



Coming Up Trumps

On a wet and windy day our Scottish Chairman, John Geddes, arranged a walkabout around the Donald Trump development/golf resort on the Menie Estate on the outskirts of Aberdeen prior to work starting. There were 19 Course Managers, Head Greenkeepers and a good mix of members from the North East of Scotland.

On arrival we were met by Project Manager, Neil Hobday. He started by briefing the group on this “very special piece of real estate” (his words). The ground work and planning that has already gone into the project and some of the ups and downs they had encountered. He also talked about the enthusiasm Mr Trump himself has had for the project since day one.

Having donned waterproofs and woolly hats, Neil, took us for a tour of the course which lasted for two and a half hours. We started off walking past the site of the new clubhouse and on towards the 1st tee.

Neil pointed into the distance to where the 1st green will be situated and said, “Can you see what I mean about this very special piece of real estate?”

He didn’t have to say any more, at that point we could all see the layout of the 1st hole. Stunning. Construction work on this hole will comprise of a selection of tees, a green and an area of fairway, the rest will be natural links, as most of the course will be.

We then walked out to the 5th hole, the far end of the front nine, then back to the clubhouse, pointing out to our left where the second 18 hole course will be constructed, then out again up the dog leg left 10th. The site for the 10th green will be enclosed by natural links dunes. From there we set off across the area of shifting sand dunes,

where work has already started. This work involves the planting of marram grass to help stabilise the sands around the 13th hole.

Moving to the 14th tee Neil said he was relaxed and comfortable with what he was doing. He also mentioned that it was nice to show a group of greenkeepers around, rather than politicians and journalists. He felt that we understood what he was trying to get across. Again all he said was, “Gentlemen. The 14th Hole”. Facing north with the North Sea to our right over the sand dunes looking down the 14th fairway.

If you ever hit a golf ball in your life, this is the place you dream about. Neil told us that this was his and Mr Trump’s favourite hole and you can certainly see why.

We all returned to McDonald Golf Club for a welcome plate of soup and sandwiches. I think that we now believe that Mr Trump and his team will build one of the World’s Greatest Links golf courses on the North East coast of Scotland.

The visit to the Menie Golf Estate was sponsored by Kenny Liddle, from Bayer.

From Ben Brookes on behalf of John Geddes and Brian Hunter

