

It was all happening at Broadstone Golf Club when Scott MacCallum met up with Course Manager Adrian Archer just before Christmas...

As Broad

as it's long



Above: The old railway cutting which runs through the course

The staff were in the process of moving into a brand new maintenance facility and the painful task of finding suitable homes for the contents of large cardboard boxes was well under way. While this would ensure better conditions for the team, out on the golf course the quality of the conditions have never been in doubt. A point that was brought home with the club's continued success in the prestigious BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in which last year Broadstone was a Regional winner.

"Monday was moving day, but today,

with the course being closed due to the flooding, we are making a serious effort to get things sorted out," explained Adnan, as we sat in the bare room, but for a desk, two chairs and a bookcase, which was to be his office.

Although the sheds have been in their ideal location for some time now the nature of the course is that "getting about" has always been a problem.

"From here the course is three quarters of a mile that way and three quarters of a mile that way," he says, while pointing in two opposite directions.

The course covers 360 acres of which

100 acres in the middle is common ground. No hole run along side another and you only ever see other golfers fleetingly. This means that as every hole is separate it takes us longer to cut greens, tees etc than the average golf course. There is no green where you can just jump from one to the next - you almost have to go in order and we just waste 10% of our time just in travelling. There is no short cut. We have some walks of 200 metres from green to tee."

The course was originally designed by Dunn and consisted of nine heathland holes and nine parkland but the park-



Above: Members enjoy the winter practice of chipping into a circle
Right: Broadstone's unique snake pit... well away from the playing areas stresses Adi (left)



land nine were ploughed up in the war effort. After the war Colt was called on to design the back nine. Both architects must have been delighted with the undulating heathland that they were given to work with - it really is a dream site. The success of the design has led to many top amateur competitions being hosted at Broadstone.

The Poole/Bournemouth area is not one which would be near the top of many holidaying golfers lists but Broadstone enjoys a reputation of being at the forefront of a remarkably strong group of quality courses, including Parkstone, Isle of Purbeck and Brockenhurst.

"Very good golfers tend to know about us but we're not really in golfing country. When Jack McMillan visited he was

staggered by the beauty of the course's design and the fact that it wasn't well known. He saw the place as Sunningdale's southern twin," revealed Adi.

Adi is an advocate of traditional green-keeping methods and the team is looking to increase the average of 50% bent on his greens.

"We are getting there but it is hard work. A lot of aeration goes on because we've got problems with drainage on greens. They are traditional style and are built on what was here, either dug into a hill and into the clay or gravel subsoil.

"People think that as some are on gravel they will drain well but if you get on heathland gravel that has capped over with silt it becomes like concrete

and nothing can go through it. This makes drainage aeration difficult."

As a more drastic approach to solving the problem they have already drained one green, the 7th, and it has become the driest on the course.

The project was not without its complications

"We did in in the winter and used a herringbone drainage system and we'd planned to lift the turf with a turf cutter and do it by hand leaving an edge alongside the the drains so that when we put the soil back in we'd have a nice solid edge, a tip we got from Ed McCabe, at Brockenhurst.

"On paper and to begin with it didn't look to long a job. The front of the green wasn't too bad but when we reached the back even with pick axes



we could hardly break it down," he recalled.

A club member, a builder, provided the answer, or so it was thought, when he brought in a mini digger but such was the nature of the subsoil the digger was pulled forwards, off the boards and on to the green itself so that approach had to be abandoned.

"It actually vindicated our decision to do the green in the first place and the members, having played on a temporary green for a time while it knitted in, have welcomed it."

A programme of draining further greens will now be implemented following the success of the 7th green.

"We also have an on-going programme of draining around the greens. We aim to prevent surface water reach-

ing the greens from the surrounding hills by remodelling where possible. Water still flows across some of the greens from off the hills for up to an hour after it has stopped raining.

"Secondly we are installing a horse-shoe drain a metre deep around the greens set into the hills to prevent sub-surface water reaching the greens. If that is not successful then we will drain the greens still causing a problem."

"We started two years ago and now the club accepts that this is the way to go," said Adi, who trained as a horticulturist and worked for Bournemouth Parks Department, latterly on a municipal golf course before taking on the job at Broadstone.

The move to the well appointed and equipped facility with all the modern

conveniences is the culmination of many years up-grading of Broadstone's sheds.

Having originally been down close to the clubhouse, the two sheds were by a lake and every time it rained heavily the area flooded the sheds. Everything was stored there but for the rootzone, sand etc which was in the middle of the course.

"It was a logistical nightmare," said Adi.

The sheds were eventually moved to the present site in the middle of the course in 1978 and these have now been replaced by a modern facility.

When they were originally moved there was no electricity, water or telephone.

Fresh water was added when Adi dis-

covered an old irrigation pipe still intact running across the course passing close to the sheds. We brought in mains water from the road and then connected to the old irrigation pipe and then ran a spur to the sheds."

"Before that there had been a water tank around the back which froze in the winter and the boys used it to wash their hands as well as washing the machines with buckets from it," recalled Adi, who also expressed how fortunate he was to have such talented and hardworking group of staff and that many of them showed great loyalty to the club.

Mains electric arrived in the early 90s, courtesy of the irrigation system when the pump station was being wired.

Before the telephone was installed - Adi took advantage of a standard charge



This page: Some of the wonderful flora and fauna to be found on Broadstone with the 7th hole, much improved after the drainage work



for installation which meant £75 instead of over £1000 as the cable had to come from a quarter of a mile away - he had to make his way down to the clubhouse every time he wanted to order something or get someone to take a look at a machine.

"It was a mile round trip and when someone wasn't in you had to do it again," he explained.

The new facility marks the triumphant conclusion to a history, probably mirrored by many other clubs, which could also be said to reflect the development of the greenkeeping profession.

"We now have an office, a mess room, drying room, toilets and shower. Everything we could possibly need," he said.

Their recognition as Regional Winners in the recent BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone, is not the first time they have achieved success in the competition and this is borne out of an environmental programme which has been developed since 1982.

"Back then we were talking about bracken overwhelming heather which was close to the edge of the fairway. When we cut this back the heather started to flourish and this continued when, not unlike Hankley Common, we started felling trees as the next stage in regenerating the heather. This is now part of the on-going maintenance regime in returning the course to heathland and is proving very successful. To date over 15 hectares have been clear felled.



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"Now we have dragon fly ponds, we go bat watching with the members, we've got deer, badgers and we've even got a snake pit.

"That started by accident in an area where we tipped our rubbish well away from the clubhouse, flower borders and playing areas. We tipped in a load of branches and then pampas grass and this attracted snakes. We got six foot grass snakes, adders and smooth snakes, all the British varieties basking in one place at the same time."

One of the staff, Terry Elborn, is an avid bird watcher often travelling around the world to watch unusual birds and he, along with Broadstone Deputy, Martin Coward, hit the national press a few years ago when a Great Bustard was apparently spotted flying over the

course attracting "twitchers" from all over the country and national press coverage.

Whether the sighting was genuine or not it takes nothing away from the wealth of wildlife at the Club which it nurtures through a strong and healthy relationship with English Nature.

Talking to Adi you become swept up in his enthusiasm for his job and his place of work.

"People ask why I haven't moved on but I love Bournemouth and the area so much. We have the New Forest, the beach and the weather. And, of course, this course. There is so much to do on it."

You get the feeling that Broadstone and Adrian Archer are a pretty good match.



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