

Sports Turf Manager

for safe, natural sports turf

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CELEBRATING
★ 20 YEARS ★

Winter 2007

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Seasons Greetings

The Sports Turf Association wishes you a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to serving you in 2008!

Merry Christmas



St Andrews Comes to OTS 2008!

HEAD GREENKEEPER GORDON MCKIE IS THIS YEAR'S KEYNOTE SPEAKER IN GUELPH

St Andrews Links is the *Home of Golf*, where the game evolved and where the spirit and traditions of golf have been safeguarded for over six centuries. Keynote speaker at the 2008 Ontario Turfgrass Symposium is Gordon McKie, Head Greenkeeper at the world famous Old Course.

Gordon, previously Head Greenkeeper at the New Course, took up one of the most prestigious roles in golf this year. "It is a privilege to work on the most famous course in the world," he said. "The history and tradition surrounding the Old Course makes it unique and it is continually under the glare of the international media spotlight. I am very much looking forward to maintaining the exceptionally high standard of the course and ensuring it continues to set the benchmark for links courses around the world."

One of the extraordinary facts about the Old Course is that it was not designed by an

architect but has evolved over six centuries. Even more remarkable is the fact that while the equipment and the standards of play have improved dramatically, the Old Course remains a true test of championship golf. The Old Course starts and finishes in the town. Originally it was played over 22 holes using the same 11 holes on the way out and in. In 1764 this was reduced to 18, which became the standard number of holes for courses worldwide. It was originally played the opposite way round with golfers teeing off to what is now the 17th green. This explains why so many of the bunkers, for example on the 12th, are not visible from the tee. ➔ **page 7**



Cover Story Continued...

During the 1860s, players alternated between left and right-hand circuits on a weekly basis. Gradually the right-hand circuit (anti-clockwise) became more popular although the clockwise route was still used occasionally until the 1970s. Since 2002, the Old Course has been opened for play in reverse for a few days in April. The physical features of the Old Course include 112 bunkers, some of which are particularly famous, e.g. Hell on the long 14th, Shell on the 7th and Strath on the short 11th. The double greens are another special feature where a golfer can face a putt of up to 100 yards.

David Anderson, known as Old Daw, keeper of the links until 1855, created a second hole on the massive 5th and 13th green to avoid confusion between outgoing and incoming golfers. Now the only single greens are the 1st, 9th, 17th and 18th. The individual who played the most significant role in shaping the course was four times Open Champion Tom Morris, appointed by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club as Custodian of the Links for nearly 40 years (1865–1903). With the help of his assistant David Honeyman, he widened the fairways and the greens, and added sand to encourage the fine links grasses such as fescue and bent. He also built the 1st and 18th greens as they are today.

Today the course is still managed according to the tradition of Old Tom with indigenous grasses encouraged, plenty of sand and minimal use of pesticides and fertilizer.

The session *Maintaining the Links at St Andrews – Past and Present* is scheduled for February 19, opening day of the OTS. Visit the symposium website www.open.uoguelph.ca/OTS for all the details.

— *St Andrews info from*
www.standrews.org.uk

FACTS ABOUT ST ANDREWS LINKS

FIND OUT MORE AT OTS 2008 WITH KEYNOTE GORDON MCKIE

“One day I’ll be able to tell my kids and my grandchildren about what happened to me at the Old Course. Without a doubt, I like it best of all the Open venues. It’s my favourite course in the world. To win at St Andrews is the ultimate.” — *Tiger Woods*

Links Trivia

- St Andrews Links is the largest public golf venue in the world.
- St Andrews Links Trust manages the courses and all the facilities.
- All six golf courses at St Andrews Links are public – open to all golfers.
- There are five 18 hole courses and one nine hole course, giving 99 holes in all.
- All five 18 hole courses can be booked in advance.
- Over 200,000 rounds are played in total on the six courses – 60% local; 40% visitor.
- Around 42,000 rounds a year are played on the Old Course.

“If I had ever been sat down and told I was to play there and nowhere else for the rest of my life, I should have chosen the Old Course at St Andrews.”

— *Bobby Jones*

- The floodlit practice centre has 12 covered bays, 36 open bays, a short game area specially designed for links golf with greenside and fairway bunkers, three practice greens and a putting green. It was extended and upgraded in winter 2005/06.
- It employs around 250 people in the high season.
- There are five teams of greenkeepers – one team for each 18 hole course.
- The turf nurseries cover around 46 acres.
- A state-of-the-art £2.5m irrigation system began operating in 2001.
- There are two clubhouses which are open to the public.
- The Trust is developing a seventh course to meet rising demand.
- The Trust is a charitable organization so all surpluses are reinvested into the Links.

Facts about St Andrews Links Trust

The Links Trust was set up in 1974 by an Act of Parliament to manage and preserve the Links as a public park. → **page 8**

The Trustees designated the Links for playing golf. Previously, the land was owned by St Andrews Town Council and the courses run by a committee made up of members nominated by the Council and the Royal & Ancient Golf Club. Following local government reorganization, St Andrews Town Council was disbanded and the Trust was created by a special Act of Parliament to ensure continuity in running the courses. The Town Council was replaced by North-East Fife District Council in 1975 which, around 20 years later, was replaced by Fife Council, based in Glenrothes.

“This is the origin of the game. Golf in its purest form, and it’s still played that way on a course seemingly untouched by time.” — *Arnold Palmer*

The Links Trust is a self-financing charitable trust with two accountable bodies – the Trustees and the Links Management Committee (LMC). Each group is made up of eight volunteers nominated by Fife Council and the R&A. The local member of Parliament is automatically a trustee and another member is nominated by the Secretary of State for Scotland. The role of the Trustees is to set policy, manage new developments and ensure that the Links are run according to the Act of Parliament. The LMC is responsible to the Trustees for running the golf courses and facilities.



“I wish that every man who plays golf could play St Andrews once.” — *Gene Sarazen*

“If a golfer is going to be remembered, he must win the title at St Andrews. At last, it is my greatest dream come true.” — *Jack Nicklaus*

“Victory anywhere is always sweet, but to win at St Andrews is so special it rises above everything else.” — *Seve Ballesteros*

“It will always be the greatest because nowhere else is there the turf that you have here.” — *Peter Thomson*

“If I could play one course for the rest of my life it would be St Andrews. Every day it’s a different course, depending on the conditions. You never have the same shot twice.” — *Stewart Cink*

“The way the wind changes, it’s a different course every time. I think 17 is a great hard hole, but 18 is one of the best holes I’ve ever seen. You just can’t do anything wrong on 18; you’ve got to birdie it every time. Only you can’t.” — *Pete Dye*

“Some people love St Andrews as a monument. I love it as a golf course. With man-made courses, someone designed the best way to play a hole. At St Andrews you figure that out yourself.” — *Tom Doak*