Open All Hours

From all accounts the Open Championship at Sandwich was a huge success and the organisers were most pleased. As the tournament finished on Sunday evening some of the competitors made their way to Scotland for the Senior British Open being played over my home course at Turnberry.

The weather and conditions (and I am also proud to say the Golf Course) were as good as it gets. We had good crowds following their lifelong idols, although in their senior years the standard of play was outstanding, none more so than the eventual winner, Tom Watson, who triumphed in dramatic style, as he did when winning the Open Championship here in 1977. I was most proud of our Greenkeeping team, as it was a tough week for the lads with the qualifying rounds played over my home course at Turnberry. To get two golf courses to Championship standards in the same week is no mean task especially with early tee-off times from 6.40am on the Ailsa and a two-tee start from 7.30am on the Kintyre, both on the same day! Our thanks go to our two friends, Course Managers, Jim Paton, West Kilbride, and Derek Wilson, at Irvine Bospide, who ably supported Martin and Jimmy at 4.30am, an early start for our lads especially as they had to come back again in the evenings for a repeat performance.

Throughout modern championships one is expected to produce fast putting surfaces, the professionals and organisers are looking for green speeds of around 10 – 11 on the stimp meter. This may be ok and will not do any harm providing it is only for a limited short spell. Close mowing does discourage the coarser, undesirable grasses, but one needs to keep a very close eye on the greens, and know exactly how long it is before signs of stress start to show then heights of cut will have to be raised. Otherwise it is not only the greens that will have their necks cut, it will be the greenkeeper as well!

It does put the pressure on when ones courses and workmanship are shown throughout the world on TV, especially at this time of year when various forms of fungi in the soil can become active and form unsightly disfigurement to the putting surfaces. It is all so easy to reach for the chemical bottle, but most of the fungal activity will only be temporary and not cause long term damage, so chemical treatment is not normally necessary. During this unusually long hot spell it has also brought other pests, we are inundated with flying-ants and wasps that seem to be more troublesome than ever this year. At least the holidaymakers are enjoying this long hot dry spell, as are the local farmers who have already harvested their spring barley and winter wheat much earlier than normal.

Unfortunately I attended another funeral this month, this time it was the sad loss of Bob Jamieson, who was the former Golf Professional at Turnberry for more than 30 years. Bob was well respected in the world of golf and well known for training many assistants who now hold some of the top jobs in the world. Bob’s two sons are also in the golf business, Gregor followed his father’s profession and is the Pro at Lake Nona, Florida and his younger son, Bruce, who is a good friend and of course well known throughout Europe as a Golf Course Advisor. My deepest sympathies and respects go out to Bob’s family.

George Brown
Chairman