



Nomenclature or the system of names or naming, can have a great deal of significance in our world. Sandy McDivot investigates...

THE NAME GAME

Everything must have a name, whether it be a person, an object, a machine or a golf club and choosing the name correctly can be of critical importance.

This is especially true with people. Sometimes their name rules them out of a particular vocation. Although having said that, I do recollect a group of undertakers that delight in the name of De-Ath and I believe there once was a butchers called Badham and Gristle. I am also aware, that

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within the ecclesiastical profession, there exists an unfortunately named Cardinal Sin and I particularly like the estate agents, I think based in the North of England, that are aptly called Dolittle and Dally. I even note from our Association's directory that a few of us have joined in the fun by going under the name of Green, Parr or even the odd Mower.

Generally though, if your name is Payne for instance, a vocation in dentistry would be one to be avoided and I would suggest people with the name

of Crippen could do better than enter the medical profession. Some names have been absolutely fine up until a particular person has spoilt the fun and taken them well and truly out of vogue. For example, Adolf has taken a bit of a nosedive in the popularity stakes since the 40's and I believe Myra has been less than prevalent since the 60's. These days people should avoid calling their twins Benjamin and William, because of the obvious flower pot connection and I would advise you side step Fred and Rosemary, especially if the surname is West. Matching first names with surnames is important and always check what the initials could add up to. So Larry would be fine, unless the surname is something like Parry and one wonders about the thought processes of Val Doonican's parents. I remember the Walker Cup Captain Peter McEvoy, saying how he once played golf with an American who introduced himself as Quintin Cumber. No problem there, until they exchanged score cards and Peter noticed on the top it read, Q Cumber. However, the American people have never showed undue concern for nomenclature and I recall in the 70's and 80's, some players on their golf tour took great delight in the celebration of the absurd, with names such as Gibby Gilbert, Forest Fezzler and Kermit Zarley.

Choosing the correct name for a golf club can be of equal importance. Personally, I have a severe disliking for the pretentious. So golf clubs that start with the word "the" have, in my opinion, got a lot to live up to. So often they fail abysmally in their self

proclaimed inference, that they are the definitive golf course of the area, the one that is set apart from all others. This is especially true when they are preceded by the name of the county in which they are found. On more than one occasion I have played such courses only to find that in reality they could qualify as being "the" worst of the county, the ones that should be preceded by the definite article in the same way as the notorious such as "the" Geoffrey Archer or "the" Robert Maxwell. (The Berkshire Golf Club excluded, of course) Personally, I like a golf club to be simply and descriptively named after the town or area in which it is found. So Hunstanton or Hankley Common fit the bill perfectly. A visitor would not necessarily expect to find a course of distinction but is delightfully surprised when the experience far exceeds expectations.

I also dislike the practice of giving grandiose names to the separate courses within a golf club. So we get things like the Gainsborough or the Blenheim course. In reality this is just a blatant attempt to inject a feeling of class, when courses of true quality never have to resort to such desperate tactics. Give me a simple Old and New or East and West anytime. The same goes for giving individual holes those separate names that no one ever uses, such as "Long Thrash", or "Watery Grave". This practice always reminds me of those sad suburban houses whose owners have named them "Dunromin" or "Glendale" in an effort to set them apart from the thousands of other identikit houses

TAKE LIST

History Major Golf Club Member List

next door, when all they really do is create apoplexy in the postman.

But let me not be so harsh in my criticism of these places, after all, I am no businessman. Perhaps if I were in the unlikely position of finding myself in golf course ownership, I too would stoop to such cheap marketing tactics in an effort to at least get the punters to visit my course the once. Maybe if I did possess an 80-acre pylon infested course, with a three in one slope adjacent to the M62, I would call the resultant assault to the optic nerve Royal Mountain Springs National Golf Links, or words to that effect. Maybe I too would then go about naming the holes "Tiger's Torment" or "Nick's Nemesis" in a flagrant defilement of the names of the famous, so as to suggest that they had been within a hundred miles of the first tee mat.

Getting the name right can be of enormous importance, if you happen to be organising a golf society. For starters, the worst thing you can do is name it after the public house in which you regularly gather for comradeship and the unselfish exchange of intellectual supposition and debate. Likewise, if it is named after the golfing standards upheld by the majority of your patrons. No, no, this is just asking for trouble. What Course Manager is going to go out of his way to present his course in the best possible condition, if they see on the start sheet. White Horse GS or Harry's Hackers? No this is just the circumstance for name embellishment. So call the society The Institute of Directors, or The Society of Connoisseurs or such like. Better still why not engage in a bit of harmless deception and name your society after a division of a governing body, or indeed a fictitious tournament of apparent merit. The R&A Open Venue Inspection Golfing Society, or The County Greenkeepers Championship, for example. That way you should get some real quality course presentation on the day of your visit, which should as we all know be booked a) on a Friday afternoon and b) as near to the venue's club championship as is possible. That way, you should get Augusta National for your 30 quid.

But to exhaust totally the subject of naming within our

profession, may I make a tenuous link by mentioning the habits of one or two of those exclusive clubs in the stockbroker belt of London. Here they indulge in the delightfully eccentric custom of employing a calligrapher to hand write the names of the owners of a changing room locker in gold paint. But above the name of the existing owner are all the names of the previous owners and all with a broad stroke being written diagonally across their name, so as to signify they are no more. I can assume that they have expired, as generally this is the only method of terminating one's membership at such golf clubs. Even internment in an old people's home - which is pretty much the same thing anyway - allows them to keep paying the subs until judgement day. The accomplishment of receiving a locker, at these places, brings with it the full acknowledgement from the membership that the recipient has spent the obligatory 30 odd years on the locker waiting list and is now accepted as a senior member.

But looking at these lockers, it does conjure up thoughts of the fears that may be harboured within those that are at the higher reaches of that list.

Do they look at the lockers and take note of the number of crossed out names on each of them. Some may only have three or four, while others have so many that they are practically being written on the locker room floor. Do they look at them and fear the allocation of a jinxed locker, a locker that according to hushed whispers brings with it the curse of swift and hideous demise, by way of an out of control rotary rough mower, or agonising heart attack brought about by wit-

nessing the lady captain bereft of makeup. The changing room locker at such venerable institutions is like one of those absurdly expensive Aga cookers that affluent country folk possess to help keep them nice and hot in the summer months. They are for life. The question is, how long will that be?

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