



# ADVENTURES IN GOLF

Spring 2007

## News Update

Some fantastic new courses are in the pipeline for the near future. Donald Trump's exciting new development near Cruden Bay has received widespread news coverage, but the project has a number of hurdles to overcome in terms of local planning before the bulldozers move in. Set close to the majestic links of Cruden Bay, Trump's track will be a championship classic, but controversy surrounds the infrastructure of the package – a hotel, housing and new roads cause some to fear he will mar the very landscape which attracted him.

In contrast, Cornerstone Golf's development at Castle Stuart near Inverness Airport has planning consent for the phased construction of two golf courses, a hotel and a number of time share chalets. Fundamental to the scheme is the construction of a world-class championship course before other building work is commenced.

The Castle Stuart course may resemble Kingsbarns in quality, style and aspect. So, too, should the new Castle Course, which is the seventh course to adorn the portfolio of St Andrews LMC. The new

course is just along the road from Kingsbarns and will open in 2008 and have a visitor green fee of £120. Those lucky St Andrews residents who hold season tickets for their courses will have the opportunity to play the new course without additional cost. No wonder



house prices in St Andrews continue to rise as envious golfers vie with one another to achieve residency status in order to qualify for playing privileges. To protect the new course, it will initially open only from April to October, and it may be booked as an alternative to the New or Jubilee for two round packages which include the Old Course.

The new Carrick Course near Loch Lomond Golf Club is also receiving wide acclaim. It has a more "Scottish" feel than its Weiskopf/Morrish sibling, and enjoys a setting and views which are certainly the equal of its more established neighbor. With the refurbishment of Cameron House, the southern end of Loch Lomond becomes ever more appealing.

In Dornoch, the buzz concerns Peter de Savary's plans for his recent acquisition, The Royal Golf Hotel. Closed now until Spring 2008, this much-loved landmark will re-open as a four star, character property which PDS promised will offer great value, relaxed ambience and his "signature-style" of service. The Club, meanwhile, is busy installing a new irrigation system on the championship course to replace its ailing predecessor. Ironically, the last two winters have been the wettest in the area for decades. Medium term plans call for an extension to the Struie Course to 27 holes so that nine holes may be added to the Academy Course to provide better facilities for youngsters and inexperienced golfers.



### In This Issue...

News Update .....	1	FAQ's.....	3
Machrie and Islay .....	2	About Us .....	4



In Ireland, Royal County Down will host the Walker Cup matches in early September and is sure to provide a challenging test in a superb setting. With the British Seniors visiting Royal Portrush in 2008, Northern Ireland's premier duo are deservedly basking in the limelight. Later this year, a number of Links Cuppers will sample their delights, too, in a post-tournament trip to Ireland. The Links Cup event itself returns to Turnberry and is now in its 14th year. Unfortunately, last year's winners at Sea Island, the Merion team, is unable to defend their trophy, but the good ladies of Piping Rock who triumphed in 2006 are limbering up to face all-comers! Many famous clubs will again be represented, but a special welcome is extended to the teams from Ekwanok and Everglades who will make their Scottish debuts.

Many people think only of Portrush or County Down when considering Northern Ireland, but there are other appealing courses. Portstewart has some of the finest and most spectacular holes in Ireland, while neighboring Castlerock is also worth a visit. Via the summer ferry from Magilligan Point to Greencastle, a day trip from Portrush to Ballyliffin is perfectly feasible. However, the excellent new lodge there may tempt some to stay over in order to allow time for both the Old and Glashedy courses, and perhaps a side-trip to Rosapenna is also in order.

Golf in the West of Ireland remains a tremendous value with Carne, Enniscrone, and County Sligo still very modestly priced in relation to their competitors in the South West or Dublin areas. For those blessed by good weather, there can be few places on earth more peaceful and uplifting than the giant dunes of Carne or Enniscrone. The wide vistas of Machrie and Machrihanish in Scotland run them close, yet in all these cases the beauty and challenge of the courses are not

their only appeal. Remoteness and solitude are good for the soul, but few sports permit their enjoyment. How grateful we should be that golf is one that does!

### **The Machrie Links – Island Golf in Scotland**

Islay, only 75 miles from Glasgow as the crow flies (the same distance as St Andrews), has a course ranked in the top 100 in the British Isles. Worthy of that over-used term “a hidden gem” the Machrie Links is, from the back tees, 6,200 yards of the most natural and traditional golf you will find.

Relatively short by modern standards, but a stiff examination in an Atlantic breeze, the course was laid out in 1891 by Willie Campbell. On his first visit Willie enthused “it is the best ground for a golf course that I have ever had the pleasure of viewing ... you could make for very little money one of the best courses in Scotland as it will need very little more than cutting the ‘puttin’ greens”.

The islanders believed him and he set to work. By 1901 the course was ready for tournament play, and the week after the Open Championship at Muirfield, the Islay Tournament attracted the top players of the day. Harry Vardon, James Braid, and J H Taylor were amongst them, attracted no doubt by the first prize offer of £100, at the time a sum four times greater than that awarded to the winner of the Open.

Little has changed over the years and the course starts gently over the first three holes with two short par 4s either side of the 500 yard 2nd hole. Views from all parts of the course are uplifting, with seascapes dominating on the opening holes and panoramic vistas of the moors and hills distracting us later on.

Blind shots regularly occur, but rarely are they unfair in the sense that landing areas are usually generous and playing lines distinct. A couple of good short holes punctuate a series of par 4's on the outward nine, while two par 3's act as bookends to the 11th (par 4) as we turn for home.

The 14th is called the Heather Hole. Nothing too threatening in the name perhaps but this is the most difficult handicap hole. It is a long par 4 played from a high teeing ground, generally into the prevailing wind and requiring “three good shots to get up in two” as the old Pros might say! The 15th – Willie's Fancy – allows a minor respite before the strong finish, played over roller-coaster terrain.

Conveniently, the comfort and conviviality of the Machrie Hotel is but a 100 yard walk from the 18th green. The course-owning hotel provides modest but perfectly comfortable accommodation in either the main house or adjacent lodges. Good food, comprising many local ingredients, figures prominently as do the local malts. You can visit seven distilleries on Islay – Ardbeg, Bowmore, Bunnahabhain, Bruichladdich, Caol Ila, Lagavulin, and Laphroaig – or enjoy the “alternative tour” by sampling a dram from each at the hotel bar!

Regular flights operate from Glasgow – except at weekends – and the airport is 5 minutes from the golf course and hotel. For those with a little more time to spare, drive instead to the Kintyre peninsula and enjoy the scenic ferry journey past the islands of Gigha and Jura. For those electing to drive, a visit to Machrihanish at the bottom of the Mull of Kintyre is also a tempting option.



**FAQ's for the Golf Traveler:**

**Q** Can I use my mobile phone overseas?

**A** Yes, but only if you have a newer GSM phone and first arrange with your telephone provider to give you international coverage. And, will generally cost extra for both your monthly service and per minute charges.

**Q** If I take my laptop, will I be able to connect to the internet?

**A** Most hotels now offer broadband connection to the Internet – either in guest bedrooms or via dedicated office/lounge facilities. Where these are not available, internet cafes are usually not hard to find in town.

**Q** British and Irish weather is notoriously variable. How do I know what to take?

**A** During summer months the weather across the pond can change quickly, but is rarely extreme. We recommend lightweight water-proofs and a selection of layers – golf shirts, wool sweaters, chinos and water-proof golf shoes with soft spikes. For gentlemen a blazer and tie will suffice for evening wear. Most people take too much luggage – remember on a touring holiday it all has to travel with you from place to place in your rental car!

**Q** Do we need to make restaurant reservations in advance?

**A** It really depends on the size of your party and the degree of flexibility you wish to retain. Hotels will normally ensure their clients have tables in their restaurants, but groups of 12 or more need to pre-book if they plan to dine out. Remember though that a booking constitutes a contract and no-shows may be penalized. Some restaurants will

mandate credit card details when taking your reservation, to help prevent a last minute change of heart.



**Q** Is there a best time of year to travel?

**A** For Spain and Portugal - Spring and Fall are best as summer temperatures may be too hot for golf. In Britain and Ireland, May to September are the best months, but don't rule out late April or early October if those times suit you. April actually has more sunshine hours than September due to longer days, and recent summers have extended into October. Some courses and hotels consider April and October to be "shoulder season" and price reductions apply.

**Q** Are there any driver restrictions on rental cars that I should know about?

**A** You will need a valid driving license and must be aged between 25 and 70. Outside these age limits additional insurance will be required. Most companies surcharge for additional drivers, too. Excess charges apply on standard insurances (for damage or theft of vehicle) but these

can usually be reduced or waived completely on payment of a supplement.

**Q** How do I know whether to take a driver or rent a car?

**A** Sometimes this comes down to pure economics – a driver is almost always more expensive than self-drive. However, where the driving distances are more challenging, a driver can dramatically improve your enjoyment of a trip. In Ireland, for example, the courses are more widely dispersed than in Scotland. So relaxing in the coach on the way to the next hotel after a tough round can be very appealing. Also, all European countries are intolerant of drinking and driving. Jumping behind the wheel to drive to Dornoch after a Muirfield or Prestwick lunch may not be the smartest move!

**Q** Is trip cancellation/trip interruption insurance worthwhile?

**A** We feel yes, it is worth the cost. Family or personal illness can arise without notice, as can business financial concerns, so knowing that you can either cancel your trip entirely or return home earlier than planned – without any cost impact – is worth its weight in gold. In addition, as we have all witnessed personally – various airlines and/or airports cancel flights from time to time, thus, having cancellation/interruption insurance allows for any losses to be reimbursed.

**Q** Will my hairdryer, electric razor, & laptop work overseas?

**A** Yes, but you will need to purchase a European power adapter before leaving on your trip. These adapters are very inexpensive and can be found at stores like Radio Shack, Circuit City, and even at some airport shops.

Since 1977, Adventures In Golf has customized golfing itineraries for thousands of parties, large and small, with each program carefully designed to maximize the enjoyment of your dream trip – to Britain, Ireland, or other destinations.

Our key staff, with over 130 years of combined travel experience and offices in the United States, England, & Scotland, offer peerless service and in-depth knowledge of these historic countries and their golf courses. Additionally, we work closely with our hotel, transport, and golf partners to make certain you receive an exceptional vacationing experience. You state your objectives - we ensure they are met.

We are one of the few tour operators who can offer unparalleled access to St Andrews Old Course (as well as to many other famous courses, such as Ballybunion, Royal County Down, Old Head, and Royal Troon). To further enhance your St Andrews experience, a member of our Scottish staff will meet you at the Old Course with your personal caddy, and our local staff will be ready to assist you throughout your stay.

As your advisor, we will guide you through each stage of your trip. Determining the most appropriate accommodations, formulating the best transportation options and, best of all, securing tee times on the famous courses and hidden gems of your choice! As you might expect, we also assist you in the finer details, such as dinner reservations, sightseeing, fishing, shopping, and any other guidance you may need, making your experience that much more memorable.

This formula has produced an ever-increasing list of satisfied customers, as commendations in *Passport*, *Forbes*, *Sky*, and *Connoisseur Magazines* bear testimony. Additionally, as a Premier Q Club Travel Partner of *Andrew Harper Travel*, we extend our service to a still wider audience.

By the way ... when you call our office, you will be answered by one of our staff. For we believe, in this business, there is no substitute for the personal touch.

## **Adventures In Golf with offices in: Scotland, England, & USA**

**For further details write or call: Toll Free: 1-877-424-7320**  
**infousa@golfwithaig.com**  
**www.adventures-in-golf.com**

PRSR STD MAIL  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
MANCHESTER NH  
PERMIT #197

ADVENTURES IN GOLF

22 Greeley Street  
7 Medallion Center  
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054

