



Welcome

## YOU DECIDE!

Are you getting as fed up as I am of the current requirement to have a telephone permanently stuck to your ear whenever you're watching television. "Tell us who you think is the Greatest Briton"; "Who do you want to leave the Big Brother House?"; "Who do you want to stay in the Fame Academy?". The list goes on and on.

There's hardly a programme nowadays which doesn't enlist the help of the general public. Even the news programmes are at it. As I write Cherie Blair has just been on television defending herself and we are being asked to vote on how well she did!

As well as being an obvious money-making racket I reckon it is an extension of the use of focus groups. I once sat on one such group for American Express where I was asked questions on a range of issues. I was told the idea was to form an opinion of the type of person who did or would like to have such a card. In a daft sort of way you feel quite important but it is completely and utterly meaningless and, in a negative sense, does result in a blandness.

When I worked on a couple of the mainstream golf magazines focus groups were brought in. What happened was that they became overburdened with instruction, holiday and equipment features. Now I have never met anyone who reads golf magazines for golf instruction but if I were asked I'm sure I would wrack my brain for a while then blurt out "Instruction". Of course what I'd really mean to say would be "More in-depth features on the lives of our top golfers and the hurdles they have had to overcome to reach the top". But that would be very complicated and too difficult to put in a tick box.

We end up with a "lowest common denominator" when the general public gets a say, while it is very easy to sway the telephoning audience to a particular point of view.

Can you imagine how it might effect your own professional lives.

"If you think, as a fee paying member of Sludgecombe GC, you should have the right to play your course whenever you wish and that the Course Manager's job should be to repair any damage which is caused as a result call 0800 1234567. Or if you think the Sludgecombe GC Course Manager has the right to treat your course as though it was his own back garden call 0800 7654321. Alternatively...

"If you think you should leave decisions regarding the well being of your course to a highly trained professional greenkeeper call 0800 3456789. Or if you think you have the right, just because you are a member of the club, to damage greens just because you have decided you want to play golf on your course whenever you want, even on particularly frosty days call 0800 9876543."

It might be a way for your club to bring in more money but let's not suggest it shall we?

Scott MacCallum, Editor

## ROAD HOLE BUNKER



The most famous bunker in golf also became the most talked about recently. The reconstruction of the Road Hole Bunker has resulted in the whole of St Andrews reported to be in "uproar" - you can see a snowy

image of the bunker on the front cover of this month's magazine .

The decision of the Links Management Trust to have Eddie Adams and his team rebuild the bunker came as a result of the bunker becoming too difficult for the best players in the world, never mind the 42,000 handicap golfers who play the Old Course each year.

The Road Hole bunker became known as the "Sands of Nakajima", following the five attempts taken by Japan's Tommy Nakajima to extricate himself during the 1978 Open while, in the

Millennium Open, David Duval took four to get out while still in runner-up slot behind Tiger Woods, on the final day dropping him down the field.

As a result the walls have been reduced by around two feet and the bunker has been moved back from the side of the green.

A local ex-Captain of the New Club in St Andrews was quoted as saying, "tampering with the bunker is going too far and its loss is a tragedy". This demonstrates the strength of feeling in the town but perhaps misses the point that a bunker needs constant attention and is always being rebuilt and remodelled.

The bunker to which David Duval fell pray would have been different to the one in which Tommy Nakajima suffered never mind Old Tom Morris.

That said, it was obviously a brave decision to make such a radical change.

Your comments on the matter would be most welcome.

Editor

## TEESSIDE GOLF CLUB

In this year of record rainfall and flooding spare a thought for Tony Smith, Course Manager at Teesside Golf Club, which is more prone than most to flooded conditions.

"The water table in winter is about 12 inches while in summer this drops to about 30 inches," explained Tony.

"Of the 130 acres of course, I have seen as much as 90 acres under water at any one time. This has happened several times over the past few years and seems to be a regular feature of the course these days with this so-called global warming."

Teesside G C is a very flat course, has an eight inch natural fall from the highest to the lowest point of the course.

"We also have two becks crossing the course, north/south & east/west as well as the Old River Tees which runs part way round the outside of

the course," said Tony who added that the Clubhouse used to be the old flower mill.

"When we get heavy rainfall the C S O overflow intercepts the excess water that can't get down the sewage pipe, which runs through our the middle of the course. When this happens it's then pumped it in to our becks, at flood times I've seen it come over the bank sides - and these are six feet high - on to the course.

"We also have to work with the tides to drain our course, which means that when we have a heavy rainfall and the tide is up it can take as much as 24/48 hours, before we see the beck levels drop down. Our water then starts to drain away it may not seem long but with a flat course and no wind this can seem a long time."

The picture is looking from the clubhouse down the 1st and 2nd fairways. Taken in May 2002



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