

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

DRIVE TO IMPROVE BOLTON'S MUNICIPAL G.C.

Bolton Leisure Services Committee is aiming to improve facilities at their Regent Park Golf Course - the Borough's only municipal course.

At the April meeting of the Leisure Services Committee Councillors discussed ways of increasing participation in golf for a wider cross-section of the community. Councillor Tom Alderton, Chairman of the Committee, said: "Golf is a sport for people of all ages and Regent Park is one of the finest courses in Greater Manchester."

The Committee plan to discuss possible improvements to clubhouse facilities, marketing campaigns to attract new participants in golf and special courses for beginners. Investment in the course over the last three years has created new greens, special winter tees of artificial grass and an extended professional's shop.

Councillor Anderton commented: "We already have an exceptionally well-used course. The aim is now to enhance the enjoyment of our existing customers whilst providing a warm welcome to new users."

A NEW COURSE FOR THE WEST COUNTRY

There are reports of a new golf course development at Erlestoke Sands near Devizes, which starts construction in May. Built on 163 acres of farm land, the 6,700 yard course will be a private members club, with an annual fee set at the astonishingly low figure of £275, though this does not mean the construction will be sub-standard.

The course designers, Western Golf Development, headed by Adrian Stiff, formerly course manager at Tracy Park, are aiming at a high specification with large greens, some measuring 800 square yards, three sets of tees for each hole, with interesting and unusual features, such as an island green at the fourth hole, completely surrounded by sand.

The green constructions will be to USGA specifications, with particular emphasis on drainage, though as the course is built on a 40 foot depth of "greensand", flooding is not likely to prove a problem.

Greens will be sown on a 12" mix 75/25, with an all bent grass mixture of Highland/Saboval/Bardot, medal tees with Frieda, a Chewings Fescue and the day to day tees with a more hard wearing species to be decided.

The estimated cost of construction to include materials, labour, plant and irrigation has been put at £386,000, well below some of the figures heard recently. The land includes a marked Roman site and archaeologists will be on hand in the early stages to search for coins and artefacts.

NEW COMPLEX AT QUINTA DO LAGO

The Algarve purchase of the Vilar do Golf complex at Quinta do Lago, by Trafalgar House (Europe) last summer also involved two superb nine hole golf courses, one of which, the D course, was still in the throes of construction. Now successfully completed, the course was officially opened in April 1990 by the new Ryder Cup captain, Bernard Gallacher, Trafalgar House Europe's Golf Consultant.

All four 18 hole golf courses at Quinta do Lago, are regarded as amongst the best in Europe. The regular venue of the Portuguese Open, the spectacular Bermuda grass fairways unfold amongst wooded and open slopes to provide a variety of true championship play.

The location of the new D course itself is superb. Both par 5 holes feature beautiful winding fairways through pine and heathland, with a view of the distant mountains behind the greens. A walk in the rough will also provide botanists with an array of wild orchids, tulips, gladioli, corci, heather, bluebells, gorse, together with a beautiful selection of colourful birds.

The D course was designed by Joseph Lee with the collaboration of Rocky Ro-

quemore. The course, long for 9 holes at 3,067 metres, is a masterpiece of design, featuring beautifully contoured fairways. Excellent bunkering is a feature, with large greens, many of which contain gentle tiers to provide a multitude of interesting flag positions.

Tees and fairways are of Bermuda 419, with an overseeding of cool season grasses. The greens are Penncross bent. The courses are built on sand to the highest specifications, with a Toro irrigation system keeping the course watered.

"The holes are testing for the good player but the high handicap players will not lose many balls as the rough is not punitive" said Stuart Woodman, Vilar do Golf Resort Director and British PGA member. "The course is tremendous and really makes the player think and plan his route. Interesting holes include, for example, the 4th hole 'Lago', a 90 degree dogleg around a two acre lake".

The opening of the D course will coincide with the launch of the first of 180 refurbished villas with a distinctive Portuguese flavour, with spacious interiors and surrounded by extensive landscaping.

Whilst eventually all these villas will be offered for sale, currently villas can be taken for holiday lets by golfing enthusiasts with swimming pools, tennis courts and restaurants. All part of the complex. Future freehold purchases of Vilar do Golf's one bedroom apartments and two or three bedroom villas will also be able to enjoy discounts on green fees and given guaranteed starting times. They will also be eligible to apply for membership of the Quinta do Lago Golf Club.

Views of the golf course from Vilar do Golf

