

NEWS ROUND-UP

PEOPLE, PRODUCTS AND DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

'Why is it that all the news that comes out of Northern Ireland is bad?'

This was the question put to golf writing colleagues over dinner in the magnificent club house at Royal Portrush.

'Because that is what the English want to read', was the reply.

Unfortunately the answer was not far from the truth, but one cannot do more than express sorrow that so much of the better facets of life in the province does not receive the publicity it should and that certainly goes for golf.

The reception and hospitality enjoyed over a long weekend at Royal Portrush and the nearby Portstewart Golf Clubs could not be faulted and although we were in somewhat of a privileged position, playing a team match between the golfing scribes of Yorkshire and our counterparts from the Belfast press the reaction of others from the mainland to the golfing delights of County Antrim confirmed similar feelings.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board have what must be one of the hardest jobs in the world to convince people that Ireland is the place to go for a golfing holiday. What must be even more frustrating, is the fact, they have a product that is quite superb.

Royal Portrush, regarded as one of the top courses in the British Isles hosted the Open Championship in 1951. It is the only course in Ireland to have done so and fittingly, was won by Max Faulkner. If ever a links was worthy of staging the event again, it must be here, but sadly,

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Northern Ireland – A Golfing Paradise



The pictures of Royal Portrush Golf Club (front cover and this page) have been provided by courtesy of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

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the ugly side of politics must forbid any such consideration in most of our lifetimes.

Laid out by Harry Colt in its present form it was described by Bernard Darwin a golf writer who stands tall even in the company of men such as Henry Longhurst, 'as a monument to Mr. H. S. Colt, more enduring than brass'.

Every hole is a challenge, even those that seem reachable with no more than a good drive and a pitching wedge to the putting surface. The famous 5th-hole is a case in point. It was here the ravages of the Atlantic Ocean undermined the cliff face and the green almost fell into the sea. Members and golf lovers the world over rallied round and raised sufficient money to build a retaining wall to hold the green in place.

The Dunluce Course, better known of the two at Portrush (the other is the Valley) is the favourite of Fred Daly, the only other Open Champion from Ireland. He was born at Portrush and though now in his seventies is still a far better than average player.

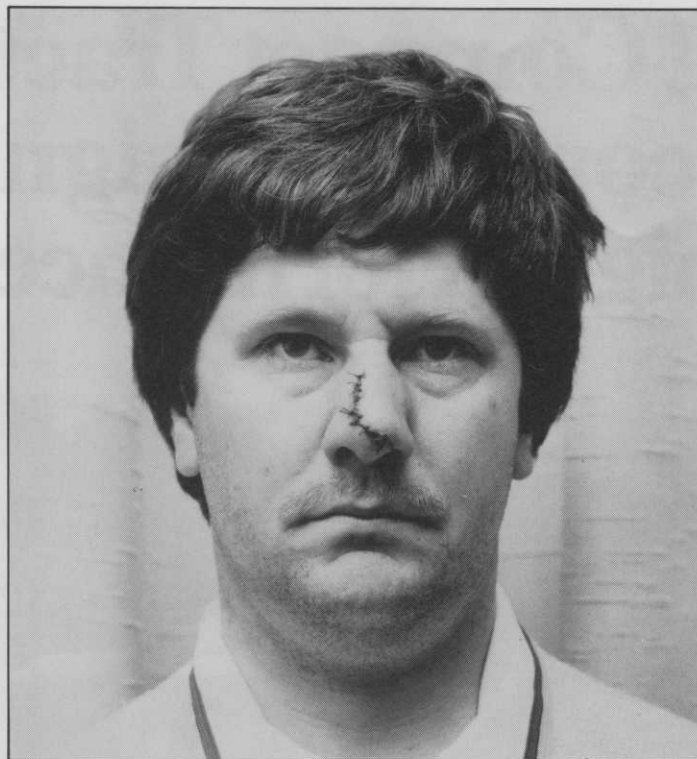
The Causeway coast is also renowned for one of Ireland's best known exports - Black Bush. For those who have not imbibed a 'drop of the Irish' they have a treat in store.

The distillery at Blackbush dates back to the beginning of the 17th century when a licence 'to distil whiskey' was granted by James I. It is now exported to 106 countries around the globe.

Each year in June, Black Bush sponsor the Causeway Coast Amateur Golf Tournament, played over the links at Royal Portrush, Portstewart and Castlerock. Entries come from all over the world and this year there were golfers from Canada, the USA, Australia and Zimbabwe as well as strong contingents from the UK.

The weather was not especially kind for the tournament, but to quote a phrase 'the price was right' and there was always the whiskey to provide the internal warmth.

NEWS 1



(above)
Eric Green needed 17 stitches in his nose when a plastic coupling broke off the control valve.

(below)
Eric shows the broken valve.



One of the leading members, Bill Hawthorn of Watermation Ltd. has commented.

The horrific accident to Eric Green, Head Greenkeeper at Woodcote Park Golf Club resulting in facial injury occurred because of a failure of the plastic nipple underneath the manual hydrant. Failures of this nature are not uncommon if this method of installation is used. For this reason many years ago Watermation devised a different method of mounting valve assemblies at the greens having the hydrant supported on a metal nipple attached to a robust metal tee, in order to withstand the mechanical loads which inevitably are placed upon the hydrant when hoses are attached.

Toro, whose General Manager Peter Roberts is Chairman of the Association, has recently published a guide entitled 'The Thinking Man's Guide to Golf Course Watering', a publication that all golf green committees should read before asking companies to submit tenders for irrigation systems.

Naturally this booklet is biased towards the Toro product as any sales literature should be in a competitive market.

Other systems, such as that marketed by Watermation, could suit a club equally as well. The club must seek tenders for the product that best fits their need within a price bracket they can afford.

What they must not do is to take the lowest price, without ensuring the system fully meets safety standards and their staff are not put in a position of danger.

We are publishing the photographs of Eric Green's injuries, not from a sense of tabloid press sensationalism, but simply to bring home to Greenkeepers and those involved in Golf Club Management, the need to be ultra careful when dealing with water under extreme pressure.

NEWS 2

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