

The diary of a golf course constructor

MAY started full of expectations for what could turn out to be a deep involvement in European golf by our company. Three major projects were well under way. The new 18-hole golf course at Redditch, Worcestershire required final dressings and overseeding to repair the ravages of winter; at Radley College, Berkshire, a new nine-hole course had settled down and survived the winter and the extension to Alresford Golf Club, Hampshire caused by a proposed new by-pass necessitating the construction of five new greens and 12 tees, was under control although stones seemed to be multiplying by the day!

I have already made two trips to Tenerife, where negotiations are advanced for the construction of the first new course on the island in 60 years. This is a very exciting project, situated in the southern part of the island, for many years considered too barren for development. However, with the advent of deep wells (water mines), vast quantities of fresh water have become available and the area is now being developed extensively.

Tuesday May 8

After a flight to Lisbon with Cameron Sinclair of Cotton, Pennink, Steel and Partners, who has designed two courses with a villa development in a project managed by Miller Buckley Golf Services, there are two days of

By Brian D. Pierson



On-site in Portugal, Cameron Sinclair, Keith Barker, Chris Powlez and Brian Pierson.

walking and talking with a view to preparing cost parameters for a possible construction contract.

Sunday May 13

A long day spent in London with Spanish land-owners is used to discuss the finer points of the Tenerife development.

Tuesday May 15

Arrived in Tenerife with Vic Davies, financial controller of the Wessex Syndicate with whom we are involved in the financial structuring of the 200 villas that will accompany the golf course. A week of intense activity and discussion with the land-owners and builders, includes some site exploration—constructing a golf course within the crater of an extinct volcano is a little different to the rolling hills of England! The area can best be described as a 500-acre Wembley Stadium with wall-to-wall lava. A fairly awesome task, but one our local contractor informs us is 'no problem.' In fact, that seems to be the answer to all questions!

Wednesday May 23

Everything is running smoothly—what a joy to have an efficient back-up in the office. There are discussions regarding the Lisbon contract. The other courses are progressing well and, following confirmation from the client, it's off to Letham Grange in Forfar on June 4 with one of our construction foremen to commence work on the new 18-hole golf course in the grounds of the magnificent Letham Grange.

Tuesday June 5

On to Porthleven Cornwall, where we are involved in negotiations for the construction of a new 18-hole golf course with a possible industrial or housing development.

Friday June 8

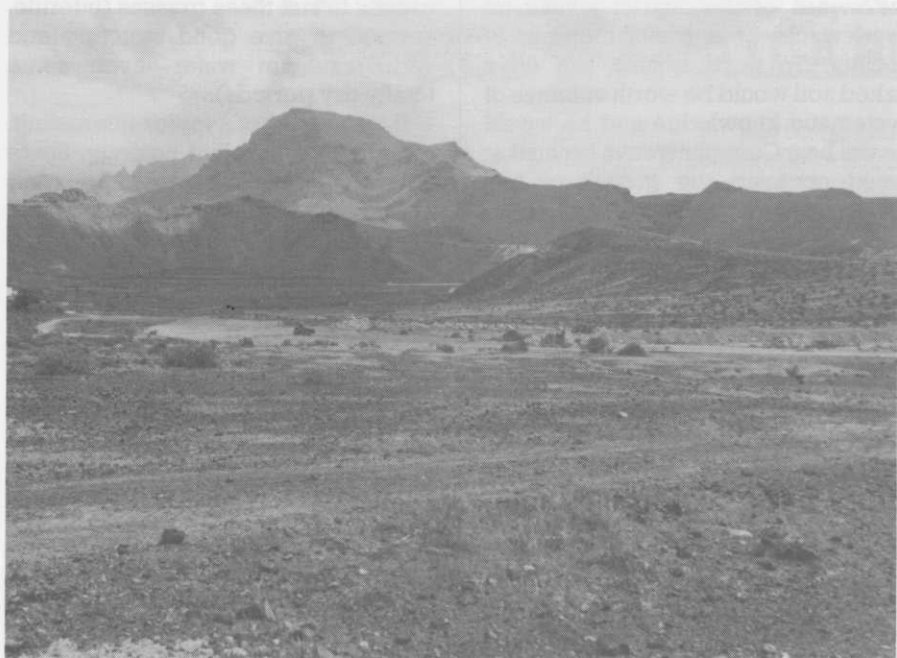
On to Dawlish in Devon with some golfing colleagues for two days' break from it all playing (or, in my case, hacking round) Dawlish Warren, which is a most enjoyable course.

Tuesday June 12

Site meetings at Alresford and Radley—all progressing, but we need rain!

Friday June 15

Off again, this time to Malaga. It is interesting to speculate how many more courses will be required around the Costa del Sol. In spite of



This Tenerife terrain is soon to give way to a new golf course.

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Chairman's Report

After EIGGA's successful participation in *Golf Course '84*, the board of management has decided to hold EIGGA's own conference in 1985.

The venue will be the University of Warwick and the dates March 22-24 inclusive. We hope that this venue will encourage members from all over the country to attend. For further details, please contact the general administrator.

The board has also been working on ways to improve standards of education throughout greenkeeping and a meeting has been arranged with the principals of several major colleges to discuss ways in which we can liaise towards this end.

The North West branch has been involved in extensive talks on education and credit must go to the branch committee for achieving this.

Still on the subject of education, details of colleges offering both day and block release courses can be obtained from the general administrator.

Head greenkeepers should make sure youngsters in their charge attend these courses and make the case to their committees, for only by education can we achieve the professional image we seek.

In conclusion, I should like to

extend congratulations on behalf of EIGGA to Walter Woods and his staff for the superb condition and presentation of St Andrews for this year's Open. Proof to all that traditional methods in the hands of a true professional like Walter produce results second to none.

Any member living in an area without a branch and wishing to participate in the formation of one can, by contacting us, be put in touch with other members in his area. August saw the reformation of the Berks, Bucks and Oxon branch—enquiries to Derek Smith on Reading (0734) 470815.

Peter Wisbey.

Surrey

The McMillan Tankard was played for recently, courtesy of Sunningdale over the club's famous Old Course—a privilege that was much appreciated by a not surprisingly large turn out.

After an excellent day's golf over a truly magnificent course, the McMillan Tankard was presented to David Jones of Leatherhead GC by Jack McMillan.

Our thanks go to the Sunningdale secretary Mr Almond for his help in arranging this fixture and to the artisan section for the use of its clubhouse and bar facilities.

A series of winter lectures is being drawn up and members will be notified of dates and venues as soon as possible.

Kenny MacNiven.

Not Forgetting The Falklands

One of the latest recruits to EIGGA is Sir Rex Hunt, civil commissioner of the Falkland Islands. A letter from Government House, Stanley to EIGGA general administrator Danielle Jones was accompanied by a £15 cheque for a subscription.

Sir Rex wrote: 'Many thanks for the copy of *Greenkeeper*. I should point out that I scarcely qualify for membership as our golf course here is as the Scots first planned it. We have no proper tees, no proper fairways and no proper greens. My greenkeepers are the sheep, the bunkers are 105mm shell holes and other hazards include barbed wire and old Argentine dug-outs.

'Nevertheless, we live in hope. We have recently acquired a Portakabin for use as a clubhouse, the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Golf Club (with whom we are twinned) has kindly donated some handsome flags and flag poles and, with the help of a roller borrowed from the Royal Engineers and a couple of lawnmowers from Government House, I hope that we shall gradually improve our greens.

'We have plenty of peat mould to put on them and stacks of manure from the sheep. We even have a friendly golf consultant, who is interested in coming here from England and advising us on how to plan the course.'

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certain bad Press in recent months, it would appear that the courses are getting their act together and nothing seems to inhibit the plans for further projects.

Friday June 22

Return to Bournemouth Airport, which is only a 20 minute drive to the office. This year certainly appears to be one of great change and possible expansion for the company and general interest in leisure activities can only be good for the industry as a whole.

Fellow members of the British Association of Golf Course Constructors report a marginal upturn in activities nationally, although it must be regretted that many contracts are still being let to 'muck shifters' and other less-experienced contractors.

You can only hope that the clients do not inherit too many problems, although past experience favours the use of companies with both a good reputation and the expertise to carry out work to the highest standard.

The weather, although a little too dry for the establishment of seed, is

proving ideal on most construction sites but, no doubt, we will receive our fair share of wet weather as the year progresses!

The company has diversified even further over the past two years and is now fully involved in the maintenance of bowling greens, cricket squares and fine turf areas.

We have recently purchased a Verti-Drain, the first machine with the capability to achieve the penetration and compaction easement we have all known has been required, but which has, until now, been almost impossible to achieve. We are offering this out on hire to golf courses and have been very pleased with the response.