



Jack Nicklaus - designer of the St Mellion Course financed by the Bond Brothers

Go home, Yanks

We love you but can't afford you says Fred Hawtree

One minute we are pleased they are coming - the next, we are telling them to go home. We have got to sort out our relationship if the children are not to grow up deprived, violent and queer. What better Marriage Guidance Counsellor than your old and wicked Uncle Fred, recently returned from exile in Siberia. "Nobody better", you say? Thank you! Let's get to work.

The first signs of the foreign invasion appeared back in the Sixties. Your older but not so wicked Uncle Robert (Trent Jones) attended the Canada Cup in Paris and took Henry Longhurst out to dinner at Maxim's. This was a sound move. Henry's articles on the back page of the Sunday Times were prescribed reading at breakfast or as he said, immediately afterwards. Never at a loss for a word, he was occasionally at a loss for a subject. This one gave him useful material though he was more impressed by the aplomb of his host who, when presented with

the bill, neither blanched, fainted nor asked if they needed any help with the washing up.

Subsequent articles mentioned the Trent Jones staff of forty in his New York office and made us Brits feel deprived. In those days, if we picked up a nice little par 3 job, we were set up for life.

I have never met the great man and still more regrettably, have never dined at Maxim's at his expense. But at least I once managed to touch the hem of his garment. When the committee of the Golf de Bonadues near Lille wanted to build a new golf course, they decided to have 9 Holes British and 9 Holes American. The site was flat as a pancake. Even the land drains were laid dead level.

I spattered lakes all over the place à l'americaine and the contractors were of that rare breed who actually read the plans and produced what was drawn. This is what one expects of an outfit with a snappy name like "Nederlandseheidema-

atschappij". I saw the other 9 Holes described later as "Trent Jones in one of his milder moods". So the clients probably got what they wanted but the wrong way round.

A similar situation cropped up in Belgium this Spring when my son, Martin, shared 36 holes for the same reason with Bill Amick from Florida. (Bill, when off duty, advocates Modified Golf with the bramble-dot ball that only goes half as far.) The golf course architects were courteously asked if Amick would do a big American eighteen and if Martin would mind tackling the "club" course. Mind? He was delighted. Only Amick was put out. They both knew that the short course (though at 6,400 yards not all that short) would be the charmer, just like the Old Course at Sunningdale compared with the New.

Where was I? Of course, New York and Paris in the Sixties. Those were the palmy days. Not necessarily because there were new courses beginning to appear in Europe (though still ten times less than in the US) but because there were fewer golf course architects and they were in business on their own account. Things are different now. Here is a random selection of six recent US resort courses with their designers:

1984 Grand Cypress, Florida
7,024 yards. 72.

Jack Nicklaus and Bob Cupp.

1985 Horseshoe Bay
(Applerock) 6,990 yards.
72.

Robert Trent Jones and Roger Rulewich.

1981 Francis H I'i Brown G C
(!) Hawaii 6,813 yards.
72.

Ray Cain, Homer Flint and Robin Nelson

1981 Sungiver (North), Oregon
6,863 yards. 72.

Robert Trent Jones and Don Knott

1980 Kapalua (Village),
Hawaii 6,602 yards. 71.

Ed Seay and Arnold Palmer

1976/82 Kingsmill (River)
Williamsburg 6,776
yards. 71.

Peter Dye 1976. Brian Ault and Tom Clark 1982.

OPINION

It is a small sample but already suggests three trends. First, and most ominous, is the role of leading professionals in bringing in the business and staying in it as co-designer.

Second is the listing of the name of the collaborator who probably did all the serious work. This may have occurred because the full list was prepared by Ronald Whitten, co-author with Geoffrey Cornish of "The Golf Course", the only full account so far of the designers of the world's golf courses. He will have been meticulous in allocating the credits.

Bob Cupp, for example, has now stepped out of the shadow of collaboration and stands alone. Jim Wyllie who will be speaking at next April's Cambridge Conference (Queens' College, by the way, not Queen's and not Queens) told me yesterday that Cupp is enjoying a vogue in Ontario re-fashioning out-dated bunkering. He is also designing a new course in Sussex for a Canadian group and already has his own under-collaborator.

Third, many of the names on the list are new or at least unfamiliar. I have certainly heard of Don Knott who married Victoria, the daughter of another golf course architect, Robert Muir Graves. Graves still ploughs his own furrow solo in spite of a long list of courses in America and as far afield as Japan and Malaysia. He started life as a licensed landscape architect in California but gradually concentrated on golf. This is still the best route into golf course architecture though collaboration with an experienced firm is probably safer at the start. Peter Dye for instance, the neo-Impressionist in golf design, has ten young men attached to his office. The policy there is one man, one course, from crackle to champagne. Even Mrs Dye has blossomed into full consultanthood and specialises in design from the forward tees.

I have reservations about collaboration with a big-name pro. They tend to have bizarre ideas amongst the good ones picked up when away from the practice ground. Unless Ronald Whitten is around, they may also get a disproportionate share of the credit.

And the owner of the big name does not pin it on the gate for peanuts. He is cashing in on a valuable



Fred Hawtree

property built single-handed over many years. The customer will not be hornswoggled but had better get his sums right before agreeing to the unlimited budget which is likely to be requested and which, as the old joke insists, will be exceeded.

That milestone on top of the other one, the advisory fee, will grind the client pretty small unless he has recourse to building or resort development. Those possibilities

are scarce in these small islands and getting scarcer as the planners and conservationists close ranks. Even the general public who prefer their present outlook to what is being offered now tag along to the Public Enquiry and register their protests about disturbance, traffic, dust, water table and excessive use of land by an élite group.

I blame all this on the amount of expensive hot air necessary to blow up the balloon. Each development has to be grander, bigger and more star-spangled than the last. These requirements determine where the golf course will be built - not the suitability of the site itself. The qualities of the site are relatively unimportant because it is simply converted into a standard 72 par product exactly like all the others apart from a few local eccentricities likely to ensure that the maintenance bill will be astronomical for ever after. The greenkeeper ends up with the headache - trying to maintain a monster which should not have been there in the first place. We grumble about inflation going up from 4.5 per cent to 5.6 per cent. Where is it going in the golfing world? It is not going down, that is for sure. And it is not steady. So there is only one other way. And, present trends look set to push it higher still.

Now, before you put in for a rise, sharpen your pencils.

WHIZ KID'S QUIZ ON GOLFING FINANCE

- A. What will it cost to add a big name to your project?
Tick one box for each question
a) £50,000 b) £100,000 c) £350,000 d) £500,000
- B. A popular but not outstanding North American club has an 8-year waiting list. What is the entrance fee?
a) \$10,000 b) \$20,000 c) \$30,000 d) \$50,000
- C. You decide to play a round at Pebble Beach. What dollar bills should you offer?
a) \$20 b) \$50 c) \$100 d) \$500
- D. Which of the above is the best value?
A. B. C.

If you got three C's and a C go to the top of the class. If not, there is still hope if you continue reading THE GOLF COURSE.