

Memories of Troon in the '89 summer

I have had the exacting task this month of attempting to combine moving house with producing this magazine.

The former has led me into corners of the loft to which I'm sure I've never ventured before – at severe risk to my personal well being – in attempts to rescue boxes containing things we didn't know we owned and are certainly not likely to need in the foreseeable future. The latter saw me pay a visit to Royal Troon to see how preparations for this month's Open are progressing.

While much of the house moving experience involves sweat, tears and occasionally blood it does give a chance to relive old times as clear out sessions are diverted by the discovery of old photographs and souvenirs.

It was during one of these that I came across a programme for the 1989 Open Championship at Royal Troon and it brought back some memories of that hot week eight years ago.

I have always considered Troon to be one of the best locations for an Open. There is a definite "golfing feel" about the place generally while there is plenty of room to host an Open and all the accompanying tentage. Oh yes, and the views it shares with Turnberry over the Firth of Clyde are among the finest to be found anywhere.

What I, indeed everyone, recalled about the '89 Open was the hard running fairways and the lack of rough – the result of one of the west of Scotland's rare extended dry spells! The hard running fairways contributed to Greg Norman's stunning start to his final round – he opened with five straight birdies – but also led to his eventual downfall when he drove into a bunker an obscene distance from the tee on the 18th hole during the play-off and

lost all chance of wrestling the title from Mark Calcavecchia.

The lack of rough was illustrated by Calcavecchia himself who sealed the Championship by playing a short iron to within two feet of the final play-off hole from what would normally have been thick rough.

A recently installed irrigation system, not to mention the wettest June in 40 years – Can I remind you of last month's Editorial piece? – will toughen up a course which will undoubtedly be an exacting test for Tiger, Ernie, Colin, Nick and co. They will also find a course in immaculate condition.

No less a source than Kim Macfie of Hayters, a former Chairman of Green at Royal Troon, played it recently and said he had never seen it look better.

Good luck to Billy McLachlan, in his first Open as Head Greenkeeper, and his team.

The BIGGA Open Championship Greenkeeping Support Team will also be in action once again. As well as being a superb chance for old friends to meet up, the Team is becoming an increasingly influential part of the Championship as a whole providing professional help whenever and wherever it is needed.



Scott
MacCallum
Editor

As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

What a month! My feet just haven't touched the ground. I've visited just about every corner of the country and I've even played some golf for the first time in 10 years.

It started with the Scottish Hayter Final where among the highlights was enjoying some square sausage with Kim Macfie and his brother, and, courtesy of Jim Paton, paying a quick visit to Billy McLachlan at Royal Troon where he was extremely busy preparing for this month's Open.

As ever the Scottish Hayter was organised to perfection and credit must go to Elliott and, of course, Edna Small in what is Elliott's last year as Regional Administrator.

After fitting in a GTC meeting at Aldwark Manor I was off to Burnham and Berrow for another Hayter organised admirably, on her debut by Paula Humphries. Chairman of the Region, Richard Whyman, also presented Kim and myself with a memento of the occasion which was a nice touch.

There followed a Regional Board meeting where it is sad to report we accepted the resignation from the Board of Management of David Milbourne to allow him to spend more time on his own job. He will be replaced until January by Past Chairman Barry Heaney and then by Ian Holoran, Chairman of the Northern Region.

With barely time to reflect on that meeting I was off to Germany to be one of the 180 British greenkeepers on John Deere's Feedback event. I think it is excellent that the greenkeeper's views are given so much consideration and I am particularly excited by the new cutter which eliminates clogging that is being developed.

The Anniversary Golf Day was a superb occasion and will probably become an annual event. It was great to see so many familiar faces from the industry attend and interesting to hear Rory Underwood's talk.

After that it was to Shipley College to discuss the college being granted GTC status and I'm delighted to say that it will. Then on to Whitby GC to make Andy Boyd an Internal Verifier and then to South Leeds GC for the Northern Section President's Day. It was then that I played my first 10 holes of golf in seven years.

Having whetted my appetite for the game my next two visits to golf courses just resulted in me getting wet. The Hayters at The Warwickshire and Ham Manor both came within an inch of being cancelled and medals should be struck for the players who played nine holes on each course to ensure a result. I did manage to play at Ham Manor with Kim and James McEvoy from HQ but only out of a buggy!

Can I just thank all the golf courses I have visited in the past month for their wonderful hospitality.

Finally, to those people who contacted me regarding the Box Number Ad in the Magazine a couple months ago. There was a communication breakdown at HQ on the policy for such a situation and the problem will not arise again.

