



Editor & Publisher:  
**JOHN LELEAN**

Regular Editorial  
Contributors:  
**F. W. Hawtree**  
**Martyn Jones**

National Advertising  
Executive:  
**Mike Massey**  
'Fieldside', Grange Road,  
Bowdon, Cheshire  
Tel: 061-928 2997

Graphics & Design:  
**Stephen Spellman**

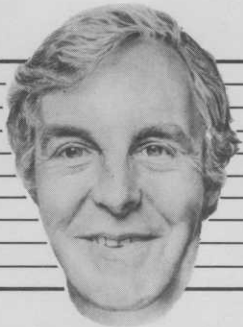
Production Manager:  
**Ian Donoghue**

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## Greenside Comment...



*John Lelean*

# Greenkeepers to the Rescue

Sheer mindless vandalism by a group said to represent animal rights campaigners, have dug up all but four of the eighteen greens at Fairhaven Golf Club near Lytham St. Annes.

The highly organised desecration of the beautifully kept greens, was done at night with gardening forks and spades in a so called protest, by members of the Animal Resistance Group, against the Poultry Association, who were holding their annual conference in Blackpool.

The Secretary at Fairhaven Golf Club, Mr. Brian Hartley, told *Golf Greenkeeping* it was impossible to put a figure on the damage caused to the course, though thanks to the help immediately offered by neighbouring clubs at Royal Lytham St. Annes Old Links and Lytham Green Drive, most of the initial repair work had been completed within three days.

Greenkeepers from the three neighbouring courses joined Head Greenkeeper George Lloyd and the Fairhaven staff to repair up to eighty fork and spade holes all over the greens to bring the course back to a playable state, though during the winter months much more will need to be done with top dressing and re-turfing to return Fairhaven to its usual immaculate condition.

Why Fairhaven was chosen to highlight these criminal protests against battery chicken farming is hard to understand. Perhaps it was because there was an announcement in the conference programme that a round of golf was available at Fairhaven for those delegates seeking a break from the weekend deliberations, though according to Mr. Hartley it was not an organised competition, simply the availability of the facilities for a small group to play golf.

Greenkeepers nationwide were horrified when news of the appalling damage to the fine putting surfaces was announced in the national press and it was not surprising the club had such instant offers of help from the greenkeeping staff of nearby courses.

Play continued immediately after the greens were dug up on the Friday night by cutting temporary putting surfaces, so the weekend competitions could take place and it is to the credit of the staff that they refused to bow down to the actions of what many would believe to be the criminally insane.

Next year the Open Championship is due to be played over the links at Royal Lytham which must cause grave concern to both the club, greenstaff and

the Secretary of the R&A, Mr. Michael Bonallack, in view of the vandalism perpetrated at Fairhaven, a qualifying course for the Open.

The last time the Open Championship took place on the Fylde Coast at Royal Birkdale, a group, said to represent a man wrongly convicted of a robbery and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, breached the security and spray painted several greens with slogans demanding his release.

To police a golf course of over 200 acres is an almost impossible task regardless of the finance set aside for security fencing, electronic surveillance or manpower.

It is a sad fact of life that action groups, who invariably represent minority interests believe the only way they can make their mark is to cause damage and distress to innocent victims.

Their ideals would appear to be summed up in a recent piece of graffiti seen painted on the wall of a derelict building near a red brick University.

It read:

**'Votes in the ballot box achieve nothing'.**

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**Cover Picture** - An autumn scene of the opening hole at Wetherby Golf Club looking towards the club-house.

