



Lined up for a great debate: The second day forum

Donald Steel made this plea during the Architect's Conference at Wentworth

“We need to help greenkeepers and committees preserve golf courses in the traditional manner.”

That was the clarion call of respected golf course architect, Donald Steel, at the at the Silver Jubilee Conference, sponsored by Barenbrug, of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects held at The Wentworth Club last month.

“Heavy handed fairway irrigation alters the terrain. Everyone should be aware of the problems of fairway irrigation,” he said.

“The phrase ‘beautifully lush’ is one which grates and colour is no guarantee of quality. You must remember that a watered course is a longer course which is not what the members want,” he told delegates.

He called for law makers to provide help for greenkeepers and committees by giving a stronger lead when it came to controlling the ball and the clubs.

USGA Guidelines

Another issue discussed at the conference was that of USGA guidelines on green construction with Jim Moore, of the USGA, stressing that they where not actually “specs” but guidelines.

“We are often asked why do we change the guidelines. Well we are always looking for weaknesses in the guidelines so we can amend them. We learn and change rather than decide that we are perfect and not change it.”

He revealed that most clubs which claim to have USGA greens do not, in fact, meet the guidelines and he said that they would like to drop hydraulic conductivity from the guidelines.

More New Courses

The boom in golf can be reflected by the fact that over 1,000 golf courses will open worldwide in 1996 – the greatest number in history – revealed Geoffrey Cor-

‘Let’s get back to traditional links’

nish, a highly regarded American architect.

With 503 of these opening in the States and the rest throughout the world it is good news for greenkeepers looking for future career opportunities. It has also, as Jim Moore explained, created a new profession – the Grow In Superintendent, who spends six months on a course before moving on to his next project.

On the same theme Hamilton Stutt, who can recall travelling to golf courses as a youngster in the back of a car with his father and James Braid, said that he always encouraged owners to appoint the future Head Greenkeeper at

the start of the construction work so he could act as the Clerk of Works and feel a part of the team right from the beginning.

Another point which was raised was the need for Post Construction Manuals so everyone can be made aware of the materials which were used during construction and therefore what is required to maintain greens etc. It would be particularly useful in continental Europe.

Fungicide Bans

BIGCA Associate Member Tom Mackenzie, predicted that within 10 years fungicides would be banned and fertilisers and water

rationed and that change is going to be forced on the committee.

“Architects are going to be required to design courses to be played under the conditions which prevail if this does happen,” he explained.

This would involve designing greens to accept the running shots which will be need to succeed in the firm fast conditions.

Presentation

Hamilton Stutt, Peter Harradine on behalf of his father Donald Harradine, who died a week before the Conference, Eddie Hackett, Geoffrey Cornish and Dr Martin Hawtree on behalf of his father Fred Hawtree were all presented with Gold Medals by the Institute in recognition of the work they had done.

New Federation

A Federation of European Golf Course Architects was formed during the Conference with the coming together of the three professional organisations in golf course design in Europe.

AGFA, BIGCA and ESGA formalised their relationship in the formation of the Federation to progress towards a single voice in the European Golf market.

Representing almost 100 architects in practice the Federation will lobby on matters such as ecology, safety planning, education and so on to governments and administrative organisations.



Signing papers to establish the Federation of European Golf Course Architects