

Ali Barrett with the drone



## ST ANNES OLD LINKS SOARS THANKS TO DRONE

For most Golf Clubs, like most businesses, marketing has become a key component of success and longevity. So when the St Annes Old Links (SAOL) Course Manager, the Professional and a club member chatted over a beer at the Club prizegiving, none of them thought that marketing and greenkeeping at the club would take such an innovative step forward so quickly.

Positioned within yards of Lancashire's Irish Sea coastline, the club prides itself on having one of the best maintained true Links golf courses in the UK; but maintaining this standard comes at a significant cost. Two of the key individuals responsible for ensuring the viability of the Club are the Club Pro Daniel Webster and the Course Manager Stuart Hogg.

It was whilst discussing the need to market the Club to a wider audience and bringing in visiting parties that Peter Barrett, a club member, suggested an innovative idea. Peter's son Ali had been developing a helicopter drone which he had used for filming extreme sports. So why not use this same technology to film the course and allow prospective visitors to see the quality and standard of the greens and fairways before they visit?

Stuart then suggested it was not only useful for marketing, but would also enable him, as Course Manager, to gain a more holistic view of the course using the aerial perspective to track progress of the course over time and to help the development of future short and long term improvement projects.

Working with Daniel and Stuart, a plan was put together to film the course during the Easter holidays.

The whole course has now been filmed and the results can be seen at the SAOL website [www.stannesoldlinks.com](http://www.stannesoldlinks.com).

SAOL is one of the first golf clubs in the UK to have a full aerial video of the complete course available on its website.

The results speak for themselves. As Club Captain John Gallacher said:

"I am extremely impressed by the end results. Utilising this innovative

technology enables us to showcase our wonderful course, providing an enhanced service offering to our visitors and guests. Equally as important it provides valuable information to our Course Manager in terms of course maintenance and development."

Work is ongoing to refine the videoing techniques and Ali and Peter have now set up a new business - [www.heliphoto.biz](http://www.heliphoto.biz) - to further promote the use of lightweight, high tech drones for aerial filming of golf courses and other sporting events and venues.

St Annes Old Links clubhouse

