



ADVENTURES IN GOLF

Fall 2008

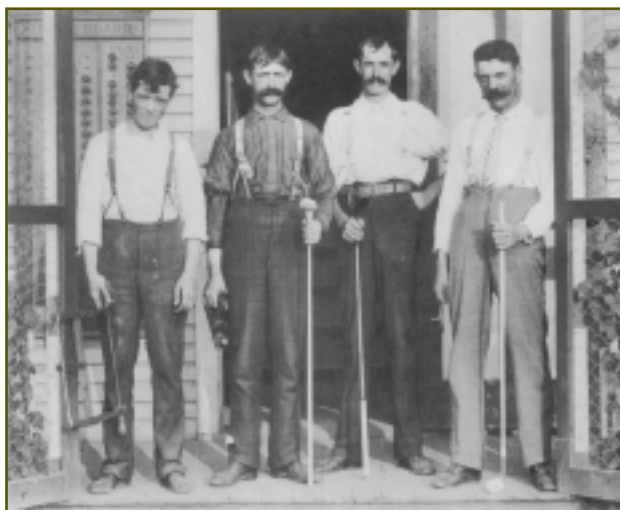
The Year In Review

What a year in the Majors! **Trevor Immelman** recovered from surgery to get back on tour, then, having missed the cut the week before **The Masters**, he held off Tiger's challenge to secure his first major title. Injuries continued to feature at the **US Open**, where **Woods defied the pain of torn ligaments and a double-stress fracture** to record his **14th major victory** and surely his most unlikely win to date. **Rocco Mediate** forced a play-off, but Tiger's iron-resolve prevailed once again.

Even the world's number #1 golfer would have been hard-pressed to deny **Padraig Harrington** his successful defense of the Open Championship at Royal Birkdale, or indeed his marvelous win at **Oakland Hills** in the **PGA Championship**. Fantastic final rounds were carded by the Irishman in both events and his performance down the closing stretch in each case was nothing

short of awesome. That makes three wins in the last six majors for Harrington - even Tiger would be happy with that!

The story in **Southport** was, of course, headlined by **Greg Norman's** fantastic tilt at the title.



In contention throughout and leading halfway through the final round, **he was denied only by the brilliance of Harrington's back nine**. And, the following week at **Royal Troon**, the Shark frightened the life out of **John**

Cook and **Bruce Vaughan** as, after a moderate start, he picked up twelve shots in the space of 32 holes to close on the leaders. Needing to birdie #17 on the final day, Greg's tee shot was a little too aggressive. He found sand, his charge was halted and he bowed out to leave **Vaughan** to edge **Cook** in sudden death, and therefore, make the **British Seniors Open his first tournament win in 33 starts**. Quite a fairytale for the likeable American.

Playing conditions at Southport were challenging, to say the least. Unplayable might be a better word for the average golfer, with strong winds on most days and heavy rain as well on Thursday. Troon enjoyed a little better weather and a warm, wet summer in the British Isles has ensured the golf courses have been in fantastic condition. It's also meant that the rough has been penal, however, so if you've failed



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to play to your handicap in such conditions, you'll be in good company!

Turnberry's new owners, Leisurecorp have committed to significant investment in the resort in order to realize more of its vast potential. This includes a **full redevelopment and re-launch of the hotel**, which is planned to close in late 2008 and re-open ahead of The Open Championship which takes place there in July 2009. The company's determination to ensure the quality and condition of the Ailsa Course is illustrated by their recently announced **decision to only open the course in 2009 for visitor play after the event.** Next year, Leisurecorp boasts an incredible hat-trick of golf tournaments across three continents - the world's oldest tournament, **The Open Championship; Africa's oldest tournament, The South African Open; and the Dubai World Championship**, the richest tournament in golf. Despite Leisurecorp's investment, **Starwood** will continue to manage the Turnberry resort. St Andrews will have its **seventh**

course available for a full season.

The Castle Course is the first tournament quality course to be added to the St Andrews stable in 100 years. It stretches to 7,200 yards from the back tees, but architect **David**

MacLay Kidd has ensured playability for golfers of all levels by providing five tees for each hole. Initial comments on the layout compliment the **panoramic views over St Andrews** and the Bay and emphasize the quality of the par 3s. Some say additional improvements might be made in

terms of definition to clarify

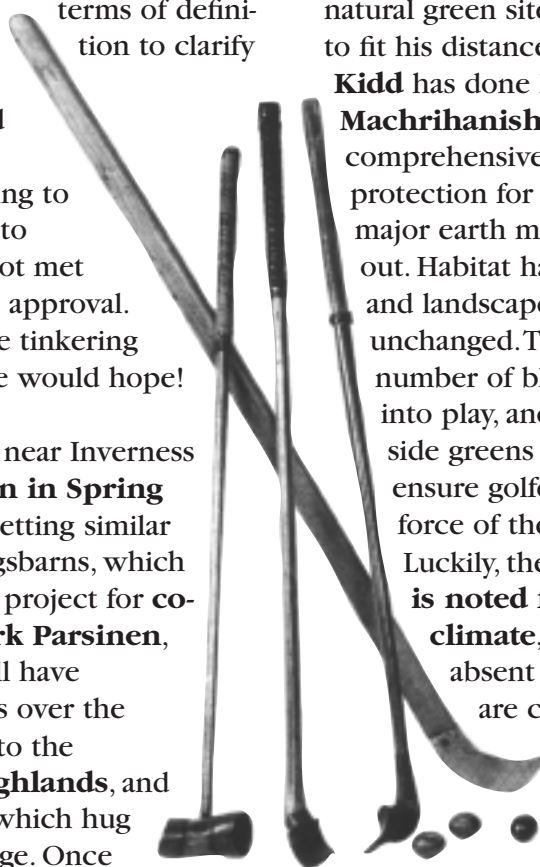
lines from some tees, and Kidd's use of rough mounding to add character to fairways has not met with universal approval. Nothing a little tinkering can't fix ... we would hope!

Castle Stuart near Inverness is **due to open in Spring 2009.** With a setting similar to that of Kingsbarns, which was an earlier project for co-designer **Mark Parsinen**, the course will have fabulous views over the **Moray Firth** to the **Northern Highlands**, and several holes which hug the water's edge. Once the hotel facilities come on line it

will make an excellent starting or finishing point for a Scottish vacation, given the proximity of Inverness Airport. **Royal Dornoch** is only a one-hour drive away and **Nairn** is on its doorstep!

Brightside Leisure Developments' Scottish flagship project at **Machrihanish Dunes** should also come on stream in 2009, a year behind schedule. To be managed by Massachusetts-based Southworth Developments the new course occupies a **site of special scientific interest (SSSI)**, which has meant modern construction techniques have been outlawed by government legislation and so traditional methods have had to be employed. Just as **Old Tom** at nearby **Machrihanish** turned rabbit warrens into bunkers, identified natural green sites and placed tees to fit his distances, **David MacLay Kidd** has done likewise at **Machrihanish Dunes.** So comprehensive has been the protection for the dunes that major earth moving was ruled out. Habitat has been preserved and landscape largely left unchanged. That has meant a number of blind shots come into play, and several ocean-side greens and tees will ensure golfers sample the full force of the Atlantic weather. Luckily, the **Mull of Kintyre** is noted for its **mild climate**, but wind is rarely absent and strong winds are common.

Past visitors to **Machrihanish** may have been concerned at the quality of the





après-golf. These concerns have been addressed with plans to **convert the old Ugadale Hotel into The Kintyre Hotel and Cottages** featuring 82 quality rooms and overlooking the first hole at **Machrihanish GC.** **The Royal Hotel in Campbeltown** is scheduled to re-open with 30 graciously appointed guest rooms in 2010. Finally, **The Residences at Machrihanish Bay** are scheduled to comprise 32 two-bedroom cottages and houses which will overlook the new course and Atlantic Ocean.

Scotland does not have all the exciting new courses in Britain, of course. The European Ladies tour has visited **Machynys Golf Club** in Wales a couple of times since it opened to popular acclaim. Golf Monthly wrote in 2005 that its "stunning location, great design and clever use of natural features suggests that **Machynys** will quickly develop into one of the best courses in the country".

Overlooking the famous **Gower Peninsular**, this Nicklaus design has a links feel, albeit with a more manicured appearance than is traditional with seaside courses.

Within striking distance of **Royal Porthcawl** and **Southerndown**, **Machynys** offers another option in **South Wales**, where Pennard, Tenby and Ashburnam also compete for visitors' attention. **Don't forget Celtic Manor either, which will host the Ryder Cup in 2010.**

On the subject of future events, The British Seniors will visit **Sunningdale** in 2009, a departure from the traditional links course normally preferred, but a venue with impressive credentials as a tournament venue. And the **Royal & Ancient GC** has announced that the **Open Championship** will return to **Sandwich in 2011** and **Royal Lytham & St. Annes in 2012.**

Royal St. George's, at Sandwich in southern England, last hosted the **British Open** in 2003, when **Ben Curtis** won his first major. **It will be the 14th time the British Open has been staged there since 1894.** Other former winners include **Bobby Locke**,



Bill Rogers, Sandy Lyle, and Greg Norman.

Royal Lytham and St. Annes most recently staged the event in 2001, when **David Duval** lifted the **Claret Jug.** 2012 will witness the **tenth time that the British Open** has been played on these famous old **links** since 1926, when it was **won by amateur Bobby Jones.** Other previous winners include **Bob Charles, Gary Player, Tony Jacklin, Seve Ballesteros and Tom Lehman.** For good measure, the **British Ladies Open** will be held at **Lytham in 2009!**

Did you know there are over 32,000 golf courses in the world but only about 150 of these are genuine links courses? And, over one third of those are in Ireland!

New Zealand

In our last issue, we announced our newest destination - **New Zealand.** While we have received keen interest in this venue, **surprisingly many clients are not aware of the basics: when is the best time to travel, how do you get to NZ, what are the key courses by area, where and what are the best accommodations, etc.** Let us try to answer some of these instrumental questions.

The best time to travel to **New Zealand** is during our **traditional winter months** - late **November** through **February.** This is actually **New Zealand's summer months** with temperatures averaging in the

mid-to-high 70's with days in the 80's. For reference, as you read this newsletter, their temperatures are averaging in the 50's and low 60's.

Flying to **New Zealand** can prove long for East-Coasters, but roughly



the same as going to the United Kingdom for West-Coasters. **From the East**, you typically fly to LA then onto Auckland – **total trip taking 21 hours**. However, if you live in **California or nearby areas**, your travel time is only **13 hours**, which is the same flight time from LA to Scotland. **Remember, you will lose two days flying over but gain them back upon your return home.** And, traveling between the **North and South Islands** is easy with numerous flights daily, as well as helicopter transfers for the more extravagant traveler.

New Zealand is comprised of two islands – North Island and South Island with instrumental golf, sightseeing, dining, and accommodations throughout. However, the **North Island** has the privilege of being home to the **world-ranked Cape Kidnappers**

and Kauri Cliffs golf courses, as well as other tremendous gems, like **Wairakei International, Titirangi, and Auckland Golf Club**. One may ask, if the world-ranked courses are solely located in the **North Island**, why even travel to the South?! The answer is

simple - **South Island offers some of the most dramatic landscapes, national parks, wineries, and the area of Queenstown – a town growing more and more popular each day.**

Queenstown offers exceptional

views as well as breathtaking golf at **The Hills (hosted the NZ Open), Millbrook, Kelvin Heights, and Jack's Point**. And, northeast is **Christchurch** with **Mt. Hutt** only minutes away – argued as the best **skiing in New Zealand**, with the season lasting from June through late October! This area also hosts some instrumental golf at **Terrace Downs GC, Shirley Links, Russley GC, Clearwater GC, and Waitikiri GC.**


New Zealand is known for their “eco-friendly” accommodations, which is a fresh change for the eco-traveler searching for

environmentally conscious hotels. Even with this focus on green-accommodations – there are quality levels to suit all budgets. For example, **The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs** is a luxury five-star property with rates ranging from **\$900 to \$1,800 per night (depending on the season)**. However, only twenty minutes away is a wonderful property, **Stone Store Lodge**, which is a small boutique style eco-friendly hotel offering suites from **\$150 to \$215 per night**.

Offering varying quality levels is true for most areas in both **North and South Islands**, with **Huka Lodge** [arguably] offering the most luxurious of accommodations **with breathtaking views of Lake Taupo**. A Small Luxury Hotel of the World, **Huka Lodge** boasts only 20 rooms all within 20 meters of the river and Huka Falls. The hotel has received accolades from **Condé Nast, Travel + Leisure Magazine, Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report, and Forbes Magazine**. Room rates match their many plaudits, with prices ranging from **\$1,200 to \$3,400 per night (depending on the season)**.



Sample New Zealand North & South Island Two-week Golf & Sightseeing Itinerary:



Day 1	Depart USA
Day 2	Fly to New Zealand (crossing IDL)
Day 3	Land in Auckland, NZ Fly from Auckland to Queenstown Overnight at Millbrook Resort
Day 4	Golf at Millbrook GC Overnight at Millbrook Resort
Day 5	Visit Queenstown area - bungee jumping, golf at The Hills or Queenstown GC Overnight at Millbrook Resort
Day 6	Dart River Jetboat & Funyak excursion Overnight at Millbrook Resort
Day 7	Fly from Queenstown to Christchurch Golf at Clearwater GC Overnight at Peppers Clearwater Resort
Day 8	Tour Christchurch area - Antarctica Centre, Art Gallery tour, etc. Overnight at Peppers Clearwater Resort
Day 9	Fly Christchurch to Hawke's Bay Golf at Cape Kidnappers Overnight at Craggy Range Cottage
Day 10	Hawke's Bay Wine Tour Overnight at Craggy Range Cottage
Day 11	Optional: 4WD fly fishing, golf at Bridge Pa, or another winery tour Overnight at Craggy Range Cottage
Day 12	Private transfer to Rotorua Guided tour of geothermal hotspots, geysers, and other natural sites Overnight at Treetops Lodge & Estate
Day 13	Fly Rotorua to Bay of Islands Tour Kerikeri and Bay of Islands area Overnight at Stone Store Lodge
Day 14	Golf at Kauri Cliffs Overnight at Stone Store Lodge
Day 15	Boat Cruise of Bay of Islands and Waitangi Treaty Grounds Overnight at Stone Store Lodge
Day 16	Fly Kerikeri to Auckland Fly Auckland to USA (crossing IDL)

Notes:

The above listed itinerary is designed to be a full sampling of both North and South Islands, while playing the instrumental courses and participating in non-golfing activities. As such, the total trip length can be shortened or elongated as desired. Land pricing will vary depending on total rounds of golf, number of guided tours, and hotel quality. Above trip would be approximately \$7,350 per golfer.



Our Favorite Holes

We suggest three memorable examples in each par category as well as our pick of the best opening and closing holes.

Opening Holes

St Andrews Old Course #1

If anyone ever tells us that they stand on the **first tee of the Old Course** and feel nothing, we don't believe them. Seasoned veterans have been known to tremble and many a first-time visitor confesses to insomnia the night before his/her round. This must be **the most famous piece of turf** in the golfing world. Yet, with a fairway a mile wide and not a bunker in sight, how many shots end up out of bounds over the white railings? How many short iron second shots disappear into the **Swilcan Burn**? And how many "safe" approaches entice a three-putt or worse? Blame the sense of history or the ambience if you like, but most of us can't wait to try again, and again. And each time we feel the same sense of nervous exhilaration when we stand on that tee.

Portstewart #1

Few holes anywhere rival the vista **from the first tee at Portstewart**. Just enough of the top of a giant sand dune here has been flattened to accommodate tees and a starter's hut and the view is just sensational. A shimmering white beach stretches away to the right, with white horses riding the breakers. Over to the left, the **River Bann** makes its final approach to the sea. And way below in front, the fairway doglegs

gently to the right between high dunes on both sides before reaching a green over 400 yards in the distance. Normally played in a crosswind this hole yields few pars, but guarantees great satisfaction for those who achieve them. The rest of us can savor that view.

Prestwick #1

A **stone wall protects a railway line** tight to the right hand side and the prevailing wind helps many a tee shot towards **the passing trains**. Bailing out left is not really an option as the semi-rough quickly gives way to a carpet of dense heather. Big-hitters can easily run out of fairway even if they fire a straight one, so canny locals may start with a rescue club or mid iron. If the wind is blowing, both drive and approach shot are fraught with danger. No wonder the caddies here keep the hip flask handy to steady the nerves!

Par 3s

Portmarnock #15

A classic example of **risk and reward**. With out-of-bounds and the beach all the way down the right hand side, and the prevailing wind coming from the left, the safe play is a lay-up short and left to a grassy swale. That leaves a pitch over two bunkers, or a chip-and-run depending on the angle of approach and flag position, for what ought to be a safe bogey. The only way to hit the putting surface from the tee, however, is to fly it to the green, a carry of about 180 yards. Even a hint of slice will cause right-handers to reload and the consequences of that could make a safe bogey seem the preferred choice.

Silloth-on-Solway #12

Silloth, as the home to **Cecil Leitch**, one of Britain's best female golfers post WW1, is a links to which many British golfers pay homage. Designed partly by **Cecil's father and Willie Park Jr, Alister Mackenzie** supervised changes in 1921 to create a superior links course on superb seaside turf which enjoys views to the **English Lake District** to the east and west across the **Solway Firth** to the hills of **Dumfries and Galloway**. Fairways wind through delightful little valleys in high dunes with the seascape a constant vista on the outward nine. This culminates in a delightful short hole to a narrow green at the edge of the beach, before the course turns inland up the 10th. The **12th** is reminiscent of **Sunningdale** or **Woodhall Spa**, with gorse and heather framing a broken fairway which leads to a green set into a small hill. A deep greenside bunker on the right draws the eye, but encroaching gorse on the left is just as much of a danger. Every detail of this hole is clearly presented from the tee. Just one good shot!

Enniscrone #17

After **Donald Steel's** recent changes, Enniscrone is now a big course by any standards. By the time you reach the **17th** you will have played some tough holes, so the yardage of just 149 yards from the back tee may come as something of a relief, especially if the prevailing wind is helping. However, don't get over-confident. From the high tee the narrow green lies beyond a sandy wasteland, protected by a bunker in



front and with such steep slopes away from either side that saving par from off the green requires a short game like Tiger's.

Par 4s

Royal Portrush #5

Like many great links courses, the championship **Dunluce Course at Portrush** does not rub shoulders with the beach, despite the grand sea views it frequently offers. Yet everywhere on the course the very essence of links golf is to the fore - the grasses of the rough, the springy turf of the fairways, the cliff views in the distance and the salty smell of the breeze. **The 5th hole** is played directly towards the sea and just beyond the green lies the beach. **Only 384 yards** from the back tee, length is not the problem. Direction is the key, with a shot of 220-230 yards between giant sand dunes offering pole position at the corner of the dogleg. Then club selection is critical if the correct tier of a narrow green is to be found. Bunkers do not feature, but rough does - lots of it - while the hole's name, "**White Rocks**" bears witness to the seascape close by.



world". At **459 yards** and with a double dog-leg to an elevated green, this hole is undoubtedly a supreme test of links golf. **But, the 5th has some strong supporters, too. Tom Watson and Charlie's Angel, Cheryl Ladd**, both voted it their favorite hole. It's one of those holes where you want to open your shoulders and hit your

right hand side. Three more bunkers lie in front and two deep ones lurk on the left of the green, which is set several feet above the fairway making yardage hard to judge. Few of us will even get close to the putting surface from the tee, but the perspective of the hole encourages optimism and carefree disregard for the sandy dangers. The view from the tee is to die for, with the **Sutherland Hills** in the distance, the shimmering

sea away to the right and the course itself stretching out towards the turn. By the way, club pro **Andrew Skinner** rated **Cheryl Ladd** a highly competent golfer! We expect he would say the same about **Tom Watson**.

Ballybunion #17

You could take any one of the holes on the **back nine at Ballybunion** and include it in a compendium of golf's best. We are citing the **17th** for the wow factor it generates. From the tee set high on the dunes, the fairway below looks like a boot fractured at the ankle by a deep ridge. The toe of the boot points at the tee, while the leg ends at the green with a 90 degree



Royal Dornoch #5

Most people name "**Foxy**", the **14th**, as their classic par 4 at **Royal Dornoch**. Indeed, **Harry Vardon** described **Foxy** as "**the finest natural links hole in the**

Sunday best. The fairway stretches out below a high tee, providing a broad target, albeit that a string of pot bunkers leads back from the green down the semi rough on the

dogleg angled to the left in-between. A sandy wasteland of high dunes to the right does not hide the **blue Atlantic and the golden sands** of the bay are



shown at their finest on this stretch of the course. If the green helps to gather a decent shot, it's no less than well-deserve, for **400 yards** into the stiff prevailing wind is a mighty task.

Par 5s

Carnoustie #14

The finishing holes at **Carnoustie** are considered by many to be the hardest in championship golf. The **14th** is perhaps the first of these, a long hole dominated by the **Spectacle bunkers** which sit some 60 yards from the green and threaten the second shots of most players. Played with the prevailing wind, long-hitters must ensure they hold a fairway angled right to left from the tee, or penal gorse awaits the overly ambitious drive. For most, the decision is then whether to attempt the carry the **Spectacles** or to lay up short and face a blind approach. Club selection and direction are both critical for the pros, since the green is sixty yards long with dense cover on both sides.

Royal Birkdale #17

547 yards from the blue tees, this monster starts with a big carry to a fairway snaking between high mounds. **Out-of-bounds** lines the right hand side, but well back from the fairway, before a long, narrow green is reached between bunkers and mounds. Eminently fair, the hole rewards straight hitting and distance control, but cloying rough will penalize the errant shot. It was on this hole in 1969 that **Tony Jacklin** holed a long putt to draw level with **Jack Nicklaus** in the final singles match of the **Ryder Cup**. Jack's famous concession of Tony's putt on the 18th green led

to the first tie in the history of the match.

Carrick Course #15

The **Carrick Course**, **Doug Carrick's sensational layout on the shores of Loch Lomond**, is not a links course. It's not even an old one. But, don't shoot the messenger! This hole combines much of what is best in Scotland: sublime views, testing shots, springy turf and a slick green. The views of **Loch Lomond** and the **Highland Hills** are intoxicating, but the requirement off the tee is a long draw which must avoid a trio of bunkers set into the bank at the left edge of the fairway. Then, beyond a ridge which drops the fairway down a level, the second shot must avoid two bunkers cunningly positioned in the middle of the fairway, before the final approach to a kidney-shaped green again must negotiate bunkers left and right. Good holes should offer all golfers playable routes to the green. Great holes should also test players of all levels, while providing birdie opportunities for outstanding play. This hole ticks all the boxes.

Closing Holes

Carne #18

The best thing you can say here about a prevailing wind at two

o'clock is that it offers some protection against the out-of-bounds on the right. Threading a drive between the enormous sand hills lining the fairway is the first priority however, closely followed by the challenge of scaling the ridge some 100 yards in front of the green. With a clear sight of the green you expect to hit it. From the bottom of the ridge, however, it becomes a much taller order, especially in the knowledge that "**Bloody Hollow**", an **ancient burial ground**, awaits to the right!



Royal Aberdeen #18

As **Bernard Darwin** memorably put it, **Royal Aberdeen** is "much more than a good golf course, [it is] a noble links". The **Balgownie links** offers four of the finest short holes in Britain as well as some of the best par 4s and 5s. The back nine is a severe test, culminating in a finishing hole of rare quality. At **434 yards** into the prevailing wind, this is a brute, and even after a good drive the second shot must clear a high bank in

front of the elevated green. Bunkers left and right complete the picture.

Royal County Down #18

For those who feel golf in **Britain and Ireland** is about seaside courses with enchanting views, springy turf and pot bunkers, then the final hole at Newcastle fits the bill. There are twenty three bunkers with all but three of these lining the fairway and the trio set in a cluster at the half-way point achieves their aim, which is to intimidate the drive. Some would say the final trio - two on the left and one to the right - are set too far short of the green to come into play. For the professional, the answer is "yes". **For the amateur these bunkers see more of the rake than most!**

Golf Course Architecture - the Influence of St Andrews

In his book *Golf Architecture*, published in 1920, **Alister MacKenzie**, explained why he rated the **Old Course at St. Andrews** so highly;

"...the real reason St. Andrews Old Course is infinitely superior to anything else is owing to the fact that it was constructed when no-one knew anything about the subject at all, and since then it has been considered too sacred to be touched."

MacKenzie went on to contend that the **Old Course** represented a standard by which all other courses should be judged. Since the earliest days of the profession, golf course architects have travelled to **St. Andrews** from far and wide to study the **Old Course**

and to copy its style, strategy and features. So it's probably fair to say that no other tract of land has had **so much influence on the development** of the game and on the attitudes of course designers.

Yet the first greens and fairways at **St. Andrews** were formed not by men but by sheep grazing amongst the sand dunes, and bunkers were created by these same animals wearing out sandy hollows as they nestled for shelter from the wind. But in 1848 **Allan Robertson**, one of the worlds first golf professionals, was asked to make improvements to the **Old Course**. His first task was to lengthen the course, reducing the number of holes **from 22 to 18**, a historic event which was to impact directly on the development of the game as we know it today. He also made a number of other major changes.

mandatory, now golfers had a **choice of options** from the tee. Wider fairways offered longer but safer alternatives, while the direct line rewarded success for the more daring player. **Robertson's work** was continued and expanded by **Tom Morris** over the following decades. Better fairways and greens made for greater enjoyment of play and the increasing popularity of the game again led to improved care - **the reduction of whins and gorse, repair of cart ruts and, eventually, shaping and grooming of bunkers.**

Not until the **turn of the century**, however, **did strategic design** as a concept come to be favored by golf course architects and thus replace the penal approach which hitherto had held sway. Part of the explanation for that, of course, relates to resources and cost. The early architects to follow **Robertson**, men like **Tom**



By widening the double fairways, from **40 yards to over 100 yards**, he introduced the possibility of **alternative routes** between **tee** and **green**. Where the crossing of hazards had once been

Morris and **Willie Dunn**, were often expected to lay out a course **in a day or two, with no earth moving, minimal land and limited budgets**. Of necessity, these pioneers utilized the

existing topography, identifying **natural green sites** and **hazards** and moving only the amount of earth that a horse and scraper could comfortably shift. **Course routing** was designed to minimize the amount of land required and to contain maintenance costs.

This approach achieved remarkable success where the available land met the architect's requirements. Courses such as **Machrie, Royal Aberdeen** and **Royal Dornoch** illustrate perfectly the suitability of linksland for golf. It was when golf reached the sandy **heathlands** of **Surrey** and **Berkshire** at the turn of the 19th Century however, that the first dedicated golf course architects began to **remodel the terrain** they were given in order to build golf courses which were **strategically** and **aesthetically pleasing**. Blind shots would now be avoided where possible and hazards no longer hidden – a significant change from the old links of **Prestwick** or **St. Andrews** where so many hazards lie unseen, waiting to gather stray shots.

But despite this fundamental change in thinking, those who designed these **heathland courses**, like **Willie Park, Jr., Harry Colt** and **Herbert Fowler**, all paid homage to the influence that the **Old Course** had on their design philosophies. That influence lay not in the shape or visibility of the "Old Lady's" hazards but in their location and the strategy required to avoid them, as well as in the variety of shot making which the **naturally undulating contours** of the ground encouraged.

Harry Colt first visited **St. Andrews** in 1887 and later wrote that the pleasure of playing the Old Course "...is not gained by successfully carrying gigantic hazards, but in avoiding comparatively small ones, and the difficulties consist not only of sand bunkers, but also of undulations, small plateau and slightly swinging ground." He noticed how the **contours of the ground affected approaches into the green** and also how important it was to select the correct type of shot, and to execute it properly for the best result. The concept of **strategic design** was taking root.

Alister MacKenzie studied the **Old Course** religiously and rated the 11th, 14th, 16th and 17th as holes without equal anywhere in the world. He especially admired the way that it could provide a stern test for the best golfers but was still playable for those with lesser ability. Much of **MacKenzie's work**, which included **Augusta National, Royal Melbourne** and **Cypress Point**, reflects the importance he placed on playability.

He believed that there should always be **alternative routes** available to players of different **skill levels** and he often illustrated three, four, or even five ways to play different holes. The concept of **strategic design** is to reward the golfer who succeeds in taking the greatest risks, penalize him if he fails, but offer alternative routes for the less accomplished player. This makes golf a game not just of **skill**, but importantly, of **judgment**. It also creates variety and interest which are funda-

mental to the enjoyment of the game, and it gives the average player the opportunity to get round the course. As Mackenzie wryly observed, **no-one enjoys looking for golf balls**.

Another prominent pioneer of strategic golf course design was **Tom Simpson**, a brilliant if eccentric golf course architect who became a partner of **Herbert Fowler**. He listed the 16th and 17th on the Old Course as two of the "mad masterpieces that live in the memory and make the game of golf worthwhile." Simpson also had strong views on the subject of bunkering; he thought that a fairway bunker should fulfill two objectives. Firstly, it had to influence the play of the hole, and secondly it should catch the scratch golfer's good shot which was not quite good enough. As he wrote, "It is a popular delusion to suppose that the function of a fairway bunker is to catch a bad shot. It is nothing of the kind."

Along with **MacKenzie** the other dominant designer of his time in the USA was **Donald Ross**, who was also heavily influenced by his knowledge of **St. Andrews** and particularly of his home club at **Dornoch**. **Ross** designed hundreds of golf courses, including **Pinehurst No. 2** and was also a dedicated exponent of strategic golf course design. Writing on the subject **Ross** outlined his design philosophy; "My aim is to bring out of the player the best golf in him....The hazards and bunkers are placed so as to force a man to use judgment and to exercise mental control in making the correct shot."

His thoughts echoed those of **MacKenzie** when he stated that his objective when designing was "...to lay out an alternative route on practically every hole. That is on a par 4 the scratch player... has one way of getting home in two shots - he must place his drive accurately to do so - and the high handicapper or short hitter has another route to reach the green in three". **Robert Trent Jones** would later echo these words.

All of these famous architects felt they could learn from the **Old Course**. And many of them would have agreed with **Bobby Jones**, who stated that "**The more I studied the Old Course the more I loved it: and the more I loved it the more I studied it**".

Architectural styles may come and go but the basics of good golf course design still depend on a

strong strategic approach and **St. Andrews has been the leading example of this for the last 100 years**. Maybe that is why the **American Society of Golf Course Architects** makes an official study visit every ten years or so!

Hidden Gems - Askernish

To further illustrate the importance of **St Andrews** on modern architects (and golfers) we could cite the example of **Askernish**. In **June 1891**, **Old Tom Morris** accompanied by his companion **Horace Hutchinson** (British Amateur Champion and golf writer) travelled to **South Uist in the Outer Hebrides** at the request of the landowners to inspect the *machair* lands (Gaelic for fertile low-lying grassy plain) with a view to laying out a new

course. Whether **Morris** actually laid out the eighteen holes on the rolling dunes of **Askernish Farm** is hard to know, although proof of his visit exists and he is said to have declared that the choice of links land available was "staggering."

Over the years the **original routing** was modified and neglected, but club chairman **Ralph Thompson** invited **Gordon Irvine**, a golf course consultant from Ayrshire, to visit Uist in 2005 and that proved to be a fateful decision.

Irvine's reconnoitre in December of that year enthused him with the potential to restore the original design. Even in atrocious weather the quality of the land and turf appeared exceptional for golf.



The machair at Askernish.

With assistance from **Martin Ebert (Golf Architect)**, **Chris Haspell (Greenkeeper)** and **Adam Lawrence (Editor, Golf Course Architecture)** and aided by club members, **Irvine** sought to retrace the **original eighteen holes**. Ebert produced a plan on his laptop, and the members readily supported a **resurrection of the original layout**. With minor alterations **Ebert's plan** has been followed - it was plotted in **just one day**, in much the same way as **Old Tom** would have done all those years before.



An example of the land being restored.

The **restoration program was completed this summer**, funded in part by the sale of life memberships to those who cherish golf history and applaud the preservation of a truly natural links. **South Uist** can be reached by **plane** from either **Glasgow** or **Inverness**. But if you visit, be prepared for a **glimpse of the past** and something a little **more rustic** than you might be accustomed to!



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