

The challenge of a lifetime



One of the small lakes built to conserve water supplies

Route to Barton-on-Sea was via Germany and the Ivory Coast

Always a keen golfer, Tony Gadd was playing off 2 at the New Zealand Golf Club, West Byfleet, Surrey as a youngster, but quickly realised he couldn't afford to become a pro. "Family finances would not stretch that far," he remembers.

Instead, he walked out of his banking job – "I hated being walled-in" – to study engineering "while playing as much golf as was possible."

This combination led Tony into greenkeeping. He became an assistant at the New Zealand Club specialising in the maintenance of the club's tractors, mowers and the like.

Moving on to Fulwell, South London, Tony later joined the John Lewis partnership, who were involved in the construction of a new course at Winter Hill, Cookham, Berks, in the mid-'70s.

At Cookham, Tony teamed-up with Winter Hill's head groundsman, Pat Ainsworth. Describing Pat as a "great greenkeeper who put me on the right road," Tony learned much about golf course management.

When the chance came, Tony applied for, and obtained, the head keepers position at the 18-hole Kingsdown Club, at Box, a

delightful small village near Bath. Three and a half years later, in the early '80s, Tony joined the King Norton (Birmingham) Golf Club, "To sort out thatch problems. It was 1 1/2ins deep in places!"

That accomplished, he joined Golf European Construction, a move which led him to Africa and the Ivory Coast.

"I was appointed – by the president of the Ivory Coast government – to manage the construction of new courses designed to attract tourists."

During his five-year spell in Africa, Tony was responsible for building and developing the Yammousukro and Abidjan courses.

In 1987, Tony moved to Germany and became involved in the construction of Golf Klub Schloss Weitnburg, Stuttgart, an 18-hole plus 9-hole academy complex.

Now a family man with two young children, Tony decided that perhaps it was time to come home.

That decided, he was appointed course manager of the Barton-on-Sea golf club, Hampshire, in 1991. His first objective? "To take an ageing 18-hole cliff-top course into a new era of golf."

