

Golfing legends are stars of £40m club opening

The £40m London Golf Club's grand opening was certainly grand. It featured a £1,000-a-hole skins match between two golfing legends – Jack Nicklaus, who designed the Heritage course, and Seve Ballesteros – with Tony Jacklin making up the numbers before going to America to make his debut on the US Seniors Tour.

The opening was televised by Sky Sports and featured in several national newspapers and magazines. More than 3,500 spectators turned up to see the charity challenge which was followed by a trick shot show and long-driving exhibition.

The 7,208-yard par 72 course looked superb for the big day and, judging by the number of birdie putts sank by Nicklaus and Ballesteros, the creeping bent-grass/USGA spec greens are as good as they look.

Like many Nicklaus-designed courses, the Heritage features many big bunkers and lakes which come into play on five



holes. These lakes are outlets for an extensive drainage system as well as being strategic hazards. They are all inter-connected with a 40-million gallon reservoir providing all the water course superintendent Steve Marsden and his staff of 27, including 18 greenkeepers, could want for the 36-hole club.

Club president Masao Naga-

hara said: "My goal is for the London Golf Club to become the best golf club in Europe."

With such a good start, the Japanese developers are well on their way to achieving their dream. But they have got one thing wrong, at least geographically. The London Golf Club is not even inside the M25, it is near Brands Hatch in Kent.

All change at Force Limagrain

Force Limagrain Ltd, the UK marketing arm of Group Limagrain France, has announced a series of management changes. Ken Alderton is retiring as a director after 44 years service, but will continue to act as a consultant. His responsibilities as forage seeds director will be taken over by Keith Galley, who will be supported by Simon Mitchell as product manager. Dee Bruce assumes the role of sales coordinator at the Longstanton office.

Answers behind the answers...

Mark Smith foxed a few of you with last month's Open Namesearch, even though most of you got the final answers right. You'll find the winner and the answers on page 23, but for those of you who got there without knowing who Massy, Strath and Kirkaldy were, here are the 14 winners and their year of triumph: Hutchinson, Jock 1921; Weiskopf, Tom 1973; Nicklaus, Jack 1966, 70 and 78; Massy, Arnaud 1907; Taylor, JH (John) 1894, 1895, 1900, 1909 and 1913; Strath, Andrew 1865; Jacklin, Tony 1969; De Vicenzo, Roberto 1967; Rogers, Bill 1981; Charles, Bob 1963; Perry, Alf 1935; Kirkaldy, Hugh 1891; Lyle, Sandy 1985; Faulkner, Max 1951.

Letter to the editor

'Great show' was down to a team effort

May 1, through Greenkeeper International, thank the under-noted for their support during the recent Open Golf Championship at Turnberry. The additional machinery enabled us to achieve the standard that is necessary to stage this major championship.

• Toro (The Russell Group); • Jacobsen (H Sheach); • Ransomes (Scottish Grass Machinery); • Kubota (Hamilton Bros.).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our regular suppliers (too many to list) for their support in the lead up to the tournament – not forgetting our friends and colleagues who helped cut greens, tees and paint holes etc. – not everyone's cup of tea at 4am every day.

Many thanks also to your chairman, John Millen and the dedicated few from the support team who helped fill divots on two evenings even though they had just finished bunker raking.

One can only congratulate the R&A for their professional organisation in bringing together as many as 40 contractors such as fencing, electricians, plumbers, scaffolders, caterers, BBC, Telecom, etc. to name but a few. The planning took between one and two years and during the championship approximately 5,000 people were working at Turnberry every day.

Having spent many hours at meetings with the various contractors I have to rely on a good crew. My staff, which is headed by Martin Lothian, head greenkeeper, prepared the course not only during the Open week but throughout the last two long, wet and windy winters – preparing walkways, tees, greens and revetting most of the bunkers. It is to my team and all colleagues at Turnberry that I give the biggest thanks and say "well done lads – you put on a great show."

**George Brown,
Golf Courses and Estates
Manager, Turnberry**

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● More letters, Page 58.

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