit his approach **into the water again!** With tremendous nerve he got up-and-down for a **double bogey six** to leave **Sergio** needing a par for the championship. Finding the fairway from the tee as he had all week, the Spaniard pulled his second almost pin-high but close to the out-of-bounds on the left. **A delicate pitch left a ten footer for the win, but agonizingly his putt lipped out and led to a play-off over the 1st, 16th, 17th and 18th holes.**

After both players found the middle of the fairway on the 1st, **Harrington rifled his 5 iron approach to six feet.** Uncharacteristically, Sergio pulled his approach shot and, for once, failed to get up-and-down. **Harrington's birdie created a two shot lead**, which he looked like preserving with a superb tee shot on the 16th to 25 feet. Amidst great tension, **Sergio drilled his 2 iron, the ball striking the pin after bouncing twice.** An ace would have leveled the scores, but once again his putt would not drop and the **combatants moved to the 17th tee with Harrington's lead intact.**



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Again, both players hit perfect tee shots to leave long irons to the green and, once again, Harrington covered the flag with his approach. Sergio worked his ball to the centre of the green and neither player secured birdie.



So, on the 18th tee Harrington knew a bogey 5 would probably suffice. This time taking a fairway metal he reached the cut stuff, but a long way from home and had to lay up. Sergio, for the first time in the week, took driver and launched a missile down the left hand side. His approach found the middle of the green and Harrington could not get inside Sergio's ball with his pitch from 100 yards.

When Pdraig's putt slipped three feet by, Sergio had a birdie putt to at least tie the play-off. Again he shaved the hole but Harrington found the middle of the cup to be the first Irishman to lift the Claret Jug since Fred Daly at Hoylake in 1947. What a finish!

In the British Seniors Open event, Tom Watson again added a senior title on a course at which he once lifted the Claret Jug. He had already achieved the feat at Turnberry, this time it was Muirfield, which witnessed his triumphal return. Given his

winning total was level par gives some indication of the difficulty of the course and the playing conditions. A strong breeze made every round a true test and Tom played his best golf from start to finish. After his spectacular collapse at Whistling Straits in the US Seniors Open, it must have felt good to quell the demons.

Meanwhile, St Andrews Old Course hosted its first ever women's professional event. Lorena Ochoa opened with a 6-under-par 67 and never looked back, leading throughout to record her first Grand Slam victory on her 24th try. She sealed the victory with a 1-over-par 74 for a 72-hole total of 5-under par 287. After starting the day with a six-shot lead, Ochoa finished four shots ahead of Lee Jee Young of South Korea and Maria Hjojrth of Sweden, who closed with 71s. Michele Wie failed to make the cut after a disastrous second round of 80 played in strong wind.

Tiger left it late to claim his first Major this year. After a course record 63 in round two, he led all the way to the wire but Ernie Els and Woody Austin got close enough to give the Woods fans some scary moments. That's number thirteen for Tiger, so Jack's record inches a little closer.

Royal County Down hosted the Walker Cup and that doyen of commentators, Peter Alliss, delighted the club by proclaiming that the course presentation was the finest he had ever seen for a links. Conditions must have been to the liking of the American team for they triumphed by a single point over a spirited home side led by the Silver Medalist in The Open Championship, Rory McIlroy.

Meanwhile, the Links Cup returned to Turnberry for the tenth time in its fourteen-year history. Some great golf culminated in a play-off between

Piping Rock, the eventual winners, and Old Elm. Fittingly, the girls from Piping Rock also took the ladies team prize and the final round was played in dazzling sunshine enlivened by a stiff breeze. Local violin artist Karen Hunter provided Saturday night entertainment to such acclaim that she received a standing ovation! In 2008, the group will visit The Broadmoor in Colorado for the first time.

We mentioned last fall that the developers of Kingsbarns have planned a hotel and golf course complex at Castle Stuart, near Inverness Airport. Anyone interested in following progress of this development can log on to the project's website and view webcasts on www.youtube.com, which are updated every couple of weeks. The land looks extremely inviting, the views are superb and the location is incredibly convenient – just a couple of miles from Inverness Airport.



Doug Carrick's superb design at Loch Lomond opened earlier this year. The course straddles the Highland Line, the front nine holes technically lying in the Scottish Lowlands and the back nine in the Highlands. Fabulous views of Loch Lomond and of the Highland hills are available from most holes, with the

scenic 14th the signature hole. Played from a high tee to a green nestling at the loch side far below, the view from the tee would grace any calendar. Below is a section detailing the course and nearby luxury hotel – **Cameron House**.

Archerfield is another exciting new development. Bordering **Muirfield**, the complex comprises two excellent courses, **Dirleton & Fidra**, with some superior housing to give a traditional appearance, which blends in well with the East Lothian landscape. **Archerfield House** offers small parties exclusive use for memorable stays with golf on-site. Edinburgh is just a thirty minutes' drive for those in search of retail therapy.

Speaking of which, we've mentioned in previous issues the attractions of the **House of Bruar** for those driving north up the A9 between Perth and Inverness. If you've sampled a full Scottish breakfast there en-route to the Northern Highlands, you may be looking for somewhere to shed a few pounds to ensure your new cashmere purchases still hold their shape. **Macdonald Hotels'** new **Spey Valley** course at **Aviemore** has been described as **Boat of Garten** on steroids, which nicely indicates the same gorgeous terrain as the old favorite, but on a grander scale. In any event, for those seeking a new challenge it may be worth a look – please contact us for further details.

The Open Championship – Royal Birkdale: 17 – 20 July 2008

Host to **two Ryder Cups**, the **Walker and Curtis Cups**, the **Women's British Open** and the **Open Championship** on no less than **eight occasions** (including the 100th Open), **Royal Birkdale** has been voted the **No. 1 course in Britain**, and is among the best in the world.

Although the club was **formed in 1889**

it moved to **Birkdale Hills in 1894**, but the links were not developed along modern lines until the 1920's. **Purchasing the links in 1922**, Southport Corporation (the town council) then cooperated with the club on a **seven-year plan to prepare the**



course for Championship standards.

This involved the building of a new Clubhouse (which was opened in the summer of 1935), and also a grand re-design of the course. **The Club employed a company called Hawtree and Taylor** for this exercise, one partner being a prominent golf course architect and the other a member of the Great Triumvirate who had dominated the Open Championship during the 20 year period immediately prior to the First World War. **Their philosophy was to lay out holes in the valleys between the sandhills rather than over them.** This enabled Birkdale to gain the reputation of being one of the fairest of the championship venues. The course was tough but fair, rewarding the straight hit but punishing the wayward shot with its surrounding buckthorn and dwarf willow scrub. **The fairways threaded their way through the valleys and the mighty sand dunes became perfect natural vantage points for spectators.**

After the 1961 Open however, with the growing popularity of golf as a spectator sport, extensive changes were made to the Clubhouse and to the course. But it

was **only after the Open Championship in 1991** that the club took the brave decision to dig up, **re-design and relay all 18 greens.** The considerable capital investment involved has ensured that Royal Birkdale remains one of the finest links courses in the world. Indeed it has been rated Britain's finest course.

The Clubhouse now stands like a **majestic ship overlooking the 18th green.** The views from the enormous bay window in the mixed lounge give an impressive view over the course, and on the Sunday afternoon of the Open it is a very exciting place to be. **Expect the Irish to be there in force to support Padraig's title defense.**

The Course

The start is as difficult as you will find anywhere, **with three testing par 4's**, all in excess of 400 yards, and an opening tee shot of pin-point accuracy required to give sight of the green for the approach. **Good short holes come at the 4th and 7th**, with the tricky dog-leg 5th of only modest length, but the mighty 6th covering 473 yards yet still a par 4! **Four more long par 4's straddle the turn, before the 12th, a par 3,**



which is both picturesque and demanding. Its plateau green is set into the dunes, as if carved out by a giant shovel, with bunkers guarding the approach on both sides.

Two serious par 5's come at the 15th and 17th, but the average player will find par harder to come by at both the 13th (475 yards) and the 18th (472 yards) where the par is only 4! **For the Open Championship, the R & A will doubtless introduce new tees to lengthen some holes even more.**

The bunkers on the course are superbly maintained, but their **deep, revetted faces** make for difficult escapes. **The greens are magnificent - a huge improvement on their flat predecessors,** and the course has witnessed many memorable moments over the years. The 18th, itself, has been the scene of **some of golf's finest moments,** including **Watson's career 2 iron to seal his victory in 1983** and **Jack Nicklaus's memorable concession of Tony Jacklin's putt to halve the Ryder Cup of 1969.**

*Previous Open Championship
Winners at Royal Birkdale:*

- 1954 - Peter Thomson**
(72, 71, 69, 71 - 283)
- 1961 - Arnold Palmer**
(70, 73, 69, 72 - 284)
- 1965 - Peter Thomson**
(74, 68, 72, 71 - 285)
- 1971 - Lee Trevino**
(69, 70, 69, 70 - 278)
- 1976 - Johnny Miller**
(72, 68, 73, 66 - 279)
- 1983 - Tom Watson**
(67, 68, 70, 70 - 275)
- 1991 - Ian Baker-Finch**
(71, 71, 64, 66 - 272)
- 1998 - Mark O'Meara**
(72, 68, 72, 68 - 280)

Wales

For those intent on finding value for money, **Wales** remains a fantastic bargain with **modestly-priced accommodation, inexpensive green fees** for excellent golf courses and **spectacular scenery.**

From Manchester, a 90 minute drive will bring you to **Bodysgallen Hall,** near Llandudno, a majestic 17th century house standing in 200 acres of parkland with spectacular views of **Snowdonia.** Two dining rooms, a bar, an attractive library and a feature first floor drawing room all contribute to the character of the hall, and a fully-equipped Spa provides opportunities to relax after your journey.

The best local golf is at **Conwy,** home of the **Caernarvonshire Golf Club,** which affords fine views of the Conwy estuary and surrounding hills from all parts of the course, and at the nearby **North Wales Golf Club.**

A visit to the town of Conwy is also worthwhile. The ancient castle was **built between 1283 and 1289 by Edward 1** and the town walls - over three-quarters of a mile in length, with 22 towers and 3 original gateways - still ring the old village, in which narrow alleys and cobbled passages dart between attractive shops and inns.

Nearby **Snowdonia** is a **National Park** with impressive mountain scenery and the surrounding area boasts a number of impressive castles dating back to the reign of **Edward I.** **Caernarfon** was the site for the investiture of the **Prince of Wales,** while **Beaumaris** is consid-

ered to be the most sophisticated example of **medieval military architecture in the British Isles.**

A few miles west of Conwy is **Nefyn & District,** a classic seaside holiday course, where **Ian Woosnam holds the course record.** The course runs along the cliff tops with holes 11 to 18 perched on a headland and enjoying outstanding views. The tiny **Ty Coch** Inn nestles in a cove below the 12th green.

Harlech has its own impressive **fortress overlooking** the elegant links of **Royal St David's.** This must be the **finest course in North Wales,** despite the fact that sea views are few. A ridge of dunes shields a glorious sandy beach from all parts of the course, but the eyes are drawn to the massive peaks of **Snowdonia,** which rise majestically to the north and east. The ancient castle stands high above the course and, like **Conwy** and **Beaumaris,** was built for **Edward I.** It is a seemingly impregnable fortress, **protected on three sides by cliffs** and defended by concentric lines of mutually-supporting fortifications. **Harlech** was the **very last Royalist stronghold to fall during the English Civil War,** and the **Welsh Lancastrians** who fought there were the **original "Men of Harlech" of the song.**

The little town retains its old-world



charm and the golf course adds to its reputation with every visitor who plays it. **Cecil Leitch won the last of her British Open Championships here in 1935** (the tournament returned without her in 1949, 1960 and 1967) and the then **Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) accepted the honor of the Club Captaincy in 1935.**



Nearby is the excellent **Hotel Maes-y-Neuadd**, which has a glorious rural setting and is patronized by locals and visitors, alike. Menus combine Welsh, English and French influences to good effect and the rooms are well-appointed, if a little small.

From Harlech, a short and scenic drive brings you to the **Mawddach River**, one of Wales' best salmon rivers, and the excellent **Penmaenuchaf Hall**, which overlooks the estuary. **Fourteen lovely bedrooms, charming public rooms and fine cuisine await you here.**

Not many golfers stand on the first tee peering through a herd of grazing cattle at the distant flag, but all those playing Aberdovey might add that experience to their golfing memories. **Aberdovey** may not be a great golf course, but it has a number of great holes, and playing there is a most enjoyable experience. It was **Bernard**

Darwin's favorite and has a number of holes which will linger in the memory, none more so than the short 12th. **Reminiscent of Troon's "Postage Stamp"** but longer and harder, this can be almost impossible into a strong breeze. Little respite follows over the finishing holes as the railway is tight to the fairway on the left of the last few holes, with water and sand additional distractions.

The little town has a variety of friendly pubs and attractive cafes. It also has a number of good hotels including **The Penhelig Arms**, right on the water's edge, with a wood-paneled **Fisherman's Bar** and a celebrated restaurant.

A few miles to the south lie the old links of **Borth & Ynyslas**, the oldest links course in Wales, and, some say, the most natural. Further south, the big names are **Royal Porthcawl**, **Southerndown** and **Ashburnam**. But, to this list should be added **Celtic Manor**, which is now hosting European tour events and is scheduled for a future **Ryder Cup**.

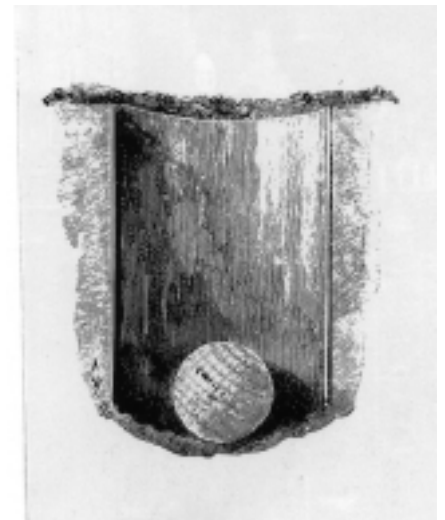
Royal Porthcawl is arguably the finest course in Wales. The sea is visible from every hole here and, while the first three holes run alongside the beach, many of

the others climb high above sea level to afford panoramic views of the **Bristol Channel** and across to Exmoor. The greens are considered to be some of the best in Britain. **Southerndown**, perched on a headland across the river, looks down on Porthcawl and has even better views. It also requires shot-making of a high order to negotiate narrow, gorse-lined fairways in the inevitable wind which accompanies play. A more natural course would be hard to find, and it remains a "hidden gem" in that it does not enjoy the fame and reputation outside Wales which it deserves.

A convenient place to stay is **Coed-y-Mwstwr**, at Coychurch near **Bridgend**. Part of Sir Richard Branson's empire, this imposing country house occupies a secluded position up a long, narrow lane and is only a 15 minutes' drive from Southerndown.

Cameron House & The Carrick Course

Few hotels can rival the location of Cameron House, set as it is on the bonnie banks of **Loch Lomond**, yet only a thirty-minute drive from Glasgow Airport. With the owners, **De Vere Hotels**, implementing a **\$50 million investment program in the hotel itself, plus a deluxe health spa**



and world-class golf course, it has become a destination resort to rank with the world's best. A new wing nearing completion will add 35 bedrooms and 4 suites to the existing building, which contains **89 bedrooms and 7 luxury suites**. And, there are also plans for a romantic option of a water launch transfer to the golf club! All the restaurants in the hotel, spa and golf complex **will feature seasonal Scottish and British produce** with first class service provided in a relaxed and informal manner.

To bolster claims for future tournaments, **plans to build a number of chalets around the golf course** have been scaled back to **permit the development of a superb practice ground and golf academy**. This will feature **cutting-edge technology for swing analysis** and club selection.

For golfers, the jewel in the crown will naturally be the course itself. **Starting with a sumptuous par 4 of over 400 yards, water is immediately a threat with a stream on the right and a wetland area beyond it**. Bunkers up the left hand side provide aiming points for some, before the approach to a generous green which is forty yards in length. **The short 2nd and dog-leg 3rd tack around a man-made lagoon, but**



the water bordering the scenic 4th is entirely natural and extends along the length of the hole. **The long 5th is all about avoiding the bunkers**, which are deep and feature steep, revetted faces which will normally cost at least one shot. The short 6th has a three-tiered green, with a Redan-style angle to the tee, and the 7th – **from a raised tee – hints at the views still to come**.

For tournament play the 8th can be stretched to over 600 yards before another stiff par 4 completes the outward nine. With views north to **Ben Lomond**, west to the **Luss Hills**, east towards **Conie Gill** and south across **Loch Lomond** itself, the back nine offers some of the finest views in golf.

Perhaps the most memorable vista is that from the 14th tee, which stands high above a green nestling at the water's edge. The long 15th follows the loch side to a kidney shaped green, before the short 16th features a second man-made lagoon. Straight driving is a requirement at all these holes and the 17th, where the fairway leads through an avenue of trees, is no exception. **Water threatens again at the 18th for both drive and second shot**, before the elegant clubhouse looms in sight to soothe frayed nerves.

Built to USGA standards the greens provide fine putting surfaces and offer a variety of pin positions, while the name of the course – **Carrick** – is particularly apt. **The Gaelic term for rocky place is "Carraig" (pronounced Carrick)** and the **acclaimed Canadian architect, Doug Carrick**, was the course designer.

People & Places

The Nairn Golf Club, one Scotland's best links courses, will host the **Curtis Cup in 2012**, the year that will mark the **125th Anniversary of the founding of the club**. This will be the **38th playing of the biennial contest**



between Great Britain & Ireland and the United States of America, established in 1932 "to stimulate friendly rivalry among the women golfers of many lands".

Nairn, reputed to have some of the finest greens in Scotland, is located just east of **Inverness** on the southern shore of the **Moray Firth** and has played host to many major events: the **Walker Cup** in 1999, various **Scottish Amateur Championships, Northern Professional Opens, European Championships** and several British and Scottish ladies' tournaments.

In 2008, the matches will be played over the **Old Course at St Andrews**

from 30 May-1 June, and at the **Essex County Club, Massachusetts** from 11-13 June in 2010.

The Fylan Collection, relative newcomers to the hotel market, has opened two new independent properties in Ireland. *Dylan's* in Dublin has fast gained the reputation of being one of the smartest places to stay and dine in the city. Formerly called The Hibernian Hotel, **this deluxe 44-bedroomed boutique property** is located in a smart residential area close to the city centre. Early feedback reports luxurious bedrooms and excellent food plus young, but charming and attentive, staff. **Named in the Conde Nast Hot List for 2007.**

Dunboyne Castle and Spa is situated only 8 miles from Dublin Airport and 11 miles from the city centre. **A good alternative for those clients who want to be close enough to the capital but prefer a quieter country setting**, this four-star property is set in 21 acres and offers 45 over-sized bedrooms and 4 suites all with garden views. The **Seoid Spa** (meaning jewel or gem in Gaelic) is located on **3 floors – a hydrotherapy pool**, separate **thermal facilities for men and women** including heat and ice rooms, plus **18 treatment suites** offering everything from massages to **hammam** and **algototherapy**.

Moving onto Scotland - developments at the beautiful **Gleneagles** resort in



Perthshire continue to impress. The past few years have seen considerable investment in **bedroom refurbishment** and in the **golf courses**. **An additional £18m development program has now produced ten luxury top floor suites**, a new **Mediterranean deli-style restaurant** as a dining option and a transformation of the leisure club and spa.

A **one-bedroom** and **nine two-bedroom suites** are located on the 4th floor and consequently have stunning views of the estate. The **Blue Tower Suite** is split-level with two bedrooms and en suite bathrooms situated on the lower floor, and a **spiral staircase leading to a second floor lounge** – the highest point in the hotel. All the suites have a contemporary feel, decorated in natural tones.

The new spa will open in January 2008, doubling the number of treatment rooms to 20 and introducing new zones such as **'Heat Experiences'** and the **'Vitality Pool'**. According to the hotel's PR "the design and lighting have been carefully planned to create the perfect place to unwind". Sounds good to us!

The **new restaurant** is called **'Deseo'**, or **'Desire' in Spanish**. Designed around the concept of a **Mediterranean market**, dishes are cooked in front of guests, who can peruse the menu options at various food stations before ordering. A mixture of high tables and banquette seating provide an excellent alternative to the more formal **Strathearn** and **Andrew Fairlie's** restaurants.

Only 40 minutes from St Andrews and 20 minutes from Carnoustie **Kinnettles House** is now available for exclusive use. Perfect for corporate entertaining, family groups or just those golf parties that prefer total privacy, the



turreted baronial mansion has been completely refurbished and **accommodates up to 18 guests.**

One suite and ten King or Twin bedrooms offer every modern comfort. Public rooms include a spacious lounge and a dining room which has its own **drop-down cinema screen & HD Projector**. In addition, the **game room** has a **championship-size snooker table, satellite TV, Bose surround sound system and Wi-fi capability.**

Although certainly not inexpensive, rates are inclusive of breakfast, dinner, drinks, plus the services of a chef and host to make your stay as comfortable and memorable as possible.

New plans are afoot with the **St. Andrews Grand** project, overlooking the 1st tee and 18th green of the Old Course. Housed in the former red-bricked university hall of residence (Hamilton Hall), **the original concept of a residential club** has been dropped by the developers, **Wasserman Real Estate Capital**. **Twenty-three 3 & 4-bedroomed serviced apartments are still planned, but** will now be on the market for **outright sale rather than shared-ownership**, with asking prices from **\$10 million to \$16 million** apiece. The new projected completion date is mid 2009.



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