

## FROM THE FAIRWAY

Dear Sir,

Steven Marnoch summed up my sentiments perfectly in his article in your February 1990 issue. I can appreciate the problems he has had in getting into a career in Golf Course Architecture. I have received equally demoralising replies to job applications too.

I am now studying for the same Education Programme Steven mentioned in his article and only now do I feel that I am making some progress. Although the course set up by the BAGCA is the best thing that could have happened for someone like Steven or myself, I cannot emphasise enough, how important an understanding of the construction side of the industry is. Fortunately, Golf Landscapes Ltd, are providing me with this excellent grounding.

A comprehensive understanding of construction techniques will inevitably give the Golf Course Architect a much wider knowledge and ultimately, with the BAGCA Education Programme, a much more professional approach.

With regard to this professional approach, I was surprised to read a comment in a letter from Graham Hurst of Glebe Consultants. He stated that, "If we wait for the day when all courses will have been designed by qualified architects, may we not be overtaken by events."

Is he suggesting there is suddenly an insatiable need for golf developments!

The demand has been growing rapidly from the 70's, and no matter how quickly these courses are designed and built there will always be the demand for more, due to a greater availability of the sport to the individual, due to increased leisure time, the televising of all major golfing events and Europe's success in the Ryder Cup. Surely the last thing the golfer wants is the rushed building of new courses. Rapid development of a golfing facility can lead to short cuts taken in the construction stages, such as poor materials supply and specification, or the installation of insufficient drainage systems, or poorly specified irrigation systems, which will cause inevitable problems in the future.

The modern golfer is not looking for a barren turfed green space to hit a ball around, he/she is looking for something of quality, which has been designed with him/her in mind. A course that challenges all levels of golfer, which is sympathetic to the aesthetic quality of the surrounding landscape, a course that can be maintained by experienced greenkeeping staff with ease, and that entices the golfer back again even as he/she walks off the 18th green. Golf courses which provide a facility of such high

standards must not be rushed, every course is unique and it can take between 18 months and two years from it's conception to the opening day.

I am concerned that due to the present shortfalls in facilities, developers may begin to accept lower standards as a result of their urgency to satisfy the demand for new courses. Whereas, the BAGCA by setting up the Education Programme, are promoting an awareness of a higher standard approach. This may take a little longer to establish, but will benefit many more golfers in the long term. I can only hope the developers take the latter choice.

**Jonathan C. Gaunt**  
**Golf Landscapes Ltd**

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read Steve Marnoch's article regarding golf course Architects.

I too, way back in the days of the Beatles and mini skirts had the desire to become involved in the design of golf courses.

From an office bound job I moved to the "great outdoors!" In pursuit of my passion for golf I managed to get a job on a golf course. This was mainly due to an understanding head greenkeeper who was willing to give me a chance. The following two years I learnt the basics in the art of good greenkeeping. This period was one of the happiest in my career. I have fondest memories of incidents that happened at this time of my impetuous youth: e.g. wrapping the 6th green around a Patissson spiker; looking back and seeing the head greenkeeper standing in the back of a stationary tipper trailer, as I merrily roared off along a bumpy track with my Fordson devoid of coupling and hydraulic pipes flailing. Or the time I left a perforated hose to water a green, only to find on my return, that the green had been re-modelled by several large humps and the rest of the surface resembling a water bed! While I had been away, a golfer who was determined to make his double bogey, had moved the hose. In doing so he had inadvertently aligned several holes in the hose with old solid tine holes which had the effect of injecting water under the turf. Of course with modern methods of green construction and maintenance it is unlikely that this would happen today!

Some years later, I too, like Steve Marnoch, wrote to BAGCA enquiring into golf course design.

At that time I was working as a Grounds Maintenance Officer with Berkshire County Council designing and supervising the construction of playing field and sports facilities.

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## FROM THE FAIRWAY

My grounding for this work included experience in architectural draughting, my two years at Banstead Downs Golf Club; four years at Art College studying environmental design and several years as landscape assistant in Berkshire County Architects Department.

For the last thirteen years I have devoted my working experience to improving the standards of playing surfaces for sport in Berkshire's schools. Together with a colleague have lead Berkshire into the 21st century with artificial grass pitches on school sites. By the year 2000 these pitches will be some of the oldest in the country!

It was in May last year that the opportunity arose for myself and colleague to effect a management buyout with Berkshire County Council. We have set up a partnership Fountain and Shatford specialising in sports and recreational landscape design and consultancy service in both natural and artificial surfaces.

My partner (who incidentally was an advisor with STRI) and I, feel we make a worthwhile contribution in the advancement of sports surfaces especially in the area of synthetics. Synthetic surfaces in golf are usually confined to tee areas but with the ever increasing sophistication of these products a synthetic green could be on the horizon. Ughh! I hear you purists say but how about temporary winter greens? We are members of Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management a worthy forward thinking body, who are dedicated to promoting a modern sport technology and high standard leisure provision.

I do sincerely hope that BAGCA in its attempt to safeguard the design standards of golf courses does not fall into the same trap as a few elitist institutes who in their relentless pursuit of professionalism prelude the often wealth of talent that can be found but is excluded by academical insistence.

Good luck to the S.M. and the BAGCA course organisers. At least future designers and architects alike will be teeing off in the right direction. FORE!

**Mike Fountain**

**Fountain & Shatford**

Dear Sir,

It is most gratifying to read that the PGA European Tour is to introduce 'a two stroke penalty' rule as the ultimate deterrent against 'slow play'. This will surely encourage their members to have due respect for a reasonable pace of play.

Last season an experimental scheme to encourage an acceptable pace of play was introduced by the Committee of the Vauxhall Club Team Classic. The scheme met with widespread approval among the hundreds of players and club officials who were involved. This special rule was based in the establishment of a reasonable time for play and subject to consistent refereeing, carried the potential for a penalty of 'two strokes'. It worked.

On behalf of Vauxhall Motors, I shall be pleased to send copies of the rules and guidelines that were introduced last season, to anyone who is interested.

It is only necessary to call my office on 03727 28816 (Clarion Sports Management) and I will respond immediately.

**Stephen Russell**

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