The first ever Hayter Challenge Tournament Final takes place in September at Sand Moor, a venue brimming with history and a course which is a real delight, reports DAVID WHITE

There surely cannot be a greenkeeper who will not have heard of, or indeed who will not in some way hold in awe, the name of Doctor Alister Mackenzie, that cleverest of golf course architects and acknowledged master of the ingenious green contour and enticing sculptured bunker. Who though, outside of a handful of the keenest golfing historians, will register so much as a scrap of recognition for the Leeds clothier, Henry Barran? I can almost hear my readers' mind cranking into overtime, wondering what possible bearing this line of introduction can have on the Hayter Challenge Tournament Final.

Yet at Sand Moor Golf Club on the outskirts of Leeds, those players who have fought the good fight to qualify for the first ever Hayter Challenge will be privileged to witness one of perhaps the finest marriages of minds, though they will sample a mere 'taster' on the first hole and then be held in suspense until the par four 358 yard fifth before again walking the hallowed and relatively unaltered ground upon which Mackenzie and Barran enacted their joint masterpiece.

Local legend has it that Henry Barran made his fortune in the clothing trade, as a result becoming a landowner of magnitude, many a cres of which overlooked picturesque Wharfedale. He also boasted a wife who was the archetypal lady golfer of the day, keen to play all the hours that God created but without a patch to call her very own - enter Barran, the golf course developer.

Owning the blessed land upon which Sand Moor is now located, Barran decided that a golf course of considerable magnificence should be constructed, one that would complement the remarkable views toward the adjacent Eccup Reservoir. One may surmise that Barran's contribution was both fiscal and practical (it is written that he 'laid out' the course), and imagine that he also demanded the best that money could buy. Above all, it is suggested that he decreed the club would take ladies into the fold and that they would enjoy equal rights with gentlemen players - this at a time when many ladies were struggling merely to be allowed through the clubhouse door. Was this, one wonders, an early case of a captain of industry falling under petticoat rule? Perhaps it is better we do not know.

Sadly, any records that may have existed in the early twenties concerning those commissioned to undertake the actual landscaping and shaping work, the Brian Pierson's of the day so to speak, do not exist. What is worse, there is nary a mention of Dr Mackenzie's input into Sand Moor's design brilliance in any of my cluster of books on famous architects and their golf courses. It matters not, for one has only to walk any of the fourteen original holes remaining to see Mackenzie writ large, as clearly individual as, say, the buildings of Inigo Jones or the paintings of Pablo Picasso.

The Sand Moor course is different from its near neighbours, all almost within a good brassie shot of each other - Alwoodley, Moor-town, Moor Allerton - in that the sub-soil consists of sand and sandstone. Hence its name! It is nurtured (not too strong a word) by head greenkeeper Bobby Barnes, as dedicated a man as ever I met and one who has been in charge of Sand Moor for approaching thirty years, knowledgeable to the extent that in listening to him one senses he knows every single blade on Sand Moor's 110 acres, rather like a shepherd knows his sheep.

Bobby was around in the sixties when the original course was split in two by Alwoodley Lane, with the clubhouse and the first two and last holes on one side of the lane and the remaining fourteen on the other. The committee of the day decided that changes were called for and additional land was acquired to bring all eighteen holes onto the north side of...
the lane. To all but the fiercely Mackenzie devotee those new holes, now with number jockeying known as the second, third, fourth and thirteenth, are very good indeed, but I am sure the members of Sand Moor will forgive me if I dare to suggest that they lack that cer-
tain something which only Mackenzie could have fashioned, though we all appreciate that whirling twist of Time's winged chariot the mould was broken.

By way of recompense, if my criticism of the new appears harsh, praise must in like fashion go to Bobby Barnes for his interpretation and introduction of several 'Mackenzie style' con-
ceps, with my applause in particular reserved for his clever work on and around the thir-
teenth green! On that score, I am a pass-over when I met folk who share my passion for classic golf architecture - I didn't need Bobby to wax lyrical over his golf course, for having done my homework in the library I was sold on Sand Moor before we met. That stated, I enjoyed and was held spell-bound by the man, once begun never daring to cut him short. The thought crossed my mind several times, I'm in the presence of a true believer, a worshipper at the Mackenzie Temple and a greater admirer of the man's work than me - and it shows!

Bobby Barnes is a dyed-in-the-wool country-
man, by his own admission one who might just as happily have been a gamekeeper, certainly one who is never more content than when at work on the golf course or at play on the York-
shire moors, invariably accompanied by the beloved gun dogs he breeds for game shooting work. Conversely, had the timing been differ-
ent he would have likely starved for all the lack of cash he'd have likely starved for all the lack of cash - and Iain Pyman became the lowest scoring amateur player ever in the whole history of The Open... and one may hope that a smidgen of Iain's talent may magi-
cally rub off onto the Hayter Champion, Sand
Moor being a magical sort of place!

Bobby Barnes is no newcomer to preparing
the big event, for Sand Moor has played host
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Car Care International there in 1983, edging
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Seve, Sandy and Bernhard in their wake.

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