



Above: A Bridge of Sighs...
If your ball happens to
be underneath!
(Bridge from Woodscape Ltd)

Golf Course furniture can add the finishing touches to the excellent work you do in preparing your course, as Roland Taylor explains...

Bridge the gap



The last decade has certainly seen considerable changes in golf with the introduction of increasing numbers of commercially run clubs, pay-and-play venues and municipal courses being established across the country. Some may say that golf is now part of the leisure and sporting entertainment industry, especially with the greater media coverage it now enjoys.

While this analysis might not be to everyone's taste, it has meant that the over-all presentation of a course is an important part of the marketing package. For any commercially run establishment it is necessary to have a corporate identity that creates a high profile and public awareness. They want as many people as possible to play the course and to enjoy their visit so they return, and also tell all their friends about it.

These changes have led to some interesting developments. One of these is in golf course furniture and accessories. Suppliers in this sector are reporting a significant increase in business and interest. Many courses

have discovered a source of extra revenue - sponsorship. Items like litter bins, divot boxes or tee markers are ideal advertising sites.

For those Course Managers or Greenkeepers looking for signage, accessories or furniture there is plenty of choice.

Harmonising with the surroundings and withstanding the elements are two of the most important features. One company that has taken this into consideration is Surrey-based Eagle Promotions. They use a photographic process to etch onto a zinc plate. A positive or negative film of the required image is exposed to the specially treated metal surface. It is then etched. Varying the temperature of the etching solution controls the depth of the imprint. The plate is then primed and stove enamelled. All the raised areas are machined bright. Finally, coatings of epoxy resin and polyurethane are applied for UV stability.

Because of the nature of this process it is possible to include logos and hole diagrams. Any size or shape of plate can be made and mounted on to the

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Signage can be as attractive as it is practical



chosen material. This could be stone, natural rock or wood. An alternative to natural rock is the use of pre-cast concrete. By using different aggregates and cement pigmentation plus various finishings they can produce stone-effect pedestals.

Border Golf from Shrewsbury etches stainless steel and bronze plaques. These can include hole maps and any logos in full colour and there is a choice of mountings including reconstituted stone or natural rock. The company also manufactures reinforced granite resin composites which can be mounted on plinths and stands made from powder coated steel, Iroko and kiln dried Oak.

Meeting an individual club's corporate or identity requirements is the reason for their success according to Links Leisure Ltd. Their "Pro Tee Collection" includes signs, tee-markers, litter bins or divot boxes. All are tailor-made in detail, style and colour for each course. They are cast from weatherproof glass reinforced cement. The manufacturers say this has been used in the construction industry for over twenty years, it is durable and requires the minimum maintenance. Signs can be mounted on metal post or free-standing units.

Timber is ideally suited for blending into the landscape and a company that specialises in this material is



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Woodscape from Lancashire. They offer a wide range of products including litter bins, seats, signs and bridges.

They use "Greenheart" timber for most of their products. It is claimed to be one of the hardest and most durable timbers in the world with a life expectancy of over 100 years in the UK without any preservative treatment. Among their range is hardwood paving setts that are suitable for paths or walkways or areas that have a lot of foot traffic. According to the supplier these can be quickly laid on a smooth compact permeable base. When it comes to footbridges the company can advise on the best design to blend in with the natural landscape.

Britannic Teak says that outdoor furniture must be of a quality that enhances and harmonises with the elements and natural surrounds. While providing a comfortable resting-place, it also has to withstand heavy use and the rigours of the UK climate. Their range of traditional and classical benches and seats are manufactured from genuine plantation teak which they say is strong, stable and impervious to the weather and does not require preservatives or paint.

Whilst Furnitubes offer an extensive range of street furniture, they do have a number of products that could be of interest for those readers whose responsibilities include areas around the clubhouse complex. Their cast-iron litter bins are available as circular, square or octagonal units. These can strengthen the corporate identity by being fitted with plaques which can be produced by photo etching or by traditional hand carving. Other items in their range include traditional cast iron and timber seating, directional signage information panels and finger posts.

Dura-Sport, from Leicester, have recently introduced a range of golf furniture that they claim is almost identical in appearance to wood, but is manufactured from recycled plastic. Using the latest technology, everyday plastic waste is transformed into wood substitute materials that can be nailed, screwed and sawn. This material they say also has joinery capabilities which enables the company to produce outdoor furniture that has low maintenance and long life.



Keeping areas around trees clear of grass and weeds can be a time consuming operation, plus the fact there is a chance of damage from a mower or line trimmer. According to Linpac Environmental, their Edgemasta Tree Guard is an effective new protection system for trees. A safety zone is created around the base of each tree which protects it from damage while retaining mulch and moisture. A weed suppression membrane can be fitted as an optional extra. The Edgemasta, which is made from UV stabilised polyethylene comes in a range of shapes and colours. It is said to be easy to install and requires no further maintenance.

A factor that needs to be taken into account when installing any course furniture is how it will be kept clear of that feather of uncut grass that forms around the actual static items or their supporting posts. If not added at this stage, it could become a time consuming cutting operation later. It could be set on a pea shingle base or wood chippings. This needs to be larger than the item and below the turf so mowers will cut up to the edge. This will require trimming either by hand or with an engine-powered edger.

Good signage benefits the players and can help to speed up the game. It needs to be discrete, give out an easy to read message and blend with the landscape. If in any doubt about whether your club has got it right, then take a walk around your course viewing it from a stranger's point of view. If you find that signs are missing or out-of-date, or just looking a little sad, then perhaps the time has come for a face-lift.

