

Shades Of Green

OPINION

At the end of 2000, my wife and I took a two week trip to the British Isles, which sadly only included a one-day visit to St. Andrews, Scotland. I did get to set foot on the Old Course, which was closed for renovation, and I chatted briefly with the deputy greenskeeper on the 18th hole. Ironically, the head greenskeeper was in America. Oh, well, it was too cold to enjoy golf anyhow.

It was satisfying enough just to peer into the Road Hole bunker on the 17th green, trod up the 18th hole and across the Swilcan Burn bridge and soak in the history of the place. Trekking around Augusta, Pebble Beach or the Old Course, for a superintendent, is better than visiting St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey or Buckingham Palace — anytime.

I would love to come back in the warmer months on a golf-only holiday and really take on this grand dame of links golf.

In the British Museum of Golf directly behind the Old Course clubhouse, I found evidence of John Jackson, apprentice club maker to Old Tom Morris, and A. Jackson, also a club maker, from the 1700s.

My wife has been working on our family trees, and I hope she can graft a branch in that direction. Most likely my ancestors were poachers and highwaymen, which could give validity to the suspicion that I'm a bona fide sandbagger.

The museum also had some pictures of Old Tom Morris and details of his golfing and club-making expertise. When discussing his role as greenskeeper, he said the club provided him with all the tools necessary to care for the Old Course — “a barrow, a shovel and a spade.”

Looking back to golf's origins at St. Andrews reminded me that we will be celebrating GCSAA's 75th anniversary beginning in Dallas this year and culminating in Orlando in 2002. No doubt the Historical Preservation Department will have loads of old photos and antique equipment, the oldest of which will be more modern than Old Tom's modest tools.

Our meager 75 years of existence is but a blip on golf's timeline, but it remains an important one — not just for its current members, but for the future of the profession.

For St. Andrews, Respect and Love

BY JOEL JACKSON



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Since we have finally entered the new millennium (see, since there was no year 0, last year couldn't *possibly* have been the ... oh, never mind), it's the perfect time to reflect on how we have progressed in equipment, technology, attitudes about golf and, most importantly, how the average golfer perceives our profession. From horse-drawn mowers and iron-wheeled tractors to the visions of GPS-guided robotic-cutting units and “no-mow” grasses, golf has undergone unbelievable changes since Old Tom Morris strode St. Andrews with his barrow.

How will the ever-evolving image and role of the superintendent change as Old Tom's barrow, shovel and spade fade even further into the past, replaced as they will be by computers, software programs and balance sheets? Despite modern society's desire to rush headlong into the future, we must also never relinquish our past. No matter what tomorrow brings, we will forever be linked to Old Tom.

In the middle of this mulligan stew of change and progress lies the GCSAA. As far as professional associations go, it has done a good job of reflecting the goals and intentions of its honest and hardworking membership. The more the membership gets involved in committee work, the stronger we are.

The varying opinions and viewpoints of our members challenge us to find the best solutions for all. I have witnessed the process firsthand and encourage the rest of you to step forward to serve on committees. It will be well worth your time and effort to see firsthand what goes on in Lawrence on your behalf.

I wish you all a belated Happy New Year and look forward to helping kick off GCSAA's 75th anniversary celebration in Dallas.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.