



brought additional revenue into the club.

It originated in 2002 when Persimmon Homes purchased land from the local authority, on which three of the holes were laid out, with a view to building luxury houses with spectacular views of the North Sea.

In anticipation of the work going ahead three new holes were built out on the dunes, the 14th, 15th and 16th, which certainly haven't taken anything away from the quality of the course and in the case of the 15th, a par-3 over water, provided a hole which would grace many courses.

"The planning process for the houses took a long time during which time I arrived. I felt that would could take advantage of the building process and acquire some of the sandy soil that would be removed for foundations and move it on to the golf course.

"I contacted Lee Penrose, at the STRI, who together with Henry Bechelet, were extremely helpful in advising me how best to go about it – I would have needed a minimum

of two feet of sand to be able to grow the desired grasses."

It seemed the perfect plan with the golf course being able to develop using rootzone which couldn't be any more perfect for the job.

However, local objections saw the Persimmon housing development fail to win planning approval and Ian was forced to abandon his plans for the course or find an alternative solution.

Not a man to be beaten down and showing a resourcefulness that is common among many greenkeepers he tracked down a local recycling contractor.

"Keith Rutherford was looking for an area in which to dispose of soil and brick and we were looking for the material to create character and definition to an area of the course around the 3rd and 4th holes which was fairly featureless and full of small peaks and hollows, making it very difficult to maintain."

Ian's aim was to create an inland dune and build new tees with the material with the added bonus that



MAIN ABOVE: A view from the top of the new dune

INSET ABOVE: The new dune adds definition to the right side of the 3rd hole

the club would generate income from the material brought in.

"It's a win-win situation for us," said Ian, who admits to being the driving force behind the project.

"The Chairman of Green, Dave Atfield, has been extremely supportive during this process, but he sometimes hides when he sees me coming at him with another idea," joked Ian.

That 20,000 tonnes has enable Ian to build a huge inland dune, five to eight metres high, to add definition to the right side of the 3rd hole and a backdrop to the

The Jacobsen Eclipse 322

the only 100% hydraulic-free greens mower available ... anywhere!

Other 'hybrids' still use hydraulic motors for propulsion, so when we say no hydraulics, we mean it. Traction, reel drive and lift/lower operations are all electrically driven using either a small petrol or diesel engine running a 48 volt generator. And now there's an all-electric version using a battery pack. It's stealth quiet and ideal for greens close to housing or hotel rooms.

For greener operation on your greens, less maintenance and lower operating costs, it has to be the Jacobsen Eclipse 322.

By the way, did we mention ...
no hydraulics.



www.ransomesjacobsen.com

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd

West Road, Ipswich, IP3 9TT UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1473 270000
Web: www.ransomesjacobsen.com

Code: GKI/03/11/E322

JACOBSEN
A Textron Company

Driving Environmental Performance



The stunning par 3 on the 15th

7th green to ensure that there is no distraction to people putting of those playing off the nearby 12th tee.

“The great thing is that the digger operator, the digger and its diesel is paid for by the contractor so we don’t have any outgoing at all,” said Ian, who admits he has been very lucky that the operator has shown a real flare for the work and a desire to do it as well as he can.

“He is outstanding – a craftsman!” is Ian’s assessment.

It is an on-going programme and the current Club Captain, Keith Cooper, has also identified an area behind the 4th green which he feels would benefit from a mound.

“That would be purely for aesthetics, to shield the hole from the Steel Works, which borders the course, but we are aware that too much would be as damaging as nothing at all as it could alter the character of the place beyond all recognition.”

However, the work so far has received great acclaim from the membership and improved that particular area of the golf course no end.

“The one small downside is having lorries driving over the course to deliver their loads.

“We can have as many as 20

wagons a day while other days we may only have three and others none at all but we looked at the situation and got in touch with the council to identify the shortest possible route over the course for access.

“All the drivers are informed that the golfers’ safety takes priority and we don’t have any problems.”

Ian is very much an advocate of good traditional sustainable golf.

“We’ve just applied Rescue to a couple of greens and achieved a successful outcome, but it’s minimal feed – we just do a 3-0-8 to start them off and then go on to liquids while we will put on a half rate 4-0-24 application at the back end of the year just to ensure they are healthy going into the winter.”

He was particularly pleased a couple of years ago when the club hosted an R&A Sustainable Golf Seminar when Nick Park, a member of the Golf Course Committee and a great advocate of Sustainable Golf, complimented him on the quality and quantity of fescue in the greens.

In his four years at the club, Ian and the team have continued to build tees and now the vast majority of the project, designed to add length to the course, has been done.

“We can have as many as 20 wagons a day, so we got in touch with the council to identify the shortest possible route over the course for access”

**Ian Pemberton,
Course Manager**



The huge artificial dune continues to grow

TORO



TORO Irrigation Products are distributed by Lely (UK) Limited, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 1QH. Tel: 01480 226848 Email: irrigation.uk@lely.com www.lely.com www.toro.com

**GDC FROM TORO.
THE INTELLIGENT
CHOICE.**

- LESS DECODERS
- LESS CABLING
- LESS EXPENSE

Costing less to install and run, and giving pin-point accuracy out on the course, Toro GDC irrigation is the best choice for both club managers and greenkeepers alike. Now proven in use on over 200 courses worldwide. Contact us today to find out more.

Call 01480 226800 or visit www.toro.com



partners in turfcare



CONTROL UNIT



DT SERIES



B SERIES



DECODERS



F-220 SERIES



POCKET PC

**A multi-component biostimulant that increases
root development and general plant health**



Activate R

- * Contains Enhanced Root Developer (ERD) to improve root development
- * Root length shown to be increased by up to 32%
- * Improves nutrient retention in the rootzone
- * Contains humic acid and plant growth hormones
- * Chelated trace element package also present
- * Leaf penetrant system ensures rapid movement of product into rootzone
- * Unique tank mixing compatibilities



+21%



+32%



Rigby Taylor Ltd, Rigby Taylor House, Crown Lane, Bolton, BL6 5HP. Freephone 0800 424 919 www.rigbytaylor.com
Mascot and Activate are trade marks of Rigby Taylor Ltd



The mini Swilken Bridge built by a member

“We totally amended the 1st; done the 2nd, built two on the 3rd; 4th not yet; 5th – we’ve plans for that incorporating the ing; 6th, we’ve extended and recontoured; extended the 7th, added extra length to the 8th; done the 9th; extended the 10th at the back and levelled it off and built a path by the side; 11th nothing yet; 12th nothing yet; 13, 14, 15 and 16 yes; 17 not yet, and 18 yes,” he reeled off, showing that he is as adept when it comes to memory as he is with course construction.

“We do it all in-house and I’ve got a great team here – Deputy Les Hunt, who has been here 20 years; Jamie Chester, who has been here 18 years; Kevin Bartram, who has been here 12 years and Aiden Coates, who has been here three,” said Ian, who added that Kevin and Aiden have proven themselves to be particularly skilled when it comes to building steps and paths.

The club has a very strong membership, and green fees have seen a marked increase over the last couple of years.

“We had a member, Bill Franks, come in and build us a mini Swilken Bridge while he also helped us construct the litter bins, with bricks given to us by Keith

Rutherford, that we have on the course. People take a pride in the club and it’s great to see.”

As I was leaving Ian pointed out another member who was repairing one of the outside lights on the clubhouse wall.

Ian was always aware of the fact that he had arrived at a links from an inland course and that he was particularly careful to steer clear of anything which might have been perceived of bringing parkland to the seaside.

“That said, I’m not a big advocate of the great divide between links greenkeepers and parkland greenkeepers. I class myself as a greenkeeper as simple as that. I love my job passionately and it is about grass be it on links or parkland.”

“The only difference is that we can be a lot drier at times, reaction times to implement any required maintenance has to be immediate. Always be proactive not reactive.”

Having achieved so much in his first four years Ian now has his sights set on becoming an Open Qualifying venue and has already been in touch with the R&A to set up a visit of the course in 2011.

It would be a fitting reward for the only true links in the largest county in the country.

“We do it all in-house and I’ve got a great team here – Deputy Les Hunt, who has been here 20 years; Jamie Chester, who has been here 18 years; Kevin Bartram, who has been here 12 years and Aiden Coates, who has been here three”

Ian Pemberton, Course Manager





Going that *extra* mile

In the aftermath of the Ryder Cup, Celtic Manor bore the scars from thousands of rain-soaked people conveying around roped-off sections during those tense final days. Jim Cook spoke with Director of Golf Courses and Estates Management, Jim McKenzie, about the tremendous efforts which have gone into restoring the damaged areas in time for the forthcoming Wales Open in June.



When the Ryder Cup circus moved into Celtic Manor in September last year a 'golf town' was effectively constructed.

It had its own traffic system, its own shops and places to eat and with 50,000 people on site each day, more inhabitants than most towns and villages in the surrounding area.



Inevitably this, combined with heavy rainfall, took its toll on the site. Back in the November issue of *Greenkeeper International*, Jim McKenzie said from an aerial shot taken after the tournament, it resembled a desert course, with islands of green surrounded by mud.

Whereas there was no damage to the actual course itself, on the other side of the ropes where the crowds were, was a different story.

Jim said: "A third of a million people walked through within the space of six days and it acted like a huge rotovator. Off the course, along the rope lines, we had significant grass cover that was lost. Alongside this, it took months for all of the infrastructure to be removed so by the time it was gone, a lot of it had been up for four or five months, so the areas beneath the tents and temporary facilities

were pretty much dead as well. So the damage was to spectator areas, hospitality areas, merchandising areas and places like that and was very significant.”

The last piece of physical structure related to the Ryder Cup, a skip used for the final clear up, was only removed on January 6. Jim mentioned this would have been sooner, though, had it not been for the inclement weather and snow towards the end of last year.

Celtic Manor is due to host the Wales Open at the beginning of June and with this prospect at the forefront of his mind, Jim implemented an expeditious recovery programme to bring the damaged areas of the course back up to pre-Ryder Cup conditions.

“The week after the Ryder Cup we split the course into three areas and started turfing the areas that we felt either needed to get back into shape very quickly or were fundamental for the Wales Open. Then there were other areas where we seeded that weren’t close to play



“A lot of the turf has been laid in huge, wide rolls that rely on specialist equipment to roll it so we’ve brought in local, Bridgend-based contractor, Inscapes”
Jim McKenzie

and that were going to take a while to recover, bearing in mind we were almost in October by then though. Then there were parts that we felt would recover naturally.”

The extensive renovation work required since the tournament would have been a full-time venture for his team of staff at the best of times, but with the unreliable weather and the Wales Open looming, not to mention regular daily maintenance of the course, contractors were brought in to assist.

“We brought contractors in order to get the job done as quickly as we can. A lot of the turf has been laid in huge, wide rolls that rely on specialist equipment to roll it so we’ve brought in local, Bridgend-based contractor, Inscapes, to do that work. Plus our guys have got other things to do.

“We have our winter maintenance schedule to take of so if we had laid all of the turf, and been responsible



for all of the restorations, we just wouldn’t have got it all done.”

One of the worst affected areas was the driving range, where the tented village had stood.

“We are still turfing the driving range at present. There’s something like £35,000 worth of turf going on it, because that was the site of the tented village during the Ryder Cup and it got absolutely hammered. With the Wales Open going on here at the start of June there is not a lot of recovery time, so that area has to be turfed. Basically we went in, scraped the mud and dead grass off and set new turf down. We used the local contractors for a lot of the turf-

ing, and our own staff have done a significant amount as well.”

To give an idea of scale Jim said how, overall, enough turf has been put down to turf the Millennium Stadium pitch four times over.

With the best part of three-and-a-half to four weeks of snow split into three different periods of time at the end of last year, the weather has not helped the recovery programme.

Jim admitted that in preparing a course for two high-profile tournaments in relatively quick succession comes a certain degree of pressure.

He said: “The expectation from the members and guests is very high because the course has held

the Ryder Cup and multiple other tournaments. Also the fact that the Wales Open is in June adds a huge amount of pressure to us, since we'll only have a matter of weeks of good weather between the end of spring and the start of the Wales Open week.

"So we have pressure both from a tournament point of view and from a customer and business point of view. We have it from all angles really."

Last year, the Wales Open was broadcast live to over 300 million households worldwide and with this year sure to be no different means the world will be watching Wales once again.

"A lot of the players who played in the Ryder Cup will be at the Wales Open, so the television pictures and the feedback from the players needs to be good. We can't get it wrong," Jim said.

With this in mind and spring just around the corner, efforts to get the damaged areas back to their best were well on their way.

"The site is getting back into shape. We've had no complaints from any of the visitors because the course itself is fine. The damage was restricted to the areas behind the ropes, because the players who played in the Ryder Cup didn't do any damage at all."

"The actual playing of the golf course is fine and always has been, but it's the extremities to the left and right of holes, the hospitality and catering areas. In some instances on the same hole multiple tasks have been carried out. Some bits have been seeded, some turfed, and some will come back on their own so every hole is different."

Reflecting on the Ryder Cup, Jim stressed the efforts of everybody involved in going that extra mile during the week.

"It was not just us, but everybody involved who put in that extra bit. The marshals, referees, people who drove the buses, manned the car parks, right across the board. There were a lot of people who went that extra mile in order to make sure the event took place. Colin Montgomerie said in his closing speech that the world was watching and Wales delivered. It wasn't just us but the whole combined efforts."

It was the greenkeeping team, however, which has since been singled out for an award.

"We have subsequently learned that since the Ryder Cup that the greenkeepers who worked on the tournament have been given an award from the City of Newport to recognise the efforts. It's for my staff



and also the volunteers from other courses.

"It's an award called the Extra Mile Award which is presented to people that go the extra mile to put the city on the map, so we've won that for our efforts."

The Extra Mile Awards was introduced last year and is an initiative run by Newport City Council and the South Wales Argus newspaper, where individuals or organisations are nominated for going that extra distance.

Jim explained part of the motivation for the achievement.

"It wasn't the most enjoyable week I have ever had but it has certainly turned out to be the most satisfying. Irrespective of how many days it took to play the Ryder Cup, the most important thing was that we got it finished and we succeeded in playing for the 28 points. The main thing was that the integrity of the Ryder Cup remained uncompromised."

For this accomplishment then, and for being the first greenkeeping team in history to help win the Ryder Cup, the Extra Mile Award must be the icing on the cake.

Recognition from outside the industry is always a positive because, after all, without greenkeepers there would be no golf courses.

For the job done last year and little respite before the Wales Open, all praise toward Jim and his crew is thoroughly deserved for the way in which they continue to do our profession proud.



Specially designed for
sustainable maintenance regimes



Mascot R117 With ESP liquid seed coating
Greens Fescue Renovation

- * Mixture of Chewings Fescues and Slender Creeping Red Fescues
- * Outstanding drought and wind chill tolerance
- * Gives improved growth at lower temperatures
- * Has a high shoot density and fineness of leaf
- * Treated with ESP liquid seed coating for improved establishment
- * Ideal for all golf situations, particularly links courses



Rigby Taylor Ltd, Rigby Taylor House, Crown Lane, Bolton, BL6 5HP. Freephone 0800 424 919 www.rigbytaylor.com
Mascot and ESP are trade marks of Rigby Taylor Ltd



WiedenmannTM

Deep and Fast
and Precise

Choose from **TEN** Wiedenmann
Terra Spike Aerators



Call today on **0141 814 3366** for more information

www.wiedenmann.co.uk
info@wiedenmann.co.uk