

With a very successful Open Championship now just a memory, Carolyne Nurse, of The St Andrews Links Trust, reviews the decision to build two new greenkeeping centres at the complex and how they have contributed to the overall course maintenance at 'the home of golf'



# Shedding an image



The only constraint on the design of the Eden Centre was that it should be in keeping with the other nearby buildings with a low profile and similar roofline. It is screened with banking and planting from the car park and public areas

Opened in April 1996, the Eden Greenkeeping Centre was the first of two new greenkeeping facilities on St Andrews Links.

Built on the south side of the 660-acre Links complex and costing £500,000, it was designed to be in keeping with the developing complex at Pilmour that includes Pilmour House, the Links Trust's administration headquarters, the Golf Practice Centre and a large neighbouring car park. The location for the greenkeeping centre was chosen as the most suitable because of the road access and other nearby services. Most importantly, it is less than 30 seconds from the first tee of the Eden Course and a minute from the Strathtyrum Course.

"It used to take at least 20 minutes

for greenkeepers to make the journey from the previous greenkeeping sheds," recalls Gordon Moir, Head Greenkeeper of the Eden Course.

"We had to cross both the New and the Old Courses and often had to wait for golfers as we did not want to interrupt their game. It also caused a fair amount of tracking on both courses."

Another factor for locating the Eden Greenkeeping Centre at Pilmour was its close proximity to the Golf Practice Centre, which opened in 1993. The only constraint on the design was that it should be in keeping with the other nearby buildings at the Pilmour complex that includes the Golf Practice Centre, ie a low profile with the shape of the roof in similar style to the other buildings. It is screened

with banking and planting from the car park and public areas.

It provides more than 10,000 square feet of storage space for the grass-cutting machinery, tractors and equipment used by the greenkeeping squads responsible for the Eden, Strathtyrum and Balgove Courses as well as the nearby Golf Practice Centre.

This large amount of space is required as the fleet of equipment includes five tractors, five trailers, one digger, two sprayers, two verti-drainers, four pieces of aeration equipment including a GA30 and a GA60, five ride-on mowers (160s), two ride on fairway mowers (300s), two rough cut mowers (AR250s), five Cushman trucksters, 15 pedestrian mowers

Right: At the Eden Centre there are 2500 square feet of covered storage bays for top dressing and other materials such as sand

Below: Some of the greenkeeping team outside the Eden Centre



(GS55 and marquis), six victas and six strimmers as well as attachments such as topdressers, seeders and scarifiers. There is also a tractor mounted chemical spreader and a pedestrian version. Around ten E-Z-GO petrol-

driven golf cars used by the orderlies and rangers and, some that are for hire are also stored here. The five orderlies use the centre as their base.

As well as a large storage area, the Eden Centre also incorporates a small engi-

neering workshop for basic maintenance with facilities that enable engineers to go to the centre to service the machinery. The service and maintenance routines for each type of equipment is dictated by the manufac-

turers' requirements as are the routine safety checks, usually after every 100 hours. When a service is due, the main workshop at The Jubilee Centre is informed and staff travel to the Eden Centre to carry out the work.

Any equipment that breaks down or requires a serious overhaul goes to the Jubilee workshop as it was decided at the design stage that the main workshop facilities should be centralised there. It is bigger and better equipped to tackle more of this type of work. A small chemical safe is situated outside the Eden Centre and used for the short-term storage of chemicals – the main store being located at the Jubilee Centre.

Two Head Greenkeepers are based in the Eden Greenkeeping Centre in an office where they each have a computer to control the irrigation on their courses and the Golf Practice Centre. Their greenkeeping squads of 15 men have lockers for their work clothes and separate lockers for spraying equipment and clothes. There are changing rooms, showers and a large room where breaks and lunches can be taken, equipped with a kettle, fridge and microwave. There are drying facilities where work clothes can be dried overnight and there is also an emergency shower by the chemical safe in case of a spillage.

Outside there are 2500 square feet of covered storage bays for top dressing and other materials such as sand. There is also an enclosed bay for seed and fertiliser. This area also incorpo-





rates a wash bed where the machinery is cleaned with silt traps to prevent grass cuttings and top dressing flowing into the soak-away.

An above-ground tank provides storage for 3000 gallons of diesel while an underground petrol tank holds 2000 gallons of petrol. All machines are refueled in a dedicated central area and spillages flow into an interceptor tank.

"After the Eden Centre opened there was a noticeable improvement to the Old Course as maintenance vehicles no longer needed to travel backwards and forwards across the Links from the old storage sheds to reach the courses on the south side," said Ian Forbes, Links Manager.

During the recent Open the Jubilee Greenkeeping Centre was the focus of operations. All the Links greenkeeping staff from all the courses, around 58 staff, were working on the Old Course for the Championship starting at 4am every morning plus the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team. The Eden Greenkeeping Centre was also used, but not to the same extent, with four staff using the four AR250s for maintaining the semi-rough.

The Jubilee Greenkeeping Centre was opened in 1997 to serve the Old, New and Jubilee Courses. Twice the size of the Eden Centre, the Jubilee Greenkeeping Centre was designed with a 'barrel' roof as a means of ensuring that its profile intruded as little as possible into the famous St Andrews skyline. Banking and landscaping

around the centre screen it from the Jubilee Course, which runs alongside.

It includes a large workshop where all the machinery can be stripped down and maintained. It is equipped with a scissor-lift ramp, lifting benches, grinders and welding equipment and also provides central storage facility for items such as hydraulic hoses, control cables, bearings, filters, spiker tines, spare wheels and a host of other spare parts.

A computer-controlled £2.5m irrigation system is currently being installed on the Links. When it is completed the whole 660-acre site will have irrigation including the Golf Practice Centre. There are four Flowtronex pumps and a master computer control that are housed next to the Jubilee Centre. Also nearby are two covered reservoirs providing storage for 750,000 gallons of water and there are four boreholes. If necessary, one million gallons of water could be fed onto the courses in one night. A weather station on the site feeds the latest information into the computer and to ensure the accuracy of the information the grass around the weather station is cut to the same height as that on the fairways. There are currently 4000 sprinkler heads on the system and 28 miles of irrigation pipe work that will rise to 100 miles when all the work is complete.

Both the Eden and Jubilee Greenkeeping Centres were designed by Fraser Smart of Links Design Studio in Leven and built by Forman Construction of Dundee.



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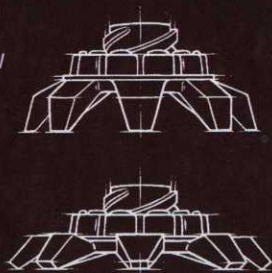
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