

Hiseman set to redo Dornoch's 'Struie' course

By TREVOR LEDGER

DORNOCH, Scotland — "My aim is to design a course of such quality, that if there were no other course in Dornoch, the members would be proud to play this one," said Robin Hiseman, setting himself a high standard with his new commission to redesign the secondary "Struie" course at Dornoch.

The world-renowned and extremely remote Royal Dornoch in the north of Scotland is to receive a course that is designed to rise from being the "much lesser course at Dornoch" to "a course of distinction in its own right."

This is the excitement that Hiseman is generating at the prospect of a spring 2000 start on the site.

"A member of the golf club retired as a farmer and offered the club first choice on 300 acres of linksland on the Dornoch Firth," he said. "The new land encompasses some of the best golfing terrain you can imagine."

The original Struie course has managed to retain some of the original Dornoch course designed by Old Tom Morris. However, lack of land and boring terrain have restricted the length and the quality of golf available. With its illustrious sister next door, Struie was always going to struggle to attract players. The result is as predictable as Hiseman is succinct: "The Struie is a 5,500-yard ancillary course. It is very under-used, so the championship course is swamped."

A Scotsman, Hiseman was a natural choice for the job. "I think my living in Aberdeen was a contributing factor," he said. "They are a long way from anywhere and they are aware of it."

"The captain of Dornoch was playing at Deeside Golf Club, where I was marking out some bunkers. We got chatting."

Part of the new plan has already been initiated by greenkeeper Bob Mackay and his staff, who have built several new pot bunkers on existing holes which will be retained. Five holes will be dropped from the present course, two of which will be abandoned, while the other three will function as a practice course.

Ten of the 13 remaining holes have been redesigned to varying degrees, with three new green sites together with new tees and bunkers. The first phase of the project will see the lengthening of the course up to 6,500 yards with five new holes — 9 through 13 — being laid into the

new linksland.

Mountainous dunes and barren wastes are sure to become a feature of the new course.

"The most exciting change comes with the addition of the five new holes on the new linksland to the west of the 8th," said Hiseman. "These holes take full advantage of the natural links terrain and provide the Struie with a fresh style, scenery and challenge."

Part of Hiseman's design has included the familiar Royal Dornoch fingerprints of deep pot bunkers and large, undulating, elevated greens. But this is not a clone.

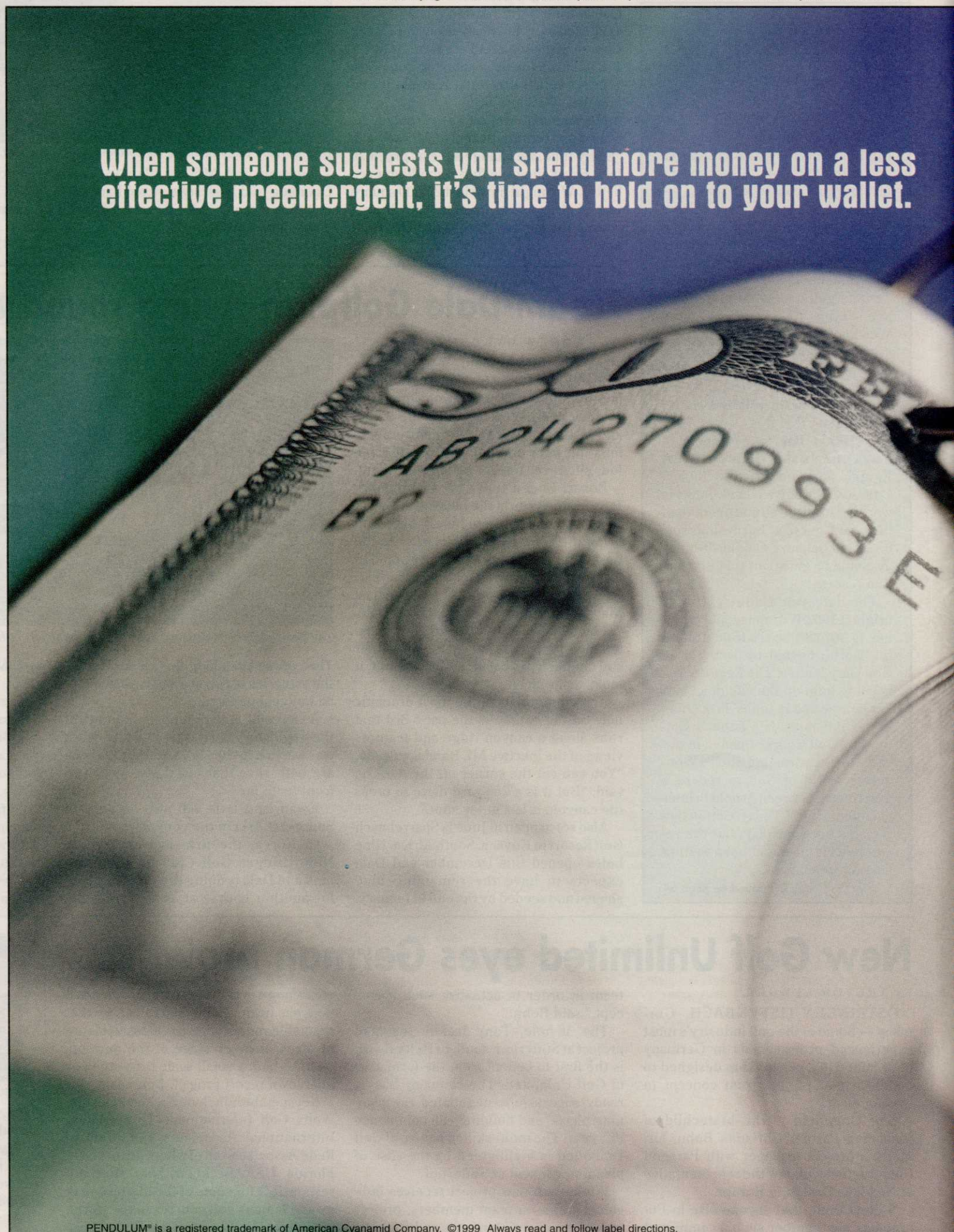
"The 10th and 11th could become the two best holes on either course at Dornoch," Hiseman wrote to the membership. "The 10th has the potential to be one of the best par-4s in the

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Dornoch Firth is in full view from the 10th and 11th holes of the 'Struie' course.

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Creative Golf debuts in Germany

By TREVOR LEDGER

SYLT, Germany — Creative Golf Design (CGD) of Chester, England, has been awarded its first commission in Germany — the Marine Golf Club

"The golf club has acquired a further 120 acres for an entirely new, 18-hole course," said CGD Director Ken Moodie. "There are

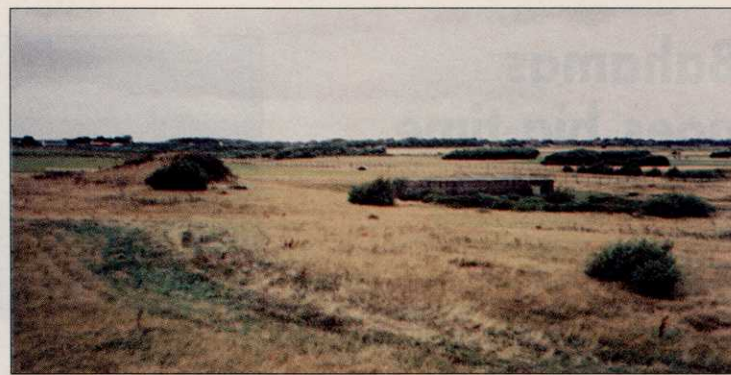
a number of ecological issues to attend to, but far from being a problem, I am very excited by the challenge."

The Marine Golf Club was founded by a Royal Air Force (RAF) crew stationed on the island of Sylt, just off the northwest German coast, during the latter stages of World War II. The existing nine-hole course oc-

cupies 50 acres of Sylt which sits in the eastern section of the North Sea. The previous dune system was flattened to allow for runways and taxiways, but, for aesthetic, strategic and ecological reasons, Moodie hopes to reinstate the diverse and shifting landscape with sublime simplicity.

"With the sandy nature of the soil, stabilization will be a major

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The CGD-designed Marine Golf Club in Sylt, Germany.

Hiseman/Dornoch

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British Isles, with its supreme natural elegance and a beautiful green-site within yards of the Dornoch Firth."

Hiseman described the 10th as "one of the most stunning, natural golf holes in the world."

At 445 yards, slightly downhill from an elevated tee — the 10th will incorporate a wide fairway sandwiched between "a gaping natural sand hollow and the Dornoch Firth." When this natural fairway plain runs out at the green location, it is nestled gently between the sand wastes and the beach.

It is the simplicity of the hole which most appealed to Hiseman.

"There are no artificial bunkers or design tricks as the native hazards are abundant and perfectly placed to complement a thrilling golf hole," he said. The only tree on the course is perfectly placed to the left of the fairway to catch a hooked tee shot.

While this hole just presented itself to Hiseman, some thought was necessary for the rest — but not much.

"I came up with the concept for the new layout in just half an hour on the back of an old scorecard," he explained. "I can only describe it as a 'eureka!' moment. It just fell perfectly into place and has changed very little ever since."

Part of this 'synchronicity' involves rerouting the Black Burn which meanders across the course. In keeping with the traditional manner of Hiseman's approach, it is being diverted onto its original course. This is almost entirely cosmetic but with the intention of promoting its image to that of the Barrie Burn at Carnoustie, or the Swilken at St. Andrews.

The course will be unveiled in 2002, along with its new name. Hiseman suggests "The Witch," explaining: "This would commemorate the fact that the 18th hole is the site of the last execution of a witch in Scotland, in 1772. They first tried to drown her in a deep pond — still there — and when that failed they burned her at the stake. Her gravestone resides in the greenkeeper's front garden..."

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