



## Carnoustie Legend Bows Out in Style

As John Philp retires from Carnoustie he leaves a great legacy, writes Gordon Moir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust

**John began his career at his home town club of Pitreavie in Dunfermline and after a spell there learning his trade, he moved to Newmarket GC as Head Greenkeeper/Professional, for a number of years before coming back to Scotland as Deputy Links Supervisor at St Andrews in 1979.**

Many people perhaps don't realise that John was quite a proficient golfer in his day.

In 1985 he moved to Carnoustie Golf Links, which was in extremely poor condition at the time, as Links Supervisor. It had hosted the Open in 1975 but because of the condition and other factors it had dropped off the rota. John, with the support of Jock Calder,

Chairman of Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee, turned the Championship course around into the condition it is today, where arguably it is recognised to have set the benchmark for Open Championship venues in 1999 and 2007.

Under his tenure, Carnoustie has also staged the 1991 and 2001 Scottish Ladies' Close Amateur Championships, the 1992 Amateur Championships, the 1995 and 1996 Scottish Opens, the 1997 and 2008 Scottish Amateur, the 2002 British Boys Championship, no less than eleven Dunhill Links tournaments and this year, in his final week, the British Ladies Amateur Championship.

His outstanding work on restoring the Championship course is well documented but what must also be remembered is that he played a similar role in improving both the Burnside and Buddon courses. While not involved in the construction of the Buddon Course, which was built in 1979, he has since rebuilt 16 of the 18 greens.

He has been a regular speaker at various greenkeeper seminars and conferences over the years both in the UK and abroad and has also assisted Elmwood College where he has given presentations and field studies on grass species and identification.

In his time at Carnoustie he has also trained and inspired a number of staff who have gone

onto become Course Managers at some of the most prestigious courses in the UK and Ireland. Alan Strachan at Walton Heath and Gary Johnstone at Portmarnock are two that come to mind.

His training has also been recognised by Carnoustie as they have promoted the Championship Links head greenkeeper Sandy Reid to succeed him and Craig Boath has also ascended to Sandy's previous role.

He has also always been willing to discuss many matters with Course Managers and greenkeepers at all nearby clubs. Many a time I have turned up at Carnoustie on a Sunday morning in winter to drop my sons off at their football and wandered down to the course where I would find John busy on the course. I would always end up missing the first goal after getting into some technical discussion or other!

In 2000, his services to greenkeeping were recognised when he was awarded the MBE, an honour he received from the Queen.

### Hole in honour

Earlier this year when it was announced John Philp was retiring, Carnoustie Golf Links Management Committee agreed to name the 11th hole on the Championship course after him, this is an extraordinary honour to bestow on an extraordinary greenkeeper and will be the subject of a full report in the next issue.

## PLAYER SALUTES LA MANGA ON 40TH ANNIVERSARY



South African legend Gary Player has delivered his own personal message of congratulations to La Manga Club as part of the Spanish resort's 40th anniversary celebrations.

The 76-year-old was La Manga Club's first director of golf when it opened in 1972 and played a key role in helping the resort establish itself during its early years.

La Manga Club hosted the Spanish Open five years in a row from 1973-77 and has gone on to become one of Europe's leading sports and leisure destinations.

Player said: "This is a very happy moment for me having been the director of golf at La Manga Club, a very beautiful place, a great resort with some wonderful courses and people.

