



# MIND THE GAP

*Scott MacCallum looks at the unsung hero of many golf courses – the bridge*

**If a course architect, constructor or greenkeeper is faced with a span to traverse on a golf course whether it be a lake, a river or stream, busy road or a gully, what are their options?**

Well, you could go round the obstacle. But that could be time consuming for golfers and/or greenkeepers and, let's face it, a little bit boring. A tunnel is sometimes an option, ideal for some situations as they are extremely discrete, but can be expensive to introduce. A ferry, as one used on the 18th hole at Brocket Hall, is another consideration if it is quite wide expanse of water, although this can be expensive and often labour intensive to run.

What else is there? Well let's just think inside the box for a change. What's the most common and most effective method to get from A to B across the sort of terrain we've been talking about? A bridge, of course!

A bridge can make a huge difference to a golf course. Imagine what the 18th on the Old Course would look like, or indeed, function like, without the famous humpbacked stone bridge upon which, in recent times, both Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus have stood and waved goodbye to the adoring galleries. If the bridge hadn't been there we wouldn't have been left with those unforgettable images, while no bridge would involve a somewhat less dramatic walk around the burn.

Likewise the 12th hole at Augusta National. You're leading the Masters on the final day but have had to play three from the wrong side of the creek having misjudged your tee shot and now have the time it takes to walk over the beautifully manicured bridge to collect your thoughts. They are probably the most famous bridges in golf and probably among the smallest.

At many clubs bridges, while often taken for granted, play a significant role in everyone's regular round of golf.

Georgia-based, Creative Bridge Designs, has worked for some of the best known golf course architects in the US, including Robert Trent Jones and the aforementioned Palmer and Nicklaus providing an array of bridges in different styles.

"One of the main considerations before deciding on a bridge is budget," explained General Manager, Richard Eunice.

"Once that is determined we can examine the options. We can supply pre-fabricated bridges, in whole or in sections but for club's with larger budgets we will look at a range of options and different styles," he explained, adding that in the US many bridges are installed to keep golfers out of protected wetland areas.

"The things we like to look at are from artistic perspectives we want to make a bridge look as natural as possible and we don't like a bridge over a river to go from bank to bank we want it above the bank, ideally about 10 feet on each side."

With golf in the USA suffering from a lack of money similar to the situation in the UK Creative Golf Designs has found a way of providing golf clubs with a more cost effective way of what they want.

"To save a dollar here and a dollar there what we have been doing lately is steel beams but decorating them with timber so that they look like a regular wooden bridge."

Length of span has a part to play in materials as well.











“If you want to reach 200 feet in a single span for example you are definitely looking at a steel bridge; from 10 to 20 feet you are looking at timber and for 30 feet a lot of people like to use a glue laminated beam timber,” explained Richard, whose company, launched by Richard’s brother Brian Nuttall, in 2000, is hoping to offer its services to UK customers in the near future.

One of the other main elements to consider is weight as the larger the bridge the more that can be done with it – buggies, greenkeeping machinery etc.

“From our point of view a two ton bridge is a pedestrian bridge, a five ton bridge can take buggies and some lighter maintenance equipment while 10 ton bridges are for large equipment and 20 ton for large vehicles,” explained Richard.

Health and Safety is another important issue and hand or bump rails, should always be considered in most circumstances.

Sometimes bridges can give a new lease of life to a golf club. At Aldwark Manor, home of BIGGA HOUSE a bridge over the River Ure enable the course to be extended from a short nine holer to a full length 18-hole course with the additional holes being laid out on the land on the other side of the river. The 70-yard long single span steel bridge may not be a thing of beauty but it can take buggies and is of vital importance to Aldwark Manor Hotel and its owners Q Hotels.



So next time you are traversing one of the bridges at your club just have a think about how life would differ if it didn’t exist.

Thanks to Richard Eunice, of Creative Bridge Designs, for his assistance with this article. See: [www.creativebridgedesigns.com](http://www.creativebridgedesigns.com)

**WE’RE ON YOUR TURF.**  
MAKING LIFE EASIER

THE FORMULA FOR TOP-NOTCH TURF BEGINS WITH THE MH-400 MATERIAL HANDLER AND THE PP-180 TOP DRESSER. TOP DRESS ALL YOUR GREENS IN UNDER TWO HOURS USING THIS UNBEATABLE COMBINATION.

TO FIND A DISTRIBUTOR NEAR YOU, EMAIL [SALES@TYCROPTURF.COM](mailto:SALES@TYCROPTURF.COM) OR VISIT [WWW.TYCROPTURF.COM](http://WWW.TYCROPTURF.COM)

# Heron

**Specialists in Irrigation Control**

- Irrigation Controllers
- Standalone or PC Systems
- Mobile Phone Control
- pH Control systems







Heron is dedicated to the design and manufacture of irrigation control systems. We have exploited the latest innovations in technology to bring you a range of user friendly controllers of outstanding quality.

Our products come with a proven track record of reliability. Call us today for more details.

**Tel: 01903 724343**

E-mail: [sales@heron-electric.com](mailto:sales@heron-electric.com) [www.heron-electric.com](http://www.heron-electric.com)  
Heron Electric Ltd, Unit G15 Rudford Est., Ford, W. Sussex, BN18 0BD