The old saw about not picking up a 'lost' ball until it has stopped rolling is one that has an ironic ring of... at this Club forbids members buying balls from any casual on course sources, no matter how cheap they may be.

Ball theft is the thin edge, though the demons that manifest themselves in the nightmares of most... in ruining several at once, on occasions culminating in rolling and burning the stolen car on the green.

Cars are not the only cause of wheeled damage however, for many courses with large open areas away from the clubhouse or maintenance shed, that bunkers and adjacent contoured areas make ideal tracks for performing 'wheelies'. Control of these antics, often performed in daylight, are not easy, for the riders can be exceedingly swift when confronted by authority – though one good ruse used to superb effect was the thrusting of an umbrella between spokes, the resulting damage seen as a very real deterrent.

Less traumatic though equally frustrating is the stealing of pins and yardage markers, these often lobbed into deep rough. The obvious answer on all high risk sites is to remove pins at end of play and to install permanently fixed markers (heavy timber or stone are best), embedding them deeply into the ground with cement.

Vandalism is not totally restricted to hooligans, for on many common land courses Joe Public is not above... I well remember on one occasion accosting such a gathering, only to be told in no uncertain terms to b— off!

Few would deny that free roaming dogs are another problem, and it is hard to find suitable words of discouragement when the fangs of a Rotweiller or similar beast are slavering for action. Canine defecation on turf is unpleasant to say the least and urine can cause severe scorching. Additionally, a rampaging dog hell-bent on hunting rabbits or wildfowl can cause untold damage in short time. Incidentally, have you noticed how dog owners so often resemble their 'pets'?

If your trolley shed is open to the elements, this can be an invitation for malicious invasion which often takes the form of iron gates which will stop most intruders, who will be thwarted upon finding their way locked and barred at night.

Why do vandals especially target golf courses? Is it that they mistakenly perceive golfers as some kind of rich kids on the block: hurt the rich and you hurt society? I have a theory that vandalism stems from the attitudes of couldn't-care-less parents, giving vent to violence, anger and frustration from their children's unloved offspring. Theories apart, if you are victim to vandalism and all else fails, consider the course of action taken by one Club, that of vigilante patrols over the peak hours of 10pm to midnight. Even the most persistent vandal jibs at being caught and a posse on the war-path will often prove the ultimate deterrent.

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