

When Jim Parker, owner of the new Bank House Golf and Country Club, just outside Worcester, was contemplating the design of the golf course, his step-father who lives part of the time in Florida told him "Plenty of lakes, Jim, that's the answer!"

The first phase of eleven holes and a spectacular necklace of seven lakes set in 120 acres of countryside, which is being manicured and moulded into an attractive par 72 course together with a driving range is now being completed. The second phase of the remaining seven holes and six lakes, which includes building a tunnel under a secondary road, will be undertaken during 1992.

A spokesman for Laser Civil Engineering said: "We were certainly intrigued at the prospect of including so many lakes. Such high water storage is, of course, very commendable these days and this does not reduce the level of water in the lakes because there is so much water being induced by the circulating pump from lake number seven to lake number one".

Only a small pond fed by surface water existed at the start when Ocmis Irrigation came on the scene in March 1991, about four months after work on construction had begun. They devised a system of water management involving the re-circulation of water from the bottom lake (number 7) to lake number 1 by weirs and sluices to lake number 2 where the water is abstracted for use on greens and tees. Water falls from number 1 to number 8 lake by gravity and is pumped back through a sunken pipe line. There are manual hydrants for approaches and fairways. The course will not flood because the same pipes which feed by gravity would also take water off the site. The lake at the second hole holds seven million gallons and there is a waterfall between lakes 2 and 3.

Head greenkeeper David Kelly, who has had American experience and was previously at Bearstead, Maidstone, expresses his delight: "The Pencross creeping bent now on the putting surfaces requires plenty of water", he says,



WATERSPORT

KEN JOHNSTONE adds weight to the controversial use of lakes in British golf course design and describes a new course where *thirteen* will make up the landscape

adding, "it's great to have all these lakes and it certainly helps us to irrigate specific areas whenever we like, for even though the irrigation system is fully automatic and irrigates the greens and tees at night, we can still plug into the system manually with a hose". David has just joined BIGGA ➔ 28

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142



Above: Jim Parker, left owner of the new Bank House Golf and Country Club, with course designer Bob Sandow. Previous page: young trees in place in a lake setting

27 and has as his first assistant, Robert Bishop, a very keen BIGGA member, who came from Evesham. Arthur Young, who assists full time, has considerable local connections which have helped in the development plans.

Some of the hedgerows have had to go but trees have been saved and more will be planted. The Malvern Hills provide a fine back-drop and the spire of Worcester Cathedral and the tower of Bromsford Chapel pierce the skyline. Swans move, oblivious to the world of golf, on lakes two

feet deep containing trout and carp, with lilies setting the scene. It is not only aesthetically pleasing, there is a strategic challenge too.

Playing the tenth (Par 4, 310m) you drive between lakes 2 and 3 landing on a wide fairway, with lake number 2 comfortably to the right. Two of the lakes are in play. The ninth is a splendid dog-leg with a carry across the water of 150 yards. You cross lake 4 (lakes 4 and 5 both have an island which come into play) – it being a very reasonable width even for the high handicapper – or you can lay-up after about 50m. You then play alongside lake 5, which is on your left.

Course architect, Bob Sandow, says, "I was not really taken back when I was asked to incorporate as many as thirteen lakes into my design. In fact, it is something I am getting used to, though admittedly not always so many, for all over the world there is growing emphasis on lakes for golf courses. No more so, of course, than in the USA, where they are very popular. One of the most famous examples is at Augusta National; and in South Carolina for the most recent Ryder Cup millions of TV viewers saw the spectacular lake orientated course at Kiawah Island. Here at home we also have the example of The Belfry, where lakes figure at the 10th, 17th and the impressive 18th".

He goes on to say "When a course is built on a comparatively small area like Bank House – 120 acres for a par 72 and Driving Range – one has to apply a safety zone and trees and lakes are ideal. "It is a very well installed system and when one considers the urgent need for water storage, there is further good sense in using lakes in the design of the course".

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